

Rheumatology Patient-Initiated Follow-Up [PIFU]

Information for Patients

Rheumatology PIFU Direct Tel: **01270 273631**

What is Patient-Initiated Follow-Up?

Patient Initiated Follow-Up [PIFU] allows you, the patient, more flexibility as to when you are seen by the Rheumatology Department. PIFU allows us to review patients who most need to see us and in a more timely way if you do have symptoms or concerns.

Attending regular Outpatient appointments scheduled by the hospital can cause unnecessary anxiety (e.g. time taken to travel, park and wait for your appointment) especially if your condition is stable.

Sometimes, regular Outpatient appointments may not result in any change to your treatment. In fact, your condition may flare up in-between regular booked appointments and it's during this time that you can seek advice when you need it the most.

For all other concerns, or if you are feeling unwell, your GP will remain your first point of contact.

How does PIFU work?

You will be advised by the Rheumatology Team if your condition is now suitable to have your follow-ups as patient-initiated instead of the regular scheduled appointments.

Your clinician will have advised you about the process and given you this patient information sheet for you to consider if you want to have your follow-ups in this way.

How will I book a PIFU?

Seeking advice from the Rheumatology Team is a quick and easy process. If you have a flare of your symptoms and need advice or an appointment, just follow the steps below and the team will help you.

4 Easy Steps:

1. Call the Rheumatology Team on **01270 273631** (manned Mon – Fri, 9am - 4pm; except Bank Holidays).
2. Explain to the Rheumatology Team you need to have a follow-up appointment or outline the concern you have. You may be asked to leave a message if the phone is unmanned, but all messages are triaged within **2 working days** and you will be contacted within **10 working days**.
3. Your request will be triaged and appropriate action will be taken by a member of the Rheumatology Team. This may result in a clinic appointment being made for you or advice and guidance being given.
4. Attend your clinic appointment or wait for advice from Rheumatology Team

In the event you need to leave a message when you call, please leave the following information:

- ✓ Your full name and date of birth.
- ✓ Your hospital number and/or NHS number.
- ✓ A contact number where we can call you during normal hours between 8am – 4pm.
- ✓ Date of your last Rheumatology appointment, if known.

What will happen if I do not contact the Rheumatology Team for a PIFU?

If you have not called us for advice within **12 months** then we would discharge you back to the care of your GP.

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

Just contact the Rheumatology Team and we will go back to booking regular hospital appointments for you to attend for your rheumatology reviews. Please discuss any concerns with a member of the team who will be happy to help.

When should I call for a PIFU?

You should call if you experience a flare-up of your symptoms and need advice from the Rheumatology Team.

When should I not to use PIFU?

If you require urgent medical advice you should contact your GP, NHS 111, your local Walk-In Centre or, if you are really unwell, your local Emergency Department (A&E).

This information is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages. To request a copy, please telephone **01270 273631**.