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Issues paper

This report is for information

This report gives details of a classification of small areas across the UK, based on young participation rates in higher education. This classification is a new iteration of the existing Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) classification.

POLAR3

Young participation rates in higher education

HIGHER EDUCATION hefce FUNDING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND

Contents

POLAR3: Young participation rates in higher education

To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions Heads of HEFCE-funded further education colleges Heads of universities in Northern Ireland
Of interest to those responsible for	Widening participation, Policy development
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Executive summary

Purpose

1. This report gives details of a classification of small areas across the UK, based on young participation rates in higher education (HE). This classification is a new iteration of the existing Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) classification. Known as POLAR3, this new classification supersedes its predecessor, POLAR2.

2. This report explains the ways in which POLAR3 differs from POLAR2. It also examines how young participation has changed between the periods covered by each classification.

3. The report will be of benefit to new and existing users of POLAR who want to understand further some of the more technical aspects of the classification. The report will also be of benefit to those involved in policy as the new classification highlights some of the ways that young participation in HE has changed since POLAR2 data were published.

Key points

General comments

4. The propensity of young people to participate in HE varies across the UK. Understanding why this variation exists is important, and a prerequisite for this is to understand how participation varies geographically.

5. Previous work by HEFCE focused on this issue as part of our broader programme of work on young participation. The POLAR classification analyses the geographical variation in participation by grouping small areas (2001 census area statistics wards) across the UK according to their level of young HE participation. The classification is publicly available, and is used by HEFCE to allocate funding to promote and facilitate widening participation. It is also used by the wider HE sector to measure widening participation performance and to help target outreach activities, and by some institutions during the admissions process.

6. The previous POLAR classification, POLAR2, used information about cohorts of young people who would have entered HE aged 18 or 19 between 2000 and 2005. However, more recent work by HEFCE has shown that participation in HE has grown among more recent cohorts of young people, increasing from 32 per cent for the 2004 cohort to 36 per cent for the 2009 cohort. By making use of the latest information on students who enter HE aged 18 or 19, we have now updated the POLAR classification to a new version, POLAR3.

7. This report focuses on how changes in the HE participation rates of young people in the 2005 to 2009 cohorts have affected the composition of POLAR quintiles. These changes, and their effect on average young participation rates, are considered at the UK, country, and English regional levels.

Increase in young participation between POLAR2 and POLAR3 periods

8. The average young participation rate during the POLAR3 definition period was 34.7 per cent. This is an increase of two percentage points over the average rate during the POLAR2 period.

Greater equality in average participation rates across quintiles

9. The two percentage point increase has not been equally distributed. Areas with the lowest young participation rates (those in quintile 1) under the POLAR3 classification are now 2.5 percentage points higher (a proportional increase of 19 per cent) than quintile 1 areas were under POLAR2. Meanwhile areas with the highest young participation rates (those in quintile 5) are just 1.6 percentage points higher than quintile 5 areas under POLAR2 (a proportional increase of 3 per cent). The average participation rates across the quintiles are therefore closer together than they were previously.

10. Despite these changes, large differences in participation rates remain across the POLAR3 quintiles with people from quintile 5 areas being on average 3 to 4 times more likely to go into HE than those from quintile 1 areas.

Continued substantial geographical variation in young participation across the UK

11. There is substantial variation in the average young participation rates across different parts of the UK. The North East and Yorkshire and the Humber have lower participation rates compared with other parts of the UK. These regions have among the highest proportions of their areas falling, and of their young population living, in quintile 1. Meanwhile Scotland, Northern Ireland and, in particular, London have higher young participation rates. These parts of the UK also have among the highest proportions of their areas and young population in quintile 5.

Differential changes in young participation across the UK since POLAR2

12. The young participation rate has increased the most in London, despite the capital already having one of the highest participation rates during the POLAR2 period. The participation rate in London increased by 4.7 percentage points, a proportional increase of 12 per cent. London has had the largest net reduction of areas in quintiles 1 and 2, a proportional fall of nearly 50 per cent, and the largest net increase in areas in quintiles 4 and 5, a proportional increase of 16 per cent.

13. Other areas with large increases in young participation rates include the North East, the North West and the East of England, which had percentage point increases of around 2.5 per cent. Northern Ireland also had an increase in young participation of 3.4 percentage points.

14. In contrast the participation rate in Wales increased by just 0.2 percentage points, while in Scotland young participation fell by one percentage point. In England the South West had the smallest increase in young participation of any region: an increase of 0.8 percentage points, far below the average increase for England of 2.5 percentage points.

The majority of small areas remain in the same quintile

15. Despite the changes described above, the majority of areas (66 per cent) are found to be in the same quintile under the POLAR3 classification as they were under the POLAR2 classification. 19 per cent of areas moved into a lower quintile, while 15 per cent moved into a higher quintile. Nearly all areas which moved quintiles did so into an adjacent quintile, with the majority being accounted for by movements into and out of quintile 3.

Action required

16. No obligatory action is required following this report but we recommend users of the POLAR2 classification to now use the POLAR3 classification instead.

Introduction

17. This report introduces the latest area-based classification of young participation in higher education (HE) across the UK. The participation of local areas (POLAR) measure classifies small areas from across the UK[1] according to their rates of young participation[2]. As such the latest version of this classification, POLAR3, shows how the chances of young people entering higher education vary according to where they live.

18. The POLAR classification is used by HEFCE to assign widening participation allocation funding to institutions based on their intake of young entrants[3]. It is also used as a measure in the widening participation performance indicators[4], and is commonly used by institutions as contextual information during the admissions process, and for targeting outreach programmes.

19. It is known that participation in HE among young people changes through time. In England participation has increased since the mid-1990s, particularly since the mid-2000s[5]. In Scotland participation has increased during the last five years[6]. There are many reasons why the level of young HE participation in an area might be expected to change over time, for example through government policy to widen participation, or through changes to the size and social composition of the population within an area. These changes may not be the same in all parts of the UK. The previous update to POLAR measured the young participation rates for cohorts of young people who were 18 between 2000 and 2004, so it was necessary to bring the classification up to date. We have created the POLAR3 classification by making use of the latest available data on HE entrants and population sizes for those who were 18 between 2005 and 2009. This report highlights the main findings.

Background

20. HEFCE's ongoing work on young participation has led to continuous development of the POLAR classification through time. The first classification, known simply as POLAR, was made publicly available in 2005. The HEFCE report 'Young participation in higher education'[7] described the reasons for looking at young participation rates by area, and provided an in-depth explanation of the methodology. The report also contained national results and trends as a context for the local patterns shown in POLAR.

21. An updated version of POLAR, known as POLAR2, was made available in 2007. This made use of more recent information on HE entrants, and extended the scope of the classification to include part-time study and a range of other HE qualification aims.

Summary of methodology

22. POLAR3 is based on the HE participation rates of people who were aged 18 between 2005 and 2009 and entered a HE course in a UK higher education institution or English or Scottish further education college, aged 18 or 19, between academic years 2005-06 and 2010-11.

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[1] Excluding the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.
[2] See www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/wp/ourresearch/polar/
[3] See www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/wp/currentworktowidenparticipation/howwefundwideningparticipation/
[4] See www.hesa.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2060&Itemid=141
[5] See 'Trends in young participation in higher education: core results for England', HEFCE 2010/03, www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2010/201003/
[6] Participation rates for entrants to Scottish higher education, Scottish Funding Council, March 2012, available at www.sfc.ac.uk/reports_publications/reports_publications.aspx
[7] HEFCE 2005/03, http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120118170707/http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_03/

23. It draws on data provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the Data Service, the Scottish Funding Council, UCAS and HM Revenue and Customs[8]. The method used to obtain the participation rates is broadly similar to that used for POLAR2. There are however some differences worthy of note. The main difference, mentioned earlier, is the set of cohorts used to form the classification. Another difference is that information on entrants to HE courses at Welsh further education colleges has not been included in POLAR3[9].

24. The POLAR3 classification is formed by ranking 2001 Census Area Statistics (CAS) wards[10] by their young participation rates for the combined 2005 to 2009 cohorts[11]. This gives five quintile groups of areas ordered from '1' (those wards with the lowest participation) to '5' (those wards with the highest participation), each representing 20 per cent of UK young cohort.

25. The full POLAR3 classification is available to download from the HEFCE web-site[12].

Analysis

POLAR3 participation rates

26. It is useful to begin by looking at the average young participation rate during the period covered by POLAR3 (the combined 2005 to 2009 cohorts), and how this has changed since the period covered by POLAR2 (the combined 2000 to 2004 cohorts). The average (mean) participation rate across the UK[13] for the POLAR3 period was 34.7 per cent. For POLAR2 the mean rate was 32.6 per cent, so the young participation rate has increased by around two percentage points (6 per cent proportionally) on average across the UK.

