

NHS 111

Officer Contact

Helen Delaitre, Project Manager Unscheduled Care, NHS Hillingdon

Papers with report

None

REASON FOR ITEM

To update the Committee on the new NHS 111 telephone helpline.

OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE

1. To note and ask questions about the report and presentation.

INFORMATION

NHS 111 is the new, free to call, telephone helpline. NHS 111 will make it easier for the public to access local health services when they need help quickly but for issues that are not life-threatening, or when they don't know who to call.

The introduction of the NHS 111 service is part of the wider revisions to unscheduled care services to deliver a 24/7 urgent care service that ensures people receive the right care, from the right person, in the right place, at the right time. The NHS 111 service will be available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, via the new free to call, easy to remember three-digit number.

NHS 111 will:

- provide a clinical assessment at the first point of contact, without the need to call patients back;
- direct people to the right NHS service, first time, without the need for them to be re-triaged; and
- be able to transfer clinical assessment data to other providers and book appointments for patients when appropriate.

NHS 111 will work alongside the 999 emergency service and will be able to despatch an ambulance without delay and without the need for the patient to repeat any information.

The NHS expects the introduction of the 111 service to:

- improve public access to urgent healthcare services;
- increase the efficiency of the NHS by ensuring that people are able to quickly and easily access the healthcare services they need;
- increase public satisfaction and confidence in the NHS;
- enable the commissioning of more effective and productive healthcare services that are tuned to meet peoples' needs; and
- increase the efficiency of the 999 emergency ambulance service by reducing non-emergency calls to 999.

The new NHS 111 service is now available in four pilot areas - County Durham and Darlington, Nottingham City, Lincolnshire and Luton.

Benefits

The introduction of the new NHS 111 service is expected to provide key benefits to the public and the NHS, by:

- Improving the public's access to urgent healthcare services:
 - Providing a simple, free to call, easy to remember three-digit number, that is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year; and
 - Directing people to the local service that is best able to meet their needs, taking into account their location, the time of day of their call and the capacity of services.
- Increasing the efficiency of the NHS:
 - Providing clinical assessment that ensures people access the right service, first time;
 - Directing people to the service that is best able to meet their needs; and
 - Rationalisation of call handling.
- Increasing public satisfaction and confidence in the NHS:
 - Improving the public's access to urgent healthcare services;
 - Providing an entry point to the NHS that is focused on peoples' needs;
 - Enabling people to access the right service, first time; and
 - Increasing efficiency of the NHS by directing people to the service that is best able to meet their needs.
- Enabling the commissioning of more effective and productive healthcare services that are tuned to meet people's needs:
 - Identifying the services, which are currently over or under utilised;
 - Providing information on people's needs and the services they are directed to; and
 - Increasing understanding of the demand for each service.
- Increasing the efficiency of the 999 emergency ambulance service:
 - Reducing the number of non-emergency calls received by 999; and
 - Reducing the number of avoidable admissions.

How Does NHS 111 Work?

Dialling 111 will put callers through to a team of fully trained call advisers, who are supported by experienced nurses. They will ask questions to assess symptoms, and give the healthcare advice needed or direct the caller to the right local service.

The four existing NHS 111 pilots are using the NHS Pathways clinical assessment system. This is an NHS owned system that has been developed by a team of NHS doctors, nurses and IT specialists to provide a safe, consistent clinical assessment of a caller's symptoms and to identify the service that is best able to meet their needs. The system has been designed to assess calls about any symptom – from life threatening to very minor – and has been extensively tested, piloted and academically reviewed to confirm its effectiveness. To date more than 1.2 million calls have been safely assessed using NHS Pathways.

The NHS 111 team will, where possible, book an appointment or transfer the caller directly to the service they need. If the caller needs an ambulance, this will be dispatched immediately, just as if the caller had originally dialled 999.

NHS 111 in Hillingdon

Hillingdon has been selected as an early implementer of 111, ahead of pan-London roll out by April 2013. It is expected that Hillingdon will launch 111 in the Autumn of 2011.

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

1. Members note the report and presentation.
2. Members to ask questions and seek clarification, as appropriate.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.



When it's less urgent
than 999

