



Office for Health
Improvement
& Disparities

Patterns and trends in child obesity in England

**A presentation of the latest data from the National Child Measurement Programme and
Health Survey for England**

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National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)

The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP), established in 2006, collects annual measurements of the height and weight of over one million children in Reception (age 4 to 5 years) and Year 6 (age 10 to 11 years) in primary schools across England.

This slide set presents data from the 2024 to 2025 academic year showing the patterns and trends in the prevalence of overweight and obesity among reception (age 4 to 5 years) and year 6 (age 10 to 11 years) children in England.

In 2024 to 2025 the NCMP collected data from 1,145,893 children, which is 94.1% of all eligible children. This participation rate is higher than the rate in 2023 to 2024 (93.6%), but still slightly lower than the participation rates in pre-pandemic years of around 95%.

Trend data for participation rates, total participation and split by school year group, in the NCMP from academic years ending 2011 to 2025 is available in the [Obesity, Physical Activity and Nutrition profile](#).



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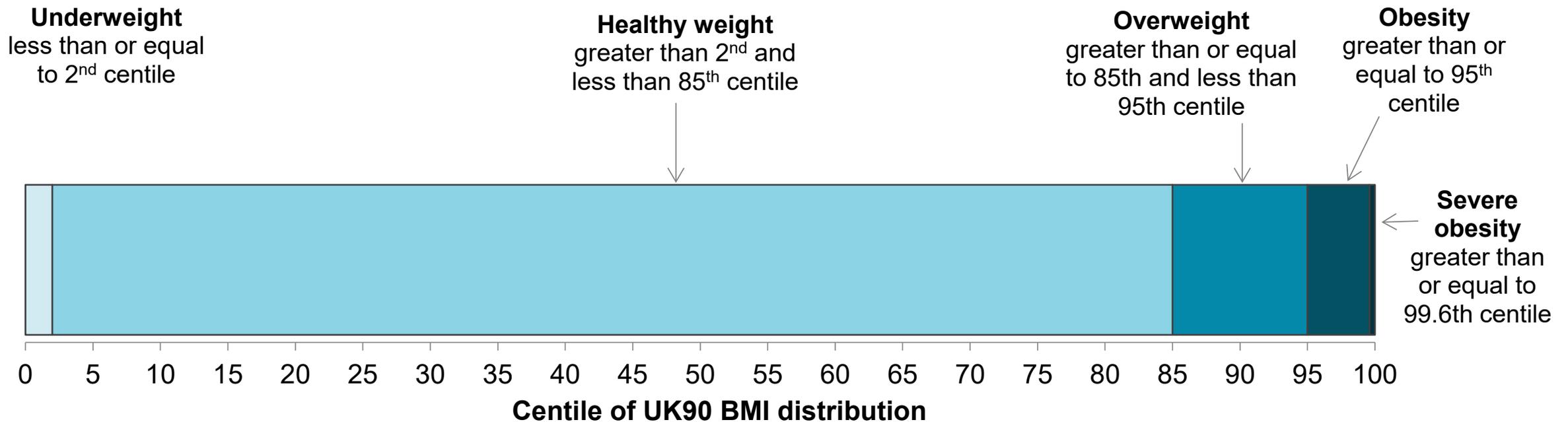
Child BMI status by parents BMI status and parent's perception of child's BMI status ([slides 66 to 68](#))

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Child body mass index classification

Definitions for population monitoring

For population monitoring purposes, a child's body mass index (BMI) is classed as overweight or obese where it is on or above the 85th centile or 95th centile, respectively, based on the British 1990 (UK90¹) growth reference data. The population monitoring cut offs for overweight and obesity are lower than the clinical cut offs (91st and 98th centiles for overweight and obesity) used to assess individual children; this is to capture children in the population in the clinical overweight or obesity BMI categories and those who are at high risk of moving into the clinical overweight or clinical obesity categories. This helps ensure that adequate services are planned and delivered for the whole population to treat and prevent obesity and promote healthy growth for all children. The chart below shows the population monitoring thresholds that are used for the analysis of the data presented in this slide set.



1 Cole TJ, Freeman JV, Preece MA. Body mass index reference curves for the UK, 1990. Archives of Disease in Childhood 1995 73:25-29.

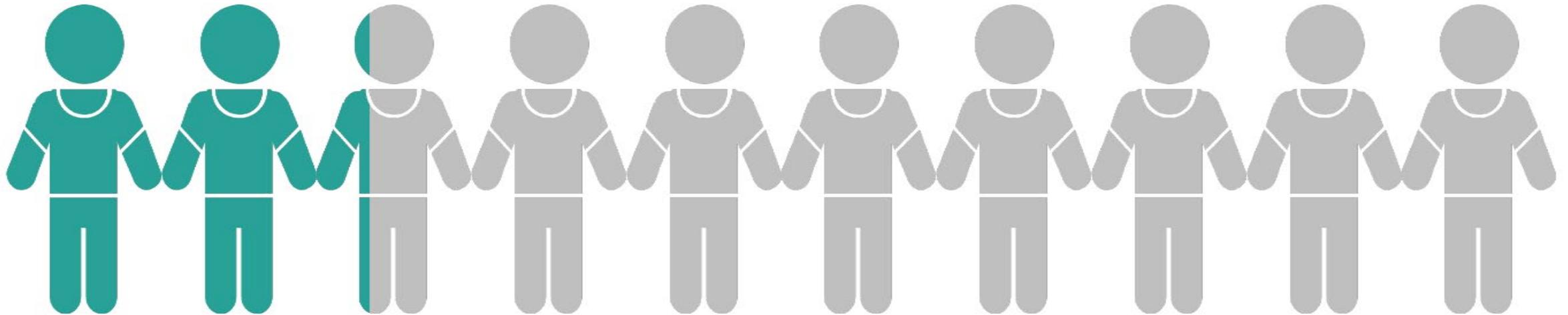
Latest data showing prevalence of overweight and obesity by age and sex in England

National Child Measurement Programme

Reception: Prevalence of overweight (including obesity)

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England

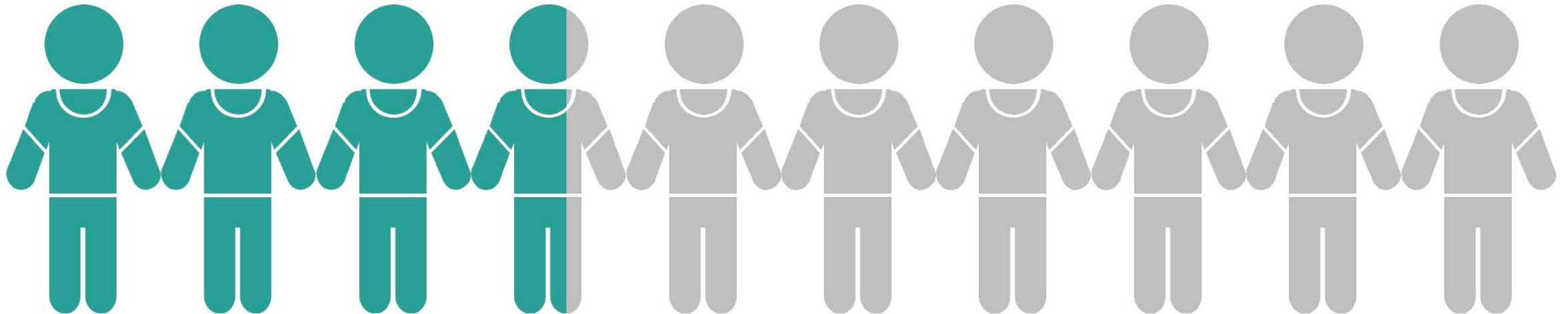
In 2024 to 2025, 23.5% of children in reception (aged 4 to 5 years) were overweight or living with obesity (boys 23.6%, girls 23.4%)



Year 6: Prevalence of overweight (including obesity)

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England

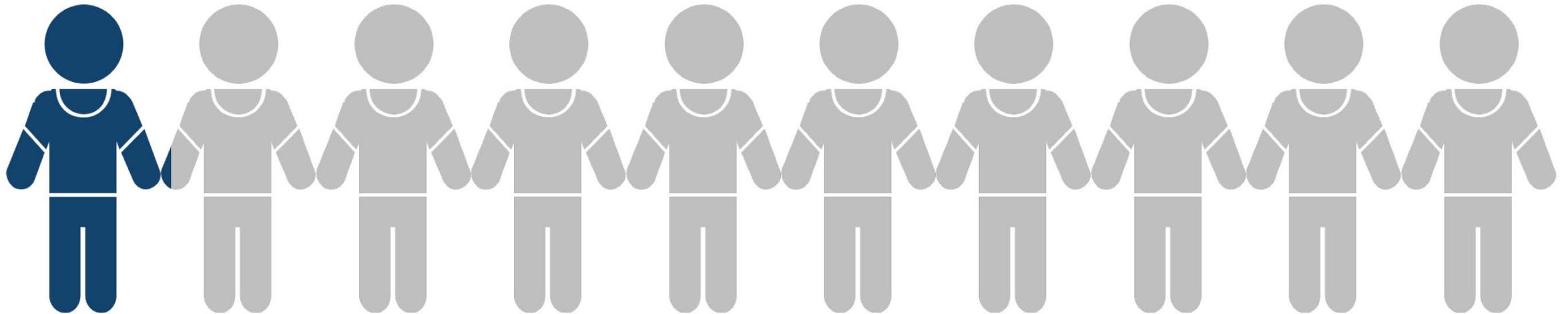
In 2024 to 2025, 36.2% of children in year 6 (aged 10 to 11 years) were overweight or living with obesity
(boys 38.5%, girls 33.7%)



Reception: Prevalence of obesity

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England

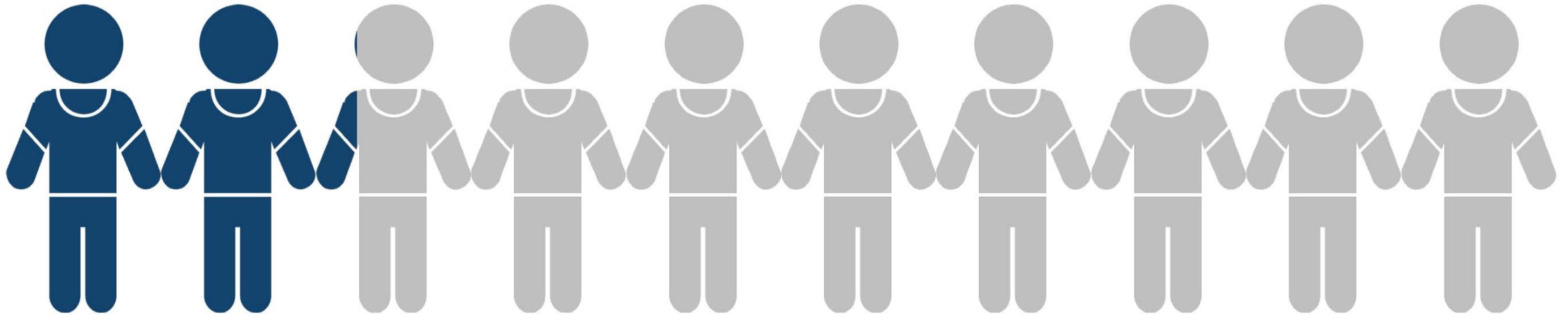
In 2024 to 2025, 10.5% of children in reception (aged 4 to 5 years) were living with obesity
(boys 10.7%, girls 10.3%)



Year 6: Prevalence of obesity

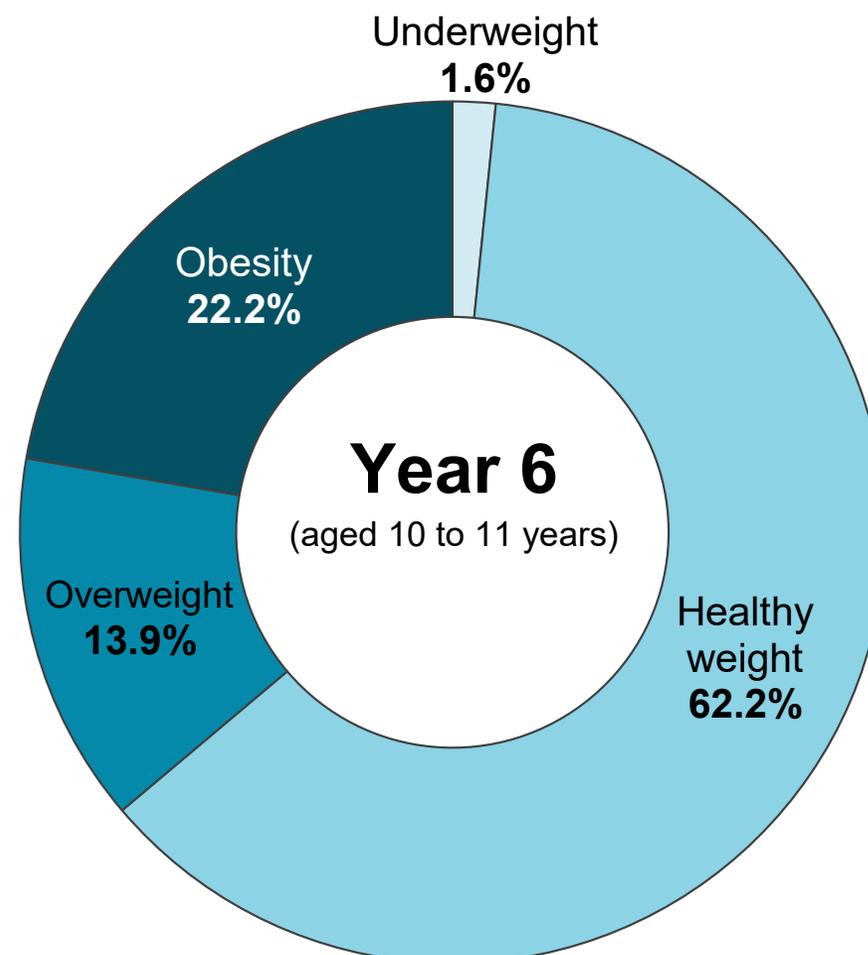
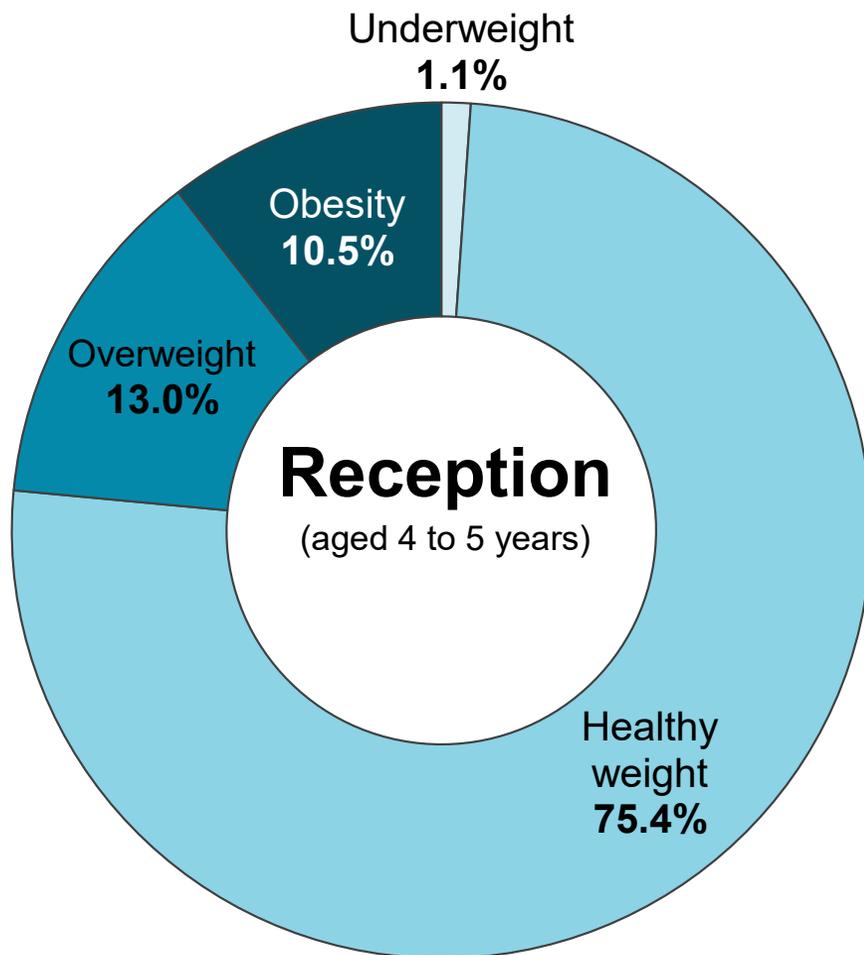
National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England

In 2024 to 2025, 22.2% of children in year 6 (aged 10 to 11 years) were living with obesity
(boys 24.6%, girls 19.8%)



BMI status of children by age

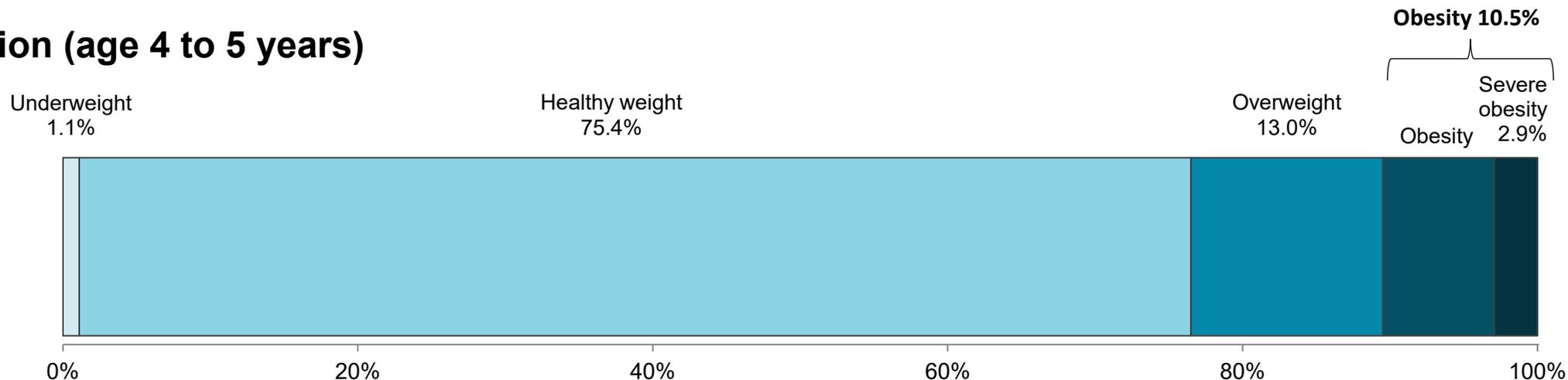
National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England



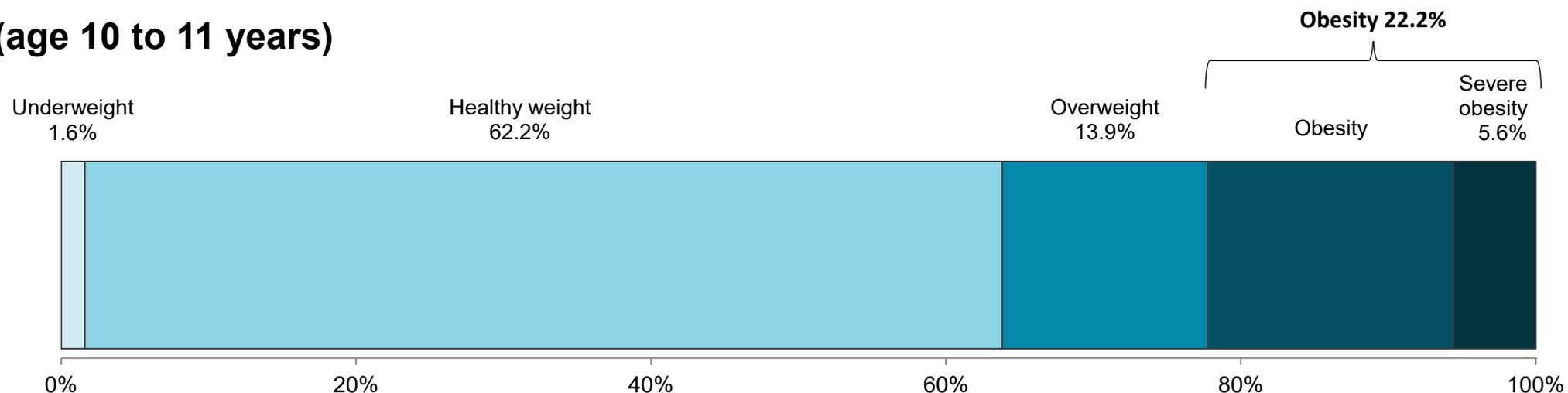
BMI status of children by age

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England

Reception (age 4 to 5 years)

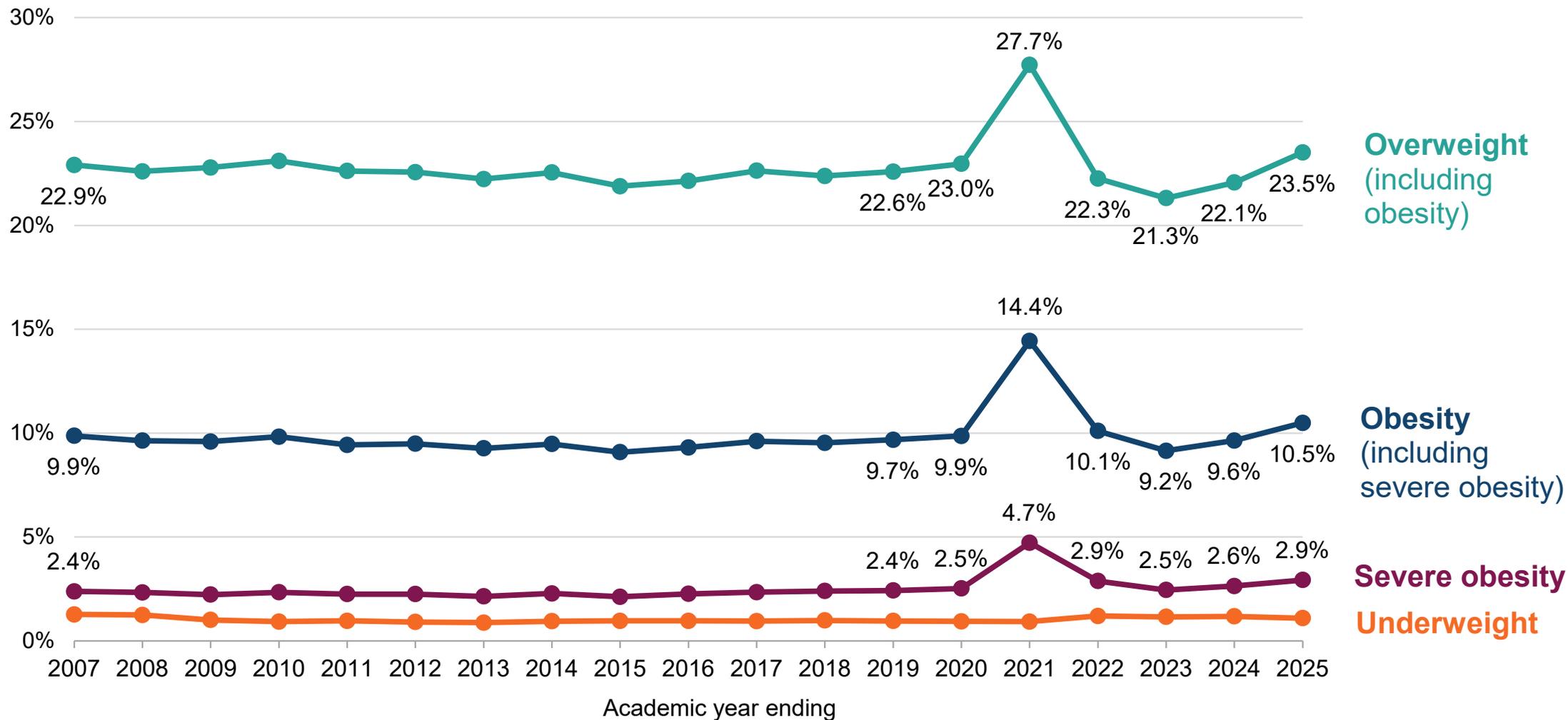


Year 6 (age 10 to 11 years)