27. Table 1 gives the average young participation rates for each POLAR3 quintile. Young participation rates increase from quintile 1 through to quintile 5. Large differences exist between the participation rates of areas in quintile 1 and quintile 5; young people living in quintile 5 areas are 3 to 4 times more likely, on average, to participate in HE than those who live in quintile 1 areas.

28. Also given in Table 1 are the average rates for each POLAR2 quintile, along with the percentage point and proportional increases between POLAR2 and POLAR3. Average POLAR3 participation rates are higher across all quintiles, but the difference is greatest for quintile 1 and lowest for quintiles 4 and 5. This means that the chances of young people progressing to HE, regardless of which quintile they come from have, on average, become more equal.

[8] Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, the Data Service and the Scottish Funding Council are used to identify HE entrants. Data from HM Revenue and Customs are used to estimate young population sizes. UCAS data are used to identify missing and anomalous HE entrant postcodes.
[9] During the POLAR2 period only one per cent of HE entrants from Wales, and less than 0.1 per cent of all HE entrants from the UK, studied at Welsh further education colleges (see Annex A). Therefore the omission of Welsh further education college entrants is estimated to have a very small impact on the POLAR3 classification. It also enabled publication of POLAR3 to be brought forward to the start of the 2012/13 academic year, the most practical time for publication.
[10] Census output is Crown copyright and is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office and the Queen's Printer for Scotland.
[11] Cohorts are labelled according to the academic year in which they would enter HE aged 18. For example the 2009 cohort includes those who would enter HE aged 18 during the 2009-10 academic year.
[12] www.hefce.ac.uk/polar/
[13] This is a weighted mean of all wards in the UK, where weights are proportional to the size of the young population within a ward. This is equivalent to dividing the total number of HE entrants from the UK by the total young population.

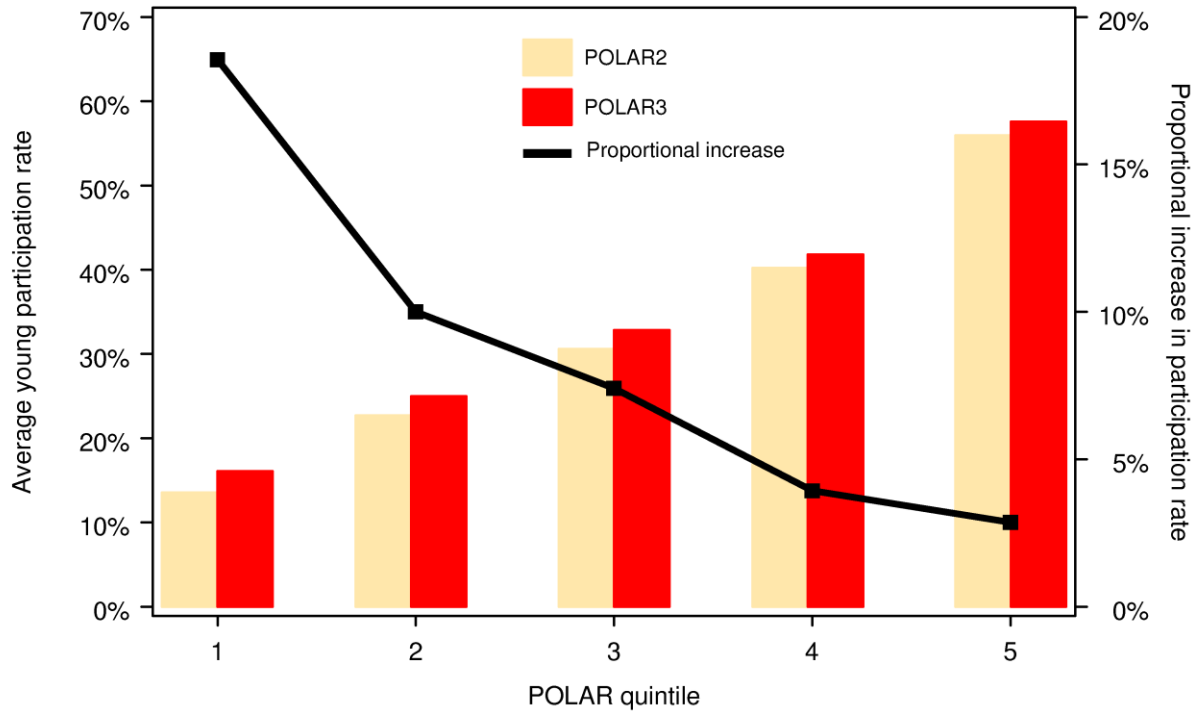
29. Figure 1 also shows the average participation rates for each quintile for both POLAR2 and POLAR3 classifications, along with the proportional increase. The figure shows that the less advantaged a quintile is, the larger the increase in its average participation rate.

Table 1: Mean young participation rates for POLAR2 and POLAR3 and their difference

Quintile	POLAR3 (%)	POLAR2 (%)	Percentage point difference	Proportional difference
1	16.1	13.6	2.5	18.6
2	25.0	22.7	2.3	10.0
3	32.8	30.6	2.3	7.4
4	41.8	40.2	1.6	3.9
5	57.6	56.0	1.6	2.9
All	34.7	32.6	2.0	6.3

Note: numbers have been rounded to 1 decimal place

Figure 1: Mean young participation rates for POLAR2 and POLAR3 quintiles and the proportional increase in rates for POLAR3 over POLAR2



Summary statistics for POLAR3 quintiles

30. Quintiles are formed by grouping together wards with similar young participation rates. This means that each quintile will have its own distribution of ward-level participation rates. Summary statistics on the distribution of ward participation rates for each POLAR3 quintile are given in Table 2. Across the UK, wards span the full range of participation rates, including some with

participation rates of zero, and others with participation rates of 100 per cent[14], although wards with such extreme values are in the minority (0.1 per cent of the total). The effect of this is to make the range of participation rates covered by quintiles 1 and 5 much larger than the range of rates covered by the other quintiles. This pattern remains when we exclude the 5 per cent (Figure 2) and 50 per cent of wards (Table 2: inter-quartile range) with the most extreme values.

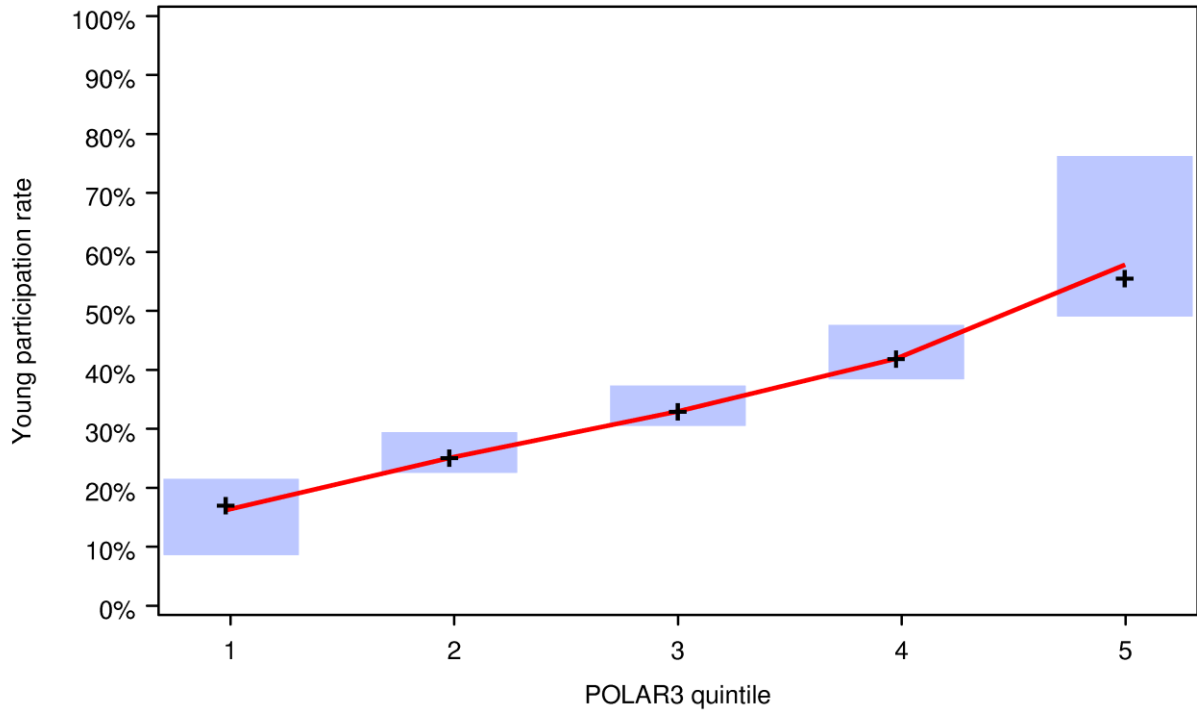
31. The number of wards in each quintile increases from quintile 1 to quintile 5: there are 70 per cent more wards in quintile 5 than there are in quintile 1. This pattern exists because wards that have higher rates of young participation tend to have smaller young population counts (see Table B2 in Annex B) and because the quintiles are constructed to contain equal proportions of the young population (a fifth each). Table B1 in Annex B shows how some of these statistics compare with the POLAR2 classification.

