



To
Y&H Primary Care Commissioners
Y&H Urgent Care Commissioners

White Rose House
West Parade
Wakefield WF1 1LT

Date: 25 November 2021

Dear Commissioner

NHS111 Support for Protected Learning Time (PLT) in 2021-22

Following consideration at the regional Integrated Commissioning Forum (ICF) and a further recent clinical review, I am writing to confirm that NHS111 cover for Protected Learning Time (PLT) sessions in Yorkshire & Humber is being stood down for the remainder of 2021-22.

PLT sessions being held in November will continue to be supported to avoid disruption, however **NHS111 cover will not be available for PLT sessions from 1st December onwards**. A schedule of the affected sessions is included in Appendix 1 below. Areas with PLT sessions in early December are being contacted this week to notify them of the change as early as possible. I recognise that this may create challenges for some areas in arranging alternative cover at relatively short notice. However, the decision to stand down PLT cover is necessary to assist the system in managing the extreme demand pressures and clinical risk within the NHS111/IUC service:

- Our NHS111 call demand is currently 16.3% above planned levels, equating to ca. 8,000 additional calls received every week compared to pre-pandemic levels – with much of this additional demand focused on the in-hours period.
- Combined with increasing call length and ongoing national recruitment challenges, the increased IUC demand has meant that call answer timescales, call abandonment rates and clinical call back times have all been severely impacted

A significant national recovery programme is underway to develop additional NHS111 capacity and improve service performance over the coming months. Whilst our joint NHS111/IUC recovery work in Yorkshire & Humber is being undertaken at pace, we are unlikely to see significant system-level improvement in NHS111 performance until the end of 2021/22. The review of PLT cover was therefore undertaken as part of a broader set of measures intended to reduce clinical risk over the winter period.

Next Steps:

As part of the recovery programme, we will be working with local systems and the YAS NHS111 service during Quarter 4 to confirm PLT cover requirements for 2022/23. We will ensure that this occurs in good time to support the development of your future PLT plans.

I appreciate your understanding and support for this decision.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat Keane', with a horizontal line underneath.

Pat Keane

Programme Lead - Integrated Commissioning IUEC – Yorkshire and Humber