

NHS 111 Update by Dr Nigel Wells, GP lead for NHS 111 Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group (VOYCCG) Spring 2014

NHS111 is nearing its first year anniversary although NHS 111 went live for call handling and triage of the GP Out Of Hours service in York on 2nd July 2013 after a staggered introduction nationally and regionally.

NHS111 is now taking calls from 18.30 until 08.00 on weekdays and from 18.30 on Friday until 08.00 Monday for patients registered to GPs in York and surrounding areas.

NHS111 works on a clinical pathways triage model and is staffed by call handlers and clinical advisers; call lengths vary between 7 and 15 minutes on average. The outcome is determined by the clinical scenario, the input from the clinical advisers and then a possible direction to a service outlined on the directory of service (DOS).

NHS111 in our area has not seemed to have increased the Accident & Emergency (A&E) attendance or 999 calls with the information available to date. Complaints and incidents continue to be low in number.

Commissioners continually monitor NHS111 service across Yorkshire and Humber and this allows areas of concern to be highlighted for action. This is now headed up by a regional North Yorkshire and Humber team and regular contracting, performance and governance meetings.

The service coped well under the winter pressures of Christmas and New Year and Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) had business contingency plans in place if needed. The busiest day over the Christmas period was Saturday 21 December where the senior team escalated to level 3 (out of 5) for a period of 3 hours.

NHS 111 now takes around 4000 calls a month for the VOYCCG area with 60% being directed to either in hours or Out Of Hours GP services. The number of calls into the Out Of Hours services had significantly reduced over summer and autumn, although it has recently returned to a level closer to that prior to the introduction of NHS 111. It is unclear why this happened, however, this has also been seen in other areas.

The service continues to evolve and is exploring areas of need such as dental services and pharmacy support, as well as looking at using new technology in some areas.

YAS NHS 111 took its millionth caller on Saturday 22 February 2014.

Abbreviations

A&E – Accident and Emergency

DOS – Directory of Service

GP-General Practitioner

VOYCCG - Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group

YAS – Yorkshire Ambulance Service