

# SUPP RT

SUMMER 2025

## HELP US REOPEN the National Kidney Support Centre



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PAGE 21

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# Editorial



## Irish Kidney Association CLG

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Welcome to our Summer issue of *SUPPORT*.

It is a very exciting time for the IKA as the builders started work on renovating our National Kidney Support Centre on the grounds of Beaumont Hospital. Work is progressing well, but we really need your help to get an even better and improved Centre back open again. Full details on page 4-5.

We had a very successful Organ Donor Awareness Week, and the commencement of the Human Tissue Act was also announced, with the Act commencing on June 17th, see page 30.

There were two separate, and significant publicity campaigns by the Department of Health and the HSE. Thanks to your support, we ensured peoples' personal stories were front and centre in media publicity, ensuring the human aspect of the very technical changes were not forgotten. It is important to know that family consent is still needed for organ donation to proceed. Full details on pages 36-45.

Another very technical scheme is the fully funded Solar Panels for Vulnerable Household Scheme through the SEAI and of particular relevance for people on home dialysis.

You have told us how difficult it has been to successfully apply and we continue to advocate for an easier grant application process.

You can read an update on the Scheme on page 51.

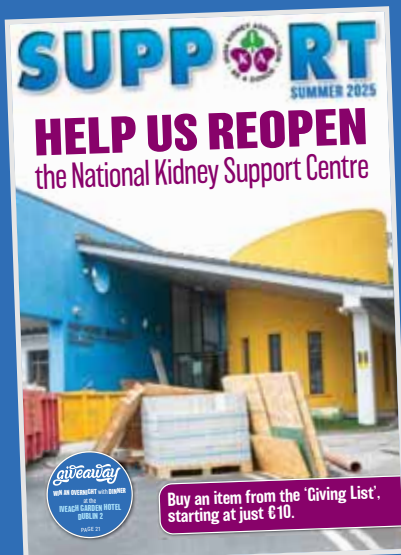
We have also received clarification on the reimbursement of sunscreen (who qualifies and how to access it). See page 53.

Branch and National Elections have been held, and it is great to see new volunteers stepping forward. Many thanks to all our hard-working volunteers who have recently retired and contributed so much to our Association.

We held our AGM and there is a full report on pages 8-9.

We also thank our many committed fundraisers, from Branches to individuals, families and groups right across the country who work so hard to raise funds. Your valued efforts means we can continue to provide services, supports and advocacy for kidney patients and organ donation. We really do appreciate and value all your support. You can see some examples of our wonderful fundraisers on pages 16-21 and 56-57.

Planning for the 40th Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving on Saturday, September 27th is progressing



## FRONT COVER

Building works have commenced at the National Kidney Support Centre in Beaumont Hospital. Together, your Centre will be a home from home for all who need it.

Photo: Gareth Chaney

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well and you can see how to register to attend on page 11.

We were deeply saddened to lose our dear member of staff Lenny Ryan, a dialysis patient, who passed away suddenly in May. We reflect on Lenny's contribution to the IKA and all who knew him on page 60.

Demand for dialysis in Ireland continues to rise, with the equivalent of two new dialysis units needed every year. However, a new unit has not been provided since 2020 and existing units are re-organising to meet increased demand and are coming under increasing pressure.

We understand a number of dialysis units are now considering both twilight and night-time shifts. The research is clear this is not in patients' best interests and the IKA have long argued against this.

We also believe it is unacceptable that patients cannot access out of area dialysis for holidays, to attend family events or travel with work, in Ireland.

Of concern, as demand for dialysis continues to rise globally, is that we are now experiencing problems securing dialysis abroad for patients in some countries. So, we welcome the fact that at the recent 78th World Health Assembly, the World Health Organisation (WHO) adopted a landmark resolution to reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases by promoting kidney



*Dr. Brian O'Brien, ODTI; Jacqueline Burke, IKA; John Walsh, ODTI; Carol Moore, IKA; Dr. Carol Traynor, Beaumont Hospital; Eddie Flood, IKA; Dr. Christopher Neilson, Liver Trust Ireland.*

health and strengthening the prevention and control of kidney disease.

While a commitment has been given to introduce screening for kidney disease in Ireland, as part of the wider Chronic Disease Management Programme, we have not yet seen active steps taken to start screening. As we saw from the long battle to regain our Support Centre at Beaumont Hospital, change does not always happen quickly in the healthcare system.

So, we will need to intensify our campaigning efforts to ensure more focus on the needs of patients. This type of campaigning takes time, energy and money, with a set of priorities that our whole community has agreed on.

This is where the Future-proofing the Irish Kidney Association project is so important. This project provides for organisational changes to how

we operate, with the goal of strengthening the IKA's ability to deliver services, campaigning and supports for decades to come.

At the heart of these changes is our ongoing mission to ensure that the lived experiences of kidney patients lay the foundation for everything we do: from the services we provide and the issues we campaign on, to the way we operate as an organisation.

A vital and critical part of the 'Future-proofing the Irish Kidney Association' project is the setup of a new National Member Forum which will strengthen the patient voice within the IKA and ensure we are meeting the needs of our community. For more details, please see page 10.

We hope you get to enjoy some rest and relaxation this Summer.

**CAROL MOORE**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

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# Help us to get the National Kidney Support Centre BACK UP AND RUNNING!



Signing the contracts with Architect Peter Kavanagh (back right) and joined by two team members of VHV renovations, and front, Carol Moore and Eddie Flood



The Steering Committee: Pat O'Sullivan, Carol Moore, Colin Mackenzie, Sarah Buchanan, Eddie Flood



By SIOFRA KENNY

[fundraising@ika.ie](mailto:fundraising@ika.ie)

For many years, the National Kidney Support Centre provided a much valued *'home from home'* and those who have availed of the Centre know that it provides so much more than just a bed for the night. It's a safe, nurturing space that enhances emotional well-being and plays a critical role in the overall healthcare experience.

By buying an item for the Centre, you will enable the Irish Kidney Association to provide this vital support, once again, for patients and their families, which is what they deserve.

## Purchasing items for the Centre is easy – just follow these steps:

- Visit [www.supportkidneycentre.ie](http://www.supportkidneycentre.ie) and click on the 'Start Giving' button.
- Browse the items needed for the Centre (or choose a category e.g. kitchen).
- Choose the item you would like to give and click on the 'Give Item' button.
- Click/tap on the basket icon and select 'Give Now'.
- Follow the secure payment process and make your payment to IKA.

Visit [www.supportkidneycentre.ie](http://www.supportkidneycentre.ie) now to buy an item.

To avoid duplication and to ensure your funds go to where they are needed most please do not buy items independently (outside the website). For tailored packages please consult with our fundraising team. Thank you so much for your support – together we will bring this very special Centre back for all who need it.

We are delighted to announce that building work has commenced at the National Kidney Support Centre at Beaumont Hospital.

As we have shared previously, the Centre will require considerable redevelopment to bring it up to the modern standards of the Munster Kidney Support Centre, including rewiring, insulation, ensuite replacements, building sustainability and general future-proofing.

With a Project team now in place, costings have been prepared, as well as an itemised list of materials required to get the Centre back up and running.

We are so grateful to the IKA fundraising community for the huge work they have done to date and once again their support will be vital to the success of this project. A fundraising campaign with a dedicated website has been created at [www.supportkidneycentre.ie](http://www.supportkidneycentre.ie) and will be officially launched to the public in August.

This bespoke website features a

list of all the items required for the Centre and supporters can buy an item to assist the redevelopment of the centre. From windows and washing machines, to teaspoons and toasters, we need it all and we need your help!

After buying an item, you will receive a thank you email from the IKA and an image to share on social media and WhatsApp. By sharing this image, you can help us to spread the word about this campaign and encourage more people to show their support.

If your local Branch would like to get involved, there is the option to fundraise as a group to buy a larger item, which would be gratefully received.

Do you know a company that may be interested in supporting this project? We have also put together Corporate Giving Packages that will help transform the Centre into a comforting, modern, and sustainable sanctuary for kidney patients and their families.

For further details please contact





## Will you buy an item to support the National Kidney Support Centre

Access to the National Kidney Support Centre has now been handed over but considerable work is needed to bring it up to the standard of our Munster Kidney Support Centre and provide the welcoming *"home from home"* that our patients and their families deserve.

You can help make this a reality by buying an item for the Centre on our brand new website [www.supportkidneycentre.ie](http://www.supportkidneycentre.ie) From teaspoons to tables, there are items to suit every budget and buying an item is quick and easy! Visit the website or simply scan the QR code now (right) with your phone camera for more information.



Buy an item now at: [www.supportkidneycentre.ie](http://www.supportkidneycentre.ie)

# Fiona's Way

Fiona McDonald



Written on Fiona's behalf by her sister **Emma McDonald**, from Ballinakill, Co. Laois.

I always felt a deep need to share my sister Fiona's story because stories like hers often go untold. Young adults with additional needs struggling with kidney failure are rarely talked about. And yet, for nine long years, this was our reality.

Fiona was diagnosed with kidney disease on her 21st birthday. It should have been a milestone to celebrate in her life but instead, it was the beginning of the hardest chapter in our family's life.

Fiona, now 33-years-old, has a rare chromosome disorder and has both intellectual and physical disabilities. This made managing her dialysis more complex.

At first, we tried peritoneal dialysis at home where she was hooked up to a dialysis machine through the night, every night. It worked for a number of years, but Fiona struggled with it, she often pulled out the tubing, not understanding what it was for. This led to repeated infections, hospital stays, and setbacks that drained all of us emotionally and physically.

We live in Ballinakill, Co. Laois close to the Kilkenny border. We're a small family; my parents Michael and Pauline and myself, Fiona's only sibling.

Unfortunately, Fiona couldn't attend her day Service Centre during this time because she was so unwell. This meant she had no routine, and she missed her friends. Watching someone you love suffering, especially when they can't fully understand why, is a kind of heartbreak I can't quite describe.

Fiona was switched to haemodialysis treatment in the hospital after peritoneal dialysis failed. The haemodialysis initially meant travelling three times weekly to Waterford Hospital for treatment lasting three hours at a time. The 90-minute each way commute to Waterford Hospital was an extra burden on Fiona and the rest of the family.

Thankfully, after a year Fiona began treatment just a 30-minute drive from home at the Kilkenny Dialysis Centre. We took it in turns to sit with her, amusing her with books, pictures and videos to avoid her pulling out the tubing. The years crawled by.





**Emma beside Fiona proudly holding her goddaughter Katie.**

We never truly believed a transplant would happen. It always felt just out of reach.

And then, one September night, three years ago in 2022, the phone rang. It was Beaumont Hospital telling us that there was a donor kidney for Fiona.

We were floored. Shocked. Overwhelmed. After nine years, we had forgotten what hope really felt like. Fiona got her transplant, and our lives changed overnight.

Today, she's a different person. She's healthy. She's thriving. She attends Dove House in Abbeyleix, (a day service for adults with intellectual disabilities), every day, and she smiles more than ever. She is so much brighter. It's hard to put into words how grateful we are to the family who made the choice to donate, they saved her life and gave our lives back, too.

We have sent a card anonymously through the organ donor coordinator to mark the past two transplant anniversaries and we light a candle for the donor and their family at Christmas time. We don't know who the donor family is, but we



**In 2018 at Paul's Ferguson 20/32 challenge, Fiona with her aunt Patsy, sister Emma, her mother Pauline and aunt Bridie.**



hold them in our hearts and thoughts every single day.

We'd like to thank the nurses, carers and doctors, especially Dr. Catherine Brown, at Waterford Hospital and Kilkenny dialysis centre.

Over the years our family has participated in many fundraising activities such as church gate collections, bag packing, cake sales, selling IKA Christmas cards to family and friends, and completing the VHI mini marathon on a few occasions. We wanted to give back to the Irish Kidney Association which supported us along the way. Fiona enjoyed the holidays we took at the IKA holiday homes in Tramore and Tralee.



In Summer 2018, inspired by Fiona's plight when she was still on dialysis, her uncle Paul Palmer, committed himself to raising organ donor awareness and supporting the IKA. He travelled through all 32 counties of Ireland on his vintage 1955 Ferguson 20 tractor. His



**Fiona's aunts Teresa and Patsy running for the IKA at the VHI Mini Marathon.**

journey, called The Ferguson 20/32 Challenge, covered almost 1,500 kilometres.

He set off from Kilkenny Castle and stopped at places like Electric Picnic, raising awareness and starting conversations about the importance of organ donation everywhere he went. His effort brought hope not just to us but raised €5,425 for the IKA which supports other patients with kidney disease and their families.

There were times we felt invisible in the system, not sure where Fiona's story fit. But stories like hers matter. Organ donation saves lives, even when the situation is complicated. Especially then!

I want people to know that Fiona's life is valuable. That she's worth fighting for. And that her story, and so many others like it, deserve to be heard.

To the family who gave us this precious gift, we will never forget you. You gave our Fiona the chance to live her life again. You gave us the opportunity to witness her transformation, to see her become the healthiest, happiest version of herself. That is a gift beyond words, and one we will carry with us forever.



**Fiona with her sister Emma and parents Micheal and Pauline.**

# AGM and National Executive Elections



**Liz O'Sullivan, National Honorary Chairman**

**O**n Saturday June 14th, the third face to face Annual General Meeting (AGM) since COVID-19 was held in the Aspect Hotel, Dublin. Over eighty people were present.

The meeting was opened by Honorary Chairperson Eddie Flood who welcomed everyone and held a minute's silence for deceased



**Elsie Moore, National Honorary Secretary**

members and donor families.

The minutes of the 2024 AGM were approved. The National Treasurer, Elsie Moore, presented the Treasurer's report from the audited accounts which were approved by the Board at the Board meeting on May 8th.

The Directors were authorised to appoint the Auditors and fix the



**Eoin Madden, National Honorary Treasurer**

Auditors remuneration.

The Chairperson then presented the Chairperson's report which was drawn from the full Director's report in the audited accounts. After a lively and informative question and answer session, the formal AGM then ended.

After lunch with plenty of chat between old and new members,

## IKA BRANCH OFFICIALS 2025

Branch	Chairperson	Secretary	Treasurer	Board Member
Carlow	Alan Cullen	Orla Canning	Bryan Duignan	
Cavan/Monaghan	Paul Donohoe	Rose Dalton	Karl Cronin	Aodhagan Cullen
Clare	Dermot Hayes		Mary Abbott	Sharon Fitzgerald
Cork	Wesley O'Shea		Bernard Cronin	Pat O'Sullivan
Donegal	Noel McGeever	Patricia Callaghan	Marie Brogan	Vincent Callaghan
Dublin East/Wicklow	Rachel O'Hora	Niamh Dowling	John Wogan	Jacqueline Burke
Dublin North	Simon Walsh		Brian Carney	Chloe Kinahan
Dublin South	Gerry McKenna	Clair J. Hughes	Paddy Sneyd	Liz O'Sullivan
Galway	Eoin Madden	Peadar Ó hCí	Samantha Lee	Eoin Madden
Kerry	Brendan Herbert	Theresa Looney	Elsie Moore	Elsie Moore
Kildare				Michelle Horan
Kilkenny	Mary Rooney	Linda Brennan	Bridget Langton	Seamus O'Farrell
Laois	Joseph Molloy	John Byrne	Angela Kirwan	Angela Kirwan
Leitrim	Annetha Kieran	Cathriona Charles	Frank Heslin	Cathriona Charles
Limerick	Debbie Sheehy	James Riordan	Glenn Cooper	
Longford	John Opabola	Elaine Heslin	Carmel Donlon	James Farrell
Louth/Meath	Louise Wayenburg	Sandra Flanagan	Sara McKeown	Valerie Brady
Mayo		Mairead Thomas	Catherine Gormally	
Offaly	Paul Molloy	Marjorie Stanley	Leona McDonald	Paul Molloy
Roscommon	Vincent Finan	Maura Quigley		
Sligo	Sean Fowley	Anna Mitchell-Kenny	Brian McHugh	
Tipperary	Anne Hackett	Francis Hogan	Mary Adamson	Francis Hogan
Waterford	Raymond Halligan	Michael Gallwey	Frances Moynihan	Frances Moynihan
Westmeath	Jack Cuniffe	Sinead Dowling	Pattie O'Neill	Eddie Flood
Wexford		Walter Kent	Marie Kehoe	Liam Buttle

As you can see there are vacancies in Branches which the new Board will be looking to appoint. The Association will be examining the process it uses to elect Directors to ensure our appointment processes comply with the Charities Governance Code. Minutes of the AGM will be available at a later date on the IKA website **[www.ika.ie](http://www.ika.ie)**



Professor Joe Eustace gave a talk on what the future holds for kidney patients.

Professor Eustace takes over as Clinical Director of the National Renal Office in August. His talk was frank and informative, with comprehensive answers to the many members raising questions.

Presentations of gifts to three very long-serving Directors who were retiring were made:

**Joan Gavan** from Tipperary, a living donor to her husband Willie;

**Marie Fowley**, a kidney transplant recipient living in Sligo; and **Deirdre Heslin**, a kidney transplant recipient from Longford.

**Jennifer McDermott** from Donegal who was unable to attend the AGM also retired.

These Directors have volunteered so much of their time and have all made a substantial contribution to the success of the IKA. We are delighted that all of them will continue to be involved with their Branch and we are delighted that Joan will continue to work on the *Living Well* programme.

**Professor Joe Eustace, new Clinical Director of the National Renal Office.**



At a subsequent Board meeting on June 25th, the following people were appointed as **National Officers**. **Liz O Sullivan** was elected Chairperson.

**Eoin Madden** was elected Treasurer. **Elsie Moore** was elected Secretary.



**Debbie Sheehy, Niamh Dowling, Rachel O'Hora**



**Deirdre Heslin, Eddie Flood**



**Eddie Flood, Joan Gavan**



**Marie Fowley, Eddie Flood**



**John & Una Whelan.**



**Chloe Kinahan, Sharon Fitzgerald, Caitriona Charles**



**Harry Ward, Simon Walsh, Colin Mackenzie, Gerry McKenna**



# Future-proofing the IKA

## National Members Forum

You may have read about a new Irish Kidney Association (IKA) initiative entitled 'Future-proofing the Irish Kidney Association' in recent editions of *SUPPORT Magazine*. In short, it provides for organisational changes to how we operate, with the goal of strengthening the IKA for decades to come.

At the heart of these changes is our ongoing mission to ensure that the lived experiences of kidney patients lay the foundation for everything we do: from the services we provide and the issues we campaign on, to the way we operate as an organisation.

So, as a transplant patient, Branch Officer and IKA volunteer from Galway, it's an honour to join the IKA team to lead this project.

Like so many of you, I've benefited from the services and advocacy work carried out by the IKA, and preserving this work into the future with a patient-first approach is very close to my heart.

I was particularly excited to learn that my first task in my new role was to support the formation of our new National Member Forum.

### INTRODUCING THE IKA NATIONAL MEMBER FORUM

This Forum, which I'm delighted to share, has been green lit by the Board, will give patients, carers, and family members a stronger voice in shaping kidney care services in Ireland. Its purpose is to gather real-life experiences and use them to improve IKA services, influence national health policy, and increase organ donation awareness. And like many of you across the country, this is exactly why I signed up to volunteer with the IKA.

Many of the operational issues have already been ironed out. For example, the Forum will be made up of up to 35 people, mainly patients and their family members, meeting



By MICHELLE GERAGHTY

in-person every 2-4 months. Importantly, the majority (at least 51%) of these will be patients representing a wide range of patient experiences and all Forum members must have at least one year of IKA membership.

Each IKA Branch can nominate one member, ensuring representation from across the country. I'm acutely aware that as a Galwegian, the issues we face here differ greatly from those faced by Branch members in Dublin, Donegal or Kerry for example. And from speaking with fellow members at the Annual General Meeting, we know many of you are excited about the opportunity to represent your Branch on these issues without the onerous legal responsibilities of being a Board Director.

### A VOICE FOR PATIENTS

To achieve success in future-proofing the IKA, it's imperative that the **National Member Forum** isn't just a 'talking shop'. To truly influence how the IKA operates, the Forum will need to operate as a critical link between members and IKA

leadership. That's why, along with patients and their families, other Forum members will include key IKA staff, and non-voting members such as the CEO, a facilitator and expert advisors as required.

### YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS

This is your Forum, and your opinions and input are fundamental to its formation. That's why at our next online Branch Officers meeting on September 15th, I'll be sharing further information about the **National Member Forum** and encouraging officers to distribute it to their members.

We'll also be discussing the nomination process for appointment to the Forum which is currently being developed.

At a time when operating in the Charity sector is increasingly complex, and compliance with the Charities Governance Code is non-negotiable, changes to our Constitution and our structure are essential to future-proof the IKA.

As we embark on this journey, we must ensure patient voices remain at the forefront of all we do. I'm confident the **National Member Forum** is the first step in achieving this goal and I'm looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible over the coming weeks and months to hear your thoughts, ideas and concerns.

If you are interested in learning more or would like to share your thoughts and opinions, please drop me a line at [michelle.geraghty@ika.ie](mailto:michelle.geraghty@ika.ie).

I'd love to hear from you!

## TOGETHER, THE FORUM MEMBERS WILL

- Advise the IKA on patient issues.
- Inform patient advocacy priorities, e.g., what are the most important things we should campaign on.
- Suggest service improvements both for the IKA and for the HSE.
- Contribute to IKA strategic plans and recommend priorities.
- Represent the IKA in HSE regional health partnerships.
- Encourage organ donation awareness, and
- Nominate six Directors to the Board (if members approve Constitutional change).





**BOOK  
YOUR PLACE  
NOW!**

# *40th Annual Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving Ruby Anniversary*

at the

*Church of The Holy Child  
Thatch Road, Whitehall,  
Dublin 9, D09 HX99*

on

*Saturday, September 27th, 2025  
at 1.00pm*

*(We ask that all attendees be seated by 12.50pm).*



We are pleased to announce that the **40th Annual Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving** will be held at the **Church of The Holy Child**, on **Saturday, September 27th**. The Church can accommodate up to 1,500 attendees. To ensure your place, **PLEASE BOOK EARLY**. We kindly ask that you register in advance to help us prepare for the numbers. This will also allow us to make arrangements for an overflow facility next door if needed.

You can reserve your place online by scanning the QR code below with your phone camera or using the link [www.ika.ie/service2025/](http://www.ika.ie/service2025/). Alternatively, you can email: [info@ika.ie](mailto:info@ika.ie) or phone: **01-6205306**.

We will do our best to accommodate walk-ins on the day, if space allows, keeping in mind the safety of all, especially our many immunocompromised attendees.

Additionally, as the Service will be recorded for broadcast we ask the congregation to be seated by 12.50pm at the latest to ensure a smooth start. The event will be televised on RTÉ One TV, RTÉ Radio 1 Extra and RTÉ Player on **Sunday, November 2nd** at **11.00am**.

Some free car parking is available next to the **Church of The Holy Child**. The Church is just over 5kms from the city centre on Dublin's northside (postcode D09 HX99). It is well serviced by public bus and there is a bus stop within a few minutes' walk. We look forward to seeing you on the day. Look out for more details on our social media and website [www.ika.ie](http://www.ika.ie)



*In light of the expected large attendance, we respectfully request that if you are experiencing any infectious respiratory symptoms you refrain from attending the Service. This measure is aimed at safeguarding the health of all attendees, many of whom have compromised immune systems. Your understanding is greatly appreciated.*



# Baby Archie's Journey: Milestones, Memories, and Moving Forward



Archie, 9 months.



Archie, 11 months.

By **GWEN O'DONOGHUE**

Back in May, **Shanice Murphy** (24) and **Cormac Wall** (26), the parents of baby **Archie Wall** shared their family's story for Organ Donor Awareness Week, a deeply personal account of navigating life with a baby born with complex kidney complications.

Now, just a few months later, Archie has reached a major milestone: his first birthday.

“He turned one on the last weekend in July, and we had a big party for him,” his mum Shanice from Rathangan, Co. Kildare shared. “It was so special to mark that moment, something that felt so far away at the beginning. We’ve taken loads of photos and are still getting through all the lovely messages and calls.”

Archie was born five weeks premature weighing in at just 5 pounds and 10 ounces. While he spent a week in the special care unit at Cavan General Hospital his parents were soon able to bring him home to Cormac's native Cavan town, in Co. Cavan. But it wasn't the start they had hoped for.

