

Economic activity in Brent

2021 Census – topic report

August 2023



Summary

census 2021

Economic activity in Brent

As at March 2021

235,600
residents aged
16-64



66%

Two thirds
of residents
aged 16-64
in work

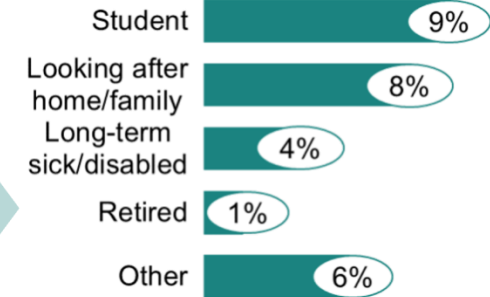


1 in 3

not in work

6%
unemployed
and seeking
work

28%
classified as
'economically
inactive'



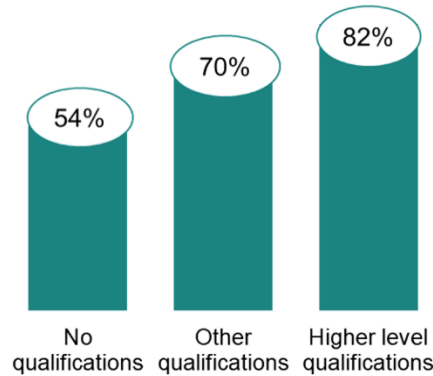
Employment rates by population group

■ % In employment (age 16-64)

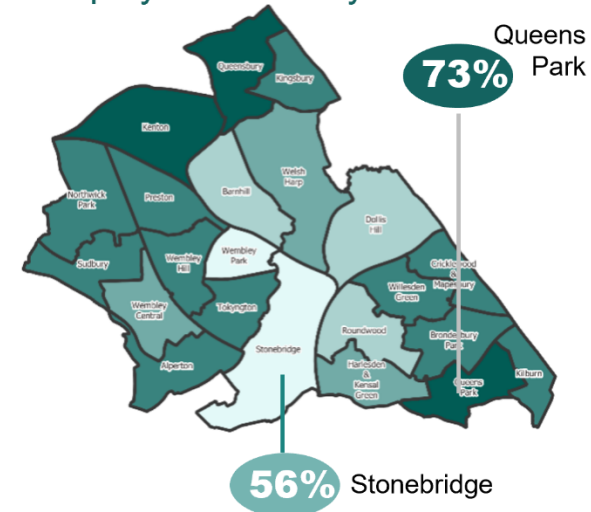


Employment rate by qualifications level

% in employment (age 25-64)



Employment rate by ward



Employment rate
EU-born residents

1 in 8

women take time out
of the workplace to
care for family/home



1 in 7

older residents
aged 65+ were
in work



Headlines (1)

This briefing summarises census data about the economic activity of residents in Brent. Key findings:

- **Overview:** The census provides a snapshot of the labour market situation as at March 2021. At this time, 72% of the Brent population (aged 16-64) were economically active: 66% were in employment and 6% were unemployed and seeking work. The remaining 28% were 'economically inactive' – this group includes students (9%); those looking after family/home (8%); the long-term sick or disabled (4%); and those not in work for some other reason. The employment rate in Brent was lower than the rate across London and England & Wales (66% vs. 70-71%).
- **Age:** Employment rates were highest for those in the age groups 25-34 and 35-49: around three quarters of residents in these groups were in work. The employment rate is lower for the over 50s: 65% of those aged 50-64 were in work, falling to 15% of those aged 65 and over. Just over a third of young adults aged 16-24 were in work, with many still in full-time education.
- **Gender:** In 2021, 61% of women aged 16-64 were in work compared with 71% of men. Women were more likely than men to take time out of the labour market to look after their family or home (13% vs. 2%). The gender gap in employment rates is evident in all age groups except for young adults (aged 16-24), where the rate is the same for both men and women, both 36%.
- **Ethnicity:** Around three quarters of residents from White ethnic groups were in work compared with 61% for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic residents. Employment rates were highest for the 'Other' White and White Roma groups (78% and 77%) and lowest for the Arab group (41%). Residents from Black ethnic groups had the highest unemployment rates: across the three Black ethnic groups (Other Black, Black Caribbean and Black African) – around one in ten were unemployed.
- **Gender and ethnicity:** The gender gap in rates is evident across most ethnic groups with a few exceptions, most notably the Black Caribbean population – where women have higher employment rates than men (66% vs. 59%). The largest gender gaps were within the Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Arab groups, where employment rates were more than 20 points lower for women than men.

Headlines (2)

- **Country of birth:** Employment rates were relatively high for those born in EU countries (e.g. Romania, Poland, Italy) and lowest for those born in Iran, Iraq, 'Other Middle East' and Afghanistan (all below 50%)*.
- **Proficiency in English:** Around two thirds of residents who use a main language other than English were in work. Within this group, those who had good proficiency in spoken English were far more likely to be in work than those who could not speak English well, or at all (70% vs. 51%). Within the group with poor proficiency, the employment rate was considerably lower for women than men (37% vs. 69%).
- **Health:** Residents with good health are much more likely than those with poor health to be in work: 69% of residents who described their health as 'very good' or 'good' were in work, compared with 51% of those with 'fair' health, and 21% of those with 'bad', or 'very bad' health. The health gap in employment rates is evident across all age groups. Employment rates are low for both women and men with poor health (20% and 22%).
- **Disability:** Similarly, disabled residents are far less likely than non-disabled residents to be in work (37% vs. 69%). The disability gap in employment rates is evident in all age groups, but gets significantly wider with age, rising from 14 points for those aged 16-24 up to 41 points for those aged 50-64. Employment rates are low for both disabled men and women (both 37%).
- **Qualifications:** Residents with higher level qualifications were far more likely to be in employment than those with no qualifications (82% vs. 54% for the age group 25-64). Of those with no qualifications, 42% were economically inactive, including: 10% who were long-term sick or disabled and 17% who were looking after home or family. Around 12% were classed as 'other' economically inactive.
- **Ward differences:** In 2021, the employment rate varied from 73% in Queens Park ward down to 56% in Stonebridge. Stonebridge also had the highest percentage of economically inactive residents. Reasons for economic inactivity vary by ward, for example, the percentage of economically inactive students was highest in Wembley Park (24%), while those in Wembley Central and Dollis Hill were the most likely to take time out of the workforce to care for family/home (both 11%).

About this data

Census definitions

On the census form, residents aged 16 and over were asked a series of questions about their labour market participation. This information was used to classify adults into different categories on the basis of their activities in the weeks just before the census. The following terms are used in this report:

- **In employment:** those in work (an employee or self-employed) the week before the census.
- **Unemployed:** those unemployed, but looking for work and who could start within two weeks, and those waiting to start a job that had been offered and accepted.
- **Economically active:** Those employed or unemployed (i.e. those active in the labour market).
- **Economically inactive:** Those not in work who are not actively seeking/available for work. This group is broken down further to capture key reasons for economic inactivity: studying, looking after home or family, long-term sick or disabled, retired, or 'other'.

Students: Those in full-time education can be classed under any of these headings, depending on their labour market participation. So while many students are economically inactive, some will be classed as in employment or unemployed. Students are classed as unemployed if they are actively looking for, and available for, work.

The 2021 census snapshot: pandemic impacts

The figures in this report all relate to the labour market situation as at 2021. The census took place in March 2021 when a range of pandemic lockdown measures were in place. Those on furlough at the time of the census were advised to classify themselves as 'temporarily away from work'. Those who did so are classed as 'in employment' on census tables. However, ONS acknowledges that some residents may have classed themselves in other ways (e.g. 'other' economically inactive) despite the guidance.

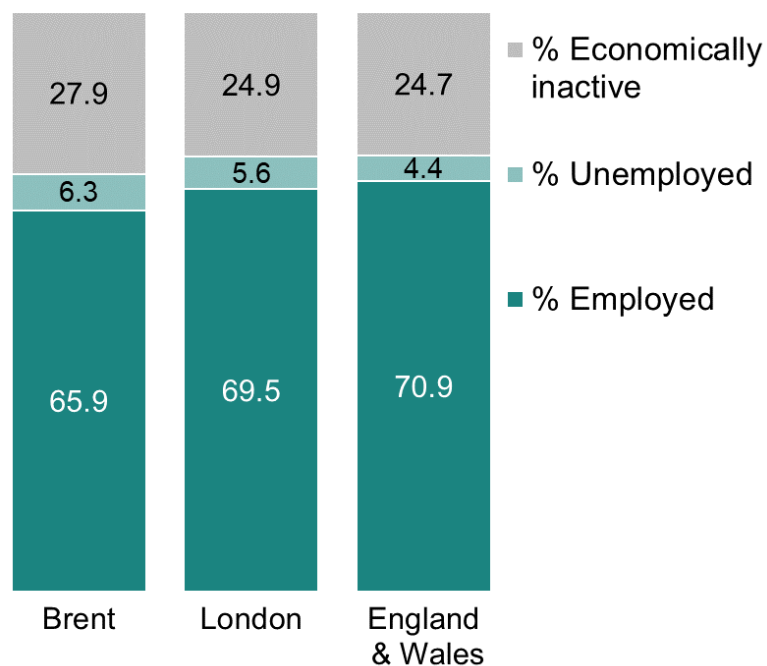
Data source and copyright: Census statistics in this report have been produced using the ONS custom dataset [tool](#) and are licenced under the Open Government Licence v.3.0 © Crown Copyright.

Economic activity: Overview

- In 2021, 72% of the Brent population (aged 16-64) were economically active: 66% were in work and 6% were unemployed and seeking work. The remaining 28% were 'economically inactive' – this group includes students, those looking after family/home, the long-term sick or disabled, retired residents and those not in work for some other reason.
- The employment rate in Brent was lower than the rate across London and England & Wales (66% vs. 70-71%). Conversely, Brent had higher levels of unemployment, and economic inactivity, compared with the London and national averages.

