

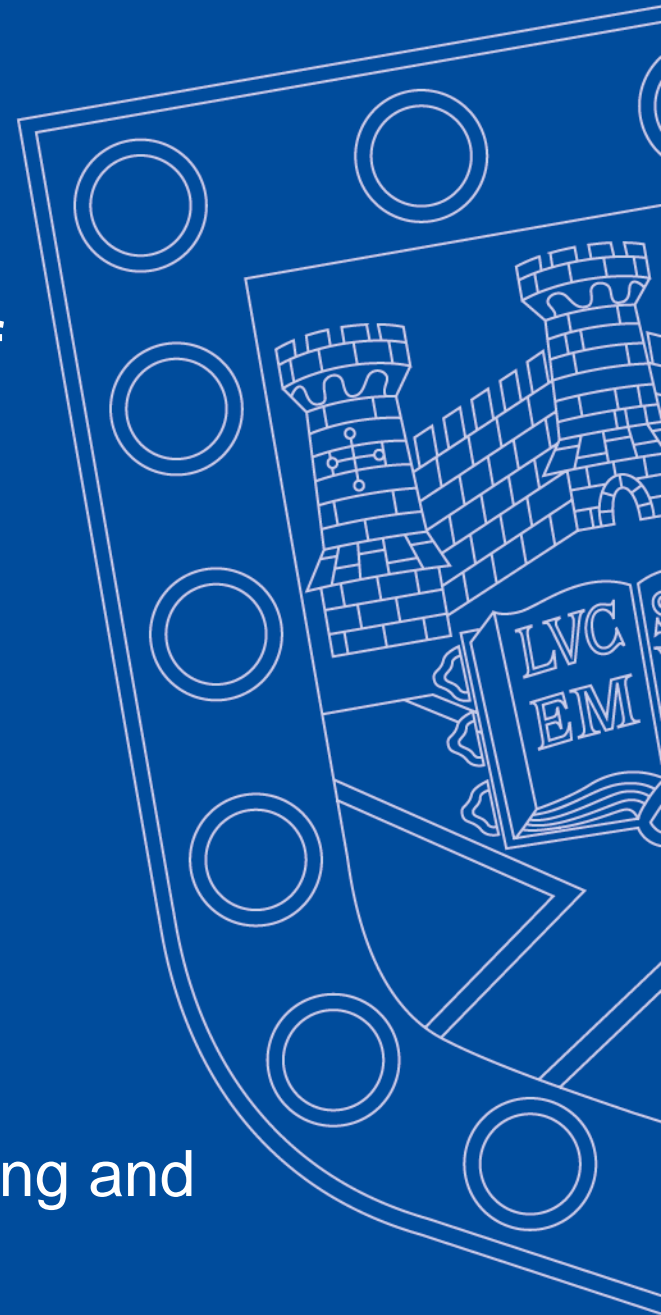


**What is the evidence on the impacts of Covid-19 (and related responses) on the mental health of young people?**

**Mental Health of Children and Young People in England survey 2020**

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Children and Young People's Mental Health Research  
Collaboration (ChYMe), University of Exeter

On behalf of the survey team – see Funding and Acknowledgments



# Survey Partners

Survey funded by the Department for Health and Social Care, and commissioned by NHS Digital.



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care



Survey was conducted by:



Office for  
National Statistics

**NatCen**  
Social Research



UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE

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**EXETER**

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# Mental Health of Children and Young People in England surveys

- National surveys provide England's Official Statistics into child mental health:
  - British Child and Adolescent Mental Health Surveys 1999 and 2004
  - Mental Health of Children and Young People in England (MHCYP) 2017
- Cross-sectional surveys with 3 year follow-ups;
- Probability samples: 2017 MHCYP used stratified multistage random probability sample of children and young people drawn from the NHS Patient Register database



# Sample

MHCYP 2017 included 9,117 children and young people aged 2 to 19 years.



MHCYP 2017 participants who consented to recontact for further research invited to take part n=7,885 children and young people (aged 5 to 22 years in 2020)



3,570 CYP participated in Wave 1 follow-up Responses were achieved with 45% of the issued sample.