Table 2: Key POLAR3 quintile statistics, based on ward participation rates

	Quintile 1	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5
Number	1,581	1,829	2,081	2,478	2,685
Minimum	0	21.0	29.0	36.9	47.3
Lower quartile	13.8	23.1	31.1	39.1	50.8
Median	16.7	24.9	32.7	41.8	55.5
Mean	16.1	25.0	32.8	41.8	57.6
Upper quartile	19.0	26.9	34.8	44.3	62.0
Maximum	21.0	29.0	36.9	47.3	100.0
Inter-quartile range	5.2	3.8	3.7	5.2	11.2
Range	21.0	7.9	7.9	10.4	52.7
Standard deviation	78.5	46.7	43.3	53.5	147.0

[14] Due to the inherent uncertainty involved in estimating the number of entrants and cohort sizes, some wards with small populations have estimated rates of more than 100 per cent. Rates for such wards have been capped at 100 per cent.

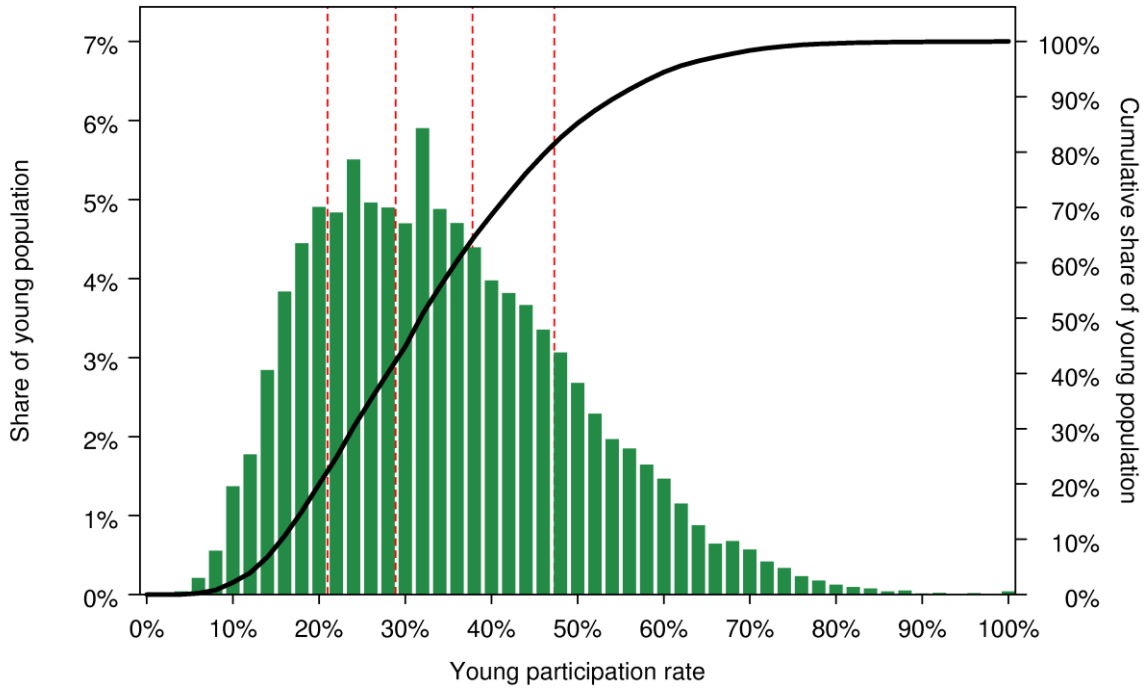
Figure 2: Distribution of ward-level young participation rates for POLAR3 quintiles



Note: The bars show the distribution of 5th to 95th percentiles for each quintile: thus for each quintile the 5 per cent of wards with the lowest rates are not included, nor are the 5 per cent of wards with the highest rates. The '+' symbol represents the median value. The red line joins the mean values within each quintile.

32. Figure 3 shows the share of the young population living in wards with different participation rates. Once again the full range of young participation rates is spanned, but it is found that roughly half of the young population live in areas with participation rates of between 23 and 44 per cent, while 90 per cent live in areas with participation rates of between 14 and 62 percent. Again quintiles 1 and 5 cover the largest range of young participation rates, but only a minority of the young population in these quintiles live in areas with participation rates close to the extreme values of 0 and 100 per cent respectively.

Figure 3: Share of young population living in wards grouped by young participation rate



Note: Dashed lines show the POLAR3 quintile boundaries.

Movement of wards between quintiles

33. POLAR3 calculates young participation rates for the same 2001 CAS wards used in POLAR2, making it possible to see the extent to which wards have moved between POLAR2 and POLAR3 quintiles. Table 3 shows that of the 10,654 CAS wards in the UK, 7,028 (66 per cent) remain in the same quintile for POLAR3 and POLAR2. 2,039 (19 per cent) are classified into a lower quintile for POLAR3 than for POLAR2, while 1,587 (15 per cent) are classified into a higher quintile. Of the wards that have moved quintiles, 3,383 (93 per cent) moved to an adjacent quintile. Figure 4 shows how wards in POLAR2 quintile 3 are most likely to have changed quintile, while wards in POLAR2 quintiles 1 and 5 are least likely to have changed quintile. Compared with POLAR2, POLAR3 has more wards in quintiles 1 and 2, and fewer wards in quintiles 3, 4 and 5. It remains the case that quintile 5 has the highest number of wards while quintile 1 has the lowest number of wards. Table B3 (in Annex B) shows how the young population within each POLAR2 quintile is now distributed across POLAR3 quintiles, with a similar pattern to that for wards as shown in Table 3.

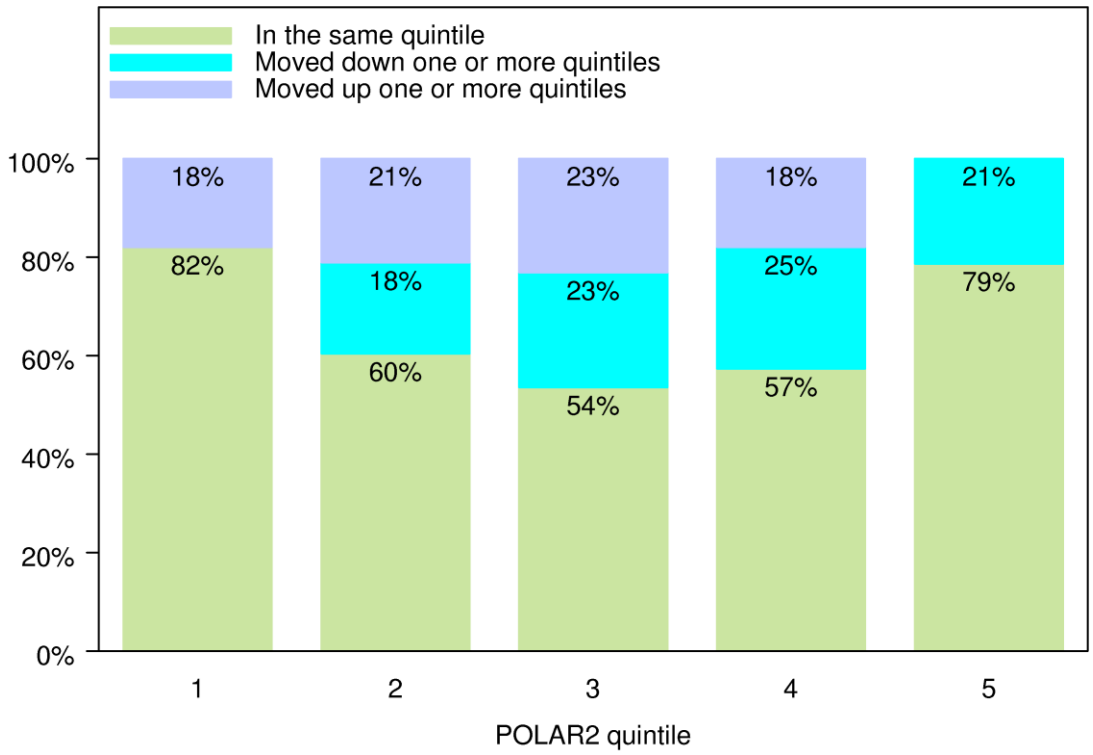
34. The pattern of ward movement between quintiles will be driven by the changes to the underlying young participation rates in those areas. However there are additional effects which will be partly responsible. The distribution of ward participation rates within each POLAR2 quintile, and the proximity of wards to POLAR2 quintile boundaries, will be important. For example, POLAR2 quintiles 1 and 5 cover a much larger range of rates than the others, so wards in these quintiles are likely to require larger changes in participation (on average) in order to move quintile. The POLAR2 quintile that a ward belongs to will also be important since wards in POLAR2 quintile 1 cannot move to a lower quintile, while those in POLAR2 quintile 5 cannot move into a higher quintile. Similarly the decreasing likelihood of a ward moving to a more distant

quintile is important, and may partially explain why POLAR2 quintile 3 wards have the highest proportion of movement into different POLAR3 quintiles.

