

The Millennial Dialogue Report

Ireland



methodology

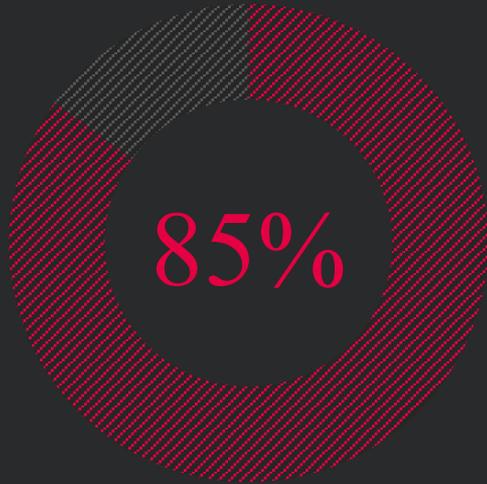
AudienceNet conducted an initial online survey amongst 1,001 15-34 year old Ireland residents and moderated a week-long, online dialogue with 40 Irish Millennials, segmented as follows: those very interested in politics; those fairly interested, not that interested and not at all interested.

The sample was recruited to be nationally representative of all Irish Millennials in terms of: age; geographical region; household income and educational attainment levels. The survey and online community were conducted in February 2016.

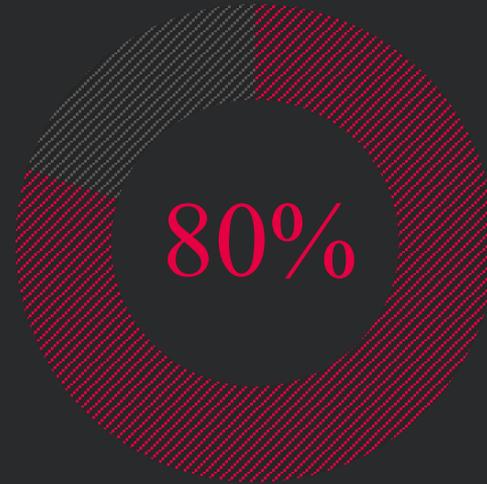
Interest & engagement with politics



Most young people in Ireland are happy and optimistic...

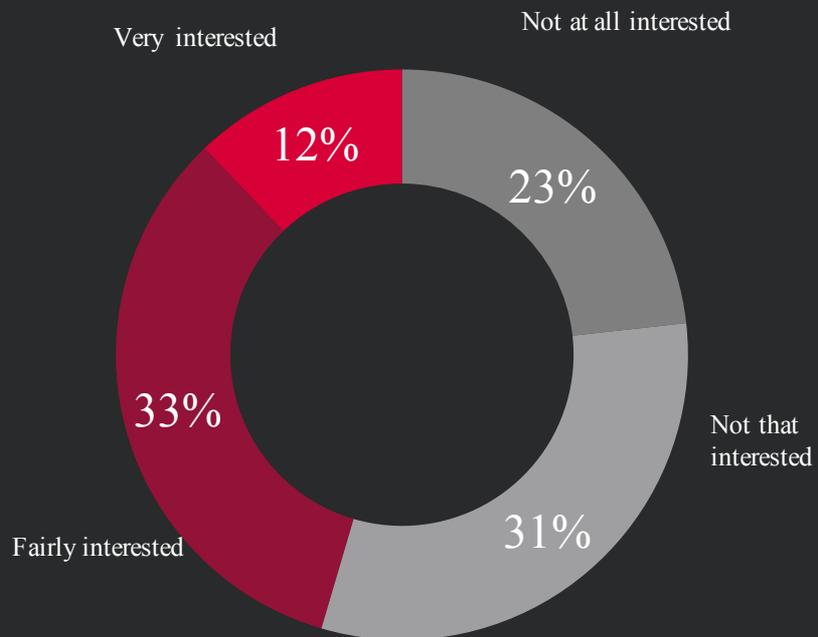


Are generally happy
with their lives



Are optimistic about
their future

...But interest in politics is low

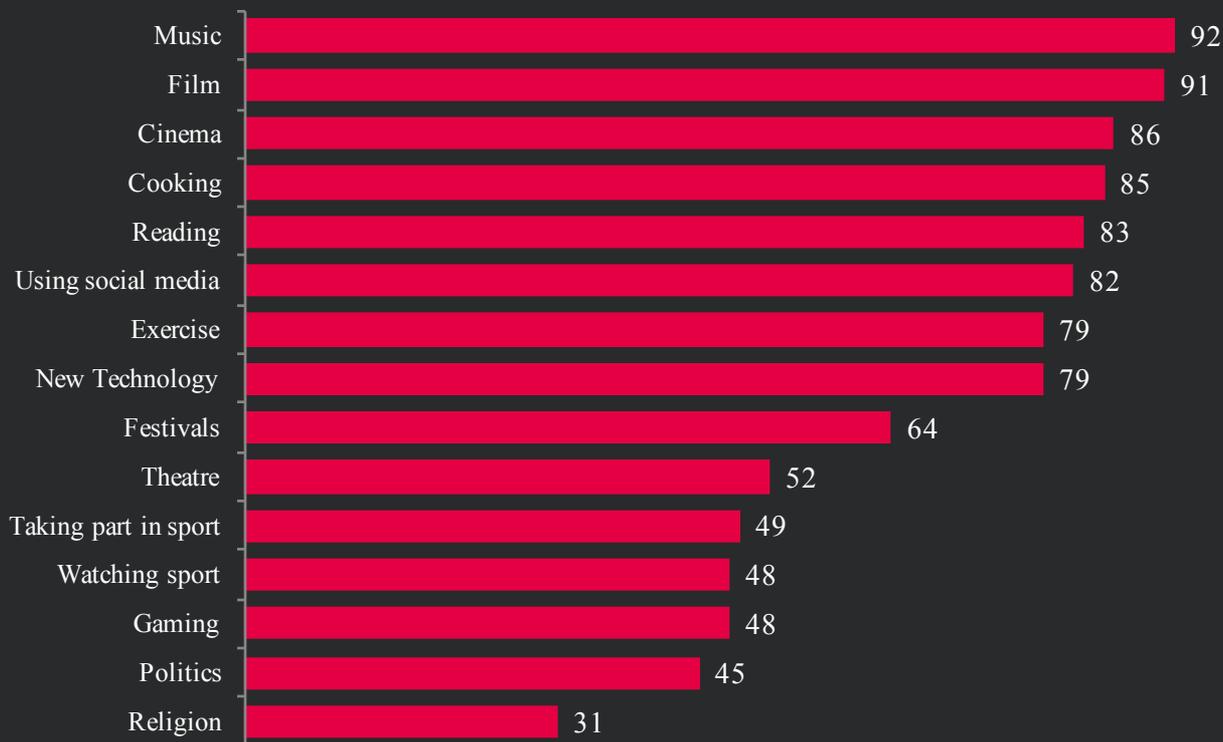


12%

said they were “very interested” in politics

Music & film top the list of interests

(Net %: very interested / fairly interested)



Taking an interest in politics is also not seen as being important

(Rank in order of importance)

1 Being in good health

2 Being happy

3 Being free to do and say what I want

4 Having leisure time

5 Helping others

6 Equality in society

7 Spending time with family

8 Spending time with friends

9 Making money

10 The well-being of society in general

11 Being successful

12 Having my voice heard

13 Contributing to society

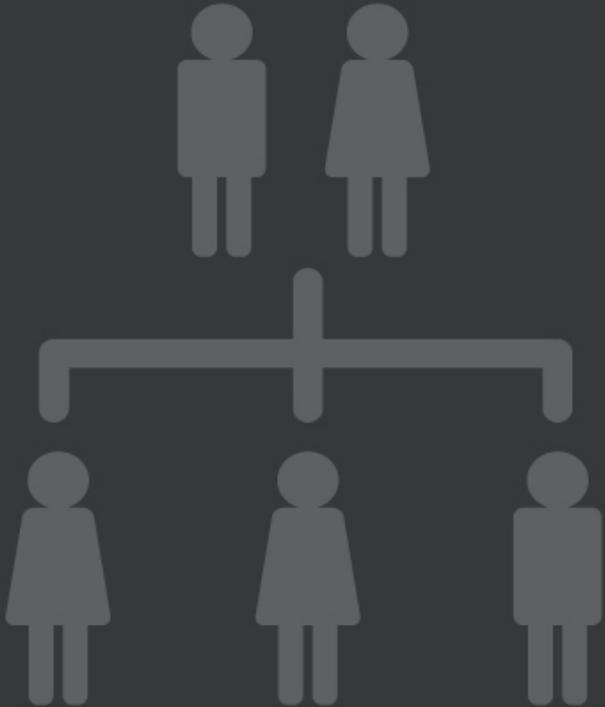
14 Taking an interest in music

15 Being connected to friends via social media

16 Being involved with my local community

17 Taking an interest in politics

Generation gap



54%

feel that their generation is less interested in politics than their parents' or grandparents' generation

18% think the reverse

Why are so few young people interested in politics?

