

An insight into inequalities in adult physical activity in Derby City

Based on data using the Active Lives Survey 2024-2

September 2026

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The Adult Active Lives survey began in November 2015, which means we now have **a decade of insight**



Ten years of comparable data — This gives us more than a snapshot of our area, it gives us a trajectory. This shows us the direction inactivity is heading in our area: Where it has improved, stalled, or become entrenched.

The national picture is one of overall progress. But a decade of data makes it clear that growth is not equal. In most cases the gap between our most and least affluent communities has widened. Disabled adults and those with long-term health conditions, women, older residents and people in our most deprived neighbourhoods continue to experience levels of inactivity that the national average conceals.

Demographic and economic shifts are ongoing and have **intensified inequality gaps**

- Generally, our populations are growing, ageing and becoming more diverse
- The shift towards an ageing population is moving more people into age groups we know are more likely to be inactive
- Economic pressures are pushing more people into lower income brackets, where we know inactivity is more likely



Inactivity at a glance:

The local picture

National Active Lives data shows the direction of travel for England. To see what that means for Derby City, we need to understand our population, how it's changing, and the inactivity and inequalities we see locally.



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Our growing adult population is shifting towards an older and more diverse community

There are 222,000 **adults (16+)** living in Derby City

An increase of around 17,000 since 2015



45,000 of these are **over 65**

That's 20% of the adult population



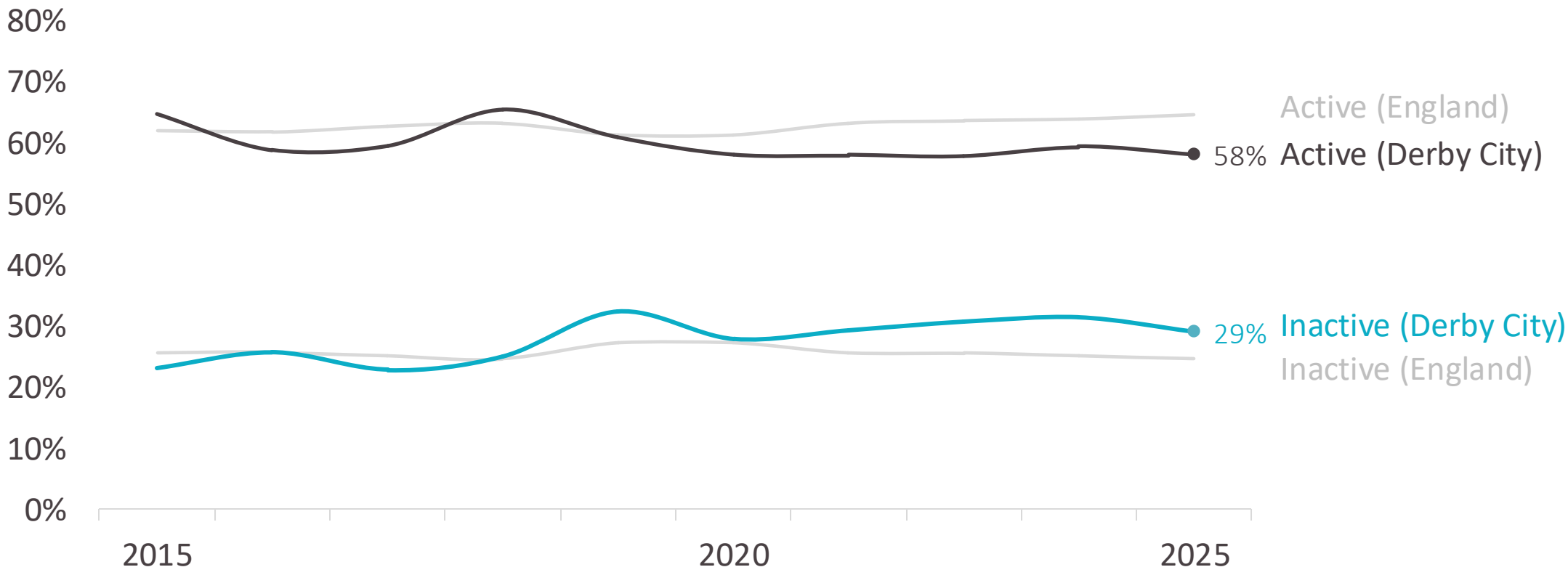
53,000 of these are from **global majority** ethnic groups

That's 30% of the adult population



Source: ONS Mid Year Population estimates for England and Wales, 2015 & 2025 (16+); Census 2011 & 2021 (24+)

Physical inactivity for adults in Derby City is relatively stable



Source: Sport England, Active Lives Adults (16+), 2015-25, excluding gardening

Currently, **29%** of adults are inactive



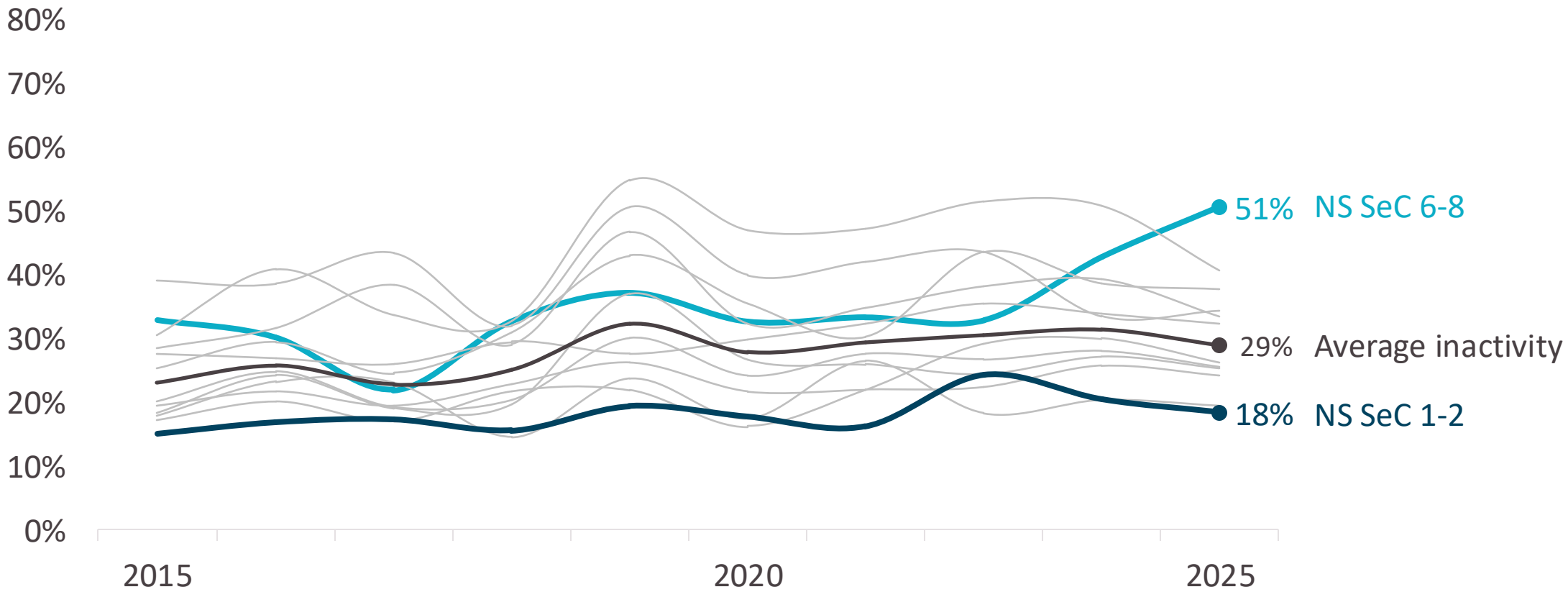
That's around **64,000**

people not meeting recommended activity levels

Source: ONS Mid Year Population estimates for England and Wales, 2025 (16+); Sport England, Active Lives Adults (16+), 2024-25, excluding gardening

