



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Rheumatology Patient- Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:

**Outpatient Services**

Telephone: 01904 726400

York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

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# **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 by the hospital team. Research has shown that regular visits do not 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.

## **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 and 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 patient initiated follow up 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, within the next 28 days. Please note that the operator cannot give any clinical advice.

Following your appointment, your consultant will discuss with you whether to remain on Patient Initiated Follow-Up or revert to regular appointments.

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. Your PIFU card will highlight symptoms to look out for to help you decide when you need to contact us.

## **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?**

Yes, we will contact you to arrange a follow-up appointment if you have not contacted us after a set timescale, usually one to two years but may be shorter or longer (depending on your condition). Your consultant will agree and set this timescale during your clinic appointment depending on your condition.

If you have any concerns associated with your condition, you can contact the Rheumatology Advice Line:

York and Selby: 01904 721854

Scarborough, Bridlington, and Malton: 01723 385058

## **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.

## **Feedback**

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

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Outpatient Services, York Hospital, Wigginton Road,  
York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 726400.

## **Teaching, training, and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:  
[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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