Inbhich a tha ag ionnsachadh Gàidhlig – 2018

Adults learning Gaelic – 2018

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Thomhais sinn gu robh **5,460 inbheach ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig** ann an Alba thairis air an t-Samhain 2018.

Le bhith cleachdadh an dàta a thug **luchd-ionnsachaidh na Gàidhlig ann an Alba** dhuinn, tha e dualtach:

- gu bheil iad a' fuireach anns na h-ùghdarrasan ionadail a leanas: Dùn Èideann, Glaschu, a' Ghàidhealtachd no na h-Eileanan Siar
- gu bheil iad eadar 35 is 74 bliadhna a dh'aois (bha a' mhòr-chuid de luchd-freagairt eadar 35 is 44, no eadar 65 is 74)
- gur e boireannaich a th' annta; tha an co-mheas boireannach is fireannach cha mhòr 2:1
- gu bheil iad ag obair pàirt- no làn-ùine, no air an dreuchd a leigeil dheth

A thaobh mar a thathas ag ionnsachadh, tha e dualtach:

- gu bheil inbhich a tha ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig ann an Alba gam measadh fhèin mar luchd-tòiseachaidh
- gu bheil iad ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig air sgàth ùidh ann an cultar agus dualchas, no air sgàth dèidh Gàidhlig a ghlèidheadh
- gu bheil iad gan teagasg fhèin, no a' frithealadh clas no clas còmhraidh a tha ga stiùireadh le oide
- gum bi iad a' cleachdadh an cuid Gàidhlig cha mhòr gach latha, no co-dhiù latha san t-seachdain
- gum bi iad a' cleachdadh an cuid Gàidhlig anns an àite far a bheil iad ag ionnsachadh, aig an taigh no air loidhne, agus/no aig tachartasan sòisealta
- gum bi iad a' siubhal nas lugha na 10 mìltean airson an àite ionnsachaidh a ruigsinn (no 0 mìltean ma tha iad gan teagasg fhèin aig an taigh)
- gu bheil iad air cnap(an)-starraidh an aghaidh an cuid ionnsachaidh a cheannsachadh
- nach eil cothroman gu leòr aca airson conaltradh ri fileantaich is luchd-ionnsachaidh fileanta
- nach b' urrainn dhaibh an cùrsa no cothrom ionnsachaidh as fheàrr leotha a lorg gu h-ionadail

Le bhith cleachdadh an dàta a fhuair sinn bho luchd-solair chùrsaichean, tha cothroman ionnsachaidh buailteach a bhith mar a leanas:

- is e cùrsaichean no clasaichean thairis air iomadh seachdain, no clasaichean còmhraidh le oide gan stiùireadh, an t-seòrsa de sholarachd as cumanta
- chan eil teisteanas nan lùib
- chan eil iad air an rèiteachadh ris an Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF), agus chan eil iad a' solarachadh puingean creideis SCQF
- tha iad a' gabhail àite anns a' choimhearsnachd
- tha na h-oidean a tha gan lìbhrigeadh a' faighinn pàigheadh
- tha na luchd-ionnsachaidh fhèin a' pàigheadh nan cìsean ionnsachaidh

Summary of findings – adults learning Gaelic 2018

We estimate that there were **5,460 adults learning Gaelic** in Scotland during November 2018.

According to the data gathered from learners, **adults who are learning Gaelic in Scotland are most likely to**:

- live in the local authority areas of Edinburgh City, Glasgow City, Highland or the Western Isles
- be in the age range 35 to 74 (with the highest numbers in the ranges: 35 to 44 and 65 to 74)
- be female, by a ratio of female:male of almost 2:1
- be in work (full- or part-time) or be retired

In terms of their learning, **learners are most likely to**:

- consider themselves a beginner learner
- be motivated to learn by an interest in culture and heritage, or by a wish to help preserve the language
- be teaching themselves or attending a class or conversation class that is led by a tutor
- use their Gaelic most days, or at least one day each week
- use their Gaelic in their place of study, at home or online, and/or in a social environment
- travel less than 10 miles to reach their place of learning (or 0 miles if they are teaching themselves at home)
- have had to overcome a barrier or barriers to their learning
- have lacked opportunities to interact with native Gaelic speakers or more proficient learners
- have been unable to find their preferred type of learning provision locally

According to the data gathered from learning providers, **learning provision in Scotland is most likely to**:

- consist of courses or classes run over a number of weeks, or conversation classes led by a tutor
- take place in community-based settings
- be delivered by paid staff
- be paid for by learners themselves
- not lead to a qualification or certificate
- not be levelled against the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) or provide SCQF credit points

1 Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the continuous support we have received from Dr Peadar Morgan of Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

We are grateful to Dr Susan Ross for her Gaelic-language feedback and advice.

We thank learning providers for the enthusiastic response they gave us. These providers not only responded with data about the learning opportunities they provide, but also shared our online learner survey among learners that they support, resulting in a high number of responses.

Most importantly, we wish to thank the adult learners who took time to share their experiences of learning Gaelic. Their responses provided useful and interesting information, and we feel their enthusiasm in taking part in this research reflects their enthusiasm for learning the language.

2   Introduction

2.1   Background

In 2014, Bòrd na Gàidhlig[1] commissioned research to identify the approximate number of adults who were learning Gaelic. That project provided a baseline for measuring numbers of adults learning Gaelic in subsequent years, and for highlighting trends relating to the number of learners and their learning activities.

Bòrd na Gàidhlig subsequently commissioned Tkm Consulting to undertake research on this subject in each of the years 2015, 2016 and 2017. Reports for these are available on Bòrd na Gàidhlig's website.[2]

In 2018, Bòrd na Gàidhlig commissioned Daniel Sellers, Borge Consulting and Dr Nicola Carty to undertake a three-year continuation of this research. This would provide data relating to numbers of adult learners of Gaelic in each of the years 2018, 2019 and 2020.

This report presents findings relating to data gathered from learners and learning providers in November 2018.

2.2   Structure of the report

In this report we describe the methodology used to gather and analyse data and discuss trends we have identified. Percentages are given to one decimal place.

We provide a profile of adult learners, with information on:

- their location, their age and sex/gender
- what, where and how they are learning, and their motivations for learning Gaelic
- any barriers they have faced in accessing, or taking part in, learning

This is followed by a breakdown of information gathered from learning providers, on:

- the types of learning opportunity they offer and learner numbers
- whether learning is accredited in any way
- how the learning is provided, by whom, and how it is funded

We offer a headline estimation of the number of adults who are learning Gaelic, by extrapolating the data we have gathered to a wider population.

We present our conclusions around key issues and trends from the data. Finally, we provide three case studies illustrating individual learners' experiences of learning Gaelic.

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[1] Bòrd na Gàidhlig is an executive non-departmental public body, responsible through Ministers to the Scottish Parliament. It was established under the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is the principal public body in Scotland responsible for promoting Gaelic development and providing advice to Scottish Ministers on Gaelic issues. Bòrd na Gàidhlig is required to exercise its functions with a view to securing the status of Gaelic as an official language of Scotland commanding equal respect to the English language.
[2] http://www.gaidhlig.scot/bord/research/education-data/

3 Methodology

Our methodology was similar to that used in the years 2015, 2016 and 2017. It was based around two surveys: one for learners and one for learning providers. In Appendix 1 we explain refinements made to the previous years' surveys.

4 Numbers of survey responses

4.1 Numbers of responses from learners and learning providers

Table 1 shows the numbers of completed responses from learners in 2018, alongside numbers of completed responses from previous years.

Year	Number of completed responses received from learners
2015	626
2016	383
2017	390
2018	867

Table 1 – Numbers of completed responses received from learners, 2015–2018

Table 2 shows the numbers of completed responses from learning providers in 2018, alongside numbers of completed responses from previous years.

Year	Number of completed responses received from learning providers
2015	12
2016	16
2017	10
2018	43

Table 2 – Numbers of completed responses received from learning providers, 2015–2018

4.2 Discussion relating to numbers of responses

The higher number of responses from both categories of respondents may be partially attributed to the use of our professional networks within the Gaelic and adult learning sectors. We also made extensive and targeted use of social media, in particular Twitter, to distribute the survey links and seek further sharing of these among networks.

Our engagement with learning providers (as outlined in Appendix 1) before we distributed the survey is another likely factor in the increase in responses. Respondents were well-informed as to the nature of the survey and had been introduced to the research team before being asked to give their time to the work.

Another explanation for the increase in the number of responses from learning providers could be that some organisations, such as local authorities, had made recent advances in the development and implementation of their Gaelic Language Plans.

5   Analysis of responses to the learner survey

867 individuals completed the learner survey. Of these, 726 (83.7%) reported that they were learning during the snapshot week of 5th November 2018.

The data in the following analysis is based on responses from the 726 learners who were active during the snapshot week. The analysis is structured around four themes:

- ➢ The individual
- ➢ Their learning
- ➢ Barriers they have faced in their learning
- ➢ The organisation providing the learning

5.1   The individual

5.1.1   Geographical location

We received learner responses from every local authority area in Scotland, although numbers were very low in some areas and sub-areas.

The table in Appendix 2 shows data relating to where learners live.

Table 3 shows the top five areas for learning activity during the snapshot week (excluding 77 responses from learners who were active during that week but who told us they were not based in Scotland).

Area	Number of learners active	%
Glasgow City	102	14
Edinburgh City	99	13.6
Highland: Inverness	35	4.8
Dumfries & Galloway	32	4.4
Renfrewshire	30	4.1

Table 3 – Top five areas for learning activity during the week beginning 5th November 2018

The top three areas match the ranking from 2017 with roughly equivalent percentages. In 2017, Aberdeen City was the fourth most active area (with 5.6% of activity), followed by the Western Isles. This year the Western Isles were segmented into five sub-areas.[3] Without this segmentation the Western Isles would have been in fourth place, with a total of 34 learners across the five sub-areas.

