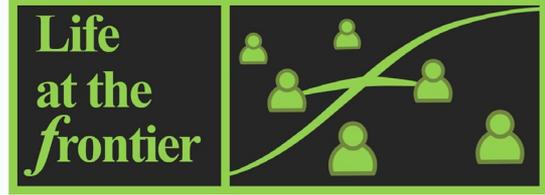




University of  
Sheffield



# Social frontiers in Rotherham West and their impacts on the community

RMCB Improving Places Select Commission, 12th December 2023

Dr Aneta Piekut, Prof. Gwilym Pryce,  
Dr Zanib Rasool (RUCT) & Dr Henry Staples



NordForsk



Economic  
and Social  
Research Council

# About the project

“Life at the Frontier: Researching the Impact of Social Frontiers on the Social Mobility and Integration of Migrants” (2020-2023)

Funded by Nordforsk and the Economic and Social Research Council (ERSC)

Project Director: Prof. Gwilym Pryce

Rotherham case study lead: Dr Aneta Piekut

UK, Norway, Sweden

Web: <https://www.lifeatthefrontier.org/>





# Case study in Rotherham West

- **23 resident interviews:** Sept 2021 - Nov 2022

Neighbourhood		Gender		Age group		Ethnicity	
Kimberworth	8	Man	9	18-29	7	White British	8
Masborough	6	Woman	14	30-54	11	British Pakistani	9
Ferham	9			55+	5	Other	6
	<b>23</b>		<b>23</b>		<b>23</b>		<b>23</b>

- **11 expert interviews:** councillors (3), police (1), priest (1), local NGOs (2), community leaders (4)
- **1 focus group:** in Roma Slovak (6 female participants)
- **1 group reflection & feedback session:** held at Liberty Church in March 2023
- **2 artistic performance and Q&A sessions:** September 2022 (Sheffield) and August 2023 (Rotherham)

# **Key findings**

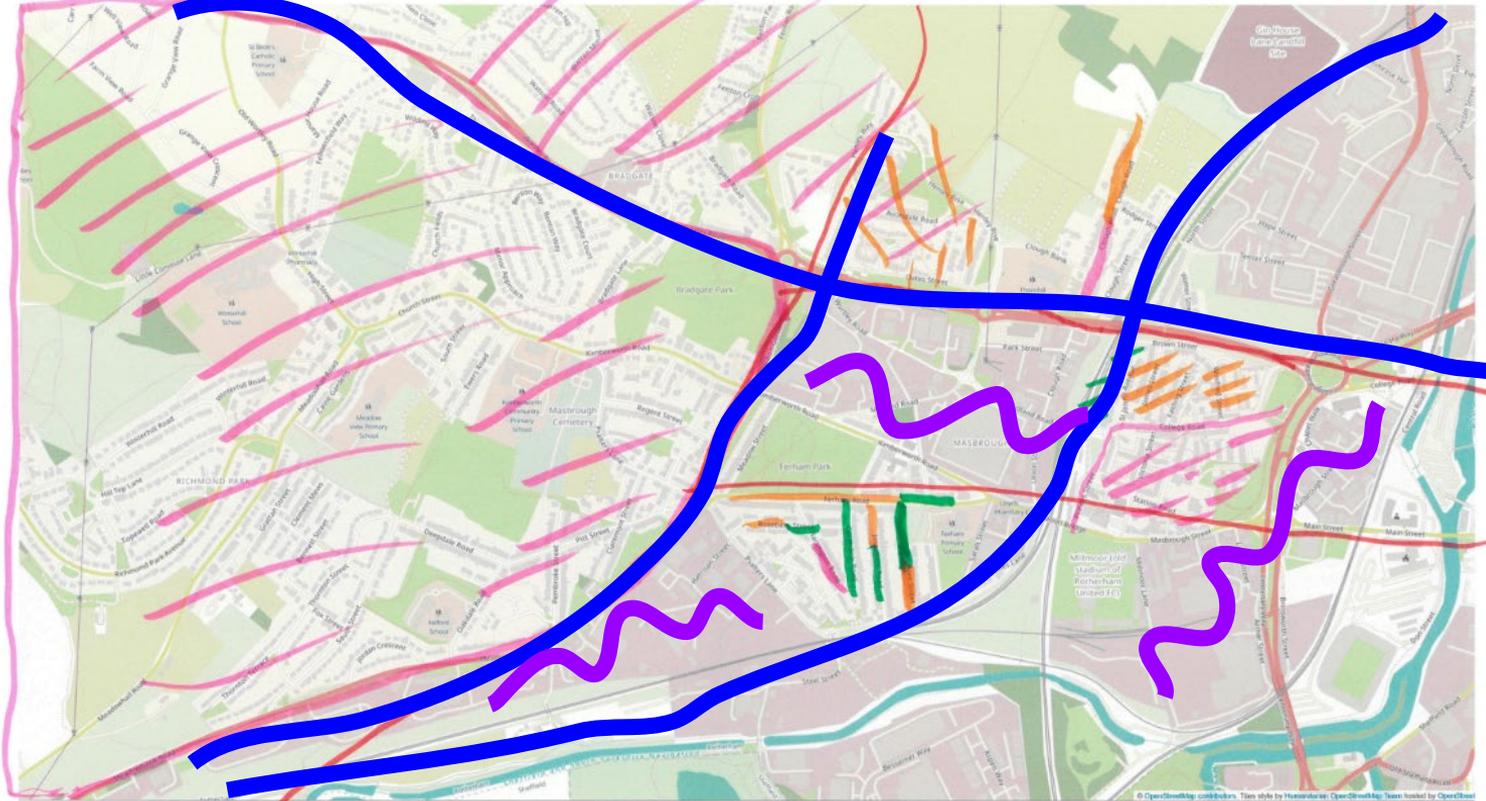
- 1. Physical barriers overlapping with social frontiers**