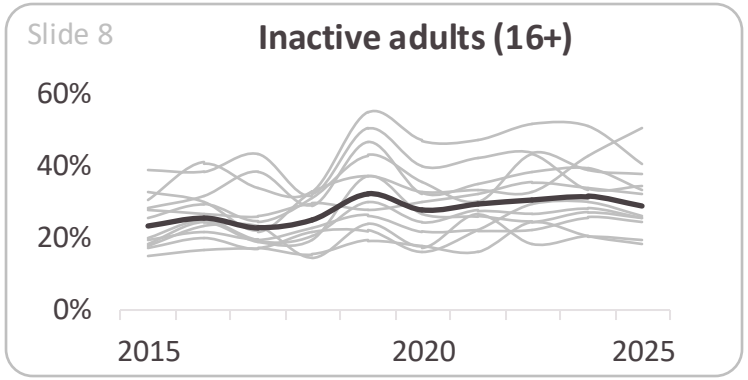
Average inactivity hides the variations within our population

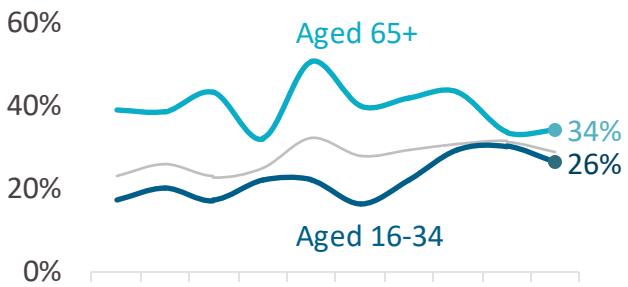
Inactivity across Derby City averages 29%. Within that, it rises to **51% for the least affluent** (NS SeC 6-8) – the highest of any group – and falls to **18% among the most affluent** (NS SeC 1-2). The lowest of any group.

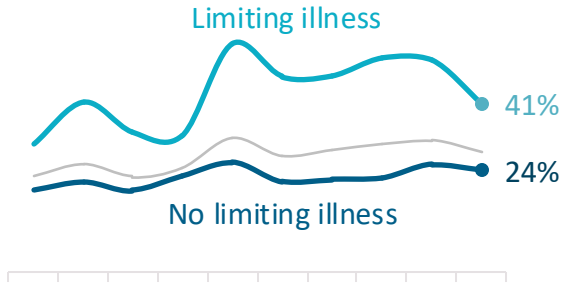


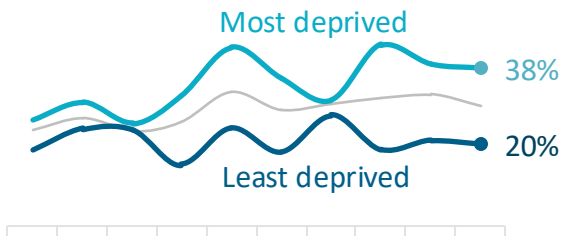
Source: Sport England, Active Lives Adults (16+), 2015-25, excluding gardening

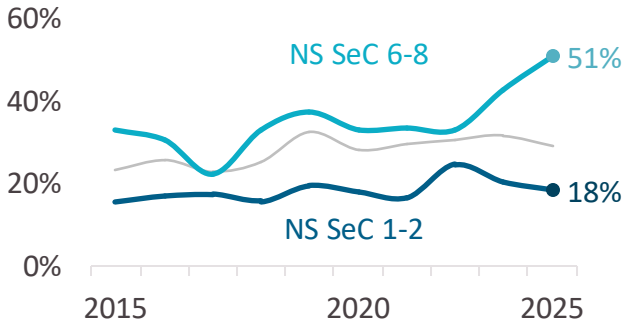
The inactivity gap: Which groups sit above and below the average

