



Folkhälsomyndigheten

# Mental Health among Children and Youth in Sweden: trends, prevention and promotion

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# Mental health of children and youth in Sweden: trends



# Mental Health of Children and Youth in Sweden: trends

## Health, *mental health* and health behavior monitoring systems

- Employed to
  - guide national prioritization
  - measure development
- Surveys in use in Sweden
  - **The national public health survey – “Health on Equal Terms”**
  - **Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC)**
  - Living Conditions Survey of Children
  - Nation-wide school survey on alcohol and other drugs

# Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC)

- **Aim:**

- Gain new insight into young people's health and well-being (11-, 13- and 15- years old)
- Follow the development within countries and regions, and
- Make comparisons between countries and regions.

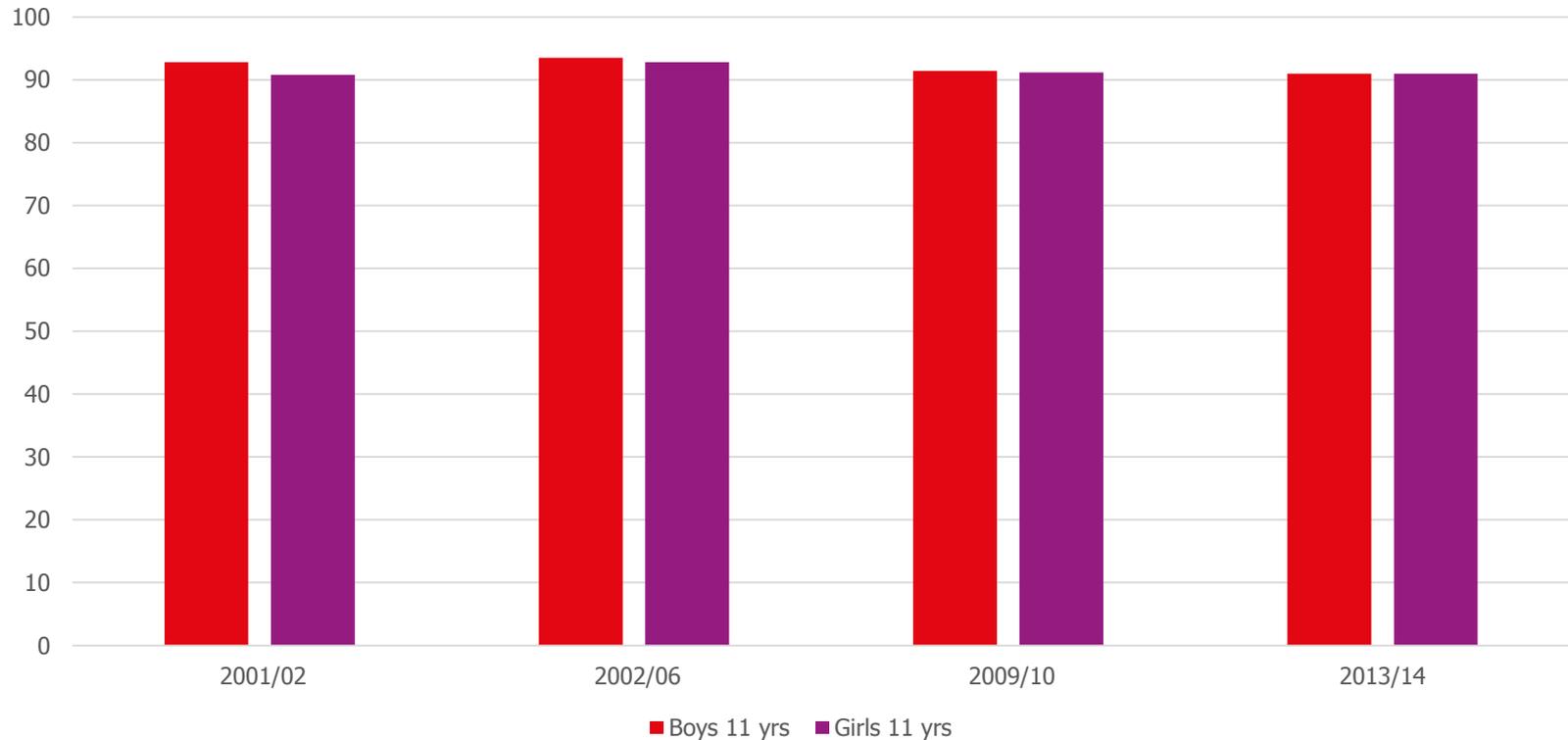
- **Study design:**

- Cross-sectional
- >40 countries and regions across Europe and North America
- Schoolbased
- Conducted every four years since 1985/86, latest 2013/14

