# The Listening Path - Consent Policy

(a service within Best Foot Forward)

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1. Purpose

Consent ensures that clients, and where appropriate their parents or carers, understand and agree to:

- The counselling process
- How information is used
- The limits of confidentiality
- Their rights and choices

Consent is an ongoing process and can be reviewed at any time.

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2. Informed Consent

Before counselling begins, The Listening Path will ensure that:

- The service is clearly explained
- Questions are encouraged
- Clients understand what to expect
- Consent is given freely and without pressure

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3. Consent for Children and Young People

Under 16s

- Consent must be provided by a parent or legal guardian
- The young person's assent (agreement) is also essential
- Counselling will only proceed if the young person is willing to engage

Aged 16–17

- Young people may be able to give their own consent
- Parents/carers are usually informed, unless it is not appropriate to do so

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4. Ongoing Consent

Consent is not a one-time agreement.

The Listening Path will:

- Check in regularly with the young person
- Respect their right to pause or stop counselling
- Review consent if circumstances change

Sarah Gaiger: +44 7824 903282
Email: sarah.gaiger@bestfootforward.org.uk
Website: www.bestfootforward.org.uk

5. Consent and Confidentiality
Clients are informed that:
- Counselling is confidential
- However, confidentiality may be broken if there is a risk of harm or safeguarding concern

This is explained clearly at the start of the work.

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6. Consent for Information Sharing
Information will only be shared:
- With consent from the client (and parent/carer where appropriate), or
- Where safeguarding or legal obligations require it

This includes sharing information with:
- Schools or SENCOs
- Other professionals involved in EHCP support

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7. Recording and Data Use
Clients and parents/carers consent to:
- Brief session notes being recorded
- Secure storage of personal information
- Data being used in line with GDPR and Best Foot Forward policies

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8. Right to Withdraw Consent
Clients and/or parents/carers can:
- Withdraw consent at any time
- Request an end to counselling
- Ask questions or raise concerns

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