



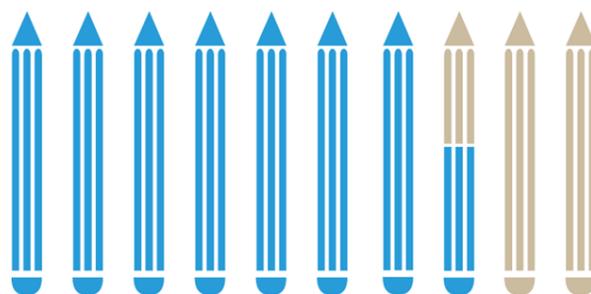
National Survey for Wales 2014-15 Parental Support with Literacy and Numeracy

27 October 2016
SB 49/2016

A set of questions on parental support with literacy and numeracy were included in the National Survey to provide further evidence to support policy development. Parents were asked how frequently they helped their child with reading, writing and numbers and how confident they were in their own ability to help.

Key findings

- 81% of parents with a child aged 3 to 7 supported their child at least several times a week with reading and writing.
- 69% of parents supported their child aged 3 to 7 at least several times a week with maths or numbers.
- 76% were very confident helping their child aged 3 to 11 with writing in English; 79% were very confident helping their child with reading in English.
- 60% were very confident helping their child aged 3 to 11 with maths or numbers.
- 56% of Welsh speakers were very confident in their own Welsh reading ability, and 50% very confident in their own Welsh writing ability to be able to help their child aged 3 to 11 with their Welsh reading and writing.



76% Very confident helping child with writing in English

The National Survey for Wales covers a wide variety of topics affecting people and their local area. The headline results from the 2014-15 survey, based on over 14,000 face-to-face interviews, were first published in June 2015. An expanded version of the National Survey began in 2016 covering similar topics as well as a selection of topics from four other surveys that it has replaced. The first results from the new survey will be published in June 2017.

About this bulletin

This bulletin provides more detailed analysis of the results for the questions on **parental support with literacy and numeracy** which were included for the first time in the National Survey for Wales in 2014-15.

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

Additional tables can be accessed via [StatsWales](#).

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Introduction

In 2013 the Welsh Government launched [Building a Brighter Future: The Early Years and Childcare Plan](#), setting out its commitment to provide all children with the opportunity to fulfil their potential, and emphasising the importance of good literacy and numeracy skills. Three important elements were identified as improving a child's outcomes and later life chances:

- a good early years home learning environment;
- a good quality pre-school; and
- an effective primary school.

Parents who talk with their children, value learning and encourage their child to read can substantively improve their child's language and literacy skills, and support them to become ready for school.

The National Survey questions on parental support were introduced in order to find out how commonly this is done and to provide evidence for the [Foundation Phase](#), a learning and development initiative targeted at children aged 3 to 7. In addition, parents with a child at primary school (aged 3 to 11) were asked about their own confidence when helping their child to learn. This bulletin sets out the results from these survey questions.

The full [questionnaire](#) with questions on parental support, as well as on a range of other National Survey topics, can be found on the [National Survey for Wales web pages](#). Additional tables can be accessed via [StatsWales](#). More information about the survey methodology, and definitions of terms used in the bulletin, can be found in the [Key Quality Information](#) section at the end of this bulletin.

Parental support

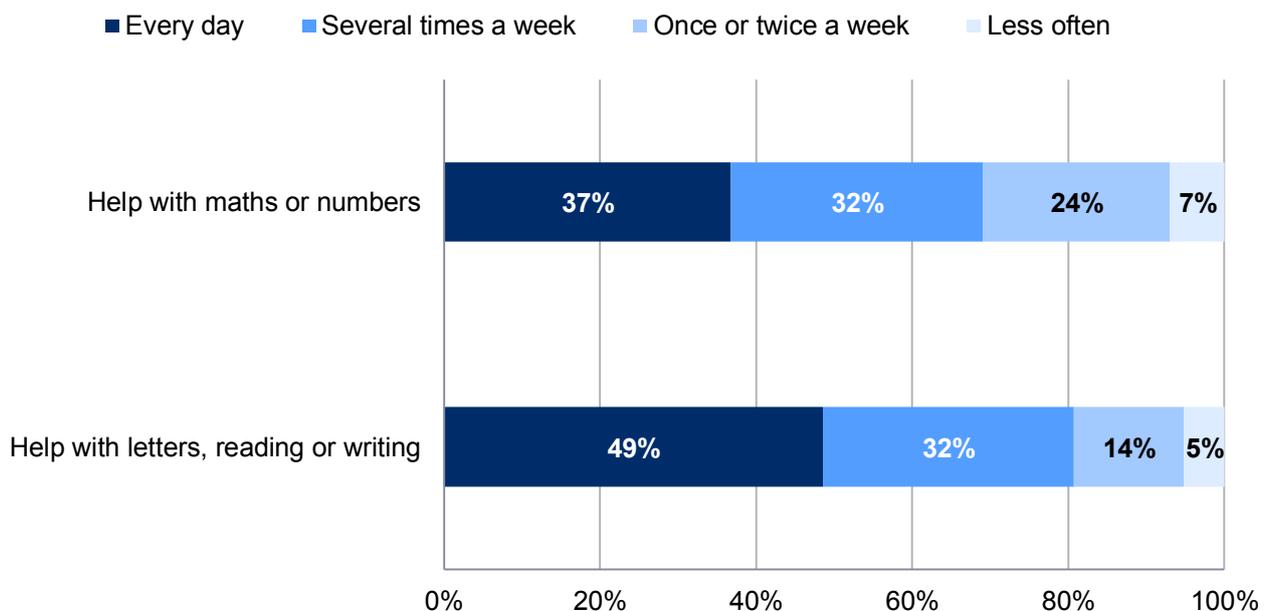
The 2014-15 National Survey for Wales included questions that specifically considered parental support with literacy and numeracy. Parents with a child aged 3 to 7 (living in the household) were asked how often they helped their child with learning about letters or with reading or writing, and with maths or numbers. Parents with a child aged 3 to 11 were also asked how confident they felt in their own ability to help their child with reading, writing and maths.

