

# SUPP



# RT

SPRING 2026



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*giveaway*

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at the

**CLAYTON HOTEL**  
DUBLIN AIRPORT

and a **FAMILY DAY PASS**  
to **DUBLIN ZOO**

SEE INSIDE  
BACK COVER

# UNITED IN GIVING

# Volunteers Nationwide Mark WORLD KIDNEY DAY

# Editorial



Welcome to our Spring issue of *SUPPORT*.

Excitement is building as we approach the re-opening of the National Kidney Support Centre at Beaumont Hospital. Staff, contractors and volunteers are working tirelessly to get us across the finish line. With the inspection of major construction items nearly complete, we have now entered the final phase: safety certification, outfitting, and furnishing.

Part-time staff have been recruited and are already working with us, but at the time of writing, we still have some vacancies which are advertised on our website. From feedback so far, it is very obvious the Centre has a “wow” factor and will set new standards for patient and family comfort.

As a community we can take real pride in what is being achieved. We hope to welcome the first residents in April. More details on page 39 and you can find out how to help on the back page.

Another major milestone was our second (and first in-person) National Member Forum meeting. This was held in Athlone and there were

plenty of ideas about how to improve services for patients and families.

Minutes and presentations from the Members Forum meeting are available from your Branch Forum representative or from your Branch officers, (see key takeaways on pages 6-7).

One of the items discussed was the creation of the first prototype Irish Kidney Disease Database System (IKDDS). This marks a vital step forward, providing the essential data we need to campaign for better services.

Member Forum volunteers were involved in giving feedback on the new prototype and we are very grateful to these volunteers who give so freely of their time.

Professor Joe Eustace, Clinical Director of the National Renal Office also presented, and his remarks highlighted the considerable challenges the healthcare system faces as the incidence of kidney failure rises by an average of 3% every year. In practical terms, this means two new dialysis units are required every year. So, simply ensuring adequate dialysis capacity exists is a major challenge, made even harder by the fact that transplant figures for 2025 are very disappointing



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## FRONT COVER

Members of the North Dublin Branch of the IKA came together to celebrate the incredible volunteers from across the country who supported this year's national fundraising campaign.

Photo: Conor McCabe

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and deeply concerning, (see pages 20-21).

With so many challenges in the healthcare system, we must decide what our top campaign priorities should be in the coming years. Experience shows successful campaigns pick two to three issues and focus on these.

I also presented at the Irish Nephrology Society (INS) conference in Cork, where we debated campaigning priorities. We discussed the Kidney Health Australia patient organisation's radical campaign to "Stop Dialysis by 2050", which calls for more prevention, research, innovation, and the introduction of more effective treatments. Such treatments can not only stall progression into end stage kidney disease but can even reverse kidney failure decline.

It was encouraging to see how aligned we are with the INS and that, despite not getting kidney disease as a priority on Ireland's upcoming EU presidency, we continue to work together to ensure kidney disease is not forgotten (see page 59 for more).

World Kidney Day was a resounding success, raising awareness of kidney disease and over €100,000 in vital funds. It was great to see and chat to so many people out and about and listen to their stories. Thank you



At the National Members Forum meeting in Athlone were: Jack Cunniffe, Lia Murphy, James McShane, Carol Moore, Fiona Aherne, Debbie Sheehy.

to our incredible volunteers. We could not achieve so much without you. (Full report on pages 8-19).

The project to future-proof the IKA is continuing, and the Board is working hard behind the scenes to draft proposed updates to our Constitution (see page 33). Our members will vote on at our AGM on July 4th. Keep an eye on our website and social media for further updates over the coming months.

We also share an update on the services delivered in 2025, which we're happy to report were higher than the year before. You'll find all of the details on page 38.

Finally, we turn our eyes to the future, developing a renewed strategy for the IKA that will take us from where we are now to

2031.

The Board has decided to appoint an experienced external facilitator who will help us to develop a new strategy. This is where we really need your feedback and opinions. You have told us our services are good, and that you really value them, but you've also made it clear you want to see us campaign more. At its heart, the question for members is this: how can we best use the funds you raise? What matters most to you?

We will be in touch to get your views in the coming months, so make sure we have your latest email address so you can have your say in where we go next.

Kind regards

**CAROL MOORE**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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## FRONT COVER STORY

# VOLUNTEERS UNITE FOR NATIONAL COLLECTION DAY

Our cover photo features members of the North Dublin Branch of the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) who came together to celebrate the incredible network of volunteers from Branches across the country who supported this year's national fundraising drive.

The group pictured were mirroring the enthusiasm of volunteers of all ages who stepped out at ALDI, Dunnes Stores and other locations in communities around Ireland on Saturday, March 7th in support of the IKA, helping to raise vital funds and increase awareness ahead of World Kidney Day.

Among those pictured are volunteers with personal stories connected to kidney disease.

**M**egan Carter (25), from Coolock, is a kidney transplant recipient whose father Eddie donated a kidney to her in 2014. Before surgery, Megan underwent specialised treatment in Great Ormond Street Hospital, London, to remove HLA antibodies so the transplant could proceed.

Diagnosed at age three after a bout of pneumonia revealed severe kidney problems, she spent years on dialysis following an earlier failed



(Back row): Chloe Kinahan; Harry Ward, Ivan Kinahan, Ron Grainger, Joyce Grainer; Colin MacKenzie;  
(Middle row): Ann Hatch, Allsún Henderson, Megan Carter, Carol Williams;  
(Front row): James McShane, Claire Cody, Sophie Cody, Narendar Katta.

transplant at Temple Street in 2011. She is now in her third year studying for a Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design at the National College of Art and Design. Also in the photo is her mother, **Carol Williams**.

**Sophie Cody** (20), from Skerries, received a kidney transplant from her mother Claire in November 2020. Sophie's transplant ended 22 months of upheaval which began in February 2019, when she was suddenly catapulted into unexpected kidney failure and hospital dialysis treatment at Temple Street Hospital.

Claire attended counselling at the IKA National Kidney Support Centre in 2019, though the family later missed the convenience of the Centre when Sophie underwent treatment in 2025 for Post-transplant Lymphoproliferative Disorder (PTLD), a rare post-transplant cancer, while it was sequestered. She is now fully recovered and studying Digital Marketing.

**Ron Grainger**, from Castleknock, is a retired urologist and member of Transplant Sport Ireland. Ron, a kidney transplant recipient stepped out with his wife **Joyce** as volunteer collectors for the IKA on March 7th.

Ron received a deceased donor kidney transplant in November 2003 shortly after starting dialysis. His brother Ivan, who lives in Bangor, underwent his own deceased donor transplant in 2010 after five years on dialysis. Both

brothers' transplants were carried out by the same surgeon, Dr. Dilly Little.

During Ivan's transplant journey, his wife Maureen stayed at the National Kidney Support Centre. Ron and Ivan's father was the second person to undergo a kidney transplant in Northern Ireland in January 1969 at Belfast City Hospital, the first having taken place there in late 1968. Previously, patients in the north had to travel to the UK to receive kidney transplants.

**Harry Ward** from Baldoyle, Team Manager of Transplant Sport Ireland, was also supporting the IKA as a volunteer collector. He received a kidney transplant at Beaumont Hospital in July 2007 after more than three years of haemodialysis. Transplanted by surgeon Dr. Richard Power, his donor kidney is still thriving today.

**Allsún Henderson**, is Assistant Secretary of the IKA Dublin North Branch, and lives in Swords. She received a double lung transplant at the Freeman Hospital, UK, in 2010, and a kidney transplant in 2024 after overcoming breast cancer and two and a half years of haemodialysis at the Mater Hospital.

**Narendar Katta**, is a former northside resident who now owns and runs a grocery shop in Newcastle, Dublin and continues to be a member of the IKA Dublin North Branch. He received a

By **GWEN O'DONOGHUE**  
Photos: **CONOR MCCABE**

deceased donor kidney transplant at Beaumont Hospital in 2018 after almost three years of dialysis at the Mater Hospital and Fresenius Clare Hall.

**Colin Mackenzie**, is former IKA National Honorary Chairman and former Dublin North Branch Chairman, from Portmarnock. His late wife Patricia who passed away in July 2022, was a kidney transplant recipient who co-managed the IKA National Kidney Support Centre up until it was sequestered in 2020. A dialysis patient for eight years before her transplant, Patricia is widely remembered for her warmth and dedication. She also served as Secretary of the IKA Dublin North Branch for 16 years.

**Ann Hatch** is Secretary of the Dublin North Branch. She lives in Skerries. Ann received a kidney transplant in August 2022 after four years on dialysis at Beaumont Hospital.

As part of the Irish Kidney Gene Project led by Prof. Peter Conlon and the MDT team, Ann was tested and the team were able to identify a rare genetic kidney disease affecting Ann and her father who is currently receiving dialysis treatment under the excellent care of Prof. Peter Conlon.

**James McShane** from Dublin 5 is Dublin North Branch representative on the IKA's National Member Forum. He was diagnosed with polycystic kidney disease and underwent a deceased donor kidney transplant in July 2023. He attends Dr. Sadlier at the Mater Hospital for his ongoing care.



*Harry Ward and Ron Grainger, long-time stalwarts of the Dublin North Branch. Both will be heading to the European Transplant Games in Arnhem in June, 2026.*

Chloe and Ivan Kinahan from Donaghmede were also collecting for the IKA on March 7th. Chloe is a Director on the IKA's National Board. Ivan donated a kidney to their son

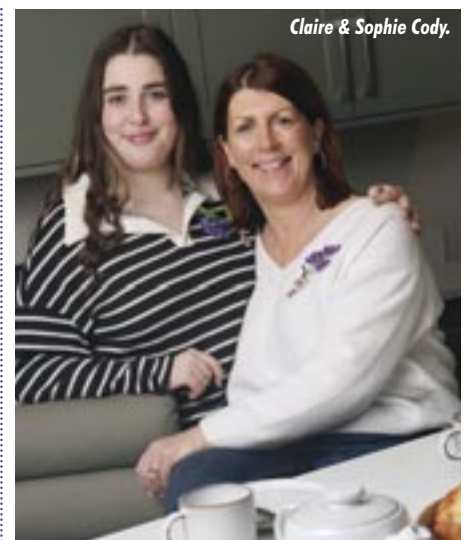
Sam in June 2019. Sam was just five-years-old at the time, having received dialysis treatment since he was four months old.



**Each has their own personal experience of kidney disease, but like the many volunteers who stepped out in communities the length and breadth of the country, they are united by a shared connection to the kidney community and a commitment to supporting the work of the IKA.**



*Carol Williams and daughter Megan Carter.*



*Claire & Sophie Cody.*



## Growing momentum, strong voices, and a bright year ahead



By **MICHELLE GERAGHTY**  
Member Forum Facilitator

**When we first met for a 90-minute Zoom call back in November 2025, the National Member Forum was a seed beginning to take root.**

At that time, 17 of the 25 Branch representative seats had been filled, and 15 of those members were able to join our inaugural meeting. While the agenda focused on laying the Forum's foundations, it was clear from our early engagements that we already had a group of energised and committed members, passionate about ensuring the patient voice isn't simply heard, but is meaningfully embedded in everything we do.

Fast forward to today, and 24 of our 25 Branches are now represented on the Forum. On February 14th, we were delighted to invite them to our full-day gathering in Athlone for a day of honest discussion, shared experience and thoughtful collaboration. The Forum is still new, but it is already making a real impact.

What follows are the four key themes that emerged from that February meeting.

### 1 THE PATIENT VOICE

It was clear from the very first presentation of the day that the patient voice is not just part of our work – it is the work.

Our CEO, Carol Moore, opened our first session with a powerful reminder of why the Member Forum exists. She spoke openly about the systemic barriers that make navigating kidney care more complex than it needs to be, and how

vital it is that patients feel empowered to influence the solutions.

Barriers include limited access to nearby dialysis units, a lack of consistency between regions (the Eircode lottery), major gaps in data, and the very real sense that patients can sometimes feel "too grateful" to speak up about what isn't working.

These are not abstract issues for anyone in the room. They are lived realities, felt daily in dialysis units, throughout transplant journeys, and by families across Ireland.

By the afternoon breakout session, these challenges began to shape potential solutions, guided by frameworks like the "Theory of Change," which Carol invited the group to reflect on, asking questions such as: Where are we now? Where do we want to be? How will we get there?

And at the core of every answer was you – the patient community. Ensuring



CEO Carol Moore

your voice is central isn't just a goal; it's the foundation on which we will build everything else.

## 2 THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

We were honoured to welcome Professor Joe Eustace, Clinical Director of the National Renal Office, whose presentation was both informative and deeply validating. Professor Eustace shared data, trends and pressures that many patients feel, but rarely see expressed at national level.

Hearing him speak so openly about the increasing numbers requiring dialysis, the uneven availability of services around the country, the under-utilisation of home therapies and the lack of standardised national clinical pathways was sobering but essential, and outlined how new HSE regional structures will affect renal care planning.

The room was deeply engaged, with members asking thoughtful and practical questions on access, shared care, dialysis capacity and transplantation. These questions reflected real lived experience and a genuine desire to influence meaningful change. Many members later remarked they would have welcomed even more time with Professor Eustace, a clear sign of how valuable his insights and openness were to the group.

## 3 SHAPING OUR FUTURE

This year, the IKA begins work on our next five year Strategic Plan, and the Member Forum will be right at the centre of that process.

In breakout sessions, members explored the services they value, the gaps they see, and their ambitions for the future of the IKA. Across all groups, the message was clear: patients want a stronger voice, more support, more equitable services and a bolder vision for what kidney care in Ireland could be.

Members highlighted priorities including mental health supports, peer mentoring, better outreach to younger patients, clearer dialysis education and improved information on living donation. They also emphasised the need for stronger links with kidney units and more consistent services across regions. The discussions were rich,



constructive and firmly future-focused.

Members also welcomed the appointment of an external consultant to support the Strategic Plan, helping to ensure independence, structure and close collaboration with patient representatives.

## 4 FUTURE-PROOFING THE IKA

An important update covered the proposal to restructure the National Board. The proposed reduction of the Board from 25 to 11 directors is intended to strengthen decision-making and compliance with the Charities Code, while improving effectiveness and formally embedding the patient voice in our governance structure.

Under this model, the Member Forum would appoint six of its members as Directors (one for each HSE region), with the remaining five appointed by the Board based on skills and diversity needs.

It's a thoughtful and future-focused approach that puts patient representation at the heart of national governance while ensuring the Board has the expertise required to guide the organisation through the years ahead.

This proposal will go to all IKA



members at the AGM in July, and Forum members were encouraged to discuss it locally and ask questions. If approved, the proposal will give the Member Forum a formal role in national governance, a positive step for patient representation. You can read more about this proposal in our Autumn/Winter 2025 edition of Support.

## A SENSE OF COMMUNITY, ENERGY AND PURPOSE

Beyond the presentations and formal discussions, the atmosphere in the room was unmistakably positive and engaged. Members shared experiences, exchanged practical advice, and spoke openly about the realities of living with kidney disease. They represented their Branches with commitment and shared perspectives shaped by their lived experience.

Conversations continued throughout the breaks, with Professor Eustace staying on during lunch to engage directly with members and answer further questions. The level of participation, curiosity and collaborative spirit was evident across the day. For a group only two meetings in, the sense of community and shared purpose is already strong.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

The year ahead will bring many opportunities for the Member Forum to continue shaping the work of the IKA. Representatives will share updates with their Branches and gather feedback to ensure Forum discussions reflect the priorities and experiences of members nationwide.

Branch members are encouraged to stay engaged with their representatives by asking questions and highlighting issues that matter to them. Every contribution strengthens the Forum's ability to represent the wider kidney community.

To all Forum members: thank you for your time, your honesty and your commitment to representing your Branches while balancing the demands of health, family, work and volunteering. Your contribution is invaluable.

Here's to a meaningful and impactful 2026, and to honouring the patient voice as the unwavering heart of the IKA, today and always.

# WORLD KIDNEY DAY

MARCH

12th  
THURSDAY

## A nationwide effort to raise awareness

World Kidney Day on March 12th once again provided an important opportunity for the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) to highlight kidney health and encourage people across Ireland to learn about the risk factors for chronic kidney disease (CKD) and the importance of early testing and detection.

**C**hronic kidney disease (CKD) affects approximately **1 in 10** adults in Ireland, rising to **1 in 7** among those over 50. On its

current trajectory, kidney disease is projected to become the fifth leading cause of death globally by 2040.

Despite its prevalence, CKD is often described as a 'silent condition,' with an estimated 98% of people in the early stages unaware they have it.

Risk of having CKD increases if you have diabetes, heart disease, or high blood pressure, a family history of kidney disease, are over 50, or use certain over-the-counter medications long term. A simple blood and urine test undertaken by a general practitioner can help assess kidney health.

According to figures from the HSE National Renal Office (NRO), at the end of 2025 there were 2,647 people in Ireland receiving dialysis treatment, more than three times the 821 people receiving dialysis treatment in the year 2000. Of the 2,647 dialysis patients, there were 2,617 adults and 30 children. 351 patients were receiving dialysis at

By  
**GWEN O'DONOGHUE**

home, while 2,296 were receiving in-centre haemodialysis.

In the campaign press release the **IKA's Chief Executive Carol Moore** stated, *"Behind every statistic is a person and a family whose lives are permanently changed by kidney failure. There is a profound human cost to patients and their families – including the physical and mental health toll of treatment, emotional strain, and significant disruption to daily life."*

She also highlighted the impact on the healthcare system. *"Dialysis treatment is life-sustaining but demanding, and transplantation, while transformative, requires ongoing life-long specialist care. The burden on patients, families and the health service is significant. Early detection and prevention are the most effective way to reduce avoidable suffering and long-term healthcare costs. Dialysis treatment is already costing the HSE more than €300 million per year, showing the urgent importance of*



**PLEASE SUPPORT THE IRISH KIDNEY ASSOCIATION**

Your generosity changes lives and every gift counts

Cash and card donations accepted

[www.ika.ie/worldkidneyday/](http://www.ika.ie/worldkidneyday/) Registered charity no: 20011260

prevention and early intervention."

The campaign also received strong support from the **Health Service Executive (HSE)**, with its networks helping to amplify the message around kidney health.

**Dr. Colm Henry Chief Clinical Officer of the HSE**, welcomed the campaign's focus on chronic kidney disease saying, *"I welcome the work of the Irish Kidney Association in raising awareness about kidney health while marking World Kidney Day. Chronic kidney disease is closely linked with other major health priorities, including diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and requires a coordinated, system-wide response in the health-system including primary care"*.

### COMMUNITIES AND VOLUNTEERS PLAYING THEIR PART

Across the country, **IKA volunteers from its 25 Branches** once again played a vital role in bringing the campaign message into communities, whilst out fundraising.

On Saturday, March 7th, volunteers were present in ALDI, Dunnes Stores and some SuperValu stores, highlighting World Kidney Day by raising vital funds as part of our national fundraising day through the

**1 in 10** people have Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)



sale of IKA merchandise, while also raising awareness about kidney health and organ donation through the distribution of free organ donor cards. The dedication of the IKA's army of volunteers continues to be a cornerstone of the IKA. *You can read more about the volunteer collections and photos of them from around the country on pages 14-19.*

For those wishing to support the fundraising campaign online, the IKA's virtual Forget-Me-Not Garden once again provided a space where supporters could make an online donation and dedicate a virtual flower in honour or memory of someone special.

#### SUPPORT FROM HEALTHCARE PARTNERS AND PHARMACISTS

The public education campaign had the endorsement of the HSE's **National Renal Office** and the **Irish Nephrology Society**, along with the support of the **Irish Pharmacy Union** and various pharmacy chains at the heart of communities across Ireland.

Support for the campaign came from healthcare partners and community pharmacies across the country. Pharmacy chains displayed the poster highlighting the risk factors for kidney disease, some on their stores' digital screens, as well as



on their social media. The IKA's website page [www.ika.ie/kidneyhealth](http://www.ika.ie/kidneyhealth) contained information and resources for healthcare professionals.

The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) also supported the campaign through an article in the March issue of its magazine *IPU Review* with our poster inserted in its circulation to pharmacists nationwide.

It was particularly encouraging this year to see national support from the HSE and further support from some of its regions. An article in the

HSE partner pack distributed to 3,000 stakeholders, and in its national and some of its regions' newsletters to HSE staff, amplified the campaign far and wide.

Several hospitals also celebrated World Kidney Day with information stands with our awareness materials on display.

Other patient advocacy groups supported the campaign including **Croí** and **Diabetes Ireland** who showed their support through their digital media channels.

*Contd. next page...*



**MEDIA ENGAGEMENT AND ONLINE EVENTS**

The awareness initiative received media coverage including several interviews on radio stations.

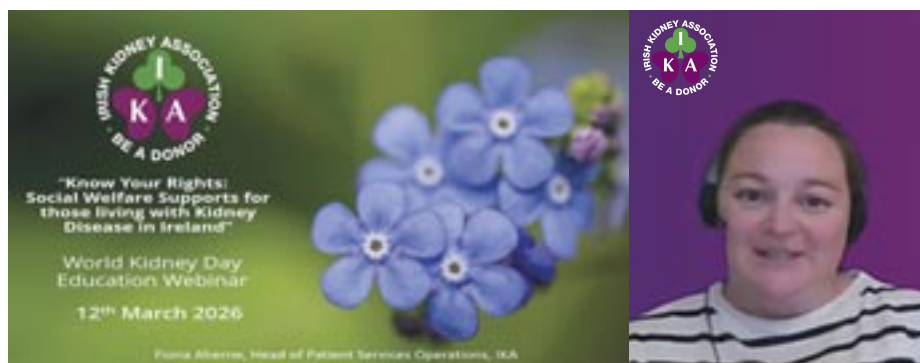
The campaign also gained valuable on-screen exposure on RTÉ's *Fair City*, where posters and collection boxes remained visible on the community centre set in episodes well beyond both our national fundraising day and World Kidney Day.

**IKA WEBINAR**

The IKA hosted a webinar on World Kidney Day which was open to people on dialysis, transplant recipients, family and carers to attend. There were presentations from **Consultant Nephrologist Dr. Claire Kennedy** who spoke about dialysis treatment options, **Fiona Aherne**, who is head of the IKA's Patient Services and Operations and advised on social welfare entitlements for kidney patients.

**IRISH KIDNEY DISEASE DATA SYSTEM**

We also took the opportunity of World Kidney Day to highlight the importance of research and national



collaboration in improving kidney health.

**Professor Austin Stack, Consultant Nephrologist** and Professor of Medicine at the University of Limerick, highlighted progress on the prototype **Irish Kidney Disease Data System**

(IKDDS), a collaborative initiative involving researchers at the **University of Limerick School of Medicine**, clinical teams at **UL Hospitals**, the **HSE**, and other national stakeholders including the IKA.

He stated, "Early detection of chronic kidney disease is crucial to

**World Kidney Day 2026**

**Programme:**

- Housekeeping and Introduction

**Session 1:**

- Dialysis – Treatment Options  
**Dr. Claire Kennedy (St. James' Hospital)**

**Session 2:**

- Know Your Rights: Social Welfare Supports for those living with Kidney Disease in Ireland  
**Fiona Aherne (IKA- Head of Patient Services Operations)**

preventing progression and improving outcomes through timely intervention and effective management. The development of the Irish Kidney Disease Data System, under the governance of the Health Service Executive, brings Ireland to an important juncture and once fully implemented, will mark a significant step forward in strengthening how we understand and manage kidney disease at a national level, and aligning our services with international standards.

"High-quality, reliable data are fundamental to improving outcomes, enabling earlier intervention, and ensuring that health services are designed around population needs rather than reacting at the point of crisis. By enhancing how kidney health is monitored and measured, Ireland has an opportunity to shift from reactive treatment of kidney failure to proactive protection of kidney health."

The IKDDS project aims to improve how kidney disease is identified, monitored and understood at a national level, helping clinicians and researchers build a clearer picture of kidney health in Ireland and ultimately supporting better prevention, treatment and patient outcomes.

**Carol Moore, IKA CEO** said she welcomed the development of the IKDDS "as an essential resource for improving services for patients and we call for the prototype to be guaranteed multi-annual funding to ensure it can



be expanded beyond a prototype”, while the **HSE’s Chief Clinical Officer Colm Henry** said, “The establishment of the prototype Irish Kidney Disease Data System reflects the HSE’s commitment to strengthening chronic disease surveillance and evidence-informed service planning.”

This work on the IKDDS also formed part of the discussion during a webinar organised by the Health Research Board, coordinators of the project and supported by the Irish Kidney Association.

The webinar was open to kidney patients and their families and held on the evening of March 19th, entitled **“What we do with your kidney health data and why”**.

Participants heard from clinicians, researchers and experts responsible for ensuring that patient data is used safely and responsibly while improving understanding of kidney disease and future patient care.

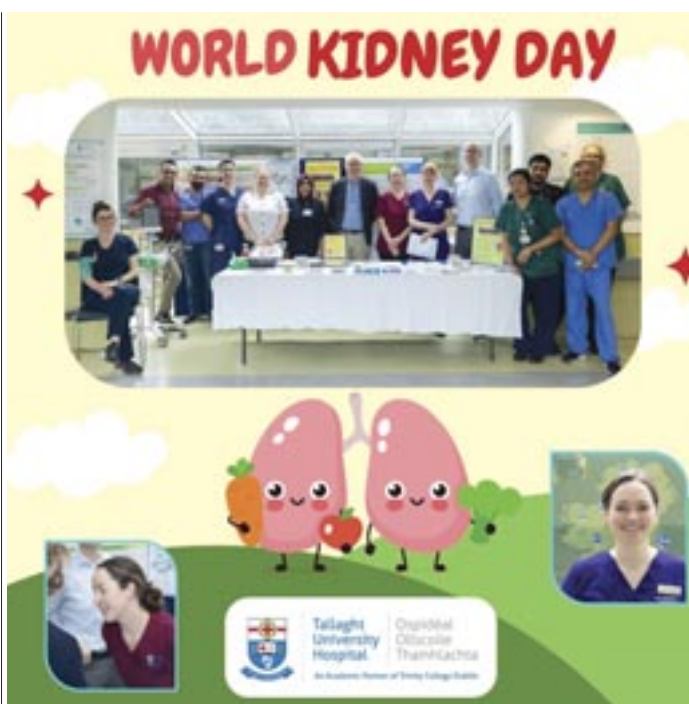
**The IKA’s kidney health education campaign which marked World Kidney Day 2026 demonstrated how powerful awareness can be when individuals and organisations work together – patients, volunteers, healthcare professionals, researchers, pharmacists and national health partners. Through this collective effort, the awareness campaign continues to encourage people across Ireland to take charge of their kidney health.**



For more information/resources  
[www.ika.ie/patientresources/patientguides](http://www.ika.ie/patientresources/patientguides)

# OUT AND ABOUT ON WORLD KIDNEY DAY

Marking World Kidney Day in Mater Misericordiae University Hospital.



Marking World Kidney Day in Tallaght University Hospital.



Nancy Riordan, Martin Fitzgerald, Clare



Tracey Bullman, Helen Fitzgerald, Clare



Noel Barrett, Stacy O'Kane, Clare



Linda Fitzgerald, Doreen Hughes, Clare

# Community support reaches new heights for 2026 World Kidney Day fundraiser

**World Kidney Day** once again demonstrated the incredible strength of the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) community. Across the country, our branches, volunteers and supporters came together to raise awareness and vital funds to help the IKA support kidney patients and raise awareness of organ donation.

In the weeks leading up to our national fundraising drive on **March 7th**, to mark **World Kidney Day**, there was a huge amount of activity behind the scenes. Branches organised volunteers, fundraising locations were confirmed, materials were distributed nationwide, and teams worked tirelessly to ensure everything was in place for the big day.

As with any national campaign of this scale, there were a few last-minute changes and challenges, but the understanding, patience and good humour shown by our volunteers made all the difference.

## A WARM WELCOME ACROSS THE COUNTRY

When the day arrived, we were treated to beautiful spring weather, which created a wonderful atmosphere at a record-breaking **120 shopping locations** around the country. The sunshine encouraged people to stop and chat with our volunteers, fostering conversations about kidney health and organ donation, which made the day even more special for everyone involved.

We were overwhelmed by the support from our Branch volunteers who gave their time so



*Back: Eoin Madden, Chair Galway IKA, Michelle Geraghty, Peter Conboy. Front: Andrew Ishmael, Alceina O'Brien, transplant recipient and organiser, Consultant Nephrologist Dr. Niamh Kieran, Jonny O'Brien (Alceina's brother and owner 'Train Station' Gym, Liz Conboy at the WKD Fitness Fun Day Fundraiser in Galway'*

## By SINEAD McDONALD

generously to sell forget-me-nots, engage with the public, and spread the word about the work we do. Your commitment is what makes this campaign possible year after year.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT IN ACTION

We would also like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the many businesses that facilitated our fundraisers. In particular, we are deeply grateful to ALDI, Dunnes Stores and SuperValu, whose continued support allowed us to reach communities across the country. Their store teams were

welcoming, helpful and supportive of our volunteers throughout the day.

Many other local shops, centres and venues also kindly provided space for our volunteers, and we are very thankful for their support.

Each year, World Kidney Day continues to grow, and this year's campaign was bigger than ever. The level of engagement from Branches, volunteers and the public reflects the growing awareness of kidney health and the importance of organ donation.

## MAKING REAL IMPACT

While we are still finalising the overall fundraising figures, the campaign has been an enormous success, with over €100,000 raised, and donations still rolling in. Every conversation held, leaflet shared and donation received helps support the Irish Kidney Association's work in patient support, advocacy and organ donor awareness.

To everyone who played a part – our Branches, volunteers, supporters and partners – thank you. Your dedication, kindness and community spirit make events like World Kidney Day possible, and help ensure that kidney patients across Ireland continue to receive the support they need.



When the day arrived, we were treated to beautiful spring weather, which created a wonderful atmosphere at a record-breaking **120 shopping locations** around the country.

# OUT AND ABOUT ON WORLD KIDNEY DAY

## Midland Regional Hospital, Tullamore



Staff at the Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore marking World Kidney Day.



Sani George and Jini Jacob, Renal Advanced Nurse practitioners, MRH, Tullamore.



Sani George, Renal Advanced Nurse Practitioner, at the MRH Tullamore.

## Cavan/Monaghan General Hospital



Patricia Connolly, Laura Dillon, Ciara Leddy



Olivia McCormick, Jackie Larkin



Olivia McCormick CNN, Laura Dillon, Renal Dietitian and Paul Donohoe.

# IKA Volunteers in ALDI Stores on World Kidney Day



Sisters Rosie Humpston  
Irish O'Mahoney  
(standing), ALDI,  
Skibbereen, Cork



Marion Crudge, ALDI,  
Skibbereen, Cork



Mary O'Donovan,  
ALDI, Skibbereen, Cork



Liam O'Mahoney, ALDI,  
Skibbereen, Cork



Gary, Marie & Niamh Brogan with Patricia Callaghan,  
ALDI Donegal Town



Jennifer McDermott  
ALDI, Ballybofey  
Donegal



Vincent Callaghan, Gary Brogan  
ALDI Donegal Town



Frank Heslin, ALDI,  
Carrick-on-Shannon



Kathleen McTeigue and  
granddaughter Rachel, ALDI,  
Carrick-on-Shannon



Cathriona Charles, Charles Beirne,  
ALDI, Carrick-on-Shannon



Adrienne Donohoe, Aodhagan Cullen,  
ALDI Cavan



Paul Donohoe, Aodhagan Cullen,  
ALDI Cavan



Aine Geraghty, Marie Costello  
ALDI Limerick



Hanna Vasikin, Patrick O'Donovan, Declan McCarthy, Marina Torrens,  
ALDI Newcastle West



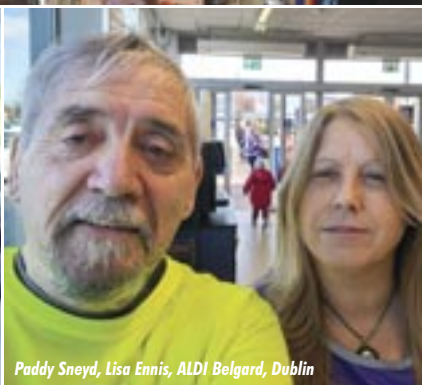
Aine Geraghty, Denis O'Grady, Dave  
Geraghty, ALDI Limerick



Bernie Hopper, Lorna O'Leary, Lisa Fitzgerald, ALDI Belgard, Dublin



Declan McKenna, Brid O'Sullivan,  
ALDI Belgard, Dublin



Paddy Sneyd, Lisa Ennis, ALDI Belgard, Dublin



Claire & Hannah Kelly,  
ALDI Terenure, Dublin



Deirdre & Bernie Watters,  
ALDI Terenure, Dublin



Jackie Lyons, Trudi Mulreany,  
ALDI Terenure, Dublin



Kevin & Noreen Nuding,  
ALDI Terenure, Dublin



Gabriel Lugares, Arlene Hughes, Girley Lugares,  
Sarah Granmagnat, ALDI Newlands Cross, Dublin

# IKA Volunteers in ALDI Stores on World Kidney Day



Emily & Linda Brennan,  
ALDI Hebron Road,  
Kilkenny



Mary B Lacey, Mary Rooney,  
ALDI Hebron Road, Kilkenny



Sarah Gallagher, Leah Gillespie,  
ALDI Hebron Road, Kilkenny



Shem Carrigan, Mike Holland  
ALDI Hebron Road, Kilkenny



Fiona O'Neill, David O'Neill,  
ALDI Tramore, Waterford



Debbie Lanigan, Michael Lanigan,  
ALDI Tramore, Waterford



Majella Hackett, Mark Frisby  
ALDI Tramore, Waterford



Susan Cowman, Michael Galloway  
ALDI Tramore, Waterford



Ward Frisby, ALDI Tramore,  
Waterford



Roseanne & Lilly Magee, ALDI Ferrybank,  
Waterford



Marguerite McGee,  
Ann Ennis,  
ALDI Tramore,  
Waterford



Tom & Chris O'Neill, ALDI Dungarvan, Waterford



Frances & Denis Moynihan,  
ALDI Dungarvan, Waterford



Betty Daly, Carmel O'Lone  
ALDI Dungarvan, Waterford



Lorna Jane Murray,  
ALDI Dungarvan, Waterford



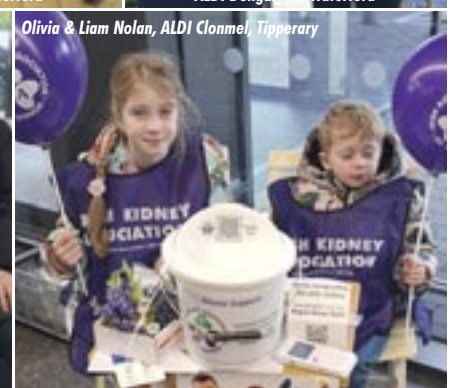
Patricia Griffin, Ciarán Morrissey  
ALDI Dungarvan, Waterford



Catherine O'Malley, Mary Ryan,  
ALDI Clonmel, Tipperary



Mary O'Gorman, Jean Meddick  
ALDI Clonmel, Tipperary



Olivia & Liam Nolan, ALDI Clonmel, Tipperary



Sharon & Meta O'Donovan  
ALDI Clonmel, Tipperary



Sophie & Caroline Hogan,  
ALDI, Nenagh, Tipperary



Ivan, Sam & Chloe Kinahan, ALDI,  
Bayside Square West, Dublin



James & Eijiro, ALDI, Bayside Square West,  
Dublin



Joyce & Ron Grainger, ALDI, Blanchardstown  
Shopping Centre, Dublin

# IKA Volunteers in ALDI Stores on World Kidney Day



Caroline Redmond, Bernie C Olgan, ALDI, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford



Stefanie & Aoife Honan, ALDI, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford



Dora Kent, Paul Connick, ALDI, New Ross, Co. Wexford



Mary Culleton, Frank Curtis, Marion Young, ALDI, New Ross, Co. Wexford



Seamus Darcy, Annette Foley, ALDI, New Ross, Co. Wexford



Mairead O'Brien McCauliff, Janine Kenny Murphy, ALDI, Gorey, Co. Wexford



Melissa Lawlor, Liam Buttle, Richard Dunne, ALDI, Gorey, Co. Wexford



Trish Kelly and daughter, Liam Buttle, ALDI, Gorey, Co. Wexford



Rory Carry, ALDI, Newtown Road, Wexford



Stefan & Killian Whelan, ALDI, Trinity Street, Wexford



Walter Kent, Bridget Cullen, ALDI, Trinity Street, Wexford



Trish & John Boyce, ALDI, Trinity Street, Wexford



Martin, ALDI Sligo Deputy Store Manager, Geraldine McHugh, front: Aoidhin & Rebecca



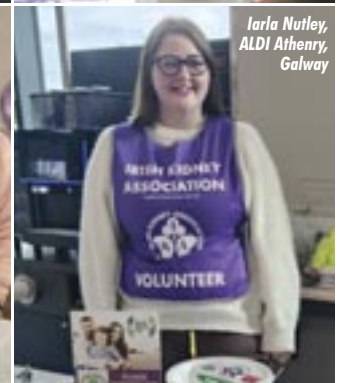
Eileen Nolan and Sinead, accept a donation from customer, ALDI Sligo



Anna Mitchell Kenny, Lilian & Sophie, ALDI Sligo



Aidan & Deirdre Madden, ALDI Athenry, Galway



Iarla Nutley, ALDI Athenry, Galway



Niall Madden, ALDI Athenry, Galway



Eoin Madden, ALDI Athenry, Galway



Anne-Marie Kelly, Paul Greaney, ALDI Mountbellew, Galway



Liz Conboy, Rhona Black, ALDI Mountbellew, Galway



Peter & Liz Conboy, ALDI Mountbellew, Galway



Peadar O hici, ALDI Westside Galway

# IKA Volunteers in ALDI Stores on World Kidney Day



Alceina O'Brien, Carmel Moran, ALDI Loughrea, Galway



Alceina O'Brien, Marie Duane, Laura Duane, ALDI Loughrea, Galway



Tommy O'Brien, ALDI Loughrea, Galway



Ruth McGann, Dave McDonnell, ALDI Loughrea, Galway



Simon Mayhew, ALDI Loughrea, Galway



Breda Flanagan, Collette O'Reilly, ALDI Portlaois, Laois



Mary Slevin, ALDI Portlaois, Laois



Ashling Flanagan, ALDI Portlaois, Laois



Fiona McEvoy, Bernie Binions, ALDI Portlaois



Andrew Gallagher, John Brennan, ALDI Dundalk, Co. Louth



Margaret Marrett, Tommy Marrett, ALDI, Ardee, Co. Louth



Pat O'Donoghue, ALDI, Ardee, Co. Louth



Ciara McMenamon and grandchildren Robyn Mahon, Sarah McMenamon, ALDI Mell, Drogheda, Co. Louth



Lisa Dalton, Orla Stewart, ALDI, Donore Road, Drogheda, Co. Louth



Eddie Flood, ALDI Mullingar, Westmeath



Elizabeth McGinn, Vanessa Garrioch, ALDI, Sallynoggin, Dublin



Marie Lynch and daughter Carla, ALDI, Bray, Co. Wicklow



Una Whelan, ALDI, Bray, Co. Wicklow



Jacqueline Burke, Helen Deane, ALDI Sallynoggin, Dublin.



Patricia Delehanly, ALDI Bray, Co. Wicklow



Philip Duane, Anne Sadlier, ALDI, Sallynoggin, Dublin



Theresa Looney, ALDI Kerry



Amanda & Tomás O'Dowd, Elsie Moore, ALDI Kerry



Clodagh O'Shea, Caitriona Shanahan, ALDI Kerry

# IKA Volunteers in Dunnes Stores on World Kidney Day



Ann Nolan, Martin Heraty, Dunnes Longford Town



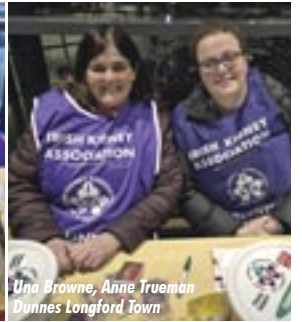
Elaine McGrath Heslin, Carmel Donlon, Dunnes Longford Town



James Farrell, Deirdre Heslin, Dunnes Longford Town



John Opabola, Carmel Donlon, Dunnes Longford Town



Una Browne, Anne Trueman, Dunnes Longford Town



Anna-Marie McHale, Liz Gaffney, Tomás Gilmartin, Dunnes Ballina, Mayo



Jack Gilmartin, Dunnes Ballina, Mayo



Leah Cleary, Heidi Kilcullen, Lorraine Kilcullen, Dervilla Gilmartin, Kate Holmes, Eabha McHale, Dunnes Ballina, Mayo



Michael Walsh and Sile McHale, Dunnes Knocknacarra, Galway



Eoin Ryan, Michael Walsh, Dunnes Knocknacarra, Galway



Carol Carolyn, Michelle Geraghty, Dunnes Knocknacarra, Galway



Diane Walsh, Jean Murray, Dunnes Knocknacarra, Galway



Jennifer Silke, Andrew Ishmael, Dunnes Terryland, Galway



Elaine Fitzgerald, Samantha Lee, Dunnes Terryland, Galway



Andrew Ishmael, Georgina Lee, Dunnes Terryland, Galway



Miranda & Gabbie in Dunnes Cavan



Maura Quigley, Pat Hegarty, Dunnes Roscommon Town



Niamh Dolan, Vincent Finan, Dunnes Roscommon Town



Michael Dolan, Tomas Leach, Dunnes Roscommon Town



Bridget Langton, Rodel Vargas, Dunnes MacDonagh, Kilkenny



Angela Kirwan, Joseph Molloy, Dunnes Portlaoise, Co. Laois



Debbie Sheehy, Glenn Cooper, James Riordan, Lisa Leamy, Ross Curran, Dunnes Jetland, Limerick



Aidan McMenam and son Charlie, Dunnes Scotch Hill, Drogheda, Louth



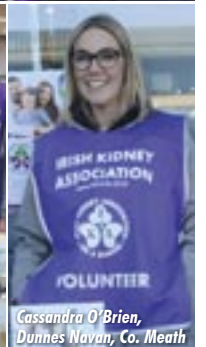
Aoife Adams, Dunnes Marshes, Dundalk, Louth



Brendan O'Connor, Pauline McManus, Dunnes Ashbourne, Co. Meath



John McGovern, St. Mary's TY Students, Brady Patterson, Tadgh Carolan at Dunnes Town Centre, Drogheda, Louth



Cassandra O'Brien, Dunnes Navan, Co. Meath



Cliff Wayenberg, Dunnes Hoey's Lane, Dundalk, Louth



Samantha O'Reilly, daughter Ella Hewitt, Dunnes Southgate, Drogheda, Louth



Brian McHugh, Aoibhin & Pearl with Dunnes sales assistant Sean, Sligo



Patricia Falla, Ita McMorrow Leyden, Dunnes Sligo



Jack Cunhiffe, Peter Dunphy, Dunnes Irishtown, Westmeath



Carrie Minagh, Elaine & Sinead Dowling, Dunnes Athlone, Westmeath

# IKA Volunteers in Dunnes Stores on World Kidney Day



# IKA Volunteers in SuperValu Stores on World Kidney Day



# IKA Volunteers in Fairgreen Shopping Centre, Carlow



# Organ Donation and Transplantation in 2025



By **COLIN WHITE**  
National Advocacy Manager

From the outset, we wish to express our deepest gratitude to organ donors and their families, whose extraordinary generosity in the most difficult of circumstances continues to give the gift of life to others.



Their selfless decisions transform lives and reflect the very best of human compassion. We also acknowledge the dedication of transplant coordinators, surgeons, and all healthcare professionals who work tirelessly to make transplantation possible.

Regrettably, 2025 saw a decline in donation and transplant activity. As a patient representative body, the Irish Kidney Association recognises that this

decline has profound implications for the growing number of people in Ireland living with organ failure and their families (Table 1).

As outlined in the Autumn/Winter 2025 edition of this magazine, when comparing activity to other countries, there are opportunities for growth in Ireland. For example, the average age of deceased organ donors in many European countries is significantly higher than in Ireland.

**TABLE 1: Organ Donation & Transplantation Activity in Ireland 2021-2025**

Organ Donation and Transplantation Activity in Ireland		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	5-year average Pre-pandemic 2015-2019
Deceased Organ Donors		65	86	95	84	65	85
Transplantation from Deceased Donors	Kidney	104	130	159	145	105	128
	Liver	35	51	46	53	34	61
	Lung(s)	20	18	19	15	16	35
	Heart	10	10	5	16	9	16
	Pancreas	2	8	6	4	5	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>171</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>242</b>
Kidney Transplants from Living Donation		35	33	30	30	29	40
<b>TOTAL TRANSPLANTS</b>		<b>206</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>282</b>



# Matthew's Recipe for Success

## Aspiring Chef Gets Second Chance at Life



21-year-old Matthew Holland from Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, is celebrating his restoration to good health after receiving a kidney donated for a second time during Christmas week 2025 which he describes as giving him “a new lease of life”.

*Matthew Holland taken in summer 2025 prior to his second transplant*

The youngest of six siblings, Matthew was just eight-years-old when he learned he had been born with only one kidney, which was slowly failing. In February 2015, aged just 10, he underwent his first kidney transplant without the need for dialysis. He and his parents, Jackie and Michael, remain deeply grateful to the family of his deceased donor, whose gift allowed Matthew to enjoy much of his early to mid-adolescence in good health.

In 2019, aged 14, he travelled to Switzerland to take part in a TACKERS ski camp alongside other young transplant recipients from all over the world – an experience he describes as both memorable and empowering.

His transplanted kidney continued to thrive until he was sixteen after which its function began to decline.

He began dialysis treatment in July 2024 which he attended at University Hospital Limerick, undergoing four hours of treatment, three days a week, while awaiting a suitable kidney donor. Often exhausted, he was drifting off to sleep on the sofa as he and his sister watched a movie together during Christmas week when his phone rang. It was a call from Beaumont Hospital asking him to make his way to Dublin for a kidney transplant!

After a year and a half on dialysis the call marked the end of a long and gruelling wait and the beginning of a new chapter in his life. Now, with renewed health, he is making plans for his future and hopes to



**Pictured (L-R): Michael Holland, Tipperary IKA; Gerri Cantwell, TUSLA; Matthew Holland, Tipperary IKA and kidney transplant recipient; Triona Collins, Tipperary County Council (TCC); Lorraine Keeshan, TCC; Mary Grace, TUSLA, Lisa McGeaney, TUSLA, and James Dodd, Tipperary IKA.**

pursue his ambition of becoming a chef.

*"It's given me a whole new outlook on life," Matthew said. "I'm just so grateful for the chance to move forward and follow my dreams."*

While still on dialysis before his second transplant Matthew was nominated by his Branch in Tipperary as their representative on the IKA's National Member Forum. The Forum was created to unite patient voices across Ireland to ensure patient experiences directly shape the future of the IKA.

He recently accepted a donation on behalf of the Tipperary Branch of the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) at the Civic Offices in Nenagh.

The funds – €371 raised last December by the Canteen Carollers, a group of carol singers made up of TUSLA and Tipperary County Council staff.

Speaking at the cheque presentation, Matthew reflected on his health journey and the importance of organ donor awareness and expressed his profound gratitude to the families of his two kidney donors who in death gave him renewed life.

He thanked the Canteen Carollers for their donation to the IKA describing the charity as one that *"supported my family along my kidney journey and other kidney patients and their families across Ireland."*



**"It's given me a whole new outlook on life," Matthew said. "I'm just so grateful for the chance to move forward and follow my dreams."**



**Matthew as a young child**



**Matthew at Tackers Ski Camp, 2019**



**Matthew with The Camper Award at Tackers Ski Camp**

# ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK



SATURDAY MAY 16TH – SATURDAY MAY 23RD

Organ Donor Awareness Week returns from May 16th - 23rd, led by the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) in association with HSE Organ Donation Transplant Ireland (ODTI).

Since the introduction of the soft Opt-out register in June 2025, it remains just as important for people to share their wishes with their loved ones. Families are still consulted before organ donation proceeds, except where a person has formally recorded their decision on the Opt-out register. Conversation remains essential, particularly as only about 1% of deaths occur in circumstances where organ donation is medically possible.

The annual campaign theme continues to be **“DON'T LEAVE YOUR LOVED ONES IN DOUBT – Share Your Wishes about Organ Donation”**, highlighting the importance of letting family members know your decision.

An Post will play an important role once more, with organ donor cards available in 295 of its busiest post offices nationwide and campaign posters appearing on large digital display screens at 300 locations with high footfall. The campaign will also be promoted through its internal employee newsletter and on its digital App, POST PEOPLE, which is aimed at internal and external partners, colleagues, vendors and contractors of An Post.

To mark the week, the iconic General Post Office (GPO) will be illuminated in green – the international colour of organ donation.

Meanwhile, An Post's expansive reception area at Dublin's tallest office building, the EXO Building – its new headquarters on the Dublin

Allsún Henderson, double lung and kidney transplant recipient at the launch of ODAW in the Mansion House in 2025.



By GWEN O'DONOGHUE

quays – will also shine green. Visible to passing traffic and located beside the 3Arena, the building's digital totem screen (lollipop sign) will display a dedicated **'Organ Donors Save Lives'** message, helping to raise awareness across the busy docklands.

We are also delighted to have the support of **Dublin City Council**, which will illuminate its Civic Offices at Wood Quay, the North City Operations Depot in Ballymun, and the historic Mansion House in green during Donor Week.

The Council will also support the campaign internally through its staff newsletter and by making campaign posters and organ donor cards available across a number of locations and organ donor awareness activity in their canteens.

Galway City Council has also confirmed that the Spanish Arch and City Hall will turn green for the week to support the campaign.

The **HSE** will support the campaign by sharing Organ Donor Awareness Week messaging through its partner pack, which is distributed



to 3,000 stakeholders, and through its internal staff newsletter, which reaches a considerably larger audience.

The Association is pleased to have the continued support of the **Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU)** and many pharmacy chains nationwide. The campaign poster will be included in the May issue of the *IPU Review*, accompanied by an article highlighting the campaign, while campaign messaging will also appear on digital screens in many community pharmacies across the country.

**Bauer Media Outdoor** (previously *Clear Channel*), which has supported the campaign for several years, will once again sponsor some outdoor poster sites nationwide.

Supporters might also spot the campaign poster on **RTÉ's Fair City**, which has regularly helped highlight the campaign around the time of Donor Week.

The **campaign poster**, available in four languages including versions in Irish, Polish and Yoruba, will again be distributed to our community partners. The familiar purple campaign poster is available in print while a new green poster has been introduced this year for use online. Both posters can be downloaded, along with other campaign resources and information, at [www.ika.ie/donorweek](http://www.ika.ie/donorweek)



**SCAN FOR AN ORGAN DONOR CARD**

The organ donor card remains a useful ice breaker to start a conversation about organ donation and a powerful reminder and symbol

**HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK?**

Organ Donor Awareness Week is all about encouraging a national conversation about organ donation. The goal is to get families in every corner of the country, sharing their wishes about organ donation.

The personal touch is what will make a real difference. We are asking you to contact your local Branch of the IKA to offer a few hours of your time during the Week to assist promoting the importance of organ donation in your local community.

This may involve supporting an information stand in a local shopping centre, arranging for copies of the campaign poster to be put up in your local community or arranging to deliver organ donor cards to outlets in your local community or place of work. It can also include arranging to share the organ donation message at a local community group meeting, or spreading the word on social media. And don't forget to proudly wear your Forget-Me-Not flower emblem – the symbol of transplantation – to show your support and start conversations wherever you go.

Resources to support awareness are available at:  
**[www.ika.ie/donorweek/resources](http://www.ika.ie/donorweek/resources)**

You can also tag the Irish Kidney Association when doing social media posts:

@IrishKidneyAssociation @IrishKidneyA  
 irishkidneyassociation

**CAMPAIGN HASHTAGS:**

**#LeaveNoDoubt, #ShareYourWishes and #DonorWeek26**

**Organ Donor Awareness Week is an opportunity to make a difference. Every organ donor card and every conversation gives hope to those waiting for "the call" to receive the Gift of Life.**

of your willingness to give the gift of life. The QR code on the poster links directly to the IKA webpage where

people can request a physical organ donor card or download a digital version to their Digital Wallet.



Carol Moore, IKA (centre right) with transplant recipients and their families at the national launch in 2025.

“When it’s bad, it can be debilitating”



# Understanding Pruritus: The skin itching condition affecting many dialysis patients

Chronic Kidney Disease-Associated Pruritus (CKD-aP), previously known as uremic pruritus, is a common but often overlooked skin condition affecting people on dialysis. For many, this itching is far more than a simple irritation - it can disrupt sleep, affect daily activities, lead to skin damage and infections, cause missed dialysis sessions, and in extreme cases, contribute to patients stopping dialysis altogether.



**DR LISA MELLON**  
Lecturer, School of Population Health, Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland

Unlike other symptoms, there is no single standard way to measure how severe CKD-aP is, which makes it difficult for healthcare teams to fully understand how widespread it is or what treatments work best. Despite strong research evidence showing that antihistamines offer very little relief for CKD-aP, 93% of nephrologists continue to prescribe them as the first line of treatment.

The good news is that newer, targeted treatments have recently been approved for use in Ireland. To make sure patient voices guide care, we set out to better understand the real-life experience of CKD-aP – how often it happens, how severe it is, what makes it worse, and what treatments people actually use.

## WHAT IRISH PATIENTS TOLD US

We surveyed 689 dialysis patients across Ireland using the 5-D Itch Scale. Itching was most commonly felt on:

- Trunk: 73%
- Arms: 53%
- Thighs/legs: 50%
- Face and scalp: 45%

Patients described a significant impact on both physical and emotional wellbeing, with many reporting frustration, exhaustion, embarrassment, and disrupted sleep. Treatment effectiveness varied widely, and many felt their concerns were not always addressed.

# IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING WITH ITCHING, YOU'RE NOT ALONE



Our findings show that 66% of patients experience moderate to severe CKD-aP – yet many never mention it to their healthcare team. Itching is not “just part of dialysis” and should never be something you simply endure.

If you experience persistent or severe itching:

- Ask your dialysis team for a treatment review.
- You may be eligible for newer medications designed specifically for CKD-aP.
- An individualised treatment plan can help you regain comfort and quality of life.

You don't have to suffer in silence. Help is available, and your symptoms matter.

## PATIENT VOICES

*“There have been times where I would have an itchy episode and I would cause myself to bleed, and it would lead to scarring on my thighs, which is still there.”*  
(Female, PD)

*“It was a very dark and difficult time for both me and my family. I sincerely hope it never returns.”*  
(Male, in-centre HD)

*“Without anti-epileptic drugs (I am not epileptic) it was chronic and unbearable. Gabapentin has been a lifesaver...but the itching is still constant. Some nights are agony. Hell!!!”*  
(Male, in-centre HD)

*“It torments me from time to time, but I don't mention it to anyone.”*  
(Female, in-centre HD)

## Addressing CKD-aP itching in Irish dialysis patients

Itching reported in more than

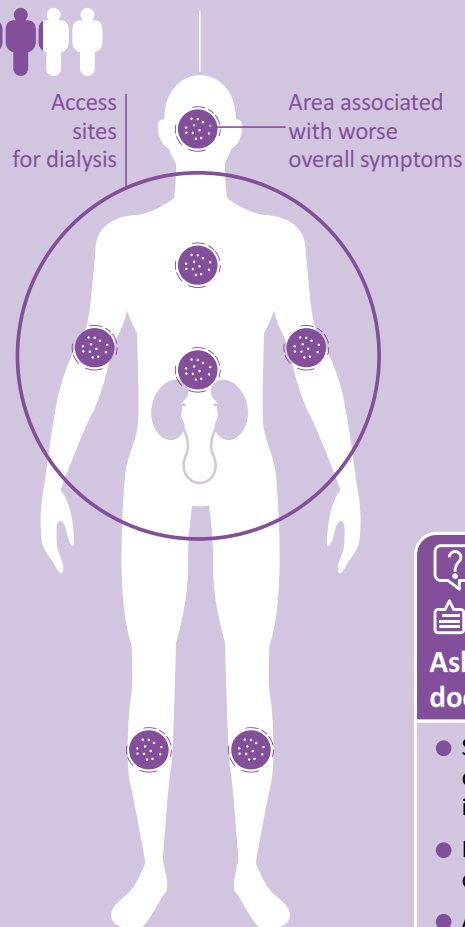
**3 in 5**

of 689 Irish dialysis patients surveyed

**2 in 3**

had moderate to severe itching

Areas affected by itching



Itching affects:



Quality of life



Sleep



Wellbeing



Treatment:

- Creams and antihistamines
- Phosphate-removing drugs
- Anti-seizure drugs
- **Difelikefalin: specifically for dialysis-related itching**



Ask your doctor for:

- Solutions to dialysis-related itching
- Individualised care
- A medication review

CKD-aP=Chronic Kidney Disease Associated Pruritus

The Irish Kidney Association gratefully acknowledges the support of CSL Vifor, in funding this research. They had no role in the design, conduct, or reporting of the research.

# COMMUNITY IN ACTION



Greystar volunteers at the NKSC.

## Corporate Volunteer Days at the National Kidney Support Centre

Teams from Vifor Pharma, Greystar and Irish Life rolled up their sleeves to revitalise the National Kidney Support Centre, proving the power of teamwork, compassion, and corporate social responsibility.

By  
**SARAH BUCHANAN**

We are proud to recognise and celebrate the outstanding work of our corporate volunteers who generously gave their time and energy to support the renovation and future-proofing of our National Kidney Support Centre (NKSC) over several on-site volunteer days.

We were incredibly fortunate that three companies stepped forward, eager to support this very worthwhile cause and give back to the IKA community.

Volunteers from Vifor Pharma, Greystar and Irish Life joined us over several months, bringing enthusiasm, teamwork and a

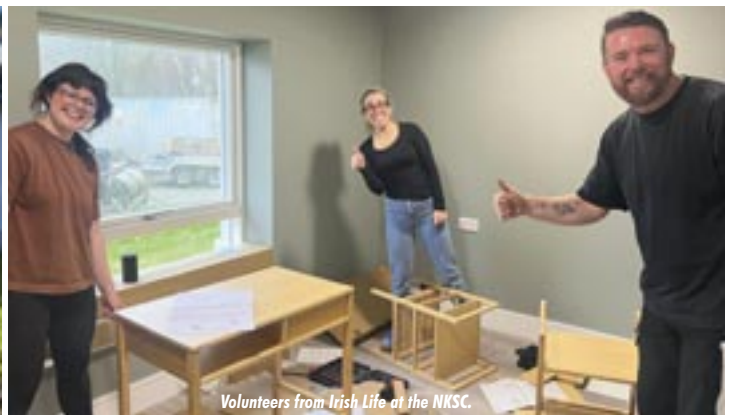
genuine desire to make a difference. As part of their Corporate Social Responsibility commitments, each company proudly supports meaningful community initiatives such as the NKSC.

### MAKING AN IMPACT

Across three separate Volunteer Days, approximately 30 volunteers from the three companies rolled up their sleeves and took on a wide variety of tasks. They cleared out sheds and storage containers, filling large skips, and assembling flat-pack furniture (a team-building exercise in itself!). Outside, they cut hedges, created compost areas, picked up



Volunteers from Vifor Pharma at the NKSC.



Volunteers from Irish Life at the NKSC.



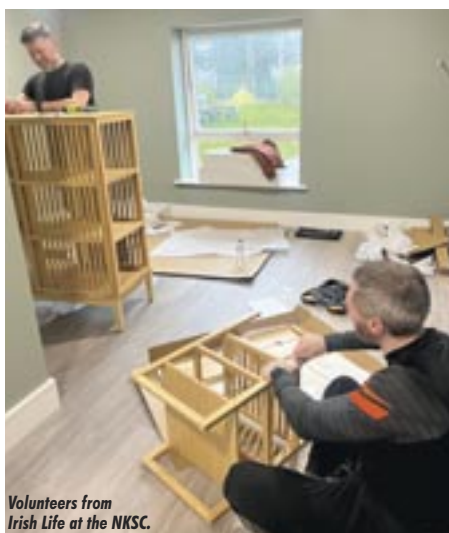
Volunteers from Greystar at the NKSC.



Volunteers from Irish Life at the NKSC.



Volunteers from Greystar at the NKSC.



Volunteers from Irish Life at the NKSC.

little bit of craic along the way.

The impact of their efforts has been truly transformative. With budget constraints, limited manpower and time pressures, this project simply would not have taken shape as it did without the support of these dedicated volunteers. They brought not only practical help, but fresh energy and positivity to the NKSC.

**OUR THANKS**

On behalf of the IKA community,

we extend our heartfelt thanks to every volunteer who contributed. Your time, dedication, kindness, and hard work has helped build, not just improved facilities for kidney patients and their families, but the very fabric of our community. Community supporting community, at its very best.

If you or your company would like to support IKA projects such as the NKSC, please contact us at [volunteer@ika.ie](mailto:volunteer@ika.ie) to learn more about how you can get involved.

litter, cut back overgrown branches, and even uncovered pathways that had long been hidden. No job was too big or too small.

Beyond the physical transformation of the Centre itself, something equally important was happening. These Volunteer Days offer teams the chance to step away from the office environment, and connect with colleagues in a different setting. For many remote workers, it's also an opportunity to meet and catch-up in person.

There was plenty of teamwork, many cups of tea, and more than a



Volunteers from Greystar at the NKSC.

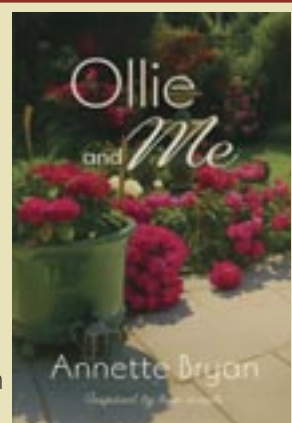
# Ollie and Me

## A Story of Love, Resilience and Organ Donation

**Ollie and Me**, a fictional memoir inspired by true events, was launched on December 3rd, 2025 by broadcaster Joe Duffy and South Dublin Mayor Pamela Kearns. It was standing room only at the event with the room overflowing due to the number of people attending.

Written by **Annette Bryan (Ní Feighery)**, the story follows a young Dublin man's journey through kidney failure, the gift of a lifesaving transplant, and his return to sport – including representing Ireland at the World Transplant Games and winning multiple medals. At its core is a love story strengthened by courage, hope, and unwavering support.

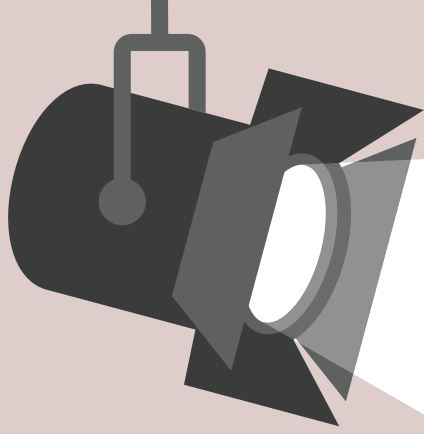
The book highlights the profound impact of organ donation. One donor's generosity not only transformed his life but allowed him to thrive, compete, and look to the future with renewed possibility. Stories like this help shine a light on the difference donors and their families make in communities across Ireland.



Prof. George Mellotte, Annette Bryan (Ní Feighery), and Paul Bryan.

Annette, originally from Crumlin and now living in Templeogue, describes the book as her most personal work – a tribute to resilience and to the life-changing power of transplantation.

The book is available from [buythebook.ie](http://buythebook.ie) and [amazon.ie](http://amazon.ie).



# SPOTLIGHT ON... VOLUNTEER

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

**Debbie Sheehy** has been a dedicated and inspiring presence within the Limerick Branch of the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) for the past 18 months. Through her lived experience, kindness, and genuine desire to support others, Debbie has played an instrumental role, alongside fellow newly appointed Branch officers, in reactivating and revitalising the local Branch.

As Chairperson, Debbie has helped foster a welcoming and supportive environment where members feel heard, valued, and encouraged to connect. Her commitment to advocacy and community has also recently led her to represent the Limerick Branch on the IKA Member Forum, further strengthening the voice of the Limerick Branch within the wider organisation.

Debbie's passion for helping others and her belief in the power of shared experience continue to make a meaningful difference within the IKA community.



# Debbie Sheehy

## LIMERICK BRANCH

**Q. Is volunteering important to you, and if it is, why?**

**A.** Yes, volunteering is important to me. Having lived with kidney disease from a young age, including time on dialysis and receiving a kidney transplant, I understand how important support and understanding can be. Volunteering allows me to give something back and hopefully make the journey a little easier for someone else.

**Q. Why did you choose to volunteer with the IKA?**

**A.** The IKA has always been close to my heart because of my own experience with kidney disease. I wanted to use my experience to help support others, raise awareness, and contribute to a community that supports people living with kidney disease and their families.

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

**A.** After receiving my wonderful transplant, I wanted to give something back. The Limerick Branch had not been active since COVID, and I decided to attend a meeting about reviving it. We were asked if we would help reignite it. Together with James

Riordan as Secretary and Glenn Cooper as Treasurer, we worked to get the Branch running again and support people locally affected by kidney disease. It's still early days, but little by little we are trying to build a supportive community within the Branch in Limerick.

**Q. What time commitment does it demand of you?**

**A.** It can vary depending on what is happening at the time. There may be meetings, fundraising events, awareness campaigns, or community activities. I try to give whatever time I can because the work of the IKA is so important.

**Q. In what ways have you found volunteering with the IKA rewarding or challenging?**

**A.** The most rewarding part is meeting people who are going through similar experiences and being able to offer support or understanding. It can be challenging at times because kidney disease affects so many lives, sometimes you wish you could do more for people, but that also motivates me to continue the work we do.



*Debbie with Ross and Audrey Curtin  
at Cube Printing Coffee Morning.*



Róisín Carr and Debbie Sheehy at the 'Gift of Life' Ball in 2024.

**Q. Can you share a memorable experience or moment that has had a significant impact on you?**

**A.** There have been a lot of memorable moments in the last 12 months, it's hard to pick one in particular, but I am blown away with how generous people can be with their time and money when we have a fundraiser. I had a lady who thanked me after a social event we ran in January, she said: "she really needed it". That really was heartwarming.

**Q. What advice would you give someone considering volunteering with the IKA?**

**A.** I would encourage anyone to get involved. Volunteering is a great way to give back, meet wonderful people, and make a real difference in the lives of those affected by kidney disease. I wouldn't be discouraged if you have very limited time or that. I know we are delighted in the Branch when anybody volunteers to do anything, however big or small. It can make an impact.



Debbie and Aine Geraghty Fundraising For WKD 2026.



Darren Cawley, Aoife Smith and Dr. Lisa Mellon.

# Reflections on Speaking at the Royal College of Surgeons

It was a pleasure to present at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) on the psychological impact of living with chronic kidney disease. I value every opportunity to highlight the emotional and mental challenges faced by so many individuals navigating long-term illness, and it was encouraging to see such genuine interest from the medical students in the room.

I was grateful for the invitation from Dr. Lisa Mellon, Lecturer in Health Psychology at RCSI, whose commitment to integrating lived experience and psychological insight into medical education is

invaluable.

It was also lovely to present alongside Darren Cawley, who shared his lifelong experience as a kidney patient. His story of resilience was inspiring and offered students a powerful first-hand perspective on life with renal disease.

Engaging with future doctors in this way reinforces the importance of empathy, understanding, and patient-centred care. I'm thankful to Lisa for creating this space and to the students for their thoughtful engagement.

**AOIFE SMITH**



Angeline Cooke



# The Gift

## A tribute art exhibition to Angeline

The last remaining artworks by the late and gifted Galway painter **Angeline Cooke** were shown at the Coole Gallery in Gort, Co. Galway over the August Bank Holiday weekend last year.

'The Gift' exhibition celebrated Angeline's luminous talent, and the €4,000 raised from the sale of her paintings was divided equally between the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) and the Strange Boat Donor Foundation's 'Circle of Life' National Organ Donor Commemorative Garden in Salthill, Galway.

**A** founding member of the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) in 1978, Angeline Cooke, from Maunsells Road in Galway, underwent a kidney transplant in 1996. The retired schoolteacher enjoyed the successful longevity of this transplant for over 25 years before returning to dialysis treatment. She passed away suddenly in March 2023. Together with her late husband Bernard, who passed away in 2012, they committed their voluntary life's work to the IKA's Galway Branch.

Angeline had a passion for music and was a gifted painter. Her watercolours were often publicly exhibited and are proudly hung in many homes. She encouraged dialysis patients to take up art.

The exhibition was hosted by Angeline's niece and fellow artist Toni O'Donovan and her artist husband Sean O'Donovan.



**Frank Cooke (brother of the late Bernard), Marie & Peadar O'Hici, Galway IKA.**

Speaking before the event, Toni said: "We are so honoured to be able to host this exhibition in our own studio. It means the world for us to be able to do this for Angeline and Bernard – this is what she would have wanted us to do with all of her paintings. We truly hope we can sell her paintings to raise money for her beloved charities."

**Eithne Cooke, Bernie Coyne, Frank Cooke, Mary Ryan, John Connolly (Art Club with Angeline), Anne-Marie Kelly, Sean & Toni O'Donovan (Coole Gallery), Alceina O'Brien, Peadar O'Hici.**





Bernie Glynn, Toni O'Donovan.

Eoin Madden, Chairperson of the Galway Branch of the IKA said: "Angeline is one of the greats. The work that she and Bernard did for kidney patients across Ireland is immeasurable. They both dedicated themselves to improving facilities, be it hospital equipment, haemodialysis transport arrangements,

respite holidays, or patient aid. They never stopped fundraising to achieve these goals. Even after Bernard's passing, Angeline was an active member here in the local Branch. She never missed a Branch meeting right up until her death."

Martina Goggin, founder of the Strange Boat Donor Foundation and creator of the beloved 'Circle of Life' Garden in Salthill, along with her husband Denis said: "We are honoured that some of the proceeds from the exhibition in Gort of Angeline's artwork will help with the ongoing maintenance and

development of the 'Circle of Life' Garden, a place very dear to Angeline. Since its creation, Angeline supported the garden in every way possible and we were delighted to honour her by installing a seat in her memory at the Garden's 10th Anniversary event last year."

A special visitor to the exhibition was Bernie Glynn. Bernie, from Ballylee, near Gort is still enjoying the successful longevity of the kidney transplant she received in March 1979, making her the longest deceased donor kidney transplant recipient in Ireland.



## Future-proofing the IKA: Your Vote Matters

As you know, work is well underway to future-proof the Irish Kidney Association (IKA). The project aims to strengthen the patient voice of the IKA, comply with best practice in governance, and ensure our Board can continue to lead the IKA effectively. All of this is underpinned by our mission to support, educate, and advocate for people affected or likely to be affected by end-stage kidney disease.

Establishing the Member Forum was the first step and is already making an impact. The next step is creating a revised Board structure to meet our legally required governance obligations. You can read more about the **Board's restructuring proposal** in the Autumn/Winter edition of *SUPPORT*.