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[3] Barra and Vatersay; Benbecula, South Uist and Eriskay; Harris; Lewis; and North Uist, Berneray and Grimsay.

5.1.2   Age

Chart 1 shows the age bands of the learners who were active during the snapshot week.
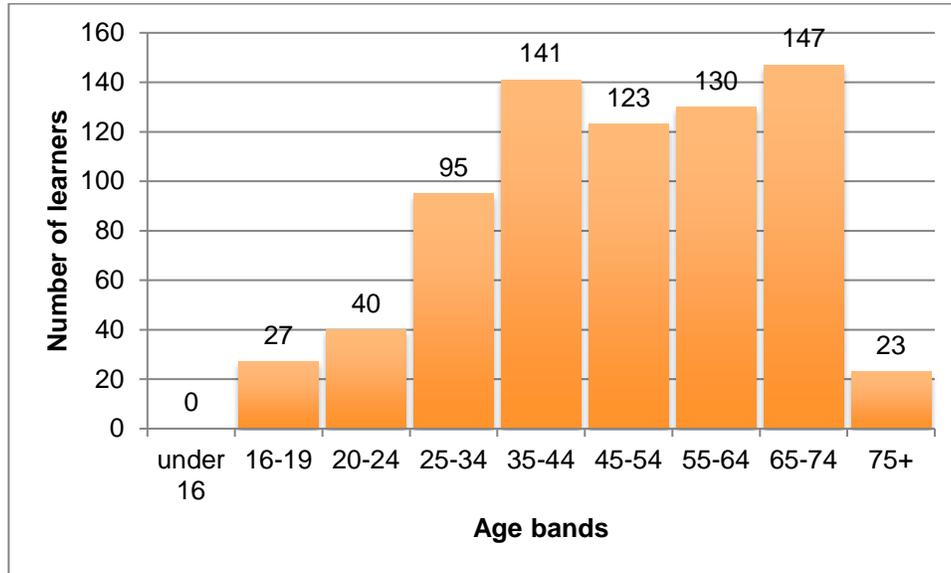
Chart 1 – Ages of learners active during the week 5th November 2018

In 2017, 69% of learners were aged 45 and over. In 2018 this had dropped to 58.2%.

The number of respondents in lower age brackets rose significantly between 2017 and 2018: in 2017, the age range 16-24 accounted for 3.0% of respondents. In 2018 it accounted for 9.2%.

These differences may be due to the way we distributed the survey or a reflection of the higher overall participation rate. For example, the extensive and targeted use of social media might have reached more younger learners.

5.1.3 Sex/Gender

Table 4 shows the sex/gender of respondents.

Sex/Gender	Learners active during the snapshot week	%
Female	424	58.4
Male	233	32.1
No response	67	9.2
Non-binary	[Redacted]	
Other	[Redacted]	

Table 4 – Sex/gender of learners active in the week beginning 5th November 2018

This was an open-ended question, so we have categorised the responses in line with those used in previous years. The percentage of male respondents has decreased slightly since 2017, and there was a slight increase in the number of female respondents. There are more female than male respondents, which may reflect the general trend for women to respond more to surveys than men.[4] It is interesting to note the large increase in respondents who preferred not to answer this question, which may, again, be a reflection of the overall higher number of responses.

5.1.4 Disability

44 (6.1%) of the 726 learners active during the snapshot week told us they consider themselves to be disabled. Of the rest, 16 (2.2%) preferred not to say.

This rate of disclosure is lower than was indicated for the Scottish population as a whole in the 2011 Census,[5] where 19.6% of individuals reported being disabled or as having a long-term health condition.

As in previous years of this research, it is possible that individuals only disclosed a disability when they felt it impacted on their learning.

5.1.5 Employment status

Chart 2 shows the employment status of respondents active during the snapshot week.

The data shows that adults learning Gaelic are most likely to be working (full- or part-time) or retired, together accounting for 610 (84.0%) of the 726 learners active during the snapshot week. 49.5% of these respondents were in full- or part-time employment, which could have positive implications for the potential transmission and use of Gaelic as a workplace language.

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[4] See Smith (2008), *Does gender influence online survey participation?: A record-linkage analysis of university faculty online survey response behavior.*
[5] Analysis of Equality Results from the 2011 Census (2014, Scottish Government).
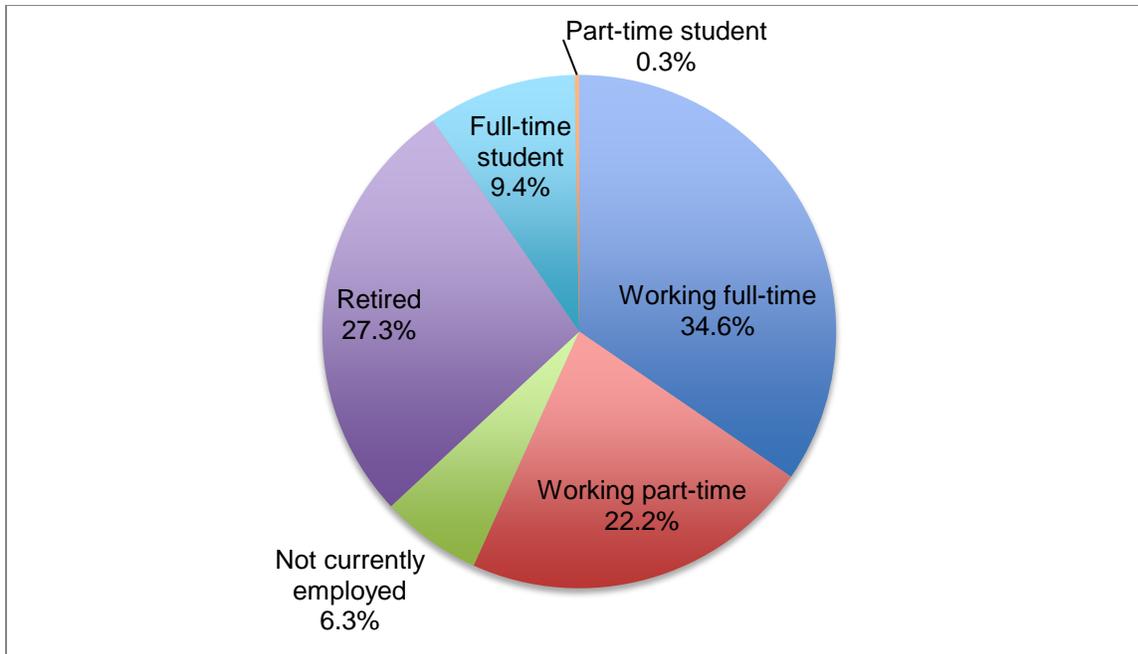
Chart 2 – Employment status of learners active in the week beginning 5th November 2018

5.2   Learning

The survey sought responses from learners in relation to:

  - ➢ their self-assessed competence in Gaelic
  - ➢ their motivation for learning Gaelic
  - ➢ how and in what settings they use their Gaelic
  - ➢ specific learning activities they engaged in during the snapshot week

5.2.1   Self-assessed level of competence

We provided learners with descriptors of the six levels of competence in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), where level A1 represents beginner and C2 the most advanced. (These descriptors are attached in Appendix 3.)

We asked learners to read the descriptors and select which level they considered best fitted their overall or general competence in Gaelic (that is, not focusing specifically on reading, writing, speaking or listening).

Chart 3 shows the self-stated competence levels of learners who were active during the snapshot week, with A1 representing the lowest level.
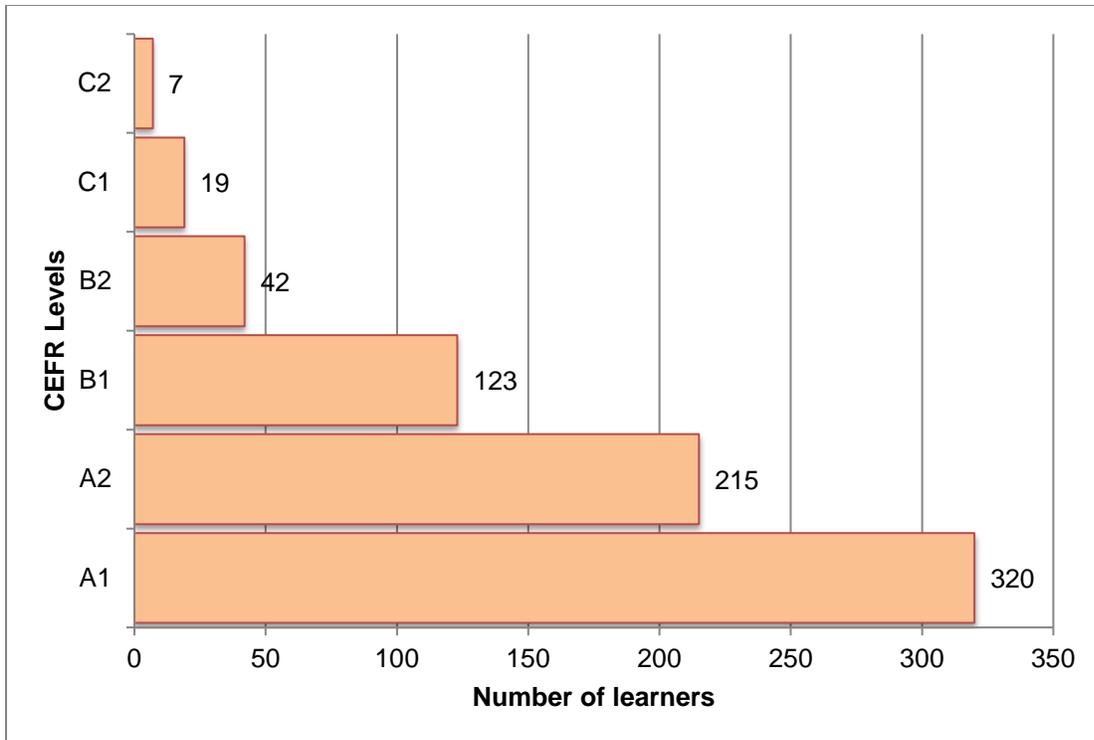
Chart 3 – Self-assessed Gaelic competence on the CEFR of learners active during the week beginning 5th November 2018

This data shows that the majority of learners active during the snapshot week (535, or 73.7%) consider themselves to have a basic level of Gaelic language competence (level A1 or A2).