For both sets of questions, if there was more than one child in the household in this age group then one child was selected at random and the respondent was asked to think about this child when answering. It is important to note that the survey only asked the parent that was randomly selected for interview how much time they spent doing various activities with their child. Information about the time that the other parent or another adult spent doing the same activities with the child was not collected.

Frequency of parental support

Parents tended to help their child aged 3 to 7 to learn about letters or helped with reading and writing more frequently than they helped their child with maths or numbers. This is shown in Chart 1, where 81% of parents helped with reading and writing at least several times a week; compared with 69% of parents helping their child with maths or numbers at least several times a week.

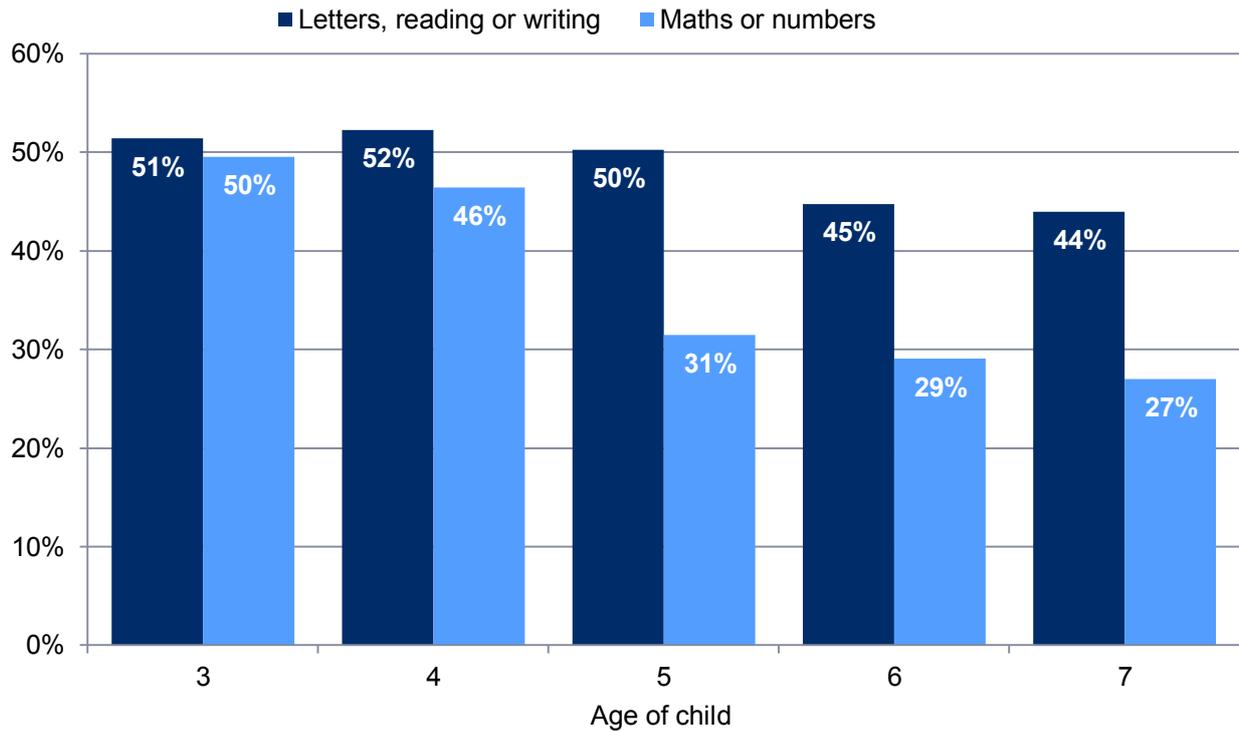
Chart 1: How often a parent supports child aged 3-7 with their learning



The amount of time parents spent helping their child varied by age of the child. As shown in Chart 2, children aged 3 and 4 received the most daily support, with around half of parents providing support with letters, reading or writing, and with maths or numbers.

