

Economic inactivity, defined by the Office for National Statistics, is where a person is not in paid work and has not sought work in the last 4 weeks or is not able to start work in the next 2 weeks. This could be for positive or negative reasons such as retirement, looking after family and home, being a student, long term or temporary sickness, or feeling ‘discouraged’ meaning a belief that no jobs are available.

In England it is required that young people remain in education and training until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. Statistics show the percentage of 16 and 17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known. The profile also includes unemployment benefits claimants data- these people are required to seek work and be available for work.

Why is this important?



Good quality employment contributes to good health and wellbeing, improving income and contributing to the economy.

What is the local context?



Torbay has significantly higher levels of economic inactivity due to long term sickness than the England average (Fig 4).

What should we do?

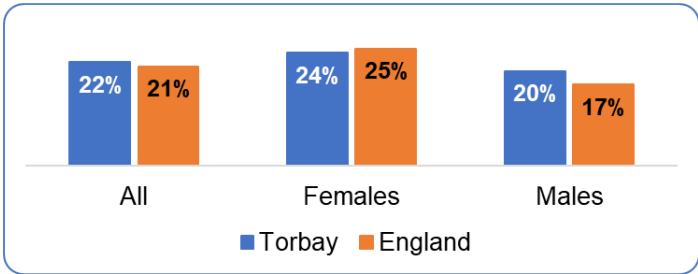


Help people move into work where appropriate, and support them to maintain suitable work which is good for their health and wellbeing.

Economic inactivity: 22% of Torbay’s working age residents are economically inactive in the 3 years combined in Fig 1. This means that 78% of Torbay’s working age residents are economically active so they are in work or they are unemployed and seeking work within the last 4 weeks and available for work in the next 2 weeks.

Sex: Torbay has a higher percentage of economic inactivity in working age females than males (Fig 1). However, Torbay is lower than the England average in females and higher in males.

Fig 1: Economic inactivity, aged 16 to 64, April 2022 to March 2025

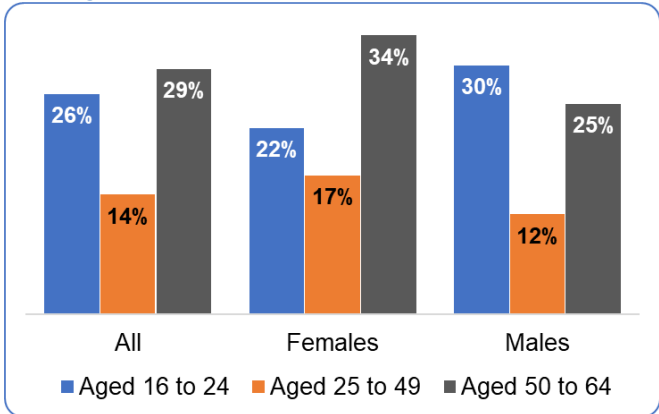


Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)- [Nomis](#) (Annual Population Survey)

Age: Amongst working age people in Torbay, the percentage of economic inactivity in 50 to 64 year olds is significantly higher in females than males (Fig 2). In 16 to 24 year olds the opposite is true with males significantly higher than females. The England average, however, has higher levels in

females than males for all age groups. Torbay has much lower levels of economic inactivity amongst 16 to 24 year olds and higher levels amongst 50 to 64 year olds than England.

Fig 2: Economic inactivity, aged 16 to 64, Torbay, April 2022 to March 2025



Source: ONS- [Nomis](#) (Annual Population Survey)

Fig 3: Economic inactivity amongst disabled people as defined by the Equality Act, aged 16 to 64, April 2022 to March 2025

	All	Females	Males
Torbay	48%	45%	51%
England	41%	41%	40%

Source: ONS- [Nomis](#) (Annual Population Survey)

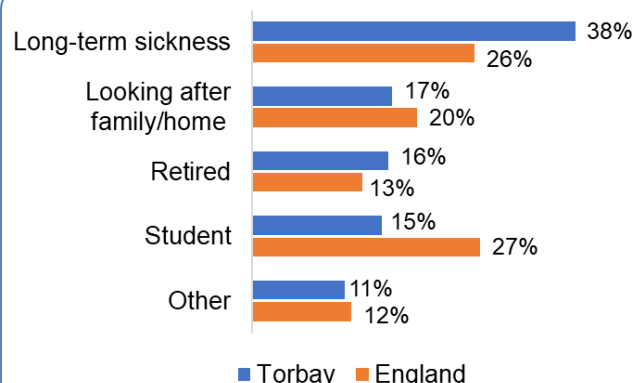
Disability: Economic inactivity levels of working age residents defined as disabled under the Equality Act are higher in Torbay than the England average- 48% compared to 41% in England (Fig 3). The difference is especially pronounced in males with 51% of disabled males in Torbay being economically inactive compared to 40% in England.

