



CYDWEITHREDFA GWELLA GWASANAETHAU
GOFAL A LLESIANT **GOGLEDD CYMRU**
NORTH WALES SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING
SERVICES IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE

2021 Census

Topic summary: main language

December 2022



Contact us

North Wales Regional Innovation Coordination Hub

County Hall, Wynnstay Road, Ruthin, LL15 1YN

Email: nwrich@denbighshire.gov.uk

Phone: 01824 712432

Website: www.northwalescollaborative.wales

Contents

Introduction	4
Main points	5
The key results for North Wales	6
The key results for the Isle of Anglesey.....	7
The key results for Gwynedd.....	8
The key results for Conwy County Borough	9
The key results for Denbighshire.....	10
The key results for Flintshire	11
The key results for Wrexham	12
About the Census.....	13

Introduction

This bulletin looks at the topic summary data from the 2021 Census for England and Wales for main language, English or Welsh language proficiency, and household language. The data was published on 29 November 2022 by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). It provides unrounded population and household estimates at North Wales and unitary authority level.

Figures for language are for people aged three years old and over.

In Wales, people were asked if their main language was anything other than English or Welsh. Therefore, it is not possible to determine from this question how many people in Wales considered Welsh to be their main language. There was a separate question for people in Wales asking them about their Welsh language ability.

People in Wales who did not report English or Welsh as a main language were asked to report how well they could speak English. They could choose from either “Very well”, “Well”, “Not well” or “Not at all”. This allowed people who did not report English or Welsh as their main language, but may be fluent English speakers, to report that they could speak English well or very well.

The ONS has also published [Language: Census 2021 in England and Wales \(Office for National Statistics\)](#) which includes some data down to output area.

More data will be released in phases until the end of 2023 and will include detailed data at small area level about people, households and living arrangements, work and housing/amenities.

Changes between 2011 and 2021 may reflect how the Covid 19 pandemic affected people’s choice of usual residence on Census Day (21 March 2021). Census results for Gwynedd in particular are likely to have been affected by where students were counted. These changes might have been temporary for some and more long-lasting for others. It is also not clear how exiting the European Union has affected population change in Wales and across the UK.

Main points

Figures for language are for people aged three years old and over.

- The proportion of North Wales residents aged three and over who have English or Welsh as their main language is higher than the average for England and Wales as a whole.
- 97.1% of usual residents aged three years and over (648,555 people) had English or Welsh as a main language. This is a decrease compared with 2011, when 97.7% had English or Welsh as a main language. (Wales in 2021 = 96.7% and England and Wales = 91.1%).
- In North Wales in 2021 the proportion who had English or Welsh as a main language was highest in Anglesey at 99.1% and lowest in Wrexham at 94.9%. Compared to 2011, only Wrexham and Flintshire saw a decrease of more than 0.1%. The decrease in Flintshire (1.6 percentage points) was the highest seen across Wales.
- A further 2.2% (14,894) of the overall population of North Wales could speak English or Welsh either “well” or “very well”, but did not speak it as their main language. This takes the figure for those who have a good level of proficiency in English or Welsh to 99.3%.
- 0.6% of the population (3,746 people) could not speak English or Welsh well, and a small percentage (0.1% or 709 people) could not speak English or Welsh at all – a total of 0.7% of the population aged three and over. The proportion was highest in Wrexham at 1.3% and lowest in Anglesey at 0.2%. (Wales = 0.7% and England and Wales = 1.8%).
- As in 2011, Polish was the most common main language after English or Welsh for North Wales as a whole (1.0%), and for each of the unitary authority areas in the region (highest in Wrexham at 2.5% and lowest in Anglesey at 0.1%).
- In addition to spoken languages, British Sign Language (BSL) was the preferred language of 169 (0.03%) usual residents aged three years and over across North Wales. A further 83 usual residents who selected a non-spoken language as their main language reported a sign language or communication system other than BSL.

The key results for North Wales

Figures for language are for people aged three years old and over.

- In North Wales, 648,555 usual residents aged three years and over (97.1%) spoke English or Welsh as their main language, slightly down from 97.7% in 2011. The 2021 rate was higher than both the rate across Wales (96.7%) and the rate for England and Wales as a whole (91.1%).
- Of the 19,349 people who did not select English or Welsh as a main language in 2021, 14,894 or an additional 2.2% of the population said they could speak English well or very well. This takes the figure for those who have a good level of proficiency in English or Welsh to 99.3%, which is similar to the figure for 2011 (99.4%).
- 4,445 people or 0.7% of the population who did not select English or Welsh as a main language could not speak English very well or at all. This compares to 0.6% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 0.7% and England and Wales = 1.8%).
- As in 2011, Polish was the most common main language after English or Welsh at 1.0% of the population. Romanian (0.2%) was the most common main language apart from English, Welsh or Polish in 2021.
- British Sign Language (BSL) was the main language of 169 (0.03%) usual residents aged three years and over. For England and Wales as a whole the proportion was 0.04%.
- There were 4,968 households (1.6%) where no one spoke English or Welsh as a main language in 2021. This compares to 1.3% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 1.8% and England and Wales = 4.8%).

