

NHS 111 – frequently asked questions

What is NHS 111?

NHS 111 is a new telephone service being introduced to make it easier for you to access local health services, when you have an urgent need.

If you need to contact the NHS for urgent care there are only three numbers to know; 999 for life-threatening emergencies; your GP surgery; or 111.

When you call 111 you will be assessed, given advice and directed straightaway to the local service that can help you best – that could be an out-of-hours doctor, walk-in centre or urgent care centre, community nurse, emergency dentist or late opening chemist.

NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

How does it work?

Calling 111 will get you through to a team of fully trained call advisers, who are supported by experienced nurses.

They will ask you questions to assess your symptoms, and give you the healthcare advice you need or direct you to the right local service.

Where possible, they will book you an appointment or transfer you directly to the people you need to speak to.

If they think you need an ambulance, one will be sent just as quickly if you had dialled 999.

When do you use it?

You should call 111 if:

- you need medical help fast, but it's not a 999 emergency;
- you don't know who to call for medical help or you don't have a GP to call;
- you think you need to go to A&E or another NHS urgent care service; or
- you require health information or reassurance about what to do next.

Why should you use it?

NHS 111 will direct you straight away to the local service that can help you best.

How much do calls to NHS 111 cost?

Calls to the NHS 111 service are free from both landlines and mobile phones, so it won't cost you a penny.

Is the NHS 111 service available 24/7?

Yes, NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Who answers NHS 111 calls?

The North East Ambulance Service handles 111 calls for North East England in partnership with Northern Doctors Urgent Care. Calls are answered by fully trained call advisers, who are supported by experienced nurses.

Is the service available to people with a hearing impairment or communication difficulties?

People with communication difficulties or impaired hearing are able use the NHS 111 service via a textphone by calling 18001 111.

Calls are connected to the TextDirect system and the textphone will display messages to tell the user what is happening.

Typetalk Relay Assistant will automatically join the call and they will speak the users typed conversation to the NHS 111 call adviser and will type back the adviser's conversation, so that this can be read this on the caller's textphone display (or computer).

Is the service accessible to non-English Speakers?

The NHS 111 service uses a translation service so that it is accessible to people who do not speak English.

Callers who do not speak English should state the name of the language they want to conduct the conversation in and the interpreting service will be utilised.