

Cumbria 111 FAQs

1) How the NHS 111 service works

Calls to the NHS 111 service from landlines and mobile phones are free and the service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to respond to people's healthcare needs, when:

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

2) Will Social Care be included in 111 Service?

During the roll out phase the NHS 111 service will primarily be for access to urgent healthcare, but callers with social care needs will be signposted to the right services to meet their needs. In time the scope of the service will grow and could become the single telephone access point for all urgent healthcare and social care services.

3) Who will answer NHS 111 calls?

Calls to NHS 111 will be answered by fully trained NHS 111 health advisors, supported by experienced clinical advisors, who are either nurses or paramedics. They use a clinical assessment system called *NHS Pathways* to assess callers' needs safely and effectively and direct them to the right NHS service.

All the existing NHS 111 live areas are using the **NHS Pathways clinical assessment system**. This is an NHS owned system that has been developed by a team of NHS doctors, nurses and IT specialists to provide a safe, consistent clinical assessment of a caller's symptoms and to identify the service that is best able to meet their needs. The system has been designed to assess calls about any symptom – from life threatening to very minor – and has been extensively tested, piloted and academically reviewed to confirm its effectiveness.

4) Calls to the NHS 111 service are answered by non-clinicians, is it safe?

Just like 999 operators, NHS 111 health advisors are fully trained. They use a clinical assessment system which enables them to assess callers' needs safely and effectively and direct them to the right NHS service. All advice provided is supported by experienced clinical advisors.

Using the clinical assessment system means a smaller proportion of calls need to be referred to a clinical advisor. This means that NHS 111 clinical advisors can focus on cases where their clinical skills are most needed rather than dealing with calls that don't need their expertise.

5) Will the NHS 111 service book appointments with GPs?

If a caller requires in-hours GP services they will be advised to contact their GP directly.

6) How will practices receive patients' information if they use the 111 service?

When one of your patients uses the NHS 111 service you will receive a report within 30min. This would be received electronically. Other areas where 111 have been in use, their current referrals to in hours GP's day per practice are usually in single figures. (Often 0-2)

Any patients who are referred on to CHOC will be dealt with by CHOC and their post event message (PEM) will arrive at your practice in line with their procedures.

7) What will happen if patients ring the current 03000 CHOC number after the mobilisation date? Will the current CHOC number continue?

They will continue to get through directly to CHOC. However, the facility to use the 03000 number will be discontinued after a few months so it is in everyone's interest to move to 111 as soon as possible.

Patient with Care plans and other Health Care Professional will continue to ring through on the 03000 to CHOC. District nurse and pathfinders will continue to contact CHOC as currently.

8) What about PLT Days?

111 will need to be your surgery telephone message on PLT days. Any other surgery closure time would be a private arrangement between the surgery and CHOC.

Although significant work has been done to ensure that this transition is as smooth as possible both for patients and health professionals, there will inevitably be some issues. It would be very helpful for these to be sent to 111 so that matters can be addressed immediately.

You can flag up any issues or concerns by using the established Healthcare Professional Feedback (HPF) system. After receipt of feedback each case is reviewed by the clinical governance team within the NHS 111 providers and you will receive an individual response about the outcome.

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

10) Is the service accessible to non-English Speakers?

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

11) Will NHS 111 deal with emergency calls?

The public should continue to call 999 for life threatening emergencies that require an immediate response. However, if a call to NHS 111 is assessed as being a medical emergency, the service will dispatch an ambulance directly, and provide first aid advice to the caller until the paramedics arrive, without the need to transfer the call, or for the caller to repeat information.

12) Will 111 be a 'backup' for my in hours practice in case of service failure?

No. As a GP practice you should have a business continuity plan in place. If your continuity plan fails then you can contact NWAS. They will do what they can to help but cannot guarantee a service.