



South Yorkshire's
**Community
Foundation**



VITAL SIGNS



South Yorkshire's Vital Signs Report 2021

Local knowledge.
Wise investment.
Stronger communities.

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Welcome to our 2021 Vital Signs research. As with previous reports, our goal is to 'take the pulse' of the South Yorkshire community. As we are doing this in the wake of a global pandemic, which we are still trying to understand the impact of, we thought it more important than ever to identify and measure the needs and priorities the pandemic has so palpably exposed.

We want to respond to the crisis and support our communities with targeted interventions where they are most needed. We will be directing our grant giving to support the identified priorities and produce a detailed Vital Signs report every three years to measure progress and conduct interim impact monitoring, ensuring grants are as effective as possible.

Our community survey has provided a detailed insight into current thoughts on quality of life in our communities, as well as an awareness of how heavy the last year is sitting with us and for just how long we will see the impact of it. The top four priorities for action detailed in this report demonstrate the interlinking nature of society's biggest problems and how a coordinated effort from all stakeholders is needed to effect change.

This Vital Signs report provides a thought-provoking snapshot of the current facts and priorities of the South Yorkshire community but let us not allow this report to just be a moment in time – let us think long term. As you read this report, consider your place in the story. What do you love, and what do you want to change about your community?

We have contemplated this research and identified our next course of action with a targeted funding programme which aims to have maximum impact across all the priorities discussed in this report. Why don't you join us? Our aim is to spark discussion, encourage connections, create partnerships, and inspire action.



**Professor
Chris Booth-Mayblin**
Chair



Ruth E Willis
MCIIH FRSA
Chief Executive

We are South Yorkshire's Community Foundation (SYCF) and are here to support and build strong, resilient communities across the region. We invest in change-making groups by distributing grants, delivering training and sharing advice – acting as a catalyst for positive change. SYCF encourages charitable giving for the benefit of communities, to help local people gain the support they need now, while investing in a stronger South Yorkshire for all.

This Vital Signs report will be used to inform funding decisions by the region's non-profit organisations, charities, government agencies, impact investors, grant makers and philanthropists.

Through the report we aim to:



Strengthen our collective understanding of, and connections with, South Yorkshire communities



Inform and support local funding and impact investment decision-making by identifying and communicating the key priorities and aspirations of South Yorkshire communities

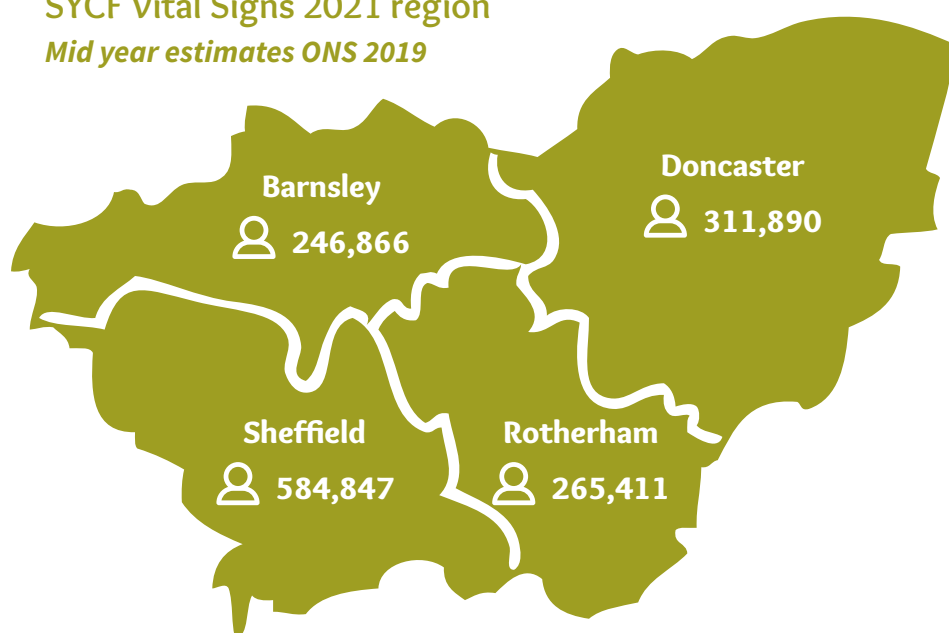


Connect philanthropic individuals and organisations with the change-makers that can address key community needs and opportunities

We conduct the Vital Signs research to understand the areas for urgent investment and sustainable community development. We are committed to serving the South Yorkshire community in the long term and affecting change to improve the quality of life for all. We are measuring this impact through the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) which acknowledge inequality exists everywhere with a focus on community-level actions, with indicators to ensure 'no one is left behind.' The projects referred to demonstrating Vital Action will be linked to the goals they are directly working towards.

