



Children & Young People Physical Activity Behaviour in Hertfordshire

April 2026

Active Lives Children's Survey 2024-25



The Active Lives Children and Young People Survey

gathers data on how
children engage with
sport and physical
activity



Designed by Sport England, the Department for Education (DfE), the Department for Health (DfH), and the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), its purpose is to gain a detailed insight into the current physical activity habits of the nation's children and young people (aged 5 to 16).

The survey collects data to present a comprehensive picture of children and young peoples:

- Overall levels of activity both at school (during the school day) and outside school
- Activity levels for a range of key demographic groups
- Chosen activities by age group
- Volunteering levels (supporting sport and physical activity)
- Associations between activity levels and measures of mental wellbeing, individual development and social and community development
- Attitudes towards sport and physical activity

How much physical activity should children and young people do?

Activity levels for children and young people are presented in three categories (for overall activity in the last week)



Active (Chief Medical Officer guidelines)

An average of 60 minutes or more a day*



Fairly active

An average of 30-59 minutes a day



Less active

Less than an average of 30 minutes a day

*At least 420 mins over a week. Only activity of at least moderate intensity is included

There are **174,000** young people in our area



32%

are from global majority groups



18%

have Special Educational Needs (SEN) support



16%

are eligible for free school meals

Data tells part of the story – context tells the rest



This pack contains in-year figures and trends since the Active Lives CYP survey began in 2017



It is important that we consider how much **children and young people's worlds have changed** in that time

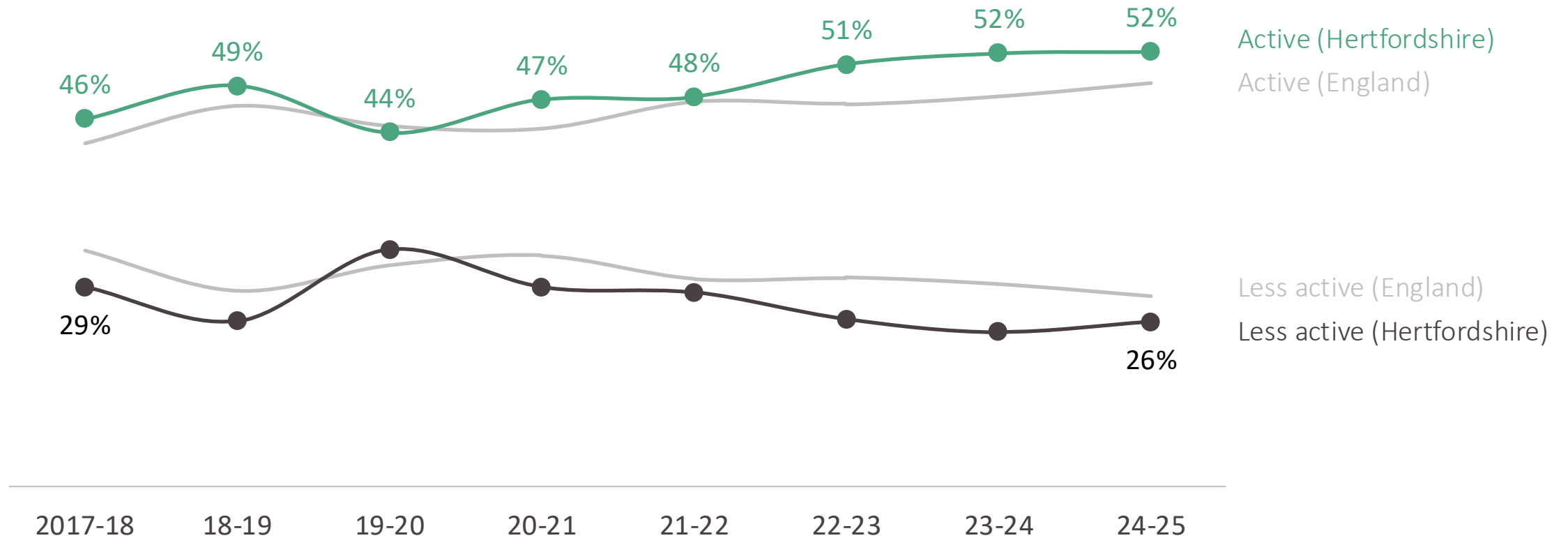


Broader context and young people's own perspectives help us make sense of this data

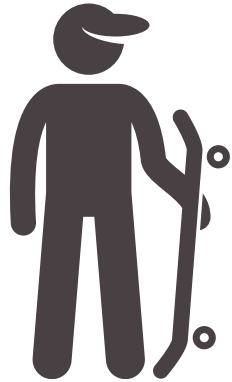
Coming soon...

A children and young people's **context narrative** to help us reflect on what the data might mean locally

Physical activity for children and young people has remained at an all time high

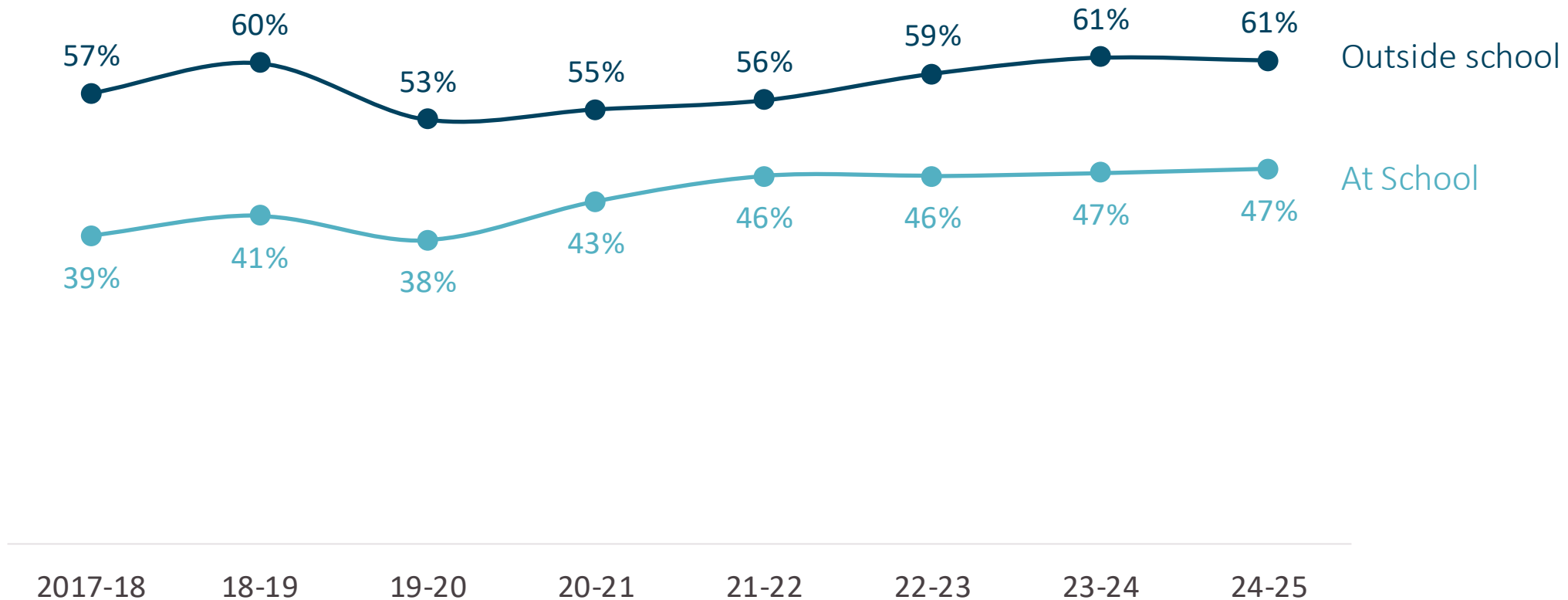


Half of our children and young people are **not active enough (48%)**



That's around **85,000**
young people not meeting
recommended activity levels

Children and young people are more likely to be **active outside school** than they are **at school**