When we asked why their generation was less interested in politics, the primary factors cited were that they felt they didn't know enough about politics or found the political jargon used unappealing.

“I don't actually know that much about politics and I think that's a real disadvantage. I am able to vote yet I really don't know anything about the different parties and what each of them stand for. I am interested in knowing who's running my country and I'm trying to find out more but it can be difficult getting the real information.”

“I find that I am not very interested in politics and I believe that this is mainly due to a lack of knowledge about it. If I had been taught politics in school, I feel that I would have more of an interest in it.”

“I am very intimidated by politics. Sometimes I don't understand the jargon or people get too overzealous when making their point. If the atmosphere were more relaxed and friendly maybe people would not be scared off by it. Also if politicians were more accessible and involved with the community we could have a chance to meet with them and get to know them better.”

“I am interested in politics but it's difficult to be. As a young person I think it's very hard to relate to many politicians as they are all from the generation before us or even two generations before us. In school we rarely had many discussion about politics in Ireland other than in history class which very few students took. My mam isn't very interested in politics, she does vote but half the time she doesn't really understand what she's voting for.”

Why are so few young people interested in politics? (Cont.)

Others argued that politicians made it difficult to understand how politics affects their life and had other things they would rather spend their time on.

“Politics would not be a thing I'm very interested in. Yes, sometimes I like to find out the issues in politics, their ideas and outcomes, but it's not a thing I am passionate about. I feel like most young people are more concerned about their life and their 'drama' and 'gossip' than actual issues in their country, because most things probably don't affect their life directly. Other young people may just have a hate or dislike for long talks and speeches, which politics are most known for and find it plain boring.”

“I don't have a huge interest in politics but I feel some of my peers and younger people in general are more interested in politics as the issues today are more relevant to young people such as job creation, lack of housing and childcare as the country is in such a mess I feel young people are turning to politicians more for help.”

“I think young people lack interest because the topics raised in politics seem out of touch or too in the distant future. I think the representatives are of a different generation. When issues are raised that are of actual interest to younger people it is evident that they will take great interest and show their passion, as was seen in the Equality vote, but for the most part the issues that are supposedly 'aimed at young people' like education just seem untouchable and unrealistic to younger people so they grow frustrated and sick of caring anymore.”

Taking part

5% said that they have attended a political meeting compared to 12% who said that they have taken part in a protest/demonstration

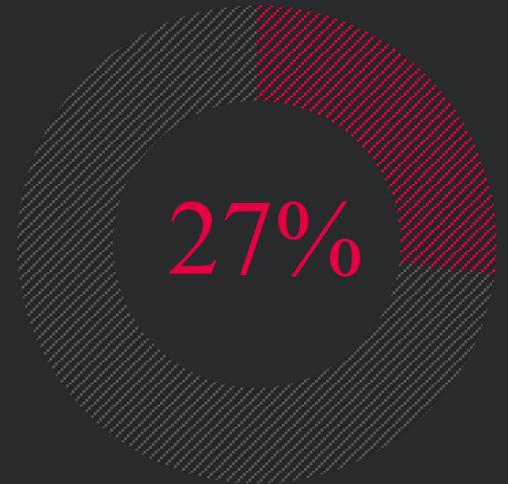
5%

Take part in
political meetings

12%

Take part in
protests/demonstrations

This compares to 13% who
take part in religious
meetings/events and...



who take part in team
sports



Politicians connecting with young people

18%

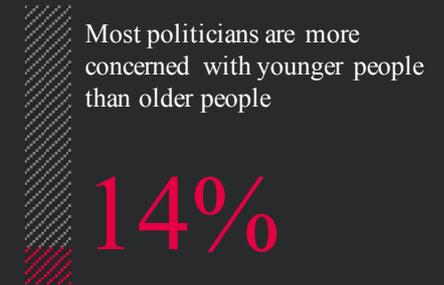
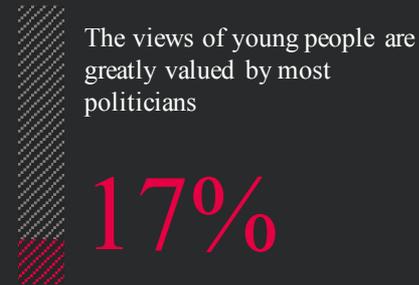
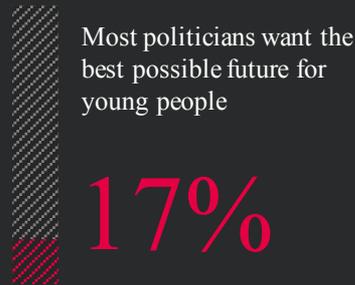
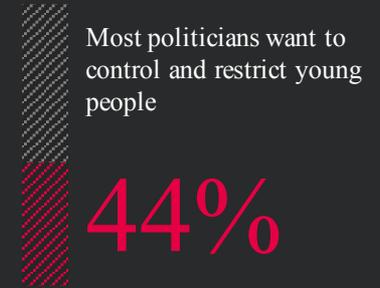
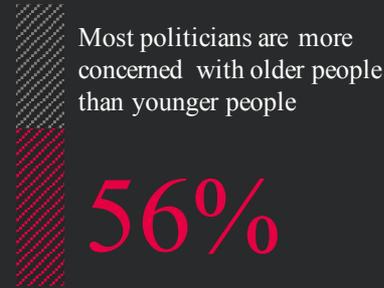
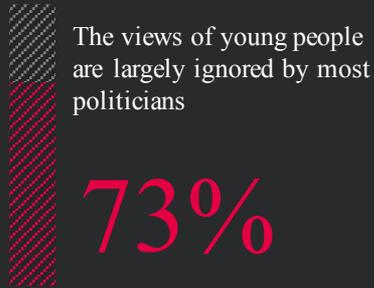
felt confident that they and their peers
could make themselves heard

50%

think very few, if any, politicians
encourage young people to get
involved in politics

% agreeing with statements

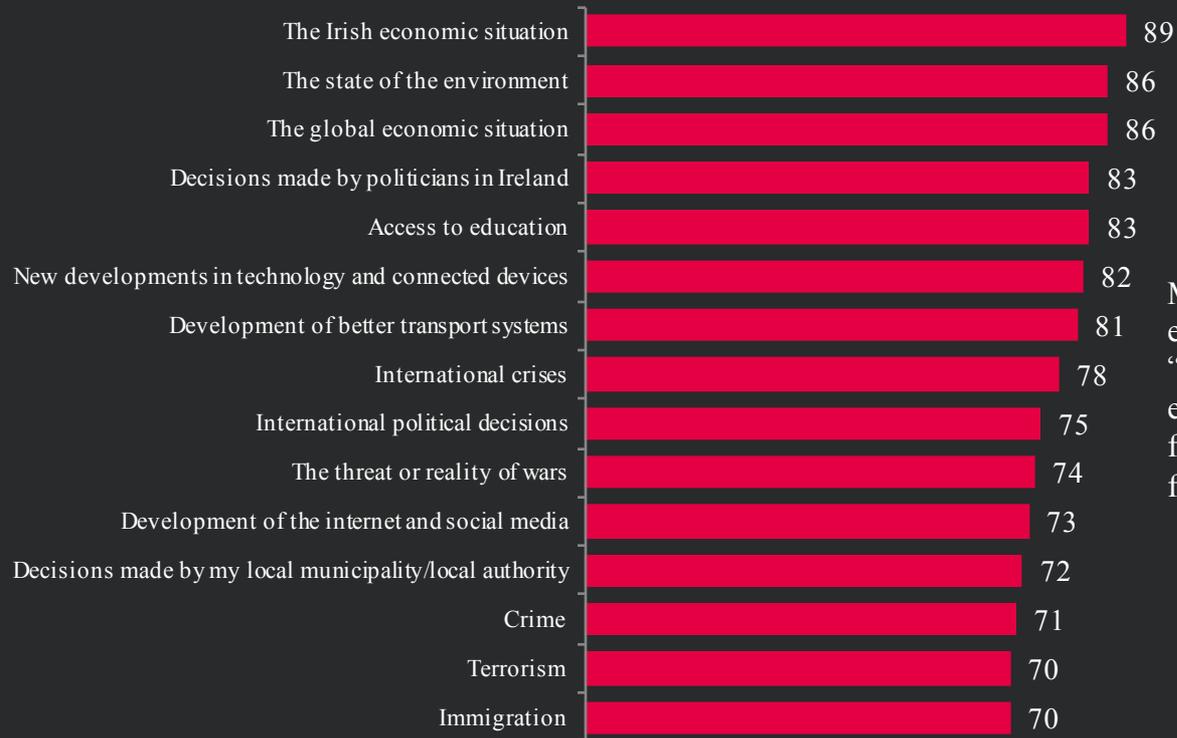
73% of Irish millennials think that politicians ignore the views of young people.



Looking to the future...

