



Whakarongorau
Aotearoa//
New Zealand
Telehealth
Services//

Service User Insights

Between 2019 and 2023, 100,000 people shared their feedback on our National Telehealth Services like Healthline, 1737 and Quitline, helping us understand their needs, and improve our services.

Executive summary

The voices of our users, stakeholders, and staff bring our services to life and helps Whakarongorau adapt to their changing needs

Our focus is on tāngata whai ora – people seeking wellness

Everything we do is centered around the needs and outcomes of the people who use our services. We adapt to the needs and challenges of whānau and community to deliver impactful work and improve our services.

We recognise that one size does not fit all, and actively seek to understand the diverse needs and priorities of the people who use our services, and their communities. This diverse input is crucial for our service improvement process.

With feedback from around 100,000 people over the last five years, we share these insights with partners and funders to highlight the experiences of tāngata whai ora.

We know what makes a great experience

Tāngata whai ora value:

- Support when needed, without being transferred elsewhere
- An empathetic listener who understands them
- Expert clinical advice that can be life-saving
- Equity-focused pathways and clear communication.

Critical feedback drives our improvement

Tāngata whai ora dislike:

- Incorrect or disagreeable advice
- Difficulties accessing the service (e.g. long wait times)
- Interactions with unsupportive or unempathetic staff.

We use this feedback to improve our processes and services.

How we listen.

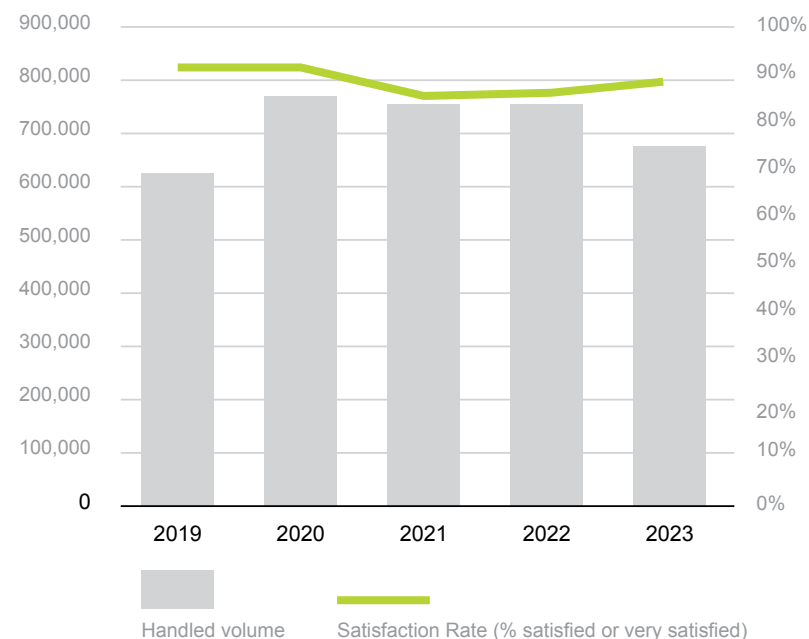
We collect user feedback through surveys, direct feedback, and focus groups.

- 1. Surveys** are sent via SMS after service, are anonymous, and help us improve through identified themes.
- 2. Direct feedback** is received via website, email, or phone, allowing follow-up for specific details.
- 3. Focus groups** involve users and stakeholders to understand needs and test improvements.

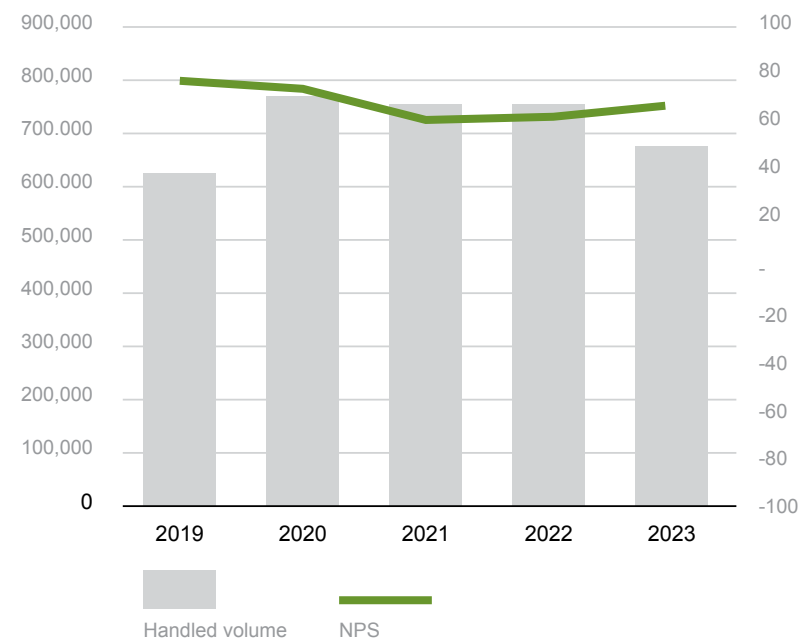
Despite growing demand, our users remain highly satisfied and continue to recommend our services to friends and family

Between 2019 and 2023 the National Telehealth Service (NTS) supported a total of 3,717,529 contacts, with an average satisfaction rate of 89% and an NPS of 69.

Satisfaction Rate and Contacts handled



Net Promoter Score and Contacts handled



Data includes Healthline, Mental Health & Addictions, Quitline, and Poisons, with totals across all services, not averages.

Net Promoter Score (NPS) measures how likely users are to recommend the service. According to Customer Gauge, an NPS over 58 is above the industry average (NPS Healthcare Guide).



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We know what our users value most.

- 1. Access** – they want swift support
- 2. Connection** – they want to be heard
- 3. Expertise** – they want the best clinical advice
- 4. Equity** – they want to be understood.

A light green background with several thin, white, hand-drawn style lines. One line is a long, sweeping curve that starts from the top left and goes towards the bottom right. Another set of lines forms a large, roughly circular shape in the upper right quadrant, with multiple overlapping strokes.

1. Access is our top priority.

Users want a responsive, accessible service, emphasising the need to manage demand and wait times. They worry about what they would have done without us.

Immediate access is critical for our users.

While wait times are consistently noted as the top area needing improvement, tāngata whai ora also recognise the challenges of high demand for healthcare and advice, especially when local services are not promptly available.

They often express appreciation for the support received despite waiting:

“It was worth the wait... thank you, I feel very relieved after speaking to them.”

Feedback consistently shows high satisfaction across all our services, averaging 90%.

Over five years, satisfaction ranged from 66% for Mental Health and Addiction services to 98% for Poisons services. This variation reflects the broader needs and expectations of Mental Health and Addiction contacts, compared to the more specific nature of calls to the Poisons service, with other services' satisfaction rates falling within this range.

“By time I called Healthline I had already been ill for a week. Tried to get a GP appointment but wasn't available for another week. After being triaged by Healthline, the nurse decided I could not wait for another week to be seen so she called my GP, GP called me to say I had an appointment within that hour.”

“My concern is that if this service is discontinued what happens to people who can not afford health service if they can't drive or can't afford to go to a GP. I don't think there needs to be any improvement in your service. Continue to do what you do. Ngā mihi mo o Koutou manaaki, awhina, tautoko hoki.”

Our users want to stay at home.

One common theme from all feedback is the importance of resolving concerns promptly to help people stay in their homes.

Users highly value first call resolution, which gives them confidence to manage symptoms at home and guidance on monitoring changes. They appreciate avoiding the need to travel to a GP or ED, often citing significant wait times for these services.

When asked about alternatives if Healthline wasn't available, many would have sought ED or called 111, while some might have ignored their concerns altogether.

As one user put it:

“I am likely to have dismissed my issue as an overreaction on my part. If I had done this, the result would have been life-threatening, as in the process of following Healthline advice another more serious issue was discovered.”

Me, my wife and 16-month-old son caught Covid. My son also got Croup and had very bad issues with breathing. We ended up going to Middlemore hospital in an ambulance.

The following day after leaving hospital we had the same symptoms at 3am.

Healthline spent 30 minutes on the phone with us and talked us through everything. We left the conversation feeling very comfortable and didn't require another trip to hospital. The nurse was a wealth of knowledge and knew everything possible to help us. This included a video call to watch our son's breathing.

This was the first time needing a service like this and it was unbelievable... as it saves blocking up the hospitals and we still got the same outcome and direction on medication use and monitoring our little man. A huge thanks to Healthline for your outstanding support.

2. Connection is crucial.

Tāngata whai ora tell us that they appreciate when call takers take the time to understand and address their specific needs. They want to be heard, and helped, with empathy.

Empathy and rapport are vital.

Users consistently highlight the value of feeling heard and understood by our kaimahi, which fosters trust and openness.

Feedback often mentions our staff's ability to keep callers calm and reassured during distressing times.

