

# Irish Kidney Association



## CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

### Counselling Assistant

## About the Irish Kidney Association

The Irish Kidney Association (IKA) is a charitable voluntary organisation founded in 1978. We are dedicated to meeting the needs of renal patients and their families and carers, living with and affected by end stage renal disease. These needs are spread across all aspects of life – medical, social and psychological.

Our prime role at the Irish Kidney Association is to support patients and their families affected by end stage kidney disease who are either being treated by dialysis or have a working kidney transplant.

***“Our vision is to bring about the best quality of life for those affected by end-stage kidney disease, with quality and equality in their care and treatment.”***



## Our Mission

To be the national patient-led organisation which supports, educates, and advocates for people living with, or likely to be affected by end-stage kidney disease.

## Membership

Members join the Irish Kidney Association by subscribing to the Constitution. The voluntary Board of Directors is elected from each of the 25 branches of the Association. At the year-end 2020 we had 3,701 members, of which 2,219 were patients and 1,482 were friends/family/carers, etc.

## Our Priority

The prescribed course of each person's treatment affects their working life, their home and family life and often results in unemployment and loss of their meaningful identity.

A simple event such as booking a holiday with family and friends will be restricted by the limited availability of holiday centres with dialysis facilities. While the patient is regularly away from home receiving medical treatment for extended periods of time, the burden of the function of the sole carer and provider of a most stressed family unit, falls on the spouse and carers.

The priority of the Association is to ensure that the unmet needs of the renal patient and family are addressed by the statutory health and education system either directly from the mainstream or via an association like ourselves. Within our resources, derived from voluntary donations and fundraising, we attempt to contribute to fulfilling these needs directly to the patient and family.

## What we do

As the only organisation representing the views of Irish kidney patients, the IKA continually lobbies on their behalf. This ongoing activity covers a wide variety of areas, including government departments, the HSE, hospitals, rental units and many other agencies. By joining with other organisations, the IKA helps in furthering the aims of all patients with chronic illness and improving their quality of life.

The patient remains at the centre of the IKA — the patient's needs are paramount.



**Organ Donor Card:** The Irish Kidney Association's main awareness event is the annual Organ Donor Card campaign. Apply online to receive a card by post or use the Digital Organ Donor Card App. Users can use the app to start the 'Organ Donation Conversation' with their family, and make sure their wishes are known.

**Support Centre:** The Irish Kidney Association Renal Support Centre has been in operation since 2000. Located in the grounds of Beaumont Hospital, the Centre is open all year round and provides free accommodation for all its residents. Rooms are available for families of kidney patients from outside Dublin, no matter what Dublin hospital their family member is attending and kidney patients who have to travel

long distances to see their consultant as an outpatient may stay overnight. It is planned to open a Cork support centre in 2023.

**Patient Holidays:** The Irish Kidney Association has three Holiday locations in Tramore, Tralee and Killarney which are available, free of charge, for transplant and dialysis patients to use.

**Counselling:** The IKA provides a free, comprehensive and confidential counselling service for those diagnosed with kidney disease, their family members and carers. These counsellors are accredited with their professional body and registered with the IKA to provide this service.

**Sports Programme:** Physical health is a big part of keeping well whilst living with kidney disease, and after transplantation. IKA's Sports Programme began as a way to encourage kidney patients to be more active and as a way for people to meet others in similar situations.

Transplant & Dialysis Sport brings together the gift of life offered so generously by the donors, and their families, and the strength of the human spirit as shown by the athletes. Now a team of over 80 members, Transplant Team Ireland has competed all over the world and is internationally recognised as one of the most successful and enjoyable teams to be a part of.

**Peer Support:** The Irish Kidney Association is currently planning a phone/online formal pilot peer support service. Once evaluated, it will be expanded to reach more of our community.

## **The Role**

The Irish Kidney Association is now seeking to recruit a part time counselling assistant

These is one of two brand new roles arising out of increasing demand for our services.

### **Counselling assistant**

The purpose of this role is to maintain our kind and compassionate approach to our patients, while also leading the drive to enable our counselling services achieve the next stage of their development. This role focuses on supporting the National Co-ordinator to deliver counselling and educational services. A background/experience in counselling is essential as the assistant will take and make calls to patients as they manage referrals to our external counsellor network. This role might suit a counsellor with their own practice who wishes to work part time in an office environment.

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## Our kind of person

The people who work for the Irish Kidney Association are genuinely supportive of one another, so everyone is expected to be a team player. Given that it is an organisation that supports people who are often unwell, every member of the organisation must have a strong capacity for empathy.

