

SUPPORT

SUMMER 2026



SUMMER

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Welcoming Our New Patron: President Catherine Connolly

Editorial



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Welcome to the Summer issue of *SUPPORT*.

This has been a truly historic and momentous time in the Association's history. First, we are honoured to announce that Uachtarán na hÉireann, President Catherine Connolly, has graciously accepted our invitation to become Patron of the organisation. For more on this exciting new chapter, see page 4.

Secondly, we celebrated the reopening of the newly renovated National Kidney Support Centre on Thursday, April 16th. We can all be immensely proud of this magnificent achievement, made possible through the dedication of our Board, the Board Renovation Committee, our staff team, contractors, suppliers and you, our incredible volunteer fundraisers. Every visitor has praised the comfort and welcoming environment the Centre provides. If you are in the area, please call in Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 6.00pm. The next step is to complete the community and counselling room. You can read more on page 40 and find out how you can help on page 42.

The third major development in this historic period came at our AGM on Saturday, July 4th, where

members voted overwhelmingly in favour of constitutional changes designed to strengthen governance, protect the patient voice, and future-proof the Association. We now enter a transition period. You can read the full details on page 24.

The Minister for Health has warned that it is *"not sustainable"* for health spending to continue at its current rate, making the case for increased investment more challenging than ever. In response, we have prepared our first-ever pre-Budget submission, which is available on our website.

The submission calls for greater investment in preventing people from developing end-stage kidney failure, as this is the approach most likely to attract the attention of policymakers and secure long-term improvements in kidney care. This includes making new medicines available to slow down kidney disease.

The demand for dialysis continues to grow by around 3% each year, and this is likely to increase as our population ages. We have requested a meeting with the Minister for Health, the Irish Nephrology Society and other partners to discuss these issues and continue our advocacy for future generations of kidney patients.

Organ Donor Awareness



FRONT COVER

Our new Patron, President Catherine Connolly met with Eoin Madden, National Honourary Treasurer and CEO Carol Moore at the 'Circle of Life' Garden in Galway during Organ Donor Awareness Week.

Photo: Andrew Downes, xposure

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Week was another great success, with events taking place across the country. One particularly memorable occasion was the privilege I had, together with members of the Galway Branch, of meeting our new Patron, President Catherine Connolly, at the inspiring Circle of Life Organ Donor Commemorative Garden in Salthill, Galway.

The North/South collaborative celebration, organised by Martina and Denis Goggin of the Strange Boat Donor Foundation, marked the final day of Organ Donor Awareness Week 2026. It brought together healthcare professionals, politicians, transplant recipients, donor families, and volunteers. We all enjoyed the inspiring and often moving speeches, the beautiful surroundings, the music, and the opportunity to come together on a wonderful summer's day.

In a world where we are so often confronted with stories of hardship and tragedy, this volunteer-led event was a powerful reminder of something just as real: the extraordinary kindness, compassion, and generosity that exist all around us. It shone a light on the countless people who quietly give their time and energy to support others, offering hope and proving that every act of kindness can make a lasting difference. It was a truly fitting conclusion to the



At the national launch of Organ Donor Awareness Week in the Mansion House: Nikki Phillips, Organ Donor Nurse Manager (ODNM), Organ Donation Transplant Ireland (ODTI); Health Minister Jennifer Carroll MacNeill; Dr. Catherine Motherway, Clinical On Call, ODTI; and Bernie Nohilly, (ODNM), (ODTI).

week. Our deepest thanks go to everyone who helped make Organ Donor Awareness Week such a success. For more, see pages 4 and 12.

We are also delighted to share that we have begun work on our new strategy, which will guide what the Association will work on up to 2031.

We want this plan – our roadmap for the next five years – to genuinely reflect the priorities of the people we serve. Those of you who receive our emails will already have received the survey. Paper copies are also available in our Support Centres and in Donor House, and have been distributed to dialysis units.