At our **AGM** on **Saturday, July 4th**, members will vote on constitutional changes to ensure the IKA continues to be a strong

and effective voice for patients. *These changes include:*

- Enshrining the Member Forum into our Constitution to safeguard its status within the IKA
- Approving the changes to the structure of our Board as outlined in the Autumn/Winter edition of *SUPPORT* and
- Approving other minor changes to bring our Constitution more in line with the Model Constitution recommended by the Charities Regulator, and to ensure it accurately reflects how we operate today. One change, for example, will allow members to join the IKA online without the need to post a form to Donor House.

We'll be sharing further details about the changes on our website and social media channels in the coming months so please follow us to stay up to date. If you have any questions, please contact **michelle.graghty@ika.ie**.



### The Irish Kidney Association **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

will take place on  
**Saturday 4th July 2026.**  
in **The Aspect Hotel**  
Nangor Road, Park West,  
Dublin 12, D12 F2V4.

Keep an eye on our social media channels for further details, including information on how you can register in advance.



# When change finds us

## The emotional and mental demands of adjusting to illness



**By AOIFE SMITH**  
COORDINATOR OF  
COUNSELLING SERVICES

Change is one of the few certainties in life, yet for many of us it can be one of the hardest things we have to navigate. We often imagine change is something we choose, initiate, or plan when the time feels right, whether that is a new house, new area to live, new job, or new hobby. Still, most of the profound changes, unfortunately, arrive without an invitation. Illness, especially chronic illness, is one of these changes that can reshape a life in an instant.

**W**hen illness enters the picture, it doesn't just affect the physical body, it impacts identity, relationships, routines, hopes, and the quiet dreams we carry about how our lives will unfold. It asks, or perhaps 'demands' us to adapt quickly to a new way of being, even when our minds and hearts are not ready.

As a therapist, I often meet people in that delicate place, caught

between the life they had and the life they never expected to be living, trying to understand what's happening to their bodies while also wrestling with the emotional impact of a world that is very unfamiliar. This 'internal adjustment', the mental and emotional (psychological) work of illness, is often unseen.

As humans we are wired for predictability. Our minds work hard to maintain balance and

stability. Our nervous systems thrive on routine, familiarity and having a sense of control. Illness disrupts this, the ground feels unsteady beneath our feet and threatens this balance.

Psychologically it challenges our sense of safety, identity, expectations of the future and our belief in our physical reliability. Thoughts like: 'I can't cope with this', 'I'm not safe' or 'I'm losing control', can

occur automatically, without permission, and intensify feelings of fear, anxiety and overwhelm us.

It's important to remember that these reactions are common – it is our bodies' and minds' way of trying to make sense of what is happening. The good news is that we can learn to notice these automatic thoughts and develop ways to respond to them. Small shifts in how we understand ourselves can reduce the intensity of fear and help us regain a sense of stability.

This mismatch between what the body requires and what the mind can process can be difficult. The body needs immediate intervention, treatment routines, and lifestyle changes but the mind needs time, time to understand, to grieve, to reorganise. Many describe feeling shocked, numb, overwhelmed, resistant, frustrated, guilty for not 'coping better'. All of these feelings are completely valid. They are normal responses to sudden change.

However, change is more like an ongoing adjustment process rather than a single event. It's not one moment of acceptance. It is a gradual reorientation process. For most of us it involves grief for what was, fear of what might be and the rebuilding of a sense of self that can hold this new reality.

This new reality will

bring with it lots of different, sometimes complex and sometimes contradictory, emotions. You may feel anger at the unfairness of it all and at the same time relief at having answers. You can feel grateful for treatment and resentful of it at the same time or you may feel strong and fragile in the same day.

Illness requires you to build a new way of living, one that honours limits, needs and changing bodies. This shift is not about forced positivity. It's about a realistic acceptance or a gentle compassionate acknowledgement of what is, without giving up on what could still be.

Exploring the possibility of how to adjust expectations without losing hope, how to create routines that support wellbeing, how to ensure you keep your identity beyond the illness and how to cultivate self-compassion on the difficult days (or difficult weeks) are all areas that might be valuable to look at as we shape this new way of life.

I understand that this does not happen overnight. We have to work on allowing ourselves to feel what we are feeling, to move at our own pace and to recognise that there is a psychological adjustment that needs to happen around illness, that our mind needs to adjust as much as our body. Over time, some people discover:

- A resilience they didn't know they had
- A deeper sense of self awareness
- A sense of inner strength
- A more compassionate relationship with their bodies
- A renewed appreciation for connection.

Going through such life changing challenges, some people experience growth, not because illness is a 'gift' but because they see strengths, priorities, or different perspectives through the struggle of their illness. It reflects the ways people make meaning through the challenges they face.

Growth can coexist with pain, grief and difficulty.

This kind of growth, which can come from all the hardship, is referred to as post-traumatic growth.

Adjusting our mindset is not a simple task. It's emotional work. It's psychological work. It is deeply personal. We do not have to rush it. We do not have to do it perfectly. There is no right or wrong way. We just try to find a way that works for each of us individually, one step at a time, or one small act of self-compassion at a time.

And remember, you don't have to do this on your own, we are always here if you need any support along the way.

*Aoife*

## Leave a Gift in your Will



### 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.

**For your FREE voucher**  
**email: [fundraising@ika.ie](mailto:fundraising@ika.ie)**  
**or visit:**

<https://ika.ie/how-to-give/#freewill>



Thank you to all who called or emailed the counselling team here at the IKA throughout the year. Please continue to email me with topics you would like to read about. Your comments 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. Email: [aoife@ika.ie](mailto:aoife@ika.ie)



By **CARRIE McMULLAN**  
Communications Executive

# SOCIAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

## A FRESH NEW LOOK

### Our website gets a makeover!

We're thrilled to share some exciting news - our website [www.ika.ie](http://www.ika.ie) has been given a fresh new look! We know how important it is for kidney patients and their families to have access to information and support, so we've been working hard to make our website more welcoming and user-friendly than ever before.



#### WHAT'S NEW?

The first feature we brought into the new design was a stronger brand identity. You will now see the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) colour palette woven throughout the site, bringing the familiar IKA personality and warmth into this space.

Our services are a key entry point for many of our new members, so they now sit front and centre on the homepage, followed by clear signposts to the other main areas of the site. Whether you're looking for information about patient aid, counselling, holidays, or kidney health, you can now find it faster with fewer clicks.

#### EASIER NAVIGATION

The navigation menu has been completely reorganised, with simpler, clearer menu items, along with a search bar to help you find what you need in seconds.

#### WHO WE ARE

This section explains our mission as a national charity supporting people affected by kidney disease and introduces the team members who help bring this mission to life. You can also find out more about our governance and compliance activities, our National Member Forum, and our Strategic Plan.

Our Branches are at the heart of everything we do at the IKA, so, we've created a **National Branch Network** page where you can learn more about your local Branch and who to contact to get involved.

#### WAYS WE HELP

Here you'll find everything you need to know about our patient services brought together in one place, including Information about our *Living Well Programme*, a self-management programme for people affected by end stage kidney disease. Our aim is to make it easy for you to see, at a glance, the different types of support available to you and your family.

@IrishKidneyAssociation

@IrishKidneyA

irishkidneyassociation

## GET INVOLVED

This section highlights all the ways you can support the IKA through fundraising or volunteering, along with information about how you can make a contribution.

Whether you want to host a fundraiser, share your skills, or leave a legacy, you'll find clear options for getting involved and making a difference.

## RESOURCES

One of the most exciting additions to the new site is our new **Resources** section. This will grow into a rich library of educational articles and materials for patients at every stage of kidney disease, their family members and carers, and the healthcare professionals who support them.

We have also introduced a dedicated section for **Organ Donation Education**, where you can request an organ donor card, learn more about being an organ donor, and how to start conversations with your loved ones about organ donation.

Over time, we'll be adding trusted information on topics such as dialysis, transplantation, emotional wellbeing, physical health and diet, as well as practical tips for navigating



day-to-day life with kidney disease. This new section will serve as your go-to hub for clear, reliable guidance whenever you need it.

## EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS

All our national events and major fundraising campaigns can now be found together under the **Events** section. It's now much easier to see what's coming up, find details about national awareness days and campaigns, and join in on our activities throughout the year.

## WHAT THIS MEANS FOR OUR MEMBERS

Living with kidney disease is challenging enough without the

added stress of searching for information or support. Our aim is to make life a little bit easier by giving you a reliable, friendly place to turn, whether you need advice, information, or simply want to see what the IKA is up to.

There is still lots of content to come on the website. If you are a kidney patient, family member, carer or healthcare professional, we would be very grateful to hear what information or resources you would like to see, or any suggestions that would make the site easier to use.

For any queries or suggestions, please email [carrie@ika.ie](mailto:carrie@ika.ie). You can visit the website at [www.ika.ie](http://www.ika.ie).



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. Which country recently hosted the Winter Olympics?
2. Name the Actress who won the Best Actress Award at the Oscars in March?
3. Who wrote the book *Animal Farm*?
4. What was the bestselling tractor brand in Ireland in 2025?
5. What does the acronym NASA stand for?
6. Valletta is the capital of which European country?
7. Which sports star married their long-term partner Sean McCavanagh recently?
8. In which year did Ireland last win the Eurovision Song Contest?
9. Which club does Troy Parrott play for?
10. Who wrote the song "The Town I Loved So Well"?

QUIZ ANSWERS 1. Italy; 2. Jessie Buckley; 3. George Orwell; 4. John Deere; 5. National Aeronautics Space Administration; 6. Malta; 7. Katie Taylor; 8. 1996 (Eimear Quinn with The Voice); 9. AZ Alkmaar (Holland); 10. Phil Coulter

## 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).



# Irish Kidney Association



## IKA ACTIVITY – 2025

### PATIENT SUPPORT



#### PATIENT SUPPORT

**821** Patient support requests

#### COUNSELLING



**2,348**  
FREE HOURS

#### PEER SUPPORT

**55** Referrals **246** Sessions



#### HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

**1480** Overnight stays for **327** families

#### MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE

**840** Overnight stays for **90** families



#### HOLIDAYS

**106** Families enjoyed a 6-day holiday

**253** Dialysis referrals organised abroad

### ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS

#### ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK

– MAY –



#### 40TH ANNUAL SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE AND THANKSGIVING

– SEPTEMBER –

**1,500** attended with  
**31,000** people viewing



#### ROLL OF HONOUR FOR ORGAN DONORS

### ORGAN DONOR CARDS



**89,040**

DISTRIBUTED

**1,222** DIGITAL DONOR CARD DOWNLOADS

Since launch of new version in July 2025.

### EVENTS



#### LIVING WELL PROGRAMME

**3**

#### MEETINGS

**4**

National Branch Forums

**93**

Branch Meetings

### COMMUNICATIONS



**32,530**



**4,933**



**1,158**



Emails

**1,271**

to [info@ika.ie](mailto:info@ika.ie)

### PUBLICATIONS

**3** FREE SUPPORT Magazines



Circulation: **3,400** per issue

**7** FREE Patient Information Books



**4,700** issued

**9,200** INFORMATION LEAFLETS CIRCULATED

**RE-OPENING  
THE**

# NATIONAL KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE



**THE WAIT IS OVER**

Excitement is building as we approach the reopening of the National Kidney Support Centre at Beaumont Hospital. Staff, contractors, and volunteers are working tirelessly to bring us across the finish line. With the inspection of major construction elements nearly complete, we have now entered the final phase: safety certification, outfitting, furnishing, and cleaning.

## SAFETY AND FACILITIES

**S**afety certification is essential to ensure that all patients and families can be confident that the premises and furniture are safe and free from hazards. Cleaning has already begun, and volunteers have removed old materials that are no longer needed.

Wi-Fi installation is underway, so guests will be able to stay connected. As described on pages 28-29, much of the furniture has already been delivered and assembled with thanks once again to the support of our wonderful corporate volunteers. Appliances such as cookers and washing machines have been purchased and are now being installed and tested. We are also seeking quotes for services such as linen supply and cleaning.

While recent bad weather has

slowed progress on the garden, this will not delay the reopening.

## STAFFING

Two part-time staff members have already been recruited and have started their roles. However, a number of positions remain vacant and, at the time of writing, are advertised on our website for those interested.

## STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS OF OUR PREDECESSORS

The Centre is a testament to the foresight, vision and hard work of our predecessors, many of whom are sadly no longer with us. As we prepare to open our doors, we hold them in our thoughts and are deeply mindful of the foundation they laid for kidney patients and their families around the country. Their legacy lives

on in what they created.

## A HOME AWAY FROM HOME

The design specification was to create a building that felt like “a home from home”, offering a sense of peace and tranquillity. From the feedback received so far, it is clear that this goal has not only been achieved, but exceeded. The Centre has a real “wow” factor and will set new standards for patient and family comfort. As a community, we can all take great pride in what has been accomplished.

With all of this in place, we are ready to take the final step. We hope to welcome our first residents in April, and we invite you to follow our social media channels for updates, including confirmation of the opening date.



# Clear View to Better Care

## How Nurses Are Using Ultrasound to Protect Your Haemodialysis Access



By **WELSHLEY LORIN**,  
Renal Vascular Access Coordinator,  
University Hospital Waterford

If you or a loved one is receiving haemodialysis, your point of access, whether an arteriovenous fistula (AVF) or an arteriovenous graft (AVG), is quite literally your lifeline. It allows you to connect to your haemodialysis machine for treatment. Therefore, looking after this access is top priority.

**AVF:** An AV fistula is a small surgical procedure, usually carried out on the forearm or upper arm, where a surgeon joins an artery directly to a vein. This causes the vein to grow larger and stronger over time - strong enough to handle the repeated needling required for dialysis sessions. Once it has matured - which typically takes several weeks to a few months - it becomes the access point through which blood travels out of the body, through the dialysis machine to be cleaned, and safely back in again.

**AVG:** An AV graft is similar to an AV fistula in its purpose - it creates a reliable access point in the arm for dialysis - but instead of joining an artery and vein directly together, a surgeon uses a small synthetic tube to bridge the two. This tube sits just under the skin and once healed, can be needled in the same way as a fistula at each dialysis session. A graft is typically recommended when a patient's veins are not suitable for a fistula.

For many years, nurses have relied on their sense of touch (feeling for the vibration known as "thrill") and sound (using a stethoscope to listen for the whooshing sound known as "bruit") to find the best spot to insert the two needles needed for each dialysis session. This traditional method works well for many people. But what if your access is deeper under the skin, not enlarged enough, has scar tissue, or is twisting and turning? Finding the right spot can become a stressful challenge for both you and your nurse.

This is where a remarkable advancement in patient care comes in: specially trained nurses can now use ultrasound in real time to check an access site, and guide the needle safely into an AVF or AVG. This innovative process is known as **ultrasound-guided assessment and cannulation**. 'Cannulation' is the name given to inserting the needle into the access site for dialysis).

### HOW DOES ULTRASOUND-GUIDED ASSESSMENT AND CANNULATION WORK?

Think of it as a "flashlight" to help the nurse see the AVF/AVG underneath your skin. A small, handheld device called an ultrasound probe is gently placed on your arm. It uses safe, painless sound waves to create a live, moving image of your blood vessels on a screen.

This isn't just a one-time picture. It's real-time video. The nurse can see:

- The exact path of your fistula or graft
- The size of the vessel (to ensure it's healthy and mature)
- The depth of the vessel below the skin
- Any issues like narrowing (stenosis), aneurysms, clots, or nearby scar tissue.
- The direction of blood flow.

With this clear "roadmap," the nurse can then guide the dialysis needle precisely into the best spot, watching the tip enter the vessel on the screen. This transforms the process from feeling in the dark to seeing with clarity.

### WHY IS THIS SUCH A BIG DEAL FOR PATIENTS?

This technique, championed and led by specially trained nurses, is changing the dialysis experience for the better in several important ways:

#### 1. Increased comfort and reduced pain

Repeated "missed sticks" or needing to poke multiple times can be painful and frustrating. By seeing the vessel clearly, the nurse can achieve successful cannulation (needling) on the first attempt much more often. This means less pain for you. Once nurses are used to the device, it adds very little time, often just two to five minutes to the overall process.

#### 2. Reduced anxiety

The increased comfort and reduced pain can significantly reduce anxiety, knowing that your access is being handled with the best possible tools. And because the ultrasound is handheld and portable, it can be used right at your chair, making it a seamless part of your treatment.

### 3. Protecting your lifeline for the long haul

Complications like infiltration (when the needle goes through the vessel, causing a bruise or bleed under the skin) or the formation of scar tissue, can damage your access over time. A well-placed needle, guided by ultrasound, minimises this trauma. A 2021 study showed that ultrasound-guided cannulation can significantly reduce infiltration rates. By protecting the vessel wall, the access remains healthy and functional for years to come. Furthermore, regular nurse-led ultrasound monitoring of fistulas has been linked to a reduction in fistula clots.

### 4. A solution for “challenging” accesses

As we age or if we have other health conditions, our blood vessels can change. Some fistulas are deep, others might have tricky turns, and new fistulas can be challenging to needle. Ultrasound is a game changer in these situations. It is invaluable for detailed mapping and assessment before a needle is even placed. It allows nurses to confidently cannulate (needle) accesses that were previously a major challenge, potentially reducing the need for surgical revisions or the placement of haemodialysis catheters.

### 5. Empowering nurses

This isn't a skill picked up overnight. It represents a significant investment in nursing expertise. Your nurse has undergone rigorous training to understand what they see on the screen and to perform the cannulation safely.

Research confirms that ultrasound guidance is particularly effective for difficult-to-cannulate fistulas, boosting nurse confidence and accuracy. Furthermore, when ultrasound reveals a potential problem, nurses are trained to know how to follow up, ensuring you see a specialist if needed. (This proactive approach helps catch issues early.)

This advanced practice role empowers nurses to deliver the highest standard of care. It moves beyond traditional methods, embracing a culture of continuous improvement in quality and safety.



### 6. A standard of care backed by experts

Leading vascular access groups now recommend this approach. Organisations including the Canadian Association of Nephrology Nurses and Technologists (CANNT), the UK Kidney Association, British Columbia Renal Agency, and the Vascular Access Society of Britain and Ireland (VASBI) have endorsed guidelines supporting the use of ultrasound. The National Kidney Foundation considers its use to be of help in needling accuracy

#### WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE SAY?

The move towards ultrasound-guided cannulation is backed by a growing body of international research. Experts have conducted extensive scoping reviews and trials to confirm its feasibility and advantages, including its cost-effectiveness and other benefits. Ongoing research continues to explore how best to use ultrasound to keep fistulas healthy for the long term.

All of this evidence points to the same conclusion: using ultrasound leads to better outcomes, a safer experience, nurse empowerment, and improved patient satisfaction.

#### WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT?

The potential roll-out of this innovative practice is currently being explored. If it comes to your dialysis unit, this is what you could expect:

- 1. Assessment:** Before your needles are placed, a specially trained nurse will use the ultrasound probe to scan your access. They might show you the image of your own blood vessels on the screen, which many patients find fascinating. This is also a great opportunity for patient education.
- 2. Planning:** Based on the image, the nurse will mark the best spot for cannulation.
- 3. Cannulation (needling):** The nurse will clean the area and insert the needle while watching the screen to guide it perfectly into the centre of the vessel. The process feels very similar to a traditional cannulation, but with much greater precision.
- 4. Building a Team:** This is a partnership. Your feedback is vital. If you have concerns or questions about the process, or if an area feels tender, tell your nurse. Your input, combined with the nurse's enhanced view, makes the perfect team. When ultrasound is a common practice in the unit, the whole team becomes proficient and supportive.

#### THE FUTURE OF DIALYSIS CARE

The goal is always to create a safer, better healthcare system that enhances the patient experience and improves outcomes. Nurse-led ultrasound-guided cannulation is a perfect example of this vision in action. It's a simple idea, giving nurses a clearer view that makes a profound difference in protecting your lifeline and making your dialysis journey a little easier.

# A Strong Start for our New Peer Support Team

This month marked a meaningful step forward for our Peer Support Service as we officially launched training for our newly expanded Peer Support Volunteer Team. We are delighted to welcome nine new peer supporters from across Ireland to Donor House.

The team represented a mix of patients, family members, and living donors, each bringing a valuable depth of lived experience. Together they form a team grounded in empathy, insight, and commitment to supporting others navigating kidney disease.

By  
**AOIFE SMITH**



Martha Griffin, Ciara Glynn.

On day one, the energy in the room was unmistakable. The new team arrived eager to learn, connect, and begin shaping their role within this essential service. Our CEO, Carol Moore, opened the training with a warm and heartfelt welcome, expressing her gratitude to the new peer supporters and setting the tone for the day. She shared her own journey and her experience of peer support within the health system, offering a genuine understanding of the profound difference this kind of support can make.

We were fortunate to be joined by Martha Griffin, Assistant Professor in Mental Health and Peer Educator, and Ciara Glynn, Lived Experience

Director at Mental Health Reform, whose wealth of experience added immeasurable value to the training.

Martha and Ciara shared their own journeys openly, including how meaningful peer support can be during times of uncertainty. They spoke honestly about the power of feeling understood by someone who has been there, who has walked a similar path, and who can offer support from a place of genuine empathy.

Ciara said that delivering the training to our new team of volunteers was a gentle reminder of what she knows to be true: *'Healing happens in relationship. It is through connection with others, that we recover from the awful things that we endure in life. There is no substitute for human connection, and this transcends all health and social sectors.'*

Their presence set a strong foundation for the team: one built on authenticity, compassion, and the importance of meeting people exactly where they are.

## WHY PEER SUPPORT MATTERS IN KIDNEY CARE

Peer support is more than a supportive service; it can be a lifeline for many individuals and families facing the challenges of renal disease. Research shows that peer support can:

- Reduce feelings of isolation
- Improve emotional wellbeing
- Enhance confidence in treatment decisions
- Support coping during times of change or uncertainty
- Promote hope by connecting people with others who have navigated similar journeys.



New team of Peer Support Volunteers with Ciara Glynn.



**Shared learning, Joan and Sheila with new team members.**

For those newly diagnosed, beginning dialysis, preparing for transplant, or managing long-term treatment, hearing the voice of someone who truly understands can offer a depth of reassurance.

Peer supporters bring something unique: the wisdom that comes from lived experience. Their stories, setbacks, resilience, and insights create a bridge for others, reminding them that they are not alone, that their feelings are valid, and that there is strength in sharing the journey.

### REFLECTING AND GROWING TOGETHER

The second day of training offered space for reflection. The team revisited the learnings from day one, taking time to discuss what resonated most, and what they hoped to bring into their peer support practice. This reflective space allowed individuals to deepen their understanding of their own motivations and recognise the important role they will play within the kidney community.

Later, the team worked together to identify the core values they want to uphold as a team. Words such as compassion, respect, trust, understanding, and kindness surfaced strongly, capturing the heart of what peer support truly is. These values will guide their work and anchor the service in authenticity and care.

### BUILDING CONNECTION ACROSS TEAMS OF VOLUNTEERS

We were delighted to welcome members of the existing Peer Support Team to join us on Day Two. Their involvement added warmth, experience, and continuity. They



generously shared stories from their time as volunteers, speaking about the privilege of supporting others, the profound impact peer support can have, and the personal growth that has shaped their time in the role.

The new team had plenty of questions, and the discussions that followed were rich and honest. There was a real sense of connection between the experienced volunteers and the new team, a passing on of wisdom, reassurance, and encouragement, a bridging of experience with fresh perspectives.

The two days of training were filled with learning, connection, and a shared sense of purpose. The new team left inspired, supported, and ready to begin their journey as peer supporters.

### A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR PEER SUPPORT

The strength of this service lies not only in skills and training, but in the heart and humanity of the people who choose to step forward. With their compassion, diversity, and commitment, this new team is ready to make a profound difference for individuals and families across Ireland living with kidney disease.