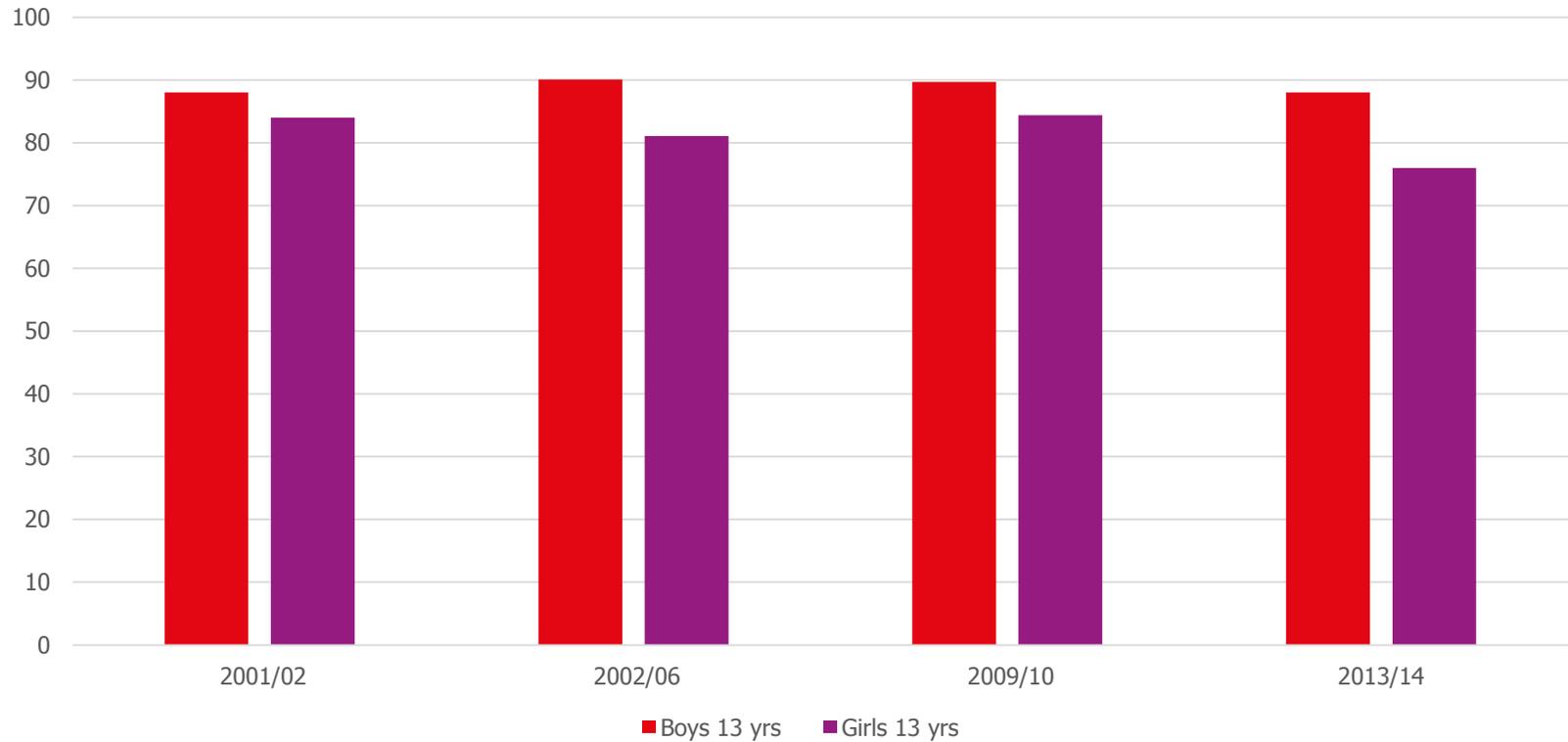
# Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC)

- **Questionnaire:**
  - **Self-rated health and general well-being**
  - Risk behaviour
  - Eating habits and physical activity
  - Social relationships
  - School environment

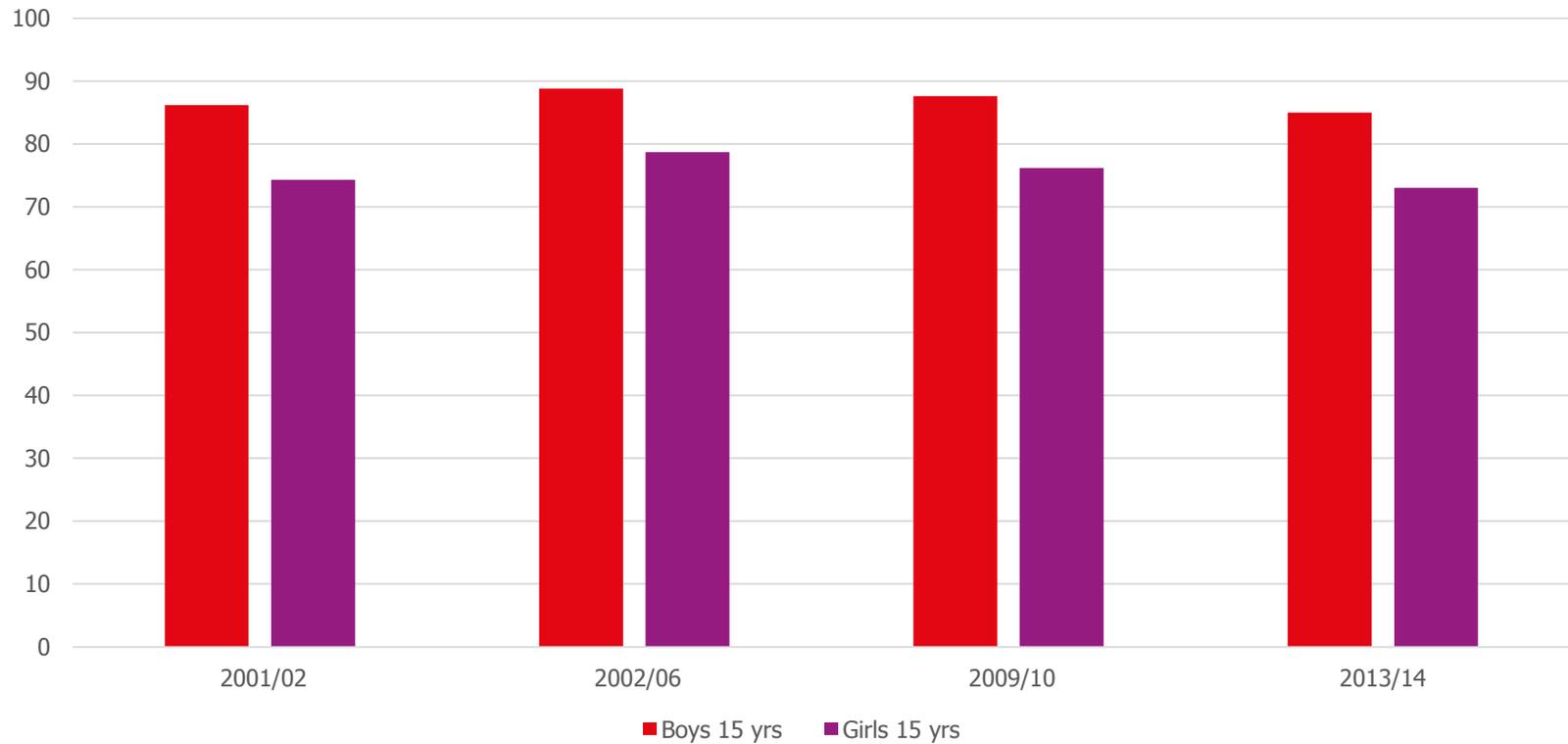
# 11-year-olds who report high life satisfaction, 2001/02–2013/14.



