

# **Consenting to Treatment and Care at Strawberry Hill Medical Centre**



## **Useful Information for Patients**

**Consent to treatment and care is the principle that a person must give their permission before they receive any type of medical treatment or care.**

Consent is required from a patient regardless of the treatment / examination/care for example vaccinations, immunisations and minor surgery.

The principle of consent is an important part of medical ethics and the international human rights law. The practice considers that consent also shows good communication between the patient and healthcare professional and thus enabling the patient to make an informed choice regarding their treatment and care.

### **Defining consent**

For consent to be valid, it must be voluntary and informed, and the person consenting must have the capacity to make the decision. These terms are explained below.

**Voluntary:** the decision to consent or not consent must be made alone, and must not be due to pressure by medical staff, friends or family.

**Informed:** the person must be given full information about what the treatment or care involves. This will include the benefits, risks and whether there are reasonable alternative treatments, and what will happen if treatment does not go ahead. Healthcare professionals should not withhold information just because it may upset or unnerve the person

**Capacity:** the person must be capable of giving consent, which means they understand the information given to them and they can use it to make an informed decision.

### **How to give consent**

Consent should be given to the healthcare professional directly responsible for the person's current treatment and care, such as the nurse arranging an immunisation or vaccination the GP prescribing new medication or planning a

minor operation. It can be given:  
verbally

non-verbally, for example, raising a hand to indicate they are happy for a nurse to take a blood sample

in writing, by signing a consent form

## **Withholding information**

To consent to a treatment / examination / care, the person needs to be fully informed about what is involved and understand why it is considered necessary.

Healthcare professionals should not withhold information just because it may upset or unnerve the person. Even if the person specifically requests not to be told about the extent or likely outcome of their condition, the healthcare professional has a moral and legal responsibility to provide them with at least:

- a basic overview of their condition
- the likely outcome of their condition
- their treatment options

## **When consent is not necessary**

There are a few exceptions when treatment can go ahead without consent. One main exception is if a person does not have the mental capacity (the ability to understand and use information) to make a decision about their treatment. In this case, the healthcare professionals can go ahead and give treatment if they believe it is in the person's best interests.