

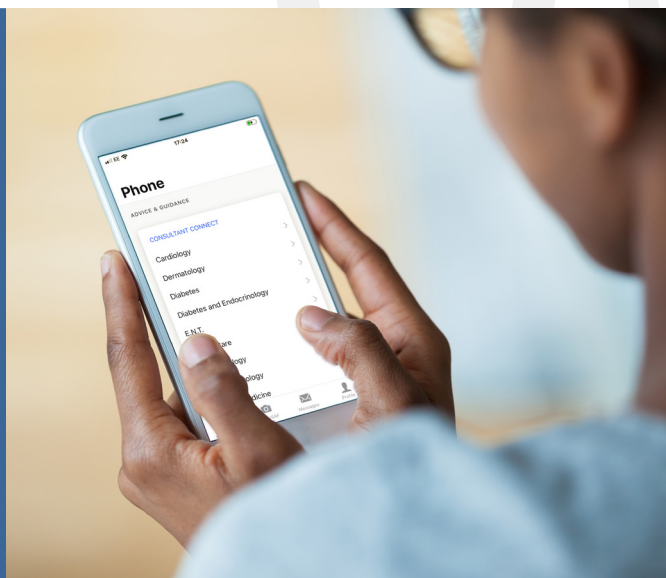
Patients get the right care faster through rapid advice from Endocrinology and Gastroenterology

About the GP and technology used

Dr Diana Chmielewska is a GP at the Valleys Medical Partnership in the NHS Derby and Derbyshire CCG area.

Since 2019, Primary Care clinicians across the CCG area have had access to rapid Telephone and Messaging Advice & Guidance from specialists via Consultant Connect.

We caught up with Dr Chmielewska to find out about her experience of using the service.



Endocrinology Patient

Dr Chmielewska shared an example of when using Telephone Advice & Guidance helped her create a medication management plan for a patient whilst they awaited an outpatient appointment:

"I saw an elderly patient with hyperthyroidism who was waiting for an outpatient appointment which was postponed 4 times due to cancellation of outpatient clinics. The patient was increasingly anxious and upset that they were not getting the treatment, despite their referral to see a specialist having already been accepted. There is a huge capacity shortage for outpatient appointments, and patients are turning back to Primary Care for advice which they are desperate to receive for the right treatment.

I used Telephone Advice & Guidance via Consultant Connect to speak to a Consultant Endocrinologist. The consultant explained the best options for medication before the patient was seen in Secondary Care. Speaking to an Endocrinologist enabled me to get the patient's treatment plan underway while they awaited a new appointment date.

Being able to get this type of advice quickly improved the patient's care. Without the service, the patient would have got increasingly worried and anxious. After talking with the consultant, I was comfortable that the prescribed medication was the best route for the patient."



Gastroenterology Patient

On another occasion, Dr Chmielewska used the Consultant Connect service for advice about a patient's constipation that lasted for 2 weeks:

"I saw a patient who was suffering from severe constipation for around 2 weeks. I used Consultant Connect to call a Gastroenterologist for advice regarding the patient to avoid sending them to A&E for a long wait. The Gastroenterologist explained the red flags I should be looking out for in the patient's presentation, what to worry about and in which instances I would need to escalate the issue. I felt confident prescribing the suggested medication after having spoken to a consultant. The patient was on the best pathway the first time and was able to stay in the community, avoiding a hospital visit."



How Advice & Guidance benefitted the patients and the GP

On both occasions, the timeliness of the advice received from the consultants reassured the patients, which meant that they got the right care faster.

Dr Chmielewska adds what she likes the most about Advice & Guidance via Consultant Connect:

"I can speak to a specialist within minutes when I have a pressing question. The service enables me to get immediate input from a specialist for specific or unusual conditions. When local specialty teams are not available, out-of-area NHS consultants on the National Consultant Network (NCN) are able to provide helpful advice and input supporting my decision making."

"Consultant Connect is a brilliant service. Due to huge capacity pressures, services are becoming more difficult for the patients to access. Advice & Guidance via Consultant Connect closes the gap for patients who otherwise would have needed to wait for 6-7 months to be seen in Secondary Care."

Related materials:

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