



**Bòrd na Gàidhlig**

**Survey of  
Adult Learners of Gaelic – 2017**

**Final Report**

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## Geàrr-chunntas – Inbhich a tha ag ionnsachadh Gàidhlig 2017

Bharantaich Bòrd na Gàidhlig Tkm Consulting sa Ghiblean 2015 gus pròiseact a libhrigeadh thairis air trì bliadhna anns am biodh iad a' cruinneachadh dàta a thaobh Gàidhlig do dh'inbhich. 'S e as adhbhar don phròiseact: dàta, staitistearachd agus mapaichean a thoirt seachad is fhoillseachadh a bhuineas ri inbhich a tha ag ionnsachadh Gàidhlig, agus a bhuineas ri gnìomhan ionnsachaidh. Thèid feum a dhèanamh den fhiosrachadh a thèid a chruinneachadh tron phròiseact, gus sealltainn dè na gluasadan a th' ann agus dè tha tachairt le luchd-ionnsachaidh agus cuidichidh sin le bhith dealbh ro-innleachdan is phoileasaidhean san àm ri teachd.

B' e an sgrùdadh a chaidh a dhèanamh ann an 2017 an treas sgrùdadh agus am fear mu dheireadh airson a' phròiseict seo, agus chaidh feuchainn cho fad 's a b' urrainnear ri cumail ris an aon seòrsa crutha agus cheistean a bh' ann an-uiridh gus an deigheadh againn air gluasadan no pàtran an a bha tighinn am follais aithneachadh.

A thaobh a' phròiseict seo, 's e a th' ann an inbheach a tha ag ionnsachadh sgilean Gàidhlig, cuideigin a tha 16 no nas sine agus:

- i. a tha air an àrd-sgoil fhàgail, agus a tha a' dol an sàs, no an dùil a dhol an sàs, ann an gnìomh sam bith gus piseach a thoirt air na sgilean Gàidhlig aca; no
- ii. a tha ann am foghlam àrd-sgoile an-dràsta agus a tha a' dol an sàs ann an gnìomh ionnsachaidh sam bith gus piseach a thoirt air na sgilean Gàidhlig aca, nach eil air a ruith leis an sgoil.

B' e am prìomh mhodh-obrach a chaidh a chleachdadh gus dàta a chruinneachadh, ceisteachan air-loidhne a bha fosgailte airson cola-deug bho 6 Samhain 2017. Bha an àireamh dhaoine a chuir freagairt a-steach faisg air an aon ìre 's a chuir freagairt a-steach an-uiridh agus chaidh an àireamh de luchd-freagairt a mheas mar àireamh reusanta. Bha an àireamh às a' cheud a fhreagair fhathast aig ìre ris am biodh dùil airson na h-àireimh a mheasar a th' ann de luchd-ionnsachaidh. Mar sin, thathar san fharsaingeachd den bheachd gu bheil na toraidhean a' riochdachadh inbhich a tha ag ionnsachadh sgilean Gàidhlig. Cuideachd, chaidh dàta bhon sgrùdadh air luchd-ionnsachaidh a chur a-steach ann an cliath-dhuilleagan a dh'ullaich Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Mar a rinneadh leis na ceisteachan eile, chaidh iarraidh air luchd-solair chùrsaichean pàirt a ghabhail san sgrùdadh le bhith toirt seachad fiosrachadh mu chùrsaichean no tachartasan ionnsachaidh a bha iad a' cumail rè ùine an sgrùdaidh. Chaidh sin a chleachdadh gus obrachadh a-mach dè an àireamh às a' cheud de luchd-ionnsachaidh a fhreagair an ceisteachan agus gus tuairmse a dhèanamh air an àireimh de dh'inbhich a tha ag ionnsachadh sgilean Gàidhlig.

Chùm an ceisteachan airson luchd-ionnsachaidh na còig earrannan a chleachdadh roimhe, agus bha a' chiad earrann a' cruinneachadh fiosrachadh pearsanta.

Coltach ris an sgrùdadh mu dheireadh, bha ìre àrd de chunbhalachd san fhiosrachadh mu inbhich a tha ag ionnsachadh Gàidhlig nuair a thèid a choimeas ri fiosrachadh bho bhliadhnaichean eile. Tha aois chuibheasach an luchd-fhreagairt fhathast ag èirigh, agus tha sgrùdadh 2017 a' sealltainn àrdachadh follaiseach sa chuid de luchd-ionnsachaidh a tha aois 65 gu 74. Bha na h-ìrean fileantais coltach ris an fheadhainn a fhuaras san sgrùdadh ann an 2016, ach bha lùghdachadh ann a-rithist sa chuid de luchd-ionnsachaidh a thuir gun robh iad nam fìor luchd-tòiseachaidh. Mar a chaidh a ràdh san aithisg mu dheireadh, bidh na daoine a tha a' tòiseachadh air Gàidhlig ionnsachadh fìor chudromach don iomairt gus an àireamh de dh'inbhich a tha ag ionnsachadh na Gàidhlig a ghleidheadh agus àrdachadh. Bidh e cudromach sùil gheur a chumail air sin sna bliadhnaichean air

thoiseach, gu h-àraidh leis mar a tha toraidhean an sgrùdaidh a' sealltainn gu bheil luchd-ionnsachaidh sa chumantas a' fàs nas sine.

A-rithist, b' e an gnìomh ionnsachaidh a bu chumanta a chomharraich luchd-freagairt mar am prìomh gnìomh ionnsachaidh aca, clas air a stiùireadh le oide le gnìomhan a chaidh a dhealbh ro-làimh (nach robh na chlas còmhraidh). B' e an dàrna freagairt a bu chumanta airson prìomh gnìomh ionnsachaidh, clas còmhraidh, agus b' iad an dà gnìomh seo air an robh barrachd fèill sa chumantas a-rithist, le Cearcall Còmhraidh gu math faisg orra.

Bha àrdachadh san àireimh de dhaoine a bha ri gnìomhan ionnsachaidh an coimeas ris an-uiridh, agus thuit an àireamh de dhaoine a bha an dùil pàirt a ghabhail ann an gnìomhan ionnsachaidh. Dh'fhaodadh gu bheil seo a' sealltainn gun robh an t-atharrachadh a chunnacas ann an 2016, nuair a bha àrdachadh nach beag san àireimh de dhaoine a bha an dùil pàirt a ghabhail ann an gnìomhan ionnsachaidh, air sàillibh an ama den bhliadhna a chaidh an sgrùdadh a dhèanamh agus an t-am nuair a bha na gnìomhan ionnsachaidh a' tachairt agus chan ann air sàillibh gun tàinig atharrachadh air cleachdaidhean an luchd-ionnsachaidh fhèin.

Bha lùghdachadh air a' chuid den luchd-fhreagairt a thuirte gun robh cùisean, duilgheadasan no cnapan-starra air a bhith ann a chuir stad orra bho bhith ag ionnsachadh sgilean Gàidhlig, chaidh e sìos beagan gu 57%, ach tha an àireamh seo air fuireach cha mhòr aig an aon ìre fad ùine a' phròiseict. Rud a b' fhiach a chomharrachadh, 's e mar a sheall an sgrùdadh ann an 2017 gun do thuit an àireamh sa chiad den luchd-fhreagairt airson a h-uile cnapan-starra fa leth ach a-mhàin an àireamh dhaoine a thuirte gun robh e doirbh dhaibh a bhith ag ionnsachadh ri linn dhleastanasan pearsanta eile a bh' orra. Ach a-mhàin na cùisean sin, bha am pàtran de nithean a bha a' toirt buaidh air ionnsachadh an ìre mhath coltach ri bliadhnaichean eile. B' e an cnapan-starra a bu chumanta, cion chothroman gus conaltradh ri fileantaich is luchd-ionnsachaidh fileanta, agus b' iad na cnapan-starra a bu chumanta às dèidh sin cion chùrsaichean aig an ìre cheart agus dleastanasan pearsanta agus an aon àireamh de luchd-freagairt a' comharrachadh na dà fhreagairt sin.

Chaidh an earrainn mu ghoireasan atharrachadh gus an robh ceist ann mu chruth nan goireasan a bha luchd-freagairt a' cleachdadh, agus chaidh fhaighneachd dhaibh am b' urrainn dhaibh na goireasan fhaotainn sa chruth a b' fheàrr leotha. B' fhiach toirt an aire do mar a fhreagair 88% den luchd-fhreagairt gum b' urrainn dhaibh a' mhòr-chuid de na goireasan fhaotainn sa chruth a b' fheàrr leotha ach feumar cuimhneachadh le sin gum faod claonadh a bhith a' nochdadh ann an toraidhean an sgrùdaidh. Bha an ceisteachan ri fhaotainn ann an clò, ach chleachd a h-uile neach-freagairt SurveyMonkey agus tha sin a' sealltainn gu bheil e buailteach gun robh e comasach dhaibh fiosrachadh fhaotainn air-loidhne.

