



Parent involvement with child's medical needs at GP surgery

General Rule in the UK

Yes, in most cases, a doctor (such as a GP or specialist in the NHS) **can and should discuss medical issues with the parent of a autistic child under 16.**

Parents with **parental responsibility** (typically both parents unless a court order says otherwise) have the legal right to access their child's health records and be involved in discussions about care, especially if the child lacks the capacity to consent or make decisions themselves.

[Read more](#)

Information for under-16s on parents and guardians accessing your doctor's services

Your parent or someone else that looks after you may want to use apps or websites to:

- see, book and cancel appointments for you
- see and order prescriptions for you when you need medicine
- look at your health record online
- They can ask your doctors (your GP surgery) to link your NHS profile to theirs, so they can do this for you.
- This is sometimes called "parent and guardian proxy access", or "third party access".

It lets them manage your health and care for you online while you're growing up, until you're old enough to do it on your own.

[All information on this is found on the NHS website](#)





This applies equally to autistic children, as autism does not automatically strip away parental rights—decisions are based on the **individual child's capacity**, not their diagnosis alone.

The guiding principle is the **child's best interests**, balanced with their right to confidentiality under the **General Medical Council (GMC) guidance** and **Data Protection Act 2018**. Doctors encourage family involvement to support holistic care, particularly for conditions like autism where ongoing parental input often helps with treatment plans, education, and support services.

Key Factors: Gillick Competence and Capacity

The ability to discuss information with parents hinges on whether the 15-year-old is assessed as **Gillick competent**—meaning they have sufficient understanding, intelligence, and maturity to make informed decisions about their own medical treatment and consent to sharing information.

[More about Gillick Competence and Capacity here](#)

This is decided by the doctor on a **case-by-case basis**, considering:

- The child's grasp of the treatment's nature, risks, benefits, and alternatives.
- Their emotional maturity and ability to weigh information without undue influence.
- Any communication aids or support needed (e.g., for autistic individuals who may process information differently).

