



# ENHANCED ADVICE & GUIDANCE IN BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL ICB

Clinicians in Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board (ICB) have had access to Enhanced Advice & Guidance (A&G) provided by Consultant Connect since 2015. We spoke with Dr Emamoke Ubogu, Senior GP Partner and GP Trainer at Swan Medical Centre in Yardley, who has been using the service since 2019, to find out how this benefits himself, his colleagues, and his patients.

## **Birmingham and Solihull stats\*:**

**15** Telephone A&G specialties | **8** Messaging and Photo A&G specialties |  
**42 seconds** average time for a call to be answered

## **How did you obtain A&G before you had access to Consultant Connect?**

‘Depending on the questions I needed to ask, I would have contacted a ward consultant or registrar via the hospital switchboard or their secretary, or email friends who are consultants. This was very frustrating and proved difficult to spend a long time trying to get hold of someone. A lot of the time, it wasn’t for emergency advice, so it didn’t always feel like the right thing to do.’

## **How do those methods compare to Enhanced A&G provided by Consultant Connect?**

‘Using Consultant Connect for access to rapid advice is significantly easier, especially for Dermatology. When you have queries about the severity of a patient’s condition, trying to get the best care for a patient in the past would’ve usually resulted in a referral. It would have then taken a while to receive a response to this referral, and, in the meantime, the patient would have been struggling and worrying, and there would have also been concern from my side.’

‘I’m an early adaptor when it comes to technology, so once I became aware of the Consultant Connect service and found out that I could take IG-secure patient photos on my phone, I was keen to try it out and have continued to use the service ever since.’

## What are the benefits to you and your colleagues?

**'The most significant benefit for me would be the ability to receive comprehensive advice quickly, often within 24 hours.** In fact, many of the responses are received more quickly than that, alleviating patient anxiety and clinical concern. It also helps me manage the same or similar conditions I'm presented with in the future, so I won't need to ask the same questions.

I always encourage my GP trainees to use Consultant Connect for advice if needed, and the response has been positive.

One of the biggest advantages and developments is the integration of Consultant Connect activity into patient records. Previously, I would print off an email and have them scanned in and attached to records, which isn't a difficult task but is time-consuming. **Whereas now, as long as I input the patient's NHS number and leave an outcome, the telephone call or message is automatically pushed into the patient's record.**

There are so many specialties available, many of which I haven't needed to use yet, but I'm 100% sure that if the need arose, I wouldn't hesitate to use them for access to advice.'

## What are the benefits to patients?

'Patients are really impressed with the speed of replies. In the past, I've explained that we need to write to the specialist and await a response, a process which can take weeks. **With Consultant Connect, patients are updated with a management plan the next day, which they love and appreciate.**

There was a recent scenario where I sought A&G via Consultant Connect, and the advice ended up being to make a two-week wait (2WW) referral, which was my gut feeling. Still, **it was excellent to have the reassurance that it was the right decision to make. And because the response came through the same day, it didn't lead to a delay in terms of referral pathway for the patient.'**

\* Statistics correct as of June 2023

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