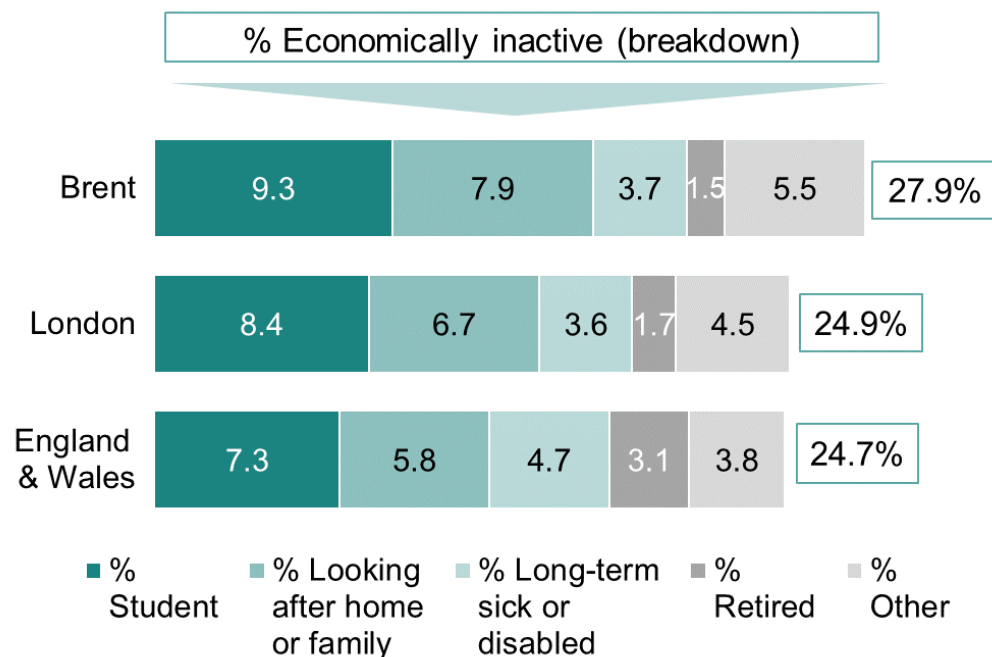
Economic activity, persons aged 16-64

Brent, London and England & Wales, 2021



Economic inactivity, persons aged 16-64

Brent, London and England & Wales, 2021

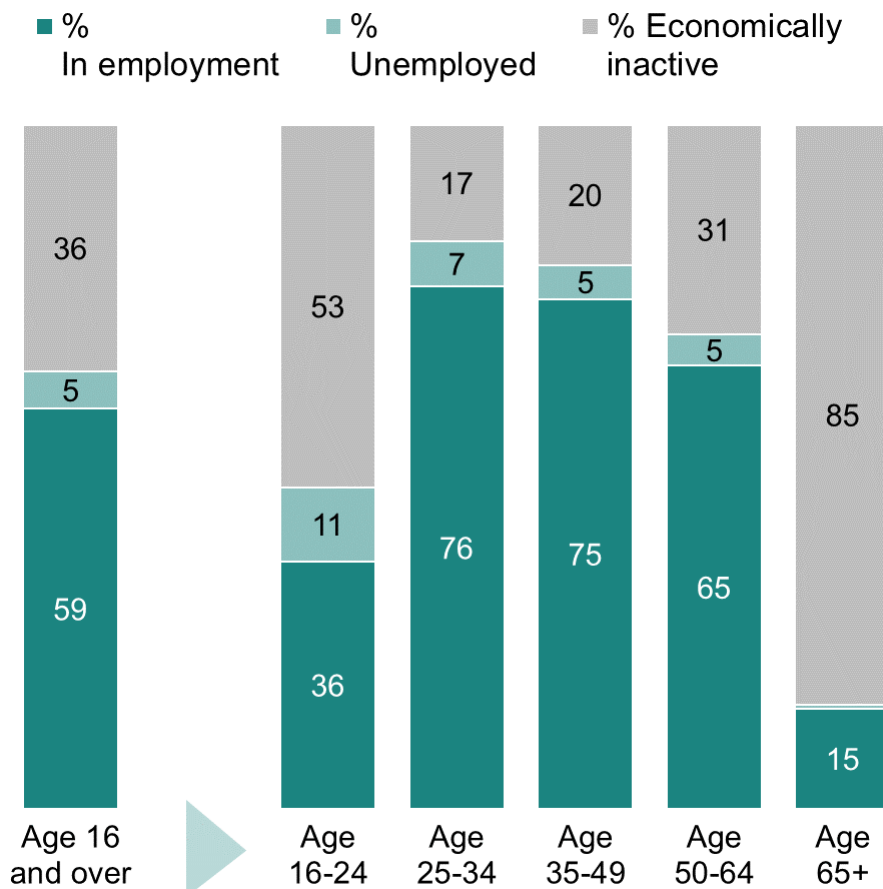


Economic activity by age

- Employment rates were highest for those in the age groups 25-34 and 35-49: around three quarters of residents in these groups were in work in 2021.
- Just over a third (36%) of young adults aged 16-24 were in work, with many still in full-time education: just over half were economically inactive, most of whom were students.
- A further 11% of young people were classed as unemployed. This statistic needs careful interpretation as almost half (45%) of this group are unemployed students i.e. those in full-time education who said they were also actively looking for work and available for work.
- Levels of economic inactivity rise as residents get older: 31% of those aged 50-64 were economically inactive, including: 9% who were long-term sick or disabled; 9% who were looking after family/home; 6% who were retired and 7% classed as 'other' economically inactive.
- Around 15% of residents, who were aged 65 and over, were in work.

Economic activity by age (% total)

Brent, 2021

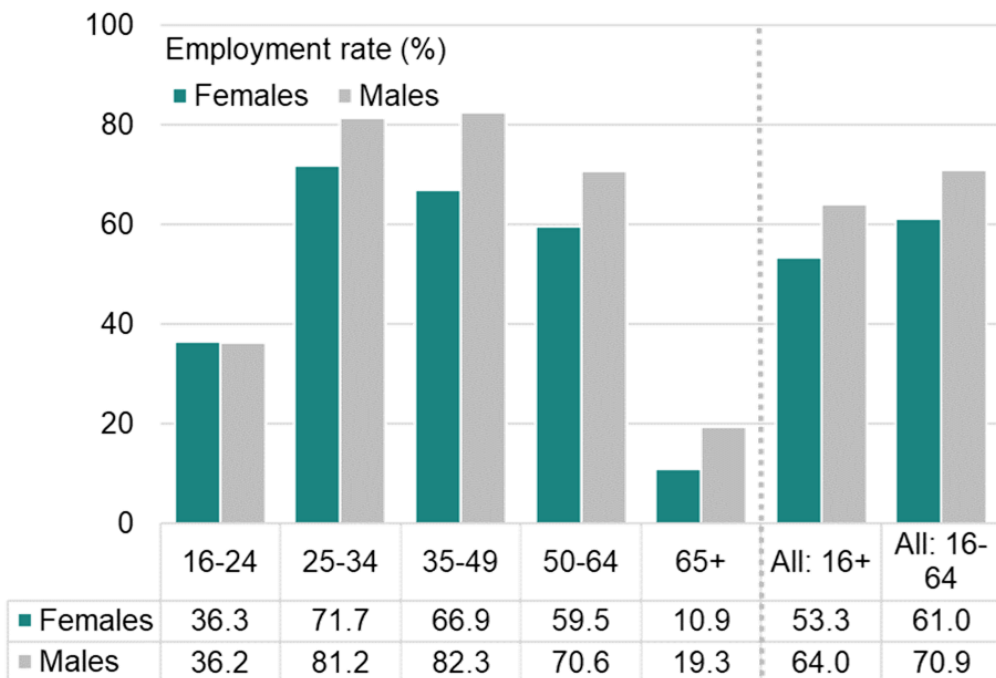


Employment by age and gender

- In 2021, 61% of women aged 16-64 were in work compared with 71% of men. The gender gap in employment rates is evident in all age groups except for young adults (aged 16-24) – where the employment rate is the same (36%).
- Women are far more likely than men to take time out of the labour market to care for their family: around 13% of women aged 16-64 were economically inactive because they were looking after their home or family compared with around 2% of men. This rose to around 18% for women aged 35-49.

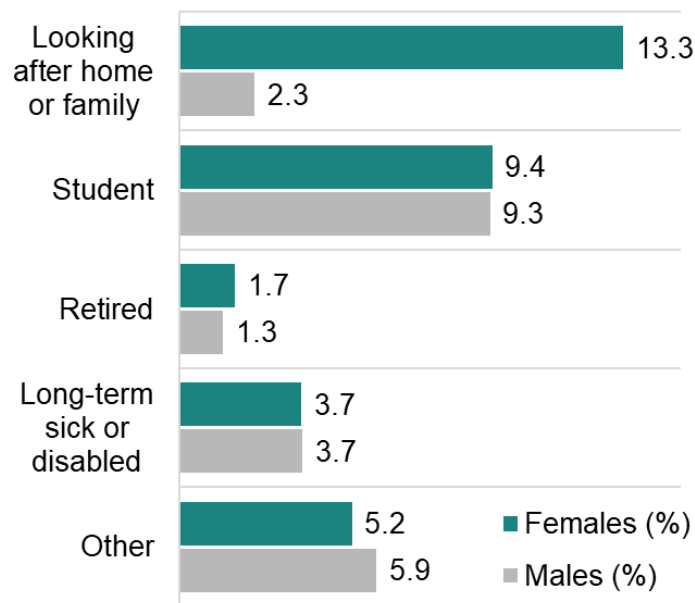
Employment rate (%) by age and gender

Brent, 2021



Economic inactivity by reason and gender (% of those aged 16-64)