The survey takes just ten minutes to complete, and everyone who participates by September 13th, will be entered

into a draw to win a Clayton Hotel voucher. For more information, see page 7. We look forward to hearing your views and helping to shape the future of the Association together.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a relaxing, enjoyable, and healthy summer. Whether you're taking some well-deserved time off, dealing with health issues, caring for others, or continuing to support our work through the season, please remember to look after yourself and those around you. (To help protect yourself during hot weather, please see our safety tips on page 49.)

Enjoy the summer, stay well, and we look forward to hearing your views in the months ahead.

CAROL MOORE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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The IKA welcomes a new patron

President Catherine Connolly

The Irish Kidney Association (IKA) is honoured to announce that **Uachtarán na hÉireann, President Catherine Connolly**, has graciously accepted our invitation to become Patron of the organisation. This marks a significant moment for the IKA, as we look forward to working under President Connolly's patronage to advocate for kidney patients and their families, while raising awareness of the life-changing impact of organ donation.

President Connolly's commitment comes at a time of great momentum for organ donation across the island, and we extend our sincere thanks to former **President Michael D. Higgins** for his steadfast patronage over the past fourteen years. His support has been invaluable in advancing the conversation around organ donation and transplantation, and we are deeply grateful for his dedication to our mission.

An historic gathering at the 'Circle of Life' Garden

By **MICHELLE GERAGHTY**

The timing of President Connolly's patronage aligns with a truly historic event that took place on Saturday, May 23rd, at the 'Circle of Life' Organ Commemorative Garden in Salthill, Galway, where the President was the guest of honour. The North/South collaborative celebration, led by Martina and Denis Goggin of the Organ Donation Strange Boat Donor Foundation, marked the final day of Organ Donor Awareness Week 2026 in what was an inspiring and emotional culmination of the annual campaign.

For the first time, organ donor families, recipients, and medical representatives from both the North and South of Ireland came together as one, united in hope, gratitude, and purpose. The event represented a truly historic all-island moment for a cause that transcends borders, and the Irish Kidney Association (IKA)

was privileged to be invited to attend.

The centrepiece of the ceremony was the unveiling of a heritage stone from the site of the sixth-century Bangor Abbey in Co. Down.

The stone, gifted by the organ donation and transplant community of Northern Ireland to its sister community in the South, was unveiled by President Connolly alongside nine-year-old Dáithí MacGabhann from Belfast.

Dáithí has become a symbol of hope and determination in the organ donation community following an inspiring campaign which led to the introduction of 'Dáithí's Law', the opt-out legislation in Northern Ireland.



Dáithí and President Connolly unveil the heritage stone from Bangor Abbey assisted by Martina and Denis Goggin.



Heritage stone seal from the site of Bangor Abbey.

The speeches delivered at the event were deeply moving. President Connolly addressed the gathering alongside Dáithí's father, Máirtín MacGabhann, a prominent organ donation campaigner. Alan Cheevers, Deputy Mayor of Galway City and a dialysis patient, shared his personal experience, while our own National Treasurer, Eoin Madden, spoke about his life-changing kidney transplant through the Paired Kidney Exchange Programme at Belfast City Hospital in 2022.

The event also featured contributions from key figures in organ donation policy, including Ryan Wilson, Director of Secondary Care with responsibility for organ donation in the Northern Ireland Department of Health and Professor Peter Conlon, Clinical Lead for Organ Donation and Transplant Ireland.

HONOURING DONORS

The significance of the event was underscored by its setting in the 'Circle of Life' Organ Donor Commemorative Garden. The garden was created by Martina and Denis



IKA National Treasurer Eoin Madden and Deputy Mayor Galway City Alan Cheevers.



Denis and Martina Goggin greet President Catherine Connolly.

Goggin in memory of their son Eamonn, who saved four lives through organ donation following a tragic road accident in 2006. Today, the garden stands as a memorial and sanctuary for donor families and organ recipients, with its heritage stone wall incorporating stones from each of the thirty-two counties, reflecting the inclusive spirit of the cause.

