

# MAE DY GYMRAEG DI'N GRÊT

End of year assessment



Prepared for: **IAITH: welsh centre for language planning**

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## Executive summary

### General

Only a relatively small number of the mothers felt completely happy<sup>1</sup> using the Welsh language at the beginning of the sessions. The mothers were at their 'happiest' speaking Welsh with children. By providing practical activities to encourage the participants to speak Welsh, the sessions succeeded in raising the participants' confidence and, by the end of the sessions, the evidence gathered from the mothers shows that they had increased confidence in their language skills and that they made more use of the Welsh language in different settings. Many demonstrated a very positive attitude towards the Welsh language following the language awareness elements.

#### **Percentages of mothers who felt happier with their Welsh language skills by the end of the sessions**

93% were happier with their understanding of Welsh  
91% were happier to speak Welsh  
78% were happier to read Welsh  
70% were happier with their Welsh language skills  
59% were happier to write Welsh

#### **Percentages of mothers who spoke more Welsh in various settings by the end of the sessions**

82% spoke more Welsh with their children  
74% spoke more Welsh with their friends  
73% spoke more Welsh with teachers  
73% spoke more Welsh with their family in general  
64% spoke more Welsh socially  
62% spoke more Welsh at work  
61% spoke more Welsh in shops and with organisations  
57% spoke more Welsh with extended family  
57% spoke more Welsh in the community  
51% spoke more Welsh with neighbours  
47% spoke more Welsh with their partner  
36% spoke more Welsh with 'officials'

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<sup>1</sup> 'Happy' or 'Hapus' (W) was used as an user-friendly term to represent the concept of being 'confident / comfortable / willing'.

### **Percentages of mothers making greater use of Welsh language media by the end of the sessions**

75% were watching more programmes on S4C

66% were making greater use of Welsh language media in terms of reading, watching and listening

51% were reading more Welsh language papers or books

43% were making greater use of Welsh to e-mail or text

41% were listening to more Welsh language radio programmes

35% were listening to more Welsh language music

34% were making greater use of Welsh on the web

Through these sessions, the participants became more aware of opportunities to use the Welsh language and Welsh language media. However, the linguistic background of their families and/or communities restricted many participants' use of the Welsh language. Therefore, consideration needs to be given to how best the good work accomplished during these sessions can be continued, possibly by establishing an informal social group for the mothers and by encouraging local organisations, e.g. schools and Mentrau Iaith, to organise appropriate activities and events.

Attention needs to be given to the best means of attracting more participants and how to address the linguistic differences between participants, since a fair number of participants were Welsh learners rather than Welsh speakers who did not habitually use Welsh.

### **Number of participants**

The sessions attracted 88 participants, the average number of participants was 61. Some sessions were relatively weak in terms of numbers, and a large proportion of the participants at many sessions consisted of Welsh learners. Attracting mothers to such activities can be challenging and the numbers at such community activities can often be low in general. However, attention needs to be given to how best to attract greater numbers and how to distinguish between those 'who are able to speak Welsh' (see brief) and those who are 'Welsh learners', and how to give appropriate support to both groups.

### **Location**

All locations were convenient and appropriate and provided an opportunity to offer various activities. Holding sessions at a Welsh medium school was a means of bringing parents into close contact with the school.

### **Timing**

In general, the timing of the sessions was convenient for parents, but it may be worth considering making further provision for mothers who will return to work before the end of the course.

### **Convenience**

Every location was convenient for parents with cars.

### **Childcare arrangements**

Effective childcare arrangements were in place at each venue. Occasionally, this was provided by the school.

### **Organisation and support for facilitators**

The initiative had been prepared carefully, with clearly structured courses and well-planned sessions. Detailed guidance was given to the facilitators and training sessions were held.

### **Resources**

Good resources were available at all sessions, including resources relating to the relevant activity and resources to reinforce those activities, e.g. books, DVDs, CDs, Welsh language papers/magazines.

### **Response of facilitators**

The facilitators demonstrated exceptional skill in responding to the mothers' questions, particularly in terms of adapting to local forms of Welsh and assisting learners. The facilitators' strengths were a special feature of the sessions observed.

### **Nature of activities**

A range of practical activities was available in each session, including cookery, ceramic painting, card-making, reflexology, visits by the police, and games. There was a specific session on language awareness. In every session, linguistic advice was given and a personal challenge was set. The emphasis on oral communication was an important aspect of all sessions.

### **Inclusivity**

The sessions included an introduction, a discussion, work in pairs, and speaking opportunities during activities, thus giving the participants an opportunity to speak the language in various settings and to discuss different issues. The participants praised highly the opportunity to speak the language, and many had changed their language practices as a result of these sessions.

### **Use of the language with children**

The mothers spoke more Welsh with children than with adults. The linguistic environment of the home influenced this and the contribution of the *Cylch Meithrin* (nursery group) and school was important. By the end of the course, the parents were more confident.

### **Use of the language with family members**

This varied according to the linguistic ability of the family. By the end of the course, the mothers made greater use of Welsh within the family, but it was also difficult for some to change their language practices.

### **Use of the language with partners**

Only a minority of the partners spoke Welsh well, therefore, only a minority of the mothers could speak Welsh with their partners. By the end of the course, there was a general shift towards making greater use of Welsh, although this was difficult for many.

### **Language use with friends**

The mothers' ability to speak Welsh with friends varied according to area. By the end of the course, there was a general shift along the linguistic continuum. Many mothers felt more confident to speak Welsh with friends. The school provided some with a new group of friends.

### **Use of Welsh within the community**

The mothers' language practices within the community varied according to the percentage of those who used Welsh in their communities, and some mothers had greater opportunities to use it than others. By the end of the course, a significant proportion of the mothers had the confidence to make greater use of Welsh. This was dependent upon the opportunities to use the language, their language skills, their confidence levels and Welsh speakers' response to them.

### **Use of Welsh in the workplace**

Although a high percentage of the mothers spoke Welsh at work 'occasionally', only a small percentage used it as their main language. The mothers became aware of the value of Welsh in the workplace. It was agreed that wearing an 'I speak Welsh badge' would be a means of increasing use of the language in this context.

### **Use of Welsh in shops and with organisations**

A minority used Welsh in shops and with organisations, although some had become aware of where they were able to use the language. Confidence was a barrier. It was difficult for the parents to use Welsh while communicating with organisations by phone, although they had received a comprehensive list of numbers from the facilitators, because the service provided was often unsatisfactory. Encouraging trading organisations to promote the use of the 'I speak Welsh' badge would assist those who would like to use Welsh first.

### **Welsh language events**

On the whole, the mothers did not attend Welsh language events for a number of reasons, including a shortage of free time. Some mothers appreciated the efforts made by schools to organise events. The most popular events were those organised for children. It was suggested that events should be targeted specifically at the needs of parents.

### **Welsh language books and media**

At the beginning of the sessions, only a minority used Welsh language media. The majority of the mothers used Welsh language media via the television. The mothers became more aware of the various available media, particularly those for children. By the end of the course, there was a general shift towards making greater use of Welsh language media.

### **Skills and confidence**

Only a minority of mothers were completely happy to speak Welsh at the beginning of the course, apart from speaking with children. Only a minority of them were completely happy with any of the linguistic skills. By the end of the course, there was a general positive shift along the linguistic confidence continuum.

## Recommendations

- 1: Where it appears that there will only be a small number of participants (e.g. a sparsely populated area), it may be worth casting the net wider to secure a good number of participants in each group from the outset. It may be worth aiming for 8 – 10.
- 2: Many of the mothers were disappointed that there was no clear progression at the end of the course. It would be useful for Mentrau Iaith and primary schools to provide progression options. Welsh language events, which appeal to children and families would be warmly welcomed.
- 3: Making a specific provision for Welsh learners in the sessions should be considered. It would be useful to target mothers with a particular level of linguistic skills, because a separate provision is needed for learners at a basic level.
- 4: The practical activities helped to build the mothers' confidence in relation to general language skills, and this translated into their perception of their linguistic skills. It may be worth considering which practical activities are likely to generate the greatest oral interaction.
- 5: In order to justify the number of staff and the childcare arrangements, it would be useful to ensure an adequate number of participants.
- 6: Providing sessions, at a convenient time, for those mothers returning to work should be considered.
- 7: The facilitators made a special effort to speak the local forms of Welsh. It may be possible to produce language guidance to build the mothers' confidence in this regard.
- 8: It may be worth considering using a room that is large enough to hold lively activities for mothers and their children together.
- 9: The mothers suggested it would be helpful if those working in shops and organisations wore a badge showing that they are able to speak Welsh.



## Terms of reference

- i We were awarded a contract by Iaith Cyf to act as external assessor at the beginning of November 2009. Iaith Cyf organised ten groups (see section 1 below) and held ten sessions in each area. We visited four of the ten groups within the scheme between November and February. We visited two groups twice, at the mid-point of the programme and at its conclusion. We visited another group midway through the programme and we visited yet another group at the end of the programme.
- ii We assisted with work on the Baseline Questionnaire, which enabled us to measure the linguistic progress of parents at the end of the sessions. These were analysed by using the statistical programme, SPSS.
- iii We produced reports on the visits and we prepared a mid-programme report summarising our observations during the sessions.
- iv Eleven mothers in four different areas were interviewed in relation to their experiences on the course and their use of the Welsh language with their children, their families, in the community and in other areas related to the desired outcomes.
- v This is the end of year report. In accordance with the brief, this report will address the following issues:

### The sessions

- o The organisation of the sessions
- o The resources used
- o The inclusive nature of the sessions
- o The nature of the activities
- o The nature and relevance of the linguistic messages
- o The response of the facilitators to the issues raised by the participants
- o The support given to the facilitators

### The language practice of the participants

- o Within the family
- o With peers and friends
- o Within the community
- o With organisations
- o In the workplace

### Outcomes

The desired outcomes at the end of the sessions included the following. We tried to measure success against these outcomes quantitatively by means of the questionnaire and qualitatively by means of visits and interviews.

- i. To be aware of the advantages of bringing children up bilingually
- ii. To make greater use of Welsh with children
- iii. To be aware of strategies on bringing children up through the medium of Welsh
- iv. To make greater use of Welsh socially
- v. To be aware of the opportunities to attend Welsh language social events
- vi. To make greater use of Welsh in the workplace
- vii. To be aware of the value of Welsh in the workplace
- viii. To be aware of services provided through the medium of Welsh
- ix. To be aware of Welsh language materials
- x. To have more confidence in their language skills

## Preliminary notes

10 'Mae Dy Gymraeg Di'n Grêt' sessions were held in 10 locations.

In total, there were 88 participants. 2 groups met in Gwynedd, 2 in Ceredigion, 5 in Carmarthenshire, and 1 in Neath Port Talbot.

Questionnaires were completed by 67 of the participants, giving a response rate of 76%. This corresponds broadly to the average number of participants at each session, which was 6.1. However, 12 of those failed to return their final questionnaires, therefore the analysis of the change in language behaviour will be based on 54 of the participants, which is 61% of the total participants. We believe that this is adequate to draw general conclusions.

In the percentage analysis, it should be borne in mind that the number of respondents was below 100. Therefore, the percentages will be expanded and small differences between percentages will be less significant. However, they will be significant where the percentages are substantial enough to demonstrate a clear trend.

In the questionnaire, the respondents' own views are given on the questions asked. Therefore, the various measures, e.g. of the linguistic ability of family members, are not objective. The method used to measure language skills is also not objective, rather it is based on self-assessment and reflects the respondent's own perceptions.

Although some care should be taken in interpreting the responses, clear trends do emerge.