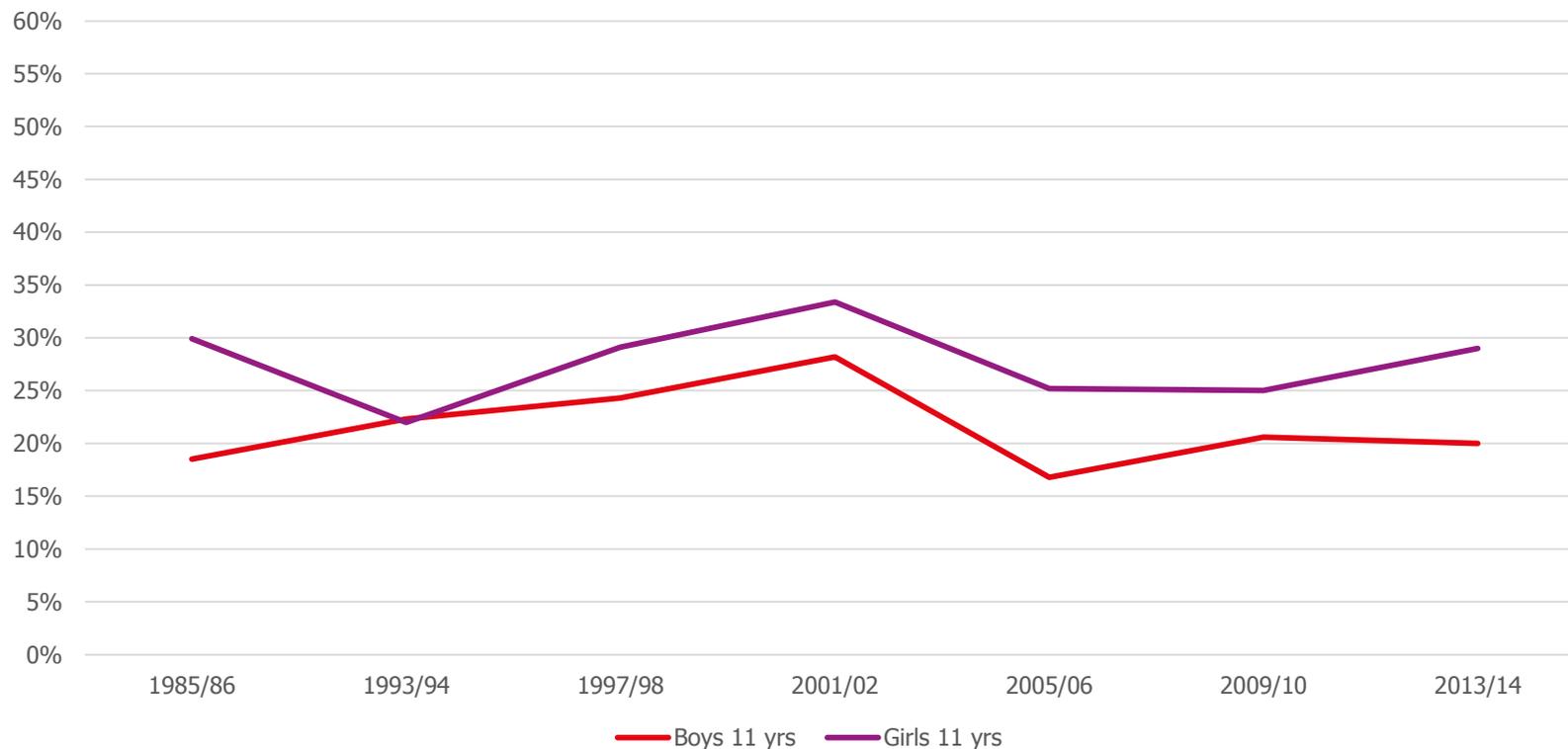
# 13-year-olds who report high life satisfaction, 2001/02–2013/14.



