

GP answers calls from 999 staff during COVID-19 pandemic

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the U.K., Consultant Connect asked GPs across the U.K. whether they would volunteer their time to answer Telephone Advice & Guidance calls from 999 ambulance crews and clinical support desk staff at the South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS). This initiative is run in partnership with Team GPvCovid. Dr Steve Doyle, a GP at Ashworth Street Surgery in the NHS Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale CCG area, agreed to take part.

Dr Doyle, who has been a GP for thirty-two years, joined this service as he felt that he could make a positive contribution during this crisis. He writes that;

"As a General Practitioner, I was aware that my hands-on contribution to the coronavirus crisis was somewhat limited, and even absent in the crisis, I am keen to expand GPs working with other allied professions. This service is an ideal example of that."

One of the benefits of Advice & Guidance is that both parties on the call can often come up with a plan that will keep the patient safe and out of hospital. This element became even more important during this crisis.

Dr Doyle expands on how the GP Advice Line helps SCAS staff and the people they are treating as;

"I can offer experienced clinical guidance and often reassurance that the proposed plan of action seems correct. I feel that I am able to work as a team with the paramedics and control centre with us each contributing from our areas of expertise."

Paramedic and GP avoid A&E trip for shielding asthmatic patient

"A brittle asthmatic, who was shielding, had taken an overdose of ibuprofen. The paramedic on scene was able to advise me that there was not a risk from the amount of ibuprofen, as it was not within the toxic range. However, they were concerned that an asthmatic had taken ibuprofen and that may trigger an attack. They had ascertained that the patient had taken ibuprofen previously with no reaction."

How Telephone Advice & Guidance helped:

"I advised that as there had been no previous reaction to ibuprofen then I would not expect one now, whatever the dosage. Only a small percentage of asthmatics react to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). As the self-harm risk was felt to be low by the paramedic, we agreed that the patient could be left at home for review by a GP from the out of hours service. As the patient was shielding this was a much safer clinical outcome."

"Without Telephone Advice & Guidance, I think the patient would have been taken to A&E with the potential of being exposed to Coronavirus."

If you have any questions about this service, please get in touch at hello@consultantconnect.org.uk or on 01865 261467.