

PRESS RELEASE

Monday 18th November 2013

For Immediate Release

NOT SURE IF IT'S AN EMERGENCY? CALL NHS111

As winter approaches and seasonal illnesses like flu and tummy bugs begin to circulate, pressure on the NHS increases. Dudley CCG is highlighting the telephone health services that are available in Dudley to help people to access the right services first time.

If you're generally fit and healthy, you may be unsure what to do or where to go with unexpected or urgent healthcare needs. In most instances people don't need A&E or 999, and accessing more suitable healthcare could result in being seen quicker.

NHS111 makes it easy for you to access healthcare advice when you need medical help fast, but it's not a life-threatening situation.

NHS111 is a free number, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The call handlers can provide health advice, put you in touch with the right service, arrange to have you seen by a doctor or call you an ambulance. The service is manned by trained call handlers with nurses on site to offer support if needed. Callers' symptoms are assessed and they are given the healthcare advice they need or are directed immediately to the right service.

Dr Steve Mann, Local GP and Clinical Lead, Dudley CCG is asking that A&E and 999 is only used for emergencies such as heavy blood loss, chest pains or loss of consciousness.

He said: "We ask the public to think before they go to A&E or call 999. These services need to be free to deal with real emergencies and should only be used in genuine emergency situations.

"Telephone services such as NHS111 are designed to offer answers, reassurance, advice and support you need as well as being convenient and open around the clock."

Those with internet access can also visit: www.nhs.uk/111.

ENDS

Note to editors

- If it's urgent, but not an emergency, you can ring 111 to get health advice 24 hours a day, seven days of week, including bank holidays. Calls to 111 are free from both landlines and mobiles.
- Visit www.nhs.uk to find your nearest GP, walk-in centre or pharmacy, or get health information.
- For further information, please contact Lindsey Harding on 01384 321677 or Lindsey.Harding@dudley.nhs.uk