



# The use of Welsh among children and young people

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## Executive summary

This paper reports on the results of research carried out on behalf of the Welsh Language Commissioner regarding the use of the Welsh language by children and young people outside school. Over 1600 children and young people aged 11-21 years across Wales completed a questionnaire, and 6 focus groups were held with children and young people aged 13-18 years. The research seeks to understand more about the linguistic practices of children and young people in their engagement with family and friends; in various activities outside school; in online communication and on social media, and when receiving services.

This section summarises the main findings of the research and outlines the implications for the work of the Welsh Language Commissioner as well as other partners who are working to increase the use of the Welsh language. The executive summary is followed by a more detailed analysis of the results, and the [data can be browsed interactively on our website](#).

Please note that this research has been commissioned to facilitate the preparation of the [Welsh Language Commissioner's Strategic Plan 2025-30](#). The strategic plan published in April 2025 provides a response to the main conclusions and implications of this research and outlines the Welsh Language Commissioner's contribution to encourage greater use of the Welsh language among children and young people.

This research has also been a key evidence base to formulate our manifesto proposals for the Senedd election in 2026. Our manifesto document will be published in June 2025.

## Main findings

- Looking at the sample as a whole, the overall use of the Welsh language by children and young people outside the education system is limited. However, it is important to bear in mind that over a third of the sample received mainly English-medium education and indicated that they spoke very little Welsh. As one would expect, the use of the Welsh language is very low among these respondents. **The research shows that the use of Welsh is much higher among fluent Welsh speakers, those who have learnt Welsh at home, and those who have received a Welsh-medium education.**
- The responses of children and young people to various statements about the Welsh language highlight positive attitudes towards Welsh and the use of the language. Among fluent Welsh speakers, those who have learnt Welsh at home, and those who have received Welsh-medium education, **the results suggest that they are extremely proud of the fact that they speak Welsh, and that they are generally keen to use more Welsh in their lives.**
- The results reinforce what we already know about the **relationship between fluency and where/when individuals acquired the language.** Those who have learnt Welsh as young children at home or in a nursery school are much more likely to develop into fluent Welsh speakers and are also more likely to use Welsh in various aspects of their lives.
- **The main setting for the use of Welsh among children and young people is in educational institutions.** Children and young people are much more likely **to use Welsh with teachers/lecturers than with members of their family and friends.** This highlights the importance of the education system in providing opportunities for individuals to learn and use the Welsh language. Beyond the education system, fluent Welsh speakers and those who have learnt Welsh at home are more likely to use the language with family than with their friends.
- In terms of **attending activities outside school**, the percentage of respondents attending sports activities was considerably higher than any other activity. It's during sports activities that children and young people are also most likely to be using Welsh with coaches/leaders and their peers.
- When **communicating with family and friends through various media** (for example, text messages, video calls etc) around 80% of the sample reported that they rarely used Welsh. The use of Welsh in these media increases significantly when looking at fluent Welsh speakers and those who learnt Welsh at home. For example, among Welsh speakers who learnt Welsh at home the results are in complete contrast to the whole sample with over 75% stating that they always use Welsh, mainly use Welsh, or use Welsh and English equally when texting family and friends who speak Welsh.
- The wider use of the Welsh language by children and young people **when creating online content and on various social media is generally limited.** It is clear from the results that children and young people make significant use of these media, but for the majority, English is the language that they use the most. The main reasons for this were that it was easier to use English, that their friends used English, and that it was possible to reach a wider audience by using English.



- Overall, very few reported watching a lot of 'live' television, with the exception of sports such as football and rugby. Respondents cited **a lack of provision and presence of the Welsh language on social media, particularly popular material that would appeal to young people**. Although there was considerable awareness of the social media accounts of organisations such as S4C, Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol, National Sports Associations, some Welsh businesses, and some individuals who used Welsh – on the whole there was a view that there was a need to target Welsh-language material and accounts more effectively towards young people.
- In terms **of the use of services through the medium of Welsh**, children and young people are more likely to receive educational support through the medium of Welsh than any other type of services requested. Children and young people are least likely to use Welsh on the high street. A prominent theme of the focus groups was the **importance of health services through the medium of Welsh**, particularly for fluent Welsh speakers.
- The proportion of respondents who indicated that they would be likely **to use Welsh if those services were readily available in Welsh** is significantly higher than the percentage who indicated that they currently use Welsh when using various services. The results strongly suggest that the **lack of an active offer of provision of Welsh language services is a barrier to the wider use of Welsh**. Another reason for not using Welsh was that respondents were reluctant to start conversations in Welsh or to request a Welsh language service because they felt uncomfortable in doing so, or that there was no point as it was unlikely that the service would be available in Welsh.
- The questionnaires highlighted **negative views from a minority**, but still significant, proportion of the respondents regarding the Welsh language. A number of the respondents indicated that they were not interested in the Welsh language, that it was a waste of time, and that it was not relevant to their lives.

## Implications for the work of the Commissioner and other key partners

- The research shows that **efforts to increase the use of the Welsh language among children and young people outside school need to be intensified**. Even among fluent Welsh speakers and those who have learnt Welsh at home, the lack of use of the Welsh language is a real concern. Current efforts to increase the number of Welsh speakers through the education system are vital, **but a similar investment and focus is needed to ensure that more children and young people use Welsh outside the school gates**.
- The Government needs to continue to explore approaches to changing attitudes and behaviour **to encourage more children and young people to consider the Welsh language as something that belongs to them. The negative attitudes towards the Welsh language that exist among some groups of children and young people need to be addressed**. Part of the solution is to offer these children and young people better opportunities to learn and use the Welsh language through the education system in the first place. There was very little evidence of negative attitudes towards the Welsh language among those who had received a Welsh-medium education, for example.
- Although all children and young people need to be encouraged to use the Welsh that they have, **the results highlight that there is a significant challenge in encouraging fluent Welsh speakers to use more Welsh outside school**. There is a significant number of children and young people in Wales who are fluent in Welsh, who have positive attitudes towards the language, but who make very little use of Welsh outside school. **Confidence among fluent speakers to use the language is a theme that does not receive sufficient consideration at present. More focus is required on changing the habits and behaviour of fluent Welsh speakers, specifically regarding the tendency to switch to English by default**.
- The results of this research reinforce the conclusions of the report of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities that there is a **need for more robust and purposeful community language planning**. There is a need for a better planning framework, along with more investment and resources to drive language planning processes at a local level, thereby **offering more opportunities for children and young people to use the Welsh language and to have cultural, community and sports experiences through the medium of Welsh**. A key part of this would be to increase the investment allocated to partners such as the mentrau iaith, sports clubs, youth services and various eisteddfodau and community initiatives. It should also be ensured that the strategic youth work plans that local authorities are required to produce as part of the statutory framework for youth work focuses on providing more Welsh language provision.
- As well as increasing investment for those partners who offer opportunities for children and young people to use Welsh, the **potential of the promotion standards, and the duty on local authorities to draw up 5-year strategies for promoting the use of Welsh, should be further explored as a framework to co-ordinate intensive community language planning**. The report of the Commission for Welsh-speaking Communities comes to the same conclusion, recommending that the promotion standards should be strengthened in order to create a more effective framework for community language planning.

- In relation to the above points, the results of this research reinforce what we already know about the **potential of sport** as a vehicle for increasing the use of the Welsh language among children and young people. **The Commissioner should continue to prioritise the development of strategic partnerships with leading national sports organisations. Sport Wales, sports governing bodies and other partners such as the Urdd should encourage more opportunities for young people to use the Welsh language in participation, in coaching, and in refereeing and administration.**
- While there are obvious challenges to increasing the use of Welsh online and on social media, advances in technology and artificial intelligence offer exciting opportunities to increase the use of Welsh. **Ensuring that the Welsh language is included within technological advances and artificial intelligence is key, but more focus is required on educating and increasing children and young people's awareness of what is possible.** Consideration should be given to developing specific campaigns to raise awareness and to promote children and young people's use of technology and artificial intelligence through the medium of Welsh. Many children and young people assume that using Welsh online and in various media is problematic or not possible, although this is not necessarily the case. **Technology and artificial intelligence can facilitate the use of Welsh in all aspects of their lives, including when communicating with friends and audiences who may not speak Welsh.**
- In relation to the above point, the results demonstrate the **importance of digital media and broadcasting in the lives of children and young people today.** There are significant challenges in attracting children and young people to watch, listen to and read content through the medium of Welsh, especially given the influence of English-language broadcasting and media. However, there is evidence that children and young people wish to listen, watch, and read through the medium of Welsh. **Further investment is needed to increase the audience and ensure the provision meets the needs and interests of young Welsh speakers.** Organisations such as S4C and the BBC are aware of these challenges and are already working to create provision that is attractive to children and young people. **However, it would be beneficial to commission further research to understand in greater detail the type of provision that would appeal to young people.** As part of this, international evidence could be considered and whether there are more strategic and effective approaches to creating and commissioning provision that would attract more young Welsh speakers.
- The results clearly show the need to ensure that Welsh language services are actively offered to Welsh speakers. If there are barriers to accessing those services, or if speakers feel uncertain about the availability of those services, then it is much more likely that young people will not use Welsh. This can lead to a vicious circle that leads to less use of the language and establishes a habit that will continue throughout their lives. **This focus on encouraging the use of services is one of the priorities of the Commissioner's strategic plan for 2025 to 2030 and there is a need to continue to work with different organisations to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh language services.** The Commissioner should prioritise those areas that are most relevant to children and young people, including leisure services and healthcare services.

# 1. Introduction

Increasing opportunities for children and young people to use the Welsh language in their lives is one of the Welsh Language Commissioner's priorities. Although we are working to increase opportunities for everyone to use Welsh, it is important to view things through the lens of children and young people in order to increase the numbers who are likely to use Welsh in the future.

Our [strategic plan for 2025-30](#) sets out our aim to plan and act more strategically in order to prioritise areas of work that are likely to influence the ability of children and young people to use Welsh in the future. The purpose of this research is to develop an improved evidence base to guide strategic planning.

## 1.1. Objectives

The research was based on two main objectives:

- 1) To develop an understanding of children and young people's use of the Welsh language in different contexts
- 2) To gather the views of children and young people on the opportunities that exist to increase their use of the Welsh language

## 1.2. Methodology

In order to achieve the research objectives it was necessary to gather the views and experiences of a wide range of children and young people in Wales. This was done in two stages.

The first stage was to develop a questionnaire that was shared with a wide range of children and young people in Wales in order to gather their views and experiences. The questionnaire sought the views and experiences of children and young people aged 11-21, specifically targeting secondary schools (Welsh-medium, bilingual, and English-medium), further education colleges and universities, and some community groups/organisations.

Online questionnaires were prepared in Welsh and English for groups of those in school years 7-11 and year 12 to 21 years of age. Although most of the questions were common to all questionnaires, it was decided that different versions of the questionnaire would be provided for respondents younger than 16 and post 16 in order to be able to target the interests and social practices of the age groups more effectively. The questions included a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions.

The questionnaire was distributed by email on 21 February 2024 and closed on 22 April 2024. The questionnaire was sent to 90 secondary schools, 11 further education colleges/groups, 7 higher education institutions, and 50 youth groups/associations across Wales. In addition, the questionnaires were shared in the form of a QR code on some of the Welsh Language Commissioner's social media accounts with an invitation for children and young people to respond to it.

We received 1,352 responses to the questionnaire for the 7-11 school year age groups, and 260 responses to the questionnaire for those in year 12 and up to 21 years of age. A total of 1,612 questionnaire responses were received.

The second stage of the research involved conducting 6 focus group sessions with young people between the ages of 13 and 18 in April 2024. The sessions were held with participants from two further education institutions, two secondary schools, and two community youth groups. The intention of the focus groups was to enrich the information gathered through the questionnaires and to give the young people an opportunity to share further information about their habits and wishes when using the Welsh language.

### **1.3. Limitations of the research**

Section 2 of the report expands on the demographics of the sample. Although the sample is significant, care should be taken in analysing and interpreting the data.

Firstly, the sample includes a wide range of children and young people, including those who have attended English-medium education and may not speak much Welsh, and also those who have attended Welsh-medium education and are likely to be fluent. Results at whole sample level tend to represent a centre-point between a group of children and young people who do not speak or use Welsh much, and a group of children and young people who are fluent and make a more significant use of Welsh. We therefore seek to compare the results of fluent Welsh speakers, those who learnt Welsh at home, and those who have received Welsh-medium education against the whole sample where appropriate.

Although there is a significant geographical spread to the sample, extreme caution needs to be exercised against drawing definitive conclusions when comparing responses according to local authorities. In many cases the sample in a particular local authority is relatively small, and the results may not be representative of the county. For example, the whole sample may come from one particular language-medium school, or come from a particular area of the county that has more or fewer Welsh speakers. Therefore, while we are confident that the sample provides us with a useful picture of linguistic practices at a national level, it would not be appropriate to draw definitive conclusions regarding language use at a more local level.

Similarly, many more children and young people aged 12, 13 and 14 have responded to the questionnaire compared to older individuals. Caution also needs to be exercised when comparing responses based on age. There may be some age groups with a lot more fluent Welsh speakers, or individuals who come from certain areas.

### **1.4. Commissioning the work**

Iaith Cyf was commissioned to carry out this research. Iaith Cyf was responsible for compiling the questionnaires, distributing and collecting the questionnaires, holding the focus groups, and submitting a draft report of the main results to the Commissioner. The Commissioner has undertaken further analysis based on the data submitted including the analysis of the data on PowerBI software, which led the preparation of this final report.

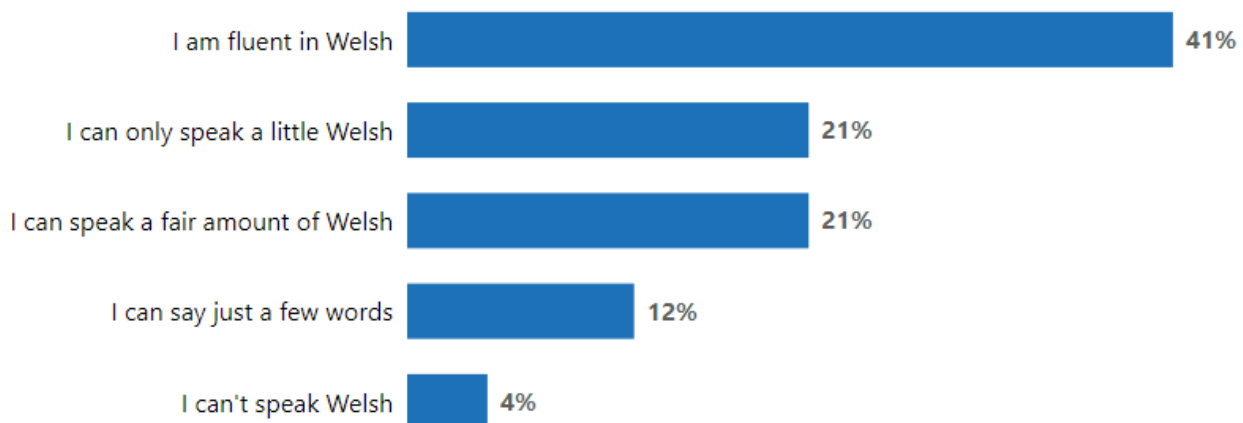


## 2. Sample demographics

### 2.1. Welsh language ability

Of the 1,612 individuals who responded to the questionnaire, over 40% reported being fluent Welsh speakers, and over a further 20% reported that they spoke a fair amount of Welsh. 4% of respondents considered that they could not speak Welsh.

**Figure 1:** respondents' self-description of their ability to speak Welsh

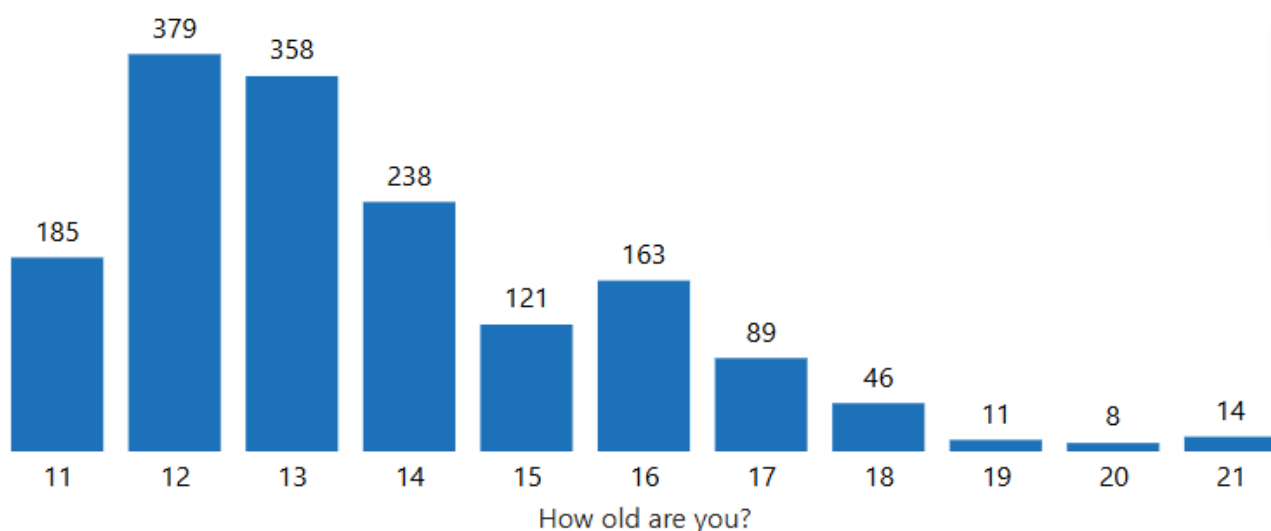


851 of the respondents chose to complete the Welsh version of the questionnaire, with 761 choosing to respond in English.

### 2.2. Age

Significantly more individuals responded to the questionnaire for ages 11-16 (school years 7-11) compared to the questionnaire for 16-21 year olds (post-statutory). The highest number of responses was received from pupils aged 12, 13 and 14.

