



## CASE STUDY -

# Bypass Numbers: helping palliative care patients access urgent medicines without delay

As part of the Enhanced Advice & Guidance service commissioned across NHS Wales, **clinicians working in secondary care and ambulance organisations can access the Bypass Numbers feature**. Available via the IG-secure Consultant Connect App, the functionality provides pre-programmed contact numbers for local GP surgeries. This allows clinicians to **bypass the public switchboard queue and speak directly with practice staff for same-day emergency communication**, helping speed up patient care.

### In conversation with...



**Dr James Davies**

**Consultant in Palliative and Supportive Care**

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board

### Wales Bypass Numbers stats\*:



**>44,000**  
calls made



**75%**  
first time connection rate

We spoke with Dr James Davies to understand how the service supports his work and benefits patients.

Dr Davies previously worked in community palliative care and now balances ward reviews and home visits with his work in the outpatient department.

## How do Bypass Numbers support you in your role?

'Trying to get in touch with a GP – particularly when working in the community – to discuss a patient, medication changes or prescription requests can be challenging. There have been many occasions when **I've had to wait for 30 minutes to get through to reception**.

'When I was visiting patients at home, there were times I wouldn't try calling between visits, because by the time I arrived at the next patient's address, I still wouldn't have got through. **Having the Bypass Numbers is really useful because I can connect with the surgery straightaway**. It means I'm not spending a significant proportion of my day waiting on the phone trying to get hold of reception.

'I prefer speaking with GPs directly because they're often very involved with patients under the palliative care team. Unless it's something really simple – where an email might suffice – care is generally more nuanced. **Speaking with the GP via the Bypass Numbers makes patient management more efficient.** Email doesn't always allow you to convey all the necessary information as well as a conversation can.

'Usually, medication requests are part of a much bigger picture. It's less about who fulfils the prescription, and more about what that treatment means for the patient – where they are in their illness and where things may be heading. **Being able to speak with their primary care provider is incredibly useful,** and doing this as efficiently as possible improves patient care.

**'Speaking with the GP via the Bypass Numbers makes patient management more efficient.'**

'Using the public GP telephone number queue also means occupying a space intended for patients, so **Bypass Numbers frees up those lines as well.'**

## Getting urgent medication to a patient without a return trip to hospital

'I recently saw a patient with a chronic lung condition in clinic who was becoming more breathless. Initially, **I didn't think antibiotics were required because a point-of-care CRP test showed the infection marker was normal.**

'However, the patient had an X-ray after leaving clinic, and **the results suggested they would benefit from antibiotics.** The patient had already gone home, so I had a few options. I could have sent a prescription to the hospital pharmacy, which would have required the patient and their family to travel quite far back to the hospital. Alternatively, I could have posted the prescription, but realistically, it might take weeks to arrive.

'The most efficient way to get the patient their antibiotics in a timely way was to speak with their GP. **I used the Bypass Numbers via Consultant Connect and got straight through to a receptionist who took my details.** The GP called me back shortly afterwards and **arranged for an electronic prescription to be sent to the patient's local pharmacy so it could be collected straight away.'**

## Improving efficiency and patient care

'For me, **Bypass Numbers improve efficiency.** When conducting community visits, patients can deteriorate quickly, and prescriptions come from the GP, so **the Bypass Numbers are a lifeline – particularly when the request is for symptom control.**

'It can be the difference between a GP calling back during the day rather than after hours, when many pharmacies are closed. That's vital when you need urgent medicines the same day. **Ultimately, it means patient care is delivered sooner.'**

\*Stats correct as of March 2026