

# **Junior Chamber International Dublin**

## **Summer Survey findings**

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## **1. Executive Summary**

Political awareness and voter participation among young people are issues that are discussed at every election but are topics on which it can be difficult to find reliable data. This has led Junior Chamber International (JCI) Dublin to look at these issues in the greater Dublin area and hopefully produce some reliable data for presentation and discussion.

The findings of this report show that the younger a person is, the less political knowledge they possess; one example being that only 1.6% of 16 – 20 year olds could identify the current Minister for Transport, Martin Cullen.

Another positive learned during the course of this study was that in all cases, more young people intend to vote in the next election than voted in the last election. Although this could be attributed to good intentions, we believe more can be done to help encourage these people to vote in the future.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Junior Chamber International

Junior Chamber International (JCI) is a not-for-profit organisation for young people between the ages of 18 and 40. JCI is a non-political, non-religious, non-profit-making organisation. It is a worldwide federation of young leaders and entrepreneurs who aim to develop better leaders who in turn will lead better businesses and societies.

***MISSION:** To contribute to the advancement of the global community by providing the opportunity for young people to develop the leadership skills, social responsibility, fellowship, and entrepreneurship necessary to create positive change.*

There are four main areas of opportunity in JCI in which the members are encouraged to participate and grow into the future leaders of tomorrow:

- **Business**

Projects in the business area of opportunity give branch members the chance to hone business skills some examples may be allining with the local Chamber of Commerce, running investment clubs, organising visits to local business etc.

- **Community**

This area involves projects that are designed to promote or improve the quality of life for people in the branches local community.

- **International**

This area provides an opportunity for members to contribute to the development of goodwill, understanding and cooperation among all people in all nations.

- **Individual**

This area provides opportunity for individual members to realise there personal potential through training programs and the other three areas of opportunity.

Members can choose to participate in one or more of the areas of opportunity.

JCI does not engage in the political process and does not have any political agenda or affiliation to any party

### 2.2. JCI Dublin Summer Survey

The issues of political awareness and voter participation in young people are issues, that when any local or general election comes round, create a lot of discussion and interest. However, when you start to delve deeper and look for some hard facts on these issues, they are hard to come by.

JCI Dublin recognises how important it is to include all groups in the voting process. Statistics show that in the last election, the 21-25 year-old demographic group had the lowest percentage of voter turn out of all age groups. The people who comprise this age

group are the future of our economy. Any decisions now made in the political process now will affect how they live there life. Without their participation, there is a risk that their viewpoint will not be considered in forward planning at government level. We therefore wanted to provide some solid data on these issues, thereby aiding discussion and hopefully providing a starting block from where action – if necessary – can be taken.

As JCI Dublin is an organisation for young people, we decided that we would like to be able to comment with certainty on the political awareness of young people in our area and would like to be able to compare this with their knowledge of celebrities and their lives.

### **3. Project Team**

**Mark Kelly**

Theresa Leneghan

Hugh Mooney

Raymond Reilly

AnneMarie O'Reilly

Kevin Gallagher

**Project leader**

Team member

Team member

Team member

Team member

Team member

## 4. Methodology

We have constructed this survey to cover several areas of interest; the awareness of our current political leaders, important historic questions and some of the politics of Northern Ireland.

The survey was conducted on 325 young people between the ages of sixteen and forty in and around the centre of Dublin City. A control group (22 surveys) of people over forty, and therefore outside of the study age range, has been included so as to allow comparison of our results with people of this group.

Table 4.1 below illustrates the percentage breakdown of the people surveyed in relation to their age and gender and also the totals of these groups.

**Table 4.1 – Percentage breakdown of people surveyed in terms of age and gender**

Age Group	Female %	Male %	Total %
16 to 20	14%	10%	24%
21 to 25	17%	14%	31%
26 to 30	12%	9%	21%
31 to 35	4%	8%	12%
36 to 40	4%	2%	6%
40+	2%	4%	6%
Total	53%	47%	100.0%

Statistics used throughout this study were obtained from the Central Statistics Office and are based on the average voter turn out for the greater Dublin area in the 2002 election. Data has not been included for the 16 to 20 age group as they were not eligible to vote in the last election.