Table 3: Distribution of wards across POLAR3 quintiles based upon their POLAR2 classification

		POLAR2					Total number of wards
		1	2	3	4	5	
POLAR3	**1**	82.0	18.5	1.4	0.2		1,580
	2	17.1	60.2	22.1	2.5	0.1	1,832
	3	0.9	19.2	53.1	22.1	1.8	2,075
	4		1.8	21.6	57.3	19.4	2,483
	5		0.3	1.8	17.9	78.6	2,684
	All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Total number of wards		1,493	1,737	2,095	2,552	2,777	10,654

Figure 4: Proportion of wards in POLAR2 quintiles which are in the same POLAR3 quintile



Participation rate changes within wards

35. As noted in paragraph 34, the pattern of quintile movements among wards is related to the changes to the underlying young participation rates in those areas. Paragraphs 36 to 39 look at how the young participation rates within wards have changed.

36. Figure 5 shows the distribution of the percentage point changes in the young participation rates of wards grouped by the POLAR2 quintile they were in. The patterns of ward-level participation rate changes are different across the quintiles. For example, among wards in POLAR2 quintiles 1 to 4, there were more wards which had increases in young participation rates than had decreases. The average participation rates for wards which were in quintiles 1 to 4 have increased, with the largest increase for wards in quintile 1 of 3.3 percentage points[15]. In contrast the average participation rate for wards in quintile 5 decreased slightly, by 0.9 percentage points, and more wards in this quintile had decreases in participation rates than had increases.

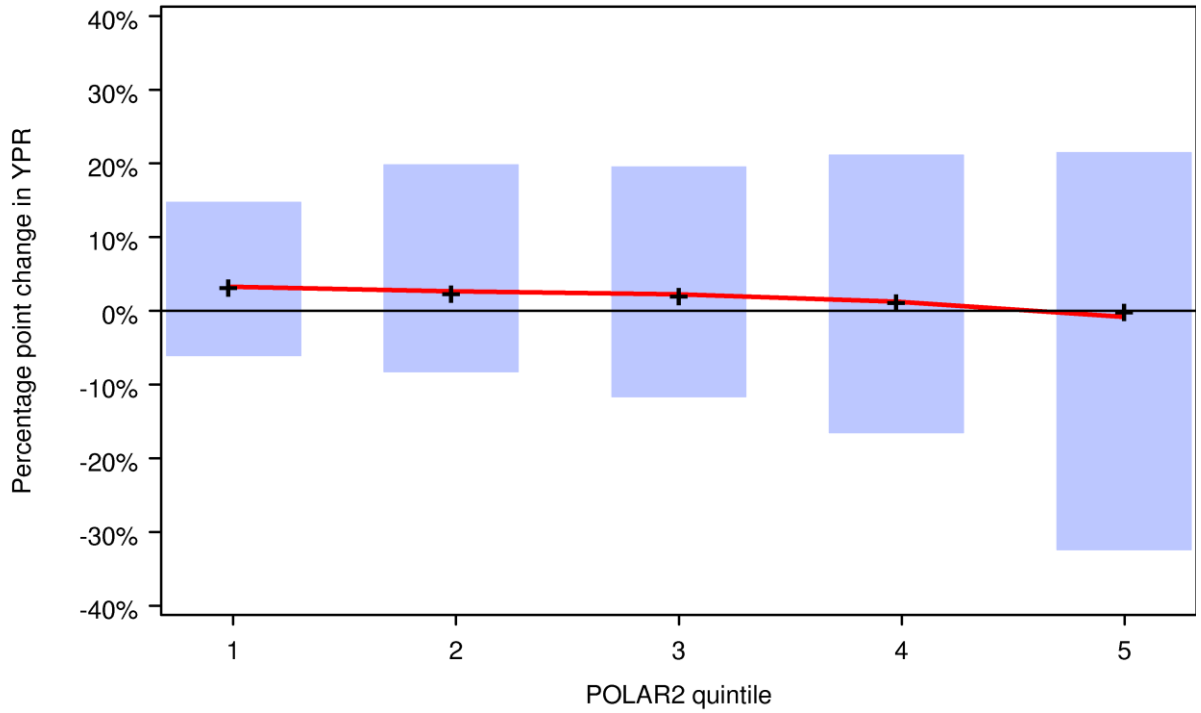
37. Although this pattern suggests that there may be a real difference in the way young participation has changed across areas with previously different levels of young participation, with areas which previously had the lowest rates of participation seeing the largest increases, a similar pattern would be expected to occur through 'regression to the mean' effects, even if no changes to participation rates had taken place[16]. It is not possible to say precisely how much of the observed pattern is due to real changes in participation rates, but simulations suggest that regression to the mean effects would result in smaller changes to the average young participation rates across quintiles than those which we actually observe. This, combined with previous findings reported in HEFCE 2010/03, mean that it is likely that areas with previously low participation rates during the POLAR2 period have experienced the largest increases in young participation since.

38. The range of changes in young participation rate also differs between quintiles. Wards in POLAR2 quintile 1 show a relatively narrow range of percentage point changes: 50 per cent of wards have seen changes of between one and five percentage points (an interval of four percentage points). The size of this interval steadily increases towards quintile 5, with 50 per cent of wards in this quintile having changes of between minus five and plus four percentage points (an interval of nine percentage points). Areas with previously high young participation rates are prone to larger changes in their rates, and as mentioned in paragraph 36 are more likely to have lower rates under POLAR3.

[15] Note these differences in average rates are not the same as the values given in Table 1. In Figure 5 we are looking at the change in average rates for fixed groups of wards, those which fall into a single POLAR2 quintile. In contrast Table 1 looks at the changes in average rates between wards in POLAR2 and POLAR3 for a fixed quintile, but as we see from Table 3 wards can move quintiles between POLAR2 and POLAR3.

[16] Any wards with unusually low (or high) young participation rates during the POLAR2 definition period, purely by chance, could result in them being placed into quintiles different to that which their 'true' participation rate would suggest. Such wards would then be expected to exhibit participation rates closer to their 'true' values the next time they are measured, in this case during POLAR3, and to be classed into different quintiles.

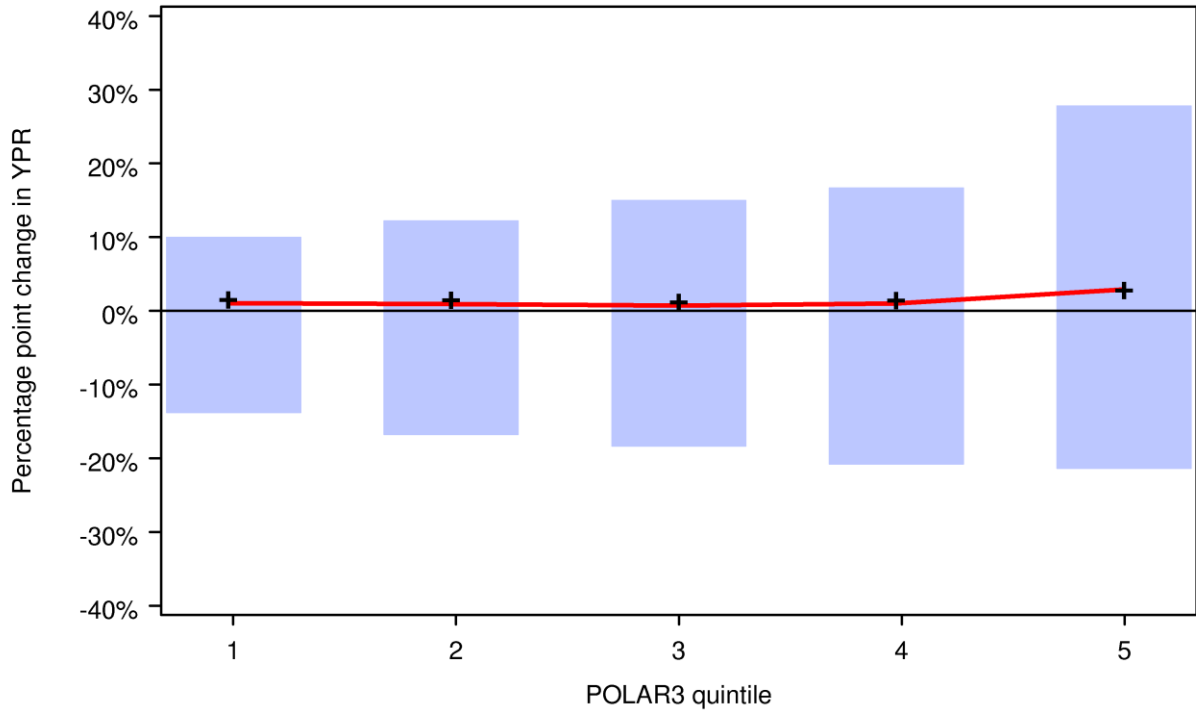
Figure 5: Distribution of percentage point changes in ward-level young participation rates across POLAR2 quintiles



Note: The bars show the distribution of first to 99th percentiles for each quintile: thus for each quintile the one per cent of wards with the lowest change in rate are not included, nor are the one per cent of wards with the highest change in rate. The '+' symbol represents the median value. The red line joins the mean values within each quintile.