**Figure 2:** age of respondents

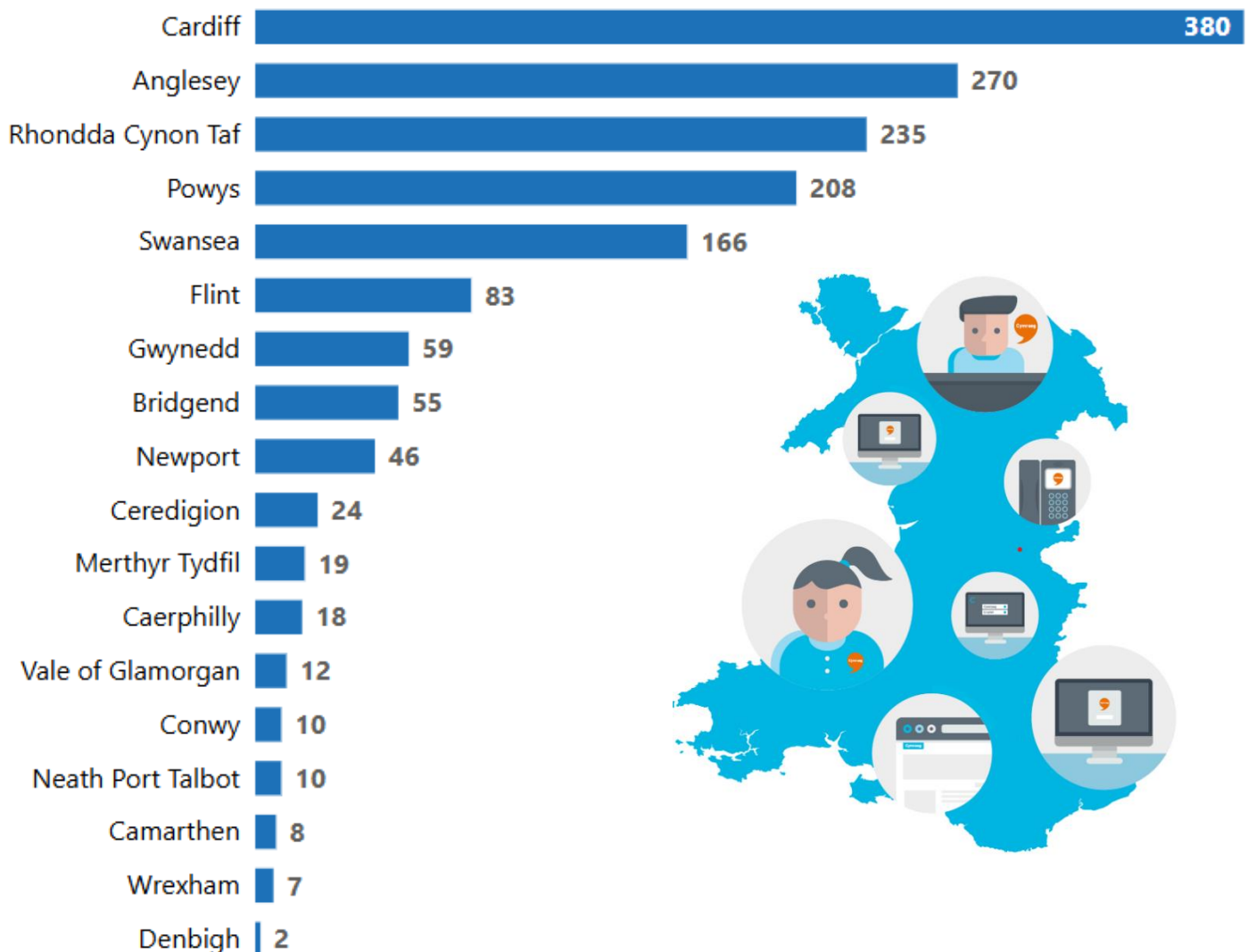


The sample for the 16-21 year old questionnaire is therefore more limited in terms of geographical spread and contains less diversity in terms of variables such as Welsh language ability.

### 2.3. Location

Responses were received from individuals from 18 local authorities in Wales. No responses were received from the Blaenau Gwent, Monmouth, Pembrokeshire and Torfaen areas. However, with the exception of south-west Wales, there appears to be a fairly strong geographical spread, with a significant number of responses from different areas of Wales. It should be borne in mind, however, that the study is not necessarily a fair reflection of the perspectives of all children and young people in Wales.

**Figure 3:** the local authority where respondents live



### 2.4. Gender

50% of respondents described their gender as female, and 42% male. About 6% indicated that they preferred to self-identify, that they preferred not to say, or that they were non-binary.

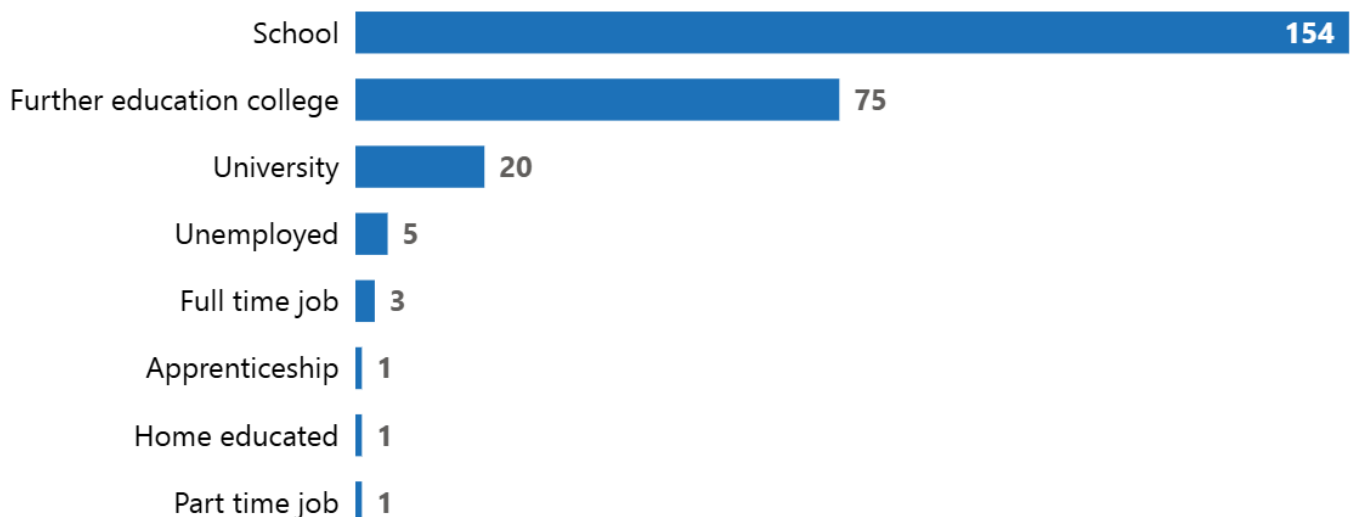
**Figure 4:** gender of respondents



## 2.5. Education or work setting

This question was only asked to the 16-21 year old respondents who had left the statutory education sector. It was assumed that everyone who had completed the questionnaire for school age 11 to 16 was still in education, whether that was at school or home-schooled. The vast majority of respondents aged 16-21 were found to be in either a school or a further education college. A smaller number attended university, and a few respondents were in employment or were unemployed.

**Figure 5:** 16-21 year olds' responses regarding an education setting or if they were in work

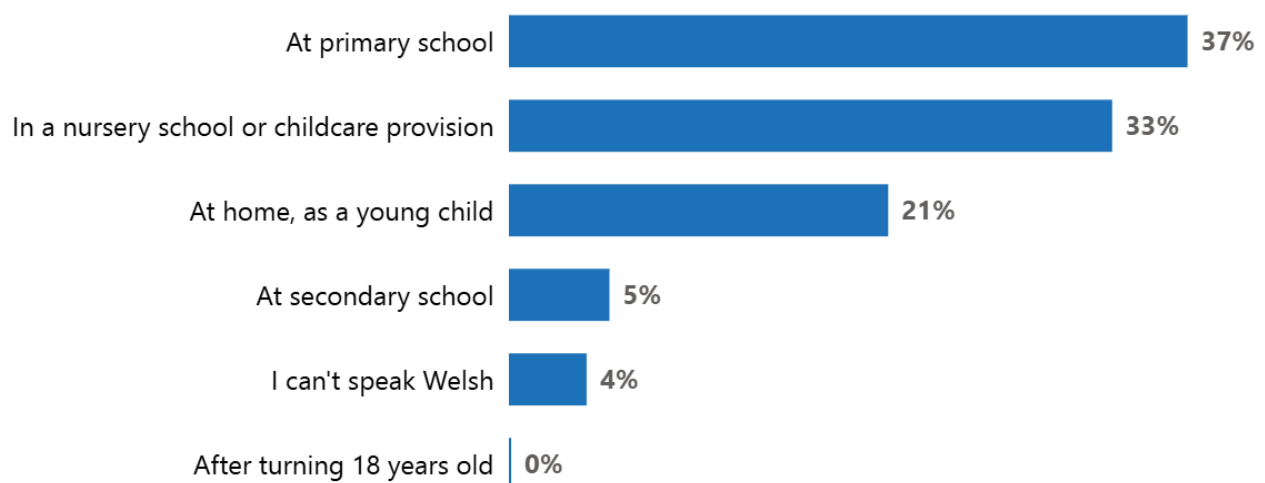


## 3. Language acquisition, education and work

### 3.1. When and where respondents learnt Welsh

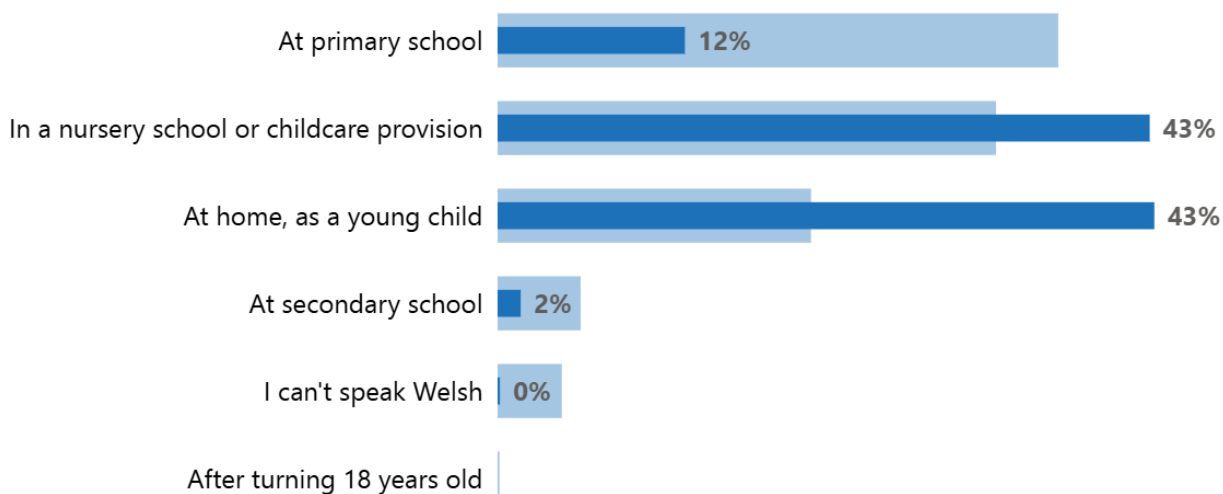
Of all respondents, 37% had learnt Welsh in primary school, 33% in nursery school or childcare provision, 21% at home as a young child, and only 5% in secondary school.

**Figure 6:** when and where the respondents acquired the Welsh language



The above profile changes significantly when comparing fluent Welsh speakers with the whole sample. We see that fluent Welsh speakers are much more likely to have learnt Welsh at home or in pre-school provision, and a significantly smaller proportion have learnt Welsh as older children within the education system.

**Figure 7:** comparison of when and where fluent speakers acquired Welsh (dark blue) compared to the whole sample (light blue)



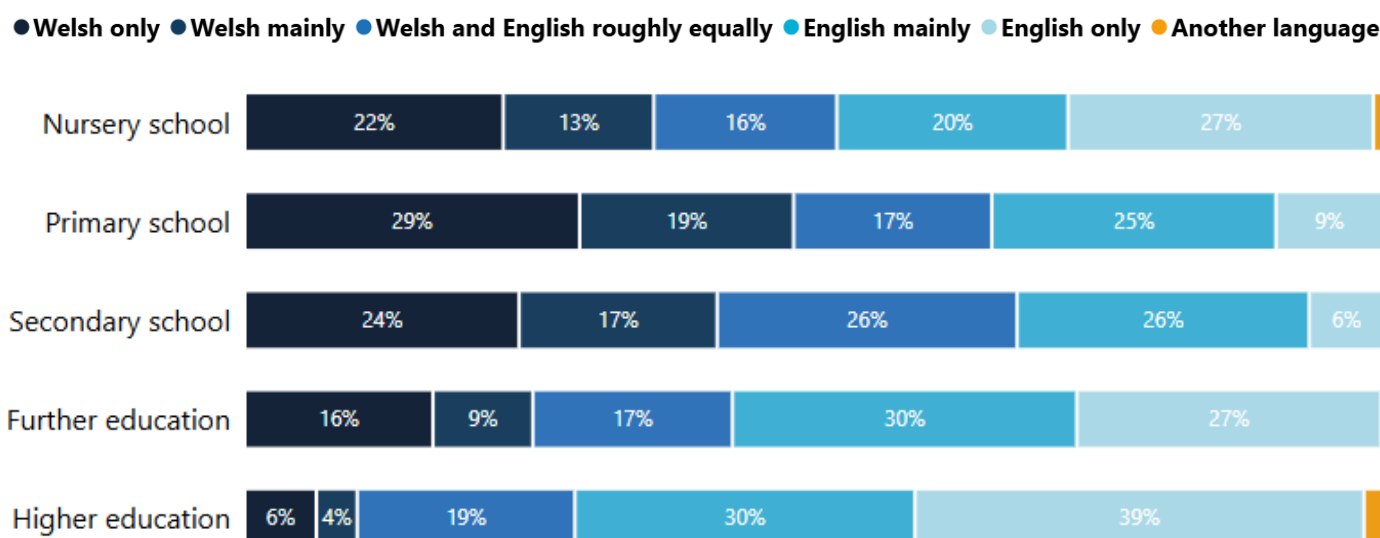


As figure 7 shows, 86% of the sample who identify as fluent Welsh speakers also say that they acquired Welsh at home or in a nursery school or childcare provision.

### 3.2. Language of education

The respondents were asked to identify the language medium of their education at different stages. Clearly, only the 16-21 year old learners who had left the statutory education system were asked as to the language medium of their further and higher education.

**Figure 8:** the language medium of the respondents' education at different stages

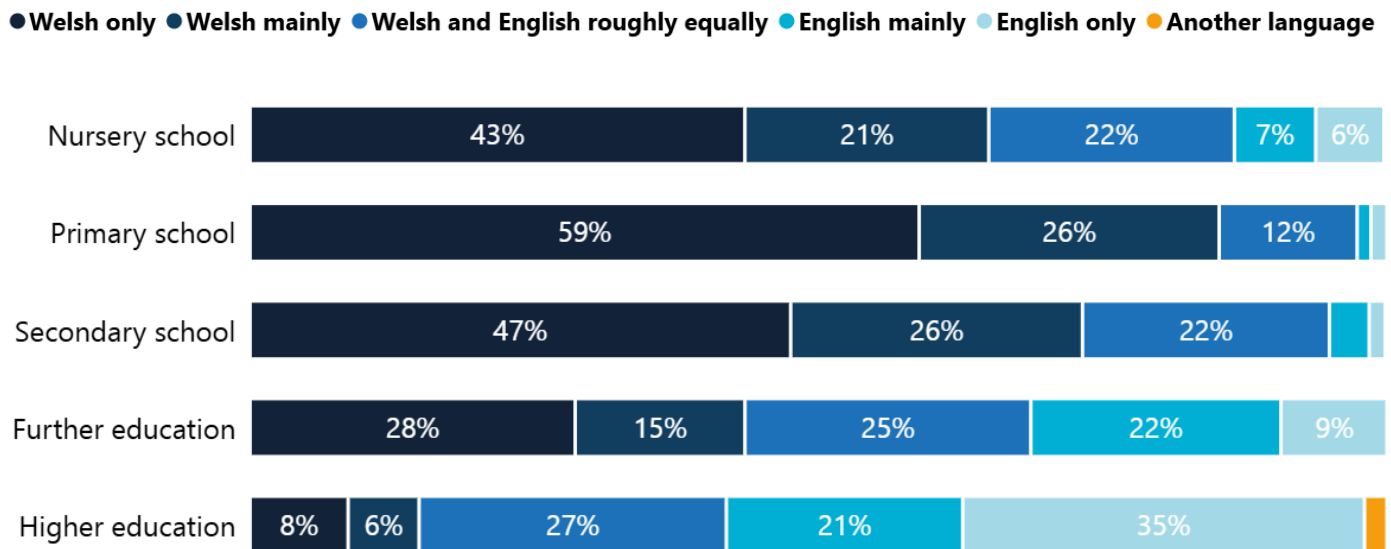


It is important to note that the above language medium categories do not necessarily correspond to a school's language category. We decided not to ask about the language category of the provision itself, as there is no consistency in categories and definitions between different stages of education (for example, between schools and provision in further education colleges and universities), and also because the school category does not necessarily reflect the linguistic experience of individual learners (especially in bilingual schools).

Around 36% of respondents indicated that they had received nursery education through the medium of Welsh only or mainly in Welsh. 48% of respondents indicated that their primary education was in Welsh only or mainly in Welsh. The equivalent figure for secondary education was 41%. For further education the figure was 25%, and for those in higher education, around 10% indicated that they received their education through the medium of Welsh only or mainly.

As one would expect, there is a clear relationship between the language medium of education and the respondents' levels of fluency. For example, over 85% of fluent Welsh speakers indicated that their primary education had been through the medium of Welsh only or mainly. The corresponding figure for those who indicated that they could only say a few words was 2%.

