

Consultant Connect is a telemedicine provider transforming patient care in the NHS. Our services are used by over half the NHS in England, Scotland, and Wales, connecting clinicians with specialists for rapid Advice & Guidance (A&G). Consultant Connect's services are utilised by over 5,600 GP practices and 11,000 specialists, covering 42 million patients. 80% of users would recommend Consultant Connect to a colleague.

Supported by the National Consultant Network (NCN), our Enhanced A&G service consists of Telephone A&G, Photo Messaging A&G, and Email A&G. All A&G activity is recorded for medico-legal purposes, including phone calls, messages, and photos.

1. How can the service be accessed?

The quickest way to access the service is via the free Consultant Connect App (download on the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#)). Only devices running on an Apple operating system (iOS) of 18 and above or an Android operating system of 13 and above will support the Consultant Connect App. This is to comply with the latest data protection regulations. Within the app, clinicians can make calls at the touch of a button, as specialty access numbers are pre-programmed.

The Consultant Connect App is a cloud-based service; therefore, no patient information is stored on the device or within the app. This includes the safe clinical photography feature – PhotoSAF. Photos can only be taken via the app and are stored in an IG-secure and GDPR-compliant cloud and not on the device, meaning photos won't appear on your camera roll or in the recently deleted folder. The photos are automatically sent to your NHS email address. They can also be accessed [in your browser](#) from a desktop computer by logging in using your credentials for the app.

Telephone A&G can also be accessed by calling your organisation's unique Dial-In Number from any phone. Your Dial-In Number, the specialties you have access to, and their operating hours can be found in your Service Directory. If you do not have your Dial-In Number, please contact the Consultant Connect Team at hello@consultantconnect.org.uk.

The time it takes a clinician to connect to a specialist for Telephone A&G is just 33 seconds (UK average).

2. Is the app safe for me to download on my personal phone?

Yes, in addition to Consultant Connect App activity being stored in an IG-secure cloud, two-factor authentication is required upon initial registration.

Use of the app is entirely voluntary; you can access Telephone A&G via your organisation's unique Dial-In Number.



3. Is the service free?

The service is free, meaning there is no cost to users other than the cost of a local telephone call if you are seeking Telephone A&G. The Consultant Connect App can be downloaded for free from the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

4. Will I pay any phone charges?

If using the app on Wi-Fi, you will not be charged for making a call or sending a message. However, if using the app on 3G/4G/5G, this will come out of your data allowance. Mobile data will only be used if your phone isn't connected to Wi-Fi. Only a small amount of mobile data is used: 1GB allows you to make over 300 calls.

5. Can I still use the service if I have no phone signal or access to Wi-Fi?

If you have poor mobile phone signal and are unable to use Wi-Fi, you can access Telephone A&G by calling your organisation's unique Dial-In Number from any phone. If you do not know your Dial-In Number, please email hello@consultantconnect.org.uk.

6. I have forgotten my password; what should I do?

You can [reset your password here](#).

7. Which specialties can be accessed and during what hours of the day?

The specialties available and the hours of operation are agreed upon by the Acute/Mental Health Trust/Hospital Teams and your local NHS commissioning organisation.

Calls will only be routed to specialists during the agreed hours of operation. Calls will not be routed to specialists outside of these agreed hours, and specialists are automatically excluded from rotas during any notified periods of holiday. Mobile numbers of those seeking and providing advice are never shared with users.

As well as the Consultant Connect App showing a complete list of the available specialties, and their operating hours, each organisation has a Service Directory listing this information. The Consultant Connect App and Service Directory are automatically updated whenever changes are made to the service, such as new specialties being added.



8. Who is responsible for the patient whose care is being discussed?

The clinician seeking the advice remains responsible for deciding what treatment is to be provided following receipt of the guidance and whether a referral or admission is appropriate for the patient.

9. Why do users need to input the NHS number?

The NHS number is attached to the medico-legal call recordings and photo PDFs to assist subsequent retrieval by relevant organisations should it be necessary as a patient identifier.

If no NHS number is input by the clinician, the recordings/PDFs can still be tracked by a date/time reference. If you don't have access to the patient's NHS number, you will still be able to initiate an advice query, by selecting 'skip', and NHS numbers can be added retrospectively via [Consultant Connect in your browser](#). Simply log in using your credentials for the app, and in the main menu select 'Reports' and 'Calls'. Identify the interaction to which you would like to add the NHS number, and under the 'Patient #' column, select 'Update'.

10. Why is providing the outcome important?

Leaving an outcome allows your commissioning organisation to monitor the effectiveness of the service. The information also supports the addition of new specialties to the service.

11. I forgot/didn't have time to leave an outcome after my call finished. What should I do?

Following a call, you can leave an outcome by logging in to [Consultant Connect in your browser](#), using your credentials for the app. The call history does not expire so you can update and add outcomes for calls at any time. Once logged in, click on the 'Calls' tab. Here you will see a complete list of calls you have placed. To leave an outcome, click 'Leave Outcome' underneath the 'Outcome' column

12. Will specialists have access to any patient records?

Specialists are often away from their desks when they take a call, and you should assume that they will not have access to patient records. Any advice given will be based entirely on the information that is provided by you to the specialists via telephone.

13. Out-of-area NHS consultants on the National Consultant Network (NCN) answer calls from my area; how can they provide advice when they don't know our local pathways?



Whilst out-of-area NHS consultants may not have knowledge of local pathways, they will be able to provide you with advice and guidance relating to your patients. In many instances, local or out-of-area specialist advice is invaluable and can help improve the care of your patients.

Please note that the NCN may not be available in all NHS areas.

14. Can I access call recordings?

All calls made via the service are recorded for medico-legal reasons. Call recordings can be accessed via [Consultant Connect in your browser](#), by logging in using your credentials for the app.

Once logged in, click 'Reports' and the sub-category 'Calls'. In the call report, you will see that for any calls you have made via the app, under the column 'Recording', there is a cloud icon. Clicking this icon will automatically start downloading an MP3 file of the call to your device.

There is no expiry date for call recordings, so you can go back and listen to previous A&G calls you placed via the app whenever necessary.

Please note that calls can only be downloaded within your browser and **not** via the app.

15. My call wasn't answered. What should I do?

Whilst routing advice lines via Consultant Connect results in a higher connection rate (an average first-time connection rate of 90%) than traditional methods i.e., switchboard, we cannot guarantee that 100% of calls are answered the first time. Please be patient and wait a few minutes, as the specialist may be undertaking other clinical duties, and try again. However, if you find that calls to a specific line continuously go unanswered, please report this to your Account Manager so that we can investigate and improve the service.

16. Whom should I call for help with the service?

If you have any questions or would like further information, please get in touch with your Account Manager. If you don't know your Account Manager, please contact a member of the team on 01865 261467 or email us at hello@consultantconnect.org.uk.



FAQs for ambulance clinicians



Useful links for ambulance clinicians:

On the [ambulance service webpage](#), you can find hints and tips for using the Consultant Connect service, including how-to guides, videos, and case studies from colleagues.

Make the most of your Consultant Connect service: ambulance clinician demonstration videos:

[Signing up to the Consultant Connect App](#)

[How it works | Telephone Advice & Guidance via the Consultant Connect App](#)

Download the free Consultant Connect App:

- On the [App Store](#).
- On [Google Play](#).

[Consultant Connect in your browser sign-in.](#)

To [reset your Consultant Connect password](#).

[Consultant Connect user case studies.](#)