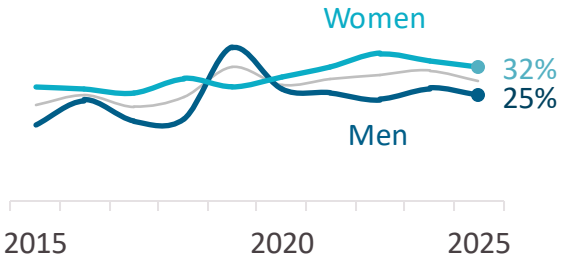


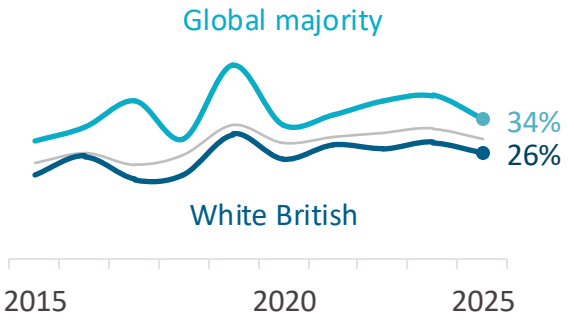










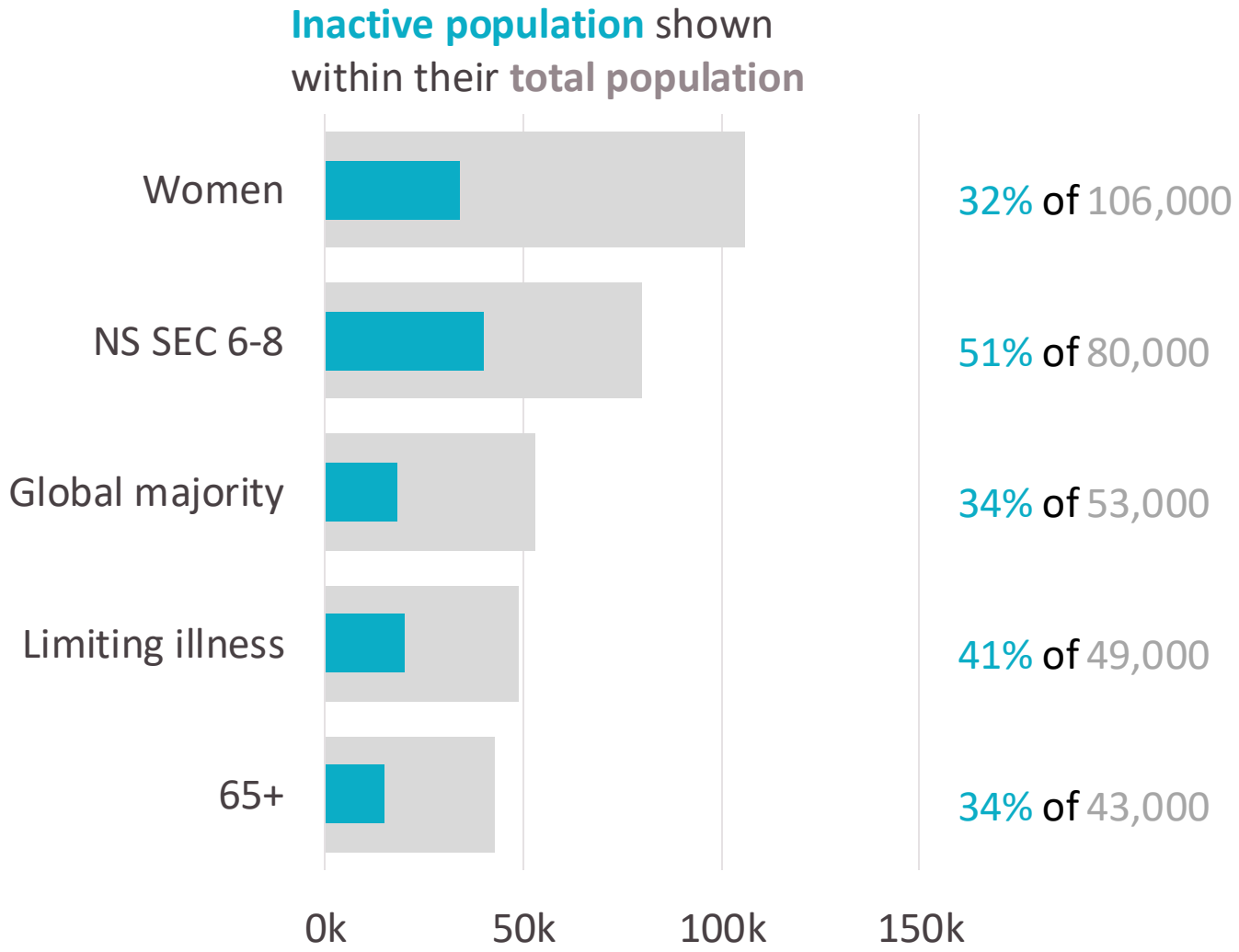


Source: Sport England, Active Lives Adults (16+), 2015-25, excluding gardening

Women make up the biggest population but not the highest % of inactivity

There are 106,000 women but only 32% are inactive. Compared to 51% of inactive adults in our least affluence households (NS SeC 6-8).



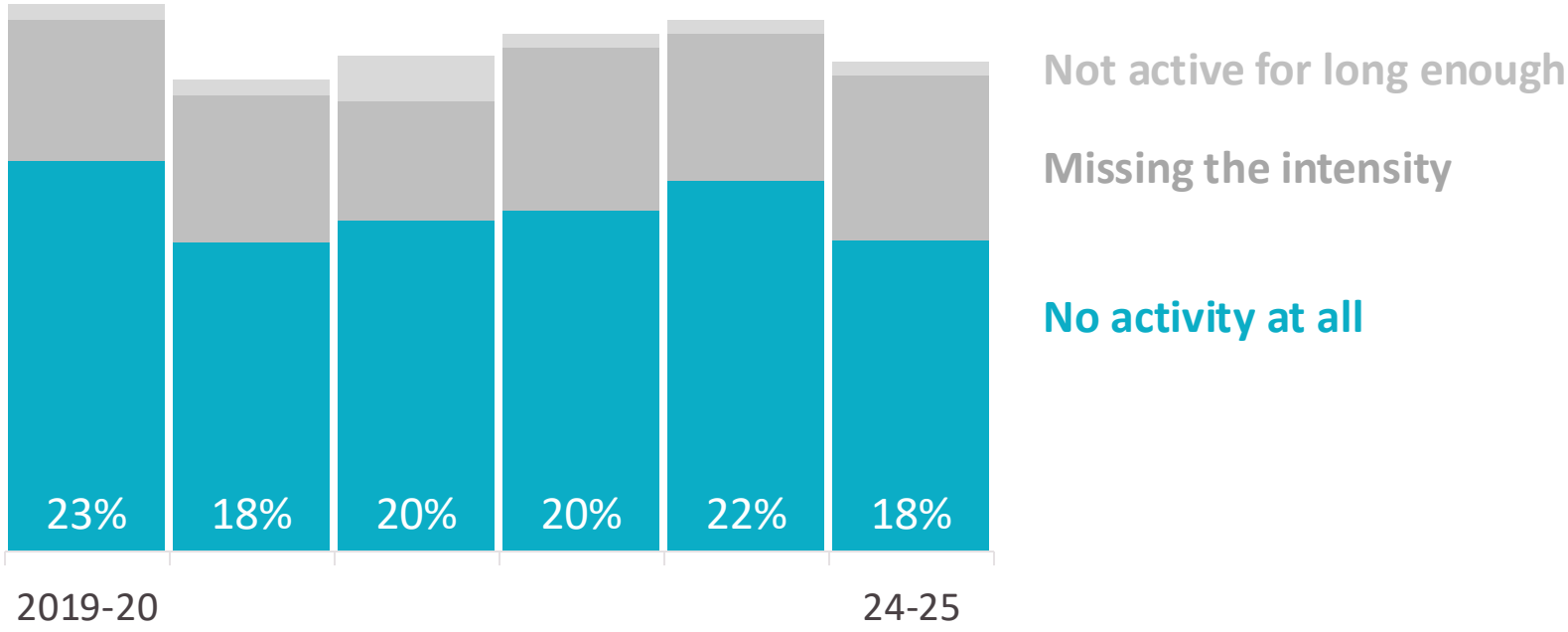


Source: Sport England, Active Lives Adults (16+), 2024-25, excluding gardening; Census 2021

The proportion of adults doing **no activity at all** has fallen for the first time in 5 years

There has been a drop of 4 percentage points in the last 12 months.

That's around **9,000,** fewer adults doing **no activity at all**



Source: Sport England, Active Lives Adults (16+), 2019-25, excluding gardening; ONS Mid Year Population estimates for England and Wales, 2025 (16+)

Characteristics and the inequalities metric

Having looked at who's inactive locally, we now turn to **active levels (meeting the CMO guidelines)** and the characteristics Sport England identifies as key drivers of inequality.

The inequalities metric shows how far activity falls as these characteristics stack up. It's not which characteristics someone carries that matters most — it's how many. That's what reveals the scale of the additional challenge some people face.



