Sunday Times
/Behaviour &
Attitudes

May 2015
Opinion Poll
1st – 11th May, 2015

Prepared for
THE SUNDAY TIMES

Prepared by Ian McShane
J.6535
Technical Appendix
The results of this opinion poll are based upon a representative sample of 927 eligible Irish voters aged 18 years +.

As such, the results can be deemed to be accurate to within plus or minus 3.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Fieldwork was conducted on an in-home, face-to-face basis over the period 1\textsuperscript{st} – 11\textsuperscript{th} May, 2015.

The sample was stratified across constituencies at 125 locations in the country with individuals selected for interview by way of Demographic Quotas (age, gender, socio-economic status) in line with Central Statistics Office (CSO) and market research industry population estimates.
The subsequent survey results are weighted to reflect the known demographic profile of Irish adults, utilising the most recently published census population estimates from the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

Party support levels are subsequently realigned in accordance with a technical adjustment factor, designed to smooth the effects of extreme highs and lows in support levels for individual parties as measured at a single point in time, and taking variable election day turnout levels into account.

All aspects of the survey, including the Party Support adjustment factor, are implemented in accordance with the technical and ethical guidelines set down by the Association of Irish Market Research Organisations (AIMRO) and the European Society of Opinion & Market Research (ESOMAR).
## Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Government and Party Leader Satisfaction Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Micheál Martin</th>
<th>Enda Kenny</th>
<th>Eamon/Gilmore Joan Burton</th>
<th>Gerry Adams</th>
<th>Eamon Ryan</th>
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<tr>
<td>12th Feb 2011 (f/w: 31st Jan - 12th Feb, 2011)</td>
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<td>24th Aug, 2011 (f/w: 16th - 24th Aug, 2011)</td>
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*Inclusion of Joan Burton as Tánaiste

** Face-to-face surveying employed

**Q.2** Would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the manner in which the Government is running the country?

**Q.3** Would you say you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the way (…..) is doing his/her job as (…….)?
## Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Core Party Support Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Fianna Fáil</th>
<th>Fine Gael</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Sinn Féin</th>
<th>Green Party</th>
<th>Independents/Others</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
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*Face-to-face surveying employed*

**Q.7** If there was a General Election tomorrow, to which party or independent candidate would you give your first preference vote?
Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Party Support Levels (Excluding Undecideds - Unadjusted)

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* Face-to-face surveying employed

Q.7 If there was a General Election tomorrow, to which party or independent candidate would you give your first preference vote?
Party Support Adjustment Factor: Technical Note

- Predicting election results on the basis of poll data is not an exact science. All the evidence shows that support for individual parties can swing dramatically in the period between elections—very often outside the bounds of historic election results.

- What to do in these circumstances? Most polling companies in Britain and Ireland publish their raw survey results as an index of fluctuations in the emotional mood of voters. They also build in an adjustment based on a number of factors. Where we have reports of how people voted in the last general election as well as how they intend to vote in the next one we can use these data to model the likely level of swing from the last election results.

- We then add back in the forecasts of voters who have not voted last time or do not answer that particular question.

- Finally we take into account each individual’s stated likelihood of voting in a forthcoming General Election.

- This is the basis of the adjusted voting forecast in Behaviour & Attitudes polls.
## Party Support Levels (Excluding Undecided - Adjusted)

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>19th Feb, 2014</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th Apr, 2014</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th May, 2014</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th Aug, 2014</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22nd Oct. (f/w: 14th - 22nd Oct. 2014)</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st Dec (f/w: 9th - 17th Dec 2014)</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th Mar (f/w: 2nd Mar - 11th Mar 2015)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Face-to-face surveying employed*

- **Adjusted figures based on:**
  - All who state they would definitely vote
  - Weighting of those respondents who give a definite answer as to who they would vote for in a general election and who they voted for in the last election, a quarter of the way between stated voting intention and the result of the last election.
  - Making no adjustment to stated voting intention of those who do not indicate how they voted in last election.

Q.7 If there was a General Election tomorrow, to which party or independent candidate would you give your first preference vote?
As you may know, two referendums will be held on 22nd May next. In one referendum, we will be asked to vote in favour of or against amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage. Will you be voting Yes, in favour of amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage, or No, against amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage.

