



## NORTHERN IRELAND GENERAL ELECTION SURVEY 2015



## INFORMATION SHEET

### THE 2015 NORTHERN IRELAND GENERAL ELECTION STUDY

#### INVESTIGATORS:

Professor Jon Tonge (University of Liverpool) Professor Peter Shirlow (Queen's University Belfast) Professor Jocelyn Evans (University of Leeds) Professor Bernadette Hayes (University of Aberdeen) Professor Paul Mitchell (LSE)

**SURVEY ORGANISATION:** Social Market Research (SMR) Belfast. Director: Donal McDade

## Introduction

You are being invited to participate in the 2015 Northern Ireland General Election study. Before you decide whether to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and feel free to ask us if you would like more information or if there is anything that you do not understand. We would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you so desire. You are encouraged to take part, but there is no obligation.

### 1. What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of the study is to collect overall data and information on why people in Northern Ireland voted the way they did in the recent (2015) General Election – and why some people did not vote. Surveys of voting patterns, elections and attitudes towards important political questions are common in many countries and allow researchers to understand trends. The 2015 survey of Northern Ireland's election will help researchers to understand the results and to assess current public opinion on a range of political issues.

### 2. Who is conducting the research?

The research project is being undertaken by researchers from five universities: Aberdeen, Leeds, Liverpool, the LSE and Queen's Belfast. The address of the Principal Investigator, Professor Jon Tonge (Liverpool) is listed at q8 below. Fieldwork for the study is being undertaken by Social Market Research in Belfast (full address at the bottom of this sheet). The survey is being funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

### 3. Why have I been chosen to take part?

1,500 adults across Northern Ireland have been entirely randomly chosen, using postcode address files, a process known as pure random sampling. We need a sizeable sample i.e. of 1,500 to ensure that the results are accurate and meaningful. In common with the 1,499 others asked to participate, you have been chosen by random chance.

### 4. Do I have to take part?

We hope you do, but participation is entirely voluntary. You do not have to take part and if you do take part you do not have to answer every question and you can end the interview at any time.

### 5. What will happen if I take part?

You will be asked approximately 60 questions by an interviewer from the survey company employed by the researchers to conduct the research. This will take up to forty minutes. The questions will be on a range of political issues, plus some basic information about yourself (age, occupation etc). The latter type of question helps us understand whether particular groups of people feel strongly on certain issues. The interviewer will store your answers on a computer and they will be added to those of all the other participants. The election survey data (but not those of any individuals) will be used for academic publications over the next few years.

### 6. Are there any risks in taking part?

None. Your answers will be stored on the computer, but no names and addresses will be stored and so it will be impossible to identify any individual respondent. No names of participants will ever be kept or disclosed. A final dataset will be compiled, but no names or addresses will be included. Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed, with your participation in the survey never being made public. If you want an example of how the final results appear, as confirmation that no individuals can possibly be identified, see <http://cms.liv.ac.uk/media/livacuk/politics/documents/SUMMARYRESULTS.pdf> or go to <http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue?sn=6553> where you will find the 2010 version of this study.

### 7. Are there any benefits in taking part?

We hope you will enjoy the chance to articulate your views, in confidence.

**8. What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?**

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting the study's Principal Investigator, Professor Jon Tonge, Department of Politics, University of Liverpool, L69 7ZT, at [j.tonge@liv.ac.uk](mailto:j.tonge@liv.ac.uk) (tel: 0151-794-2899 or 0778 8190742) and/or contact the survey company, Social Market Research, 3 Wellington Place, Belfast, BT9 6DJ (tel: w 02890 923362): director: Mr Donal McDade.

If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the University of Liverpool Research Governance Officer on 0151 794 8290 ([ethics@liv.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@liv.ac.uk)). When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

**9. What will happen to the results of the study?**

The final dataset will be lodged at the Economic and Social Data Service, [www.esds.ac.uk](http://www.esds.ac.uk) and you may see it by contacting the address at that website. Conclusions from analysis of the data will be published in various academic journal articles and books and findings discussed at conferences to which a wide range of organisations, such as political parties, members of the Executive and Assembly and journalists will be invited. We repeat: it will be impossible to identify any individual from the dataset. The findings and reports are about overall trends.

**10. Who can I contact if I have further questions?**

Professor Jon Tonge at [j.tonge@liv.ac.uk](mailto:j.tonge@liv.ac.uk) (tel: 0151-794-2899 or 0778 8190742) or Donal McDade (tel 02890 923362).