

**Consent: A short guide for parents and carers
when accessing support or advice from
Lancashire Children's Services
2023**



A short guide to consent when accessing support from children's services

In the simplest terms consent is "agreeing for something to happen". When a professional talks to you about asking for support from children's services, they should explain the reasons for this to you and what they hope to achieve for your child(ren) by doing this. This is your opportunity to provide agreement for a Request for Support Form to consider support needs for your family, an assessment to take place and consent to share information with other professionals.



The professional will then complete the Request for Support form online, which details what is going well for your family, what may not be going so well and what you all hope to change. We will always come from a position of wanting to work with you and understanding your situation, rather than telling you what we think should happen next, you and your family are the experts.



The Request for Support form is then looked at by a worker from Children's Services in MASH who will ring you to find out more information about your family. In 1 or 2 working days it will be decided what should happen next and your family will help us decide. We will always tell you what is to happen and how much support we feel you need from children's services. We need your help to us make these decisions

Otherwise, if you are a parent or family member you could make contact with children's services yourself to request support for your family by contacting 0300 123 67 20. A worker from the Hub will then talk you through your options and explore in more detail what support you are agreeing to.

Overriding Consent

- There will only be very limited occasions when professionals do not seek consent from you to make a Request for Support or for a Social Worker to see or speak to your child. The reasons for this will be clearly explained to you following this action taking place, these will be situations where we are concerned that by sharing information with parents, carers or relatives that the risk to the child may increase.
- These decisions are made in a short timescale to ensure a child is safe when there are serious concerns about their physical or emotional wellbeing, which in some situations may need the support of the Police and other professionals to come up with a safety plan together.
- If you have concerns that you have not provided consent or the reasons for consent being withheld have not been explained to you please speak to the relevant professional. You can also contact Lancashire County Council Compliments, Comments and Complaints Service at [Compliments, comments or complaints - Lancashire County Council](#)

Our commitments to you

- Any personal or sensitive information about you will be stored securely in electronic or in paper form.
- We will protect your information from being misused and treat your information with the highest standards of confidentiality.
- Your records will be updated with any changes to ensure information about you is as accurate and up-to-date as possible. We need your help to do this.
- We will ask for permission to share your information unless the law says differently. Information about you will only be shared without consent when there is a risk to your or another person's wellbeing. You will be informed if this happens whenever possible.
- We will inform you why we are using your information - and we will only use it for those purposes. See our privacy notice for more information [Service and project specific privacy notices - Lancashire County Council](#)
- We will not ask you about anything which is not relevant to your involvement and participation in the service or the support you need at the time.
- We will respect your rights under the Data Protection Act 1998 - this includes your right to see information that has been recorded about you.
- We keep personal records for some time after you have stopped participating within the services we offer. This is so that you can restart later if you chose to or to report on things that have happened in the past.
- Your records will be safely archived or destroyed according to LCC Retention and Archiving policy.
- When you have provided consent to Lancashire children's social care, we will carefully record this so we do not keep asking you the same questions on multiple occasions.

Key words and phrases explained

- **CSSH or MASH -Children's Services Support Hub or Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub** - a collection of different professionals working together, including Social Workers who help decide what support children in Lancashire may need. They do this by talking to the family and the professionals who already support the family.
- **Duty and Assessment Team** - a Social Work team in your local area who do short term assessments with families to further determine the level of support and help families require.
- **Consent** - in its simplest terms is "agreeing for something to happen".
- **Request for Support** - an online form that a professional will complete when they have decided with a family that the family need some additional support from Children's Services in Lancashire. Parents should have agreed for the online form to be completed and know that a Social Worker is likely to ring.
- **CON - Continuum of Need** - every child living in Lancashire is on the continuum of need, there are four levels, 1,2,3 and 4. The children at level 4 need the most support from Children's Services, those children at level 1 do not require any co-ordinated help from professionals. Social Workers and other professionals at MASH will help decide what level of the continuum of need a child is on. These levels can change when events happen for a child.

