



CONSENT POLICY

It is both a legal requirement and a measure of good clinical practice to obtain patient consent prior to and during physiotherapy assessment and treatment. This consent may be verbal, non-verbal or written. For consent to be valid 'it must be given voluntarily by an appropriately informed person, who has the capacity to consent to the intervention in question' (DOH, 2009). The physiotherapist should assume capacity unless proven otherwise.

- On offering an initial appointment, the patient should be informed that a full subjective and objective examination will take place and that some undress is normally required as part of the assessment/treatment process. A leaflet is provided for this purpose. The therapist should confirm that the patient has received and read this leaflet.
- Consent should therefore be obtained prior to the initial assessment and treatment and recorded in the patient notes.
- Consideration should be given to the patient's age, capacity to consent, emotional state and cognitive ability.
- Initial findings and treatment options, including benefits, risks, side effects and alternatives to proposed interventions, must be explained to the patient and recorded in the patient notes. The patient should be given the opportunity to ask questions.
- Following any significant changes to the treatment plan, the physiotherapist should reaffirm consent.
- Written consent must be gained for treatment with acupuncture, internal examinations, and Grade V manipulations of the cervical spine, and kept in the patient notes. A copy should also be given to the patient.
- Patients have the right to withhold consent for treatment. Details of this must be recorded in the patient notes, including the rationale for the decision of the patient, if this is known.
- Patient information leaflets/written information should be given where possible to assist in the consent process.
- Consent must be gained from the patient when their physiotherapy may be observed or delivered by another healthcare professional/student. The patient should also be given the opportunity to decline observation of their treatment by another healthcare professional confidentially.
- All physiotherapists should demonstrate awareness of the CSP Quality Assurance Standards and complete annual eLearning on Consent. A copy of the Quality Assurance Standards is available on request or may be found on the CSP website.

Reference: Code of Members' Professional Values and Behaviour, Section 3.2, CSP 2019
Quality Assurance Standards for Physiotherapy Service Delivery, Section 5,
CSP 2017
The Guide to Consent for Examination or Treatment, 2nd Edition, Department
of Health, 2009

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