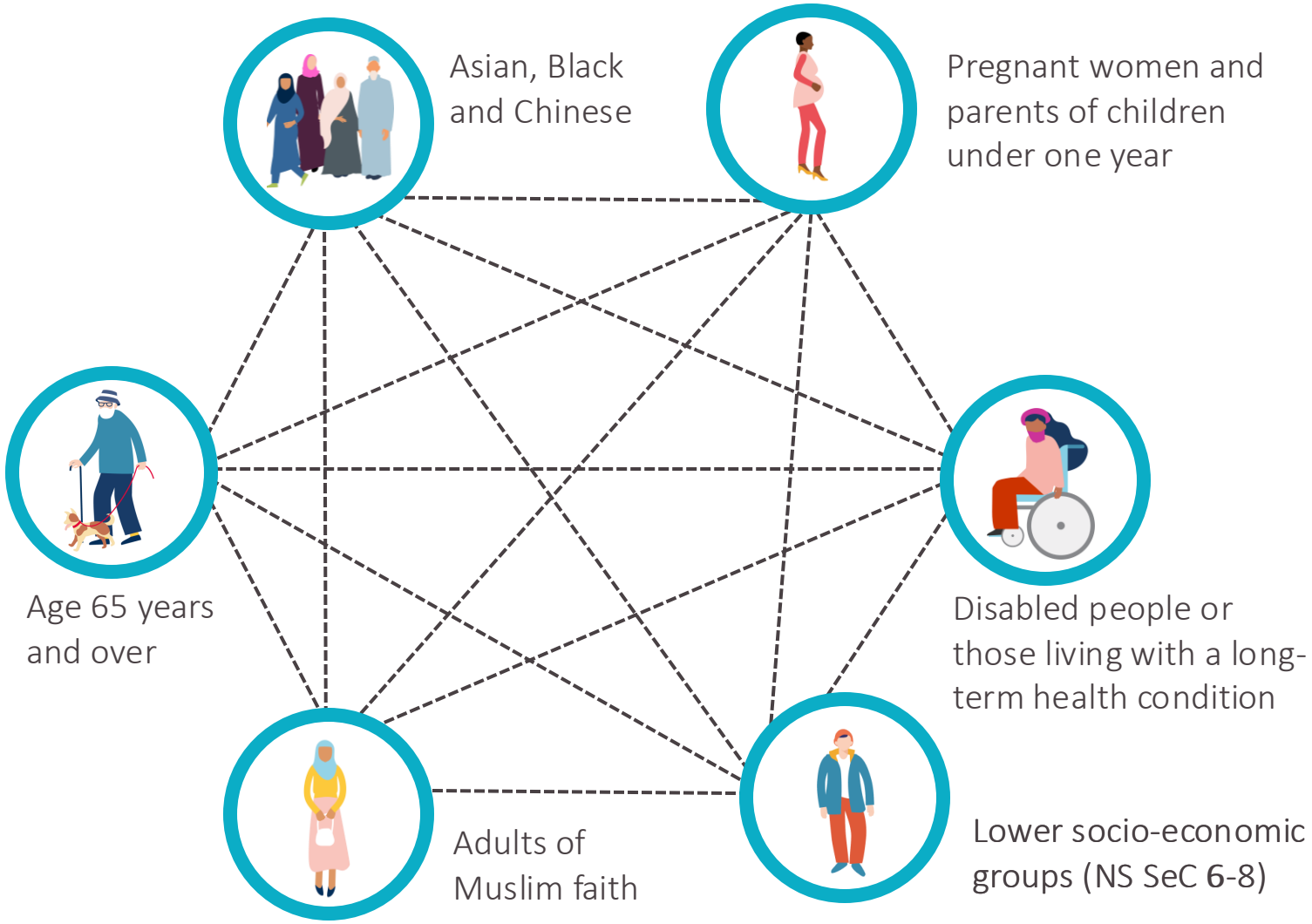
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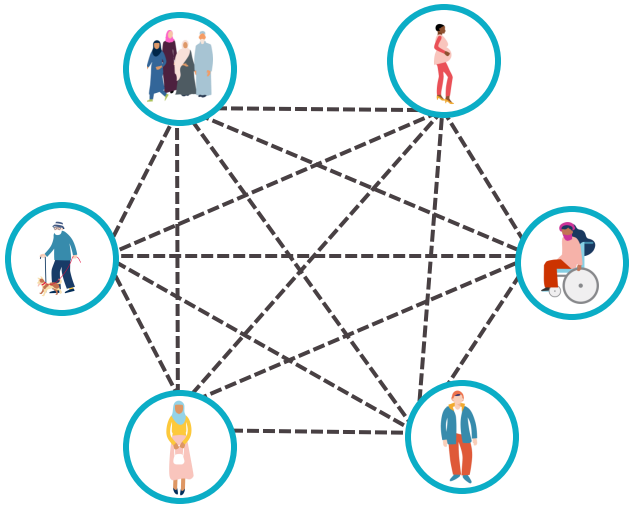
No one is a single characteristic

The inequalities metric lets us look at people as a whole, rather than one characteristic at a time.

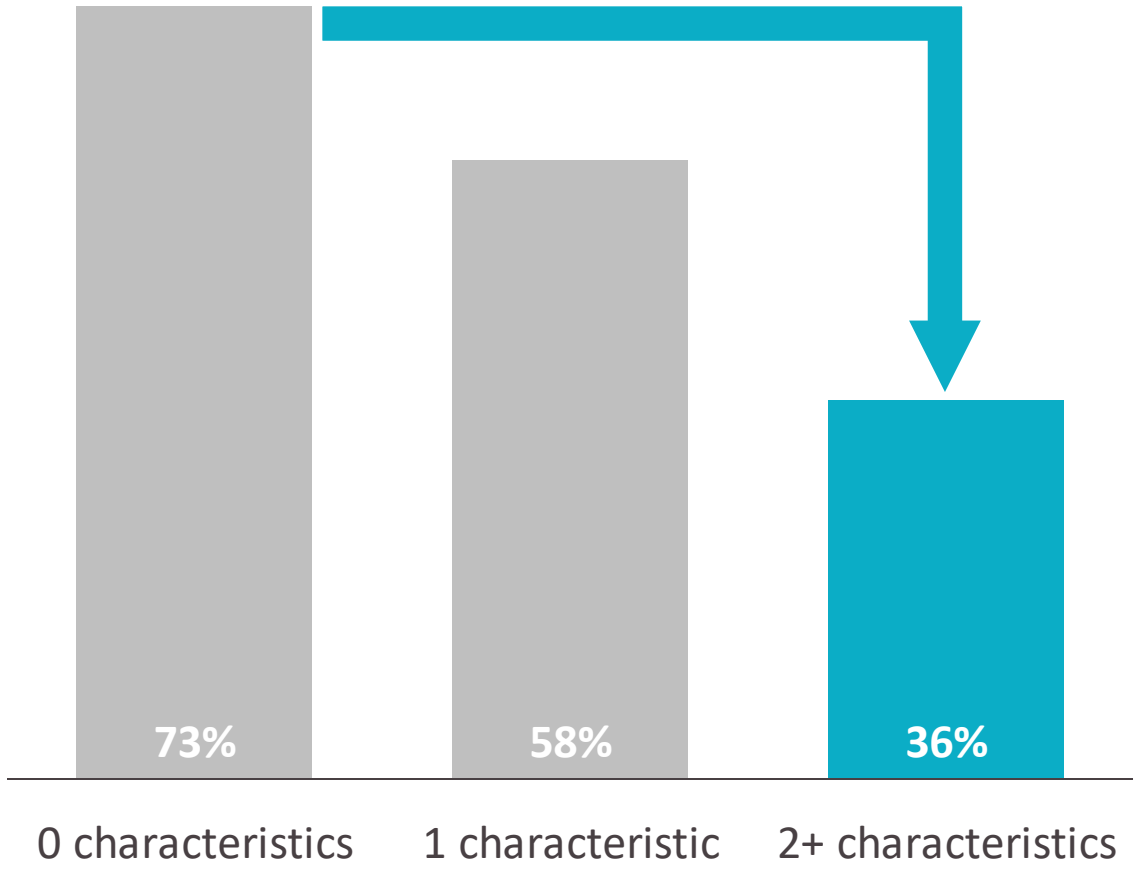
Combining characteristics associated with being less active can lower individual activity levels.



Having **2 or more characteristics** can dramatically reduce our ability to be **active**



Activity levels fall when compared to those with no characteristics of inequality



Source: Sport England, Active Lives Adults (16+), 2024-25 , excluding gardening

A local example: low affluence, plus one more characteristic

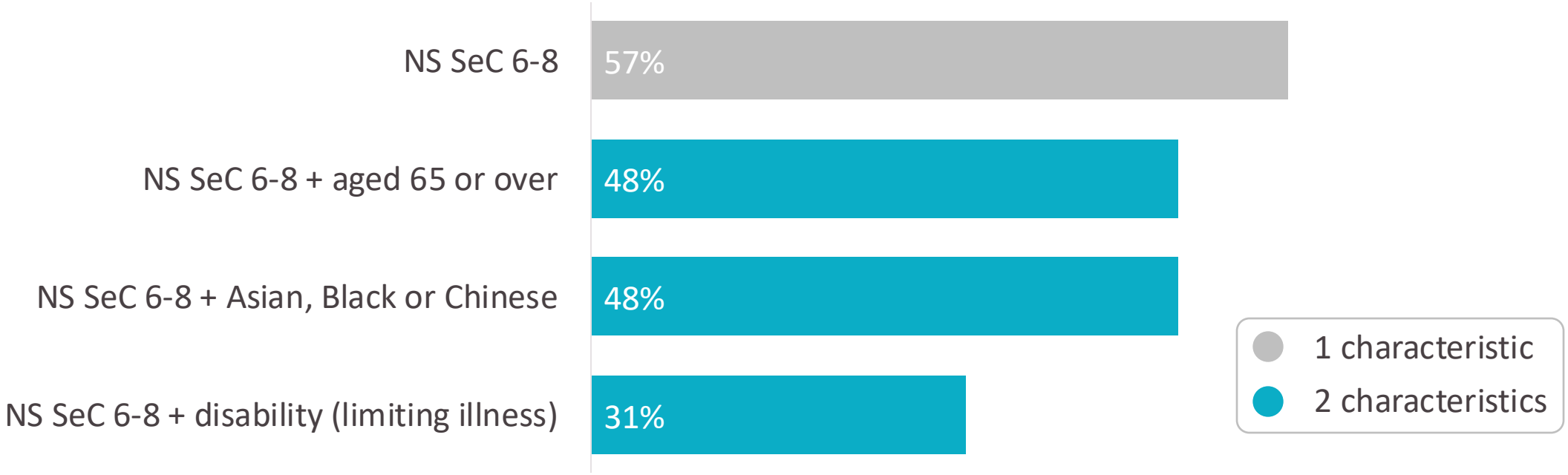
To bring this to life locally, the next slide looks at people in low affluence households — one of our key inequality characteristics — and shows what happens when a second characteristic is added.

We've chosen low affluence as our example because it cuts across so many other characteristics: people in low affluence households span every ethnicity, age group and disability status. That makes it a useful lens for showing how combining characteristics compounds the challenge, rather than a group that stands apart from the rest.

This is one example, not the full picture. The same pattern will hold for other combinations too.



Using low affluence as an example — activity drops further still when **combined** with age, ethnicity, or disability



In this example, the steepest fall is seen when disability (limiting illness) is added — but all combinations show reducing activity levels

Source: Sport England, Active Lives Adults (16+), 2022-25 3 years combined excluding gardening

Inactivity in our place

Understanding who's active in our places, and how, helps us see the full picture. Mapping also lets us explore where outcomes are worse at a place level.

The focus on place began in 2017, when Sport England's Local Delivery Pilots set out to test how working in and with places could help tackle inequalities among the least active.

Place-based work matters because lasting change happens when it's rooted in the communities that need it most.