20 (23%) of the participants were based in Gwynedd, 25 (28%) in Ceredigion, 38 (43%) in Carmarthenshire and 5 (6%) in Neath Port Talbot.

From the respondents, 19 (28%) were based in Gwynedd, 16 (24%) in Ceredigion, 27 (40%) in Carmarthenshire and 5 (7.5%) in Neath Port Talbot.

We feel that the percentage of respondents corresponds closely enough to the percentage of participants to allow general conclusions to be drawn by area.

# 1 The sessions

## 1.1 Number of participants

Location	Number of participants who registered	Average number of participants
Bangor	12	8 – 9
Dolgellau	8	6
Aberystwyth	13	7-9
Cardigan	12	10-12
Carmarthen	6	3
Llandovery	5	3
Cwm Gwendraeth	10	8
Amman Valley	6	4
Llanelli	11	6-8
Ystalyfera	5	2-3
<b>Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>61</b>

The following numbers were present at the sessions observed:

Cross Hands	6
Cross Hands (2)	7
Cardigan	6
Aberystwyth	8
Llandovery	3
Llandovery (2)	3
<b>Average</b>	<b>5.5</b>

In one case, the participants were found via the clinic, the ‘Cylch Ti a Fi’ and ‘Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin’ without further advertisement. Although this ensured that the mothers belonged to an interested group, the numbers were insufficient and it would be worth casting the net wider or doing more to persuade others to attend. One mother in a small group said that “it doesn’t matter that the group is small” but “I prefer to have five or six present”. Of her peers at the Cylch Ti a Fi, she said, “I think it’s suitable for them too. It’s ironic; they don’t want to come and they don’t feel confident, but the whole purpose of the group is to build confidence.”

In another group, participants were found through personal contact with mothers who had been part of the TWF scheme. These sessions were not advertised either, but sufficient numbers were attracted. In this case, those who usually or mainly speak English only were targeted, although they were able to speak Welsh. The participants had been educated at Welsh-medium or bilingual comprehensive schools. In more populated areas, it was easier to attract a good number of participants.

In a third case, Iaith Cyf had provided a poster to advertise the sessions and the mothers were identified via the TWF scheme. A large proportion of the mothers in

this group were Welsh learners, and the nature of the activities reflected this. There were activities to develop skills as well as confidence.

In another group, it was apparent that there was a high proportion of Welsh learners, some of whom were taking relatively early steps in terms of learning the language.

In each of the groups observed, there were specific reasons for absences, including illness, bad weather, the run up to Christmas, and mothers returning to work before the end of the course.

**Consideration 1: Where it appears that there will only be a small number of participants (e.g. a sparsely populated area), it may be worth casting the net wider to secure a good number of participants from the outset in each group. It may be worth aiming for 8 – 10.**

**Consideration 2: It would be beneficial to target mothers with a particular level of language skills, because a separate provision is needed for learners at a basic level.**

## **1.2 Location**

Each of the locations we visited had its merits.

1.2.1 There was a convenient car park at each of the four locations.

1.2.2 At three venues, there was a separate room for the mothers' children. The room at one venue was a little small, but this ensured that there was a closeness between the mothers. Another group met at a pleasant hall, where there was space for the mothers and children to share in activities at the end of the course. There was sufficient space at three venues to hold very diverse activities.

1.2.3 Three of the venues visited were attached to schools, where it was possible to continue with Welsh-medium education. It was beneficial to create this link in order to ensure linguistic continuity. The other group met at the Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin centre, and this was also very beneficial in terms of the children's linguistic continuity.

**Consideration: It may be worth considering using a room that is large enough to hold lively activities for mothers and their children.**

## **1.3 Timing**

We felt that the timing of the sessions, mainly in the afternoons, gave the mothers a sense of having an enjoyable afternoon. It was also convenient for those mothers who already had children at school.

One group experienced some difficulties at the end of the course because some mothers had already returned to work. It may be worth considering whether the

timing of the sessions could be varied by providing sessions, e.g. on Saturday mornings, to accommodate these mothers at the end of the course.

**Consideration: Providing sessions at a convenient time for those mothers returning to work should be considered.**

#### **1.4 Convenience for the participants**

Each of the four locations visited was convenient for those with cars. Two venues were within walking distance of the town centre.

#### **1.5 Childcare arrangements**

Each location provided effective childcare facilities. The children were accommodated in a nearby classroom or room at three venues and within the same hall as the group at the other venue. In this case, there was sufficient space and, although the children could prove to be a distraction, one mother was pleased that her child was nearby and that she was able to play through the medium of Welsh. Two nursery assistants cared for the children at each location. Childcare facilities were required at all venues and the mothers were grateful for this provision.

The school staff were responsible for the children at one location. At another location, the Cylch Meithrin was running at the same time. Where the number of mothers was low, and where childcare facilities were needed, the number of staff at the sessions could outnumber the mothers (e.g. facilitator, Menter Iaith assistant, activity leader, two childcarers).

**Consideration: In order to justify the number of staff and the childcare arrangements, it would be useful to ensure that there is an adequate number of participants.**

#### **1.6 Organisation and support for the facilitators**

Each group observed had been well organised. Iaith Cyf had provided guidance and resources. These covered advertisements, a programme for the sessions, language messages, suggested activities etc. The leaders had attended training sessions organised by Iaith Cyf.

The sessions were consistent. Welsh language books and magazines were available to the participants. Light refreshments were available at the sessions in every location, and the sessions also included a presentation, discussions and a well-organised activity, often with an external visitor.

The session leaders praised the support provided by Iaith Cyf. This included guidance on directing the sessions, guidance on discussing the language in its context, and the structure of the sessions. They were given appropriate resources for the sessions, including specific materials for the language awareness sessions.

The consistent activities, discussion methods and responses from the facilitators testify to the comprehensive organisation on Iaith Cyf.'s part. Examples of good practice, which added value to some of the sessions, were observed and it would be beneficial to share these amongst the facilitators.

## **1.7 Resources**

Various resources were available at the sessions attended. A kitchen or kitchen facilities were available at each location and were used during cookery sessions and to prepare refreshments. Additional resources included those brought to the sessions by the presenter e.g. a portable bed for the reflexology session, cookery resources, appropriate materials for practical activities e.g. making decorations, card-making, cookery, etc.

Welsh language publications were available, including popular titles such as 'Storïau Sydyn', and Welsh language music CDs were played occasionally. The mothers were able to use some of these resources at home.

Resources, including charts, fact cards, pictures and flipcharts, were available for the language awareness sessions. Striking quotations from the Report on Education in Wales in 1847 were set out on a chart on language awareness. Dates were omitted on some information charts. These could have been useful to aid the mothers' understanding of the history of the language.

Specific resources were provided for some sessions. At one location, a parachute and puppets were useful for activities with children, which included teaching songs to the mothers. At another location, a session included Welsh-medium games that were suitable for children, but which also provided activities for the mothers.

An effort was made to use external resources e.g. television programmes, a cinema, visits to a Welsh shop, in order to encourage Welsh language viewing, to encourage use of Welsh in the community and to generate discussion.

Appropriate leaflets were circulated in relation to the activities, presenting relevant vocabulary where needed.

## **1.8 The response of the facilitators**

The facilitators were very willing to respond to issues raised by the participants. These issues ranged from linguistic information, information on the history of the language, to Welsh in the community.

The facilitators often gave linguistic advice e.g. on vocabulary, but on other occasions they would demonstrate clearly when it would be customary to use English words while speaking Welsh.

By the end of the sessions, all the facilitators observed had built a close relationship with the participants. One mother said that she was always pleased to see the facilitator in town, knowing that she would be able to practise her Welsh: "It's nice to

see [name] around town – sometimes when I speak Welsh, people don't realise that I'm a second-language Welsh speaker – I feel more confident.”

One mother praised the facilitator for the way she organised the sessions: “[Name] presents the course well. She organises various activities and somewhere for the children to go – that's a great help – I have no family nearby at present to help me.”

## **1.9 The nature of the activities**

The activities were practical in nature. Reflexology sessions were observed at three locations. Other activities included making Christmas decorations, cookery, making clothes from waste material, ceramic painting, nail painting, visits to shops, cafes and libraries, a trip to the cinema, Christmas card-making, yoga, discussion sessions on attitudes towards language, and sessions on resources for children. One session provided a specific activity for the mothers with their children at the end, and the large room facilitated this.

The activities provided an opportunity to introduce relevant vocabulary e.g. cookery (recipes, cooking utensils), reflexology (parts of the body, illnesses). In these session, the emphasis was on encouraging the mothers to talk and discuss, either with the trainer or amongst themselves. In the reflexology sessions, the mothers would take turns. In one group, they worked in pairs.

At each session, the emphasis was on practical work and this was a means of building the mothers' confidence in their own ability. This could, in turn, build their linguistic confidence. One mother said, “The sessions helped – I had no confidence, we had cookery sessions, got some recipes, tried them at home, made cards, made things from icing, then I thought I could do it. It's given me a kick start – otherwise, I just spoke English with everyone.”

One mother noted how the activities enabled them to speak, “The activities – I've enjoyed everything really. I think everything is in place to make us practise our Welsh.” Another mother said that “it helps to do something in Welsh every day, in a natural way, and eventually, you almost forget that you're speaking Welsh”.

It was the opportunity to speak Welsh that appealed most to another mother, “The biggest benefit from the course is the opportunity to meet others who speak Welsh or who are learning the language. And the best thing for me is the opportunity to practise – because when I attend an Wlpan course, there are few opportunities to practise speaking the language. Only writing. This gives you an opportunity to speak.”

The facilitators had been instructed to give a language message or to set a language challenge for the mothers at each session. This included sending a Welsh text message, speaking Welsh first while shopping, making Welsh telephone calls, giving 'I speak Welsh' badges to shop workers, etc. Many mothers felt a sense of pride after completing these tasks.

**Consideration: The practical activities helped to build the mothers' confidence in relation to general language skills, and this translated into their perception**



**of their linguistic skills. It may be worth considering which practical activities are likely to generate the greatest oral interaction.**

### **1.10 Inklusivity**

The sessions observed provided an opportunity for the participants to interact on a number of levels, including a presentation, discussions between participants and the presenter or organiser, and discussions amongst participants. Some sessions included relatively long presentations, while others made effective use of working in pairs, e.g. playing a game or a hand reflexology session.

The organisers made a clear effort to ask the participants about their activities and to generate responses from them. The participants felt free to ask for vocabulary or clarification of anything that they had initially misunderstood.

The facilitators emphasised the use of Welsh as it is spoken locally. This included the use of dialect, and the use of English words where this would be common practice as part of the dialect. This tactic made many mothers feel that their language skills were adequate in terms of speaking Welsh.

The mothers agreed unanimously that the sessions had been very beneficial in encouraging them to speak with one another. This is one of the main attributes of the sessions according to many. "You aren't sat in a classroom. You're speaking Welsh. It's more relaxed – you can do as you please", said one mother. Another said: "I've been able to speak with friends – do things". Another said, "It's helped in terms of confidence and made me aware of the people I could try to speak Welsh with – made me aware of more opportunities." Another mother said, "It's given me the confidence to try. It doesn't matter if I make mistakes – and if I don't use the mutations." The course was "good for someone like me because I don't have much confidence to speak Welsh in the community," she said.

The combination of speaking and activities appealed to one mother: "Speaking Welsh – three of us together. Just an opportunity to meet with people and speak more. I've enjoyed myself, and the reflexology, and I learned a lot from the visit of the Police."

One of the mothers found the course very helpful: "The course has helped me loads. From [placename] ... I hadn't realised how Welsh it was – although I went to a Welsh school – I've moved here, I speak more now."