We are incredibly proud of the



**Shared learning, Angela (left) and new team member.**

service that the experienced team has built and are excited for the journey ahead as we expand the service with the addition of our new volunteers.

Peer support is a powerful force within kidney care, and just like the team before them, the team stepping forward is full of commitment and compassion, and is ready to make a meaningful difference. The future of peer support is bright!



**(Left): Martha Griffin**

To talk online with a peer supporter, click on [www.ika.ie/peersupport](http://www.ika.ie/peersupport)

The Irish Kidney Association gratefully acknowledges the support of  
**Punchestown Kidney Research Fund (PKRF),**  
the major funder for the provision of the Peer Support programme.



# SUPPLEMENTS FRIEND OR FOE?

**Herbal supplements, vitamins, super green powders, electrolytes – nowadays there seems to be a supplement for every problem, and effective marketing campaigns can leave people confused about what they need.**

**This article will explore common questions around supplements for people with kidney disease: do you really need them, or is it all just a bit of hype?**

By **SALLY HOULIHAN**  
and **SEREN POLLARD**

on behalf of the  
Renal Interest Group of the  
Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI)

**INDI**  **RENAL**  
Irish Nutrition +  
Dietetic Institute

## **ARE THERE ANY CONCERNS WITH OVER THE COUNTER VITAMIN, MINERAL OR HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS?**

Many supplements can be harmful for people with kidney disease.

**Vitamins:** The kidneys may not be able to get rid of excess vitamins leading to a build-up of toxic levels. This is of particular concern with Vitamin A and Vitamin C which are found in many over the counter vitamin supplements.

**Electrolytes:** These have become very popular, however they can contain high amounts of potassium and salt (sodium) so they should be avoided.

**Herbal Supplements:** There is very little evidence on the safe use of herbal supplements for people with kidney disease. Generally, they are not tightly regulated and therefore their composition can vary from what is written on the label.

It's also important to remember that some herbal supplements can interact with your regular medications and affect how well they

work. This is especially important to remember if you have a kidney transplant.

Certain herbal supplements are high in potassium or phosphate but this might not be clear on the label.

## **IS THERE ANYTHING I SHOULD BE TAKING?**

There is no one-size-fits-all approach, but you should probably be taking less than you think. Common supplements that might be prescribed by your healthcare provider are Vitamin D, Vitamin B12, Folic Acid, Iron, or a renal specific Vitamin B and Vitamin C formulation. These are recommended on an individual basis.

Some people may be prescribed supplements due to blood results, nutrient losses during dialysis, or because of reduced food intake. Some supplements are covered under the Drug Payment Scheme or may be available on the medical card which means it's even more important that they are prescribed by your doctor.

If you have questions on whether you should be taking supplements or if you are thinking about starting a new one, talk to your doctor or dietitian. They can advise on what is right for you.

### IF I SHOULDN'T TAKE SUPPLEMENTS, HOW CAN I GET THE MOST FROM MY DIET?

- **It's all about balance!** Include foods from each of the main food groups – fruit and vegetables, starchy foods, protein and dairy. A kidney dietitian may have advised you on the correct amount for you.



- **Eat fruit and vegetables every day!** If you have been advised on a fruit and vegetable allowance – use this as a daily target. It might seem like simple advice, but they are packed full of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fibre.



- **Frozen vegetables, and frozen and tinned fruit** (in own juices) are great alternatives to fresh, and are budget friendly. In fact, frozen fruit and vegetables are typically frozen soon after harvesting so may have more nutrients compared to fresh fruit and vegetables that have been sitting in your fridge too long.



## BAKED LEMON GARLIC SALMON

– SERVES 4

### Ingredients

4 x 4oz salmon fillets  
 1 tsp lemon zest  
 1 tbsp lemon juice  
 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil  
 1 tsp Dijon mustard  
 2 garlic cloves  
 Pinch of black pepper  
 1 medium red pepper, cut into chunks  
 1 medium courgette, cut into chunks  
 1 tbsp fresh parsley chopped  
 100g uncooked brown wholegrain rice

### Method

Mix together the lemon zest, lemon juice, 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, Dijon mustard, garlic and black pepper. Brush onto the tops of the salmon and marinate for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan.

Spread out the red pepper and courgette on a large tray. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and mix. Make space for 4 salmon fillets.

Place the salmon on the tray leaving space between each.

Sprinkle over the fresh parsley.

Place in the oven and bake for 10 – 15 minutes.

Cook the brown rice in unsalted water. Serve and enjoy.

This dish provides 1.5 portions of vegetables and 3 HBV protein exchanges per serving. The HBV protein exchange value helps you see how much of your daily dietitian-recommended allowance of animal protein is in each serving.



- **Wholemeal or wholegrain** bread, cereals, rice, or pasta can provide more vitamins, minerals and fibre compared to white.
- **Include fish twice weekly.** One of these should be oily fish as it is a rich source of Omega 3. Good sources of oily fish are salmon or mackerel. Try our recipe for baked lemon garlic salmon.



- **Healthy hydration** is possible for most people without the need for electrolyte supplements. If you are on a fluid restriction, make sure to follow your doctor's advice.
- **Visit [www.irishkidneydiet.ie](http://www.irishkidneydiet.ie) for recipes.** Try the kidney friendly soup, warm chickpeas and vegetables or vegetable medley for inspiration.
- **Speak to your dietitian or doctor** if you have a reduced appetite or notice you are eating less food than normal.



# MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE

Spring has finally arrived at the Munster Kidney Support Centre (MKSC) and after a particularly soggy start to the year, our garden is beginning to wake up once again. We are very fortunate to have the continued support of our wonderful, green-fingered plant whisperer, Aoife Dunne, who has returned this year to mind our plants and our avid grass keeper Steven O'Brien.

## ELEVATE CREDIT UNION

On February 13th, we had the pleasure of welcoming Gary Hanrahan, Marketing Manager at Elevate Credit Union in Douglas, Cork and his colleague Lynn O'Mahony. Elevate has come on board as a fundraising partner for the Irish Kidney Association (IKA).

Lynn recently played a vital role in the Paired Exchange Programme in Belfast, when her husband received a life-saving kidney transplant. Michael is an employee of Cork University Hospital (CUH) and a wonderful supporter of the MKSC.

We were very grateful to accept their generous donation of €5,000 on behalf of the IKA.



Elevate Credit Union cheque presentation, L-R: Gary Hanrahan, Jennifer Barry, MKSC and Lynn O'Mahony.



CUH Renal Nurse Abina Harrington and Cork Branch Treasurer Bernard Cronin.



CUH Consultant Nephrologists Dr. Aine De Bhailis and Dr. Eoin White.

## WORLD KIDNEY DAY

We celebrated World Kidney Day at the Centre with several very meaningful events. On February 7th, the staff in MKSC joined so many of you around the country collecting. The support we received was tremendous and we are very grateful for those who volunteered over the course of the day.

Colette and Sally, our Patient Support Officers, were invited to speak to staff at Viatris Ltd in Little Island, Cork to raise awareness of organ donation and share their stories. Colette also spoke to a group of graduate medical students from University College Cork about her experience of the healthcare system and of working with professionals from the kidney patient perspective.

We held our World Kidney Day coffee morning at the MKSC on March 12th. We were once again honoured to welcome members from the CUH renal team, the

hard-working CUH maintenance team, as well as many of our amazing kidney patients and their families.

We had the pleasure of also meeting the two new Nephrologists in CUH, doctors Aine De Bhailis and Eoin White and we gave them both a guided tour of our Support Centre and the services we provide here. It was a wonderful opportunity for everyone to catch up in a warm and supportive environment.

From Jennifer, Colette, Sally and Edel – thank you and take care. If you are ever in Cork, please do pop in and say hello.



Viatris Ltd talk, L-R: Colette Hawe, MKSC; Elaine McCarthy, Viatris Ltd and Sally Nagle, MKSC.



*Elsie Dineen & Nigel Duane*



*Geraldine McCarthy, Sally Nagle, Margaret Maher, Linda Dawess.*



*CUH Dialysis Nurse Breda Walsh; Renal Nurses Aileen O'Brien and Mairead Collins.*



*L-R: Maura McClean, Ger Harkins, Anne Canty, Aoife Ni Carthaigh, Mags Radley, Christine Sisk and Alice Kirstein.*



*Nora Barry & Jean Canty.*



*Elaine & Kieran McCarthy.*



*CUH Dialysis Ward Staff member: Joann Lyons.*



*Tipperary Branch member Francis Hogan and Elsie Dineen.*



*Frances Kendellan and Aoife Ni Carthaigh*



*CUH Renal Dieticians, Grainne O'Donovan and Irene Cronin.*

📶
11:35 AM
🔋

## NATIONAL KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE PHONE LINE

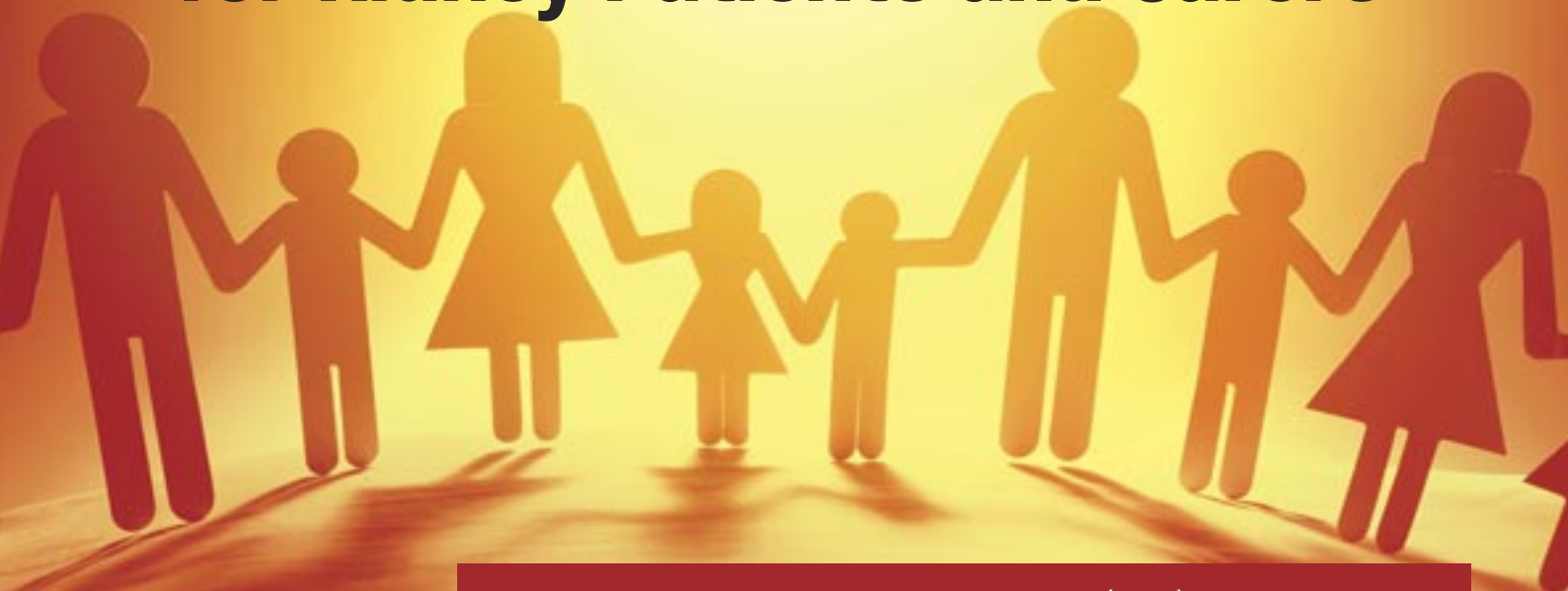
In the coming weeks, our much-anticipated National Kidney Support Centre (NKSC) in Dublin will re-open. Our new colleagues there will be joining us on the national renal support phone line as they settle into their new roles.

Over the past two and half years we have had the privilege of speaking with so many of you as we supported you on your journeys up and down to Beaumont Hospital. These conversations were meaningful and heartfelt, and we also shared your grief for those you lost. It has truly been our pleasure to accompany you on this journey.

We know you will each receive a very warm welcome from the NKSC team.

While predominately managing the MKSC phone line and bookings, we will continue to work with our new colleagues in NKSC to ensure you calls are answered and bookings made.

# A Guide to Social Welfare Supports for Kidney Patients and Carers



Receiving a diagnosis of End-Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD) is a life-changing moment, not just medically, but emotionally and financially. As you navigate treatment schedules and focus on your health, the practical realities of household bills, travel to appointments, and potential changes to your work life can quickly become overwhelming.

The good news is that in Ireland, there is a structured system of social welfare supports designed specifically to lighten this load. This guide walks you through the entitlements available to people living with ESKD and their families, highlighting the key updates for 2026. We have divided the relevant schemes into means-tested and non-means-tested.



By **FIONA AHERNE**  
HEAD OF  
PATIENT SERVICE OPERATIONS

## MEANS-TESTED PAYMENTS

“Means-tested” means that eligibility for a payment or benefit depends on your financial means – in other words, your income, savings and investments, property, and sometimes your partner’s income are assessed to decide whether you qualify and how much you should receive from the Department of Social Protection (DSP).

- If your means are below a certain threshold, you may qualify for the full payment.
- If your means are higher but still within the limits, you may receive a reduced payment.
- If your means exceed the limit, you may not qualify.

## Disability Allowance

Disability Allowance is a weekly means-tested payment for people aged 16–66 who have a disability that is expected to

last at least one year, and that substantially restricts their ability to work. Many individuals undergoing dialysis or awaiting transplant qualify for this payment due to the long-term nature of their illness.

## 2026 updates:

- Weekly disability payments increased by €10 from January 2026 as part of the national budget.
- In an attempt to improve work incentives, recipients taking up employment may now retain their Fuel Allowance for up to five years.
- Individuals on Disability Allowance may also qualify for the Back to Work Family Dividend when returning to employment.

## Carer Supports

Patients with advanced kidney disease frequently require ongoing care,

particularly during dialysis or post-transplant recovery. Supports available for carers include:

- **Carer's Allowance:** a weekly social welfare payment available to people who care for someone because of their age, disability, or illness (including mental illness)
- **Carer's Benefit,** which is paid to people who leave work or reduce their hours to care for a person in need of full-time care, and
- **Carer's Support Grant,** which is paid to carers once a year by the DSP. It used to be called the Respite Care Grant. If you are entitled to the Carer's Allowance, you automatically get Carer's Support Grant in June each year.

In 2026, the income disregard for Carer's Allowance increased significantly, rising to €625 per week for single carers and €1,250 for couples from July 2026. This means that the Department of Social Protection (DSP) won't take these amounts into account when calculating Carer's Allowance.

This change enables more carers to qualify for payments while remaining in part-time employment.

If you are entitled to the Carer's Allowance, you can also get a GP visit card, free travel, the Household Benefits Package (if you live with the person you care for) and Fuel Allowance (you need to meet the criteria for Fuel Allowance, including the Fuel Allowance means test).

### NON-MEANS-TESTED PAYMENTS

A non-means-tested payment is a social welfare payment that does not depend on your income, savings, or financial assets. Instead, eligibility is usually based on other criteria such as PRSI (Pay Related Social Insurance) contributions, age, or specific circumstances. It is paid at a standard payment rate.



### Invalidity Pension

Invalidity Pension is available to individuals who cannot work due to long-term illness or disability and who have sufficient PRSI contributions. It is a non-means tested payment.

To qualify, individuals must:

- Have been incapable of work for at least 12 months, and
- Be likely to remain incapable of work for at least another year or permanently.

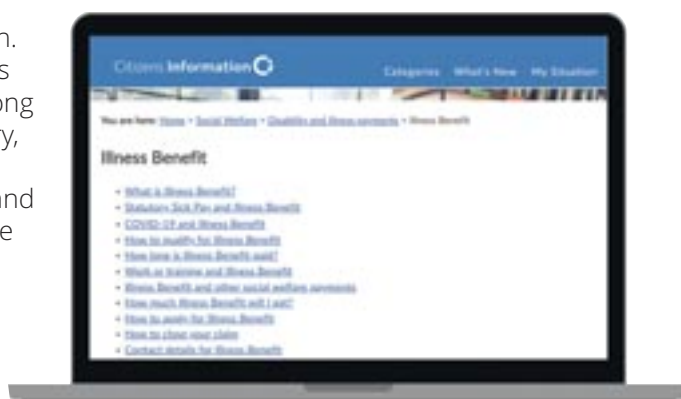
Recipients of Invalidity Pension may also qualify for the Free Travel Scheme, the Household Benefits Package and additional increases for qualified adults or dependent children.

For many dialysis patients with a strong employment history, Invalidity Pension provides a higher and more stable income compared with means-tested payments.

### Illness Benefit

Illness Benefit is a short-term, non-means-tested payment for workers who are temporarily unable to work due to illness. Individuals newly diagnosed with severe kidney disease often receive this payment before transitioning to longer-term schemes such as Disability Allowance or Invalidity Pension.

You should always apply for Illness Benefit if you are medically certified as unfit for work. Even if you don't qualify for the weekly payment, you may get PRSI credited contributions which can help you qualify for future social welfare payments.



## NEED FURTHER SUPPORT?



While this guide provides a roadmap to the financial supports available, every patient's situation is unique. We encourage you and your family to explore these options further to ensure you are receiving all the assistance you are entitled to.

For guidance on any of the supports discussed in this article, the Irish Kidney Association's Patient Services team is on hand to provide support. For further information please visit:

<https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/social-welfare/disability-and-illness/> or

<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-social-protection/publications/budget-2026/>



Main photo: Ann Marie with her husband Thomas and children Mya, Hanna and Freya at her sister's wedding in December 2024.  
Inset: Ann Marie on her wedding day in 2014 with her mother Breda.

# A Mother's Gift, Three Lives Created

In this article, 41-year-old **Ann Marie Murphy** from Turloughmore, Co. Galway shares the deeply personal story of how her mother's kidney donation in July 2017 gave her a second chance at life. She reflects on the challenges she faced, 14 months of haemodialysis treatment, the heartbreak of a late miscarriage along the way, and the joy of becoming a mother to three healthy children. Most importantly, she expresses her ongoing gratitude for her mother Breda Finnerty's life-transforming gift.

Through her story, Ann Marie hopes to raise awareness about kidney disease, highlight the incredible impact of organ donation, and emphasise the vital role that charities play in supporting families through illness.

In 2013, I started to suffer from migraines which led to a diagnosis that blindsided me and which was to change everything. I had chronic kidney disease. There was no explanation for it, no family history, no known cause. I was the only one in my family with this condition.

I was taken under the care of Consultant Dr. Giblin and Dr. Kieran at University Hospital Galway (UHG) and the renal team there. I married my childhood sweetheart Thomas Murphy in April 2014. He works in the construction industry and is a part-time farmer.

In March 2016, I became unexpectedly pregnant and we were so happy to find out we were expecting our first baby. I had intensive medical supervision with the renal team and the maternity department of UHG. In June, at 13 weeks, I started haemodialysis treatment in Merlin Park Hospital, Galway. It all happened so quickly.

But I kept going, balancing my



Reunited post-transplant daughter and mother  
Ann Marie and Breda.

Interviewed by  
**GWEN O'DONOGHUE**

three times weekly dialysis treatment with my career in tourism with Fáilte Ireland, working from the hospital on my laptop on the days I had dialysis.

However, life had more challenges in store. At 18 weeks, I was admitted to hospital for observations as my blood pressure was high. I had started to feel movement and we were getting so excited. The doctors were hopeful that I could carry to 30 weeks and that the pregnancy could be successful.

But at 22 weeks, the pressure was too much, and my placenta ruptured, and we lost our baby girl – Ruby Grace. The grief was overwhelming. My husband and I had hoped for so much, but in the blink of an eye, everything changed again.

Following this loss, I continued dialysis for a full year. Then came a miracle – my mother, without telling me, secretly contacted Beaumont

Hospital to see if she could donate one of her kidneys. Both my brother and sister were screened, but doctors determined that my mother, at 64-years-old, was a suitable match and that she could proceed.

When she finally told me at Christmas 2016, I was initially against it. I couldn't bear the thought of putting her through such a major operation. But she insisted, and despite my reservations, I came to understand the depth of her love and commitment.

The transplant surgery was scheduled, but there was a twist. While my husband Thomas and I were on a short getaway to Dublin between my dialysis treatments, we received a call informing us of a cancellation, and our surgery date was moved up. We cut our trip short and rushed home to prepare for the transplant surgery.

On Sunday, the day before surgery, it was a big match day for my county as Galway was playing in the Leinster Final in Dublin. I dropped my husband and my sister off in the car at Croke Park before I drove to Beaumont hospital with my mother to check ourselves in. Despite the trepidation of the surgery ahead, we both watched the game together on TV while I received my final dialysis session pre-surgery. It was surreal.

The next day, my mother went into surgery first. I was nervous and worried for her, of course. It was tough to see my dad wave both his wife and daughter off before two serious surgeries. A few hours later, I followed.

The surgeries were a success, and we were both up and about in less than a week. During our recovery, my husband and other members of our family stayed in the Irish Kidney Association's Support Centre, just a stone's throw away from the hospital, to be near us as we recovered.

*Continued next page...*



**Ann Marie's family at her sister Emer's wedding in December 2024: Sisters Edel Keane, Martina Pender, father Martin Finnerty, groom Liam Clarke, bride Emer Clarke, mother Breda Finnerty, Ann Marie and her brother David Finnerty.**

Since the transplant in 2017, my life has blossomed in ways I could never have imagined. Regular check-ups became a part of my new routine, and though I was advised to wait a year before trying for another pregnancy, just 14 months later, I discovered I was expecting again. My baby girl, Freya, was born at 35 weeks in June 2019, and soon after, I had two more beautiful daughters both delivered at 36 weeks – Hanna in February 2021 and Mya, who was born in October 2022. Both Hanna and Mya were born during the COVID pandemic.

Looking back, I know I'm incredibly fortunate to have my parents and siblings, my husband, and now, three beautiful, healthy daughters. My mother adores spending time with her granddaughters, and I feel blessed every day to watch them grow and thrive.

The Irish Kidney Association that supported us has also been a huge part of our journey. As a way of giving



**Freya (6) Mya (3) and Hanna (5).**

back, my mother painted the charity's emblem, the 'forget-me-not' flower, which was hung in its Support Centre at Beaumont Hospital, before its

temporary closure and renovation. My mother and I and the kids also enjoyed a holiday at the IKA's holiday home in Tramore. As our way of showing our gratitude to the charity we organised a coffee morning fundraiser in 2018, raising €1,200.

Now, life is busy. With three young girls, ages 6, 5 and 3, and a job to balance, every day is filled with happy chaos and gratitude.

I've learned not to take anything for granted, especially the gift of life. My mother's decision to donate a kidney saved my life, and in turn, gave me and Thomas the opportunity to build our own family. I'm incredibly grateful to her and for everything I have: my health, my family, and the love we share.

# CHARITY GOLF DAY

IN AID OF THE IRISH KIDNEY ASSOCIATION  
National Kidney Support Centre  
*(Home Away from Home for Kidney Patient Families)*

at Greenore Golf Club

*(on the shores of The Cooley Peninsula, Co. Louth)*

On the eve of  
Organ Donor Awareness Week

FRIDAY  
May 15TH, 2026

Teams of four:  
€200  
incl. Meal and Great Prizes

Book Your Tee Time • All Are Welcome



Organised by transplant recipient  
**Augustine Goss**

Phone: **087-649 2446**

Email: **agoss02@gmail.com**

www.ika.ie/support-centre



## CAN WE COUNT ON YOUR COUNTY?

Calling mná na hÉireann! Experience the iconic **VHI Women's Mini Marathon** on **May 31st** as part of Team IKA!

**The event is sold out but we have limited charity places available** for Irish Kidney Association supporters.

Get a group together and represent your county/Branch, do it with a friend, or sign up solo – you won't regret it!

