**Consent Top Tips**

**Can I share or request information without consent?**

* Yes, if you have a legitimate reason in order to safeguard the child or ensure their needs are met and as social workers we have a legal mandate to safeguard the child.
* However, consent should **always** be attempted (both parent/carer and child) unless it would put the child at risk, and we should be mindful of The Data Protection Act and GDPR.

**Seeking consent to complete an assessment or to see a child:**

* Good practice is to seek consent whether the case is Child In Need or Child Protection (S17/ S47) and, although consent is not necessary in Section 47 Enquiries, you should have a clear reason if you have not sought consent and record this clearly.
* If parents refuse consent, be open and transparent, explain the consequences if parents do not consent in a non-threatening manner (e.g. possible Section 47 or taking legal advice).
* If parents still do not consent take advice from your manager and possibly legal advice. Keep the child and their immediate safety at the centre of your decision-making and clearly record your decisions as well as parents', children's and professional's views.

**Positive practice tips:**

* When you gain consent, it should be informed, explicit, and freely given.
* Consider the child's age and stage as well as **communication and capacity** needs in the while family and ensure you have facilitated children's and families understanding, for example explaining terms/language and checking they have understood.
* Build trusting, professional, **positive relationships** with families, **work in partnership**, respecting their views and choices. Think about how they can positively **participate** and how you can co-produce assessments and plans with them.
* Work to **empower children and families**, remember parents and children have the right to make decisions about their lives, be aware of their rights and help families understand these and their choices.
* There can be good reasons not to share information with some people, but still aspire to work in a **transparent** way, help children and families make **informed choices** and have control of professional involvement in their lives as far as possible.
* Let children and families know how you will use and **protect their information**, remember it is their information about their lives. You should seek consent where an individual may not expect their information to be passed on.