

Briefing on 111

1 Background

Members of the Joint HOSC are aware of the history of the NHS 111 Service. The commitment to introduce a national 111 service to improve access to urgent care when not an emergency was included in election Manifestos, and prioritised by the Coalition Government.

Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire CCGs were members of a regional consortium who collaborated on a regional procurement to select a provider to deliver a national service specification.

The contract for the region was awarded to NHS Direct with a planned start date of 1.4.13.

It became apparent within hours of the launch of the new service in April that there was insufficient capacity in the Dudley Call Centre. All CCGs put contingency plans in place – locally that involved day time 111 calls going to the Dudley call centre and out of hours 111 calls being diverted to Shropdoc. This was agreed for a 6 month period.

2 Current Position

Since April, and following the decision of NHS Direct to withdraw from the provision of the service, the West Midlands Ambulance Service has stepped in to run the Dudley Call Centre. Performance of the service has improved significantly and reports from other CCG's whose populations are served by the centre are positive.

NHS England has announced plans to re-procure 111 from 2015. They are currently reviewing the national service specification and at this stage, we anticipate more focus on an integrated service between 111 and Out of Hours. Engagement to date with local clinicians and patients suggests this approach would be supported.

In the meantime there is a national requirement to offer a 24/7 NHS 111 service that is fully compliant with the national service specification. West Midlands Ambulance Service is the only provider able to deliver this at this time. After careful testing, including patients joining clinical teams to visit the Call Centre, the 111 divert from Dudley to Shropdoc was taken off on 26th November 2013.

It is important to note that this arrangement is not the same as the NHS 111 service planned by NHS Direct earlier in the year. Had that gone ahead callers would not have been able to contact Shropdoc directly. Instead the Shropdoc number is still live, and so local callers can either call 111 or the Shropdoc number directly.

3 Future procurement

A Pan Shropshire project board has been established, which includes both patient representatives and clinicians to oversee the procurement of the new 111 service from 2015.

Until the revised service specification has been released it is not possible to consult on how the new arrangements will work, but the board expects to work through a comprehensive engagement programme in the new year.

In due course the CCGs expect to report on recommendations for a future model to the HOSC.