



An insight into physical activity in **Tameside**

July 2025



An unequal landscape

A summary of findings

The same patterns appear across both adults and children and young people: living on a low income is consistently associated with higher levels of inactivity.

For adults, inactivity is also more prevalent among those of us from an Asian heritage, or living with a health condition or disability. Being active is also a greater challenge for many girls and women.

The borough's assets are unevenly distributed — concentrated in some areas, and scarce in others, particularly in the neighbourhoods where people with these characteristics are most likely to live.

These are structural inequalities, not personal choices. How we experience physical activity — and whether we feel we belong in the spaces where it happens — is shaped by who we are and where we live.

In the 10 years between Census 2011 and 2021 we have seen our population **growing**, **aging** and becoming **more diverse**

All adults (16+)



5%
increase*

Older adults (55+)



16%
increase

Minority ethnic groups

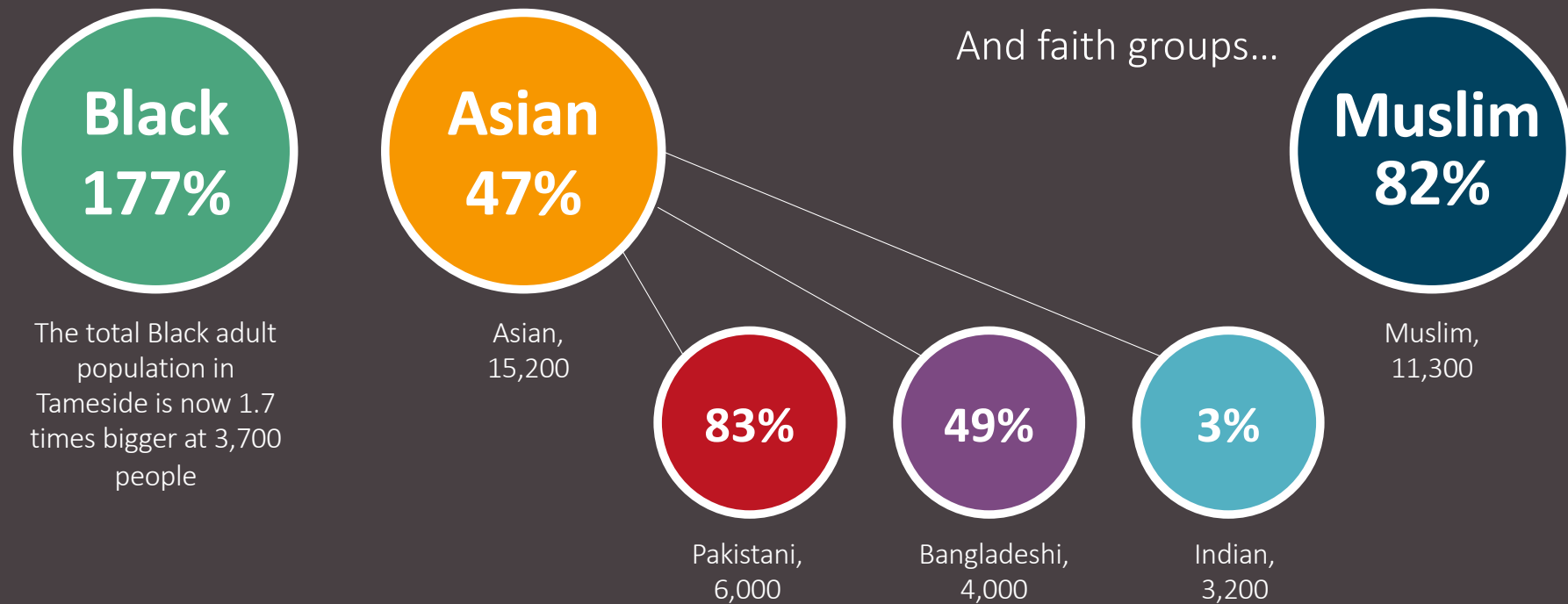


62%
increase



Growth in our ethnic communities (adults, 16+)

In the 10 years between Census 2011 and 2021 our populations have grown by:



How the population of Tameside is changing

The number of people claiming **universal credit** has **quadrupled** since 2018



32,000 people are **economically inactive**



Aged 16-64

Gross disposable household income is significantly lower in Tameside at £16,659



Compared to £20,425 in England

Full time workers

earn £663 per week



5% lower than the national average

Data from 2024

What about
health and the
environment?

Adults who smoke

15.9% in
Tameside



compared to 11.4% in England

12,600 are
long term
sick



An increase of 4,000 people
over the last 4 years

Sports facilities, 11.6
per 10,000 population



compared to 18.6 in England

Healthy life expectancy



Female:

56.2 years in Tameside,
compared to 60.7 in England



Male:

55.9 years in Tameside,
compared to 60.6 in England

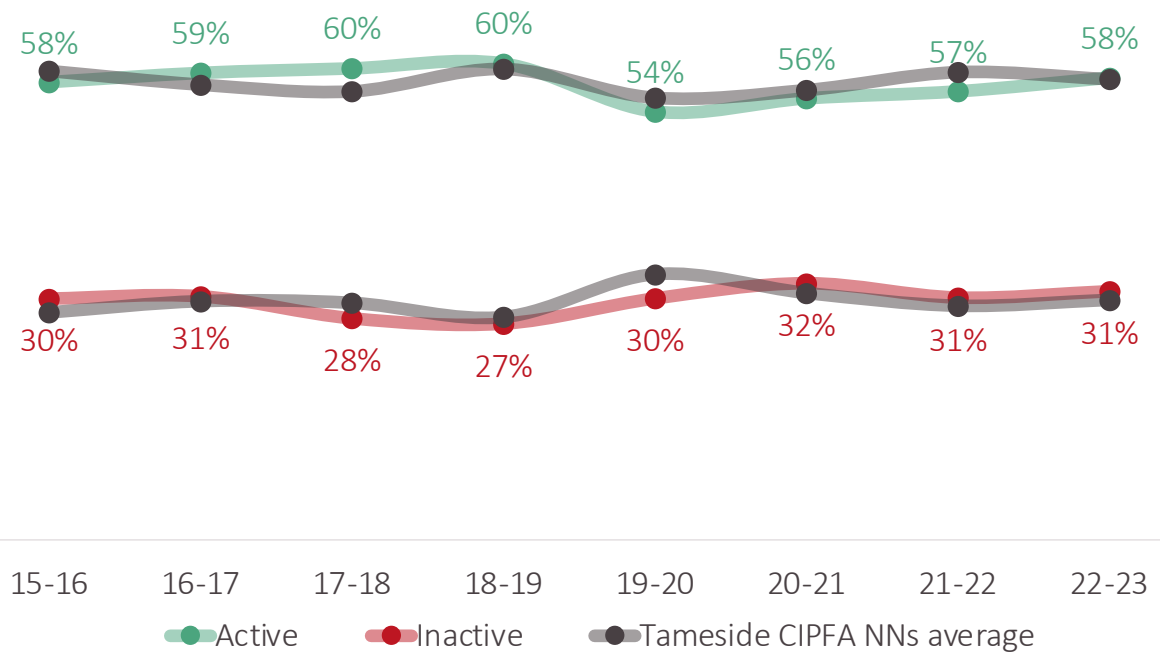
Data from 2024

Adults (16+)

Active Lives Adults Survey 2022-23



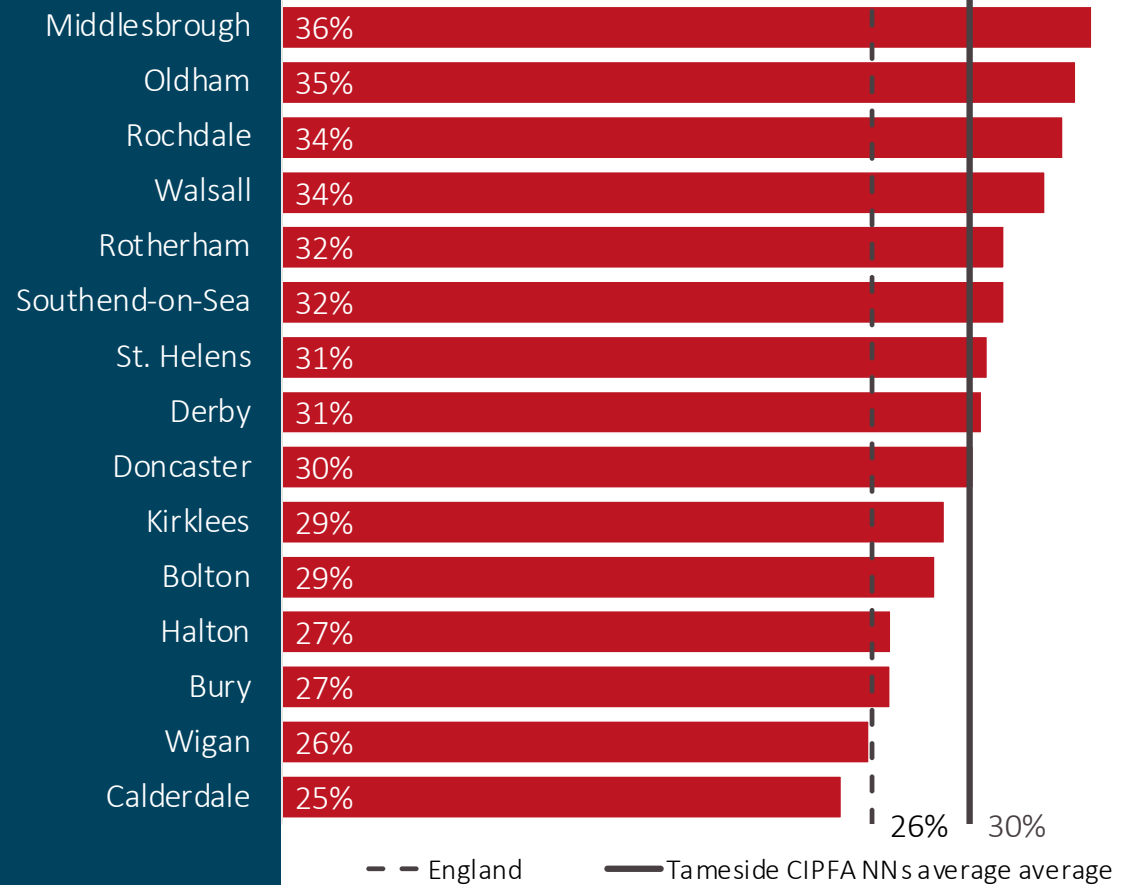
**3 in 10 adults are
not active enough**



Data is for: Tameside

Source: Sport England Active Lives Survey 2015-16 to 2022-23 (16+)
Measure: Physical activity levels (excluding gardening)

Tameside has
higher inactive
rates than 6 of their
nearest neighbours
(CIPFA)



Data is for: Tameside

Source: Sport England Active Lives Survey 2015-16 to 2022-23 (16+)
Measure: Physical activity levels (excluding gardening)

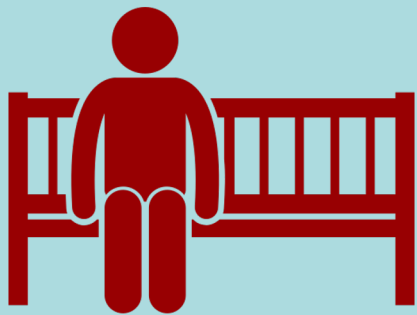




Currently, 31%
of adults are inactive

That's
58,000
people

39,000
adults do
no activity at all
(21%)



But not all inactive
adults do nothing



There are **17,000**
people missing the intensity
(9%)



There are **2,000**
people not active for long enough
(1%)



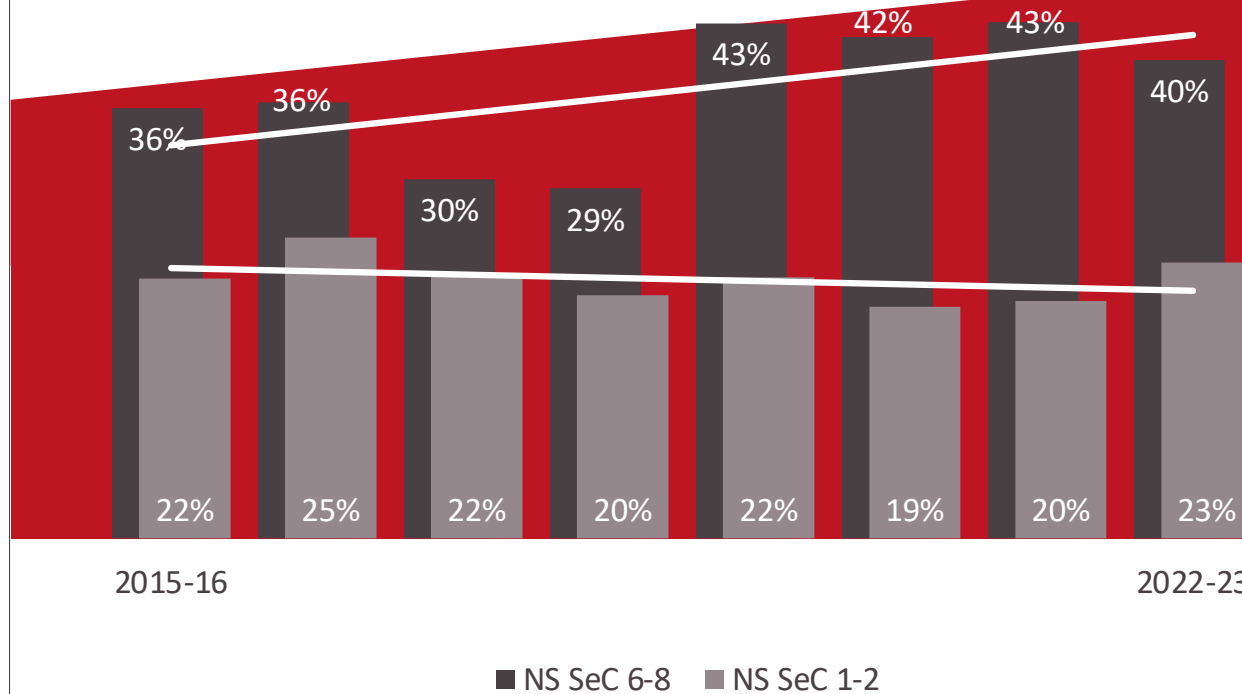
Data is for: Tameside

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

Our **least affluent** households are almost twice as likely to be inactive (NS SeC 6-8)



