

South East London Primary Care User Guide

Enhanced Advice & Guidance via Consultant Connect

This pack is designed to provide clinicians in NHS South East London with all the information needed to get the most from Consultant Connect.



E: hello@consultantconnect.org.uk
T: 01865 261467
W: consultantconnect.org.uk



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Introduction to Consultant Connect

Consultant Connect is a telemedicine provider transforming patient care through better communications. Used by over half the NHS in England, Scotland, and Wales, our services connect clinicians with specialists for rapid Advice & Guidance (A&G).

Consultant Connect's services are utilised by:



>5,000 GP practices



>10,000 specialists



42 ICBs/Health Board areas



>130 hospitals



7 ambulance services



80% of users would recommend Consultant Connect to a colleague

Supported by the [National Consultant Network \(NCN\)](#), our Enhanced A&G service allows clinicians to communicate via telephone, photo, and messaging*. All A&G activity, including phone calls, messages, and photos, is IG-secure, GDPR-compliant, and recorded for medico-legal purposes. By having rapid and direct access to specialist advice, clinicians can ensure their patients get the right care faster.

* Please note that available specialties and service features will differ by hospital and/or locality.

How to sign up and access the service

Open your smartphone's camera feature and scan the QR code below. You will be redirected to the relevant app store to download the **free Consultant Connect App**. Once you have the app, open it and follow the simple steps to create your account.



You can also search 'Consultant Connect' on the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) on your phone.

Create an account using your NHS email address or, if you already have one, log in.

Alternatively, you can [create an account](#) from your browser on your computer. Then, you can use the same credentials to download and start using the Consultant Connect App on your mobile phone. Once logged in, you will see a list of your service features and available specialties.

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The Consultant Connect App

The quickest and easiest way to access Enhanced A&G is via the Consultant Connect App, which allows you* to:

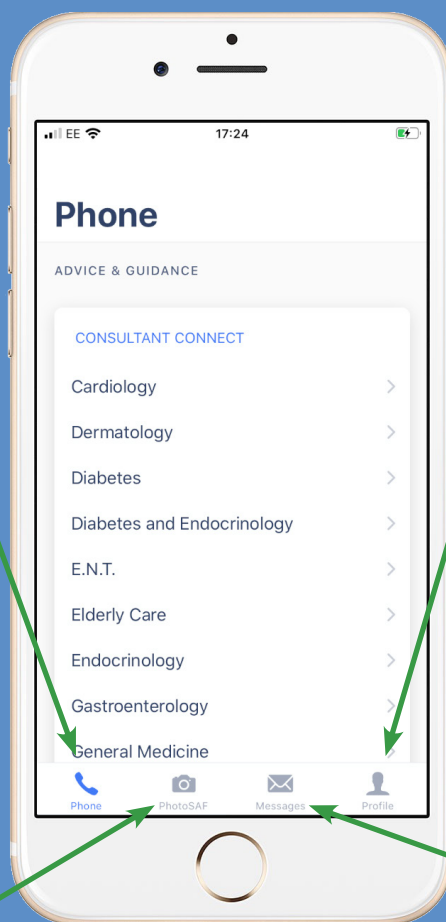
- Make phone calls to specialists at the touch of a button.
- Send secure messages, attaching images, reports, and files where required.
- Take IG-secure patient photos with a built-in 'patient consent' step.
- Earn CPD credits and download your CPD statements.
- Toggle between multiple organisations as needed.

Phone

Tap 'Phone' to make A&G calls to NHS specialists. You can also view the specialty's opening hours and where the specialists answering calls are based. With an average connection time of 33 seconds, this is a quicker alternative to calling through switchboard. Clinicians using the app or their browser for Telephone A&G can earn CPD credits (see page 15 for eligibility criteria). Calls made where a **valid** NHS number is input **and** an outcome is left are automatically integrated into the patient's record.

PhotoSAF

Use this feature to take secure clinical photos and add notes. Images are stored in an IG-secure and GDPR-compliant cloud, not on the device. The images and a PDF summary are automatically sent to your NHS email address. You can view and download saved images by logging in to [Consultant Connect in your browser](#) from any device. In areas where messaging is enabled, photos can also be sent within the app directly to specialists for A&G. Photos saved with a **valid** NHS number input are automatically integrated into the patient's record.



Profile

Select 'Profile' to view your account settings and activity. Here, you can download your CPD statements. You can also toggle between organisations if you are a locum practitioner or work across multiple sites. If you require additional workplaces on your account, please get in touch. Select 'Call us' or 'Email us' to contact the Consultant Connect main office. Please **do not** include any PID.

Messages

In areas where this feature is enabled, you can send messages to specialists with the app. With an easy-to-view message history for group or clinician-to-clinician queries, you can view all open and closed advice requests you have sent. Clinicians using the app or their browser for Messaging A&G can earn CPD credits (see page 15 for eligibility criteria). All Messaging A&G requests where a **valid** NHS number is input **and** an outcome is left are automatically integrated into the patient's record.

* Please note that available service features will differ by hospital and/or locality.

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Consultant Connect in your browser

If you cannot access the app or experience poor phone signal, [Consultant Connect in your browser](#) can be used to make calls via the Desktop Calling feature and send messages. In addition to making calls and sending messages, you can also access your Consultant Connect activity and download your call recordings. Simply log in using your credentials for the app or sign up with your NHS email address. Practice managers and administrators can also be granted access to this feature to pull reports.

