

Guide to our services

Primary Care
Toolkit



nhs24.scot

Introduction

NHS 24 continues to evolve, offering a growing range of services to support patients and the wider health and care system. To help your Practice and patients better understand what NHS 24 offers - and when and how to signpost to these services - we've developed this information toolkit.

At the centre of NHS 24 is the 111 service, a 24/7 telephone triage service that plays a key role in:

- Managing patients in the out-of-hours period requiring urgent Primary Care. Our teams ensure patients receive care in the correct place.
- Alleviating pressure on the wider NHS system by handling queries related to A&E and minor injuries.

During core business hours we recognise that General Practice remains the cornerstone of patient care in Scotland. During these periods patients should always be advised to contact their own primary care practice, with the exception of a clinical issue requiring attendance at a Minor Injury Unit (MIU) or Emergency Department.

In addition to 111, NHS 24 also provides the following national services:

- [Scottish Emergency Dental Service](#)
- [Cancer Treatment Helpline](#)
- [NHS inform](#)
- [Mental Health Hub](#)
- [Breathing Space](#)
- [Care Information Scotland](#)
- [Health Information Service](#)

111 Urgent Care and Out of Hours

A&E

NHS 24 is the first point of contact – day or night - in the Urgent Care Pathway for patients with urgent but not life-threatening health concerns. They should be directed to call 111 where they will be triaged and either given self-care advice or onward referral into their nearest Flow Navigation Centre. We recognise that local variations may exist in remote and rural locations.

Minor Injuries

Patients calling with a minor injury such as a cut that needs stitches, a possible broken bone, sprain or minor burn, should be signposted to NHS 24 on 111 for triage and/or an appointment at their nearest MIU before attending. We recognise that local variations may exist in rural locations.

Patients with an injury which occurred more than 7 days ago, should be assessed by their GP practice. National Flow Navigation Centre referral agreements prevent NHS 24 from referring these patients onto these services.

Out of Hours

NHS 24 provides access to urgent patient care when your Practice is closed. This is defined as urgent clinical care issues that require a response before the next routine care service is available. Primary Care Practices' automated telephony message should only signpost to 111 outside of core hours which are 6pm to 8am Monday to Thursday and from 6pm on Fridays until 8am on Mondays. The 111 service also provides cover for **agreed** Public Holidays such as Christmas and Easter.

The 111 service **does not** provide primary care triage or access to primary care services during core hours. This includes when a Practice has run out of on-the-day appointments, complex or time-consuming cases, when a practice is closed over lunch breaks or Protected Learning Time. Nor does NHS 24 arrange primary care appointments or offer a patient a second opinion. Patients with clinical issues that are not suitable for MIU or A+E who contact NHS 24 during core hours will not be subject to triage and will be advised to contact their own primary care practice.

Our Mental Health Services

The information below provides a brief overview of services and when to signpost to each:

Breathing Space

A free, confidential, phone and webchat service for anyone in Scotland aged 16 or over.

Call: 0800 83 85 87

Weekdays: Mon - Thurs 6pm to 2am

Weekend: Fri 6pm - Mon 6am

For Webchat: www.breathingspace.scot

When to signpost:

- Stressful situations
- Relationship difficulties
- Loneliness and isolation
- Low mood
- Bereavement and loss

111 Mental Health Hub

A service is for people in need of Urgent Mental Health Care. Available to all age groups 24/7.

Call Free: 111

When to signpost:

- Suicidal thoughts
- Self-harm (considering or active)
- Depressive illness (diagnosed)
- Young people in distress (u-16)
- Anxiety (ongoing), GAD, social anxiety, PTSD

Living Life

A free telephone-based CBT service providing 4 to 6 talking therapy sessions. Self referral.

Call: 0800 328 9655

When to signpost:

- Mild to moderate depression
- Anxiety
- Low mood

Online

The following provide hyperlinks to clinically reviewed mental health resources on NHS inform:

Mental health care guides:

Self-help guides to support a range of conditions ranging from anxiety and depression to OCD and sleep issues.

Surviving Suicidal Thoughts:

Developed for people thinking about suicide – these lived-experience videos are from people who have been there and come out the other side.

Mind to Mind:

Range of resources to support people in mental health distress including anxiety, panic, stress, grief.

SARCS

(Sexual Assault Response Co-ordination Service)

A specialist NHS service providing healthcare, support and access to forensic medical examination (FME) for people who have experienced rape or sexual assault. Individuals can access support whether or not they wish to report the incident to the police.

FMEs usually take place within 7 days, depending on the assault. In some circumstances, a healthcare professional may decide it would be appropriate for the person to have an FME after that time.

Self-referral: patients can self-refer directly to SARCS which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on the following dedicated free number **0800 148 88 88**.