**JOIN TEAM IKA!**

**1 Place - €39**

**PLUS:**

**Group Offer - €156**  
**(that's 5 places for the price of 4!)**

## WHY JOIN TEAM IKA 2026?

- Enjoy a breakfast reception at the Iveagh Hotel and get your t-shirt
- Meet and greet with the IKA and fellow female IKA supporters
- Get your fab gift bag, with Faro Beauty and La Roche Posay goodies
- Discount on a stay at the Iveagh Hotel (night before or on event day)
- Get support from our Fundraising Team with your iDonate page
- Be in with the chance to win an exciting prize for the top fundraisers!

Scan the QR code now to sign up or go to <https://ika.ie/minimarathon/>



## SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR IKA

You don't have to be a runner to take part — you can walk, jog, stroll or roll!

By joining Team IKA you'll help us to promote awareness of organ donation and chronic kidney disease whilst raising funds for kidney patients and their families in Ireland.

**Do it for the IKA and let's have a great day!**

For support or more details please email [fundraising@ika.ie](mailto:fundraising@ika.ie)



# Transplant Sport Ireland

## MONTHLY MEETUPS

Transplant Sport Ireland (TSI), the official governing body for transplant sport in Ireland, has been busy with monthly Meetups, aimed at giving TSI members a chance to avail of coaching in their chosen sports.

In the February Meetup, the local Kilcullen Athletics group coached those interested in Athletics. This was organised by Athletics Sports Captain, Emma Nolan. The lads from Kilcullen FC offered football coaching and a full match, and Pétanque coaching was made available to those interested in participating in this discipline.

TSI is very grateful to these volunteer coaches who are so supportive of transplant sport, along with those who kindly allow us to use venues such as Kilcullen Community Centre and Nenagh AFC.

## EUROPEAN TRANSPLANT GAMES 2026

TSI will be hosting ongoing Meetups and training sessions as athletes prepare for the **European Transplant Games** in Holland this summer. The municipality of Arnhem will host organ and stem cell



TSI athletes are a recent meetup/training in Kilcullen Community Centre.

transplant recipients, and people undergoing dialysis, from all over Europe from **June 21st to June 27th**.

During the European Transplant Games, more than a thousand athletes, along with their families, friends, donors, and relatives from almost every European country, get the chance to highlight the life-changing power of transplantation and the vital role of sport in recovery. There is life after transplantation. This is what the European Transplant Games showcase.

Spurred on by their families, friends, donors, and donor families, transplant and dialysis athletes from all corners of Europe will come together to compete across fifteen diverse sports and engage in inspiring side events and meaningful gatherings. The event is built around the core theme: **'Celebrate Life'**. This guiding principle inspires all participants to come together to honour the gift of life after transplantation through sport. The

Games inspire and encourage transplant recipients across Europe to embrace sport and exercise as a key part of their journey.

TSI has several athletes competing in a range of disciplines, led by team manager Harry Ward.

You can keep up to date on the TSI social media platforms and website [www.transplantsportireland.ie](http://www.transplantsportireland.ie).

## BRITISH TRANSPLANT GAMES - SHEFFIELD 2026

Sheffield will host the **British Transplant Games** from **August 6th to 9th, 2026**, celebrating the resilience of transplant recipients and promoting organ donation awareness.

The British Transplant Games are a multi-sport event that celebrates the lives of individuals who have received organ transplants. The event is expected to attract over 3,000 participants, including 1,000 athletes who have undergone lifesaving organ or stem cell transplants.

The Games are organised by the charity Transplant Active and aim to raise awareness about the importance of organ donation while

## SPORTS CAPTAINS 2026

TSI has approved the following Sports Captains for 2026:

TSI Team Manager:	Harry Ward
U18 Team Manager:	Aoife O'Gorman
Athletics:	Emma Nolan & Mike Keohane
Archery:	Victor Conroy
Badminton:	Robbie England
Cycling:	John Moran
Darts:	Mick Dwyer
Football:	JP O'Neill, [Manager: Mike Keohane]
Field Events:	Mairead O Mahony
Golf:	Ron Grainger & Amanda O'Neill Coyne
Swimming:	Peter Heffernan
Table Tennis:	Val Weblin
Tennis:	Glenn Clinton
Triathlon:	Bryan Duignan
Pétanque, 10-Pin Bowling:	Harry Ward

The captains will promote their discipline among TSI members, prepare a budget, and organise and liaise with the TSI team manager Harry Ward to organise training sessions.



Cyclists Patrick O'Driscoll and Mick O'Shea.

promoting the health and well-being of transplant recipients through physical activity. The event will feature 24 different sports over four days, showcasing the achievements and resilience of transplant athletes. TSI has several athletes participating in these Games.

### KIT DAY

Kit Day for those participating in the European Games and/or the British Games will take place in Kilcullen Community Centre on Sunday, May 24th at 10am.

Punchestown Kidney Research Fund (PKRF) has kindly sponsored the kit, and TSI would like to thank them most sincerely for their generous sponsorship once again

### TSI FOOTBALL

TSI footballers are training hard in preparation for international competitions in 2026. The team is training every fortnight, and have already trained this year in Nenagh, Kilcullen, the University of Limerick and Portmarnock.

TSI Football hosted a *Tri-Nations Tournament* with Northern Ireland and Scotland on **March 28th** in the **Athletics Union League (AUL)**, Dublin.

The team are very appreciative of all the voluntary coaching and support they have received at these venues. They will continue training for what promises to be an exciting 2026.

### TSI GOLF

TSI golfers also have an action-packed programme for 2026, including five Golf Meetups, with three coaching sessions in the works. Some TSI golfers are committed to participating in the European Games in Arnhem and/or the British Games in Sheffield.

### TSI AGM

TSI held its **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** on **February 25th**. Annual Reports were circulated in advance and presented on the night by the Acting Chair Peter Heffernan, Secretary Sandra Doyle, Treasurer Sheila Gregan, Team Manager Harry Ward, and Media Coordinator Dee Keohane.

With well over 130 TSI members, it was very well supported.



*TSI footballers playing a match in Nenagh recently.*



*TSI athletes being put through their paces at Kilcullen Community Centre recently.*

### TSI MEDIA

The TSI Media team is gearing up for a busy few months with a variety of activities and events. Please encourage your family and friends to share and like our posts on our social media channels. You will find links to access these on our website.

### JOINING TSI

TSI extends the hand of friendship to all eligible athletes in Ireland, through our membership, which is open to all those who have had a transplant, are on dialysis, or are living donors, along with family and supporters. Membership gives access to insured training sessions and Meetups, and approved registration for the British, European and World competitions. But it is the camaraderie and mutual support among athletes that is valued most by our members.

Our training sessions and Meetups take place around Ireland,

once or twice a month. We change the venues regularly to ease the burden of travel for all members. and encourage them to try a variety of sports.

If you'd like to get involved, please email [transplantsportireland@gmail.com](mailto:transplantsportireland@gmail.com) to request an Expression of Interest form. Joining TSI is a way to move forward together and embrace the opportunities that come with transplant sport: the celebration of the gift of life, the opportunity to honour our donors and the promotion of organ donation.

### ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS

TSI is very proud of all its athletes who powerfully showcase that organ donation works, and organ donors save lives. At any one time in Ireland, there are over 650 people active on waiting lists for organ transplants, including heart, lung, liver, bone marrow, kidney, and pancreas. Making friends and family aware of your wishes regarding organ donation is the first key step towards saving lives.

TSI encourages everyone to *Have the Conversation, Say 'Yes' to Organ Donation!*

If you would like more information, check out the TSI website and our social media platforms. If you would like to get involved with the team or can help with sponsorship, email [transplantsportireland@gmail.com](mailto:transplantsportireland@gmail.com).



*TSI Athletes with Pentaque Trainer Harry Ward.*

Sky above, sand below, peace within.



## BEFORE YOU BOOK

# Essential reminders for holidays on dialysis



By **DEBORAH CERVI**  
Holiday Co-ordinator

**Taking a holiday when you're on dialysis is possible, but it does take some extra preparation. Before you book anything, it's important to be aware of a few key considerations that will help ensure your trip runs smoothly. With the right planning and realistic expectations, you can enjoy a safe and relaxing break, whether you're travelling in Ireland or heading further afield.**

### TRAVELLING ABROAD

If you are a dialysis patient and are planning a holiday abroad in 2026, it's important to remember **NOT** to book a holiday or flights before making arrangements for your dialysis treatment abroad.

To ensure you can receive treatment abroad, it is essential that you either contact a member of staff in your dialysis unit or reach out to our team here at the Irish Kidney Association for support.

You can submit an enquiry to us using our online form at <https://ika.ie/patient-holidays>, by contacting Deborah on 01-6205306 or by email to [deborah@ika.ie](mailto:deborah@ika.ie).

Given the significant amount of planning and paperwork required to plan treatment abroad, patients need to give a minimum of eight weeks' notice. Unfortunately, last minute bookings are not a realistic option.



### EUROPEAN HEALTH INSURANCE CARD

You must have a valid European Health Insurance Card, also known as the EHIC, before you travel. This card entitles you to free dialysis and healthcare in a public hospital in another EU or European Economic Area (EEA) state.

If you are an Irish citizen, Irish pensioner or an EU citizen living in Ireland you can apply for an EHIC:

- in person at your local health office
- by post
- online at [www.ehic.ie](http://www.ehic.ie)

### Alicante Travel Warning for Dialysis Patients



Please **DO NOT** book a holiday to the Alicante region in Spain.

The dialysis units in Alicante are under severe pressure with local patients requiring all available treatment slots.

The region is also one of the busiest tourist destinations in Spain, which adds to the demand. As a result, dialysis units in the Alicante area, including Benidorm and Torrevieja are currently full and **NOT** accepting holiday requests.

Please avoid booking holidays to these areas as we cannot guarantee dialysis while you are there.

# Save the Date



Applying for the card is **FREE** and they are generally posted to you within 10 working days. Do give yourself plenty of time to apply in case of delays, especially during busy holiday periods.

## IKA HOLIDAY HOMES

The IKA has three Holiday Homes in Ireland which are available, free of charge, for transplant and dialysis patients to use. These are located in Tramore, Co. Waterford, and in Killarney and Tralee in Co. Kerry.

Our application forms for 2026 are available on our newly designed website by clicking on the 'Patient Holidays' button on our homepage, or visiting [ika.ie/patientservices/patient-holidays](http://ika.ie/patientservices/patient-holidays). Alternatively, you can ask your dialysis nurse in your local dialysis unit or your local IKA Branch Secretary for an application form. You can also contact Donor House and ask for an application form to be posted or emailed to you.

As there is a huge demand for holidays each year that far exceeds the supply, we highly recommend you apply early to avoid disappoint. Preference is given to first-time holidaymakers.

Our Tramore holiday apartments will open from May to October in 2026 and our Kerry holiday homes remain open all year round. Please be aware however that dialysis in Kerry University Hospital is not available all year round.

## HOLIDAY DIALYSIS IN IRELAND

Unfortunately, it's still extremely difficult for patients on dialysis to holiday within Ireland. Irish dialysis units are generally at full capacity treating local patients, and therefore rarely have extra space to accept holiday patients.

If you would like any advice on destinations or have any questions regarding holiday dialysis or our holiday homes, please get in touch.

I wish everyone an enjoyable summer, and I hope that wherever you may travel, the season brings lots of happiness and memories you'll cherish.

*Deborah*



## 41st Annual Service of Remembrance & Thanksgiving

**SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 21ST, 2026**

**CHURCH OF THE HOLY CHILD  
THATCH ROAD, WHITEHALL,  
DUBLIN 9, D09 HX99**

We are pleased to announce that the **41st Annual Service of Remembrance & Thanksgiving** will be held at the Church of The Holy Child, on **Saturday, November 21st**.

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 using this link [ika.ie/service2026/](http://ika.ie/service2026/) or 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 safety of all, especially our many immunocompromised attendees. We kindly ask that you be seated at least ten minutes beforehand to ensure a smooth start. Some free car parking is available next to the Church of the Holy Child. The Church is just over 5 kilometres 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.

# Conversations That Matter: Reflections from the 2025 National Organ Donation Conference

The National Organ Donation Conference (NODC) 2025, themed “Conversations That Matter” took place in Galway on October 16th. Organised by the hospital-based Organ Donation Nurse Managers, who advocate for potential donors and their wishes, the event gathered over 100 critical care professionals from across the country.

By **GILLIAN SHANAHAN**  
Organ Donation Nurse Manager,  
HSE West and North West

A key focus of the conference was the importance of compassionate, timely end-of-life conversations. Research shows that consent rates rise when trained professionals communicate with empathy, honour donors’ wishes, and support families through the decision.

Organ Donation Nurse Managers play a vital role in coordinating care, the organ donation end-of-life conversation, and ensuring every potential donor’s wish has the chance to be realised.

The day was enriched by moving real-life stories from both donor and recipient families. Martina Goggin of the Strange Boat Foundation, Circle of Life Garden, Salthill, spoke about the significance of being asked the question of donation and how the delivery of that conversation shaped her family’s experience.

Pamela Begg, a critical care nurse



*Gillian Shanahan, Organ Donation Nurse Manager, HSE West North West; Alceina O'Brien, Transplant Recipient; Nikki Phillips, Organ Donation Nurse Manager, HSE Dublin and Midlands and Bernie Nohilly, Organ Donation Nurse Manager, Mid-West Health Region.*

and member of a donor family, shared her dual perspective, both as a sister of a donor and as a professional supporting families through similar journeys in the Intensive Care Unit.

An inspiring moment came from Alceina O'Brien, a nurse and transplant recipient, who shared her powerful story of resilience.

After years on dialysis and facing the challenges of chronic illness, Alceina received a life-saving double

transplant. Her story of gratitude and recovery powerfully demonstrated the transformative impact of organ donation.

As Ireland continues to move forward under the Human Tissue Act, the National Organ Donation Conference remains a cornerstone event, promoting a culture of empathy, understanding, and respect in every donation-related conversation.

## SUPPORT MAGAZINE AUTUMN/WINTER PRIZE WINNER

The winner of the luxurious **Two-Night Escape** to **The Grace, Westport Estate** was **Cecile McInerney** from Sutton, Dublin.

# Irish Nephrology Society Winter Scientific Meeting

The Irish Nephrology Society (INS) Winter Scientific Meeting was held at the Imperial Hotel in Cork, from January 23rd-24th 2026.

It was an inspiring gathering of established, as well as up and coming, healthcare professionals and researchers from across the country who are working in the field of kidney healthcare.



By COLIN WHITE  
National Advocacy Manager

For the Irish Kidney Association (IKA), the meeting reinforced what our patients tell us every day – kidney care in Ireland is delivered by a dedicated, world-class clinical community – but that community is being asked to do more with less, against a backdrop of rising patient numbers and a healthcare system that has yet to fully resource the renal services that patients need and deserve.

The level of involvement of the IKA in the formal programme is indicative of the very positive working relationship between the INS and the IKA.

On the Friday, Colette Hawe, from our staff team in the Munster Kidney Support Centre, shared her lived experience of pregnancy after a kidney transplant and on the Saturday, during the opening session, our CEO, Carol Moore, delivered a very well received 30-minute presentation on *The Patient Voice in Irish Nephrology*, during which she outlined the IKA's vision of how the future of



Carol Moore, Prof. Austin Stack, Dr. Conor Judge and Dr. Claire Kennedy.

kidney healthcare could be.

Several themes from the meeting resonated with our on-going advocacy activity. The update from the working group leading the scoping exercise to develop a national End Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD) data registry was of particular interest.

The IKA had previously arranged for five representatives from its National Member Forum to join the working group to give the patient and family member perspective. They also highlighted how such a registry would help inform the IKA's planning of its services.

The meeting also heard presentations on the potential to expand home dialysis therapies. This is a priority the IKA strongly

supports, as home therapies offer many patients greater autonomy, flexibility, and quality of life.

The patient voice featured prominently in discussions, reflecting a growing recognition within the clinical community that patients are not simply the subjects of care decisions, but essential partners in shaping them.

The IKA acknowledges the work of the INS in convening such a substantive and forward-looking meeting to develop the profession within the country. We look forward to continuing collaboration to translate the discussions into action – in the clinic, in research and in policy, as well as in the lives of kidney patients across Ireland.





### HONOURING TIERNAN GRENNAN

We were deeply honoured to welcome Carol and Willie Grennan to the 'Circle of Life' Garden in Salthill. They presented a generous cheque for €1,400 to our Branch in memory of their son, Tiernan, who sadly passed away in May 2023.

In the midst of their grief, the Grennan family made the brave and generous decision to donate Tiernan's kidneys and liver, saving three lives.

Each year, Tiernan's GAA club, Clodiagh Gaels in Offaly, hosts a golf tournament in his honour, donating the proceeds to a chosen charity. We are so grateful that they chose the Galway Branch as this year's recipient.

The 'Circle of Life' Garden is a particularly special place for the Grennan family, as last year a tree was planted there in Tiernan's memory by the Strange Boat Donor Foundation.

Thank you to the Grennan family and Clodiagh Gaels GAA for your incredible support. It was a privilege to meet you and celebrate Tiernan's lasting legacy.



A cheque for €1,981 was presented to the IKA from Cisco Oranmore. L-R: Jakub Brzezckowski, Niall Murphy, Michelle Hurley, Eoin Madden, Chair of IKA Galway, and Ryan McDonagh.

# GALWAY

BY MICHELLE GERAGHTY



L-R Willie Grennan, Carol Grennan, Eoin Madden, Michael Walsh, Peadar O'hici.



L-R: At the Cisco Information Day were: Patrick Eustace, Audrey Bleach, Michelle Geraghty, Kate Zenkevica, Michelle Hurley and Jakub Brzezckowski.

### CISCO INFORMATION DAY

A huge thanks to Michelle Hurley from Cisco, who kindly invited us to chat to employees at their offices in Oranmore about the services provided by the Irish Kidney Association and our Branch. Our PRO and transplant recipient Michelle Geraghty was welcomed by a group of Cisco employees in person and online. She was joined by Cisco employee and transplant recipient Patrick Eustace and together they shared their experiences of kidney failure, dialysis and transplant, and how the IKA supported them throughout. We'd like to express our gratitude to Cisco for their continued support and for their generous donation of €1,981.

### KARATE CLUB'S '100 KATA CHALLENGE'

On March 2nd, Branch members Eoin Madden, Michelle Geraghty, and Tereasa Smith were welcomed to the Galway Shotokan Karate Club by instructors Greg Cotter, Mary Flanagan, and Roberto Martin to present a cheque for €1,165 to

the IKA.

The proceeds were raised from their '100 Kata Challenge' fundraiser, which saw participants perform 100 individual kata; a sequence of defensive and offensive movements that requires significant focus, stamina, and skill.

During the visit, Eoin spoke to the children about kidney health and explained that the funds raised will directly support kidney patients and their families.

Eoin, Michelle and Tereasa were even invited to take part in a mini kata demonstration, but it's safe to say they'll be leaving the karate to the pros!

### GAMING VAULT IRELAND FUNDRAISER

We're very grateful to Thomas Moss, one of our newest members and all at Gaming Vault Ireland for nominating the IKA as their chosen charity partner at their recent fundraiser. Together, they raised an incredible €2,400 which will go a long way to support kidney patients in Galway.

# GALWAY CONTD...



Members of the Galway Shotokan Karate Club present a cheque for €1,165 to the Galway Branch IKA.



Alceina O'Brien and her brother Jonny at their Fitness Fun Day at the 'Train Station' Gym.

## FITNESS FUN DAY AT THE TRAIN STATION GYM

On March 14th, our Member Forum Branch Representative, Alceina O'Brien joined forces with her brother Jonny, to organise a Fitness Fun Day fundraiser for the IKA at Jonny's gym, the 'Train Station' to mark World Kidney Day. The day was jam-packed with activities from 10am to 5pm, including a masterclass, a cycle-a-ton and a raffle.

Throughout the day, gym members were joined by Corrib Rangers FC, West United FC, Loughrea Tennis Club and Durinho Brazilian Jiu-jitsu Club to virtually cycle from Galway to the National Kidney Support Centre on the grounds of Beaumont Hospital.

Alceina, who received the gift of life when she received a double transplant in 2024, was joined by our Chair Eoin Madden and consultant nephrologist Dr. Niamh Kieran who shared their lived experiences of kidney health,



Eoin Madden, Galway Branch Chair and Thomas Moss of Gaming Vault Ireland.

dialysis, transplantation and organ donation.

Members of the Branch joined throughout the day to help out at the information stand, distribute

donor cards and share their stories.

By the end of the day, the event had raised a staggering €20,000 for

*Continued next page...*



Jonny O'Brien with some of the participants in the virtual cycle to the National Kidney Support Centre.



Eoin Madden, Branch Chair received a cheque for €6,150 from Dean Walsh and his daughter Emma.



the IKA and donations are still coming in!

The Branch would like to express sincere thanks to Johnny, Ronan and everyone at the 'Train Station' gym for all their hard work and support, and to the team at Mr. Waffle and Ground & Co. for providing delicious refreshments throughout the day. We're incredibly grateful to everyone who joined in the fun on the day and generously donated to the fundraiser either in person or online.

At the same event, we also caught up with Dean Walsh to receive his cheque for €6,250. Last year, Dean cycled 5km a day during the month of July. Dean and his daughter Emma joined his football team West United FC in the cycle-a-thon at Alceina's event.

#### WORLD KIDNEY DAY

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of the wonderful volunteers who joined us on March 7th at ALDI stores in Westside, Athenry, Mountbellew and Loughrea, and Dunnes Stores in Knocknacarra and Westside. The sun shone down on us all day and we were overwhelmed by the support of the public at all locations. It's always a privilege to speak to the public about organ donation and kidney health, issues that affect so many in our communities.

Special thanks to Avril Ní Shearcaigh (Sharkey) who organised a World Kidney Day at the SPAR on Inishmore, the largest of the Aran Islands. Thanks to the generosity of the locals, she raised an incredible €1,853.

#### BRANCH MEETINGS

Our February meeting saw a record 16 members get together to share updates, plan fundraisers and

## GALWAY CONTD...



Members at the February Galway Branch meeting at Scotty's American Diner.

chat about the ups and downs of living with kidney disease.

We would like to express our gratitude to Scotty's American Diner

for once again hosting us and providing refreshments.

Follow us on social media for news of our upcoming meetings

## CLARE

BY SHARON FITZGERALD

#### CONDOLENCES

We are deeply saddened following the loss of Dermot Hayes at the start of the year. He played



Dermot Hayes, RIP

a key part in getting the IKA Clare Branch up and running where he served as Chairperson. The Ennis renal dialysis centre was especially close to his heart, and he was instrumental in the successful campaign to have it built.

He was a lifelong activist, and he will be sorely missed by Branch members and the wider community in Clare. Condolences

to his wife Marian and daughters Aimee and Marese at this sad time. May Dermot rest in peace.

#### BRANCH CHRISTMAS LUNCH

The Clare branch held its Christmas lunch in Ennis last December. It was well attended, and members were treated to a delicious meal and wonderful music.



Musicians at the Christmas Lunch.



Some of the members at the Clare Christmas Lunch in December 2025.

#### WORLD KIDNEY DAY

A big thank you to everyone who volunteered in Clare on March 7th. You made our World Kidney Day fundraiser a great success. Special thanks to Dolly Whelan, John Mason, Eoghan O'Ceirín, Lisa O'Dwyer, Mary Abbott, and Sharon Fitzgerald for organising fundraisers in their areas.



# DONEGAL

By PATRICIA CALLAGHAN

Warm greetings from the Donegal Branch. We hope everyone enjoyed a peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all those who fundraised and donated to the Donegal Branch over the past number of months. Your generosity and continued support are greatly appreciated and make a meaningful difference to the work we do.