Another of the mothers was also very enthusiastic, "It's our language – we shouldn't feel awkward if we use Welsh – we now feel, well if they don't understand then, who cares! Fantastic ... the fact that you don't mind including some English words, my mutations aren't fantastic, I use the language, meet people, speak Welsh in the group."

**Consideration 1: Many of the mothers were disappointed that there was no clear progression at the end of the course. There is a need to think of ways to continue with and expand upon the good work done on the course.**

## **Consideration 2: A real effort was made to speak the kind of Welsh that is generally heard in the area.**

### **1.11 The relevance of the language messages**

Language messages were sometimes introduced as part of a conversation, as a weekly challenge, or during a specific session. Achievable challenges were set by the facilitators, which included texting in Welsh, asking for goods at a shop in Welsh, offering 'bilingual' badges to shop workers, making Welsh phone-calls, and watching Welsh language TV programmes.

This had a profound effect on some mothers. One said, "When I saw the decline in the numbers [of Welsh speakers] – I had to do something about it."

Participants were encouraged to use Welsh first and to feel comfortable doing so, with suggestions on how to do it. The mothers were clearly encouraged to speak Welsh with their children. Amongst the positive proposals was the idea of using a puppet that would always speak Welsh.

In the session on language awareness that was observed, there was an effective discussion on the history of the Welsh language in recent years, by linking pictures with dates, and also by choosing pictures that correspond to the mothers' perception of Wales and the Welsh language.

The mothers mentioned traditionally negative attitudes towards the language. This was evident in one of the mothers' own experience. Her grandfather did not believe that the Welsh language had any value. This mother had decided to send her second child to a Welsh-medium school, although her first child attended an English-medium school. Another mother felt strongly about placing Welsh first on signage, and she was pleased that her child was in a Welsh-medium stream and she was very willing to challenge her husband on this. The messages from this session were relevant to the mothers' decisions.

One 'learning' point was to build confidence in contacting organisations, using the Welsh language first without fear that the person would not speak Welsh. However, the mothers encountered some difficulties in asking organisations if they could use Welsh, because the responses from the organisations were mixed.

From our observations, the language messages related to

- i. using Welsh naturally with children, family and friends
- ii. encouraging the participants to use Welsh first
- iii. raising their own confidence in relation to the Welsh language
- iv. understanding the position of the Welsh language in its historical context
- v. understanding attitudes towards the Welsh language
- vi. understanding that it is appropriate to use Welsh in the workplace and in communicating with organisations.

## 2 Use of the language with children

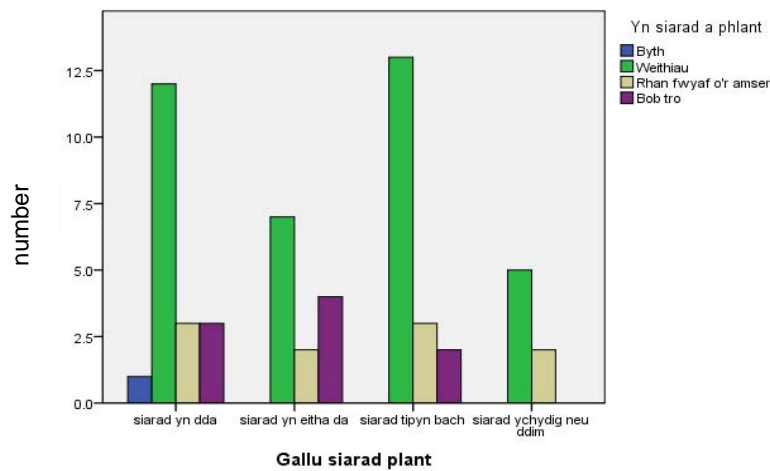
19 of the mothers had children who were considered to be good Welsh speakers and 13 others had children who were able to speak Welsh 'quite well'. Some had children who were too young to speak.

**Graph 1: The ability of the mothers' children to speak Welsh**



Prior to the sessions, it was mainly with their children that the mothers would speak Welsh, and the majority would speak some Welsh with them. 34% spoke Welsh with their children at all times or most of the time.

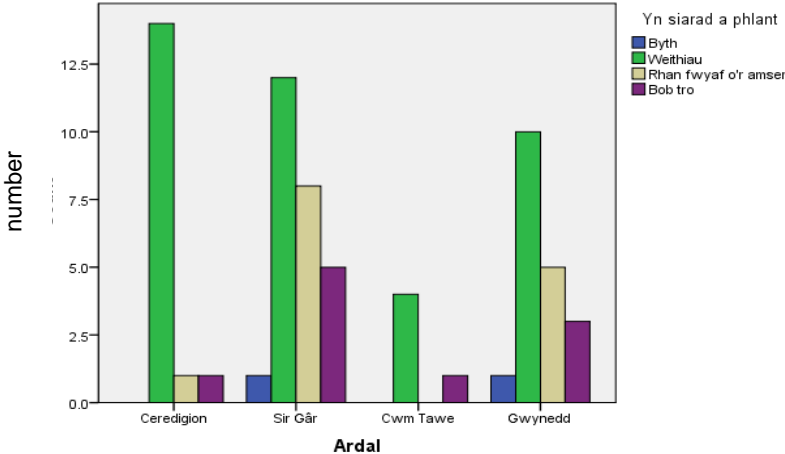
**Graph 2: Mothers who speak Welsh with their children according to the children's ability in the Welsh language**



Even when children could speak Welsh well, the majority of the mothers would only speak Welsh with them 'occasionally'. 9 of the mothers communicated with their children in Welsh only, and it was the main language of communication for 10 others.

There was some distinction in practice in terms of speaking with children prior to the course, based on area. In Ceredigion, we found that only a few spoke Welsh mainly or always with their children, unlike other areas. This can be attributed to the fact that a significant number of the mothers in this county are still learning Welsh.

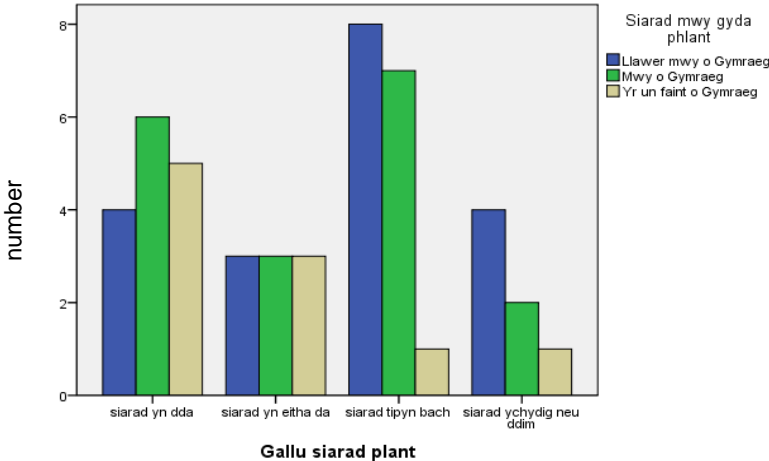
**Graph 3: Mothers who speak Welsh with their children by area**



When asked at the end of the sessions if they spoke more or less Welsh with their children, we found that 82% of the mothers spoke 'more Welsh' or 'much more Welsh' with their children by the end of the course. (Around 10 mothers did not respond, either because their children did not yet speak any language, or because they did not complete the questionnaire at the end of the course.)

A trend towards speaking more Welsh was apparent, whatever the child's ability in Welsh. By the end of the course, 10 mothers continued to speak the same amount of Welsh with their children, while 37 spoke more or much more Welsh with them.

**Graph 4: Mothers who speak more Welsh at the end of the course, according to the children's ability in Welsh**



The mothers' experience was dependent on their own linguistic standard, and on the language that they had used with their children prior to the course. One mother, who had learned Welsh to a relatively high standard said, "we speak Welsh at home – sometimes – our next door neighbours – they speak Welsh – and the children next door speak Welsh with my eldest daughter." Her husband comes from overseas and she was unable to attend a Welsh course after having her second baby.

One of the mothers was still in contact with other mothers after the conclusion of the course, but because they were all learners, they would sometimes speak English, but they make an effort to speak Welsh with their children. "I still meet with two others from the course – we often speak English, but we try to speak Welsh with the babies."

Another mother, who is also a Welsh learner, has a Welsh-speaking husband. This obviously assisted her in terms of speaking Welsh with her children, "my husband's family speak Welsh – they speak Welsh with the children. I spoke Welsh with the children before the course." Another mother had a non-Welsh speaking husband, but she would "speak Welsh when I speak to my daughter alone".

Another mother did not speak much Welsh at home. Her husband comes from overseas and she comes from England. With her child having started at nursery school, she now has more contact with the Welsh language. "My daughter is four years old now and last September she started at nursery school in [placename] ... so she heard more Welsh being spoken and there was an opportunity for me to try to speak Welsh with the staff. After Easter, she moved to the school, full-time."

A mother who was brought up in England is now learning the Welsh language. Her husband was born in Wales and they are now trying to speak Welsh with their children: "I speak Welsh with my son ... my mother lives in [placename] ... I've lived here since I was ten."

One mother had a greater ability to speak Welsh, and this was reflected in her tendency to speak Welsh with her children: "With the children, I speak a little Welsh – more and more now that they learn it at school and understand everything – but it becomes a habit to speak English if you've already started. My husband is a Welsh-speaker – he speaks Welsh well. He speaks Welsh with the children but again, it's an effort to speak with the children because it involves a change. If we speak with the children, we do too – but not usually." It seems that it is problematic to change languages once you've started speaking in the other language.

One mother had a mixed linguistic background. Some of her relatives spoke Welsh, but her husband did not. She would now make an effort to speak Welsh with her children. "We watch Cyw in the morning, mam-gu speaks Welsh, my husband speaks English, but he's the only one in the house. My mam-gu. Speaks a lot more Welsh with [son's name], but Wenglish sometimes."

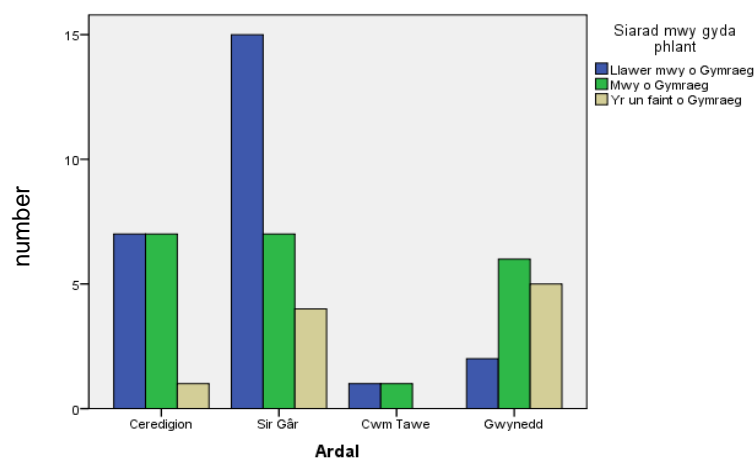
Another mother was brought up in an English-speaking home, although her father spoke Welsh. She had moved to a more Welsh-speaking village and used more Welsh for that reason. She had attended a Welsh-medium comprehensive school, but had not used Welsh with her peers. She now uses some Welsh with her child

“but we’ve moved to [placename] and we speak a lot of Welsh now. I speak half and half with the child now.”

Another mother has a more Welsh-speaking background. She now speaks much more Welsh in general, but she has no doubt what language she speaks with her husband and child. “I speak Welsh at home with my husband and child.”

There was some variation by area, with mothers in Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire clearly speaking more Welsh with their children by the end of the sessions. The baseline was slightly different, however, with fewer using Welsh as the main medium of communication with their children at the beginning of the sessions.

