

Welcome to the Rheumatology Clinic



Information for patients

MSK Outpatients



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This leaflet is for people who have a rheumatological condition who need follow-up. It explains how our clinics work and what to do if you need help between clinic appointments.

Who will I see in clinic?

You will have a named consultant (senior doctor). He or she has responsibility for your care.

Your appointment could be with a different member of the Rheumatology team. Each member of the team can get advice from your consultant if needed. This could be:

- A registrar who is a junior doctor who is training to be a consultant Rheumatologist
- An Advanced Practice Physiotherapist
- A clinical nurse specialist.

Sometimes other staff or students may observe in clinic to help with their training. If you do not wish them to stay for your appointment, please let a member of staff know.

Where will I be seen?

We run clinics at three sites:

- The MSK Outpatients hub at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital
- The Metabolic Bone Centre (Sorby wing) at the Northern General Hospital
- The Graves Sports Centre

Parking is limited at both the Royal Hallamshire and Northern General Hospitals and it can be very difficult to find parking. Please consider this when planning for your appointment. We advise using public transport if possible.

What happens when I come to clinic?

At the Royal Hallamshire and Northern General Hospitals, there are self-check-in screens which you will use to let us know you have arrived. Reception staff are available to help if needed. At Graves, you will check in at the reception desk. You will then take a seat in the waiting area.

You will have your blood pressure checked by a health care assistant. You may get your height and weight checked. You may be asked to bring a urine sample which the health care assistant will check.

You will then be seen by one of the clinical team.

If your condition is flaring, you may be offered a steroid injection. This can be into a joint or into the muscle of the buttock. The injections may be done by a doctor or nurse. It is best that someone else drives you to clinic if you know in advance that this might happen.

You may be referred to our specialist Physiotherapy and/or Occupational Therapy teams. They can provide education about your condition and how to manage this. They can also discuss any day-to-day problems you may be having.

Can I bring someone with me?

Often it is helpful to bring a family member or a friend.

Should I bring anything with me?

It is helpful to bring a list of your medications, including the dosage and how often you take them.

For some clinics, you will be asked to bring a urine sample to each appointment. You will be told at your appointments if this is needed.

What happens after the appointment?

Often you will need a blood test on the day of the appointment. This will be taken within the department.

You may need an X-ray. This will be done in:

- The Radiology department on B or C floor at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital
- The Radiology department on D floor in the Huntsman building at the Northern General Hospital
- There are no X-ray facilities at Graves.

Other tests may need to be arranged for another day. You will receive a phone call or letter with an appointment for these.

You may be given a prescription for medication. At Graves, you will be given a prescription that can be taken to any chemist. At the Royal Hallamshire and Northern General Hospitals, please take these to the onsite hospital pharmacies:

- Royal Hallamshire Hospital- Crucible pharmacy on C floor
- Northern General Hospital- Crucible pharmacy at the Huntsman entrance, on C Floor.

After your appointment we will write with details to your GP, and usually you will receive a copy of this letter.

How will my next appointment be arranged?

The doctor or nurse who has seen you will request this using our electronic system. If the next appointment is within three months, you can book this at the reception desk before you leave. If the appointment is after three months, you will be contacted a few weeks before it is due. If you need to change your appointment, please contact our appointments line on **0114 271 1947**.

Please remember to let us know if your name, address or GP have changed so that we can update our records.

When you are first diagnosed and if your condition is flaring you will need to be seen quite often. As your condition becomes more stable, you will need less frequent appointments.

What happens if I'm started on a new medication?

Many rheumatological conditions need long-term medication. This often needs close monitoring by blood tests, especially in the first few months. Appointments will be made for these within the department. If the results require follow up, you will be contacted, and you may need a repeat test.

Usually after three months on a new medication, your GP will be asked to take on 'shared care.' This means your GP will prescribe the medication and arrange the monitoring blood tests. This will be explained to you when it is arranged.

Sometimes, medicines can be difficult to get hold of from local community pharmacies. If you're having problems getting your medicine from your usual pharmacy, try to contact other pharmacies in your area. See the link below to help you find a pharmacy:

www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy

Some Rheumatological conditions need infusion or drip treatment. This is given in our Day Case Unit in the MSK Outpatients department at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital. If you need this kind of treatment, an appointment will be made for you.

What do I do if I need help in between appointments?

The department has an advice service. This is for any questions or concerns about your Rheumatological condition or medication. For any other issues you should contact your GP.

You can contact us by email on **sth.ropd@nhs.net**, or by telephone on **0114 271 3086**. Please follow the automated instructions and make sure you speak clearly. Please include:

- Your name
- Your hospital number (if you know it)
- Your date of birth
- A contact number
- A brief summary of the problem you need help with

Calls and emails are checked three times a day and we aim to get back to you within two working days.

If your medicine is prescribed by the hospital, please call the prescription line on **0114 271 1950** for a new supply. If you have been transferred to 'shared care', please request further medicines from your GP.

Please call **0114 271 1947** if you have a query about your appointment or need to change it.

Where can I find useful information about my rheumatological condition?

We have a range of leaflets in clinic that we can give to you. Please ask us to show you if we haven't already.

Useful information and links can be found on the following websites:

Versus Arthritis: www.versusarthritis.org

Sheffield Aches and Pains: www.sheffieldachesandpains.com

We also have an App for Rheumatology called 'My Pathway.' You should be invited to join this when your first appointment is booked.

You can register at mypathway.care/sth. You will need your NHS number, which is on your appointment and clinic letters.

The app includes all your appointment details within MSK, helpful resources and information. It also allows us to help keep in touch with you and track the progress of your condition.



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