

Experiences of using NHS 111



This report is about what we found out when we asked autistic people, people with learning disabilities and their supporters about using NHS 111.



What is NHS 111?

This is the NHS service you are asked to call when you have an urgent medical need, but it is not an emergency.

What is NHS 111 for?

It is to make sure services like ambulances and accident and emergency in hospitals are available when people really need them.



It is also to make sure that people who need help quickly for a medical problem can still get help without having to wait to speak to their doctor.



How many people did we speak to?

6 people with a learning disability



4 autistic people



1 person supporting a group of self advocates



20 paid supporters



3 family members



How had people used NHS 111?



33 used the phone



11 used it for themselves



1 used the internet



23 used it for someone else

How many times did people use NHS 111?



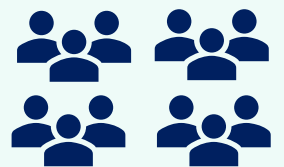
8 people once



8 people 2-5 times



6 people 5-10 times



12 people 10 or more times

What did people think about the NHS 111 service?



Very poor

8.5%



Poor

8.5%



Not good
or bad

20%



Good

46%



Very Good

17%



We asked the people who said they had a good experience what helped make it good.

What helped make a good experience?

- Lots of people experienced something good.
- People still said that overall, their experience was not good or bad or it was poor.
- This might mean that part of the service they got was good.



The top 7 things people said were good

1. I was put in touch with a doctor.
2. NHS 111 was easy to use.
3. They helped me explain what was wrong.
4. How they communicated worked for me.
5. I got help quickly.
6. They made reasonable adjustments.
7. I was given a prescription.



Some people also said being prepared before they phoned helped them have a positive experience.

What caused people to have bad experiences?



- Not everyone had good experiences.
- 19 people answered questions about the things that made theirs a bad experience.
- This is more people than said everything about their experience was bad .
- Some people probably had a mix of good and bad things happen.

The top 6 things people said were bad



1. It took too long to get the help I needed.
2. They didn't make reasonable adjustments.
3. It was hard to use or get through on the phone.
4. The questions asked didn't make sense.
5. They didn't communicate in a way that worked for me.
6. I didn't get any help from a doctor.

What did people say could make NHS 111 better?

DO:



✓ explain and reassure.



✓ talk slowly.



✓ get training from people with learning disabilities and autistic people.



✓ ask questions to help you find out if you need to make reasonable adjustments.



✓ let me speak to someone like a nurse who can ask questions based on what I say is the matter.

What did people say could make NHS 111 better?

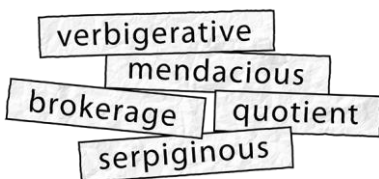
DON'T



✗ use an automated call system (press this number, press that number).



✗ ask unrelated questions.



✗ use long words.



✗ send an ambulance straight away if you are not sure it is an emergency.

What does this mean for NHS 111?

People use NHS 111 when they are worried and need help quickly.



Quick access, reassurance and a caring person

Most people found getting help quickly from someone who cared made a difference.

Reasonable adjustments

This means changing the way things are usually done so a person can use a service.



Some people need different reasonable adjustments that might be harder or easier to make.

For the people who said 111 didn't work well, it was linked to how call handlers talked to them, the questions that were asked as well as not being able to get through.

Understanding questions and answers



Some people were worried their disability would be seen more than their health condition and this would mean they did not get the help they needed.



Some people said the questions they were asked didn't make sense to help them describe what the matter was.



It is important call handlers can recognise there is something the matter and help the person get seen by someone who can understand, even if they do not understand what the matter is themselves.

Who did this work?

As part of our work with the **Health and Wellbeing Alliance**, this work was done by the partners of the **Valuing People Alliance**:



- Learning Disability England (LDE)



- The British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD)



- The National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi)