



# DEMAND FOR PROVISION OF WELSH- LANGUAGE SPORT AMONGST ADULTS



September 2010

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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Arad Consulting was commissioned in February 2010 by Sport Wales to carry out qualitative research to examine demand for Welsh-language sports provision among adults in Wales. This report presents the findings of the research, which was conducted between March and May 2010.

### 1.1 Background and context

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This research builds on the findings of the Sport Wales Active Adults Survey, a biennial household survey that measures levels of sports participation, club membership, volunteering and other issues related to sporting matters among adults in Wales. Analysis of the 2008-09 Active Adults Survey<sup>1</sup> indicated that access to opportunities to participate in sport in the medium of the Welsh language is neither a barrier for non-participants nor a barrier for those who wish to undertake more sport. A further finding was that provision of sports coaching and instruction in Welsh among adults is relatively rare.

It was not possible, however, to use the survey data to establish levels of demand for provision in the Welsh language amongst existing participants, or what impact Welsh-language or bilingual provision may have on the (perceived) quality of experiences for adults participating in activity sessions. A separate evaluation of three pilot projects<sup>2</sup> funded by Sport Wales suggested that young people and parents felt that additional Welsh-language and bilingual provision had a beneficial impact on the quality of their experiences.

This research was therefore intended to collect evidence from a sample of adults to assess levels of demand, adults' views on the benefits of Welsh language and bilingual provision and attitudes towards the development of further Welsh language and bilingual activities, both among Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers.

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<sup>1</sup> The Sport Wales Active Adults Survey is a biennial household survey commissioned by Sport Wales to measure levels of sports participation, club membership, volunteering and other sporting matters amongst adults in Wales. The 2008-09 survey collected 22,176 responses based on a random probability sample.

<sup>2</sup> Sports Council for Wales (2010) Evaluation of Welsh Language Sports Development Pilot Projects. Produced by Arad Consulting for the Sports Council for Wales (now Sport Wales).

## 1.2 Key research questions

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Sport Wales identified the following research questions and themes as being central to the research:

- Is there significant demand for Welsh-language/bilingual sports provision amongst adults who currently participate?
- Does Welsh language and/or bilingual coaching and instruction increase satisfaction amongst Welsh-speaking participants? If so, in what ways?
- What do Welsh-speaking participants currently coached in English think would be the added value of developing additional provision delivered through the medium of Welsh or bilingually?
- What do participants who don't speak Welsh think of the potential for developing Welsh language and/or bilingual activities? Does this differ between different sports e.g. team sports versus exercise classes?

## 1.3 Overview of methodology and sampling

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### Overview of sampling

The study was carried out using qualitative research methods, mostly through telephone interviews but with some face-to-face interviews. In the first instance, participants were drawn from the 2008-09 Active Adults Survey data file. All respondents to that survey were asked if they would be willing to participate in further research undertaken by third parties on behalf of the Sport Wales. Those who had signalled their willingness to take part in ongoing research were contacted and interviews were arranged.

The sample consisted of two broad groups: firstly, those who had noted in the Active Adults Survey that they were fluent/had some Welsh; secondly, those who had reported that there were not Welsh speakers.

### Welsh speakers

With regard to the first group, there was a limited pool from which to select. After analysing the dataset provided, there were only 35 contacts from which to achieve the

target sample of 20-25 interviews from this group. 22 interviews were carried out, although 5 of the interviews were conducted with individuals who were not Welsh speaking, even though they were recorded on the Active Adults Survey as being fluent or having some knowledge of Welsh. Consequently, it was decided to carry out visits to a number of groups in order to speak to individuals taking part in Welsh-medium or bilingual activities. Team members visited Caereinion Leisure Centre in North Powys, Penllyn Leisure Centre in Bala, Gwynedd and also spoke to individuals in Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taff who take part in activities through the medium of Welsh. The locations of these visits were selected to help ensure that the sample of interviewees was geographically representative. Research team members confirmed that individuals participating in bilingual activities would be present, although the nature of the activities and age profile of those interviewed was unknown prior to the visit. This boosted the sample to 24 interviews. Of these, 11 were with males and 13 with females.

We consider that the sample, which includes individuals from all parts of Wales ranging from 16 to 77 years of age, is sufficiently representative to draw conclusions

### **Non-Welsh speakers**

The pool of non-Welsh speakers from which to draw was significantly larger. A pool of 136 was provided, consisting of individuals who do not speak Welsh, who receive regular coaching and who had noted they were willing to be contacted again during the Active Adults Survey. In total, 59 individuals were telephoned at various times of day between 11am and 7pm. A maximum of three attempts was made to contact each individual. In some cases it was necessary on first contact to arrange a convenient time to call back to conduct the interview. Only a small minority (5 individuals) declined to take part in the survey, noting that they did not wish to comment on the subject area. This suggests that the sample has not been significantly biased. 22 interviews were carried out, which exceeded the target of 20 interviews.

We were satisfied that this sample was sufficiently representative, in terms of geographical spread, type and location of activities attended and the age profile of interviewees, which ranged from 17 years of age to 77. Of the 22 interviewees, 10 were male and 12 were female. A more detailed breakdown of the sample is included in Annex 1 to this report.

### **Analysis**

Analysis was based on the key research questions set out by the client, extracting qualitative evidence relating to:

- i) Evidence of demand, including unmet need in specific activities and geographic areas;
- ii) Impact of Welsh-language / bilingual provision on levels of satisfaction among participants;
- iii) The added value that participants gain / anticipate they would gain from participating in Welsh-language / bilingual provision.
- iv) The views of non Welsh-speakers on the potential for developing Welsh language sports activities.

Semi structured interview guides are included in Annex 2.

## 2. FINDINGS

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This section of the report presents the findings from the fieldwork conducted. We have sought to summarise the evidence thematically to reflect the key research questions set out by the client in the research specification.

Firstly, it examines levels of demand for Welsh language/bilingual sports provision among adults who currently participate. Secondly, we consider the impact of the language of instruction on enjoyment and satisfaction: i.e. does the fact that activities take place in Welsh/bilingually result in greater satisfaction (which, in turn, can impact on levels and frequency of participation)? Linked to this, we asked Welsh-speaking participants who receive coaching/instruction in English whether they thought there would be added value in receiving instruction in Welsh. Thirdly, we consider the views of non-Welsh speakers on the potential for developing Welsh language and/or bilingual activities.

