



National Survey for Wales, 2017-18 Welsh Language: Confidence and attitudes

10 October 2018
SB 59/2018

In 2017-18, the National Survey included questions about the Welsh language, exploring Welsh speakers' confidence to speak the language as well as attitudes towards the language by those who speak Welsh and those who don't.

This bulletin presents the results of these new questions, and also presents results of other questions on Welsh language ability which have been included in the National Survey and its predecessor surveys in recent years.

2017-18 key findings

Ability

- 19% of adults aged 16 and over reported that they can speak Welsh, with a further 12% reporting to have some Welsh-speaking ability.
- Younger people aged 16 to 24 were most likely to be able to understand, speak, read and write Welsh.

Confidence

- 68% of Welsh speakers felt confident speaking Welsh. 72% wanted to speak it with other Welsh speakers and 36% worried they would be judged on how well they spoke it.
- Welsh speakers' fluency levels were strongly correlated with their confidence when speaking Welsh.
- 95% of fluent Welsh speakers were confident speaking Welsh; however 21% of fluent speakers worried they'd be judged on how well they speak it.
- Women were slightly more likely than men to worry about feeling judged.

Attitudes

- 86% of people felt the language was something to be proud of
- 67% thought more effort needed to be put into supporting the language
- 62% of those who couldn't speak Welsh would like to be able to speak it, and 85% of those with some ability in Welsh wanted to speak it better.
- People were least likely to agree with the statement 'The Welsh language will be stronger in 10 years' time': 40% agreed with that statement. Those living in the North East of Wales were least likely to agree with this statement.



About this bulletin

This bulletin provides more detailed analysis of National Survey 2017-18 results on the **Welsh language**.

Where possible, it also includes comparisons with results from previous surveys.

The full questionnaire is available on the [National Survey web pages](#).

Additional tables can be accessed via the [Results viewer](#).

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Introduction

The Welsh language strategy '[Cymraeg 2050](#)' sets out the Welsh Government's long-term vision to achieving the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

In order to realise this vision, the strategy states that action needs to be taken to enable more people to learn to speak Welsh, for Welsh speakers to be able to use Welsh in every aspect of life, and that among those who do not speak Welsh, there is goodwill, a sense of ownership towards the language and a recognition of its contribution to the culture, society and economy of Wales.

The strategy states that the Census of Population will be used to monitor progress towards the target of a million Welsh speakers. But in order to make policy decisions about the Welsh language in an informed way, the Welsh Government included questions in the National Survey for Wales as well as its predecessor surveys on people's Welsh language ability. In addition to this, in 2017-18, to monitor the progress of '[Cymraeg 2050](#)', questions were included in the National Survey, for the first time, about the confidence of Welsh speakers to use their Welsh language skills and people's attitudes towards the language.

Furthermore, the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) has 'A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language' as one of its seven well-being goals. This places a legal requirement on the Welsh Government to report its progress against this goal. Two [national indicators](#) were identified to measure progress against this goal which relate to the Welsh language. These are the percentage of people who:

- [Speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh](#) (No 36),
- [Can speak Welsh](#) (No 37)

The [Welsh Language Use Survey](#) and the [Census of Population](#) are the main source of information for these national indicators. However, the National Survey provides more regular data for these indicators for adults aged 16 and over for the years between Welsh language use surveys or censuses. The [Welsh Language Use Survey](#) includes information on the skills and use of the language by children under the age of 16, which are not covered by this bulletin.

Bulletin structure

This bulletin is split in to three chapters:

- 1: [Background: Ability in the language](#) - The first chapter presents the 2017-18 National Survey results on people's ability in Welsh. These questions were also asked in previous surveys. This chapter presents the results for these questions over time and for different sources.
- 2: [Confidence in using the language](#) – The second chapter, focuses on Welsh speakers and explores the characteristics that were found to be associated with their confidence to speak Welsh.
- 3: [Attitudes towards the Welsh language](#) – The third chapter presents results on attitudes towards the Welsh language for both Welsh speakers and those who didn't speak Welsh.

Regression analysis is used in chapters 2 and 3 to identify factors which influence peoples' confidence and attitudes towards the language. The factors that remained significant even after holding the other factors constant are those that are discussed in this bulletin

Chapter 1: Background - Welsh language ability

The [Census](#) is the main source of information about the proportion of people who can speak Welsh; but the National Survey is used to monitor trends for adults between censuses.

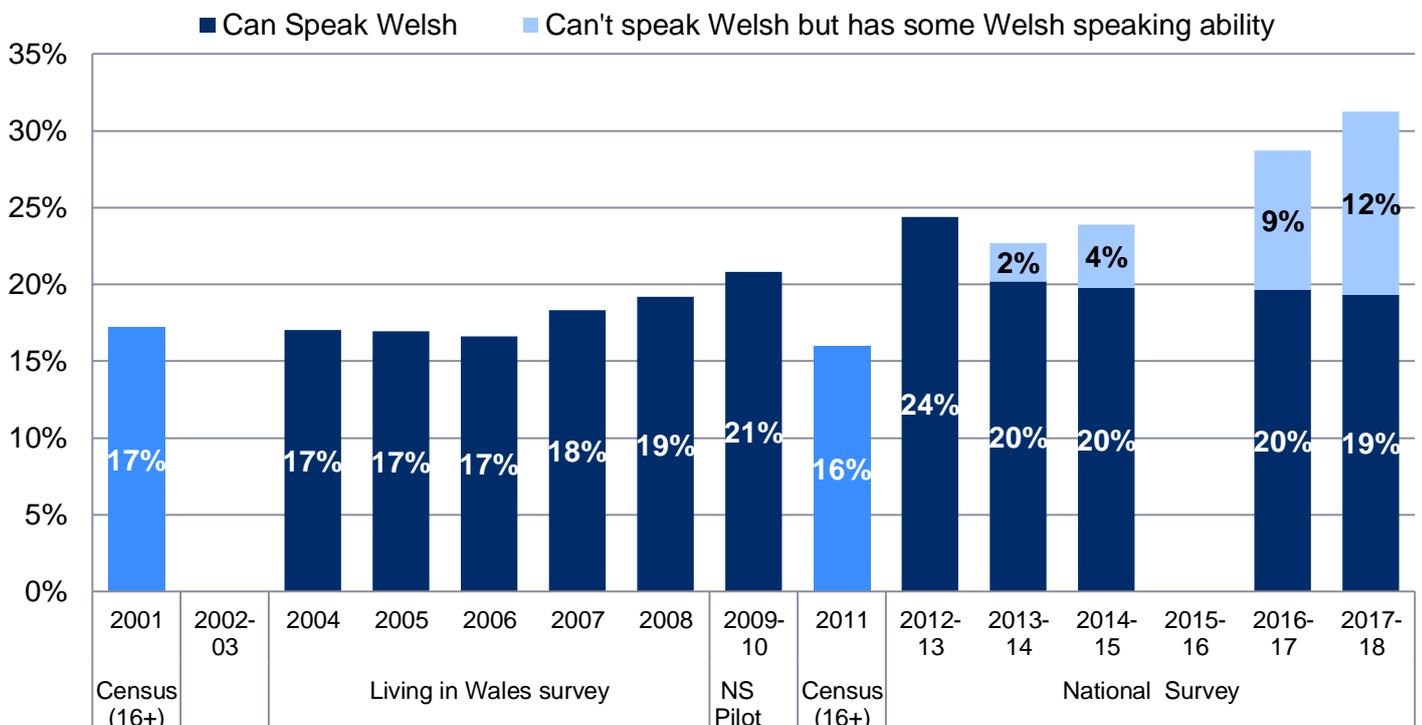
The 2017-18 National Survey for Wales found that 19% of adults aged 16 and over reported that they could speak Welsh. This question was also asked in the 2011 Census, where 19% of people aged 3 or over, and 16% of adults aged 16 or over reported to be able speak Welsh.

The Annual Population Survey (APS) also collects information on the number of Welsh speakers. The most recent APS results for the year from June 2017 to June 2018, reported that 29% of people aged 3 or over, and 24% of adults aged 16 or over reported to be able speak Welsh. The [estimates from the APS](#) have traditionally been much higher than both the Census and the National Survey.

The question on ability to speak Welsh has been included in the National Survey since it began in 2012-13. However, in this first year, interviewers were briefed to code people who hesitated over their answer (owing to the fact that they had some Welsh-speaking ability) as Welsh-speaking; as there were subsequent questions on fluency. For this reason from 2013-14 onwards, a new category was introduced for interviewers so that they could code these respondents as 'not able to speak Welsh but having some ability in the language'. The proportion coded to this response has quickly increased since its introduction, as shown in Chart 1 below.

The question on ability to speak Welsh was also asked in its predecessor survey 'Living in Wales' from 2004. Chart 1 shows how the percentages who report being able to speak Welsh has changed over time and by source.

Chart 1: Ability to speak Welsh, for those aged 16+, by different sources, 2001 to 2018



The Chart shows that the Census results for the percentage of Welsh speakers, in 2011 in particular, is considerably lower than the survey results for the years closest to it.

Why is there a difference between Census and survey results?

The question about Welsh language ability included in the National Survey for Wales and Annual Population Survey (APS) is identical to that included in the Census. Despite this, the proportion of people who state that they speak Welsh is higher for both of these surveys than it is for the Census. Differences in how these surveys and the Census are carried out are likely to have affected the results.

- The census is a statutory self-completion questionnaire, and the National Survey and APS are voluntary and use face-to-face interviews.
- The census question asks respondents to tick 'as many boxes as applies'; not everyone will read the instruction and may only tick one box. However in an interviewer-led survey, the interviewer will ask about each skill separately, therefore increasing the possibility for people to say they do speak Welsh.
- When respondents are faced with only one question, in an official statutory survey, they must make a categorical decision about whether they speak Welsh or not. Where an interviewer is present, the respondent may feel more able to describe their ability levels in more detail with the interviewer and the interviewer may encourage respondents to say that they are able to speak Welsh, so that they can provide more details about their ability in the subsequent questions.
- In the APS, respondents are asked to respond on behalf of other household members. When these 'proxy' responses are removed, the proportion who report being able to speak Welsh is slightly lower, (22% instead of 24%) particularly for younger respondents aged 16-24, suggesting that fellow household members may over estimate other household members' ability in Welsh.
- It should also be borne in mind that speakers' assessment of how well they speak a language can be quite subjective. For some people, the ability to say a few words in the language is enough for them to say that they speak it. Others, despite speaking it regularly, may say that they can't speak it if they feel that they are more comfortable speaking another language.

For these reasons, some respondents recorded as speaking Welsh in the National Survey for Wales or the Annual Population Survey might have reported that they were not Welsh-speaking when completing the Census questionnaire.

We are undertaking further research into the responses to surveys relating to the Welsh language and the differences between people's responses in surveys and the Census and hope to report on this in the next few months.¹

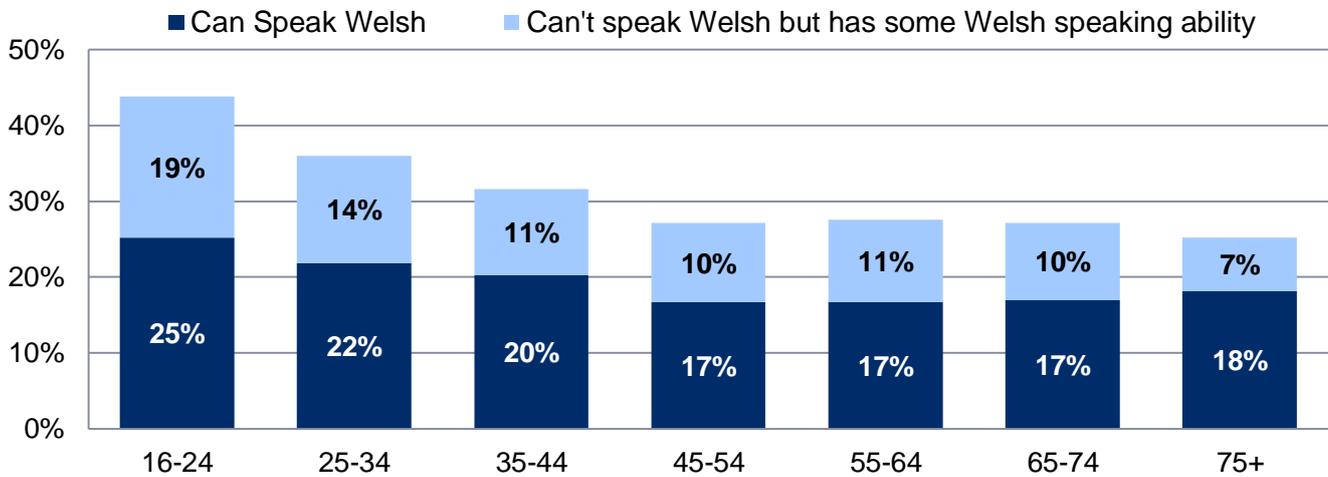
¹ The further research includes:

- A project linking people's responses to the National Survey with their Census responses to understand the characteristics of those people who record their ability differently in the two sources, and
- Additional analysis of one quarter of the National Survey and Annual Population Survey where we asked interviewers to assess the confidence in which respondents gave their answers to the question on ability to speak Welsh.

Age

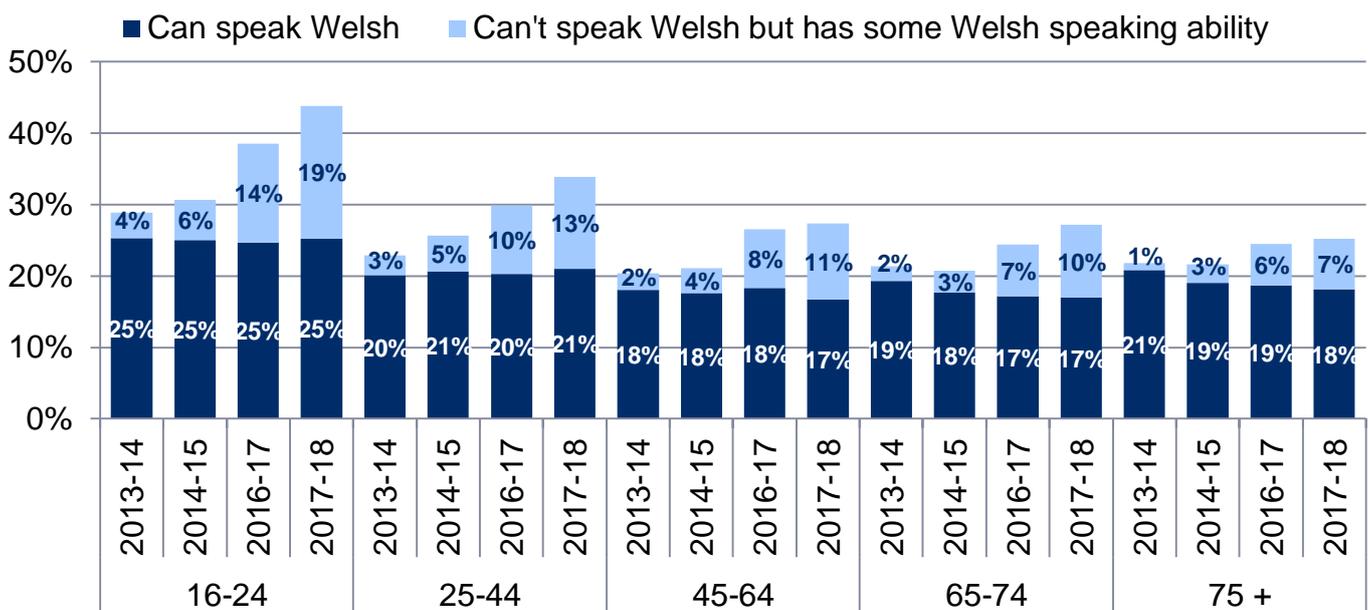
Younger people aged 16 to 24 were most likely to be able to speak Welsh, with 25% reporting to be able to speak Welsh in 2017-18. The age group least likely to speak Welsh were those aged 45 to 74, where 17% of them were able to speak Welsh as shown in Chart 2.

Chart 2: Ability to speak Welsh, by age, 2017-18



Younger people were also more likely to say that although they couldn't speak the language, they did have some ability in the language. Just over half of the 16-24 year olds who had 'at least some Welsh-speaking ability' classed themselves as Welsh speakers. This compares with almost three quarters of those aged 75 or over with 'at least some Welsh-speaking ability'. This should be borne in mind in later chapters of this bulletin when looking at confidence of those with 'at least some Welsh-speaking ability'. The proportion who report that they can speak Welsh has remained fairly constant by age since 2013-14 (chart 3).

Chart 3: Ability to speak Welsh, by age, 2012-13 to 2017-18

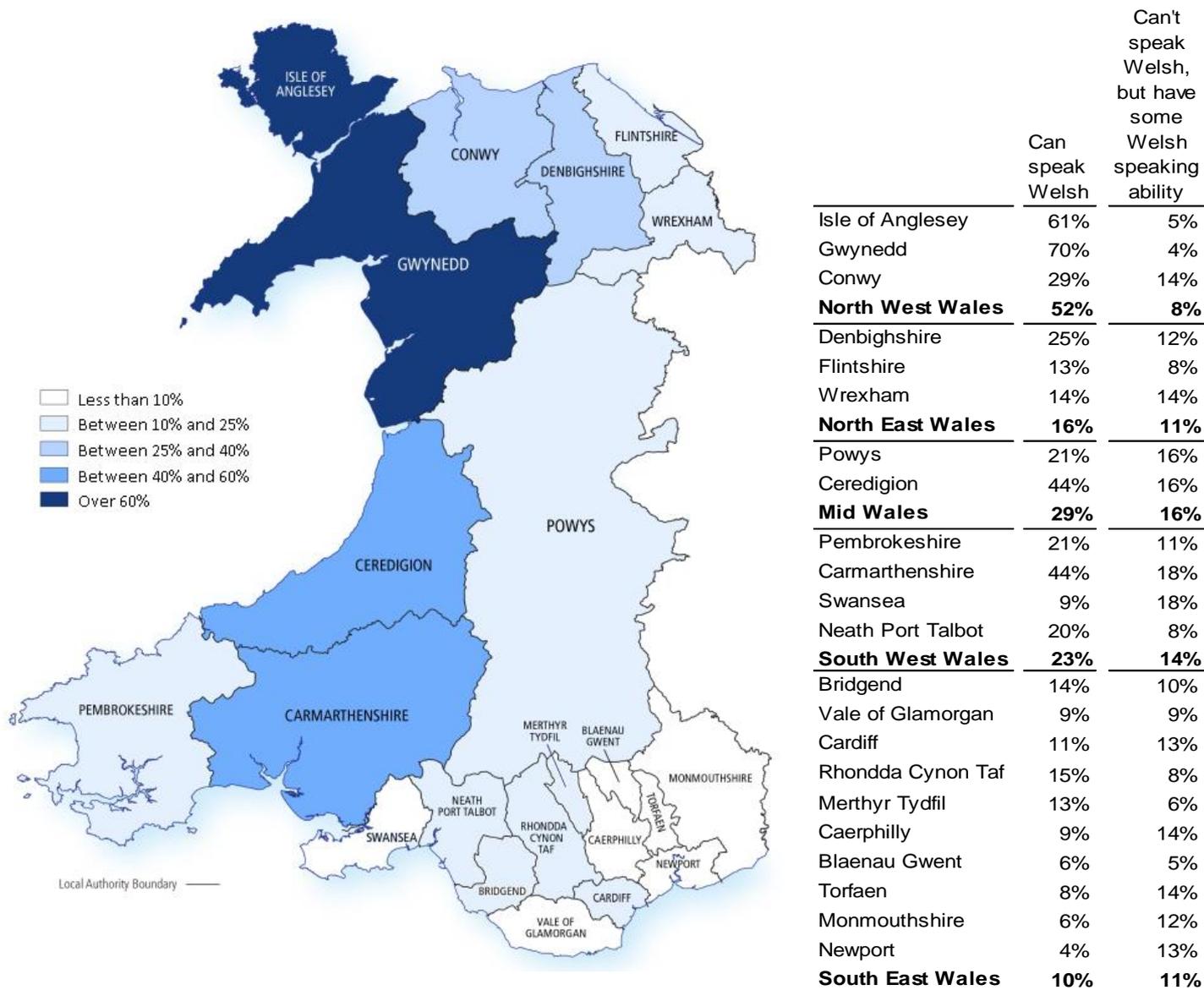


However, the proportion of people who report having 'some Welsh-speaking ability' has increased for all age groups since its introduction, but was largest for those aged 16 to 24.

