Patient initiated follow up appointment

## Information for patients

This leaflet provides information for patients who have attended an out-patient clinic at Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust and have been offered a ‘patient initiated follow-up appointment’. It explains what a patient initiated follow up is, how it works, and gives you the information you need to contact your service to arrange a follow up appointment for yourself. We hope you find it helps you to feel confident to be in control of your own follow up.

If you would like further information or have any particular worries, please do not hesitate to ask your healthcare professional.

****What is a patient initiated follow-up appointment?****

A patient initiated follow up (PIFU for short) allows you to arrange follow-up appointments as and when you need them.

This puts you in control of your hospital follow-up and gives you direct access to guidance when you most need it.

Previously, it has been standard practice for patients who have been seen in an out-patient clinic to be followed up at regular intervals. Some patients find these regular visits useful and reassuring.

Others find them a source of anxiety and not particularly helpful unless they have a specific concern they wish to discuss with their doctor or nurse. There is also good evidence that, for most patients, routine follow up at regular intervals does not benefit them and they do not actually need it.

****How does patient initiated follow up work?****

If PIFU is suitable for you, your clinician will discuss your condition with you and add your name to a PIFU waiting list. Instead of being given routine follow-up clinic appointments at regular intervals, you will be able to contact the service directly to arrange a follow-up appointment if you feel you need it. Your clinician will tell you how long you will stay on this PIFU waiting list as it is determined by your clinical condition.

If you do not need to see the doctor or nurse about your condition within the specified period after your last appointment, you will be discharged back to your GP who will re-refer you if you need to be seen again in the future.

****Why do you offer this type of follow up?****

There are a number of benefits to PIFU. These include:

* PIFU puts you in control of your own out-patient follow up. Appointments can be made based on your individual needs instead of being at routine intervals, which often do not add value for patients and waste valuable resource. If you experience a flare-up in symptoms, you will be able to receive guidance when you need it.
* Patients frequently spend time and money to attend appointments that are not essential. The number of people making these journeys will be greatly reduced and we hope it will improve your experience.
* Freeing up appointments means we can reduce the waiting times for people who need an appointment, enabling them to be seen more quickly.
* It will also help us to cut down our carbon footprint by reducing the number of unnecessary journeys made to our hospitals.

****What do I need to do?****

If you experience any problems with your condition, or complications after treatment, please contact us to arrange an out-patient appointment. You will be given a guide card to help you decide whether you need to make an appointment because your symptoms have returned or got worse. Your clinician will tell you what you need to watch out for and will write these down on the card. General information will also be available on our website here: <http://www.salisbury.nhs.uk/InformationForPatients/Pages/Outpatientclinics.aspx>

Frequently asked questions

* **How long will I have to wait before I receive an appointment?**

Because you are on the PIFU pathway, if you need to be seen because your symptoms worsen, you will be given priority and booked in as soon as possible.

* **Could I get lost in the system?**

No. You will be on a dedicated waiting list for PIFU, which will be checked regularly. If you do not need to see the doctor or nurse at all within the specified period after your last appointment, you will be discharged back to your GP who will re-refer you if you need to be seen again in the future.

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

The length of time that you will remain on the PIFU waiting list is determined by your clinician as it depends on your condition and their clinical judgement on how long each patient will need before they can be discharged back to their GP.

**How do I book a patient initiated follow-up appointment?**

To book an appointment, call the Central Booking Team on **01722 345543** and ask for a “patient initiated follow-up appointment”. Please note that if you speak to an administrator, secretary or receptionist, they cannot give clinical advice.

To arrange a patient initiated follow-up appointment you must:

* Have been told this is appropriate for you and been given a personalised guide card by your clinician.
* Contact us within the timeframe advised by your clinician

Please remember that it is important that you are available for your appointment. If you find you cannot attend, please tell us in advance so we can try to give your appointment slot to someone else. Failure to let us know you won’t be attending may lead to you being discharged back to your GP.

**Lost your guide card?**

If you have lost your guide card, please telephone PALS on **01722 429044** and ask for a replacement PIFU card.

Your feedback

We would love to hear your feedback about PIFU. Please complete our online survey by visiting: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/PIFU>

If you have any feedback on this leaflet please email: [sft.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:sft.PALS@nhs.net)

****Further information****

For additional information about patient initiated follow-up, please visit our website: <http://www.salisbury.nhs.uk/InformationForPatients/Pages/Outpatientclinics.aspx>

Alternative formats

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need this leaflet in another format – for example Braille, a language other than English or audio – please contact PALS on 01722 429044 or email sft.PALS@nhs.net

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