PRESSRED

Wales:

An insight into physical activity behaviours of our disabled population



April 2025

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY®

CHWARAEON ANABLEDD CYMRU
DISABILITY SPORT WALES

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

1.9m

370,000

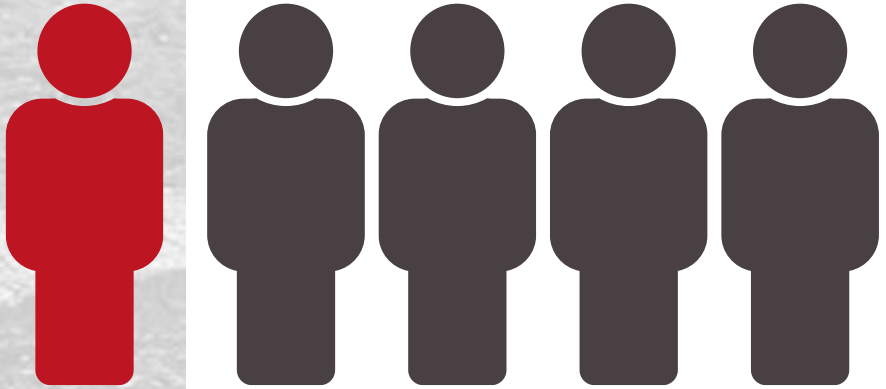
of those have a limiting illness or disability (19%)

152,000

of those with a limiting illness or disability are inactive (41%)

Data is for: Wales

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 370,000 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, 99.6%)



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



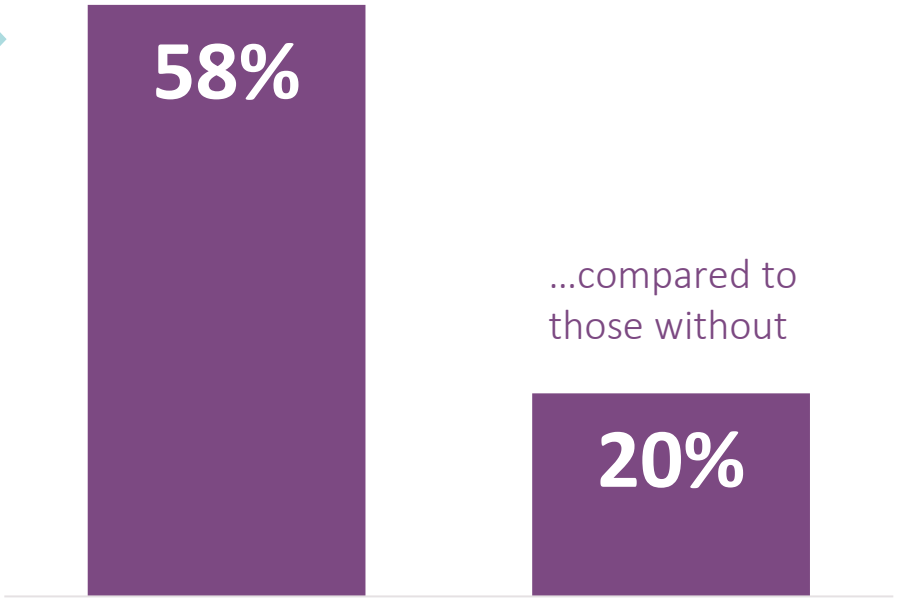
29%

Data is for: Wales

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

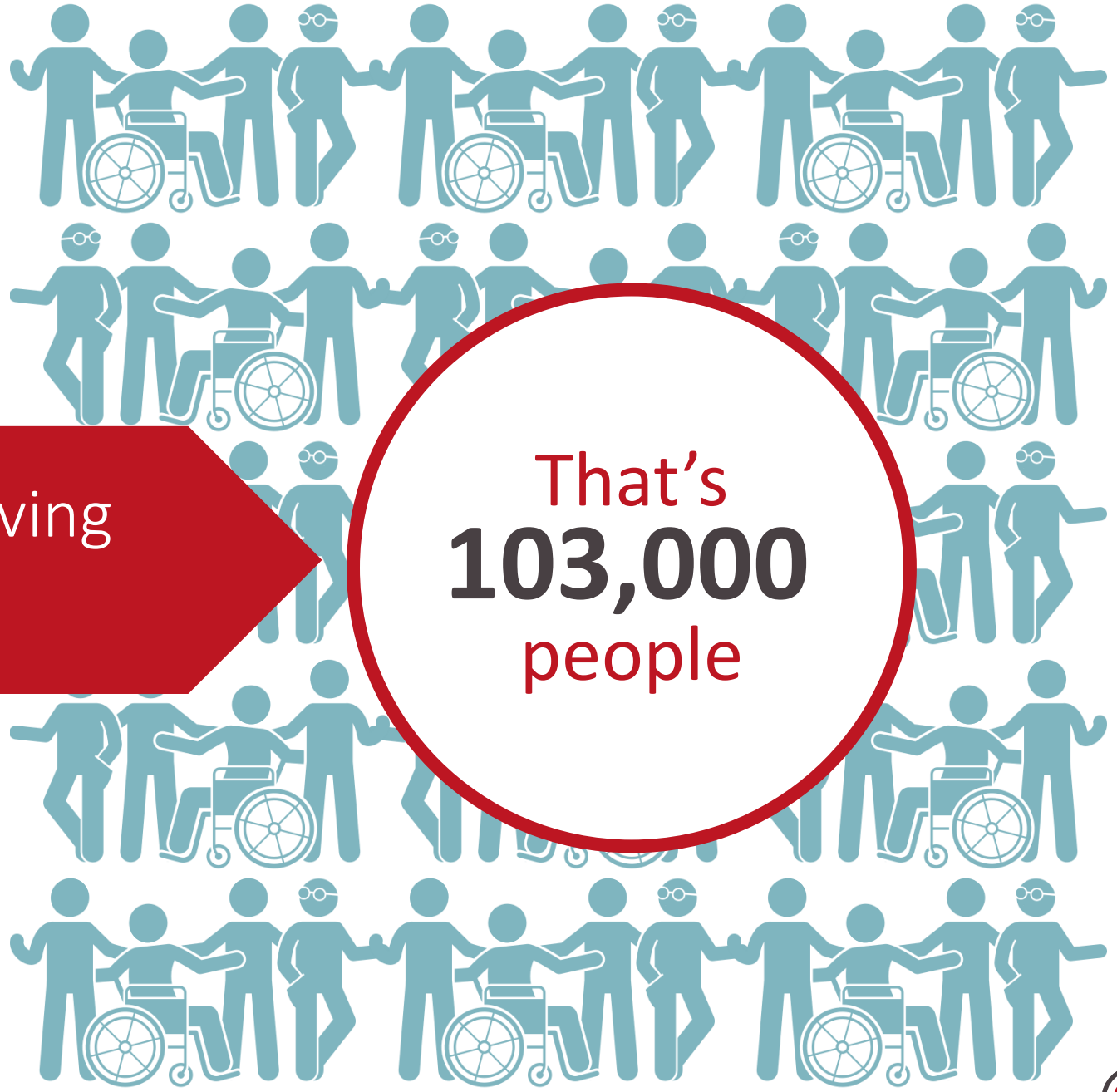
People with a limiting illness or disability are **3 times more likely** to be economically inactive…





Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

28% of disabled adults are living in **urban deprivation**



Data is for: Wales

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

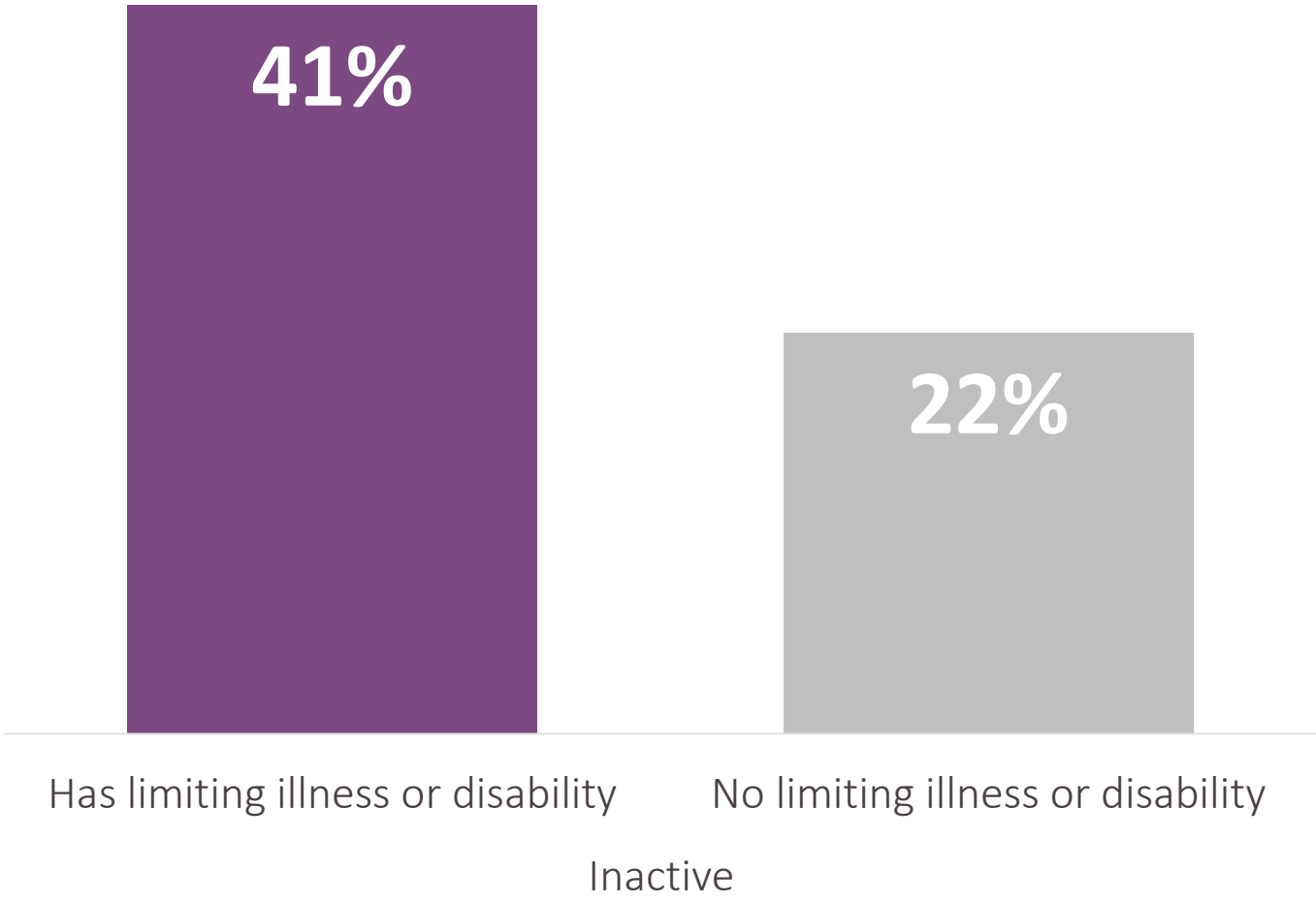
Latest 3 years of data have been combined to boost sample sizes (2020-23) throughout this section, unless stated otherwise

Key messages



- Our adults are twice as likely to be inactive if they have a disability
- Disabled women's inactivity levels are similar to 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 There is little difference between levels of inactivity for disabled people in rural and urban settings
- Almost half disabled adults living in the most deprived areas are physically inactive, compared to a third of those living in more affluent areas

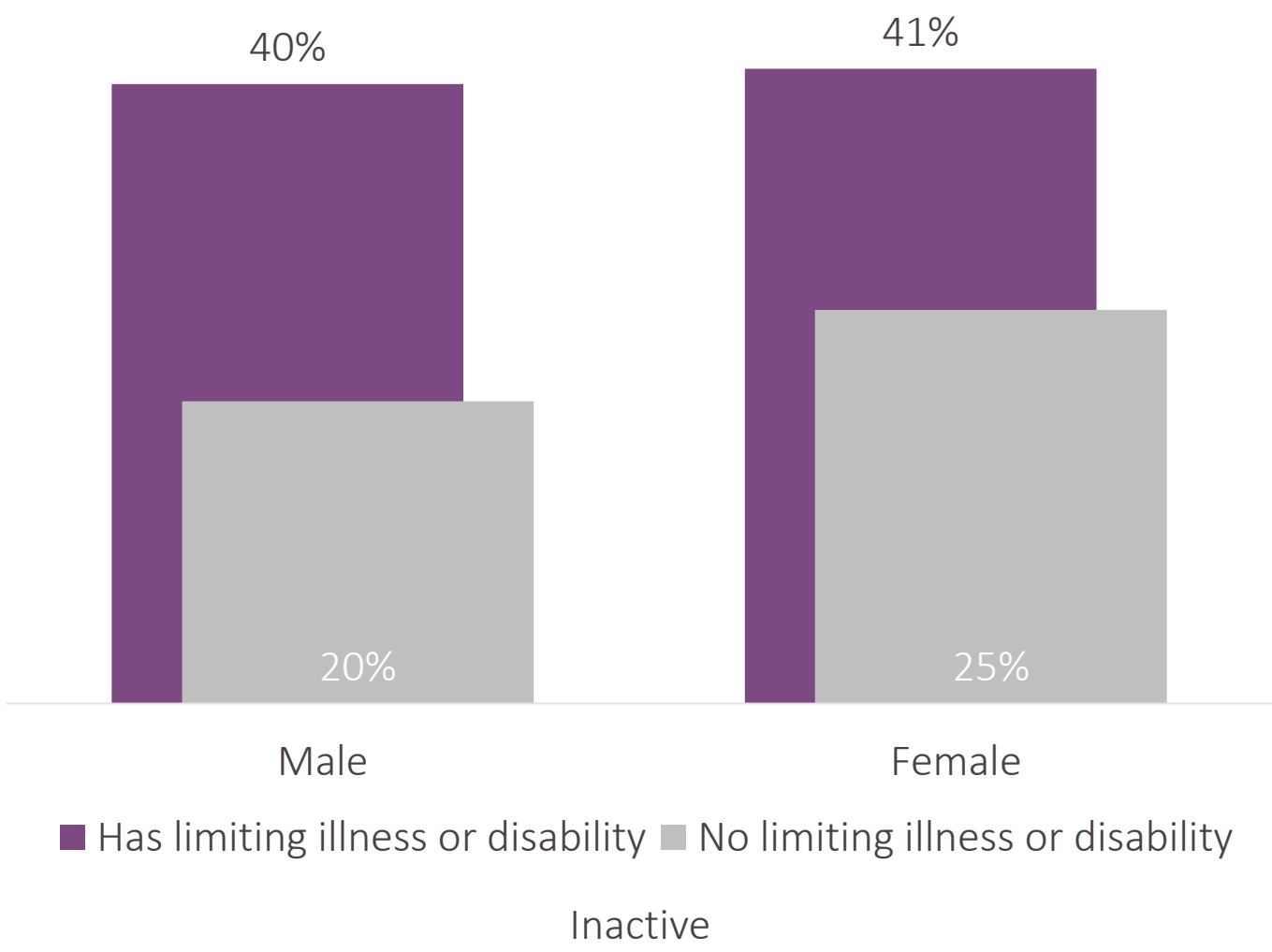
Disabled adults are **twice as likely to be inactive**