### 2.1 Demand among Welsh speakers

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Based on evidence collected from those who contributed to this research, overall there are good levels of demand for Welsh language and bilingual sports activities. The sample of interviewees included a mix of individuals with varying levels of fluency (although most spoke Welsh fluently) and in different parts of Wales. Generally interviewees expressed interest in taking part in Welsh language activities, and this section aims to identify differences, based on location, age and type of activity

By way of background, 10 of the 24 interviewees with some knowledge of Welsh currently take part in activities with an element of Welsh language instruction or training. Those individuals were keen for bilingual activities to be sustained:

*"It's important that opportunities are available to take part [in Welsh language activities]... in an area like this, it's to be expected." (Gwynedd, female aged 30)*

*"Keeping fit and healthy is important to me and I would hope that the activities I attend in Welsh continue to be delivered." (Powys, Male)*

Others who do not currently participate through the medium of Welsh also expressed interest in taking part in Welsh language activities. One young woman, who currently takes part in a number of activities in English, commented:

*"I would definitely be interested [in Welsh language activities]... I've been brought up speaking Welsh and it's easier for me." (Carmarthenshire, female aged 20)*

Another interviewee in south Wales noted:

*"I think that more should be available bilingually. I would try it out if there was something local." (Bridgend, female aged 31)*

### **2.1.1 Demand among younger people**

Demand for Welsh medium or bilingual provision was expressed keenly by a number of younger interviewees. As one might expect, this was particularly true among young people in largely Welsh-speaking communities who socialise through the medium of Welsh.

*"I think it would be a good idea to offer more sports activities through the medium of Welsh – and a range of different sports." (Carmarthenshire, female aged 17)*

*"I'd be very interested in taking part in new [Welsh language] activities. I'm sure lots of other people of my age in the area would too." (Gwynedd, male aged 18)*

One of the younger age group, who is already a member of a couple of local clubs where Welsh language instruction and coaching is delivered, noted that he would be keen to try out new opportunities and activities:

*"I would try anything if there was provision or new opportunities available." (Gwynedd, male aged 18)*

The common feature among these young people who expressed demand for Welsh language provision is the fact that they are first language Welsh-speakers who interact

with their peers through the medium of Welsh. As such, being able to access Welsh language sports provision – whether this is local authority delivered provision or instruction through independent clubs – is not only desirable but is also viewed as a part of everyday life. This is demonstrated by the fact that some of the young people interviewed noted that they arrange 5-a-side football matches and badminton with friends where “everybody speaks Welsh together without really giving it any thought” (Carmarthenshire, male aged 20).

It is to be expected that demand (across all age groups) is most concentrated in areas where the proportion of Welsh speakers is greatest. The situation is different for those who live in areas where the Welsh language is spoken less widely in everyday social settings. There is some evidence that people are motivated to travel to participate in activities through the medium of Welsh, suggesting that there is demand but that this is dispersed over a larger geographic area.

*“I play touch rugby in Cardiff with friends – some of the team travel down from the valleys. The fact that we all speak Welsh was a factor in setting up the team and certainly drew me into taking part.” (Cardiff, male aged 26)*

For other Welsh speakers, there appeared to be a lack of awareness of opportunities to take part in bilingual activities (see section 2.1.3, below). Another interviewee noted that he “speaks less Welsh since leaving school”. He added:

*“I’m not really sure why people choose to speak English when they can speak Welsh. Unless they’re told they can do it in Welsh, quite often the default position is English.” (Ceredigion, male aged 24).*

Evidence suggests that there are different patterns of demand across all age cohorts. Among younger people, the research found a good degree of enthusiasm for bilingual activities in Welsh speaking heartlands. Indeed, there was, for some, an expectation that bilingual provision should be available. In other areas, demand appears to be more diluted, although some young people are prepared to travel to take part in activities through the medium of Welsh.

### **2.1.2 Adults emphasising the importance of opportunities for younger people**

While Welsh speaking adults across all age cohorts were asked specifically about their own participation in, and their attitudes towards, Welsh language provision, many were keen nevertheless to emphasise the importance of opportunities for younger people.



A number of Welsh speaking interviewees expressed parental demand for bilingual activities:

*“I think it would be brilliant if there were bilingual classes in the leisure centre. My son learns Welsh at school and it would be great for him to keep it up.”  
(Bridgend, female aged 31)*

In other cases, demand was expressed on behalf of young people:

*“I would support sporting activities through the medium of Welsh – it’s the perfect time for children to get a grasp of the language and stay healthy”. (Wrexham, male aged 47)*

Although not the core focus of the research, there was evidence that parents are prepared to travel to take advantage of opportunities to participate through the medium of Welsh. One parent from Dolgellau, explained that she takes her two children to Caereinion in north Powys to attend bilingual gymnastics classes - a 55 mile round trip.

*“When my children first started coming to gymnastics, they couldn’t speak much English and so it was essential that the instructors could converse with them in Welsh. So this is a big factor for me.” (Powys, Female aged 42)*

Evidence in this section and in 2.1.1, above, links to the findings of the previous evaluation of Welsh language pilots which found notable demand for bilingual activities targeted at young people. That report found enthusiasm among young people and their parents for Welsh medium sports activities.

### **2.1.3 Examples of specific activities demanded**

The research provided an opportunity to learn about the type of bilingual sports activities that they would like to see being delivered in their local area.

When prompted to provide examples of activities they would like to see delivered, interviewees’ answers followed a pattern. For the most part, activities mentioned fell into the broad category of ‘fitness classes’, including circuit training, aerobics and aqua aerobics. In some specific areas, respondents called for specific activities in their local area (swimming and, surprisingly, skiing instruction). It should be noted that this represents the views of only a small sample and local authorities should carry out more

comprehensive market research in order to inform the development of additional Welsh language and bilingual activities.

Generally, it is local authorities who are seen as being responsible for responding to any increased demand for Welsh language / bilingual sports activities. However, there were references to services provided by other organisations.

One older interviewee referred to exercise and fitness classes he had accessed through a community based cardiac rehabilitation service. The person who used to lead the exercise sessions in the gym with him was a Welsh speaker but used to speak Welsh, but the person now leading the sessions does not.

