



General Election Opinion Poll

20th December 2015



Methodology and Weighting

- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,007 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 14th – 16th December 2015.
- A random digit dial (RDD) method is used to ensure a random selection process of households to be included – this also ensures that ex-directory households are covered.
- Half of the sample are interviewed using an RDD landline sample, with the other half conducted using an RDD mobile phone sample, this ensures 98% coverage of the population reaching landline only households, mobile only households and those with both a landline and a mobile.
- Interviews were conducted across the country and the results weighted to the profile of all adults. A further past vote weighting is included that takes the current recall for how people voted at the last election, compares this to the actual results, and weights the data to halfway between the two.
- Vote intention results are based on those who will actually go and vote, using a 10 point scale, where 1 is not at all likely and 10 is very likely, those rating 4 to 10 are included as being those who will actually go and vote.
- In all respects the poll was completed to the opinion polling guidelines set out by both ESOMAR and AIMRO.



Government Parties End Year on a High - I

Everything appears to be going to plan for the Government parties as we come to the end of the year. The highest joint first preference share for the current coalition of 41% registered in this final poll of the year, will surely leave them spending the Christmas break like “Cheshire Cats”.

Many questioned Enda Kenny’s decision to delay the election until 2016 in the Autumn, when things were looking relatively OK for a November election for the government, as they feared potential negative speed-bumps along the way. Trends now suggest it was certainly the right move. A further increase of 1% since the last Sunday Business Post poll conducted at the end of November, continues an upward trend in support of +7% since July. This leaves the party securing 32% first preference share of the vote, and leaves them only 4% behind the share they achieved at the last election. This is before the main reason for delaying the election, the impact of the budget being felt in voters pockets only due to materialise at the end of January, has taken place.

Obviously this is no time for complacency for the Party. The electorate remains relatively volatile, and this is characterised even by the poll we conducted for Paddy Power just two weeks ago, that had party support falling back to 28%. Of course we control every poll to be representative of all voters as possible, but there is still always a margin of error of + or -3% on any figure. This would suggest the Fine Gael support is possibly somewhere between the highs of 32% and the lows of 28%. Once again this shows the importance of regular polling to look at trends, rather than relying completely on only one poll at a point in time. It is clear from those trends that even with last months apparent blip included, the trend in support for the party as been generally upward.

Labour will also be delighted that they held fast in pushing for a Spring election. The apparent up weight in messaging that has been highlighting Labour’s role in positive legislation during the last government appears to be having effect. To secure 9% in the last poll before Christmas is certainly a much stronger position than they had been contemplating in recent times. This is a 2% increase since the last Sunday Business Poll, and the same result as seen in the interim Paddy Power poll seen in early December.

The fact that this is the second poll in a row that Labour have managed to secure this share is even more noteworthy. The party has occasionally seen its share of the vote hit 9% or 10% in the past year, only to see it fall back to 6-7% the following month. This trend has meant that they have really been securing in and around 7-8% support for some time, with the polls fluctuating on either side of this. To secure 9% share two months in a row is therefore some indication that this gain may be more secure than those we have seen in the past. The difference between 9-10% support or 6-7% support, in terms of the number of seats the party can secure, could also be quite significant.

Government Parties End Year on a High - II

It appears some of the gains for the government parties may be about the polarisation of voters as the Election comes into view on the horizon. The reason for this hypothesis is that Sinn Fein also record an increase in support, up 1% on the past month, leaving the party securing 19% overall. The highest share the party has seen since May this year. On the other hand Fianna Fail, Independent candidates and other parties all see declines in this poll.

The Fianna Fail drop to 17% will be a concern for the party. While it is only a drop of 2%, which is within the margin of error, it coincides with the gain for Fine Gael and Sinn Fein. This could signal a worry for the party that it becomes squeezed if people begin to feel that a first preference vote for Fianna Fail may be wasted. It also the lowest result that RED C has recorded for the party since 2012. Having said that the party has consistently secured 18-19% in the polls over this year, and 17% is well within the margin of error for those longer term trends. As such this poll result is perhaps an early warning signal.

Independent candidates on the other hand continue to lose the strong levels of support seen during the term of the government. This continues the trend long predicted by RED C, that voters who registered their protest by telling pollsters they would vote for Independent candidates and other parties, may well gradually move back to the more established parties as the reality of an election draws near. This poll suggests small declines for both the Social Democrats at 2% and the Anti-Austerity Alliance at 3%, but at the same time sees Renua push its support up to 2%.

The final factor that should not be ignored are the increase in undecided voters. The proportion of likely voters that now suggest they are undecided has risen +5%, to 15% in this poll. This is significant as it suggests the declines for Fianna Fail and Independents, and the subsequent gains in share for Fine Gael, Labour, and Sinn Fein, may both be as result of those more undecided voters. While there is no direct correlation it would suggest that those who had been saying they would vote Fianna Fail and Independent were moving to now be somewhat more undecided, and this in turn has improved the share of the other three parties.

So what are the main take-outs of today's poll, the last before Election year? Firstly, the government coalition appear to have the famous "momentum" behind them at this early stage, particularly Fine Gael who's upward trend in support will leave them very satisfied over the Christmas break. Secondly, the electorate remains quite volatile, with plenty of wavering and undecided voters shifting support and not sure of exactly where they will end up. It's all to play for in 2016.