“He was constantly crying, vomiting after every feed, and just never seemed to settle”, Shanice recalled. “Even as a new mum, I knew something was wrong.”

Despite several visits to A&E, no clear diagnosis could be found. At just 17-days-old Archie was brought to A&E, where Shanice was told that he most likely had reflux. At five weeks old, he was readmitted through A&E for an ultrasound to check for a suspected hernia. Blood tests revealed alarmingly high protein levels in his blood. After spending a night in Cavan General Hospital, Archie was transferred to CHI Temple Street on September 2nd, where he was diagnosed with Congenital Nephrotic Syndrome, a rare and complex kidney condition.

Archie spent the next seven months as an inpatient at Temple Street Hospital and much of that time was in a small ward, with his mum Shanice staying by his side around the clock. He underwent multiple treatments and fought life-threatening infections including meningitis and sepsis before Christmas 2024. On March 13th this year, coinciding with World Kidney Day, Archie had one of his kidneys removed.

Two weeks later, at the end of March, he was finally discharged on the same weekend as Shanice's birthday and Mother's Day, a gift more special than anything she could have imagined.



Throughout those long hospital stays, support from family was vital. Over the trying seven months when they could, Shanice's parents Timmy and Priscilla Murphy and Cormac's parents Michael and Miranda Wall, took turns staying overnight, allowing Shanice one day and night off on the weekends to catch up on washing, meal prep, and generally reset.

In the early days Cormac stayed as much as he could, but after Christmas, he had to return to work full-time to keep his small family afloat. Despite this, he still made regular evening visits and stayed overnight at weekends to spend time with Archie and give Shanice a rest.

"Archie's dad and both sets of grandparents were amazing," she says. "They helped in every way they could, taking turns visiting, bringing food, and just helping us get through it

"It was incredibly difficult," Shanice remembers. "I lived in a small hospital room with Archie because he couldn't be alone. I slept in a chair by his side most nights. It was uncomfortable, but I got used to it."

Shanice also credits her partner Cormac's workplace, McBreen's Environmental in Cavan, for their flexibility during a very uncertain time. "His employers were really understanding, and that took a huge weight off our shoulders. They have responded with compassion donating funds to the Cavan Monaghan branch of the Irish Kidney Association in recognition of Archie's battles and the role the charity plays in supporting families of kidney patients, like ours."

Archie was readmitted to Temple Street three times in April, spending another two weeks as an inpatient that month. However, just before



**Archie with his mum Shanice and her parents Timmy & Priscilla Murphy.**

Organ Donor Awareness Week (May 10th-17th) Shanice gave a hopeful update. "We've had nearly four full weeks at home without any emergency trips back to Temple Street. It feels like having a new baby at home, he's only just starting to live with us properly, and we absolutely love having him here".

Shanice and Cormac are now living in Rathangan with Shanice's parents to be closer to medical care and regular visits to Temple Street. Though doctors initially anticipated his remaining kidney would be removed before his first birthday, they are now holding off, hopeful that Archie can avoid dialysis until he is two. A kidney transplant will be necessary, likely between the ages of five or six when he reaches a sufficient weight and height. His parents are hoping that one of them will be a suitable living donor kidney match for him.

#### SUMMER UPDATE

Shanice gave another update on Archie's progress just after his 1st birthday, "Archie has continued to defy expectations. He's doing really well. He's meeting all his milestones and just has the biggest personality."

There have been a few bumps in the road over the summer, including a couple of short hospital admissions. Archie was readmitted for a few nights each time due to fluid overload.

"He gained too much fluid weight, and they had to monitor him," Shanice explained. "When that happens, there's always a risk it could affect his lungs, so it's important to act quickly. Thankfully, he responded well."

The plan remains for Archie to have his second kidney surgically removed once he reaches 10kg in



**Archie with his dad Cormac and his parents Micheal & Miranda Wall.**

weight. At that point, he will begin peritoneal dialysis (PD), a form of dialysis that can be done at home, seven days a week.

"It's a big step, but one we're prepared for," Shanice shared. "We've been given a lot of information and support to get ready for PD when the time comes."

In the meantime, the family is cherishing every moment they get at home. Archie's first birthday was more than just a celebration of age, it was a powerful reminder of everything he's already overcome and a testament to the resilience of his besotted young parents.

"We're so proud of him," Shanice beamed. "He's been through so much in such a short time, but he's still smiling, still fighting, and still surprising us every day."

Archie's journey continues to touch everyone who hears it. His story has raised awareness of the realities faced by families of children with kidney disease and highlighted the importance of organ donation and early intervention.

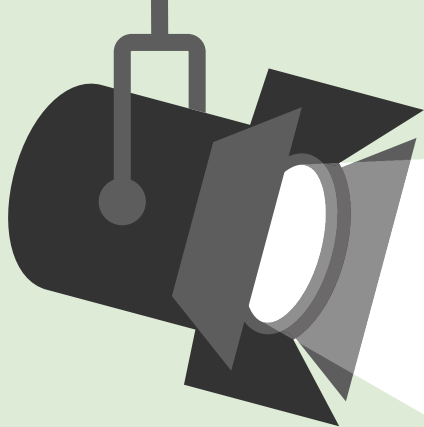
"He's our little warrior," his mum says simply. "We take it day by day, and every day with him is a gift."



**Cormac, Archie and Shanice on Archie's first birthday.**



**Shanice, Cormac and Archie on his Christening day, June 7th.**



## SPOTLIGHT ON... VOLUNTEER

By **DEIRDRE MARKEY**  
and **SARAH BUCHANAN**

From the moment she received the 'gift of life', **Amber O'Rourke** has been determined to give back in every way she can. A native of County Carlow, Amber was just nine-years-old when she underwent a life-changing kidney transplant in 2017, generously donated by her mother's friend, Anne-Marie Byrne. That act of selflessness left a lasting mark on Amber, one that has grown into an inspiring passion for volunteering, advocacy, and living life to the fullest.

Now a vibrant and energetic young woman, Amber radiates positivity, resilience, and a zest for life that is impossible to ignore. Her transplant journey didn't slow her down, it became her motivation. She has since thrown herself wholeheartedly into volunteering efforts both locally and nationally, quickly becoming a familiar face in campaigns for organ donation awareness.

Whether she's organising 5km charity walks, hosting bake sales, setting up organ donor awareness stands, or speaking on national platforms like RTÉ, Amber is always on the move, always giving, always inspiring. At an age when many are still finding their voice, Amber has already become a powerful advocate for a cause close to her heart and her kidney.

# Amber O'Rourke



## CARLOW BRANCH

**Q. What inspired you to start volunteering at such a young age?**

**A.** I started volunteering early last year 2024 when I was making my change from children's services to adult services, I did a series of fundraisers for Temple Street Hospital to give back for all they had done for me. I suppose after my first fundraiser and seeing how grateful Temple Street was, I fell in love with giving back and doing my part for people that did a lot for me.

**Q. How did you first get involved with the IKA?**

**A.** I first got involved with the IKA when we did a photoshoot in 2023 for a campaign. After that, last year the Carlow branch for the IKA restarted after stopping for quite some time since COVID, I got really involved with that. We are still a small Branch but growing each month.

**Q. Why is volunteering with the IKA meaningful to you?**

**A.** Volunteering with the IKA means the world to me as someone who received a kidney transplant at quite a young age, I see the work the Irish Kidney Association do behind the scenes, and I know a lot of it is only possible because

of fundraising. I suppose I have seen the IKA go above and beyond in every way they possibly can for everyone they can, and it's meaningful to me because I know how important a kidney transplant is and how much it can change you.

**Q. What kind of things do you help with as a volunteer?**

**A.** I organised a fundraiser in my school where we did a 5km walk and had a bake sale. I also did a collection day in the Fairgreen Shopping Centre in Carlow for the IKA. I've done media interviews including RTÉ News2day during organ donor awareness week speaking about my story also. I also get involved as much as I can with the IKA and do what I can.

**Q. How do you balance volunteering with school and other parts of life?**

**A.** I don't find it difficult to balance school and volunteering. Some of my fundraisers happen in my school and the school is very supportive that way. Apart from that I organise it in my spare time and my family and friends help me out along the way as much as they can.





Amber on RTÉ News2day raising awareness and telling her story.

**Q. What's been your favourite or most memorable experience so far as a volunteer?**

**A.** My most memorable experience so far has probably been my collection day in the Fairgreen Shopping Centre hearing people's stories and what experiences they've had. Stories that I never would have heard if I did not go ahead with my collection day. I met so many people that knew someone with a kidney transplant or waiting on a transplant and it opened my eyes so much more into how generous people are. Another moment that really stands out to me is my first time ever on television with RTÉ News2day. That was an opportunity I never thought I would have, and it was great to be able to speak about something so close to my heart.

**Q. Why is organ donor awareness important to you personally?**

**A.** Organ donor awareness is important to me because I know how much it can mean to someone and their family. Waiting on a transplant is a tough time for everyone as you are just waiting on a phone call to say there's a match. I suppose you worry too that you're never going to get a transplant.

After receiving my transplant, I realised that it really does give you a second shot at life and you get a whole new lease of life. You are able to do things you couldn't do on dialysis. You're not sitting around waiting for a phone call.



Amber in the Fairgreen Shopping Centre during Organ Donor Awareness Week 2025.

Organ donor awareness means everything to me because I know how hard it is waiting.

**Q. What's something surprising you've learned since becoming a volunteer?**

**A.** Something surprising I've learned since becoming a volunteer is how much work actually goes into the IKA and how much time people have for it. I also never thought people could be so supportive and understanding and wanting to hear my story. People surprised me by being so generous and kind over the time I did my fundraiser and everyone in Carlow really did do their bit.

**Q. How do your friends or classmates react when they hear about what you do?**

**A.** I have the most supportive friends and classmates anyone could ever ask for. Whenever I have a fundraising idea or tell them what I've been up to they all



Amber with friends at her Bake Sale fundraiser.

get behind me and want to help in any way they can. They are so understanding and thoughtful and they know how much it all means to me.

**Q. What advice would you give to other young people who might want to get involved in volunteering?**

**A.** I would tell any young person that is thinking about getting involved in volunteering, just do it go for it there is absolutely nothing stopping you only yourself! People are going to judge you no matter what you do in life, someone always has something to say, volunteering makes me feel like I'm making a difference. It makes me feel so good about myself, it changed my whole outlook on life, and I think it could just change yours too. You get one life, don't waste it.



Amber and school friends raising awareness of organ donation.





Some of the over 140 cyclists from all over Ireland about to take part in the Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle in aid of the Irish Kidney Association.

## The Irish Kidney Association takes on the RING OF KERRY CYCLE

The Irish Kidney Association (IKA) proudly participated in the **43rd Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle** on July 5th, 2025. Nearly 4,000 cyclists took on the iconic 170km challenge around the scenic Ring of Kerry, including over 140 riders fundraising for the IKA. Their efforts support essential services for kidney patients and raise vital awareness about organ donation.

The weather was mostly favourable for cycling, with light winds and a warm, sunny atmosphere. Early morning saw some rain and mist cling to parts of the route, particularly around Cahersiveen, Waterville, and Coomakista. As the cyclists made their way along the course, the rain abated and mist gradually lifted, and clear skies emerged, offering ideal conditions to tackle the challenging yet scenic ride.

Happily cyclists were greeted with a sunny and celebratory welcome as they returned to Killarney.

This was the 43rd Ring of Kerry Cycle. It began more than four decades ago to raise funds for a dialysis centre for people in Kerry, and remains a powerful testament to community spirit and the fight against kidney disease. It was originally set up to support patients who previously had to travel to another county for life-saving dialysis treatments, a crucial service that the IKA continues to provide. Since the inaugural cycle in 1982, the event has raised over €20 million for more than 200 charities and voluntary organisations.



Dave Cullen, Adam Challen, Francis Hogan, dialysis patient and Joe Clohessy from the Upperchurch Drumbane Cycling Club in Co. Tipperary.



Cathal McKeever, Armagh, celebrating 10 years since his brother's living donor transplant.





*Sean Moynihan, Douglas, Co. Cork.*



*Kieran McGuinness, Wexford; Leslie Bates, Noel Fitzharris and Karen Loveday, cyclists from the Southeast.*

This year the IKA was selected as one of nine main beneficiary Tier 1 charities. Over €54,000 was raised for the IKA by cyclists through the iDonate fundraising platform, with additional contributions expected.

Among the riders, many were touched by the impact of organ failure. Some were kidney transplant recipients, while others cycled in gratitude for family members who

received the 'gift of life'. One such participant, **Seamy McDermott** from Ballybofey, Donegal, was a recipient of a kidney transplant 23-years-ago who cycled with members of his local cycling club Finn Wheelers.

Travelling South from Portrush, Co. Antrim was **Cathal McGeever** who was celebrating the living donor kidney transplant his brother received from his donor mother ten

years ago. **Des and Harry Hayes** journeyed from Ross-on-Wye in England to participate for the first time in the Ring of Kerry Cycle while raising funds through their iDonate platform.

**Barry Lehane**, a native of Kiskeam in Cork flew in from the UK to cycle with his brother **John Paul Lehane** and his wife **Edel** who live in Gneeveguilla, Co. Kerry.

*continued next page*



*JP Molloy, Carlingford, Co. Louth.*



*Des & Harry Hayes, Ross-on-Wye, UK.*



*Derek & Marina Clarke, Loughrea.*



*The IKA team from Donor House, Lisa Fitzgerald, Dublin; Sinead McDonald, Wexford; Sarah Buchanan, Louth, all kidney transplant recipients.*



*Jerry Ryan, Sean Burchill and Michael Duffy from Kilmallock, Co. Limerick.*



# RING OF KERRY CHARITY CYCLE CONTINUED...

Barry donated a kidney to John Paul in 2018 and in 2020 John Paul received a pancreas from a deceased donor. The trio raised over €6,000 through iDonate. Edel shared, *"Working in palliative care, I've seen how life's journey can mirror the ups and downs of health struggles. Participating in the 170kms Ring of Kerry cycle with my husband and brother-in-law Barry will probably be just like that, a long journey with its challenges, but with a light at the end, a sense of hope and achievement. I'm so grateful that John Paul is now well enough to take part, and that I am able to share this experience with both him and his brother."*

Also raising funds for the IKA was **Eithne Murphy** from Castleisland, Co. Kerry. Eithne cycled in gratitude for the life-changing kidney transplant her father and grandfather of five, Ted Murphy who lives in Gneeveguilla, had received 12 years before. *"We're so glad to still have our dad here with us. The transplant gave us more time together, and we'll always be thankful", Eithne shared. "I'm so grateful for everything the IKA has done. Taking part in this cycle is my way of saying thank you and honouring my dad's kidney donor and their family. It's a small gesture, to show my appreciation."*

**Matt McAuliffe** and his 19-year-old son **Cathal** from Ballynoe, in Co. Cork cycled out together in thanks for the kidney transplant he received from a deceased donor two years ago. Well-known in his community he raised a phenomenal €20,000 for the IKA. You can read more about Matt on page 21.

Also cycling from neighbouring Cork was **Sean Moynihan** from Douglas while **JP Molloy** travelled from Carlingford, Co. Louth to enjoy the cycle.



From left: Des Hayes, Oran Buckley, Cara McIlroy, Edel Lehane, Marie Keane, Barry Lehane, Der Cronin, John Paul Lehane, Annie McIlroy, Harry Hayes, Theresa Looney, Cadan and Freya McIlroy in front.



Clodagh O'Shea, transplant recipient



John Paul, Edel and Barry Lehane



Patrick O'Donoghue, a transplant recipient



Francis Hogan, Joe Clohessy



Some of the great volunteers looking after the cyclists.



Volunteers Ann O'Rourke, Debbie Templeton, Theresa Looney, Bernie O'Sullivan, Josephine Lawlor, Christine and Migi.





Founding members of the ROKCC Denis Geaney and Theresa Looney

This year's event also saw the inspiring story of **Francis Hogan**, a dialysis patient from Templemore, Co. Tipperary who took part in last year's Ring of Kerry Cycle with just 10% kidney function. Remarkably, just two days after last year's event, he began his dialysis treatment and continues to undergo nightly dialysis since then. Proving that life doesn't stop with kidney disease for the father of five and a business owner whose energy levels are often depleted, but his determination is unmatched.

Francis, who was recently appointed to the Board of the IKA and is an active member of the Tipperary Branch sent a message to fellow dialysis patients to continue to push forward even when faced with health challenges. *"I'm doing this to show others that even with dialysis, life can go on. It's tough, but it's not the end,"* said Francis who cycled this year's event with some members of Upperchurch Drombane Cycling Club. Over €2,000 was raised for the IKA through Francis's idonate fundraiser.

Also from Tipperary, was **Nicola Maunsell**, from Clonmel, who describes herself as a *'leisure cyclist'*. Nicola took up training for the cycle five months before, taking on the Ring of Kerry Cycle for the first time. Raising €1,500, Nicola was cycling in gratitude for the IKA's support of her relative Mike Hennessy from Cahir.

Mike has undergone two kidney transplants, one from a deceased donor and his most recent in December 2024, thanks to his kidney donor niece and goddaughter Kathy Daughren. In advance of the cycle Nicola said, *"Mike's health transformation through the 'gift of life' he received from his deceased donor and Katie was inspirational to everyone who witnessed his journey. Organ*



Bernie O'Sullivan

*donation really does save and transform lives. Taking on this Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle is my way of giving back to the IKA, and of helping support others going through the same health journey as Mike did.*

*"When I learned that the IKA was a Tier One main beneficiary charity of the iconic Ring of Kerry Cycle, I was determined to sign up and fundraise for the cause."*

Travelling from the sunny Southeast to support the IKA and enjoy the cycle were **Kieran McGuinness** from Drinagh, Co. Wexford along with **Leslie Bates**, **Noel Fitzharris** and **Karen Loveday**.

From Kilmallock Co. Limerick was **Jerry Ryan**, **Sean Burchill** and **Michael Duffy**. Travelling from Loughrea, Co. Galway for the event were **Derek and Marina Clarke**. Derek's mother Carmel is a transplant recipient.

Closer to home and regular cyclists in the annual event and supporters of the IKA were retired veterinarian **Noel Ryan** from Killarney and **Paul Herlihy**. **Odran Lucey**, Head Chef at the Rose Hotel in Tralee, rode along with three of his cycling friends, Ger Quirke, Declan Lynch and Paul O'Sullivan.

On the event day there was a large impressive presence of 50 IKA volunteers wearing bright yellow t-shirts, led by **Theresa Looney** who is one of the founders of the Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle, ensuring the event ran smoothly while remaining highly visible to both participants and spectators.

In Caherciveen, drenched cyclists were met with warm smiles and tasty treats from the yellow-clad volunteers, offering a much-needed break and refuel stop before they hit the road again to complete the 170km loop. Theresa and the IKA Kerry Branch and its volunteers'



Volunteers: Ann O'Rourke, Valerie O'Connor, Eleanor Doherty, Theresa Looney, Bernie O'Sullivan.

dedication and hard work are the backbone of the IKA's involvement in the annual Ring of Kerry Cycle.

Backroom IKA staff included **Carrie McMullen** who was busy posting on social media and **Gwen O'Donoghue** was managing publicity in the lead up to, and on the day, of the event. IKA staff members, **Sinead McDonald**, **Lisa Fitzgerald**, and **Sarah Buchanan**, all of whom are transplant recipients from deceased donors, attended the event, supporting cyclists and volunteers from early morning until late evening. Everyone thoroughly enjoying the atmosphere and camaraderie throughout the day.

A post-event celebration was held at the Shire Bar in Killarney that evening, where cyclists, volunteers and supporters shared plenty of laughter and recounted the highlights of their unforgettable journey.

The Ring of Kerry Cycle continues to be a cornerstone event for the IKA, raising crucial funds that go directly to supporting kidney patients in need, including providing holiday homes free to patients and their families in Tralee and Killarney. Over the years, the cycle has helped improve the lives of countless kidney patients.

The event stands as a powerful tribute to the resilience of the kidney community and a reminder that organ donation truly changes lives.

The IKA now looks ahead to the 2026 Ring of Kerry Cycle, held annually on the second Saturday of July, with hopes of being chosen, once again, as a Tier 1, main beneficiary charity again in 2026! We are so grateful to the passion and commitment of all our wonderful volunteers.



# RING OF KERRY CHARITY CYCLE CONTINUED...



JP Molloy, Theresa Looney, retired vet Noel Ryan, Killarney



Edel, John Paul & Barry Lehane, Francis Hogan with his family, wife Andrina, Byron and Leon.



Adam Challan, Francis Hogan, Nicola Maunsell, Joe Clohessy



Gina Halliday, Marguerite Brosnan



Sandwiches with a smile from Stephen Byrne and Gina Halliday.



Edel Lehane, Marie Keane, John Paul Lehane.



Paul Herlihy, Theresa Looney



Teresa White, Theresa Looney



Before restoration



Joe Buckley, Francis Hogan



Theresa Looney, Bernie O'Sullivan, Ann O'Rourke

## Novelty bike restoration

Adding a joyful splash of fun to the day, a novelty bicycle for three passengers, in IKA brand colours and adorned with balloons, was on display, with 80-year-old local legend Bernie O'Sullivan making a

special appearance to cross the finish line in style – continuing her lifelong dedication to the IKA and the Ring of Kerry Cycle.

Many hours of passion and hard work by IKA Kerry Branch stalwart

Theresa Looney and her husband Pat and other enthusiastic Branch members, were spent refurbishing the old bike ensuring it received a spectacular makeover in time for its big reveal on July 5th.



Taking on the Ring of Kerry Charity Cycle was Matt McAuliffe (55) with his son Cathal (19), from Ballynoe, near Fermoy, Co Cork.

The devoted father of two, was diagnosed with end-stage kidney failure six years ago, shortly after returning from a family holiday. The diagnosis was life-changing, forcing him to step back from his role at the 155-year-old family-run McAuliffe's Bar while retaining his job with Veolia Ireland. He began dialysis at Cork University Hospital, undergoing treatment three times a week for nearly four years.

*"Going from full-time work to regular dialysis was incredibly tough," Matt recalls. "But the support from my medical team and the Irish Kidney Association helped me and my family through it."*

During those years, many friends and family members offered to donate a kidney, including his wife Celine and cousin Matthew. Unexpectedly, it was Matthew's wife, Paula, who quietly got tested and proved to be a match, though before she could donate, Matt received a transplant from a deceased donor in February 2023.

*"That moment changed everything,"*



William McAuliffe, Donal Howard, Matt, Cathal and Celine McAuliffe, Marie Roche, Thomas Dee.

he says. *"I think of my donor and their family every single day. I'm forever grateful."*

A keen cyclist, he completed the event four times between 2014 and 2017.

This year marked his return to the iconic event and his first time riding alongside his son, Cathal. *"It means so much to share this with him," Matt says. "He was a child when I was diagnosed. Now he's beside me as a young man."*

Through Matt's incredible fundraising just over €20,500 was raised for the IKA with donations online to his iDonate link were cash and cheque donations. *"I never imagined the monumental level of support I would receive from so many people in the wonderful community in which I live. I'm truly blessed."*



Matt & Cathal McAuliffe.

**WIN**



## SUMMER giveaway

**A night for 2**  
with **dinner, B&B** in the  
**4-star Iveagh Garden Hotel, Dublin 2**

To be in with a chance to win this lovely overnight, with dinner and breakfast for two, at **The Iveagh Garden Hotel**, Harcourt Street, Dublin 2, simply email the answer to the question below to [carrie@ika.ie](mailto:carrie@ika.ie) with the subject line **SUPPORT Competition**, and remember to include your name, address, and contact number.

The winner will be picked after 3pm on **Friday, August 29th** using a random number generator assigned to all correct answers. By entering the competition, you agree to your name being published in the Winter 2025 issue of **SUPPORT** magazine.

**Question: Which county won the All-Ireland Senior Hurling Championship Final on Sunday, July 20th?**





# Honouring the Carers of Kidney Patients



**By AOIFE SMITH**  
COORDINATOR OF  
COUNSELLING SERVICES

**B**ehind every kidney patient navigating dialysis, transplants, hospital appointments, medication regimens, dietary requirements or emotional ups and downs, there is often someone walking closely beside them – a dedicated carer. Whether it's a spouse, parent, sibling, or close friend, carers are united in one thing – unwavering support - physical, mental, logistical, and emotional. Their role, which sometimes may feel invisible, is absolutely vital.