B' fhiach toirt an aire cuideachd do mar a tha gluasad cunbhalach air a bhith ann a thaobh nan goireasan a tha inbhich a' cleachdadh gus na sgilean ionnsachaidh aca a dhaingneachadh. B' e stuthan sgrìobhte airson inbhich agus a' bruidhinn ri daoine aig a bheil sgilean Gàidhlig nas fheàrr an dà ghoireas a bu motha a chaidh a chomharrachadh agus b' e stuthan sgrìobhte airson inbhich fhathast an goireas a bu motha a bhiodh daoine a' cleachdadh nuair a chaidh coimeas a dhèanamh eadar na h-àireamhan airson nam prìomh thrì goireasan. Dh'fhaodadh diofar adhbharan a bhith ann airson mar a tha am pàtran air atharrachadh, a' gabhail a-steach gu bheil an luchd-freagairt sa chumantas nas sine, ach dh'fhaodadh gur e atharrachadh eile ann an 2017 a bha am measg nan nithean a dh'adhbharaich seo, sin atharrachadh air an t-seòrsa buidhne a tha a' libhrigeadh a' phrìomh gnìomh ionnsachaidh. B' e a' bhuidheann no ionad as cumanta a bha a' cur air dòigh a' phrìomh gnìomh ionnsachaidh don luchd-fhreagairt oilthigh, colaiste no institiut Foghlam Adhartach/Àrd-ìre eile, agus bha an fhreagairt sin tòrr nas cumanta na an fheadhainn eile. B' àbhaist ùghdarrasan ionadail a bhith air an riochdachadh barrachd, agus bha lùghdachadh de 8% san àireimh de dhaoine a chomharraich iad gu 21% ann an 2017. Dh'fhaodadh seo a bhith mar

chomharra air mar a tha nas lugha maoineachaidh aig na h-ùghdarrasan ionadail agus bu chòir sùil gheur a chumail air sin feuch nach toir e droch bhuidh air na cothroman a th' ann do dh'inbhich a tha ag ionnsachadh Gàidhlig.

Bha lùghdachadh beag san àireimh de luchd-solair chùrsaichean a fhreagair an ceisteachan, ach thug an fheadhainn a fhreagair dàta fìor fheumail seachad agus chaidh an àireamh de ghnìomhan ionnsachaidh a chaidh ainmeachadh an àirde. Le bhith cleachdadh an dàta a thug luchd-solair chùrsaichean seachad, chaidh obrachadh a-mach gun robh 2,899 inbhich ann a tha ag ionnsachadh sgilean Gàidhlig agus a tha a' fuireach ann an Alba. Tha an toradh sin a' sealltainn gu bheil e buailteach gu bheil pàtran a' nochdadh far a bheil an àireamh a' dol sìos, agus i air tuiteam bho 3,261 ann an 2016, agus bha an àireamh sin cuideachd air a dhol sìos an coimeas ri bliadhnaichean eile.

## Executive Summary – Adult Learners of Gaelic 2017

Bòrd na Gàidhlig commissioned Tkm Consulting in April 2015 to deliver a three year project collecting data on Gaelic for adults. The purpose of the project was to produce and publish data, statistics and maps relating to adult learners, as well as adult learning activities, with the information generated by the project being used to establish key facts and trends that will inform future strategies and policies.

The survey conducted in 2017 was the third and final survey in the project with the format and questions kept as similar as possible to the previous year to enable the identification of any emerging trends.

For the purposes of the project, an adult learner is anyone who is 16 years old or over and has either:

- i. left secondary school education and is either currently participating, or planning to participate in any type of learning activity to improve their Gaelic language skills; or
- ii. is currently in secondary school education and participating in any type of learning activity to improve their Gaelic language skills, which is not run by their school.

The primary method of data capture was an on-line survey which ran from 6 November 2017 for two weeks. The response rate was comparable with the previous year and the response rate was considered reasonable and within the expected percentage for the anticipated number of learners. Therefore the findings are generally considered to be representative of adult learners of Gaelic. Data from the survey for learners was also entered into spreadsheets prepared by Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

As with previous surveys, learning providers were also asked to participate by providing information about activities they were running during the survey period, which was used to calculate a return rate and generate an estimated number of adult learners of Gaelic.

The survey for learners retained the five sections used previously with the first section gathering personal information.

In common with the previous survey, the adult learner profiles generally showed a high degree of consistency with the previous years. The average age for respondents continues to increase, with the 2017 survey showing a marked increase in proportionality of those aged 65 to 74. Levels of fluency were also similar to 2016 although there continues to be a reduction in the proportion of those indicating that they are complete beginners. As highlighted in the previous report, those entering the training pipeline will be critical to sustaining and building on the numbers of adult learners. It will be important to monitor this closely in future years, particularly given the evidence of an ageing population of adult learners.

The most common learning activity that respondents were undertaking as their primary activity during the survey period continued to be a class that was tutor led with preplanned activities (excluding conversation classes). The second highest return for primary learning activity was a conversation class, and these two activities remained the most popular overall, closely followed by Conversation Circle.

The relative number of those undertaking a learning activity increased when compared with the previous year, and those planning to undertake a learning activity fell. This may indicate that the change seen in 2016, where there was a relatively large increase in those planning to undertake an activity, could have been due to the timing of the survey and whether it coincided with activities rather than a change in the profile of adult learners.

The proportion of those respondents that indicated that they had encountered issues, difficulties and barriers that had affected their acquisition of Gaelic language skills fell slightly to 57% although the proportion has remained fairly consistent throughout the project. What was notable in the 2017 returns was that the relative numbers of respondents reporting each barrier fell with the exception of those reporting that other personal commitments were affecting their learning. Otherwise the pattern of the factors influencing learning remained broadly the same as in previous years. The most commonly reported barrier was lack of interaction with native speakers or fluent learners, which was followed by both the lack of courses at an appropriate level and personal commitments which had the same level of responses.

The resources section was changed to ask respondents specifically about format of resources, and whether they were able to access resources in their preferred format. It is worth noting that 88% of respondents said they were able to access the majority of resources in their preferred format although it is essential to take into account survey bias. The survey was made available in hard copy although all respondents used SurveyMonkey suggesting they have some ability to access information on-line.

It was also notable that there seems to be a continued shift in resources that adult learners are using to consolidate their learning skills. Texts for adult learners and conversing with others with a higher level of language skill reported as the top two primary resources and texts for adult learners remained the top resource when the numbers for the top three resources were aggregated. There may be a number of explanations for this changing pattern including the increasing average age of respondent although one other change in the results for the 2017 which may have been a contributing factor was the type of organisation providing the primary learning activity. The most commonly reported type of institution that was providing respondents' primary learning activity was university, college or other type of HE/FE institution by some margin. Previously, local authorities have had a significantly higher representation, falling by 8% to 21% in 2017. This finding may be indicative of pressures on local authority funding and should be monitored closely to ensure it does not have a negative impact on opportunities available to adult learners of Gaelic.

There was a slight fall in the number of returns from learning providers although those that did provide a return provided some very good data and the number of learning activities reported increased. Using the data submitted by learning providers, the number of adult learners living in Scotland was calculated to be 2,899. This finding suggests a downward trend in numbers is emerging, down from 2016 in 3261, which was also a fall on previous years.



## 1. Introduction

Bòrd na Gàidhlig was established by the Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 as the organisation responsible for securing the status of Gaelic as an official language of Scotland, commanding equal respect to the English language.

As part of their remit, Bòrd na Gàidhlig are required to produce, review and update the National Gaelic Language Plan (NGLP). The current plan is NGLP 2012–2017, which was launched in June 2012. The NGLP defines a number of development areas with some being prioritised for delivery, and post-school education is one of the prioritised areas.

A project to establish the number of adult learners of Gaelic was commissioned by Bòrd na Gàidhlig in 2014, which also informed the development of a strategy for adult learners. Bòrd na Gàidhlig then commissioned a three year project to survey adult learners annually, and establish some general trends and statistics about adult learners of Gaelic. The 2017 survey was the third and final survey in that project.

To facilitate comparison, the structure and format of this report follows that of the previous year and much of approach for project delivery has remained unchanged to ensure consistency and comparable year on year results. Following the Introduction, there are four sections:

- i. Methodology – provides an overview of the approach taken to deliver the survey, covering the development and distribution of the surveys for both learners and learning providers. It also covers project definitions, survey design, development of question sets, and details how the surveys were distributed;
- ii. Survey Data and Analysis – presents the data gathered from learners and a brief overview of data captured from learning providers. For learners, the data gathered in response to each question is analysed and the key facts highlighted. Where appropriate and relevant, a comparison is made with the previous years' data;
- iii. Evaluation – discusses the key findings from the data analysis and identifies potential and emerging trends by using comparisons to the previous survey. The section also identifies where changes may need to be incorporated into future projects, and any issues with datasets are highlighted, together with suggestions for improvement;
- iv. Number of Adult Learners of Gaelic – using the formula developed previously, an estimated number of adult learners of Gaelic during the survey period is calculated. There are some important assumptions and limitations that must be taken into account for this calculation, which are also documented in this section.