Area

The areas of Wales with the highest proportion of Welsh speakers are in the western half of Wales as shown by this map.

Map/Table 4: Ability to speak Welsh, by local authority and region



The table on the right shows the proportions who can speak Welsh and who have 'some Welsh-speaking ability' by each local authority and also shows which local authorities make up each region. We see that the highest proportions of Welsh speakers are in Gwynedd and Anglesey with 70% and 61% able to speak Welsh respectively. In many parts of South Wales the percentage who say they have 'some Welsh -speaking ability' outnumbers those who state they can speak Welsh.

Due to the sample size, some results are reported by these regions rather than local authorities in later chapters of the bulletin.

The local authorities have been grouped into these regions in order to be broadly consistent with previous analyses² carried out on the Welsh language.

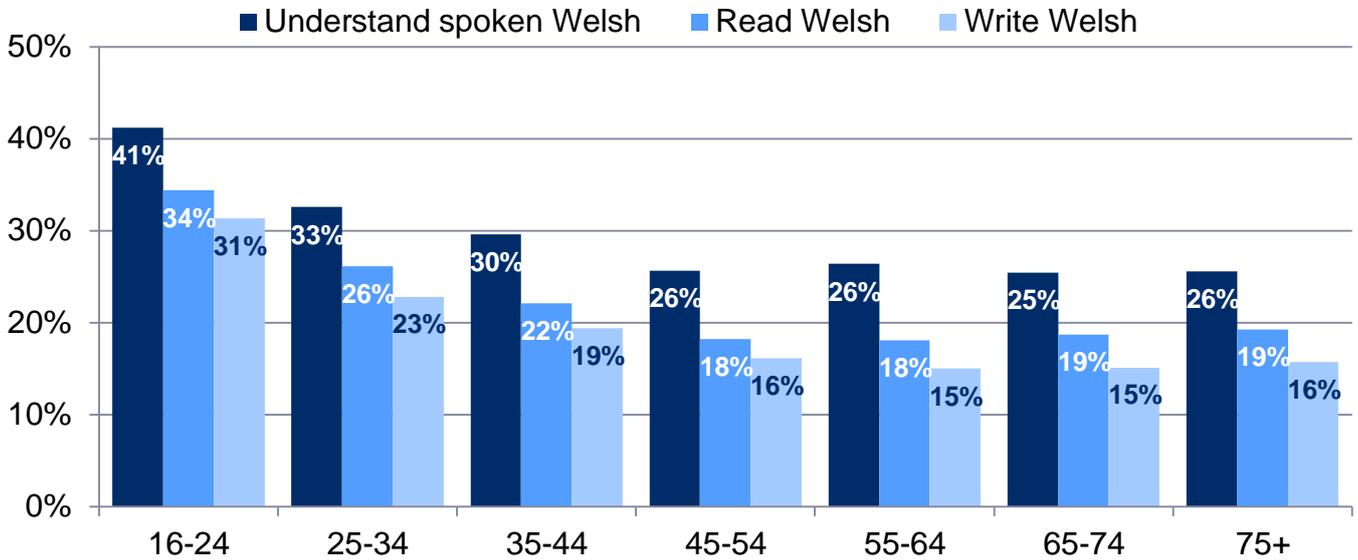
² [Welsh language use survey 2013-15](#)

Other skills in Welsh

The 2017-18 National Survey for Wales found that 29% of adults aged 16 and over could understand spoken Welsh, 22% could read Welsh and 19% could write Welsh.

Younger people were much more likely to report being able to understand spoken Welsh, read and write in Welsh, as shown in chart 5

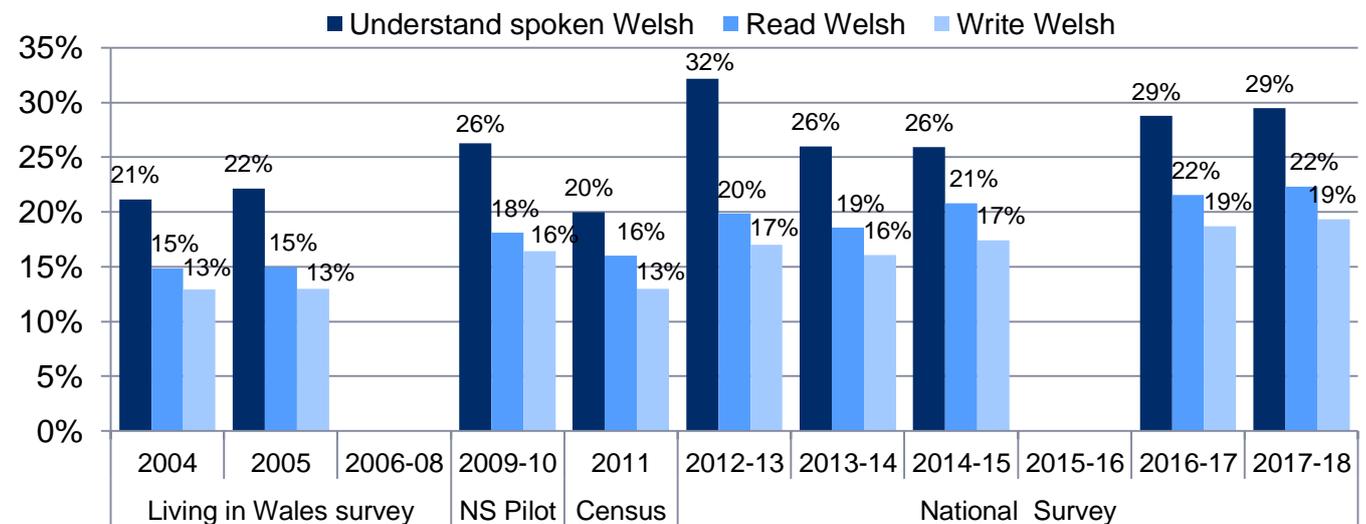
Chart 5: Ability to read, write and understand spoken Welsh, by age, 2017-18



These questions were also asked in the 2011 Census, where, once again a lower proportion of adults reported being able to do each of these (20% understand spoken Welsh, 16% read, 13% write)

These questions have also been included in previous National Surveys and the Living in Wales survey. Chart 6 shows how the percentages who report being able to understand, read and write Welsh have changed over time.

Chart 6: Ability to read, write and understand spoken Welsh, from 2004 to 2018

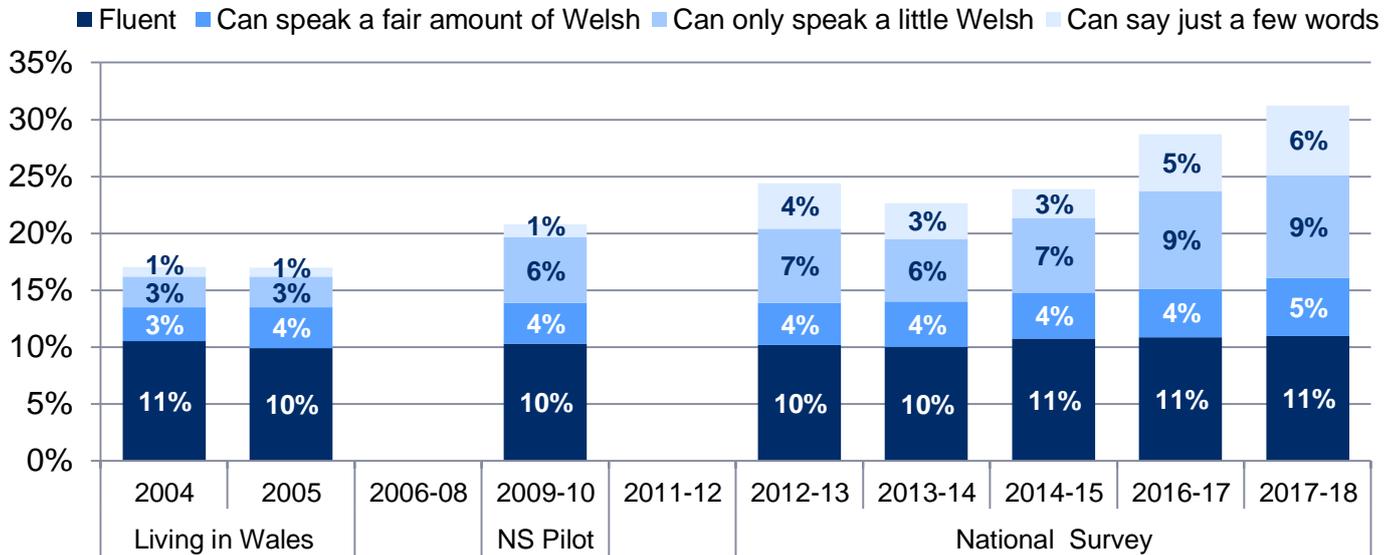


When looking at the survey results alone, the proportions who report being able to understand spoken Welsh, read and write Welsh have increased gradually over the years.

Fluency

The National Survey and Living in Wales surveys have also included questions asking those who could speak Welsh (or who had some Welsh-speaking ability) to describe their ability in Welsh. The responses over time are shown in Chart 7.

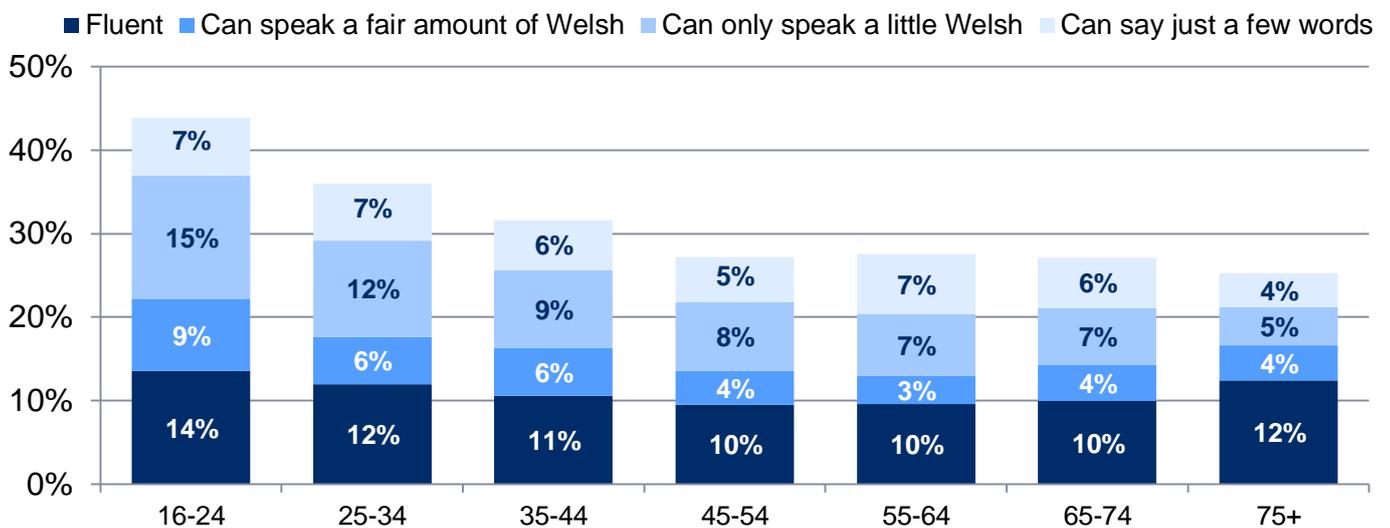
Chart 7: Fluency in Welsh, from 2004 to 2018



In 2017-18, 11% said they could speak Welsh fluently. This has remained fairly consistent since 2004 as shown in Chart 7. 5% say they could speak ‘a fair amount of Welsh’; this has increased slightly from 3% in 2004. The greatest increase can be seen for those who ‘can only speak a little Welsh’ and those who ‘can say a few words’. Note however that from 2013-14 onwards those who reported that they couldn’t speak Welsh but had some Welsh speaking ability were also routed through to this question which will have accounted for much of that increase.

Younger people aged 16 to 24 are most likely to be fluent in Welsh. In 2017-18 14% of those aged 16 to 24 were fluent, compared with 10% of those aged 45 to 74. This is shown in Chart 8 below.

Chart 8: Fluency in Welsh, by age, 2017-18

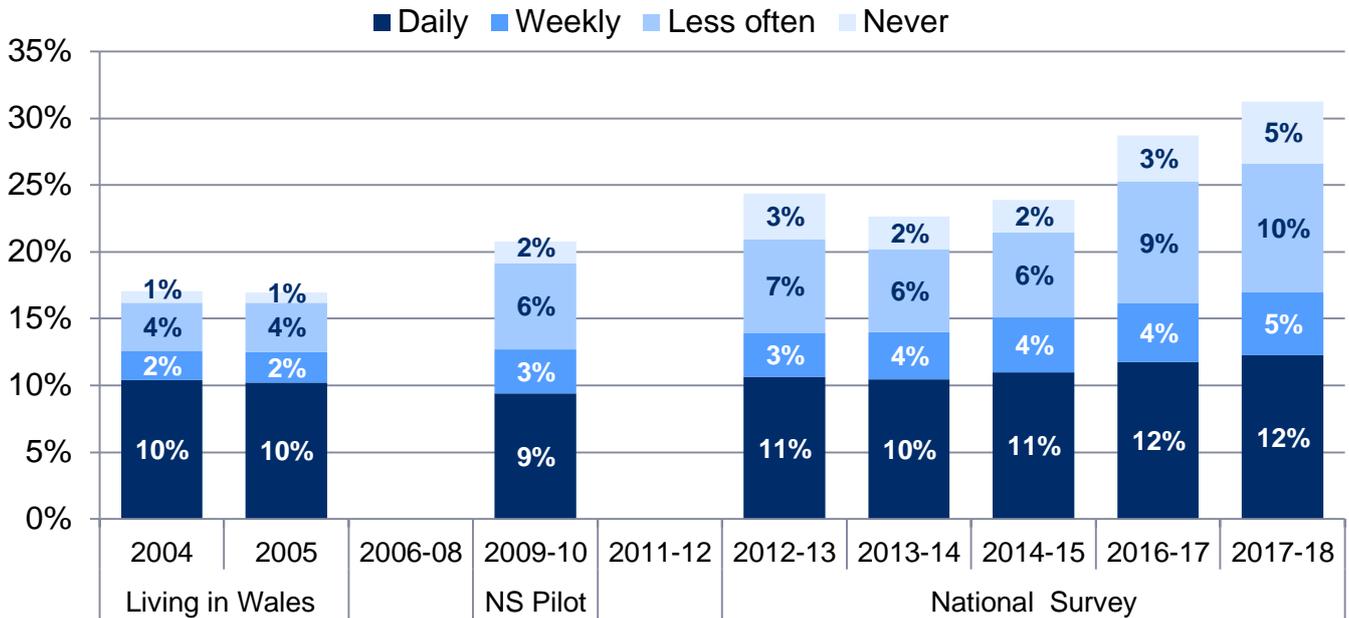


This younger age group are also more likely than older age groups to report being able to speak ‘a fair amount of Welsh’ and speak ‘only a little Welsh’.

Frequency

Respondents were also asked to describe how often they spoke Welsh, which is shown in Chart 9.

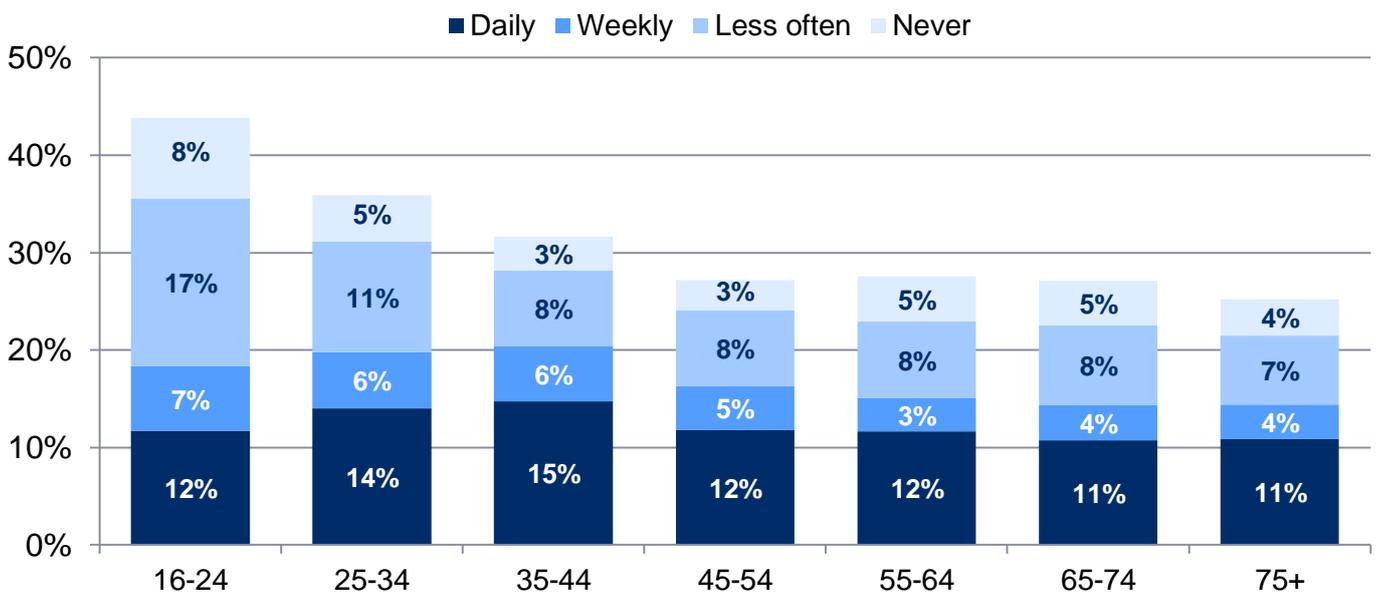
Chart 9: Frequency of speaking Welsh, from 2004 to 2018



In 2017-18 12% spoke Welsh daily. This was a very slight increase since 2013-14, when 10% spoke Welsh daily. Chart 9 shows that the greatest increases are for the proportions who speak Welsh less often or never.

Although younger people aged 16 to 24 are more likely than other age groups to speak Welsh and speak it fluently, they are not the age group who speak Welsh most frequently. People aged 35 to 44 were most likely to speak Welsh every day. This is shown in Chart 10 below.

