

South East London Secondary 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.



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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 in the right place the first time.

* 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.

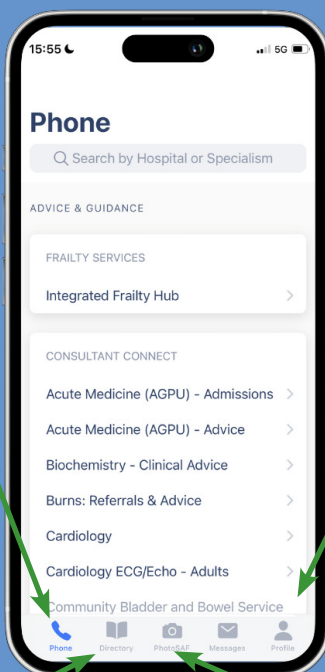
The Consultant Connect App

You can use the free Consultant Connect App, regardless of whether you answer A&G queries or not. The app allows you to:

- Make phone **calls to specialist colleagues** at the touch of a button.
- Take **IG-secure patient photos** with a built-in 'patient consent' step.
- Utilise **pre-programmed Bypass Numbers**, allowing you to skip the queue on switchboard and speak directly to staff at local GP practices.
- 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 the calls are based. With an average connection time of **33 seconds**, this is a quicker alternative to calling through switchboard. The app is your pre-programmed phone directory, and all calls are recorded for medico-legal purposes.



Profile

Select 'Profile' to view your account settings. You can also see your recent app activity, including logs of calls and messages for individual or department analysis. 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.

Directory

Click 'Directory' to call GP practices using Bypass Numbers. You can locate practices via the search bar instead of scrolling through the directory. Easily distinguishable, Bypass Numbers are clearly labelled, allowing you to skip the queue on switchboard. If a Bypass Number is not available, the reception number will be displayed.

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 colleagues for A&G.

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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. Consultant Connect in your browser can also be utilised for data collection purposes; you can access all your Consultant Connect activity (calls and photos) and download call recordings. Simply log in using your credentials for the app or sign up with your NHS email address. Service managers and admin teams can also be granted access to this feature so they can pull reports.

Consultant Connect in your browser allows you to:

- [Make calls to specialists.](#)
- [Securely store and share photos/files.](#)
- [Access your call log and recordings](#) (please note that **only** authorised users can access PID call recordings and download them).
- [Access your photo log.](#)
- Update the specialist call answering rota.

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**.

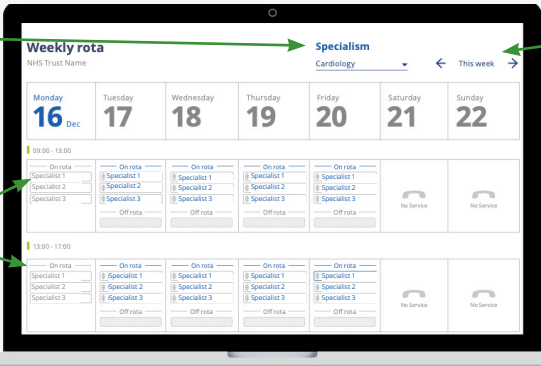
Specialist rota overview

Specialist rotas can be edited per session, day, and week. This overview is designed to show you how easy it is to view and edit the rotas you are on. Other staff, such as medical secretaries, personal assistants, or service managers, can be given access to edit the rotas on your behalf. If you require access to rota management, please email your Account Manager or the Consultant Connect team at hello@consultantconnect.org.uk.

View a dropdown of all specialist teams answering A&G at your organisation.

View the names of the specialists on and off the rota for each session for the week and specialty selected.

Specialists can expect to receive calls only on the sessions when they are on the rota.



See previous/upcoming rotas for the specialty team selected.