## **5. Data collection**

After an initial pilot of the surveys, it was found that it was possible to maximise the amount of surveys completed and still get an even spread of people from all areas of Dublin by collecting surveys in Dublin city centre.

The surveys have been completed on a one-to-one interview basis. The interviewer asked the questions and recorded the responses on a hard copy of the survey. The survey answer sheets were numbered and entered on computer for analysis

To assess peoples' political and celebrity awareness we chose a style of closed questioning. By using closed questions we limited the number of possible responses and thus made it easier to analyse the data.

The political questions are not weighted in favour of any political party as this would distort the findings.

The political awareness questions were chosen to assess the following: (See also Appendix A)

- Irish political history
- Knowledge of current government
- Knowledge of local politicians and local political constituency
- Politics in Northern Ireland

The questions on celebrity awareness were chosen at random to match each political question to which it is to be compared. Every effort was made to make each set of questions of equal difficulty.

## 6. Results

### 6.1. Voter participation

When asked “Did you vote in the last elections?” the results collected were as shown in Table 6.1 below.

**Table 6.1: Percentage breakdown by age of voter turn out in the 2002 election.**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
No	n/a	43.2%	40.0%	39.1%	27.6%	27.3%
Yes	n/a	56.8%	60.0%	60.9%	72.4%	72.7%

Table 6.2 below illustrates the results obtained when asked “Will you vote in the next election?”

**Table 6.2: Percentage breakdown by age of those intending to vote in the next election**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
No	51.6%	30.5%	31.3%	28.3%	24.1%	15.2%
Yes	48.4%	69.5%	68.8%	71.7%	75.9%	84.8%

### 6.2. Political and Celebrity Awareness

When subjects were shown a picture of T.D. Pat Rabbitte, and asked to identify the person, the results were recorded as either ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ and are shown in Table 6.3 below.

**Table 6.3: Percentage breakdown by age of responses when asked to identify T.D. Pat Rabbitte**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
Incorrect	79.7%	75.8%	55.0%	47.8%	34.5%	42.4%
Correct	20.3%	24.2%	45.0%	52.2%	65.5%	57.6%

When subjects were shown a picture of George Hook, and asked to identify the person, the results were recorded as either ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ and are shown in Table 6.4 below.

**Table 6.4: Percentage breakdown by age of responses when asked to identify George Hook**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
Incorrect	71.9%	61.1%	47.5%	47.8%	44.8%	48.5%
Correct	28.1%	38.9%	52.5%	52.2%	55.2%	51.5%

When asked to name the current Minister for Transport, the results illustrated in Table 6.5 below were obtained.

**Table 6.5: Percentage breakdown by age of responses when asked to identify the current Minister for Transport**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
Incorrect	93.8%	84.2%	71.3%	58.7%	55.2%	57.6%
Martin Cullen	1.6%	6.3%	20.0%	30.4%	31.0%	24.2%
Seamus Brennan	4.7%	9.5%	8.8%	10.9%	13.8%	18.2%

When subjects were asked if they could identify Marshall Mathers, more popularly known as Eminem, the results shown in Table 6.6 below were obtained.

**Table 6.6: Percentage breakdown by age of those subjects who could identify Marshall Mathers**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
Incorrect	17.2%	17.9%	30.0%	32.6%	44.8%	63.6%
Correct	82.8%	82.1%	70.0%	67.4%	55.2%	36.4%

When subjects were asked to name the current Minister for Finance, the results shown in Table 6.7 below were obtained.

**Table 6.7: Percentage breakdown by age of responses when asked to identify the current Minister for Finance**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
Incorrect	75.0%	71.6%	65.0%	50.0%	48.3%	54.5%
Brian Cowen	9.4%	16.8%	33.8%	34.8%	44.8%	39.4%
Charlie McCreevy	15.6%	11.6%	1.3%	15.2%	6.9%	6.1%

When subjects were asked to identify the current girlfriend of actor Tom Cruise, Katie Holmes, the results shown in Table 6.8 below were obtained.