Consultant Connect in your browser allows you to:

- Make calls to specialists.
- Securely store and share photos/files.
- Safely send messages and photos/files to specialists for advice.
- Access your call log and recordings (please note that **only** authorised users can access PID call recordings and download them).
- Access your photo history.
- Access your messages log.

Your organisation's unique Dial-In Number

If you're unable to use the app or your computer, you can access Telephone A&G by calling your organisation's unique Dial-In Number from any phone. Your Dial-In Number, list of available specialties and their operating hours can be found on your online Service Directory.

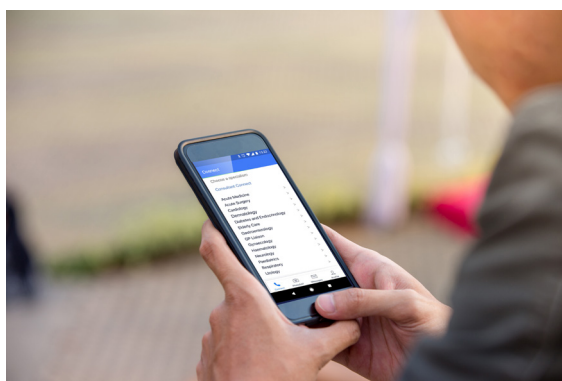


If you do not know your Dial-In Number or have the link to your online Service Directory, please contact the Consultant Connect team at hello@consultantconnect.org.uk or **01865 261467**.

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Quick service summary - access options and features

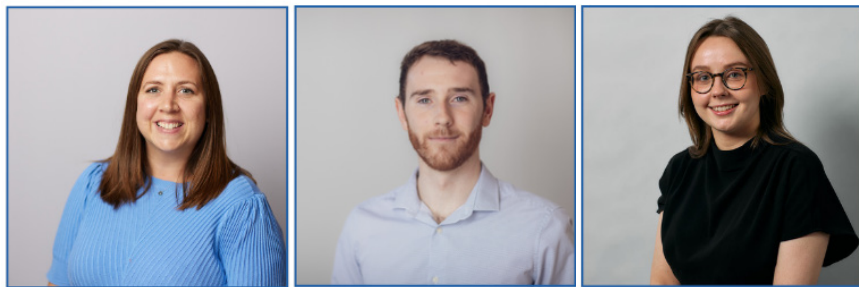
Feature	Access options		
	Consultant Connect App	Unique Dial-In Number	Consultant Connect in your browser
Make rapid A&G calls	Y	Y	Y
Take IG-secure clinical photos (photos are saved in a secure cloud not on your phone)	Y	N	N
Send secure messages and / or share photos with specialists	Y	N	Y
View specialties available and their operating hours	Y	N	Y
Earn CPD credits and download CPD statements	Y	N	Y
View your personal activity, toggle between organisations, request support, access your photos and profile settings	Y	N	Y
Store and share photos taken by patients securely	N	N	Y
Access your call recordings	N	N	Y
View your activity – calls, messages, and photos. Access PID records	N	N	Y
Convert A&G queries to e-RS referrals	N	N	Y



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Your dedicated Account Management Team

If you need any support or have additional questions, your dedicated Account Management Team are available.



Need help? The team can:

- Provide individuals or teams with bespoke demonstrations and answer any questions.
- Support with customised reports and analysis.
- Create personalised communications that can be distributed amongst local teams.

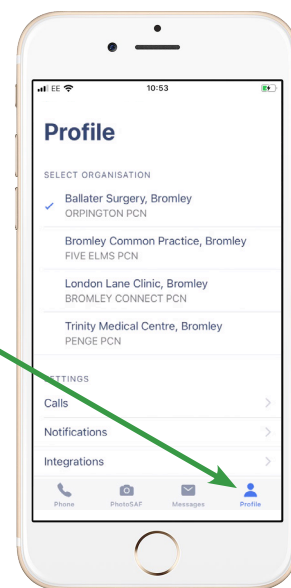
Accessing PID reports

Please note that access to patient-identifiable data (PID) is **only** available to the relevant user(s). Access is subject to role-based access controls and is via a secure web portal, including two-factor authentication and a unique long random password/username combination. Please see the [Information Governance Access Guide](#) for more information on accessing PID and the approval process.

Locum clinicians

Locum healthcare professionals who work across more than one site can access multiple organisations across participating NHS areas within Consultant Connect. Users can then toggle between surgeries under 'Profile' within the Consultant Connect App or in their browser.

To request additional access, please email hello@consultantconnect.org.uk or call **01865 261467**.



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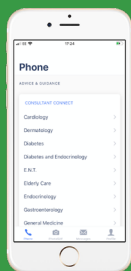
Telephone A&G

You can use the Consultant Connect App, the Desktop Calling feature on [Consultant Connect in your browser](#), or your organisation's unique Dial-In Number to seek Telephone A&G. Calls are routed to a rota of specialists and are answered within 33 seconds (UK average). Calls with a **valid** NHS number input **and** an outcome left will automatically integrate into patient records. CPD credits can be earned for Telephone A&G sought via the app or Desktop Calling feature (see page 15 for eligibility criteria).

Calling on the app

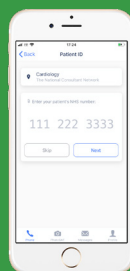
1

Open the Consultant Connect App and locate the required specialty from the list*.