Data is for: Wales

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

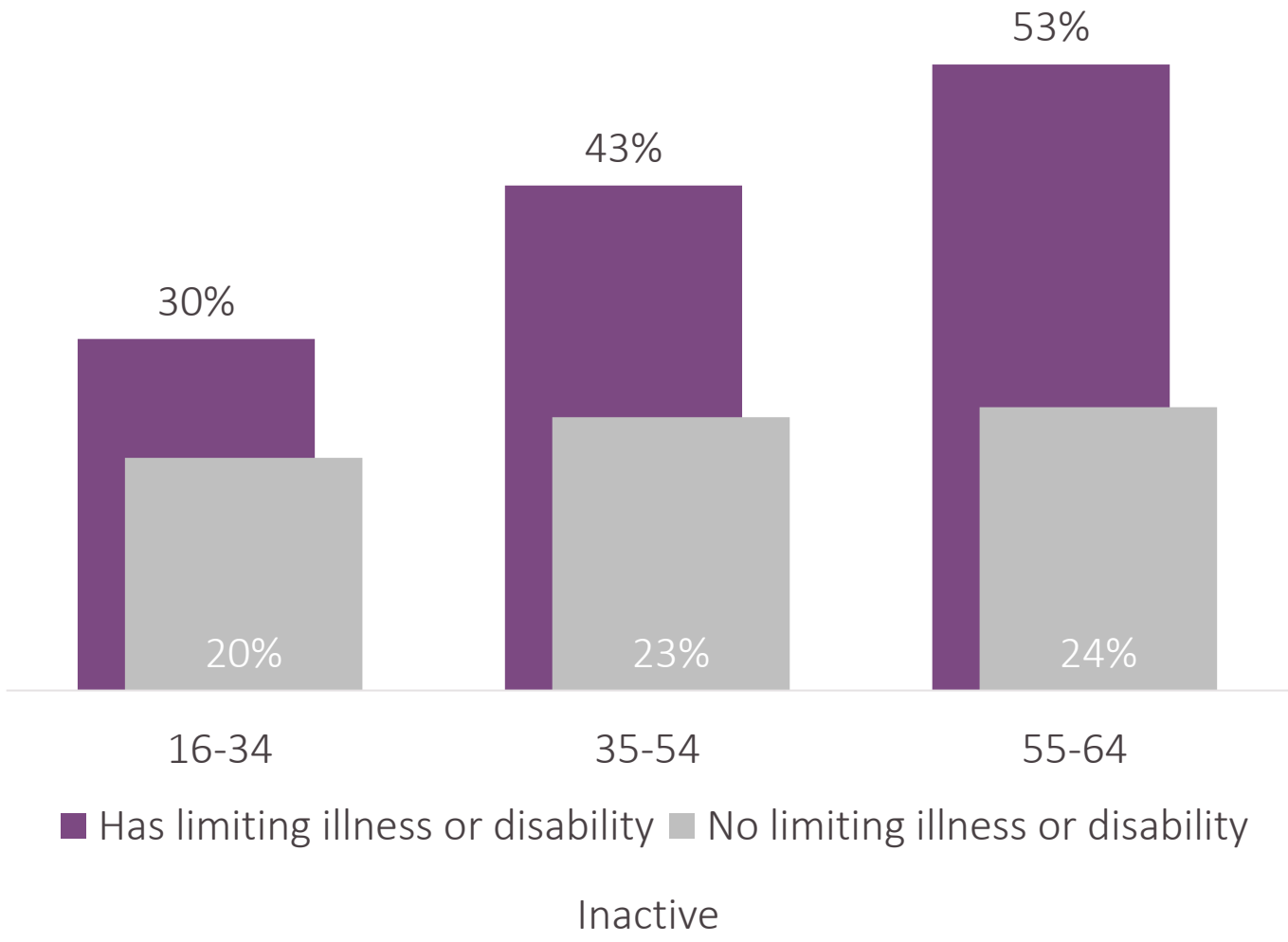
Disabled women's inactivity levels similar to disabled men



Data is for: Wales

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

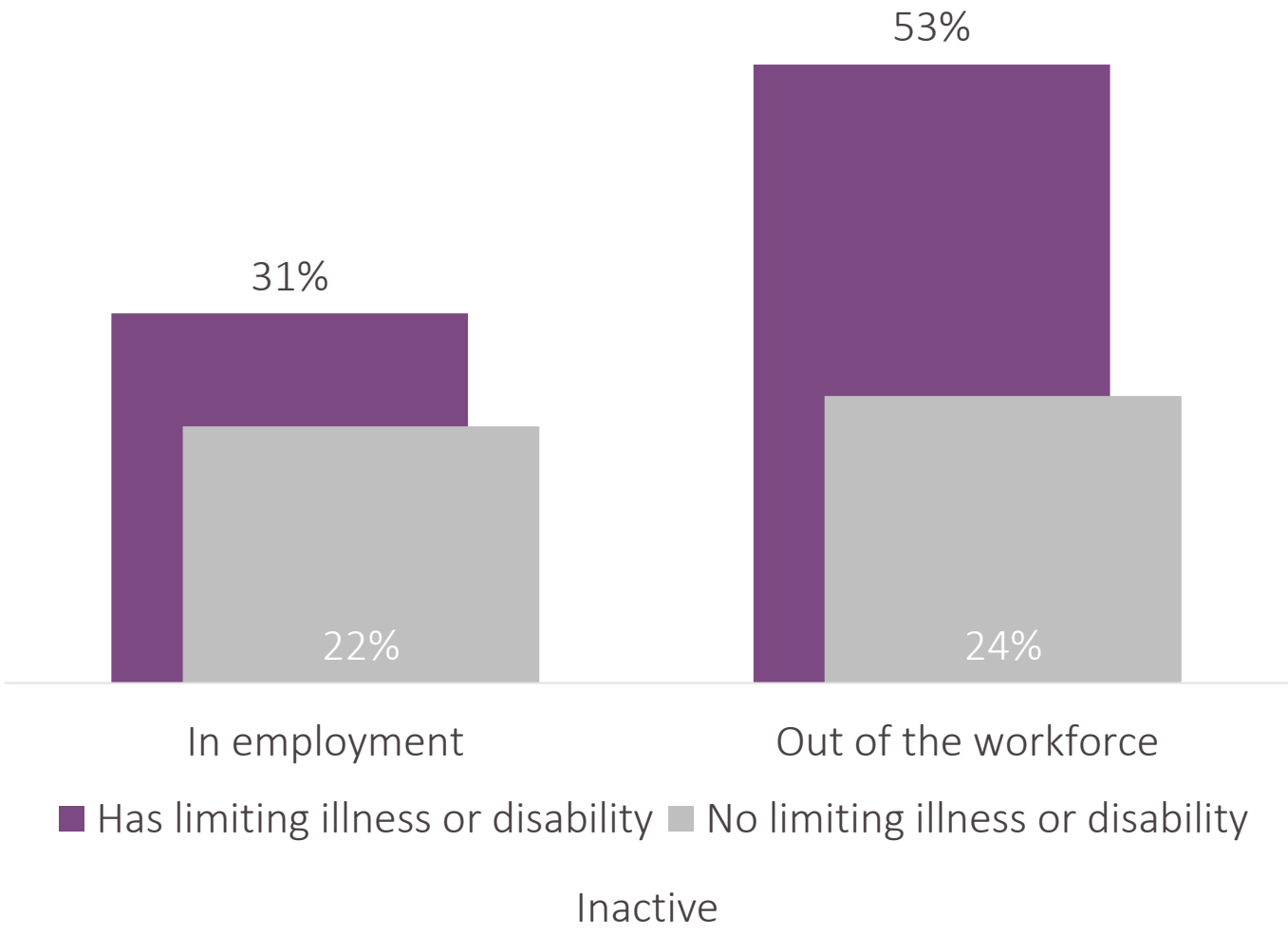
Inactivity rises with age, but this correlation is more pronounced for **disabled people**



Data is for: Wales

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

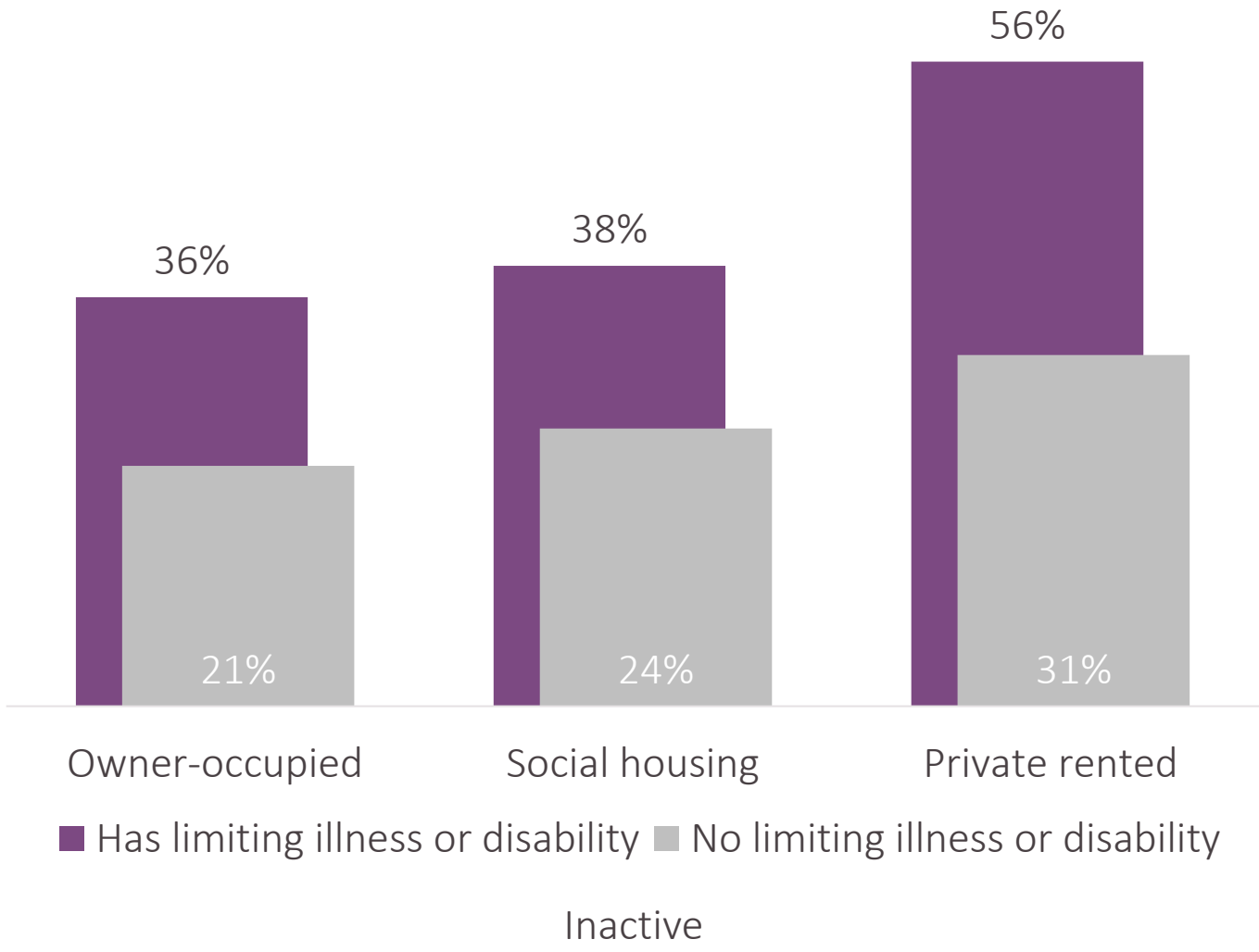
Disabled adults outside of the workforce are far more likely to be physically inactive than those in employment