Reasons for economic inactivity: Fig 4 shows the reasons why working age people are economically inactive. Torbay’s most common reason is long term sickness, making up 38% of those who are economically inactive compared to 26% in England. Long term sickness is the reason for 40% of economically inactive Torbay males compared to 37% of females. England is also higher amongst males in this.

In Torbay, looking after family/home is the reason for 21% of economically inactive females. In England the most common reason is being a student. 'Other' can include reasons such as not needing/wanting a job, awaiting job application results or not yet started looking for work.

Categories not included in Fig 4 are temporary sickness and those feeling 'discouraged' as numbers are low and suppressed for Torbay. In England these reasons make up 2.4% of the total.

Fig 4: Reasons as a % of economic inactivity, aged 16 to 64, April 2022 to March 2025



Source: ONS- [Nomis](#) (Annual Population Survey)

Wanting to work: Fig 5 shows that 27% of economically inactive working age people in Torbay would like a job. This is considerably higher than the England average.

Fig 5: Economic inactivity, % who want a job, aged 16 to 64, April 2022 to March 2025

	All	Females	Males
Torbay	27%	26%	27%
England	18%	17%	19%

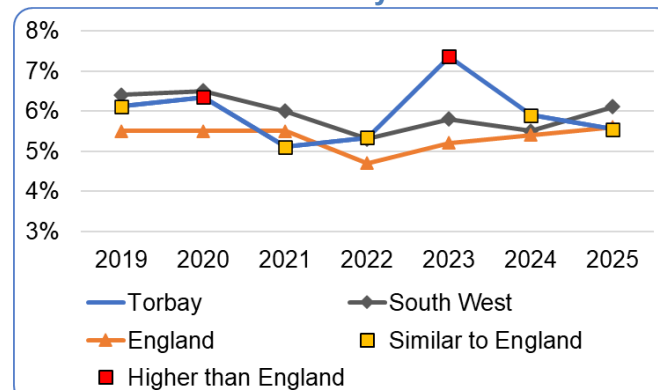
Source: ONS- [Nomis](#) (Annual Population Survey)

NEET: Torbay's percentage of 16 to 17 year olds who are not in education, employment or training or whose activity is not known has fluctuated over the years. In 2025, Torbay is similar to both the South West and England figures. (Fig 6)

Nationally, there are higher levels of 16 to 17 year old young men who are NEET or whose activity is not known compared to young women. Due to the low numbers, Torbay's figures fluctuate.

More than twice the percentage of 16 to 17 year olds in Torbay who have recognised SEND (Special educational needs and disability) are NEET or their activity is unknown compared to those not recognised as SEND. In England as a whole this is around twice as high.

Fig 6: Percentage of 16 to 17 year olds who are NEET or whose activity is not known

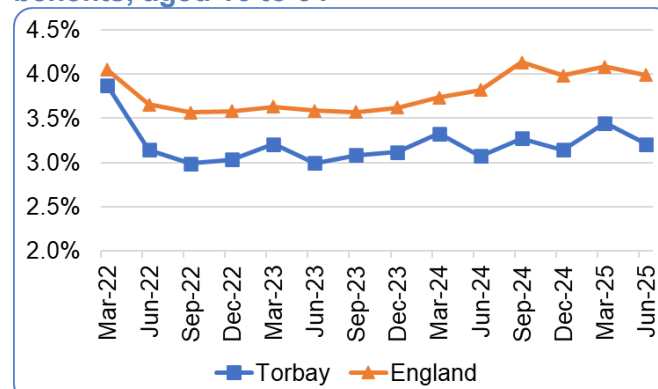


Source: Department for Education- [Explore education statistics 2024/25](#)

Unemployment benefits claimants: This measures people claiming benefit principally for the reason of being unemployed. They are required to seek work and be available for work. There will be some that are counted as claimants although earnings in the particular month led to no actual payment being made.

Torbay has a significantly lower percentage of claimants than England in the 3 years shown (Fig 7). In June 2025 this is 3.2% of working age people in Torbay (England is 4.0%). Torbay's highest percentages are in people in their 30s with males higher than females.

Fig 7: Percentage claiming unemployment benefits, aged 16 to 64



Source: ONS- [Nomis](#) (claimants and mid-year population estimates)

Local plan: Get Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Working is a local plan being developed (at the time of writing) to help people move into work and then stay in work that is secure, rewarding and good for health and wellbeing.

References:

The sources of data used are referenced and linked to throughout the profile. All data was accessed in August 2025.