As one user put it:

“The nurse was patient and reassuring; I felt clearer about my symptoms after our conversation.”

Creating rapport with tāngata whai ora helps them to feel safe, without judgement, and encourages them to open up and trust the advice they are being provided.

“The nurse was very empathetic, encouraged me to take my time and (said) she'll be there when I'm ready. I felt very cared for, which in and of itself had a massive impact to my mental state.”

“I found the lady was an excellent listener. She was kind, empathetic and validated my feelings. She was compassionate and caring in her approach.”

“My daughter managed to get the cap off an essential oil roller for teething while in the car. I felt I had really good advice without any judgement or questions. It was excellent reassurance and peace of mind. Very grateful for this valuable service.”



3. Expertise is life-saving.

Tāngata whai ora trust our clinicians to advise accurately, interpret symptoms, and provide compassionate care.

Connecting with clinical expertise is life-saving.

Many users across our services express that we've saved their lives. In our Health Services team, nurses often notice crucial details that indicate the seriousness of a condition.

For example:

“They advised me to call an ambulance, which saved my life.”

In mental health support, brief interventions can be pivotal, offering immediate empathy and understanding that significantly reduces the risk of self-harm or suicide.

One user shared:

“The person I spoke to gave me a new perspective when I felt suicidal; they saved my life.”

“The man I spoke to was very helpful and kind, I felt cared about. He said I should go to the ER, I was bleeding after a hysterectomy and not sure if I should be worried. The advice he gave was correct, I had an infection and needed antibiotics. They got it right and really helped someone.”

“She made me feel not alone. That while I was having a big reaction and finding it hard to manage recent situations my feeling were understandable and relatable. This made all the difference in a dark time.”



4. Equity has a profound impact.

Tāngata whai ora tell us our equity-focused pathways have made a real difference.

Community voice drives our equity improvement.

Direct engagement with local communities uncovered a strong preference for cultural sensitivity, language options, and a whānau-centered approach to telehealth.

Feedback from whānau also confirmed that they have higher levels of trust in face-to-face services and expressed the need for clear and simple health information.

These insights drove enhancements in our equity practices and inspired the development of dedicated services, such as the Māori Pathway; a dedicated option where whānau can speak to a Māori clinician.

They also drove improvements like our internal cultural identity programme to promote cultural sensitivity and enhance competency in engaging with all tāngata whai ora.

During 2023, the Healthline Māori pathway supported a total of 5741 contacts, with an average satisfaction rate of 91% and a Net Promoter Score of 77.

“Excellent I was referred to the Māori service and this was brilliant compassionate empathetic enabling encouraging beautiful service from the wahine who served me.”

“Initially I felt a little anxious about calling, however an option to speak to a Māori clinician helped greatly! A second call five days later I was confident to speak to others.

They asked the right questions and were so professional, patient and kind! I followed the recommendations suggested and felt respected and compassion. Gave me heaps of confidence to return to my GP! I am so grateful to have had the excellent service of Healthline available to me! ”

“Being able to help an entire whānau is awesome.”

Our equity pathways consistently receive positive feedback.

Since January 2023, Healthline has offered culturally and clinically competent Māori clinician support for tāngata whai ora and whānau.

The Net Promoter Score, based on how likely someone is to recommend our services to friends and family, for this service pathway, remained high at 77 throughout 2023, compared to Healthline's overall score of 73. Quitline's Māori Pathway, launched in early 2022 to better assist Māori communities in quitting smoking, prioritises integrating the cultural perspectives of our tāngata whai ora into support delivery.

In 2023, Quitline's Māori Pathway achieved a Net Promoter Score of 60, significantly surpassing Quitline's overall score of 46.

“Quitline people demonstrate to me they are highly responsive no matter how long I've been on the programme. They understand my smoking addiction and praise me for the achievements I have made despite falling off wagon once or twice. In addition to this, there is more diversity now with language particularly with te reo Māori. Quitline is now so much more responsive, adaptive and knowledgeable for us.”

“Building trust is the most important part in making sure the call is successful.”

“I really appreciated talking to someone from my community.”

Our partners' feedback informs our work.

Our partners mainly give us feedback through informal channels. We hear praise for our services, especially when we've helped patients in their absence. However, we primarily receive feedback about areas needing improvement.

Common issues involve sharing information about tāngata whai ora, and we're currently enhancing our technology and operations, to tackle these challenges together.

We adapt to our partners' needs.

Feedback from various sectors highlights the positive impact of our services and informs how we scale or adjust our services.

