



National Survey for Wales, 2018-19: Welsh language in the workplace

5 December 2019
SB 57/2019

In the 2018-19 National Survey for Wales, employed people were asked about their use of the Welsh language in their workplace and whether their employer offered staff any opportunities to learn Welsh.

This bulletin presents the findings.

Main points

Speaking with colleagues

- 80% of Welsh speakers spoke Welsh with at least some of their Welsh-speaking colleagues, while the remaining 20% did not speak Welsh with their Welsh-speaking colleagues.
- Fluency levels played a significant role in determining whether they would speak Welsh with their colleagues. 93% of fluent Welsh speakers spoke Welsh with at least some of their Welsh-speaking colleagues, compared with 38% of those who weren't fluent.
- Females, people aged 60 or over, those who learnt to speak Welsh at a young age and those who lived in north-west Wales were most likely to speak Welsh with their Welsh-speaking colleagues.



Speaking with people outside the organisation as part of their job role

- Fluent Welsh speakers were twice as likely as non-fluent Welsh speakers to be in a job role that required them to speak to people outside their organisation (in any language).
- 93% of fluent Welsh-speaking employees reported that they spoke at least some Welsh with people outside their organisation, however for those who weren't fluent, only 42% spoke any Welsh with those outside the organisation.

Employer offering opportunities to learn Welsh

- Just under a third of employees reported that their employer offered staff opportunities to learn Welsh.
- Employees who could speak Welsh, were female, from north-west Wales or had higher levels of qualifications, were more likely to state that their employer offered staff the opportunity to learn to speak Welsh.

About this bulletin

This bulletin provides more detailed analysis of National Survey 2018-19 results on the **Welsh language**.

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

Additional tables, to accompany this bulletin can be accessed via the [Results viewer](#).

In this bulletin

Introduction	2
Employed people's ability in Welsh	3
Speaking Welsh with colleagues	4
Speaking Welsh with people outside the organisation	8
Employers providing opportunities to learn Welsh	10
Key quality information	12

Introduction

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

In order to achieve this target, one of the aims of the strategy is to increase the use of Welsh within the workplace. The strategy states that "*The workplace is central to our day-to-day lives,.. and provides opportunities to use, practise and learn Welsh*".

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 provided a legal framework for the use of the Welsh language in the delivery of public services. This measure enabled the development of Welsh Language Standards, which aim to ensure that organisations in Wales do not treat Welsh less favourably than English. The standards also require that organisations promote the Welsh language, ensuring that Welsh has an active role in the organisation's internal administration, and that the language is accessible to the public.

The principles of language planning within the workplace are not only relevant to bodies that come under legislation. '[Cymraeg 2050](#)' states that the Welsh Government intends to build upon the work being done across all sectors to significantly increase the opportunities for individuals to use their language skills within workplace settings

In order to monitor the use of the Welsh language within the workplace, questions were included in the National Survey for Wales in 2018-19 on the use of Welsh with colleagues and those outside their organisation, as well as the opportunities provided by their employer to learn Welsh. The results of these questions are presented in this bulletin.

Definition of 'Welsh speakers'

In the 2018-19 National Survey for Wales, respondents were asked whether they could speak Welsh. They could respond:

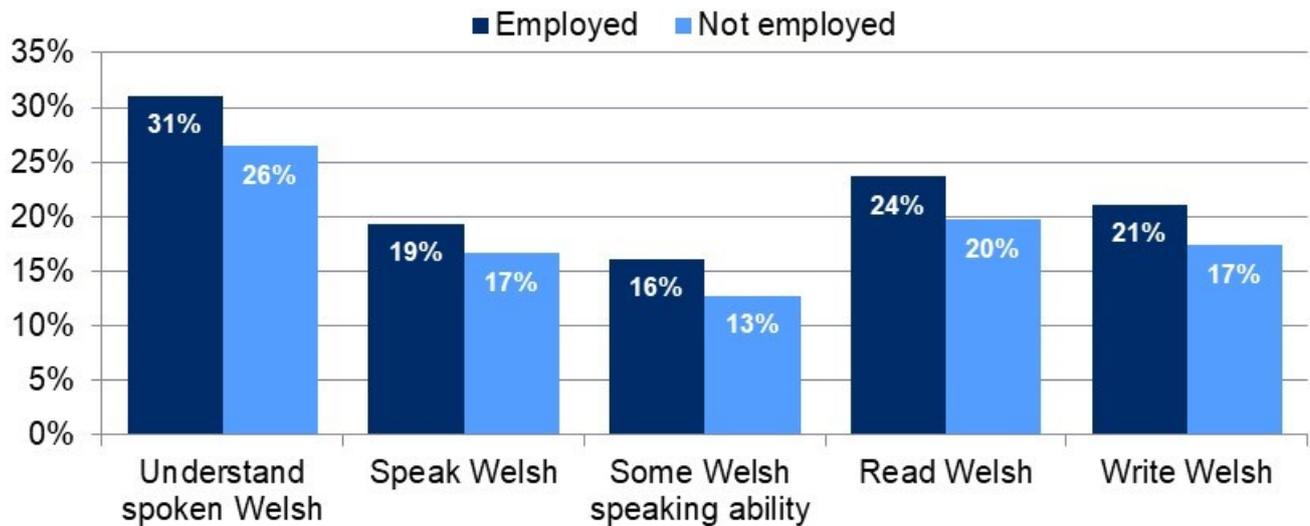
1. Yes;
2. No; or
3. No, but I have some Welsh speaking ability'.