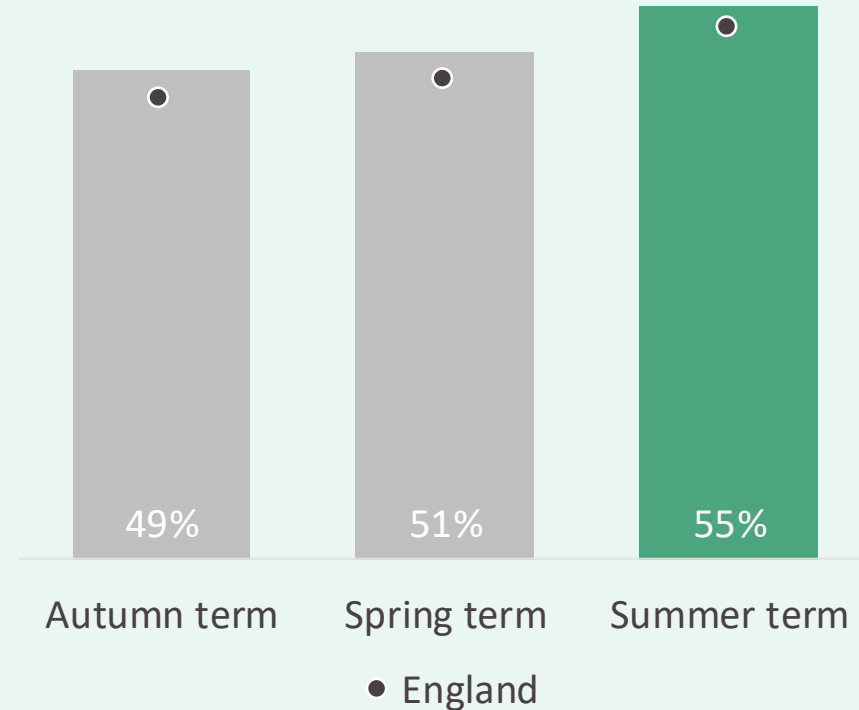


It's important to consider **when surveys were completed** as this can impact overall activity levels

Sample sizes by term:

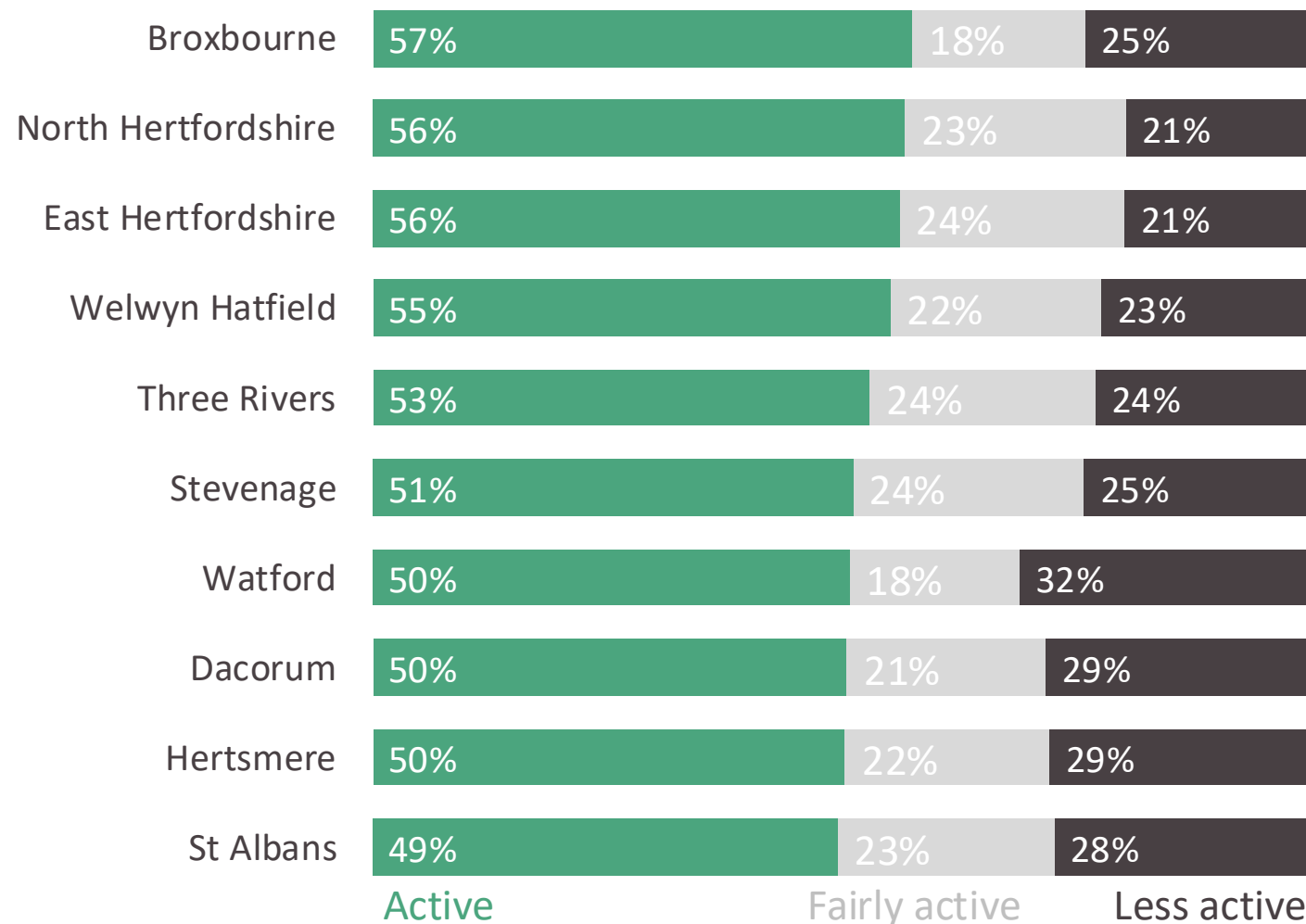
- Autumn term: 969
- Spring term: 1,602
- Summer term: 1,790

