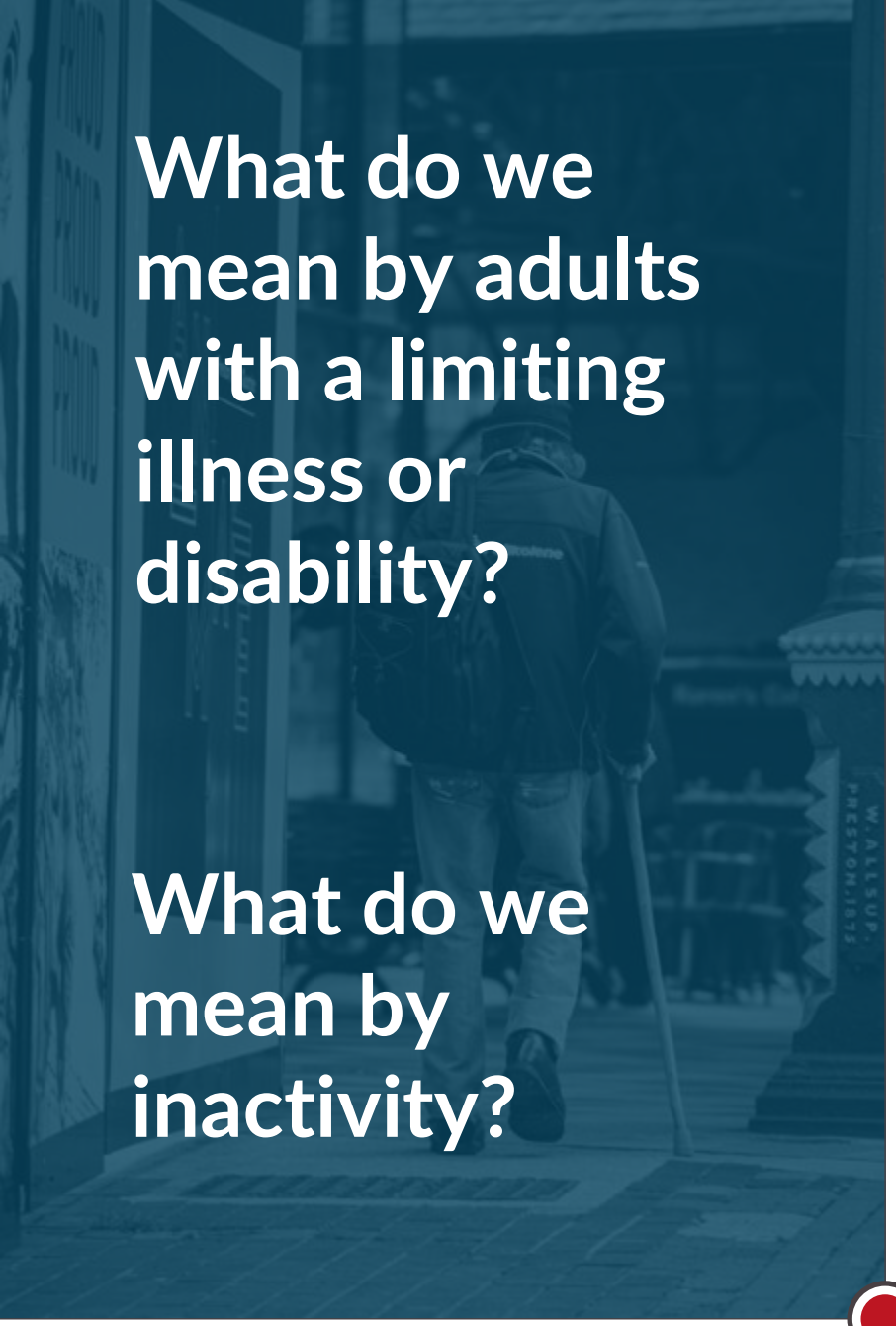
Central South Wales:
An insight into physical activity behaviours of our disabled population

April 2025

Adults

This section focusses on:

- Adults with a limiting illness or disability
- Physical inactivity



What do we mean by adults with a limiting illness or disability?

By **adults**, we mean:

Those aged 16-64

For the purposes of this pack, we have chosen to look at the data for adults aged 16-64. People aged over the age of 65 are considerably more likely to be living with a limiting illness or disability. We have decided to focus on adults, still of working age.

By **limiting illness or disability**, we mean:

Longstanding illnesses or health conditions

Respondents* reporting physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more. This is based on their own understanding of their condition and not on a medical diagnosis.

What do we mean by inactivity?

By **inactive**, we mean:

People that are doing less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week

*National Survey for Wales

What do we know about our adult population?

Total 16-64 year old population

595,000

115,000

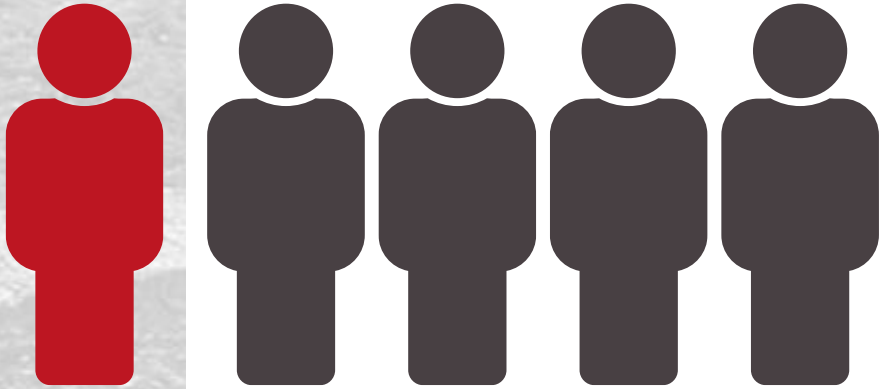
of those have a limiting illness or disability (19%)

40,000

of those with a limiting illness or disability are inactive (35%)

Data is for: Central South

Source: National Survey for Wales 2022-23, age 16-64 and ONS Census 2021



1 in 5

working age adults have a limiting illness or disability
(aged 16-64)

That's 115,000 people

Data is for: Central South

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

71% of working age people with a limiting illness or disability consider themselves to be in 'good' or 'fair' health

(Compared to those without a limiting illness or disability, 99.5%)

7 in 10 are in good/fair health

Data is for: Central South

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

Disabled workers are twice as likely to be in unskilled jobs (NS SeC 6-8)

49%

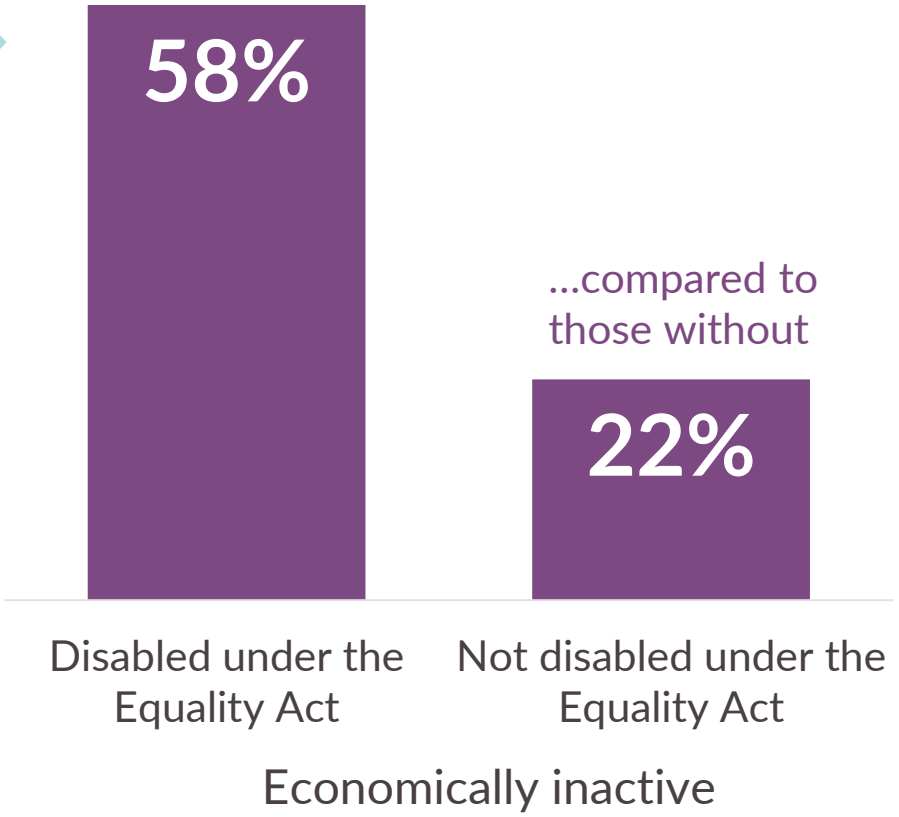
Compared to those without a limiting illness or disability

26%

Data is for: Central South

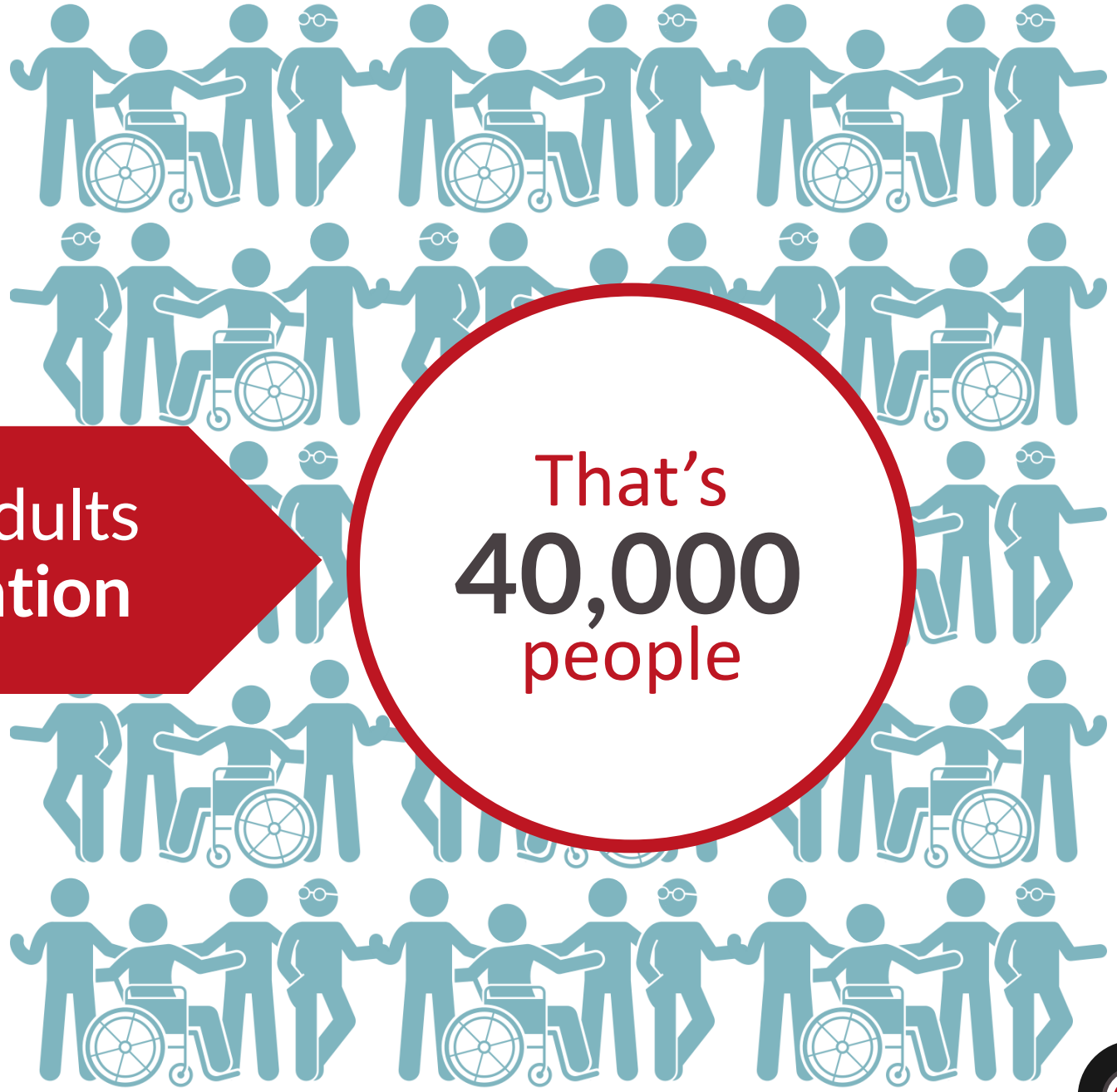
Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

People with a limiting illness or disability are **3 times more likely** to be economically inactive...



Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

Over a third of disabled adults are living in **urban deprivation**



Data is for: Central South

Source: Sport England Active Lives Survey 2022-23 (16+)
Measure: Physical activity levels (excluding gardening)

National Survey for Wales data

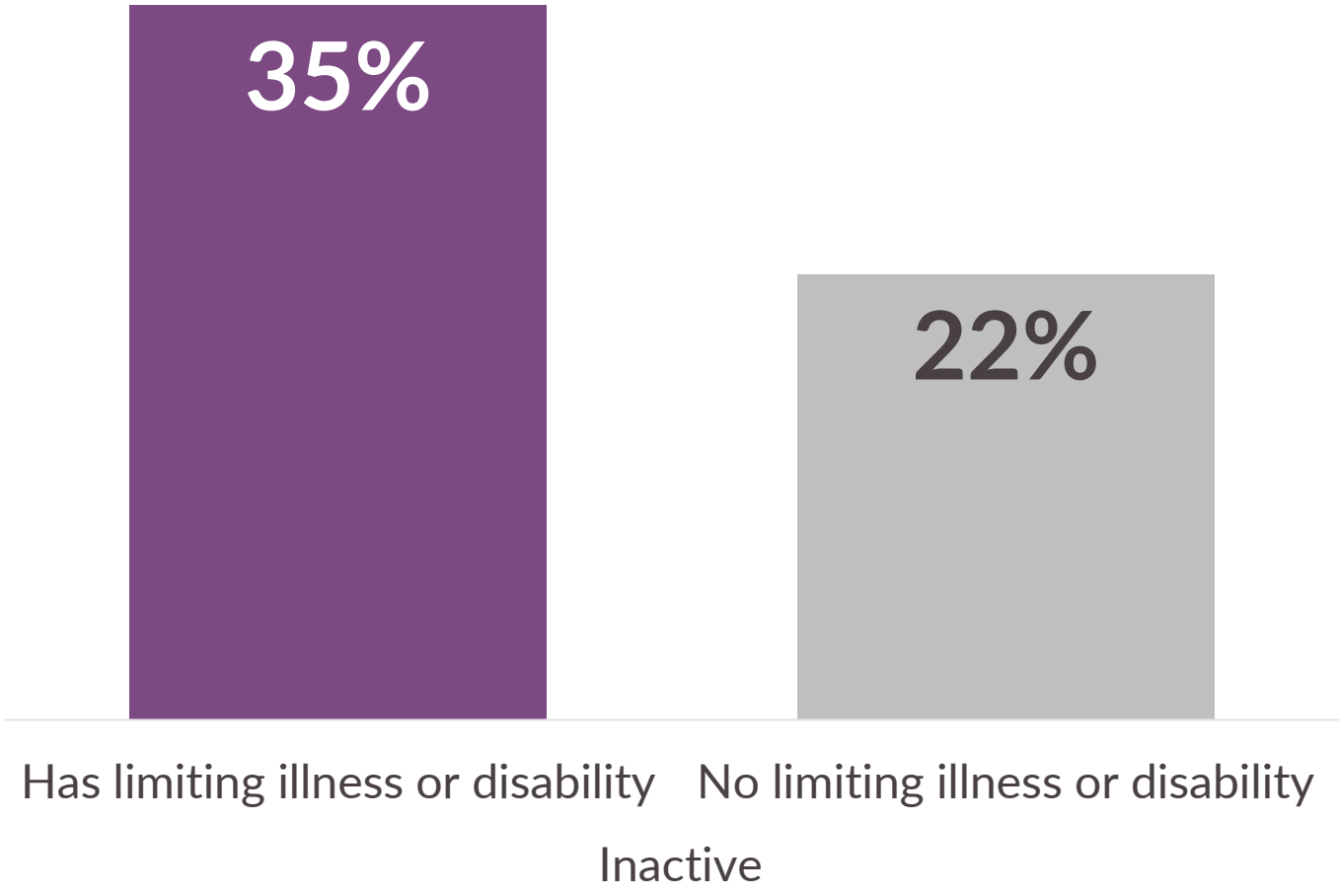
Inactive levels for adults (16-64 year olds) with and without a disability

