

Introduction to the Self-Management Pathway (SMP) after treatment for Breast Cancer

Breast Care Department:

Helpline: 01902 695778

Why have I been given this leaflet?

This leaflet explains the self-managed follow-up pathway which you have been referred on to. This pathway is for patients who have been treated for breast cancer or DCIS (Ductal Carcinoma in Situ – sometimes called pre invasive cancer).

What is the self-managed pathway (SMP)?

Self-management is a type of follow up pathway which means that from now on, you will only have to come to the hospital for an appointment when you actually need to. All you have to do is call us if you have a problem and, if necessary, you will be seen in a timely manner back at the hospital in an appropriate clinic.

Why has the self-managed pathway been introduced?

We have introduced the self-managed pathway because evidence shows it is better for patients. It means that you don't have to make unnecessary trips to the hospital at times when you are feeling perfectly well and symptom free.

Patients often find traditional clinic appointments can be a source of anxiety. This can lead to a delay in reporting any new or worrying signs and symptoms if a routine clinic appointment is “not too far away”.

It has also been found that new problems are unlikely to be identified at yearly clinical review appointments. Most problems are identified by patients themselves, in between these yearly appointments.



Is The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust the only hospital to introduce a self-managed follow-up pathway?

No (although it may be called different things in different places). More and more hospitals across the country are changing the way patients are followed up after treatment for breast cancer, DCIS or indeed other cancers in line with the NHS Long Term Plan for Cancer.

What information will I be given?

During your appointment with the breast care nurse, a discussion regarding the importance of breast awareness and self-examination, including a demonstration, will have taken place.

You will also have been provided with support services and health and wellbeing information.

Following your clinic appointment today, you and your GP will be sent a detailed letter which will summarise:

- Your diagnosis, the treatment/s you have had, possible side effects and any medication you may still be receiving.
- Arrangements for annual mammograms and bone density scans (if applicable).
- How to use the helpline, which gives you fast access to the self-managed pathway team and your consultant if you need it.

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

Yes. You can call the self-managed pathway team on the helpline number **01902 695778** if you have any symptoms or concerns, and you are encouraged to do so.

The helpline is monitored between the hours of 8.30am-3:30pm Monday to Friday. We encourage you to leave a message including your name, hospital number and a brief description of your concern. We will endeavour to reply to all messages within two working days.

We are often able to resolve your concerns through a telephone conversation. However, if appropriate you will be offered a face-to-face clinic appointment.



Will I continue to have regular mammograms?

Yes, unless it has been otherwise specified at the end of your treatment. A normal surveillance mammogram period is once a year for 5 years in total, unless you are under the age of 50, when mammograms will continue until you reach the age of entry on to the NHS Breast Screening Programme.

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 tests, such as bone density scans (DEXA) scans if you are taking anti oestrogen medication.

Important information:

Please contact the SMP helpline on 01902 695778 if you have a change of circumstances, e.g. address, contact number, GP practice so we can update your records.

Follow the Breast Care Service on Social Media

- Twitter- @RWT_breastcare
- Facebook- RWT Breast Care Service
- Instagram- @rwt_nhs
- Website - <https://www.royalwolverhampton.nhs.uk/services/service-directory-a-z/breast-care-service/>

