

Building Enduring Partnerships in South Yorkshire

A Regional Strategy for Sustainable Collaboration

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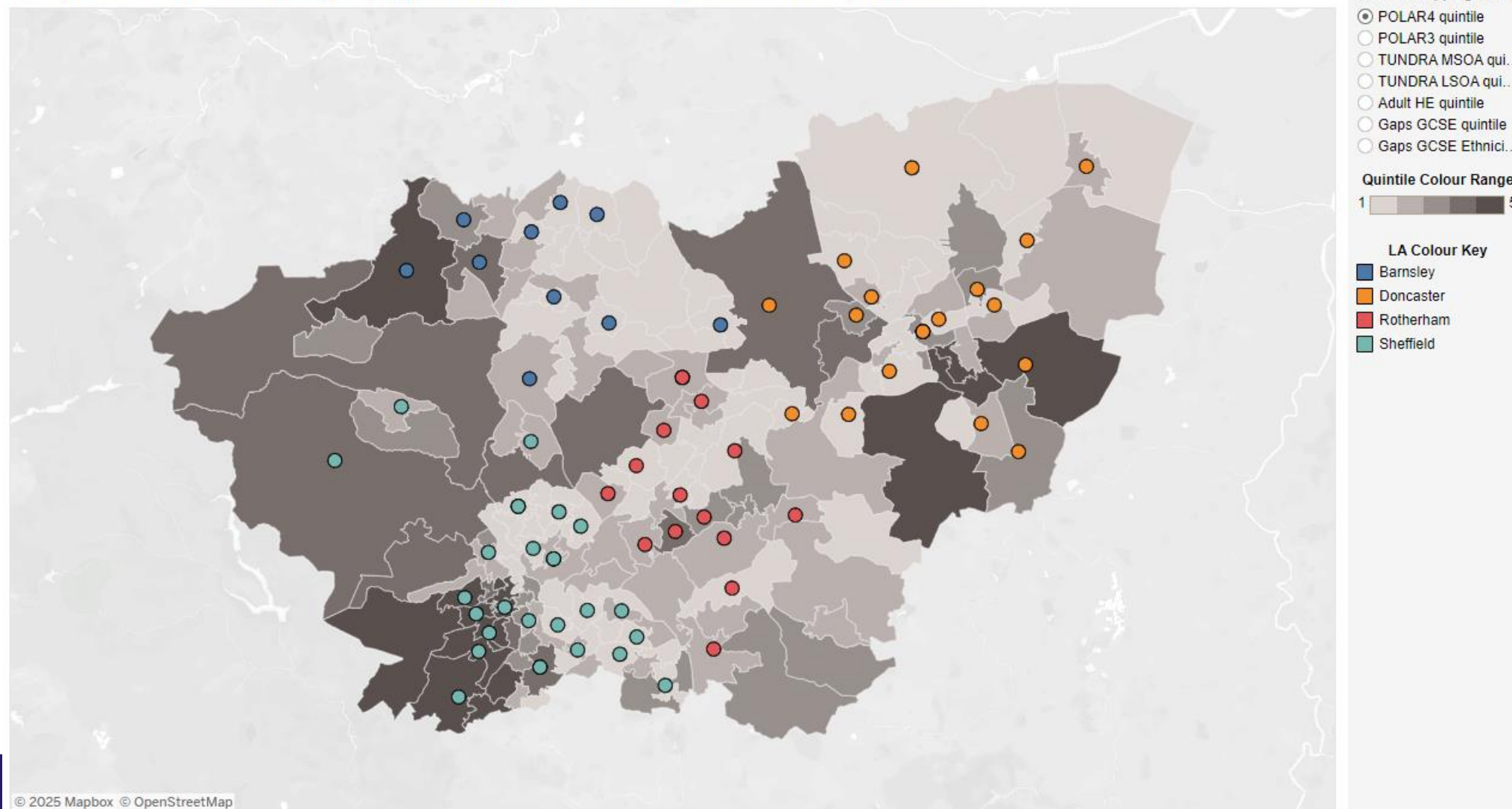
“Educational institutions in cold spots struggle to equip young people to make informed, confident decisions about the next steps in their educational journeys” (UPP, 2025)

South Yorkshire wards continuously fall in the lowest quintiles of HE participation - POLAR4 and TUNDRA data from July 2025