Data is for: Wales

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

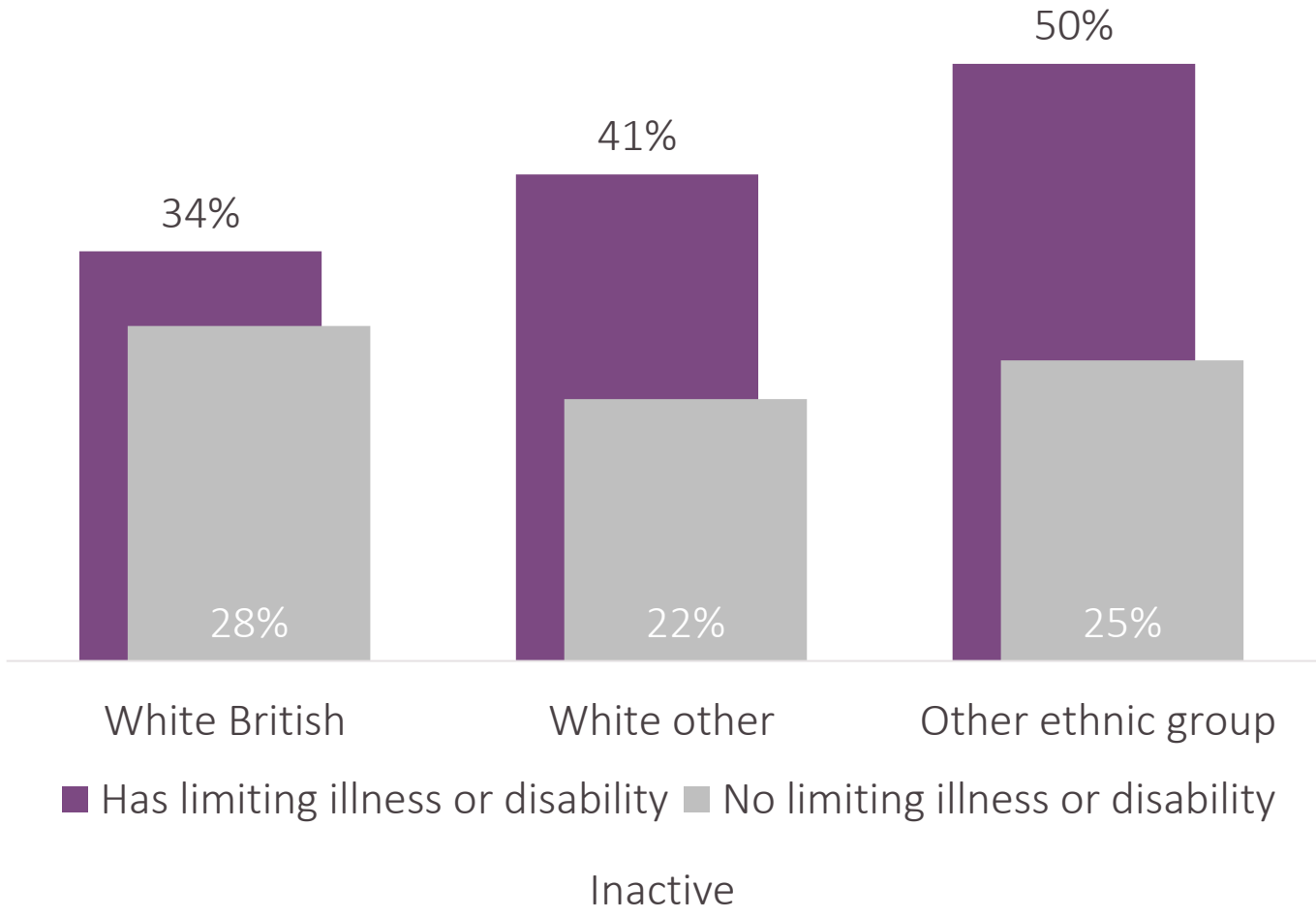
Disabled adults living in private rented accommodation are far more likely to be physically inactive than owner-occupied or social housing



Data is for: Wales

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

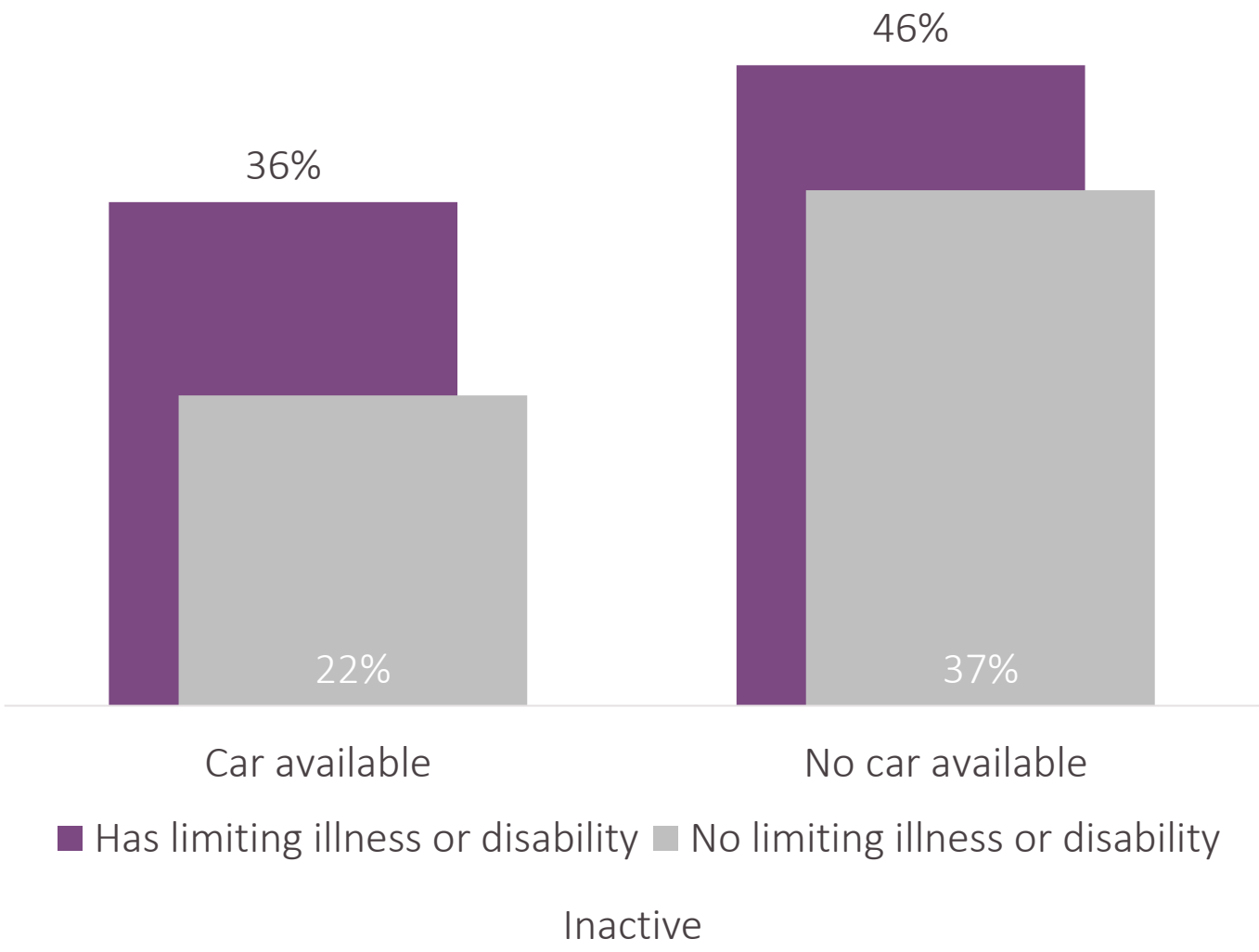
Physical inactivity is higher among **disabled adults from non-White British ethnicities**



Data is for: Wales

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

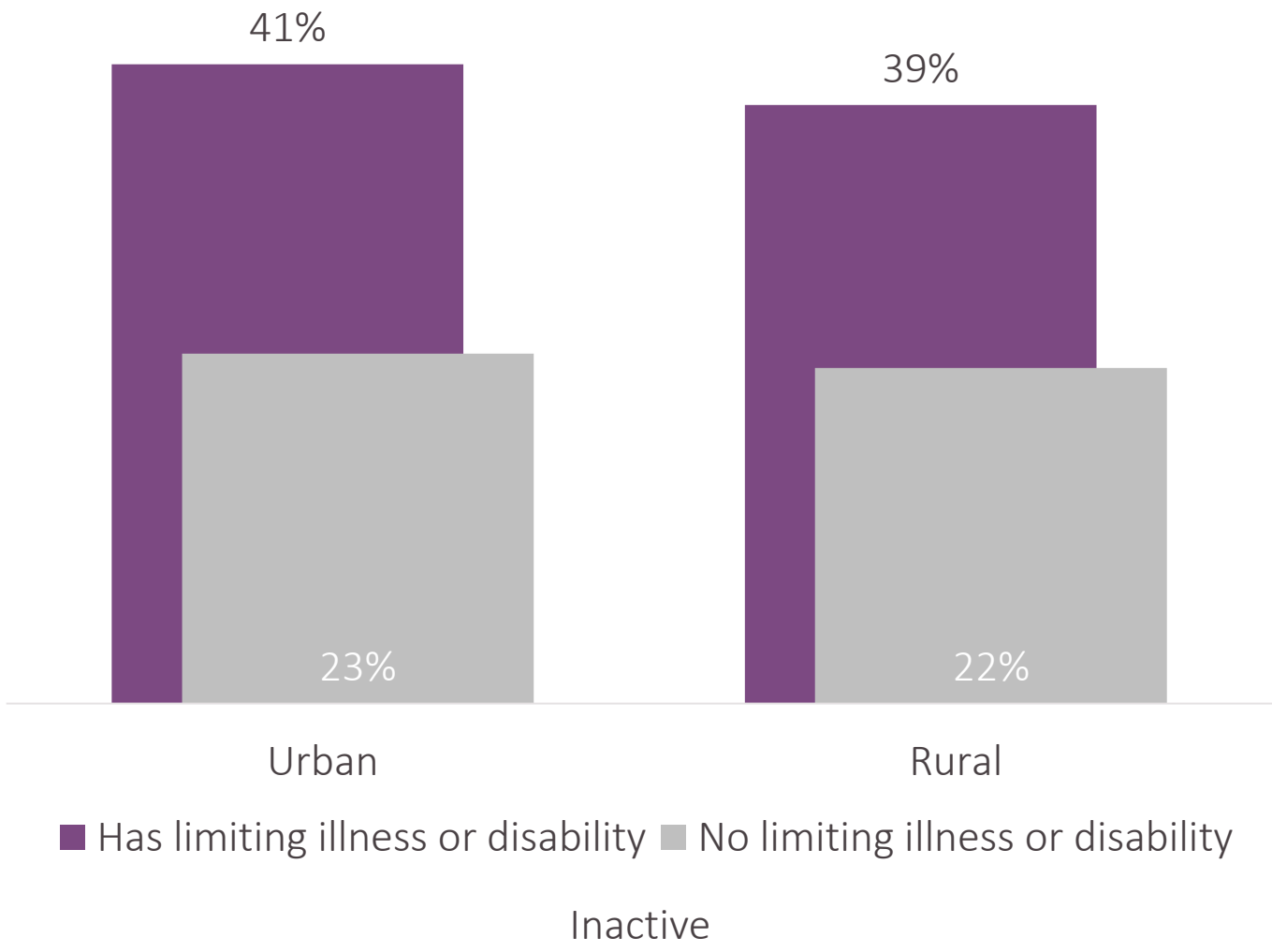
Inactivity rates are higher for disabled people without a car (Wales)



Data is for: Wales

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

There is little difference between levels of inactivity for **disabled people in rural and urban settings** (Wales)



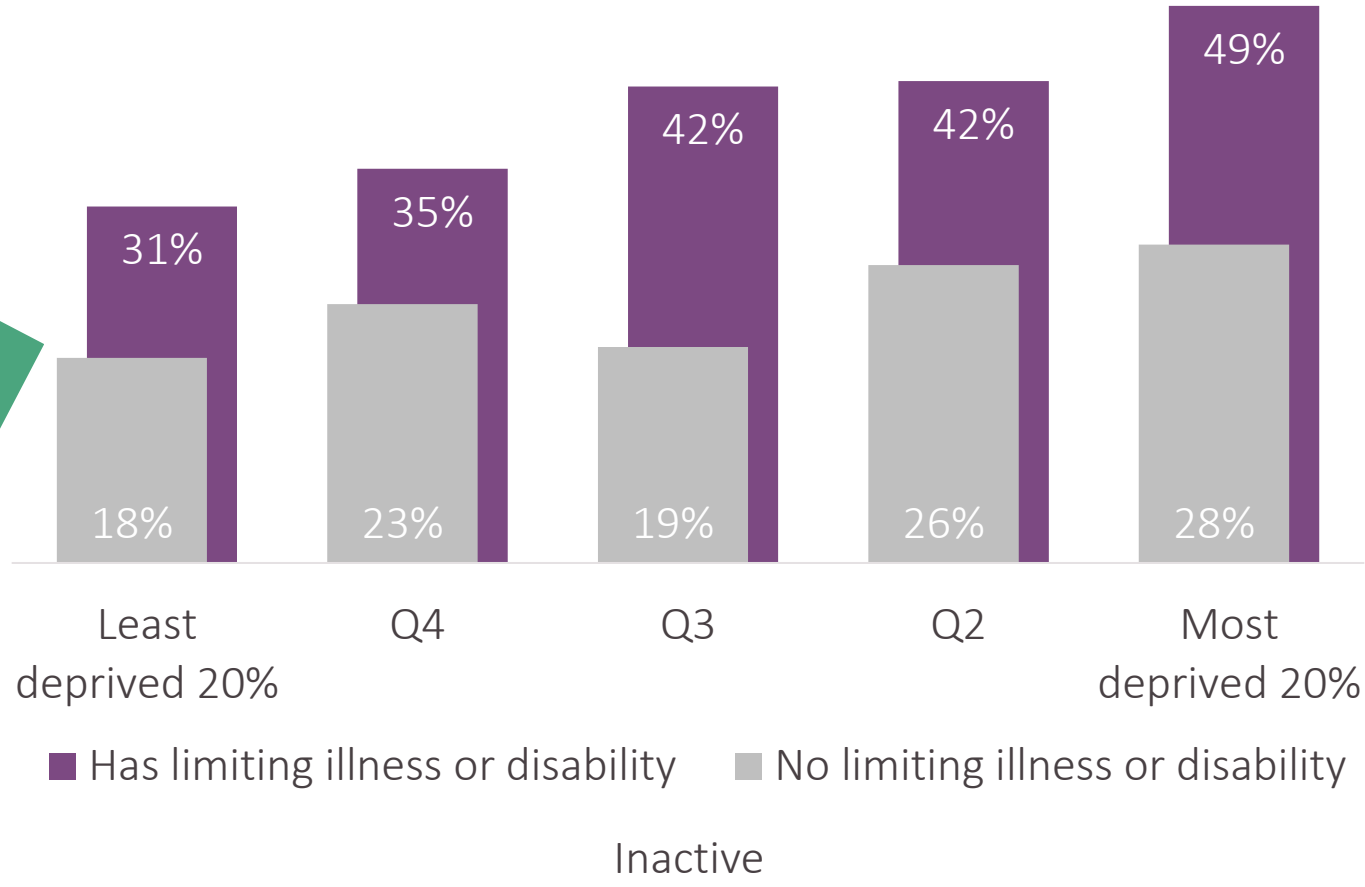
Data is for: Wales

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

Almost half disabled adults living in the most deprived areas are physically inactive

compared to a third of those living in more affluent areas

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



Data is for: Wales

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

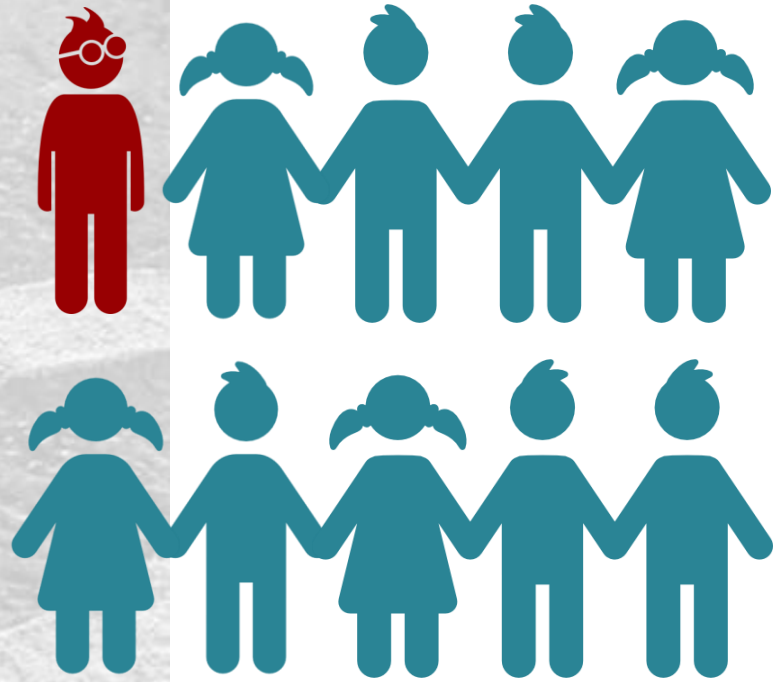
Children and young people

Key messages



- Nearly 1 in 10 children and young people have a limiting illness or disability. That's 37,000 children
- Children and young people with a disability are less likely to be active than children without a disability
- Boys are more likely to have a limiting illness or disability than girls. But gender seems to make little difference active levels.
- Secondary school children with a disability 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 litle 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, children with a disability have a lower average WEMWBS score compared to children without disabilities