**Figure 9:** The language medium of education for fluent Welsh speakers at different stages



### 3.3. Employment and use of the language

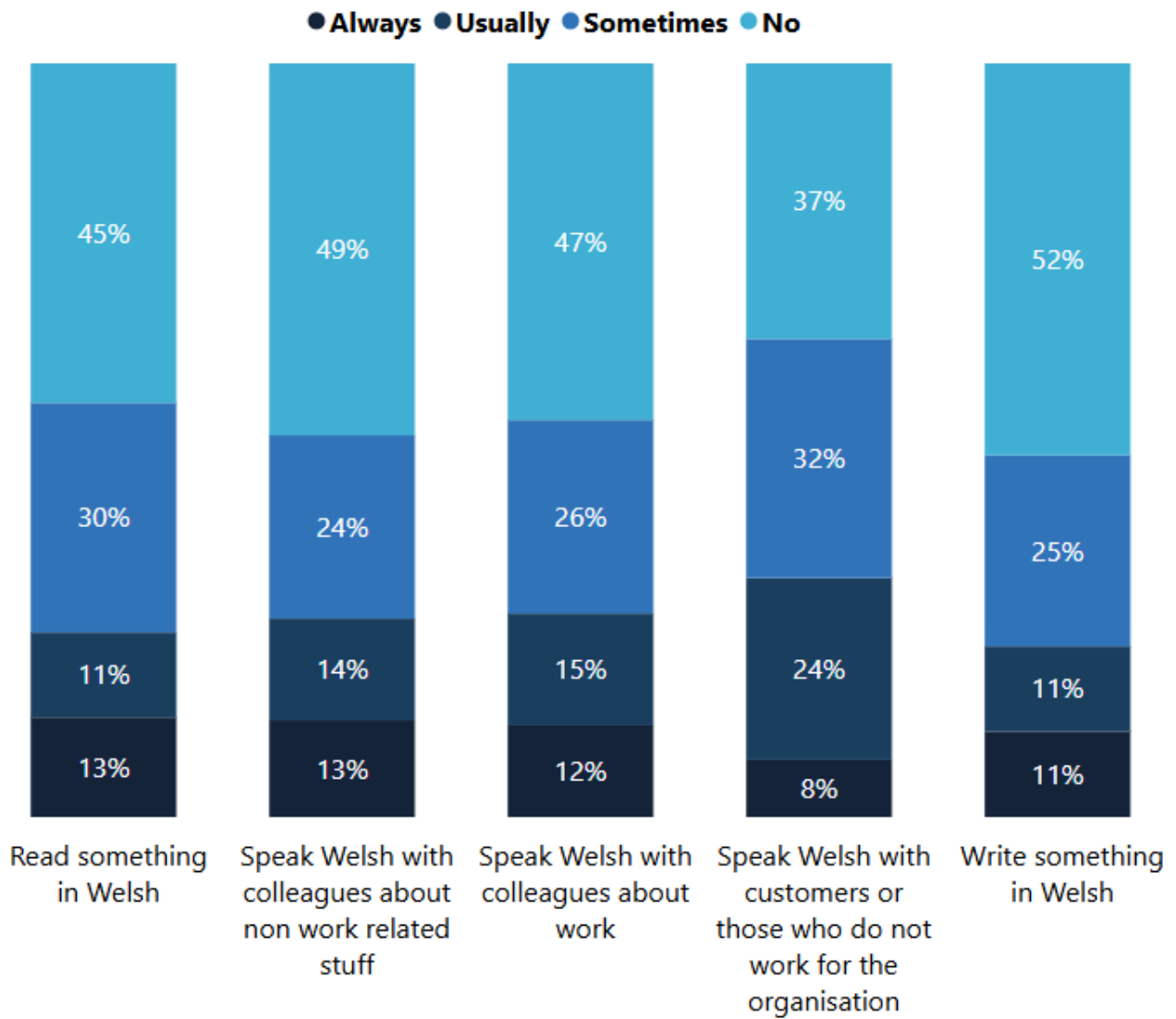
The individuals who were over the statutory education age were asked whether they were in work or not. About half of those who responded were in work, with the vast majority in part-time work.

**Figure 10:** how many respondents aged 16-21 are in work



Individuals who were in work were asked to what extent they used Welsh at work. For those in work, they were most likely to use Welsh when talking to customers, with over 64% of respondents indicating that they used some Welsh.

**Figure 11:** the extent to which respondents in work use Welsh at work. (\*Results exclude those who responded that the question was not relevant to them)



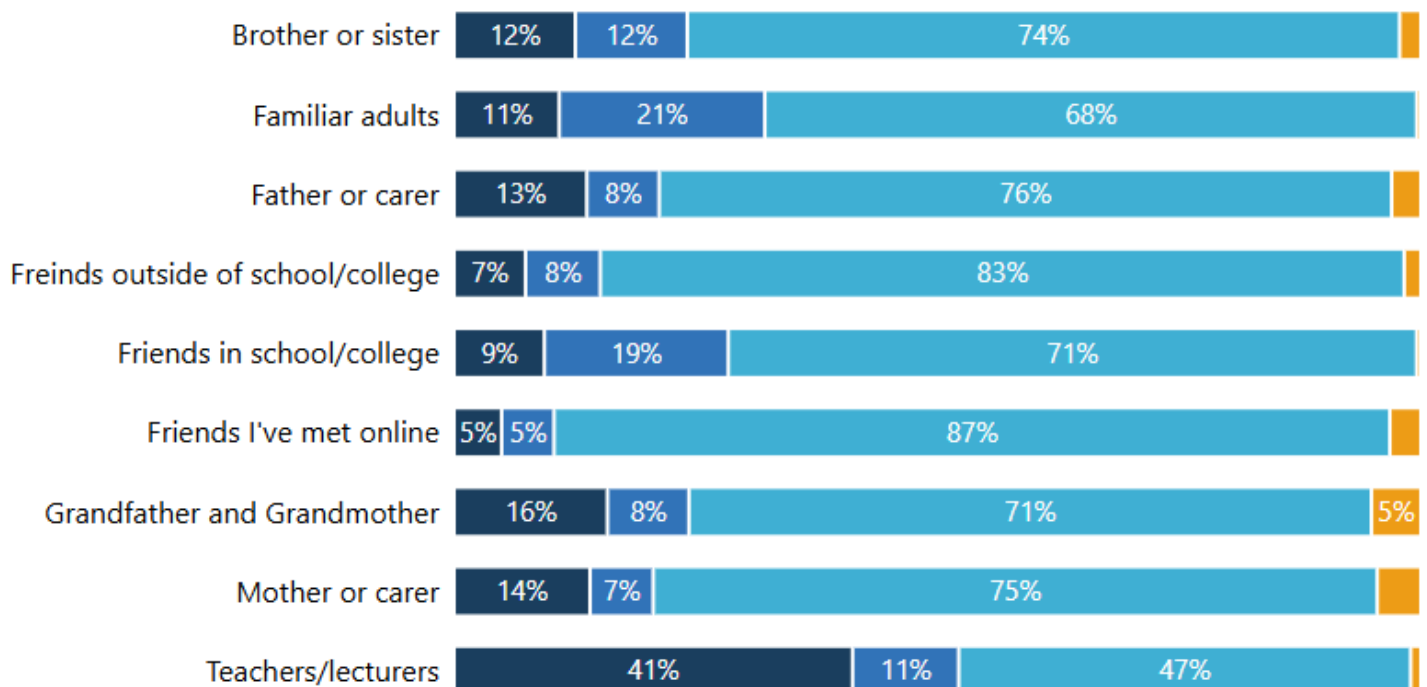
## 4. Using Welsh socially

### 4.1. Using Welsh with family and friends

Respondents were asked which language they mainly use when talking to family members, friends and familiar adults. To facilitate the analysis we decided to combine the categories 'Welsh always' and 'Welsh mainly', as well as the categories 'English always' and 'English mainly'.

**Figure 12:** which language do respondents mainly speak with the following? (\*Results exclude the small number of responses indicating that some categories were not relevant to them)

● Always or mainly Welsh ● Welsh and English equally ● Always or mainly English ● Other language

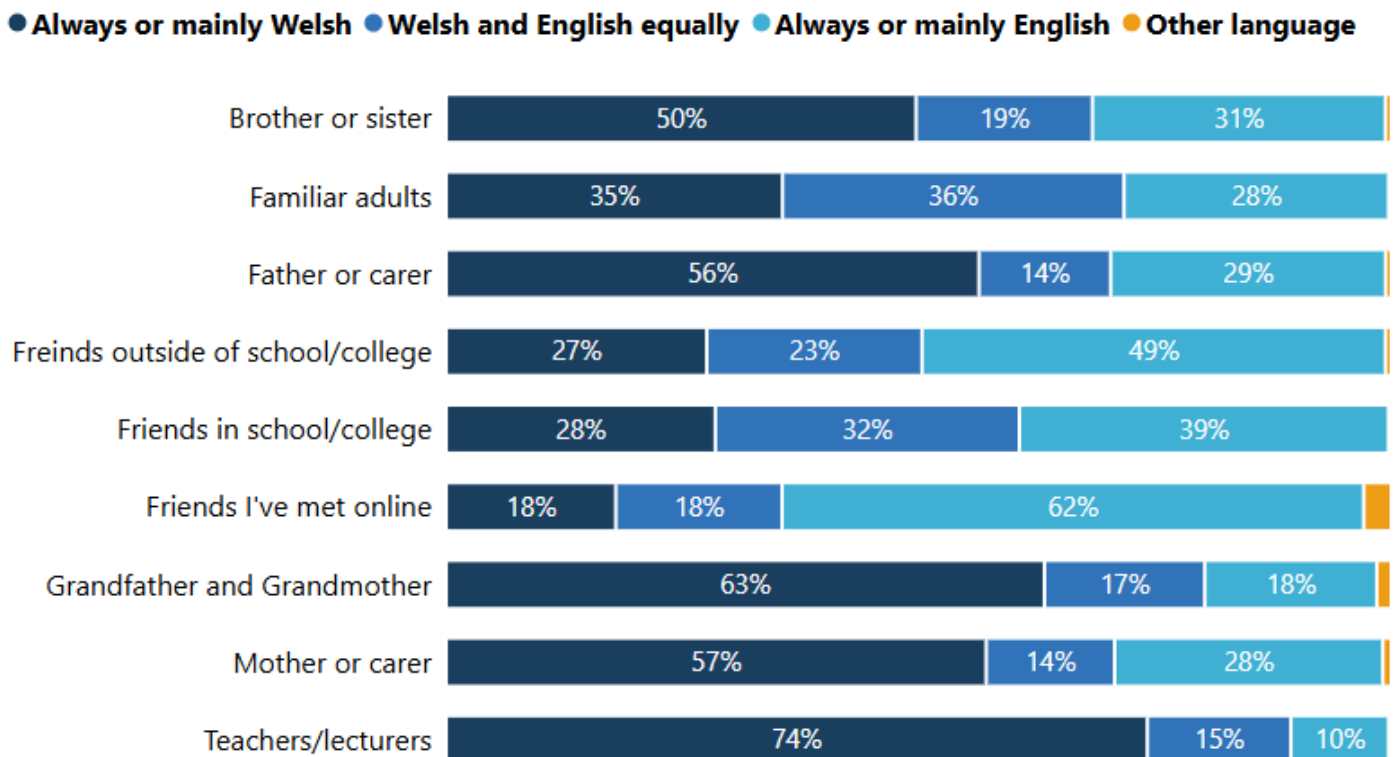


Looking at all the responses, we see that the respondents are most likely to speak Welsh with teachers or lecturers. Over 40% of respondents speak Welsh always or mainly with teachers or lecturers. Not surprisingly, this percentage was very similar to the percentage indicating that they received secondary education through the medium of Welsh only or mainly (see Figure 8). Outside school we find that the respondents are most likely to speak Welsh with their family, with grandparents at the top of the list.

The above language use pattern changes significantly when looking at the responses according to other characteristics. For example, we see that the percentage who report that they speak Welsh with family and friends increases significantly when looking at the Welsh speakers who had acquired Welsh at home. It is also interesting to note that a significant percentage of Welsh speakers who learnt the language at home as young children always or mainly use English with family members, including their parents and siblings.



**Figure 13:** which language do respondents who had acquired Welsh at home as young children mainly speak with the following? (\*Results exclude the small number of responses that indicated that some categories were not relevant to them)



Characteristics such as fluency, the language medium of education, the choice of language in responding to the questionnaire, and also to a lesser extent where the respondents live, make it more likely that they will use Welsh with their family and friends. For example, looking at one category in particular - the language used with siblings, the percentage stating that they always or mainly use Welsh is 12% of all respondents, 27% for fluent Welsh speakers, 50% for those who learnt Welsh at home, and 33% among respondents from Anglesey.

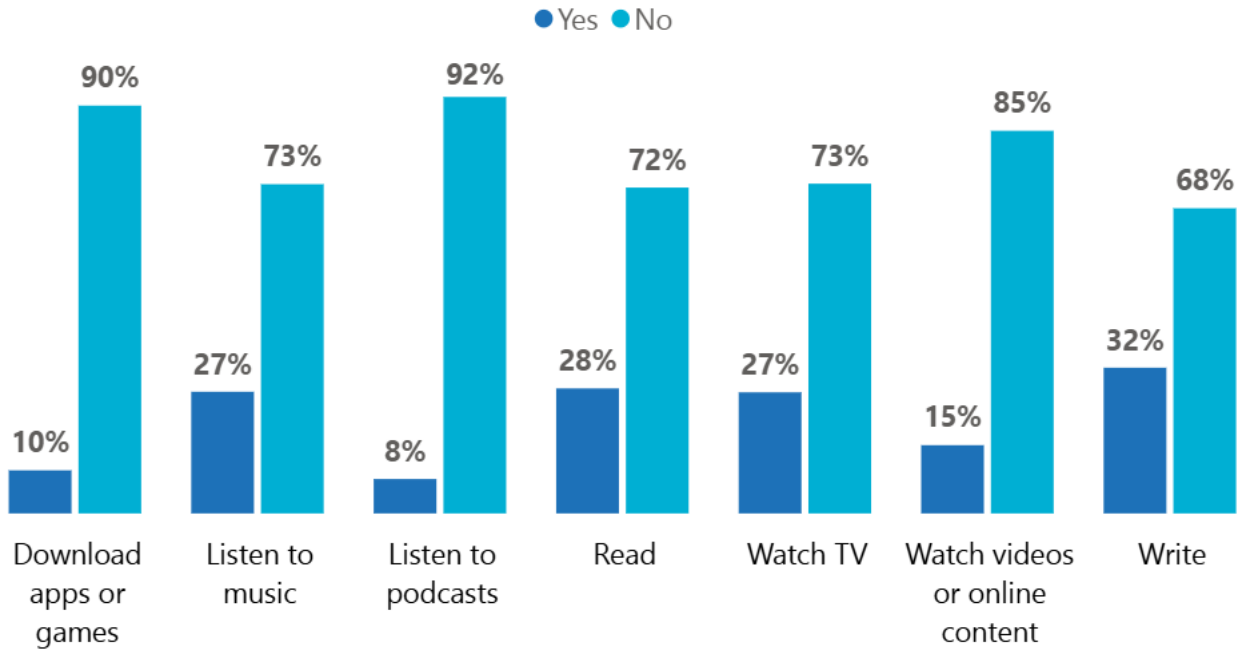
It is surprising that around 30% of those who learnt Welsh at home reported that they always or mainly spoke English with their siblings, and also that a similar percentage reported that they always or mainly spoke English with their parents. It is interesting to examine Anglesey more closely as an example of an area with a high density of Welsh speakers and where there were a significant number of responses to the questionnaire. It is surprising that only 33% of respondents report that they speak Welsh always or mainly with their siblings, and that the percentage is relatively similar for their use with parents as well. Although this percentage increases to 61% among those who learnt the language at home, over 25% of these individuals still state that they always or mainly use English with their siblings. The situation is a little more positive in Gwynedd for example, but around 17% of those who learnt Welsh at home still indicate that they always or mainly use English with their siblings.

## 4.2. Using Welsh outside school

Respondents were asked about their use of the Welsh language outside school, specifically when reading, writing, listening to music and podcasts, and watching television. Out of all the respondents, around 32% reported writing in Welsh, 28% reading in Welsh and 27% listening to music and watching

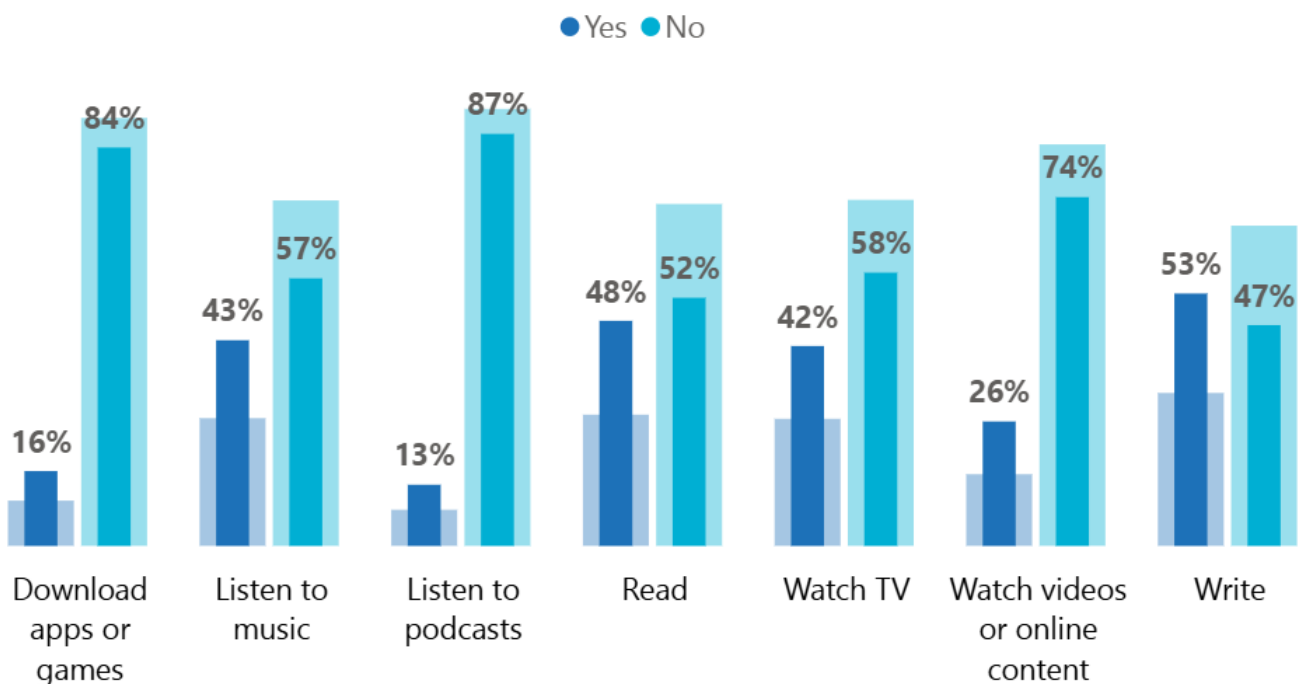
TV in Welsh. A smaller proportion of respondents reported watching videos or online content in Welsh (15%), downloading apps or games in Welsh (10%), or listening to podcasts in Welsh (8%).

