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University Health Board

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LAUNCH OF 111 SERVICE IN CWM TAF MORGANNWG

A brand new non-emergency healthcare telephone number is launching today, November 24, in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board area.

The new 111 service will now be available in the areas of Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf today. The number is already being used in the Bridgend area of the health board.

111 is a FREE to call number and instead of having to ring different numbers to contact NHS Direct Wales or GP out-of-hours, dialling 111 will give access to both services.

Alan Lawrie, the health board's executive director of operations, said: "The main benefit to patients is that for the first time, they can call this easy to remember number and receive expert care, advice and information regarding urgent, but not life-threatening, health concerns 24 hours a day.

For patients who are unsure whether or not their urgent health concern is an emergency, a trained call handler can determine this following a series of questions, and can arrange an ambulance, if required.

Ringling 111 will help to signpost patients to the right place, to get the right treatment at the right time.

The service is clinically-led, with trained call handlers working together with clinicians, such as GPs, nurses, advanced nurse practitioners and pharmacists.

The service supports the wider campaign encouraging patients to Stay Well This Winter and help to keep our emergency departments (EDs or also known as A&E) and 999 service for those who really need them.

As part of a successful phased rollout throughout Wales, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board is the fifth health board to launch this new service.

Please note, the Dental Helpline number 0300 123 5060 will not be affected. Patient should continue to use this number for any urgent dental queries out-of-hours.

Richard Bowen, programme director for 111 NHS Wales, said: "Accessing urgent care services can be really quite confusing if you're a member of the public, knowing what services are available and when, and which healthcare professional or service is best placed to meet your needs.

"NHS Wales want to make that simpler for patients so from today, people living in the Cwm Taf Morgannwg area will now only need to call one number – 111.

"It's simple to access and can provide direct advice and signpost you to a range of different options. We also have an online symptom checker which patients can also access for common complaints and conditions. In a time of increasing workload it's fantastic to be able to work with health professionals including nurses, GPs and pharmacists to ensure our patients get the help they need as effectively and efficiently as possible."