Latest 3 years of data have been combined to boost sample sizes (2020-23) throughout this section, unless stated otherwise

Key messages

- Our adults are far more likely to be inactive if they have a disability
- Disabled women's inactivity levels are higher than disabled men
- Inactivity rises with age, but this correlation is more pronounced for disabled people
- Disabled adults outside of the workforce are far more likely to be physically inactive than those in employment
- Disabled adults living in private rented accommodation are far more likely to be physically inactive than those living in owner-occupied or social housing
- Physical inactivity is higher among disabled adults from non-White British ethnicities
- Inactivity rates are higher for disabled people without a car
- Disabled adults living in rural settings are far more likely to be inactive than those living in urban environments
- Over 4 in 10 disabled adults living in the most deprived areas are physically inactive, compared to a 2 in 10 of those living in more affluent areas

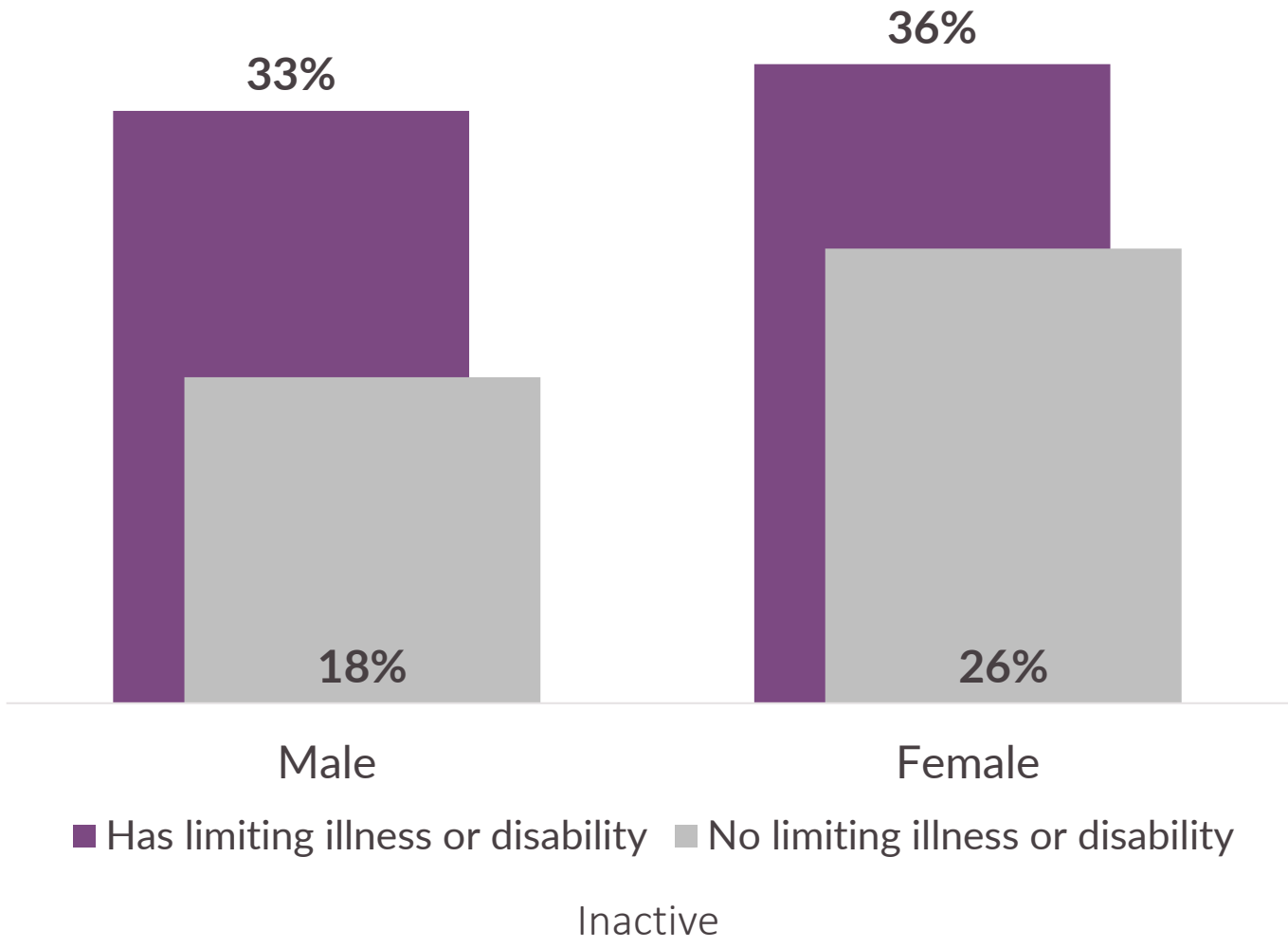
Disabled adults are far more likely to be inactive



Data is for: Central South

Source: National Survey for Wales, 2020-23 combined, age 16-64

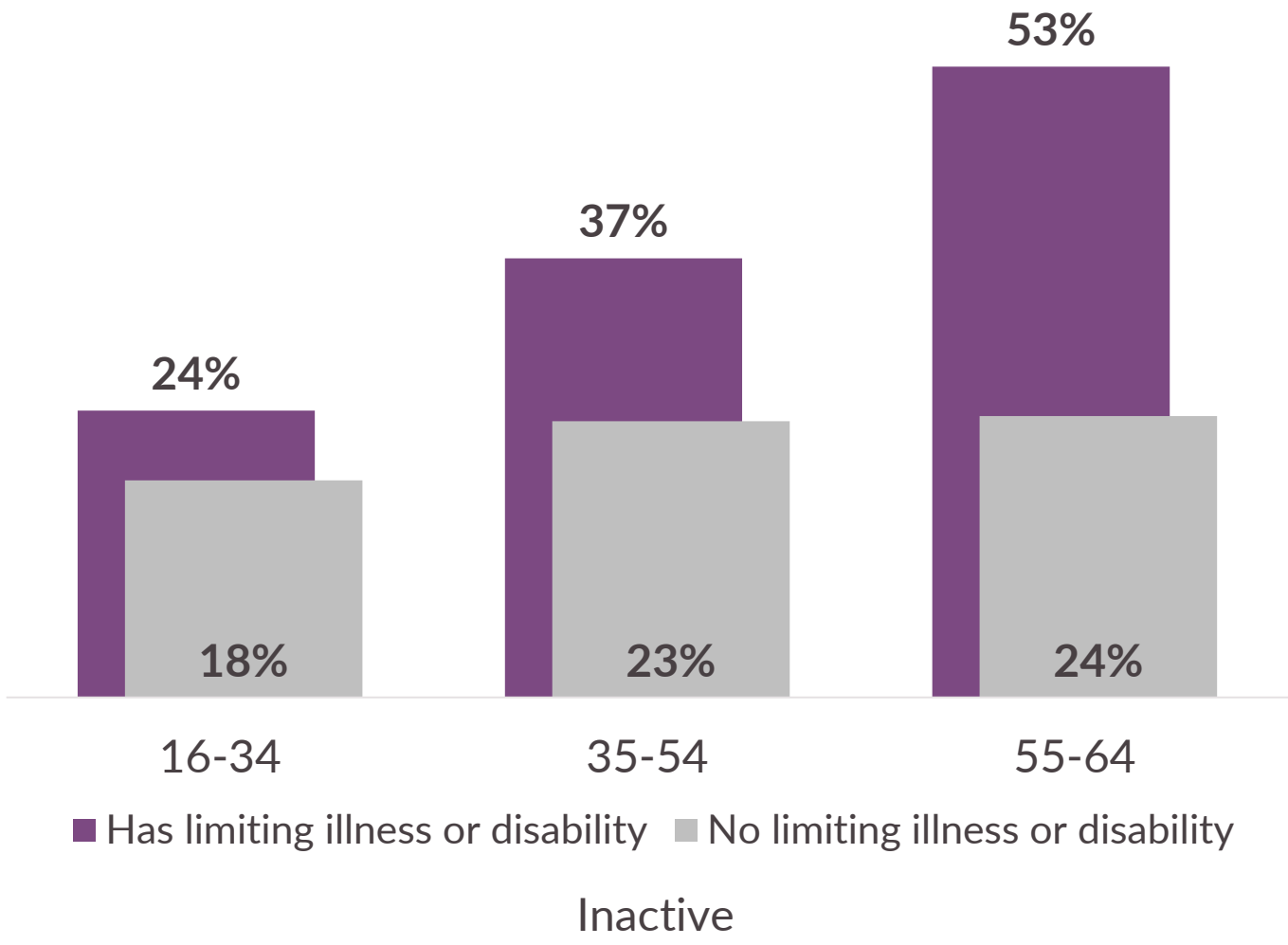
Disabled women's inactivity levels are higher than disabled men



Data is for: Central South

Source: National Survey for Wales, 2020-23 combined, age 16-64

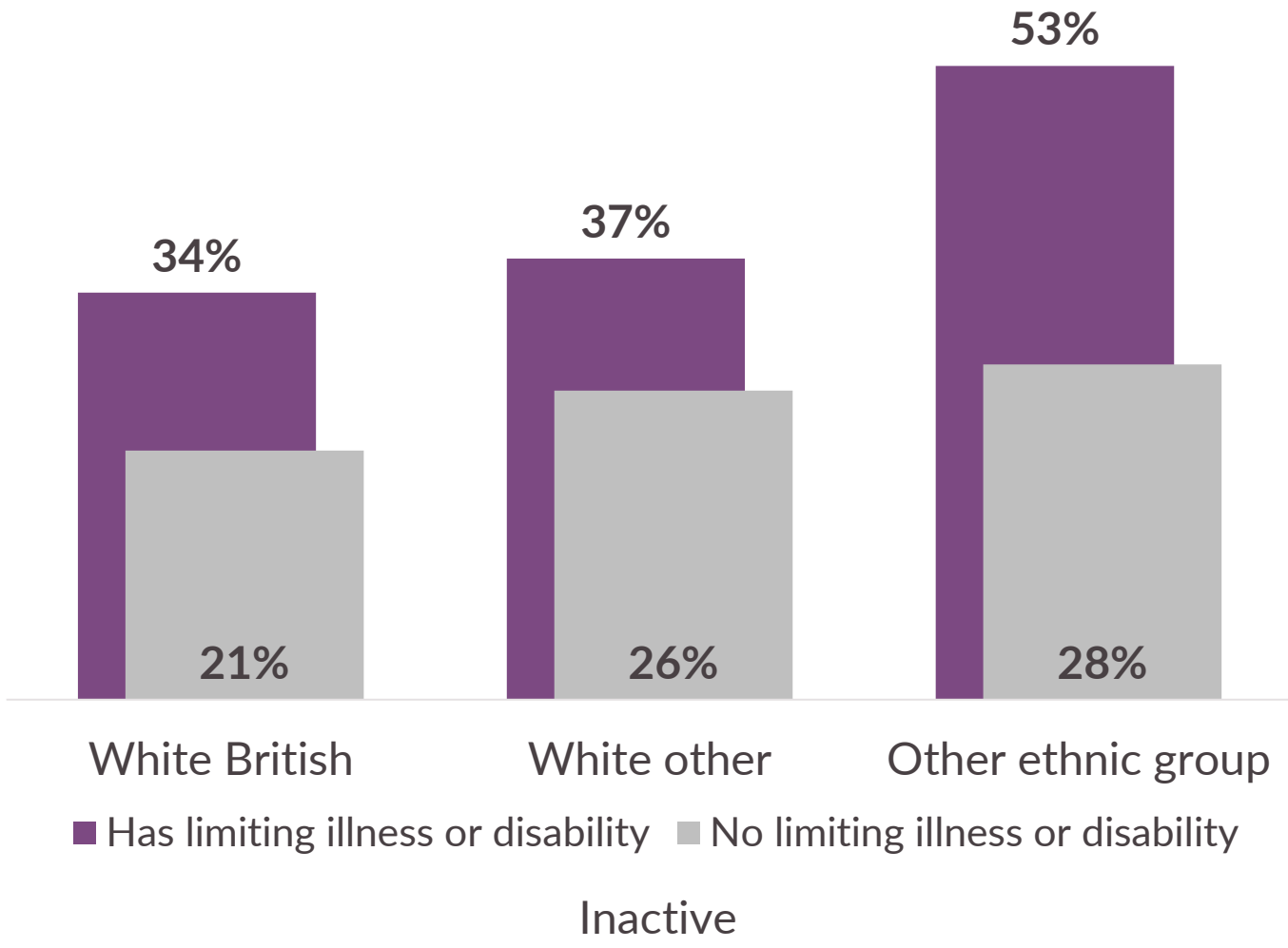
Inactivity rises with age, but this correlation is more pronounced for **disabled people**