There is a clear **inequality gap** between our least and most affluent households

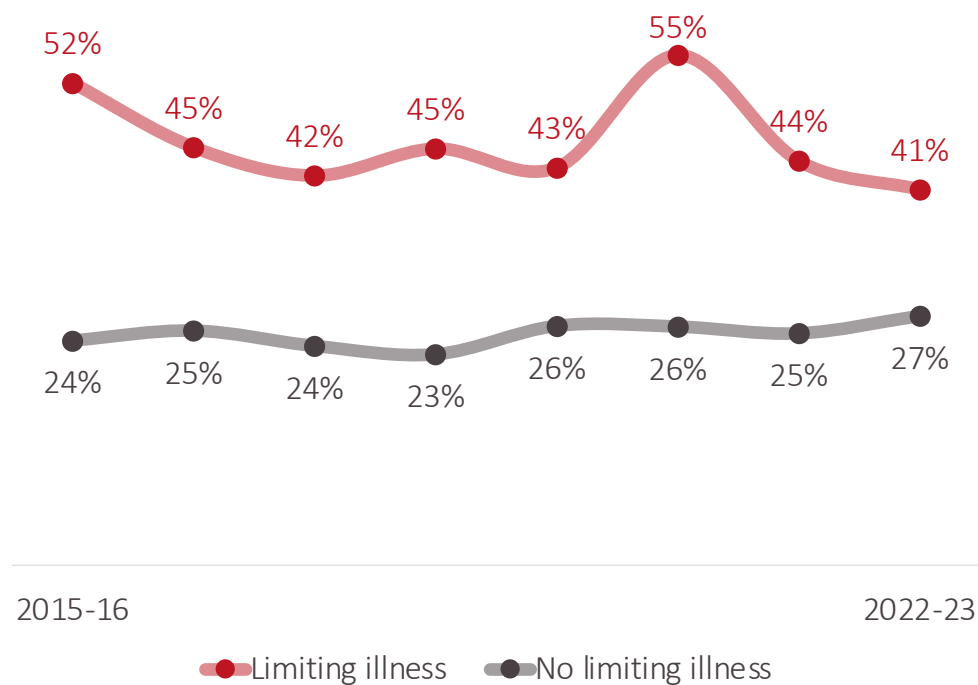


Data is for: Tameside

Source: Sport England Active Lives Survey 2015-16 to 2022-23 (16+)
Measure: Physical activity levels (excluding gardening)

The inequality gap is narrowing for adults with a **limiting illness or disability**

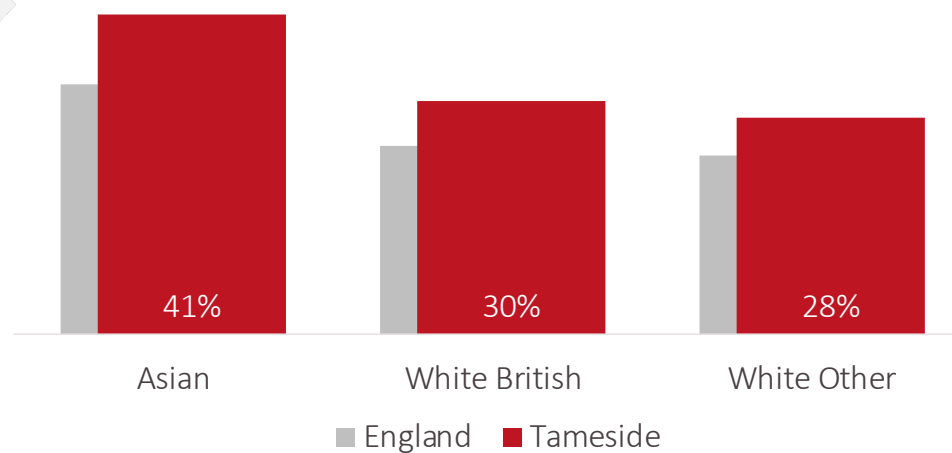
However, inactivity remains far higher for adults with a limiting illness or disability



Data is for: Tameside

Source: Sport England Active Lives Survey 2015-16 to 2022-23 (16+)
Measure: Physical activity levels (excluding gardening)

Our **Asian**
communities
experience higher
levels of inactivity



Data is for: Tameside

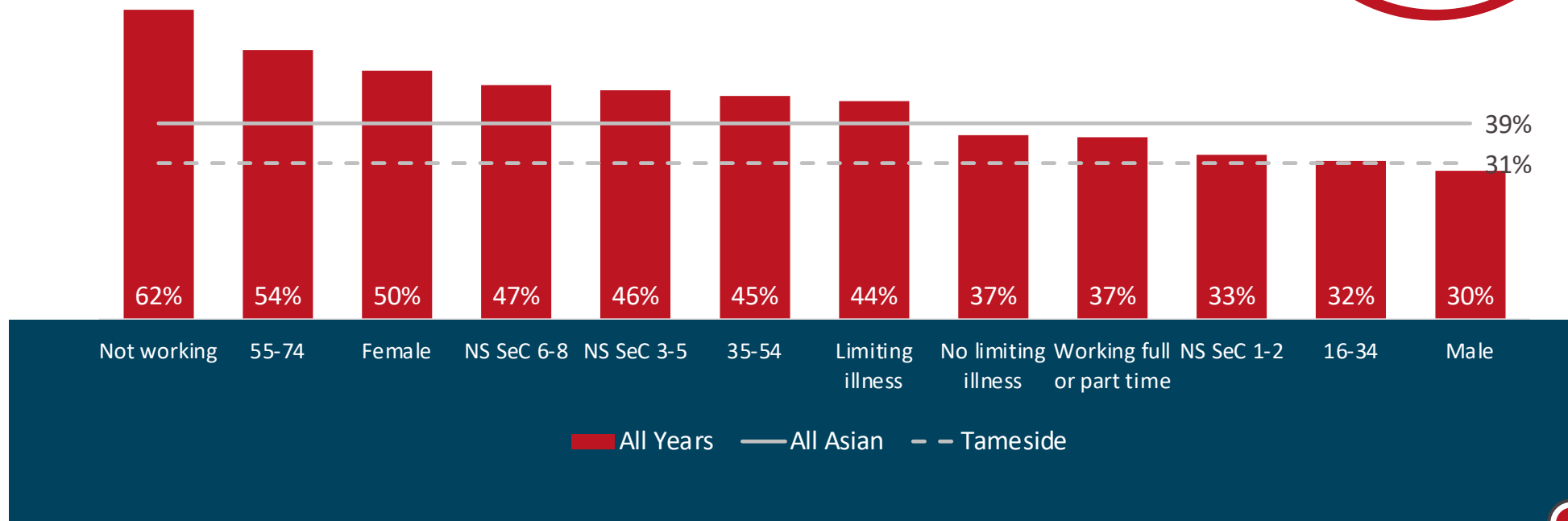
Source: Sport England Active Lives Survey 2021-23 aggregated (16+)
Measure: Physical activity levels (excluding gardening)



Nearly all people in our Asian community have higher inactivity levels than the Tameside average



Inactivity in our **Asian** communities: by secondary demographic group



Data is for: Tameside

Source: Sport England Active Lives Survey 2021-23 aggregated (16+)
Measure: Physical activity levels (excluding gardening)

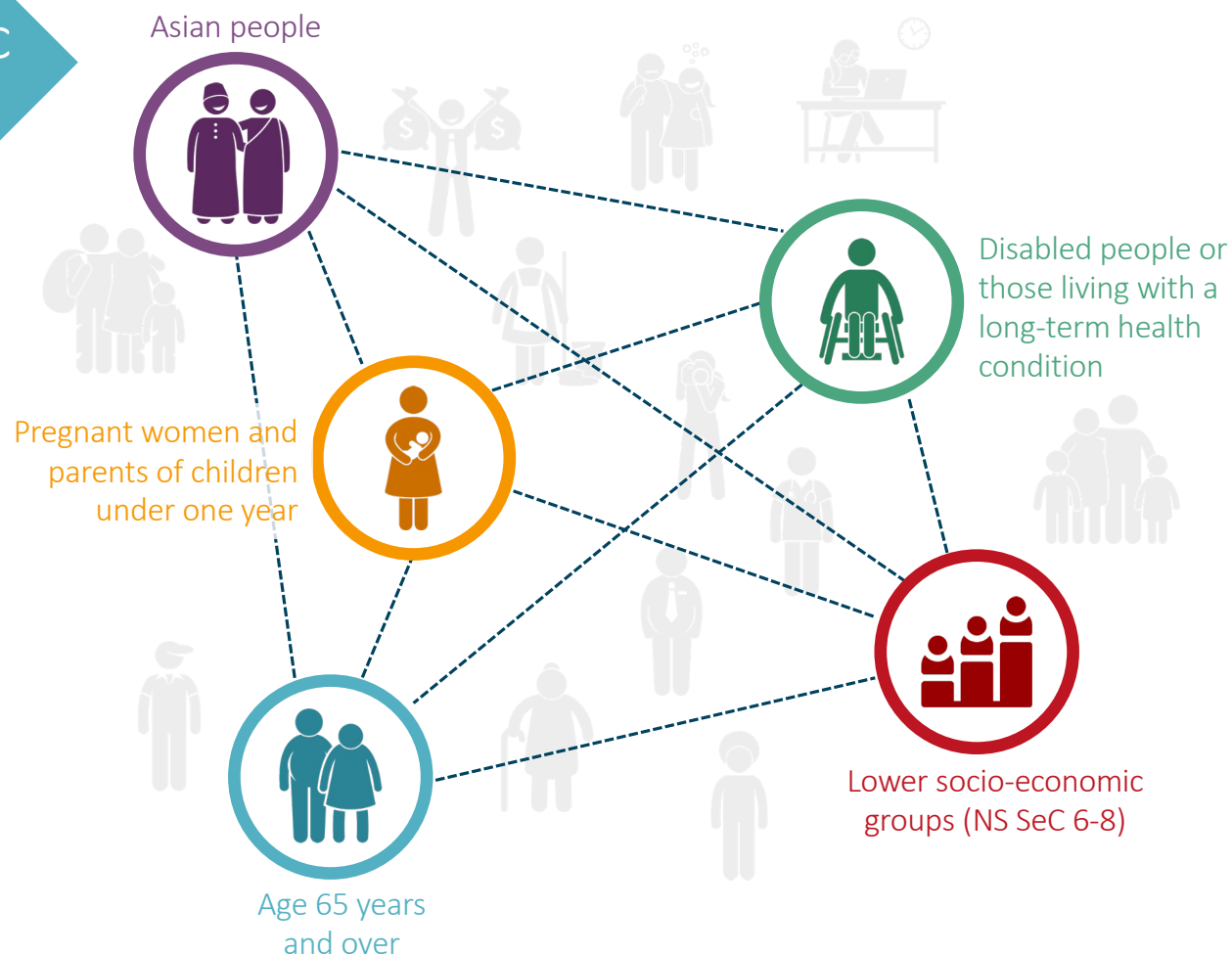
The inequalities metric

Key characteristics

The Inequalities Metric has identified which characteristics or factors have the most impact on minutes of activity*

The key driver of lower levels of physical activity is where a person has **two or more characteristics associated with being less active**

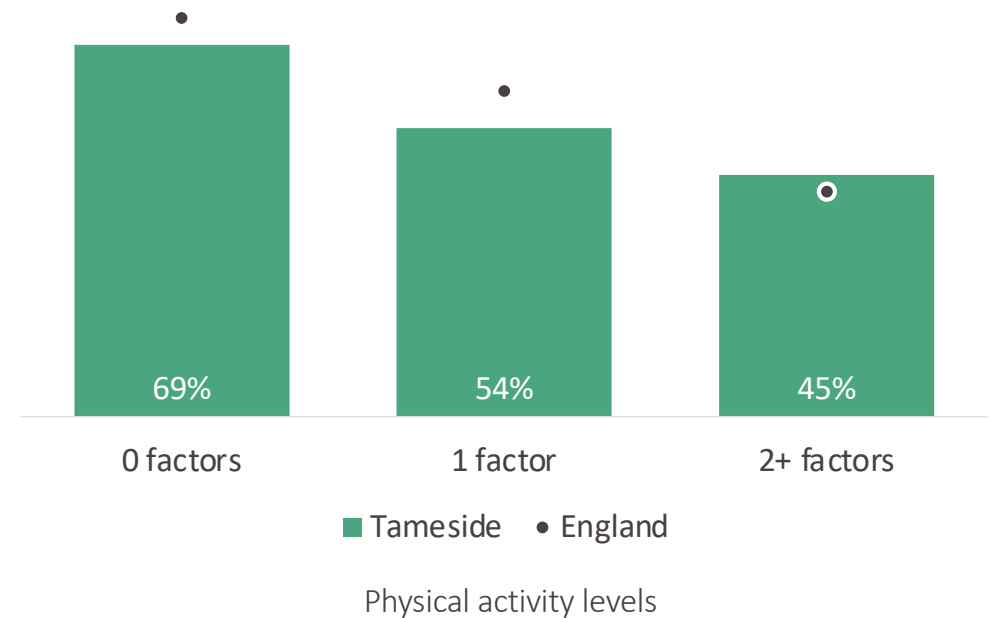
*These characteristics are different for children and young people