Activity levels are higher in the summer

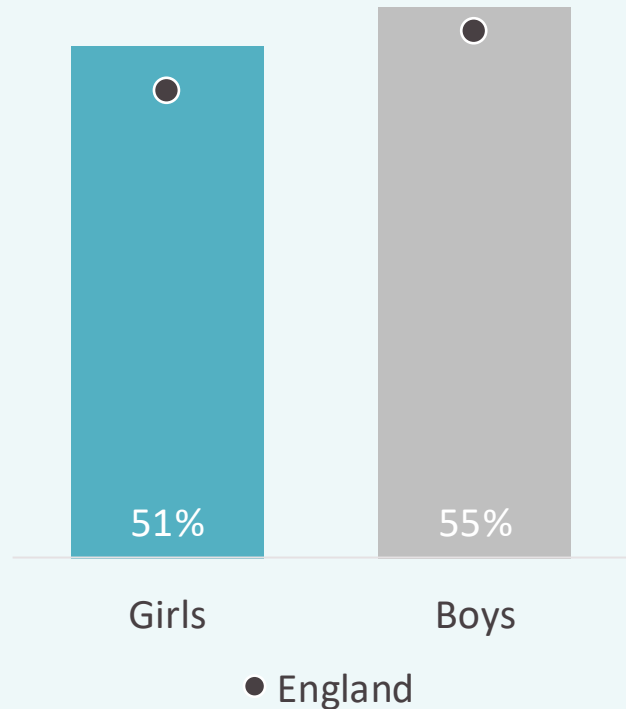


There is an **8%** difference in activity levels across our local area

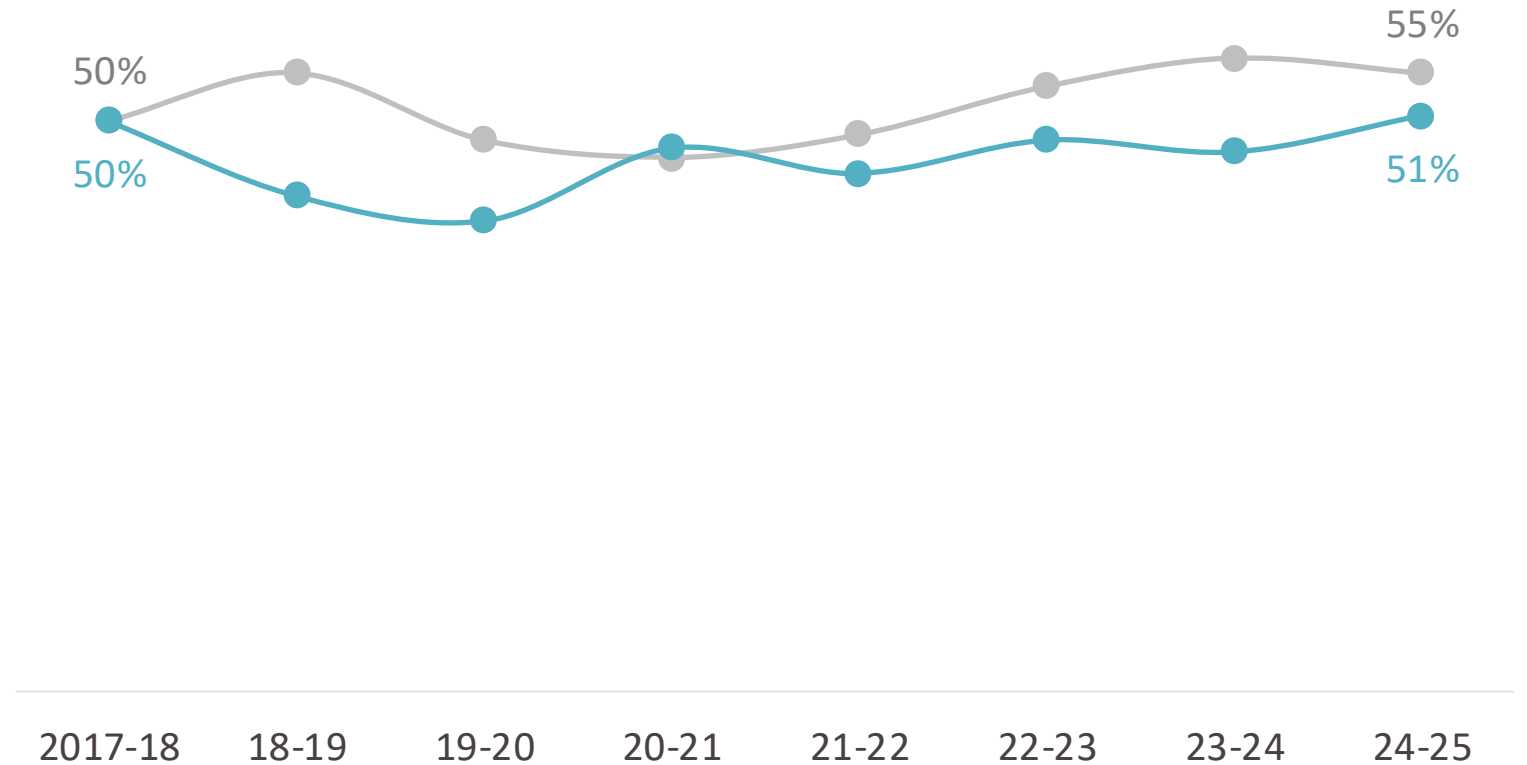
St Albans children and young people are least likely to be active



