



Children & Young People Physical Activity Behaviour

Active Lives Childrens Survey 2021 - 2022

The **Active Lives** **Survey: Children** **and Young** **People** 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 people's:

- Overall levels of activity both during the school day ('at school') and outside school
- Activity levels for a range of key demographic groups
- The types of activities undertaken 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

For more information about the survey please visit [Sport England's website](#)

How much physical activity should children and young people do?



The **Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) guidelines** for young people is presented in three categories for overall activity in the last week:

Active

An average of 60 minutes or more a day (at least 420 mins over a week).

The majority of the data in this data pack will focus on this

Fairly active

An average of 30-59 minutes a day

Less active

Less than an average of 30 minutes a day

Note: Only activity of at least moderate intensity is included

Definitions

Family affluence score (FAS)

This is a standard scale developed for the Health Behaviour in School Aged Children Survey (an international study of 11-15 year olds) which involves asking a series of questions and provides an overall score between 0-13:

- **Low** family affluence (score range 0-6)
- **Medium** family affluence (score range 7-10)
- **High** family affluence (score range 11-13)

Limiting disability

Whether or not a young person has a disability, special need or illness. This measure changed in 19-20

Moderate intensity activity

Is defined as activity where you raise your heart rate and feel a little out of breath (children were asked whether it made them breathe faster)

Percentage points (pp)

A percentage point (pp) is the unit for the arithmetic difference of two percentages (%). For example, moving up from 40% to 44% is a 4pp increase, but is a 10% increase in what is being measured

Income deprivation affecting children

This is derived from the Index of Income Deprivation Affecting Children (IDACI) which comes under the Index of Multiple Deprivation Outputs but is based on income source data only. It is matched onto the data using the postcode of the school attended by the pupil. Deciles 1-4 are grouped as 'deprived' deciles 8-10 are grouped as 'affluent'

Definitions continued

Everywhere*

This refers to activities done in and out of school (see definitions below). The active total for 'At school' and 'Outside school' does not equal 'Everywhere' as some children will be active at both settings but will only count once in 'Everywhere'.

At school *Where every day = five days (weekdays only)*

Refers to activities done while at school, during normal school hours. It includes activities in PE lessons and break times, but excludes activities at before and after school clubs, even if these take place at school

Outside school *Where every day = seven days*

Refers to activities done outside of school hours. It includes anything done before getting to school and after leaving school (including travel to/from), as well as activity done at the weekend, on holiday days and at before and after school clubs, even if these took place at school

National headlines

Full report – available in full [here](#) - covers the 2021-22 academic year.

- The findings paint a promising picture, with a return to levels seen pre-pandemic in the proportion of children and young people meeting the Chief Medical Officers' guidelines of taking part in an average of 60 minutes or more of sport and physical activity a day.
- There are also positive signs of longer-term growth in activity levels among secondary aged girls (ages 11-16). However, some groups are being left behind, with primary aged children, specifically those in school Years 3-4 (ages 7-9), and Black boys, not seeing the same recovery - while Black girls are reporting significantly fewer positive attitudes towards sport and physical activity than before the pandemic.
- The survey provides more evidence as to the positive impact of physical activity on mental health - with an increase in the proportion of children exercising to relax and worry less, and socially for fun with friends.
- However, physical literacy levels - which are linked to higher levels of activity and wellbeing - haven't recovered to pre-pandemic levels. It's therefore vital there's a focus on providing positive experiences of physical activity, with children and young people involved in decisions around their design and delivery. And while activity levels are recovering, there are warning signs that more needs to be done - with the ongoing challenges of the cost of living posing a risk to continued recovery and growth.

National demographics

The proportion of children and young people classified as active has returned to pre-pandemic levels across most age groups.

However this isn't the case for those in school **Years 3-4** (ages 7-9) where activity remains 4.5%, or 53,000 children, down on pre-pandemic (academic year 2018-19), with no change compared to 12 months ago.

In contrast, young people in school **Years 9-11** (ages 13-16) have seen activity levels increase above pre-pandemic levels (up 5.7%/145,000 young people) and in line with the highs seen two years ago

- When looking at **gender**, boys have driven the recovery in activity levels, with the proportion active now back in line with pre-pandemic (academic year 2018-19). Girls continue to see limited change overall, although levels are slightly above pre-pandemic (up 1.9%, or 98,000 more active girls). As a result, the gender gap between boys and girls has re-emerged - with a gap of 5% between them in the proportion active. This overall picture masks some clear and important differences between age groups:
 - The lack of recovery seen across children in Years 3-4 (ages 5-7) is seen for both boys and girls, but boys in school Years 5-6 (ages 7-9) have seen limited recovery.
 - While secondary age boys are following the pattern seen here for boys overall, secondary age girls are showing some growth in activity levels.
 - There's a much smaller gender gap among secondary age young people (school Years 7-11, ages 11-16), with just 2% between them.
- There's an emerging upward trend in activity levels among girls in school Years 7-8 (ages 11-13), with an increase of 5.7%, or more than 50,000, more active young people since academic year 2017-18. Additionally, girls in school Years 9-11 (ages 13-16) saw an increase in academic year 2019-20, which has been consolidated giving them a net overall increase of 11.5%, or more than 100,000, more active young people compared to pre-pandemic

National – demographics continued

The proportion of children and young people without a **disability or long-term health condition**, who are active, has increased compared to 12 months ago. This is in line with the overall change in children and young people's activity levels. While we can't detect a change for those with a disability or long-term health condition, activity levels overall remain consistent between the two groups.

Activity levels are back in line with those seen pre-pandemic (academic year 2018-19) for **all ethnic groups**, with the exception of Black children and young people. This is specifically among Black boys where, despite a notable increase compared to 12 months ago, the proportion active remains 7.7% lower than pre-pandemic. The gender gap remains widest between Asian girls and boys (10%), followed by Black (8%) and Other (8%) children and young people.

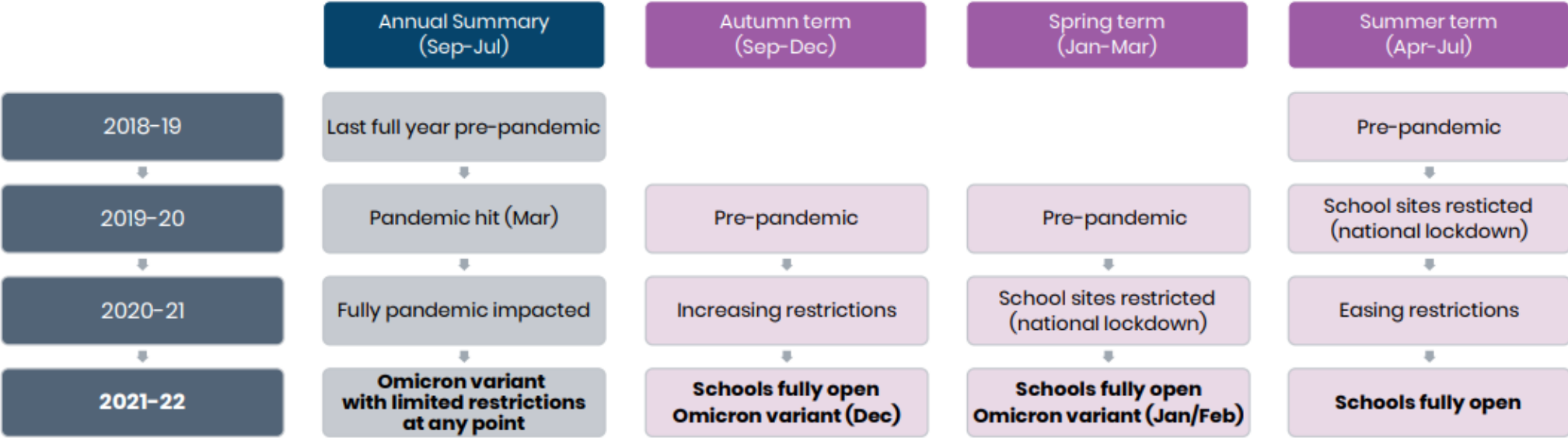
When taking **family affluence score** into consideration, children and young people from the least affluent families are the least likely to be active, with only 42% meeting the Chief Medical Officers' guidelines - compared to 52% of those from the most affluent families. The overall impact of the pandemic on activity levels was similar across groups and all have similarly recovered to pre-pandemic levels.

Deprivation affects activity levels. They are lowest among those going to school in the most deprived places in the country. Despite an increase compared to 12 months ago, those going to school in the most deprived places haven't seen activity recover to pre-pandemic (academic year 2018-19) levels, with the proportion active remaining down by 2.8%. As such, the gap in activity levels between those going to school in the least and most deprived places has widened.