**Figure 14:** proportion of respondents who report that they carry out the following activities through the medium of Welsh

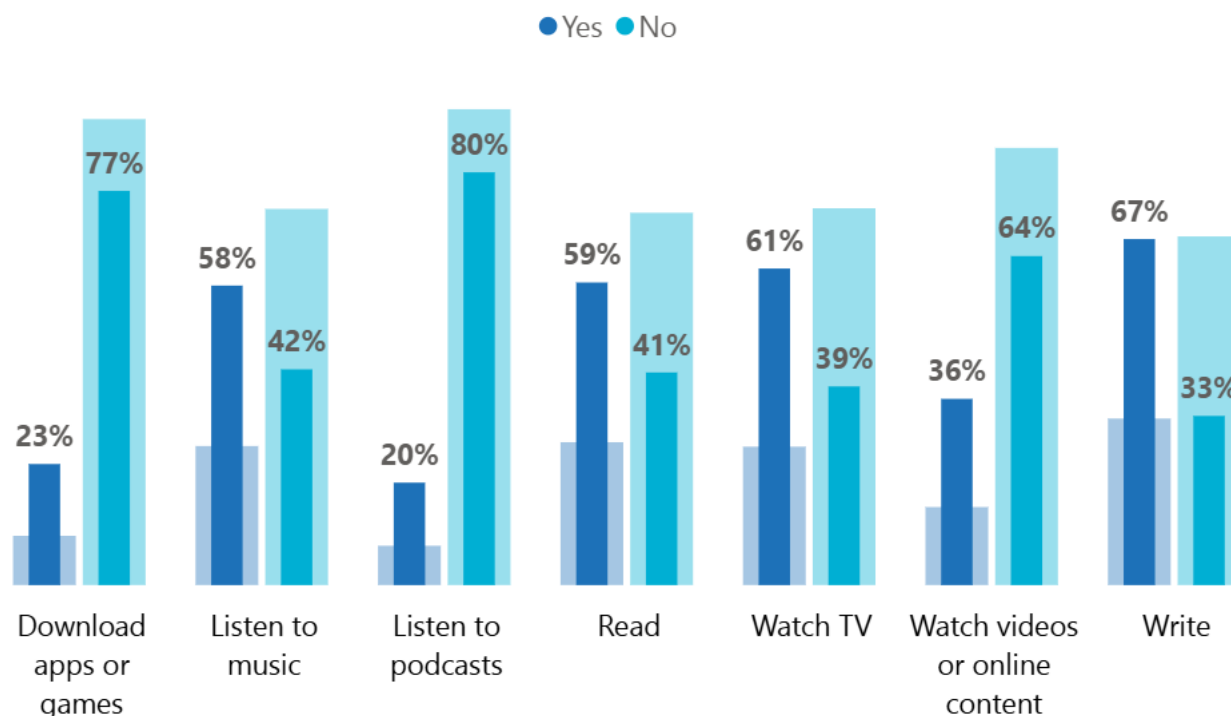


Once again, we found that fluent Welsh speakers and those who acquired Welsh at home as young children are much more likely to listen to music, read, and write in Welsh outside school. For example, although 27% of the entire sample watched television in Welsh, the figure rose to 42% among fluent Welsh speakers, and to 61% for those who had learnt Welsh at home.

**Figure 15:** proportion of fluent Welsh speakers (bold colours) indicating that they carry out the following activities through the medium of Welsh, compared to the whole sample (shaded colours)



**Figure 16:** proportion of respondents who had acquired Welsh at home (bold colours) indicating that they carried out the following activities through the medium of Welsh, compared to the whole sample (shaded colours)



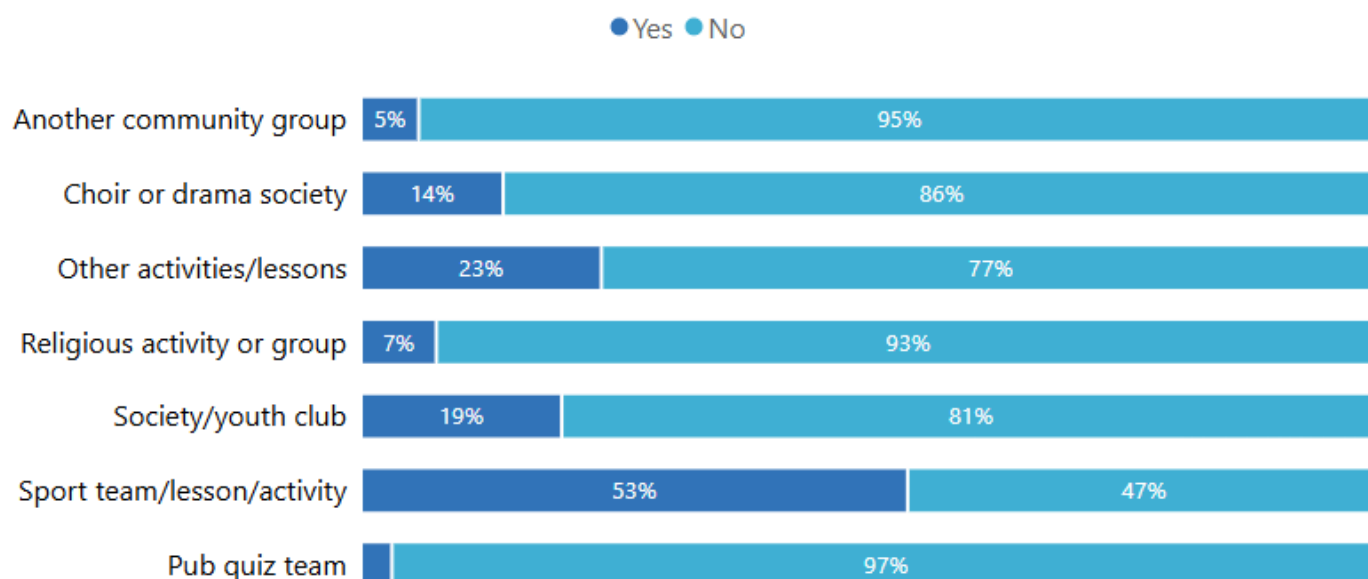
Of the focus group participants, very few reported that they watched television regularly, and it was often a family event or unplanned. There was more reference to online viewing through platforms such as Youtube, Netflix and Disney. In terms of the types of programmes and Welsh-language material watched, HANSH, Rownd a Rownd and international sports programmes were specifically mentioned.

### 4.3. Attending clubs, groups or societies

Respondents were asked if they were a member of any type of club, group, society, or attended specific activities outside of school. We find that the respondents are much more likely to be a member of sports clubs or attend sporting activities than any of the other options.

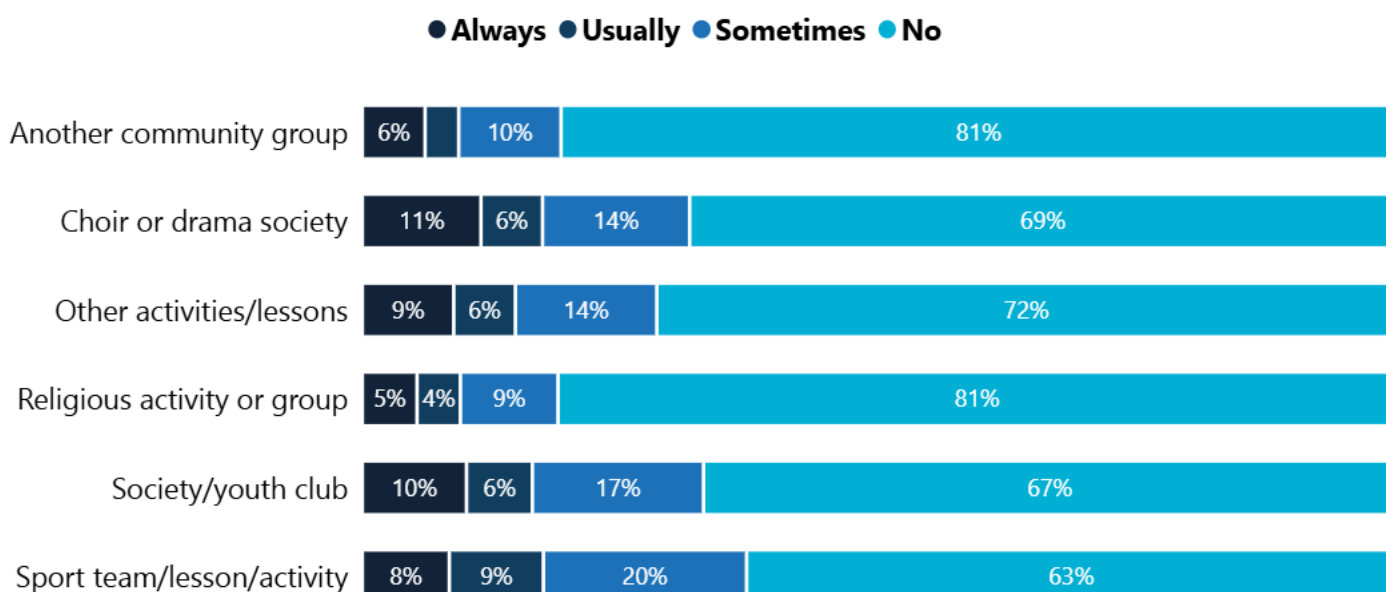
It is interesting to note that respondents' involvement with certain types of groups and activities decreases as they get older. For example, the percentage doing some form of sporting activity is highest among 13 year-olds (60%), and significantly lower for age groups who have left the statutory education sector (an average of 38%).

**Figure 17:** Membership of clubs, groups, societies or attending specific activities outside school.  
(\*Only the older respondents were questioned on whether they attended a pub quiz)



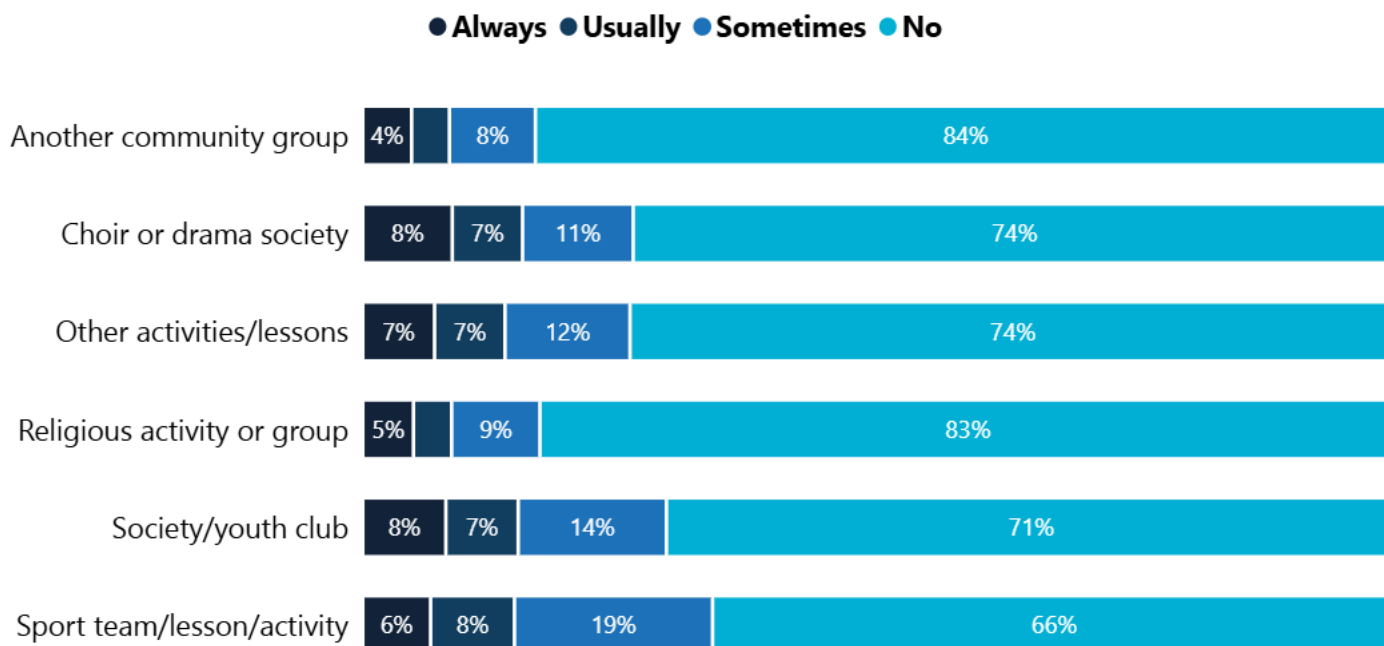
Respondents were asked about their use of the Welsh language when attending various clubs and activities. Figure 18 shows the extent to which respondents use Welsh with coaches or leaders, while Figure 19 shows the extent to which respondents use Welsh with friends when attending various clubs and activities.

**Figure 18:** of those attending the clubs/activities below, to what extent do they use Welsh with coaches/leaders? (\*Results exclude those who had indicated that they did not attend the clubs/activities, and therefore that the question was not relevant to them)



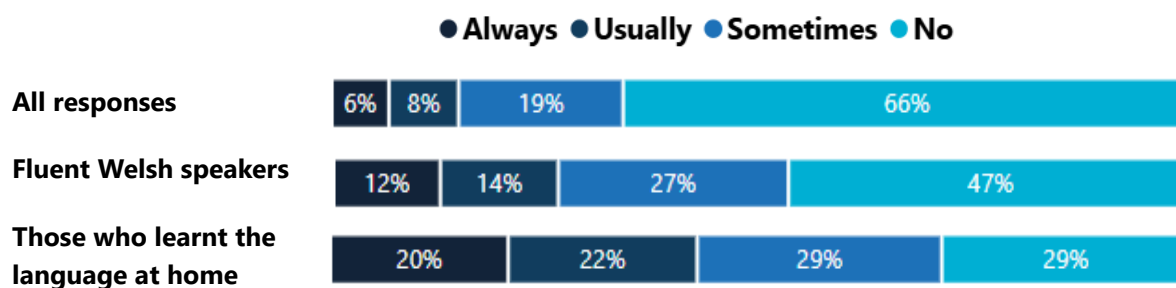


**Figure 19:** of those who attend the clubs/activities below, to what extent do they use Welsh with friends? (\*Results exclude those who had indicated that they did not attend the clubs/activities, and therefore that the question was not relevant to them)



The pattern of using Welsh in different activities is relatively consistent when comparing the use of Welsh with trainers/leaders and with friends. In both cases, respondents are more likely to use Welsh in sporting activities, with 37% of respondents stating that they will use Welsh with coaches and leaders, and 34% with friends. It is again interesting to compare the above figures with fluent Welsh speakers (where 53% indicated that they used Welsh with friends when doing sporting activities) and those individuals who had acquired Welsh at home (where the corresponding figure was 71%).

**Figure 20:** comparison of the extent to which respondents use Welsh with friends in sporting activities. (\*Results exclude those who had indicated that they did not attend the clubs/activities, and therefore that the question was not relevant to them)



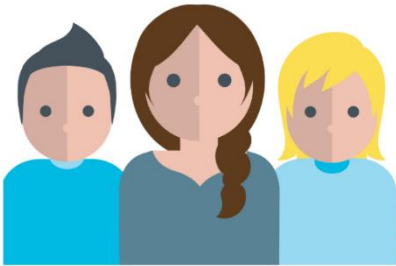
Some of the participants in the focus groups were members of the Welsh language organisations, Clwb Ffermwyr Ifanc and the Urdd and noted that this gave them opportunities to use the Welsh language outside school. Many of them also attended sports clubs in their areas. In some areas it was noted that these clubs were held through the medium of Welsh or that there was a conscious effort on the part of the leaders to carry out the activities in Welsh.

*"I play hockey, the club is Welsh-medium, if some English speakers join us I speak English with them but I would speak Welsh with most people and with the coaches. The trainers still speak Welsh."*

*"I go swimming, I go to the local swimming club, there are some in the club who speak Welsh and some speak English. In the swimming club the coach speaks Welsh."*



The respondents who had indicated that they did not use the Welsh language in the club or society were asked what prevented them from doing so. The reasons most often cited were that friends or other members did not speak Welsh. A number of respondents, particularly those who had answered the questionnaire in English, indicated that they felt more comfortable speaking English, and that speaking Welsh was not commonplace for them and their friends.