**Graph 5: Mothers who speak more Welsh with their children, by area**



At the beginning of the course, 14 out of 16 mothers from Ceredigion would only speak Welsh with their children ‘occasionally’ and there has been clear progress in usage there. Half of the Carmarthenshire mothers already spoke Welsh mainly with their children, and 8 of the 19 mothers in Gwynedd did so, yet there is clear progress in these areas too.

### Summary of language practice with children

Although the questionnaires show that the mothers in general speak more or much more Welsh with their children following the course, it became clear that there are variations and that it is dependent on a number of factors, including

- i) the mother’s background
- ii) migration from England
- iii) the partner’s language: from overseas, from England, non-Welsh speaker, Welsh-speaker
- iv) the mother’s Welsh language skills
- v) the language of the community
- vi) attending a Welsh medium nursery group

The more positive these factors were in relation to the Welsh language, the more Welsh the mother would speak with her children.

### 3 Use of the language with family members

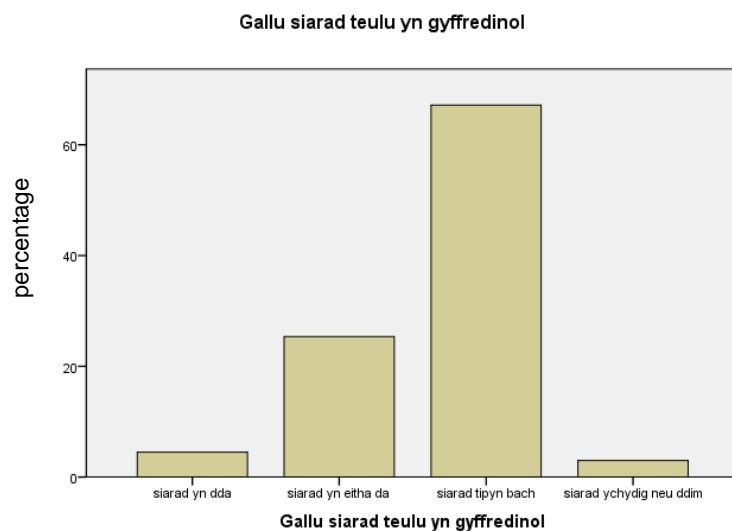
We asked about the ability of partners, parents and siblings to speak Welsh.

11 had siblings who were able to speak Welsh well, and 17 had siblings who were able to speak Welsh “quite well”.

27 of the fathers were able to speak Welsh well or quite well, along with 25 of the mothers. In total, 30 of the respondents had parents who were able to speak Welsh well or quite well.

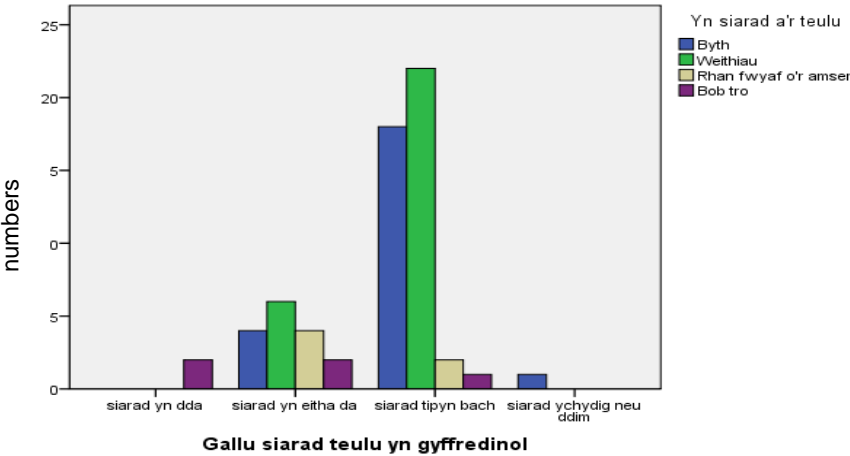
In measuring the linguistic ability of the family in general, we considered that 20 of the respondents had families who were able to speak Welsh well or quite well, but that the majority of families only had ‘a little’ Welsh.

**Graph 6: The ability of close relatives to speak Welsh**



The respondents spoke some Welsh with their families, but this varied according to the individual’s ability to speak Welsh. In measuring the general speaking practices at the beginning of the sessions, we found that only a few used Welsh regularly.

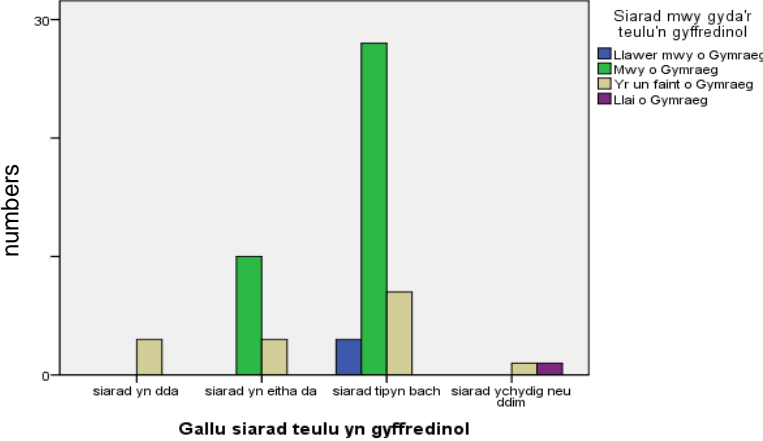
**Graph 7: Mothers who speak Welsh with their families, according to the family's linguistic ability**



18% of the respondents spoke Welsh 'always' or 'most of the time' at the beginning of the course. 37% would not speak Welsh at all within the family.

By the end of the course, the respondents said that they spoke significantly more Welsh within the family.

**Graph 8: Mothers who speak Welsh with their families, according to the family's linguistic ability**



73% spoke more Welsh or much more Welsh, and the greatest increase was to be found amongst families who spoke 'a little' Welsh.

According to one mother: "My sister speaks Welsh, but she isn't very confident – we only speak Welsh with her, but it's pidgin Welsh. I speak Welsh with my father, but it was half and half."



In the case of a mother from a mixed-language home, her English mother would now sing Welsh nursery rhymes, but her experiences with her family continued to be mixed. “There’s no Welsh at home – Daddy speaks Welsh, but Mammy only speaks English, but now she sings ‘Mi welais Jac y Do’. M and M’s sister speak Welsh – but I spoke English with them first, so I still speak English with them. My father speaks Welsh – speaks half and half – and tad-cu, but my brother went to [a Welsh-medium comprehensive school], but never spoke Welsh, but he does now half and half.”

According to one mother, she was unable to speak Welsh with her brothers because one lives in England and another lives abroad.

It was difficult for many of the mothers who were learning Welsh to speak Welsh with their families because various members of those families were non-Welsh speaking. No-one spoke Welsh in one mother’s family, although her own mother was learning. She said: “I try to speak Welsh with Mam – she’s learning. I’d like to speak Welsh with her, but she doesn’t speak much. We switch back and forth. Mam has some set phrases.”

One of the Welsh learners had a Welsh-speaking father and this had helped her: “Dad spoke Welsh with nain – always had to speak with nain [village name]. Mam’s family cannot speak Welsh.”

One mother’s family came mainly from England. “Not much at home – I come from England. My parents live in [name of county] but I was born in [town in Wales], but the family moved when I was three.”

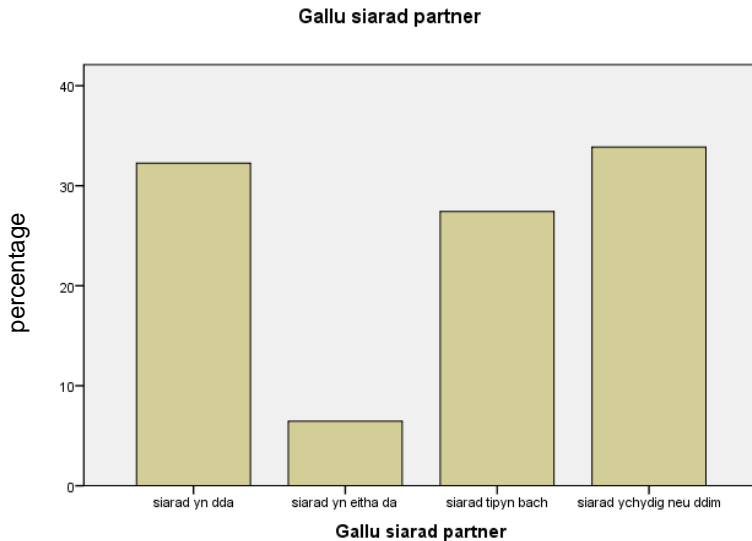
### **Summary of language use with family**

Most of the mothers made greater use of the Welsh language with their families after the course. It became apparent that the mothers found it difficult to change medium if they had always spoken a different language. However, where family members were able to speak Welsh, the mothers made an effort to speak more Welsh by the end of the course. The course had some wider influence too, as members of the mothers’ families began to speak more Welsh.

## 4 Use of the language with partners

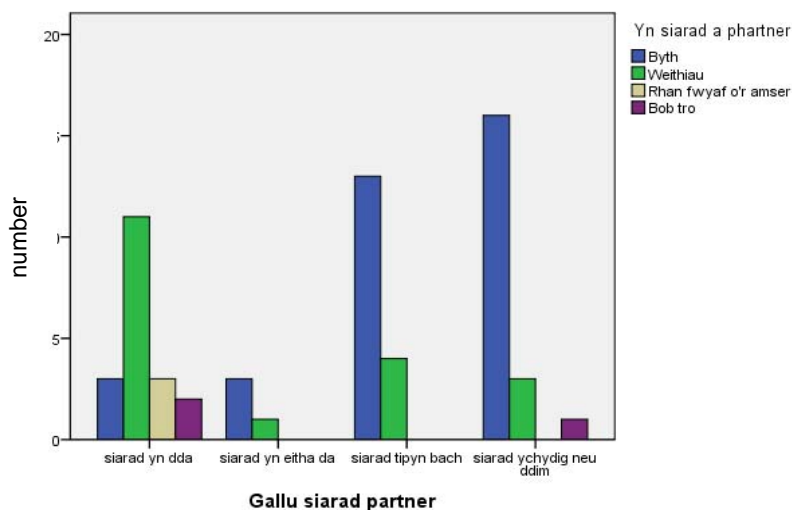
30% of the respondents had a partner who could speak Welsh well, and another 4 had a partner who could speak Welsh quite well.

**Graph 9: The partners' ability to speak Welsh**



However, only 9% 'always' or 'mostly' spoke Welsh with their partner at the beginning of the course.

**Graph 10: Mothers who speak Welsh with their partner, according to the partner's ability in Welsh**



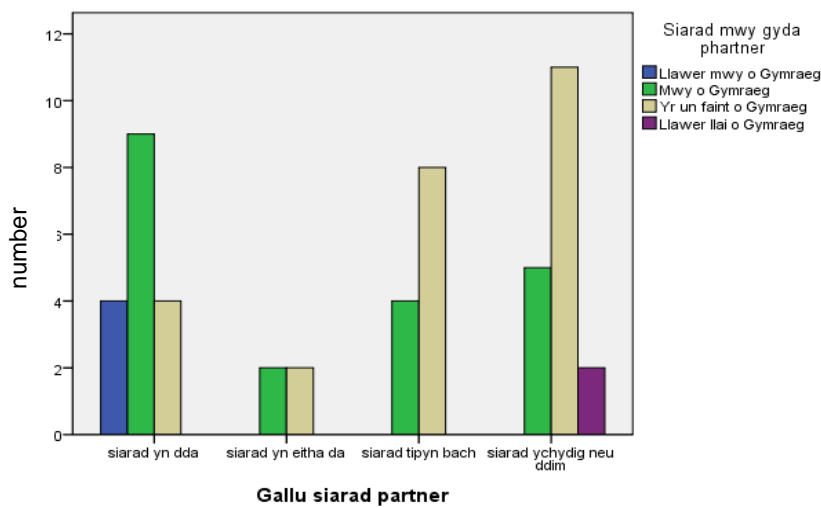
Of those mothers who have a partner who is able to speak Welsh well, 3 out of 4 would not speak Welsh regularly with their partner. 58% would not speak any Welsh with their partner and 32% would only speak Welsh with their partners occasionally.

