

# My Wales Now

**A Snapshot of Wales  
Today:  
Insights from the  
Visiting Welsh Diaspora**



## The Welsh diaspora is not disengaged, but under-engaged. The challenge for Wales is not to create connection, but to convert existing connection into meaningful economic, social, and civic participation.

GlobalWelsh conducted a survey of 401 Welsh diaspora who visited Wales from December 2025 to April 2026. This profile represents a snapshot of members of the Welsh diaspora who are actively returning to Wales to visit, rather than the diaspora population as a whole. As such, the findings reflect the characteristics of those who maintain an ongoing connection through physical return and may therefore be more engaged than those who do not visit.

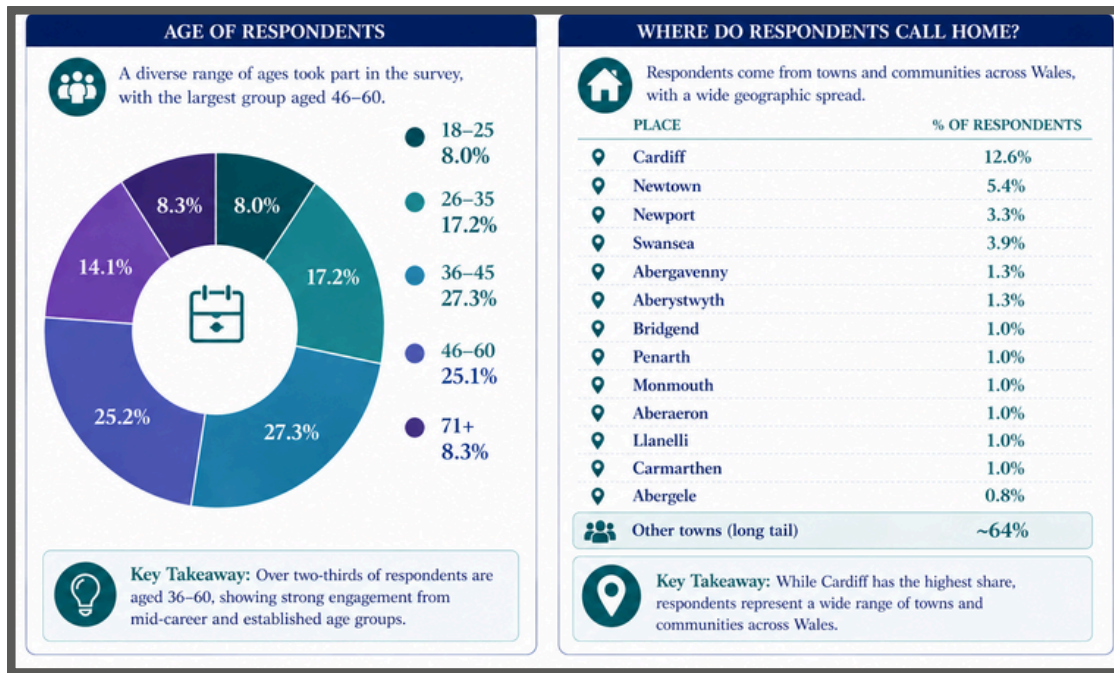


The age distribution suggests strong representation from mid-career and established age groups, while the wide geographic spread of “home” locations highlights the diverse regional origins of returnees across Wales, extending beyond major urban centres. This indicates that return visits are not limited to a small number of hubs but are rooted in a broad and distributed sense of place attachment. Overall, the data provide valuable insight into the segment of the diaspora that remains actively connected through visitation, offering an important lens for understanding patterns of engagement, identity, and potential future involvement.