# Social frontiers in Rotherham West

- SFs overlapping with physical barriers affecting community life
- Rotherham West:
  - Dual-carriageways
  - Post-industrial sites
  - Unused green spaces
  - Railway tracks



Rotherham West map



**Participant-created map**  
(M, 20-24, not UK born, Ferham)

Asian  
Boundaries

European

English

Participant code:  
RES\_UK\_R\_17

# Impacts on safety, mobility and socialising

(...) Well, **they're extremely dangerous at night to walk through...** and they would have been the safest paths to town, though, because if not, you're going over the dual carriageways. So those areas I would... **I'd avoid.**

(F, 35-39, White British, Kimberworth, R21)

There's only a path here for bus, X78 ...to Meadowhall. (...) **There's no pavement from that Kimberworth Road all the way down to the other roundabout** (...) You have to **cross two sets of traffic lights to go into Bradgate Park** entrance at the top here if you're going up (...) There's literally physically not a lot of space [between], but I think **mentally**, the way they've made the design of the road and everything, it's like yeah, **don't cross over.**

(M, 20-24, not UK born, Ferham, R17)

I think it's just geographical, really... You live in Kimberworth, you mix in Kimberworth. You live in Masbrough, you know? **I think that it's geographical boundaries, and obviously there's the distance,** isn't there, in terms of walking and stuff.

(F, 55-59, White British, Kimberworth, R19)

# **Key findings**

1. Physical barriers overlapping with social frontiers
- 2. Scarcity of social and community infrastructure**

# Not many places to meet and socialise

“[New Wortley Road] created a barrier. Because a hell of **a lot of the shops, the services, got knocked down**, got demolished. So it really did **affect the whole makeup of the community**”

(W, 65-70, White British, Kimberworth, [R15])

I lived on the borderline. [*pointing to the map*] So this is Ferham and that's the main Masbrough area. (...) Ferham, of course, they have the nice park and stuff. **Masbrough have nothing. You can look there – there's nothing.**

(M, 20-25, British Pakistani, Masbrough, [R18])

“I do believe that there should be more things going on in the area, and I am sad to see **a building going to waste.**”

(W, 40-44, White Other, Masborough [R9])

“**There's nothing** really in Masbrough, Ferham or Kimberworth that you could go to...”

(W, 25-29, British Pakistani, Masborough [R5])

# Key findings

1. Physical barriers overlapping with social frontiers
2. Scarcity of social and community infrastructure
- 3. Tensions related to the scarcity of community infrastructure**

# Unequal distribution of resources

“One area has a high number of immigrants or people of diverse ethnicities – nothing available to them; and then, just over the border is predominantly White British, and there’s a clear contrast how the park has been maintained. **And then that raises questions. That raises insecurities. That raises a lot of, you know ... it can create a little difficult atmosphere between the neighbours**, as well, you know. So other people can start looking down on the particular neighbourhood.

**It’s a shame that these basic facilities are all being taken away, especially when the crime is on the rise, the vulnerability is on the rise.** Ferham has been identified as one of the most deprived areas of Rotherham, and the most deprived area of Rotherham doesn’t have a youth centre. ... doesn’t have a police station or police hub. It doesn’t have a library. ... not even a single place for the elderly to sit or congregate around”

(M, 30-34, British Pakistani, Ferham [R10])

# Not enough infrastructure for all communities

That's more of a **space for White British people (Bradgate Park), and that's a space for Pakistani (Ferham Park)**. And so if there's any social events ... put on by Pakistani groups, it's always in the Ferham Park (...). If there's anything from the white community, it's either put on in that park [Bradgate], or it'll be in the park up here [in Kimberworth].

(M, 55-59, White British, Kimberworth [R15])

**If one of those groups uses the building, the other group then think it's not theirs ....** So those tensions have been played out at that level, that actually even physical spaces have become identified with one group or the other....