Data is for: Central South

Source: National Survey for Wales, 2020-23 combined, age 16-64

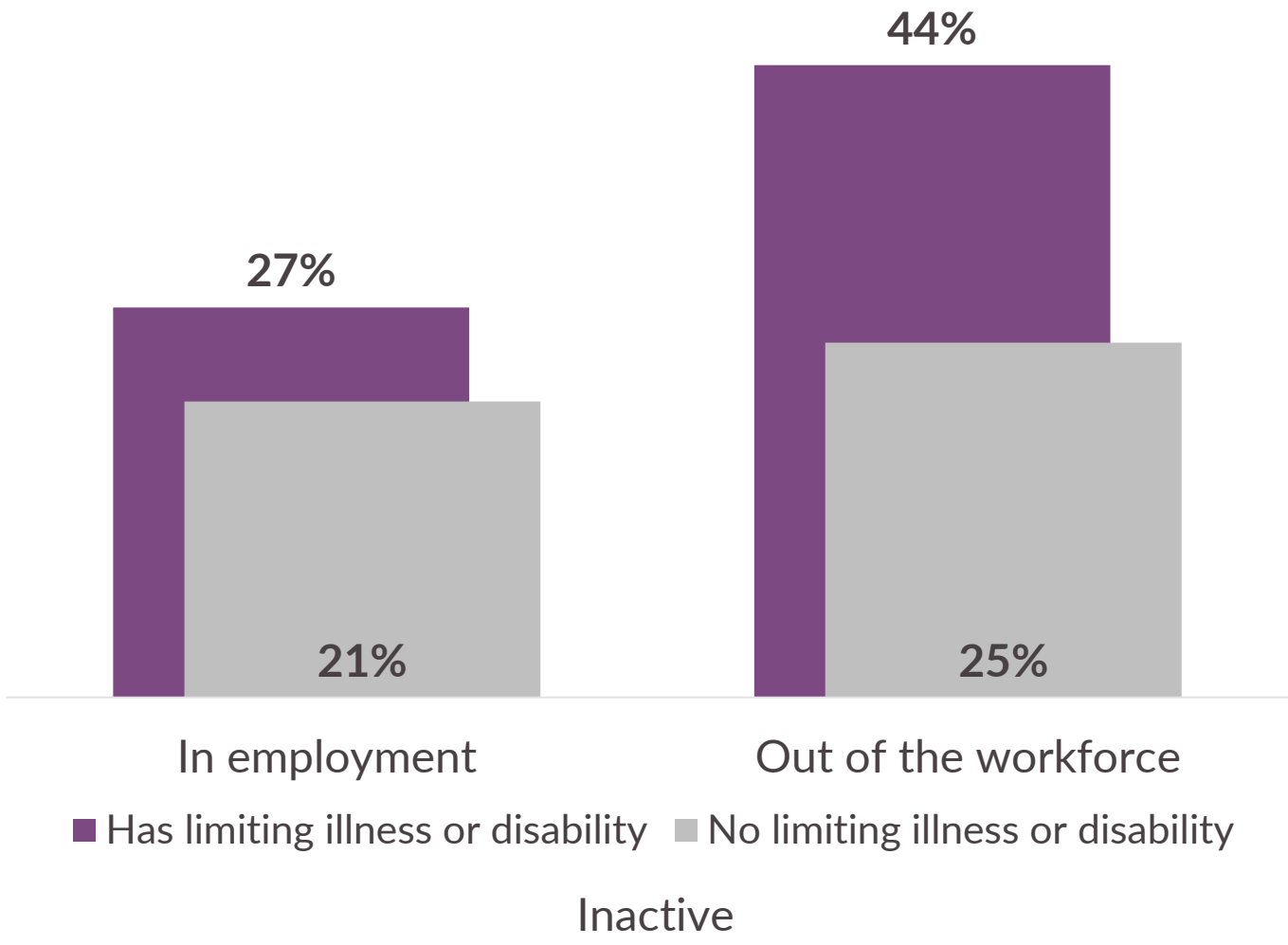
Physical inactivity is higher among disabled adults from non-White British ethnicities



Data is for: Central South

Source: National Survey for Wales, 2020-23 combined, age 16-64

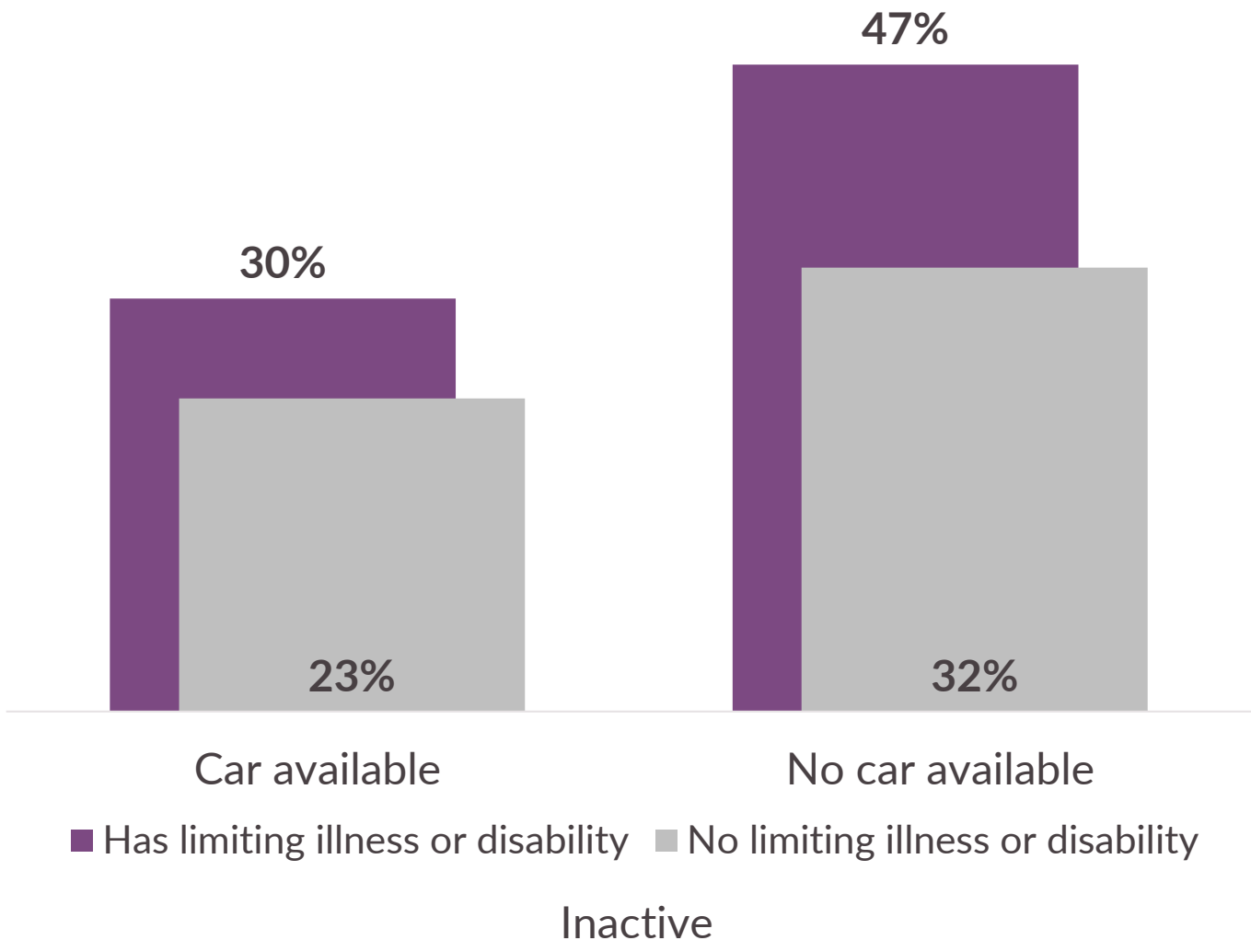
Disabled adults outside of the workforce are far more likely to be physically inactive than those in employment



Data is for: Central South

Source: National Survey for Wales, 2020-23 combined, age 16-64

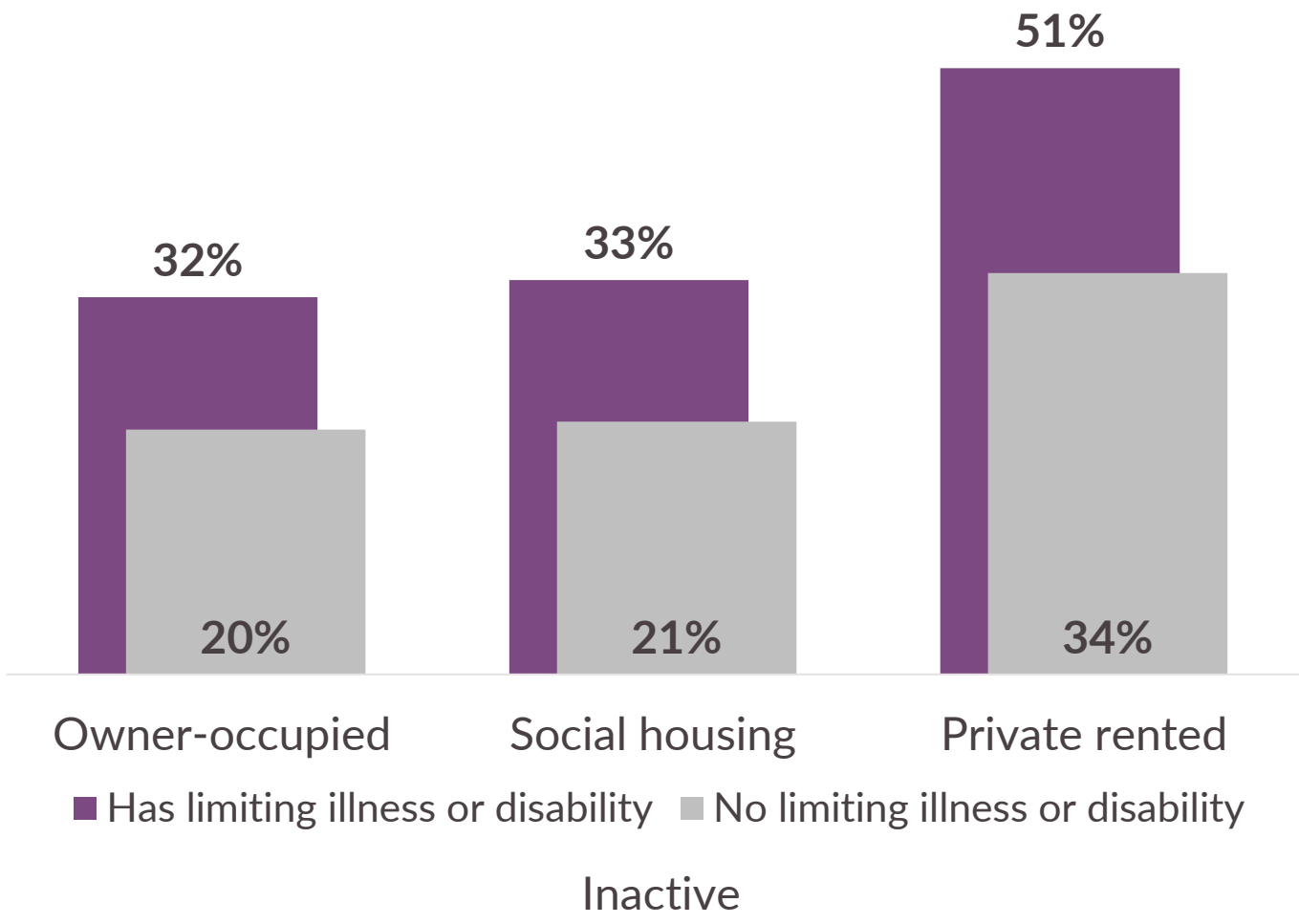
Inactivity rates are higher for disabled people without a car



Data is for: Central South

Source: National Survey for Wales, 2020-23 combined, age 16-64

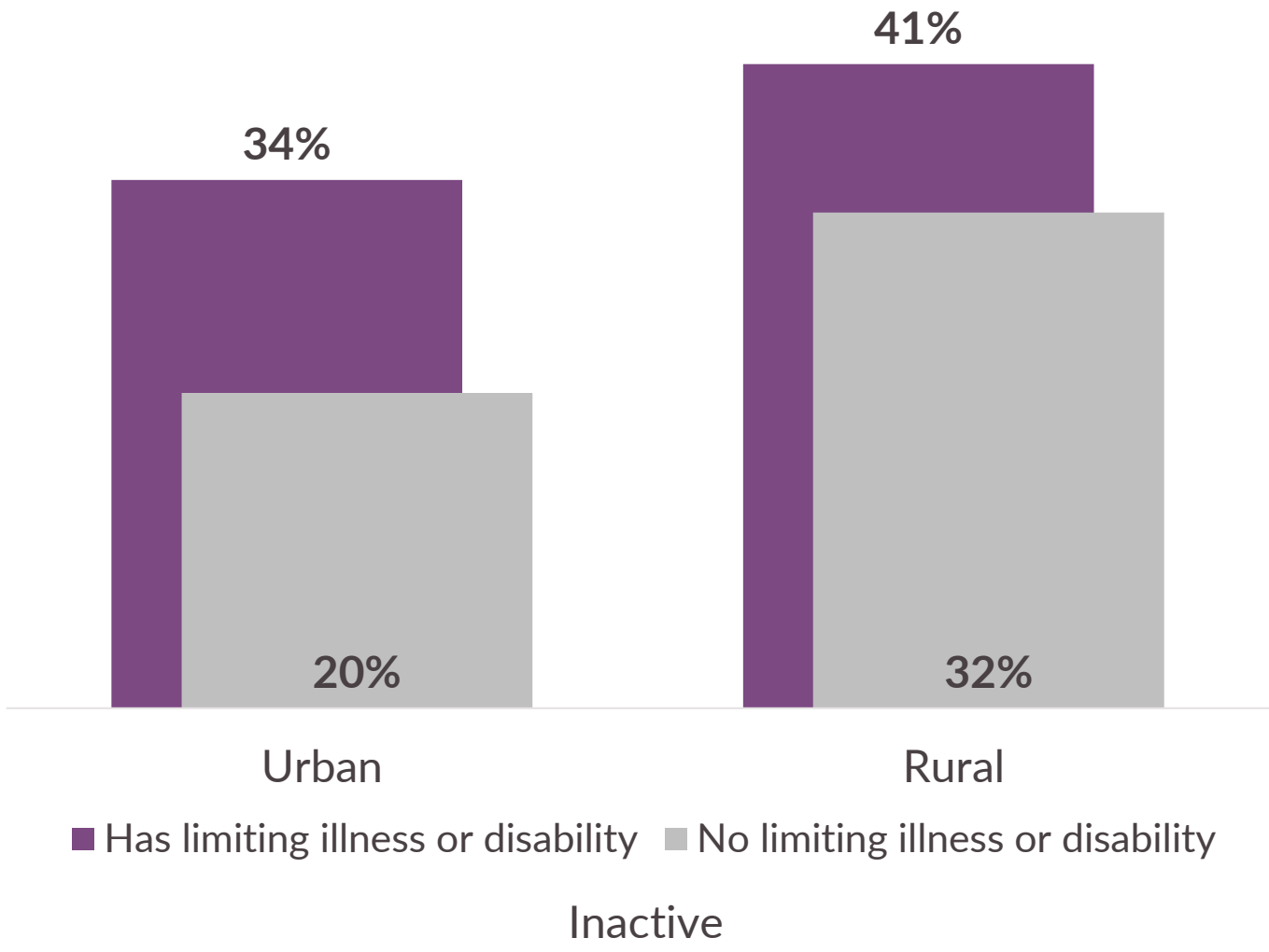
Disabled adults living in private rented accommodation are far more likely to be physically inactive than owner-occupied and social housing



Data is for: Central South

Source: National Survey for Wales, 2020-23 combined, age 16-64

Disabled adults living in rural settings are far more likely to be inactive than those living in urban environments