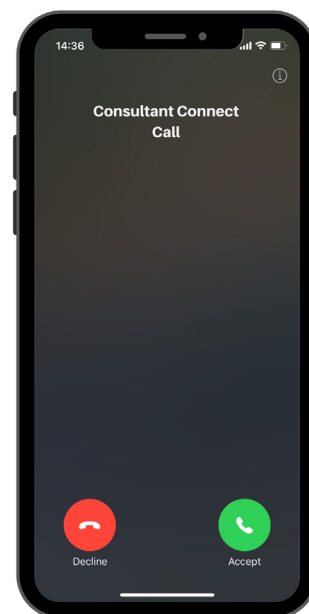
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Responding to A&G calls

All calls via Consultant Connect will arrive from a single inbound number: **01865 922021**, meaning personal numbers are never disclosed to other clinicians. **We recommend that you add this number to your contacts as 'Consultant Connect call'.**

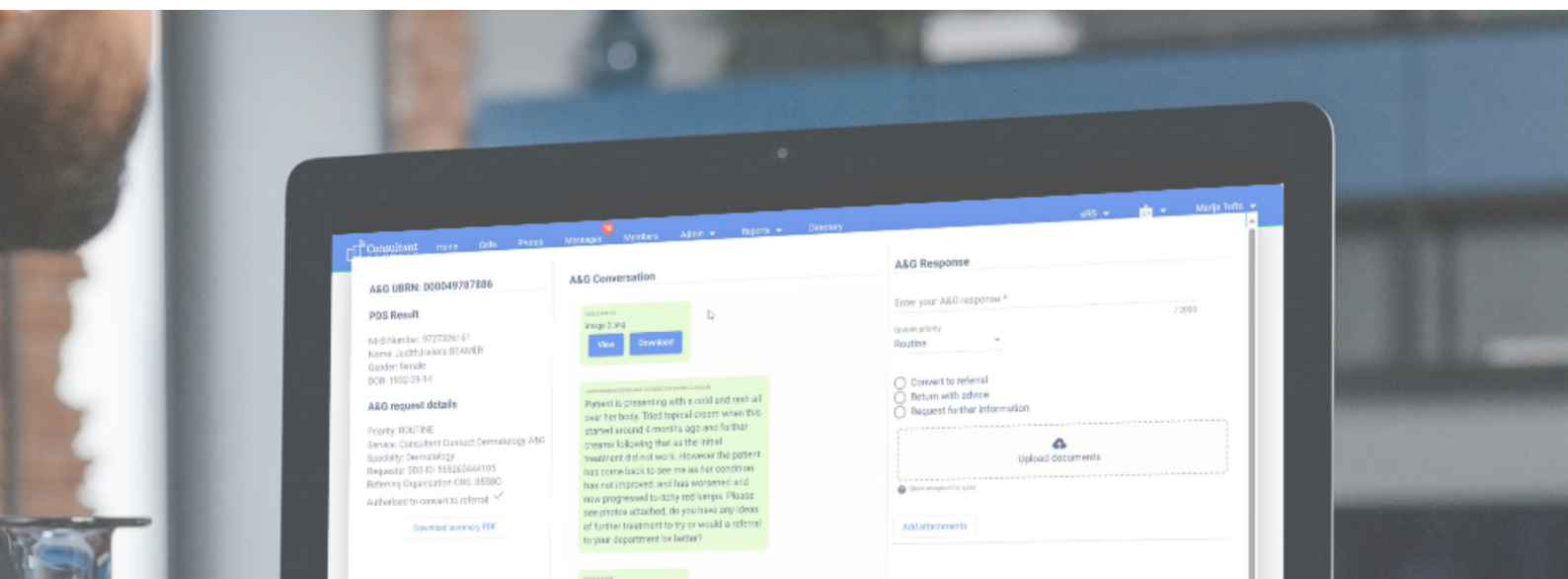
When answering a call via Consultant Connect, an automated message will prompt you to press or say '1' to speak to the clinician. If you are unavailable when a clinician calls, the system will automatically connect to the next person on the rota rather than sending the caller to voicemail.

