

## Why have you given me this leaflet?

You have been given this leaflet to explain the 'patient-initiated follow-up' appointment programme which West Hertfordshire NHS Trust has put in place for patients who have been treated for haematology diseases, including cancer.

## What is 'patient-initiated follow-up'?

Patient-initiated follow-up (PIFU) is a new type of follow-up at West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust. It is where routine, clinical examination appointments are replaced by a system through which patients can call us when they have a problem so they don't have to come to hospital at times when they are feeling well and symptom-free.

## Why are you introducing PIFU?

We have introduced PIFU to patients who often find traditional clinical appointments are a source of anxiety and can lead to them being tempted to put off reporting worrying signs and symptoms if a routine clinical appointment is 'not too far away'.

## How to contact us

**Haematology Care telephone number:**  
**01923 217630**

If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 187** or email [westherts.pals@nhs.net](mailto:westherts.pals@nhs.net)



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**NHS**

**West Hertfordshire  
Teaching Hospitals**  
NHS Trust



**A guide to...**

# **Supported patient- initiated follow-up for haematology**

***Patient information***

## **Cancer services**

Watford General Hospital  
Hemel Hempstead Hospital  
St Albans City Hospital

For the next step of your care within the haematology department, your doctor has arranged for a 'patient initiated follow up' appointment (PIFU for short).

PIFU allows you to arrange a lymphoma-related follow-up appointment, if required, for you (or someone you care for) as and when you need it. It is designed specifically for people who have had treatment for lymphoma and have responded very well to therapy. PIFU is an alternative to a routine follow-up appointment which can be a source of stress and expense, and which you may not always find helpful unless you have a specific concern you wish to discuss with your healthcare professional.

### **How does it work?**

Your doctor in the haematology department has added your name to the PIFU appointment list. From now on, instead of being given routine follow-up clinic appointments, you will be able to contact the service directly to arrange a follow-up appointment, only if you feel you need it.

This follow up may be at the hospital, or a telephone/video appointment. Your clinician will discuss this with you nearer the time.

### **What to look out for?**

Please contact us if you experience any of the following symptoms, particularly if they last for longer than about two weeks:

- New lumps
- New persistent generalised itching
- Unintentional weight loss
- Unexplained fevers over 38C
- Recurrent drenching night sweats
- Recurrence of your original symptoms that preceded the diagnosis of lymphoma, for example, if you had lymphoma in your chest and this presented with persistent cough
- Or any other new symptom that is worrying to you

If you don't experience any of these symptoms, there's no need to contact us.

How and when should I call to make an appointment?

If you experience any of the problems listed above, please call the number: **01923 217630** to get in touch with the service to arrange a PIFU appointment. Alternatively, you can email us on: [westherts.haematology@nhs.net](mailto:westherts.haematology@nhs.net)

### **How long have I got to make the appointment?**

You will remain on the PIFU system for three years. The expiry date shown above indicates when this three-year period ends. If you do not need to speak to a doctor or nurse in the Lymphoma Service before this date, you will be discharged back to your referring healthcare professional (eg your GP) who will re-refer you back to us if you need to be seen again in the future.

If you activate your PIFU (make an appointment) your healthcare professional will discuss the options with you for taking up another PIFU or other next steps that are right for you after your PIFU appointment.

### **What if I lose this Clinic Letter?**

If you lose this information, you can contact the haematology administration team via switch board and request a copy of the letter