Chart 10: Frequency of speaking Welsh, by age, 2017-18



15% of those aged 35 to 44 speak Welsh daily, compared with 11% of those aged 65 or over.

Chapter 2: Welsh speakers' confidence in using the language



Welsh speakers who are **fluent** and who **speak Welsh every day**, are most likely to be confident when speaking Welsh. These were the two most dominant factors which determined Welsh speakers confidence to speak the language.

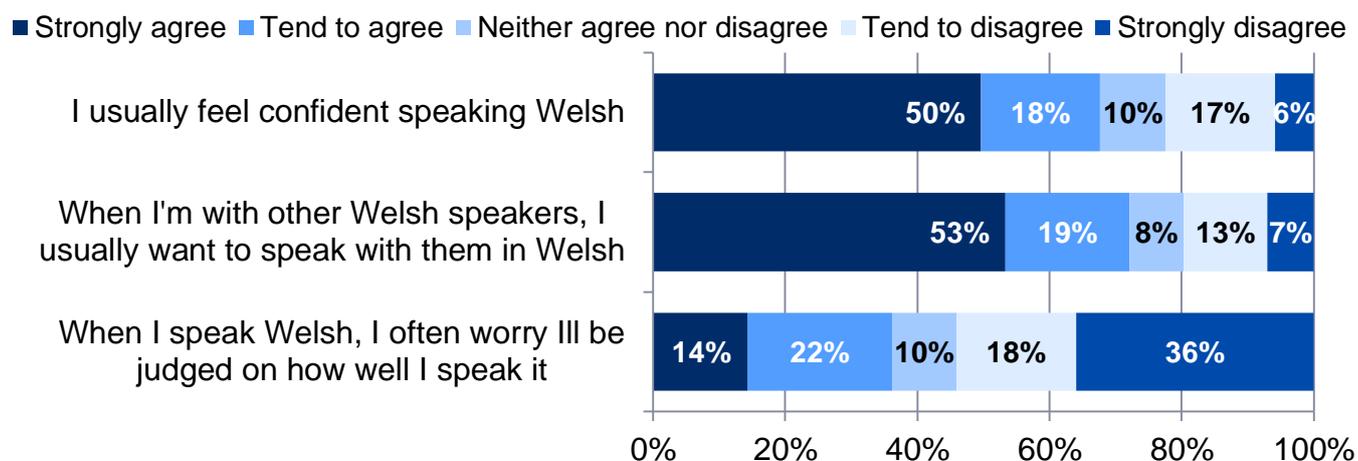
[Research](#) carried out by BBC Cymru Wales, S4C and the Welsh Government in 2013 found that confidence was often cited as a reason why some Welsh speakers don't use the language.³ The report stated that the kinds of emotions experienced by some Welsh speakers included “*believing they sounded 'like a fool' trying to speak Welsh, feeling awkward, incompetent and intimidated*”

To better understand Welsh speakers' confidence in speaking and using Welsh, the National Survey for Wales included questions on the topic for the first time in 2017-18. Welsh speakers were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following three statements:

- I usually feel confident speaking Welsh
- When I'm with other Welsh speakers; I usually want to speak with them in Welsh
- When I speak Welsh, I often worry I'll be judged on how well I speak it

The responses given are shown in Chart 11.

Chart 11: Level of agreement with statements on confidence using Welsh



68% of Welsh speakers usually felt confident speaking Welsh. They were most likely to agree with the statement “When I'm with other Welsh speakers, I usually want to speak with them in Welsh” (72% agreed with this statement), and least likely to agree with the statement “when I speak Welsh, I often worry I'll be judged on how well I speak it” (36% agreed with this statement).

Those who reported that they couldn't speak Welsh but had some Welsh-speaking ability were also asked for their agreement with these statements. Naturally the results were very different for this group. Only 9% felt confident speaking Welsh, 25% agreed that they usually want to speak with other Welsh speakers in Welsh, and 51% agreed with the statement “when I speak Welsh, I often worry I'll be judged on how well I speak it”.

³ [Exploring Welsh speakers' language use in their daily lives](#), BBC Cymru Wales, S4C and Welsh Government 2013.

Note: In this chapter, the results are presented for those who reported being able to speak Welsh only.

Welsh speakers' fluency levels were very strongly correlated with their response to the statements as shown in the following two charts.

Chart 12: Level of agreement with statements on confidence using Welsh, for fluent Welsh speakers

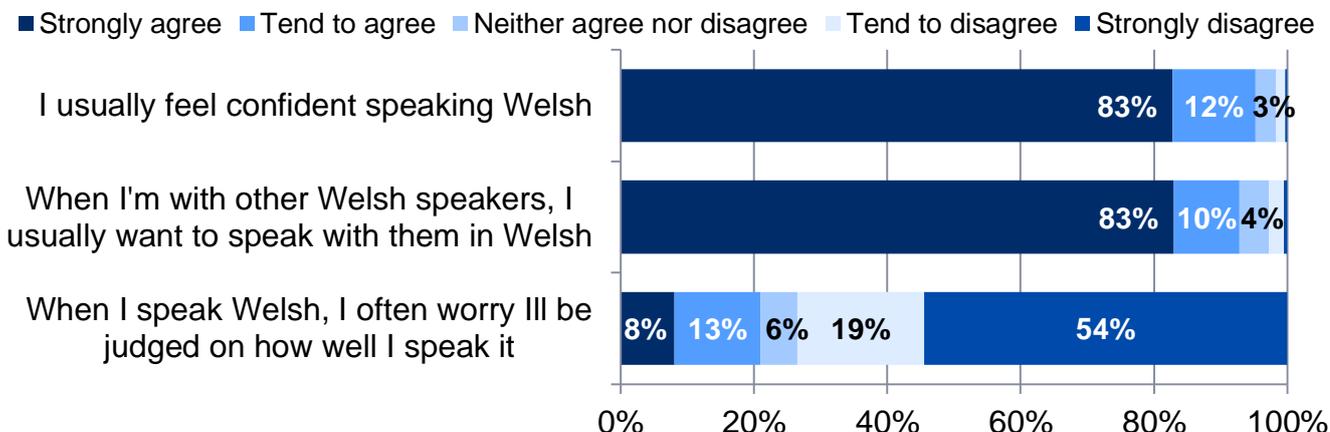
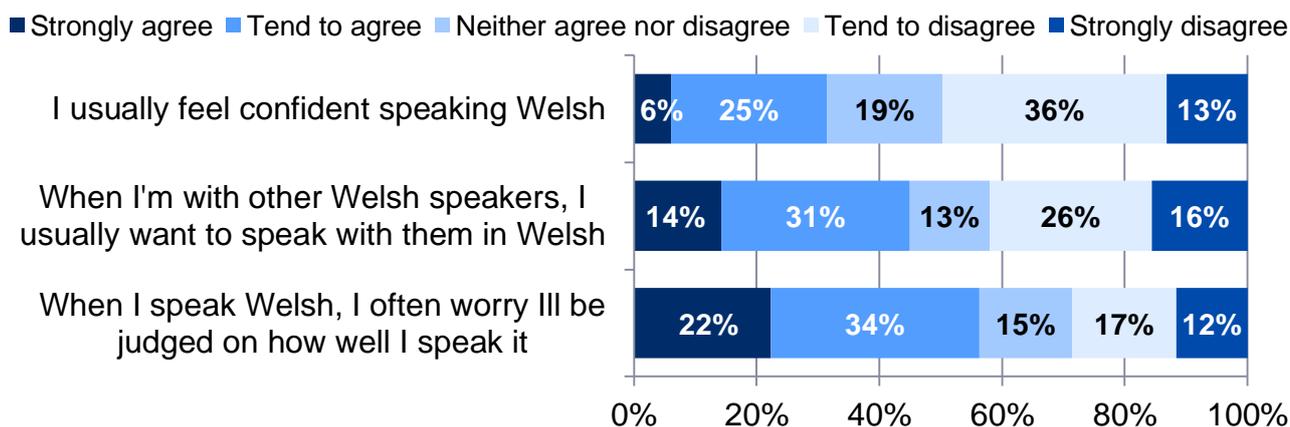


Chart 12 shows that the vast majority of fluent Welsh speakers felt confident speaking Welsh (95%) and a similarly high percentage wanted to speak Welsh with other Welsh speakers (93%). However, despite most fluent Welsh speakers being confident speaking Welsh, around one in five (21%) often worried they'd be judged on how well they speak Welsh.

As might be expected, Welsh speakers who weren't fluent were less likely to be confident, as shown in Chart 13.

Chart 13: Level of agreement with statements on confidence using Welsh, for Welsh speakers who are not fluent



Less than a third (31%) of Welsh speakers who weren't fluent felt confident speaking Welsh, 45% wanted to speak Welsh with other Welsh speakers and more than half (56%) often worried they'd be judged on how well they speak Welsh.

The frequency of speaking Welsh was also strongly correlated with their response to the statements. 90% of those who spoke Welsh daily felt confident speaking Welsh, 88% wanted to speak Welsh with other Welsh speakers and 23% often worried they'd be judged on how well they speak Welsh. This compared with 40%, 52% and 53% respectively for those who spoke Welsh less frequently.

I usually feel confident speaking Welsh language

Key findings

Welsh speakers who are **fluent** and who **speak Welsh every day** are the most likely to feel confident when speaking Welsh.

In addition to this, Welsh speakers' who:

- were **older**
- from **North West Wales**
- who identified themselves as having a **Welsh National Identity**
- lived in **less populated** areas
- who were **satisfied with their lives** in general

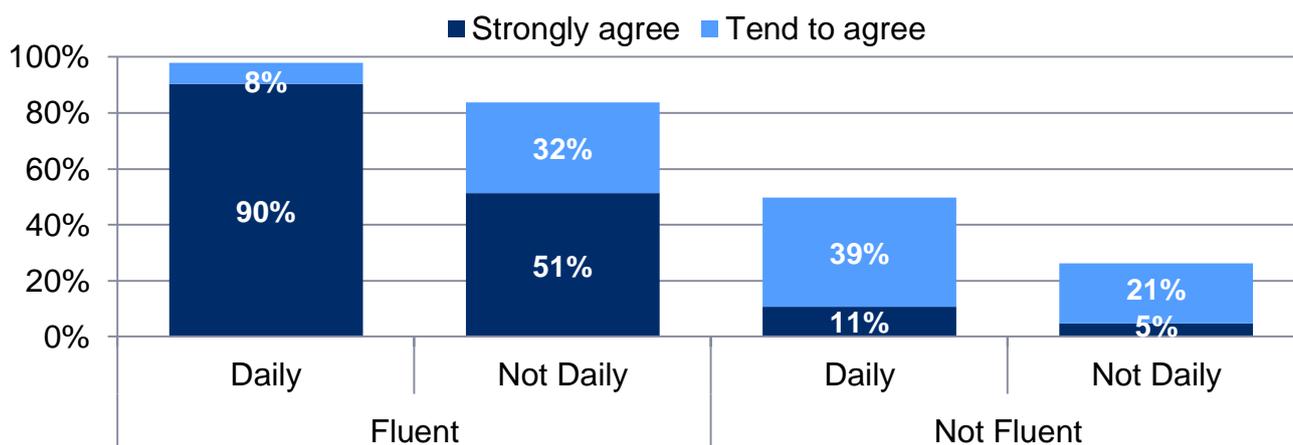
were also more likely to feel confident when speaking Welsh.

Fluency in the language was the main factor that was associated with people's confidence in using the Welsh language; this was closely followed by how often someone speaks Welsh.

Our analysis also showed that when looking at **only** fluent speakers, there is very little difference in levels of confidence regardless of personal characteristics although age was a significant factor (those who were older fluent speakers were most confident).

Chart 14 shows that for those who were fluent in Welsh, a greater proportion of those who spoke it daily were confident speaking the language compared with those who didn't speak it as often. It is not possible to assess whether this is because people feel more confident because they speak Welsh daily, or whether they speak the language daily due to their confidence, nor how this interacts with their opportunities to use Welsh in their daily environment.

Chart 14: 'I usually feel confident speaking Welsh', by fluency and frequency of speaking Welsh



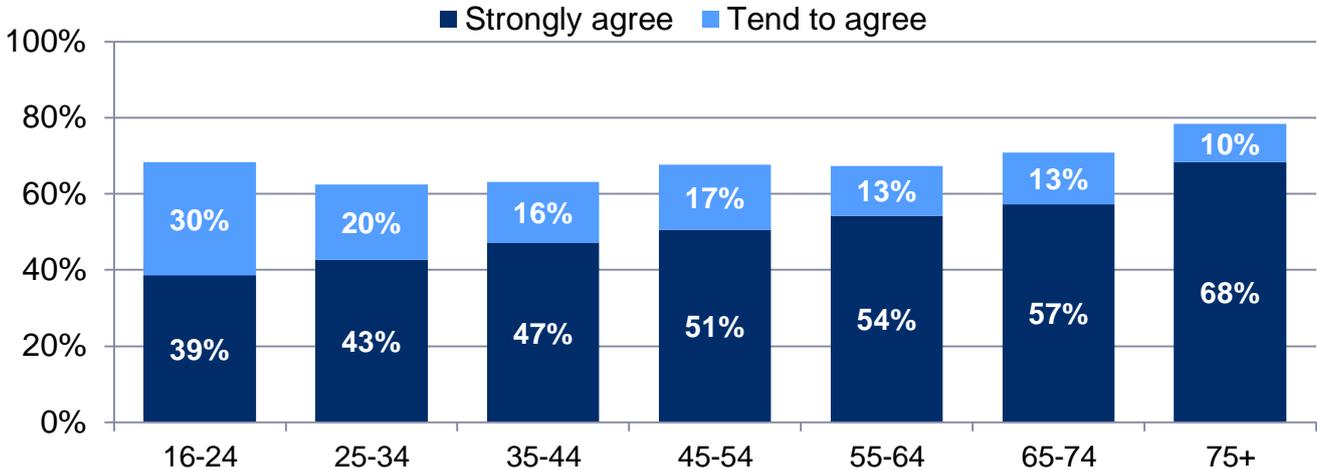
When controlling for other factors⁴ which aren't directly related to language ability or use, the following personal characteristics were found to be associated with **Welsh speakers** 'strongly agreeing with statement "I usually feel confident speaking Welsh":

⁴ Using regression analysis - Note that the findings depend on which factors are available to take into account in the regression analysis. In this case these included – age, gender, area deprivation, economic status, urban or rural area, presence of young children in the home, satisfaction with life, region, qualifications, settlement size, national identity levels of loneliness, anxiety, religion. More details can be found in the [Key quality information](#).

National identity – Welsh speakers who identified their National identity as ‘Welsh’ were more likely to feel confident speaking Welsh than those who didn’t. 58% of Welsh speakers who identified their nationality as Welsh ‘strongly agreed’ with the statement compared with 15% of Welsh speakers who didn’t identify themselves as Welsh.

Age – Older Welsh speakers were more likely to feel confident speaking Welsh.

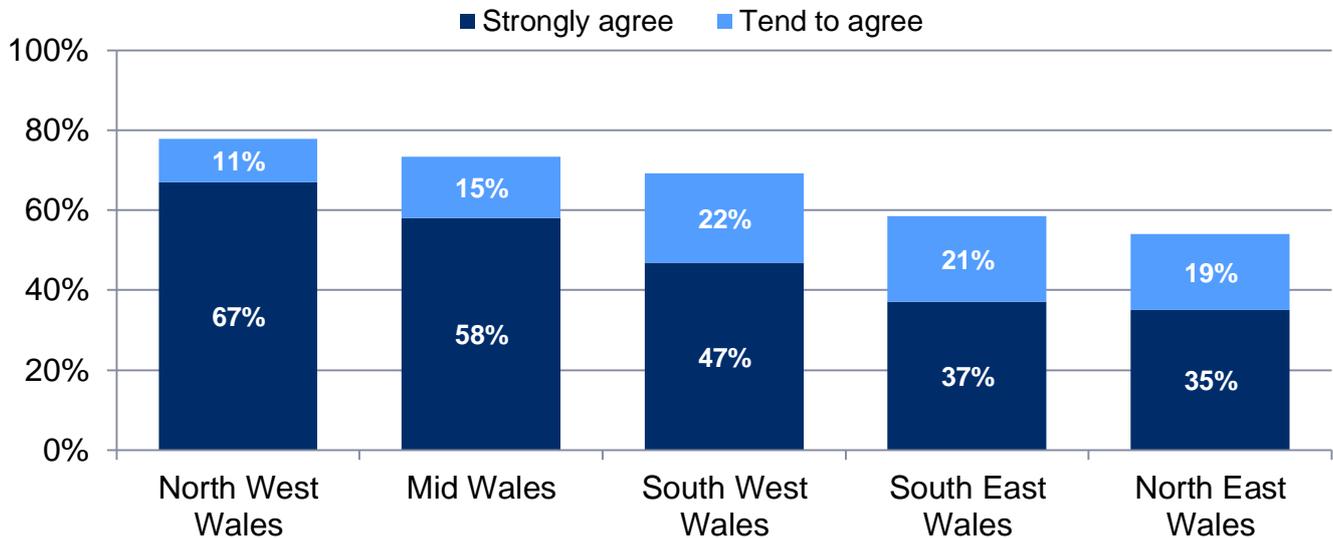
Chart 15: ‘I usually feel confident speaking Welsh’, by age



Note, that this chart shows the proportion ‘of Welsh speakers’ who agreed with the statement ‘I usually feel confident speaking Welsh’. Therefore, whilst a greater proportion of Welsh speakers aged 75 or over were confident, there are a greater proportion of 16 to 24 year olds who can speak Welsh (see [Chart 2](#)). In fact, a higher proportion of all people aged 16-24 were confident in speaking Welsh, compared with the proportion of all people aged 75 or over.