# Survey context

- MHCYP 2020 follow-up; two main aims
  - Comparing mental health in 2017 and 2020
  - Describing life during the COVID-19 pandemic



# Survey design and content

- Online questionnaire, July-August 2020
  - Parents of 5-16 year olds
  - Child version for 11-16 year olds
  - Young person version for 17-22 year olds
- Content included:
  - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
  - Demographics and household circumstances
  - Family dynamics & parental mental health
  - Covid impacts on household
  - Access to education and services
  - Daily activities



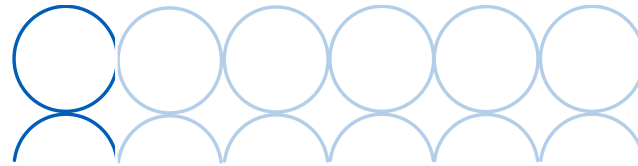
# Measuring mental health

- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) main measure (Goodman, 1997)
- Responses used to calculate how likely child or young person was to have a condition in terms of an emotional, behavioural or hyperactivity disorder (more detail in the report – see References)
- Terminology used in report as main unit of reporting “probable mental disorder”
- **It is essential that comparisons between the 2020 and 2017 data use this SDQ algorithm and not the more detailed and complex Development and Wellbeing Assessment (DAWBA) diagnostic tool.**

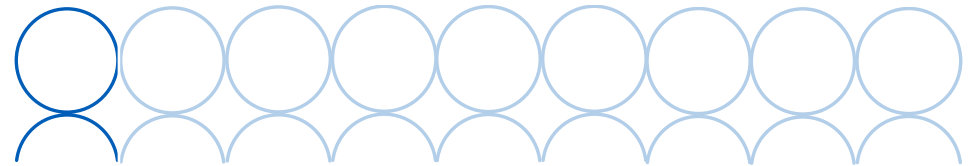


# Rates of probable mental disorder in 5 to 16 year olds in England have increased since 2017

In 2020, **one in six** (16.0%) children aged 5 to 16 had a probable mental disorder.



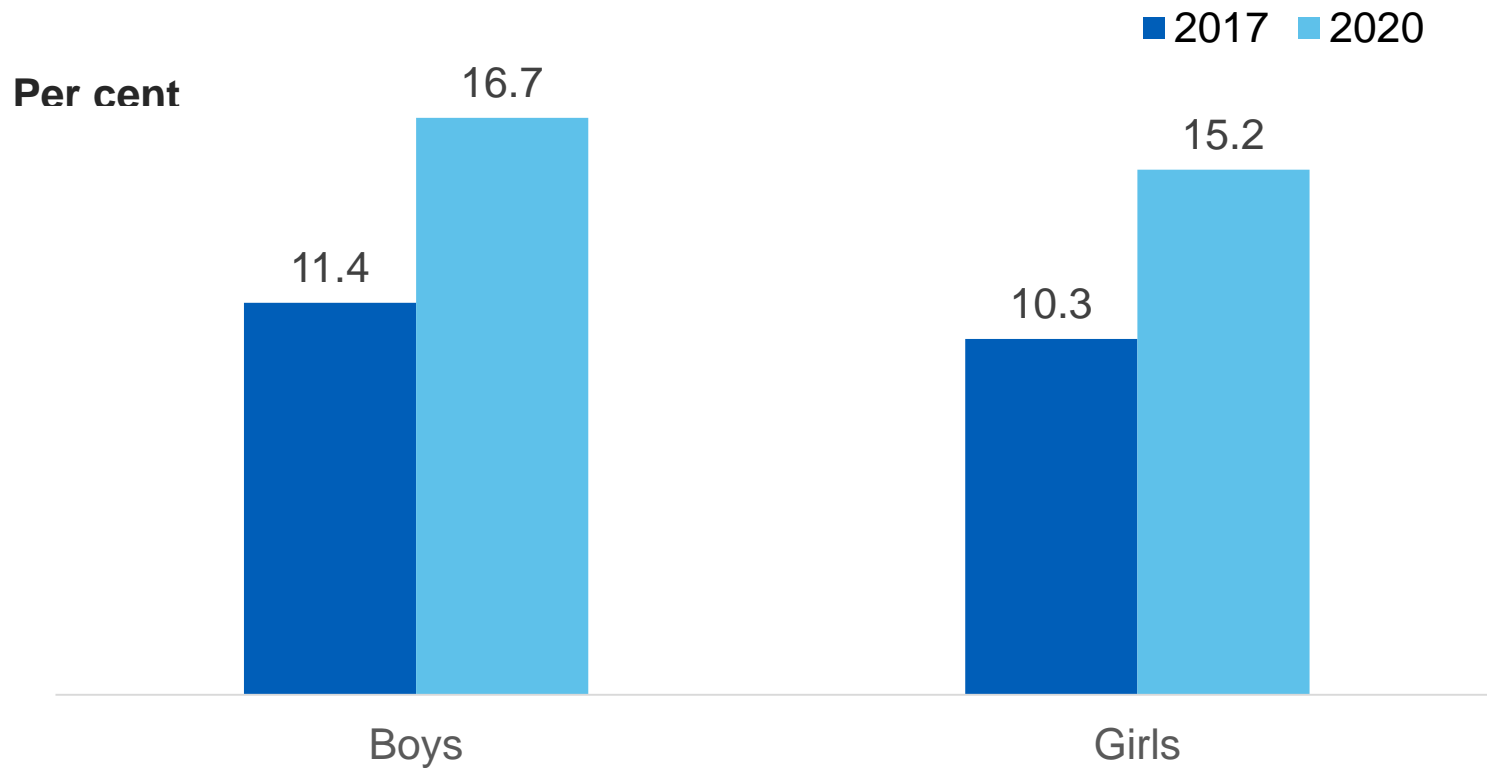
In 2017, **one in nine** (10.8%) children aged 5 to 16 had a probable mental disorder.



