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# Welsh National Marine Plan Monitoring and Reporting User Survey 2021

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This document is also available in Welsh.

## Welsh National Marine Plan Monitoring and Reporting User Survey 2021:

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Available at: <https://gov.wales/welsh-national-marine-plan-user-survey-2021>

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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## **Glossary**

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
WNMP	Welsh National Marine Plan
MCAA	Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009
HLMO	High Level Marine Objectives
MPS	UK Marine Policy Statement

## 1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The [Welsh National Marine Plan \(WNMP\)](#) sets out the Welsh Government's marine planning policy in relation to the sustainable development of Wales' marine plan area. The WNMP was adopted and published on 12 November 2019. It came into effect immediately, with public authorities required to take any authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with the WNMP, unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise.
- 1.2 Section 61 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA) sets a legal requirement to monitor and report (at least every three years) on the implementation of marine plans, including the WNMP. The purpose being to understand:
- the marine plan's contribution to meeting the High Level Marine Objectives (HLMOs) in the UK Marine Policy Statement (MPS);
  - progress being made towards securing the marine plan objectives;
  - the effects of the policies in the marine plan; and
  - the effectiveness of plan policies in securing the marine plan objectives.
- 1.3 A [Monitoring and Reporting Framework](#) for the WNMP was published in January 2020. The Framework outlines the strategic approach that Welsh Government, as the marine planning authority for Wales, will follow to develop indicators for monitoring the implementation of a plan-led system for Welsh waters.
- 1.4 The aim of this survey was to gather information on awareness of the WNMP. It also sought to gather information of awareness and use of guidance and tools to support marine planning.
- 1.5 Welsh Government intends to carry out an additional User Survey over the three year reporting period. This will enable Welsh Government to capture trends in the awareness and use of the WNMP and its supporting marine planning guidance and tools, as well as users' views on how the WNMP is performing in terms of achievement of its objectives.

## **2. Methodology**

- 2.1 The Marine Planning team in Welsh Government commissioned the Sustainable Futures research team in Knowledge and Analytical Services, Welsh Government to undertake a User Survey. This initial User Survey, which has been conducted only a year after WNMP publication, is designed to establish some initial contextual information to inform future monitoring. The User Survey was targeted at stakeholders from across the marine sector.
- 2.2 The questions in the User Survey were designed by the Welsh Government Knowledge and Analytical Services team and the Marine Planning policy team. All questions were optional for respondents.
- 2.3 The data for this User Survey was collected via Smart Survey between December 2020 and February 2021. A link to the Survey was published on the Business Wales Website. It was publicised through the Welsh Government [Marine Planning newsletter](#), the Welsh Government Marine and Fisheries news page and direct mailings to the Marine Planning Stakeholder Reference Group and the Marine Planning Decision Makers Group. The survey respondents were organisations and individuals involved in marine planning in addition to businesses in the marine industry.
- 2.4 Reminders to complete the User Survey were sent via email in both January and February 2021. The User Survey and all User Survey reminders were sent out in both English and Welsh.
- 2.5 There were 28 respondents in total to the User Survey.