Data is for: Central South

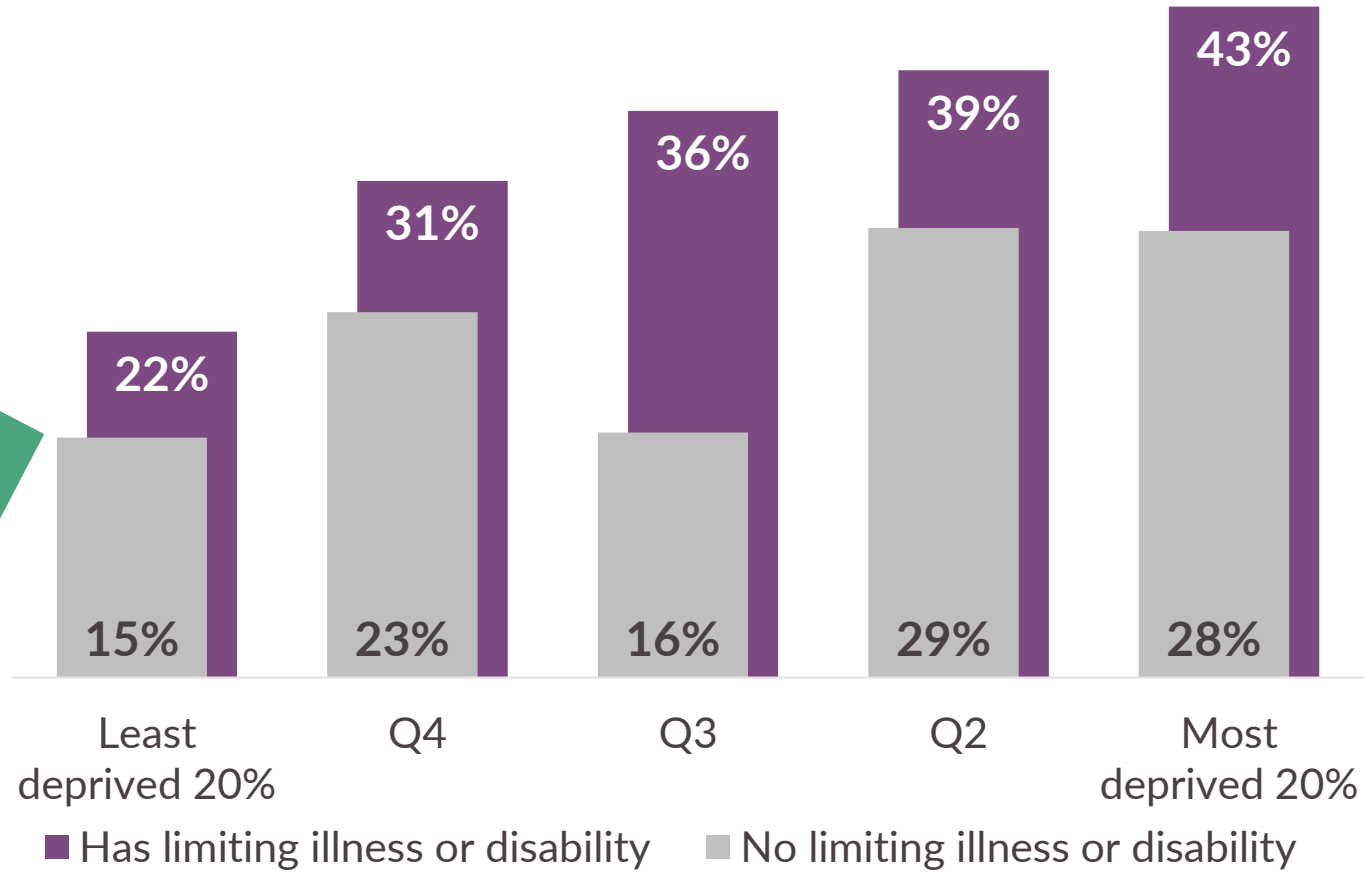
Source: National Survey for Wales, 2020-23 combined, age 16-64

Over 4 in 10 disabled adults living in the most deprived areas are physically inactive

compared to a 2 in 10 of those living in more affluent areas

Look at the difference in **inactivity rates for those with a limiting illness or disability**

Inactivity rates by WIMD



Data is for: Central South

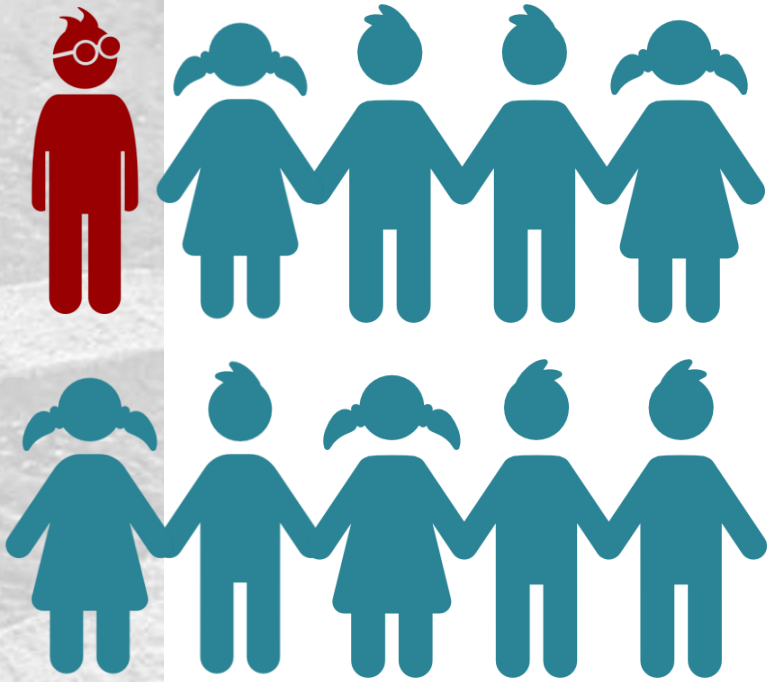
Source: National Survey for Wales, 2020-23 combined, age 16-64

Children and young people

Key messages

- Over 1 in 10 children and young people have a limiting illness or disability. That's 12,000 children
- Disabled Children and young people are less likely to be active than non-disabled children
- Boys are more likely to have a limiting illness or disability than girls. And disabled boys are less likely to be active.
- Disabled secondary school children are less likely to be active than primary aged children. And those in years 10-11 are less likely to be active, compared to year 7-9.
- Disabled children who have access to a car are more likely to be active
- Disabled children living in low affluence households are less likely to be active than their wealthier peers
- There is no difference between levels of activity for disabled children in rural and urban settings
- Disabled children reporting higher life satisfaction are more active than those with lower satisfaction.
- However, disabled children have a lower average WEMWBS score compared to non-disabled children

Sources: ONS Census 2021, aged 5-15 years
School Sports Survey 2023 and SHRN Survey 2021 and 2023



Over

1 in 10

children and young people have a limiting illness or disability (11%)

That's 12,000 children

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 5-15 years

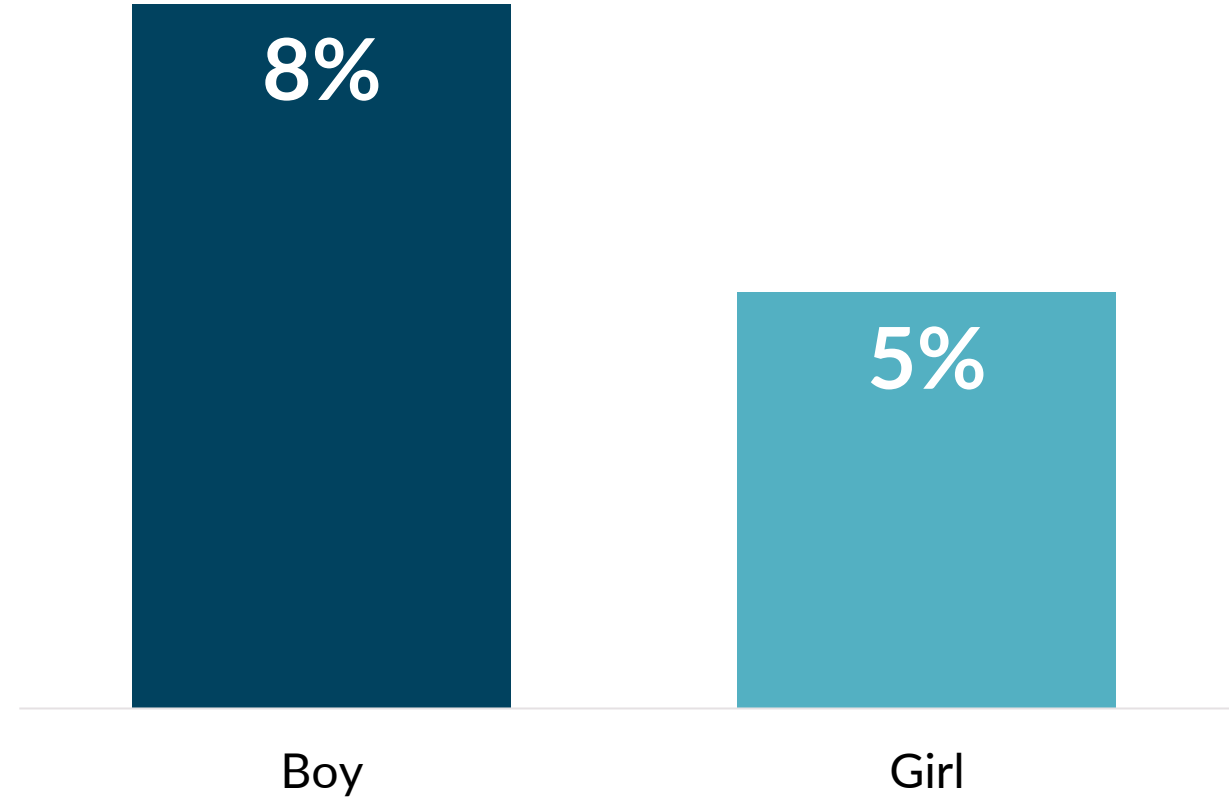
92% of children and young people with a limiting illness or disability consider themselves to be in ‘good’ or ‘fair’ health

(Compared to those without a limiting illness or disability, 99.9%)

9 in 10 are in good/fair health

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 5-15 years

Boys are more likely to have a limiting illness or disability than girls



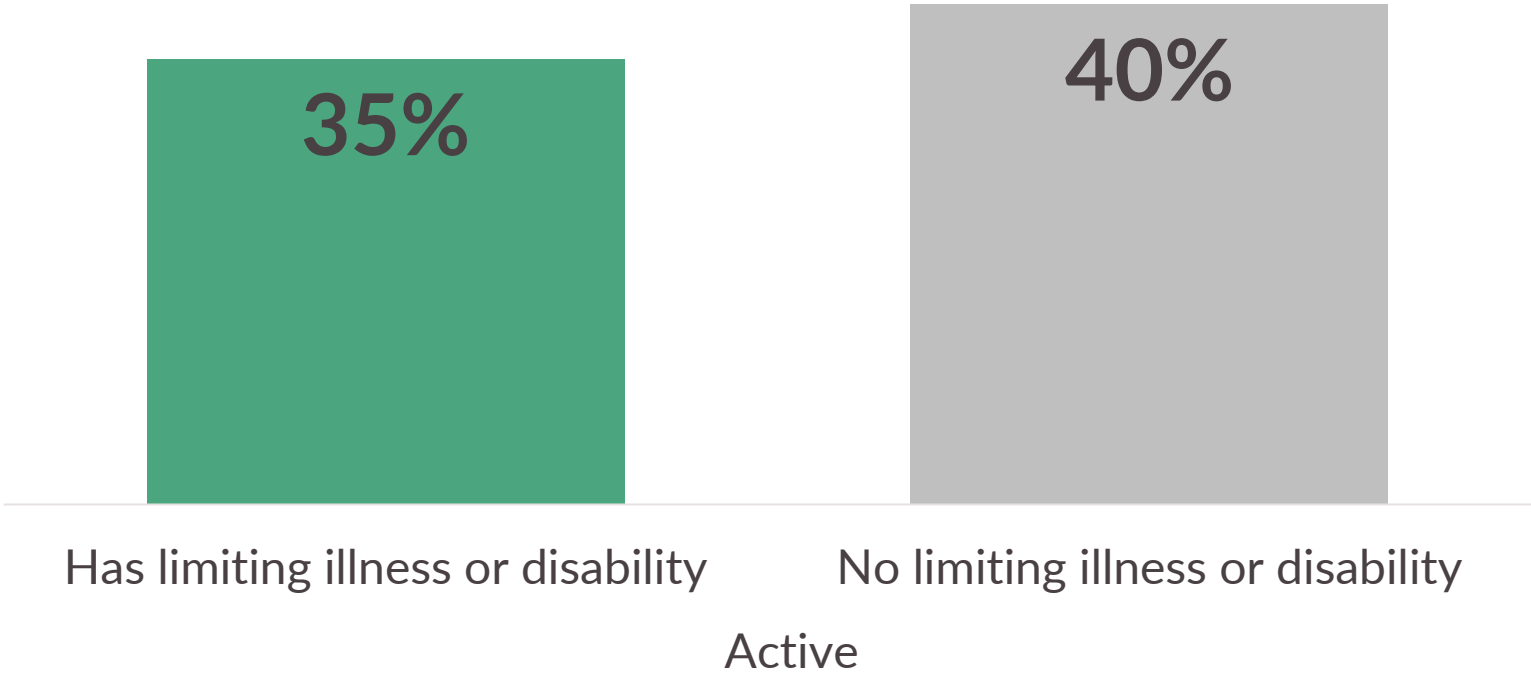
Data is for: Central South

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 0-15 years

School sports survey

Young people who are ‘hooked on sport’. In the following slides, these will be referred to as ‘active’.