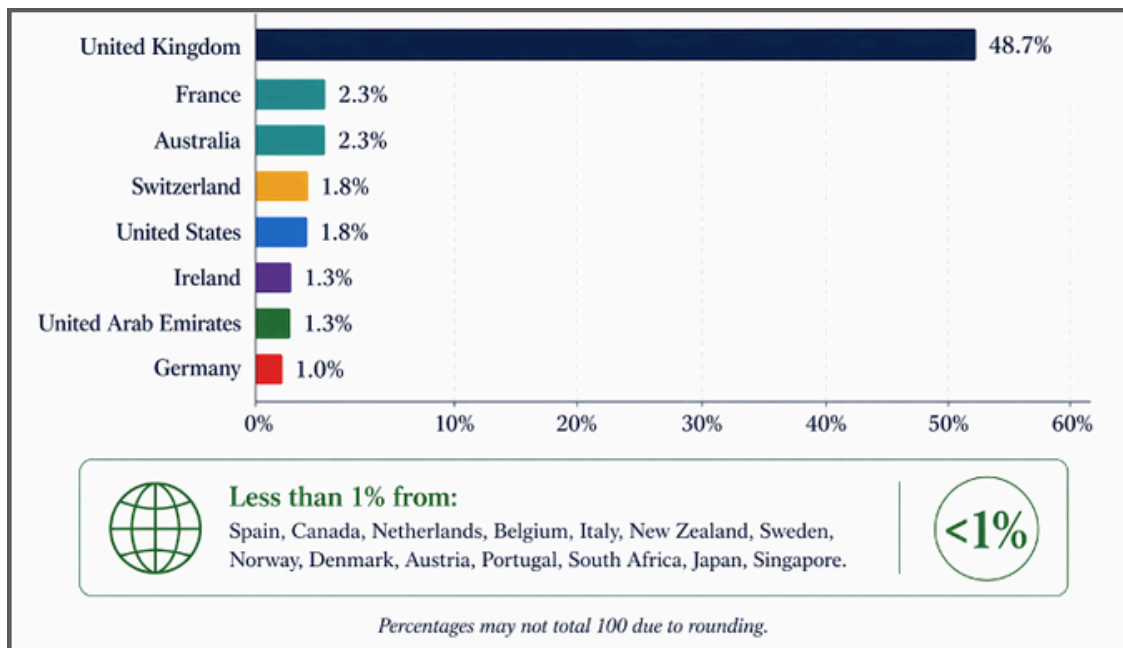
## The Sample

The sample included 401 responses 66% male, 32% female, balanced across all age brackets. Approximately two-thirds of respondents were residing outside the United Kingdom.

**Fig.1 Age of Respondents and Where People Call 'Home'**



**Fig.2 Current Country of Residence of the Respondents**



Forty-four percent of respondents have lived outside Wales for more than 20 years. 17% between 11-20 years, 15% between 6-10 years and 16% between 1-5 years.

Responses to where individuals call 'home' in Wales show a mix of specific geographic locations (82%) and multiple residences, with some mentioning ties to more than one area. A few respondents referenced recent relocations or noted that they no longer have a clear home in Wales. While most answers simply identified places, a small number reflected on birthplace, bilingual place names, or infrequent visits. Over 60%+ spread across many small towns showing that Welsh identity is localized community-based and 12–13% identify Cardiff as “home.” Overall, feedback highlights a diverse sense of home, with connections spanning various regions and circumstances across Wales.

A comparison between current country of residence and self-identified “home” reveals a clear divergence between economic mobility and identity attachment. While respondents are geographically concentrated in major urban and global economic centers, their sense of home is overwhelmingly tied to smaller towns and local communities across Wales. This suggests a decoupled geography of diaspora, in which economic activity operates at a global scale, while identity remains rooted in highly localized places.

