

MEDIA STATEMENT

2 May 2013

NHS 111

The NHS 111 service is currently being established across Bath and North East Somerset and Wiltshire, following a 'soft' launch in February. This means that a test period is now underway in order to identify problems and rectify them before the service goes fully live.

"Performance is continuing to improve, but we know that some patients and providers are still experiencing some problems with getting through to the service as well as delays in receiving treatment particularly during busy weekend periods," said Dr Simon Douglass, Clinical Accountable Officer for BaNES Clinical Commissioning Group. "We'd like to apologise for this and reassure patients that we are continuing to work with our NHS 111 provider, Harmoni, to resolve the remaining issues before the service is launched in full. We have seen a reduction in the number of 999 ambulances dispatched by the NHS 111 service, and an encouraging improvement in the number of these ambulance call outs that result in patients requiring transfer to hospital or another service."

Wiltshire and B&NES CCGs have decided to defer the full launch of NHS 111 until all such issues are resolved. Both CCGs and Harmoni are committed to providing a safe and high quality NHS 111 service and contingency plans, involving the established local out-of-hours GP service for patients, have been in place throughout this period.

NHS England supports the CCGs' decision and is working alongside them to ensure that the service meets national requirements.

When fully launched, NHS 111 will be a free to call service, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It will act as a one stop shop for patients if their healthcare need is urgent, but not a 999 emergency.

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