

# Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill

## Survey findings

October 2024

### Background

1. As part of the Children, Young People and Education Committee's consultation on the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill, a survey was conducted to gather the views of children and young people who attend English-medium schools in Wales on learning Welsh at school.

### Method

2. A self-completion survey was open for approximately a four week period, between Monday, 2 September – Friday, 27 September 2024. The survey was available to complete online, and in paper format upon request.

3. A self-completion survey allowed respondents a degree of anonymity that other engagement methods, such as face-to-face, interviewer administered surveys, would not. All quotes which appear in this paper are anonymised, with any identifiable information removed.

4. To compile this paper, an analysis of a complete data set was conducted. All data can be sourced to individual responses and further analysis can be undertaken upon request.

### Audience

5. The survey was designed to capture the views of children and young people who attend English-medium schools in Wales.



**6.** Given the amount of time available to complete this engagement work, and the proximity to the start of the school term, a focused approach to promotion was taken. The survey was shared with existing contacts who work with children and young people in English-medium settings. The survey was also promoted by the Senedd’s Education team during scheduled sessions with school groups, both in the Senedd and as part of their outreach work. The Senedd’s Front of House team also promoted the survey during tours and sessions booked by appropriate groups.

**7.** We would like to thank everyone who shared their views with us.

## Findings

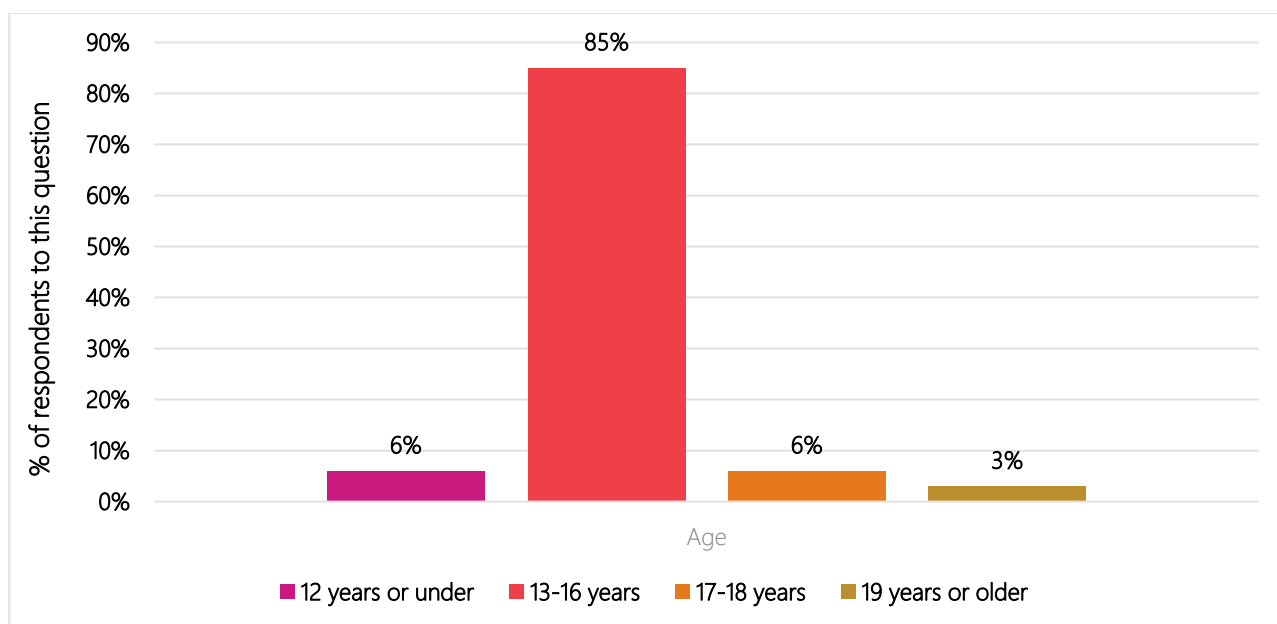
**8.** The survey comprised 12 questions and was split into 3 sections. 35 responses were received to the survey. 2 responses were not eligible to continue with the survey due to age or not attending an English-medium setting.

