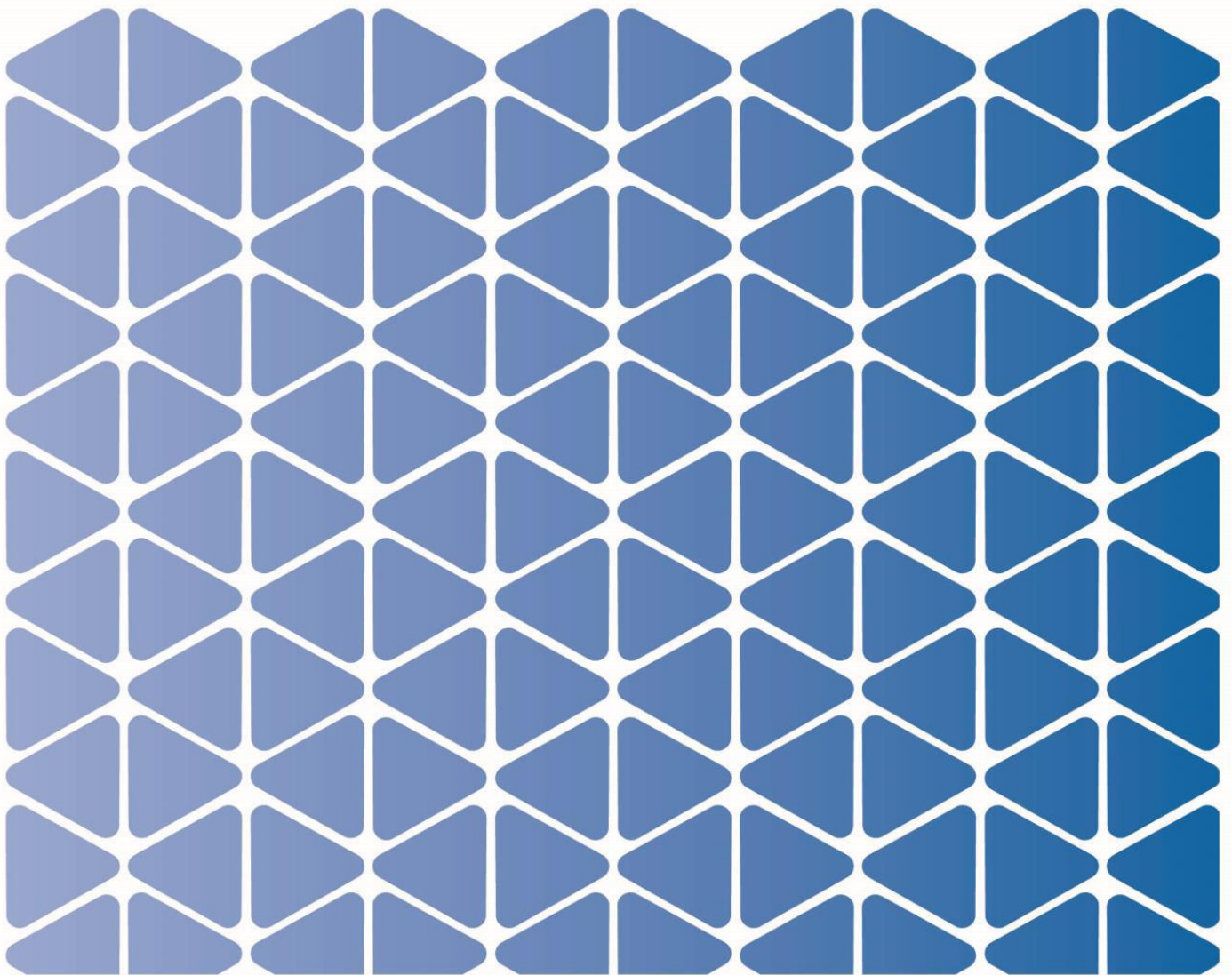




PATIENT INFORMATION

**Breast Care Unit**

**WELCOME TO SELF-MANAGED  
FOLLOW-UP**



## **What is self-management follow-up?**

Self-management is a new system for follow up treatment at Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust. Routine clinical examination appointments are replaced by a system where patients can call us when they have a problem so that they don't have to come in to the hospital if they are feeling well and symptom-free. Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust is not the only hospital to do this, an increasing number of hospitals across the country are also changing the way patients receive follow up treatment.

## **Why have you introduced self-management?**

Self-management follow-up has been shown to work better for patients, as it means you don't have to make unnecessary hospital trips when you are feeling perfectly well. Patients often find traditional clinical appointments are a source of anxiety. This can lead to them not reporting worrying signs and symptoms immediately if a routine clinical appointment is already due. It has also been proven that new problems are more likely to be identified by patients themselves, in between routine appointments, than by clinical examination alone.

## **What information will I be given?**

In addition to this leaflet, you will have a consultation at the end of your treatment which will cover specific symptoms that should be reported immediately to your Specialist nurse. You will also receive information on:

- *Your diagnosis and medication*
- *Your treatment and the possible side effects*
- *Signs and symptoms to report*
- *Being body and breast aware*
- *Attendance for bisphosphonate infusions and bone density scans (where appropriate)*
- *How to use the Helpline which gives you fast access to your Specialist nurse if needed*
- *The process your Specialist nurse will follow if you need to be booked back into the clinic*

## **Will I continue to have routine mammograms?**

Yes. Unless it has been otherwise specified at the end of your treatment, you will continue to be called for yearly mammograms for at least five years after your treatment, or until you are the right age to join the national NHS Breast Screening Programme. If, as a result of your specific treatment, you do not need to have annual mammograms, you and your GP will be informed about this.

## **Are there any other regular tests that I may need to have?**

Following your treatment, you and your GP will be told if you need any additional regular checks, such as bone density scans (DEXA scans). These scans can tell us if you are developing bone thinning which could lead to a condition called osteoporosis. These will be organised in line with local arrangements where you will receive clear instructions on what you will need to do.

## **What are the signs & symptoms I need to look out for?**

- *A lump or swelling in the breast, in the skin after a mastectomy, above the collar bone, in the neck, or under the arm*
- *Any skin changes, red areas or raised spots on the breast or mastectomy scar*
- *Nipple discharge*
- *Development of lymphoedema*
- *Any new, persistent pain anywhere in the body, especially in the back or hips, that does not improve with painkillers*
- *A constant feeling of nausea Unexplained weight loss and a loss of appetite*
- *Discomfort or swelling under the ribs or across the upper abdomen*
- *A dry cough or a feeling of breathlessness*
- *Severe headaches - usually worse in the morning*
- *Any abnormal neurology e.g. pins and needles and/or a loss of sensation/numbness or weakness in the arms or legs and/or loss of co-ordination, which might suggest underlying spinal cord compression, contact either your GP, Breast Care Support Worker Helpline, or the out of Hours Service as this may require urgent assessment*

**Will I still be able to access the breast service if I have any concerns?**

Yes. At the end of your treatment you will have a review with your Specialist nurse. During this appointment they will explain exactly how the helpline works and which signs and symptoms you need to look out for. The dedicated telephone helpline number is:

**01905 760113**  
**(internal line 36703)**

If you need to ring this number, please leave a short voice message including your:

**FULL NAME**  
**HOSPITAL NUMBER**  
**TELEPHONE NUMBER**

The helpline is monitored between **Monday to Friday** between **09:00** and **17:00** and you will be called back by a Specialist nurse within 24 hours (Mon to Fri).

Your Specialist nurse will talk you through any symptoms or concerns you may have and decide with you whether you need to be brought back into the clinic, or have further diagnostic tests. If they feel this is necessary, you will be offered a clinic appointment within 14 days, where possible, of phoning the helpline.

**HELPLINE NUMBER:**

**01905 760113**

**Worcestershire Royal Hospital, Worcester**

**WR5 1DD**

**01905 763333**

**Kidderminster Hospital and Treatment Centre**

**DY11 6RJ**

**01562 823424**

**Alexandra Hospital, Redditch**

**B98 7UB**

**01527 503030**

**If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.**

### **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

### **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

### **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net)**

### **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.