Benefits of Patient Initiated Follow Up

PIFU can reduce service waiting lists and by helping services become more responsive, reduce the clinical risk of patients awaiting follow up on a caseload. They also give clinicians the opportunity to address some patients’ unease about engaging with services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Clinicians agree clear criteria with patients on when they should make contact with the service and how to do it.

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| “Research shows that having regular follow-ups does not necessarily prevent patients’ conditions returning or identify new problems. In fact, many people find the visits to hospital cause a lot of unnecessary anxiety.”  Trust medical director |

**PIFUs offer the following benefits:**

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| **Benefits to patients**   * Alongside remote appointments, encourages patients to attend appointments over the COVID-19 pandemic as they know they will not need to go to an NHS site unless clinically necessary * Improves patients’ engagement with their health (patient activation) * Empowers patients by allowing them to book appointments when they most need them (e.g. during a flare up) * Services are more responsive due to improved management of waiting lists * Time and cost savings due to not having to travel to appointments without clinical need[[1]](#footnote-1),[[2]](#footnote-2) * Improved patient satisfaction[[3]](#footnote-3) and reduction in anxiety | **Benefits to clinicians**   * Ensures clinicians know that they are seeing the patients who need it the most * Provides a mechanism for the clinician to jointly develop plans and ‘what if’ scenarios with patients, and share the clinical risk * Helps clinicians to manage their caseloads and waiting lists * Gives clinicians confidence that patients know how to contact services if they need to | **Benefits to organisations and systems**   * Reduction in waiting times and waiting lists due to net reduction in follow-up appointments4,5,6 * Avoids overcrowding of waiting areas, which is essential for continued social distancing as part of COVID-19 recovery * Reduction in service costs4 * Reduction in did not attends (DNAs) and improved use of clinical resources * Reduction in unmet need and clinical risk from patients being on waiting lists for follow-up appointments * Enabler to delivering the NHS Long Term Plan aim of reducing outpatient appointments by 30% |

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)