The key results for the Isle of Anglesey

Figures for language are for people aged three years old and over.

- On the Isle of Anglesey, 66,462 usual residents aged three years and over (99.1%) spoke English or Welsh as their main language, up slightly from 98.9% in 2011. The 2021 rate was higher than both the rate across Wales (96.7%) and the rate for England and Wales as a whole (91.1%).
- Of the 624 people who did not select English or Welsh as a main language in 2021, 501 or an additional 0.7% of the population said they could speak English well or very well. This takes the figure for those who have a good level of proficiency in English or Welsh to 99.8%, which is the same as the figure for 2011.
- 123 people or 0.2% of the population who did not select English or Welsh as a main language could not speak English very well or at all. This compares to 0.2% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 0.7% and England and Wales = 1.8%).
- As in 2011, Polish was the most common main language after English or Welsh at 0.1% of the population. Turkish (0.1%) was the most common main language apart from English, Welsh or Polish in 2021.
- British Sign Language (BSL) was the main language of 17 (0.03%) usual residents aged three years and over. For England and Wales as a whole the proportion was 0.04%.
- There were 148 households (0.5%) where no one spoke English or Welsh as a main language in 2021. This compares to 0.5% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 1.8% and England and Wales = 4.8%).

The key results for Gwynedd

Figures for language are for people aged three years old and over.

- In Gwynedd, 111,446 usual residents aged three years and over (97.5%) spoke English or Welsh as their main language, up slightly from 97.4% in 2011. The 2021 rate was higher than both the rate across Wales (96.7%) and the rate for England and Wales as a whole (91.1%).
- Of the 2,861 people who did not select English or Welsh as a main language in 2021, 2,372 or an additional 2.1% of the population said they could speak English well or very well. This takes the figure for those who have a good level of proficiency in English or Welsh to 99.6%, which is similar to the figure for 2011 (99.5%).
- 489 people or 0.4% of the population who did not select English or Welsh as a main language could not speak English very well or at all. This compares to 0.5% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 0.7% and England and Wales = 1.8%).
- As in 2011, Polish was the most common main language after English or Welsh at 0.3% of the population. Arabic (0.3%) was the most common main language apart from English, Welsh or Polish in 2021.
- British Sign Language (BSL) was the main language of 15 (0.01%) usual residents aged three years and over. For England and Wales as a whole the proportion was 0.04%.
- There were 674 households (1.3%) where no one spoke English or Welsh as a main language in 2021. This compares to 1.3% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 1.8% and England and Wales = 4.8%).

The key results for Conwy County Borough

Figures for language are for people aged three years old and over.

- In Conwy County Borough, 109,757 usual residents aged three years and over (98.2%) spoke English or Welsh as their main language, down slightly from 98.3% in 2011. The 2021 rate was higher than both the rate across Wales (96.7%) and the rate for England and Wales as a whole (91.1%).
- Of the 2,048 people who did not select English or Welsh as a main language in 2021, 1,680 or an additional 1.5% of the population said they could speak English well or very well. This takes the figure for those who have a good level of proficiency in English or Welsh to 99.7%, which is the same as the figure for 2011.
- 368 people or 0.3% of the population who did not select English or Welsh as a main language could not speak English very well or at all. This compares to 0.3% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 0.7% and England and Wales = 1.8%).
- As in 2011, Polish was the most common main language after English or Welsh at 0.4% of the population. Spanish (0.1%) was the most common main language apart from English, Welsh or Polish in 2021.
- British Sign Language (BSL) was the main language of 36 (0.03%) usual residents aged three years and over. For England and Wales as a whole the proportion was 0.04%.
- There were 483 households (0.9%) where no one spoke English or Welsh as a main language in 2021. This compares to 0.8% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 1.8% and England and Wales = 4.8%).

The key results for Denbighshire

Figures for language are for people aged three years old and over.