Brent, 2021

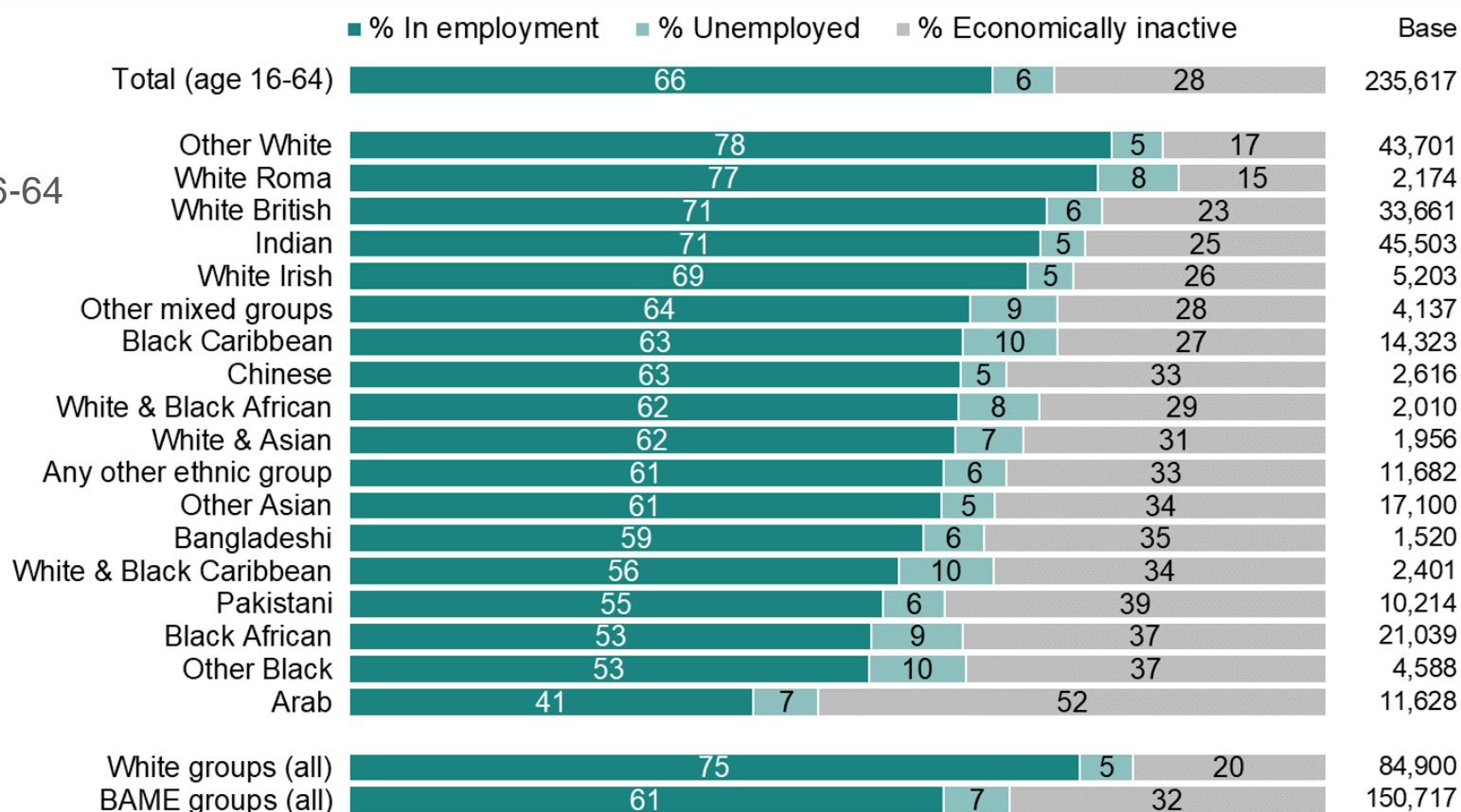


Economic activity by ethnicity

- Economic activity patterns vary significantly by ethnicity. Overall, three quarters of residents from White ethnic groups were in work compared with 61% for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) residents. Employment rates were highest for the 'Other' White and White Roma groups (78% and 77%) and lowest for the Arab group (41%).
- The 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' ethnic group also had a very low employment rate (40%). This group has been excluded from the chart below, and the analysis that follows, due to its relatively small size, numbering just 161 persons aged 16-64 in 2021. Note: full details for all groups are available in the data tables that accompany this report.

Economic activity by ethnicity*

Persons aged 16-64
Brent, 2021



Unemployment by ethnic group (2021)

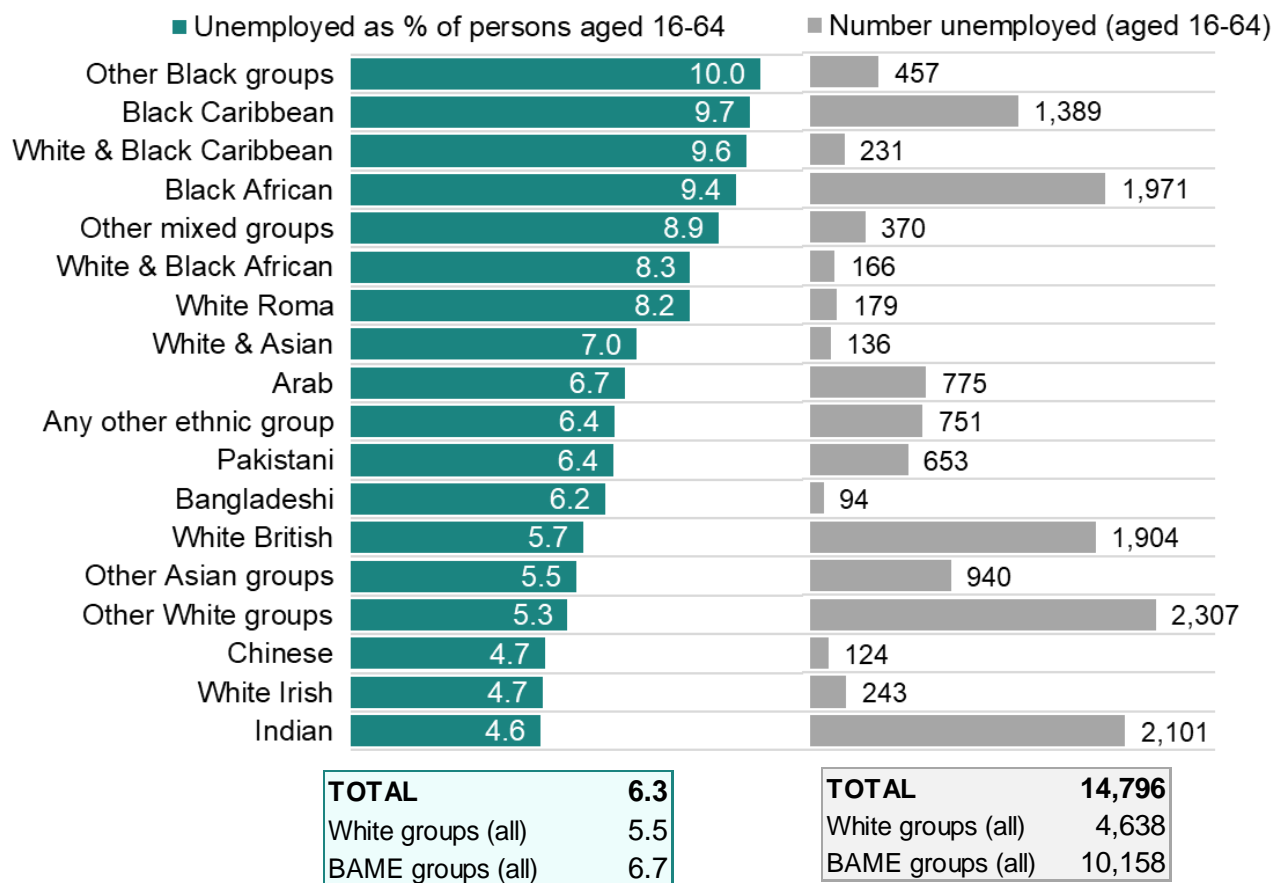
The charts below provide more information about unemployment levels by ethnic group. Residents from Black ethnic groups have the highest unemployment rates: across the three Black ethnic groups (Other Black, Black Caribbean and Black African) – almost one in ten residents aged 16-64 were unemployed (an average of 9.6%, well above the Brent average of 6.3% in 2021). The percentage was also high for the White & Black Caribbean group (9.6%). By number, residents from the Indian and Other White ethnic groups make up the largest numbers unemployed, reflecting their larger population size.

Unemployment by ethnicity

Persons aged 16-64, Brent, 2021

Definition: Those classed as unemployed were those not in work the week before the census, who were actively seeking work, and were available to start work (or were waiting to start a new job). On the census definition, students can also be unemployed if they meet these criteria.

% rate: The number unemployed is expressed as a percentage of the population (note: this differs from alternative measures which express the number unemployed as a percentage of the economically active population).

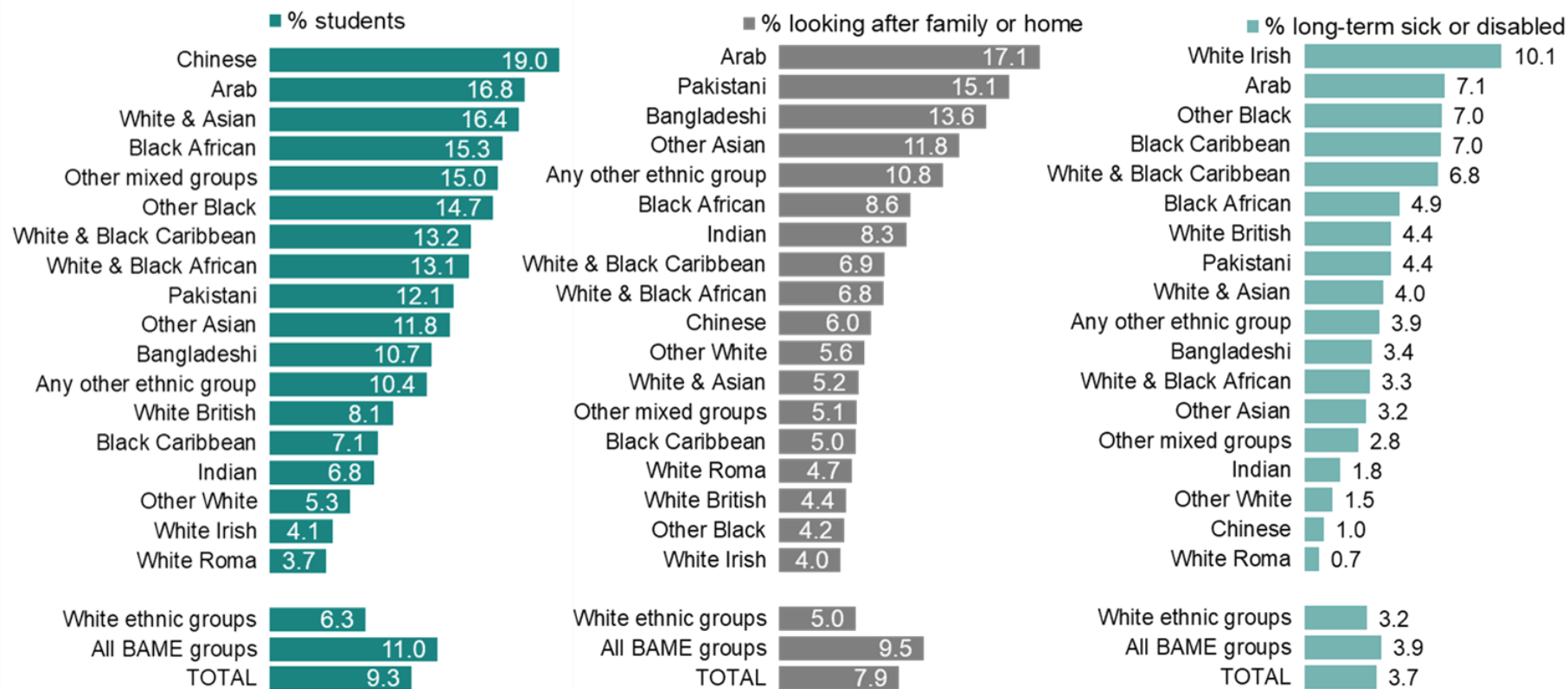


Reasons for economic inactivity by ethnicity

The charts below explore key reasons for economic inactivity by ethnicity. Around 9% of those aged 16-64 are economically inactive students (i.e. in education but not active in the labour market) - the rate is highest for the Chinese population (19%) and lowest for the White Roma population (4%). Arab residents are the most likely to take time out of the workforce to care for family/home (17%), followed by Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents (15% and 14%). White Irish residents are the most likely to be out of work due to long-term sickness or disability (10%). This is likely to reflect their older age profile: almost half of all White Irish residents aged 16-64 are aged 50-64.

Key reasons for inactivity by ethnic group, persons aged 16-64, Brent, 2021

Ward ranked from highest to lowest on each indicator

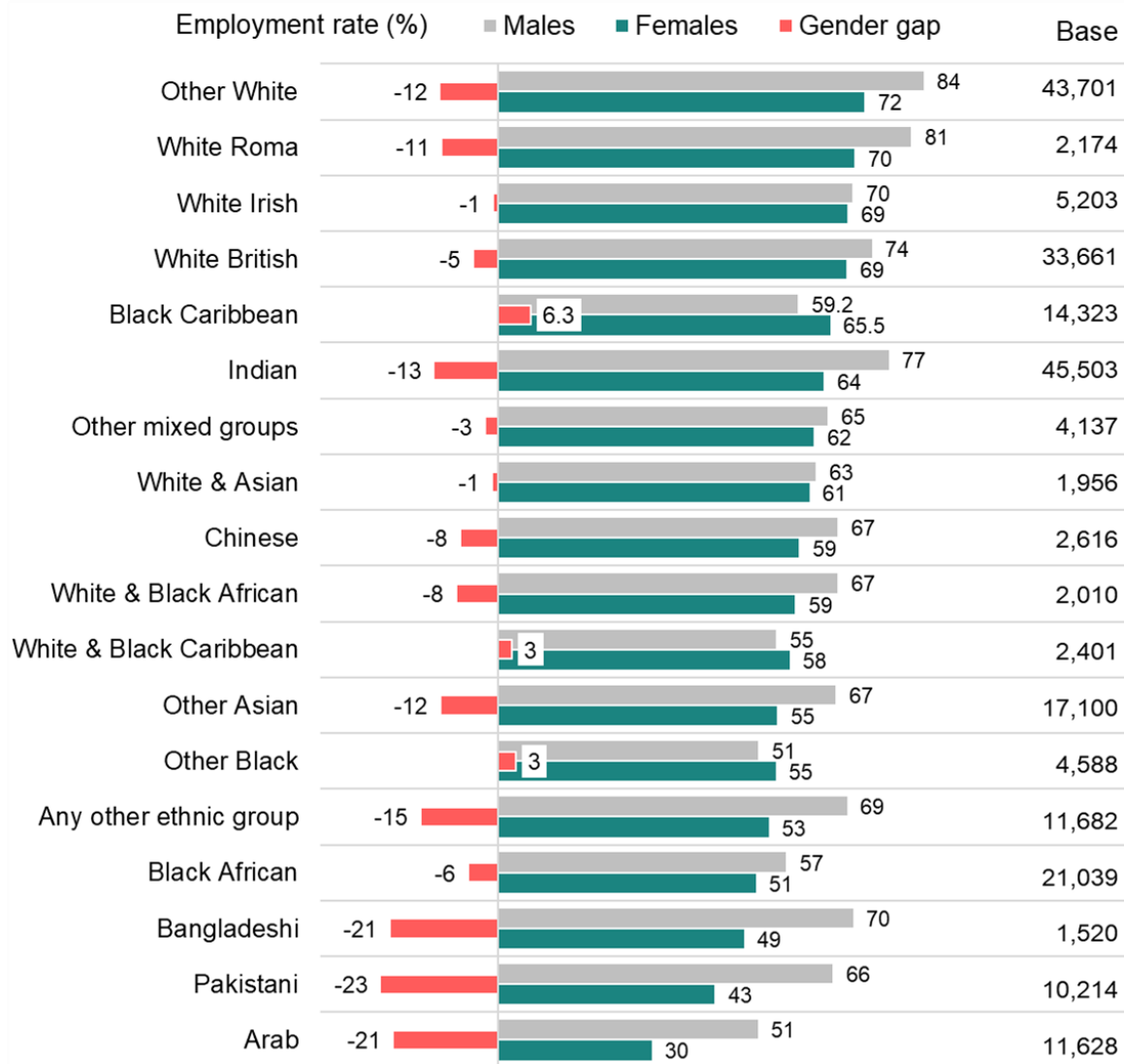


Employment rates by gender and ethnicity

- Overall, the gender gap in employment rates is 10 percentage points: 61% for women vs. 71% for men (aged 16-64).
- The gender gap in rates is evident across most ethnic groups with a few exceptions, most notably the Black Caribbean population – where women have higher employment rates than men (66% vs. 59%). Women also have slightly higher rates than men within the Mixed White & Black Caribbean group and the Other Black group (both +3 points higher).
- The largest gender gaps are within the Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Arab groups, where rates are more than 20 points lower for women than men.

Employment rates by gender and ethnicity, Brent, 2021

Persons aged 16-64

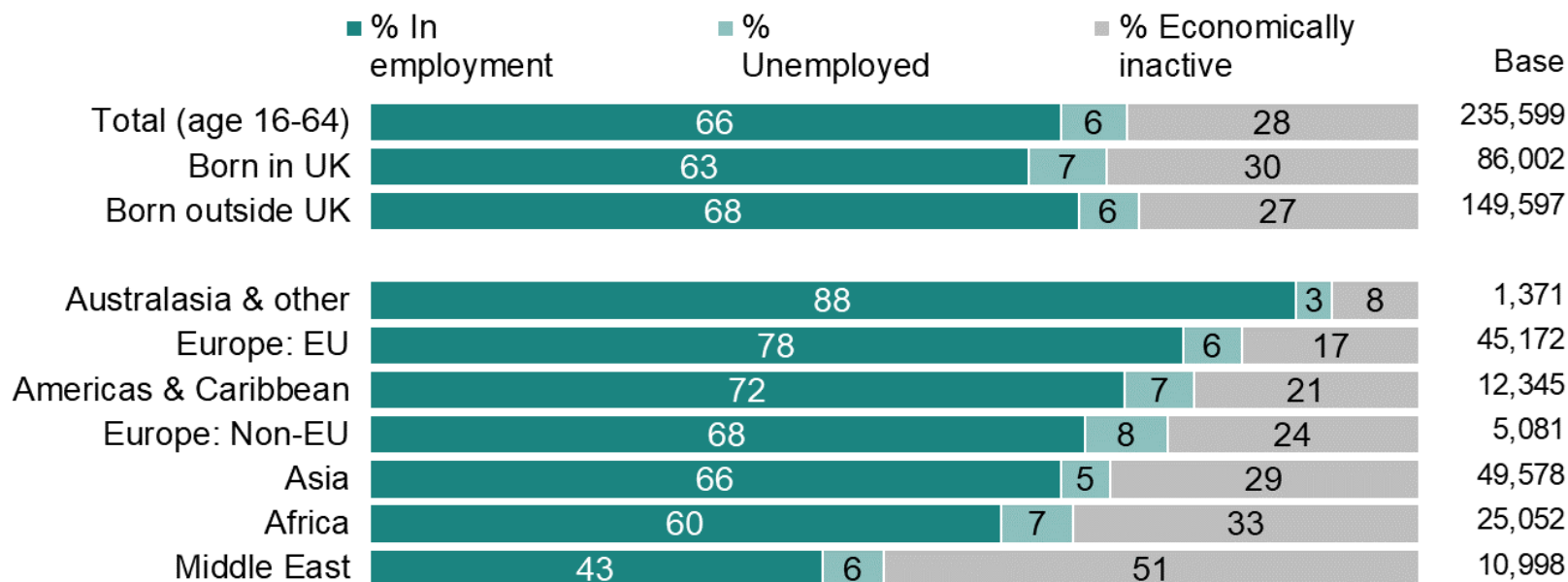


Economic activity by country of birth (1)

- Economic activity patterns vary significantly by country of birth. Overall, the UK-born population has a lower employment rate than the population born in countries outside the UK (63% vs. 68%). This reflects its younger age structure and higher percentage of students: 15% of UK-born residents (aged 16-64) were economically inactive students compared with 6% of those born outside the UK.
- By world region, employment rates were highest for those born in countries in Australasia (e.g. Australia and New Zealand) and EU countries (88% and 78%). Rates were lowest for those born in Middle Eastern countries (43%). A more detailed breakdown by country of birth is provided on the next page.

Economic activity by country of birth (persons aged 16-64), Brent, 2021

Broad 'world region' categories

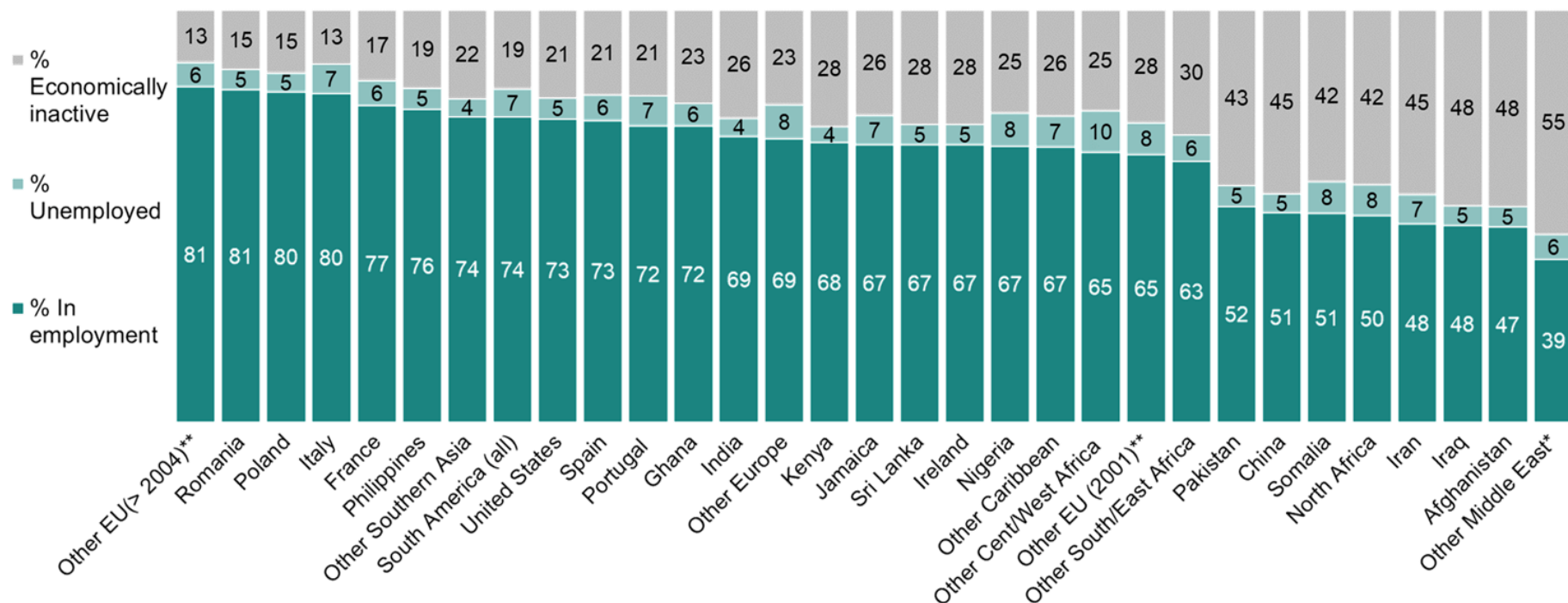


Economic activity by country of birth (2)

The chart below provides more detail for selected countries / areas (i.e. those with working age populations numbering more than 1,000). Employment rates were typically highest for those born in EU countries (e.g. Romania, Poland). Rates were also relatively high for those born in the Philippines and those from South American countries. Rates were lowest for those born in Iran, Iraq, 'Other Middle East' countries and Afghanistan – all below 50%. Note: Further detail for all country groups, including the borough's smaller populations, is available in the data tables that accompany this briefing.

Economic activity by country of birth (persons aged 16-64), Brent, 2021

Selected countries/groups with populations > 1,000 or more



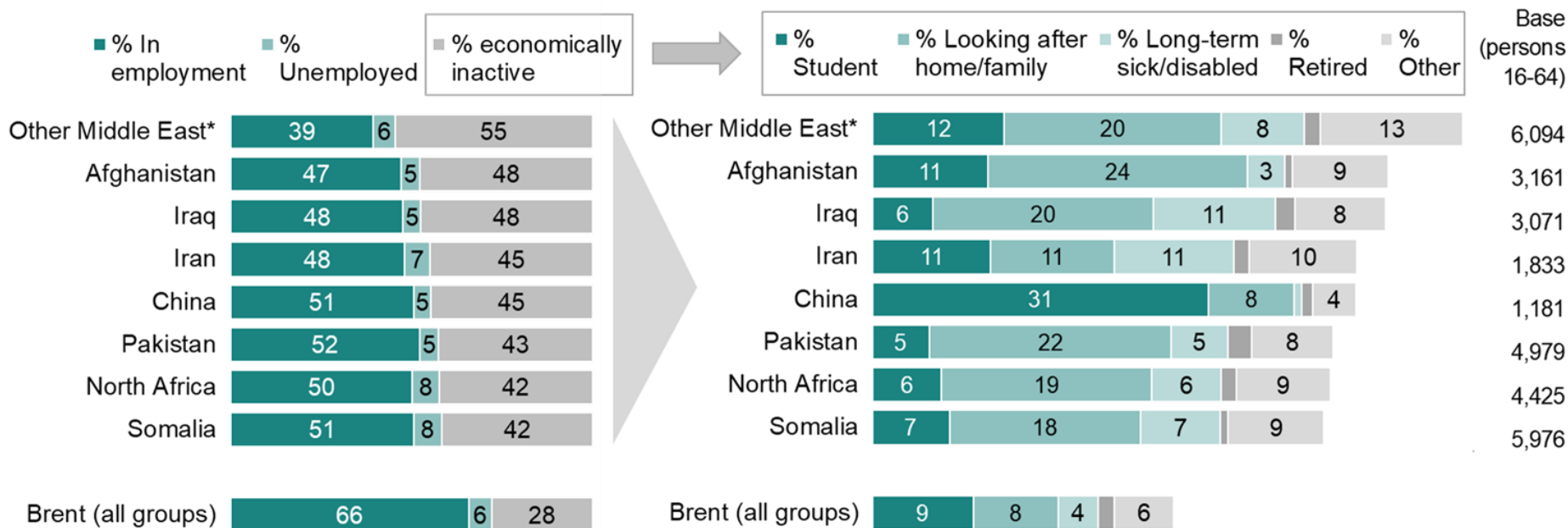
Notes: (*) 'Other Middle East' includes: Syria, Kuwait, Lebanon, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Israel, Jordan, the Occupied Palestinian territories, Bahrain, Qatar & Oman. (**) The 'Other EU' groups are split into two: those who were member states as at 2001 and accession countries who joined after 2004.

Economic inactivity: selected countries

- The charts below profile the eight country groups with the lowest employment rates (<60%), providing a breakdown of the key reasons for economic inactivity. The low rate for Chinese residents was explained wholly by a high proportion of students in this population: almost one third were economically inactive students (31%).
- Across the other groups, most had relatively high percentages looking after family/home, especially those born in Afghanistan, Iraq, Other Middle East and Pakistan (with rates of 20% and over vs. 8% borough average). Those born in Iraq, Iran and the Other Middle East group all ranked highly on the percentage of economically inactive residents with a long-term sickness or disability (8-11%, well above the borough average of 4%). Those born in the 'Other Middle East' group had the highest economic inactivity rate overall – 13% of this group were classed as 'other' economically inactive – the highest across all groups. This group includes those born in Syria.

Economic activity: selected countries/groups (persons aged 16-64)

Brent, 2021 - selected countries/group with employment rates of less than 60%

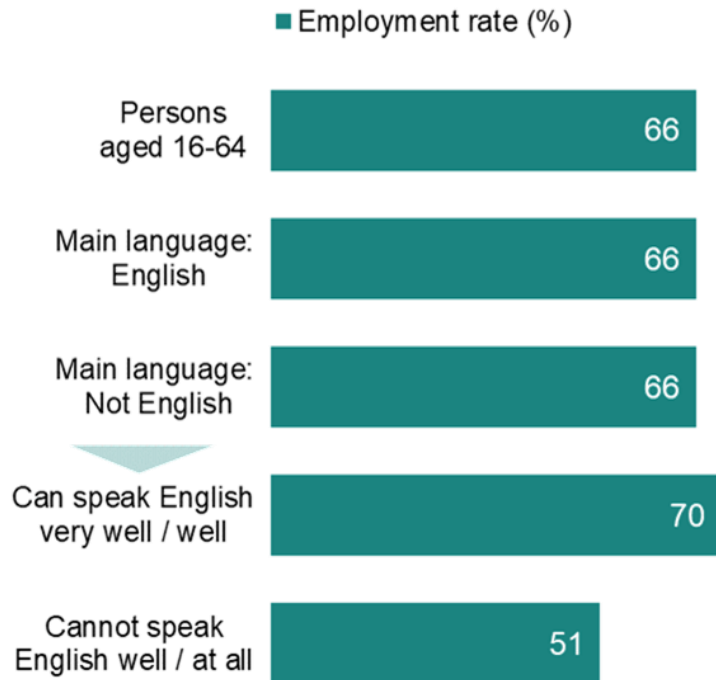


Employment rates by English proficiency

- The employment rate for residents who use English as their main language is 66% - the same as the rate for those who use another main language. However, within the latter group, those who have good proficiency in spoken English are far more likely to be in work compared with those who cannot speak English very well or at all (70% vs. 51%).
- The gender gap in employment rates is widest for those with poor proficiency in spoken English (31 points).