Covid-19 timeline and data reference points

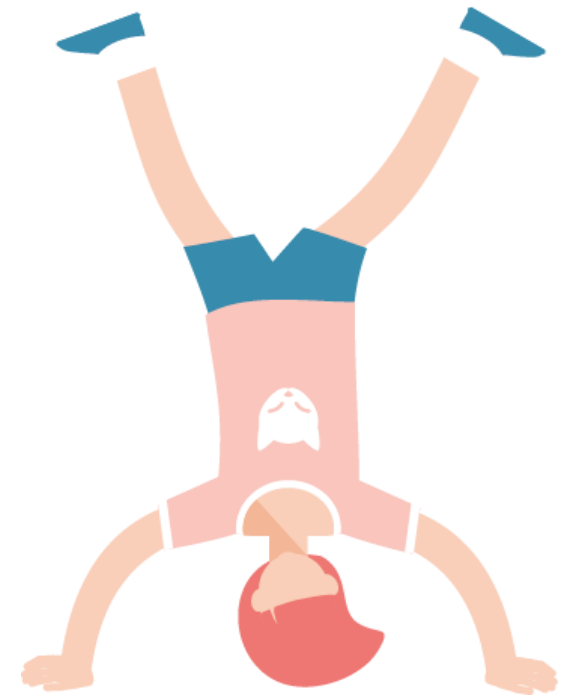
This release contains a full year’s data following the removal of most legal restrictions related to Covid-19, however it does contain the period where the Omicron variant was of concern.

Comparisons are generally made with academic year 2020-21 (12 months ago), where some form of disruption was seen throughout the year with restrictions and school closures occurring, and to academic year 2018-19 as the last full year’s data pre-pandemic.

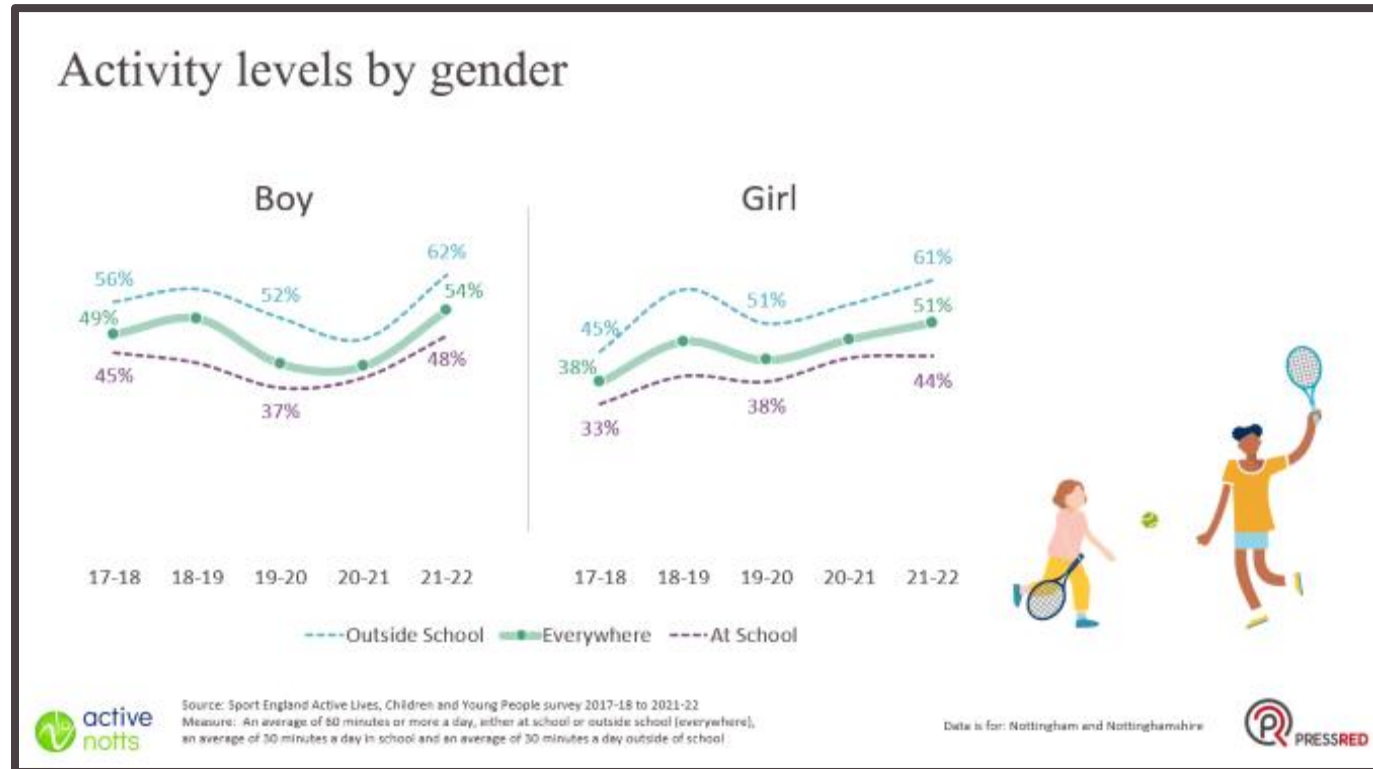


Full details of lockdowns and measures between March 2020 and December 2021 can be found [here](#)

How to read the charts



How to read the charts: Activity levels



Everywhere (solid green line)

This refers to activities done in and out of school

Outside school (dotted blue line)

Refers to activities done while at school, during normal school hours

At school (dotted lilac line)

Refers to activities done outside of school hours

Note: 'At school' and 'Outside school' does not equal 'Everywhere' as some children will be active at both settings but will only count once in 'Everywhere'.

How to read the charts: Inequalities (second demographics)

Gender inequalities are greater for primary school age children



active notts Source: Sport England Active Lives, Children and Young People survey 2017-18 to 2021-22 combined Measure: An average of 60 minutes or more a day, either at school or outside school (everywhere)

Data is for: Nottingham and Nottinghamshire PRESSRED

The **green bubbles** indicate active levels (everywhere) for demographic groups (in this example, gender) split by primary and secondary school age children

The distance between the dots on each chart indicates the inequality (eg girl 40%, boy 46% = a gender inequality gap of 6pp)

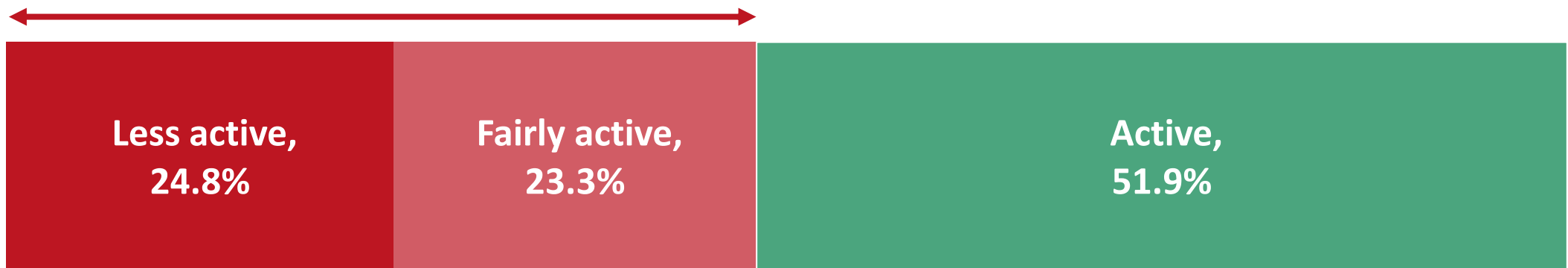
The distance between the relative dots on corresponding charts indicates the inequality between primary and secondary age girls and boys