The clinician seeking advice remains responsible for deciding what treatment is to be provided following the receipt of advice. They decide whether a referral or admission is appropriate or not. All calls are recorded for medico-legal purposes and can be accessed by you or your clinical lead as needed.



Making calls

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).

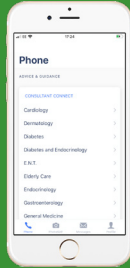


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Calling on the app

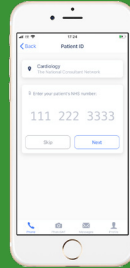
1

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



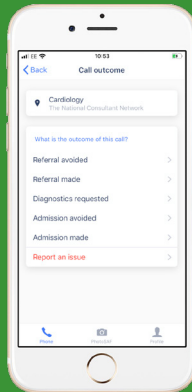
2

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 commissioning organisation to assess the impact of this initiative.



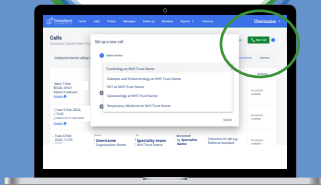
*Please note available specialties will differ by hospital and/or locality.

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.

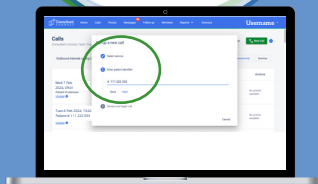
1

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



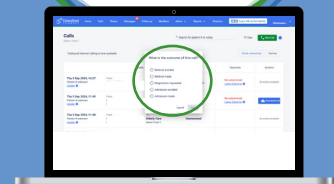
2

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.

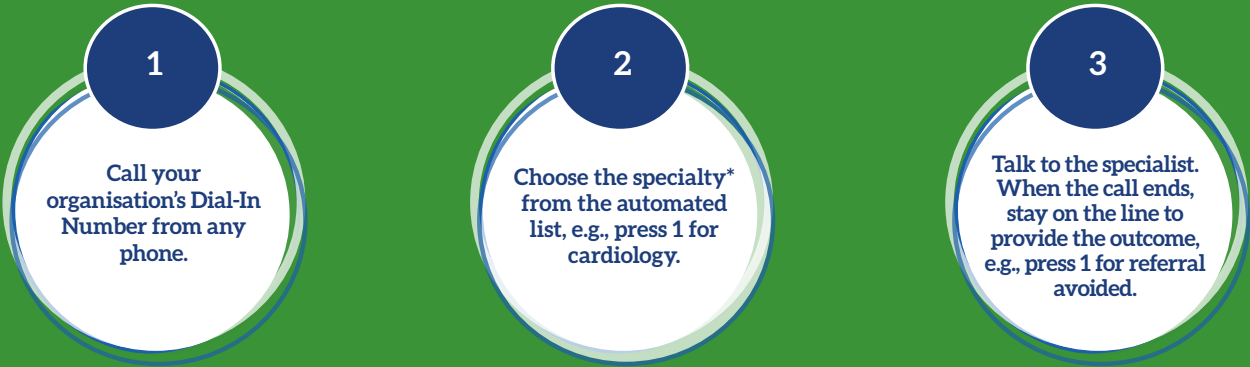


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Calling your Dial-In Number

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.

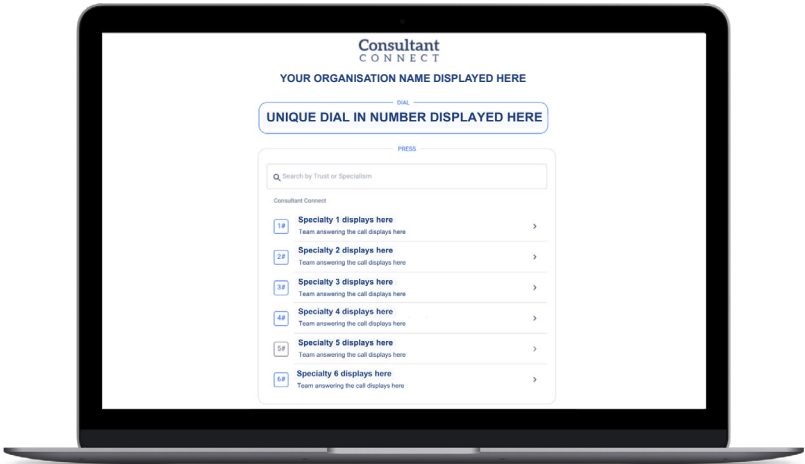
If you don’t know your organisation’s Dial-In Number, please email hello@consultantconnect.org.uk for further support.