On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is you understand it very well and 1 is you do not understand it at all, how well do you feel you understand what the same sex marriage referendum is about?
Likely Voting Intentions and Level of Understanding
- Amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland

**Voting Intention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>March 2015 %</th>
<th>May 2015 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, in favour of reducing age</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, opposed to reducing age</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level of understanding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>March 2015 %</th>
<th>May 2015 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand it very well</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand it quite well</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand it to some extent</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not understand it particularly well</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not understand it at all</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q.10 A referendum will also be held on May 22nd next whereby we will be asked to vote either in favour of, or against, amending the constitution to reduce from 35 to 21 the minimum age of candidacy for the office of President of Ireland. Are you likely to vote Yes, in favour of amending the constitution to reduce the minimum age of candidacy for President of Ireland from 35 to 21 years, or No, against amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland?

Q.11 On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is you understand it very well and 1 is you do not understand it at all, how well do you feel you understand what the Presidential Candidate Age Referendum is about?
## Likely voting intentions x Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>55+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td>Base:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>927</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base:</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base: %</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, in favour of same sex marriage</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, opposed to same sex marriage</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, in favour of reducing age</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, opposed to reducing age</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Q.8**

As you may know, two referendums will be held on 22nd May next. In one referendum, we will be asked to vote in favour of or against amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage. Will you be voting Yes, in favour of amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage, or No, against amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage.

**Q.10**

A referendum will also be held on May 22nd next whereby we will be asked to vote either in favour of, or against, amending the constitution to reduce from 35 to 21 the minimum age of candidacy for the office of President of Ireland. Are you likely to vote Yes, in favour of amending the constitution to reduce the minimum age of candidacy for President of Ireland from 35 to 21 years, or No, against amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland?
### Likely voting intentions x Party Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Base: All Eligible Voters</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Fianna Fail</th>
<th>Fine Gael</th>
<th>Labour</th>
<th>Green Party</th>
<th>Sinn Fein</th>
<th>Independent/ Others</th>
<th>Would not/ DK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>927</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, in favour of same sex marriage</th>
<th>No, opposed to same sex marriage</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td>63 (53)</td>
<td>26 (41)</td>
<td>11 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td>60 (69)</td>
<td>28 (18)</td>
<td>12 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Don’t know</strong></td>
<td>13 (13)</td>
<td>8 (8)</td>
<td>6 (6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, in favour of reducing age</th>
<th>No, opposed to reducing age</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td>33 (31)</td>
<td>58 (64)</td>
<td>9 (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
<td>24 (24)</td>
<td>68 (68)</td>
<td>8 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Don’t know</strong></td>
<td>23 (23)</td>
<td>73 (73)</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Q.8**

As you may know, two referendums will be held on 22nd May next. In one referendum, we will be asked to vote in favour of or against amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage. Will you be voting Yes, in favour of amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage, or No, against amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage.

**Q.10**

A referendum will also be held on May 22nd next whereby we will be asked to vote either in favour of, or against, amending the constitution to reduce from 35 to 21 the minimum age of candidacy for the office of President of Ireland. Are you likely to vote Yes, in favour of amending the constitution to reduce the minimum age of candidacy for President of Ireland from 35 to 21 years, or No, against amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland?
**How well do you understand the Referendum x Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18-34</td>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>55+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base:</td>
<td>927</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage**

- Understand it very well:
  - Male: 42
  - Female: 41
  - Age 18-34: 46
  - Age 35-54: 44
  - Age 55+: 35
  - Class ABC1: 43
  - Class C2DE: 41
  - Class F: 45
  - Region Dublin: 43
  - Region Leinster: 42
  - Region Munster: 49
  - Region Conn/Ulster: 31
  - Area Urban: 41
  - Area Rural: 43

- Understand it quite well:
  - Male: 31
  - Female: 32
  - Age 18-34: 30
  - Age 35-54: 32
  - Age 55+: 31
  - Class ABC1: 34
  - Class C2DE: 31
  - Class F: 15
  - Region Dublin: 35
  - Region Leinster: 33
  - Region Munster: 21
  - Region Conn/Ulster: 38
  - Area Urban: 35
  - Area Rural: 25