The selection of a CEFR level was subjective, and learners may have under- or over-estimated their competence. It is also possible that, in line with the most common barrier to learning (*Not enough opportunities to interact with native speakers and fluent learners,* as identified at 5.2.6 below), learners above beginner level have difficulty in accessing provision at an appropriate level, which impacts on their ability to develop their skills.

Use of the CEFR in Gaelic is relatively new and learners may be unfamiliar with the framework. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that all 726 learners active during the snapshot week responded to this question.

The CEFR was not used for the learner survey in previous years, so it is not possible to measure trends. We will monitor any trends arising from this question in 2019 and 2020.

5.2.2   Motivation for learning Gaelic

We asked learners to tell us what had motivated them to learn Gaelic. We offered a number of options and respondents could select more than one. These options are listed in Chart 4, in descending order of popularity.

It is interesting to note that five of the six most popular motivations are related to culture. The need or desire to communicate features moderately, with references made to: improving

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literacy; reading in Gaelic; or communicating with friends and family, including children. Motivations relating to the use of Gaelic in employment or for a specific purpose (in this example, for tracing family history) feature less often.

Information on learners' motivations for learning Gaelic was not collected in previous years. We will track trends in relation to this in 2019 and 2020.

5.2.3 Specific learning activities undertaken during the snapshot week

We asked learners to indicate, from a list of options, the learning activities they took part in during the snapshot week. We present these in Chart 5, in descending order of popularity.

Learners identified some "other" activities including:

- teaching others (as a way of reinforcing their own learning)
- watching or listening to Gaelic TV, radio and podcasts
- getting together with friends on Skype, one of whom is a Gaelic tutor
- using social media (such as Gaelic Twitter)
- helping children to learn/practise Gaelic

This year the survey offered more questions relating to different methods of self-teaching. It is interesting to note that of the five most popular activities, three involved self-teaching. Attending a course and attending a conversation-only activity also remained popular, continuing the trend identified in previous years.

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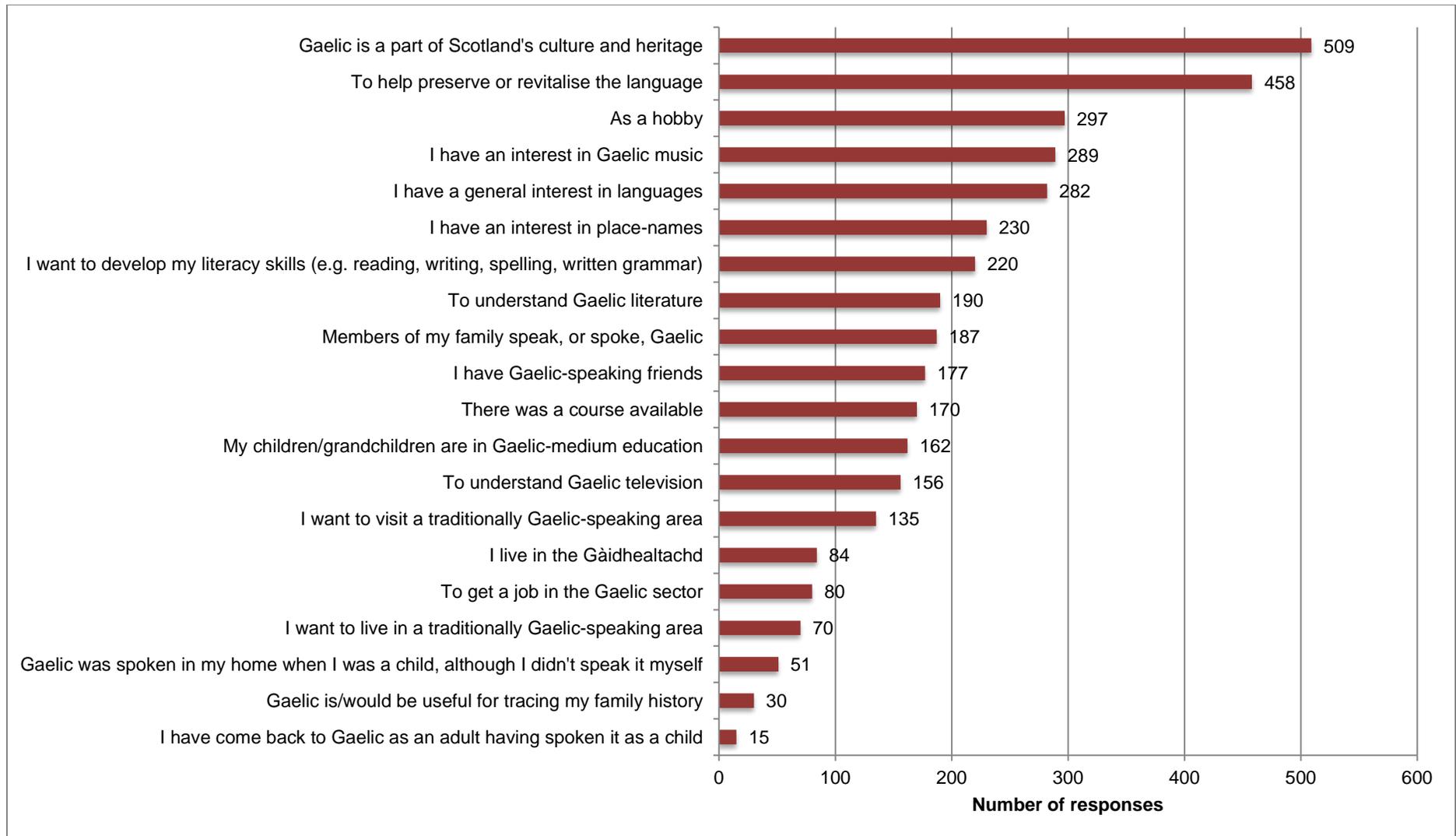
Chart 4 – Gaelic learning motivations of learners active during the week beginning 5th November 2018
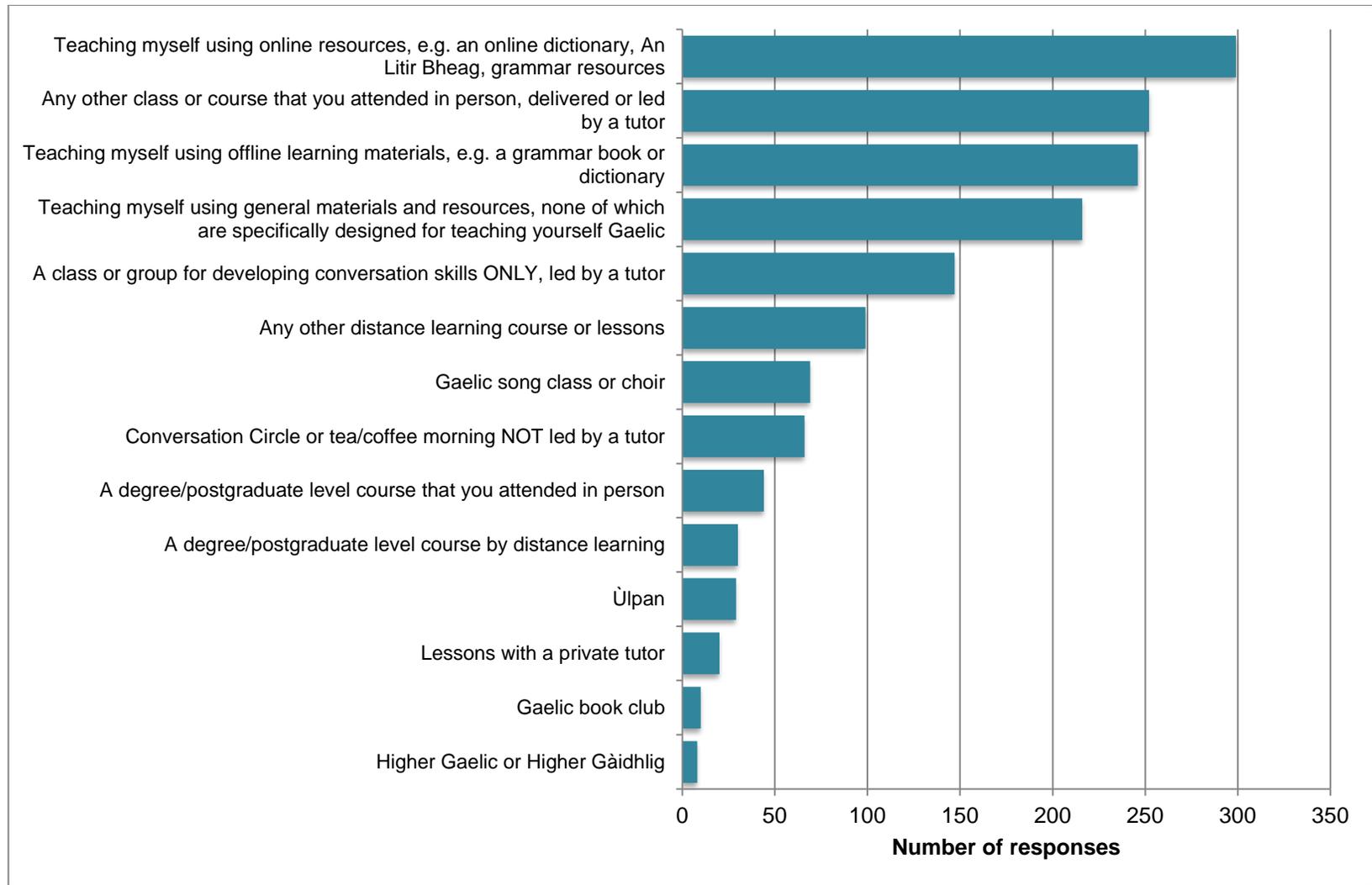
Chart 5 – Specific learning activities undertaken during the week beginning 5th November 2018

5.2.4 How often learners use their Gaelic

We asked learners to tell us how often they used their Gaelic skills. The results are set out in Table 5, in order of frequency of use.

