**Policy for Consent to the Treatment of Children**

**1. Purpose**

To establish a clear framework for obtaining consent for medical treatment of children, ensuring compliance with UK legislation and safeguarding children's rights.

**2. Scope**

This policy applies to all healthcare professionals involved in the treatment of children under the age of 18.

**3. Principles of Consent**

* **Children aged 16 or over** are presumed to have the capacity to consent to their own treatment unless there is evidence to suggest otherwise.
* **Children under 16** may consent if they are deemed **Gillick competent**, meaning they have sufficient intelligence, competence, and understanding to appreciate the implications of their treatment.
* If a child lacks capacity, consent must be obtained from someone with **parental responsibility**, such as:
  + A parent or legal guardian
  + A person with a residence order concerning the child
  + A local authority designated to care for the child

**4. Parental Responsibility & Disputes**

* Only **one person with parental responsibility** is required to provide consent.
* If parents disagree on treatment, healthcare professionals should seek agreement but may escalate the matter to the courts if necessary.
* In **emergency situations**, treatment can proceed without consent if waiting would place the child at risk.

**5. Refusal of Treatment**

* If a **competent young person (16-17 years old) refuses treatment**, their decision may be overruled by the **Court of Protection** if refusal would lead to death or severe permanent injury.
* If a **Gillick competent child refuses treatment**, healthcare professionals should assess the situation carefully and may seek legal intervention if necessary.

**6. Confidentiality & Information Sharing**

* Children and young people have a right to **confidentiality**, and their consent should be sought before sharing medical information.
* Information may be disclosed without consent if necessary to **protect the child’s welfare** or comply with legal obligations.

**7. Training & Compliance**

* Healthcare professionals must receive **regular training** on consent laws and best practices.
* Compliance with this policy will be monitored through **audit and review processes**.

This policy ensures that children's rights are respected while maintaining legal and ethical standards in medical treatment.