**9.** On average, the survey took 5 minutes and 19 seconds to complete. All responses were received online.

## Age

---

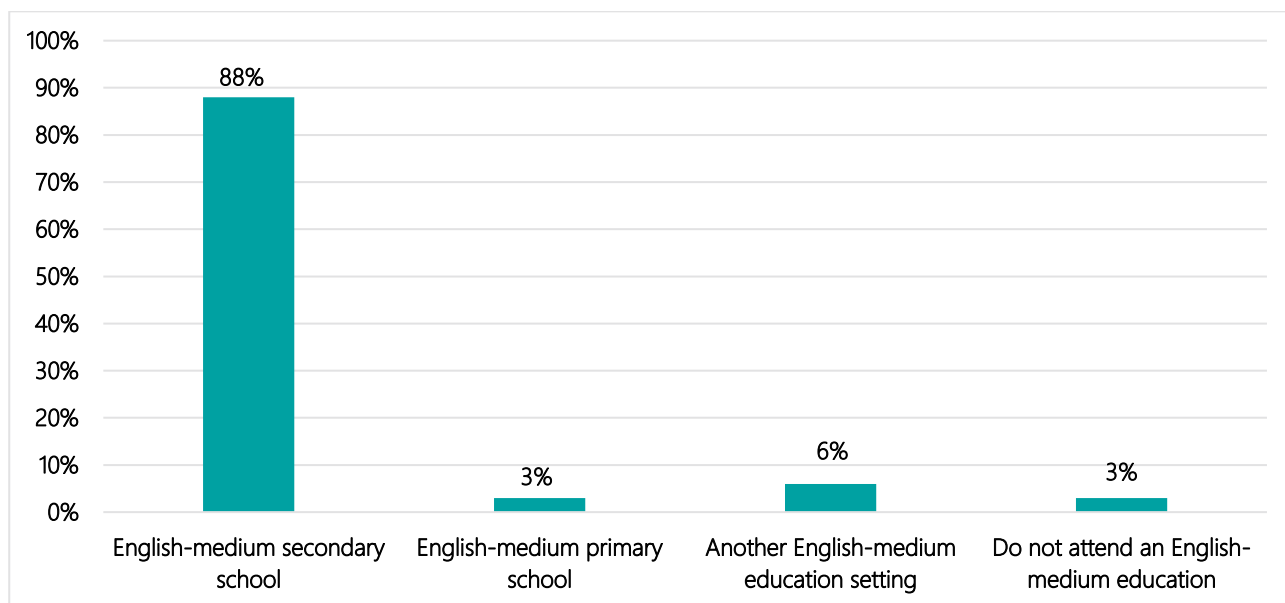
**10.** 30 respondents (85%) to this question were **13-16 years of age**. 2 respondents (6%) were **12 years or under**. 2 respondents (6%) were aged **17-18 years of age**. 1 respondent (3%) was aged **19 years or older** and was not eligible to continue with the survey.



## Do you attend an English – medium education setting?

---

**11.** 30 respondents (88%) to this question said they attended an English-medium secondary school. 1 respondent (3%) said they attended an English-medium primary school. 2 respondents (6%) said they attended another type of English-medium education. 1 respondent (3%) said they didn't attend an English-medium setting and was not eligible to continue with the survey.



## Where do you live?

---

**12.** Responses were received from 5 local authority areas. 2 respondents answered 'Other' to this question and 2 respondents chose not to answer.

**13.** 21 respondents (64%) to this question said they lived in Bridgend, 4 respondents (12%) were from Swansea, 2 respondents (6%) said they lived in Flintshire, 1 respondent (3%) was from Rhondda Cynon Taf, and 1 respondent (3%) said they lived in Neath Port Talbot.