39. Figure 6 is similar to Figure 5 but shows the distribution of percentage point changes in young participation rates of wards for each quintile according to the POLAR3 quintile they are in. Again wards in quintile 1 have shown least variation while wards in quintile 5 have the largest. The average rate for all quintiles has increased, but quintile 5 has seen the largest increase of 3 percentage points. Quintile 5 is the only quintile in which more wards had an increase in young participation rates than had a decrease: more wards in quintile 1 to 4 had decreases in rates than had increases. In a similar way to the pattern in Figure 5, the pattern in Figure 6 would be expected to arise naturally from regression to the mean effects, so we are unable to tell if the observed patterns reflect real differential changes in the patterns of young participation across areas.

Figure 6: Distribution of percentage point changes in ward-level young participation rates across POLAR3 quintiles



Note: The bars show the distribution of first to 99th percentiles for each quintile: thus for each quintile the one per cent of wards with the lowest change in rate are not included, nor are the one per cent of wards with the highest change in rate. The '+' symbol represents the median value. The red line joins the mean values within each quintile.

Regional patterns

40. Analysis so far has concentrated on the nature of the POLAR3 quintiles, and on drawing comparisons with POLAR2, at the UK level. However, HEFCE 2005/03, 'Young participation in higher education', shows that rates of young participation vary substantially across different parts of the UK. Paragraphs 41 to 54 examine the relationship between POLAR3 and the different countries and regions of the UK.

POLAR3 young participation rates

41. Table 4 gives the average young participation rates for each of the nine English regions, along with the rates for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, for the cohorts covered by POLAR3. Also given are the percentage point differences in rates from POLAR2.

42. There is substantial geographical variation in the young participation rates during the POLAR3 period. Of the four countries of the UK, Scotland and Northern Ireland have the highest rates: 39.8 and 38.1 per cent respectively. England and Wales have lower rates: 34.2 and 31.7 per cent respectively. The rate for England has the greatest effect on the overall UK rate since the majority of entrants (82 per cent), and of the young population (83 per cent) are English (see Table B4 in Annex B). This is why the rates for England and the UK are similar.

43. Within England, London and the South East have the highest young participation rates (43.1 and 36.6 per cent respectively), while the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber have the lowest (29.4 and 30.0 per cent respectively). With the exception of London and the South East, all English regions have participation rates which are below the national average for

England. In the same way that participation in England has the greatest effect on the overall level of participation in the UK, the participation in London and the South East has a large effect on the overall level of participation within England: 34 per cent of entrants to higher education and 29.3 per cent of the young population are from these two English regions (Table B4 in Annex B).

44. As stated in paragraph 26, the young participation rate has increased by two percentage points across the UK as a whole compared to the period covered by POLAR2. Table 4 shows how this change is distributed across the UK. Of the four UK nations, Northern Ireland had the largest increase in participation rate of 3.4 percentage points. England also had a relatively large increase of 2.5 percentage points, while Wales had a modest increase of 0.2 percentage points. Scotland saw a decline of one percentage point. Within England, all nine regions had increases in participation rate. London (4.7 percentage points) and the North West (2.6 percentage points) had increases greater than average for England as a whole. Yorkshire and the Humber, the East and West Midlands, the South East and the South West had increases lower than the average for England, with the South West having by far the lowest increase (0.8 percentage points) around a third of that for England as a whole.

45. The average participation rates across the UK nations are more equally distributed during the POLAR3 period than they were in the POLAR2 period. During the POLAR2 period the difference in average participation rates between Scotland (with the highest rate) and Wales (with the lowest rate) was 9.3 percentage points. During the POLAR3 period that difference was just 8.1 percentage points. Within England the pattern is more complicated. Across all nine English regions, participation rates have become more unequal: during the POLAR2 period the difference between London (with the highest rate) and the North East (with the lowest rate) was 11.5 percentage points, but during the POLAR3 period that difference increased to 13.7 percentage points. However if London, which as already stated experienced by far the largest increase in young participation rates, is excluded, the differences between the regions with the highest and lowest young participation rates fell from 7.8 percentage points during POLAR2 to 7.2 percentage points during POLAR3. Thus outside of London, participation at a regional level has become more equal.

46. Table 4 also shows the average rates in each region for each of the POLAR3 quintiles. Regional rates in quintile 5 exhibit the greatest variation, with Scotland having the largest rate, 60.1 per cent, and Yorkshire and the Humber the lowest, 55.3 per cent, resulting in a range of 4.8 percentage points. Quintile 1 also has relatively large variation, with London having the highest rate (18.6 per cent) and Northern Ireland having the lowest (14.2 per cent), resulting in a range of 4.4 percentage points. Despite this, the rates within quintiles show less variability than the overall regional rates.

47. The pattern for Scotland is interesting: participation rates within each quintile have increased while the overall rate has declined. This is to do with the way the weightings, which are applied to the wards and used in the calculation of quintile and overall averages, have changed[17].

[17] In Scotland the majority of the young population were found in quintile 4 and 5 wards under POLAR2. However under POLAR3 this proportion fell (see Table 6), owing to the greater increase in young participation elsewhere in the UK compared to Scotland. As a result greater weight is given to wards in quintiles 1, 2 and 3. This acts to reduce the average participation rate for Scotland, even though the average rates in each of the quintiles has increased.

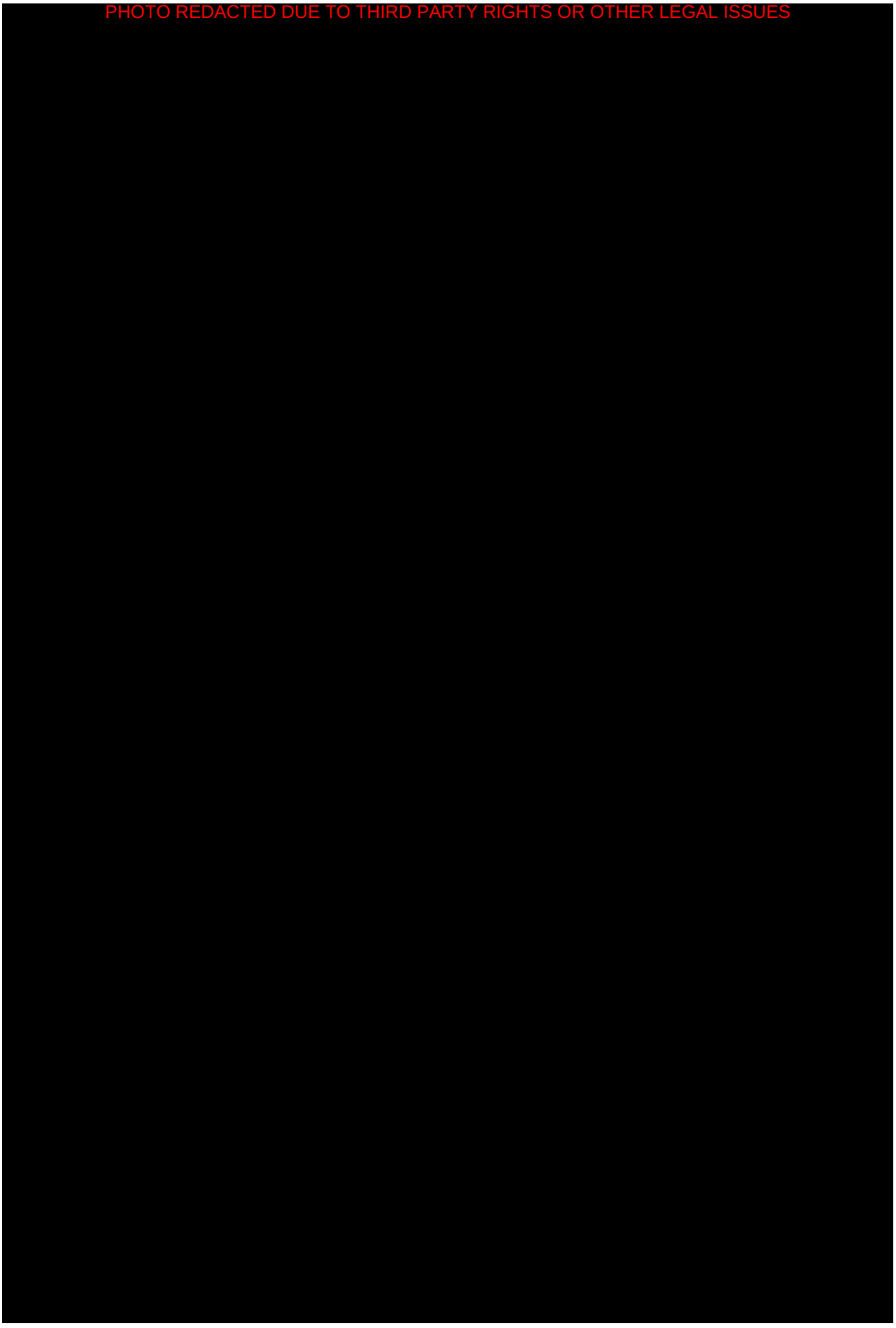
Table 4: Mean young participation rate by UK region for POLAR3 quintiles (percentage point changes from POLAR2 quintiles given in parenthesis)

