

Engagement summary – National Eisteddfod – Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill

30 September 2024

During the 2024 National Eisteddfod in Pontypridd, the Children, Young People and Education Committee took the opportunity to seek the views of children, young people and adults on the Welsh Language and Education (Wales) Bill, which had been referred to the Committee for scrutiny. This engagement was also accompanied by other citizen engagement including focus groups and a survey. A separate summary report has been published with the findings from that engagement.

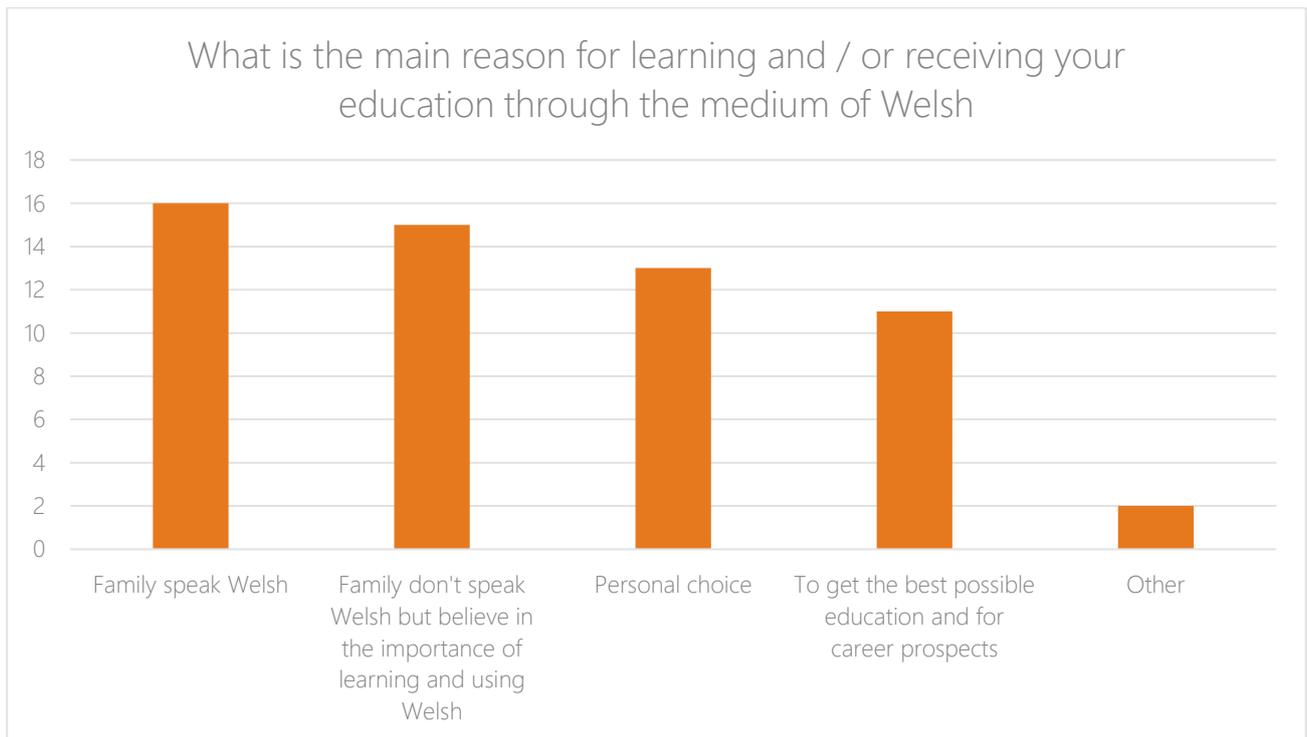
The Committee held a drop in session at the Senedd Eisteddfod stand where members of the public could talk directly to the Committee Chair and Clerk. This was also accompanied by a graffiti wall where people could share their views, along with postcards asking four questions. The postcards were available for the duration of the Eisteddfod. Full details of the questions are set out in Annex A.