## 2. Methodology

No changes were made to the definition of key terms. The agreed project definitions were:

- i. Adult Learner of Gaelic – a person who is actively seeking to improve any of their Scottish Gaelic language skills (reading, writing, speaking and understanding) through study or

experience. The definition provided as part of the survey introductory text is shown below:

An adult learner is anyone who is 16 years old or over and has either:

- a. left secondary school education and is either currently participating, or planning to participate, in any type of learning activity to improve their Gaelic language skills;  
or
  - b. is currently in secondary school education and participating in any type of learning activity to improve their Gaelic language skills, which is not run by their school.
- ii. Learning intervention – a specific activity offered by a learning provider with clear start and finish times (whether by calendar dates or by level achieved), that is either:
    - a. aiming to teach a language skill or skills in Scots Gaelic to adult learners, or
    - b. aiming to enable adult learners to achieve a specific standard in such a skill or skills.
  - iii. Learning resource – a resource that is specifically designed to support adult learners in acquiring Scottish Gaelic language skills or competencies.

## **2.1. Design of Surveys**

The required dataset from the survey of adult learners was based on the spreadsheets developed by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. The survey of learners captured data about those who considered themselves learners of Gaelic regardless of whether they were actively participating in activities, and also those planning learning activities. However, it should be noted that, as with previous surveys, the text and promotion of the survey was very much targeting those who were currently participating in a learning activity.

To enable year on year comparisons to be made, any changes made to question sets were kept to a minimum in both surveys. In 2017, changes were limited to:

- i. Rewording or reformatting the questions where it was clear the question had in some way been misinterpreted or was not providing the anticipated data;
- ii. The addition of questions where further detail was required about particular topics in the learner survey only. The additional questions related to resources.

### **2.1.1. Learner Survey**

Questions were presented to respondents in five sections:

- i. About the learner – respondents were asked a number of questions relating to their personal circumstances that may influence their learning patterns. There was also a self-assessment of current language skills which was loosely based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) framework. To help improve accuracy, this question asked respondents to rate each of the four skills (speaking, understanding, reading and writing) separately;

- ii. Learning activities – respondents were asked about how many distinct learning activities they were participating in during the survey period, and asked to rank up to five of these activities in order of importance;
- iii. Barriers to learning – this section asked about potential issues, difficulties and barriers to learning that respondents had encountered;
- iv. Resources – the questions from the previous survey were combined with respondents asked to order the types of resources in order of importance to their learning;
- v. Contact details – respondents were asked to provide their name, e-mail and contact telephone number if they would like to participate in future surveys.

The question set for learners can be found at Appendix 1, which also shows possible responses for each question, and the available pathways through the survey. The survey was provided in Gaelic and English languages throughout and respondents were able to respond in either language. The different languages were shown in the final survey in different colours, and the languages were separated with a “/” to facilitate accessibility.

The survey was designed using the on-line survey tool SurveyMonkey. Hard copies were also made available by request although none were returned.

### *2.1.2. Learning Provider Survey*

Information requested from learning providers was:

- i. Organisation and contact information. This was split into two sections with high level organisational information asked at the beginning of the survey (such as name and location of main office), and information about the total number of staff involved in the delivery of Gaelic language learning activities asked at the end of the survey;
- ii. Learning activities being offered during the survey period, the location, and the number of students participating. Providers were also asked about concessions, and the number of staff involved in individual activity provision.

The learning provider survey allowed respondents to enter information about up to five current initiatives and the survey question set can be found at Appendix 2.

This survey was also designed using SurveyMonkey. However, given some learning providers were anticipated to be offering large numbers of initiatives, a spreadsheet asking for the same data was also made available by request to facilitate returns.

## **2.2. Distribution of Surveys**

### *2.2.1 Learner Survey Distribution*

Information about the survey was sent to a range of contacts which included:

- i. Organisations with, or preparing, Gaelic Language Plans;
- ii. Main Gaelic organisations;

- iii. Contact details of organisations that had participated in the survey the previous year or were known to be providing learning opportunities.

A number of people had provided an e-mail address in the 2016 survey and these people were sent a dedicated link through SurveyMonkey which meant their participation and return rates could be more accurately monitored.

During the survey period, the ongoing promotion of the survey was through e-mail to learning providers and through Bòrd na Gàidhlig's social media.

The survey was open for responses between 6–19 November 2017.

### *2.2.2. Learning Provider Survey Distribution*

The link to the survey was issued to known learning organisations, those with Gaelic Language Plans, and anyone who had specifically requested the survey link. Learning providers were issued with an e-mail to remind them about both surveys and also to ask them to encourage participation of their learners.

The spreadsheet for learning providers was made available two weeks before the survey period, with returns required by 1 December 2017.

### **2.3. Collection of Results**

The data gathered from both surveys was collected through SurveyMonkey, which was also used to do some of the preliminary analysis and presentation of data.

### 3. Summary and Analysis of Results

This section presents the data gathered from the learner survey and provides some initial analysis of those results, highlighting key facts evident from the data. There is also an overview of results from the learning provider survey.

It should be noted that:

- i. Percentages in the text have been rounded to a whole number (shown to one decimal place on the figures), and refer to the percentage of those responding to the question;
- ii. The presentation of figures shows the data labels in English only. Where the figures are marked with an \*, the options that were offered to respondents have been summarised for the purposes of data presentation. The full text of options that were presented to the respondents can be found at Appendix 1.

#### 3.1. Numbers of Survey Respondents

##### 3.1.1. Learner Survey Returns

The number of learner survey returns are shown in Table 1:

**Table 1 – Number of Learner Survey Returns**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
Total number of returns	751	424	441
Total number of completed returns	626	383	390

Two of the returns for 2017 included in the figures above were made in hard copy. It should be noted that these were received after the closing date and therefore have not been included in the report although have been added to the data tables.

##### 3.1.2. Learning Provider Survey Returns

The learning provider returns are shown in Table 2:

**Table 2 – Number of Learning Provider Survey Returns**

Total number of returns (including nil returns and spreadsheets)	11
Number of returns from learning providers with current learning interventions	10

## 3.2. Survey Data and Analysis

### 3.2.1. Learner Survey Data and Analysis

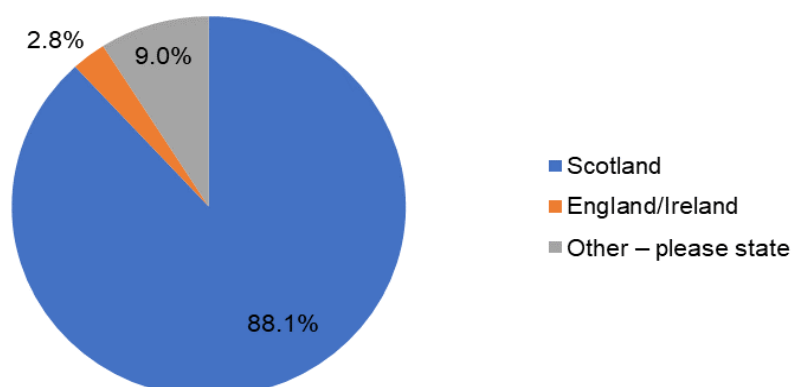
Data and a summary of analysis for each survey question is presented below. The sub-headings shown in bold relate to section headings within the survey, and paragraph numbers below each sub-heading relate to question numbers. It should be noted that there were various pathways through the survey and therefore not all respondents would have been given an opportunity to respond to all questions.

Data was also entered into Bòrd na Gàidhlig's spreadsheets.

#### Section 1 – About the Learner

1. The survey started with a question to check that the respondent considered themselves an adult learner of Gaelic, with eight respondents stating that they were not learners. There were 383 completed responses for those that considered themselves to be learning.

2. The country in which adult learners of Gaelic currently live is shown in Figure 1:



**Figure 1 – Country of Current Residence**

The percentage of adult learners living in Scotland was almost the same as the previous year (89%).

3. Where respondents selected Scotland, they were then asked which local authority area they lived in with the numbers shown in Table 3. (Subdivisions as per European Level 1 Local Administrative Units.)