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



Nearly

1 in 10

children and young people have a limiting illness or disability (8%)

That's 37,000 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%)

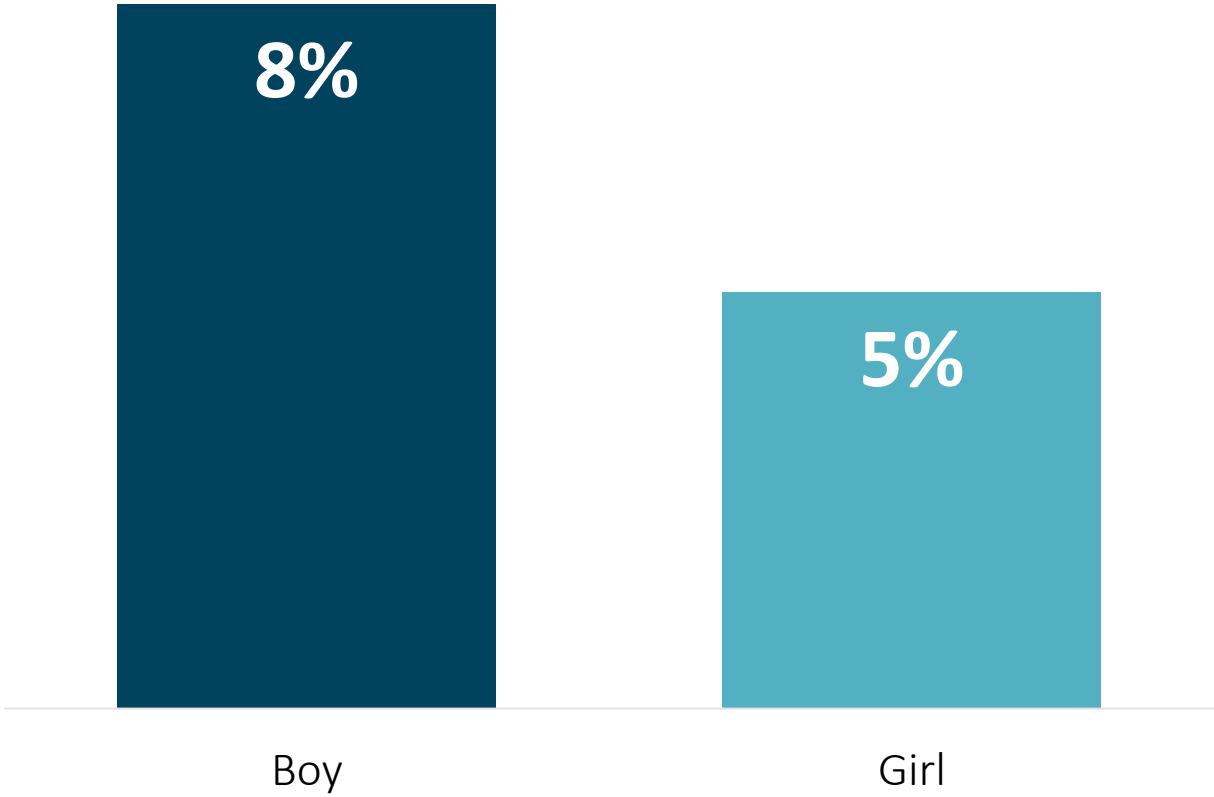


9 in 10 are in good/fair health

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 5-15 years

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





Data is for: Wales

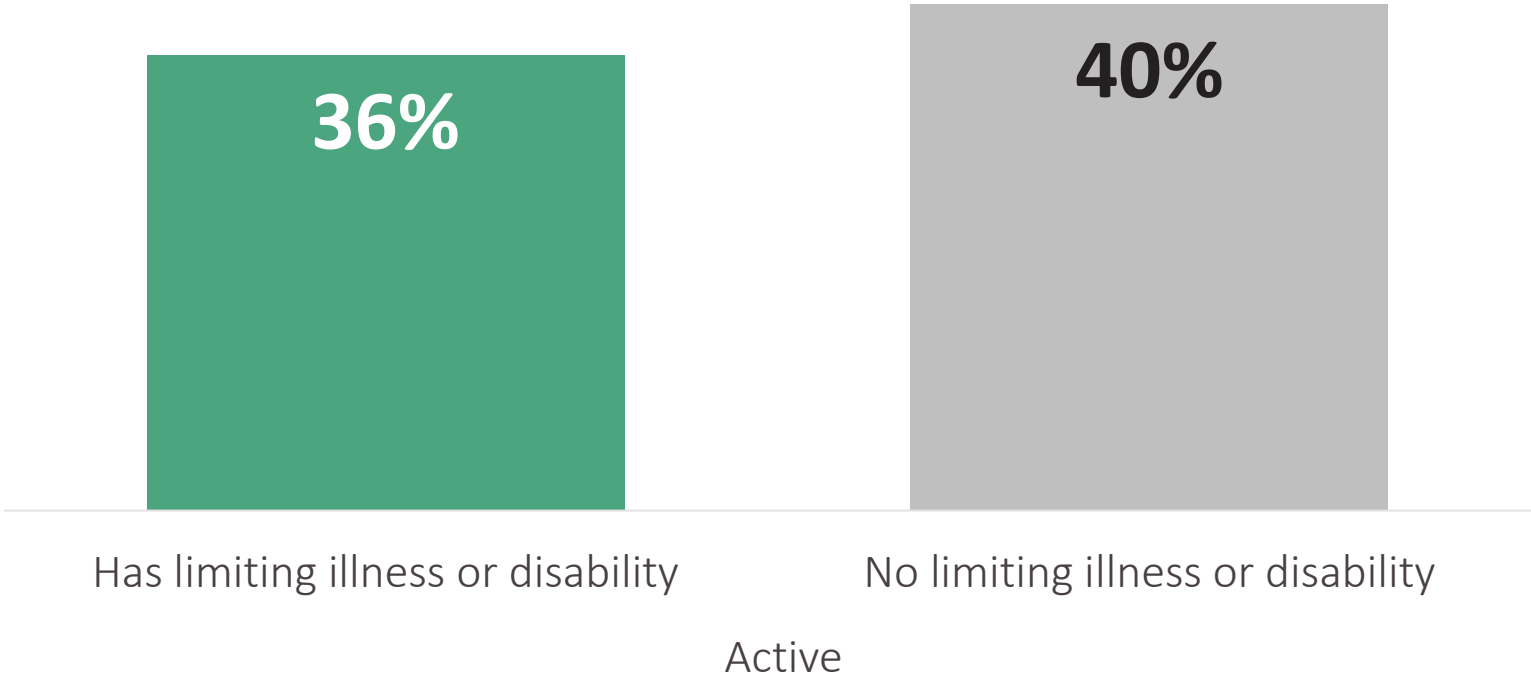
Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 0-15 years

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 children without a disability

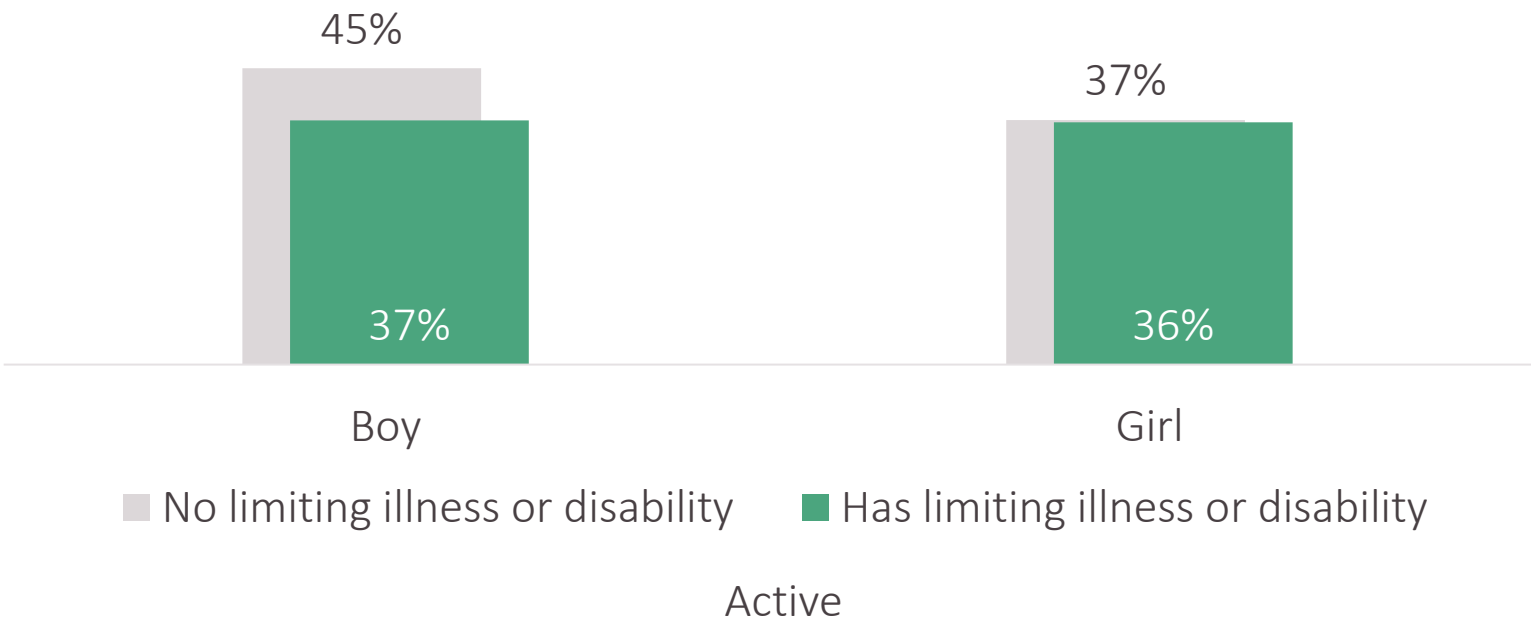


Data is for: Wales

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



Gender seems to make little difference to active levels for children with a disability

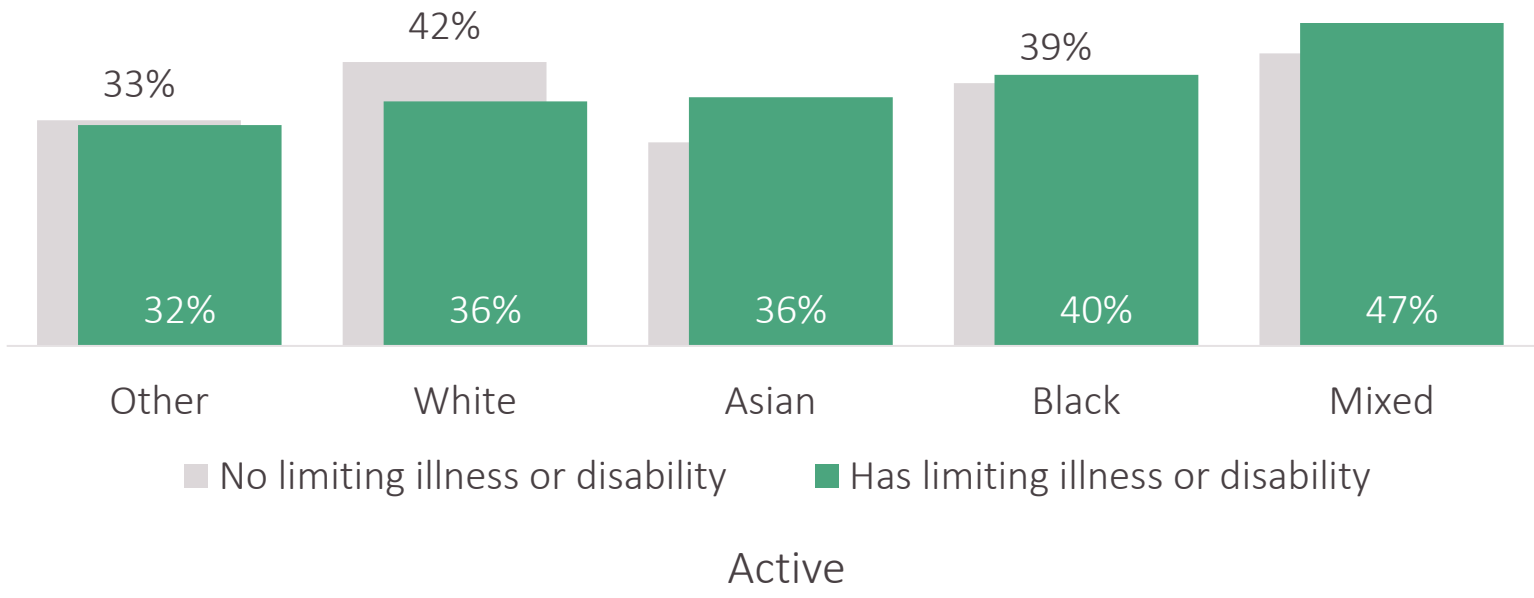


Data is for: Wales

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



Disabled children of **Black and mixed ethnicity** backgrounds tend to have higher activity levels

