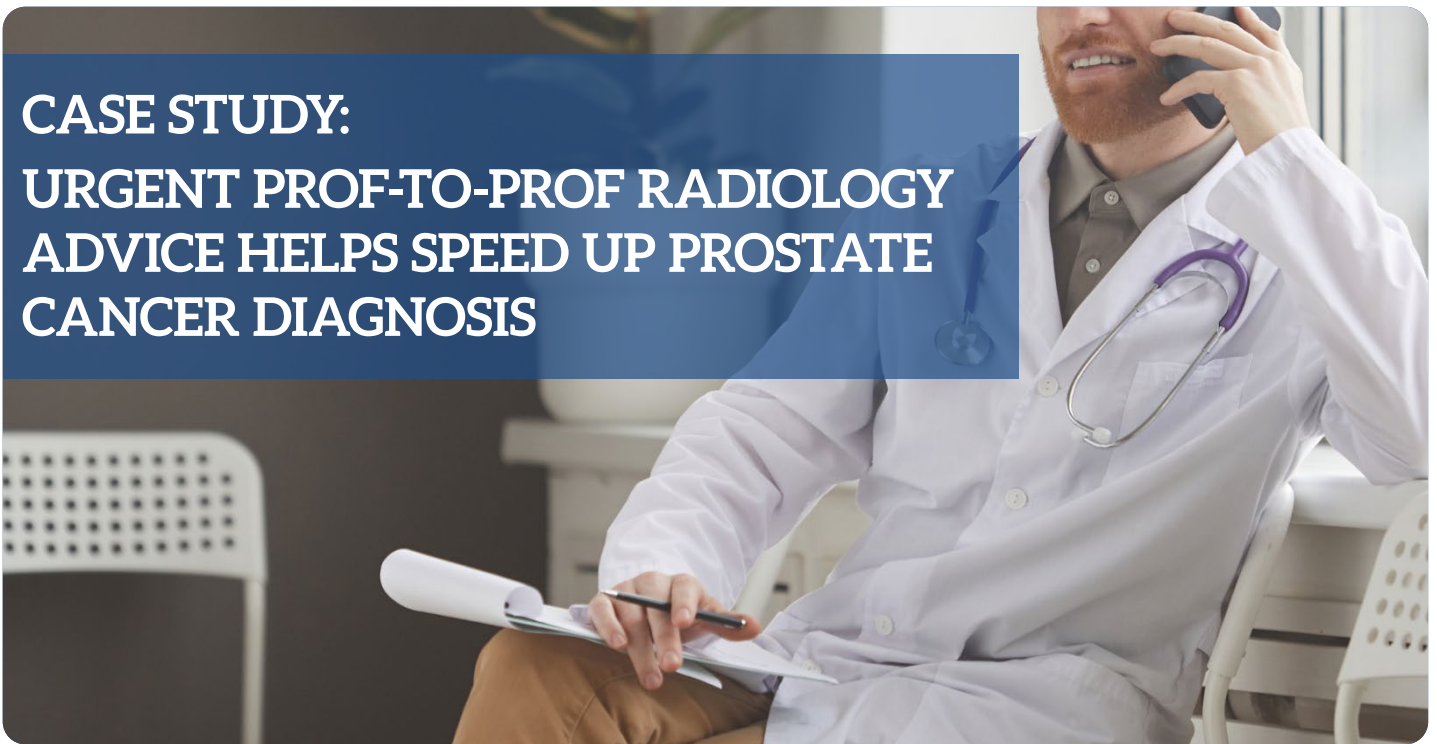





CASE STUDY: URGENT PROF-TO-PROF RADIOLOGY ADVICE HELPS SPEED UP PROSTATE CANCER DIAGNOSIS



Since June 2024, clinicians in NHS Forth Valley have had access to Telephone Professional-to-Professional (Prof-to-Prof) Advice for urgent care via Consultant Connect. Implemented to help **reduce unnecessary Emergency Department attendances**, the service also helps to **ensure timely access to advice for local healthcare professionals, enabling patients to receive the right care in the right place the first time**. Users in NHS Forth Valley access the service by calling their organisation's secure Dial-In Number from any phone, and an automated recording prompts them to select the number corresponding to the desired specialty.

We spoke with GP Dr David Herron to find out how the service benefits clinicians in the local area.

NHS Forth Valley stats since project launched*:

-  More than **1,300 calls made**
-  Calls answered **within 10 seconds**
-  **9 specialties available** for primary care

What are the advantages of using Consultant Connect for Prof-to-Prof Advice?

'I've used the service about four times in four months. I like that **using Consultant Connect involves a single phone number with built-in options**, and I have our surgery's Dial-In Number on a poster in my office for ease of access.

'Previously, I always had great difficulty locating the up-to-date phone numbers for specialty teams I contacted a handful of times a year. I often spent time searching through historic emails or asking reception for the number, and a lot of the time, the phone number had changed, so I couldn't get through. That, in turn, meant **patients were frustrated because they had to wait longer for their appointments**, which delayed our workload.

'**Having access to Consultant Connect is great because it saves me time**, purely because I know I can phone this one singular number in between seeing patients and it will be answered promptly.'

Patient example

'After sending a patient for an X-ray, the report came back suggesting possible cancer metastases and that the patient should undergo an urgent MRI scan. Booking an MRI scan – even on an urgent request – can take many weeks or months, so **I used my surgery's Consultant Connect Dial-In Number to call the radiologist and got straight through**. He reviewed the X-ray and said it was definitely cancer metastases, and the patient did not require an MRI scan. Instead, he advised I investigate the cancer's primary and then refer to that specialty.

'**The benefit was that we didn't waste any time getting an urgent MRI scan, and I got the patient back into the surgery that same day**. I took his bloods, we identified the following day that prostate cancer was the source, and I referred him urgently to urology. **There was no delay in the patient's care because I had quick and easy access to a radiologist** to say, "This doesn't sound right, can you have a second look?" and that's ultimately why we contact radiology. It's often the reports that are ambiguous or not entirely clear, where specialist guidance helps, and in this case, that worked really well.'

* Stats correct as of June 2025

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