Frequency	Number of responses	%
Daily	134	18.5
Most days	276	38.0
About once a week	280	38.6
About once a fortnight	17	2.3
About once a month	5	0.7
Less often than once a month	11	1.5
Never	3	0.4

Table 5 – Frequency with which learners active during the week beginning 5th November 2018 use their Gaelic

It is significant that more than half (56.5%) of learners active during the snapshot week have the opportunity to use their Gaelic daily or most days, with very few (0.4%) never having an opportunity to use it.

This question was new in 2018, and we will track trends in future years.

5.2.5 Settings in which learners use their Gaelic

We asked where / in what settings learners use their Gaelic skills. Respondents could select more than one option. The results are shown in Table 6.

Previous surveys had asked learners about their opportunities to interact with fluent Gaelic speakers. We created this new question for 2018 to get a broader sense of learners' use of Gaelic and will track trends in the years 2019 and 2020.

Setting	Number of responses	%
At a place of study (full-time or part-time), e.g. a Gaelic class in your community or university	469	64.6
At home	281	38.7
On the internet (online)	228	31.4
In an organised social environment which is not part of a class or class activity, e.g. a choir rehearsal, coffee morning, or a meet-up group	155	21.4
In any other social setting including casual meetings and conversations	151	20.8
At work	97	13.4
I never have the chance to use my Gaelic	15	2.1

Table 6 – Where / in what settings learners active during the week beginning 5th November 2018 use their Gaelic

It is not surprising that the majority of respondents said they had used their Gaelic in their place of study. Almost a third of respondents said they used Gaelic on the internet, indicating the degree to which online access to Gaelic resources can support learning.

281 respondents (38.7%) said they used Gaelic at home. We do not know the exact ways in which Gaelic is used in the home. It could be, for example, that Gaelic is the default language used by family members, or that perhaps one family member calls household objects by their Gaelic names. We cannot therefore draw solid conclusions from this data. However, it is still encouraging that learners are finding opportunities to use Gaelic in the home environment, as it suggests a recognition of Gaelic as an everyday, living language.

15 respondents said they never use their Gaelic. This is at odds with the data we collected about frequency (see section 5.2.4), where only 3 learners said they never have the chance to use their Gaelic. This could mean that the 15 respondents in Table 6 never use their Gaelic *outwith* a formal learning environment. We will modify this question in future surveys, to obtain more clarity.

5.2.6   Barriers faced

We asked learners to tell us what, if any, barriers they had faced to learning Gaelic. Learners were able to select more than one barrier. 648 (89.9%) respondents told us they had faced barriers to their learning.

We present the findings in Chart 6.

In line with data from 2016 and 2017, the most common barrier was: "not enough opportunities to interact with native speakers and fluent learners".

Other common barriers related to local access or access to opportunities at particular times.
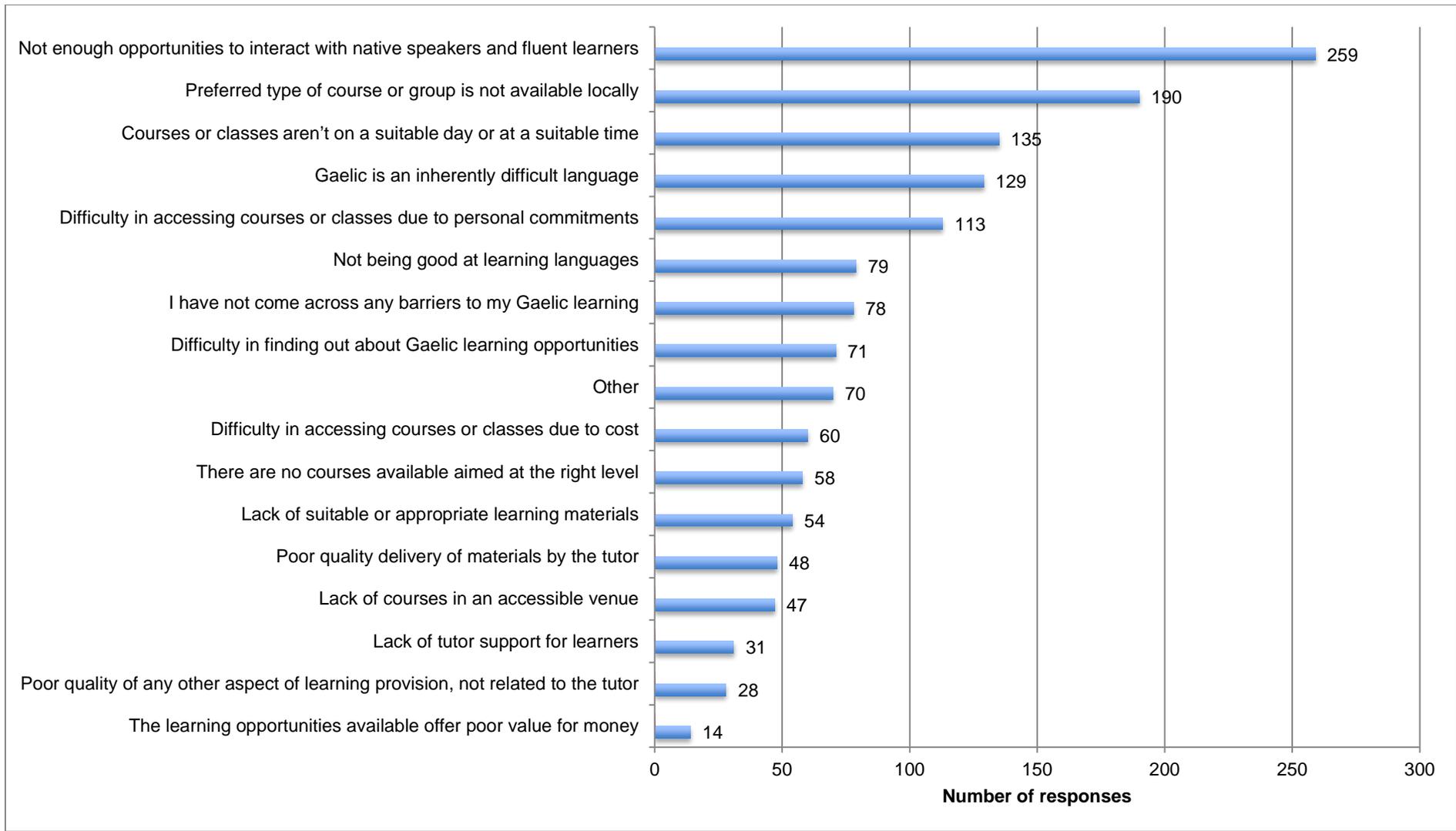
Chart 6 – Common barriers experienced by learners

Barrier	Number of responses
Not enough opportunities to interact with native speakers and fluent learners	259
Preferred type of course or group is not available locally	190
Courses or classes aren't on a suitable day or at a suitable time	135
Gaelic is an inherently difficult language	129
Difficulty in accessing courses or classes due to personal commitments	113
Not being good at learning languages	79
I have not come across any barriers to my Gaelic learning	78
Difficulty in finding out about Gaelic learning opportunities	71
Other	70
Difficulty in accessing courses or classes due to cost	60
There are no courses available aimed at the right level	58
Lack of suitable or appropriate learning materials	54
Poor quality delivery of materials by the tutor	48
Lack of courses in an accessible venue	47
Lack of tutor support for learners	31
Poor quality of any other aspect of learning provision, not related to the tutor	28
The learning opportunities available offer poor value for money	14

5.3   Organisation providing the learning

5.3.1   Type of learning provider

We asked learners to tell us what type of organisation was providing their learning opportunity or opportunities. We included an option for those who were teaching themselves.

Responses to this question are set out in Table 7, in descending order of popularity.

Type of learning provider	Number of responses	%
University, college or other Further/Higher Education institution	218	30.0
Local authority	142	19.6
I am teaching myself	81	11.2
Community group	75	10.3
Other – please specify	50	6.9
A Gaelic organisation that does not fall within any of the above categories	48	6.6
No response	44	6.1
Your employer/workplace	34	4.7
I don't know	13	1.8
Private tutor	12	1.7
Primary school	[Redacted]	
Secondary school	[Redacted]	

Table 7 – Types of organisations providing learning during the week beginning 5th November 2018

As in 2017, the most popular type of organisation selected (by 218 learners, or 30.0%) was a university, college or other HE/FE institution. (In 2017 this was 34%.)

