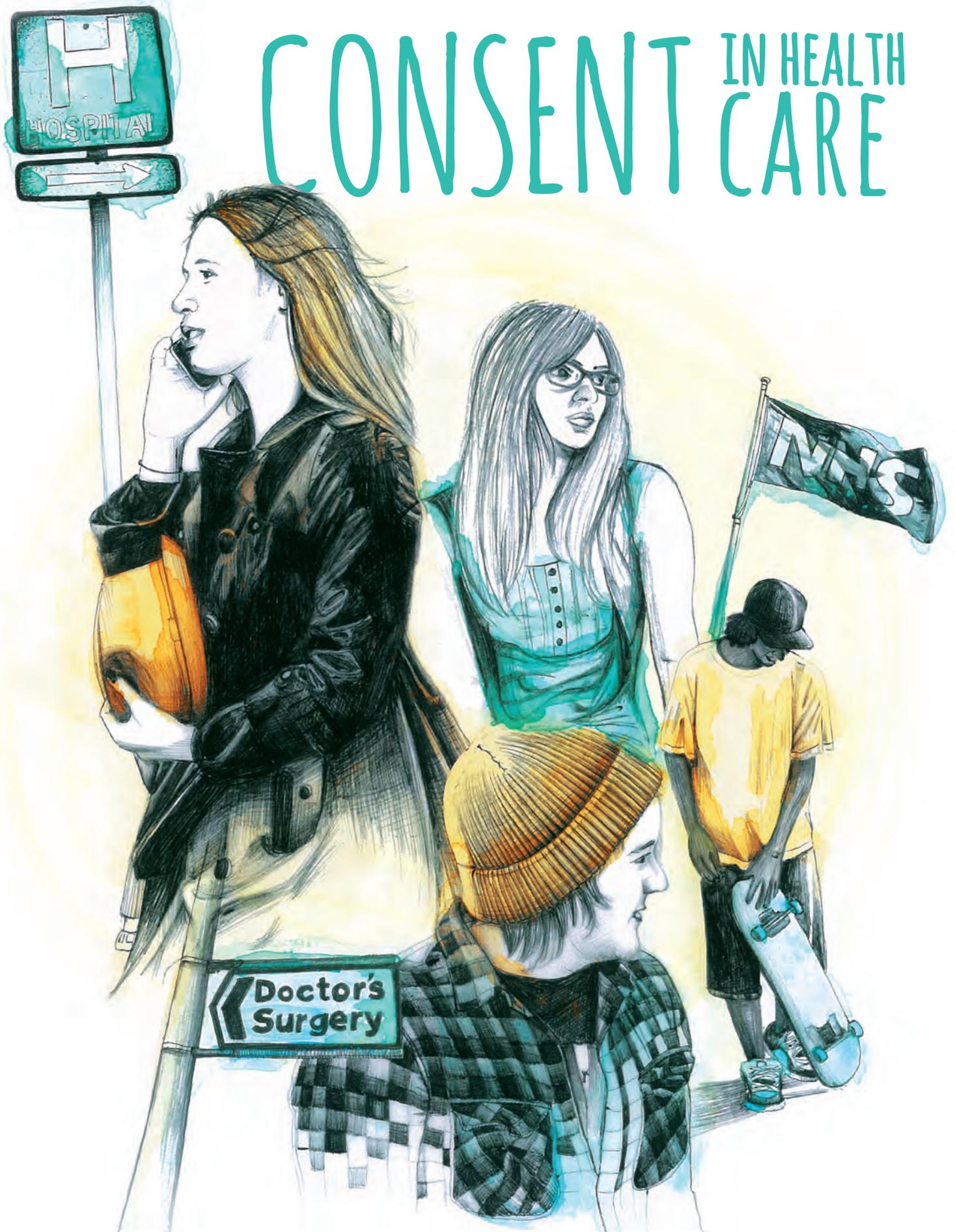


# CONSENT IN HEALTH CARE



INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN WALES



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# YOUR RIGHTS



THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD SETS OUT A LIST OF RIGHTS THAT ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD HAVE.



## THESE INCLUDE THE RIGHT TO:

- ✓ Good quality health care.
- ✓ Say what you think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect you and that adults should listen to what you have to say.
- ✓ Get information that you can understand as long as it is safe for you to have it.
- ✓ Your privacy.

**GOOD**  
**QUALITY**  
health care



**PRIVACY**



## WHO IS THIS LEAFLET FOR AND WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

This leaflet is for all children and young people under age 18 in Wales. Your parent or carer might find it helpful too.

It's about your health care and your right to be involved in decisions about your health, health care or treatment.

## WHAT IS CONSENT?

If you give consent, **you are saying that something can happen**. In health care it means that **you must say yes** before the doctor, nurse, dentist or anyone else who looks after your health can examine or treat you.

Choosing whether you wish to consent to something needs **careful consideration**.

YES



## CAN I GIVE CONSENT?

**If you are 16 or 17 you are presumed to be able to give consent** for an examination or treatment with a doctor, nurse or dentist after it has been explained to you. If you agree to a particular treatment, the doctor, nurse or dentist does not have to ask your parents or carers for consent as well.

