

**Patient
Information**

Patient Initiated Follow-Up

Putting you in control of your follow-up care

Introduction

This leaflet provides you with information about Patient Initiated Follow-Up appointments or PIFU for short, at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. It explains what PIFU appointments are and how they work.

About PIFU appointments

Traditionally, regular follow-up appointments are arranged by the hospital within a specific timeframe, for example, every 6 or 12 months. Some patients find these regular visits useful and reassuring. For others, it can be frustrating or stressful coming to hospital if they don't feel they need to.

If your clinical team think that PIFU might be suitable for you, they will discuss this with you and a PIFU appointment will be given. This means you will not receive regular follow-up appointments anymore, and you will need to contact the service if you feel there is a need to see a clinician.

How do PIFU appointments work?

PIFU appointments allow you to arrange a follow-up with the clinical team looking after your care, when you feel you need it, or if your symptoms get worse, within the given timeframe.

For example, you may be provided with a one year PIFU appointment. This means that you can arrange a follow-up appointment with your clinician at any stage during the 12 months. This puts you in control of your follow-up appointments and gives you access to support and guidance when you need it most.

The clinical team looking after your care will tell you how long your timeframe will last for, and you will be on a dedicated Patient Initiated Follow-Up list which will be checked regularly.

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Outpatients

Review due

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If you do not need to see your clinical team during the timeframe given, you may be discharged back to your GP.

Your GP can refer you back to the hospital if you need to be seen in the future.

There will be some exceptions to this for patients with conditions where it may not be appropriate for them to be discharged from the hospital. In these cases, the clinical team will discuss this with the patient.

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

Why we are introducing this new type of follow-up

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

- You have more control over your follow-up appointments.
- Appointments are made based on your individual needs.
- For many people it will mean they don't need to come to hospital as often, avoiding potential time off work and travelling.
- With fewer patients coming in to the 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.

What type of PIFU appointment do I have?

The type of appointment provided will be detailed in your clinic letter.

This means that you have a dedicated amount of time to contact the clinical team looking after your care to arrange an appointment to see your clinician, if you consider this necessary.

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When should you contact the clinical team looking after care?

If you experience any of the symptoms listed in your clinic letter, please contact the service as soon as possible to arrange an appointment.

If you experience any symptoms not listed, you should contact your GP or NHS 111 for advice.

How do I book an appointment?

To book an appointment, please use the contact number in your clinic letter and ask for a Patient Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU) appointment.

If we cannot take your call, please leave a short message with your name, date of birth and contact number and the right person will get back to you as soon as possible. Your GP can also use this number to contact the team for you.

To arrange an appointment, you must:

1. Have been given a PIFU appointment and discussed this with the clinical team looking after your care.
2. Contact the service within the timeframe advised in your letter. Unfortunately, appointments cannot be offered outside of your designated timeframe.

Feedback

Following your appointment or visit, the Trust may contact you for feedback. The Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust values your feedback and carries out a number of surveys to gain a better understanding of the experience of our patients and to improve services.

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Making a choice

Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.



Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you are asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

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

These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation* Ask 3 Questions is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial. Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85

<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>