In this bulletin, those who responded '1' are reported as being 'Welsh speakers', '2', as not being able to speak Welsh and those who responded '3' are reported as having 'some Welsh-speaking ability'. People who responded with either 1 or 3 are described in the bulletin as having 'at least some Welsh speaking ability'

Employed people’s ability in Welsh

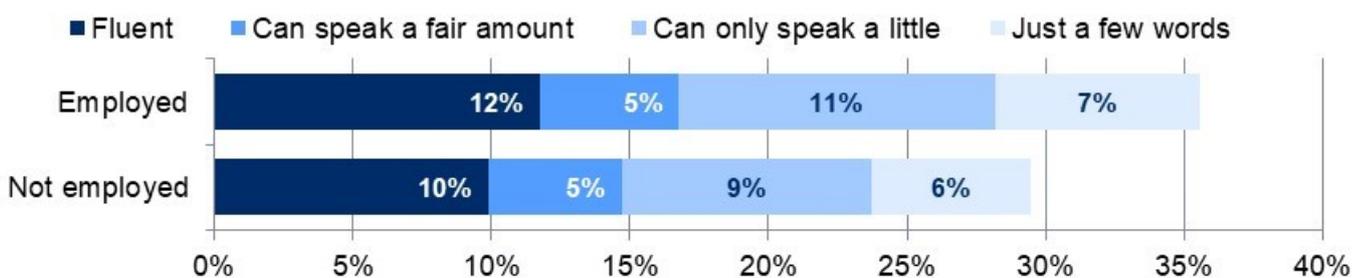
The 2018-19 National Survey for Wales found that 18% of adults aged 16 and over reported that they could speak Welsh, with a further 15% reporting that they had some Welsh-speaking ability. 29% could understand spoken Welsh, 22% could read Welsh and 19% could write Welsh. Employed adults were slightly more likely to have skills in the Welsh language than those who weren’t employed. However Welsh speakers are also more likely to be younger and hold qualifications, factors which mean they are more likely in general to be in employment. The differences between the Welsh language ability of employed people and those who weren’t employed are shown in Chart 1 below.

Chart 1: Skills in Welsh by employment status



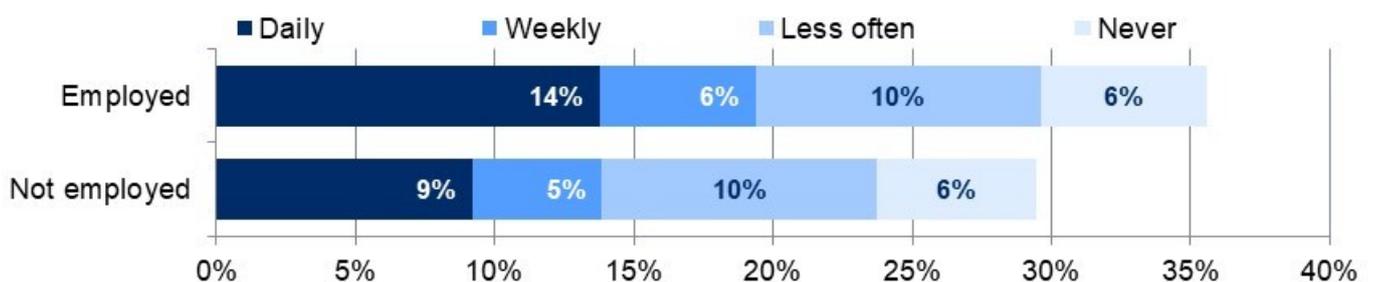
Employed people were also more likely to be fluent in Welsh than those who weren’t employed, as shown in Chart 2.

Chart 2: Fluency in Welsh by employment status



Employed people were also more likely to speak Welsh more frequently than those who weren’t employed, as shown in Chart 3.

Chart 3: Frequency of speaking Welsh by employment status

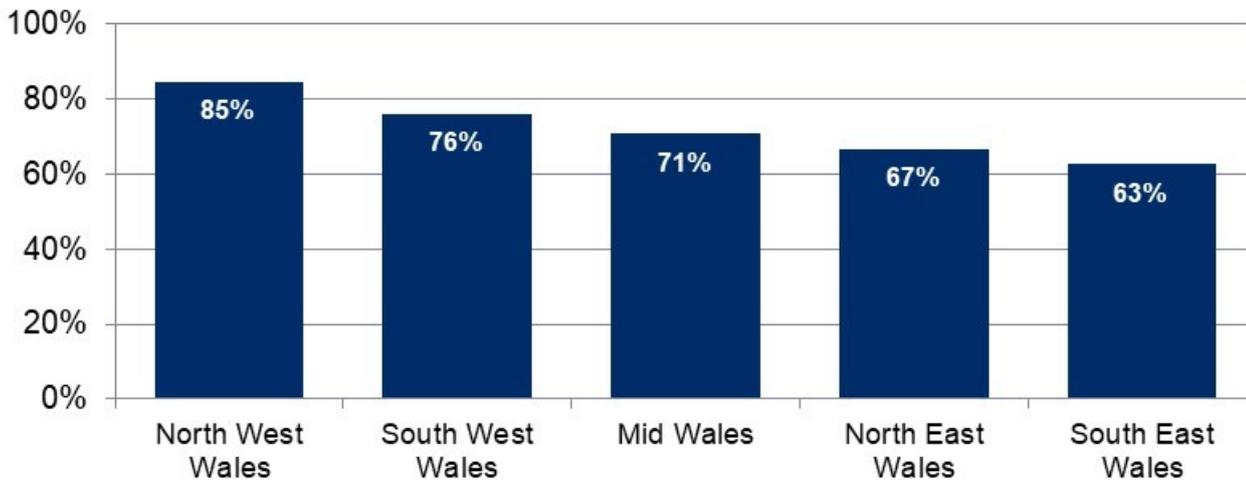


Speaking Welsh with colleagues

72% of employed people with at least some Welsh-speaking ability reported that they had Welsh-speaking colleagues in their organisation. Welsh speakers were more likely to report this, with 78% of Welsh speakers and 68% of those with some Welsh-speaking ability reporting to have Welsh speaking colleagues in their organisation. The [Welsh Language Use Surveys of 2004-06](#) also included this question for *Welsh speakers* only and found that 80% of them reported to have Welsh speaking colleagues.¹

Employed females with at least some Welsh-speaking ability were slightly more likely to report having Welsh-speaking colleagues than males (75% for females compared with 68% for males). As might be expected, those who lived in areas with higher proportions of Welsh speakers were more likely to have Welsh-speaking colleagues in their organisation, as shown in Chart 4.