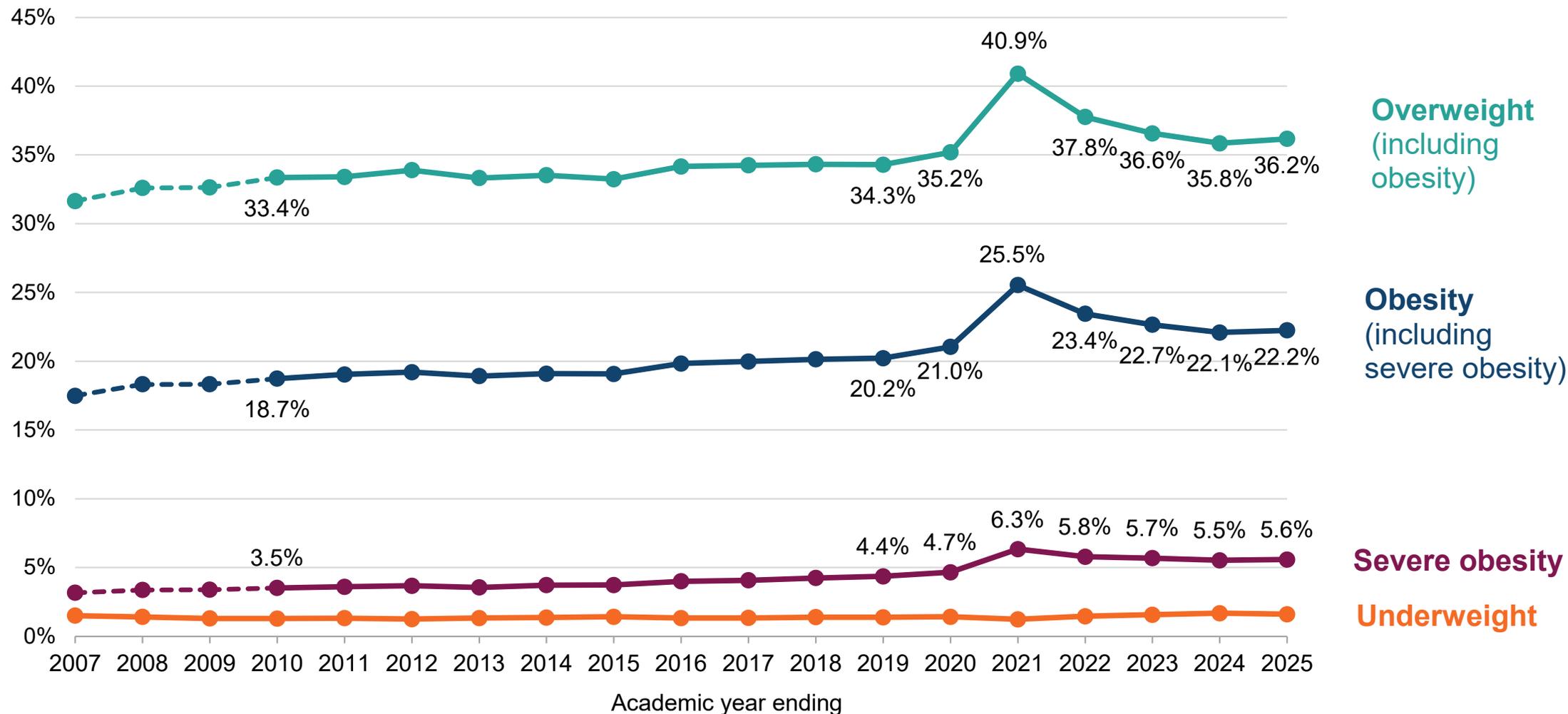
Reception: Trends by BMI category

National Child Measurement Programme 2006/2007 to 2024/2025, England



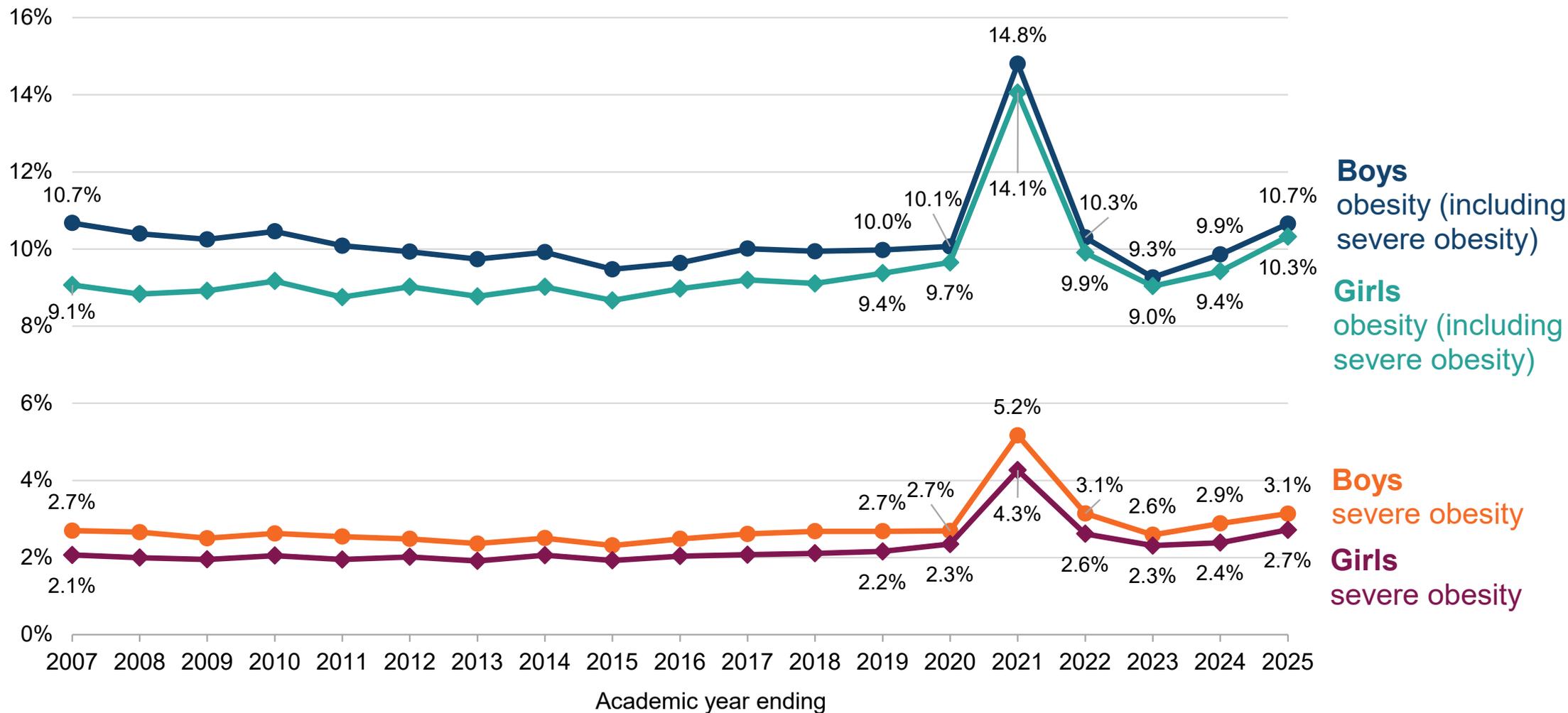
Year 6: Trends by BMI category

National Child Measurement Programme 2006/2007 to 2024/2025, England



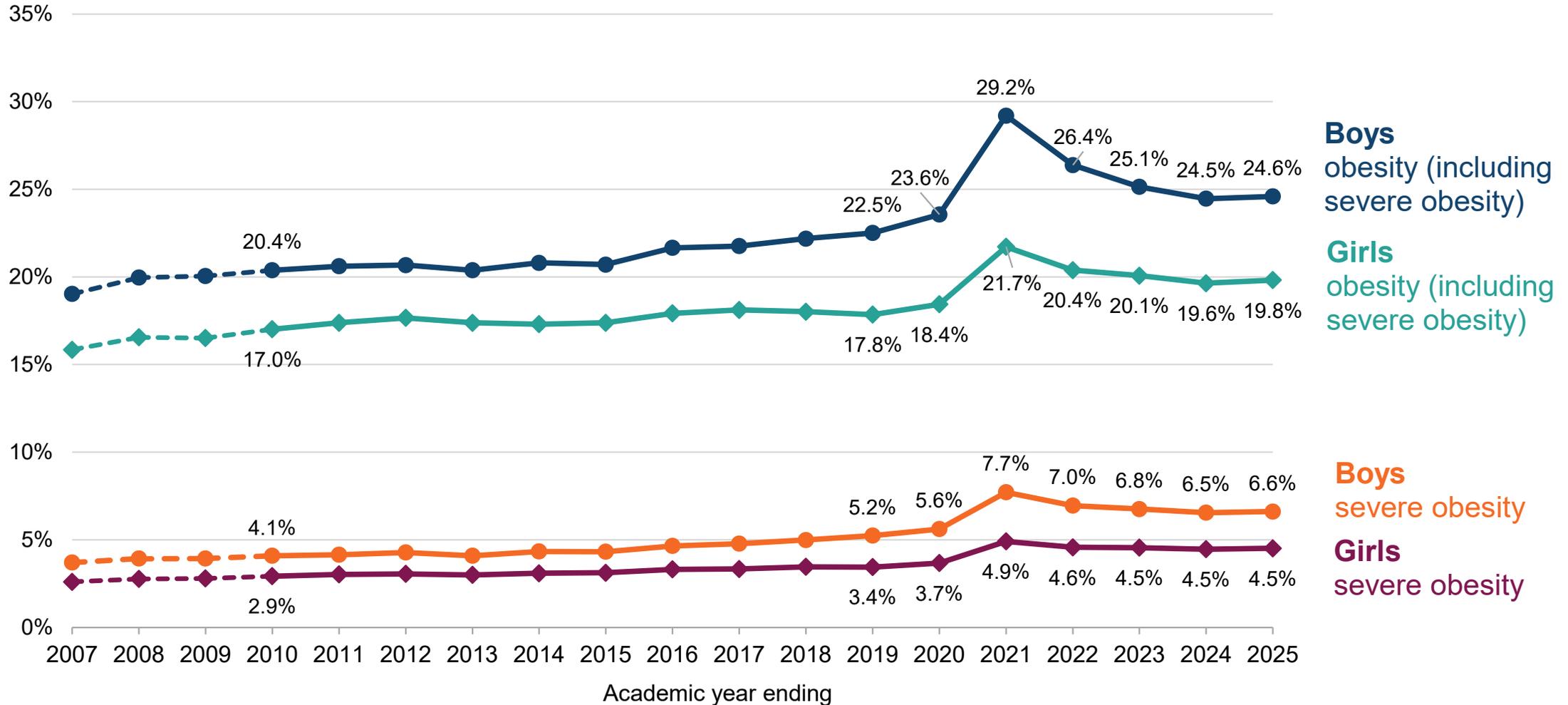
Reception: Trends in obesity prevalence by sex

National Child Measurement Programme 2006/2007 to 2024/2025, England



Year 6: Trends in obesity prevalence by sex

National Child Measurement Programme 2006/2007 to 2024/2025, England

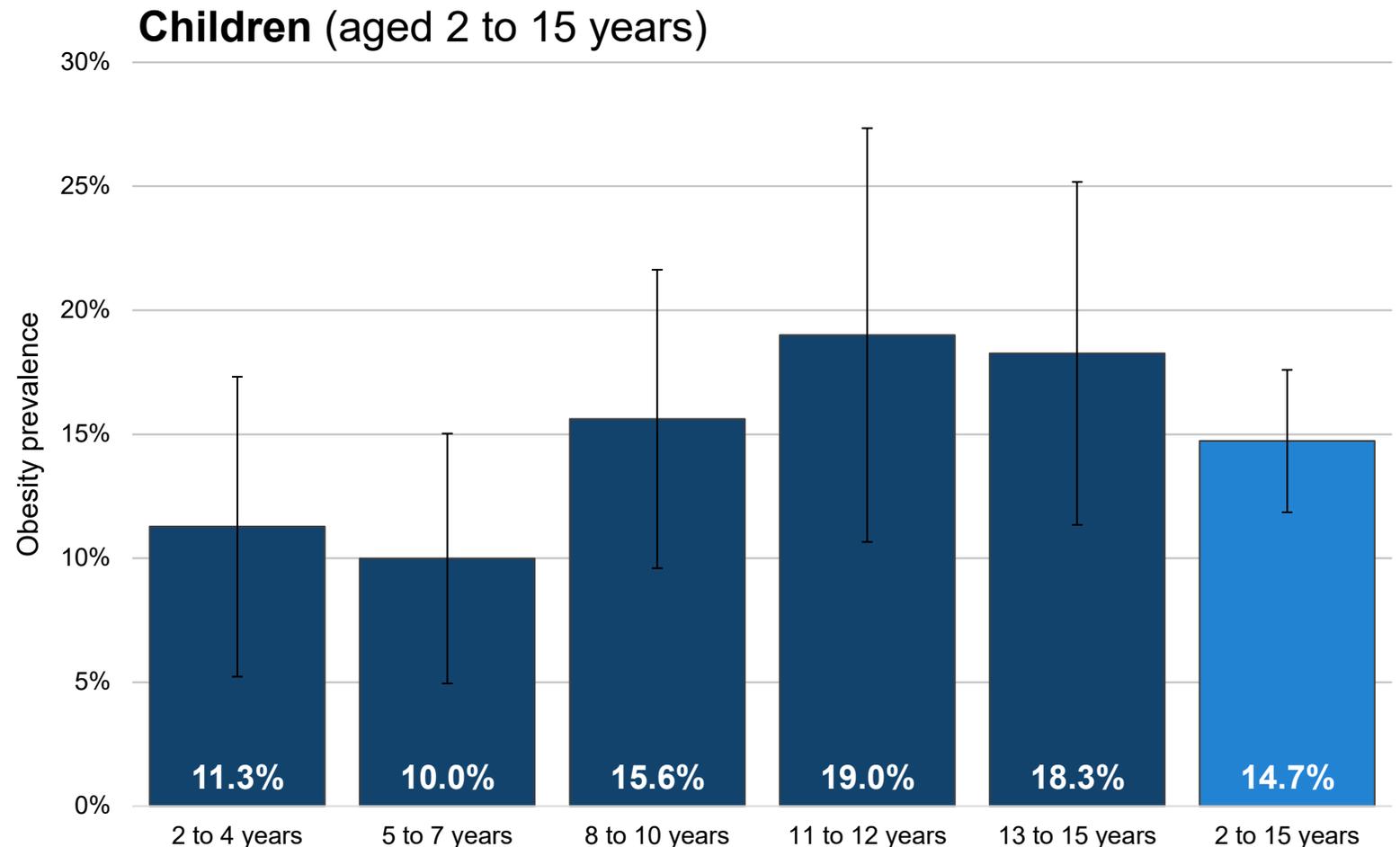
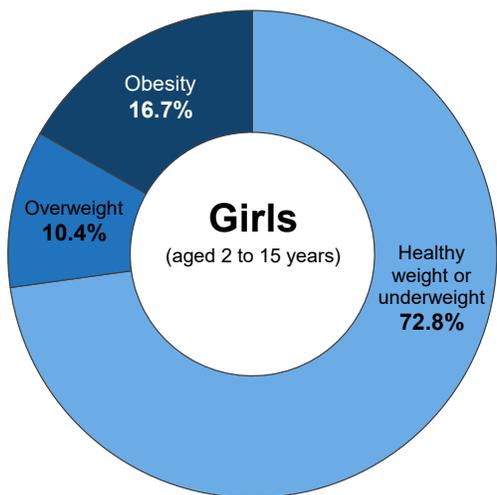
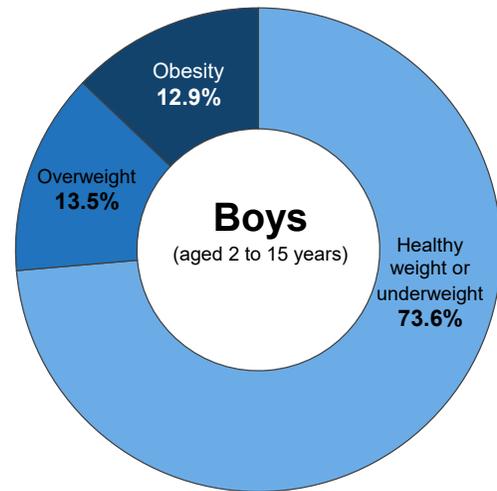


Latest data showing prevalence of overweight and obesity by age and sex in England

Health Survey for England 1995 to 2022
children aged 2 to 15 years

Prevalence of overweight and obesity by age and sex

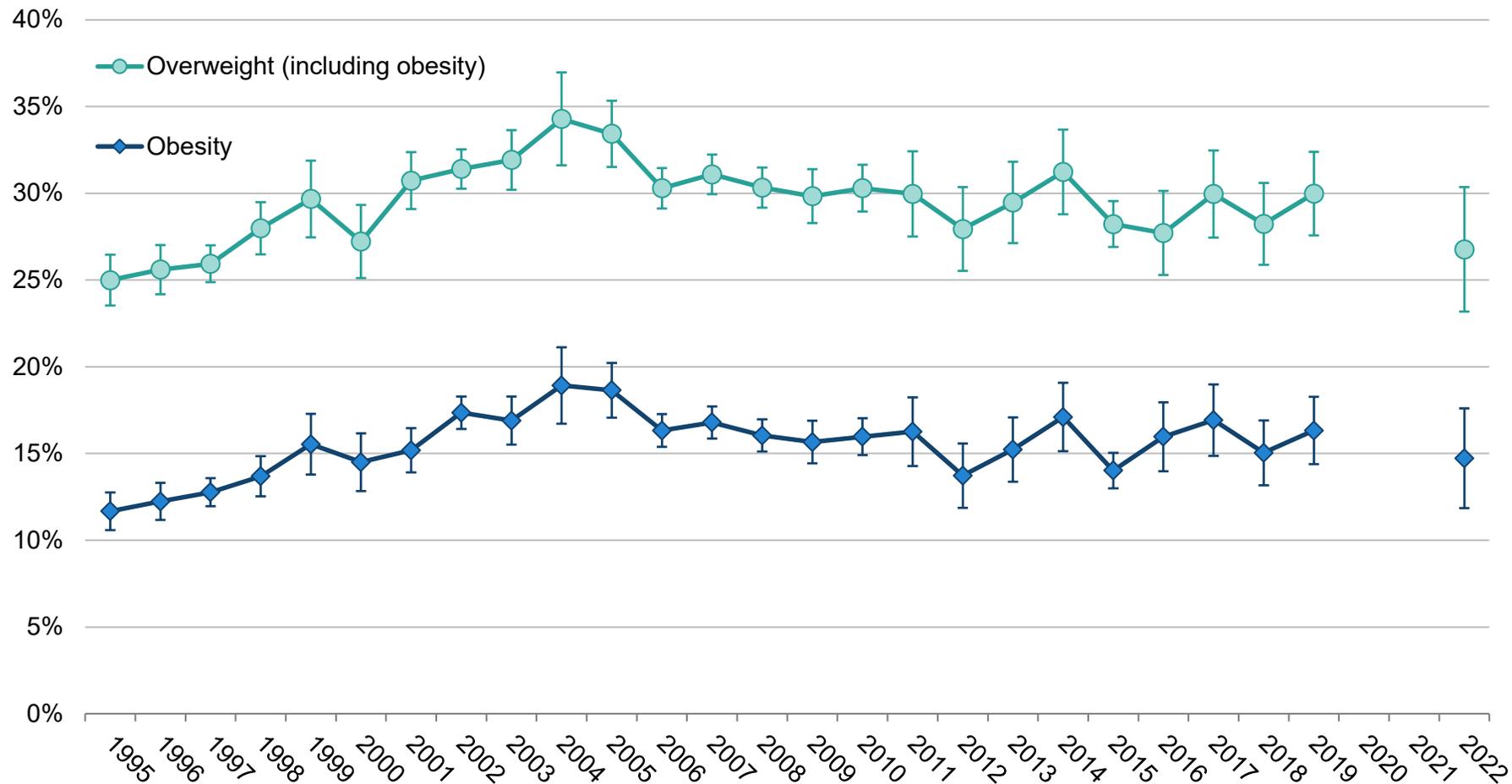
Health Survey for England 2022



95% confidence intervals are displayed on the column chart

Trend in the prevalence of overweight and obesity

Health Survey for England 1995 to 2022 (children aged 2 to 15 years)



95% confidence intervals are displayed on the chart

Prevalence of overweight (including obesity) and obesity increased from 25% and 12% respectively in 1995 to 33% and 19% in 2005. From 2006 onwards prevalence has been relatively stable.

In 2022, among children aged 2 to 15, the prevalence of obesity was 15%, and the prevalence of overweight (including obesity) was 27%. This is similar to 2019, when obesity prevalence was 16% and prevalence of overweight (including obesity) was 30% among children.

The small sample size of the Health Survey for England means we see a lot of year to year variation and wide margins of error around the estimates (shown by the confidence intervals (CIs)). The CIs are larger than normal in 2022 due to only 586 measurements being taken compared to 1,392 in 2019.



Projections of obesity prevalence based on pre-pandemic data

National Child Measurement Programme

Projections of obesity prevalence based on pre-pandemic data

Projections of obesity prevalence for reception and year 6 have been produced based on pre-COVID-19 data from 2006 to 2007 through to 2019 to 2020. This allows a comparison between the latest estimates of obesity prevalence with the pre-pandemic trend projected forward.

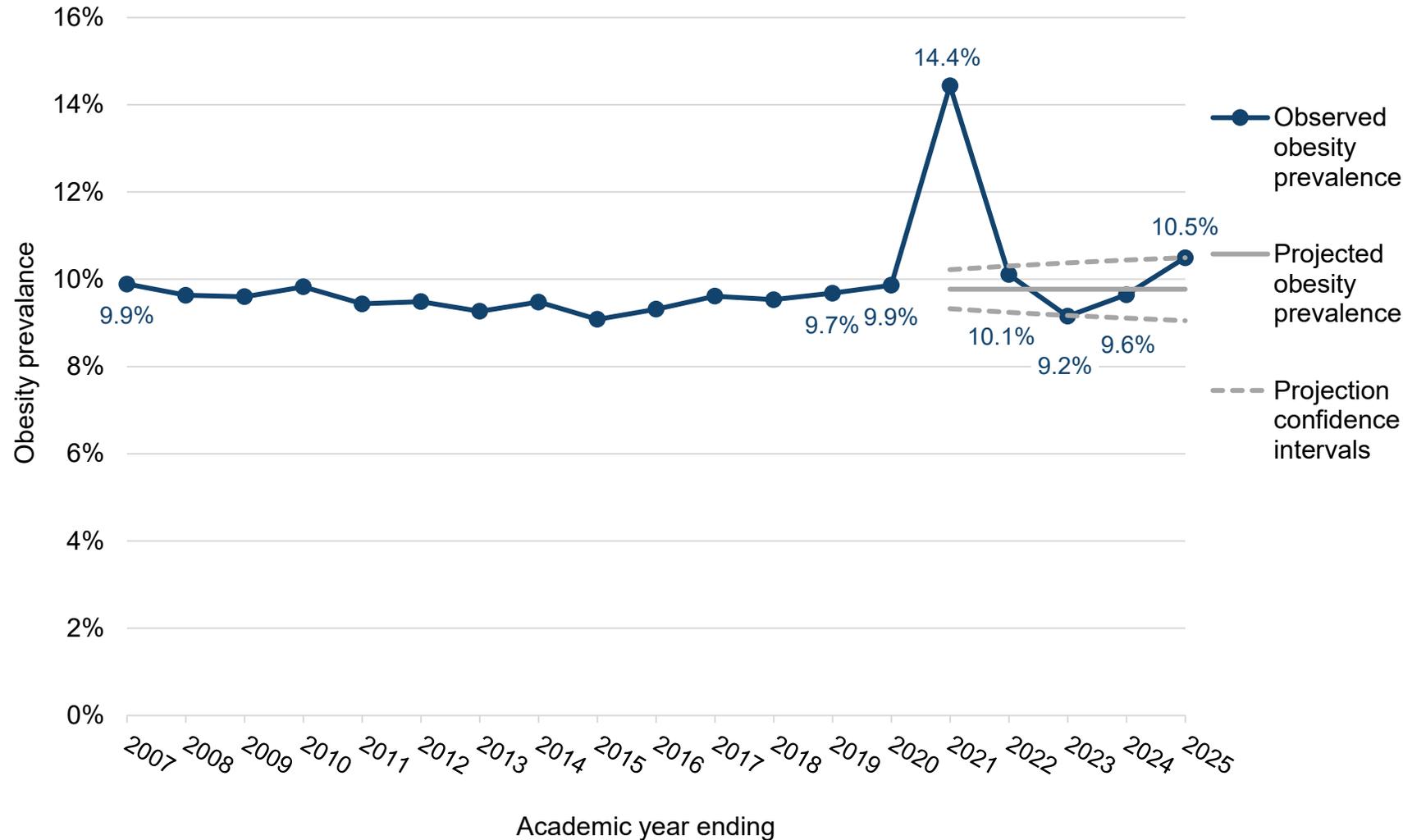
The projection is presented with 95% confidence intervals, this is a range of values that is used to quantify the uncertainty in the projection. The observed prevalence estimates also have a small level of uncertainty even though nearly all children are measured each year. This primarily reflects the natural variation which would occur if the measurements were taken on a different day.

The data used to produce the charts can be [downloaded as an accessible spreadsheet](#), this spreadsheet also contains the methods used to produce the projections.



Reception: Observed prevalence of obesity compared to projected prevalence

National Child Measurement Programme 2006/2007 to 2024/2025, England

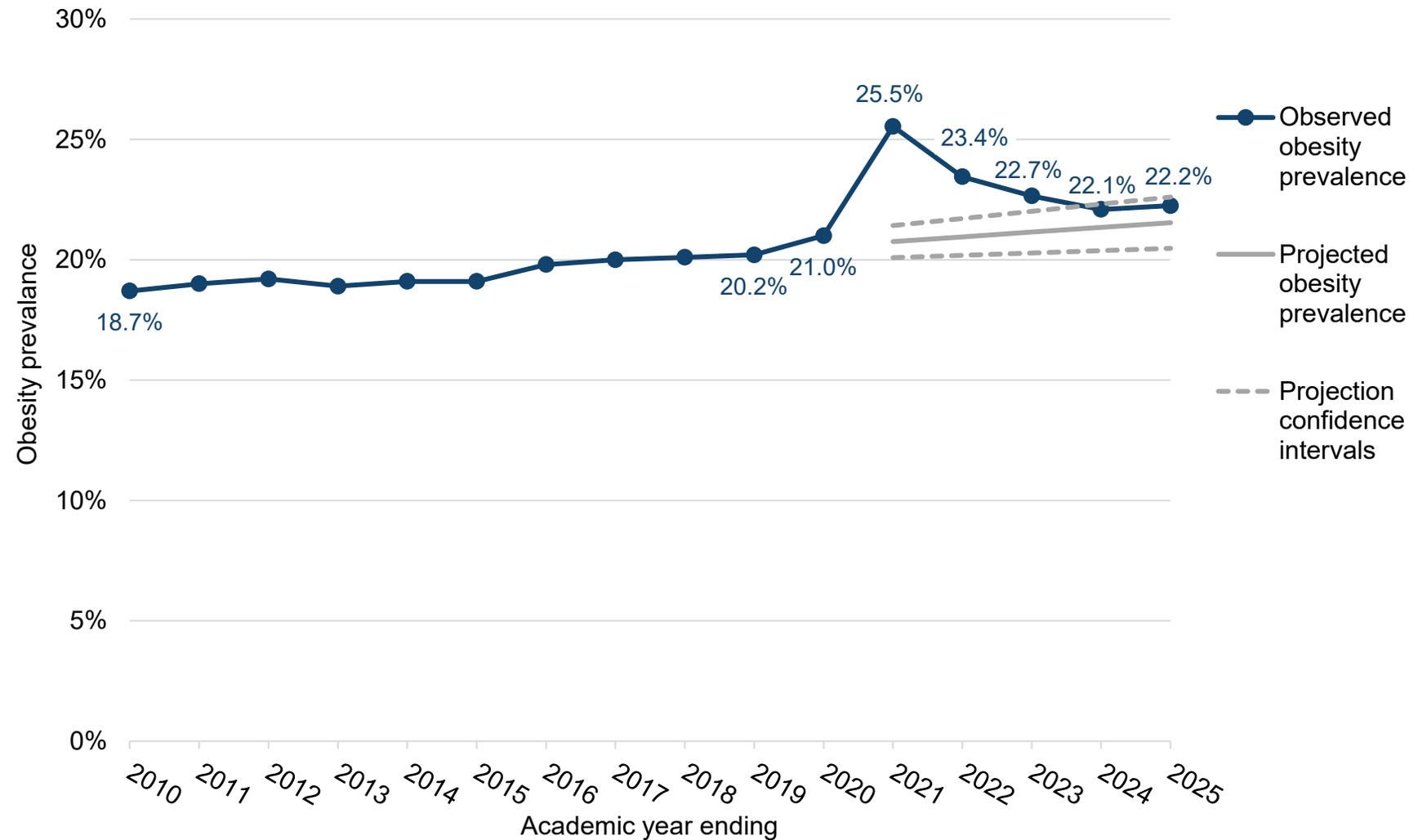


What does the data show?

- in 2020 to 2021 the observed prevalence of obesity (14.4%) was well above the projection based on the pre-pandemic trend
- the observed prevalence of obesity for 2021 to 2022 and 2022 to 2023 were both within the confidence interval for the projection
- in 2023 to 2024 the observed obesity prevalence (9.6%) was similar to the projected value
- in 2024 to 2025 the observed obesity prevalence increased to 10.5% which is just within the range of projected prevalence based on the pre-pandemic trend

Year 6: Observed prevalence of obesity compared to projected prevalence

National Child Measurement Programme 2009/2010 to 2024/2025, England



What does the data show?

- in 2020 to 2021 the observed prevalence of obesity (25.5%) was well above the projection based on the pre-pandemic trend
- the observed obesity prevalence decreased each year from 2020 to 2021 through to 2023 to 2024 where prevalence (22.1%) then was within the confidence intervals of the projection
- in 2024 to 2025 the observed obesity prevalence (22.2%) remained similar and within the projection based on the pre-pandemic increasing trend

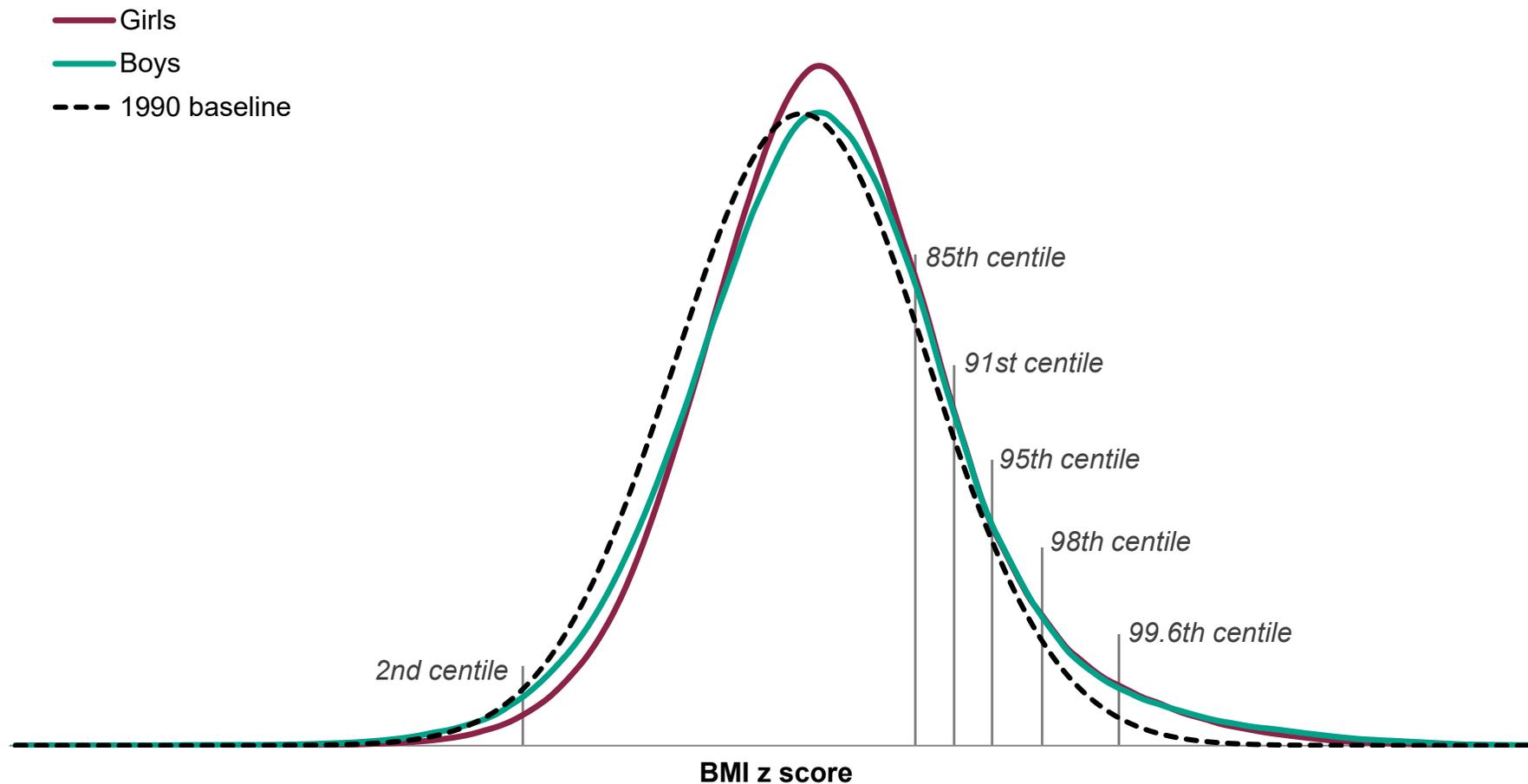


BMI distribution, children in England

National Child Measurement Programme

Reception: BMI distribution by sex

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England



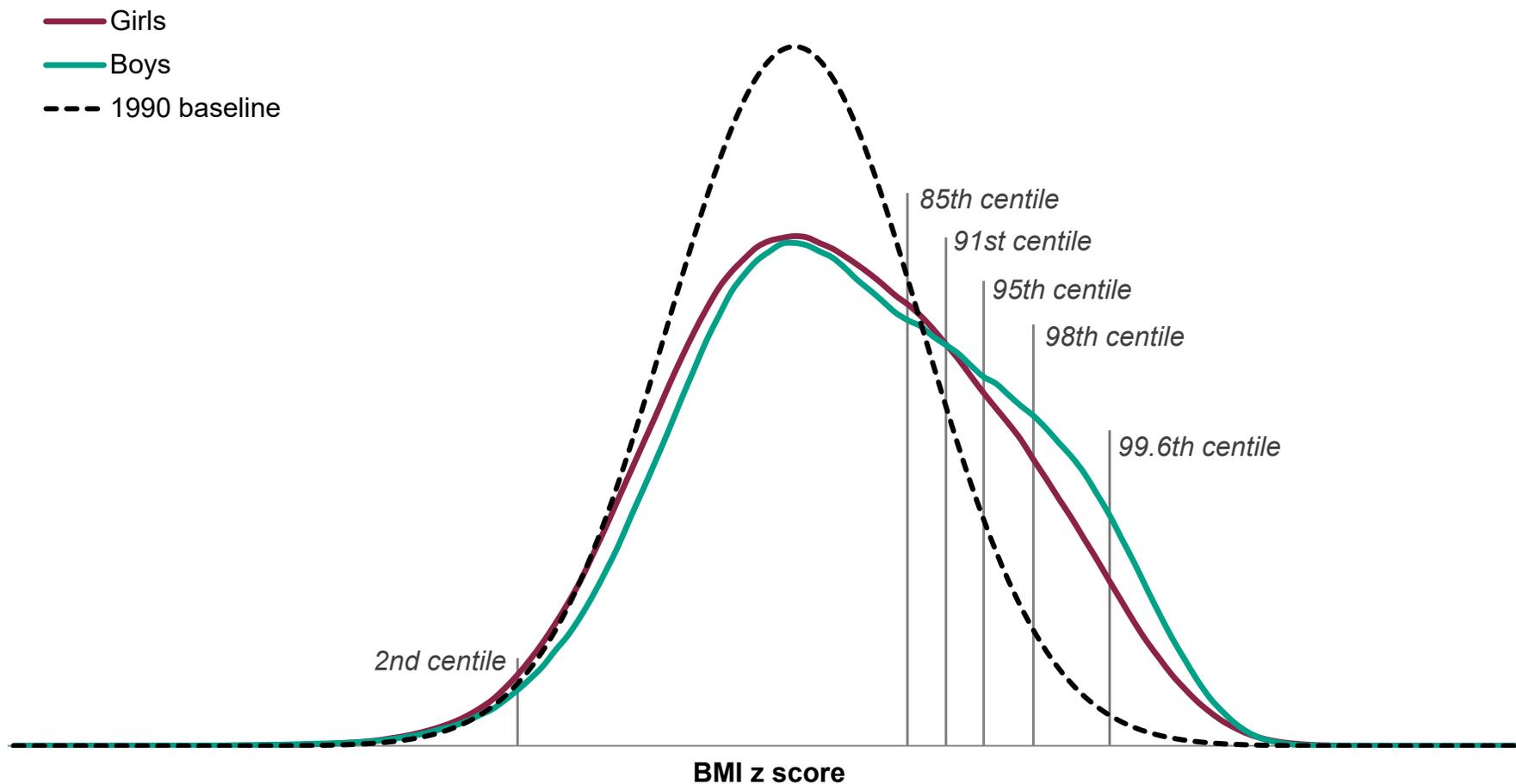
What does the data show?

