



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

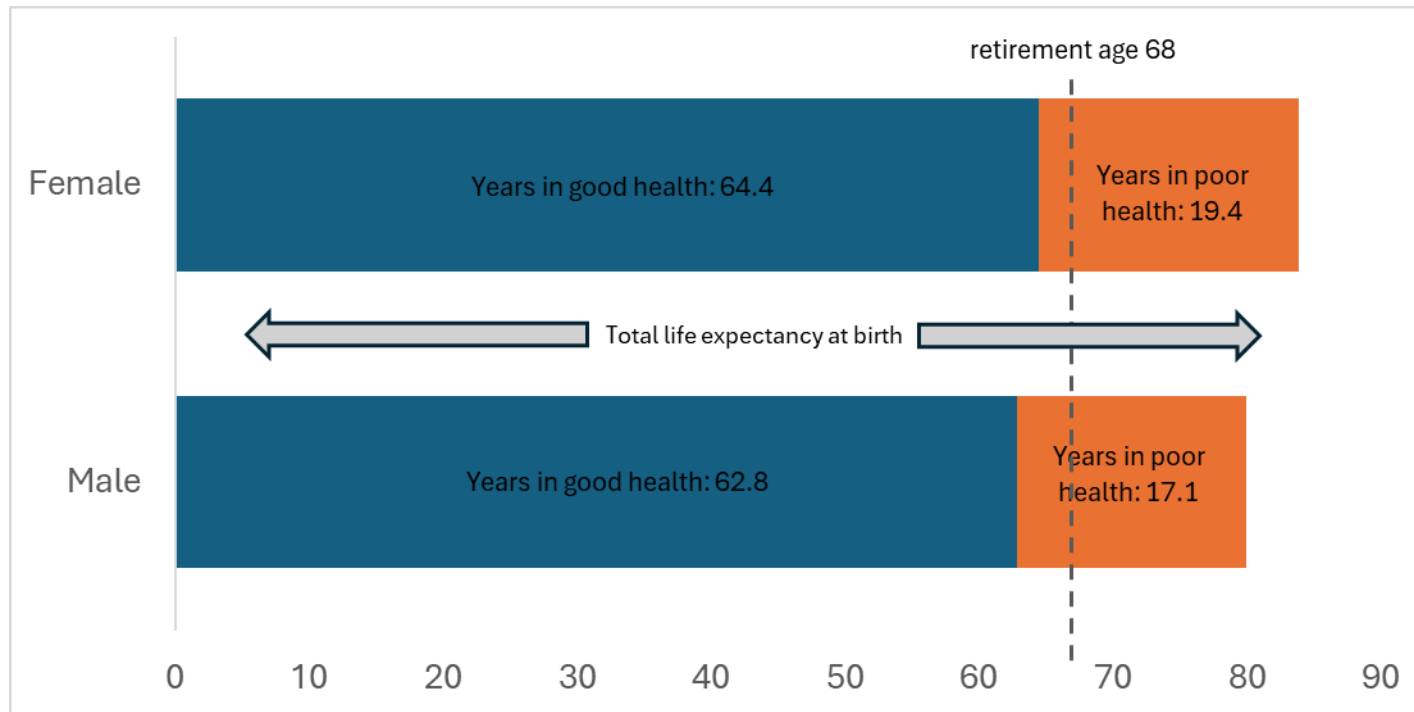
Public Health Annual Report 2026

Supporting Data

westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk



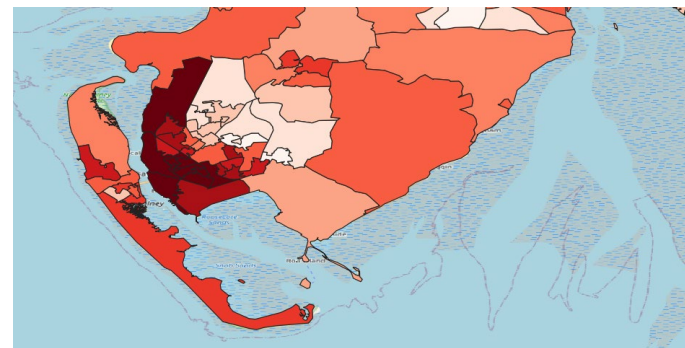
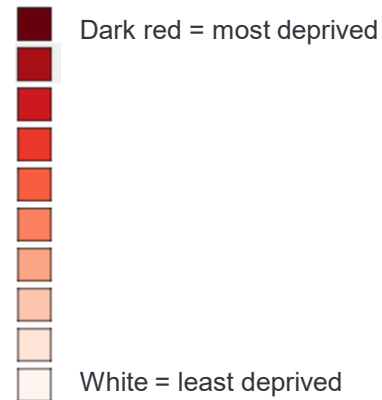
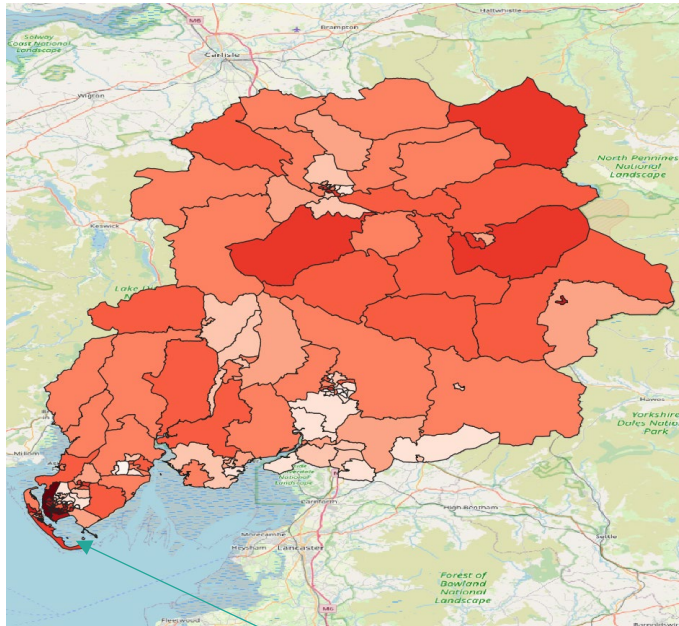
Healthy Life Expectancy & Retirement Age



Male life expectancy in Westmorland and Furness is currently 79.9 years
Female life expectancy in Westmorland and Furness is longer, at 83.3 years. Men can expect to live 79% of their life in good health, whereas women can expect to live 76% of their life in good health. Taking a current retirement age of 68 years therefore, men can expect to live for 15 years in good health up to retirement, and women for 13.5 years. Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy is better than regional and national averages. There will be differences across the local authority area that this data does not show.