Activity levels in Tameside as measured by the Inequalities Metric

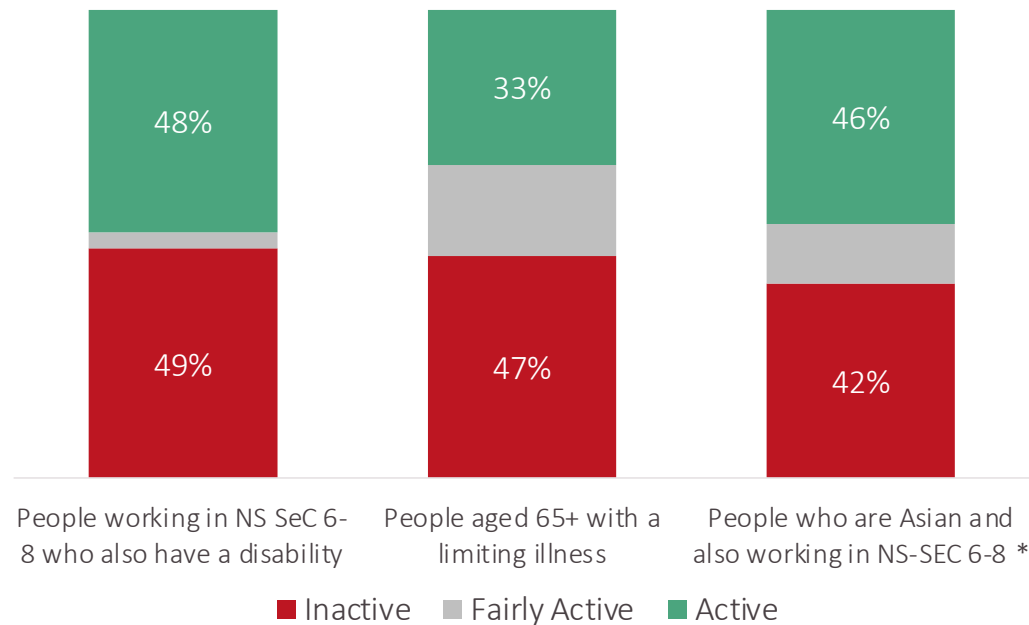


Activity levels reduce as we experience more factors from the Inequality Metric



Source: Sport England Active Lives, 2022-23

Inactivity levels for groups with 2+ factors in Tameside

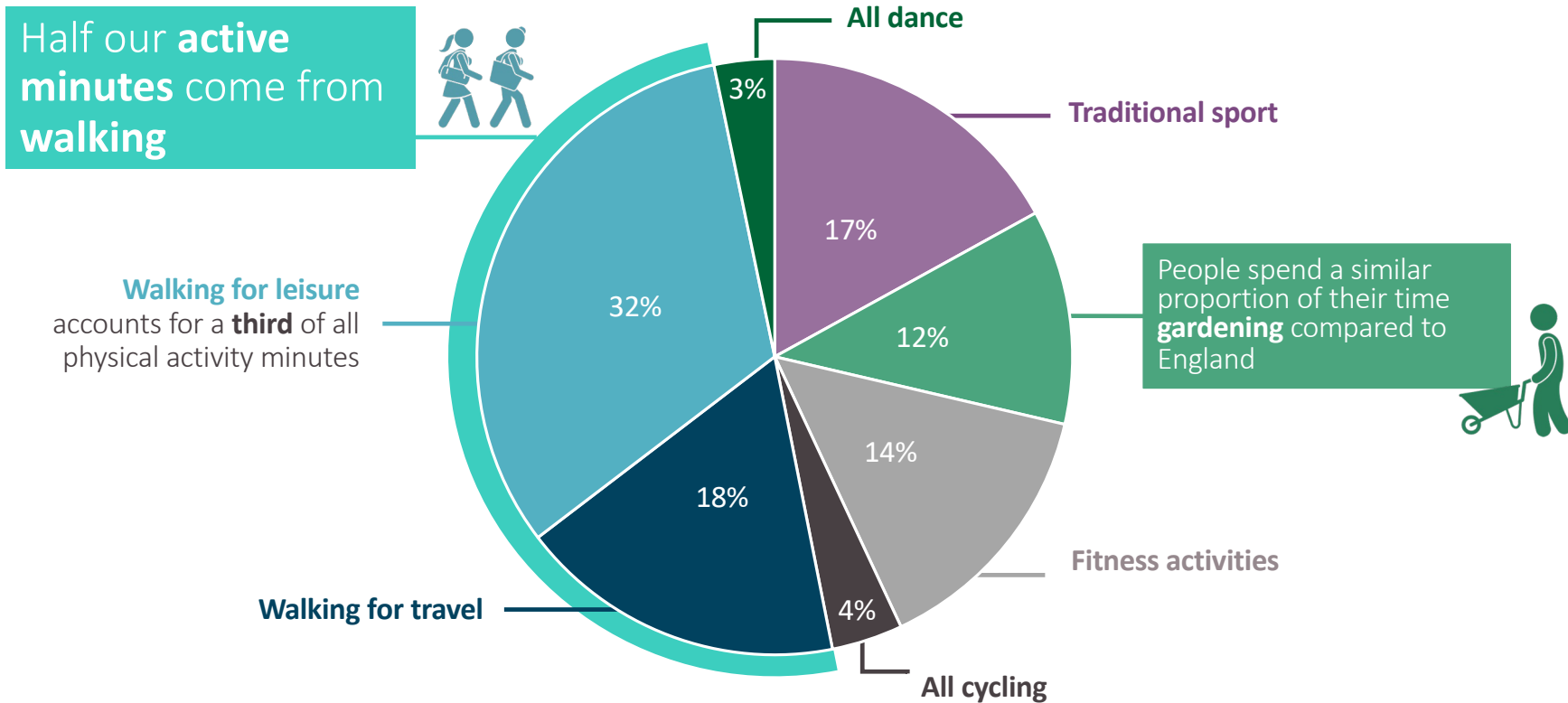


In Tameside there are:

- 11,000 inactive adults in NS SeC 6-8 with a disability
- 7,500 inactive people aged 65+ with a disability
- 2,600 inactive people with Asian heritage working in NS SeC 6-8

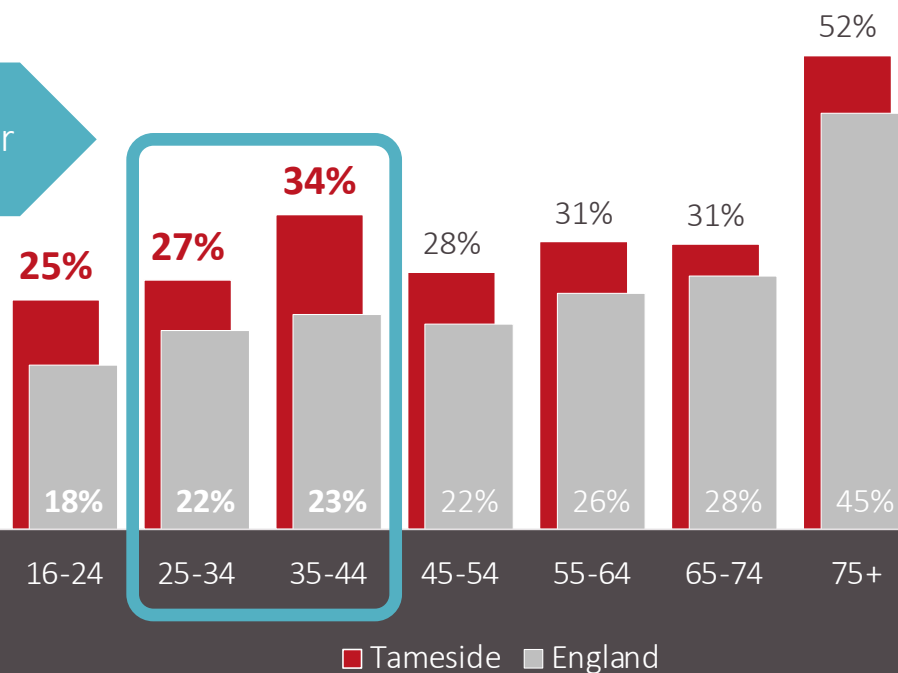
*GM value due to small sample size in Tameside
Source: Sport England Active Lives, 2022-23

What does activity look like where we live?



Inactivity increases with age

Inactivity is notably higher among 25–44 year olds in Tameside



Data is for: Tameside

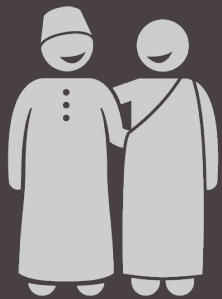
Source: Sport England Active Lives Survey 2022-23 (16+)
Measure: Physical activity levels (excluding gardening)

Adults aged 25-44

Shining a light on what is contributing
to high inactivity in this group

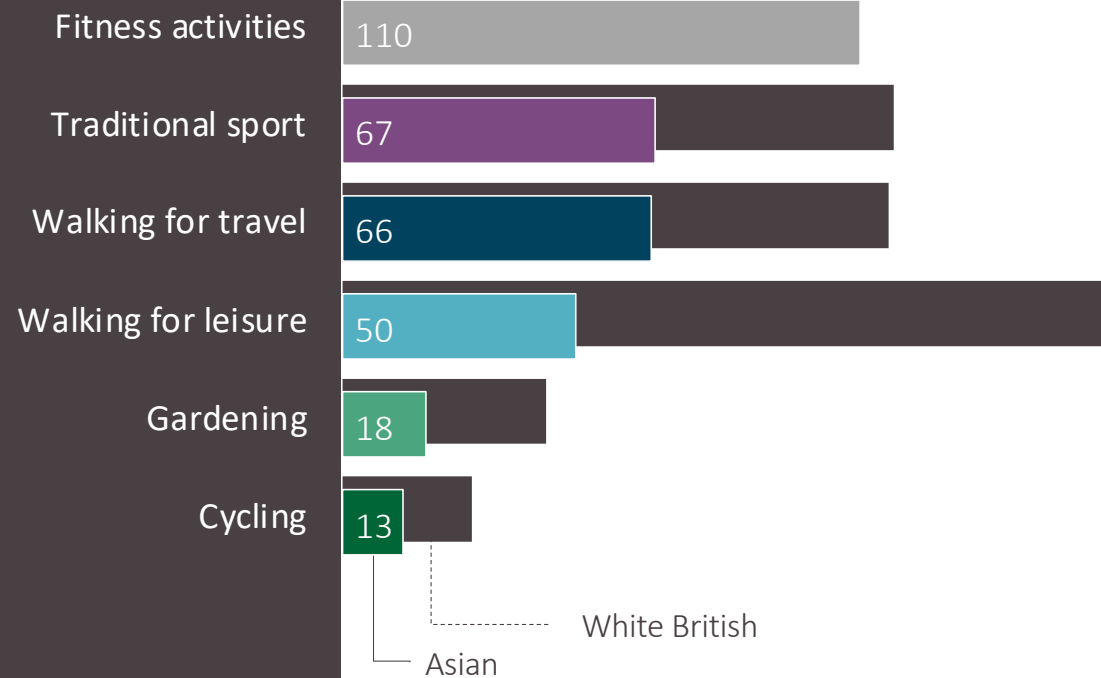


42% of our Asian 25–44 year olds are inactive



Our Asian 25-44 year olds get most of their active minutes through fitness activities

Active minutes (adults aged 25-44)



Data is for: Tameside

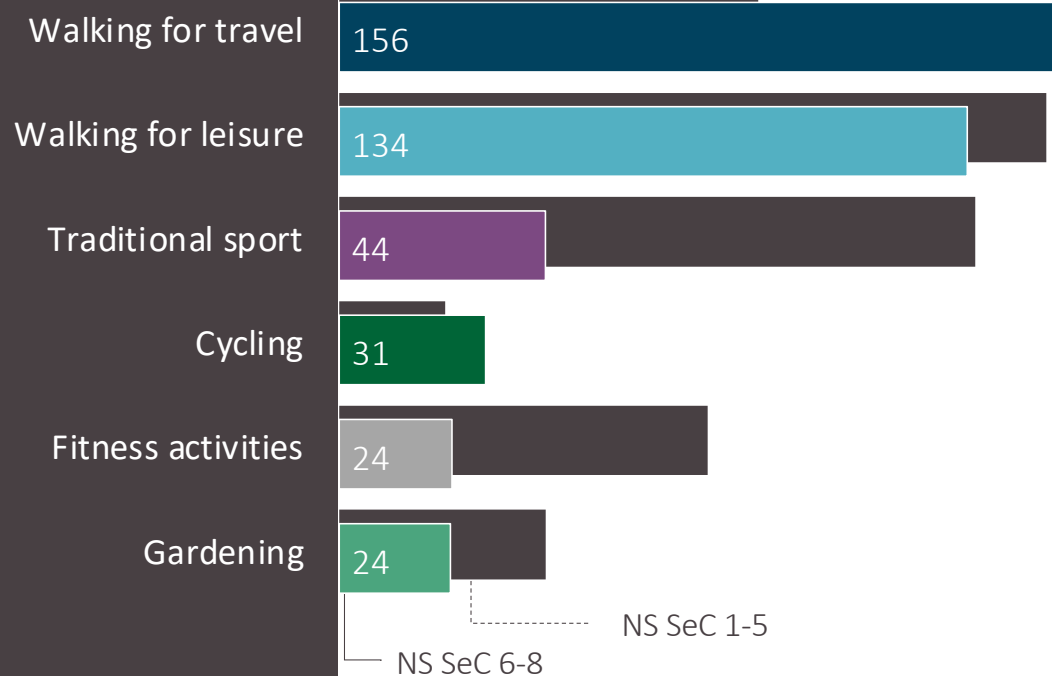
Source: Sport England Active Lives Survey 2021-23 (aged 25-44)
Measure: Minutes of physical activity per week by activity