- Understand it to some extent:
  - Male: 21
  - Female: 22
  - Age 18-34: 21
  - Age 35-54: 18
  - Age 55+: 26
  - Class ABC1: 19
  - Class C2DE: 21
  - Class F: 36
  - Region Dublin: 18
  - Region Leinster: 21
  - Region Munster: 23
  - Region Conn/Ulster: 24
  - Area Urban: 18
  - Area Rural: 27

- Do not understand it particularly well:
  - Male: 4
  - Female: 3
  - Age 18-34: 5
  - Age 35-54: 2
  - Age 55+: 5
  - Class ABC1: 3
  - Class C2DE: 5
  - Class F: 4
  - Region Dublin: 4
  - Region Leinster: 3
  - Region Munster: 6
  - Region Conn/Ulster: 4
  - Area Urban: 5
  - Area Rural: 2

- Do not understand it at all:
  - Male: 1
  - Female: 2
  - Age 18-34: 2
  - Age 35-54: 0
  - Age 55+: 3
  - Class ABC1: 1
  - Class C2DE: 2
  - Class F: 1
  - Region Dublin: 0
  - Region Leinster: 1
  - Region Munster: 4
  - Region Conn/Ulster: 1
  - Area Urban: 1
  - Area Rural: 2

**Amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland**

- Understand it very well:
  - Male: 43
  - Female: 46
  - Age 18-34: 44
  - Age 35-54: 42
  - Age 55+: 42
  - Class ABC1: 46
  - Class C2DE: 41
  - Class F: 37
  - Region Dublin: 43
  - Region Leinster: 40
  - Region Munster: 50
  - Region Conn/Ulster: 35
  - Area Urban: 44
  - Area Rural: 40

- Understand it quite well:
  - Male: 30
  - Female: 27
  - Age 18-34: 33
  - Age 35-54: 27
  - Age 55+: 34
  - Class ABC1: 28
  - Class C2DE: 29
  - Class F: 23
  - Region Dublin: 18
  - Region Leinster: 21
  - Region Munster: 23
  - Region Conn/Ulster: 24
  - Area Urban: 36
  - Area Rural: 27

- Understand it to some extent:
  - Male: 21
  - Female: 22
  - Age 18-34: 22
  - Age 35-54: 18
  - Age 55+: 25
  - Class ABC1: 21
  - Class C2DE: 20
  - Class F: 33
  - Region Dublin: 18
  - Region Leinster: 21
  - Region Munster: 33
  - Region Conn/Ulster: 24
  - Area Urban: 19
  - Area Rural: 26

- Do not understand it particularly well:
  - Male: 5
  - Female: 4
  - Age 18-34: 5
  - Age 35-54: 5
  - Age 55+: 5
  - Class ABC1: 4
  - Class C2DE: 5
  - Class F: 5
  - Region Dublin: 5
  - Region Leinster: 4
  - Region Munster: 6
  - Region Conn/Ulster: 4
  - Area Urban: 5
  - Area Rural: 5

- Do not understand it at all:
  - Male: 1
  - Female: 2
  - Age 18-34: 2
  - Age 35-54: 0
  - Age 55+: 3
  - Class ABC1: 1
  - Class C2DE: 2
  - Class F: 1
  - Region Dublin: 0
  - Region Leinster: 1
  - Region Munster: 4
  - Region Conn/Ulster: 1
  - Area Urban: 1
  - Area Rural: 2

**Q.9** On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is you understand it very well and 1 is you do not understand it at all, how well do you feel you understand what the same sex marriage referendum is about?

**Q.11** On a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is you understand it very well and 1 is you do not understand it at all, how well do you feel you understand what the Presidential Candidate Age Referendum is about?
### Amending the constitution to allow for same sex marriage

**Base:** All Eligible Voters  
**Total:** 927  
**Party Support:**  
- Fianna Fail  
- Fine Gael  
- Labour  
- Green Party  
- Sinn Fein  
- Independent/Others  
- Would not/DK

#### Understand it very well
- Fianna Fail: 42%  
- Fine Gael: 40%  
- Labour: 47%  
- Green Party: 30%  
- Sinn Fein: 56%  
- Independent/Others: 55%  
- Would not/DK: 43%

#### Understand it quite well
- Fianna Fail: 31%  
- Fine Gael: 30%  
- Labour: 32%  
- Green Party: 42%  
- Sinn Fein: 34%  
- Independent/Others: 18%  
- Would not/DK: 31%

