**Consent Policy**

**1. Introduction**

Penwith Ear Care is committed to providing high-quality ear care services in a safe and ethical manner.  Fundamental to this commitment is ensuring that all patients understand the procedures they will undergo and provide informed consent before any treatment commences. This policy outlines the principles and procedures for obtaining valid consent at Penwith Ear Care.

**2. Principles of Consent**

All consent must be:

\* Voluntary: Freely given, without coercion or undue influence.

\* Informed:  Patients must receive sufficient information to make an informed decision, including the nature of the procedure, potential risks and benefits, alternative treatments, and the option to decline treatment.

\* Capacity: The patient must be capable of understanding the information provided and making a reasoned decision.  If there are concerns about capacity, appropriate steps will be taken to assess and involve appropriate decision-makers.

\* Specific: Consent must be given for the specific procedure being proposed. Blanket consent is not acceptable.

\* Documented: All consent discussions and decisions should be clearly documented in the patient's records.

**3. Obtaining Consent**

\* Responsibility:  It is the responsibility of the healthcare professional undertaking the procedure to obtain consent.

\* Information: Information provided to the patient should be tailored to their individual needs and understanding.  This may include:

   \* Explanation of the diagnosis and proposed procedure.

   \* Potential benefits and risks of the procedure.

   \* Likely prognosis with and without the procedure.

   \* Alternative treatment options.

   \* Opportunity to ask questions.

\* Time to Consider:  Patients should be given adequate time to consider the information and make a decision.

\* Written Consent: Written consent will be obtained for all invasive procedures and other procedures as deemed appropriate.

\* Verbal Consent: Verbal consent may be obtained for minor procedures, but this must be clearly documented in the patient's records.

\* Withdrawal of Consent: Patients have the right to withdraw their consent at any time, even after a procedure has commenced.

**4. Children and Young People**

\* Consent from those with Parental Responsibility: For patients under 16 years of age, consent must be obtained from a person with parental responsibility.

\* Gillick Competence:  Children under 16 who are deemed to have sufficient understanding and maturity to make decisions about their own care (Gillick competent) may be able to provide consent independently.

\* Involvement of the Child:  Every effort will be made to involve children and young people in discussions about their care, in a way that is appropriate to their age and understanding.

**5. Adults Lacking Capacity**

\* Assessment of Capacity: If there are concerns about a patient's capacity to consent, a formal assessment will be undertaken.

\* Best Interests:  If a patient lacks capacity, decisions about their care will be made in their best interests, considering their wishes, values, and beliefs where possible.

\* Involvement of Others:  Family members, carers, and independent advocates may be involved in decision-making for patients lacking capacity.

**6.  Documentation**

\* Consent Forms:  Written consent forms will be used for all relevant procedures.

\* Patient Records:  All consent discussions, including the information provided and the patient's decision, will be clearly documented in the patient's records.

**7.  Training and Support**

\* Staff Training:  All staff will receive training on the principles of consent and the procedures for obtaining valid consent.

\* Support and Guidance:  Staff can access support and guidance on consent issues from their line manager, designated safeguarding lead, or other relevant professionals.

**8.  Review**

This Consent Policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains in line with current legislation, best practice guidance, and the needs of Penwith Ear Care.

Disclaimer: This consent policy is a template and should be reviewed and adapted by Penwith Ear Care to ensure it meets their specific needs and complies with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements. It is recommended that legal advice is sought to ensure the policy is appropriate for their specific circumstances.