SYCF Vital Signs 2021 region

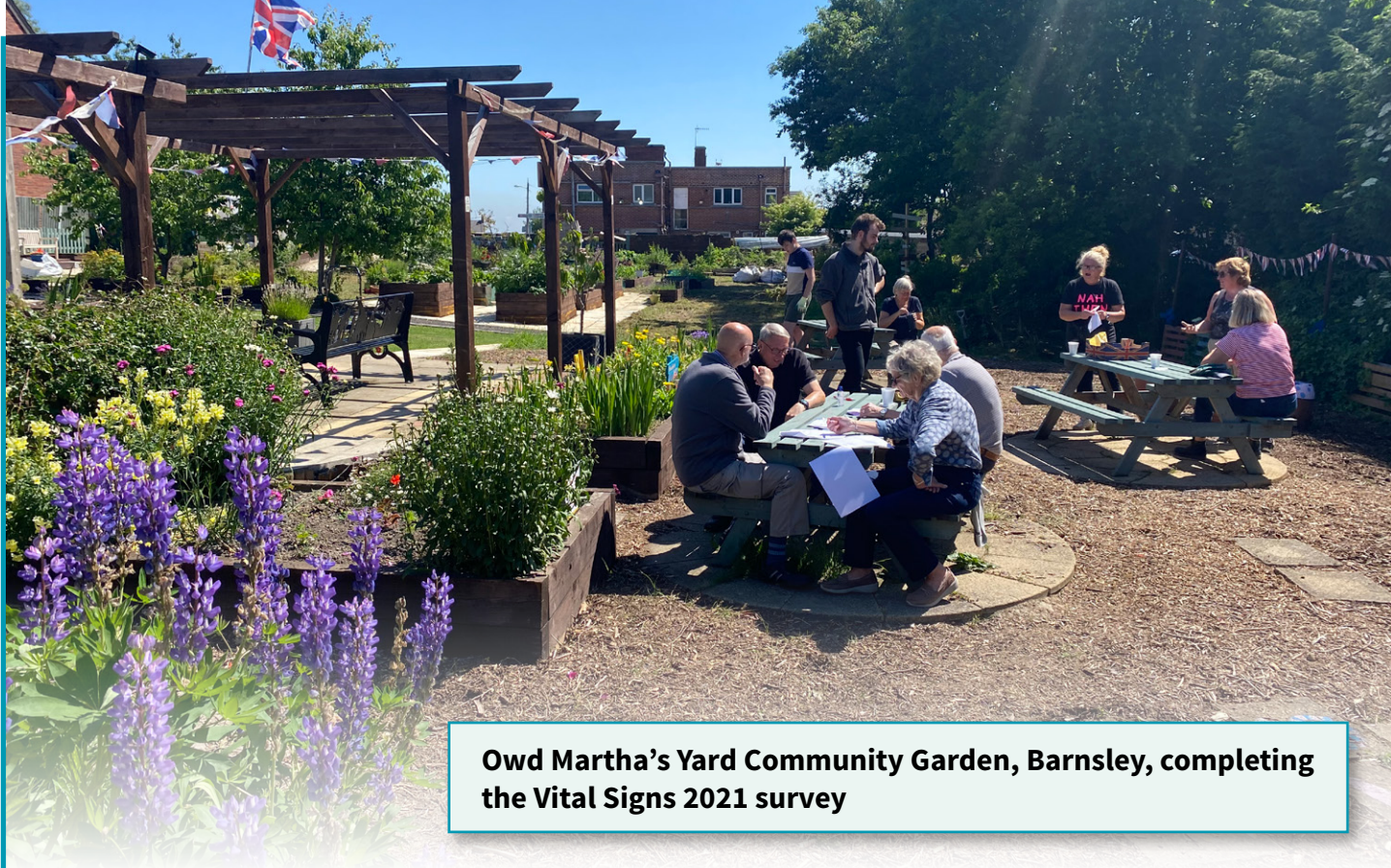
Mid year estimates ONS 2019



South Yorkshire is made up of four metropolitan districts.

In this report we compare these four regions, and South Yorkshire as a whole, with local authorities across England. SYCF exists to serve all people and communities within the South Yorkshire geographic boundary.

Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by foundations around the world that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. Vital Signs is coordinated internationally by Community Foundations of Canada.



Owd Martha's Yard Community Garden, Barnsley, completing the Vital Signs 2021 survey

Vital Signs uses local knowledge to measure the vitality of a community and support action, a 'health-check' that identifies our community's hidden needs and priorities. Local data gathered through the research is used to support evidence-based, locally relevant solutions to improve the quality of life at the community level.

Data has been collected in three ways:



Vital Voices - your input through our community survey



Vital Statistics - where we have brought together existing datasets to compare South Yorkshire with the rest of England



Vital Conversations - where we held focus groups with the public and interviewed experts in each of our themes

We'll be looking at each theme through an analytical lens, and exploring means for actions:

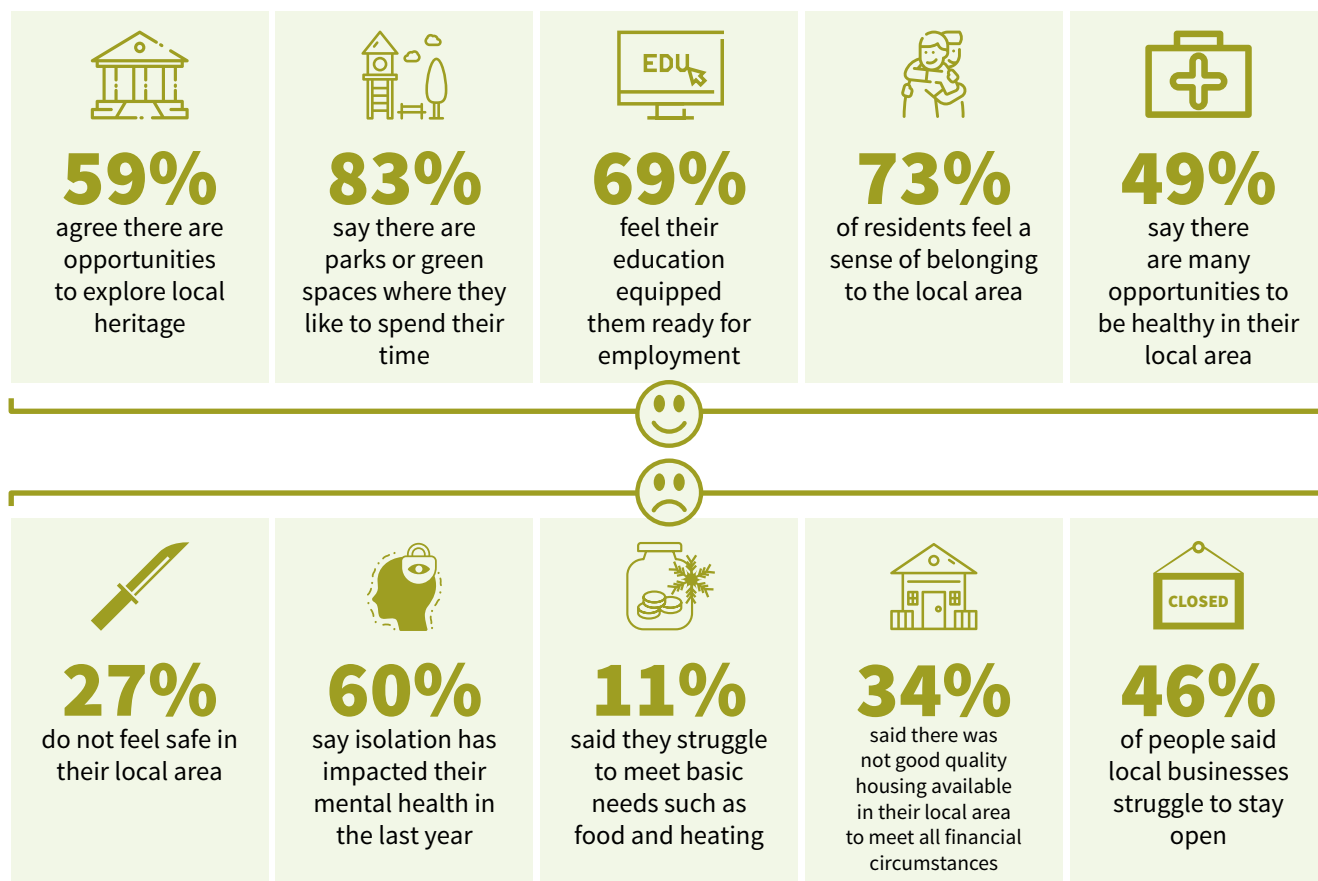


Vital Action – organisations working in South Yorkshire making strides towards our target priorities