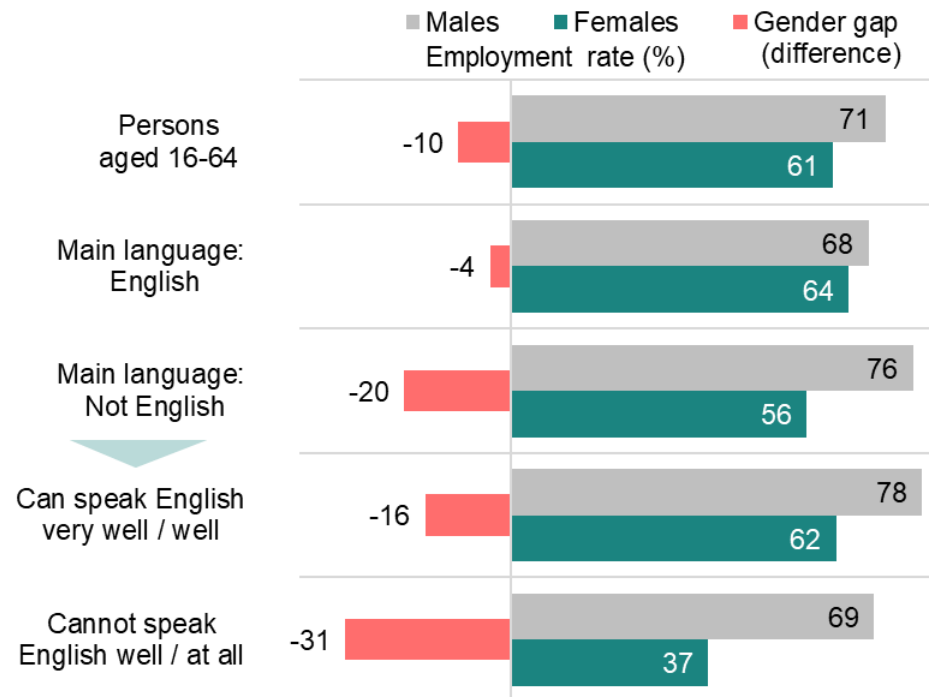
Employment rate by English language proficiency

Persons aged 16-64, Brent, 2021



Employment rate by English language proficiency and gender

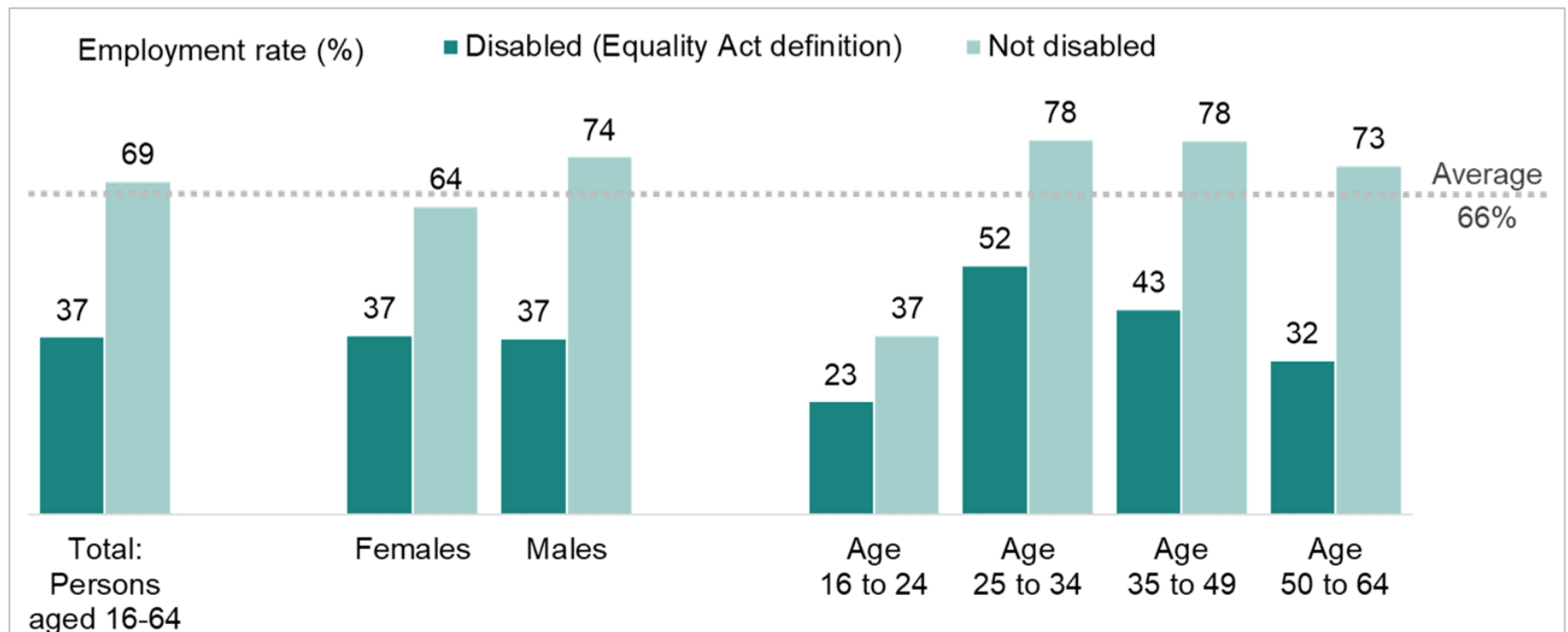
Persons aged 16-64, Brent, 2021



Employment rates by disability

- Disabled residents are far less likely than non-disabled residents to be in work (37% vs. 69%). The disability gap in employment rates is evident in all age groups, but gets significantly wider with age, rising from 14 points for those aged 16-24 up to 41 points for those aged 50-64.
- Employment rates are low for both disabled men and women (both 37%), though the gender gap persists for non-disabled residents (64% vs. 74%).

Employment rates (%) by disability, age and gender, Persons aged 16-64, Brent, 2021



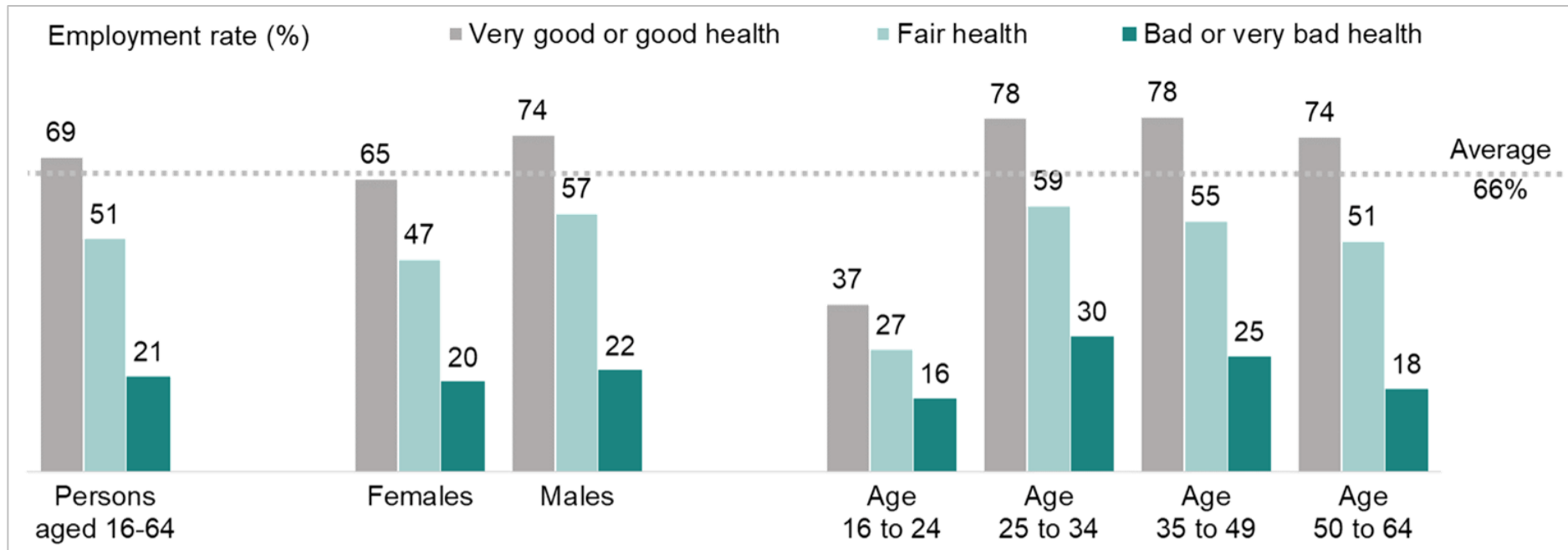
Disability definition: People who assessed their day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses are considered disabled. This definition of a disabled person meets the harmonised standard for measuring disability, in line with the Equality Act (2010).

Employment rates by health

- There is a similar picture in relation to the association between general health and employment levels. Those with good health are much more likely than those with poor health to be in work: 69% of residents who described their health as 'very good' or 'good' were in work, compared with 51% of those with 'fair' health, and 21% of those with 'bad', or 'very bad' health. The health gap in employment rates is evident across all age groups.
- Employment rates are very low for both women and men with poor health (20% and 22%), though the gender gap persists for those with fair or good health.

Employment rates (%) by general health, age and gender

Persons aged 16-64, Brent, 2021

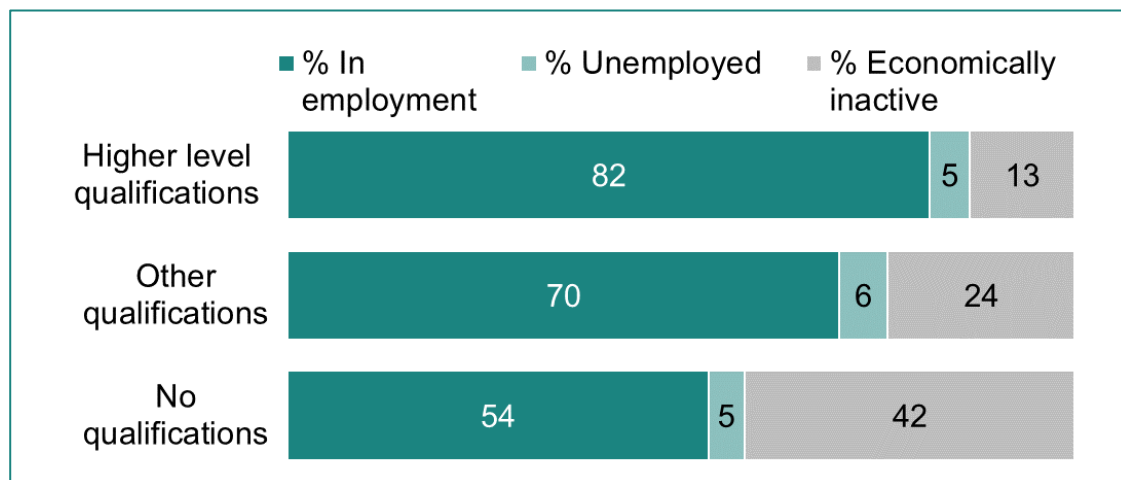


Economic activity by qualifications level

- Residents with higher level qualifications were far more likely to be in employment than those with no qualifications (82% vs. 54% for the age group 25-64). *Note: the analysis excludes those aged 16-24 as many in this group are still in process of gaining their qualifications.*
- Those with no qualifications were far more likely than those with higher level, or other qualifications, to be economically inactive (42% vs. 13% and 24%).
- Of those with no qualifications, 42% were economically inactive including: 10% who were long-term sick or disabled and 17% who were looking after home or family. Around 12% were classed as 'Other' economically inactive.