Chart 4: Proportion who had Welsh-speaking colleagues, by region² (a)



(a) Only asked of employees with at least some Welsh speaking ability. For the definition of the regions, see footnote.

Employed people with at least some Welsh-speaking ability, who had Welsh speaking colleagues, were subsequently asked whether they did speak to those colleagues in Welsh. Naturally, their ability to speak Welsh played a significant role in whether or not they spoke Welsh with their colleagues. 32% of Welsh speakers spoke with 'all' of those colleagues in Welsh, 20% spoke with 'most' and another 29% with 'some', leaving 20% of Welsh speakers not speaking to Welsh-speaking colleagues in Welsh. However, for those who reported that they had some Welsh-speaking ability 70% did not speak Welsh with those colleagues (2% said they spoke Welsh with 'all' Welsh speaking colleagues, 2% with 'most' and the remaining 26% with 'some').

The [Welsh Language Use Surveys of 2004-06](#) included a similar question for *Welsh speakers* and found that of those with Welsh-speaking colleagues, 24% did not speak Welsh with them.¹

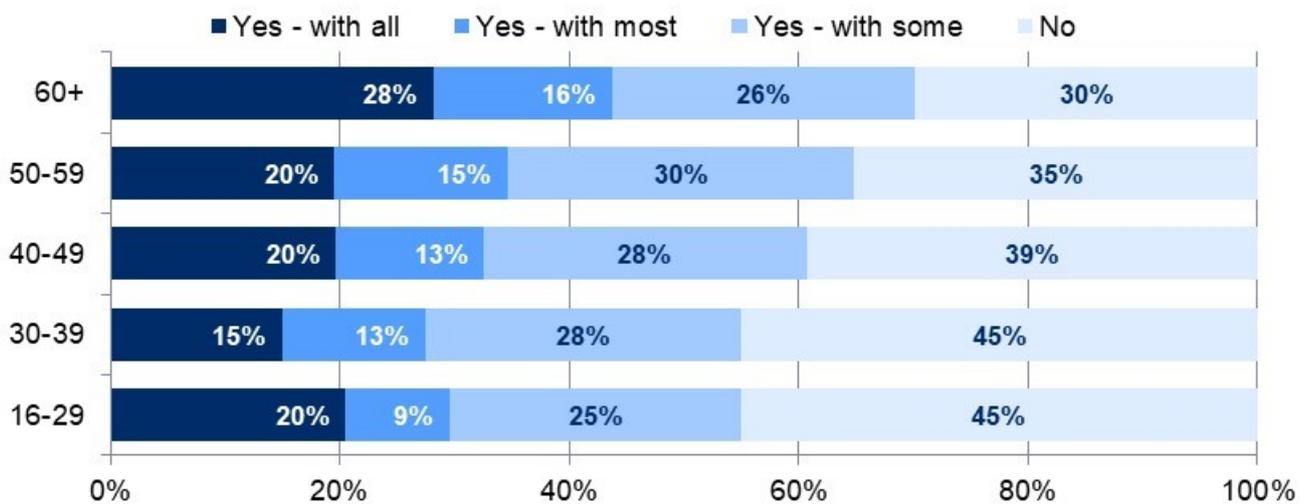
¹ The Welsh Language Use Survey in 2013-15 did not include a comparable question.

² The **North-west Wales** region is made up of the local authority areas of Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd and Conwy, **North-east Wales** includes Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham, **Mid-Wales** includes Powys and Ceredigion, **South-west Wales** is made up of Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. All other local authority areas are in **South-east Wales** (Bridgend, Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Newport)

When combining those who could speak Welsh with those who had some Welsh-speaking ability, 20% reported that they spoke Welsh with all other Welsh-speaking colleagues, 13% with most and 28% with some Welsh-speaking colleagues, and 40% did not speak to them in Welsh. Females were slightly more likely than males to speak to Welsh-speaking colleagues in Welsh (63% of females compared with 56% of males).

There was some variation by age, with employees with at least some Welsh-speaking ability aged 60 or over being most likely to speak Welsh with Welsh speaking colleagues. This is shown in Chart 5 below. This variation by age continued to exist after controlling for their levels of fluency.

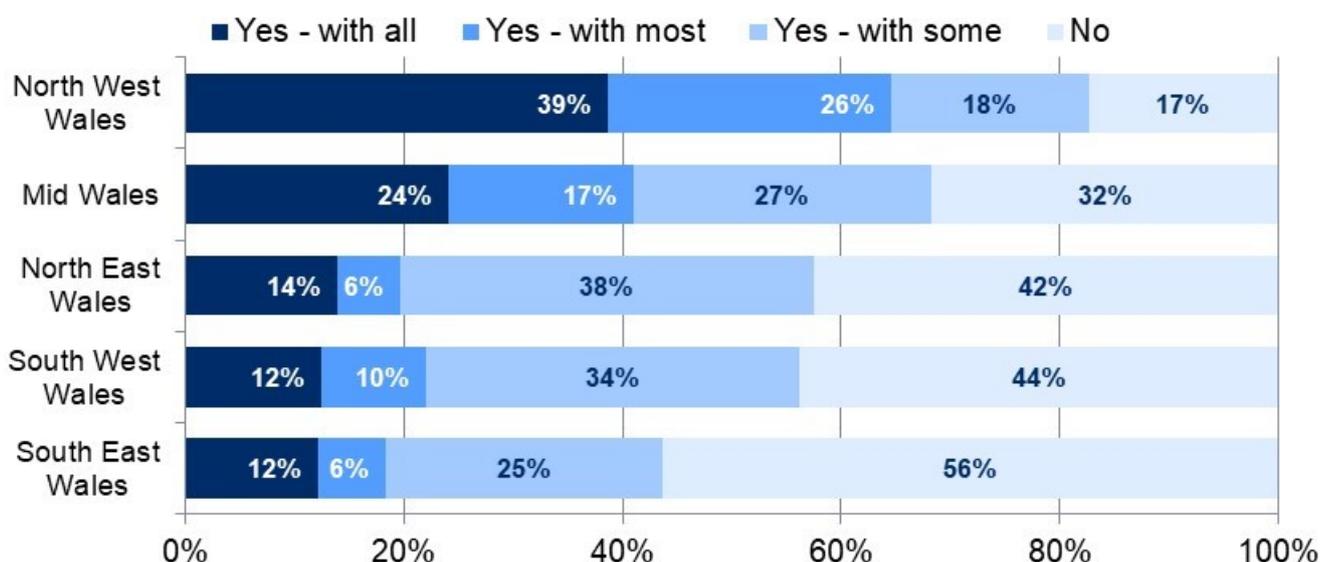
Chart 5: Speaking Welsh with Welsh-speaking colleagues, by age (a)