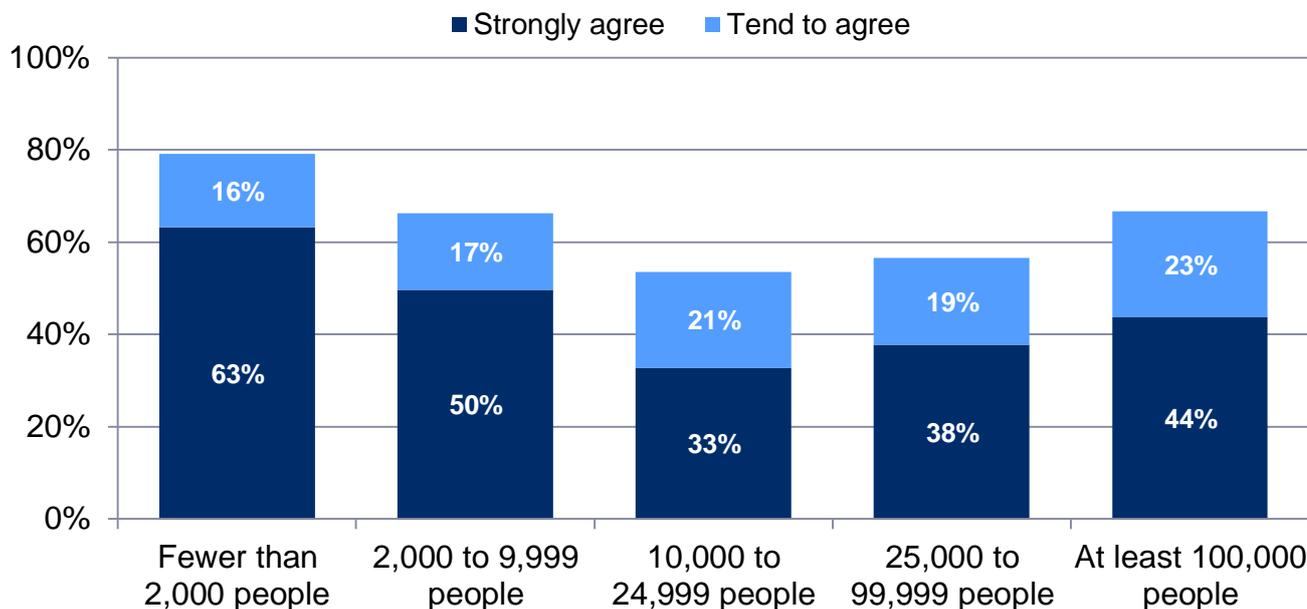
Region lived in – People who lived in the region with the highest proportion of Welsh speakers - North West Wales, were more likely to be confident speaking Welsh than those in South East Wales (the region with the lowest proportion of Welsh speakers)

Chart 16: ‘I usually feel confident speaking Welsh’, by region



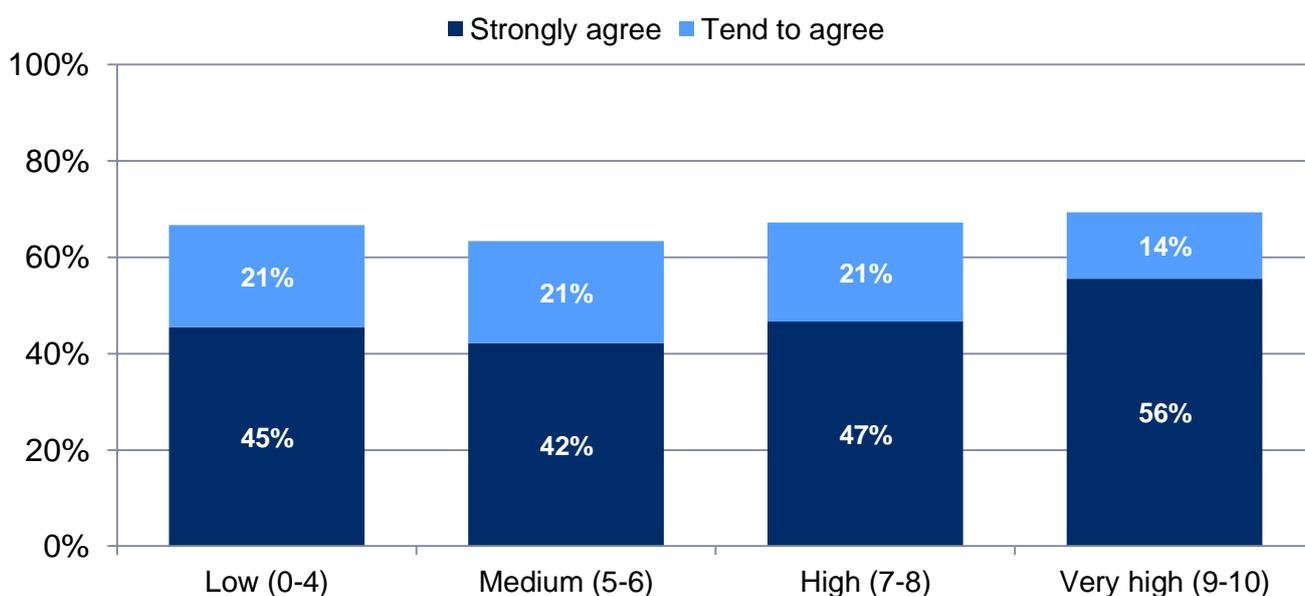
Settlement size – Welsh speakers who lived in more rural areas with fewer than 2,000 people in the settlement were more likely to be confident speaking Welsh than those who lived in more populated settlements with around 10,000 to 24,999 people in the area.

Chart 17: 'I usually feel confident speaking Welsh', by settlement size



Satisfaction with life – In the National Survey, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with their lives on a scale of 0 to 10, (where 0 is not at all satisfied and 10 is extremely satisfied). Welsh speakers who were more satisfied with their lives (giving a score of 9 or 10) were more likely to feel confident speaking Welsh. One possible explanation for this is that respondents who are positive about their lives are also more likely to be positive about their confidence, rather than confidence levels affecting someone's satisfaction with their lives.

Chart 18: 'I usually feel confident speaking Welsh', by satisfaction with life



I often worry I'll be judged on how well I speak Welsh

Key findings

Welsh speakers who **weren't fluent** and who **didn't speak Welsh every day**, were most likely to worry about being judged on how well they speak Welsh

In addition to this, Welsh speakers who:

- were **female**
- **aged 25 to 34**
- from **North East Wales**
- **not living in the most or least populated areas**
- who did **not** identify themselves as having a **Welsh National Identity**
- who were **anxious** in general

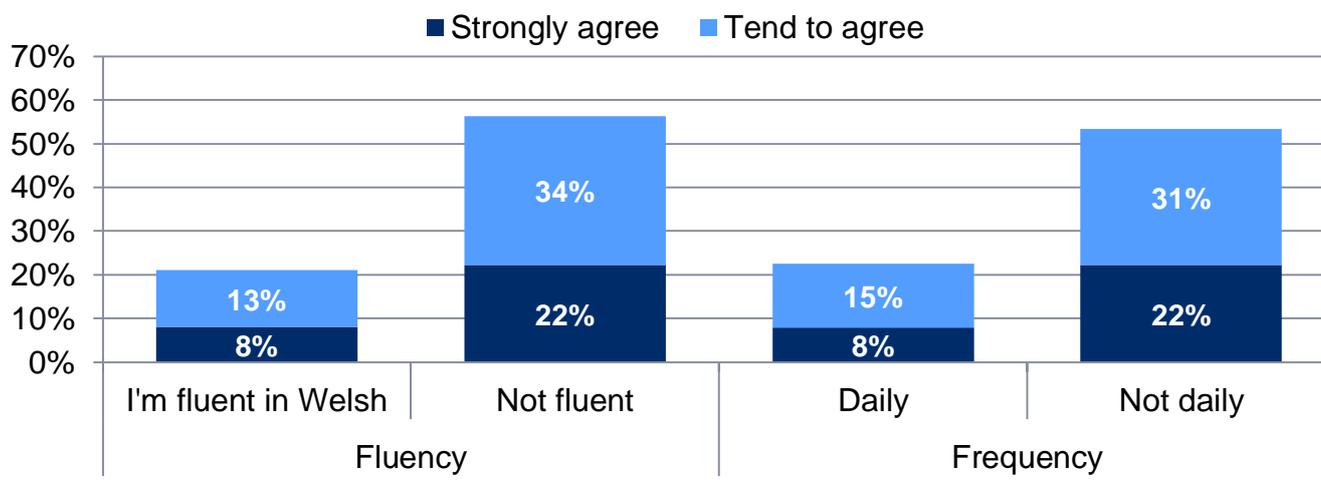
were more likely to worry about being judged on how well they speak Welsh.

Of the three statements used in the National Survey to better understand Welsh speakers' confidence in speaking and using Welsh, the statement "When I speak Welsh, I often worry I'll be judged on how well I speak it", was the only one worded negatively. However, those who 'disagree' with this statement have slightly different characteristics to those who 'agree' with the other two positively worded statements.

When controlling for other factors⁵, the following characteristics were found to be associated with Welsh speakers feeling judged on how well they speak Welsh:

Fluency and frequency of speaking Welsh⁶ – As with feeling 'confident speaking Welsh', fluency in the language is the main factor which influences whether people feel judged when speaking the language, followed by how often they speak Welsh. Those who aren't fluent and who don't speak Welsh daily are more likely to feel judged on how well they speak Welsh.

Chart 19: 'I often worry I'll be judged on how well I speak Welsh', by fluency and frequency of speaking Welsh

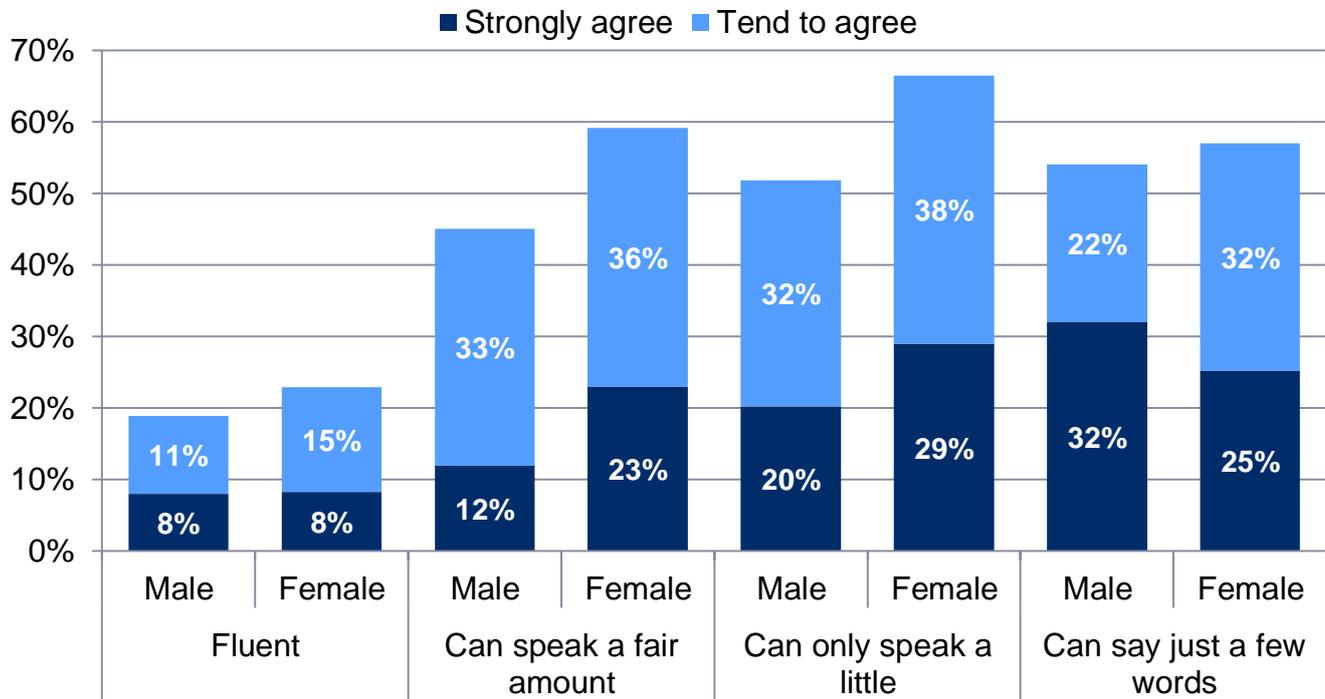


⁵ Using regression analysis - Note that the findings depend on which factors are available to take into account in the regression analysis. In this case these included – fluency and frequency of speaking Welsh, age, gender, qualifications, health status, area deprivation, economic status, settlement size, region, national identity, anxiety, religion. More details can be found in the [Key quality information](#).

⁶ 'Frequency of speaking Welsh' was strongly correlated, but couldn't be included in this regression due to multicollinearity – i.e. it is too strongly correlated with Welsh speaking ability.

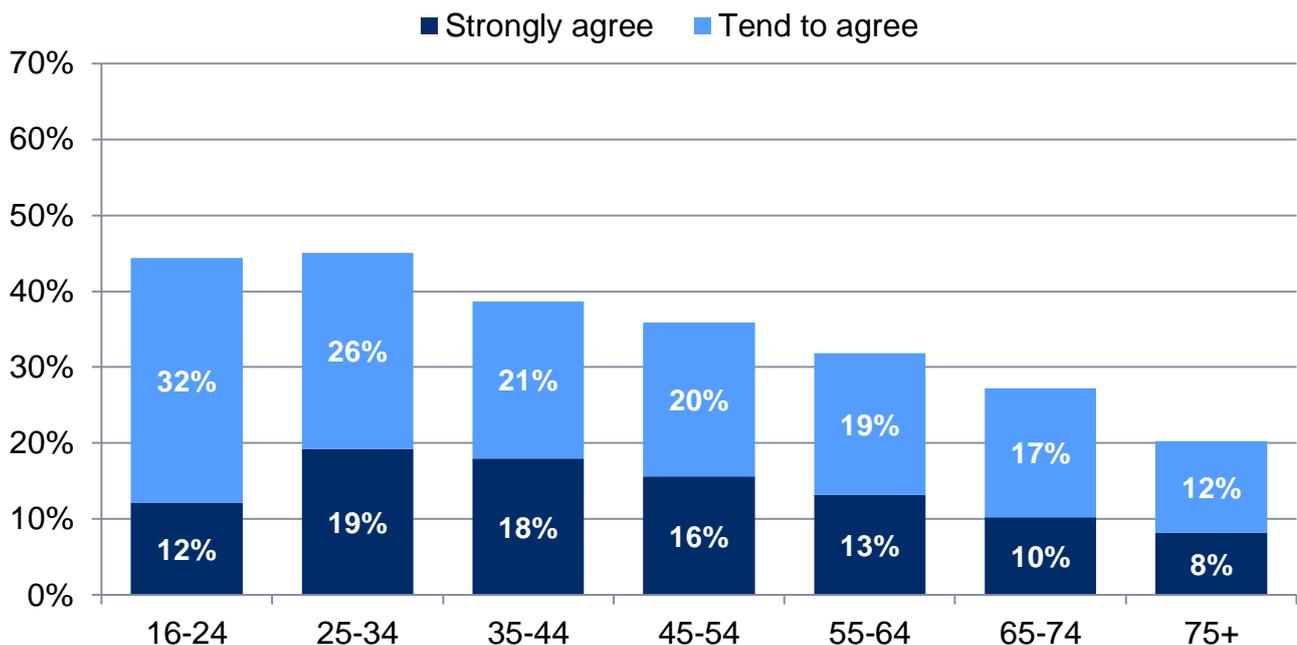
Gender – Women were more likely than men to worry about feeling judged about how well they speak Welsh, even after controlling for other factors.⁵ 31% of males worried about feeling judged, compared with 41% of females. Chart 20 shows that this is true, regardless of their fluency levels. Gender did not have an association with the other two statements.

Chart 20: 'I often worry I'll be judged on how well I speak Welsh', by fluency and gender



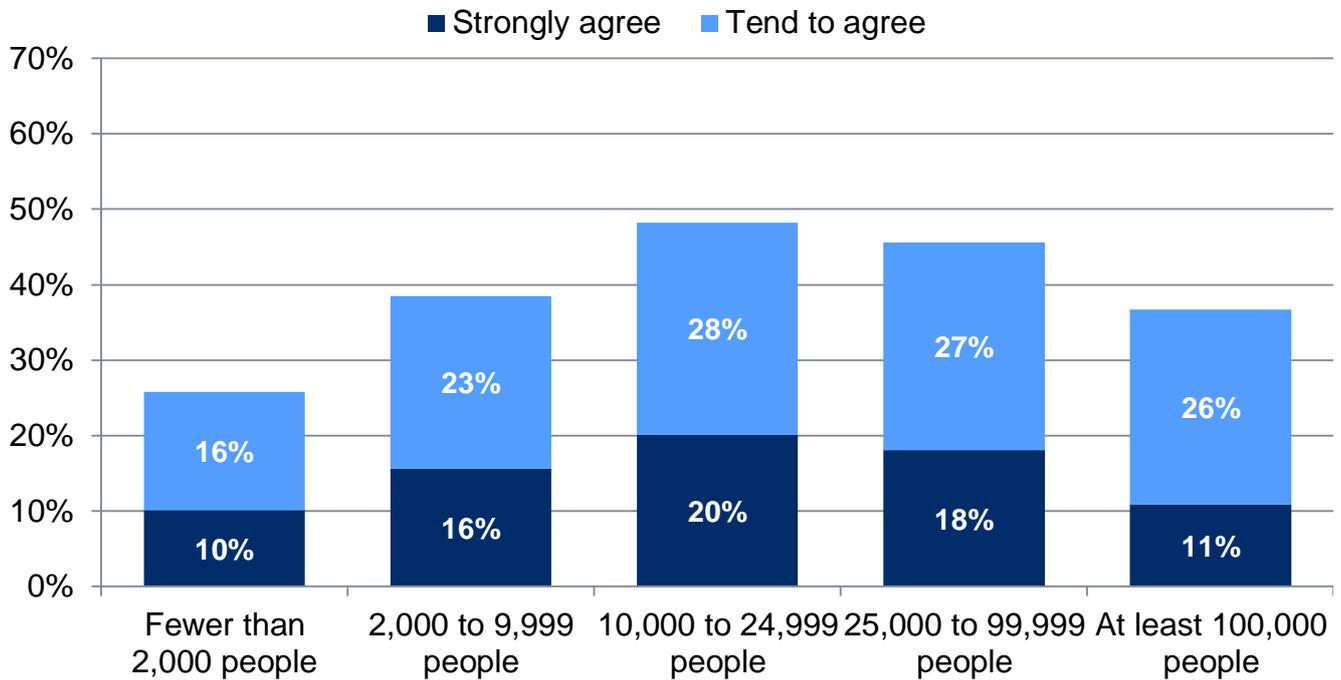
Age – Younger Welsh speakers were more likely to worry about being judged on how well they speak Welsh than older Welsh speakers.

Chart 21: 'I often worry I'll be judged on how well I speak Welsh', by age



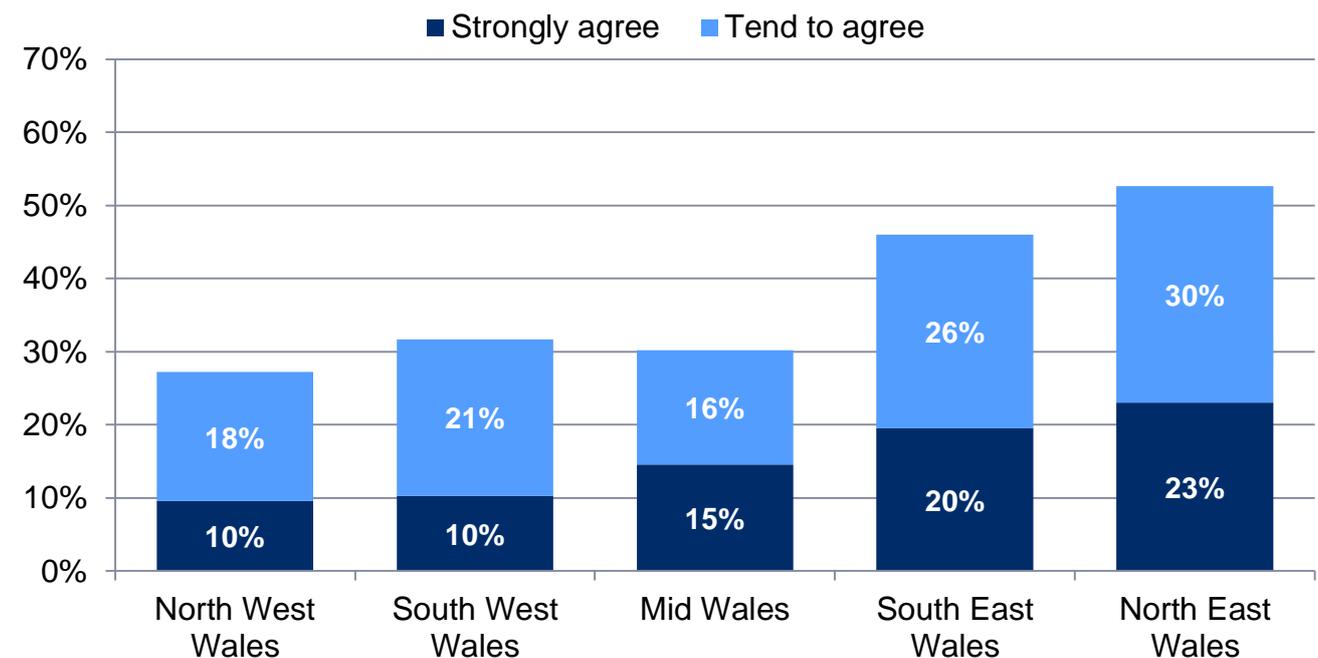
Settlement size – Welsh speakers who lived in less populated areas (fewer than 2,000 people in the settlement) were less likely to worry about being judged on how well they speak Welsh, than those who lived in more populated settlements with around 10,000 to 24,999 people in the area.