For both reception (age 4 to 5 years) boys and girls, the whole BMI curve has shifted slightly to the right since 1990 indicating increases in BMI, the shape of the distribution has remained similar suggesting that the increases have occurred relatively evenly for all BMI levels.

This shows that the rise in BMI since 1990 is spread across the whole population.

Year 6: BMI distribution by sex

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England



What does the data show?

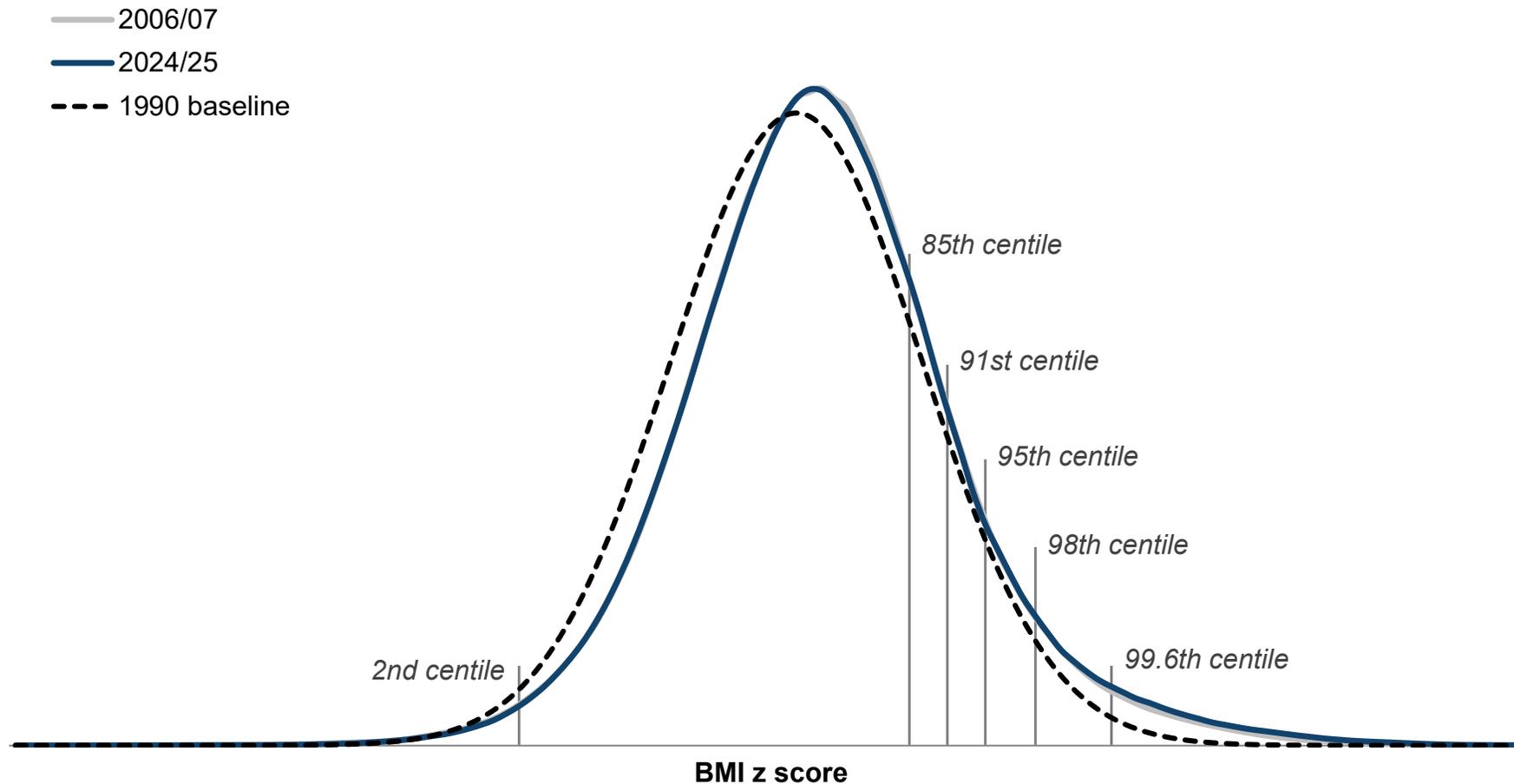
The shape of the distribution has changed considerably among year 6 (age 10 to 11 years) children since the 1990 baseline.

The curve is now more skewed, with a higher proportion of children in year 6 at the right hand side of the chart with higher BMI values.

The BMI distribution for boys is more skewed than the girls curve with a higher proportion of boys having a BMI over the 95th centile.

Reception: Change in BMI distribution

National Child Measurement Programme 2006/2007 and 2024/2025, England



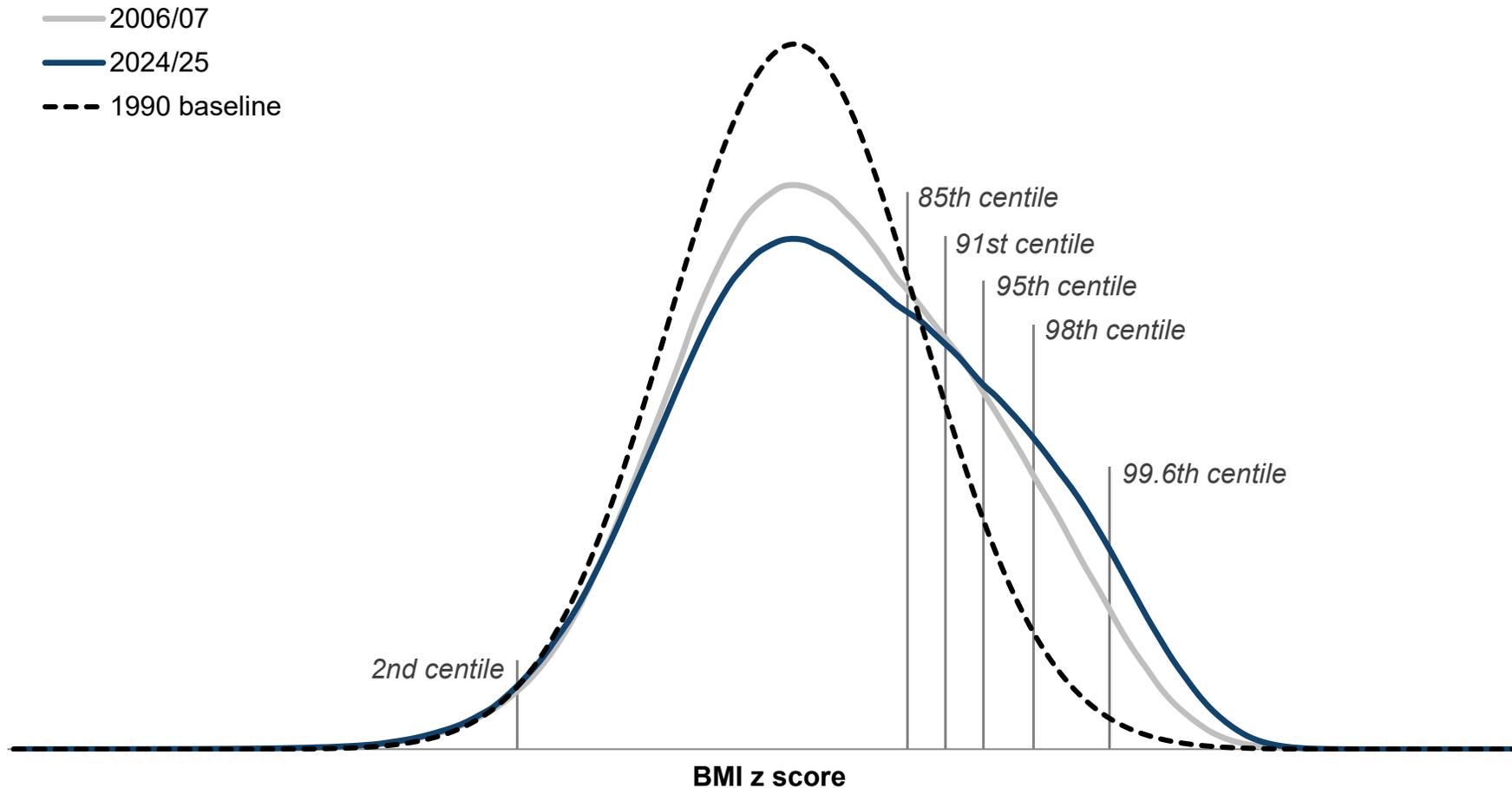
What does the data show?

The distribution of BMI in children in reception (age 4 to 5 years) is very similar in 2024 to 2025 compared to the start of the NCMP in 2006 to 2007.

The mean BMI centile for children in reception had been on the 59th or 60th centile since 2006 to 2007 it increased to the 62nd centile in 2020 to 2021 but returned to the pre-pandemic level in 2021 to 2022 where it has remained.

Year 6: Change in BMI distribution

National Child Measurement Programme 2006/2007 and 2024/2025, England



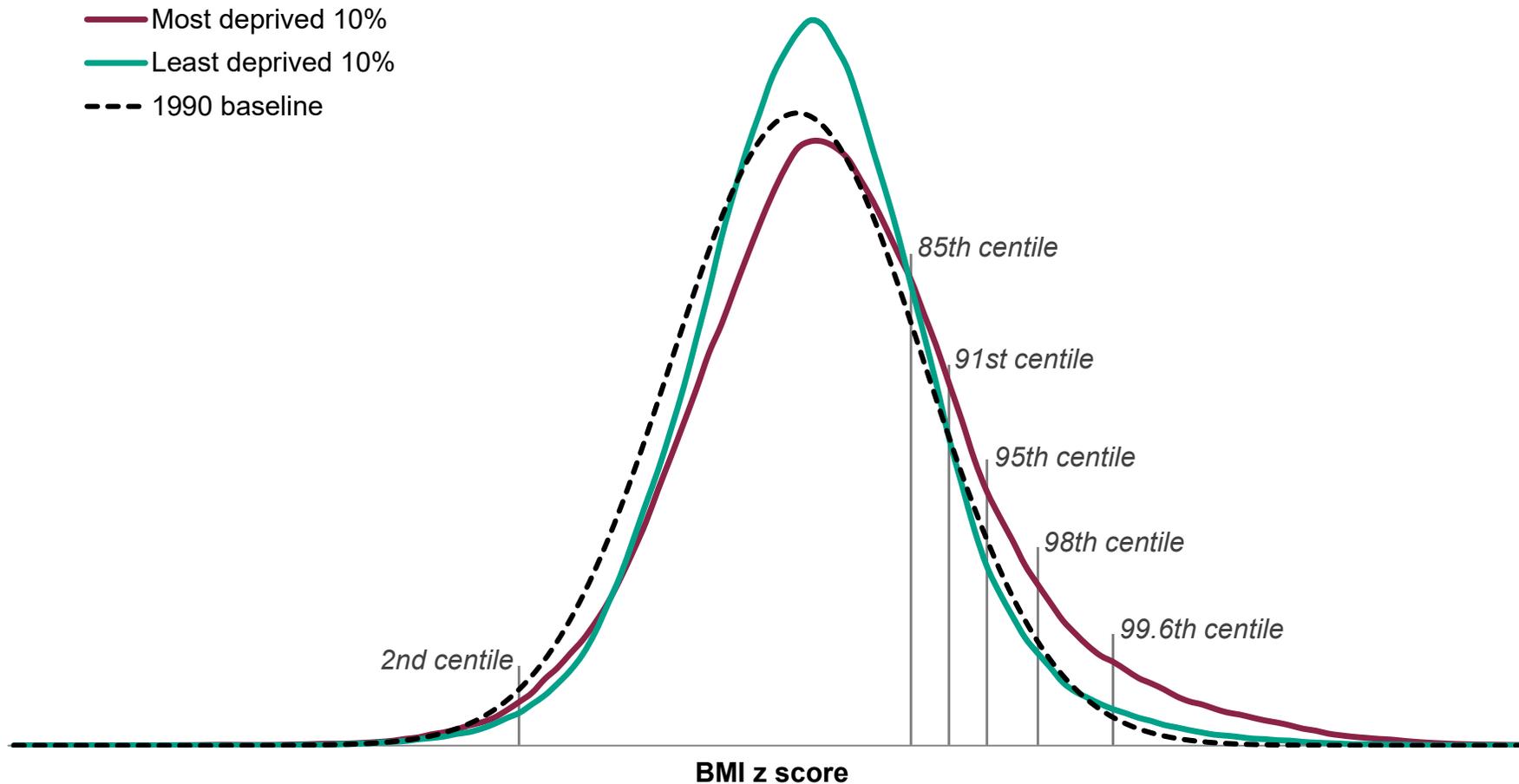
What does the data show?

The shape of the distribution has changed over the period of the NCMP. Between 2006/2007 and 2024/2025 the curve became more skewed, with an increasing proportion of year 6 children (age 10 to 11 years) with higher BMI values.

The mean BMI centile for children in year 6 had been on the 62nd or 63rd centile between 2007/2008 and 2019/2020 and increased to the 67th centile in 2020/2021. Mean BMI centile for year 6 children was on the 63rd centile in 2024/2025.

Reception: BMI distribution by deprivation decile

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England



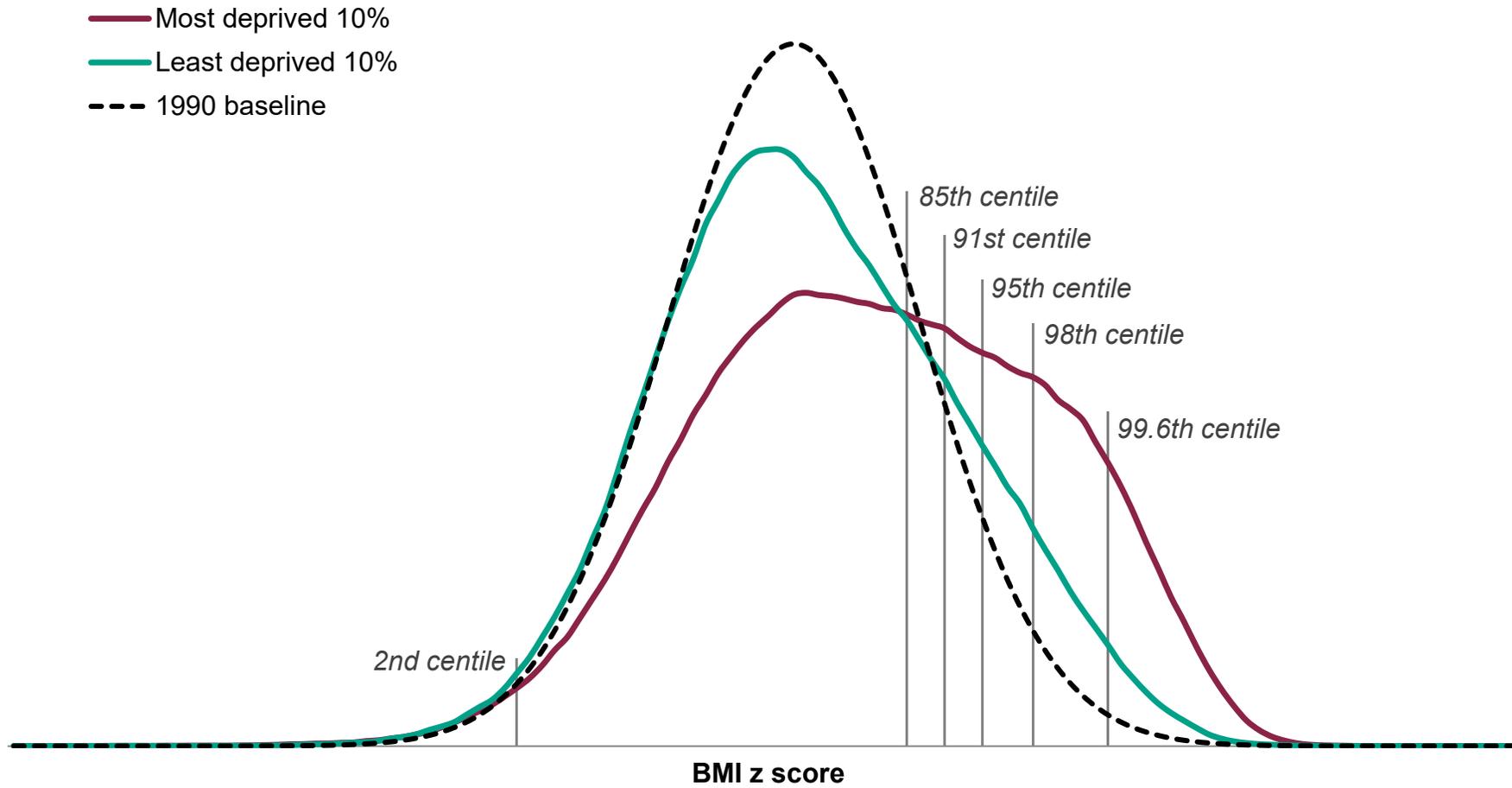
What does the data show?

The distribution of BMI is a different shape for reception (age 4 to 5 years) children living in the most deprived 10% of areas in England compared to children living in the least deprived areas with a peak further to the right and a longer tail of high BMI z scores.

The mean BMI centile of children living in the most deprived areas in 2024 to 2025 was on the 61st centile whereas the mean among children living in the least deprived areas was on the 58th centile.

Year 6: BMI distribution by deprivation decile

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England



What does the data show?

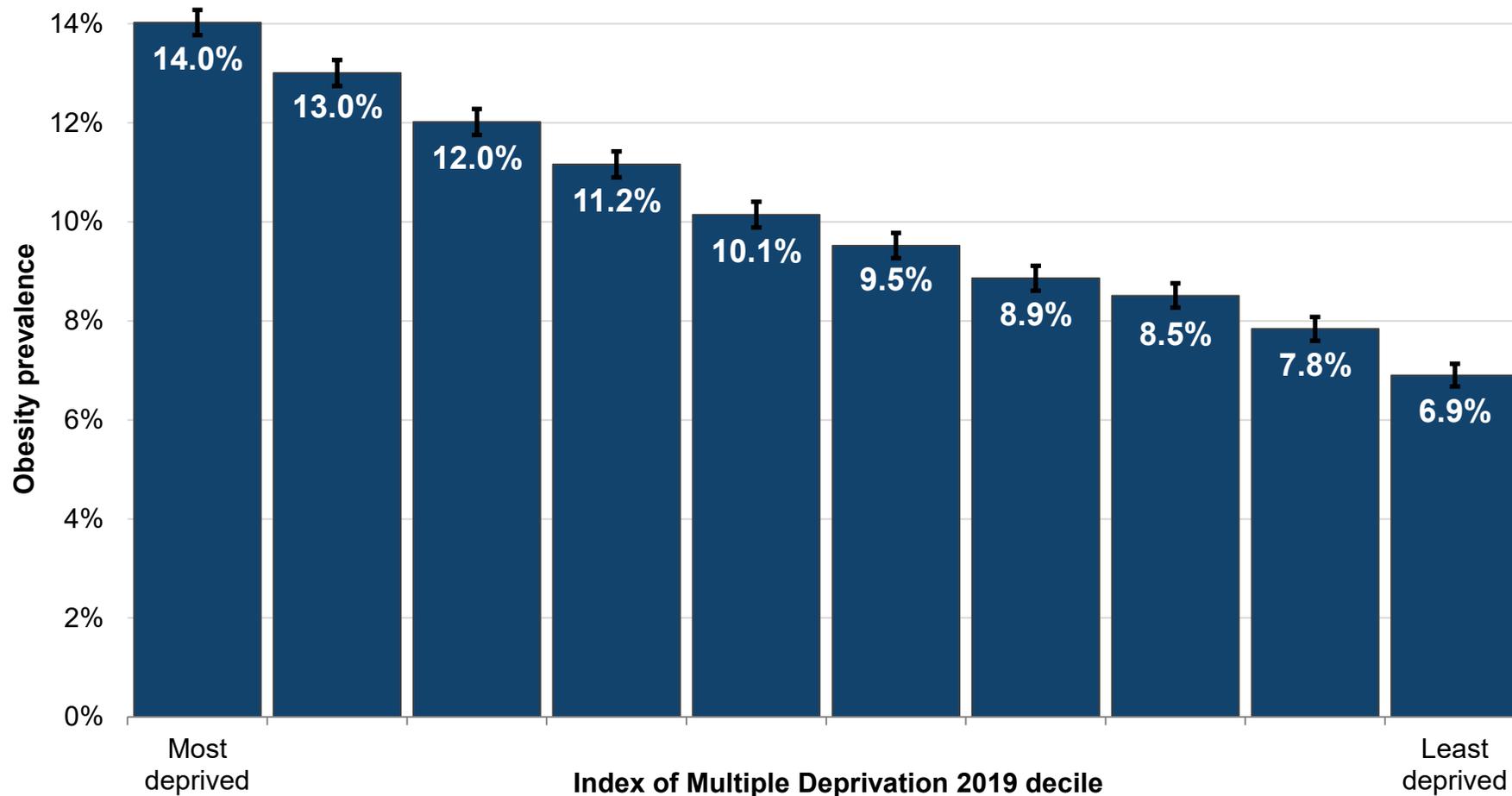
The distribution of BMI is a very different shape for year 6 (age 10 to 11 years) children living in the most deprived 10% of areas in England compared to children living in the least deprived areas. The peak is further to the right and flatter with a much longer tail of high BMI z scores.

The mean BMI centile of children living in the most deprived areas in 2024 to 2025 was on the 67th centile whereas the mean among children living in the least deprived areas was on the 56th centile.

Inequalities in child obesity in England
National Child Measurement Programme

Reception: Obesity prevalence by deprivation decile

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England



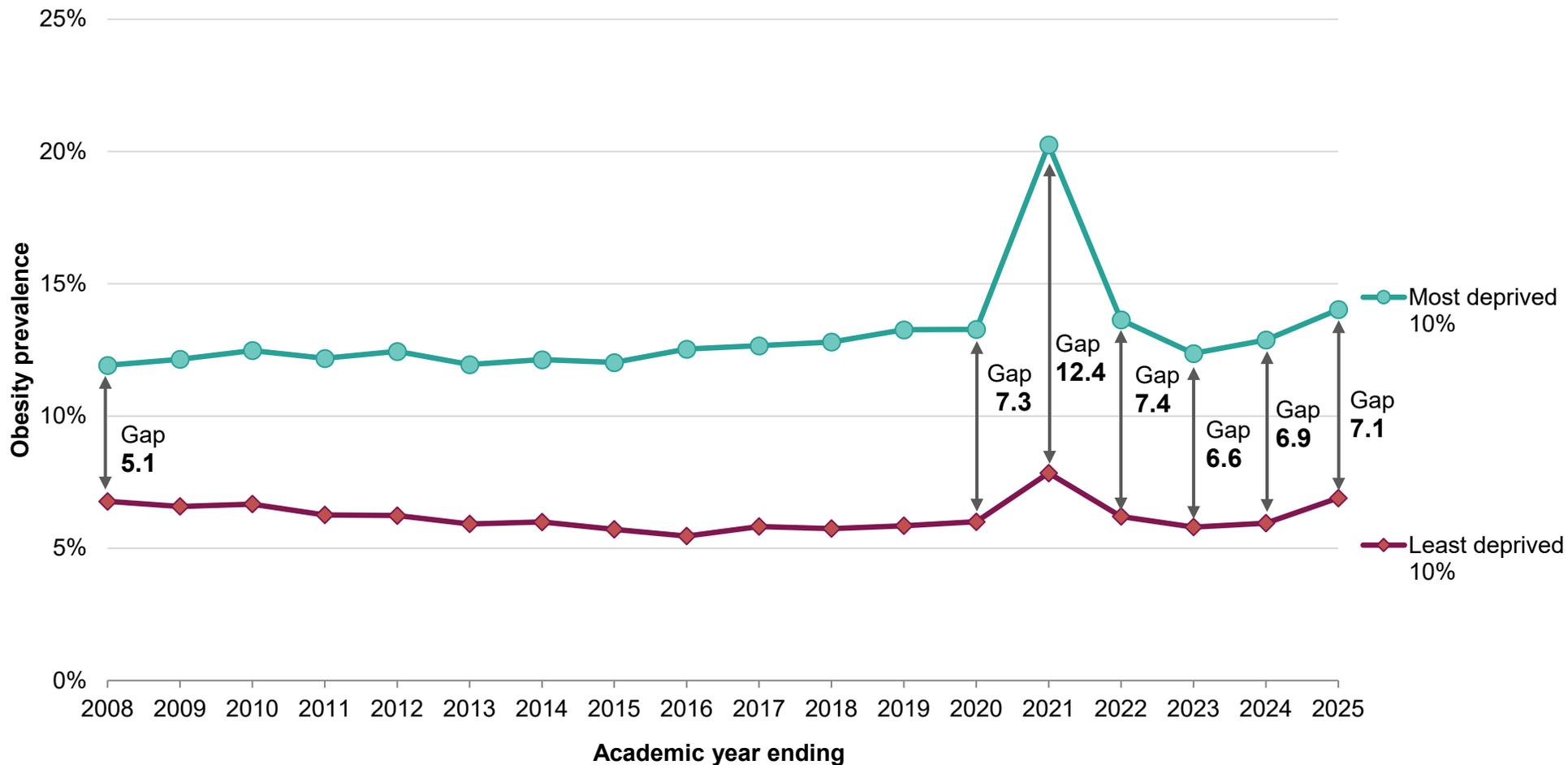
There are large inequalities in child obesity.

Children in reception (age 4 to 5 years) living in the most deprived areas in England are more than twice as likely to be living with obesity compared to those living in the least deprived areas.