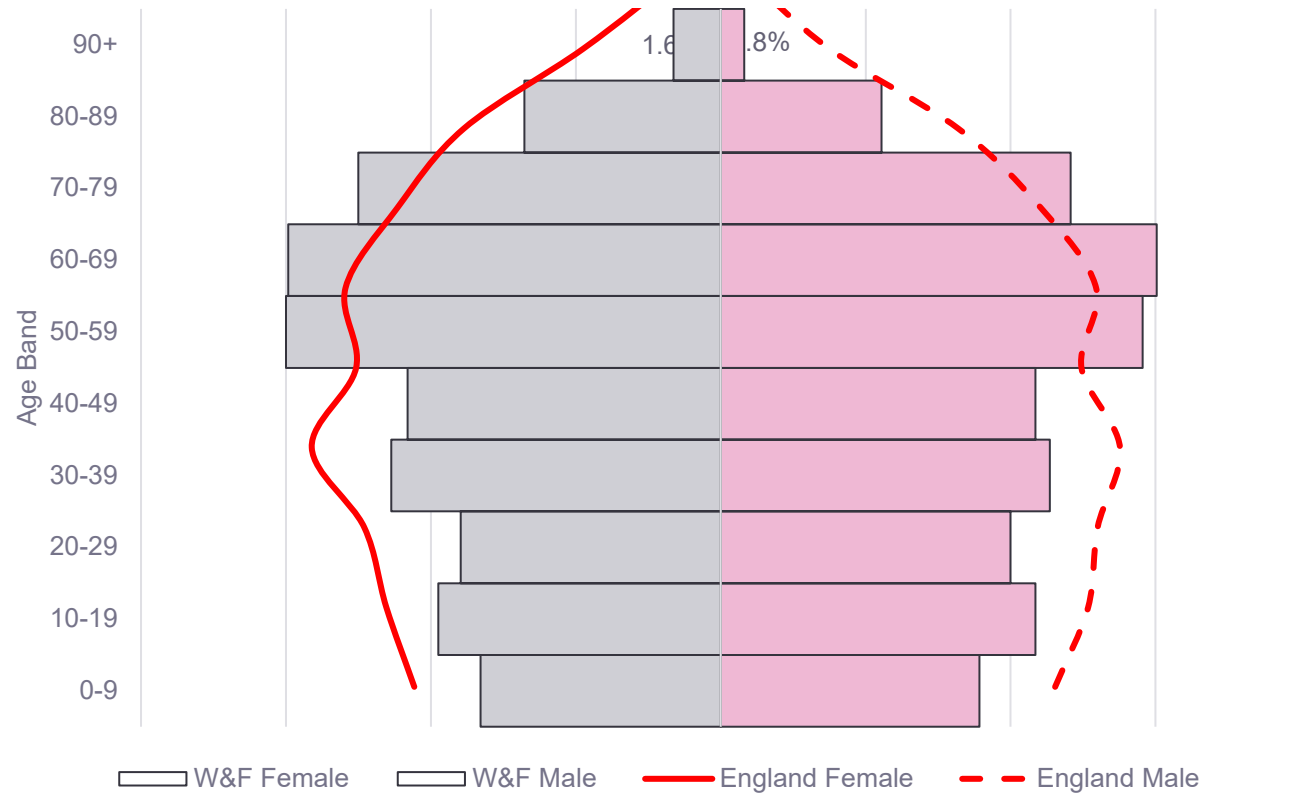


Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025



The distribution of deprivation across Westmorland and Furness reflects how the building blocks of health, such as employment, education, housing, and poverty are experienced differently across the local authority region. Deprivation is more common within the former Barrow in Furness district, where around 42% of neighbourhoods are within the 3 most deprived deciles of deprivation in England, and 18% are in the most deprived decile. This compares to Eden, where only 5.6% are in the 3 most deprived deciles, and South Lakeland where no neighbourhoods are in the least deprived 3 deciles of deprivation in England.