Carers often become advocates, companions, motivators and emotional anchors for their loved ones. To many, it isn't just a role, it's a way of life. Their presence, steady and constant, for many patients, can transform the journey, and yet, so many carers sacrifice their own needs to ensure their loved ones' well-being, overlooking just how much they are carrying themselves.

Nevertheless, even the strongest support needs reinforcement from time

to time and even unwavering strength can feel the weight of constant care.

The intensity of caregiving can lead to carer burnout, a profound physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion. When left unchecked, it may affect not just the carer's health and happiness, but also their ability to continue providing care.

There are some common signs of carer burnout, like excessive feelings of irritability, guilt, helplessness, or resentment, a persistent sense of fatigue or difficulty in sleeping, social withdrawal, and loss of interest in hobbies or a decline in physical health and more frequent illnesses.

Unlike everyday stress, burnout often creeps in silently and is persistent. Carer burnout and regular stress may seem similar on the surface, but they differ in intensity, duration, and impact, especially when caregiving becomes a long-term responsibility.

Thank you to all who emailed or called to discuss the counselling service provided here at the Irish Kidney Association. Please continue to email me at [aoife@ika.ie](mailto:aoife@ika.ie) with topics that might benefit you to read about. Your comments to me will be completely confidential, no names will be used, and no reference will be made to any person or any specific email. If there is a common theme in the requests, I will base the next article around that topic.



Understanding this distinction helps carers recognise when they've crossed from manageable stress into burnout territory and when recovery requires more than a good night's sleep. Burnout among carers is common and it is not a failure, it's a signal. It's a signal to pause, seek support, and prioritise your own well-being. It means the mind and body are asking for care, too.

If you're a carer reading this, know that your dedication is greatly appreciated. You are not 'just' a source of support; you are a lifeline. You deserve time, space, and compassion just as much as the person you care for. Caring for someone with kidney disease is a beautiful and brave act. Your care is valuable. Your health is essential.

**Here are some wellbeing practices that may support you on your journey:**

- **Create Boundaries Around 'Care Time'.** Caring for others is a profound commitment, but it shouldn't come at the cost of your own well-being. Where it is possible, establish routines that carve out time just for you. Even 20 minutes in the morning or evening to journal, listen to music, or simply be still can have a

meaningful impact on your mental health. *Remember: your care time is just as important as the caring.*

- **Embrace Realistic Expectations.** Some days will be tougher than others, and that's okay. What truly matters is that you show up with care and do your best. You're not expected to do it all, only what's possible, with the energy you have. Compassion begins with accepting that your best is always enough. Focus on doing your best, not doing it all.
- **Practice Self-Compassion.** As a carer, you extend compassion to others every single day. Let that same kindness flow toward yourself. Recognise your feelings without judgement and honour your own needs. I know it's often easier said than done, but even now and then, give yourself permission to: *Take a break, Rest without guilt, Be gentle with yourself, Say "no" when you need to.* You deserve the same care and understanding that you so generously give to others.
- **Build a Care Network.** You don't have to carry everything alone. Invite family, friends, neighbours, and professionals to be part of your support circle. Even small acts, like sharing shopping duties

or rotating drives to appointments, can ease the load and remind you that help is not only available, but welcome. Teamwork brings relief, connection, and space to breathe.

- **Use Available Resources.** Support is out there, and you don't have to navigate this journey alone. Hospitals, charities, and online platforms often offer access to support groups, counselling, and webinars designed specifically for carers. If it feels right for you, explore these options. You deserve connection, understanding, and a sense of community around you.

If reading this article resonates with you and you feel you may be experiencing more serious signs of carer burnout, now could be a good time to reach out for support.

Speaking with your healthcare team or a counselling service may support you, and of course, we are here for you. The Irish Kidney Association (IKA) offers counselling and peer support for patients, families, and carers.

Remember prioritising mental health and emotional well-being isn't selfish it's self-care!!

Aoife

## Differences between Regular Stress and Carer Burnout

	Regular Stress	Carer Burnout
<b>Duration</b>	Often short-term and situational	Chronic and persistent over time
<b>Cause</b>	Triggered by a specific event or pressure	Accumulated emotional, physical and mental strain from responsibilities
<b>Symptom</b>	Tension, irritability, fatigue	Exhaustion, detachment, hopelessness, and compassion fatigue
<b>Recovery</b>	Usually resolves with rest or coping tools	Requires deep interventions – respite, therapy, lifestyle changes
<b>Impact</b>	Temporary disruption	Can lead to loss of self, purpose, and emotional numbness
<b>Risk</b>	Low	Risk of depression, physical illness, and strained relationships

# Brothers undergo a rare Living Donor Kidney Transplant

In October 2024, a rare and complex kidney transplant procedure – performed for the first time in Ireland in 15 years – gave Tallaght man **James Reynolds** a second chance at life, thanks to the gift from his younger brother **Graham**. The following story charts the emotional and medical journey of the Reynolds family and the groundbreaking transplant that made it possible.

This feature by **Gwen O'Donoghue** is an amalgamation of two original articles written by reporter **Alessia Micalizzi** with local newspaper **The Echo** which kindly consented for re-publication. Alessia's first article in the paper on Christmas week 2024, told James and Graham's story and the second, in January this year, included her interview with Consultant Nephrologist **Dr. Colm Magee** at Beaumont Hospital who explained the procedure. Photos by **Paddy Barrett**, also courtesy of **The Echo**.

**A**Tallaght father says he has his life back after undergoing a rare kidney transplant, made possible by his younger brother – and a medical procedure not performed in Ireland for over 15 years.

**James Reynolds** (37), who has lived with chronic kidney dysfunction for much of his life, received a living donor kidney transplant on October 22nd, 2024, thanks to a selfless donation from his brother **Graham** (34). What made this transplant especially remarkable was that the two men have incompatible blood types – something that would typically prevent a transplant.

James' condition had required a previous kidney transplant in 2009, but after a second kidney failure in 2022, he spent over two years on dialysis. With his health deteriorating and options narrowing, the Reynolds



James and Graham Reynolds

family explored every possibility.

"I really want to stress that my other siblings Thomas and Ashling, and my wife Samantha, were all very keen to be tested as potential donors," James told *The Echo* in December 2024. "Graham was considered the most practical option."

The family initially turned to the UK Living Kidney Sharing Scheme (LKSS) at Belfast City Hospital, which matches incompatible pairs from different families, but after two unsuccessful match attempts over six months, they sought help closer to home.

At Beaumont Hospital in Dublin, doctors offered a rare solution – an ABO – incompatible living related donor kidney transplant. This approach hadn't been carried out in Ireland since 2009.

James' and Graham's blood types

were incompatible. James is type O, while Graham is type A. That kind of mismatch would normally cause immediate organ rejection.

"Like in blood donations, blood group O is always the most difficult one," explained **Dr. Colm Magee**, Consultant Nephrologist at Beaumont Hospital, speaking to *The Echo* in January 2025. He said, "Someone whose blood type is O can only receive blood or an organ from another O donor."

But through a process called plasmapheresis, essentially a special form of dialysis, the levels of antibodies in James' blood that would have triggered rejection were lowered. He underwent immunosuppressive therapy a month prior and began plasmapheresis a week before the surgery.

"Plasmapheresis brings the blood



group antibodies to a low level, and when you have that window with low antibodies and the patient on standard transplant medications, that's enough time to get the kidney in," said Dr Magee.

"You don't convert the patient to a different blood group, but you reduce their reactivity to the blood group they're incompatible with."

James had six sessions of plasmapheresis in total while at times undergoing both dialysis and

plasmapheresis in the same day. "Those were quite tough days," James admitted. "I was counting them down to when my life was going to change."

Graham, who lives in Kilnamanagh in Tallaght with his partner and two children, said it was hard to watch his brother struggle. "If I got a flu, I would get over it in a few days but for James, picking up a cold would have meant feeling in a bad way for a few weeks," he said.

"I knew the difference it was going to make for him if it worked. I tried to keep myself as fit as possible."

Despite being a complex, multi-disciplinary procedure involving kidney doctors, blood bank specialists, and specialist nurses, the surgery was a success. It was performed by surgeons Dr. Dilly Little and Dr. Neal Dugal.

"It's very rare that the antibodies bounce back high, which would be the cause of rejection," said Dr. Magee. "We consider the first two weeks a sort of 'danger period' and after that we're generally much more comfortable."

Including James' operation, the ABO-incompatible procedure has only been performed four times in Ireland. Its rarity is due in part to the availability of the Living Kidney Sharing Scheme (LKSS) at Belfast City Hospital, which often allows patients to avoid such invasive pre-treatment by swapping donors with other families.

"If you can find a swap where you don't need to do any of this extra treatment, that's always better," said Dr. Magee.

But for James and Graham, that option wasn't available. Graham said, "Compared to last time, we were older and more aware. We knew the benefits a new kidney would have, and that's why we all put ourselves forward. If it wasn't going to be me for any reasons, my brother and sister were ready to go."

“After the transplant, I took a moment to tell him that he didn't just give me my life back. He gave my wife a husband back, and my eight-year-old son a father back.”



*Dr. Colm Magee, Consultant Nephrologist, Beaumont Hospital.*

Both brothers have recovered well. James has returned to his job as a digital content manager. Graham, who works for the ESB, is back at work having taken a few months off due to the physical nature of his work.

The siblings remain close. James shared, "I never asked any of them to do this for me. It was all pushed by them."

James jokingly shared during his December 2024 interview, just ahead of their

first Christmas post-surgery, "I just don't know what to get Graham for Christmas. What kind of present is going to top his?"

But the gratitude goes deeper than gifts. "After the transplant, I took a moment to tell him that he didn't just give me my life back. He gave my wife a husband back, and my eight-year-old son a father back."



### Donating to the Irish Kidney Association is a meaningful and enduring act of generosity

The Irish Kidney Association has teamed up with **FreeWill.ie** to provide you with a free online service to create or update your will using their will drafting tool.

For more information please see

[ika.ie/leave-a-gift-in-your-will/](https://ika.ie/leave-a-gift-in-your-will/)



# Patient and Public Involvement in kidney research

## ‘Nothing about us without us’

### WHAT IS PATIENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT (PPI) IN RESEARCH?

Too often, patients' voices go unheard during treatment for kidney disease, and their complex needs can remain unaddressed. PPI in kidney research means involving people living with kidney disease in research, not just as a participant, but as an active partner in each stage of the research process.

People who have lived experience of a health condition, and their family members, have expert perspectives that improve the quality of research, make it more meaningful, and make sure it has a real-world impact. Including patients in research ensures that the research is carried out 'with' or 'by' patients, rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them

PPI is now considered a key part of publicly funded research projects in Ireland; the best type of PPI research is where there is full contribution of

By  
**DR. LISA MELLON, LECTURER,  
RCSI UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE  
& HEALTH SCIENCES**  
  
**DR. DAVID KEANE (NUIG)  
AND THE  
KERNAL PATIENT ADVISORY GROUP**

patients and services users at all stages of the research.

This can range from being involved at the earliest stage by identifying priority research questions that are important to patients, advising on how to recruit participants to take part, designing the type of study and methods to collect data, and finally interpreting the findings and advising on the best strategies for sharing the findings to patients, healthcare professionals and the public.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING INVOLVED IN PPI?

Being actively involved in the research process gives you an opportunity to provide the patient voice in important matters and contribute to improving treatments and quality of care for patients on dialysis or living with a kidney transplant.

It's also an opportunity to gain new skills and learn about the research process, and to work closely with multidisciplinary experts in kidney disease research in Ireland.

### WHO CAN BECOME A PPI REPRESENTATIVE?

Anyone with experience of living with kidney disease (or a family member) has a perspective that is valuable to research on the topic. All that is expected from PPI representatives is a willingness to speak up about their condition as this will highlight patient-led perspectives that can enhance the research.

### WHAT DOES PPI INVOLVE?

It mainly involves your time – most project steering committees meet two or three times a year, and you may be more actively involved at the start and end of the project, when the patient voice is essential.

Often there can be quiet periods when data is being collected and analysed by the researchers. You will receive training and financial compensation for your time, contributions and any travel expenses.





### *In summary, why get involved in PPI?*

- **To make sure research is carried out on topics that are important to people living with kidney disease.**
- **To improve the quality and value of kidney disease research.**
- **To increase the impact of kidney disease research for people living with kidney disease.**

### **WHAT DO IKA MEMBERS SAY ABOUT THEIR PPI IN RESEARCH EXPERIENCE?**

*Rachel O'Hora, PPI panel member for the KERNEL study:*  
"Having been a renal patient for 14 years, I felt that my broad range of experiences might help to inform some of the decisions being made going forward. I decided to get involved with this study as a way of giving back to the IKA, and the whole Renal community, after my treasured simultaneous pancreas kidney transplant. If I can help others to avoid some of the pitfalls, I had to overcome then it was worth it all in the end".

### **WHAT DO RESEARCHERS SAY ABOUT PPI IN RESEARCH?**

*Dr. David Keane, Principal Investigator for the KERNEL study:*  
"I'm really grateful for the support from the IKA to set up our Patient Advisory Group and especially to the members of the group for their time and enthusiasm.  
PPI in data analysis research is different from other research such as clinical trials, where there are clear objectives on things like supporting recruitment and retention.  
We've been learning together how PPI works in this setting, but there's no question to me around the value of PPI in the project. Watch out for some patient focussed outcomes from the project over the next months!"

## **WHAT TYPES OF STUDIES ARE IKA MEMBERS CURRENTLY CONTRIBUTING TO AS PPI PARTNERS?**



*The Kidney Failure in Ireland (KERNEL) Study  
(Dr. David Keane, University of Galway).*

This study aims to describe the burden of kidney failure for patients living in Ireland, as compared to patients in other countries, looking at changes over time from 2010-2020. Findings will be used to directly influence policy decisions of the National Renal Office for planning and improving services for people with kidney disease.



*The EPIC Study;  
Enhancing Prescribing in Chronic Kidney Disease in Primary Care  
(Prof. Frank Moriarty, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland).*

Patients with CKD take multiple medications, some of which may be unnecessary. This project aims to identify what medications are most important to stop or reduce for patients with chronic kidney disease and understand how to help healthcare professionals prescribe correctly to make medications safer for patients.



*The PRO-GD study:  
Patient Reported Outcomes – Glomerular Disease  
(Dr. Michelle O'Shaughnessy, University of Galway).*

This study aims to develop a Patient Reported Outcomes questionnaire that is acceptable and relevant for Irish patients with glomerular disease (also known as glomerulonephritis, nephritis, or nephrotic syndrome). Patients will complete 2 or 3 study questionnaires over 6 months, to assess how well the questionnaire captures their symptoms and quality of life. Some participants will then also complete the IKA's 'Living Well' programme and report the potential impact of this programme on their health-related quality of life.

## **HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?**

In 2025, the IKA is partnering with the National PPI Ignite Network. This network brings together a diverse range of stakeholders nationally and internationally to build a shared voice for PPI in research in Ireland.

**Dr. Lisa Mellon**, a member of the Mayo IKA Branch and Lecturer at the **Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, University of Medicine & Health Sciences**, currently leads the IKA's PPI involvement in research.

Please contact Lisa at [lisamellon@rcsi.ie](mailto:lisamellon@rcsi.ie) if you would like to be added to the IKA PPI panel, where you will be invited to be involved in the development and implementation of future research projects.

# Happiness is planning a trip to somewhere new



By **DEBORAH CERVI**  
Holiday Co-ordinator

**The Irish Kidney Association provides a service for Irish dialysis patients looking to holiday abroad. Please contact us about arranging dialysis BEFORE booking your holiday. Please give at least 8 weeks' notice as our holiday booking service is extremely busy.**

## HOW DO I BOOK DIALYSIS ABROAD?

- Please **DO NOT** book a holiday or flights before making arrangements for your dialysis treatment abroad.
- Your first port of call should be either to contact a member of staff in your dialysis unit or you can submit an enquiry using our online form at <https://ika.ie/patient-holidays/> or contact Deborah in the IKA on 01-6205306 email: [deborah@ika.ie](mailto:deborah@ika.ie)

- Patients need to give at least a minimum of 8 weeks' notice for holiday treatments abroad.

## WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO PROVIDE?

The basic information needed to proceed with the booking of a patient's request is the following:

- Patient's name.
- Holiday location.
- Desired dialysis dates.
- We will also need information on where you usually attend dialysis so we can contact them and start the booking process for your holiday.

## WHAT DOCUMENTATION DO I NEED TO PROVIDE?

- Completed medical and dialysis application form.
- Up to date blood test results of Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, MRSA and HIV (the test results must be dated no more than 4 weeks before the departure date).
- A letter from your consultant stating you are fit to travel.
- EHIC – European Health Insurance Card (formerly known as the E111).

- If travelling outside Europe your EHIC is of no use therefore you must pay for dialysis treatments outside the EHIC card area.
- Official COVID-19 Cert.

## IS IT SAFE TO DIALYSE IN ANOTHER COUNTRY?

- We offer our patients consistently high standards in any of the worldwide dialysis clinics. We assess them yearly, making sure they meet the same standards as where you dialyse here in Ireland.

## WILL I BOOK MY FLIGHTS / ACCOMMODATION BEFORE MY DIALYSIS IS CONFIRMED?

- It is best to wait until you have received a dialysis booking confirmation from the IKA holiday coordinator or your dialysis unit, before confirming flights or putting a deposit on your holiday. We will do a thorough search of all hospitals in the area you are travelling to, but since the COVID-19 pandemic some hospitals have less capacity. We will do our best for alternative

options if your chosen location is not available.

- You will need to give the IKA at least a minimum 8 weeks' notice to organise your holiday dialysis abroad.

## HOW DO YOU GET MY MEDICAL INFORMATION TO BOOK MY HOLIDAY DIALYSIS?

Once you give consent on the application form, this allows us to safely communicate all your paperwork from one hospital to another. We have years of experience, and all your information is kept confidential.

## DO I NEED TO ARRANGE MY OWN TRANSPORT TO DIALYSIS ABROAD?

For most destinations you will need to make your own arrangements to/from the hospital for your dialysis times.

Destinations that do offer transport will be in touch directly with you, prior to your arrival, and will discuss pick-up times with you.

## DO I NEED TO LET THE TRANSPLANT TEAM KNOW I AM TRAVELLING ABROAD ON HOLIDAYS?

Yes, if you are on the waiting list for a transplant,



you should let the team know that you will be abroad. This will 'pause' you on the list whilst you are away, as you wouldn't be available to receive the transplant. Remember to let them know as soon as you return.

#### ARE THERE PROTOCOLS IN PLACE SINCE COVID-19?

All hospitals have taken extra precautions since the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure everyone is kept as safe as possible. Some hospitals abroad still require a COVID Rapid Antigen test to be taken in your dialysis unit and certified by a nurse in charge. This test must be

taken 48 hours prior to your flight departure. We will be sure to inform you of what is required by overseas medical facilities before you travel.

If you are thinking of a holiday abroad in 2025 or would like advice on destinations, you can now make an enquiry on our website <https://ika.ie/patient-holidays/> by clicking on patient holidays and complete our secure enquiry form or alternatively you can contact me on 01-6205306 or by email: [deborah@ika.ie](mailto:deborah@ika.ie)

*Wishing everyone an enjoyable summer.*

*Deborah*

## IKA HOLIDAY HOMES

The holidays in the IKA Holiday Homes in Tramore, Killarney and Tralee are now in full swing.

Again, this year, we have received hundreds of requests from patients who wish to holiday in one of the IKA's lovely holiday homes. With the holiday homes being in great demand, accommodation is full on a weekly basis so unfortunately, we cannot accommodate all requests.

However, we do have a waiting list in place for those families that we could not accommodate with the dates they requested. If a cancellation occurs, we will revert to our waiting list to see can we give another family the opportunity to avail of the holiday home. We will continue to accommodate as many families as is possible this year.

If you are unable to make your booking, please let us know as soon as you can so that we have the time to re-allocate your holiday home to another deserving family.



Killarney Holiday Home

Tralee Holiday Home



# Become a PEER SUPPORT VOLUNTEER this Summer!



Over the past three years, our Peer Support service has made an extraordinary impact, bringing real connection, hope, and healing to those navigating difficult times on their kidney journey. Thanks to our wonderful team of peer support volunteers and funding from Punchestown Kidney Research Fund.

We believe in the transformative power of lived experience: that those who have faced and overcome adversity can offer genuine understanding, guidance, and encouragement to others walking a similar path.

This summer, we're building a new team of peer support volunteers, and we're looking for passionate individuals like you to join us.

#### WHY GET INVOLVED?

- Make a meaningful difference in someone's life
- Share your strength and story to inspire others
- Be part of a supportive community that values empathy and resilience

Peer Support volunteers will have the chance to enhance their skills and build on existing experience, supported by our dedicated and knowledgeable team. Through comprehensive training, volunteers will develop core peer support competencies while contributing to a dynamic and passionate team.

If you're interested in becoming a peer support volunteer or want to find out what's involved, email us at [peersupport@ika.ie](mailto:peersupport@ika.ie) and follow us on social media for updates on recruitment events and details.

Together, we can turn lived experience into lasting support.

**Information session on Thursday, August 21st,  
at 7pm. Register at [ika.ie/peersupport](https://ika.ie/peersupport)**

# Human Tissue Act 2024



June 17th was a landmark day in the history of organ donation and transplantation in Ireland as Part 2 (Transplantation) of the Human Tissue Act (2024) was commenced. As with any time when we reflect on organ donation and transplantation, it is important not to get 'lost' in policy or statistics and remember that we are talking about people and generosity of the human spirit that allows for the transformative impact of organ donation for transplantation.



By **COLIN WHITE**  
NATIONAL ADVOCACY  
& PROJECTS MANAGER

## MEDIA COVERAGE

For three weeks prior to the commencement date, the Department of Health ran an extensive media campaign announcing the aspects of the legislation that would be coming into effect on June 17th. The campaign appeared across print and electronic media with significant advertising coverage on radio and television too.

The HSE's Organ Donation Transplant Ireland (ODTI) office 'took over' the awareness campaign from June 17th. Their remit was to cover the practicalities of the legislation. This included the launch of the Opt-out Register and explaining how it worked.

The Irish Kidney Association (IKA) also played its part in bringing awareness of, and clarity to, the changes that the legislation has brought in. There were 15 radio interviews done on 14 different radio stations (including RTÉ 1 Radio and Newstalk and a range of local radio stations covering most parts of the country).

There were also 28 print/electronic media articles in which the IKA was either the primary source or one of the sources with a collective reach of over 1 million people and a value of over €86,000.

## SOCIAL MEDIA COVERAGE

The IKA kept its focus on getting clear, reliable information into the public domain. It has been interesting to follow the public reaction to the legislation through the various social media channels.

Running alongside the inevitable misinformation that was pedalled by some, there has been some honest confusion over the provisions of the Act, much of which was rooted in the misleading statement, "if you are an

adult, you will now be considered an organ donor when you die".

This statement led some to assume that organs would be retrieved from everyone who dies unless they registered their objection on the Opt-out Register.

This overlooks the continued role of family in the process.\* It also fails to highlight the fact that approximately 1% of deaths annually are in the circumstances where organ donation is even a possibility.

## THE OPT-OUT REGISTER

Whilst the launch of the Register was impacted by a couple of minor technical issues, the HSE's prompt response is to be commended and through their use of HSE Live, every effort was made to keep the public updated and respond to queries/problems.

You may have read in the media that in the three weeks since the commencement of the legislation, approximately 45,000 people (less than 1% of the population) had registered on the Opt-out register. Looking at this figure in isolation, it may be startling, but it is important to put it in context.

Organ donation is a personal choice and is not for everyone. The introduction of the Opt-out register ensures that the wishes of those who do not want to be considered as potential organ donors are respected and protected by law.

It is important to note that the number of opt-out decisions being recorded each day has already dropped significantly. To put the figure in context, as of March 2024, 2.6 million people in the UK (3.9% of the population) had registered on their Opt-out Register (of note, 28.1 million, or 42% of the population had registered on their Opt-in Register).

\* "Where a person has not registered his or her objection to the donation of his or her relevant organs in accordance with Section 33, a registered medical practitioner who, after the person's death proposes to remove a relevant organ from that person for the purposes of transplantation shall satisfy himself or herself that the designated family member of the person has confirmed that he or she does not have any objection to the donation of the relevant organ."