95% confidence intervals are displayed on the chart

Reception: Inequalities gap in obesity prevalence

National Child Measurement Programme 2007/2008 to 2024/2025, England



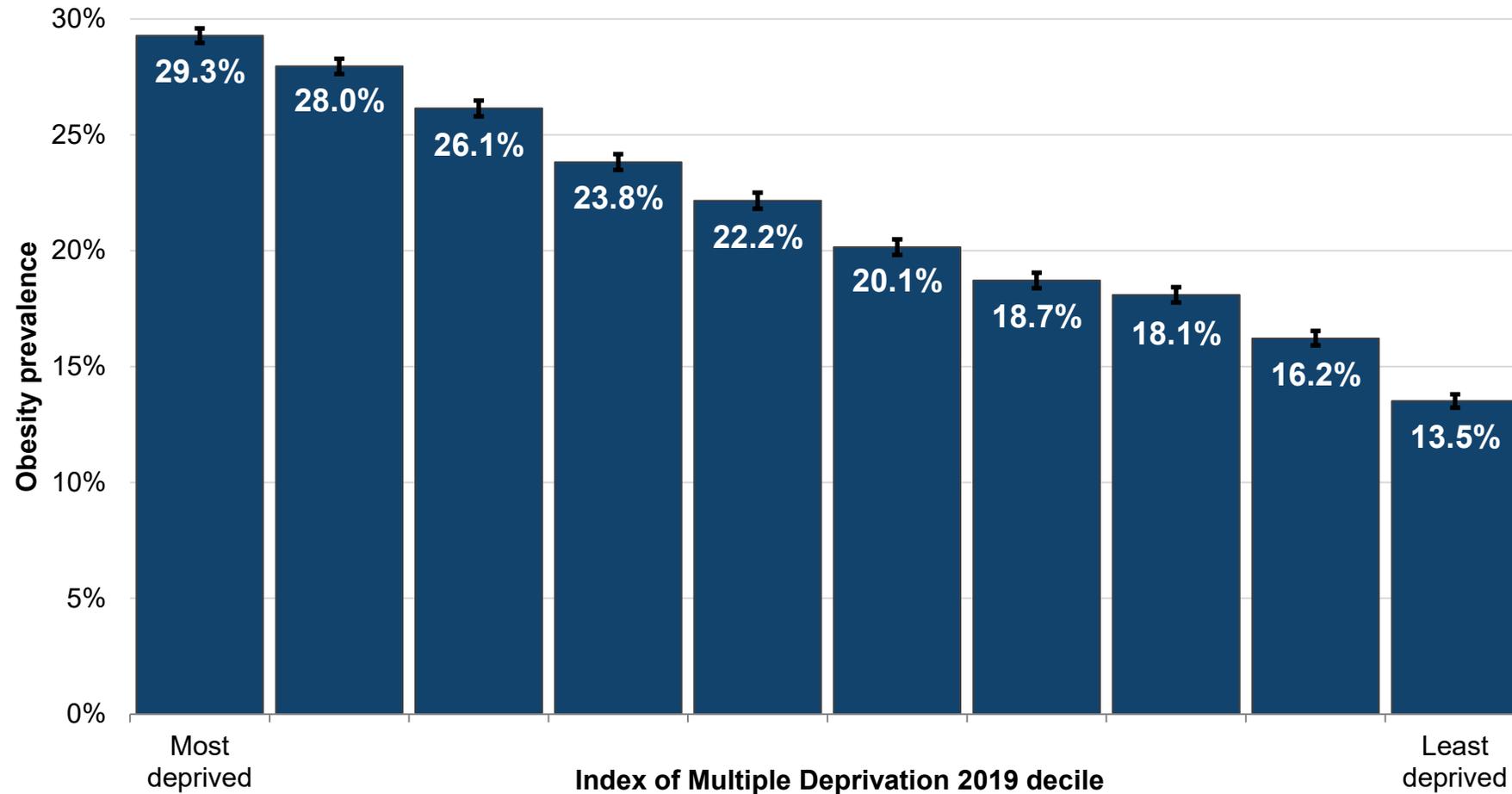
Prevalence of obesity increased in both the most and least deprived areas between 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 and the gap remains large at 7.1 percentage points.

Between 2007 to 2008 and 2019 to 2020 there were small annual increases in the inequalities gap in child obesity mostly driven by decreases in prevalence in the least deprived areas.

The gap in obesity prevalence increased to 12.4 percentage points in 2020 to 2021.

Year 6: Obesity prevalence by deprivation decile

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England



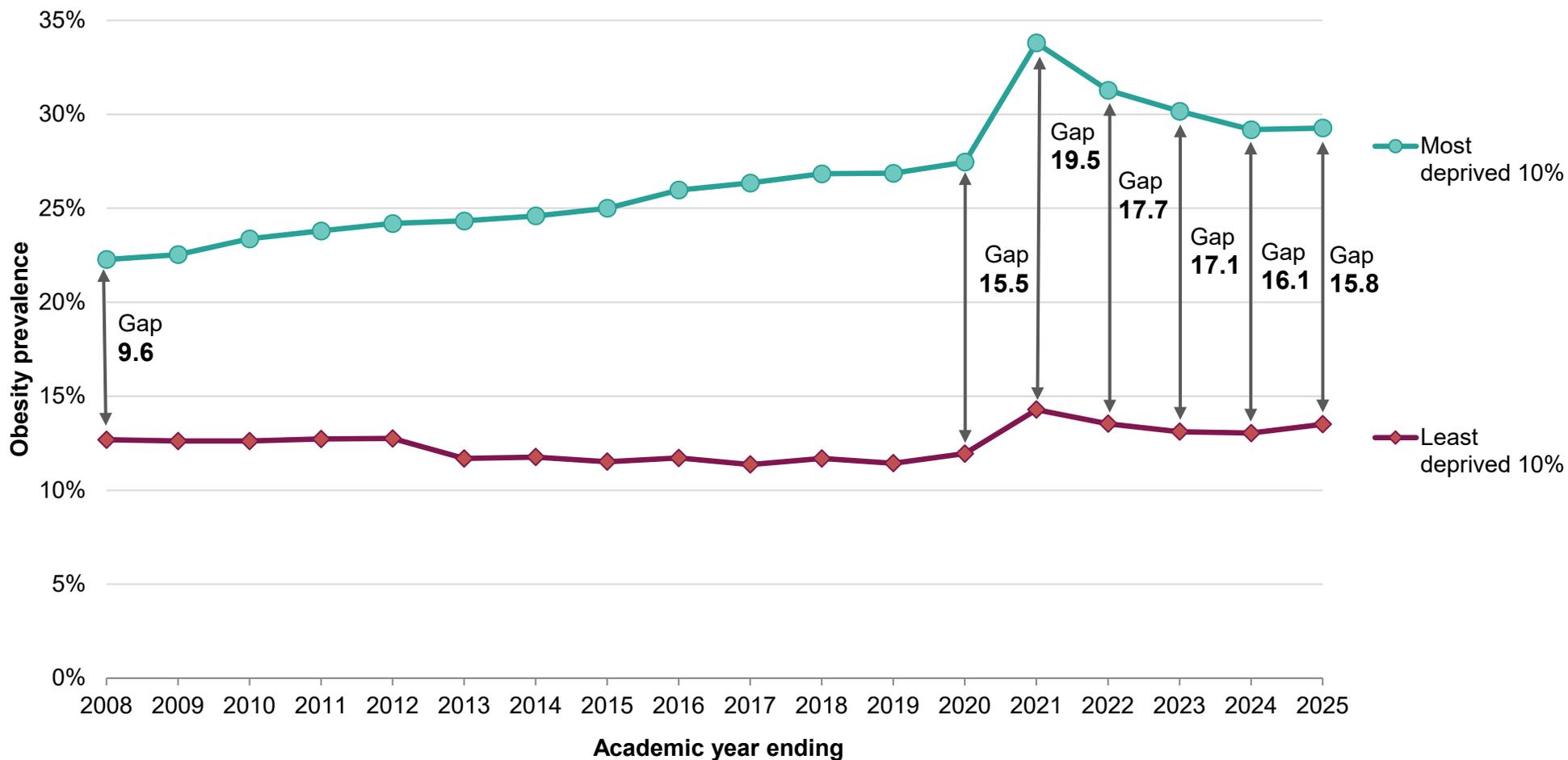
95% confidence intervals are displayed on the chart

There are large inequalities in child obesity.

Children in year 6 (age 10 to 11 years) living in the most deprived areas in England are more than twice as likely to be living with obesity compared to those living in the least deprived areas.

Year 6: Inequalities gap in obesity prevalence

National Child Measurement Programme 2007/2008 to 2024/2025, England

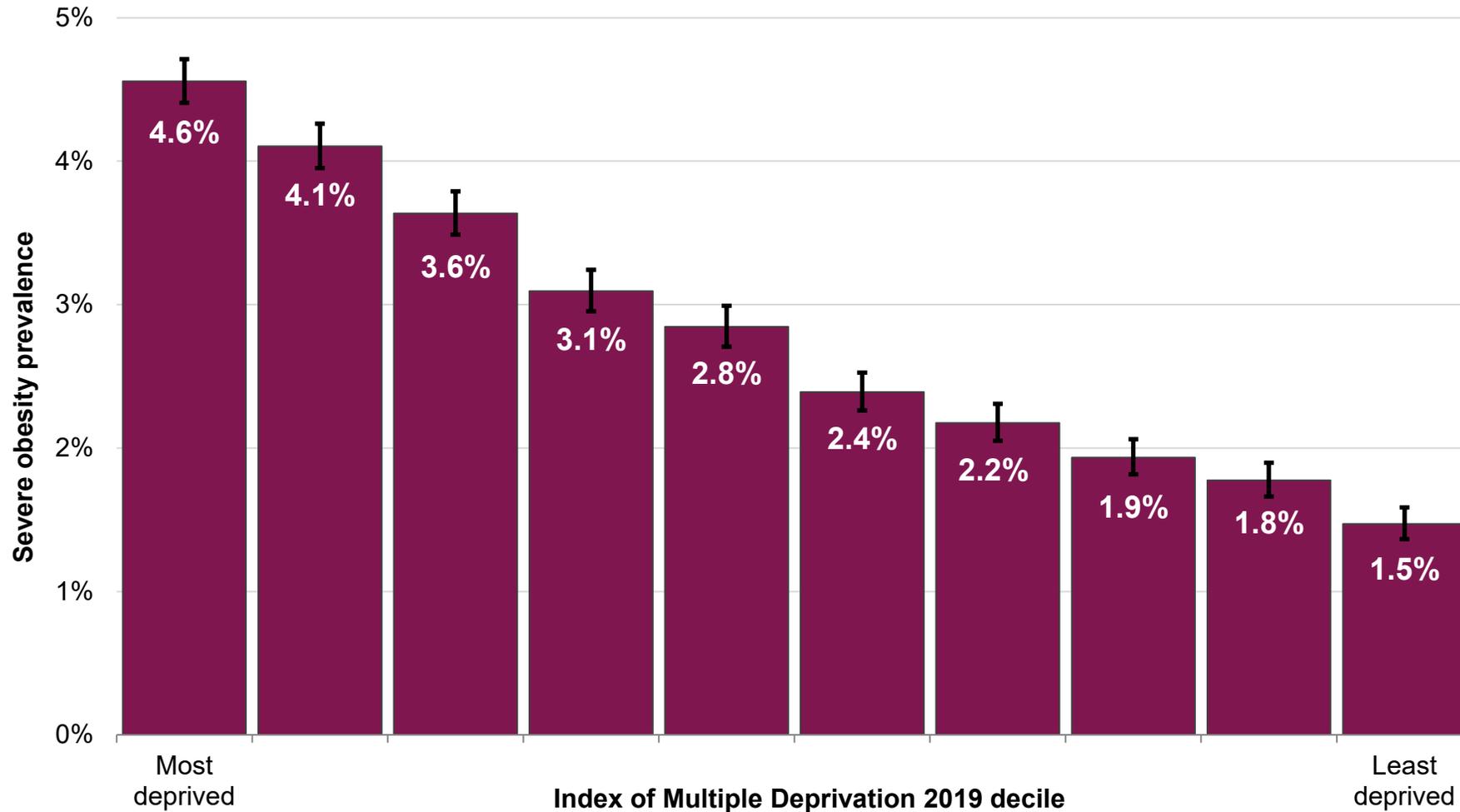


The gap in obesity prevalence between the most and least deprived areas in 2024 to 2025 has reduced compared to 2020 to 2021 from 19.5 to 15.8 percentage points, however it is still slightly larger than in pre-pandemic years.

Between 2007 to 2008 and 2019 to 2020 the inequalities gap in child obesity was widening each year; mostly driven by increases in prevalence in the most deprived areas and a relatively stable prevalence among the least deprived children.

Reception: Severe obesity prevalence by deprivation decile

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England



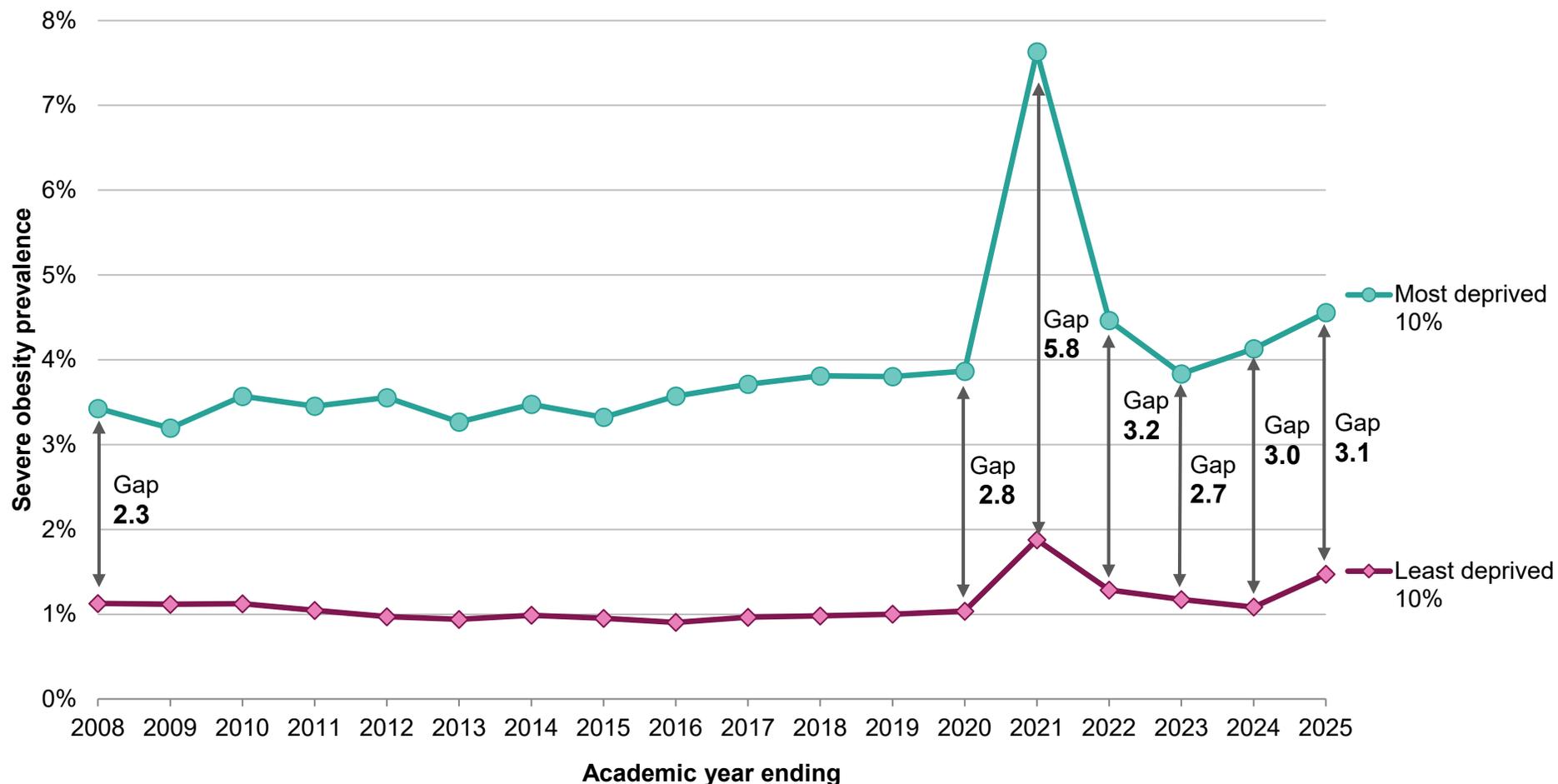
There are large inequalities in severe obesity prevalence.

Reception children (age 4 to 5 years) living in the most deprived areas in England are more than three times as likely to be living with severe obesity compare to those living in the least deprived areas.

95% confidence intervals are displayed on the chart

Reception: Inequalities gap in severe obesity prevalence

National Child Measurement Programme 2007/2008 to 2024/2025, England



Prevalence of severe obesity increased in both the most and least deprived areas between 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, the gap remains large at 3.1 percentage points.

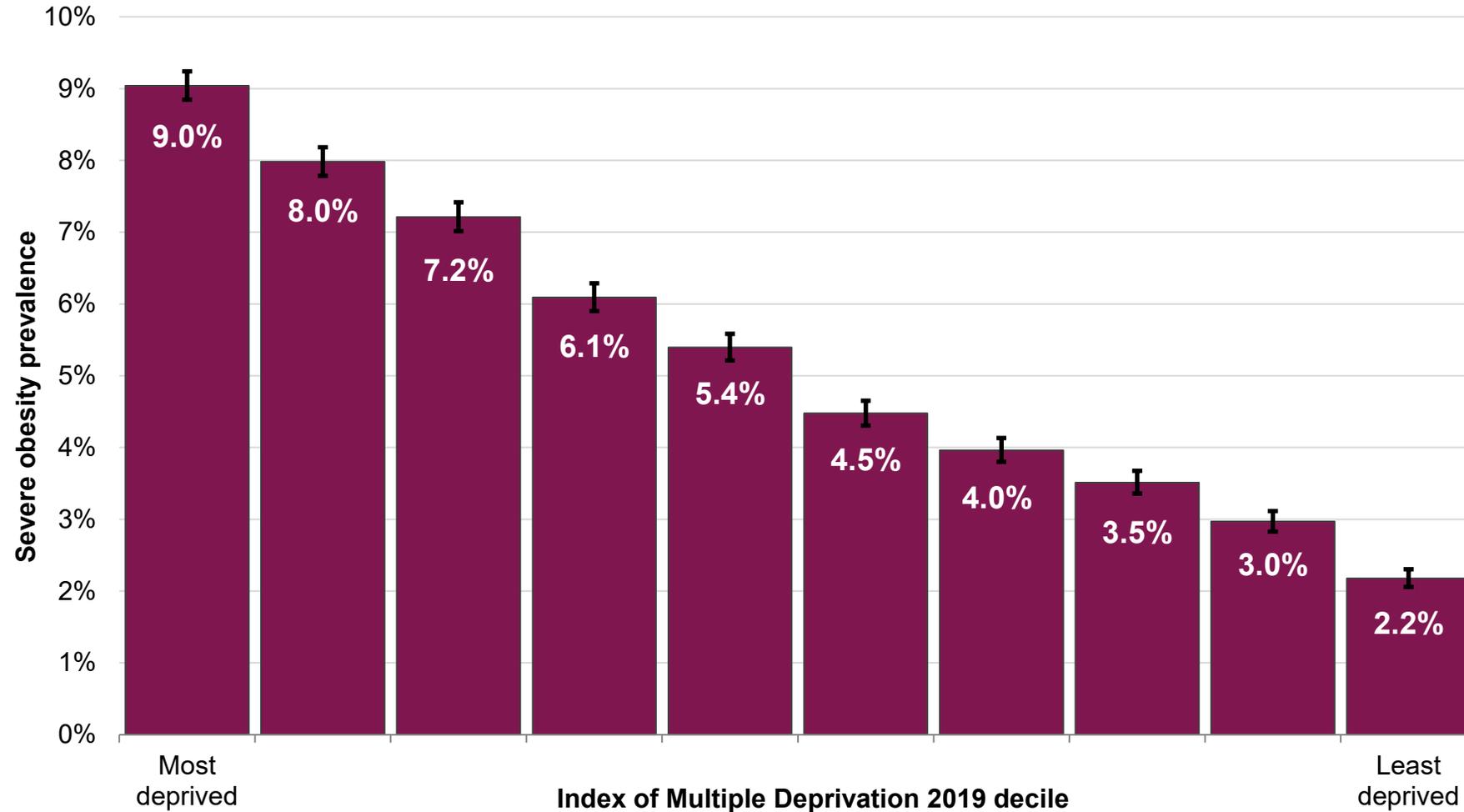
Between 2007 to 2008 and 2019 to 2020 there were small increases in the inequalities gap in child severe obesity mostly driven by increases in prevalence in the most deprived areas.

The gap in severe obesity prevalence increased to 5.8 percentage points in 2020 to 2021.



Year 6: Severe obesity prevalence by deprivation decile

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England



There are large inequalities in severe obesity prevalence.

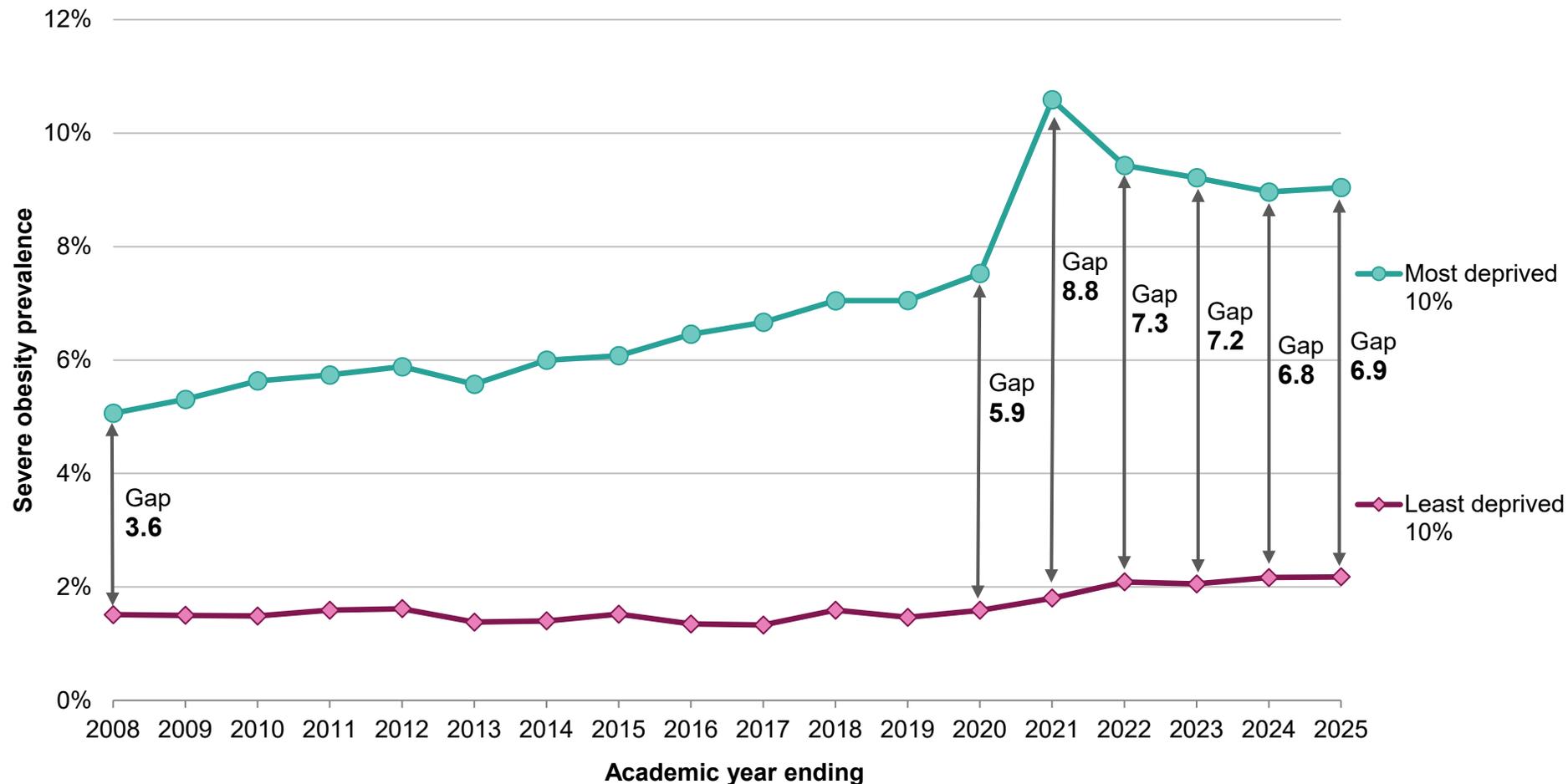
Year 6 children (age 10 to 11 years) living in the most deprived areas in England are more than four times as likely to be living with severe obesity compare to those living in the least deprived areas.

95% confidence intervals are displayed on the chart



Year 6: Inequalities gap in severe obesity prevalence

National Child Measurement Programme 2007/2008 to 2023/2024, England



The gap in severe obesity prevalence between the most and least deprived areas in 2024 to 2025 has reduced compared to 2020 to 2021 from 8.8 to 6.9 percentage points, however it is still much larger than in pre-pandemic years.

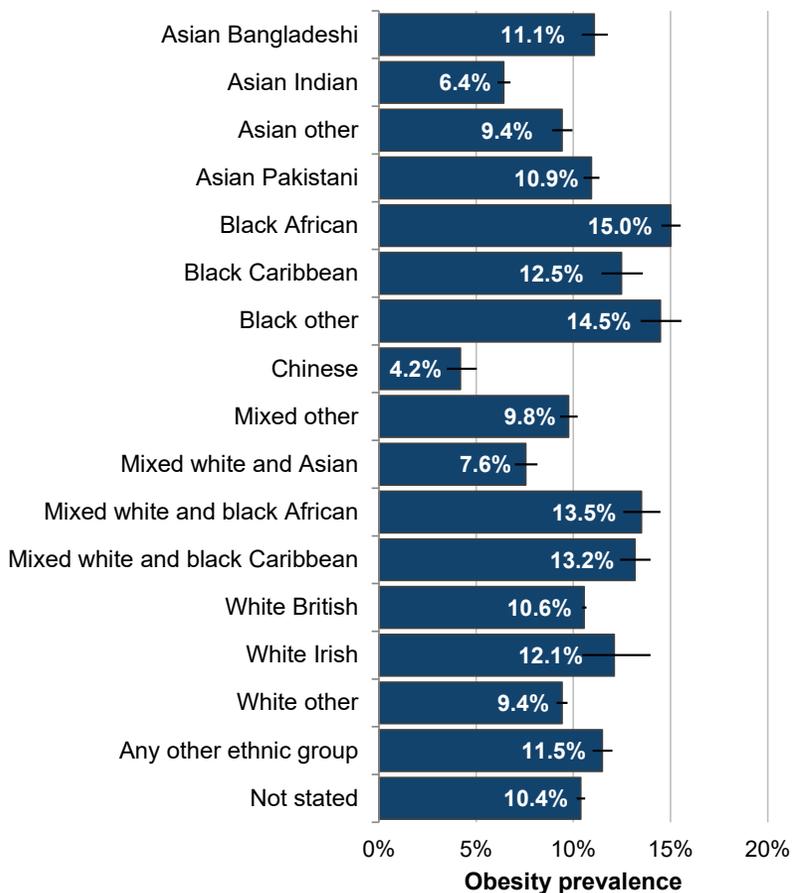
Between 2007 to 2008 and 2019 to 2020 the inequalities gap in child severe obesity was widening each year; mostly driven by increases in prevalence in the most deprived areas and a relatively stable prevalence among the least deprived children.

There was a large increase in prevalence in the most deprived areas in 2020 to 2021, prevalence has decreased since but remains higher than pre-pandemic.

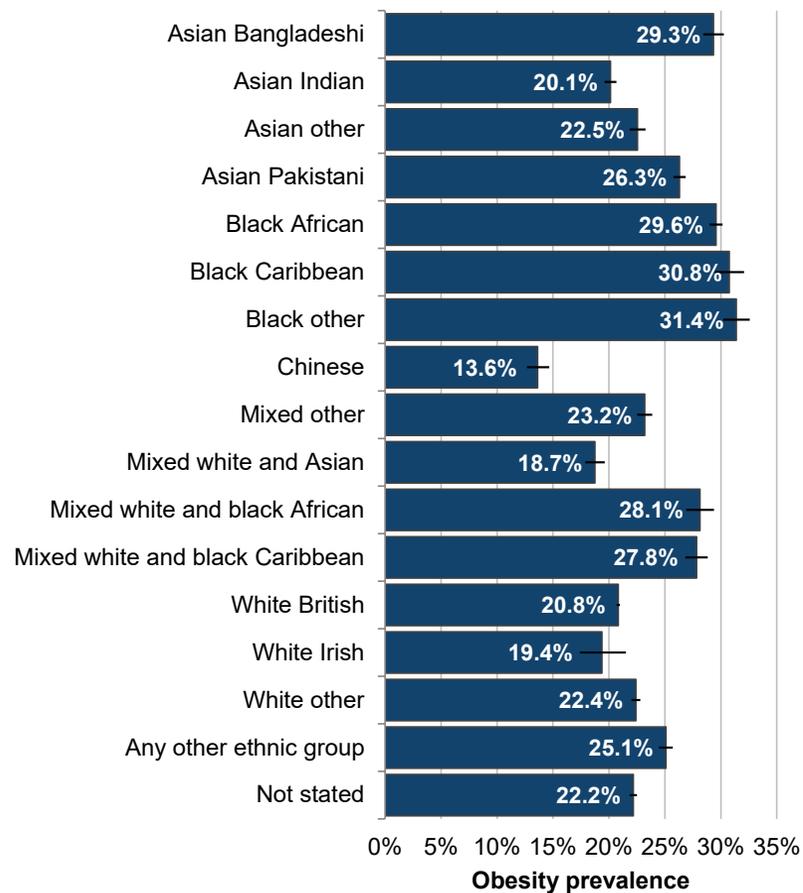
Obesity prevalence by ethnic group

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England

Reception age 4 to 5 years



Year 6 age 10 to 11 years



There is variation in obesity prevalence across ethnic groups.

