



Advice and guidance: National Elective Care Recovery and Transformation Programme's high impact intervention

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Advice and guidance (A&G) services allow a clinician (often in primary care, but not exclusively) to seek advice from another (usually a specialist) before or instead of referral. This enables a patient's care to be managed in the most appropriate setting with the necessary specialist advice.

A&G provides a secure and rapid digital communication channel between two clinicians: the 'requesting' clinician and the provider of the service, also known as the 'responding' clinician.

A&G is defined as non-face-to-face activity delivered by consultant-led services, which can be:

- synchronous (eg a telephone call)
- asynchronous – enabled electronically through:
 - the [NHS e-Referral Service \(e-RS\)](#)
 - other IT platforms or dedicated email addresses (with agreement from all stakeholders).

Role of A&G services alongside COVID-19 activity

During the NHS response to COVID-19, A&G services are central to supporting the management of patients in primary care, as well as the restoration and recovery of elective services.

Changes to current models of A&G delivery may be implemented at organisational or system level, to maximise opportunity in the management of patients outside secondary care.

Benefits of advice and guidance

<p>Patients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabled to make more informed decisions about specialist care • Improved access to services • Reduced waiting times and a reduced risk of unnecessary hospital appointments • Improved patient experience • Reduced patient journeys, transport costs and pressure on hospital car parks (including a positive impact on the environment) 	<p>Requesting clinicians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid access to specialist advice for individual patients • Reduced unnecessary referrals into secondary care • Reduced risk of redirected or rejected, unnecessary referrals • Improved knowledge and expertise to support future management of patients • Increased opportunities to inform continued learning and professional development
<p>Service provider organisations, consultants and clinicians</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More cost-effective use of clinician time and expertise • Increased flexibility of service delivery • Reduced demand in high volume specialities with long waiting times • Improved integration and relationships between primary and secondary care 	<p>Commissioners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater confidence that referrals into secondary care are appropriate • Reduced cost of outpatient attendances • Patients managed outside the hospital setting for longer • Increased co-ordination between GPs and hospitals

Resources and further information

The [National Elective Care Transformation Programme's Community of Practice](#) hosts tools and resources to support local health systems implement A&G services. To request access to this, please email ECDC-manager@future.nhs.uk.

Support for e-RS A&G can be found on the [A&G toolkit for the NHS e-Referral Service \(e-RS\)](#), including case studies and national e-RS A&G request figures.

For further information on A&G please contact england.AdviceAndGuidance@nhs.net.