(a) Asked of employees with at least some Welsh-speaking ability who had Welsh-speaking colleagues.

Respondents with Welsh-speaking colleagues who lived in north-west Wales were much more likely to speak Welsh with those colleagues than respondents who lived in south-east Wales. This is somewhat expected due to the higher proportions of fluent Welsh speakers living in north-west Wales, when compared with south-east Wales. This variation by region continued to exist after controlling for their levels of fluency.

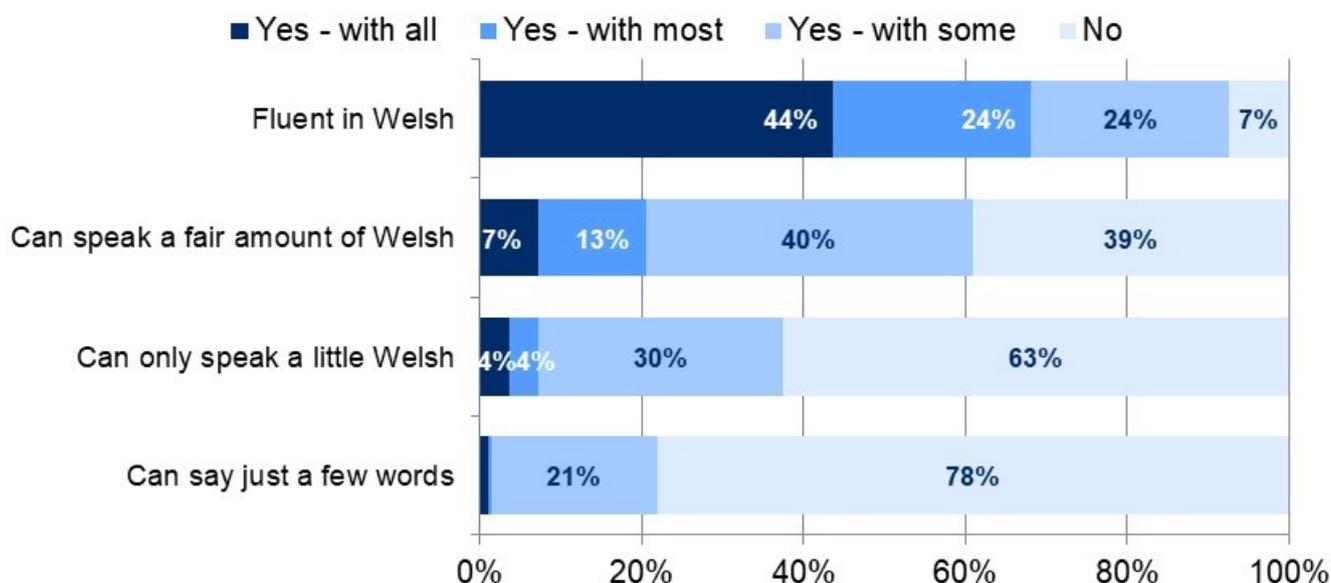
Chart 6: Speaking Welsh with Welsh-speaking colleagues, by region (a)



(a) Asked of employees with at least some Welsh-speaking ability who had Welsh-speaking colleagues. For definition of regions, see footnote on page 4.

As might be expected, respondents' fluency in Welsh was a very significant factor in determining whether they spoke to other Welsh-speaking colleagues in Welsh. 93% of employees who were fluent in Welsh spoke Welsh with at least some Welsh-speaking colleagues (44% stated that they spoke Welsh with 'all' Welsh speaking colleagues). This falls to 61% of those who could speak a fair amount of Welsh, 37% for those who could only speak a little Welsh and to 22% for those who could say a few words of Welsh. This is shown in Chart 7 below.