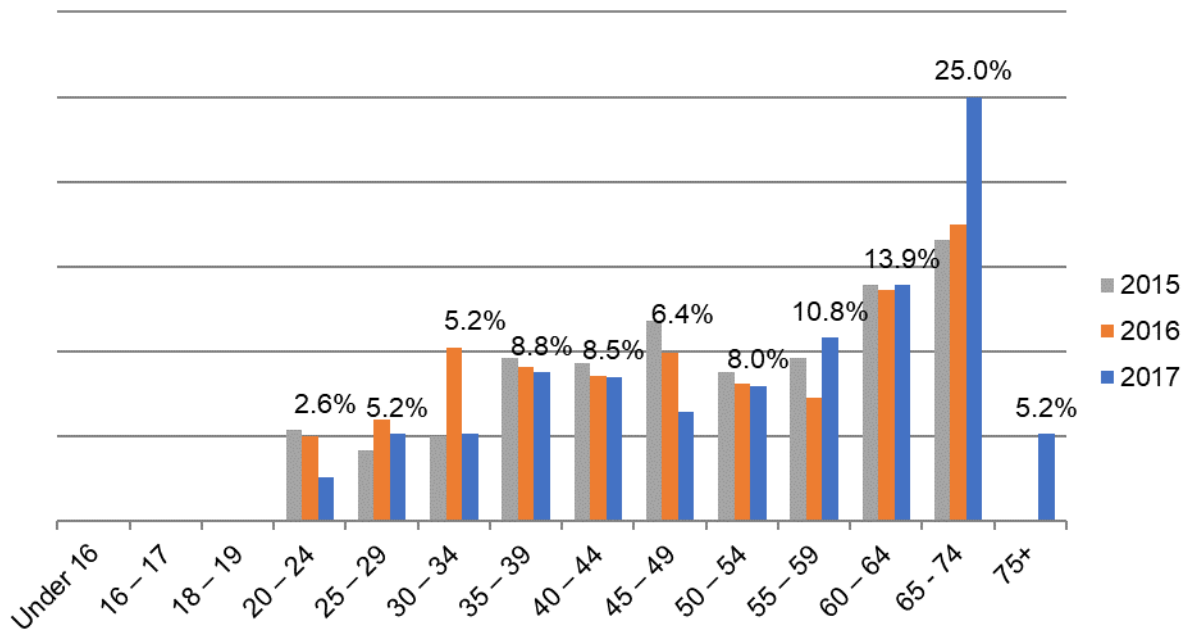
**Table 3 – Local Authority Area of Adult Learners**

Local Authority Area	Percentage	Number
Aberdeen City	5.6%	19
Aberdeenshire	4.7%	16
Angus		≤5
Argyll: Argyll and Bute Islands	2.9%	10
Argyll: Argyll and Islands	3.2%	11

Argyll: Helensburgh and Lomond		≤5
Clackmannanshire		≤5
Dumfries and Galloway		≤5
Dundee City		≤5
East Ayrshire		≤5
East Dunbartonshire	2.3%	8
East Lothian	1.5%	5
East Renfrewshire	2.1%	7
Edinburgh, City of	11.1%	38
Falkirk		≤5
Fife		≤5
Glasgow City	12.9%	44
Highland: Badenoch and Strathspey		≤5
Highland: Caithness and Sutherland		≤5
Highland: Inverness and Nairn	6.4%	22
Highland: Lochaber	1.8%	6
Highland: Ross and Cromarty	4.4%	15
Highland: Skye and Lochalsh	3.5%	12
Inverclyde		≤5
Midlothian		≤5
Moray: North East Moray		≤5
Moray: West Moray		≤5
North Ayrshire mainland	4.1%	14
North Ayrshire: Arran and Cumbrae	2.3%	8
North Lanarkshire	1.8%	6
Orkney Islands		≤5
Perth and Kinross	1.8%	6
Renfrewshire	4.1%	14
Scottish Borders	1.8%	6
Shetland Islands		≤5
South Ayrshire		≤5
South Lanarkshire	1.8%	6
Stirling		≤5
West Dunbartonshire		≤5
West Lothian		≤5
Western Isles	5.3%	18
Don't know		≤5

4. Responses for town and post code of where respondents live and are shown at Appendices 3 and 4 respectively (redacted from this version of the report).

6. The age profile for respondents is shown at Figure 2 which shows a comparison with the profile for 2015 and 2016 (percentages displayed for 2017 data only).



**Figure 2 – Learner Age Profile**  
 (Data redacted from age categories with low returns)

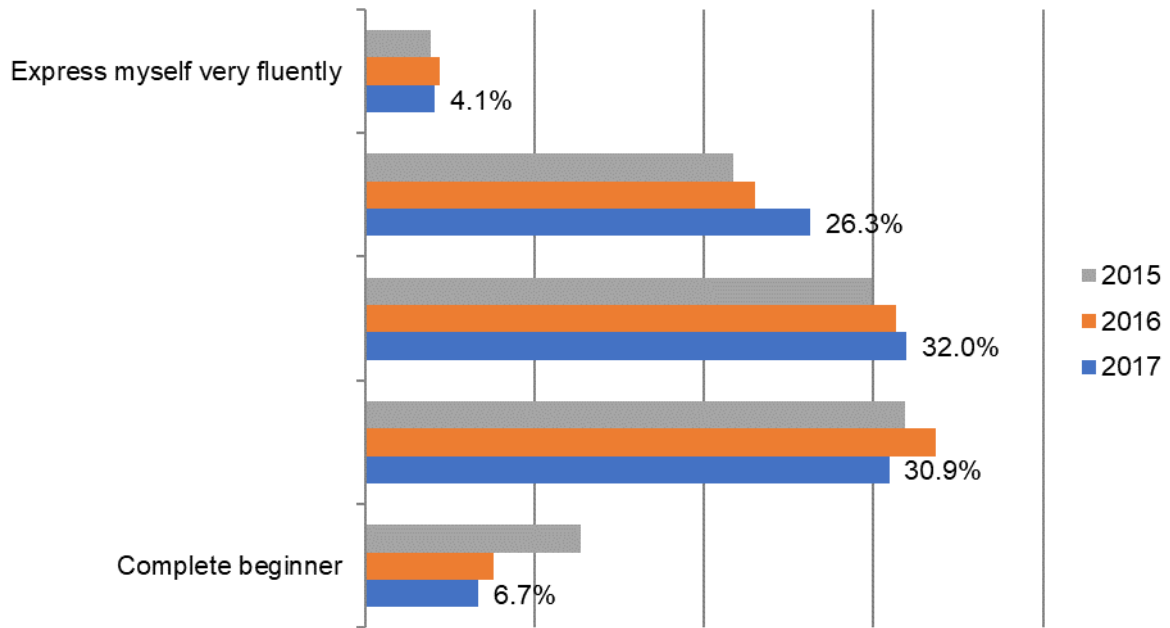
7. As with the previous year, there was a very small number of returns for anyone aged under 20, which is unlikely to be representative of the number of adult learners in that age group given the number of undergraduate learners reported by learning providers. Responses for the age group 20–24 were also very small.

9. Respondents were asked if whether, before starting their adult learning activities, they had frequent experience of spoken Gaelic at home, school or in the community, whether or not it was in a Gaelic speaking community. The majority selected No (86%, 330 responses), which was similar to the two previous years (83% in 2016 and 86% in 2015).

10. Respondents were asked to rate their current level of competency on a scale that offered respondents five increments from complete beginner to expressing themselves very fluently (full descriptions can be found at Appendix 1).

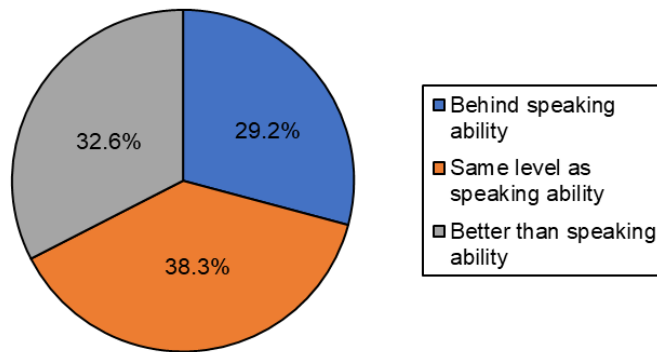
Responses are shown in Figure 3 and show a comparison to the 2015 and 2016 data (percentages displayed for 2017 data only).



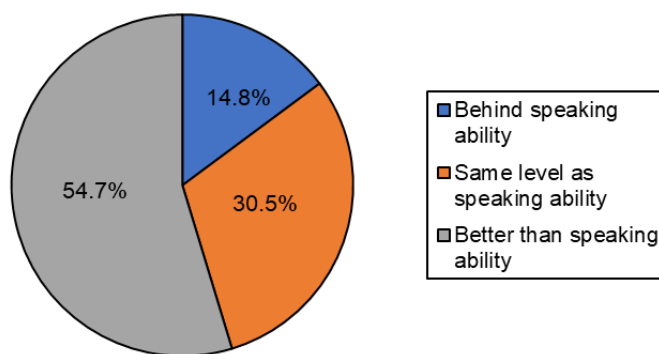


**Figure 3 – Current Competency Levels of Learners\***

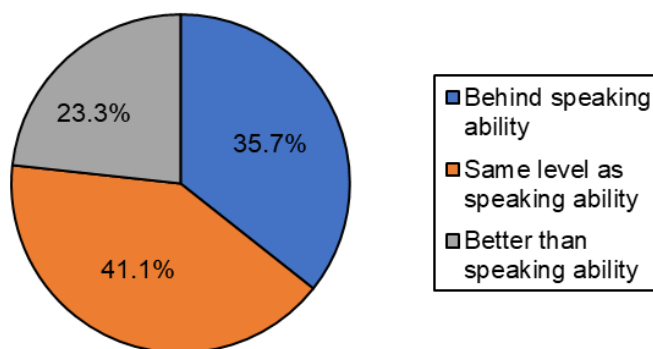
11. Respondents were then asked to rate their ability to understand a conversation, their Gaelic language reading ability and their Gaelic language writing ability by comparing them to the level of their Gaelic language speaking skills. The responses are shown in Figures 4–6.