Source: NHS Digital. 5 to 16 year olds, England.

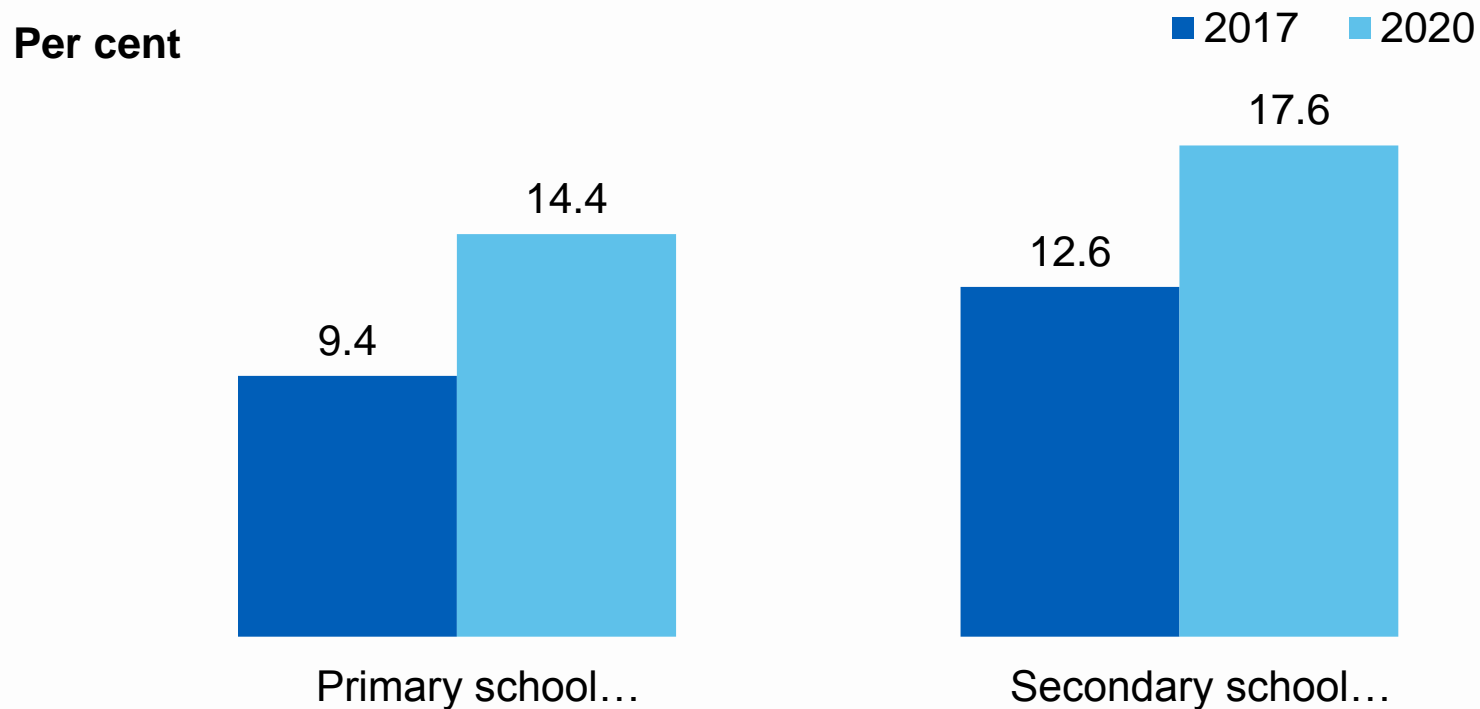


# Rates of probable disorder by gender



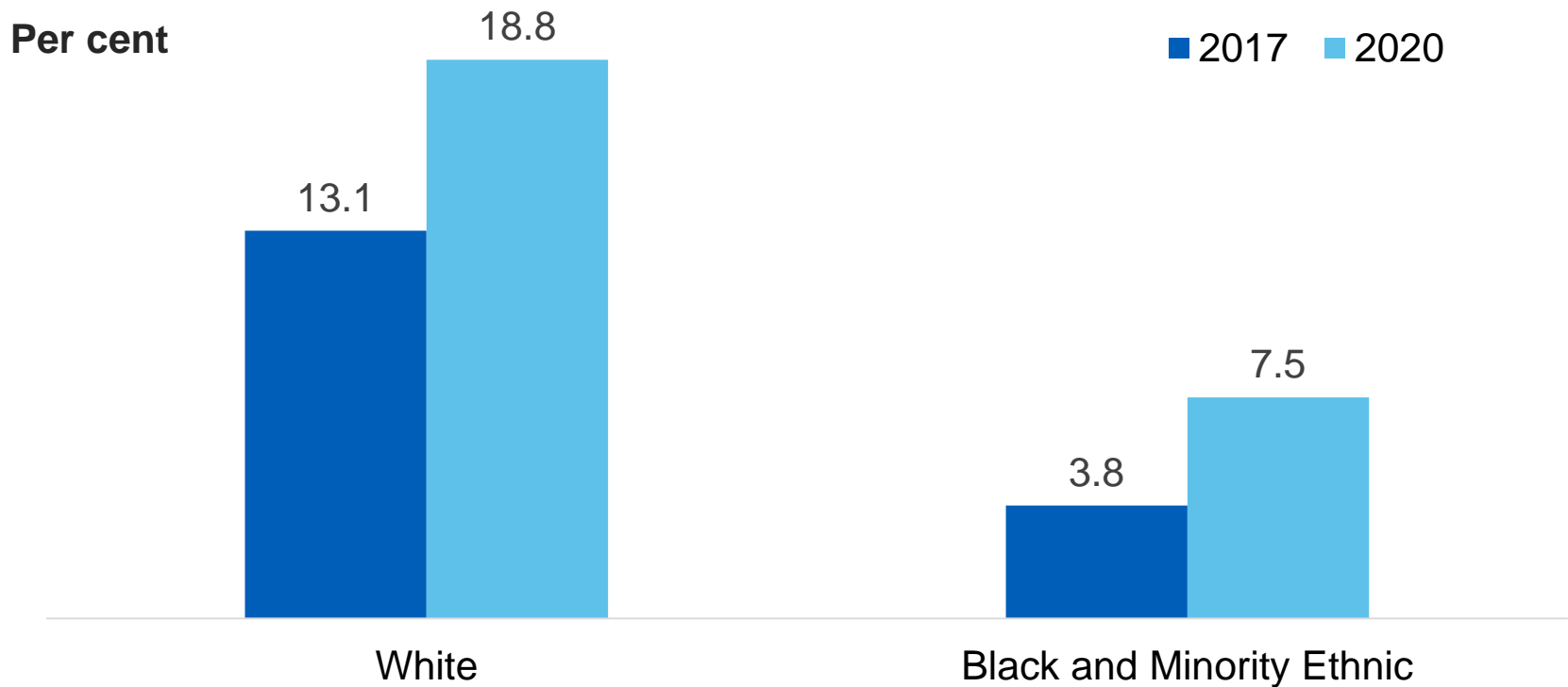
Source: NHS Digital. 5 to 16 year olds, England.

# Rates of probable disorder in primary and secondary age children, 2017 & 2020



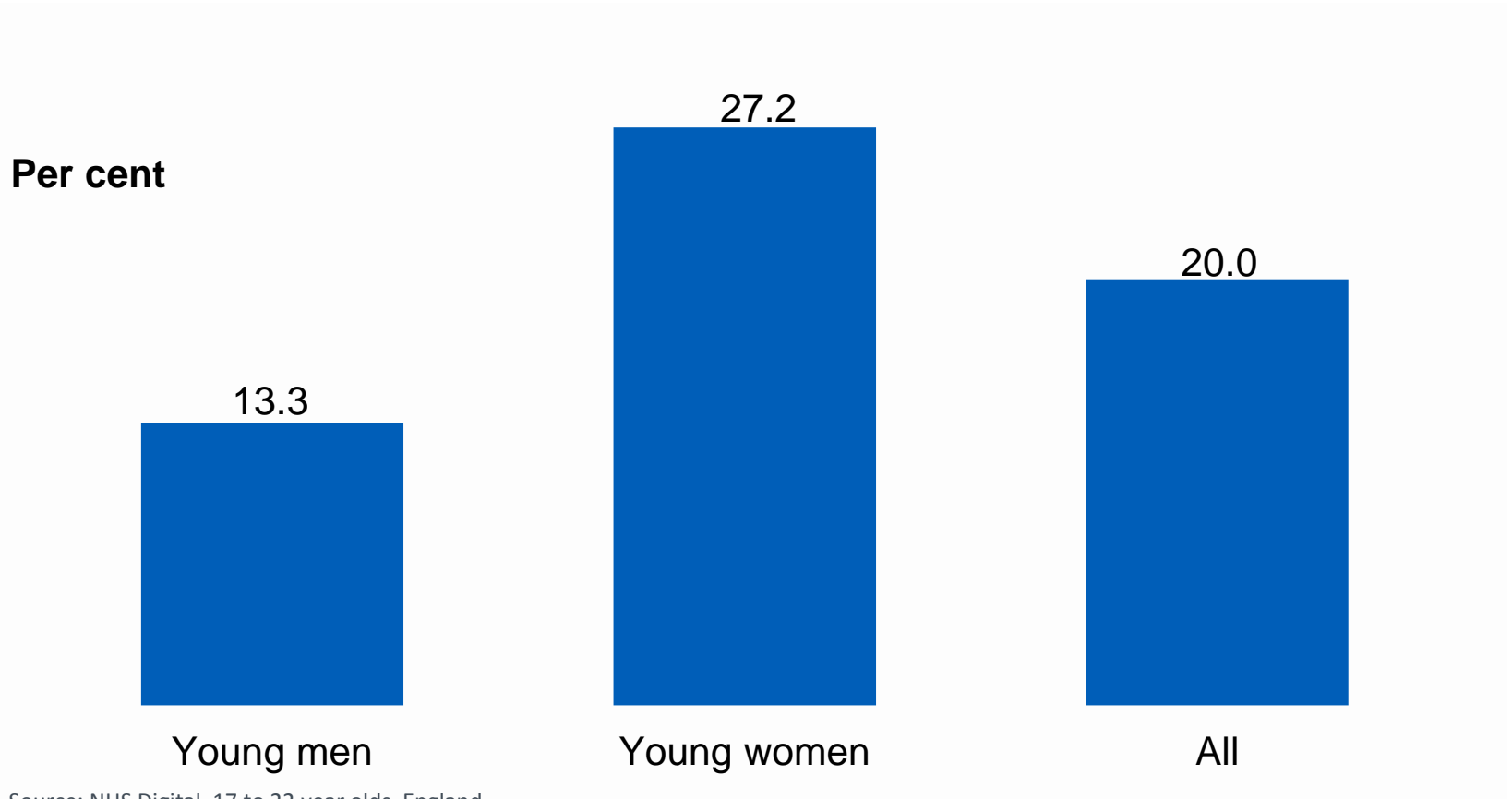
Source: NHS Digital. 5 to 16 year olds, England.

# Rates of probable disorder by ethnicity



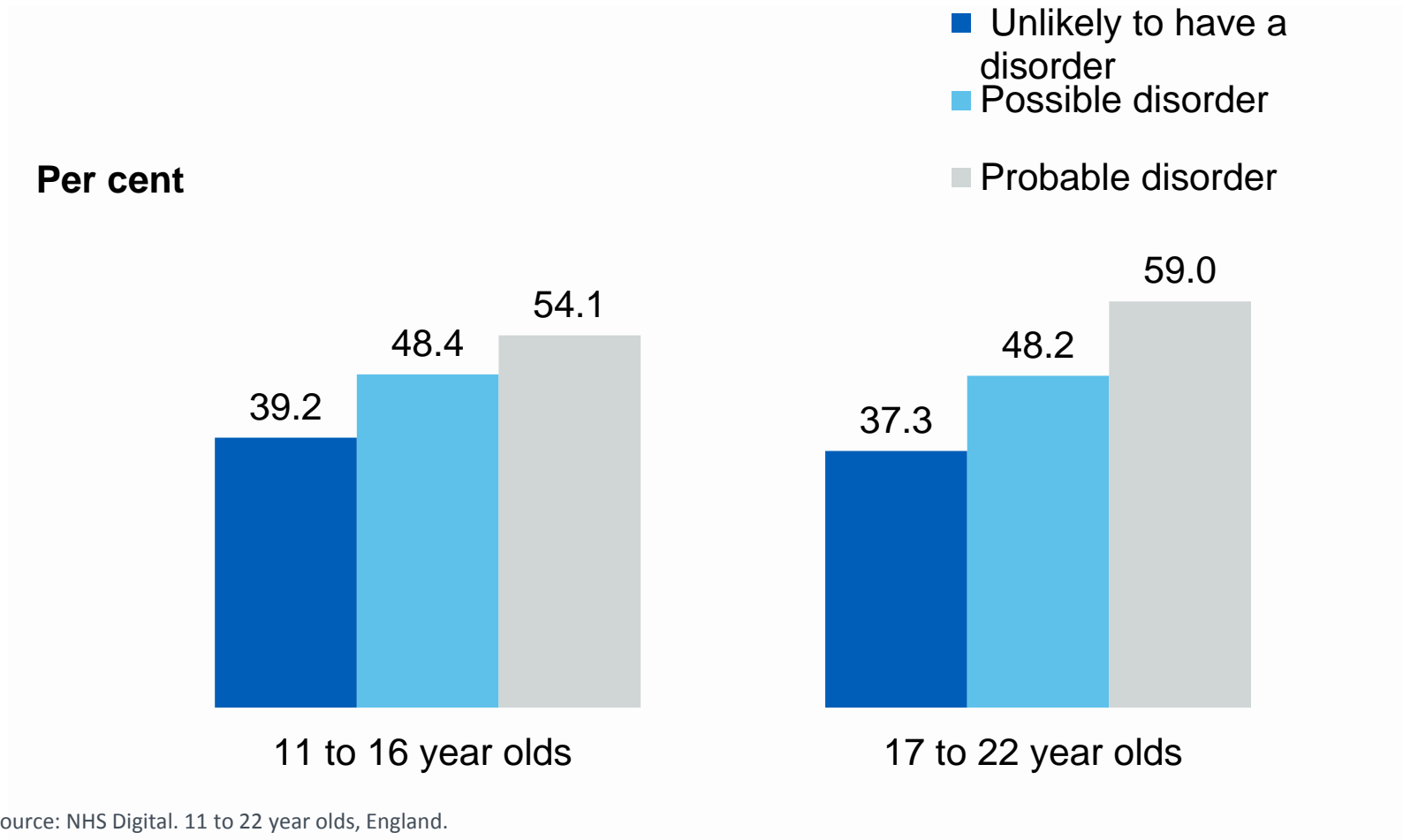
Source: NHS Digital. 5 to 16 year olds, England.

# Rates of probable disorder in 17 to 22 year olds, 2020

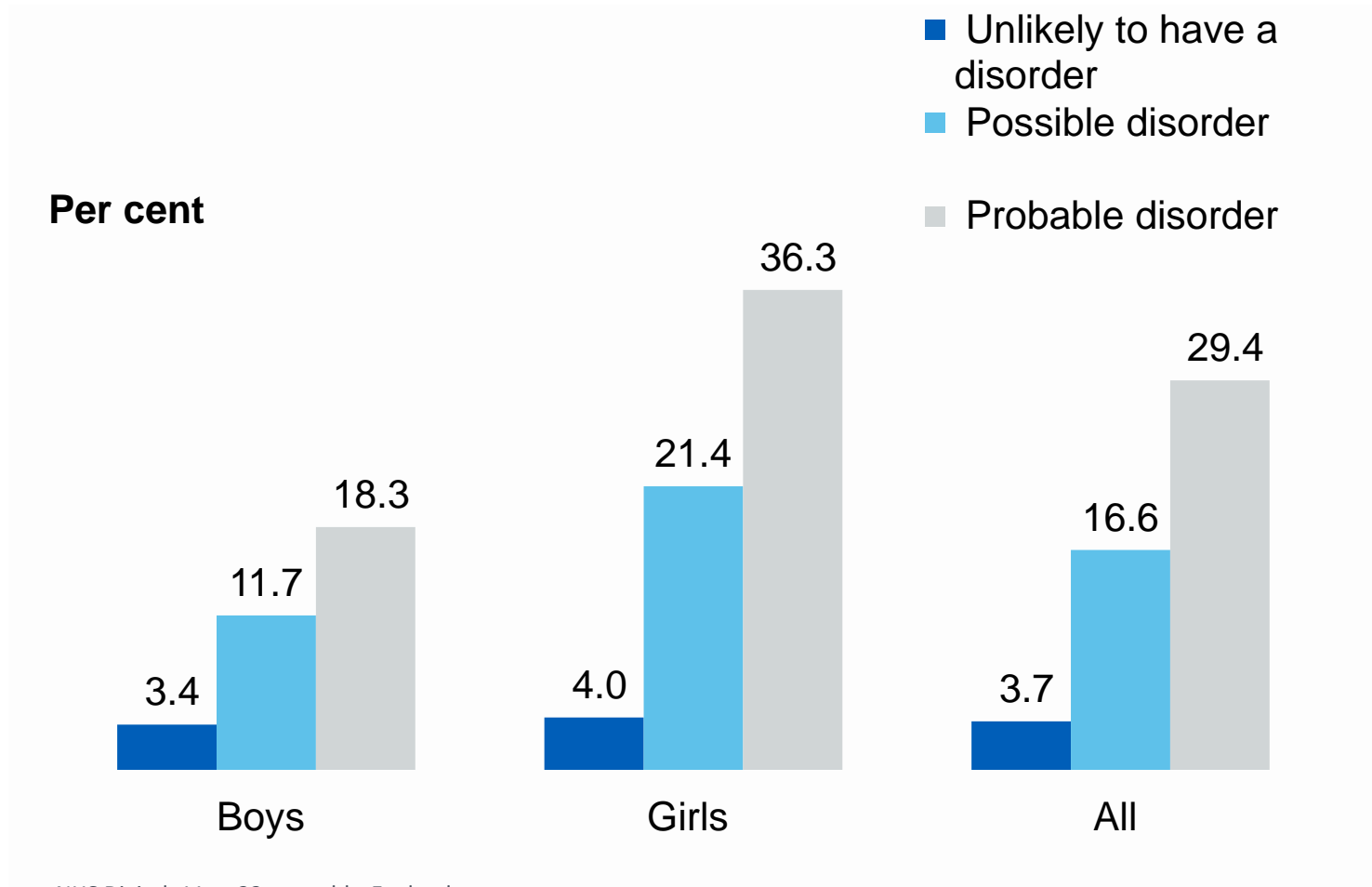


Source: NHS Digital. 17 to 22 year olds, England.

## Impact of lockdown on life: Percentage reporting it had made their lives worse



# Loneliness: Percentage reporting often or always feeling lonely



Source: NHS Digital. 11 to 22 year olds, England.

# Inequalities, risk and protective factors

- Children and young people with a probable mental disorder were:
  - More than twice as likely to live in a household that had fallen behind with payments (16.3%) than children unlikely to have a mental disorder (6.4%).
  - More likely to live in a household where the household could not afford to buy enough food or had to use foodbanks
  - More likely to report not having some form of social support in terms of an adult to turn to,
  - Less likely to have exercised outside, spent time with family, or eaten a meal with family in the previous 7 days

