

Update on the NHS 111 Implementation in Derbyshire

Background

In July 2010 the Government stated its commitment to a national roll out of the new NHS 111 service in 'The Coalition our programme for government' & the White paper 'Equity & excellence: Liberating the NHS'. The aim was to develop a coherent 24/7 urgent care service in every area of England that makes sense to patients when they have to make choices about their care. This will incorporate GP Out of Hours services & provide urgent medical care for people registered with a GP elsewhere. The service will be more accessible by introducing, informed by evaluation, a single telephone number for every kind of urgent and social care and by using technology to help people communicate with their clinicians'.

Procurement options

The NHS 111 Service is mandated for implementation by all regions by 1st April 2013. This can be achieved by one of three options:

- The implementation of a pilot service followed by competitive procurement.
- Procurement of a service
- 'Opting in' (this will be a solution provided for a community by NHS Direct working in liaison with the ambulance service and Out of Hours providers.

Derbyshire has chosen to pilot a service with the intention to have a procured joint NHS 111 and Out of Hours service in place by October 2013. This timescale will allow sufficient time to learn from the pilot and to ensure the correct specification of the service. It will also allow learning from other procurements taking place elsewhere in the UK.

The Pilot So Far

The pilot has a phased implementation. The first phase of the pilot went live on 25th October 2011 in the Matlock, Bakewell and Chesterfield areas of Derbyshire. The rest of North Derbyshire will join in February 2012, Derby City in March 2012 with the remainder of the county being covered by September 2012.

The first phase of the pilot has been very successful. Activity is within expected levels and has increased gradually since the service went live. All GP surgeries within the pilot area have been supplied with leaflets and posters publicising the NHS111 service. In addition to this there have been a number of articles in local media and there has been a door-drop of leaflets about NHS111 to all households in the pilot area.

De-commissioning of The NHS Direct 0845 Service

NHS111 will replace the existing health information and assessment service offered by NHS Direct on 1st April 2013. However, it is likely that the NHS Direct service will stop earlier than this in some areas. In Derbyshire we are discussing with NHS Direct the possibility of stopping the service from September 2012 and possibly even earlier than this in those areas where the NHS111 pilot is already established. This will enable us to move funding from the existing NHS Direct service to support the NHS 111 pilot.

Next steps

The procurement of the NHS 111 service is being coordinated in regionally. We will ensure that Derbyshire is a separate lot within this process to allow for a separate service specification and control over the evaluation process to the other areas of the East Midlands. The planning for this procurement has already started.