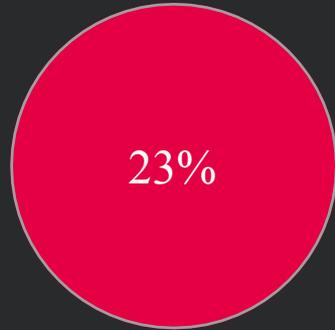


Factors affecting future quality of life ('Very big effect' or 'some effect' %)



Millennials think “the Irish economic situation” and “the state of the environment” will be the top factor influencing their future quality of life.

What would they rather be?



Business Owner
or Founder



Research
Scientist



Sportsperson



Doctor



Writer



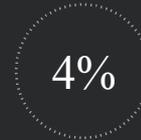
Musician



Famous
Celebrity



Academic



Lawyer



Politician



Religious
Leader

Time Travel Activity | **their own future**

We asked the participants to imagine that they could travel 20-30 years in to the future and describe what they think their lives will be like, some contemplated leaving Ireland, but most hoped to settle down with a good job and a family.

“I imagine that I will be married with a child or two and living in a beautiful house. I hope to be in the same type of role in work. but maybe a manager, or in a higher position and possibly in a different company.”

“Hopefully in 20 - 30 years my life will be much better than now, more stable, more settled. I will definitely be living in Ireland, probably in the beautiful city of Galway or somewhere in the countryside.”

“ in 20-30 years I will be between 38-48. I'll hopefully be in a job I enjoy and will have a family. To be honest I'm not sure if I would still be in Ireland.”

“I'm not sure if I will still live in Ireland - I would like to travel so I may stay abroad for a while. I hope to be working and have a family of my own.”

“In 20-30 years I would like to be married and have a family. I would like to have gotten to manager level in my career. I don't think I'd like to be at director level as I think the strain and stress would be too much. I would like to live in my own home and have a lot of my mortgage paid off. I would like to live in the South east of Ireland, maybe Wexford/ Waterford/ Kilkenny. That's where I am originally from. I would like to have good relationships with my friends and family.”

Time Travel Activity | Ireland

When we asked what the country might be like in 20-30 years time, most people hoped Ireland would be more inclusive, technologically advanced and environmentally friendly. Not everyone was equally optimistic about Irelands future, some still thought emigration would be a big issue.

“I feel that the Irish as people have really changed a lot throughout the last few years so I would imagine Ireland being completely different in this length of time. One thing that stands out is that I think different cultures and genders will be way more widely accepted. People that currently read newspapers and magazines will be reading news digitally. Electronics like cars will be more fuel efficient and electric cars will be everywhere. Having food delivered to you by drones will be the only way food can be delivered. Maybe parcels will be delivered by drones too?... Who knows?!”

“I hope Ireland will be a richer country, with plenty of jobs and with more international companies set up in Ireland, providing more jobs and wealth to the country.”

“Ireland will have a new host of young families struggling and contemplating emigration. These will be the children that are growing up now that haven’t emigrated.”

“I think Ireland will be much the same. If anything I think it will become more liberal (not necessarily a bad thing). On an economic basis, I think the country will be doing OK. I don't think the country will ever go back to the level of prosperity that was present in the boom. That's a good thing because it was all artificial wealth. I think certain problems like homelessness will never be solved completely, because the root causes are so multifaceted and diverse. It might be nice to dream that we would live in a less materialistic society that was more focused on personal and societal happiness rather than the "rat race" and the drive towards private gain and profiteering.”

Time Travel Activity | Government

When we asked what the government might be like in 20-30 years time, many hoped the government would be more representative and more attentive to the needs of the Irish people. Most thought voting would be possible online.

“I think the government will be smarter and address any issues that the country is facing in a faster, more efficient approach. For example, there shouldn't be any homeless people on the streets, so I hope that the future government will prevent this from happening.”

“I cannot figure out what government we will have, but I would assume that people will take over as more and more people are getting frustrated with the corrupted political system. The elections will be conducted online and the polling stations will disappear.”

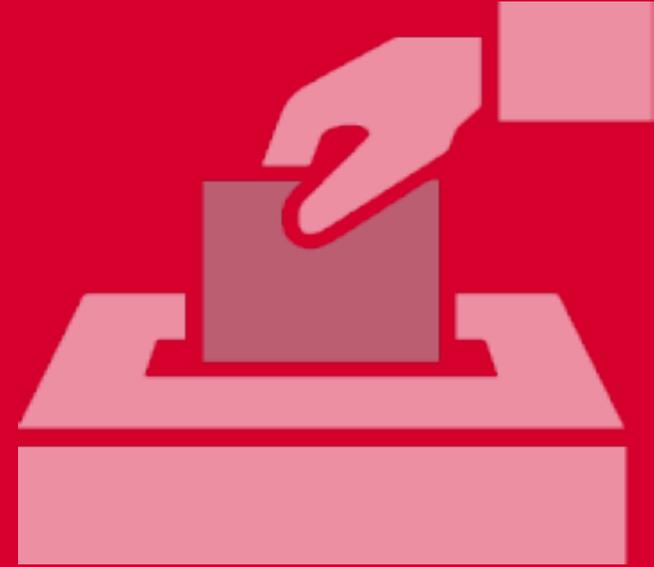
“The government will be trustworthy and efficient, they will finally listen to the people and will work for the people's interest. Thanks to the latest technology, everyone will be able to vote in the elections by using their Smart phones or computers.”

“I think that election process will be modernised to a level where people can vote online from their mobile devices or any other gadget that the future will offer :)”

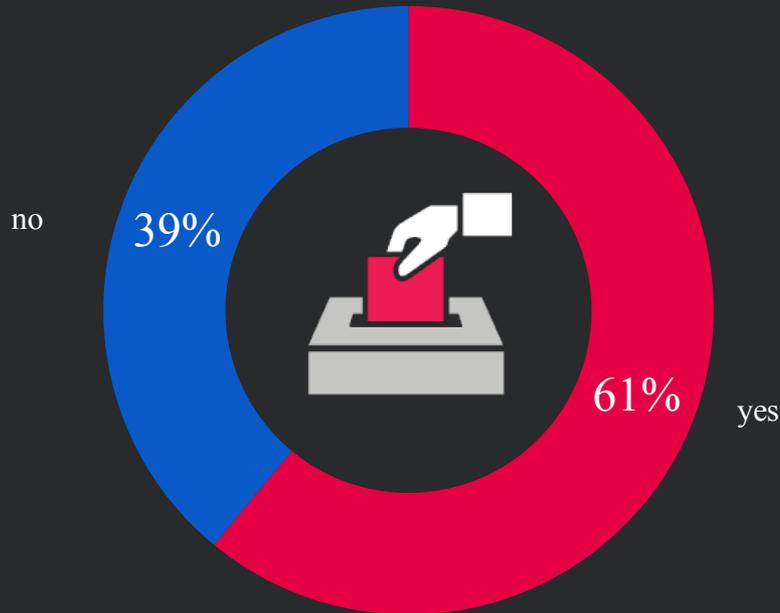
“Hopefully the government will have listened to the people by then and made changes in the systems. There might be more diversity in the government by then with gender equality and people of other ethnicities. Maybe voting can be done online now somehow..”

“The government will be relatively the same. I don't think it will change much unless someone will have the courage to implement radical change. .”

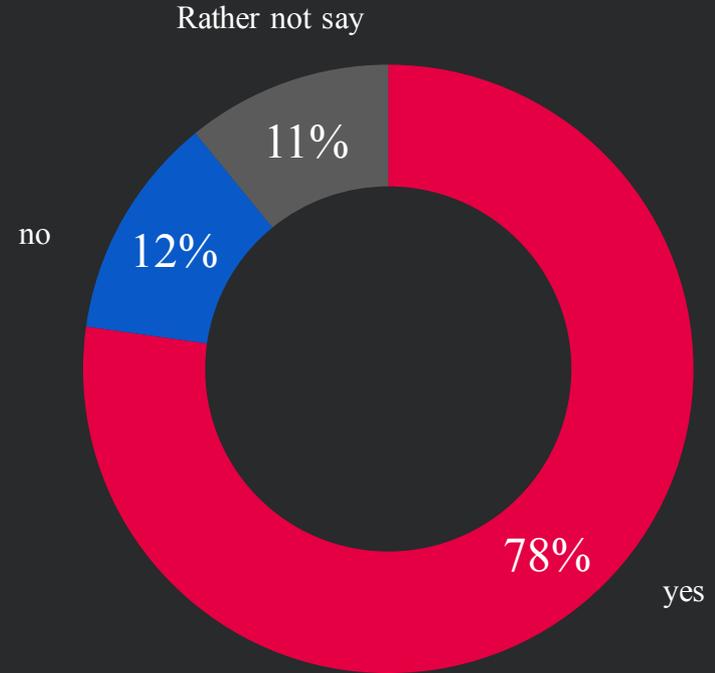
Voting



Did they vote in the 2015 referendum to provide equal rights to marriage for lgbt couples?