First Preference Vote Intention – December 2015

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



Fine Gael
32% +1

Labour
9% +2

Fianna Fail
17% -2

Sinn Fein
19% +1

Independent/
Other Party
23% -2

Undecided Voters
15% +5

REDC

First Preference Vote Intention – December 2015

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (showing impact of past vote weighting, and likely voter filters)

(Base: All adults 18+)

CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT						
	Core figures	Impact of Past vote weighting	Likely Voters	Excluding Undecided	Prompting on Other Parties	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Fine Gael	27	26	27	32	32	36
Labour	7	8	8	9	9	19
Fianna Fáil	14	14	15	17	17	17
Sinn Féin	16	15	16	19	19	10
Independent candidates	14	15	16	19	14	13
Green Party	1	1	1	2	2	2
Renua	1	1	1	1	2	-
AAA-PBP	*	*	*	*	3	1*
Social Democrats	1	1	1	1	2	-
Other Party	*	*	*	*	*	1
Undecided	19	19	15	n/a	n/a	n/a

*Socialist Party

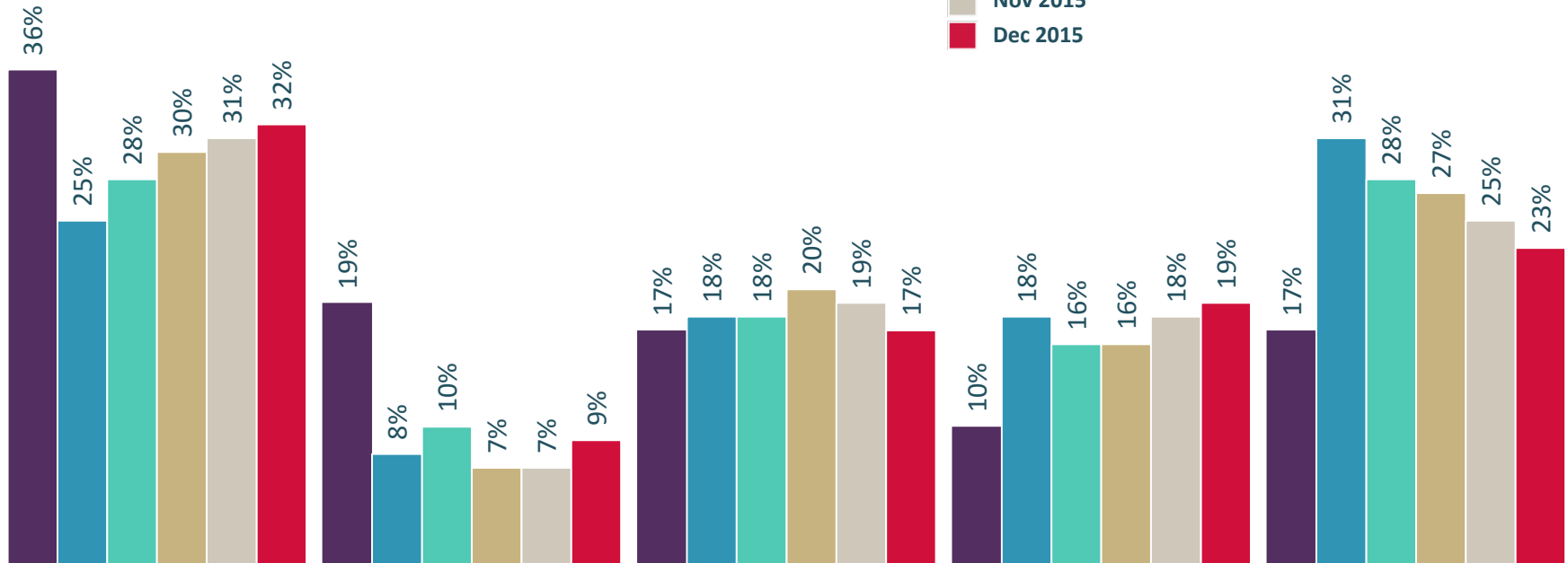


REDC

First Preference Vote Intention – July – December 2015

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



Fine Gael
32%

Labour
9%

Fianna Fail
17%

Sinn Fein
19%

Independent/
Other Party
23%



First Preference Vote Intention – November - December 2015

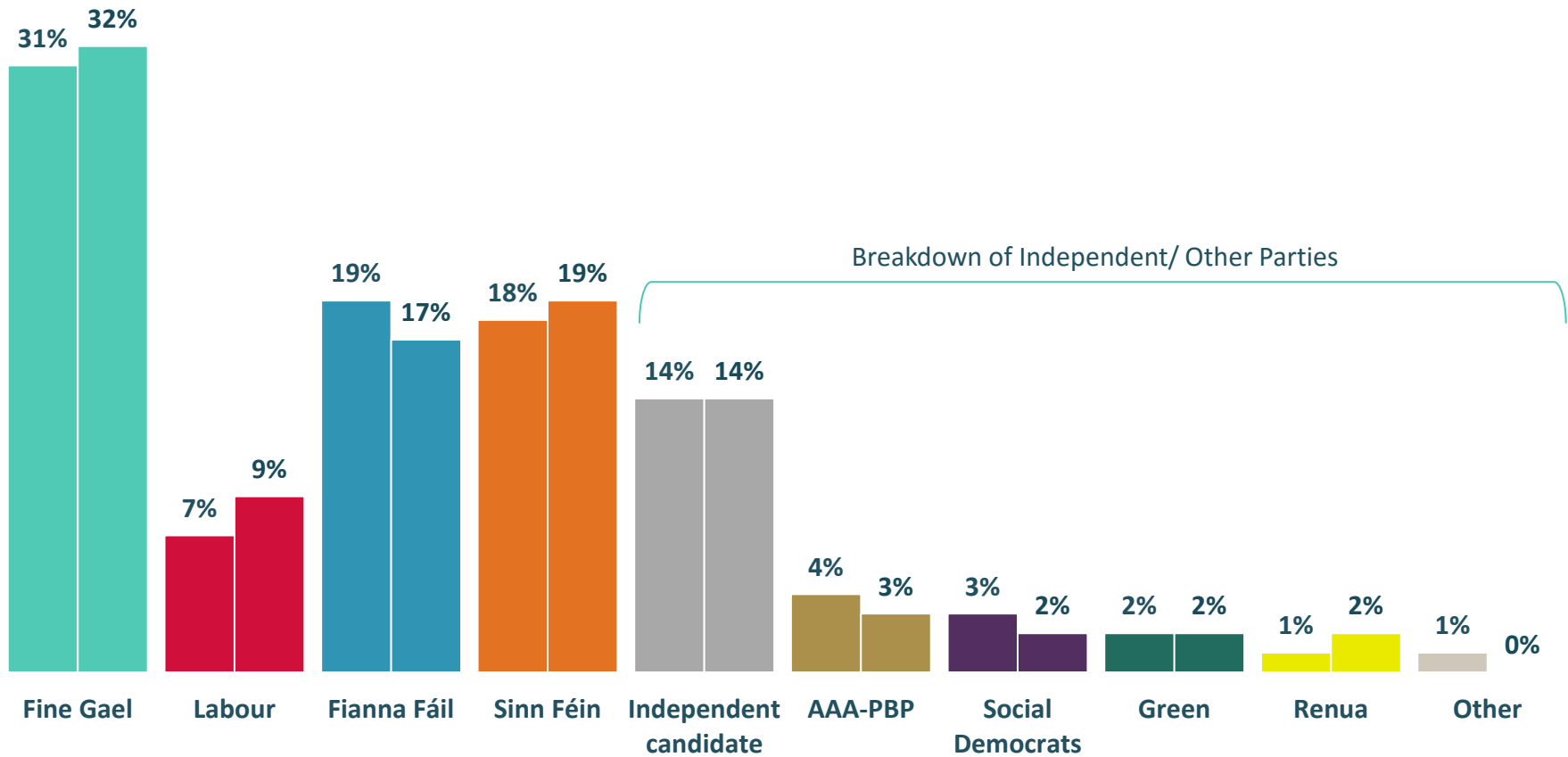
If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted) + PROMPT If Independent Candidate for party.

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)

