



Advice and guidance: guide for system leaders

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

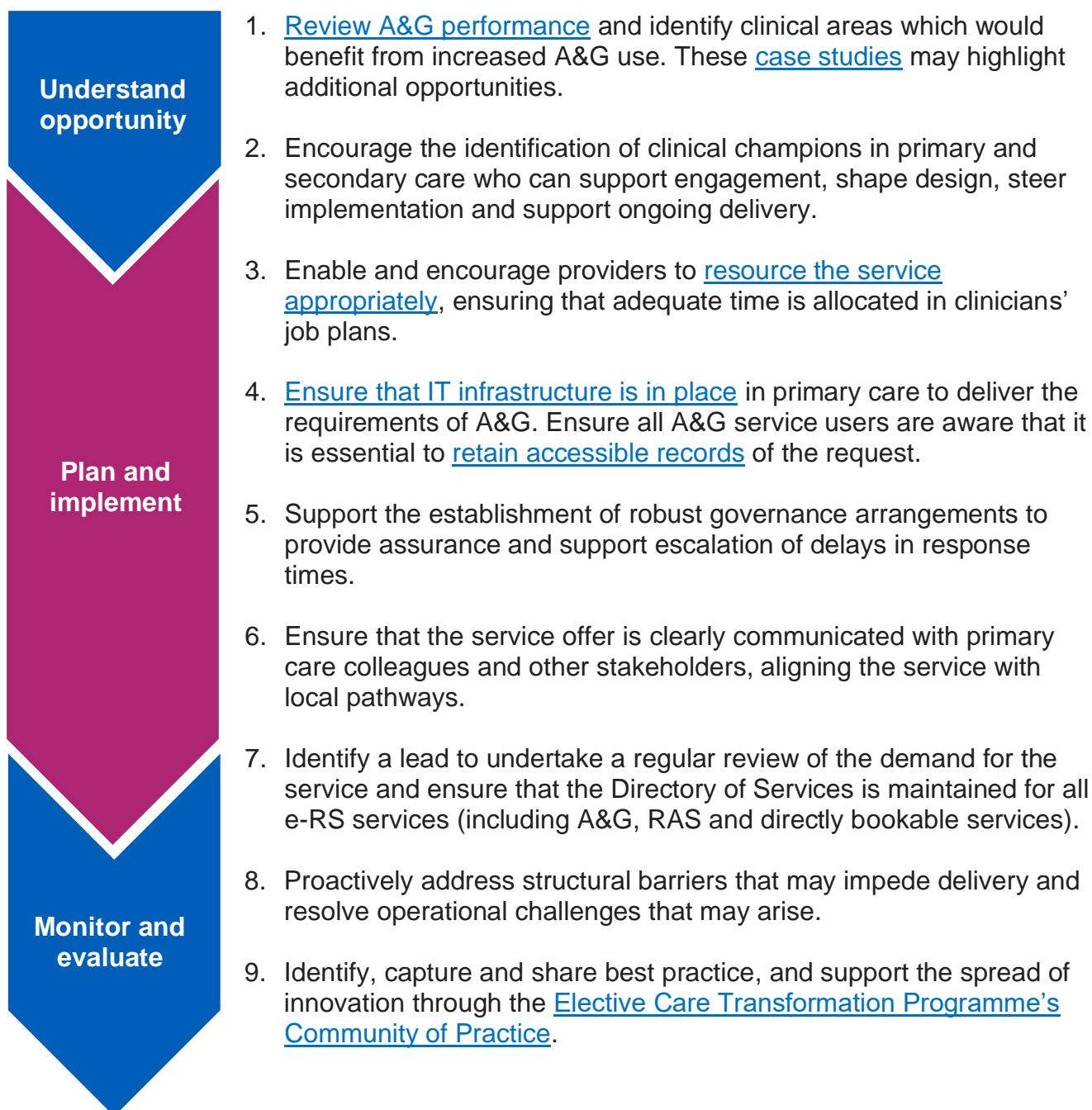
A&G services improve the interface between primary and secondary care. Through A&G, specialist advice may be shared with primary care before or instead of referral. This supports personalised care, enables patient care to be managed in the most appropriate setting and avoids unnecessary outpatient activity.

This guide sets out practical advice for system leaders to support the mobilisation of A&G, and to increase the scale and offer of services at a local level.

How can A&G support the safe and effective delivery of care alongside COVID-19 activity?

- A&G is one of the three main [NHS e-Referral Service \(e-RS\) channels](#) through which a GP may obtain a clinical opinion. A&G provides a pre-referral communication channel between clinicians.
- Underpinned by A&G provision, streaming of new outpatient referrals will be important to ensure patient care is managed in the most appropriate setting. This supports the effective co-ordination of care pathways. [Referral Assessment Services \(RAS\)](#) may support referral triage across complex pathways, with A&G enabling effective pre-referral communication between clinicians.
- A&G services can be managed at specialty level, enabling alignment and pooling of clinical resources across any organisation. This enhances resilience across service lines and enables clinical teams to respond to A&G requests.
- A&G services can also be aligned with system-wide approaches to managing care at scale, with e-RS configured to enable virtual pooling of clinical resource across providers.

Key actions recommended for mobilising A&G services



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.