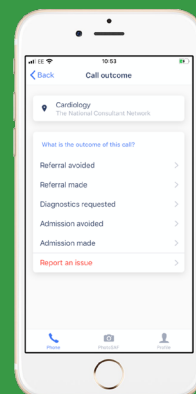
2

Enter the patient's NHS number and select next. Consultant Connect's integration with NHS systems pulls through important patient data, ensuring accurate record keeping.



3

Talk to the specialist. When the call ends provide the outcome. This enables your ICB/Health Board/Trust/Hospital to assess the impact of this initiative.



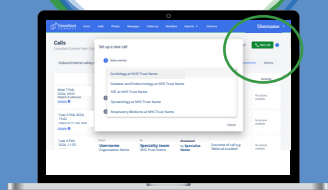
*Please note available specialties will differ by hospital and/or locality.

Calling via the Desktop Calling feature

The Desktop Calling feature enables you to place rapid A&G calls to specialists from your computer. To start using this feature, log in to [Consultant Connect in your browser](#) using your credentials for the app. If you don't have an account yet, you can create one in minutes; all you need is an NHS email address.

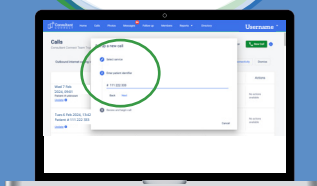
1

Click on the 'Calls' menu item, then click the 'New Call' button.



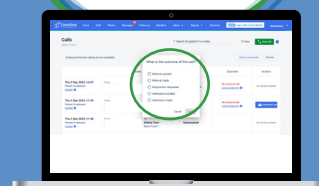
2

Select the relevant specialty team from the list, and enter the patient's NHS number.



3

Speak with the specialist. When the call ends, leave an outcome so you can qualify to earn CPD credits (see page 15 for eligibility criteria).

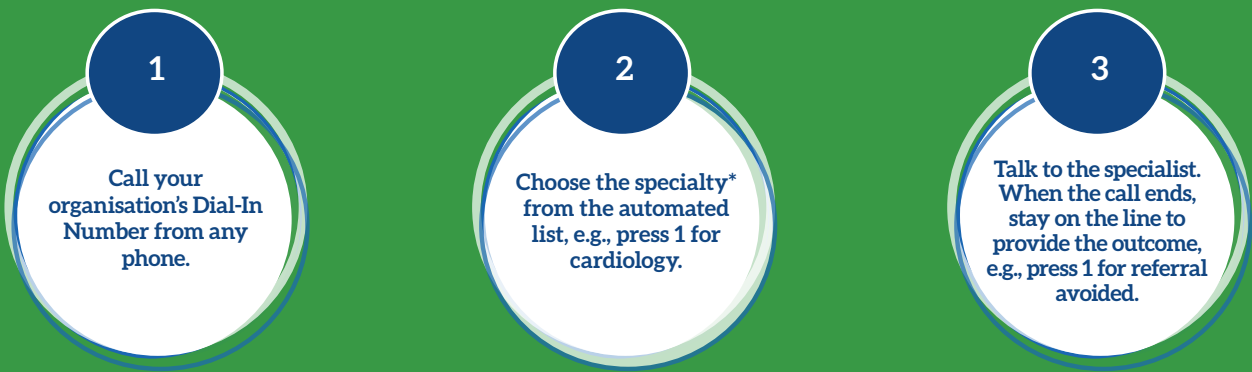


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Your organisation's unique Dial-In Number

You can also obtain Telephone A&G by calling your organisation’s unique Dial-In Number from any phone. Your Dial-In Number, list of available specialties and their operating hours can be found on your online Service Directory, which automatically updates to provide you with the latest information.

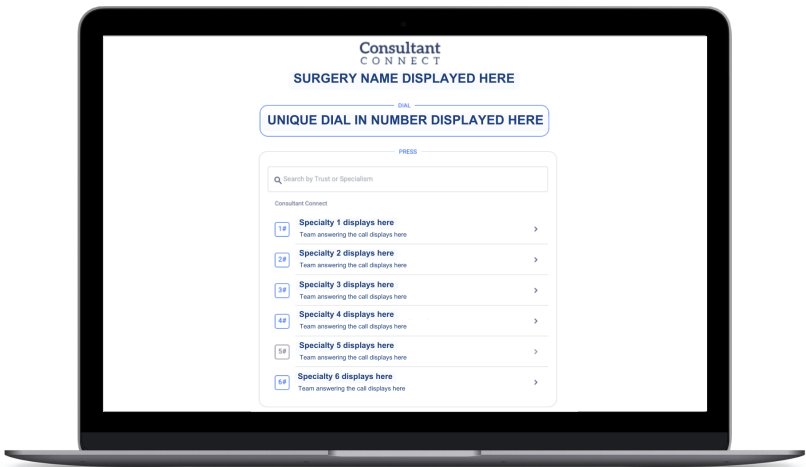
If you don’t know your organisation’s Dial-In Number, please email hello@consultantconnect.org.uk for further support.



*Please note available specialties will differ by hospital and/or locality.

Your Service Directory

[Your Service Directory](#) will show your surgery’s unique Dial-In Number, all available Telephone A&G specialties and their operating hours. We recommend you bookmark it in your browser for easy access.