(Chapter two Section 18 (3) of the Human Tissue Act).

[www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2024/act/5/section/18/enacted/en/html#sec18](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2024/act/5/section/18/enacted/en/html#sec18)



## WHAT IS THE IKA MESSAGING ON THE LEGISLATION?

The Association welcomes the commencement of the legislation. It is a positive step forward, but it will not be a game-changer on its own – it is a piece of a larger jigsaw. Other factors include:

- **Infrastructure**
  - ICU beds
  - Theatre space
  - Recovery beds
- **Personnel**
  - Organ Donation Nurse Managers
  - Transplant Surgeons
  - Anaesthetists
  - Nursing and support staff

## THE LEGISLATION HAS INTRODUCED THE FOLLOWING:

- **Opt-out Register (operated by the HSE)**
  - Where people can record their objection to organ donation.
- **Deemed Consent**
  - In practical terms, this means that if you have not recorded your objection on the Opt-out register and you are not in one of the excluded groups (*children, people normally resident in the country for less than 12 months, a person who, for a significant period before his or her death, lacked the capacity to understand that his or her consent would be deemed to be such if he or she did not register an objection to the donation of his or her organs on the Register and to a person in respect of whom a designated family member cannot be identified or confirmed*), you have given consent for your family to be approached and asked if they have any objection to organ donation for transplantation going ahead.
- **Excluded Groups**
  - In the case of those in the above identified excluded groups, their families will be approached for consent rather than an approach asking if they have an objection.
- **Non-directed Altruistic kidney donation**
  - This is where a member of the public steps forward to offer themselves as a living kidney donor for whoever is a suitable

match (hence the ‘non-directed’ part of it). The donor and recipient do not have a prior relationship, and they do not meet during or after the process.

## THE ORGAN DONOR CARD / CODE 115:

- The card remains relevant post-legislation as the role of the family remains central in the organ donation process. You can read about the IKA's new Digital Organ Donor Card on page 32 of the magazine.
- The organ donor card is an ‘icebreaker’ to help people start the organ donation conversation in their family. This is why it has a space for the next of kin to sign. It is important to understand that it is not a legal document and there is no central database of contact details for people who have requested organ donor cards (as per GDPR, the IKA deletes all personal details submitted when requesting an organ donor card via its website once the donor cards have been sent out).
- Answering ‘yes’ to the organ donation question on the driving licence application form puts Code 115 on the bottom left-hand corner of the back of the licence. Whilst the driving licence authority can tell us that 1.6million licence holders have code 115 on their licence, their details are not shared with the health service.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The sources of information below are of use for your own information or equally for sharing with others.

- [www.gov.ie/organdonation](http://www.gov.ie/organdonation)
- [www.hse.ie/organdonation](http://www.hse.ie/organdonation)
- [www.ika.ie/organdonation](http://www.ika.ie/organdonation)

## MISCELLANEOUS

There has been some concern expressed about the announcement that the commencement of the provisions on June 17th is only the first step of the legislation and there will be more to come. Some people have made the assumption that the ‘more to come’ is about organ donation. The reality is that the Human Tissue Act has 6 parts and Part 2 (Transplantation) is the part that was commenced on June 17th.

The other 5 parts of the legislation

are not about organ donation – they cover areas such as post-mortem practice. There is nothing more to come from the legislation about organ donation other than a provision for a review of the consent process that must take place within the next three years (this is covered in Part 2 (Transplantation)).

## MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES / SPEAKING ABOUT THE LEGISLATION:

If you have an opportunity to speak about the legislation with the media or to an audience outside the IKA membership, please make sure to inform Colin White ([colin@ika.ie](mailto:colin@ika.ie)) so that we can keep an accurate record of all the IKA's public activity around organ donation.

If you speak to a public representative about the legislation, or any other policy related issue in the IKA's name, you must record it and inform Colin White as the Association is obliged, by law, to submit records of all such interactions with public representatives.

You will find useful resources on the IKA website ([www.ika.ie/organdonation](http://www.ika.ie/organdonation)) to help prepare you for any speaking opportunities. The key points to remember are:

- Acknowledge organ donors and donor families.
- Highlight, under the legislation, the continued and legally recognised, role of the family in organ donation.
- Promote the organ donor card, including the new digital organ donor card, as an icebreaker to start a family conversation.

Don't over-reach in an interview – if you are not confident in your answer to a question, feel free to either direct the interviewer to Donor House or offer to get an answer and come back to them.

The IKA has a well-earned reputation for the provision of reliable information, and it is important that we continue this.

If you have any questions or areas you want to clarify in advance of any such opportunity, please contact Colin White ([colin@ika.ie](mailto:colin@ika.ie)) in Donor House.

Equally, feedback after any such opportunities is welcome and will help inform future messaging.



By **CARRIE McMULLAN**  
Communications Executive

# SOCIAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

## The new digital donor card

Since its foundation in 1978, the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) has been at the forefront of promoting organ donation awareness across Ireland. Initially focusing on kidney transplants before other organ transplant programmes had begun in Ireland, the IKA created the Kidney Donor Card. It later evolved into the Organ Donor Card and included a space on the back for both the holder and next of kin to sign acting as a tool to start the 'organ donation conversation' within households and help families understand their loved ones wishes to have the possibility to give the 'gift of life'.

The Organ Donor Card has remained a fundamental part of the IKA's campaigning as a tangible symbol of the wish to be an organ donor. We recently saw the importance of the donor card during this year's Organ Donor Awareness Week and the commencement of the Human Tissue Act (2024), during the months of May and June, which brought about a surge in requests of over 1,500 donor cards within those two months.

The IKA has always tried to remain accessible to our community by keeping ourselves up to date with



how we can best offer and communicate our services to our members all across the country. Previously, a Donor Card App was created which allowed for a way to carry your Organ Donor Card on your phone. However, in time, we discovered that phones were being upgraded much more frequently, and the app eventually became outdated.

Anecdotally, we heard from members of our community that they found a lot of value in having the option to carry their Organ Donor Card on their phone. It meant that they had instant access to their card after requesting it, it couldn't easily be lost or broken, and it was convenient to share with their family and friends. Recognising this, we started developing a more sustainable, long-term solution for a digital card.

The new Digital Organ Donor Card offers an updated experience for people who want to carry their Organ Donor Card on their phone. Much like a supermarket loyalty card or concert tickets, the Digital Organ Donor Card can be stored in a phone wallet, so it is always easily accessible. The Digital Card can be downloaded through our website and stored immediately in your phone's Google or Apple Wallet. The process of downloading your card prompts you to share your wishes with your loved ones through email,

text or WhatsApp, and includes a link to a page on our website which will help your loved ones understand your decision and the importance of organ donation.

The design matches the appearance of the physical card, and features the poignant Forget-Me-Not logo, its elements symbolising the journey of organ donation and transplantation. The brown stem represents the failed organ, the bandaged graft represents a person receiving a transplant, and the flower represents the new life received after transplantation.

Along with keeping the IKA in line with the developing digital world, the Digital Organ Donor Card offers additional environmental benefits by reducing the overall materials used.

Considering the provision within the Human Tissue Act (2024) for the Opt Out Register, which commenced on June 17th, 2025, the importance of organ donation has become more prominent in the public eye. This is a crucial window of time to use the Organ Donor Card as a tool to prompt a discussion about organ donation.

Promoting organ donation awareness can be as simple as sharing your decision with family and friends, or by using social media platforms to spread the word.

To download your Digital Donor Card, visit the IKA website - [www.ika.ie/donorcard](http://www.ika.ie/donorcard)



# New digital Organ Donor Card now at your fingertips

Attending a photocall on July 8th to launch the new Digital Donor Card beside the 'Circle of Life' Memorial for organ donors and their families just outside the front door entrance to Beaumont Hospital was Lana Devine.

Lana, age 21, travels from her home in Kells, Co. Meath to Beaumont Hospital three times a week for three and a half hour haemodialysis treatment sessions.

By **GWEN O'DONOGHUE**  
Photo by **GARETH CHANEY**

Lana was born with bilateral kidney dysplasia and received a kidney transplant when she was just 4-years-old – a gift that allowed her to experience a childhood and most of her teenage years. Lana and her family remain eternally grateful to the deceased donor who gave her that opportunity. Also present at the photocall were Laura Austin, CNM3, Transplant Coordinator, National Kidney Transplant Service, Beaumont Hospital, and Colin White, National Advocacy and Projects Manager, Irish Kidney Association (IKA).

Lana's kidney transplant failed in 2023 and initially she underwent peritoneal dialysis through the night but it wasn't working well for her and in February of this year she switched to haemodialysis at Beaumont Hospital. Hoping for a second kidney transplant from a donor relative soon, Lana has deferred taking up the offer of a place in teacher training at St. Patrick's College in Drumcondra, Dublin. Lana shared, "I feel incredibly fortunate to have received a kidney transplant, and I



*Laura Austin, CNM3, Transplant Coordinator, National Kidney Transplant Service, Beaumont Hospital and Lana Devine.*

hope this digital donor card initiative helps others understand the importance of organ donation.

"This new card will make it easier for people to show their support and potentially save and transform lives, just as mine was."

The IKA's new digital donor card is not only a convenient and secure way to carry a record of your willingness to donate, it is also a powerful symbol, conversation starter, and constant reminder of your commitment to saving lives. The digital donor card does not serve as legal consent but it can be a meaningful prompt to your family, ensuring your wishes are respected.

"This isn't just about convenience," said Colin White, National Advocacy & Projects Manager, IKA. "In now providing a digital organ donor card, the IKA is embracing the latest technology that has become such an integral part of our daily lives. It's about keeping organ donation front of mind and giving hope to those who are waiting for a second chance at life."

With the addition of the new digital option, the IKA is making the organ donor card more accessible than ever. You can now download your digital donor card from the IKA website [www.ika.ie/donorcard](http://www.ika.ie/donorcard) and add it to your Apple or Google Wallet.

## DO YOU HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT OR FUNDRAISER?

We would be delighted to add it to the events calendar on our website - just email [carrie@ika.ie](mailto:carrie@ika.ie) with the details (including what type of event it is, where, when it will be held, ticket and price information).



# Navigating Ultra Processed Foods and Renal Disease

## WHAT ARE ULTRA PROCESSED FOODS?

You may have heard of ultra-processed foods (UPFs) in the media recently, but what are they? UPFs are classified by the NOVA food classification system, according to the degree of industrial processing a food item has undergone. This system follows foods from non-processed or minimally processed foods such as potatoes through to the addition of culinary ingredients (e.g. salt) to make UPFs such as potato crisps. These products (UPFs) are usually palatable, cheap, convenient to buy, have a long shelf life, are ready to eat and have numerous ingredients, many of which are unpronounceable!

The aim of this article is to provide you with evidence-based information on UPFs and equip you with the knowledge to make more informed food choices when going to the supermarkets.

## WHAT ARE THE CURRENT CONSUMPTION RATES?

A recent report revealed that Ireland has one of the highest rates of ultra-processed food consumption globally (*Obesity Report 2022*). Other countries with high UPF intake include Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States.

While the consumption of UPFs is lowest in Portugal, Italy, Greece and France. It is not surprising that these are countries well known for their traditional food cultures and often attract droves of hungry tourists ready to sample their delicious cuisine.

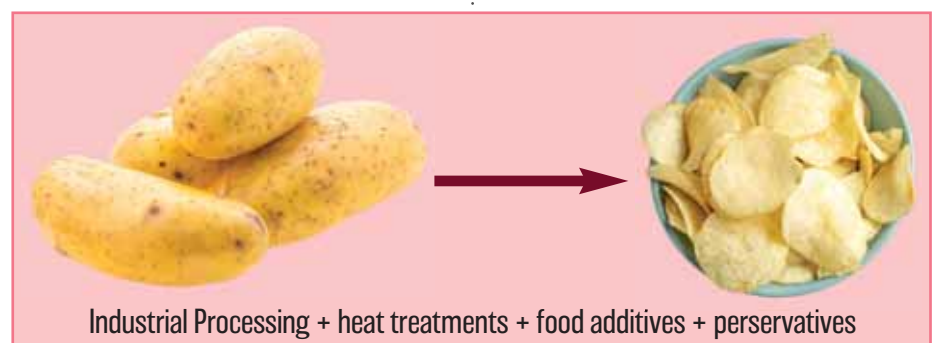
## HOW ULTRA-PROCESSED FOODS (UPFS) AFFECT YOUR HEALTH

Ultra-processed foods are usually high in fat, sugar and salt and sit at the top of our food pyramid. This means that these foods should not be eaten every day. A 2024 study found that eating a lot of UPFs can lead to weight gain. This happens because UPFs affect the hormones that help us feel full, making it easier to overeat. Eating too many UPFs can lead to more fat around your internal organs (called visceral fat) and

increase the risk of health problems like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and even poor mental health.

With an increased intake of foods which are ultra-processed comes a decrease in diet quality. That is because these foods undergo extensive processing and heat treatments to extend their shelf life, which can change the nutritional characteristics of the food depleting their fibre, vitamin and mineral contents. Think of the humble potato for example, a natural food product inherently high in potassium but low in fat and salt. During the manufacture of potato crisps, substances are added which ultimately increase the salt, fat and potassium content. Crisps are an example of a UPF.

Many UPFs also contain food





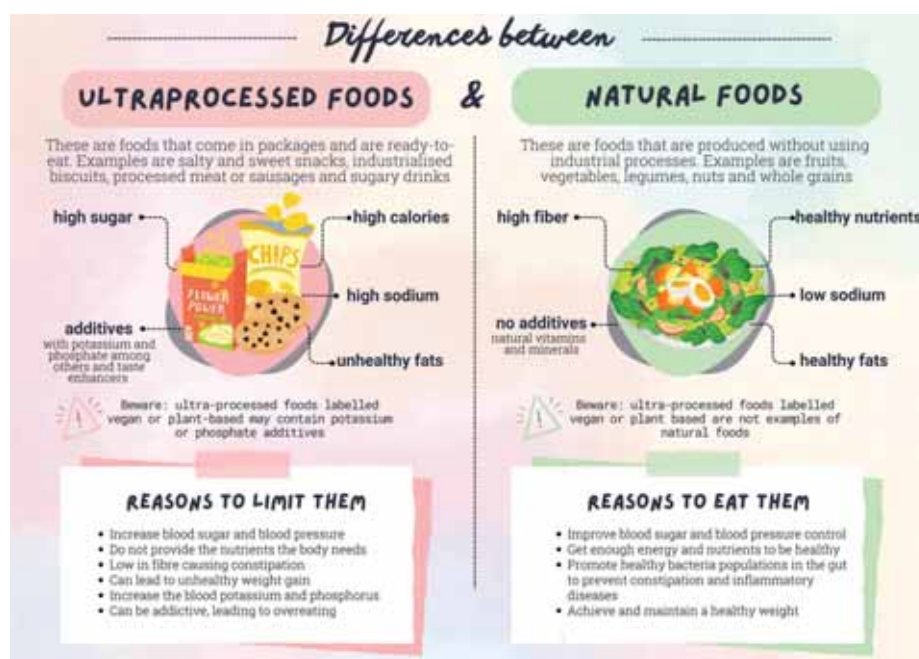
additives, including colourings, sweeteners, flavour enhancers, stabilisers and thickeners. These add to a food's shelf life, sensory characteristics and appeal.

### UPFS AND CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

In the context of Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), there is a growing body of evidence to support that a higher UPF consumption can increase risk of decline in kidney function. These foods tend to be lower in fibre, vitamins and antioxidants and higher in energy, fat, sugar, sodium and potassium and phosphate additives.

It's important to remember that we eat food, not just nutrients. Our bodies don't absorb nutrients the same way from all foods. For example, potassium is absorbed differently depending on what type of food it comes from. When we eat fruits and vegetables, we absorb about half of the potassium they contain. This is because nutrients such as fibre help to lessen the absorption of potassium from fruits and vegetables. But when extra potassium is added to processed foods, our bodies can absorb almost all of it. Yet another reason why we should aim to include more plants in our diet!

So now that we know what an UPF is and how they can impact our health, let us help you to identify UPFs in your supermarket.



### UNDERSTANDING FOOD LABELS

#### Look at the ingredients

The ingredients in a food product appear in descending order of weight. The first ingredient named, is present in the highest amount and the last ingredient will be present in the smallest amount. Food products that contain over five ingredients are likely to be ultra-processed.

#### Search for additives

Food additives include colourings, flavour enhancers, and chemicals to improve texture, taste, and appearance.

If you are following a low phosphate or low potassium diet, try to limit foods containing these additives.

**Examples of additives that contain phosphate and potassium include:**  
(this is not an exhaustive list).

Diphosphates (E450)  
Triphosphates (E451)  
Polyphosphates (E452)  
Phosphoric acid (E338)

Potassium Chloride (E508)  
Potassium Phosphates (E340)  
Potassium lactate (E326)  
Potassium Citrates (E332)

## CHICKEN BURGERS 4 servings

### Ingredients

Chicken meat (285g)  
Breadcrumbs (100g)  
1 medium onion (150g)  
Dijon Mustard (1 tsp)  
Lemon (juice of half)  
Fresh thyme (1 tsp)  
Olive oil (1 tbsp)  
Black pepper (1 tbsp)  
Burger buns

### To garnish each burger

Tomato (1 slice)  
Red onion (1 slice)  
Cucumber (2 slices)  
3 lettuce leaves  
Mayonnaise (1 tbsp)  
Dijon Mustard

### Method

In a large bowl combine the chicken, breadcrumbs, onion, mustard, lemon juice and thyme. Season the mixture with freshly ground black pepper.

Shape into 4 equal patties.

Cover and place in fridge. Refrigerate for about 1 hour.

Fry in a small amount of olive oil over a medium to high heat until browned on both sides.

Transfer to a pre-heated oven at 180°C/  
Gas mark 4 for 15-20 minutes.

Ensure burgers are cooked thoroughly prior to serving.

Slice and lightly toast the burger buns and put the patties in the bread.

Wash the salad vegetables and garnish the burgers.



By **SARAH WADE, RD & MICHELLE KEALY, RD**  
Dietitians in Cork University Hospital  
on behalf of the Renal Interest Group  
of the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI)

**INDI RENAL**  
Irish Nutrition +  
Dietetic Institute





**Patient advocacy representatives:**  
**Front row, (l-r):** Olayinka Aremu, ANNI; Gemma O'Dowd, ILFA; Carol Moore, IKA; Avril Whitty, LISN; Jacqueline Burke, IKA.  
**Middle row:** Philip Kavanagh, LISN; Eddie Cassidy, ILFA; Sandra Doyle, TSI; Eddie Flood, IKA.  
**Back row:** Robert McCutcheon, IHLTA; Denise Dunne, Cystinosis Ireland; Colin White, IKA; Nicola Delaney-Foxe, CFI; Dr. Christopher Neilson, Liver Trust Ireland.

# ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK 2025

**O**rgan Donor Awareness Week (Donor Week) took place from May 10th-17th this year with the official launch taking place in the Mansion House in Dublin on May 6th.

Donor Week took place against the backdrop of the imminent commencement of Part 2 (Transplantation) of the Human Tissue Act (2024). It is heartening to note that in discussions with the Department of Health and the HSE, there was a conscious decision made to respect the place, and impact, of Donor Week in the annual national calendar and ensure that the commencement of the legislation would be a separate event.

## THE HUMAN TISSUE ACT

It was originally planned that the Minister for Health would announce the commencement date (June 17th) for the legislation at the launch of Donor Week but for logistical reasons, the announcement was delayed until May 9th.

Going right back to the justification behind introducing the very first organ donor card, the Irish Kidney Association's focus in its messaging around the promotion of organ donation has always been rooted in the importance of sharing your wishes with family in the context of their role in giving the final consent.

## By COLIN WHITE NATIONAL ADVOCACY & PROJECTS MANAGER

With the continued role of family in consent for organ donation being enshrined in the new legislation, it was clear that the messaging for Donor Week 2025 should remain the same as in recent years – “*Don't leave your loved ones in doubt*” – and the promotion of the organ donor card should continue to be the ‘call to action’.

## Photos by CONOR McCABE

## HOW THE ASSOCIATION SPREADS ITS MESSAGING

The Association's focus on promoting its messaging through the sharing of the life stories of people affected by organ donation and transplantation has a strong track record in being the most impactful way of engaging the public. As in previous years, many individuals, and their families, stepped forward to share their stories with significant media coverage generated at a local and national level across print and electronic media as well as radio and television.



**Organ Donation Transplant Ireland (ODTI) (l-r):** National Donor Coordinators Emma Corrigan, Aisling Vickers and Louise Pedreschi; Kathleen Tyrrell, Administrator; John Walsh, Chief Operations Officer; Jennifer Hally, National Donor Coordinator; Dr. Brian O'Brien, National Director; Dr. Catherine Motherway, Clinical Lead; Lynn Martin, National Donor Coordinator.



## MEASURING THE IMPACT

The Association engages the services of an online media monitoring service. It does not capture all coverage, but it gives a good indication of the reach and value of messaging from campaigns such as Donor Week.

### PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA IMPACT

#### REACH



**17.4**  
million

#### VALUE



**€931,777**

#### COVERAGE BREAKDOWN



**50+** Local Newspapers  
**10+** National Newspapers  
**10+** Radio Interviews\*  
RTÉ One News, Virgin Media News and RTÉ News2Day\*  
*\*Not included in the measured impact*

### SOCIAL MEDIA / WEBSITE



**206,629**

the combined reach of Donor Week activity across all IKA accounts on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and X.



**1,886**

views of the Launch of Donor Week on YouTube.



**1,418**

the number of Donor Cards requests submitted via the website.

The speakers at the launch of the Week, representing people on dialysis, transplant recipients and donor families really brought the human side of the issue to the fore.

The added presence of representatives from the three adult transplanting hospitals (Beaumont, St. Vincents and The Mater hospitals), Temple Street Children's University Hospital, the HSE's Organ Donation Transplant Ireland office, Department of Health, patient organisations and other community representatives also brought home the complexity of making organ donation and transplantation a reality whilst shining a light on the importance of collaboration and partnership.

### BUILDING ON OUR BASE

Organ Donor Awareness Week continues to be an Irish Kidney Association initiative and is built on the activities of its grassroots volunteers through its Branch network across the country.

It is pleasing to report that this year's Donor Week continued the trend in recent years of increasing

engagement with community and national partners outside the Association's own base.

Two new patient organisations formed in the past 12 months helped amplify the messaging of Donor Week.

**The Liver Ireland Support Network (LISN)** hosted a public Walk for organ donation through Dublin city centre to coincide with the first day of Donor Week on May 10th.

**Transplant Sport Ireland (TSI)** had a training day in Limerick on May 17th, the last day of Donor Week,

and their activity was a fitting conclusion as their members are a living embodiment of the transformative impact of organ donation for transplantation.

It was very encouraging to have **An Post** on board for Donor Week for a third year running. Conor Nott, Retail Marketing Manager, An Post said, "Our goal in supporting this campaign is to leverage our grassroots presence in communities across the country to play our part in promoting a national dialogue about organ donation. We are incredibly proud to support this vital campaign."

Advertising company, **Clear**

**Channel**, once again stepped up and provided electronic advertising space in many shopping centres around the country to the value of €23,500 plus VAT.



2024 was the first year that the Association engaged with **Libraries Ireland** through their **Healthy Ireland at your Library Service**, and we were delighted to build on this in 2025 with increased and enthusiastic engagement by libraries in promoting the organ donor card in towns and cities across the country.

The **Irish Pharmacy Union** continues to be very engaged in promoting the messaging of the Association both around awareness of chronic kidney disease and the promotion of organ donation. Following their support in previous years, many of the commercial pharmacy chains also supported the

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Colin White, National Advocacy & Projects Manager and ISL interpreter Sarah Garvey.

IKA's messaging at a grassroots level in their outlets across the country.

Working through the **Irish Nephrology Society** and direct relationships with individual hospitals, it was great to be able to support their public information stands with donor cards and posters.

## SOME MORE METRICS

- **744** boxes of donor cards were sent out to partners and individuals to have on display during Organ Donor Awareness Week
- **80** boxes of donor cards went to the **Punchestown Kidney Research Fund** to be made available during the entire Punchestown Festival (April 29th-May 3rd)
- That is **53,000+** organ donor cards going into the community
- The **RSA (Road Safety Authority)** confirmed that over 1.6 million people now have **Code 115** (an indication of their support for organ donation) indicated on their driving licences.