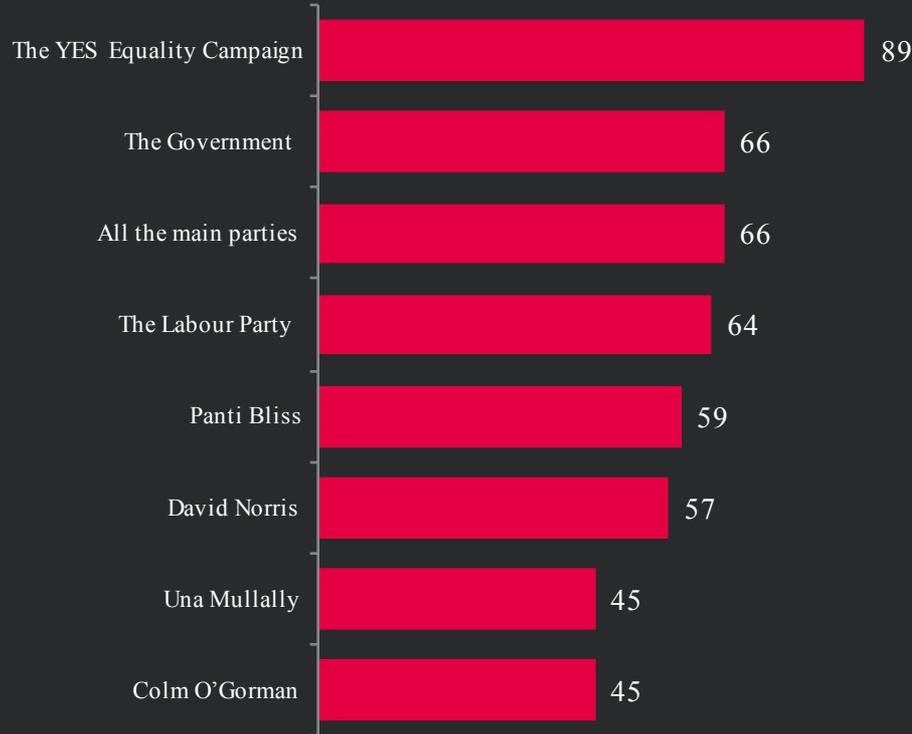


Were they happy with the outcome of the referendum?



Who deserves credit for getting the referendum passed?

(Deserve credit 'a great deal' / 'to some extent'%)



71%

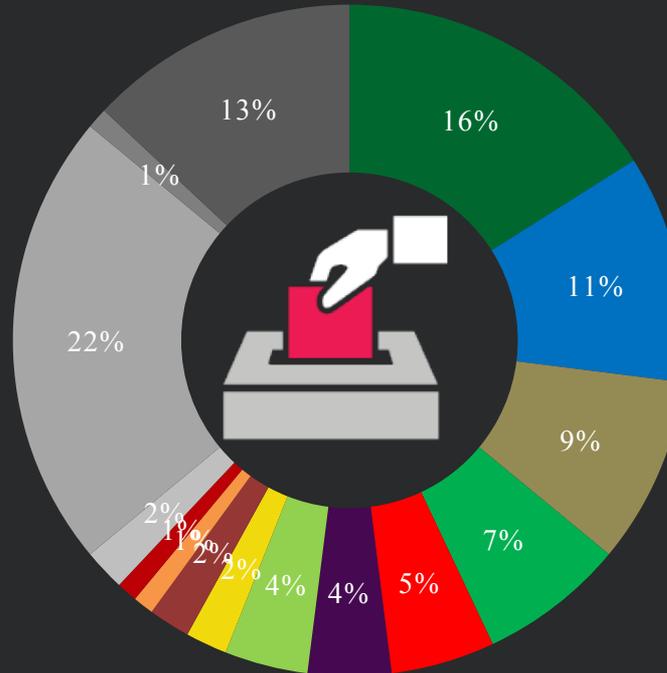
Said the Yes Equality Campaign deserved 'a great deal' of credit for getting the referendum passed

If there was an election tomorrow...

66%

Said that they would vote

...



- Sinn Féin
- Fine Gael
- I would vote for an independent candidate
- Fianna Fáil
- Labour Party
- Social Democrats
- Green Party
- Anti-Austerity Alliance – Socialist Party
- People Before Profit Alliance
- Renua Ireland
- Workers' Party
- Other (Please state)
- Don't know
- None of the above
- Not prepared to say

Deciding how to vote: election 2016

When we asked Irish millennials if they were going to vote and what motivated their decision, the majority of the community participants said they would vote. However, many were still undecided and said they were going to spend the election campaign period researching the different options.

“I will definitely be voting in the upcoming election but I want to find out more about each of the candidates in my local area and see what they are campaigning for and what they promise that they will do if elected. I take my parents votes into account as they would know and understand politics better than I would.”

“Yes I will vote because it is important that I have a say in who is running my country. I have no idea who I will vote for yet as I don't really know what everyone stands for etc. Past actions would affect my vote and family members vote would partly influence my vote as I trust my family opinion on politics”

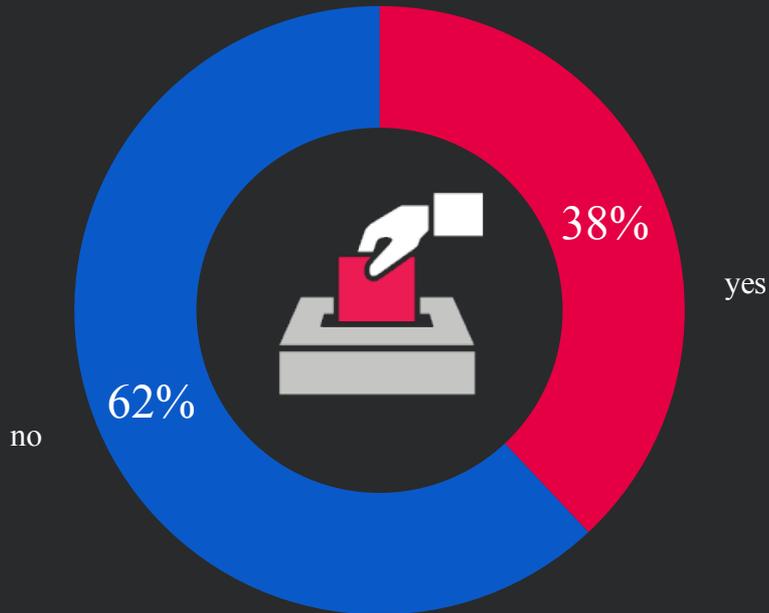
“I think young people are less likely to vote because they tend to be disenfranchised in general. They have a natural tendency to rebel in the establishment and feel like they want nothing to do with it. I think that leads to a high degree of apathy amongst young voters. They feel that their voice isn't heard - so they don't vote. its kind of a vicious circle really.”

“I will definitely be voting. I feel like I will be paying more attention to this election campaign than I have previously done as I am that bit older and feel like it is more relevant to me in terms of work, family, etc. I would focus more on the local candidate.”

“I haven't even registered to vote yet because I know so little about it. But I do feel past actions of candidate/ party would affect my vote”

“I don't really take into consideration how my parents/friends vote- my friends each have their own views and interests - though we do share some of them- and my mother is not all that informed on politics to my dismay, though my father is. I do consider the past actions of a party as it's a good indication of future behaviour- so I already know who I'm definitely not voting for. I haven't been back home for a while so I don't yet know much about the people in my area”

Have they changed voting preference since the last general election?



42%

Of 30-34 year olds
said they had changed
their voting
preference since the
last election

Key reasons for not wanting to vote

1

Lack of trust in politicians

2

They are not interested in politics

3

They don't think they know enough about politics

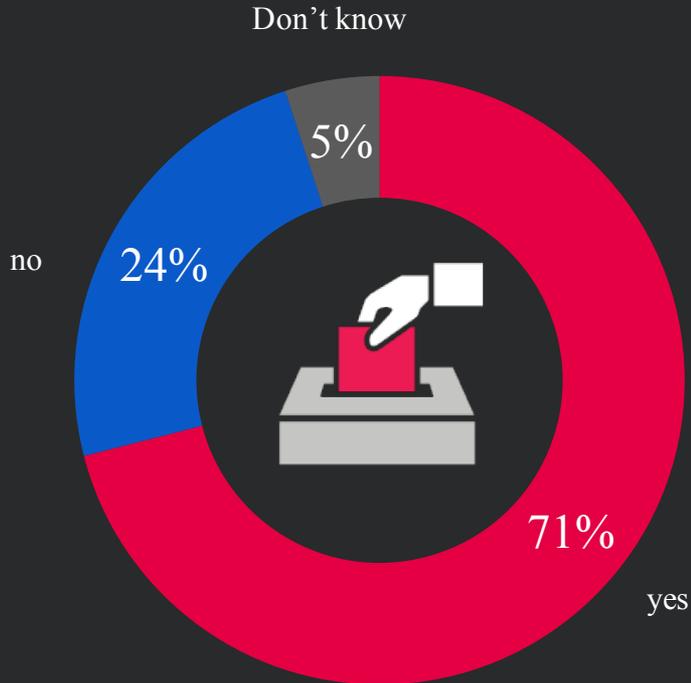
4

They think all politicians and parties are the same

5

They don't support the current political system

Are they currently registered to vote for the next election?