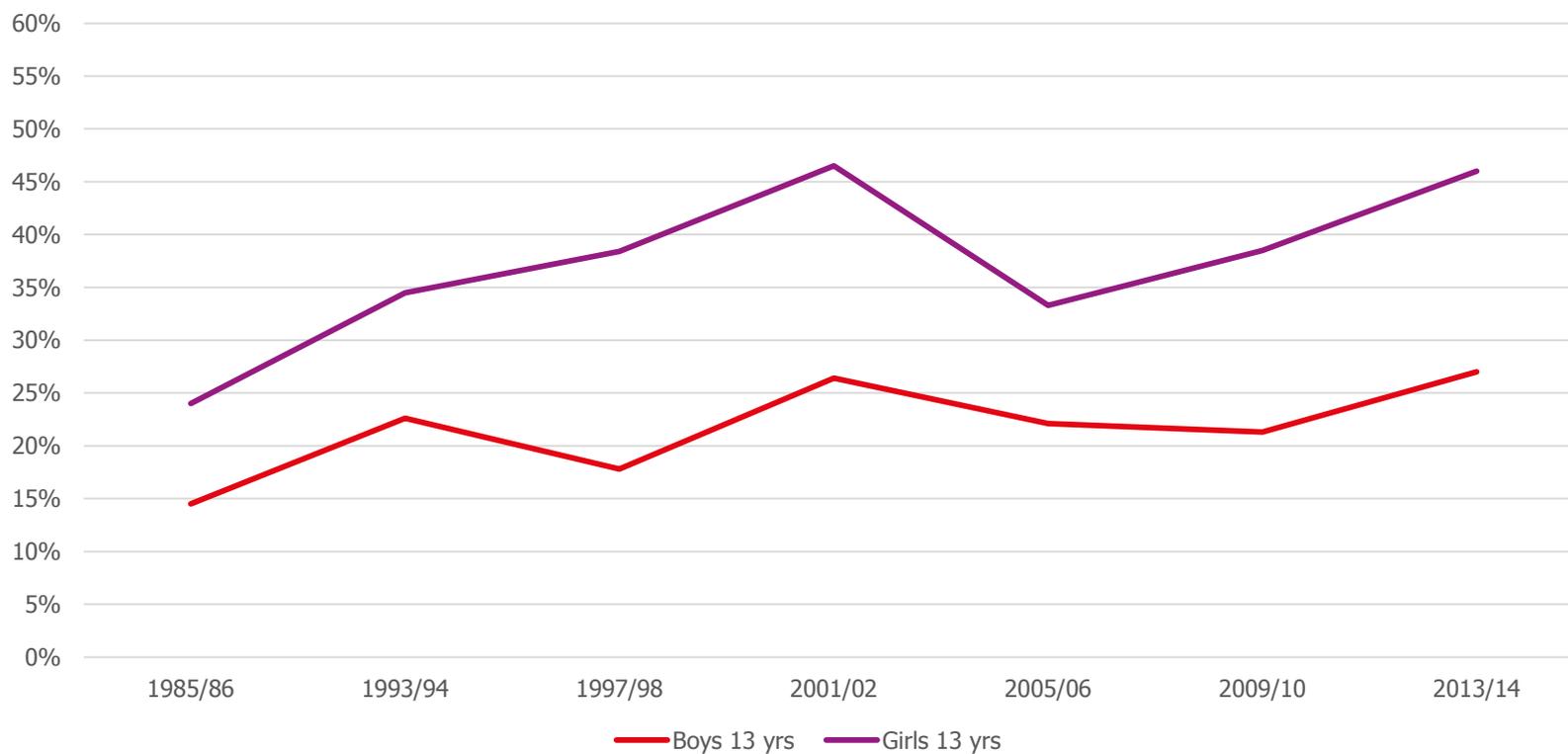
# 15-year-olds who report high life satisfaction, 2001/02–2013/14.