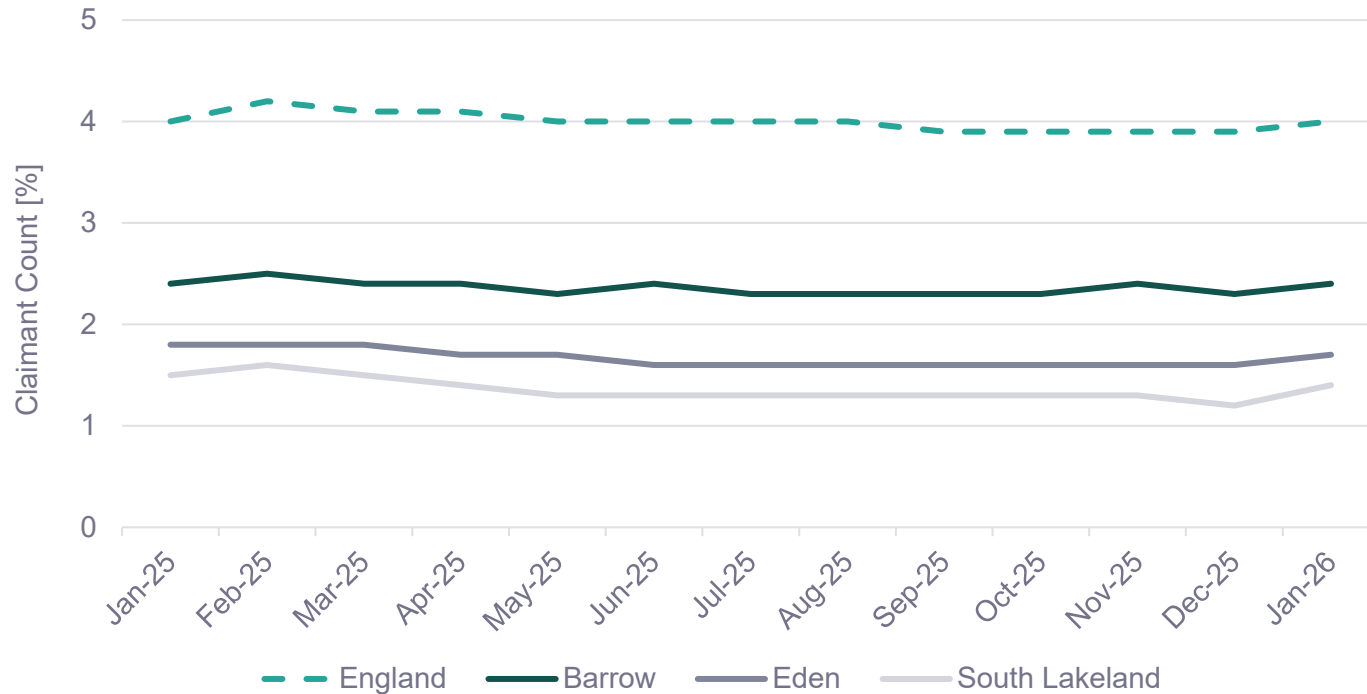
Population Structure – Westmorland and Furness compared to England



Westmorland and Furness has an older population than the national population profile, based on 2024 population estimates. The most populous age bands in Westmorland and Furness are those between 50 – 69. This has implications for the availability of the younger working population in the region being more under-represented.



