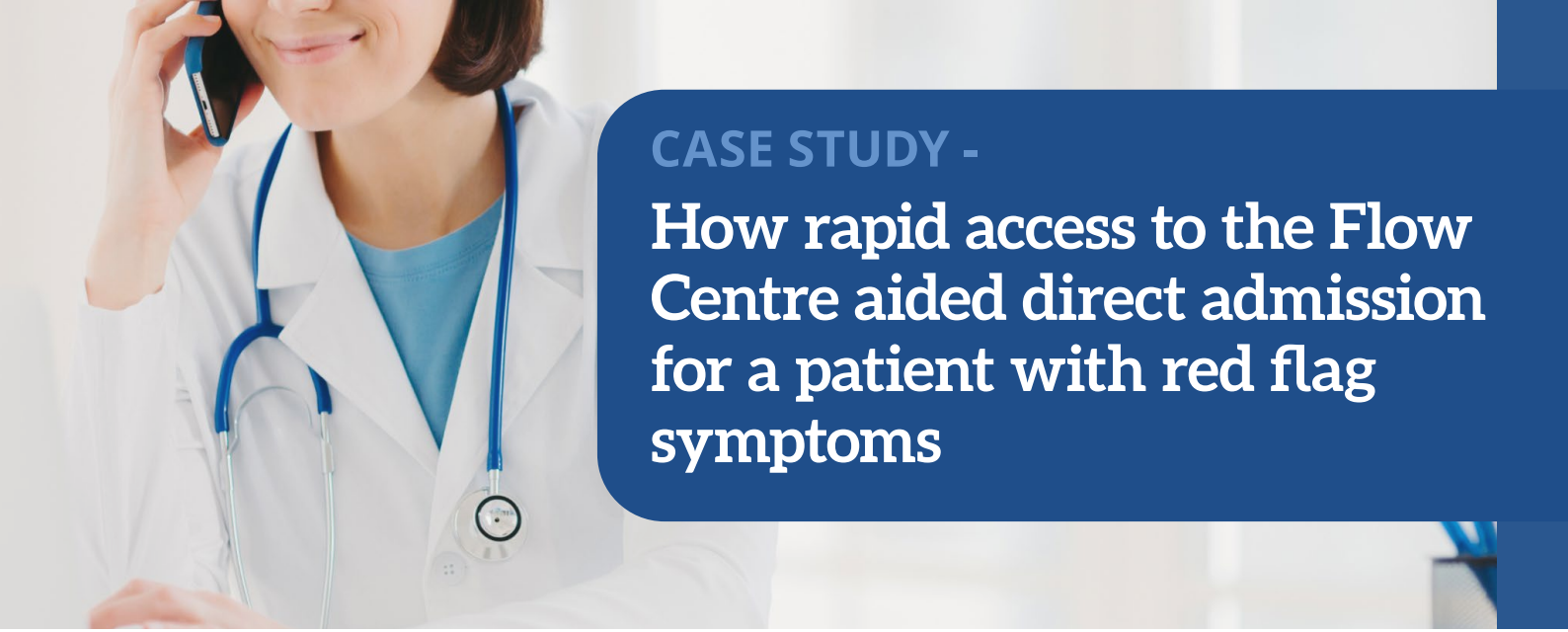




CASE STUDY -

How rapid access to the Flow Centre aided direct admission for a patient with red flag symptoms

Since 2020, NHS clinicians across all seven health boards in Wales have had access to rapid Advice & Guidance (A&G) via Consultant Connect, **linking healthcare professionals with specialists through telephone, photo, and messaging**. As part of the service, clinicians can also access IG-secure clinical photography, allowing them to take photos using the Consultant Connect App on their personal devices, safe in the knowledge that **images are securely saved to the cloud, rather than on the phone itself**.

Wales stats*:



>3,200
active users



>78,000
calls made



>71,000
photos taken



>12,000
messages sent

We spoke with Dr Jenny Jones, Locum GP, and Dr Emily Kingham, GP in Powys, **to find out how access to Consultant Connect supports them in their day-to-day roles** – from documenting patient presentations and seeking specialist advice, to quickly contacting the right service when a patient needs a hospital admission.

Making clinical documentation easier

Dr Jones first started using Consultant Connect during the Covid-19 pandemic as a way of accessing specialist advice. Since then, **clinical photography has become an important part of how she documents patient presentations and manages dermatology referrals**:

‘In order to document a patient’s presentation, it’s easier than going to try and find the practice camera and thinking, “Where is it? Will it have charge?”
Instead, I’m just using my phone and it’s so easy. I’ve not stopped using it since Covid. In one surgery I worked at, **they weren’t using Consultant Connect before I joined and I got them to sign up which was brilliant.**’

Alongside specialist A&G, Dr Jones also uses Consultant Connect to contact the Flow Centre when a patient requires a hospital admission.

For a locum moving between different practices, **having the relevant contact details readily available means she does not need to rely on local knowledge or search for the right number.**

‘The phone number is already pre-programmed, it goes straight through, and it’s a smooth process.’

‘It’s a click of a few buttons, the phone number is already pre-programmed, it goes straight through, and **it’s a smooth process.**

‘Otherwise, I’d be rummaging through a book full of numbers that are out of date half the time.’

Supporting timely admission for a patient with red flag symptoms

Dr Jones recently used the service when seeing a patient who had presented with three days of melaena:

‘It was a red flag. His observations were relatively stable, but he was feeling dizzy and lightheaded. I rang the Flow Centre via Consultant Connect; **all I had to do was enter his NHS number, talk to the specialist, and it aided his direct admission.**

‘I particularly value Consultant Connect as a locum because I move around a lot, and **I know I can just use that and don’t have to remember specific phone numbers.**’

Starting treatment sooner while patients wait

For patients in Powys, where access to hospital services often involves long journeys and lengthy waits for outpatient appointments, **access to consultant-led advice is helping treatment begin sooner, reducing unnecessary travel, and supporting more care to be delivered closer to home.**

For Dr Kingham, access to specialist advice means patients don’t have to wait months before treatment can begin:

‘Very often I get a response within ten minutes.’

‘I started using Telephone A&G many years ago, and now use Messaging A&G quite frequently too. Most patient queries aren’t urgent, so if I can send a message, then that’s great. **Very often I get a response within ten minutes,** but if not, within a few days.’

For patients with conditions such as hyperthyroidism, this can make a significant difference:

'We have almost no access to an endocrinologist locally, so patients who really should be under specialist care can wait many months for an appointment.'

Using Consultant Connect, we're able to start medicines whilst they're waiting and bridge that gap.'

Without specialist advice, many patients would continue attending repeat GP appointments whilst their condition remains untreated:

'If we didn't have Consultant Connect, we'd keep writing increasingly urgent referral letters, which probably wouldn't make much difference.' Patients would remain untreated, some would inevitably end up attending A&E, and others would feel they had no option but to pay privately.'

'Using Consultant Connect, we're able to start medicines whilst [patients] are waiting and bridge that gap.'

* Data from September 2025 – September 2026