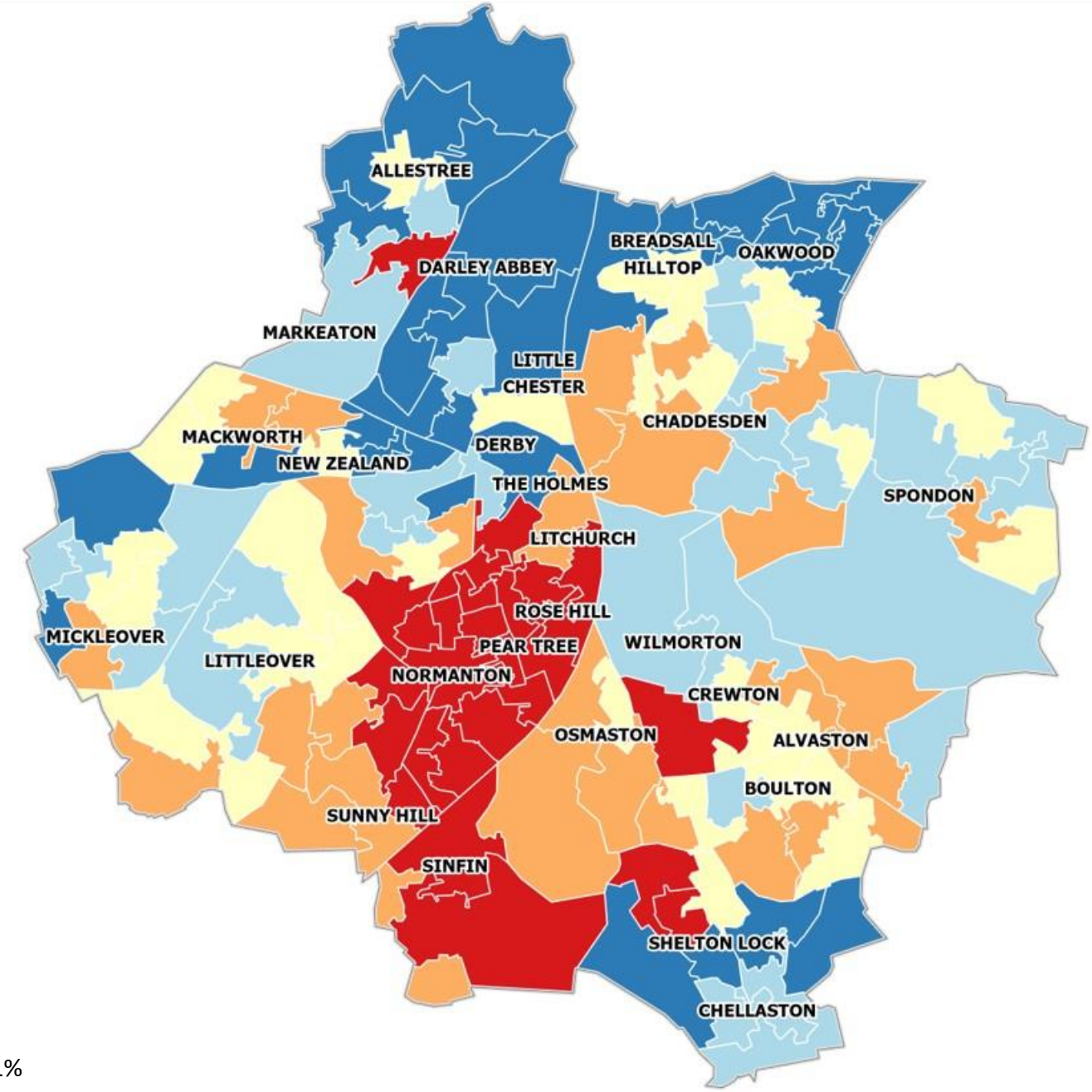


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Inactivity doubles across the city

(21%-41%)



Adult inactive overall (Derby City data range)

Less inactive — More inactive

21% 28% 29% 31% 34% 41%

Source: Sport England, Lower Super Output Area (LSOA), Small Area Estimates Nov 2023-24. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2026

How we get our physical activity minutes

Understanding changing trends driving the types of activities we do is important. Nationally, running and fitness activities continue to grow strongly, while active travel and cycling for leisure have dipped over the last 12 months.

This matters because knowing through which activities our communities get their minutes tells us what to protect, what to invest in and where the biggest opportunities lie — from everyday walking routes and green space to sports and leisure facilities.



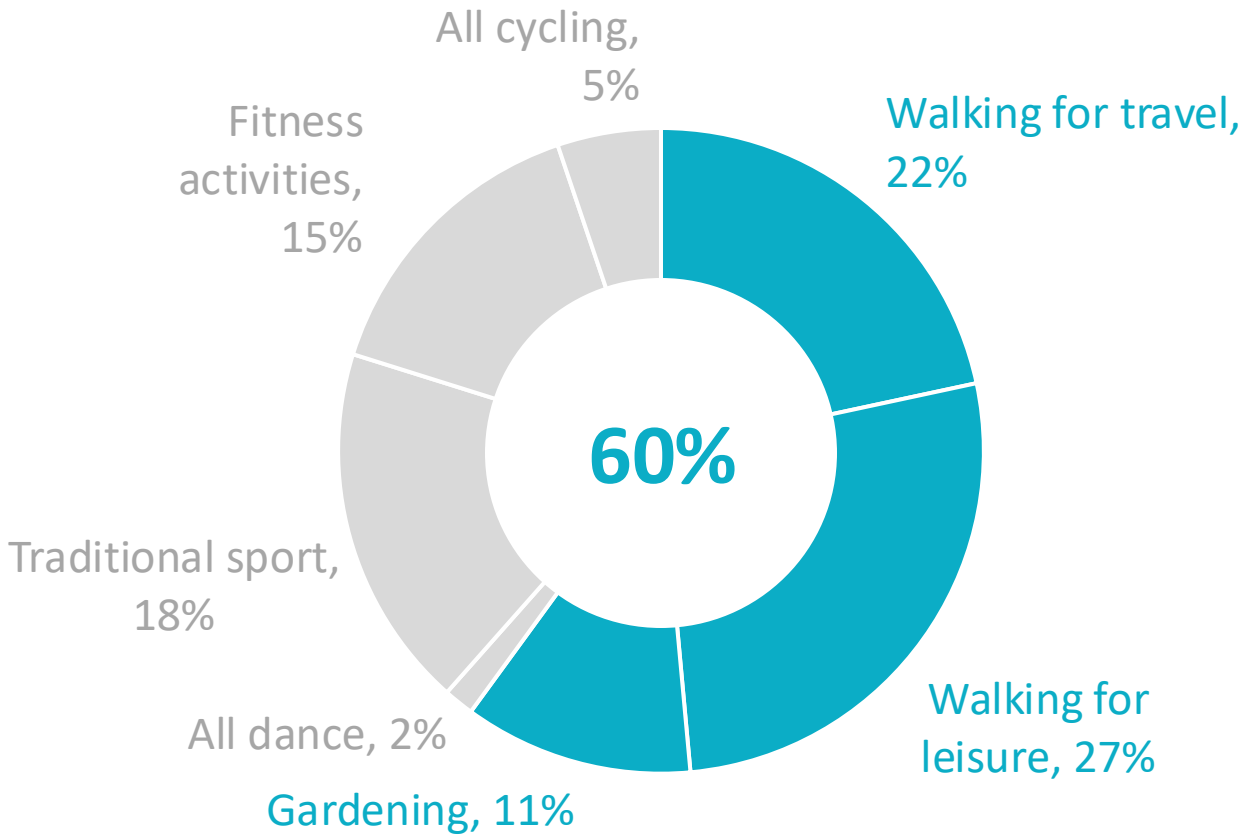
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Almost 2 thirds of our active time is spent doing informal activities