Following the trend from 2016 to 2017, the proportion of learners identifying a local authority as the organisation providing their learning fell. In 2016 it was 29%, in 2017 21%, and in 2018 19.6%.

5.3.2   The distance learners travelled from home to where they learn

We asked learners to report how far they travelled from home to the place where they learned during the week beginning 5th November 2018. Chart 7 sets out their responses.
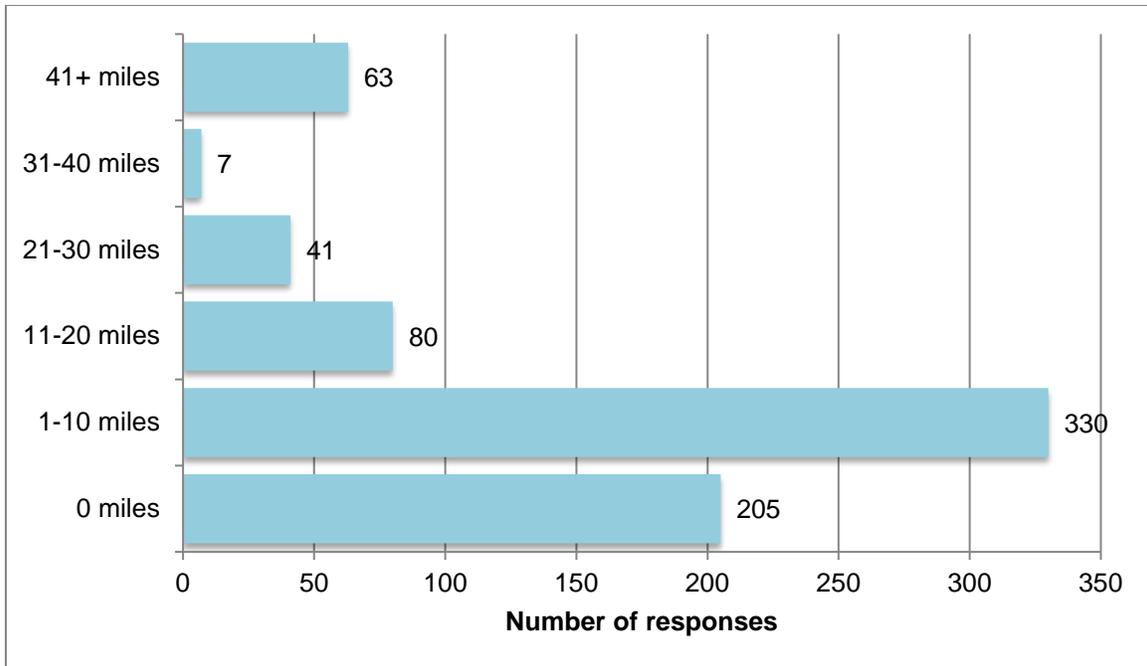
Chart 7 – Distance travelled by learners to the place they learned during the week beginning 5th November 2018

Almost three-quarters of learners (535, or 73.7%) travel 10 miles or less to the place where they learn (including those who say they travel 0 miles, and whom we might assume are teaching themselves or are learning in their place of work). This is a higher proportion than in 2017, when 68% of learners were travelling 10 miles or less to their learning.

It is significant that more than a quarter of learners (205, or 28.2%) say they travel 0 miles in order to learn. This could be accounted for by the popularity of self-teaching as a learning activity, as evidenced in section 5.2.3.

5.3.3   Creation of case studies

We asked learners whether they would be willing to feature in a case study about their experience of learning Gaelic. 490 respondents said they would.

From these 490, we identified 10 potential case study "leads", ensuring a range of geographical locations, levels of self-stated competence, ages and motivations for learning.

From the shortlist of 10, we identified four names: three key names and one back-up. We produced three case studies of learners' individual learning journeys and attach these at Appendix 4.

6   Analysis of responses to the learning provider survey

We received 43 completed responses to the learning provider survey, relating to Gaelic language learning opportunities that were delivered for adults during the week beginning 5th November 2018.

These organisations included 9 local authorities, 8 Gaelic organisations or clubs, 5 universities and 5 colleges.

We received 2 responses from each of 3 different organisations. In these cases, each response reported a different type of provision or related to provision in a different geographical location. In our analysis, we treat these as 6 separate returns.

We present below an analysis of the 43 responses, with a focus on three key areas:

  ➢ Types of learning opportunity and numbers of learners
  ➢ Achievement and attainment
  ➢ Learning delivery

6.1   Types of learning opportunity and numbers of learners

6.1.1   Types of learning opportunities

We asked learning providers to identify from a list the different types of learning opportunities they offered. Their responses are presented in Chart 8, in descending order.
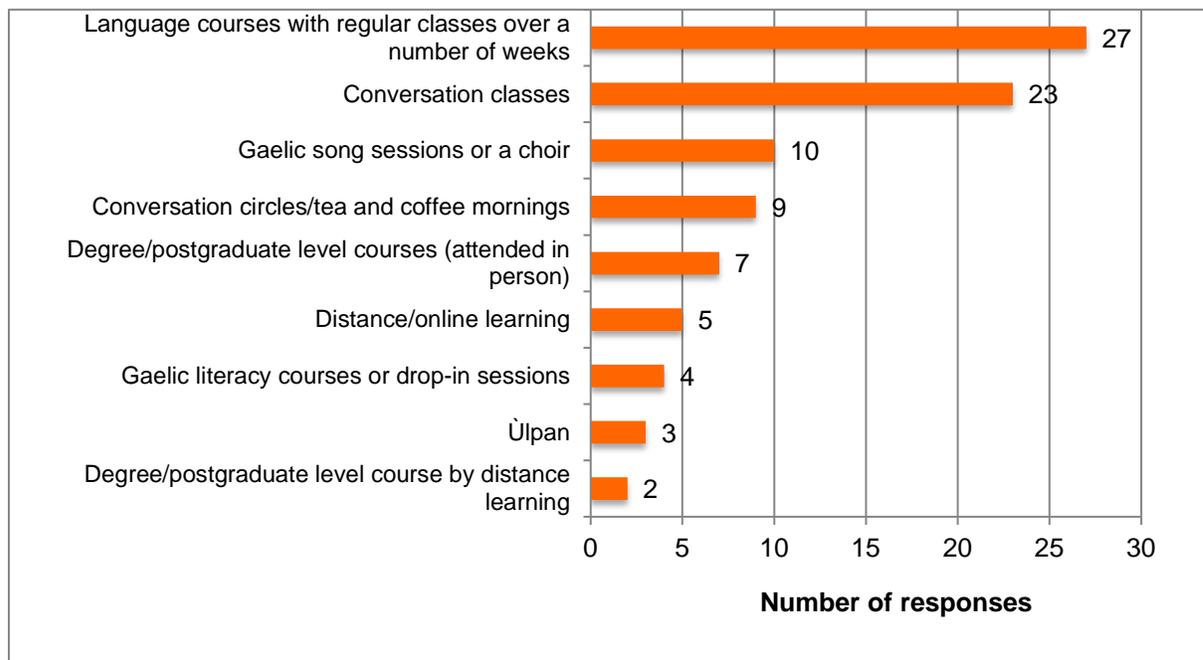

Chart 8 – Popularity of different types of provision offered by learning providers in the week beginning 5th November 2018

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Respondents provided details of other types of provision, which included:

- weekend language courses and other immersion courses for learners
- training for tutors
- Gaelic homework clubs
- a drama group
- classes for parents and family learning sessions (with Gaelic Bookbugs)

6.1.2 Numbers of learners attending across all types of provision

Learning providers told us how many learners attended their provision, across all types on offer during the snapshot week. Across the 43 responses from learning providers, the total number of learners reported was 3012.

6.1.3 Main types of provision offered by learning providers

We asked learning providers to identify the opportunity they considered to be the "main" type of provision their organisation offered. 42 learning providers answered this question. Their responses are presented in Table 8, in descending order.

Type of learning opportunity	Number of responses
Language courses with regular classes over a number of weeks	22
Conversation classes	9
Degree/postgraduate level courses (attended in person)	5
Ùlpan	3
Conversation circles / tea and coffee mornings	1
Distance/online learning	1
Gaelic song sessions or a choir	1
Degree/postgraduate level course by distance learning	0
Gaelic literacy courses or drop-in sessions	0

Table 8 – Main provision offered by learning providers at any time of the year

Over half of learning providers (22, or 53.7%) considered their main provision to be language courses over a number of weeks, with 9 (22.0%) deeming their main provision to be conversation classes.

6.2 Achievement and attainment

6.2.1 Accreditation for learning

We asked learning providers to tell us what (if any) accreditation learners could receive from the main type of provision they had identified, for example, in the form of a certificate or qualification.

Chart 9 presents the data drawn from across the 43 responses.