Healthcare professionals praise the crucial support given to patients, noting our contributions to their recovery and ongoing treatment success. Public health authorities acknowledge our proactive interventions, citing examples where our timely advice has successfully managed and contained infectious diseases, safeguarding community health.

“I would like to thank your team for the great advice given to 2 people who rang Healthline recently. Yesterday, the Healthline nurse suspected measles and advised the family to ring ahead to ED. ED was able to meet the person in the car park with a mask and take them straight to an appropriate room without exposing any staff or anyone in the waiting room. This action has saved endless hours of contact tracing, anxiety for members of the public and reduced measles spread in the community. The person has been diagnosed with PCR confirmed measles.”

REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH

“I had a great conversation with a RN Key Worker at an AOD service today, who was extremely complimentary of the support 1737 has been providing to her patient. He has been contacting the lines frequently, and there has been multiple break glass episodes. She was very impressed with our responses to him and our commitment to sticking by him and keeping him safe. She also said she wanted the call takers to know that they have been instrumental in his recovery journey. He is currently participating really well in an intensive treatment programme with AOD, and she feels we have helped him hugely in that journey.”

DHB NURSE

We support in times of crisis.

Our teams are recognised for their effective emergency response, and emergency services support, triaging and redirecting to lighten the load for our partners, and ensure everyone gets the right assistance swiftly.

Professionals across different fields value the high-quality support from our helplines, emphasising our role as a reliable resource in mental health and crisis intervention services.

These insights from feedback underscore our commitment to delivering impactful services across diverse sectors and communities.

“Twice you were mentioned by name by two different call takers as being professional, kind and friendly Thank you so much! I really appreciate all you do.”

NZ POLICE

“I was just talking to my team about what a lovely call it was ... really empathic, thorough and helpful for the patient and her partner.”

AMBULANCE EMERGENCY TRIAGE

“... (I have) had a client raving to me this morning about how helpful they have found your helpline. So thank you very much, it is such a blessing to have people like yourselves that clients can call on when in need. ”

We're always aiming for better.

We're continuously looking for improvement opportunities.

Regularly gathering feedback from tāngata whai ora, stakeholders, and communities is essential for continuously improving our services and understanding their perspectives to deliver better outcomes for all.

We have improved our services by allowing users to upload photos, offering a call-back web page, and exploring new ways to meet peoples' needs when they're in distress.

New capability: image upload

Image upload allows clinicians to request images from callers to get more information. From March 2021 to December 2022, 40,045 images were analysed, making up 6% of total Healthline calls.



We heard...

Tāngata whai ora expressed a need to share photos for a better consultation:
“It would be helpful to send photos to medical professionals.”

In response, we enhanced our digital solutions.



We responded by...

Introducing image upload functionality to support the triage process. This enhancement allows users to securely upload photos and videos, facilitating more accurate advice and empowering users in managing their health. Starting in August 2022, users could upload images through Healthline and Emergency Triage. By late 2023, this feature expanded to include video uploads.



Now we're hearing...

Users appreciate the convenience and empowerment this brings to their healthcare journey.
“The ability to upload images was so helpful in a busy health system.”

New capability: Healthline Online

Healthline Online, a web-based service, enables users to request a call-back from Healthline for health advice and information.



We heard...

An overwhelming number of tāngata whai ora preferred a callback option over waiting in a queue:
“A callback option would be good, so you don’t have to wait on hold.”



We responded by...

Launching Healthline Online to streamline access to healthcare support, a digital option where users can request a clinician callback by providing their details. Since its inception, it has been utilised over 18,760 times, reducing wait times and improving user experience. In the future, we will use this service to assist in triage and prioritisation.



Now we’re hearing...

Users value the time-saving aspect, skipping queue wait times.

“The quick callback after entering details online meant I could focus on my health concerns right away.”

New capability: improved IVR experience in 1737

Giving callers quick support and options helps meet their mental health needs when demand is high.



We heard...

Requests for additional support options while waiting to connect with a counsellor via 1737:

“During wait time, can there be other support numbers or services to contact if a person is desperate to get help?”



We responded by...

Enhancing our IVR (Interactive Voice Response) system to provide users with SMS support links and different pathway choices designed to reduce their anxiety, while waiting to speak with a counsellor.

This initiative ensures users have access to alternative support options during high-demand periods.



Now we're hearing...

Users appreciate having alternative support options during high-demand periods.

“The support links provided while waiting were helpful, ensuring I received valuable support promptly after connecting.”



We change our ways, as well as our services.

We have also improved our team's ability to handle distressing situations, built a better system for triage notes, and foster inclusivity.