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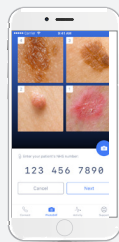
IG-secure clinical photography

You can use the PhotoSAF feature within the Consultant Connect App to take safe clinical photos. Images are saved to the IG-secure and GDPR-compliant cloud, not on the device, meaning photos won't appear on your camera roll or in the recently deleted folder. After taking images via PhotoSAF, they are automatically sent to your NHS email address, and, if a **valid** NHS number is attached, they are automatically integrated into patient records. You can also access and download past images at any time for external use by logging in to [Consultant Connect in your browser](#) with the same credentials for the app.

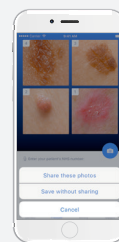
Using PhotoSAF



Log in to the Consultant Connect App and click 'PhotoSAF' at the bottom of your screen. Confirm your patient's consent and take photo(s).



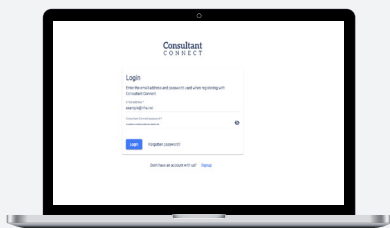
Add the patient's NHS number and type or dictate any notes. Consultant Connect's integration with NHS systems pull through important patient data, ensuring accurate record keeping.



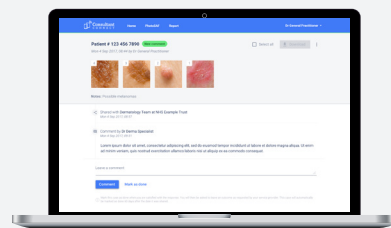
Select 'Save these photos'.



Photos and notes are automatically sent to your NHS email address and are saved in the secure cloud.



To access and download your photos for onward use, e.g., to attach to local referral systems, log in to Consultant Connect in your browser using the same email address and password you use for the app. Click on the 'Photos' tab in the menu bar.



Click the 'Download photos' button to export the images as a PDF to a secure file location on your device and attach them to local referral systems or send them to specialists as needed.

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Photo Messaging A&G

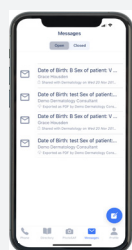
Send IG-secure messages, attaching photos and files to support requests at the touch of a button. Please note that you can only send patient photos taken 'in the moment' for A&G via the app. Patient images and videos not taken using the app can be uploaded and sent via [Consultant Connect in your browser](#) for specialist advice. If a **valid** NHS number is input **and** an outcome is left after the message has been closed, the photos/files and message history will automatically integrate with patient records.

Images up to 211MB can be uploaded without loss of resolution, compared to limits of 10MB or less on other systems, such as email. This means messaging can be used for large files, such as dermatoscopic images and OCT scans.

Messaging in the app



Open the Consultant Connect App and select 'Messages'.



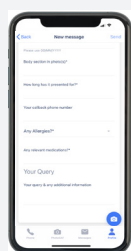
Select the blue button in the bottom right-hand corner and choose the specialty you wish to message.



Enter the patient's NHS number and click 'Next'. Consultant Connect's integration with NHS systems pulls through important patient data, ensuring accurate record keeping.



Fill in the messaging proforma and take any photos using the camera icon if needed.



Click 'Send' in the top right-hand corner to share your message with the relevant specialty team.



You will receive an email notification and, depending on your settings, an app alert when a specialist reviews and responds to your query.



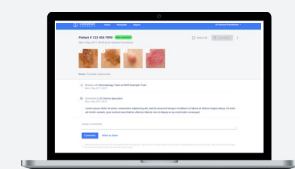
Once the query has been resolved, any of the clinicians involved in the thread can close the case and leave an outcome. The conversation is securely saved, and images and notes can be downloaded as a PDF by logging in to Consultant Connect in your browser.

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Messaging in your browser



Log in to [Consultant Connect in your browser](#) using your credentials for the app or sign up with your NHS email address. Select 'Messages' from the menu and 'New Message'.



Choose the specialty you wish to message, enter the patient's NHS number, and complete the messaging proforma. If needed, upload patient files/images, and click 'Send' to share your message with the relevant specialty team. Consultant Connect's integration with NHS systems pulls through important patient data, ensuring accurate record keeping.



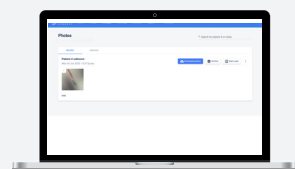
You will receive an email notification when a specialist reviews and responds to your query.



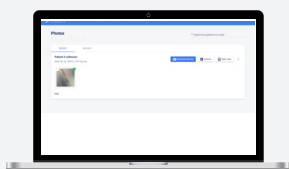
Once the query has been resolved, any of the clinicians involved in the thread can close the case and leave an outcome. The conversation is securely saved, and images and notes can be downloaded as a PDF at any time.

Deleting photos from your browser

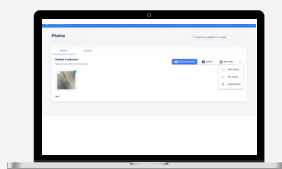
All photos taken within the Consultant Connect App are securely stored within the cloud, meaning your data is always safe, but should you need to delete images, it is easy and straightforward.



Log in to [Consultant Connect in your browser](#) using your credentials for the app, and select 'Photos' from the menu.



