

Consent to treatment for your child

Make sure that your child attends his/her outpatient appointment with a person who is legally able to give consent (permission) for treatment. Please read the following information carefully. **In law, a birth parent may not automatically be able to give consent.**

This leaflet contains important information for parents and/or carers about giving permission for your child's treatment. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for your child.

Who can give consent?

Valid consent is important when treating children, young people and adults. In some situations children are able to give consent themselves, and sometimes others need to take the decision on their behalf.

Everyone aged 16 or older is presumed to be able to give consent for themselves, unless they have been assessed by their doctor/healthcare professional as incapable of understanding the proposed treatment.

Legally, children under 16 may be able to give consent for treatment provided the health professional is satisfied that they are able to understand what is involved in the proposed treatment. However, we would always encourage parents and their children to make important decisions together in a supportive way. Children under 16 cannot, however, refuse treatment if it has been agreed by a person with parental responsibility or the court, and it is in their best interest.

If children or young people aged under 18 years of age are not able or willing to give consent for themselves, someone with **parental responsibility** may do so on their behalf.

What is parental responsibility?

Parental responsibility is where an adult is responsible for the care and wellbeing of their child and can make important decisions about medical treatment for them.

Who has parental responsibility?

The person(s) with parental responsibility will usually, but not always, be the **child's birth parents**. People with parental responsibility for a child include:

- the child's mother
- the child's father – if married to the mother at the child's birth
- the child's father (for children born on or after 1st December 2003 only, England) if his name is on the birth certificate
- those named on the birth certificate – including same sex parents
- those who have legally adopted the child
- a legally appointed guardian
- those who have a parental order
- the local authority – if the child is the subject of a care order
- a person named in a residence order in respect of the child.

Who does not automatically have parental responsibility?

Unmarried fathers can get parental responsibility for his child in 1 of 3 ways:

- jointly registering the birth of the child with the mother (from 1 December 2003)
- getting a parental responsibility agreement with the mother
- getting a parental responsibility order from a court

Parental responsibility is also not automatic for:

- step parents (unless they have legally adopted the child)
- foster parents (unless the local authority has obtained a care order for the child and they delegate parental responsibility to the foster parents).
- grandparents, aunts, uncles or other relatives, even if the child lives permanently with them (however, they may obtain a residence order from the court which will grant them parental responsibility for the child).

Useful sources of information

Gov.uk. Legal information and national guidelines on parental rights and responsibilities are available at [w: www.gov.uk/parental-rights-responsibilities/what-is-parental-responsibility](http://www.gov.uk/parental-rights-responsibilities/what-is-parental-responsibility)

Stonewall. Legal information, advice and support on parental right and responsibilities for lesbian and gay parents and for same-sex couples is available at [w: www.stonewall.org.uk/at_home/parenting](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_home/parenting)

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about consent to treatment, please contact a doctor or nurse caring for your child.

You can telephone the Guy's and St Thomas' switchboard **t:** 020 7188 7188 and ask to be transferred to a named member of staff.

You can also find contact information on the different wards, services and staff of the Evelina Children's Hospital by visiting the web page Preparing your child for their hospital visit on the Guy's and St Thomas' website www.gstt.nhs.uk/our-services/childrens/parents/preparing-your-child.aspx.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003 10am to 5pm, Monday to Friday **e:** letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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