**Website copy for practices**

**Think 111 First**

The NHS is changing how people access urgent and emergency care across the country.

We are making it easier and safer for patients to get the right treatment at the right time and aiming to reduce the waiting time to be seen in an Emergency Department (ED) or Accident and Emergency (A&E) department.

Patients with life-threatening emergencies should continue to call 999.

**Contact NHS 111 First**

From 1 December 2020 if you have an urgent but not life-threatening health problem and think you need to go to an emergency department, you should contact NHS 111 first. This can be done either online or by phone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and the service is free to use (including from all mobiles).

An experienced health advisor will talk to you to find out more about your health problem and get you to see the right local service. This could be your GP, a pharmacy, a local minor injuries unit or urgent treatment centre.

If it looks like you need to go to the emergency department, you’ll speak to a senior medical professional who will be able to arrange a timed arrival slot for you at the emergency department if necessary.

If you need urgent emergency care, an ambulance will be sent immediately.

**Calling 111 first will mean:**

* Where needed, more patients will speak with a senior medical professional earlier and get the right treatment first time.
* If someone needs an urgent face-to-face assessment or treatment, this can be arranged without delay - leading to shorter waiting times for all patients
* By advising people where and when to go, we can better control queues in emergency department waiting rooms and lower the risk of catching or spreading COVID-19

Take a look at our frequently asked questions *add link to FAQs* for more information.