### **Limitations**

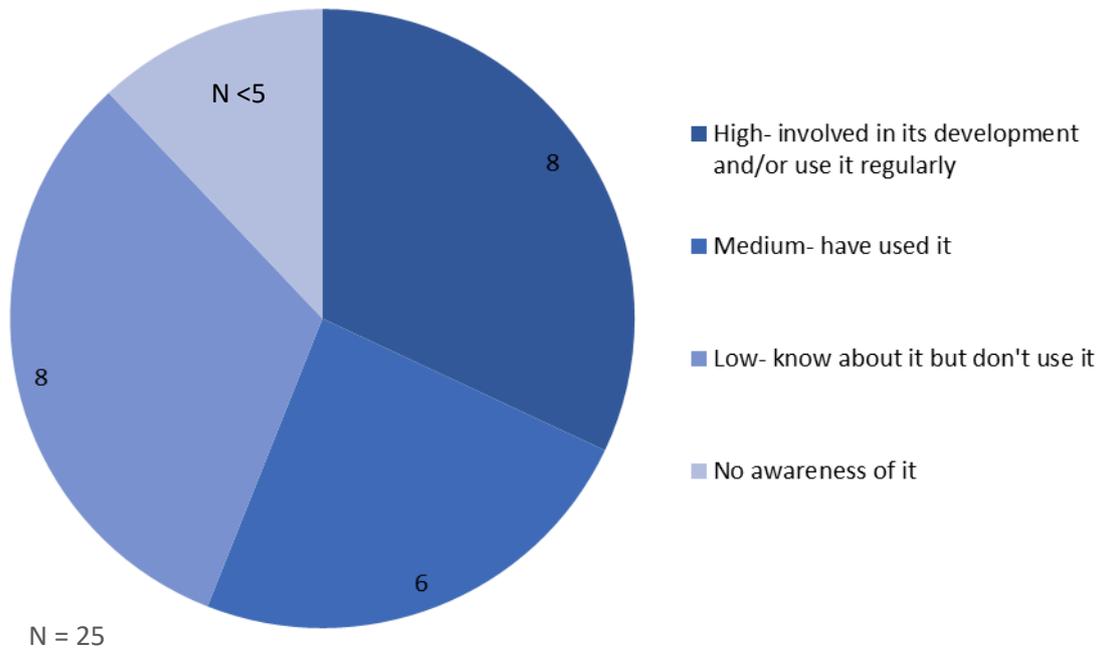
- 2.6 Due to the low response rates to this User Survey (25 respondents), the findings should be considered indicative of the recent publication of the WNMP only. It should also be noted that all questions were optional, resulting in a very low number of responses to some questions. The responses to the User Survey have enabled us to establish a baseline on the awareness and use of the WNMP to inform wider monitoring and reporting.

### 3. Findings

#### Awareness of the Welsh National Marine Plan

3.1 Of those who responded to this survey, there was an even split between those who reported having 'Low' and 'High' levels of awareness of the WNMP (eight out of 25). Almost a quarter of respondents (six out of 25) reported a 'Medium' level of awareness, and three out of 25 reported 'no awareness'.