Most of the mothers at the sessions had not chosen to make Welsh the main language in their homes.

By the end of the sessions, we had a more positive and encouraging response in terms of using of Welsh with partners. 47% spoke more Welsh or much more Welsh with their partners by the end of the course.

This was naturally dependent on the partner’s Welsh language ability.

**Graph 11: Mothers who speak more Welsh with their partners, according to the partner’s Welsh language ability**



Where the partner is able to speak Welsh well, there is an obvious increase in the use of the Welsh language between the mothers and their partners. There was some progress with partners who were less able to speak Welsh.

Prior to the course, one mother would speak Welsh and English with her partner, but this has changed. “I used to speak Welsh and English with him, but now I speak much more Welsh with him.”

One mother’s husband had tried to learn Welsh. “My husband learned Welsh when we came to Wales – that was 12 years ago. He’s been on the Wlpan course, as have I, but he hasn’t had much opportunity to practise and he’s forgotten it.”

Another said “my husband comes from [another country].”

Another mother gave a similar response: “My husband doesn’t speak Welsh – he comes from [overseas]”. According to another, “My partner doesn’t speak Welsh, but we watch S4C - Cyw.”

One mother, whose husband speaks Welsh, found it hard to change. “My husband and I – if we’re on holiday and don’t want others to understand what we’re doing, we’ll use it, but not usually.”

For one mother, having children had prompted her to speak Welsh with her husband. “My husband and I spoke English before we had children – now that our children are here, we try to speak Welsh all the time.”

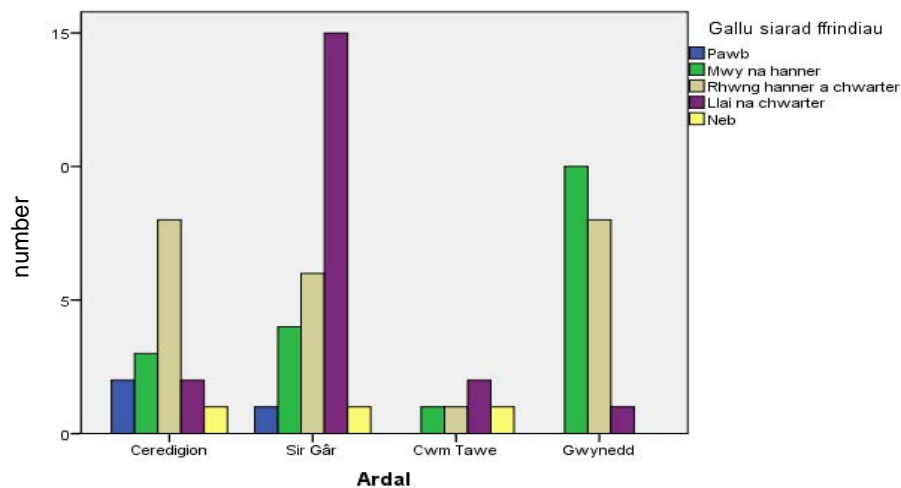
### **Summary of language use with partners**

There was a clear increase in the use of the Welsh language with partners if they speak Welsh. It became apparent that the individual experiences of the mothers differed greatly, and that increase in the use of the Welsh language with their partners depended on the partner’s knowledge of Welsh. Having children may prompt mothers to speak more Welsh with their partners.

## 5 Use of the language with friends

The ability of the mothers' friends to speak Welsh varied from area to area. This varied in accordance with the general perception of the linguistic nature of the areas. Gwynedd was the most Welsh-speaking area, followed by Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire respectively.

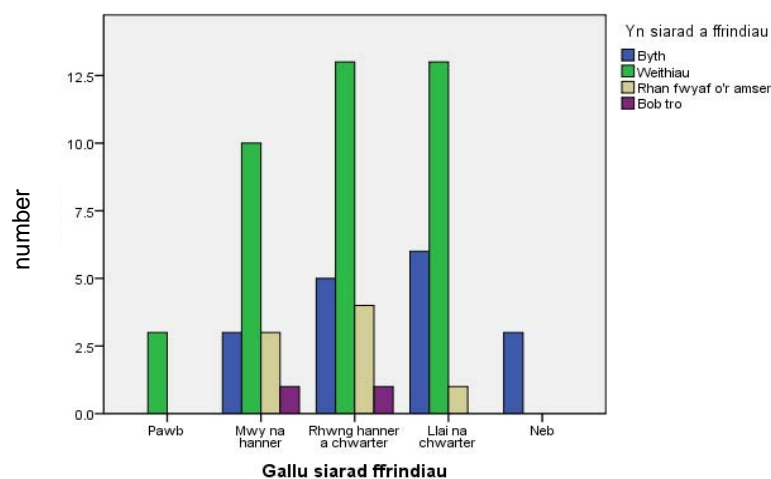
**Graph 12: Friends' ability to speak Welsh, by area**



More than half the friends (53%) of the Gwynedd mothers were able to speak Welsh, 31% of the Ceredigion mothers, and 19% of the Carmarthenshire mothers.

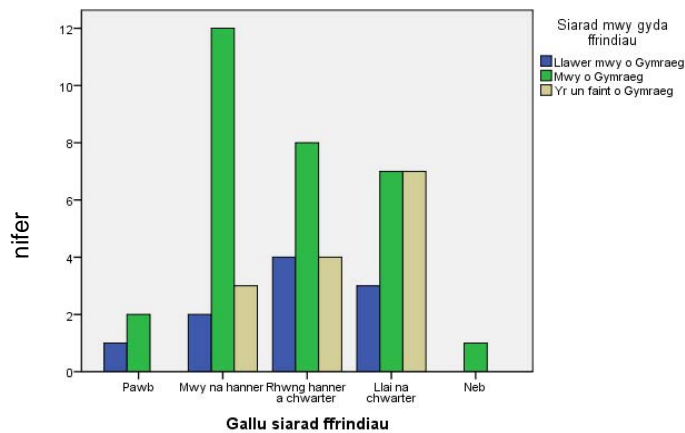
Only a minority spoke Welsh with their friends at the beginning of the course. 26% would never do so, and 59% would do so 'sometimes'.

**Graph 13: Mothers who speak Welsh with friends, according to the proportion of Welsh-speaking friends**



By the end of the course, there was a clear increase in the number of mothers who spoke more Welsh with friends.

**Graph 14: Mothers who speak more Welsh with friends, according to the proportion of Welsh-speaking friends**



19% of the mothers spoke ‘much more Welsh’ and 56% spoke ‘more’ Welsh by the end of the course.

The experience of individual mothers varied according to their circumstances. One mother was extremely pleased that she now felt confident enough to speak Welsh with her best friend, and this had extended to sending Welsh text messages. “My best friend speaks Welsh. We now text in Welsh, ‘cwl’ – c – w – l.” She would be willing to speak Welsh with her friends, although her husband would not understand. “I speak much more Welsh now. Some of my best friends speak Welsh. I have more Welsh now – my husband is put out, he doesn’t know what I’m talking about.” She would also be more willing to change languages within one group of friends now. “At the ante-natal group, we spoke English, but we’ve started in Welsh now.”

Another mother included two friends amongst those with whom she would now speak Welsh. By talking with friends in the group, another mother said that she would be unable to speak English with them, although they had started their relationship in English. “I could never speak English with you now – it would be really odd to speak English now – and to text now.” When she and another mother were amongst English-speaking friends, she would find it strange to speak English with her in their company: “Some [friends] speak English with each other – it felt really strange to speak English with you [to her friend].” In terms of her linguistic behaviour since the course, she said, “I haven’t been the same since.”

One mother who had learned Welsh has now developed her confidence to speak Welsh with friends and neighbours. “More now than before the course? Yes. I have more confidence.”

Another felt that she had more confidence to use Welsh. “My neighbours speak Welsh ... I feel more confident after the course.”

A mother, who now speaks Welsh with her husband, does not have Welsh-speaking friends: “My neighbours and friends speak English really.”

Another mother found that she did not have Welsh-speaking friends, but she came into contact with other mothers who spoke Welsh through the school. “I don’t have friends who speak Welsh all the time, but I’m able to speak Welsh with parents at the school – my children go to a Welsh-medium school – many of the parents speak Welsh, as well as the teachers.”

Another mother had a similar experience. While talking about her use of Welsh with friends, she said, “Not much – sometimes with neighbours, but I usually speak English. A few words – it depends on the situation – how much time I’ve got. I speak Welsh with my friend [name] who runs a ‘Hwyl a Chân’ group in town during the afternoon.”

Her friends encouraged one mother to speak Welsh. “My friends make an effort to speak Welsh with me now because they know I’m learning and they don’t start speaking English with me. They start in Welsh – but they help me if I’m unsure. If someone starts speaking Welsh, you make an effort to respond in Welsh.”

By the end of the course, one mother was speaking Welsh with neighbours. “With some Welsh-speaking neighbours, I’ve started speaking Welsh – it’s ok.”

The same was true of another mother who was less fluent: “my best friend is Welsh and my neighbours – I was doing a course in Canolfan Iaith A... – neighbours speak to me in Welsh. I understand a lot of Welsh.”

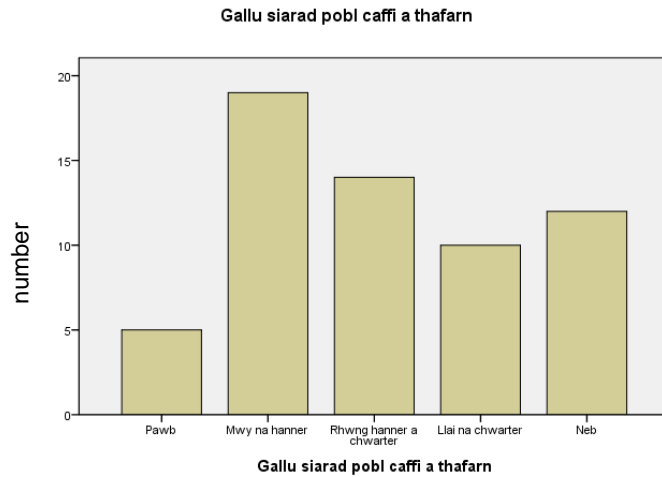
### **Summary of language use with friends**

It was clear that many more mothers spoke Welsh with friends by the end of the course. A shortage of Welsh-speaking friends proved to be difficult for some, although mothers may find new friends through play groups or schools. Some Welsh-speaking friends would support some of the mothers by speaking Welsh with them.

