



---

# Children's Commissioner for Wales

## Beth Nesa? What Next? 3–7 survey

Detailed findings



<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>About the survey</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The questionnaire</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Presentation of findings</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Priorities</b>	<b>12</b>

---



**beth nesa'**  
**what next**

dweud eich dweud  
have your say

## **Introduction**

---

**This is a report on the survey of children aged 3 to 7 conducted in the Autumn of 2015 as part of the ‘What Next? | Beth Nesa?’ consultation. The survey was one of a set of four which were conducted with different age groups of children, young people, and adults, seeking to gather views and experiences in order to inform the future priorities of the Children’s Commissioner for Wales. Surveys of this age group at a national level are unusual and this is a distinctive aspect of the project’s attempts to seek the views of as wide a range of children and young people as possible.**

## About the survey

### Questionnaire content

The 3 to 7 survey consisted of a self-completion questionnaire which was mostly completed by children online via a computer, tablet or mobile. Paper versions of the questionnaire were also available on request. The questionnaire was available in Welsh and English.

### Means of distributing

Information about the survey, including the links to the online questionnaires, were circulated as widely as possible within Wales. This included sending information to schools and nursery settings emailing information to other organisations and reaching parents through Twitter.

### The sample

A total of 758 completed questionnaires were received and are included in this report<sup>1</sup>. Twelve responses were completed in Welsh and the remaining 746 in English. The characteristics of these children are shown in Table 1:

- Around 49% of children defined themselves as female, 46% defined themselves as male and around 5% chose the 'prefer not to say' option in response to this question.
- The most common age for children in the survey was 6 years (46%)

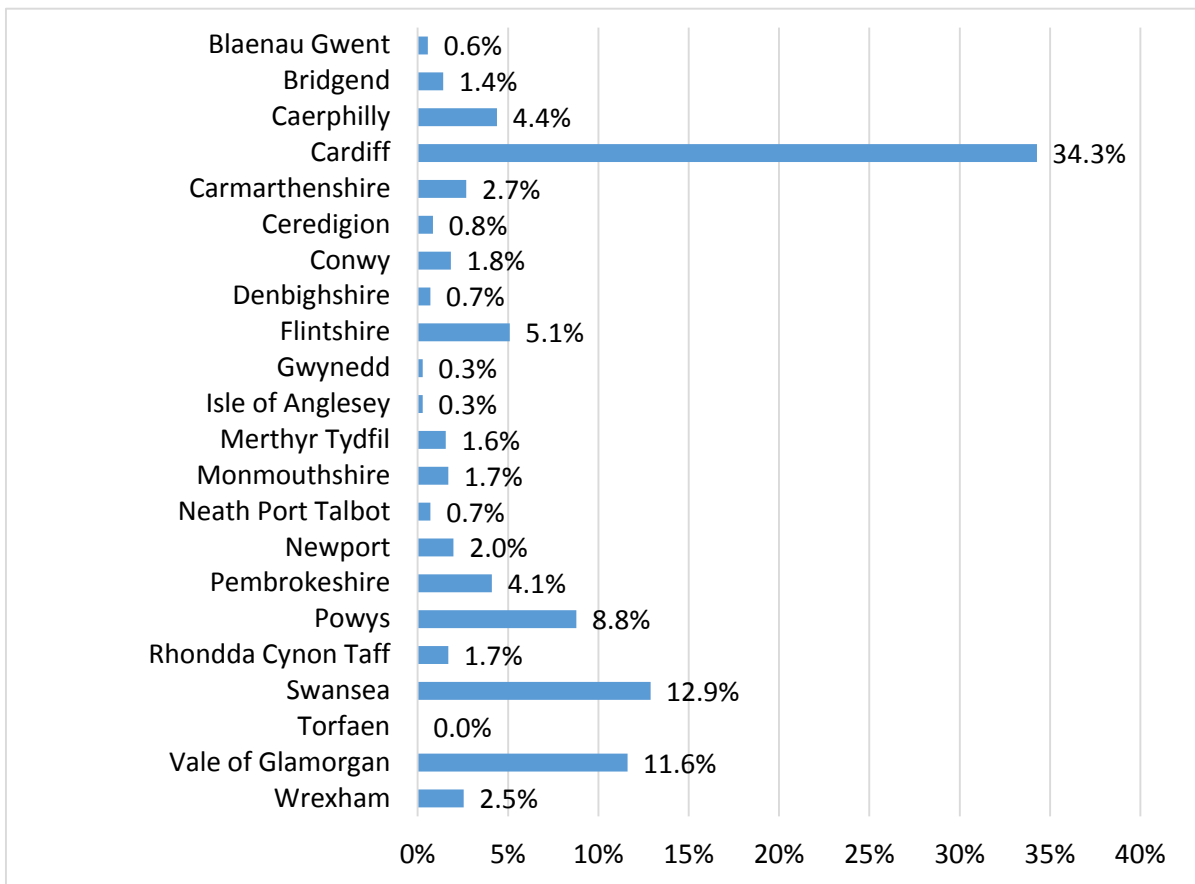
<sup>1</sup> In total, the online survey was also started an additional 146 times but either these entries were blank or the cases contained very little data due to the respondent exiting the survey within the first few questions.