**If you are under 16, you may still be able to give consent for health care** with a doctor, nurse or dentist, provided you are able to understand what is involved in the proposed treatment. The doctor, nurse or dentist should talk to you and explain what will happen and how you may feel afterwards. If they think you understand what is involved then you will be able to make your own decision to have the treatment (give consent). This means that you may be able to agree to some treatments by yourself and not to others. For example, **if you're 14, you may be able to give consent yourself** for an injection to protect you against meningitis. However, the information needed for agreeing to something as serious as a heart operation might be too much to weigh up by yourself.

If you cannot give consent, your doctor, nurse or dentist should still talk to you about what is going to happen. They will also talk to your parents or the person responsible for your care about what is in your best interest.



## WHAT ABOUT MY PARENTS OR CARERS?

Even if you are able to give consent yourself, it's still a **good idea to include your parents or carers** in your decision. If they know what is happening, they will be able to **help you think through your decision** and support you.

However, if you do not want to tell your parents or carers about treatment or advice you are getting, the doctor, nurse or dentist will not tell them without your permission, except in exceptional circumstances to protect you or someone else from serious harm.



## WHAT HAPPENS IN AN EMERGENCY?

If you are not able to consent and there isn't time for your parent or the person responsible for your care to give consent on your behalf, **the doctor can still treat you**. They will only do this in an emergency to save your life or to make sure that you don't become even more unwell.



**SAVE  
YOUR  
Life**



## HOW DO I GIVE CONSENT?

You can give consent by showing that you agree to something happening, for example if the doctor asks to look at your arm, you roll up your sleeve. You might also nod, say out loud that you agree or you may be asked to sign a form to say you agree.

**AGREE**  
to something happening



**ALWAYS**    
**QUESTIONS**



**AND REMEMBER**

You can change your mind about agreeing to an examination or treatment at any time by telling the person looking after you. You can also take as much time as you need to make your decision. You should always ask questions if you don't understand anything or feel you need more information.

## CAN I REFUSE AN EXAMINATION OR TREATMENT?

If you are 16 or 17, or under 16 and the person looking after your health has decided that you understand what is happening **you can refuse to consent to an examination or treatment.**

However, there are some situations where your refusal can be overridden by your parents or carers or by those treating you. If your doctor believes that your refusal to treatment is detrimental to your wellbeing they may want to talk to a lawyer about whether the treatment should be given. They will usually only do this if you refuse treatment for a life threatening condition and they believe that the treatment is what's best for you.

If you are under 16 and the person looking after your health has decided that you can't give your consent then **your parents or carers can consent on your behalf**, even if you want to refuse treatment. However, your parents or carers and those treating you will be encouraged to discuss the treatment with you and try and reach agreement with you.

**WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU** ★

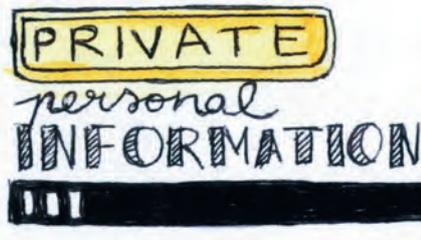
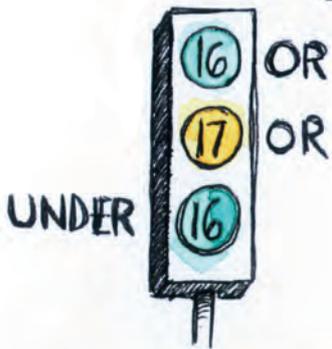




## WHAT ABOUT MY PRIVACY ?

If you are 16 or 17, or under 16 and your health worker has decided that you can give consent then **they should keep all your personal information private unless you say otherwise.**

There are some situations when your doctor or dentist **may need to share your personal information** with your parents or carers or the person responsible for your care, if, for example, you refuse treatment for a very serious illness or they are worried that you are in danger. If this is the case, you will be told what information is being shared and why, and what will be done with it. Information will only be shared without your consent if you or someone else is in serious danger of being hurt or abused.



## WHAT IF I'M NOT HAPPY?

If you are not happy about your care and treatment you can tell one of the people who is looking after your health care or ask your parent or carer to do this for you. You can also ask someone working in health care for a leaflet called Putting Things Right which has more information.

**COME**  
**HERE FOR**  
*advice*



# YOU CAN ALSO CONTACT THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER FOR WALES FOR ADVICE AND SUPPORT

**Children's Commissioner for Wales**  
**Freepost RRGL XLYC BHGC**  
**Swansea SA7 9FS**



Freephone: 0808 801 1000 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)  
Text: 80800 Text us for free (start your message with COM)  
Email: [advice@childcomwales.org.uk](mailto:advice@childcomwales.org.uk)

Twitter: @childcomwales  
Website: [www.childcomwales.org.uk](http://www.childcomwales.org.uk)



FOR LOCAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

YOU CAN CONTACT THE WELSH GOVERNMENT:

**Healthcare Quality Division**  
**Department for Health and Social Services**  
**Welsh Government**  
**Crown Buildings**  
**Cathays Park**  
**Cardiff CF10 3NQ**

Tel: 029 2082 6842 / 029 2082 3083  
Email: [consent@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consent@wales.gsi.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.wales.nhs.uk/consent](http://www.wales.nhs.uk/consent)



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