
Part 3: Increasing the use of Welsh



Although increasing the number of Welsh speakers is essential, we must not overlook the second strategic theme of *Cymraeg 2050*: increasing the use of Welsh. **After all, creating Welsh speakers has limited value unless those individuals are able and willing to go on to use the language in their daily lives.** For the Welsh language to thrive, it must be used regularly and naturally throughout Wales and in a wide range of contexts.

While the census does not collect direct data on language use, **there is a strong relationship between factors such as the density of Welsh speakers in an area, or the fluency of Welsh speakers, and language use.** One of the primary sources offering direct evidence on the use of Welsh is the Welsh Government's Language Use Survey.¹ The most recent survey took place between July 2019 and March 2020, with the results published in a series of statistical bulletins between 2022 and 2024. Although this survey data does not relate directly to the past five years, until we receive a later survey, the data from the 2019–20 Language Use Survey will be treated as describing the situation today.

The following chapters will examine the quantitative data resulting from this survey alongside other surveys including the National Survey for Wales,² the Annual Population Survey,³ and our own research in the office of the Welsh Language Commissioner on the use of Welsh among children and young people.⁴ We will also consider relevant policy developments over the reporting period, again highlighting the priorities and opportunities identified by the Commissioner for the next five years.

The main statutory aim of the Welsh Language Commissioner is to increase the use of Welsh. **Accordingly, this section will consider the evidence gathered about language use through our work implementing the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and working with the private and third sectors.** Using methods such as hidden-shopper exercises, discussion groups, opinion surveys and ongoing organisational engagement, we obtain a detailed picture of user experiences and organisational compliance. This provides first-hand insight into how organisations contribute to creating a Wales where Welsh is a living language, as well as improving the experiences of service users. This section provides an overview of the evidence we have and highlights key priorities and opportunities for the Commissioner's work over the next five years.

¹ [Language use survey | GOV.WALES.](#)

² [Welsh language speaking ability and use \(National Survey for Wales\): April 2022 to March 2023 | GOV.WALES.](#)

³ [Welsh language data from the Annual Population Survey | GOV.WALES.](#)

⁴ Welsh Language Commissioner, [The use of Welsh among children and young people](#) (September 2025).

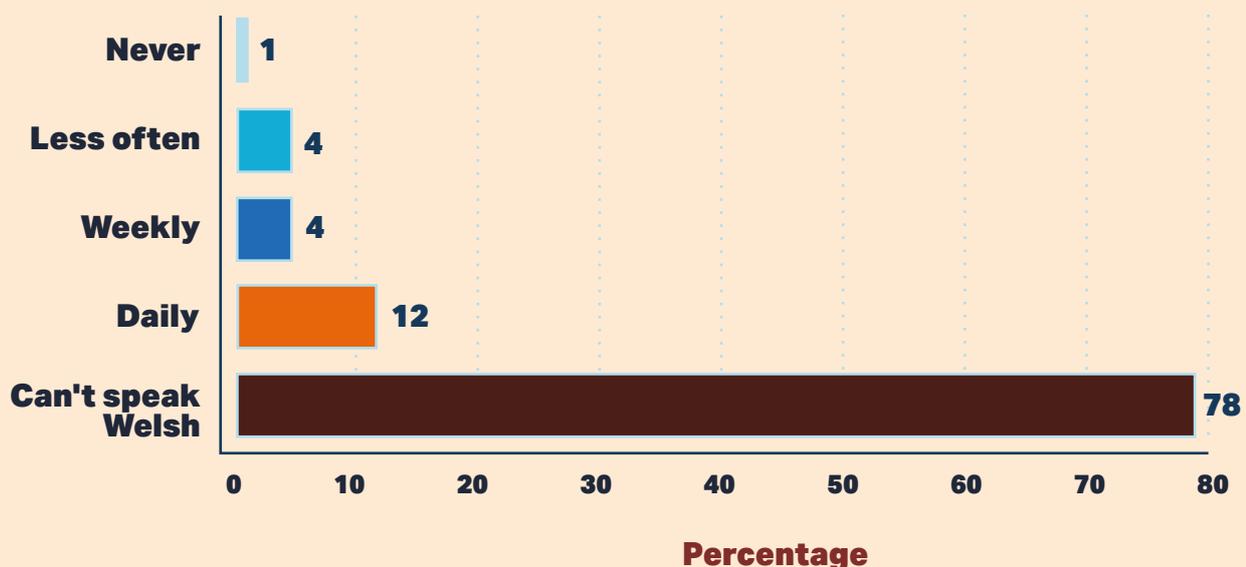
1. Social use of Welsh and community language planning

The census shows that one of the main challenges facing the Welsh language today is ensuring that children and young people retain the language after leaving the education system. The evidence clearly shows that a significant number of children and young people who have learnt Welsh at school gradually lose their skills as they get older. One of the most likely reasons for this is the lack of opportunities to use the language in social situations outside, and beyond, the education system. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the focus of language-planning efforts in Wales today is increasing opportunities for people to use Welsh socially and in varied contexts.

1.1 The evidence

The second target of the *Cymraeg 2050* strategy is to double the percentage of the population who speak Welsh daily, and who can speak more than a few words of Welsh, from 10% in 2013–15 to 20% by 2050. According to the 2019–20 Language Use Survey, 10% of people aged three or older spoke Welsh daily and could speak more than a few words. This means there has been no change since 2013–15. Looking at the population of Wales as a whole, regardless of their fluency levels, we can see that 12% use Welsh daily, which is exactly the same figure as reported in 2013–15.

Chart 1: Frequency of speaking Welsh amongst the population aged three or older



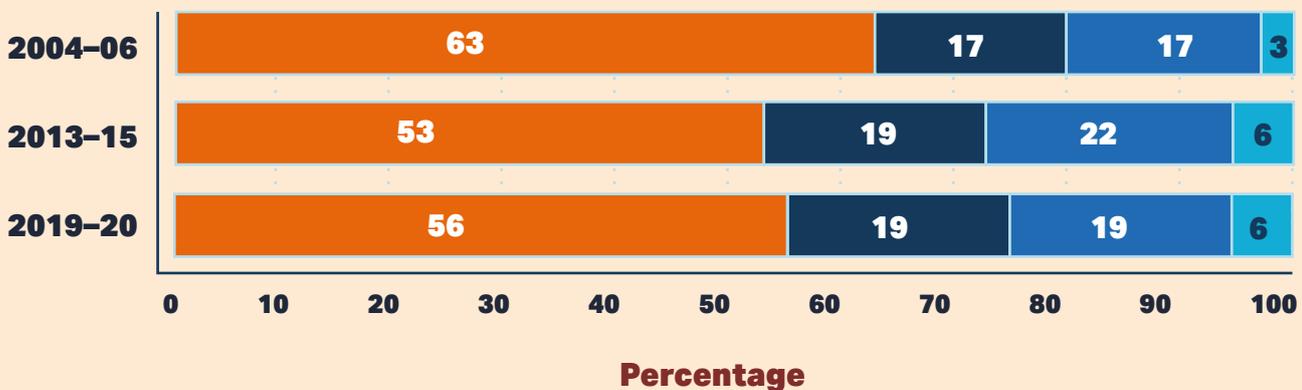
The percentage of the population who speak Welsh every week (4%) and those who never speak Welsh (1%) has also remained consistent with the results of the 2013–15 survey. Those who reported speaking Welsh less often than every week fell by one percentage point to 4%.

The Annual Population Survey also collects information on how often Welsh speakers speak the language, and reports patterns similar to the Language Use Survey. The Annual Population Survey for the year ending 31 March 2025 reported that 13.8% of people aged three or older speak Welsh daily, 5.3% weekly and 6.7% use it less often, with a further 1.2% saying they never speak Welsh despite being able to do so.⁵

Among Welsh speakers specifically, the percentage who speak the language daily has decreased since 2004–06, but there has been a modest increase since 2013–15. In 2019–20 over half of Welsh speakers reported using Welsh daily.

Chart 2: Frequency of speaking Welsh among Welsh speakers aged three or older

Frequency



(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2004–06, 2013–15, and 2019–20)

Key conclusions

- There has been very little change in how often the whole population uses Welsh.
- The percentage of **Welsh speakers who use the language daily has increased slightly since 2013–15, but has decreased since 2004–06.**

⁵ Annual Population Survey - Ability to speak Welsh by local authority and year.

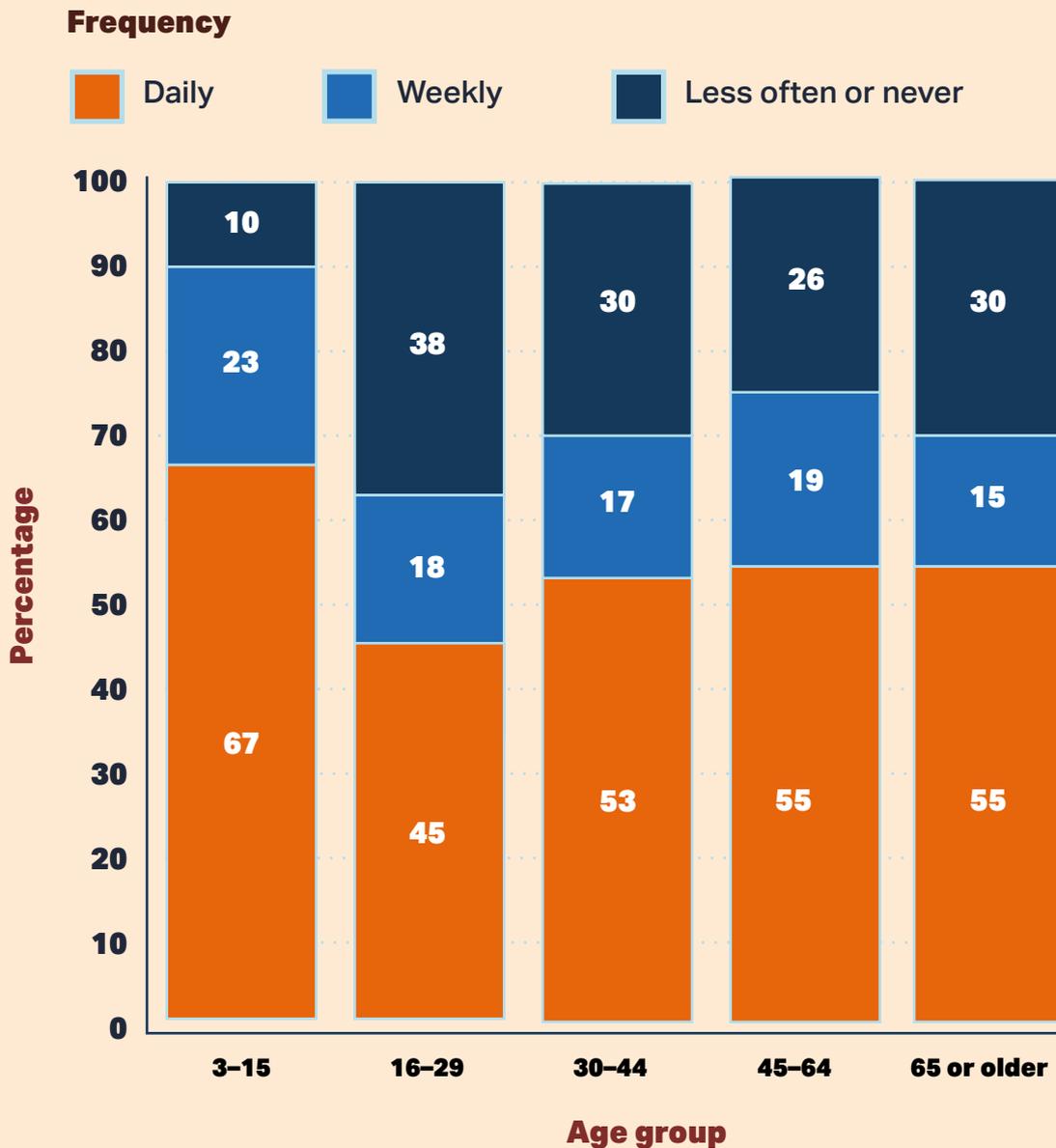
What factors influence the use of Welsh?

The Language Use Survey clearly shows that patterns of language use vary significantly depending on factors such as the age of speakers, their fluency and confidence in Welsh, where and when they learnt the language, and where they live.

Age

Looking at the use of Welsh by age, we can see that children and young people aged 3–15 are far more likely to use Welsh daily than any other age group. This probably reflects the importance of schools in creating opportunities to use the language.

Chart 3: Frequency of speaking Welsh amongst Welsh speakers by age



(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2019–20)

Compared to the results of the 2013–15 Language Use Survey we see **that the percentage of children and young people aged 3–15 who use Welsh daily has increased from 59% to 67%, and the percentage of 16–29 year-olds who use Welsh daily has increased from 39% to 45%**. Daily use of the Welsh language has remained relatively stable in the other age groups.

Fluency and confidence in the Welsh language

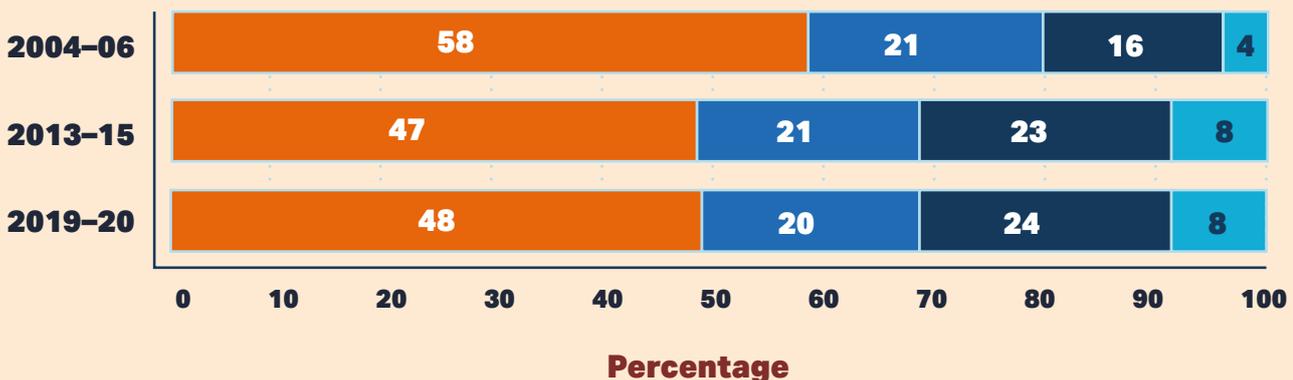
It is not surprising that fluent Welsh speakers are far more likely to use Welsh daily. For example, in the 2019–20 survey 85% of fluent Welsh speakers indicated that they use Welsh daily. 42% of those who reported being able to speak a fair amount of Welsh used Welsh daily, 24% of those who could speak a little Welsh, and 17% of those who could only say a few words.

As shown in Chart 4, the percentage of fluent Welsh speakers has remained relatively stable between 2013–15 and 2019–20, but has fallen by 10 percentage points between 2004–06 and 2019–20. The percentage who speak a fair amount of Welsh has remained relatively stable since 2004–06, and there has been an increase in the percentage who can speak a little Welsh and can only say a few words. In 2019–20 48% of Welsh speakers described themselves as fluent, 20% indicated that they could speak a fair amount of Welsh, 24% could speak a little Welsh, and 8% could only say a few words.

Chart 4: Percentage of Welsh speakers aged three or older by fluency level

Fluency

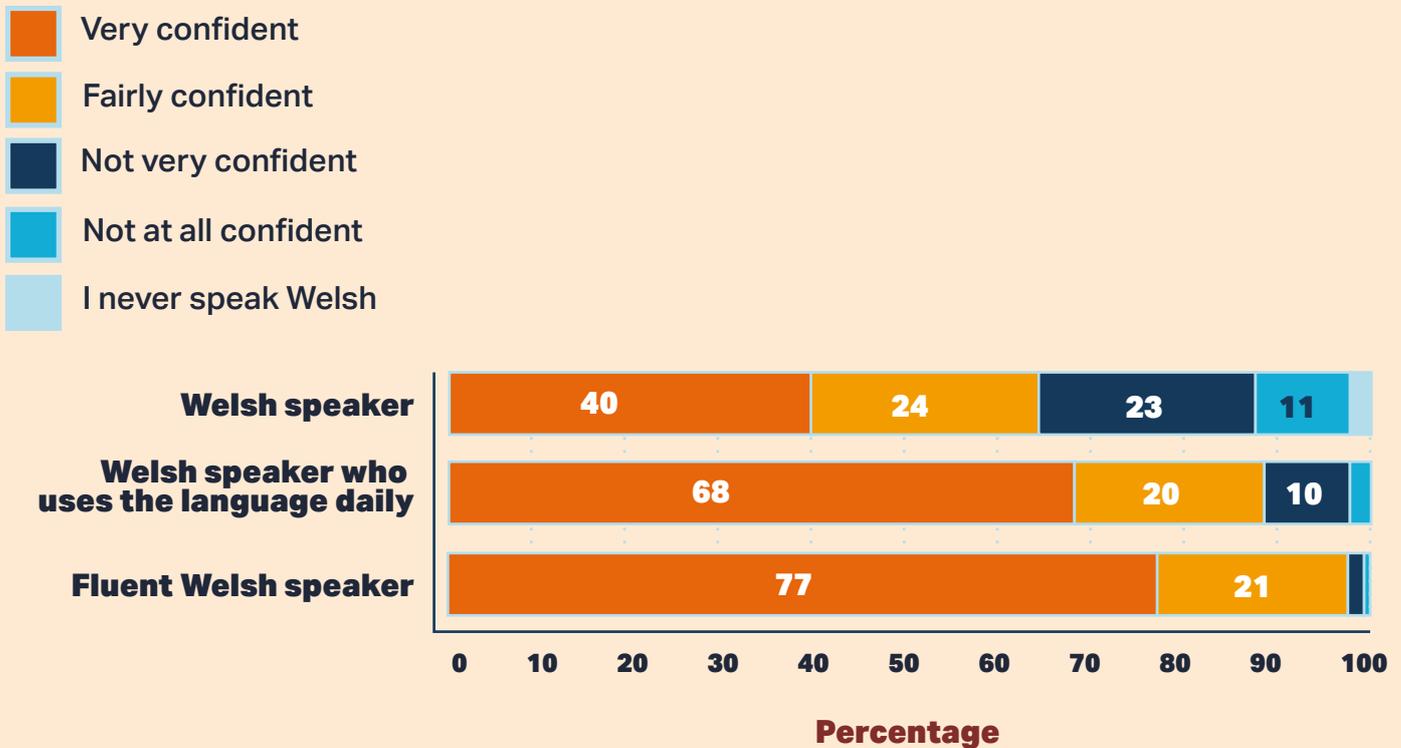
- I'm fluent in Welsh
- I can only speak a little Welsh
- I can speak a fair amount of Welsh
- I can say just a few words



(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2004–06, 2013–15, and 2019–20)

The evidence also shows a clear link between confidence to speak Welsh, frequency of use, and fluency. As illustrated in Chart 5, among all Welsh speakers aged 16 or older, 40% indicated that they were very confident in speaking Welsh. 24% were quite confident, 23% not very confident, and 11% not at all confident. Of those who report using the language daily, 68% stated that they are very confident in speaking Welsh. 77% of fluent Welsh speakers were very confident when speaking Welsh.

Chart 5: Confidence of Welsh speakers aged 16 or older when speaking the language, according to speakers who use the language daily and those who consider themselves fluent in the language

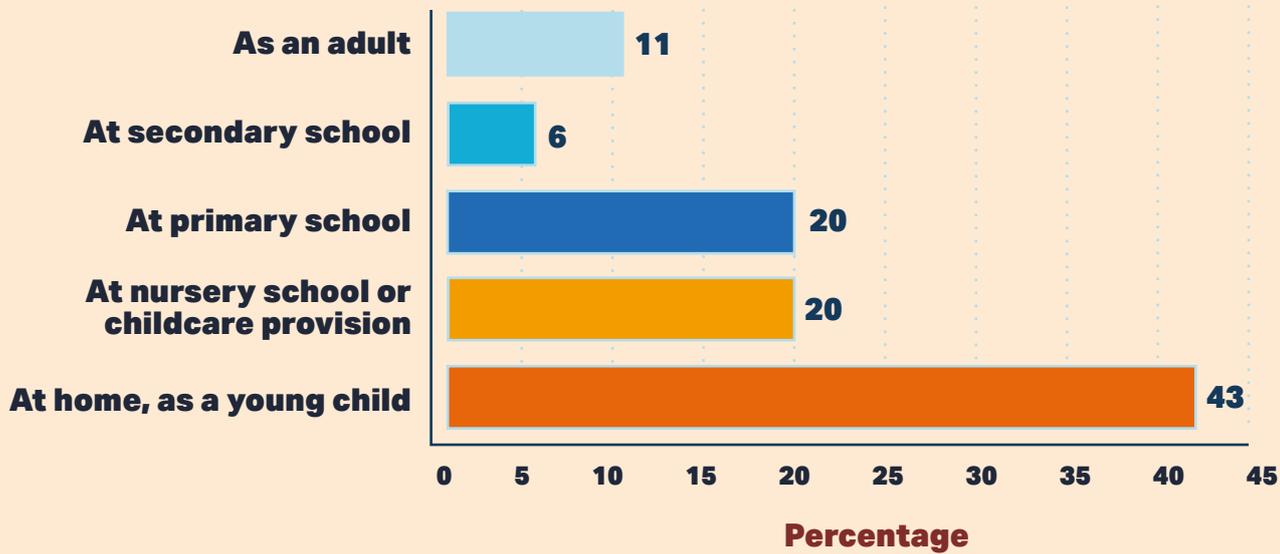


(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2019–20)

Where individuals have learnt Welsh

The 2019–20 Language Use Survey shows that 43% of Welsh speakers learnt the language at home as young children, 20% acquired it in nursery school or childcare provision, 20% in primary school, 6% in secondary school, and 11% as adults.

Chart 6: When Welsh speakers started learning to speak the language



(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2019–20)

As already mentioned in Part 2, there has been a significant shift over the past fifty years from the home to the education system as the main source of new Welsh speakers. As a result, a significantly smaller percentage of today’s young children have learnt the language at home, and a far greater percentage have acquired the language at school.



69% of Welsh speakers aged 65 or over have learnt Welsh at home.

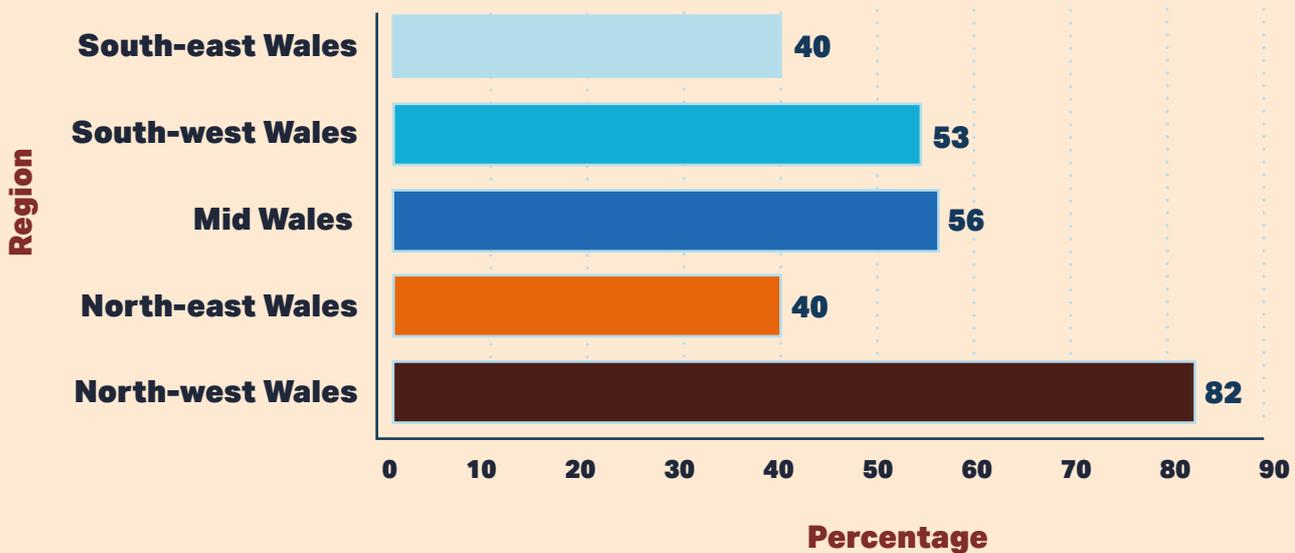
The equivalent figure for Welsh speakers aged 3–15 is **31%**: **69%** of this age group have learnt Welsh via the education.

As with fluent Welsh speakers, individuals who learnt Welsh at home as young children are also far more likely to use Welsh, with 82% indicating that they use Welsh daily. In comparison, only 32% of individuals who learnt Welsh in primary school indicated that they used Welsh daily.

Location

As we know, there are significant variations in the percentage and density of Welsh speakers in different areas of Wales, and these differences are also reflected in patterns of language use. For example, Welsh speakers over the age of 16 in north-west Wales were far more likely than Welsh speakers in the rest of Wales to be using Welsh daily.

Chart 7: Percentage of Welsh speakers aged 3 or over who speak Welsh daily, by region

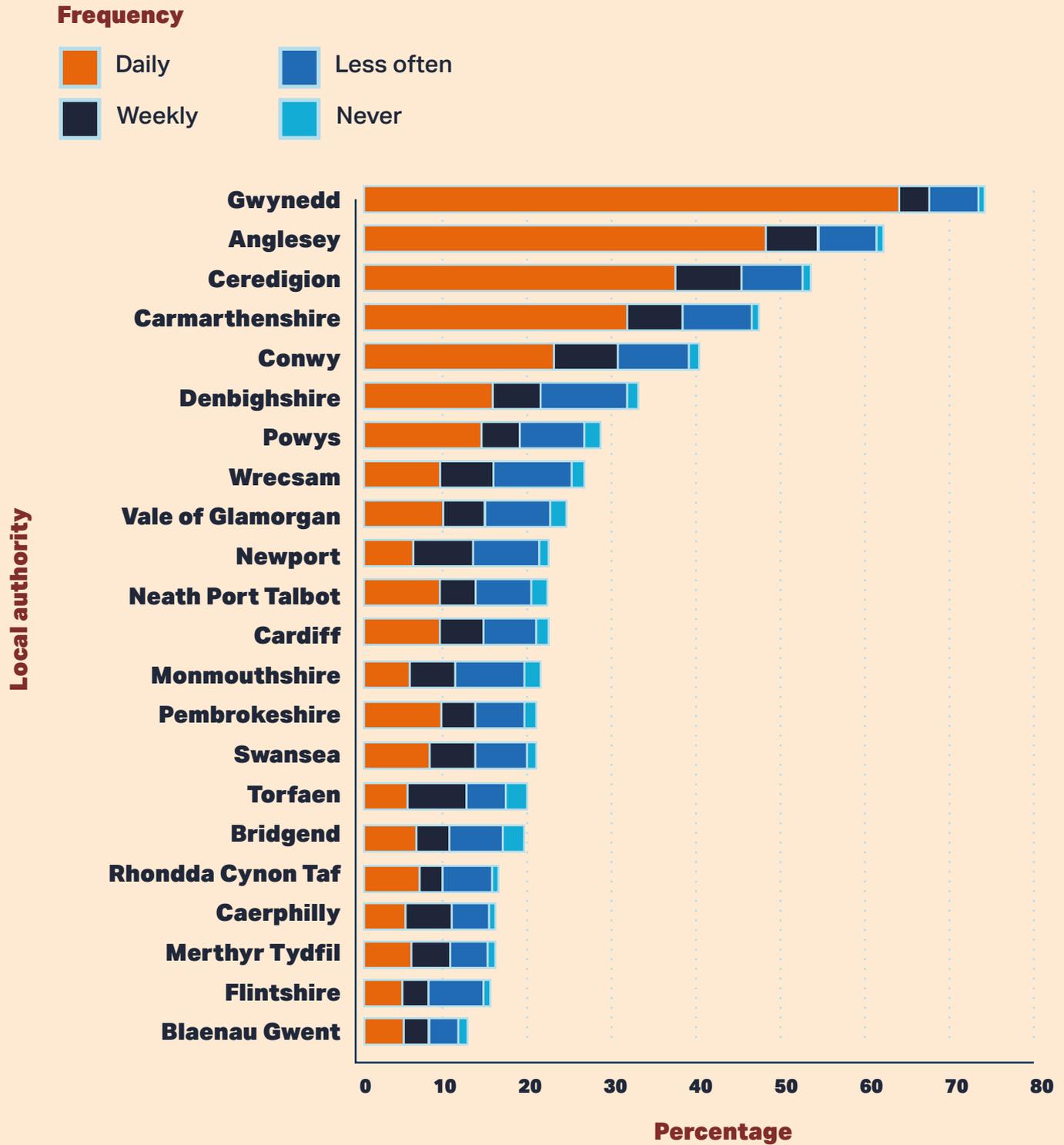


(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2019–20)

Although the 2019–20 Language Use Survey does not report on results at local authority level, data on Welsh language use at local authority level can be found in the annual population surveys. The survey for the year ending June 2025 reports that the counties with the highest percentages of people reporting daily use of Welsh were Gwynedd (64%), Anglesey (48%), Ceredigion (38%) and Carmarthenshire (32%). These figures align closely with regional trends seen in the Language Use Survey.

These results also reinforce Prosiect Bro's findings regarding the significance of areas with a high density of Welsh speakers in supporting the social use of the language. As previously noted, both the census results and Prosiect Bro's detailed analysis, show that the position of the Welsh language in areas with a high density of speakers is weakening.

Chart 8: Frequency of speaking Welsh by local authority



(Source: Annual Population Survey for the year ending June 2025)

Key conclusions

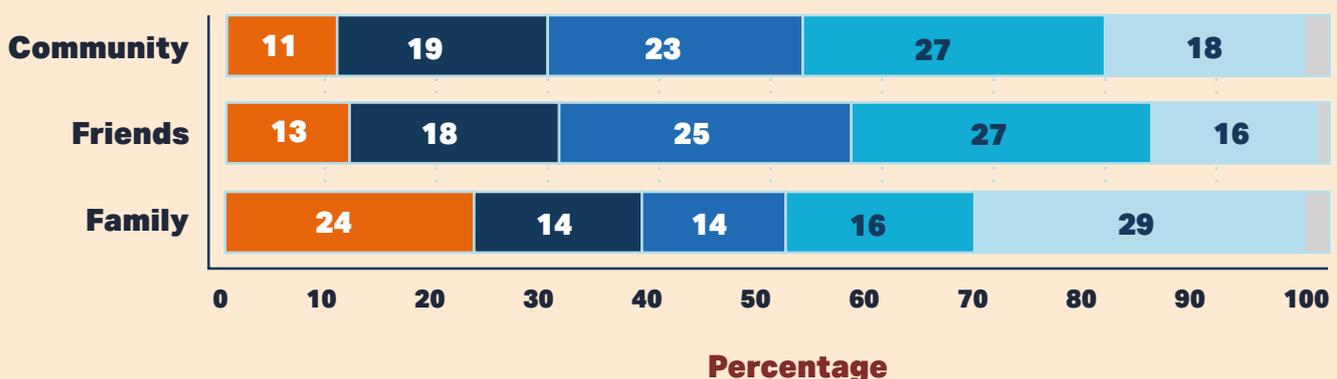
- **The use of Welsh** across different contexts is **significantly higher among fluent Welsh speakers, those who learnt Welsh at home as young children, and in areas with a higher density of Welsh speakers.**
- There have been notable demographic shifts among Welsh speakers in recent years. There are **fewer fluent Welsh speakers today than there were ten years ago, for example. There has been a noticeable shift from home to school as the primary source of new Welsh speakers.** At the same time, the **density of speakers in traditional Welsh language strongholds is decreasing.** Together, these trends are likely to create less favourable conditions for increasing the use of Welsh.

Social use of the Welsh language

The Language Use Survey asks Welsh speakers about the ability of their extended family, friends, and members of the local community to speak Welsh. This provides a valuable insight into the opportunities that exist for Welsh speakers to use the language.

Chart 9: Welsh language ability of Welsh speakers' social groups

Ability in Welsh

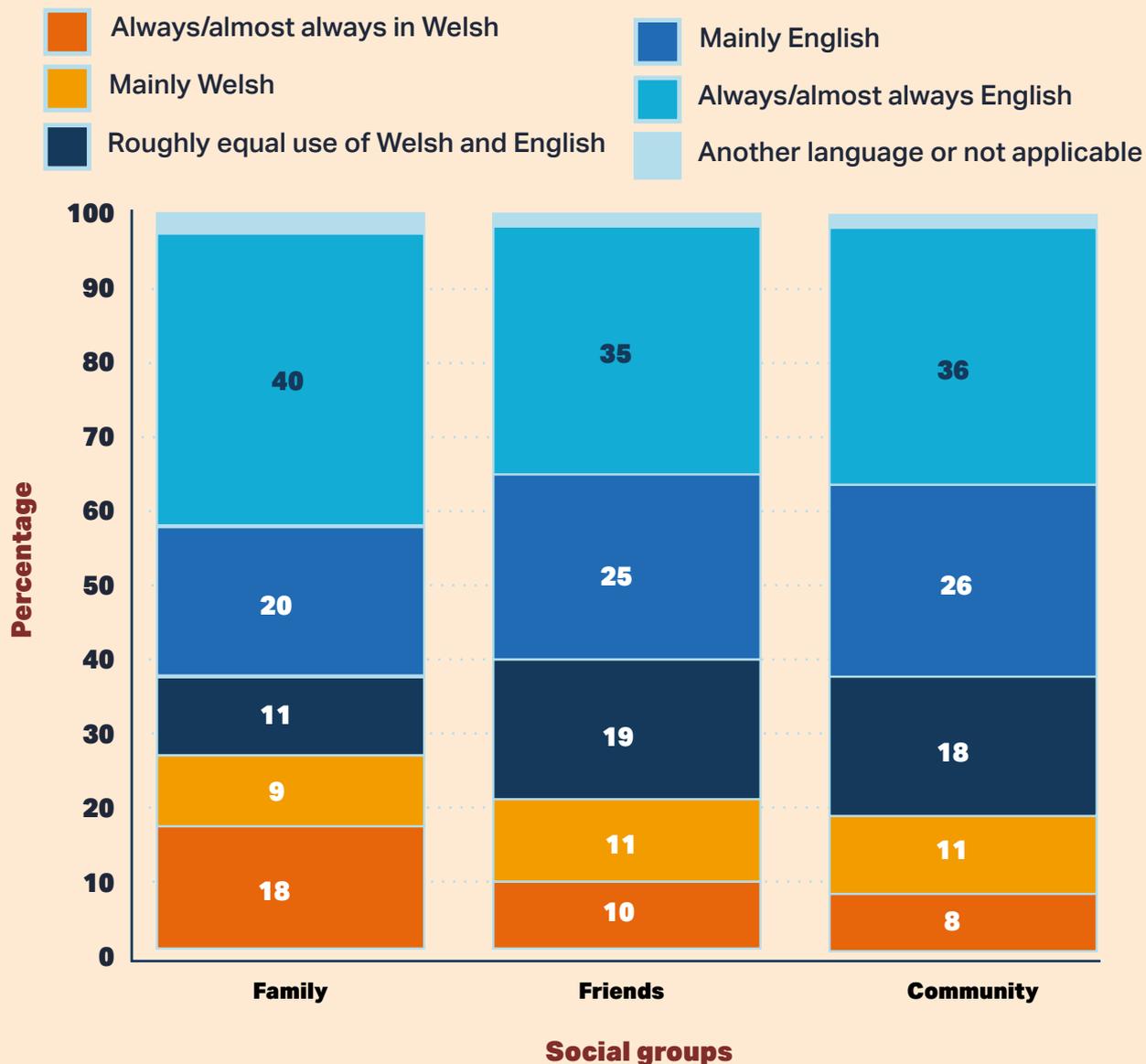


(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2019–20)

As illustrated in Chart 9, 52% of Welsh speakers report that at least half of their extended family can speak Welsh. A further 56% said that at least half of their friends can speak Welsh, and 53% said that at least half of the people in their local community can speak Welsh.

These opportunities that Welsh speakers have to use Welsh can be compared with statistics on what language Welsh speakers usually use with these social groups. Welsh speakers are more likely to use Welsh always or mainly with their family (28%) compared to their friends (21%) and people in the local community (19%). Overall, **the data suggests that Welsh speakers do not consistently take advantage of opportunities to use Welsh with their family, friends, and wider social groups.**

Chart 10: Language usually spoken by Welsh speakers with social groups



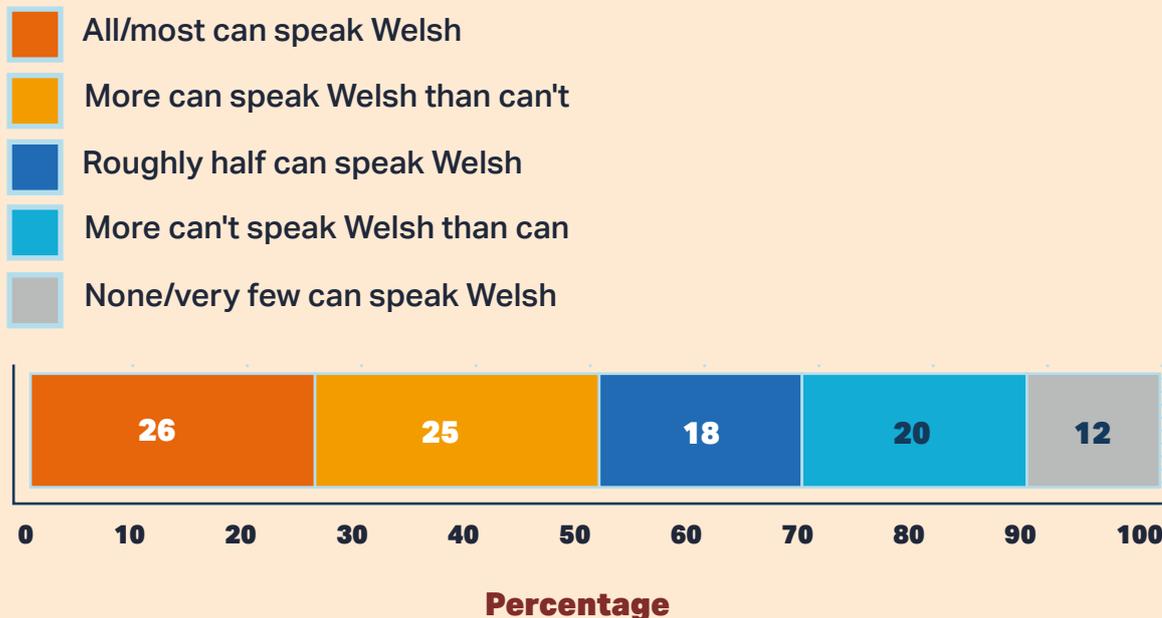
(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2019–20)

Welsh speakers over the age of 16 in north-west Wales were far more likely than Welsh speakers in the rest of Wales to report that at least half of their social groups were able to speak Welsh (extended family: 77%, friends: 81%, and people in the local community: 85%). The data also shows that **Welsh speakers in areas where there is a higher density of Welsh speakers are far more likely to use Welsh with their social groups.** For example, 51% of Welsh speakers in north-west Wales speak Welsh mainly or always with their extended family, 44% with their friends, and 46% with people in their local community.

It is also unsurprising that fluent Welsh speakers, those who speak Welsh daily, and those who had learnt Welsh at home as young children were far more likely to say that at least half their social groups were able to speak Welsh, and that they were far more likely to use Welsh regularly with those groups.

The Language Use Survey also asks children and young people (3–15 years old) about their use of Welsh in social contexts. As shown in Chart 11, Welsh-speaking children and young people were more likely to report that their friends could speak Welsh (69%) compared to the percentage of adults who reported that their friends could speak Welsh (56%).

Chart 11: Welsh language ability of children and young people’s friends

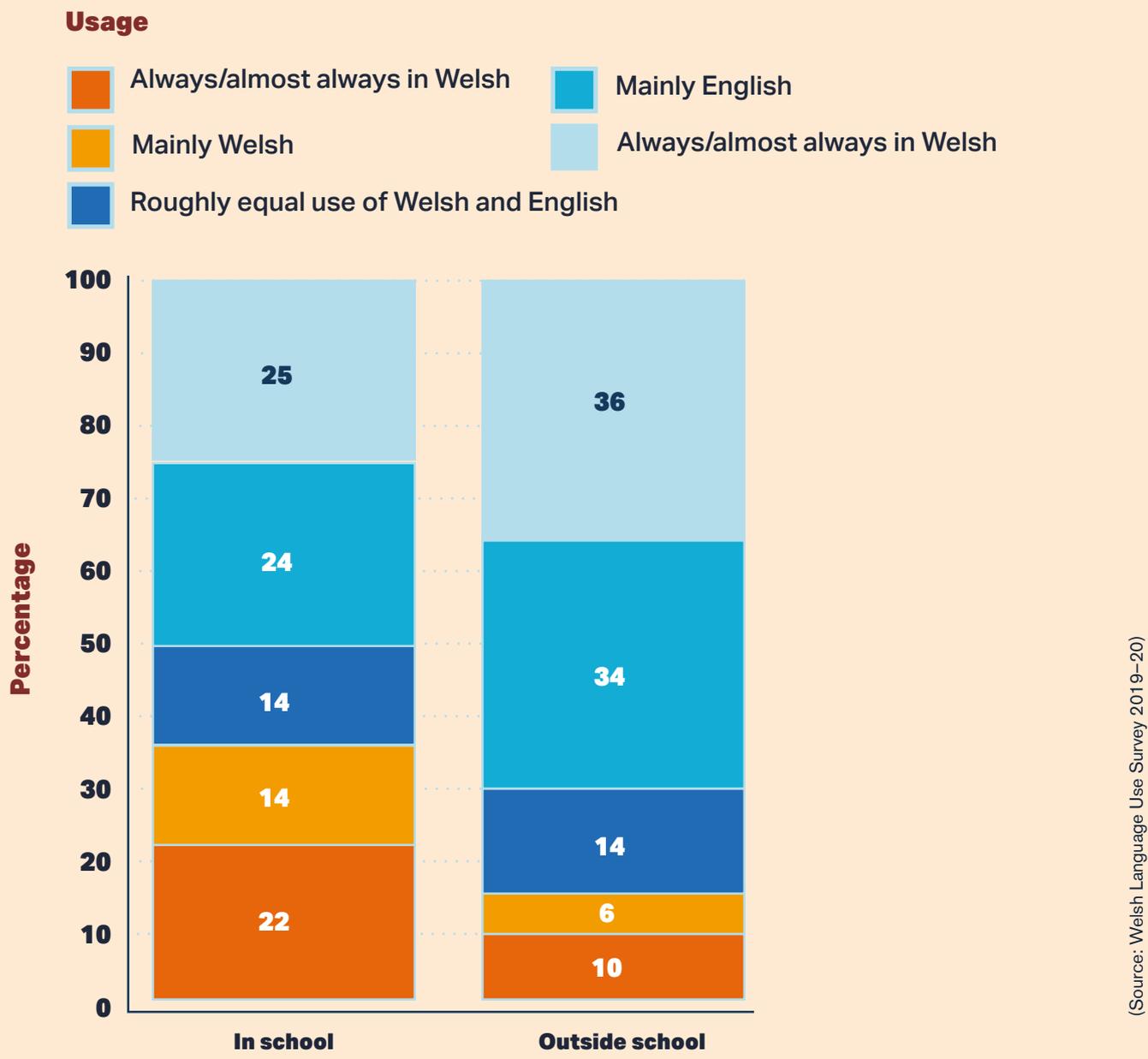


(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2019–20)

In terms of children and young people’s use of Welsh with their friends, the data shows that they are far more likely to speak Welsh with their friends at school than outside school. While 36% of Welsh speakers always or mainly use Welsh with their friends at school, only 16% did so outside school.

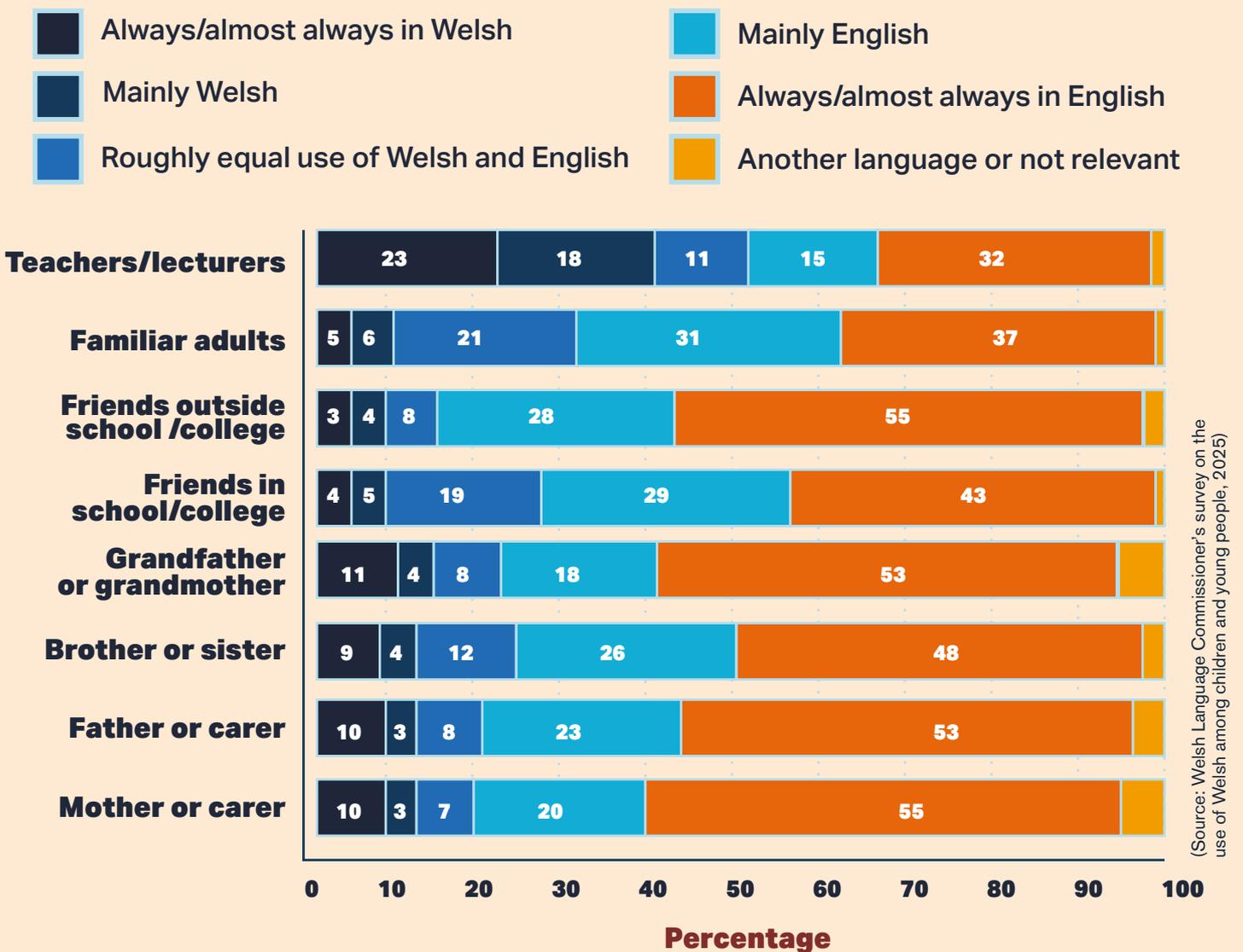
Children and young people’s use of Welsh with their friends outside school is lower than the equivalent figure for adults, despite the fact that children and young people are more likely to report that their friends are able to speak Welsh.

Chart 12: Use of Welsh by Welsh-speaking children and young people with friends



In May 2025, the Commissioner published a research report on children and young people’s use of the Welsh language in different contexts. Over 1,600 children and young people (aged 11–21) across Wales responded to the questionnaire. As part of the research, they were asked what language they mainly used when interacting with different social groups.

Chart 13: Language use with family and friends



Looking at all the responses, we see that the respondents were most likely to speak Welsh with teachers or lecturers. Over 40% of respondents spoke Welsh always or mainly with teachers or lecturers. **Outside school, respondents were most likely to speak Welsh with their family, and it is noteworthy that grandparents are at the top of the list.**

The percentages that indicated they use Welsh with their families and friends in the Commissioner's survey are significantly lower than those of the Language Use Survey. This probably partly reflects differences in the sample and methodology of these surveys.⁶

Patterns of language use vary considerably when responses are analysed by other characteristics. The percentage who indicate that they always or mainly speak Welsh with family or friends increases significantly among fluent Welsh speakers and those who learnt Welsh at home. For example, although 9% of the entire sample always or mainly used Welsh with their friends at school/college, this figure rises to 18% among fluent Welsh speakers, and to 28% among those who acquired Welsh at home.

Key conclusions

- The evidence **clearly shows that social use of the Welsh language remains a significant challenge**. This is particularly true when it comes to **children and young people's use of Welsh outside school**.
- Individuals who speak Welsh **are more likely to use Welsh with their family** than with their friends or within the community.
- The data shows that **children and young people are far more likely to use Welsh with their friends at school than outside school**.
- **Children and young people's use of Welsh with their friends outside school is lower than adults' use of Welsh with their friends**, despite the fact that a higher proportion of young people's friends are able to speak Welsh.

Use of the Welsh language in events and activities

Overall, the Language Use Survey shows that Welsh speakers are more likely to have attended an event or activity held through the medium of English than Welsh. **The only notable exception is a festival or Eisteddfod, where 20% of respondents indicated that they had attended such an event in Welsh in the previous 12 months.** Once again, Welsh speakers from north-west Wales, fluent Welsh speakers, those who spoke Welsh daily, and those who started speaking Welsh at home as young children, were more likely to have attended an event or activity that was held through the medium of Welsh.

⁶ For example, the Language Use Survey sample is based on those who have identified as Welsh speakers in the National Survey for Wales, and who agreed to complete the Language Use Survey. The Commissioner's questionnaire was shared with children and young people more generally, and it is likely that a significant number of responses were completed in schools. It must also be borne in mind that the Language Use Survey may have been answered by a parent or guardian on behalf of their children, where the Commissioner's questionnaire was answered by the children and young people themselves.

The above patterns are fairly consistent among the events or activities attended by Welsh speakers over the age of 16 (Chart 14), and among Welsh-speaking children and young people (Chart 15).

Chart 14: Organised events or activities attended by Welsh speakers over the age of 16 in the previous 12 months, by the language of the event

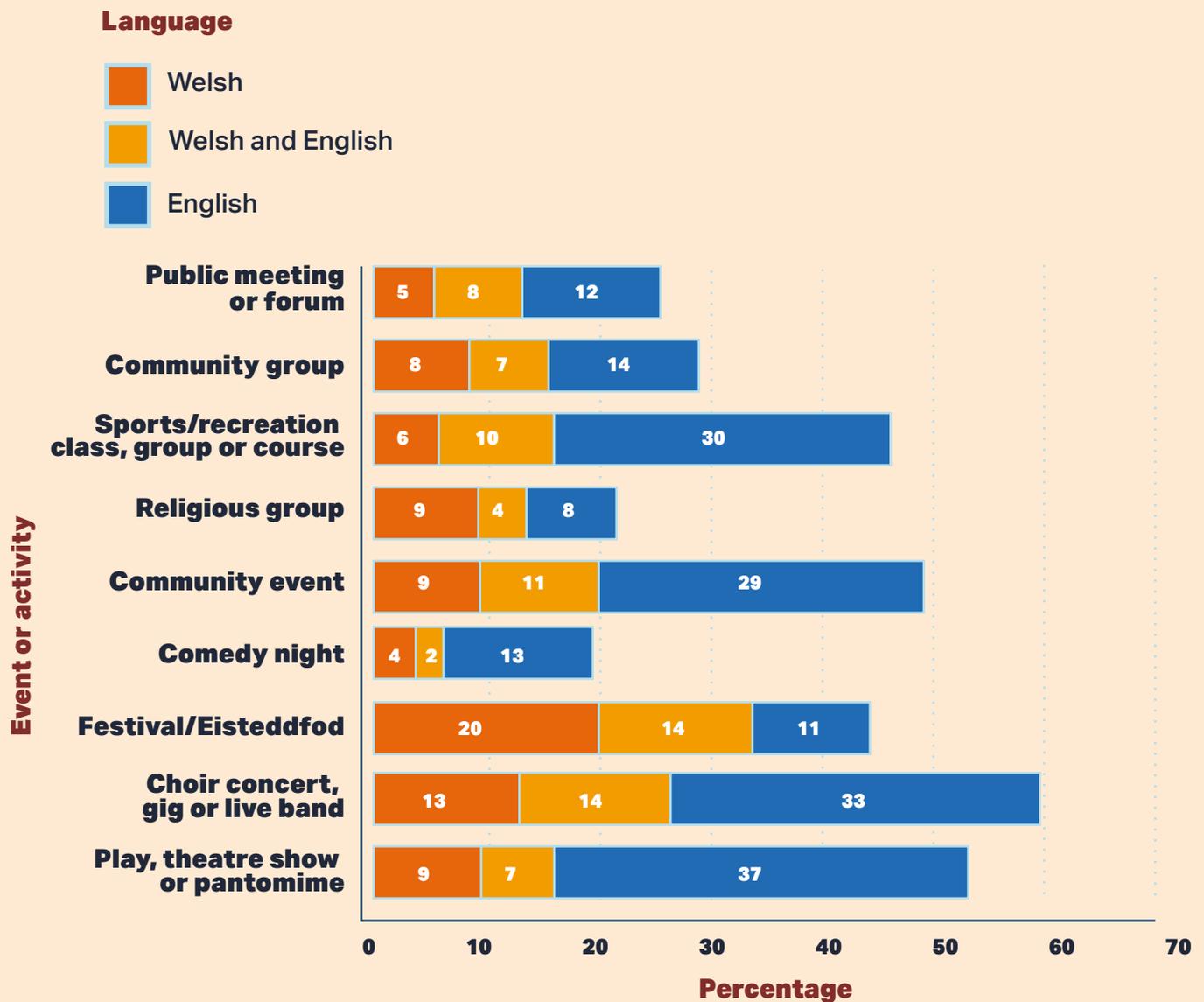
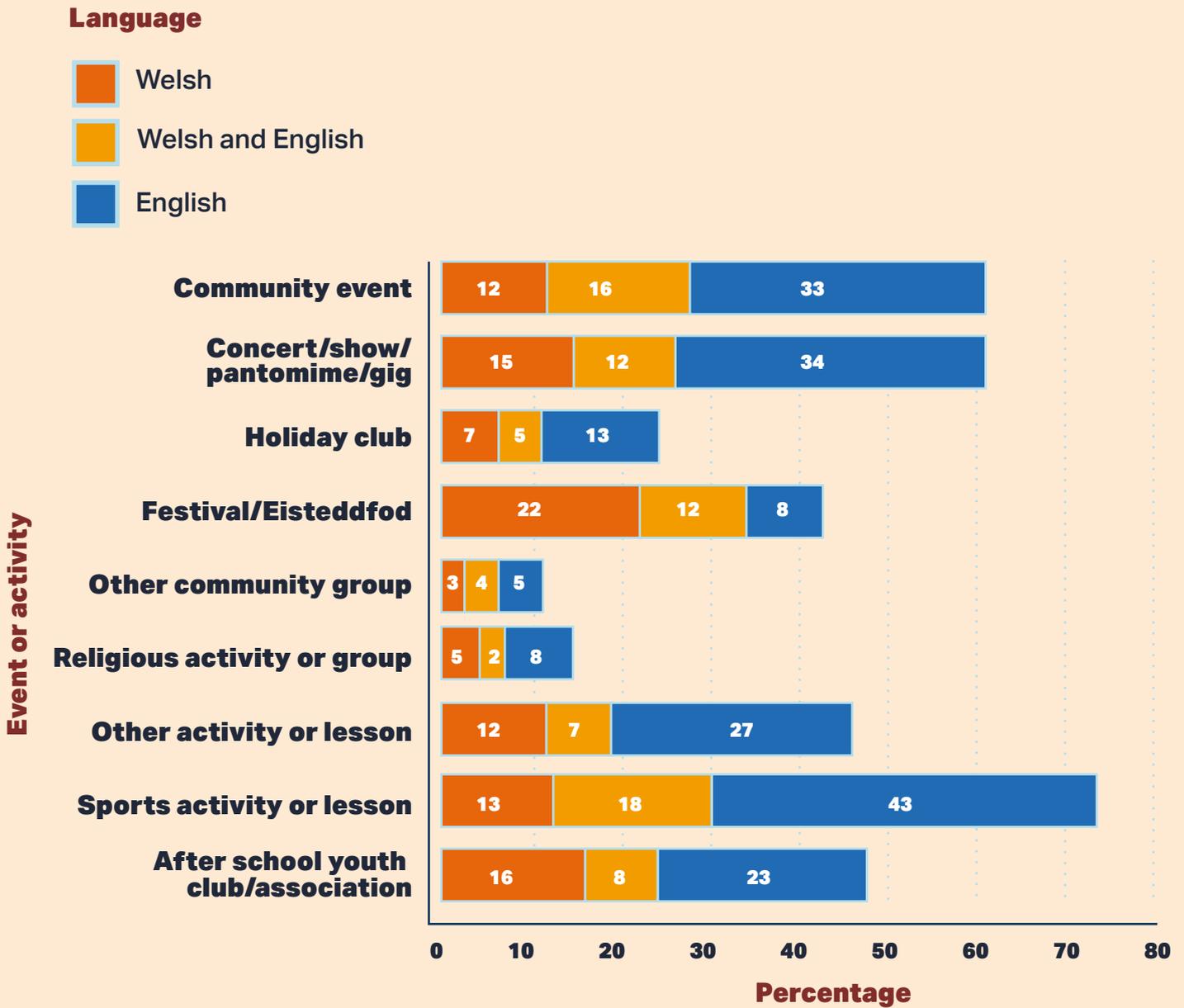


Chart 15: Welsh-speaking children and young people’s attendance at organised events or activities outside school over the previous 12 months





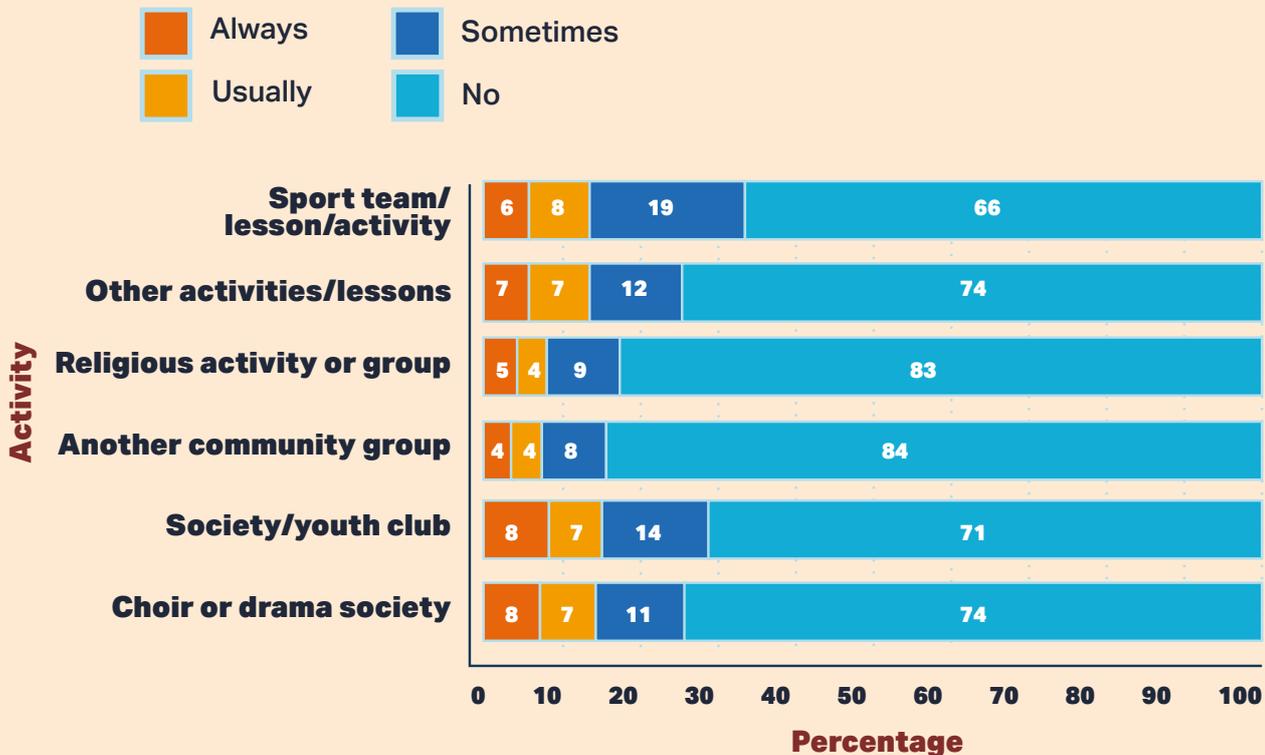
53% of children and young people say they take part in sports activities.

This is **twice as high** as the percentage who indicated that they took part in other types of activity.

The Commissioner’s research report further detailed the types of activities children and young people did outside school, and also the extent to which they were using Welsh with their friends during these activities.

Respondents were far more likely to be a member of a sports club or attend sporting activities than any of the other options, with 53% of the sample stating that they attended a sporting activity outside school. **The data also shows that children and young people are most likely to use Welsh with their friends when taking part in sporting activities.**

Chart 16: Use of the Welsh language by children and young people attending different activities



(Source: Welsh Language Commissioner’s survey on the use of Welsh among children and young people, 2025)

These percentages increase significantly when the data is analysed by other characteristics. For example, 34% of the overall sample reported using some Welsh during sports activities, compared with 53% of fluent Welsh speakers and 71% of those who learnt Welsh at home.

Key conclusions

- With the exception of festivals such as the Eisteddfod, **Welsh speakers are more likely to attend events and activities through the medium of English** than Welsh.
- Children and young people are far more **likely to attend sports activities** on a regular basis compared to any other type of activity. Children and young people are also **more likely to use Welsh with friends and coaches in sporting activities** compared to other events and activities.

1.2 Main developments

Grants to promote and facilitate the use of the Welsh language

Over the reporting period the Government has continued to provide **grants to a range of organisations to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh**. For example, in 2023–24, grants were allocated to 43 organisations to facilitate the use of the Welsh language at a community and national level. Recipients included the National Eisteddfod, Cymdeithas Eisteddfodau Cymru, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, the Mentrau Iaith, Merched y Wawr, the Wales Young Farmers Clubs, papurau bro, and Cymdeithas Cyfieithwyr Cymru.

These grants are crucial in **enabling various organisations to create meaningful opportunities for people to use the Welsh language in the community**. They are particularly important for ensuring that children and young people can participate in cultural and sporting experiences through the medium of Welsh.

Although the structure of these grants has remained relatively stable throughout the reporting period, their contribution to supporting the work of key organisations such as the Urdd, the mentrau iaith, the Wales Federation of Young Farmers Clubs and the National Eisteddfod, which play a central role in promoting the use of the Welsh language throughout Wales, must be acknowledged. This includes the **role the Urdd plays in providing sporting activities and arts and cultural activities to thousands of children and young people** across Wales. Similarly, **Mentrau Iaith Cymru and the local mentrau iaith provide an extensive range of activities and events at a local and national level**, all designed to increase opportunities for people to use Welsh.

As the census data shows, there is a high density of Welsh speakers in rural areas, and the activities of the Welsh Young Farmers' Clubs, particularly in those areas, **offer indispensable opportunities for young people to socialise and take part in a variety of activities in the Welsh language. They also offer opportunities nationally for those in areas where there are lower numbers of speakers to hear and use Welsh. Major cultural events such as the Urdd Eisteddfod and the National Eisteddfodau as well as the Tafwyl festivals and the Tawe Festival are important spaces for people to use the Welsh language socially.** By celebrating the Welsh language and culture, these events help to create a positive image of the Welsh language and do a great job of promoting the language and creating a sense of pride in it in communities, which can inspire more Welsh-language community activities and motivate people to learn the language.

In 2023, a Review of the Welsh Government's Grant Scheme to Promote and Facilitate the Use of the Welsh Language was published.⁷ As well as concluding that the grant scheme makes a significant contribution to achieving the *Cymraeg 2050* strategic objectives, the review made a series of recommendations to the Welsh Government as it plans a new funding model and structures for the grant scheme in the future.

Another development likely to influence this policy area in the future is the second phase of work of the Welsh Communities Commission. While the Commission's publications to date have focused on areas with a high density of speakers, the Commission's next phase will consider the situation of the Welsh language in areas with a medium or lower density of Welsh speakers. The Commission will submit a report and public policy recommendations to the Welsh Government in 2026 on how the number of Welsh speakers and usage in these areas could be increased.

Sport

There is little doubt about the **importance of sports in providing opportunities for people to use the Welsh language socially** as members of a team or club, whether as players, supporters, coaches, volunteers or referees. This is especially true for children and young people who participate in sport more than in any other activity outside school. Over the reporting period, **there has been a growing recognition of the need to strengthen opportunities to use Welsh in the sports sector.** The Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities highlighted the importance of ensuring that sports and leisure clubs make extensive use of the Welsh language when coaching children and young people in areas of higher density. The same applies in lower density areas where opportunities to use Welsh in sport are more limited, often due to a lack of awareness of participants' desire and ability to speak Welsh.

⁷ [Review of the Welsh Government's Grant Scheme to Promote and Facilitate the Use of the Welsh Language.](#)

The various sporting activities organised locally and nationally by the Urdd are crucial in this regard. The sports governing bodies that receive funding from Sport Wales also have an important role to play in influencing the use of the Welsh language in grassroots sport. The Welsh Language Commissioner has worked with governing bodies and other strategic partners in sport to encourage them to develop plans for the development of the Welsh language, and by the end of the period, four of them had been awarded the Cynnig Cymraeg recognition. At grassroots level, there have also been steps taken towards strengthening the use of Welsh in the community with Menter Iaith Gwynedd producing a pack to promote the Welsh language in sports clubs. The National Centre for Learning Welsh also formed a special partnership with the Football Association of Wales, the Welsh Rugby Union and Wrexham Football Club to increase the Welsh language skills of the club's players, staff and supporters. To support learners, apprentices and individuals working in sport who need greater confidence to use Welsh in professional sport-related settings, a package of sport e-learning resources tailored for Level 2 learners has been developed with funding from Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

The importance of the sports sector in providing opportunities to use the Welsh language highlights the **need to put firmer structures in place to support the use of Welsh in grassroots sport**. Sport Wales' role in setting conditions relating to the Welsh language in the allocation of grants is crucial in this regard. There is a clear need to raise awareness of the Welsh language and ensure that training is available in Welsh in the various sports as well as to consider how to further support clubs at grassroots level to facilitate the use of the Welsh language in a fun and informal way.



A language for
socialising and
community



Promoting the Welsh language on the playing field is one of the aims of Ceredigion Hockey Club, which was established by a group of volunteers in the Aberystwyth area. The club provides opportunities for local children and young people to enjoy playing hockey in a friendly and inclusive environment, and to do so through the medium of Welsh.

This felt like the most natural approach for Gemma Cutter and her friends.



I work in the field of sport from day to day and I see how important it is in building confidence and friendship among young people. When we came together to establish this club there was a clear intention to create a setting where Welsh could be a natural language when playing sport. But at the same time, it developed organically because many of the coaches and children were already using Welsh as their main language.

Our hope is that this will also influence the children and that they, too, play naturally in Welsh, as that is the language they hear from us as coaches.

Naturally, a few challenges have come up along the way. Sometimes it is difficult to ensure that all the coaches speak Welsh, and that can create gaps in the language from time to time. But we also see this as an opportunity – the coaches who are not confident in Welsh have a chance to develop their language skills and become part of our culture.

We emphasise that all are welcome, and learners are an important part of the club. For many of the children, this is the first time they've been part of an environment where Welsh is used naturally, and they come from a variety of linguistic backgrounds.

The natural Welsh-language environment developed through sport is a great way for them to practice without pressure and to have a positive experience of the Welsh language and culture. Learners often benefit greatly from having role models in the coaches, and this helps build confidence and a sense of belonging to the club and the Welsh culture.

According to Gemma, there is great potential in using sport to promote the Welsh language in the wider community.



Activities outside school help Welsh to be a living language, not just taught in a classroom. Sport can play a key role in this – children use the language without overthinking it, which builds confidence and makes Welsh a natural part of everyday conversations.

Leisi is 11 years old and has been a member of the club for many years.



I love playing hockey and this club gives me the chance to do that every week and to learn more about the sport. I speak Welsh and English with my friends, but it's great to come to the club and be able to speak Welsh with everyone.

One of the parents, Charlie Priddy, is a Welsh learner and has recently come along to train with the hockey club.



I'm learning Welsh, and I see the club as a great opportunity to do that in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Playing with both teens and adults is a lot of fun, and it's a great workout too.

Culture and the arts

Organisations such as the Urdd and the National Eisteddfod also provide important opportunities to use Welsh socially when engaging with the arts. Both the **Urdd Eisteddfod and the National Eisteddfod continue to contribute extensively to Welsh language arts**, offering valuable opportunities for young people and adults to use the Welsh language as competitors and attendees. Through the financial support of the Welsh Government, the Urdd was able to offer free entry to low-income families to the 2025 Urdd Eisteddfod at Margam Park. **That year, the Urdd celebrated a record 119,593 entries to compete in over 400 competitions in 2025**, with a significant increase in the number of young Welsh learners taking part.

The importance of these festivals for new speakers or people interested in learning more about the language and its culture cannot be overstated. Research by the National Eisteddfod indicates that **more new Welsh speakers visited the 2025 Wrexham Eisteddfod than ever before**. Their research shows that the number of first-time visitors has more than doubled since the Monmouthshire and District National Eisteddfod in 2016 almost a decade ago – the last time the festival was held near the border. Notably, 17% of visitors reported that **visiting the Eisteddfod or taking part in community activities prior to the festival had helped them learn Welsh or inspired them to start learning the language**. This aligns with data from the National Centre for Learning Welsh which showed that the **number of people enrolling on a Welsh course in Wrexham was at an all-time high**.⁸

A key attraction of the national festival that appeals to all ages, and which is very important in trying to attract children and young people to the Welsh language as a contemporary language, is the opportunity to hear contemporary Welsh music. Smaller local gigs held in venues across Wales also provide crucial opportunities for people to come together to socialise and enjoy themselves in Welsh, and often serve as gateways for new speakers. A new generation of people composing and singing in Welsh is emerging alongside established artists. The popularity of songs such as 'Yma o Hyd' by Dafydd Iwan, boosted further by the success of the Welsh football team, demonstrates how Welsh music can broaden the language's appeal. Similarly, the decision of people who usually sing in English, such as Aleighcia Scott, to compose and sing in Welsh shows how the Welsh language can bridge diverse communities and cultural identities across Wales.

The Arts Council of Wales is the main third sector arts funding organisation in Wales, funding theatres, galleries, arts centres and a wide range of projects and events. Following the publication of key research in 2020 into the scale and strength of Welsh-medium arts activity across Wales, the Arts Council has taken steps to address the challenges and opportunities identified.⁹ One of the main findings of the research was that a proactive approach is needed to promote the Welsh language in the arts, including better data, support for bilingualism, and strategic collaboration.

⁸ Demand for Welsh lessons up in Wrexham as National Eisteddfod takes place | Welsh Government News (Accessed January 2026).

⁹ Arts Council Wales, Welsh Mapping Project (May 2020).

A major development during the reporting period was the Arts Council’s strategic decision to require organisations receiving its grants to develop Welsh language development plans.

As a result, 34 arts organisations now have structured plans to increase the use of Welsh in their work. From 2027 onwards, **all eligible organisations will be required to attain the Cynnig Cymraeg recognition from the Welsh Language Commissioner in order to receive a grant from the Arts Council of Wales.** This will build on the 29 arts organisations across Wales that already hold the Cynnig Cymraeg. The Cynnig Cymraeg provides a structured framework to support organisations in developing and reporting on the Welsh language services and activities they offer. Organisations subject to statutory Welsh-language standards are not eligible to work towards the Cynnig Cymraeg.

Another important development during the reporting period was a commitment in the Programme for Government 2021–26 to engage with the arts, culture and heritage sectors in Wales to develop a **new culture strategy for Wales.** Offering cultural activities through the medium of Welsh is essential for creating more opportunities for people to use Welsh. Sectors such as the arts, literature, music and the performance industries are vital to conveying Wales’ rich cultural heritage, supporting economic growth and expanding opportunities to work through the medium of Welsh. **Ensuring the development of a clear strategy and adequate levels of investment in culture is, therefore, crucial for the long-term vitality of the Welsh language.**

Following significant delay, the Welsh Government published a consultation on priorities for culture 2024–30. Following the consultation, the Senedd’s Culture Committee expressed their concerns about the lack of detail in the consultation document, particularly around budget, responsibilities and timetables.¹⁰ The committee noted that these concerns reflect wider concerns about the lack of strategic investment in culture in Wales. For example, government figures show that **spending on culture in Wales is significantly lower than in most European countries.**¹¹

Cuts to the Books Council’s budget, as in the case of the Arts Council, the National Library of Wales and Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, have led to concerns about the viability of the Welsh language books publishing sector, a sector where public funding is vital to ensure its success. Welsh language books give expression to Welsh language culture and the experiences of its speakers and are essential in order to reinforce people’s language skills. The sector is also an important employer and provides Welsh-language working environments across Wales. Current policy direction in this sector **suggests that the contribution of the publishing industry to language planning is not being fully acknowledged or prioritised.**

¹⁰ Letter from the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee to the Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip regarding draft priorities for culture in Wales 2024 to 2030. (September 2024)

¹¹ The Welsh Government’s priorities for culture: When is a strategy not a strategy?.

5-Year Promotion Strategies

To comply with Welsh language standards, local authorities and national parks must produce **5-year strategies explaining how they will promote the Welsh language and facilitate its use** in their areas. These strategies must include clear targets to increase or maintain the number of Welsh speakers, along with an explanation of how these targets will be achieved. Each strategy must be reviewed at the end of every five-year cycle, with a revised version published accordingly.

The aim is that the promotion strategies provide a clear framework for local action to increase the use of Welsh and the number of people who speak Welsh, connecting local policies to national priorities. They should be vehicles for planning community, cultural and sporting activities locally to meet the linguistic needs of Wales' diverse communities. Their **main objective is to create an environment where the Welsh language is visible, accessible and a natural part of everyday life, ensuring that there is an increase in opportunities for people to use the language.**

The Welsh Language Commissioner is responsible for ensuring that these strategies are produced. To support this work, the Commissioner has published an advice document for organisations¹² and commissioned an independent study to evaluate how organisations have assessed the achievement of their 5-year strategies.¹³ The evaluation highlighted examples of good practice, but it also revealed significant variation in how success was assessed. This highlighted the **need for more specific guidance and training on assessing the achievement of strategies** and in the collection and use of quantitative and qualitative data to formulate the strategies and set realistic targets.

The Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2025 places a duty on Welsh Ministers to review the promotion standards and determine whether there is potential to amend them to facilitate the achievement of the Government's targets on increasing social use of the Welsh language. **This creates an important opportunity to consider how the role of the promotion strategies as strategic tools for robust community language planning in Wales could be developed and strengthened.**

Although the promotion standards provide an important foundation for language planning, they do not currently set clear expectations with regard to the content of the strategies, nor do they provide a specific process for monitoring and scrutiny. As a result, the full potential of these strategies as a vehicle for community language planning has not yet been fully realised. A recent report by the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities recommends reviewing and expanding the standards to maximise their impact, particularly in areas with a high density of Welsh speakers.

¹² Welsh Language Commissioner, [Standards relating to promoting the Welsh language: 5-year strategies: a best practice guide for county and county borough councils and national park authorities](#).

¹³ Welsh Language Commissioner, [Promotion standards: assessing the achievement of the 5-year strategies, effective practice guidance document \(April 2021\)](#).

1.3 Priorities and opportunities to strengthen the position of the Welsh language over the next five years

The latest evidence suggests that **little has changed over the past decade in how often the population speaks Welsh**. The evidence clearly shows that **increasing social use of the Welsh language remains a significant challenge**. It seems that Welsh speakers do not consistently take advantage of opportunities to use Welsh when socialising with their extended family, friends, or in their local community.

This is **particularly apparent when it comes to children and young people’s use of Welsh outside school**. The evidence shows that children and young people are far more likely to use Welsh at school, while social use of the language outside school gates appears to be limited.

The evidence shows that **social use of the Welsh language is consistently much higher among fluent Welsh speakers**, among those who have **learnt Welsh at home**, and in **areas with a higher density of speakers**.

There are fewer fluent Welsh speakers today than there were a decade ago, there has been a significant shift from home to school as the main source of new Welsh speakers, and we know that the density of speakers in traditional Welsh strongholds is declining. Together, these **trends in the demographics of Welsh speakers today do not support efforts to increase the use of the language**.

Although this section of the report focuses specifically on increasing the use of Welsh, it must be emphasised that there is **an integral relationship between increasing the number of Welsh speakers and increasing language use**. Increasing language use would be a much easier task in a situation where the majority of the population is able to speak Welsh. It is therefore important to bear in mind the relevance of significant developments in education and skills over the reporting period to the efforts that exist to increase the use of Welsh.

Despite the challenges highlighted by the evidence, **it is essential to acknowledge the significant and important work undertaken by many organisations to increase opportunities to use Welsh**. Without the efforts of bodies such as the mentrau iaith, the Urdd, and the National Eisteddfod, the position of the Welsh language would undoubtedly be more fragile. But there is no doubt that the latest evidence shows once again the scale and complexity of the challenge that exists to ensure that Welsh is a living language, used as a natural part of community life across Wales. There is a **genuine risk that an increasing proportion of children and young people see Welsh solely as the language of education**, and there is a real need for more bold and ambitious interventions in community language planning.

In terms of strengthening community language planning frameworks there is **clear potential to strengthen the promotion standards as a more effective vehicle for community language planning**. Although local authorities and national parks in Wales are already required to produce 5-year strategies for promoting the use of the Welsh language, the potential of these strategies is not yet being fully realised. These strategies **have the potential to make a significant difference to the way in which opportunities to use the Welsh language socially are planned and implemented**.

Priority



There must be far more opportunities, especially for children and young people, to use the Welsh language in communities, and to take part in cultural, community and sporting activities. To achieve this, and as recommended by the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, the Welsh Government must strengthen community-based language planning frameworks and increase the funding and resources available to key partners responsible for delivering these activities and events in Welsh.

The Commissioner should therefore be given greater responsibilities to monitor and assess strategies, provide recommendations to bodies, share good practice and review the success of the strategies annually, as well as producing a report and recommendations to the Welsh Government at the end of the strategy period.

In addition to strengthening the planning framework, **additional resources should be provided to key partners such as the mentrau iaith, the Urdd, Mudiad Meithrin, the National Eisteddfod and sports clubs** – to enable them to implement key elements of these strategies.

2. Broadcasting, media, and technology

The mass media play a crucial role in strengthening the visibility of the Welsh language and creating opportunities for people to hear and use Welsh in their daily lives. Welsh-language broadcasting and media not only reflect the experiences, aspirations and identities of Welsh speakers, but also help attract new speakers to the language.

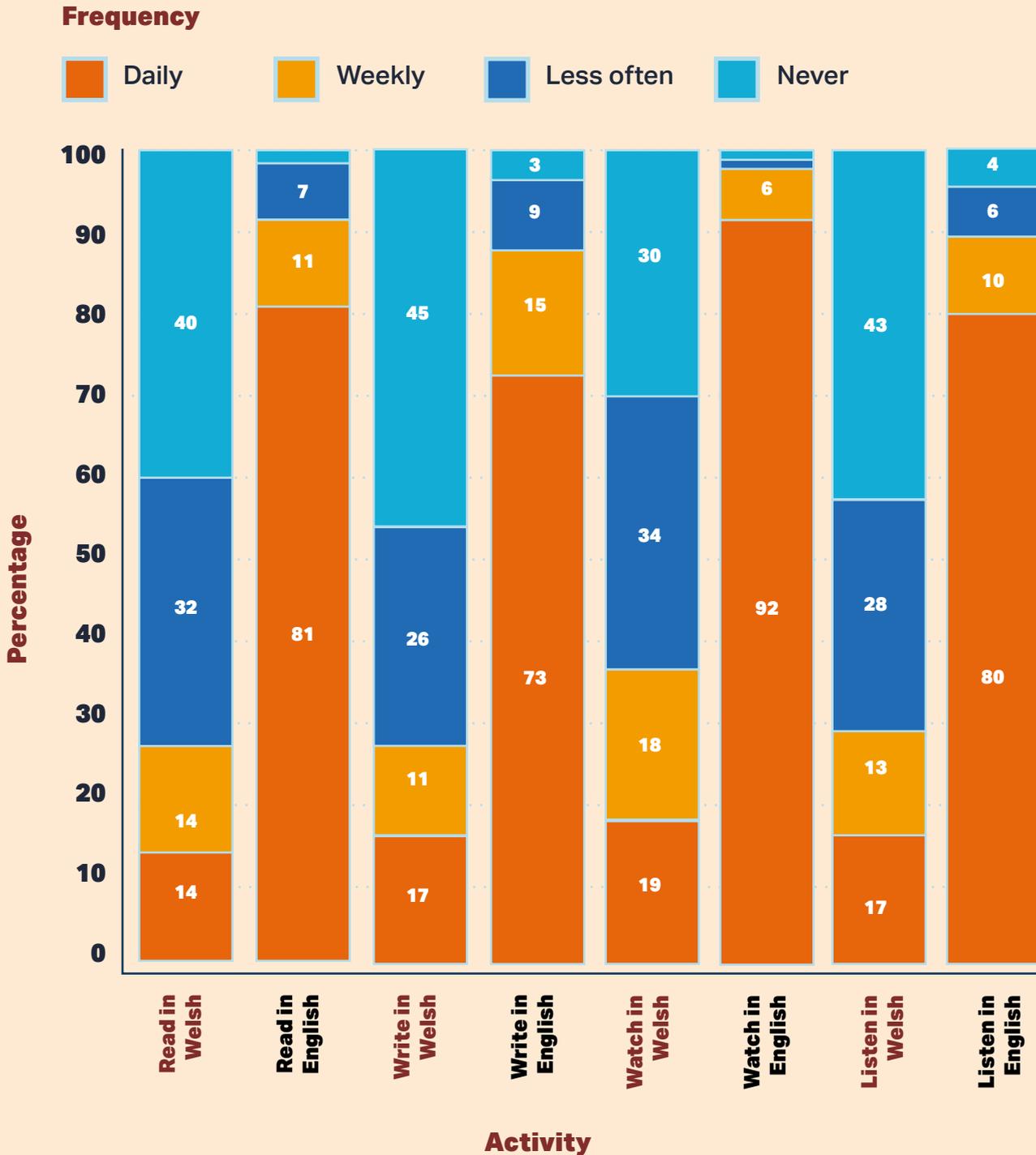
This role is even more important given the central place that digital media and technology now hold in contemporary life. It is inevitable that social media, online content creation and consumption, and artificial intelligence will become increasingly significant factors in future language planning.

2.1 The evidence

Using Welsh when watching, reading, and listening

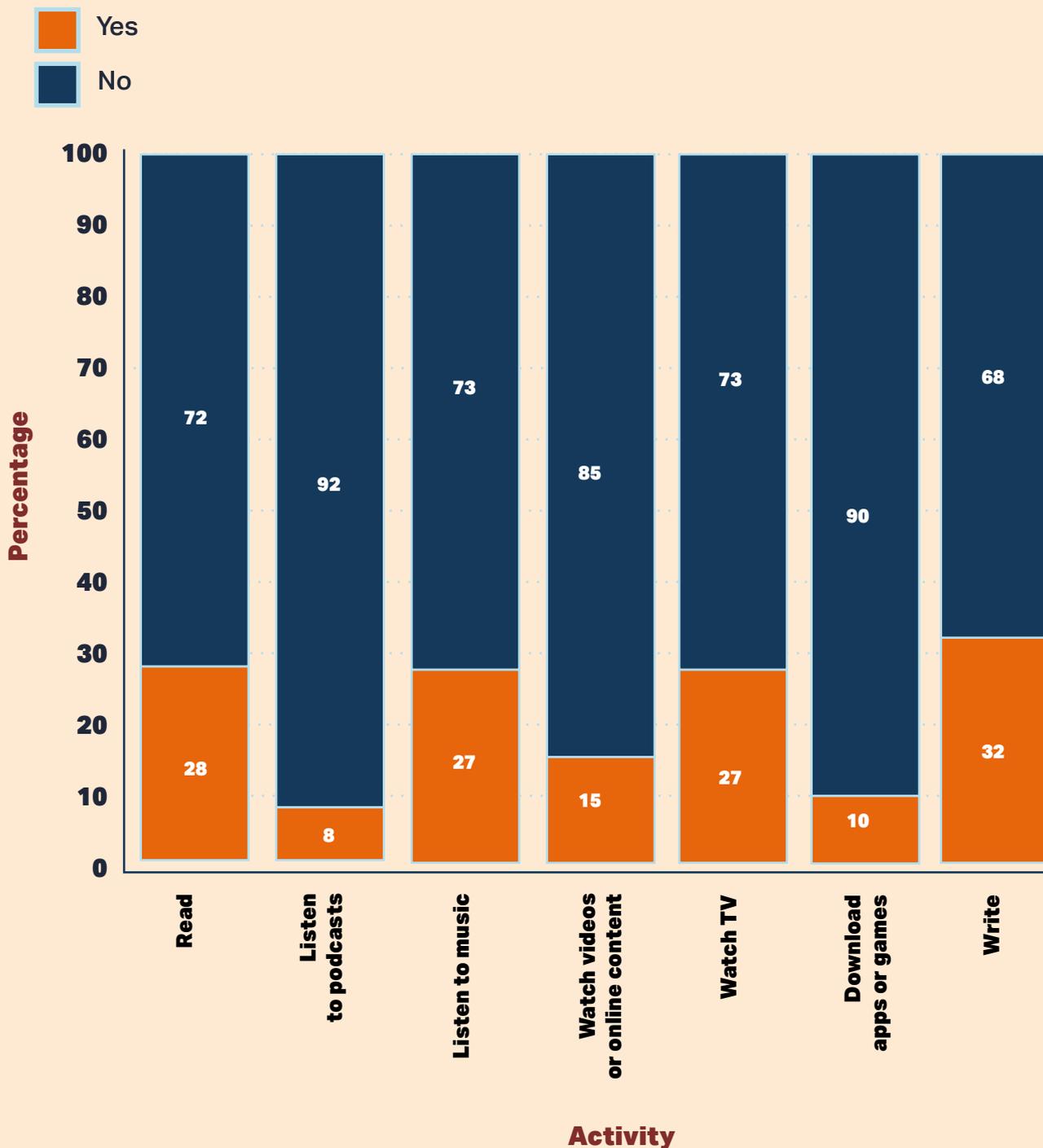
The Language Use Survey provides information on the use of Welsh in reading, writing, watching and listening. Chart 17 shows that Welsh speakers are far more likely to read, write, watch and listen in English than in Welsh.