Note: Higher levels of activity are better than lower levels of activity

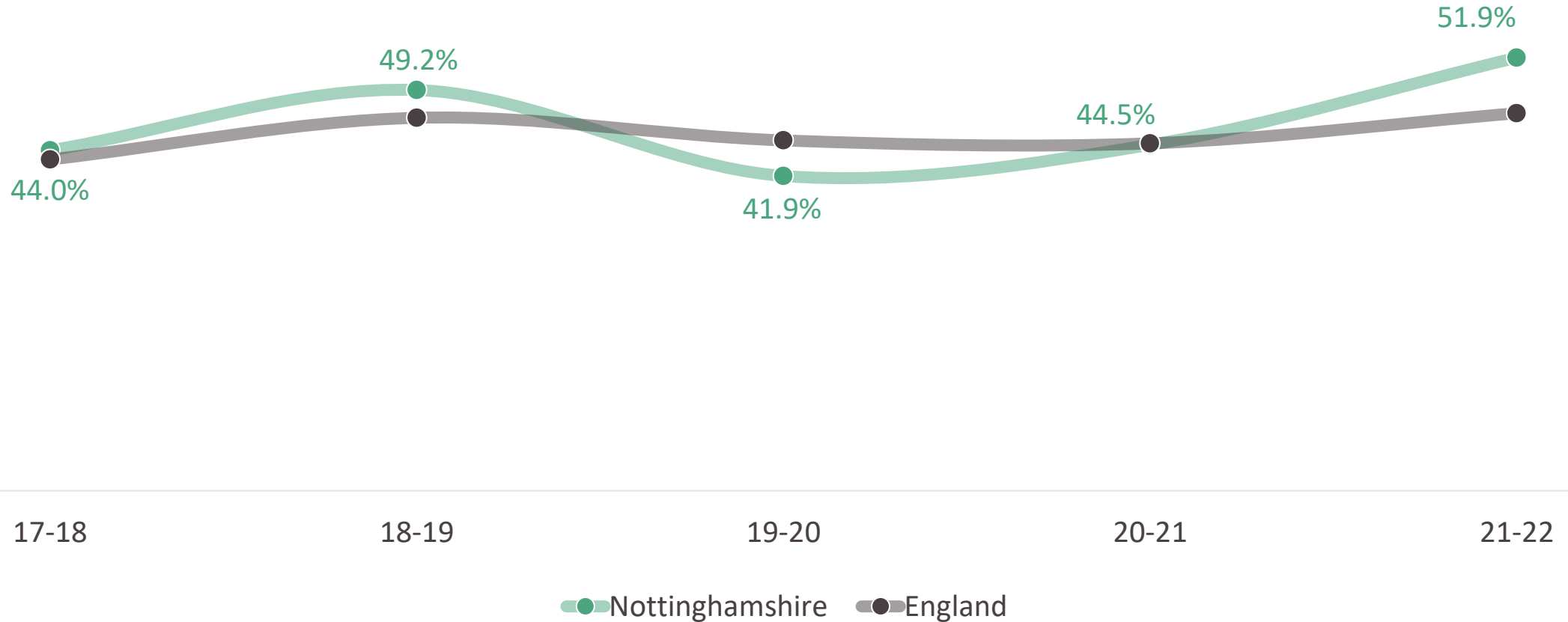
Sample sizes by survey year and demographic group

	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22
Total responses	1,843	2,630	2,005	1,368	3,200
Boy	878	1,199	890	567	1,428
Girl	828	1,228	935	682	1,383
Year 1 -2 (parent)	81	155	115	51	271
Year 3-4	451	826	449	235	411
Year 5-6	531	789	628	278	521
Year 7-8	374	409	554	470	1077
Year 9-11	406	451	259	334	920
Has limiting disability	-	-	120	79	231
No limiting disability	-	-	1,267	879	1,860
Low FAS	389	589	332	297	596
Medium FAS	996	1,355	993	774	1,717
High FAS	376	585	552	216	553
White British	1,313	1,829	1,361	892	2,207
White Other	82	99	60	62	125
Asian	93	114	87	108	180
Black	62	71	54	51	64
Mixed	123	157	136	93	182
Other ethnicity	116	78	69	39	94

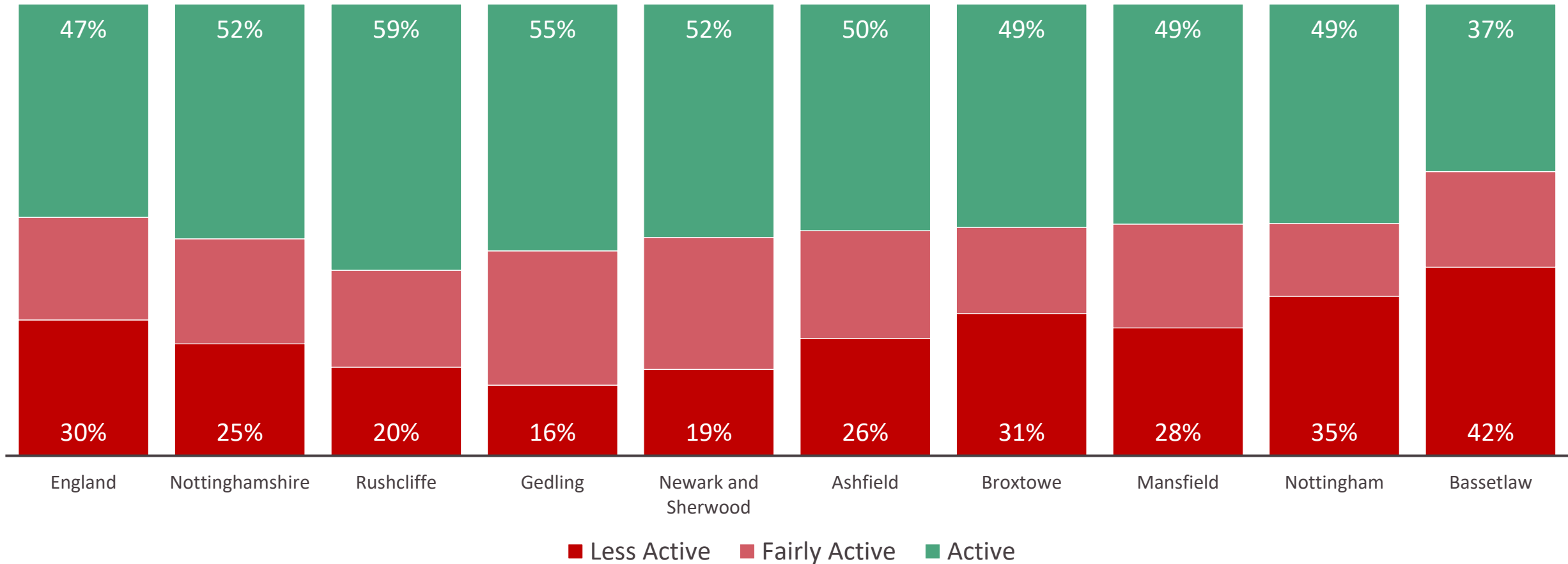
Nearly half of our children (48.1%) are not active enough



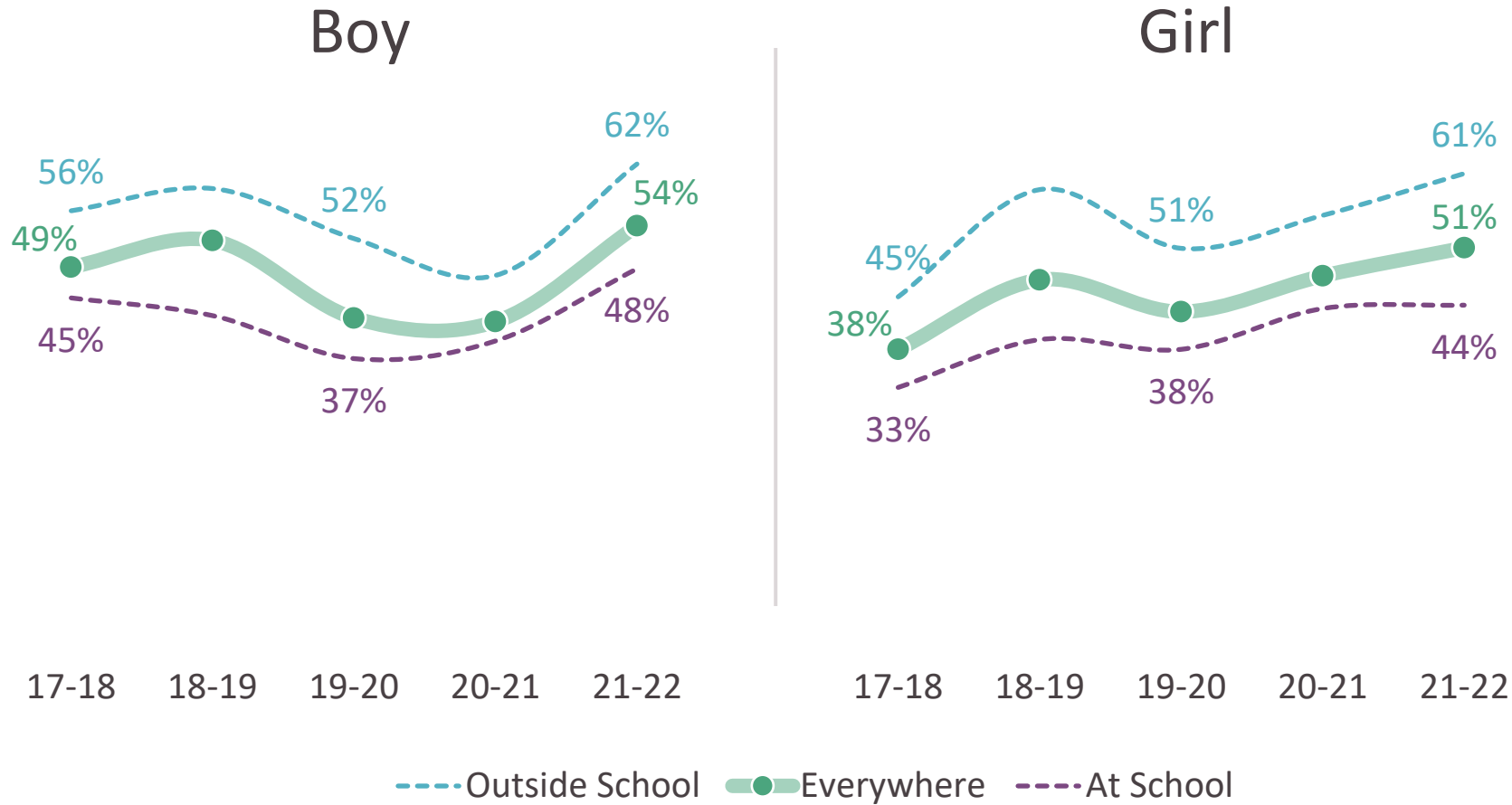
Activity levels decreased during the covid pandemic but have since recovered to an all time high