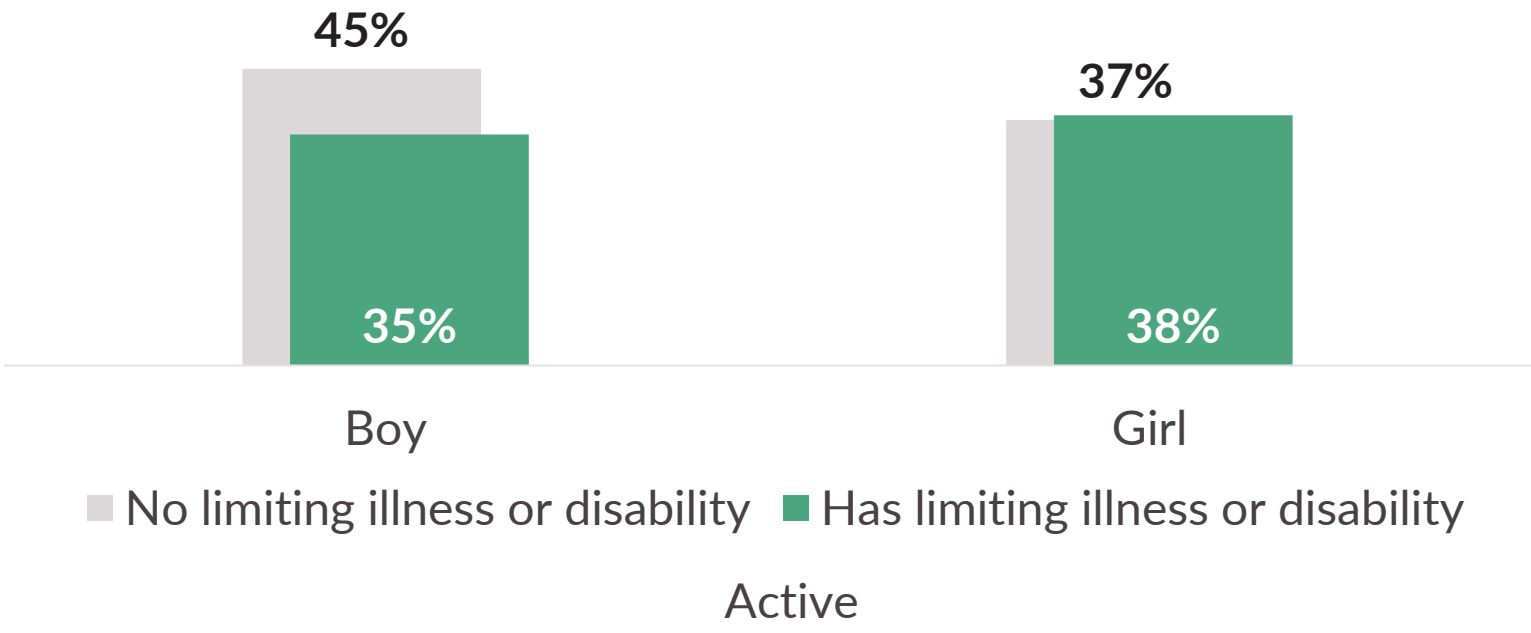
Disabled Children and young people are less likely to be active than non-disabled children



Data is for: Central South

Source: School Sport Survey 2023
Measure: Young people who are 'hooked on sport'

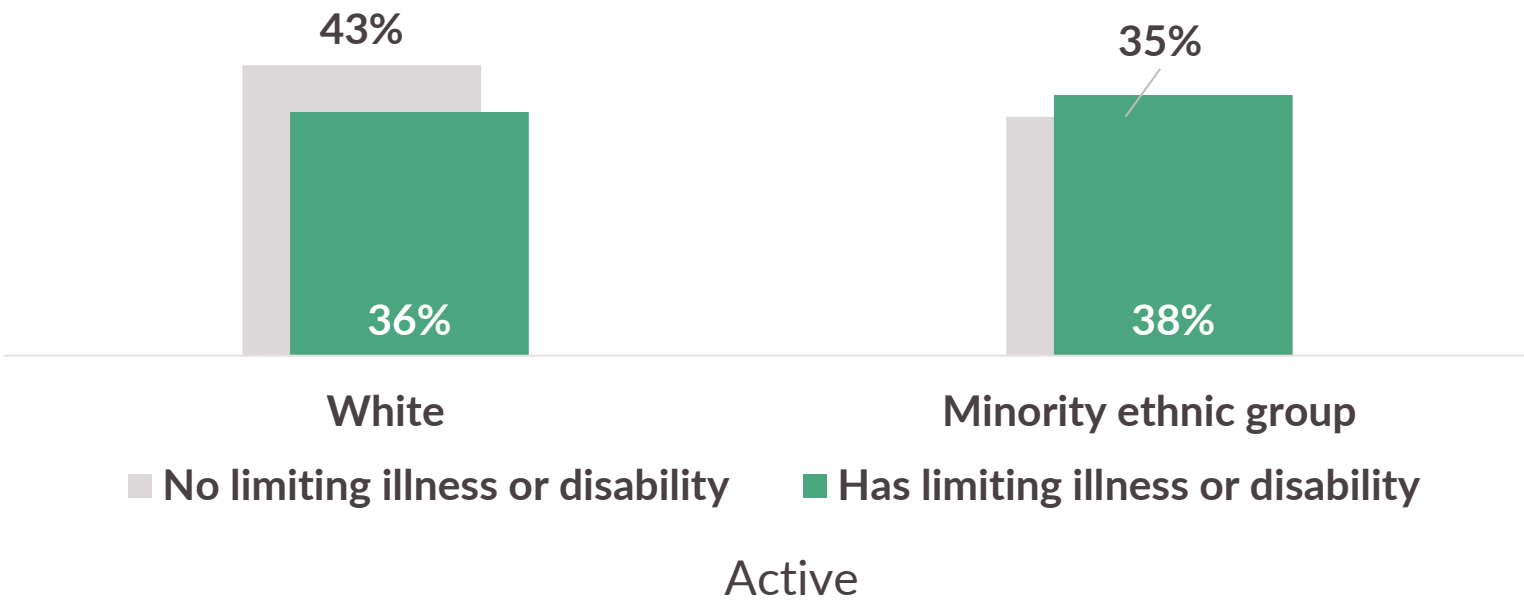
Disabled Boys are less likely to be active than girls



Data is for: Central South

Source: School Sport Survey 2023
Measure: Young people who are 'hooked on sport'

We are only able to report on two categories, White British and Minority ethnic groups. This may mask some of the inequalities between ethnic groups.

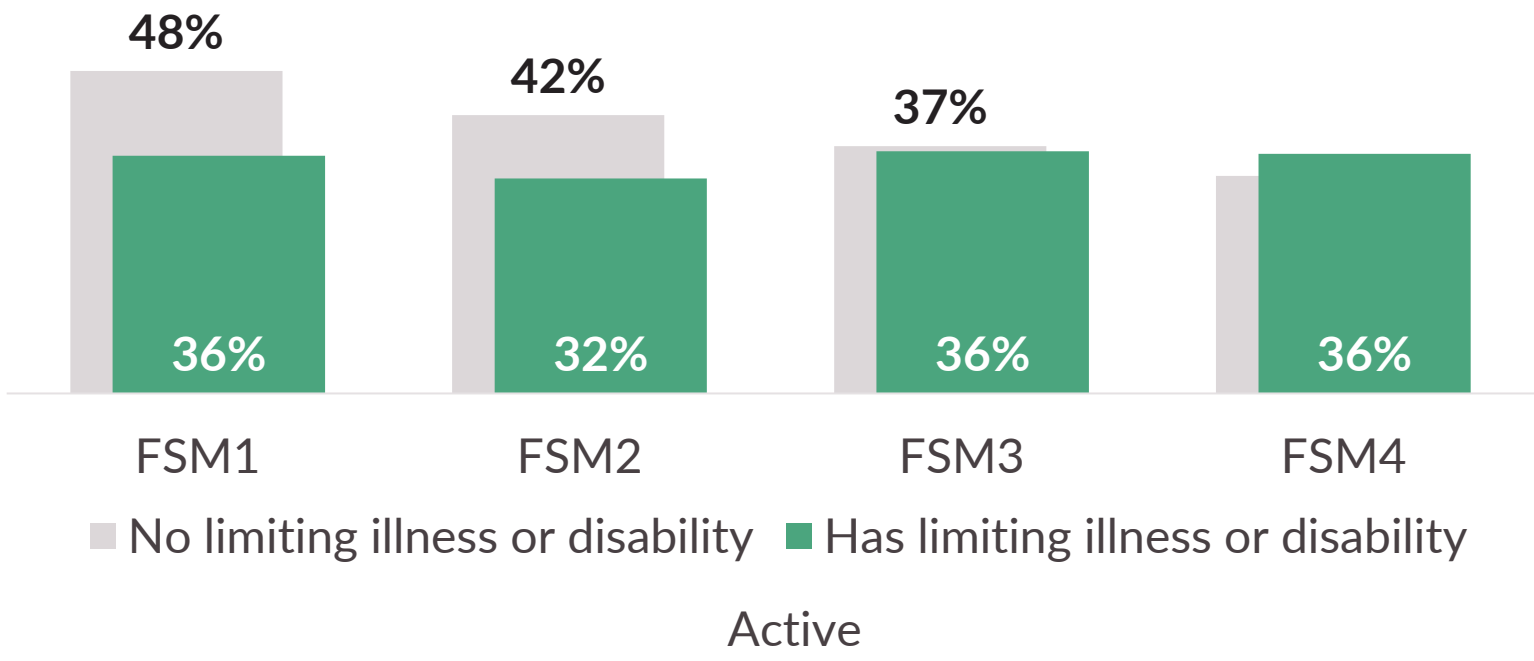


Active

Data is for: Central South

Source: School Sport Survey 2023
Measure: Young people who are 'hooked on sport'

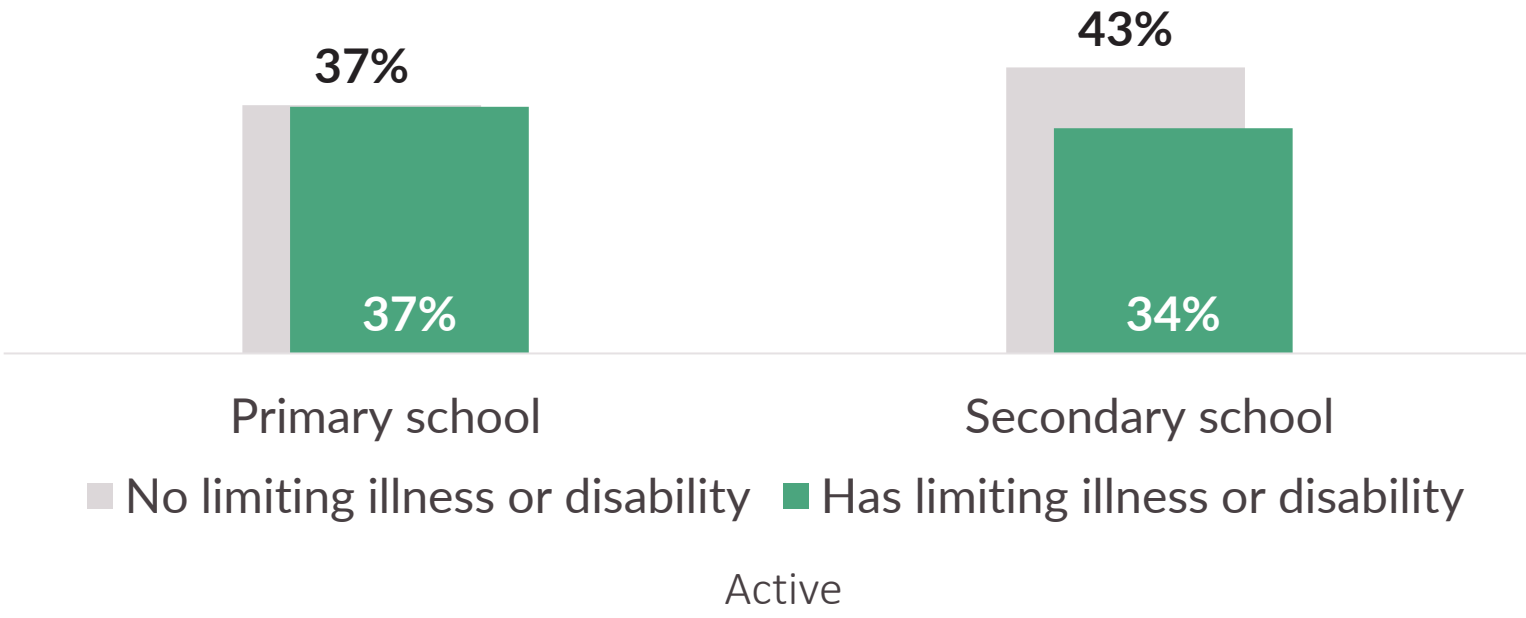
The **level of deprivation** of disabled children doesn't appear to impact their levels of activity



Data is for: Central South

Source: School Sport Survey 2023
Measure: Young people who are 'hooked on sport'

Disabled Secondary school children are less likely to be active than primary aged children



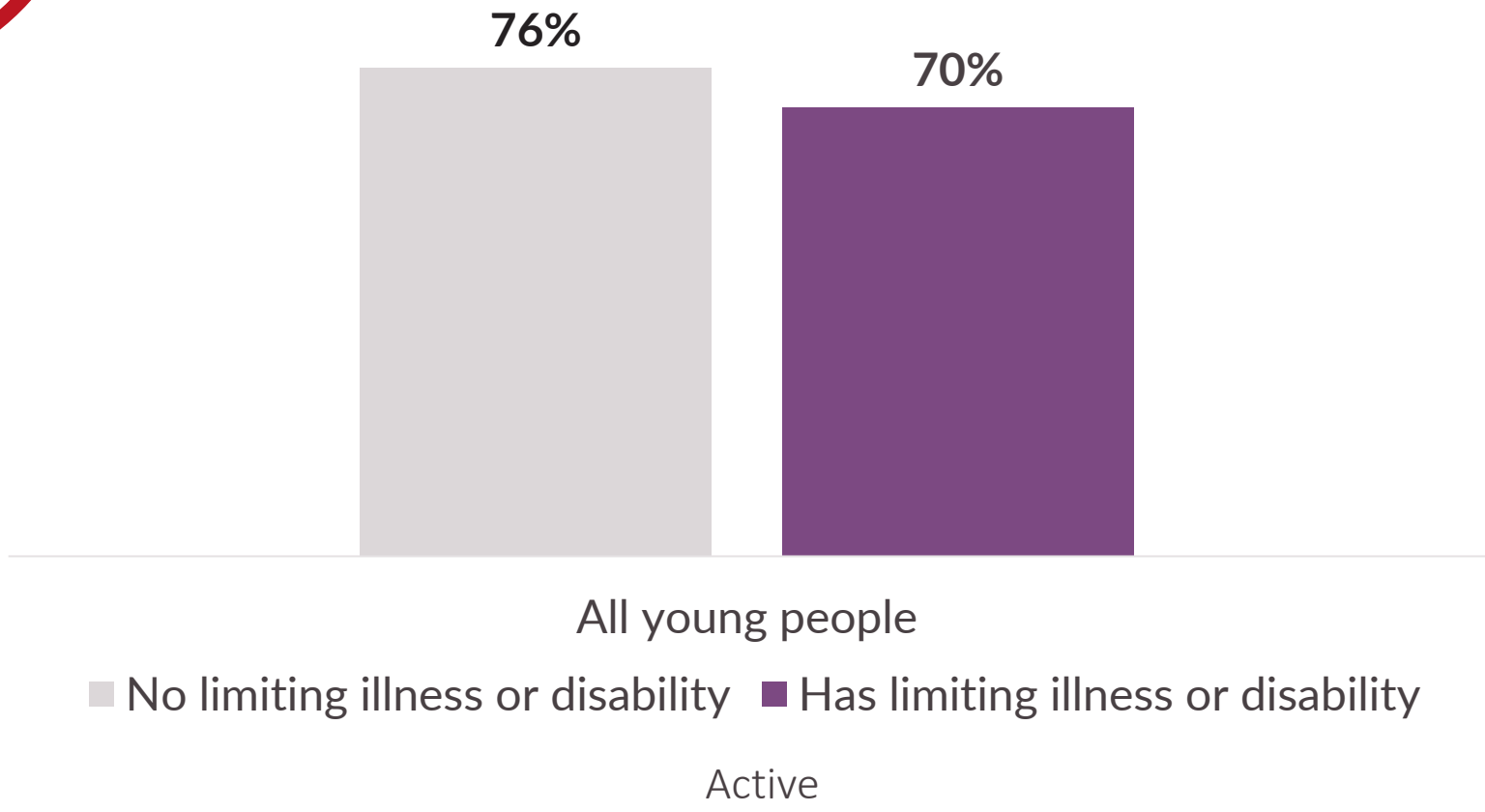
Data is for: Central South

Source: School Sport Survey 2023
Measure: Young people who are 'hooked on sport'

