

GCC Registrant Toolkit

# Supporting Informed Consent

Toolkit



# Enhancing patient care through informed consent

Obtaining informed consent from a patient is a critical part of chiropractic treatment, demonstrating that a patient has sufficient understanding of their treatment options based on information provided by their chiropractor.

According to the GCC's recent Patient Community research patients have a reasonable understanding of consent within the context of chiropractic care, describing consent as the giving and receiving of information to enable a patient to make an informed decision.

Consent is not a one-off conversation or activity. It is important that chiropractors continually engage with

patients to regularly review and explain treatment and confirm that the patient is happy to proceed.

Ongoing dialogue with patients not only builds trust but can be an effective means of obtaining informal consent. It also creates an environment in which patients feel empowered to talk about consent and importantly, recognise that consent can be withdrawn at any time.

This toolkit provides registrants with guidance and tips to support discussions with patients about consent.

## Consent in the Code of Practice



**E:** Obtain informed consent for all aspects of patient care

**Patient consent must be voluntary and informed. It is your duty to ensure the patient has all the necessary information and support they need in order to give it. You must ensure that, when the circumstances of a patient's care changes, the patient continues to consent to treatment. (NB: The term patient has been used throughout this principle but consent may need to be obtained from a representative chosen by or appointed to act on behalf of a patient).**

Other Standards in the Code that reinforce and link to the above:

**E1** share with the patient accurate, relevant and clear information to enable the patient to make informed decisions about their health needs and relevant care options. You must also take into consideration a patient's capacity to understand.

**E2** obtain and record consent from a patient prior to starting their care and for the plan of care.

**E3** check with the patient that they continue to give their consent to assessments and care.

**E4** ensure the consent of a patient is voluntary and not under any form of pressure or undue influence.

**E5** seek parental consent first if a child is to be seen without someone else being present, unless the child is legally competent to make their own decisions.

**E6** always obtain a patient's consent if it becomes necessary for the purposes of examination and treatment during care, for you to adjust and/or remove items of the patient's clothing.

**E7** obtain and record the express consent (i.e. orally or in writing) from the patient regarding sharing information from their patient record. You must not disclose personal information to third parties unless the patient has given their prior consent for this to happen.

# Demonstrating professionalism by understanding and supporting informed consent

## TOP TIPS:



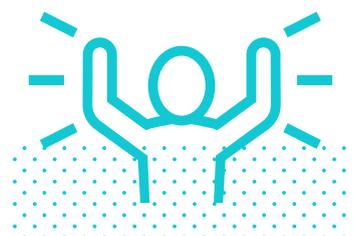
### Be open and transparent

Providing a broad range of information will support patients to make an informed decision about their treatment. For example, information about how they might be expected to feel after treatment, treatment costs, ways to self-manage their condition as well as any potential risks. Patients may also find it helpful to receive information about the treatment environment.



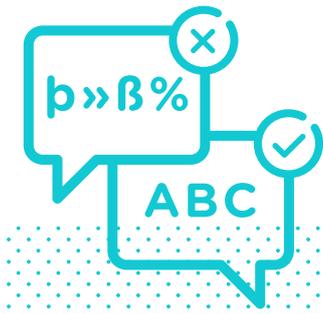
### Tailor information for specific needs

Patients have different level of understanding and experience of chiropractic care, so it is important to tailor information to meet individual needs that considers a patient's medical history, physical assessment as well as any communication preferences.



### Empower patients

Create a welcoming environment to help patients feel comfortable and in control of their treatment. Consent should be regarded as a two-way process whereby the chiropractor shares information and the patient gives permission to proceed with treatment but understand they can withdraw consent at any time.



### **Avoid jargon and ambiguous language**

Explain technical terms clearly and in plain language to help prevent misunderstanding and enable patients to provide informed consent.



### **Ask open-ended questions**

Ask open ended questions to check a patient's understanding of the information provided and invite patients to ask questions and raise any concerns.



### **Obtain written confirmation**

Consent in writing will help to confirm that patients are clear on what treatment will be carried out when and within what boundaries, preventing uncertainty.

# Toolkit

# Simple steps to supporting informed consent



## 1. Communicate

- Be open and transparent
- Use plain language
- Maintain ongoing dialogue

## 2. Explain

- Provide a broad range of information
- Consider individual needs

## 4. Enquire

- Ask open ended questions
- Check your patients understand the information provided
- Obtain written consent

## 3. Empower

- Create a welcoming environment
- Encourage questions
- Support shared decision making

---

General Chiropractic Council  
Park House  
186 Kennington Park Road  
London  
SE11 4BT

Telephone: +44 020 7713 5155  
Website: [www.gcc-uk.org](http://www.gcc-uk.org)  
Twitter: @GenChiroCouncil  
W3W: gains.fairly.rang



Published April 2023