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

Your Service Directory

[Your Service Directory](#) will show your organisation’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.

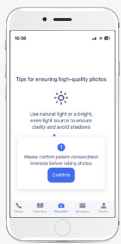


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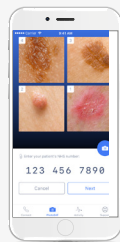
IG-secure clinical photography

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 you can access and download them via [Consultant Connect in your browser](#) to add to the patient's record or share with other specialty teams.

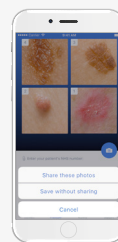
Using PhotoSAF



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).



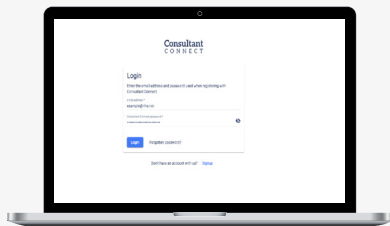
Add the patient's NHS number and type or dictate any notes. Consultant Connect's integration with NHS systems pull through important patient data, ensuring accurate record keeping.



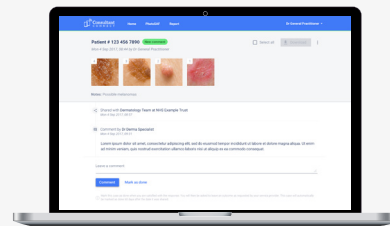
Select 'Save these photos'.



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, log in to Consultant Connect in your browser using the same credentials 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.

 [Watch this short video on how to use PhotoSAF for more information.](#)



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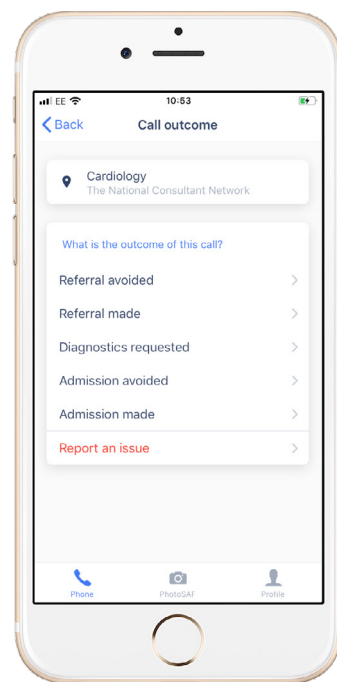
Leaving an outcome

At the end of each call, the system will ask the clinician to leave an outcome, e.g., 'Referral avoided'. The advice seeker is always the first person to be asked to leave an outcome; however, if they do not do so, the responder is then prompted to provide an outcome.

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 hospital/trust can see statistics showing how effective the service is. This allows them to add more specialties for you to utilise.

Following receipt of A&G, the advice seeker is prompted to leave an outcome for the interaction. 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](#).