As with all events held at the 'Circle of Life' Garden, organ donors

were honoured and remembered, along with their families, who, at the most difficult time in their lives, unselfishly gave the gift of life to others.

The event closed with a stirring rendition of The Waterboys' song 'Strange Boat', by Eleanor Shanley and John Feeley on guitar, a poignant reminder of the gift of life that organ donation represents.

This unique gathering highlighted the important and potential benefits of an integrated and collaborative approach to organ donation and transplantation at every level, reinforcing the message that organ failure knows no borders and organ donation saves lives.



Eleanor Shanley with John Feeley on guitar.



Denis Goggin; Dr. Aisling Courtney, Belfast City Hospital; Deputy Mayor Galway City, Alan Cheevers; Eoin Madden, National Treasurer, IKA; Carol Moore, CEO, IKA; Martina Goggin; Dáithí MacGabhann; Ryan Wilson, Dept. of Health Northern Ireland; Máirtín MacGabhann holding his son and Dáithí's brother Cairbre Frances; and Prof. Peter Conlon, ODTI.

DÁITHÍ'S JOY

In a remarkable development that has brought joy to the organ donation community, Dáithí MacGabhann has since received a heart transplant after an eight-year wait. His father, Máirtín, shared that the family is "beyond grateful to Dáithí's donor and their family for

continued next page...



Máirtín and Dáithí MacGabhann.

making such a selfless decision at the most difficult time imaginable".

Máirtín has spoken of seeing his son "getting that sparkle back in his eyes" as he begins his recovery, describing Dáithí as having made "amazing progress" since his operation. Dáithí's wait had been the longest of any child in the world for a heart transplant.

A NEW CHAPTER

As the IKA embarks on this new chapter with President Connolly's patronage, we remain committed to our mission of supporting kidney patients and their families, raising awareness of organ donation, and celebrating the gift of life that transforms so many lives. The events at the 'Circle of Life' Garden serve as a powerful reminder of what can be achieved when communities come together in hope and solidarity.

With sincere thanks to the Goggins, and to all the wonderful volunteers who lovingly tend this special space, we look forward to the future with renewed hope and determination.



L-R: Eoin Madden, National Treasurer, IKA and Chair Galway Branch; Michelle Geraghty, IKA and Galway Branch PRO; Gwen O'Donoghue, IKA Senior Media Advisor, IKA; President Catherine Connolly; Carol Moore, CEO IKA; Michael Walsh, Deputy Chair Galway Branch; Samantha Lee, Treasurer Galway Branch and Peadar O hIci, Secretary Galway Branch at the 'Circle of Life' Garden in Salthill.



Eoin Madden, President Catherine Connolly, Michelle Tooher, Martina Goggin and front: Una Madden, Eoin and Michelle's daughter.



Parents Willie and Carol Grennan, their daughter Aoibhe (centre) and a photo of their deceased organ donor son Tiernan.



President Catherine Connolly with Michelle Geraghty, her husband Eoin Ryan and their son Dylan.



Ryan Wilson; Raymond O'Flaherty presenting a gift of a stone carving of Blackrock Diving Tower in Salthill to President Catherine Connolly; Denis Goggin.



Edel Livingstone, Lead Nurse, Organ Donation Northern Ireland (NI); Mary Hayes, Specialist Nurse, Organ Donation NI; Nikki Phillips, Organ Donor Nurse Manager (ODNM), Denis and Martina Goggin, Orla Craddock, (ODNM), Bernie Nohilly, (ODNM) and Ryan Wilson, Dept. of Health Northern Ireland.

Help Shape the Future of the IKA

Complete our member survey and be in with a chance to win!

WE'RE PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE AND WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

This is a big year for the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) as we begin shaping our next Strategic Plan for 2027-2031. This roadmap will set out our priorities for the next five years and the impact we hope to achieve to support those affected by, or at risk of, end stage kidney disease in Ireland. Following a competitive quotation process, we have appointed consultant facilitators **Maire McGrath** from **FutureSpark Coaching** and **Dr Nazia Latif** from **Right Practice** to work with us to guide us through this journey.

