



General Election Opinion Poll

14th February 2016



Methodology and Weighting

- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1,008 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 8th – 11th February 2016.
- 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 8 to 10 are included as being those who will definitely go and vote.

(METHOD NOTE: After a review of findings of the UK polling enquiry, RED C has reviewed our approach to ensure we take account of any possibility of similar errors in Irish polling. Two issues were uncovered in UK, the first being internet polls not providing enough older voters and the second being too many politically interested younger voters. The older voter issue does not exist in Ireland. The key then is to ensure the younger people in our poll are representative and that we accurately predict their turnout. Having evaluated the voter profile of our likely voters vs. the two general election exit polls and post-election studies, we have made the decision to be more stringent in our likely voter analysis as this provides a profile more in line with those that have voted in the past. From today we will therefore move to only including those that say that they are very likely to vote (8-10) rather than likely to vote (4-10) used previously.)

- In all respects the poll was completed to the opinion polling guidelines set out by both ESOMAR and AIMRO.

Sinn Fein feeling the love, from core working class voters

Sinn Fein appear to be the party that have best got their message across in the first week of the GE16 campaign, resulting in a 3% rise in support that suggests a connection with some voters. These gains also need to be put into the context of the fact that many commentators believed their support would in fact fall, in the wake of possible links by association of the party to the gang shootings in Dublin.

The reality is that these shootings, despite claims that they were carried out by the CIRA, have not yet been proved to be directly linked to the organisation. It is also the case that the journalist who took the call from the CIRA, stated that the group wanted to be seen as “the protectors of the people”, and suggested that more drug dealers and criminals would be targeted. While many feel this is an outrageous stance, you can see how this fight against the drug criminals in Dublin may appeal to others.

In any case the shootings certainly do not appear to have damaged Sinn Fein by association among their core voters, where gains have been made that far offset any loss of support among those not happy with the links. The gains in support for the party are focused on more working class voters, and suggests a possible widening of a divide in vote behaviour by social class.

Support for Sinn Fein has increased by +7% among more working class voters, while falling back by -3% among those in more professional and clerical occupations. This makes Sinn Fein the largest party among those from more working class social backgrounds, securing 29% of the first preference vote. Conversely they fall well down among those in more professional and clerical occupations securing just 11% of the first preference vote.

This split of voting behaviour isn't new in Irish politics, but is certainly becoming more pronounced, and does suggest that the first week of campaigning has been successful in Sinn Fein further targeting this core group.

The second core group that Sinn Fein appear to have wooed for this Valentine's Day poll are mid aged male voters. In the past the Sinn Fein vote has been heavily dependent on young voters. This is particularly dangerous, as younger voters are far less likely to actually go and vote and also more likely to change their mind. The strong gains among more solid 35-54 year old men seen in this poll, suggests the vote we are seeing may not be as flaky.

So how likely is it that these gains can be retained and built upon? By looking at the combination of first and second preference support RED C build a model of total potential reach for all the parties. This analysis suggests that Sinn Fein haven't extended their total potential reach among all voters. What they have done is managed to persuade some of those voters that were originally only giving them a second preference, to move them up their preference list to first place.

Having said that, historically Sinn Fein have tended to lose support as the campaign progressed. This was mainly due to those younger and more unlikely voters either not voting or changing their minds. The strengthening of support in this campaign poll suggests we may be seeing a very different campaign impact for the party in General Election 2016. If Sinn Fein has had a real breakthrough in persuading more mid age group voters to give them a first preference, and this is replicated in the next and other polls, this may suggest a very strong performance come Election Day.