## The Visit

### Where did they visit?

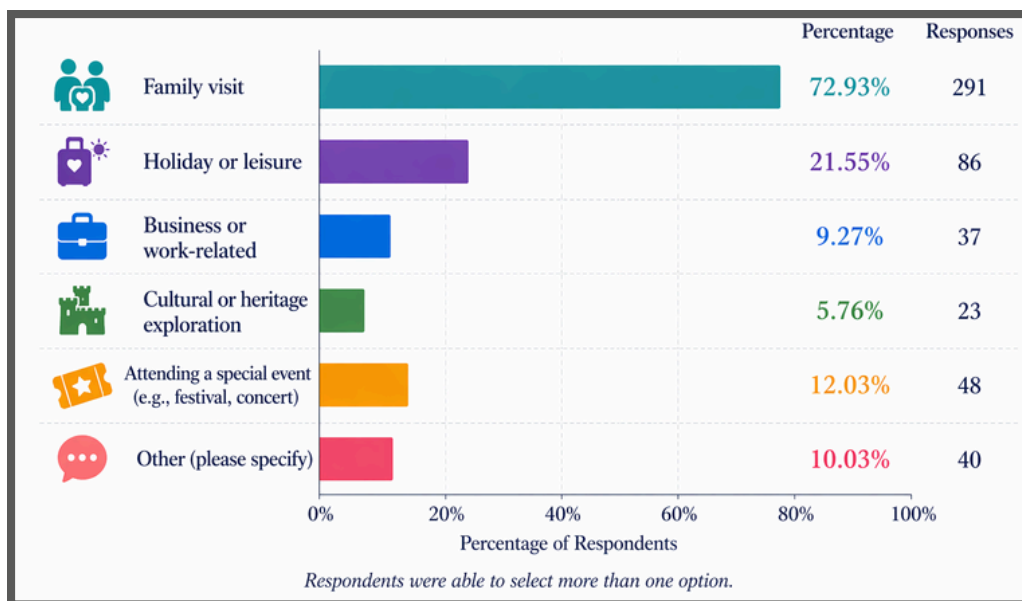
The regional distribution of visits to Wales reveals a clear concentration in the south, with the Cardiff Capital Region attracting 58.85% of respondents, making it by far the most frequently visited area. This is followed by the Swansea Bay City Deal Region (26.18%), indicating a secondary but still significant pull within South Wales. In contrast, both North Wales and Mid Wales (17.71% each) receive considerably fewer visits, suggesting a more limited engagement with these regions.

### Why did they visit?

The data indicates that visits to Wales are overwhelmingly driven by personal and relational ties, with family visits accounting for 72.93% of responses, far exceeding all other categories.

In contrast, more conventional mobility drivers such as holiday or leisure travel (21.55%) and attending special events (12.03%) play a secondary but still notable role, suggesting that emotional attachment is often complemented by experiential engagement. Economic motivations appear more limited, with only 9.27% visiting for business or work-related purposes, while cultural or heritage exploration (5.76%) represents a smaller, though symbolically important, driver of return. The presence of “other” responses (10.03%) further suggests a diversity of individualized motivations. Overall, the findings reinforce the idea that return visits to Wales are primarily rooted in social and emotional connections rather than economic or touristic factors, underscoring the importance of family and community in shaping diaspora engagement.

**Fig. 3 Reasons the Diaspora Visited Wales**



Seventy-five percent of respondents return to Wales more than once a year and 15% once a year.

## What did they do when they returned?

The data reveal that cultural engagement among the Welsh diaspora during return visits is uneven and largely passive in nature yet 46% of respondents spoke Welsh while in Wales. While attending sporting events emerges as the most common activity (34.81%), participation in more interactive or community-based activities remains relatively limited.

Notably, over a quarter of respondents (28.32%) reported no engagement with cultural activities at all. This suggests that, despite physical return to Wales, a significant proportion of diaspora members remain socially and culturally unengaged beyond private or family contexts. These findings highlight an important gap between presence and participation, indicating that existing emotional ties to Wales are not automatically translated into active engagement. For policymakers and diaspora organizations, this represents both a challenge and an opportunity: to design more accessible, visible, and participatory cultural experiences that can convert passive connection into meaningful social and economic engagement.

When asked what they wanted to do first on arrival in Wales, respondents shared a range of activities. Some prioritized reuniting with family and friends, while others sought traditional Welsh foods like Welsh cakes or visits to local markets. A few mentioned enjoying pub culture, coastal scenery, or engaging in outdoor activities such as mountain walks and rugby games. Overall, the responses reflect a mix of personal connections, culinary experiences, and appreciation for Welsh landscapes and culture upon return. No strong disagreements were noted in the feedback provided.

