

# Advice & Guidance provided by consultants on the National Consultant Network



## Overview

February 2025

## How it works

The National Consultant Network (NCN) comprises out-of-area NHS consultants who can answer pre-referral Advice & Guidance (A&G) calls and/or written requests for advice. The consultants can:

- **Support local consultants**, acting as backup when they can't respond to requests; and/or
- **Provide A&G for specialties that are not available locally**; and/or
- **Answer all A&G calls and/or messages from Primary Care** (e.g., GPs, paramedics etc.), leaving local consultants free to help the patients they need to see.

## Key Impact:

50 NHS Trusts/Hospitals use the NCN to support local teams with A&G:



\*For calls or messages with reported outcomes.

Data accurate from launch - February 2025.

# Clinician feedback

'I was **put through very quickly to an out-of-area consultant** and gained the information I needed to manage the patient effectively.'

Lambeth GP

'I feel it truly complements my work in the NHS, and **I feel impassioned to support my Primary Care colleagues and do the best for these patients.**'

NHS consultant gastroenterologist on the NCN

'It can otherwise be difficult to get hold of a specialist within the field required at the local hospital, particularly a consultant. I have used Consultant Connect on two occasions and **found the out-of-area consultants very knowledgeable** about the answers to my queries, and it did not take too long for someone to answer, **this is fantastic.**'

BCU GP

'A **much-needed advice service to talk through cases and get advice quickly** to help stop unnecessary referrals, which means we can take the **pressure off of secondary care services**. Dr Nambi, consultant dermatologist, has been excellent in terms of diagnosis and **thorough advice and management plans.**'

Bedford GP

'I really enjoy providing advice. I've been answering calls for three years, and I take between 15 and 16 calls a week, which takes approximately 45 minutes of my time overall, and I'm able to improve the rate of referrals. **I think Consultant Connect is the way forward; it's very neat, and it works really well.**'

NHS consultant gastroenterologist on the NCN

'It's not arduous to provide guidance, and **it makes me think practically as to what is likely or unlikely**. Many patients **avoid unnecessary Secondary Care appointments** as our advice will often resolve their issues. In a crowded NHS specialist setting, **this all helps so we can see those patients in tertiary care who really need us.**'

NHS consultant neurologist on the NCN

## NHS specialties available include:

Monday-Friday, 9am-8pm and Saturday-Sunday, 9am-5pm

1. Cardiology
2. COVID-19 Line
3. Dermatology
4. Diabetes and Endocrinology
5. Diabetic Podiatry
6. Elderly Care
7. E.N.T
8. Gastroenterology
9. General Medicine
10. Gynaecology
11. Haematology
12. Inflammatory Bowel Disease
13. Mental Health - Medication Advice
14. Menopause Advice
15. Neurology
16. Ophthalmology
17. Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
18. Paediatrics
19. Palliative Medicine
20. Renal Medicine
21. Respiratory Medicine
22. Rheumatology
23. Stroke Medicine
24. Trauma & Orthopaedics
25. Urology

*Please note: Some specialties are offered at extended hours. Contact us for more information.*

**If you are interested in joining the NCN as a provider of Telephone and/or Messaging A&G, please see our [information webpage](#) or get in touch. If your NHS specialty is not listed above, please contact us as we're always looking to bring on more services.**