



CASE STUDY:

HOW A SINGLE CONVERSATION HELPED RESOLVE A PATIENT'S LONG-STANDING SYMPTOMS IN GREATER MANCHESTER

The rollout of Enhanced Advice & Guidance (A&G) across NHS Greater Manchester has given **local clinicians in all 10 boroughs rapid access to a wide range of elective care specialties**. Provided by out-of-area NHS consultants on the National Consultant Network (NCN), clinicians can use telephone and photo messaging to receive timely, expert advice when it matters most.

NHS Greater Manchester stats*:

17 Telephone specialties available | **20 Messaging specialties** available | Calls answered within **23 seconds** on average | **83%** first time connection rate | Messages answered within **three hours** on average | Covering more than **380 GP surgeries**

We caught up with Dr Syeda Farah Farzana, a GP Trainee in Tameside, to understand **how Consultant Connect is supporting her during her training:**

What made you want to use Consultant Connect?

‘Alongside my GP training, I’m also a clinical fellow at NICE, and one of my mentors told me about the Consultant Connect App – **especially how useful it is for newly qualified practitioners** and the impact it’s already having in Greater Manchester.’

‘As a trainee running independent clinics, traditional routes for A&G often feel fragmented. I just want an answer in that moment, and continuity of care can be difficult as a result. When contacting on-call teams, I don’t want to waste their time if it’s not urgent – and it can be challenging to speak to someone with the authority to advise. **Enhanced A&G is a much better system**. It allows conversational discussion and **helps me deal with uncertainty in a timely, relevant, and reasonable way.**’

Paediatrics: reassurance for families, confidence for clinicians

'One of the first times I used Consultant Connect was for a young paediatric patient presenting with a prominent hyperpigmented lesion around the lip. It looked classical of vitiligo, but I'd never seen this presentation in such a young patient. I was concerned it could be something impacting his immunity or a different diagnosis entirely.

'I was very aware of how sensitive uncertainty can be in paediatric care, and the anxiety it can cause families, so I wanted specialist input. **I was connected to a consultant paediatrician via Consultant Connect within 20 seconds**, whose vast knowledge helped me explore a wide range of differential diagnoses. One such cause was persistent fluoride exposure from toothpaste causing localised hyperpigmentation, which I hadn't even considered.

'The consultant didn't think further blood tests were warranted and instead gave lots of practical lifestyle advice I could relay to the family. **This was a huge reassurance for the patient's mother**, and she admitted that she hadn't originally wanted to come to the practice because she feared her concerns wouldn't be listened to.

'Now, **the patient's hyperpigmentation has significantly improved**, and it was a great result that no steroids were required.'

Endocrinology: avoiding unnecessary invasive investigations

'In another case, a young, physically active patient presented with fatigue and persistently raised creatinine and CK levels. We repeated the blood tests with the same results and no clear explanation. **I wanted advice on whether a watch-and-wait approach was sensible** or if she needed an expedited referral for further investigations.

'**My trainer and I used Consultant Connect to speak with an acute medical consultant, who reassured us the results were not in an urgent or red-flag range.** During the conversation, the consultant mentioned that lifestyle supplements or anabolic steroids were a possible cause. In a follow-up consultation, the patient confirmed supplement and steroid use and chose to stop.

'**Eight weeks later, her bloods had returned to normal parameters**, and her symptoms had resolved. **It was a seamless process.** We avoided an MRI and other invasive investigations, reassured the patient it wasn't anything sinister, and supported her to make safer lifestyle choices.'

* Stats correct as of January 2026.

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