**Figure 4 – Ability to Understand a Conversation in Gaelic**



**Figure 5 – Gaelic Language Reading Ability**



**Figure 6 – Gaelic Language Writing Ability**

14. Respondents were asked their gender with 62% of respondents being female, [redacted]% male and [redacted]% preferring not to say.

15. Respondents were asked if they were in any kind of employment, whether full or part time, working for themselves, a company or any other type of organisation. 58% selected Yes, [redacted]% No, and [redacted]% preferring not to say.

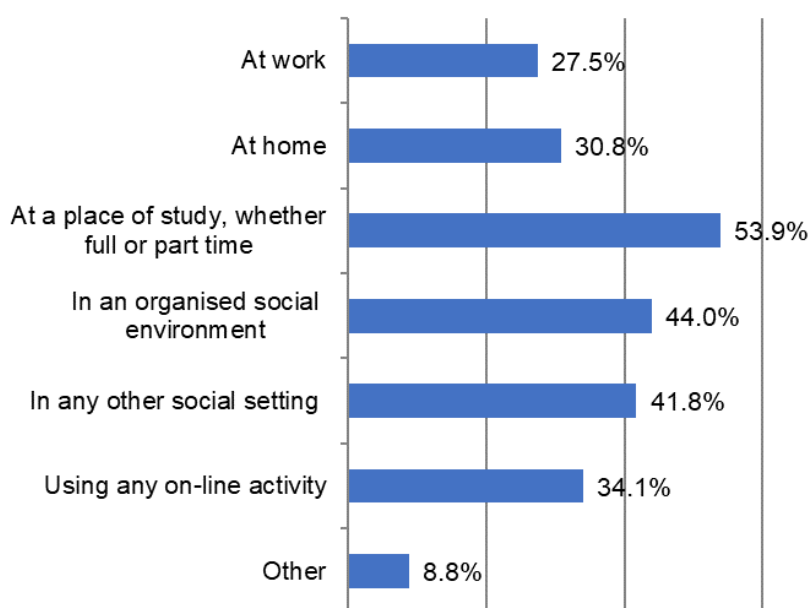
16. The next question asked about disability with 93% saying they did not consider themselves to be disabled, [redacted]% ([redacted] respondents) considered themselves disabled and [redacted]% preferred to not say (additional percentage created by rounding). There were no additional questions relating to disability in the survey. One important point arising from the initial survey in 2014 which is likely to remain the case, is that people only reported a disability where they felt it impacted their learning. The figure for those who consider themselves disabled is slightly higher than the Scottish percentage for those disabled and participating in a learning activity, but still much lower than the representation in the general population in Scotland (20%).

17. Respondents were asked if they were the parent or guardian of a child that is in Gaelic Medium Education with 16% (61 respondents) indicating they were. This is a fall of 4% on the previous year.

18. Respondents were then asked if there were any children within the household being raised with Gaelic as their prime language and 3% (13 respondents) said that there were. Again, this is a fall on the previous year.

19. The question relating to peoples' ability to practice their speaking Gaelic language skills was amended in 2016 to specifically ask about interactions. Respondents were asked if they normally interacted with people who they considered to have fluent Gaelic language skills for at least one hour each day on five days of the week. There were 23% of learners (91 respondents) indicating they did have this level of interaction, which was a slight fall of 3% on the previous year.

20. Respondents that indicated they did interact with Gaelic speakers they considered fluent were then asked where they interacted with others and the results are shown in Figure 7.



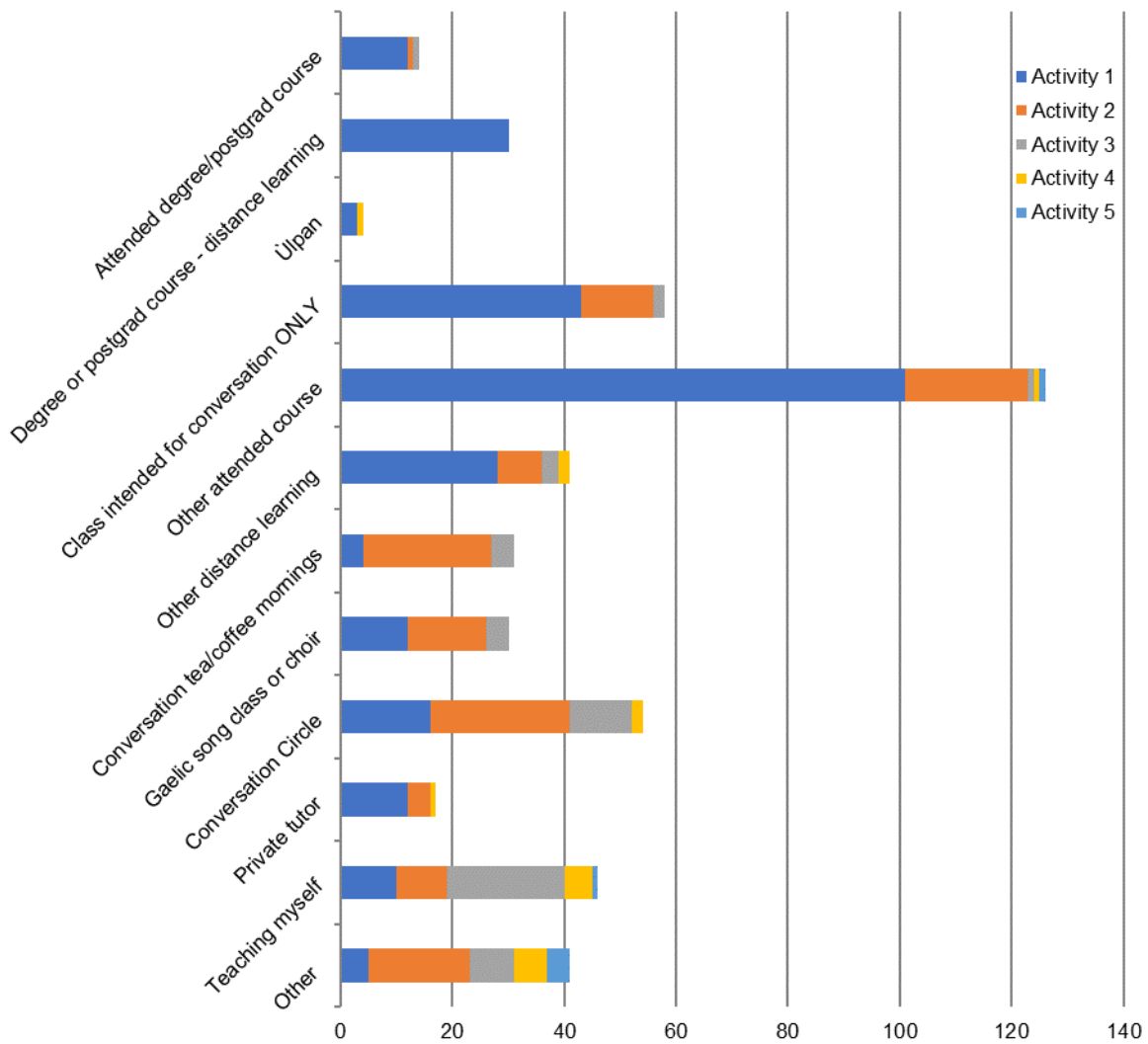
**Figure 7 – Where Respondents Interact with Those They Consider to have Fluent Gaelic Language Skills\***

## Section 2 – Learning Activities

21. Respondents were asked about participation in learning activities and the majority (72%, 279 respondents) were participating in one or more learning activities during the survey period. 6% of respondents considered themselves to be a learner although not currently participating, nor planning to participate in a learning activity in the foreseeable future. 10% planned to start an activity within the next 6 months, with 12% of respondents planned to participate in a learning activity at some point in the future although it was unlikely to be in the next six months. While the percentage of respondents participating in learning had increased, there was a decrease in those that planned to participate in learning when compared to the previous year.

22. Respondents who indicated they were undertaking learning activities during the survey period were asked how many distinct learning activities they would be participating in during the survey period. The average was 1.7, fractionally lower than 2016 (1.9) and than 2015 (1.8).

23. Respondents were then asked to rank up to five types of learning activity, with activity 1 being their most important activity and 5 being the least important. They were also asked to only select as many activities as they were actually participating in during the survey period, and the results are shown in Figure 8. The full text of the options available can be found at Appendix 1.



**Figure 8 – Learning Activities\***

As shown in Figure 8 and following the pattern of activity in both previous years, attended classes (excluding conversation classes) were the most common form of learning activity, with conversation classes being the second highest type of activity. Also in common with previous years, a significant number of respondents (46, 17%) who were teaching themselves as one of the five activities although the percentage had fallen slightly on the previous year (20%).

24. Respondents were then asked which type of organisation was providing the learning activity they had marked as activity 1 in the previous question. In a change to previous years, the highest proportion, 34% (96 respondents) stated it was university, college or other HE/FE institution. A notable change was the drop in those learning with local authorities (21% down from 29% in the previous year) although both community groups and other Gaelic organisation representation was higher than the previous year, being reported at 16% and 14% respectively.