Economic activity by highest qualifications level

Brent, 2021 (Base: persons aged 25-64)



Economic activity by highest qualification level, Brent, 2021

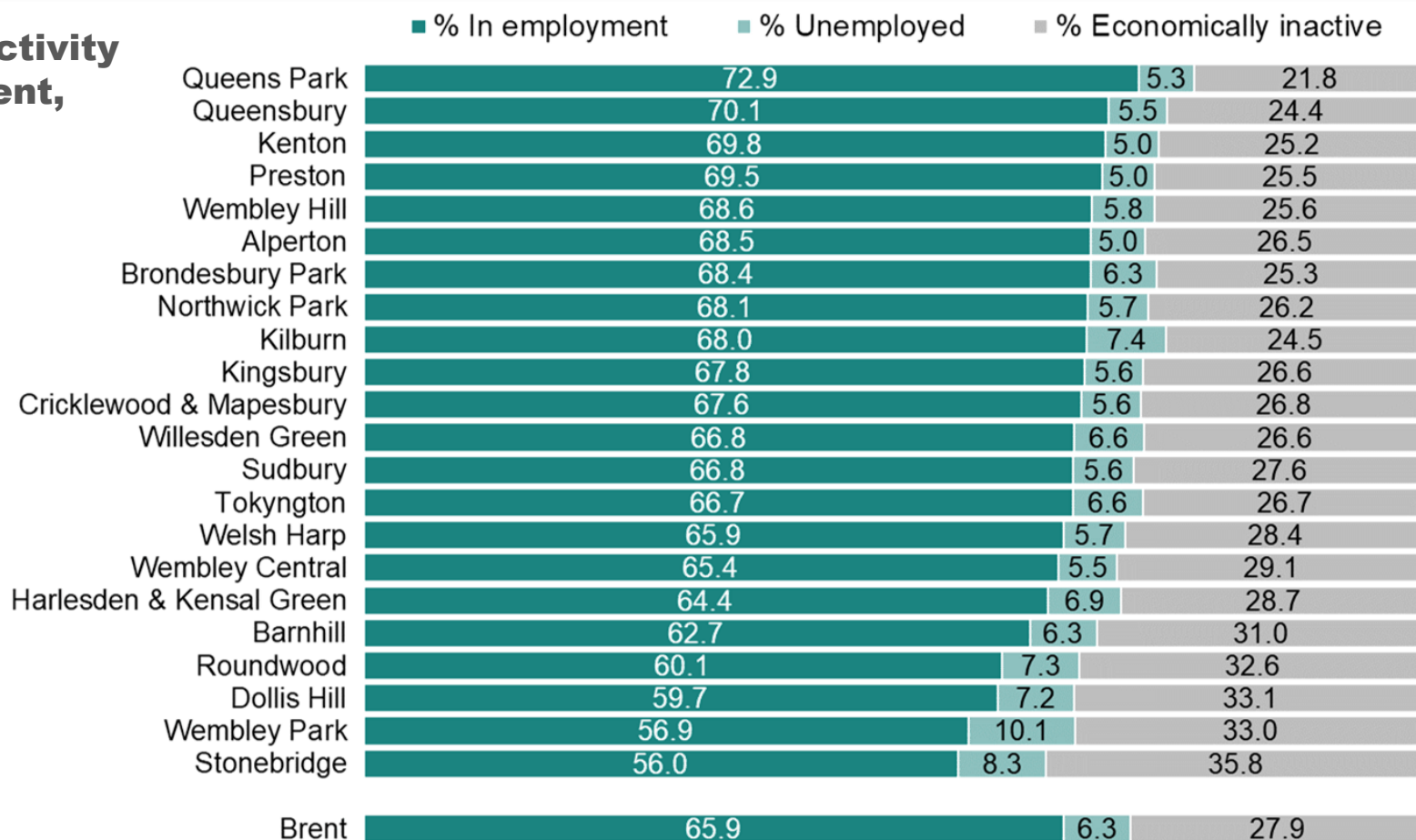
| | Qualifications level (% total) | | | Base: persons aged 25-64 |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| | None | Other levels | Higher level | |
| Total (persons aged 25-64) | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 194,374 |
| In employment | 53.5% | 70.2% | 81.6% | 140,232 |
| Unemployed | 4.6% | 6.1% | 5.1% | 10,379 |
| Economically inactive | 41.9% | 23.7% | 13.3% | 43,763 |
| Long-term sick or disabled | 9.5% | 4.9% | 1.6% | 8,350 |
| Looking after home/family | 16.5% | 9.7% | 5.2% | 17,458 |
| Retired | 3.0% | 1.9% | 1.2% | 3,484 |
| Student | 1.1% | 1.5% | 1.9% | 3,141 |
| Other | 11.8% | 5.7% | 3.4% | 11,330 |

Economic activity by ward

- In 2021, the employment rate varied from 73% in Queens Park ward down to 56% in Stonebridge. The map on the next page provides more detail on employment rates at LSOA (Lower Super Output Area) level across Brent.
- The percentage who were unemployed was highest in Wembley Park, though this statistic is wholly driven by the large student population in the area, some of whom were classed as unemployed. The chart on page 22 provides more detail about ward unemployment statistics for the student and non-student populations.

Economic activity by ward, Brent, 2021

Brent, 2021
(Persons aged 16-64)

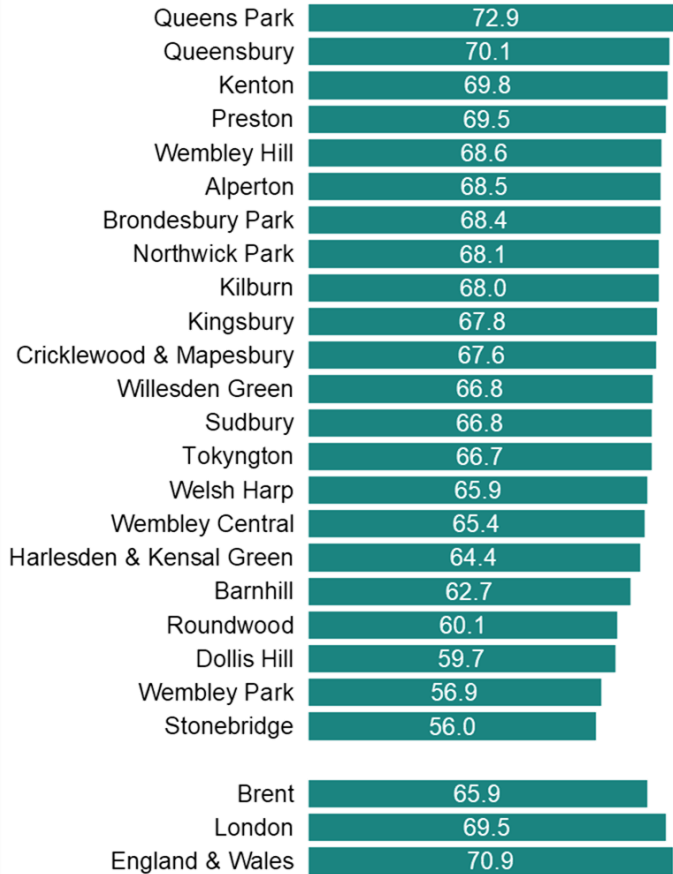


Employment rates by ward and LSOA

Percentage of residents (aged 16-64) in employment, Brent, 2021

By ward

■ % In employment



By Lower Layer Super Output Area

Employment rate (%)