The **gender activity gap** has reduced in 2024-25

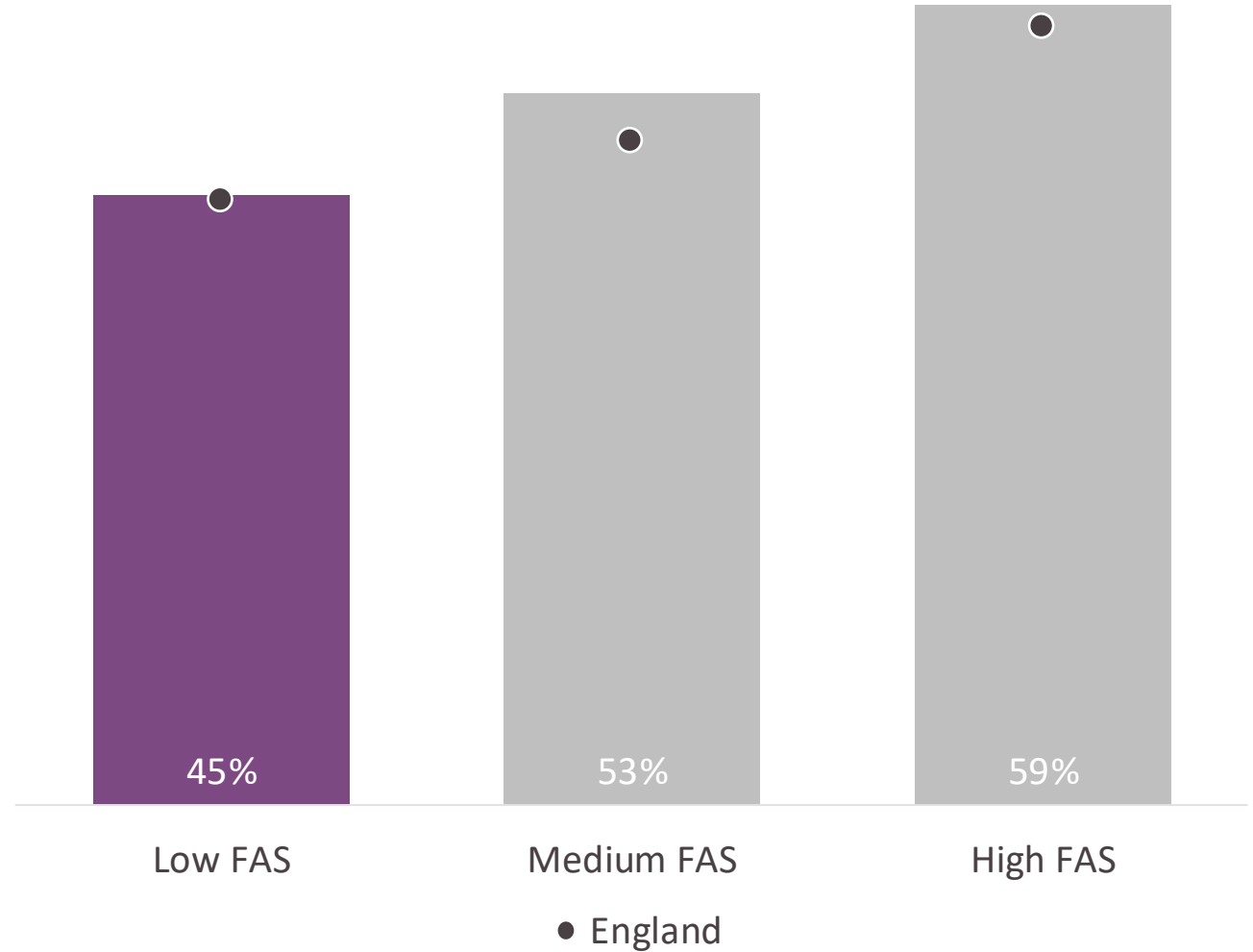


Over time, **girls are less likely to be active** compared to **boys**





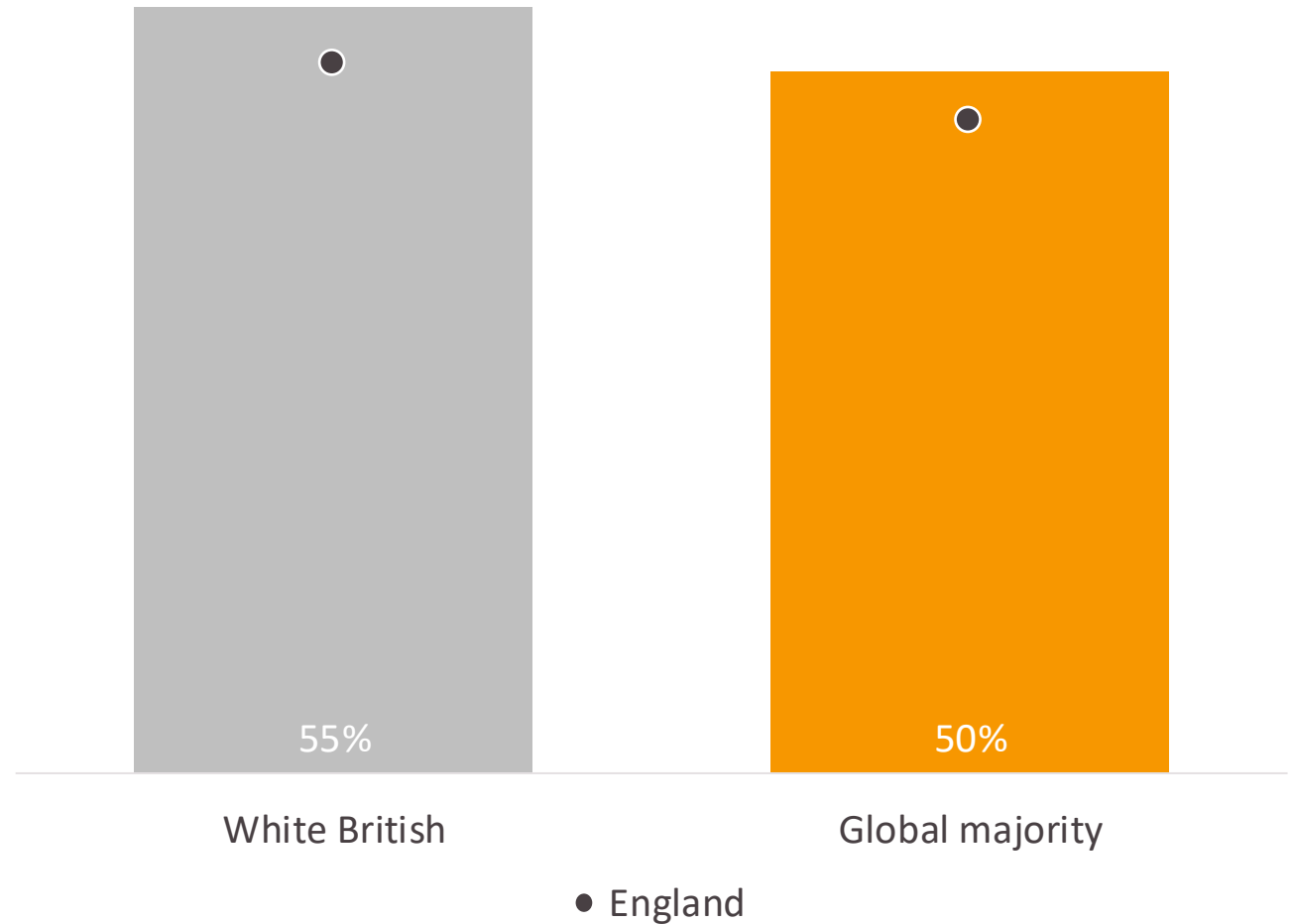
The biggest difference in activity levels is between low and high affluence families





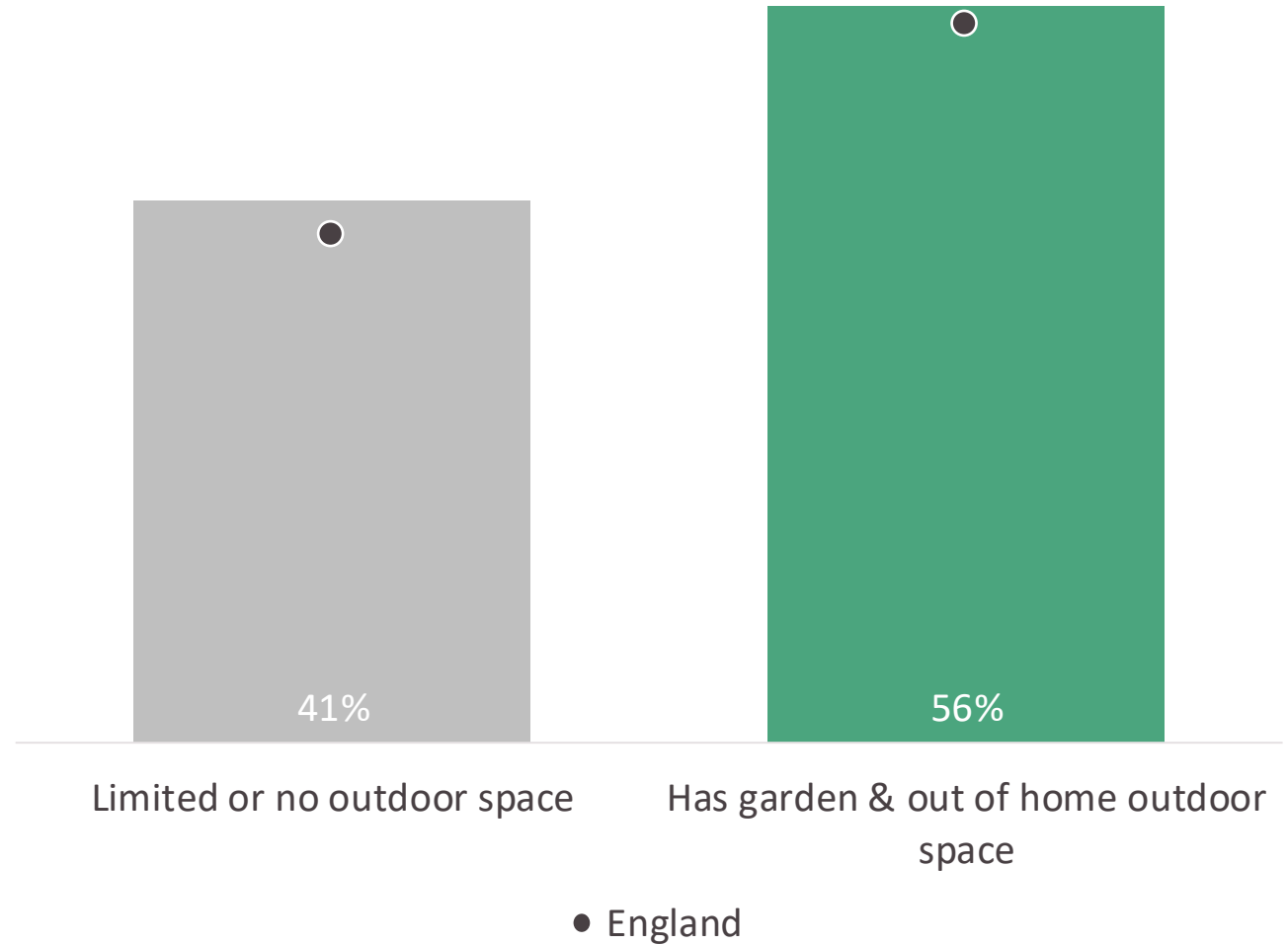
Activity levels are lower among children from global majority groups than their White British peers