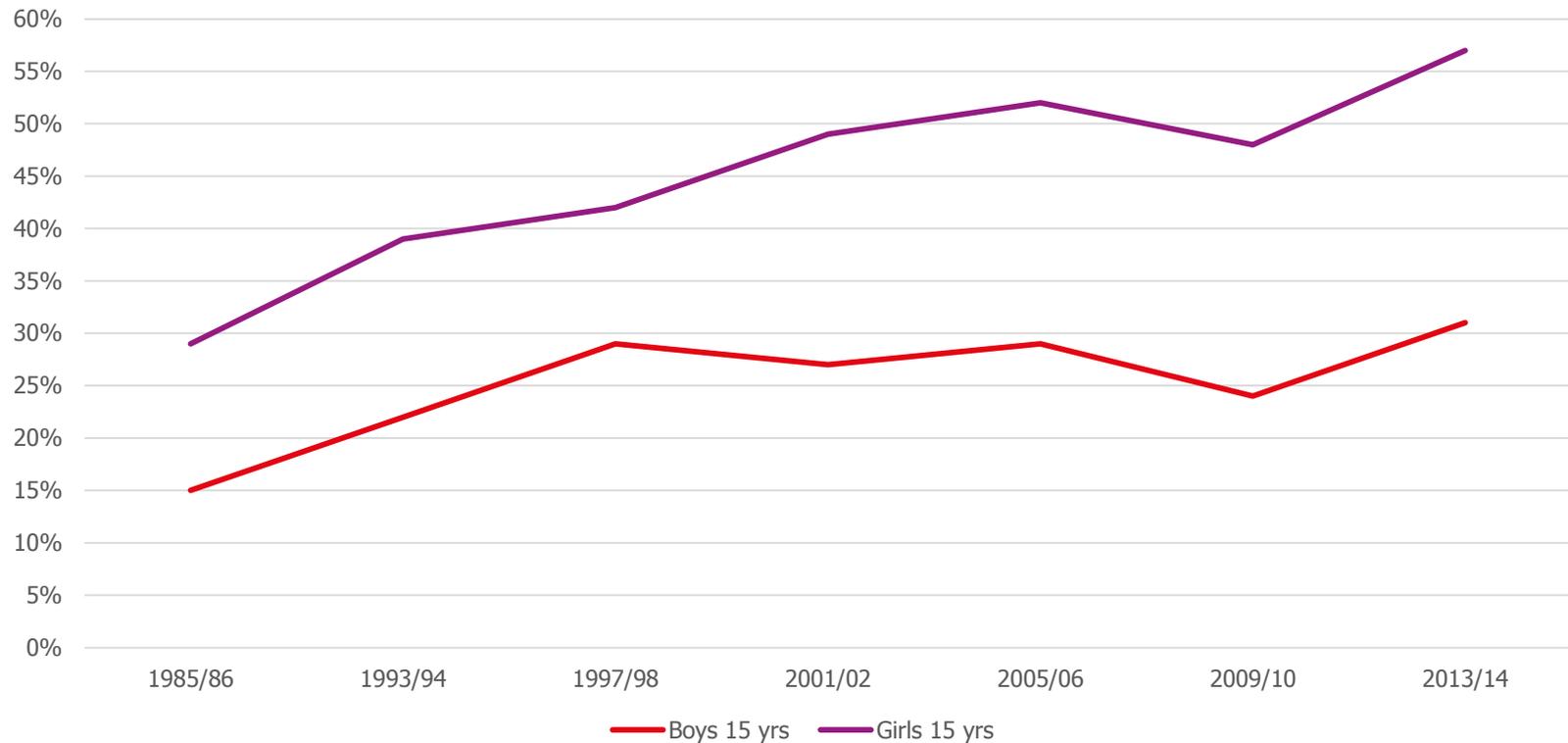
## At least two psychosomatic problems per week during the last 6 months, among 11-years old, 1985/96-2013/14.