Source: NHS Digital; 5-22 year olds; England

## Help seeking amongst 17-22 year olds with a probable disorder

**21.7%** - Did not seek help for a mental health concern due to the pandemic

**22.9%** - Did not seek help for both a mental and physical health concern due to the pandemic

Source: NHS Digital; 17-22 year olds, England

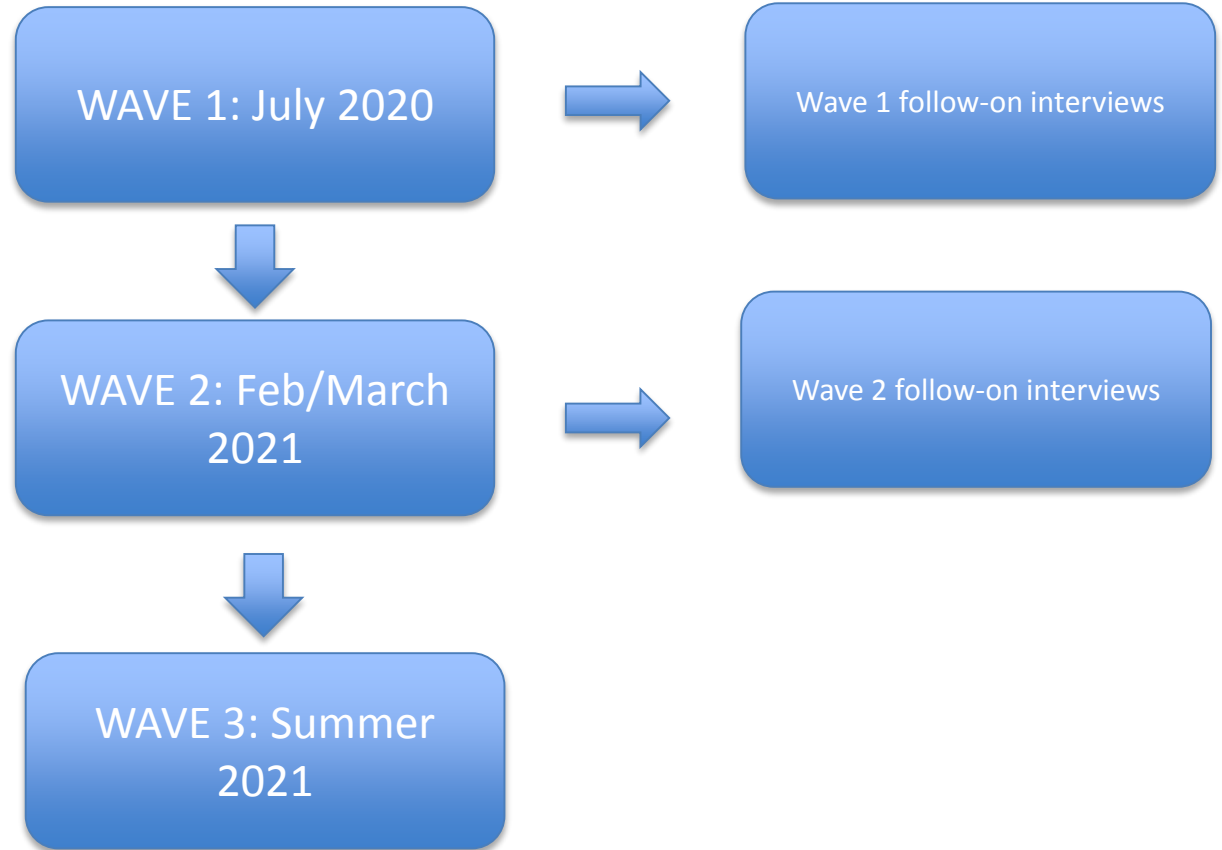


# Summary

- Follow-up using identical measure suggests significant increase in prevalence 2017-2020
- Concerns about unequal pandemic impacts supported by survey data
- Limitations: response rate; lack of intervening keeping-in-touch surveys; face-to-face vs online
- Further work:
  - Fine grained & longitudinal analyses
  - Track impacts over time
  - Understand more about experience
  - Supported by MRC Covid-19 funding: “Tracking the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health of children, young people and families”



# What's next?



# Funding and Acknowledgments

**This study was funded by the Department of Health and Social Care, commissioned by NHS Digital, and carried out by the Office for National Statistics, the National Centre for Social Research, University of Cambridge and University of Exeter.**

**Dr Tamsin Newlove-Delgado was funded by an National Institute for Health Research Advanced Fellowship (NIHR300056) whilst undertaking this work. The views expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR, NHS or the UK Department of Health and Social Care.**

**Professor Tamsin Ford was also supported with funding from the UK Research and Innovation (Medical Research Council) as part of their “Ideas to address COVID-19” call.**

**We would also like to thank all of the team members at ONS, NatCen, NHS Digital, University of Cambridge and University of Exeter for their hard work, and the children, young people and families who took part for giving their time so generously.**



# References/resources

- [Figures in this presentation taken from:  
https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2020-wave-1-follow-up](https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2020-wave-1-follow-up)
- Vizard T, Sadler K, Ford T, Newlove-Delgado T et al. (2020) Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2020. NHS Digital:  
[https://files.digital.nhs.uk/CB/C41981/mhcyp\\_2020\\_rep.pdf](https://files.digital.nhs.uk/CB/C41981/mhcyp_2020_rep.pdf)