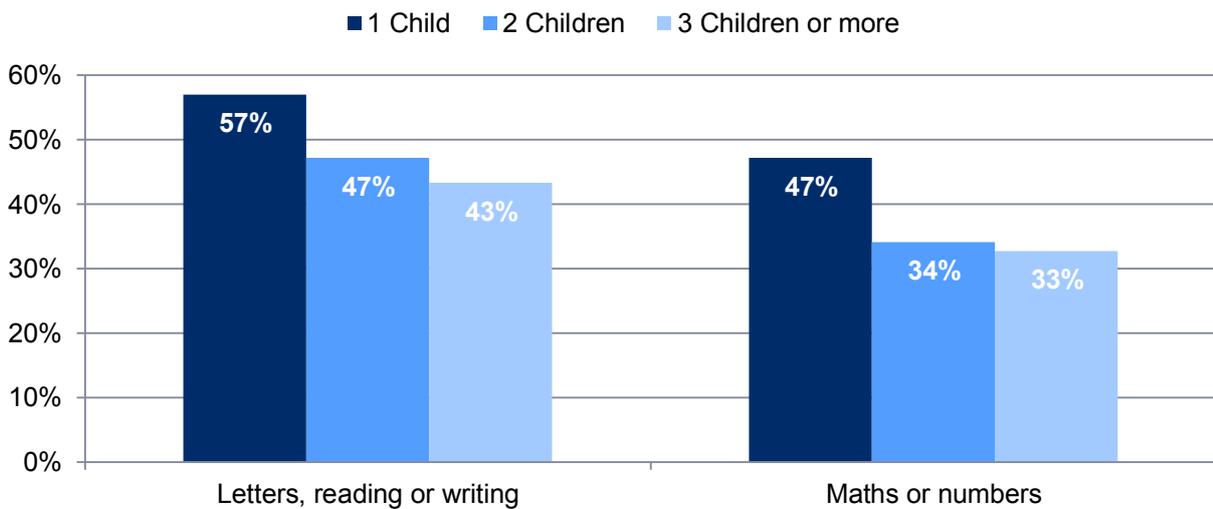
Chart 2 also shows that there was a decline in daily support with maths or numbers as the age of the child increased. This decline in daily support was most notable between ages 4 and 5: For children aged 4 years, 46% of parents gave daily support in maths and numbers; at age 5, when children start school, 31% of parents gave support this regularly. The markedly higher levels of daily literacy support may be explained by children bringing reading books home from school and being read bedtime stories.

Chart 2: Daily parental support by age of selected child



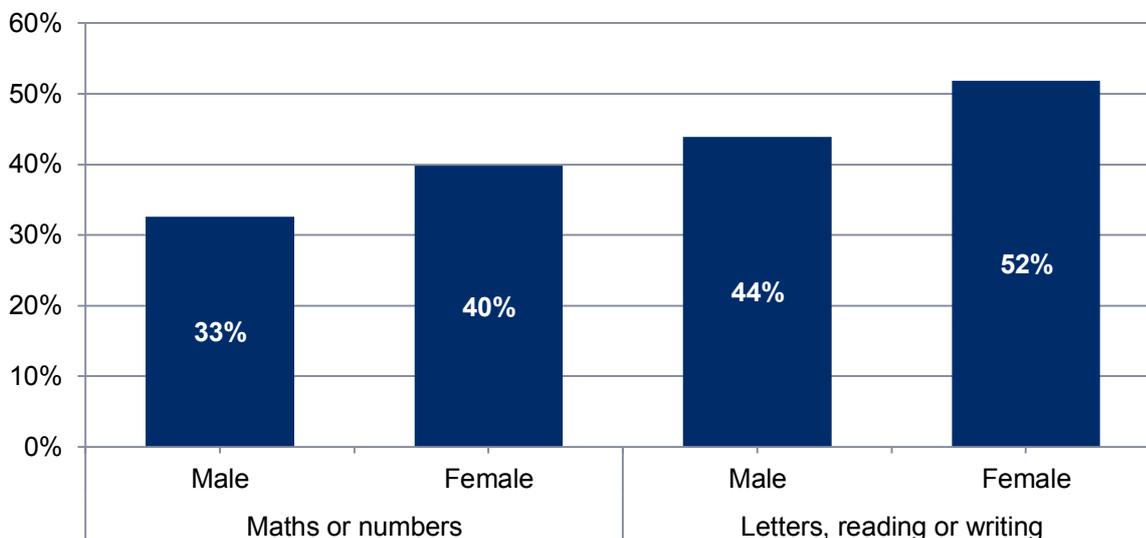
The presence of other children in the household also influenced the amount of time that parents spent helping their child. Chart 3 shows that the frequency of daily parental support was highest in single child households, with 57% of parents providing daily support with letters, reading or writing, and 47% providing daily support with maths or numbers. With two children in the household, 47% of parents provided daily support with letters, reading or writing to the child that was asked about, and 34% of parents provided daily support with maths or numbers.

Chart 3: Daily parental support for selected child, by number of children in household



There was a difference between the amount of support offered by male and female parents. Chart 4 shows that a higher percentage of mothers offered daily support with both literacy and numeracy skills compared with fathers.