# At least two psychosomatic problems per week during the last 6 months, among 13-years old, 1985/96-2013/14.



# At least two psychosomatic problems per week during the last 6 months, among 15-years old, 1985/96-2013/14.

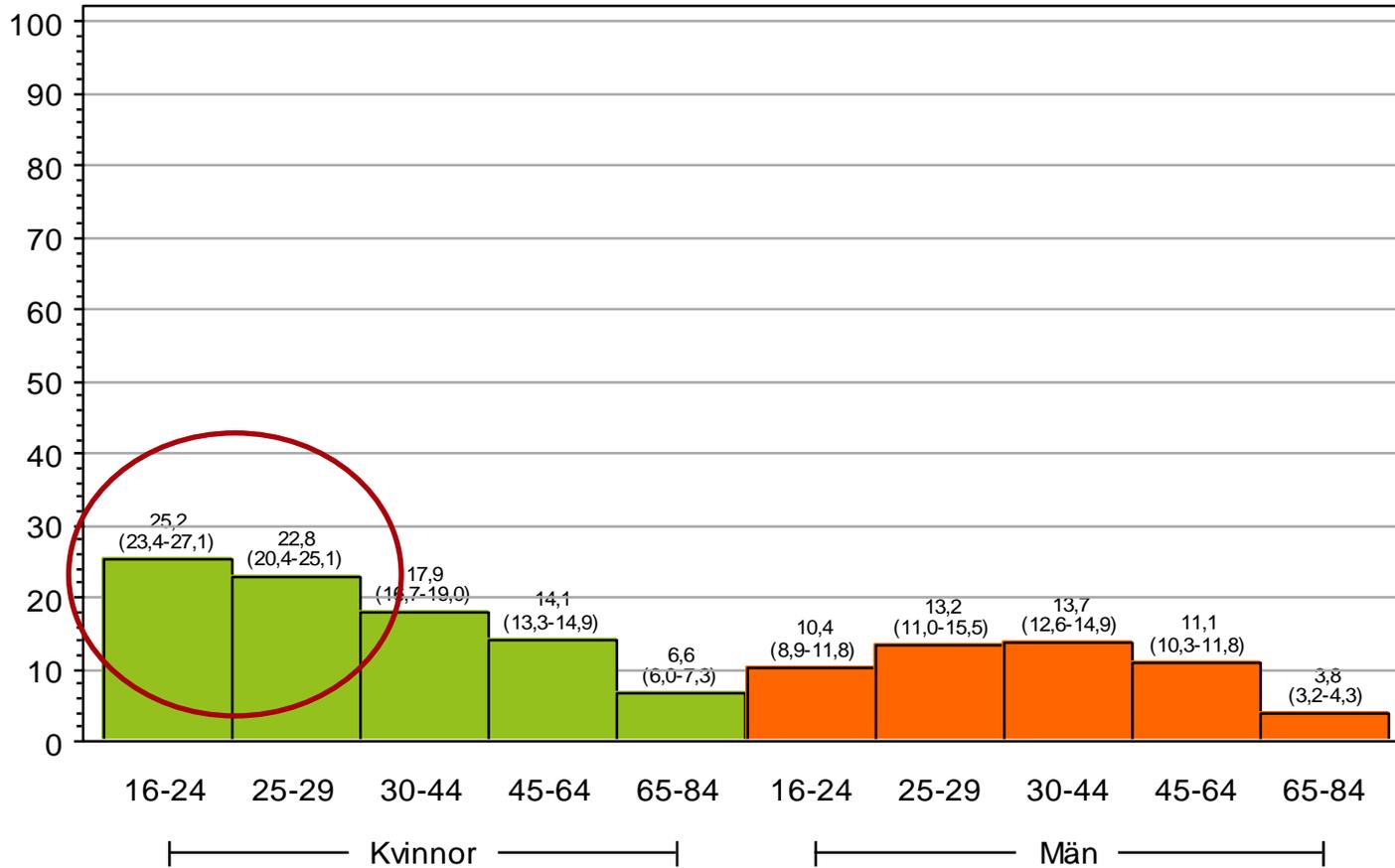


# The national public health survey – “Health on Equal Terms”

- Conducted annually (since 2004)
- Ongoing collaboration between the Public Health Agency of Sweden and county councils/regions in Sweden
- Response rate between 57–61%
- Survey selection: a total of 20,000 people, aged 16–84 years
  - Includes a **youth segment (16-24 years)**
  - Information on parents
- Covers questions about
  - physical and **mental health**, substance use, contact with healthcare services, living habits, financial conditions, work and occupation and safety and social relationships

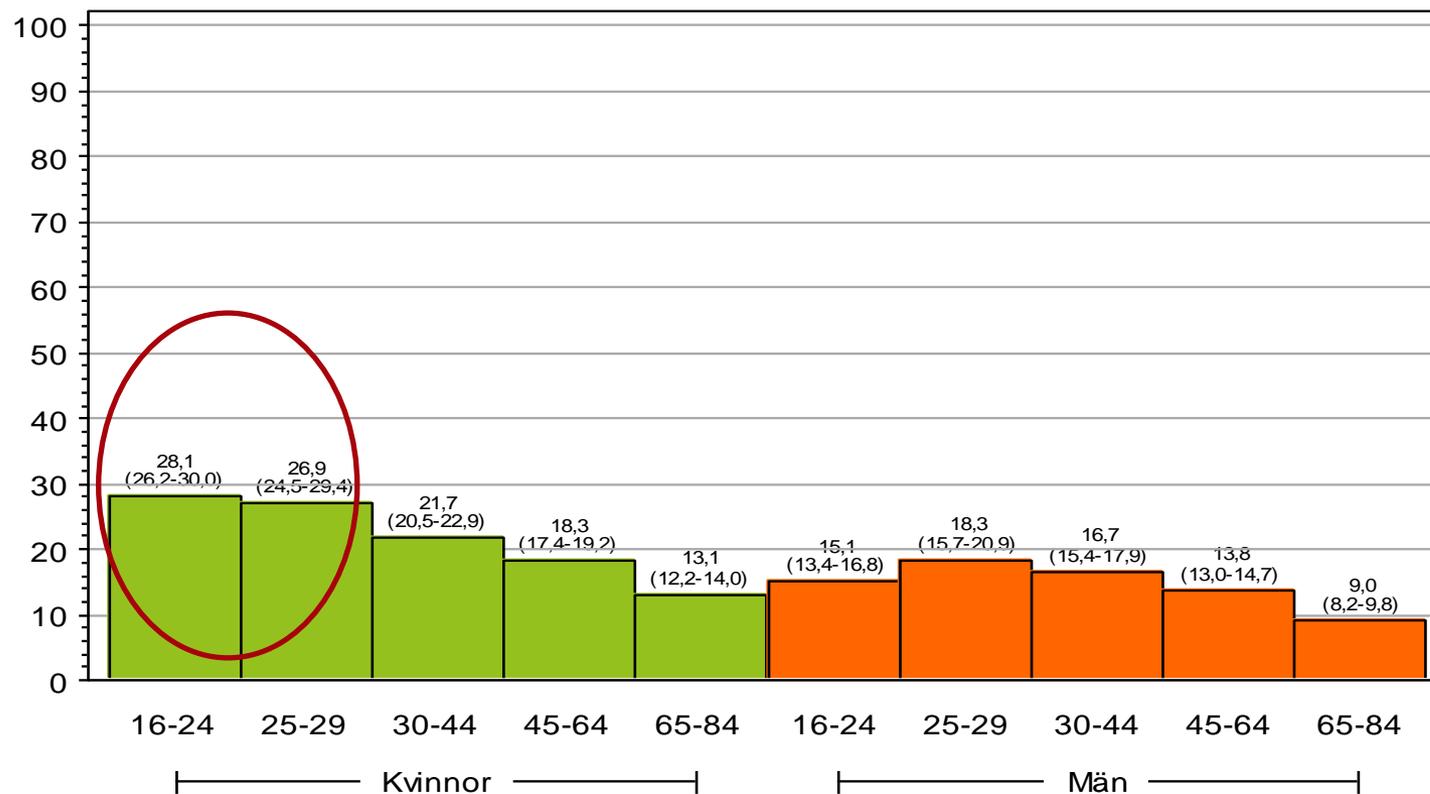
# Moderate to high levels of stress

Ganska till väldigt mycket stressad. Åren 2010-2013 sammanslagna



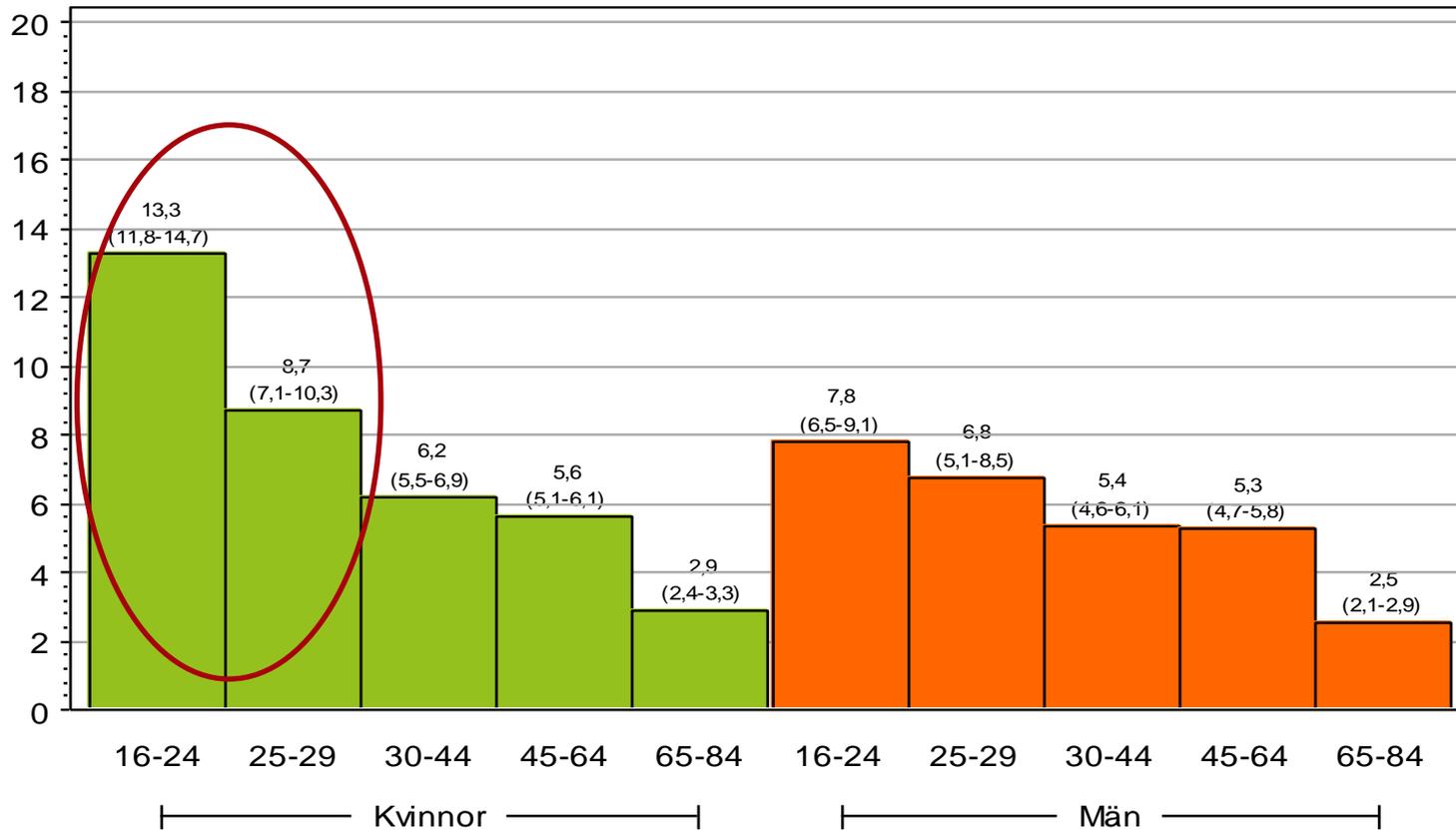
# Low mental wellbeing (GHQ12)