First Preference Vote Intention – 14th February 2016

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

28% -2

Labour

8% =

Fianna Fail

18% =

Sinn Fein

20% +3

Independent/
Other Party

26% -1

Undecided Voters

12% -4

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First Preference Vote Intention – 14th February 2016

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 (8-10)	Excluding Undecided	Prompting on Other Parties	2011 Election Results
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Fine Gael	26	24	25	28	28	36
Labour	7	7	7	8	8	19
Fianna Fáil	14	14	15	18	18	17
Sinn Féin	18	18	18	20	20	10
Independent candidates	15	16	17	20	16	13
Green Party	2	2	2	2	2	2
Renua	1	1	1	1	1	-
AAA-PBP	1	1	1	1	3	1 (socialist party)
Social Democrats	2	2	2	2	4	-
Workers Party	-	-	-	-	-	*
Other	*	*	*	*	*	1
Undecided	14	15	12	n/a	n/a	n/a

*Less than 1%



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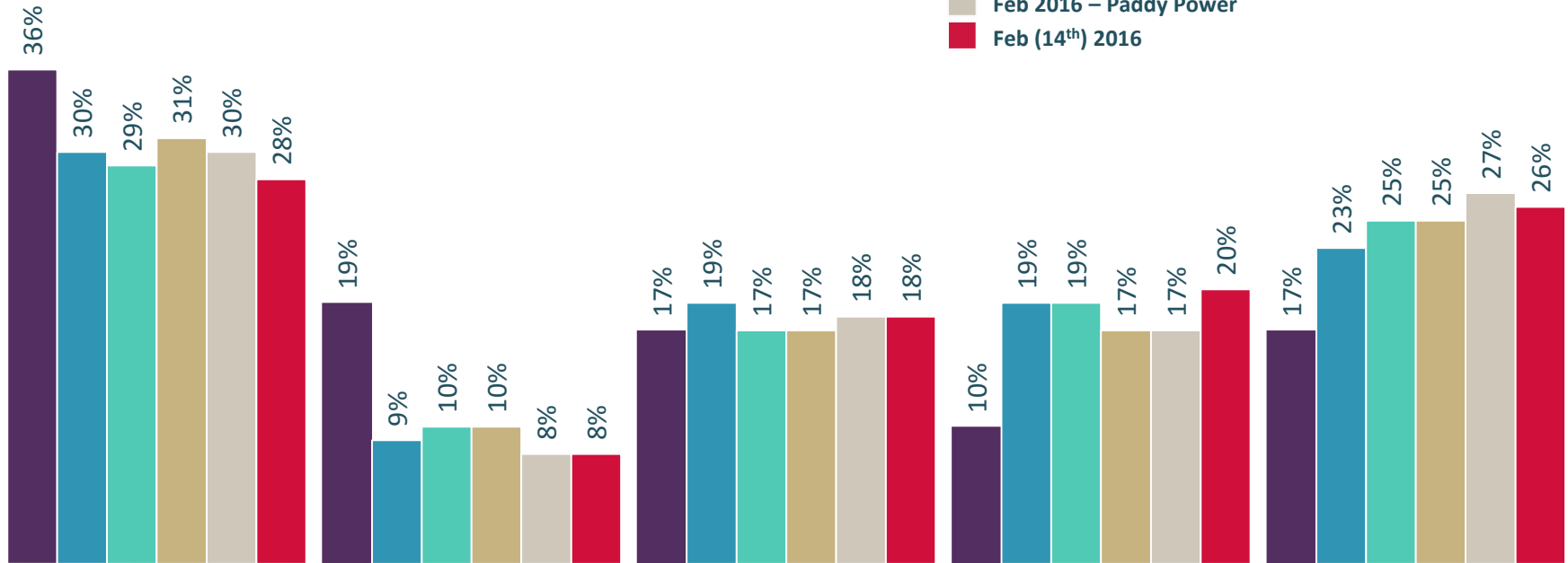
First Preference Vote Intention – Jan '16 – Feb '16

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)



- General election 2011
- Jan (17th) 2016
- Jan (31st) 2016
- Feb (7th) 2016
- Feb 2016 – Paddy Power
- Feb (14th) 2016