Obesity prevalence in **reception** children (age 4 to 5 years) is highest among children from black African and black other ethnic groups.

Obesity prevalence in **year 6** children (age 10 to 11 years) is highest among children from black other, black Caribbean, black African and Bangladeshi ethnic groups.

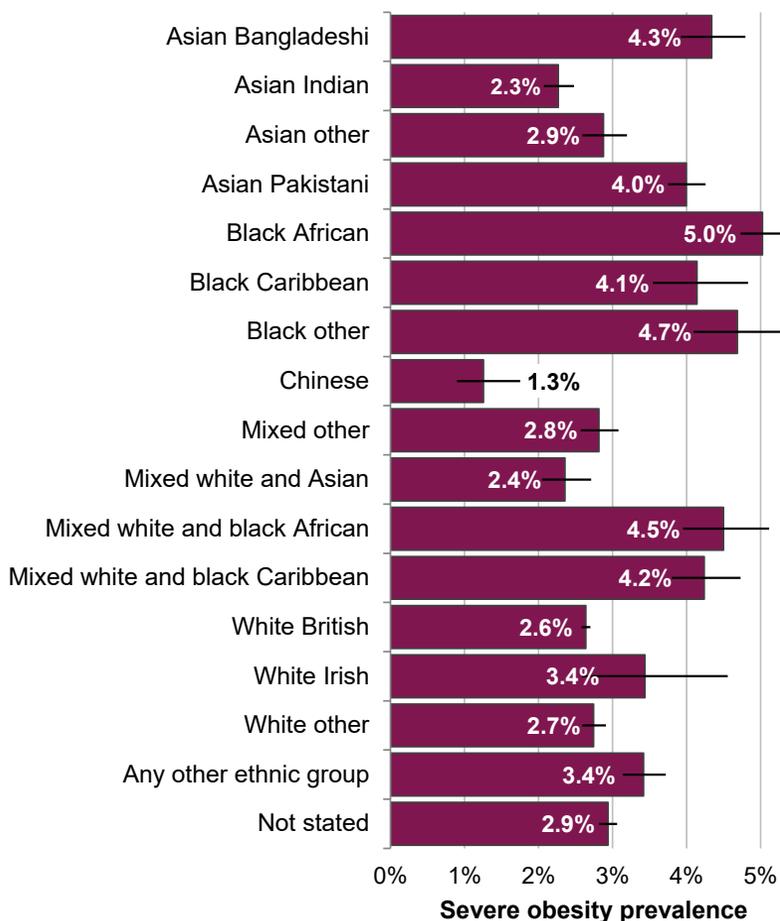
Some of these differences may be due to the influence of other factors such as area deprivation and physiological differences such as height.

95% confidence intervals are displayed on the chart

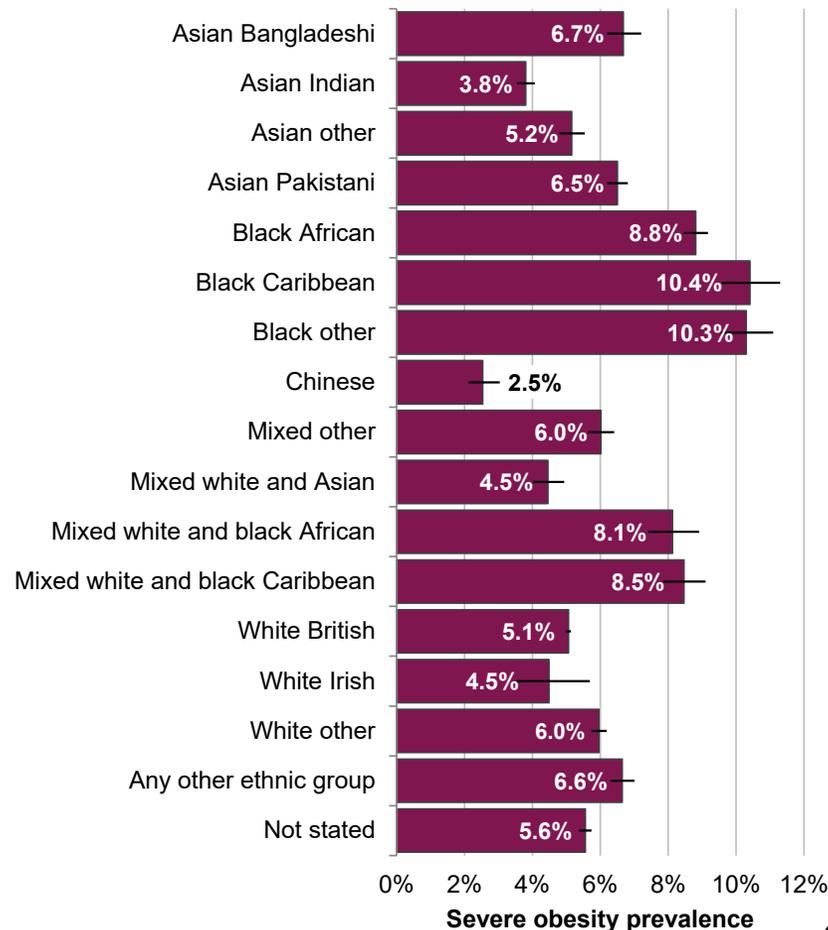
Severe obesity prevalence by ethnic group

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025, England

Reception age 4 to 5 years



Year 6 age 10 to 11 years



There is variation in severe obesity prevalence across ethnic groups.

Severe obesity prevalence in **reception** children (age 4 to 5 years) is highest among children from black African and black other ethnic groups.

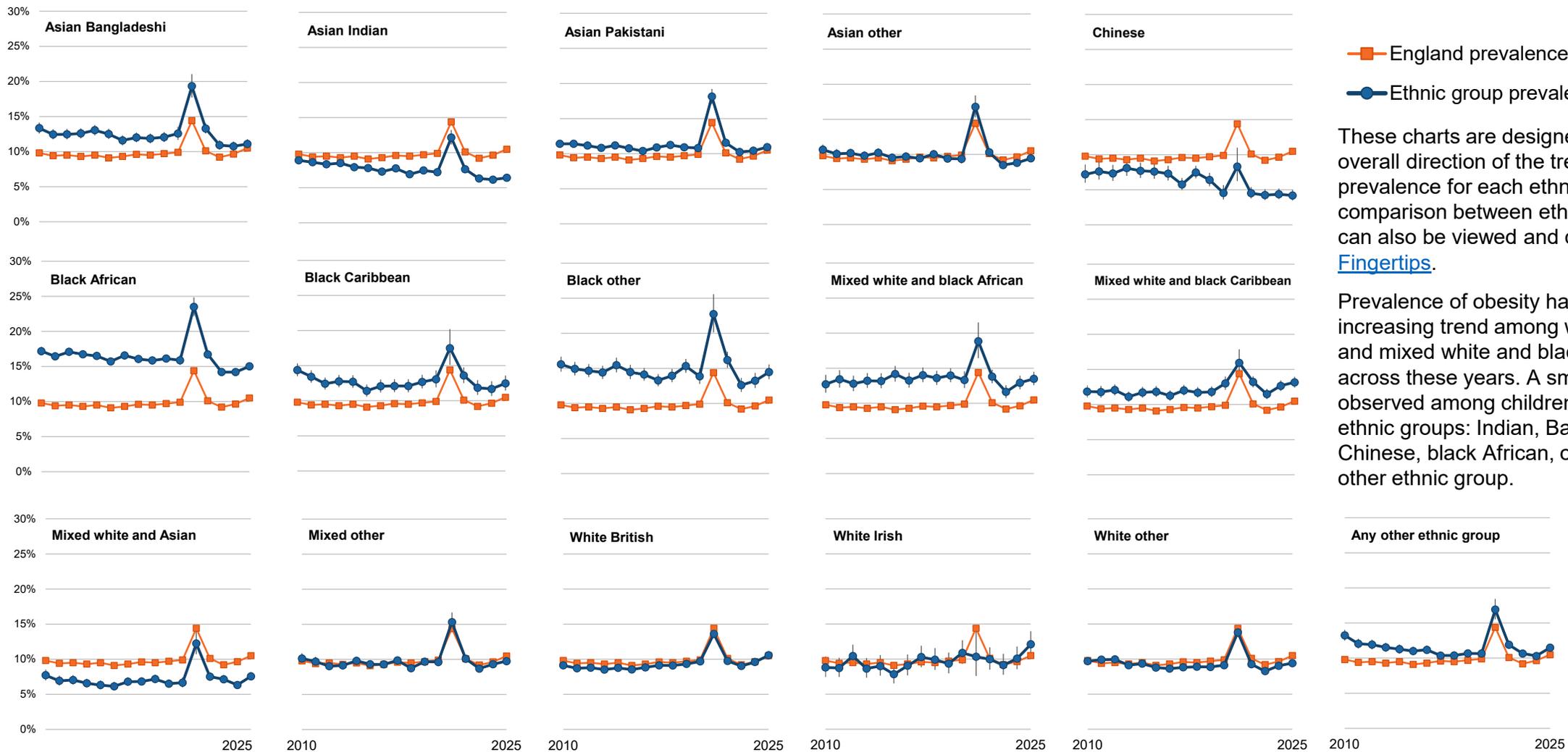
Severe obesity prevalence in **year 6** children (age 10 to 11 years) is highest among children from black, and mixed white and black ethnic groups.

Some of these differences may be due to the influence of other factors such as area deprivation and physiological differences such as height.

95% confidence intervals are displayed on the chart

Reception: Trend in prevalence of obesity by ethnic group

National Child Measurement Programme 2009/2010 to 2024/2025, England



Year 6: Trend in prevalence of obesity by ethnic group

National Child Measurement Programme 2009/2010 to 2024/2025, England



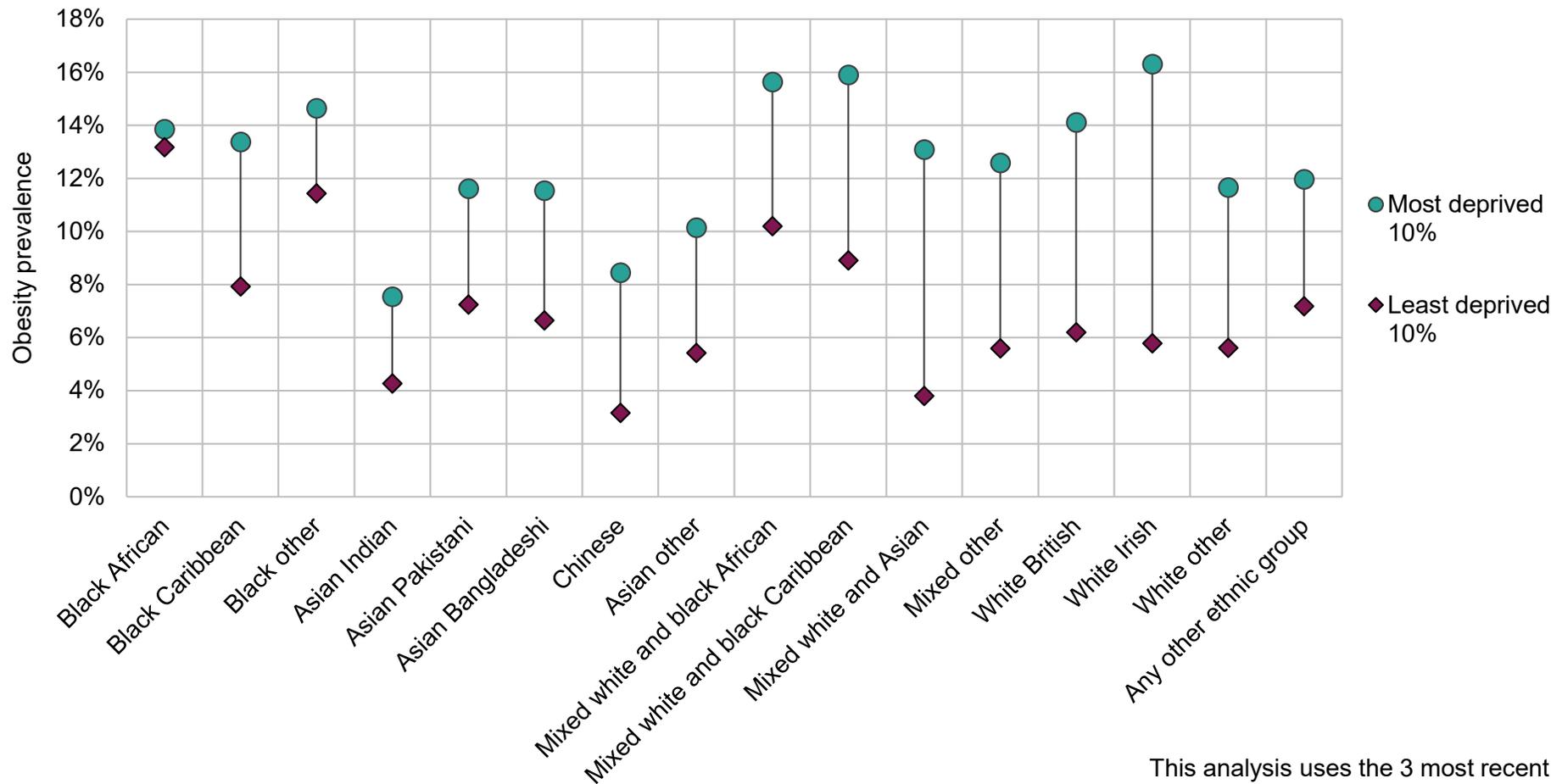
These charts are designed to examine the overall direction of the trend in obesity prevalence for each ethnic group and enable comparison between ethnic groups*. The data can also be viewed and downloaded from [Fingertips](#).

Prevalence of obesity has seen an increasing trend across these years among children from all ethnic groups with the exception of Chinese, and white Irish where no significant trend was detected.



Reception: Inequalities gap in obesity prevalence by ethnic group

National Child Measurement Programme 2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024/2025, England



The pattern of obesity prevalence by deprivation decile varies by ethnic group. As seen on slide 31, for all reception children in England, prevalence increases with increasing levels of deprivation and is around double in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived.

This chart shows the gap in obesity prevalence between children living in the most deprived and least deprived areas of England for each ethnic group.

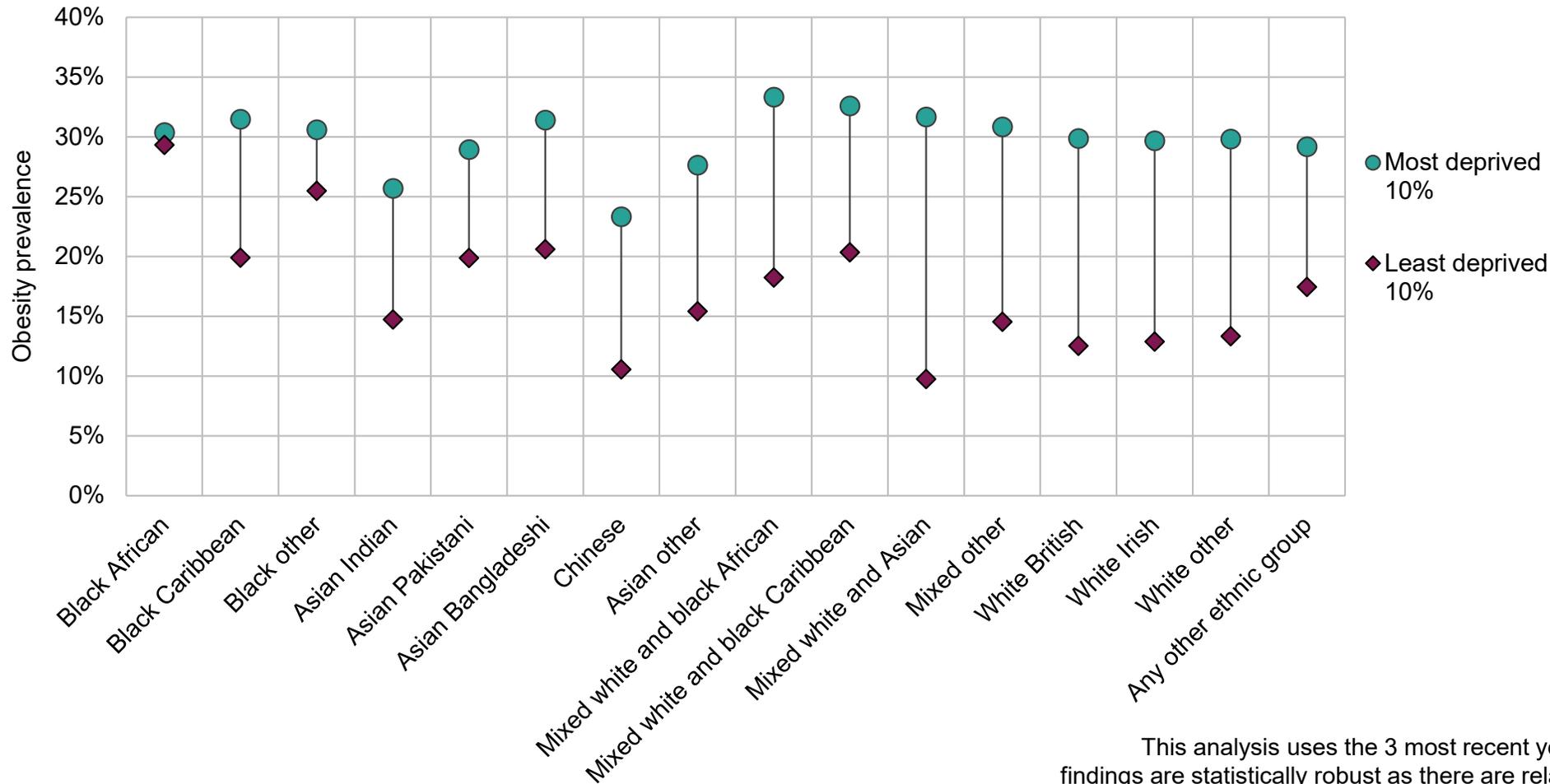
Most ethnic groups follow a similar pattern to England with a large gap in prevalence between the least and most deprived areas. However, this pattern is not evident in all groups; children of black African ethnicity living in the least deprived areas have a similar prevalence of obesity to those in the most deprived areas of England.

This analysis uses the 3 most recent years of available NCMP data to ensure the findings are statistically robust as there are relatively few children in some ethnic groups.

The data used to produce the charts can be [downloaded as an accessible spreadsheet](#)

Year 6: Inequalities gap in obesity prevalence by ethnic group

National Child Measurement Programme 2022/2023, 2023/2024, 2024/2025, England



The pattern of obesity prevalence by deprivation decile varies by ethnic group. As seen on slide 33, for all year 6 children in England, prevalence increases with increasing levels of deprivation and is more than double in the most deprived areas compared to the least deprived.

This chart shows the gap in obesity prevalence between children living in the most deprived and least deprived areas of England for each ethnic group.

Most ethnic groups follow a similar pattern to England with a large gap in prevalence between the least and most deprived areas. However, Black African children living in the least deprived areas have a similar prevalence of obesity to those in the most deprived areas of England.

This analysis uses the 3 most recent years of available NCMP data to ensure the findings are statistically robust as there are relatively few children in some ethnic groups.

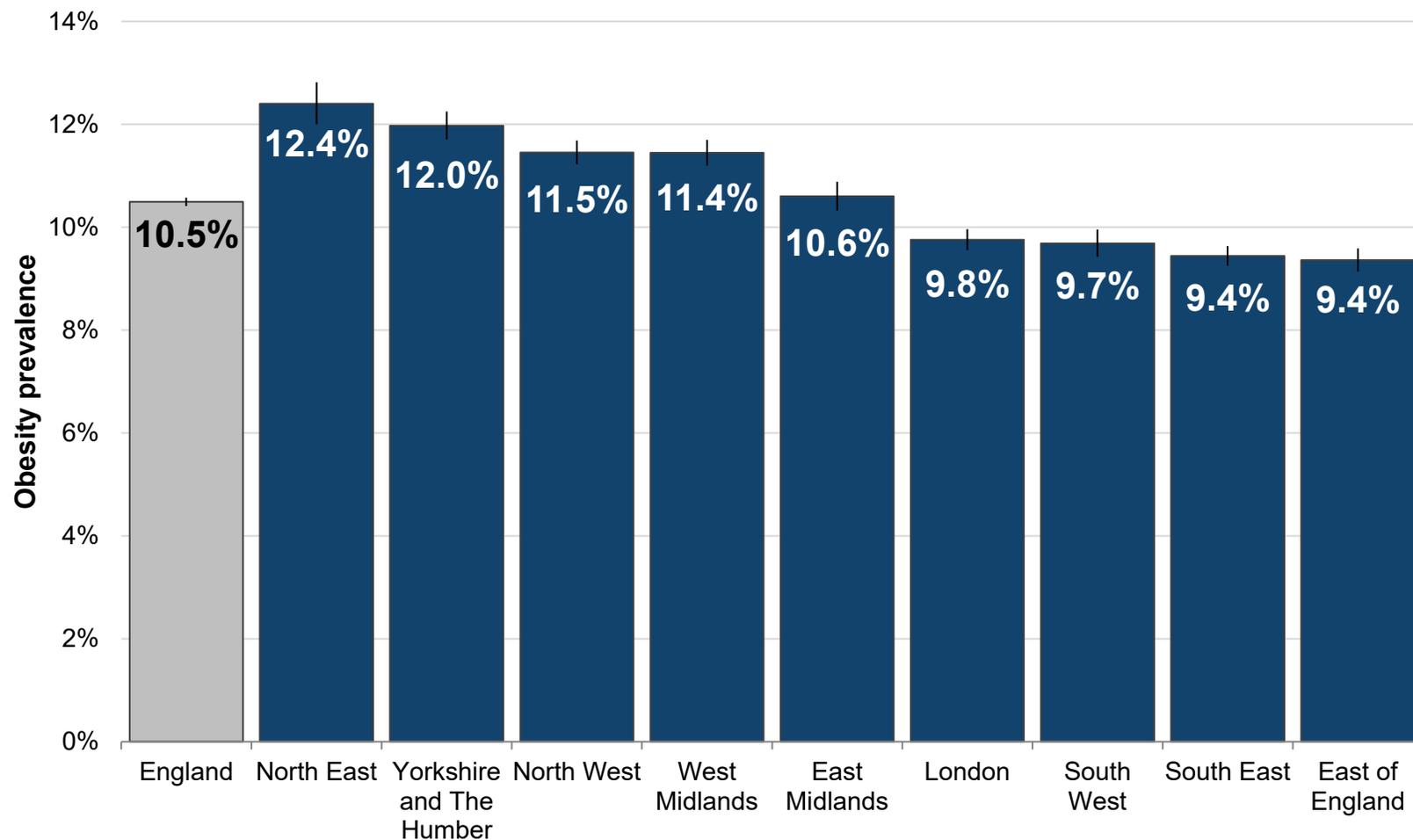
The data used to produce the charts can be [downloaded as an accessible spreadsheet](#)

Geographic variation in child obesity

National Child Measurement Programme

Reception: Prevalence of obesity by English region

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025



There is variation in the prevalence of obesity among **reception** children (age 4 to 5 years) between regions in England.

In 2024 to 2025 prevalence of obesity in the East of England, South East, and South West was lower than all of England.

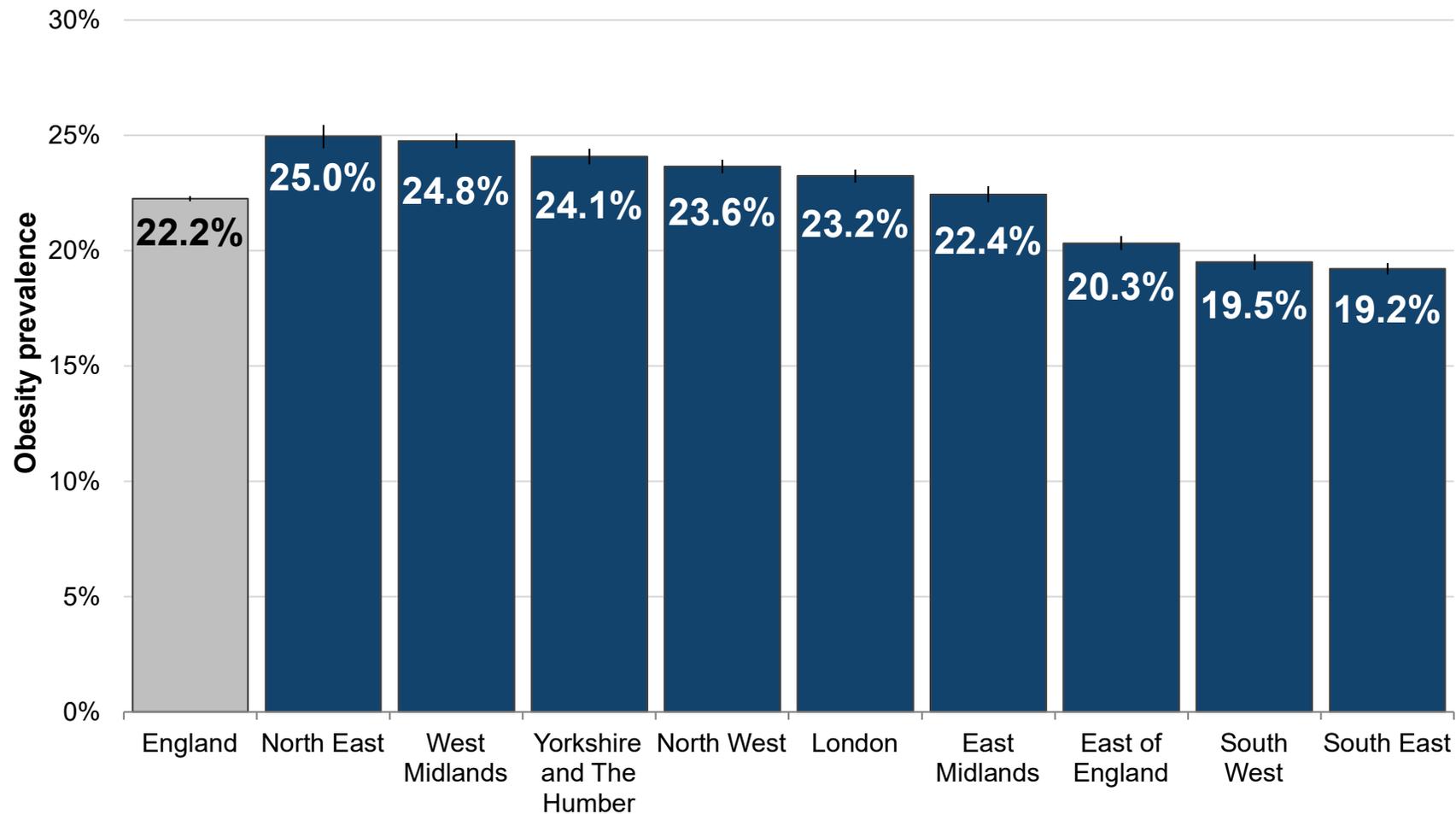
North East, Yorkshire and the Humber, North West and West Midlands had prevalence rates higher than all of England.

95% confidence intervals are displayed on the chart



Year 6: Prevalence of obesity by English region

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025



There is variation in the prevalence of obesity among **year 6** children (age 10 to 11 years) between regions in England.

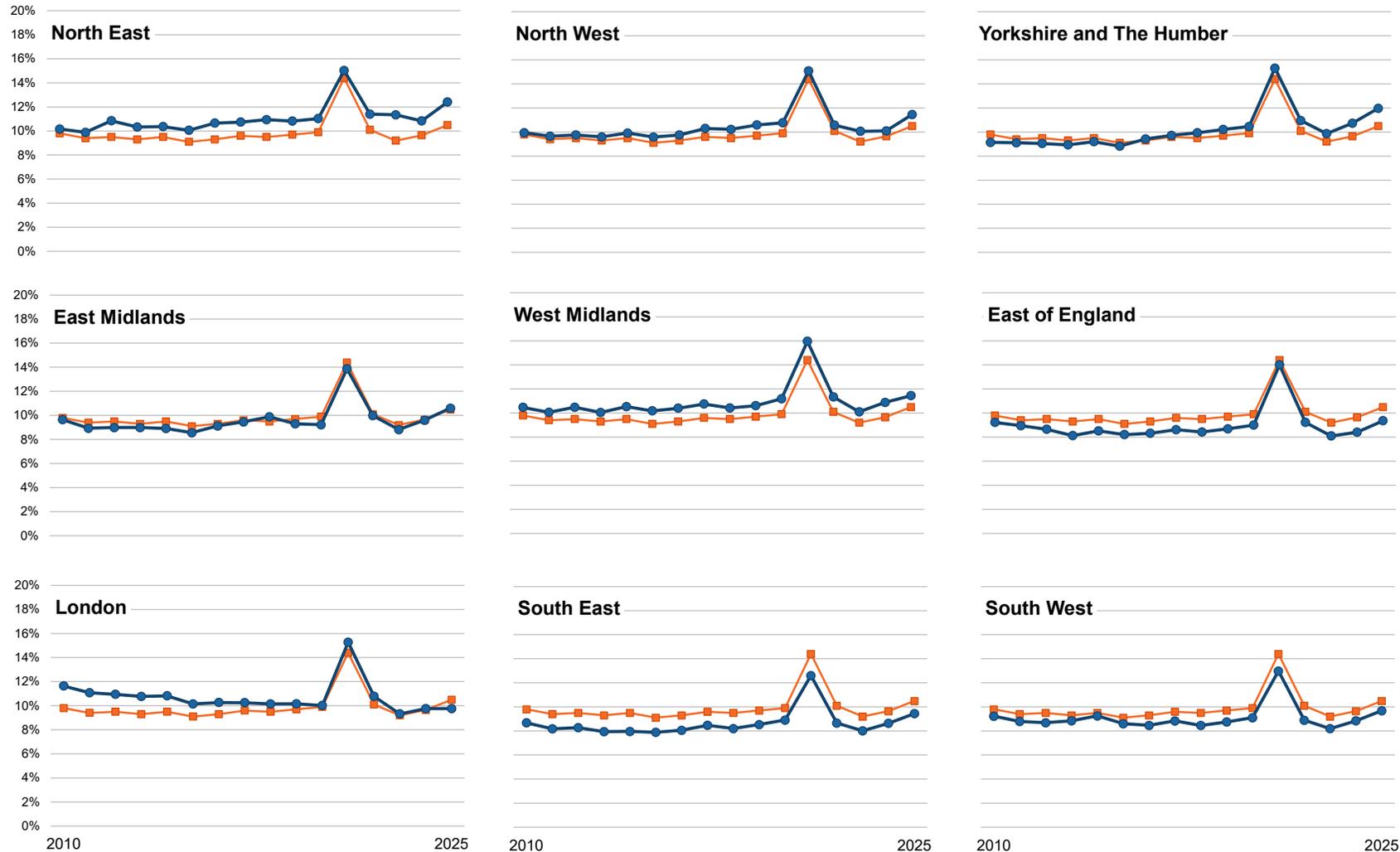
In 2024 to 2025 prevalence of obesity in the South East, South West, and East of England was lower than all of England.

