

Consultation Question “Do you agree with Ofcom’s views that the proposed non emergency healthcare service represents a justified use of a three-digit number?”

Proposed NHS 24 Response

NHS 24 agrees that the proposed non-emergency healthcare service represents a justified use of a three digit number for the following reasons:

- We agree that using a more memorable number would be in the public interest, particularly in urgent, non-life threatening circumstances. We do believe, however, that this would be of greater benefit in England due to the current number of out of hours service providers.
- NHS 24 is a national provider of healthcare across Scotland, and therefore if adopted in Scotland this would have a national impact.
- NHS 24 experiences high demand on the service, particularly over the winter period, during significant outbreak of disease (e.g. flu), and over the festive period when GP practices can be closed for up to 8 days out of 14. NHS 24 currently receive approximately 1.5 m calls per year.
- In Scotland, NHS 24 provides non-emergency healthcare to people across Scotland, including access to urgent care out of hours therefore the change would benefit the diverse groups that form our society

Consultation Question “Do you agree with the Department of Health’s view that:

- 1. A three digit number is the best choice for the proposed service; and**
- 2. Of the three digit numbers available, 111 is the best option?”**

Proposed NHS 24 response

1. NHS 24 agrees with the Department of Health’s view that, based on the four options considered, a three digit number is the best choice for the proposed service. This option improves the patient experience of accessing the most appropriate healthcare for needs

NHS 24 has already recognised that the current number is 11 digits long, and not memorable, and this is supported by feedback from our partner Health Boards.

Initial feedback from our patients and the public is that a three digit number would be easier to remember, particularly when caller may be feeling unwell, anxious or vulnerable.

A three digit number would support one of our strategic objectives of improving access to NHS Services.

2. With regards to the selection of the number 111, NHS 24 agree that this is the most appropriate option.

Consultation Question: What are your views on the tariff options selected by the Department of Health?

Proposed NHS 24 Response

NHS 24 believes it is not acceptable to implement a tariff that would result in the public having to pay more to access the new number than they currently pay to access the service (and/or their GP), therefore we would not recommend option 3.

Consultation Question: “Do you have any comments on the proposed notification of modification to the Number Condition in Annex 8 of the document?”

Proposed NHS 24 Response

None