

Improving the health of the nation

In England, over the past ten years, we have seen significant falls in the rates of drinking, smoking and taking illegal drugs in the young (11-15 years).



Smoking rates in England have declined from 39 per cent in 1980 to 20 per cent in 2010. However, socio-economic variation persists – the decline in smoking rates is more rapid in non-manual groups than manual.



1980

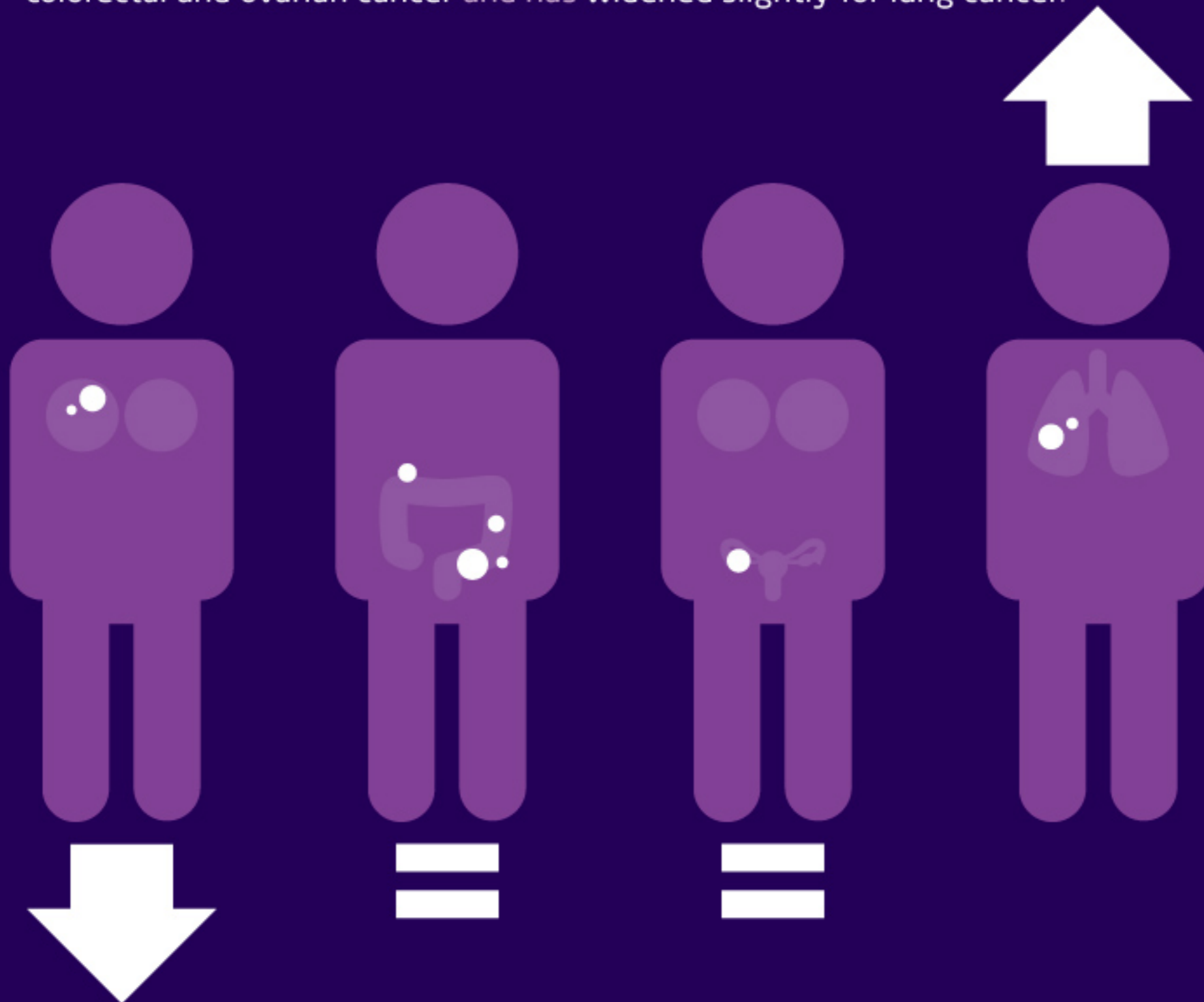


2010

Liver disease causes approximately 2 per cent of all deaths in England.
Of these, 40 per cent can be attributed to alcohol.