SHRN data

Young people who are active 3+ days a week

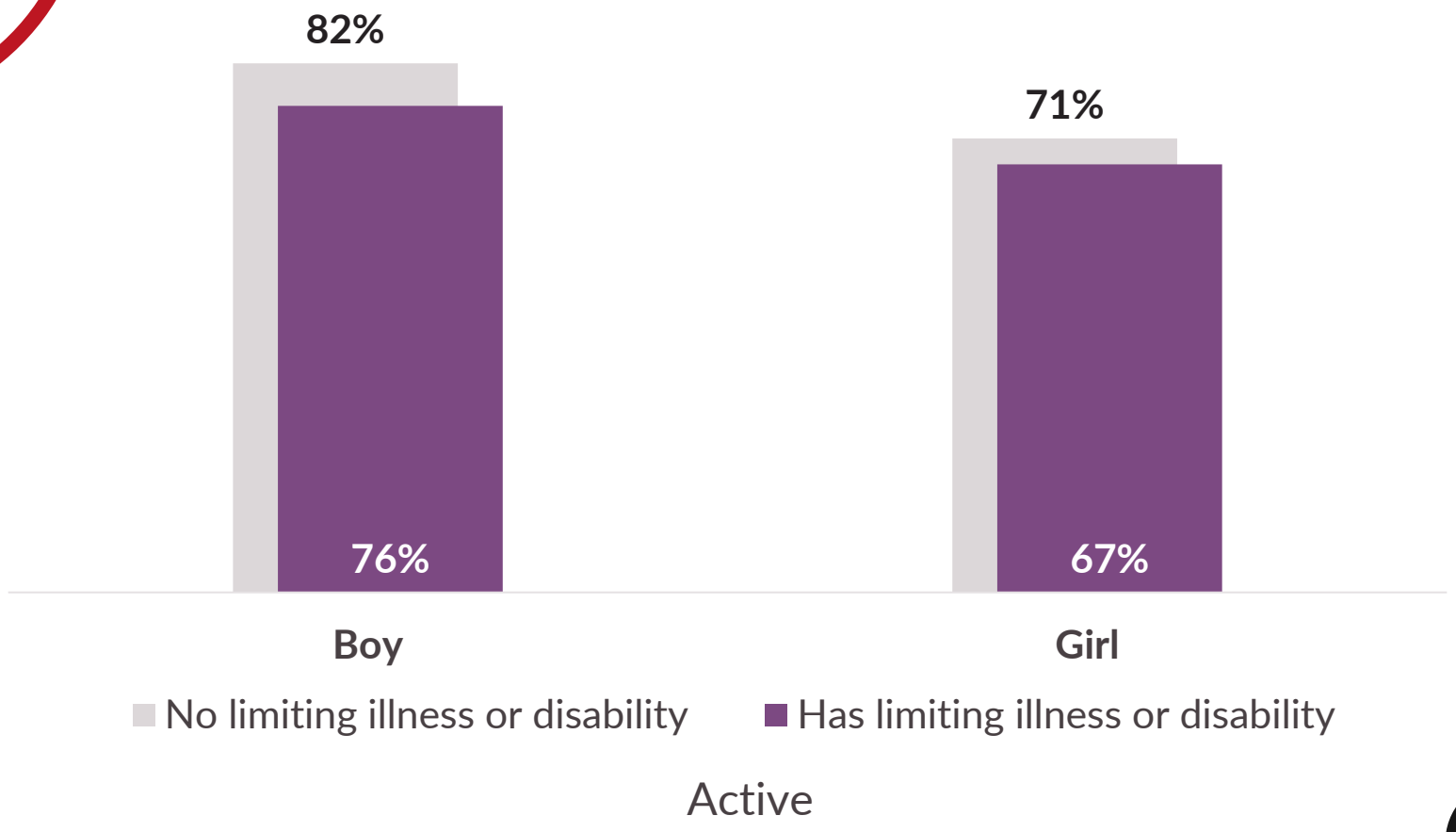
Disabled Children and young people are less likely to be active than non-disabled children



Data is for: Central South

Source: School Health Research Network 2021 and 2023
Measure: Young people who are active 3+ days a week

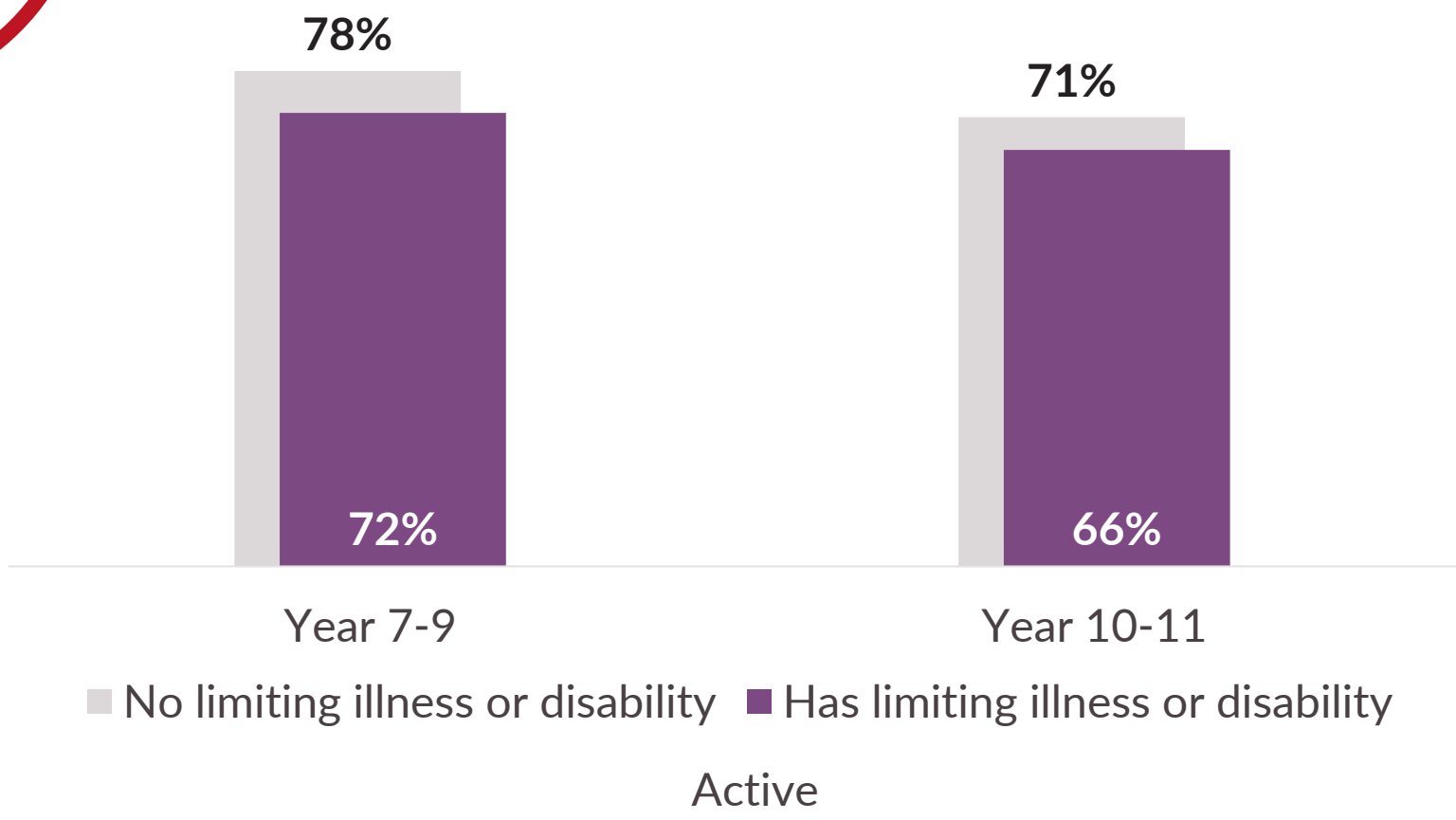
Disabled Girls are less likely to be active than boys



Data is for: Central South

Source: School Health Research Network 2021 and 2023
Measure: Young people who are active 3+ days a week

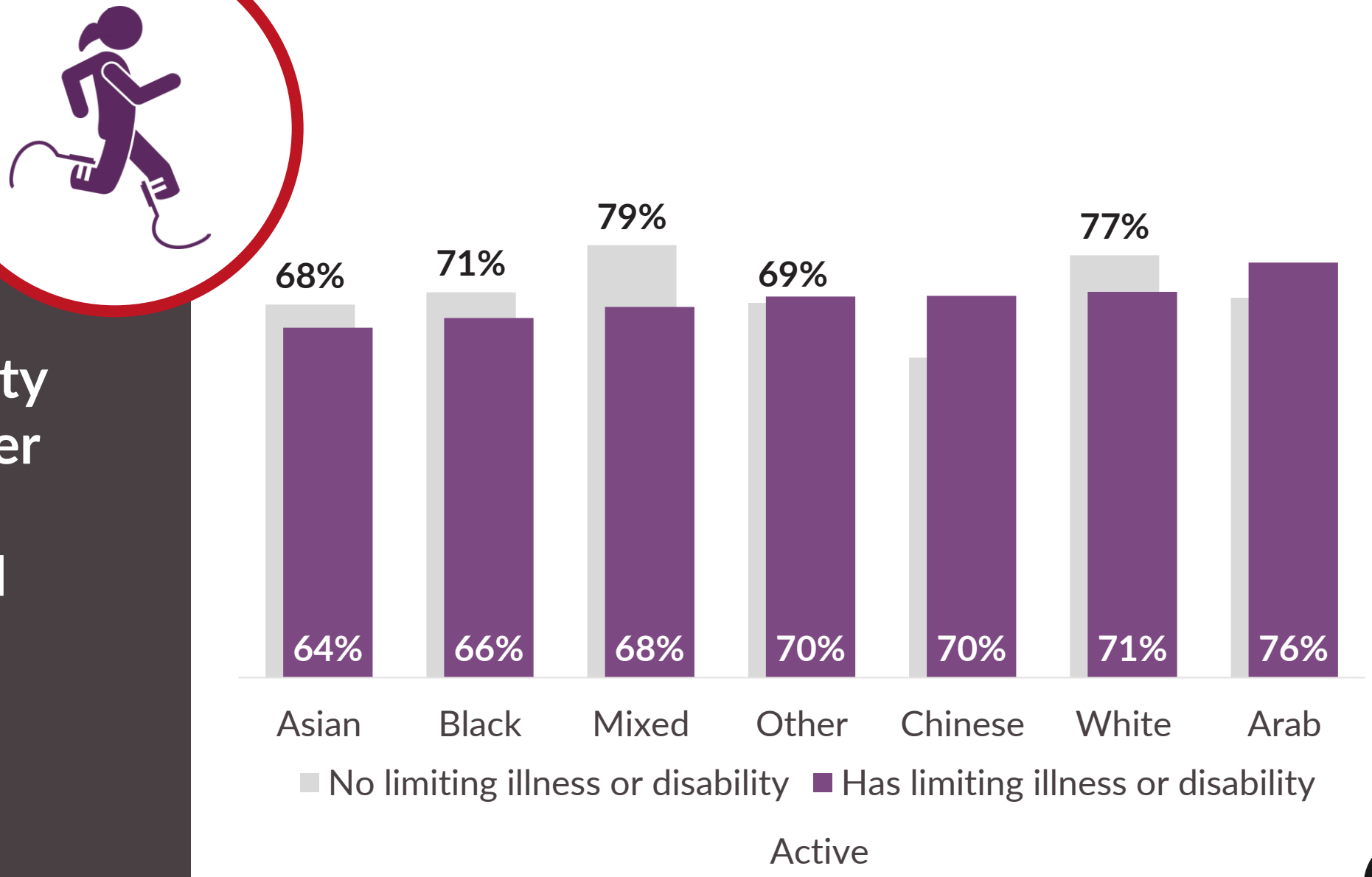
Disabled children in **years 10-11 are less likely to be active**, compared to year 7-9



Data is for: Central South

Source: School Health Research Network 2021 and 2023
Measure: Young people who are active 3+ days a week

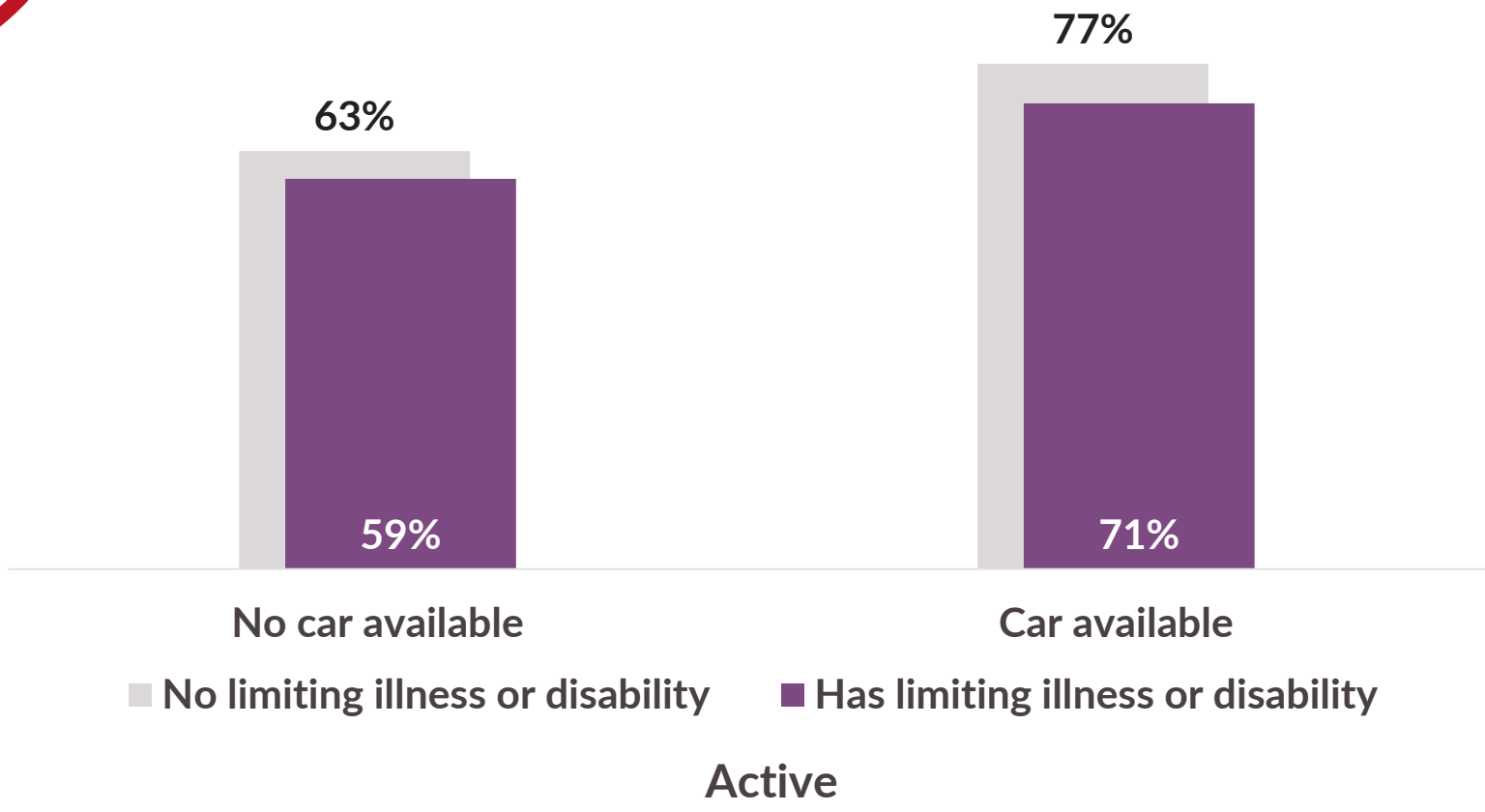
Physical **activity levels are lower for Asian and Black disabled children** and young people



