

## Patient Initiated Follow Up (PIFU)

### Specialty: Plastics – Hand Surgery

Queen Victoria Hospital (QVH)

Telephone: 01342 414000 Email: [qvh.handsteam@nhs.net](mailto:qvh.handsteam@nhs.net)

Medway Maritime Hospital (MMH)

Telephone: 01634 833981 Email: [medwayft.plasticsurgery@nhs.net](mailto:medwayft.plasticsurgery@nhs.net)

This leaflet explains how you can access further support and advice regarding your hand surgery. If this leaflet does not answer your questions or concerns, please speak to your clinician.

### What is patient initiated follow up?

- Patient Initiated Follow Up (PIFU) is when a patient (or their carer) can request an additional follow up appointment (if required) for a set period of time.
- This means if you have worries or concerns following your consultation in the outpatient clinic or you have further problems related to your condition, you can contact us and we will make another appointment for you to be seen.
- You will be able to book an additional appointment (if required) for the length of time agreed with your healthcare professional and in your accompanying letter.
- The reason we offer this service is that we want to give you more confidence, choice and flexibility in your care. It also reduces the number of unnecessary visits to the hospital and reduces waiting times for appointments.

### How does patient initiated follow up work?

- If PIFU is suitable for you, your clinician will discuss your condition with you and move your care onto a PIFU pathway.
- Instead of being given a follow up appointment which you may not need, you will be able to contact the service directly to arrange a follow up appointment if you feel you need it.
- Your clinician will agree how long you will stay on this PIFU pathway with you.
- If you do not need to see a clinician about your condition whilst you are on the PIFU pathway and reach the end of the agreed time, we will discharge you back to your GP.
- If you need to be seen again in the future your GP can always re-refer you.

### What do I need to do?

- If you experience any problems with your condition after being moved to the PIFU pathway, please contact us to request a follow up appointment. Examples of reasons to contact us are:
  - worsening of symptoms and/or hand function
- Please contact us to arrange another appointment if you wish to proceed with previously discussed surgical intervention.
- Should you have other symptoms that suggest a medical emergency please do not hesitate to call 111 or 999.

## To book an appointment:

1. Call the Plastic Surgery team.
  - The department opening hours are 08:30 to 16:00 Monday – Friday
  - **QVH:** Telephone 01342 414000 and ask to be put through to your Consultant's secretary or email [qvh.handsteam@nhs.net](mailto:qvh.handsteam@nhs.net)
  - **MMH:** Telephone 01634 833981 or email [medwayft.plasticsurgery@nhs.net](mailto:medwayft.plasticsurgery@nhs.net)
2. Explain that you are on a PIFU pathway.
3. If leaving a voicemail please include:
  - Your full name and date of birth
  - Your hospital number and/or NHS number
  - A telephone number where we can call you between 08:30 and 16:00
  - Date of your last appointment (if known)
4. We will then arrange an appointment date and time.
  - *Please note: the administrator may need to liaise with the clinician and call you back to confirm.*
5. Attend your appointment.
  - *Please note: this could be a video, telephone or face-to-face appointment.*

## Frequently asked questions

- **How long will I have to wait before I receive an appointment?**  
Because you are on the PIFU pathway, we will book you the next available appointment.
- **Could I get lost in the system?**  
No. You are on a dedicated PIFU pathway and we check this regularly. If you do not need to see the clinician at all while you are on the pathway, we will discharge you back to your GP who can re-refer you in the future if required. This will not affect any appointment with other services at the hospital.
- **Why have you set a deadline for me to make an appointment?**  
Your clinician determines the length of time that you will remain on the PIFU pathway. This depends on your condition.
- **When is PIFU not appropriate?**  
PIFU is only appropriate for the condition for which we have treated you. For anything else, you will need to contact your GP or NHS 111 for advice.

PIFU is not suitable for providing urgent medical advice. In such a case you should contact your GP, NHS 111, your local walk-in centre or, if you are really unwell, your local Accident and Emergency Department (A&E).

If you'd like to find out how you can support QVH, please visit [www.supportqvh.org](http://www.supportqvh.org)