Claimant Count

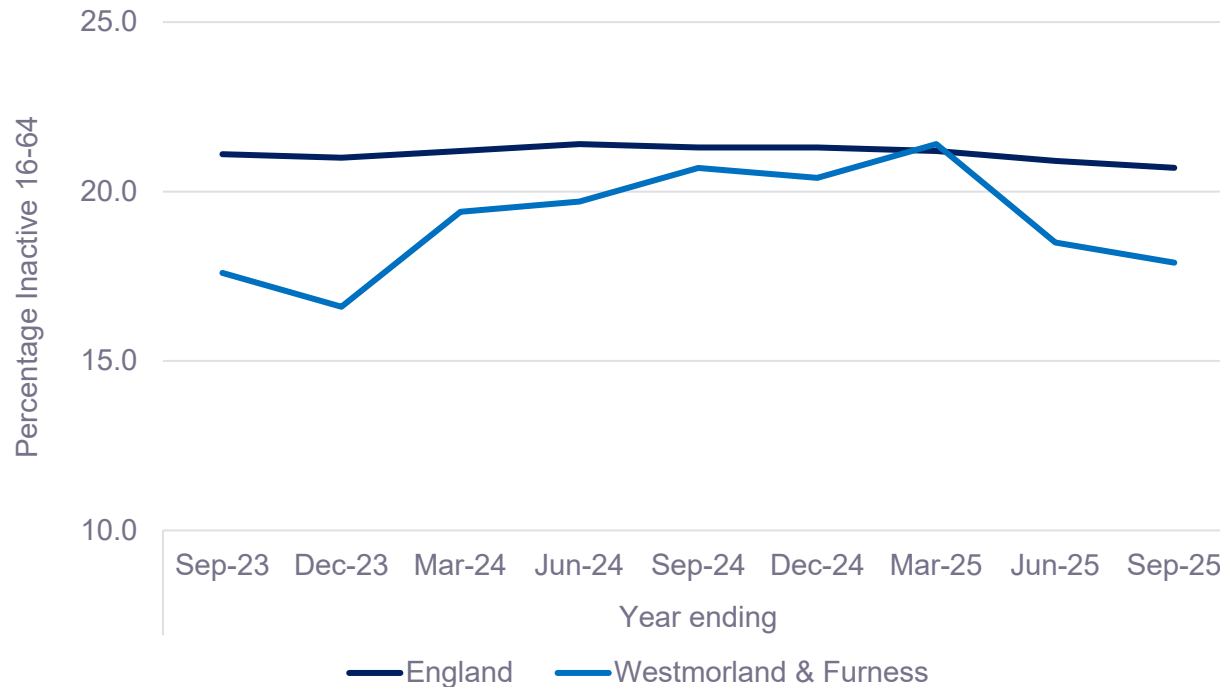


The percentage of people claiming unemployment related benefits has remained relatively unchanged across the three former District areas in the last 12 months, and remains lower than the national rate.

However the rate(as at January 2026) differs across the Districts, with this being almost twice as high in Barrow compared to South Lakeland