Hover over the thumbnail of the photo(s) you want to delete and tick the box(es).



To delete the selected photo(s), click the ellipsis dropdown menu on the far right and select 'Delete selected photos'.

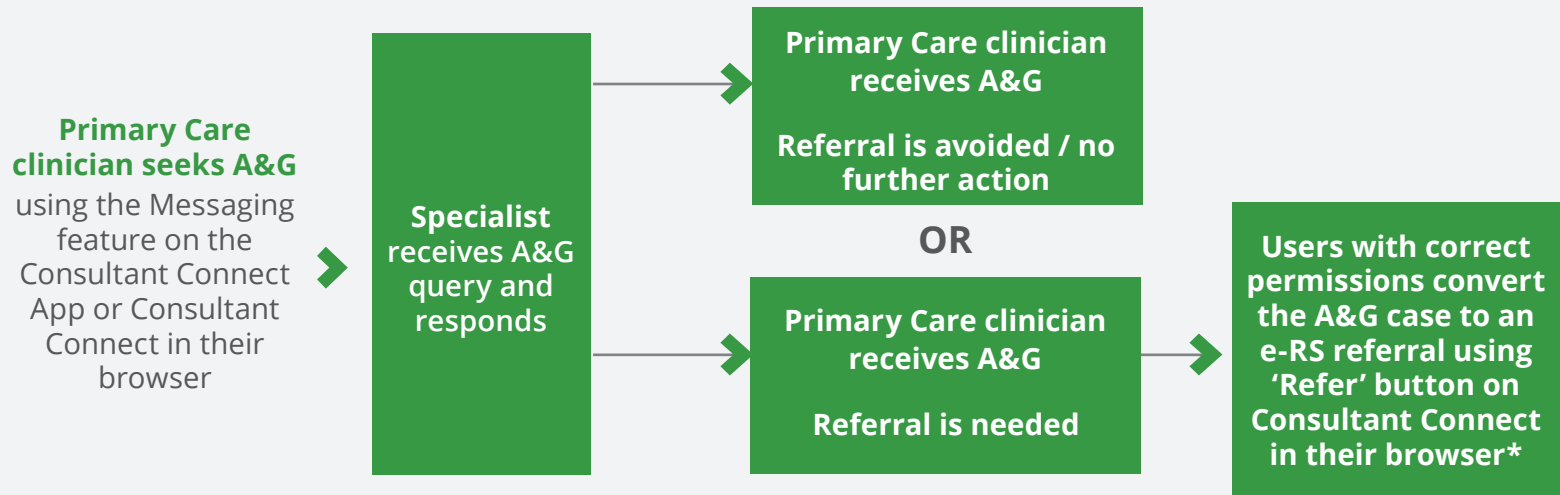


If you need support with deleting images from cases on behalf of your colleagues, please email a member of the team at hello@consultantconnect.org.uk.

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Advice and Refer

Clinicians can use the IG-secure Consultant Connect App or access [Consultant Connect in their browser](#) to send messages alongside photos and/or files directly to the specialist team for A&G. Where the specialist's advice is to refer the patient, clinicians with the correct permissions will be able to convert the A&G query to an e-RS referral directly on Consultant Connect from their browser.



* The Consultant Connect system automatically integrates with e-RS, so the user creating the referral will not need to switch platforms to convert the A&G case to an e-RS referral.

Please see the [Advice and Refer Guide](#) or watch the [short demonstration video](#) for more information.

Leaving an outcome

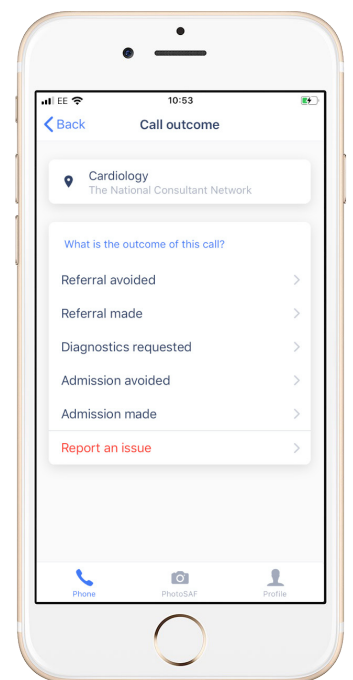
At the end of each call or after a message has been closed, the system will ask the clinician to leave an outcome, e.g., 'Referral avoided'. When using the Consultant Connect App, a menu with outcome options will appear on the screen. Select an outcome from the menu by tapping it. An outcome can also be left via [Consultant Connect in your browser](#).

Why this is important:

You can easily track the patient's pathway.

It's an important way to secure the future of the service – your commissioning organisation can see statistics showing how effective the service is, allowing them to add more specialties for you to utilise.

If an outcome is left and a valid NHS number is input, the system will auto-generate a PDF document of the interaction and send it to your practice.



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Immediate outcomes

On the Consultant Connect App

Using your Dial-In Number

Finish your call on the app and hang up.

➔

A menu with outcome options will appear on the screen.

➔

Select an outcome from the menu by tapping on it.

Wait for the specialist to hang up and then stay on the line for a few seconds.

➔

You will hear an automated menu (e.g. 'select one for referral avoided').

➔

Select an option from the automated menu and then hang up.