25. Respondents were asked to name their learning organisation for the activity marked as 1 and this information was used to determine what proportion of adult learners of Gaelic has responded to the

survey. The following question asked them to state in which local authority area their learning provider was located and the results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4 – Local Authority of Learning Provider for Activity 1**

<b>Local Authority Area</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
Aberdeen City	9.9%	26
Aberdeenshire		≤5
Angus		≤5
Argyll: Argyll and Bute Islands		≤5
Argyll: Argyll and Islands	3.4%	9
Argyll: Helensburgh and Lomond		≤5
Clackmannanshire		≤5
Dumfries and Galloway		≤5
Dundee City		≤5
East Ayrshire	2.3%	6
East Dunbartonshire		≤5
East Lothian		≤5
East Renfrewshire		≤5
Edinburgh, City of	8.3%	22
Falkirk		≤5
Fife		≤5
Glasgow City	11.0%	29
Highland: Badenoch and Strathspey		≤5
Highland: Caithness and Sutherland		≤5
Highland: Inverness and Nairn	5.7%	15
Highland: Lochaber		≤5
Highland: Ross and Cromarty	3.4%	9
Highland: Skye and Lochalsh	23.5%	62
Inverclyde		≤5
Midlothian		≤5
Moray: North East Moray		≤5
Moray: West Moray		≤5
North Ayrshire mainland	4.6%	12
North Ayrshire: Arran and Cumbrae		≤5
North Lanarkshire		≤5
Orkney Islands		≤5
Perth and Kinross		≤5
Renfrewshire	2.3%	6
Scottish Borders		≤5
Shetland Islands		≤5
South Ayrshire		≤5
South Lanarkshire		≤5
Stirling		≤5
West Dunbartonshire		≤5
West Lothian		≤5
Western Isles	3.8%	10
Located outwith Scotland	5.7%	15
Don't know		≤5

27. Respondents were then asked about their furthest one-way journey that they would make in order to participate in a learning activity. The majority (68%, 178 respondents) indicated they were travelling 10 miles or less which is an increase of 4% on the previous year. There were still a fairly significant number of respondents (8%, 22 people) indicating their journey would be in excess of 41 miles, although the proportion had fallen when compared to the previous year (11%).

28. The number of people that said that they would use public transport as part of their longest journey to attend a learning activity had also fallen when compared to the previous year from 24% to 19% (49 respondents).

29. Those that stated they were teaching themselves Gaelic as their primary activity had fallen quite significantly when compared to 2016. Participants were asked how they were teaching themselves Gaelic, and 79% (11 respondents) were using structured learning materials specifically designed for teaching yourself Gaelic, a significant increase in proportion on the previous year (54%).

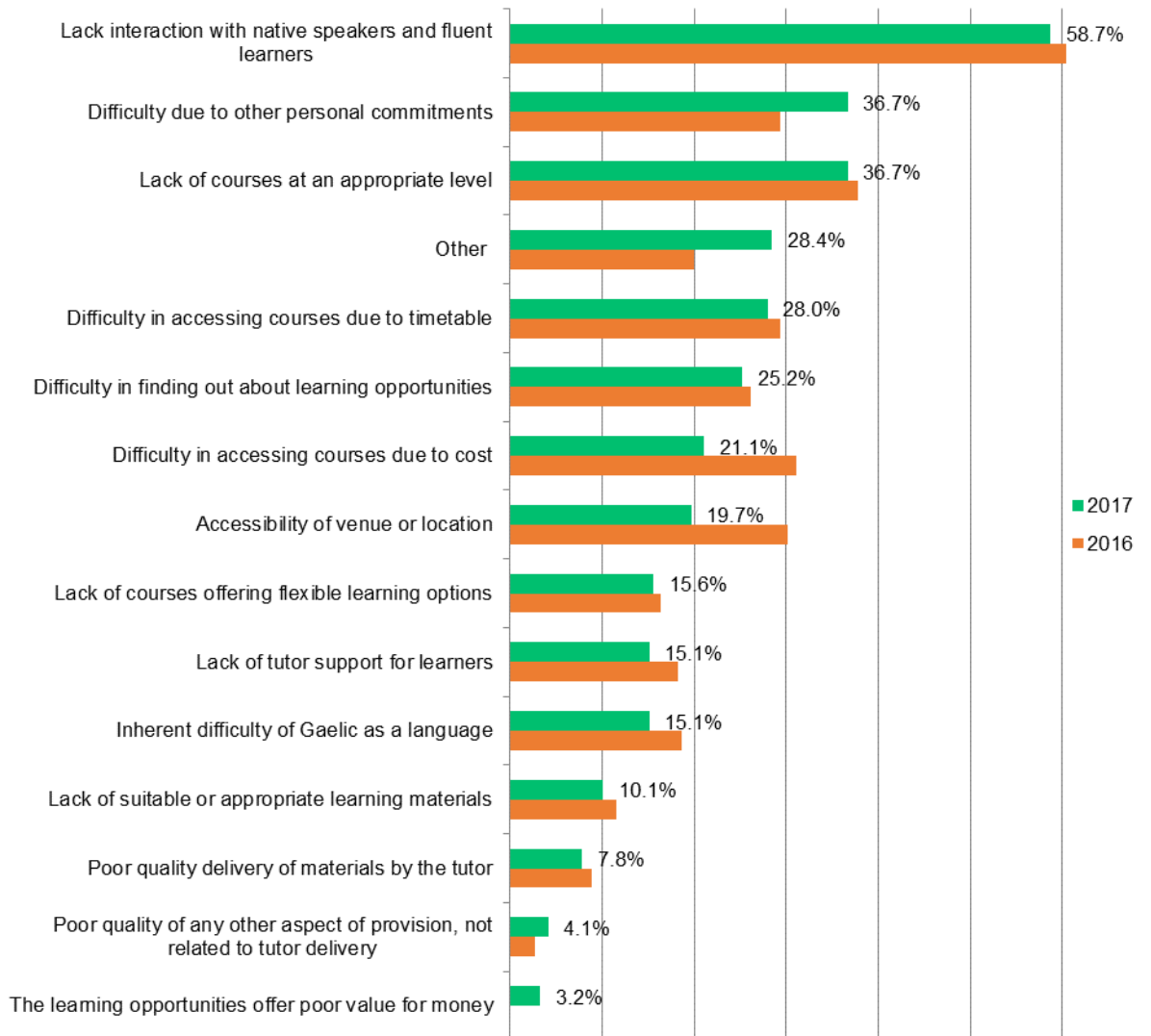
30. Those that considered themselves learners but were not planning to participate any learning activity were asked why they considered themselves learners. Of those that responded to the question, 41% (9 respondents) said that they felt they are continuously developing their Gaelic language skills and consider themselves to be involved in lifelong learning. 23% said that they were committed to developing their Gaelic language skills but felt there were no suitable learning opportunities available to them, and 9% said they were committed to developing their skills at some point in the future although had no specific plans.

31. A question was added to the 2017 survey to identify how many of those that considered themselves learners although not participating or planning to participate in a learning activity were supporting other learners. Of those that responded, 48% stated that they were supporting others and provided examples of both formal and informal learning activities.

### **Section 3 – Potential Barriers to Learning**

32. The majority of respondents (57%, 220) indicated that they had encountered issues, difficulties or barriers that had prevented them from improving their Gaelic language skills as they had anticipated although there was a small drop compared to 2016 (59%).

33. The barriers selected by respondents are shown in Figure 9, which also shows a comparison with 2015 data (percentages shown for 2017 data only).



**Figure 9 – Barriers to Learning\***

Once again, the barriers reported by respondents had a similar profile to the previous years, with the largest reported barrier remaining the lack of interaction with native speakers and fluent learners. With the exception of “Difficulty due to other personal commitments”, the proportion of those reporting each of the barriers had fallen in comparison to previous years.

