The NHS 111 Service

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Background

NHS 111: When it’s less urgent than 999

• NHS 111 is being introduced as part of the wider revisions to the urgent care system to make it easier for patients to access the right service

• A joint NHS and Department of Health initiative

• A key element of the QIPP Urgent and Emergency Care national work stream

• Patients have told us that they are unsure what to do or where to go for help, particularly when they have unexpected or urgent healthcare needs
Background

- The service will make it easier for patients to access healthcare services when they need medical help fast, but it’s not a life-threatening situation.

- Calls to 111 will be free from landlines and mobile phones.

- The NHS 111 service is already available in some parts of England and will go live in the West Midlands in March 2013.

- NHS 111 can help us take the pressure off the 999 service and local A&E departments so that they can focus on emergency cases.

- NHS 111 will be available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
Government Vision for Coherent 24/7 Urgent Care

Better value
- Aiming to ensure appropriate use of NHS services, delivering better value for the taxpayer

Greater integration
- Services working together to provide a seamless service, irrespective of the provider organisations which operate them
Greater consistency
– Consistent high quality care delivering the best outcomes and experience 24/7, 365 days a year with no noticeable differences during or out of normal office hours.

Improved quality, safety and patient experience
– A simply designed and rationalised system architecture supported by easy telephone and web access, with less variation across the country
Clear policy for telephone access to urgent and emergency care agreed with the NHS:

– 999 for life threatening emergencies;
– people will continue to access their GP as they do now; and
– NHS 111, if:
  • they need medical help fast, but it’s not a 999 emergency;
  • they don’t know who to call for medical help or you don't have a GP to call;
  • they think they need to go to A&E or another NHS urgent care service
3. How will it work?

- NHS 111 will get the caller through to fully trained advisers who are supported by experienced nurses.
- They will ask the caller questions to assess their symptoms and give the healthcare advice they need, or direct them to the right local service.
- The NHS 111 team will where possible book an appointment or transfer the caller to the people they need to speak to.
- If the callers needs an ambulance one will be sent just as quickly if they had dialled 999.
Service Specification for NHS 111

NHS 111 operates to the following core principles:

1. Completion of a clinical assessment on the first call without the need for a call back
2. Ability to refer callers to other providers without the caller being re-triaged
3. Ability to transfer clinical assessment data to other providers and book appointments where appropriate
4. Ability to dispatch an ambulance without delay
5. Ability to provide health information or reassurance about what to do next

Successful implementation of NHS 111 means ensuring all primary care services are aligned around it.
**Statutory Duties**

- Protection and retention of information
- Safeguarding Children
- Managing repeat callers (frequent callers)
- Data sharing with the Health Protection Agency
- Care Quality Commission registration
- The safe management of callers who contact the NHS 111 service three times or more within a four day period
Potential benefits

- Improved the public’s access to urgent healthcare services
- Increased public satisfaction and confidence in the NHS
- Increased efficiency of the NHS
- Enable the commissioning of more effective and productive healthcare services
- Reduce the number of non-emergency calls received by the 999 emergency ambulance service.
- NHS 111 in the West Midlands is being run by an experienced organisation with over 10 years experience in operating front line patient telephone services
University of Sheffield Evaluation

The key findings of the evaluation were:

- All pilot sites operated to national quality standards
- Some integration between services was achieved
- Users were very satisfied with the new service
- One year after launch, the pilots had not delivered the expected benefits
- The primary economic analysis based on the pilot site activity identified a low probability of cost savings to the emergency and urgent care system
- There was no clear evidence of the superiority of one type of model

The lack of impact of NHS 111 in its first year in the pilot sites could be explained by:

- the small ‘dose’ of NHS 111 within the emergency and urgent care system
- early stage of development
- the introduction of NHS 111 has occurred at a time of great change in the NHS
It’s not a 999 emergency.
But you need medical help fast.
There’s now 111 number to call.

If you need urgent medical help that isn’t an emergency, and can’t wait for a GP appointment, you can now call 111. It’s available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You’ll be assessed, given advice and directed straightaway to the local service that can help you best – that could be an out of hours doctor, walk in clinic, community nurse, emergency dentist or late opening chemist.

If you do need an ambulance, one will be sent immediately.

Calls to 111 are free, including mobiles.
The NHS 111 service is currently only available to callers within County Durham and Darlington.

For more information visit www.nhs.uk/111

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