When to signpost:

- Anyone who has experienced rape or sexual assault and requires support or guidance
- Individuals seeking healthcare following a rape or sexual assault
- People who wish to explore their options without immediately involving the police

- Individuals who may benefit from a forensic medical examination following a recent incident
- Family members or carers seeking advice on accessing support services

What support is available?

- Compassionate, person-centred care from specially trained healthcare professionals
- Assessment of immediate health and wellbeing needs
- Access to local SARCS services and specialist support
- Information about available options and next steps
- Access to a forensic medical examination where appropriate, including for some individuals who do not wish to make a police report at that stage

Further information

Primary care professionals and patients can find comprehensive information about the specialist service [View SARCS information on NHS inform](#)

Digital Resources to Support Patient Signposting

Primary Care Practices can now access a range of digital patient information resources directly from NHS 24 designed to support signposting and improve patient access to care. This includes signpost content on the Pharmacy 1St service.

Website Content

Downloadable materials are available from [NHS24.scot](https://www.nhs.uk/24/scot) to enhance your Practice website. Examples of content include:

NHS 24 offers several ways for people to access urgent care help. Call 111 for the following:

- you think you need A&E and it's not a life or limb threatening emergency
- painful but non-life-threatening injuries such as sprains, minor burns, cuts needing stitches, and minor fractures
- you need urgent health care advice that cannot wait until the Practice re-opens

For quick, accurate, and trusted health advice use the NHS 24 [symptom checker](#). This tool will assess your symptoms and tell you what to do next to help you find the right care, at the right place.

A range of mental health support is available to patients in addition to speaking with the Practice. [NHS 24 mental health services](#) are available to everyone in Scotland. The services include listening, offering advice, and guiding those needing support to further help if required.

To see the full range of website content, please visit the **Primary Care Resource section** on [NHS24.scot](https://www.nhs.uk/24/scot).

Waiting Area Screens

A suite of visual assets for digital screens in patient waiting areas is also available via the Primary Care Resource section on NHS24.scot. These are designed to raise awareness of services that support Primary Care including our mental health services, health information and Pharmacy 1st.



NHS 24

Struggling with your mental health?

Support is available **24/7**

- ➔ If you're in need of urgent mental health care
- ➔ call free on 111
- ➔ available to all age groups

www.nhsinform.scot/mental-health-support



NHS 24

NHS 24 Symptom Checkers

For quick health advice use the NHS 24 symptom checker

This tool will assess your symptoms and help you decide what to do next to find the right care at the right place

www.nhs24.scot/check-your-symptoms/



NHS 24

Getting the right care in the right place with 111

When to call 111:

- ➔ If you need urgent care and your GP, pharmacy or dental practice is closed
- ➔ If you think you need A&E and it's not a life or limb threatening emergency
- ➔ If you are in need of urgent mental health support

www.nhsinform.scot/111



NHS 24

NHS Pharmacy First - expert help in your community

- ➔ If you have a minor illness, a pharmacy is the first place you should go to
- ➔ Your pharmacist can give advice and medicine if they think you need it
- ➔ Visit NHS inform for full details

www.nhsinform.scot/pharmacyfirst

SMS Messaging Content

For Practices using patient messaging platforms NHS 24 has created a selection of hyperlinked SMS messages. These can be used to direct patients to NHS inform's trusted health information resources.

Common Health Conditions

Please see more information here on your condition:

[Tick bites | NHS inform](#)

[Norovirus | NHS inform](#)

[Urinary tract infection \(UTI\) | NHS inform](#)

[Sore throat | NHS inform](#)

[Gout | NHS inform](#)

[Labyrinthitis | NHS inform](#)

Addictions

Supportive information to help you can be found here:

[Alcohol, tobacco and drugs | NHS inform](#)

[Problem gambling | NHS inform](#)

MSK HUB

Please see more information here on your condition:

[Muscle, Bone and Joint Conditions](#)

Mental Health Services

Please see more information here to help with your concerns:

- For low mood & anxiety:

[Breathing Space](#)

- For Urgent Mental Health Support:

[Mental Health Hub](#)

Smoking Cessation

Additional information can be found here:

[Quit Your Way Scotland](#)

Information for Carers, including Young Carers

Additional information can be found here:

[Care Information Scotland](#)

Elderly Care Resources

Frailty

Falls are a leading cause of injury, loss of independence, and hospital admission among older adults. Frailty is now recognised as a long-term condition requiring proactive, person-centred care. People with mild frailty have twice the mortality risk of their fitter peers, and those with moderate or severe frailty are more likely to experience delayed transfers of care, emergency admissions, and long hospital stays

Falls

These links provide access to a series of short films demonstrating exercises for maintaining stability as well as clips on how to get up safely from a fall, or what to do if the person can't get up.

Please see more information here: [Falls Prevention Exercises](#)

Please see more information here: [What to do if you fall](#)



Contact, thanks and follow up

We are grateful for your support. If you have any questions or need help, please contact:

NHS 24's Corporate Communications Team at:
Corporate.Communications@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk



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