*"I prefer speaking in a language common to most of the people I interact with, and that language is English"*

*"I don't want to because school has made Welsh something I feel I'm forced to do because they're so angry about it so it makes me and my friends uncomfortable"*

*"I prefer to speak English in case I get embarrassed speaking Welsh"*

**Table 1:** respondents' reasons for not using Welsh in a club/activity

Rheswm	Nifer
Club/society held in another language	278
Friends don't speak Welsh	552
Leaders/coaches don't speak Welsh	370
Other members don't speak Welsh	500
Other reason	513

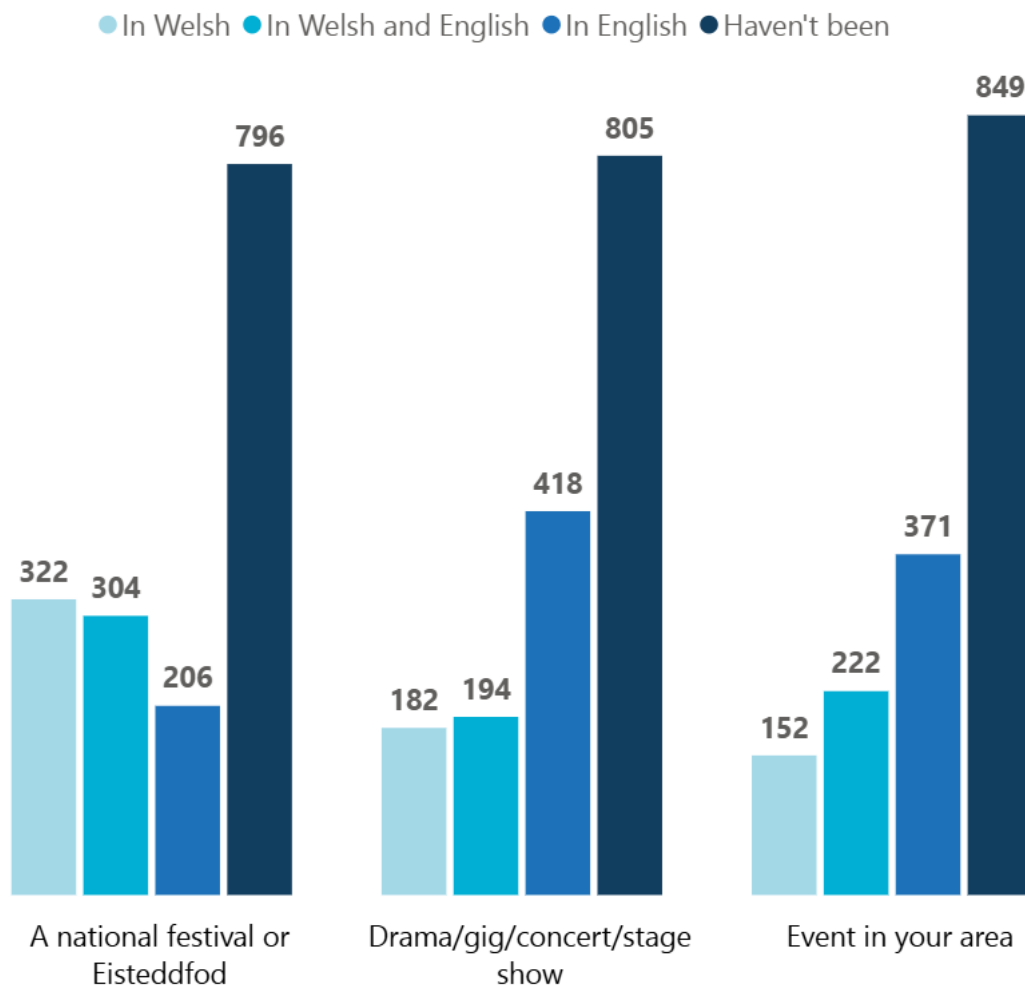
**Table 2:** What would help to enable the respondents to use Welsh in their clubs/activities?

Rheswm	Nifer
Club/society held in Welsh	267
Knowing beforehand that speaking Welsh is possible	428
Leaders/coaches that speak Welsh	399
Other reason	487

#### 4.4. Attending events

Respondents were asked if they had attended various events in the last 12 months, and to what extent were these events through the medium of Welsh or not.

**Figure 21:** which events have respondents attended in the last 12 months, and in which language was the event held?



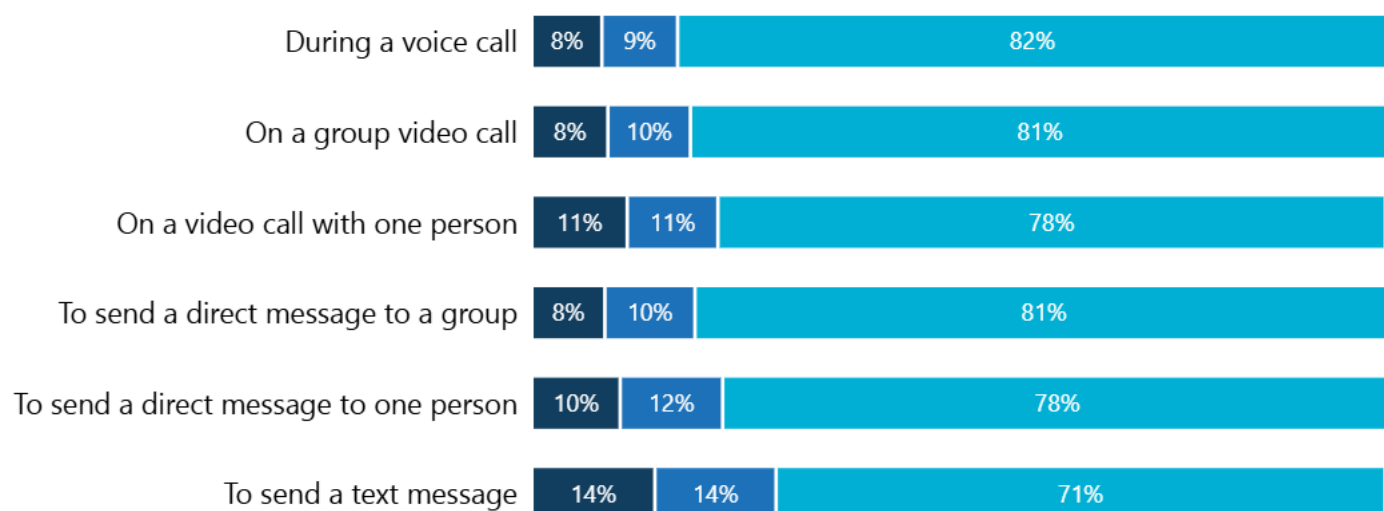
## 5. Using Welsh on social media and online

### 5.1. Communicating with family and friends through different media

Respondents were asked which languages they used usually when communicating with Welsh-speaking family and friends. Around 28% of all respondents indicated that they always use Welsh, mainly use Welsh, or fairly equally with English when texting. The percentage was smaller in terms of sending direct messages to an individual (22%), on a video call with an individual (22%), on a direct message to a group (18%), on a video call with a group (18%), and when conducting a voice chat (17%).

**Figure 22:** language use when communicating with family and friends who speak Welsh through different media (*\*Results exclude those who responded that the activity was not relevant to them*)

● Always or mainly Welsh ● Welsh and English equally ● Always or mainly English ● Other language

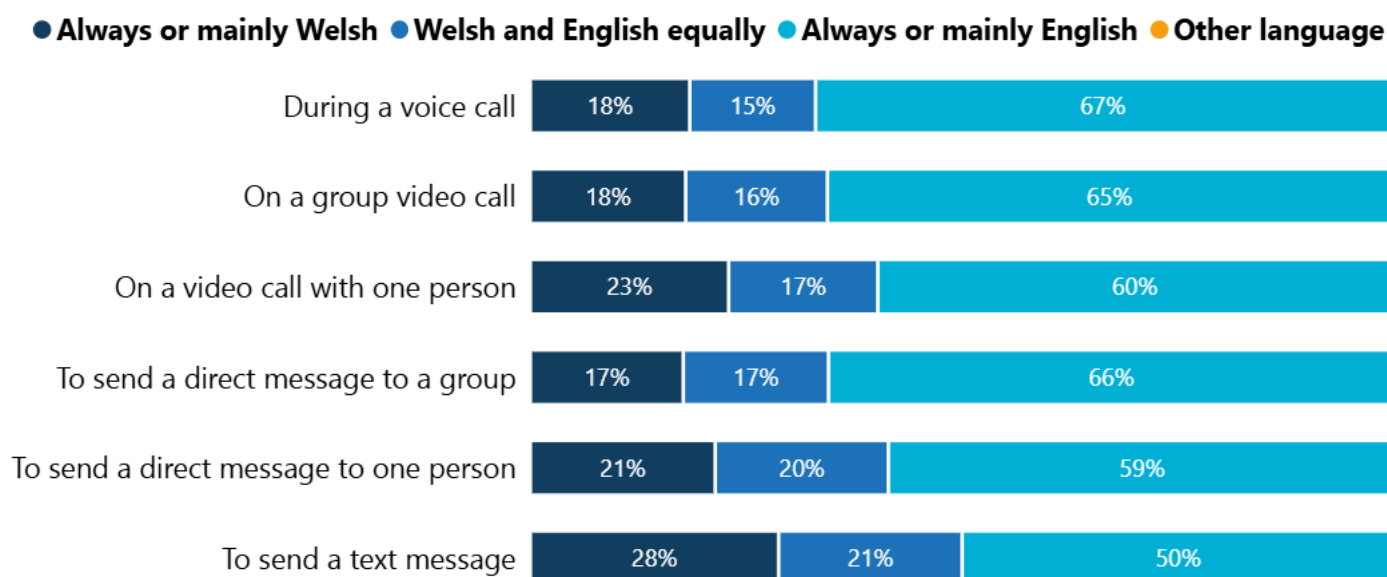


For the majority of categories around 80% of the sample indicate that they rarely use Welsh when communicating with family and friends through the various media noted above.

The older age groups who responded to the questionnaire were generally more likely to use Welsh when communicating with family and friends across all of the above media. For example, 26% of respondents of statutory education age used mainly Welsh or Welsh and English equally when texting, compared to 38% of respondents of post-statutory age. It should be noted, however, that a higher proportion of the post-statutory age respondents indicated that they were fluent Welsh speakers and had learnt Welsh at home. As seen below, fluent Welsh speakers are more likely to use Welsh when communicating with family and friends across all different media:



**Figure 23:** language use of fluent Welsh speakers when communicating with family and friends who speak Welsh through different media. (\*Results exclude those who responded that the activity was not relevant to them)



Welsh speakers who learnt Welsh at home are even more likely to use Welsh with family and friends on various media. For example, when texting, 76% of individuals who learnt Welsh at home indicate that they always use Welsh, mainly, or Welsh and English equally.

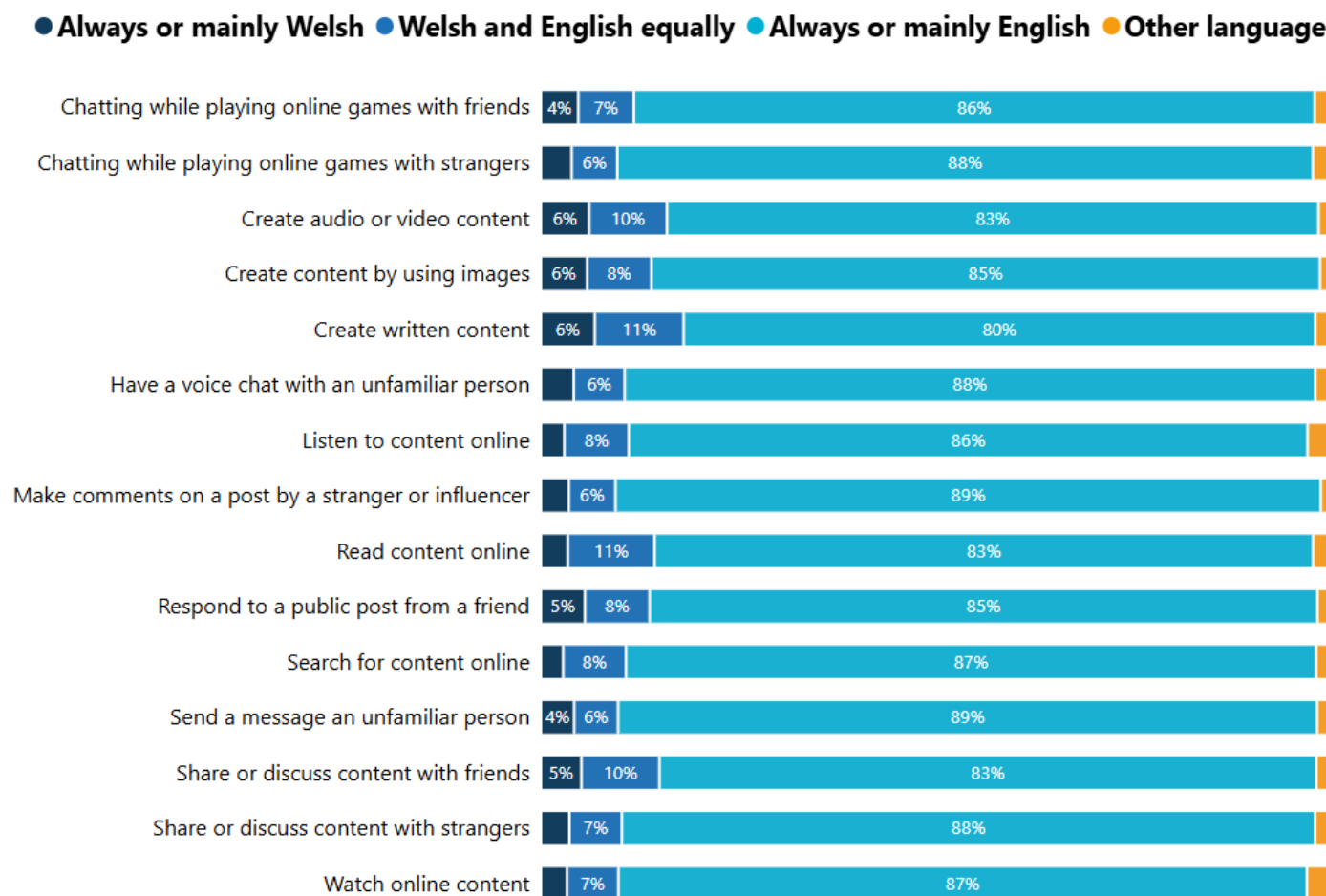
## 5.2. Using Welsh in online communication and on social media

Respondents were asked to give details of their language practices when communicating online and on social media. Again, in order to simplify the analysis for this question the categories 'Welsh always' and 'Welsh mainly' have been combined, as have the categories 'English always' and 'English mainly'.

As seen below, a relatively low percentage of respondents use Welsh when communicating online and on social media. The percentages who report that they use Welsh always, mainly, or Welsh and English equally, are lower than the percentage who use Welsh face-to-face (see Figure 12) or when texting (see Figure 22). The percentage varies from one medium to another, with the highest proportion (6%) indicating that they always or mainly use Welsh when creating their own written content, and the smallest percentage (2%) indicating that they always or mainly use Welsh when searching for content online or listening to content online. It is interesting to note that the above percentages are generally lower than the percentages who use Welsh with family and friends (see Figure 22 above).

It should be noted that the above percentages do not include those who had stated that the activities were not relevant to them. For example, some of the activities were not relevant to a significant number of respondents, for example 'using voice chat with an unfamiliar person', where 662 of the respondents indicated that this was not relevant to them. For other activities, for example, watching content online, only 61 indicated that this was not relevant to them.

**Figure 24:** respondents' use of language when communicating online and on social media. (\*Results exclude respondents who responded that the activity was not relevant to them)

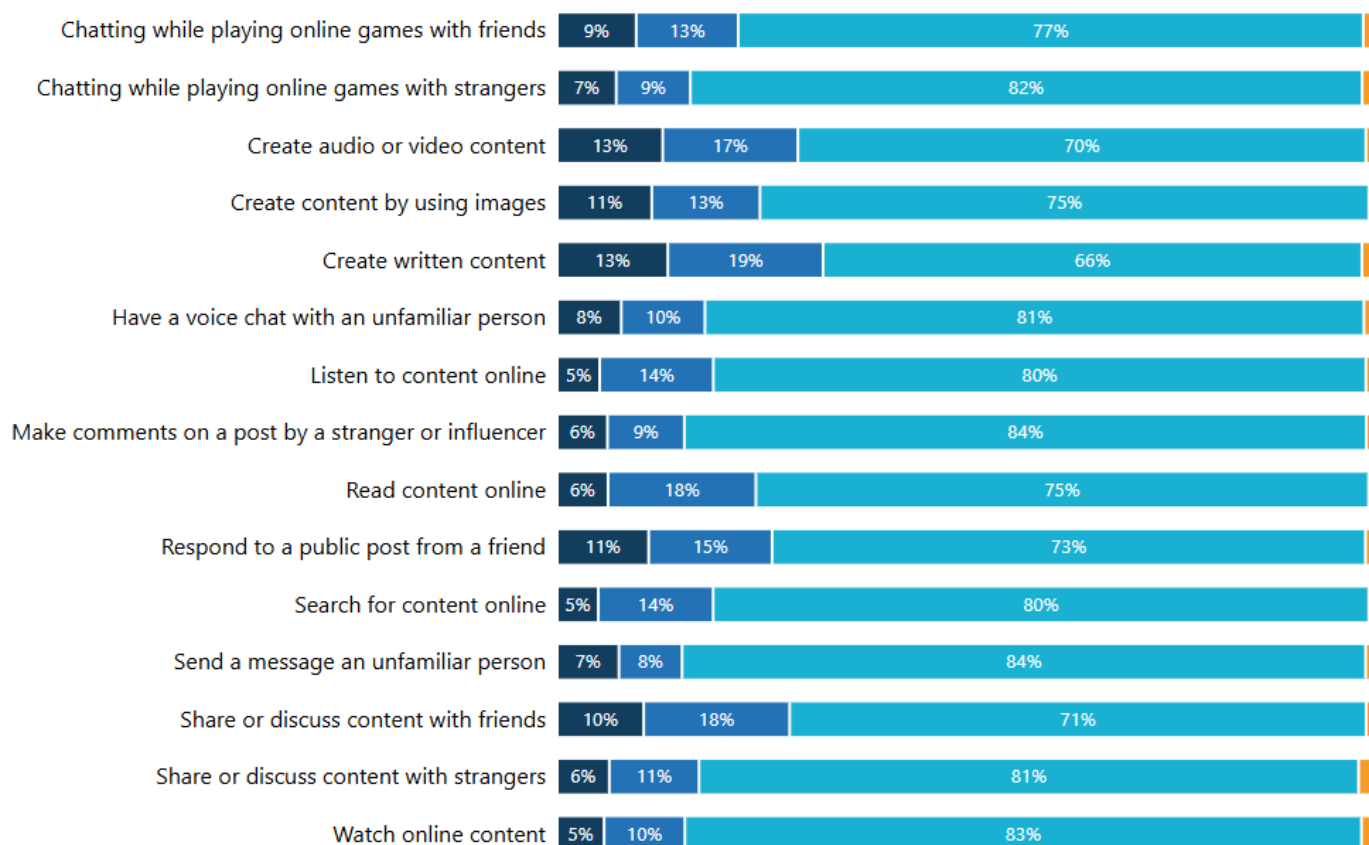


Although the percentages using the Welsh language are relatively low, these percentages are still likely to represent significant numbers at a whole Wales level. Even in relation to the activities where the lowest percentage of respondents indicated that they used Welsh, from combining the category 'Welsh always or mainly' and 'Welsh and English equally' a significant number of respondents indicated that they made significant use of Welsh. For example, taking the category 'watching online content' 151 out of a sample of over 1600 indicate that they make significant use of the Welsh language. At a whole Wales level, the numbers of children and young people using Welsh on social media and online are likely to be significant, even if the percentages are relatively low.