## Learning Welsh

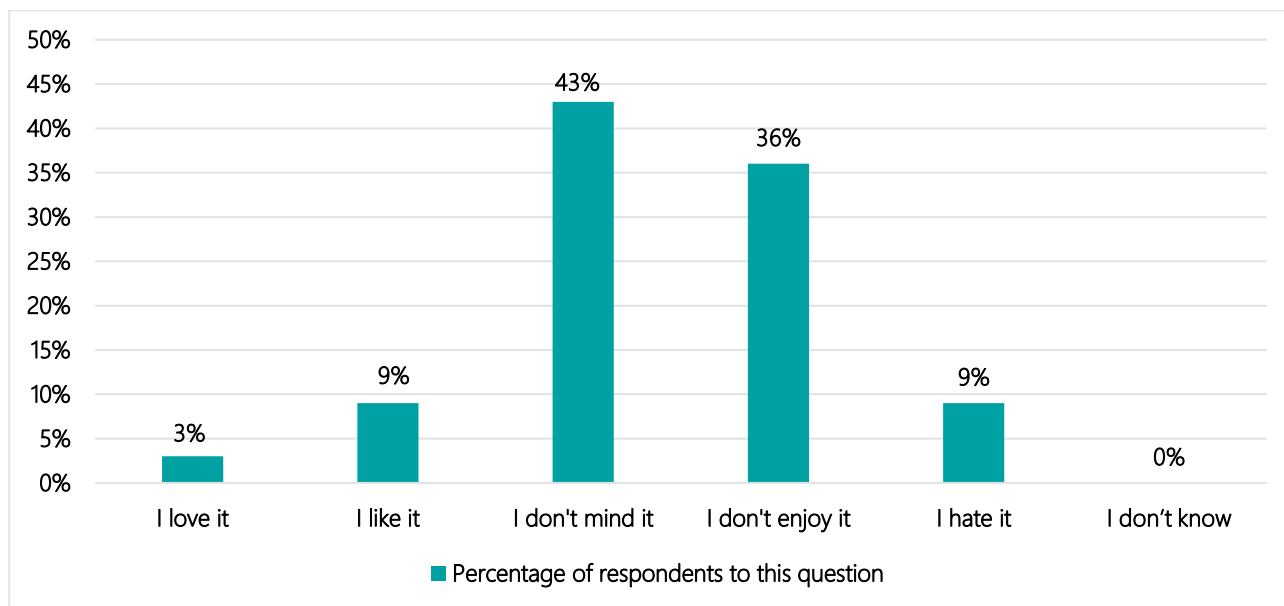
---

**14.** Questions 5 and 6 sought to explore the respondent's personal experience of learning Welsh in school.

### **15. Which of the following best describes your opinion of learning a subject in Welsh?**

14 respondents (43%) to this question said they **didn't mind** learning a subject in Welsh, with 12 respondents (36%) answering that they **didn't enjoy** it. 3 respondents (9%) **liked** learning a

subject in Welsh and 3 (9%) **hated** it. 1 respondent (3%) answered that they **loved** learning a subject in Welsh.



### Tell us why you gave this answer

---

**16.** The respondent who answered 'I love it' said:

"It is fun learning new languages."

**17.** The respondents who answered 'I like it' said:

"Although it's not my favourite I still enjoy learning about my country's language and being able to speak it."

"Well it is difficult and it is not my first language"

**18.** Of those who answered 'I don't mind it', some found the language difficult:

"I like it but I find it a little bit hard."

"It's difficult for me to do."

"It can be difficult with spelling and pronunciation - English is easier."

**19.** Others felt more positive about learning Welsh:

“Because it's important to know because some jobs require people knowing Welsh but the lessons aren't exactly fun.”

“I think it's good that we have our own language, however not many people speak it here.”

“I think it is a good skill to have another language.”

“It is fun to change up the language every now and then.”

**20.** Other comments from those who answered ‘I don't mind it’ included:

“I like the subject Welsh, but I'm not sure how I would feel if other subjects started teaching it in Welsh.”

“The topics we do are not topics that you would use in a conversation and are really odd.”

“I don't speak Welsh but I don't hate it.”

“It's ok but I wouldn't choose to do it in my own time.”

“Welsh isn't exactly the most exciting or boring subject.”

**21.** Of those who answered 'I don't enjoy it', finding the language difficult was also a theme:

“Because it would be easier in English.”

“I find it hard to understand and to speak and write it.”

“I find it harder to learn than other subjects and more confusing.”

“Because its hard and confusing.”

“It's pretty boring and hard as I've just moved schools so it's a lot harder in this school.”

“Because I'm not good at it.”

**22.** Others felt learning the language was boring:

“It's boring.”

“I find Welsh boring and complicated.”

“I don’t enjoy leaning Welsh because I find it boring and I prefer to speak English.”

**23.** One respondent didn’t feel it was necessary to learn Welsh:

“Because I find it unnecessary if the main language is English. If we used it more often, or certain areas of our part of Wales spoke more of it, I would understand.”