Economic Inactivity

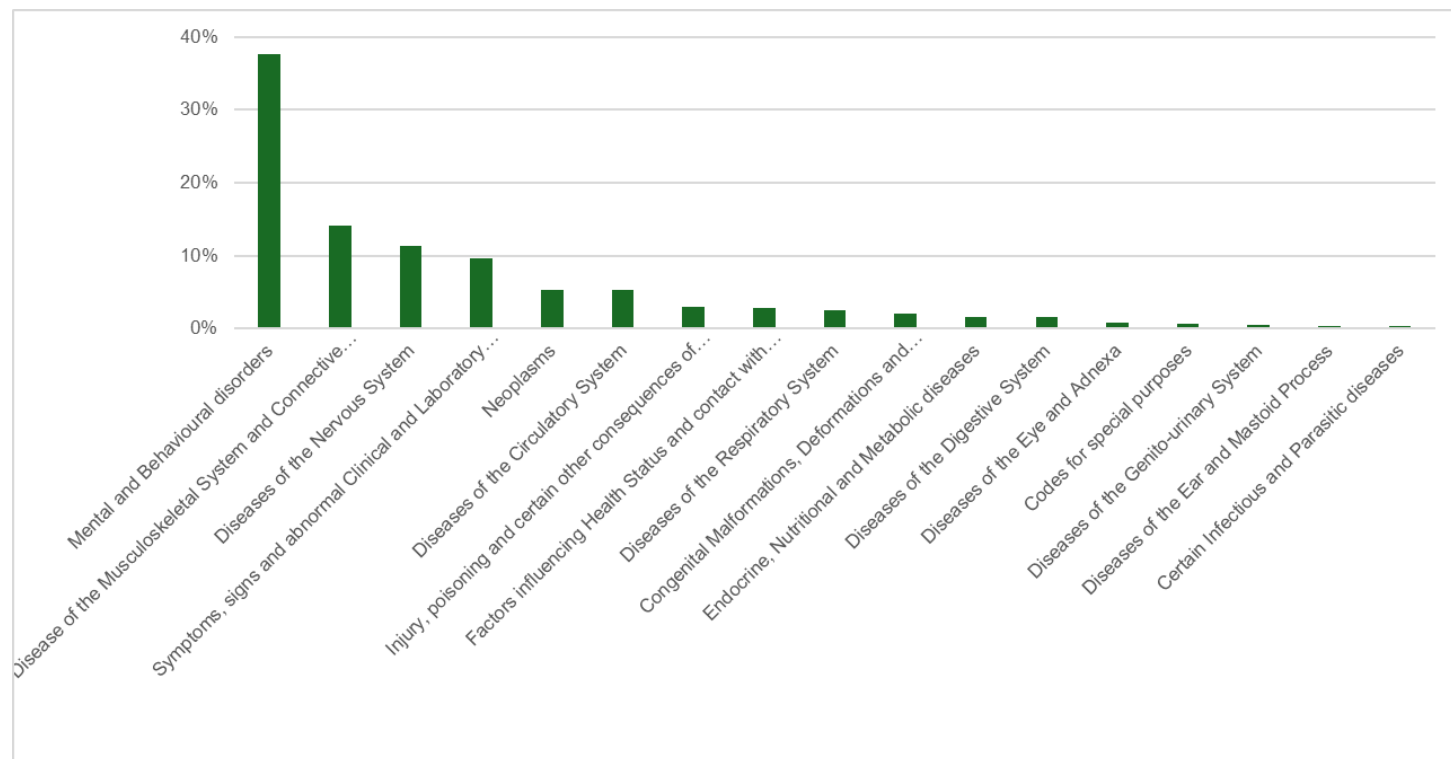


A person is deemed economically inactive if they are neither in work nor available for work (someone out of work but actively looking and available for work is classified as unemployed).

In the 12 months ending September 2025, the inactivity rate, as a proportion of those aged 16-64, in