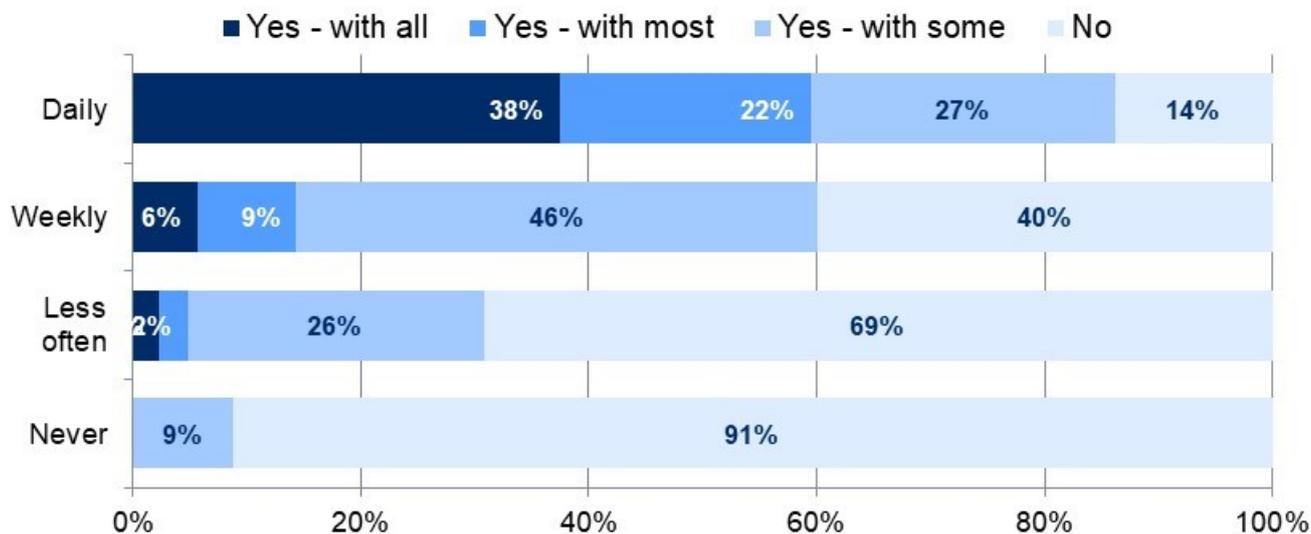
Chart 7: Speaking Welsh with Welsh-speaking colleagues, by fluency levels (a)



(a) Asked of employees with at least some Welsh-speaking ability who had Welsh-speaking colleagues.

How frequently someone speaks Welsh was also a factor for whether they spoke Welsh with their colleagues. 86% of employees who speak Welsh daily spoke to other Welsh-speaking colleagues in Welsh (38% speaking Welsh with 'all' Welsh-speaking colleagues). This reduces substantially the less often someone speaks Welsh, as shown in Chart 8 below.

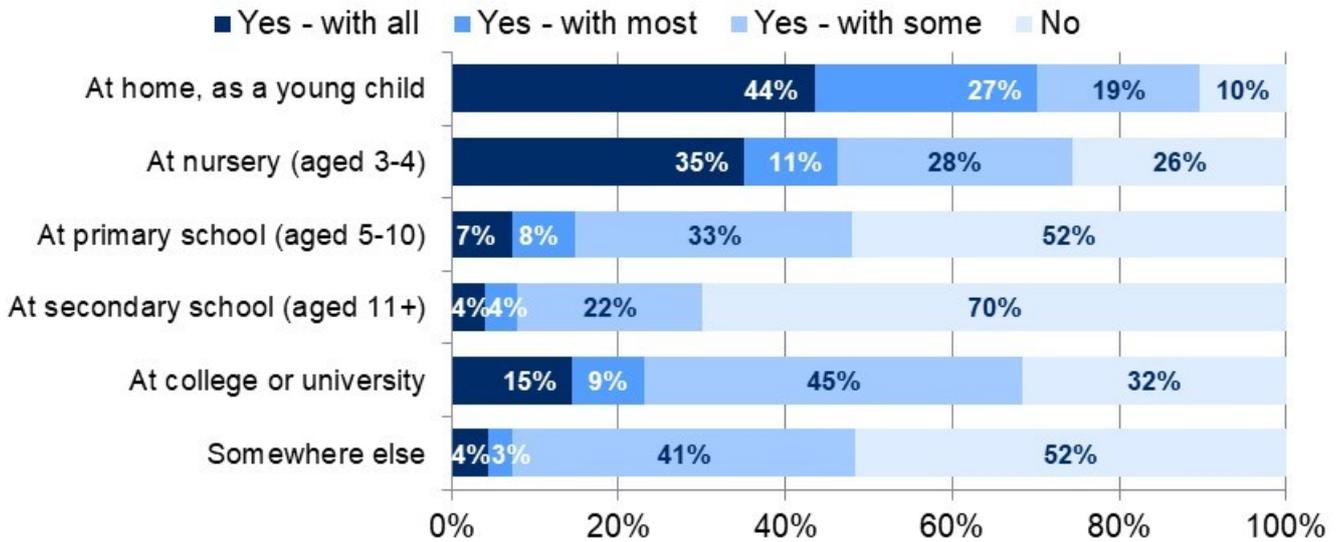
Chart 8: Speaking Welsh with Welsh-speaking colleagues, by frequency of speaking Welsh (a)



(a) Asked of employees with at least some Welsh-speaking ability who had Welsh-speaking colleagues.

Welsh-speaking respondents were asked in the National Survey where they had learnt to speak the language. This also played a substantial role in deciding whether employees spoke Welsh with their colleagues. 90% of employees who learnt to speak Welsh at home as a young child and 74% of those who learnt to speak Welsh at nursery spoke to other Welsh-speaking colleagues in Welsh. This compares with 30% of those who had learnt to speak Welsh at secondary school, as shown in Chart 9 below.