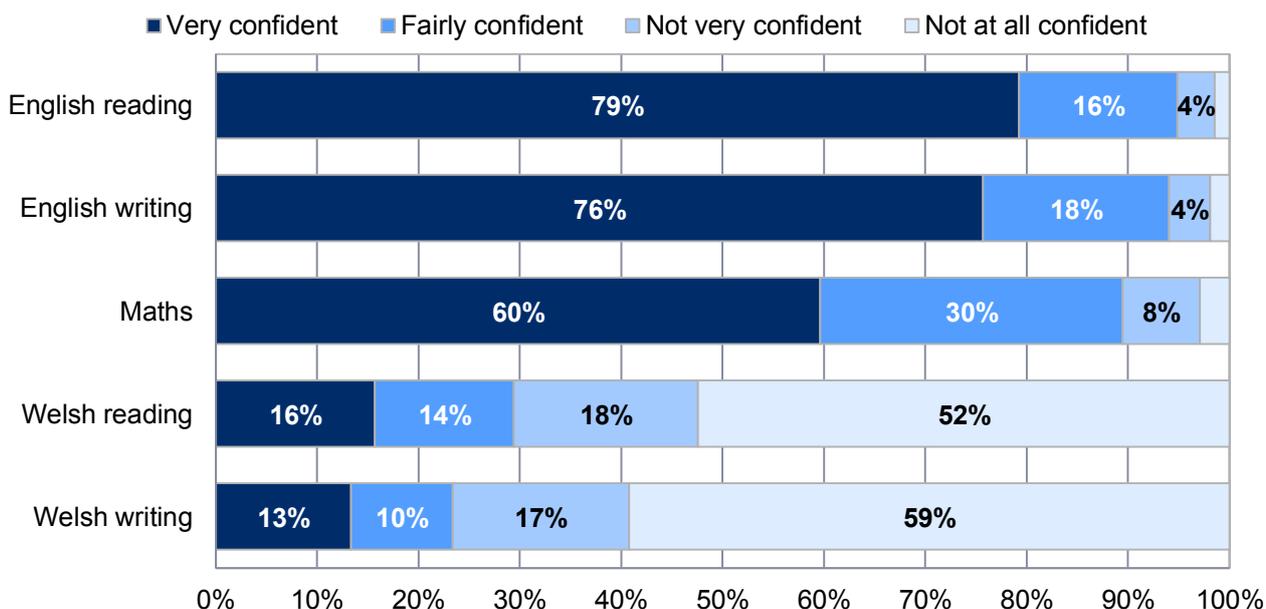
Chart 4: Daily parental support by gender of parent



Parental confidence in their own ability to support child's learning

Parents with children aged 3 to 11 were asked how confident they felt in their own ability to help their child with reading and writing in both Welsh and English, and with maths. The results are shown in Chart 5.

Chart 5: Parental confidence in their own ability to help child aged 3-11^(a)

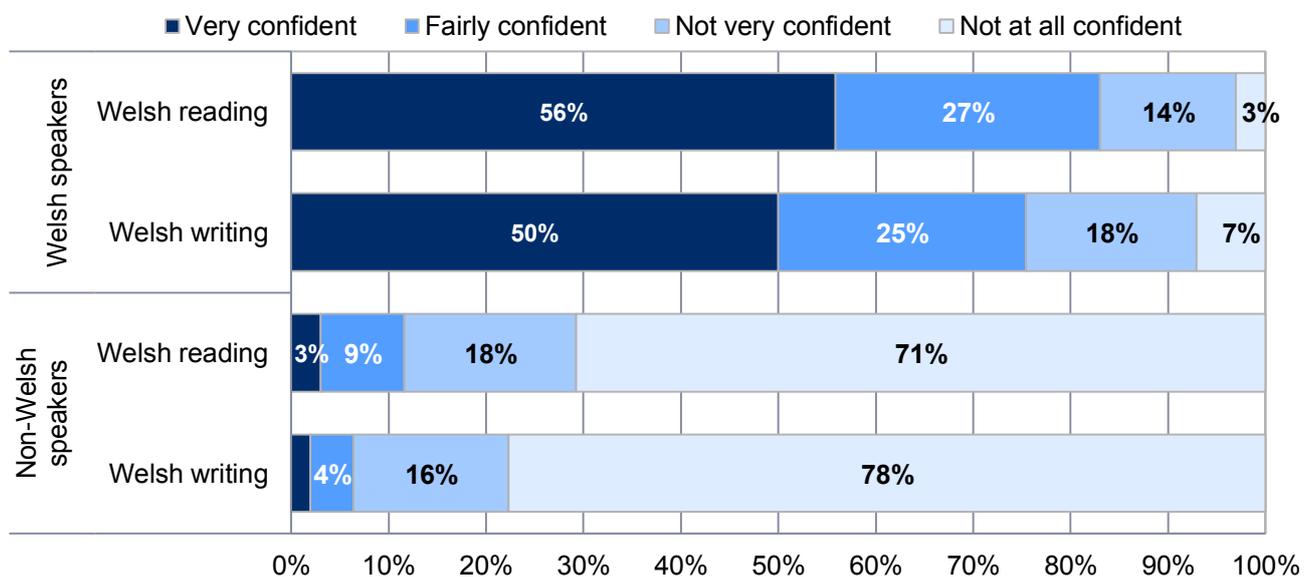


(a) Parents could spontaneously mention that 'their child doesn't do this yet'. Less than 1% said this for English reading and writing and less than 2% for Maths, but 12% and 13% of parents mentioned this for Welsh reading and writing respectively. These spontaneous responses have been removed from the chart.