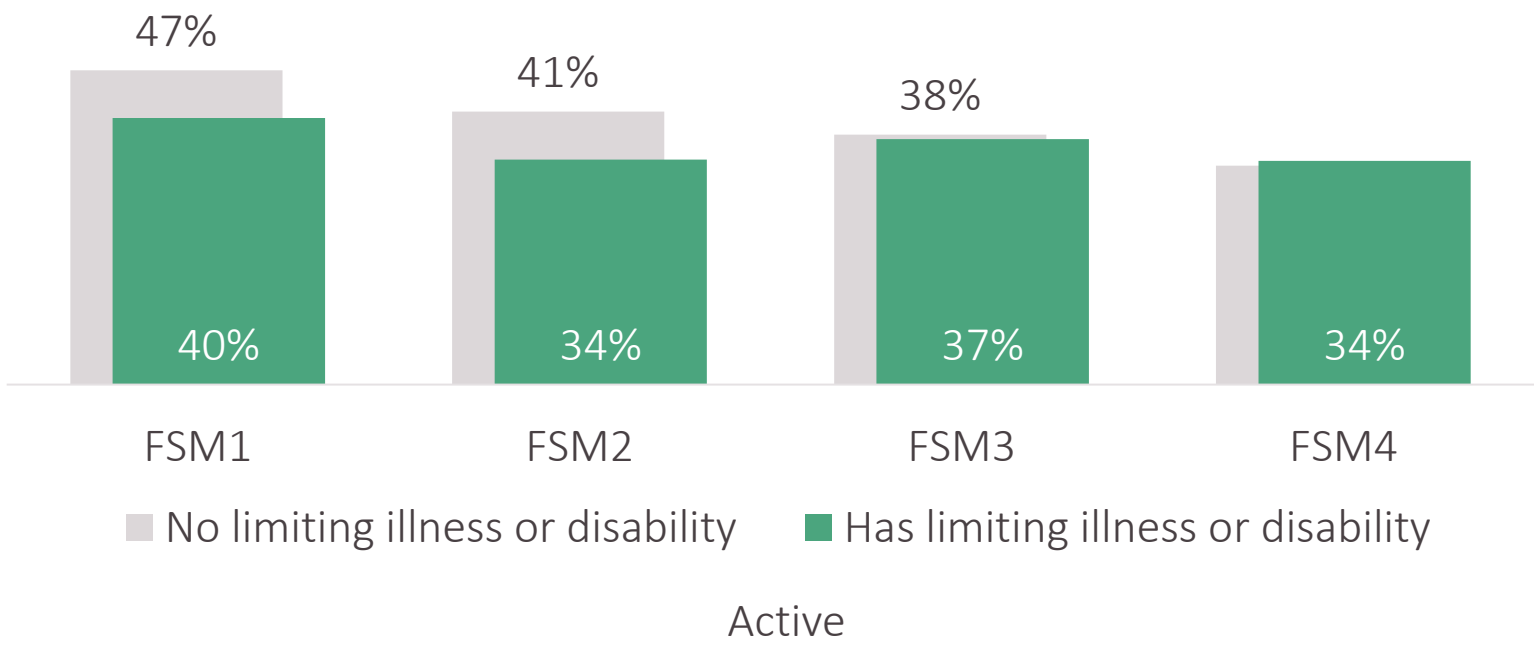


Data is for: Wales

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



In our **more affluent communities**, there is a clear inequality between our disabled and non-disabled children's active levels

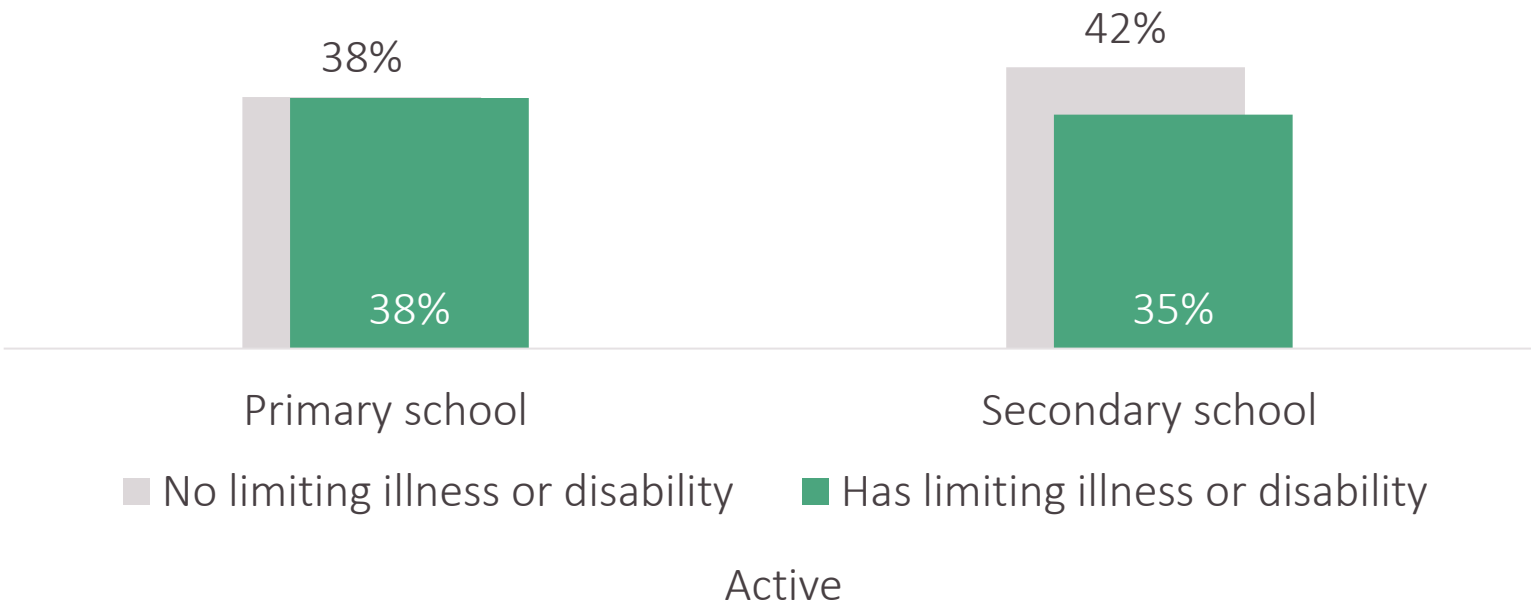


Data is for: Wales

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



Disabled children in **secondary schools** are less likely to be active than primary aged children



Data is for: Wales

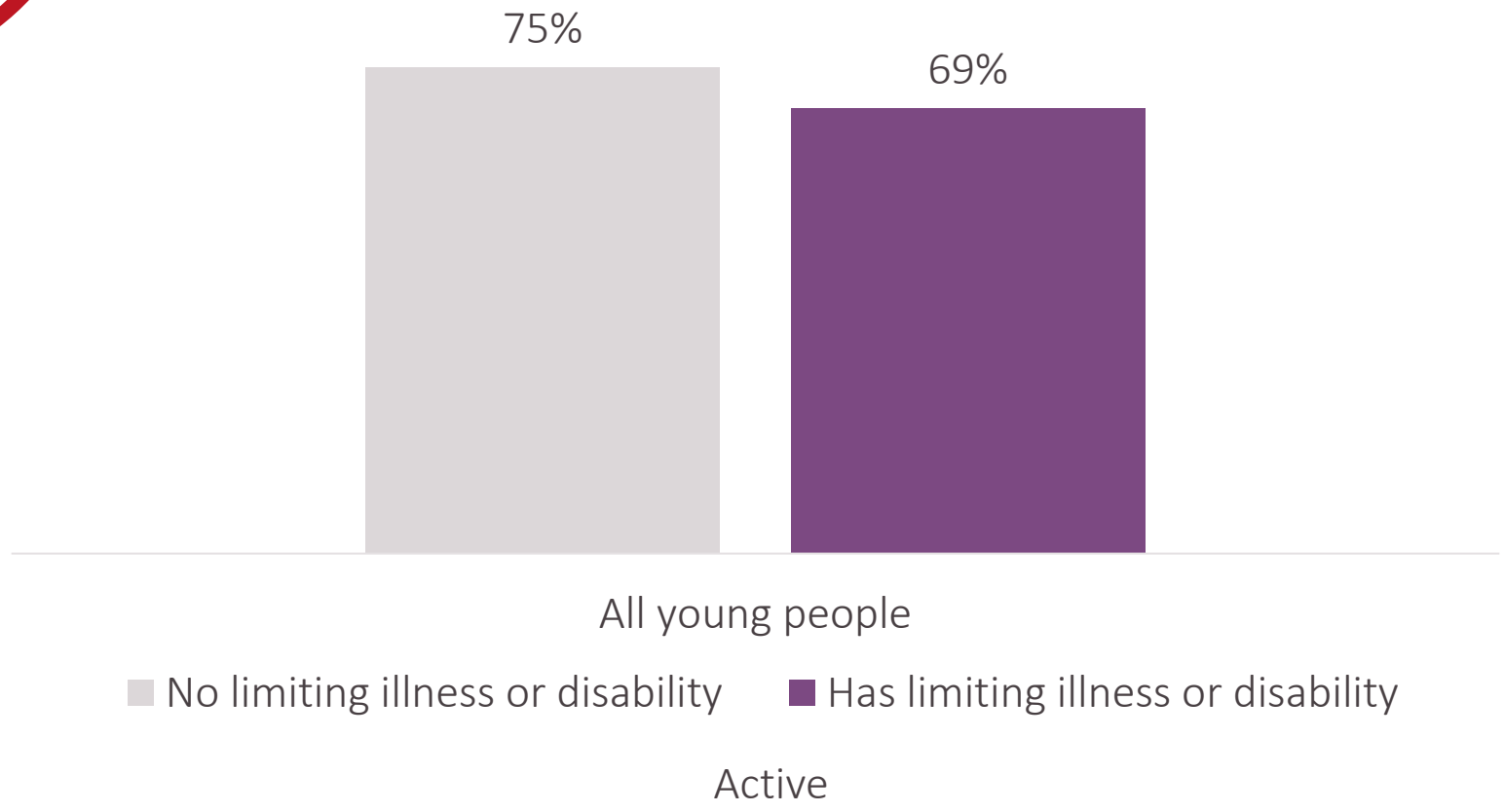
Source: School Sport Survey 2023
Measure: Young people who are 'hooked on sport'

SHRN data

Young people who are active 3+ days a week



Disabled children and young people are less likely to be active than children without a disability