Chart 17: Proportion of Welsh speakers who use Welsh or English skills outside work



The Welsh Language Commissioner’s research report looked in more detail at children and young people’s use of the Welsh language outside school. Out of all the respondents, around 32% reported writing in Welsh, 28% reading in Welsh and 27% listening to music and watching TV in Welsh. A smaller proportion of respondents reported watching videos or online content in Welsh (15%), downloading apps or games in Welsh (10%), or listening to podcasts in Welsh (8%).

Chart 18: The percentage of respondents who carry out the following activities through the medium of Welsh outside school



(Source: Welsh Language Commissioner’s Survey on the use of Welsh amongst children and young people, 2025)

As with the Language Use Survey results, we see that the percentages who carry out the activities in Chart 18 through the medium of Welsh increase significantly when looking at fluent Welsh speakers and those who learnt Welsh at home as young children. For example, while 27% of the entire sample watched television in Welsh, this increased to 42% among fluent Welsh speakers, and to 61% among those who learnt Welsh at home.

Key conclusions

- Welsh speakers **are far more likely to read, write, watch and listen in English** than in Welsh.
- **Children and young people** report that they are **more likely to use Welsh** when **writing, reading, watching TV and listening to music** compared to using Welsh **online, downloading apps or games, or listening to podcasts**.

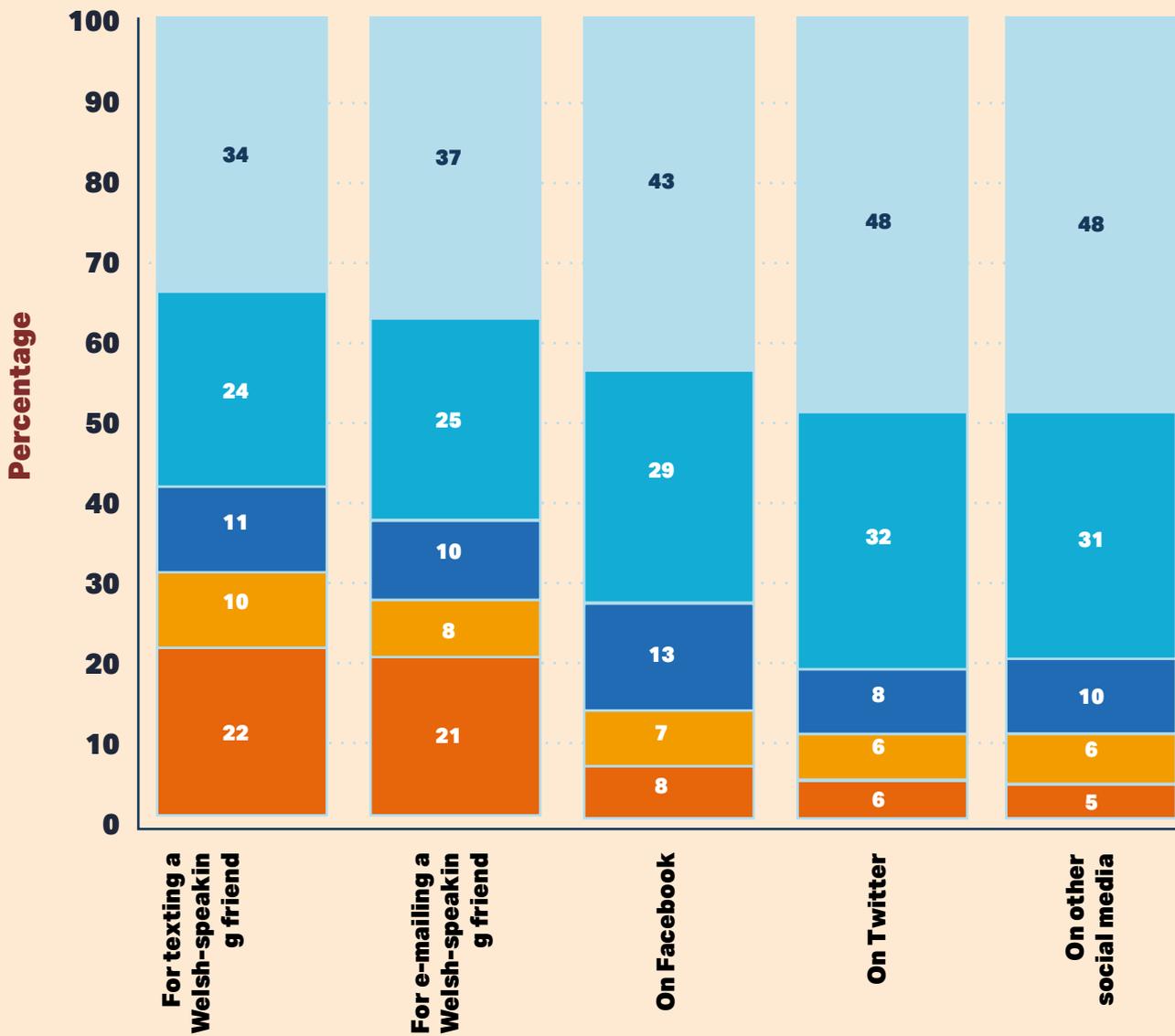
Digital use of Welsh

The Language Use Survey also provides some evidence regarding the digital use of Welsh. As shown in Chart 19, just under a third of Welsh speakers always or mainly used Welsh when texting or emailing a Welsh-speaking friend. A lower proportion of respondents always or mainly used Welsh when using social media.

Chart 19: Language used on digital media by Welsh speakers

Language

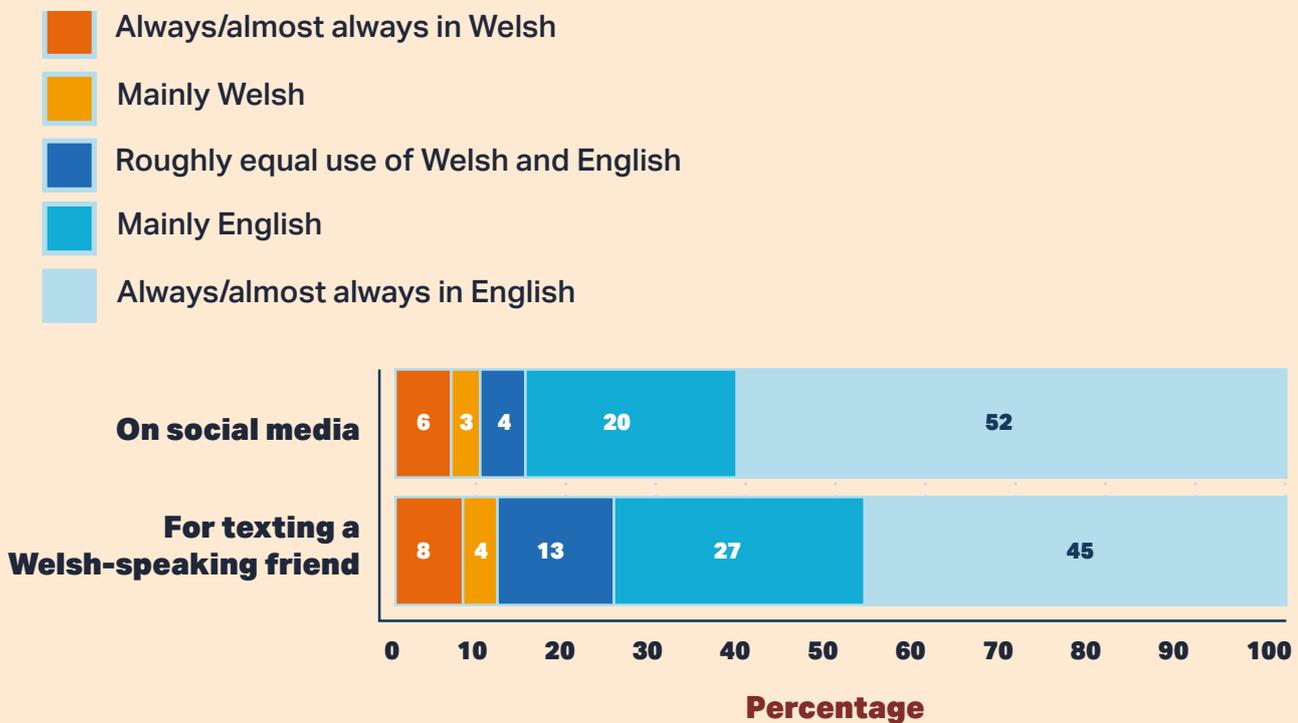
- Always/almost always in Welsh
- Mainly Welsh
- Roughly equal use of Welsh and English
- Mainly English
- Always/almost always in English



(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2019–20)

As with adults’ use of Welsh, Welsh-speaking children and young people were **more likely to use Welsh when texting than when using social media**. However, only 12% of children and young people used Welsh always or mainly when texting a Welsh-speaking friend, compared to 33% of adults. A lower proportion of children and young people also indicated that they always or mainly use Welsh on social media.

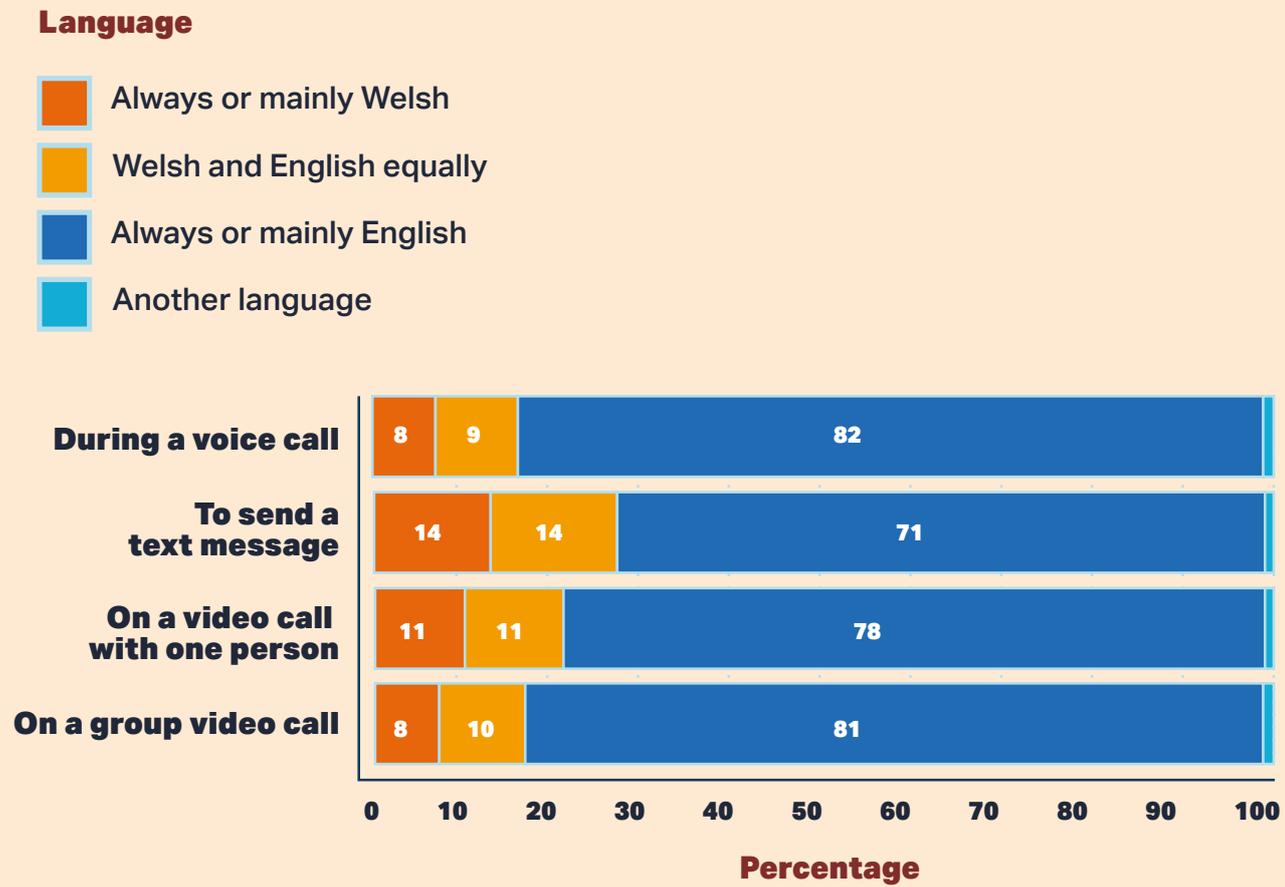
Chart 20: The use of Welsh by Welsh-speaking children and young people on digital media



(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2019–20)

The results in Chart 20 regarding children and young people’s use of digital media through the medium of Welsh are relatively consistent with the conclusions of the Welsh Language Commissioner’s research report. For example, it was found that 14% of respondents indicate that they always or mainly use Welsh when texting family and friends who speak Welsh.

Chart 21: Respondents’ use of language on digital media when communicating with Welsh-speaking family and friends

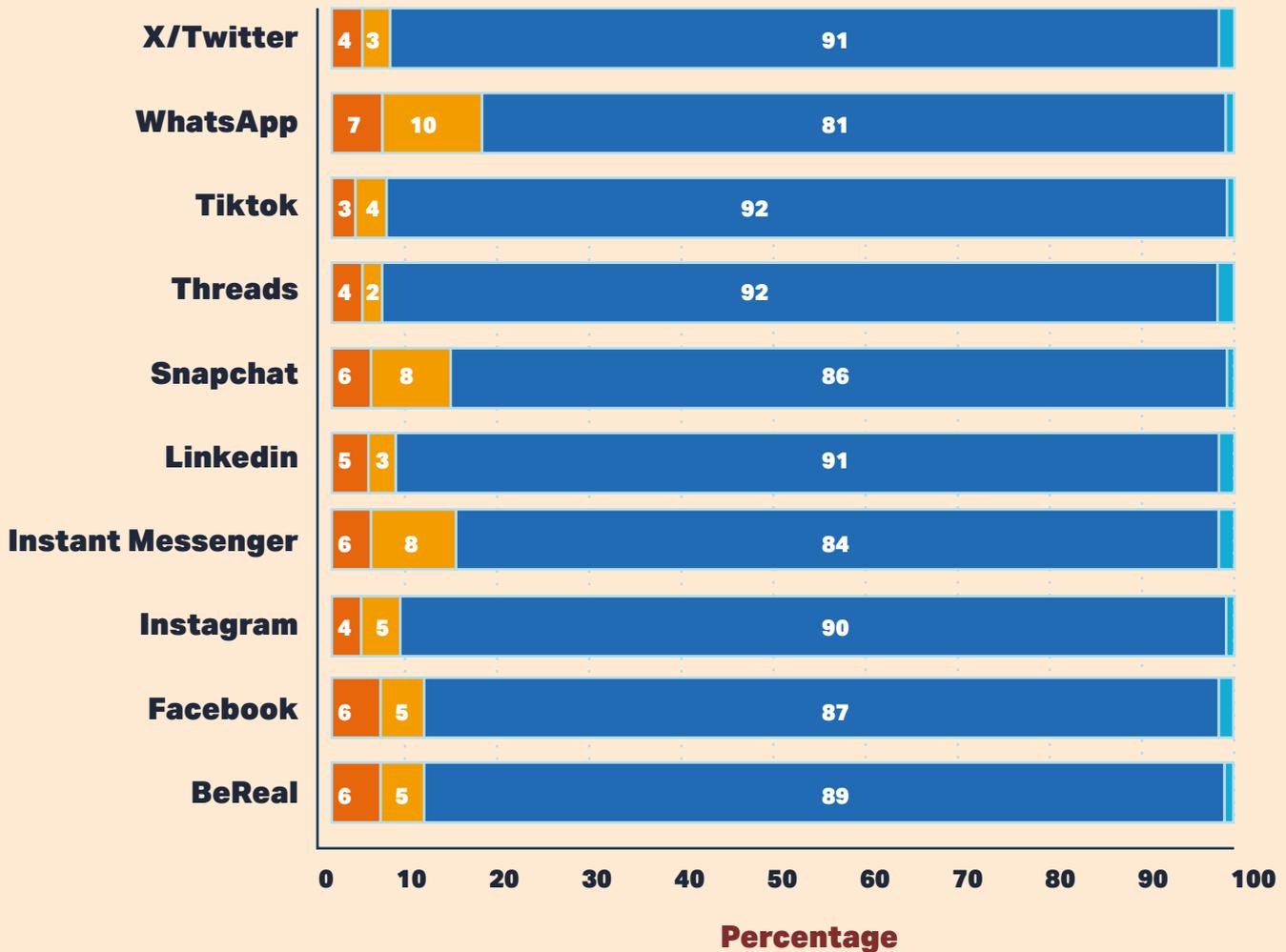
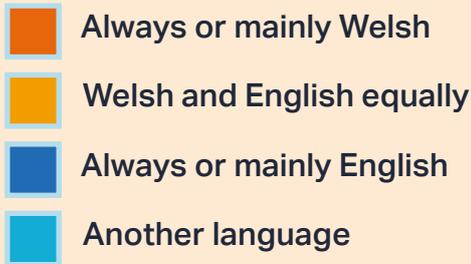


(Source: Welsh Language Commissioner’s Survey on the use of Welsh among children and young people, 2025)

The Commissioner’s report also provides more detailed evidence on the use of the Welsh language in online and social media communications. Chart 22 shows that the percentage of respondents who always or mainly use Welsh is very low overall, and significantly lower than the percentage who use the language more generally, and when messaging through text, for example.

Chart 22: Respondents' use of language when using different social media platforms

Language



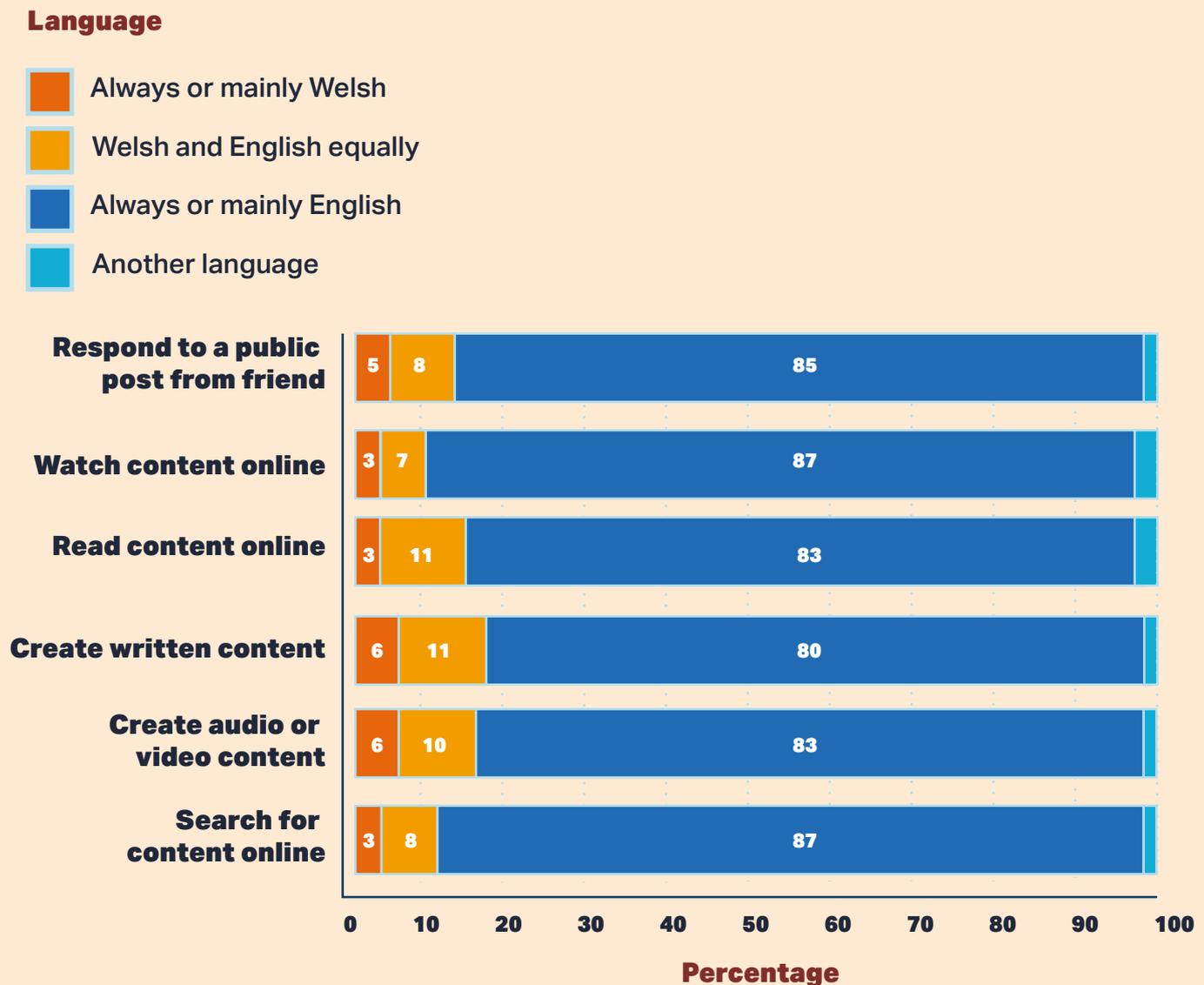
(Source: Welsh Language Commissioner's Survey on the use of Welsh among children and young people, 2025)

When looking at the use of Welsh across different digital platforms, WhatsApp topped the list, with 17% of those using the platform stating that they use Welsh always, mainly, or Welsh and English equally. This was followed by Instant Messenger (14%) and Snapchat (14%).

The percentages indicating that they use Welsh on different platforms rise significantly for fluent Welsh speakers and those who learnt Welsh at home. For example, the percentage indicating that they use Welsh always, mainly, or Welsh and English equally on WhatsApp is 17% for the whole sample, 34% for fluent Welsh speakers and 60% for those who learnt Welsh at home.

These trends can also be seen when looking at the wider use of the Welsh language among children and young people when communicating and creating or using content online.

Chart 23: Respondents’ use of language when communicating online and on social media



(Source: Welsh Language Commissioner’s Survey on the use of Welsh among children and young people, 2025)

As shown in Chart 23, a relatively low percentage of respondents use Welsh in online communication and in creating and using content online. Patterns of Welsh-language use vary considerably when the data is analysed according to specific characteristics. For example, the use of Welsh on social media and online increases significantly among fluent Welsh speakers. In fact, across every type of online activity measured, the percentage of respondents using Welsh is markedly higher when looking at fluent Welsh speakers only.

This overall increase is most evident when looking at those individuals who have acquired Welsh at home as young children. Looking at the category ‘creating written content’ as an example, we see that the percentage who use Welsh always, mainly, or Welsh and English equally is 17% for the sample as a whole, the percentage increases to 32% for fluent Welsh speakers, and increases to 48% for those who learnt Welsh at home.

Key conclusions

- Welsh speakers **are less likely to use Welsh on digital and social media** compared to using Welsh in person or when texting.
- These trends are **even clearer among children and young people**. There seems to be a **digital shift towards English as the default language** for most children and young people both online and when using social media.

2.2 Main developments

Broadcasting and media

In 2023 the Welsh Affairs Committee published their report on Broadcasting in Wales.¹⁴ While the report concludes that broadcasting in Wales has been a remarkable success story, it also warns that **public service broadcasters are too slow in adapting to developments in the global broadcasting revolution**. Some of these developments include significant changes in people’s viewing habits and the popularity of digital streaming. The committee also expressed concerns about ensuring that national sporting events are broadcast free of charge. The committee warns that a **lack of reform and investment would lead to a ‘digital extinction’ of Welsh culture and the Welsh language**.

The passing of the **Broadcasting Act 2024** marked one of the most significant reforms to UK broadcasting law in decades, and directly addressed many of the challenges outlined in the Welsh Affairs Committee’s report. The act aimed to modernise the broadcasting framework, introducing greater flexibility for public service broadcasters to respond to contemporary viewing patterns and developments in digital broadcasting. For the first time, **broadcasting law**

¹⁴ Welsh Affairs Committee, *Broadcasting in Wales* (October 2023).

establishes the Welsh language as an essential part of public service broadcasting in the UK. The act contains a number of important provisions in relation to broadcasting through the medium of Welsh, including:

- expanding S4C's statutory remit to include digital and online platforms
- removing the previous geographical restrictions which will enable S4C's Welsh language content to reach audiences across the UK and beyond more easily
- ensuring that Welsh-medium apps and offerings are better promoted and have a prominent place on smart TV and streaming platforms
- safeguarding listed sporting events
- providing clarity on S4C's ability to generate commercial income and to invest in new content and technology
- strengthening accountability and governance of the channel
- introducing greater flexibility to collaboration arrangements between the BBC and S4C.

Although the act significantly strengthens the legal foundation of broadcasting through the medium of Welsh, **one of the less positive outcomes of the act is that Ofcom no longer has the ability to require commercial radio services to provide services through the medium of Welsh.** As a result, some commercial radio services have chosen to cease broadcasting through the medium of Welsh in recent years.

A more positive development in terms of radio broadcasting was the decision of the BBC Board **to expand the provision of the Radio Cymru 2 service.** Following a period of piloting the extended provision since 2022, Ofcom approved a request from the BBC for the channel to receive status as a Public Broadcasting Service in its own right in 2024.

This example further illustrates how strongly Welsh-language broadcasting depends on services funded through public investment. Despite the importance of the Broadcasting Act 2024, **the funding model of public broadcasting in the UK is a separate matter.** It is currently unclear how the BBC, including its Welsh-language services and S4C, will be funded in the future. The uncertainty regarding the future of public service broadcasting funding arrangements through the licence fee presents real dangers to the future of the Welsh language and culture. At the end of the reporting period the UK Government published a green paper on its **review of the next BBC Charter which includes consideration for the future of BBC and S4C funding.**

Digital technology

Digital technology is increasingly important to all aspects of life, and artificial intelligence (AI) is developing rapidly in ways that will undoubtedly reshape how we communicate with each other and interact with the world around us. As a result, **language technology is a subject that has grown in relevance, importance and profile over the reporting period.**

The Welsh Government is leading the strategic efforts to improve Welsh language technology and the **Welsh Language Technology Action Plan** published in 2018 has been the basis for significant developments over the reporting period. The plan outlined a series of practical actions across key areas of language technology, including speech technology, machine translation, and AI, with the aim of creating a robust linguistic infrastructure for the Welsh language in the digital world.

A final report on the implementation of the scheme was published in 2024¹⁵ which provides an overview of what has been achieved to ensure that the Welsh language is in a position to respond quickly to developments in the digital world, including AI. One of the most significant advances was the collaboration between Welsh Government, Bangor University and OpenAI on Welsh language models for GPT-4. The aim being to ensure that AI platforms such as ChatGPT work easily through the medium of Welsh. Welsh Government also provides a grant to Bangor University to further develop Welsh language technology, including improving its text-to-speech bilingual voices, the Trawsgrifiwr, and Welsh language speech recognition. The Welsh Government has now published their priorities for Welsh language technology and AI which focus on improving Welsh language technology, improving access to Welsh technology, and improving Welsh language and speech technologies.¹⁶ The Commissioner has agreed to work with the Welsh Government to achieve these priorities, including by making the Iaith Gwaith logo even more prominent in the digital world, so that people feel more confident to start more conversations and use more digital services in Welsh.

The Welsh Government has continued to work with Microsoft to ensure that the Welsh language can be used freely across its products, including the development of a tool to enable human simultaneous translation in Microsoft Teams meetings and developing Copilot in Welsh. They are also collaborating on a broader business case involving over 30 features to improve how Microsoft products work in Welsh. Given the importance of virtual meetings and the potential of AI such as Copilot to the world of work today, these developments represent a major step forward in facilitating the use of Welsh in professional settings. The Government has also shared a collection of free Welsh Government translation memories on BydTermCymru and released Cysgliad (a software package that includes a spell checker and a collection of dictionaries) free of charge to organisations with fewer than ten members of staff, and to the entire education and third sector.

Another significant development during the reporting period was the establishment of the **Centre for Digital Public Services** in 2020. The centre is responsible for supporting people, teams and organisations to build high-quality public digital services. The centre has published the Digital Services Standards for Wales, a framework that defines good digital public service in Wales. It was positive to see that the **design of services in Welsh and English was included as one of the 12 standards**, and that **meeting the needs of Welsh speakers must be an integral part of the design of high-quality digital services in Wales**. They have also published a trio-writing methodology in collaboration with the Welsh Government; guidance which describes an approach to working together to effectively create content in both languages in a way that focuses on the user experience.¹⁷

¹⁵ [Welsh language technology action plan: final report 2018 to 2024 | GOV.WALES.](#)

¹⁶ [Welsh language technology and AI | GOV.WALES.](#)

¹⁷ Centre for Digital Public Services, [How to do trio writing](#) (Accessed January 2026).