Parents were most confident in their English reading and writing ability, with 79% and 76% respectively saying they were very confident in their ability to be able to help their child. Parents were slightly less confident in their maths ability, with 60% very confident in their ability to help their child.

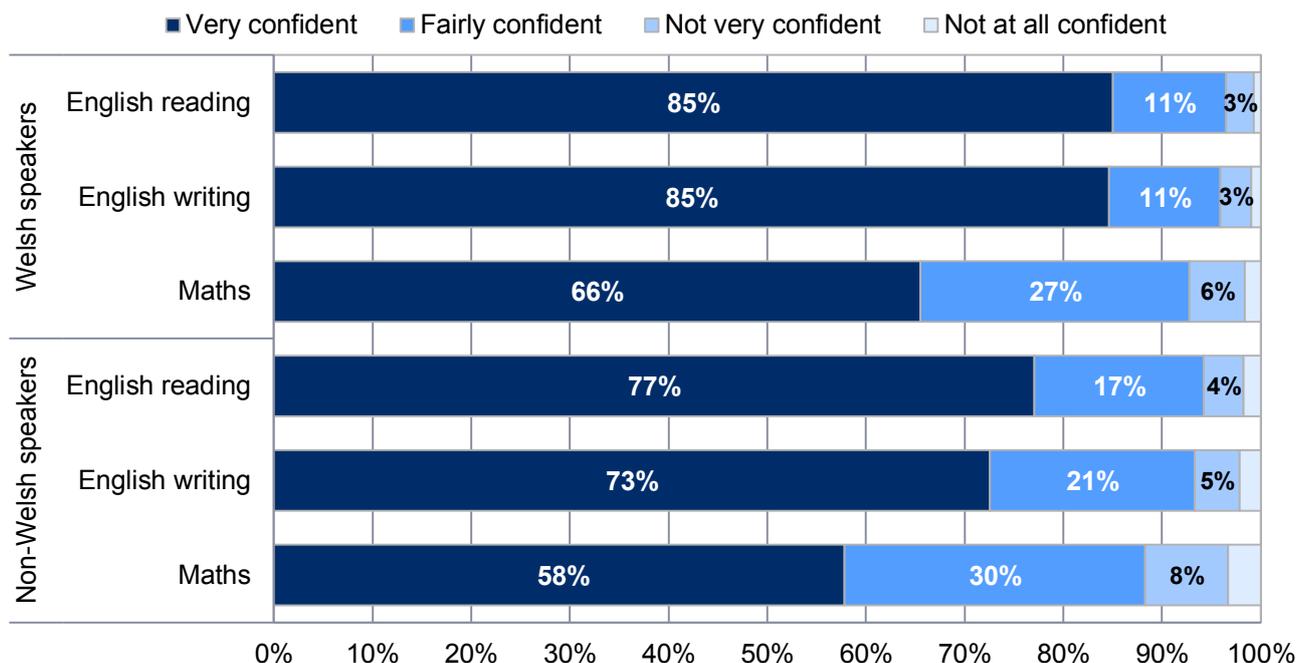
Parents were least confident in their Welsh reading and writing ability, with only 16% and 13% saying they were very confident in their ability to help their child to read and write in Welsh and over half reporting they were 'not at all confident'. The question was asked both of parents who could speak Welsh and those who couldn't. Unsurprisingly, Welsh speaking parents were more confident, in their ability to help their children with Welsh reading and writing, than those who couldn't speak Welsh. This is shown in Chart 6.

Chart 6: Parents' confidence in helping with Welsh reading and writing, by language



However, charts 6 and 7 show that even parents who speak Welsh were less confident in their ability to read and write in Welsh (56% and 50% very confident) than they were in English (85%) and Maths (66%). Welsh speaking parents were, however, more confident in their ability in English and Maths than those who couldn't speak Welsh, as shown in Chart 7.

Chart 7: Parents' confidence in helping with English and Maths, by ability to speak Welsh



