

Parental Consent - Enabling families to agree to work with Children's Services – 7 MINUTE BRIEFING

What is parental consent? Asking a person who is responsible for a child, to allow you to share details of their family's circumstances with Children's Services. Verbal consent is sufficient but remember to record this in your own records. Consent is only needed from one parent; this includes a non-resident parent as long as they have legal '**parental responsibility**'. Parents do not need to agree to a specific service, as Children's Services will contact the parent/carer to discuss what might help.



When to gain parental consent? Always.

Unless to do so would:

- place the child at increased likelihood of significant harm through the action of gaining this consent
- impact on a criminal investigation
- a delay in making the referral would impact on the child's immediate safety



Be positive, motivational and honest about the reasons for the referral... 'We would like to make a referral to Children's Services as we are worried about...'

'It is good that ... has felt able to speak at school about their worries, and Children's Services could help you as a family to address those worries'

'We have found that help at an early stage can prevent things at home becoming more difficult for you and (name of child)'



Be clear about what will happen when you refer to Children's Services.....

'We will complete an online form which will ask questions about your family, to help Children's Services recommend services which are likely to be most helpful to you and (names of children)'

'Children's Services will contact you when they receive the referral to find out more and to ask your permission to contact other agencies. Your information is treated sensitively and only shared with the few people who need to know'



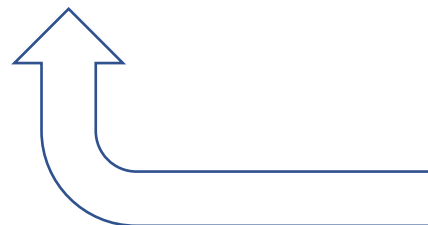
No consent?.....If a parent still refuses consent, or they do not have capacity to consent, you will need to decide if the child is suffering or likely to suffer 'significant harm'. Take advice from your safeguarding lead or out of hours manager.

Who needs to consent? Ideally, you will ask for consent from anyone who shares parental responsibility for a child, but this may not always be possible. Let Children's Services know who has consented.

Always refer using the professional contact form and not by email.



Further tips for resistance: Ask the parent what worries them about a referral to Children's Services. Reassure the parent that Children's Services will work alongside them, will not dictate or tell them what to do, but help by providing ideas and support which has helped lots of other families. Consent is not telling parents you have made a referral.



Tips to address any resistance.....Ask the parent what they are worried about for their child and then mention that you know that Children's Services have helped other families with similar worries.
Try reframing: 'If you were me and you heard that there were these worries about my children, what would you think would be the best thing to do?'