## REFLECTIONS

A huge THANK YOU to all the volunteers who stepped forward to give their time, to share their stories and to make a difference. In the context of the promotion of organ donation and transplantation, facts and figures can tell a story, but it is emotion and empathy that make an impact.

The commencement of Part 2 (Transplantation) of the Human Tissue Act (2024) is the start of a new chapter in the story of the promotion of organ donation for transplantation in Ireland. However, the core theme of the story – the importance of sharing your wishes with family – remains the same and the role of the Irish Kidney Association, and the voices of people living with and affected by organ failure and organ donation, remain crucial.

# Celebrating the 'Gift of Life'

By **GWEN O'DONOGHUE**

## NATIONAL LAUNCH



*Heart transplant recipient Nick Hines with his mother Annie, wife Tracey and daughter Molly (14).*

**O**n a bright spring morning following the May bank holiday weekend, the front garden of the Mansion House facing onto Dawson Street in Dublin 2 set a bustling backdrop for the national launch of Organ Donor Awareness Week 2025 (Donor Week). The garden was in full bloom and the lawn provided an ideal place for recipients, donor families, healthcare professionals, and advocates to gather for photos before moving inside to the historic Oak Room for the official ceremony in the beautiful building.

The event on Tuesday, May 6th was held four days in advance of the national Organ Donor Awareness Week, allowing media and community partners time to amplify the powerful stories and messages shared. The Oak Room was filled with emotion, appreciation, and renewed commitment and solidarity in support of organ donation for transplantation.

The media were there, with a TV crew, videographers and journalists capturing the emotion and significance of the occasion.

This year's campaign carried added significance, with the anticipation of the new Minister for Health, Jennifer Carroll McNeill's, imminent announcement of the implementation date for Part 2 of the Human Tissue Act, which includes

the introduction of an opt-out organ donation register and provision for altruistic kidney donation. The Minister, whose attendance at the launch had been confirmed, was regrettably unable to attend at short notice due to an unforeseen and unavoidable scheduling conflict, which arose on Friday evening ahead of the bank holiday.

The launch was attended by transplant coordinators and other representatives of Ireland's transplant hospitals, including Beaumont, St. Vincent's, the Mater, and CHI Temple Street, as well as the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) and representatives of other patient advocacy groups including **Irish Heart and Lung Transplant Association, Irish Lung Fibrosis Association, Liver Ireland Support Network, Liver Trust Ireland, Transplant Sport Ireland, Cystic Fibrosis Ireland and Cystinosis Ireland.**

Among the guests were transplant recipients, donor families, healthcare professionals, organ donor nurse managers, organ donor coordinators and representatives of Organ Donation Transplant Ireland (ODTI), HSE and the Department of Health. Senator Mark Daly, the IKA's nominee to Seanad Éireann, was also in attendance.

The event was live streamed and featured Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpretation throughout and was later










IKA CEO Carol Moore and ISL interpreter Shelley Gibson.

viewed widely on the IKA's YouTube channel [www.youtube.com/@IrishKidneyAssociation](https://www.youtube.com/@IrishKidneyAssociation).

The opening address came from the IKA's National Honorary Chairman **Eddie Flood**, a kidney transplant recipient. IKA Chief Executive, Carol Moore, reported on national transplant and donation figures.

In 2024, 263 organ transplants were carried out thanks to the generosity of **84 deceased donors** and **30 living** kidney donors. This included **175 Kidney** transplants, **53 Liver** transplants, **16 Heart** transplants, **15 Lung** transplants, **4 Pancreas** transplants.

IN 2024 263 ORGAN TRANSPLANTS		
175		KIDNEY
53		LIVER
16		HEART
15		LUNG
4		PANCREAS

Carol Moore said, "We must always remember that without organ donation, there is no transplantation. In 2024, 84 families, in the most tragic of circumstances, selflessly consented to their loved one's organs being donated."

Carol Moore also noted the continued rise in public support for donation, with the **Road Safety Authority** reporting that 1.6 million people, or 47.6% of licensed drivers, now carrying **Code 115** on their licence to signal support for organ donation.

She stated, "This is a hugely positive reflection of public sentiment, especially considering that it has happened without any targeted education or promotion linked to the licence application process. Just like carrying a physical organ donor card or having a digital donor card, Code 115 is a visible reminder of a person's decision and a powerful conversation starter. It opens the door for families to talk about their wishes, helping to ensure no one is left in doubt if, and when, the time comes."

Representing **Organ Donation and Transplant Ireland (ODTI)** was its National Director **Dr. Brian O'Brien**, a Consultant in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Medicine at Cork University Hospital, who highlighted the significance of the Human Tissue Act.

"While much of what defines modern medicine entails complex



Dr. Brian O'Brien, National Director, Organ Donation and Transplant Ireland (ODTI).

science and technological innovation, it is humbling that one of its most sophisticated frontiers is founded entirely on community, altruism and compassion. Organ donation, a gesture of kindness to strangers made in the bleakest of circumstances, encapsulates much of what is good about humanity. Under forthcoming legislation, living donation will become more feasible in Ireland. We welcome the introduction of the Human Tissue Act therefore, and hope it serves to raise awareness of this most vital practice. We encourage all to make their views on donation known to those close to them".

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Representatives of ODTI, organ donor nurse managers and donor coordinators, transplant coordinators and other healthcare professionals with Carol Moore, IKA (front row, 4th from left).

# Personal Stories Shared

A series of powerful personal stories was shared by six speakers, each offering unique insight into the transformative impact of donation:

**ADRIAN FLYNN, A DOUBLE LUNG TRANSPLANT RECIPIENT, ATHY, CO. KILDARE**

Adrian (53), a father of two who developed a rare condition called Good Syndrome, recalled being three years on the waiting list, being 11 months in hospital and having five calls before receiving his transplant at the Mater Hospital in 2023.

*"My transplant didn't just improve my quality of life; it gave me life. It gave me more time. Time with my amazing wife and kids - something you can't buy, pause, or ever have enough of. That's the greatest gift of all."*

**AVRIL WHITTY, A LIVER TRANSPLANT RECIPIENT, CLEARINSTOWN, CO. WEXFORD**

Avril (38), a mother of two, shared how she quietly endured Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis (PSC), an autoimmune liver disease, for several years before her transplant at St. Vincent's University Hospital two years ago changed everything.

Avril who is the chairperson of Liver Ireland Support Network (LISN) shared, "I planted a tree for my donor. It's a small way to honour the gift that has given me my life back."



Avril Whitty, liver transplant recipient.



Adrian Flynn, double lung transplant recipient.

**NICK HINES, A HEART TRANSPLANT RECIPIENT, CLONASLEE, CO. LAOIS**

Nick (46) who is a US native and has been living in Clonaslee, Co. Laois with his family for over 20 years spoke about facing end-stage heart failure with his Sarcoidosis diagnosis, since he was in his early thirties, and how his heart transplant at the Mater Hospital last year restored hope for the future.

The school teacher shared, "Every beat now carries a little part of the person who saved me. The donor didn't just save my life, they have improved my living of it."



Nick Hines, heart transplant recipient.



Alceina O'Brien, kidney-pancreas transplant recipient.

**ALCEINA O'BRIEN, A KIDNEY-PANCREAS RECIPIENT, LOUGHREA, GALWAY**

Alceina is a retired nurse and mother to Rhianna (16). She reflected on the difficult years of dialysis and type 1 diabetes before her double transplant in 2023 at St. Vincent's University Hospital.

*"After 28 years, I no longer have diabetes. I'm free from pumps, monitors, and fear. The gift of organ donation has changed my life and my daughter's."*

**KEELYN MURPHY, A MOTHER ON DIALYSIS, MALAHIDE, DUBLIN**

Keelyn (45) is a national schoolteacher, from Malahide, Dublin awaiting a kidney transplant. She gave voice to the emotional toll of waiting while raising three children. Her two kidneys were removed in July 2024, and from then has been attending dialysis treatment three times a week at Northern Cross in Dublin.

Her genetic condition, Polycystic Kidney Disease, runs heavily in her family – two aunts, two uncles and two cousins have it in addition to her brother and mother.

Her mother Alacoque received a kidney from her sister 23 years ago and in total her family has received six successful kidney transplants.





**Keelyn Murphy, awaiting a kidney transplant.**

*"My son wrote in his Christmas list: all I want is for my mum to get a kidney. I live for that day."*

*"Receiving a kidney would mean a chance at normality for my little family, a chance to finally step out of the waiting room and back into life"*

**OLIVIA FARRELL, LEIXLIP, CO. KILDARE, ORGAN DONOR MOTHER**

Olivia, speaking in memory of her daughter **Lauren Sloan** who was 24 when she became an organ donor in 2022, gave a moving tribute.

*"Lauren's selflessness lives on. Her strength in life now shines through in her strength in death."*



**Olivia Farrell, mother of organ donor Lauren.**

Although not formally speaking at the launch, other families touched by organ failure supported the event by taking part in interviews and photographs.



**Jasmine Rayyan, kidney transplant recipient with her mother Asmae.**

**JASMINE RAYAN, SHANKILL, CO. DUBLIN, A KIDNEY TRANSPLANT RECIPIENT**

Jasmine (6) and her mother Asmae, supported by her renal team at CHI Crumlin and transplant team from CHI Temple Street, took part in photos and media interviews. The family expressed deep gratitude for the kidney donation from a stranger in August 2024 that allowed Jasmine to thrive again having been sick from infancy and nightly dialysis prior to her transplant.

**ALLSÚN HENDERSON, CASTLEKNOCK, DUBLIN, A DOUBLE LUNG AND KIDNEY TRANSPLANT RECIPIENT**

Allsún is an inspiring woman who received a double lung transplant at Newcastle Freeman Hospital in the

UK in 2010, and following two and a half years on dialysis underwent a kidney transplant at Beaumont Hospital in January 2024.

She attended with her mother Kathleen to show support and encouragement for others on the journey.

**SHANE GALLAGHER, KILTIPPER, DUBLIN 24, DONOR BROTHER**

Shane is the brother of a deceased organ donor **Cian**, and was accompanied to the launch by his fiancée Ramona and young daughter Erin (3). They came to honour Cian's memory and to remind others of the power of sharing wishes about donation. Cian was just 26-years-old when he passed away in 2022 helping three strangers through donating two kidneys and his liver.



**Shane Gallagher with Ramona and daughter Erin.**



**Allsún Henderson, double lung and kidney transplant recipient.**

*continued next page*





*Eddie Flood, National Chairman, IKA, a kidney transplant recipient.*

The national launch underpinned the call for conversation and a reminder that organ donation is only possible with family consent when we are aware of each other's wishes. Speakers encouraged everyone to make their views known. You can view the presentations on [www.youtube.com/@IrishKidneyAssociation](https://www.youtube.com/@IrishKidneyAssociation)

Organ donation is about hope, humanity, and the chance for life. Each of us can be a part of that story.

The campaign poster (available in four languages – Irish, English, Polish and Yoruba) and signage on display with its slogan 'Don't Leave Your Loved Ones in Doubt' was highly visible while the event's press release reinforced the campaign messaging on Ways To Show Your Support For Organ Donation:

- Don't Leave Your Loved Ones in Doubt. Talk to them. Share your wishes about organ donation. *Say it, Share it, Save a Life.*
- Request an Organ Donor Card from the Irish Kidney Association website [www.ika.ie/donorweek/](https://www.ika.ie/donorweek/)
- Tick the box YES for organ donation when applying for, or renewing, your driving licence represented by Code 115.
- Follow the Irish Kidney Association's activities on social media, show your support and share the messaging with your own network:
  - ✕ @IrishKidneyAs
  - 📷 @IrishKidneyA
  - 📘 @IrishKidneyAssociation
  - 📺 irishkidneyassociation
- Social media hashtags:
  - #LeaveNoDoubt
  - #ShareYourWishes
  - #DonorWeek25



*Dr. Brian O'Brien, National Director, ODTI, organ donor family members Olivia Farrell and Shane Gallagher with photos of their deceased loved ones Lauren and Cian, Dr. Catherine Motherway, ODTI.*



*The Whitty family: Avril, Justin, Cora (10), Alicia (19).*



*Allsún Henderson and her mum Kathleen.*



*ISL interpreter Sarah Garvey.*



*Simon Mayhew and Alceina O'Brien.*





Carol Moore, IKA (centre right) with transplant recipients and their families.



Keelyn Murphy and husband Ros Halpin with their children Danny (14), Noah (11) and Lauren (7) and Keelyn's mum Alacoe.



Senator Mark Daly, Dr. Catherine Motherway, ODTI, Eddie Flood, IKA.



Mary and Olivia Farrell holding a photo of Lauren.



Sandra Doyle, Transplant Sport Ireland



Adrian and Denise Flynn.



# OUT AND ABOUT DURING DONOR WEEK 2025

Blackwater Valley Vintage Group, Cork



Staff from the IKA Munster Kidney Support Centre at Cork University Hospital, Jennifer, Colette and Sally.



Pictured with CUH Interim CEO Deirdre O'Keeffe, IKA staff and medical personnel.



Colette Hawe, Francis Kendellan, Sally Nagle, Denis Hyland.



Rob, Glenn, Aileen, Patricia, Dublin South Branch Members.



Keelin Cassidy with her mum Pam Cassidy, Dublin South Branch members.



Debbie and Sarah at SOS Cookies, Limerick.



Dublin South Branch members Hannah Kelly, Bernie Cooper, Claire Kelly, Girley Lugares, Lorna O'Leary.



Councillor Adam Smyth, Senator Teresa Costello offering their support to the Dublin South Branch.



The Wogan family John and Patricia and their sons Eoin and Ciarann at Bridgewater Shopping Centre in Arklow.





Wexford: Niall Kennedy, Brian Lawrance, Pauline Atkinson, Walter Kent, Eddie Kehoe, Liam Buttle with staff of BBraun Dialysis Unit.



Wexford: Niall Kennedy, Brian Lawrance, Pauline Atkinson, Stefan Whelan, all transplant recipients at BBraun Dialysis Unit.



Wexford: Staff of Life Pharmacy, Castlebridge with Eddie Kehoe, Walter Kent, Liam Buttle.



Some of our wonderful volunteers from the Longford Branch.



Jake Kehoe and his father Eddie outside their local post office in Castlebridge, Wexford.



Liver Ireland Support Network Walk for Organ Donation, May 10th. Liver recipient Jayson Flynn and his son with Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Emma Blain.



Liver Ireland Support Network at the Mansion House, Dublin on May 10th with Lord Mayor, Councillor Emma Blain.

Irish Nephrology Society 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting, Dublin, on May 17th.







# MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE

**S**ummer greetings to you all from the Munster Support Centre.

The beautiful May weather we had allowed us to finish off the last of our outdoor projects and now our garden is complete. The morning sunshine is stunning here and for our guest's safety the patio now offers a cool shaded retreat with the addition of two cantilever umbrellas. Thanks to Cork IKA Branch Chairman Wesley O'Shea for setting them up for us.



*Sally Nagle – Renal Support Officer MKSC and Wesley O'Shea Cork Branch Chairman taking a well-deserved break.*



## MEDITATION EVENING

We are delighted to be able to concentrate on building our support activities at the Centre. We hosted a meditation evening recently, under the expert guidance of Louise Pollock. The evening was a resounding success, and the inaugural group left feeling calm, refreshed and mindful. We hope to host more of these over the coming months and look forward to more of you joining us.

## RENAL DIETITIANS DEPARTMENT

The Renal Dietitians Department in Cork University Hospital (CUH) is currently organising a series of talks



*Meditation with some of our Cork Branch members: Aoife Hennessy, Siobhan O'Connor, Sheena McDonagh, Anne Foley, Geraldine McCarthy.*

for renal patients with CKD. We are delighted to be able to facilitate these talks in the Munster Support Centre. If you are interested in attending and are under the care of a CUH Nephrologist please contact Irene Cronin, Dietitian in CUH.

## TIMOLEAGUE LADIES CLUB

Sally and Frances Kendellan were guests of the Timoleague Ladies Club and gave an informative and very personal talk on both of their kidney journeys. The evening was a resounding success, and we are very grateful to the club for their warm welcome and generous donation.



*Timoleague Ladies Club with kidney transplant recipients (front row) Frances (second from left) and Sally seated (2nd from right).*





**Colette Hare, Renal Support Officer, John and Mary McGrath.**



**Back: Sally Nagle, Kieran Spillane, Elaine O'Brien, Annette Spillane, Wesley O'Shea. Front: Ann O'Brien, Ellie Spillane, Adam O'Brien, Sophie O'Brien.**

## CHEQUE PRESENTATIONS

We have had the pleasure of welcoming two-family groups recently for cheque presentations.

John and Mary McGrath, from Tipperary, were guests with us on several occasions towards the end of last year and earlier this year as John continues his treatment.

They hosted family and friends for a coffee morning this past Easter Sunday which was a resounding success, reflecting the incredible generosity of all those who attended and supported on the day.

It was an honour to welcome three generations of the O'Brien and Spillane families from Enniskeane, Co. Cork. They donated some of the proceeds from the sale of a CD their mother Ann and late father Frank had originally made in 1988. Frank was a home dialysis patient awaiting a transplant but unfortunately after two sudden heart attacks passed away in 2022. Their son Jeff converted the cassettes to a CD which they sold locally. We are honoured to now have a copy of this CD in the Centre.



**Rachel and Tom Murphy with Colette Hare.**

## COFFEE MORNING IN CONNA, EAST CORK

Saturday, July 12th Tom Murphy and his family held a fundraising coffee morning at their home in East Cork amid blazing sunshine. Tom was recently diagnosed with CKD and commenced Home Peritoneal Dialysis in September 2024. The amazing community in Conna enjoyed a lovely time in the Murphy family home.

As always, we look forward to welcoming you to the Munster Kidney Support Centre, we may need to switch to iced tea if this beautiful weather holds.

**Colette, Sally and Jennifer**

# ACCOMMODATION BOOKINGS

If you require overnight accommodation at the **CLAYTON HOTEL, Dublin**

**PHONE: 01 690 8887**

or

**MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE, Cork**

**PHONE: 021-2044555**

**PHONELINE OPENING HOURS FOR CLAYTON HOTEL, DUBLIN AIRPORT**

Mon – Fri: 9.30am – 7.00pm

**For Emergency Bookings:**  
Sat – Sun and Bank Holidays  
12.00pm – 4.00pm

*Please be sure to phone the IKA Renal Support Centre staff as soon as you know of your hospital appointment.*

**OPENING HOURS  
MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE, CORK**

**Drop-in:**

Mon – Fri: 9.30am – 6.00pm

**Phone lines open:**

Mon – Fri: 9.30am – 7.00pm

**For emergency bookings:**  
Sat - Sun and Bank Holidays  
12.00pm – 4.00pm

# SUPPORT MAGAZINE SPRING PRIZE WINNERS

*The winner of the La Roche-Posay Giveaway was*  
**Walter Kent**  
New Ross

*and the winner of the Clayton Hotel Dublin Airport & Dublin Zoo Giveaway was*  
**Susan Lowe**  
Limerick



**Timoleague Ladies Club: (L-R): Sally Nagle, Phil O'Hea, Sonia Vaughan, Frances Kendall, Maria McCarthy, Mary McSweeney.**

# Witches, Cats and Flowers

Renal dialysis patient **Nicola Power** launches her first art exhibition at Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts



(L-R): Rebecca O'Neill, Brothers of Charity; artist and renal dialysis patient Nicola Power; Dr. Sean Leavey, Consultant Nephrologist; Jane Cullen, Clinical Nurse Manager, Renal Dialysis, UHW; Claire Meaney, Director, Réalta; Philip Cullen, Artist Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts programme.

**Witches, Cats and Flowers, the first art exhibition by Renal Dialysis patient Nicola Power, was launched at Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts Centre for Arts and Health at University Hospital Waterford (UHW) on Tuesday, April 22nd and continued until May, 6th.**

A capacity crowd of family, friends and staff from the Renal Dialysis Unit at UHW came together to celebrate this milestone achievement.

*Witches, Cats and Flowers* is a beautiful collection of art created by Nicola, under the gentle guidance of Waterford Healing Arts artist Philip Cullen.

A native of Tramore, Nicola Power attends the Brothers of Charity Services in Waterford. She has been a renal dialysis patient for six years.

It was during her dialysis sessions that Nicola connected with the Waterford Healing Arts programme, which supports patients through their long hours of treatment by providing opportunities to be creative through visual art, creative



(L-R): Mary Prendergast, Staff Nurse Renal Dialysis (retired); Jane Cullen, Clinical Nurse Manager, Renal Dialysis Unit, UHW.

writing, music and storytelling.

Artist Philip Cullen has been working with the Waterford Healing Arts programme for nearly 20 years, and when he began working with Nicola two years ago, it soon became clear that she had a unique, colourful and exuberant artistic style.

Speaking at the launch, Philip said "I love Nicola's colour and the craic that we have. It's not easy being on dialysis; it's a difficult thing to go

through, but Nicola is always in good form. And I'm stunned, seeing the whole exhibition here tonight, its beauty and colour. Congratulations, Nicola."

Dr. Sean Leavey, Consultant Nephrologist at UHW, also spoke enthusiastically about Nicola's art: "Nicola is a breath of fresh air. The colour and warmth of Nicola's creativity is fantastic. She's a warm, colourful, joyful person, and that's evident in her art."





(Seated): Nicola's parents Nicky and Mary Power, with Nicola (centre); (Standing): Scott, Pamela and Jack Power.



(Seated): Artist Philip Cullen, Nicola Power, Maeve Butler, Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts, (Standing): Ann Murphy, Claire Meaney and Aisling Kennedy, Réalta/Waterford Healing Arts.

Dr. Leavey went on to pay tribute to the Waterford Healing Arts programme: "By sharing Nicola's creativity with us, Waterford Healing Arts allows us as a medical team to see the person, the life that's being lived, so it becomes not about illness, but about the person on their journey. That is critical for us."

Jane Cullen, Clinical Nurse Manager of the Renal Dialysis Unit at UHW, added, "Nicola has been an inspiration to all of us in the Renal Dialysis Unit over the course of this process. Proof of all her hard work is here tonight. Nicola, we're immensely proud of you."

Rebecca O'Neill from the Brothers of Charity also congratulated Nicola on her

achievement: "On behalf of all of the Brothers of Charity Services, especially Tory and Nova Services, we would like to say that we are very proud of Nicola."

"We would like to thank the staff of the Dialysis Unit for taking care of Nicola, and also the staff of Waterford Healing Arts for helping Nicola to achieve her dream of having her own art exhibition."

The final word went to Nicola herself, the star of the evening: "Welcome to my art exhibition. I would like to thank the Dialysis Unit staff, Philip, Maeve, Claire and Tom from Waterford Healing Arts for all their help, and also my family and friends. I hope you enjoy the evening."



**WATERFORD HEALING ARTS** brings music, visual art, creative writing and storytelling to the bedside of patients at University Hospital Waterford and other healthcare settings.

This extensive arts and health programme is part of Réalta, the national resource organisation dedicated to developing arts and health in Ireland.

Realta is core funded by the Arts Council and the HSE.

[www.waterfordhealingarts.com](http://www.waterfordhealingarts.com)  
[www.realta.ie](http://www.realta.ie)



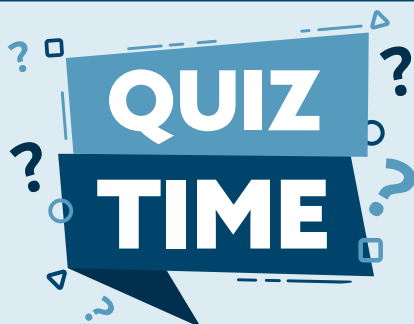
Nicky Power, Nicola Power and Margaret Moran, Transplant & Anaemia Coordinator, Renal Dialysis, UHW.



Mary Purcell, Tory Services, Brothers of Charity, and her husband Tom.



Nicola Power with her mother Mary Power.



Get ready to test your wit with a brief mental workout as quizmaster **Paul Donohoe**, Chairman, Cavan/Monaghan Branch IKA, invites our readers to tackle the following ten questions (answers opposite).

