



When it's less urgent
than 999

NHS
Berkshire

NHS 111 in Berkshire

Update for NHS Staff

February 2013

Plans are well advanced for the NHS 111 telephone service for people in Berkshire to call if they need medical help fast, but are not in a life-threatening situation. The public launch is scheduled for 16th April, but the service will be operating in the background for one month before this during what is known as its “soft launch” phase, whilst it undergoes a series of tests and clinical governance processes.

The easy to remember, free to call number will be available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to help people access the care they need, wherever they are and no matter what time of day it is. On dialling 111 callers will be put through to a team of highly trained advisers and experienced nurses, receive a clinical assessment and be directed to the local service that can help them best at that time. This could be by providing details of the nearest pharmacy, direction to an appropriate service or even dispatching an ambulance if this is required.

There will be only three numbers people need to know; 999 for life-threatening emergencies, their GP surgery for routine health conditions and 111 for urgent/unplanned health conditions or when patients are unsure of which service to access.

The service will increase efficiency of the NHS while reducing the number of non-emergency calls received by 999 and avoidable ambulance journeys. It will enable the commissioning of more effective and productive healthcare services by providing comprehensive information on people's needs and the services they are directed to.

NHS 111 services are being locally procured and the provider for Berkshire will be South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SCAS). The NHS 111 service is already live in Oxfordshire and in Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth; and Buckinghamshire is due to go live at the end of February.

How NHS 111 will work

- Free to dial, including from a mobile, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- Immediate clinical assessment by trained call handlers, supported by experienced clinicians
- Ability to refer callers to other providers without the caller being re-triaged
- Ability to transfer clinical assessment data to other providers
- Ability to dispatch an ambulance without delay
- Ability to provide health information or reassurance, including self-care
- Will replace the current NHS Direct phone number
- The service will be nationally available from October 2013

Further updates on the NHS 111 service implementation in Berkshire will follow, but if you have any questions please email bw-pct.NHS111@nhs.net