LucidTalk
COLLATING OPINIONS COLLECTING VIEWS

Predicted the NI EU Referendum Result to within 1%

# January 2017 – Pre NI Assembly Election Tracker Poll – No. 1
# LucidTalk Tracker Poll (Northern Ireland) Results

## Issues: Voting Intention, Turnout, Outcome of NI Assembly Election 2017
## POLL QUESTIONS RESULTS – GENERAL REPORT
## 30th January 2017

## CONTENTS

LUCIDTALK MONTHLY TRACKER POLLS - Introduction and Background ..... 2
Methodology: ..... 2
LucidTalk – Professional Credentials ..... 2
REPORT and COMMENTARY - PRE NI ASSEMBLY ELECTION 'Tracker' POLLS: Poll No. 1 – January 2017: KEY SUMMARY POINTS AND HEADLINES ..... 3

| | |
|---|---|
| Subject | NI Tracker Polling Projects |
| Issue | 30 January Opinion Panel Poll-Project: Final Results (V1) |
| Date | 30th JANUARY 2017 |
| Author(s) | Bill White – LucidTalk |

LucidTalk Limited | The Innovation Centre | NI Science Park I Queen's Road | Queen's Island | Belfast BT3 9DT
Telephone: 028 9073 7800 (Switchboard) | 028 9040 9980 (Direct) | 07711 450545 (Mobile)
Fax: 028 9073 7801 | Email: info@lucidtalk.co.uk

LucidTalk
COLLATING OPINIONS COLLECTING VIEWS

# LUCIDTALK MONTHLY TRACKER POLLS - Introduction and Background

LucidTalk run scheduled regular 'Tracker' polls of their established Northern Ireland online Opinion Panel - usually on a bimonthly basis (every two months). The LucidTalk Opinion Panel (now 6,747 members) consists of Northern Ireland residents (age 18+) and is balanced by gender, age-group, area of residence, and community background, in order to be demographically representative of Northern Ireland. In the build-up to the NI Assembly Election on 2nd March 2017, LucidTalk will be running **THREE NI OPINION PANEL 'Tracker' POLLS**:

**Poll 1 - NI OPINION PANEL 'TRACKER' POLL: Pre NI Assembly Election 2017**
**26th to 28th January 2017 – Results: 30th January 2017**

**Poll 2 - NI OPINION PANEL 'TRACKER' POLL: Pre NI Assembly Election 2017**
**9th to 11th February 2017 – Results: 13th February 2017**

**Poll 3 - NI OPINION PANEL 'TRACKER' POLL: Pre NI Assembly Election 2017**
**23rd to 25th February 2017 – Results: 27th February 2017**

The objective of these scheduled and regular 'Tracker' polls is to research opinion on key issues at key points in time + track changes in trends and opinions about key topics and issues over the period of the NI Assembly Election campaign. These key issues include, in the context of this poll, NI Assembly Election voting intention – both 1st and 2nd preferences, NI Political leader ratings, Election Issues, and estimation of voting turnout.

For this 'Tracker' poll-project our 6,747 member NI Opinion Panel was targeted, and invited to participate, 2,437 responses were received, and after data auditing to ensure:
(a) 'one person-one vote' responses, and
(b) the collation of a balanced representative NI sample,
- 1,580 full responses were recorded and used for analysis in terms of the final results.

## Methodology:

Polling was carried out by Belfast based polling and market research company LucidTalk. The project was carried out online for a period of 60 Hours from 11am 27th January to 11pm 29th January 2017 (60 Hours). The project targeted the established Northern Ireland (NI) LucidTalk online Opinion Panel (6,747 members) which is balanced by gender, age-group, area of residence, and community background, in order to be demographically representative of Northern Ireland. 2,437 full responses were received, and a data auditing process was carried out to ensure all completed poll-surveys were genuine 'one-person, one-vote' responses, and also to collate a robust and accurate balanced NI representative sample. This resulted in 1,580 responses being considered in terms of the final results - the results presented in this report.

All data results have been weighted by gender and community background to reflect the demographic composition of Northern Ireland resulting in 1,580 responses being considered in terms of the final results. All data results produced are accurate to a margin of error of +/-3.0%, at 95% confidence.

All surveys/polls can be subject to sources of error, including, but not limited to, sampling error, coverage error, and measurement error. All sampling error margins include the computed design effects for weighting.