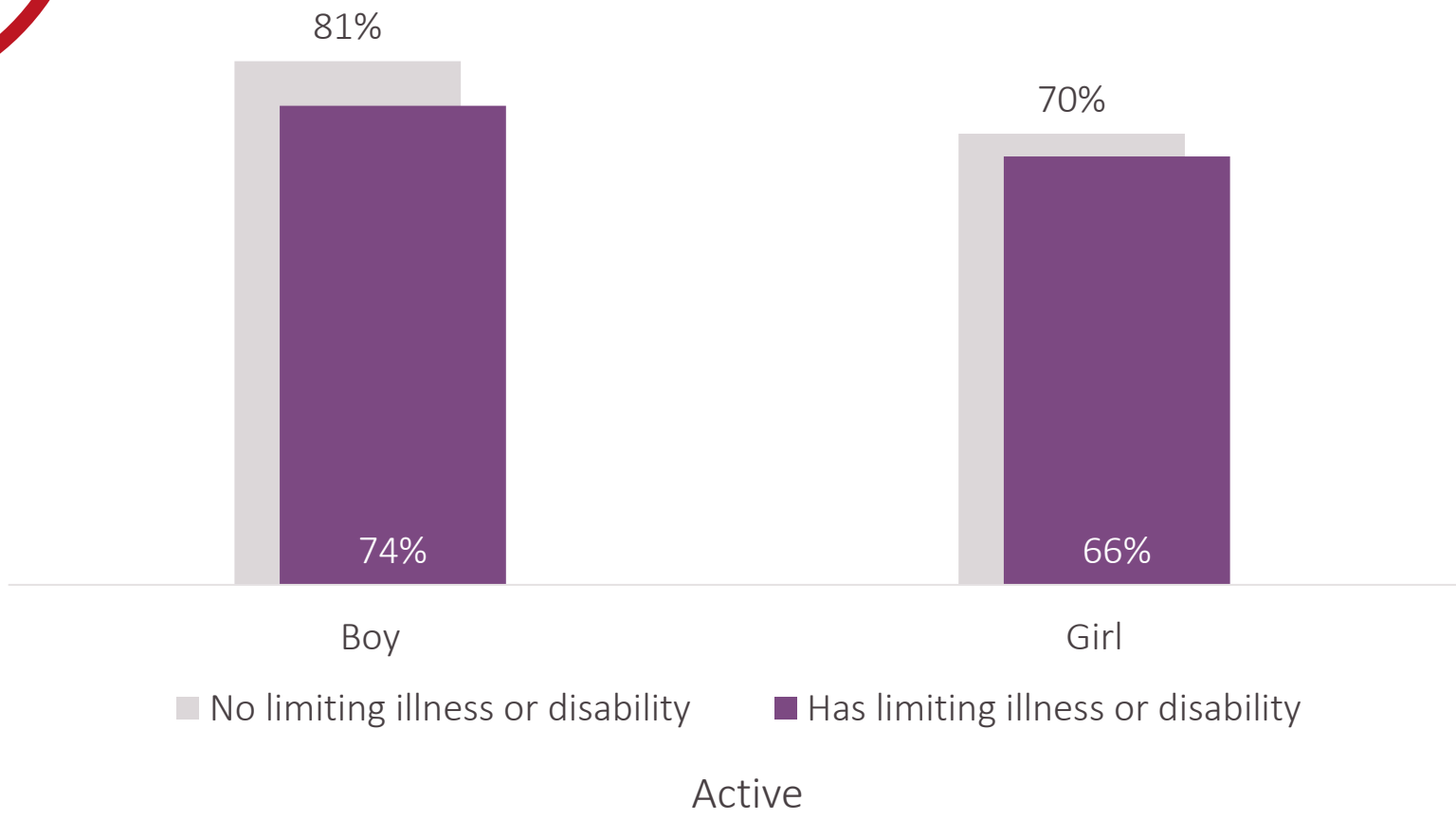


Data is for: Wales

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

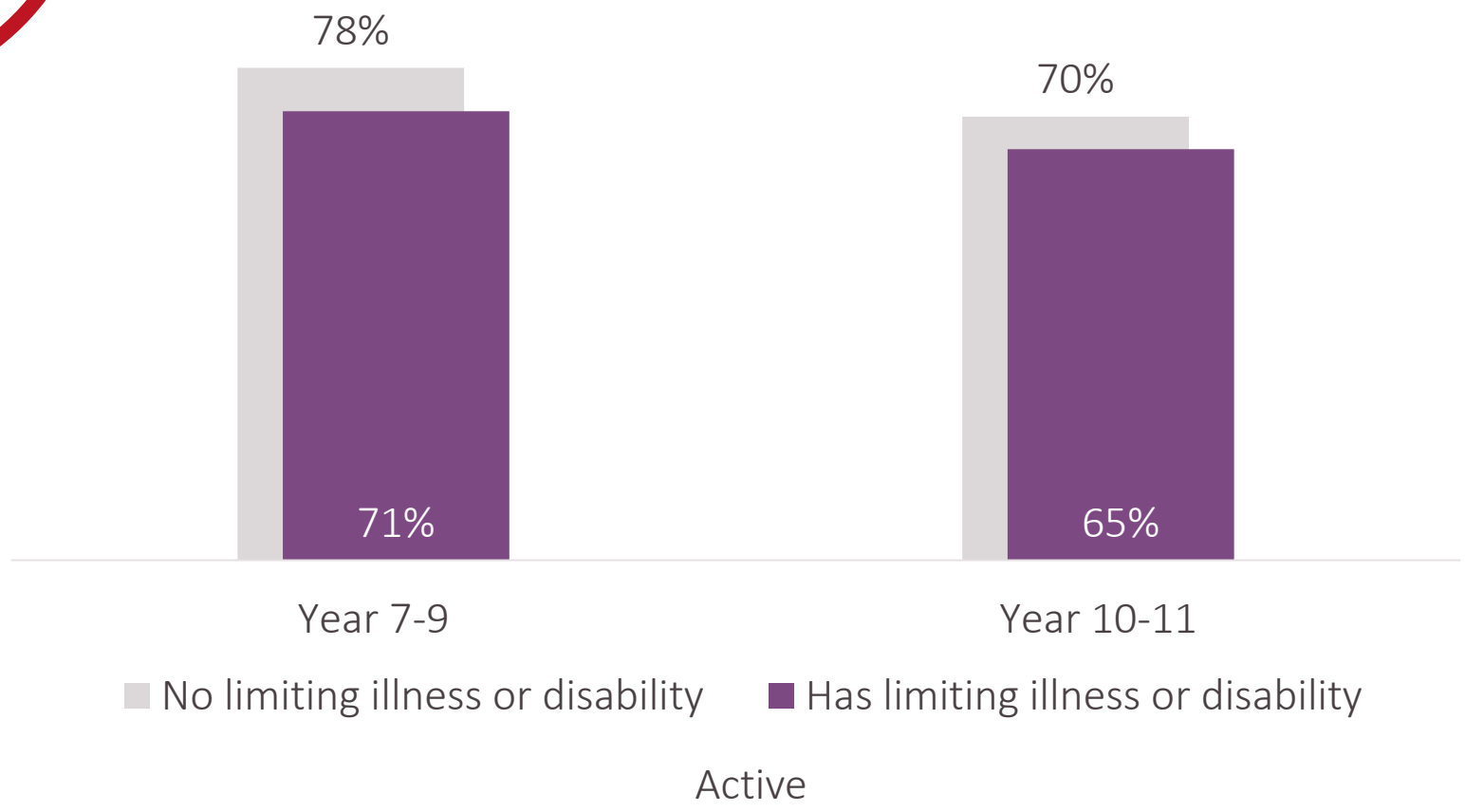


Data is for: Wales

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

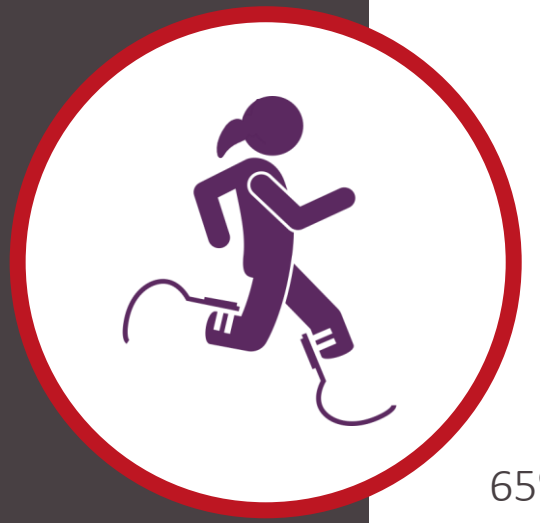


Disabled children in **years 10-11 are less likely to be active**, compared to year 7-9