Nedsatt psykiskt välbefinnande. Åren 2010-2013 sammanslagna



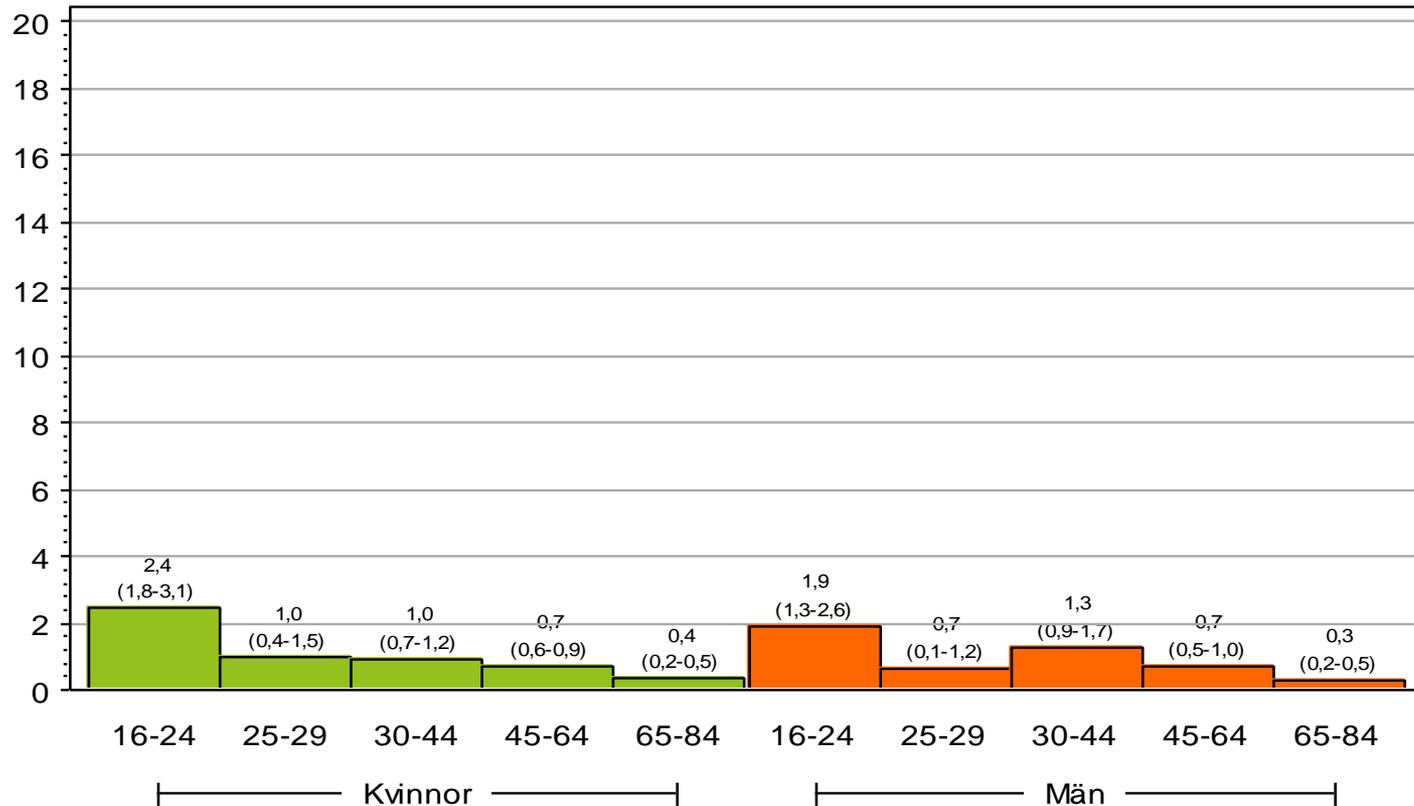
# Suicidal thoughts during the last 12 months

Suicidtankar. Åren 2010-2013 sammanslagna



# Suicide attempts during the last 12 months

Försökt ta sitt liv. Åren 2010-2013 sammanslagna



# Trends

Data from HBSC, Health on Equal Terms, other national surveys and national registers:

- Self-reported life satisfaction: high, stable
- Self-reported mental health problems: increase 13- and 15 year olds
- Psychiatric care for depression/anxiety, eating disorders: increase
- Suicide attempts: earlier increase, now stable.

Poor mental health is significantly more common among girls and among youth who are neither in work, nor in education or training.



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# Promotion and prevention



# The Swedish National Public Health Policy

## Overall objective

**create social conditions for good health on equal terms for the entire population**

# The Swedish National Public Health Policy

**A holistic perspective, based on the social determinants of health, was developed for the Swedish National Public Health Policy. No specific goal for mental health, but an integrated approach to *all* of the 11 objective domains is required.**

1. Participation and influence in society
2. Economic and social prerequisite
3. Conditions during childhood and adolescence
4. Health in working life
5. Environments and products
6. Health-promoting health services
7. Protection against communicable diseases
8. Sexuality and reproductive health
9. Physical activity
10. Eating habits and food
11. Alcohol, illicit drugs, doping, tobacco and gambling

# Promotion and prevention

## PRIO

- Mental illness – action plan for targeted interventions in the area of mental illness, 2012-2016.
- An agreement between the State and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) concerning joint responsibility for the action plan.
- Since 2012, SEK 870 million has been allocated annually to prevent mental illness and improve health and social care for those already affected.
- Children and youth: one of two highly prioritized target groups.

# Promotion and prevention

## PSYNK-project

- Agreement between the State and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), 2011-2014.
- Synchronise actions/interventions for children and youth at risk of, or suffering from, mental illness.
- An intersectoral perspective and multidisciplinary working methods.
- Issue specific themes
  - Intense coordinated care planning
  - "First-line" – early access and intervention
  - Mental health and school performance
- Approx. 50 municipalities and county councils involved in the PSYNC project.

# Promotion and prevention

- Coordinated national evidence-based management: mental illness (Government assignment, National Board of health and Welfare, in collaboration with other national agencies), 2011-2013. Including efforts aimed at children at risk for severe mental illness.
- A national strategy for developed universal parental support (Public Health Agency) 2009-.
- Support to children in families with addiction, mental illness, or where violence occur (Government assignment, within the ANDT-strategy, Public Health Agency), 2011-2015.

# Main challenges for mental health promotion and prevention in Sweden

- Increase in self-reported mental health problems and psychiatric care for depression/anxiety among youth and young adults.
- Problems more pronounced among girls/young women and among youth who are neither in work, nor in education or training.
- Lack of data, especially younger children and mental wellbeing. Data are essential for the surveillance and evaluation of interventions (“what is measured gets done”).

# Main challenges for mental health promotion and prevention in Sweden

- A large number of government assignments concerning children's mental health. Need for national coordination 1) monitoring systems and 2) prevention/promotion.
- Current national action plan is focused on targeted interventions to tackle mental illness.
- Need for a national mental health strategy, and corresponding action plans, which also includes mental wellbeing and health promotion strategies and interventions?
- Furthermore, actions need to be guided by scientific evidence.

*Thank you!*