	Quintile 1		Quintile 2		Quintile 3		Quintile 4		Quintile 5		All	
North East	16.0	(2.8)	24.8	(2.0)	33.1	(2.3)	41.6	(1.6)	56.7	(-0.2)	29.4	(2.5)
North West	16.5	(3.1)	24.7	(2.3)	32.8	(2.3)	42.1	(1.6)	56.6	(1.8)	32.5	(2.6)
Yorkshire and the Humber	15.7	(2.4)	24.7	(2.0)	32.6	(1.9)	41.5	(1.4)	55.3	(1.2)	30.0	(2.2)
East Midlands	15.6	(2.7)	25.2	(2.9)	32.5	(2.0)	41.5	(1.5)	55.4	(1.8)	32.0	(2.0)
West Midlands	16.4	(2.0)	24.8	(2.3)	32.7	(2.4)	42.1	(1.6)	55.4	(1.0)	32.2	(2.0)
East of England	16.0	(2.4)	25.0	(2.4)	33.0	(2.3)	41.6	(1.9)	57.4	(2.6)	33.8	(2.5)
London	18.6	(4.0)	25.7	(2.2)	33.2	(2.7)	41.6	(1.7)	59.7	(2.4)	43.1	(4.7)
South East	15.6	(2.3)	25.0	(2.3)	32.8	(2.0)	41.9	(1.6)	57.5	(2.6)	36.6	(1.9)
South West	16.0	(2.3)	25.0	(2.4)	32.8	(2.3)	41.6	(1.6)	56.4	(1.9)	32.1	(0.8)
England	16.1	(2.5)	25.0	(2.3)	32.8	(2.3)	41.8	(1.6)	57.3	(2.0)	34.2	(2.5)
Wales	15.7	(2.2)	24.9	(2.2)	32.5	(1.9)	42.1	(2.1)	56.8	(0.8)	31.7	(0.2)
Scotland	17.2	(2.1)	25.0	(1.9)	33.1	(2.4)	41.7	(1.0)	60.1	(0.6)	39.8	(-1.0)
Northern Ireland	14.2	(2.5)	25.3	(2.9)	33.0	(2.1)	42.4	(2.0)	56.3	(0.7)	38.1	(3.4)
All	16.1	(2.5)	25.0	(2.3)	32.8	(2.3)	41.8	(1.6)	57.6	(1.6)	34.7	(2.0)

Distribution of regional wards across quintiles

48. Figure 7 shows the proportion of wards in different parts of the UK which are in quintiles 1 and 2 (left hand side) and in quintile 5 (right hand side)[18]. Figure 8 shows the proportion of the young population in different parts of the UK. These figures allow identification of regions with relatively large concentrations of high and low participation areas. The region with the lowest participation rate, the North East, is also the region with the largest proportion of wards (50.4 per cent) and young population (57.7 per cent) in quintiles 1 and 2. By contrast London, the region with the highest participation rate, has the lowest proportion of wards (10.6 per cent) and young population (12.4 per cent) in quintiles 1 and 2. London also has the highest proportion of wards (39.2 per cent) and young population (33.4 per cent) in quintile 5 of any region.

[18] We report for quintiles 1 and 2 together as these are the quintiles which receive funding via HEFCE's widening participation allocation (see www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/wp/currentworktowidenparticipation/howwefundwideningparticipation/)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49. The distribution of wards and young population, split for each quintile, are given in Table 5 and Table 6. Also given are the net changes in each region's percentage of wards and young population in each quintile compared with that found under POLAR2. London, despite already having the lowest number of wards in quintile 1 under POLAR2, has also had the largest net fall in the percentage (and number) of wards in quintile 1. There has also been a large net fall in the percentage of London wards in quintile 2, and a large net increase in the percentage of wards in quintiles 4 and 5. Scotland is notable for the large fall in the percentage of wards and young population now in quintile 5, and for associated increases in the percentages in quintiles 1, 2 and 3. This is likely to be due to the combined effect of the average rate for Scottish wards falling by one percentage point, and an increase in the average rate for wards in the rest of the UK (see Table 4). Despite this Scotland retains both a relatively high percentage of wards and young population in quintile 5 and a relatively low percentage in quintile 1 compared with the rest of the UK.

Table 5: Share of UK region's wards within each POLAR3 quintile (percentage point changes from POLAR2 quintiles given in parenthesis)

Region	POLAR3 quintile									
	Quintile 1		Quintile 2		Quintile 3		Quintile 4		Quintile 5	
North East	30.6	(-0.8)	19.8	(1.7)	16.3	(-1.9)	15.1	(1.0)	18.2	(0.0)
North West	20.6	(-0.1)	16.9	(-1.0)	17.9	(0.8)	20.1	(-0.3)	24.6	(0.6)
Yorkshire and the Humber	22.8	(0.2)	18.8	(1.6)	18.5	(-1.2)	19.8	(-0.6)	20.2	(0.0)
East Midlands	18.0	(1.8)	19.1	(-1.6)	19.8	(0.3)	21.2	(-1.1)	21.9	(0.6)
West Midlands	15.4	(0.3)	17.5	(0.3)	20.9	(3.3)	21.3	(-2.8)	25.0	(-1.1)
East of England	14.0	(-1.1)	21.1	(3.0)	21.0	(-2.1)	23.8	(-1.2)	20.1	(1.4)
London	3.0	(-2.7)	7.6	(-7.0)	24.8	(0.6)	25.4	(5.8)	39.2	(3.2)
South East	12.6	(1.3)	14.6	(0.0)	16.9	(-0.1)	24.5	(-2.2)	31.4	(1.1)
South West	12.7	(2.3)	18.9	(2.6)	23.2	(-1.2)	26.8	(-2.7)	18.4	(-0.9)
England	15.6	(0.4)	17.2	(0.1)	19.9	(-0.2)	22.7	(-0.9)	24.6	(0.6)
Wales	18.7	(4.0)	21.8	(3.2)	17.7	(-2.4)	22.5	(0.9)	19.3	(-5.7)
Scotland	7.4	(1.7)	15.5	(4.8)	19.8	(2.8)	25.5	(-0.6)	31.8	(-8.8)
Northern Ireland	13.4	(0.5)	13.4	(-1.0)	17.4	(-2.2)	27.7	(-0.7)	28.2	(3.4)

50. Similar reasons are likely to underlie the pattern in Wales. While the average young participation rate of Welsh wards increased by 0.2 percentage points between the periods covered by POLAR2 and POLAR3, this increase was modest, just one tenth of the increase for the UK. The omission of the Welsh further education college data has not had a material effect on the overall rate for Wales (see Annex A).