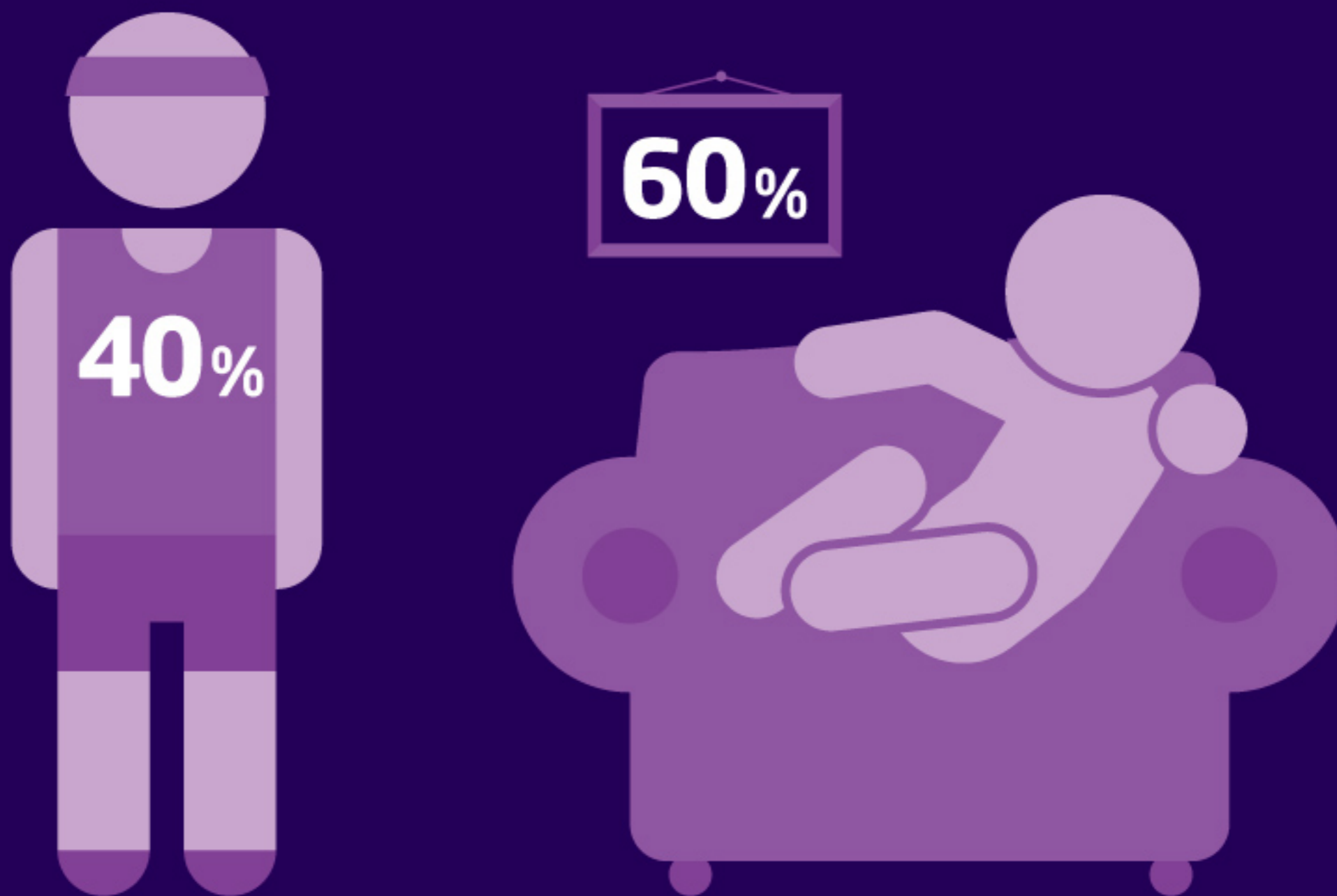
The gap in survival rates between England and the countries with the best cancer outcomes is closing in breast cancer, but has not narrowed for colorectal and ovarian cancer and has widened slightly for lung cancer.



Inequalities in mental health remain stark. The gap in life expectancy between those with a severe and enduring mental health problem and those without is 10 - 15 years on average.



Analysis of people's attitudes to their health suggests that only 40 per cent of the population are highly motivated to adopt healthy lifestyles; the remaining 60 per cent have a more negative or fatalistic attitude.



Estimates suggest that being overweight (BMI 25 to less than 30) reduces life expectancy by about three years, and being obese (BMI 30 or more) can reduce life expectancy by ten years.

