



Who Do I Call? Requesting Out of Hours Help

This leaflet contains information about the services that you can contact if your usual GP or district nurse service is not available. Read through this leaflet carefully and use the space below to make a list of numbers that you want to use as a reference in an emergency. You may find it helpful to go through this leaflet with your GP, district nurse, or specialist palliative care nurse. If you call your usual GP or district nurses outside their normal working hours, their answer phone message will give details about how you can contact 'out of hours' services. Some GP surgeries' telephone lines will automatically redirect all telephone calls to of hours GP service 111.

My emergency out of hours contacts list

Out of Hours GP service: 111
District nurses: 0330 726 0077

Out of Hours Services – Triage

When you call any of the out of hours services, the person you speak to - the 'call handler' - will ask you several questions. These questions help the call handler to identify the urgency of the call and the most appropriate course of action. These questions are known as 'triage' or 'triaging' questions. Often the call handler will collect this information, and then ask someone else to call you back. It is important for you to speak as clearly and calmly as possible in order for the out of hours services to deal with your call effectively and efficiently. Be aware that many out of hours services staff do not have direct access to patient medical records. Patient records are held at the GP practice and usually the call handler has no background clinical information about the patient.

When you call an out of hours service, you need to give the following information for them to triage your call:

- The diagnosis and any current treatments
- Current symptoms including pain, breathlessness or vomiting
- Information about medicines including injectable medications that are already in the home, or that the district nurses have been visiting because there is a syringe pump in place
- Your telephone number in case someone needs to call you back
- Any other information such as ReSPECT form, A "Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation" (DNACPR) form, an advance decision to refuse treatment.
- Advise that Arthur Rank Hospice Charity are involved in the patient's care

If you need to contact an on-call GP or district nurse you can ask them to telephone the Hospice for advice, especially if you are well known to the Hospice.

Urgent Care Cambridgeshire (UCC) out of hours GP service, NHS 111 Out of Hours GP service Contact number 111

Can be contacted 24 hours a day for advice or medical attention. This is the number to call if you require a GP on weekdays from 18.00 to 08.30 or at any time during the weekend or at bank holidays and you are not able to wait until your surgery reopens.

What happens when I ring 111?

You will initially speak with a trained call handler who will ask you questions to triage your call and plan the appropriate response. It will be helpful to provide the information discussed earlier. They may pass the triage information to a GP or Nurse who will call you back to give appropriate advice. If your call requires face to face assessment, they will arrange for a health professional to visit your home or for you to be seen as an outpatient.

What happens when I call UCC?

Either a GP or another trained call handler will answer your call and ask the triage questions. Sometimes medical records are passed to UCC (only with the patient's permission) so the call handler may have some information. If the call handler identifies your call as a potentially life-threatening emergency, they may immediately send out an ambulance or 'rapid response' vehicle. An example of this is if the call handler believes someone is having a potential heart attack. If your call is less urgent the call handler will discuss your concerns with the GP on call. The GP will then determine the most appropriate response. Please be aware that you may not receive an immediate answer, and you may need to wait for someone to call you back. During this telephone conversation you will be given information advising you what to do next.

On-call district nurses

Contact number 0330 726 0077. Opening times: Mon to Thu from 18:00 until 8:00 the following morning and weekends Fri from 18:00 until Mon 8:00 and Bank Holidays - all day and night. The on-call district nursing service provides services at a patient's home for specific tasks such as to administer certain medicines, set up or renew medicines in a syringe pump, assess and treat wounds or assess care needs.

What happens when I call the out of hours district nurses service?

The number for the district nurses connects directly to a call centre. The call handler will take

some of the triage information and pass the information on to the on-call district nurse. The district nurse will then call you back. Please be aware, district nurses are often busy with other patients, therefore you may need to wait for 30 minutes or more before the district nurse can call you back. When the district nurse calls back or visits make them aware of any information that was not collected on your original call to the on-call nurses. The district nurse will advise you what to do next.

Arthur Rank Hospice

Telephone: 01223 675777

Opening times: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

If you call Arthur Rank Hospice out of hours, your call is directed to the Inpatient Unit. This number is mainly for professionals who need to ask for specialist medical and nursing advice.

What happens when I call Arthur Rank Hospice out of hours?

Please call UCC or the on-call nurses if you have any urgent problems or require a home assessment, as Arthur Rank Hospice is unable to provide emergency support. If you call the Arthur Rank Hospice for non-urgent advice, be aware that you may need to wait before your call is answered if the nursing staff are busy when you call.

Emergency Services

Telephone: 999 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Unless the patient needs immediate assessment and transfer into hospital, it may be more appropriate for you to call one of the other services. For example, you can call UCC for a medical problem, and the on-call district nurses for a nursing problem. You should call 999 if there is a medical emergency or sudden unexpected change in condition, for example, chest pain, extreme shortness of breath, severe pain, fits, uncontrolled bleeding, severe allergic reactions, or unconsciousness. Be aware that unless specific written instructions are in place in the home, ambulance staff have a duty to treat intensively.

This includes attempting cardio-pulmonary resuscitation and transfer to hospital, which may be against the wishes of the patient or their family. If you are not sure, call UCC.

What happens when I call 999?

The call handler will ask you which service you require. Request the ambulance service. The call handler will then ask what is wrong and what has happened, the exact location of the incident and the the phone number you are calling from. They will then ask the patient's age, sex and medical history, whether the patient is conscious, breathing, and if there is any bleeding or chest pain and details of any injury and how it happened.

Urgent life-threatening emergency

If the call handler assesses the situation as urgent and life-threatening, they may immediately send a rapid response vehicle or ambulance to the patient. When the rapid response or ambulance staff arrive, advise them about all the triage information. In particular, make sure that you let them know about any patient wishes, for example, if the patient does not want to go to hospital. Also make sure you show them any relevant forms, for example a ReSPECT Document, a 'Preferred Priorities for Care' (PPC) document (if the patient has one), a 'Do Not Attempt Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) form (if the patient has one) or an Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment (ADRT), sometimes known as a 'living will' (if the patient has one).

Let them know that Arthur Rank Hospice is involved in the patient's care. Ambulance staff will assess the situation and are able to administer some medications within their agreed protocols. They may also telephone other services to obtain further medical advice. If the patient's heart has stopped, ambulance staff will perform cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), unless you show them a valid DNACPR form. The CPR process may be traumatic for everyone. In some cases, ambulance staff may want to take the patient to hospital for further treatment. They will only allow the patient to remain at home if the patient can clearly refuse or if there is a completed form (for example, an ADRT form) which documents the patient's advance decision to refuse admission to hospital.

Non-life-threatening emergency

If the call handler assesses the situation as non-life-threatening, they may give advice over the telephone, refer to another out of hours service, or send ambulance staff as a non-urgent visit, non-urgent ambulance visits usually arrive within 20–30 minutes.

All information is correct at time of print and may be subject to change. Please visit our website for the most up-to-date information. If you have any feedback or would like this information in a different format or language, please contact us.