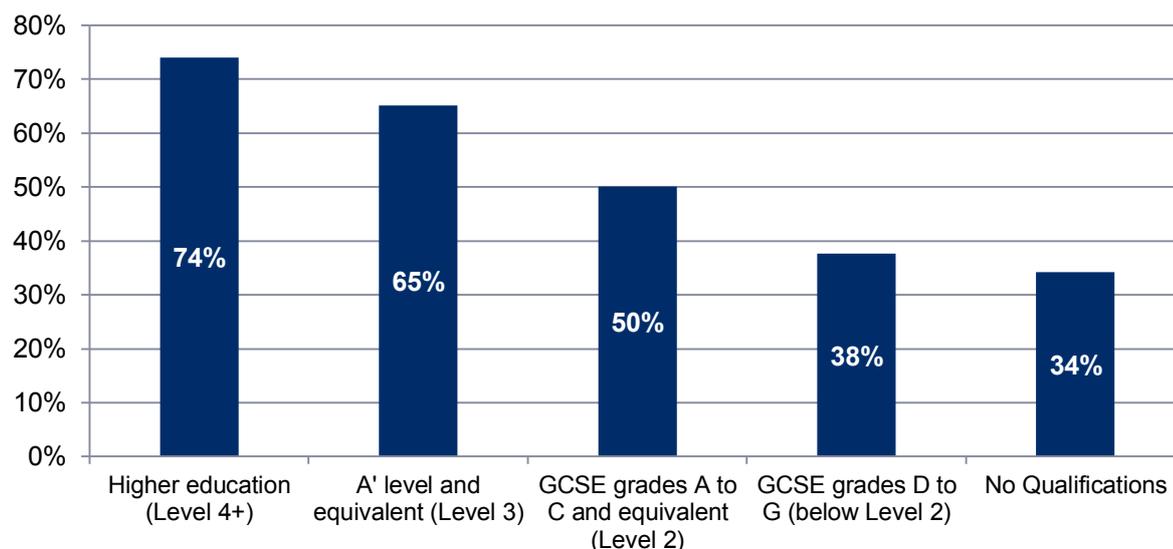
However, it is important to note that being able to speak Welsh is associated with other factors, such as higher levels of qualification. So, to explore whether being a Welsh speaker might influence a parent's confidence in helping their child with English and Maths more in-depth analysis¹ was carried out. This analysis indicated that for English reading, English writing and Maths the strongest factor predicting parental confidence for all three was the highest qualification of the parent. Once level of qualification had been taken into account, there were no significant differences in confidence between parents who could speak Welsh and those who couldn't. This suggests that the higher confidence of Welsh speaking parents identified in Chart 7 was mainly due to Welsh speaking parents holding higher qualifications, rather than their confidence level being influenced by their ability to speak Welsh.

Based on the same analysis technique, there were two main factors identified as predicting parental confidence in helping with Welsh reading and writing, these were the qualification level of the parent and their level of Welsh speaking ability.

The parent's qualification level was a strong indicator of a parent's confidence in their ability to help their child with English and Welsh reading and writing, and with Maths. Chart 8 illustrates this relationship for numeracy skills.

¹ For more information see the ['Regression analysis'](#) section in the ['Key Quality information'](#)

Chart 8: Parents very confident in own maths ability to help child with maths, by highest qualification²



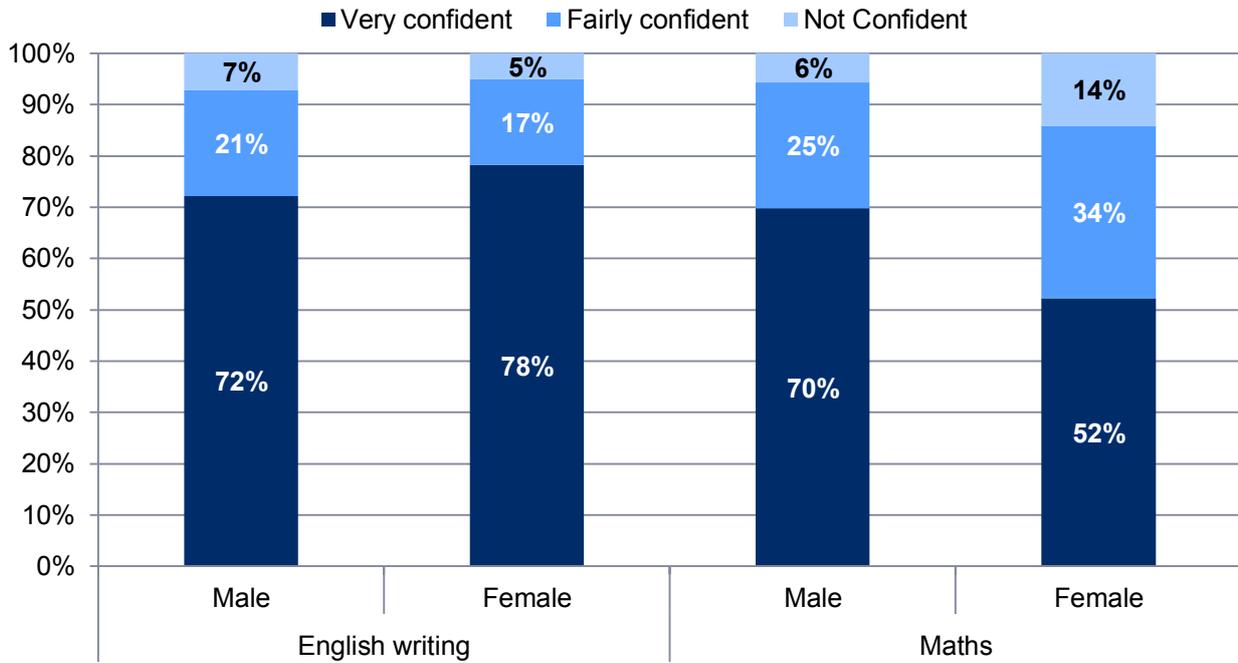
74% of parents with qualifications achieved at higher education were very confident helping their child with maths, whereas 34% of parents with no qualifications were very confident. Similarly, 89% of parents with qualifications achieved at higher education were very confident in their own ability to help their child with English reading and writing. In contrast, 52% and 47% of parents with no qualification were very confident in their own English reading and writing ability, respectively. Of Welsh speaking parents, 68% and 62% with qualifications at higher education level were very confident in their own ability to help their child with Welsh reading and writing. In contrast, 19% and 25% of parents with no qualifications were very confident in their own Welsh reading and writing ability.