75%

Of 20-24 year olds
said they were
registered to vote

How did you register to vote?



76%

Said they registered to vote at the age of 18



Key factors that might encourage an interest in voting

#1

If I trusted politicians more

#2

If I could vote online

Why politicians aren't trusted

The main reason why politicians generally aren't trusted is not keeping promises, followed by young people feeling they couldn't relate to politicians and a few politicians creating a bad reputation for everyone else.

“I think politicians say what people want to hear, then when they win the elections they forget about everything, I'm not saying every single politician is not trustworthy, but it is the stereotype, so when a good politician comes with a good and different speech even when he is being honest, we say ‘oh no this is more of the same’.”

“I think that many young people don't trust politicians because most, if not all, politicians tend not to think much about young people. Despite the fact that the young people of Ireland are the future, most politicians seem to think more about adults, the elderly, and other issues facing the country.”

“I think that the challenge of trusting politicians is caused by several things. One of the biggest ones is the empty promises made by the same politicians over and over again.”

“I think young people don't trust politicians because they can't relate to them. They don't see a direct impact on their own personal life. Plus, all of the tribunals and scandals that Ireland has had down through the years have severely tarnished the image of politicians. There is also a lack of accountability for politicians. When people make big mistakes, they are rarely brought to task.”

Trustworthy politicians?

When asked to name a “relatively trustworthy” politician, only a handful of participants offered any suggestions. Irish millennials seemed to find it easier to trust American politicians, with Barack Obama and Bernie Sanders being mentioned several times.

“I don't think that there are any political representatives that I trust. A lot of them seem to be in for it for the money and will try to do a few good things and improve on some aspects of the country as a whole but there are none of them that I fully trust. A lot of them promise to do good things for the country but then those things do not happen.”

“I'm not too sure about any trustworthy national politician, but on an international level my pick would be the president of the USA - Barack Obama. I like the fact that he comes across as a caring and concerned person who doesn't pretend to be perfect. At the same time he can be strict and self-confident.”

“I would trust Joe Higgins, Clare Daly and people in the Socialist Party.”

“Paul Murphy can relate to younger people. He protested the water charges and ended up in court. He has also spoken out against corruption, elevated salaries, and the old boy's club mentality. If he stood for election in my area, I will gladly vote for him.”

Building Trust in politics

Ideas for how politicians could better connect with younger people and win their trust included telling the truth and keeping promises. Other threads of discussion included looking deeper into matters that affect young people and going out to schools to talk to young people.

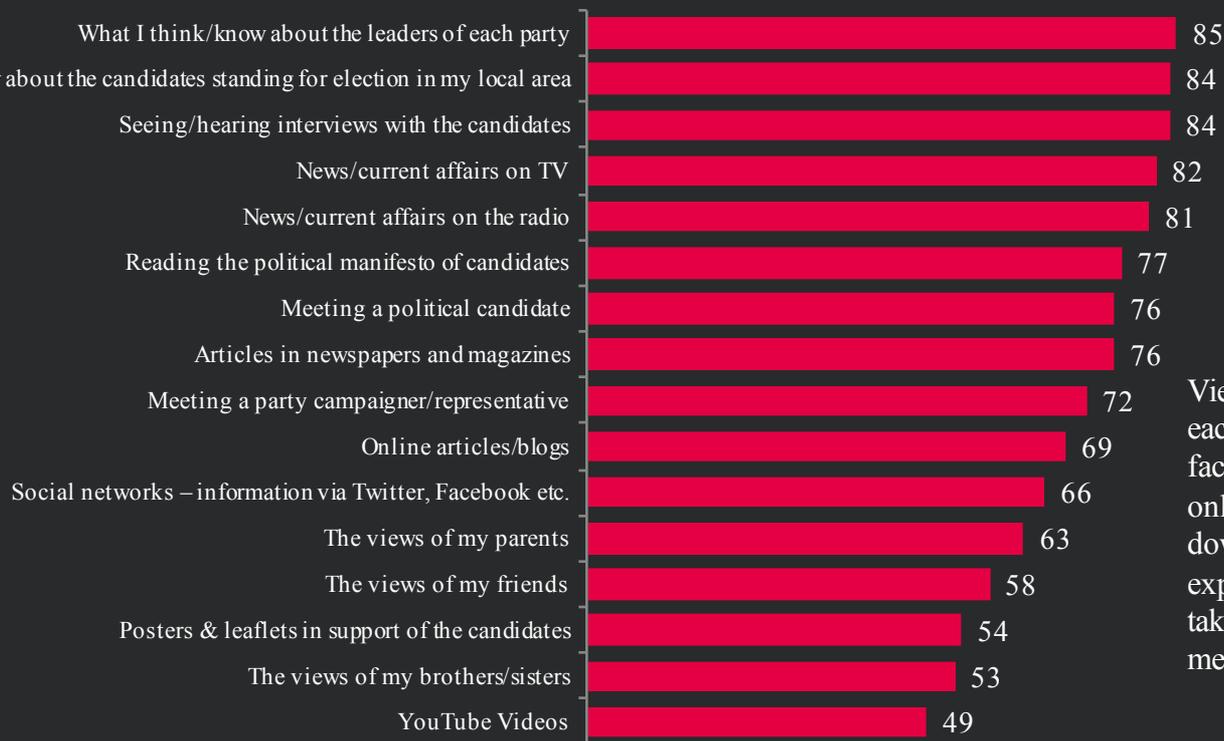
“They could gain trust by literally speaking frankly, cut out the bull and tell the truth. Hold their hands up when they are wrong, don't make promises when we know full well the money isn't their to back it up.”

“I think if politicians gave people realistic promises and actually fulfilled those promises there would be more trust .”

“I think if they showed interest or were more open minded instead of going over the same things year-in year-out then younger people may have more interest in their ideas. I think in this generation we are far more used to having things happening instantly, which never seems to happen in politics, so if younger people were made aware about updates about something that a politician said that they would work on, it might be of some use.”

“To gain trust, an idea might be for them to come into schools and tell the students about their party/group and ask the students what they want to see being done about the issues of Ireland. Seeing politicians actively taking an interest in young people and seeing what they want and following it through might change some peoples opinions of them.”

Factors contributing to voting decision (%NET 'Great Extent' or 'Some Extent')

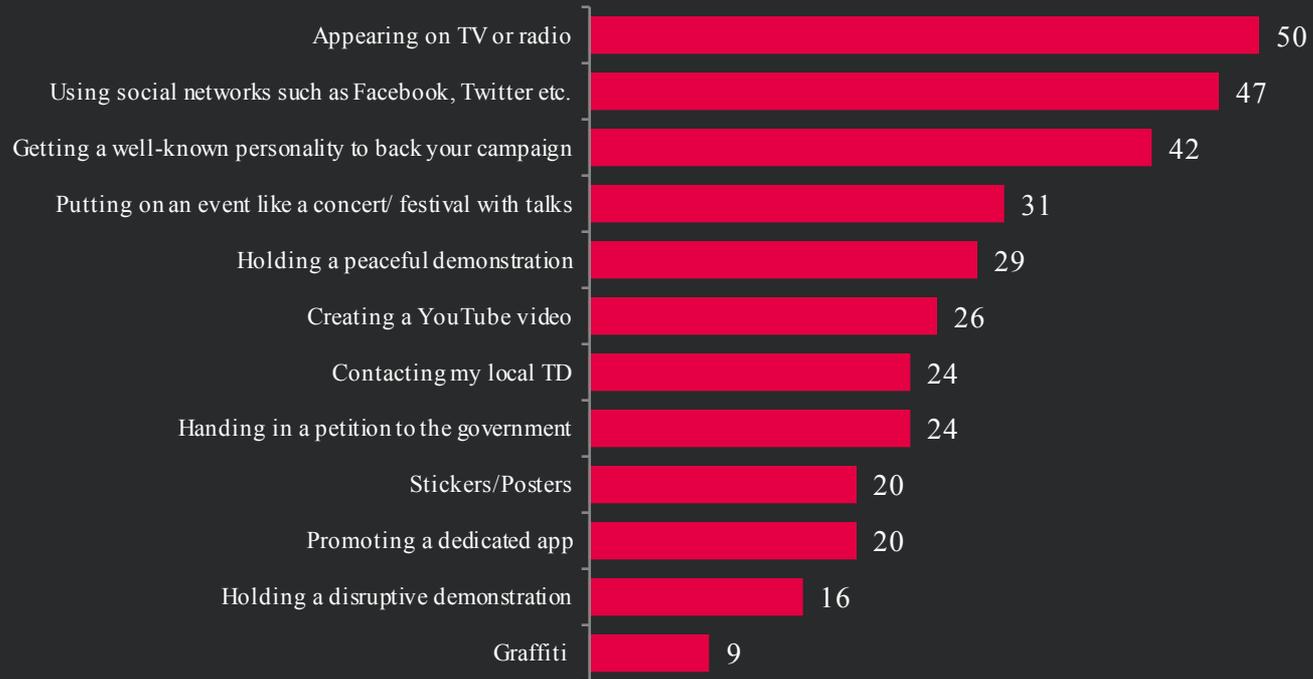


Views about the leaders of each party was seen as the key factor. Social media and other online factors were fairly low down the list as millennials expect the main campaigns to take place using traditional media (TV and radio)

Means they would use to start a political campaign

(‘extremely useful’ %)

If they were to start their own campaign, however, Irish millennials would be very likely to focus their efforts on social media



WHAT WOULD THEY DO DIFFERENTLY?