Walking and gardening can be done with no sports or leisure facilities



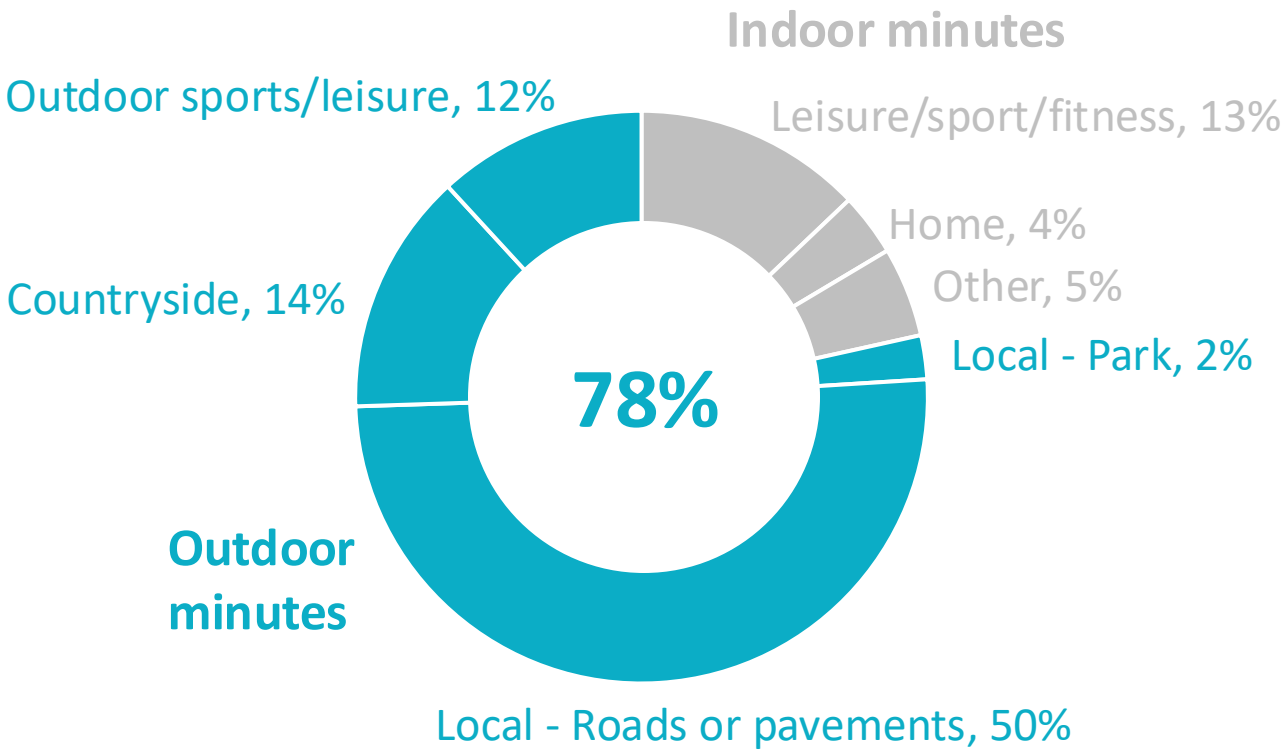


Source: Sport England, Active Lives Adults (16+), 2024-25, excluding gardening. Measure: Minutes of physical activity per week



Over 3 quarters of our active time comes from **outdoor activities**

This shows the importance of our active environments



Source: Sport England, Active Lives Adults (16+), 2024-25, excluding gardening. Measure: Minutes of physical activity per week

What gets us moving?

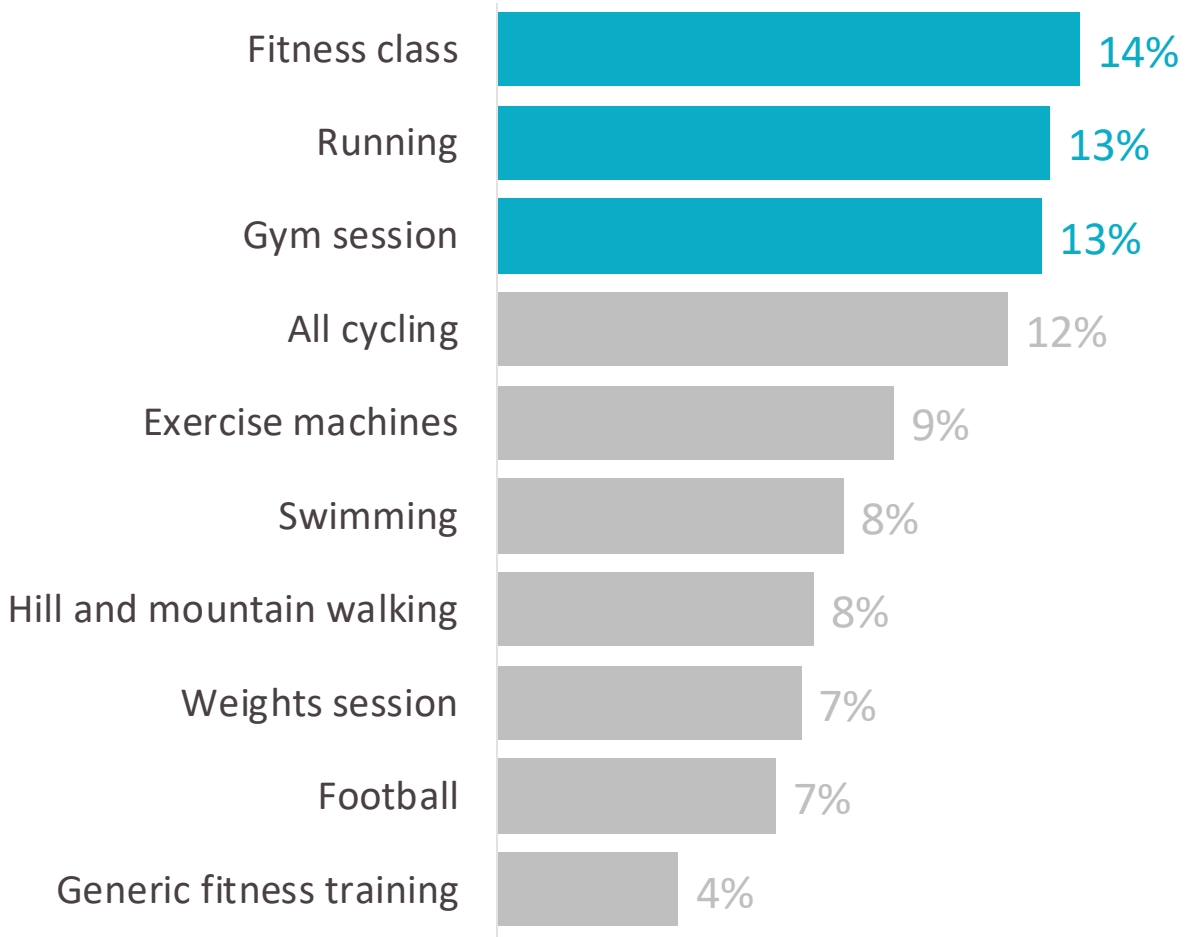
Fitness classes, running and going to the gym are the top 3 sports and activities adults regularly take part in locally, each at 13% or above.

As a national comparison, football has held steady at just under 5% since 2015.



Top 10 sports and activities

Participating **at least twice in the last 28 days**



Source: Sport England, Active Lives Adults (16+), 2024-25, excluding gardening

The importance of physical activity and social outcomes

Active Lives also captures data designed to better understand impact against four of the five social outcomes to which sport and physical activity contributes.



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Social outcomes are measured by asking different questions…



Mental wellbeing

How **happy** did you feel yesterday?
How **satisfied** are you with your life nowadays?