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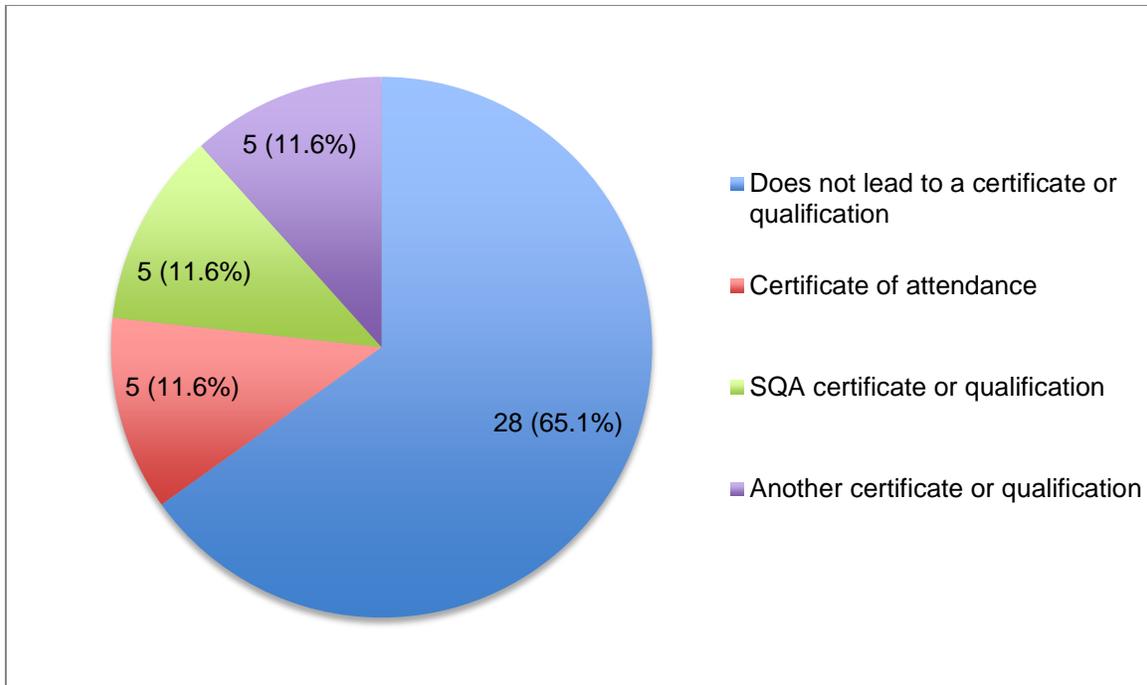
Chart 9 – Availability of accreditation from learning providers' main provision

It is significant that 28 out of the 43 (65.1%) providers' main type of provision does not lead to any form of accreditation. Provision leading to a certificate or qualification (other than a certificate of attendance) accounts for only 23.2% of the provision.

6.2.2   Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

We asked learning providers to tell us the highest SCQF level[6] learners attending their <u>main</u> provision could achieve. 41 learning providers answered this question.

31 respondents (75.6%) said their learners would achieve "no particular level".

Colleges and universities were able to identify the highest possible SCQF level that learners in their provision could attain. These were:

- SCQF level 5 – 2 responses (4.9%)
- SCQF level 6 – 3 responses (7.3%)
- SCQF level 10 – 2 response (4.9%)
- SCQF level 11 – 3 responses (7.3%)

It is possible that many other Gaelic learning providers, particularly those providing informal or non-formal learning opportunities such as conversation circles, have limited awareness of the SCQF. These results tally somewhat with the low amount of accreditation available for learning across all responses (see 6.2.1).

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[6] www.scqf.org.uk

6.2.3 Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

We presented learning providers with the CEFR Global Scale (see Appendix 3) and invited them to identify the level at which they would expect learners attending their main provision to start, and the level at which they would likely finish.

29 of the 43 respondents answered this question fully. We received robust data in relation to 4 types of learning provision:

- Ùlpan
- Language courses with regular classes
- Degree/postgraduate level courses (attended in person)
- Conversation classes

Start and end points differed across the range of responses for each type of learning provision. Substituting the numbers 1 to 6 for the six levels of the CEFR (A1 to C2), we calculated mean average start and end points for each type of provision and present them in Chart 10.
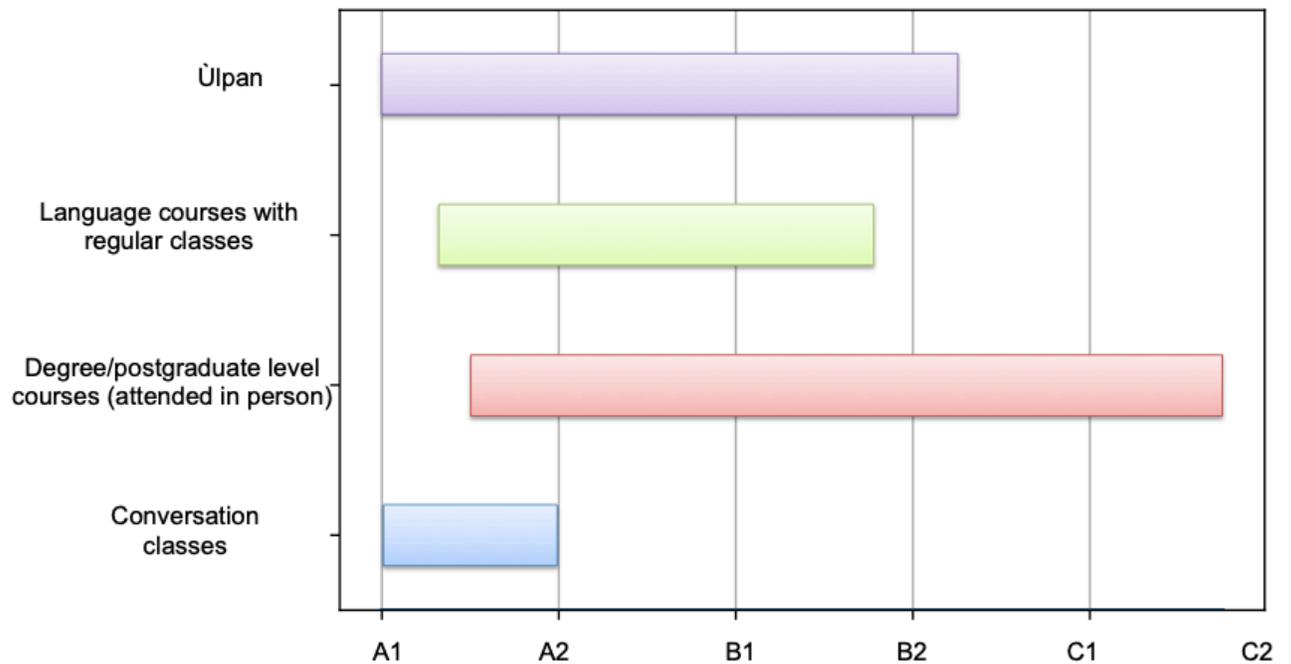

Chart 10 – Typical start and end points on the CEFR for different types of provision

These findings ring true in relation to the different types of provision, and we look forward to gathering more data in future surveys on the distance in competence that learners travel while taking part in different types of learning opportunities.

6.3   Learning delivery

6.3.1   Learning settings

We asked respondents to tell us in what settings the learning they provided took place. Respondents were able to choose more than one option from a list. The results are presented in Chart 11, in descending order.
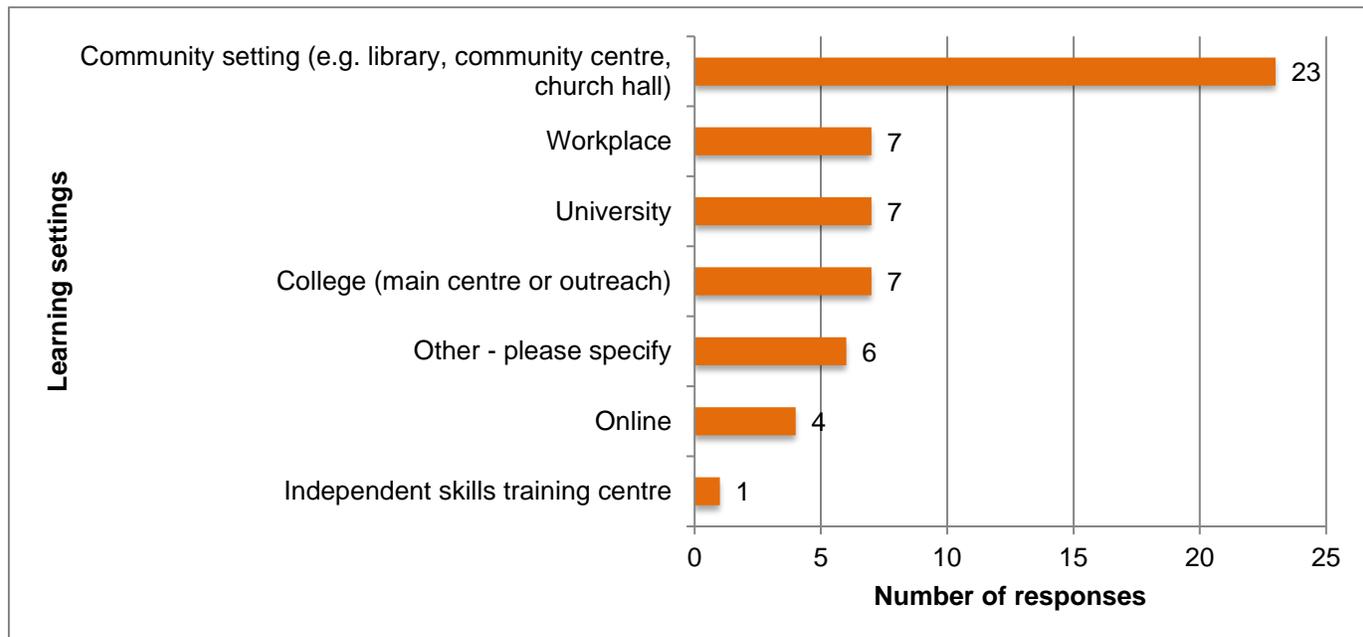
Chart 11 – Settings where learning takes place

6 providers identified settings other than those we had suggested, with 4 saying they offered learning opportunities for adults in schools (for example, in the evening). 1 provider referred to using a hotel as the setting and another said they offered learning opportunities at a distance, by Skype or phone call to the learner's home.

By far the most popular setting for Gaelic adult learning offered by these providers was a community setting such as a community centre or library. While this suggests broad access to Gaelic learning for adults in Scotland's communities, it also underlines the non-formal nature of much of this provision.

6.3.2   Numbers of paid and volunteer tutors

We asked providers how many paid and volunteer tutors delivered their main learning opportunity. 2 providers indicated that they used neither paid nor voluntary staff – we believe these answers to be an error, so have discounted them.

36 providers had **only** paid staff, 3 had **only** volunteers, while 2 had **both** paid and volunteer tutors.

Among the 38 providers employing paid tutors, the number employed covered a large range: between 1 and 12, but with the majority employing fewer than 7. The mean

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number of tutors employed was 3.17, but the median (a more helpful measure in this context) was 2.

Among the 5 providers that employed volunteers, the mean number of volunteers was 1.6 and the median was 1.

The 2 providers that employed both paid and volunteer tutors had very small numbers. The mean (and median) number of paid staff was 1.5, and the mean (and median) number of volunteers was 1.

6.3.3   Funding for learning opportunities

We asked providers to identify the primary source of funding for the learning opportunities they offer. Their responses are presented in Table 9.

Funding source	Number of responses
Individual learners pay fees or receive a concession/waiver	22
Local authority	15
Other organisation	15
Funded by the Scottish Funding Council	7

Table 9 – Sources of funding for learning opportunities

Where providers identified alternative sources of funding, these appear to be from specific Gaelic budgets held in organisations. Examples of alternative funding arrangements are as follows:

- Funding from Bòrd na Gàidhlig
- A Gaelic budget set aside as part of an organisation's Gaelic Language Plan (i.e. paid by the organisation)
- Part payment by the organisation, part by the individual
- A Scottish Government grant
- A community course offered by a college
- Free space provided by a local authority with learning provided by volunteer tutors
- Learning funded as part of another activity, for example a choir
- Funding provided by a local development trust

7 Conclusions and recommendations

7.1 Number of adults currently learning Gaelic in Scotland

We estimate that there are 5,460 adults currently learning Gaelic in Scotland.

We calculated this figure by extrapolating from the data provided by learning providers. We also added in the number of learners we identified as likely to be teaching themselves.

We acknowledge that this figure is significantly higher than those identified in previous years and believe the new methodology we have used accounts for this.

We have submitted our detailed methodology to Bòrd na Gàidhlig for their information and to assure them that our methodology is robust. Bòrd na Gàidhlig have approved the methodology.

7.2 Key findings

7.2.1 The typical adult Gaelic learner

According to the data we gathered from learners, adults who are learning Gaelic in Scotland are most likely to:

- live in the local authority areas of Edinburgh City, Glasgow City, Highland or the Western Isles
- be in the age range 35 to 74 (with the highest numbers in the ranges: 35 to 44 and 65 to 74)
- be female, by a ratio of female:male of almost 2:1
- be in work (full- or part-time) or be retired

In terms of their learning, learners are most likely to:

- consider themselves a beginner learner
- be motivated to learn by an interest in culture and heritage, or by a wish to help preserve the language
- be teaching themselves or attending a class or conversation class that is led by a tutor
- use their Gaelic most days, or at least one day each week
- use their Gaelic in their place of study, at home or online, and in a social environment
- travel less than 10 miles to reach their place of learning (or 0 miles if they are teaching themselves at home)
- have had to overcome a barrier or barriers to their learning
- have lacked opportunities to interact with native or more proficient Gaelic speakers, or been unable to find their preferred type of learning provision locally

7.2.2   Typical adult Gaelic learning provision

According to the data we gathered from providers, learning provision in Scotland is most likely to:

- consist of courses or classes run over a number of weeks, or conversation classes led by a tutor
- provide learners with progression through the levels of the CEFR
- take place in community-based settings
- be delivered by paid staff
- be paid for by learners themselves
- not lead to a qualification or certificate
- not be levelled against the SCQF or provide SCQF credit points

7.2.3   Trends from previous years

This year's research benefited from response rates that were higher than in previous years. Our learner survey introduced new questions or more detail into existing questions, and we were therefore unable to track trends from previous years for these items. We will track trends against all of the items below in the years 2019 and 2020.

Themes where we identified a trend

- **Geographical location** – the most common places where learners lived was largely the same in 2018 as in 2017: Edinburgh City, Glasgow City and the Inverness area of Highland local authority

- **Disability** – the data in 2018 was in line with that from previous years

- **Employment status** – the proportion of learners who were working full- or part-time in 2018 was in line with figures from 2017

- **Learning activities** – this year's data revealed a continuation in the trend for the most popular learning activities: self-teaching, attending a course and attending a conversation class

- **Barriers faced** – in 2018, as in 2017 and 2016, the most commonly perceived barrier by learners was that there were not enough opportunities to interact with more proficient speakers

Areas where we identified change

- **Age** – in 2018 the age distribution had shifted slightly in comparison with that in 2017. There were slightly fewer older learners and more middle-aged learners. There were significantly more younger learners in 2018, compared to 2017

- **Sex/gender** – slightly more women than men appeared to be learning Gaelic in 2018, than was identified in the 2017 data

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New or expanded questions

The new or expanded questions, for which we have no previous data, were in the areas identified below.

- **Level of competence** – our approach and framework for assessing level of language competence was fundamentally different for this report, and we cannot identify trends with previous years

- **Motivations for learning Gaelic** – this was a new measure in 2018

- **How often learners use Gaelic and in what settings** – these questions were new in 2018

Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

Definitions

We made one substantial change to the definitions used in the surveys. In agreement with Bòrd na Gàidhlig, we replaced the term "learning intervention" with "learning opportunity", which we felt was a more inclusive term.

The definitions we used were as follows:

> An **adult learner** is someone who actively seeks to acquire or improve any of the language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in Gaelic, through study or through experiences. An adult learner is aged 16 or over and has left full-time secondary school education.
>
> **Learning resources** are those materials (for example, worksheets, websites, apps) designed for adult learners of Gaelic.
>
> A **learning opportunity** is any activity offered by a learning provider with clear start and finish times, or at a particular level that aims to either:

- teach a language skill or skills in Gaelic to adult learners, or
- enable adult learners to achieve a specific standard in such a skill or skills

> Examples of **learning opportunities** include:

- a conversation course delivered by a tutor in a community setting, such as a library
- drop-in sessions for native Gaelic speakers who want to improve their Gaelic literacy
- an online course
- language training for a specific purpose; for example, for students studying to perform traditional Scottish music
- language training as part of a university Gaelic degree
- evening classes in a community setting

Survey questions

We built on the surveys used in previous years, making changes to the structure and some of the questions. These changes included:

- reducing the number of questions in both surveys
- moving questions relating to personal or organisational data to the end of the survey, so that questions relating to learning and learning provision came first
- changing questions relating to the level of learning and competence to refer to the SCQF and the CEFR.[7]

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[7] We used the English descriptors as a Gaelic version of the descriptors has not yet been agreed.

Both surveys were bilingual, with Gaelic appearing before English. Respondents could answer in either language.

The surveys made specific reference to a "snapshot" week, which began on Monday 5th November 2018. We asked respondents to consider their answers in relation to this single week.

Survey distribution

To reach **learners** we used a number of approaches, including:

- asking Bòrd na Gàidhlig to contact its database of previous survey respondents[8]
- sharing the survey link via social media channels and through e-newsletters
- asking providers not only to complete the learning provider survey but to share the learner survey with learners they were supporting or were in contact with

Before sending out the link to the **learning provider** survey, we undertook a period of engagement, targeting specific individuals in organisations and seeking their preliminary agreement to completing the survey. We also sent a bilingual letter of introduction from Bòrd na Gàidhlig to assure learning providers of the legitimacy of the research and our status as approved researchers.

We used a number of approaches when sending out the learning provider survey link, including:

- asking Bòrd na Gàidhlig to share the survey link through their communication channels and networks, including on social media
- sending the survey link to organisations with Gaelic Language Plans, and to a database of learning providers
- asking for the survey link to be included in organisations' e-newsletters and similar channels
- distributing the survey link to our own networks of learning providers

Surveys were sent out during the week beginning 5th November 2018 (the snapshot week) and responses could be submitted until 30th November 2018.

We explained in our communications with learners and learning providers that data would be analysed and reported on anonymously and would be kept securely. We explained that data would be collected via SmartSurvey and then downloaded and kept in a secure Dropbox, which would only be shared by the project team and Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Analysis of data

After the deadline of 30th November 2018, we downloaded the data and saved it in a Dropbox folder shared only between us. We then discussed the summary data, individual responses and trends that we identified. Our discussions informed the structure of this report.

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[8] These learners had provided Tkm Consulting and Bòrd na Gàidhlig permission to be contacted again, only by them.