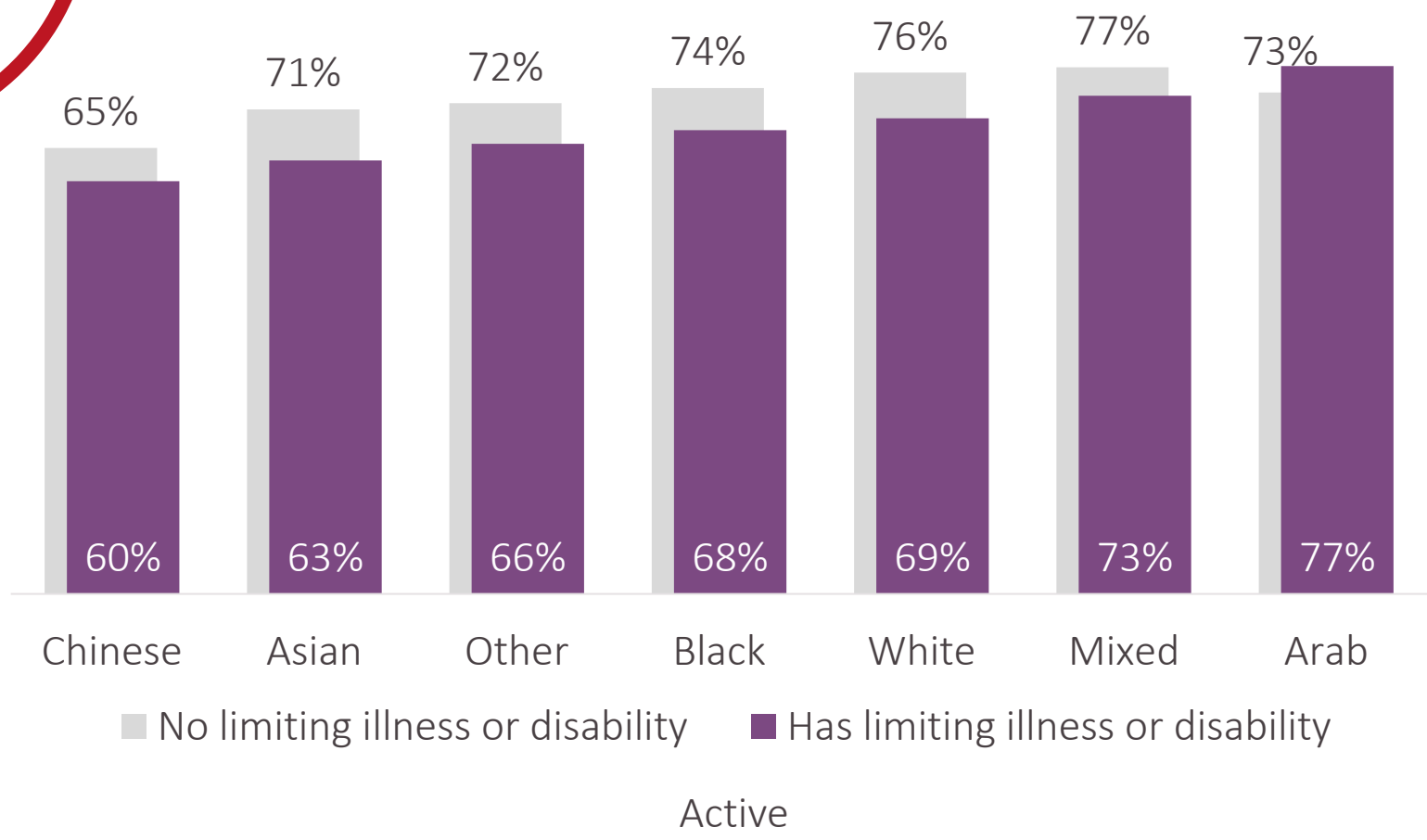


Data is for: Wales

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

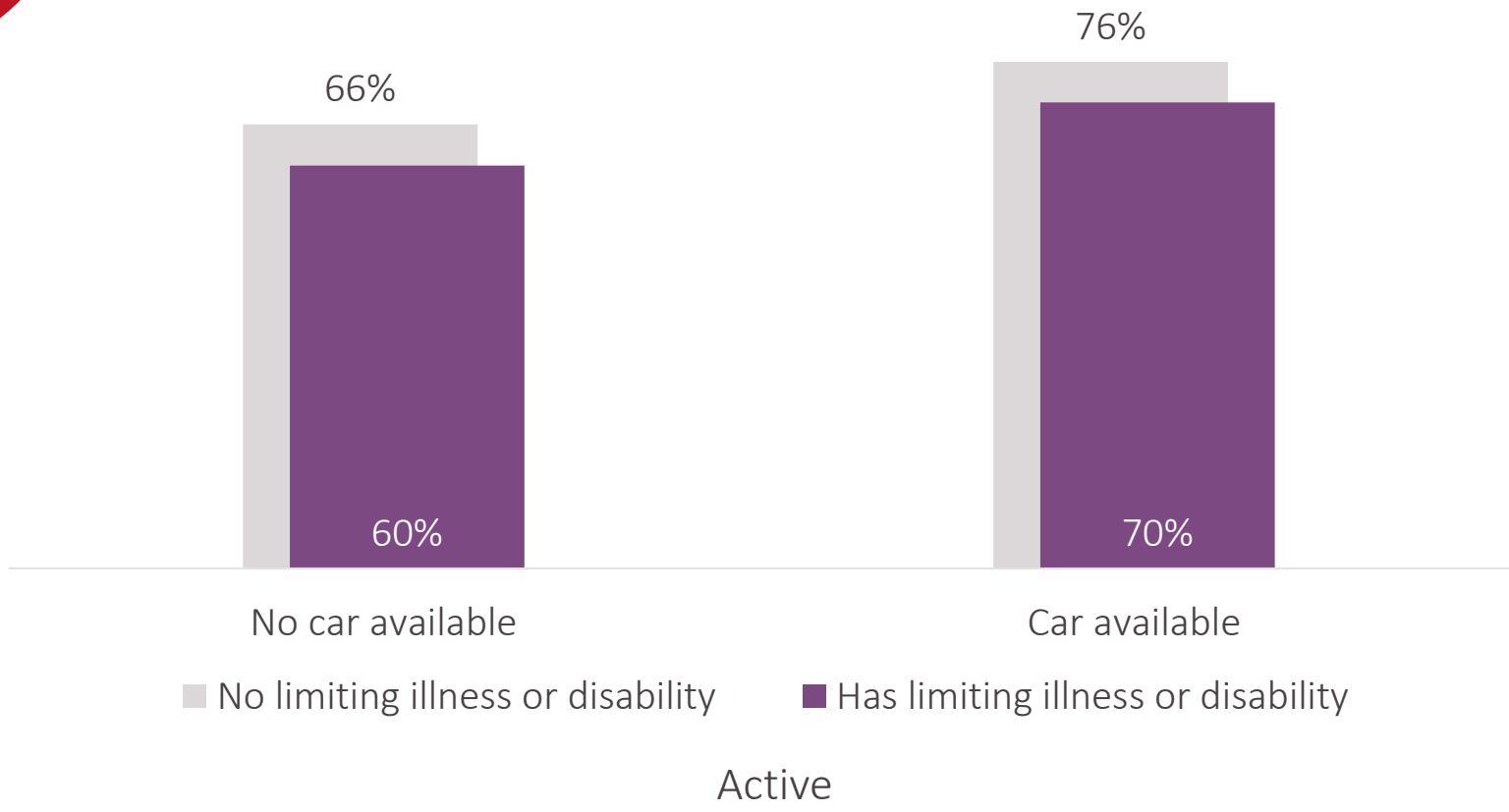


Data is for: Wales

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

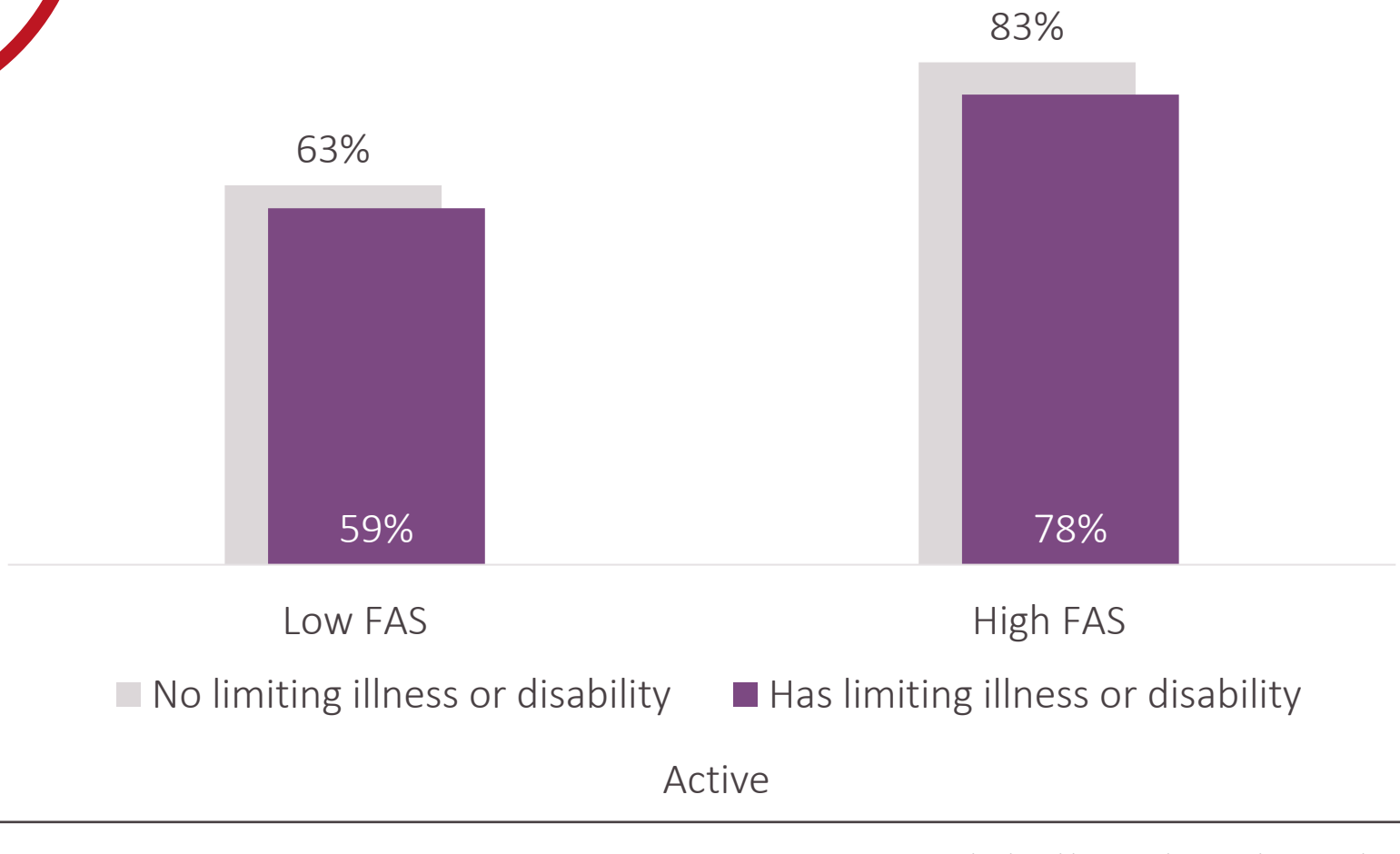


Data is for: Wales

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



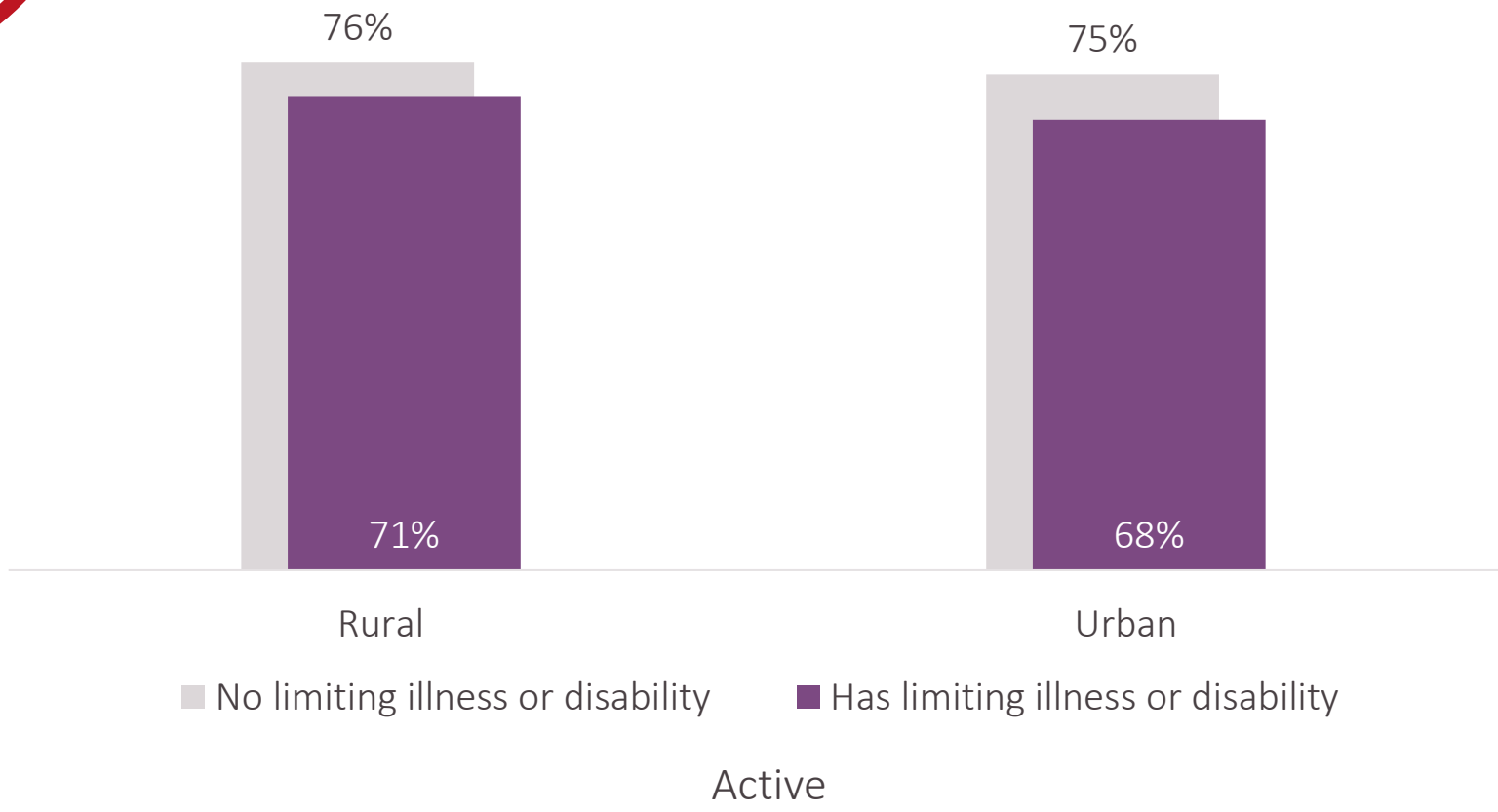


Data is for: Wales

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



There is little difference between levels of activity for disabled children in **rural and urban settings**



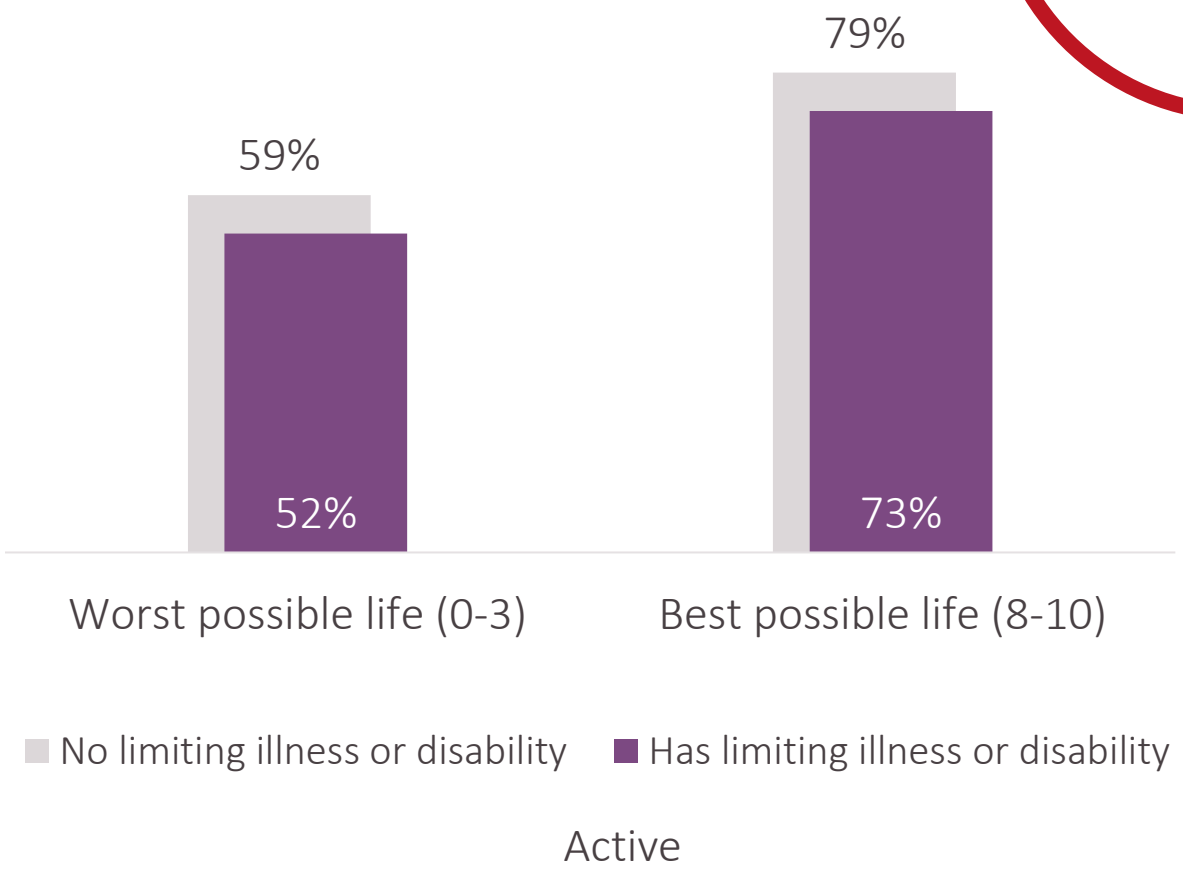
Data is for: Wales

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, children with a disability have a lower average WEMWBS score compared to children without disabilities



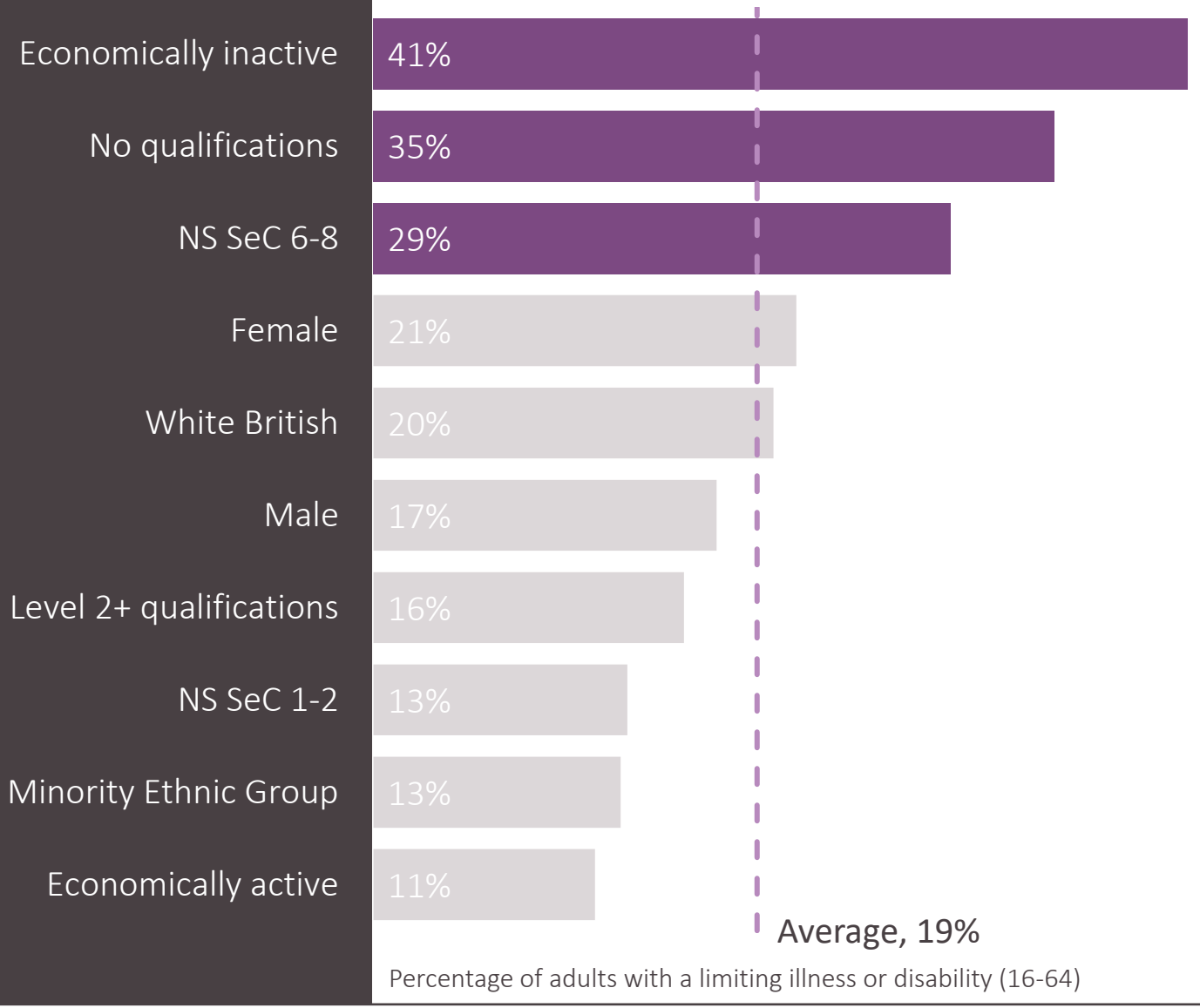


Source: School Health Research Network 2021 and 2023
Measure: Young people who are active 3+ days a week