**Table 1: Characteristics of the sample (unweighted)**

<b>Gender</b>	
Female	49%
Male	46%
Prefer not to say	5%
<b>Age</b>	
3 years old	6%
4 years old	12%
5 years old	18%
6 years old	46%
7 years old	18%

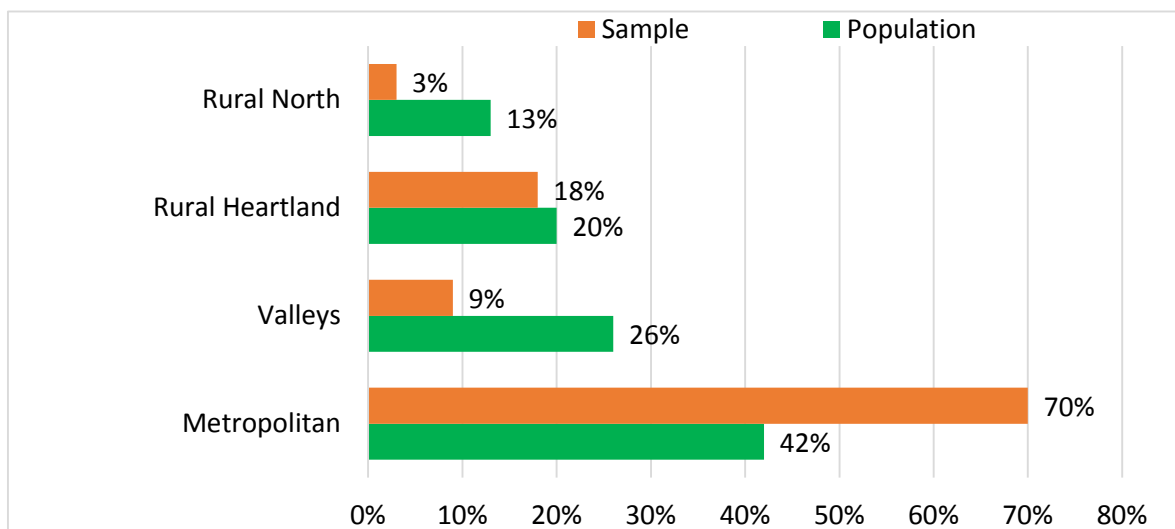
The percentage of children per local authority area in Wales are shown in Figure 1

**Figure 1: Percentage of children in the sample by local authority area**



These areas were grouped into four 'macro' regions, representing the different areas of Wales and the percentages in the sample in each region were compared with the percentages of children in the population as a whole by region (Figure 2). There was some under-representation of the Valleys region and a corresponding over-representation of the Metropolitan region – see discussion of weighting the sample for analysis (next section).

**Figure 2: Percentage of children in the sample and in the population by macro region**



## The questionnaire

Apart from the above demographic information, the questionnaire consisted of seven question items in the following sections:

- School and nursery
- Favourite places to play
- Help when sad or worried
- Children's priorities

Most questions were in closed tick-box format. There were a few open-ended response format questions. Wordings of questions and response options are provided in the sections on findings.