**24.** The respondents who answered ‘I hate it’ also made reference to the language being boring and not understanding it:

“It is boring.”

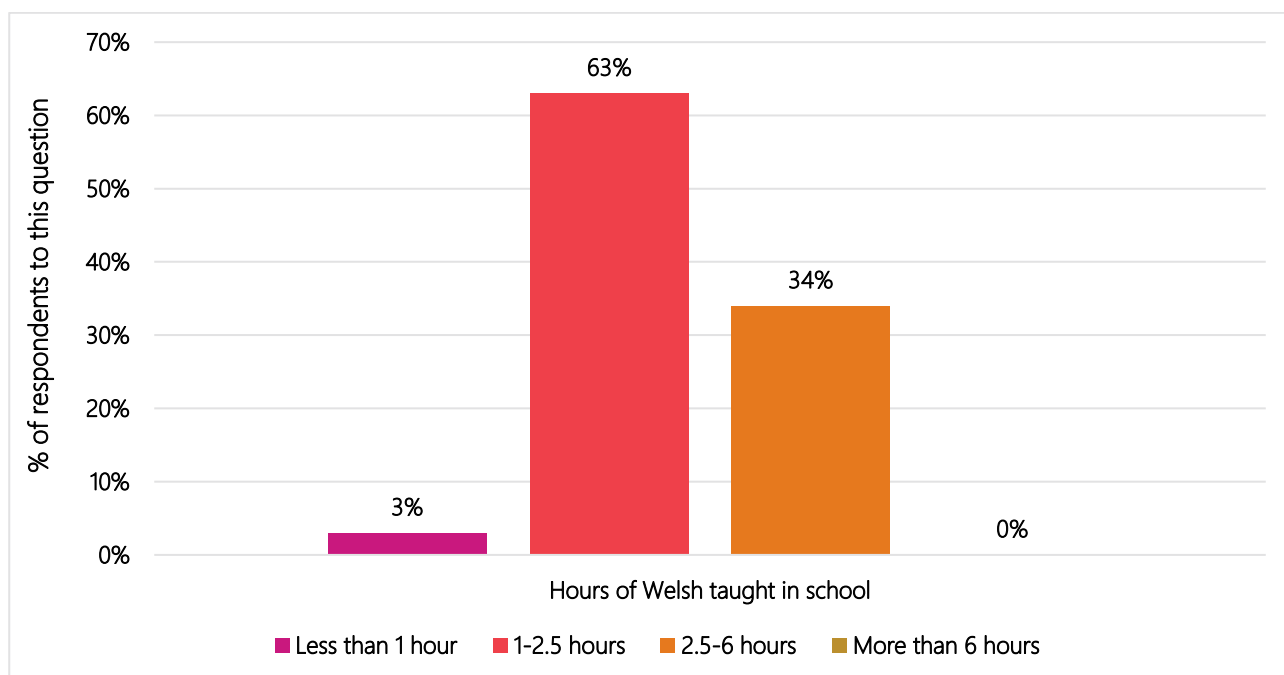
“I don’t really understand Welsh that well.”

### How many hours a week are you taught in Welsh at school?

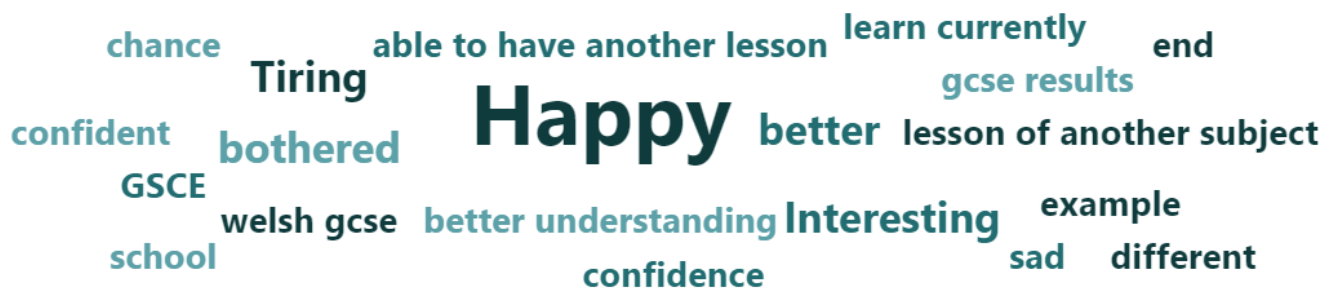
---

**25.** Questions 7 and 8 sought to find out how many hours a week respondents were learning Welsh in school, and how they would feel if they were to learn Welsh for 10% of their school week should the Bill be implemented.

