



CASE STUDY | ACUTE FRAILTY IN DORSET

Enhanced Advice & Guidance has been available for clinicians in Dorset since 2018, rapidly connecting them with local specialists for Advice & Guidance over the phone.

In November 2023, the Acute Frailty Team at Dorset County Hospital requested that all pre-referral or admittance communications be directed to them via Consultant Connect, producing a single point of access and allowing for calls to be recorded and patient journeys to be tracked.

We spoke with Dr Laura Godfrey, a GP in Dorset, who has recently used the Acute Frailty line to find out how this aided her and her patients.

Acute Frailty Line stats*:

Calls are answered in 23 seconds (on average)

Calls last less than three minutes (on average)

100% of calls, with reported outcomes, **resulted in the patient avoiding an unnecessary hospital visit**

How did you find using the Acute Frailty line via Consultant Connect?

'It was really beneficial. **The Consultant Connect App is user-friendly and intuitive.** I've had no difficulties using it, and the consultant geriatricians within the Acute Frailty Team are incredibly helpful. The biggest benefit this service gives is the ability to have a professional conversation in an easily achievable way; Consultant Connect enables you to speak with colleagues in a time-efficient manner, which helps deliver improved patient care.'

*Data correct from November 2023

Patient Example

'A patient of mine had been admitted to hospital a couple of times and recently discharged, and I felt she had an underlying and deep-seated infection. The patient hadn't been scanned whilst in hospital, and I felt that a scan without an admission would support my management of her. I called the Acute Frailty line via Consultant Connect, and the consultant geriatrician arranged the scan for the patient as an outpatient without her needing to attend any appointments beforehand. **I would have had to admit her if I hadn't had access to the Acute Frailty line. As a result, this allowed the patient to stay home and avoid an unnecessary admission, improving her care journey.**

'I had a separate patient with a recurrent high potassium level for no obvious reason, and I needed to speak with a specialist peer. The patient didn't require a visit to hospital, but I needed an answer on managing them within the community. **After speaking with a colleague via the Acute Frailty line, they provided advice for patient management that I hadn't considered, ultimately allowing the patient to remain at home.** So using this service gives you access to specialist knowledge within the Acute Frailty Clinic and SDEC, as well as the investigations they offer.'

What advice would you give your colleagues who are hesitant to use the service?

'It's just a phone call; it's picked up and answered by someone who knows what they're doing, and they want to help you and the patient. **The real benefit is in avoiding admissions. For complex patients who are best looked after in their own homes or patients who you know need further investigations or a specialist opinion to help support their management and prevent them from further deterioration.** For the ones who you think need holistic care quickly, accessing rapid advice in this way answers the question, "How do I keep this patient at home?". I think it's a brilliant service.'

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