## LucidTalk – Professional Credentials

LucidTalk is a member of all professional Polling and Market Research organisations, including the UK Market Research Society (UK-MRS), the British Polling Council (BPC), and ESOMAR (European Society of Market Research organisations). The BPC are the primary UK professional body ensuring professional Polling and Market Research standards. All polling, research, sampling, methodologies used, and results and reports production are, and have been, carried out to the professional standards laid down by the BPC.

LucidTalk Limited | The Innovation Centre | NI Science Park I Queen's Road | Queen's Island | Belfast BT3 9DT
Telephone: 028 9073 7800 (Switchboard) | 028 9040 9980 (Direct) | 07711 450545 (Mobile)
Fax: 028 9073 7801 | Email: info@lucidtalk.co.uk

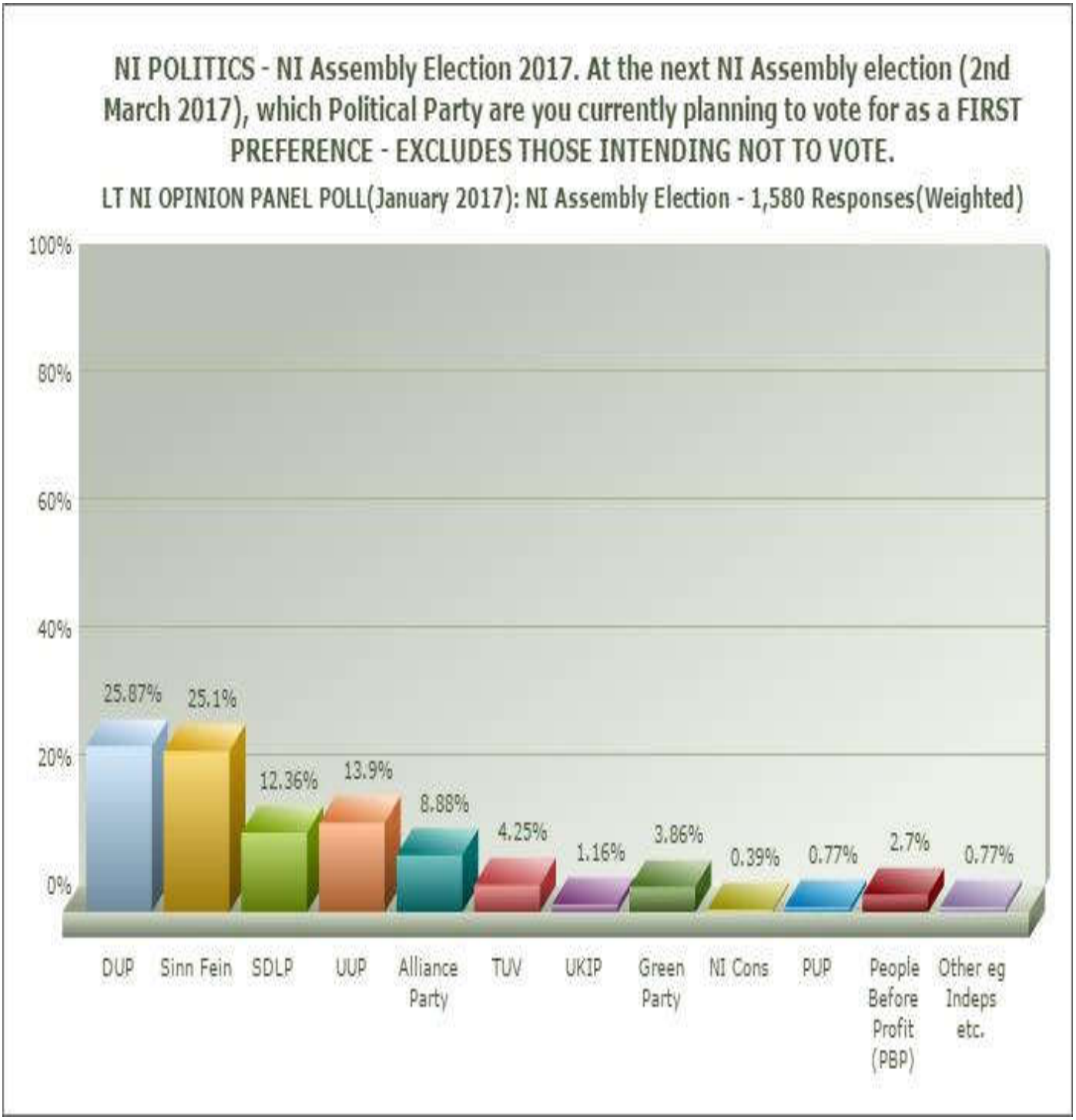
LucidTalk
COLLATING OPINIONS COLLECTING VIEWS

# REPORT and COMMENTARY - PRE NI ASSEMBLY ELECTION 'Tracker' POLLS: Poll No. 1 – January 2017: KEY SUMMARY POINTS AND HEADLINES

The benefit of this regular scheduled polling is that it allows us to see changes in trends and opinions at regular intervals over the time of the NI Assembly Election 2017.