**Figure 1: How would you rate your awareness of the Welsh National Marine Plane?**

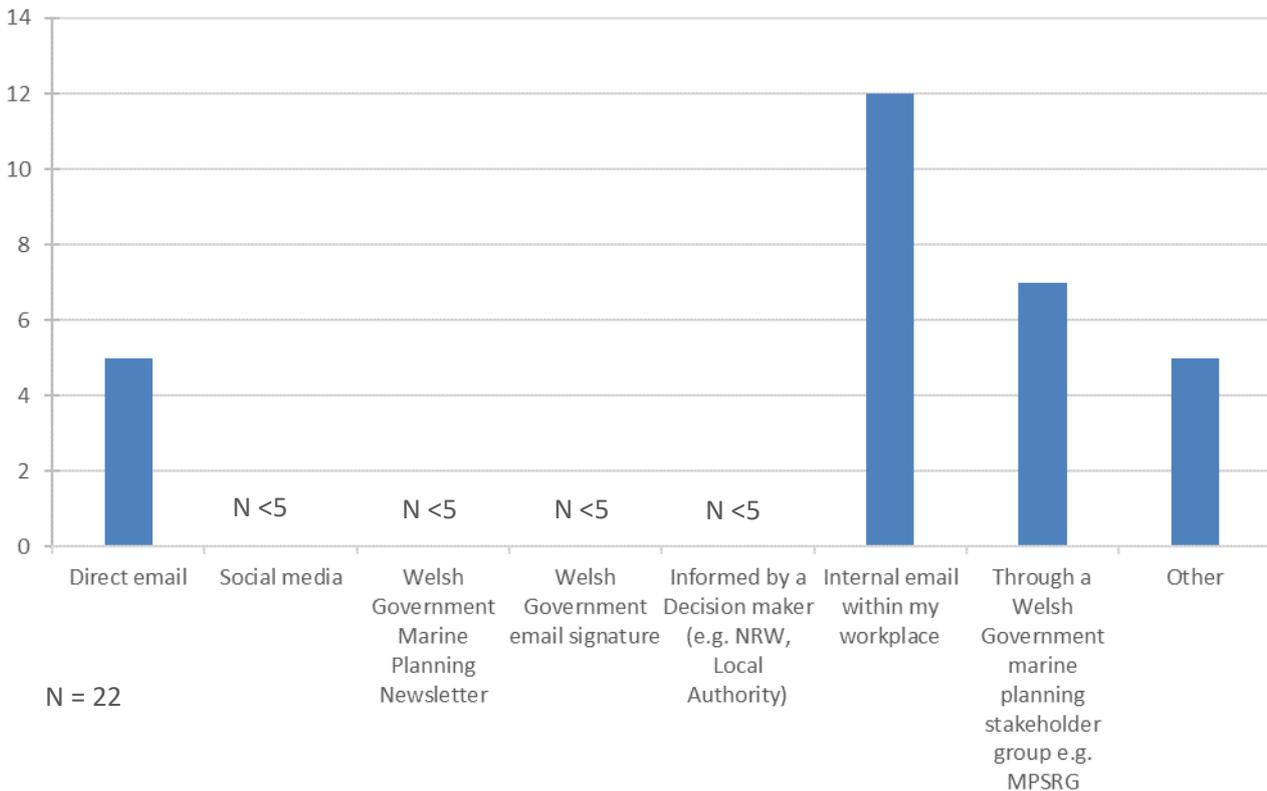


3.2 Respondents with at least a low level of awareness were asked where they heard about the WNMP. Over half (12 out of 22) reported hearing about this through an internal email in their workplace. The second most common response was 'Through a Welsh Government Marine Planning Stakeholder group' (seven out of 22).