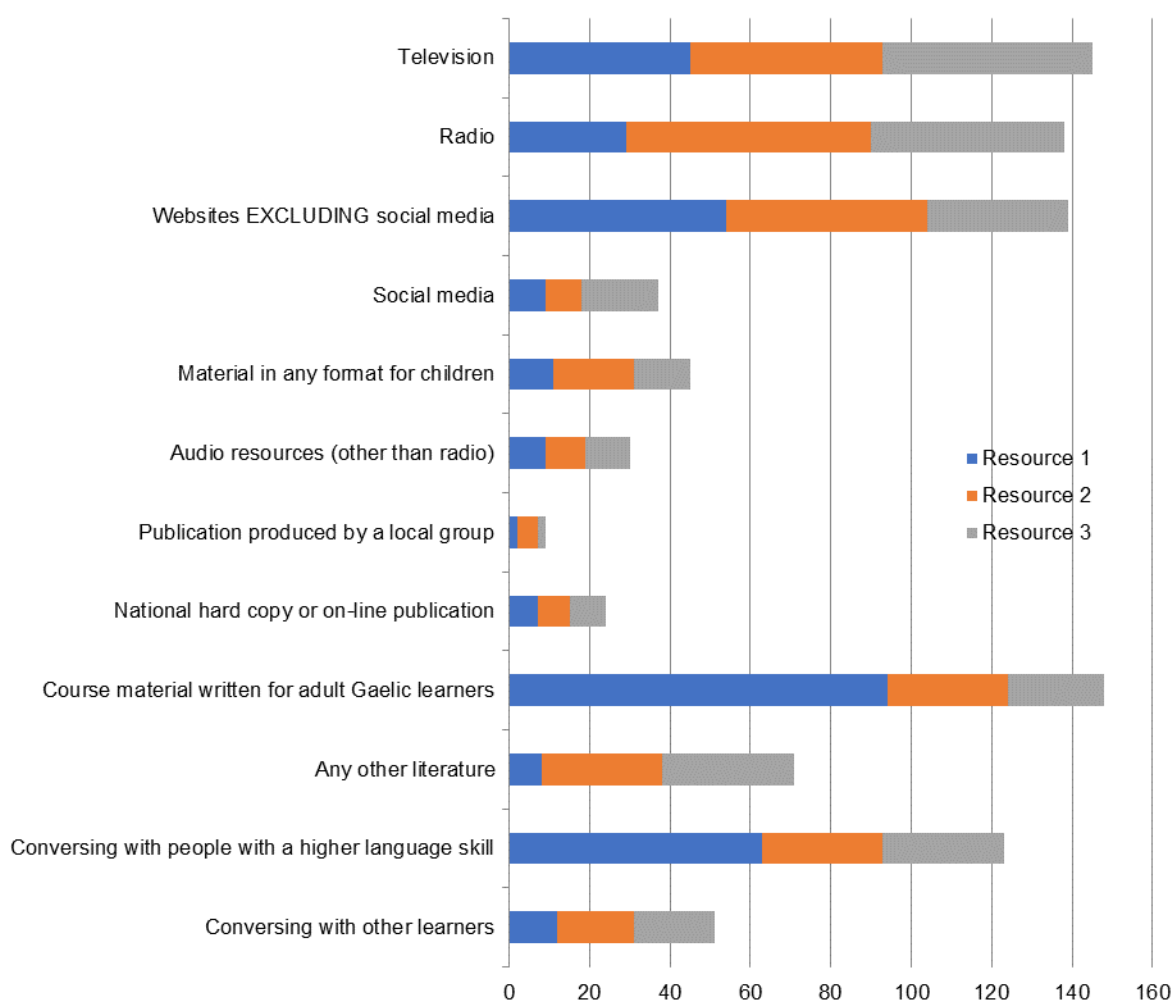
#### **Section 4 – Resources**

34. The majority of respondents (91%, 352) indicated that they used resources to help improve or consolidate their Gaelic language skills.

35. Two questions were added to the 2017 to ask about the format of resources that respondents were using, and whether they were able to access resources in their preferred format. Of those that responded, 40% indicated that they used digital or on-line and physical resources about the same, with 27% stating that most of the resources they use are accessed on-line or through digital media. 20% said that most of the resources they used were physical resources, with 3% stating that all the resources they used were in physical format.

36. Respondents were then asked whether they could access resources in their preferred format and 88% stated that they could either access all or most of the resources in their preferred format.

37. In common with previous surveys, television was an important resource, followed by websites with Gaelic content, radio and books written specifically for adult learners. However, one notable change is the importance being placed on course material written specifically for adult learners of Gaelic, which was the most important resource identified both as the most important (indicated as Resource 1) and when taking into consideration aggregated numbers for resources 1–3.



**Figure 10 – Resources Used to Improve or Consolidate Gaelic Language Skills\***

## Section 5 – Contact Details

36. 296 people (76%) provided a contact e-mail address for a follow-up survey.

### 3.2.2. Learning Provider Survey Data and Analysis

Learning providers were asked to submit data primarily to help with the triangulation of learner data and enable the calculation of a return rate for the learner survey. Some of the providers submitted comprehensive information which enabled a figure to be calculated for the number of adult learners of Gaelic. It is worth noting that the quality of returns from learning providers has continually improved during the survey project, with the number of activities reported in in each year being consecutively



higher. The improved quality of learning provider data has, once again, highlighted the issues with learners being able to accurately categorise their learning into appropriate type, which is discussed further in the relevant sections below. Data from the learning providers was entered on to the spreadsheet.

## 4. Evaluation

This section provides a discussion and evaluation of the findings from the surveys, making some comparisons to previous survey work where relevant.

Each section of the survey is discussed in a separate sub-section with the final sub-section looking at changes to the survey for subsequent years to address issues identified.

Given the number of returns, the results are thought to be generally indicative of adult learners of Gaelic. It should be noted that wherever the term “learner” (or “learners”) is used in the text, it is referring to an adult learner or enhancer of Gaelic language skill(s) unless stated otherwise.

### 4.1. About Learners

There was a slight increase on the number of returns when compared to 2016, which was very positive considering there were anticipated issues with survey fatigue. A survey has now been conducted in 4 consecutive years and, in order to establish trends, it has been vital to keep the majority of the question base consistent year on year. However, this creates challenges in maintaining the interest of those participating and it will be important to give the balance further consideration should a new project be commissioned.

The calculation of the number of learners during the survey period (shown in the next section) appears to confirm that there is a downward trend in the number of learners, with both the overall number of learners located in Scotland and the number of beginners showing a decrease when compared with the numbers in 2016. While there will be a degree of error in the way in which the total number of adult learners is calculated, the same method has been used each year, suggesting there is an underlying downward trend. Further explanation of the methodology and potential sources of errors are in the next section.

#### 4.1.1. Location of Learners

The five areas that had the highest representation (with i being the highest) of where adult learners were currently living were:

- i. Glasgow City
- ii. City of Edinburgh
- iii. Highland: Inverness and Nairn
- iv. Aberdeen City
- v. Western Isles

The top four locations of learners were the same as the previous year although Glasgow City and City of Edinburgh had changed places to become top and second respectively.

#### 4.1.2. Age Profile of Learners

Respondents were offered age bands from age 16 up to age 75+. The profile of adult learners of Gaelic remained (in comparison to the previous surveys) weighted towards the upper end of the age spectrum with the average age showing signs of increasing. In 2017, 69% of learners were aged 45 and over, an increase of 8% on the previous year, with 55% being aged 55 and over. Once again, the profile was similar to previous years although it should be noted that there was a marked increase in

the proportion of respondents who were aged 65–74. This is a very positive finding in terms of inclusivity and accessibility of learning. However, this trend will need to be monitored as it could adversely affect the number of people who are able to become fluent due to the length of time required to develop the level of language skills required for fluency. Given the shift in age profile, there may also be a need to consider whether those who are aged 65–74 should be split into 5-year bands, in common with each of the younger age bands.

As referenced previously, work commissioned by the EHRC, Jones (2010),<sup>i</sup> examined participation in adult learning and has yet to be updated. Jones noted that there was a direct correlation between participation rates and economic activity. Given the current economic situation across the UK, it remains possible that this may be a factor affecting the lower age brackets more than the upper age brackets. There is other anecdotal evidence that also suggests this may be factor, such as the falling number of respondents using public transport to travel to their learning activity.

There remains a very low number of returns for those aged 16–19, with returns for those aged 20–24 also falling throughout the project, which is unlikely to be representative of learning activity. This is discussed further at Section 4.7.

#### *4.1.3. Current Language Competency of Learners*

The method of assessing language competency of learners was developed in 2015 and was generally thought to be a more accurate representation of language competence. Respondents were asked to assess the level of their spoken Gaelic and then asked to rate their understanding, reading and writing skills by comparing them to where they had ranked their speaking skills. The categories of spoken skills presented to respondents were loosely based on the CEFR framework although, given the length of many of the category descriptors, these were amended to make them more suitable for the survey.

The results show that, relatively, the proportion of beginners is continuing to fall (6.7% from 7.6%) albeit the rate has slowed when compared to the rate of fall the previous year (7.6% from 12.7%). This is the second year where a drop in relative number of beginners has been evident and, should these results be indicative of actual numbers of learners, it would suggest that there are fewer learners entering the training pipeline, which will require action. The profile for the other levels of competence remained similar to previous years although it should be noted that nearly a third of respondents assessed their own abilities as being in one of the top two levels (30%). The results are showing a year on year increase which may also evidence fewer learners entering the learning pipeline.

The profile for other language skills was broadly similar to 2016. Respondents remained more confident with their reading ability, with 55% considering their reading skills to be better than their spoken Gaelic skills. The assessments for understanding and writing skills were more evenly split between the options offered.

## **4.2. About Learning**

### *4.2.1. Learning Interventions*

The majority of respondents were participating in an activity during the survey period with the results indicating the highest proportion to date (72%, compared with 66% in 2016 and 68% in 2015). The activity most commonly reported as a respondent's primary learning activity remained a class with a planned set of activities led by a tutor. This excluded a structured conversation class, which was the

second most common reported primary activity. In a change to previous results, the most common second activity was Conversation Circle, closely followed by Conversation tea or coffee mornings and then structured classes. As discussed in previous reports, there are inherent difficulties involved with asking learners to accurately classify their learning activity and quantifying levels of accuracy within the existing project. It is therefore important to acknowledge this factor when estimating the number of adult learners during the survey period.

