

OH 1st Guide to consent

What is Consent?

Consent to treatment is the principle that a person must give permission before they receive any type of medical treatment, test or examination.

This must be done on the basis of an explanation by the OH Clinician

Consent from a patient is needed regardless of the procedure, whether it's a physical examination, organ donation or something else.

The principle of consent is an important part of medical ethics and the international human rights law.

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 either consent or not to consent to treatment must be made by the person themselves, and must not be influenced by pressure from medical staff, friends or family

informed – the person must be given all of the information in terms of what the treatment involves, including the benefits and risks, whether there are reasonable alternative treatments, and what will happen if treatment doesn't go ahead

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

If an adult has the capacity to make a voluntary and informed decision to consent to or refuse a particular treatment, their decision must be respected.

How consent is given

Consent can be given:

verbally – for example, by saying they're happy to have lung function testing

in writing – for example, by signing a consent form for an appointment or release of a medical report.

Someone could also give non-verbal consent, as long as they understand the treatment or examination about to take place – for example, holding out an arm for a blood test.

Consent should be given to the healthcare professional directly responsible for the person's current treatment, such as:

The Clinician at the OH appointment.

If they change their mind at any point before the procedure, the person is entitled to withdraw their previous consent.

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When consent isn't needed

There are a few exceptions when treatment may be able to go ahead without the person's consent, even if they're capable of giving their permission.

It may not be necessary to obtain consent if a person:

requires emergency treatment to save their life, but they're incapacitated (for example, they're unconscious) – the reasons why treatment was necessary should be fully explained once they've recovered

Complaints

If you believe you've received treatment from OH1st you didn't consent to, you can make an official complaint by writing to the Clinical Director Occupational Health 1st 24 Springfield way Fareham PO14 2RG

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