However, we are only able to report data in two categories. This may mask some of the inequalities between ethnic groups



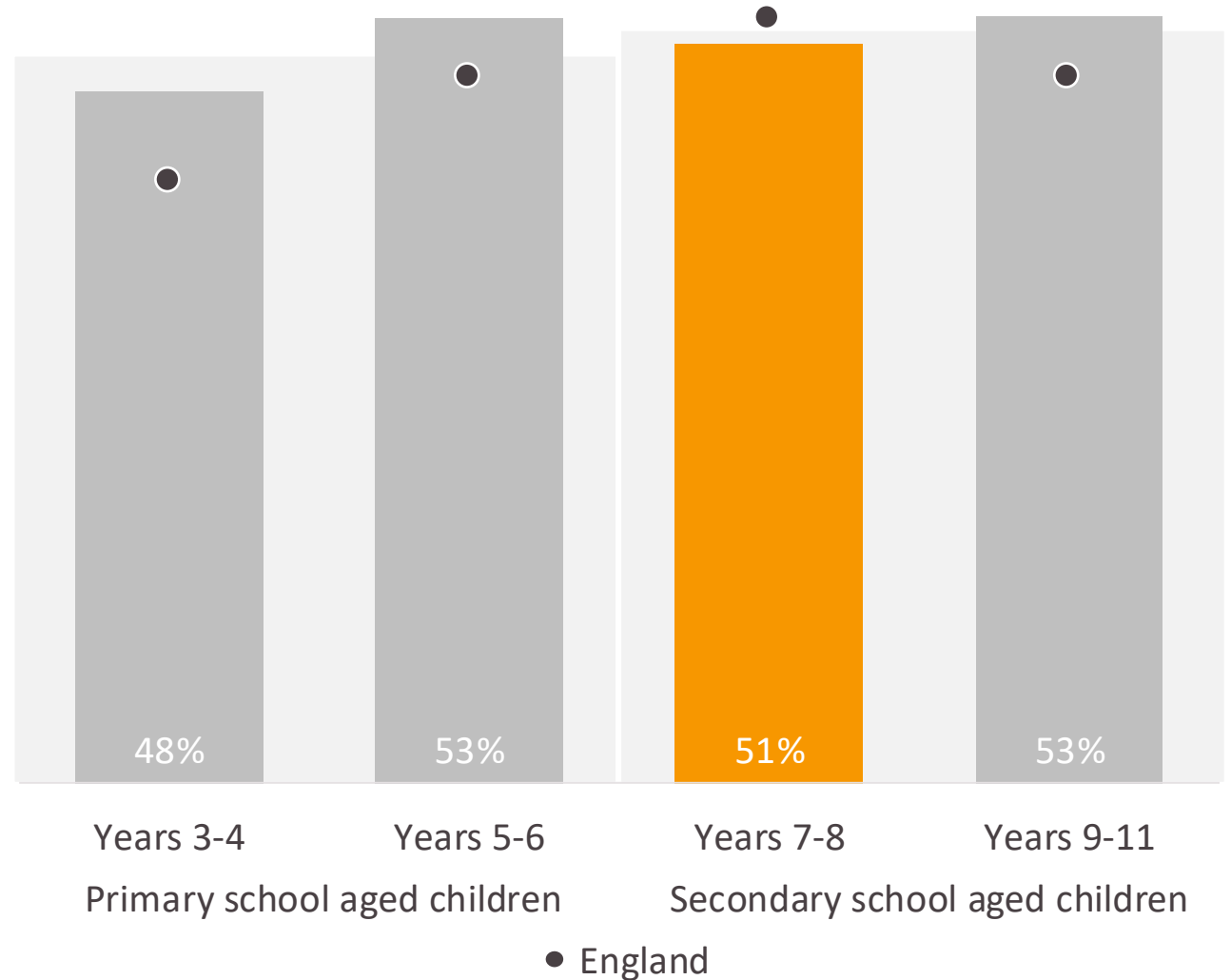


Having **access to outdoor space** has a **positive impact on activity levels**



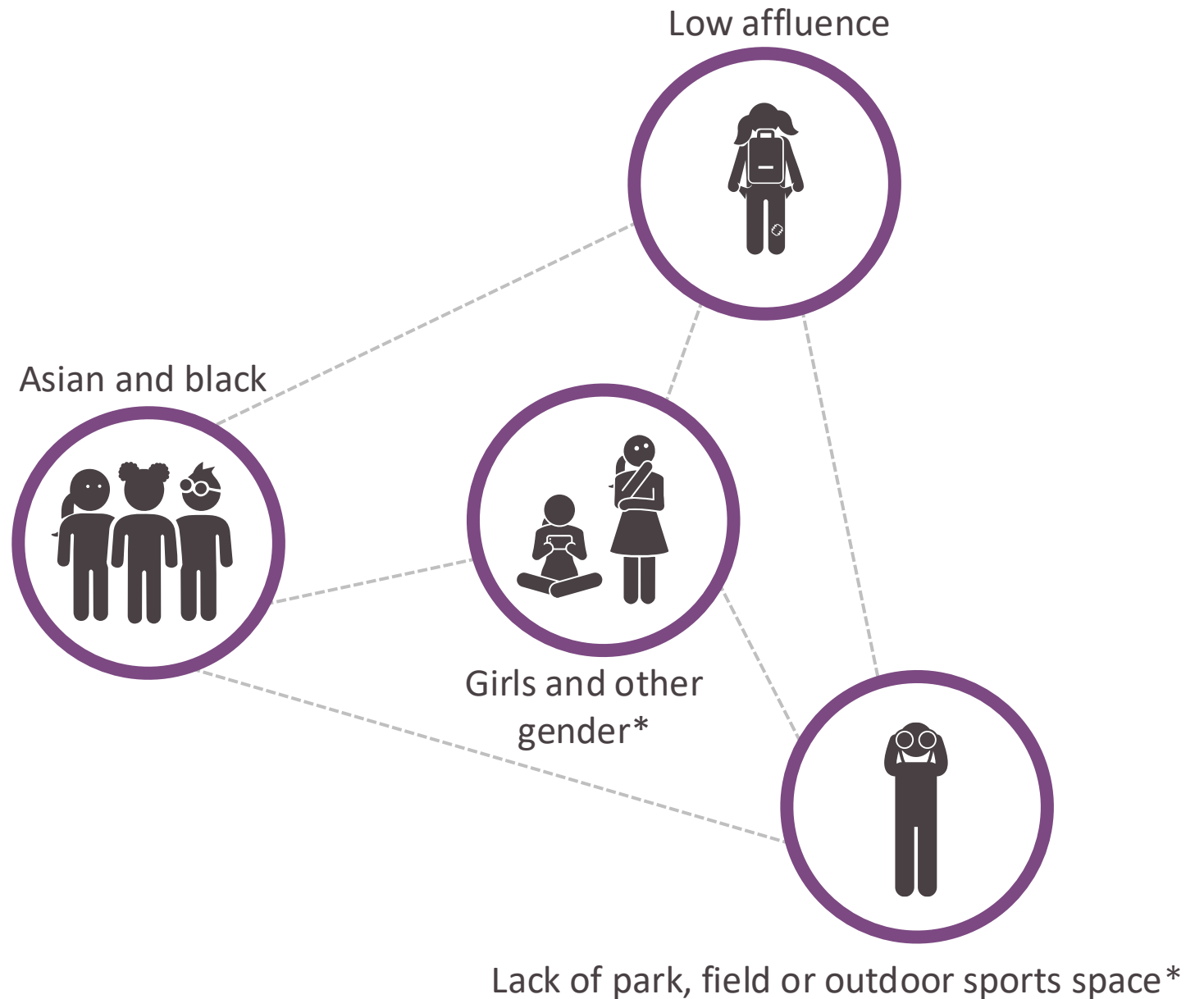


Activity levels for children in years 7-8 fall below the national average



What drives inactivity in children and young people?

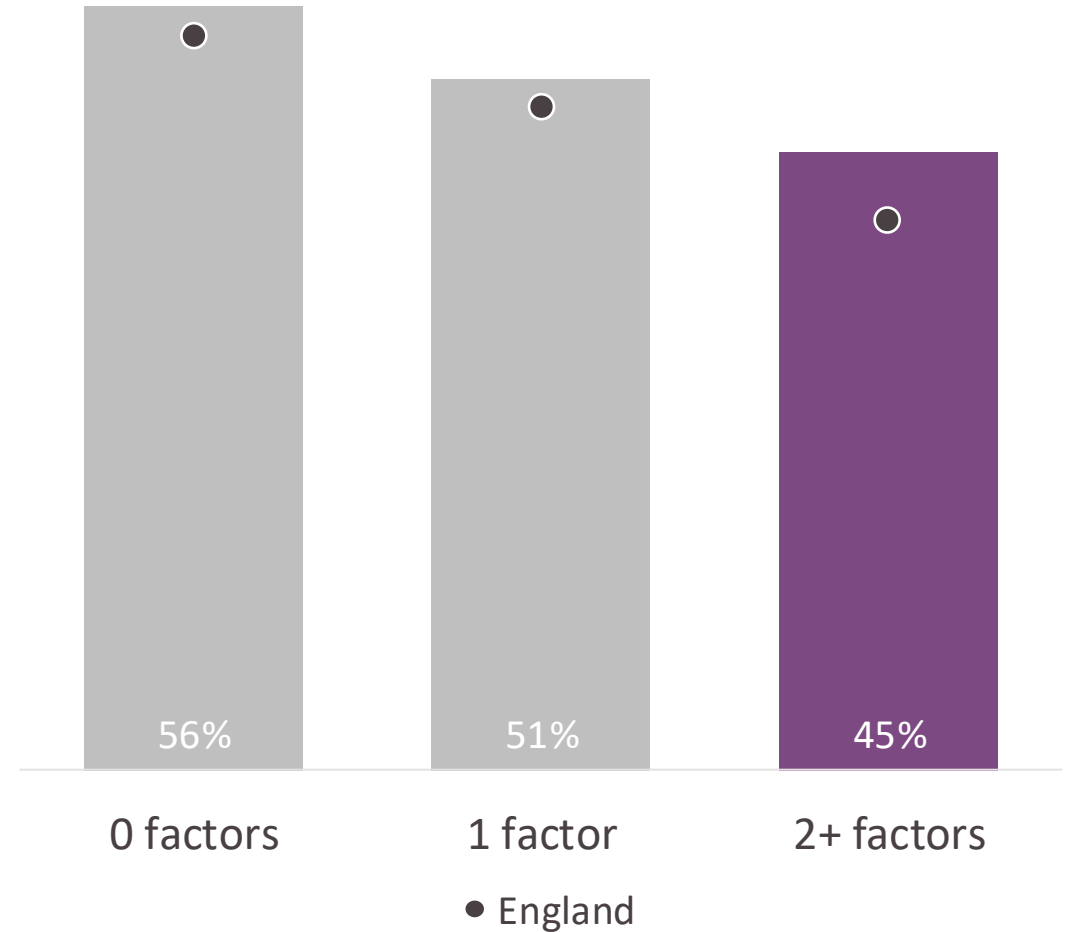
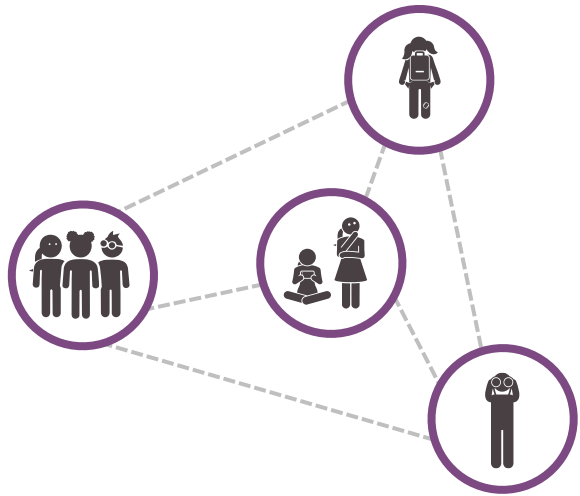
Each of these four factors is associated with lower activity levels on its own, but the impact is greatest when factors are combined



*for secondary school aged children and young people



Activity levels fall when a child or young person experiences two or more factors from the Inequalities Metric



Are we seeing **positive attitudes** towards exercise and sport in our area?

