

## **NHS 111 – ‘when it’s less urgent than 999’**

### **Context**

The development of NHS 111 as a new national NHS service, providing a telephone advice line for patients with urgent health problems which require assessment but which are not so serious as to require a 999 call, was identified in the White Paper, *Liberating the NHS*. The service will be available free to callers, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and will absorb the calls currently going to NHS Direct and our GP OOH services. NHS 111 makes it easier for people to access local NHS healthcare services

NHS 111 will incorporate services already offered by NHS Direct and the telephony components of the GP OOH services.

### **When to contact NHS 111?**

- Need medical help fast but its not a 999 emergency
- Don't have a GP or know how to access healthcare
- Think you need A&E or other urgent care service
- Need health information, reassurance or advice on what to do next

### **What will NHS 111 do?**

- Clinical assessment without the need for a call back
- Dispatch an ambulance without delay
- Refer callers to services with appropriate skills and capacity to meet their needs
- Provide information / advice to callers who can care for themselves
- Transfer clinical assessment data to other providers / book appointments where appropriate
- Provide a Professional Support Line

### **Mobilisation in Sussex**

In order to be as efficient as possible, a single procurement across Kent, Surrey and Sussex was conducted in order to secure a high quality service that is value for money.

From 19th March 2013, the NHS 111 service in Sussex will be provided by a partnership between South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAmb) and Harmoni. Assessment of the bidders was carried out by a panel including a number of GPs against a rigorous set of criteria to determine which bidder was best able to deliver the service to the standard required for patients in our health economy.

When someone phones 111, a trained call handler, supported by appropriate health professionals, will provide them with a clinical assessment using NHS Pathways at the first point of contact, without the caller having to wait for a call back. NHS Pathways will be underpinned by a local 'Directory of Services' (DoS), which will provide the call handler with real time information about local services available to support a particular patient.

GPs and other health professionals will also be able to phone 111 or use a web based version of the DoS to get real time information on available services.

The new NHS 111 service will provide telephone triage and assessment, both in and out of hours, and will advise the patient or direct to the most appropriate local service available including GP Practices.

The current professional support line function that is currently provided by HERMES will also be incorporated into the 111 service.

### **What are the benefits?**

The benefits of 111 are:

- Improved access to urgent care services
- Improving efficiency of NHS services
- Increasing public satisfaction & confidence in using NHS services
- Enables design and commissioning of more effective and efficient services

### **Out of Hours Service (OOH)**

The current OOH contract is being extended for 6 months and the CCG procuring a new service to start on 1st October 2013. It is expected that there may be an increase in OOH activity as a result of NHS 111 but these numbers have not yet been quantified. Mitigation of possible increases in OOH will be through the population of the Directory of Services to its maximum potential.