Physical activity levels by local authority

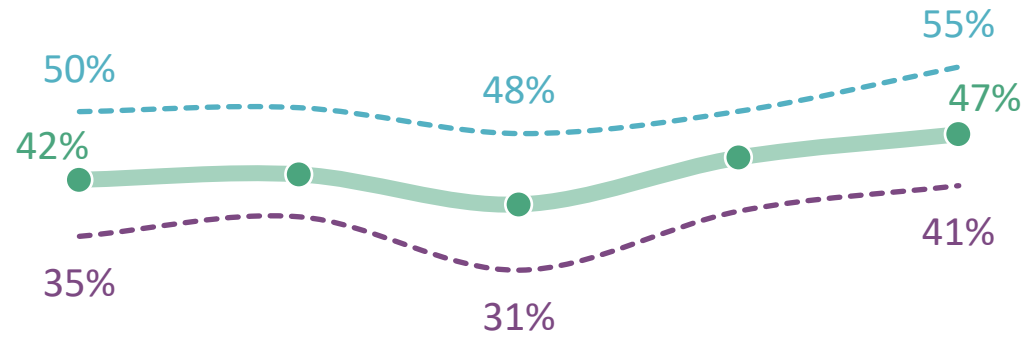


Activity levels by gender

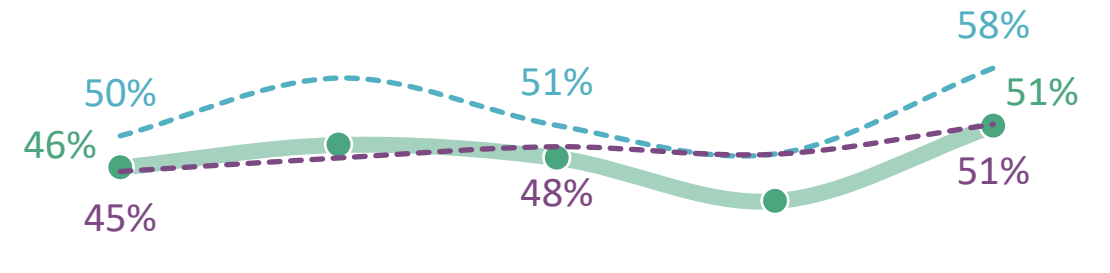


Activity levels by school age

Primary (years 3-6)

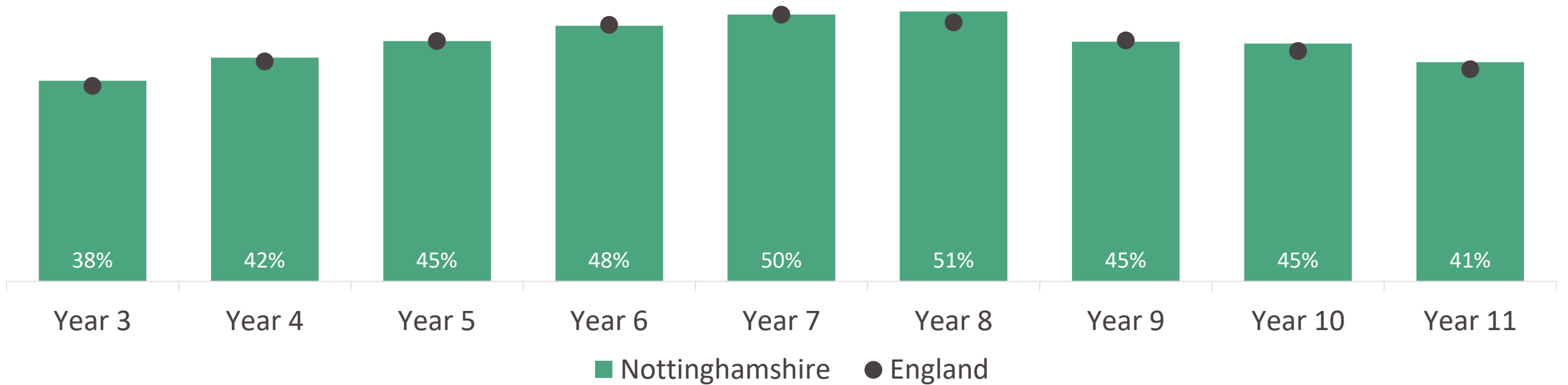


Secondary (years 7-11)



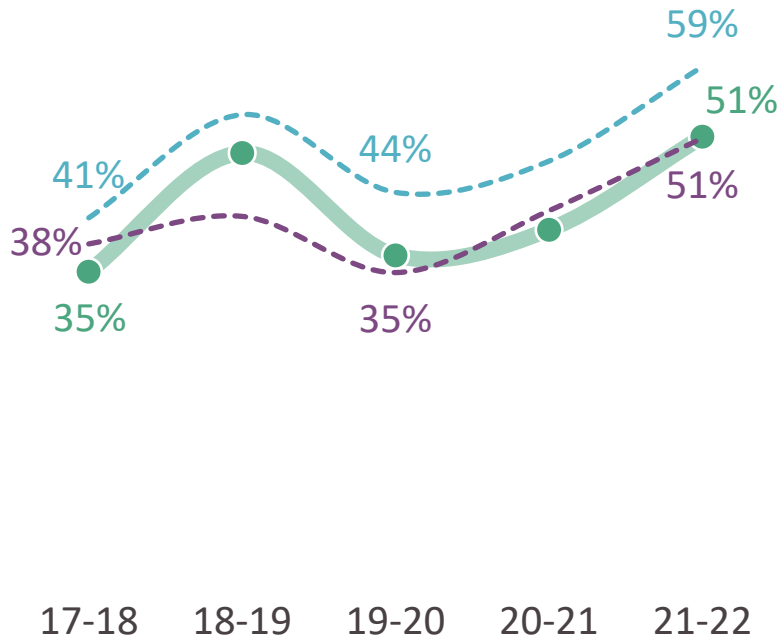
--- Outside School ● Everywhere --- At School