44% of 25–44 year olds in
our least affluent households
are inactive (NS SeC 6-8)



Our 25-44 year old NS SeC 6-8 population
get most of their active minutes through
walking for travel

Active minutes (adults aged 25-44)



Data is for: Tameside

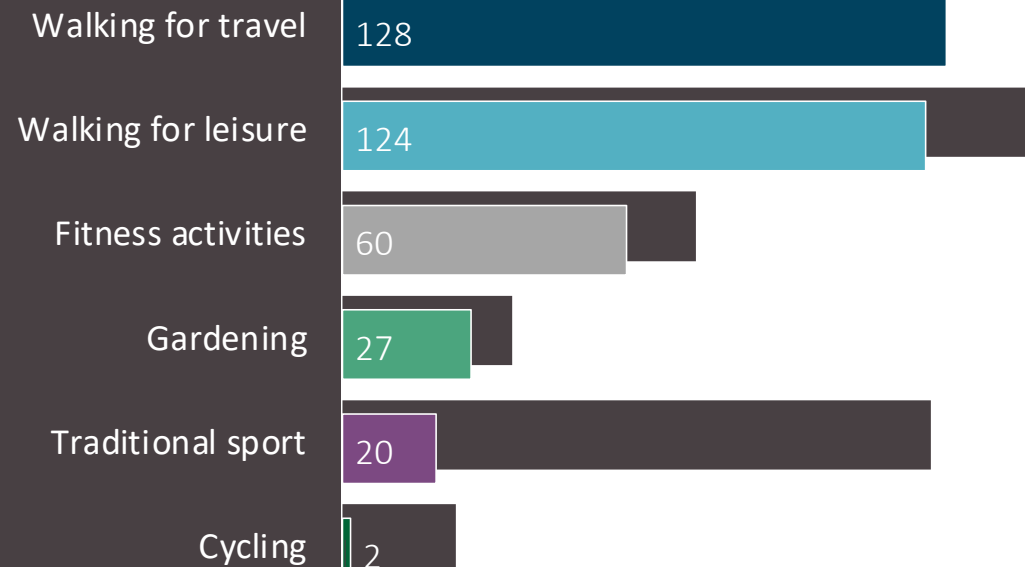
Source: Sport England Active Lives Survey 2021-23 (aged 25-44)
Measure: Minutes of physical activity per week by activity

50% of 25–44 year olds outside the workforce are inactive



25-44 year olds that don't work get most of their active minutes through walking

Active minutes (adults aged 25-44)



Working full or part time

Outside the workforce

Data is for: Tameside

Source: Sport England Active Lives Survey 2021-23 (aged 25-44)
Measure: Minutes of physical activity per week by activity

Key messages

Adults



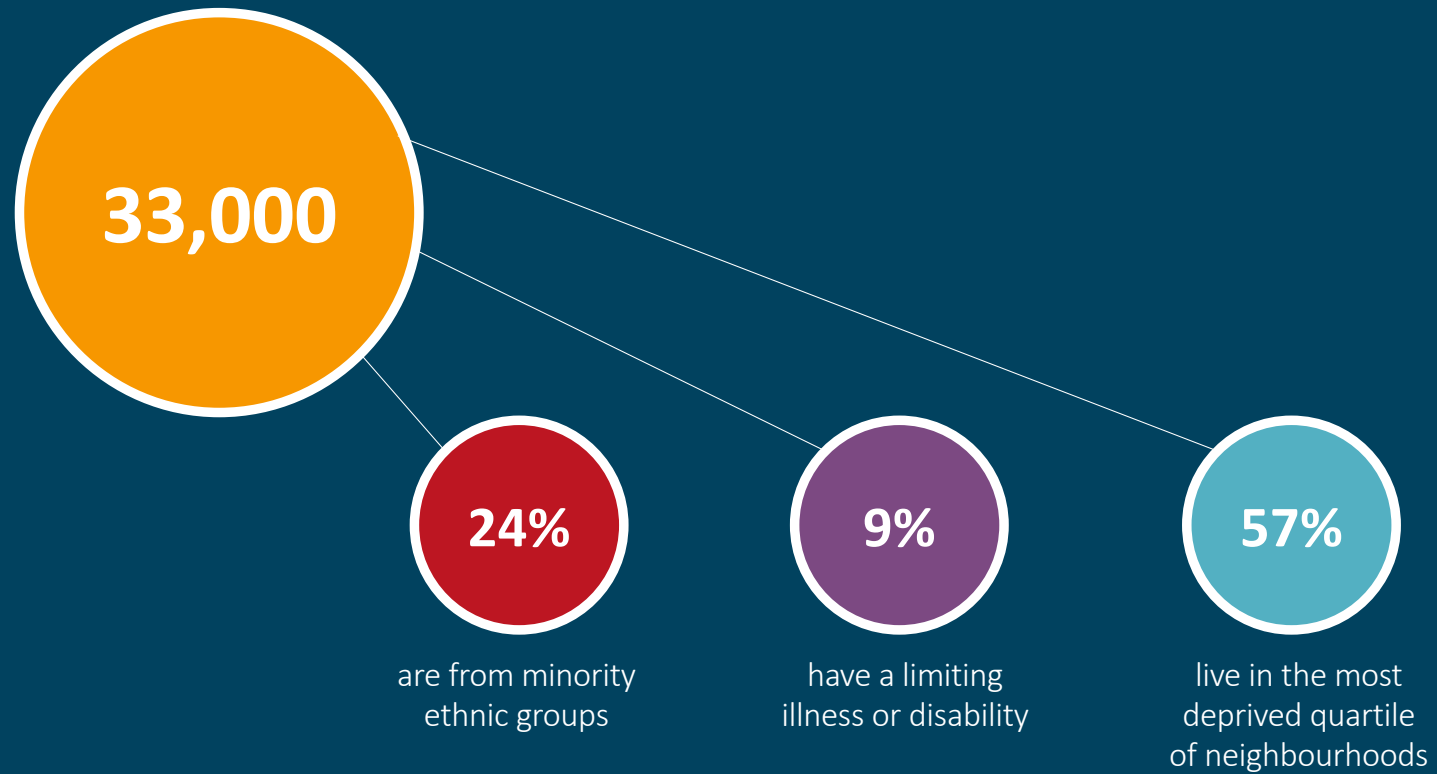
- Our population is **growing, ageing and becoming more diverse**
- We have **more people living on lower incomes**
- Over **3 in 10 adults** currently **experience inactivity** in Tameside
- We have a **challenge across the life course**
- **Inactivity among our younger adult population** is a concern
- People that are **much more likely to experience inactivity** are:
 - of Asian heritage
 - living on lower incomes
 - out of the workforce
 - living with a limiting illness or disability



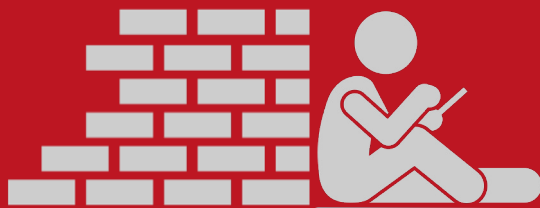
Children and young people



There are **33,000** young people in Tameside



47% of children and young people are **not active enough**

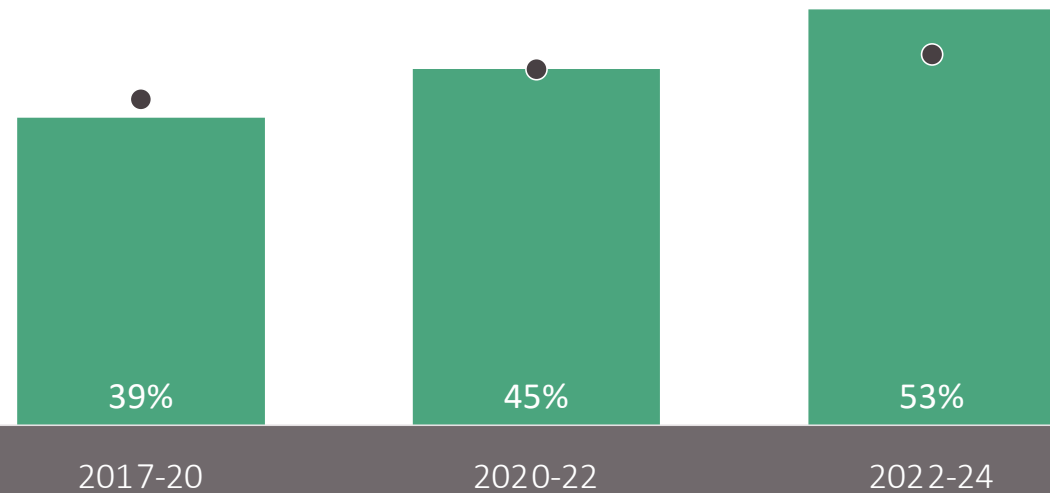


That's **15,500**
young people not
meeting recommended
activity levels



Source: Sport England Active Lives, Children and Young People survey
2022-23 to 2023-24 **combined**, ONS Mid year population estimates, 2023

There has been a big increase in **active levels** for children and young people

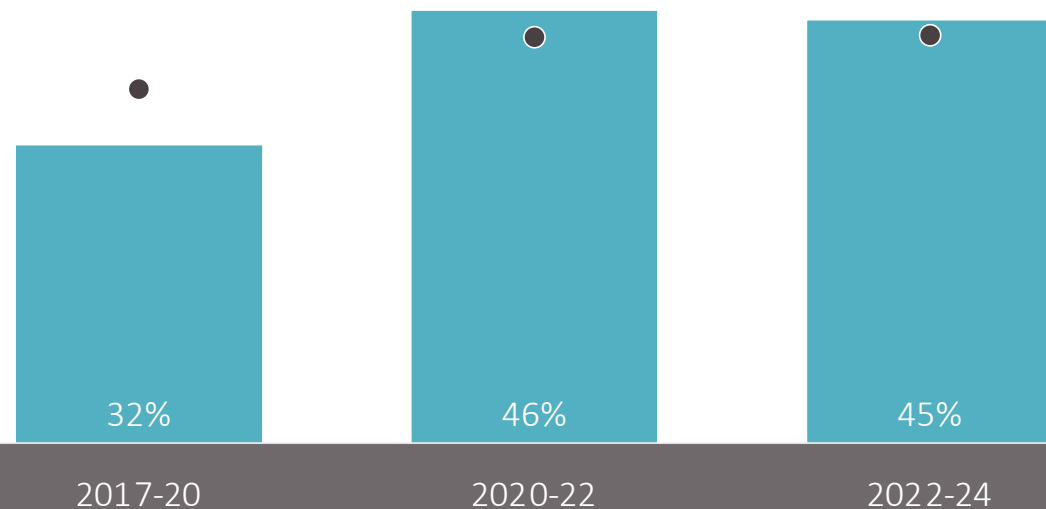


■ Tameside ○ Greater Manchester

Active

Source: Sport England Active Lives, Children and Young People survey 2017-18 to 2022-24
Measure: An average of 60 minutes or more a day, either at school or outside school (**everywhere**)

There has been a big increase in **active levels** for children and young people **at school** over time

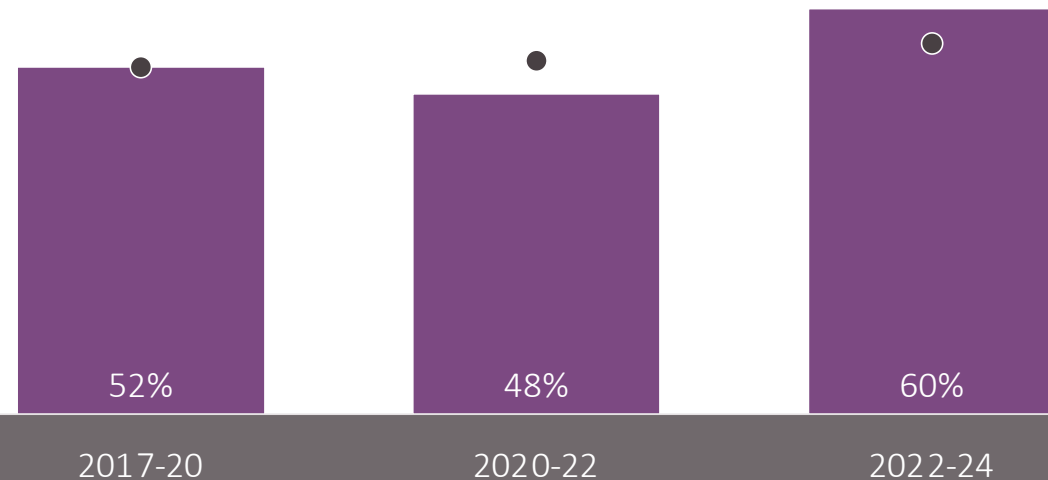


■ Tameside ● Greater Manchester

Active

Source: Sport England Active Lives, Children and Young People survey 2017-18 to 2022-24
Measure: An average of 30 minutes or more a day, **at school**

The increase in **active levels** for children and young people **outside school** occurred after the pandemic