North East, West Midlands,, Yorkshire and the Humber, North West and London had prevalence rates higher than all of England.

95% confidence intervals are displayed on the chart

Reception: Trend in prevalence of obesity by English region

National Child Measurement Programme 2009/2010 to 2024/2025



● Region prevalence

■ England prevalence

These charts are designed to examine the overall direction of the trend in obesity prevalence for each region and enable comparison between regions*. The data can also be viewed and downloaded from the [Obesity Profile on Fingertips](#).

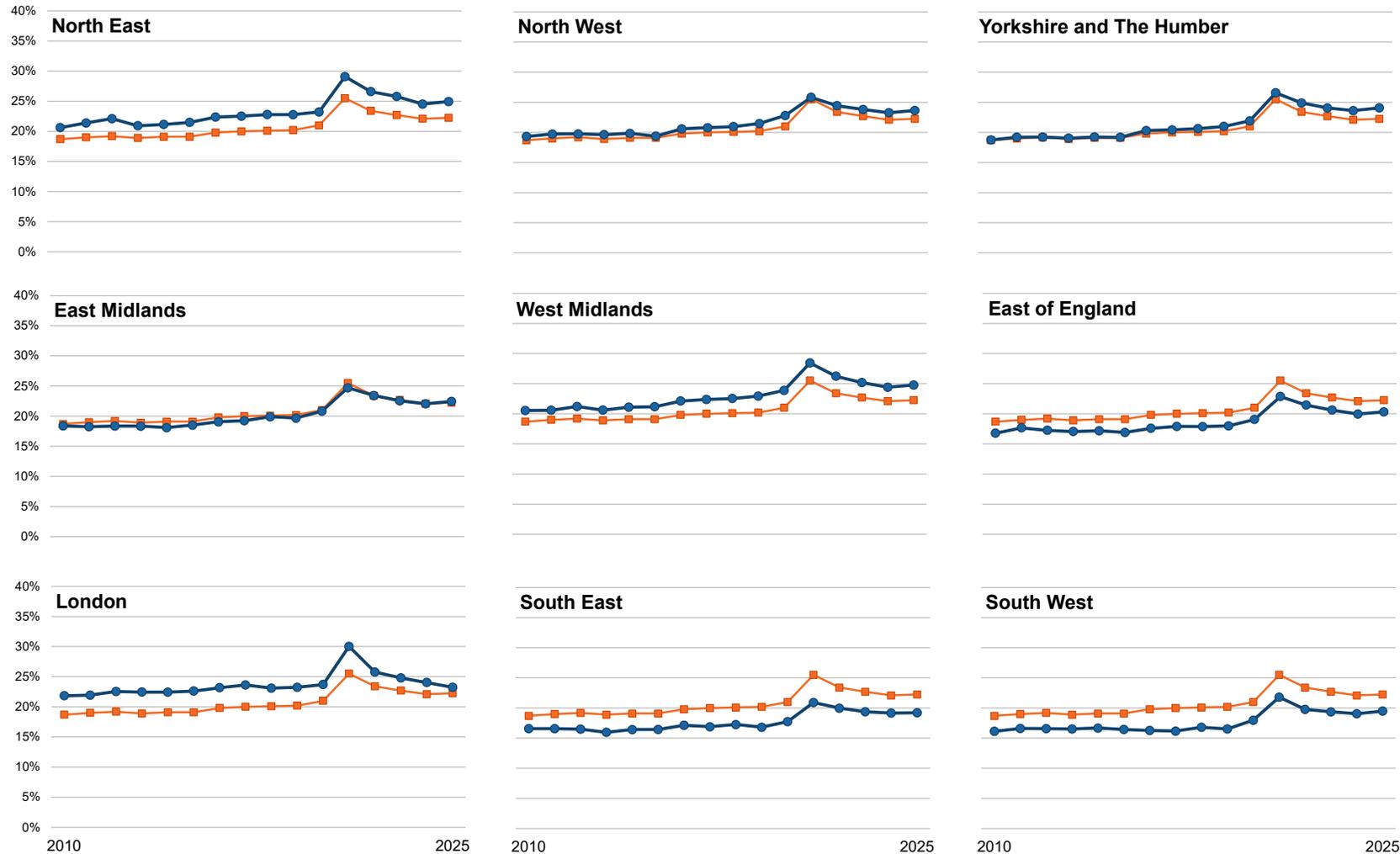
The overall trend for England since 2009 to 2010 is stable.

Obesity prevalence in the North East, North West, Yorkshire and the Humber and West Midlands has seen an increasing trend, whereas a decreasing trend is observed in London. No significant trend was detected in the other regions.

* 2020 to 2021 data was excluded from the trend analysis.

Year 6: Trend in prevalence of obesity by English region

National Child Measurement Programme 2009/2010 to 2024/2025



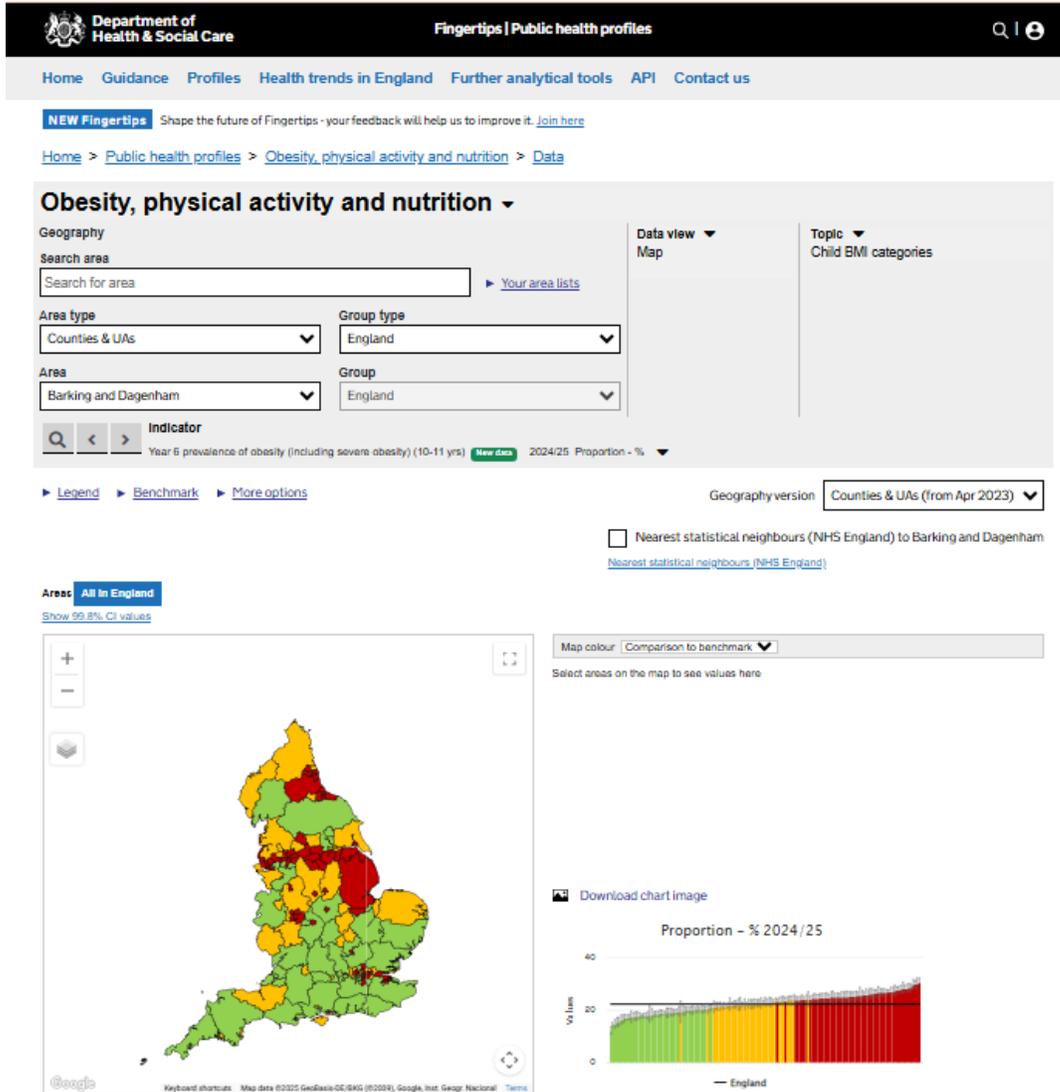
● Region prevalence
 ■ England prevalence

These charts are designed to examine the overall direction of the trend in obesity prevalence for each region and enable comparison between regions*. The data can also be viewed and downloaded from the [Obesity Profile on Fingertips](#).

Prevalence of obesity in England and across all regions has seen an increasing trend across these years.

* 2020 to 2021 data was excluded from the trend analysis.

Local data on Fingertips



The **Obesity, Physical Activity and Nutrition profile on Fingertips** displays data from the National Child Measurement Programme.

Indicators on the prevalence of underweight, healthy weight overweight, obesity, and severe obesity are shown for England, regions, upper and lower tier local authorities, Integrated Care Boards, electoral wards, and middle super output areas.

Inequalities data is also displayed showing differences in prevalence by sex, ethnic group, and deprivation.

The profile also includes local authority level data on child height as well as data showing movements between BMI categories between reception and year 6 measurements.

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/obesity-physical-activity-nutrition>

Regional and local authority child obesity slide sets

The screenshot shows the 'Obesity, physical activity and nutrition' profile page on the Fingertips website. The page includes a navigation bar with 'Department of Health & Social Care' and 'Fingertips | Public health profiles'. Below the navigation bar, there are links for 'Home', 'Guidance', 'Profiles', 'Health trends in England', 'Further analytical tools', 'API', and 'Contact us'. A 'NEW Fingertips' banner encourages user feedback. The main content area features a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Public health profiles > Obesity, physical activity and nutrition > Data'. The profile title is 'Obesity, physical activity and nutrition'. The 'Geography' section includes a search area, a 'Your area lists' link, and dropdown menus for 'Area type' (set to 'Counties & UAs'), 'Group type' (set to 'Regions (statistical)'), 'Area' (set to 'Barking and Dagenham'), and 'Group' (set to 'London region (statistical)'). A 'Data view' dropdown is set to 'Reports', and a 'Topic' dropdown is set to 'Child BMI categories'. A 'Geography version' dropdown is set to 'Counties & UAs (from Apr 2023)'. Three report cards are visible: 1. 'Changes in the weight status of children between the first and final years of primary school' with a note that reports are not available for Counties & UAs (from Apr 2023) and are available for England. 2. 'Patterns and trends in adult obesity' with a note that reports are not available for Counties & UAs (from Apr 2023) and are available for England. 3. 'Patterns and trends in child obesity' with a 'Download a detailed report of the data for' section, listing links for 'England', 'London region (statistical)', and 'Barking and Dagenham', each followed by 'MS PowerPoint document'.

The **Obesity, Physical Activity and Nutrition profile on Fingertips** includes regional and local authority slide sets presenting data on the pattern and trends in child obesity using data from the NCMP.

There is one slide set for each region and each upper tier local authority with charts and maps displaying prevalence data by BMI category, geographical variation, and inequalities data showing differences in prevalence by sex, ethnic group, and deprivation.

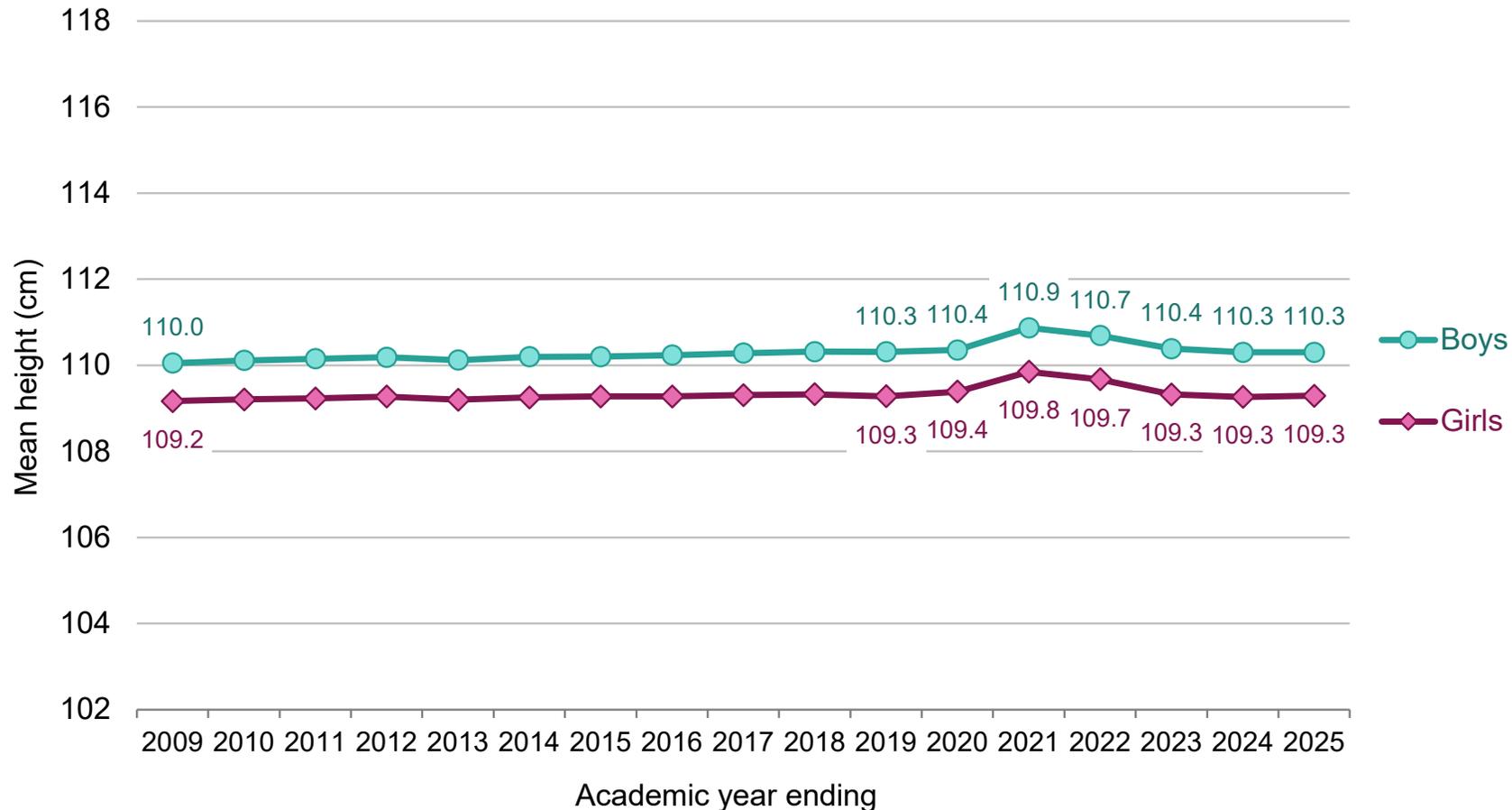
<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/obesity-physical-activity-nutrition/data#page/13/>

Child height in England

National Child Measurement Programme

Average (mean) height in centimetres at age 5 in England

National Child Measurement Programme 2008/2009 to 2024/2025



The average height of 5 year old boys and girls in England had been increasing slightly over the period of NCMP data collection up to 2019 to 2020.

There was a relatively large increase in average height in 2020 to 2021 which coincided with the large increase in the prevalence of obesity during the pandemic¹.

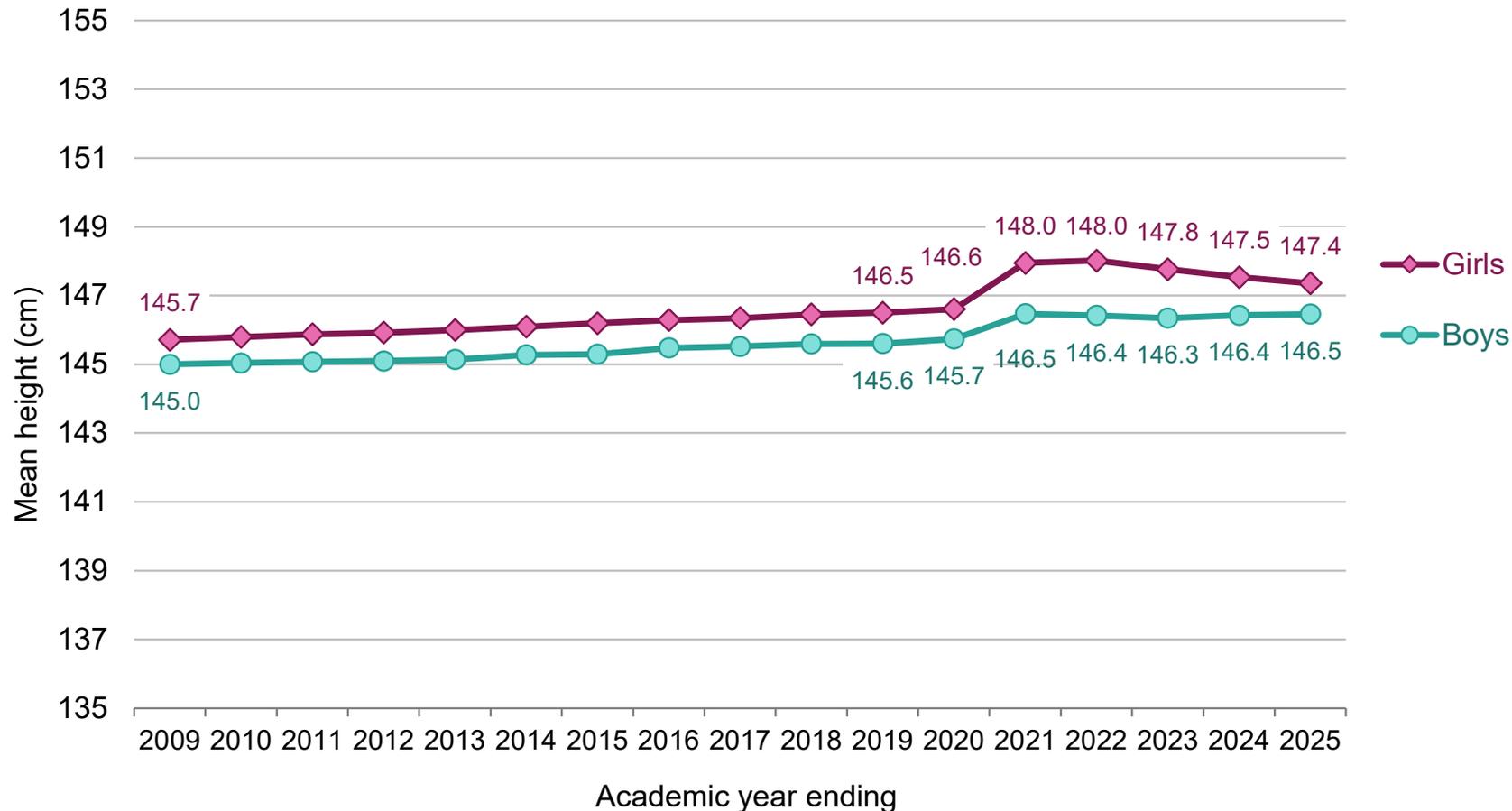
Since 2020 to 2021 average height has decreased among girls and boys and is now similar to the 2018 to 2019 average.

Note: y axis does not start at zero

The data has been standardised to adjust for children being measured at different times in the academic year. See [slide 72](#) for analysis methods used to produce this data.

Average (mean) height in centimetres at age 11 in England

National Child Measurement Programme 2008/2009 to 2024/2025



The average height of 11 year olds in England has seen small increases over the period of NCMP data collection from academic years ending 2009 to 2020.

There was a relatively large increase in average height in 2020 to 2021 which coincided with a large increase in the prevalence of obesity during the pandemic¹.

Since 2021 to 2022 average height of girls has decreased but remains above pre-pandemic levels. Average height of boys has not decreased and remains above pre-pandemic levels and is similar to the 2020 to 2021 average.

Girls are taller than boys on average at age 11 due to starting puberty earlier.

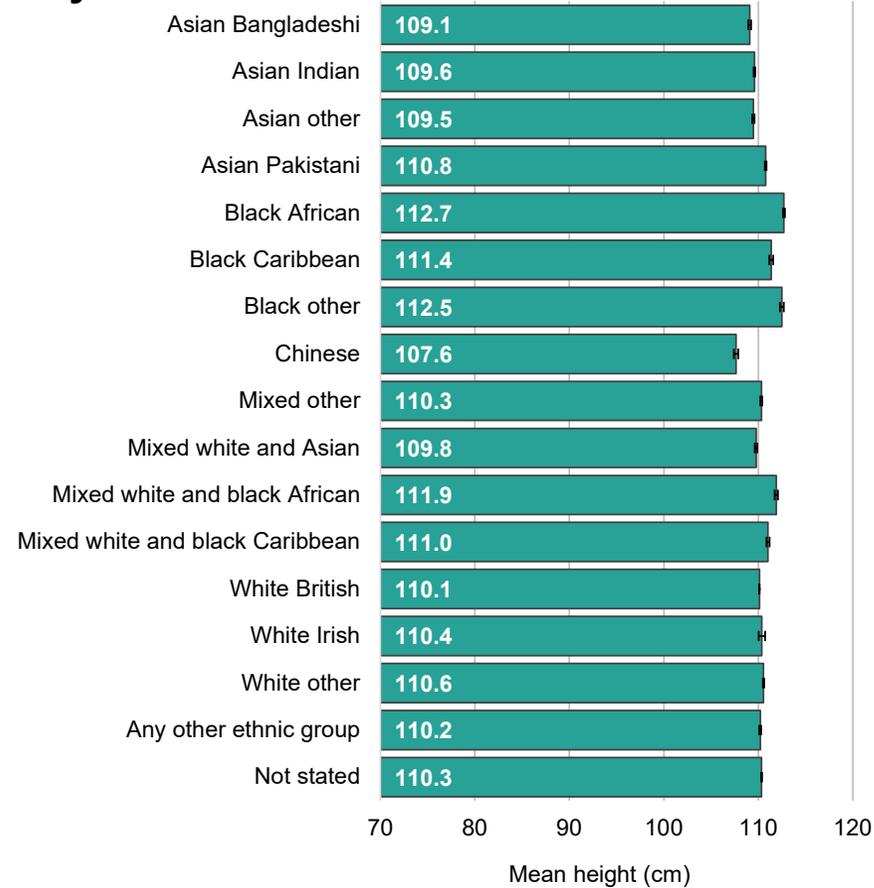
Note: y axis does not start at zero

The data has been standardised to adjust for children being measured at different times in the academic year. See [slide 72](#) for analysis methods used to produce this data.

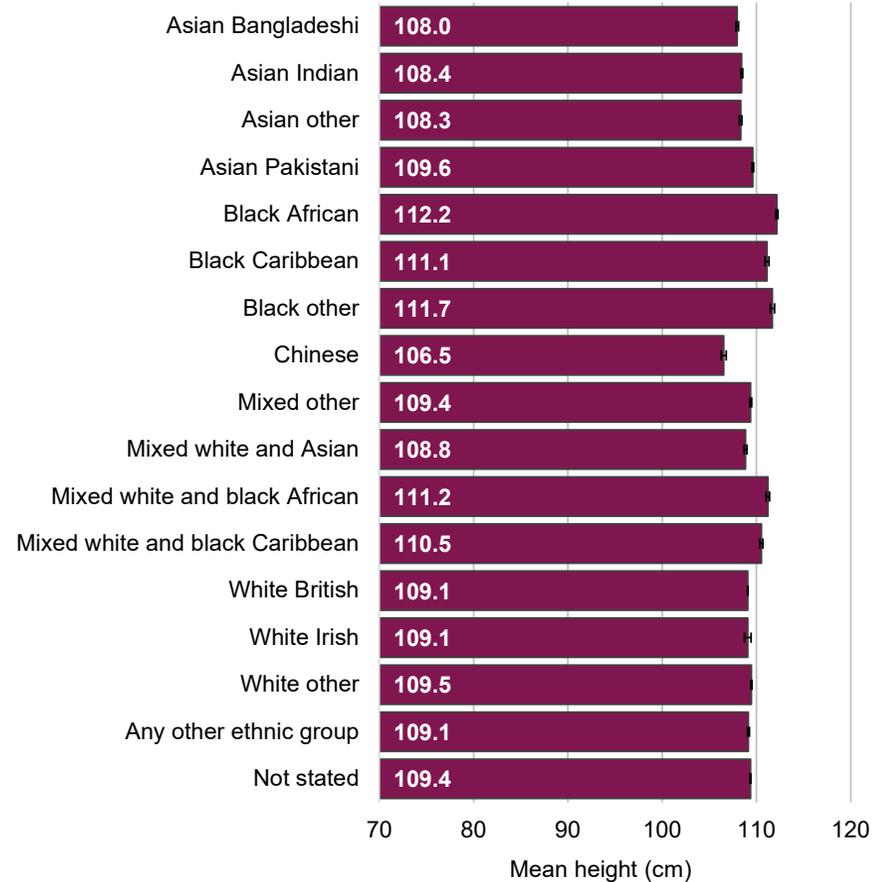
Average (mean) height in centimetres at age 5 in England by ethnic group

National Child Measurement Programme 2024/2025

Boys



Girls



Mean height varies by ethnic group with boys and girls from black ethnic groups being on average taller, and boys and girls from Asian ethnic groups being on average shorter at age 5 than children from other ethnic groups.

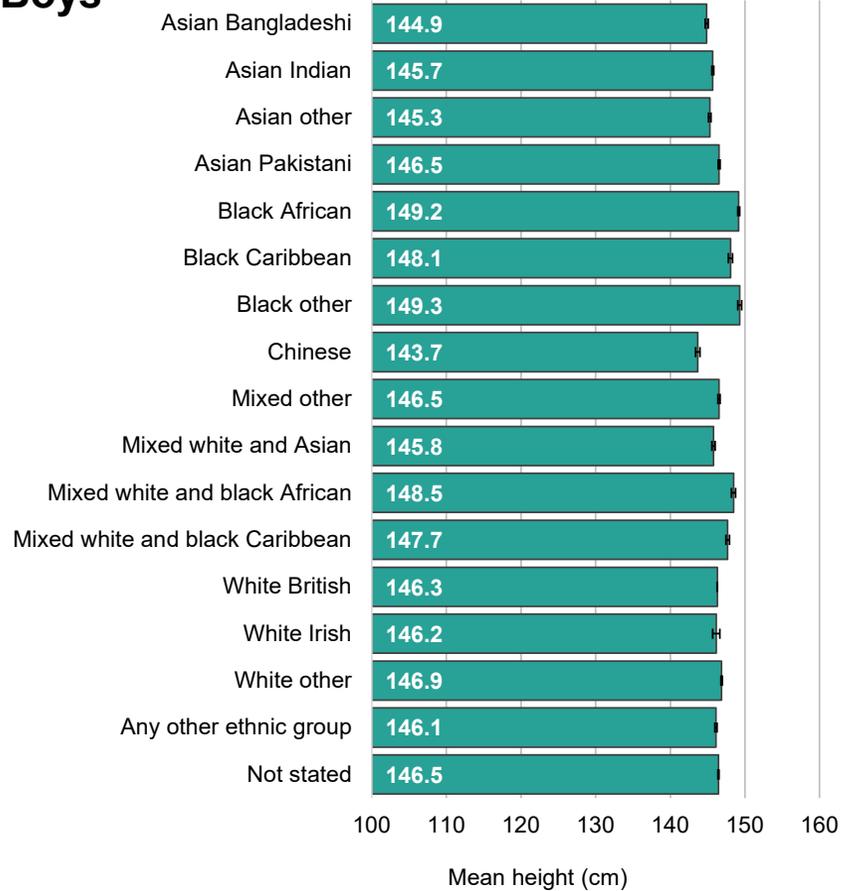
Note: y axis does not start at zero

The data has been standardised to adjust for children being measured at different times in the academic year. See [slide 72](#) for analysis methods used to produce this data.