46.4 - 52.0

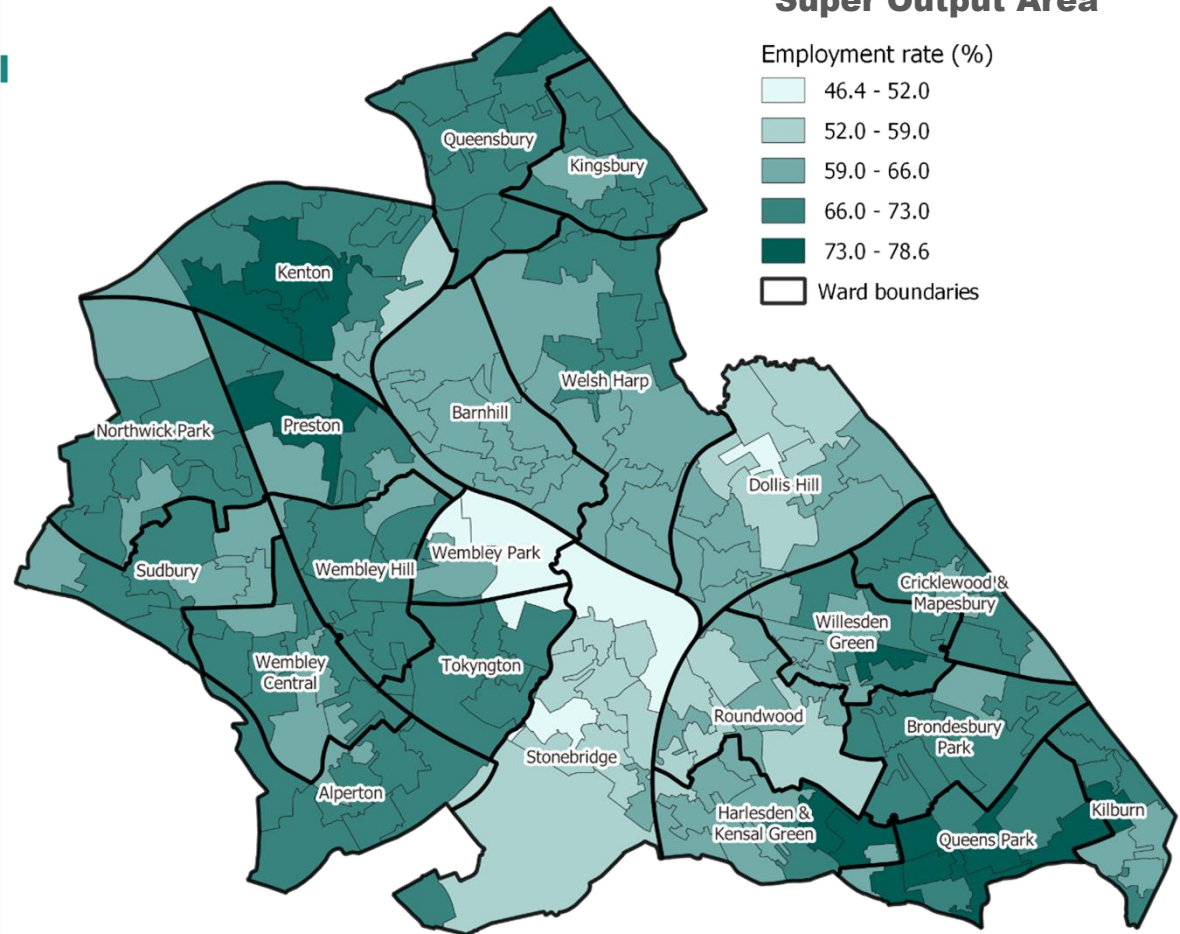
52.0 - 59.0

59.0 - 66.0

66.0 - 73.0

73.0 - 78.6

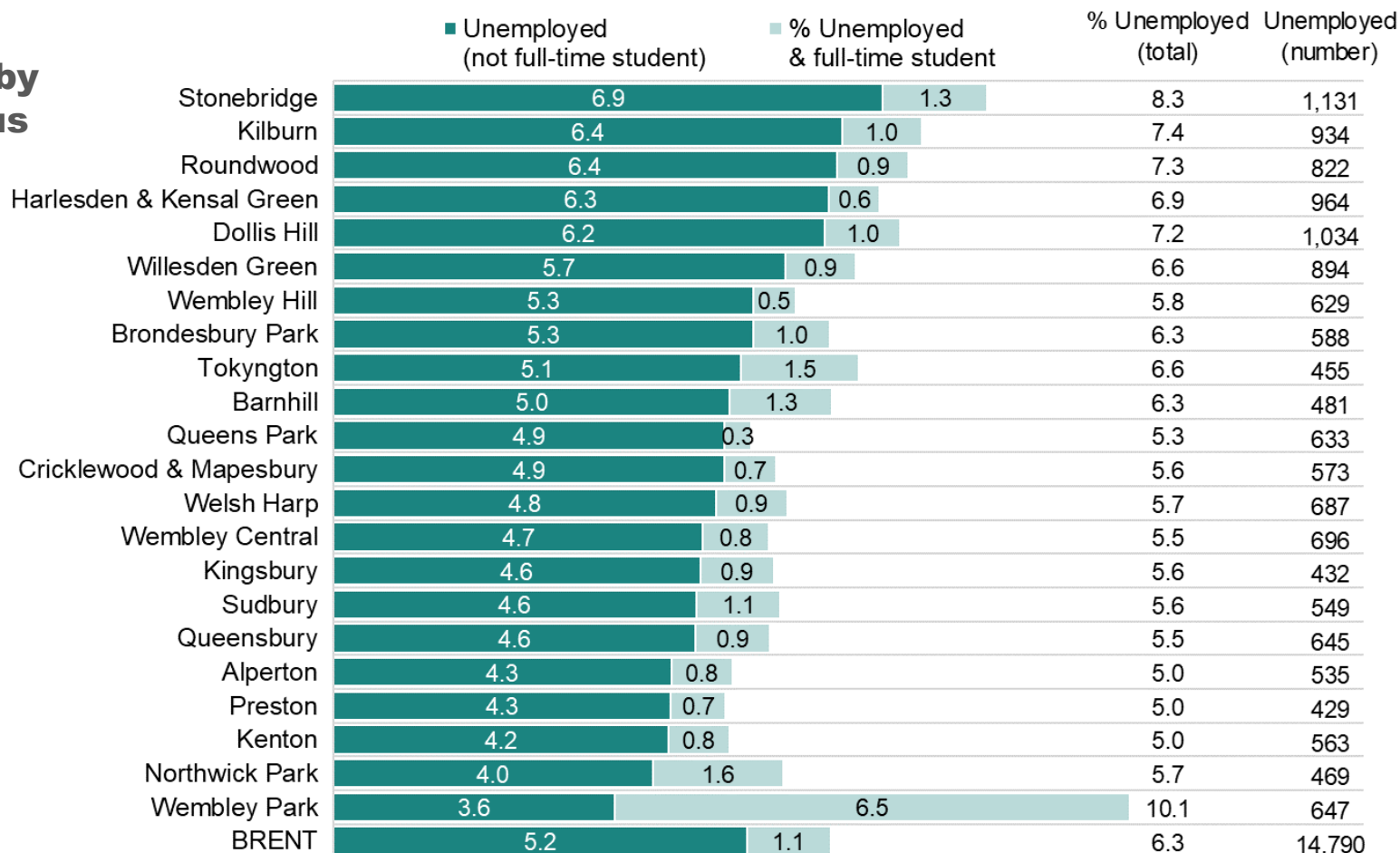
Ward boundaries



Unemployment and students by ward

The chart below breaks the percentage unemployed figure down between the non-student and student population. Among the non-student population, the percentage of those aged 16-64 who were unemployed was highest in the ward of Stonebridge and lowest for Wembley Park (6.9% vs. 3.6%). Note: On the census unemployment definition, students could be classed as unemployed if they said they were actively seeking work and available for work.

Percentage unemployed by student status and ward Brent, 2021 (Persons aged 16-64)

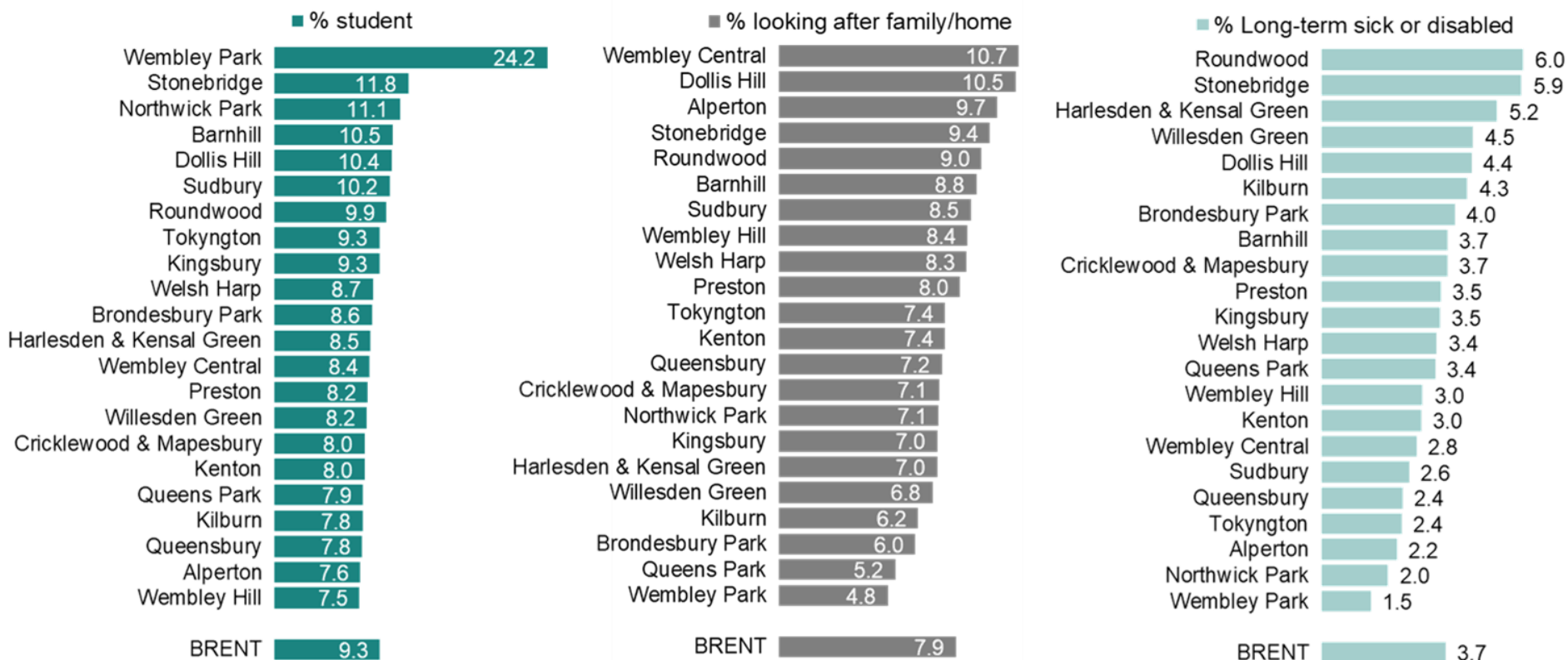


Reasons for economic inactivity by ward

The charts below explore key reasons for economic inactivity at ward level. The percentage of economically inactive students is highest in Wembley Park (24%) and lowest in Wembley Hill (8%). Those in Wembley Central and Dollis Hill are the most likely to take time out of the workforce to care for family/home (11%), while those in Wembley Park and Queens Park are the least likely (5%). The percentage who were out of work due to long-term sickness or disability was highest in the wards of Stonebridge and Roundwood (both 6%).

Key reasons for inactivity by ward, Brent, 2021 (Persons aged 16-64)

Ward ranked from highest to lowest on each indicator



Further information

- **Data tables:** A set of data tables have been produced to accompany this report. These have been made available in spreadsheet format, alongside this topic report, on the council's open data [site](#).
- **2021 Census data:** Census statistics in this report have been produced by Brent Council using the Office for National Statistics 2021 Census [custom dataset tool](#). A range of 2021 census 'ready made' datasets can be found on the [NOMIS website](#).
- **ONS mapping tool:** ONS has produced an interactive [mapping tool](#) which allows exploration of census data across all local authority areas, and small areas, in England & Wales.
- **Brent insight:** For more census facts about Brent please see the [Census page](#) on the Council's '[Brent Open Data](#)' website.
- **Contact:** This report was produced by Brent Council's Data and Insight team. For more information please email the team at: open.data@brent.gov.uk