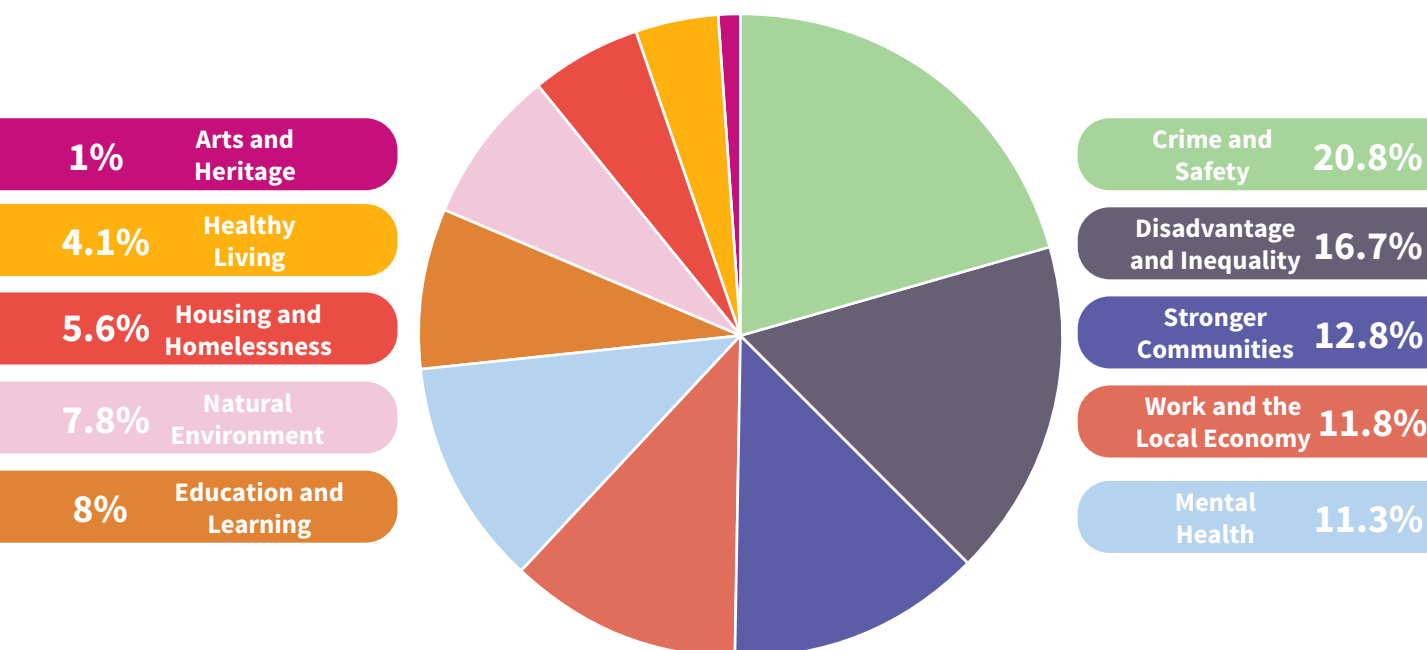
Vital Thinking – a reflection on the learnings gained from focus groups and interviews with our experts on what needs to happen now

The Vital Voices and Vital Conversations are a crucial part of this report and we have spoken to more people this year than ever before. By hearing the community voice behind the numbers we amplify their meaning, gathering real stories and viewpoints. The real life insight received from our South Yorkshire community was rich and we give sincere thanks to everyone who engaged with the survey and took part in the focus groups and interviews.



Our South Yorkshire community's priorities for action

In the survey we asked respondents to tell us which theme they considered to be the top priority for action.

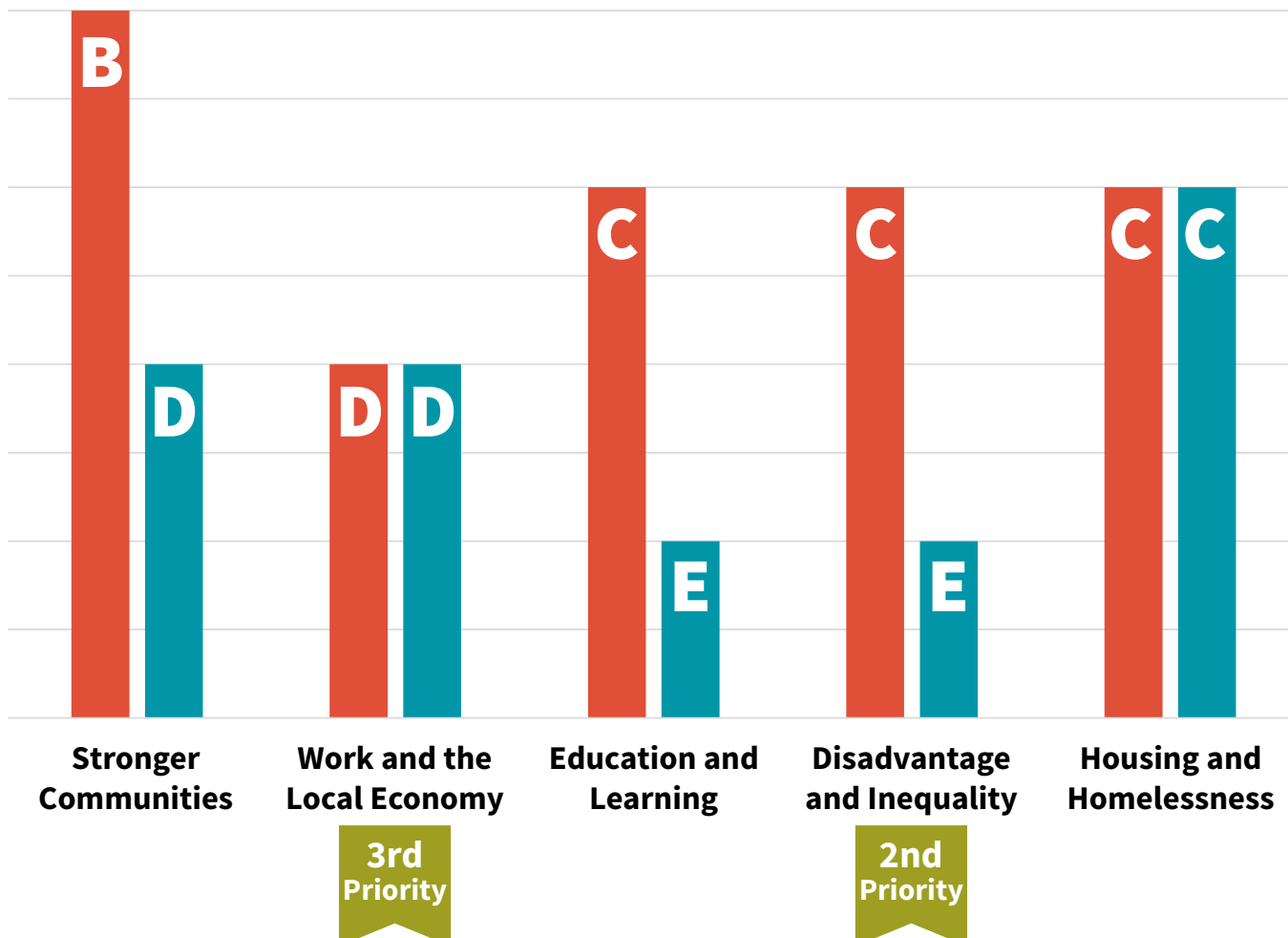
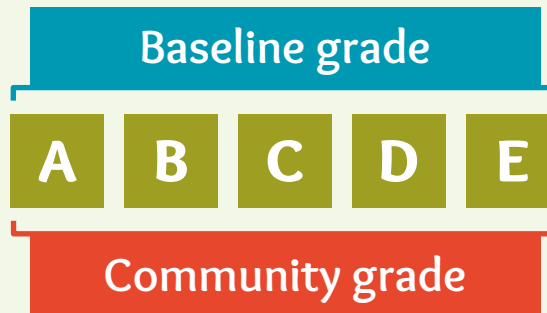