SBP Nov 2015



SBP Dec 2015



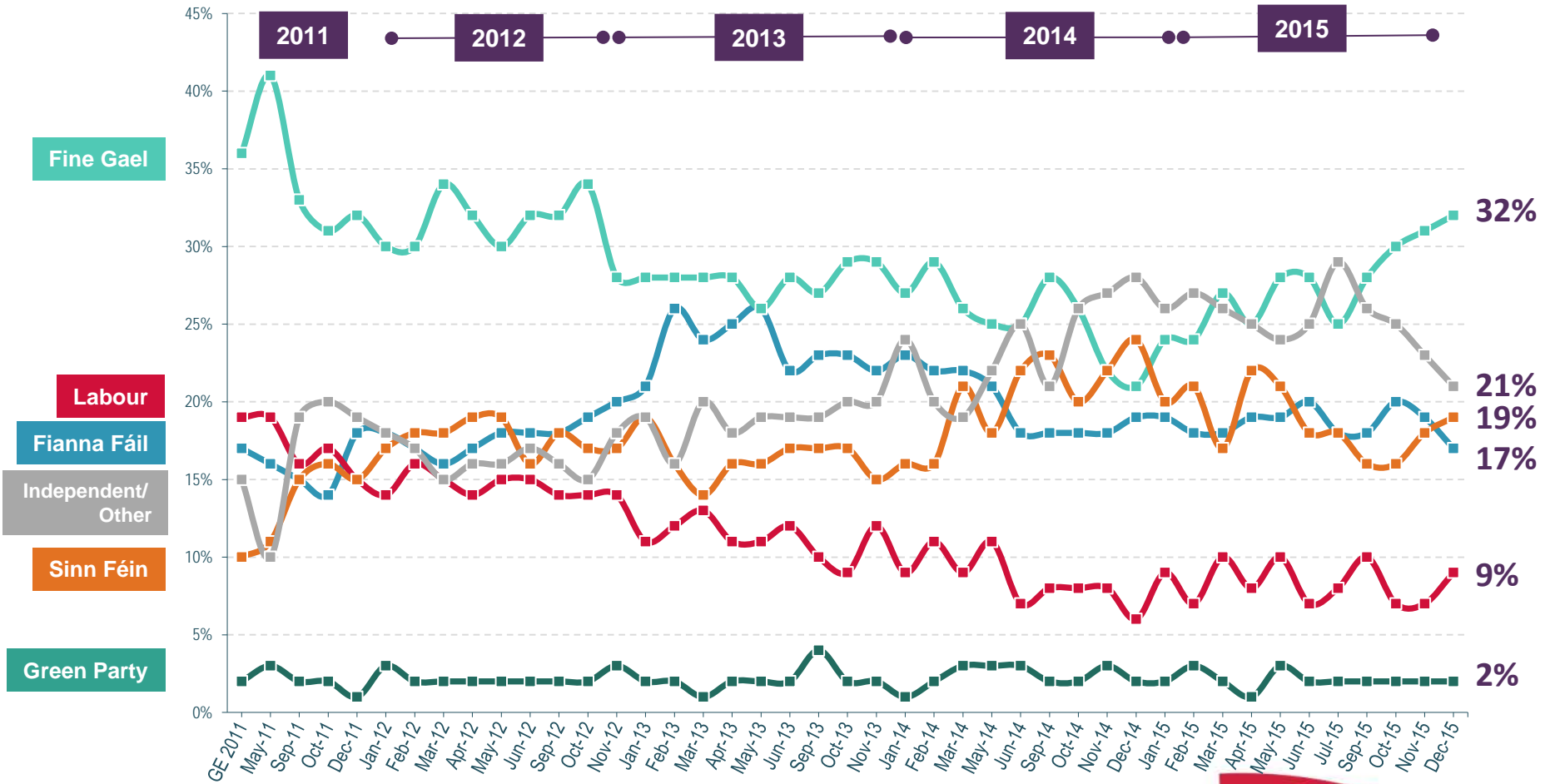
(Independent Alliance 2%)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2011-2015

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

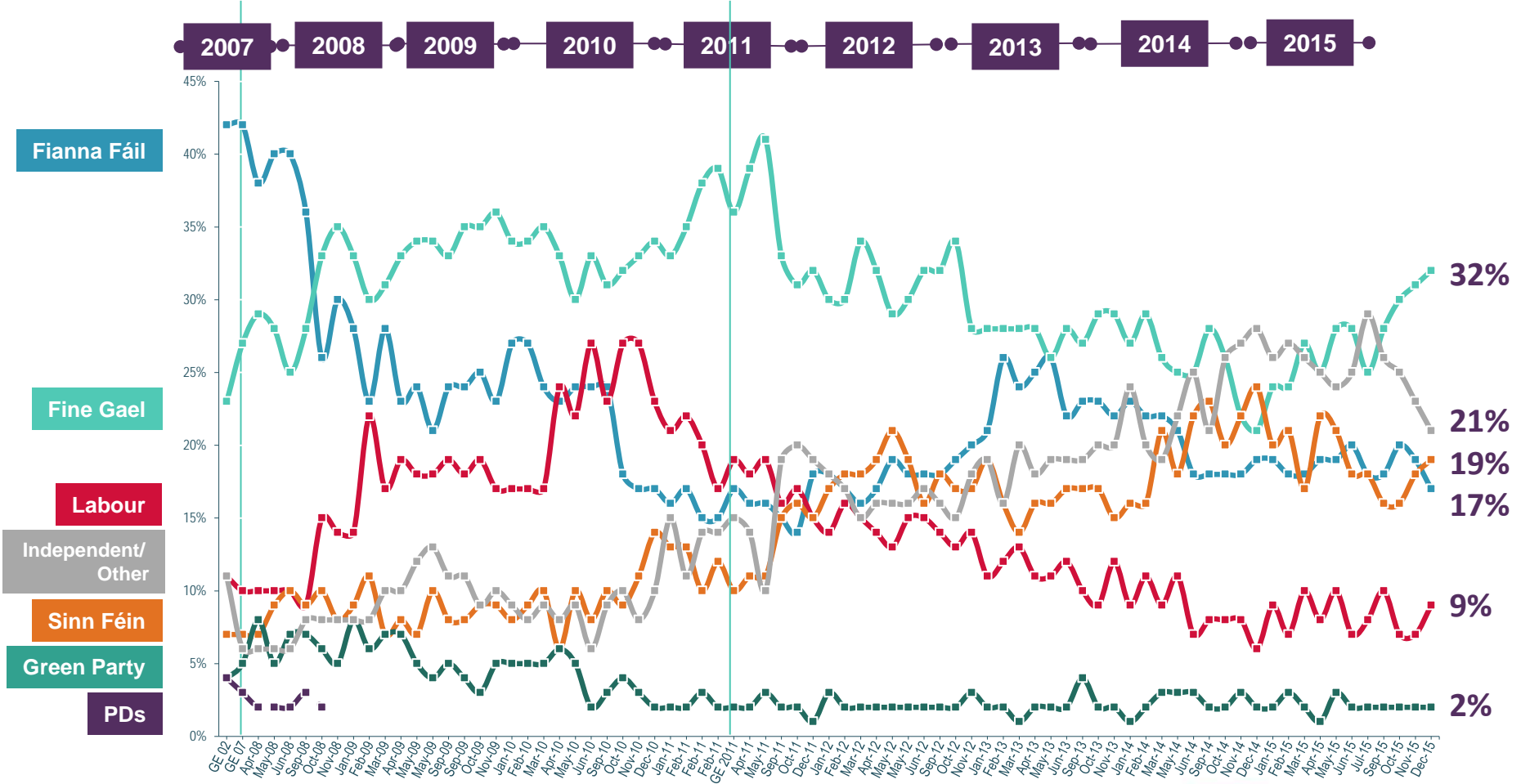
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2007 to 2015