Chart 22: 'I often worry I'll be judged on how well I speak Welsh', by settlement size



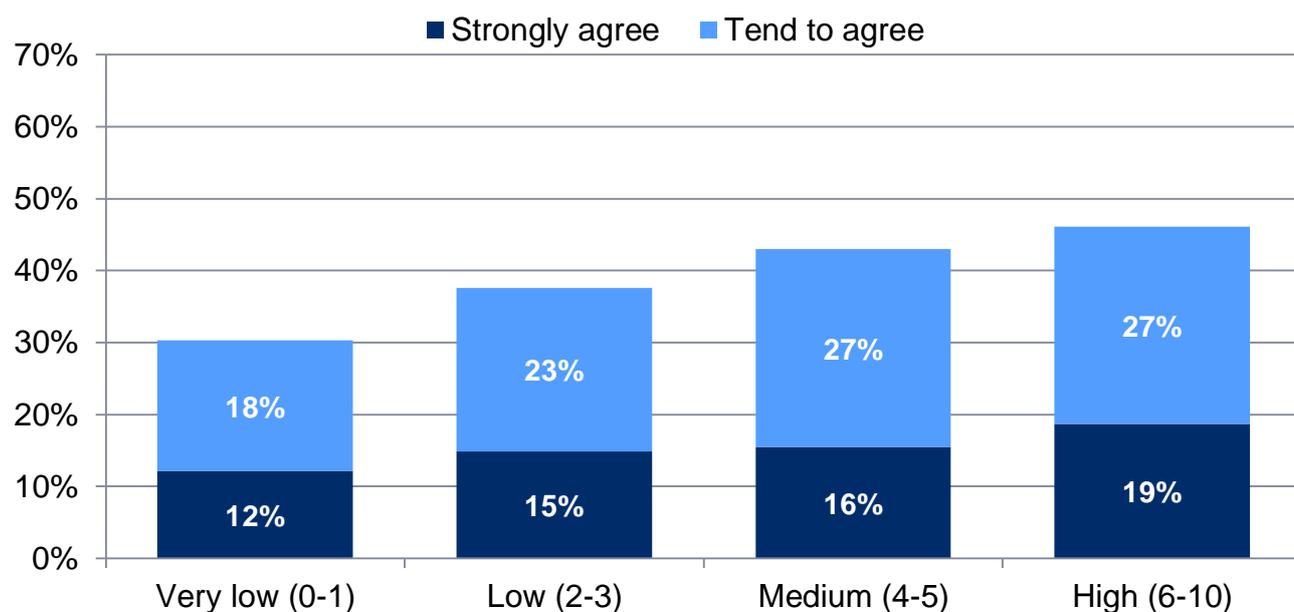
Region lived in – People who lived in the region with the highest proportion of Welsh speakers, North West Wales, were least likely to worry about being judged compared with those in North East Wales (the region with the second lowest proportion of Welsh speakers).

Chart 23: 'I often worry I'll be judged on how well I speak Welsh', by region



Anxiety – In the National Survey, respondents were asked to rate how anxious they felt the previous day on a scale of 0 to 10, (where 0 was ‘not at all anxious’ and 10 ‘extremely anxious’). Welsh speakers who were more anxious (giving a score of 6 to 10) were more likely to worry about being judged on how well they speak Welsh. One possible explanation for this is that this may be related to the respondents’ personality (i.e. respondents who are anxious in other aspects of their lives are more likely to worry about being judged on how well they speak Welsh), rather than their worry about how well they speak Welsh causing anxiety.

Chart 24: ‘I often worry I’ll be judged on how well I speak Welsh’, by anxiety levels



National identity – Welsh speakers who identified their national identity as ‘Welsh’ were less likely to worry about being judged on how well they speak Welsh compared with those who didn’t. 33% of Welsh speakers who identified their nationality as Welsh agreed with the statement compared with 51% of Welsh speakers who didn’t identify themselves as Welsh.

Chapter 3: Attitudes towards the Welsh language

Key findings

- In general the vast majority of people felt proud of the language and felt more effort was needed to support it, but it was less clear whether people thought it would be stronger in 10 years' time.
- Welsh speakers were more positive about the language than those who did not speak it

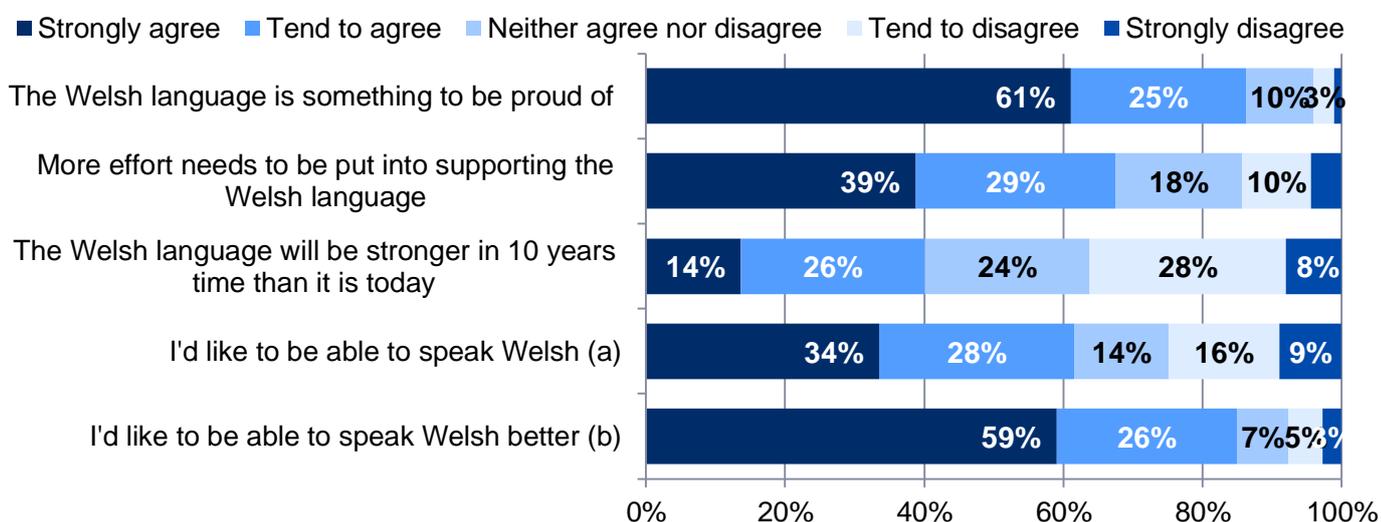
One of the themes in the Welsh language strategy, [Cymraeg 2050](#) is the need to ensure that there is goodwill towards the language. The strategy states: "We want it to be relevant for everyone in Wales, regardless of whether they speak Welsh, English or other languages, and to inspire a respect and appreciation of the language among people who move into Wales"

To monitor people's attitude towards the Welsh language, the National Survey for Wales included questions on the topic for the first time in 2017-18. People were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- The Welsh language is something to be proud of.
- More effort needs to be put into supporting the Welsh language
- The Welsh language will be stronger in 10 years' time than it is today.
- I'd like to be able to speak Welsh (*asked of those who couldn't speak Welsh*)
- I'd like to be able to speak Welsh better (*asked of those who couldn't speak Welsh, but had some Welsh-speaking ability*)

The responses given are shown in Chart 25.

Chart 25: Attitudes towards the Welsh language



(a) Asked only of those who couldn't speak Welsh.

(b) Asked only of those who couldn't speak Welsh but explained that they had some Welsh-speaking ability.

86% of people felt the language was something to be proud of; 67% thought that more effort needed to be put into supporting the language. People were least likely to agree with the statement 'The Welsh language will be stronger in 10 years' time': 40% agreed with that statement.

62% of those who didn't speak Welsh said they would like to speak it, and 85% of those who didn't speak Welsh but who had some Welsh-speaking ability said they would like to speak it better.

The Welsh Language Board commissioned a set of questions about attitudes towards the Welsh language in the Wales Omnibus Survey⁷ in November 2008, and some were re-commissioned by the Welsh Language Commissioner in November 2015.

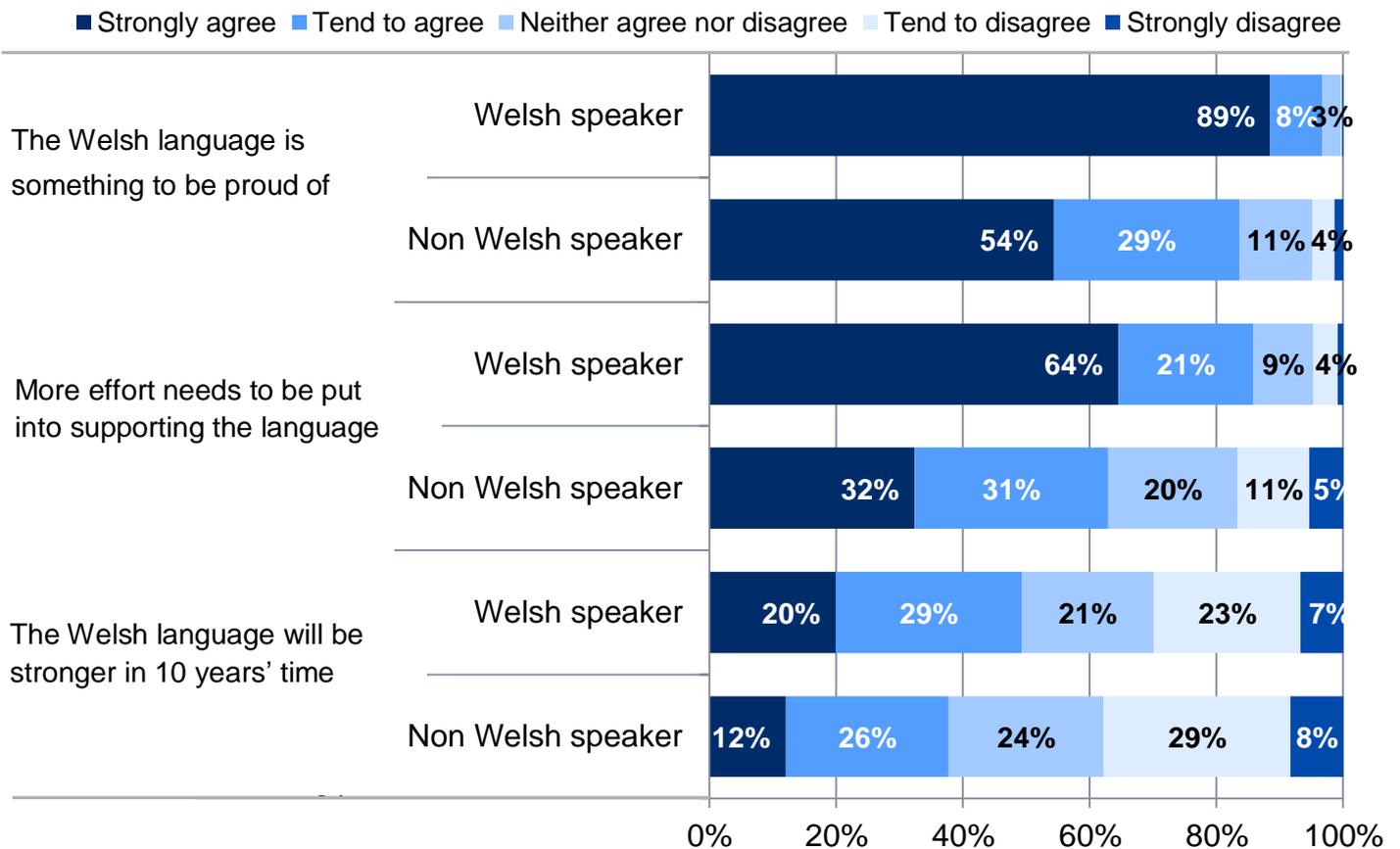
The Wales Omnibus Survey found that:

- In 2008, 82% felt that the ‘Welsh language was something to be proud of’; this was 85% in the same survey in 2015.
- In 2008, 41% felt that the Welsh language will be stronger in 10 years’ time than it is today’, and in 2015, this was 39%.

As the Wales Omnibus Survey is carried out in a slightly different way to the National Survey for Wales it is not possible to make direct comparisons, however it is interesting to note the similarity between the results of the two surveys.

For the three statements that were asked of both Welsh speakers and those who didn’t speak Welsh, in each case Welsh speakers were more likely than non Welsh speakers to agree with the statements as shown in Chart 26 below. The proportion of Welsh speakers ‘strongly agreeing’ with these statements was markedly higher.

Chart 26: Attitudes to the Welsh language, by whether they can speak Welsh



⁷ The Wales Omnibus Survey is a face to face survey of a 1,000 people, based on a quota sample.

The Welsh language is something to be proud of

Key findings

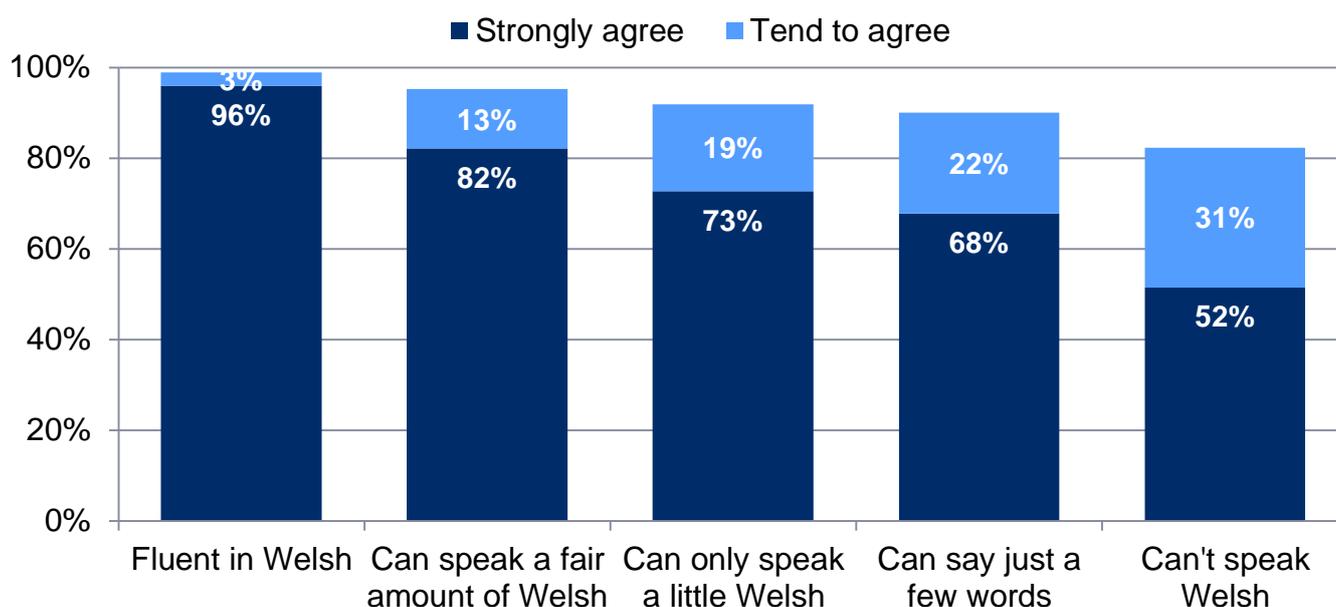
The people who were most likely to think that the Welsh language is something to be proud of:

- could **speak Welsh fluently**
- lived in **local authorities** with a **high proportion of Welsh speakers**
- were **employed**
- lived in **more deprived** areas
- had **lower incomes**
- identified themselves as having a **Welsh National Identity**
- lived in **less populated** area

When controlling for other factors⁸, the following personal characteristics were found to be associated with 'strongly agreeing' with the statement 'The Welsh language is something to be proud of':

Ability to speak Welsh⁹ – Fluent Welsh speakers were more likely to think that the language was something to be proud of, compared with those who were less fluent or who didn't speak it.

Chart 27: 'Welsh language is something to be proud of', by ability to speak Welsh



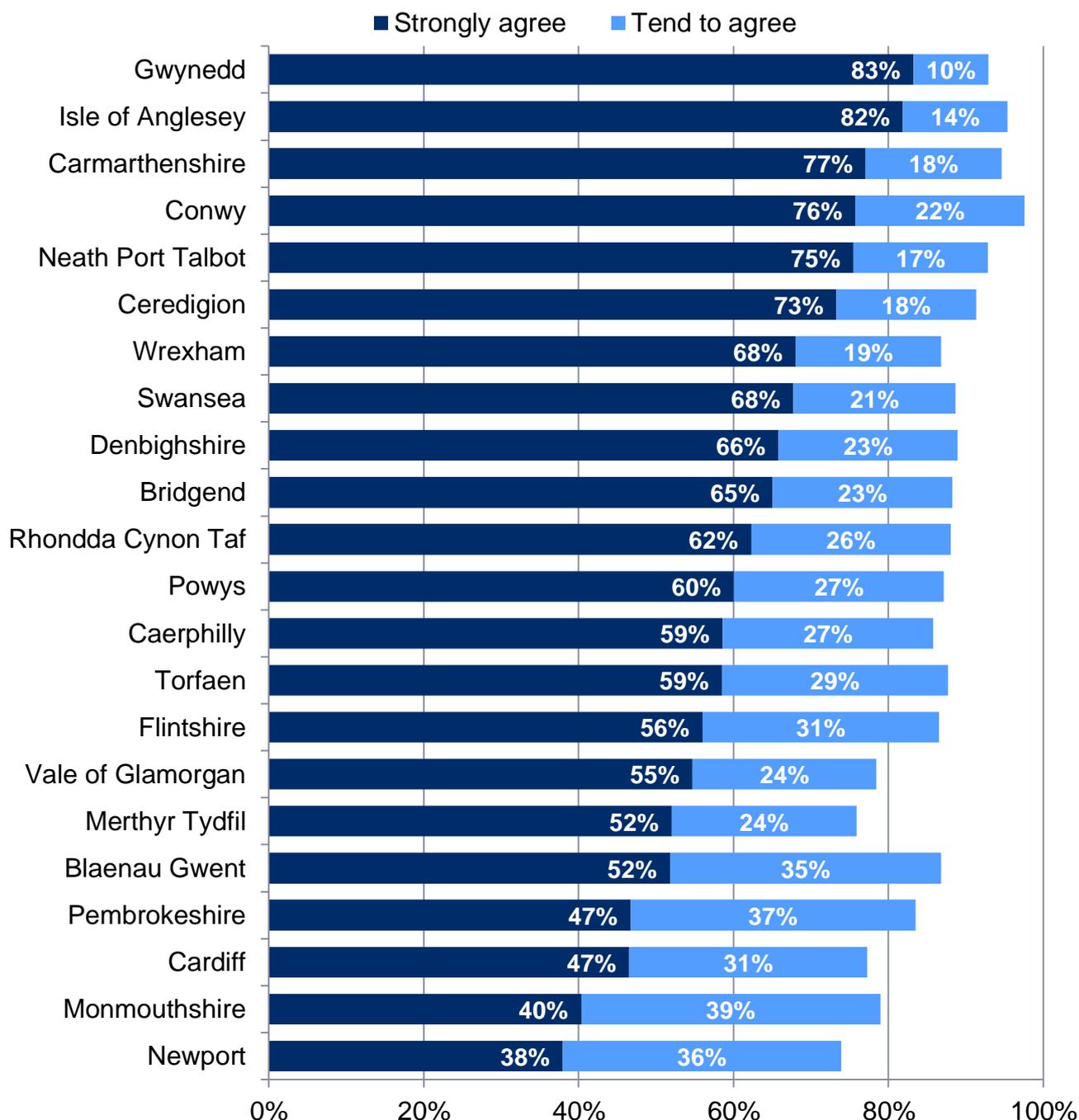
National identity – 70% of those who identified their national identity as being 'Welsh', 'strongly agreed' that the Welsh language was something to be proud of, compared with 48% of those who didn't identify themselves as Welsh.