Data is for: Central South

Source: School Health Research Network 2021 and 2023
Measure: Young people who are active 3+ days a week

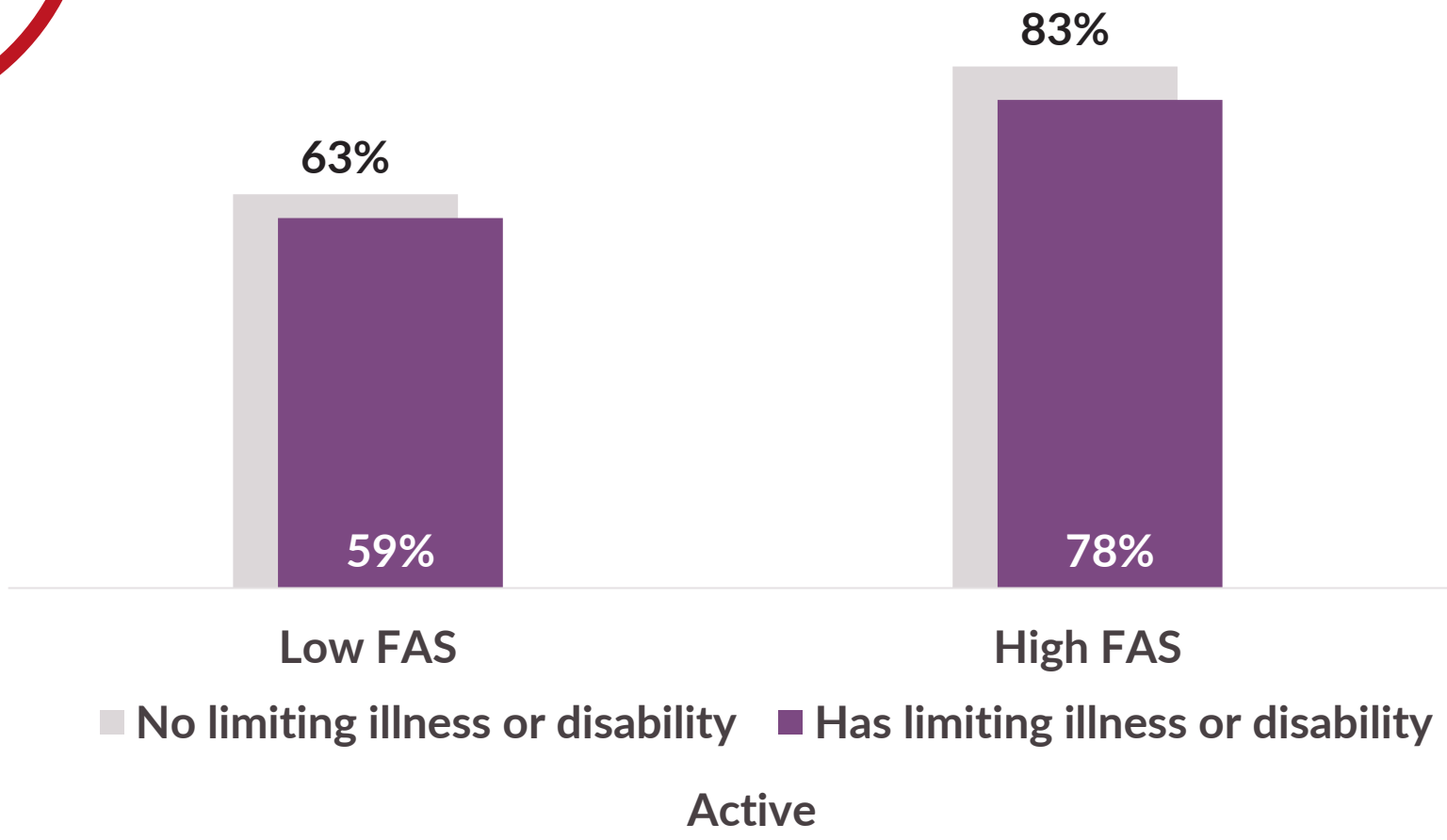
Disabled children who have **access to a car** are more likely to be active



Data is for: Central South

Source: School Health Research Network 2021 and 2023
Measure: Young people who are active 3+ days a week

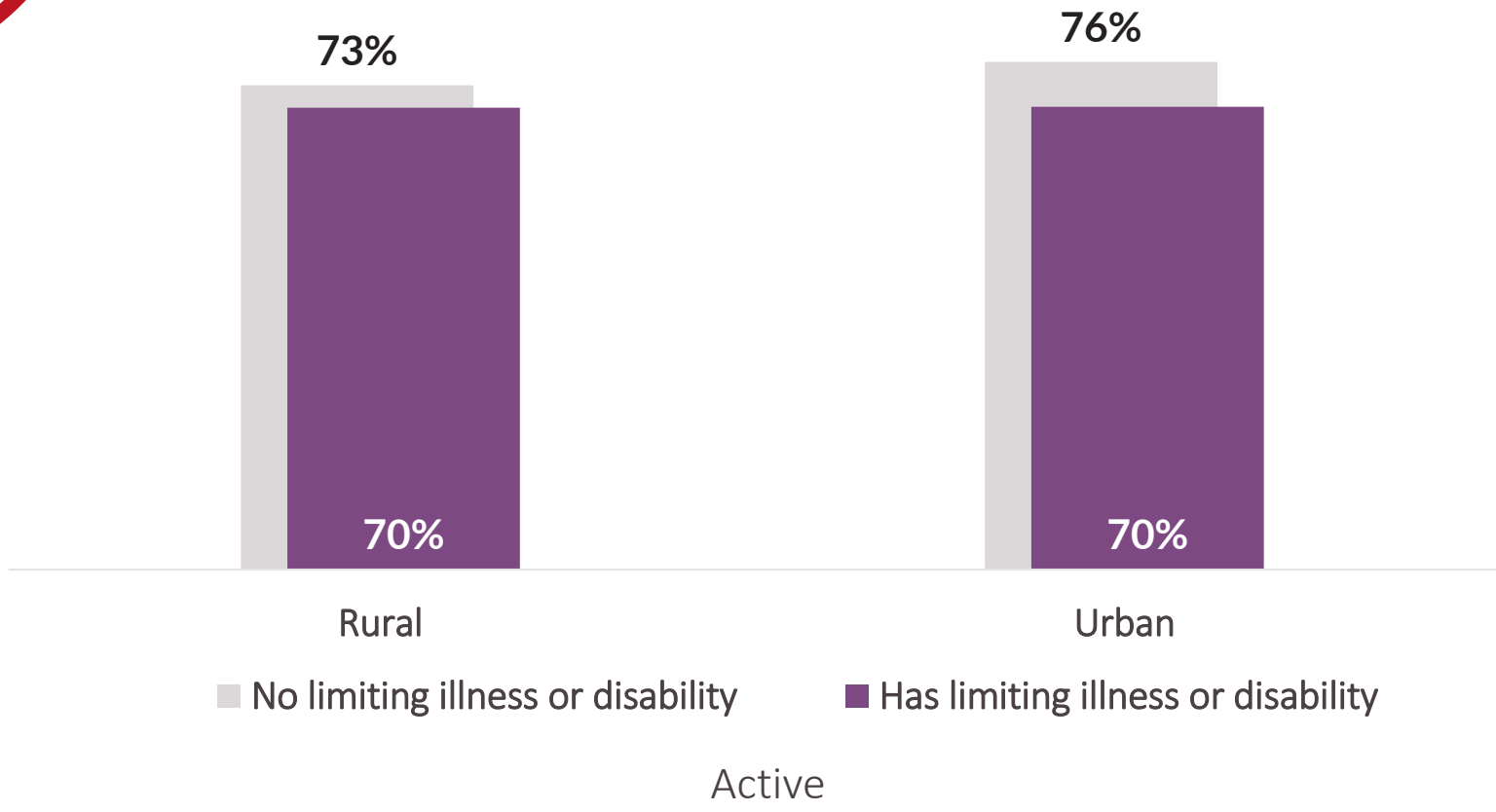
Disabled children living in **low affluence** households are less likely to be active than their wealthier peers



Data is for: Central South

Source: School Health Research Network 2021 and 2023
Measure: Young people who are active 3+ days a week

There is no difference between levels of activity for disabled children in **rural and urban settings**

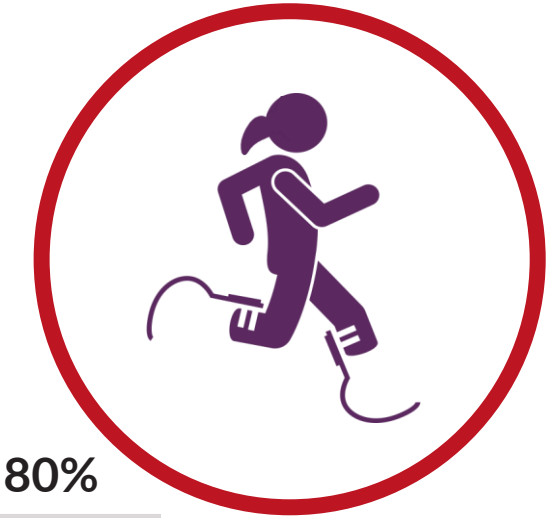


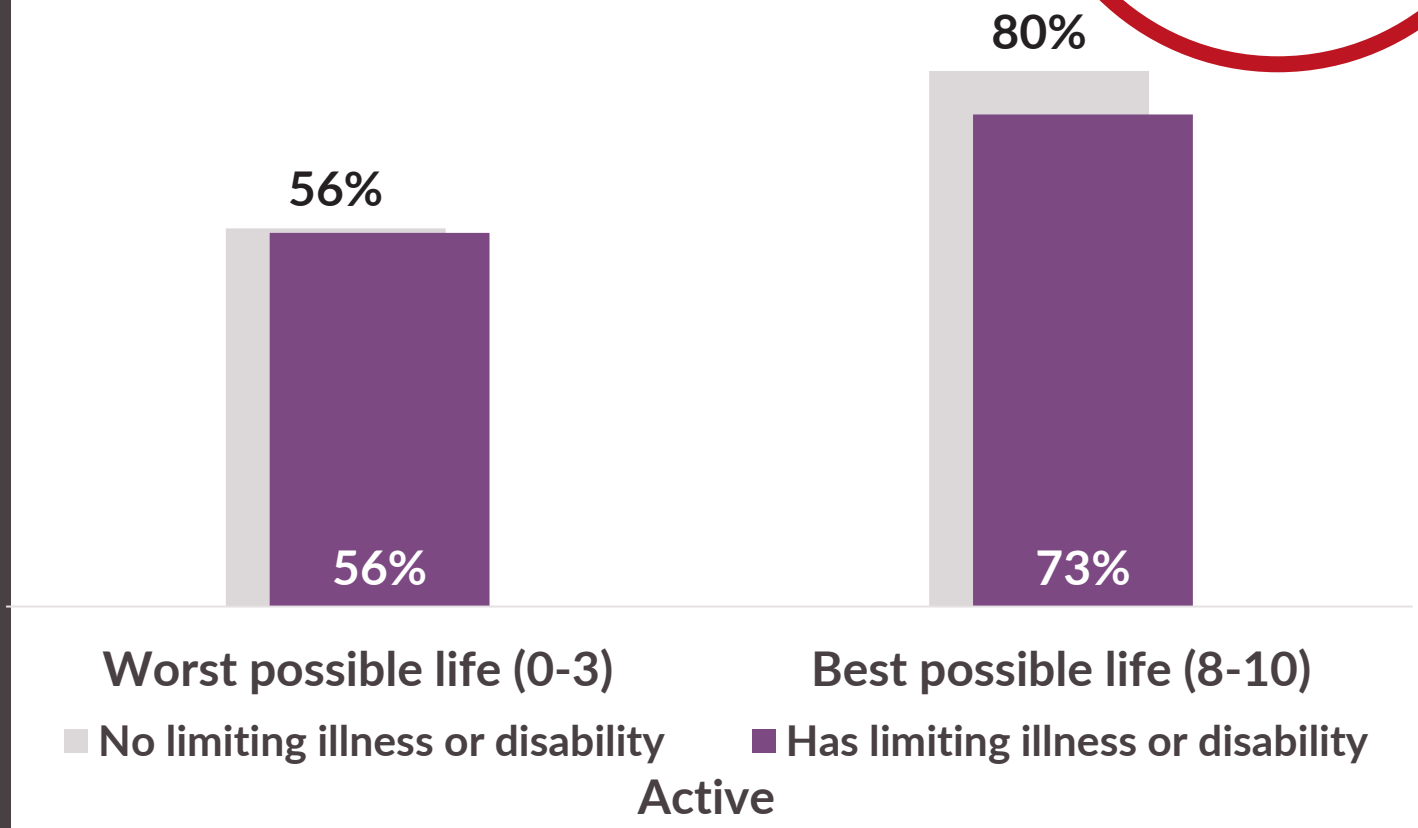
Data is for: Central South

Source: School Health Research Network 2021 and 2023
Measure: Young people who are active 3+ days a week

Disabled children reporting higher life satisfaction are more active than those with lower satisfaction

However, disabled children have a lower average WEMWBS score compared to non-disabled children.