**Table 6.8: Percentage breakdown by age of responses when asked to identify the current girlfriend of actor Tom Cruise**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
Incorrect	45.3%	32.6%	23.8%	43.5%	51.7%	81.8%
Correct	54.7%	67.4%	76.3%	56.5%	48.3%	18.2%

When subjects were shown a picture of former Minister for Finance, Charlie McCreevy, and asked to identify the person, the results were recorded as either ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ and are shown in Table 6.9 below.

**Table 6.9: Percentage breakdown by age of responses when asked to identify former Minister for Finance. Charlie McCreevy**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
Incorrect	70.3%	55.8%	50.0%	54.3%	31.0%	39.4%
Correct	29.7%	44.2%	50.0%	45.7%	69.0%	60.6%

When subjects were shown a picture of actor Brad Pitt, and asked to identify the person, the results were recorded as either ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ and are shown in Table 6.10 below.

**Table 6.10: Percentage breakdown by age of responses when asked to identify actor Brad Pitt**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
Incorrect	4.7%	6.3%	2.5%	4.3%	3.4%	21.2%
Correct	95.3%	93.7%	97.5%	95.7%	96.6%	78.8%

People were also asked if they could name any of the T.D.’s in their local constituency. Names of particular T.D.’s were neither confirmed nor denied; it was only recorded as to whether the subject made an attempt to name any politician. Results recorded are shown in Table 6.11 below.

**Table 6.11: Percentage Breakdown by age of subject knowledge of local constituency politicians**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
No Attempt made	48.4%	61.1%	66.3%	56.5%	55.2%	45.5%
Attempt Made	51.6%	38.9%	33.8%	43.5%	44.8%	54.5%

When subjects were asked about the electoral district to which they belonged, the answer was not verified; the respondent was just asked to name the district, and if no answer was given a zero was applied in data collection. Results recorded are shown in Table 6.12 below.

**Table 6.12: Percentage Breakdown by age of subject knowledge of their electoral district**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
No Attempt made	56.3%	60.0%	55.0%	54.3%	27.6%	51.5%
Attempt Made	43.8%	40.0%	45.0%	45.7%	72.4%	48.5%

**Table 6.16: Percentage Breakdown by age of responses when asked to identify MEP Mary Lou McDonald**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
Incorrect	79.7%	78.9%	73.8%	76.1%	82.8%	72.7%
Mary Lou McDonald	15.6%	15.8%	22.5%	17.4%	10.3%	15.2%
Sinn Fein	4.7%	5.3%	3.8%	6.5%	6.9%	12.1%

### 6.3. Historical Awareness

When subjects were asked “Did Michael Collins support the 1921 treaty with the British?” the results shown in Table 6.13 were obtained.

**Table 6.13: Percentage breakdown by ages of subject knowledge of whether Michael Collins was in support of the 1921 treaty with Britain**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
Incorrect	56.3%	49.5%	43.8%	47.8%	41.4%	54.5%
Correct	43.8%	50.5%	56.3%	52.2%	58.6%	45.5%

When subjects were asked “In which year was the Good Friday Agreement Signed?” the results given in Table 6.14 were obtained.

**Table 6.14: Percentage breakdown of subject knowledge of when the Good Friday was signed**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
Correct	12.5%	14.7%	25.0%	19.6%	34.5%	18.2%
Incorrect	87.5%	85.3%	75.0%	80.4%	65.5%	81.8%

Subjects were asked to name the political party which held the most seats in Northern Ireland. The results obtained are shown in Table 6.15

**Table 6.15: Percentage breakdown by age of subject knowledge of the majority political party in Northern Ireland**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
Correct	10.9%	31.6%	43.8%	37.0%	55.2%	57.6%
Incorrect	89.1%	68.4%	56.3%	63.0%	44.8%	42.4%

## **7. Discussion**

### **7.1. Voter Participation**

In reference to the question on participation in the 2002 election, it can be seen in Table 6.1 that in all cases for people below the age of 36, the voter turn out in the election is below the average voter turn out for the greater Dublin area, that of 62%. The trend has appears in this table that as we move up through the age groups voter participation also increases. This trend shows that once people start to vote they are more likely to continue to vote in the future this adds to the importance of getting young people into the habit of voting at a younger age.

When this is compared to the percentage of people in each demographic group who intend to vote in the next election (Table 6.2), it is interesting to see that in every age group there is a substantial increase in the number of people intending to vote. It can also be seen that as age increases the willingness to vote also increases.