**NB All commentary is provided on the basis of guidance and for information purposes and is not meant to be absolute determinations from the poll results, as poll and market research results can be open to differing interpretations, commentary, and conclusions.**

## QUESTION 1: NI ASSEMBLY ELECTION – VOTING INTENTION – January 2017 Tracker:




LucidTalk Limited | The Innovation Centre | NI Science Park I Queen's Road | Queen's Island | Belfast BT3 9DT
Telephone: 028 9073 7800 (Switchboard) | 028 9040 9980 (Direct) | 07711 450545 (Mobile)
Fax: 028 9073 7801 | Email: info@lucidtalk.co.uk

LucidTalk
COLLATING OPINIONS COLLECTING VIEWS

**Change since NI Assembly Election 2016:**

| Political Party | Change vs NI Assembly 2016 |
|---|---|
| DUP | -3.3% |
| SINN FEIN | 1.1% |
| SDLP | 0.4% |
| UUP | 1.3% |
| ALLIANCE | 1.9% |
| TUV | 0.9% |
| UKIP | -0.3% |
| GREEN PARTY | 1.2% |
| NI CONSERVATIVES | 0.0% |
| PUP | -0.1% |
| PBP | 0.7% |
| OTHERS | -3.5% |

**Since NI Assembly Election 2016: RED = Significant Decrease, DARK BLUE = Significant Increase, LIGHT BLUE = Small/Medium Increase.** NB Increases/Decreases are specified as significant or not, as measured against the specific political parties' current poll score – so e.g. a 0.7% growth for PBP which is a '35% growth' from their May 2016 election result of 2% is defined as significant.

**Key Headline Points – January 2017 Tracker Poll. Items/sentences in BROWN are suggested to be important in terms of key 'headline results':**

- Since NI Assembly Election the **TOTAL Unionist vote has dropped from 47.9% (NI Assembly election 2016) to 46.3% (in this poll).** The **TOTAL Nationalist/Republican vote has gone up from 39.3% (NI Assembly election 2016) to 40.2% (in this poll)** – and NB this includes PBP who tend mostly to attract votes from the Nationalist/Republican sectors (currently at the moment – that may change). Plus, the **Alliance/Green 'middle ground' vote has gone up from 8.5% to 12.7%.** This is significant as the total Nationalist/Republican vote has reversed a trend that has been happening over recent years of the total vote from this sector dropping – a growth of 39.3% to 40.2% is quite significant. But the biggest noticeable 'growth' is the Alliance/Green vote from 8.5% (NI Assembly 2016) to 12.7% (this poll).

- As can be seen from the above table the **main 'headline' is the drop in the DUP vote of 3.3%.** This is quite a drop, but may not totally translate into dropping a similar relatively large No. of seats in the new NI Assembly. This is because it would take an even larger drop to really feed-into dropping a larger No. of seats in the new NI Assembly. Though this drop could be the difference in terms of them losing 1-2 'extra' seats (i.e. above those they may be expecting to lose anyway).

LucidTalk
COLLATING OPINIONS COLLECTING VIEWS

- Also noticeable that **Sinn Fein has got a boost, and a bigger jump than the SDLP.** This possibly shows that the Sinn Fein strategy is working with Nationalist/Republicans – particularly also taking into account that the overall Nationalist/Republican vote has grown overall.

- A large No. of poll participants who said they voted DUP last May 2016, say they will switch this time to the UUP and other parties. **This is a noticeable swing to the UUP, but at this stage in the campaign, is not overwhelming i.e. the DUP can cope with this swing** (in terms of not being damaged too much overall in terms of seats in the NI Assembly), but they can't afford the swing to grow anymore over the course of the campaign.