Activity levels peak between years 6 and 8

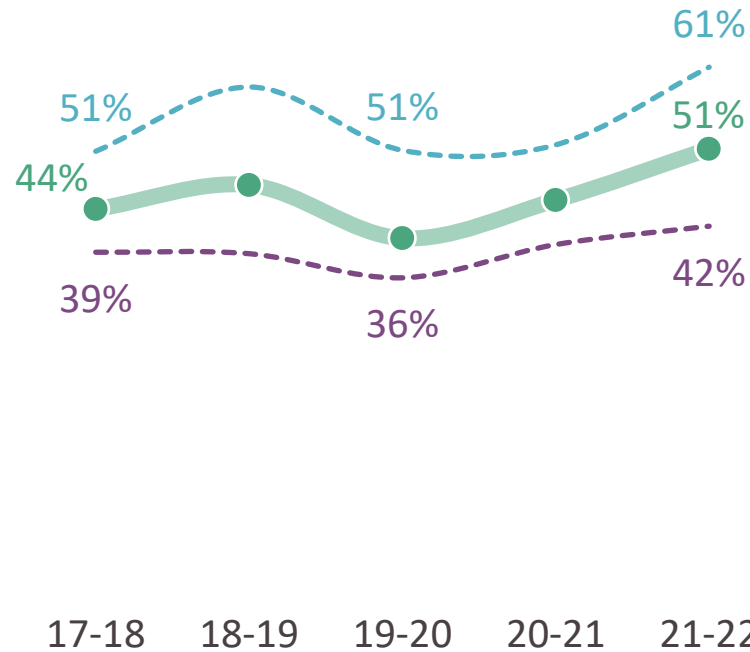


Activity levels by family affluence

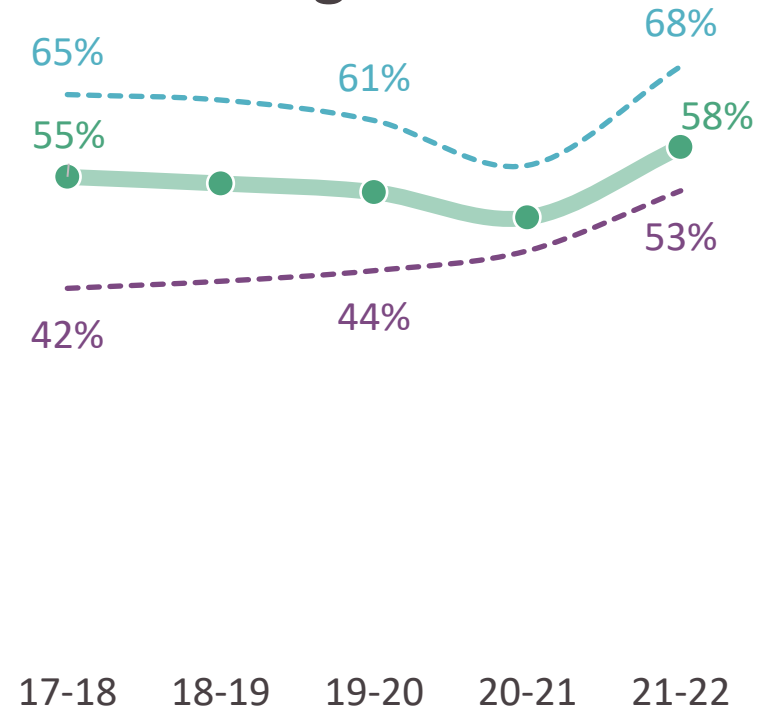
Low FAS



Medium FAS



High FAS

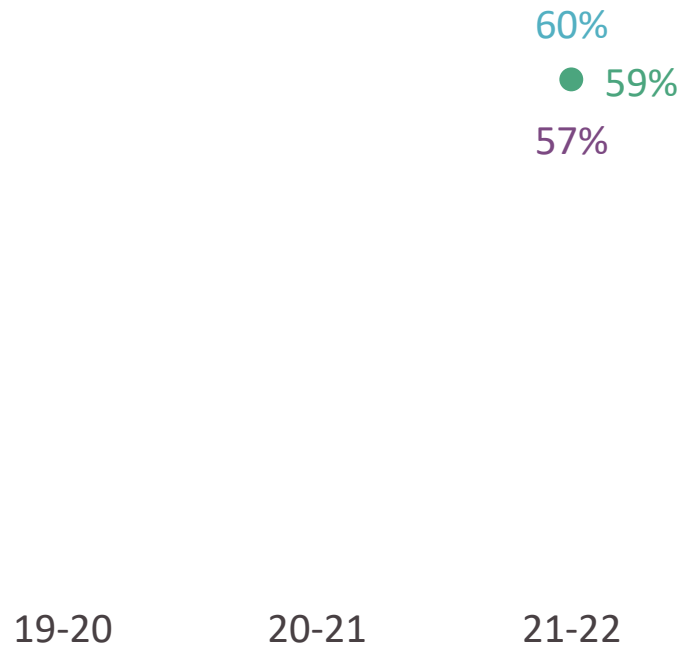


--- Outside School ● Everywhere --- At School

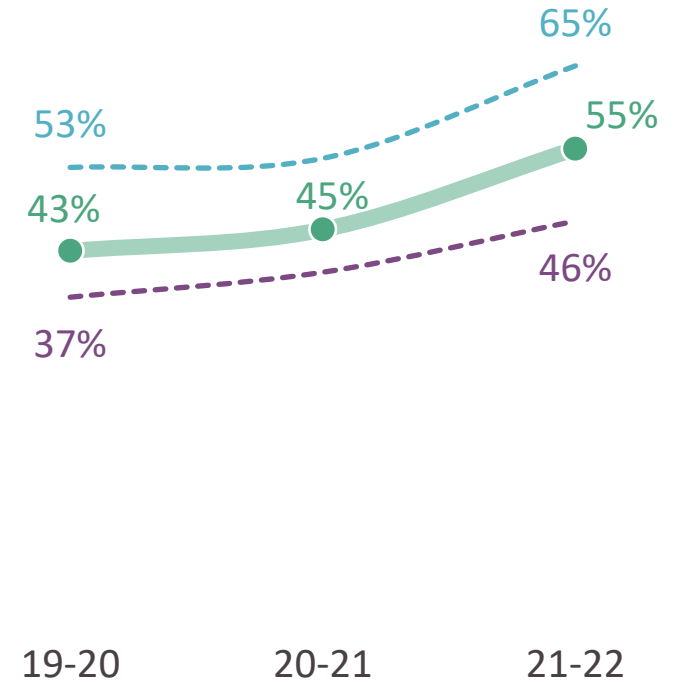
Activity levels by disability



Has limiting disability



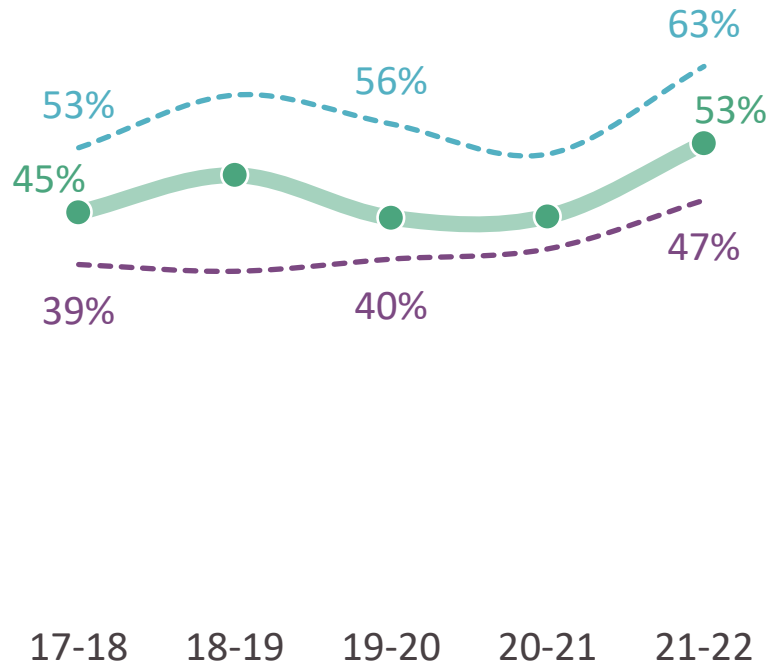
No limiting disability



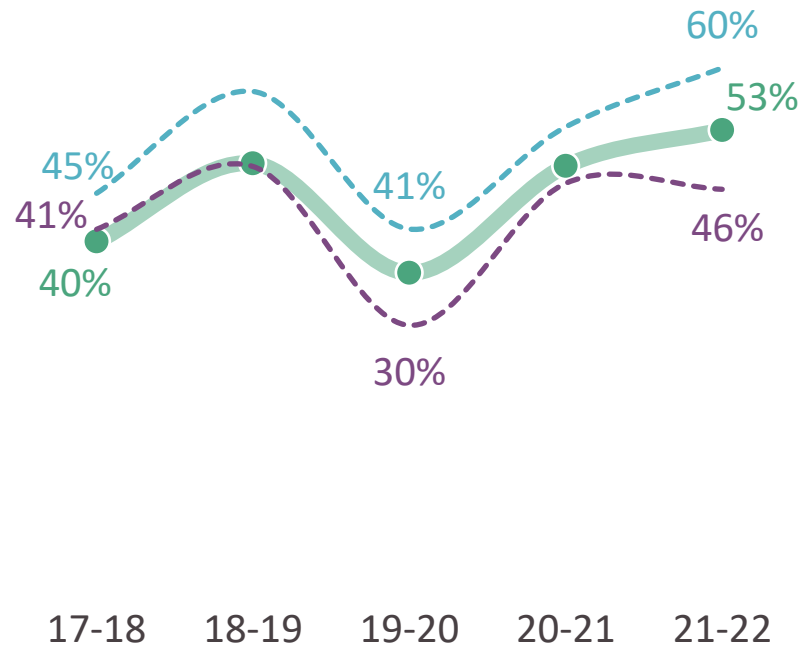
--- Outside School ● Everywhere --- At School