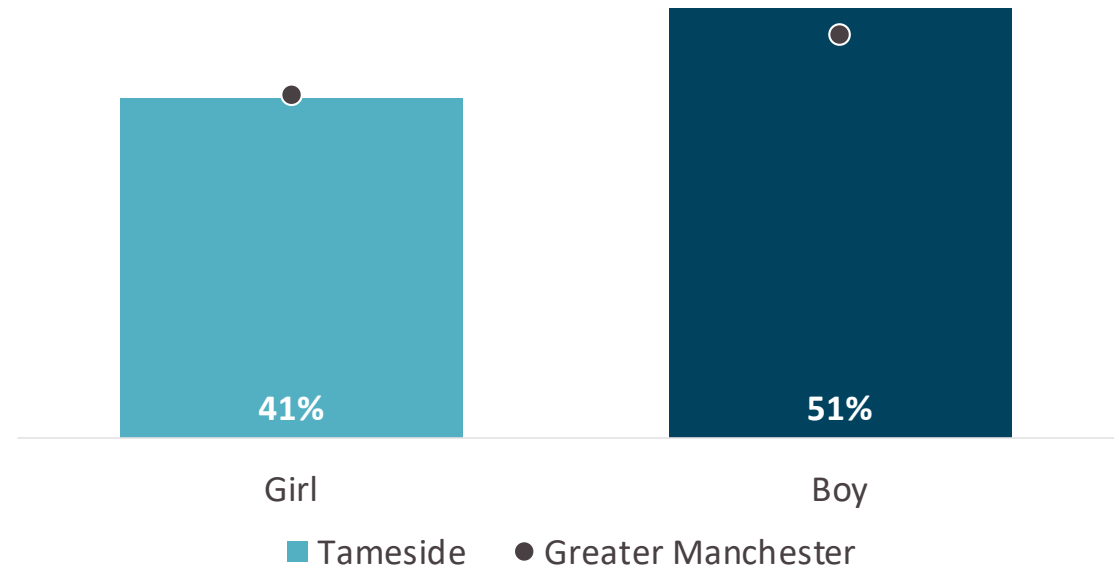


■ Tameside ○ Greater Manchester

Active

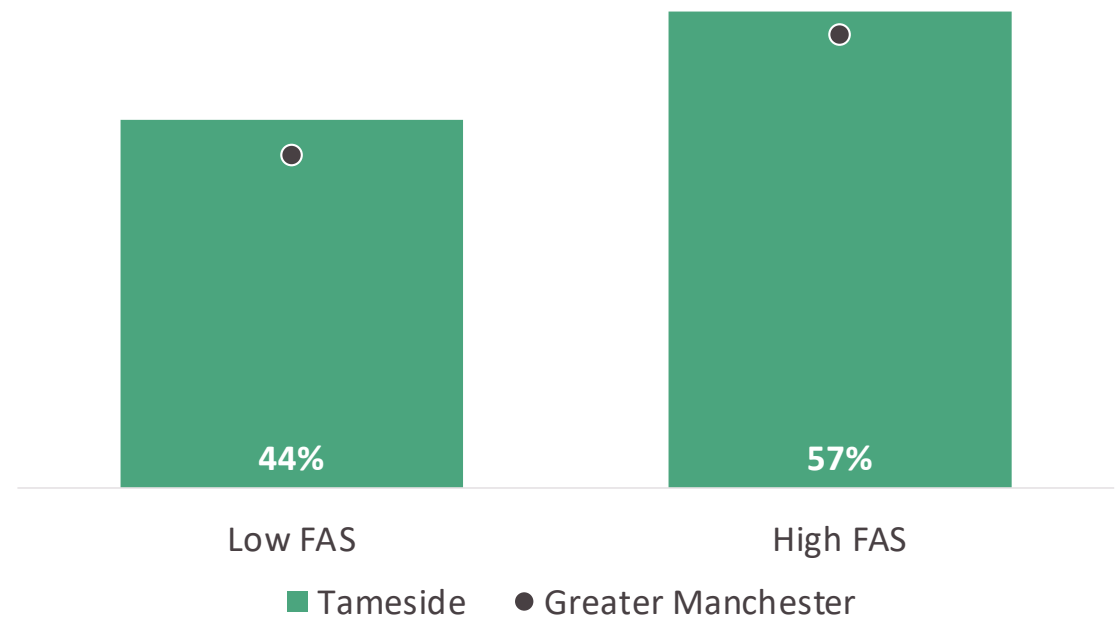
Source: Sport England Active Lives, Children and Young People survey 2017-18 to 2022-24
Measure: An average of 30 minutes or more a day, **outside school**

Girls are far less likely to
be active compared to
boys



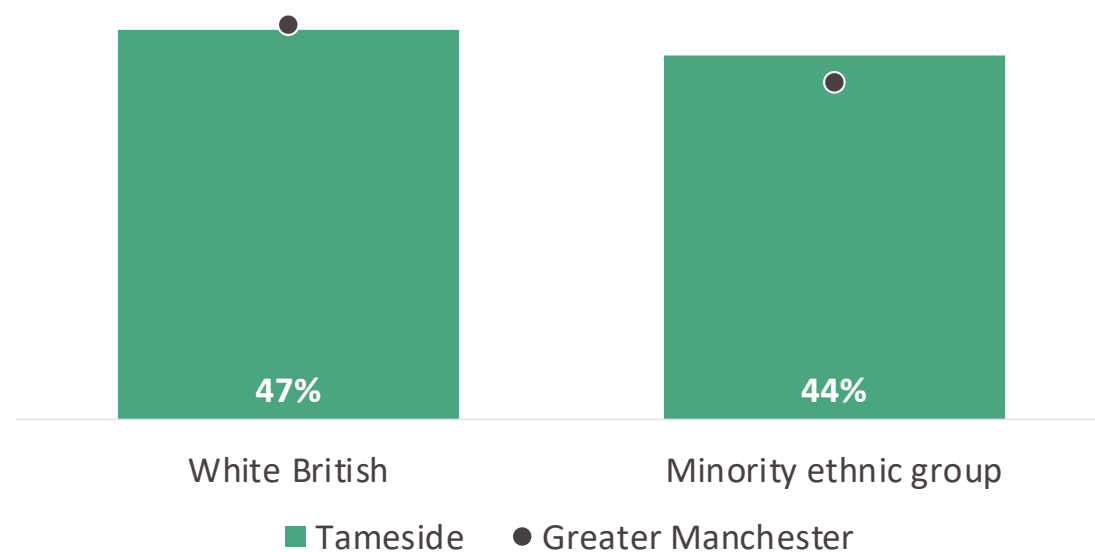
Source: Sport England Active Lives, Children and Young People survey 2017-24
Measure: An average of 60 minutes or more a day, either at school or outside school (**everywhere**)

Family affluence creates the biggest inequalities in activity levels



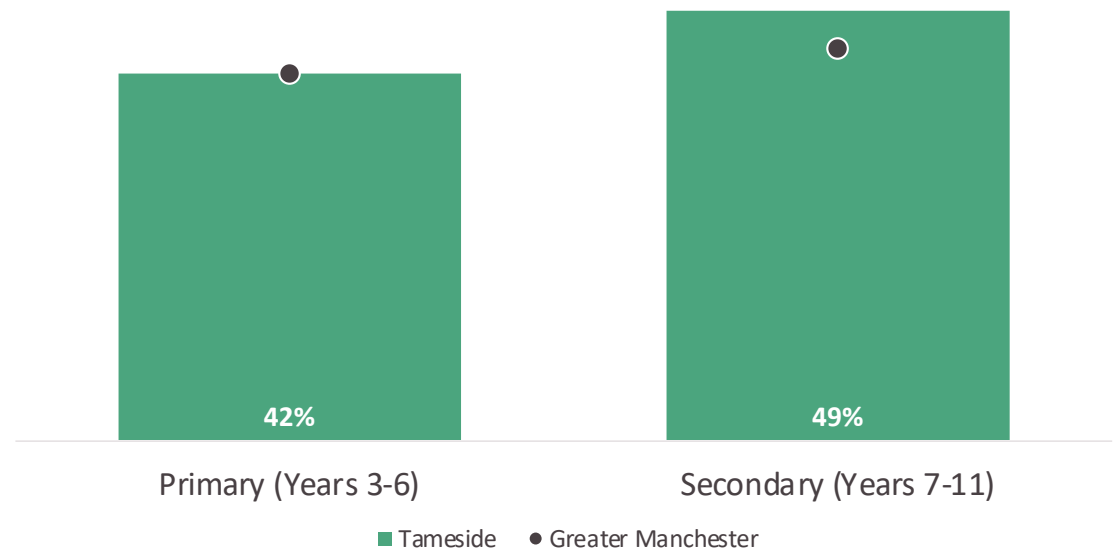
Source: Sport England Active Lives, Children and Young People survey 2017-24
Measure: An average of 60 minutes or more a day, either at school or outside school (**everywhere**)

We are only able to view data in two categories, **White British** and **Minority ethnic groups**. This may mask some of the inequalities between ethnic groups



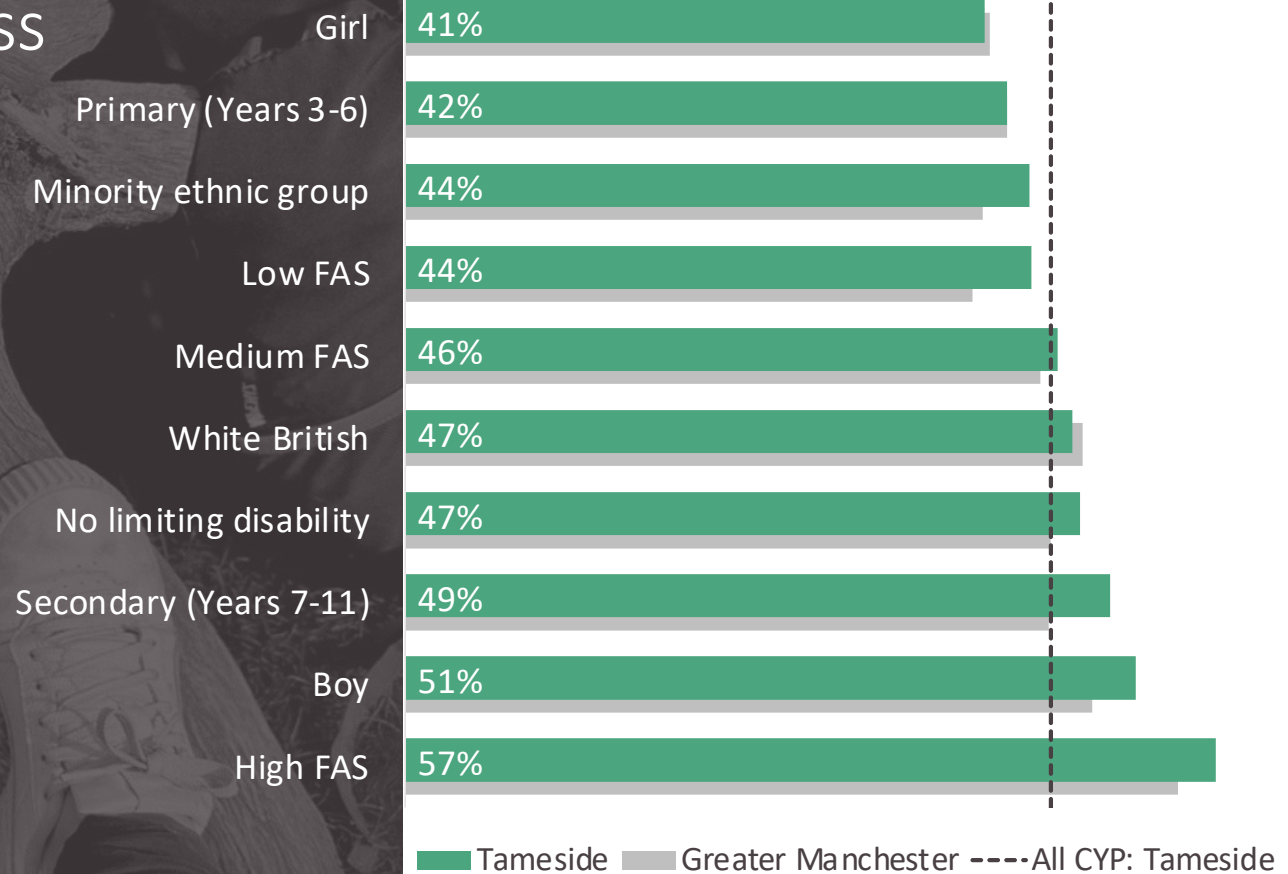
Source: Sport England Active Lives, Children and Young People survey 2017-24
Measure: An average of 60 minutes or more a day, either at school or outside school (**everywhere**)

Activity levels are lower
in primary than
secondary schools



Source: Sport England Active Lives, Children and Young People survey 2017-24
Measure: An average of 60 minutes or more a day, either at school or outside school (**everywhere**)

Active levels across our children and young people population

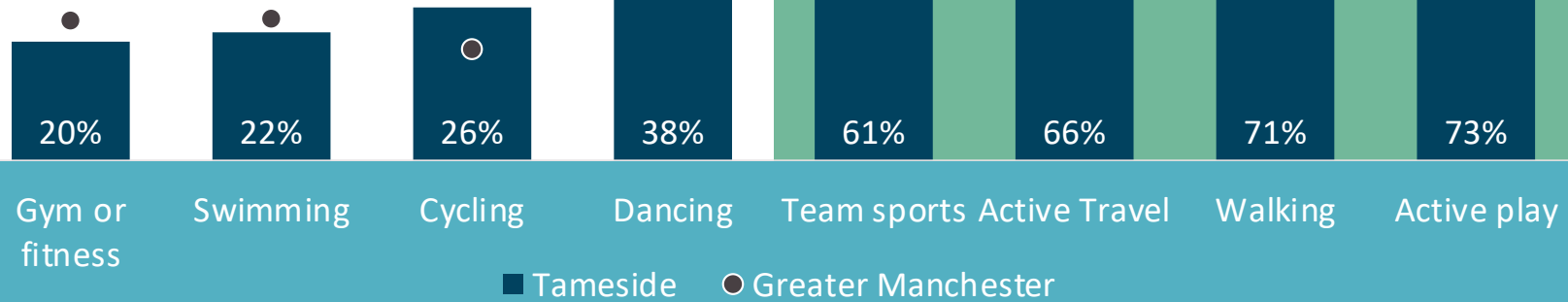


Data is for: Tameside

Source: Sport England Active Lives, Children and Young People survey 2017-24
Measure: An average of 60 minutes or more a day, either at school or outside school (everywhere)