3.3 Respondents who selected 'Other' were asked to specify. Responses included: through regular Marine Management Organisation Liaison meetings, through work

within the Natural Resources Wales Marine Licencing Team, and through the Welsh Fisherman’s Association.

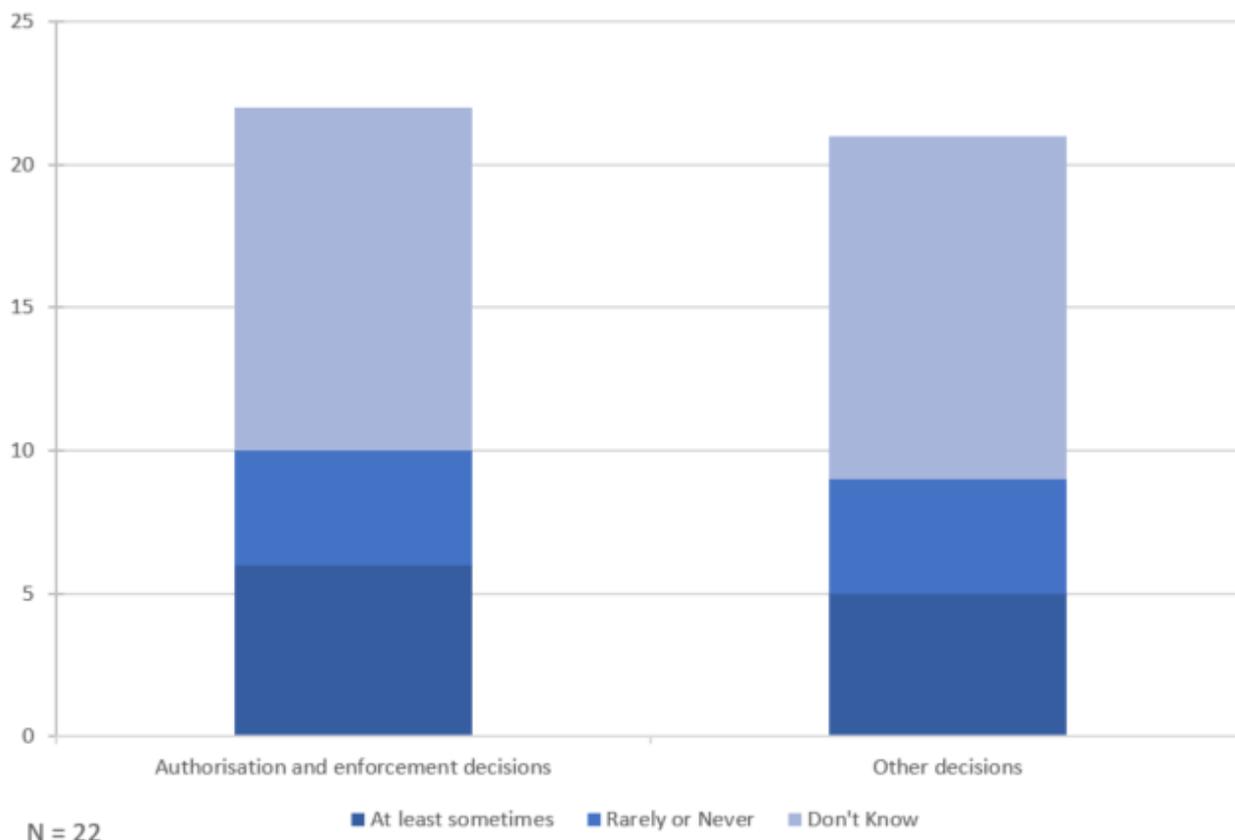
**Figure 2: How did you find out about the Welsh National Marine Plan? (Please select all that apply)**



