




## CASE STUDY:

# THE CONSULTANT CONNECT SERVICE THAT IS ENGENDERING BETTER AND QUICKER COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PUBLIC HEALTH WALES AND PRIMARY CARE

In October 2023, the first pan-Wales Telephone Advice & Guidance line provided by Public Health Wales via Consultant Connect was launched, **providing access to all NHS clinicians in Wales**. Now, more than six months on, we spoke with Darren Beynon, Lead Practitioner for Health Protection and Michael Fletcher, Senior Health Protection Nurse, who receive calls through the Health Protection line. We also spoke with Dr Nicky Davies, Primary Care Medical Director for Central Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and GP, who advocated for adding the service via Consultant Connect.

### Health Protection line stats since launch\*:

 117 calls made

 calls answered in **3 seconds** on average

 **81%** first-time connection rate

 **23%** of calls result in a **disease being notified**

\*Data correct as of June 2024.

## Why was it important that the Health Protection line was added as an available specialty to Consultant Connect for clinicians in Wales?

'I've been involved with Consultant Connect since its initial launch in 2020. I'm always looking for ways to **make GPs' access to different departments easier and more direct, and Consultant Connect does that.** Before the Health Protection line was available via Consultant Connect, a GP colleague contacted me explaining that they'd spent the afternoon unsuccessfully trying to get in touch with Public Health Wales, and asked if it would be possible to have the Health Protection line added as an option to the Consultant Connect service. So I contacted Bronwen and Chloe, our Consultant Connect Account Management team, and they liaised with Public Health Wales to bring it on board as a pan-Wales service.' – **Dr Nicky Davies.**

## What use does accessing this service via Consultant Connect provide?

'For primary care, it standardises processes, and we have a lot of locum GPs, so **having access to specialties in this way makes it easier for us to contact them.** Also, it doesn't increase the advice provider's workload; it's simply an additional avenue for direct conversations.

'It's useful because we must notify Public Health Wales of many different diseases. Contacting the specialist teams via Consultant Connect makes it quick to speak to the appropriate clinician – **I've always had very timely and useful responses.**' – **Dr Nicky Davies.**

## What happens after an infectious disease is reported to you through the Health Protection line?

'There are 31 notifiable diseases that need to be reported, ranging from mumps to measles, meningitis and various forms of food poisoning, amongst other things. Once received, **the report will be assessed, and further information may be gathered from a clinician or microbiologist to evaluate and classify the case.** More often than not, a call will be made to the patient or their next of kin. Actions that can often follow may include contact tracing, exclusion advice, and identifying high-risk contacts and those requiring antibiotics. Vaccinations are sometimes necessary, and communication with certain settings may be needed, such as schools, nurseries and care homes.' – **Darren Beynon.**

## What are the benefits of accessing Consultant Connect as an advice provider?

'We can access GP practice Bypass Numbers using the Consultant Connect App, which we've already made 61 calls via since its launch in Public Health Wales in March 2024. It enables us to **skip the queue on switchboard and speak directly to practice staff for same-day priority communications**. Accessing GP practice Bypass Numbers is not just a big time-saver in terms of service efficiencies; it is also far more effective when undertaking steps such as those mentioned above in terms of identifying additional clinical information and arranging antibiotic prescribing and vaccinations. Many of these steps can often be time-critical for public health purposes, and **delivering an improved speed is one benefit of having access to Bypass Numbers.**' – **Darren Beynon**.

'I have **used Consultant Connect daily since we've had access**, mainly to contact GP surgeries about contact tracing babies and vulnerable adults for outbreaks I've been managing in my local region. On one occasion, I called a GP using the traditional method of the public-facing telephone number and was advised I was number 25 in the queue.

Remembering we now had access to Bypass Numbers, **I used the Consultant Connect App to call the GP practice and was put through almost instantaneously**. Having this service really helped in this situation as it enabled a **faster and more efficient collaboration with the GP**, allowing us to identify contacts, arrange appropriate clinical reviews, and give public health advice. This also gave our local team more capacity to continue with high priority work rather than waiting on hold for significant periods of time.' – **Michael Fletcher**.



### For more information:

E: [hello@consultantconnect.org.uk](mailto:hello@consultantconnect.org.uk)

T: 01865 261 467

W: [consultantconnect.org.uk](http://consultantconnect.org.uk)