51. Comparing the patterns for wards and populations shows that, within each region, quintiles 1 and 2 account for a higher proportion of the young population than they do for the proportion of wards. Similarly, quintiles 4 and 5 account for a lower proportion of the young population than they do for wards. This is because wards with higher levels of young participation tend to have smaller young populations. In some parts of the country, this pattern appears to be stronger than in others. For example, the difference between the proportion of wards and the proportion of the young population accounted for across the quintiles is largest in the West Midlands, the South West, and Yorkshire and the Humber, and smallest in Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Table 6: Share of UK region's young population within each POLAR3 quintile (percentage point changes from POLAR2 quintiles given in parenthesis)

Region	POLAR3 quintile									
	Quintile 1		Quintile 2		Quintile 3		Quintile 4		Quintile 5	
North East	34.9	(-1.3)	22.8	(0.3)	16.8	(-0.5)	12.4	(0.8)	13.1	(0.8)
North West	25.8	(-1.2)	21.2	(0.1)	19.0	(-0.1)	17.4	(1.0)	16.6	(-0.1)
Yorkshire and the Humber	29.6	(-0.9)	23.3	(0.9)	19.0	(-0.3)	15.7	(-0.8)	12.4	(1.1)
East Midlands	25.2	(2.2)	21.8	(-0.9)	18.3	(-1.8)	18.4	(0.4)	16.2	(0.1)
West Midlands	21.6	(-1.6)	25.7	(0.7)	22.0	(3.2)	14.2	(-2.7)	16.4	(0.4)
East of England	19.5	(-1.8)	22.9	(3.7)	19.2	(-2.7)	21.8	(-0.2)	16.6	(1.0)
London	3.6	(-3.1)	8.8	(-8.4)	28.0	(2.5)	26.2	(6.3)	33.4	(2.6)
South East	17.2	(1.1)	18.2	(0.4)	17.3	(0.4)	22.6	(-2.4)	24.7	(0.6)
South West	22.9	(4.7)	21.8	(1.0)	21.4	(-2.4)	21.2	(-2.4)	12.7	(-1.0)
England	20.8	(-0.5)	20.1	(-0.5)	20.4	(0.1)	19.5	(0.1)	19.1	(0.7)
Wales	25.4	(4.3)	25.3	(1.7)	16.8	(-3.0)	17.4	(0.4)	15.2	(-3.5)
Scotland	10.6	(1.5)	17.8	(4.3)	19.5	(1.5)	23.1	(-1.0)	29.1	(-6.2)
Northern Ireland	14.6	(-1.0)	13.9	(-1.5)	17.1	(-1.8)	27.1	(-0.8)	27.3	(5.1)

Distribution of quintiles across regions

52. As well as understanding how the areas and young population within different regions are distributed across POLAR3 quintiles, it is useful to know how the wards and young population within quintiles are distributed across the regions. These distributions are shown in Table 7 and Table 8. The North West of England has the highest number of wards from quintile 1, accounting for 13.1 per cent of all quintile 1 wards. In contrast London has the fewest wards from quintile 1, accounting for only 1.2 per cent of all quintile 1 wards. Most regions of the UK have seen a fall in the number of wards from quintile 1 despite there being 92 more wards in this quintile for POLAR3 compared with POLAR2. London had 17 wards move out of quintile 1, the highest number in the UK. Wales, the South West of England, and Scotland have had the largest increases in wards in quintile 1, with the number in Wales increasing by 35, in the South West by 25 and in Scotland by 21.

53. The South East of England has the highest number of wards in quintile 5, accounting for 17.5 per cent of all wards in this quintile. The North East has the fewest wards in quintile 5, accounting for just 3.3 per cent of the total. Northern Ireland, London, the South East and the East of England have had the largest increase in wards moving into quintile 5, with a combined total of 72 doing so. Scotland has had the largest number of wards move out of quintile 5, with 108 fewer now in this quintile. This is more than twice as many as moved out of quintile 5 in Wales, the region with the second largest fall.

54. The regional patterns described above will be a function of both the relative participation rates within wards, and also the relative sizes of each region in terms of number of wards and young population. For example, compared with the other UK nations, England accounts for the majority of wards across all quintiles simply because it is the largest of the four UK countries, accounting for three-quarters of all wards in the UK. The final column in Table 7 and Table 8 provides a measure of the size of each region to identify where a region has a higher proportion of wards or population in certain quintiles than its size alone would suggest.

Table 7: Share of wards across UK regions for each POLAR3 quintile (percentage point difference to POLAR2 quintiles given in parenthesis)

Region	POLAR3 quintile										Proportion of UK wards
	Quintile 1		Quintile 2		Quintile 3		Quintile 4		Quintile 5		
North East	9.4	(-0.8)	5.2	(0.2)	3.8	(-0.4)	2.9	(0.3)	3.3	(0.1)	4.5
North West	13.1	(-0.8)	9.3	(-1.1)	8.6	(0.4)	8.2	(0.1)	9.2	(0.5)	9.4
Yorkshire and the Humber	7.1	(-0.4)	5.1	(0.2)	4.4	(-0.3)	4.0	(0.0)	3.7	(0.1)	4.7
East Midlands	10.1	(0.5)	9.2	(-1.3)	8.4	(0.2)	7.5	(-0.2)	7.2	(0.4)	8.3
West Midlands	7.4	(-0.3)	7.3	(-0.3)	7.6	(1.2)	6.5	(-0.6)	7.1	(-0.1)	7.1
East of England	9.9	(-1.4)	12.9	(1.2)	11.3	(-1.1)	10.7	(-0.2)	8.4	(0.9)	10.5
London	1.2	(-1.2)	2.6	(-2.7)	7.5	(0.2)	6.5	(1.6)	9.2	(1.0)	5.9
South East	12.0	(0.6)	12.0	(-0.6)	12.2	(0.0)	14.8	(-0.9)	17.5	(1.2)	14.1
South West	8.8	(1.2)	11.3	(1.0)	12.2	(-0.5)	11.8	(-0.8)	7.5	(-0.1)	10.2
England	78.9	(-2.7)	74.8	(-3.3)	76.0	(-0.2)	73.0	(-0.7)	73.1	(4.0)	74.8
Wales	10.4	(1.7)	10.5	(1.1)	7.5	(-1.0)	8.0	(0.5)	6.3	(-1.6)	8.3
Scotland	5.8	(1.1)	10.4	(2.8)	11.6	(1.7)	12.6	(0.1)	14.5	(-3.4)	11.5
Northern Ireland	4.9	(-0.1)	4.3	(-0.6)	4.9	(-0.6)	6.5	(0.0)	6.1	(0.9)	5.5

Table 8: Share of young population across UK regions for each POLAR3 quintile (percentage point difference to POLAR2 quintiles given in parenthesis)

Region	POLAR3 quintile										Proportion of UK population
	Quintile 1		Quintile 2		Quintile 3		Quintile 4		Quintile 5		
North East	7.6	(-0.7)	5.0	(-0.2)	3.7	(-0.3)	2.7	(0.0)	2.9	(0.0)	4.4
North West	15.7	(-1.0)	12.9	(-0.2)	11.6	(-0.1)	10.6	(0.4)	10.1	(-0.3)	12.2
Yorkshire and the Humber	12.8	(-0.4)	10.0	(0.3)	8.2	(-0.2)	6.8	(-0.4)	5.3	(0.4)	8.6
East Midlands	9.1	(0.9)	7.9	(-0.2)	6.6	(-0.5)	6.7	(0.2)	5.9	(0.2)	7.2
West Midlands	10.1	(-0.8)	12.0	(0.3)	10.3	(1.5)	6.7	(-1.3)	7.7	(0.2)	9.4
East of England	8.8	(-0.6)	10.4	(1.9)	8.7	(-0.9)	9.9	(0.2)	7.5	(0.6)	9.0
London	2.0	(-1.6)	5.0	(-4.5)	15.8	(1.8)	14.8	(3.9)	18.9	(2.0)	11.3
South East	11.3	(1.0)	12.0	(0.5)	11.4	(0.5)	14.9	(-1.2)	16.2	(0.7)	13.2
South West	9.3	(2.1)	8.8	(0.6)	8.7	(-0.7)	8.6	(-0.7)	5.1	(-0.3)	8.1
England	86.8	(-1.2)	83.9	(-1.5)	84.8	(1.0)	81.5	(1.2)	79.5	(3.6)	83.3
Wales	6.4	(1.1)	6.4	(0.4)	4.2	(-0.7)	4.4	(0.1)	3.8	(-0.9)	5.0
Scotland	4.4	(0.4)	7.4	(1.5)	8.0	(0.3)	9.6	(-0.9)	12.0	(-3.3)	8.3
Northern Ireland	2.5	(-0.4)	2.4	(-0.4)	2.9	(-0.6)	4.6	(-0.5)	4.6	(0.6)	3.4

Future work

55. This report has focused on how the changes in ward-level young participation rates for the 2005 to 2009 cohorts have affected the composition of POLAR quintiles at the UK, country, and English regional levels. The effect on average young participation rates at these levels has also been considered.

56. Future work on young participation will include looking in further detail at how participation has changed at a more local level across the UK, and trying to understand the extent to which these developments might be driven by changes in prior attainment and other forms of disadvantage. Additional work will focus on the trends in young participation, moving away from the comparison between POLAR2 and POLAR3 definition periods to concentrate on variations between individual cohorts at both local and national levels. This will continue and extend the work reported in 'Trends in young participation in higher education: core results for England', HEFCE 2010/03.