Chart 9: Speaking Welsh with Welsh-speaking colleagues, by where Welsh was learnt (a)

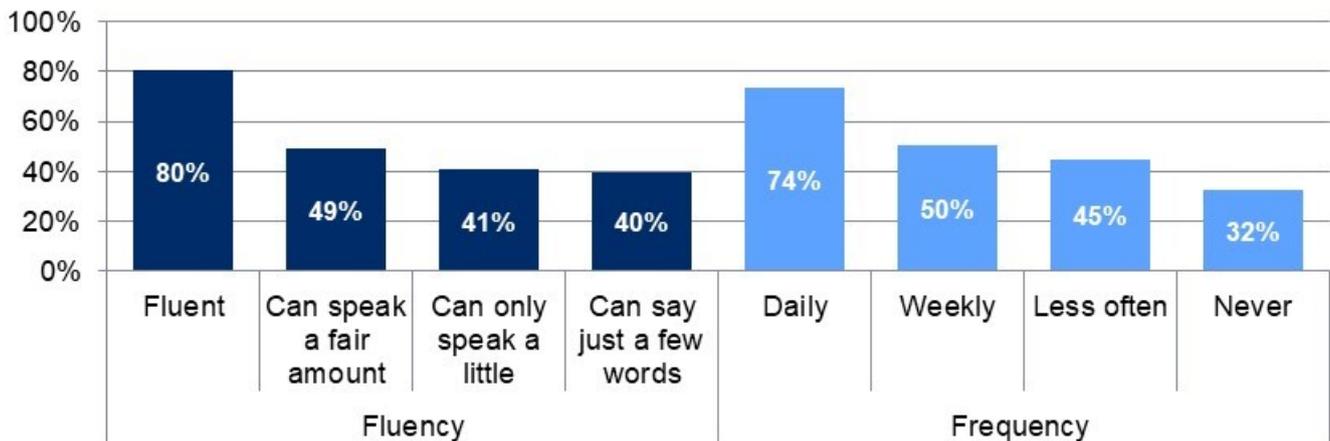


(a) Asked of employees with at least some Welsh-speaking ability who had Welsh-speaking colleagues.

Speaking Welsh with people outside the organisation

55% of employees with at least some Welsh-speaking ability reported that they spoke with people outside of their organisation as part of their job (not necessarily in Welsh). Those who were fluent in Welsh, or who spoke it more frequently, were far more likely to report that their job required them to speak to people outside their organisation. 80% of fluent Welsh-speaking employees spoke to people outside their organisation as part of their job, compared with 40% of those who could only say a few words in Welsh. This is shown in Chart 10.

Chart 10: Speaking with people outside their organisation as part of their job, by fluency levels and frequency of speaking Welsh (a)



(a) Asked of employees with at least some Welsh-speaking ability.

This could be due to employers requesting that their front-line staff can speak Welsh or that organisations utilise their Welsh-speaking staff for roles that involve contacting people outside the organisation.

Employed people with at least some Welsh-speaking ability, who spoke with people outside of their organisation as part of their job, were subsequently asked whether they did speak to those people in Welsh. Once again, their ability in Welsh appeared to play an important role in their decision to speak Welsh with people outside their organisation.

39% of Welsh speakers reported that they spoke Welsh with ‘all’ or ‘most’ of the people they speak with, 46% with ‘some’ and 14% didn’t speak Welsh with these people. However, for those who reported that they had some Welsh-speaking ability, 71% did not speak Welsh with people outside their organisation (3% said they spoke Welsh with ‘all’ or ‘most’, and 26% with ‘some’).

The [Welsh Language Use Survey of 2004-06](#) included a similar question for *Welsh speakers only* and found that of those who had Welsh-speaking clients, 32% spoke to them mostly in Welsh, 49% sometimes in Welsh and 19% did not speak Welsh with them.³

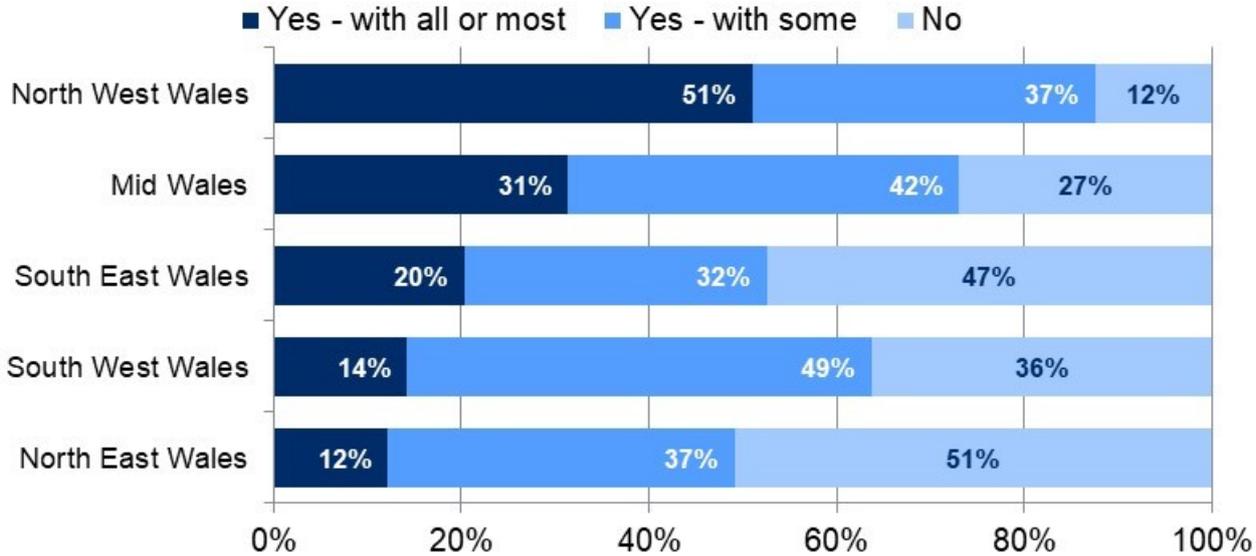
When combining those who could speak Welsh with those who had some ability in Welsh, who spoke with people outside of their organisation as part of their job, 27% reported that they spoke Welsh with ‘all’ or ‘most’ of the people they speak with, 39% with ‘some’ and 33% didn’t speak Welsh with them.

³ The Welsh Language Use Survey in 2013-15 did not include a comparable question.

Older employees with some Welsh-speaking ability, who spoke with people outside their organisation, were slightly more likely to speak with ‘all’ or ‘most’ in Welsh.

Respondents in north-west Wales, who spoke with people outside their organisation as part of their job, were more likely to speak with ‘all’ or ‘most’ of them in Welsh, compared with those from north-east Wales. This is shown in Chart 11.

