

Patient Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)

Information for patients and carers

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formacie, proszę skontaktować się z członkiem personelu, który ją dla Państwa przygotuje.

Dacă aveți nevoie de această broșură într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rog să discutați cu un membru al personalului să se ocupe de acest lucru pentru dumneavoastră

如果您需要本传单的其他语言版本或无障碍格式，请联系工作人员为您安排。

إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

If you have any questions or concerns about our new Patient Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU) Service, please call our department on 0151 430 1234

What is Patient Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)?

PIFU puts you in control of making an appointment when you need it and provides you with direct access to guidance when you need it. The majority of patients with stable long-term conditions, do not require regular follow-up appointments by the hospital team. Research has shown that regular visits do not necessarily help to prevent your condition returning or identify new problems.

Instead of being offered regular clinic visits and routine check-ups with your consultant, PIFU patients can make their own appointment only when they need it e.g. when you experience a flare-up of your condition – reducing the unnecessary anxiety, travel and time spent waiting for a routine follow-up.

Why are we introducing this new type of follow-up?

We are trialling this type of follow-up because it offers a number of benefits. These include:

- PIFU puts you in control of your own outpatient follow-up. Appointments can be made based on your individual needs instead of being at routine intervals, which often do not add value for patients and waste valuable resources. If you experience a flare-up in symptoms, you will be able to receive guidance when you need it.
- Patients frequently spend time and money to attend appointments that are not essential. The number of people making these journeys will be greatly reduced and we hope it will improve your experience.
- Freeing up appointments means we can reduce the waiting times for people who need an appointment, enabling them to be seen more quickly.
- It will also help us to cut down our carbon footprint, by reducing the number of unnecessary journeys made to our hospitals.

How does it work?

Following your next clinic appointment, you will be advised by your consultant if your condition is now suitable to have your follow-ups as patient initiated instead of the regular appointments scheduled by the hospital. Your consultant will discuss the process with you, your suitability and provide you with this leaflet to consider your options. Managing your appointments in this way is optional and it is your decision.

How do I book a PIFU appointment?

The service is quick and easy to use. If you experience a flare-up, call the number on your PIFU card or this leaflet, and explain to the team that you are experiencing a flare-up and you need to be seen.

The team will agree a suitable appointment date and time over the phone with you. Please note that the operator cannot give any clinical advice.

Please remember, it is important that you are available for your appointment. If you find you are unable to attend, please tell us in advance, so we can try to give your appointment to someone else who needs it.

When should I call for a PIFU?

You should call the PIFU line if you are experiencing a flare-up of your condition and need to be seen. If your most recent appointment was face-to-face, the PIFU card given to you will highlight symptoms to look out for to help you decide when you need to contact us. If you had an appointment via telephone or video link, your clinician should have advised you which symptoms to look out for and when to call back.

When not to use PIFU

If you require urgent medical advice, you should contact your GP or NHS 111, or if you are really unwell, your local emergency department (A&E). For all other concerns, or if you are feeling unwell, your GP remains your first point of contact.

Will you still be looking after me if I do not call for a PIFU?

If you have not called back within the specified timeframe given by your clinician, you will be discharged back to your GP. If you feel that you need further investigations, your GP will need to complete a new referral.

What if I am worried and change my mind about this style of follow-up?

Some patients express concern about losing regular contact with the hospital. Everyone has different feelings when they no longer need to be seen regularly by their medical team. If you wish to go back to booking regular hospital appointments, just tell us and we will arrange this for you.

We appreciate and encourage feedback. Please note we may be in touch in the future to ask about your experience.

Frequently asked questions

- **What if I cannot get through to make an appointment?**
If you cannot get through using the contact details on your guide card, please contact the department on 0151 430 1234 and they will be able to redirect you.
- **How long will I have to wait before I receive an appointment?**
The Trust will aim to arrange a follow-up appointment in line with the timeframe in which you and your clinician agree.
- **Could I get lost in the system?**
No. When you call the department you will be booked for a follow-up appointment. If you do not need to see the doctor or nurse at all within the specified period after your last appointment, you will be discharged back to your GP who will re-refer you if you need to be seen again in the future.

Why have you set a deadline for me to make an appointment?

The length of time that you will remain on the PIFU waiting list is determined by your clinician, as it depends on your condition and their clinical judgement on how long each patient will need before they can be discharged back to their GP.

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