⁸ Using regression analysis - Note that the findings depend on which factors are available to take into account in the regression analysis. In this case these included – age, gender, area deprivation, economic status, settlement size, presence of young children in the home, satisfaction with life, material deprivation, local authority, ability to speak Welsh, ethnicity, religion and national identity. More details can be found in the [Key quality information](#).

⁹ 'Frequency of speaking Welsh' was strongly correlated, but couldn't be included in this regression due to multicollinearity – i.e. it is too strongly correlated with Welsh speaking ability.

Local authority – The local authority that people lived in was also associated with strongly agreeing that the language was something to be proud of. In general, the local authorities with the highest proportion of Welsh speakers were more likely to be proud of the language. However it was not necessarily the case that having more Welsh speakers meant the population in general were more likely to be proud of the language. For example in Swansea where only 9% could speak Welsh, 58% strongly agreed that the language was something to be proud of, whereas in Pembrokeshire 21% could speak the language but only 25% strongly agreed that the language was something to be proud of.

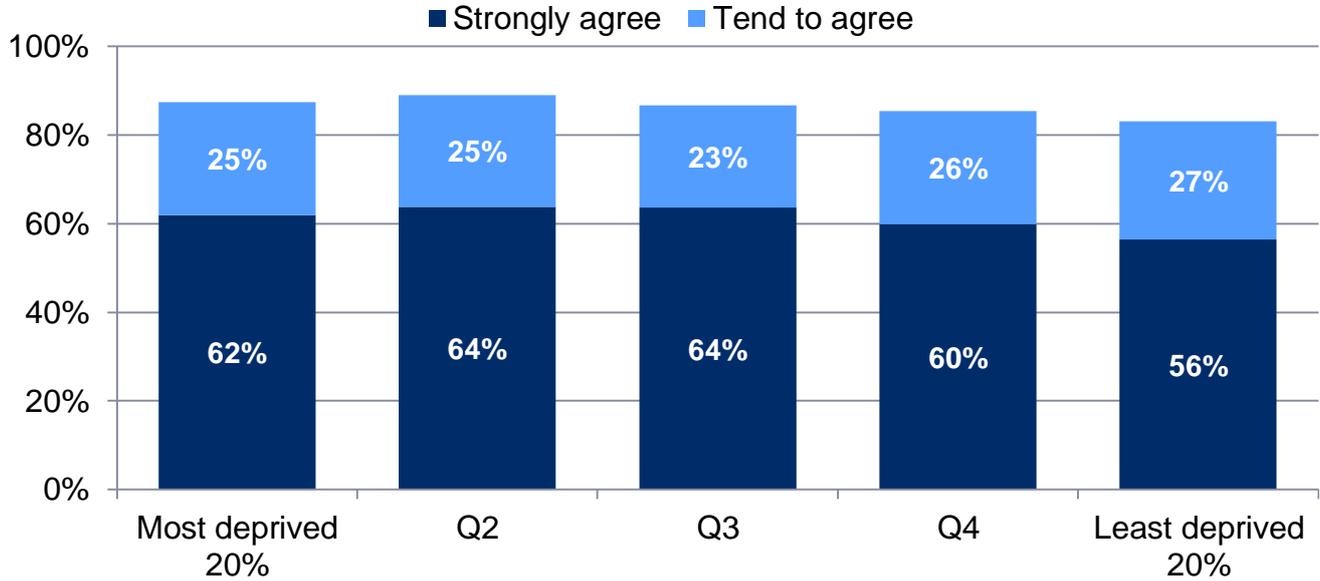
Chart 28: 'Welsh language is something to be proud of', by local authority



Economic status – Employed people were more likely to think that the Welsh language was something to be proud of with 64% 'strongly agreeing' with it compared with 54% of unemployed people and 58% of economically inactive people.

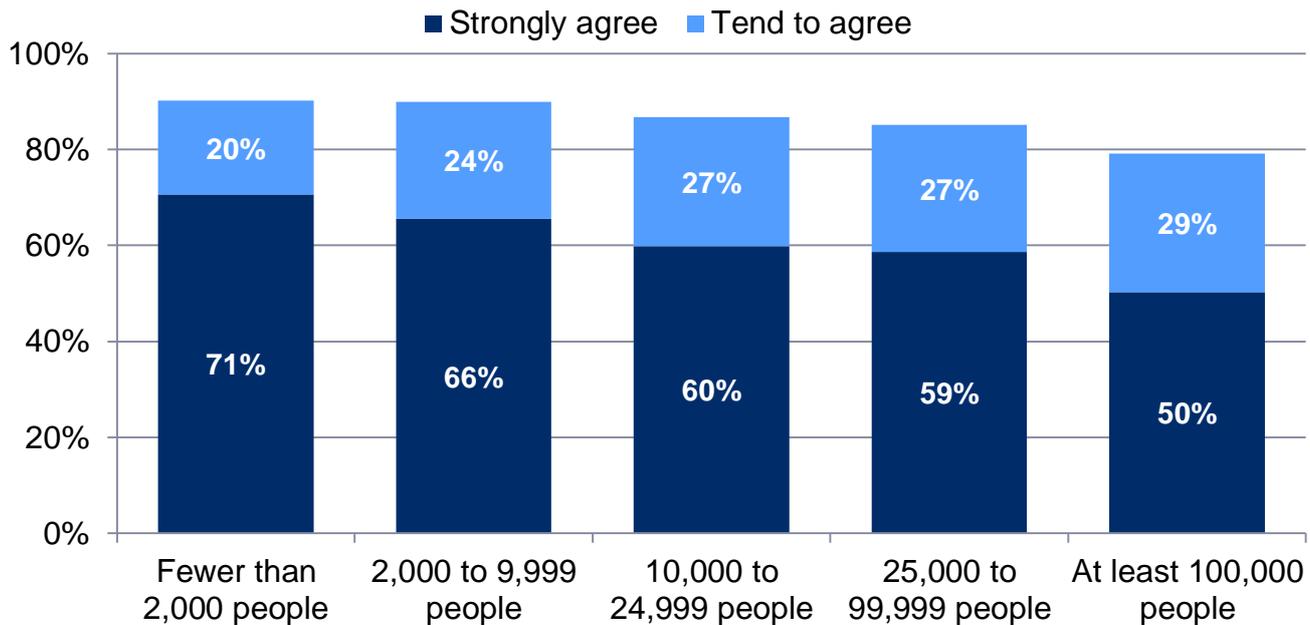
Area deprivation – Despite Chart 29 not showing any significant differences in responses by area deprivation, when controlling for other factors, those who were in the least deprived areas were less likely to ‘strongly agree’ that the language was something to be proud of when compared with those in the most deprived areas.

Chart 29: ‘Welsh language is something to be proud of’ by area deprivation



Settlement size – Welsh speakers who lived in more rural areas with fewer than 2,000 people in the settlement were more likely to strongly agree that the language was something to be proud of, when compared with those in more urban settlements with at least 100,000 people in the settlement.

Chart 30: ‘Welsh language is something to be proud of’ by settlement size



More effort needs to be put into supporting the language

Key findings

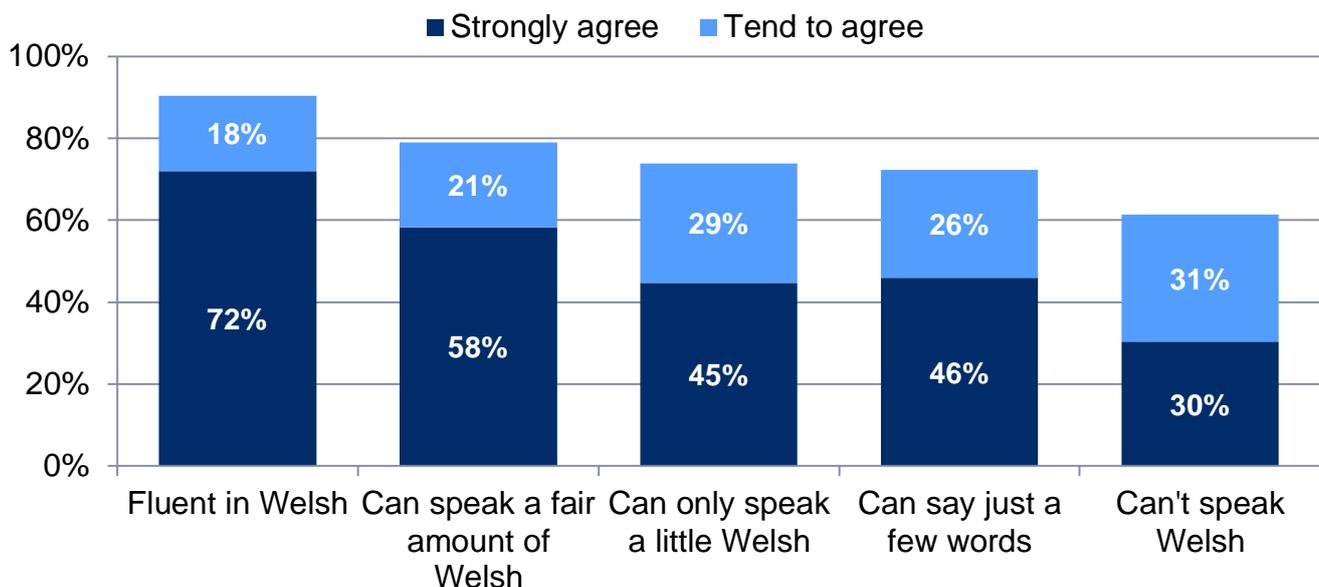
The people who were most likely to think that more effort needed to be put into supporting the Welsh language:

- could **speak Welsh fluently**
- were **younger**
- identified themselves as having a **Welsh National Identity**
- lived in **more deprived** areas
- had **lower incomes**

When controlling for other factors¹⁰ the following personal characteristics were found to be associated with 'agreeing' with the statement 'More effort needs to be put into supporting the language'.

Ability to speak Welsh¹¹ – Fluent Welsh speakers were more likely to think that 'more effort needs to be put into supporting the language', compared with those who were less fluent or who didn't speak it.

Chart 31: 'More effort needs to be put into supporting the language', by ability to speak Welsh



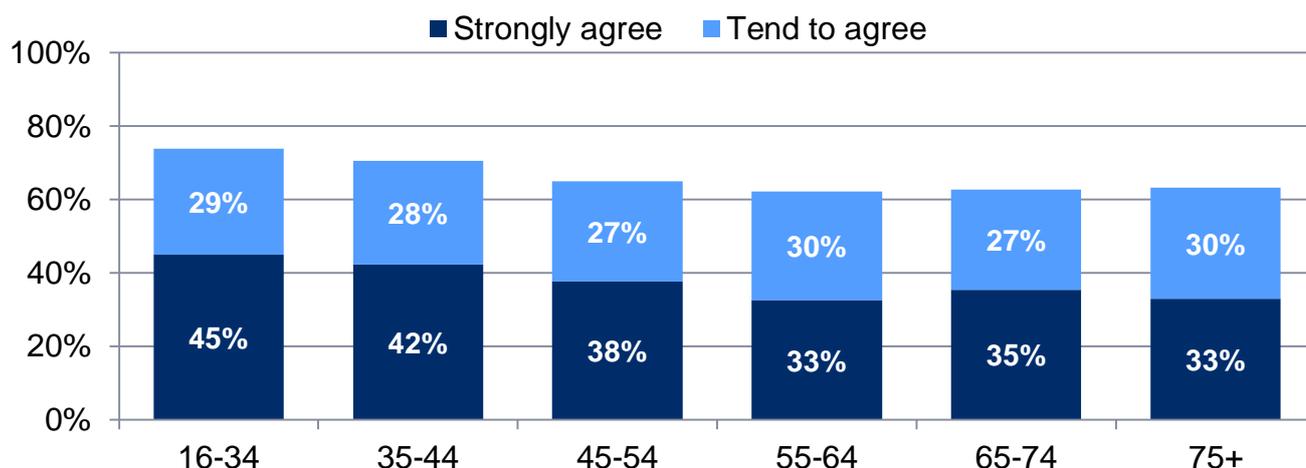
National identity – 76% of those who identified their national identity as being 'Welsh', thought that more effort needed to be put into supporting the language', compared with 55% of those who didn't identify themselves as Welsh.

¹⁰ Using regression analysis - Note that the findings depend on which factors are available to take into account in the regression analysis. In this case these included – age, gender, area deprivation, economic status, settlement size, presence of young children, satisfaction with life, material deprivation, local authority, ability to speak Welsh, ethnicity, religion, income, length of time at their address and national identity. More details can be found in the [Key quality information](#).

¹¹ 'Frequency of speaking Welsh' was strongly correlated, but couldn't be included in this regression due to multicollinearity – i.e. it is too strongly correlated with Welsh speaking ability.

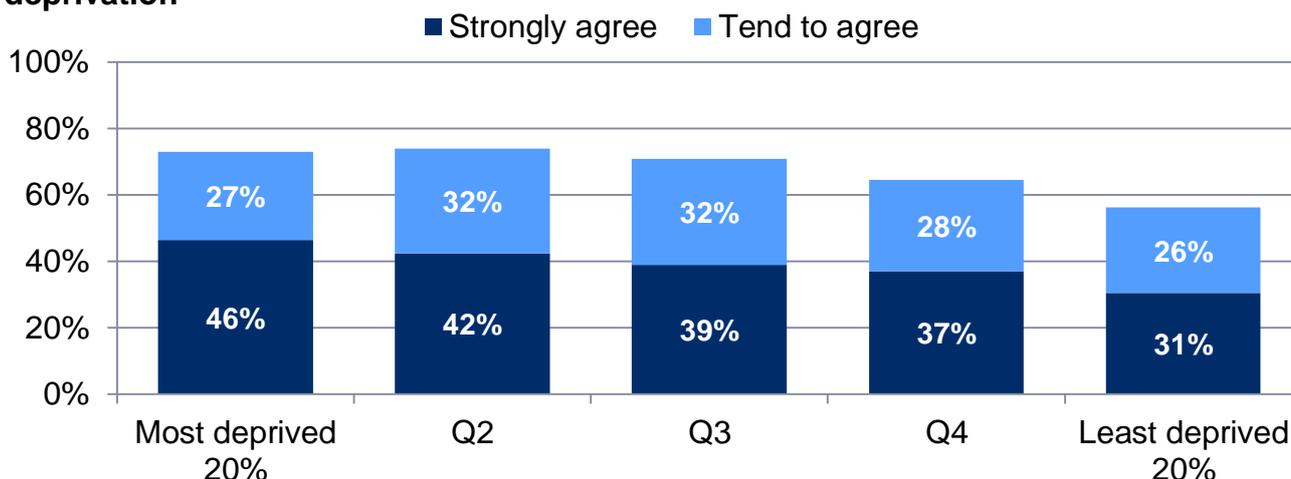
Age – Younger people under 35 years old were more likely to think that more effort was needed to support the language, when compared with those aged 55 to 64 as shown in chart 32.

Chart 32: 'More effort needs to be put into supporting the language', by age



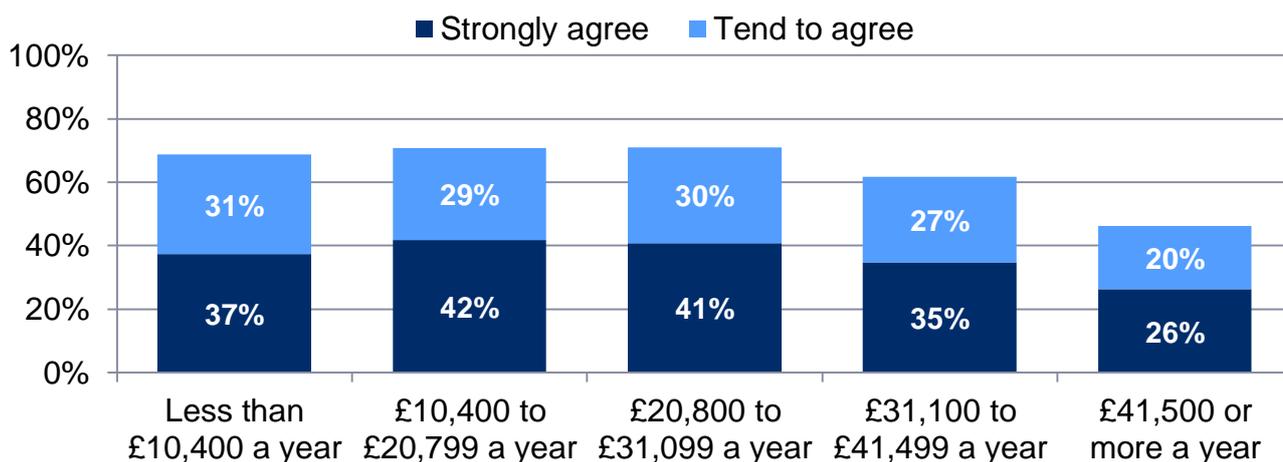
Area deprivation – People living in more deprived areas were more likely to think that more effort is needed to support the language, compared with those who were in the least deprived areas

Chart 33: 'More effort needs to be put into supporting the language', by area deprivation



Income – Higher earners were less likely to think that more effort was needed to support the language than those with lower incomes

Chart 34: 'More effort needs to be put into supporting the language', by income



The Welsh language will be stronger in 10 years' time than it is today

Key findings

The people who were most likely to think that Welsh language would be stronger in 10 years' time

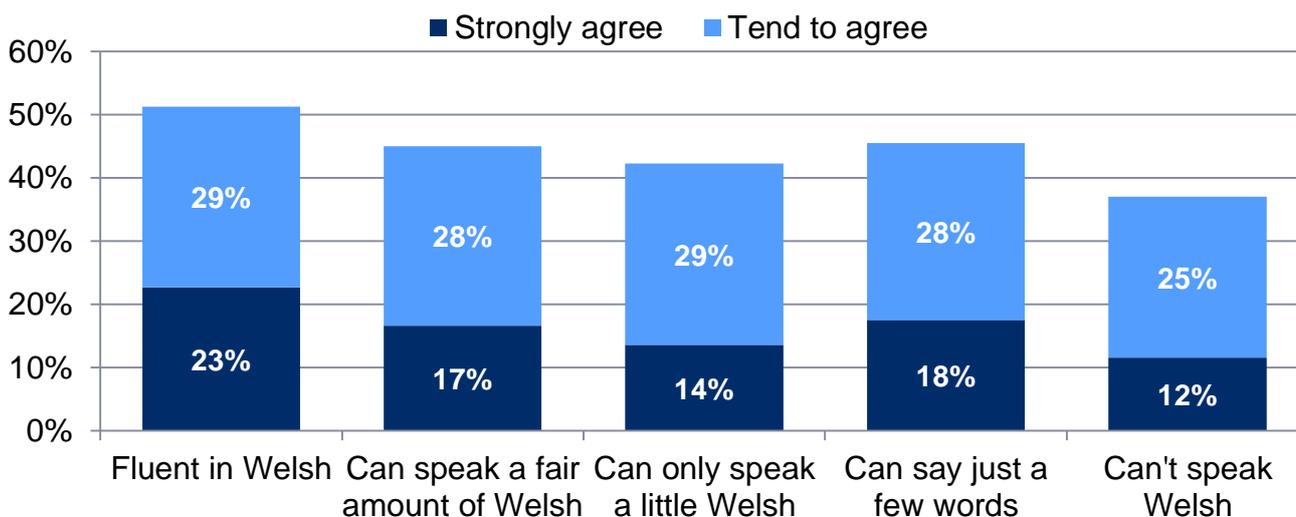
- could **speak Welsh fluently**
- lived in **North West Wales**
- were **aged 35 to 44**
- felt **happy**
- had **lower levels of qualifications**
- had **higher levels of confidence in the education system**
- had a **positive attitude towards the Welsh language**

The statement 'The Welsh language will be stronger in 10 years' time than it is today' is slightly different to the other statements asked about as it is asking about the *future* and their perception about the vitality of the language as opposed to their view on the current situation, which may be more difficult for some respondents to answer. This was the statement that people were least likely to agree with, where the vast majority of respondents (78%) gave one of the middle three options, ('tend to agree', 'neither agree nor disagree' and 'tend to disagree')

When controlling for other factors¹² the following personal characteristics were found to be associated with 'agreeing' with the statement 'The Welsh language will be stronger in 10 years' time than it is today'

Ability to speak Welsh¹³ – Fluent Welsh speakers were more likely to think that the Welsh language will be stronger in 10 years' time, compared with those who were less fluent or who didn't speak it.

Chart 35: 'The language will be stronger in 10 years' time', by ability to speak Welsh

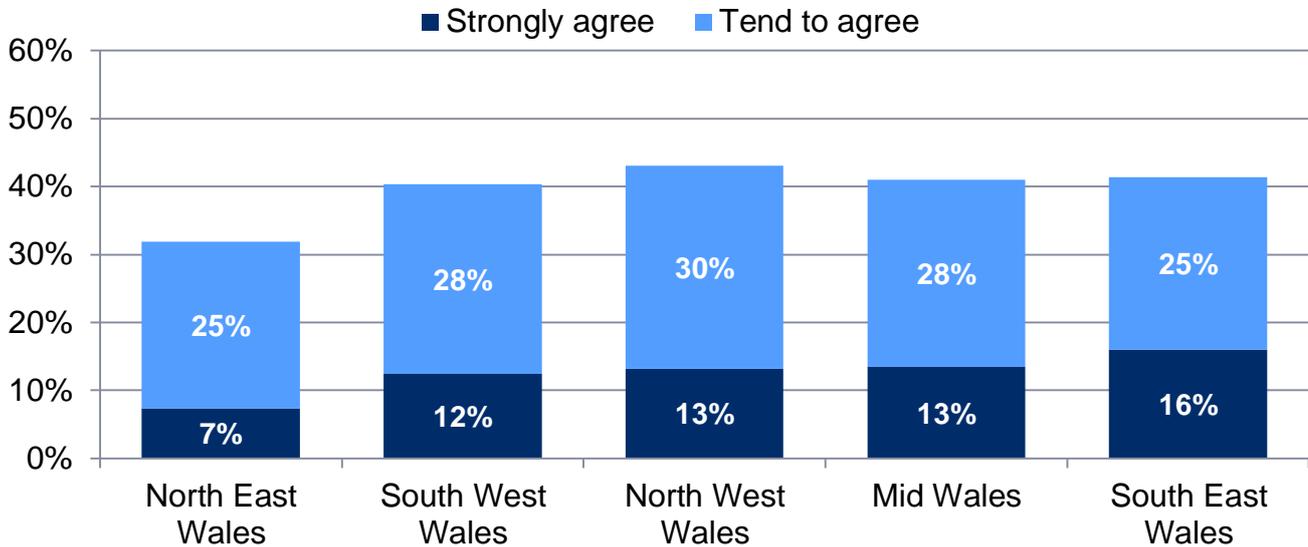


¹² Using regression analysis - Note that the findings depend on which factors are available to take into account in the regression analysis. In this case these included – age, gender, area deprivation, economic status, settlement size, presence of young children, satisfaction with life, happiness levels, material deprivation, local authority, region, ability to speak Welsh, ethnicity, religion and national identity. More details can be found in the [Key quality information](#).

¹³ 'Frequency of speaking Welsh' was strongly correlated, but couldn't be included in this regression due to multicollinearity – i.e. it is too strongly correlated with Welsh speaking ability.

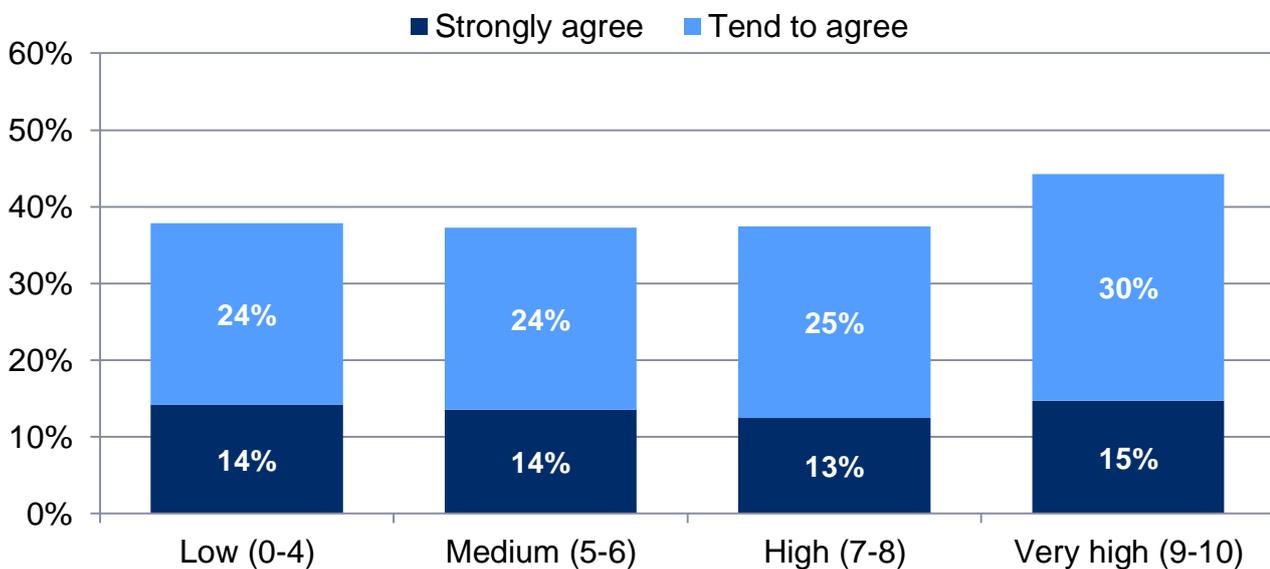
Region lived in – The region with the lowest proportion of Welsh speakers (South East), were most likely to ‘strongly agree’ that the language would be stronger in 10 years’ time, however, when looking at ‘strongly agree’ and ‘tend to agree’ combined, there was very little difference between the regions, with the exception of those in the North East, where a much lower proportion thought the language would be stronger in 10 years’ time.

Chart 36: ‘The language will be stronger in 10 years’ time’, by region



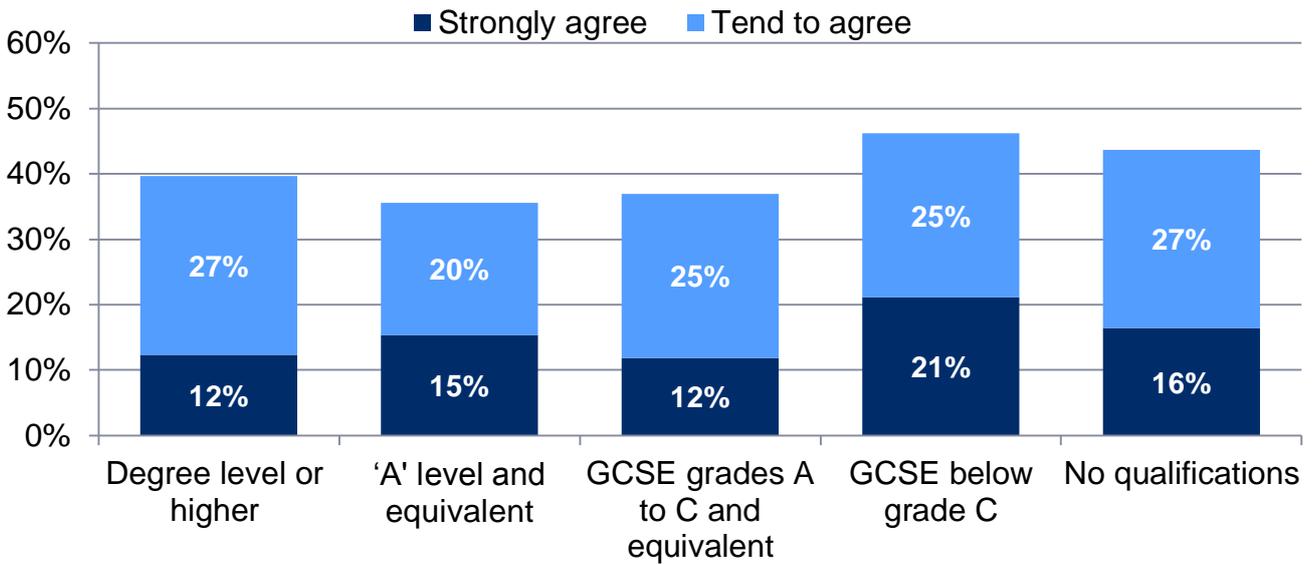
Happiness – In the National Survey, respondents were asked to rate how happy they felt the previous day on a scale of 0 to 10, (where 0 was ‘not at all happy’ and 10 ‘extremely happy’). Respondents who were happier (giving a score of 9 to 10) were more likely to think that Welsh language would be stronger in 10 years’ time. One possible explanation for this is that this is linked with the respondent’s personality (i.e. the respondents who respond positively to the question on happiness are more likely to also give positive responses for other questions, rather than their views about the future of the language making them happier)

Chart 37: The language will be stronger in 10 years’ time’, by happiness levels



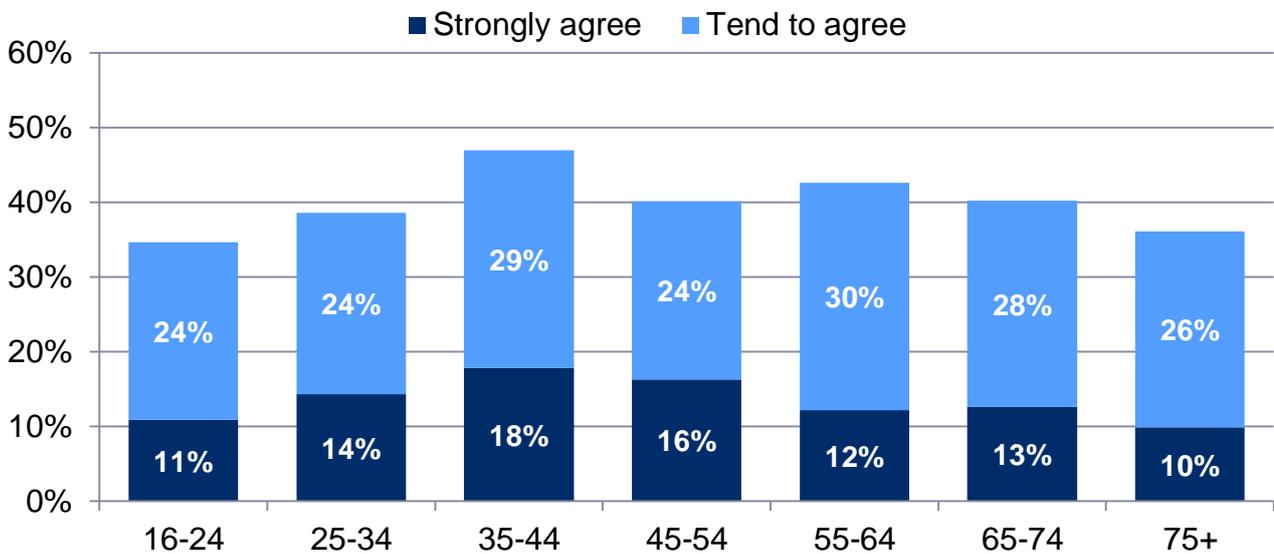
Qualifications – People with lower levels of qualifications (below GCSE level C or equivalent) or no qualifications, were more likely to think the language would be stronger in 10 years’ time.

Chart 38: ‘The language will be stronger in 10 years’ time’, by qualification



Age – Younger people aged 16 to 24 and older people aged 75 or over were least likely to think that the language would be stronger in 10 years’ time.

Chart 39: ‘The language will be stronger in 10 years’ time’, by age

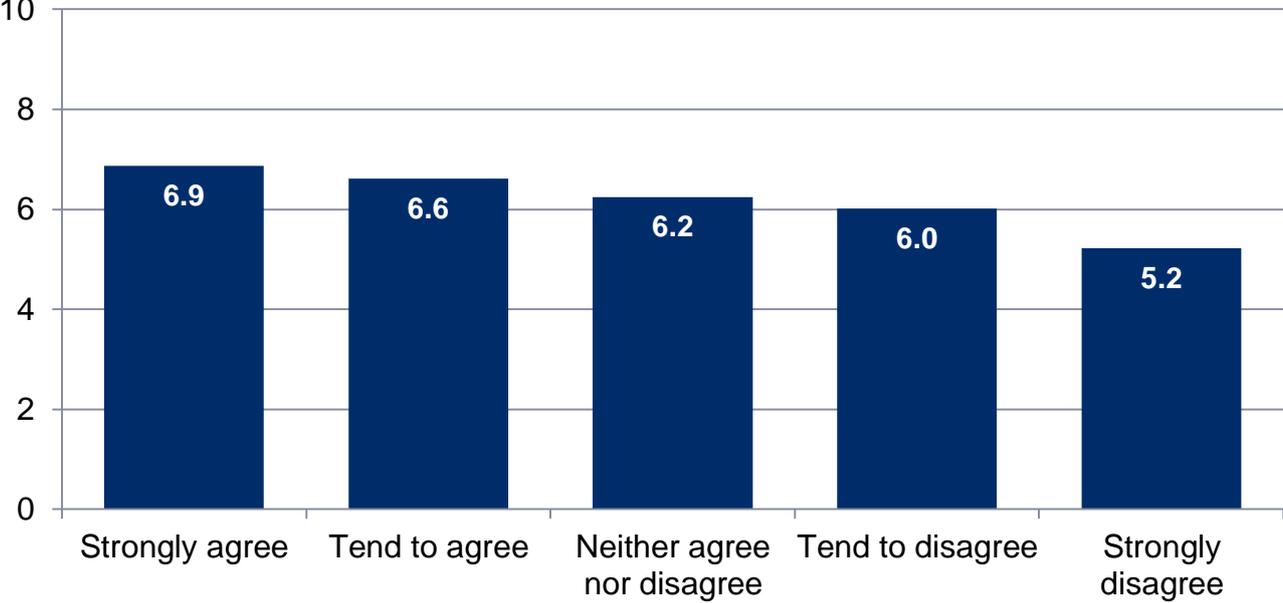


Attitude towards the Welsh language¹⁴ - There was a strong correlation between agreeing with the other statements about the Welsh language and agreeing with the statement ‘The Welsh language will be stronger in ten years’ time’. This may partly be attributed to acquiescence bias (i.e. the tendency to want to agree with any statement), but is also likely that those who are supportive of the language, will feel proud of the language, will want to speak it, will want more support for it and will want it to be stronger in the future

¹⁴ These statements were strongly correlated but couldn’t be included in this regression due to multicollinearity – i.e. they were too strongly correlated with agreeing with the statement ‘ the language would be stronger in 10 years’ time’

Confidence in the education system¹⁵ - In the National Survey, respondents were asked to rate their confidence in the education system on a scale of 0 to 10, (where 0 was 'not at all confident' and 10 'extremely confident'). Respondents, who were more likely to think that Welsh language would be stronger in 10 years' time, gave a higher score average for their confidence in the education system.

Chart 40: Confidence in the education system, by agreement with 'The language will be stronger in 10 years' time'



¹⁵ This question was only asked of a sub-sample of people, and therefore was not included in the regression model.

I'd like to be able to speak Welsh (better)

Key findings

The people who were most likely to say that they'd like to be able to speak Welsh or to speak it better

- Were **female**
- **aged 16 to 34**, (aged 35 to 54 to speak it better)
- identified themselves as having a **Welsh National Identity**
- lived in **South West Wales** (North West Wales to speak it better)
- had **visited a historic site** in the previous year
- had a **positive attitude towards the Welsh language**

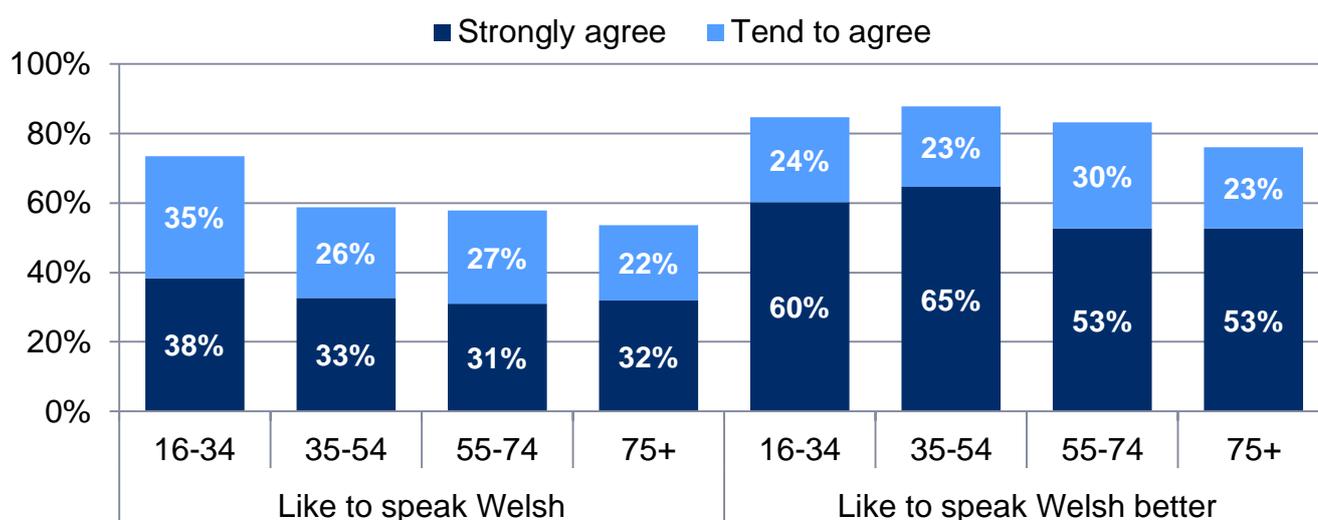
Respondents who couldn't speak Welsh were asked whether they'd like to be able to speak Welsh, and those who said they couldn't speak Welsh but had some Welsh-speaking ability were asked whether they'd like to be able speak Welsh *better*.