## 6 The mothers' use of Welsh in the community

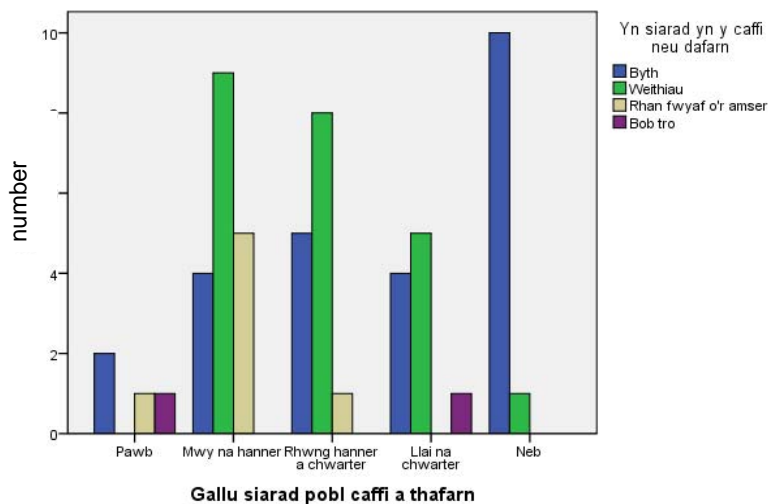
A relatively high percentage of the mothers had friends in social places, such as the cafe or the pub, who were able to speak Welsh.

**Graph 15: The ability of people in the cafe or pub to speak Welsh**



A quarter or more of the friends of 63% of the mothers were able to speak Welsh. However, 46% would never speak Welsh with friends and another 40% would speak Welsh 'occasionally'.

**Graph 16: Mothers who speak Welsh with people in the cafe or pub, according to the number of Welsh-speakers**



The use of Welsh in the cafe or pub did not correspond to the participants' ability to use the language. This could be due to the mothers' lack of confidence in using the language, or because people tend to turn to English in such situations where not everyone is able to speak Welsh.



By the end of the sessions, the mothers tended to use more Welsh in the cafe or pub. 57% of the mothers used more Welsh in these situations, depending on the others' ability to speak Welsh.

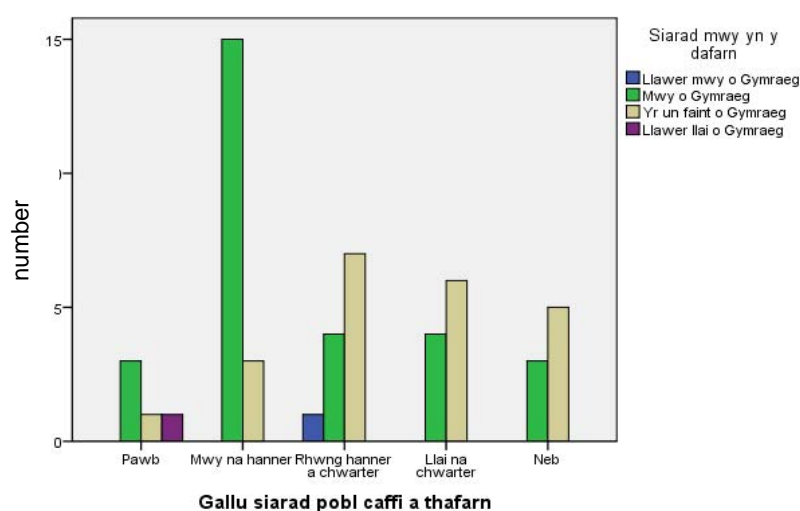
The decline of village life proved to be a barrier for one mother, because there is no longer a meeting place in her village. "I believe that many people speak Welsh but the Post Office has closed – and there are very few places, no shop – we live – away from the village."

A mother, who is a Welsh learner, found that Welsh-speakers spoke too quickly. "Welsh-speakers are unable to speak to learners – sometimes I find that first-language speakers speak very quickly – sometimes I'm unable to have a conversation."

Another found that her own lack of confidence was a barrier. "I don't have much confidence to speak with adults – I mostly speak with children." This was more difficult in the case of a mother who was less fluent. "Can't think quick enough. I have to think in English and translate it in my head. People think I'm not going to answer."

Another problem is that Welsh-speakers turn to English, although those teaching the language help. "Some do. I find that if they've worked as a teacher, they're very good at persisting in Welsh. Others are very polite and turn to English if you're unable to answer!"

**Graph 17: Mothers who speak more Welsh with people at the cafe or pub, according to the proportion of Welsh-speakers**



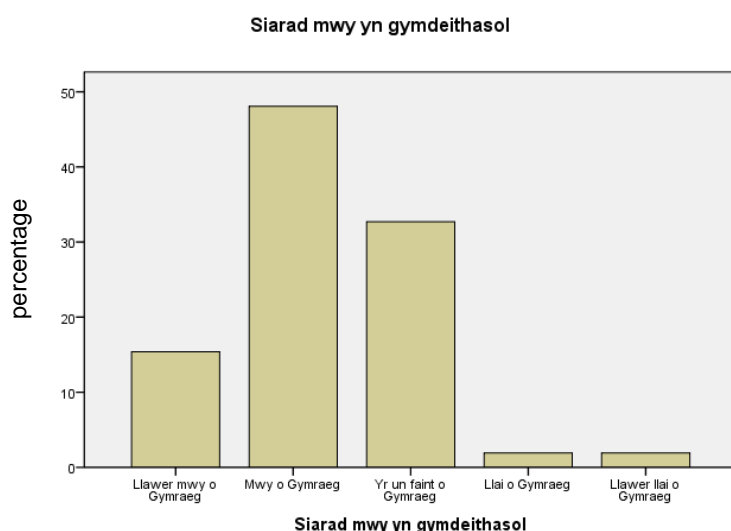
There were no significant differences in the mothers' behaviour in different situations. We asked about their choice of language amongst friends, with neighbours and while shopping. 15% spoke Welsh mainly with their friends, 18% with neighbours, 14% in the cafe or pub and 14% while shopping.

On the negative side, 26% would never speak Welsh with friends, 48% would never speak Welsh with neighbours, and 46% would never use Welsh in the cafe or pub.

While shopping, 14% would use Welsh mainly, but 41% would never use Welsh, and 46% would use it occasionally.

By the end of the sessions, the evidence shows that the mothers make greater use of Welsh in these situations. 17% speak much more Welsh socially, and another 47% speak more Welsh.

**Graph 18: Mothers who speak more Welsh socially**



According to one mother, she spoke much more Welsh by the end of the course. “If someone speaks Welsh, I’ll answer in Welsh now – previously I would speak English, but now I find Welsh easier.”

One mother, who is a Welsh learner, found it difficult to feel at ease in a group of mothers who spoke more Welsh than her. She said: “I feel quite isolated there – I struggle to follow what people say sometimes. I don’t want to be different – I want to be able to follow everything and be part of the conversation. They have to speak slowly with me – I have to ask. It’s so easy to switch to English – too easy – and they do.”

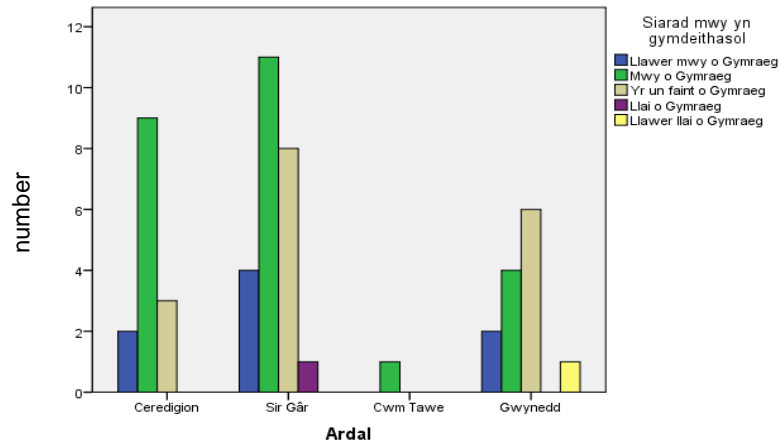
Some Welsh speakers’ emphasis on accurate language can be a barrier. When one mother attended a meeting of *Merched y Wawr*, someone offered ‘te a coffi’. At once, a number of those present said ‘ch’ to correct her. This destroyed her confidence.

It is clear that the mothers are aware on the whole of the various places where people are able to speak Welsh, and therefore they speak Welsh where possible. According to one mother, “Not at the Post Office – it’s English at the Post Office, but while shopping – I speak a lot of Welsh.”

There was some variation in the increased use of Welsh socially according to area. 78% of the Ceredigion mothers used more or much more Welsh, 63% of the Carmarthenshire mothers, and 46% of the Gwynedd mothers. There were insufficient responses from Neath Port Talbot to be statistically relevant. The variation in the

increase can be attributed to the baseline use of the language by the mothers and the linguistic nature of the areas.

**Graph 19: Mothers who speak more Welsh socially, by area**



### Summary of Welsh spoken in the community

By the end of the course, there is evidence that the mothers had more confidence to speak Welsh socially. This was dependent on the following:

- i. the opportunity to do so
- ii. their own language skills
- iii. their confidence
- iv. the response of Welsh-speakers

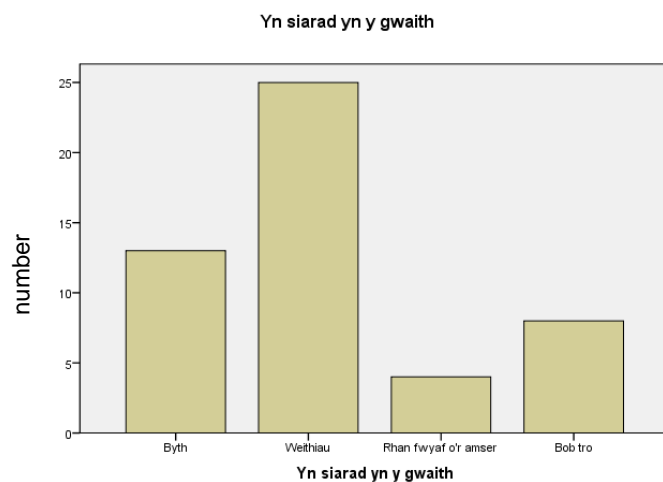
## 7 Use of Welsh in the workplace

Everyone spoke Welsh in the workplace in the case of 18% of the mothers who responded and who are working. More than half spoke Welsh in the case of another 24%. Between half and a quarter of the workforce spoke Welsh in the case of 18% of the mothers. No-one spoke Welsh in the workplace in the case of 14% of the mothers.

25% of the participants said that they would never use Welsh in the workplace and 49% said that they would use it 'occasionally'. 23% said they always or usually used it.

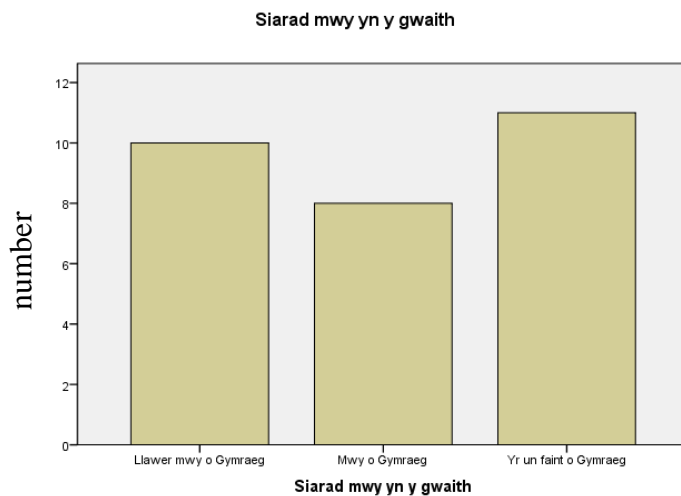
These percentages showed a slightly lower use of the Welsh language than the opportunities available, but this is in line with expected linguistic behaviour.

**Graph 20: Mothers who speak Welsh in the workplace**



A number of participants had not returned to work by the end of the sessions. For that reason, only 57% of the mothers completed this section of the questionnaire. Of the remaining participants, 35% said that they speak much more Welsh, and 28% said that they speak more Welsh in the workplace.