**26.** 20 respondents (63%) to this question said they were taught Welsh for **1-2.5 hours a week**. 11 respondents (34%) said they were taught Welsh for **2.5-6 hours a week**. 1 respondent (3%) said they were taught Welsh for **less than 1 hour a week**. No respondents answered that they were taught Welsh for **more than 6 hours a week**.



**27.** When asked how they would feel if they were taught in Welsh for 10% of the school week (which could be from 2-2.5 hours depending on age), respondents answered with a variety of feelings, which are represented in this word cloud.



**28.** A more detailed analysis shows that some responses include some positive reactions around having a better understanding of Welsh when they leave school and increasing confidence levels. The more positive responses included:

"Happy as I could have a better understanding when coming out of school and in GSCE's."

"Interesting"

"I wouldn't mind it because it is not too different to how I learn currently."

"Ok"

"Relieved"

"I wouldn't mind it I would feel more confidence."

"Alright"

"I wouldn't mind, as long as there would be something at the end of it - for example a chance of better Welsh GCSE results."

"Happy"

**29.** Some respondents didn't know how they would feel or had indifferent or mixed feelings towards the proposal:

"I would feel less confident but would be happy because I would be able to have another lesson of another subject."

“Indifferent”

“I dont know”

“Neutral”

**30.** A number of respondents expressed negative feelings towards the proposal, with some making reference again to finding the language difficult or boring.

“Confused”

“Sad because I would struggle to understand it.”

“Annoyed”

“Hate”

“Tiring”

“Bothered”

“Unfair”

“Bored”

“Exhausted”

“Depressed”

## Confidence levels

**31.** Question 9 asked those who are under 16 how confident they would be to complete a number of tasks once they reached 16 if they had been taught in Welsh for 10% of the school week. For those who were already 16, the question asked how confident they were completing these tasks now.

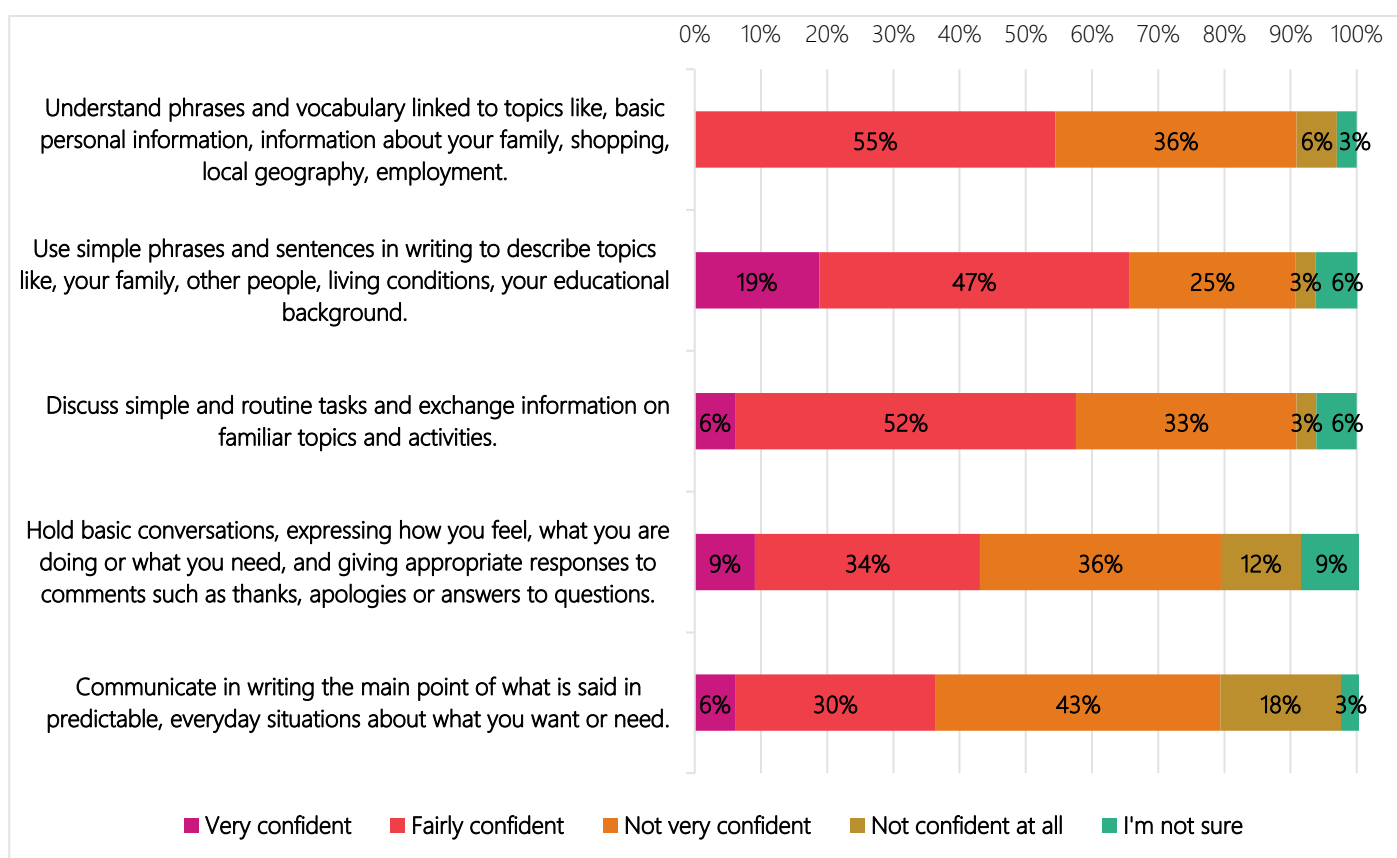
**32.** In considering their ability to *‘Understand phrases and vocabulary linked to topics like, basic personal information, information about your family, shopping, local geography, employment’* - 18 respondents (55%) were **fairly confident**, or felt they would be if they learnt Welsh for 10% of their school week. 12 (36%) answered **not very confident**, 2 (6%) were **not confident at all** and 1 respondent (3%) was **not sure**.

