

Q1 Do you agree with Ofcom's view that the proposed non-emergency healthcare service represents a justified use of a three-digit number? Please give reasons for your views. :

Yes, I agree. Although NHS Direct is a valuable service, I believe that a three-digit number would vastly increase the number of people who would be able to gain access to healthcare advice without needing to remember the number or find it out from a directory, the operator or the internet. The one concern I do have is that such an easy-to-use number might lead to a greater number of hoax calls, as are already prevalent for the 999 emergency services, wasting time and diverting resources away from genuine enquiries.

Q2 Do you agree with the DHs view that:

- A) a three-digit number is the best choice for the proposed service and
B) of the three-digit numbers available, 111 is the best option?**

Please give reasons for your views. :

- A) A three-digit number does fit in with the existing well-known numbering system (100, the former 192, 999, 112 etc.), and is a psychologically 'satisfying' number of digits to input.
B) 111 is sufficiently distinct from 999 as to prevent mis-dialling, but it is quite close to the 112 emergency services.

Q3 What are your views on the tariff options selected by the DH? :

I don't think the service should necessarily be free of charge, maybe a nominal rate (say, 4-5ppm), applicable across mobile networks as well, since many people on lower incomes do not always have landline phones and high call costs could deter them from gaining the healthcare advice they need. I do believe the price should be the same regardless of the operator or network however.

Q4 Do you have any comments on the proposed notification of modification to the Numbering Condition in Annex 8 of this document:

No comments.