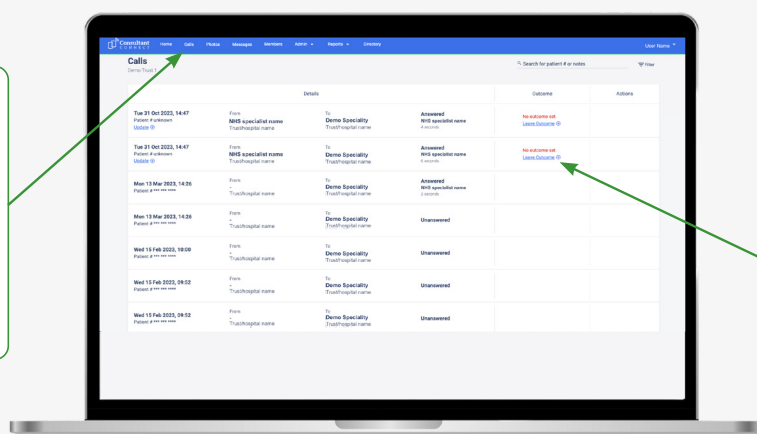


Retrospective outcomes

You can leave an outcome via [Consultant Connect in your browser](#) after answering a Telephone A&G call.

The call history does not expire so you can update and add outcomes for your calls at any time.

- 1 Once logged in, click on the 'Calls' tab. Here you will see a complete list of calls you have answered using the app or 'Desktop Calling' feature.



- 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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Bypass Numbers

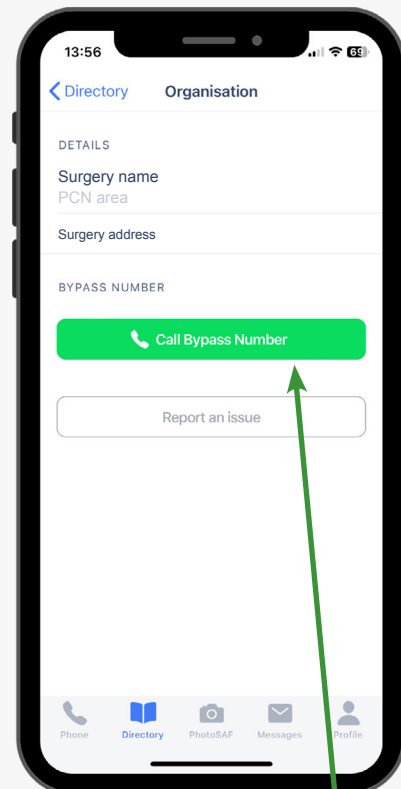
Accessed via the Consultant Connect App, the pre-programmed Bypass Numbers feature allows you to skip the queue on switchboard and speak directly to staff at local GP practices. If a Bypass Number is not available, the reception number will be displayed and clearly labelled.

Open the Consultant Connect App and [log in](#).



Tap the Directory icon:

Here you will see an alphabetised list of local GP practices. Locate the practice you need to contact via the search bar or by scrolling through the directory.



Place a call:

Once you have selected a practice and are ready to place your call, click 'Call Bypass Number'. If the Bypass Number is unavailable, the reception number will be displayed with the option to 'Call reception number'.

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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 and photos.

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 service managers and admin staff to access this so they can review and download PID reports as needed.

Access your calls report

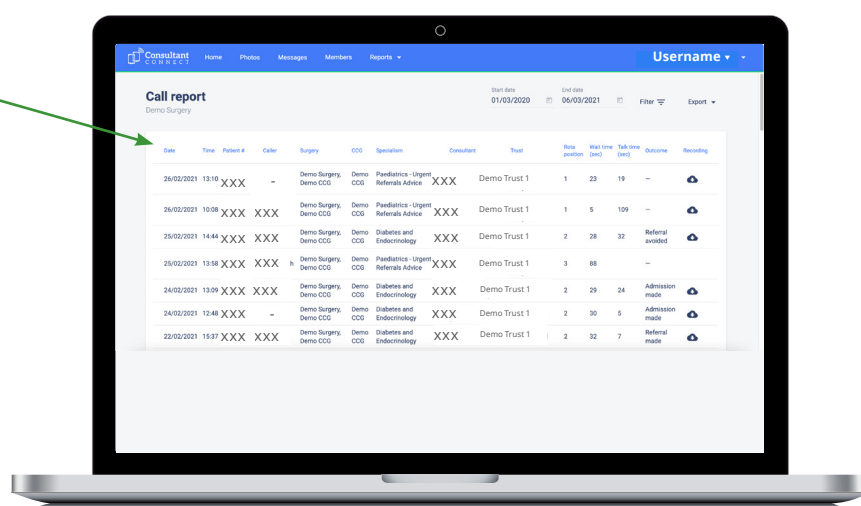
If you click on 'Reports' and 'Calls', you can see more detailed information.

