



FACT SHEET – NHS 111

What is NHS 111?

NHS 111 is a national telephone service for people to access healthcare services when they need medical help fast but not in life-threatening situations.

In our area it was introduced in March 2013 and replaced the service provided previously by NHS Direct.

NHS 111 is provided across Kent, Surrey and Sussex by SECAmb working in partnership with a private company called Care UK.

How does it work?

Calls to the NHS 111 service from landlines and mobile phones are free of charge and the service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year when:

- Someone feels they need medical help fast, but it's not a 999 emergency
- Doesn't know who to call for medical help or doesn't have a GP to call
- Thinks they need to go to A&E or another NHS urgent care service
- Needs health information or reassurance about what to do next

In our area, the NHS 111 service is provided from two Contact Centres – one at Dorking in Surrey and one at Ashford in Kent.

In the Contact Centres, calls are answered by trained Health Advisors (call-takers) using a clinical call-handling system called NHS Pathways (this is the same system as used by our 999 call-takers).

Callers will be asked lots of questions by the Health Advisor, which will help them decide what help is needed, using a tool called the Directory of Services (see below). Calls can also be referred to Clinical Advisors (paramedics and nurses) when required, who are based in the Contact Centres.

Depending on the answers they give, callers to NHS 111 will be provided with self-care advice, health information or referred to a number of other services, including GP practices, dentists and mental health services. If needed, they will be told to make their own way to an A&E Department or passed on to the out of hours GP service.

If a call to NHS 111 is assessed as being a medical emergency, the service can send an ambulance or response car directly and provide first aid advice to the caller until it arrives, without the need to transfer the call, or for the caller to repeat information.

What is the Directory of Services?

The Directory of Services (DoS) is a web-based directory, populated locally. It lists all of the health, social care and voluntary services available in the area, including when they operate. We work closely with local providers to ensure their details are listed on the DoS and are up to date.

This means that Health Advisors and Clinical Advisors provide callers with appropriate information and options on further treatment if needed.

Analysing referrals to the DoS also helps the local NHS identify where gaps in service exist and helps commissioners (those who choose and pay for services) to plan to better meet the needs of local people.

Did you know?

- During 2013/14 we received more than 954,000 NHS 111 calls
- We employ more than 400 staff to provide our NHS 111 service (together with our partner Care UK)

South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust is your NHS ambulance service covering Kent & Medway, Sussex and Surrey and provides:

- **999 services**
- **Patient Transport Services (PTS) in Surrey and Sussex**
- **NHS 111 services**

For more information please contact us:

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