Westmorland and Furness was estimated to be 17.9%, which is lower than the national rate of 21.1%. Across the last two years this rate has generally remained below the national rate despite showing a rising trend since 2024.



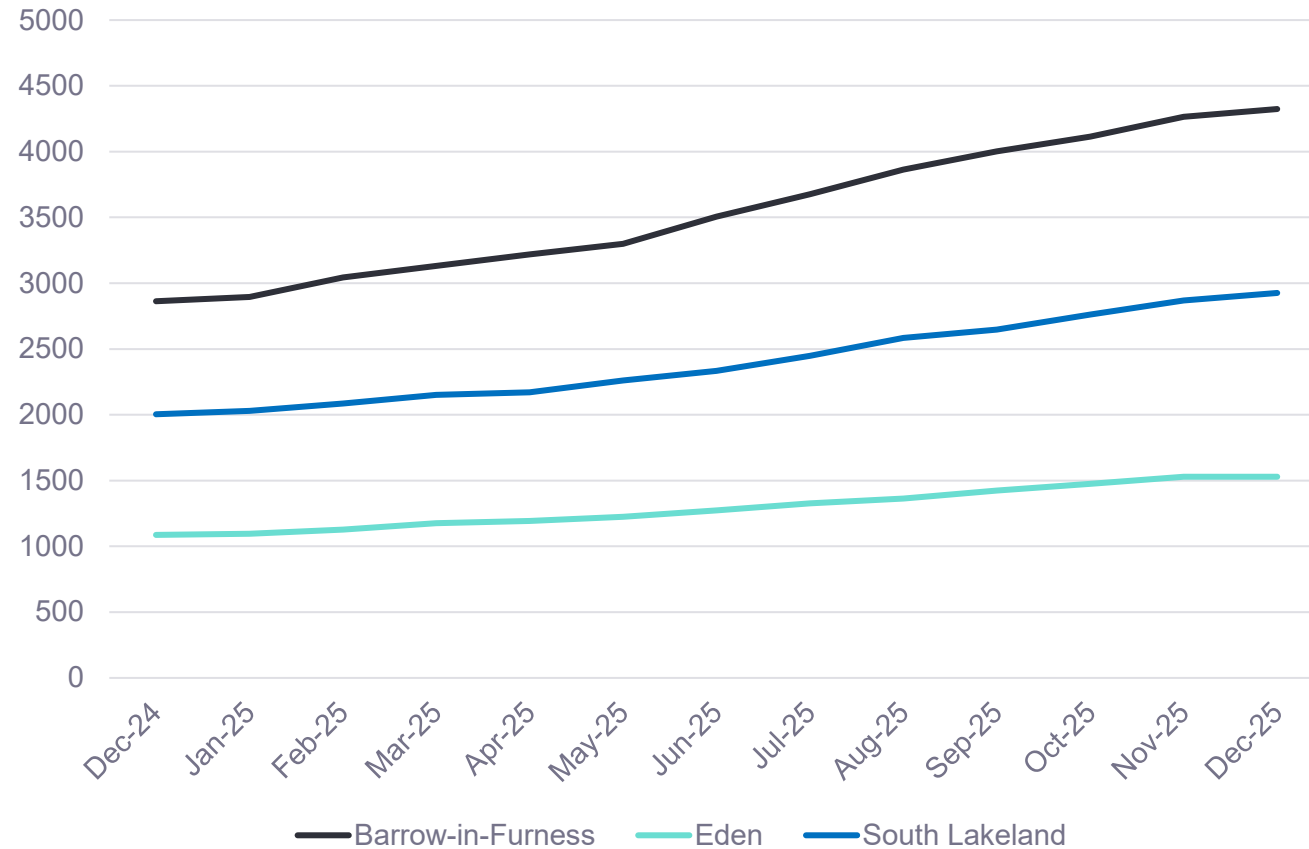
Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) Claimants: June – August 2025