(Expert, religious leader [E10])

**Only mixing that happens between whites and Asians is at school,** and of course you go to school to learn, really, to learn lessons. **They're not really focussing on, "Ah, yeah, we're mixing communities."** So that's the only real – there's nothing, there's never been much.

(M, 20-25, British Pakistani, Masbrough, [R18])

# Key findings

1. Physical barriers overlapping with social frontiers
2. Scarcity of social and community infrastructure
3. Tensions related to the scarcity of community infrastructure
- 4. The importance and limits of community encouragers/leaders**

# The importance of community encouragers

I'm a chair for a community organisation that I set up in 2018. That was to increase physical participation within underrepresented groups (...) And that's currently going successful to this day. (...) It takes **time and effort** and not many people have that.

(W, 45-49, White British, Kimberworth [R01])

Just before Christmas they had a teacher up there (...) and [the teacher] did a lot of work ... **trying to pull the Roma community and the Asian community together**. Getting the children to work through music, through cultural events. (...) Unfortunately, **XXX has left**... So, whether that side of it will carry on I'm not quite sure.

(Expert, Local Councillor, [E04])

[X] offered the building up. [They] supported them with food. [They] worked alongside the mosque. So [They] really did change the face of Masbrough and then, **I think, [X] left, and then obviously it's always very person centric, isn't it**, and I think that's the thing. (...) Somebody else came in, did quite a lot of damage, and then no-one has been able to recover any engagement in that community.

(Local expert, NGO, [E05])

# Support is not systematic

“[That person] left and **then the council said, “Right – we’re gonna bring another person...”** That person has looked to us once, met us **once**. They promised they’re going to see us again, we’re going to do work – never met us again. Since then, no-one’s approached us. [...]

Of course the council changes. New officers have been coming, new youth workers have been coming. **They’ve all promised us, each stage, they promised us, write down an item and they do this and they do that – nothing gets done.** And then now at the end of it they’ve just left us to it”.

(M, 20-25, British Pakistani, Masbrough, [R18])

# Key findings

1. Physical barriers overlapping with social frontiers
2. Scarcity of social and community infrastructure
3. Tensions related to the scarcity of community infrastructure
4. The importance and limits of community encouragers/leaders
- 5. A vibrant and initiative-taking community**

# Many community organisations and initiatives in Rotherham West

[As coded in data]

- Community Building
  - Bridge builders
  - Bridge building - cross-cultural initiatives
  - Community engagement
  - Initiatives - Bin Amnesty
  - Initiatives - Chester Hill Project
  - Initiatives - Children classes
  - Initiatives - Ferham Festival
  - Initiatives - Food
  - Initiatives - Food Bank
  - Initiatives - Henley Rise Community Space
  - Initiatives - Liberty Church Men's Group
  - Initiatives - Masbrough Youth Forum
  - Initiatives - Mental Health
  - Initiatives - School Coffee Sessions
  - Initiatives - Social Supermarket
- Organisations - Liberty Church
- Organisations - Artful
- Organisations - Bernardos
- Organisations - Bridging groups
- Organisations - Community building
- Organisations - Ferham Community Group
- Organisations - Kimberworth Neighbourho
- Organisations - One Voice
- Organisations - Reach
- Organisations - REMA
- Organisations - Residents' Association
- Organisations - Rother Phoenix FC
- Organisations - Rotherfed
- Organisations - Rotherham Minster
- Organisations - Rotherham United
- Organisations - Salvation Army
- Organisations - Shiloh
- Organisations - Voluntary Action Rotherha

# Rotherham Plan 2025: Building Stronger Communities

- Diverse and rich local social capital / community glue
- Passionate partners to work with!



“Creating more **connected neighbourhoods** where residents and agencies come together to solve problems and make improvements”

“We will work closely together with all partners, including local voluntary and community groups, **to ensure our public spaces, buildings and other local assets are used effectively** to deliver public and community services.”

See it yourselves at <https://player.sheffield.ac.uk/>

Produced by David Sánchez Marín in collaboration with local partners:



**ROAR**



# Our recommendations

1. Review how frontiers/barriers in Rotherham West divide the community and affect everyday life of residents
2. Create an inclusive social and community infrastructure, e.g. a community centre
3. Support local encouragers/leader in establishing sustainable structures for their work
4. Involve the community more in the decision-making process & improve transparency of the consultation process and how the council works with local groups

# Thank you to all community organisations who supported us:



KRASTEVA

KPCP

KIMBERWORTH PARK COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

ROAR



A Sure Start Children's Centre



# Contact details



Dr Aneta Piekut:

[a.piekut@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:a.piekut@sheffield.ac.uk)

Prof. Gwilym Pryce

[g.pryce@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:g.pryce@sheffield.ac.uk)

Dr Zanib Rasool

[zrasool@rotherhamunited.net](mailto:zrasool@rotherhamunited.net)

Dr Henry Staples

[h.staples@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:h.staples@sheffield.ac.uk)