Further analysis³ was used to investigate whether the parent's gender influenced their confidence. For English reading, Welsh reading and Welsh writing there was no significant difference in confidence between male and female parents. However, as shown in Chart 9, male parents were significantly more confident in their ability to help their children with Maths and female parents were significantly more confident in their ability to help their children with their English writing.

² The qualification groups used on this chart are based on [National Qualification Framework](#) levels. The titles used here are for illustrative purposes. For a full definition of the qualifications included in each category see [Terms and Definitions](#)

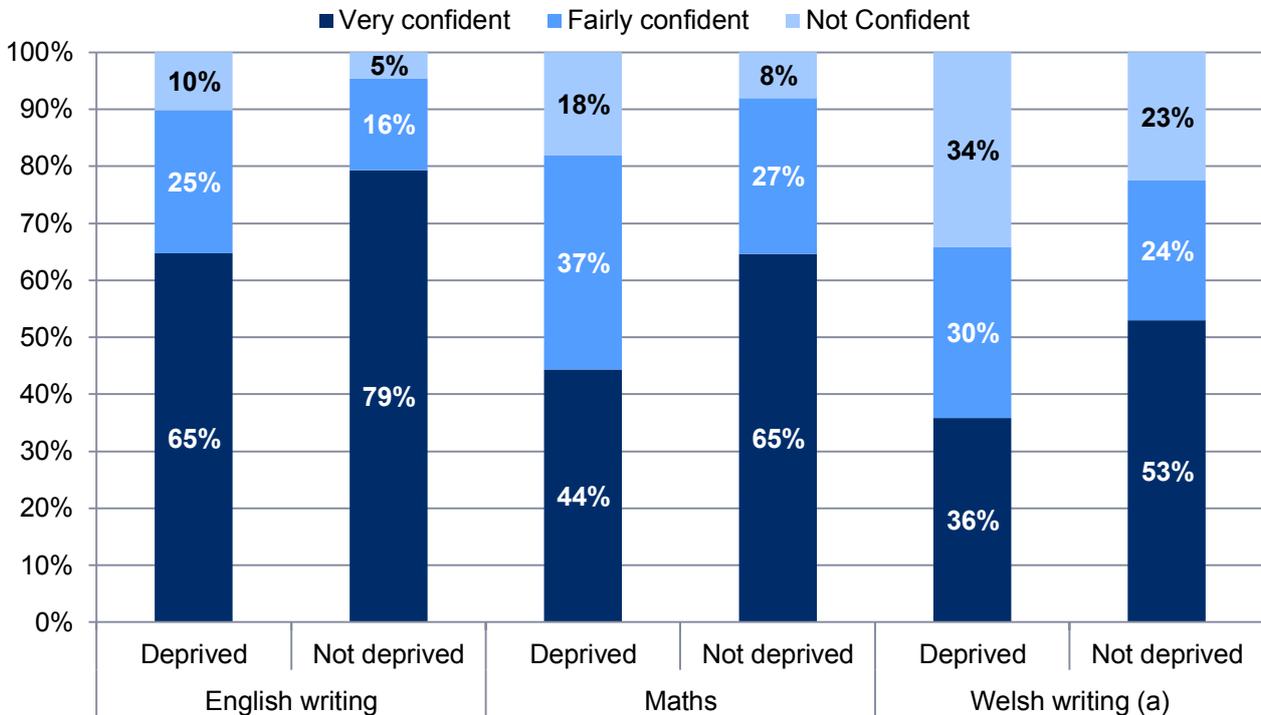
³ For more information see the [Regression analysis](#) section in the [Key Quality information](#).

Chart 9: Parental confidence in English writing and maths, by gender



Parental confidence was lower for English, Welsh and Maths when the household was in material deprivation. As shown in Chart 10, parents in non-deprived households were more confident in their ability to help their child, compared with parents in materially deprived households.

Chart 10: Parental confidence by material deprivation



(a) Only includes results for parents who could speak Welsh

The relationship for English and Welsh reading by material deprivation followed a very similar pattern to English and Welsh writing.

Whilst for all subjects, parents in non-deprived households were more confident in their ability to help their child, more in-depth analysis⁴ found that being in material deprivation was only found to predict parental confidence in maths. For both languages, lower parental confidence for those in materially deprived households was found to be mainly driven by those parents holding lower qualifications, rather than their confidence level being influenced by their level of deprivation.

⁴ For more information see the ['Regression analysis'](#) section in the ['Key Quality information'](#)

Terms and definitions

Household

A household is defined as one person living alone or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address with common housekeeping – that is, sharing a living room or sitting room or at least one meal a day.