New capability: recognising distress and providing support

Giving callers quick support and options helps meet their mental health needs when demand is high.



We heard...

Complaints about kaimahi being rude and dismissive:

“This guy was argumentative, unhelpful, rude, and argues that my problems have been resolved by other counsellors. He made me feel unimportant and angry. I swore at him and I don’t usually swear at people.”



We responded by...

Connecting with kaimahi who reported abusive callers to understand why they might interpret distress as abuse and respond aggressively. We developed a new training programme and resources to help kaimahi recognise and de-escalate distress. This training was rolled out across all front-line teams.

New capability: improving information for GPs

Providing clear and concise triage reports to GPs is crucial for effective patient management and timely care



We heard...

Some GPs were frustrated with the complexity and inadequate summaries of triage outcome reports:

“I don’t have time to go through all these triage details, I just need a good summary of the assessment, right up front.”



We responded by...

Working with our Clinical Leads and Clinical Governance Group to redesign the triage outcome reports. We piloted the new reports with a small group of GPs, iterated based on their feedback, and then implemented the improved reports across Healthline and Emergency Triage services.

New capability: respecting gender diversity

Creating a supportive environment ensures transgender individuals feel respected and valued. Using correct pronouns and showing empathy builds trust, encouraging them to seek help without fear. This approach improves health outcomes by ensuring they receive appropriate and compassionate care



We heard...

Feedback about the lack of empathy and understanding for transgender tāngata whai ora, incorrect use of pronouns, and inappropriate advice from kaimahi:

“I called 1737 about my mental health issues regarding transgender stuff. The person who took my call gave his own opinions and pressured me to accept others’ views. Now I feel worse than before I dialed the number.”



We responded by...

Holding workshops with transgender tāngata whai ora, which led to the co-development of new training for kaimahi. This training helps our frontline kaimahi understand and empathize with the unique challenges and considerations that impact transgender whai ora and how to engage and advise them appropriately and respectfully.



**We're on a mission of
continuous improvement.
We'll innovate and evolve so
communities have the right
health services, in the right
place, at the right time.**



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Appendix

Healthline feedback

“

I felt like my nurse was very compassionate, she listened and took my case very seriously which was the opposite of what I got at the emergency room. She was very good, and I was very grateful to have had the interaction.

The nurse was so reassuring and put me at ease. She asked lots of questions and really listened to me. She talked me through providing photos of my son's rash and responded with appropriate advice that I acted upon. Lovely manner and I felt confident in her advice. Would use this resource again.

The person on the phone was very respectful and understanding. I appreciated their expertise as I didn't want to call an ambulance if it was not necessary. The expert helped me recognise that an ambulance was required, and I didn't feel guilty about it. I appreciate that.

Excellent service. My local health centre would have charged me \$30.00 to triage or speak to a nurse who is then likely to rely on health line information.

Nurse was very helpful and patient. I felt reassured and much clearer about my symptoms after the call. Such a great service, needs more funding and staff.

Super helpful and re-assuring. FaceTime and being able to send photos was so helpful!

Excellent service. Jo the nurse was so very helpful and patient when I struggled to send photos through. She was amazing and the doctor came back to us quite quickly as well.

By time I called Healthline I had already been ill for a week. Tried to get a GP appointment but wasn't available for another week. After being triaged by Healthline, the nurse decided I could not wait for another week to be seen so she called my GP, GP called me to say I had an appointment within that hour.

Mental Health & Addictions feedback

“

The counsellor was very good, was able to help me through some grounding exercises until I was calm. She was able to relate to me which is important. The wait time was 30 minutes which feels a lot longer when anxious and you don't know how longer it's going to be, I got tempted to just hang up. Glad I didn't hang up and I got through.

It was nice and comforting to be able to reach out to someone during a time of need in the middle of the night

The advisor was very empathetic. What surprised me more was she gave me some really good practical advice. I am going through separation and felt stuck. My initial expectation was that a counsellor would work with my “emotions” so I would feel better about it, but she gave me some idea on what actions to take. There aren't many professionals I could talk to about this because they usually say I should go to a lawyer, which is quite expensive. I felt she was the best person I could speak to that time. Huge thanks!!

Someone was there when I needed to be heard.

I called 2 times over two days and both times felt reassured and understood and was given short term strategies. Also, I never felt rushed and really appreciated the time they took to listen.

