

## CONSENT

Written consent must be obtained before any procedure such as reduction, fb removal, incision & drainage. Fingertip surgery using the Hospital's consent forms (if in doubt re the need for written consent, ask an EM consultant)

*This section on consent is taken from "12 Key points on Consent: The law in Northern Ireland"; a guideline from the Chief Medical Officer for NI*

When do health and social care professionals need consent from patients/clients?

1. Before you examine, treat or care for patients/clients who are competent you must obtain their consent.
2. Adults and young people aged over 16 are always assumed to be competent unless demonstrated otherwise. If you have doubts about their competence, the question to ask is: "can this patient/client understand and weight up the information needed to make this decision?" Unexpected decisions do not prove the person is incompetent, but may indicate a need for further information or explanation.
3. Patients/clients may be competent to make some health and social care decisions, even if they are not competent to make others.
4. Giving and obtaining consent is usually a process, not a one-off event. Individuals can change their minds and withdraw consent at any time. If there is any doubt, you should always check that the patient/client still consents to your caring for or treating them.
5. Can children give consent?

Before examining, treating or caring for a child, you must also seek consent. Young people aged 16 and 17 are presumed to have the competence to give consent for themselves. Younger children who understand fully what is involved in the proposed procedure can also give consent (although their parents should ideally be involved). In other cases, someone with parental responsibility must give consent on the child's behalf, unless they cannot be reached in an emergency. If a competent child consents to treatment, a parent cannot over-ride that consent. Legally, a parent can consent if a competent child refuses, but it is likely that taking such a serious step will be rare.

Who is the right person to seek consent from a patient/client?

6. It is always best for the person actually treating or caring for the patient/client to seek consent. However, you may seek consent on behalf of colleagues if you are capable of performing the procedure in question, or if you have been specially trained to seek consent for that procedure.

What information should be provided when seeking consent?

7. Patients/clients need sufficient information before they can decide whether to give their consent; for example, information about the benefits