Activity levels by ethnicity

White British



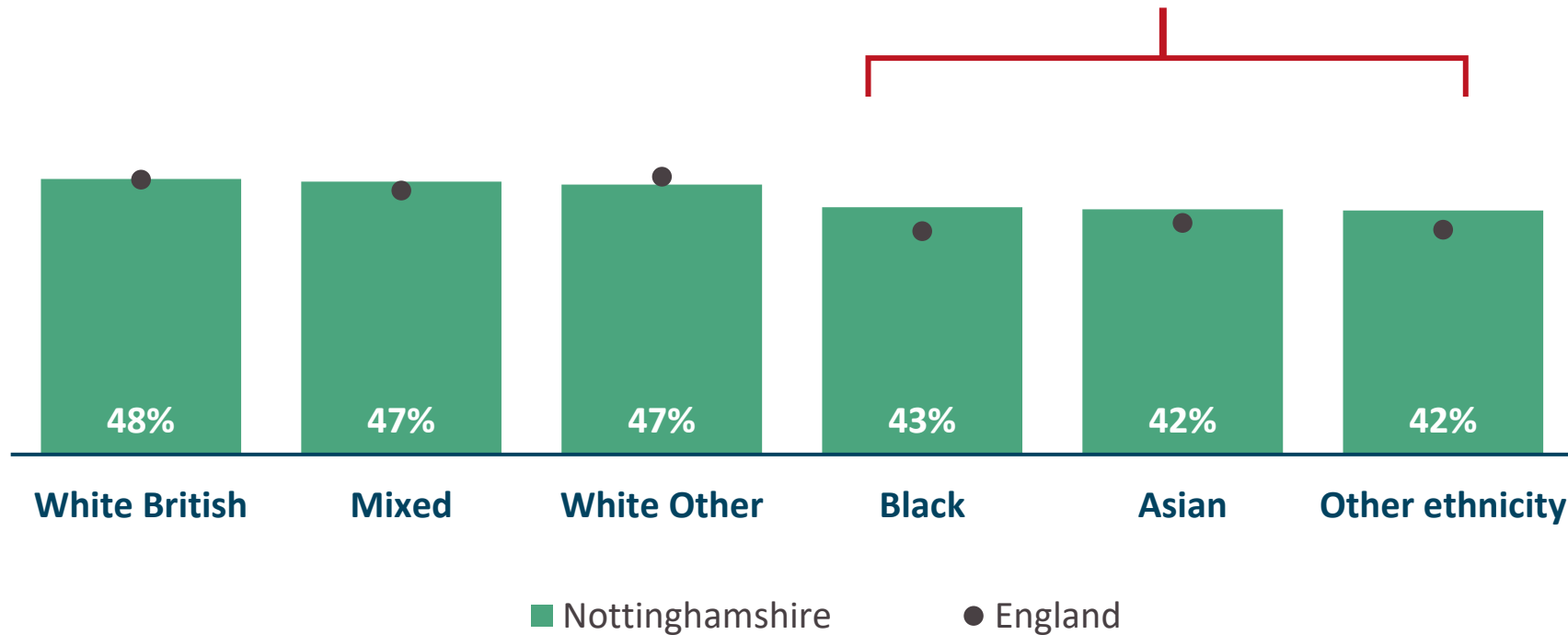
Minority ethnic group



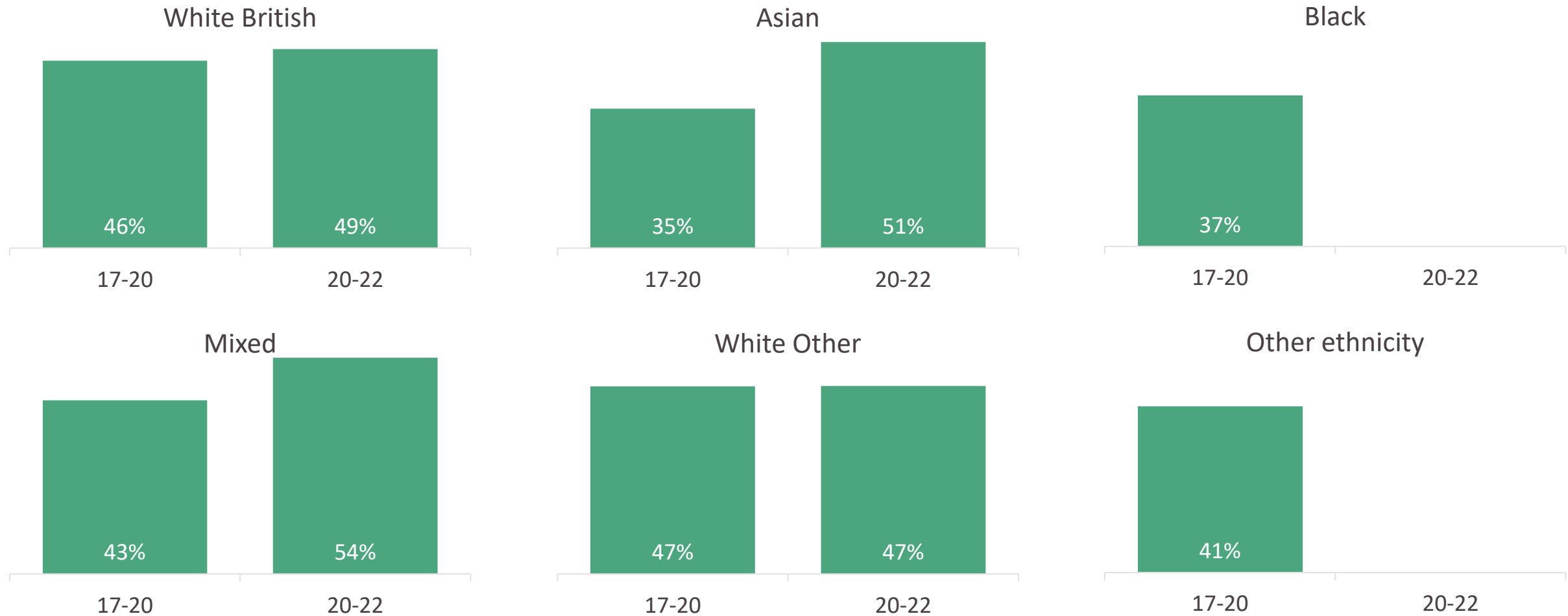
--- Outside School ● Everywhere --- At School



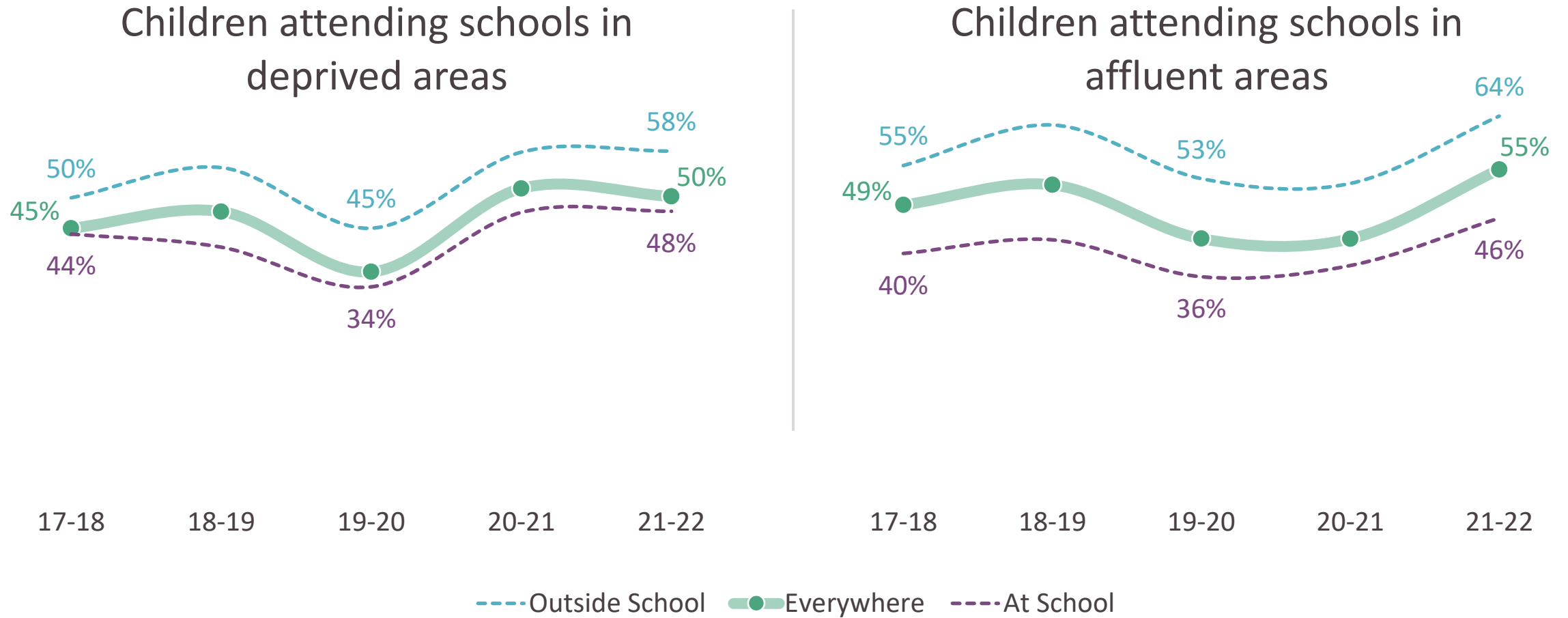
Our CYP from Asian, Black and other ethnic communities experience lower levels of activity