### Use of Welsh National Marine Management Plan

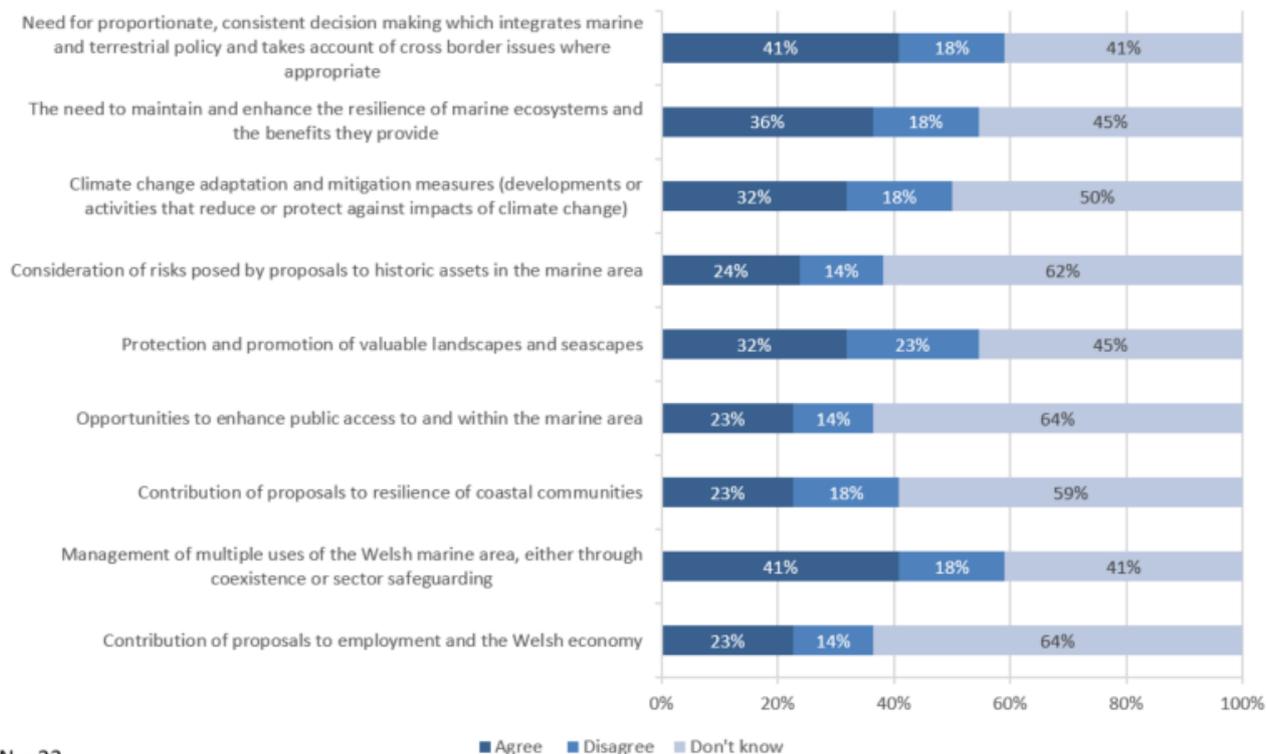
- 3.4 When asked whether their organisation had used the WNMP, almost three in five (13 out of 22) responded that they had, compared with six out of 22 who said they had not.
- 3.5 Capturing initial impression on how often organisations referred to policies in the WNMP when making different types of decisions was an important aim of the survey in order to establish a baseline. For ‘Authorisation and Enforcement Decisions’, five out of the 22 respondents reported that they ‘Always’ or ‘Often’ used the WNMP for these decisions and four out of 22 respondents reported that they use the WNMP ‘Always’ or ‘Often’ for ‘Other Decisions’. The most common response for both of these decision types was ‘Don’t Know’ (nine and 11 respondents out of 22 respectively).

