





## CASE STUDY: HOW THE INFECTIOUS DISEASES ADVICE LINE IN GREATER GLASGOW AND CLYDE IS SPEEDING UP CLINICAL COMMUNICATION

Following the launch of the **Infectious Diseases Professional-to-Professional Advice line via Consultant Connect**, we spoke with clinicians to find out how access to this service has improved their working methods. Dr Colin Brueggemeier and Dr Marie Bubegwa, both GPs in Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board, have had access to the line since January 2024 and discuss its benefits.

### Infectious Disease stats\*:

 **208** calls made

 calls answered in **10 seconds** on average

 **75%** first-time connection rate

 **38%** of calls with outcomes results in patients avoiding referral

\*Data correct as of June 2024.

## What are the advantages of accessing Professional-to-Professional Advice via Consultant Connect?

'I've been using the Consultant Connect App since I was in training, and it's a smoother and **more user-friendly way of making direct contact than going through the hospital switchboard**. This process is easier than needing to page or bleep someone, which is very clunky and can take a long time.'

– **Dr Colin Brueggemeier**.

'I've had the app installed on my phone for a few years now, and I've not necessarily needed to use it every day, but because I know it's there to help me speak to a specialist for advice at a moment's notice, it gives me peace of mind and a safety net when seeing patients. **The infectious diseases service is helpful to contact when you think your patient probably doesn't require an admission, but you would benefit from specialist input** regarding your patient. Often the patient will need an investigation that can't be initiated in primary care, or the results are needed as soon as possible, so I feel a discussion with a specialist to discuss the best way forward is beneficial.'

– **Dr Marie Bubegwa**.

### Patient Examples

'I saw a patient who had recently travelled in an area where they may have caught an infectious disease, and I needed to know quickly whether that was the case so I could advise and treat them accordingly. The patient required a rapid blood test, which can be conducted in general practice. However, because of how the system operates, if we take the patient's blood in the morning, the sample wouldn't be collected until the early afternoon. In addition to that, the driver collecting the sample would likely also need to pick up samples from other GP practices before finally delivering the patient's blood sample at the hospital, which can add another three hours to the timeframe. So, I used the Consultant Connect App to speak with an infectious diseases specialist who told me to send the patient in, and they would conduct the investigation there and then. **It was such a quick method of communication and it's great to connect with experienced colleagues**. If I had made this request through the traditional route via switchboard, it would have been time-consuming, sometimes taking up to half an hour to eventually get through to the right person. This would have added significant patient delays. With Consultant Connect, the middleman is cut out, saving everyone a lot of time, especially already busy GP practices.'

'On another occasion, I called the Care of the Elderly (COTE) line regarding a patient for whom I wasn't sure if an admission was in their best interests. It's all about what is necessary: Do they need a diagnostic right now, or can we operate a "wait and see" approach? **The consultant was very helpful** and advised that the patient should be seen the same day in hospital for investigations and that they would take things from there.' – **Dr Marie Bubegwa.**

'A patient presented in the surgery with a fever and feeling unwell after recent travel to Southeast Asia, and I was querying a diagnosis of typhoid. I wasn't sure whether it was a condition that was managed as an outpatient or inpatient, and therefore, whether she could be a direct admission rather than going via medical assessment. I called the Infectious Diseases line via Consultant Connect, and **a specialist answered immediately and advised that she required an admission via medical assessment.** Before having access to this service, I would have needed to bleep a specialist via the hospital switchboard, which would've prevented me from carrying out other important tasks.' – **Dr Colin Brueggemeier.**

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

'I use it the most in our practice. One of my colleagues approached me about a patient case she wasn't quite sure how to proceed with, so I advised her to download the Consultant Connect App and see what a specialist thinks. I told her **it's easy and a great service – to be able to pick up the phone whenever you need advice rather than waiting for a callback.** Every time I've used the service, I've always had great advice in a quick timeframe, with really helpful clinicians answering calls.' – **Dr Marie Bubegwa.**



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