

NHS Maternity Care Research Small Grants Programme.

NHS South Yorkshire exists to improve health and wellbeing and ensure our people have access to the services they need to live well throughout their lifetime. This starts from birth, which is why NHS South Yorkshire works with pregnant women, birthing people, parents, and families to improve the care and support provided during pregnancy and beyond.

A key element of this work is to eliminate health inequalities and make sure that all our people have access to the services and support they need when they need them most. To do this, we want to work with our communities to ensure their experiences, feedback and needs are at the heart of all decision-making.

We know that some women in South Yorkshire are more likely than others to have poor experiences of maternity care and poor outcomes. We want to change that. To do this, we need to hear from the specific communities identified below.

We are keen to work with groups across South Yorkshire who can engage their communities in gathering stories, feedback and experiences from women and families who have used maternity and/or neonatal services in the past 2-3 years. This includes care in pregnancy, during birth and after pregnancy or birth. Neonatal care is special care for babies who are born early (before 37-weeks), small or unwell and is delivered in a specialist neonatal unit.

This feedback will help shape NHS South Yorkshire's ongoing service user involvement strategy and improvements to services to ensure we can provide maternity care that is inclusive and meets the needs of our diverse communities. We hope to maintain an ongoing partnership with the organisations involved, so they can help shape service improvements in the long-term.

By the end of May 2027, your organisation should have undertaken comprehensive community engagement and shaped that information into work that can be shared at a special listening event in June / July, and with NHS South Yorkshire, so it can feed into its new involvement strategy.

Criteria & Guidelines

Groups applying for this opportunity must:

- Be a community, charity and/or not-for-profit organisation based in, and whose beneficiaries are in, South Yorkshire.
- Have a bank account in the name of the organisation with at least two unrelated signatories.
- Have three unrelated members on your management committee/ trustees.
- Be a constituted organisation with appropriate governing documents.
- Be able to share a breakdown of costs for the project as part of the application.
- You and participants in the research should be able to commit to attend the listening event in June / July and be ready to share/present/discuss your findings. We can be guided by you on what this looks like and will provide support every step of the way.
- Be able to complete your research before the end of May 2027 (though your community activity can continue beyond this date).
- Your group should have experience working with the specific communities outlined below and have staff who are experienced and trusted in leading some of the potentially sensitive conversations likely to come up from research of this nature.

Specific Community Engagement

We would like to hear from groups, working with women who are pregnant or have been pregnant in the last two-three years, and their families, across South Yorkshire including the following places:

- **Barnsley**- living in areas of deprivation or global majorities
- **Doncaster**- living in areas of deprivation or global majorities (priority will be given to Eastern European communities)
- **Rotherham**- living in areas of deprivation or global majorities
- **Sheffield**- living in areas of deprivation or global majorities (priority will be given to Roma/Slovak communities)
- **South Yorkshire**- living in areas of deprivation or global majorities

We are particularly keen to hear from communities that experience the poorest outcomes from maternity care, both pre- and post-natal, including people from Global Majority communities, with a focus on Black African, Black Caribbean, and other Black backgrounds, so that we can make sure our future strategy better represents these under-served communities and that future care is co-designed by them, allowing their voices to be amplified.

We can support you with what information to capture if that would be useful, please let us know in your application.

Listening event – June / July 2027

Successfully funded groups will need to commit to join us for a listening event in June / July. This should include the research lead but also participants from the funded activity to share what they have learnt. The event will be attended by senior leaders within NHS South Yorkshire and local healthcare providers who can make change, with community voices at the forefront. They will be excited to hear and see what you will bring to share and would then look to work with funded groups to co-design actions to improve services.

More details will be shared nearer the time, but attending and taking part on this day is a key part of this funding and you should state in your application what you might like to do on the day, to share your feedback.

What could our project be about?

Your project should focus on gathering stories, experiences and feedback from women and families who have used maternity and / or neonatal services in South Yorkshire in the past 2-3 years.

This includes care in pregnancy, during birth and after pregnancy or birth. Neonatal care is special care for babies who are born early (before 37-weeks), small or unwell in a neonatal unit.

We will provide some guidance notes for successful organisations to support the engagement work.

How much can we apply for?

The total funding available for South Yorkshire is just over £22,500, and we would like to fund at least five organisations, so applications should ask for no more than **£4,500**. Although the communities we wish to engage with are specific, we do expect the application process to be competitive, so please only apply if you are confident that you can fully engage with this project as outlined.

We will be available throughout the application process and project delivery for any support you might need in your application, delivery, event participation, and evaluation.

What can I spend the money on?

Depending on the approach you want to take, you could receive a grant for:

- Staffing costs (we encourage you to meet the National Living Wage)
- Volunteer costs
- Resources such as food/drink, marketing, and tools to encourage meaningful community engagement throughout the programme.
- Reasonable contribution towards overheads if they directly support community engagement on this specific project. This could include transportation costs to take part in activity and the listening event.

When is the closing date

The deadline for applications is **9am, Monday 9th November**.

Application process and timeline

Application is via our online application form.

Applications will be assessed by an expert local panel in early December with grants distributed before the Christmas break.

If your application is successful, we would expect activity to take place over the below timeline:

- **December – May 2027** - Activity to take place throughout December, January, February, March, April and May, if needed.
- **May 2027** - Meet with the NHS South Yorkshire team. We would arrange to meet you to go through your research and chat through how you would like to present/share your findings at the listening event.
- **June / July** – Share your feedback / research at the South Yorkshire Listening event.
- **August onwards** – After the Listening Event we will meet with you to discuss opportunities for additional grant funding and ways to stay connected and involved in improving maternity and neonatal services going forward.
- Although we need to receive your research and stories by the end of May, you are welcome to continue your activity and community engagement after the feedback meeting. When your activity ends is up to you and the funding! We would need you to tell us when it would be so we can receive a short end of grant report to confirm conclusion of the work.