**33.** In considering their ability to *‘Use simple phrases and sentences in writing to describe topics like, your family, other people, living conditions, your educational background’* – 6 respondents (19%) said they felt **very confident**, 16 (47%) said they were **fairly confident**, 8 (25%) were **not very confident** and 1 respondent (3%) was **not confident at all**. 2 respondents (6%) were **not sure**.

**34.** When asked about their confidence to *‘Discuss simple and routine tasks and exchange information on familiar topics and activities’* – 2 (6%) answered that they were **very confident**, with 17 (52%) saying they were **fairly confident**. 11 (33%) said they were **not very confident** and 1 respondent (3%) was **not confident at all**. 2 respondents (6%) were **not sure**.

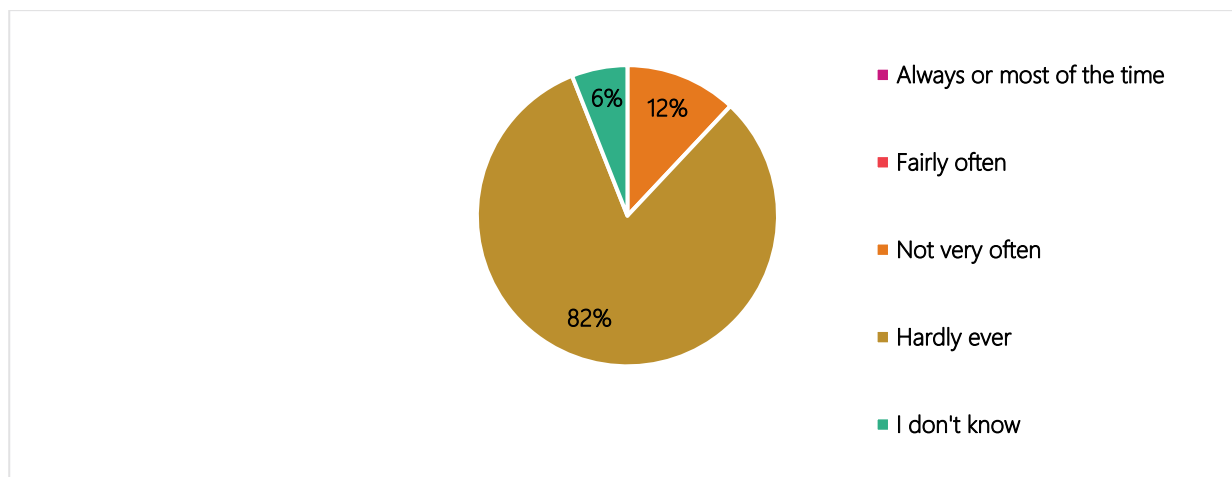
**35.** In considering if they could *'Hold basic conversations, expressing how you feel, what you are doing or what you need, and giving appropriate responses to comments such as thanks, apologies or answers to questions'* – 3 respondents (9%) said they were **very confident**, 11 (34%) were **fairly confident**, and 12 (36%) were **not very confident**. 4 respondents (12%) were **not confident at all** and 3 (9%) were **not sure**.