57. We envisage that other research aims will be informed through discussions with interested parties and groups from across the HE sector.

Annex A

The omission of data on HE entrants at Welsh further education colleges

1. Previous participation of local area (POLAR) classifications have included higher education (HE) entrants at Welsh further education colleges (FECs). However these entrants were not included for POLAR3.

2. We are unable to precisely measure the effect that omitting the Welsh FEC data will have on the distribution of wards across POLAR3 quintiles. However we are able to estimate what the effect might be by looking at the difference that omitting the Welsh FEC data has on the young participation rates used to construct the POLAR2 quintiles. We can then use these differences as an approximation of what the effect would be on the distribution of wards across POLAR3 quintiles[19]. Table A1 and Table A2 show how wards with entrants to Welsh FECs would be reclassified according to POLAR2 had entrants to Welsh FECs not been included.

3. The number of HE entrants at Welsh FECs is small in comparison with the total number of entrants. During the POLAR2 period there were 805 HE entrants at Welsh FECs, representing less than 0.1 per cent of all HE entrants from the UK during that time. This means the effect on the UK-level participation rates is minimal. 742 of these entrants were domiciled in Wales, representing just 1.3 per cent of all HE entrants from Wales, so the effect on the country-level participation rates will also be small.

4. The participation rates in some wards are more affected by the omission of the Welsh FEC data than others. The average (mean) difference in participation rates across wards when Welsh FEC data are omitted is a fall of 0.7 percentage points. The largest difference is a fall of 6.2 percentage points, but 90 per cent of cent of wards have falls of less than 1.6 percentage points.

5. We estimate that the changes to ward participation rates that would be caused by the omission of Welsh FEC data would result in a total of 30 wards (all in Wales) switching to lower POLAR2 quintiles. By assuming that a similar number of wards would switch to lower POLAR3 quintiles because entrants to Welsh FECs were excluded from the calculation, and noting that 257 Welsh wards moved to lower quintiles between POLAR2 and POLAR3, we estimate that roughly one in nine of the Welsh wards which moved into lower quintiles is likely to have done so due to the omission of entrants to Welsh FECs. Table A3 shows the POLAR2 and POLAR3 classifications for Welsh wards.

[19] In the results reported, rather than recreate a new set of POLAR quintiles without the Welsh FEC entrants, we simply report which POLAR2 quintile each ward that had Welsh FEC entrants would be classified into had we not counted them. This serves as a suitable approximation since the average effect on the rates of the 409 wards (4 per cent of all UK wards) from which Welsh FEC entrants come from is a reduction of one percentage point, and so the likely impact on POLAR2 quintile boundaries will be small.

Table A1: The distribution of UK wards across POLAR2 quintiles if Welsh FEC data were excluded, by their actual POLAR2 quintiles

		POLAR2 quintile without Welsh FEC data					
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**All**
Actual POLAR2 quintile	**1**	46					46
	2	3	72				75
	3		11	86			97
	4			8	96		104
	5				8	79	87
	All	49	83	94	104	79	409

Note: Only wards with entrants to HE courses at Welsh FECs are included.

Table A2: The distribution of Welsh wards across POLAR2 quintiles if Welsh FEC data were excluded, by their actual POLAR2 quintiles

		POLAR2 quintile without Welsh FEC data					
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**All**
Actual POLAR2 quintile	**1**	38					38
	2	3	61				64
	3		11	73			84
	4			8	78		86
	5				8	68	76
	All	41	72	81	86	68	348

Note: Only wards with entrants to HE courses at Welsh FECs are included.

Table A3: Distribution of Welsh wards by their POLAR2 and POLAR3 quintiles

		POLAR3 quintile					
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**All**
POLAR2 quintile	**1**	112	17	1			130
	2	45	100	17	2		164
	3	7	61	79	27	3	177
	4	1	10	53	99	27	190
	5		4	6	70	140	220
	All	165	192	156	198	170	881

Annex B

Additional tables

Table B1: Young participation rates covered by POLAR2 and POLAR3 quintiles

Quintile	Lower boundary		Median		Upper boundary		Range	
	POLAR2	POLAR3	POLAR2	POLAR3	POLAR2	POLAR3	POLAR2	POLAR3
1	3.3	0.0	14.1	16.7	18.5	21.0	15.2	21.0
2	18.5	21.0	22.8	24.9	26.6	29.0	8.1	7.9
3	26.6	29.0	30.5	32.7	34.9	36.9	8.3	7.9
4	34.9	36.9	40.0	41.8	46.2	47.3	11.3	10.4
5	46.2	47.3	53.7	55.5	100.0	100.0	53.8	52.7
All	3.3	0.0	30.5	32.7	100.0	100.0	96.7	100.0

Table B2: Ward-level statistics for POLAR3 quintiles

POLAR3 quintile	Average number of entrants within a ward during POLAR3 period	Average ward young population during POLAR3 period	Weighted average ward rate during the POLAR3 period (%)
1	80	496	16.1
2	107	429	25.0
3	124	378	32.8
4	132	317	41.8
5	168	293	57.6
All	128	368	34.7

Note: Weights used in the weighted average are proportional to the size of the young population within each ward.

Table B3: Distribution of the young population under the POLAR2 classification across the POLAR3 quintiles

		POLAR2				
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
POLAR3	**1**	83.5	15.8	0.8		
	2	16.1	63.7	18.5	1.5	
	3	0.4	19.2	60.0	19.4	0.9
	4		1.2	19.8	63.2	15.1
	5		0.1	0.9	15.9	83.9
	All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total young population under POLAR2		737,100	736,100	738,100	737,200	737,300

Note: Populations rounded to the nearest 100.

Table B4: Number of entrants and young population for English regions and UK countries during the POLAR3 period

Region/Country	Number of entrants	Young population
North East	50,400	171,400
North West	155,100	477,900
Yorkshire and The Humber	101,300	337,800
East Midlands	90,800	283,600
West Midlands	118,400	367,300
East of England	119,800	354,700
London	190,800	442,900
South East	189,000	516,300
South West	102,200	318,100
England	1,117,800	3,270,100
Wales	62,500	197,400
Scotland	129,300	324,900
Northern Ireland	50,600	132,900
All	1,360,300	3,925,300

Note: Numbers rounded to the nearest 100.

Annex C

Glossary of terms used in this report

Cohort

This term is used in the report to describe a group of people of the same school-aligned year of age: that is, people who would have been in the same year in school.

Entrants

People starting a course of higher education. Their numbers are used in combination with the cohort estimates to give the young participation rates.

Further education college (FEC)

An establishment mainly offering courses at further education level. These institutions may also offer higher education courses, and young entrants to these courses in England and Scotland are included in the young participation measure.

HE

Higher education. Higher education courses are programmes leading to qualifications, or credits which can be counted towards qualifications, which are above the standard of GCE A-levels or other Level 3 qualifications. In this report only entrants to undergraduate level courses are considered. Examples of undergraduate courses include degree courses, foundation degree courses and Higher National Diplomas amongst others.

Percentage point increase (decrease)

The simple arithmetic difference between, for example, two young participation rates. For example if the participation rate of a group increased from 10 per cent to 14 per cent then that would be an increase of 4 percentage points. (See also ‘Proportional increase’).

POLAR

Participation of Local Areas: a classification of 2001 census area statistics wards according to their young participation rate. POLAR is presented as a set of quintiles labelled 1 through to 5, where quintile 1 contains wards with the lowest young participation rates and quintile 5 contains wards with the highest young participation rates. Quintiles are constructed such that they each contain an equal proportion (20 per cent) of the young population.

Proportional increase (decrease)

The change in, for example, the young participation rate expressed as the proportional difference (typically as a percentage) between the two values. For example, if the participation rate of a group increased from 10 per cent to 14 per cent then that would be a proportional increase of 40 per cent. (See also ‘Percentage point increase’).

Quintile

A group formed by ranking 2001 census area statistics wards according to their young participation rate and then dividing them into five equally sized groups in terms of their young population.

Ward, 2001 census area statistics (CAS) ward

A small unit of 2001 census geography, typically covering a named neighbourhood and with an annual cohort size of around 70. There are 10,654 such wards in the UK.

Young

In this report ‘young’ is taken as a school-aligned age of 18 or 19.

Young participation rate

This is the measure of participation used in this report. It is constructed by summing the entrants aged 18 from one academic year and the entrants aged 19 from the following academic year and then dividing this total by the young population estimate. The resulting rate shows what proportion of a young cohort has entered HE by age 19.

Young population

In this report the young population refers to the estimated size of a cohort or group of cohorts. (See also ‘Young’).The size of the young population is estimated as the size of the cohort at the age of 15.