

Advice and Guidance (A&G)

What is Advice and Guidance (A&G)?

A&G allows a clinician (usually a GP) to seek advice from hospital specialists. They will then work together to decide if the patient needs to be referred or if their care can continue with the GP.

This is usually carried out via an electronic referral service and enables a two-way dialogue between clinicians.

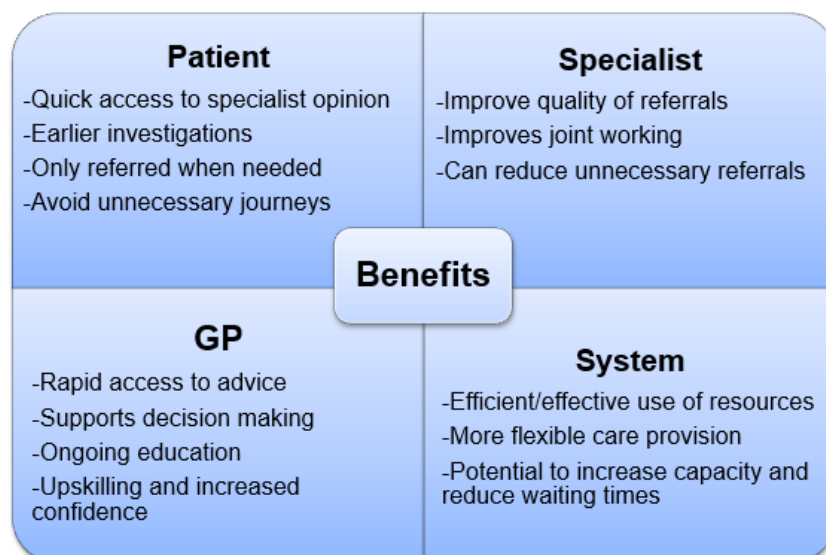
Here are some examples where A&G could be used:

- Asking a specialist for their advice on a treatment plan
- Asking for clarification regarding test results
- Seeking advice on the appropriateness of a referral
- Identifying the most clinically appropriate service to refer a patient into

When a GP requests A&G they should get a response within a few days. The target is around 2-4 days. The GP can then decide what to do next and inform the patient of the outcome.

Why use Advice and Guidance (A&G)?

Through better communication, A&G provides GPs with access to specialist advice on investigations, interventions, and potential referrals. This can mean patients are managed in the right place, as soon as possible, and can reduce unnecessary referrals into the hospital. The image below summarises some of the benefits:



This video further describes A&G:



[NHS e-Referral Service \(e-RS\) – the benefits of using the Advice and Guidance function | NHS Digital - YouTube](#)

In Sussex:

We have had A&G in place for a couple of years but it is used variably across Sussex. It is an option in many of the main specialties but it is not always used.

There are several reasons for this:

- GPs may not be aware of it
- Specialists might not have the time to respond
- It might not be available in that specialty yet
- GPs may be unsure of A&G suitability and make a referral instead

Our plans:

We are aware of other areas in the country that have increased A&G and demonstrated the benefit.

We would therefore like to increase the use of A&G in areas where it would most benefit patients, for example services with long wait times with conditions suited to A&G. This will need to be done with additional support in place for GPs. We also need to ensure we have the right methods for communicating the outcomes to patients.

Workshop focus:

We would like to know your thoughts of A&G. In the workshops we will have some scenarios to discuss in small groups. We would like to know what matters most to

patients/carers and how it would be best to communicate outcomes of A&G with a patient.