**36.** Finally, when asked about their ability to *'Communicate in writing the main point of what is said in predictable, everyday situations about what you want or need'* – 2 respondents (6%) said they were **very confident**, 10 (30%) were **fairly confident**. However, 14 (43%) did not feel very confident and 6 (18%) were **not confident at all**. 1 respondent (3%) was **not sure**.



## Using Welsh outside of school

**37.** Question 10 asked how much respondents used Welsh outside of school. 27 respondents (82%) of respondents said they **hardly ever used Welsh outside of school**. 4 respondents (12%) said they **didn't use Welsh very often**, and 2 respondents (6%) **didn't know**. No respondents answered **always or most of the time** or **fairly often**.



### How can schools help students feel more confident to use Welsh?

---

**38.** Question 11 asked for ideas about how schools can help all students have the confidence to use Welsh independently by the time they can leave school at 16.

**39.** Some of the comments suggested using Welsh in more lessons and across different topics.

"Use Welsh more often in different subjects."

"Use Welsh more in different classes."

"Use Welsh more often in other subjects but not too much."

"Schools could introduce more Welsh lessons during the week or for teachers to encourage using Welsh instead of English in the classroom."

"Little bit of Welsh everywhere."

"Use incidental Welsh in every lesson regardless of the subject - this means that our teachers will need to speak more Welsh in lessons too. Include more Welsh in assemblies - e.g. Welsh hymns."

"Ease into using Welsh more regularly rather than making a huge change one day."

**40.** Others talked about the subjects they were learning through Welsh and making them more interesting.

"Do Welsh topics that we may be interested about."

“Use topics that the whole class is interested about.”

“Do topics that is interesting for us.”

“Just make it more fun.”

**41.** Some respondents suggested there is more time for Welsh lessons in the week or additional recap lessons to revisit what has been learnt.

“More Welsh lessons a week.”

“More Welsh lessons.”

“Let students have conversations in Welsh often.”

“Use more Welsh with teachers who can speak it.”

“More time for lessons.”

“Once a month do a recap lesson?”

“Do a recap lesson or make them do conversations with each other in Welsh.”

“Do recap lessons occasionally.”

**42.** Others talked about making the Welsh that is taught more useful for learners so they would be more likely to use it.

“More Welsh clubs and then making posters on how to ask for equipment and other simple vocab we can use.”

“Teach topics that would pop up in conversations.”

“Teach them simple phrases.”

**43.** A couple of comments made reference to Welsh being discussed in terms of long-term benefits. However, they weren't in agreement on how this should be used.

“Not state that it's going to be the most important thing that they must learn in order to be employed.”

“For it to be made a big deal about learning Welsh. That you have better job opportunities etc.”

## Additional comments

---

**44.** Respondents to the survey were given the opportunity to share any further comments about learning Welsh and how the Welsh Government could help students. Some of the comments suggested additional support for those who are struggling with learning the language.

“I would like to see it more accessible to people who struggle with Welsh to learn it.”

“There should be things in place for students who fall behind in Welsh so they can catch up.”

**45.** Some respondents provided some practical suggestions for learning Welsh:

“Let the students create posters about the topics they find tough.”

“Welsh homework.”

“More conversation.”

“More conversations and teamwork.”

**46.** One respondent suggested that learning Welsh should be optional.

“Don't make it a pressured topic and allow people to choose if they want to take it or not.”