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Education Inclusion  
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# **‘Disabled’ students in higher education**



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# Overview

- Increase in numbers and changes in categories – impact of DDA Part 4 and the Singleton Report (Report of the National Working Party on Dyslexia in Higher Education, 1999)
- Heterogeneous group – differences in *need, experiences and outcomes* but most statistical analysis compares disabled with non-disabled
- Recent Scottish legislation on access to higher education – includes ‘underrepresented’ groups but there is a lack of data and intersectional analyses



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# Increases and changes in categories (FT U-G) UK, HESA



Type of impairment	1994-95	2004-05	2013-14
Unseen disability	57.5	17.1	nil
Dyslexia ( <i>Specific learning difficulty</i> )	16.2	54.2	53.3
Other disability ( <i>or medical condition</i> )	8.9	10.2	8.8
Deaf/hard of hearing	5.9	3.7	2.1
Wheelchair/mobility difficulties ( <i>A physical impairment or mobility issues</i> )	2.9	2.6	3
Blind/partially sighted	3.9	2.4	0.2
Multiple disabilities ( <i>Two or more conditions</i> )	3.3	4.8	5.3
Mental health difficulties	1.2	4.0	12.5
Personal care support	0.2	0.1	nil
( <i>Social communication and</i> ) Autistic spectrum disorder	nil	0.9	4
Proportion of all F-T first degree students	3.6	7.1	11.3



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# Different students – different needs – different outcomes (from Fuller, et al, 2009)

