

Messaging Advice & Guidance in Kent & Medway

Primary Care clinicians in Kent and Medway have had access to specialist Telephone Advice & Guidance (A&G) since September 2019. As of May 2022, clinicians now have access to Messaging A&G provided by out-of-area consultants on the National Consultant Network (NCN). We spoke with a GP and an advanced nurse practitioner in the area to find out how Messaging A&G has improved their working methods.

How did you get specialist written advice before using Consultant Connect and how does this compare with Messaging A&G?

Deborah Nicholls, an Advanced Nurse Practitioner, said: “in the past, we would’ve needed to make a written referral to Secondary Care, which is a longer overall process. **Messaging A&G is easy to use and gives me specialist input quickly for my decision-making. It is reassuring to know that help is available at the touch of a button.**”

Dr Shirani Ilanthirayan, a GP, commented: “access to Messaging A&G helps obtain input to streamline referrals and potential admissions on the correct pathways. **I frequently avoid unnecessary referrals and admissions by using Consultant Connect.**”

We asked the clinicians to share examples of how using the service has recently helped improve patient care:

Deborah's Neurology patient

“I sent a message via the Consultant Connect App to a consultant neurologist on the NCN after seeing a patient with a neurological concern. The consultant assured me that the patient was suitable for a 40-week referral rather than an urgent one. **The response was rapid, and I was able to reassure the anxious patient and put them at ease quickly.**”

Dr Ilanthirayan's Stroke patient

“I saw a patient who had had a stroke and was taking Apixaban and Statin. They recently had their bloods taken, and their liver function test (LFT) was grossly abnormal, which was a new finding. I sent a message to a haematology consultant, who reassured me that the patient could be managed locally and that a referral was unnecessary. **This was excellent for the patient as they didn't need to travel to the hospital and wait to speak to a clinician in Secondary Care.**”



What advice would you give to clinicians who are thinking of using Messaging Advice & Guidance but are unsure?

Dr Ilanthirayan mentioned: “**this is a service that can help many clinicians.** I like that many responses to A&G queries are almost instant.”

Deborah added: “**I would advise all clinicians to use Messaging A&G** whenever additional input is required. The service is excellent and has helped manage many of my patients.”

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