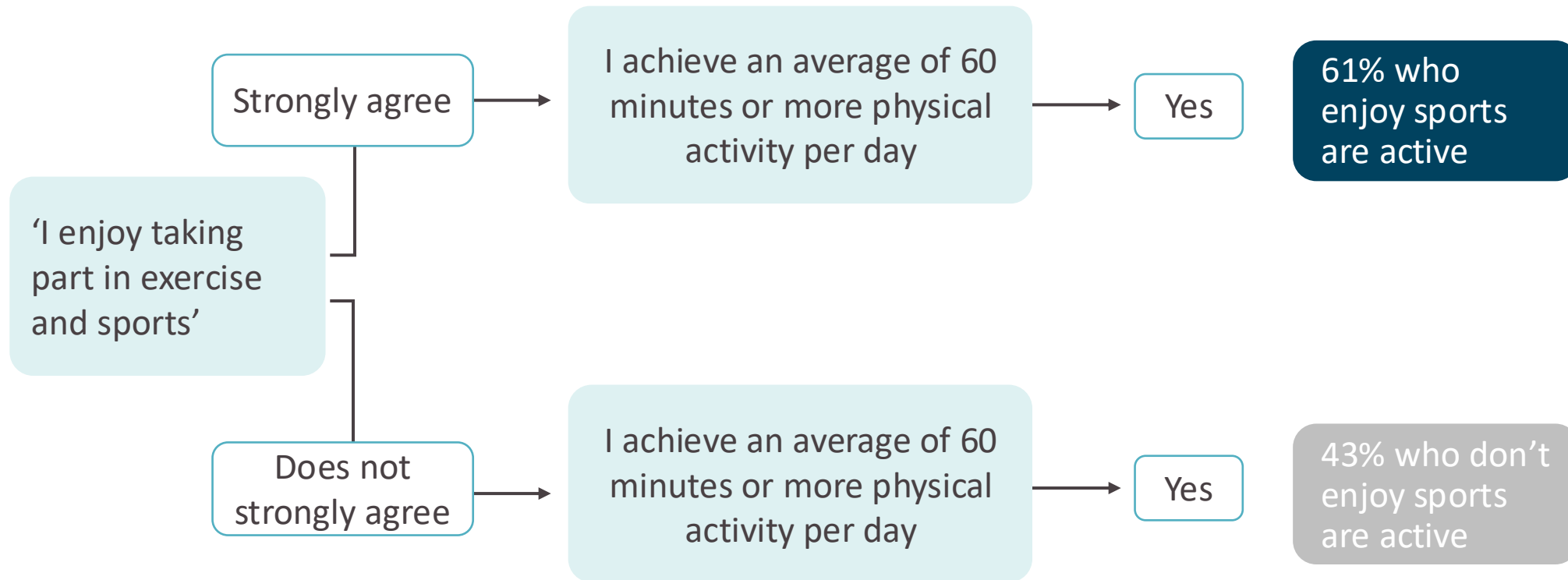
The proportion of children and young people reporting they **strongly agree** that they:

- **Understand** why being active is good for them (understanding)
- **Enjoy** taking part (enjoyment)
- **Feel confident** when doing so (confidence)
- **Know how** to get involved (know how)
- **Find it easy** (competence)

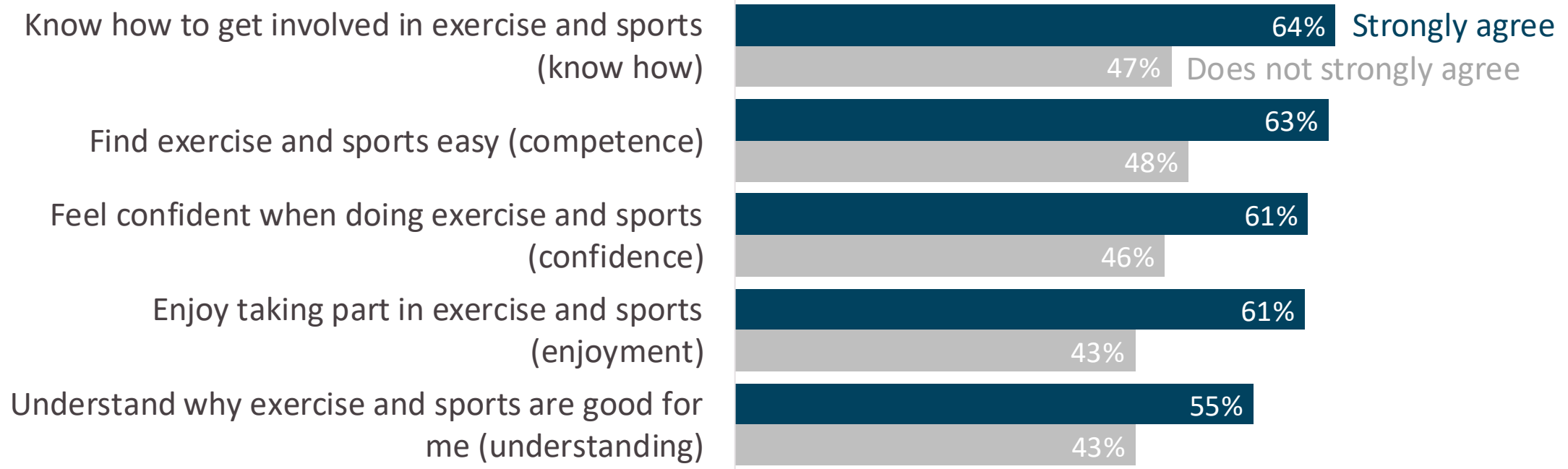


Children and young people are more likely to be active if they enjoy exercise and sports

Here is an example of how physical literacy affects physical activity levels

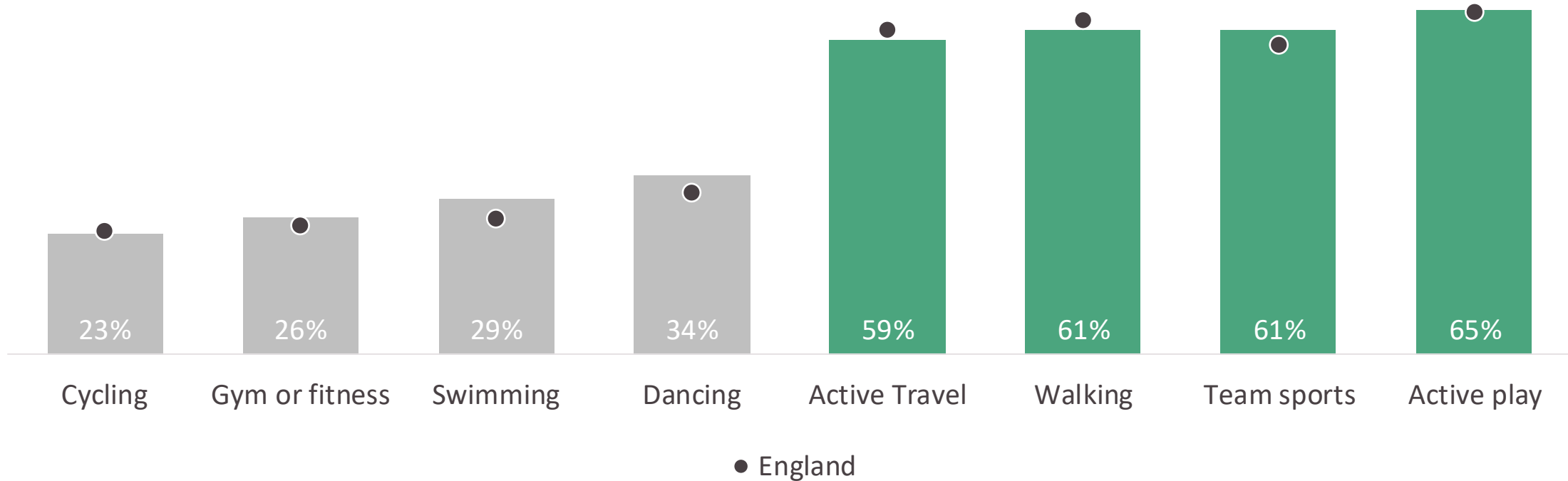


I am more likely to be **active** if I **strongly agree** that I...

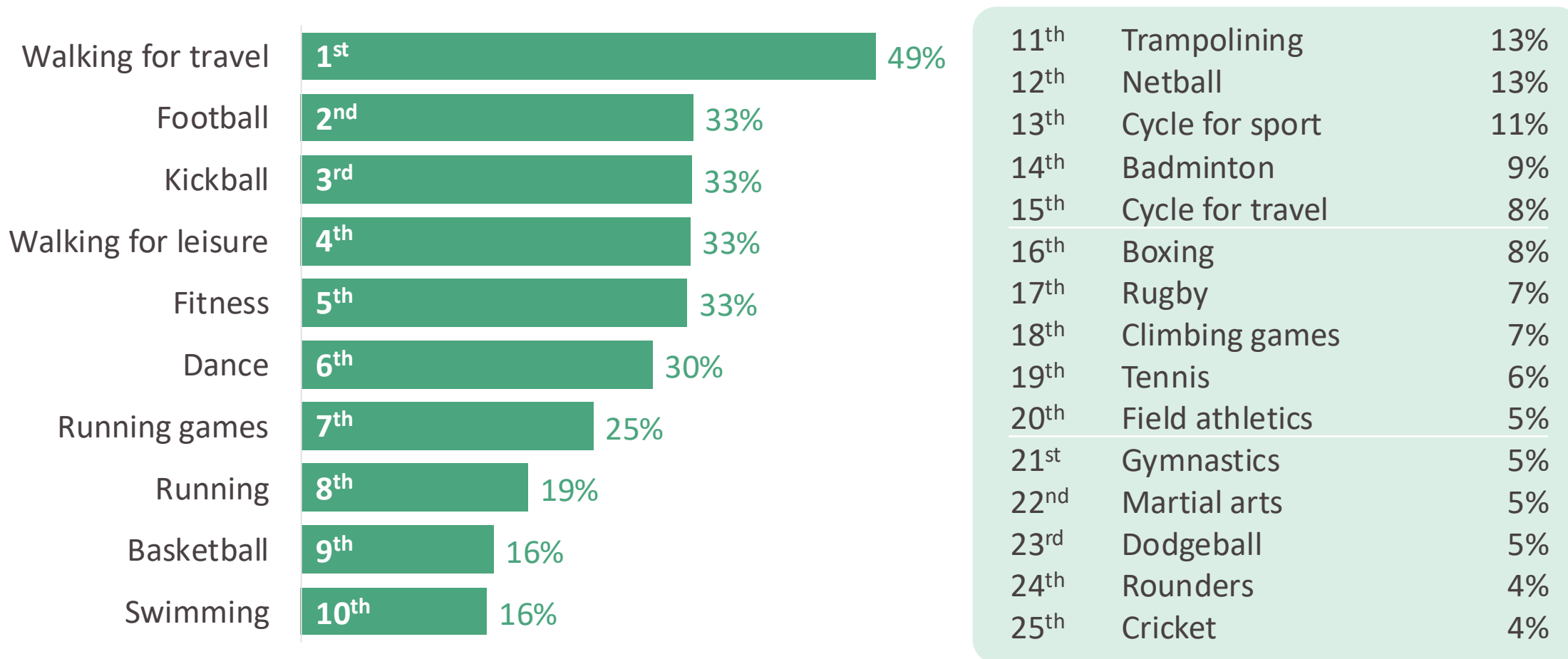




Over half of young people **participate in team sports, active travel, walking or active play** each week



What gets our children and young people moving at least once a week?



Key messages



- **Half (48%) of our children and young people are not active enough.** That's around 85,000 children and young people in Hertfordshire not meeting recommended activity levels
- Children and young people are more likely to be active **outside school** than they are at school
- The **gender** activity gap has reduced in 2024-25. However, overtime girls are less likely to be active compared to boys
- The biggest difference in activity levels is between low and high **affluence** families
- The **Inequalities Metric** shows activity rates are much lower for young people with two or more factor. This difference is less apparent than at National level.
- Having **access to outdoor space** has a positive impact on activity levels
- Activity levels for children in **years 7-8** fall below the national average

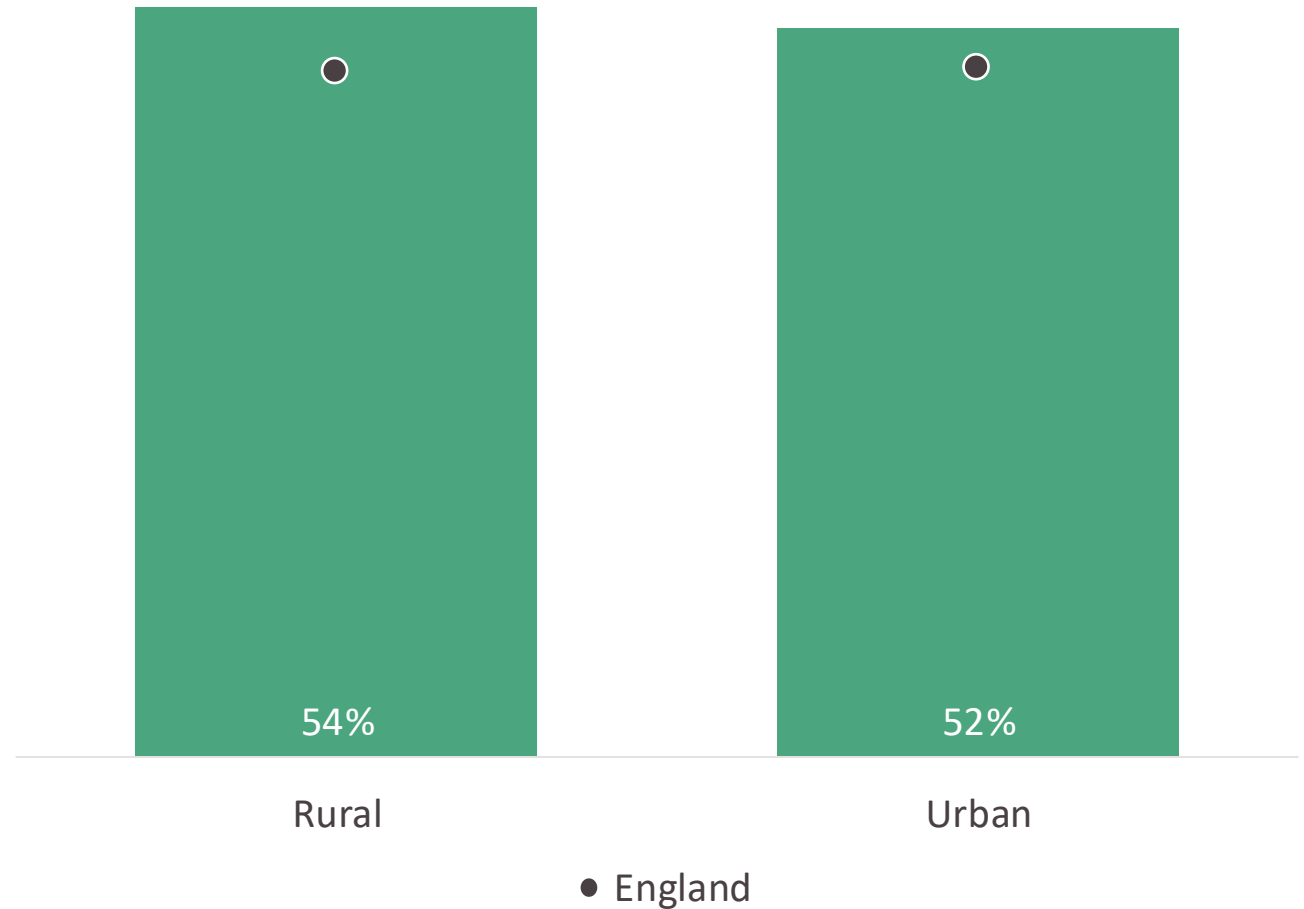


Appendix





There is little difference in **activity levels** between children and young people living in **urban** communities and their peers in **rural** settings





Activity levels appear higher for young people with a disability

However, the disability questions may not capture children's experiences accurately, and special school responses are not included in the results