It might be suggested that there are a number of possible explanations for this increase. Some maybe made up of good intentions. Probably of greater interest is to find out why those who will not vote in the next election are not voting. This we suggest is made up of a general disinterest and lack of knowledge of the political system and how it impacts on the daily life of young people. The results of the political and celebrity awareness questions also seem to support this hypothesis.

### **7.2. Political and Celebrity Awareness**

Now we compare the results of those who were able to correctly identify T.D. Pat Rabbitte to the results gathered when people were shown a picture of George Hook and we see that more young people were able to identify the pundit George Hook than could identify the leader of the Labour party Pat Rabbitte.(Tables 6.4.& 6.5). There is an increasing awareness of the identity of Pat Rabbitte as age increases, with only 24% of the 21 – 25 age group recognising the T.D, while 65% of 36 – 40 age group recognised him. George Hook however was known to 39% of 21 – 25 year olds and 55% of 36 – 40 year olds.

When subjects were asked to name the current Minister for Transport, Martin Cullen, a similar pattern is noted in that with increasing age comes increasing familiarity (Table 6.6). However a number of people were naming the outgoing Minister, Seamus Brennan, as at the time of this survey a cabinet reshuffle had just occurred. Of the people under the age of 30 who took part in the survey 72% did not know the answer to this question. Considering that in the last budget €10.2 billion was earmarked for the 2005 – 2009 period. The Transport 21 plan now has allotted €35billion for the development of transport in Ireland over the next ten years. The impact that this will have on the lives of the youth of today can not be underestimated.

Now if we compare these results with the results gained when asking the candidates to identify Marshall Mathers (Table 6.6), the rapper also known as Eminem, we can see that the same young people under the age 30 knew who he was with a range of 71% - 94% able to answer this question correctly. In all cases more people knew who the American musician is than the person who is in charge of transport for Ireland.

When subjects were asked to name the current Minister for Finance in Ireland, Brian Cowan (Table 6.7), the lowest score was obtained from the younger participants with 9% of the 16 – 20 knowing that Brian Cowan was Minister of finance. It is worth noting that more of the 16 – 20 group thought the minister of finance was Charlie McCreevy with 16% of the participants thinking this. This is quite interesting as Charlie McCreevy had been out of this position for number of months then. The trend also emerges here that with increasing age also comes increasing political knowledge with the participants over the age of 40 having the greatest knowledge of their Minister of Finance.

If this is compare this with something that also only changed recently i.e. the current girl friend of Tom Cruise, shown in Table 6.8, we can see that in all cases the % of people who knew who girl friend of Tom Cruise was in comparison to there knowledge of the present minister of finance.

When subjects were shown a picture of Charlie McCreevy and asked to identify the person, (Table 6.9), it was seen that once again that with increasing age there is increasing awareness, reflecting the trend of previous questions. 44% of the 21 – 25 years compared with 69% of 36 – 40 years. From this survey it has been learned that Charley McCreevy is one of the better known politicians.

If we compare the knowledge of recognising Charlie McCreevy versus the ability to recognise Brad Pitt (Table 6.10) we see that young people have a far greater knowledge of who Brad Pitt is in all cases in comparison to Charlie McCreevy. Charlie McCreevy was one of the longest running Ministers for Finance in Ireland and yet an American movie star has almost 100% recognition from our young people, and our Ministers have anything from 29 – 69%.

People were asked if they could name any of the TD's in their local constituency (Table 6.11). It was not verified at the time of questioning if the names given were correct but 66% of 26 – 30 year olds could not even offer a guess as to who the local TD's may be. They had no recollection of any name or any idea as to who it might be. In all age groups greater than 50% of the people surveyed could not offer a single name. If people do not know who there political representatives are this shows that they are not participating in the political process.

When participants were asked about what electoral district to which people belonged to (Table 6.12), the only age group who even attempted this question and getting a score of above 50% was the 36-40 age group with a score of 72%. Every other group got a score of less than 50% on just attempting a guess at what the electoral district may have been. As in the knowledge of TD's people not knowing there electoral district is something that shows lack of interest in politics in general.