2.3 Priorities and opportunities to strengthen the position of the Welsh language over the next five years

There's **no doubt that technology is changing the way people spend their time and communicate with each other**. Advances in technology and artificial intelligence are happening at pace and will, undoubtedly, further influence how we communicate, socialise and work in the future.

There is no denying that the evidence we have regarding the **use of the Welsh language in mass media and digital technology is a cause for concern**. While increasing the use of Welsh is a significant challenge, this challenge is even greater in the context of social and digital media. The evidence shows that **Welsh speakers are less likely to use Welsh online, and on digital media**, compared to using Welsh in other social contexts.

These trends in language use are even more pronounced among children and young people. Digital media is becoming increasingly prominent and central to children's lives today, yet for most, the default digital language is English. The evidence clearly points to **a digital shift towards the use of English as the language of communication online and on social media**. Unfortunately, these trends are not surprising given that the Welsh language exists alongside a dominant language in global popular culture, especially considering the influence of English-language broadcasting and media.

While there are clear challenges to increasing the use of Welsh online and on social media, it is also true that **advances in technology and AI offer exciting opportunities to increase the use of Welsh**. Ensuring that Welsh is fully embedded within technological advances and AI is key, but there should also be more focus on **changing the attitudes and behaviours** of children and young people. Action is needed to change the attitudes and practices of Welsh speakers online, including teaching and increasing awareness of how to use Welsh on different platforms, and the **creation and use of Welsh-language content of all kinds needs to be encouraged and facilitated**.

Rather than viewing technology and AI as a threat to the Welsh language, we should embrace the fact that this **technology can make it easier for people to use Welsh in all aspects of their lives**, including when communicating with friends and audiences who may not themselves speak Welsh.

Priority



Key partners must work together to develop a full understanding of the challenges and opportunities involved in increasing the use of Welsh in digital media and broadcasting. Building on this collaboration, a national digital strategy, led by the Welsh Government, should be developed outlining the key contributions of all partners.

3. Economy, housing, and town and country planning

The relationship between housing, work and language has long been a central focus of language-planning efforts in Wales. This is particularly true in areas considered traditional strongholds of the Welsh language.

Strengthening the socio-economic infrastructure of Welsh-speaking communities is absolutely crucial both for increasing the number of Welsh speakers and increasing social use of the language. The key challenge is ensuring that people have good-quality jobs, attractive careers, and suitable housing so that they can remain in, or return to, their communities. Ultimately, these factors have the greatest influence on crucial issues such as language transmission between generations and everyday social use of Welsh within Welsh-speaking communities.

3.1 Main developments and evidence

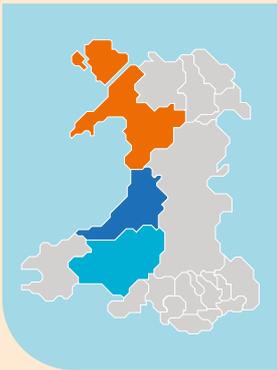
As already noted, the results of the latest census prove that **areas with the highest density of Welsh speakers are under increasing pressure**. For example, in the four local authorities with the highest percentage of Welsh speakers, there has been a significant decline in the percentage of Welsh speakers between 1981–2021.

The percentage of Welsh speakers has fallen by 9.5 percentage points in Gwynedd, 5.2 percentage points in Anglesey, 17.9 percentage points in Ceredigion, and 19.1 percentage points in Carmarthenshire.

Although there has been an increase in the population of most Welsh local authorities between 2011 and 2021, we know that the **population of Gwynedd, Anglesey and Ceredigion has decreased** in the same period. It is therefore not surprising that there has been a decrease in the number of Welsh speakers in these areas. Although Carmarthenshire's population has increased since 2011, this is the county where the largest decline in the number and percentage of Welsh speakers has been seen since 2011.

The Prosiect Bro¹⁸ analysis provides us with a more detailed picture of these trends in the areas concerned.

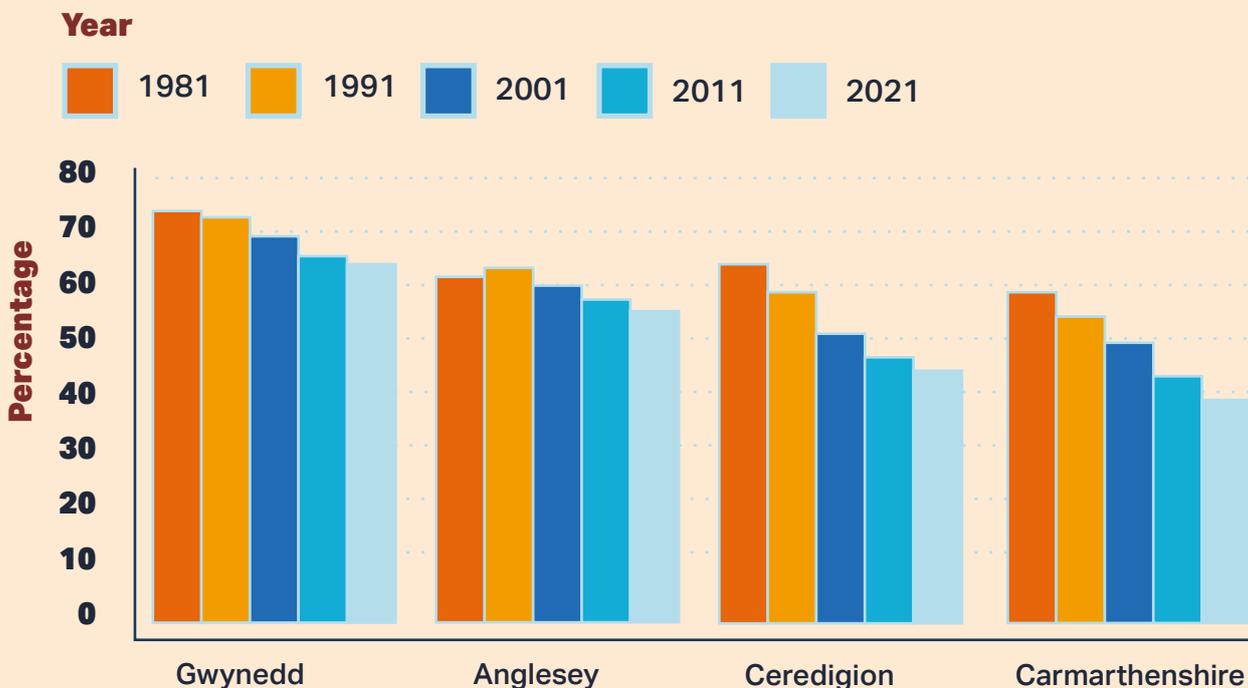
¹⁸ BRO Project Compendium of Census 2021 Language Statistics.



In the four local authorities with the **highest density of Welsh speakers, there were a total of 268 small areas** comprising between 400 and 1,200 households in each.

In 252 (or 94%) of these small areas there was a decrease of between 1 and 21% percentage point in the percentage of Welsh speakers between 2011 and 2021.

Chart 24: Percentage of Welsh speakers by local authority between 1981–2021



(Source: Office for National Statistics)

Although the population of Gwynedd, Anglesey and Ceredigion has declined since 2011, we also know that the proportion of the population of these areas born outside Wales is higher than the national average. While 71% of the population of Wales were born in Wales, the figure for Gwynedd and Anglesey is 66%, and for Ceredigion the figure is 53%. It is therefore clear that there is **significant in-migration from outside Wales to these areas**, and we know that a very high proportion of those who have migrated to Wales indicate that they are unable to speak Welsh. In Gwynedd for example, 87% of those born in Wales can speak Welsh, while only 21% of those born outside Wales can speak the language.

The discussion of the census results, together with an analysis of the evidence on the social use of the Welsh language, clearly highlights the **significance of these areas to the future of the Welsh language**. These are not only the areas with the highest percentages of Welsh speakers, they are also the areas where Welsh speakers are most likely to use the language and pass it on to the next generation.

Although the **reasons for the decline of the Welsh language in these areas** are complex and multifaceted, there is no doubt that **significant structural and economic challenges, outward migration and migration trends, second homes and a lack of adequate housing, play a central role**.

Economy and the Welsh Language

While there is a consensus on the significance of the link between language and economy, it is fair to note that there is little evidence showing the direct impact of economic policies and trends on the vitality of a minority language.

However, the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities argues that one of the reasons that communities with a high density of Welsh speakers are seeing a steady decline in the number and percentage of speakers is that they **‘face significant structural challenges**, including an ageing population and a continuous out-migration of young people’.¹⁹

The Commission has emphasised the significance of the fact that a **large proportion of young people are leaving the areas with a high density of speakers, and that this is an economic and structural challenge for Welsh-speaking communities**. According to the Commission, these challenges include:

- weak transport infrastructure
- a labour market that does not always meet the needs of industry
- productivity levels that are lower than most of the rest of the UK
- underemployment and low wages.

These challenges mean that there are fewer economic opportunities to attract young people to stay or return to these communities, which in turn, further intensifies the challenges to creating an attractive and prosperous economy.

The fact that more than a quarter of Welsh undergraduates study outside Wales makes it more difficult to ensure that young people with a high level of skills return to their communities and contribute to the local economy.

Supporting the socio-economic infrastructure of Welsh-speaking communities is one of the core objectives of *Cymraeg 2050*. The strategy emphasises the importance of developing a prosperous and sustainable economy to sustain and strengthen those communities where there is a high density of speakers.

As part of the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru, in October 2022 a **further investment of £11m was announced for phase 2 of the ARFOR Programme**. The intention was to build on the first phase of the programme, together with the findings of the independent evaluation of the ARFOR 1 programme. The main aim of the programme is to support the economy of the areas with the highest density of Welsh speakers within the boundaries of the local authorities of Ceredigion, Gwynedd, Carmarthenshire and Anglesey. Some of ARFOR 2's successes to date include:

- support for 1951 young people to stay or return to their communities, supporting them to succeed locally through initiatives or career development
- 19 new initiatives receiving support, and 64 existing initiatives receiving support
- 73 businesses increasing their use of the Welsh language.

¹⁹ Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities, *Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language* (August 2024).

The initial review of ARFOR 2 was published in October 2024, and some of the early findings conclude that the programme is succeeding in achieving some of its key objectives, but that there is also a need to consider targeting specific businesses and sectors more strategically.

Despite the importance of the ARFOR programme, it must also be recognised that this investment is modest given the Welsh Government's wider economic development budget. For example, the **City and Growth Deals provide multi-billion pound investment** and provide a strategic direction for economic development across the whole of Wales over a period of 15 years. It is revealing that the finding of a research report by Aberystwyth University was that the Welsh language was a very marginal consideration in the development of growth deals in north, mid and south-west Wales.²⁰ According to the report, the long-term impact of the City and Growth Deals will be very significant given the high levels of public and private investment involved, **however, they do not appear to give serious consideration to the ARFOR programme, nor to the Welsh language.**

Since summer 2024 the Welsh language standards place a duty on the corporate joint committees, which implement the city and growth deals, to consider the effects of policy decisions on the Welsh language. This requirement should ensure that the **joint committees give conscientious consideration to the Welsh language when making strategic and budgetary decisions.** This is particularly relevant given that past economic development strategies and structures have not focused much on the needs of communities with a high density of Welsh speakers.

One important industry that has experienced significant change over the reporting period is the agriculture sector. It remains the employment sector with the highest proportion of Welsh speakers in Wales, and **agricultural businesses continue to sustain many rural communities where Welsh is spoken naturally on a daily basis.**

Following the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, support for farmers through the Common Agricultural Policy came to an end, posing a clear threat to the sustainability of the industry. In response to this far-reaching change the **Agriculture (Wales) Act 2023** was passed. As part of the act the Government has been developing the **Sustainable Farming Scheme**, which sets out how farmers will receive financial support from 2026 onwards.

The impact assessment of the Sustainable Farming Scheme on the Welsh language recognised the importance of the agricultural sector to the vitality of the Welsh language, and acknowledged that changes to the system of support could have a negative impact on those communities. Following widespread opposition to the first version of the Sustainable Farming Scheme, it was decided to postpone the introduction of the scheme for a year, and a new version proposing fewer changes, and therefore more stability, to the industry was introduced in Spring 2025.

Planning, housing and Welsh language communities

The COVID-19 pandemic period highlighted **housing problems in areas with a high density of Welsh speakers.** A combination of factors, including an increase in the number of second homes and holiday accommodation, rising house prices, and higher levels of in-migration, **have made it increasingly difficult for local people, especially young people, to buy or rent homes in**

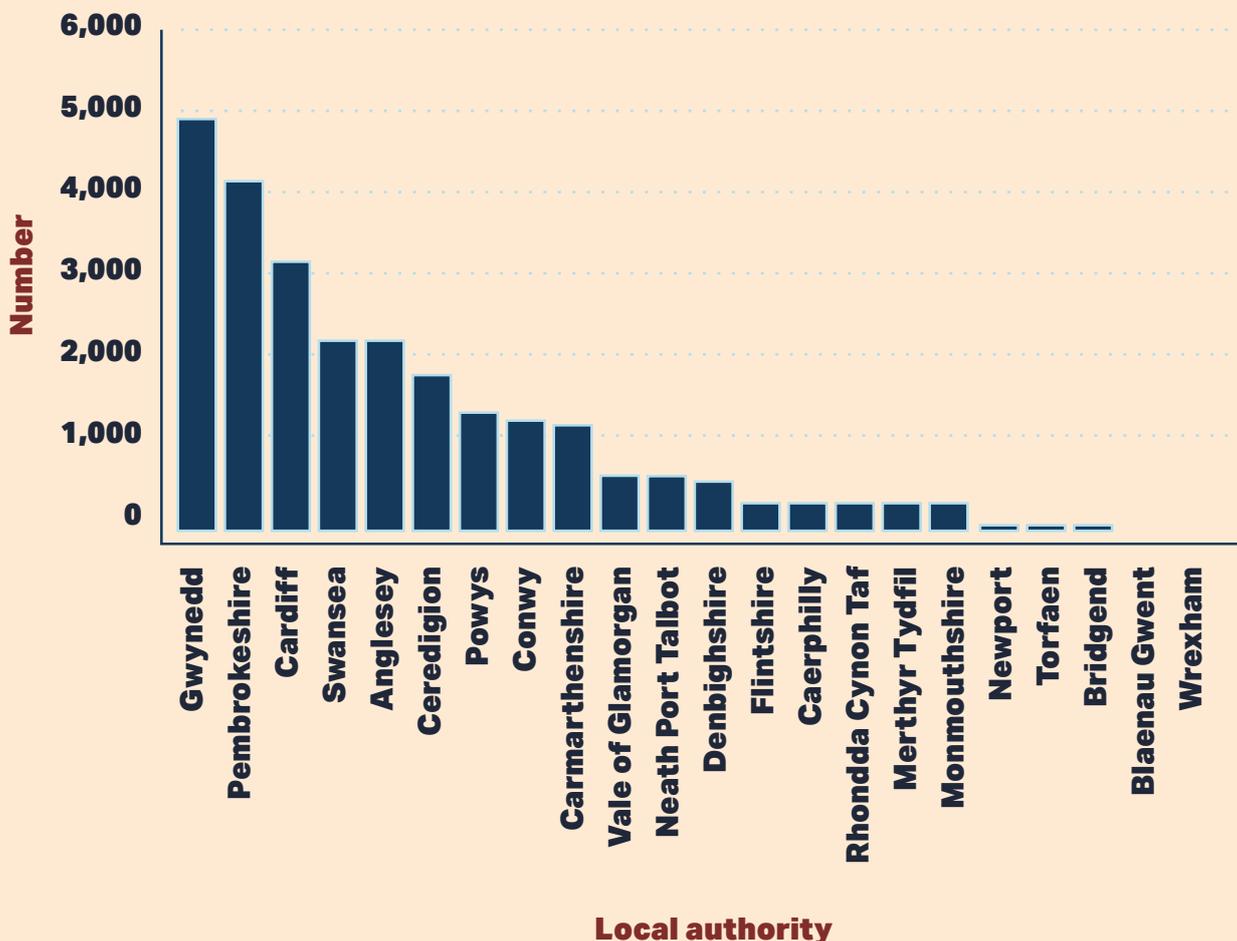
²⁰ Huw Lewis, [Looking beyond ARFOR: economic development strategies and the Welsh language](#) (2025).

their communities. According to the Local Government and Housing Committee, Wales as a whole is facing a housing crisis, with a significant shortfall in the supply of social housing.²¹ The sharp rise in construction costs has slowed the construction of affordable housing, compounding the challenges already faced by communities with a high density of Welsh speakers.

In response to the crisis, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol awarded a grant to Academi Hywel Teifi to scrutinise public policy on second homes in Wales and Cornwall, and Dr Simon Brooks was commissioned to lead the work. **Second Homes: Developing new policies in Wales** was published in March 2021.²² The main conclusion of the report was that second homes pose a serious challenge in some parts of Wales **undermining both the community and linguistic sustainability of these communities.** According to the report, the economic and social changes brought about by Brexit and COVID-19 have intensified the problem, creating a need for urgent policy interventions.

Using Welsh Government data on the number of second homes on which the council tax premium could be charged as second homes during 2020–21, the report makes it very clear that second homes are a regional problem in Wales.

Chart 25: The number of second homes on which it was estimated that the council tax premium could be charged as second homes during 2020–21 by local authority²³



(Source: Welsh Government, 2020)

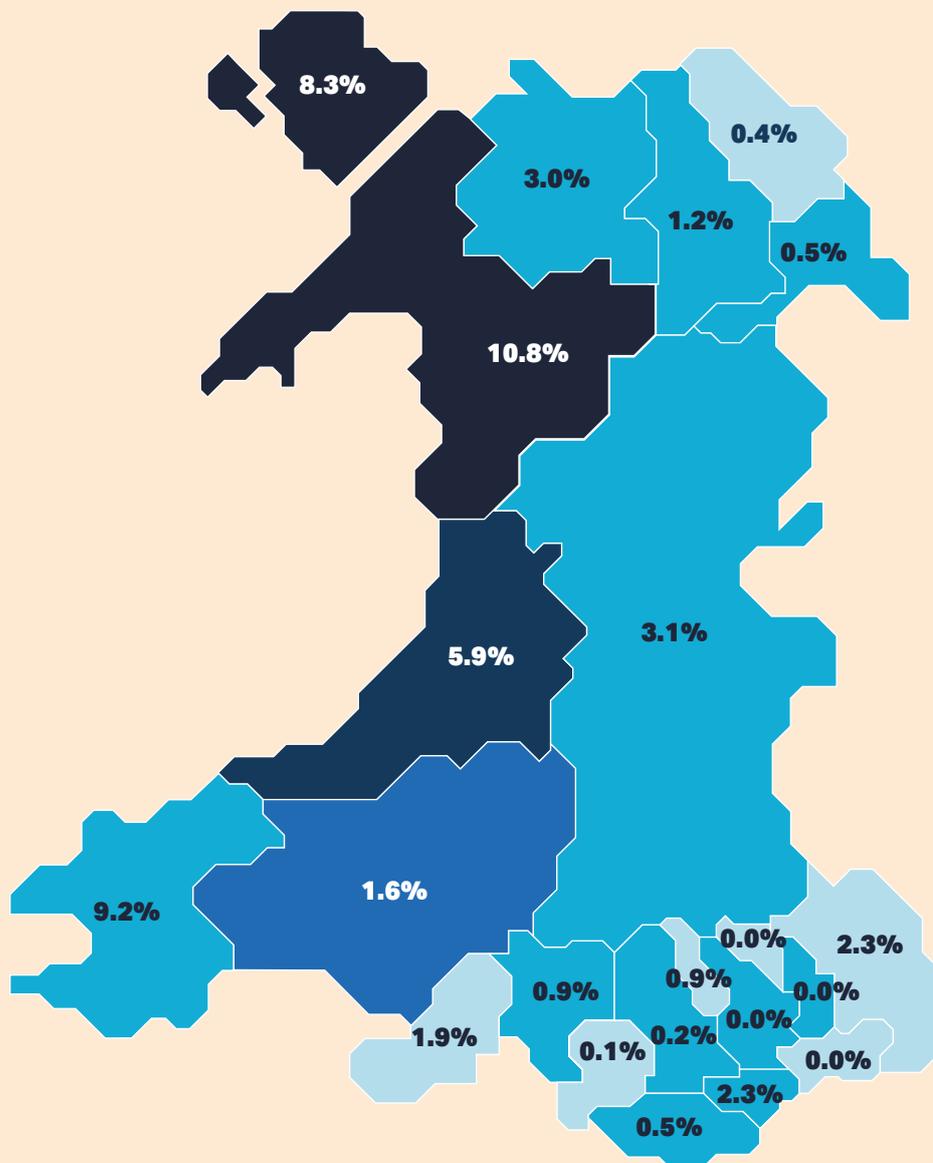
²¹ Local Government and Housing Committee, **Social housing supply** (November 2024).

²² Simon Brooks, **Second Homes: Developing new policies in Wales** (March 2021).

²³ Welsh Government, **Council Tax Dwellings in Wales, 2020-21** (January 2020).

In order to understand how much of the housing stock is used for leisure or holiday purposes, and therefore not available to the local population, the report also calculates the percentage of housing stock in a local authority that is either a second home or a holiday accommodation units. As shown in Map 1, the results highlight even more clearly that a high number of second homes is a regional phenomenon.

Map 1: Second homes and holiday accommodation in Wales as a percentage of housing stock by local authority area²⁴



(Source: Gwynedd Council, 2020)

²⁴ Cyngor Gwynedd, *Managing the use of dwellings as holiday homes* (December 2020).

Following the publication of the report, the Welsh Government published **the Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan**.²⁵ The plan introduced measures to limit the negative impact of second homes by offering support for community-led housing projects. The plan also **introduced amendments to The Council Tax** (Long-term Empty Dwellings and Dwellings Occupied Periodically) (Wales) Regulations 2022. These reforms enable local authorities to charge a council tax premium of up to 300% on second homes and short-term holiday accommodation. The purpose of the premium is to encourage owners of second homes or long-term empty properties to put the property on the market for sale or letting, thereby increasing the supply of affordable housing for local people. The policy therefore **sought to address the negative impact of too many second homes, such as reducing the number of permanent residents, school closures, and the impact of this on the sustainability of Welsh-speaking communities.**

Gwynedd Council was the first local authority to take advantage of the new regulations when the premium was increased to 150% in April 2023. It was reported in September 2024 that the number of chargeable second homes in Gwynedd fell by 5% between April 2023 and April 2025. There are now 21 local authorities charging a council tax premium on second homes and empty homes.

To complement the above policy, the Welsh Government **introduced amendments to planning legislation in 2022** to enable Local Planning Authorities to introduce **Article 4 Directions** to control the use of houses as second homes and holiday accommodation. Planning authorities now have the right to require owners to apply for planning permission before changing the use of a residential property to a second home, short-term holiday let, or specific mixed-use. To date Snowdonia National Park Authority and Gwynedd Council have introduced an Article 4 Direction to control the use of houses as second homes and holiday lets within their boundaries.²⁶

To monitor the impact of the above policies and to pilot further policy interventions, **the Welsh Government launched the Dwyfor Pilot scheme in June 2022**. The Government is working with Gwynedd Council and the housing associations operating in the pilot area. As well as monitoring the impact of the Article 4 planning direction and higher taxes on second homes and empty properties, the pilot is also implementing the Home Purchase project, which offers financial support to local buyers with a connection to the area.

Establishment of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities

One of the most significant developments in Welsh language policy over the past five years was the Welsh Government's decision to establish a **Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities in August 2022**. Although the concept of identifying areas of linguistic significance is not new, this is the first time that the Welsh Government has formally **recognised the need to consider developing policy interventions specific to areas with a higher density of speakers**. The Commission was established with a remit to examine the factors influencing the vitality of the Welsh language in communities and make policy recommendations to support the Welsh language in these areas.

²⁵ [The Welsh Language Communities Housing Plan \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES.](#)

²⁶ In November 2025 the High Court ruled that the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority must revoke the Article 4 Direction. Gwynedd Council have declared their intention to appeal to the Court of Appeal.

In August 2024 the Commission published its final report, *Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language*.²⁷ The report includes a detailed analysis of the 2021 Census results, which clearly show the decline in the stability of the Welsh language in the areas with the highest density of Welsh speakers. **The Commission is of the view that there is a significant threat to the vitality of the Welsh language, not only in those areas, but also at a national level.**

The Commission's main recommendation is that the Welsh Government needs to legislate to give official status to areas of Wales with a high density of Welsh speakers. According to the Commission, **the establishment of areas of higher density linguistic significance** would enable the development of public policies tailored to the specific needs of these areas.

The report outlines how public policy could be adapted to order to support Welsh as a community language in these areas. The Commission proposes a wide range of policy recommendations across key areas including education, planning and housing, economic development, and community language planning. The Commission recognises that further work is needed on the development of concrete policy proposals in these areas, but that the key first step is to establish the areas of higher density linguistic significance. This would create the framework for the development and implementation of significant policies in key areas such as housing, planning and the economy.

The Welsh Government has, in principle, accepted the majority of the recommendations in the report, including the main recommendation of designating areas of higher density linguistic significance. Although the Government has established a forum for considering how these recommendations could be implemented, **it does not appear that any firm decisions will be made before the end of the Sixth Senedd term.**

The Commission has **emphasised that establishing areas of higher-density linguistic significance would not diminish the status of the Welsh language in other parts of Wales.** Rather, it reflects the need to develop and implement policies tailored to diverse linguistic contexts. In this context the Commission has now progressed to phase 2 of the Commission, which will consider policy interventions needed in areas with a lower density of Welsh speakers.

²⁷ Commission for Welsh-speaking communities, *Empowering communities, strengthening the Welsh language* (August 2024).

3.2 Priorities and opportunities to strengthen the position of the Welsh language over the next five years

The analysis of the results of the 2021 Census clearly shows that the **Welsh language is losing ground in the very areas where it has traditionally been at its strongest.** Gwynedd, Anglesey, Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire have the highest density of Welsh speakers, yet the evidence highlights that the position of the Welsh language is declining in these areas. The scale and speed of the decline in the number and percentage of Welsh speakers in Carmarthenshire in particular is a cause for serious concern, and **highlights the need for urgent action to support the Welsh language in its strongholds.**

Evidence on the social use of the Welsh language also highlights the significance of these areas, both in terms of everyday language use and in the transmission of Welsh between generations. If **Welsh is to remain a living language used naturally** by the majority of the population, it is essential to halt, and reverse, decline in those areas where the density of speakers remains relatively high.

Despite the concern raised by statistical trends, **some significant developments over the reporting period have set a much clearer direction for future public policy development.** Chief among these is the establishment of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities. The establishment of the Commission marks a significant policy shift on the part of the Welsh Government, and **for the first time there is acknowledgement of the need to focus specifically on supporting areas where there is a high density of speakers,** and where the Welsh language continues to be used and transmitted naturally between generations.

Priority



The further decline of the Welsh language in the areas where it is currently at its strongest must be prevented if we are to strengthen its position across the whole of Wales. The Welsh Government must urgently publish a white paper to implement the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities' key recommendation to establish areas of higher density linguistic significance.

The establishment of areas of higher-density linguistic significance is not, in itself, a definitive solution to the various challenges that exist, but **the implementation of this key recommendation would be a significant step in the right direction.** Designating these areas would create a robust framework and mechanism for the development, delivery, and evaluation of policy interventions in key areas such as housing, planning, the economy, and community language planning. Together with reforming the promotion standards regime and local promotion strategies (see priority 6), this is the **vehicle and first step for the development and delivery of vital policy interventions that will be needed to protect and strengthen the position of the Welsh language in these areas and beyond.**

4. Services, workplaces and increasing opportunities to use the Welsh language

One of the main challenges for the Welsh language today is ensuring that people can use the language beyond the home or classroom. Although an increasing number can speak Welsh, their ability to use it depends on providing practical situations where the language can be used naturally. *Cymraeg 2050* acknowledges the central role of the Welsh Language Commissioner and the impact of the Welsh Language Measure in driving change within workplaces and services: two key areas that provide vital opportunities to use Welsh. Without such opportunities, skills weaken and confidence wanes.

Increasing opportunities to use Welsh – not only through expanding services, but also through creating Welsh language workplaces and developing an increasingly bilingual workforce – is absolutely crucial to meeting this challenge and ensuring that Welsh is a living, functioning language in the Welsh economy and public services. A key part of this work is the joint planning and collaboration that takes place between the Commissioner and other strategic partners such as the National Centre for Learning Welsh and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol.