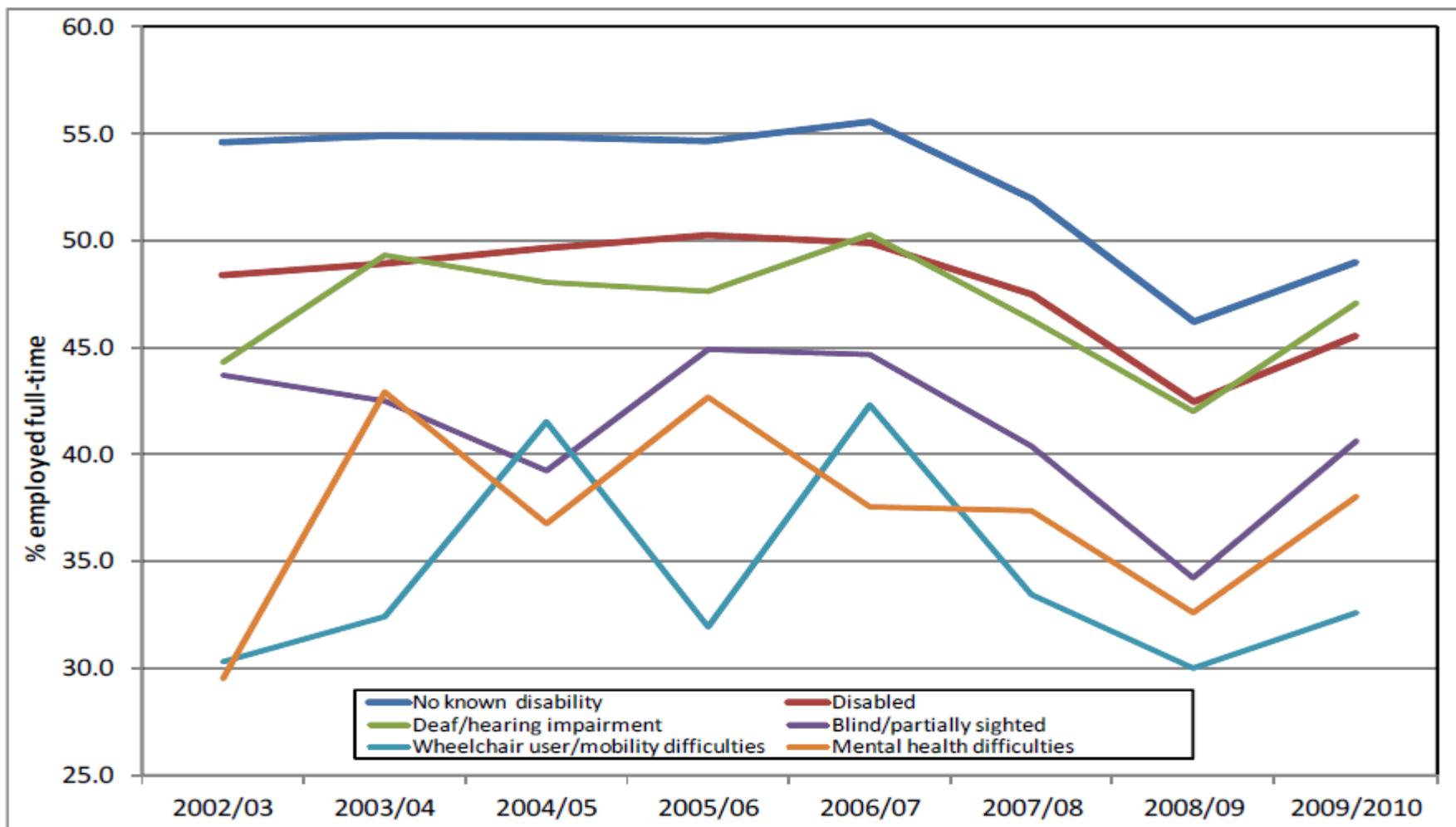


- I'm still having problems with **attendance** and stuff. But I've had another seizure as well which is a, a bit of a strange thing. I don't know what happened (Teresa - epilepsy); Outcome: non completion
- **Physical access** has a knock on effect on everything else, I would end up sitting right up at the back with a little table, completely cut off; I had a **note taker**; [with no] knowledge of Spanish language, [but] was the PA who was doing the note taking [and by 4<sup>th</sup> year the course was taught in Spanish] (Karrie – cerebral palsy/wheelchair user); Outcome: 3<sup>rd</sup> class Honours
- she would use a lot of **overheads** for things and **I would lose visual sight** of what my aim was for this workshop, and then she would just put overheads up ... and I found that so difficult. **Personal life** - university is geared to seventeen, eighteen year olds who don't have a life (Jean – mature student, dyslexia); Outcome: First class Honours
- it's like an ordinary radio mike that you've got on for the lecture and then I've just got the other end, the same sort of thing ... [it worked] but the **PE teachers wouldn't wear** it. (Lesley –hearing impairment); Outcome: Unknown



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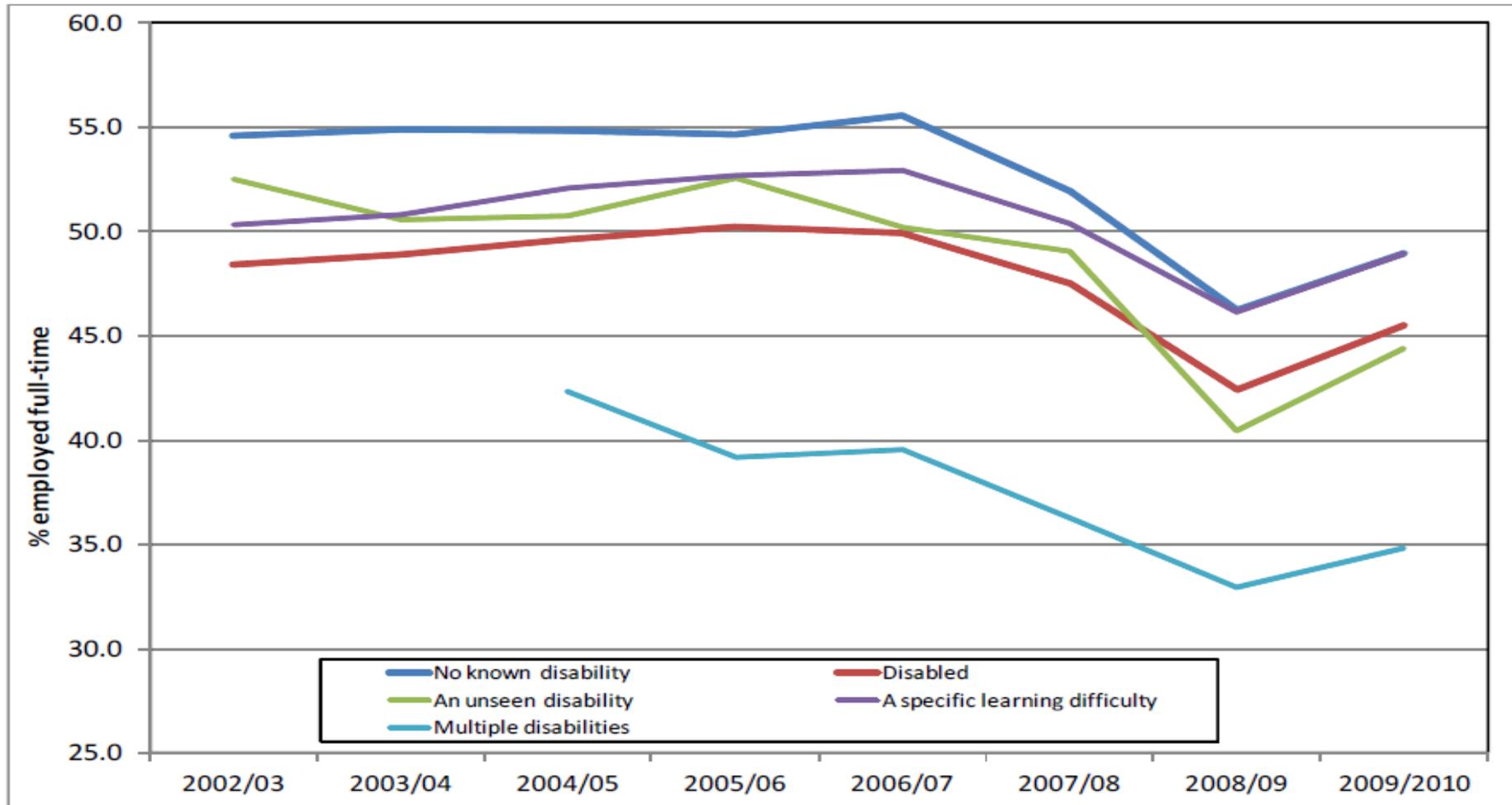
# Outcomes: Employment rates (AGCAS, 2013)





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# Outcomes: employment rates continued (AGCAS, 2013)





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# Outcome agreements, widening access and disabled students



The Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013 places a number of statutory duties on SFC in relation to access to colleges and universities. These include provisions that mean institutions:

- must have regard for the desirability of widening access among under-represented socio-economic groups
- have a duty to define what under-represented means (SFC Key Priorities 2014-2017)
- [aim to] increase ... the proportion of Scottish-domiciled undergraduate entrants from the 40% most deprived postcodes (from SFC Guidance AY 2015-16)



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# Underrepresentation – how do you define it? And how do you capture differences within a group?

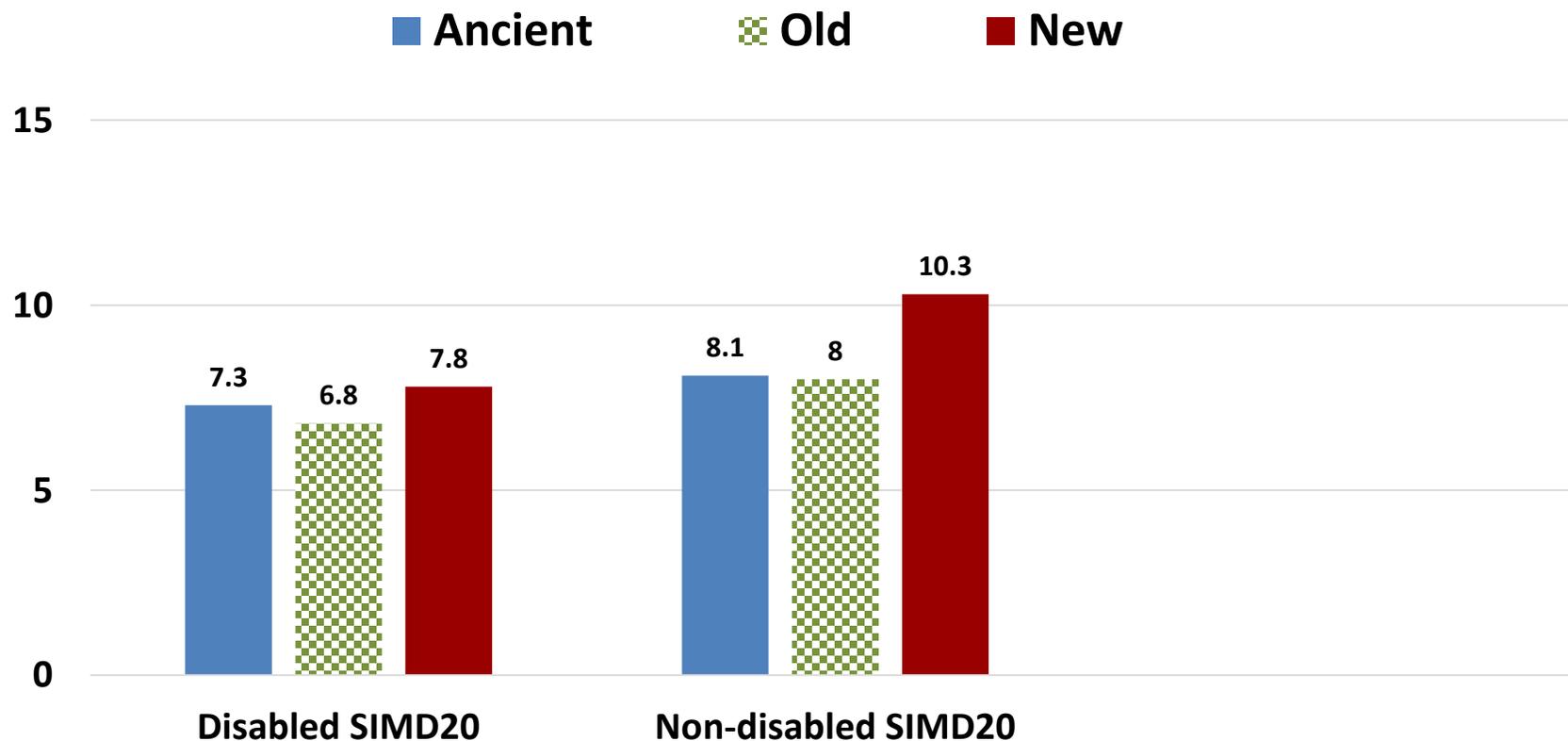


- How do you know who is underrepresented?
  - Gender is not problematic – we know overall population
  - Disability – we don't know the population; LFS asks about health;
  - Little known about disabled students from low socioeconomic backgrounds
- How do you ensure that you capture differences within a group, e.g. disabled? Disabled group in higher education is skewed – numbers in some categories very high – in others very low



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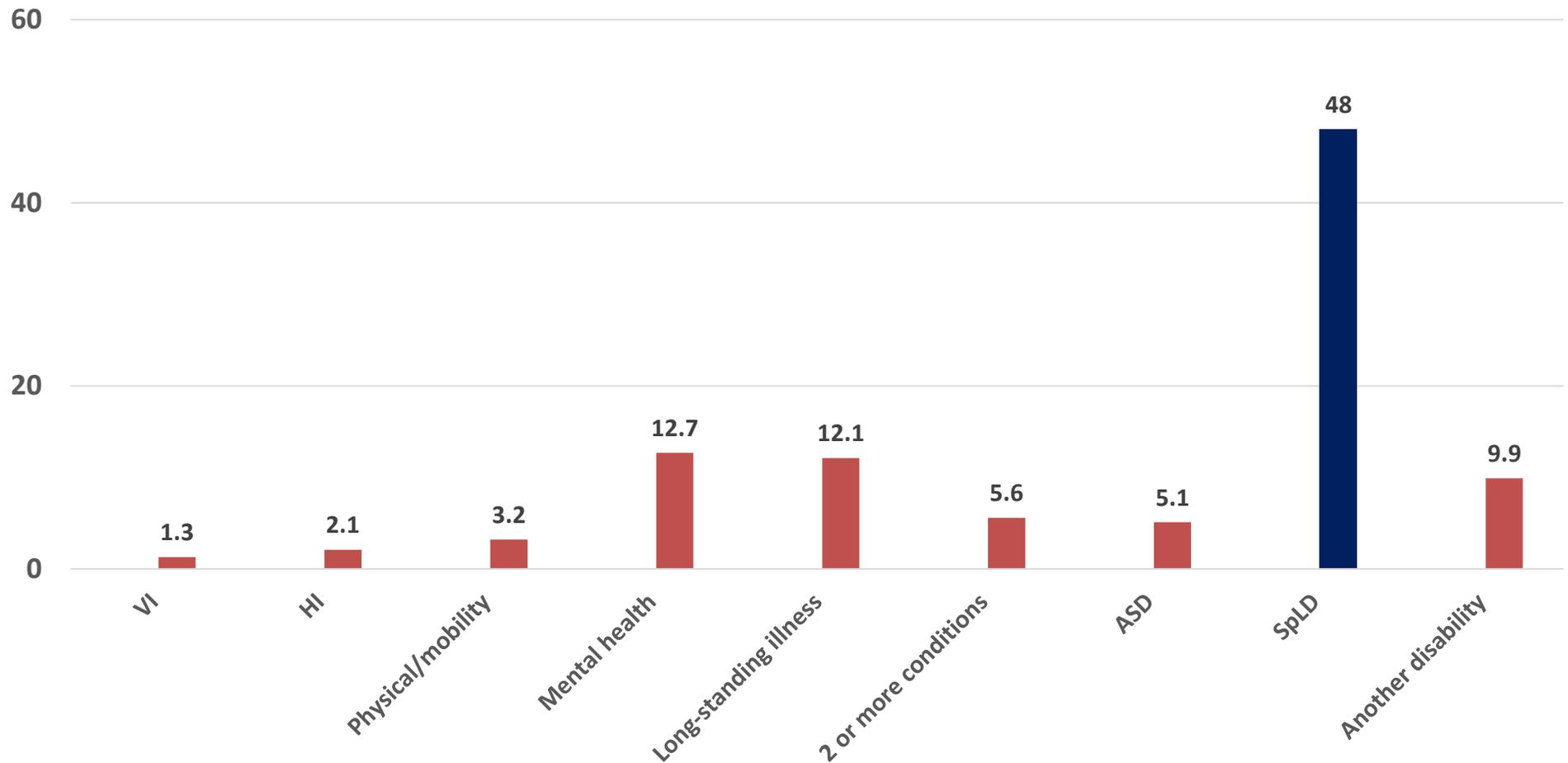
# Access: disabled/non-disabled from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, HESA, 2015





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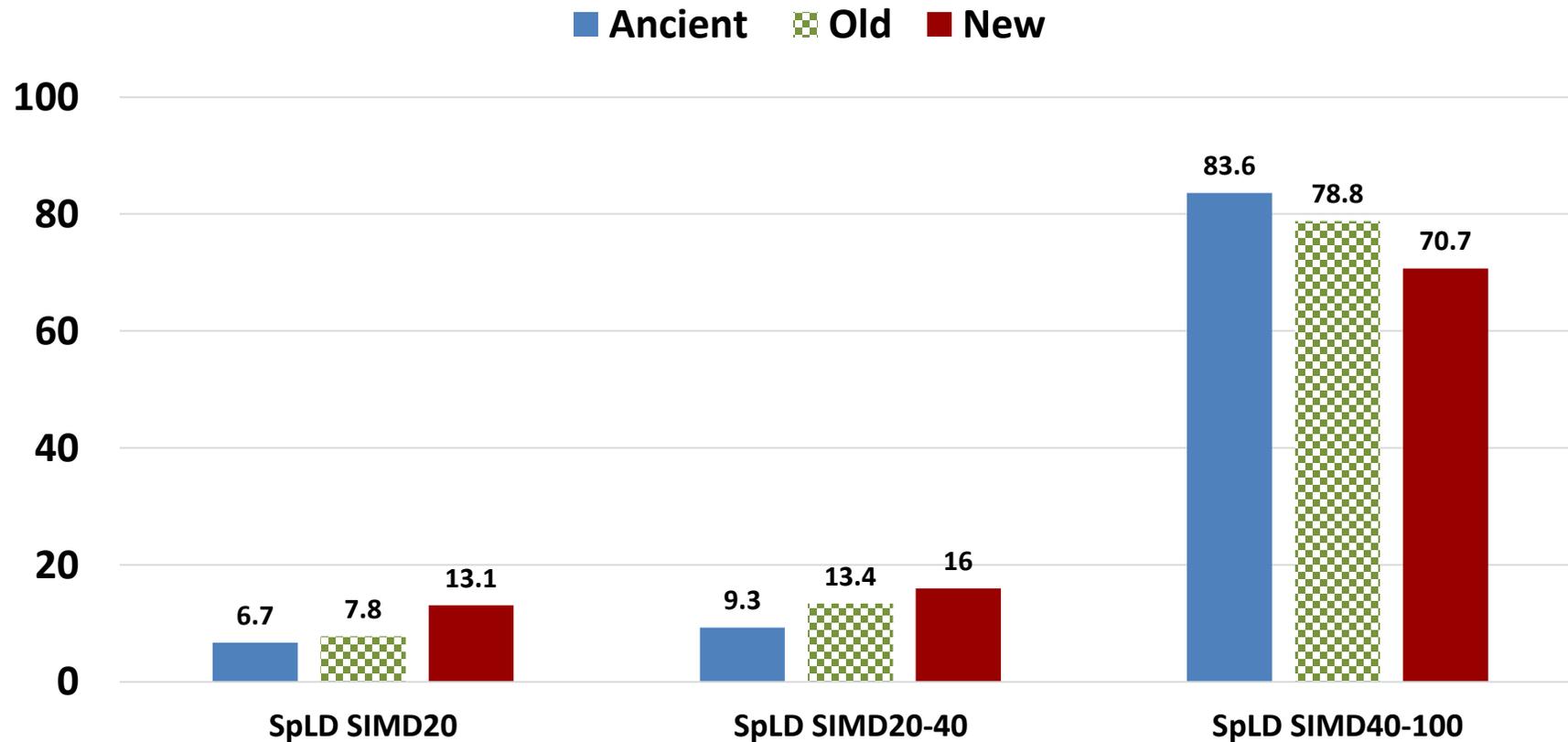
# Percentage of Scottish students by type of impairment, HESA, 2015





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# SpLD and socioeconomic background, HESA, 2015



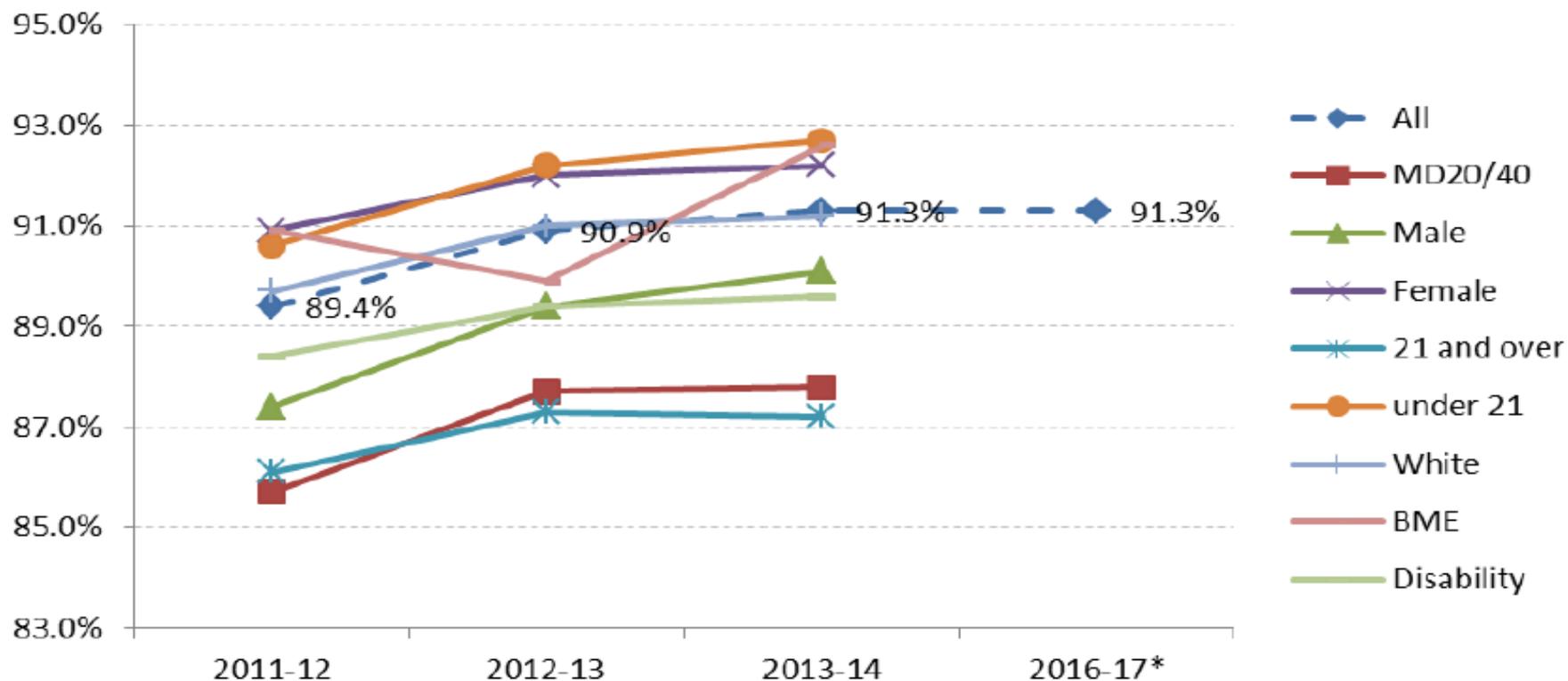


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# Returning to study in year 2, SFC



The proportion of full-time first year Scottish-domiciled entrants from different protected characteristic groups returning to study in year two



Source: HESA



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# A report on Deaf or Hard of Hearing 18-24 year olds noted that:



*‘the social networks and advocacy power of their parents were closely related to their **socio-economic status**. They played a significant role in shaping the young people’s experiences of school education, as well as their post-school journeys’ (Fordyce, et al, 2013, p.113)*



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# Three key messages

1. Disabled students are not a homogeneous group – they have:
  - different impairments
  - different needs
  - different outcomes
2. Disabled students from disadvantaged backgrounds are potentially doubly disadvantaged because:
  - they do not necessarily have access to social networks that can help them
  - they are probably at greater risk of dropping out
3. We need more fine-grained analysis of access to university, retention and outcomes for disabled students by type of impairment



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# References

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Fuller, M., Georgeson, J., Healey, M., Hurst, A., Kelly, K., Riddell, S., Roberts, H. and Weedon, E. (2009) *Improving Disabled Students' Learning: Experiences and outcomes*, London, Routledge

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