Poor mental health dominates as the primary condition among working-age residents claiming ESA, with 38% of ESA claimants affected, followed by Musculo-skeletal problems (14%) in Westmorland and Furness in the period between June and August 2025



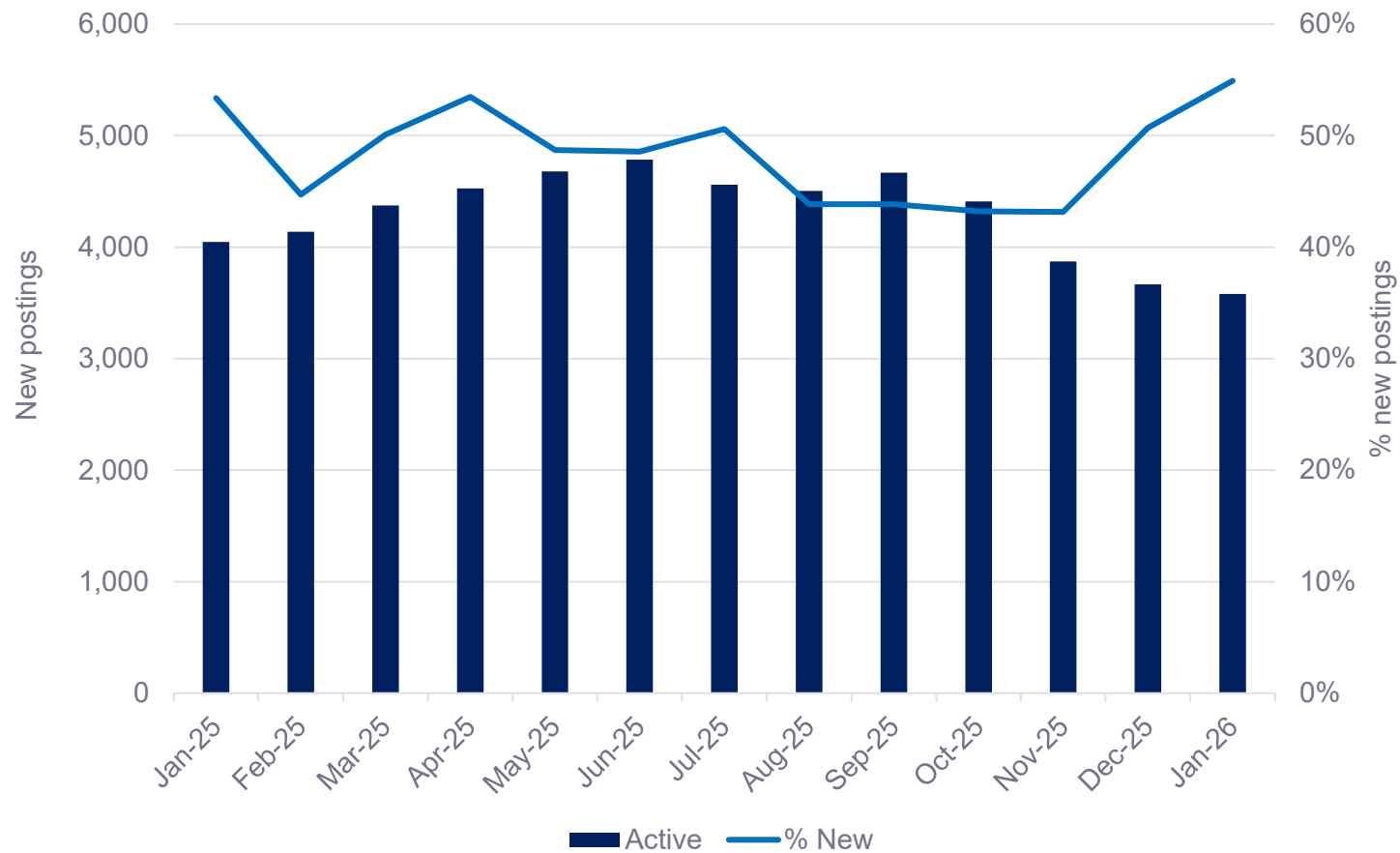
Universal Credit – Health Reasons



The proportion of people claiming Universal Credit on health reasons has risen by 47% across Westmorland and Furness between December 2024 to December 2025, with rates higher within the former Barrow in Furness district. This is a faster rate of growth than for all of those residents on Universal Credit.



Labour Shortages: Advertised Jobs



In January 2026 there were 3,580 active job postings across Westmorland and Furness, 1,966 (55%) of which were new postings during the month. This volume of active job postings for January 2026 is lower than that observed 12 months previously.



Impact on different groups in the region

Over 50



114,700
people in Cumbria aged 50 to 64
(38% of the working aged population; 30% in England)



6,600
receiving UC or ESA and not required to work (6%; 13% in England)



28%
of those economically inactive due to long-term sickness or disability have never worked (31% in England)



14,700
economically inactive due to retirement (13% of the population; 10% in England)



41%
early retirees hold a Level 4 qualification or above (38% in England)

Young People



43,300
people in Cumbria aged 16 to 24
(14% of the working aged population; 17% in England)



342
16-17 years old not in education, employment or training (3.2% of the population; 5.4% in England)



49%
Level 3 attainment rate among 19 years olds (58% in England)



3,400
16-24s economically inactive and not in full-time education (8% of the population; 7% in England)



1,900
16-24s on UC and exempt from work due for health/caring reasons (4% in Cumbria and England)

Caring Responsibilities



31,800