Patterns of use of the Welsh language vary considerably when interpreting the data according to other specific characteristics. For example, the use of Welsh on social media and online increases significantly when looking at fluent Welsh speakers only. Indeed, we see that there is a significant increase in the use of Welsh in all contexts when looking at fluent Welsh speakers only.

**Figure 25:** language use of fluent Welsh speakers when communicating online and on social media, combined categories. (\*Results exclude respondents who responded that the activity was not relevant to them)

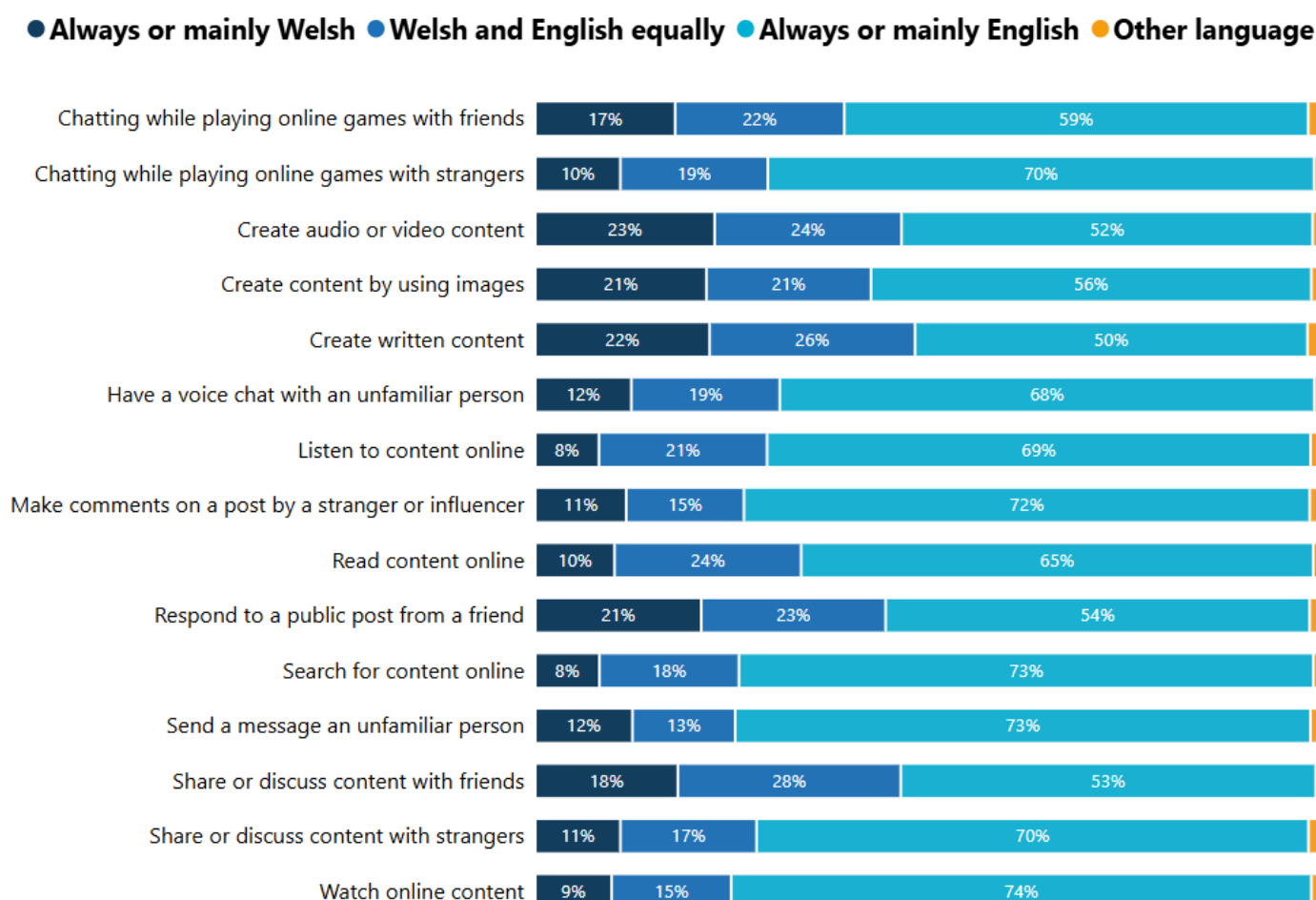
● Always or mainly Welsh ● Welsh and English equally ● Always or mainly English ● Other language



This overall increase is most evident when looking at those individuals who have acquired Welsh at home as young children (see Figure 26 below). 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.

These percentages also vary based on age and location, but there is no obvious pattern. It is likely that these variations mainly reflect other characteristics such as fluency in Welsh, language medium of education, and sample size in that local authority or for that age. The overall conclusion is that a proportion of Welsh speakers across Wales and of all ages are likely to be using Welsh on social media and online. This use increases significantly among fluent Welsh speakers and those from Welsh-speaking households. It is therefore likely that the use of the Welsh language on social media and online will be higher in those areas of Wales where there is a higher density of fluent Welsh speakers and Welsh-speaking households.

**Figure 26:** language use of individuals who have learnt Welsh at home when communicating online and on social media, combined categories. (\*Results exclude those who responded that the activity was not relevant to them)

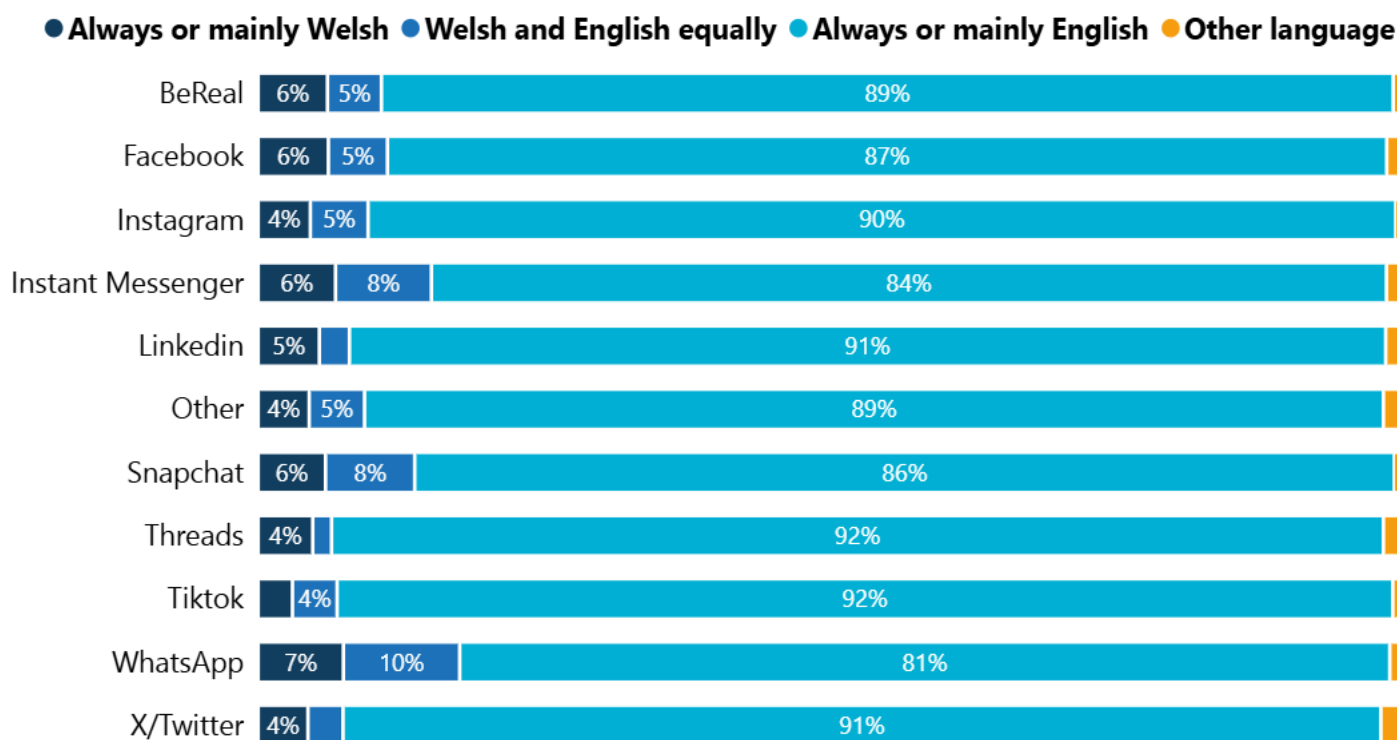


There was a mixed linguistic picture in terms of the use of Welsh online among the focus group participants. Some of the participants insisted that they *'do every single thing online in Welsh'*, and only used English if it was not possible to use Welsh. One prominent theme of the focus groups was that many reported writing bilingual messages when starting a conversation or sharing content. According to the participants, this *'gave them the choice... and show that I speak Welsh'*. Many also reported that they mainly use English because more of the audience are English speakers, and therefore it is easier to reach more people by using English. One prominent theme here was the lack of confidence of Welsh speakers to use Welsh, usually based on the assumption that other people would not understand them.

### 5.3. The language used on different social media

Respondents were asked if they used the social media noted below, and if so what language they used when creating/sharing content on them:

**Figure 27:** respondents' use of language when using different social media platforms. (\*Results exclude respondents who said that they did not use certain platforms)

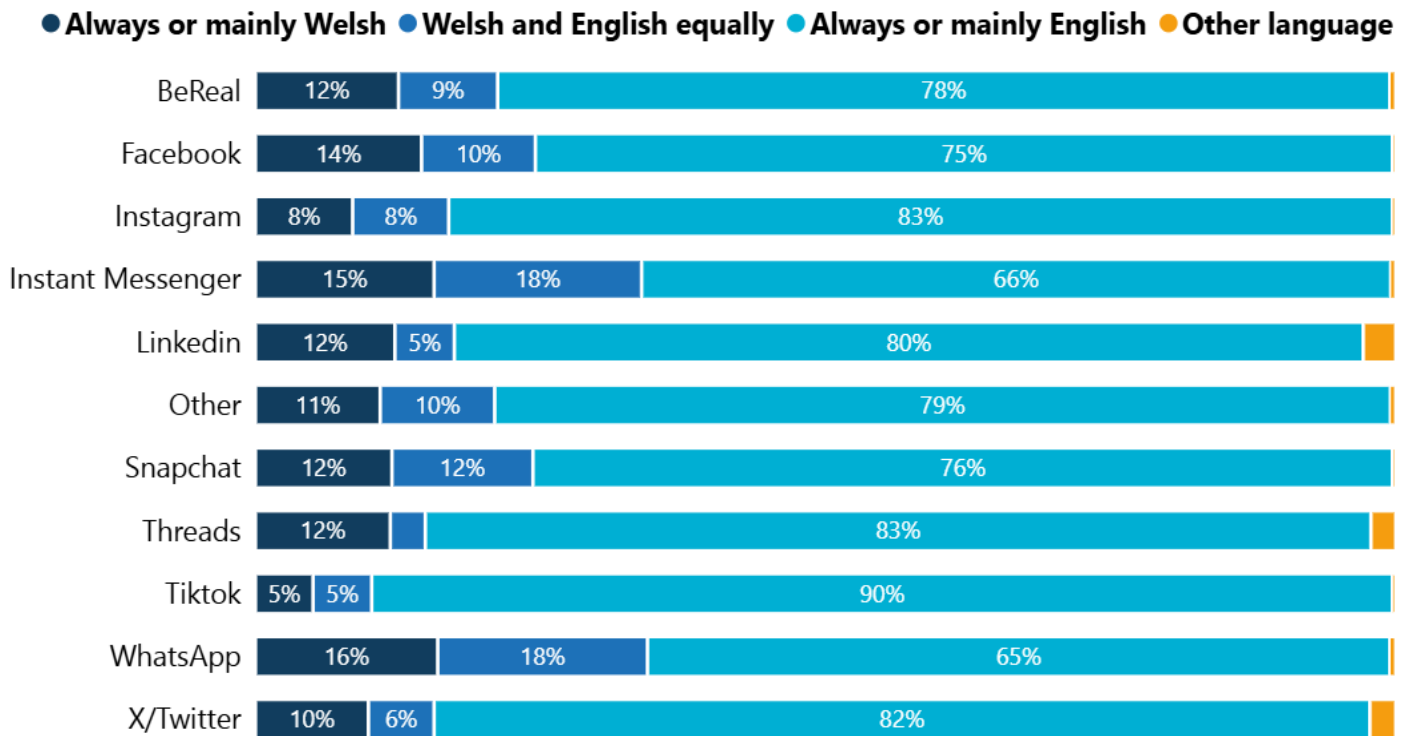


It should be noted that the above percentages do not include those who had stated that they did not use some of the social media platforms. For example, 74% of respondents indicated that they did not use LinkedIn at all, and therefore the percentages above are based on the language use of the 26% of the sample who did use LinkedIn. In terms of using the other platforms, WhatsApp was found to be the most popular platform, with 94% of respondents stating that they use it. Following that, Snapchat (81%), Tiktok (76%), and Instagram (70%) were the most popular platforms. Interestingly, only 38% of respondents used X/Twitter, and only 47% used Facebook.

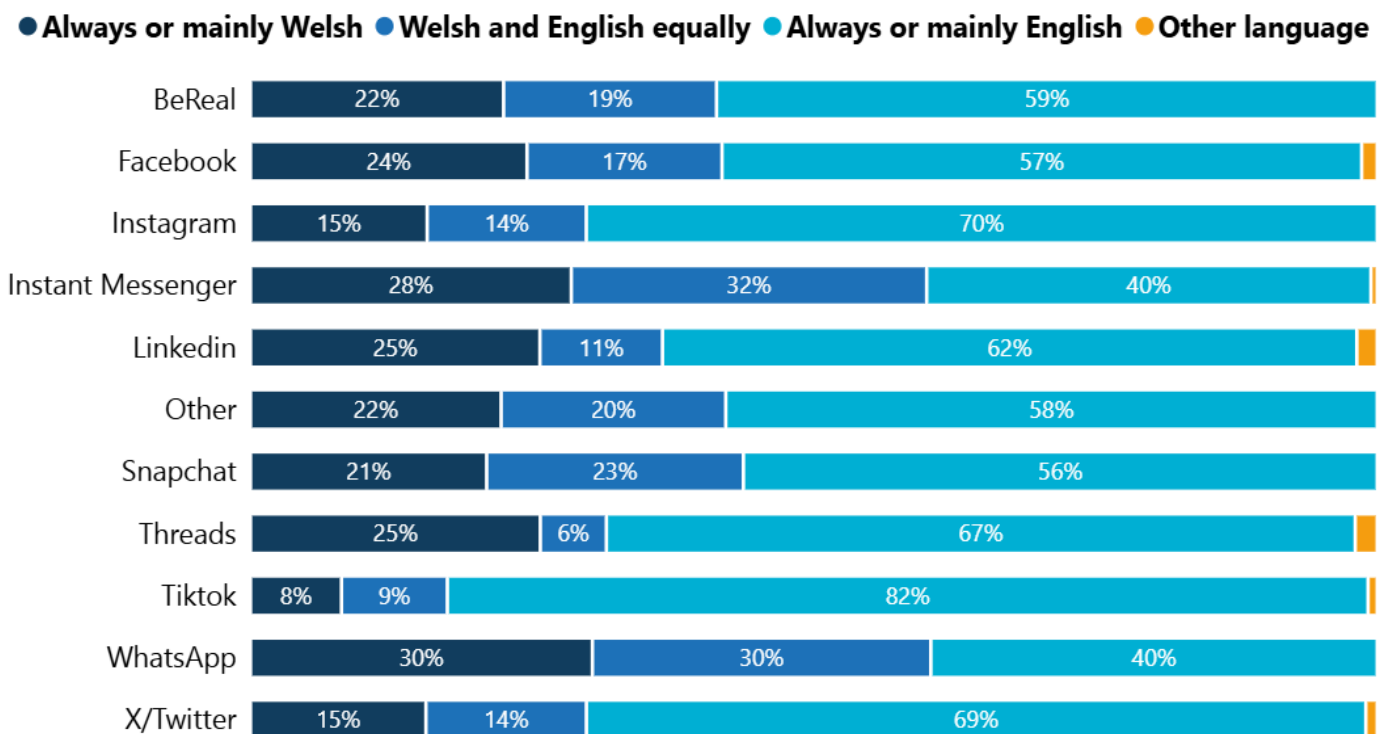
In terms of using Welsh on these platforms, WhatsApp topped the list, with 17% of those using the platform stating that they use Welsh always, mostly, or Welsh and English equally. This was followed by Instant Messenger (15%) and Snapchat (13%).

The use of social media was discussed with focus group participants. Most participants made some use of social media. Reference was made to using WhatsApp, Instagram and Snapchat to chat and communicate with friends. The majority said that they sometimes used Welsh, but that they also used English, and that this depended '*on the members of the conversation or the chat group*'. For example, '*if there's an English speaker, or someone who prefers to speak English, then the group all use English.*' Comments like this about a lack of confidence to use Welsh in situations where not everyone can speak Welsh were a prominent theme in some of the qualitative responses in the questionnaire, and also in the focus groups, and we explore this further below.

