

Heart Failure Patient Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)

PIFU direct tel: 01271 311633

Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm (excluding bank holidays)

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net.

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 heart failure department. It means spending less time attending hospital appointments, but still having access to clinical support when you need it.

When your heart failure is well controlled on optimum medications, follow-up appointments are unlikely to result in any change to your treatment, but you'll have spent time and energy putting arrangements in place to attend your appointment.

You may experience worsening heart failure signs or symptoms in between regular booked appointments and it's at this point that our input is most useful. With PIFU, you can report changes in heart failure signs and symptoms and get advice from our clinical team, who may recommend treatment adjustments and / or suggest an appointment is required.

You initiate the follow-up appointment, instead of the hospital, which is why this process is called patient-initiated follow-up (PIFU).

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

How will I know if I'm suitable for PIFU?

The heart failure team will advise you if your condition is now suitable for PIFU, instead of regular appointments scheduled by the hospital.

It is entirely your decision. If you do not wish to proceed with PIFU, you may prefer your follow-up to continue with your GP, who can contact our team for advice if needed. Your clinician will have advised you about the PIFU process and given you this patient leaflet to support you.

When should I call for a PIFU?

You should call if you experience worsening heart failure symptoms. Please see the Pumping Marvellous symptom checker for guidance (pumpingmarvellous.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Heart-Failure-in-Lights-RAG-Sheet.pdf). Please call us if you are unsure.

PIFU is not a replacement for urgent medical advice. If you require urgent medical advice, you should contact your GP, NHS 111, your local walk-in centre or, if you are really unwell, your local Emergency Department (A&E).

How will I book a patient-initiated appointment?

This is a quick and easy process.

If you have worsening heart failure symptoms and need advice or an appointment, just follow the steps below and the team will help you.

5 easy steps:

1. Call the heart failure team

PIFU direct tel: **01271 311633** (Monday – Friday, 8.30am-4.30pm, excluding bank holidays)

If 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 so we can call you back during our opening hours
2. Explain to the heart failure team you are experiencing worsening heart failure symptoms and need some clinical advice.
 3. The team will review your concerns and decide whether you need immediate clinical advice for your symptoms or if you need an appointment.
 4. If the team think you need an appointment, we will contact you to agree an appointment date and time. In most cases we will arrange an appointment for you within 10 working days.
 5. Attend your clinic appointment.

Will you still be looking after me if I'm on PIFU and don't initiate an appointment?

Yes, you will still have follow-up appointments with us. We will arrange a follow-up appointment after a year to check that your condition is still stable.

If you have any concerns associated with your condition, you can contact the heart failure nursing team on 01271 311633, Monday – Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm (non-urgent calls only).

What happens when my condition is well controlled and I am receiving optimum treatment for my condition?

You will be discharged back to the care of your GP, who will manage your annual review and blood tests within primary care. Nonetheless, you will still have the option of contacting our team if your heart failure signs / symptoms change, which may lead to subsequent treatment and follow up.

What if I am worried and change my mind about this style of follow-up?

Just tell us and we will refer you back to your GP for annual review and blood tests in primary care. Our team are happy to discuss any concerns with you.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website www.careopinion.org.uk.

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