## A Typical Day

A typical day could involve liaising with a patient and counsellor, contacting a branch volunteer about a patient referral or discussing patient needs with a health care professional. Issuing referral documentation or a letter of support to access support services in the community and logging interactions and updates in patients files on our database salesforce and running reports as required for impact measurement.

Despite its small size, the Irish Kidney Association has a high public profile. It has a small, friendly team with fantastic teamwork among the staff and the branches provide a local network of contacts. Branch volunteers are dedicated to the cause - many have lived experience as either patients or family members have been patients. The working environment is informal, and everyone is passionate about the work they do.

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## Key information about this role

- This opportunity is open to people with no prior experience in the charity sector and have transferable skills. e.g., hospital or GP practise
- Part -time, 2.5 days a week, 3-year contract with a view to permanency
- Days are flexible subject to attendance on Wednesdays when all team members attend
- This role will be based at Donor House, Block 43A, Park West, Dublin, D12 P5V6
- The salary for this role is €37,400 pro rata.
- The annual leave entitlement is 20 days pro rata
- 5% employer contribution to your pension once probation is completed.
- Paid sick leave policy

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## How to Apply

The recruitment campaign for this is being managed by Ashling Hand.

To apply for this role, please email your CV and a cover letter outlining your suitability for the role to [recruitment@ika.ie](mailto:recruitment@ika.ie) by **6pm Sunday, the 28th of August 2022**. Cover letters should be addressed to Aoife Smith You can apply for one or both positions, specifying clearly “counselling” and/or “patient support” as relevant.

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**Please note:**

- Shortlisting will apply
- Deadline date for applications
- First round interviews are scheduled to take place the week starting the 6<sup>th</sup>, or 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2022.
- Second round candidates will be expected to complete a short online psychometric profiling and complete two tasks at interview.
- Second round interviews will likely take place the following week.
- The successful candidate will ideally be in place by late October 2022.

**More information on the Irish Kidney Association can  
be found on our website [www.ika.ie](http://www.ika.ie)**



## **Job Description Counselling Support Assistant**

### **Job Purpose**

The IKA provides warm, compassionate, and empathetic patient services. The purpose of this role is to maintain this approach while also leading the drive to enable our counselling services achieve the next stage of their development. This role focuses on supporting the National Co-ordinator to deliver counselling and educational services.

### **Key Responsibilities**

Working closely with the National Counselling Co-ordinator

- Intake referrals on the IKA's standardised system for counselling and educational programme referrals
- Assess people's needs due to their kidney disease and make referrals as needed.
- Build relationships with patients and their families
- Liaise with nationwide counsellors, hospital social workers and nursing personnel
- Offer patients information on services as needed
- Maintain up to date, accurate records and reports on patients' status.
- Refer patients to community services to help them in recovery and liaise with professionals in local health care settings to assist the transition.
- Approve counselling invoices for payment
- Run reports as needed.
- Any other duties that may be assigned by manager

### **Introduction**

The Association is seeking an emotionally intelligent counselling or health care professional who will have the ability to listen to patients' concerns and experiences whilst exercising judgement, assign priorities, meet deadlines and maintain strict confidentiality. Identification of opportunities for synergy and integration and a passion to deliver services in what can often be a very challenging social environment. Adhere firmly to the Association's core values and beliefs and act in line with those values.

### **Essential Requirements**

- Qualification in relevant discipline e.g., Counselling, Social care, Nursing, Social work, Psychology
- Accreditation with professional counselling body such as IACP or IAHIP

- At least 4 years relevant work experience working in a counselling or support for people with a long-term health conditions.
- Working knowledge of counselling theories, ethics and practices.
- Excellent communication – both written and verbal.
- Excellent computer skills.
- Emotionally self-aware, with social perceptiveness, empathy and ability to self-reflect.
- Listening, observational skills, an approachable personality and positive outlook.
- Empathise with individuals' personal situation and convey compassion.
- Demonstrate resilience, along with ability to assess complex situations.
- Strong organisational skills.
- Strong work ethic, with ability to be proactive and flexible.
- Build and maintain professional relationships.
- Willingness to submit to background checks.
- Can maintain confidentiality.

#### Desirable

- Experience in renal healthcare.
- Familiarity with the use of data bases, in particular Salesforce.
- Experience of peer support structures.
- Experience of working with volunteers.
- Current or previous experience of personal therapy.