**Figure 28:** language use of fluent Welsh speakers when using different social media platforms, combined categories. (\*Results exclude respondents who did not use certain platforms)



**Figure 29:** language use of individuals who have learnt Welsh at home when using different social media platforms, combined categories. (\*Results exclude those who responded that the activity was not relevant to them)

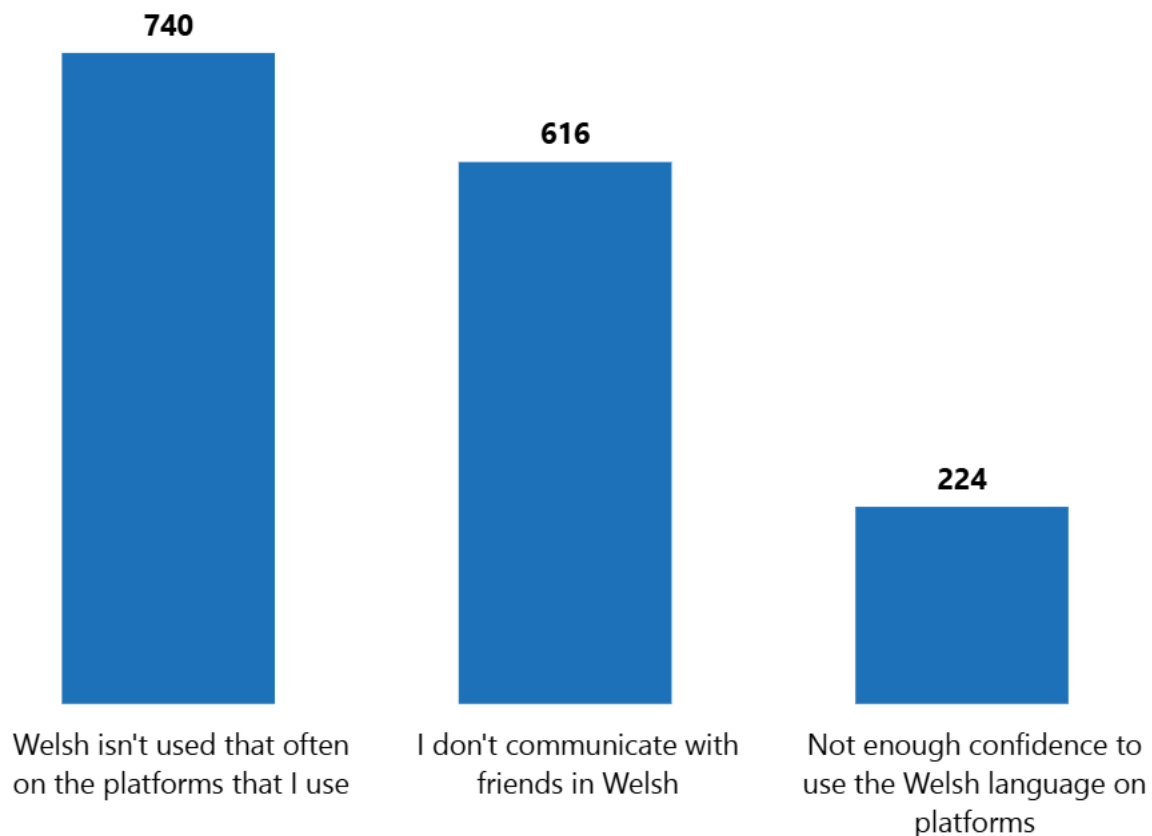




As figures 28 and 29 show, the percentages indicating that they use Welsh on different platforms increase significantly for fluent Welsh speakers and those who learnt Welsh at home. For example, the percentage indicating that they use Welsh always, mainly, or Welsh and English equally on WhatsApp is 17% for the whole sample, 34% for fluent Welsh speakers and 60% for those who learnt Welsh at home.

Respondents were asked to state their main reasons for not using Welsh.

**Figure 30:** respondents' reasons for not using Welsh on social media

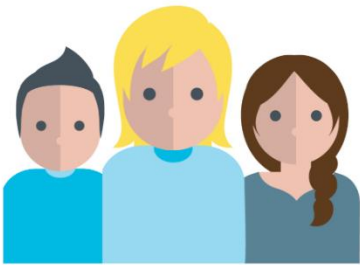


Other reasons given by respondents were that it was easier to use the various platforms through the medium of English due to auto-correct and that the people they were communicating with were likely to be English-speaking and not Welsh speakers. While many of the respondents to the questionnaires and focus group participants indicated that there were challenges in using social media through the medium of Welsh, others saw the potential for technology to facilitate the use of Welsh. For example, one of the participants in the focus groups noted that material in Welsh can be posted on various social media platforms and that other people can use the 'translate' button to read it in another language. However, these types of attitudes were the exceptions, and it seems that the more common practice was to switch to English if not everyone could speak Welsh, or that it was a wider audience.

It is interesting to note that there was little evidence to show that individuals saw the potential of technology and artificial intelligence in enabling them to communicate in Welsh, and for audiences who are not able to speak Welsh to follow and understand the language. Similarly, and in the context of chatting with friends and peers, there seems to be a tendency to switch to English when it was the

first language of other individuals, despite the likelihood that these individuals understood Welsh. There seems to be a lack of confidence on the part of many Welsh speakers to use Welsh in situations where everyone else does not speak Welsh. This is despite the fact that these individuals are likely to be able to understand Welsh. The above issues undoubtedly merit further research, and this is possibly an area that could be prioritised in terms of increasing the use of the language among fluent Welsh speakers.

Respondents to the questionnaire and the focus group participants were asked what would make them more likely to use the Welsh language on social media and online. Some examples of the answers given include:



*"Ensuring that the translation resources on these platforms are reliable... I would be more likely to post more Welsh-only content if I knew that the platform was creating a reliable/coherent translation for non-Welsh speakers."*

*"Using Welsh on the platforms for discussing more broad topics – i.e., the content tends to come up on Tiktok discussing the language itself rather than things seen in the English language – humour, politics, world news, and so on"*

*"On the whole I use Welsh on social media... but the more general content like videos, adverts that I don't follow by choice all appear on my feed in English. You've got to search for the Welsh..."*

*"Social media or online is not important, this is not what the aim should be. More effort is needed for activities e.g. gigs and performances and not for older people..."*

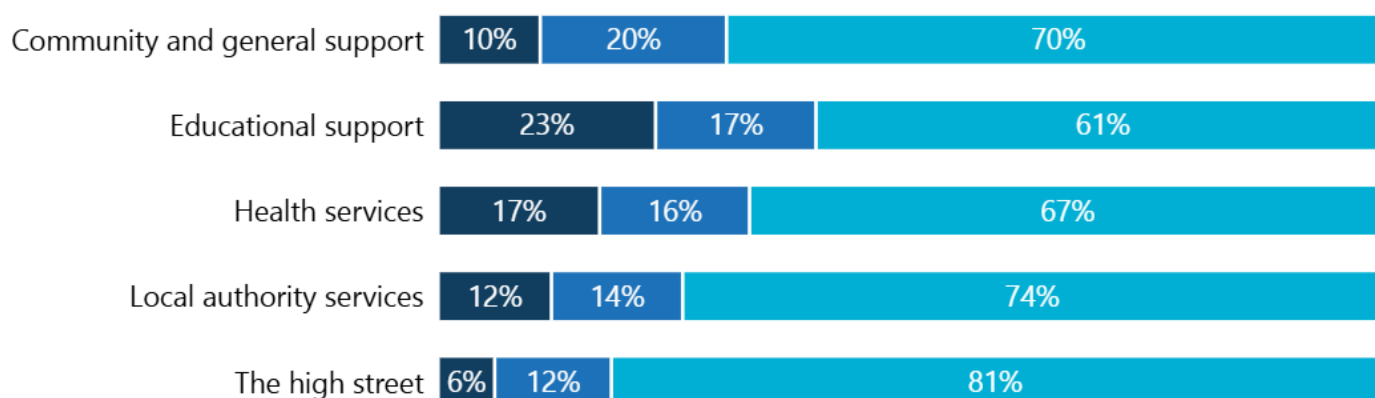
## 6. Using services in Welsh

### 6.1. Language used when receiving services

Respondents were asked which languages they used most often when receiving face-to-face services, online services, or on-screen services. Respondents aged 12 to 21 years were asked about the language they used when receiving educational support (for example Careers Wales, student loans, UCAS); community/general support (for example charities that support and provide advice to young people); health services (for example GP, hospital, social services, dentist, optician); local council services (for example leisure centre, library, youth services, public transport), and on the high street (for example shops, supermarkets, theatre, cinema, banks). The 7-11 school year sample were only asked about the language they used when receiving local council services and on the high street.

**Figure 31:** the languages the respondents use when receiving different services. (\*Results exclude those who responded that the question did not apply to them)

● Always or mainly Welsh ● Welsh and English equally ● Always or mainly English ● Other language



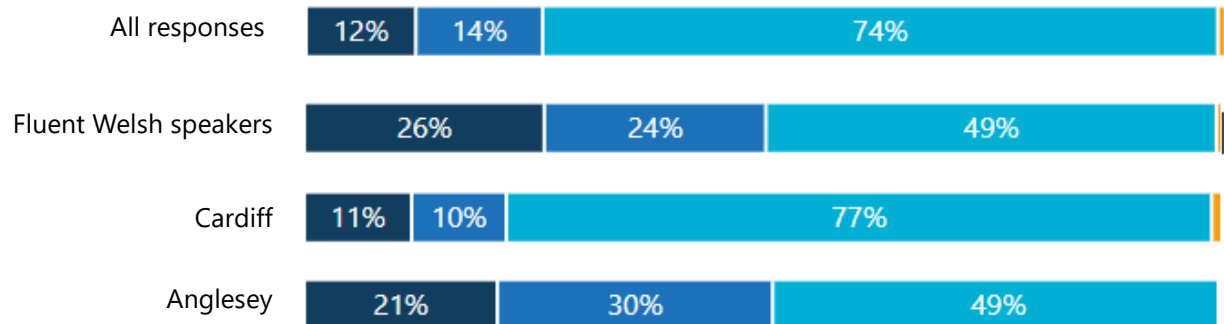
We see that children and young people are most likely to use Welsh when receiving educational support. For example, 23% of respondents indicated that they always or mainly use Welsh when receiving educational support, with 17% indicating that they use Welsh and English fairly equally. When combining these categories we see that 39% of respondents indicate that they use Welsh fairly regularly when receiving educational support. The corresponding figure for health services was 33%; for community/general support the figure was 30%; and for council services the figure was 26%. We see that children and young people are less likely to use Welsh on the high street, with 17% stating that they use Welsh always, mainly, or fairly equally with English.

When interpreting the data according to other characteristics, we see that children and young people's use of the Welsh language varies significantly when receiving services. For example, Figure 32 below compares responses regarding the use of Welsh when receiving council services according to other different characteristics. Once again we see that the use of Welsh increases significantly when comparing the whole sample with fluent Welsh speakers and those who learnt Welsh at home. We also see that the results vary by geographical area, with 21% of respondents from Cardiff reporting

that they regularly use Welsh when receiving council services, compared to 50% of respondents from Anglesey.

**Figure 32:** the languages respondents use when receiving council services, comparison by different characteristics. (\*Results exclude respondents who responded that the question did not apply to them)

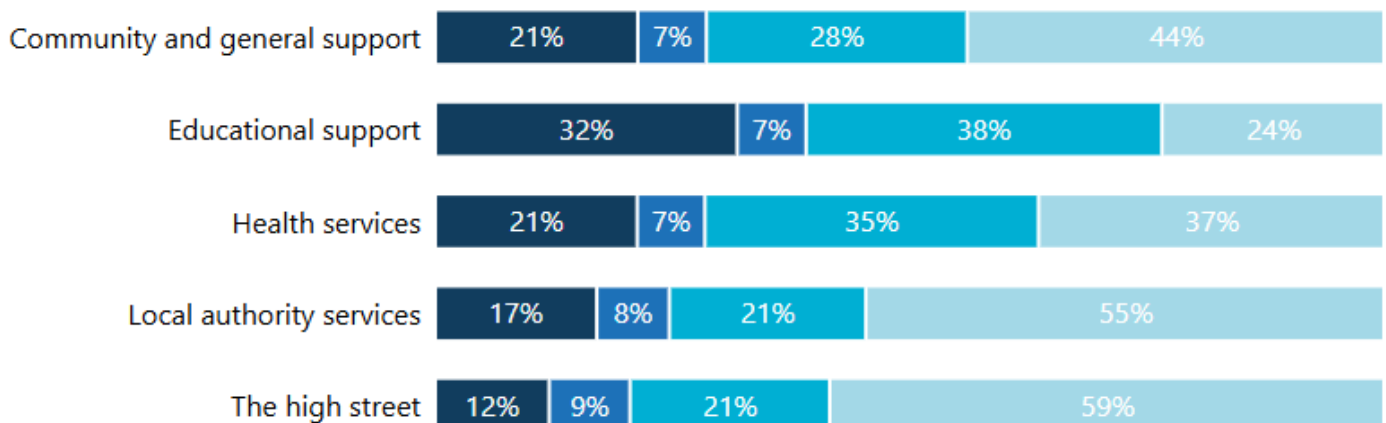
● Always or mainly Welsh ● Welsh and English equally ● Always or mainly English ● Other language



Of course, care must be taken when comparing different areas and there can be a number of complex reasons for the differences that emerge. However, it is interesting to compare the results from the two local authority areas from which the largest numbers of responses were received, 380 from Cardiff and 270 from Anglesey. Comparing the responses of fluent Welsh speakers alone (164 from Cardiff and 152 in Anglesey) we see that the percentage who regularly use Welsh when receiving Council services is 41% in Cardiff and 66% in Anglesey. In terms of the use of Welsh on the high street among fluent Welsh speakers in these two areas, the percentage who regularly use Welsh is 55% in Anglesey and 21% in Cardiff. The above results suggest that people's use of the Welsh language is influenced by a variety of complex factors.

**Figure 33:** did the respondents receive a Welsh language service the last time they used different services? (\*Results exclude respondents who responded that the question did not apply to them)

● Yes, I was offered and I used it ● Yes, after asking ● No, but it was offered ● No, it was not offered ● Not relevant



The graph above shows which languages the respondents used the last time they received different services. The percentages indicating that they have received an offer of a service in Welsh are relatively consistent with the results in Figure 31, but we see that a high percentage of respondents indicate that they have been offered Welsh-medium services, but that they had not however used Welsh.

The focus group participants provided a mixed picture of the use of services in Welsh. In some areas participants said that they did not use many health services or council services on the whole. In other areas there was considerable discussion on health services through the medium of Welsh. For example, one of the groups praised local health services where the majority of staff spoke Welsh. However, in another area one participant explained how she was affected by the lack of a Welsh language medical service:

*"When I have to speak English at the doctor's I can't say what's wrong with me properly. I have to practice before I go and think about what I want to say."*



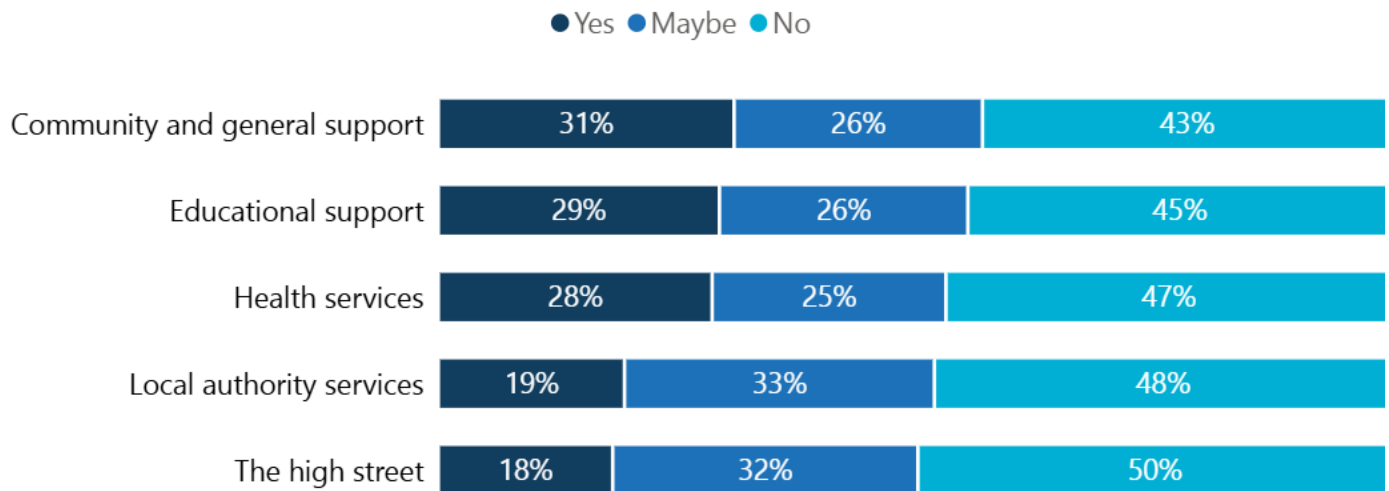
Those who had experienced treatment in general hospitals stated that they very rarely received Welsh language services. There were also very few experiences of receiving a dental service and an eye care service in Welsh.

In discussing experiences of using high street services, various participants said that the tendency in their areas was for small family businesses to offer services in Welsh while local supermarkets offered a service in English. Some of these participants referred to difficulties in receiving a Welsh language service while taking a driving test. The majority of those who had taken their driving test had done so in English although some would have wished to take the test in Welsh.

## 6.2. Children and young people's choice of language when receiving services

Respondents were also asked whether they were likely to use Welsh if those services were easily available in Welsh. Interestingly, the percentage of respondents who indicated that they would be likely to use Welsh if those services were easily available was higher than the percentages who indicated that they use Welsh when receiving these services. For example, only 17% of respondents used Welsh always or mainly when receiving health services, but 28% of the sample indicated that they would use Welsh if this service was easily available, with an additional 25% indicating that they might use the service in Welsh. Similarly, only 6% of respondents indicated that they used Welsh always or mainly on the high street, but 18% indicated that they would be likely to use Welsh if the service was easily available, with an additional 32% indicating that they might use Welsh.

**Figure 34:** the extent to which respondents would be likely to use Welsh if the following services were available in Welsh

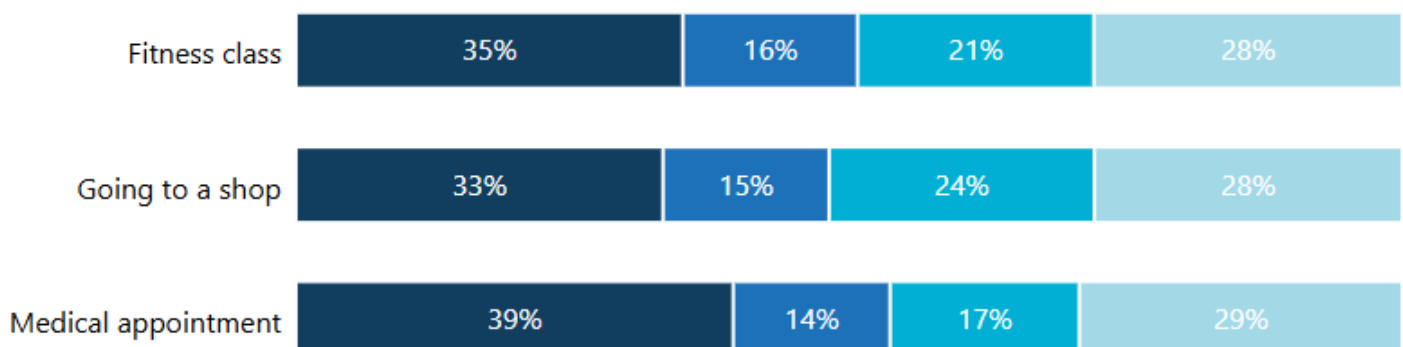


Respondents were also asked what they would do if they were offered a Welsh language service in different situations. Respondents from year 12 to 21 years of age were presented with three situations: attending a medical appointment, attending a fitness class and going to a shop. The respondents in school years 7-11 were presented with two situations: attending a medical appointment and going to a shop.

