

# Discharge from hospital with Patient Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)

<https://kingstonhospital.nhs.uk/information/discharged-via-pifu>



This information is about a **way of managing follow-up appointments** for some patients after being in hospital.

## What is PIFU?

After a patient has been in hospital, we would typically book a follow-up appointment to see how they are getting on. This would be booked in for a specific date and time.

Instead of this, we are now offering some patients the option of being discharged without routine follow-up. Instead, the patient contacts us only if they need to. This is called **Patient initiated follow-up** (PIFU).

PIFU means that **you book an appointment or contact a specialist** if you have symptoms relating to your condition.



## How does it work?

If your specialist thinks you would suit PIFU, they will explain it to you. You can agree to PIFU or choose to have a routine follow-up appointment on a set date instead.

### If you choose PIFU:

1. We will tell you how long the PIFU lasts for. This will depend on the procedure or condition you are being treated for.
2. We explain when to contact us. This will be if you get certain symptoms or do not recover as we expect. If you develop another, unrelated health problem you still have to get help in the usual way (such as contacting your GP, NHS 111 or emergency [A&E] department).
3. We give you a list of symptoms on a PIFU card or hospital letter. This means you know exactly what to look out for.
4. If you get any of the symptoms listed, you should contact us, tell us you are on PIFU, and explain your symptoms.
5. We will then contact you within 3 days to offer you an appointment.
6. If you do not have any of the symptoms on the list during your PIFU period, you will be discharged from the care of the hospital. You then need to contact your GP for any future problems.

## PIFU at a glance



### Agree to PIFU

We discuss PIFU with you if we think it is a good option.

You agree to PIFU.

We give you a list of symptoms to look out for and explain when and how to contact us.



### Contact us if you have symptoms

If you have any of the symptoms on the list:

- Contact us
- Say you are on PIFU
- Explain your symptoms
- Tell us about any additional needs we need to take account of.



### Get an appointment when you need one

We will contact you within 72 hours (3 days) to offer you an appointment.

Tell us if you no longer need the appointment or wish to change the day or time.

## Who will be offered PIFU when they are discharged?

Not all patients will be offered the option of PIFU when they leave hospital (called 'Discharge via PIFU'). It is only suitable for certain patients with **shorter-term conditions or illnesses** who:

- are able to manage their condition themselves, or
- only need short-term or occasional support from the hospital team, for example, after surgery.

## What are the benefits of PIFU?

- With PIFU, you still have full access to support from a hospital specialist when you need it.
- You only book an appointment or contact a specialist **when you have symptoms** relating to your condition.
- You are **in control** of when you get care and treatment.
- You may **spend less time** attending hospital appointments.
- Feedback from patients using PIFU is that they avoid **unnecessary trips to hospital**. This saves them time, money and stress.
- Research has shown that planned follow-up appointments **do not help** to prevent conditions returning or lead to new problems being identified.

## Why have I been offered PIFU?

You and your hospital specialist have agreed that being discharged via PIFU is the best option for you.

It is important that you look out for changes in symptoms and that you are confident to contact us about them.

## How do I book a PIFU appointment?

If you have any of the symptoms listed on your hospital letter or PIFU card, contact the relevant department and say that you are on PIFU. They will:

- ask you to describe your symptoms
- ask if you have any special requirements that we need to take into account when we organise your appointment

- pass this information to the specialist team.

You will not be given any clinical advice during these initial contacts.

The department will get in touch with you within 72 hours (3 days) to arrange a phone or face-to-face appointment.

Tell us straight away if your situation changes and you no longer need your appointment or need to change your appointment date. We will then be able to offer your appointment to someone else.

## PIFU is not a replacement for urgent medical advice

If you need urgent advice, do not wait for a PIFU appointment.

- ➔ **Contact your GP** if you have symptoms that are not listed on your letter or PIFU card or letter.
- ➔ **Contact your GP, NHS 111 or a local walk-in centre** if you need urgent medical advice.
- ➔ **Go to your local Emergency Department (A&E)** if you need urgent medical assistance.

## Will you still be looking after me if I do not call for a PIFU appointment?

Your hospital specialist will tell you how long you will be on PIFU. At the end of this time, if you have not used PIFU, we will discharge you back to the care of your GP. Your GP will refer you to the hospital if you need any further specialist care.

## What if I have a special communication need?

Tell your hospital department or ask someone else to contact us if you have a special communication need. We will offer information and communication in a format that you find easy to use and understand. We can provide large print if you have eyesight problems, or written communication and face-to-face appointments if you are deaf or hard of hearing, or easy read information if you have a learning disability.

Tell us whether an online or face-to-face appointment will best meet your needs.

## We want your feedback to improve our services

We appreciate and encourage feedback and our hospital departments are happy receive your comments at any time.

You can give quick anonymous feedback about PIFU by:

Scanning this QR code with a smartphone or tablet or clicking [PIFU Feedback Survey](#) if you are reading this leaflet online. Or go to our [PIFU department page](#) on the Kingston Hospital website.

Alternatively, you can call PALS on 020 8934 3993 to give feedback by phone.




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If you do not want to take part in surveys, you can tell us by contacting your hospital department or by choosing to 'opt out' of the national programme that allows confidential information about you to be used for research and planning. Visit this website to learn more and to opt out.

[Make your choice about sharing data from your health records - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

# Contacts

If you have any questions or concerns about PIFU please call your department. Use the number on your hospital letter or PIFU card.

<p><b>Translate</b></p>	<p>Please speak to a member of staff before or during your visit to the hospital if you require translation.</p>
<p><b>Accessibility</b></p>	<p>Please contact the Patient Experience Team on 020 8934 3850 if you need this information in a different format. For information accessibility please visit Kingston Hospital AccessAble <a href="http://www.accessable.co.uk/kingston-hospital-nhs-foundation-trust">www.accessable.co.uk/kingston-hospital-nhs-foundation-trust</a></p>
<p><b>Support services</b></p> <p>Visit the hospital website, ask a member of staff, or ring us for details.</p> <p><a href="http://www.kingstonhospital.nhs.uk">www.kingstonhospital.nhs.uk</a></p> <p>Switchboard 020 8546 7711</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Find Us' page for maps, transport, registering a blue badge, disabled access</li> <li>• Information, advice and support for patients and relatives (PALS) 020 8934 3993</li> <li>• Pastoral and Spiritual Support 020 8546 7711</li> <li>• Learning Disability Liaison Team 020 8934 6895</li> </ul>