Appendix 2: Table showing where learners live

The table is divided into Scotland's 32 local authorities, with four local authority areas further segmented as follows:

- ➢ Argyll and Bute – segmented into three sub-areas
- ➢ Highland – segmented into five sub-areas
- ➢ Western Isles – segmented into five sub-areas
- ➢ North Ayrshire – segmented into two sub-areas

Area	Number of responses during snapshot week	%
Aberdeen City	18	2.5
Aberdeenshire	10	1.4
Angus	<5	<0.7
Argyll and Bute (as a whole)	24	3.3
Argyll and Bute: Bute and Cowal	*<5*	*<0.7*
Argyll and Bute: Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Islay	*5*	*0.7*
Argyll and Bute: Oban, Lorn and the Isles	*16*	*2.2*
Clackmannanshire	<5	<0.7
Dumfries and Galloway	32	4.4
Dundee City	<5	<0.7
East Ayrshire	24	3.3
East Dunbartonshire	7	1.0
East Lothian	9	1.2
East Renfrewshire	<5	<0.7
Edinburgh, City of	99	13.6
Falkirk	8	1.1
Fife	25	3.4
Glasgow City	102	14.1
Highland (as a whole)	90	12.4
Highland: Caithness, Sutherland, and East Ross-shire	*23*	*3.2*
Highland: Greater Inverness area, Nairn, Badenoch, & Strathspey	*11*	*1.5*
Highland: Inverness City	*35*	*4.8*
Highland: Skye	*13*	*1.8*
Highland: Wester Ross and Lochaber	*8*	*1.1*
Inverclyde	<5	<0.7
Midlothian	10	1.4
Moray	10	1.4
North Ayrshire (as a whole)	13	1.8
North Ayrshire mainland	*12*	*1.7*
North Ayrshire: Arran and Cumbrae	*<5*	*<0.7*
North Lanarkshire	19	2.6
Orkney Islands	<5	<0.7
Perth and Kinross	17	2.3
Renfrewshire	30	4.1
Scottish Borders	9	1.2
South Ayrshire	11	1.5
South Lanarkshire	15	2.1

Stirling	5	0.7
West Dunbartonshire	<5	<0.7
West Lothian	9	1.2
Western Isles	34	4.6
Western Isles: Barra and Vatersay	*6*	*0.8*
Western Isles: Benbecula, South Uist and Eriskay	*<5*	*<0.7*
Western Isles: Harris	*<5*	*<0.7*
Western Isles: Lewis	*22*	*3.0*
Western Isles: North Uist, Berneray, and Grimsay	*<5*	*<0.7*
Outwith Scotland	77	10.6

Appendix 3: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Global scale

C2	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

Appendix 4: Case studies of learners' journeys

The following case studies illustrate the learning journeys of three learners who completed the survey during November 2018.

We have used only the learners' first names and have not named any learning providers.

We thank Dylan, Malcolm and Clare for their time and their enthusiasm.

Case study: Dylan

Introducing Dylan

Dylan is an 18-year-old student from Livingston. He is studying for an MA in Celtic Studies at university.

Dylan has been learning Gaelic as part of his studies for just over six months. He has a good grasp of complex grammar but feels less confident at interacting with Gaelic speakers, so considers himself still to be a beginner.

Dylan has an interest in languages in general and has achieved Highers in French and Spanish. As part of his degree, he also has the chance to learn other languages.

Dylan's motivation for learning Gaelic

Dylan has a long-standing interest in Celtic history and mythology, which is why he applied for this degree. Dylan says that Scottish Gaelic "feels close to home". He has grown used to seeing Gaelic on road signs and at train stations, so feels happy to focus on that over other Celtic languages.

Before starting his degree, Dylan hadn't studied Gaelic in any detail, though he had made some progress teaching himself. His grandmother ([redacted]) liked her grandchildren to watch and listen to Gaelic programmes on the TV and radio. Dylan says that she did this because she thought it would be "good for them to be familiar with Gaelic," as it was part of the culture they were growing up in.

Dylan's experience of learning Gaelic

At the moment Dylan attends five hours of classes a week, which are led by a native Gaelic speaker. The learning involves working through exercises in books, practising vocabulary and looking in detail at grammar points, with opportunities for speaking and listening, and pronunciation practice. In future years, as the students' skills grow, the focus will move on to the study of literature. The classes are delivered in English.

There are opportunities for developing Gaelic conversation skills at the university, but Dylan's part-time job means that he cannot attend these at the moment. Dylan is able to practise his Gaelic skills occasionally; for example, by exchanging greetings and pleasantries with classmates in the corridor, or at special events such as a recent Highland Annual Dance that took place at the university.

Outside his studies, Dylan makes an effort to read Gaelic online, choosing to read websites in Gaelic when there is an option to do so. He also browses Gaelic books that are available in the university bookshop and likes to read his Gaelic translation of Asterix.

Dylan says that he found it difficult at first to find learning materials that contained a good balance of grammar and content. Some books, for example, could be overwhelming in their presentation of complex grammar; others were too light on grammar and focused

on learning set phrases without a clear understanding of how the language worked. A solution that has worked well for Dylan is to combine two particular resources, referring to each of them as necessary. These are Michel Byrne's *Gràmar na Gaidhlig*, and Ó Maolalaigh and MacAonghuis's *Scottish Gaelic in Twelve Weeks*.

What's next for Dylan and his Gaelic learning?

Dylan isn't sure how he might use his Gaelic after his degree, but is considering teaching Gaelic, or perhaps teaching another subject, such as history, through the medium of Gaelic. Whatever he chooses, he hopes one day to be fluent.

Case study: Malcolm

Introducing Malcolm

Malcolm is a 46-year-old officer in the Merchant Navy. He lives in Glasgow but travels frequently with his ship and for pleasure.

Malcolm says he has been learning Gaelic in one way or another all his life. He considers himself currently to be learning at an intermediate level.

Apart from learning Gaelic, Malcolm is teaching himself to play the pipes.

Malcolm's motivation for learning Gaelic

Malcolm's father's family was from Lewis and Skye, and Gaelic was the only language spoken at home in Dumbarton when his father was growing up [redacted].

Malcolm learned Gaelic from his father as a young child [redacted]. Still, Malcolm would visit Lewis every summer to visit family, and there he heard Gaelic frequently, and understood some words.

Malcolm says that his motivation for learning Gaelic as an adult is based on a desire to be fluent in a language he feels, by rights, should be his, and also to be able to pass it on, in some way, to his son.

Malcolm's experience of learning Gaelic

Malcolm didn't start learning Gaelic again seriously until a couple of years ago. His first steps were using online resources.

As Malcolm spends a good deal of time at sea, he was able to spend free time working through learning activities available on the LearnGaelic website[9]. He worked through the beginners' course and says, "I found it very easy, which was encouraging!"

Next, Malcolm worked through the Taic course. He found the detailed grammatical explanations particularly appealing, which he puts down to his familiarity with the fine mechanics of engineering. The ship's servers barred Taic's sound files, but Malcolm used LearnGaelic's sound dictionary to get around this problem.

Malcolm next completed a six-month distance learning course with a university, and then applied for an intermediate-level distance learning course at a college. He scored well in the written entry test but failed the telephone interview – something Malcolm puts down to the fact that he had limited speaking and listening practice during the early stages of his learning, particularly while at sea.

The college suggested that Malcolm should wait and join the third term of the entry-level distance learning course. However, Malcolm didn't want to have several months' break

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[9] https://learngaelic.scot

in his learning, so he opted to join the course from the start, despite finding much of the content straightforward.

Malcolm is finding this accelerated course helpful. It involves a series of units, with homework to complete, supplemented by weekly phone calls with a tutor and his coursemates.

Outside his course, Malcolm is able to practice his Gaelic by talking to colleagues in the engine room of his ship, who are mainly from the Gàidhealtachd. He also watches BBC Alba and listens to Radio nan Gàidheal. He downloads Gaelic content from YouTube before setting sail, and watches this while he is away.

Malcolm feels that there is a significant lack of Gaelic media available, though he thinks this situation is getting better. He points to the fact that only one Gaelic film has been released in recent years. He wishes, for example, that he could access DVDs of some of the later series of the TV show Bannan.

What's next for Malcolm and his Gaelic learning?

Once Malcolm has completed the entry-level course, he plans to apply for the advanced-level course. Ultimately he would like to work towards a degree.

Malcolm feels strongly that he should have had the chance to learn Gaelic properly as a child. "I feel cheated out of being able to speak Gaelic," he says.

His personal goal is Gaelic fluency.

Case study: Clare

Introducing Clare

Clare is 39 and lives in the Highland local authority area, where she works in a Gaelic-medium primary school. Clare is not learning Gaelic at the moment but uses it every day – both at work and home.

Clare says she is "fairly fluent" at speaking and listening to Gaelic and is comfortable talking to the children in school and in reading stories to them. She doesn't write much in Gaelic but considers her speaking and listening skills to be at an intermediate level. She says her writing skills were better in the past.

Clare's motivation for learning Gaelic

Clare did not learn Gaelic in school or at home but was a member of the school's Gaelic choir. Her involvement in the choir ignited her interest in Gaelic, and she studied a Gaelic module as part of her History and Celtic Studies Degree at university. [Redacted].

Clare's experience of learning Gaelic

When she left university, Clare did a two-year distance learning Gaelic course, which involved self-study and attending some weekend courses. She has also attended a council-run Gaelic conversation circle, which she found "very helpful". Unfortunately, the class is no longer running due to the low number of learners.

All conversations with colleagues in the primary school are in Gaelic, and this helps Clare to improve her Gaelic skills. She says she also learns from her husband and children and sometimes uses the LearnGaelic[10] and Gaelic4Parents[11] websites, or watches videos on social media.

Clare's biggest success, in her view, has been conversing in Gaelic. She says, "I'd done the grammar – that was fine as a learning thing, but I'm not a linguist. My aim was to communicate so what's really helped has been just using it."

What's next for Clare and her Gaelic learning?

Clare plans to continue learning Gaelic and hopes to carry on working in Gaelic-medium education. She would like to feel more confident and become more fluent in speaking Gaelic.

Clare says she will go back to the conversation classes if they start again and she would like to join a Gaelic course for parents and children. She says, "It would be great to have something the children go to and that I could attend too". Clare would also be interested in doing a Gaelic-medium course to help with fluency and using Gaelic in real-life situations.

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[10] https://learngaelic.scot
[11] https://www.gaelic4parents.com