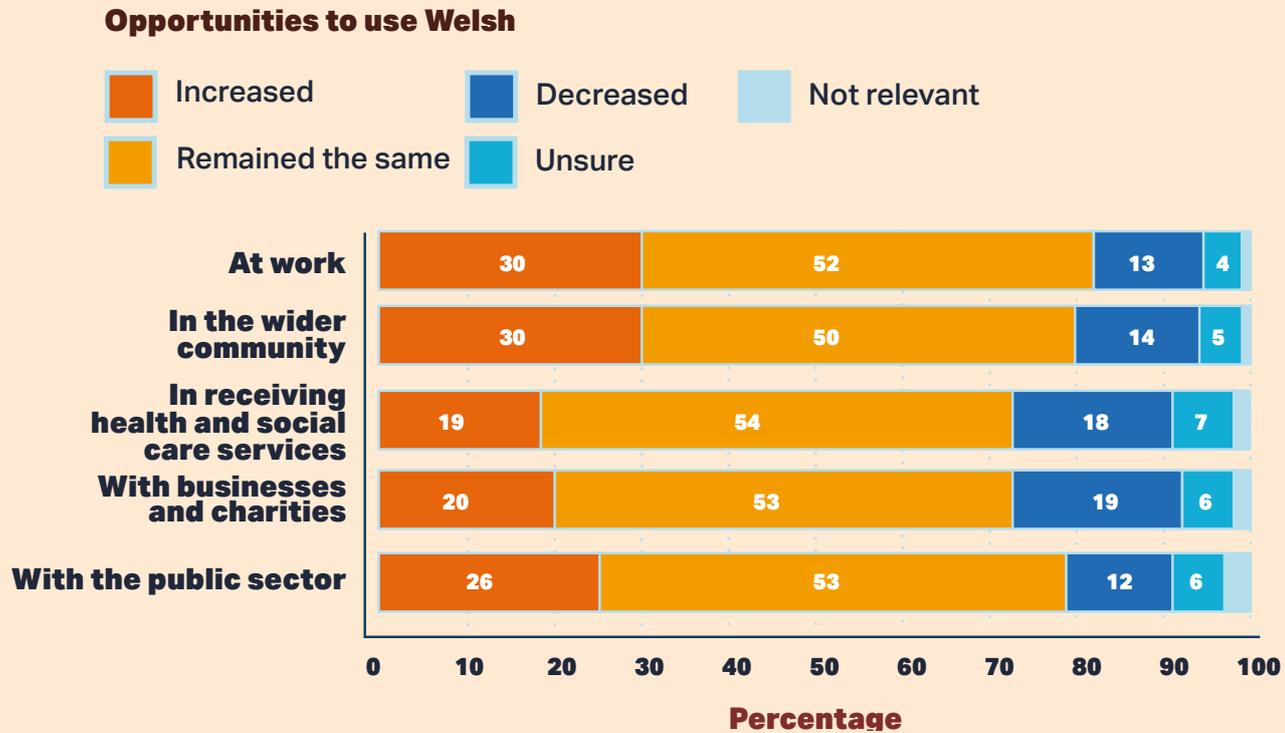
4.1 The evidence

Use of the Welsh language when receiving services

The Commissioner conducts an annual survey of Welsh speakers' views on the Welsh language services of public organisations and on opportunities to use Welsh. The most recent survey carried out at the end of 2025 included a sample of 737 Welsh speakers from across Wales.

Depending on the context, between 19% and 30% of Welsh speakers believe that opportunities to use Welsh have increased over the past year.

Chart 26: Welsh speakers’ views on whether the opportunities to use Welsh in the following situations have increased, decreased, or remained the same over the past year

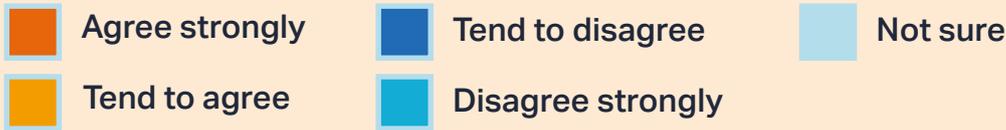


(Source: Welsh Language Commissioner's Opportunities to Use Welsh Survey, 2025)

A higher proportion of Welsh speakers believe **that opportunities to use Welsh have increased at work and in the wider community** compared to opportunities with receiving health and care services or with businesses and charities.

As illustrated in Chart 27, while **93% of respondents believed that it was important to receive a service in Welsh when dealing with public bodies**, a smaller percentage (75%) were confident that they could receive a service in Welsh. **In the case of medical appointments, 88% of the sample believed that it was important to be able to receive a service in Welsh**, and 56% were confident that they could receive a service in Welsh if they wished. **89% of the sample believed that it was important to receive a service in Welsh when dealing with businesses and charities**, and 55% were confident that they could receive a service in Welsh.

Chart 27: The extent to which Welsh speakers agree or disagree with the following statements



Businesses and charities

I'm confident that I can receive services in Welsh

I believe that it's important to receive services in Welsh

Health and social care services

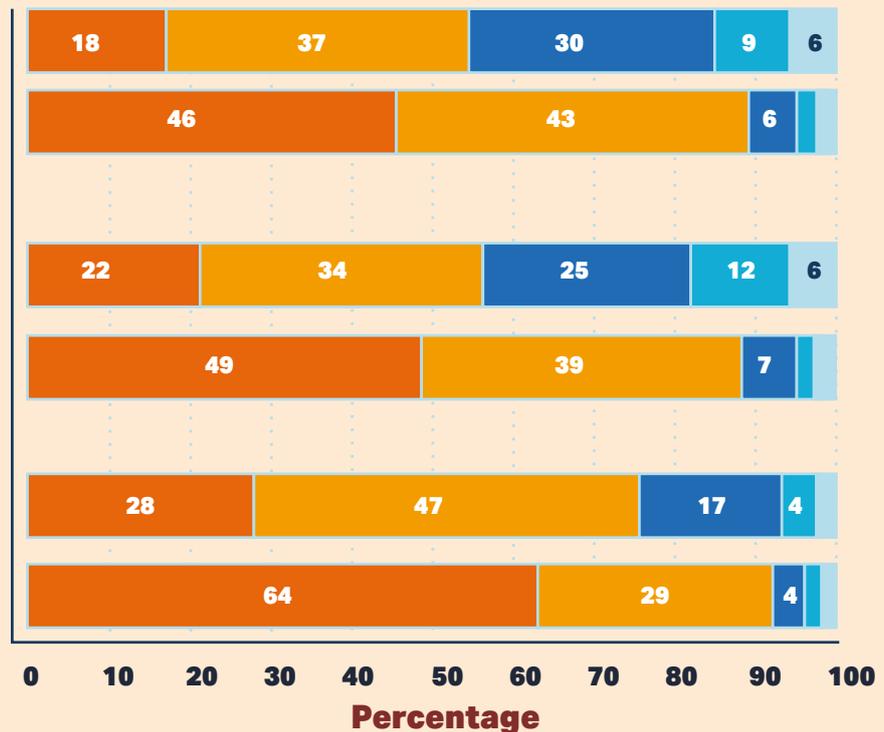
I'm confident that I can receive services in Welsh

I believe that it's important to receive services in Welsh

Public sector

I'm confident that I can receive services in Welsh

I believe that it's important to receive services in Welsh



(Source: Welsh Language Commissioner's Opportunities to Use Welsh Survey, 2025)

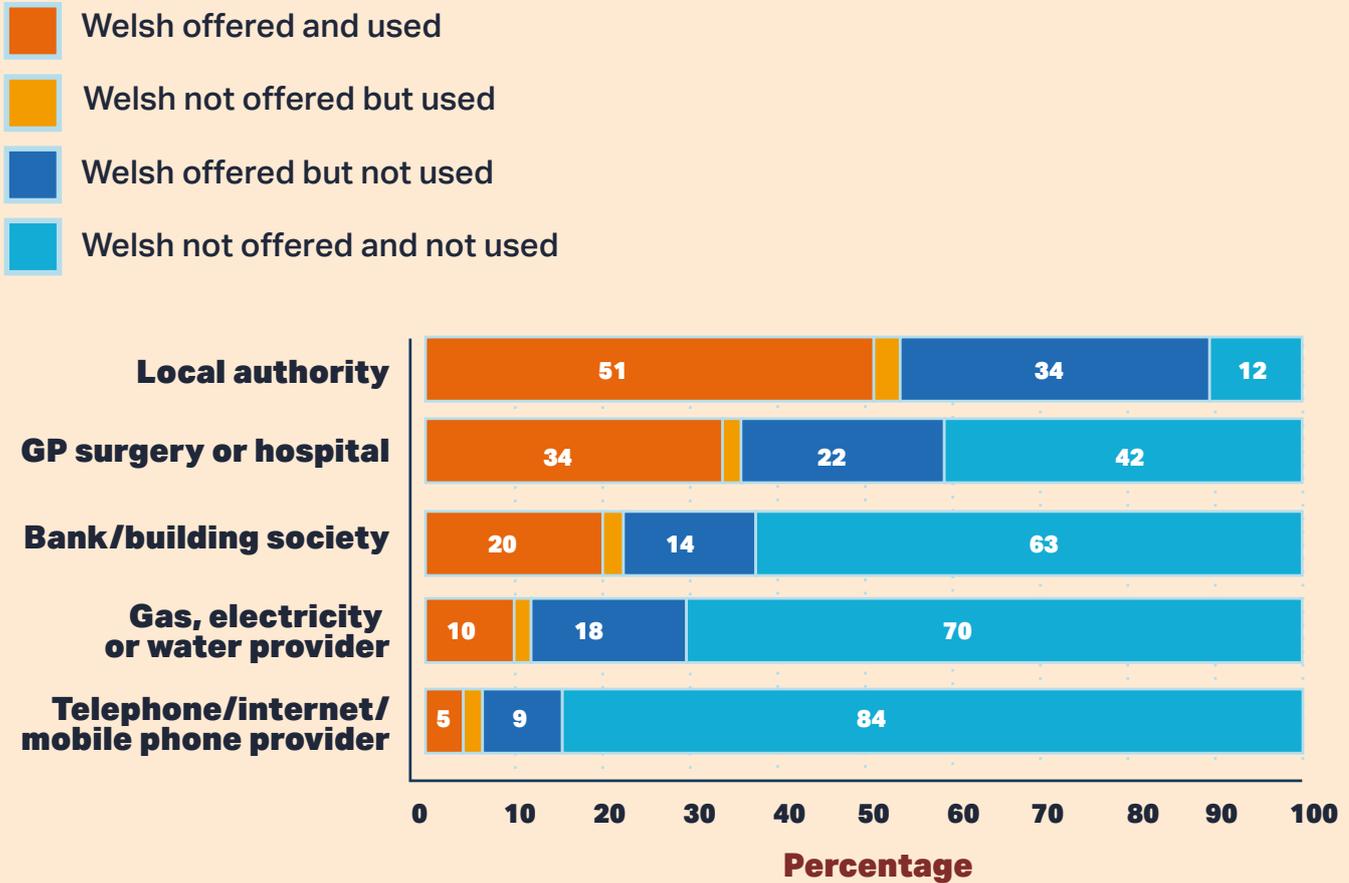
The 2019–20 Language Use Survey also provides some information on the extent to which Welsh speakers are offered services in Welsh, and the extent to which they use these services.

As shown in Chart 28, **Welsh speakers are far more likely to report having been offered and receiving a Welsh language service the last time they contacted the local authority compared to all other types of service providers.** 85% of Welsh speakers said they had been offered a Welsh language service the last time they contacted the local authority, and 53% of them had used Welsh.

For GP surgeries or hospitals, 56% indicated that they had been offered a service in Welsh, and 36% said they had used Welsh. Welsh speakers were much less likely to say that they had been offered a service in Welsh by gas, electricity or water providers (28%) or by telephone or internet companies (14%).

Fluent Welsh speakers, those who used the language daily and those who had learnt the language at home as young children were more likely to choose and use Welsh for all types of services.

Chart 28: The percentage of Welsh speakers reporting that Welsh language services were offered and used when dealing with service providers²⁸



(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2019–20)

The Commissioner’s survey also asks which language Welsh speakers have used most often in different situations over the past year. Although the questions differ between the Language Use Survey and the Commissioner’s survey, the percentage stating that they use the Welsh language with the public sector is relatively consistent. The Commissioner’s survey shows that 44% of Welsh speakers use Welsh always, mainly, or as equally as English when dealing with the public sector. The Language Use Survey also reports that around half of Welsh speakers use Welsh when dealing with local authorities.

As well as asking what language they used most often in different situations, the Commissioner’s survey asks what language they would prefer to use in these situations. As shown in Chart 29, **the percentages stating that they would prefer to use Welsh always or mainly are consistently higher than the percentages stating that they currently use Welsh in these situations.** It is interesting to note that almost three times as many Welsh speakers would prefer to use Welsh always or mainly when accessing health and care services (28%), compared to the percentage who currently use Welsh (10%). The same is true in relation to businesses and charities.

²⁸ These statistics do not include Welsh speakers who had indicated that they had not been in contact with the service providers in the previous 12 months.

Chart 29: Which language Welsh speakers have used most often in the following situations, and which language they would prefer to use in the following situations

Language

- Always/mostly Welsh
- English and Welsh roughly equally
- Always/mostly English
- Other language
- Not relevant

At work

Language currently used

Preferred language

In the wider community

Language currently used

Preferred language

Public sector

Language currently used

Preferred language

Health and social care services

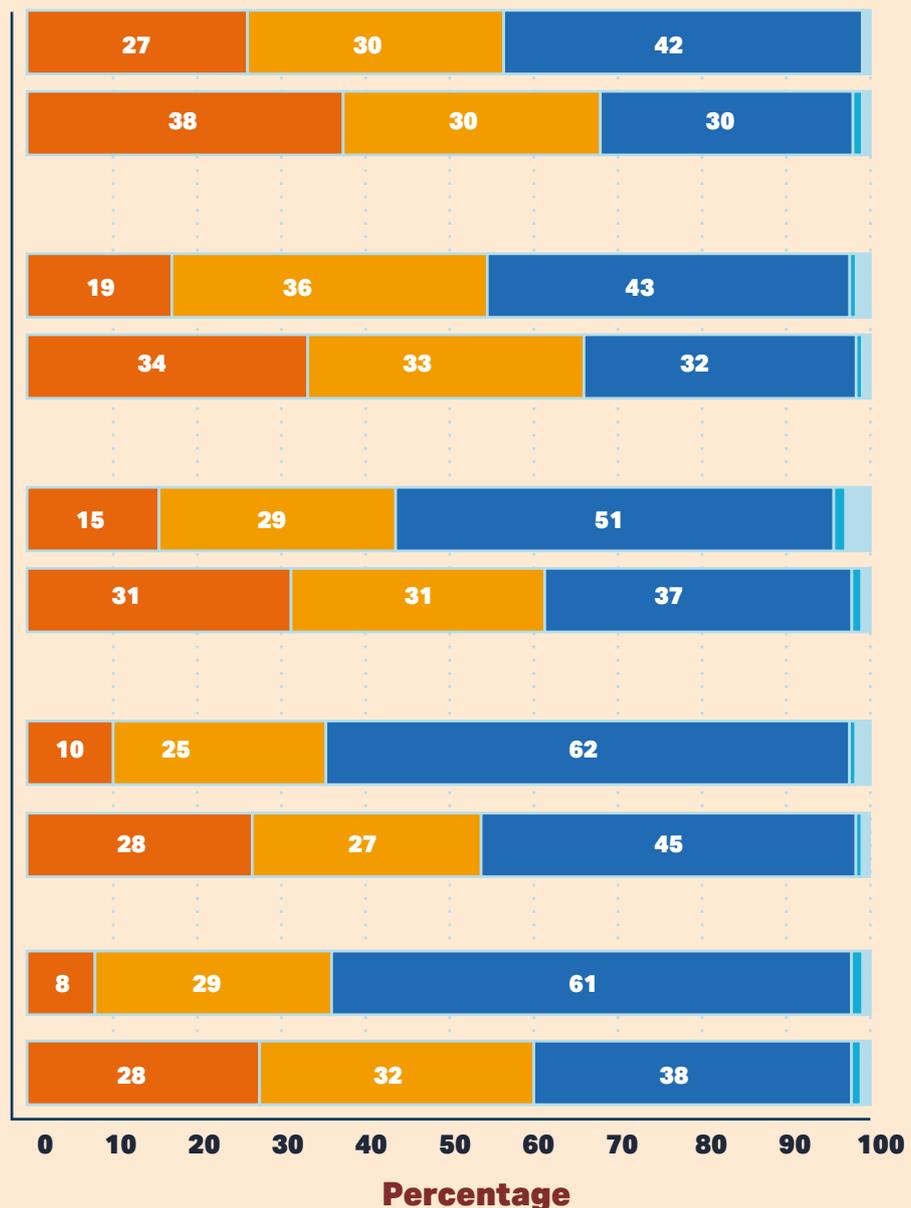
Language currently used

Preferred language

Businesses and charities

Language currently used

Preferred language

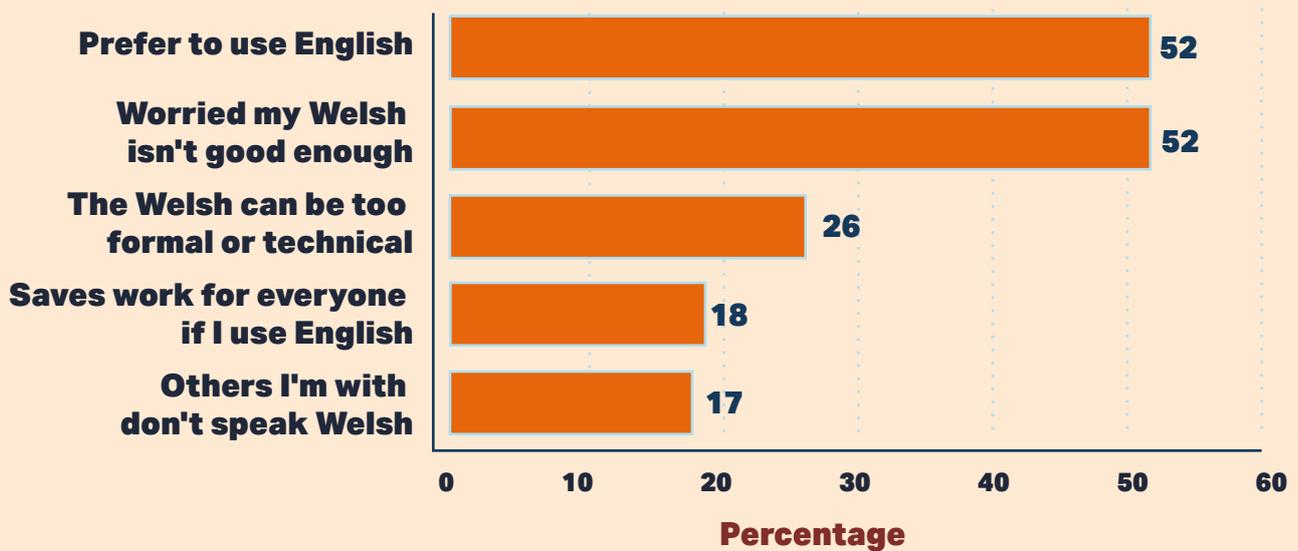


(Source: Welsh Language Commissioner's Opportunities to Use Welsh Survey, 2025)

These results are consistent with the results of another research survey carried out by the Commissioner regarding the use of Welsh by children and young people.²⁹ The results of that survey also showed that the percentage of children and young people who stated that they would *like* to use Welsh in different contexts was significantly higher than the percentage who indicated that they were currently using Welsh when using various services.

According to the Language Use Survey, the main reasons Welsh speakers give for choosing to use English when receiving services is that they prefer to use English, or that they are worried that their Welsh is not good enough.

Chart 30: The main reasons for using English given by Welsh speakers who had said that they used English mainly, almost always, or always

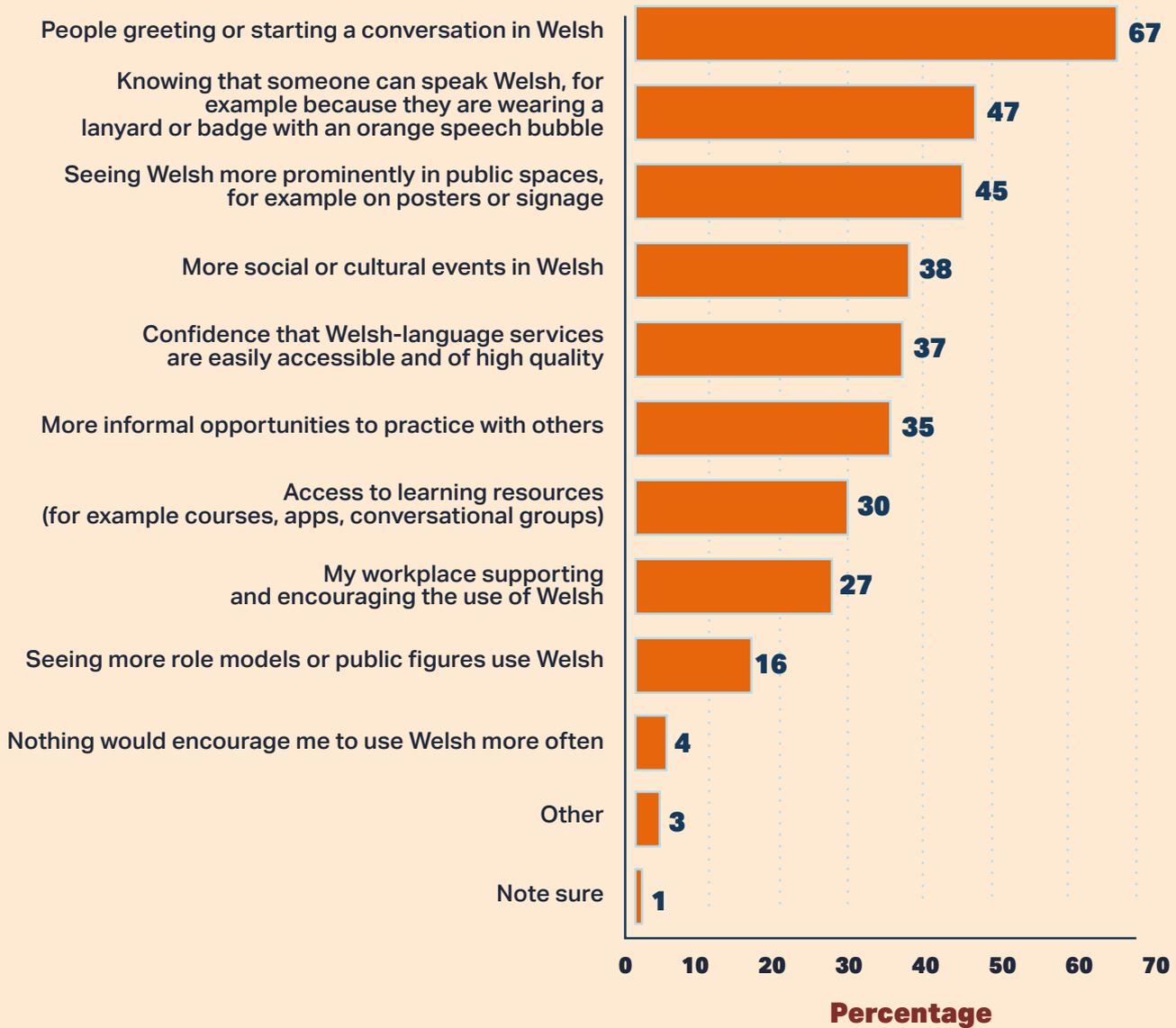


(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2019–20)

The Commissioner turned this question on its head somewhat and asked Welsh speakers what would encourage them to use Welsh more often.

²⁹ Welsh Language Commissioner, *The use of Welsh among children and young people* (May 2025).

Chart 31: What would encourage Welsh speakers to use Welsh more often?



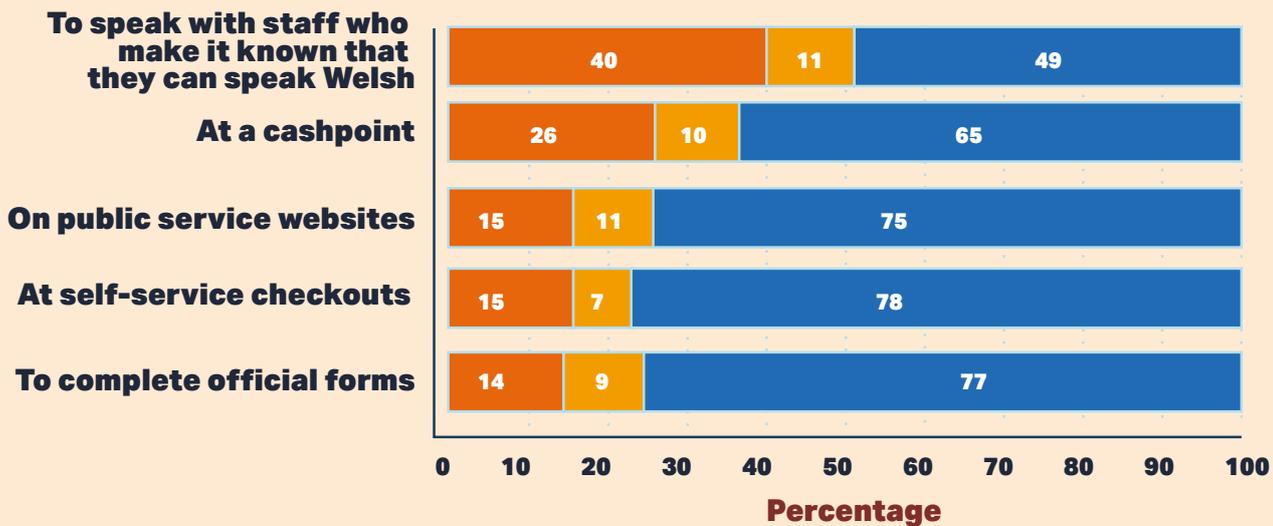
(Source: Welsh Language Commissioner's Opportunities to Use Welsh Survey, 2025)

It is clear from these results that the **main thing that would encourage Welsh speakers to use Welsh would be if other people started a conversation in Welsh**, or if they already knew that someone could speak Welsh. The Language Use Survey also shows that Welsh speakers are more likely to use Welsh in situations where staff make it clear that they can speak Welsh.

Chart 32: Language usually chosen by Welsh speakers according to the type of service³⁰

Language

- Always/almost always in Welsh/mainly Welsh
- Roughly equal use of Welsh and English
- Always/almost always in English/mainly English

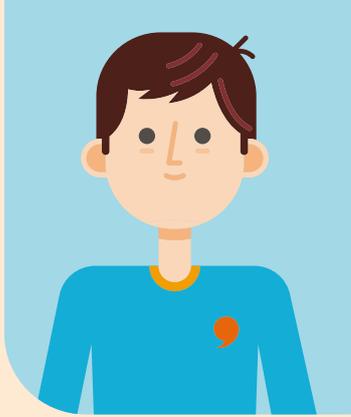


(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2019–20)

It is **striking that the Welsh language services used most often are those where a member of staff makes it clear that they are able to speak Welsh**, and it could be assumed that these would be face-to-face or telephone services. It is also interesting that cashpoint services are next, with over a quarter of Welsh speakers choosing to use this common, long-established service.

³⁰ This data does not include those who indicated that they had not used the service. For this analysis the categories always/almost always in Welsh and Welsh mainly have been combined. The categories always/almost always English and mainly English are also combined.

The Commissioner's survey also clearly demonstrates the importance of the active offer of Welsh language services, and that the use of Welsh is unhindered.



82% of Welsh speakers report that they are more likely to use Welsh language services if they are easily and freely available.

81% note that they are more likely to use Welsh language services if organisations make it clear that they are available.

One obvious way of signalling the ability to speak Welsh is to wear an orange laith Gwaith badge. With the logo celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2025, it has become firmly established. The Commissioner's survey data supports this with 75% of Welsh speakers saying that they are aware of the logo and its meaning. 77% of respondents also said that seeing this logo would make them more likely to use Welsh.



75% of respondents say they are aware of the logo and its meaning.

77% of respondents stated that seeing this logo would make them more likely to use Welsh.

65% have started a conversation in Welsh in the last year after seeing the logo.

