

111 service to be rolled-out nationally

111 is a free treatment and advice service, managed by a team of professionals, who will treat or direct users to the right health service for their need. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Currently the service is only available in the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Health Board and Carmarthenshire areas, where it was launched as a pilot in October 2016 to test the practicalities of combining NHS Direct Wales and the GP Out of Hours services.

The service brings together NHS Direct Wales and GP Out-of-Hours call handling and triage into a single service. It differs from other UK models by having a greater proportion of clinical staff within it.

The decision to roll out follows an independent evaluation of the pilot. It found the service received over 71,000 calls in the first six months of operation, with 95% of survey respondents saying they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service.

Although changes cannot be wholly attributed to 111. The evaluation found a 1% decrease in Emergency Department attendance in Abertawe Bro Morgannwg during the first six months of service. There was also a reduction in ambulance conveyance to Emergency Departments. This change was mainly seen in non-urgent conveyances – down by just over 25% during the evaluation period.

Vaughan Gething said:

“I am pleased to announce that following the success of the 111 pilot we will be rolling out the service nationally over the next 3 years.

“I’m very encouraged to see evaluation which suggests a link between 111 and a decrease in ambulance conveyance. It is also clear from feedback that this service has been valuable in supporting patients and helping the NHS to treat patients with urgent care needs more effectively.

“We’ve been open and honest about the pressure our Emergency Departments are under, particularly this winter. People can help make a difference by using our health service sensibly. The 111 service will support people to receive the most appropriate services for their needs, at the right time and in the right place.”

Chris Powell, the Welsh Ambulance Service’s Area Manager for 111/NHS Direct Wales, added:

“As the hosts of 111, we’re really pleased by the progress made and the encouraging feedback received during the early stages of the pilot.

“People living in the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg and Carmarthenshire areas have been reaping the benefits of 111 for many months now, and soon everyone in Wales will have access to this service. This is another step towards a more modern approach to delivering urgent care, and we look forward to building on the success of 111 to date.”