## Presentation of findings

### Weighting

As noted above there was an uneven distribution of children compared to the overall population of Wales in this age group. In order to take account of this and to make the survey as representative as possible,

weightings were calculated to balance the sample equally by gender and age. Due to the size and characteristics of the sample it was not possible also to weight the data so that the representation of the four macro regions reflected that in the general population of children (as was done with the surveys of older children and young people) and this should be borne in mind when interpreting the results. All findings presented in the remainder of the report are weighted as above.

### Missing data

There were relatively low levels (less than 10%) of missing data for all questions, and these responses are excluded from the percentages discussed unless otherwise specified.

### Rounding

For simplicity of presentation all percentages have been rounded to the nearest one percentage point, so totals for questions may not add up to exactly 100%.

### Structure of the report

The structure of the report broadly follows the structure of the questionnaire, with findings presented in topic-based sections.

## School and nursery

Children were asked which educational setting they attended during the day. Around 89% of children went to school; 6% to a playgroup or Cylch Meithrin; 3% to a nursery and 2% to a childminder or other arrangement.

In relation to children's experiences of the above settings, the survey asked:

— Do adults listen to you in school or nursery?

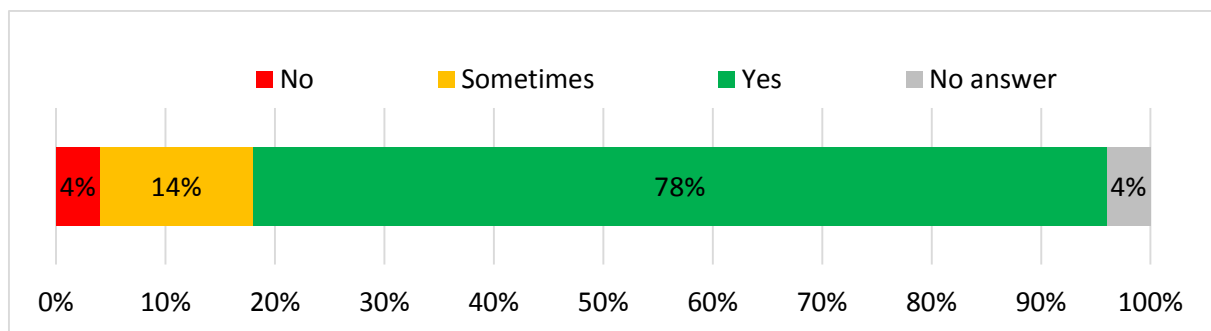
— What do you like about school or nursery?

— What don't you like about school or nursery?

### Being listened to

Figure 3 shows a summary of children's responses, weighted by age and gender, to the question about whether adults listened to them at school or nursery. Over three-quarters of children answered 'yes' to this question and a further 14% answered 'sometimes'. Around one in 25 children said that adults didn't listen to them.

Figure 2: Do adults listen to you in school or nursery?





## Things that children liked about school or nursery

Children were asked an open response question about what they liked about school or nursery. The large majority of children (over 680) wrote a reply to this question. The key topics (those mentioned by at least ten children) identified in the responses were as follows:

- **Play:** Over 300 children mentioned play – often in general terms but sometimes more specifically (e.g. *‘playing with toys’*). This topic was often linked with friends and/or with breaks and playtimes. More than 40 of these children specifically mentioned liking playing in outdoor areas. Toys were specifically mentioned by around 40 children, usually in connection with playing. Breaks and play times were mentioned by a similar number of children.
- **Friends** were mentioned by over 150 children
- **Learning / working** (in general). More than 60 children said that they liked learning or working. For example:
  - ‘Working hard’
  - ‘I like my teachers. I like doing my work.’
  - ‘I like learning new things’.
- **Specific activities/lessons.** The most commonly mentioned specific activities/lessons were creative work (drawing, painting, building, etc.), reading/writing and maths – all mentioned by more than 60 children. Other lessons with at least ten mentions were Sports/PE and Music and free choice time.
- **Teachers** were mentioned by over 40 children, e.g.
  - ‘School is fun and my teachers care about me.’
- **Food** (school dinners and snacks) was mentioned by more than 20 children

## Things that children did not like about school or nursery

---

Children were asked a similar question about what they did not like about school or nursery. A total of 569 children wrote an answer to this question. Just over one hundred of these children said there was nothing they didn't like about school.