- In Denbighshire, 91,451 usual residents aged three years and over (98.3%) spoke English or Welsh as their main language, which was the same as in 2011. The 2021 rate was higher than both the rate across Wales (96.7%) and the rate for England and Wales as a whole (91.1%).
- Of the 1,611 people who did not select English or Welsh as a main language in 2021, 1,311 or an additional 1.4% of the population said they could speak English well or very well. This takes the figure for those who have a good level of proficiency in English or Welsh to 99.7%, which is the same as the figure for 2011.
- 300 people or 0.3% of the population who did not select English or Welsh as a main language could not speak English very well or at all. This compares to 0.3% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 0.7% and England and Wales = 1.8%).
- As in 2011, Polish was the most common main language after English or Welsh at 0.3% of the population. Tagalog or Filipino (0.2%) was the most common main language apart from English, Welsh or Polish in 2021.
- British Sign Language (BSL) was the main language of 15 (0.02%) usual residents aged three years and over. For England and Wales as a whole the proportion was 0.04%.
- There were 332 households (0.8%) where no one spoke English or Welsh as a main language in 2021. This compares to 0.8% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 1.8% and England and Wales = 4.8%).

The key results for Flintshire

Figures for language are for people aged three years old and over.

- In Flintshire, 145,037 usual residents aged three years and over (96.3%) spoke English or Welsh as their main language, down from 97.9% in 2011. This decrease (1.6 percentage points) was the highest seen across Wales. The 2021 rate was higher than the rate for England and Wales as a whole (91.1%).
- Of the 5,523 people who did not select English or Welsh as a main language in 2021, 4,096 or an additional 2.7% of the population said they could speak English well or very well. This takes the figure for those who have a good level of proficiency in English or Welsh to 99.1%, which is similar to the figure for 2011 (99.3%).
- 1,427 people or 0.9% of the population who did not select English or Welsh as a main language could not speak English very well or at all. This compares to 0.7% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 0.7% and England and Wales = 1.8%).
- As in 2011, Polish was the most common main language after English or Welsh at 1.4% of the population. Romanian (0.5%) was the most common main language apart from English, Welsh or Polish in 2021.
- British Sign Language (BSL) was the main language of 49 (0.03%) usual residents aged three years and over. For England and Wales as a whole the proportion was 0.04%.
- There were 1,461 households (2.2%) where no one spoke English or Welsh as a main language in 2021. This compares to 1.3% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 1.8% and England and Wales = 4.8%).

The key results for Wrexham

Figures for language are for people aged three years old and over.

- In Wrexham, 124,402 usual residents aged three years and over (94.9%) spoke English or Welsh as their main language, down slightly from 95.9% in 2011. The 2021 rate was higher than the rate for England and Wales as a whole (91.1%).
- Of the 6,682 people who did not select English or Welsh as a main language in 2021, 4,934 or an additional 3.8% of the population said they could speak English well or very well. This takes the figure for those who have a good level of proficiency in English or Welsh to 98.7%, which is similar to the figure for 2011 (98.9%).
- 1,748 people or 1.3% of the population who did not select English or Welsh as a main language could not speak English very well or at all. This compares to 1.1% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 0.7% and England and Wales = 1.8%).
- As in 2011, Polish was the most common main language after English or Welsh at 2.5% of the population. Bulgarian (0.4%) was the most common main language apart from English, Welsh or Polish in 2021.
- British Sign Language (BSL) was the main language of 37 (0.03%) usual residents aged three years and over. For England and Wales as a whole the proportion was 0.04%.
- There were 1,870 households (3.2%) where no one spoke English or Welsh as a main language in 2021. This compares to 2.7% in 2011. (Wales in 2021 = 1.8% and England and Wales = 4.8%).

About the Census

The census happens every 10 years and gives us a picture of all the people and households in England and Wales.

Your answers to census questions help organisations make decisions on planning and funding public services in your area, including transport, education and healthcare.

Census Day was on Sunday 21 March 2021.

[As data from the 2021 Census becomes available, the Regional Innovation Coordination Hub website will be publishing key results and providing analysis for North Wales and our unitary authority areas.](https://www.northwalescollaborative.wales/census/)

(<https://www.northwalescollaborative.wales/census/>)

[A statistical bulletin summarising the key results for Wales is available.](https://gov.wales/ethnic-group-national-identity-language-and-religion-wales-census-2021-html)

(<https://gov.wales/ethnic-group-national-identity-language-and-religion-wales-census-2021-html>)

[The main census website](https://census.gov.uk/) is:

<https://census.gov.uk/>

[Welsh Government's main Census website](https://gov.wales/census-population) is:

<https://gov.wales/census-population>

The full [release schedule for the 2021 Census](https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/census2021output/s/releaseplans) is available.

(<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/census2021output/s/releaseplans>)