Use the call report to:

- View the date and time the call was made.

View the name of the person/organisation who made the call.

- Change the date range for call reports.
- 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 neither clinician left an outcome. You can easily add outcomes retrospectively (please see [page 10](#) for more information).
- Download recordings of calls you have made or answered. Indicated by a cloud icon, clicking this button will save an MP3 file of the call recording your device.

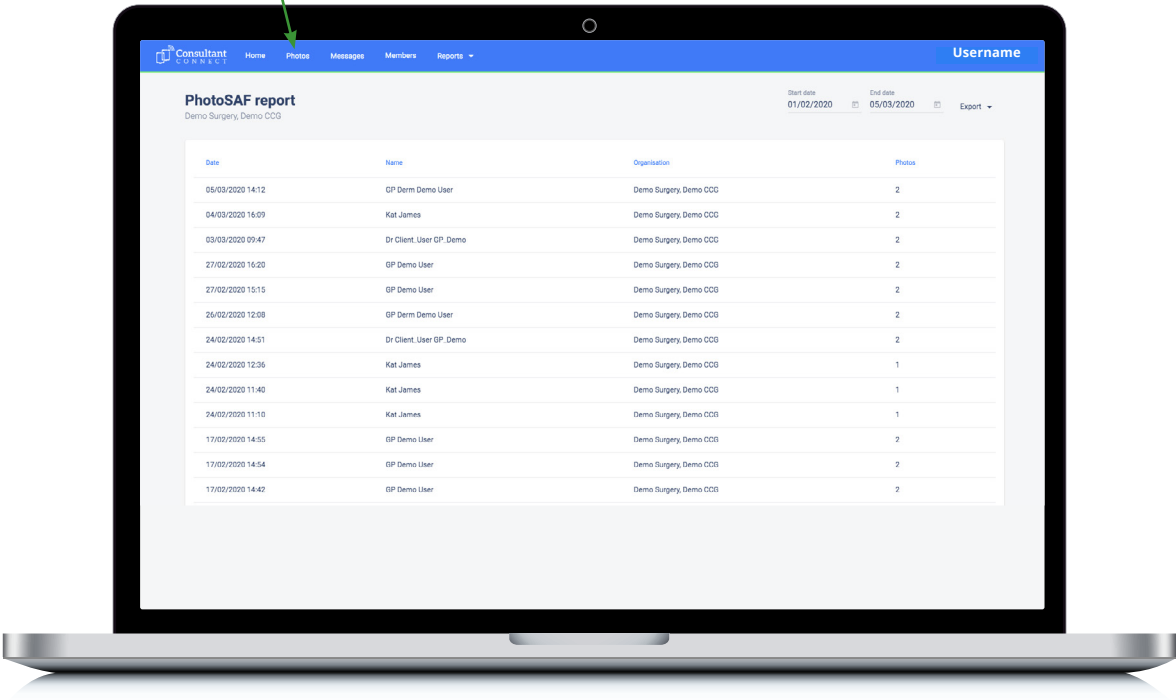


Date	Time	Patient #	Caller	Surgeon	CCG	Specialist	Consultant	Trust	No. patients	Wait time (sec)	Talk time (sec)	Outcome	Recording
26/02/2021	13:10	XXX	-	Demo Surgery, Demo CCG	Demo CCG	Paediatrics - Urgent Referrals Advice	XXX	Demo Trust 1	1	23	19	-	Download
26/02/2021	10:08	XXX	XXX	Demo Surgery, Demo CCG	Demo CCG	Paediatrics - Urgent Referrals Advice	XXX	Demo Trust 1	1	5	109	-	Download
25/03/2021	14:44	XXX	XXX	Demo Surgery, Demo CCG	Demo CCG	Diabetes and Endocrinology	XXX	Demo Trust 1	2	28	32	Referral avoided	Download
25/02/2021	13:58	XXX	XXX	Demo Surgery, Demo CCG	Demo CCG	Paediatrics - Urgent Referrals Advice	XXX	Demo Trust 1	3	88	-	-	Download
24/02/2021	13:09	XXX	XXX	Demo Surgery, Demo CCG	Demo CCG	Diabetes and Endocrinology	XXX	Demo Trust 1	2	29	24	Admission made	Download
24/02/2021	12:48	XXX	-	Demo Surgery, Demo CCG	Demo CCG	Diabetes and Endocrinology	XXX	Demo Trust 1	2	30	5	Admission made	Download
22/02/2021	15:37	XXX	XXX	Demo Surgery, Demo CCG	Demo CCG	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.



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 **80% of users would recommend Consultant Connect** to a colleague. Here is some of your feedback:

“

'Consultant Connect makes things easier! Approximately **70% of calls answered in our organisation resulted in a referral being avoided**, which saves the NHS and its employees time and money. Most importantly, Consultant Connect helps patients access the best care and will have a hugely significant positive impact on their health.'

- Nurse in South East London

”

“