**Graph 21: Mothers who speak more Welsh in the workplace**



By the end of the course, the mothers were very aware of the possibility of speaking Welsh in the workplace. Opportunities were few and far between for one. “I work at [name] hospital. There’s not much Welsh there. I’m a nurse. There’s only one other Welsh-speaker on my ward. But there aren’t many in [placename] ... It’s better in some jobs – if I go to [placename], it’s ok to have someone who speaks Welsh, many older people don’t like to speak English.”

A shortage of Welsh-speakers in the workplace prevented another mother from speaking Welsh. “I work at [shop’s name] – one guy speaks Welsh, I don’t speak Welsh there, one boy speaks Welsh – is learning, so I speak Welsh with him.” Another mother also works in a shop and her experience was more positive: “I work at [name of shop] ... at present – some customers come in and they remember that you’re able to speak Welsh – and when I’m at the till, they hear and they speak Welsh too. I have an opportunity to speak Welsh in the shop, in the village.”

One mother is a teacher at a dual stream school and she has been given responsibility for the Welsh-medium stream at that school. Another is a beauty therapist and she is now be able to use some Welsh with Welsh-speaking customers. “People used to speak to me in Welsh – I understand – it helps in a way.”

One of the mothers was aware that Welsh could be beneficial to her in the future, although it did not currently assist her with her research work. “Not much, because I work as a researcher. But I hope that Welsh will help me in the future because we want to stay in Wales.”

One of the mothers runs a business with her husband and she’s aware of the advantages of Welsh. “We run a business ... a new business. Trying to build the company. I think the Welsh language helps. We’re trying to win a contract with [name of bank] – they’d like somewhere closer to Pembrokeshire/Carmarthenshire – I know they want a place that speaks Welsh.”

Although no-one speaks Welsh at her current workplace, one of the mothers is hopeful that Welsh will be useful in the future. “I work with [name of organisation]. I’m

on maternity leave now. Hopefully, Welsh will help me at work. Others... don't speak Welsh."

These sessions, of course, did not provide an opportunity to improve written skills, therefore we accept that the aim was to be able to speak Welsh at a relatively informal level at work.

### **Summary of Welsh in the workplace**

The mothers were aware of the possibility of using Welsh in the workplace, but many were not in a position to do so because of the nature of their work or because of a shortage of other Welsh-speakers in the workplace.

**Consideration:** It would be helpful if Welsh-speaking staff wore a badge to demonstrate that they are able to speak Welsh.

## 8 Use of Welsh in shops and with organisations

It was clear that the sessions placed considerable focus on speaking Welsh with organisations, and that the participants had received clear advice to build their confidence in using Welsh first of all by going to shops and contacting organisations, either in person or by phone.

At the beginning of the sessions, 41% would never use Welsh while shopping, and 45% would use it occasionally. 13% would always or usually use Welsh.

**Graph 22: Mothers who speak Welsh while shopping**



By the end of the sessions, 47% of the respondents said that they speak more Welsh, and another 14% said that they speak much more Welsh.

**Graph 23: Mothers who speak more Welsh in town**



The mothers tend to know who is able to speak Welsh at different trading places or within organisations. According to one mother, in the context of the library and the leisure centre, "I speak Welsh – more often after the course." Another described her experience as follows: "I do if I'm in a shop and I know the people, but not at the bank or in a big place. Such as [placename] ... and the butcher. I try to do it in Welsh." She

said that a 'Welsh' badge would be useful, "if I don't know them I'm a little embarrassed."

For one mother who has learned Welsh to a relatively high standard, it helps if she knows someone in a shop or within an organisation. She said: "Sometimes – I try to speak Welsh in [Welsh shop]. Something very simple – but I'm happy to try. If it's a little more complex, I feel a little anxious. But sometimes I do try in a shop. I speak Welsh with the secretary in the school office... [Name] is a safe person to 'ease me in'. It's important to find safe people – people who know me and people who understand."

Confidence continued to be a barrier for one mother: "It's easier to shop in town – I don't use much Welsh in shops, the leisure centre – but I do in [placename]... – obviously – I don't have much confidence to speak with adults – I mainly speak with children."

It was less problematic for one mother whose confidence has developed: "I speak Welsh in the bank – I know that there is a woman at the bank who speaks Welsh. I tried Welsh first in a shop, but they spoke English back. They're the ones who look foolish, not me."

Another mother has started speaking Welsh in shops after moving to a more Welsh-speaking area. "I speak Welsh at the butchers... I've done it – I would never have done it in [placename]."

Lack of support for the language from organisations could also prove to be a barrier, however enthusiastic the mother may be. This is the experience of one mother, "yes, in [placename] – but nowhere else – English usually. At the town library – I try to get one Welsh book every time – 'steer her towards a Welsh book'."

Another mother has changed her practice when communicating with organisations. "I phoned BT – I would never have done that before. I use Welsh at the library – I know that the man speaks Welsh, I look to see if they're wearing a badge. Previously, I would have used English."

The participants on each course received a list of Welsh language telephone numbers for various organisations, but some had encountered great difficulty in accessing a coherent Welsh language service from the organisations. According to one of the mothers, "We had this long list of services available in Welsh. Haven't done it yet!"

### **Summary of using Welsh in shops and with organisations**

It was more difficult for the mothers who were Welsh learners to build their confidence to use Welsh in these situations. Sometimes, staff within organisations were not supportive. Some mothers had built enough confidence so that they did not feel awkward. In general, the mothers became aware of where they could use Welsh, but it would be helpful if staff wore badges.



## 9 Events

This area appeared to be more problematic for the mothers. It would be difficult for some to go out because of their children and others did not go out often.

However, events targeted at children seem to be popular. According to one of the mothers, “Last Sunday, [girl’s name 1] went to an event at the Morlan Centre with Martyn Geraint. In the car, we have the Martyn Geraint TWF CD – [girl’s name 1] likes to sing.”

Another mother intended to go to the Urdd Eisteddfod, “we’re going to the Urdd Eisteddfod as a group. We’ve arranged it ourselves. I used to go to ‘Ti a Fi’ but I’m back at work now.”

The school had been a source of activities for one of the mothers, but they had come to an end. “Not many. In the school – but very few other events. Last year, the PTA organised meetings for parents to practise speaking, but they’ve stopped.”

One of the mothers had been to a concert with a bilingual introduction, and that had confirmed to her that she had understood correctly. “I went to listen to a choir – to a choir concert and there was a brief introduction in Welsh and then in English. That was a good test. ‘Oh, I’ve understood correctly’, but it wasn’t complicated.”

She also went to Welsh Bingo. Children’s events appealed to another of the mothers. “A BBQ in summer – everyone comes. There’s a Bouncy Castle and so on. I’m not sure if that helps.”

Another of the mothers is a member of a folk dance group, and she uses her Welsh there.

Apart from the sessions organised for children, the mothers did not attend many other Welsh language events. It would be useful for organisations related to the Welsh language, e.g. Welsh-medium schools, Mentrau Iaith, to consider what activities or events they could organise to encourage mothers to use their Welsh.”

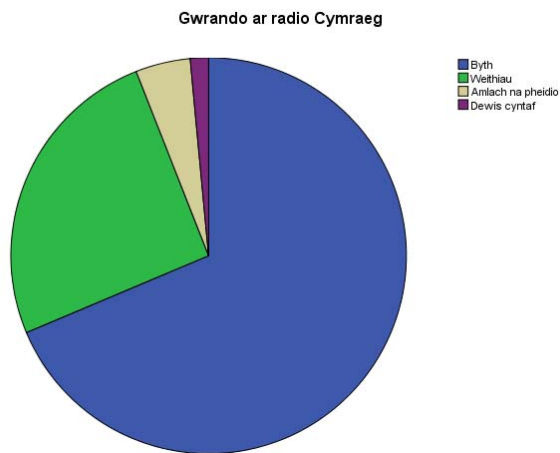
At the end of the course, one of the mothers said: “I was gutted, after the sessions ended.” There is a clear demand, but appropriate opportunities are few and far between at present.

### Summary of attending events

Very few of the mothers attended Welsh language events for adults. Welsh language events targeted at children were popular and further events of this kind would be welcomed. It would bring mothers together and give them an opportunity to enjoy Welsh language events with their children. The mothers felt that this would make a positive contribution in terms of bringing their children up in a Welsh language environment.

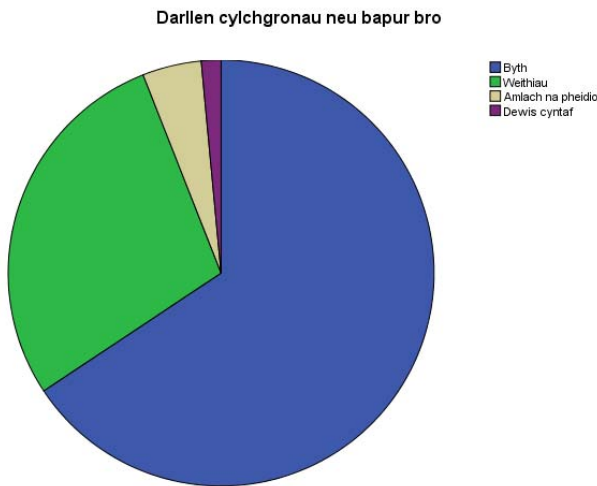
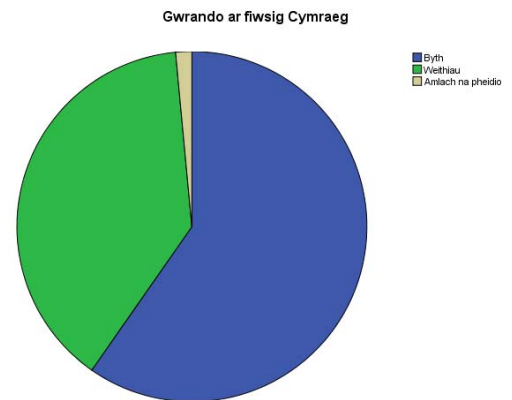
# 10 Reading Welsh language books and using Welsh language media

Graphs 24: Percentages of mothers who use the various Welsh media



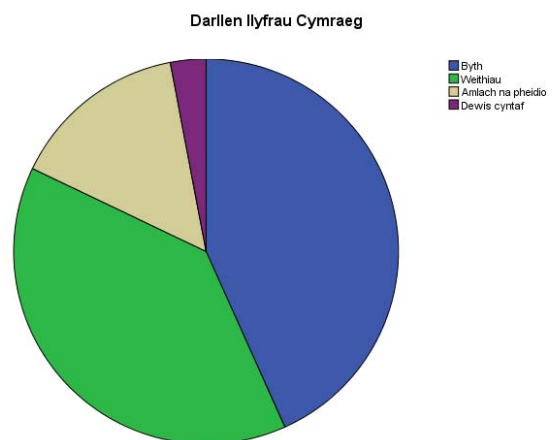
At the beginning of the sessions, 60% never listened to Welsh language music. 39% would listen occasionally, and 1% would listen regularly.

The parents' use of Welsh language media varied. The sessions focussed specifically on Welsh language books, television programmes, films and songs for children. At the beginning of the course, 68% never listened to Radio Cymru. 25% would listen occasionally and 6% chose to listen regularly.



43% never read Welsh books. 39% would read them occasionally, and 18% would read them regularly.