1. Name the captain of the British and Irish Lions rugby team who toured Australia in July and August?
2. Mark Carney was elected Prime Minister of what country earlier this year?
3. Cat Deeley was married to which well-known comedian and TV presenter?
4. From which European country do Dacia cars originate?
5. For which movie did Leonardo DiCaprio win an Oscar for Best Actor?
6. Name the county which won their first Leinster Senior Football Championship for 68 years this year?
7. According to the *Irish Farmers Journal* what was the bestselling brand of tractor in Ireland in 2024?
8. Megan, Chris and Stewie are the family children in which animated TV show?
9. In which year did the first Live Aid concert take place in London and Philadelphia?
10. According to the Central Statistics Office what is the most common surname in Ireland?

QUIZ ANSWERS 1. Mario Holte (England) 2. Canada 3. Patrick Kielty; 4. Romania; 5. The Revenant; 6. Louth; 7. John Deere; 8. Family Guy; 9. 1985; 10. Murphy.

# Corporate Volunteering

## Would Your Company Be Interested?



**As we move into the exciting refurbishment and fit-out stages of our newly re-named National Kidney Support Centre (NKSC), located on the grounds of Beaumont Hospital, we are reaching out to our members and supporters.**

**D**o you work in a company, or have a loved one who does, that may be interested in getting involved?

There are many meaningful ways for companies to support this vital project. Many businesses already have Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes designed to give back to the community.

Supporting the NKSC is a fantastic way to align with those values while making a lasting impact.

Whether it's hands-on volunteering, sponsoring equipment, or simply helping us connect with the right people, every action makes a difference.

Together, we can build a Support Centre that offers vital support to patients and their families for years to come.

If you'd like to learn more about how you or your company can get involved, please get in touch.

Contact by emailing: [volunteer@ika.ie](mailto:volunteer@ika.ie) or phone Sarah on 083-3232145.

**By SARAH BUCHANAN**



- **Volunteer Days:** Organise a staff volunteer day to help on-site – from preparing garden areas to assisting with set-up.
- **Sponsorship:** Sponsor part of the refurbishment or a room within the Centre and leave a lasting impact that helps kidney patients and their families.
- **Company Match:** Host a fundraiser within your company and see if your employer can match the amount raised.
- **Donations & Supplies:** We're also in need of materials, everything from hardware, plasterboards, solar panels, underfloor heating, to paint and accessories.



# SEAI Medically Vulnerable Solar PV System

## UPDATE

Having spoken with the person in SEAI responsible for oversight of the scheme and some of the energy providers involved, it has been encouraging to hear that members of the Irish Kidney Association were seen as being 'very quick off the mark' in making contact about it.

However, it has become apparent that greater clarity is needed around the roll-out of the scheme.

The key feedback is that, whilst each of the energy providers involved has their own way of doing things, the common thread seems to be that they have their internal lists of people who qualify for the scheme and are working their way through these lists rather than taking applications.

By COLIN WHITE, IKA NATIONAL ADVOCACY & PROJECTS MANAGER

## KEY INCLUSION CRITERIA

The general feedback from SEAI, and a number of the energy providers involved in the scheme, is that a significant number of people making contact about the scheme are falling at the first hurdles as they do not meet the two basic inclusion criteria.

1. He/she, a member of their household, or one of their tenants, is registered in the *life support category of the Priority Services Register* maintained by ESB Networks as of **November 22nd, 2022**; and
2. The relevant property was built and occupied on or before December 31st, 2020 and is suitable to receive a Solar PV Installation.

For the foreseeable future, if you do not meet these criteria, you will **NOT** qualify for the scheme.

The IKA is pushing for a change to the cut-off date so that the scheme is open to people who have qualified for the life support category of the Priority Register more recently.

## PRIORITY REGISTER

If you have been included in the life support category of the Priority

Services Register from before November 22nd, 2022 but have changed energy provider since then, this may be the cause of some confusion, but it is not a reason for exclusion. You just need to clarify with your current energy provider that you were on the Register through your previous provider, and, if needed, the SEAI can step in to confirm this.

## ENERGY PROVIDERS AND THE SCHEME

Currently, the energy providers signed up to the scheme are:

- Bord Gáis,
- Energia,
- SSE Airtricity,
- Electric Ireland, and
- Flogas

It is important to note that the energy providers did not all deploy on the scheme at the same time, meaning some are further down the road than others in terms of actual delivery. It is worth making contact with your provider to get an understanding of where they are at.

As with all such schemes, there are budgets/limitations and delivery will, by necessity, be over a period of time.

For context, a written answer from

Darragh O'Brien TD, Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment given on May 27th this year;

*"SEAI report that 137 systems were installed in 2024. However, with the programme now ramping up, over 160 systems have been installed in the first two months of 2025, with SEAI estimating that over 1,440 will be installed by the end of 2025."*

## PURPOSE AND OPPORTUNITY

The purpose of the scheme is to assist in the cost of electricity. It is important to note that by default, all solar panel systems and batteries will shut down during a power cut (that said, systems that include batteries can be set up to run off-grid by adding a changeover switch).

It is important to note that the scheme offers a basic solar panel package, and its installation, free of charge. Once contacted about installation, you may wish to discuss options with the contractor about building onto the package, at your own cost. You may wish to consider more panels, or the inclusion of batteries, etc. The contractor involved will be best placed to offer advice and let you know the cost.

# New on [www.ika.ie](http://www.ika.ie) A Dedicated Page for Volunteers



We're delighted to announce the launch of a new section on our website **"Volunteer With Us"** celebrating the heart of the Irish Kidney Association, our volunteers.

The ethos of volunteerism is fundamental to the Irish Kidney Association, where, as a collective group, there is generosity and commitment of time and effort extended in the service of others. As a membership-led organisation of approximately 4,000 members, without our volunteers, the IKA could not support patients and their families the way we do.

Now, with this new dedicated page at [ika.ie/VolunteerWithUs](http://ika.ie/VolunteerWithUs), we're making it easier than ever to get involved and learn about the many ways volunteers make a difference.

Whether you're passionate about:

- Raising awareness for organ donation
- Fundraising to support kidney patients and their families
- Corporate volunteering
- Offering peer support as

- someone who's been there
- Or simply lending a hand at local branch events, there's something for everyone.

The new page reflects the wide range of roles and values our volunteers bring, from empathy, support, and hope to the IKA community.

We shine a light on the incredible individuals who dedicate their time and talents to the IKA. Through personal stories, our volunteers

share how they got involved, the meaningful work they contribute to, and why they believe others should join the IKA community in making a difference.

It also features a sign-up form to express interest, whether you're looking for a one-off opportunity to volunteer or a longer-term commitment.

A helpful FAQs section will support answering common questions such as time commitment to volunteering,

how to get started, to how to navigate volunteering if on dialysis.

We know that life is busy, and everyone has different time and energy to give. That's why our volunteer programme offers flexibility, support, and the chance to make a meaningful impact, whatever your circumstances.

If you've ever thought about getting involved, now's the perfect time to explore the opportunities.

Visit [ika.ie/VolunteerWithUs](http://ika.ie/VolunteerWithUs)



## Volunteerism

It sits at the heart of our work

The ethos of volunteerism is fundamental to the Irish Kidney Association, where, as a collective group, there is generosity and commitment of time and effort extended in the service of others. Without our volunteers the Association could not support patients and their families in the way we do.

## Ways to get involved



Volunteer to Fundraise

Become A Volunteer



Share Your Story

Become A Volunteer



Event Volunteer

Become A Volunteer



World Kidney Day Volunteer



Corporate Volunteer



Volunteer Your Skills



# Sunscreen and Transplantation

By **COLIN WHITE**  
National Advocacy & Projects Manager

**Organ transplant patients are at a greater risk of developing skin cancer, making it hugely important that transplant recipients protect their skin from the sun.**

In a 2017 report, the HSE's multi-disciplinary Medicines Management Programme (MMP) came to the following conclusion in relation to the reimbursement of sunscreen.

*In Ireland, the price of sunscreen has reduced in recent years such that cost should not be a barrier to utilisation.*

*As we prioritise financial spend on new medicines, the Medicines Management Programme (MMP) concludes that sunscreen should not be reimbursed on the DP Scheme as high quality products can be purchased at a low cost in many pharmacies and supermarkets.*

**For patients with GMS eligibility and who are organ transplant recipients, sunscreen could be made available through Discretionary Hardship Arrangements due to the higher risk of skin cancer in this cohort.**



## PROTECTING YOUR SKIN

Exposure to the sun or its ultraviolet rays is the main cause of skin cancer in transplant patients. Exposure to the sun does not just mean sunbathing, by just being outside you are exposed to the sun. This includes walking, gardening, outdoor work, etc.

*You should take simple precautions to protect yourself:*

- **Cover Up** – wear a wide brimmed sun hat and long sleeves.
- **Stay in the shade** during peak times of sun intensity (11am-3pm).
- **Never, ever**, use sun beds.
- Wear a high intensity sun cream, Sun Protection Factor, SPF 50+ or higher with a 3 or 4-star rating. Ensure the sun cream protects against UVB and UVA rays.
- If planning to travel to Australia, purchase sun cream when you get there, that is designed specifically to protect against UVC rays.



## To qualify for the reimbursement of sunscreen you must meet the criteria below:

- A** Have an organ transplant.
- B** Have a medical card.
- C** Have a prescription from a consultant dermatologist or a transplant specialist.
- D** Have your pharmacist fill in the Discretionary Hardship form.

The sunscreens reimbursed through this process should be in line with the recommendation for product quality and cost as outlined below. **Sunscreens should only be reimbursed through Discretionary Hardship Arrangements when the prescription has been written by a consultant dermatologist or**

## transplant specialist and products reimbursed should be at an appropriate price as outlined below.

Preparations to be considered for reimbursement should be as follows:

- SPF 50+ only.
- High UVA protection (appropriate information available on product packaging).
- Cost-effective volume product (i.e., 200ml or 400ml preparations) only.
- Cost of up to €9.99 per 200ml preparation (<€50 per litre).



## THE MEDICINES MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME RECOMMENDS REIMBURSEMENT OF SELECTED 'PREFERRED' SUNSCREENS OF:

- **SPF 50+.**
- **High UVA rating (5-Star rating or high PPD).**
- **Best value for money (based on volume and unit cost).**

**For transplant recipients with GMS eligibility only.**

# How can the Treatment Benefit Scheme help people access healthcare?

As an adult living in Ireland, paying PRSI contributions you may be entitled to benefits available through the Treatment Benefit scheme. This scheme is run by the Department of Social Protection (DSP) to provide a limited financial contribution towards dental, optical and aural services.

Under the Treatment Benefit Scheme, you and your spouse may qualify for:

- **Dental benefit** – €42 towards the cost of a scale and polish or, if deemed clinically necessary, periodontal treatment once per year. The treatment is provided by a private dentist who is on the DSP panel. If you are paying PRSI you may get tax relief on certain non-routine dental treatments. You can check this on [mygov.ie](https://mygov.ie)
- **Optical benefit** – you are entitled to a free eyesight test, once every two years (not including eyesight tests for driving licences). You can get a set payment once every two years, towards either one pair each of reading and distance spectacles, one pair of bifocal or varifocals or one pair of contact lenses (including disposables). The cost will vary depending on the frames you choose. Basic frames are free.
- **Medical lenses** – If you need contact lenses for medical reasons, you can get up to €1,000 towards the cost of a pair of medical contact lenses (€500 for each contact lens) once every two years. This applies to a small number of eye conditions that make wearing glasses impossible. You must have a doctor's recommendation.
- **Hearing aids** – Hearing aids may be provided by suppliers who have a contract with the DSP. The DSP pays the full cost of a hearing aid up to a maximum of €500



By **FIONA AHERNE**, PATIENT SUPPORT MANAGER

(€1,000 for a pair) once every four years. It also pays the full cost of repairs to hearing aids, up to a maximum of €100, once every four years.

- **Hair piece or wig** – You can get up to €500 for one hair replacement item such as a hairpiece or wig, in each calendar year. It does not cover surgical or topical treatments. Hair loss must be from a disease or treatment of a disease such as cancer or alopecia. Although end-stage kidney disease treatment is not mentioned as a qualifying criteria patients could check with their renal team if the hair loss they are experiencing is because of a related alopecia. You must buy the hair piece or wig from the Department's list of approved providers.

## DO I QUALIFY?

Qualification for the Treatment Benefit Scheme requires that you have paid Class A, E, H, P or S social insurance contributions. The criteria to qualify changes according to age.

- **Aged under 21:** you may qualify if you have paid at least 39 contributions at any time.
- **Aged 21-28:** the same as qualifying criteria for under 21s applies and at least 39

contributions in the contribution year.

- **Aged 29-65:** you may qualify if you have paid at least 260 contributions and a minimum of 39 contributions in the governing contribution year.

*The governing contribution year and relevant tax year is ordinarily 2 years previous to the year you are claiming in e.g., 2023 is the governing contribution and relevant tax year for claims made in 2025.*

- **Aged 65 and over:** you may qualify if you have 260 PRSI contributions paid at any time and 39 paid or credited contributions in the relevant tax year or the year immediately before it.

## HOW DO I APPLY TO THE TREATMENT BENEFIT SCHEME?

Claims are made through your provider (dentist, dispensing optician/optometrist/ophthalmologist or audiologist), who can check your entitlement in advance of treatment and claim payment afterwards.

Your provider will require some information to identify you, such as your date of birth and PPS number. Before treatment, you will need to sign a consent form approving the



service provider to hold and share your information to enable payment of your claim.

If you are claiming as a dependant under the PRSI record of your spouse, civil partner or cohabitant, both you and your spouse or partner will need to sign the consent form.

For treatment received in other EU member states, you can contact the Treatment Benefit Section.

For further information visit <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/1fb655-treatment-benefit-scheme/>

Or call the Treatment Benefit section: 074-9164480 or 0818-300600

### Dental maintenance and hygiene are vital for patients living with ESKD and/or being assessed for transplant.

Here is an overview of what medical card patients are entitled to.

The Dental Treatment Services Scheme (DTSS) provides access to dental treatment for adult medical cardholders (aged 16 or over).



Dental Surgeon detailing why it is clinically necessary to repeat the filling.

### Dental cleaning

If you have a medical card, you are entitled to a dental clean (scale and polish) once in each calendar year. Any

### Dental examinations and extractions

Medical card holders are entitled to a free dental examination in each calendar year, as well as any extractions that are required. One first-stage endodontic (root canal) treatment is also available each year for teeth at the front of the mouth.

### Fillings

Two fillings are free in each calendar year. For a filling on a tooth that has already been filled in the last five years, the dentist must get approval from the local HSE Principal

additional dental cleaning treatments must be approved by the local HSE Principal Dental Surgeon.

If you have special needs or are in the high-risk category, for example, if you have diabetes, you may get the treatment every six months. This must be approved by the local HSE Principal Dental Surgeon.

Your local health centre may provide a list of dentists who treat medical card holders. Dentists who offer services to medical card holders are listed as taking part in the Dental Treatment Services Scheme.



# SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE IKA

Yes, I would like to make a regular donation by **STANDING ORDER**.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY**

## STANDING ORDER REQUEST FORM

To: The Manager of \_\_\_\_\_

(Your bank's name and address)

I/We hereby authorise you to set up a Standing Order on my/our account as specified below: *(Please print all information clearly)*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Ph: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE CHARGE TO MY / OUR ACCOUNT: Name of Account: \_\_\_\_\_

IBAN:                 Bank Identifier Code - BIC:

*(These can be found, printed on your bank statement)*

My regular ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Yearly DONATION of Amount € \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please tick as appropriate)*

to start on Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

### AND CREDIT TO THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT:

Name of account: **IRISH KIDNEY ASSOCIATION** at Bank of Ireland, College Green, Dublin 2.

IBAN NO.:  IE06 BOFI 9000 1717 1934 35 BIC NO.:  BOFIE2D

As long as you are a PAYE or self-employed tax payer, when you donate €250 or more in a year (€21 or more per month), the Revenue Commissioners will give the Irish Kidney Association CLG an extra rebate of 45%. For example, if you give €250 in one year, the IKA would gain an extra €112, at no extra cost to you.



Please post to: **THE IRISH KIDNEY ASSOCIATION CLG, DONOR HOUSE, BLOCK 43A, PARKWEST, FREEPOST, DUBLIN, D12 P5V6**  
*(Please do not post to your bank)*

CHARITY REG. NO. 20011260





*The fantastic runners at the breakfast for champions, before they set off on their run.*

## Running to support Kidney Health



*Mark McCallion's tattoo.*

**T**he Irish Kidney Association (IKA) greeted nearly 80 women who chose to run this year's VHI Women's Mini Marathon on June 1st, 2025. With a breakfast for champions reception at the Iveagh Garden Hotel on Harcourt Street, Dublin 2, sponsored by Le Roche Posay, it was sure to be a great start for all! The 10km race started at 12:30pm at Fitzwilliam Street Upper and took in the route of Donnybrook, Stillorgan, Nutley Lane and Merrion Road and finished at Baggot Street Lower.

Sarah Buchanan, Caroline Connolly and Lisa Fitzgerald from the IKA were delighted to meet in person so many fantastic women and hear their inspirational stories. It was a joyous



*Niamh Walsh and family*

morning with delicious pastries, tea/coffee and fresh juices allowing all the runners to get acquainted and share their stories over a cuppa and a nibble. They also received newly designed IKA T-shirts as well as

goodie bags importantly containing mini Le Roche Posay sun factor.

"It was emotional to witness the camaraderie and mutual encouragement among participants who were deeply moved by the services the IKA offers," said Lisa.

With over €47,000 raised so far, the IKA are in awe of these inspirational women, many of whom have travelled from all over the country. There were representatives from Tipperary, Cork, Mayo, Leitrim, Galway, Meath, Dublin, Waterford, Kilkenny, Wicklow, Offaly, Kildare, Belfast and Sligo!

**Alanna Kennedy** from Dublin, participated in her first VHI Mini Marathon with her mum. Her life took an unexpected turn when she



*Galway Branch Secretary, Peadar Ó hIáin's niece Aoife and friends.*



*Alison McCallion and family.*





**Alanna Kennedy**

was diagnosed with End Stage Kidney Disease at the age of 22 in 2020. After two and a half years of dialysis, her world transformed in January 2023 when she received a kidney transplant. This life-changing moment gave her back her future, offering her a renewed lease on life and a chance to embrace opportunities that once seemed out of reach. Alanna was determined to finish celebrating her renewed health and the extraordinary gift she received.



**Caroline Connolly, Lisa Fitzgerald, Rebecca Brennan, Jessie Doyle.**

**Jessie Doyle** also from Dublin, was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease at just 17, right before sitting her Leaving Certificate. Despite her health challenges she completed her exams before starting dialysis treatment. She received a successful



**Caroline Connolly, Maria Feen, Sarah Buchanan.**



**Majella, Leah McAuley and friends.**

transplant in 2015, but her resilience was tested again in 2022 when an acute kidney injury placed her back on the transplant list. She received her second life-changing transplant in 2023. Now celebrating her renewed health, Jessie honoured her organ donor by running in the VHI Women's Mini Marathon.

**Maria Feen** travelled up from Cork to raise awareness for organ donation as her younger brother Pdraig, was diagnosed with only 10% kidney function. He is now awaiting a kidney. Maria has made the selfless decision to put herself forward as a living donor. She wanted to give back to the IKA by running this year's Mini Marathon.

**Crea Shine's** younger cousin Lana Devine was only 8-months-old when she was first diagnosed with Bilateral Kidney Dysplasia, a condition where both kidneys do not develop



**Ailish Noonan, Sarah Smith**



**Trish O'Brien, Sarah Quinlisk.**



**Lana Devine, Crea Shine.**

properly when a baby is growing in the womb. Her transplant gave her 15 years until the kidney started to fail during her Leaving Certificate exams. Now Lana has been on the transplant list for 2 years awaiting a new kidney. Her cousin Crea ran in this year's marathon to raise awareness about the importance of organ donation. Crea lives in Meath.



**Katie Reynolds**



If you wish to offer your support, you can still do so by donating to:  
[www.idonate.ie/team/TeamIKAVHIWomensMarathon](http://www.idonate.ie/team/TeamIKAVHIWomensMarathon)





# Transplant Sport Ireland

## TRANSPLANT GAMES 2025

Transplant Sport Ireland is busy preparing for an exciting summer of competition. The British Transplant Games took place in Oxford in the first weekend of August and TSI had 19 adults, an U18 team and a Living Donor team all competing in over 20 different sports. These Games are a wonderful starting point for any athlete and Team Ireland has been very successful in these Games.

Following this, the World Games take place in Dresden on August 16th-23rd and TSI have a team of 29 athletes and over 30 supporters. Athletes and teams from 60 countries will be there for a week of competition and camaraderie – to honour their donors and to promote organ donation.

## TSI FOOTBALL

TSI played out a highly entertaining and very competitive one-all draw in a match with Kilcullen All Stars at the Kilcullen Community Sports Centre on June 15th.

All in all, it was a highly competitive friendly match played in very good spirits and a true celebration of life through sport. The ultimate message was for Team Ireland to showcase the success of organ donation.

## TRAINING/MEET-US

TSI has had eight Training/ Meet-ups since January, taking place in Kilcullen, Carlow, Nenagh, Newcastle

TSI Members at TSI Training Day in Portmarnock in June.



West and Portmarnock with volunteer football coaching from the local soccer clubs as well as petanque training, darts, swimming, tennis, and athletics.

## KIT DAY 2025

Kit Day took place on Sunday, July 27th in Kilcullen Community Centre at 10am with inspirational Irish sportswoman and former jockey Rachel Blackmore. All TSI members and their families were welcomed on the day with 95 people attending.

TSI would like to thank James Nolan and family, along with PuncHESTOWN Kidney Research Fund (PKRF), for their generous sponsorship of Team Kit again this year.

The PuncHESTOWN Kidney Research Fund Charity Race was founded in 1990 and has raised a staggering €1.9 million to date.

## TSI FUNDRAISING

There are several fundraising activities underway, not least of which is Rob Merrigan's (and friend John Lynch) epic The 'Gift of Life' Golf Challenge playing 72 holes of golf across four countries in a single day, travelling to Norway, Sweden, Denmark and back to Ireland. They raised over €15,000 for TSI.

Thanks to the Prendergast family who have also been busy raising funds for TSI in memory of their late



Rob Merrigan, John Lynch at the 'Gift of Life' Golf Challenge.

father Paul (Dave) Prendergast.

We also thank Jackie O'Reilly and friends who took on the mini marathon in aid of TSI.

Well done also to Rose Dalton and friends who donated the funds from their Annual Walk this year.

Thanks too to Matt Cooney, MCC Future Fitness who raised money in memory of the late transplant athlete Orla Hogan Ryan.

Many thanks to our fundraising heroes! We greatly appreciate all you do.

Anyone interested in funding for TSI are asked to contact the fundraising committee on [transplantsportireland@gmail.com](mailto:transplantsportireland@gmail.com)

## CORK CIVIC RECEPTION

A Civic reception by Cork Lord Mayor was held in the County Hall on



TSI Members at TSI Training Day in Newcastle West with Carol Moore, CEO IKA, also in attendance.





Ron & Joyce Grainger recently celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary (50 years). Both are active members of TSI with Ron, a kidney recipient and urologist, fondly known in the transplant games community as 'The Flying Doctor' for setting a number of World records in Athletics and wife Joyce 'the wind beneath his wings'. Ron also serves on the TSI Committee.

April 28th to acknowledge the success of Transplant Sport Ireland and wish the team well for Dresden. A lovely morning was had by those who attended.

### CLUB SHOP

TSI Club Shop opened up for orders and this will be open again in November for Christmas orders. Some TSI branded T-shirts and hoodies are still available at our pop-up shop at our Training/Meetups.

### TSI COMMITTEE

TSI committee members continue to meet every fortnight to work on policy formation, financial compliance, and oversight of the Games Management. Peter Heffernan is currently Acting Chair and Tim Lion has joined the Media Team.



The Mullahoran Annual Sponsored Walk raised €1,500 for TSI. Organising Committee (l-r): Breda Lynch, Donie Harten, Rose Dalton, Oliver O'Reilly, Aodhan Cullen, Grainne Lovett. Back: Mary Sullivan, Gary O'Reilly



The Prendergast family.



Members of Transplant Sport Ireland at a recent Civic Reception hosted by the Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr. Joe Carroll to acknowledge TSI athletes who promote organ donation through their successes in global sporting events.