For more information on the methodology, definitions of and findings on all ten themes please see the long report, Vital Issues, on the SYCF website www.sycf.org.uk/VitalSigns

Each of the ten themes have been given a Baseline Grade and a Community Grade.

The Baseline Grade reflects the Vital Statistics - how do the areas within South Yorkshire compare with the other local authorities in England using existing research. The Community Grade is your voice – what do people on the ground think the situation is like in our community. The lower the overall rank, the Community Grade and Baseline Grade side by side, the higher the priority for action.

When two priorities had the same rank, we used the community's choice for number one priority for action (from p5) to give the higher weighting.



Baseline grade



Vital Statistics - where we have brought together existing datasets to compare South Yorkshire with the rest of England

A

Better than 80% of comparable areas in relation to the core indicator

B

Better than 60% of comparable areas

C

Better than 40% of comparable areas

D

Better than 20% of comparable areas

E

Worse than 80% of comparable areas

Community grade



Vital Voices - your input through our community survey

A

Everything is great!

B

Things are going well

C

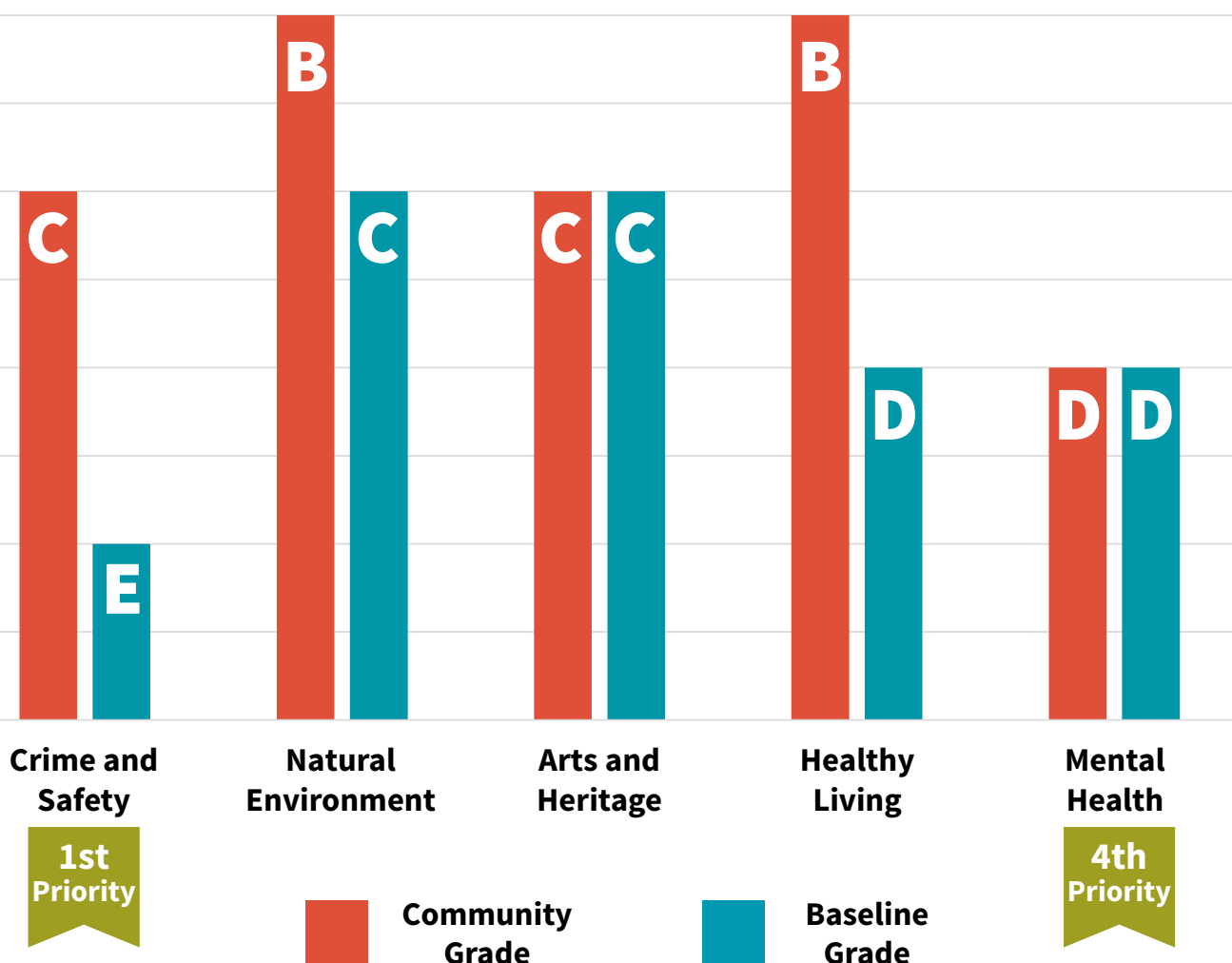
The situation is OK

D

Things aren't going well

E

Things are going very badly



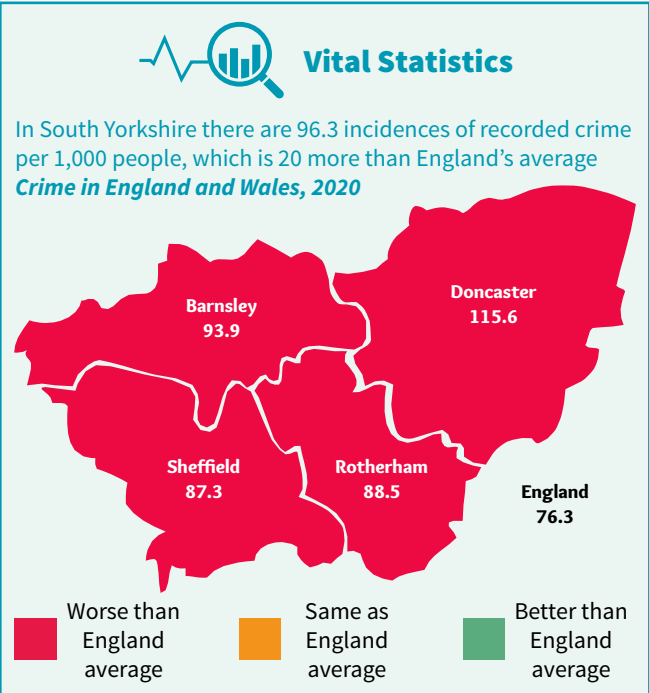


1st priority for action

Community Grade	C
Baseline Grade	E
20.8% voted as number one priority for action	

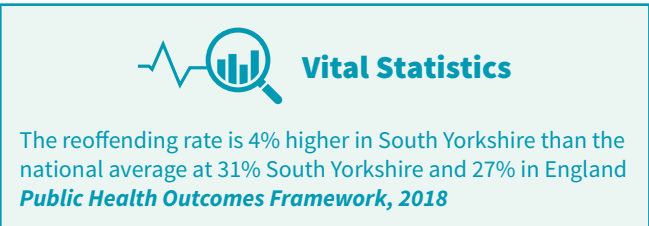


Crime and Safety explores how safe and secure people feel in their local area – looking at the incidences of crime, the response to crime by enforcement authorities as well as residents’ perceptions and experiences of crime.



 **Vital Voices**

"Total lack of interest/action unless residents get together and protest loudly. Not enough resources. People probably doing their best under difficult circumstances"
(Barnsley resident)



The impact of the pandemic

The levels and types of crimes have changed over the pandemic with decreased robbery and theft but increased violent crime, drug use and gang activity.
BBC News, 2021

 **Vital Conversations**

"No point reporting criminal behaviour that contributes to a feeling of unsafety like fast driving and causing accidents. How do we prioritise the inclusion of young people in society to help them not commit crimes down the line which costs money. It feels like we're out of kilter as to what the priorities are for funding"
(Angela, Sheffield)



Mums United delivering summer camps for families in Meersbrook Park, Sheffield



Vital Action

Mums United is a youth violence organisation led by mothers to protect young people from becoming involved in criminal activity. They exist to listen, engage, act, raise awareness and create safe places for young people. They provide support and activities which develop young people's skills, capacities, and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as responsible individuals. They support both the victims and perpetrators of violent crimes or gang activity, and their families.

Mums United train people in their own communities to become mentors so they can connect with young people. They don't believe in trying to bring in an agency from the outside but about effecting change from within and de-normalising gang behaviour.

Mentoring of this kind has been shown to reduce gang involvement and improve community safety.



"Mums United can't compete with a drug dealer certainly in terms of money. But can get some young people trained up as councillors or their mums trained up in domestic violence for example. Then there are people in their bubble, someone their age with no strings attached support"