- **The Alliance poll increase of +1.9% compared to last May 2016 NI Assembly election is good healthy score**, and should show that they are well on course to maintaining their current seat tally of 8, with maybe even a possible gain somewhere? Remember this would then represent a 'seat(s) gain' i.e. maintain their current score of 8 seats even though the overall No. of seats in the NI Assembly is dropping from 108 to 90.

**QUESTION: NI ASSEMBLY ELECTION - Have you changed? You indicated you're currently planning to vote XXXX party (1st Preference) in the forthcoming NI Assembly Election - Has your NI Assembly Election voting opinion changed since the last election, May 2016, if so please indicate this change (or not) of your voting intention:**

**+ Key Points – General, and from 2nd preference vote results – NB We do not quote actual data results for 2nd preferences as these are analysed against the subset of whatever 1st preference the respondents designated, and as such the statistical error is too high to quote actual results. However key trends and patterns can be determined quite accurately – see below:**

- **There has been a noticeable increase in the No. of SDLP voters who say they will transfer (i.e. their 2nd preference votes) directly to the UUP, and vice-versa.** This is a noticeable trend and could make a difference in terms of MLA's to be elected last in seats like South Belfast, North Down, and Strangford.

- **There is also a lowering of transferring between UUP and DUP (and vice-versa)** – 1st preference UUP voters now more likely to transfer to Alliance, Green, SDLP etc..

- Following on from the above point there has been a **lowering of DUP to UUP transferring, and UUP to DUP transferring** – with the latter being more noticeable than the former. DUP show higher transfer than before to TUV, and likewise so do the UUP (even more so). 1st preference UUP voters are tending now much more to Alliance, Green, and SDLP (in that order) with the DUP 'coming in 4th' in terms of second transfers for UUP 1st preference voters.

- **Alliance have always been 'transfer friendly' but are now scoring even more healthier in this field i.e. increased No. of Sinn Fein voters saying they will transfer to Alliance just behind SDLP and PBP**.

- **Strong transfer from Sinn Fein to PBP**, but **not necessarily vice-versa i.e. PBP voters tend more to transfer to Alliance and Green**.

- **TUV 1st preference voters seem more inclined to transfer to the UUP than before** i.e. in the May 2016 Ni Assembly election they tended to transfer mostly to DUP and other Unionists.

LucidTalk
COLLATING OPINIONS COLLECTING VIEWS

## QUESTION: NI Political Leadership Ratings:

**Question: Taken 'in the round' - How do you rate each of the NI Political Party Leaders performance over the past 1-6 months e.g. Leadership, decisions made, media performance, etc.. – NI TRACKER POLL - January 2017 (Sample: 1,580 – Weighted Balanced NI Representative sample)**

We asked all participants to score each Political Leader from 0 = Terrible/Bad performance, to 100 = Brilliant/Couldn't be Improved performance. Results below show the overall average scores for each leader from ALL poll respondents. **NB WE ASKED POLL PERTICIPANTS TO DISREGARD THEIR OWN POLITICAL VIEWS AND POLITICAL PREFERENCES WHEN ASKING THIS QUESTION.**

**HERE ARE THE TOTAL RESULTS -**

| | |
|---|---|
| ARLENE FOSTER (DUP) | 21.6 |
| MICHELLE O'NEILL (Sinn Fein) | 46.1 |
| MIKE NESBITT (UUP) | 44.5 |
| COLUM EASTWOOD (SDLP) | 43.3 |
| NAOMI LONG (ALLIANCE) | 52.2 |
| STEVEN AGNEW (Green Party) | 44.3 |
| EAMONN MCCANN (People before Profit) | 45.9 |
| JIM ALLISTER (TUV) | 48.8 |

**Notes:** **Note that DUP leader Arlene Foster comes in last on 21.6%, and that Alliance leader Naomi Long scores the highest at 52.2%** (although even 52.2 is not an overly high result!), with **Jim Allister second on 48.8%**. It's noteworthy that only one NI Political Leader scores over 50% i.e. Naomi Long.

**Question: Taken 'in the round' - How do you rate each of the NI Political Party Leaders performance over the past 1-6 months e.g. Leadership, decisions made, media performance, etc.. – UNIONISTS ONLY (DUP, UUP, TUV, PUP, UKIP, NI CONS)**

| | |
|---|---|
| ARLENE FOSTER (DUP) | 29.4 |
| MICHELLE O'NEILL (Sinn Fein) | 28.9 |
| MIKE NESBITT (UUP) | 49.0 |
| COLUM EASTWOOD (SDLP) | 36.4 |
| NAOMI LONG (ALLIANCE) | 37.0 |
| STEVEN AGNEW (Green Party) | 29.8 |
| EAMONN MCCANN (People before Profit) | 38.4 |
| JIM ALLISTER (TUV) | 56.6 |

**Notes:** Note that **Unionist poll participants rate Jim Allister as the No. 1 performing Unionist leader – and not Mike Nesbitt or Arlene Foster**.