Of the remainder of children, the responses to this question were more difficult to categorise than for what children liked about school, as many were very specific and didn't group neatly into themes – e.g. '*getting kicked by a football*', '*I don't like playing with dolls*'.

However it was possible to identify a small number of key topics and themes.

— **The behaviour of other children** was mentioned by well over 100 children. Sometimes children referred specifically to 'bullying'. But there were also a range of other behaviours mentioned, for example:

'Boys are mean to me'

'Don't like nasty children'

'I don't like people calling me names and people push me over'

'I don't like children that are rude to me and my friends.'

— **Lessons and work** was the other common theme. Sometimes this was mentioned generally. Sometimes there were more specific mentions of particular lessons of which writing seemed to be the most unpopular, followed by maths.

— **Being told off.** More than 20 children specifically mentioned being told off by teachers as something that they did not like about school or nursery.

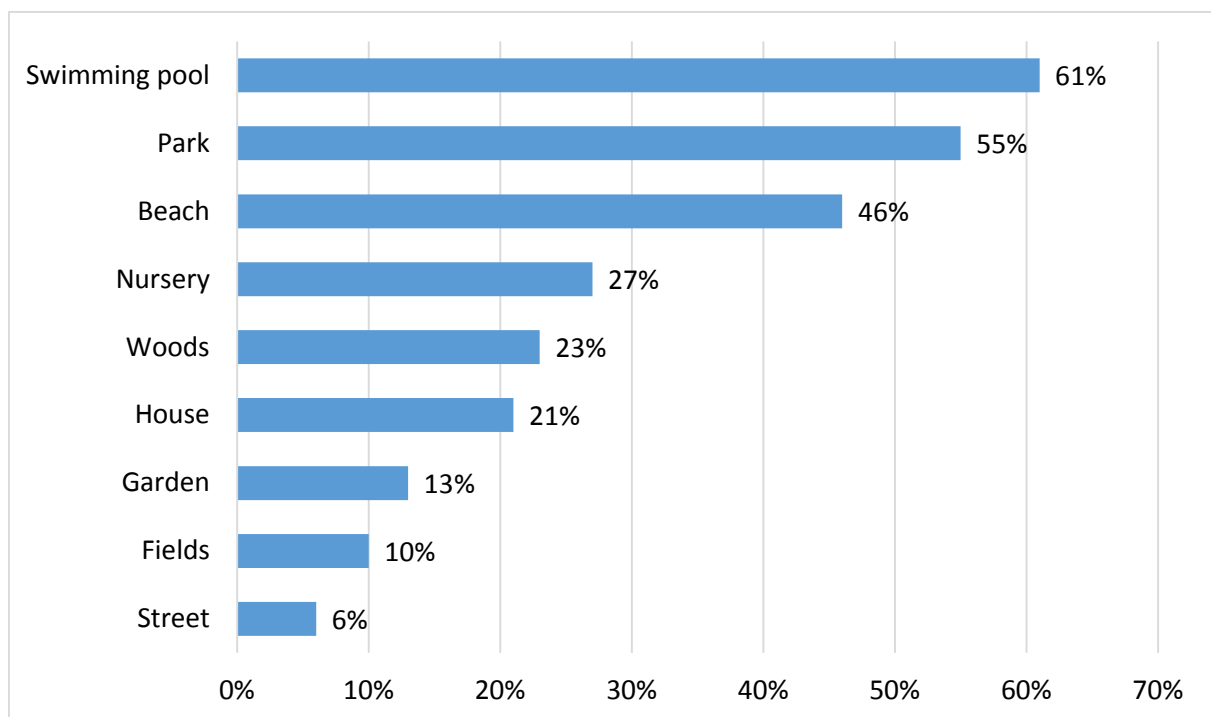
## Favourite places to play

The survey asked children to pick up to three favourite places to play from a list of nine places. The results are shown in Figure 4.