*“When I first started going, the sessions were in Welsh. John was with me at the start, and then Iorwerth. I felt much more comfortable. The lady now doesn’t speak Welsh – she’s very good but I don’t feel as happy going. But I won’t stop because it’s good for me.”*

#### **2.1.4 Coaching and Welsh language capacity**

A number of Welsh speaking interviewees indicated that the lack of coaches able to deliver provision through the medium of Welsh was a barrier. This, it was argued, results in English language activities being accepted as the norm. This is illustrated in the comments of one respondent, who plays cricket and rugby for his local clubs in a bilingual part of Carmarthenshire: he suggested that club coaches and leaders tend to use English out of habit.

*“I’d like to do sport in Welsh. Since I left school I don’t speak much Welsh. I’m not really sure why people choose to speak English when they can speak Welsh. I think that people would go to Welsh language sports activities and they would be very welcome.” (Carmarthenshire, male aged 20)*

Another echoed these comments and argued that if the aim is for people to be able to speak Welsh when they take part in sports activities, there is a need to establish this habit at a young age.

*“Many coaches are able to speak Welsh but they’re used to speaking English. We need to teach people how to coach through Welsh, so that there are enough Welsh speaking coaches.” (Powys, male aged 42)*

If, despite demand for Welsh language provision, English is seen as the ‘default’ language this is a worry and an issue that Sport Wales and local authorities should seek to address. The challenge is to enhance or develop the language skills of coaches and instructors so that they are sufficiently confident to deliver through the medium of Welsh in those settings and situations where bilingual instruction is desired. This is not a short-term objective, involving changing attitudes and behaviour and instilling confidence among coaches to deliver through the medium of Welsh. In some cases, this entails persuading Welsh speaking coaches to deliver provision in Welsh – something which they are often able but not accustomed to doing. In other cases, this may involve investing in training to improve the language skills of coaches so that, over time, they reach a point where they are able to deliver bilingually.

Again, this links to the previous study: Ceredigion’s sports development team has promoted Welsh language skills as part of standard professional development for leisure centre staff. This aims to embed bilingualism throughout the service, ensuring that instructors are equipped to deliver a wider range of activities bilingually and ensuring the public is aware of these opportunities.

Contributors alluded to the fact that a lack of Welsh speaking sporting role models was one issue that may be a barrier to participation through the medium of Welsh.

*“It would be good to have sporting role models who speak Welsh. People think that elite performers all speak and train in English and then it would be hard if we trained in Welsh – because of vocabulary etc. But we did it all in school through the medium of Welsh so I can’t see it being that much of a problem.” (Carmarthenshire, male aged 20)*

Coaches and instructors are often influential role models and mentors and therefore increasing the bilingual coaching infrastructure could potentially help overcome some of these barriers.

### **2.1.5 Terminology**

The perception (among some respondents) of there being a ‘default’ language of instruction has clear links to the issue of Welsh language terminology, which was discussed during interviews. A small number of interviewees considered that terminology was an important factor for instructors when delivering activities. One respondent, referring specifically to swimming instructors in her local pool noted:

*“they prefer to speak English because of the terms – they’re more familiar and everybody understands them.” (Gwynedd, female aged 29)*

A number of individuals who currently participate through the medium of Welsh noted that English terminology is used, but that this was not an issue.

*“the instructor in my fitness class always includes lots of English words. It’s just how it’s done and everybody accepts this. It’s not a problem.”  
(Carmarthenshire, female aged 25)*

Another young interviewee who plays for his local football club in north Wales echoed this view: he indicated that terms were not a problem and that English vocabulary is often used even though the activity itself is almost totally in Welsh.

*“sometimes is just more natural to shout things like ‘offside’ in English.”  
(Gwynedd, male)*

One interviewee was well placed to comment from the dual perspective of instructor and participant. She explained:

*“I teach PE at school through the medium of Welsh and the pupils get used to different commands, and used to the words used in sports. I don’t think terminology is an issue when teaching sport and more should be available bilingually.”  
(Bridgend, female aged 38)*

The message coming through from the evidence is that, while a lack of technical vocabulary is seen as a barrier for some coaches, it is largely a matter of habit and routine. Coaches and participants alike can familiarise themselves with Welsh terms, which over time can increase their confidence to deliver through the medium of Welsh. The aim, as noted in previous research, should be to ensure that coaches have access to a glossary of terms used in different activities and settings.

### **2.1.6 Relative importance of language in sports participation**

Based on evidence presented in preceding sections, there appears to be interest in, and demand for, Welsh language and bilingual provision. The research also provided an opportunity to understand to what extent the language of instruction impacts on participation. A small number of Welsh-speaking interviewees noted that the language of instruction was a factor in whether or not they take part in activities.

*“I’m more likely to attend if it’s in Welsh. It’s likely to be people I know that take part in the sessions.” (Gwynedd, female aged 29)*

This comment, and a number of others, underlines the importance of language as a defining feature of social networks for many people, supporting research previously commissioned by the Welsh Language Board<sup>3</sup>. That study found that in some parts of Wales, distinctive language groups are formed, with peer networks influencing behaviour in community and social settings. This research has found that some people are drawn to activities because they take place in Welsh. One young man interviewed in Cardiff started playing touch rugby because Welsh speaking friends attended (see Section 2.1.1). For some, therefore, the language of instruction / activity is a principal driver in choosing which activity or club to attend.

However, this does not appear to be the case for the majority of respondents. Most appear to welcome Welsh language provision, if available. However it is not key to individuals’ decisions whether or not to attend particular activities.

*“I don’t mind whether the activity is in Welsh or not. It’s usually local people that go, so I know most people anyway. I go because I want to keep fit and I speak Welsh in work and with my family so if the activity isn’t in Welsh it’s not the end of the world.” (Anglesey, female aged 29)*

*“First and foremost I go circuits for a work out – if the instructor speaks Welsh then great, but that wouldn’t make a difference to me in terms of taking part.” (Wrexham, male 46)*

*“I support the language... but it doesn’t bother me if the sports activities I take part in are in English only or bilingual”. (Carmarthenshire, male aged 18).*

In addition, comments suggest that interviewees in areas where there is less Welsh spoken question whether levels of demand justify introducing new Welsh medium provision. One respondent in Bridgend added:

*“I’m not sure how much take-up there would be locally [for Welsh language classes] because I don’t think that many people around here speak Welsh.” (Bridgend, female aged 31)*

The language of instruction isn’t the most important factor for most. Some interviewees explained that they prefer to be flexible and exercise in their own time, rather than

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<sup>3</sup> Welsh Language Board (2007) *Young People’s Social Networks and Language Use*

during group activities at ‘regimented times’. For these individuals the availability of bilingual provision is therefore not a significant factor or motive.