LucidTalk
COLLATING OPINIONS COLLECTING VIEWS

**Question: Taken 'in the round' - How do you rate each of the NI Political Party Leaders performance over the past 1-6 months e.g. Leadership, decisions made, media performance, etc.. – DUP VOTERS ONLY**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ARLENE FOSTER (DUP) | 72.5 | | | | |
| MICHELLE O'NEILL (Sinn Fein) | 30.9 | | | | |
| MIKE NESBITT (UUP) | 24.1 | | | | |
| COLUM EASTWOOD (SDLP) | 22.2 | | | | |
| NAOMI LONG (ALLIANCE) | 25.5 | | | | |
| STEVEN AGNEW (Green Party) | 22.9 | | | | |
| EAMONN MCCANN (People before Profit) | 27.1 | | | | |
| JIM ALLISTER (TUV) | 49.2 | | | | |

**Notes:** Note the **DUP voters rate Michelle O'Neill's performance higher than Mike Nesbitt. They also rate Jim Allister higher (much higher) than Mike Nesbitt**.

## QUESTION: Turnout – What do you expect it to be?

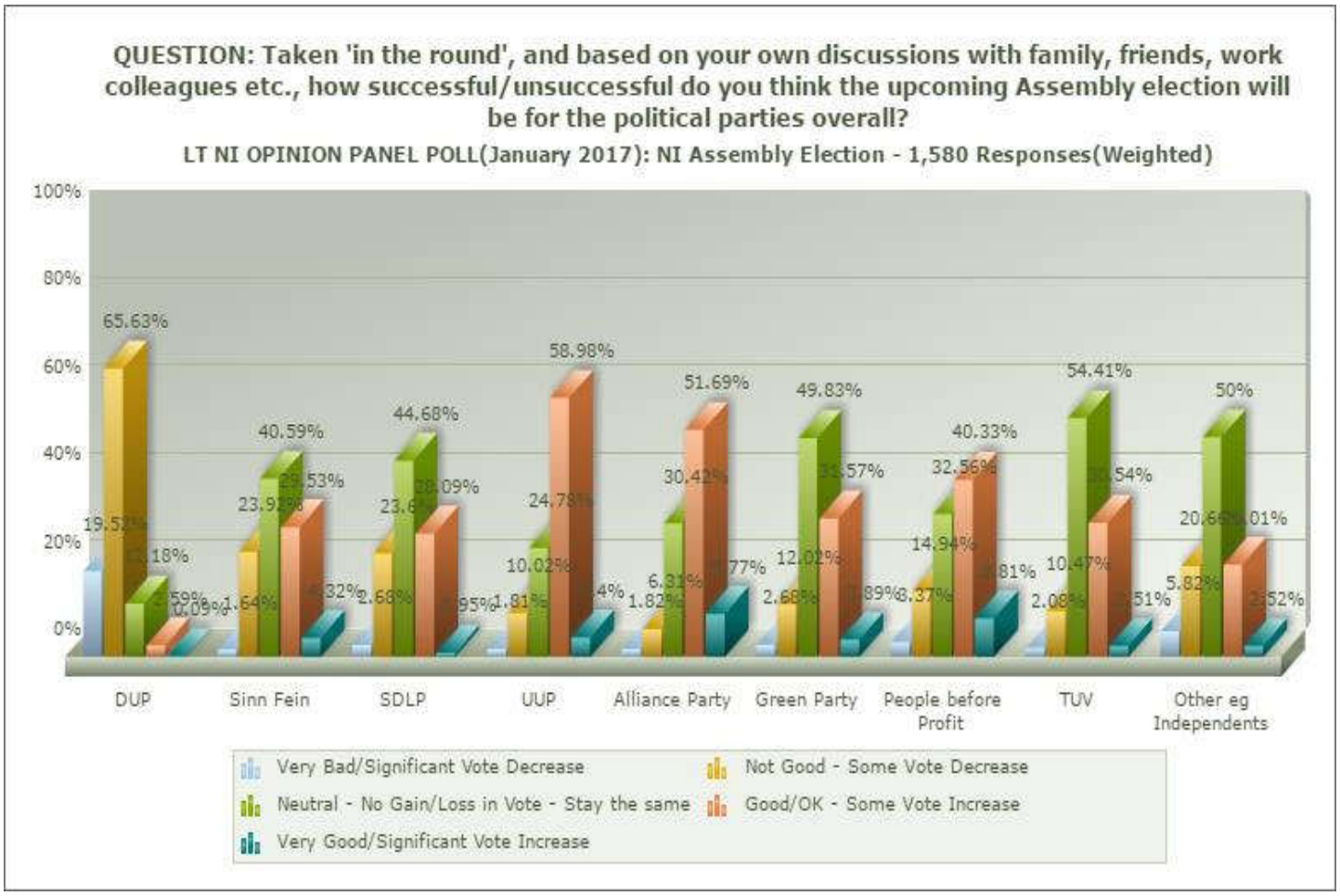
**NI ASSEMBLY ELECTION TURNOUT - YOUR OWN VIEW!: QUESTION 5: Taken 'in the round', and based on your own discussions with family, friends, work colleagues etc., what do you think the voter turnout will be at the upcoming NI Assembly Election (2nd March) - compared to the NI Assembly Election May 2016 turnout (which was 55%). Please answer from: 0(LHS) = Much lower than 55% (last NI Assembly Election), through 5 = Same as last NI Assembly Election, to 10(RHS) = Much higher than 55% (last NI Assembly Election).**