**Figure 3: Since adoption of the Welsh National Marine Plan, how often has your organisation referred to policies in the Welsh National Marine Plan when making the following kinds of decisions?**



3.6 Respondents were asked whether the WNMP had been a factor in considering a number of objectives in relation to effective marine management. 'Need for proportionate, consistent decision making which integrates marine and terrestrial policy and takes account of cross border issues where appropriate' (nine out of 22 respondents) and 'Management of multiple uses of the Welsh marine area, either through coexistence or sector safeguarding' (nine out of 22 respondents) were the objectives to which respondents most frequently responded strongly agree and agree.

**Figure 4: Since adoption of the Welsh National Marine Plan, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the Welsh National Marine Plan has been a factor in guiding consideration of the following objectives:**

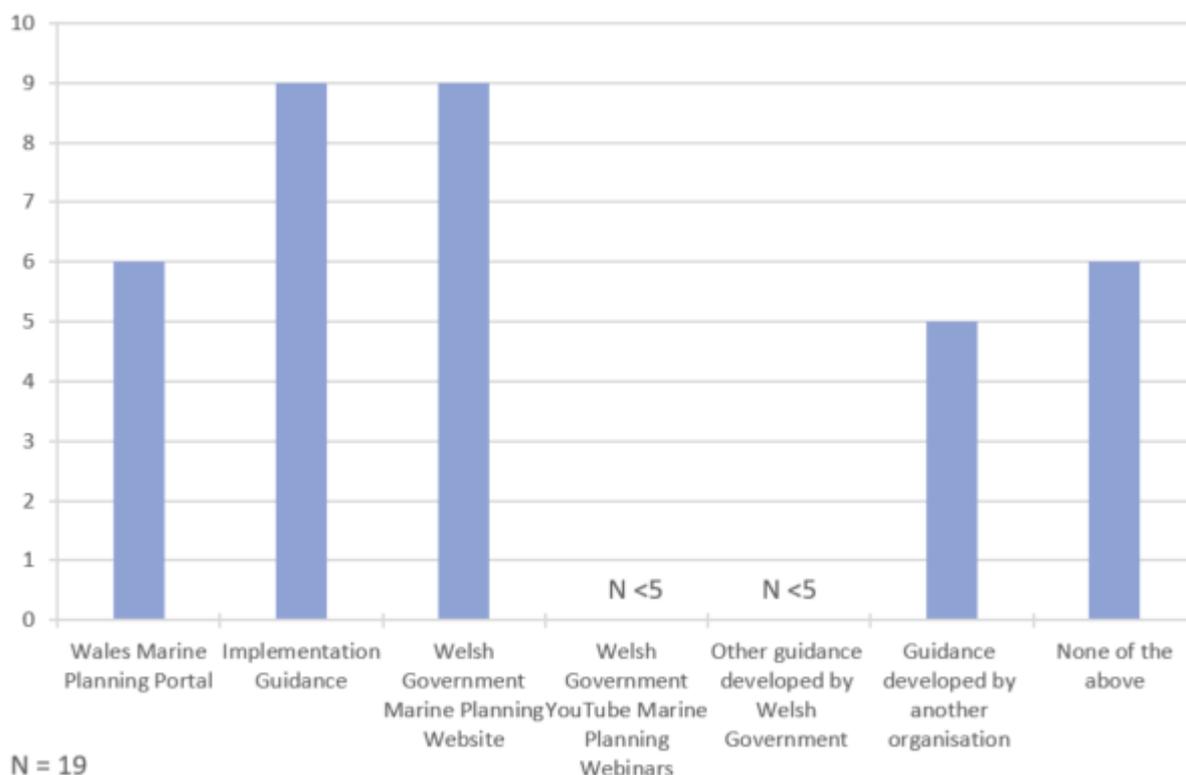


N = 22

- 3.7 Respondents were asked whether their organisation had been involved in developing and/or submitting a proposal to a formal decision-making process within the WNMP area. A third (six out of 18 respondents) stated that they had and 12 out of 18 respondents stated that they had not. Those who responded 'Yes' were asked in what capacity they had done this. The majority responded in an advisory body capacity, with a small number of other responses, including as a stakeholder and as an applicant.
- 3.8 Respondents were then asked what other resources they had used alongside the WNMP. The most common responses to this question were the Welsh Government Marine Planning website and the WNMP Implementation Guidance (both at nine out of 19 respondents).
- 3.9 If respondents selected 'Other guidance' or 'Guidance developed by another organisation' they were asked to specify what this was. A few respondents

referenced Natural Resources Wales guidance, as well as other legislation such as the Marine and Coastal Access Act.

**Figure 5: Which of the following resources have you used alongside the Welsh National Marine Plan? (Please select all that apply)**



3.10 Participants were then asked to report the reasons for which they had used the Wales Marine Planning Portal. The most common response to this was 'To find information and evidence on the Welsh Marine Area' with three quarters (nine out of 12) of respondents selecting this response.

## **4. Conclusions and Next Steps**

- 4.1 The majority of respondents (22 out of 25) had some awareness of the WNMP, with 14 out of 25 having a 'medium' or 'high' level of awareness. This indicates that communication of the WNMP is working effectively.
- 4.2 Almost three fifths of respondents (13 out of 22) reported that their organisation has used the WNMP. This indicates that there is a good level of engagement with the WNMP with organisations actively using the Plan, though there is room for some improvement on this.
- 4.1 This survey was intended as the first of several surveys to gather information on awareness of the WNMP and how it is being used. It has provided a baseline with this information. Welsh Government should carry out a further survey in this first three year monitoring period. This will allow for trends in the use of the WNMP and its supporting materials to be captured. This will also allow for users' views on the effectiveness of WNMP policies to inform wider monitoring and reporting.
- 4.2 Welsh Government wishes to express its gratitude to all respondents who completed the survey.

## **Annex A**

### **Welsh National Marine Plan Monitoring and Reporting User Survey**

The Welsh Government is carrying out this survey to better understand stakeholders' awareness of the Welsh National Marine Plan, and how this plan is used.

There will be questions about your awareness and understanding of the Welsh National Marine Plan. The survey requires no special knowledge for you to complete it. Your participation is voluntary, you do not have to answer all the questions if you do not want to, and you may withdraw from the survey at any point.

The survey could take up to 15 minutes to complete. You must be aged 18 years or older to participate in this survey.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research please feel free to contact any of the researchers involved in the project, using the contact details below.

Your data: The information provided by you in the survey will be held anonymously, it will be impossible to trace this information back to you individually. The anonymous data itself will be held up to 7 years in accordance with GDPR and may be used to produce reports and inform discussions with Marine Planning Stakeholder Groups. A privacy notice can be found [here](#).