HOW WE WILL DEVELOP OUR STRATEGIC PLAN?

At the IKA, everything we do starts with you – our members, patients and their families. Patient-centredness is one of our core values, and that principle guides every decision we make. It will continue to do so as we plan for the future and develop our **2027-2031 Strategic Plan**.

To make sure we're focusing on what truly matters, we have set up a dedicated Steering Group supported by facilitators Maire and Nazia, who will help us gather insights throughout 2026.

Over the coming months, we will reach out to members, patients, families, Branches, staff, and partners, including funders,



STRATEGIC PLAN

community organisations, and healthcare representatives, so that our roadmap reflects the views of everyone it affects.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

There will be plenty of ways to get involved and share your views.

Our online strategic planning survey is now open to patients, families, and members until September 13th 2026.

For those who don't want to contribute online, you can request a paper copy of the survey from Donor House (email us at info@ika.ie or call 01-6205620) which can be returned by FREEPOST.

Paper copies will also be made available to your local Branch and dialysis unit. Copies will also be

available in our Support Centres.

We are also hosting a dedicated, invitation only, workshop on Saturday, October 10th in Athlone for Branch officers, Member Forum representatives and Board members.

If surveys are not for you, Maire and Nazia will also hold **two informal online drop-in sessions** at the end of October (day and evening options available). These are open to anyone – just swing by, share any thoughts, and help us shape what comes next.

We will post details on how you can get involved across our social media channels, so keep an eye out. We look forward to hearing from you!

To thank you for your contribution, all those who complete and submit the survey, whether online, by post or by participating in an online session, will be entered into a draw to **WIN ONE NIGHT'S DINNER, BED AND BREAKFAST for two adults and two children (under-12) at the Clayton Hotel Dublin Airport.**



MAIRE McGRATH



DR. NAZIA LATIF

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR THE ONLINE SURVEY



Celebrating Dads

Father's Day shone a light on dads in Ireland's kidney community

By GWEN O'DONOGHUE



Mark Conlon with his kidney donor father Paul.

Below: Mark and his father Paul in 2016 with bags packed before they left for Dublin to undergo their living donor kidney transplants.



Father's Day on June 21st was an opportunity to celebrate fathers across Ireland, but within the kidney community it also highlighted the many different ways dads support their families through kidney disease and transplantation. Some have given the ultimate gift by donating a kidney to a loved one. Others have stood steadfastly beside a son or daughter through years of treatment. And some have themselves been given a second chance through organ donation, allowing them to continue being there for their own children.



Daniel Birney on his wedding day in March 2025 and his kidney donor father Seamus Sewell.

A SHARED STORY OF HOPE

In Co. Monaghan, lifelong friends Daniel Birney and Mark Conlon know first-hand the extraordinary difference a father's love can make. Both men, now 32, first met as children while attending renal clinics before forging a lifelong friendship through their shared transplant journeys and participation in the British Transplant Games as children.

The similarities in their stories are remarkable. Both received their first kidney transplant from deceased donors during childhood before eventually requiring a second transplant from their fathers as young adults. Daniel Birney spent seven-and-a-half years on dialysis before receiving a kidney from his father, Seamus Sewell, in 2015. While father and son underwent surgery, Daniel's mother, Gwen, stayed at the Irish Kidney

Association's National Kidney Support Centre, where she found comfort in remaining close. Today, Daniel is married to Kerri and the proud father of three-year-old Dani, milestones he once feared might never be possible.

Mark Conlon, from Carrickmacross, followed a very similar path. After his childhood transplant from a deceased donor eventually failed, his father, Paul Conlon, donated a kidney ten years ago, restoring his health and independence. Earlier this year, the Conlon family nominated the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) as the beneficiary of the annual Inniskeen Charity Walk held on June 7th, raising €22,245 for the Support Centre, where Mark's mother, Patricia, stayed while both her husband and son recovered following surgery.