#### Understand it to some extent
- Fianna Fail: 21%  
- Fine Gael: 22%  
- Labour: 18%  
- Green Party: 23%  
- Sinn Fein: 4%  
- Independent/Others: 24%  
- Would not/DK: 21%

#### Do not understand it particularly well
- Fianna Fail: 4%  
- Fine Gael: 6%  
- Labour: 3%  
- Green Party: 1%  
- Sinn Fein: 6%  
- Independent/Others: 3%  
- Would not/DK: 5%

#### Do not understand it at all
- Fianna Fail: 1%  
- Fine Gael: 2%  
- Labour: 1%  
- Green Party: 3%  
- Sinn Fein: -  
- Independent/Others: -  
- Would not/DK: 0%

### Amending the constitution to allow for a reduction in age from 35 to 21 years for candidacy for the President of Ireland

**Base:** All Eligible Voters  
**Total:** 927  
**Party Support:**  
- Fianna Fail  
- Fine Gael  
- Labour  
- Green Party  
- Sinn Fein  
- Independent/Others  
- Would not/DK

#### Understand it very well
- Fianna Fail: 43%  
- Fine Gael: 44%  
- Labour: 50%  
- Green Party: 41%  
- Sinn Fein: 45%  
- Independent/Others: 49%  
- Would not/DK: 46%

#### Understand it quite well
- Fianna Fail: 30%  
- Fine Gael: 30%  
- Labour: 28%  
- Green Party: 34%  
- Sinn Fein: 36%  
- Independent/Others: 22%  
- Would not/DK: 34%

#### Understand it to some extent
- Fianna Fail: 21%  
- Fine Gael: 21%  
- Labour: 19%  
- Green Party: 22%  
- Sinn Fein: 8%  
- Independent/Others: 22%  
- Would not/DK: 16%

#### Do not understand it particularly well
- Fianna Fail: 5%  
- Fine Gael: 2%  
- Labour: 2%  
- Green Party: 2%  
- Sinn Fein: 10%  
- Independent/Others: 3%  
- Would not/DK: 4%

#### Do not understand it at all
- Fianna Fail: 1%  
- Fine Gael: 3%  
- Labour: -  
- Green Party: 1%  
- Sinn Fein: -  
- Independent/Others: 4%  
- Would not/DK: 0%
Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes  Opinion Poll Series

Background

Fieldwork for today’s poll was conducted over the period 1\textsuperscript{st} – 11\textsuperscript{th} May last. As such, this might be described as the last Sunday Times/Behaviour & Attitudes Poll before the Summer “Silly Season”, during which voters typically become even more disengaged from the political process than usual.

From the Government’s perspective, the last number of weeks has been somewhat mixed. From a negative perspective, problems with the HSE continue unabated as a series of scandals and enquiries are revealed and announced.

There has arguably been more good news than bad for the Government of late, however, with Finance Minister, Michael Noonan, making positive noises about likely tax reductions in the end of year budget, perhaps even stretching to a cut in the hated Universal Social Charge.

As fieldwork for today’s poll ended, talks on public pay restoration had literally just begun, following a period of eight years during which the public pay bill had either been reduced or remained static.
Background

Much has been made of a tightening in support for the same sex marriage referendum in recent weeks, and the negative impact a rejection of the proposal would have on Fine Gael in particular.

While the vote is certainly tightening, it is hard to see how it will be rejected outright, regardless of how low the turnout is or indeed how large the so-called “Silent No” constituency is.

Against this reasonably positive backdrop, commentary is now beginning to turn to the possibility of the Government cutting and running to a General Election this Autumn instead of running its full term, perhaps preceded by a mini-budget in advance, with a view to capitalising on the ever-improving economic climate.

This may not be as absurd a notion as it seems, with the last-minute surge in support for the Conservative Party in the UK proof positive that it could in fact work for the Government parties here.
Background

Indeed, based on the results of today’s Poll, a relatively modest improvement in support for Fine Gael and Labour could produce enough seats in a general election scenario for the formation of a Rainbow Coalition of Fine Gael, Labour and the Green Party.

From an opposition party perspective, one of the great imponderables over the last number of years has been Fianna Fáil’s Opinion Poll figure, which has remained stubbornly rooted at in or around 18% - essentially the same share of vote it achieved in the last General Election.

