



## Children's Community Nursing

# Consent - Your rights

## Information for young people (under 16) and their parents and carers

### Who is this leaflet for and what is it about?

- If you are under 16, this leaflet is for you.
- It is about your right to decide about your health care and your treatment.
- Your parent or carer might find the leaflet helpful too.

### What does consent mean?

- It means **agreement**. A doctor, nurse or anyone else looking after your health has to have your agreement before they can examine or treat you.

### Can I give consent?

- You can give consent if you understand what is going to happen and then you can decide for yourself.
- You may not always feel able to give consent – each decision is different. Some decisions are more difficult than others.
- You may find it helpful to speak to someone else – for example your parent, guardian or another adult you trust.
- You can ask someone to help you express your views – for example your parent, guardian or another adult you trust.
- You can also have an advocate to help you. This is someone who can help make sure your views are heard and you get all the information you need to make your own decisions.
- Even if you are not able give your consent, you can still be involved in discussions about your health care, if that's what you want.

### Who decides if I can give consent?

- A healthcare professional will decide if you can give consent. They will decide this by talking to you. They have to be sure that you can understand the kind of examination or treatment they are suggesting, and its possible side effects.
- Your healthcare professional may decide you are not able to give consent. If you are unhappy about their decision you can:

1. Contact the NSPCC on **0808 800 5000**. Or visit their website at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>
2. Contact ChildLine on **0800 1111**. Their counsellors will give you help and support. <https://www.childline.org.uk/>



### Who can give consent if I am unable to?

- If you are unable to give consent, your parent or carer will be asked for their consent to your examination or treatment.
- In an emergency, when there may not be time for your parent or carer to give their consent for you, doctors can treat you – but only if the treatment is to save your life or stop you becoming even more unwell.

### How do I give consent?

- By doing something to show your agreement. For example, your doctor may ask to examine your foot. If you take off your shoe, it shows you agree to this.
- Sometimes your health professional will ask you to say if you agree.
- If the examination or treatment is complicated, like an operation, they will ask you to sign a form.

### What information should I be given?

- You need enough information to help you make a decision.
- The healthcare professional must explain things to you in a way you can understand. If they do not do this, you should ask them to explain more clearly.

#### You may want to know:

- why you are being examined or treated
- what will happen
- what good it will do
- if there are any risks
- if there is a different treatment you could choose instead
- what could happen if you don't have the examination or treatment
- the name of the doctor or other health worker looking after you

#### Remember you can ask:

- as many questions as you want
- for some information to take away
- for more time to make your decision
- If you need an interpreter, ask a member of staff to arrange this for you in advance

### Can I refuse examination and treatment?

- Yes, as long as you understand how this could affect your health.
- Your healthcare professional and your parent or carer should always listen to you, even if they disagree with your decision.
- It may help to talk about this with someone else that you trust.
- In very unusual cases, if you have said no to treatment and you have a very serious condition, your parent or carer may disagree with you and want to discuss your case with a lawyer.
- Your opinion will be listened to and you can also have your own lawyer to help you.



### What if I change my mind?

- You can change your mind about agreeing to an examination or treatment at any time, but you do need to understand how this could affect your health.
- Tell the person looking after you that you've changed your mind.

### What if I am asked to let students watch, while I'm being examined or treated?

- Students who are training to be doctors or nurses need to learn how to care for patients.
- Your healthcare professional may ask if students can be there while you are being examined or treated.
- **You can say no if you do not want this to happen – it will not affect the standard of care you receive.**

### What if I am asked to take part in research?

- Research is needed to find out why people become ill and the best way to treat them. Your doctor might ask if you would like to take part.
- If you are asked to take part in research, you do not have to agree.
- **If you say no, you will still get the best possible care.**
- If you decide that you do want to take part in the research, your parent or carer will also need to agree. Your health professional will discuss this with you.

### What if I am unhappy about the decisions made about my care?

- You may not be happy about the way you were involved in decisions about your care and treatment.
- If you can, tell one of the people who has been looking after you about your concerns, or ask your parent, your carer or another adult you trust to do this for you.
- If you are still unhappy, you can make a complaint to Patient Advice and Liason Service (PALS). Contact information on next page.

### What if I need more information?

- If you need help or advice about consent there are a lot of people who can help.
- You can contact any of the places we list here in this leaflet. You can contact most of them by phone, email or via a website – just choose the way that suits you best.

**Please feel free to discuss any of these issues with a healthcare professional involved with your care.**



### Further information - you may find these resources helpful.

- NHS website - <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/consent-to-treatment>
- NSPCC website - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>
- Action for Sick Children [www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk) - This organisation works with children, young people, and their families by giving health care information and support. They can also help you have your say about your health needs and rights.
- ChildLine [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) - Is a free and confidential helpline for all children and young people in the UK
- Ready Steady Go Transition [Ready Steady Go - TIER Network](#)
- Royal College of Paediatric and Child Health - [www.rcpch.ac.uk](http://www.rcpch.ac.uk)
- Information on advocacy can be given by your local social services.

### Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or [whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email [whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net). We will try our best to meet your needs.

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