When we asked them to imagine that they were involved in creating a new political campaign, most people said they would focus on spreading the word via online channels. Other ideas included going out and talking to people face-to-face in order to create trust.

“The issues that my campaign would focus on would be unemployment, housing, emigration and taxes. Existing campaigns do not target young people enough, so I would target young people and get their opinions heard. I would post about my political campaign on social media and organise events about it. I would ask people to share my posts to spread the word. I would try to convince people that my campaign is real and trustworthy by providing real-life case examples, i.e. provide real-life stories from young people who have problems with employment, for example.”

“Campaigning I would go to secondary schools/ colleges/ universities around the country and talk to our young people. I would take my campaign onto social media. As well as visiting local community centres and parish halls. I would have the usual pamphlets posters and go door to door. I would talk to the people as an ordinary person. I am not wealthy or particularly well educated. But I do have common sense and I’ve been on the receiving end of this government’s stupidity.”

“I think social media is probably the way forward - especially with young people. Media like Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest could all be utilised to drive a campaign. I think older voters might be targeted by more "real world" methods like town hall meetings etc. Crowdfunding might work if you were starting a party from scratch. I would make sure that all my electioneering material was thoroughly costed and analysed by an independent body. I would demonstrate that the party/candidates were real and credible by selecting candidates in each constituency that had a good employment history and preferably a proven track record with working with Community and charity groups. I wouldn't have a "party whip" system and would let the eventual TD's vote according their conscience on matters of business in the Dail..”

The 2016 general election

We asked participants what they would suggest if they could talk to the next Taoiseach. We asked them to identify Ireland's priorities for the next five years. While there was a great deal of disengagement, Irish millennials still cared about specific issues.

"I would tell the incoming Taoiseach that the main tasks at hand are: 1) The housing Crisis 2) The health service, especially waiting times in A&E and mental health services 3) Creating a more equal society 4) Maintaining a sustainable recovery.

It seems that the economy is the primary focus point in the election campaign. Linked to this is employment and jobs. Also, creating a broader geographic recovery - although Dublin has benefited a lot from the recovery, many regional cities are still struggling with unemployment issues and emigration."

"I'm not really sure who would get my vote. I think people were somewhat pleased with the last government in regards to change and the promises they made. I know that they are coming out of this better than their predecessors. The current government implemented a lot of change. Including, the marriage equality bill amongst others. They took hold of the country at a very difficult time and managed to keep us afloat. I haven't really seen much of opposition parties other than their posters."

"I have not decided yet which party will be getting my vote, I do know it will not go to any political parties with extreme ideas though. The biggest failure of the current government in my opinion has been charging citizens for water consumption. Around half of the households have not still paid their bills ...that says it all..."

"In an ideal world, I think more overall growth and prosperity in all facets of the country would be great, from education and homelessness to health and taxes.

I'm unsure who I will vote for but I think it will come down to the individual candidates in my area rather than for a specific party,"

The Ideal Candidate

When asked what young people imagined the perfect candidate to be like, most people thought gender and appearance were irrelevant. What was important to them was that the politician was relatable and had real life experiences.

“-Gender isn't an issue both are equal

-They are down to earth

-A younger person in their late 20s early 30s would make a huge difference

-They have no weaknesses

-Wearing anything clothes don't matter

-They are a refreshing change because finally there is someone who understands what it is like for the poor person and not

-The person needs to be down to earth and just the rich”
know what its like to come from having nothing

-Speaking to the real public and understand what is actually happening in this country

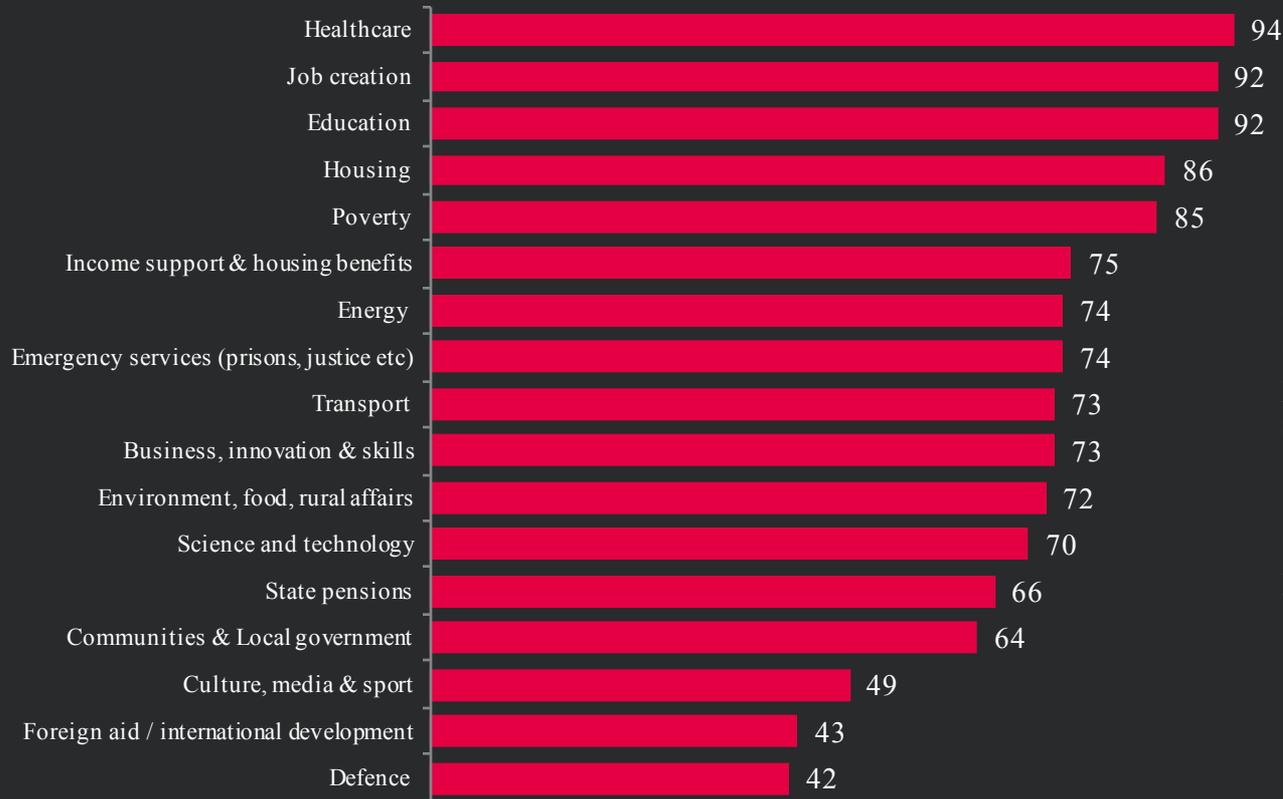
“The ideal candidate would be someone young who knows how the other side lives. I would rather a politician who knows the price of a carton of milk instead of the National debt.”

“Female in early 40's family orientated and should know how the real world works. Knows what the average person lives on week to week and not be afraid to tell the truth. I would back someone like this.”

The issues that matter



High Priority for the government (%)



Healthcare, job creation and education were considered to be the top priorities for government spending.

Housing has been a major election issue and is also placed among the top issues for Irish millennials.



85%

believed in the importance of equality
of sexual orientation in society



90%

believed in the importance of equality
for all genders in society

WHAT SHOULD POLITICIANS WORK TOWARDS? (%)

To what extent do they deliver on the following? (%)



Issues that matter: Housing, job creation and homelessness

When we asked Irish millennials which issues they thought politicians should deal with, housing, job creation and homelessness were high on the list for many. Expensive prices for renting and a lack of skilled jobs worried many young people.

“I think one of the main issues in Ireland at the moment is the housing crisis. Tied in with this is the high cost of rents, which affects a lot of young people - especially those living in Dublin.”

“I feel that the main issue that Ireland is facing right now is unemployment and because of it, young people who have recently graduated from college are emigrating to other countries to find jobs”

“ One of the main issues from what I can understand is the homelessness crisis. Its an absolute disgrace. The water charges are not only a joke but an expensive joke that the next government will need to make a priority as no one I know has any intentions at all of paying for a second time. A huge issue facing families like my own is the difficulty in securing a mortgage. Buying a home is a lot more affordable with the rate of rent right now however getting a mortgage will be a real battle.”

