

Patient Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU) Appointments

Information for patients

This leaflet provides information about Patient Initiated Follow-Up appointments, or PIFU for short, at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust. It explains what Patient Initiated Follow-Up is and how it works.

Patient Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU) won't be suitable for every patient but if your hospital care team thinks it could be right for you, they will discuss this with you.

What are Patient Initiated Follow-Ups?

Previously regular follow-up appointments were arranged by the hospital at set intervals, for example, every six months or every year. Some patients found these regular visits useful and reassuring. For others, it could be an unnecessary expense and poor use of everyone's time.

By being on a PIFU plan you can arrange follow-up appointments with your specific hospital care team when you feel you need to, such as if your symptoms get worse. This puts you in control of your follow-up appointments and gives you access to support and guidance when you need it most.

Why are we using this new type of Follow-Up?

This type of follow-up offers a number of benefits:

- You can request a follow-up appointment if your symptoms get worse.
Your request will be reviewed by your hospital care team, who will decide the most appropriate next step. This may be an appointment, or advice for you or your GP.
This helps make sure you receive the right care as quickly as possible.
- Appointments are made based on your individual needs,
- For many people it will mean they don't need to come to hospital as often, meaning less time off work and less travelling,
- With fewer patients coming to hospital when they don't need to, we can make appointments available more quickly for those that do need them,
- We can also reduce our carbon footprint by lowering the number of patients travelling to the hospital unnecessarily.

How do Patient Initiated Follow-Ups work?

Your hospital care team will discuss with you how this will work specifically for you and the condition they are treating you for. You will receive written confirmation of the PIFU plan and, providing we have a mobile telephone number and/or email address on your hospital record, a digital notification from our digital communications supplier DrDoctor (SMS text from 07860039092 and emails from [nhs.my/UHB](https://nhs.uk/my/uhb)).

Your hospital care team will tell you how long your plan will last for. In most cases, this will be once you have received treatment, and in case it does not work. If you don't need to return to see your hospital care team, you will be discharged back to your GP at the end of the defined period. Your GP can refer you back to the hospital if you need to be seen again in the future.

For some patients, with certain long-term conditions, it may not be appropriate for them to be discharged from the hospital, this means the PIFU plan will be in place so you can contact the hospital if you feel you need an additional appointment, either by calling or a digital request.

If you do not request an appointment during your PIFU period, your clinician may still review your care remotely by checking your medical records. This review does not usually involve arranging an appointment for you unless you contact the service to request one.

If you are under the care of more than one department, it is important to remember that your PIFU plan doesn't apply to all of them. Some departments may still send you regular follow-up appointments and it's important that you attend these so that they are able to monitor your condition.

What do I need to do?

Your hospital care team will discuss which symptoms you should look out for and give you this information in a written format so you can refer to it later. If you experience any of these symptoms, please contact the service as soon as possible to request an appointment.

The service will provide you with the relevant contact details which will also be detailed on the digital notification via DrDoctor (SMS text from 07860039092 and emails from [nhs.my/UHB](https://nhs.uk/my/uhb)), providing we have your mobile telephone number and/or email address on your hospital record.

If you experience any other symptoms contact your GP or phone NHS 111 for advice.

How do I request a follow-up appointment?

To request a follow-up appointment, please use the digital request form via DrDoctor [nhs.my/UHB](https://nhs.uk/my/uhb), the URL link provided to you in the text message or email that we sent to you informing that you have been added to a PIFU list, or you can call the number provided in your letter if you cannot go online.

You will be prompted to include what has triggered the request, please detail the symptoms you are experiencing so that the hospital care team can assess the most appropriate next steps for you; this may be an appointment, or it could be advice/guidance.

Please note that the request should only relate to the specific health concern your PIFU plan relates to, rather than a new or unrelated concern.

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

How long will I have to wait for an appointment if I need one?

We will review your request within a set timeframe and update you on the next steps. After triage, if your clinician decides that you need to be seen by the hospital care team, you will be offered an appointment at the earliest clinically appropriate opportunity

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

Your plan will last for a specific amount of time. Your hospital care team will talk to you about how long your plan will be open for depending on your condition and their clinical judgement of how long you may need before you can be discharged back to your GP, if this is appropriate.

Will my PIFU appointments be face-to-face consultations at the hospital?

If an appointment is needed it may be offered as a face-to-face or a remote (telephone or video) consultation. Your hospital care team will talk to you about the most appropriate way for them to assess you but you can also indicate in your request your preference for a face-to-face, telephone or video consultation.

I have recently missed an outpatient appointment, why has my clinical team put me on a PIFU list?

On the day you missed your outpatient appointment your care team reviewed your clinical records. We understand that some patients miss their outpatient appointments for a variety of reasons. Rather than discharge you back to your GP's care your care team have offered you the opportunity to initiate an outpatient appointment if you feel a further consultation is required. To request a follow-up appointment, please call the number provided in your letter or use the digital request form via DrDoctor [nhs.my/UHB](https://nhs.uk/my-uhb). If you do not need another appointment, you do not have to do anything. At the end of a defined period you will be automatically discharged to your GP.

I have recently told my clinical team that I am not ready to have surgery yet, why have they have put me on a PIFU list?

Patients who are not ready to undergo surgery are taken off the elective waiting list. This is to ensure we don't send patients unnecessary appointments, or lose valuable operating theatre time. By putting you onto a PIFU list you can alert us when you are ready to go back onto the surgical waiting list and confirm you are available for your surgery when an appointment becomes available.

How do I provide feedback on my experience of my PIFU plan?

Please contact your hospital care team in the first instance. They will value your feedback.

As part of the Trust's ongoing commitment to better understanding the experience of its patients, the Patient Experience team may contact you for feedback following your appointment or visit. You may be asked for feedback via text message, telephone, email or letter.

Further information

More info at: <https://www.uhb.nhs.uk/patients/outpatients/>
Telephone: 0121 627 2000

Accessibility

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How did we do? 😊 😐 😞

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