Fine Gael
28%

Labour
8%

Fianna Fail
18%

Sinn Fein
20%

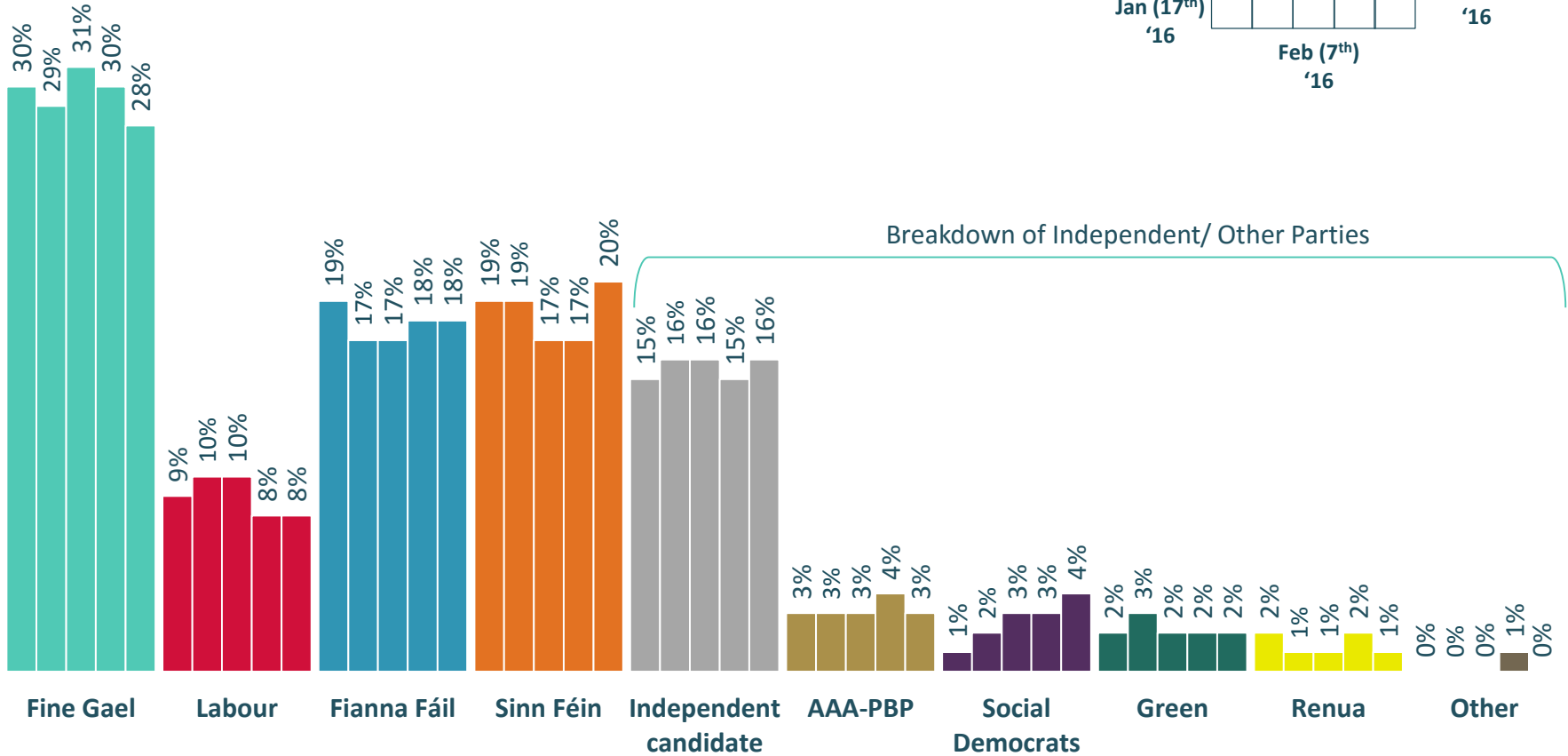
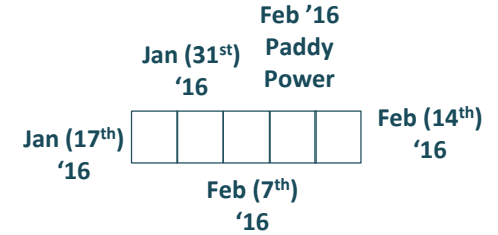
Independent/
Other Party
26%