Sahira Irshad
Founder and Managing Director of Mums United



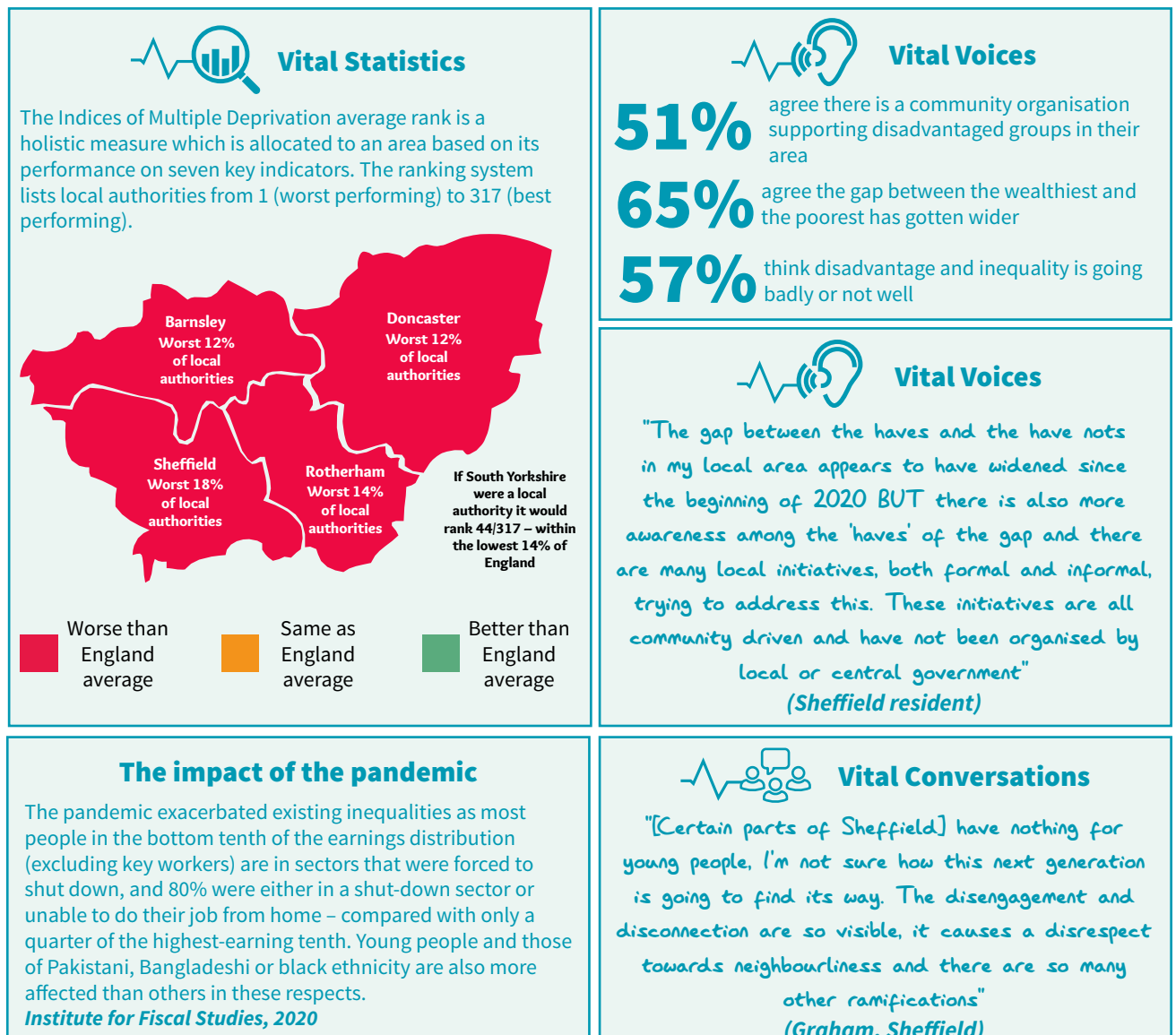
Vital Thinking

Here are our thoughts. Living with the fear of crime does not provide an environment of comfort and security, and the Vital Statistics demonstrate the reality of those fears. We have a way to go to increase community's feelings of safety and we all have a part to play

- Crime rates in South Yorkshire are in the worst 20% in England with Doncaster being in the worst 4%. It needs to be looked at how those areas performing better can work with those doing worse to close the gap
- It needs to be understood why 4% more people reoffend in South Yorkshire and look at better rehabilitation of offenders. Investment is needed in groups and organisations discouraging gateways to crime by offering other alternatives e.g. training, education
- SYCF promise to amplify the voice of groups doing work in this space to create ripple effects and build awareness of the risks open to young people in particularly. We're going to work at bringing organisations together to share best practice and understand what works to lift us up as a region



Disadvantage and inequality relates to social and economic status – looking at the gap between those with the most and those with the least.





Doncaster Conversation Club's refugee football team playing at the Keepmoat Stadium, Doncaster



Vital Action

Doncaster Conversation Club work with some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. They welcome refugees and asylum seekers who have arrived in Doncaster with little knowledge of the locality or the legal systems. They are navigating a new culture, potentially a new language and are often lonely or socially isolated and suffering mental health problems. They are managing on very limited finances, £38 per week, to cover all living costs.

The Conversation Club will offer bureaucratic advice, a hot meal, childcare, sport and social activities, healthcare advice as well as some hands on healthcare and mental health support.

Doncaster Conversation Club look at disadvantage and inequality through a lens of the huge disparity in opportunity, support and resources available to beneficiaries who show such strength and fortitude despite their circumstances.



"One of the big things about life as somebody seeking asylum is the uncertainty...and uncertainty and the 'What If Factor' undermines quality of life hugely. But I think consistency and being here (at Doncaster Conversation Club) is respectful and says 'You Matter'."

Denise
Volunteer of Doncaster Conversation Club



Vital Thinking