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

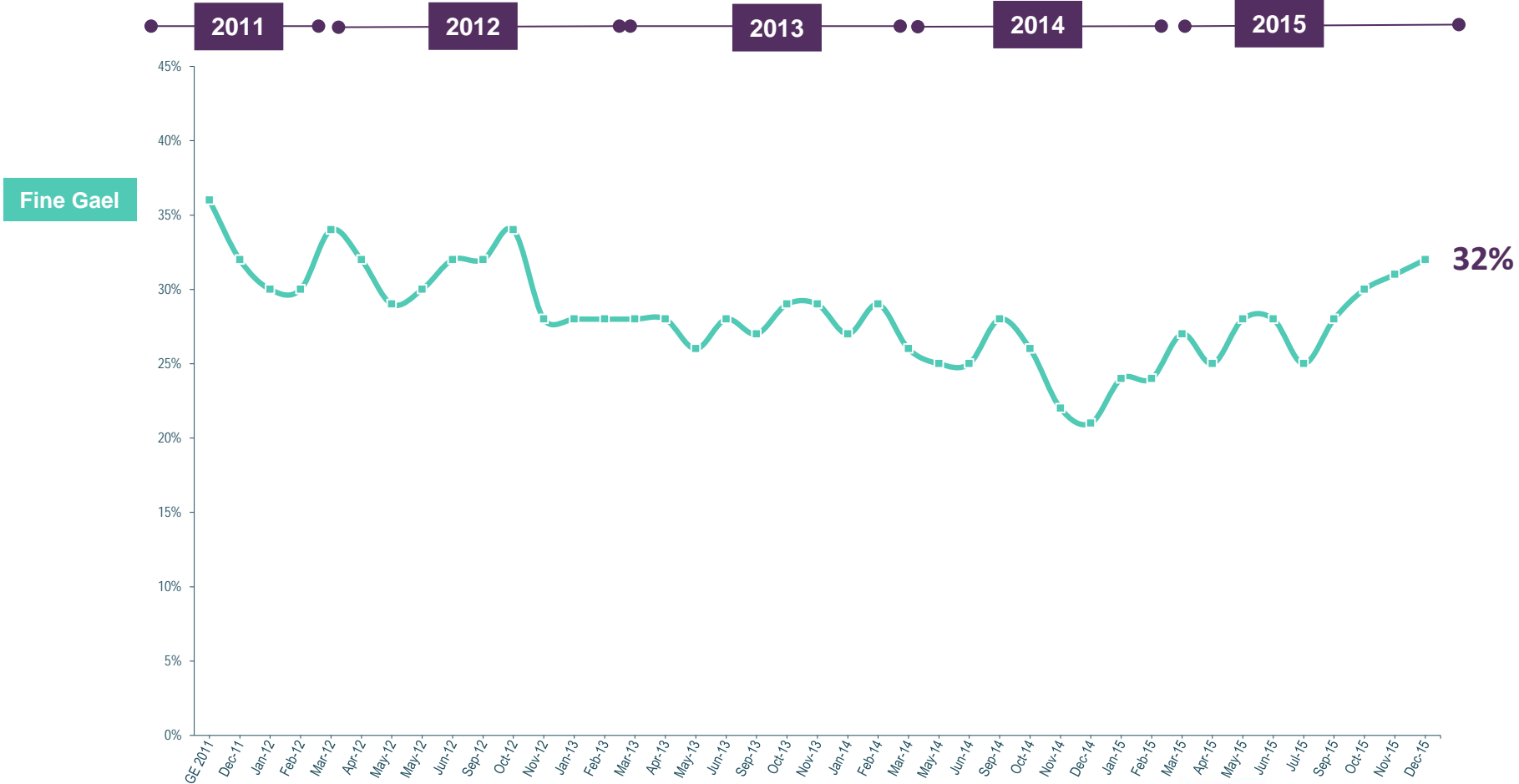
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2011 to 2015 – Fine Gael