Identifying and measuring levels of demand for Welsh medium and bilingual sports activity is a complex exercise. This was further emphasised in supplementary interviews carried out in Gwynedd, Powys and in Rhondda Cynon Taf to boost the sample. The complexity stems from the fact that there is no common format or structure for Welsh medium/bilingual provision: it comes in a range of settings, and usually involves instruction being delivered bilingually to mixed groups. This is coupled with the fact that people are motivated to take part in sporting activity by diverse and personal reasons.

An aerobics instructor in Gwynedd who delivers bilingual sessions noted:

*“I think people who choose to be active will do so anyway... if they happen to be able to take part in exercise through the medium of Welsh, which should be the case in a place like Bala, then even better. But I don’t think it’s the critical factor”.*

### **2.1.7 Public awareness and marketing of provision**

Some interviews revealed a lack of awareness of opportunities to participate through the medium of Welsh. This was particularly the case among Welsh speakers who do not currently receive any coaching / instruction in Welsh.

*“I don’t know if there are any classes in Welsh”. (Bridgend, female aged 31).*

This was not confined to individuals in parts of south east Wales, where fewer bilingual activities are delivered. A lack of awareness was also reported among Welsh speakers in north Wales.

*“I would attend Welsh sports activities if they were available, but I haven’t seen any.” (Anglesey, male aged 67)*

*“I can’t say that I’m aware of any sports through the medium of Welsh. I don’t remember seeing anything advertised.” (Anglesey, male aged 48)*

This suggests a degree of latent demand among Welsh speakers. If lack of awareness is a barrier to participation, practical steps can be taken to help address this. Clearly, in parts of north Wales, there are indeed opportunities for people of all ages to take part in bilingual sports activities. The issue, therefore, appears to be one of marketing and

promotion. Local authorities – and clubs and associations – need to ensure that information about bilingual provision is widely publicized.

The evaluation of Welsh language pilots identified the need for organisations to take a strategic approach to marketing and publicizing information about bilingual provision. It noted that *“the marketing of [Welsh language] activities should be timed carefully and planned in consultation with key partners”*. This research supports the findings of the earlier research, with evidence to suggest that there is scope for local authorities to plan the development, delivery and marketing of provision more systematically.

A number of interviewees in predominantly Welsh speaking areas noted there was a considerable amount of bilingual activity but observed that this is often not formally developed in a targeted or strategic way. Some respondents commented that they’re ‘just lucky’ that there happens to be Welsh speaking staff at leisure centres which makes it possible for them to offer some bilingual provision.

*“I’d say that opportunities are pretty patchy. I suppose it depends on whether they’ve got staff who can speak Welsh. It’s down to luck.” (Gwynedd, female 42)*

The relationship between supply (or provision) and demand is interesting. When discussing levels of demand with interviewees, a number put forward the argument that ‘supply creates demand’ and that the relevant authorities should be proactively promoting new bilingual opportunities which, in turn, are likely to generate new demand.

*“If there were more opportunities, I think this would stimulate more interest. At the end of the day, people are creatures of habit and you need to provide opportunities so that people can get into the habit of doing [sport] through the medium of Welsh.” (Gwynedd, female aged 30)*

This raises the question of how much local authorities are currently doing to actively identify latent demand for Welsh language and bilingual provision among users. During a visit to one leisure centre in north Powys, the research team took the opportunity to discuss this with the manager. His view was that demand doesn’t appear overnight.

*“...You have to build a relationship with leisure centre users and understand their interests and then identify where opportunities can be developed. People who come here know I speak Welsh so that if I’m providing gym induction to individuals, I do so in their preferred language. We have bilingual staff who deliver gymnastics to young people and do so in Welsh and English side by side.”*

This leisure centre manager clearly appreciates the need to establish a rapport with users. There is also evidence that users also value such a relationship, which can impact positively on levels of enjoyment and satisfaction (see 2.2 below).

In addition, ensuring that leisure centres are visibly bilingual environments is also important. This was a finding of the previous evaluation study which noted that effective and customised marketing can help engage communities and ensure good levels of take-up of bilingual provision. Furthermore, in some parts of Wales it is arguably important that managers and staff are bilingual in order to help build effective relationships with the public, which in turn can help encourage participation and additional demand for bilingual provision. When appointing staff to key positions in leisure centres – both into management roles or as coaches/instructors – local authorities should consider how important it is for staff to be able to speak Welsh; where appropriate, the ability to speak Welsh should be a core requirement.

## 2.2 Impact on enjoyment and satisfaction

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### 2.2.1 Ease and comfort

Interviewees were asked whether taking part in activities through the medium of Welsh makes a difference to levels of enjoyment and satisfaction. As previously mentioned, having a rapport with a coach/instructor was cited as an important factor. For some participants, the language of instruction is an important part of establishing a good relationship with an instructor and impacts on levels of enjoyment. A mother and daughter, who attend a fitness class together on a regular basis observed:

*“We have a good bond with the instructor – it’s just a really nice relaxed atmosphere and the language is a big factor for me.” (Gwynedd, daughter)*

*“I’ve been coming along to step (aerobics) with my daughter for the past six weeks and I do appreciate the fact that it’s delivered in Welsh. We would probably come anyway if it wasn’t.” (Gwynedd, mother)*

The additional visits to leisure centres as part of the research underlined the benefits of having Welsh-speaking staff who are able to deliver activities bilingually. Others also spoke about the added enjoyment of having Welsh instruction during aerobics sessions, for example:



*“As I’m a Welsh speaker I find it easier to do everything in Welsh. I’m happier in Welsh – more comfortable. Also, I’m more likely to get to know people and go more regularly. I do feel much more comfortable in my own language.”*  
(Anglesey, female aged 46)

People were asked to explain what appeals about taking part in activities through the medium of Welsh. Some spoke about the experience being more ‘natural’ when delivered through the medium of Welsh; one explained that:

*“it’s our way of life here – we speak Welsh [when playing sports] as we do in all other aspects of life”. (Gwynedd, female).*

Another made the distinction between activities being more *comfortable* and being more *enjoyable*: one Welsh speaker who has not taken part in Welsh language activities noted:

*“I don’t feel that I would enjoy sports more if it were through the medium of Welsh – the important thing is to take part in the activities themselves. But I would feel more comfortable and would be attracted to a Welsh language or bilingual session.”*  
(Anglesey, male aged 48)

### 2.2.2 Quality of provision

Another interviewee noted that enjoyment was influenced more by the quality of instruction than the language.