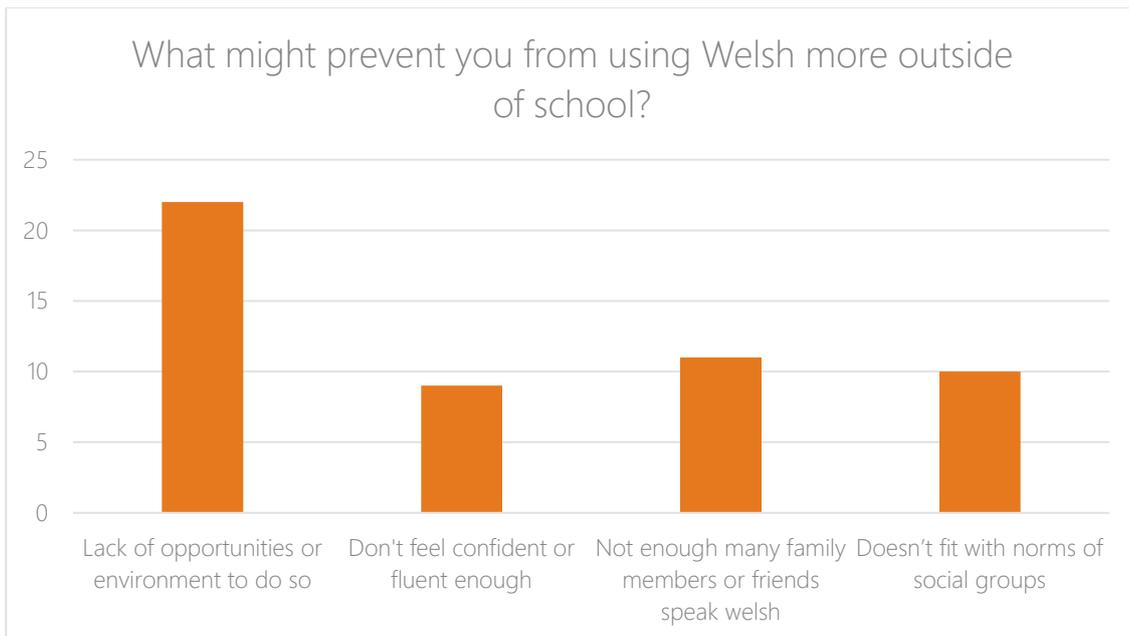
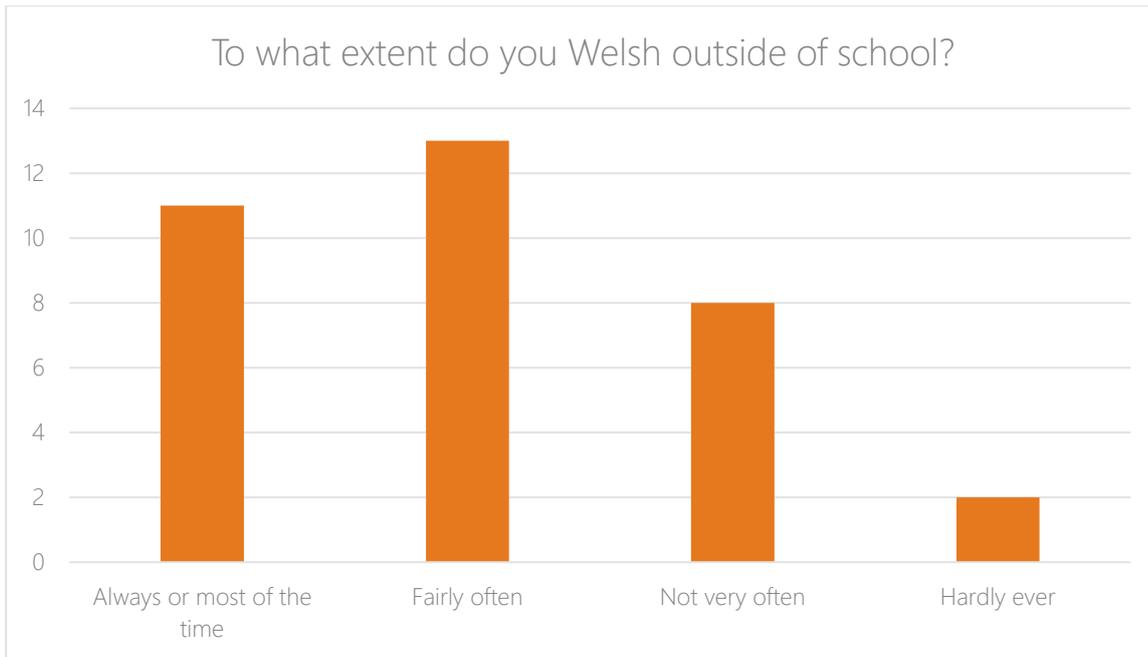


The views set out in this report are those of people who we talked to, or who filled out the postcards. They are unattributed to protect their anonymity. They do not represent the views of the Children, Young People and Education Committee.

1. Summary of post card responses

1. 40 completed postcards were submitted. However not everybody answered all the questions. The graphs below provide an overview of the responses to three of the questions.





2. What can be done to improve take up of Welsh education, and confidence in using Welsh outside of school?

2. One of the most popular suggestions was the need for more informal opportunities to use Welsh such as after school and holiday clubs, and outside of school. Someone suggested this

would help children to “get used to socialising in Welsh.” Another person suggested there was a need for Welsh language youth clubs. A parent said there were no Welsh language options for Welsh medium childcare, and agreed on the need for more Welsh medium holiday clubs. Another suggested more clubs and opportunities that are created “around school but independent of it.” One person suggested Welsh language “events for children and young people.” While another suggested “more visible opportunities.”

3. Another common theme was the importance of Welsh being taught in a way that was fun and would engage children and young people. One person said there needed to be a greater focus on “enthusing pupils.” While another said it was important to “make the language fun to speak. Not a “chore”.

4. One parent whose child is in an English medium primary school, said that her child’s Welsh education is done in a way that was fun and playful. They felt that teaching Welsh through stories, song and play was better than it being “drummed into them.” Another parent with a child in English medium secondary school agreed that there should be an emphasis on “fun”. They believed that English medium schools should be focused on getting children and young people to a conversational level of Welsh rather than on exams and tests.

5. A parent with a teen child in a English medium secondary school was concerned that Welsh lessons in English medium schools were too short. They felt that two hours was not sufficient, and that learning should be more “intensive”. Another person also suggested that there should be “longer” school lessons.

6. A parent with a teen child said that her child does not see the importance of the language, and that she had shared these views at her age. They now wished they had been taught more about how important and beneficial learning the language would be.

7. People said families need to be supported to help their child through Welsh medium education. One person said there was a need to “help non-Welsh speaking parents” develop confidence to support children to use Welsh “outside of school.” Another suggested that there should be courses for parents to support speaking Welsh at home. While someone else said that non Welsh speaking families should be given “resources to help them learn with their children.”

8. There was a call for more bilingual education resources. One person said that “schools should have the curriculum in accessible places with suggested reading to do with children that is age appropriate.”

9. We were also told of the need for more Welsh medium schools, and for improvements to current school facilities to make Welsh medium schools more attractive. A group of young people from a Welsh medium secondary school said that they need a new school building but that they don't have enough pupils to get one. They said that the quality of the school estate was affecting people's school choices.. Somebody else said that it was "disgraceful" that there is no Welsh medium secondary school in Merthyr. While, another said there was a need for more Welsh language schools.

10. We were also told of the need for more support for teachers. One said that teachers in English medium schools need more training, saying "I personally don't feel confident enough!" Another person said there was a need to "boost teachers' confidence to speak Welsh." Someone said that teachers should speak to their students more frequently in Welsh.

11. Some people suggested that there should only be Welsh language education available. One person said that this should be done over a time period, suggesting 25 years. While another said that "all primary schools should be Welsh only."

12. Finally, other recurring theme was the important role employers can play. One said that there was a need to "incentivise employers to view Welsh as a more useful skill." While another said employers should be encouraged to offer Welsh lessons. Somebody else said "Legislate so that private businesses have to provide services in Cymraeg. So kids, can aspire to have a careers using Cymraeg that provides fair pair and opportunities."

Annex 1

Informal discussions

On Saturday 3 August, the Committee Chair and Clerk held a drop in session at the Senedd's stand at the National Eisteddfod. This was promoted in advance. Anyone could come and speak to the Chair. Notes were taken of the issues discussed.

Graffiti wall

These drop in sessions were accompanied by a graffiti wall where people were asked to respond to the question: How can we ensure tht young people leave school with the confidence to speak Welsh? This was only available on Saturday 3 August.

Postcards

Throughout the Eisteddfod there were postcards on the Senedd staff and a box for them to be posted into. The postcards asked four questions. Three of which were multiple choice, and one free text. People could answer as many or as few of the questions as they wanted.

What is the main reason for you learning and / or receiving your education through the medium of Welsh? (Select all that apply)

- Family speak Welsh
- Family don't speak Welsh but believe in the importance of learning and using Welsh
- Personal choice
- To get the best possible education and for career prospects
- Other reasons

To what extent do you use Welsh outside of the school?

- Always or most of the time
- Fairly often
- Not very often
- Hardly ever

What might prevent you from using Welsh more outside of school? (Select all that apply)

- Lack of opportunities or environment to do so
- Don't feel confident or fluent enough
- Not many family members or friends speak Welsh
- Doesn't fit with norms of social groups

What more can be done to ensure all pupils can use Welsh independently by the time they leave school and have the confidence to do so?