### **7.3. Historical Awareness**

To the question of whether Michael Collins was officially in support of the 1921 treaty with Britain across the age groups was 44% and 59% (Table 6.13), it is important to note here that if people were to take an uneducated guess they could have scored better on this question. This topic is covered by history curriculum in Irish schools and this topic was covered in the Neil Jordon movie “Michael Collins” in 1996.

It was also asked “In which year was the Good Friday Agreement Signed?”, given that this is something quite recent in political times and also something that is never very far from the political agenda or the news & media. The response was poor across all ages with every group getting less than 35% correct answers and only 9% of the 16 – 20 group knowing the answer to this question (Table 6.14).

The question that inquired about the breakdown of seats in the last election in Northern Ireland is a good example of how political comes with age with only 11% of the 16 – 20 group knowing this and this rises to 58% for the over 40 group (Table 6.15). This election place at the beginning of May, this was only three months from the start of this survey and received a lot of publicity due to the significant shift of power in favor of the DUP. The fact is that young people were just not interested in the results of this election.

## **8. Conclusion**

This survey shows that in general older people have a better knowledge of politics to there younger counterparts (Table’s 6.3, 6.4, 6.7, 6.9, 6.11, 6.12). This survey also shows that the older people get the higher the turn out in elections (Tables 6.1, 6.2). Taking these two points we can see that as young start to grow up they begin to realize the importance of voting and the political process. The next phase in getting more young people out to vote is isolating that which changes as they grow up which makes them more inclined to vote and when we have isolated this we can further move to educate them younger in these areas.

## 9. Recommendations

- It is imperative that at all levels of youth in society & education that young people are made aware of the importance of the political process.
- Promotion of organisations like the JCI who know the importance of the political process and more importantly know how important the youth of today are to societies of today and tomorrow.
- Younger political candidates who represent young peoples' issues and can reach out to them.
- W6w
- Politics in schools to be compulsory but in an easy and fun learning method. Made interesting e.g. by workshops, fun debates and role-plays with a follow through to its relevance for their future.
- Colleges and Universities as a medium for introducing students to the political process and its representatives. Encourage 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions to make politics available through media that are attractive to its students.
- Target young people through advertising and the media to highlight the importance of their participation and their vote.
- Use radio 2fm and Today fm with a youth spin to promote the area of politics to the youth of today.

## **Appendix A**

### Supplemental Data

Some other questions asked but not included in the main body of the report

When asked which of the opposing factions did Ireland officially support during World War II the results shown in Table A.1 were obtained.

**Table A.1: Percentage breakdown by age of response as to which faction was officially supported by Ireland during World War II**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
Incorrect	68.8%	55.8%	55.0%	50.0%	37.9%	33.3%
Correct	31.3%	44.2%	45.0%	50.0%	62.1%	66.7%

When asked “To name up to 3 members of this year’s big brother house” the results shown in Table A.2 were obtained..

**Table A.2: Percentage breakdown by age of responses when subjects were asked to name three contestants of Big Brother 2005**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
0.00	42.2%	54.7%	58.8%	58.7%	69.0%	66.7%
1.00	3.1%	11.6%	8.8%	10.9%		
2.00	3.1%	1.1%		4.3%	6.9%	
3.00	51.6%	32.6%	32.5%	26.1%	24.1%	33.3%

When asked “How many children does Michael Jackson have?” the results shown in Table A.3 were gathered.

**Table A.3: Percentage breakdown by age of responses when subjects were asked the number of Michael Jackson’s children**

	16 - 20 Col %	21 - 25 Col %	26 - 30 Col %	31 - 35 Col %	36 - 39 Col %	40+ Col %
.00	21.9%	11.6%	12.5%	6.5%	6.9%	21.2%
1.00		6.3%	6.3%		6.9%	
2.00	31.3%	31.6%	42.5%	39.1%	41.4%	21.2%
3.00	37.5%	47.4%	38.8%	50.0%	44.8%	48.5%
4.00	6.3%	1.1%		2.2%		6.1%
5.00		2.1%				3.0%
6.00	1.6%					
10.00	1.6%					
16 - 20				2.2%		

## **Appendix B**

### Survey Questionnaire