First Preference Vote Intention – Jan '16 to Feb '16

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)



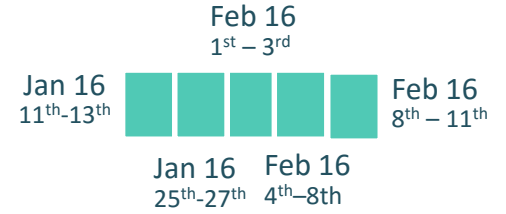
(Independent Alliance 3%)



Party Potential Support 1st/2nd Preference

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

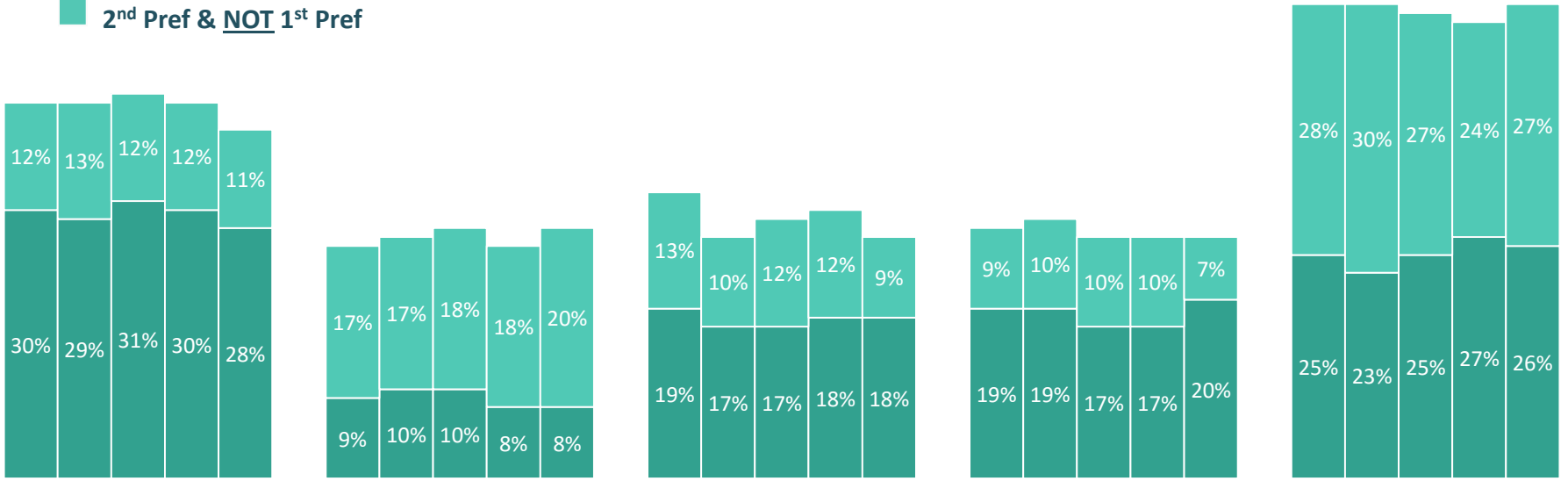
(Base: All adults 18+ who will vote)



■ 1st Preference
 ■ 2nd Pref & NOT 1st Pref

SECONDARY

PRIMARY



Fine Gael
39%
 (-3)

Labour
28%
 (+2)

Fianna Fail
27%
 (-3)

Sinn Fein
27%
 (=)

