



## PATIENT CASE STUDY: CONSULTANT CONNECT SUPPORTS EXPEDITED DERMATOLOGY REFERRAL IN OXFORDSHIRE

NHS clinicians in Oxfordshire have had access to the IG-secure photography feature, PhotoSAF, via the free Consultant Connect App since 2018. The service allows users to safely capture high-quality patient photos to monitor conditions, and can also be downloaded and attached to existing Advice & Guidance and referral pathways.

We spoke with Marie\*, a patient at Woodlands Medical Centre in Oxfordshire, to find out how her GP's utilisation of the Consultant Connect App impacted her daughter's care following a dermatological condition.

### **What led to your GP using the Consultant Connect App to take photographs of your daughter's condition?**

'Around four months ago, my daughter, Charlotte\*, had a cold, and a rash appeared all over her body. I'd never seen anything like it before, so I took her to the GP, who initially prescribed a topical cream. The cream didn't have much effect, so for a while, Charlotte and I regularly went back to the GP practice to try different treatments.

'After a few months, her condition progressed to itchy red lumps, so we returned to the surgery, and the GP suggested that he use the Consultant Connect App to take photos of Charlotte's skin, which he would download and send to a local consultant dermatologist for advice. He explained that the app was secure, and the images wouldn't be saved to his phone. He added that he would write a short report alongside the photos, detailing what we had trialled so far, and he would be in contact when he received a response.

'The dermatologist responded to the GP, saying that it could be hand, foot, and mouth disease presenting abnormally, so they suggested further treatment. When there was still no change, the GP took additional photos using the app to attach to the original report to evidence the worsening of the rash.

'This time, the dermatologist replied advising that Charlotte needed a face-to-face appointment at the hospital and her referral would be fast-tracked. Because of that, we received an appointment with a dermatologist at The Churchill Hospital three days later. At the appointment, the dermatologist had all the GP's photos to hand, which was really helpful because he could see the life cycle of Charlotte's rash instead of an isolated appearance of how it presented on the day.'

### **How did your GP's use of Consultant Connect make you and Charlotte feel?**

'From a parent's point of view, it gave me peace of mind because I thought, "A specialist dermatologist will have a look at this." In that situation, I find it so encouraging that GPs have something to aid them in capturing high-resolution photos to send to specialists, and having access to those images massively sped up the referral process.

'For Charlotte, although she's only ten, bringing in a specialist gave her reassurance, and it was the comfort of knowing we wouldn't be waiting months on end for a specialist appointment with no treatment in the meantime. I think her knowing that a specialist was looking at it really did help her. She was more positive after the GP told us he would share the photos with a dermatologist, and it felt like real action was being taken. Charlotte's spirits were lifted, which helped her mentally as well as physically.'

### **How do you think your daughter's care might have been different had your GP not had access to Consultant Connect?**

'If our GP hadn't had access to Consultant Connect, I think I'd feel really frustrated because we most likely would still have been in the same position: going backwards and forwards, trialling treatments until we received a hospital appointment. I think for the GP, it reassured him, too, because it allowed him to provide visual context to Charlotte's condition, which would have been difficult to describe verbally. I don't think we would've received the appointment as quickly as we did, had the dermatologist not been able to see how bad her skin condition was.

At that initial hospital appointment almost a month ago, the rash was diagnosed as scabies. Now, Charlotte is doing great; the rash has started to clear up, and I'm so relieved because I didn't know what it was and how to make her better.'

\* Pseudonyms have been assigned to maintain the anonymity of the patient and their family.

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