

Matters Arising from Corsham Area Board – 26 July 2012

Regarding the concerns raised at Corsham Area Board on 26 July 2012 relating to NHS 111 and the award of the contract for the call-handling elements of the new service, we hope the following addresses the concerns.

- From April 2013, a new, free number – 111 – will make it easier for patients across the country to get non-emergency healthcare, 24 hours a day, every day of the year
- NHS 111 is a national initiative, which the Government requires to be in place across the UK by April 2013
- Patients should have three numbers to call: The GP surgery is the first port of call, 111 is for when it is urgent and their GP is not available, and 999 when it is an emergency
- When NHS 111 is rolled out nationally, it will replace the NHS Direct 0845 4647 number. Until then, NHS Direct will continue to provide its current service and the Wiltshire Out of Hours number – 0300 111 5717 – will continue to provide its current service too. NHS 111 will then take over from both of these numbers, so that the patient has the choice to call 111 or 999.
- The NHS 111 service will route people through to the right service for them, first time
- The 111 number should be the first port of call if you:
 - need to use health services but are not in an emergency situation; in other words you don't need to make a 999 call or go to accident & emergency but you are unsure about what to do and where to go and therefore do need advice
 - can't access your GP because you are away from home
 - are unsure about which NHS service to use
- Calls to 111 will be answered by a trained advisor who will carefully assess your needs and select the most appropriate service from a detailed directory of local NHS services
- The call handler will be able to dispatch an ambulance without delay where the call is an emergency
- In certain circumstances, the 111 call handler will be able to book your appointments direct and transfer your information to the service so they are ready for your arrival and there is no need for you to be re-triaged when you arrive for your treatment
- The NHS 111 service in the South West will conform to a national service specification so that a consistent identity and quality of service is maintained across the country, but delivered locally by the NHS in a way that is most appropriate for each area
- The service has been tested over 18 months years in the North East and other pilot sites are now underway
- How NHS 111 is different to NHS Direct – it is a free to call service, available through the easy to remember 3-digit number. It provides a more comprehensive service by delivering clinical assessments of callers' needs at the first point of contact, and ensuring that they are directed straight away to the service that is best able to meet these needs. It also refers people directly

to the appropriate service and eliminates, as far as possible, the need for 'call backs'

- The 111 service should not stop people from calling their GP surgery. The GP practice remains the primary source of in-hours urgent care, and the 111 service will not have capacity to deal with these calls
- Harmoni have been awarded the contract to manage the call-handling and triage elements of the new service. They have won the contract because their proposal met a number of set criteria set out by the Department of Health. Harmoni was started by west London GPs in 1996 as a GP co-operative and is now the leading provider of out of hours and urgent care services in England. It is currently running two pilot NHS 111 services in London as well as the out of hours service in North Somerset.
- Bidders were assessed against an agreed set of detailed evaluation criteria, covering all aspects of the 111 service specification, such as clinical quality, service interoperability, workforce and training, and cost.
- A score was then awarded for each part of their tender response. The process is in line with UK and EU procurement rules. The evaluation process involved GPs and patient representatives, as well as representatives from the Primary Care Trusts, Department of Health and Strategic Health Authority. Harmoni's tender demonstrated that Harmoni is the supplier which can best meet the service specification and provide the quality of service that we require for patients, while delivering good value for money.
- The contract will be for five years.