The most common locations of learning activity 1 as reported by learners remained the same as the previous year although in a different order and, with i being the highest, were:

- i. Highland: Skye and Lochalsh
- ii. Glasgow City
- iii. Aberdeen City
- iv. Edinburgh, City of
- v. Highland: Inverness and Nairn

There remained a small but significant number (6%) classifying themselves as learners although not undertaking, and not planning to undertake, any activity. The 2017 survey included a question asking whether those in this group were assisting other learners and 48% (11 respondents) said they were. The most common type of learning provider organisation by some margin was a university, college or other FE/HE institution. This is a marked change to previous years, when it was a local authority.

Those considering themselves learners that were not currently participating in a learning activity, although planned to at some point in the future, decreased to 22% (compared to 27% in 2016 and 24% in 2015).

The representation of those teaching themselves as their primary activity continued to fall to 4% (compared to 5% in 2016 and 7% in 2015), although 17% reported it as a learning activity in which they would participate during the survey period. Generally, the results support the assertion that there is a decreasing number of people opting to teach themselves Gaelic.

The majority of respondents (68%, 178) were travelling a maximum of 10 miles or less as their longest journey made in order to attend learning activities, which was an increase of 4% on 2016. The proportion of respondents using public transport as part of their journey fell to 19% from 24%.

### **4.3. Barriers to Learning**

The majority of learners continued to report a potential barrier to learning (57%), which has remained consistent throughout the project. The lack of interaction with native speakers and fluent learners remained the most reported barrier, although the proportion reporting it as a barrier had fallen slightly when compared with with the previous year. The number of people reporting all other barriers had also fallen, with the exception of people indicating difficulty due to other personal commitments. Learners were, on average, reporting fewer barriers, although this decrease was not reflected in the overall number reporting a barrier.

### **4.4. Resources**

Respondents were asked if they used Gaelic resources, and 9% of respondents said they did not use any resources. The 2017 survey included questions specifically about the format of resources being used, with 39% stating that they used physical and digital resources about the same, and 27% stating

that the majority of resources used were on-line or through digital media. Respondents were then asked about their preference for accessing resources, which found that the majority (88%) were able to access most or all their resources in their preferred format. Respondents were then asked to select the three resources that were most important in consolidating their Gaelic language skills. The top five types of resources were:

- i. Course material specifically written for adult learners
- ii. Gaelic television
- iii. Gaelic websites
- iv. Gaelic radio
- v. Conversing with people

While the top five resources have remained the same, the order is a marked change to all previous surveys, which have consistently placed Gaelic television at the top. Additionally, conversing with people was the second most important primary resource and only drops to fifth place when aggregating all three choices. This may indicate a changing pattern in the resources being used, and it would be useful to continue to monitor resources that adult learners use to consolidate their learning.

As stated above, the 2017 survey introduced questions relating to format of resources that preceded the question relating to which resources were used. It cannot be ruled out that these additional questions on format have influenced the way in which subsequent questions about which resources are used have been interpreted. However, from the results, it is not immediately evident why this may have occurred. There are two possible explanations: firstly, the change in resources may relate to the profile of age moving towards those that are older. Secondly, it may relate to the increase in proportion of primary learning activities being provided by universities, colleges or other HE/FE institutions. These organisations may make more use of supporting texts, although this link would need to be investigated further in the next project before any conclusions can be drawn. The finding also suggests that the type of organisation providing learning activities has a potentially significant influence on the resources adult learners are using outwith the learning environment to consolidate their learning. Again, this would require further investigation before conclusions could be drawn.

As highlighted in previous surveys, it is important to acknowledge that the medium of the survey (an on-line tool) may have created a survey bias in the results. Given the location and age profile of learners, it is likely that some adult learners were unable to access the survey and therefore would be also unlikely to be able to access on-line resources to support their learning. Consequently it is possible that the proportion of learners using on-line content is lower than suggested in this survey.

#### **4.5. Contact Details**

A high percentage of respondents (76%) provided their e-mail address in order to participate in other/future surveys. It has proved worthwhile offering respondents an opportunity to provide their contact details for future surveys. The return rate from this particular group of respondents is generally very high, with 60% of people responding and completing a return in 2017.

#### **4.6. Learning Provider Information**

There was a sufficient number of returns from learning providers to estimate a participation rate for the learner survey. This was then used to estimate the number of adult learners of Gaelic during the survey period.

#### **4.7. Recommended Changes**

The recommended changes following the 2016 survey were implemented for the 2017 survey.

The points identified above that are recommended to take forward to any future project are:

- i. Participation of those under age 24 – the lack of participation suggests that this group may require a different type of communication or engagement.
- ii. Consideration of whether there is a need to split the age band of 65–74 years.
- iii. Consideration of how to balance survey fatigue against the need to produce consistent and comparable results.
- iv. Further investigation of resources used to consolidate learning, and in particular whether these are influenced by the type of organisations providing learning activity.

## **5. Number of Adult Learners of Gaelic**

Data about the number of people participating in learning activities during the survey period was submitted by 16 learning providers. This allowed a calculation of a participation rate in the survey for learners, which was then used to estimate the number of adult learners of Gaelic during the survey period.

The calculation to estimate the number of adult learners of Gaelic during the survey period is illustrated in the sub-sections below.

### **5.1. Number of activities reported by learners**

Total number of activities reported by learners: 492.

Total number of learners reporting a main activity (activity 1): 276.

### **5.2. Learning opportunities reported by learning providers**

Number of participants in activities during the survey period reported by learning providers: 501.

Number of reported main learning activities of learners matched to learning providers: 39.

Using the data about the first learning activity, and the likelihood of those matched to a learning provider for activity 1 participating in another learning activity during the survey period, multipliers were deduced and used to generate an estimate of how many people were participating in an activity declared by a learning provider as activities 2, 3, 4 or 5.

Deduced percentage of declared learning provider activities reported against by learners: 11.78%.

### **5.3. Number of learners**

Using the figures above, 276 respondents accounted for 11.78% of activities reported as being attended through the survey period.

Estimated number of adult learners of Gaelic participating in a learning activity during the survey period: 2,343.

112 returns reported being a learner but not participating in any activity. Using the same percentage of participation, number of additional learners: 951.

Estimated total number of adult learners of Gaelic during the survey period: 3,294.

***Estimated total number of adult learners of Gaelic living in Scotland: 2,899\****

\*It should be noted that adult learners of Gaelic in all locations are encouraged to complete the survey, and the number of learners outwith Scotland is difficult to verify within the scope of this survey. The estimate above assumes a linear relationship, using the percentage returns from those outwith Scotland as a multiplying factor.

#### **5.4. Factors Affecting the Calculation of Number of Learners**

As in previous years, there are a number of factors that should be acknowledged when using the survey results to estimate the number of adult learners of Gaelic. There are also a number of assumptions that were made when making the calculations as well as limitations, and it continues to be essential to factor these into any decisions based on the data.

##### **5.4.1. Factors Affecting Participation Rate**

Various information sources on-line suggest that the return rate for on-line surveys is typically 10–30% although this depends on a large number of variables. The participation rate calculated was within this range and some factors identified previously in the report may provide some explanation of the rate, and help improve return rates for future surveys.

As with previous calculations, one of the most important considerations is whether people participating in activities reported by learning providers considered themselves adult learners of Gaelic. People may be attending activities for other reasons, particularly some of the informal activities identified such as Gaelic choir and Gaelic song. However, the consideration is as equally important for formal activities, for example undergraduate and postgraduate courses taught through the medium of Gaelic. Some of those attending particular types of courses are likely to be more highly skilled in Gaelic language prior to beginning the course. While they may consider themselves currently learning, they may not necessarily consider themselves learners of Gaelic.

There will be other factors affecting the return rate. The promotion of the survey on-line and primarily through on-line tools may have discouraged some to make a return if they are unable to access a computer, or are not familiar with on-line tools.

##### **5.4.2. Key Assumptions and Limitations**

The key assumptions and limitations made when calculating the number of adult learners of Gaelic were:

- i. That learners were able to accurately identify and report their learning provider. As discussed above, this is known to create some difficulty in practice particularly around funded courses;
- ii. That learners and learning providers were able to accurately classify the learning activity that was taking place in accordance with the parameters set by the project, and this classification was consistent;
- ii. That the activities reported by learners were correctly matched to learning providers, and that all activities reported as current by either learners or learning providers were being undertaken during the survey period;
- iii. That the relationship between learners and learning activities is linear. Using the participation rate as a multiplier also assumes all types of learner have the same relationship to learning activities. However, there may be differences for those that consider themselves learners but are not participating in any activities, those teaching themselves, and people using a private tutor. This limitation is particularly important to acknowledge for this work as learners were only asked to provide information about activity 1;



- iv. That the relationships between numbers of learners participating and learning provider, regardless of activity, are directly relational.

## 6. References

- i. *Equality and Human Rights Commission Triennial Review: Education (Lifelong Learning) Participation in Adult Learning* (May 2010), Jones P., School of Education, University of Southampton