

# Patients presenting with Cardiology issues receive timely specialist advice

In October 2021, Telephone Advice & Guidance via Consultant Connect was launched in NHS West Essex CCG. Since the launch, over 60% of GP surgeries and more than 90 GPs have used the service. To date, 60% of calls placed via the service, with reported outcomes have resulted in patients avoiding an unnecessary trip to hospital\*. Where patients have needed to go to hospital, the service has enabled GPs to confirm the right pathway before making the referral.

\*Data correct as of January 2022

## About the GP and Technology Used

Dr Rikin Patel is a GP in the area and works across two surgeries. The quickest way for Dr Patel to get rapid Telephone Advice & Guidance is via the Consultant Connect App. However, if he's working in a location (e.g., home visit) with poor Wi-Fi or mobile signal, he accesses the service by calling the surgery's unique Dial-In Number from any phone.

The average connection time for GPs in West Essex to connect to a consultant in this way is under 1 minute, with a first-time answer rate of 91% and the average call duration is under 4 minutes. Dr Patel finds using the service helpful; he explained:

*"Using Telephone Advice & Guidance provides me with peace of mind and confidence as the decision I make has consultant input, and I can quickly close a patient case once the advice from secondary care is received."*

We asked Dr Patel to share a couple of examples of how the service has helped improve patient care recently.

## Initial Patient Presentations

A young adult patient presented with atypical chest pain. Dr Patel carried out an ECG, which showed a few unexpected and unexplained features. Dr Patel was keen to discuss the results with a cardiologist, so he used Telephone Advice & Guidance via Consultant Connect. The Cardiologist reviewed the ECG and advised that the patient needed to be referred to the outpatient department for further assessment.

On another occasion, Dr Patel saw an elderly patient who visited him after having stents fitted abroad. The patient's medication had run out. The patient had had two previous myocardial infarctions and reported 4-5 stents being present, but all medical notes provided to Dr Patel were not in English. Due to the procedures being carried out abroad and the ongoing medication advice given to the patient not matching the local NHS equivalents, Dr Patel was uncertain of the next steps.

Dr Patel used the Consultant Connect service to speak to a Cardiologist. Together, they worked out what medication the patient needed to stay safe in primary care while waiting for their outpatient appointment.

## How using the service helped the patients and GP

On both occasions, the timeliness of advice received from the Cardiologists reassured the patients and meant that they got the right care faster. For Dr Patel, having support from secondary care was *"reassuring and useful"*.



**If you have any questions about this service, please get in touch at [hello@consultantconnect.org.uk](mailto:hello@consultantconnect.org.uk) or on 01865 261467.**