The findings further highlight the strongly relational nature of diaspora visits to Wales, with the majority of respondents (69%) staying with family, and a smaller proportion (5%) staying with friends. In contrast, only 11% reported using hotels, with the remainder opting for Airbnb or other private accommodation. This pattern reinforces the centrality of personal networks in shaping the diaspora experience. In terms of economic contribution, the data show a relatively modest but varied level of spending: 59.23% of respondents reported spending between £0–500 during their visit, while 19.94% spent between £501–£1,000, and 20.83% reported spending over £1,000. Taken together, these findings suggest that while visits are primarily driven by family connections and often supported through informal accommodation arrangements, there remains a segment of the diaspora contributing more significantly to the local economy. This points to both the strengths and limitations of current engagement patterns, where strong social ties facilitate return visits but may also constrain broader economic impact.

## Highlights of the Visit

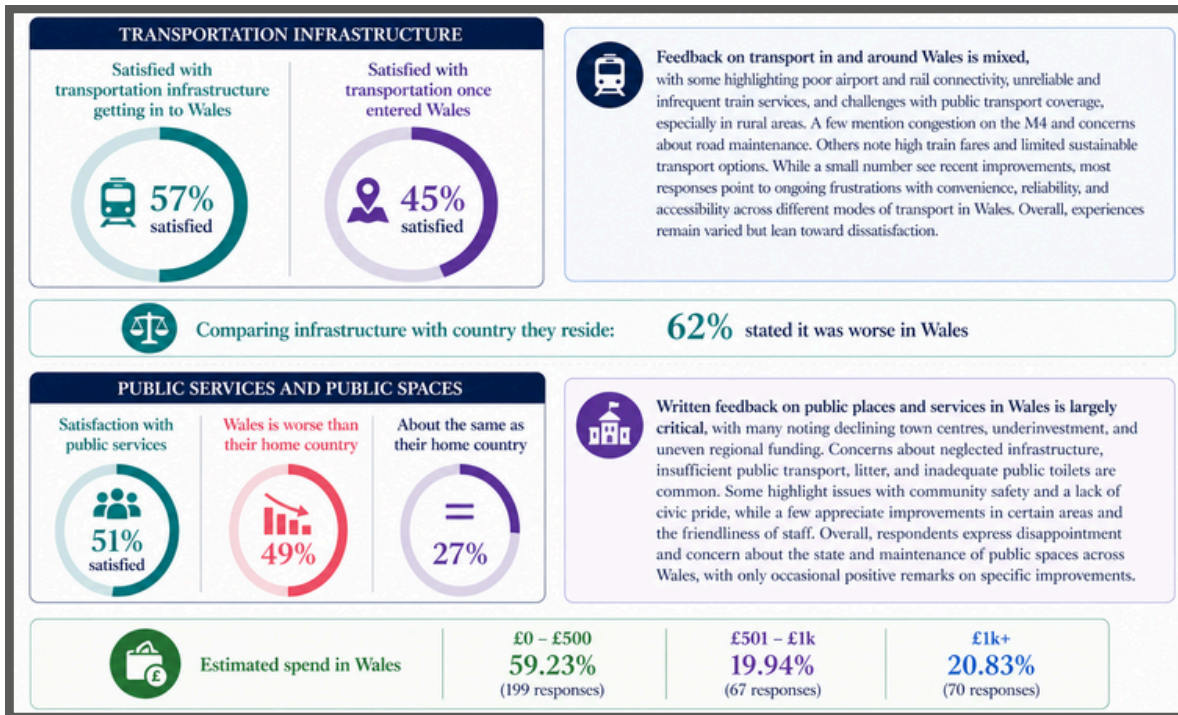
The analysis of visit highlights provides important insight into the qualitative dimensions of diaspora engagement with Wales. While respondents participated in a range of activities during their visits, the aspects they identified as most meaningful were predominantly relational and emotional in nature. Time spent with family, reconnection with familiar people, and the experience of Wales as a place, through its landscapes and atmosphere, were consistently emphasized. In contrast, formal cultural activities and events were less frequently identified as defining highlights. This suggests a clear distinction between participation and perceived value: engagement alone does not determine significance. Instead, the diaspora experience is shaped by identity, memory, and belonging. These findings indicate that while emotional ties to Wales remain strong, they are not automatically converted into structured or institutional forms of engagement, highlighting a key gap in current diaspora strategies.