Activity rates pre and post Covid by ethnicity



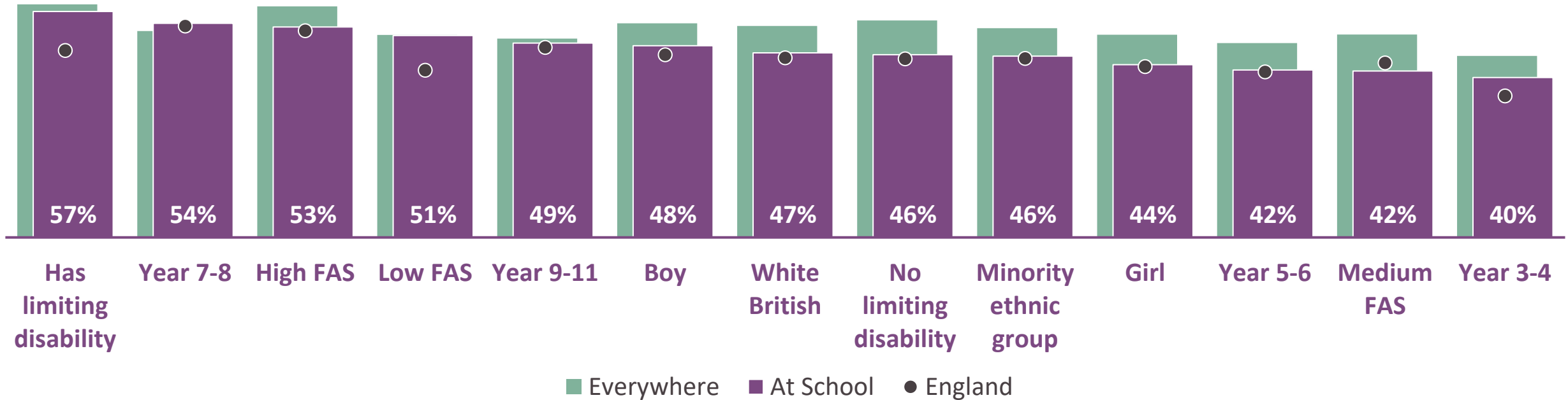
Activity levels by Income deprivation affecting children



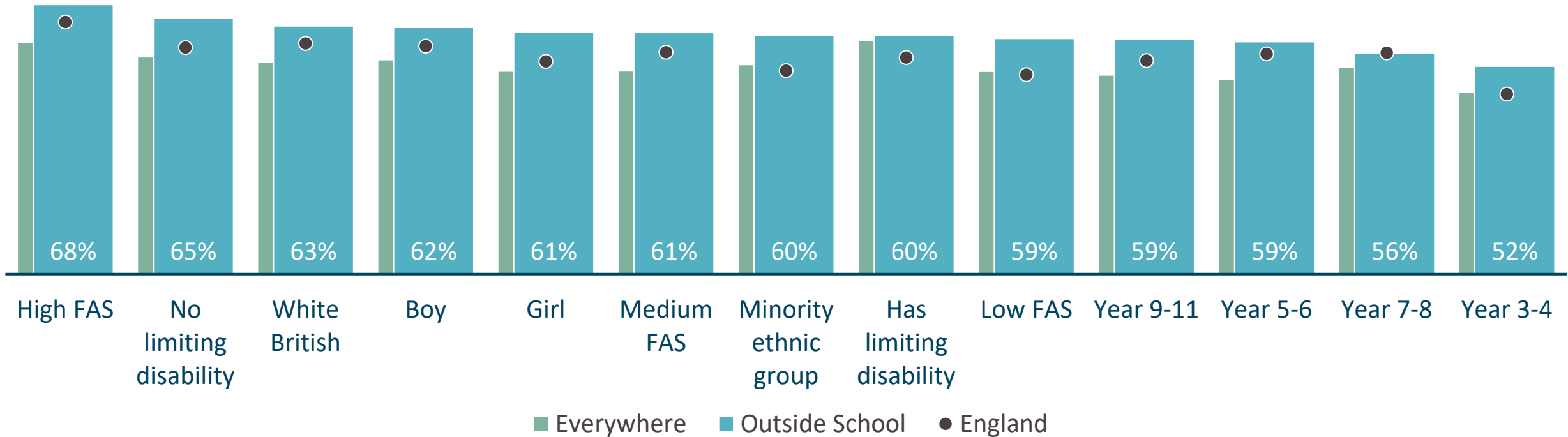
Family affluence has the biggest impact on physical activity levels



Activity levels at school by demographic group

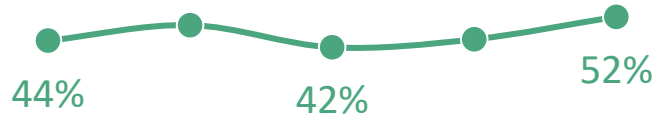


Activity levels outside school by demographic group



Activity levels by demographic groups

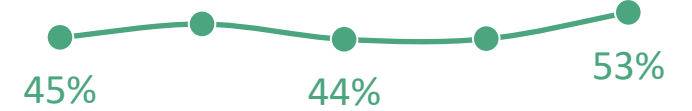
All CYP



Primary (Years 3-6)



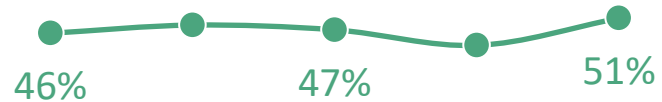
White British



Low FAS



Secondary (Years 7-11)



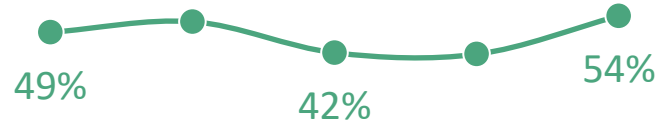
Minority ethnic group



Medium FAS



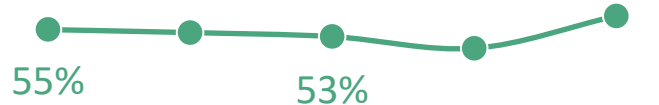
Boy



Has limiting disability



High FAS



Girl



No limiting disability



Second demographics

To help us further understand physical activity behaviour, we have split year groups by a second demographic – for example year 3-6 by gender

Again, we have **combined 5 years of data** to boost the sample size for these groups

Year groups are broken down by gender and family affluence



Gender inequalities are greater for primary school age children



Inequalities for CYP from low affluence families are greater for primary school age children



Triple demographics

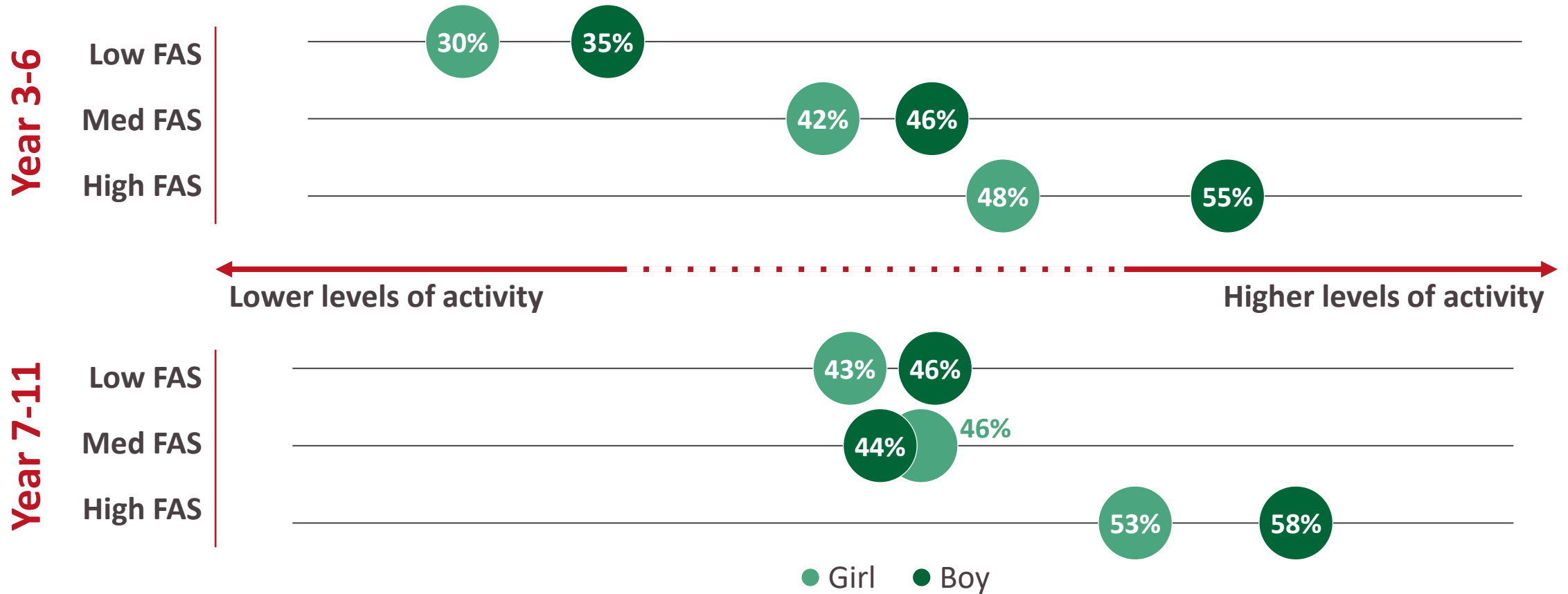
In this section we show analysis by **all three of the following demographics:**

- Year groups
- Gender
- Family affluence

Again, we have **combined 5 years of data** to boost the sample size for these groups



Inequalities are greater for younger children, girls and children from lower affluence families





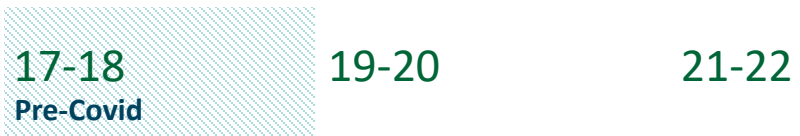
In this section we analyse the types of activities children and young people were doing in a given week

Data is for any duration, with at least moderate intensity

Fitness activities are at an all time high.