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



Source: Sport England Active Lives, Children and Young People survey 2017-24
Measure: Once a week participation by most prevalent activity groups

Key messages

Children and young people



- **Around half (47%) of our children and young people are not active enough.** That's around 15,500 children and young people in Tameside not meeting recommended activity levels
- Activity levels appear to have increased over time
- There is a gender inequality gap, **girls are far less likely to be active**
- Children and young people from **our low affluence families are the least likely to be active**
- **Children in primary school** experience lower levels of activity



**Where we live shapes
how active we are**



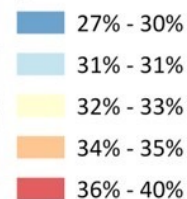
Inactivity peaks in Tameside's town centres where up to 40% of adults are inactive

Inactive Overall (Adults)

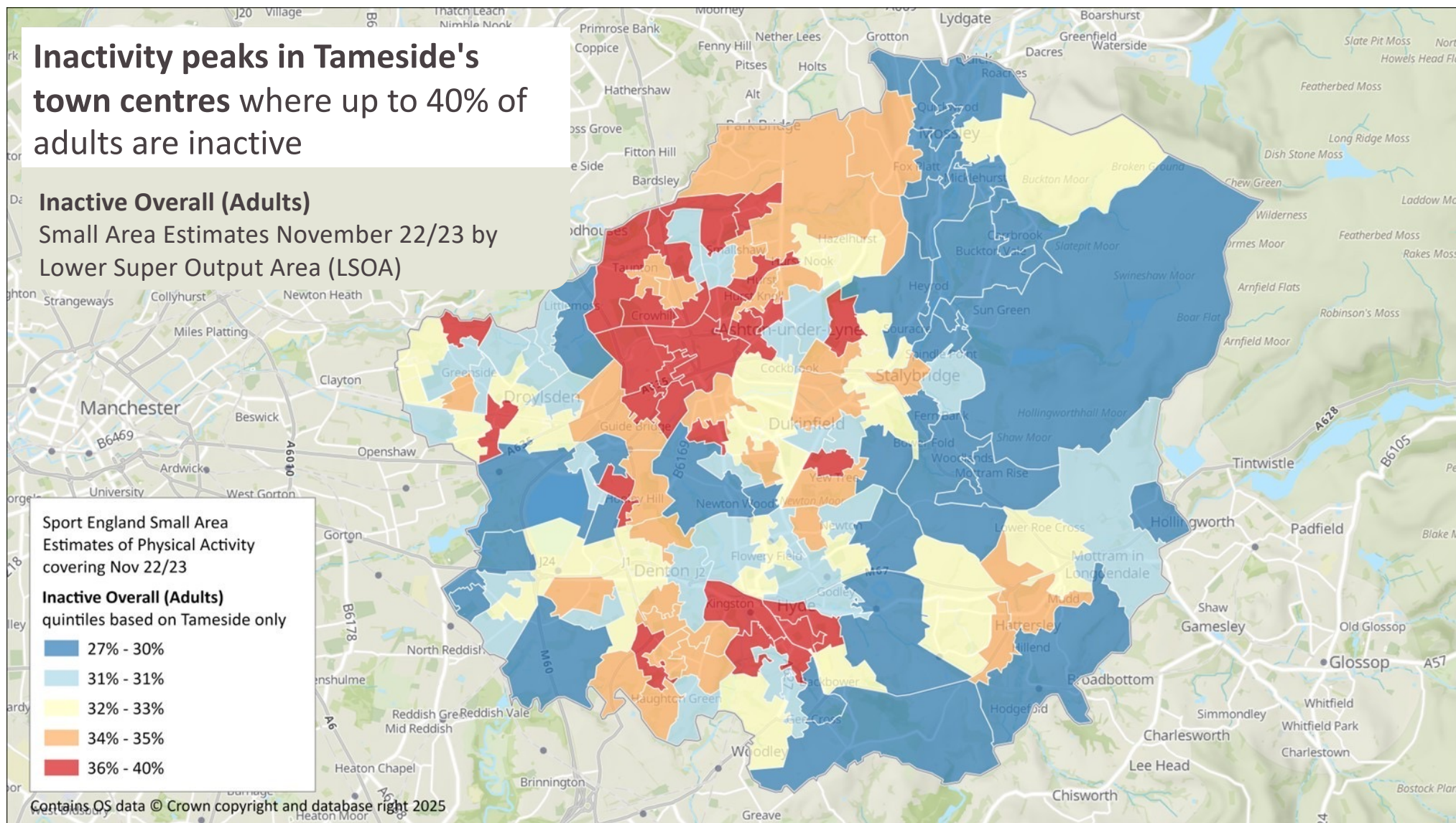
Small Area Estimates November 22/23 by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)

Sport England Small Area Estimates of Physical Activity covering Nov 22/23

Inactive Overall (Adults) quintiles based on Tameside only



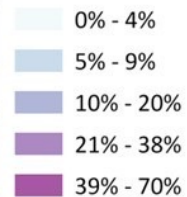
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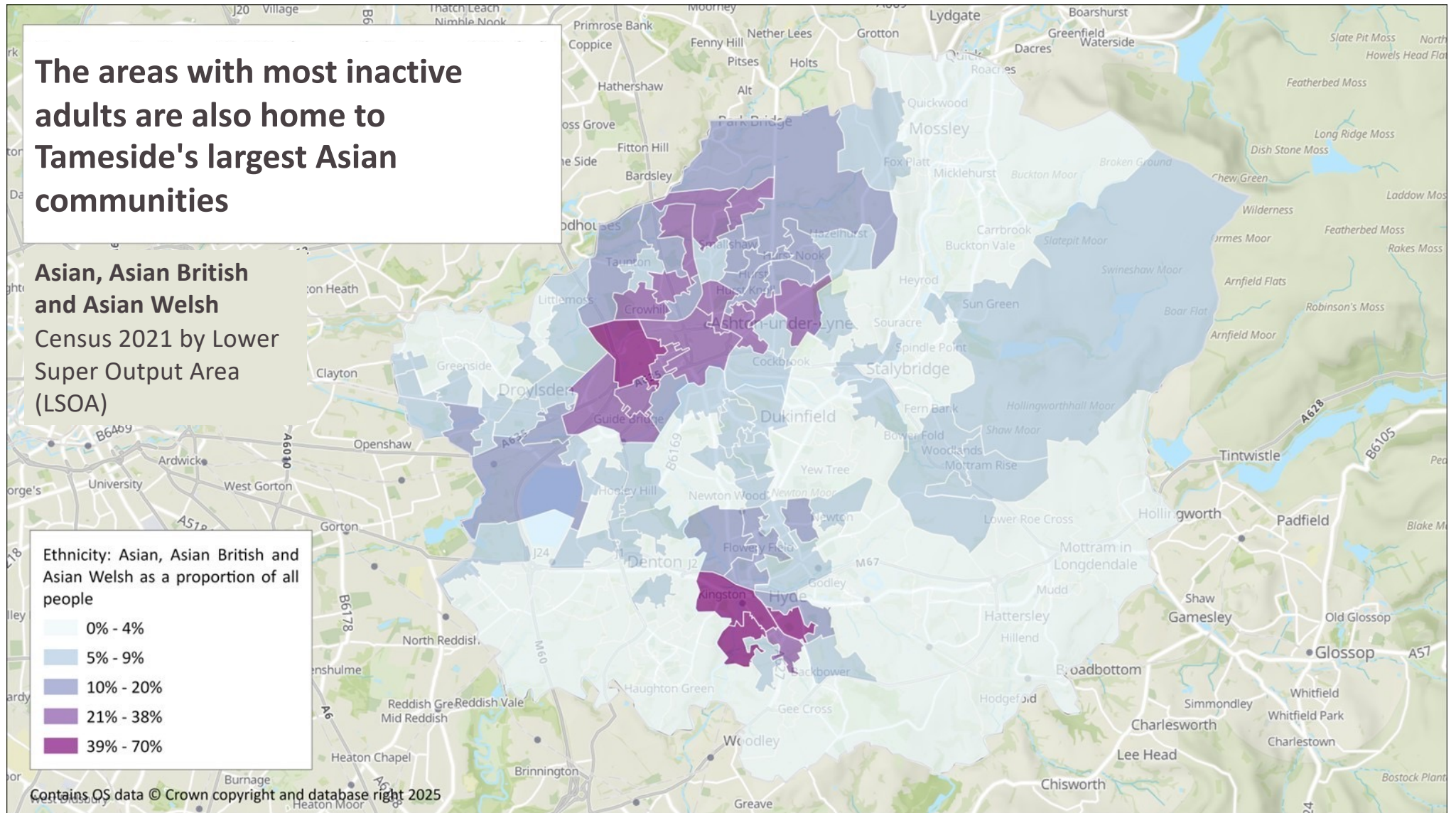
The areas with most inactive adults are also home to Tameside's largest Asian communities

Asian, Asian British and Asian Welsh
Census 2021 by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA)

Ethnicity: Asian, Asian British and Asian Welsh as a proportion of all people



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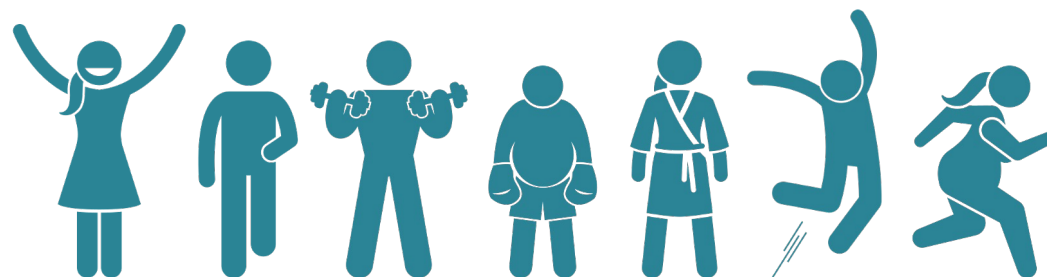




Over **3 in 10** adults living in the **most deprived** neighbourhoods are inactive (33%)



Compared to **15%** of adults living in the **least deprived** neighbourhoods



Adults in the most deprived neighbourhoods are more than twice as likely to be inactive



Data is for: Tameside

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

**The areas with most
inactive adults in
Tameside are also those
with the highest levels of
deprivation**

**Deprivation
by Lower Super
Output Area (LSOA)**

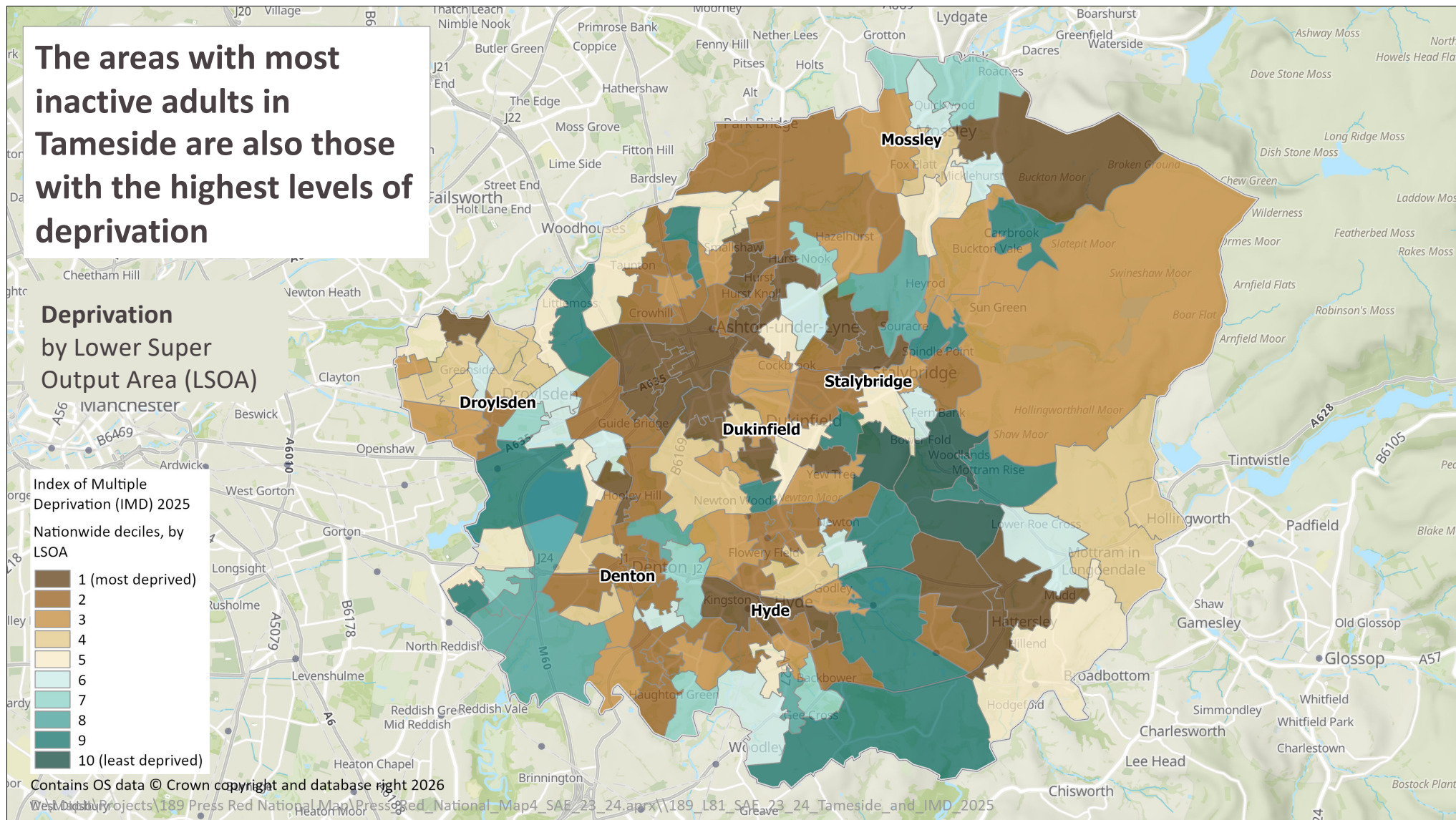
Index of Multiple
Deprivation (IMD) 2025

