



PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT POLICY

(for under 18s)

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1. Introduction

This policy will outline requirements for staff regarding the collection and storage of parental/guardian consent for children and young people aged under the age of 18 who wish to access NE Youth's services.

It will also provide clarification to staff on how young people aged 16-17 who unable or unwilling to gain parental consent can potentially engage in our services.

Ultimately, this policy will support NE Youth to fulfil its safeguarding duties.

2. When to gain consent

- NE Youth staff must seek consent for all under 16s from a parent or guardian
- For young people aged 16-17, staff should always seek to gain parental consent. When this is not possible (for example the young person is living independently) they can sign on their own behalf but staff must ensure they are aware of what they are consenting to
- Parental consent is not required for young people aged 18 and over - the individuals are able to sign for themselves when required

Written consent must be obtained via the NE Youth Registration Form (hard copy or via the NE Youth website) for any child or young person aged under the age of 18 who wants to access a NE Youth service. This includes short term events such as single day activities and longer term activities such as open access youth clubs. The Lead Worker should call parents to confirm the details of hard copy and online registration forms.

When an offsite trip or residential activity is planned, specific consent must be sought and obtained, even if a registration form has been previously completed. See NE Youth's Residential and Offsite Trips and Activities Procedure for further information.

3. Partnership working

When NE Youth staff provide services to young people who are in attendance at a partner organisation's service or event, additional specific NE Youth consent is not required, unless:

- We intend to share media relating to young people - see NE Youth's Media Consent Policy for further information
- We intend to share personal or sensitive information about the young person e.g. to a funder - see NE Youth's Data Protection Policy for further information (remember consent is not required to share information relating to Safeguarding concerns)

When young people are due to attend a NE Youth activity or event as a member of another organisation and are accompanied by a worker either individually or as part of a group, consent should be obtained by the partner organisation. The relevant NE Youth staff member should make this requirement clear to the partner organisation in writing e.g. via email.

4. Registration Forms completed on the NE Youth Website

Parents and guardians can choose to complete the NE Youth Registration Form via the NE Youth website by visiting www.neyouth.org.uk/signup. Once completed the form will be sent to Upshot and the Lead Worker must review it to ensure they know the young person before they are accepted as a service user by the system. The Lead Worker must also ring the number listed as the parent or guardian contact and verbally check that the details listed in the form are correct. A note confirming the call has happened should be logged on the young person's timeline and should include the date and worker's name.

In cases where the parents do not consent to the young person attending and still don't after the call has taken place, the young person's details must be removed from the system unless they are authorised by the Chief Executive using the process set out in section 5 of this policy.

5. What to do if a young person arrives for an activity without consent

If a young person forgets to bring a registration form or parents have not completed an online registration form, a member of staff should ask for a phone number and ring the parent/legally responsible adult and get verbal consent (a record of the phone call must be made on the individual's timeline on the Upshot system) and ask the young person to bring the completed form with them the next time they attend.

If the young person is over the age of 16 and either does not have a parent/guardian or are unwilling/unable to involve their parent or guardian they may be able to sign for themselves if:

- The young person understands what the activity entails
- The young person would go elsewhere for support anyway
- If the young person's prospects or wellbeing will suffer as it would be within their best interests to take part in the activity

It is the policy of NE Youth to always seek parental consent for 13-15 year olds. However, in the case of a young person of this age persistently failing to submit a registration form due to being unable or unwilling to gain parental consent, the following process should be followed:

- The staff member should talk to the young person and encourage them to get a registration form completed by their parent/guardian and explain to them the importance of NE Youth receiving the completed form
- If the young person fails to bring a completed Registration Form to 3 sessions, this must be followed up by the Lead Worker for that session by way of completion, in partnership with the young person, of the 'Self-Registration Authorisation Form' which is available in Appendix One of this policy
- The completed form should be forwarded to the Chief Executive as soon as possible who will either:

Authorise that the young person can sign the form for themselves, as long as the following criteria is met:

- There is genuine good reason for not being able to get a Registration Form completed by their parent/guardian
- The young person understands what the activity entails
- The young person would go elsewhere for support anyway
- If the young person's prospects or wellbeing will suffer as it would be within their best interests to take part in the activity

Decline the reasoning given for failure to gain parental consent. In this instance, the Lead Worker should explain to the young person that they have two future sessions in which to submit the completed Registration Form or they will no longer be able to access the session/activity. The young person should be referred to other support services.

Seek further information or clarification before a decision is made.

Staff must note that it is never permitted for a young person under the age of 16 to participate in any offsite trips or residentials without a completed and signed consent form from their parent or guardian.

6. Storage of forms

Hard and soft copies of forms should be kept for the period of time specified within NE Youth's Record Retention Policy:

Registration Forms - A maximum of 6 years from the date of sign up

Consent Forms - One month from the date of the offsite activity

Self-Registration Authorisation Form - A maximum of 6 years from the date of sign up

All forms must be kept and destroyed securely in line with NE Youth's Data Protection Policy.

APPENDIX ONE
NE YOUTH
Self-Registration Authorisation Form

Name of Young Person		
Date of Birth		
Name of Lead Worker		
Session/Activity		
Reasons given for not gaining parental consent (provide as much information as possible)		
Is it the Lead Worker's assessment that the following criteria applies to the young person in question:		
The young person understands what the activity entails	YES	NO
The young person would go elsewhere for support anyway	YES	NO
The young person's prospects or wellbeing will suffer as it would be within their best interests to take part in the activity	YES	NO
Chief Executive's Decision:		
The Lead Worker is authorised to accept a Registration Form completed by the young person named on this form	YES	NO
Chief Executive's Signature:		
Date:		