

REASON WHY?

The current number of patients that are “past max waits” for Oral and Maxillofacial services has been increasing since June 2022. Patient initiated follow-up (PIFU) is key to personalising outpatient care, and by enabling patients to have more control over when they receive care, can reduce unnecessary follow-up appointments, and make best use of clinical time as recommended by the Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) programme.



To reduce the number of retainer review patients who don't attend (DNA) by 20% by 28th February 2025.

Sub Aim: Increase the number of PIFU by 20% by 28th February 2025.

PLAN

The number of Past Max Waits for Oral and Maxillofacial services has steadily been increasing since 2022.

GIRFT suggests the biggest opportunities for eliminating 52-week waits are likely to be found in the outpatient part of the pathway (where the highest number of patients are waiting).

GIRFT has identified the use of PIFU to help support in reducing the burden in this area.

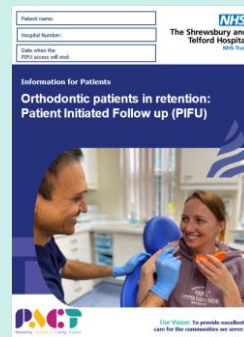
The Orthodontic team had a meeting to understand the opportunities available within this speciality and agreed to trial PIFU for selected patients who have had their active treatment completed (i.e. braces have been removed) and who would be in the supervised retention period of their treatment. Normally these patients would be offered a face-to-face appointment at 3 months after active appliance (brace) removal and again at a further 9 months for their retainers to be checked before being discharged.

DO

The consultant team agreed to trial the use of PIFU for selected patients entering into their orthodontic retention period at RSH.

A PIFU information leaflet was created so that patients were aware how to contact the department. Standard 'debond' letters sent to patients and General Dentist Practitioners (GDPs) were also updated to include information about PIFU.

The Orthodontic booking guide was updated to include PIFU section.



STUDY

The use of PIFU was introduced in October 2023, and to date has resulted in 148 patients being added. This has released a minimum of 148 additional appointments that can be utilised for patients in active treatment. The use of PIFU across the Orthodontic department has increased from 0% to an average of 1.5%. Data from Leonie Seagers PIFU audit Oct 23-Nov 24 can be seen in the table below.

Patients placed on PIFU for Leonie Seager for retention period Oct 23-Nov 24	63
Incorrect PIFU	5
Patients now discharged from PIFU	33
Patients returning within PIFU period	6
Percentage of patients returning during PIFU period	18.18%
Appointment slots available for other patients	27

No negative feedback has been received from patients, and only a few patients have requested additional follow up appointments. Anecdotal feedback from colleagues is that the process at RSH feels more effective in the management of patients, although some patients who should have been allocated to the PIFU pathway were still booked face-to-face appointments. Further work is needed to ensure patients are being placed onto the correct pathway.

Use of PIFU has freed up at least 27 patient appointment slots that would have otherwise been used for final retainer reviews (which have high DNA rates) and 29 slots which would have been used for 3-month retainer reviews (4 patients were deemed clinically necessary to return for a face-to-face retainer review at 3 months prior to being placed on PIFU and all these patients did attend their 3-month retainer review appointment).

ACT

The use of PIFU will be ADOPTED for retainer review patients.

This process will continue to be reviewed and clinicians are keen to ensure that patients placed on PIFU are having their needs met. A patient experience questionnaire has been designed and letters have been sent to 63 patients who have been under PIFU requesting the completion of the online survey via a QR code. The questionnaire runs until 23rd March 2025.

A prospective audit of patients placed onto PIFU will continue to further validate the effectiveness of the process and a prospective audit of face-to-face retainer appointments is being carried out at RSH.

The teams will look to expand the use of PIFU at PRH.