

**Response: A Three-digit Number for Non-Emergency Healthcare Services**

It is encouraging news that consideration is being given to the introduction of a three-digit number to replace the eight-digit number currently being used in England. It is noted with regret that it is only to be piloted in England after which, but no completion date is given, devolved governments and assemblies will be able to seek similar advantageous improvements.

I am involved as a patient representative with NHS 24; the **eleven-digit number** which people in Scotland are obliged to use to gain access to healthcare is a matter of great concern and frequently discussed.

My home is in a very remote part of North West Scotland where there are small scattered communities, with an increasing number of elderly people many of whom live alone. There is no community hospital. NHS 24 is our access to all OOH care; the introduction of a three-digit number would be welcomed; making it easier and speedier for people who are in need to receive medical advice or care and would be less stressful for users and much safer.

The suggested 111 number should be easy to access. There would be less likelihood of mis-dialling.

I look forward to learning the result of the pilots and subsequent consultation of our local communities to introduce this much needed and long overdue improvement.

August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009