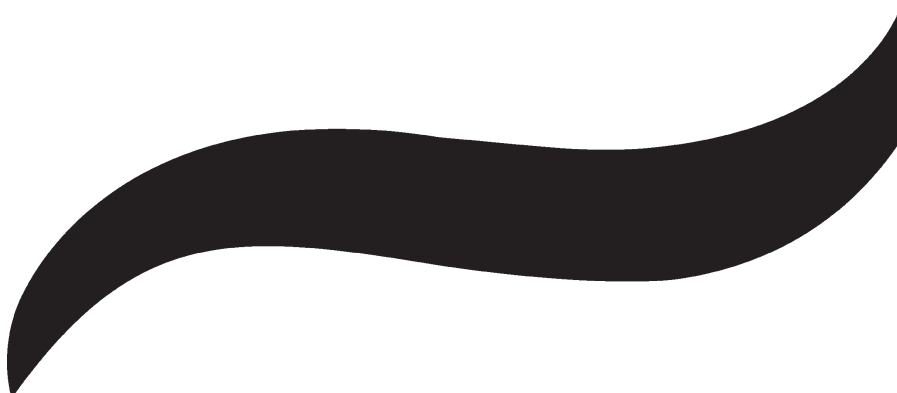




Changes to follow-up arrangements in the Rheumatology Outpatients Clinics

Information for patients
Rheumatology



We would like to tell you about some changes that are being made to the way the Rheumatology Department arranges follow-up appointments for returning patients. It is hoped that these changes will lead to better quality of care for you, fewer appointments being missed and less disruption if we're not able to run a clinic on a particular date.

WHAT CHANGES ARE BEING MADE?

Usually, if you require a further appointment you will have been given a set appointment as you left the clinic.

In the new system, you will not be provided with a set appointment as you leave clinic. Instead, your Rheumatology Consultant or Specialist Nurse will discuss how long you'll need before you have your next appointment and you will be sent a letter or SMS confirming the final arrangements 4-6 weeks before your next appointment.

If your rheumatology illness is well controlled, your Rheumatology Consultant or Specialist Nurse may also suggest leaving a longer period of time than usual until your next appointment.

WILL THERE BE ANY CHANGES TO WHAT HAPPENS DURING FUTURE APPOINTMENTS?

The new system for making appointments will not affect how we do assessments during future appointments. Any future appointments you have will continue to be made with either the Rheumatology Consultant, Specialist Nurse or Physiotherapist and, like now, could be either conducted over the telephone or in person at the Rheumatology clinic.

WILL THERE BE ANY CHANGES TO THE TREATMENT THAT I RECEIVE?

No – the changes will not affect the type of treatment you receive. You should continue to take your treatments, and (if necessary) attend for monitoring blood tests, as usual.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM?

If you are concerned that your rheumatology illness is getting worse, or you are having problems with your rheumatology treatments, please phone the Rheumatology Advice Line on 01355 585 691 and leave a short message stating your name, date of birth, hospital / CHI number (if known) and a short description of your problem. A Rheumatology Specialist Nurse will call you back within two working days to discuss your problem further. If necessary, the Rheumatology Specialist Nurse will arrange an earlier appointment with an appropriate member of the Rheumatology Team. We aim to provide appointments for urgent problems within two weeks.

If you need to change the arrangements for your next appointment, or are unsure about the arrangements, please contact either Referral Management Service (RMS) on 03003030249 or the secretary of your rheumatology consultant via the hospital switchboard.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE USE OF PATIENT INFORMATION

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www.careopinion.org.uk

Pub. date:	November 2023
Review date:	November 2025
Issue No:	02
Department:	Rheumatology
Clinical lead:	T Wootton

XS PIL.FOLLUP.21_23494.L
23_30956