JUST ANOTHER 'SPARE PART'

Another father-and-son

transplant story comes from neighbouring Co. Laois. More than 13 years after donating a kidney to his son **Austin Jnr., Austin Lanham**, who at the time worked in the motor industry supplying car parts and adapting cars for people with disabilities, continues to downplay his extraordinary act, describing it simply as "another spare part".

His donation ended almost two years of dialysis and gave his son the opportunity to retrain as a primary school teacher and build the future he once feared might never be possible. Like the Monaghan families, the Lanhams also found comfort in the Support Centre, describing it as a welcoming "home away from home" during transplant surgery and years of follow-up appointments.

15 YEARS OF GRATITUDE

In Westport, Co. Mayo, another family recently marked a milestone that has become an annual tradition. Fifteen years after **Steve O'Shea** donated a kidney to his then 12-year-old son, **Colm**, the family gathered once again to celebrate what they affectionately call their "kidney anniversary". Now 27 and living and working in Galway, Colm has enjoyed a healthy adulthood thanks to his father's pre-emptive transplant, which spared him from ever needing dialysis.

During the transplant journey, Colm's mother, Daire, stayed at the National Kidney Support Centre while Steve underwent donor surgery at Beaumont Hospital and Colm received his transplant at Temple Street Children's Hospital. The family say the Centre



Steve and Colm O'Shea.



The O'Shea's celebrating the 15th anniversary of the living donor kidney transplant from Steve to his son Colm.

provided comfort and reassurance during one of the most challenging periods of their lives.

A FATHER'S SUPPORT

Fathers have played many different roles within the kidney community, and for 22-year-old **Michelle Barry** from Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, her father **Michael** was a constant source of comfort and support throughout her kidney journey. Michelle finally received the long-awaited call for a deceased donor kidney transplant in late April this year, after more than three years on dialysis.

Her father Michael travelled with her to Beaumont Hospital while her mother, Breda, remained at home caring for Michelle's younger brother, Kyle.

A talented camogie player who represented Tipperary at underage

level, Michelle is now rebuilding her fitness and looking forward to returning to the sport she loves. Throughout her transplant and recovery, Michael stayed at the Support Centre, just a short walk from the hospital, allowing him to remain close by and support his daughter during one of the most important weeks of her life.

A HEALTHY DAD AGAIN

For Co. Kilkenny father-of-two **Derek Deegan**, becoming a transplant recipient has meant the opportunity to continue being there for his young family. After spending two years on dialysis while raising daughters Méabh (2½) and Róisín (17 months) with his wife Anita, Derek received the long-awaited call for a kidney transplant in May.

Continued next page...



Derek Deegan and his wife Anita at the National Kidney Support Centre.



Michael and Michelle Barry

Celebrating Dads_{contd...}

Derek and Anita Deegan's two daughters Róisín and Méabh.



During his recovery in Beaumont Hospital, Anita stayed nearby at the National Kidney Support Centre, allowing the family to remain close throughout his treatment as they looked forward to life beyond dialysis.

A DECADE OF GOOD HEALTH

For Sligo father-of-two **Justin Baker**, organ donation has meant far more than a successful transplant - it meant being there as his daughters grew up. Diagnosed with lupus in his twenties,

Kevin Greene and his kidney recipient daughter Amy.



Justin's kidney function gradually declined until he received the life-changing call for a deceased donor kidney transplant in 2016, just before he was due to begin dialysis.

Today, ten years later, he is celebrating a decade of good health and family life. His daughters, Gemma and Zoe, who were young

children when he underwent his transplant, are now 21 and 16. Looking back, Justin remains deeply grateful to the donor and their family whose extraordinary generosity gave him the opportunity to watch his daughters grow into the young women they are today.

Justin Baker, just a few months after his transplant in 2016, with his wife Margaret and daughters Zoe (left, now 16) and Gemma (right, now 21).