Nationwide deciles, by
LSOA



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Westminster Projects 189 Press Red National Map Press Red National Map4 SAE 23 24 April 189 L81 SAE 23 24 Tameside and IMD 2025



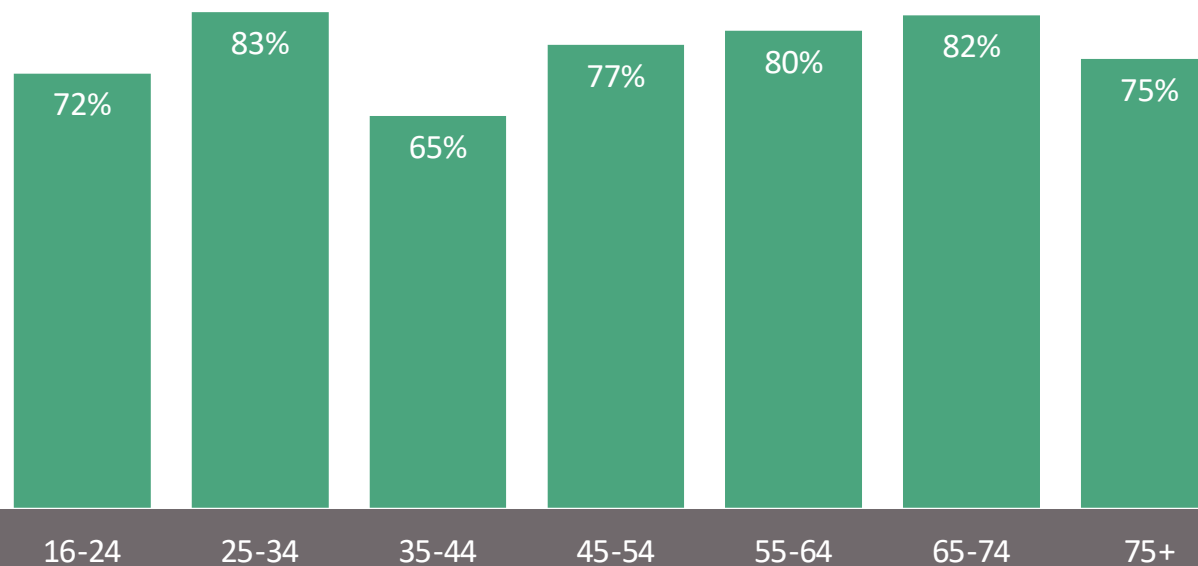
Access to outdoor space is not equally shared

The majority of physical activity in Tameside happens outdoors — making access to outdoor space central, not incidental, to an active life



Percentage of activity done 'outside'

Life stage shapes where people are active



Age

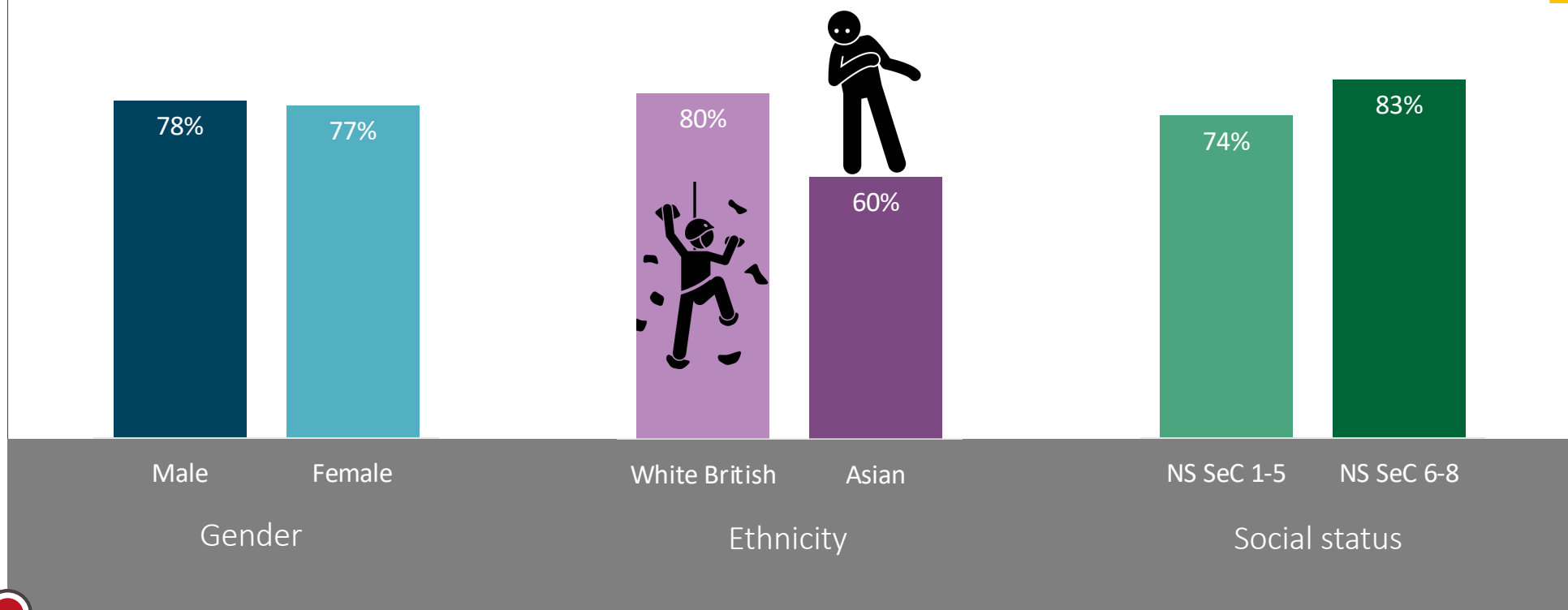


Data is for: Tameside

Source: Sport England Active Lives Survey 2021-23 combined (16+)

Percentage of activity done 'outside'

Ethnicity is the sharpest dividing line in outdoor activity



Data is for: Tameside

Source: Sport England Active Lives Survey 2021-23 combined (16+)

Identifying neighbourhoods that lack both public green space and gardens

The neighbourhoods with least access to green space are the same ones where inactivity is highest and Asian communities are most concentrated

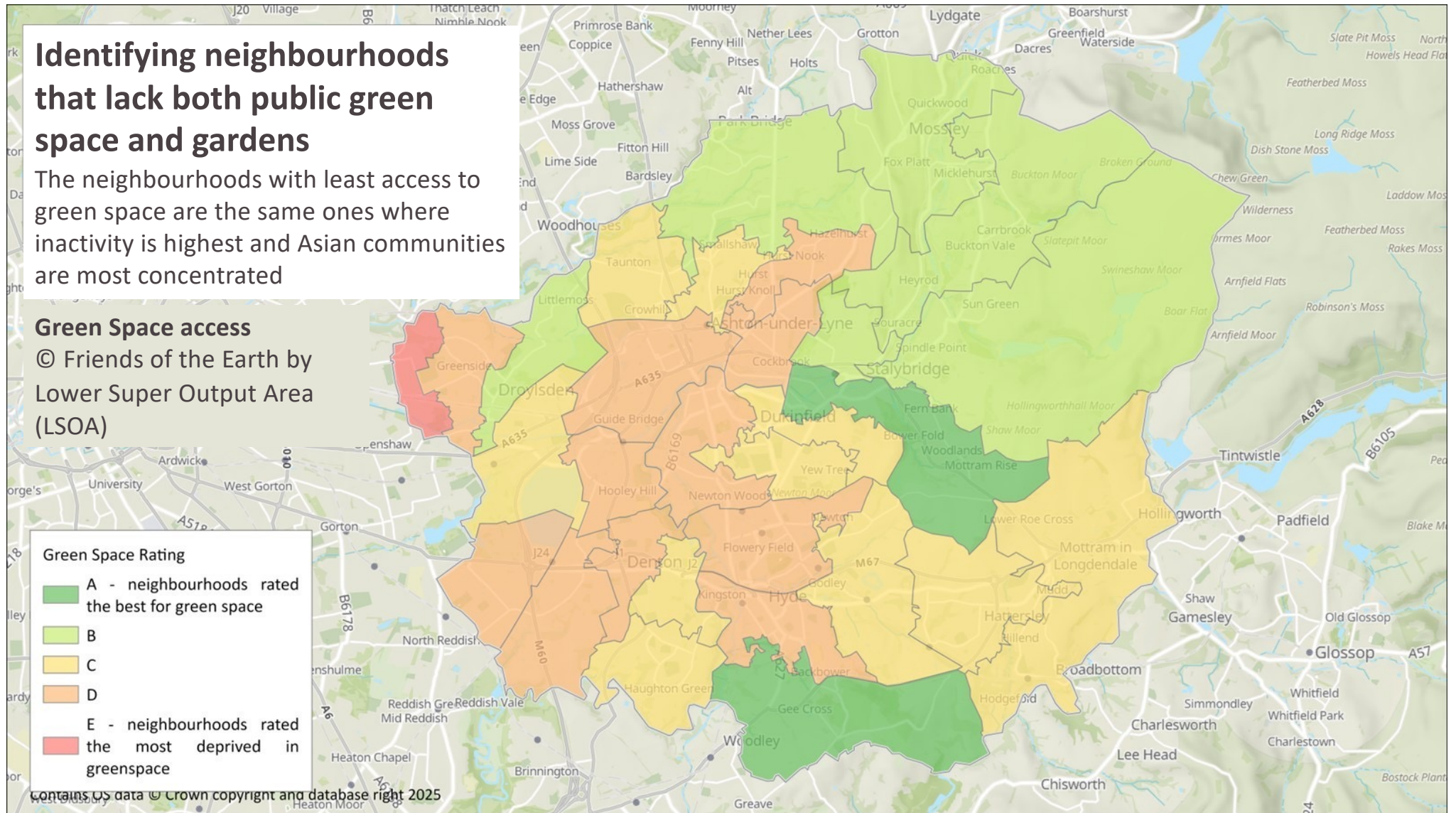
Green Space access

© Friends of the Earth by
Lower Super Output Area
(LSOA)

Green Space Rating

- A - neighbourhoods rated the best for green space
- B
- C
- D
- E - neighbourhoods rated the most deprived in greenspace

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Friends of the Earth analysis of ONS data on public green space, and gardens found that:



Black and brown people are **twice as likely** to live in a neighbourhood with **minimal access to green space**



Almost **40%** of people from BAME backgrounds **live in the most green-space deprived areas**, compared to just 14% of white people



Children from the most deprived areas are 20% less likely to spend time outside than those in affluent areas