Parent

Within this bulletin, ‘parent’ refers to parent or legal guardian of a child living in the same household.

Material deprivation

Material deprivation is a measure which is designed to capture the consequences of long-term poverty on households, rather than short-term financial strain.

Respondents were asked questions on whether their household was able to afford a series of things like: keep the house warm enough, make regular savings, or have a holiday once a year.

The material deprivation score is calculated so that a person who can afford everything, has a score of 0 and a person who wants but doesn't have any of the items asked about has a score of 100. A higher score is given to households lacking those items that most households already have. Those with a score of 25 or more are classed as ‘materially deprived’. The full list of questions asked can be found on page 80 of the [2014-15 questionnaire](#).

Qualifications

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

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

National Qualification Framework levels	Short descriptions used in charts
NQF levels 4-8	Higher education (Level 4+)
NQF level 3	A' level and equivalent (Level 3)
NQF level 2	GCSE grades A to C and equivalent (Level 2)
Below NQF level 2	GCSE below grade C (below Level 2)
No Qualifications	No Qualifications

Key quality information

Background

The National Survey for Wales 2012-15 was carried out by TNS-BMRB and Beaufort Research on behalf of the Welsh Government. The results reported in this bulletin are based on interviews completed in 2014-15 (1 April 2014 – 12 April 2015 (fieldwork was extended slightly beyond the one year mark, in order to increase the achieved sample size).

Each year approximately 25,000 addresses were chosen randomly from the Royal Mail's Small User Postcode Address File. Interviewers visited each address, randomly selected one adult (aged 16+) in the household, and carried out a 25-minute face-to-face interview with them, which asked for their opinions on a wide range of issues affecting them and their local area. A total of 14,285 interviews were achieved in 2014-15. Analysis included in this bulletin was based on 1,500 respondents with a child aged 3 to 7 and 2,200 respondents with a child aged 3 to 11.

Interpreting the results

Percentages quoted in this bulletin are based on only those respondents who provided an answer to the relevant question. Missing answers occur for several reasons, including refusal or an inability to answer a particular question and cases where the question is not applicable to the respondent.

Where a relationship has been found between two factors, this does not mean it is a causal relationship. More detailed analysis is required to identify whether one factor causes change in another. Regression analysis provides a way of investigating which factors are likely to be important – see [below](#).

Checks are in place to ensure the quoted figures are the most up-to-date figures available at the time of publication.

The results of the National Survey are weighted to compensate for unequal selection probabilities and differential non-response (i.e. to ensure that the age and sex distribution of the final dataset matches that of the Welsh population).

Quality of the data

National Statistics status

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

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

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

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

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

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

Information on indicators and associated technical information - [How do you measure a nation's progress? - National Indicators](#)

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

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

Quality report

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

Sampling variability

Estimates from the National Survey are subject to a margin of uncertainty. Part of the uncertainty comes from the fact that any randomly-selected sample of the population will give slightly different results from the results that would be obtained if the whole population was surveyed. This is known as sampling error.⁵ Confidence intervals can be used as a guide to the size of the sampling error. These intervals are calculated around a survey estimate and give a range within which the true value is likely to fall. In 95% of survey samples, the 95% confidence interval will contain the 'true' figure for the whole population (that is, the figure we would get if the survey covered the entire population). In general, the smaller the sample size the wider the confidence interval. Confidence intervals are included in the tables of survey results published on [StatsWales](#).

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

Significant differences

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

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

Where National Survey results are compared with results from other sources, we have not checked that confidence intervals do not overlap.

Regression analysis

There are different types of regression analysis that are used for different purposes. The type used here is called binary logistic regression. This is the regression technique most commonly used for survey data.

⁵ Sampling error is discussed in more detail in the [Quality Report](#) for the National Survey.

We used logistic regression to isolate the specific effects of individual factors (such as age and gender) on a particular outcome (such as parental confidence in helping their child). It allows us to look at the effect of each factor separately while keeping constant a range of other factors.

Using the statistical model that was produced, we were then able to explore the link between each factor and parental confidence in helping their child, by adjusting the values in the statistical model for each respondent. This is sometimes known as average marginal effect. The results provide an indication of which characteristics/situations have the strongest influence on the original question (e.g. parental confidence in helping their child) when all other factors within the model are held constant. More details about how we did the analysis are available on request.

Technical report

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

Revisions

[More information on our revisions policy.](#)

Release policy

Information about the process for releasing new results is available from the [Welsh Government's statistics web pages](#).

Availability of datasets

The data behind the charts and tables in this release are published in spreadsheets on [StatsWales](#). An anonymised version of the annual datasets (from which some information is removed to ensure confidentiality is preserved), together with supporting documentation, has been deposited with the [UK Data Archive](#). For more information, please contact us (see below).

Further uses of the results

The results will be used extensively by Welsh Government policy teams, but they are also relevant to a wide range of other external organisations and individuals.

Next update

Not a regular output.

Further details

The document is available at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/national-survey/?tab=current&lang=en>

We want your feedback

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided by email to

surveys@wales.gsi.gov.uk

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