

Introduction to Open Access Follow-up for Breast Cancer

Information for patients

East Kent Hospitals Breast Open Access Follow-up Team

- Louise Houston, Breast Clinical Nurse Specialist for Open Access Follow-up patients
- Breast Support Workers
 - Vicky Stevenson (William Harvey Hospital)
 - Elaine McKew (Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital)

Cancer Care Line Telephone Number: 01227 86 86 66

This leaflet has been written as an introduction to East Kent Hospitals' Open Access Follow-Up pathway for breast cancer patients. This follow-up is not suitable for every patient. However, if you have had surgery, radiotherapy, or in some cases chemotherapy, and are taking either Tamoxifen, anastrozole, letrozole, or exemestane then you may be eligible. Your consultant will discuss this with you.

What is Open Access Follow-Up?

Open Access Follow-Up (OAFU) is a new type of follow-up. It is where routine, clinical examination type appointments are replaced by a system where patients can call us when they have a problem; they do not have to come to hospital at times when they are feeling well and are symptom free.

In the past, patients who had completed their treatment for early breast cancer were seen for follow-up by their consultant team in the hospital. Although some patients found these appointments useful and reassuring, many patients found coming to the hospital a source of great anxiety and not particularly helpful. There is also good evidence to show that following up patients in this way does not prevent cancer returning and does not increase the life expectancy of patients.



With Open Access your care will remain the same. You will remain under the care of the hospital for at least five years after your treatment has stopped, and continue to have mammograms every year, for at least five years. The difference will be that you no longer have to come into hospital for your breast clinic appointments if you are well, your mammograms do not show any problems, and you are free of symptoms.

Why is follow-up changing?

Many hospitals across the country have changed the way patients are followed up after breast cancer treatment. We are moving away from a 'one size fits all' approach towards recognising that you can manage your own health.

We know patients are more likely to pick up a new problem inbetween their follow-up appointments and it can be tempting to put off telling the nurse or doctor if your routine appointment is not too far away. With Open Access we encourage you to call the Cancer Care Line on 01227 86 86 66 if you have any questions or concerns, and speak to a member of the Breast Care Team.

What happens next?

Once you have completed all your hospital-based treatment (surgery, chemotherapy, and/or radiotherapy) you will be sent further information, along with an appointment for a Breast Clinical Nurse Specialist review. This appointment will either be a telephone, face to face, or a video consultation.

At this review we will discuss with you:

- Whether you are still suitable for open access follow-up. If you are, we will go through in more detail how open access follow-up works.
- Information which will include health and wellbeing and details of Breast Cancer Now Moving Forward events you may be interested in attending.
- How to manage the side effects of your treatment and what to expect in the future.
- When your mammograms will be done and how you will get the results.
- How to contact the Breast Clinical Nurse Specialists.

Will I still be able to access the Breast Care Team if I have any concerns?

Yes. Please call the breast care nurses on the Cancer Care Line number 01227 86 86 66, if you have any queries or problems.

What happens now?

Your Breast Care Team will be in touch soon but in the meantime, if you have any questions or need any further information, please contact our Cancer Care Line.

Cancer Care Line Telephone Number: 01227 86 86 66

Further help and support

- **Breast Cancer Now**

Telephone: 0808 800 6000

Web: breastcancernow.org

Breast Cancer Now is a charity that is steered by world-class research and powered by life-changing care. They are here for anyone affected by breast cancer, the whole way through, providing support for today and hope for the future. Their website has forums and information booklets to order or download, in various formats including video, audio, and other languages. They also provide the following services and support.

- Helpline support
- Support from their Someone Like Me Service and Partners Service
- The Moving Forward Course
- A wide range of support, fundraising, and volunteer events
- BECCA App for information and support ideas

- **Macmillan Cancer Support**

Helpline: 0808 80 800 00 (7 days a week; 8am to 8pm)

Web: www.macmillan.org.uk

Macmillan Cancer Support offer emotional, physical, and financial support from the moment you are diagnosed, through your treatment, and beyond. Macmillan offer information about all types of cancer, including diagnosis, treatment, and drugs, as well as advice to help with the different ways cancer may impact your life. Visit the Macmillan web site for the following information and support.

- Online chat (7 days a week; 8am to 8pm)
- Email for advice and support (they aim to respond within two working days)
- Online community forums
- Information booklets to order or download
- Information available in video, audio, and other languages
- Where to find information and support groups in your area
- Details on fundraising events and campaigns
- Details of how you can be part of the Macmillan team

There are many other support services available, please contact your Breast Care Team via the Cancer Care Line for more information.

Cancer Care Line Telephone Number: 01227 86 86 66

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net