'The adult ADHD specialists I have contacted on the past two occasions have **answered promptly and given excellent comprehensive advice and guidance** - this also included further follow-up and assistance via email. Brilliant.'

- Secondary care clinician in South East London

”

“

'**Gives excellent advice within a short time** and also make the GP to be aware of any recent changes in practice. [Consultant Connect] helps reduce referrals to secondary care.'

- Secondary care clinician in South East London

”

“

'I've mainly used Consultant Connect for dermatology. **It's an excellent service with a fast turnaround**. It enables us to provide our patients with the best care possible and avoids needing to send them to hospital.'

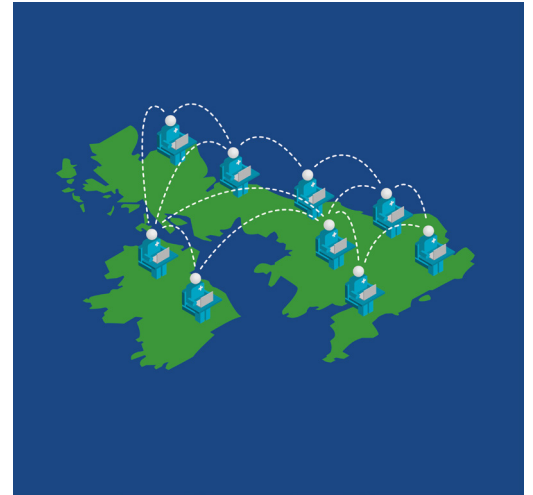
- Resident doctor in South East London

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Referral Triage and Validation

Our clinically-led Referral Triage and Validation service supports Trusts needing additional temporary capacity for referrals. The service uses the clinical expertise of NHS consultants across all main elective care specialties from our National Consultant Network (NCN). Working remotely as 'virtual locums', they follow local pathways and protocols, and, under the leadership of the local clinical leads, support with triaging and validating waiting list backlogs in bulk and/or new referrals as they come in.



Key benefits

- Manages high volumes quickly
- Returns referrals with a management plan to Primary Care where appropriate
- Identifies important upgrades as well as downgrades
- Directs referrals to the right service the first time
- Initiates diagnostics where needed
- Follows local pathways
- Communicates all results via e-RS
- Charged on a per-referral basis
- 100% outcome reporting
- Validates follow-up lists to ensure patients are seen/ discharged in the most appropriate way



[Find out more and see the impact of the service.](#)



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FAQs and case studies



[Read the Secondary 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

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