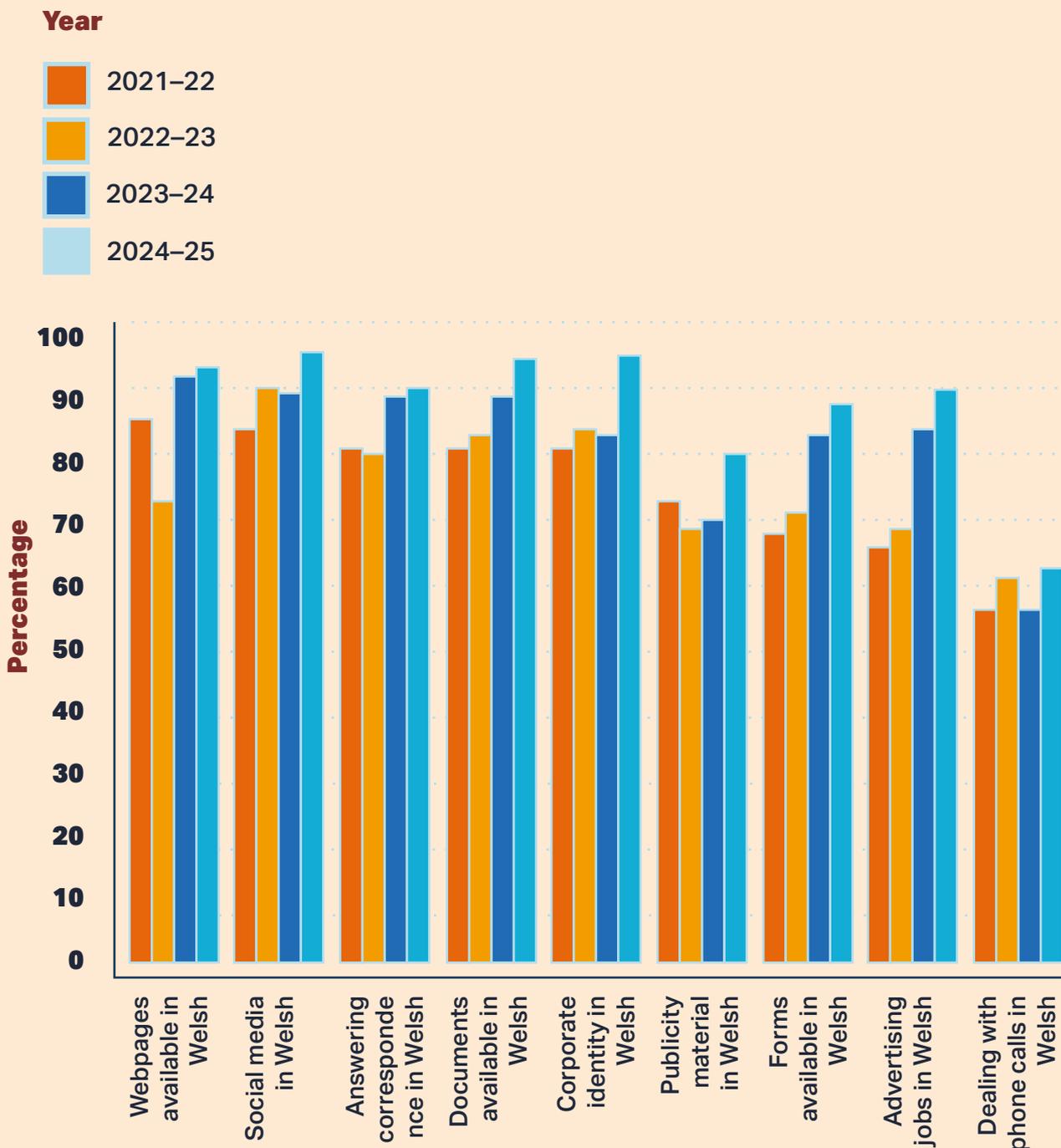
Availability of Welsh language services

Assuming that **82% of Welsh speakers indicate that they would be more likely to use Welsh language services if they are easily and freely available**, it is fair to examine the data we have on the availability of Welsh language services during the reporting period. The Commissioner systematically and consistently verifies the Welsh language services of organisations, gathering evidence on user experiences and how organisations are performing in relation to their statutory duties. This gives us a first-hand insight into the experiences of Welsh speakers and an overview of the assurance that service users can receive a Welsh language service. These findings are published in a variety of regular performance reports.³¹

³¹ Performance reports (Accessed January 2026).

During this reporting period, the Commissioner has calculated the ability of organisations to comply with the standards by conducting surveys focused on nine key service areas. The results in Chart 33 show that compliance levels are consistently high across those services where there is a strong element of central control within organisations, including areas such as corporate identity and websites.

Chart 33: The percentage of organisations surveyed that complied with the requirements of the relevant standards (2021–25)



(Source: Data from the monitoring activities of the Welsh Language Commissioner)

Chart 33 shows the highest levels of compliance in 2024–25 in each of the areas covered. This is in line with the findings of our most recent report on the performance of organisations, ***Empowering the Welsh language through strong governance***.³² That report emphasised that a significant number of organisations have been implementing the standards for several years now, and that the steady increase in compliance levels over recent years **suggests that awareness of the requirements has become embedded and integral to the organisations' activities**.

It is worth noting, however, the relatively slow progress in the percentage of organisations across sectors to deal with calls and provide a full response in Welsh during the reporting period. Chart 34 highlights that it rose from 56% in 2021–22 to 61% in 2022–23, before falling again in 2023–4, reaching 63% in 2024–25. This suggests that there is some progress, but that progress is too slow and inconsistent given the length of period in question.

Chart 34: The percentage of organisations surveyed dealing with telephone calls in Welsh (2021–25)

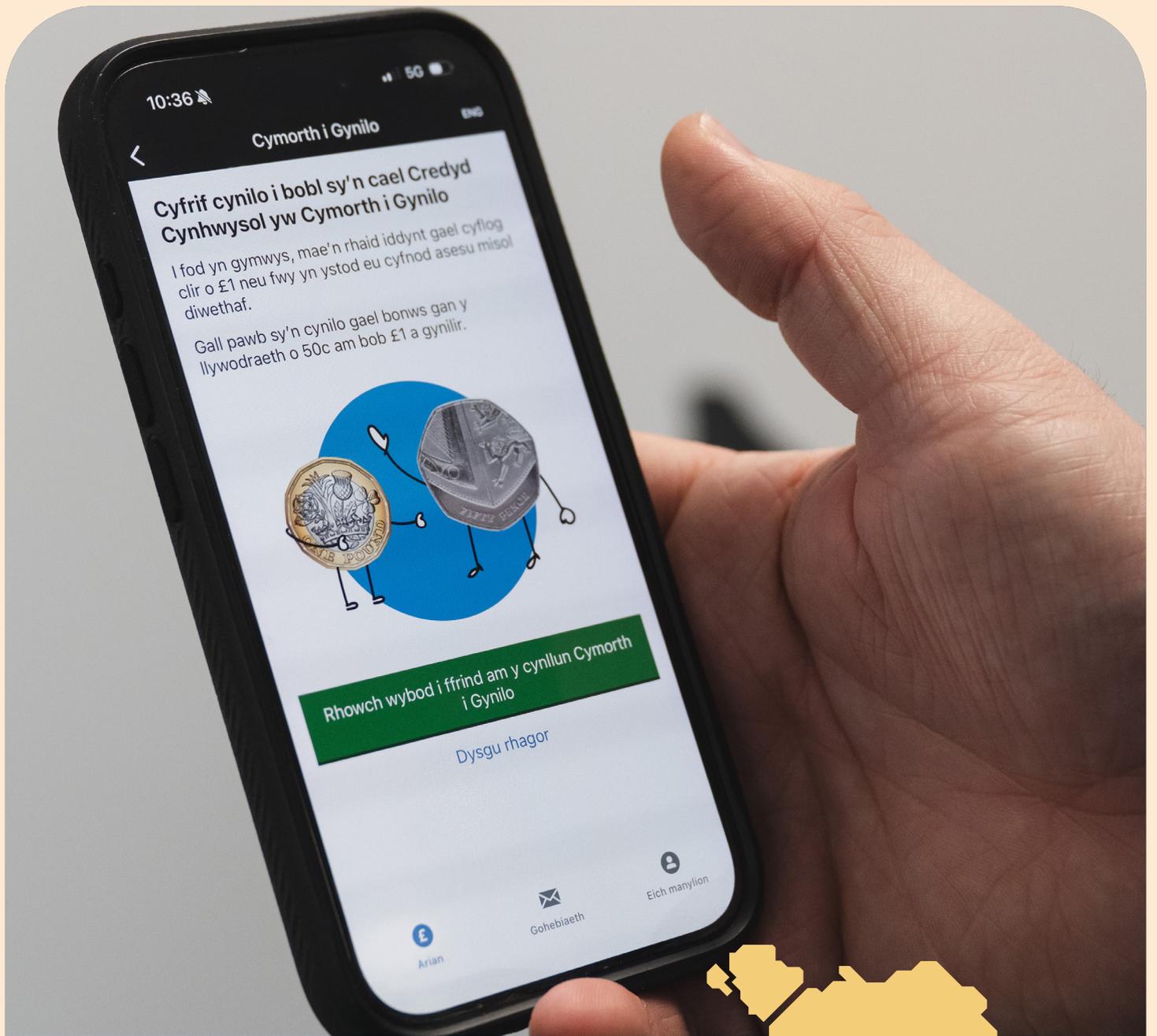


(Source: Data from the monitoring activities of the Welsh Language Commissioner)

³² Welsh Language Commissioner, ***Empowering the Welsh language through strong governance*** (July 2025).

Key conclusions

- The evidence shows that the extent to which **Welsh language services are offered varies significantly depending on the type of service**. While a high proportion of Welsh speakers are offered Welsh language services by local authorities, for example, far fewer are offered a service in Welsh from other sectors such as telephone and internet companies.
- The percentage of Welsh speakers who **state that they wish to use Welsh in different contexts is significantly higher than the percentage of those who indicate that they use Welsh** when receiving different services.
- Although a significant proportion of Welsh speakers choose to use Welsh when receiving services, there is also a **significant proportion who choose not to use Welsh**.
- The **main reasons given for not using Welsh** were that they **preferred to use English**, or that **they lacked confidence in their Welsh language skills**.
- There is clear evidence **that individuals would be more likely to use Welsh if an active offer of those services was made**, such as being greeted in Welsh or seeing the Iaith Gwaith logo signalling that a service is available in Welsh, making using Welsh **an easy and convenient choice**.
- The data arising from the Commissioner's work shows **steady improvement in the performance of organisations but that there is more work to be done**. This is particularly true in relation to the provision of telephone services in Welsh, which is important given that **speaking Welsh with a member of staff is the Welsh language service that Welsh speakers are most likely to use**.



A language
for public services



Following the development and implementation of its language scheme, His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) ensures that all customers, wherever they live, can access high-quality Welsh language services. This reflects HMRC's commitment to accessibility and inclusion, and its aim to ensure the organisation is open to all.

As HMRC transitions to a modern digital service, quick and simple access for customers is essential. The HMRC app enables users to manage their money and tax in one place, significantly reducing the need for contact by phone or post.

Lee Jones, Head of Welsh language services at HMRC, is passionate about ensuring equal opportunities to Welsh and non-Welsh speakers alike.



As digital options become more popular, HMRC have transformed our most-in demand services like finding your National Insurance Number, claiming a tax refund, checking your tax code and claiming Child Benefit, to enable customers to self-serve. An integral part of this was the development of all our online services in Welsh.

The app enables users to manage their tax issues in one place bilingually – making it the quickest and easiest way to deal with many simple actions and questions.

According to Lee, this app is also breaking new ground.



By learning from our Welsh user research and our bilingual service design principles, this app is the first of its kind across UK Government to offer the option to switch between Welsh and English seamlessly – without users needing to change their phone's settings.

This innovative feature has proven extremely popular with customers, as many are keen to be able to switch between the two languages while working in the app.

It is clear the app has been a success as over 36,500 users have already chosen the Welsh option. This reduces the demand on the customer service team that would normally deal with basic enquiries, freeing staff to focus on more complex queries.

But Lee is also keen to ensure that staff internally are aware of the importance of bilingual services.



All campaigns, such as the one that has developed and promoted the app, include internal communication to staff, with the aim that they are fully aware of the rationale for delivering a bilingual service.

It's great to be able to develop the technology but it's vital to go the extra mile and promote it effectively to our users – and that work is continuous.





30% of respondents report that opportunities to use Welsh at work have increased over the past year.

27% indicate that they have always or mainly used Welsh at work over the past year, and a further **30%** indicate that they use Welsh and English fairly equally.



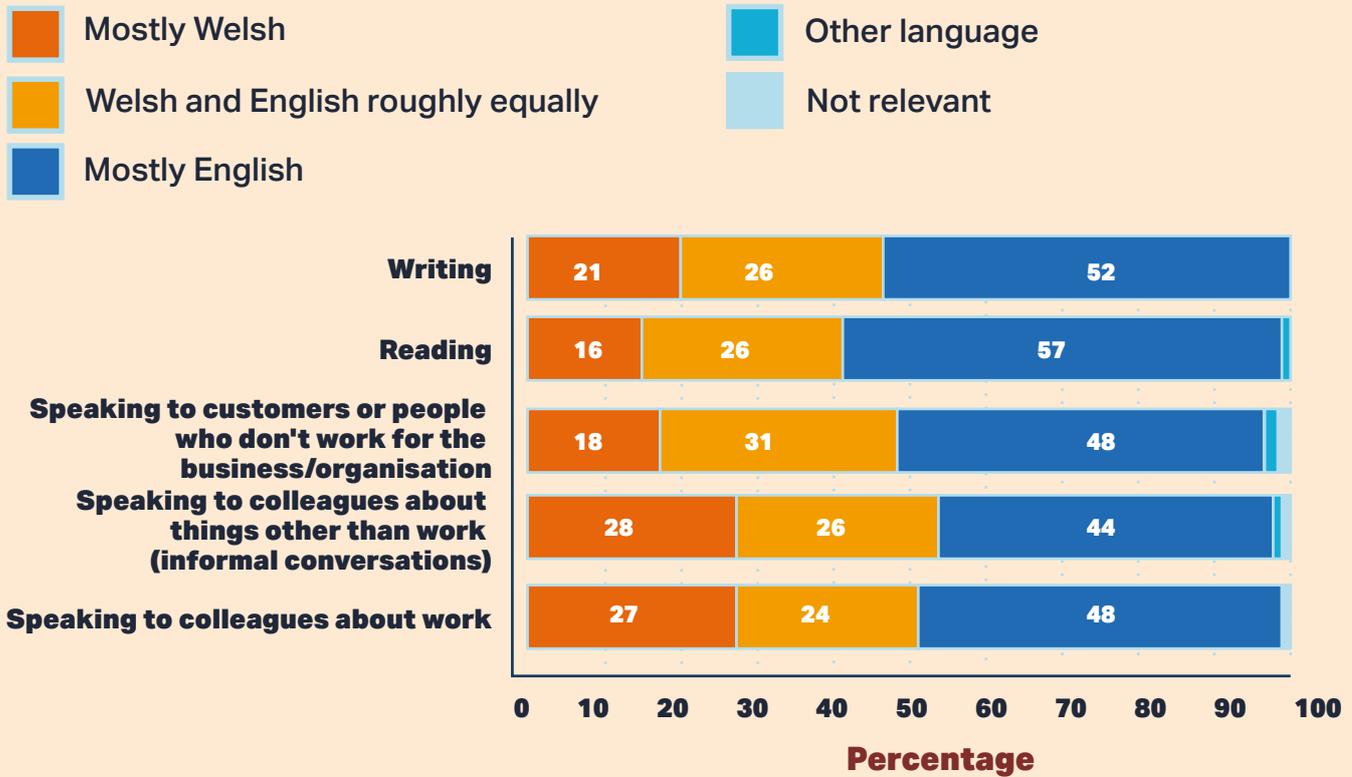
38% stated that they would like to use Welsh always or mainly at work, and an additional **30%** stated that they would like to use Welsh and English equally.

Using Welsh at work

It has already been noted that 30% of people who responded to the Commissioner's survey feel that opportunities to use Welsh at work have increased over the past year. Along with the community, this is the area that saw the most progress. Chart 29 has shown us that 27% of Welsh speakers surveyed as part of the Commissioner's survey have always or mainly used Welsh at work and a further 30% have used Welsh and English fairly equally. The Commissioner's survey also asked what language respondents would like to use at work, and **38% said they would like to use Welsh always or mainly at work.**

The results of the Commissioner's survey also give us a more detailed insight into *how* Welsh speakers use Welsh at work, in other words, what language skills they use and with whom. For example, **it is interesting to note that Welsh speakers mostly use spoken Welsh,** and specifically when talking to colleagues (whether this is discussing work or in more informal conversations).

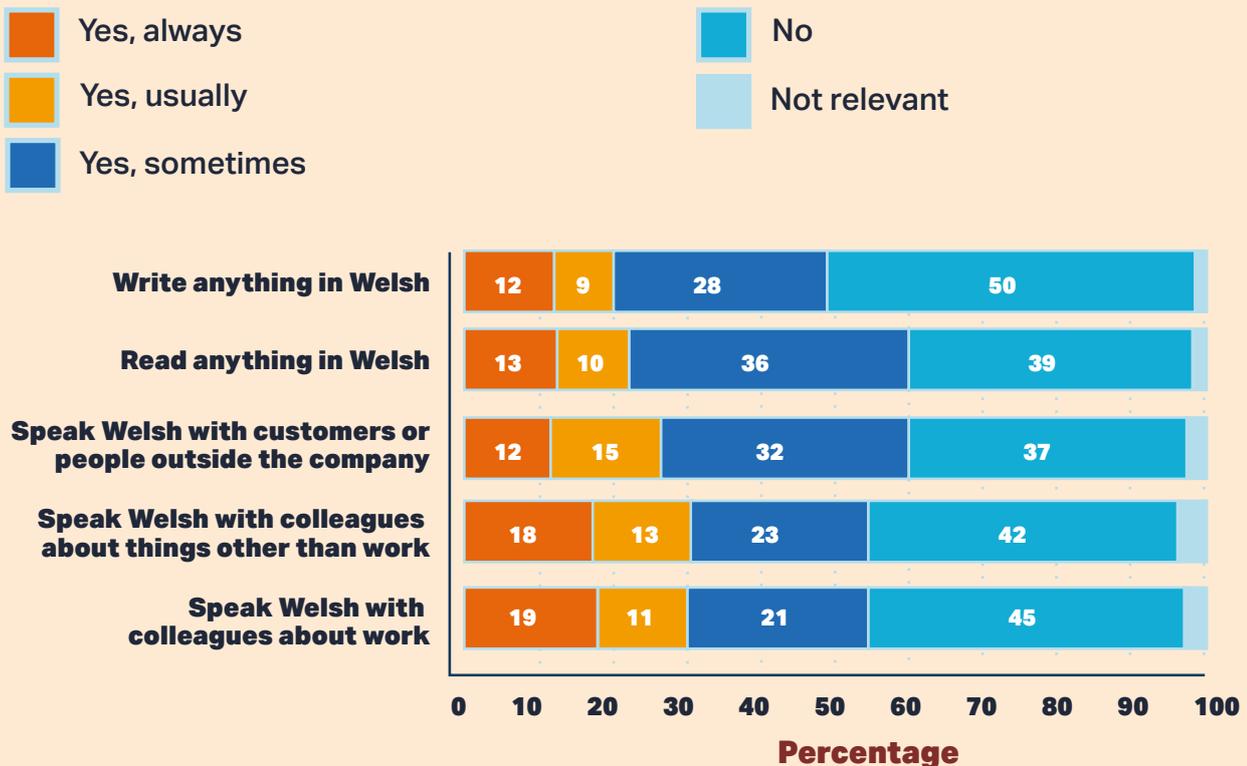
Chart 35: What language do Welsh speakers mainly use to do the following?



(Source: Welsh Language Commissioner's Opportunities to Use Welsh Survey, 2025)

Although it is not possible to compare directly with the Language Use Survey due to the variety of possible responses, these results are relatively consistent with the results of the Language Use Survey conducted in 2019–20. 30% of Welsh speakers at the time reported that they used Welsh always or usually at work to discuss work with colleagues. And 54% used Welsh to chat about things that weren't work-related, at least sometimes.

Chart 36: Percentage of Welsh speakers who speak Welsh at work



(Source: Welsh Language Use Survey 2019–20)

A further analysis of the results of the Language Use Survey and attitudes towards the language can be read in the statistical bulletin which is dedicated to discussing **Welsh language use in the workplace**.³³ It also reports on people's views on the availability of technologies and training opportunities to support the use of Welsh at work.

It must be emphasised that the results of the Language Use Survey do not reflect the changes that have taken place in working arrangements since the pandemic in some sectors, with many adopting hybrid working arrangements with extensive use of virtual meetings. **It will therefore be necessary to establish a new national data baseline to determine what impact new ways of working – and new technologies – have on the frequency of use in the workplace, as well as the confidence of speakers to use their full range of language skills.**

Key conclusions

- The evidence suggests that **opportunities to use Welsh in the workplace are increasing.**
- The evidence also suggests that **Welsh speakers would like more opportunities to use Welsh at work** with 38% stating that they would like to use Welsh *always* or *usually* in the workplace and a further 30% would like to use Welsh and English equally, i.e. to work fully bilingually.

4.2 Main developments

The statistical evidence above provides important information about the experiences and aspirations of Welsh speakers to use the language in terms of receiving services and at work, while also highlighting the practical and psychological challenges that influence their language choices. This information underpins the Commissioner's work in promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language.

The Welsh Language Commissioner's regulatory work

The purpose of the Commissioner's regulatory work is to increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language when receiving services. The work goes far beyond statutory investigations and the imposition of enforcement action; It includes setting duties, monitoring compliance, investigating complaints, promoting good practice, and providing guidance and support. **Together, these activities ensure high-quality services and increase opportunities to use the Welsh language**

A detailed report of how organisations were performing was provided in Part 3 of the previous 5-year report.³⁴ It was concluded at the time that the **introduction of the standards had significantly improved the experiences of Welsh speakers but that there was still room**

³³ [Welsh language use in the workplace \(Welsh Language Use Survey\): July 2019 to March 2020 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES.](#)

³⁴ [The Position of the Welsh Language 2016–20: Welsh Language Commissioner's 5-year Report.](#)

for improvement in the consistency of the performance of some organisations. In reviewing the performance of organisations in 2019–20, the Commissioner warned that some were failing to meet the standard and as a result, there was a risk that a gap would develop between those organisations that were compliant and continuously improving, and those that had not yet put adequate arrangements in place.

There were significant differences between sectors, with the strongest performance seen by organisations on which the standards were imposed first, including Local Authorities, Welsh Government and National Parks, while the performance of organisations in the health and education sectors was weaker and more inconsistent. The results of our surveys have shown that the services of non-devolved organisations, that continue to implement language schemes, are not available in Welsh to the same extent as the services of organisations that implement standards.

The evidence shows that levels of compliance with Welsh language standards have continued to improve over the reporting period but progress in some areas is too slow or inconsistent, as noted in the report *Empowering the Welsh Language through strong governance*.³⁵ While public organisations are gradually incorporating Welsh language standards into their operations – particularly in areas such as corporate branding, websites, documents, social media and job advertisements – significant concerns remain about compliance in frontline services such as over the telephone and at receptions, as well as the way in which Welsh language services are promoted. Despite the positive progress over the reporting period, the evidence highlights that there are still **too many examples where Welsh speakers do not always receive services in Welsh and where a lack of an active offer** leads to undermining user confidence to use the language.

To address the challenge, **an approach to co-regulation was established** during the reporting period that places an emphasis on partnership working and self-regulation by organisations. The success of this approach depends on an open and honest environment that enables dialogue and collaboration. We are seeing early indications that this approach is starting to bear fruit, **shifting the emphasis from strict compliance to what really matters – positive outcomes for Welsh speakers**, especially when receiving services.

In line with the co-regulatory approach, a series of regulatory outcomes were published in 2024. The main intention of these outcomes is to **place the Welsh Language Standards and regulatory work in the context of the national vision of reaching one million Welsh speakers and doubling the daily use of the language**, and ensuring that our regulatory work has the greatest impact on opportunities to use Welsh. The aim is to try to ensure that the regulatory work focuses on real outcomes for Welsh speakers, and an attempt to avoid the risk of superficial compliance.

This desire to adopt a more proactive, strategic and dynamic regulatory approach is set out in the **Welsh Language Commissioner’s Strategic Plan for 2025–30**.³⁶ The strategic plan also outlines specific priorities and themes that will serve as a focus for the organisation over the next five years, including a special focus on workplaces, the health and care sector and children and young people, alongside the promotion standards, and the importance of community language planning.

³⁵ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Empowering the Welsh Language through strong governance*.

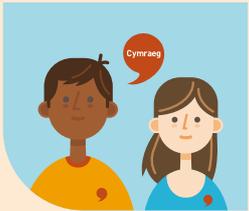
³⁶ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Welsh Language Commissioner’s Strategic Plan for 2025-30*.

Regulatory outcomes of the Welsh Language Commissioner



Outcome 1:

Organisations with the capacity to provide high-quality Welsh language services at all times.



Outcome 2:

Welsh language users understand and are aware of the Welsh language services available to them.



Outcome 3:

Organisations give due regard to the potential impacts of their policy decisions on the Welsh language.



Outcome 4:

Organisations increase the use of Welsh in their workplace, enabling staff to work in Welsh on a day-to-day basis.



Outcome 5:

Organisations promote the Welsh language so that people can use the language naturally in their daily lives.



Outcome 6:

Organisations protect and promote the interests of Welsh language users by having effective governance and complaints arrangements.

Workplaces and the Welsh Language

As already noted, the education system, and the tertiary education sector in particular, has a key role in ensuring that more individuals leave education and training with the confidence to be able to work through the medium of Welsh. As well as this focus on creating an increasingly bilingual workforce, there is also a **need to focus on the role of employers in planning for recruiting staff and utilising and developing their workforce's Welsh language skills** and in offering meaningful opportunities for individuals to use Welsh at work. This is also essential in order to be able to offer quality Welsh language services to users.

By virtue of our work with public organisations as a result of Welsh language standards and language scheme requirements, as well as our work with the private and third sectors, the Commissioner, in partnership with others, has a central role in increasing the use of Welsh within workplaces. The **Welsh language standards regime offers a powerful framework to encourage organisations to move along a linguistic continuum.** As well as standards relating to key issues such as **assessing the language skills of the workforce, offering language training, and recruitment, there is a requirement for organisations to adopt a policy regarding the internal use of Welsh.** An important development in this context was a commitment in the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Act 2005 to review the standards relating to the improvement or assessment of the Welsh language skills of the workforce, in relation to the proposed code on describing competency in the Welsh language. **This is an important development that can strengthen the Commissioner's work in this strategic area.**

Although the majority of organisations have adopted internal policies on the use of Welsh, in line with the requirements of the standards, evidence shows that **these policies are often too general and do not lead to a real increase in the daily use of the language.** This suggests that many organisations are struggling to strategically and intentionally plan for culture change in the use of language in the workplace, and in effectively measuring progress.

In response to these challenges, the Commissioner has continued to work with organisations to develop policy models and practical resources to increase the use of Welsh in the workplace. While a number of organisations have taken advantage of this support, the resources available do not appear to have been used consistently across sectors. This **highlights the need for more structured centralised support and to encourage organisations to adopt evidence-based approaches.**

Having a clear picture of the Welsh skills of the workforce is essential for organisations to plan recruitment and training, and for them to be able to encourage their current Welsh speakers to use more of the language, in order to improve services. While some organizations have begun to assess the skills of their staff, a lack of reliable data continues to hinder many organizations from being able to plan their workforces, and most do not have a comprehensive baseline to map skills against demand or identify gaps in capacity.

As the body that leads and co-ordinates strategic activity in the workplace, **the Commissioner has continued to work with key national partners** – including the Welsh Government, the National Centre for Learning Welsh, and Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol – with the aim of developing the use of Welsh in the workplace. The College is leading on the planning of tertiary education and training in Welsh to meet the needs of the future workforce whilst the Centre, through its Cymraeg Gwaith programme, develops the language skills of the current workforce and provides language training to workforces in several sectors. Both organisations focus on strategic areas such as health and care, sport and public services.

There is no doubt that the above organisations all share a vision about the potential of the workplace as a key area for developing new speakers and for increasing the use of the language. These key partners have a unique strategic contribution to offer to the field of bilingual workplace planning, and continuing to strengthen this collaboration is essential.



A language for
work and wider
horizons



Charmine Smikle is a service designer for Social Care Wales and is delighted to be in a workplace where Welsh is spoken naturally and actively encouraged.

Born and raised in Cardiff in a non-Welsh-speaking home, Charmine's early education differed from that of her older brothers, who attended English-medium schools. Her mother, influenced by friends who were also non-Welsh speakers but had chosen Welsh-medium education for their children, decided that this would be the right path for Charmine – and it is a decision she has always appreciated.



My brothers are a little older than me and had already started in English-medium education. But by the time it was time for me to go to primary school, my mum was friends with some parents, none of whom spoke Welsh, who had chosen a Welsh-medium school for their children, and she decided that would be good for me

I can't remember learning Welsh and to tell the truth, it happened quite naturally but I'm so glad I did because it has helped me enormously later in life.

After finishing secondary school, Charmine went on to study biological sciences at a university in London before travelling across the United States, Mexico, Guatemala and Belize with the intention of learning Spanish.



I lived with a family in Mexico whose English wasn't great, so I had to make the effort to speak Spanish. My Welsh was surprisingly helpful in learning the language. I had few opportunities to speak Welsh at university, but when learning another language, I felt I had a real advantage from already being bilingual.