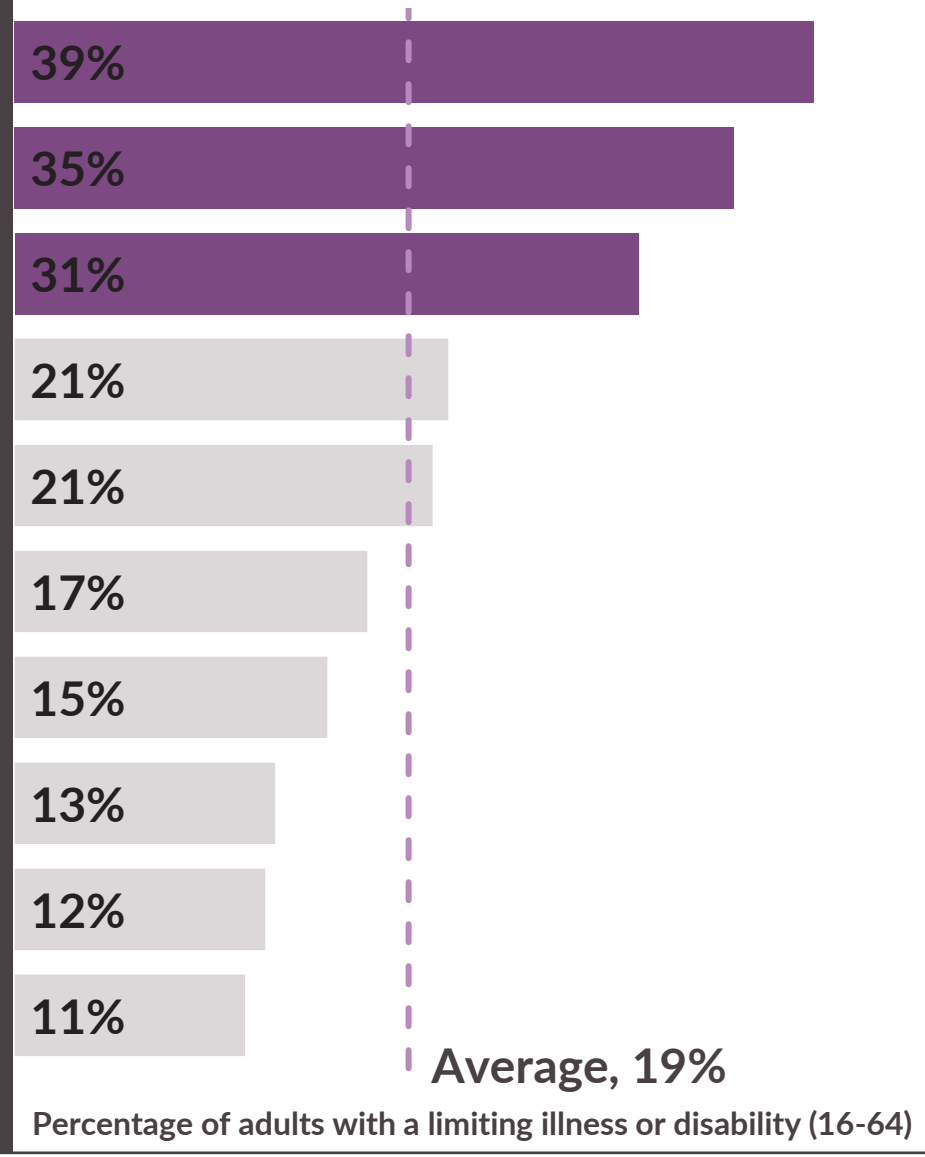


Source: School Health Research Network 2021 and 2023
Measure: Young people who are active 3+ days a week

Additional adult Census slides for extra context

Disabled population by different demographic groups

For example, 39% of adults who are economically inactive have a disability

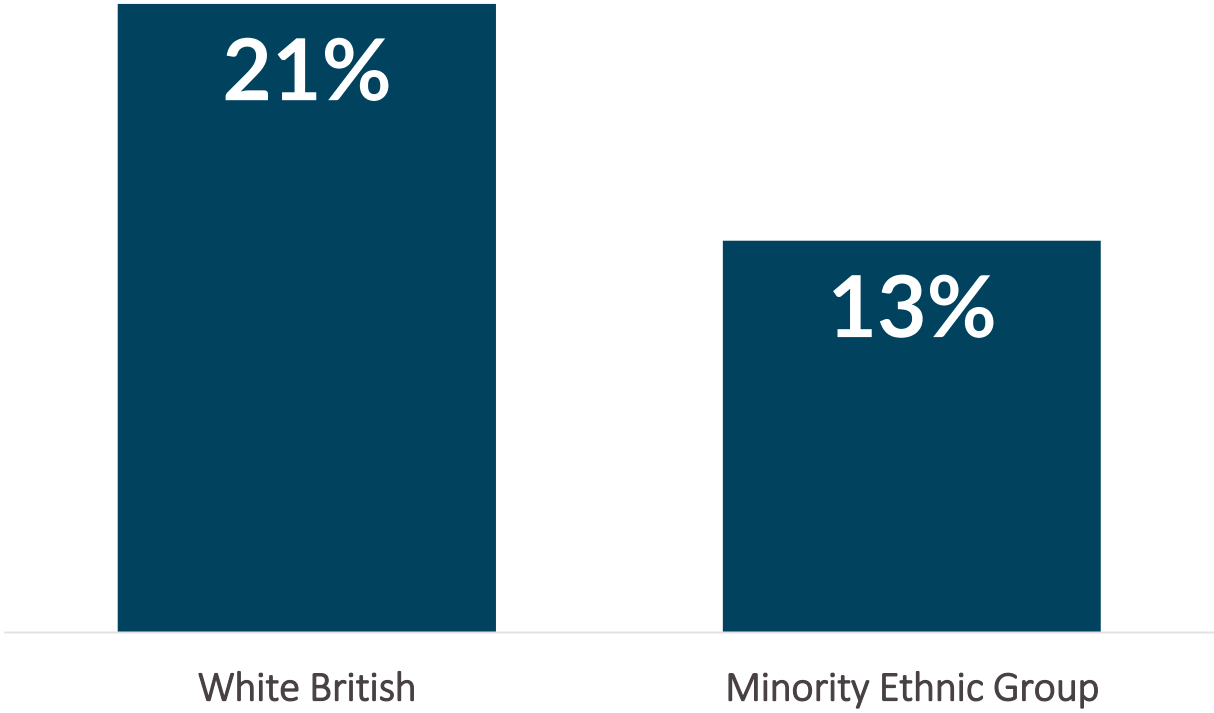


Percentage of adults with a limiting illness or disability (16-64)

Data is for: Central South

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

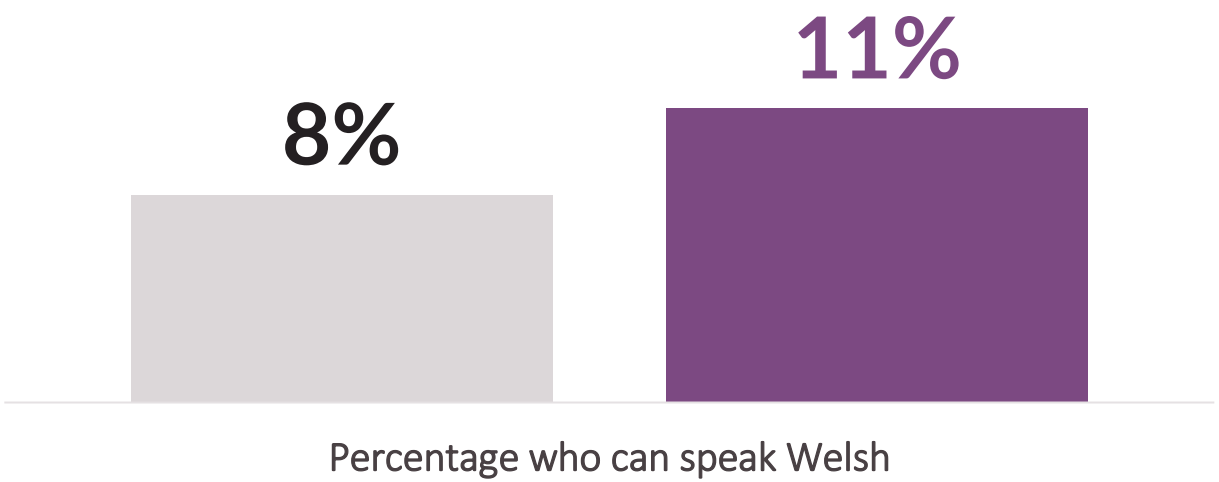
There is a higher proportion of adults with a limiting illness or disability in the White British community



Data is for: Central South

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

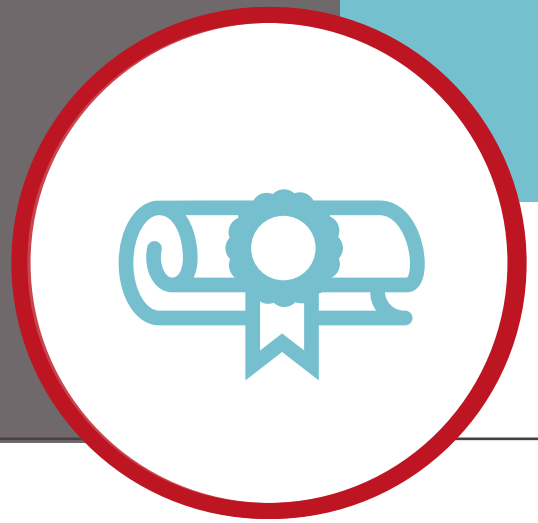
There is a higher proportion of adults without a limiting illness or disability who speak Welsh



Data is for: Central South

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

People with a limiting illness or disability are less likely to have a level 2 or higher qualification



87%

of people without a disability have a level 2 or higher qualification

Compared to

69%

of people with a disability

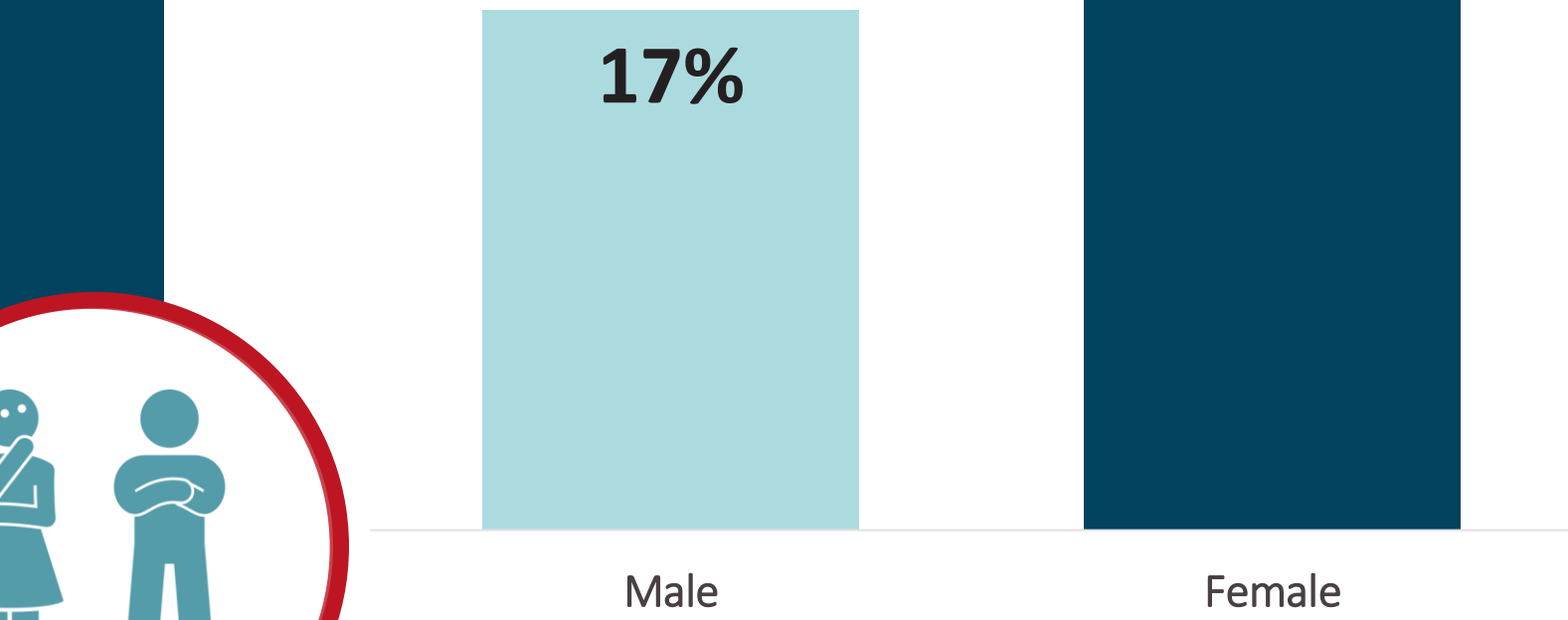
Not disabled under the Equality Act

Disabled under the Equality Act

Data is for: Central South

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

Women are more likely to have a limiting illness or disability than men

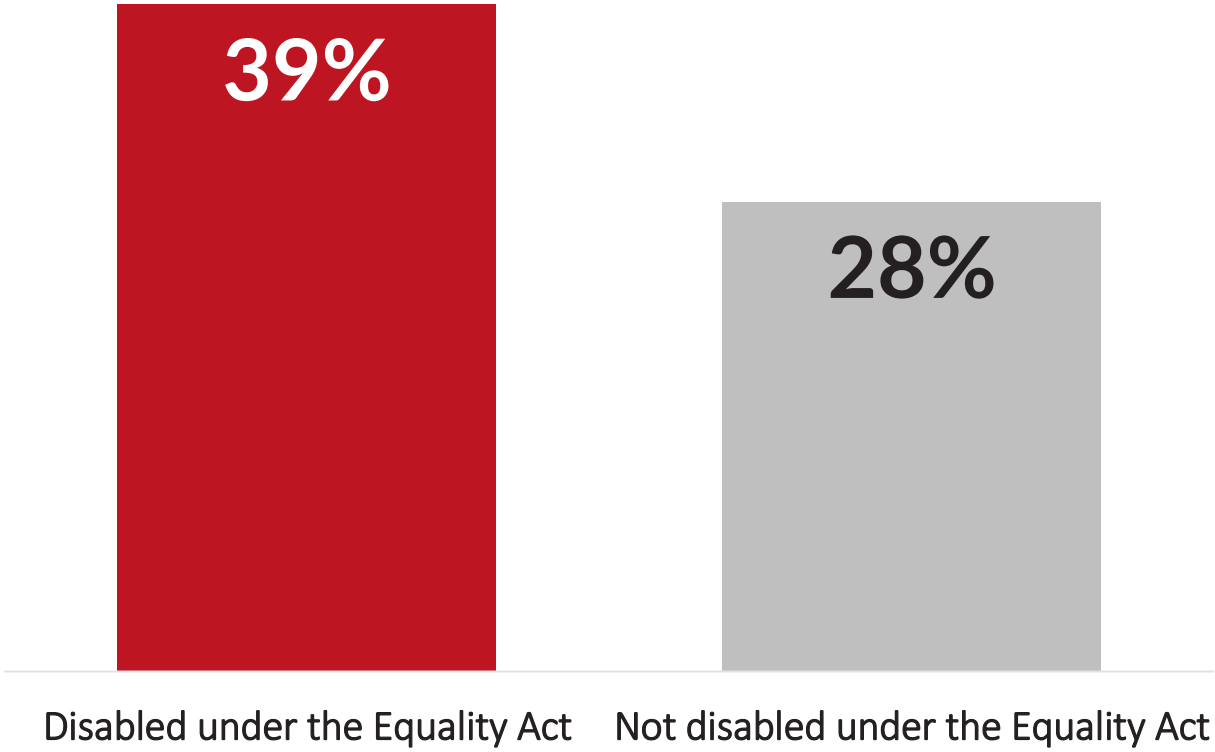


Data is for: Central South

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

4 in 10 disabled people live in areas of deprivation

compared to around 3 in 10 of those without a disability



Data is for: Central South

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years