

BRIEFING FOR INFORMATION:

TITLE: NHS 111

TO: York Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MEETING DATE: 20th February 2013

Background

NHS 111 is a new telephone based service for patients that will be available throughout the country no later than 1st April 2013.

The service is being introduced to support access to urgent and emergency healthcare and ensure patients are seen by a service most appropriate for their needs.

It will replace the existing NHS Direct telephone number.

The service will be accessed by calling a three digit number, 111, which will be staffed by a team of fully trained call handlers who will be supported by experienced clinicians.

Call handlers will carry out an initial assessment which will be directed by the use of a specific assessment tool. Depending on the answers given by the patient, appropriate services will be identified on the system, thus enabling the call handler to direct the patient accordingly.

Services may include, for example, Out of Hours GP Service, Walk in Centre, Urgent Care Centre, In Hours GP, Community Nursing Team, Emergency Dental service or Late Opening Pharmacy.

In the vast majority of cases, calls to 111 will be dealt with without the need for call backs.

If the call is an emergency and the patient requires an ambulance, the call handler has the facility to dispatch an ambulance without delay.

NHS 111 will be available 365 days a year, 7 days a week and calls will be free to the caller.

When should you call NHS 111?

Patients should dial 111 if they urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation.

Patients should call 111 if it's not a 999 emergency, but they:

- think they may need to go to A&E or another NHS urgent care service
- don't think it can wait for an appointment with their GP
- don't know who to call for medical help.

For less urgent health needs patients should still contact their GP in the usual way.

For immediate, life-threatening emergencies, they should continue to call 999.

Establishing the Service

A regional procurement took place throughout 2012 which resulted in the Yorkshire Ambulance Service being identified as the preferred provider of the NHS 111 service across Yorkshire & the Humber.

Mobilisation plans are currently being implemented which include the following:

- Recruitment and training of NHS 111 Call Handlers
- Testing of the NHS 111 service
- Establishment of Clinical Governance & Quality Assurance structures within CCGs
- Completion of the Directory of Service which underpins the NHS 111 Service
- Completion of the Department of Health readiness testing process

Launch Date

Plans are in place to ensure that NHS 111 will be launched across Yorkshire & The Humber as follows:

5th March 2013 – soft launch
19th March 2013 – full launch

Raising awareness of NHS 111

Attendance at a number of stakeholder meetings have taken place throughout the last few months Regional communication campaign is being planned and will be implemented to support awareness raising of the new service.

For more information visit www.nhs.uk/111