So what can we do about this? The pandemic has widened the pre-existing wealth gap and most people have seen the growing inequality in their community in their day to day lives. Whilst community organisations are present and supporting everyone they can, there needs to be a better support infrastructure in place

- The local authorities within South Yorkshire have ranked on average, four places worse off against the other English local authorities since the 2015 IMD. Therefore, we need to work harder with stakeholders on the ground to identify how we are going to make a difference
- We need to prepare for the impacts long lasting and widening inequality has on society e.g. mental health
- The Foundation will utilise this research to ensure grants are reaching the most disadvantaged areas



3rd priority for action

Community Grade **D**

Baseline Grade **D**

11.8% voted as number one priority for action

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

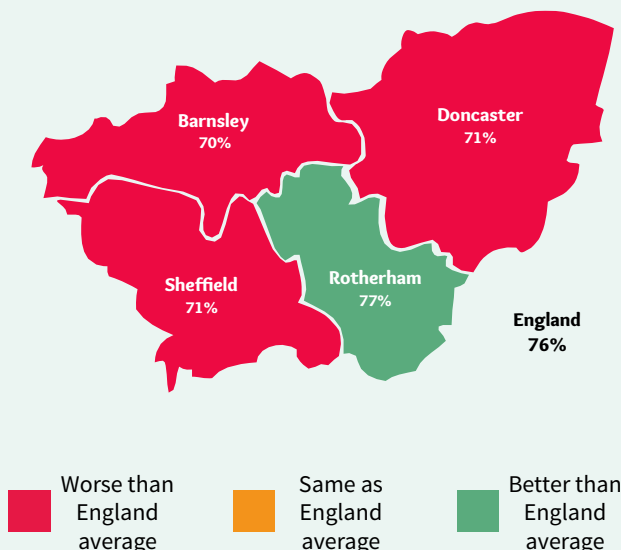


This theme addresses the availability and quality of jobs, as well as the favourability of conditions for businesses in South Yorkshire. The health of the local economy and employment is essential for ensuring the financial stability and quality of life of people in South Yorkshire.



Vital Statistics

The employment rate for ages 16-64.
Annual Population Survey 2020 via Noamix



The impact of the pandemic

The unemployment rate in South Yorkshire was 0.5% higher than the UK average of 4.5% during the peak of the pandemic. This ranges from Rotherham at 4.5% to Doncaster at 5.3%.
Office for National Statistics, 2020



Vital Voices

28% think there is not a good level of support for people seeking work in their local area

27% think there is not good quality vocational training in the area

44% think the work and the local economy is going badly/ not well



Vital Voices

"Transport links are really poor inhibiting job searches. Rental and rates for offices and shops are very high. There are very little business opportunities for employment locally or for work experience or mentoring for fledgling business"
(Sheffield resident)



Vital Conversations

"There are not enough well paid, secure job opportunities concurrent with good training. The pandemic has identified the keyworkers who we can't live without yet we look down on the lowly paid jobs that have been proven to be essential. Secure those jobs with better pay and make them more appealing to train for"
(Richard, Sheffield)



work-wise®
inspiring skills and employability

Work-wise delivering STEM summer academies for young people in Rotherham



Vital Action

The Work-wise Foundation is an employer inspired and led charity focused on supporting the development of children and young people from all backgrounds, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, aptitudes, and opportunities for employment.