However, fitness still only makes up a small proportion of active minutes

Fitness activities



Time spent dancing peaked last year.

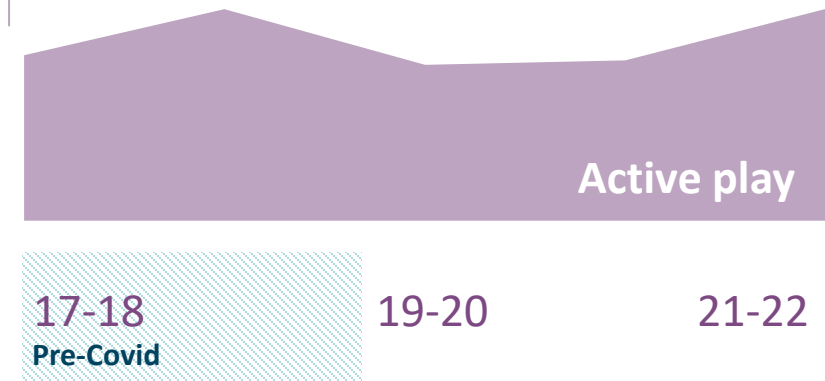
Active minutes have since decreased

Dance



Active play was disrupted by the pandemic but is showing signs of recovery. Active play is still the second largest contributor to active minutes for children and young people

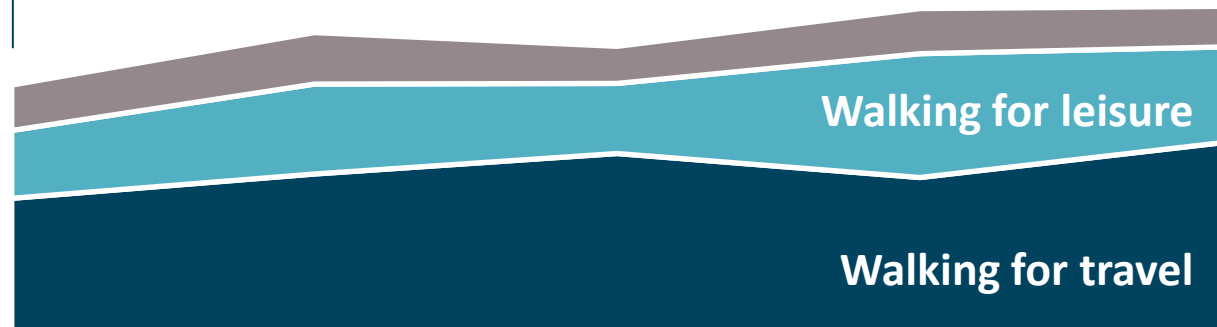
Active play



The pandemic positively affected the amount of time children and young people spent **walking for travel**. Although it dropped in 20-21, it has now bounced back again.

The amount of time spent **walking for leisure** peaked last year but is now in decline

Cycling and scooting has remained consistently low



17-18
Pre-Covid

19-20

21-22

Sporting activities continue to contribute the **most** active minutes despite being **less** than they were pre-pandemic



Sporting activities

17-18
Pre-Covid

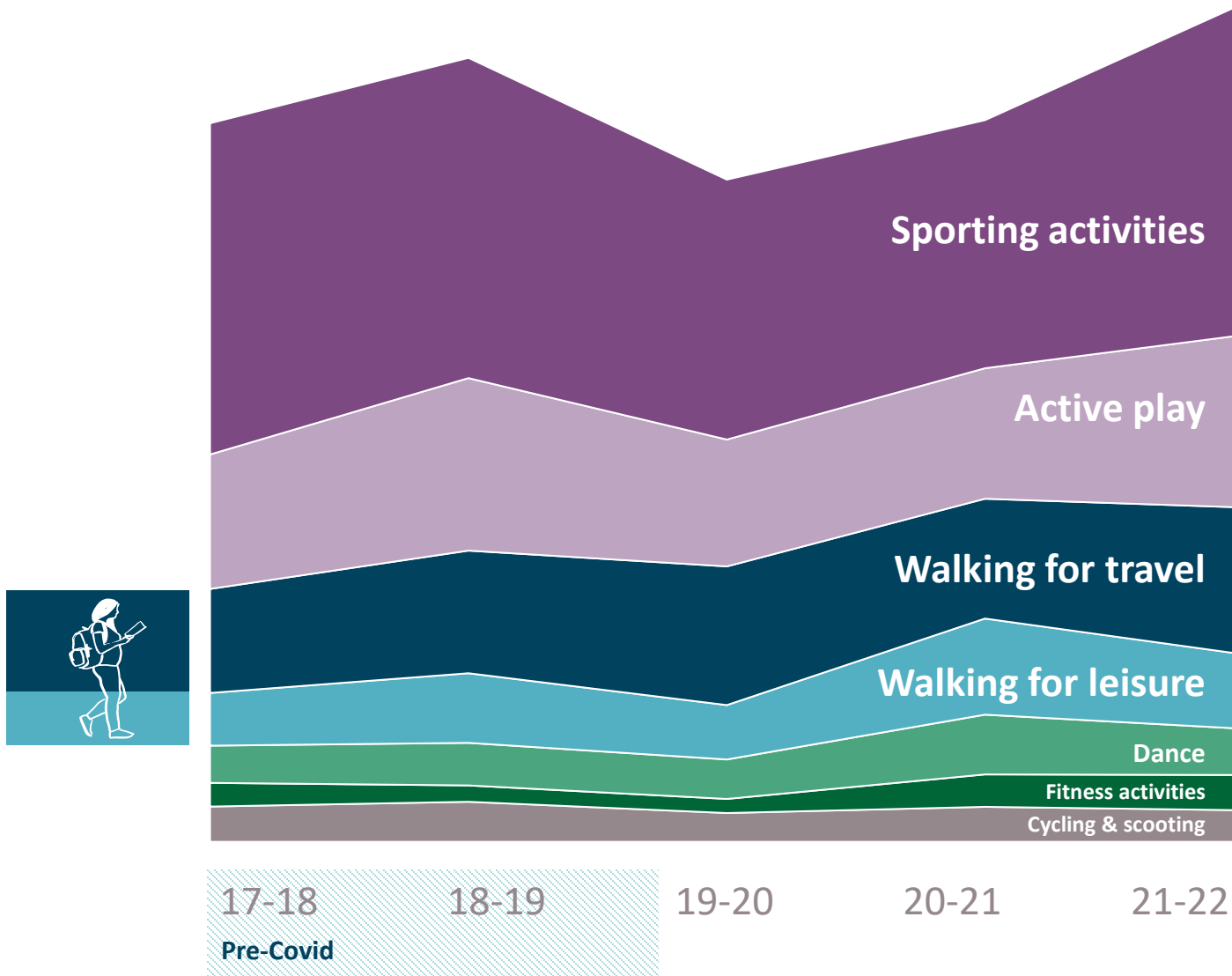
19-20

21-22



Overall, the amount of time children spend being active is increasing

The importance of **walking** for children and young people has grown.



Summary

- Almost half of all CYP do not meet the recommended physical activity guidelines
- However, active rates in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are at an all time high (51.9%)
- This is driven primarily by boys who have seen activity rates increase by 13pp in the last 12 months. Girls have seen activity rates increase by 4pp
- Activity levels peak between years 6-8
- Activity levels increase with family affluence and all groups have seen an increase in the last 12 months
- Black, Asian and 'Other ethnicity' young people have the lowest active rates
- Minutes spent on active play and walking for travel are at an all time high whilst sporting activities have recovered to the pre covid rates