## OPTUM, LETTERKENNY

Once again, Mark McLaughlin's team at Optum in Letterkenny kindly chose the National Kidney Support Centre in Beaumont, in memory of wee Christian McCullough, to receive a donation of €852.43 on behalf of the CCP organisation. We are extremely grateful to Mark and his team for their generosity and ongoing support.

## CARE PACKAGES

At Christmas, the Donegal Branch organised care packages for all patients receiving dialysis at University Hospital Letterkenny. We would also like to acknowledge and thank the staff of the Dialysis Unit for their assistance in distributing these packages to patients.

## WORLD KIDNEY DAY

To mark World Kidney Day, one of our members, Seamy McDermott, delivered an informative talk on kidney health to Transition Year students at Finn Valley College. The presentation was very well received, and it was encouraging to see such engagement from the students.

Our members were also actively involved in raising awareness for WKD, volunteering at ALDI and Dunnes Stores throughout County Donegal on Saturday, March 7th. We



Seamy McDermott with staff and pupils at Finn Valley College promoting kidney health.

would like to sincerely thank everyone who gave their time to support this initiative.

## FEBRUARY BRANCH MEETING

In February, we welcomed Deirdre Markey and Fiona Aherne from Donor House to a Branch meeting in Donegal. Many members had questions regarding support services for patients who previously attended appointments in Beaumont but have since been transferred to Galway. Fiona delivered a very informative presentation which addressed many of these concerns. During their visit, they also met with staff at the Dialysis Ward in University Hospital Letterkenny to discuss some of the challenges faced by patients travelling to Galway for appointments.

## ATU WELLNESS WEEK

Additionally, the Branch hosted an information stand at Atlantic Technological University (ATU) as part of their Wellness Week on Thursday, March 12th. It was particularly encouraging to see

the level of interest among young people in learning more about organ donation.

## MALIN TO MIZEN CYCLE

Looking ahead, we are very much looking forward to May 25th, when our committee member Seamy McDermott will undertake an impressive cycle from Malin to Mizén and back again in support of the IKA and Cancer Care. We wish Seamy a safe journey and every success with this remarkable challenge.

Finally, on behalf of all our members in the Donegal Branch, we wish everyone a very enjoyable summer.



Vincent Callaghan, Jennifer McDermott and Patricia Callaghan at ATU Letterkenny.



### CHRISTMAS PARTY

Patients and family members enjoyed a Christmas party lunch hosted by our Branch in the Glasshouse Hotel on December 14th. All present savoured the tasty food served up by staff of the Glasshouse. Afterwards as local musical maestro Hughie Lowry entertained, patients watched their tickets as our Branch members held free draws for spot prizes.

Thanks to all who donated prizes and to dialysis staff members who attended and made the afternoon more enjoyable.

### FUNDRAISER

Well done to Karina O'Dowd from Gurteen, Co. Sligo on raising €1,500 for the refurbishment of the IKA National Kidney Support Centre in the grounds of Beaumont Hospital. Kidney patient Karina raised the money through an iDonate page.

On the completion of her fundraising, Karina wrote: *"I made it to my target of €1,500 to help towards the reopening of the Support Centre. Thank you so much to all who donated, I appreciate it so much. I'm so happy to be able to contribute to the IKA"*.

### WORLD KIDNEY DAY

Branch members and volunteers had a good response from shoppers to our collections in ALDI and Dunnes Stores on Saturday, March 7th to mark World Kidney Day. The day in the stores raised funds for the Branch to assist with services for kidney patients and their families. It was also an opportunity to meet many generous shoppers who stopped to chat and leave a donation.

We would like to thank all who donated, the volunteer Transition

# SLIGO

By BRIAN McHUGH



Marie Fowley, Sligo IKA, Zana McGowan, Dialysis Nurse, Brian McHugh, Sligo IKA, Fr. Brian Conlon, Hospital Chaplain and Eileen Nolan, Sligo IKA.

Year students from the Ursuline College, and the management and staff of ALDI and Dunnes Stores for their help and courtesies on the day.



Fidelma Hanley

### MEMBER FORUM REPRESENTATIVE

Fidelma Hanley is our Branch representative on the recently created IKA National Member Forum. A former nurse in Sligo University Hospital, Fidelma is an active member of our Branch.

The Forum was created to unite patient voices across Ireland with one goal – to ensure patient experiences directly shape the future of the IKA.

### CREATING AWARENESS OF KIDNEY HEALTH

Members of our Branch joined nurses from the Sligo Renal Dialysis unit to hold an awareness and information stand in the foyer of Sligo University Hospital on Thursday, March 12th to mark World Kidney Day.

They distributed material encouraging people to protect their kidney health by learning about the



At the literature stand in Sligo University Hospital, Dialysis Nurse Grace, Dialysis Clinical Nurse Manager, Cheryl McCaul, Marie Fowley and Eileen Nolan.

risk factors and seeking early testing. The nurses brought along tasty goodies for those visiting the stand.

### DERMOT HAYES, RIP

Many in Sligo mourned the death of the former Chairman and co-founder of Clare IKA Branch, Dermot Hayes in early January. Dermot spent a number of years in Sligo and Tubbercurry in the 1980s where he worked with several voluntary organisations.

He also helped Brian McHugh in setting up *The Sligo Weekender* newspaper in 1983 where his organisational skills were invaluable. A dialysis patient, Dermot died peacefully in the Mater Hospital, Dublin, aged 71, on January 3rd. May he rest in peace.

### DEERPARK DONATION

Our Branch wishes to thank Deerpark Transport in Boyle for their generous donation of €850. The cheque presentation was made at the branch Christmas party lunch.

# SLIGO CONTD...



*Eileen Nolan, Sligo IKA; Marie Fowley, Sligo IKA; Camillus McQuaid, Deerpark Transport; Maureen McQuaid, Deerpark Transport; Sean Fowley, Sligo IKA, Geraldine McHugh, Sligo IKA.*



*Michael McHugh presents the cheque to Sligo Branch Chairman Sean Fowley at the Garden of Reflection in Doorly Park.*

## GARDEN OF REFLECTION

Thanks to Michael McHugh for his donation of €1,000 on behalf of Moylough Concrete. Michael, who is a long-time supporter of the IKA, requested that the money be used for the upkeep of the IKA Garden of Reflection at Doorly Park, which he was instrumental in putting in place.

## BRANCH MEETS MINISTER IN PUSH FOR NEW RENAL UNIT

We were delighted to receive a

last-minute invitation for a small Branch delegation to meet with the Minister for Health, Jennifer Carroll MacNeill on February 12th. The Minister was in Sligo for meetings with the HSE.

Our discussions centred around our ongoing campaign for a new Renal Dialysis unit in Sligo. The delegation again emphasised the necessity for a new unit and fully briefed the Minister on the shortcomings of the current facility, both in the dialysis unit and the clinic area.

Assistant Secretary Geraldine McHugh gave the Minister detailed summary documentation of all the correspondence she has had with the various Ministers for Health, HSE officials and hospital management since the Branch started to push for a new unit in 2018.

During the hour-long meeting the Minister responded positively to our presentation and undertook to re-examine the project and report back to us. Thanks to Frank Feighan TD and Eamon Scanlon TD for their support in arranging the meeting.



*Geraldine McHugh, Sligo IKA Branch Assistant Secretary; Anna Mitchell Kenny, Branch Secretary; Ita McMorrow-Leyden, Branch member and Minister for Health Jennifer Carroll MacNeill.*

# LOUTH/MEATH

By SANDY FLANAGAN

What a busy few months we have had in the Louth/Meath Branch organising our World Kidney Day (WKD) Fundraiser 2026. It was fantastic to see our Branch revitalised for the event. We had lots of volunteers sign up to join from our meetings and quite a few through the IKA volunteer campaign.

## WORLD KIDNEY DAY

Our WKD fundraiser was a huge success with Volunteers in ALDI and Dunnes Stores across Ashbourne, Ardee, Drogheda, Dundalk, Navan, and Centra, Blackrock. It was a mammoth effort for everyone involved. As WKD co-ordinator, I was grateful for all the support from our wonderful volunteers, some of whom are not IKA members, but came out to support their family and friends.

We loved to hear all the stories over the weekend, some sad and some happy. It was particularly great to connect with patients, their families and friends and ultimately raise awareness of organ donation across Louth and Meath.

The icing on the cake was the extreme generosity of the public over the weekend. We are proud to share that we raised an incredible €8,000 and would like to thank everyone who helped us achieve this.

## BALTRAY GOLF CLUB CHARITY PARTNER

In other news, Baltray Golf Club have nominated the IKA as their Charity Partner for 2026. We are absolutely thrilled with this news.

# SUPPORT DEADLINE

The deadline for submission of Branch notes and high resolution photos for the **SUMMER** edition of **SUPPORT** is July 12th, 2026.  
Email: [supportmag@ika.ie](mailto:supportmag@ika.ie)

# SLIGO CHRISTMAS PARTY





L-R: Mairead and Robert Thomas.



L-R: Esther Munnelly, Ann Gilmartin, Dervilla McGranaghan.

The Mayo Branch were delighted to hold our Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving in September 2025. This was the first Service since before COVID and was in memory of our former Chairperson Marie Mellon who held the position for many years.

We had a large turnout to honour the 90 transplant and dialysis patients in Mayo who are deceased since 2019, and it was a lovely

# MAYO

BY LISA MELLON



L-R: Frances Coleman, Elma Magner Moran, Karina Mullaney, Mary McBrearty, Lisa Mellon.



L-R: Maureen and Michelle Bourke.



L-R: Catherine Egan and Rachel Bourke.



L-R: Lorraine Kicullen, Edel Munnelly, Anna-Marie McHale.

opportunity to get together in the beautiful Father Peyton Centre in Attymass.

Thanks to our musicians, Catherine Egan and Rachel Bourke for the wonderful music, and to the nurses of the Castlebar Renal Unit, Elma, Karina and Mary, for attending.

Also, warm congratulations to Elma Magner-Moran on her recent retirement as CNM2 of the Renal Unit.

We wish to give our sincere

gratitude to Maureen Bourke, who has recently retired as Branch Chairperson. Maureen has been the backbone of our Branch for many years and has been instrumental in organising our Church Gate Collections and activities for Organ Donor Awareness Week.

Thank you for your tireless commitment and energy, Maureen – we'll still be coming to you for advice!

## TIPPERARY

We would like to congratulate David and Seamus Duggan, their family members, colleagues, and business partners, on the completion of their remarkable Tour de Eire fundraiser for the IKA. Inspired by their cycling buddy and our own Francis Hogan, who is living with chronic kidney disease and currently undergoing dialysis, the Duggan brothers were inspired to raise funds by pledging a donation of one euro for every kilometre cycled on the Tour de Eire, which covers an incredible total of 22,000km. As their cycle



neared its conclusion, Francis joined up with David and Seamus for the final stretch along the Greenway into Waterford.

Our last meeting was held in the Order of Malta in Thurles on Wednesday, February 18th. We were delighted to welcome a new

member and begin planning for World Kidney Day collections in Cahir, Clonmel, Nenagh, Thurles and Tipperary which were a great success. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our selfless volunteers and all who supported us in any way on World Kidney Day.



The dark winter months didn't put a stop to the fundraising efforts of the wonderful people of Wexford, who together raised an incredible €5,000 to support the renovation of the National Kidney Support Centre (NKSC).

#### NKSC FUNDRAISERS

On December 7th, the Silvermines Vintage Club organised an 'All Vehicle Christmas Light Up Road Run'. The event was a great success raising €2,772.

The Fethard Bingo Committee very kindly donated €500 from their end of year funds to Wexford Branch in aid of the NKSC.

Marie Hayes collected bottles on the return scheme in her workplace at the National Opera House, Wexford and donated a generous €700 to the Wexford Branch.

And on Christmas Day, Liam Buttle was joined by a large group of friends who braved the elements once again to participate in the Annual Christmas Day Swim for the Wexford Branch. A total of €1,016 was raised on the day.

## WEXFORD

By DORA KENT



Liam Buttle and friends braving the elements for the annual Christmas Day Swim at Ballinesker beach.



Walter Kent with the organisers of the annual Wexford Credit Union Night Run.

Our sincere thanks to everyone who organised and took part in these events.

#### ANNUAL WEXFORD CREDIT UNION NIGHT RUN

Walter Kent met with organisers of the Annual Wexford Credit Union Night Run on Wexford's Quay front to launch this year's run which took place on Thursday, February 5th. Well done to all who took part.

#### WORLD KIDNEY DAY

We want to thank all the volunteers who turned out on

Saturday, March 7th to collect in the ALDI stores to mark World Kidney Day in New Ross, Wexford, Newtown Road, Wexford Trinity Street, Enniscorthy, Gorey and Bunclody.

#### CONDOLENCES

Finally, on behalf of everyone in the Wexford Branch, we would like to extend our sympathies to the families of Thomas McCarty, Susan Roche and Jason Roche who passed away recently.

May they rest in peace.



Silvermines Vintage Club presenting cheque for €2,772.00 to Wexford Branch.



Marie Hayes presenting a cheque to Eddie Kehoe (left) and Walter Kent from her Return Scheme Fundraiser at work.



Yvonne Lawlor (centre), Fethard Bingo Committee, presenting a cheque to Dora Kent and Eddie Kehoe.



Some photos from the Silvermines Vintage Club Christmas Lights Road Run.

# CARLOW

BY ORLA CANNING

## WORLD KIDNEY DAY

We would really like to thank all our members, volunteers, and friends and family who came out to support us during our World Kidney Day collection at the Fairgreen Shopping Centre in Carlow Town. The day was a huge success and none of it would have been possible without you all. The kindness and generosity we saw in our local community was immense. We would like to say a special word of thanks to the management and staff of Fairgreen for facilitating us on the day.

## LITTLE STARS CRECHE FUNDRAISER

We would also like to say a massive thank you to Susan McLoughlin, owner of Little Stars Creche in Quinagh, Carlow, for fundraising for the IKA over Christmas with the parents and children who attend her Creche.

Susan presented us with a cheque in the Fairgreen Shopping Centre during our collection. Her Dad, Con O'Neill, a dialysis patient



Orla Canning receiving a cheque from Susan McLoughlin, her daughter Susan and grandchildren Ella, Evan and Ayla.

from Carlow and fond member of our Branch was also there on the day with his wife Mary, daughter Susan and grandchildren Ella, Evan and Ayla. I think it's fair to say our younger helpers brought all the fun and were an excellent help. Special thanks to Evan and Alya.

## NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

We are always looking for new members to join us and welcome anyone to get in touch with us via

email, phone or through our Facebook Page – 'Carlow IKA Branch'. We will be in touch with all our Members in the coming months as we try to plan a social get together for everyone. If you are not receiving our updates and would like to hear from us via text or email please contact Orla, Branch Secretary, so she can keep you informed.

Wishing everyone a Healthy and Happy Easter.



# WATERFORD

By FRANCES MOYNIHAN

## VALENTINE'S DAY GATHERING

Members of the Waterford Branch gathered on February 14th at the Riverstown Apartments, Tramore, for a Valentine's Day get-together that highlighted the true spirit of community and connection, reminding us all of the importance of coming together and supporting one another.

With 23 members in attendance, the afternoon was filled with warmth, friendship, and a sense of belonging. It was a wonderful opportunity for members to reconnect, welcome new faces, and enjoy meaningful conversations in a relaxed and supportive environment.

Catering, provided by the House of Food, Waterford, added to the welcoming and homely atmosphere.

We thank all who attended and hope to have a similar gathering in the Summer.



(L-R): Michael Gallwey, Branch Secretary, Eileen Long, Mark Frisby, Branch Treasurer, Frances Moynihan, Branch Chairperson and Joe Moynihan, Branch member.

## CHRISTMAS JUMPER NIGHT FUNDRAISER

A particularly special moment on the night was the presentation of a cheque by Eileen Long of Portlawn to the Waterford Branch. The funds were raised during the annual Christmas Jumper Night, organised by Eileen, her family, and a dedicated team of volunteers at the Forge Pub, Portlawn.

We extend our sincere thanks to Shaun and Brendan of the Forge Pub for their continued support.

This fundraiser is a shining example of how community generosity and teamwork can make a real difference.

## TWO DECADES OF DEDICATION

On November 26th, 2025 the Branch held its last meeting of 2025 at the Riverstown Apartments Tramore. Those in attendance had the privilege of honouring Ray Halligan, in deep appreciation of his extraordinary service. Ray stepped down after 16 remarkable years as Chairperson, following many years of committed involvement as a long-standing member of the Branch.

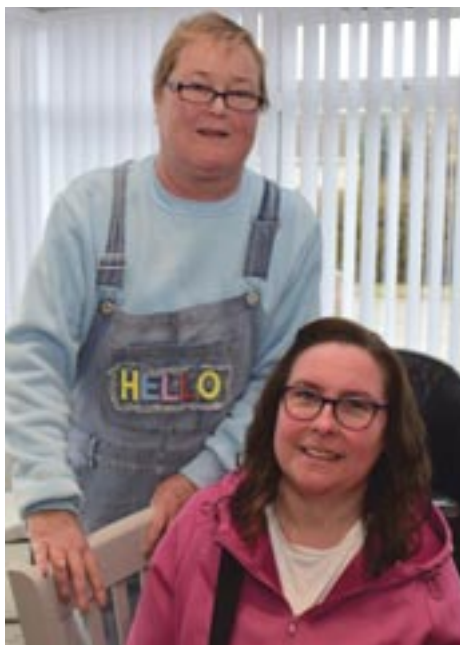
During his tenure, he also represented the Branch with distinction on the National Board.

Members spoke warmly and sincerely of Ray's unwavering

## VALENTINE'S DAY GATHERING - PHOTOS BY JOE CASHIN



Debbie and Michael Lanigan.



Caitriona Culleton and Elaine Power.



John Meade and Tom O'Neill.



Tristan Ungapen and Geraldine Falconer.



Denise Regan and Fiona O'Neill.



**(L-R): Frances Moynihan, Ray Halligan and Michael Gallwey.**

dedication. His commitment to supporting the work of the IKA at local level was clear in everything he did.

Ray was frequently in contact with renal patients, offering guidance, reassurance, and genuine care. He travelled throughout the county in his role, ensuring patients felt supported and connected.

Alongside his dedication, Ray's quick wit and love of a good joke brought warmth and ease to meetings and events. His humour has brightened many challenging moments and strengthened the sense of community within the Branch.

The members of the Waterford Branch extend our deepest gratitude to Ray for his tireless work, his kindness, and the laughter he brought to us all. We also offer heartfelt thanks to his wife Vicky, for her constant support over the years.

### BRANCH OFFICER APPOINTMENTS

We are delighted to announce that the role of Chairperson has been taken up by Frances Moynihan, ably assisted by Branch Secretary Michael Gallwey, and newly appointed Branch Treasurer Mark Frisby.

### CONDOLENCES

It is with deep sadness that we acknowledge the passing of transplant recipient Eddie Sullivan of Ballyvad, Co. Waterford. For many years, he was a tireless fundraiser for the Waterford Branch, leaving a legacy of compassion, community spirit, and selfless service.

We wish to extend our deepest sympathies, heartfelt thanks, and sincere condolences to Emily and to all of Eddie's family and loved ones at this sad time.



**Eddie Sullivan, RIP**

# OFFALY

By **MARJORIE STANLEY**

### NATIONAL MEMBER FORUM

We are delighted to inform you that John Broderick has been nominated as Offaly Representative on the National Member Forum, representing kidney patients from our Branch. We want to thank John for accepting this position and hope that he and the Branch will benefit from his experience. John is a living kidney donor, having donated a kidney to his wife.

### WORLD KIDNEY DAY

Unfortunately, the Branch was unable to take part in World Kidney Day this year due to the lack of volunteers and some members being unwell. If any member would like to host a Kidney Information Session in your workplace, social group or community, Marjorie (Secretary) has supplies and she would be delighted to help you with the organisation of the event. Marjorie can be contacted on 087-2140414.

### CONDOLENCES

We are deeply sad to share that during the year, we lost some members of the Branch, among them Valerie McDermott, Alan Browne, Ignatius Mangan and Mary Cullinane. We would like to extend our deepest sympathy to their families and to all members who suffered a bereavement during the past year.

Valerie and Mary were very faithful attendees at Branch meetings. We want to thank Valerie's family who faithfully drove her to and from IKA meetings and functions in Tullamore. Mary attended Branch meetings as long as her health would allow, and she also offered lifts to another family from her locality to enable them to attend meetings and functions.

Ignatius and his wife Dina were great supporters of the Pat Colgan 'Pedal the Peaks Cycle' and helped out with stewarding and catering.

Alan's wife Martina is organising a fundraiser for the IKA details below.

We would like to extend good wishes to all our members who may be unwell at present, in particular, those who are on dialysis and those waiting for the call for an organ transplant. We also think of members who may be caring for family

members who are unwell. The support of family and friends means so much, especially while managing a chronic illness and may not be able to do the things they once could.

### PEDAL THE PEAKS CYCLE

The Tullamore Cycling and Touring Club (TCTC) have once again chosen the Offaly Branch of the IKA as their beneficiary of proceeds from the Pat Colgan Pedal the Peaks Cycle in August. Keep an eye on Offaly IKA and TCTC Facebook pages for the date of the cycle and the Spinathon in the Bridge Centre. The cycle is open to everybody so please consider taking part on the day if this is something that interests you.

The Offaly IKA Branch help with stewarding and catering at Kinnitty Community Centre on the day of the cycle. Volunteers are required and all help is much appreciated.

### JOINT MEMORIAL WALK

One of our members, Martina Browne is organising a Memorial Walk, in memory of her brother Michael and her late husband Alan who was a kidney patient. The Walk takes place on Sunday, July 28th, most likely in Lough Boora Parklands. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates. It promises to be a good day out and all money raised will be divided between the IKA and Dochas Cancer Support Services.

Some volunteers will be needed on the day and with preparations beforehand. Your support will be much appreciated.

### BRANCH MEETINGS

Sadly, Branch meetings are poorly attended. We appreciate that many members are very busy with work and family commitments. We also understand that members who are on dialysis may not have the energy to come to meetings.

The Branch Office: Paul, (Chairperson and Board Member), Leona (Treasurer), Marjorie (Secretary) and John (Member Forum Representative) would welcome any suggestions for Branch activities from Branch members. The Branch is here to support kidney patients and their families and carers and to promote kidney health in the wider community.



It has been a busy and positive few months for the Limerick Branch of the Irish Kidney Association, and it has been wonderful to see the continued support from our members, volunteers and the wider community

#### 45 DRIVE FUNDRAISER

Before Christmas, one of our members, Pat Hayes, together with his friend Sharon Cavanagh, organised a fantastic 45 Drive (card game) fundraiser. The event was a great success and raised an incredible €3,920 for the IKA. A sincere thank you to everyone who attended and supported the night – it was a great example of community spirit.

#### SAYING THANKS WITH SOS COOKIES

In December, thanks to the generosity of SOS Cookies, we were also delighted to present cookies to the staff in the Renal Ward, Dialysis Unit and Renal Clinic as a small token of appreciation for the incredible work they do and the care they provide to kidney patients every day.

#### RENAL WARD TOUR AND THE LIAM MCCARTHY CUP

We also had the pleasure of visiting the Ward 9C, the new renal ward, and were given a tour around to see the new facilities, and spoke with the Team about how we can support patients there

Following this we were invited to a fantastic morning that was organised in the Dialysis Unit, by renal nurse Helen Kennedy, where the Liam McCarthy Cup was brought around to the patients by Tipperary hurler Jason Forde. It was a heartwarming afternoon enjoyed by all.

# LIMERICK

By DEBBIE SHEEHY

#### BRANCH SOCIAL

Following the Christmas period, members of the branch enjoyed a lovely lunch in the Woodlands House Hotel in Adare, giving everyone an opportunity to meet, chat and spend time together. We hope to continue these social events in the coming months.