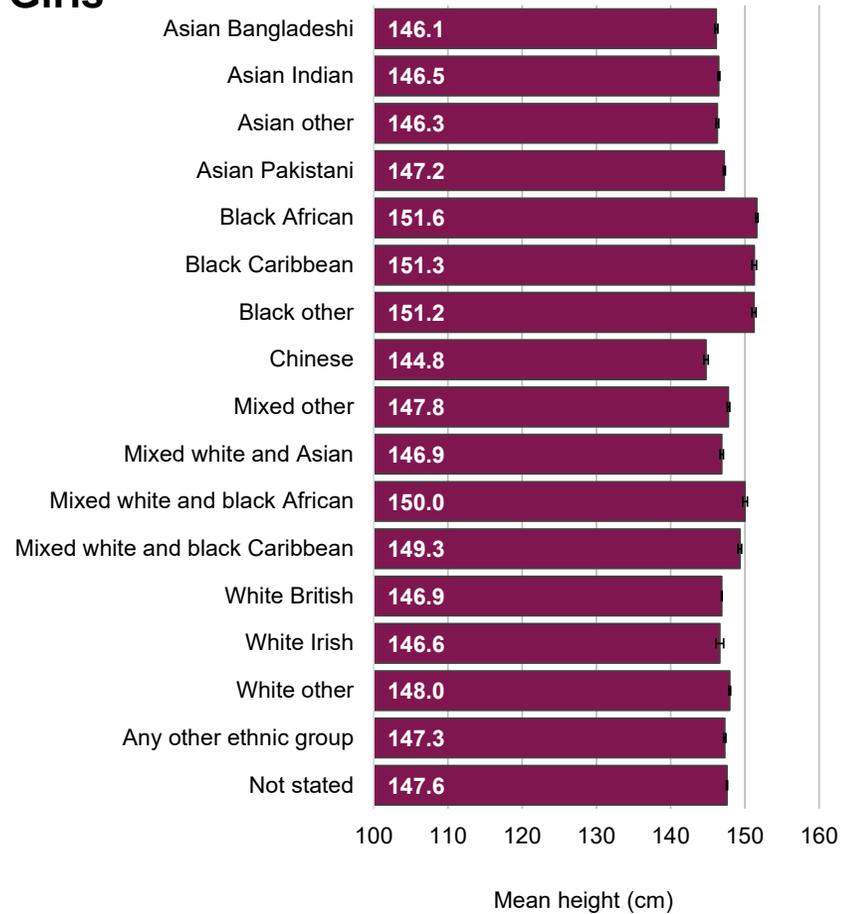
Average (mean) height in centimetres at age 11 in England by ethnic group

National Child Measurement Programme 2024/2025

Boys



Girls



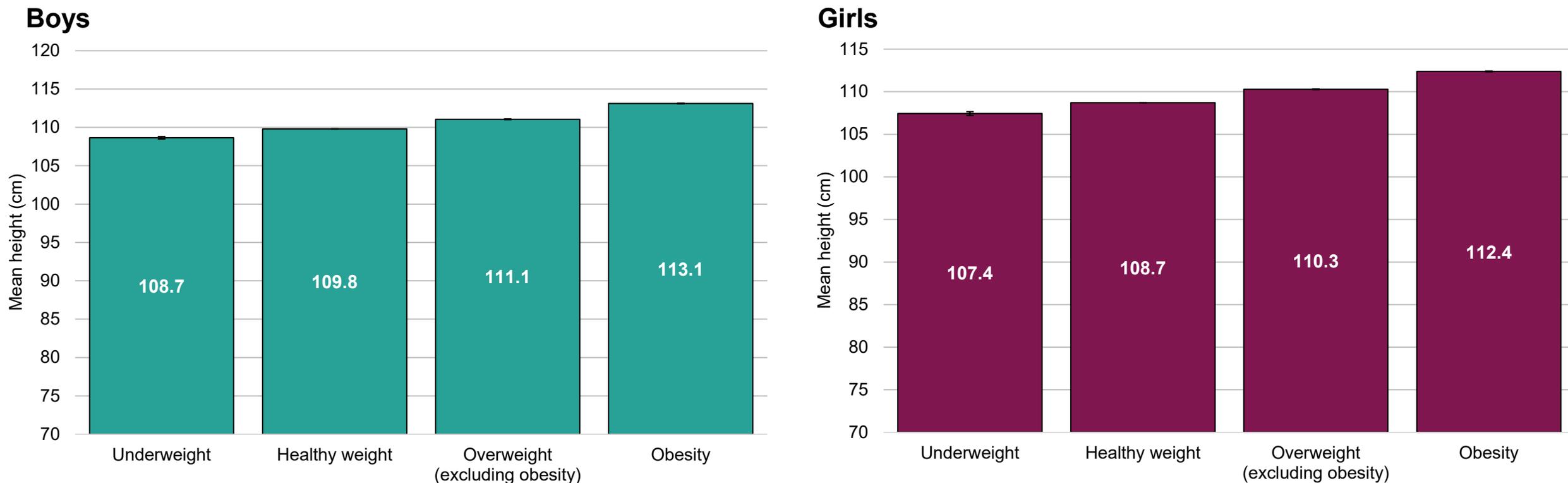
Mean height varies by ethnic group with boys and girls from black ethnic groups being on average taller, and boys and girls from Asian ethnic groups being on average shorter at age 11 than children from other ethnic groups.

Note: y axis does not start at zero

The data has been standardised to adjust for children being measured at different times in the academic year. See [slide 72](#) for analysis methods used to produce this data.

Average (mean) height in centimetres at age 5 in England by BMI category

National Child Measurement Programme 2024/2025



Mean height among 5 year olds increased across body mass index (BMI) categories in 2024 to 2025, for both boys and girls, from underweight (108.7cm boys, 107.4cm girls) through to those living with obesity (113.1cm boys, 112.4cm girls). This pattern is consistent across all years of NCMP data collection.*

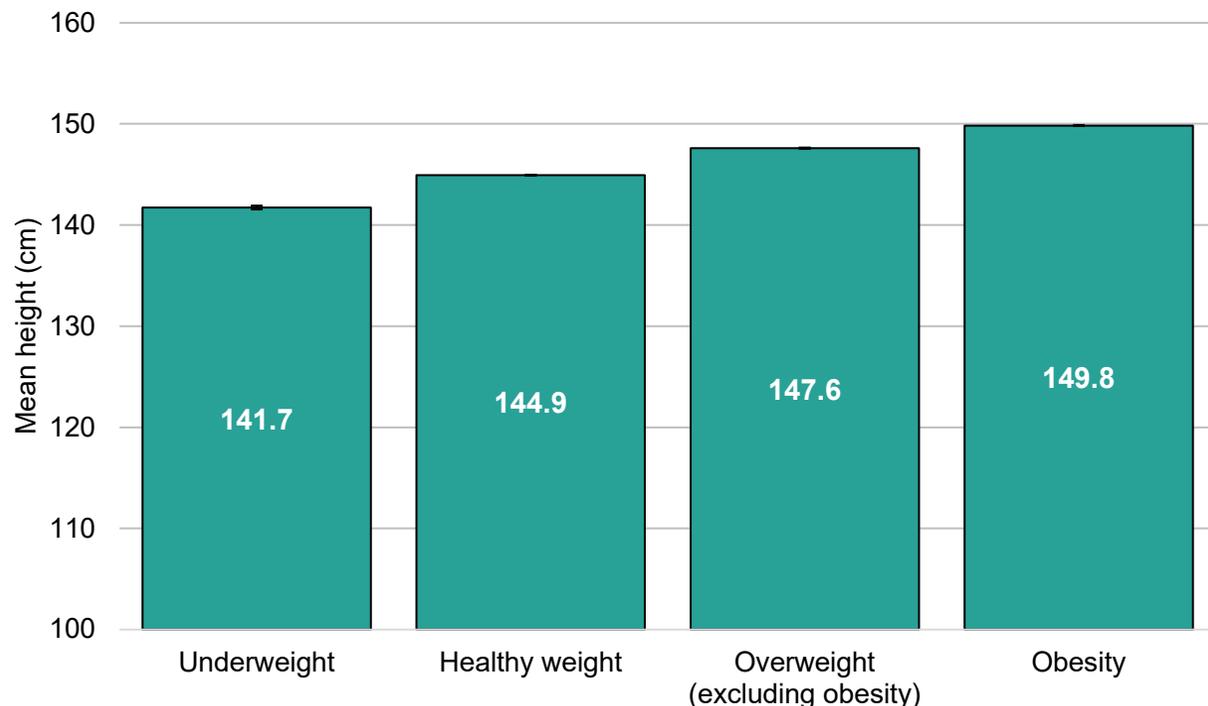
Note: y axis does not start at zero

The data has been standardised to adjust for children being measured at different times in the academic year. See [slide 72](#) for analysis methods used to produce this data.

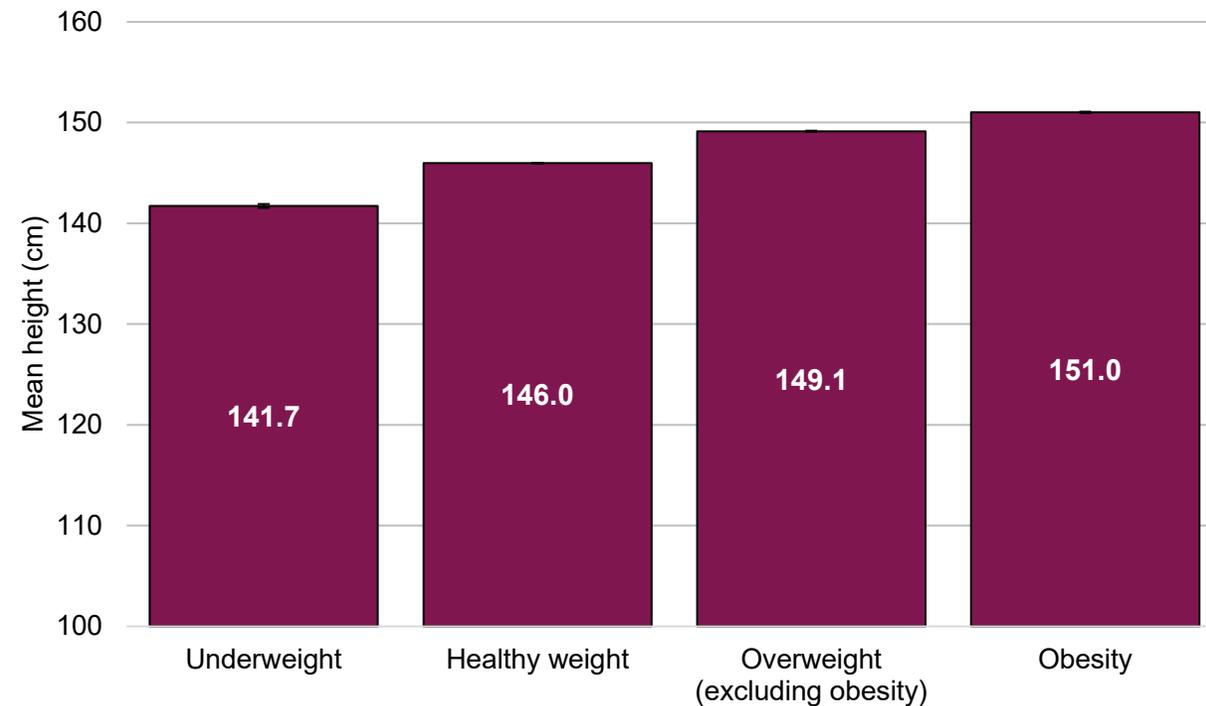
Average (mean) height in centimetres at age 11 in England by BMI category

National Child Measurement Programme 2024/2025

Boys



Girls



Mean height among 11 year old boys and girls also increased across body mass index (BMI) categories from underweight (141.7cm boys, 141.7cm girls) through to those living with obesity (149.8cm boys, 151.0cm girls). This pattern is consistent across all years of NCMP data collection.*

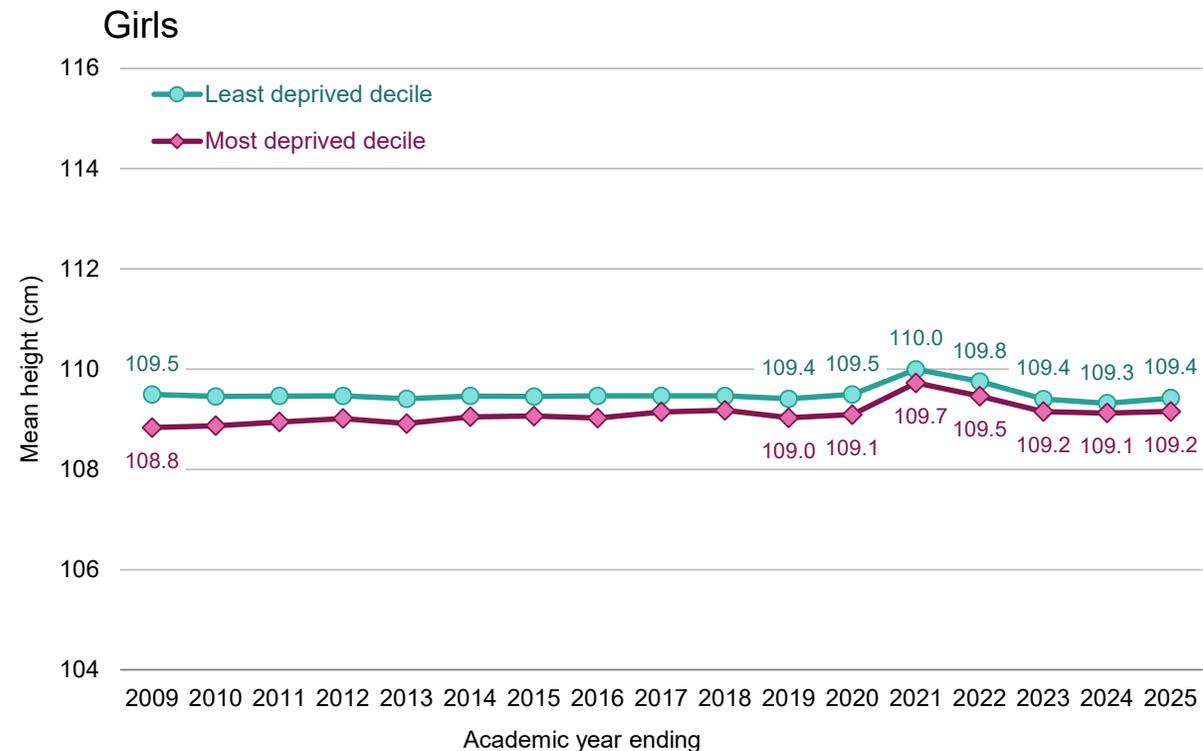
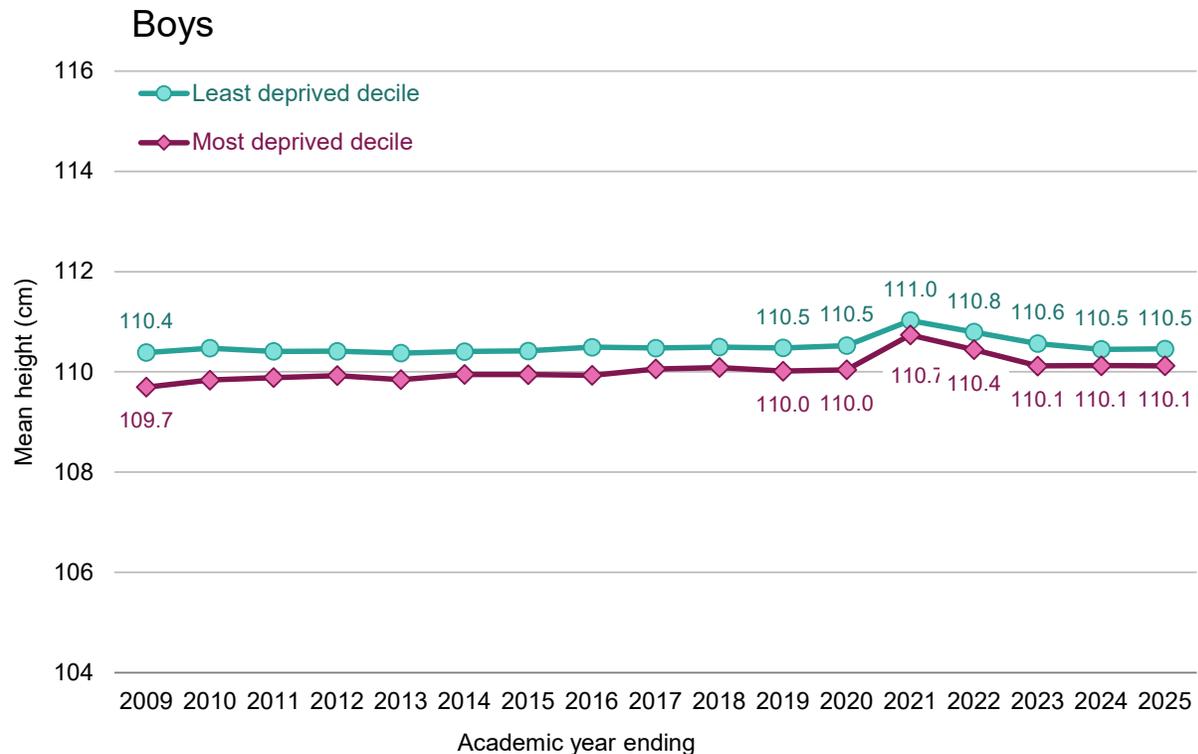
Note: y axis does not start at zero

The data has been standardised to adjust for children being measured at different times in the academic year. See [slide 72](#) for analysis methods used to produce this data.



Average (mean) height in centimetres at age 5 in England by deprivation

National Child Measurement Programme 2008/2009 to 2024/2025



Note: y axis does not start at zero

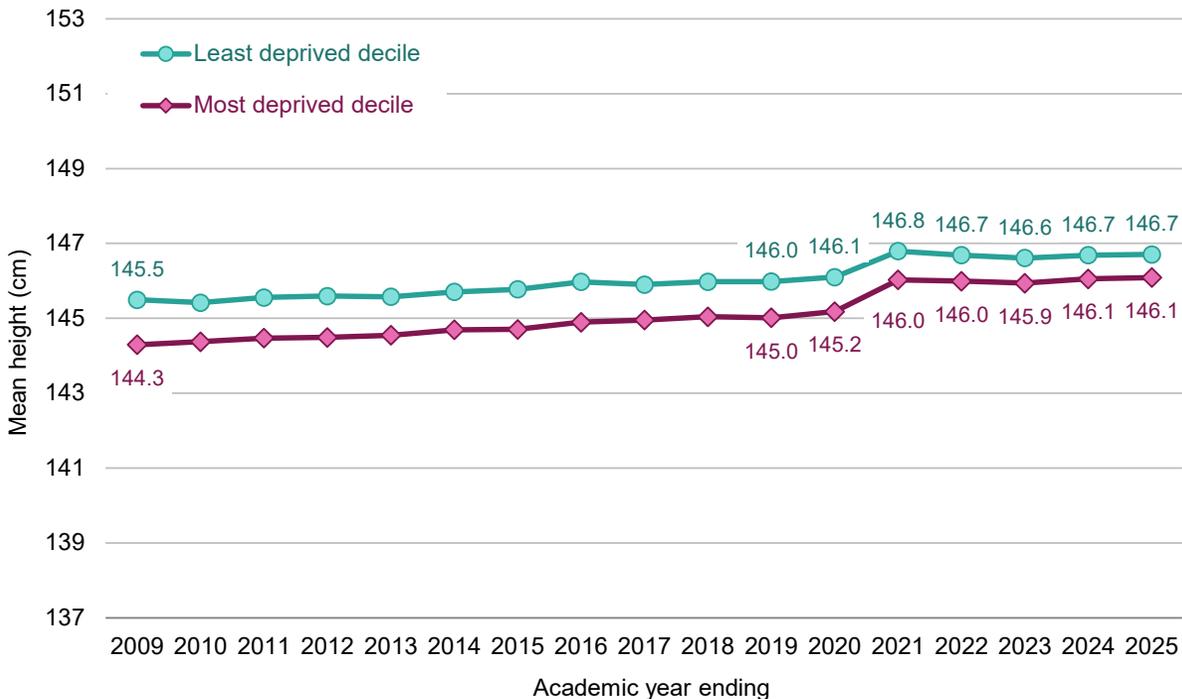
These charts show the difference in average height of 5 year olds living in the least and most deprived areas in England. Over the period of the NCMP the data shows that boys and girls living in the least deprived 10% of areas in England are taller than those living in the most deprived areas, however the gap has narrowed slightly over time.

The data has been standardised to adjust for children being measured at different times in the academic year. See [slide 72](#) for analysis methods used to produce this data.

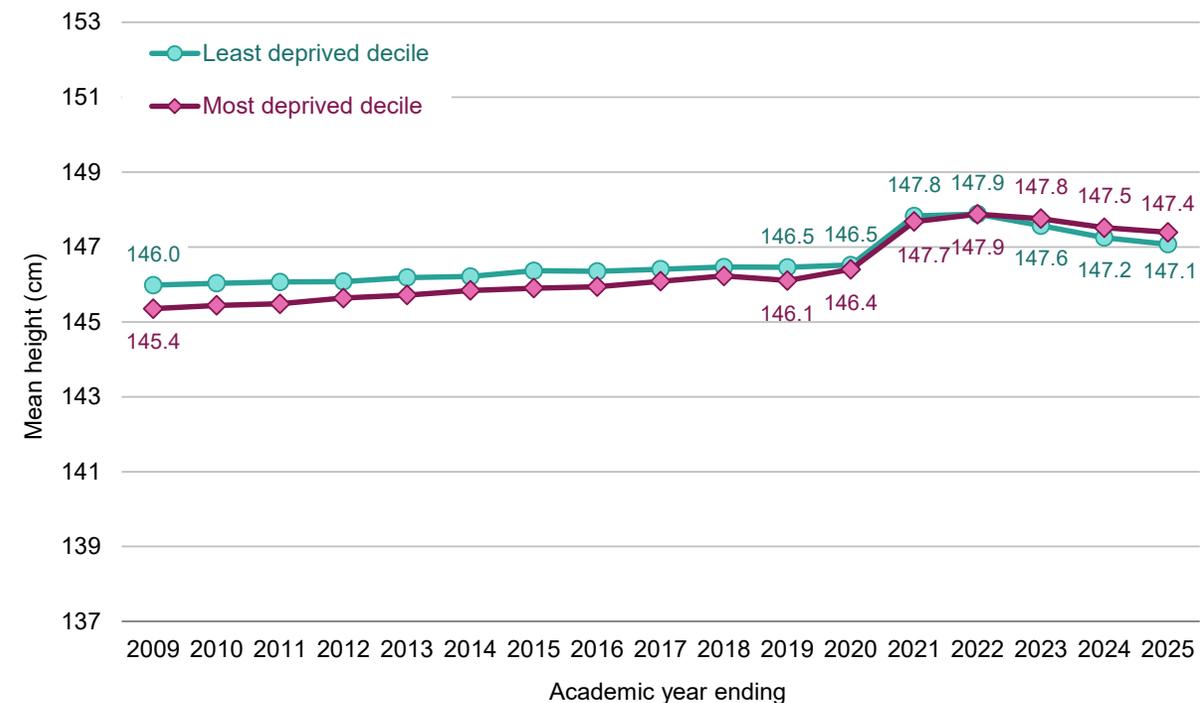
Average (mean) height in centimetres at age 11 in England by deprivation

National Child Measurement Programme 2008/2009 to 2024/2025

Boys



Girls



Note: y axis does not start at zero

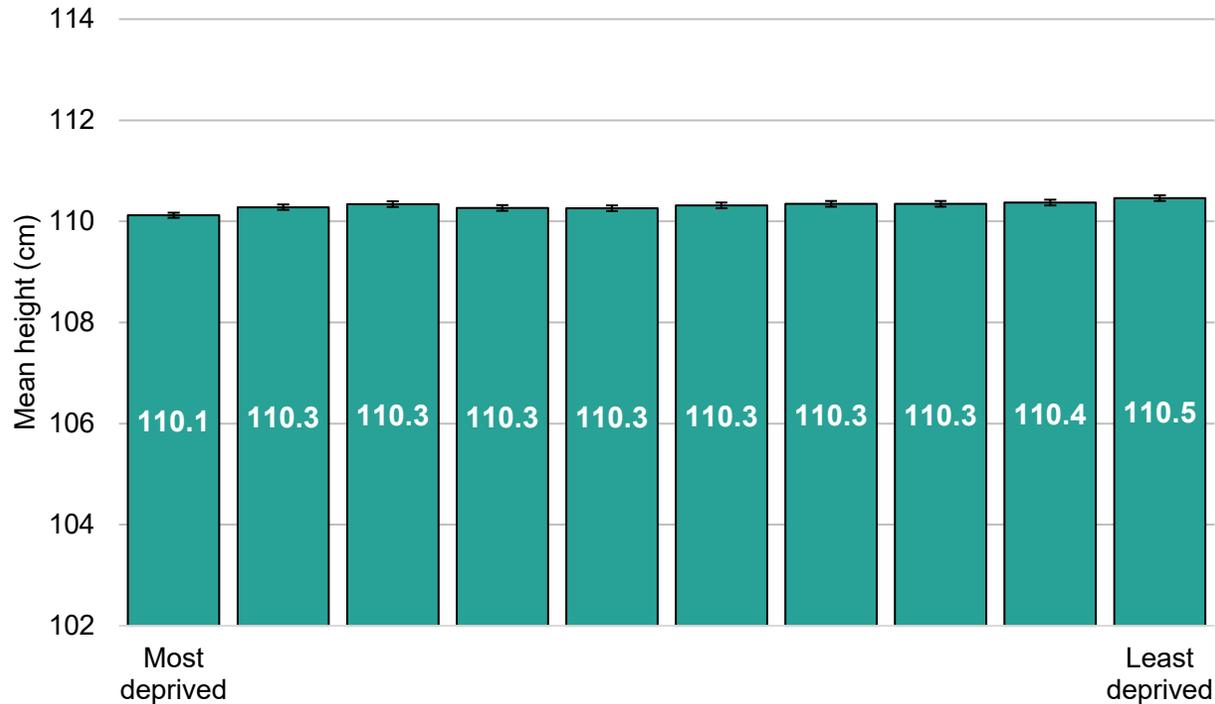
These charts show the difference in average height of 11 year olds living in the least and most deprived areas in England. The data shows that boys living in the least deprived 10% of areas in England are taller than those living in the most deprived areas, however the gap has narrowed slightly over time. Over the period of the NCMP the gap in height of girls living in the least and most deprived areas has narrowed then reversed.

The data has been standardised to adjust for children being measured at different times in the academic year. See [slide 72](#) for analysis methods used to produce this data.

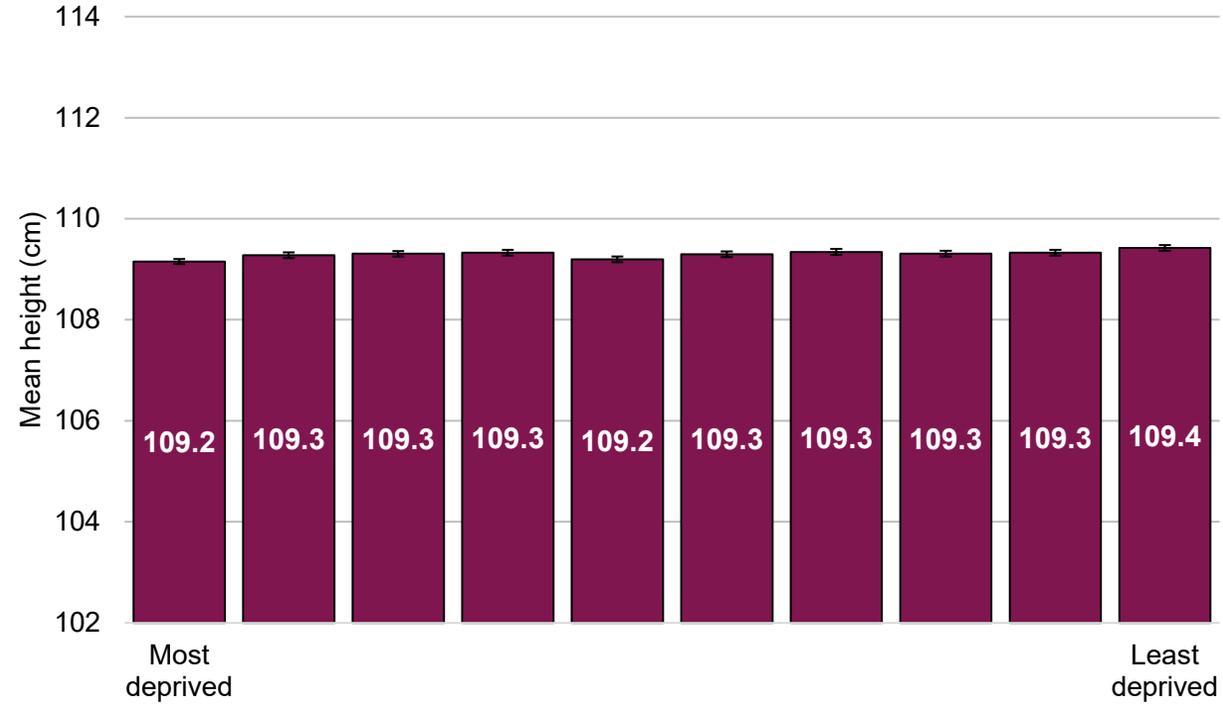
Average (mean) height in centimetres at age 5 in England by deprivation

National Child Measurement Programme 2024/2025

Boys



Girls



As seen previously on slide 59 there is currently very little difference in mean height of all children aged 5 years between deprivation deciles.

