

# Patient Initiated Follow-up (PIFU) - Rheumatology

## Patient Information

Rheumatology Services



The Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website is available on the link:  
<https://www.wwl.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets> or scan the QR code.

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## Introduction

Patient-Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU) will put you in control of making an appointment when you need it the most. If your condition is stable, attending regular outpatient appointments at hospital can cause unnecessary anxiety, including time taken to travel, park and wait for the appointment.

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 really do need our input.

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

## What is Patient Initiated Follow-up (PIFU)?

You have been put on a Patient Initiated Follow Up (PIFU) review pathway. This means if you need to be seen before your scheduled appointment, you can contact us to arrange an appointment. Patient Initiated Follow Up or PIFU is a way of putting you in control of your own care.

This means that if your condition has flared up or you have symptoms related to your condition, you are able to book an appointment directly with us without needing to speak to your GP for a new referral.

If any changes in your home circumstances affect your ability to manage your condition, please do get in touch with us.

## How long does a PIFU appointment last?

The PIFU time period will last between 6m to 12 months, unless otherwise stated. If you feel you need an appointment within this time period, please telephone the appointment Centre on **0300 555 4567**. An appointment will be made for you as soon as possible, usually the next available appointment.

**If you have been diagnosed with an inflammatory disease and are experiencing a flare up, please telephone the Advice line, on the number given below.**

When the PIFU time period lapses, that is after 12 months, a member of the appointments team will discharge you back to the care of your GP. However, this discharge will only occur after your Rheumatology Consultant has reviewed your case notes, a letter will then be sent to yourself and your GP.

**If you become unwell after discharge, please contact your GP. A new referral to an appropriate service may be made.**

## Can I just turn up at the department?

You cannot attend the department without a pre-arranged appointment. If you are unwell, please make an appointment for the Rheumatology clinic or contact your GP if you are unable to wait.

## Can I decline a PIFU appointment?

This will be discussed in the clinic consultation, when an informed decision will be made. Not all patients will be suitable for PIFU.

## Why is the booking of Rheumatology appointments changing?

The service has a long waiting list for follow-up appointments. During this waiting time, you may feel you require a sooner appointment, or you may feel you don't need an appointment at all. As explained above the PIFU system gives you the flexibility to manage your own appointments.

## Telephone Numbers

To book a patient-initiated appointment, please contact the appointments team directly on **0300 555 4567**.

When you phone the above number, an appointment will be made for you as soon as possible, usually the next available appointment.

You may also be offered the opportunity to speak with a specialist within the team for initial advice about your condition, for example, a specialist nurse.

## Cancelling your appointment

It is important that you keep your appointment. If you cannot attend your appointment, please let us know as soon as possible, as we may be able to offer the appointment to another patient. To cancel your appointment, please telephone the hospital on **0300 555 4567**, or you can visit our website and use our on-line cancellation form <https://www.wvl.nhs.uk/reschedule-an-appointment>

## Copy letters to patients

It is usual after your visit to an outpatient clinic that your consultant, doctor, or specialist nurse will write a letter to your GP to confirm details of your visit, and any recommendations about your treatment and future management. Please let your hospital doctor or nurse know if you would like to receive a copy of this correspondence or inform the receptionist so this can be arranged for you.

## Interpreter services

The Trust can provide telephone interpreting services and sign language assistance for patients with hearing impairments. The Trust will only use face to face

interpreters in exceptional circumstances. Please note that the Trust does not support the use of relatives or friends to provide interpreter services.

### **Are you an Overseas visitor?**

Hospital treatment is free to people who can demonstrate they have lived in the United Kingdom for the last 12 months. For further information, please see patient information leaflet REF: Corp 021 **Overseas Visitors**



<https://www.wvl.nhs.uk/leaflets/download/wvl-5fdc9eb8090938.14925866>

### **Chaplaincy & spiritual care**

Sometimes patients and their relatives appreciate someone to support them and to talk to before or after an appointment. Chaplains are there to support people of all faiths and none. If you would like to speak to one of the chaplains, please phone 01942 822324 or ask a member of staff to contact them.

Please see patient information leaflet REF: Corp 010 **Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care**



<https://www.wvl.nhs.uk/leaflets/download/wvl-5fd901c9cd0500.74611362>

Please use this space to write notes or reminders.

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## Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

## Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am until 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager  
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary  
Wigan Lane  
Wigan  
WN1 2NN

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## Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the positives and negatives of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



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## How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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