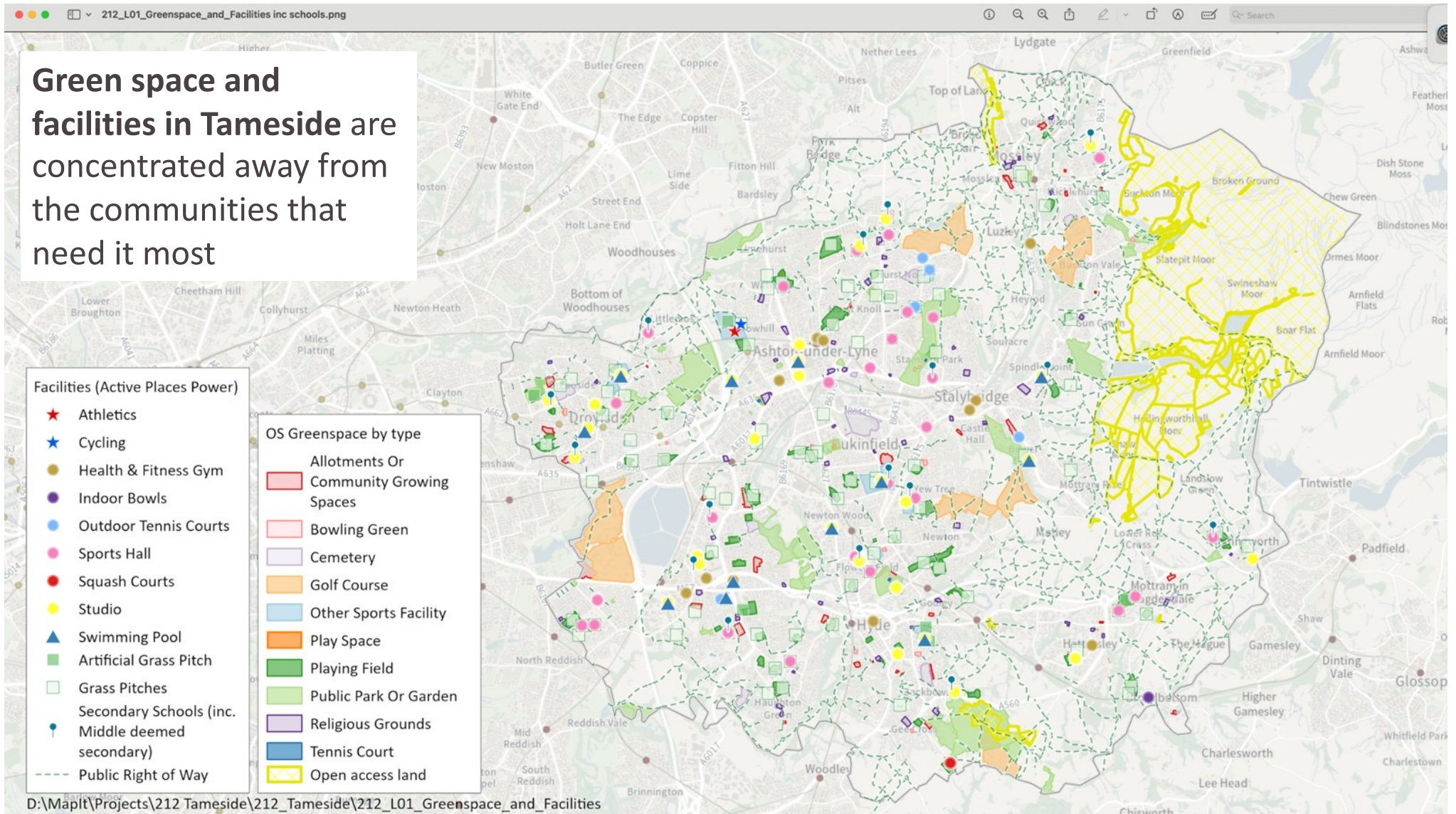
Green space and facilities in Tameside are concentrated away from the communities that need it most

Facilities (Active Places Power)

- ★ Athletics
- ★ Cycling
- Health & Fitness Gym
- Indoor Bowls
- Outdoor Tennis Courts
- Sports Hall
- Squash Courts
- Studio
- ▲ Swimming Pool
- Artificial Grass Pitch
- Grass Pitches
- Secondary Schools (inc. Middle deemed secondary)
- Public Right of Way

OS Greenspace by type

- Allotments Or Community Growing Spaces
- Bowling Green
- Cemetery
- Golf Course
- Other Sports Facility
- Play Space
- Playing Field
- Public Park Or Garden
- Religious Grounds
- Tennis Court
- Open access land



D:\MapIt\Projects\212 Tameside\212_Tameside\212_L01_Greenspace_and_Facilities

Tameside has the **lowest concentration of sports facilities** in the North West

Concentration of sports facilities, excluding grass pitches, by region

Tameside



6.32 sports facilities (excluding grass pitches) per 10,000 people



Source: Active Places Power from Sport England, Census 2021 from the Office for National Statistics

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/moreadultsareactiveinareaswithahighernumberofsportsfacilities/2024-03-07>

Ethnicity and accessing outdoor space

Just 1% of visitors to National Parks in England are from black and ethnic minority backgrounds despite making up around 17% of the GB population

Research conducted by Leeds Beckett University identified the biggest single reason as cost.

But other reasons included lack of confidence, lack of role models and negative experiences.



Reasons why people don't feel able to, or don't chose to spend time doing outdoor activities such as walking:

Experiences of racism made many people of colour feel unsafe or fearful when in the countryside

“ As people of colour we always have to risk assess where we go and preparedness for being racialized in shops or pubs that we stop by. The gazes are still profound and a few comments... ”

“ There is definitely safety in numbers and I would not take children on my own of mixed heritage or Black identities if I was not confident that I could deal with the expected ignorance ”

Fear of putting yourself in a situation where you know you will stand out in a predominantly white space

“ Everyone looked at me, but no one looked like me ”

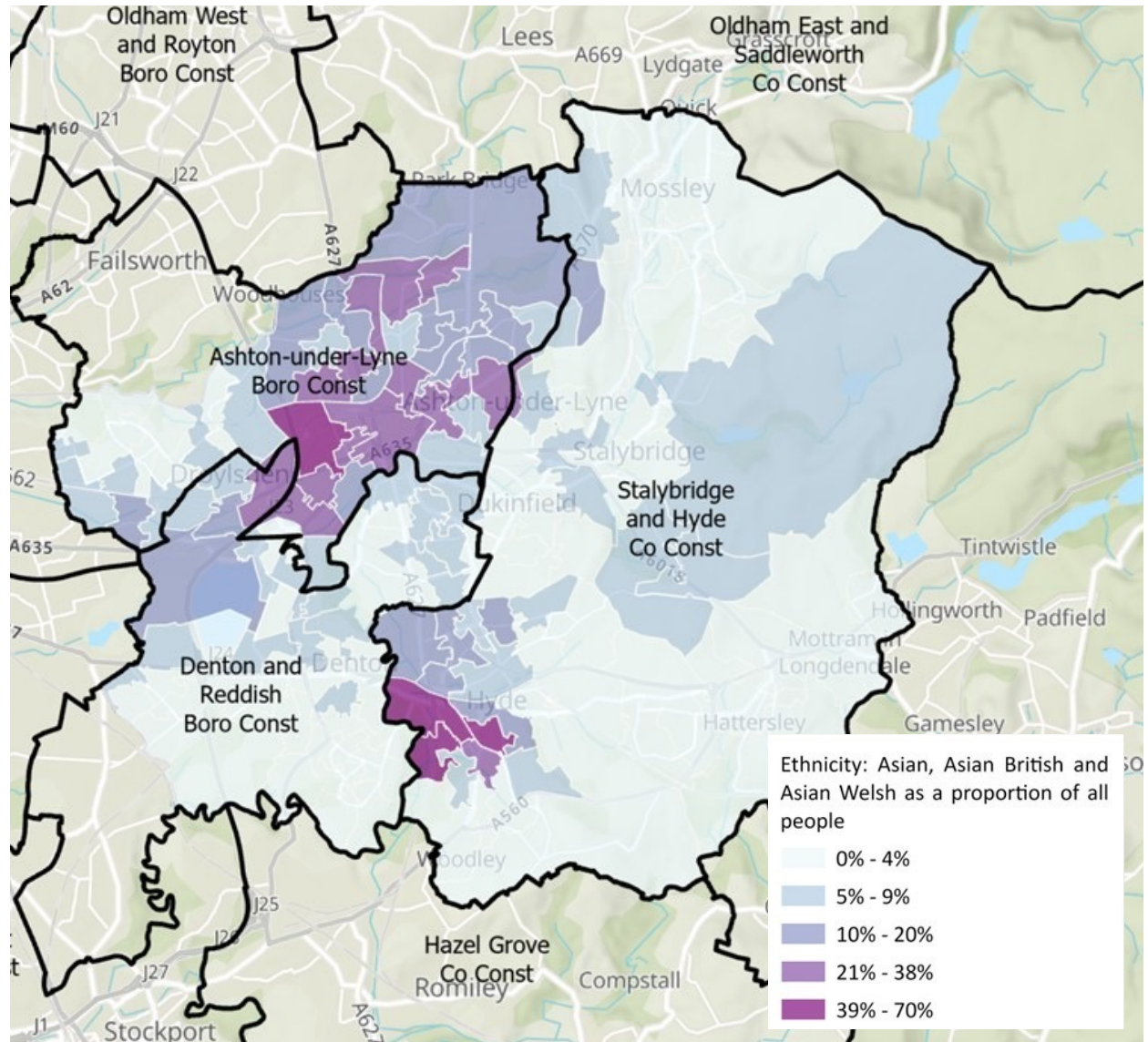
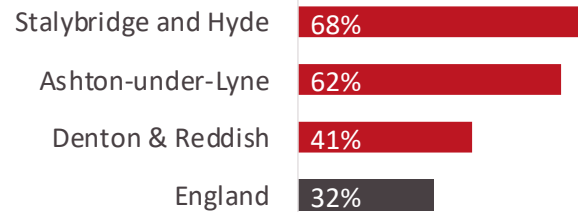
Playground access

The inequalities seen in adult activity begin in childhood — children in Tameside's most diverse areas have the least access to play space

Asian, Asian British and Asian Welsh population by LSOA (Census 2011)

Fields in Trust Green Space Index Score

Children aged under 10 not within a 10-minute walk of a playground



An investigation into whether early-life exposure to residential surrounding green space is associated with a change in bone mineral density in young children concluded that:



In this study of children aged 4 to 6 years, **higher bone mineral density and a lower risk of having low bone density were associated with higher residential green space exposure during childhood.**

These findings highlight the importance of early-life exposure to residential green space on bone health during critical periods of growth and development, with long-term implications.

Key messages

Environments

Hidden potential

Every overlooked space
is an opportunity

Street corners

Underused car parks

Overlooked verges

School playground walls

Understanding how communities use space

- We design for how people *should* move, missing the everyday patterns of walking, playing, gathering, and informal activity that already exist
- In central Tameside, the communities with greatest need are geographically cut off from natural and rural assets
- These dense, culturally diverse urban areas have acute shortages of green space and sports facilities
- Building new facilities is neither realistic nor sufficient — a different approach is needed
- Every street corner, car park, school wall, and verge has potential — if we understand what would make it inviting, safe, and useful



Key messages

Environments

The shift: From fixed infrastructure to **playful reimagining**

What if children could play here?

What if neighbours could gather here?

What if this became a route people chose?

A shift towards playful, imaginative thinking

- Streets aren't just conduits for vehicles; tarmac isn't fixed infrastructure — both can be reimagined
- Ask: what if children could play here? What if neighbours could gather here? What if this became a route people chose?
- Spatial inequality means we must layer multiple uses onto single spaces rather than create new ones
- Communities should be co-creators of their spaces — not passive recipients of designed environments
- They understand their own needs, barriers, and possibilities better than anyone



Actionable insights



Strategic leadership enabling collective leadership

Rationale: If we create strong strategic leadership with clear direction and shared ambitions, then more people and organisations in Tameside will be able to contribute to reducing inactivity, because they will understand the role they can play and have a unifying framework to align their efforts.

Priority actions:

- **Establish evidence-led strategic partnerships** – systematically develop and share physical activity evidence to build sustained relationships with policy partners and communities, enabling them to embed this evidence into their own policies and practices
- **Promote the Every Move Matters brand and framework** – establish Every Move Matters as a shared identity that promotes increased movement, supporting all partners to adopt and utilise it as a tool for aligning with existing strategies and policy objectives whilst building widespread recognition and consistent messaging across the borough

Priority influence:

- **Planning and regeneration partners** to influence borough investments, local plans, and neighbourhood planning processes
- **Transport partners** to influence active travel infrastructure and connectivity
- **Social policy partners** addressing deep-rooted social inequalities that drive inactivity across the population
- **Policy partners** to adopt Every Move Matters framework within their own strategies and communications



Involving local people and growing assets

Rationale: If we build genuine partnerships with communities and enable them to lead on solutions, then physical activity interventions will be more sustainable and culturally relevant, because communities will own the agenda and solutions will be rooted in lived experience and local assets.

Priority actions:

- **Develop sustainable community partnership models** – collaborate with Action Together to establish ongoing capacity-building support that enables diverse communities experiencing inequalities to meaningfully participate in decision-making
- **Build relationships with trusted community organisations** to expand understanding of how movement can support healthier, more fulfilling lives

Priority influence:

- **Community organisations** to shift from extractive consultation towards genuine partnership approaches with clear follow-through
- **Voluntary sector infrastructure organisations** to embed physical activity within broader community development work



Effective work across and between sectors

Rationale: If we work collaboratively across planning, regeneration, employment, health and community sectors, then physical activity will be embedded into wider policy and environmental change, because movement happens in the context of how people live, work, and experience their neighbourhoods.

Priority actions:

- **Transform urban environment for movement** – implement evidence-based retrofitting of public spaces into multipurpose playful environments, prioritising equitable access for underserved groups (particularly girls and Asian girls) whilst addressing facility deficits and reimagining urban design to naturally encourage physical activity
- **Address work-related barriers to movement** – provide evidence, guidance and support to employers and employment-related organisations to create policies and approaches that enable and encourage movement

Priority influence:

- **Planning and urban design partners** to integrate movement-friendly principles into regeneration projects and local plans
- **Parks and green spaces teams** to create multipurpose playful environments
- Facilities managers and sport development teams to address facility deficits strategically
- **Employers** to create workplace environments and cultures that enable movement
- **Employment support organisations** (including Jobcentre Plus, skills providers) to recognise and address the impact of worklessness on inactivity levels



Transforming governance and processes

Rationale: If we establish differentiated approaches that provide universal services alongside targeted support, then we can address variation in need across Tameside's 9 towns, because proportionate universalism ensures everyone benefits whilst those facing greatest barriers receive additional support.

Priority actions:

- **Develop proportionate place-based interventions** – create universal core services across all 9 towns that benefit everyone, whilst providing additional targeted support in areas of greatest need through differentiated approaches
- **Ensure all interventions are embedded** within neighbourhood planning frameworks

Priority influence:

- **Neighbourhood planning teams** to integrate physical activity considerations into local planning processes
- **Service commissioners** to adopt proportionate universal approaches rather than solely targeted interventions
- **Health and wellbeing partnership governance structures** to enable place-based differentiation within borough-wide strategic direction



**For further information
please contact us at:**

annette.turner@tameside.gov.uk

Public Health
Tameside MBC