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

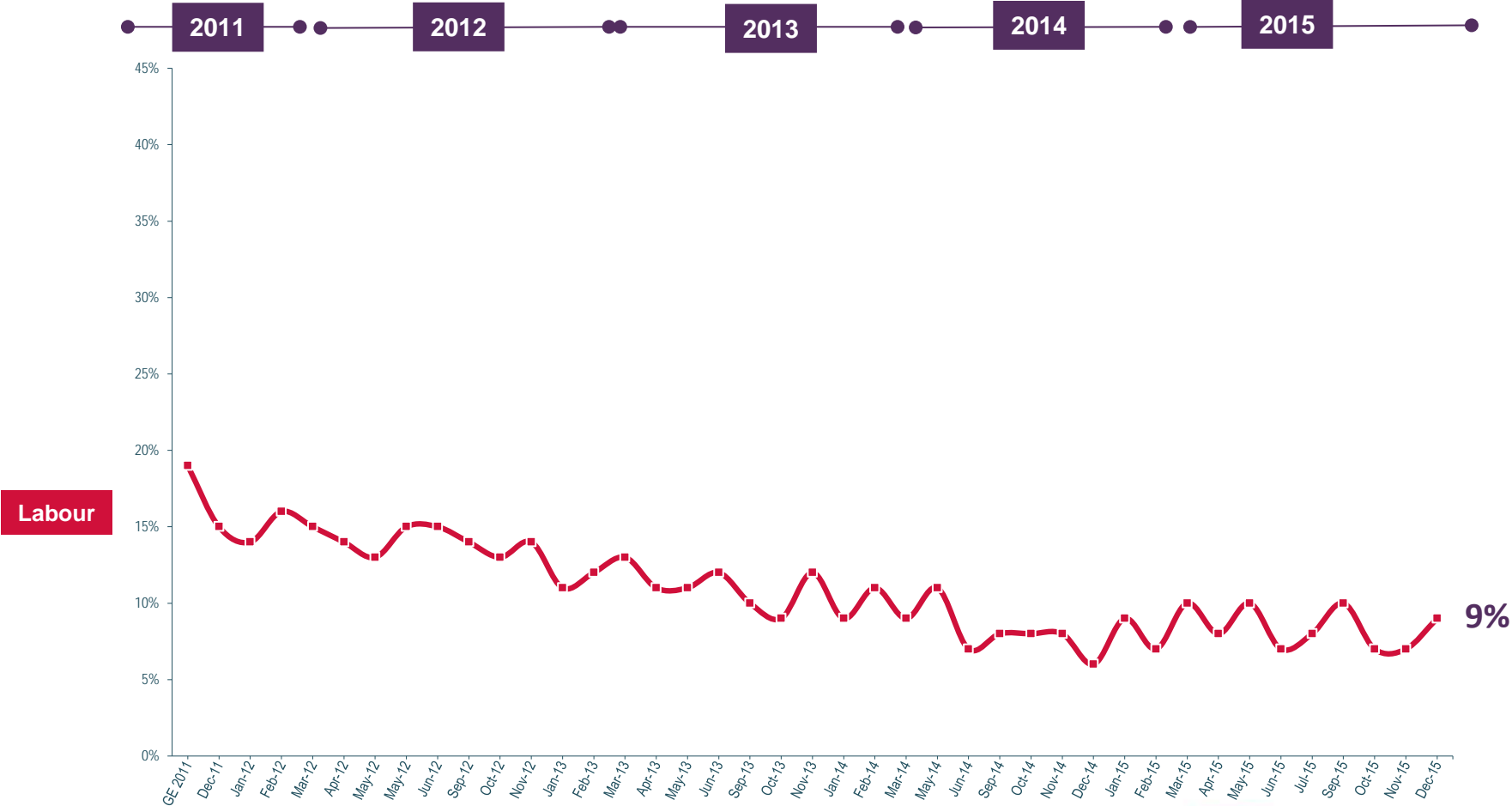
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2011 to 2015 – Labour