## Impressions of Wales

While 51% reported general satisfaction, nearly half (49%) viewed services in Wales as worse than those in their home country, and 27% considered them comparable. Written feedback points to widespread concerns about declining town centres, underinvestment, neglected infrastructure, and uneven regional development. Issues such as litter, insufficient public amenities, and challenges related to community safety were frequently mentioned. Although some respondents acknowledged improvements in specific areas and the friendliness of staff, the overall tone remains critical.

The findings indicate that emotional attachment to Wales remains strong among the diaspora, although perceptions of change introduce a more complex dynamic. A majority of respondents (56%) report feeling more connected to Wales than to their current country of residence, while a further 28% feel equally connected to both, suggesting that Welsh identity remains a significant anchor even after migration.

Fig. 4 Infographic on Impressions of Wales Transportation & Social Services



Notably, 41% of respondents state that their sense of connection to Wales has strengthened since leaving, highlighting the enduring and, in some cases, intensifying nature of diaspora identity over time. However, this strong emotional attachment is accompanied by more critical perceptions of change within Wales itself. While 32.5% of respondents believe Wales has changed positively, a larger proportion (44%) perceive changes negatively. This contrast points to an important tension: although affective ties to Wales remain robust, concerns about the country’s direction may influence the extent to which this connection translates into active engagement. Together, these findings reinforce the idea that diaspora identity is resilient, but not uncritical, and that maintaining and leveraging this connection requires addressing both emotional and structural dimensions.

