



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Rheumatology Patient-Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)

Information for patients,
relatives and carers

PIFU direct Tel: 0118 322 7969

DrDoctor: [nhs.my/rbh](https://nhs.uk/my/nhs.uk/rbh)

This leaflet explains what the Rheumatology Patient-Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU) service is and how it can help you manage your condition.

What is Patient-Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)?

Patient-initiated follow-up (PIFU) puts you, the patient, in control of when you are seen by the Rheumatology Department.

Attending regular outpatient appointments scheduled by the hospital can cause unnecessary anxiety – e.g., time taken to travel, park and wait for the appointment – if your condition is stable.

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 is during this time that you really do need our input. PIFU will put you in control of making an appointment when you need it the most.

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

How does PIFU work?

You will be advised by the Rheumatology Team whether your condition is now suitable to have your follow-ups via PIFU, rather than regular appointments scheduled by the hospital.

Your clinician will have advised you about the process and given you this patient information leaflet for you to consider if you want to have your follow-ups in this way; **it is your decision.**

How would I book a PIFU appointment?

Booking an appointment to see the team is a quick and easy process. If you have a flare up of your Rheumatology symptoms and need advice or an appointment, just call the number on the cover of this leaflet or access your profile on the DrDoctor portal and a member of our administration team will arrange an appointment for you within **10 working days.**

You will have the opportunity to speak with a specialist nurse for immediate advice, if required.

Alternatively – you can now request an appointment online via our DrDoctor platform. The service is quick and easy to use:

- If you need to book an appointment, click the link in your welcome message, or visit **nhs.my/rbh**
- Read the information on the welcome page and select 'start'
- Enter your last name, date of birth and postcode, to login to your patient portal
- We will send a code to your mobile number for security. Enter this online and select 'let's go'
- Fill out any details of why you are making the request and date and time preferences. Once you are ready, click 'submit'.

Our administration team aim to arrange an appointment for you as soon as possible. You can view the status of your request at any time by logging into your patient portal. Once your care team has reviewed your request, we will send you a text message or email. Follow the link in your message to view an update on your appointment request.

If you want any more information about our DrDoctor platform, visit our web page at www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/appointments

If I do not opt for PIFU, will you still monitor me?

Yes, we will arrange a follow-up appointment after two years to check that your condition is still stable.

If you have any concerns associated with your condition (but not a flare up) contact the Speciality Advice Line on 0118 322 7969.

Can I change my mind about this style of follow-up?

Just tell us and we will go back to booking regular hospital appointments for you to attend for your review. Please discuss any concerns with a member of the team who will be happy to help.

When should I arrange a PIFU?

Call if you experience a flare-up of your symptoms and need to be seen in clinic in the next 10 working days. You can speak with a specialist nurse for advice, if required.

When not to use PIFU

If you require urgent medical advice, you should contact your GP, NHS 111, your local Walk-in centre or, if you are unwell, your local Emergency Department (A&E) via NHS 111 or 999.

Booking a PIFU in five easy steps:

- 1 Call the Rheumatology Team on 0118 322 7969 (between 08:00am and 17:00pm).**
- 2 Explain to the Team you need to have a PIFU appointment.**
- 3 Agree an appointment date and time.**
- 4 Decide whether you need immediate clinical advice from the specialist nurse for your symptoms.**
- 5 Attend your clinic appointment.**

In the event you need to leave a message when you call, please leave the following information:

- ✓ Your full name and date of birth.
- ✓ Your hospital number and/or NHS number.
- ✓ A telephone number where we can call you during normal hours between 8am – 4pm.
- ✓ **Date of your last specialist appointment.**

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.