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

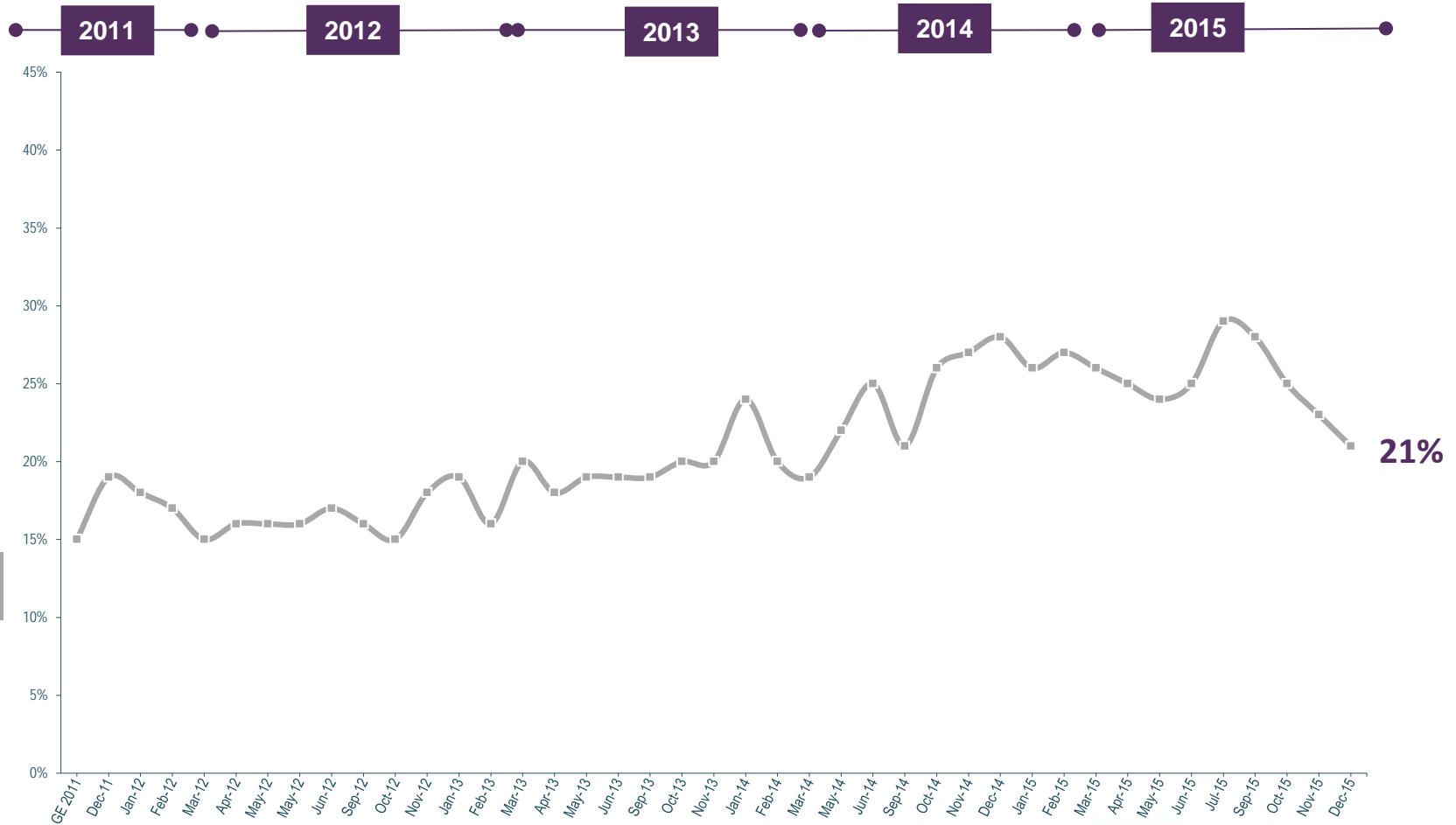
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2011 to 2015 – Independents/Other

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

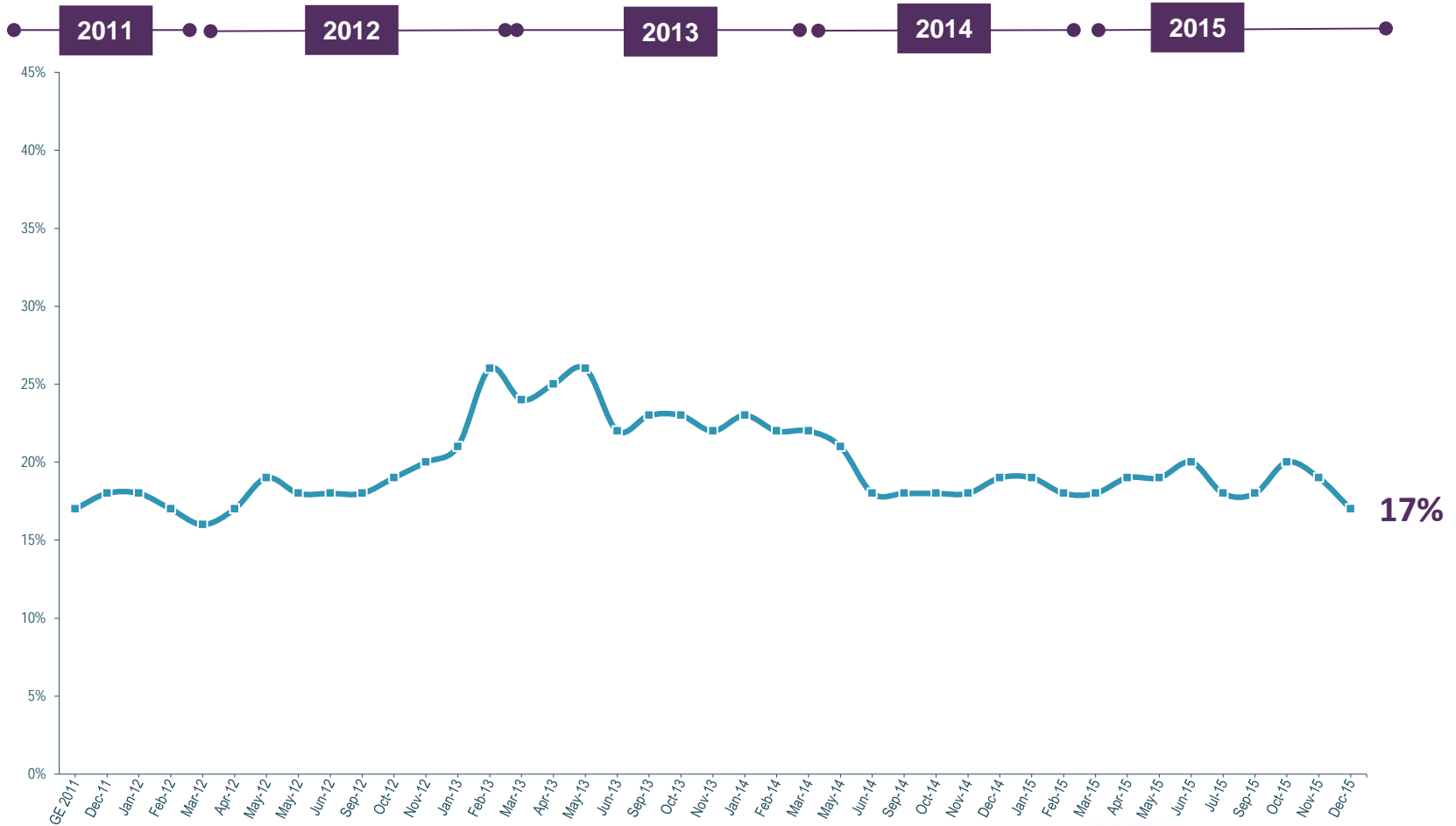
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2011 to 2015 – Fianna Fáil