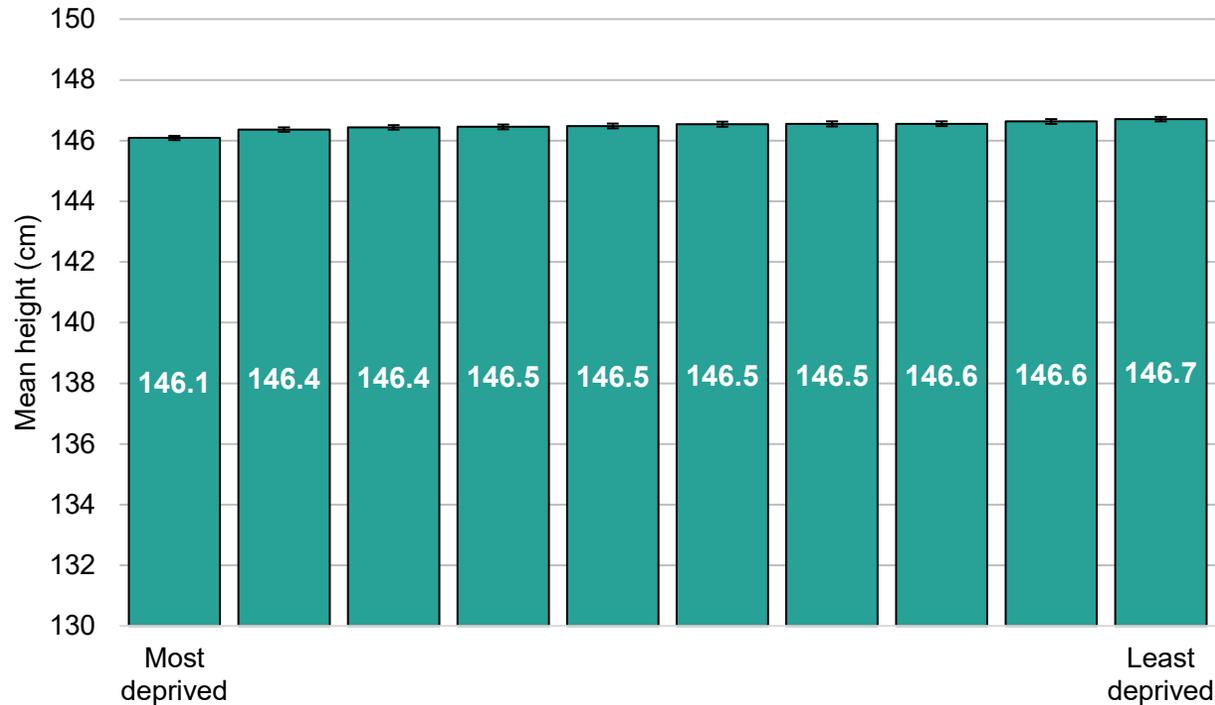
Note: y axis does not start at zero

The data has been standardised to adjust for children being measured at different times in the academic year. See [slide 72](#) for analysis methods used to produce this data.

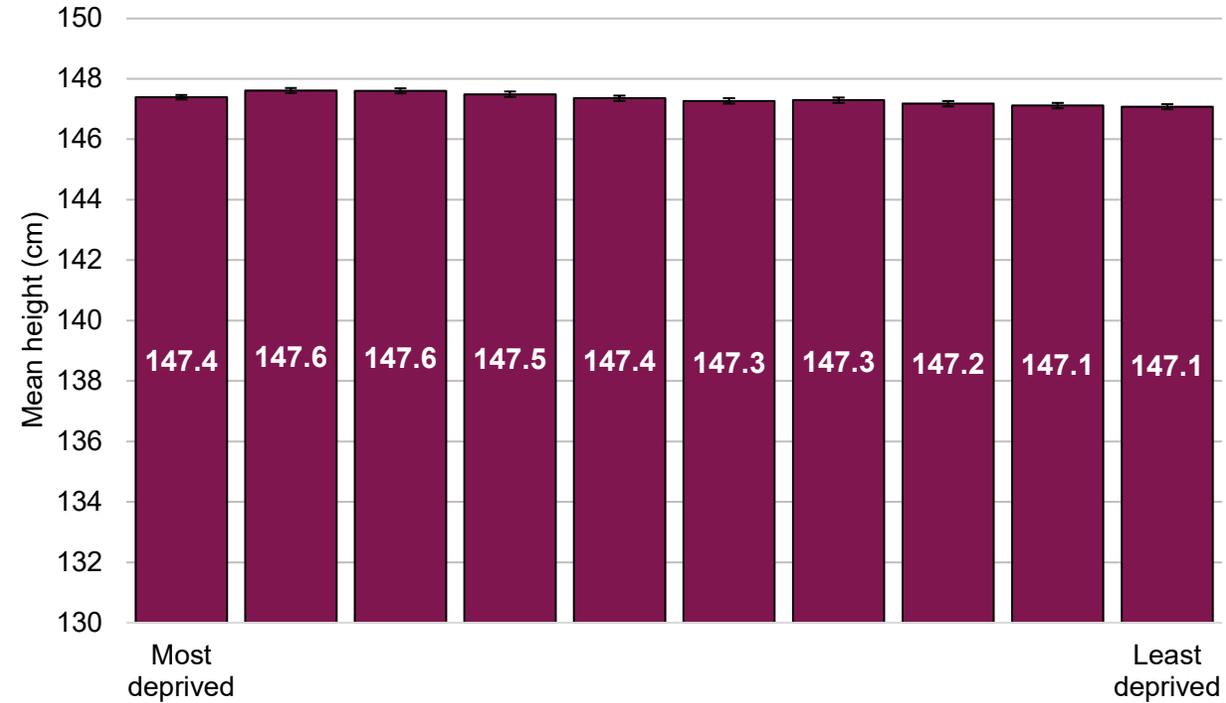
Average (mean) height in centimetres at age 11 in England by deprivation

National Child Measurement Programme 2024/2025

Boys



Girls



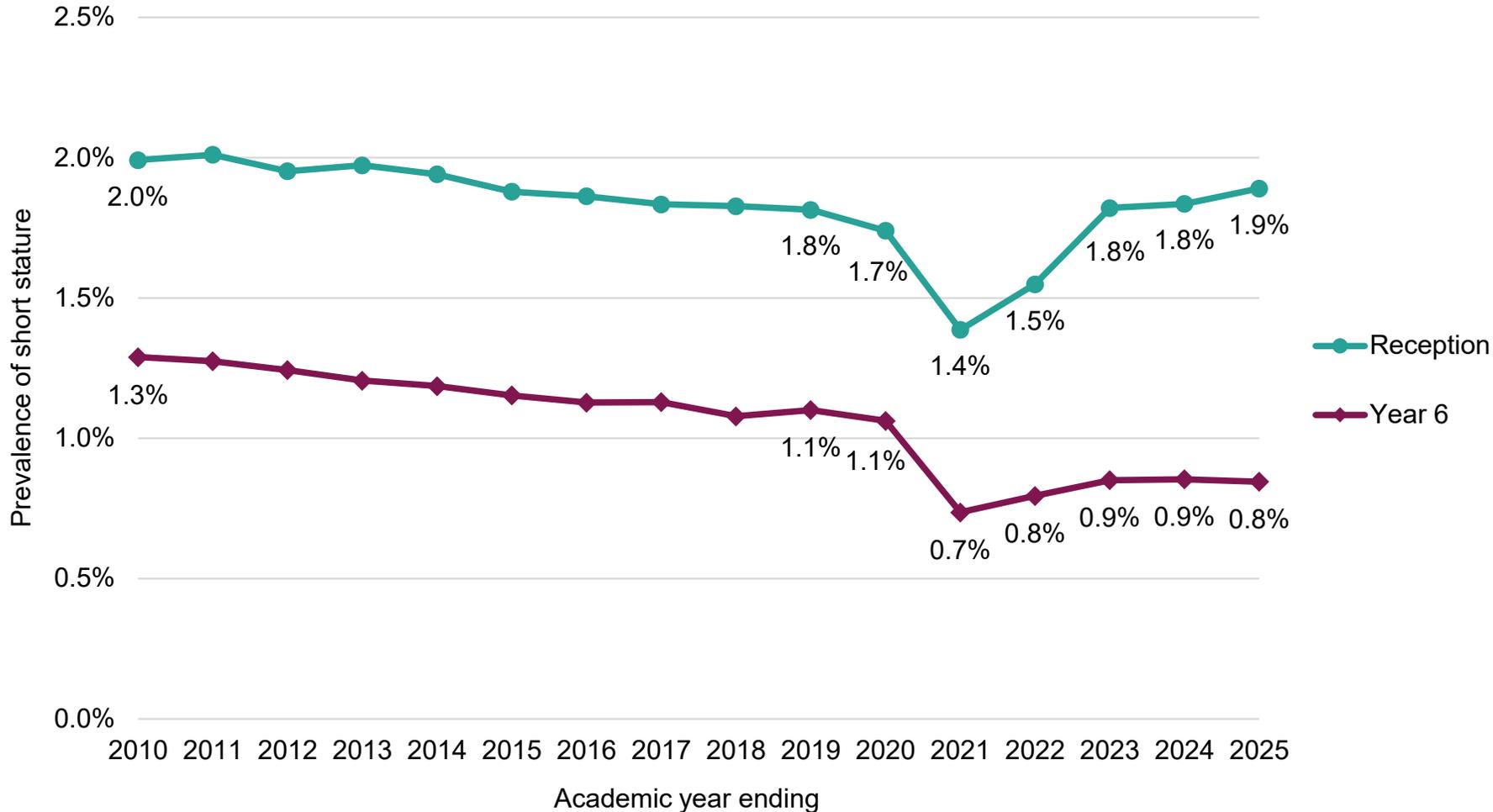
As seen previously on slide 60 there is currently very little difference in mean height of all children aged 11 years between deprivation deciles.

Note: y axis does not start at zero

The data has been standardised to adjust for children being measured at different times in the academic year. See [slide 72](#) for analysis methods used to produce this data.

Prevalence of short stature in England, by school year

National Child Measurement Programme 2009/2010 to 2024/2025



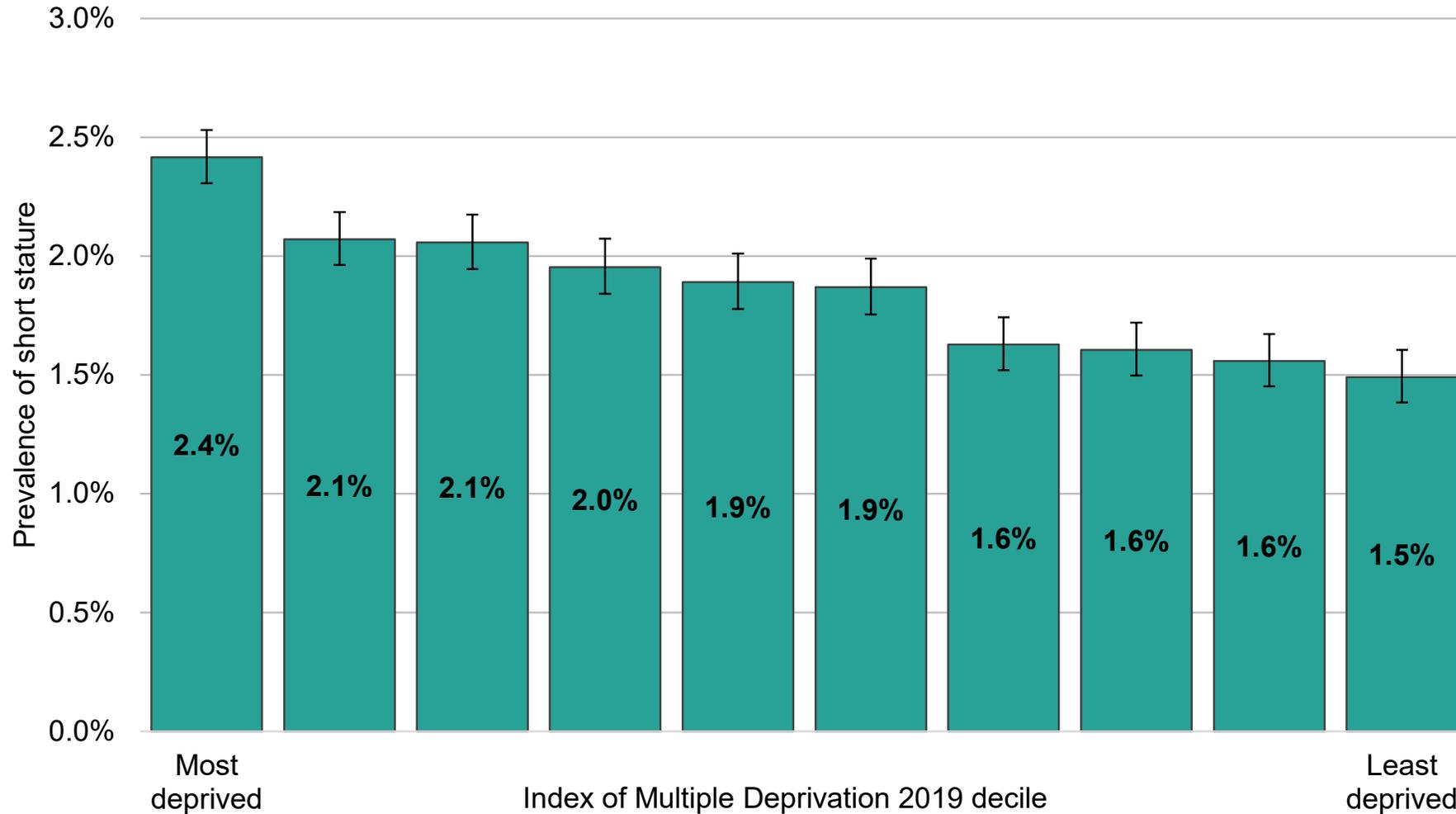
Short stature is defined as height below the 2nd centile of the British 1990 (UK90) growth reference.

Prevalence of short stature among children in reception (age 4 to 5 years) is low and was 1.8% in 2018 to 2019. It decreased to 1.4% during the COVID-19 pandemic but has since increased again and is now 1.9% in 2024 to 2025.

Prevalence of short stature among children in year 6 (age 10 to 11 years) is lower than in reception children; in 2018 to 2019 1.1% of children had short stature, this decreased to 0.7% in 2020 to 2021 and has remained less than 1% since the pandemic and is now 0.8% in 2024 to 2025.

Reception: Prevalence of short stature in England by deprivation decile

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025

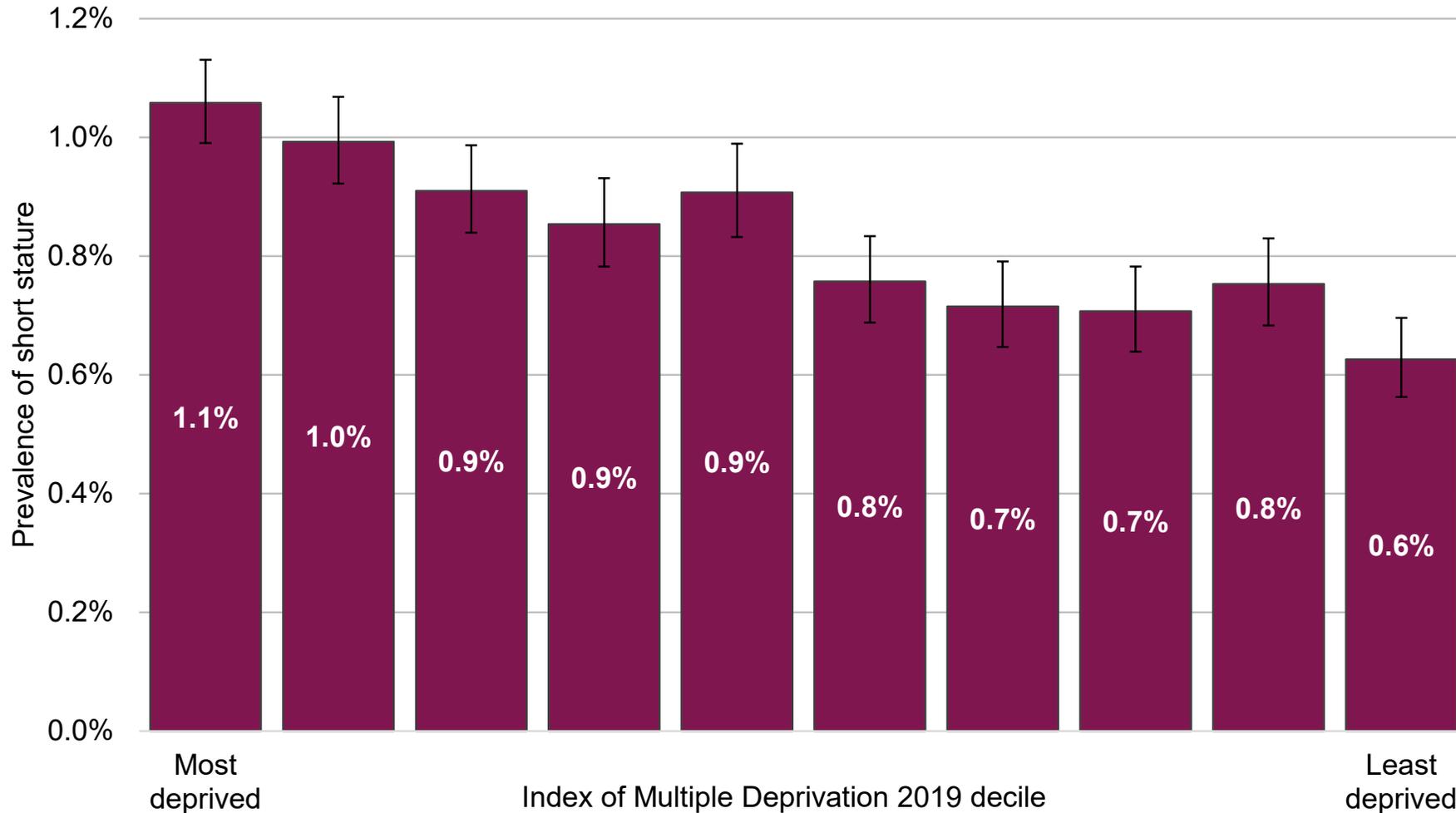


There are inequalities in the prevalence of short stature among children in England.

In 2024 to 2025, children in reception living in the most deprived areas had a higher prevalence of short stature (2.4%) than those living in the least deprived areas (1.5%).

Year 6: Prevalence of short stature in England by deprivation decile

National Child Measurement Programme 2024 to 2025



There are inequalities in the prevalence of short stature among children in England.

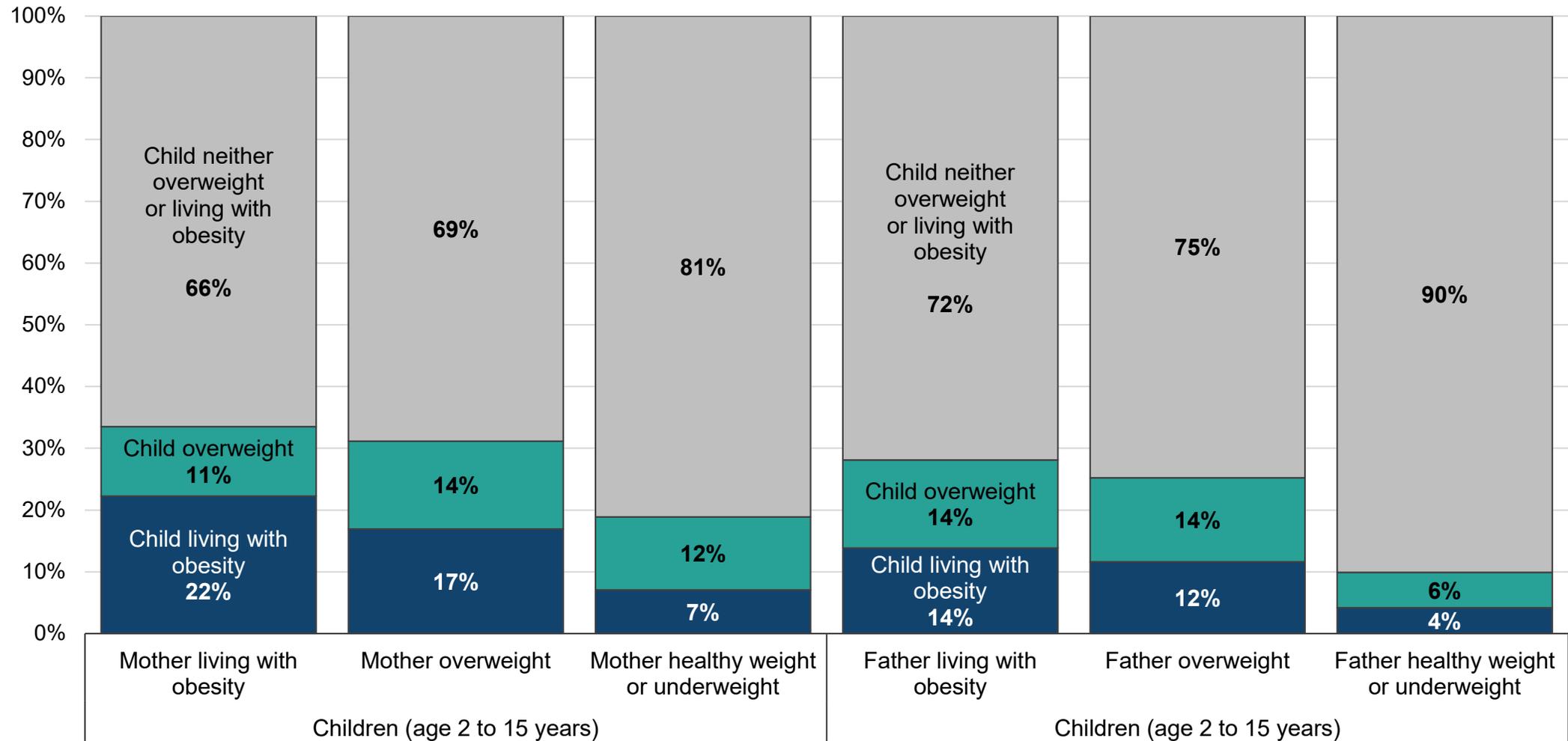
In 2024 to 2025, 1.1% of year 6 children living in the most deprived areas had short stature compared to 0.6% of children in the least deprived areas.

**Child BMI status by parents BMI status and
parent's perception of child's BMI status, England**

Health Survey for England

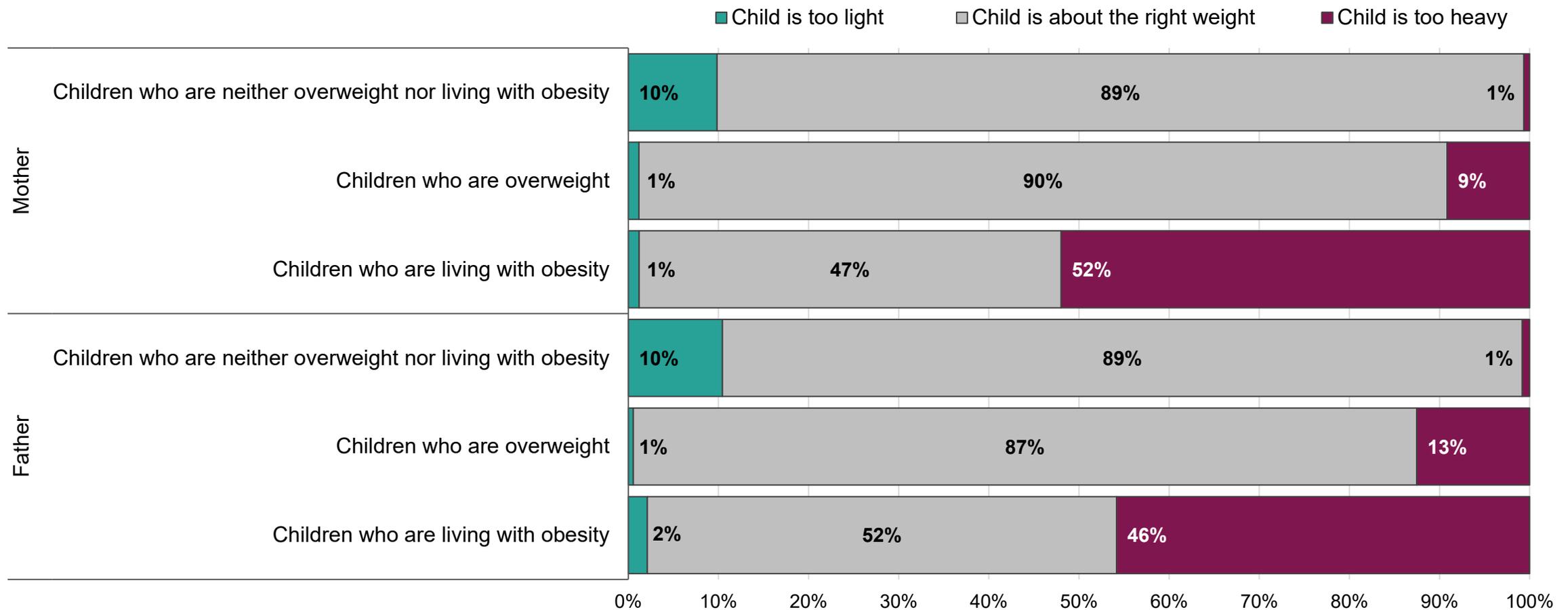
Child BMI status by parents' BMI status

Health Survey for England 2022



Parent's perception of child's weight by child's* BMI status

Health Survey for England 2015 and 2016 combined



This chart is expected to be updated in 2025 with 2022 and 2023 combined data

*Children are aged 2 to 15 years

Further information and data sources

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on NCMP data collection

The **2019 to 2020 NCMP** data collection stopped in March 2020 when schools were closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In a usual NCMP collection year, national participation rates are around 95% (over a million) of all eligible children, however in 2019 to 2020 the number of children measured was around 75% of previous years. Despite the lower than usual number of measurements, analysis by NHS England confirms that figures at national and regional level are directly comparable to previous and future years.

The **2020 to 2021 NCMP** had a delayed start due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Local authorities were still able to collect enough data to enable the production of national and regional estimates of prevalence by body mass index (BMI) category. Around 300,000 children (25% of previous full measurement years) were measured but the sample was not fully representative of the child population. Therefore weighting was used in the analysis to produce valid estimates of prevalence that could be compared to data from previous and future years. Further information on the 2020 to 2021 data collection and weighting methods is available in the NHS England report.

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/national-child-measurement-programme/2020-21-school-year>

The **2021 to 2022 NCMP** was the first data collection since the COVID-19 pandemic that was unaffected by school closures and other public health measures. Over 1.17 million children were measured in which is 92% of all children that were eligible to take part. This participation rate, though high, is lower than pre-pandemic years where participation had been at 95% since the data collection in 2014 to 2015. This is likely to be due to resourcing issues within some local authorities during the pandemic recovery process.

From the **2022 to 2023 NCMP** onwards data collection was unaffected by issues linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health Survey for England (HSE)

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/health-survey-for-england>

The Health Survey for England (HSE) is a cross-sectional survey which samples a representative proportion of the population to monitor trends in the nation's health and care. It provides information about adults aged 16 and over, and children aged 0 to 15, living in private households in England. The survey consists of an interview, followed by a visit from a nurse.

The 2022 HSE report included data on overweight and obesity in children. 1,393 children (aged 0 to 15) were interviewed in the 2022 survey and 507 children had a health visit. 586 children aged 2 to 15 were included in the data for overweight and obesity prevalence in 2022. This is much lower than in previous years, on average 1,343 children were included each year in the data for overweight and obesity prevalence between 2016 and 2019.

The data collection for the 2020 HSE was stopped in March 2020 and no data was published for that year. The 2021 HSE data collection approach differed from previous years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included a change in mode, from face-to-face interviewer visits to remote telephone and video interviews. A total of 5,880 adults (aged 16 and over) and 1,240 children (aged 0 to 15) were interviewed in the 2021 survey. 1,705 adults and 250 children had a nurse visit.

The 2021 HSE report covers overweight and obesity and health-related behaviours for adults only; findings about children were not included because of low sample numbers within different age groups. Therefore this slide set presents data for children up to 2019 which is the latest available data.



Child height analysis methods

As children are growing all the time it is important to ensure any changes in average heights are not due to children being measured earlier or later in the academic year. Therefore, the height estimates are standardised to be the height of a child aged exactly 5 years and 0 days for Reception year and 11 years and 0 days for Year 6.

The standardisation is carried out by calculating the average (mean) height z score across all the measured children as this is a standard deviation score which adjusts height for sex and age at the time of measurement using the UK90 growth reference.

These mean height z scores are then converted to the equivalent height in centimetres of an average 5 and 11 year old child using the [LMS Growth](#) Excel addin.

The data is presented in the charts as height in centimetres as this is a more meaningful measure to understand compared to presenting the height z scores.

Deprivation decile is defined using the Index of Multiple Deprivation based on the lower super output area (LSOA) of child residence.

Data on child height can be viewed and downloaded from the [Obesity, physical activity and nutrition profile on Fingertips](#).