They connect employers to young people, support recruitment and provide opportunities for the current workforce to enhance their knowledge and experience. Work-wise are trying to engage young people at a younger age to demonstrate the vastness of the possibilities of work. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds don't have access to the knowledge of the opportunities that are out there.

Through participation students gain experiential learning and an understanding of jobs, careers and pathways in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) related and other industries. They have a chance to participate in hands on activities and projects developing their employability skills, attributes and confidence.



"It's exceeded all expectations...we've actually put more than 100,000 young people through the programme and it's just absolutely been wonderful. A wonderful, amazing experience for young people"

Janice Richardson,
Senior Executive, The Work-wise Foundation



Vital Thinking

It's time for action. Some areas of South Yorkshire are performing above the national average when it comes to Work and the Local Economy but there is still a lot of work to be done to reduce the inequality across the region

- The pandemic has highlighted how important key workers are and how they have long hours for low pay. We need to reevaluate the importance and security of this workforce for our society to function
- The Foundation will work with partners to share best practice in supporting communities access employment and skills across South Yorkshire. We need to boost the community's perception and knowledge of available training and opportunity across the region



4th priority for action

Community Grade **D**

Baseline Grade **D**

11.3% voted as number one priority for action

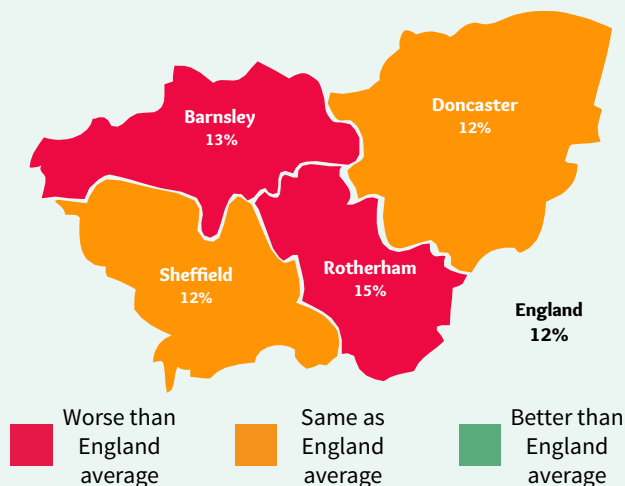


This theme explores the prevalence of mental health in communities and the response individuals receive as a result - feeling free and able to talk and the availability and success of accessing services.



Vital Statistics

The percentage of people registered with a GP who have been diagnosed with depression.
NHS Quality and Outcomes Framework 2020



Vital Voices

41% think there is not a good level of community and professional support for the people living with mental health in their local area

37% say mental health is not openly and regularly discussed in their community

55% say the situation of mental health in the community is not good



Vital Voices

"I worry about the mental health of people in our area. Local GPs are good on these issues but there are limited referral and support routes open to them"
(Rotherham resident)



Vital Conversations

"There has been lots of raising awareness pre-pandemic to reach out for help but the support in the community is just not there. And the worry is those that don't present themselves or are not seen at early stages will suffer even more with long term intervention not prevented. The services are woefully under provided"
(Lynne, Doncaster)

The impact of the pandemic

Despite the number of cases of depression doubling across England, the number of referrals to primary or secondary mental health treatments fell by 61% over 2020.

The Nuffield Trust, 2020



The Youth Association delivering detached youth work sessions in Barnsley



Vital Action

The Youth Association is a detached youth work project operating in Barnsley. They work with young people on the streets of their own communities, a place where teachers and parents have little reach. The young people are asked what they would like to do to make that time as productive as possible. This could include learning life skills such as first aid or cooking, organised sports, supporting community cohesion or running social impact projects. The idea being to give young people an experience they can't get from home, school or college whilst building their confidence, meet new friends, and give them a place to be who they are and express themselves.

These opportunities offer young people an outlet to talk about problems bothering them or a chance to shut out the outside world for a couple of hours and focus on something completely different. The young people get educated on how to deal with mental health problems both with themselves and friends and family.



"A lot of the time when you first meet young people, I don't think they understand what youth work is. If you're consistent and you build those relationships, they can see that they can get a lot out of it. It's there for them, they've just got to understand that process because it's not something they're usually used to...(It gives them) confidence, a lot of young people talk about improving in their mental wellbeing"

Rebecca Coyne
Lead Youth Worker, The Youth Association



Vital Thinking

Vital Statistics, as just one example, highlighted a higher proportion of all South Yorkshire patients being diagnosed with depression. We need to get to the bottom of why this might be, whilst also asking ourselves about the level of undiagnosed problems, the waiting lists, the increasing number of referrals, the general lack of resources. Vital Voices highlighted an extremely poor public perception of mental health support in the community, people do not think there are enough routes for onward referral.

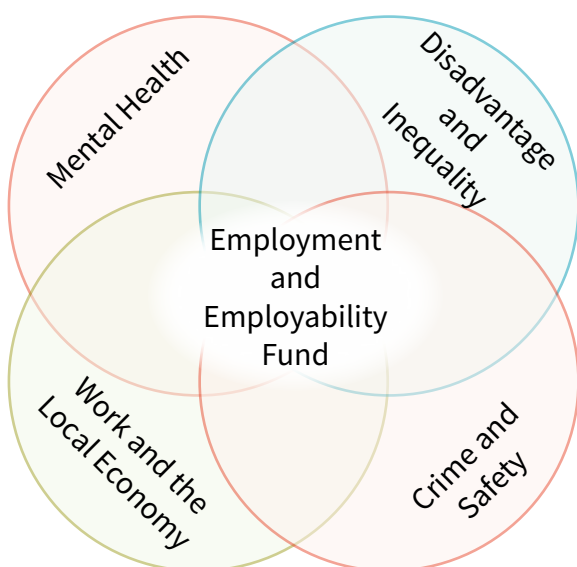
The pandemic should have equalised us in being able to talk about mental health yet in the wake of the pandemic yet over a third of our community do not feel it is openly talked about. More investment is needed in organisations who support mental health holistically and open up the conversation on prevalence and available resources.