I can't say enough good things about this service. It has helped me to begin to recognise abuse and trauma. It's been giving me support as I engage with and learn to set boundaries with abusers. And as I process the fear, grief and other emotions that come. It's been giving me support as I begin the journey of healing and learn what a more normal life looks like.

I am currently in respite I suffer from ADHD and PTSD and are going through menopause. Lynn your counsellor or also had adhd she was like turning a light on in the dark room I've been in for about five years now. Absolutely brilliant advice both to talk about with my go and some natural and cognitive suggestions I will definitely be using your service and telling others how absolutely wonderful my experience with you was.

NEED TO TALK?

1737

alcohol  drug
HELPLINE
0800 787 797

Gambling
Helpline
AOTEAROA

Depression
Helpline

Quitline feedback

“

I can't think of one thing to make the service better I mean how can you improve on excellent. I thought about this the other day, but having an app where there is a forum to talk to other people quitting where they can collaborate on facts and tips. Like a support group on fb but beta

I call Quitline because needed support for giving up vaping and I learned that u guys not supporting vaping !! I need to start smoking cigarette to get support from u !!

My experience thus far has been impeccable. If the treatment, support & level of contact was as good for mental health sufferers as it is for people who are wanting to quit smoking. We'd have less sick people in NZ. You are doing an amazing job. Thank you

The person was very helpful with tips to help with addiction to smoking in general but I felt pretty let down when I was trying to discuss quitting vaping rather than quitting smoking cigs because seemed like they didn't have any support for that because they use vaping as a way of stopping smoking cigarettes. So when I tried to talk about quitting vaping they didn't know how to help me. I felt sidelined and im not sure if I can have help from a coach now because I'm trying to stop vaping not stop cigarettes. I was smoking cigarettes and then moved to vaping but now o want to stop that too and I feel theres no support for that

I was very happy with the experience i had with quit line. It was friendly and efficient.

Sometimes it felt like there were long gaps between contact from quitline (by text). The time of day for the text message was often around 10am which was one of the times of greatest cravings. I understand why that seems logical but sometimes the text actually reminded me about smoking when I had forgotten about it. Maybe consider varying the time of day for texts more?

Poisons feedback



“

When looking for help with my situation I didn't realise it was the poison centre I should have called. So, I waited 49 mins to speak to someone on Healthline while I was inwardly panicking.

My daughter managed to get the cap off an essential oil roller for teething while in the car. I felt I had really good advice without any judgement or questions. It was excellent reassurance and peace of mind. Very grateful for this valuable service.

I didn't feel judged or silly for calling. Operator was friendly, helpful and professional

Just wanted to commend the person who answered our questions and put our worries at ease. Tuumeke rawa koe!

I really felt the professionalism was excellent and I certainly was treated with respect.

Excellent all round. I was very grateful I didn't have to leave home to get the advice as I'm hours from any town.

If manpower allows, a follow up phone call a few hours later to check.

Lovely kind person on the phone, showed empathy, made me feel calm, was thorough with questions, good knowledge, made me feel at ease, gave me good clues for proper diagnosis & what to look for if things go worse & clear steps on what to do next

I definitely felt my concern was taken very seriously even though I felt I could have been told I over-reacted.

It was the first time I called and was surprised by how good it was

Emergency triage feedback



“

The care and reassurance I received was incredible. The nature of why we rang wasn't the nicest so having the right person to do the job gave me a lot of closure. The team that took care of me had a real passion for the job and it showed through the care they gave.

I am very satisfied and happy with the telephone assessment call I had received. The paramedic was very helpful, reassuring and gave me confidence in how I should help my husband get better as he had fainted, and I didn't know what to do. The paramedic guided me very well and I felt reassured by his words that my husband will be alright. Thank you for your awesome service.

The instructions given by the nurse were clear and simple. I am deaf and I had no problem following her. I felt that I could deal with the serious fever symptoms that my husband was having. I was also aware that I could get more help if I needed it.

I was reluctant to phone 111, as I wasn't sure if my situation warranted an ambulance. But the man who took my call was very helpful in assessing my needs. I was equally grateful to get a call back from a nurse who I could further discuss my situation. Her advice helped with my health and the decision that an ambulance would not be required. This was my first experience with the 111 service, and it was a positive experience.

I rang because my family was panicking even though I knew the child would be fine, and the wound would heal well. The video call came at a time and in a place where there was no local emergency health care. The nurse was very helpful, professional and reassuring, and made all the difference to my son and daughter-in-law. All was well as a result. We are all very grateful for this wonderful service, and it certainly saved having to be visited by the busy ambulance medics. The wait would have been a lot longer as well.



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