In general, those with some Welsh-speaking ability were more likely to say that they would like to speak Welsh 'better', when compared with those who couldn't speak Welsh reporting whether they'd like to speak Welsh. This is shown in [Chart 25](#).

When controlling for other factors¹⁶ the following personal characteristics were found to be associated with 'agreeing' with the statement 'I'd like to be able to speak Welsh or speak it better'

Age – Younger people aged 16 to 34 were more likely to say that they'd like to be able to speak Welsh than older people, however it was those aged 35 to 54 who were most likely to say they'd like to speak Welsh *better*.

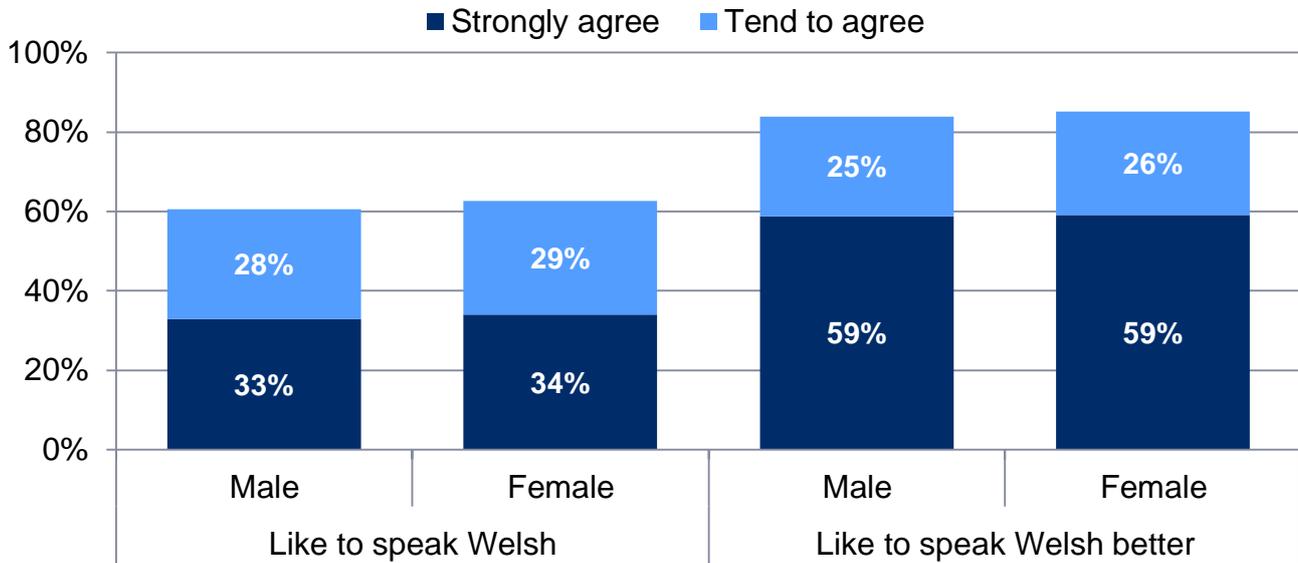
Chart 41: 'I'd like to speak Welsh or speak it better', by age



¹⁶ Using regression analysis - Note that the findings depend on which factors are available to take into account in the regression analysis. In this case these included – age, gender, area deprivation, economic status, settlement size, having children in education, satisfaction with life, whether participated in heritage activities, respondents' income, length of time at the address, material deprivation, qualification levels, region, participation in any sport, religion and national identity. More details can be found in the [Key quality information](#).

Gender – While Chart 42 does not demonstrate any significant differences between men and women’s desire to speak Welsh; when controlling for other factors, women were slightly more likely than men to want to learn to speak Welsh or to speak it better.

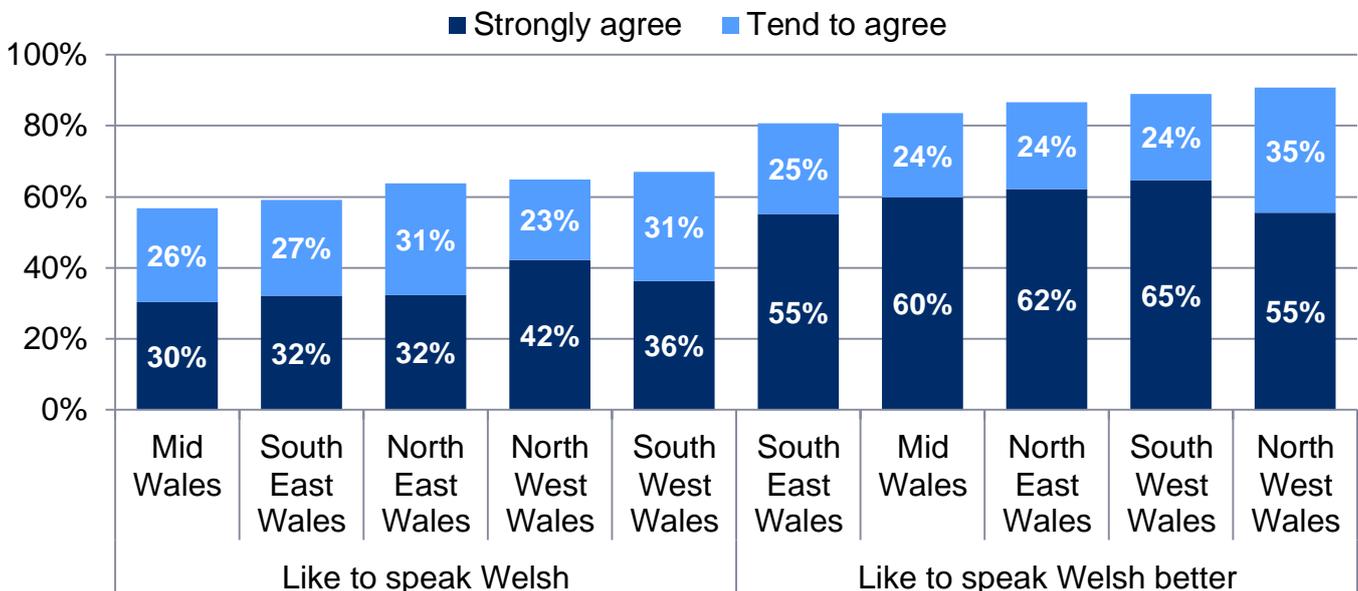
Chart 42: ‘I’d like to speak Welsh or speak it better’, by gender



National identity – 70% of those who identified their national identity as being ‘Welsh’, and who couldn’t speak Welsh wanted to be able to speak it, compared with 53% of those who didn’t identify themselves as Welsh. This was also true for those with some skills: 89% of those identifying as Welsh wanted to speak Welsh better compared with 76% of those who didn’t identify as being Welsh.

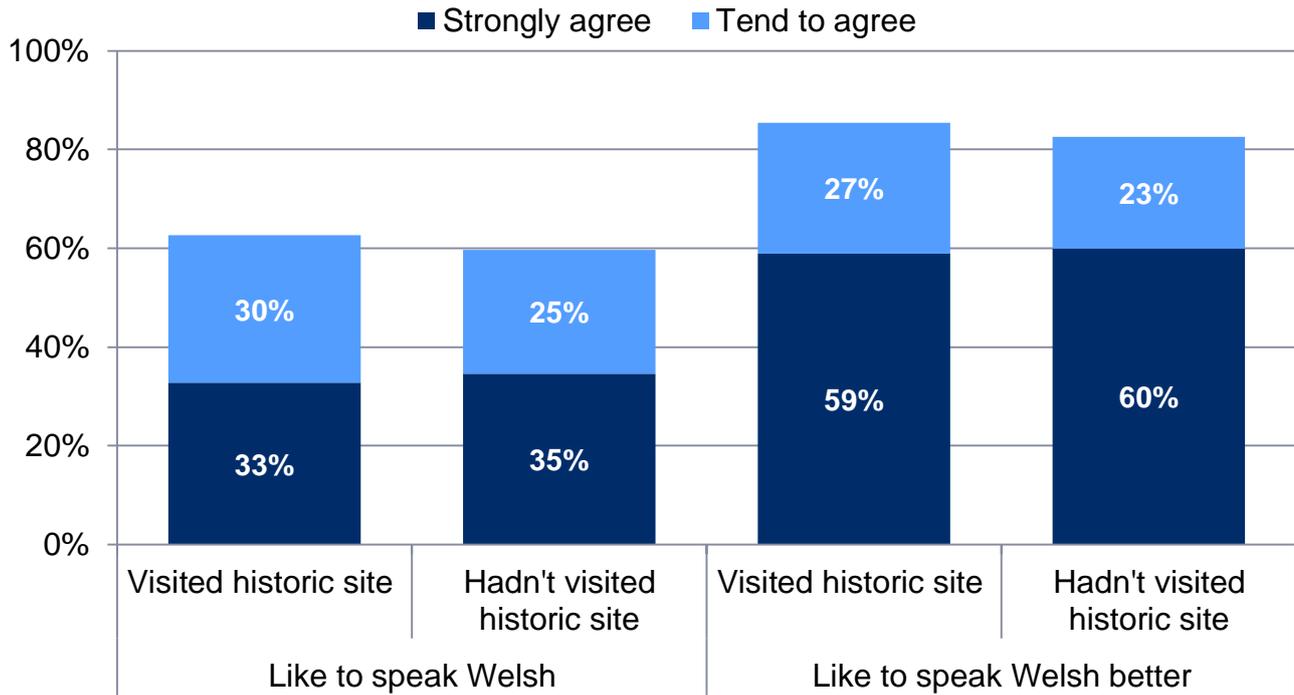
Region lived in – The regions with the highest proportions of Welsh speakers (North West and South West) had the highest proportions of people who wanted to speak Welsh or to speak it better. Non-Welsh speakers in Mid Wales were least likely to want to be able to speak the language and of those with some skills in the language, those in the South East were least likely to want to speak Welsh better.

Chart 43: ‘I’d like to speak Welsh or speak it better’, by region



Visited historic site –In the National Survey, respondents were asked whether they had visited any historic sites in the previous 12 months. Chart 44, does not demonstrate a significant difference between those who had visited a historic site and those who hadn't. However, when controlling for other factors, those who had, were slightly more likely to want to be able to speak Welsh or to be able to speak it better. One possible explanation for this is that the desire to speak Welsh is associated with respondents' interests and personality - i.e. respondents who are interested in visiting heritage sites, also being interested to learn to speak Welsh.

Chart 44: 'I'd like to speak Welsh or speak it better', by whether they had visited a historic site in the previous 12 months



Attitude towards the Welsh language¹⁷ - There was a strong correlation between agreeing with the other statements about the Welsh language and agreeing with the statement 'I'd like to be able to speak Welsh or to speak it better'. This may partly be attributed to acquiescence bias (i.e. the tendency to want to agree with any statement), but is also likely that those who are supportive of the language, will feel proud of the language, will want more support for it and will want it to be stronger in the future and will want to speak it.

¹⁷ These statements were strongly correlated but couldn't be included in this regression due to multicollinearity – i.e. they were too strongly correlated with agreeing with the statement 'I'd like to be able to speak Welsh (better)'

Terms and definitions

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is used as the official measure of deprivation in Wales. Deprivation is a wider concept than poverty. Deprivation refers to wider problems caused by a lack of resources and opportunities. The WIMD is constructed from eight different types of deprivation. These are: income, housing, employment, access to services, education, health, community safety and physical environment. Wales is divided into, 1,909 Lower-Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) each having about 1,600 people. Deprivation ranks have been worked out for each of these areas: the most deprived LSOA is ranked 1, and the least deprived 1,909. For this bulletin, we have grouped the people living in the 20 % of LSOAs that are most deprived based on WIMD score and compared them against the 20% of the LSOAs that are least deprived.

Economic status

Respondents were classified into the following three economic statuses according to how they described what they were doing in the previous 7 days.

In employment	Unemployed	Economically inactive
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In any paid employment or self-employment (or away temporarily)• On a government sponsored training scheme• Doing unpaid work for a business that you or a relative owns• Waiting to take up paid work already obtained	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unemployed and looking for work• Intending to look for work but prevented by temporary sickness or injury (28 days or less)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full-time student (including on holiday)• Unable to work because of long-term sickness or disability• Retired• Looking after home or family• Doing something else

Settlement size

We have categorised respondents by the size of the settlement they live in, from the most rural area, where there are less than 2,000 people in the settlement, to the most densely populated urban areas where there are over 100,000 people in the settlement.

There were 5 settlement bands each with roughly equal populations:

- Under 2,000,
- 2,000 to 9,999,
- 10,000 to 24,999
- 25,000 to 99,999
- at least 100,000

Settlements with population of 10,000 or more were traditionally defined as “urban”. A built up area is defined as land with a minimum area of 20 hectares (200,000 square metres), while any settlements within 200 metres of each other are linked.

More information on how these areas are defined can be found in this [statistical article](#)

Qualifications

Respondents' highest qualifications have been grouped according to the National Qualification Framework (NQF) levels, where level 1 is the lowest level of qualifications and level 8 is doctoral degree or equivalent. For the National Survey, respondents have been grouped into 5 groups, those with no qualifications are in the lowest category and respondents with qualifications at levels 4 to 8 have been grouped together in the highest qualification category. [More information about the NQF levels.](#)

To provide more meaningful descriptions of the qualifications, these short descriptions have been used in this bulletin.

National Qualification Framework levels	Description used in bulletin
NQF levels 4-8	Degree level or higher
NQF level 3	'A' level and equivalent
NQF level 2	GCSE grades A to C and equivalent
Below NQF level 2	GCSE below grade C
No qualifications	No qualifications

Key quality information

Background

The National Survey for Wales is carried out by the Office for National Statistics on behalf of the Welsh Government. The results reported in this bulletin are based on interviews completed between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018.

23,517 addresses were chosen randomly from the Royal Mail's Small User Postcode Address File. Interviewers visited each address and randomly selected one adult (aged 16+) in the household. They then carried out a 45-minute face-to-face interview with them, covering a range of views, behaviours, and characteristics. A total of 11,381 interviews were achieved with a response rate of 54.5%.

More information on the method is available in the [technical report](#).

Interpreting the results

Percentages quoted in this bulletin are based on only those respondents who provided an answer to the relevant question. Some topics in the survey were only asked of a sub-sample of respondents and other questions were not asked where the question is not applicable to the respondent. Missing answers can also occur for several reasons, including refusal or an inability to answer a particular question.

Where a relationship has been found between two factors, this does not mean it is a causal relationship. More detailed analysis is required to identify whether one factor causes change in another.

The results are weighted to ensure that the results reflect the age and sex distribution of the Welsh population.

Quality report

A summary [Quality report](#) is available, containing more detailed information on the quality of the survey as well as a summary of the methods used to compile the results.

Sampling variability

Estimates from the National Survey are subject to a margin of uncertainty. Part of the uncertainty comes from the fact that any randomly-selected sample of the population will give slightly different results from the results that would be obtained if the whole population was surveyed. This is known as sampling error. Confidence intervals can be used as a guide to the size of the sampling error. These intervals are calculated around a survey estimate and give a range within which the true value is likely to fall. In 95% of survey samples, the 95% confidence interval will contain the 'true' figure for the whole population (that is, the figure we would get if the survey covered the entire population). In general, the smaller the sample size the wider the confidence interval. Confidence intervals are included in the tables of survey results published on StatsWales.

As with any survey, the National Survey is also subject to a range of other sources of error: for example, due to non-response; because respondents may not interpret the questions as intended or may not answer accurately; and because errors may be introduced as the survey data is processed. These kinds of error are known as non-sampling error, and are discussed further in the quality report for the survey.

Regression analysis

After considering the survey results, factors we considered likely to have an influence on Welsh speakers' confidence to speak Welsh and people's attitudes towards the Welsh language were incorporated into each of the relevant regression models. In each case the selection of the initial variables used in the regression was based on; the results from cross-analysis, policy direction, and the practicality of using the variable. The results for some factors were only available for a sub-sample of respondents, or there were a large number of 'missing' results which resulted in a substantial drop in the sample size on which the regression model could be tested. For this reason some variables/factors were omitted from the investigation. The final models consisted of those factors that remained significant even after holding the other factors constant. These significant factors are those that have been discussed in this bulletin and the use of regression analysis is indicated by the statement that we have 'controlled for other factors'. It is worth noting that had a different range of factors been available to consider from the survey, then some conclusions about which factors were significant may have been different.

More details on the methodology used in the regression analysis in this report are available in the [Technical Report: Approach to regression analysis and models produced](#).

Significant differences

Where the text of this release notes a difference between two National Survey results, we have checked to ensure that the confidence intervals for the two results do not overlap. This suggests that the difference is statistically significant (but as noted above, is not as rigorous as carrying out a formal statistical test), i.e. that there is less than a 5% (1 in 20) chance of obtaining these results if there is no difference between the same two groups in the wider population.

Checking to see whether two confidence intervals overlap is less likely than a formal statistical test to lead to conclusions that there are real differences between groups. That is, it is more likely to lead to "false negatives": incorrect conclusions that there is no real difference when in fact there is a difference. It is also less likely to lead to "false positives": incorrect conclusions that there is a difference when there is in fact none. Carrying out many comparisons increases the chance of finding false positives. Therefore, when many comparisons are made the conservative nature of the test is an advantage because it reduces (but does not eliminate) this chance.

Note that this bulletin focuses on regression analysis and identifying the significant factors when controlling for other factors. It is possible that for some factors, no significant difference can be observed when using cross-analysis, but when controlling for other factors, it is found to be 'significant' in the regression model.

National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("[national indicators](#)") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the well-being goals and associated technical information is available in the [Well-being of Wales report](#).

This release presents some contextual information for the two [national indicators](#) which relate to the Welsh language. These are the percentage of people who:

- [Speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words of Welsh](#) (No 36),
- [Can speak Welsh](#) (No 37)

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local well-being assessments and local well-being plans.

Further details

This bulletin is available at: www.gov.wales/nationalsurvey

The [first release](#) for the survey was published on 20 June 2018.

More detailed information on the survey methodology is set out in the [Technical report](#) for the survey.

Next update

Not a regular output.

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to surveys@gov.wales

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