Retrospective outcomes

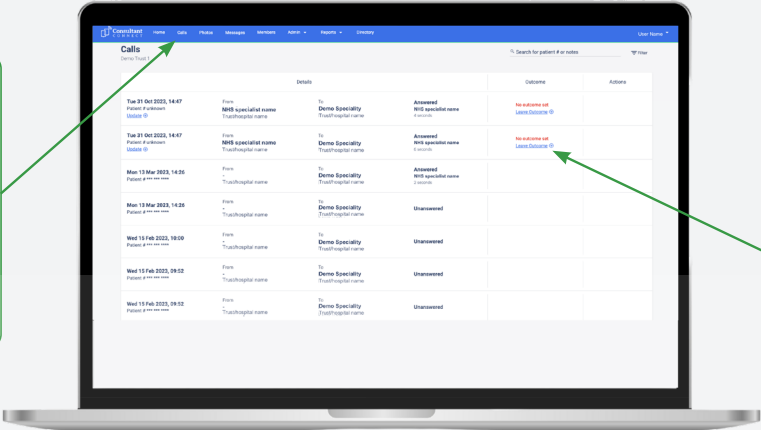
You can leave an outcome at any time via Consultant Connect in your browser. The call and message history does not expire, so you can update and add outcomes for calls when convenient. For calls made via your organisation’s Dial-In Number, where the individual placing the call is unknown, admin staff can be granted additional access to assign calls to clinicians at your surgery. To allocate additional access, please contact your Account Manager or email hello@consultantconnect.org.uk.

1

Once logged in, click on the 'Calls' tab. Here you will see a complete list of calls you have placed using the app.

2

To leave an outcome, click 'Leave Outcome' underneath the 'Outcome' column. You can also retrospectively add patient NHS numbers to call recordings.




*Please note that available outcomes may differ by healthcare area.

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14

Consultant
CONNECT

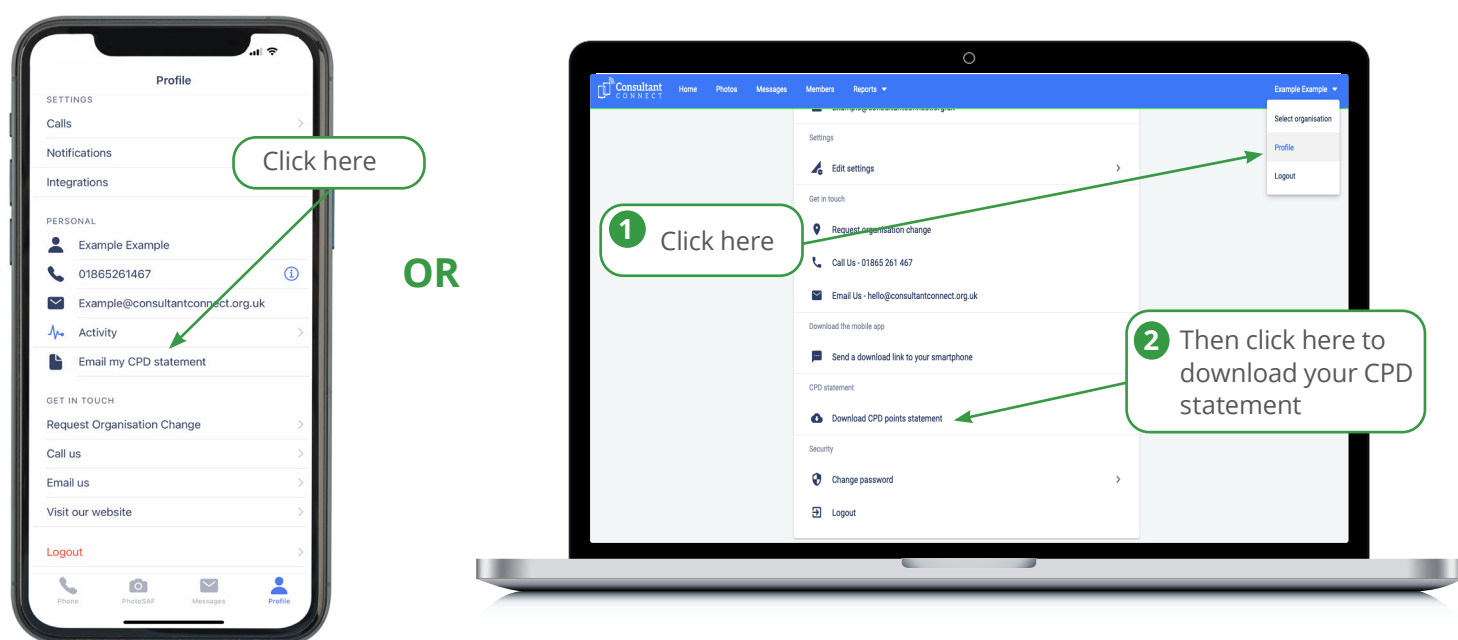
How it works

You will automatically start earning CPD credits if you use the Consultant Connect App or Consultant Connect in your browser to place A&G calls or, where this feature is enabled, send A&G messages.

Criteria

- Call duration must be over 90 seconds.
- You must leave an outcome e.g. 'Referral Avoided'.
- Your call or message must be for specialist A&G (e.g. not to confirm an admission).
- A **valid** NHS number must be input.

Download your CPD statements



Go to your 'Profile' on the Consultant Connect App and select 'Email my CPD statement'. Your statement will automatically be sent to the NHS email you use to log in.

