**South Gloucestershire Consent Guidance – Jan 2019**

Consent is complex and needs to be thought about at different stages of a child’s journey through services.

Consent is required in most circumstances and so it is important always to ensure where possible consent has been sought to undertake your work with a family and explicitly recorded. Social Workers should consult their managers to decide on the information available whether to seek parental consent for the assessment to take place, and for other aspects of the assessment such as inter-agency checks.

If the decision has been taken not to seek parental consent, this must be recorded and reasons may include:

* Concern that a child may be at risk of further harm
* Serious concern about the likely behaviour of the adult – eg the child will be coerced into silence, or vital evidence may be destroyed
* The views of the child that he/she does not want parental involvement and is competent to make that decision.

When it is decided to interview a child without parental consent, the decision must be endorsed by the social work manager and consideration should be given to seeking legal advice. Similarly, it is good practice to seek consent for a paediatric assessment, but if the decision is taken that this is not possible or appropriate, then this should be clearly recorded on file.

Many parents, understandably may find the fact that a social worker wants to speak to the child alone, or that they have to have a paediatric assessment difficult and may be reluctant to give consent. It is important that it is not assumed that this is because parents have something to hide, and it will be important to work with parents to get their consent, explaining why you need to talk to the child alone and why the child needs to see a paediatrician. Where the parent doesn’t want the child to see a Social Worker alone who he or she doesn’t know and the parent feels anxious for the child about this, the social worker can suggest for example that another trusted adult could join them when they see the child, such as a teacher. Where consent is refused this will need to be discussed with the social workers manager and decision taken as to how to progress. Legal advice may need to be sought.

Some situations where it is good practice to have explicitly recorded consent include:

* Parents need to be asked to give consent to an assessment if it is undertaken under Section 17 of the CA ’89.
* Parents need to be asked if the child can be interviewed alone
* Parents need to be asked if their child can have a paediatric assessment
* Parents need to be asked to consent to their information being shared and with whom

Practitioners will need to use professional judgement to ascertain if consent is meaningful or not, if there is any doubt over the capacity of the parent to make informed consent then this cannot be acted upon. The social worker will need to discuss this with their manager if there is doubt about capacity and a decision taken about how to progress.

Other considerations when working transparently with parents include:

Interpreters must be used if English is a second language

Parents need to be informed of how information about them will be used and stored

Parents have the right to know who their information will be shared with.

Parents have the right to change / amend their consent and therefore it is important to be transparent in the recording of consent, and it is good practice to discuss and re-confirm consent as the child’s situation progresses or when things change.

Sample Consent Agreement for an Assessment – as attached for completion

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| --- |
| CONSENT - Consent is about making an informed decision to agree to something.  This Consent Form records consent for the following as part of the Assessment Process: |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Parent agrees to assessment | Y | N | | Parent agrees to information being gathered from other agencies (important to specify) |  |  | | Parent agrees for child to be seen on their own |  |  | | Parent agrees for family to be spoken to including …. |  |  | | Parent agrees for the child to be medically examined |  |  | | Parent has been provided with …………….. |  |  |   Comment and Date:  Review date for consent: |

Similar agreements can be made for any aspect of practice where informed consent is needed. Separate forms are on Tri.X for consent to a child being accommodated under Section 20.

Blank Consent Doc for Assessment Attached

To be reviewed January 2020

**South Gloucestershire Parental Consent Document for –**

**The Assessment Process**

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| CONSENT - Consent is about making an informed decision to agree to something.  This Consent Form records consent for the following as part of the Assessment Process:  The Parent has been informed that an Assessment Will be undertaken either as A Child In Need – Sec 17 or  To determine if the child is a Child In Need of Protection – Sec 47 assessment. |
| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Parent agrees to assessment | Y | N | | Parent agrees to information being gathered from other agencies (important to specify) |  |  | | Parent agrees for child to be seen on their own –  Date agreed - |  |  | | Parent agrees for family to be spoken to including ….  Is there anyone not given permission to speak to? … |  |  | | Parent agrees for the child to be medically examined following an explanation as to why – specify the reason |  |  | | Parent has been provided with documents regarding complaint and ……………….. |  |  |   Parental Comment, sign and Date:  SW Comment, sign and Date    Review date for consent: |