*“The Pilates teacher, although not a Welsh speaker, is extremely good and people travel from far to go to her classes – she teaches up to level 4, which is rare. Therefore the quality of the teaching is more important than the language in this case.”*  
(Anglesey, female aged 46)

This illustrates that other factors – not only the language of instruction – are more important to some individuals when making decisions about what activities to pursue.

Much depends, therefore, on the individual participant’s expectations and outlook, however there is some clear evidence that the language of instruction can impact on the quality of the experience for some participants. It can enhance the quality of the relationship between instructor and participant or simply create an atmosphere or environment in which participants are more comfortable.

As the mother in Gwynedd noted, some would attend in any case; however previous studies have shown that enjoyment is a crucial motivating factor for sustained participation in sport<sup>4</sup>. Local authorities, as a major deliverer of sport and physical activity opportunities, are key to this agenda, as set out in the Welsh Assembly Government’s *Climbing Higher* strategy.

### 2.3 Non Welsh speakers’ views

Individuals who had previously taken part in the Active Adults Survey were approached and asked for their views on the potential for developing Welsh medium and bilingual provision.

Overall, the views and opinions expressed can be categorised in three ways: i) those who are supportive; ii) those who are ambivalent; iii) those who are not supportive or have concerns about the impact on English-language provision.

A summary of views expressed by those interviewed is as follows:

Supportive	15	Of whom a number were interested in taking part in bilingual activities.
Ambivalent	4	Not currently involved in Welsh medium / bilingual provision and feel that any new provision is unlikely to affect them.
Not supportive	3	Feel bilingual provision not relevant in their area / concerned about diversion of funding away from activities in English.

#### 2.3.1 Comments by individuals who are supportive

The level of support among non Welsh speakers for bilingual provision was surprising: as can be seen in the table above, the majority of interviewees saw that developing additional provision would be a positive thing, with a number expressing an interest in taking part in such activities. As can be seen from the selected comments below, the support was expressed by people of varying ages, of both sexes and in different parts of Wales.

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<sup>4</sup> *Understanding participation in sport and physical activity among children and adults: a review of qualitative studies*  
Allender, Cowburn & Foster (2006) Public Health, University of Oxford

*"I wouldn't object to them and if there was something I wanted to do that was bilingual I would do it quite happily." (Newport, female aged 44)*

*"It wouldn't bother me at all if there were bilingual classes or sessions. It would be quite interesting actually. I understand more than I speak. My friends would also be quite interested in a Welsh or bilingual sports course." (Wrexham, male aged 20)*

*"Yes, it would be a good thing to offer sports training or tuition bilingually – it would be great." (Neath Port Talbot, male aged 53)*

Interestingly, a number of those who responded positively to the idea of more activities being delivered bilingually saw this as a potential opportunity to enhance their own Welsh language skills.

Others appeared to consider that any new developments might be better targeted at children and young people, which reaffirms points made by a number of Welsh speaking interviewees.

*"I think it would be good if there were bilingual lessons. I think it would really good. Just cause, now, a lot kids get taught Welsh in school but they don't have opportunities to use it outside school or after they've finished their education." (Wrexham, female aged 66)*

*"I'm very supportive of Welsh and would welcome any opportunity for children or adults to do sports through the medium of Welsh or bilingually." (Swansea, male aged 36)*

The tone of many comments was one of broadly passive support – i.e. individuals did not object, considering that they were unlikely to be affected by any new developments. In some cases, the support was conditional and accompanied by caveats or a note of caution:

*"I would support this development if it happens. But it depends – I wouldn't want it instead of other classes. If there's a lack of funding I wouldn't want other things to be cut – but if it would be in addition to, or a bilingual class instead of an English only class, that would be good." (Cardiff, male aged 19).*

### **2.3.2 Comments by those who are more ambivalent**

For a small number of interviewees, the issue didn't provoke strong opinions:

*“Bilingual sports training wouldn’t put me off but wouldn’t be a high priority for me either.” (Vale of Glamorgan, male aged 53)*

*“I wouldn’t mind if it was possible to do some sport in Welsh but am not too bothered either way. When we do rugby training it’s all in English and that’s the way I like it.” (Neath Port Talbot, male aged 19)*

*“It wouldn’t bother me if sport was available in Welsh or bilingual. I don’t really speak Welsh so it doesn’t really affect me.” (Bridgend, female aged 36)*

### **2.3.3 Comments by those who are not supportive**

Those who were not supportive of the possibility of developing new bilingual or Welsh medium provision were in the smallest group. Only 3 out of the 22 interviewees noted that they would not be in favour of developments. However, these people were perhaps reflecting on the fact that not there is relatively little Welsh spoken in their own areas.

*“I don’t think I would be in favour of the development of sports activities in Welsh or bilingually in this particular area. There are not very many Welsh speakers here - maybe because we’re so close to the English borders.”  
(Flintshire, female aged 42)*

*“I think somebody needs to add up the cost of providing everything bilingually. Too much money is spent on printing things in English and Welsh and sending it to me – when I can’t read it.” (Caerphilly, male aged 48)*

It is interesting to note that when comparing this comment with that of the Cardiff male aged 19, one sees that there is not a huge degree of difference between the views of those who could be described as passively supportive and those who are not supportive. Both parties are motivated, at least in part, by a desire not to lose out on activities through the medium of English.

One of those who was against the expansion of Welsh language sporting activities for adults, supported new developments for young people, however.

*“Yes, I think it’s a good idea to do more Welsh language or bilingual sport for children. If they start early then it’s far easier for children to pick things up. If they start young, then they can become bilingual.” (Wrexham, female aged 66)*

Individuals were asked about their views, in principle, on the idea of enhancing bilingual sports provision. The semi-structured interview guide deliberately avoided setting one type of provision against another. However, the comment from the gentleman in Caerphilly above hints at a more specific issue which wasn't covered in any detail in interviews: namely, if it came down to a choice between expanding bilingual provision and offering more limited English language provision, would views change? Given that some of the support expressed was from a passive and even disengaged point of view, it is reasonable to suppose that if this issue was presented in a way which asked respondent to choose between one mode of provision and another, then responses would be significantly different.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### DEMAND

- i. Evidence clearly indicates that there is demand among Welsh speakers for instruction and activities delivered through the medium of Welsh. Those who currently take part in Welsh language/bilingual activities expressed a desire for provision to be sustained. There is also evidence of latent demand for bilingual provision among those who speak Welsh but do not currently participate in activities through the medium of Welsh. Based on evidence collected during this research, there is a case for developing additional Welsh language provision, although Sport Wales and local authorities should adopt a targeted approach, focusing initially on areas with the largest concentration of Welsh speakers.
- ii. Young people who socialise with peer groups through the medium of Welsh expressed particular interest in participating in new bilingual provision. As expected, demand is most concentrated in areas where the proportion of Welsh speakers is highest. Older interviewees – and indeed non Welsh speakers interviewed – also emphasised the importance of providing opportunities for young people, which links to the findings of the previous evaluation of Welsh language pilots.

#### Recommendation 1:

*Local authorities need to understand the extent and nature of demand in their local areas. **This could be done by encouraging staff in local leisure centres to consult with users (using either formal or informal methods) to identify what levels of demand there are locally for additional Welsh language or bilingual services.***

#### Recommendation 2:

***As part of this process, local authorities should prioritise developing new provision for young people aged 15-24.***

#### AWARENESS

- iii. There is some evidence to suggest that a lack of awareness of bilingual opportunities is a barrier to participation for some people. Bilingual provision is not widespread: even in areas where the development of new provision has been

piloted, opportunities are still relatively limited. However, where Welsh medium provision exists, leisure centres, clubs and associations should ensure that information is publicised to as wide an audience as possible.

Recommendation 3:

*Local authorities should ensure that Welsh medium and bilingual provision is widely advertised, tapping into existing networks and organisations such as Mentrau Iaith, schools, and other community groups. There is evidence that some people are prepared to travel to access bilingual provision and therefore publicising opportunities across local authority boundaries should be considered.*

## COACHING AND INSTRUCTION

- iv. The language of coaching and instruction is an important factor for some in their decision to participate in sporting activities. However the quality of the coaching appears to be a more important issue for the majority of those who contributed to this research.
- v. The fact that some respondents reported that English is perceived as being the 'default' language of instruction provides some cause for concern, particularly if this perception exists among coaches and instructors. Efforts are already underway in some local authorities – notably in Ceredigion – to enhance the language skills of local authority staff and instructors so that they are able to deliver provision bilingually. This is a medium to long-term aim but one which has the potential to normalise Welsh language provision and break down any attitudinal barriers that may exist.
- vi. Some issues remain in relation to terminology and 'normalising' the use of Welsh language terms and phrases in coaching settings. The lack of commonly used Welsh technical vocabulary in some sports is an obstacle for some coaches, who find that using English phrases comes more naturally. Some participants also echoed this view. The previous evaluation the three sports development pilot projects found that efforts should be made to increase coaches' and participants' confidence in using Welsh terms by developing and circulating a glossary of terms that can be used in different activities and settings.

Recommendation 4:

*Ceredigion has piloted ways of improving the language skills of leisure centre staff and widening opportunities to deliver bilingual activities. **Sport Wales should ensure that local authority sport development teams – particularly those with a high proportion of Welsh speakers – are made aware of this and to share good practice and ideas.***

Recommendation 5:

***Linked to this, local authorities should promote opportunities for existing staff to enhance or develop their own Welsh language skills, in order to help respond to identified demand.***

Recommendation 6:

***Community sports clubs should also be encouraged by Sport Wales and NGBs to consider whether activities can be delivered bilingually, where appropriate.***

- vii. It is important that all leisure centre managers come to understand users' needs and are able to identify and respond to demand. This is true regardless of the linguistic nature of an area. In some parts of Wales, being able to speak Welsh and being sensitive to the needs of bilingual communities, is key to understanding these needs and establishing a rapport with users.

Recommendation 7:

***When appointing staff to key positions in leisure centres – both into management roles or as coaches/instructors – local authorities should consider how important it is for staff to be able to speak Welsh; where appropriate, the ability to speak Welsh should be a core requirement.***

## MOTIVATION FOR PARTICIPATING IN BILINGUAL ACTIVITIES

- viii. Some interviewees are drawn to take part in activities specifically because they take place through the medium of Welsh. In these instances, social networks play a key role – people who socialise with friends through the medium of Welsh hear about



activities through peer groups and are drawn to take part as a direct result. This, however, is not the case for the majority of Welsh speakers who contributed to this research.

- ix. Most value the fact that activities are available bilingually, however the language of instruction is not the most important factor for them in whether or not they take part. Their decision to participate is not based on the language of instruction. They are motivated by the desire to keep fit or take part in a particular activity.
- x. Some Welsh speakers do report that taking part in activities through the medium of Welsh results in added enjoyment and satisfaction. This should not be underestimated as enjoyment can impact on levels of participation over time.

#### **VIEWS OF NON WELSH SPEAKERS**

- xi. Most non Welsh speakers interviewed as part of this research are broadly supportive of the idea of development more bilingual sports provision. Support was voiced by respondents in all parts of Wales.
- xii. Interviewees agreed, in principle, that additional Welsh language opportunities were a good idea. However a number of tentative conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, questions were posed in an open-ended way which, it could be argued, was always likely to elicit limited disagreement. This is reflected in the fact that many comments demonstrate generally passive support. Secondly, in seeking people's views on this issue, individuals were not asked whether they would support the expansion of bilingual provision at the expense of reducing English language (or English only) activities. Some individuals voiced concerns about the cost of bilingual service provision – particularly in areas where the Welsh language is not widely spoken. This suggests that greater opposition may be expressed if the question were posed differently, particularly in areas outside the Welsh speaking heartlands.

## ANNEX 1: Breakdown of sample

Figure a: Geographic breakdown of sample

WELSH SPEAKERS		NON-WELSH SPEAKERS	
Isle of Anglesey	5	Flintshire	1
Gwynedd	7	Wrexham	3
Wrexham	1	Pembrokeshire	1
Powys	2	Swansea	1
Ceredigion	3	Neath Port Talbot	8
Carmarthenshire	3	Bridgend	2
Neath Port Talbot	1	The Vale of Glamorgan	1
Cardiff	1	Cardiff	1
Rhondda Cynon Taff	1	Caerphilly	2
		Blaenau Gwent	1
		Newport	1
<b>WALES</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>WALES</b>	<b>22</b>

Figure b: Breakdown by type of activity

Welsh speakers	Type of activity	Non-Welsh speakers
5	Individual / private activities (not formal classes / structured provision)	8
11	Classes / structured provision at leisure centres	6
8	Activity linked to sports clubs	8
<b>24</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>

Figure c: Breakdown by age of Welsh-speaking participants (numbers and percentages)

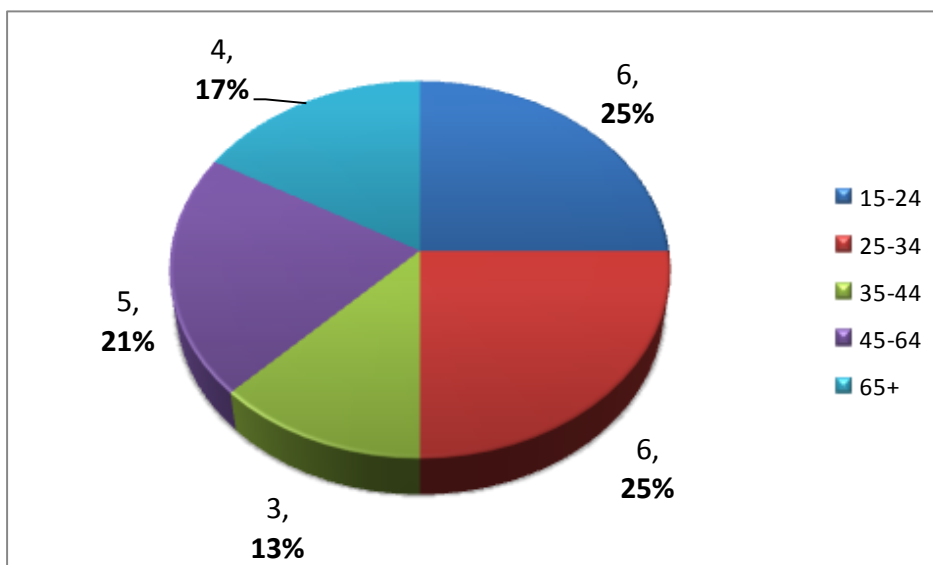


Figure d: Breakdown by age of non Welsh-speaking participants

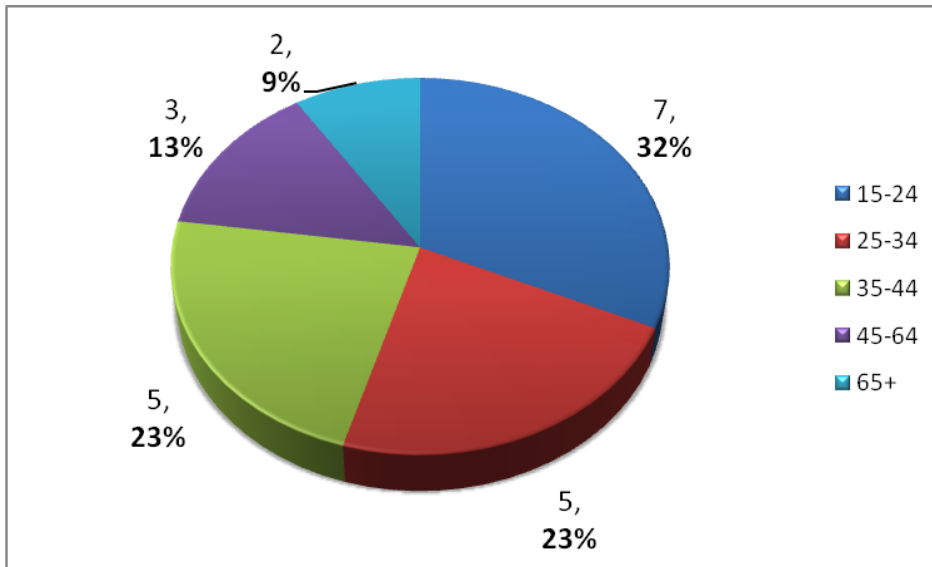


Figure e: Breakdown of interviewees by gender (Welsh speakers)

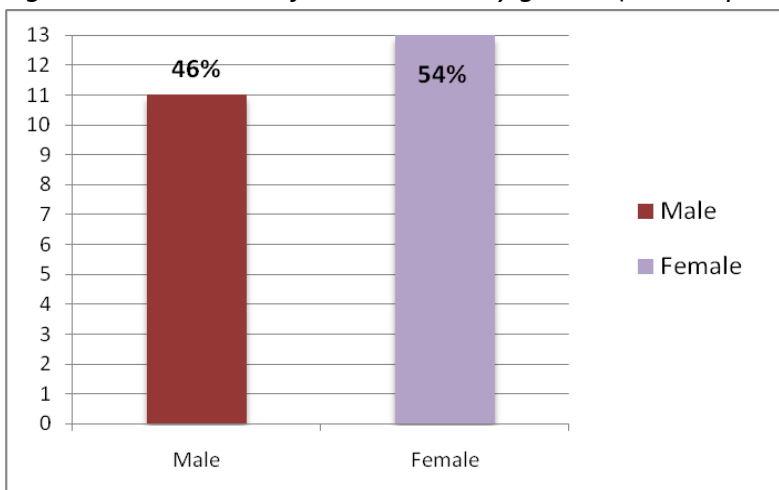
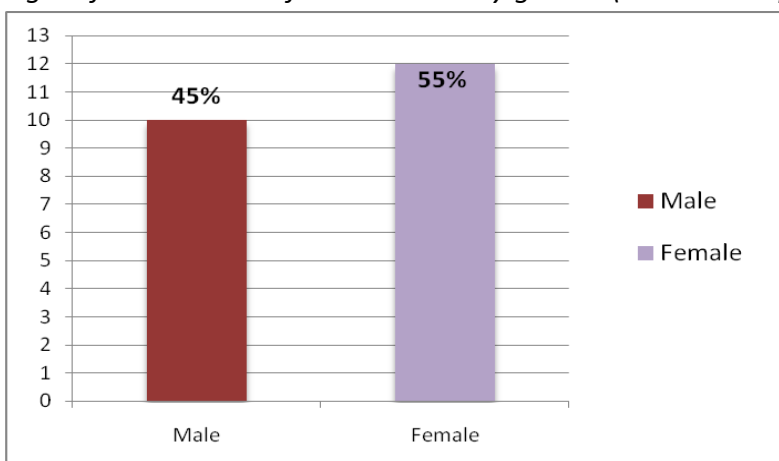