Log in to [Consultant Connect in your browser](#) and go to your 'Profile'. Select 'Download CPD credits statement' to save the PDF to your device.

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Consultant Connect reports in your browser

When you log in from your computer, you will see the 'Home page'.

Here you can:

View your organisation's summary statistics across all specialties for the last 12 months, including calls, photos, and messages.

If you scroll down, activity and performance statistics are listed, including the number of calls placed and answered, the connection rate and speed, the call duration, and the outcomes reported.

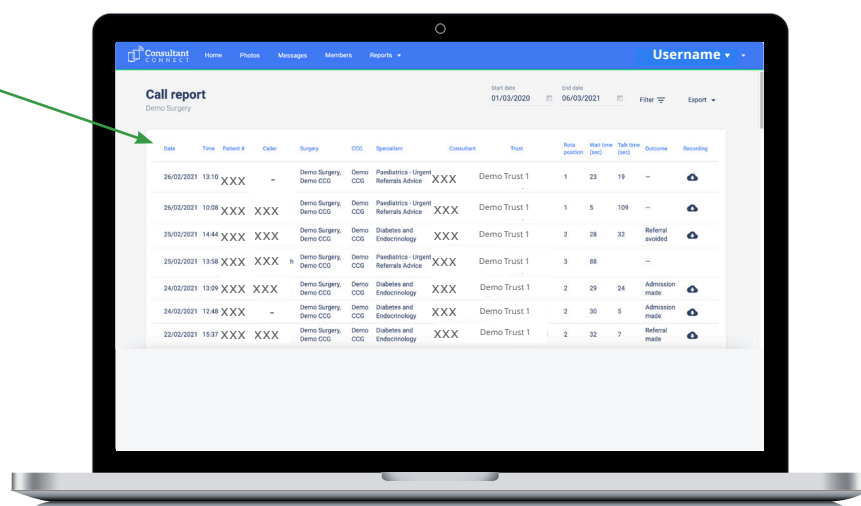
Clinicians usually prefer their practice managers and admin staff to access this so they can review and download PID reports as needed.

Access your calls report

If you click on 'Reports' and 'Calls', you can see more detailed information.

Use the call report to:

- View the date and time the call was made.
- View the name of the person who made the call.
- Change the date range for calls.
- View how many specialists were tried before a call was answered, the wait time before the call was answered, and the length of the conversation.
- Export report data to an Excel spreadsheet for analysis.
- View the reported call outcome. If the outcome shows '-', this means no outcome was left. You can easily add outcomes retrospectively (please see page 14 for more information).
- Download recordings of calls you have made. Indicated by a cloud icon, clicking this button will save an MP3 file of the call recording to your device.



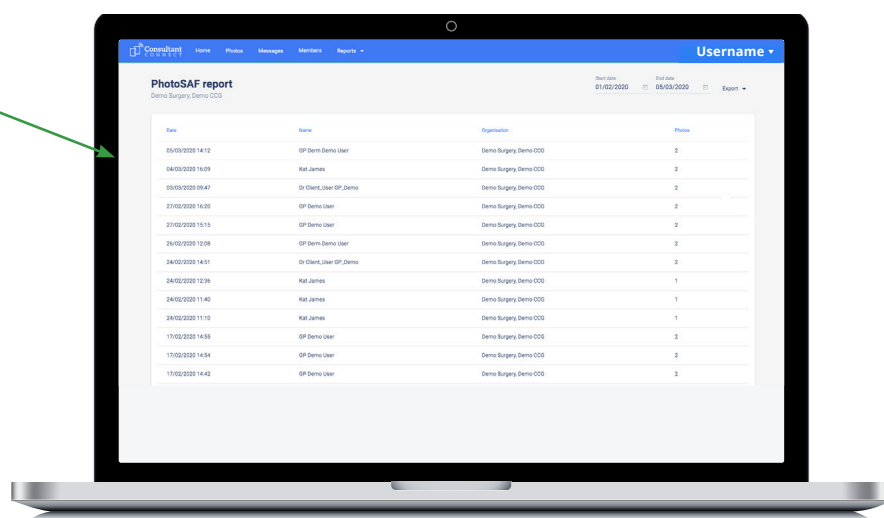
The screenshot shows the 'Call report' interface for 'Demo Surgery'. It includes a table with columns: Date, Time, Patient #, Caller, Surgery, CCS, Specialisation, Consultant, Trust, Role, Wait time (sec), Talk time (sec), Outcome, and Recording. The table contains several rows of call data. A green arrow points from the text 'View the date and time the call was made.' to the 'Date' column header.