“I would focus on the housing crisis. So many families have nowhere affordable to live and as a direct result are struggling financially or in extremely unfortunate cases have become homeless. There's so many ghost estates just waiting to be filled. I would also address the difficulty in securing a mortgage as a first time buyer with a young family”.

mental health, childcare and education

Many millennials also wanted to see improvement of mental health services, cheaper childcare and better education.

“I agree mental health services are pitiful. A lot of my family struggle with depression and the services just aren’t there. Don’t get me wrong now, there are some amazing facilities available with wonderful people behind them but without government support and funding they can only do so much. One service in Longford gets no financial aid only what they can fund raise in the community.”

“I think there should mental health classes in schools with classes on "how to deal with depression", "what to do if a friend has suicidal thoughts", "what to do if a friend/family member has a drinking/drugs problem" etc.”

“Issues that affect me and my friends are mainly things like the cost of rent, childcare for young families, and job stability.”

“I think TDs should take a more active approach to politics. Instead of making promises in the run up to the general election they should focus on achieving realistic goals. Personally I would like to see the education system reformed as well as scrapping rising student fees. Accommodation for students in cities is also quite important. ”

Equal rights and the 8th amendment

Another issue many millennials were very passionate about was gender equality and abortion rights for women in Ireland.

“As for the Eighth Amendment, it's an issue myself and my friends feel very strongly about, and we think it should be addressed as it is an important issue in terms of both human and women's rights.”

“The abortion issue. As a woman I genuinely feel scared that I live in a country where I feel my life will not be put first if something went wrong during a pregnancy. I feel our laws and attitudes are extremely out of date and need to be changed as a matter of urgency.”

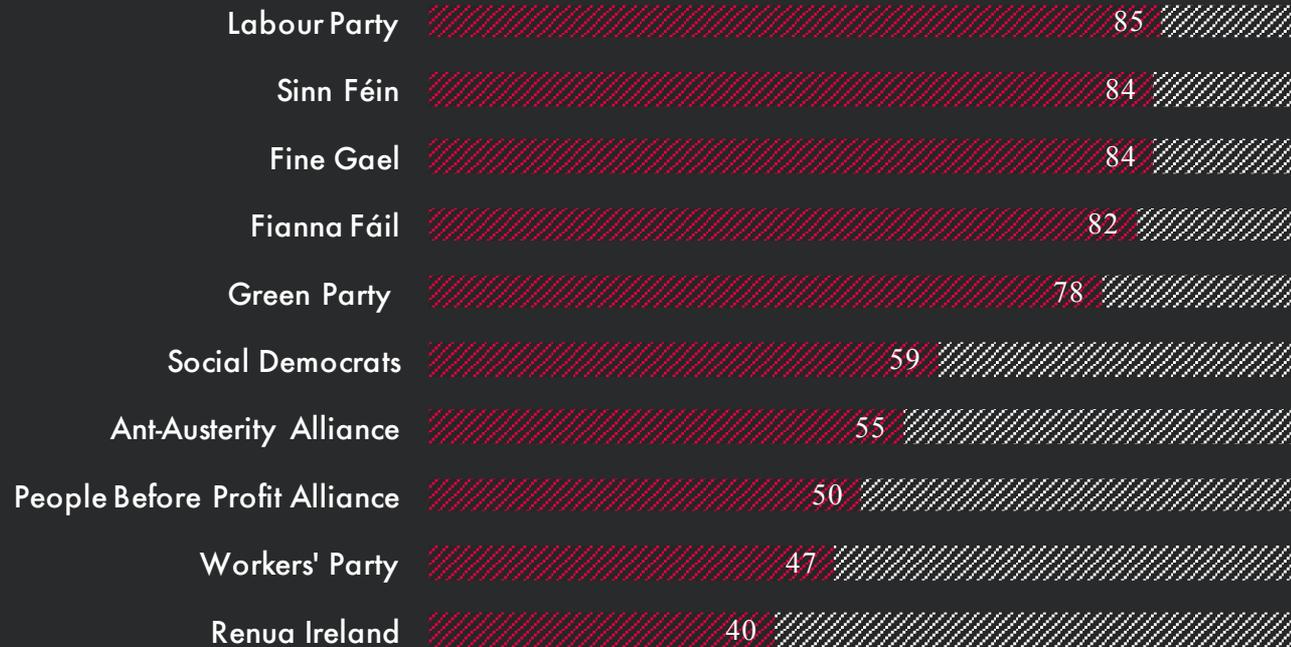
“An issue that is on the top of my mind is equality. Especially for women, there are still many cases of women being paid less than a man doing the same job. There's not enough women in politics as there should be. As I went to an all girl school this is something my friends and I discussed regularly because the difference of rules and opportunities for us girls were much different in comparison to the boys school across the road. Gender equality is something I would love to see improve. I think as a woman I can encourage other women to go for high power positions in business and in government.”

“My friends and I discuss many social justice issues that politicians should address. One issue is reproductive rights. Elected officials could start to address this issue by pushing to repeal the 8th amendment. We also talk about Traveler's rights. A good start would be to formally acknowledge Travelers as an ethnic minority. Also, elected representatives should continue to pursue LGBT rights. The marriage referendum was only a small step towards equality for the LGBT community.”