#### WORLD KIDNEY DAY

Most recently, we held collections on Saturday, March 7th for World Kidney Day, with volunteers fundraising in four locations – ALDI Castletroy, Dunnes Stores Jetland, ALDI Newcastle West, and outside the Gaelic Grounds before the Limerick v Cork Allianz Hurling League match. The public were very generous, and many conversations were had with current patients on dialysis, family members and transplanted patients.

We were apprehensive about collecting at the match, but it had been well organised in advance, with volunteers lined up and merchandise stands ready to go. And with a little cajoling the buckets started to fill up! We plan to repeat this once a year going forward.

The day was a great success, and we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who donated and to all the volunteers who gave their time to help on the day. Our



45 Drive cheque presentation (L-R): Debbie Sheehy, Sharon Cavanagh, Pat Hayes and James Riordan.

deepest appreciation to the volunteers who turned up to man the stands, without them the day would not have been as successful as it was – Aine & Dave Geraghty, Denis O'Grady, Glenn Cooper, Pat Hayes, Maria Costello, Hanna Vasekin, Patrick O'Donovan, Declan McCarthy, Marina Torrens, Lisa Leamy, Louise Riordan, Ross Curtin, Deirdre Sheehy and Pamela Fogarty.

A big thank you to the management at each location for assisting with our fundraisers, and to the team in Donor House for all their support. Between all four locations, €3,140 was raised.

#### CONGRATULATIONS

On a very happy note, we were delighted to hear that our Secretary, James Riordan, received a kidney transplant shortly after Christmas. We wish James continued good health and a strong recovery.

#### BRANCH MEETING

Our next Branch meeting will take place in the Library in Newcastle West on Tuesday, April 28th, and all members and any new members are very welcome to attend.

We look forward to the months ahead and to continuing to support one another while raising awareness of kidney health across our community.



Jason Forde with the Liam McCarthy Cup



### RENAL PATIENTS INFORMATION DAY

We held a very successful Renal Patients Information Day in Hotel Kilmore, Cavan on Saturday, March 14th. The event was well attended, with lots of information shared around haemodialysis and home dialysis, low clearance, pre-dialysis, and post-transplant concerns.

We are very grateful to our excellent guest speakers on the day, Olivia McCormick, CNM and Ciara Leddy from Cavan Dialysis Unit. Our Branch Treasurer Karl Cronin was also in attendance and kindly shared information to attendees about the services provided by the IKA.

We would like to thank everyone who attended the event. It was a great opportunity to learn, ask questions and meet other kidney patients.

### RECENT FUNDRAISERS

It's been a busy few months for fundraisers in Cavan/Monaghan. We'd like to thank everyone for taking the time to organise events and for their very generous donations including:

The committee of Gaelic For Mothers and Others (G4MO) Templeport Gaelic Football Club for their kind donation of €1,258, proceeds from their recent Ladies Blitz.

Teresa & Gene O'Kelly who donated €1,000 from the proceeds of their Memorial Tractor Run. The tractor run was held on December 21st in memory of their son Dessie (RIP).

Monaghan Cars, Bikes and Coffee who donated €1,007 to the IKA, proceeds of their annual rally.

### WORLD KIDNEY DAY

I was delighted to join Olivia McCormick, CNM; Jackie Larkin,

# CAVAN/MONAGHAN

By PAUL DONOHOE



*Karl Cronin, Cavan/Monaghan Treasurer; Paul Donohoe, Cavan/Monaghan Chairman; Aodhagan Cullen, Cavan/Monaghan Board Member; Rose Dalton, Cavan/Monaghan Secretary; Colm Chambers, Cavan/Monaghan, National Member Forum Member, Ciara Leddy, CNM and Olivia McCormick, CNM, Cavan Dialysis Unit.*

Manager, Dialysis Unit Cavan; Laura Dillon, Renal Dietitian and Patricia Connolly at Cavan/Monaghan General Hospital to promote World Kidney Day. We shared information about kidney health and IKA services with hospital visitors and staff.

### CONDOLENCES

We're deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Eamonn Malone on January 13th. Eamonn was an important figure in the IKA as a former Board member and played a huge part in the Cavan/Monaghan Branch. He'll be fondly remembered for his time as part of the Transplant Sport Ireland team in swimming, the 5k walk, pétanque, and 10-pin bowling. Rest in peace Eamonn.



*Eamonn Malone, RIP*



*Teresa & Gene O'Kelly present Paul Donohoe with cheque for €1000*



*Members of Monaghan Cars, Bikes and Coffee present Paul Donohoe with a cheque for €1,007.*



*Peggy Plunkett, Thomas O'Rourke, Mark Plunkett, Aisling Doonan.*



*A good turnout at Renal Patients Information Day.*



# DUBLIN SOUTH

By GERRY McKENNA

## BRANCH MEETINGS

Our Branch meetings resumed in 2026 at Rua Red Arts Centre in Tallaght with meetings on January 5th and again on March 2nd. It's always great to see a good turnout of patients and carers for a chat over a cuppa about all things related to kidney health. It was fascinating to hear the various shared experiences with End Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD).

We also had a very interesting report from our National Member Forum representative Declan Sherlock, on that group's recent activities. Forum members will help support resolution of patient issues, improve kidney healthcare services in Ireland and provide critical insights on the quality of IKA care and services. Our next Branch meeting will be on Monday, April 20th in St Andrew's Community Centre, Rialto (D08H51F). All Branch members and newcomers are welcome to join us for a cuppa and a chat about kidney related items. You are welcome to bring a friend or family member/carer along if you wish.



L-R: Marguerite Sneyd, Aideen Dempsey, Sarah Granmagnat, Bernie Watters, Gerry McKenna and Paddy Sneyd at The Square Tallaght supporting the NKSC in Beaumont Hospital fundraising drive.

## CONDOLENCES

We send our condolences to the family and friends of all deceased members of the Branch. May their souls rest in peace. In particular, we lost a very dear friend of our Branch of many years, Marguerite (Mags) McKeon who sadly passed away on January 9th last.

Mags became involved with the IKA many years ago alongside her husband Christy and family. It is because of Mags and others like her around the country that we have so many great IKA services available to us these days. We owe Mags a great debt of gratitude for what she did for the IKA.

On behalf of Mags' many friends from the Branch we send our condolences to her husband Christy, to her daughter Audrey and son David. May Mags gentle soul rest in peace

## BRANCH ACTIVITIES

Last November, we were very well supported by customers of The Square Shopping Centre, Tallaght for a fundraising collection, raising a total of €3,457 in aid of the refurbishment of the National Kidney Support Centre at Beaumont Hospital.

We had a special appearance from Shamrock Rovers star centre forward, Aaron Greene, who brought along the recently won FAI Cup and League Trophy to aid with the fundraising. Aaron's attendance with the silverware was a big attraction for young and old on the day and we thank him for making a great effort to be there for us.

Many thanks to Branch Member Tom Traynor for arranging this with Rovers and thanks also to our great team of volunteer collectors on the day.



L-R: Gerry McKenna, Amy O'Higgins, Donal O'Garry, Anna Garry, Jamar Macquera, Aideen Dempsey and Barry Dempsey at The Square Tallaght supporting the NKSC in Beaumont Hospital fundraising drive.



L-R: Claire Kelly, Arlene Hughes, Tom Traynor, Aaron Green (Shamrock Rovers), Gerry McKenna, Liz O'Sullivan and Hannah Kelly at The Square Tallaght also supporting the NKSC fundraising drive.

# DUBLIN SOUTH CONTD...

## WORLD KIDNEY DAY

We had a very good response from Branch members, family of members and carers to our appeal for volunteers to support the annual fundraising at some of the South Dublin ALDI and Dunnes stores.

In the end we covered ALDI Newlands Cross, Belgard and Terenure as well as Dunnes Stores at Cornelscourt. Thanks once again to all those who were able to support this fundraising effort on the day which raised just under €5,000 for the Association.



Adrian Talpa and Gerry McKenna at the County Library, Tallaght.

## WKD KIDNEY INFORMATION STAND

We set up an information stand to mark World Kidney Day on Thursday, March 12th at the SDCC Library Tallaght with information about kidney disease, dialysis and transplantation. We received some good enquiries from the library customers and we were well supported by library staff.

## ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK

Can we get your help for Organ Donor Awareness Week? We will again be seeking volunteers to help promote Organ Donor Awareness Week running this year from May 16th to May 23rd. We will likely hold promotional events on both Saturdays and would love any help we can get to support this.

Please let us know on 086-0268223 or by email to: [dublinsouthbranch@ika.ie](mailto:dublinsouthbranch@ika.ie)

## EMAIL CONTACT

We don't have email contacts for everyone in the Branch. For some



Tom Traynor with Shamrock Rovers' Aaron Greene.

folks we just have a phone number. If you are not receiving emails from us and would like to please let us know. If you wish to join our WhatsApp group please let us know by phone/text or email. Use of WhatsApp makes it easier and less time consuming to communicate

with Branch Members effectively.

We typically share information on upcoming events such as a meetings, fundraisers and webinars that may be of interest to kidney patients. It's the best place to keep up with what we are doing.

# LAOIS

By JOHN BYRNE

Hello once again from the Laois Branch.

## WORLD KIDNEY DAY

We are delighted to say that we have had very successful outings on behalf of the IKA for our annual World Kidney Day (WKD) collections.

We would like to thank our brilliant team of volunteer collectors. Although few in number, they did a brilliant job in representing the Laois Branch.

A very special thank you to Sarah for organising members of her family to assist at the collections in Portarlinton.

We held our collections on Saturday, March 7th in ALDI stores in Portlaoise and Portarlinton, where together, €1,004.91 was collected. We also held a collection in Dunnes Stores, The Kyle Centre on Friday, March 13th. Our total for this collection was €253.73. This gives a total of €1,258.64 for the on-site bucket collections, with further amounts to follow from our card

and QR donations.

Congratulations and well done to all.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank ALDI and Dunnes stores for their accommodation and assistance. Your support is very appreciated.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Our next big outing will be Organ Donor Awareness Week (ODAW) which will be held from May 16th to 23rd. This is a very important event, to raise awareness of the importance of organ donation. Organ donors save lives and we all know of people who are waiting for an organ donation and people whose lives have been enhanced by receiving an organ donation.

We will be planning our activities for ODAW at our next meeting in April and we encourage members of the Laois Branch to attend and offer their thoughts, ideas and support this venture. You will be very welcome.



Greetings from Kilkenny.

### CHRISTMAS CHORAL FUNDRAISER

At our last meeting in February, we received a very generous donation from Vocem Daru Ladies Choir, Co. Laois, who raised €850 at the Christmas Choral Concert in St.



Mary Rooney (right) and her daughter Emma training for Mary's Croagh Patrick climb.

## KILKENNY

By LINDA BRENNAN



Mary Morrissey, (Vocem Daru Ladies Choir); Linda Brennan (Kilkenny Branch Secretary); Mary Rooney, (Kilkenny Branch Chair) and Marie Holland.

Colmcille's Church. This was kindly organised by Marie Holland (wife of Branch member Mike Holland).

### GIVING BACK

Our Chairperson Mary Rooney and her daughter have been training hard for her upcoming Croagh Patrick climb. Mary received two transplants in the last 20 years and would like to give back to the IKA. To donate, please visit <https://gofund.me/1677cc721>.

### WORLD KIDNEY DAY

We were delighted with the response to our World Kidney Day fundraiser in Kilkenny, selling forget-me-nots in four shops around the

county: ALDI Callan (Shem Carrigan, Mike Holland and Sara Santi); ALDI Hebron Road, Kilkenny (Mary Rooney and Linda Brennan); Dunnes McDonagh (Bridget Langton) and Dunnes Market Square (Seamus O'Farrell).

A huge thank you to our volunteers and Branch members who helped on the day.

### SOCIAL GATHERING

Our Branch is hosting a social gathering on Saturday, April 11th in Langtons Bar (2pm-3.30pm). It's an opportunity for people to gather and chat about where they are on their kidney journey, in the company of others who understand.

## 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.

## LEITRIM

By CATHRIONA CHARLES

Frank Heslin, Treasurer and Cathriona Charles, Secretary attended the very well organised and informative Officers Training Day in Athlone back in October. They really enjoyed the day and it was great to meet up with old friends and make new ones. They enjoyed the art activity and are quite proud of their creations.

Leitrim volunteers came out in force for World Kidney Day and helped organise collections in three local supermarkets. A big thank you to the managers of those stores, along with ALDI. The public were very generous as always and of course well done and thank you to all our volunteers without whom we could not do this.

We're not having regular meetings at this time but please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have questions or need help or support.

# DUBLIN NORTH

By ANN HATCH

The family of Francis Dunne (Senior) would like to thank Trinity Donaghmede FC for the use of their football pitch, for the fundraiser on behalf of their father and the IKA. Francis, known to his loved ones as Fran, was a founding member of Trinity Football Sports and Leisure Club and was a former kidney patient. Fran sadly passed away in February 2025.



Francis Dunne Sr, RIP

The Dublin North Branch wishes to extend our heartfelt thanks to Marie Dunne, Tina Dunne, Fran Dunne (junior), Ken Dunne, Eric Howard (Treasurer, Trinity Donaghmede FC), Adam Dunne and Damian Burke for their support of the IKA. They recently presented a cheque for €1,255, proceeds from the fundraiser, to Ann Hatch, Branch Secretary.



Members of the Dunne family and Trinity Donaghmede FC present a cheque for €1,255 to Ann Hatch, Branch Secretary, Dublin North.

Hatch to the IKA Dublin North Branch. Allsún has been appointed our new Assistant Secretary and Ann is our new Secretary.

We would also like to congratulate James McShane on his nomination to the National Member Forum representing the Dublin North Branch.



Ann Hatch, James McShane, Allsún Henderson.

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

Simon Walsh, Chairman, Chloe Kinahan, Board Member and Brian Carney, Treasurer, would like to congratulate our newest Branch officers Allsún Henderson and Ann

# DUBLIN EAST & WICKLOW

By NIAMH DOWLING

We had a very successful Christmas Lunch on December 7th in The Palm Bray. We raised €750 through our raffle with some fantastic prizes won. It was great to see so many members and friends attend.

For World Kidney Day, we covered two ALDI stores for the day and teamed up with the Dublin South Branch to help cover Dunnes Cornelscourt. A huge thank you to all our volunteers who gave their time on the day.

Branch meetings are held in Bray on the last Tuesday of the month at 7pm. New members welcome.

The Roscommon Branch wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to the members of Cór Comáin for choosing the IKA as the beneficiary from the proceeds of the choir's sell-out *Music for Christmas* concert. The concert took place on Sunday, December 14th in the magical surroundings of St. Coman's Church in Roscommon.

We would also like to thank the huge crowd who attended, showing their support for the IKA. The atmosphere was wonderful and added to a truly special evening.

We were delighted to accept a cheque for €2,642 from Derek Mahedy, Musical Director, of



Derek Mahedy, Musical Director (second from right) and Cór Comáin choir members present a cheque to Maura Quigley (fifth from left) and Monica Finn (fourth from left) with John Cormican (3rd from right), Roscommon IKA Branch.

Cór Comáin, and some of the choir members.

# ROSCOMMON

By MAURA QUIGLEY



# 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.**

CHARITY REGISTRATION NO. 20011260



# LOCAL BRANCH SECRETARIES

IRISH KIDNEY ASSOCIATION CLG, Donor House, Block 43a, Parkwest, Dublin D12 P5V6

Ph: 01-6205306 | Email: [info@ika.ie](mailto:info@ika.ie) | [www.ika.ie](http://www.ika.ie)

NATIONAL KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE, Beaumont Hospital, Dublin D09 Y5R3 - **REOPENING SOON**

Telephone: 01-6908887 | Email: [nationalkidneysupportcentre@ika.ie](mailto:nationalkidneysupportcentre@ika.ie)

MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE, Glenflesk, Wilton Avenue, Bishopstown, Cork T12 X6XP

Telephone: 021-2044555 | Email: [munsterkidneysupportcentre@ika.ie](mailto:munsterkidneysupportcentre@ika.ie)

<b>CARLOW</b> Orla Canning ☎ <a href="mailto:carlowbranch@ika.ie">carlowbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 087-7560477	<b>CAVAN/MONAGHAN</b> Rose Dalton ☎ <a href="mailto:cavanmonaghanbranch@ika.ie">cavanmonaghanbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 086-8186379	<b>CLARE</b> Sharon Fitzgerald ☎ <a href="mailto:clarebranch@ika.ie">clarebranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 087-1683136	<b>CORK</b> Nicola Daniels ☎ <a href="mailto:corkbranch@ika.ie">corkbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 086-2755754	<b>DONEGAL</b> Patricia Callaghan ☎ <a href="mailto:donegalbranch@ika.ie">donegalbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 086-8357255
<b>DUBLIN EAST + WICKLOW</b> Niamh Dowling ☎ <a href="mailto:dubeastwicklowbranch@ika.ie">dubeastwicklowbranch@ika.ie</a>	<b>DUBLIN NORTH</b> Ann Hatch ☎ <a href="mailto:dublinnorthbranch@ika.ie">dublinnorthbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 086-8357295	<b>DUBLIN SOUTH</b> Gerry McKenna ☎ <a href="mailto:dublinsouthbranch@ika.ie">dublinsouthbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 086-8357287	<b>GALWAY</b> Peadar Ó hIcí ☎ <a href="mailto:galwaybranch@ika.ie">galwaybranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 086-8357294	<b>KERRY</b> Theresa Looney ☎ <a href="mailto:kerrybranch@ika.ie">kerrybranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 087-2059205
<b>KILDARE</b> Michelle Horan ☎ <a href="mailto:kildarebranch@ika.ie">kildarebranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 085-7131478	<b>KILKENNY</b> Linda Brennan ☎ <a href="mailto:kilkennybranch@ika.ie">kilkennybranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 083-3232145	<b>LAOIS</b> John Byrne ☎ <a href="mailto:laoisbranch@ika.ie">laoisbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 087-6744519	<b>LEITRIM</b> Cathriona Charles ☎ <a href="mailto:leitrimbranch@ika.ie">leitrimbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 087-9768637	<b>LIMERICK</b> James Riordan ☎ <a href="mailto:limerickbranch@ika.ie">limerickbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 086-8357257
<b>LONGFORD</b> Elaine Heslin ☎ <a href="mailto:longfordbranch@ika.ie">longfordbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 087-9444515	<b>LOUTH/MEATH</b> Sandra Flanagan ☎ <a href="mailto:louthmeathbranch@ika.ie">louthmeathbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 086-8357283	<b>MAYO</b> ☎ <a href="mailto:mayobranch@gmail.com">mayobranch@gmail.com</a> ☎ 086-8389633	<b>OFFALY</b> Marjorie Stanley ☎ <a href="mailto:offalybranch@ika.ie">offalybranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 087-2140414	<b>ROSCOMMON</b> Maura Quigley ☎ <a href="mailto:roscommonbranch@ika.ie">roscommonbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 086-8357281
<b>SLIGO</b> Anna Mitchell-Kenny ☎ <a href="mailto:sligobranch@ika.ie">sligobranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 087-6304216	<b>TIPPERARY</b> Alison Fogarty McCarthy ☎ <a href="mailto:tipperarybranch@ika.ie">tipperarybranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 086-8357259	<b>WATERFORD</b> Michael Gallwey ☎ <a href="mailto:waterfordbranch@ika.ie">waterfordbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 087-2029599	<b>WESTMEATH</b> Sinead Dowling ☎ <a href="mailto:westmeathbranch@ika.ie">westmeathbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 086-8357293	<b>WEXFORD</b> Walter Kent ☎ <a href="mailto:wexfordbranch@ika.ie">wexfordbranch@ika.ie</a> ☎ 086-2593428

## SPRING GIVEAWAY

A FAMILY\* MINI BREAK  
at the 4-STAR



WITH 1 NIGHT'S DINNER,  
BED & BREAKFAST

A DAY ENTRY  
FAMILY TICKET TO

DUBLIN



In this issue of *SUPPORT* we are offering one lucky reader the opportunity to win a fantastic 1-night's Dinner, Bed & Breakfast at the **CLAYTON HOTEL DUBLIN AIRPORT** and a **FAMILY DAY ENTRY TICKET** to **DUBLIN ZOO**.

The hotel prize, kindly sponsored by the **CLAYTON HOTEL DUBLIN AIRPORT**, allows the winner to share their good fortune with three others (sharing including one more adult and 2 children – under 12 years). Together they can enjoy the comfort of this luxurious 4-star hotel as their base while exploring the capital. The prize also includes a **FREE Family Day Pass** to **DUBLIN ZOO** for two adults and 4 children, generously sponsored by our friends at Dublin Zoo.

Nestled in the heart of the Phoenix Park, **Dublin Zoo** is Ireland's number one family attraction, welcoming over one million visitors each year.

The **CLAYTON HOTEL DUBLIN AIRPORT** is located just a 15 minutes' drive away from Dublin city centre attractions and is the perfect base to explore nearby scenic seaside villages of Malahide and Howth.

Enjoy the comfort of unwinding in one of the **CLAYTON HOTEL DUBLIN AIRPORT'S** refurbished large bedrooms, its

friendly customer service, and its multiple cuisine options from the hotel's award-winning Italian Restaurant or it's stunning bar. If the adults have any energy left after a busy day at **DUBLIN ZOO**, sightseeing or shopping, they can take turns enjoying free access to the hotel's fitness centre which is open 24/7.

To enter, simply email: [carrie@ika.ie](mailto:carrie@ika.ie) with the word **Dublin Zoo** in the subject line, include your name, address and contact telephone number, and tell us who you would like to bring with you if you win. The winner will be picked on 30/04/2026 using a random number generator, numbers will be assigned chronologically to entries. By entering this competition, you agree to your name being published in the Summer 2026 issue of *SUPPORT* magazine.

*Booking dates for the Clayton Hotel, Dublin Airport is subject to availability. The winner will receive a voucher code to pre-book their visit to Dublin Zoo online at [www.dublinzoo.ie](http://www.dublinzoo.ie).*

*Zoo visit **must** be pre-booked online.*

*The two prizes can be redeemed separately, at different times. There is no cash alternative.*

# MORE THAN HALFWAY THERE - HELP US REACH OUR TARGET!



We are delighted to share that we are now over halfway to reaching our fundraising target for the National Kidney Support Centre at Beaumont!

Over **€166,000\*** has been raised to date, and we are so grateful to the individuals, groups, Branches and companies that have helped us to get this far.

If you have been considering supporting this campaign, please do so now and help us raise the €250,000 we need to redevelop and run the Centre for kidney patients and their families in Ireland.

Visit [www.supportkidneycentre.ie](http://www.supportkidneycentre.ie) to give an item to the Centre or donate. **Or scan the QR code below.**

*\*Total at time of going to print.*

We're getting closer...please help us reach our target!



€0

€125,000

€250,000

## HOW BRANCHES CAN SUPPORT

Your Branch can get involved by organising a fundraiser for the National Kidney Support Centre, such as a quiz, coffee morning, cycle or raffle.

Branches will then get a brick on our website supporter wall, showing how much was raised.

A huge thanks to the Branches who have supported this campaign so far!



## HOW COMPANIES CAN SUPPORT

If you own or work for a company that could support this campaign, we would love to hear from you!

We offer corporate packages which include a range of items needed for the Centre, or companies can make a direct donation. Your company may also choose to hold an employee fundraiser.

**For more details on this and PR opportunities email: [fundraising@ika.ie](mailto:fundraising@ika.ie)**



## HOW EVERYONE CAN SUPPORT!

Want to show your support for this campaign?

A number of items are still needed for the Centre, from bed sheets, lamps and pillows, to chairs, sofas and coffee tables.

**Visit [www.supportkidneycentre.ie](http://www.supportkidneycentre.ie) or scan the QR code** to browse the items and choose the one you would like to give.

Every item counts and brings us closer to reaching our goal!



**For more details please email: [fundraising@ika.ie](mailto:fundraising@ika.ie)**