South Yorkshire Demographics

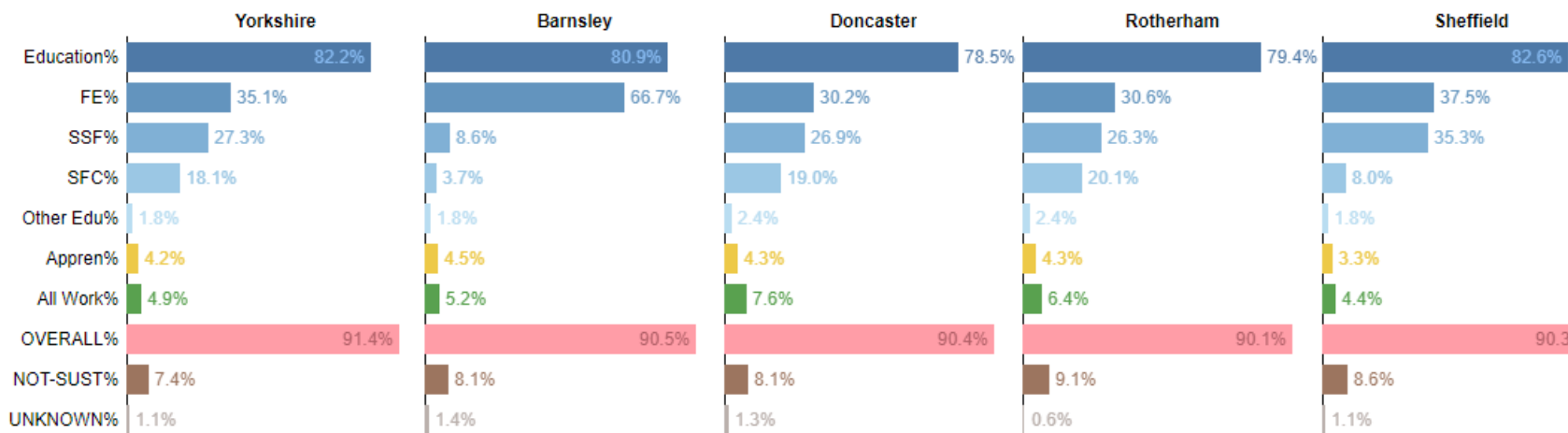
Map of Socio-Demographic Characteristics: **POLAR4 quintile**



South Yorkshire Demographics

KS4 Progression By Region and LAs (All Characteristics) for 2022-23

Breakdown across pathways



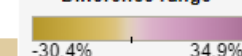
Differences compared to National

	Yorkshire	Barnsley	Doncaster	Rotherham	Sheffield
Education	-2.9%	-4.3%	-6.7%	-5.8%	-2.6%
FE	0.0%	31.7%	-4.9%	-4.4%	2.5%
SSF	-8.2%	-26.9%	-8.6%	-9.3%	-0.3%
SFC	5.5%	-8.9%	6.3%	7.5%	-4.6%
Other Edu	-0.2%	-0.2%	0.4%	0.4%	-0.2%
Appren	1.1%	1.3%	1.1%	1.2%	0.1%
All Work	0.8%	1.0%	3.5%	2.2%	0.3%
OVERALL	-1.0%	-1.9%	-2.1%	-2.4%	-2.2%
NOT-SUST	1.2%	1.9%	1.9%	2.9%	2.4%
UNKNOWN	-0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	-0.7%	-0.1%

CONTROLS & INFO

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Difference range



Strategic Vision: History and Challenges

Origins

Hepp established in 2011 following the closure of Aimhigher, continuing outreach based on its principles.

Strategic Shift

Secured NCOP contract in 2016/17, prompting deeper alignment and long-term planning.

Lifecycle Approach

Integrated South Yorkshire Children's University to ensure consistent support across all age groups.

Regional Collaboration

Over the past 5 years, engaged SYMCA, Sheffield Chamber of Commerce, employers, charities, and third-sector partners.

HEI Engagement

Shifted focus from funding to shared purpose, ensuring all partners contribute to a unified regional strategy.

Strategic Vision: Current State

Place-Based Partnership Development

- Targeting specific communities with tailored outreach.
- Working with local authorities and community organisations.

Institutional Collaboration

- Strengthening ties between HEIs, FE colleges, and schools.
- Shared delivery models and joint CPD initiatives.

Data-Driven Decision Making

- Using HEAT and local intelligence to guide targeting and measure impact.
- Embedding evaluation into partnership planning and delivery.

National Alignment & Guiding Principles

Connect higher education providers and other key partners within a region to align access efforts to regional needs

Undertake early, persistent, consistent engagement with the most underserved students to address identified regional gaps

Build and share the evidence base for effective higher education access work, with a national framework to support evaluation

OfS Theory of Change

To create **sustainable, embedded partnerships** that go beyond project cycles.

To ensure **equity of access** to high-quality outreach across the region.

To align with future regional access partnerships ensuring robust evidence and impact