Fig. 5 Perceptions of Contemporary Wales

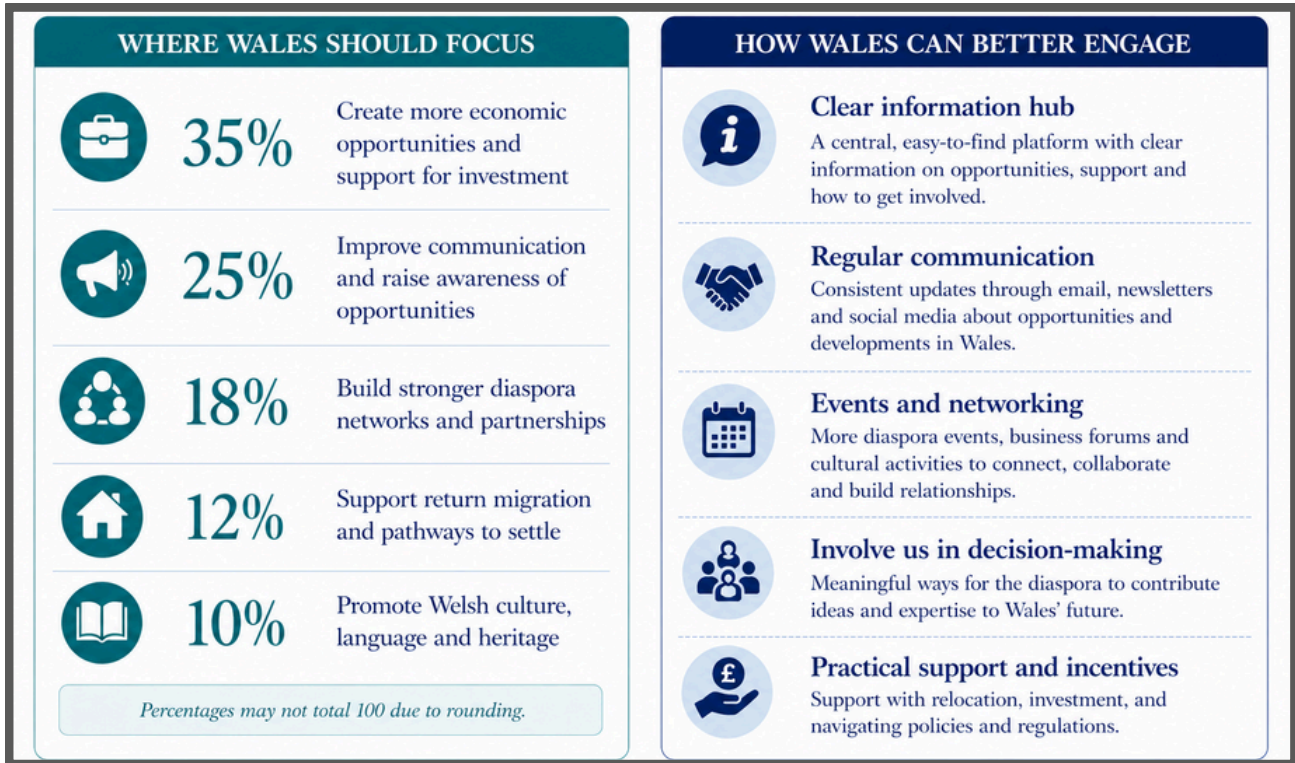


Fig 6. Feeling of Connection to Wales

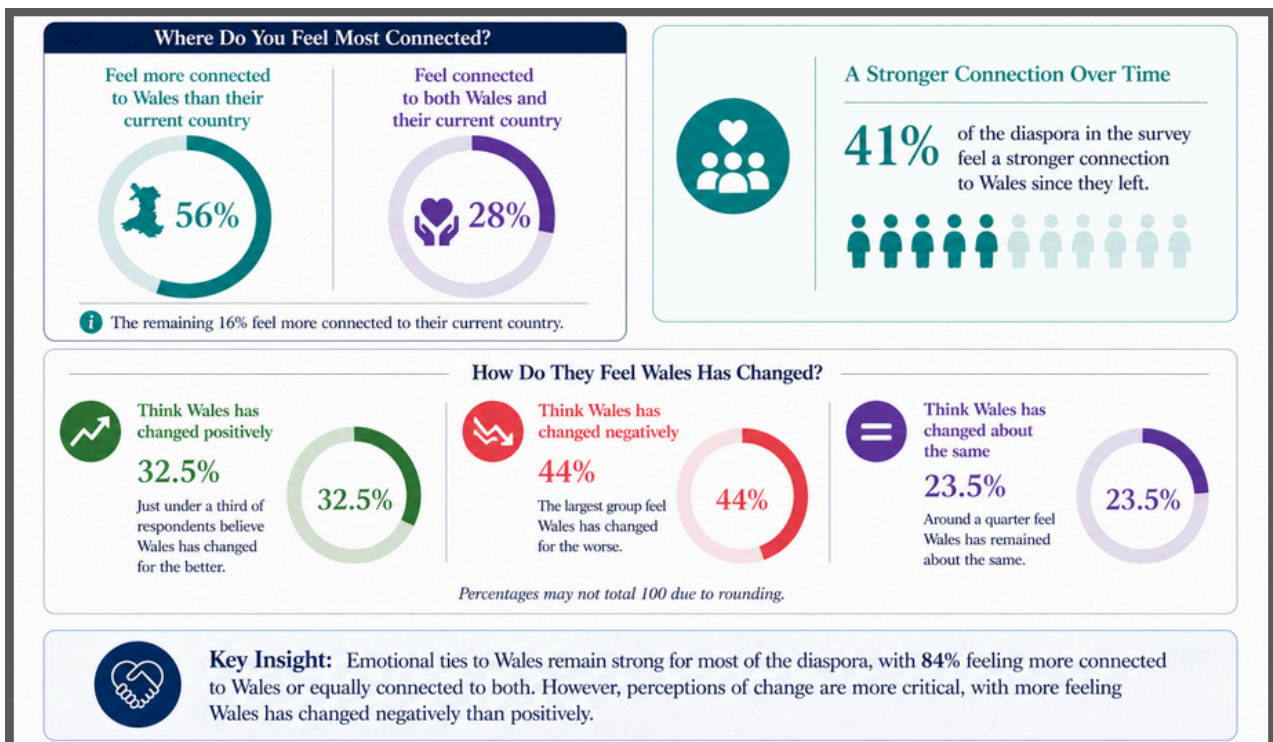
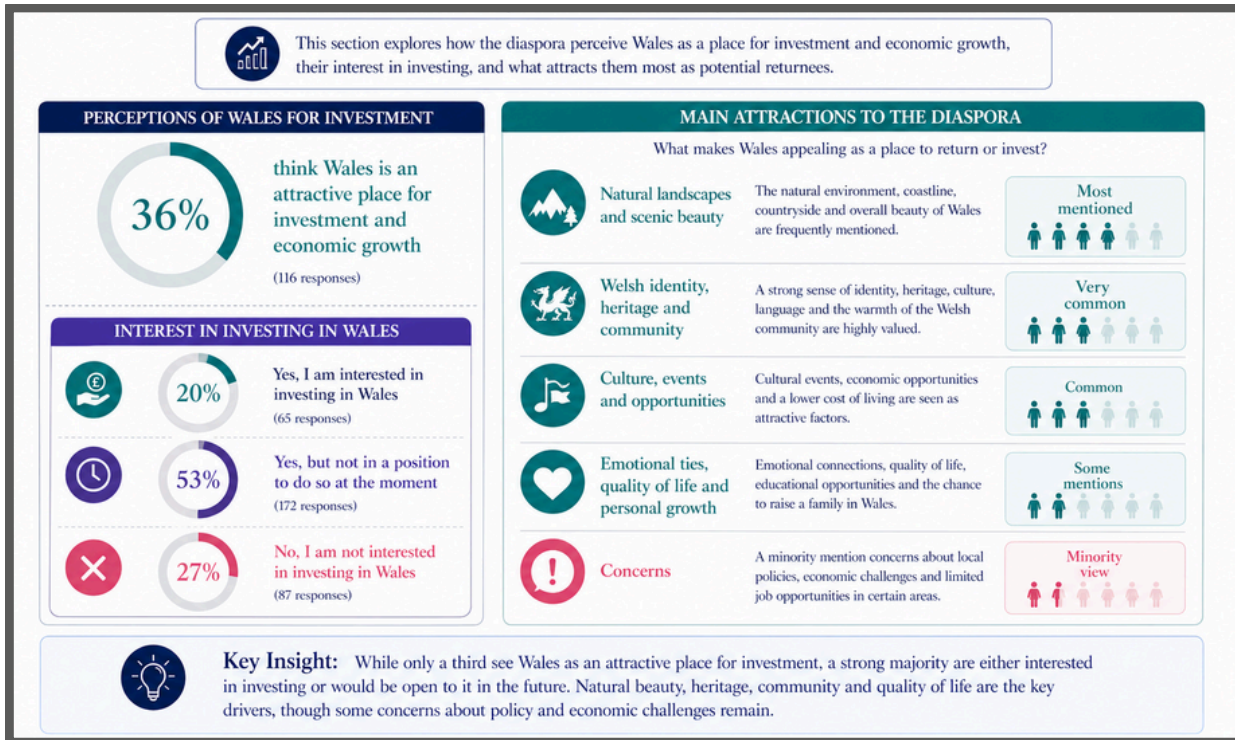


Fig. 7 Perceptions of Wales & Attractions



## Call to Action

The findings clearly indicate that the primary challenge for Wales is not a lack of interest from the diaspora, but a lack of accessible pathways to translate that interest into meaningful engagement. Respondents consistently highlight the need for clearer economic opportunities, improved communication, and more structured mechanisms for involvement. While many express a willingness to engage, particularly in areas such as investment, collaboration, and return migration, barriers such as limited visibility of opportunities, uncertainty about how to get involved, and concerns about economic conditions remain significant. At the same time, the data suggest that engagement is not purely transactional; diaspora members also seek continued relational and cultural connection through networks, events, and community-building initiatives. These findings point to the importance of a dual strategy: strengthening Wales' economic proposition while simultaneously enhancing platforms for connection and participation. By improving communication, clarifying pathways, and leveraging existing emotional ties, Wales can more effectively convert latent diaspora interest into sustained social, cultural, and economic contributions.



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