The majority (61%) of children chose the swimming pool as one of three favourite places to play. The other two most popular choices were both outdoor settings – parks and beaches. Relatively few children (6%) chose the street as one of their favourite places to play.

Younger children were more likely to choose the park as one of their favourite places to play (62% of three- and four-year olds compared to 43% of seven-year-olds). Older children were more likely to choose the swimming pool (42% of three-year-olds and 76% of seven-year-olds ) and fields (2% of three-year-olds and 17% of seven-year-olds).

Figure 3: Children’s favourite places to play



## Help when sad or worried

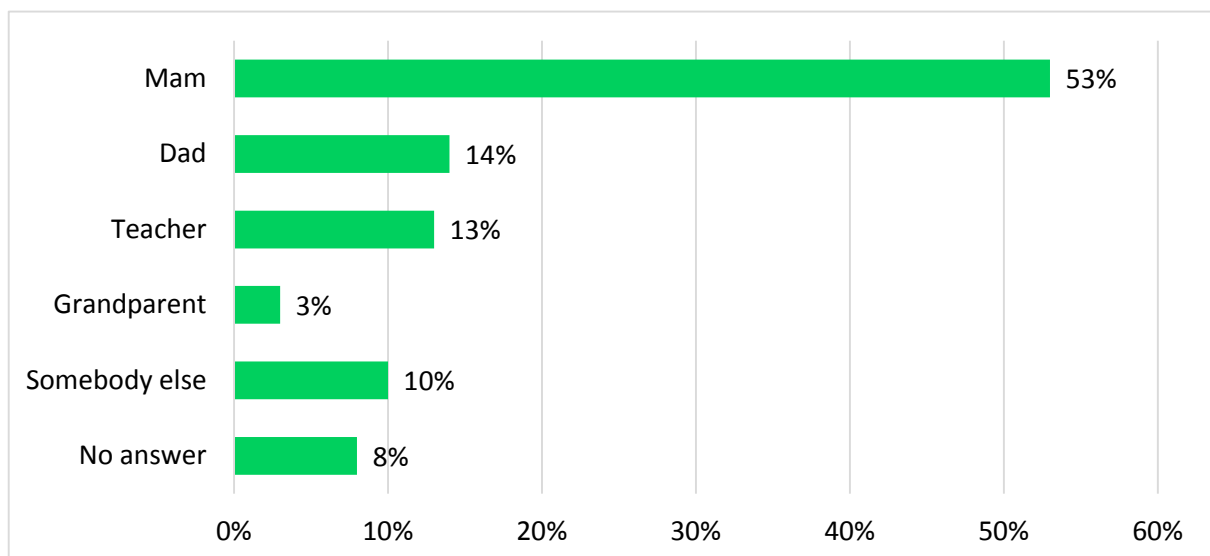
Children were asked ‘*When you feel sad or worried about something, who helps you?*’ and could choose one option only. Summary results are shown in Figure 5. Just over half of children (53%) selected their mother and around one in seven selected their father (14%) or a teacher (13%). It should be borne in mind that answers may have been influenced by the fact that the survey was completed within schools and nurseries.

Around one in ten children selected ‘someone else’, and there was an open text box where children could write details. The most common other people who provided help were siblings and friends.

Boys were more likely (17%) to choose their father than girls (11%).

Children aged five and over were also more likely (19%) to choose their father than children aged three to four.

**Figure 4: Who (main person) helps children when they feel sad or worried about something**



## Priorities

Children were asked to select from a list of seven priorities which were derived from the outcomes of the consultation which formed the first phase of this project.

The question wording was as follows:

Sally\* is thinking about what she can do to make children's lives better. Choose two things from the list that are important to you.

(\* Note that Sally had been introduced as the Children's Commissioner earlier in the questionnaire.)

The results of this question are summarised in Figure 6 in descending order of prioritisation. The strongest priority, chosen by almost half (49%) of children was 'more places to play'. The next four priorities were all selected by similar proportions of children.

**Figure 5: Children's priorities to make things better for children in Wales.**