A LIFESAVING GIFT AT THREE

The life-changing impact of a father's kidney donation is perhaps best illustrated by 16-year-old **Amy Greene** from Rathnew, Co. Wicklow. Born with severe kidney disease, Amy, a twin, spent the first years of her life on dialysis before receiving a kidney from her father, **Kevin**, when she was just three years old. More than 13 years later, Amy is thriving, enjoying school, friends and all the opportunities of teenage life - everyday milestones her parents once feared she might never experience.



Ross Curtin with his wife Audrey and sons Archie, 17 and Harvey, 10.

RUNNING SIDE-BY-SIDE

For Limerick father-of-four **Ross Curtin**, a kidney transplant has meant far more than restored health – it has given him the chance to create new memories with his family. Diagnosed with Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD), Ross spent eight months on dialysis before receiving a life-changing deceased donor kidney transplant three years ago. Since then, he has embraced his second chance at life by taking part in the Great Limerick Run to honour his donor over the May bank holiday weekend.

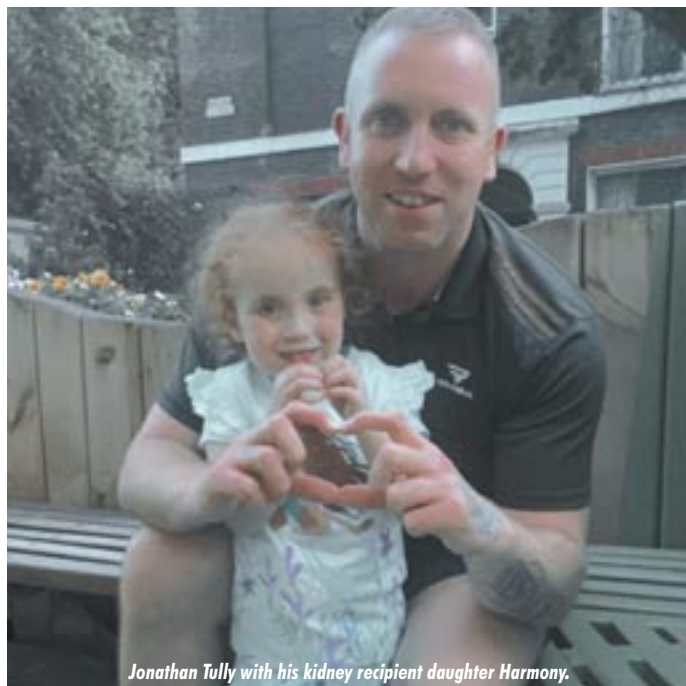
On both occasions, he was joined by his 17-year-old son, **Archie**, who ran alongside his father every step of the way, turning the event into a celebration of health, gratitude and family. Ross says the greatest gift his transplant has given him is giving his four children their healthy, active father back.

RUNNING FOR HARMONY

The Great Limerick Run also brought together another father and son whose family has been transformed by transplantation. **Jonathan Tully**, 36, and his 10-year-old son **Kyron** took part in this year's event to raise awareness of organ donation and support the Irish Kidney Association.

Jonathan proudly cheered Kyron on from the sidelines during the children's race, and the following day, it was Kyron's turn to watch his father cross the finish line.

Their runs celebrated one year since Jonathan donated a kidney to his six-year-old daughter, **Harmony**, in a complex transplant at Great Ormond Street Hospital in London. After spending much of her young life on dialysis, Harmony is now thriving, enjoying school, dancing and swimming – everyday childhood



Jonathan Tully with his kidney recipient daughter Harmony.



At the Great Limerick Run, transplant recipient Harmony Tully with her brother Kyron and parents, father Jonathan (her kidney donor) and mother Donna, and twin brothers Kayden (left) and Kameron (right).

experiences her family once feared she might never have.

For Jonathan and Kyron, taking part in the

weekend's events was another celebration of the gift of life that has given Harmony, and their family, a brighter future.

These stories offer a snapshot of the many roles fathers play within Ireland's kidney community. Together, they celebrate the life-changing impact of organ donation and the compassion, support and hope that sustain families through the challenges of kidney disease.

With close to 50 years of campaigning experience around organ donation, it is interesting to reflect briefly on what has changed in the Irish Kidney Association's approach and what has remained the same.

Back copies of the **SUPPORT** magazine provide a useful historical insight into the evolution of the campaigns and the role they have played in building the Association's national profile as a trusted charity.

Starting out as 'National Kidney Donor Week' it appears to be 1988 when it changed to 'National Donor Campaign', and in 1989 to 'Donor Awareness Week' (when Bibi Baskin was the guest of honour at the launch!). Many of our long-serving Branch volunteers affectionately referred to it as "**Forget-Me-Not Week**", after the charity's iconic Forget-Me-Not emblem, which was widely distributed throughout the week to promote organ donor awareness and encourage conversations about organ donation.

The message at the heart of Donor Week has been consistent throughout. Today it is summed up simply as "**Don't leave your loved ones in doubt**". The call to action has always been the same: have the organ donation conversation, and for nearly half a century, the Organ Donor Card has been the ice-breaker that gets it going.

Another consistent element of Donor Week has been the central role of volunteers. Whether it is sharing a personal story as part of the media campaign, volunteering at a public information stand, making sure that your community or place of work has access to organ donor cards, or any other activity that promotes the value of the organ donation conversation, it has all made a difference.

Statistics, research papers and pre-budget submissions inform policy makers, and personal connection through the sharing of lived experiences creates empathy with the public that leads to organ donation conversations happening in households across the country.

Getting the Green Light



At the national launch, back row: Dr. Catherine Motherway, Clinical On Call Organ Donation Transplant Ireland (ODTI); Professor Peter Conlon, Clinical Director, ODTI, Liz O'Sullivan, National Honorary Chair, IKA. Front: Cllr. Jacqueline Burke, IKA Board Member, Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, Minister for Health and Carol Moore, CEO, IKA.

ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK 2026

By COLIN WHITE NATIONAL ADVOCACY MANAGER

INTRODUCTION

This year's Organ Donor Awareness Week ran from May 16th to 23rd, and behind the now-iconic message "**Don't leave your loved ones in doubt**", sat one of the most far-reaching campaigns the IKA has run to date. This year, the campaign message was translated into Irish, Polish, Yoruba, and Hindi, reflecting a deliberate effort to reach every community calling Ireland home.

Preparation for Donor Week starts

many months in advance. Whilst the 'Call to Action' has remained consistent – get an Organ Donor Card and start the organ donation conversation – the context in which it is delivered each year changes, and for media engagement it is also important to be able to provide 'new' approaches to sharing the message.

The decline in organ donation and transplantation figures in 2025 compared to 2024 underpinned the narrative around this year's



Patient advocacy groups, healthcare professionals and members of the ODTI at the launch: First row centre (l-r): Jacqueline Burke, IKA; Health Minister Jennifer Carroll MacNeill; Carol Moore, CEO, IKA. 2nd, 3rd and 4th rows (l-r): Gemma O'Dowd, ILFA; Robert McCutcheon, IHLTA; Dr. Catherine Motherway, Clinical On Call ODTI; Denise Dunne, Cystinosis Ireland; Prof Peter Conlon, ODTI; Liz O'Sullivan, IKA; Maria Messitt, NOCA; Philip Kavanagh, LISN; Caroline Byrne, ODTI; Edel Ward, ODTI; Emma Corrigan, ODTI; Philip Kavanagh, TSI; Kathleen Tyrrell, ODTI; Lynn Martin, ODTI; Louise Pedreschi, ODTI; Derek Cribbin, ODTI; Dr. Atif Awan, CHI Temple Street; Colin White, IKA. In the background Dr. Colm Henry, CCO, HSE being interviewed by RTE News.