Members & supporters of TSI celebrate after the Punchestown Annual Charity Race in May. The Punchestown Kidney Research Fund, chaired by TSI athlete James Nolan, Kilkullen, Co. Kildare (bottom left, with son Andrew James), was founded in 1990 and has raised over 2 million euro for kidney-related projects.

### SOCIALS

Please support our TSI team on Facebook and Instagram (Click 'like' and/or repost!) to highlight the

celebration of life through sport and promote the success of organ donation.

## LOSS OF ONE OF OUR TEAMMATES

Transplant Sport Ireland was very saddened to hear of the sudden passing of Team Ireland athlete **Lenny Ryan**.

Lenny was much loved in the transplant community and had participated in several Transplant Games over the years. He had a wry sense of humour and enjoyed all aspects of transplant sport. He loved meeting and chatting with people and was always the last man to bed!

He also loved participating in the sports. Over the years he took part in a variety of sports...including race walking, darts, Pétanque, 10-pin bowling, to name a few.

Some of TSI were lucky to spend the day with Lenny at the Punchestown Research Charity Race on the Saturday before he



passed away and he was in great form...in his usual upbeat jolly self. This made the news of his sudden passing even more heartbreaking but was also comforting to know he enjoyed such a lovely day, leaving us with great memories of him.

TSI were well represented at his funeral Mass with Team Manager Harry Ward doing a prayer and there was a TSI guard of honour for his final goodbye.

We will miss you Lenny! May you rest in peace. Amen

# REMEMBERING Lenny Ryan

A long-time friend and colleague to all in Donor House, and the wider kidney community, Lenny, a Tallaght native, passed away on May 6th at the age of 45. Having joined the team in Donor House in 2009, as part of a back to work training scheme, Lenny's selfless approach to the work of the Association was immediately evident. He enthusiastically embraced the opportunities of the scheme and when it finished, he continued to volunteer in Donor House on a full-time basis for many years before being made a member of staff.

Lenny had two successful kidney transplants and was back on dialysis in more recent years. Whilst he faced many health challenges, he did so with equanimity. He was philosophical about dialysis, saying; "it's keeping me alive and I'm thankful for it".

The empathy he brought to conversations with others going through kidney failure made him popular with IKA members who contacted Donor House and his engagement with his local (Dublin South) branch of the Irish Kidney Association was always appreciated by fellow members.

He was an enthusiastic member of Transplant Team Ireland and was known for his willingness to take on new sports as he participated in events as diverse as Petanque, the 5km race walk and swimming. His Dad Mick was a great supporter and proudly welcomed him back in Dublin airport so many times.

He made life-long friends at every Games he attended as evidenced by the range of messages of condolences and shared memories that came from all parts of the world after the announcement of his passing.

Tarja Timonen, a Finnish participant, wrote on his RIP.ie condolences book, "I was so lucky to have met you at



*European Transplant Sport Championships in 2016. Although we met only for a few days, the joy of those moments, your beautiful smile, kindness and warm hugs will forever be cherished in my heart."*

With Lenny, you felt that you were a friend, not just an acquaintance, and this was how he was with everyone. There were no airs or graces; he listened, and he was interested. His sense of humour was legendary and his appetite for learning and interest in current affairs, underpinned by a ready willingness to share an opinion, ensured that conversations were memorable!

Although he never spoke openly about it, Lenny took great pride in the work he did, and he quietly made his presence felt across a variety of areas in the Irish Kidney Association.

For example, when it came to preparation time for the Service of Remembrance & Thanksgiving, Lenny could always be relied on to prepare the candles and the packs provided for all in attendance. Ever since he started with the back to work scheme, he took it upon himself to ensure that all organ donor card requests were processed promptly. During the Association's annual Run for A Life, "Lenny's Corner" was the only part of the course that ever got named as year after year, he would be there to cheer on the participants and take photos and bring his unique character to the event.

Lenny's untimely death has been an opportunity for reflection and his attitude to life, and the people around him, will influence many of us for a long time to come. He will be missed but he will not be forgotten.

**COLIN WHITE**  
National Advocacy  
& Projects Manager





# IRISH KIDNEY ASSOCIATION CLG

(Company Limited By Guarantee)

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM



BLOCK CAPITAL LETTERS PLEASE:

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Ms. ☐ FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SURNAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTCODE:  TEL: \_\_\_\_\_ MOBILE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL:

We record this information in line with the Constitution of the IKA. You must be 18 years of age to become a member of the Association.

Please indicate if any of the following apply to you:

PRE DIALYSIS, HAEMODIALYSIS, APD, CAPD or TRANSPLANTED

☐ YES

☐ NO

☐ Do not wish to disclose

Do you wish to receive our quarterly 'SUPPORT' magazine by  
Please tick 'No' if your household is already receiving it

Post? ☐ YES

☐ NO

Or Email? ☐ YES

☐ NO

Can we correspond with you for notices of Annual General Meeting  
of the Association and Annual Director's Report by

Email? ☐ YES

☐ NO

Would you like to receive information on activities from your local  
IKA branch which entails us giving them the data from this form?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Would you like to receive information on the IKA Transplant & Dialysis  
Sports and Fitness which is based in Head Office?

☐ YES

☐ NO

By signing this form you agree to become a member of the Association and you subscribe to the Constitution of the Association (copy available on request or on the IKA website – [www.ika.ie](http://www.ika.ie))

I subscribe to (sign up and accept) the Constitution of the Irish Kidney Association CLG (Company Limited by Guarantee).

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return the completed signed form to the  
Irish Kidney Association CLG, (Freepost), Donor House, Block 43A, Park West, D12 P5V6.  
*There is NO SUBSCRIPTION charge.*



We are having a wonderfully successful summer, with the Riverstown apartments filled to capacity for much of the season. Guests and their families are thoroughly enjoying their time here, all while staying sun-safe during this stretch of glorious weather – better than the Costa del Sol!

A heartfelt thanks goes to Cathy Keoghan for her dedicated work as caretaker and greeter. We're also grateful for the continued efforts of Dickie, Emma, and Andy, who keep everything running smoothly through their cleaning and maintenance work.

Our Branch meetings took a break for the summer but will resume in mid-September at St. John's Pastoral Centre, John's Hill. Meetings begin at 7pm and finish around 8.15pm, with time afterward for a friendly chat over tea, coffee, and cake. New members are always welcome, and the overall time commitment is just 10 hours per year.

We extend our deepest sympathies to the families of those who have recently passed. We were saddened to learn of the death of Theresa Quinn, a valued Branch member and dedicated local fundraiser. Our sincere condolences go out to her family during this difficult time.

With deep sorrow, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the family



*Brenda Ronan.*

# WATERFORD

By FRANCES MOYNIHAN



*Ray Halligan, Waterford Branch Chairperson; Carol Moore, CEO IKA; Frances Moynihan, Waterford Branch Treasurer; Joe Moynihan, Waterford Branch Member.*

of the late Robert "Bob" Murphy of Mahon, Killrossanty. Bob was a long-standing member of our Branch and left a lasting impact on all who knew him.

In the early days of the dialysis unit at University Hospital Waterford, Bob and his family devoted themselves tirelessly to fundraising efforts – work that continued with

steadfast commitment for many years. Their compassion and selflessness brought hope and healing to countless lives. To his beloved wife Diana, his mother Síle, and to all his family and friends, we offer our deepest sympathy.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam dílis.

## A POWERFUL GATHERING OF REMEMBRANCE AND GRATITUDE

On Sunday, May 25th, 2025, the Church at University Hospital Waterford (UHW) became a sacred space filled with emotion, reflection, and deep gratitude as we came together for our Annual Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance.

The overwhelming turnout – far exceeding our expectations – was a powerful testament to the lasting bonds shared by patients, families, staff, and supporters of the renal community.

This year's service was dedicated to the memory of our Branch member, the late Vera Frisby, who worked tirelessly for renal patients in

Waterford city and county. Vera's family and IKA CEO Carol Moore were among our invited guests on the day.

The Service began with a warm and sincere welcome from Dr. Elizabeth Abernethy, Renal Consultant at UHW, who spoke on behalf of the dedicated team in the dialysis unit. The ceremony was led with compassion and reverence by Fr. John Phillips, with contributions from Rev. Daniel Fleming, Rev. Jenny Crowley, and Ann Cuffe, who is currently on a chaplaincy placement. Rev. Jenny Crowley's homily was especially moving, offering a



*Rev Daniel Fleming, Fr. John Phillips, Rev Jenny Crowley.*



# WATERFORD



*Fr. John Phillips, Michael Gallwey, Waterford Branch Secretary.*



*Bridget Mitchell, Ann Murray.*



*Bridget Langton, Moira Cashin*



*Charlotte and Ward Frisby.*

## ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOE CASHIN

heartfelt tribute to the late Vera Frisby, a cherished advocate for renal patients.

Music played a central role in creating a reflective atmosphere, with the choir from St. Mary's Church, Ballygunner, under the musical direction of Ann Cody, delivering a beautiful and uplifting performance. Attendees were invited to light a candle to place on the altar and a card with the name of their loved one in the basket the altar. These symbolise a celebration of life. The lighting ceremony was accompanied by instrumental music from Sean Crowe, adding a deeply

spiritual tone. Reflections were read by dialysis and transplanted patients.

As the Service came to a close, Ray Halligan, Branch Chairperson, expressed deep gratitude to all who contributed to this unforgettable occasion, especially Brenda Ronan, Margaret Moran, and Frances and Joe Moynihan for their exceptional efforts in organising the event. Brenda Ronan also paid a moving tribute to Vera Frisby, honouring her three decades of tireless advocacy and care for renal patients and their families.

Following the service, attendees gathered for refreshments—catered

by House of Food—where stories were shared, memories were honoured, and connections were deepened.

We extend heartfelt thanks to the UHW management team for their unwavering support in providing the Church and the staff dining room, which helped make this meaningful event possible.

This years' service was more than a ceremony; it was a celebration of life, resilience, and community. We are deeply grateful to all who took part and helped make it a truly unforgettable day.



*John Meade, Barbara Roche - Choir members.*



*Frances Moynihan, Ray Halligan.*





### BRANCH MEETINGS

Our Branch meetings have been continuing at Rua Red Arts Centre in Tallaght with great attendances on March 3rd, April 14th, May 7th and June 9th. Always nice to welcome some new members to the meeting for the first time and hear about why they joined the IKA. Many discussions are had at these meetings of patients own experiences with End Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD), particularly in the areas of dialysis and transplant. Participants speak from their own experience rather than provide any medical advice.

Thank you all for your contributions to the meeting and for making it all worthwhile.

The next **Branch Meeting** will be scheduled for September 2025 to allow for holidays.

Dates and times will be communicated on Facebook page, WhatsApp group and by email. If you are not hearing from us and would like to or if you wish to attend our next meeting please text or call Gerry on 086-0268223 for details.

Hopefully everyone will enjoy some holiday time this summer. Take care to always protect yourself against the harmful sun rays, particularly those who are

## DUBLIN SOUTH

By GERRY McKENNA



*'May the force be with you' – Joining forces in the fundraising effort: (L-R) Brian Walsh, Beth Kilpatrick, (both Show Organising Team) our own Girley Lugares & Liz O'Sullivan with Philip Duane & Rachel O'Hara (both Dublin East & Wicklow Branch)*

transplanted.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The first half of our Branch Meeting on April 14th served as our Annual General Meeting. The format included presentation of the Chairperson's Report and Treasurer's Financial Statement for 2024.

Additionally we held nominations for Branch Officers for the next 2-year period. The following were elected/re-elected to Branch Officer roles:

**National Director:** Liz O'Sullivan  
**Chairperson:** Gerry McKenna  
**Secretary:** Clair Hughes  
**Treasurer:** Patrick Sneyd

We wish to warmly welcome Clair Hughes as Secretary and wish her every success in her new role. Good

luck to all Branch officers in this 2-year period and thank you for all your efforts so far.

### NEW IKA CHAIRPERSON

The newly elected Chair of the Irish Kidney Association is Liz O'Sullivan. Hailing from Kilrush, Co. Clare, Liz has served as Dublin South Director on the IKA Board for the last few years. We are very proud of Liz's enormous contribution to date for the IKA at both Branch and Board level. Congratulations to Liz on this great honour and we wish her every success in this important national role. Up the Banner!



*Some of the Branch attendance pictured here at Rua Red Arts Centre, Tallaght on June 9th: (L-R) Benita Harbourn, Clair Hughes, Vincent Harbourn, Niall O'Higgins, Roisin Healy, Ann O'Connor, Evelyn Leon, John O'Connor, Liz O'Sullivan, Bernie Hopper, Peter Lyons, Declan Sherlock, Angela Sherlock, Marguerite Sneyd, Golden Akinwe, Bernie Watters, Adrian Talpa, Niamh Donovan, Adrian Cronin, Paddy Sneyd.*



# DUBLIN SOUTH



*'Giving it socks' for the IKA at Bohernabreena were: (L-R) Amy O'Higgins, Conor Kenny, Kevin Nuding, Noreen Nuding, Lorna O'Leary, Liz O'Sullivan, Declan Sherlock, Jill McCabe (Show Organising Team) with (in front) Donal Og Garry and Anna Garry.*



*(L-R) Harold Perez with Harley, Andreina Perez, Jomar Masquera and Dublin East & Wicklow IKA legend, John Whelan working together for the IKA.*

## BOHERNABREENA CLASSIC CAR SHOW

We were delighted to be asked by Fundraising Manager Lisa Fitzgerald to help support the IKA, who had been chosen as Charity Partner for the Bohernabreena Classic Car Show. This show is held annually and is a fantastic day out for car enthusiasts and families. We too had a fantastic turnout of volunteers from the Branch who, in conjunction with Rachel and her great team of volunteers from Dublin East & Wicklow Branch raised a lot of money for the IKA as well as St. Anne's GAA club at the annual Bohernabreena Classic Car Show.

Thank you to all volunteers from

both Branches who participated in this effort and to those who sent messages of support to us on the day.

Despite some bouts of inclement weather there was a great attendance on the day from car enthusiasts and families enjoying the arts and crafts, competitions, classic cars and all who sampled the various food offers available.

In advance of the show Lisa had provided us with IKA stickers. As a result, the Irish Kidney Association – Be a Donor message was very well advertised on the day.

The show's organising team were very welcoming and supportive of

our teams and the vouchers for food, coffee and ice cream were gratefully received by our volunteers.

Enormous thanks to them for choosing the IKA as one of the two main beneficiaries of the fundraising effort this year. Thank you, Fergus, Brian and all the organising team.

## ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK

Starting on Saturday, May 10th we had plenty of our Branch members out spreading the message about the importance of organ donation, handing out organ donor cards in The Square S.C., Tallaght and Nutgrove S.C. The following Saturday, May 17th we once again



*(L-R) Councillor Adam Smyth, Roderick Smyth, Arlene Hughes, Lisa Ennis & Declan Sherlock at The Square SC, Tallaght.*



*Liz O'Sullivan, Declan Sherlock, Ann Coady and Terry Cassidy promoting ODAW in Liffey Valley SC. Thanks also to Ann Hartnett O'Connor (sorry we missed you for the photo Ann).*



*Jomar Masquera, Cecile McInerney and Yan Olzanecki at Nutgrove SC.*



*Carolyn Akintola, Hannah Kelly and Girley Lugares at The Square SC, Tallaght.*



*Bernie Hopper, Claire Kelly, Girley Lugares, Lorna O'Leary and Liz O'Sullivan at The Square SC, Tallaght*





# DUBLIN SOUTH



*Terry Cassidy, Aidan Cronin and Mark Small at Liffey Valley S.C.*

had a great turnout of volunteers for Liffey Valley S.C. and Dundrum S.C. Thank you to all our volunteers for helping us out.

This is a very worthwhile and important activity as so many people are on the Transplant List with more being added every week. By your efforts as volunteers, you may have played a small part in a future organ donation for someone out there that you have never met. Well done.

## CONDOLENCES

We send condolences to the family and friends of all deceased members of the Branch.

In particular, we remember Lenny Ryan who we lost in May. Many of you will know him as a long-standing member and employee of the IKA and he was also as a very popular member of Transplant Team Ireland with whom he competed in many of

the Transplant Games competitions.

Lenny served as Secretary of our Branch for a time and was an enthusiastic supporter of organ donation, volunteering for many years, at the various fundraisers this Branch has been involved with. May he rest in peace.

We also wish to send condolences to the family and many friends of Michael O'Brien. Michael was a long-standing member of our Branch but sadly passed away in April. He had been bravely battling illness for the past few years but always found time to offer us his support for our activities despite being unable to attend in person himself. Michael and his family have made significant contributions to the Branch over the years, and we are very grateful to them for all their efforts and donations. May Michael rest in

peace.

Additionally, we were saddened to learn of the death of another of our members, John Devine, also in April. John was a very popular man and always had a kind word and a cheery greeting for his many friends and acquaintances despite bravely battling with illness. He will be very much missed by his many friends and family. Our sympathies and condolences go out to John's wife Liz who has been very active with this Branch to help fundraise and promote organ donor awareness in the recent past. May John rest in peace.

In addition to these members who have passed away, we send condolences to all those in our Branch and their families who have lost loved ones this year.



*Golden Akinwe, Lisa Ennis & Mark Small at Liffey Valley S.C.*



*Paddy Sneyd, Benita Harbourne, Marguerite Sneyd, Peter Lyons & Jackie Lyons at Dundrum S.C.*



*(L-R) Rob Dempsey, Glenn Clinton, Aideen & Patricia Dempsey in Dundrum S.C.*



*Bernie Watters, Jackie Lyons, Gerry McKenna, Keelin Cassidy in Nutgrove S.C.*



*Trudi Mulreaney, Ruth Geraghty-Byrne, Pam Cassidy and Glenn Clinton at Nutgrove S.C.*





## LOCAL MEDIA

Thanks to Anna-Marie McHale from Enniscrone and Sligo man Brian Hanley for spreading the good news of organ donation in the local media during Organ Donor Awareness Week.

Also well done to Colin White, IKA National Advocacy & Projects Manager for explaining the Human Tissue Act and the ongoing need for the family conversation on Ocean FM in June.

## CARNEY RUN

At time of writing, the organisers of the Carney 10k & Sligo Half Marathon are finalising their accounts from the run ahead of making their contribution to our branch. We were privileged to be their charity partners for the event.

## GARDEN WORK

Maintenance work is ongoing in

# SLIGO

By BRIAN McHUGH



Committee members pictured at our June Branch meeting, (L-R): Marie Fowley, Fidelma Hanley, Eileen Nolan, Brian McHugh, Sean Fowley, Anna Mitchell-Kenny, Geraldine McHugh. Ita McMorrow Leyden and Gerry Roddy were unavoidably absent from the meeting.



OFFICERS ELECTED AT OUR BRANCH AGM: (L-r): Treasurer and PRO Brian McHugh; Chairman Sean Fowley; Secretary, Anna Mitchell-Kenny, and Assistant Secretary Geraldine McHugh.

our Garden of Reflection at Doorly Park. Special thanks to the Gardening / Parks Department of Sligo County Council for their cooperation with this.

## BRANCH MEETINGS

We are on a summer break from

our monthly branch meetings. Our next one will be on September 2nd in the Presbyterian Hall, Church St. Sligo.

In the meantime, if anyone wishes to discuss something with us, feel free to contact any of our committee members.

# MARIE STEPS DOWN FROM THE BOARD



Marie Fowley

Our Branch member Marie Fowley stood down from the Board of Directors at the recent National AGM after serving eight years as our representative in the position.

Speaking at our June Branch meeting Marie said she really enjoyed her time on the Board.

"I appreciated being part of the decision-making process on how the IKA could enhance the lives of patients and their families. It was also a good opportunity for exchanging ideas with colleagues from other Branches on the way forward".

Marie said that following the end of the COVID epidemic she campaigned continuously for the IKA Support Centre at Beaumont to be returned to the organisation after it had been taken over for use by the hospital.

Beaumont Hospital eventually handed the Support

Centre back to the IKA earlier this year.

"Coming from the Northwest I was acutely aware of how much the Centre was needed by patients and families, especially those who had long journeys to travel. Thankfully it all worked out and as renovations are ongoing, we look forward to it being available soon again", she said.

Marie continued: "I will miss the bit of argy-bargy at meetings, but I certainly won't miss the long journeys up and down to Dublin especially on dark winter evenings.

"I plan and hope to continue working with the Sligo Branch. Together with the other Branch members I will keep pushing for a new Renal Dialysis Unit. We need all our local politicians to get behind this.

"We also need volunteers, especially transplanted patients, who, like myself are on the journey to help promote the importance of organ donation.

"I want to wish all my former colleagues on the Board the very best of luck in their endeavours," Marie concluded.



Wexford Branch members were busy out and about during Organ Donor Awareness Week, meeting with local chemists in Clonroche and Castlebridge, Post Office staff in Castlebridge, and the Wexford County football team. Huge thanks to all who gave up their time to make it all happen.

Also, during Organ Donor Awareness Week recently transplanted Pauline Atkinson, Stefan Whelan and Brian Lawrence were interviewed on our local South East Radio, with all three giving great account of their journey from dialysis to receiving their transplants.

Recent transplant recipient Stefan Whelan, with family and friends completed a 1km sea swim at Baginbun beach on May 4th to raise funds for new beds in the renal unit at Beaumont Hospital. Stefan's family and friends joined him for the swim. Walter from Wexford Branch and Marion from Waterford Branch went along to support.

Congratulations to Liam Buttle who recently received a civic

# WEXFORD

By MARIA DONLON



Wexford Branch members out and about during Organ Donor Awareness Week.

honours award from Councillor Oliver Walsh, Municipal District for his many years of hard work with the IKA. Liam has been a Board Director for over 25 years and was Chairman of the Wexford Branch for more than 40 years. Liam was also instrumental and successful in getting the dialysis unit to Wexford.



Liam Buttle receiving a Civic Honours Award.

A total of €2,100 was raised at the annual Wexford Credit Union Night Run which was held this year on February 6th. Balloughter Drama group recently organised a fundraiser which raised €500 for the IKA.

Members of the Buttle family celebrated various milestone birthdays recently and asked for donations to the IKA instead of presents. They raised a total of €517.



Stefan Whelan and family with Walter Kent, Wexford Branch and Marion Young Waterford Branch after his charity swim.



Deirdre Cleary along with family and friends completed her third annual cycle on Saturday, June 28th, for the IKA, leaving her home in Ballymitty at the early hour of 6.30am to arrive at BBraun Wexford for her dialysis session at 8am.

Well done to Aoife Deignan, Johnny Kehoe, Karen Firman, Kieran McGuinness, Liam Heffernan, Leslie Bates, Noel Fitzharris and Karen Loveday who all represented Wexford and supported the IKA at the Ring of Kerry cycle on July 5th.

The July 5th was a busy one as we also attended Aldi, Retail Park, Wexford and had a great day. Management and staff very kindly let us collect and promote organ donor awareness as we were unable to cover the store on World Kidney Day. A big thank you to all the volunteers who turned up on the day.

The Bannow Rathangan Show in Kilag was another great day out again this year. We had the IKA trailer there and we distributed lots of donor cards and information leaflets. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped on the day.



*Deirdre Cleary and family with Walter Kent, Wexford Branch Secretary after completing her annual cycle.*



*Trish and John Boyce on the early shift at ALDI on Saturday, July 5th.*



*Marion Young travelled from the Waterford Branch to help out Walter Kent and Eddie Kehoe at the Motorcycle run.*



*Having fun at the Bannow Rathangan Show, Aoife Honan, Lorraine Whelan, Stefan Whelan and Stefanie Honan.*



*Liam Buttle and Walter Kent at the Bannow Rathangan Show.*

The Gurriers MCC held their charity motorcycle run to raise funds for the IKA on Sunday, July 13th. This was a super day out and special thanks to the guys for organising it.

We greatly appreciate all our

volunteers and fundraisers.

Finally, we will be holding our Annual Mass of Remembrance in September this year.

Follow us on Facebook for further updates.



*Walter and Liam Wexford Branch with Jason, one of the organisers of the Motorcycle run*



*John & Pauline White ready to lead out the Motorcycle run.*





Greetings from the Donegal Branch.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has fundraised and donated to the Donegal Branch over the past few months. Your generosity and support mean so much to us, and we are truly grateful.