At the time of writing, Bobby Aylward remains favourite to win the Carlow/Kilkenny By-Election on May the 22nd next. There have, however, been low-level rumblings to the effect that Fine Gael’s David Fitzgerald could possibly retain that party’s seat on the day.

Anything short of a Fianna Fáil victory in that election would undoubtedly reignite Fianna Fáil party debate around the leadership question, potentially precipitating a full blown leadership heave.
Party Support and Leader Satisfaction Levels

Our last poll in March registered significant jumps in satisfaction with the Government, Enda Kenny as Taoiseach, and Joan Burton as Tánaiste.

These increases coincided with an uplift in support for both Fine Gael and Labour, and corresponding declines for Sinn Féin and Independents.

In today’s poll, levels of satisfaction with the Government, and with the leaders of practically all of the main political parties, have settled back to their December 2014 levels with the exception of Micheál Martin as leader of Fianna Fáil whose personal satisfaction rating has dipped to 35% - its lowest in almost three years.

At a macro-level, it has been a feature of the last three consecutive polls that little has separated any of the party leaders in terms of their personal satisfaction ratings, with all of them registering in the mid to high 30s.

This is hardly a ringing endorsement of the type of political leadership currently on offer in the country, and is undoubtedly indicative of a broader sense of discontent and malaise with the body politic in general.

As suggested in our background commentary, the Government parties will be reasonably pleased with the results of today’s poll, which suggest that the uplift in support experienced eight weeks ago has maintained.
Party Support and Leader Satisfaction Levels

Thus, Fine Gael at 27% support and Labour at 8%, while a long way off their last General Election result, command a solid 35% of popular support – certainly enough to build upon over the coming months, although not yet enough, of course, to form a Government.

With regard to the opposition, Fianna Fáil remains stuck on 17%, and its support is particularly low amongst the more well to do ABC1 professional and white collar workers, as well as in the Dublin and Munster regions.

As is normally the case, Sinn Féin support peaks at 30% amongst 18-34 year olds, and at 26% within the C2DE blue collar working section of the Electorate.

Meanwhile, Independent candidate support has registered at an average of 26% over the last four Behaviour & Attitudes Polls, and there is now little doubt that at least 30 such candidates are likely to be returned to the next Dáil, representing a disparate cross-section of economic and social viewpoints.

In truth, we are no closer as we reach the mid-point of 2015 to predicting the likely make-up of the next Irish coalition, with the outcome well and truly all to play for.
Same Sex Marriage & Presidential Age Referenda

In our last poll conducted in March it was flagged that the Presidential Candidate age Referendum was in serious danger of being defeated.

At that stage, while a bare majority (57%) of 18-34 year olds supported reducing the age of presidential candidates from 35 to 21 years, 55% of the total electorate were opposed to it – more so as respondents progressed up the age spectrum.

Today’s poll has produced very similar results, albeit with the proportion opposed to reducing presidential candidates’ age increasing marginally to 58%. Significantly, however, the percentage in favour of an age reduction has reduced from 40% to just 33% of all voters, as the “Don’t Knows” also increase four percentage points.

It is still the case that those aged 35 years plus are overwhelmingly opposed to this constitutional change, and it appears almost certain to be defeated at the ballot box next Friday the 22nd of May.

By far the most hotly debated of the two referenda has of course been “The Same Sex Marriage” one. As discussed at the outset of this commentary, the general consensus has been that opposition to a constitutional amendment in favour of same sex marriage has been growing over the last few weeks as the campaign has gained traction, and that the outcome of that referendum is likely to be a lot closer than the polls have been indicating.
Same Sex Marriage & Presidential Age Referenda

The results of today’s survey certainly confirm a tightening of the vote, with the percentage in favour of a Yes vote declining from 73% to 63% over the last eight weeks, with a corresponding uplift of four percentage points for the No vote and six percentage points for the Undecideds.

Support for the amendment remains highest amongst younger (18-34 year olds) voters, at 79% support, and it is true that this is the cohort less likely to actually turn out and vote on the day.

It is also notable that significantly more 55 years plus voters are now indicating they will vote No (47%) than will vote Yes (39%).

Notwithstanding all of these dynamics, however, it is still our view that the Yes vote will prevail on the day, by a margin of at least 60:40.
Thank You