

Parental Responsibility & Consent for Health Appointments

What is parental responsibility?

Almost all mothers and most fathers have legal rights and responsibilities as a parent - known as 'parental responsibility'. If your child is under 16 and not mature enough to make decisions on their own, then someone with parental responsibility will need to consent to the child's healthcare on their behalf.

What is consent?

Consent is when agreement is given for something. This may be agreeing to a referral, an assessment, or treatment.

I do not live with my child. How am I kept informed about my child's appointments?

If you have parental responsibility for a child you do not live with, you do not necessarily have a right to have contact with them - but the other parent typically needs to keep you updated about the child's well-being and progress.

Do both parents (those with parental responsibility) need to give consent for my child to be seen?

Healthcare staff only need one person with parental responsibility to give consent for them to see their child. This consent for health appointments is given at the point of referral and is assumed to be ongoing (although it can be withdrawn at any time).

Do both parents need to be at appointments?

We welcome both parents to the child's appointments, although this is not a requirement. Our expectation is that the parent, who receives the appointment letter, or any other documentation, will share it with the other parent.

What happens if I do not agree with something in relation to my child?

In cases where one parent disagrees with the treatment or diagnosis, we will not be able to provide additional or separate appointments. It is therefore important for families with dual parental responsibilities, especially in cases where one parent does not live with the child, to ensure that both parents are involved in the child's care from the point of referral.

Please note -

Our role as healthcare staff is to support the health needs of your child. We are unfortunately not able to assist with any disputes or act as an intermediary between parents. We therefore would appreciate that parents with parental responsibility work together to support us, in the best interests of the child.

This can be a complex area, and although the above information will apply to the majority of cases, there may be circumstances where things are slightly different. If so, then we will discuss this with you.

