NICU Parents of Blackpool Victoria Hospital CIC

Equal Opportunities & Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

A welcoming, inclusive and supportive community for neonatal families

Policy owner	Alicia Kenny, Founder & Director
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Status	Approved

1. Purpose of this policy

NICU Parents of Blackpool Victoria Hospital CIC is committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive and supportive community for parents, carers and families affected by neonatal care.

We recognise that families and individuals come from a wide range of backgrounds and may have different needs, experiences, identities, abilities and circumstances.

This policy sets out our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion and explains how we will seek to ensure that nobody is unfairly discriminated against or excluded from our activities, services or community.

We aim to create an environment where people are treated with dignity, kindness, fairness and respect.

This policy supports our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and relevant guidance.

2. Our commitment

- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Treat members, families, volunteers, staff, directors and partners fairly and with dignity and respect.
- Not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation.
- Seek to make our activities and support accessible and inclusive.
- Recognise and respond appropriately to people's different needs.
- Take reasonable steps to remove unnecessary barriers to participation.
- Consider equality and inclusion when developing activities, events and services.
- Encourage people from different backgrounds to participate in our community.
- Listen to feedback about accessibility, inclusion and equality.
- Regularly review our approach to ensure that it remains appropriate for the families we support.

3. Protected characteristics

We recognise the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race, including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

We will not discriminate unfairly against an individual because of any of these characteristics.

We also recognise that people may experience disadvantage or barriers for reasons beyond the protected characteristics listed in law. Where reasonably possible, we will seek to consider other circumstances that may affect a person's ability to participate, including caring responsibilities, financial circumstances, language, literacy, digital access and other individual needs.

4. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to everyone involved with NICU Parents of Blackpool Victoria Hospital CIC, including:

- Parents and carers who access our support
- Members of our online community
- Families attending our events and activities
- Volunteers
- Directors and coordinators
- Paid workers or contractors, where applicable
- Partner organisations and professionals working with us
- People representing the organisation at community events
- Anyone participating in activities organised or supported by the CIC

We expect anyone representing NICU Parents of Blackpool Victoria Hospital CIC to behave in a way that reflects the principles in this policy.

5. Our beneficiaries and purpose

NICU Parents of Blackpool Victoria Hospital CIC exists to support families who have experienced neonatal care, particularly families connected with Blackpool Victoria Hospital's neonatal service.

Our focus on neonatal families is based on the specific experiences, challenges and support needs associated with neonatal care and is central to our community purpose.

Within this community, we aim to ensure that support is available without unfair discrimination and that families are welcomed regardless of their individual background or circumstances.

Where activities are designed to meet particular needs or address barriers experienced by a particular group, we will consider the principles of lawful positive action and ensure that our approach is proportionate and appropriate.

6. Inclusion and accessibility

We recognise that neonatal families may have a wide range of needs.

Where reasonably practicable, we will consider accessibility when planning meetings, events and activities, including:

- Physical accessibility of venues
- Access to seating and appropriate facilities
- Sensory needs
- Communication needs
- Disability and reasonable adjustments
- Pregnancy and postnatal needs
- The needs of parents attending with babies or children
- Financial barriers to participation
- Transport and geographical barriers
- Digital accessibility
- Language or communication barriers

We will encourage people to tell us about any reasonable adjustments or support they may require.

We recognise that not every adjustment will be possible in every circumstance, particularly where we have limited resources or are using third-party venues. However, we will consider requests fairly and make reasonable efforts to identify suitable solutions.

7. Respectful communication

NICU Parents of Blackpool Victoria Hospital CIC aims to create a community where people feel safe to share their experiences.

We encourage respectful communication and will not tolerate:

- Racist or discriminatory comments
- Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic abuse
- Ableist or discriminatory language
- Religious or belief-based harassment
- Sexist or misogynistic behaviour
- Harassment relating to pregnancy or parenthood
- Bullying or intimidation
- Derogatory comments about a person's background, identity or circumstances
- Victimisation of someone who raises a concern about discrimination

This applies to face-to-face activities, online groups, social media spaces operated by the organisation and other communications connected with the CIC.

Where appropriate, concerns will be managed in accordance with our safeguarding, complaints and/or social media moderation procedures.

8. Recruitment, volunteering and opportunities

Where NICU Parents of Blackpool Victoria Hospital CIC recruits staff, volunteers, coordinators or contractors, opportunities will be offered fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

Selection will be based on relevant skills, experience, suitability for the role and the needs of the organisation.

Where appropriate and lawful, we may take positive action to encourage participation from people who are disadvantaged or under-represented.

We will seek to ensure that role descriptions, recruitment processes and opportunities are accessible and do not create unnecessary barriers.

9. Pregnancy, maternity and parenthood

As an organisation supporting neonatal families, we recognise that pregnancy, birth, neonatal admission and parenthood can affect people in very different ways.

We will seek to ensure that people are not treated less favourably because they are pregnant, have recently given birth, are on maternity leave or are caring for a baby or child.

We recognise that neonatal experiences can also involve complex and varied family circumstances. We will seek to avoid assumptions about family structure, relationships, gender roles or parenting arrangements.

10. Disability and reasonable adjustments

We recognise both visible and non-visible disabilities and long-term health conditions.

Where appropriate, we will consider reasonable adjustments to enable people to participate in our activities.

Examples may include:

- Providing information in alternative formats
- Allowing additional time or flexibility
- Providing suitable seating
- Considering sensory needs
- Allowing a support person or carer to attend where appropriate
- Choosing accessible venues
- Providing information electronically
- Considering communication needs
- Making reasonable changes to how activities are delivered

We will treat requests for adjustments respectfully and sensitively.

11. Religion and belief

We respect people's religious beliefs, non-religious beliefs and individual practices.

Where reasonably practicable, we will consider religious observances, dietary requirements and other relevant needs when organising activities and events.

We will not tolerate harassment or discriminatory behaviour because of a person's religion or belief.

12. Race, culture and nationality

We welcome families from all racial, ethnic, cultural and national backgrounds.

We recognise that families may have different cultural practices, languages, traditions and experiences of healthcare.

We will seek to communicate respectfully and avoid assumptions based on race, ethnicity, nationality or culture.

We will not tolerate racist behaviour or racial harassment within our community.

13. Gender and sexual orientation

We welcome parents, carers and family members regardless of sex, gender identity or sexual orientation.

We recognise that families may have different structures and that parents and carers may identify in different ways.

We will seek to use respectful and inclusive language and will not make assumptions about a person's relationship, family structure, gender or sexual orientation.

14. Complaints and concerns

Anyone who believes they have experienced discrimination, harassment, bullying or unfair treatment in connection with NICU Parents of Blackpool Victoria Hospital CIC is encouraged to raise their concerns.

Concerns can be raised with the organisation's Founder/Lead Coordinator or another appropriate member of the organisation where this is more suitable.

Concerns will be treated seriously, respectfully and as confidentially as reasonably possible.

Where appropriate, concerns may be managed under the organisation's complaints, safeguarding or other relevant procedures.

No person will be victimised for raising a genuine concern or supporting another person who raises a concern.

15. Monitoring and review

NICU Parents of Blackpool Victoria Hospital CIC will review this policy at least annually and sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, guidance, our activities or the communities we support.

We will consider feedback from members, families, volunteers and other relevant stakeholders when reviewing our approach to equality and inclusion.

The policy will be approved by the organisation and made available to relevant staff, volunteers and stakeholders.

16. Legal and guidance framework

This policy has been developed with reference to:

- Equality Act 2010
- Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance and Codes of Practice
- Relevant UK Government equality guidance
- Other applicable legislation and guidance relating to the delivery of our activities

17. Policy approval

Approved by:

Alicia Kenny
Founder & Lead Coordinator
NICU Parents of Blackpool Victoria Hospital CIC

Date: 3/7/2026

Next review: September 2027

Kindness • Dignity • Fairness • Respect