Date	Time	Patient #	Caller	Surgery	CCS	Specialisation	Consultant	Trust	Role	Wait time (sec)	Talk time (sec)	Outcome	Recording
26/02/2021	13:10	XXX	-	Demo Surgery, Demo CCS	Demo CCS	Paediatrics - Urgent Referrals Advice	XXX	Demo Trust 1	1	23	19	-	Download
26/02/2021	10:08	XXX	XXX	Demo Surgery, Demo CCS	Demo CCS	Paediatrics - Urgent Referrals Advice	XXX	Demo Trust 1	1	5	109	-	Download
25/02/2021	14:44	XXX	XXX	Demo Surgery, Demo CCS	Demo CCS	Diabetes and Endocrinology	XXX	Demo Trust 1	2	28	32	Referral avoided	Download
25/02/2021	13:58	XXX	XXX	Demo Surgery, Demo CCS	Demo CCS	Paediatrics - Urgent Referrals Advice	XXX	Demo Trust 1	3	88	-	-	Download
24/02/2021	13:09	XXX	XXX	Demo Surgery, Demo CCS	Demo CCS	Diabetes and Endocrinology	XXX	Demo Trust 1	2	29	24	Admission made	Download
24/02/2021	12:48	XXX	-	Demo Surgery, Demo CCS	Demo CCS	Diabetes and Endocrinology	XXX	Demo Trust 1	2	30	5	Admission made	Download
22/02/2021	15:37	XXX	XXX	Demo Surgery, Demo CCS	Demo CCS	Diabetes and Endocrinology	XXX	Demo Trust 1	2	32	7	Referral made	Download

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Access your photos log

Click on 'Reports' and then 'Photos'. Here, you will see all the photos you have taken via the app or uploaded in your browser and saved. Select the download button next to the photo to download each image to a secure file location on your device.

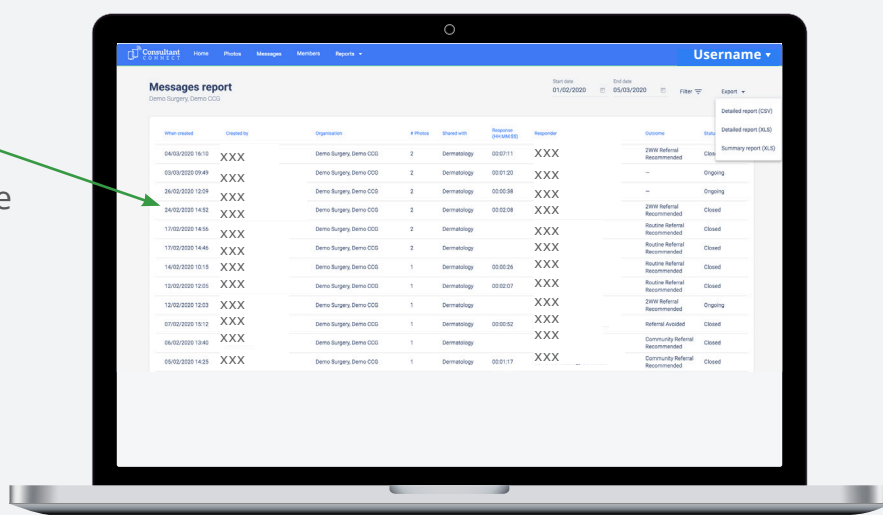


Access your messages log

If you click 'Report' and 'Messages', you will see all messages you sent via the app or in your browser. Select the download button next to the messages to download a PDF to your device.

Use the messages report to:

- View the date and time the message was initiated.
- Change the date range for message reports.
- View the date for when the first message was sent, who sent it, and where they work.
- View how many photos were included in the message(s), if applicable, and which specialty team the message was shared with.
- View the reported outcome for closed cases. If the outcome shows '-', this means no outcome was left. The status indicates whether a case has been closed or is ongoing.



Please note that **only** authorised users can see PID reports for Consultant Connect activity they have not been involved in. Additional access is subject to role-based access controls and is via a secure web portal, including two-factor authentication and a unique long random password/username combination. Please see the [Information Governance Access Guide](#) for more information on accessing PID and the approval process.

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Your feedback

Our 2025 feedback survey found that **over 80%** of primary care clinicians in England would recommend Consultant Connect to a colleague. Here is some of your feedback:

“

'Really helpful to be able to access consultant advice at short notice. I use it most with dermatology to send pictures. **It allows me to learn as well as reduce unnecessary referrals.** At times I have felt a 2ww referral was probably not justified but **getting rapid advice from dermatology via Consultant Connect has helped me to double check this with an expert.**

It can be useful to **actually speak to a clinician rather than sending an A+G written request** which sometimes receives a one line response from a clinician who it feels hasn't really read and digested the information sent.'

- Primary Care clinician in South East London

”

“

'**The photoSAF function is fantastic**, you get quick practical advice from a local consultant.'

- Primary Care clinician in South East London

”

“

'**Quick access to consultant advice regarding clinical question** to either support decision to refer (and to which speciality) or to **support clinical management in Primary Care.**

- Primary Care clinician in South East London

”

“

'I have used this on several occasions and **the consultants are just brilliant**, especially gynaecologist. Excellent service and it saves referrals and also patients. **It helps us to sort out patients issues immediately** whilst the patient is in the consultation and **patients are very pleased with our service.**

- Primary Care clinician in South East London

”

“

'Easy to use and I almost always get to speak to someone. **I think the dermatology photo referral is genius** and has significantly reduced my referral rate.'

- Primary Care clinician in South East London

”

“

'**Extremely helpful to be able to discuss and include context** rather than just ask questions about a clinical issue. My experience is that consultants understand the context of GP.'

- Primary Care clinician in South East London

”

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FAQs and case studies



Read the [Primary Care FAQs](#)



Take a look at our [case studies](#)

If you require support with your Consultant Connect service, please email hello@consultantconnect.org.uk or call **01865 261467**



Download the app to get started

Open your smartphone's camera feature and scan the QR code. You will be redirected to the relevant app store to download the free Consultant Connect App.

You can also search 'Consultant Connect' on the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#) on your phone.