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

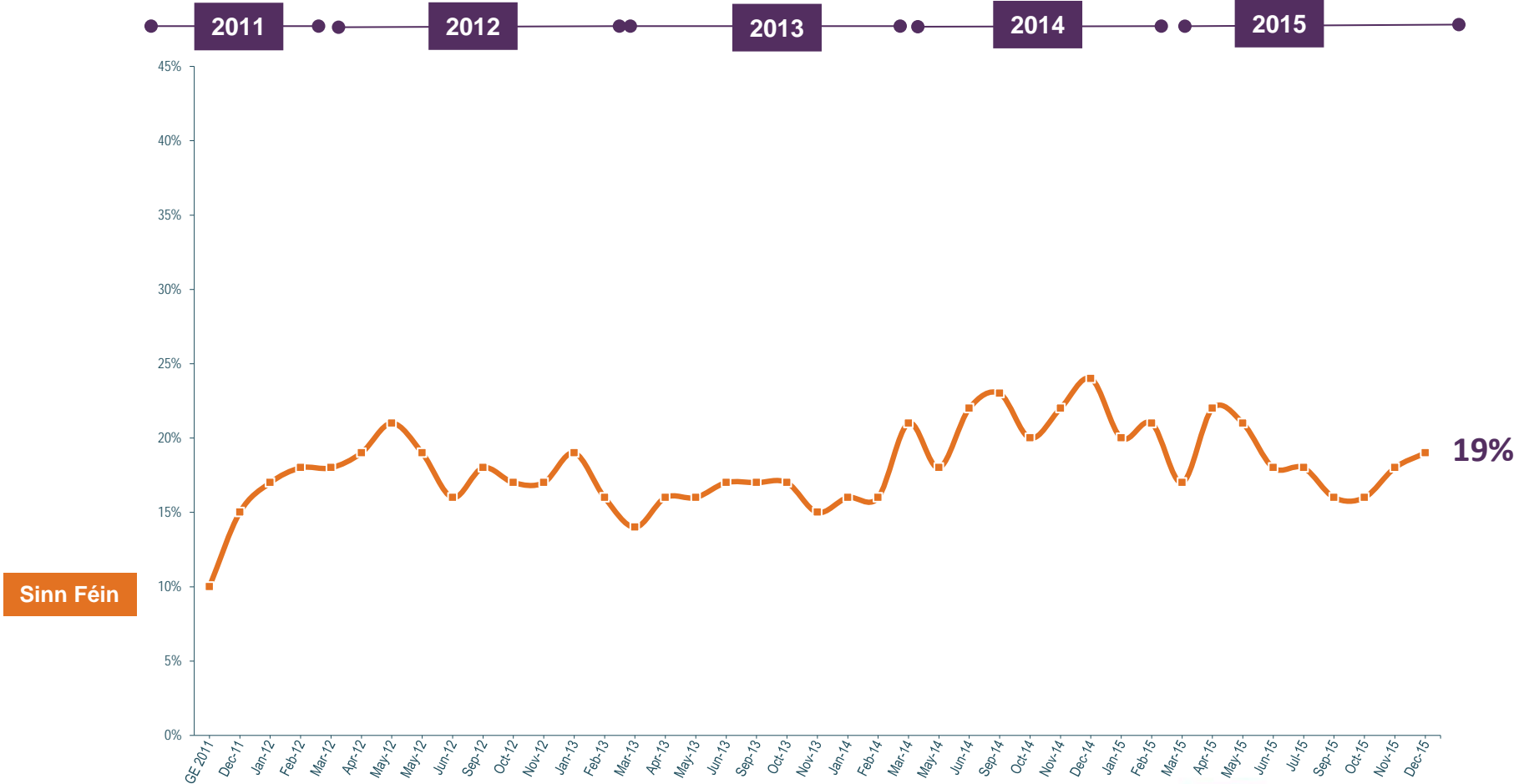
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2011 to 2015 – Sinn Féin

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2011 to 2015 – Green Party

If the general election was tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote to? (Past vote weighted)

(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)