people of working age provided unpaid care in Cumbria in 2021 (11% of WAP, compared to 10% nationally)



11,390
People provided 35 or more hours of unpaid care per week in 2021. Around half of this group were economically inactive, compared to 21% among non-carers



6,240
working age residents received Carer's Allowance (+1% in the past 12 months, below the 7% growth experienced nationally)

Gender Characteristics



58%
economic inactivity related benefit claimants are women



13%
women in Cumbria provide unpaid care, compared to 8% of men



13%
working age women claim economic inactivity-related benefits, compared with 10% of men



12%
gender pay gap among full-time employees (8% in England)



55%
19-year-old women qualified to Level 3, compared to 63% in England

Impact of economic inactivity in the region

Financial impacts to the individual



Economically inactive people are **1.5 times more likely to be in insecure work** when they re-enter employment



Financial difficulties caused by economic inactivity can lead to **food and fuel insecurity**, and increase the likelihood of **homelessness**

Wellbeing impacts to the individual



Mental and physical health and economic inactivity can be **closely linked and interdependent**



People who are economically inactive report feelings of **isolation, loss of confidence, depression, and loss of motivation**

Impacts to the employer



Challenges and impacts **differ** according to **business size and sector**



Small and micro businesses **lack the capacity and resources** to support staff in the way they want to



Employers **are not fully aware** of the services and supports that exist



Mental health is an increasing challenge in the workplace



Many employers offer **flexible hours** and working patterns to help retain staff facing barriers to remaining in work



Employers **do not always recognise how much they are doing** to support people at risk of becoming economically inactive