Additional adult Census slides for extra context

Disabled population by different demographic groups

For example, 41% of adults who are economically inactive have a disability

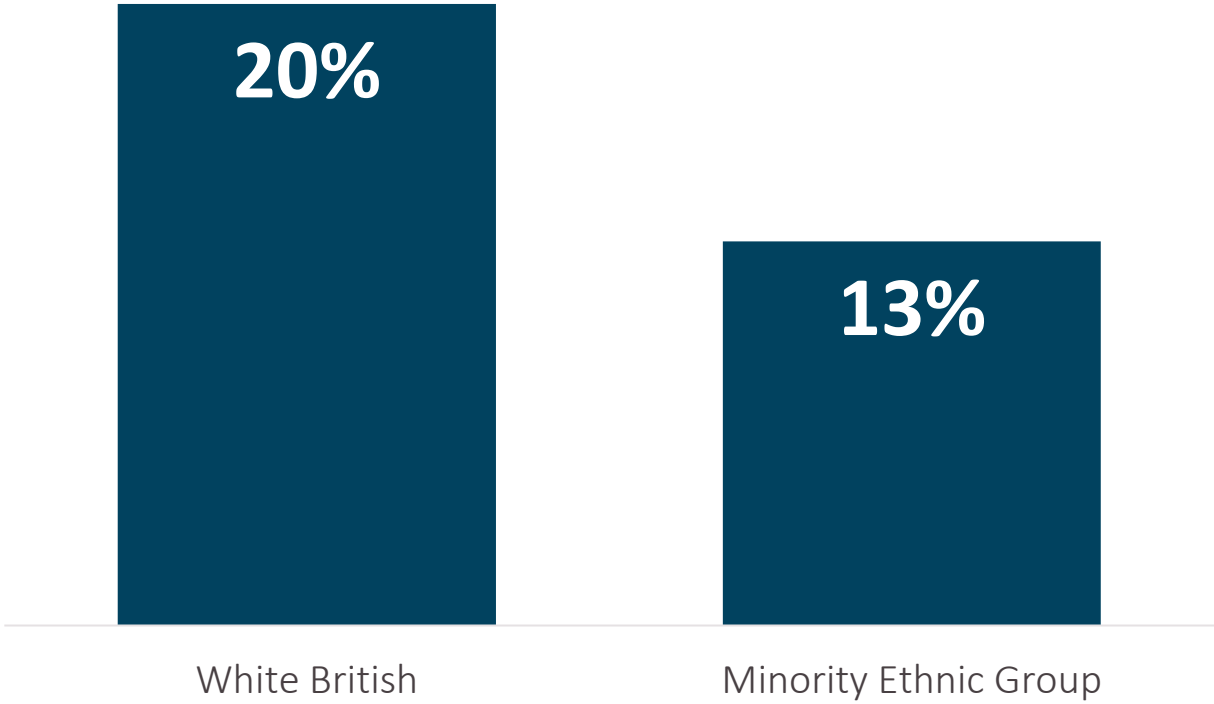


Data is for: Wales

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



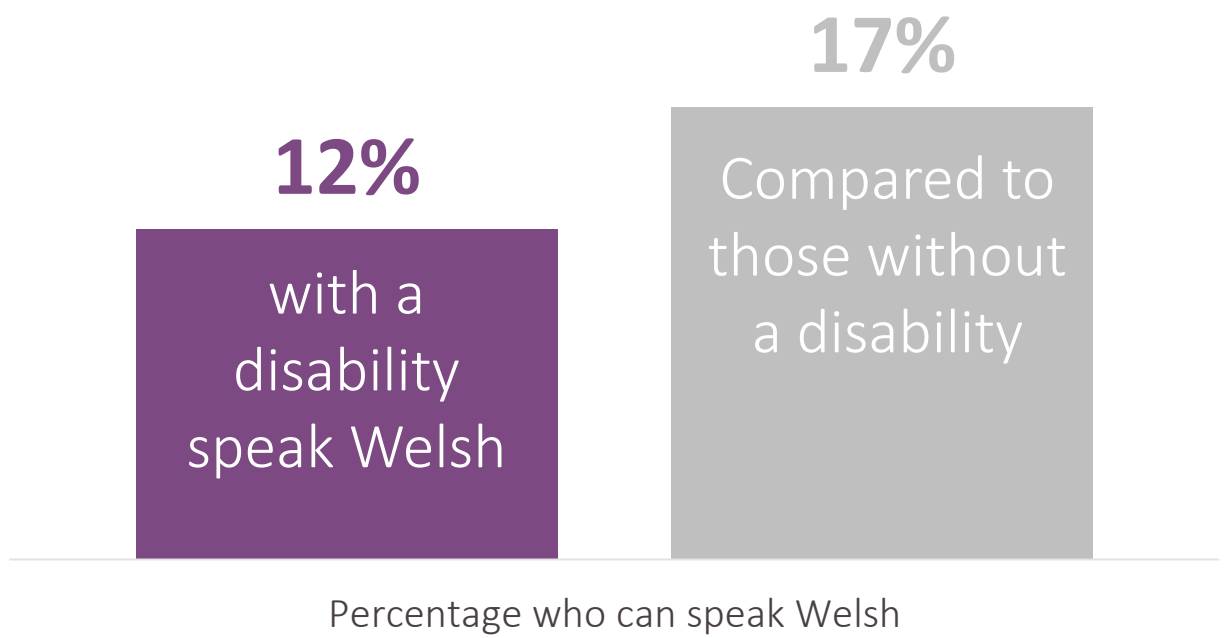


Data is for: Wales

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

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

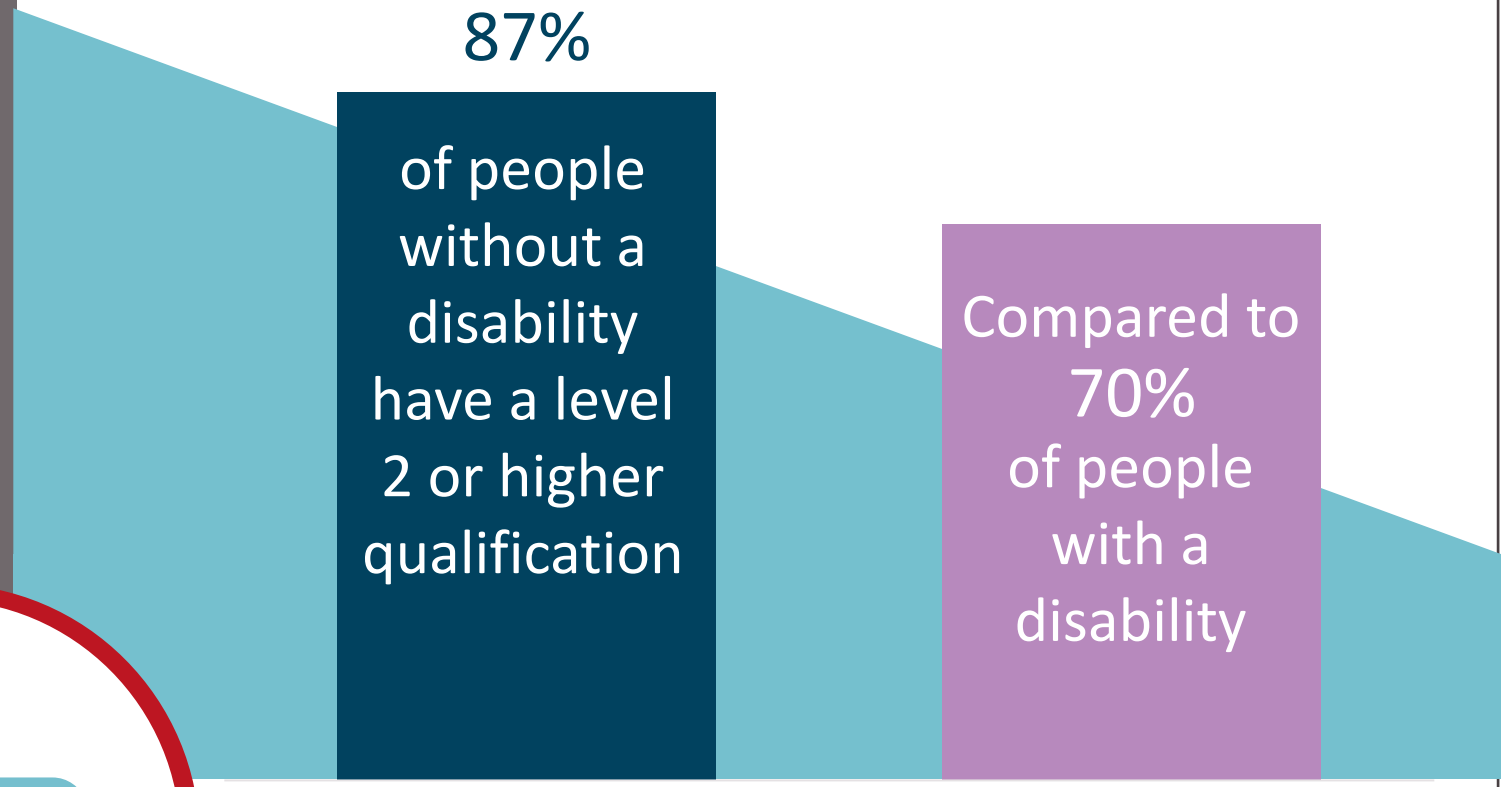




Data is for: Wales

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

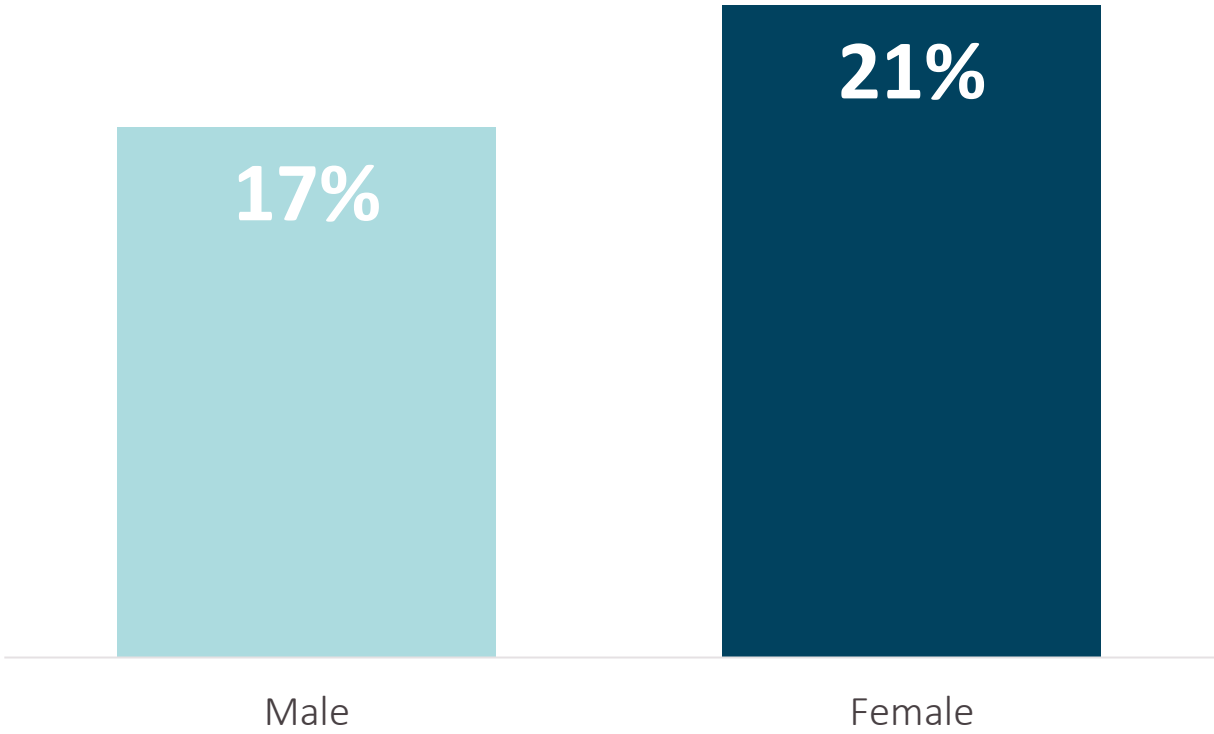


Data is for: Wales

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

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





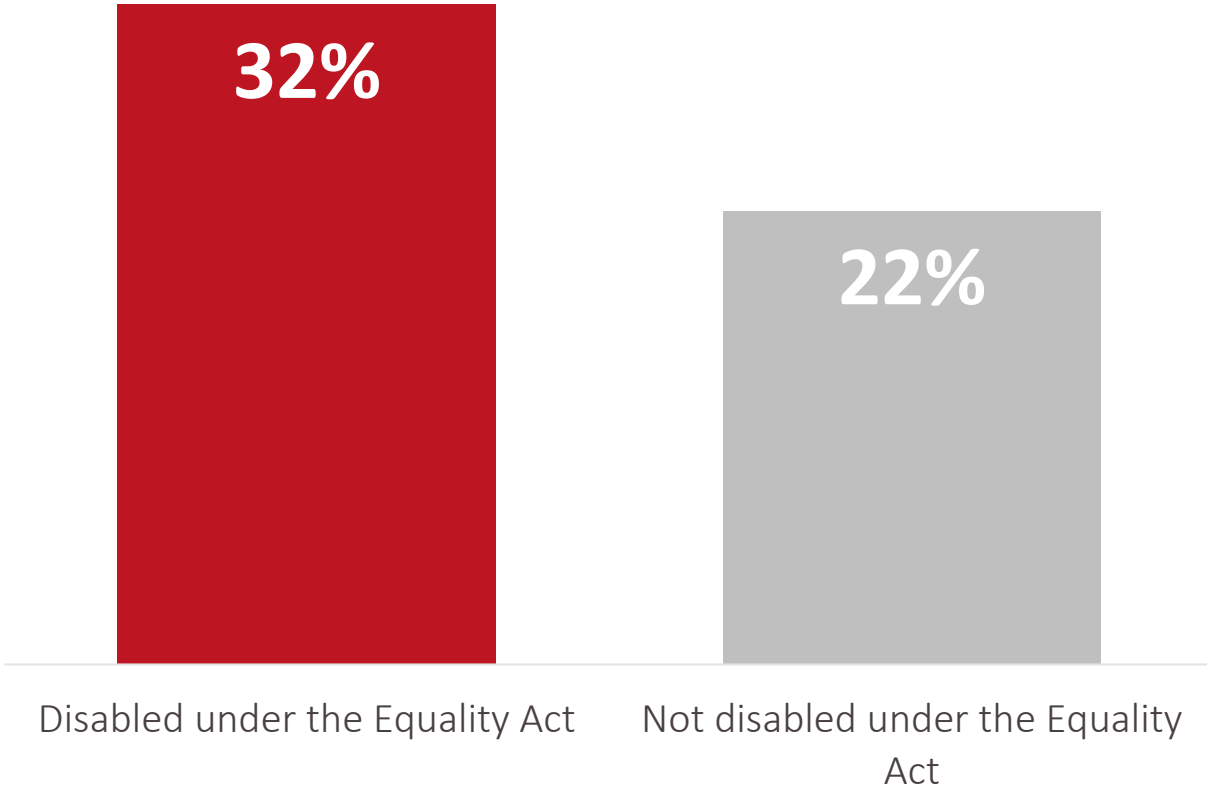
Data is for: Wales

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years

A third of disabled people live in areas of deprivation

compared to around a quarter of those without a disability





Data is for: Wales

Source: ONS Census 2021, aged 16-64 years