Individual development

I can **achieve most of the goals** I set myself
If I find something difficult, I keep trying until I can do it (**resilience**)



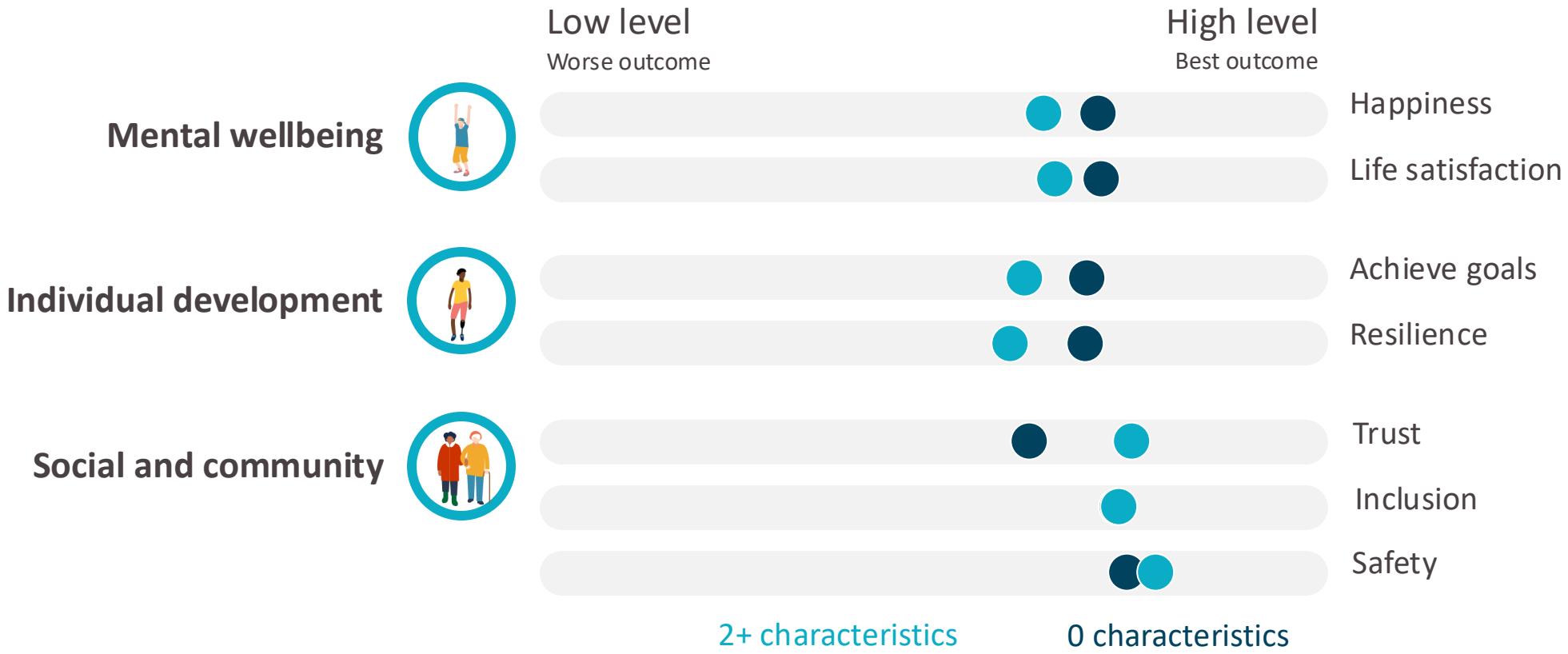
Social & community

Most people in our local area can be **trusted**
My local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together (**inclusion**)
I feel **safe** in the public places and settings where I would like to exercise

Source: Sport England, Active Lives Adult Survey November 2024-25 Report

The more inequalities stack up, the worse outcomes tend to get

We would expect adults who face **two or more inequality characteristics** to compare poorly on social outcomes, to those facing **none.** But on social and community outcomes the gaps close or reverse.



Source: Sport England, Active Lives Adults (16+), 2024-25, excluding gardening

Appendix

Demographics

	2015-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25
All adults (aged 16+)	**1,044**	**969**	**502**	**513**	**466**	**471**	**517**	**506**	**871**	**864**
Male	479	410	219	219	202	207	231	216	393	384
Female	564	559	282	291	259	260	282	286	470	473
16-34	251	223	112	135	113	113	118	117	211	210
65+	264	217	107	115	122	115	129	127	223	224
NS SEC 1-2	458	486	233	253	201	224	258	251	390	408
NS SEC 6-8	132	125	68	66	73	73	68	66	125	105
White British	858	791	407	384	376	364	383	371	635	629
Global majority	121	99	51	78	51	79	83	91	149	160
Limiting illness	195	146	98	81	97	98	103	118	198	201
No limiting illness	788	765	372	388	346	342	386	349	620	599
Least deprived quintile	313	267	93	126	133	137	167	151	251	248
Most deprived quintile	241	264	171	174	153	116	128	116	240	252
0 Characteristics	-	309	171	176	153	154	169	160	296	287
1 Characteristic	-	186	93	126	136	110	142	149	252	258
2+ Characteristics	-	52	31	40	41	45	59	64	130	123

Source: Sport England, Active Lives Adults (16+), 2024-25

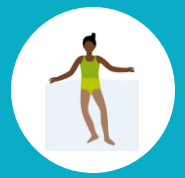
How do we measure activity?

We report on the number of **moderate intensity** minutes completed in the last week, based on activity type



Light

Light intensity minutes are excluded



Moderate

Moderate intensity equivalent (MIE) minutes means each ‘moderate’ minute counts as one minute



Vigorous

Any vigorous activity counts for double, so each vigorous minute counts as two moderate minutes

Please note: For some activities, intensity was assumed and not asked. Activities done by those aged 65 and over were assumed to be at least moderate

What activities do we measure?



is generally excluded from the survey but is counted within active minutes



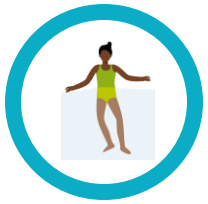
Walking for leisure includes all other types of walking, dog walking, rambling and Nordic walking or just going for a stroll*



Walking for travel includes walking as a way to get from one place to another, such as the shops work or visiting friends*



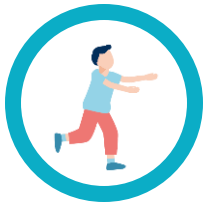
Cycling includes leisure and travel, track, road and mountain biking or racing, exercise bike or cycle class



Traditional sport includes team, water, combat and winter sports, swimming, athletics, golf, horse riding and gymnastics



Fitness activities includes gym activities (fitness machines and classes), weights, boxing and interval sessions



Dance includes artistic and creative dance (ballroom, ballet, contemporary etc)

*Only activity of at least 10 continuous minutes are counted

AI tools have been used to help process data and refine the narrative for this pack. All figures are taken from the published survey data, and all analysis has been carried out, checked and verified by Press Red

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