Chart 11: Speaking Welsh with people outside their organisation, by region (a)



(a) Asked of employees with at least some Welsh-speaking ability, who spoke with people outside of their organisation as part of their job. For definition of regions, see footnote on page 4.

Employees who were fluent in Welsh, and those who spoke Welsh most frequently, who spoke with people outside their organisation, were far more likely to speak with ‘all’ or ‘most’ in Welsh.

93% of fluent Welsh speakers, spoke Welsh with at least some people outside their organisation compared with 42% of those who were not fluent.

91% of those who speak Welsh every day, spoke Welsh with at least some people outside their organisation, compared with 40% of those who spoke Welsh less often.

Where employees had learnt to speak the language also played a role in whether employees spoke Welsh with people outside their organisation. 91% of employees who learnt to speak Welsh at home as a young child, and 74% of those who learnt to speak Welsh at nursery, spoke Welsh with people outside their organisation. This compares with 36% of those who had learnt to speak Welsh at secondary school.

Employers providing opportunities to learn Welsh

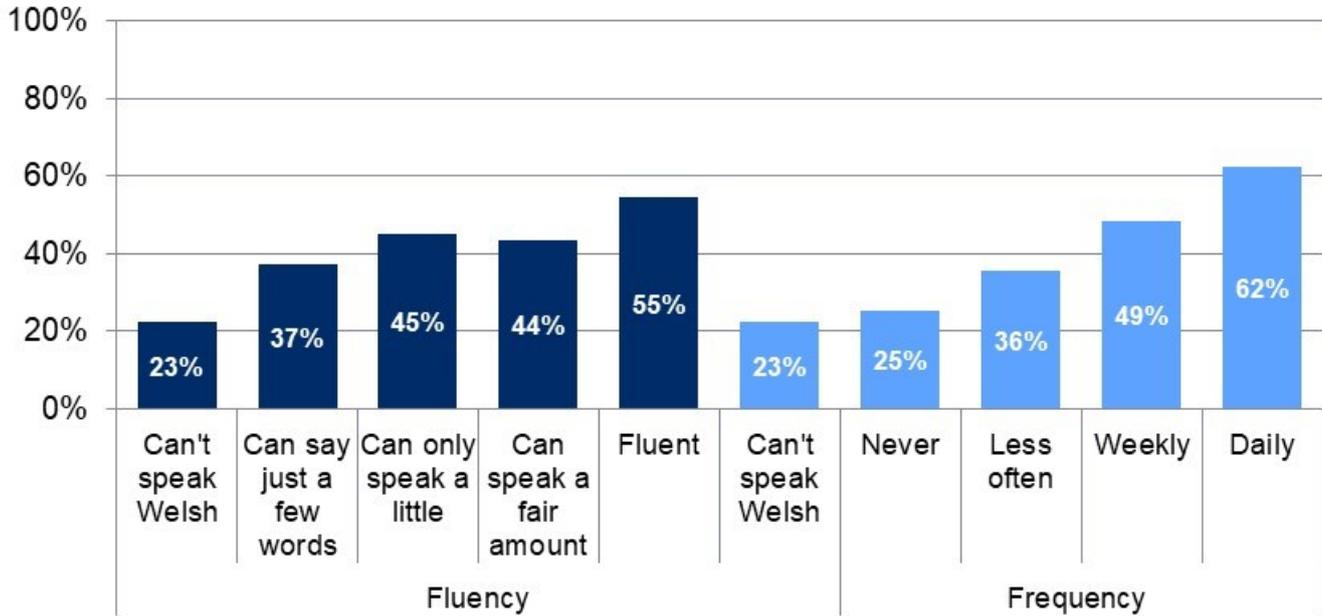
All employed people (whether they spoke Welsh or not) were asked whether their employer offered their staff any opportunities to learn Welsh.

9% of employed people stated that this question didn't apply to them. This could be due to being self-employed. A further 4% said that they didn't know. 6% of employed Welsh speakers didn't know, compared with 3% of those who couldn't speak Welsh.

Of the employed people who could answer this question, 31% reported that their employer offered staff opportunities to learn Welsh.

Welsh-speaking employees were more likely to report that their employer offered opportunities to learn Welsh, than those who didn't speak Welsh. Half of Welsh-speaking employees stated that their employer offered opportunities to learn Welsh compared with just under a quarter of employees who couldn't speak Welsh. This could be due to Welsh speakers being more likely to work for employers who value the Welsh language, or being more likely to live in areas with higher proportion of Welsh speakers and therefore a greater demand for learning the language or a greater awareness of opportunities to use or learn the language. Those who were more fluent in Welsh or who spoke it more frequently were also more likely to state that their employer offered opportunities to learn Welsh as shown in Chart 12.

Chart 12: Employees who reported that their employer offered opportunities to learn Welsh, by fluency in Welsh and frequency of speaking Welsh