HIVE, Sheffield

SYCF will be examining and actioning our Vital Thinking and searching for ways to bring about incremental change in our community. Whilst Crime and Safety, Disadvantage and Inequality, Work and the Local Economy and Mental Health are all major challenges for society today they are also intrinsically linked and we want to support communities holistically. They cannot be looked at in isolation, we have listened to the community, presented the data and we are thrilled to say we are taking our first step forward with a dedicated themed programme to target these issues.

We are launching an Employment and Employability themed programme where our ambition is to help inspire and prepare young people for the fast-changing world of work through funding community organisations that are providing support to address the key social issue of youth unemployment.

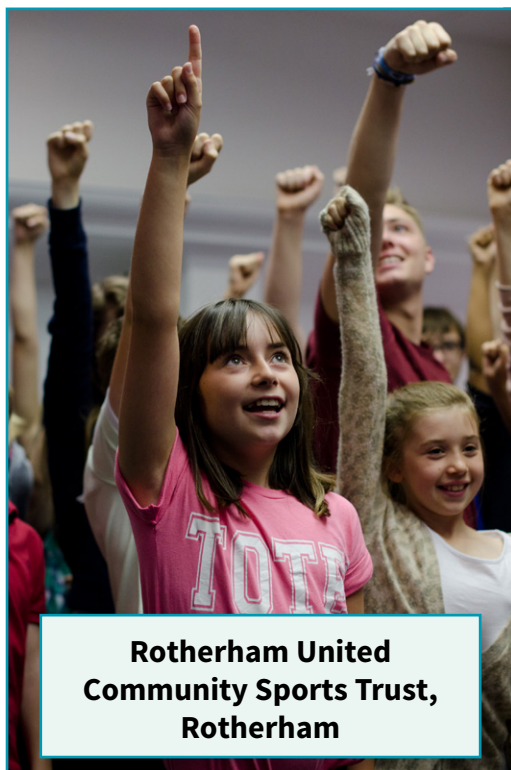


The effects of the Covid pandemic have undoubtedly exacerbated unemployment for young people, where three out of five job losses were from people under the age of 30 (ONS, 2021). Compounded by the current changing economic landscape in South Yorkshire where communities are facing a 'cliff edge' withdrawal of financial support from benefits and temporary measures such as the furlough scheme. Young people are also most concerned of all age groups that their ability to find, and progress in, a job will be hindered by their mental health and are the most concerned age group that their mental health will be affected if they do not have good opportunities in the labour market in future (**The Resolution Foundation, 2021**).



The Element Society, Sheffield

We aim to inspire the next generation by helping remove barriers to employment by connecting young people with opportunities to engage with businesses and employers. This support could include job coaches, workplace visits and interview workshops. Where possible, SYCF aims to be a catalyst for collaboration and facilitate a link between employers and those working with young people.



**Rotherham United
Community Sports Trust,
Rotherham**

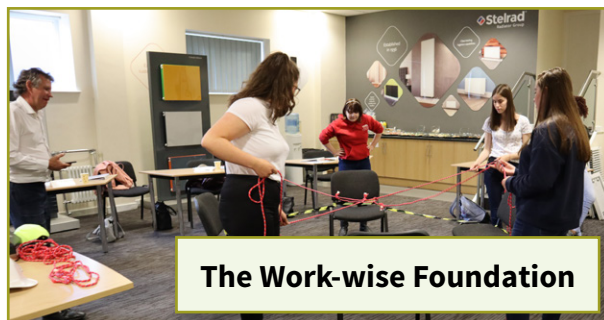
Our goal is to raise £500,000 over three years to fund community organisations providing support to young people aged 14-30 across the following:

- **Pre employability skills** – to support young people in developing future aspirations
- **Pre employment and establishing pathways** – supporting young people to gain work-ready skills, engage with employers, and mentoring or advice
- **Pathways to employment** – supporting young people to engage with businesses and into sustainable employment

This is an immediate action, but this is just the start. We need your help to move this forward and tackle some of the biggest issues facing our community. If you have been inspired to make a difference, we'd love to chat about all of the ways to get involved.



Mums United



The Work-wise Foundation

The 2021 Vital Signs report provides a snapshot in time of our community. It describes a dynamically changing South Yorkshire that is not without its challenges. However, we have an opportunity to turn this around. We want to treat it as our starting point. We need to accept our shortcomings if we are to improve the current situation and build a better South Yorkshire for everyone.

It is crucial that Vital Signs is not seen as a one-off that generates short term interest and does not result in change for our communities. This report is going to be conducted every three years, and we commit to using this report as a change generator for our communities. We cannot be writing this report in three years' time and face the same problems. The more we talk, share information and shout about the brilliant work being done to tackle the challenges the more potential it generates.

SYCF will be examining and actioning our Vital Thinking and searching for ways to bring about incremental change in our community. Whilst Crime and Safety, Disadvantage and Inequality, Work and the Local Economy and Mental Health are all major challenges for society today they are also intrinsically linked and we want to support communities holistically. They cannot be looked at in isolation, we have listened to the community and presented the data and we are taking our first step forward with a dedicated programme to target these issues.

We look forward to seeing the positive impacts of Vital Signs, the conversations it generates, and our collective progress towards a thriving South Yorkshire for all.



Doncaster Conversation Club



The Youth Association

"It is essential to be working with established grassroots organisations. When making grants, engage with local organisations and make sure they're accessible to a decent hub of the community. Decision makers need to know the patch and not enforce decisions that are not appropriate. There can be pockets of need everywhere, it is so important to communicate with people in each small locality to understand their view"

(Rotherham resident)



In2Change, Sheffield



**Doncaster Deaf Trust,
Doncaster**



**Harthill Workbench,
Rotherham**



**Hanover Tenants Association
and Libre Digital, Barnsley**

A huge thank you to the people of South Yorkshire who engaged with our community survey and focus groups, and the community organisations who gave time to be interviewed to support the findings.

Andy Kershaw is an invaluable ambassador for the Foundation and has been critical to the production of this report for which we can't thank him enough.

A special thank you to the University of Sheffield for their support in the research design of this Vital Signs Report.



The video production and design of this report is by Chris Webb.



This report has been written and produced by Liz Bailey and Joe Douglas.



Join the conversation!

Get involved and have your say on the findings in this Vital Signs report



your #SYVitalSigns thoughts to @SYCF1986



SYCF1986



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Local knowledge.
Wise investment.
Stronger communities.

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