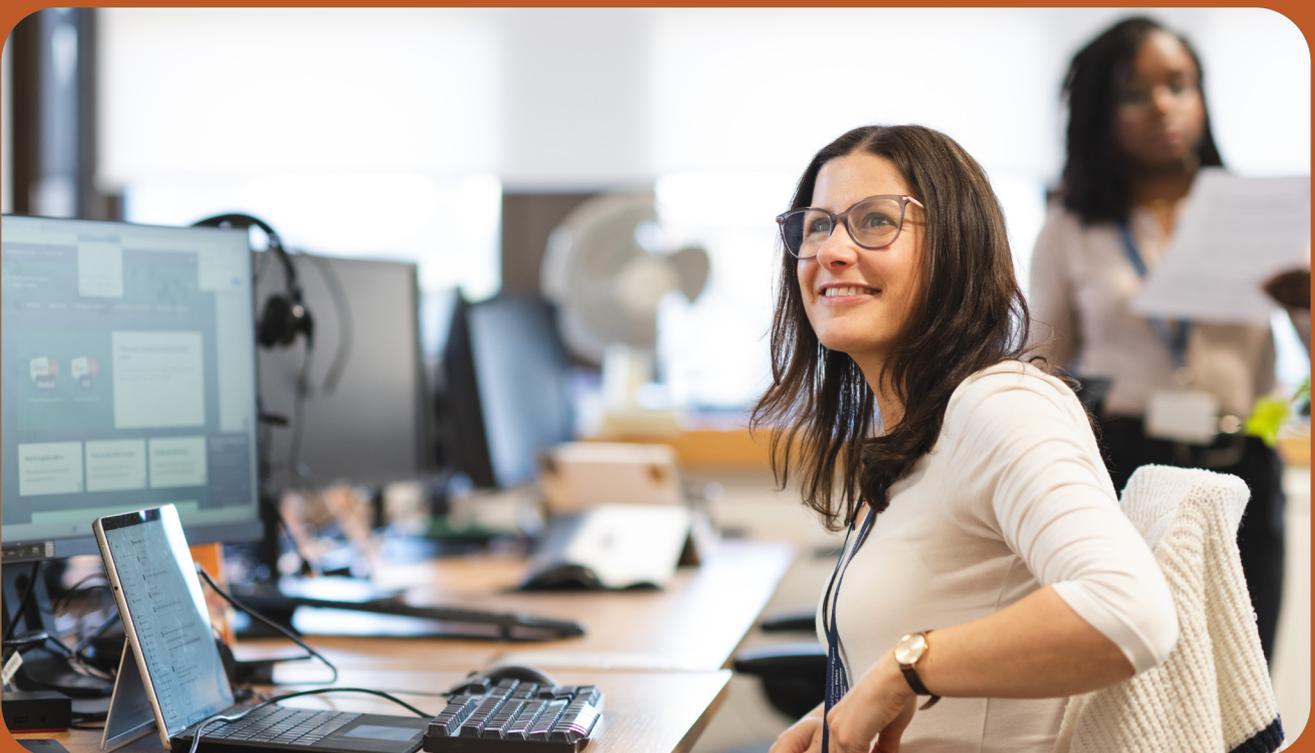
When she returned to Wales, Charmine worked in a range of roles before taking up her current post with Social Care Wales. It was there that she first fully appreciated the value of being able to use Welsh naturally in the workplace.



It immediately struck me how natural the use of Welsh is here. Bilingual conversations are encouraged, and there are opportunities to develop your skills – like informal cuppa-and-chat sessions. I don't think I'd fully realised before how important the Welsh language was to me, but looking back, it's been an advantage in every job I've had.

Using Welsh at work has also boosted my confidence to use it socially, and those two aspects are closely connected.

I'm aware that I still lack confidence in some situations – like giving presentations in Welsh – but the support is always there, and the fact that Welsh is an integral part of everyday work life makes everything easier.



Using the Welsh Language in health and care

The ability to use the Welsh language when receiving health and care services is crucial, especially as individuals are often in a vulnerable position when using these services.

The latest version of the Welsh Government's ***More than just words*** plan was published in 2022.³⁷ This is the national framework that outlines the Welsh Government's vision for ensuring that Welsh speakers can receive health and social care services in their language of choice. At the heart of the plan is the **principle of the Active Offer**, which places the responsibility on providers to offer services in Welsh rather than waiting for them to be requested by the individual.

During the reporting period, there has been a **significant change in the policy and legislative landscape, with Welsh language standards now more deeply rooted in the health and care sector**. This has led to clearer expectations being placed on public organisations to provide a wide range of services through the medium of Welsh – including correspondence, websites, public events and forms.

Although the standards impose duties on bodies to provide certain Welsh language services, they do not directly address the provision of clinical services. Instead, **there are specific requirements on bodies to formulate a policy on the provision of a primary care service and a 5-year plan outlining how they will increase capacity to carry out clinical consultations through the medium of Welsh**. These clinical services are considered to be the main focus of the *More than Just Words* plan in seeking to improve health and care provision through the medium of Welsh.

The 5-year period of NHS Health Boards and Trusts clinical plans came to an end during the reporting period. It is fair to say that the **progress during this first period was slow**. The plans were late in being published, and the any firm evidence of an increase in linguistic capacity during the first 5-year period is limited. However, we can now consider that a basic infrastructure has been put in place, creating a foundation for the sector to build on. The sector adopted new 5-year plans during 2025, it is essential for the sector to act with momentum and urgency if we are to see tangible improvements in the experiences of Welsh speakers of clinical services.

A key part of ensuring better experiences for Welsh speakers is to increase the capacity of the health and care sector workforce to offer services through the medium of Welsh. This is a particular example of the strategic collaboration taking place between the Commissioner, the National Centre for Learning Welsh and the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. The development of Welsh-medium courses and provision in the field of health and care has been a priority for the College over the reporting period. Similarly, the Centre's significant contribution is seen as they develop specific language training for the health and care sector. This work is absolutely core to achieving some of the core objectives of the *More than just words* plan, and also to enable the Commissioner to exercise his regulatory powers to ensure that health boards improve their services and experiences for Welsh speakers.

³⁷ [More than just words: Welsh language plan in health and social care | GOV.WALES](#).

Since 2019, **specific duties have been imposed on independent primary care providers** to coincide with the advent of Welsh language standards for the health sector. One of the actions of the *More than just words* plan is to carry out a survey to understand the impact of these duties on the delivery of the Active Offer. This research will provide important evidence to understand the extent to which these duties are being implemented effectively and whether the monitoring and accountability framework needs to be strengthened. Consideration should also be given to the extent to which the current requirements need to be reviewed to ensure that they reflect the changes in the way clinical services are delivered in the coming years.

Beyond clinical services, our report on the performance of organisations in 2024, *Delivering change together*,³⁸ identified the need for the health sector to build on the momentum it has managed to create over the past year, and ensure that progress continues into the next period. The results of the **2024–25 surveys show that the sector has responded positively to that challenge and significant improvements can be seen**, including:

- An increase of 68% to 80% in the number of documents available in Welsh in a year – an increase of 42 percentage points compared to the 2021 data, when the first verification surveys were conducted
- An increase from 74% to 87% in the number of web pages available in Welsh in a year
- An increase from 64% to 72% in the proportion of social media posts available in Welsh in a year.

However, challenges remain in the provision of reception and telephone services. **It should be stressed that these challenges are not unique to the health sector.**

³⁸ Welsh Language Commissioner, *Delivering change together* (August 2024).



Language
of care



Ceri Innes-Parry has personal family experience of dementia and is now a member of a Welsh language and dementia care subgroup working to improve support for patients and their families across Wales.

In 2020, Ceri's mother was diagnosed with dementia, and four years later her mother-in-law received a similar diagnosis. She therefore knows first-hand the significant challenges involved in accessing treatment and support through the medium of Welsh. She also understands what kinds of opportunities and changes would make a meaningful difference.

A former headteacher, Ceri left her job to care for her mother and ensure that the Welsh language would be an integral part of that care.



Welsh is my mother's first language and, like many people living with dementia, she communicates mainly in her mother tongue. Her memories are closely connected to her Welsh culture – whether that is poetry from her school days, her Bible, the Eisteddfod, her family, everything that makes her who she is.

When a diagnosis of dementia is made, what has struck me most is the lack of awareness of the impact that positive reference to the Welsh language and culture has on an individual. In my view, disregarding a person's identity is disregarding the person.

I fully understand that it is not possible to provide assessments and care through the medium of Welsh in every part of Wales, but I would like to see dedicated training offered across the care sector to emphasise the importance of a person's language and culture to the way they respond and to their mental wellbeing. Unfortunately, in my experience, Welsh is not always offered proactively, and more than that, there is no real understanding of the impact this has on the individual.

After being contacted by Alzheimer’s Cymru, Ceri was invited to give feedback on her experiences, and this led to her becoming a member of a Welsh language and dementia care subgroup that provides advice and feedback to the Government as they develop a new action plan.



Joining this group was extremely beneficial for me as I learned a lot and gathered further information about the support available. It was also good to see that I was not on my own and that I – and therefore my mother and mother-in-law – still had a voice.

On one level the group operates very strategically, but what I can offer, based on my personal experience, are suggestions for small things that can be implemented immediately. For example, ensuring that care homes play Welsh music, ask artists to sing in Welsh, have bilingual signs, and use bilingual flashcards. Above all, remembering that a simple ‘Bore da’ can make a world of difference.

Although she wants to remain positive and hopeful about the future, Ceri is concerned that things are not moving fast enough.



I often feel that I have to raise the same issues and barriers time and time again. I sometimes think that a situation has been resolved but, because of a lack of communication, I have to repeat the same points all over again. But my hope is that, in five years’ time, we will be in a healthier position regarding the Welsh language and dementia, with training, understanding and action on the importance of language and culture fully embedded across the health sector in Wales.



Policy making standards and mainstreaming the Welsh language

There is no doubt that the **policy making standards continue to play a vital role in ensuring that the Welsh language remains central to public policy development.** They set a requirement to consider the impact of policies on the language in a meaningful way – including direct impact on Welsh language services, and the wider impact on communities, opportunities to use the language, and the education infrastructure for example.

This is not simply a matter of technical compliance, it is a strategic mechanism designed to ensure that the Welsh language is treated as an integral consideration as organisations decide how to carry out their functions. The expectation is clear: **public organisations must make a conscientious and reasonable effort to assess the potential impact of their decisions on the Welsh language**, not as a secondary consideration but as an integral part of the process. And this principle has now been reinforced in a recent ruling by the Welsh Language Tribunal.

The standards set out two requirements when publishing consultation documents: to consider the impact on the Welsh language and to seek views regarding the Welsh language. Monitoring during the reporting period shows that awareness of these requirements, and the extent to which they are met, varies significantly between organisations. While some have robust arrangements in place to ensure compliance, others show limited awareness or fail to fully meet the standards.

There has been a significant increase in organisations putting administrative arrangements in place to comply with the policy-making standards. Templates, guidelines and training have been developed to facilitate the process. However, the **evidence shows a clear gap between these arrangements and their practical implementation.** Impact assessments often include generic factual statements on the Welsh language without identifying specific impacts, meaning that the requirement to make a conscientious effort is not fully met.

The context or subject area of the policy in question is key in considering what is required to be able to demonstrate a conscientious effort. Decisions that are linguistically sensitive, such as the reorganisation of education, call for deeper consideration, of course. However, this level of consideration is not always evident.

This emphasises the need to strengthen understanding and meaningful action, in order to close the gap between policy and action, and achieve the regulatory outcome we have set out the outcome: **organisations giving due regard to the potential impacts of their policy decisions on the Welsh language.**

The Welsh Language Tribunal

The Welsh Language Tribunal is a statutory tribunal established by the Welsh Language Measure. The role of the Tribunal is to decide on appeals against decisions made by the Welsh Language Commissioner in relation to the Welsh Language Standards. The final year of this reporting period marks a significant milestone: **ten years since the establishment of the Welsh Language Tribunal**. Over the past decade, the Tribunal has developed into a robust and independent statutory body, playing a vital role in ensuring fairness and consistency in the operation of the standards regime.

Table 1: Number of applications to the Welsh Language Tribunal (2020–25)

Year	Number of applications received
2020–21	13
2021–22	3
2022–23	1
2023–24	4
2024–25	3
Total	24

(Source: Annual Reports of the Welsh Language Tribunal)

As shown in Table 1, the number of applications received by the Tribunal during the reporting period is low in reality, with a marked decrease since 2020/21. In that year 13 cases were recorded, with applications for a review of the Commissioner’s decision not to investigate accounting for 70% of cases. But by 2024/25 only three cases had been submitted to the Tribunal. This suggests an **increasingly stable climate in terms of compliance with standards and acceptance of the Commissioner’s statutory determinations**.

The Tribunal has not received any appeal under Section 58 of the Measure during the reporting period. Section 58 allows organisations to challenge a requirement to comply with a standard if they consider it unreasonable or disproportionate. The absence of appeals in this area, coupled with the overall decline in the number of cases, indicates the robustness and efficiency of the standards-imposition process. It also suggests that the standards themselves are considered proportionate and appropriate by the organisations subject to them.

Although the number of cases that have been brought before the Tribunal has been relatively low during the reporting period, **the decisions made have set important precedents, and have had a positive impact on the practices of organisations**. Without a doubt, the most significant case heard by the Welsh Language Tribunal during the reporting period was Neath Port Talbot Council’s appeal regarding their failure to consider the impact of a decision to reorganise three primary schools on the Welsh language.

Details of the case can be read in full on the Tribunal’s website,³⁹ but the outcome of the case was that the Tribunal agreed with the Commissioner: the Council had not complied with the standards that require public bodies to consider the impact of policy decisions on the Welsh language. **Superficial statements in consultation documents or deferring an assessment until after a consultation period are not sufficient.** This ruling is an important one as it sets a clear precedent: public organisations must make a conscientious and reasonable effort to consider the impact of policy decisions on the Welsh language.

Opportunities to use the Welsh language services

As part of the co-operation agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru (2021), a commitment was made to implement standards for public transport, health regulators, public bodies that are not yet subject to the standards, and water companies. It was also agreed that work would begin on implementing standards for housing associations during the Senedd term.

During this period, **significant progress has been made in extending and amending Welsh language standards, further strengthening the statutory framework created by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.** The Welsh Government has introduced a number of new and revised regulations, extending the standards to most of the sectors and organisations in line with commitments. In addition, the Government amended five sets of existing regulations to make them applicable to additional organisations. This enables the Commissioner to issue them with statutory compliance notices, ensuring that these organisations implement the standards.

Below is an overview of those sectors and organisations:

Group of organisations	Specific organisations	Date of approval of regulations	Date standards implemented
The Corporate Joint Committees (Amendment of Schedule 6 to the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) Regulations 2021 The Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015 (Amendment) Regulations 2021	Corporate Joint Committees (4 organisations)	1 Ebrill 2021	30 October 2024 ⁴⁰
The Welsh Language Standards (No. 8) Regulations 2022	Health Professions Councils (9 organisations)	31 October 2022	6 December 2023
The Welsh Language Standards (No. 9) Regulations 2023	Water and Sewerage Undertakers (2 organisations)	31 October 2023	13 August 2025
The Welsh Language Standards (No. 1, No. 2, No. 4, No. 6 and No. 7) Regulations (Amendment) Regulations 2025	A variety of public organisations (10 organisations)	28 March 2025	These standards have not yet come into effect.

³⁹ TyG/WLT/22/01: Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council | Welsh Language Tribunal (Accessed January 2026).

By the end of 2025, the Senedd had approved eight sets of Welsh Language Standards Regulations, each applying to a specific group of organisations, along with two sets of amending regulations. **As a result, 133 organisations are now implementing the standards.**⁴⁰

The Welsh Government also consulted on draft Regulations for Registered Social Landlords providing services to people in Wales. This would enable the Commissioner to impose language duties on these organisations, increasing opportunities for people to use the Welsh language when interacting with them.

Although a commitment to implement standards for public transport is included in the co-operation agreement, it is disappointing that regulations for the sector have not been introduced during the reporting period. However, it should be noted that Transport for Wales – the leading provider of public trains in Wales, and a not-for-profit limited company wholly owned by the Welsh Ministers – is already subject to the standards imposed on the Welsh Government.

While a significant number of the organisations named in the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 Schedules are now subject to the standards, several bodies and sectors remain outside the regime. The Government has the ability to expand the provisions of the Measure, ensuring that more organisations have to comply with the standards. These include Crown bodies and UK Government departments, gas and electricity service providers, postal and telecommunications. At present, a number of these organisations operate Welsh language schemes under the Welsh Language Act 1993 – **a different framework which does not grant the Commissioner the same enforcement powers.**

Using Welsh with businesses and charities

Businesses and charities are important service providers with the potential to shape the daily linguistic experiences of consumers and customers, whether browsing on the high street, shopping in supermarkets, getting advice from a charity or sorting out your financial affairs at a bank. **These are also sectors where the Commissioner does not, of course, have enforcement powers.** We must rely upon the power of persuasion and influence.

The Commissioner's Hybu Team works with businesses and third sector organisations to demonstrate the benefits of using the Welsh language and work closely with organisations to produce exciting development plans that lead to an increase in the use of Welsh. The Commissioner has supported all types of organisations – from large supermarkets and international charities to smaller businesses and third sector organisations operating locally.

⁴⁰ The standards come into force for those organisations named in the Welsh Language Standards (No.1, No.2, No.4, No.6 and No.7) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 during 2026.

An important development during the reporting period was the **launch of the Cynnig Cymraeg scheme in June 2020**. The Cynnig Cymraeg is an official recognition by the Commissioner, and is an **opportunity for businesses and charities to demonstrate to the public that they are organisations that take pride in the Welsh language and are committed to using it**. To receive the Cynnig Cymraeg, organisations must draw up a Welsh language development plan in cooperation with the Welsh Language Commissioner and operate it successfully for a period. Organisations must also highlight at least five services they are proud to be able to offer through the medium of Welsh, such as self-service tills, a website and social media accounts.

Between the launch of the scheme and the end of the reporting period, **169 organisations received the Cynnig Cymraeg**, including Cancer Research Wales, Aldi, Ffilm Cymru, the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society, Disability Sport Wales, Boots and NSPCC Cymru.

Table 2: The number of organisations that have received the Cynnig Cymraeg during the reporting period

Financial year	Organisations
2020–21	12
2021–22	28
2022–23	26
2023–24	45
2024–25	48
2025–26	10 (to date)

(Source: Commissioner's Hybu Team Data)

As organisations work towards the Cynnig Cymraeg, the range and availability of Welsh-language services available to users has increased.

The number of organisations that have received the Cynnig Cymraeg has increased significantly since 2023, partly as a result of collaboration with strategic partners such as Arts Council of Wales and ARFOR. These funding bodies are requiring organisations to work towards the Cynnig Cymraeg as part of their grant conditions. This collaboration with strategic partners has been key in reaching and influencing new organisations.

Organisations clearly see value in working with the Commissioner to obtain the Cynnig Cymraeg.

One benefit of working towards the Commissioner's official recognition is the formalisation of Welsh language services across the organisation and that consideration is given to how an organization plans and develops the workforce to deliver those services. Organisations must submit an annual report on the activities contained in their development plans and their Welsh Language Offer and, in co-operation with the Commissioner, will review their Welsh Language Offer every three years.

In 2023 the Commissioner conducted research which looked at how the Welsh language helps charities fundraise. The findings demonstrated that using the Welsh language can offer clear financial advantages and that using the Welsh language enables charities to:

- visit events or organisations that operate in Welsh
- sell Welsh goods
- advertise in Welsh
- create Welsh language templates and fundraising packages
- engage with the Welsh language media.

It has been shown that using the Welsh language enables charities to reach new audiences, which in turn helps generate financial support. For example, the use of Welsh enabled BHF Cymru to visit Welsh language organisations. Following one such visit, Merched y Wawr chose BHF Cymru as their charity of the year and raised around £30,000 for the organisation.

You can read the research in full and see other examples of how charities benefit financially from using the Welsh language on the Commissioner's website.⁴¹

⁴¹ Welsh Language Commissioner, [Welsh – your fundraising tool](#).



A language for
support and
opportunity



Established in 1985, GISDA is a charity that supports vulnerable young people under 25 years old in Gwynedd. It provides a wide range of services, but its main service is to provide support with homelessness, and it operates houses and hostels across the county.

Gwynedd is one of the strongholds of the Welsh language, and the ability to communicate with young people – many of whom face significant challenges – in their preferred language is essential, according to the Chief Executive, Siân Tomos.



The young people we work with are able to communicate more effectively in their first language, especially if they are discussing difficult, sensitive, or emotional matters. Being able to talk in Welsh is extremely important, and that's why we believe so strongly in offering a Welsh-medium service.

When young people want to move from a hostel to a house, for example, being able to communicate exactly what they want and how they feel makes a huge difference.

The Welsh language is a key part of our values; our entire workforce is bilingual and we also support new learners.

We have plenty of evidence that communication through the medium of Welsh is important – it is an integral part of what we offer young people. Welsh will remain a part of GISDA for as long as we exist.

One of the young people who has been supported by GISDA is Reece.



I live in Caernarfon and I am one of GISDA's young people who receives housing support. I feel that it's important that services are available in Welsh because Welsh is my first language. And even though I don't speak it every day, it is my language.

If you look at organisations like GISDA that provide support for young people, very often you don't get that through the medium of Welsh. So I think it's so important that these services are available in Welsh.

Relevance of the Welsh language standards

Welsh language standards are detailed, prescriptive requirements set out in subordinate legislation. Their strength lies in the fact that they are statutory duties, providing clarity and certainty for both organisations and service users alike. However, in a rapidly changing world, there is a **danger that such standards may become outdated, especially as technology reshapes the way services are designed and delivered.**

Since their introduction in 2016, and indeed during throughout the period covered in this report, public services have undergone substantial transformation, with developments such as digital platforms, automation and the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI). **AI can now process spoken language with far greater accuracy than before, creating new opportunities to use Welsh in digital systems more naturally and more efficiently.** This has the potential to enable organisations to provide more personal, accessible and efficient services, ensuring that the Welsh language remains relevant and visible in a digital world.

However, **when adopting new technologies, organisations must continue to comply with their duties**, ensuring that Welsh is not treated less favourably than English. To provide guidance on the application of AI in terms of Welsh language duties, the Commissioner issued a regulatory policy statement in 2025.⁴²

It is essential that the standards are regularly reviewed to reflect consumer habits and technological advancements. As service providers adopt AI-generated self-service systems and solutions, it must be ensured that the requirements remain relevant, practical and effective – including provision for digital interfaces, automated services and processes using intelligent data – so that the use of the Welsh language remains easy, natural and safe for users.

⁴² Welsh Language Commissioner, [Artificial Intelligence and the Welsh Language: Welsh Language Commissioner's Regulatory Policy Statement](#).

4.3 Priorities and opportunities to strengthen the position of the Welsh language over the next five years

Looking ahead to the next five years, clear strategic opportunities and priorities are emerging – **opportunities with the potential to drive fundamental change in the quality and availability of Welsh language services, and to expand opportunities for people to use the language.**

Since their introduction in 2016, Welsh language standards have strengthened the status of the language and provided a level of assurance to organisations and service users alike, creating new opportunities for people to use Welsh. There is no doubt **that the Welsh language standards are the most effective mechanism for improving provision and ensuring consistency of Welsh language services.** To further increase these opportunities, the ongoing work of extending the standards to new organisations and sectors is a key strategic step. The next few years therefore offer a significant opportunity to extend the Welsh Language Standards to new sectors and organisations. While strong foundations have been laid with a number of new regulations introduced during 2021–25, critical gaps remain.

Extending the standards to UK Government ministerial and non-ministerial departments, providers of public transport services, as well as other organisations and sectors named in the Measure are steps that have the potential to expand the use of the Welsh language on a national scale. **This work will be key to ensuring consistency and new opportunities for Welsh speakers.**

There is also potential to create new opportunities for people to use the Welsh language with businesses and charities. The number of organisations that received the Cynnig Cymraeg increased significantly between 2023 and 2025, partly due to working with strategic partners to influence new organisations, and it is important to continue this cooperation over the coming years.

It should also be emphasised that a number of the organisations that received the Cynnig Cymraeg between 2023 and 2025 were smaller organisations as a result of a strategic working relationship. Whilst we recognise the importance of these smaller organisations to community linguistic experiences, **greater emphasis must be placed on targeting large businesses and charities operating nationally in the coming period as they are the ones which people engage with most frequently.**

There is also a need **to respond proactively to a rapidly changing digital world.** As automated responses, self-service interfaces and artificial intelligence become integral to service delivery, **standards guidance needs to be updated to ensure that the Welsh language is supported and strengthened in the digital space.**

Priority



The Welsh language standards must be reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and reflect current and future models of service provision. The Welsh Government must also facilitate an increase in the opportunities to provide Welsh language services by:

- introducing Welsh language standards regulations for Ministers of the Crown; the consent of Secretaries of State would be required to name them in regulations.
- introducing Welsh language standards regulations for UK Government non-ministerial departments.
- developing a clear programme for extending Welsh language standards to other sectors and organisations listed in the Measure and considering expanding to other key sectors.

While many organisations now offer good-quality Welsh language services, **inconsistencies continue to undermine the user experience**, particularly in sectors such as health, care and education. There are noticeable improvements in documents, websites and social media, but access to face-to-face and telephone services remains a challenge. The next period, therefore, **is an opportunity to act more strategically, targeting those gaps in provision which most influence user experience.**

Looking ahead, the next period will present opportunities to further strengthen our strategic approach to co-regulation. The outcomes already published lay a solid foundation for partnership, and we are keen to continue to foster open dialogue, share good practice, and support organisations to take bold action ensuring the best outcomes for service users. Through this approach, **regulation will continue to be a strategic tool to increase opportunities to use the Welsh language, ensuring that services meet user expectations and contribute to the national vision.**

In this context, **strategic workforce planning and recruitment are emerging as some of the most transformative opportunities.** Beyond the education system, this is the area that has the most potential to influence opportunities for individuals to learn and use the Welsh language in their daily lives, contributing directly to the core objectives of *Cymraeg 2050*. There is a real opportunity to build on what the education system achieves by ensuring opportunities for people to use Welsh daily at work. **Increasing both the formal and informal use of Welsh in the workplace has the potential to influence people's perceptions of the importance of the language, to build confidence in the language, and to generate wider use of Welsh in the community.**

For organisations wishing to increase their capacity to provide Welsh language services – and therefore expand opportunities for people to use the language daily – **greater focus and strategic investment** in language planning within workplaces is essential. **Developing consistent methods to measure usage, establishing a solid baseline of language skills, identifying gaps between skills and service demand, and reviewing and improving recruitment practices will be vital steps to enable organisations to work through the medium of Welsh.** Ultimately, these are the primary mechanisms for increasing capacity and will make the biggest difference in the next five years in building a confident and sustainable workforce, which provides high-quality Welsh language services.

Priority



The Welsh Language Commissioner must be enabled to intensify our work in workplaces through the provision of additional investment to develop and deliver a coherent strategy to increase the use of Welsh in the workplace. This strategy would target and support organisations across all sectors to plan strategically for increasing the use of Welsh in their workplaces. Such a strategy would coordinate national workplace planning activities, building on the strategic collaboration that is already taking place between other key partners in this field.

With the emphasis on the need to focus on outcomes for Welsh speakers, the importance of the provision of health and care services through the medium of Welsh cannot be overstated. Despite some significant and positive developments during the reporting period, the **reality is that Welsh speakers are not always able to receive clinical services through the medium of Welsh.** While the principle of the active offer is accepted and discussed as a policy concept, it does not always impact the way care is planned, delivered and funded. Far too often Welsh speakers have to accept clinical services through the medium of English. **Current health and social care provision in Wales still falls short of the needs of a bilingual nation.**

Over the next five years, **the use of Welsh in health and care services must be strengthened**, particularly in clinical settings, where the language can have a profound impact on a person's experience in vulnerable situations. Although core infrastructure is now in place through the sector's *More than just words* and five-year clinical plans, the evidence shows a **continuing need to increase Welsh language capacity in the core clinical services on which users depend on on a day-to-day basis.** This includes consultations, assessments and care from therapists, specialist nurses and other health professionals. These are the areas with the greatest demand and, in turn, the greatest risk of failing service users if services do not align with their linguistic needs. This directly impacts quality, outcomes, and clinical safety.

Meeting this challenge **requires alignment between the legal framework, statutory standards and national strategies, with a clearer focus on strengthening clinical services.** The coming years should mark a move from laying foundations to delivering tangible results, ensuring that strategic planning translates into measurable improvements for Welsh-speaking patients.

Priority



Clinical care for Welsh speakers must be transformed by focusing resources and effort on recognised priority areas. Central investment by NHS Wales in the Welsh language should be increased by funding a department of specialist lead officers who will ensure that care in Welsh is an integral part of all aspects of care pathways in these priority areas.

Funding a department of lead specialist officers would enable them to work within and across departments and share good practice across the health and care service working with professional bodies, regulators, inspectorates, health boards and health bodies, social services and social care leaders, charities and others involved in patient care pathways. They will also play a critical role in the development of strategies and action plans in these areas, particularly in **achieving the objectives of *More Than just words* and the successful implementation of the health boards' 5-year plans** for increasing capacity to provide clinical care through the medium of Welsh.