Figure f: Breakdown of interviewees by gender (non Welsh speakers)



## ANNEX 2: Script for telephone interviews

### 1) WELSH SPEAKERS: INTRODUCTION

Could I speak with [.....] please?

My name is [...]. I'm phoning from a company called Arad Consulting – we are conducting research on behalf of Sport Wales into the demand for Welsh medium sports activities. Some time ago, you took part in the Active Adults Survey and we would like to ask you a few follow-up questions.

This should take up to 30 minutes. Is now a convenient time to have a short chat? If not, could we arrange a time for me to call you back some time over the next week or so?

[IF ASKED ABOUT HOW WE OBTAINED THEIR CONTACT DETAILS: We have been given your contact details by Sport Wales. When you completed the previous survey, you agreed to be contacted again as part of future research.]

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE: WELSH SPEAKERS**

#### **DEMAND**

1. What sports/leisure activities do you take part in?
  - Who organises this activity?

[Prompts: An independent club / local leisure centre provision]
2. Do any of these take place through the medium of Welsh or bilingually?

#### **If yes:**

3. Background: How did you become involved in this (the Welsh-language / bilingual) activity?
  - How often do you attend these (Welsh-language/bilingual) activities?
  - Do you know how the activity first became established?
  - Has the session / club always been run in Welsh or bilingually?
4. How much Welsh is used? Is the coaching /instruction delivered in Welsh?
5. Are there any other activities /

#### **If no:**

7. Are you the only Welsh-speaker in the group? [Prompt for approx numbers; if all/ almost all are Welsh speakers, ask for any particular reasons why provision is delivered in English]
8. Would you be interested in attending activities delivered through the medium of Welsh, if they were available?
  - If so, what activities?
  - Do you think there would be a demand locally for these activities?
  - If no, why not?

<p>classes that you would like to see being delivered through the medium of Welsh? [Prompts: Why these in particular? Do you think there would be a demand locally for these activities? Is there any evidence of demand?]</p> <p>6. Would you attend, if such classes / activities were available?</p>	<p>9. Have you taken part in any Welsh language sports activities in the past? - If so, what? When? Is the provision still available?</p>
<p><b><u>QUALITY &amp; ENJOYMENT</u></b></p> <p>10. What appeals to you about attending activities that are delivered in Welsh / bilingually? - Are you more comfortable attending Welsh activities? - Does it enhance the quality of the experience? If so, in what way(s)? Are you likely to know more people taking part in these activities?</p> <p>11. Are you more likely to attend an activity or class if it is delivered in Welsh? Why / why not?</p> <p>12. Have you encountered any difficulties with technical/coaching terminology in Welsh? If so, was this a problem? How was it resolved?</p> <p>13. Do you have children who take part in Welsh language sports activities? [What? Where? Is there a benefit to them? If so, how do they benefit – in terms of language or enjoyment?]</p>	<p><b><u>QUALITY &amp; ENJOYMENT</u></b></p> <p>14. Do you think that you would gain any additional benefits or enjoyment from Welsh-language / bilingual provision? [Prompts: Would it be more comfortable for you? Would it enhance the quality of the experience? Are you likely to know more people taking part in these activities?]</p> <p>15. Would you support efforts to develop new Welsh-language provision? - If yes, what activities?</p> <p>16. Do you have children who take part in Welsh language sports activities? [What? Where? Is there a benefit to them?]</p>

17. Any other comments on sports activities delivered through the medium of Welsh/bilingually?
18. How do you used Welsh in everyday life? [Prompts: with your family, in work, socially?]
19. How much Welsh is spoken in your local area? Are there other social / recreational activities delivered through the medium of Welsh? Do you attend any of these?

## **2) NON WELSH SPEAKERS INTRODUCTION:**

*Could I speak with [.....] please?*

*My name is [...] . I'm phoning from a company called Arad Consulting – we are conducting research on behalf of Sport Wales into the demand for Welsh medium sports activities. Some time ago, you took part in the Active Adults Survey and we would like to ask you a few follow-up questions.*

*This should take 10-15 minutes. Is now a convenient time to have a short chat? If not, could we arrange a time for me to call you back some time over the next week or so?*

*[IF ASKED ABOUT HOW WE OBTAINED THEIR CONTACT DETAILS: We have been given your contact details by the Sport Wales. When you completed the previous survey, you agreed to be contacted again as part of future research.]*

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE: NON-WELSH SPEAKERS**

1. What sports/leisure activities do you take part in? [Prompts: An independent club / local leisure centre provision]
  - Who organises this activity?
2. Are you aware of any sports activities in your local area that are delivered through the medium of Welsh or bilingually?
3. Would you be in favour of the development of additional Welsh-language sports and leisure activities? [Prompt: Are there any particular reasons for your answer?]
4. How would you feel about taking part in bilingual provision (i.e. provision delivered in Welsh and English side by side)? [PROMPT: how would you feel if your (answer

to Q1) sessions were delivered bilingually? Would you still attend?]

- Explore perceptions: Would it be confusing / distracting for sessions to be delivered in two languages?
  - Would it benefit participants' language skills?
5. Would you support the development of additional Welsh language/bilingual sports and leisure activities for children and young people?
  6. Any other comments on sports activities delivered through the medium of Welsh or bilingually?
  7. How much Welsh is spoken in your area? Do any of your friends / family speak Welsh?
  8. What are your feelings on efforts to promote the Welsh language more generally?