

Update for matters arising Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and Durham

May 2018

Questions about:

1. NHS 111 procurement
2. Queries from Keep our NHS Public – response letters from Mr Bas Sen and Mr Alan Foster
3. Concerns raised by Health Watch organisations – response letter from Mr Mark Adams

NHS 111 service for the North East

In relation to enquires from Cllr F Mendleson about the North East NHS 111 Service. The procurement was carried out by the region's clinical commissioning groups and was concluded in March 2018.

The media release below sets out that North East Ambulance Service were the successful bidders.

Successful NHS 111 service will continue to improve under new contract

The successful NHS 111 telephone helpline in the region will continue to improve, as commissioners agree a new contract for the service.

Current providers the North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust will operate the new service under a five-year contract to start in October 2018.

The service operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, helping patients who need medical help fast but do not need to call 999 – as well as anyone who is unsure which service to use.

Dr Neil O'Brien, Chair of the Northern Clinical Commissioning Groups Forum, said: "NHS 111 is a vital part of the urgent and emergency care system in the North East, and helps over 800,000 patients every year to get the care they need.

"The new service builds on this success, including a clinical assessment service meaning patients can conclude their call with advice, a prescription or an appointment for further assessment or treatment.

"With quick and easy access to a service that is fully integrated with other NHS services, patients can have real confidence in the care they will receive."

A recent Ipsos Mori survey showed 88% of patients using NHS 111 saying they would be likely or extremely likely to recommend the service.

The new service is designed to ensure that most patients' problems are dealt with on their first call, including a consultation with a clinician where that is needed. Staff will have access to a range of real-time information, including a summary of GP-held patient records, and details of local services such as GP extended hours schemes and community pharmacies.

Staff will also be able to book appointments with local GPs, send prescriptions directly to a convenient pharmacy or dispatch an ambulance where that is necessary.

Clinicians supporting the service – such as dental nurses, mental health nurses and palliative care nurses – will also be available to help professional colleagues working with patients in the community.

Gerardine Hope, Service Manager for the North East Ambulance Service, said: “We have a fantastic record of success and continue to deliver a safe, effective, caring and compassionate service – evidenced by the low number of serious incidents and high number of positive comments from our patients.

“None of this would be possible without our outstanding team who want to do the best for the patients of the North East. We are incredibly proud to have been awarded this contract and to know that the people of the North East can continue to rely on us for at least the next five years.”

Last year NEAS handled 858,224 calls to NHS 111, including 95,142 in December alone. NEAS currently handles an average of 64,000 calls every month, and is leading the way nationally in providing directly bookable appointments with local GPs.

Referrals to ambulances from NHS 111 decreased throughout 2017 to around 9%, and referrals to emergency departments to around 2.5%.

Yvonne Ormston, Chief Executive of the North East Ambulance Service, said: “Our service is perfectly placed at the heart of the region’s urgent and emergency care network and our clinical assessment service already supports the region’s patients, ensuring patients can access quickly the healthcare service that best meets their needs.

“The commitment and dedication of the team who deliver the service – from management to call handlers and everyone in between – and the developments they have brought in have made the service the success it is. This new service builds upon the work they have already started and we look forward to further developing the service with support from colleagues across the region.”

Queries from Keep our NHS Public

Please find attached to this update letters of response from Mr Bas Sen and Mr Alan Foster in relation to questions received.

Concerns from Health Watch organisations

Please also find attached a response letter from Mr Mark Adams in relation to concerns raised by healthwatch organisations regarding developing sustainability and transformation partnerships for the North East and North Cumbria.

Also to note, the intention to appoint a lead healthwatch organisation to support the development of engagement for the region.

