

NHS111 online evaluation

Submission date 25/10/2019	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	☐ Prospectively registered ☒ Protocol
Registration date 29/10/2019	Overall study status Completed	☐ Statistical analysis plan ☒ Results
Last Edited 19/10/2022	Condition category Other	☐ Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

The NHS 111 telephone service is being used increasingly by people who need help deciding which urgent care services to use when they need help quickly. Recently, an alternative online NHS 111 service has been introduced. This allows people to use either a website or an “app” to answer a series of questions about their health problem rather than the telephone. The online service can provide advice about what the patient needs to do next (for example self-care, see a pharmacist, make a GP appointment, go to an emergency department) or if needed link the person using the online service to a clinical advisor within the NHS111 telephone service for further assessment. It is hoped that this will help improve access to services, and help to reduce the impact of growing demand for the NHS 111 telephone services. This online service is now being offered across England. As it is relatively new it is not clear at the moment how effective this service is. The University of Sheffield will look at how well the new service is working in about eight sites and assess what impact the new online service has on the existing NHS 111 telephone service by measuring any changes in the number of calls and whether the new online service provides similar advice to the NHS 111 telephone service. They will also ask people who use both the NHS111 online and telephone services if they followed the advice they were given, if they found the service easy to use and how the new online service might affect how they use health services in the future. The researchers will also assess how the new online service affects the workload and the people who work at the NHS 111 telephone service and estimate the costs of the service.

Who can participate?

People who either call the NHS111 telephone service or use the NHS111 online service in five study areas

What does the study involve?

The number of calls to the 111 telephone service and contacts with the online service over a four-year period in the study areas are measured using routine national data to see if there has been a shift from the telephone service to the online service. The researchers also estimate what the likely future numbers of users for each service will be. In selected sites they look in more detail at what happens to people who use both the online and telephone services to see if there are differences. They also ask users about their experience of using the services and what they did after their contact using a survey and more detailed interviews with people who have used the service. A particular interest is the experiences of the people that use the online

service and their views on whether it worked well or was difficult to navigate. Both the NHS111 telephone and online services already use a patient experience survey so this is used to ask some additional questions. The researchers also conduct more detailed interviews with users of the new NHS111 online service to ask in more detail about their experience. They also talk to staff to see if the introduction of the online 111 service has had any impact on their work and use the results of the statistical analysis and survey to assess whether the new service has had any effect on the costs of delivering the overall NHS111 service.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Patient views and experiences of the new service will help identify where it works well and whether any changes are needed to improve the advice provided to people who use it and make it more accessible and easy to use. Participating in the surveys or interviews is voluntary. It is possible that some people who agree to be interviewed may find recalling their health problem event upsetting. If this happens they will be able to withdraw at any time.

Where is the study run from?

The study is led by the Centre for Urgent and Emergency Care Research at the University of Sheffield. The five areas involved in the patient surveys and interviews are Yorkshire and Humber; Hampshire; South West London; Derbyshire and Bedfordshire & Luton.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

March 2019 to June 2020

Who is funding the study?

National Institute of Health Research (UK)

Who is the main contact?

Janette Turner

j.turner@sheffield.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)

Scientific

Contact name

Ms Janette Turner

ORCID ID

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3884-7875>

Contact details

University of Sheffield

Regent Court

30 Regent Street

Sheffield

United Kingdom

S1 4DA

+44 (0)114 2220761

j.turner@sheffield.ac.uk

Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number

OL1EV_V103/19

Study information

Scientific Title

An evaluation of the impact of online NHS11 on the NHS111 telephone service and potential effects on the urgent care system

Acronym

OL1EV

Study objectives

To assess if the introduction of the NHS111 online service has had an impact on reducing calls to the NHS111 telephone service and the national implications for the wider urgent care system

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

Approved 24/07/2019, North West Haydock (Manchester HRA Centre, 3rd Floor Barlow House, 4 Minshull Street, M1 3DZ; Tel: +44 (0)202 104 8012; Email: nrescommittee.northwest-haydock@nhs.net), NRES ref: 19/NW/0361

Primary study design

Observational

Study design

Observational mixed methods study

Study type(s)

Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

People seeking help for an urgent health problem

Interventions

Before and after time series of NHS111 telephone activity 3 years before and 1 year after the introduction of an online NHS11 service in 9 areas. User/patient surveys and interviews for online and telephone NHS111 services in 5 case study sites. Qualitative interviews with service providers and stakeholders. Economic evaluation.

Intervention Type

Other

Primary outcome(s)

Measured using routine national data:

1. Change in number of contacts with the NHS111 telephone service: time series analysis of

trends 3 years before and 1 year after the introduction of NHS111 online

2. Cost consequences: cost estimates of NHS111 online service, combined cost of NHS111 online and telephone services and urgent care system cost changes, measured 1 year after the introduction of NHS111 online

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. Usability, acceptability and compliance with advice provided by NHS111 online, assessed using the NHS Digital NHS 111 online patient survey and telephone interviews within 2 weeks of contact

2. Usability, acceptability and compliance with advice provided by NHS111 telephone service, assessed using the postal/telephone NHS111 patient experience survey within 2 weeks of contact

3. Changes to service provision and workforce effects, assessed using NHS staff and stakeholder interviews at least 1 year after implementation of online service

Completion date

30/06/2020

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. Individual members of the public who log in to the NHS111 online service or call the NHS111 telephone service

2. Staff and other stakeholders involved in delivery or commissioning of NHS111 services

Participant type(s)

Mixed

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Mixed

Sex

All

Key exclusion criteria

User interviews:

1. Children under 16 years

2. Unable to provide consent

Date of first enrolment

01/08/2019

Date of final enrolment

31/03/2020

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre

Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust

Springhill 2

Wakefield 41 industrial estate

Brindley Way

Wakefield

United Kingdom

WF2 0XQ

Study participating centre

South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust

7-8 Talisman Road

Bicester

United Kingdom

OX26 6HR

Study participating centre

Hertfordshire Urgent Care Service

Ascots Lane

Welwyn Garden City

United Kingdom

AL7 4HL

Study participating centre

Vocare

Cardinal Square West

10 Nottingham Road

Derby

United Kingdom

DE1 3QT

Study participating centre

Derbyshire Health United Health Care

Johnson Building

Locomotive Way

Derby

United Kingdom
DE24 8PU

Sponsor information

Organisation

University of Sheffield

ROR

<https://ror.org/05krs5044>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Government

Funder Name

National Institute for Health Research

Alternative Name(s)

National Institute for Health Research, NIHR Research, NIHRresearch, NIHR - National Institute for Health Research, NIHR (The National Institute for Health and Care Research), NIHR

Funding Body Type

Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype

National government

Location

United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The data the researchers are using will be provided by NHS Digital from information assets they hold and cannot be shared under the terms of the data-sharing agreement. Individuals can apply for the same datasets using the NHS Digital Data Access Request Service.

IPD sharing plan summary

Not expected to be made available

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article		01/11/2021	18/10/2022	Yes	No
HRA research summary			28/06/2023	No	No
Protocol (other)		07/03/2019	19/10/2022	No	No
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes