

Consultant Connect set up advice line within 24 hours to assist with outbreak of monkeypox

NHS South East London ICS began talks with Consultant Connect on 30th May 2022 to assist Primary Care with access to specialist advice amidst the monkeypox outbreak.

Just 24 hours later, on 31st May 2022, the Monkeypox Advice & Guidance line was launched to allow Primary Care clinicians to contact specialists for immediate advice for a suspected case of monkeypox, with the patient present.

David Reith, Director of Commissioning Strategy at NHS South East London ICS, said:

“the hotline was set up following calls from a South East London trust, and improving communication access between Primary and Secondary Care is critical to improving patient outcomes. The hotline has meant we can connect different parts of the system at the touch of a button.”

This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and the reliability of the line is shown in the average time of 30 seconds it takes for a specialist to answer a call.

The Monkeypox Advice & Guidance line is answered by a rota of infectious disease specialists and HIV consultants and allows Primary Care clinicians to send secure clinical photos to provide context to their queries.

Four months on from the launch of the line, **240 calls have been made to date**, with **46% resulting in referral avoidance**. Another **46% of calls have resulted in a referral being made**, ensuring those who need to be seen get the right care the first time.



Nick Smith, Account Manager for NHS South East London ICS, said:

“As we already had existing Sexual Health services available to clinicians via the Consultant Connect service, it was very easy to re-allocate existing resources for a monkeypox service. This allowed a smooth and slick rollout within 24 hours of the request being made.”

It is important to note that lower numbers of infections are attributed to the rollout of the monkeypox vaccine, and so 240 calls in four months to this line is proportionate to monkeypox statistics in the UK.

If you have any questions or would like more information about how Telephone or Photo Advice & Guidance can support your area, please email us at hello@consultantconnect.org.uk or call us on 01865 261 467.