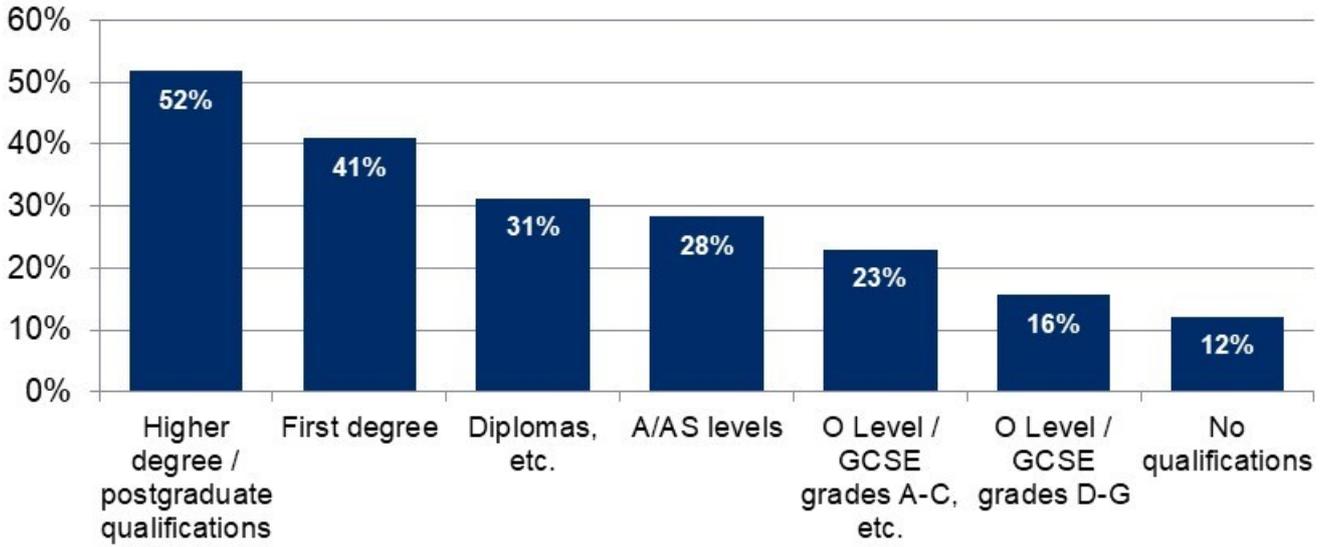


Female employees were more likely to report that their employer offered opportunities to learn Welsh, than Males. 39% of female employees reported that their employer offered opportunities to learn Welsh, compared with 22% of males. This might reflect the type of employer that female employees are more likely to work for (i.e. public sector).

43% of employees from north-west Wales reported that their employer offered opportunities to learn Welsh. This compares with 32% of employees in south-west Wales, 31% in mid-Wales, 30% in north-east Wales and 28% in south-east Wales.⁴

Employees with higher levels of qualifications were more likely to report that their employer offered opportunities to learn Welsh, than those with lower or no qualifications. This is shown in Chart 13.

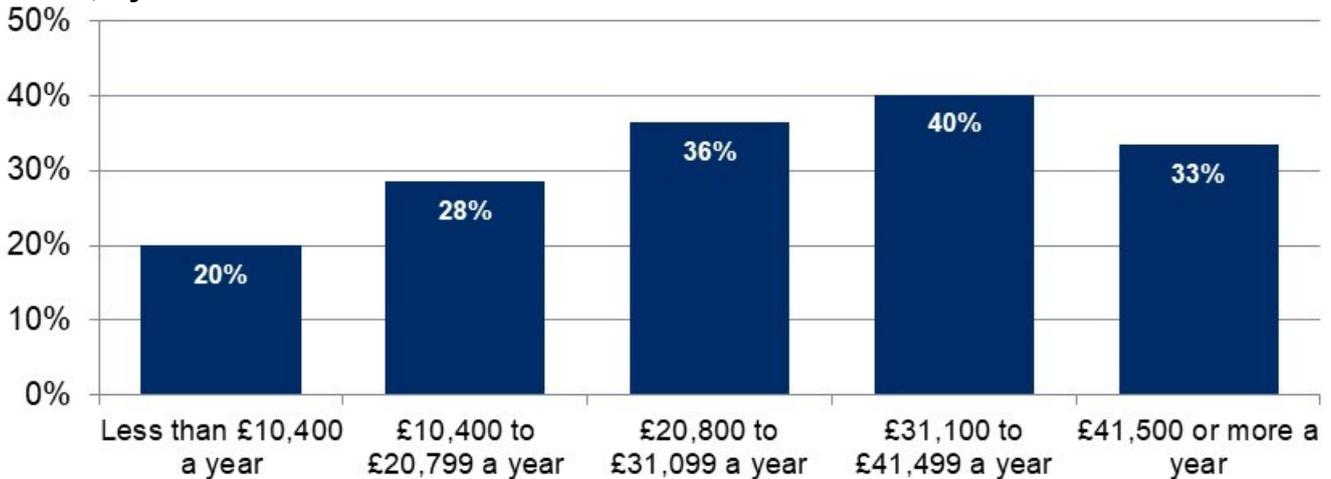
Chart 13: Employees who reported that their employer offered opportunities to learn Welsh, by highest level of qualifications (a)



(a) This chart excludes those whose highest level of qualification were foreign qualifications, trade apprenticeships and other qualifications.

There was also a relationship with employees' salaries, where those with annual pre-tax salaries of £31,100 to £41,499 being most likely to report that their employer offered opportunities to learn Welsh. This is shown in Chart 14 below.

Chart 14: Employees who reported that their employer offered opportunities to learn Welsh, by annual income



⁴ For definition of regions, see footnote on page 4

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 2018 and 31 March 2019.

24,762 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 11,922 interviews were achieved with a response rate of 54.2%.

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

Interpreting the results

Figures quoted in this bulletin are based on only those respondents who provided an answer to the relevant question. Missing answers can also occur for several reasons, including a refusal or an inability to answer a particular question.

Where a relationship has been discussed 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, or if other factors are actually more important.

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.

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.

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in 2017 following a compliance check by the Office for Statistics Regulation [[letter of confirmation](#)]. These statistics last underwent a full assessment [[full report](#)] against the Code of Practice in 2013.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- provided more detailed breakdowns in the [Results viewer](#) and made it easier for users to compare results across years;
- updated the survey topics annually to ensure we continue to meet changing policy need; and
- made regression analysis a standard part of our outputs to help users understand the contribution of particular factors to outcomes of interest.

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.

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.

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](#) that 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: <https://gov.wales/national-survey-wales-culture-and-welsh-language>

The [first release](#) for the survey was published on 18 June 2019.

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 WelshLanguageData@gov.wales

Open Government Licence

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated.

