



AMBULANCE

CASE STUDY -

Consultant Connect: supporting safe decision-making in the community

We spoke with Stephen Dowber, Senior Paramedic, and Non Harries, Newly Qualified Paramedic (NQP), at the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST), to find out how using Consultant Connect **supports clinical decision-making, improves patient safety, and helps patients receive the right care in the right setting.**

Wales pre-alert stats*:



In conversation with...



Stephen Dowber
Senior Paramedic

Stephen has worked for WAST for 25 years and is a Senior Paramedic, managing a team of Emergency Ambulance Practitioners (EAPs), paramedics, and NQPs.

Alongside supporting and promoting clinical excellence, his role includes regular ride-outs and office-based responsibilities, such as rostering and reporting.

Stephen explained how ambulance clinicians use Consultant Connect in day-to-day practice:

'We use Consultant Connect through the free app, which is installed on our tablets and phones. We predominantly use the service for pre-alerts to hospital, but also to speak with the patient's GP through the Bypass Numbers if we feel the patient doesn't need hospital but would benefit from additional clinical support.'

'If a patient experiences a trauma or cardiac arrest or becomes acutely unwell and they have a NEWS score of 5 and above, they need to be conveyed to hospital, and we'll use the pre-alert pathways via Consultant Connect to do that.'

'The beauty of using Consultant Connect is that **all the calls are recorded and safely stored in the cloud**, which gives us added protection should a patient's care need to be reviewed, or if there's a difference in opinion over what was communicated.

'I haven't personally ever needed to access my past calls, but I know there have been previous instances, which is reassuring.'

Improving communication between ambulance crews and primary care

Stephen also explained how the service enables ambulance clinicians to work more collaboratively with GPs and other healthcare professionals to safely support patients in the community.

'Sometimes **we'll contact the patient's GP directly, or other times use the APP Nav for a professional-to-professional conversation**. This is to sense check our reasoning and pathway options.

'Historically, we used to let the patient make contact with their GP, but we found that wasn't clinically safe because you couldn't always rely on them to make that call.

'The advantage of speaking with the patient's GP is that **they know the patient more intimately and have access to more of their clinical records** and can prescribe medications.'

In conversation with...



Non Harries

Newly Qualified Paramedic (NQP)

Non has been an NQP with WAST for over a year and **regularly uses Consultant Connect to contact the Clinical Support Desk (CSD)**, where clinical advisors review decisions to discharge patients safely at home.

She also uses the Single Integrated Clinical Assessment and Triage (SICAT) pathway, enabling ambulance clinicians to speak with WAST doctors who can arrange prescriptions for patients who do not need or want hospital admission.

'**It's a way of getting them the care they need on the same day**. Using Consultant Connect is very reassuring because you've got the other person on the end of the phone to ensure you haven't missed anything, which provides safety. The doctor is very helpful because **they might consider options or provide solutions I hadn't thought of**.'

'It's a way of getting patients the care they need on the same day.'

Non shared an example of how the service supported a patient experiencing a hypoglycaemic event during the early hours of the morning:

'I was recently called out to a patient at 3am **who had a hypoglycaemic event and was definitely considered as needing to go to hospital**, but was adamant she wouldn't for personal reasons.

'So we did everything we could at home: ensured all safety netting was in place, asked her to speak to her diabetic nurse when they came on shift, and made sure her partner was aware of what to look out for should another hypo occur. We helped her get the Libra on her arm so that her partner could scan it to check her numbers.

'We accepted that she wasn't willing to go to hospital, so at that point **it was about ensuring she was as safe as she could be in the community**.

'I gave the CSD a ring through Consultant Connect to say this is what we'd done. **They agreed and were happy with the decision**.

'It wasn't an ideal situation, but we'd put in place every safe option to leave her safely at home. So **it was really reassuring to know that I'd considered everything and there was nothing more that the CSD advisor would have done differently.**'

Non described how regularly using the service helps support urgent patient care and improves communication with hospitals before arrival:

'I think Consultant Connect is a brilliant system, **it's such a helpful service, and it's so easy to access**.

'The pre-alerts for time-critical patients are invaluable.

I pretty much use them every time I'm on shift to alert the hospital of our time of arrival.

'The pre-alerts for time-critical patients are invaluable'

'We can give them the history, presentation, medication supplied and the observations.'

Non also highlighted the benefits of secure call recordings for both clinicians and patients:

'I love that all calls are recorded. I've never needed to listen back to my calls, **but it's very reassuring that I can**, especially if I've forgotten to document something on the PCR.

'I can listen back and know that I've conveyed it verbally. **It keeps us safe and keeps the patients safe.**'

*Data accurate from May 2025 - April 2026.