Research Contact: Isabella Malet-Lambert (Isabella.malet-lambert@gov.wales)

Policy Contact: Sarah Bound (Sarah.Bound@gov.wales)

**Q1 In which language would you like to undertake the User Survey?**

- Welsh
- English

**Q2 I am responding to this survey as: Please select all that apply.**

- A decision-making authority (e.g. Local Planning Authority)
  - An applicant (e.g. for a Marine Licence)
  - An advisory body (e.g. statutory or non-statutory consultee)
  - Another stakeholder type (e.g. recreation organisation or individual. Please specify)
- 

**Q3 My job title or position held is:**

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**Q4 How would you rate your level of awareness of the Welsh National Marine Plan?**

- High - involved in its development and/or use it regularly
- Medium - have used it
- Low - know about it but don't use it
- No awareness of it

**Q5 How did you find out about the Welsh National Marine Plan? (Please select all that apply)**

- Direct email
  - Social media
  - Welsh Government Marine Planning Newsletter
  - Welsh Government email signature
  - Informed by a Decision maker (e.g. NRW, Local Authority)
  - Internal email within my workplace
  - Through a Welsh Government marine planning stakeholder group e.g. MPSRG
  - Other (Please specify)
-

**Q6 Since adoption of the Welsh National Marine Plan, has your organisation used the Welsh National Marine Plan when making any decisions?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**Q7 Since adoption of the Welsh National Marine Plan, how often has your organisation referred to policies in the Welsh National Marine Plan when making the following kinds of decisions?**

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not applicable - don't make those decisions	Don't know
Authorisation and enforcement decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					
Other decisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>					

**Q8 Since adoption of the Welsh National Marine Plan, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the Welsh National Marine Plan has been a factor in guiding consideration of the following objectives:**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Contribution of proposals to employment and the Welsh economy					
Management of multiple uses of the Welsh marine area, either through coexistence or sector safeguarding					
Contribution of proposals to resilience of coastal communities					
Opportunities to enhance public access to and within the marine area					
Protection and promotion of valuable landscapes and seascapes					
Consideration of risks posed by proposals to historic assets in the marine area					
Climate change adaptation and mitigation measures (developments or activities that reduce or protect against impacts of climate change)					
The need to maintain and enhance the resilience of marine ecosystems and the benefits they provide					
Need for proportionate, consistent decision making which integrates marine and terrestrial policy and takes account of cross border issues where appropriate					

**Q9 If you are able to expand on your responses to the question above, please provide examples:**

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**Q10 Since adoption of the Welsh National Marine Plan, has your organisation been involved in developing and/or submitting a proposal to a formal decision-making process within the Welsh National Marine Plan area?**

- Yes - Please state in what capacity (i.e. applicant, consultant, advisory body)

- 
- No

**Q11 When deciding whether or not to submit a proposal to a formal decision-making process, did you consider the Welsh National Marine Plan policies? (Please select all that apply)**

- Yes – proposal was submitted
- Yes – proposal was not submitted
- No – I wasn't aware this was necessary
- No – I didn't consider it relevant
- Not applicable – not involved in decision to submit a proposal

**Q12 Which of the following resources have you used alongside the Welsh National Marine Plan? (Please select all that apply)**

- Wales Marine Planning Portal
- Implementation Guidance
- Welsh Government Marine Planning Website
- Welsh Government YouTube Marine Planning Webinars
- Other guidance developed by Welsh Government (Please specify)
- Guidance developed by another organisation (Please specify)
- None of the above

**Q13 Since adoption of the Welsh National Marine Plan, have you used the Wales Marine Planning Portal for any of the following reasons?**

- To inform a decision under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009
  - To find information and evidence on the Welsh marine area
  - To find links to other (non-Welsh Government) sources of information
  - Other (Please specify)
- 

**Q14 How did you find out about this survey? (Please select all that apply)**

- Direct email
  - Social media
  - Welsh Government Marine Planning Newsletter
  - Internal email within my workplace
  - Business Wales Marine and Fisheries News page
  - Welsh Government Marine and Fisheries News page
  - Other (Please specify)
-