Politicians / Political parties

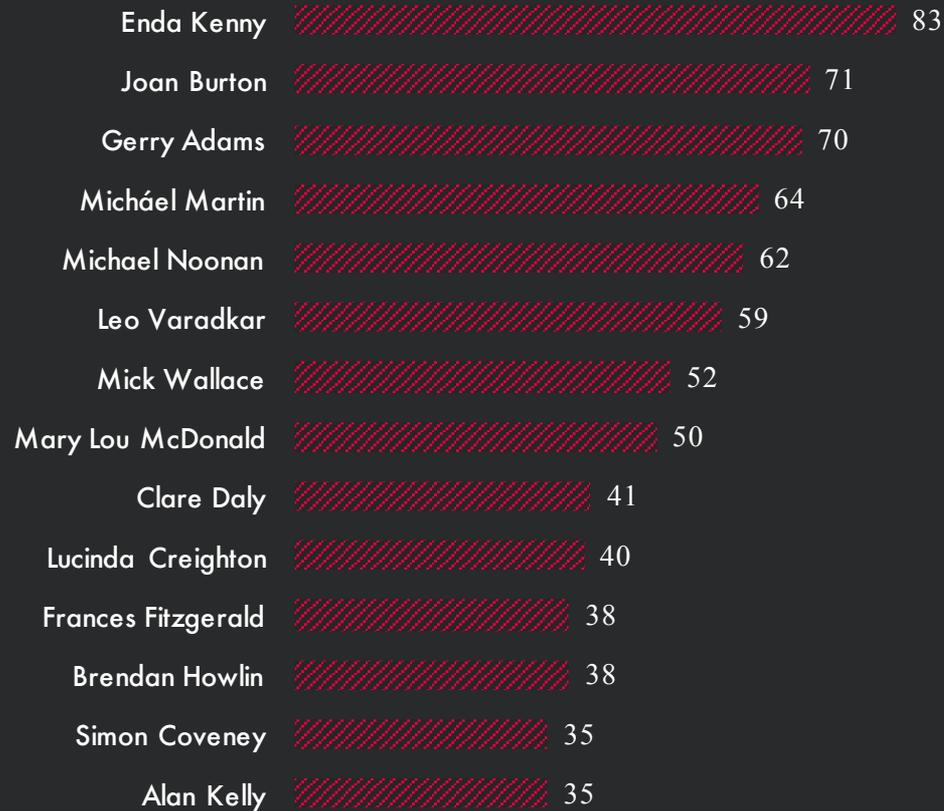


Awareness of political parties

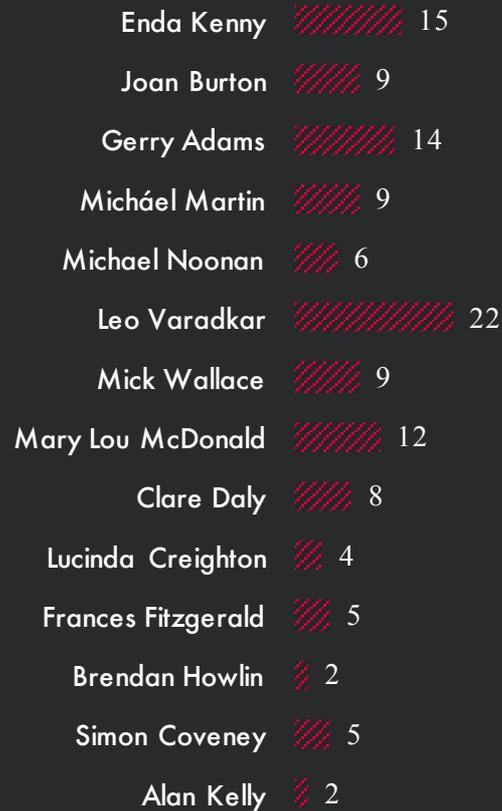


Awareness was relatively high for all the top parties

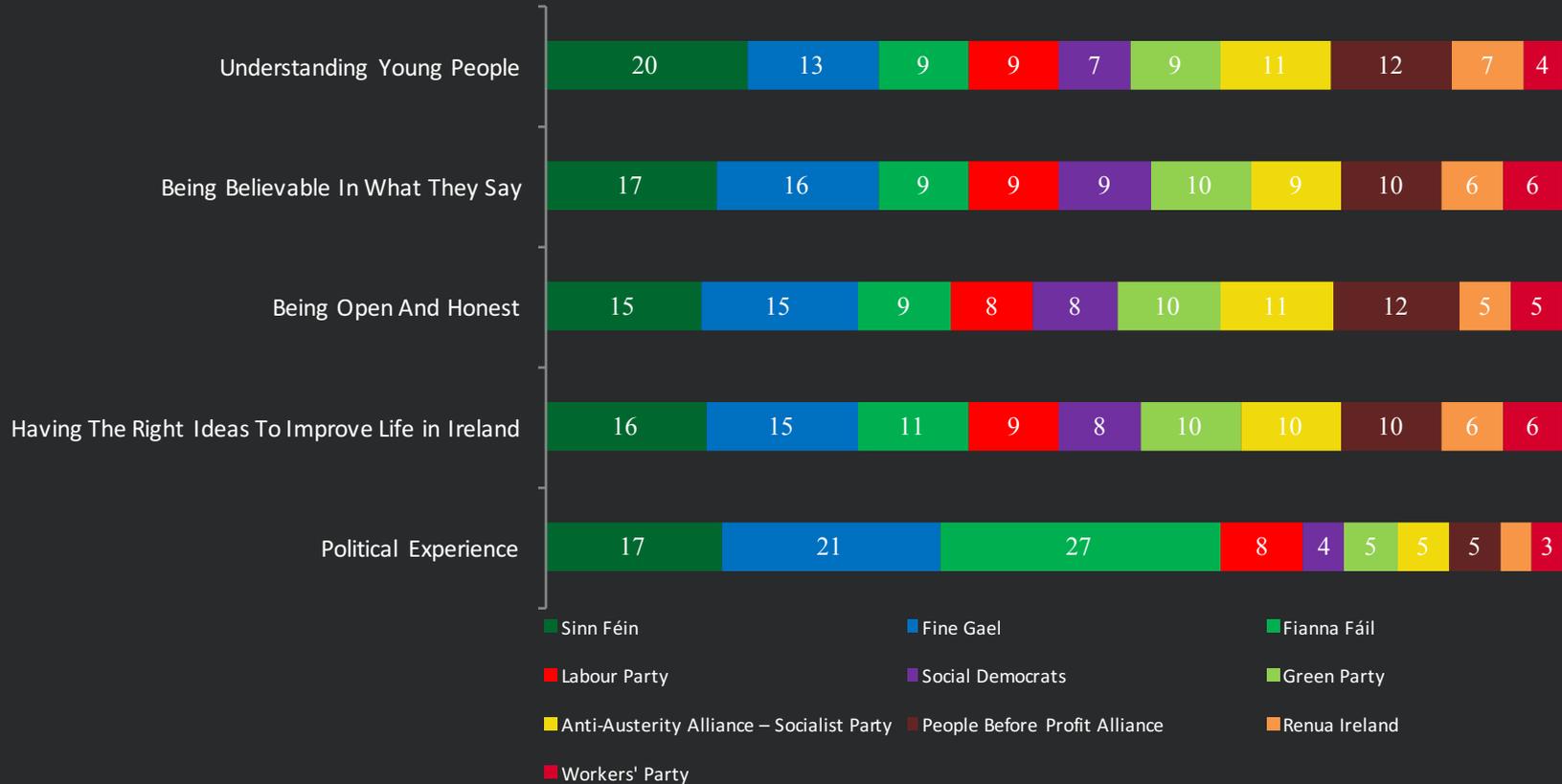
Awareness of politicians (%)



Proportion who like each politician



Which party scores the highest for...



Important qualities for an elected politician (%)



Electoral reform



What would encourage more people to vote?

(% 'Very significantly encourage...' or 'Would go some way to encouraging...')

Irish millennials SHOW GREAT CONFIDENCE IN THE POWER OF CONNECTED TECHNOLOGY AND ONLINE VOTING TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION. THERE IS ALSO fairly strong SUPPORT FOR EXTENDING THE LOCATIONS WHERE ONE CAN VOTE AND FOR PROLONGING ELECTIONS.

If it were possible to vote online via a secure app and/or website



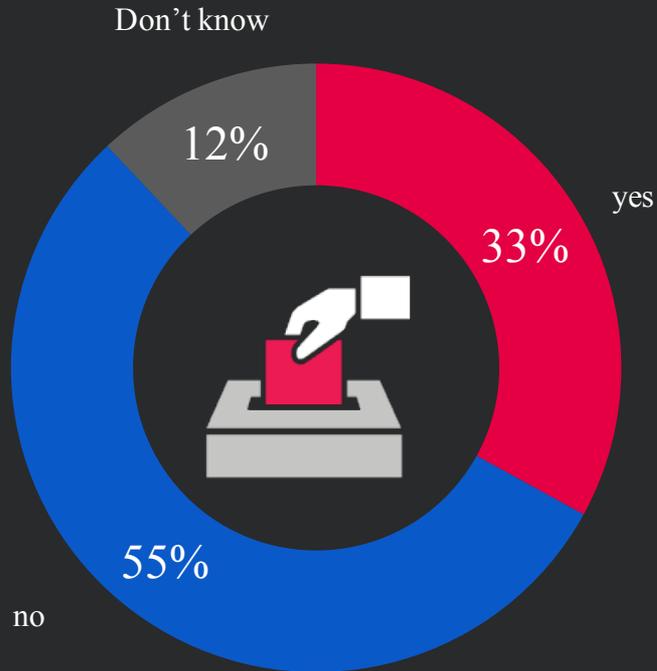
If it were possible to vote at a lot more places such as in shopping malls, libraries, voting stations on the street, on trains, at the airport etc.



If it were possible to vote for a longer period of time i.e. several weeks or months in advance



Should it be made compulsory to vote?



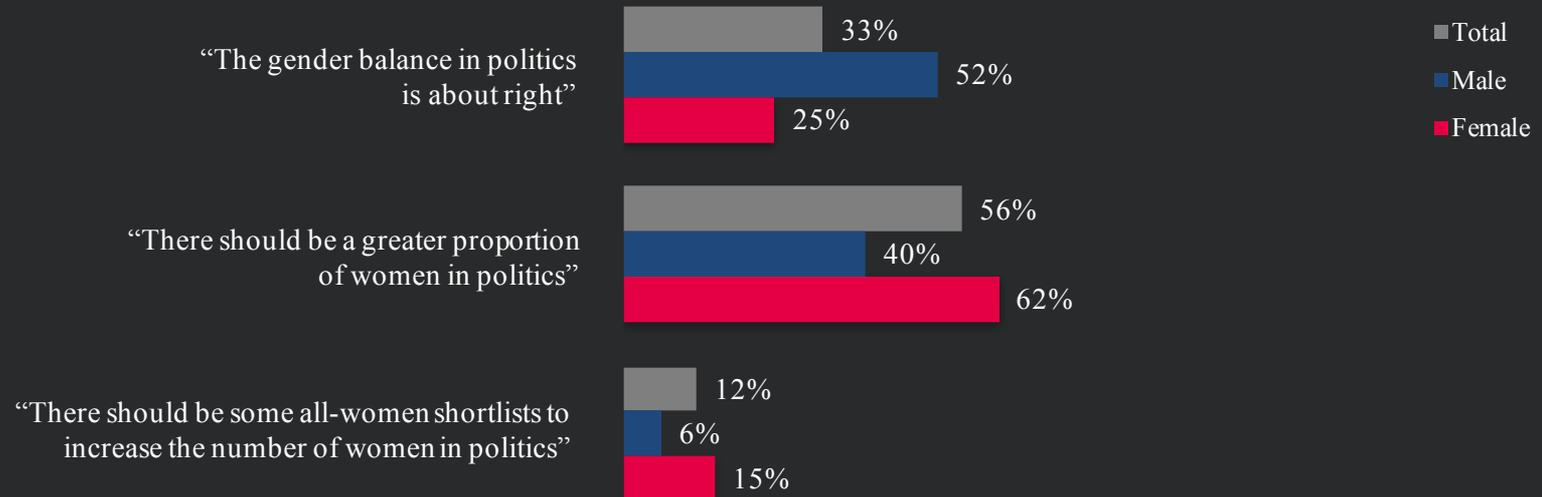
20%

Of those who said they would not vote if there was an election tomorrow said 'yes' - voting should be made compulsory

Women in politics

(% who agree with each statement)

52% of Irish men feel that the gender balance in politics is 'about right', compared to 25% of Irish women. There is generally very little support among millennials for all-women electoral lists.



Descriptive Demographic representation

How important is it to you that elected representatives reflect the population in terms of age, gender, class, religion, race etc.?