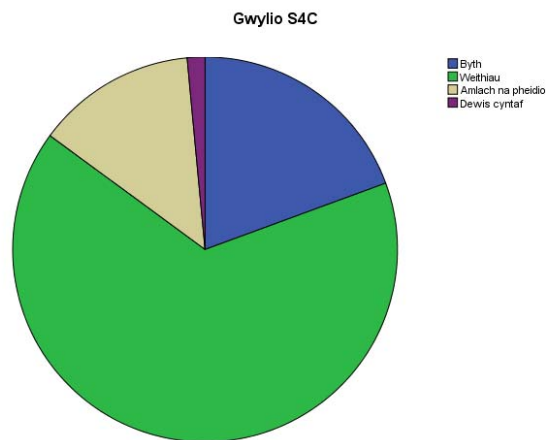
65% did not read Welsh language magazines or papurau bro. 29% would read them occasionally and 1% would read them regularly.



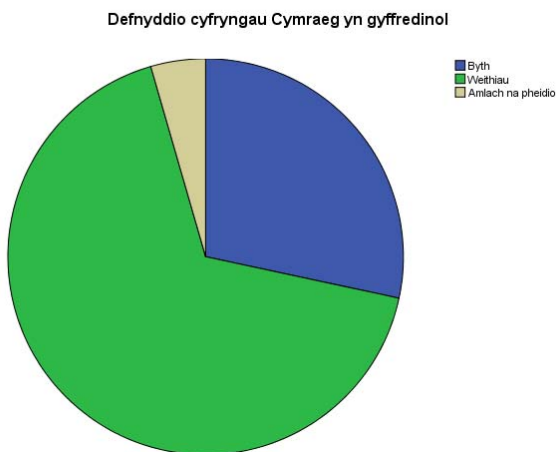
A greater number of the mothers watched Welsh language television. Only 20% never watched S4C. 65% would watch occasionally and 15% would watch regularly. The disappointing aspect of these figures may well be that the figure of 15% is not higher.

In establishing averages, we found that 28% made no meaningful use of Welsh language media. 67% made occasional use of them, while 4.5% used them regularly.

Following the sessions, the participants were more aware of Welsh language media. Some facilitators arranged visits to the local Welsh book shop. The mothers said that the course made them aware of the availability of DVDs for children. One of the mothers was now aware of a number of programmes available, “Peppa Pig in Welsh”. I borrow DVDs from my next door neighbours – Tecwyn y Tractor.



[girl's name 1] watches Cyw on the computer – Heini – she watches Heini at the Welsh School.” Another of the mothers, who is a Welsh learner, watches S4C programmes with her daughter and uses Welsh books: “I’m bringing my children up in Welsh. TV – S4C – Cyw. Peppa Pig and Bob the Builder... We have a lot of Welsh books – Smot and so on. [Girl's name] sometimes speaks Welsh first! She understands Welsh but she answers in English.”



Another mother was aware of television programmes and children’s books, “Watch Cyw – talk too. Cbeebies – sing – [child's

name] speaks Welsh.” Similar comments were made by another of the mothers, “DVDs about Wales – what’s available for children, books, DVDs, toys.”

Yet another of the mothers was enlightened by the course, “Yes, it’s shown me that there is more available for the children – things I wasn’t aware of before. DVDs.”

By the end of the course, 42% listened more to Welsh language radio, 76% watched more Welsh language television, 50% read more Welsh language books or publications, 32% listened to more Welsh music, 34% made more use of Welsh on the web, 43% made more use of Welsh when e-mailing or texting. In general, 66% made more use of Welsh language media.

### Summary of use of Welsh language media

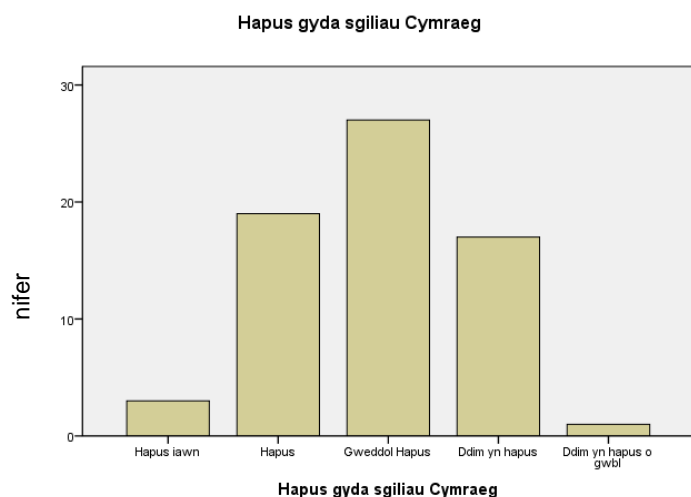
Television was the most popular Welsh language medium prior to the course, but only one in five watched S4C regularly. The mothers received information on a number of Welsh language media during the course, and by the end of the course, the participants said that they made greater use of Welsh language media on the

whole. The mothers indicated that they made use of DVDs and resources for children, and it was clear that they felt that the Welsh language media helped them to bring their children up in a Welsh language environment.

## 11 Welsh skills and confidence of participants

Only 4.5% of the mothers were ‘very happy’ with their Welsh language skills in general prior to the sessions. Another 33% were ‘happy’ with their Welsh language skills. 40% were ‘quite happy’. These scores were calculated by combining their views on their speaking, listening, writing and reading skills.

**Graph 25: The mothers’ level of happiness with their Welsh language skills in general**



Their happiness, or confidence, in using Welsh orally varied from situation to situation.

	Very happy	Happy	Total
With children	51%	31%	82%
With extended family	21%	25%	46%
With teachers	18%	29%	47%
At work	18%	24%	42%
Socially	13%	18%	31%
In town	12%	21%	32%
With officials	12%	10%	22%
In general	10%	21%	31%

The level of happiness in terms of using Welsh with children was much higher than in any other situation. Half the mothers were only completely happy to speak Welsh with children. In every other situation, only one in ten or one in five of the mothers were completely happy.

This may reflect, to some extent, the number of mothers who are still learning the language. The majority of the mothers at three of the venues visited were Welsh learners. One of them said that her main incentive to learn the language was to speak with children: “After I’d had [girl’s name 1], I understood that she would be learning Welsh ... as well as the children next door – they speak Welsh and I wanted to be able to speak with them.”

For many of the mothers, one of the main attributes of the sessions was the opportunity to speak Welsh with one another, “Speaking to others in Welsh and having an opportunity to speak Welsh.” The course created social opportunities to use Welsh. “We’ve met for a coffee after the course. It’s nice to catch up with the others to see what they’re doing.”

For one of the mothers, one of the greatest benefits of the course was her increased confidence to speak Welsh: “It’s helped my confidence I think, and it’s just made me aware of the people I can try to speak Welsh with – made me aware of more opportunities.”

The nursery school was the main incentive for another of the mothers to speak Welsh: “To tell you the truth, the main reason is the nursery school and the school – a bigger influence than the course – it’s an incentive for me to speak Welsh because [girl’s name] is at school.” This mother required a course that would help her specifically to speak Welsh with her child: “Yes, but something different would be more useful for me. What would be useful for me – an opportunity to practise simple phrases like ‘What did you do in school today’ etc – correct, simple sentences – a Welsh course for mother and child.” However, the course had been of useful to her, “Confidence to speak to people – correct me in a good/encouraging way.”

For one mother who is learning Welsh, confidence was a problem, “Just confidence, I think. Nothing with the others.”

Another of the mothers, who had acquired advanced Welsh language skills as a learner, identified a problem that has nothing to do with confidence: “Can’t think quick enough. I have to think in English and translate it in my head. People think I’m not going to answer.” She found it easier to speak with teachers, because they’re aware of the learner’s situation, “With the school, because they know I’m learning, they say everything to me in Welsh first, and I have to repeat it in English (to make sure I’ve understood).” She was keen for the talking sessions to continue in order to use Welsh with adults: “If there was something similar, so that we can meet, such as the CYD group. I’ve heard of them. They do something similar to what we’ve done in these sessions. Just to continue with Welsh.”

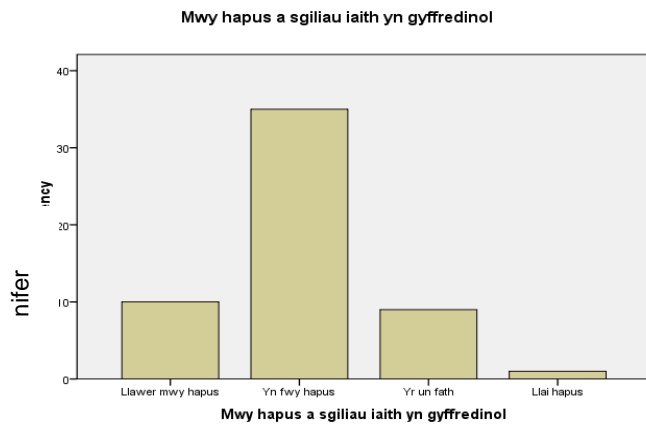
We found that the mothers’ confidence varied across the four linguistic skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing.

	<b>Very happy</b>	<b>Happy</b>	<b>Total</b>
Understanding	30%	34%	64%
Reading	15%	27%	42%
Speaking	13%	21%	34%
Writing	6%	18%	24%

It may well be surprising that so few of the mothers felt very happy with their understanding or speaking skills. Again, this may be attributed to the relatively high proportion of Welsh learners.

By the end of the course, the vast majority of the mothers were happier with their Welsh language skills. 18% were far happier, and 52% were happier.

**Graph 26: Mothers who are happier with their Welsh language skills in general**



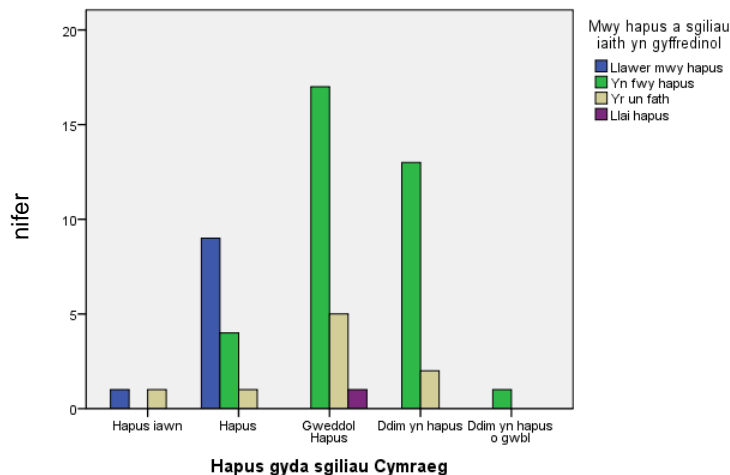
In terms of individual skills, we identified some variation again:

	<b>Much happier</b>	<b>Happier</b>	<b>Total</b>
Understanding	53%	40%	93%
Speaking	51%	40%	91%
Reading	25%	53%	78%
Writing	20%	39%	59%

We were able to identify three main shifts by the end of the course. 64% of those who were 'happy' with their Welsh language skills were now 'much happier'. 74% of those who were 'quite happy' were now 'happier' and 87% of those who were 'unhappy' were now 'happier'. It would be fair to claim that a shift along the linguistic confidence continuum occurred during the course.

In observing the sessions, we found that the facilitators were highly skilled in responding to the linguistic needs of the Welsh learners within their sessions.

**Graph 27: Increase in happiness with Welsh language skills in relation to initial happiness with Welsh language skills**



## **Summary of confidence and language skills**

The mothers felt happier to speak Welsh with their children than with any one else or in any other situation. Between 6% and 15% of the mothers were confident to speak, read and write Welsh, but a general shift along the linguistic confidence continuum was observed by the end of the course. The relatively low proportion of mothers who had confidence in their Welsh language skills may be attributed to the proportion of Welsh learners.

### **Consideration**

**Making a specific provision for Welsh learners in the sessions should be considered.**