| Item | Average | Min | Max | Std. Deviation | Total Responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turnout in the NI Assembly Election (2nd March) 2017 (5 = same as NI Assembly Election May 2016) | 5.49 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 2.06 | 1,580 |
| | | | | answered | 1,580 |
| | | | | skipped | 0 |

**Note: 5.49 means the poll participants think the turnout will go up a bit from NI Assembly Election 2016 but not dramatically so, e.g. maybe to 58-62% or somewhere about that level**. When a further 'drill-down' analysis is done on this question we find out that **Nationalist/Republicans are more 'optimistic' of a higher turnout than Unionists i.e. Nationalists/Republicans seem more enthused (slightly more!) to go to the polls than Unionists.**

LucidTalk
COLLATING OPINIONS COLLECTING VIEWS

**QUESTION: Overall result, regardless of your own voting intention – How do the poll participants think the NI Assembly Election will go overall for each of the political parties?**




**LIGHT BLUE/ORANGE (towards left-hand-side of each political party) = Poll participants think parties vote will go down at election, RED/DARK BLUE (towards right-hand-side of each political party) = Poll participants think parties vote will go up at election.**

**Notes: Alliance has the highest 'Dark Blue' i.e. 'Very good/significant vote increase'. UUP has a high RED i.e. 'Some vote increase', but less of the 'Dark Blue' (i.e. compared to Alliance). DUP has a high 'Orange' - 'Some vote decrease' and 19.5% 'Dark Blue' meaning 'Very bad/significant vote decrease'. Its noteworthy that poll participants think the UUP will sort of 'improve a bit' but that the improvement won't be that large.**

**QUESTION: NI Assembly Election – Reasons for your voting decision:**

**QUESTION 3 - NI ASSEMBLY ELECTION: Please list the four top issues you consider as important in making your NI Assembly election voting decision (whether voting or not-voting) - please list this as single words (e.g. Jobs, Health Service, RHI, Equality,..), or short expressions (e.g. Support for Education, NI Constitutional position, Irish Unity,..) etc.**

**Results – Top 8 Issues ranked by how many 'mentions' were recorded by poll respondents in answers to question above:**

**Health Service: 775, RHI: 639, Education: 624, Equality: 560, Jobs/Economy: 494, Brexit: 371, Irish: 344** (mostly in connection with Irish language act), **Unity** (mostly in the context of Irish Unity): **301**

**Notes:** Note that **The Health Service is the 1st factor uppermost in people's minds when making their voting decision, followed by RHI, then Education – These are the top three issues that voters/potential voters are thinking about when making up their minds who to vote for.**

LucidTalk Limited | The Innovation Centre | NI Science Park I Queen's Road | Queen's Island | Belfast BT3 9DT
Telephone: 028 9073 7800 (Switchboard) | 028 9040 9980 (Direct) | 07711 450545 (Mobile)
Fax: 028 9073 7801 | Email: info@lucidtalk.co.uk