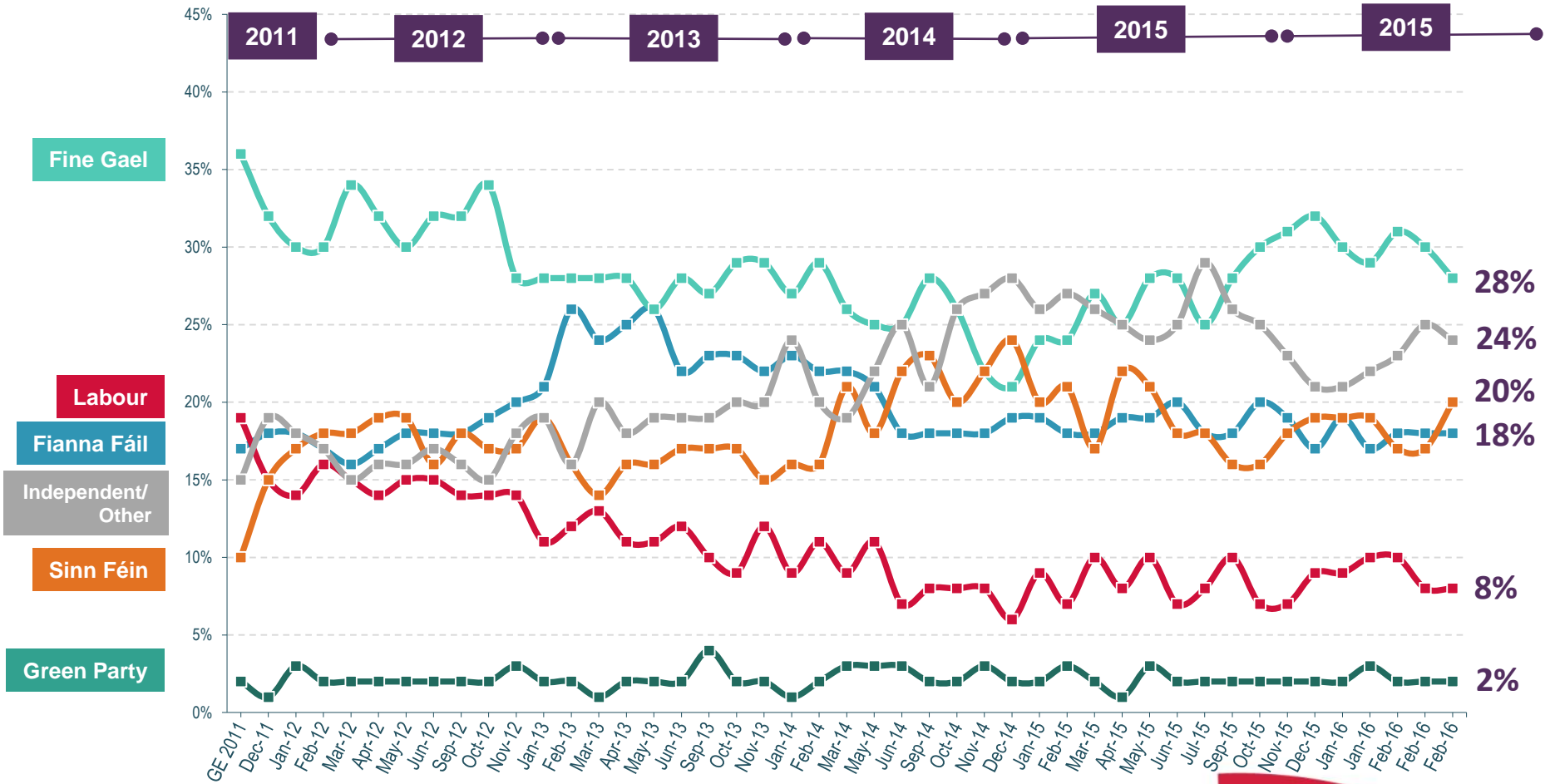
Independent/
 Other
53%
 (+2)



First Preference Vote Intention – 2011-2016

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 2016

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)