Figure 35 below shows that 39% of respondents would accept the offer to speak Welsh if there was an active offer to conduct a medical appointment through the medium of Welsh. This is significantly higher than the 17% who indicated that they always use Welsh or Welsh mainly when receiving a health service (see Figure 31). 35% of respondents indicated that they would accept the offer to speak Welsh when attending a fitness class, and 33% when going to a shop and being offered a service face-to-face or on-screen in Welsh. These percentages are again significantly higher than the percentage that indicates that they currently use Welsh always or mainly. These results strongly suggest that Welsh speakers are more likely to use Welsh if they are actively offered services, without any barriers.

**Figure 35:** how would respondents react to the following situations? (\*Results exclude respondents who responded that the question did not apply to them)

● Accept the offer to speak Welsh/respond in Welsh ● Respond in Welsh to start but gradually change to English  
● Respond in English ● Ask for services in English ● Not relevant

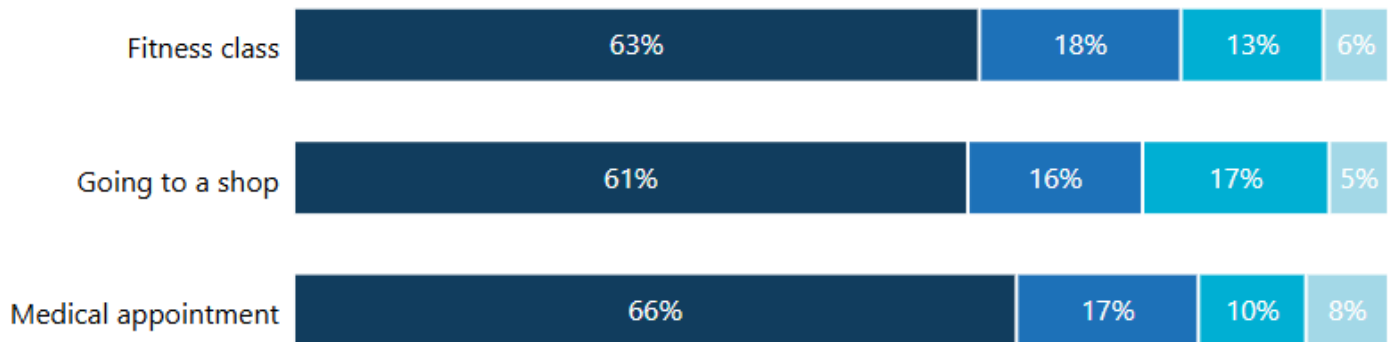




As shown in figure 36 below, the likelihood that respondents would accept the offer to speak Welsh in different situations increases significantly in the case of fluent Welsh speakers.

**Figure 36:** how would fluent Welsh speakers react to following situations? (\*Results exclude respondents who responded that the question did not apply to them)

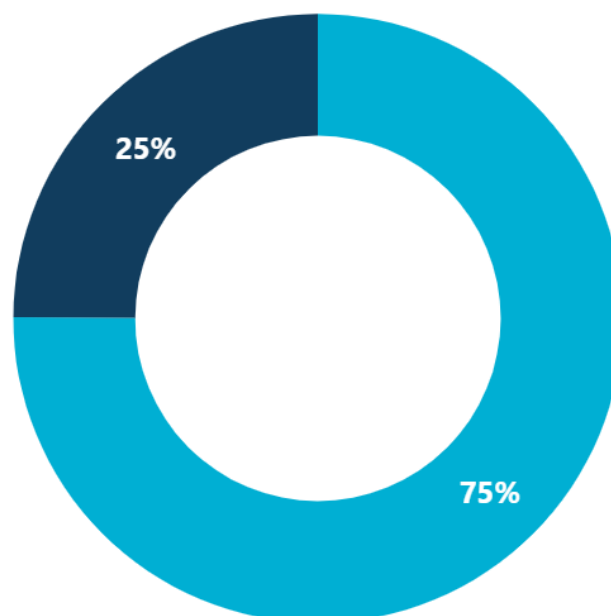
● **Accept the offer to speak Welsh/respond in Welsh** ● **Respond in Welsh to start but gradually change to English**  
● **Respond in English** ● **Ask for services in English** ● **Not relevant**



As shown in Figure 37 below, 75% of the sample responded that they would not ask for a Welsh language service if it was not obvious that a Welsh language service was available. As for the reasons provided by those who had indicated that they would not ask for a Welsh service, the most consistent one was that they did not want to be a nuisance and that doing so created an uncomfortable situation.

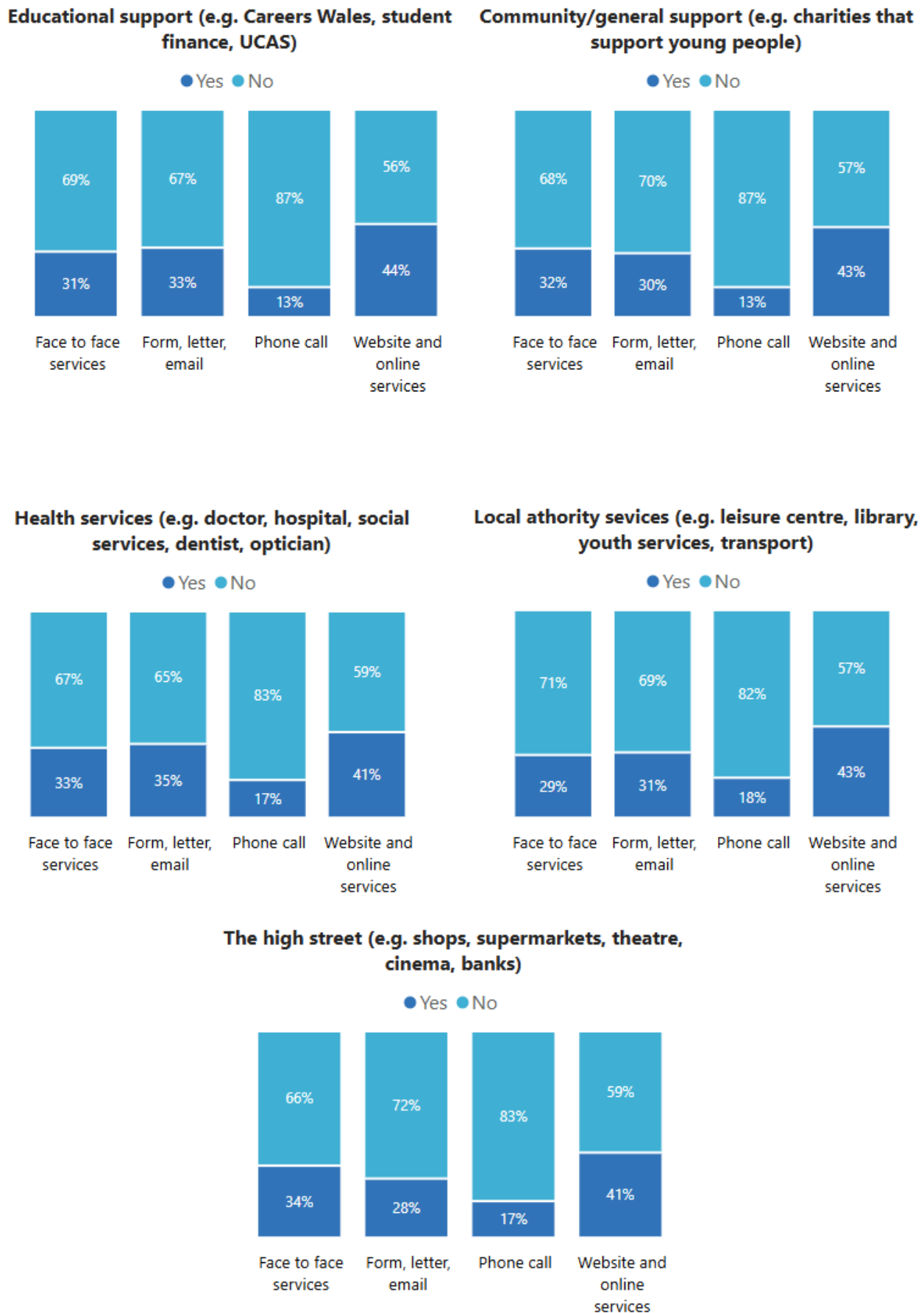
**Figure 37:** would respondents ask for a Welsh language service?

● No ● Yes



### 6.3. Types of Welsh language services

**Figure 38:** what type of Welsh language services would respondents like to receive



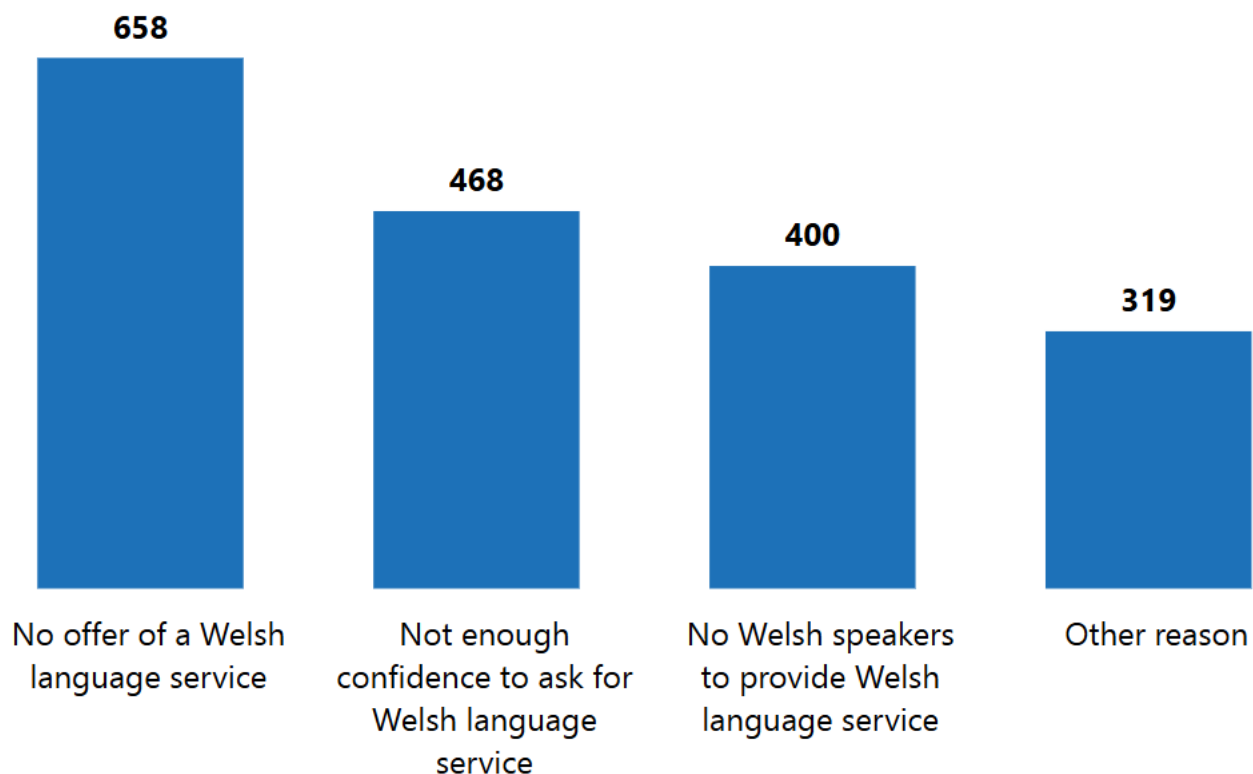
Respondents were asked if there were specific types of services they wished to receive in Welsh. The questionnaires shared with years 7-11 school pupils focused on the types of services respondents would like to receive in relation to council services and on the high street. The questionnaires shared with the young people in year 12 to 21 years of age gathered respondents' views on different types of services in the context of health services, educational support, and community/general support as well.

There is significant consistency in the results below, with a higher percentage of respondents wishing to receive online services through the medium of Welsh; relatively similar percentages wishing to receive services on paper and face-to-face through the medium of Welsh, and lower percentages wishing to receive telephone calls through the medium of Welsh.

## 6.4. Barriers to receiving Welsh language services

Respondents were asked if they had encountered difficulties in using Welsh language services. We saw that the reason most often chosen by the respondents was that there was no offer of a Welsh language service. Again, it is revealing how many of the respondents indicated that a service was not available, or did not have the confidence to ask for a Welsh language service.

**Figure 39:** the reasons why receiving a Welsh language service was difficult

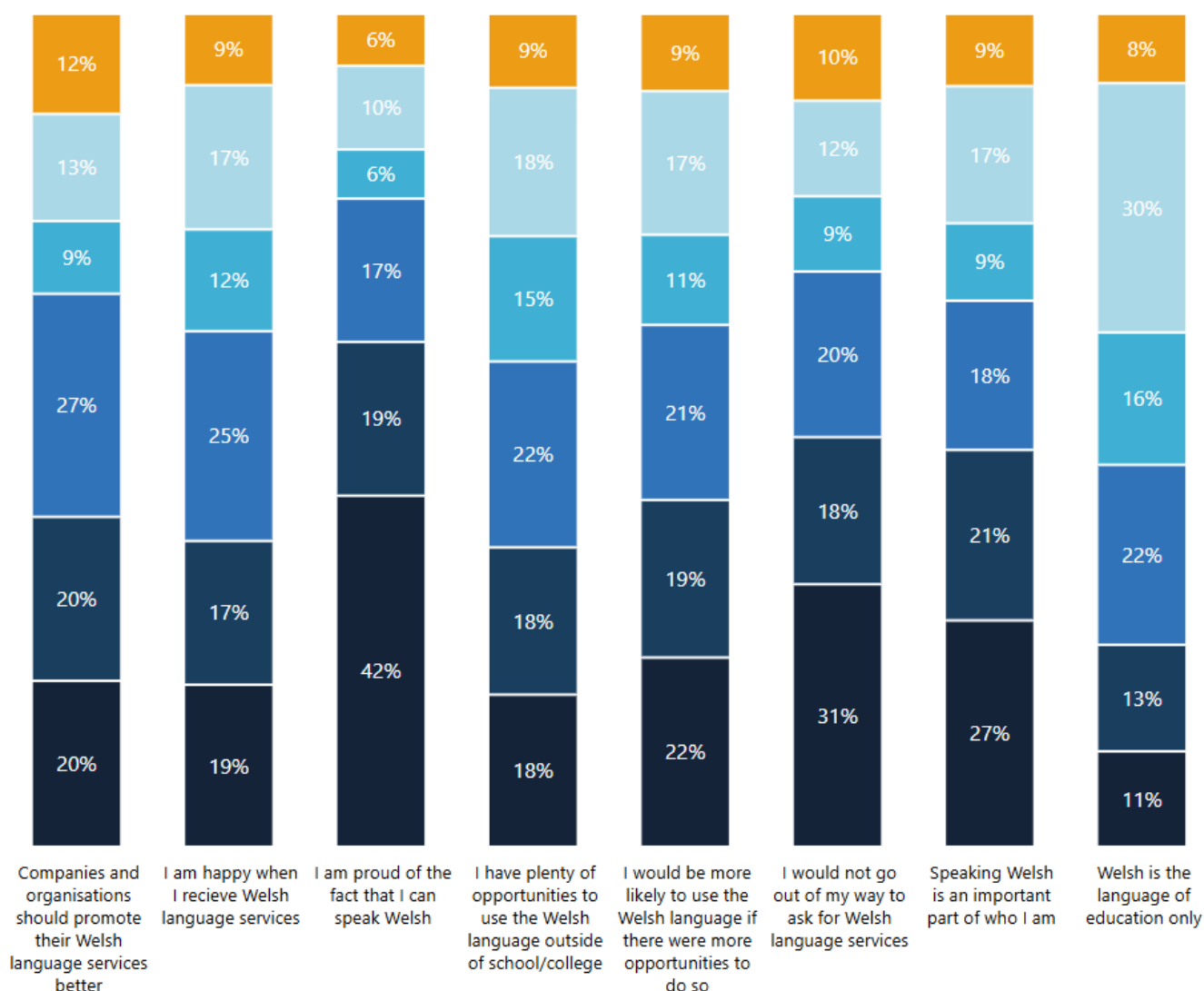


## 6.5. Respondents' views on Welsh language services and the importance of the Welsh language

Respondents were given a series of different statements and asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements.

**Figure 40:** the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with the statements below

● Strongly agree ● Tend to agree ● Do not agree or disagree ● Tend to disagree ● Strongly disagree ● Don't know



It is interesting that the respondents' views are generally more positive to these statements compared to the patterns of Welsh language use found in the rest of the results. In other words, it is clear that a large number of respondents who may make very little use of the Welsh language outside school are generally supportive of the Welsh language and would like more opportunities to use the language. These results coincide with research published by the Commissioner in 2023 on [Welsh speakers' views on Welsh-medium and bilingual post-compulsory education](#).

For example, 41% of respondents strongly agree or tend to agree that they would be more likely to use Welsh if they had more opportunities to do so. The figure rises to 63% amongst fluent Welsh speakers

and 70% for those who learnt Welsh at home. On a very general level these percentages are significantly higher than the percentages of respondents who reported using Welsh regularly in different contexts in their lives.

Similarly, 61% of the whole sample strongly agree or tend to agree that they are proud of the fact that they speak Welsh. Looking at those who had received primary education through the medium of Welsh only, this figure rises to 81% and less than 5% of these respondents strongly disagreed or tended to disagree with the statement. There is an important message here, that those who have received a Welsh-medium education, and are likely to be fluent in Welsh, are proud that they speak the language, and are generally keen to use more Welsh in their lives.

While the results of this research highlight the significant challenges that exist in terms of increasing the use of Welsh among children and young people, there is a glimmer of hope in the fact that the majority of young Welsh speakers have positive attitudes towards the language and their identity.