In April, we received a generous donation of €1,385.78 from Mark McLaughlin and his team at Optum Ireland, based in Letterkenny, on behalf of The Claims, Capitation and Provider Services Organization. Thank you for your outstanding support.

Also in April, some of our members attended Wellness Week at the Atlantic Technological University in Letterkenny, where we hosted a donor awareness stand. We were thrilled to meet Michael Murphy, Donegal Senior GAA football star – best of luck to him and the team in the Championship!

Our member Deirdre McLaughlin organised beautiful prizes for the Dialysis Unit Easter Bingo in Letterkenny. We heard it was great fun and well enjoyed by all involved – thank you, Deirdre!



*Seamy McDermott, Dean Herron and Vinny Gillespie after finishing the Ring of Kerry cycle.*

# DONEGAL

By PATRICIA CALLAGHAN



*Michael Murphy Donegal County GAA Football star at the Wellness Week in ATU Letterkenny with Donegal Branch members: Deirdre McLaughlin, Patricia & Vincent Callaghan.*

In early May, we were honoured to receive a cheque for €1,570 from the Dunfanaghy Tractor and Motor Run, organised by Martin Holmes and friends. We are so appreciative of this fantastic community effort.

Our Annual General Meeting took place on May 26th, during which a new Board was elected. Sincere thanks to all the officers who have kindly accepted their roles.

We also received a kind donation of €300 from the McKeown family of Quigley's Point. Sadly, Joan's husband David, who received a kidney transplant in 2012, passed away in March. The family chose to share the funeral donations

between Letterkenny Hospice and the Donegal Branch of the IKA. We are deeply grateful for their thoughtfulness during such a difficult time.

In July, three of our members – Vinny Gillespie, Dean Herron, and Seamy McDermott – took part in the Ring of Kerry Cycle. What a tremendous achievement! We are very proud of them.

To close, our member Deirdre has written a heartfelt poem in memory of her deceased donor, which she has asked to be shared. We hope you find it as touching as we do.

Wishing you all a lovely and restful summer.



*Joan McKeown and family from Quigley's Point, Donegal who donated €300.*



*Martin Holmes and friends presented a cheque to Patricia Callaghan, Donegal Branch, from the Dunfanaghy Tractor & Motor Run.*



# DONEGAL

## Deirdre's Poem

They called me in and to  
Beaumont we went,  
Me, Mum and Konrad,  
on route, we needed to vent  
I arrived at the room,  
they said goodbye.  
I was all alone,  
so I started to cry.  
Me, My life, Why.

I sat alone in room number 6  
I felt the needles I felt the pricks.  
Above me you were  
on your way home,  
I had no company,  
only my phone.  
I prayed for you  
and your family  
I was in the zone.

They said tissue match,  
time to go.  
They wheeled the bed,  
They wheeled it slow  
They held my hands,  
Lucy and Marissa,  
I knew your family,  
heartbroken  
They would miss ya

To the theatre I went  
My emotions truly spent  
I promise you won't be forgotten  
I'll walk for you and  
help others when I can  
I thought I'd die,  
but that wasn't God's plan.

# DUBLIN EAST & WICKLOW

By NIAMH DOWLING



(Front to back, clockwise): Brian Walsh, Marian Duane, Bernie & Mick Dwyer, Myriam Walsh, John & Una Whelan, Jacqueline Burke, Rachel O'Hara, Niamh Dowling, John & Patricia Wogan and Philip Duane.

## NEW BRANCH OFFICERS

After our recent AGM, the following officers were appointed:

**Chairperson:** Rachel O'Hara  
**Secretary:** Niamh Dowling  
**Treasurer:** John Wogan

## EVENTS

It's been a busy few months for our Branch.

On World Kidney Day we campaigned with bucket shakers outside local ALDI branches to raise funds and had great support from all involved. Niamh Dowling's work office also had a lunch to raise funds and awareness of organ donation.

During Organ Donor Awareness Week John and Patricia Wogan, along with their sons, set up an information stand in their local shopping centre. Rachel O'Hara gave talks in two schools about awareness

and the impact of organ donation.

In June a group of our members, along with some members of the South Dublin Branch, attended the Bohernabreena Car Show to raise funds for the IKA.

The East Dublin & Wicklow Branch turned 40 on June 14th (the same day as the AGM). We celebrated this in the Martello on July 2nd. We had a lovely meal with a great group of members. We also had to say goodbye to Bernie who has been an integral part of the Branch for over 20 years. We cannot thank her enough for all she has done.

We will enjoy the summer break with plenty of slip, slap, slopping and will return in September for our next meeting.

Wishing all our members a great summer and we look forward to seeing you all in September.

# LEITRIM

By CATHRÍONA CHARLES



Leitrim IKA Branch had a table at the Leitrim Volunteer Centre festival in May, we chatted to lots of people, handed out leaflets and donor cards and also met some people who offered to volunteer with us.

The re-elected officers, Annetha, Frank and Cathriona met up in Carrick to sign all the bank mandates and make some plans for the summer – we will have stalls at some agriculture shows during August.

We will also be having a Branch meet-up, coffee and chat at some point in August, keep an eye on our Facebook page LeitrimIKA for details.

Frank Heslin, Leitrim Branch Treasurer; Cathriona Charles, Leitrim Branch Secretary & Board member, Annetha Kieran, Leitrim Branch Chairperson.



## BRANCH MEETINGS

The first Louth/Meath Branch meeting since COVID took place in Drogheda on April 16th, with a great turnout. Many members showed strong interest in reactivating the Branch and having local officers represent the Louth/Meath area. It was wonderful to see both long-standing and newer members come together.

A follow-up meeting was held in Slane on May 21st, with an even bigger crowd. On the night, Branch officers were elected:

**Chairperson:** Louise Wayenberg  
**Secretary:** Sandra Flanagan  
**Treasurer:** Sara McKeown  
**Board Member:** Valerie Brady

We're thrilled to now have a full team of officers, along with many members volunteering to help in various ways.

It's fantastic to see the Branch reactivated and full of energy, with a strong passion for re-engaging and organising local activities.

## ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS TALK

In the lead-up to Organ Donor Awareness Week, we had the privilege of visiting Ratoath College, Co. Meath on May 8th to speak with 4th year students.

We were joined by two amazing volunteers, Adam Cantwell, who shared his family's powerful story of choosing to donate his brother Aaron's organs after his tragic passing in 2023, and Lisa Fitzgerald, a young mother who received a life-changing kidney transplant in 2019.

Adam gave a deeply heartfelt insight into his family's decision to donate his brother Aaron's organs. In the midst of their grief, they chose to give hope to others, bringing light in their darkest of moments by giving the 'gift of life' through Aaron's

# LOUTH/MEATH

By SARAH BUCHANAN



Adam Cantwell, Aisling Savage TY Co-ordinator, Sarah Buchanan, IKA, Lisa Fitzgerald, IKA.



Students & Teachers of Dromiskin National School.

organ donation.

Lisa spoke about her kidney journey, navigating life with a young family, dialysis and how receiving that awaited phone call for a kidney transplant transformed her life.

The talk on organ donation was truly powerful and left a lasting impact on both students and teachers alike.

## ST. PETERS NATIONAL SCHOOL

The First Holy Communion class at St. Peter's National School in Dromiskin, Co. Louth, made a wonderful gesture by choosing to donate part of their Communion money to the IKA. The Branch volunteer team visited the school to meet the 20 children, their teacher Ms. Mulroy, and Headmistress



Ms Lynch, Headmistress; Sarah Buchanan, IKA, Ms Mulroy, Teacher

Ms. Lynch, to present a Certificate of Kindness and gratefully accept a cheque for €301.

It was a lovely morning filled with





Students and staff of Ratoath College with IKA Volunteers.



Louth/Meath Officers: Valerie Brady, Sara McKeown, Sandra Flannagan, Louise Wayenberg.

curiosity, pride, and joy, as the children asked thoughtful questions about kidneys and organ donation.

#### LOUTH/MEATH BRANCH VOLUNTEERS BEACON DIALYSIS UNIT, DROGHEDA

Following feedback from the Louth/Meath Branch meetings, it became clear that many patients and their families were not fully aware of the services offered by the IKA. In response, we coordinated with the Beacon Dialysis Unit in Drogheda, and with the support of

Manager Nikita and Joanne, arranged visits across two days to meet patients during both AM and PM dialysis sessions.

Volunteers John McGovern, Sarah Buchanan, Aidan McMenamon, Cliff Wayenberg and Tommy Marrett shared leaflets, *SUPPORT* magazines, answered questions, and had valuable conversations with a diverse group of patients.

The experience provided great insight, and we were pleased to distribute many new membership

forms. We're sincerely grateful to the Beacon team and patients for their warm welcome and openness and the volunteers for giving up their time to support others.

The next Louth/Meath Branch meeting will take place on Wednesday, September 17th in Ardee, Co. Louth. Venue and time to be confirmed.

Keep an eye on social media for upcoming Branch updates or email: [volunteer@ika.ie](mailto:volunteer@ika.ie) or phone 083-3232145 for Louth/Meath Branch queries.

## LIMERICK

By DEBBIE SHEEHY



Glenn Cooper, Debbie Sheehy, James Riordan.

We are delighted to announce that the Limerick Branch of the IKA has now been reactivated, with three new officers appointed:

**Chairperson:** Debbie Sheehy

**Secretary:** James Riordan

**Treasurer:** Glenn Cooper

We are honoured to take on these roles and look forward to meeting everyone, new, and existing members alike, at our upcoming Branch meetings and at some social events that we hope to organise soon.

We warmly welcome all to come along, get involved, and connect with others in our community.

We would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the previous officers for their dedication and service to the Limerick Branch over the years.

We invite everyone to join our Facebook page to stay up to date with Branch news and events: [www.facebook.com/LimerickIKA](https://www.facebook.com/LimerickIKA)

Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you need any advice or support, or if you'd like more information about the work of the IKA and how we can help.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

## WESTMEATH

The Westmeath Branch is happy to announce the election of the following officers:

**Chairman:** Jack Cuniffe

**Secretary:** Sinead Dowling

**Treasurer:** Pattie O'Neill

Please follow us on social media for further updates.



Jack Cuniffe



Sinead Dowling



Pattie O'Neill





A number of our members have availed of the IKA holiday centres and dialysis in the EU. We are greatly thankful to Donor House and dialysis staff in Cavan Unit for their help. We would encourage those who haven't already availed of this service to consider it and book well in advance. After all, a change is as good as a rest. Please contact Deborah Cervi in Donor House.

There was a fantastic turn out at the 30th anniversary celebrations of Cavan dialysis unit in Cavan Cathedral on Sunday, June 8th and afterwards in The Cavan Crystal Hotel. Well done to all involved organising what was a wonderful occasion and those who took part.

Big thanks to all those who continue to run fundraisers for the IKA. We include some pictures from some of these great events.

Continuing health to those on dialysis, and those awaiting transplant or already transplanted.

If you wish to avail of IKA services in strict confidence, please contact:

**Chairman:**

Paul Donohoe, Ph: 083-8577890

**Secretary:**

Rose Dalton, Ph: 086-8186379

**Treasurer:**

Karl Cronin, Ph: 086-8513173

# CAVAN/MONAGHAN

## By PAUL DONOHOE



*Dialysis Unit Nurses.*



*Bernadette & Jim Holohan.*



*Martin Moloney, Mel Maguire & William Moore.*



*Dr. Kieran Hannon & Anna Mae Lynch.*



*Fr. Gerry Kearns & Gabji Zemgulyte.*



*Mark Smith presents a cheque from HighCiders MCC for €700 to Paul Donohoe, Chairman, Cavan/Monaghan Branch, proceeds from a run in memory of their late colleague Pat Granaghan.*



*Paul Donohoe accepts a cheque from Paul Field for €500, the proceeds of a tractor pull in Clontibret and Gowra (l-r): Nathan Field, Marcia Marques, Paul Field, Paul Donohoe.*



## CAVAN/ MONAGHAN



Siobhan O'Reilly



Trish Corr, Avril Reilly & Siobhan Rogers.



Marie Sheridan and Breda Callaghan



Phelim & Maura Pritchard

## OFFALY

By MARJORIE STANLEY

Hello, greetings from the Offaly Branch.

At our AGM in April the following officers were elected:

**Board member:** Paul Molloy  
**Chairperson:** Paul Molloy  
**Secretary:** Marjorie Stanley  
**Treasurer:** Leona McDonald

The Branch wishes the new Committee and Board Director all the best in the coming year.

### SYMPATHY

Deepest sympathy to the families of Alan Brown, Mary Cullinan and Ignatius Mangan, members of our Branch who passed away recently, and to all members who suffered bereavements.

### ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK

We had a stand in the Bridge Centre Tullamore on Saturday, May 17th and gave out donor cards, and talked to people about the need to discuss their wishes with their loved ones.

It was quite encouraging that a lot of people said they already had a donor card or had the code on their driver's licence. Thank you to all who helped on the day.

### TULLAMORE CYCLING AND TOURING CLUB

Tullamore Cycling and Touring Club have again chosen the IKA Offaly Branch as their charity for the Pat Colgan Pedal the Peaks Cycle on August 31st. The Offaly Branch prepare and serve the food at the food stop in Kinnitty Community Centre and assist with stewarding in Kinnitty. Volunteers are needed for stewarding. Please contact Marjorie (087-2140414) if you can help.

There is also a Spinathon to increase awareness of the cycle and raise funds for the IKA in the Bridge Centre on Friday 8th and Saturday, 9th August. If you are in the Bridge Centre on either day call by and say hello. If you can volunteer an hour or two contact Marjorie on the number above.

### BRANCH MEETINGS

Branch meetings are held in Mucklagh Community Centre and will resume in September (date to be confirmed). We plan to have a guest speaker at meetings going forward and would encourage members to let us know what topics they would like addressed.

Hoping everyone has a lovely summer and do take care.

## Acknowledgements of Deceased Loved Ones

At a difficult and sensitive time, the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) wants to acknowledge the recent passing of your deceased loved one in a respectful and personal way. In recent times we have been receiving an increase in the number of requests for inclusion of expressions of sympathy and life stories in *SUPPORT* magazine, from families of loved ones who have passed away. Therefore, in order to ensure consistency of approach, guidance has been developed regarding inclusion of obituaries based on the deceased's person involvement and role with the IKA.

The guidance allows for expressions of sympathy in other ways outside inclusions in *SUPPORT* magazine.

Please contact your Branch officer if you have any queries in relation to this guidance which outlines what can be included.





The AGM of the Tipperary Branch was held in the Anner Hotel, Thurles on Tuesday, April 8th.

The elected committee is as follows:

**Chairperson:** Anne Hackett  
**Secretary:** Francis Hogan  
**Treasurer:** Mary Adamson

Congratulations to our new Secretary Francis Hogan. Francis has also stepped up as our new Board member and we wish him the best of luck in his duties. Many of you will know Francis already as a cyclist in the Ring of Kerry. Francis has boundless energy, despite being currently on dialysis, and we know he will continue to fundraise and fight the cause for us all.

We are extremely grateful to the Garda College in Templemore for donating all their recycled plastic bottles and cans to the Tipperary IKA Branch over the last year. It has now

# TIPPERARY

By MARY ADAMSON



*Members of the Tipperary Branch at the AGM.*

been passed to another charity, but it has been a very worthwhile fundraiser.

It was no easy task collecting on a weekly basis the extra-large bags of recyclables and placing them individually through the machines in various supermarkets throughout the county.

Thanks to all volunteers who helped out but in particular to the two chief 'bottleshwashers' who did the driving and emptying – John Cleary and Francis Hogan. Keep drinking the Lucozade Gardai!!!

The Nenagh members were busy

fundraising on their annual flag day and raised a grand sum of €2,490.

There was also a very successful coffee morning in Emly organised by John and Mary McGrath. We are very grateful for their support.

We wished all our Tipperary members who entered the Ring of Kerry Cycle the very best of luck – Adam Challen, Francis Hogan, Gerry O'Meara, Joe Clohessy, John Connolly, JP Hogan, Nicola Maunsell and Seamus Fahey.

## JOAN GAVAN STEPS DOWN FROM THE NATIONAL BOARD

Joan Gavan has stepped down from the National Board of the IKA. Joan served on the Board for the last 14 years and we are most grateful to her for her long-standing dedication and commitment to the IKA and the cause of kidney patients.

Joan is a stalwart of our Branch having been with us since the foundation of the Tipperary Branch in 1982. She has served not only on the Board but in every officer position over the years in Tipperary.

We wish Joan a happy and well-deserved retirement from Board duties but are reassured that both Joan and her husband Willie will continue to be with us in the Tipperary Branch.



*Presentation to retiring Board member Joan Gavan, (l-r): Francis Hogan (Secretary and new Board member), Anne Hackett (Chair), Joan Gavan and Mary Adamson (Treasurer).*



*Anne Hackett presenting to Alison Fogarty, kidney transplant recipient and fundraiser.*



*Sheila Gregan and Patricia Gibson, collecting on Nenagh Flag day.*





It has been a few busy months for the Kilkenny Branch.

We had a big turnout for Organ Donor Awareness Week – with our new Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and Board member all in attendance across a number of locations.

A huge thanks to Ellen Brennan whom last month was sponsored €500 by CluneTech to run 10km by the Barrow River in Graiguenamanagh which was kindly donated to the IKA.

A huge thanks to Adrian Hayden's family plus some of the committee members who arranged a memorial walk on Brandon Hill, Graiguenamanagh, in remembrance of Adrian. Sadly, he passed away very quickly after being diagnosed with cancer. The memorial walk generated €1,500 which was kindly donated to the Kilkenny Branch.

In other news Mary Rooney and Bridget Langton would like to offer sincere thanks to Colette, the Superior of Fresenius Dialysis Unit in Kilkenny, who allowed them time to talk with the patients on June 17th

## KILKENNY

By LINDA BRENNAN



Mary Rooney and Bridget Langton with Adrian's family: Mum Catherine and Dad Pat with Committee members.



Mary Rooney and Bridget Langton with Adrian's family: Mum Catherine, Dad Pat and sister Breege.



Seamus O'Farrell (Board Member) and Linda Brennan (Secretary) Supervallu, Thomastown.

and 26th.

Both Mary and Bridget had experienced dialysis treatment before receiving their transplants, therefore had an awareness of issues facing patients and were able to answer questions.

Unfortunately, some patients were unaware of the IKA and the services it offers, but all who wished

to join, were given a registration form.

Finally, great news, Kilkenny Branch member Michael Doyle was successfully transplanted in May this year. We wish Michael all the best on his journey.

Our next branch meeting will be in September. Keep an eye out on our social media for updates.



Ellen Brennan (left) receiving the cheque for €500.



Bridget Langton assisted by member Michael Doyle and volunteer in Supervallu, Graiguenamanagh.

## SUPPORT DEADLINE

The deadline for submission of Branch notes and high resolution photos for the next edition of **SUPPORT** is on, or before, **7th November, 2025**. Email: [supportmag@ika.ie](mailto:supportmag@ika.ie)





## IN MEMORY OF BARRY SHIEL

Maureen Sheil and her family from Loughrea sadly lost their son Barry, 14 years ago, at just 26 years of age. Barry became an organ donor following a tragic road accident resulting in two people receiving life-saving kidney transplants. Maureen's grandchild is also a kidney patient at Temple Street Children's Hospital.

On March 15th, Maureen organised a fundraiser and celebration of Barry's life on what would have been his 40th birthday in McCormack's Bar in Curragh, Loughrea raising an incredible €7,120 for the IKA.

Maureen was also kind enough to share her story on local radio and with newspapers to help raise awareness of organ donation and encourage people to have the conversation and share their wishes with their families. Thanks to Maureen, her family and Barry's friends for all their support.



*Barry Shiel RIP, an organ donor.*

# GALWAY

By MICHELLE GERAGHTY



*Eoin Madden, Chairperson, Galway Branch, receiving a cheque from Maureen Shiel for €7,120.*



*Galway Branch volunteers who attended the North Galway Vintage Show in Glenamaddy.*

## NORTH GALWAY VINTAGE SHOW FUNDRAISER

We were delighted to be invited to the North Galway Vintage Show and Autojumble at the Glenamaddy Equestrian Centre on May 25th by the North Galway Vintage and Heritage Club. Thanks to the efforts of dialysis patient and event organiser Paul Greaney, we were offered a prime location at the event

and had the opportunity to raise awareness about organ donation.

Thanks to the generosity of local businesses who donated prizes for a raffle, and the generous donations from attendees, we're delighted to report that €2,250 was raised for the IKA.

Congratulations to Paul and all involved for a great event and huge thanks for giving us the opportunity to attend.

As well as raising funds and awareness about organ donation, the event was a wonderful opportunity to connect with fellow members as we dodged the rain showers under the IKA trailer.

We noted that between the nine volunteers who attended from the Galway Branch throughout the day, we have been blessed to have received 11 kidneys and two pancreases thanks to the generosity of organ donors and their families.



*Paul Greaney, dialysis patient and organiser of the North Galway Vintage Show.*





*Alceina O'Brien and Lizzie Harrison at the Songs of Gratitude Fundraiser.*

## SONGS OF GRATITUDE

Later that same evening, Lizzie Harrison hosted an incredibly moving concert in the Athenry Community Centre to raise funds for the IKA. Lizzie received a life-saving kidney 23 years ago and organised the event to celebrate and thank her donor.

She was joined on the night by the Athenry Peace Choir and Soul Sisters. The highlight for all was a stunning rendition of 'Hallelujah', with the lyrics updated to share the joy and gratitude that comes with receiving the 'gift of life'. All who attended agreed it was emotional and uplifting.

Branch member Alceina O'Brien also shared her inspiring kidney transplant journey on the night. Thanks to Lizzie and all involved for a beautiful evening and for raising over €1,000 for the IKA.

## PAUL TUMULTY'S TABLE QUIZ

On May 30th, a special cheque presentation took place at the Pillar Bar and Restaurant in Ballinasloe, as Paul Tumulty, a dialysis patient from Roscommon raised over €3,000 for



*Presentation of cheque from Paul Tumulty to Eddie Flood, outgoing Chairman IKA, in Ballinasloe.*

the IKA. The funds were raised through a table quiz held in March to mark World Kidney Day. Representing the IKA at the event was Eddie Flood and representatives of the local Branches for Galway and Westmeath.

## DEAN'S 5KM A DAY FUNDRAISER

Dean Walsh went into kidney failure suddenly at 21, and after some time in ICU, multiple medical procedures and 18 months on dialysis, he got the life-changing call. Thanks to the generosity of an organ donor and their family, he's been living his best life following a successful kidney transplant in 2005.

To mark 20 years with his kidney, Dean took on the challenge of running 5km a day for the month of July to raise funds for the IKA. You can follow his progress at [idonate.ie/fundraiser/DeansKidneyTransplant](https://idonate.ie/fundraiser/DeansKidneyTransplant).

## A WORD OF THANKS

We'd also like to take a moment to thank all the Galwegians who took



*Dean Walsh from Galway City ran 5km a day for the month of July.*

part in the Women's Mini Marathon and the Ring of Kerry Cycle recently.

Olivia Cullen and Martina Lee who took part in the Women's Mini Marathon in aid of the Irish Kidney Association on June 1st.

Thanks also to our Galway cyclists who represented us at the Ring of Kerry Cycle fundraiser with Kristopher O'Ceallaigh, John Burns, Derek Clarke and Martina Clarke taking on the 170km hilly challenge in early July. We know the effort, training and commitment that goes into taking on these events and we're incredibly grateful for your support.

## BRANCH MEETINGS

Inclusivity is important to us here in Galway, so to facilitate some members who are unable to attend meetings in person, we held our March meeting over Zoom which was very successful. To facilitate members on the Northeast of the city, our May meeting was held in the Claregalway Hotel. The attendance was great, and we all enjoyed the chats over tea and biscuits when the official work was done.

We're taking a break for the summer but are looking forward to re-connecting again in September and, as always, we welcome new members. As we continue to plan our meetings for 2025, we would love to hear your thoughts on how we can continue to ensure our meetings are as open and inclusive as possible.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

The Galway Branch is very active on social media, so if you want to follow our activities over the summer, we'll keep you updated on Facebook (Galway IKA Branch) and Instagram (@galwayika). We'd love to hear from you!



*Galway Branch Meeting at the Claregalway Hotel in May.*



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