At the national launch: Professor Peter Conlon, Clinical Director ODTI; Louise Pedreschi, National Organ Donor Coordinator (NODC); Aisling Vickers, NODC; Caroline Byrne, NODC; Emma Corrigan, NODC; Derek Cribbin, Director of Nursing, ODTI; Lynn Martin, NODC; Kathleen Tyrrell, Senior Administrator, ODTI; Edel Ward, Quality Manager, ODTI; Dr. Catherine Motherway, Clinical On Call ODTI; Dr. Colm Henry, Chief Clinical Officer, HSE.

campaign, particularly given that Part 2 (Transplantation) of the Human Tissue Act (2024) had commenced in June 2025.

THE CAMPAIGN

As always, it was about repeating best practice and consolidating partnerships from previous campaigns, whilst also learning new lessons and building new relationships.

THE LAUNCH

The Mansion House in Dublin has provided the backdrop for the launch of Organ Donor Awareness Week for many years. An iconic venue in the heart of Dublin, it combines the appropriate gravitas with convenience. Coming from Leinster House, Minister for Health, **Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD**, was able to arrive on foot, with her team. She joined those gathered for the launch in the garden at the Mansion House for photographs before the formalities of the event began.

The launch brings together individuals representing organ transplant recipients, people awaiting an organ transplant, donor families and living donors, along with representatives of all the charities in the sector, as well as healthcare professionals from each of the transplanting hospitals and HSE, and Department of Health officials. It is an opportunity to acknowledge all that is good about organ donation and transplantation, which was ably delivered through personal testimonies, and shared widely through our online live stream on YouTube and with the support of our Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreters.

It is also a time to address the need for development. IKA CEO, **Carol Moore**, Chief Clinical Officer in the HSE, **Dr. Colm Henry** and the newly appointed Clinical Lead in Organ Donation Transplant Ireland (ODTI), **Prof. Peter Conlon** all shared their insights. It was acknowledged that more needs to be done in areas such as living kidney donation and donation after circulatory death.

The role of good data was highlighted in a presentation on the Irish Potential Donor Audit given by **Maria Messitt** from the National Office of Clinical Audit.

We were also delighted to welcome the Lord Mayor of Dublin **Councillor Ray McAdam** and the Road Safety Authority's **Christine Hegarty** to join us on the day.

LIGHTING UP THE COUNTRY

Green – the internationally recognised colour of organ donation – was everywhere. Leinster House

was lit up in green in support of organ donation on the evening of the launch as **Senator Mark Daly** hosted a visit by a number of IKA volunteers and staff to bear witness. He also distributed Forget-Me-Not flowers in the Houses of the Oireachtas.

The GPO, the Mansion House in Dublin, Dublin City Hall, Dublin's Civic Offices, the National Convention Centre, Galway City Hall, and a host of heritage sites around the country (through the Office of Public Works) were all lit up in green in support of the campaign. The Basilica in Knock joined in too, hosting a special Mass alongside its own, green-lit tribute.

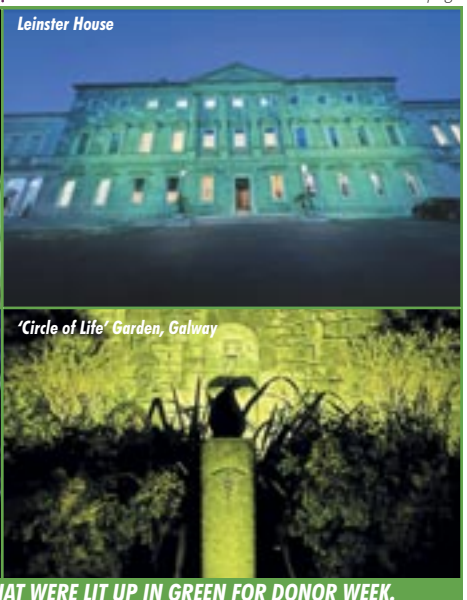
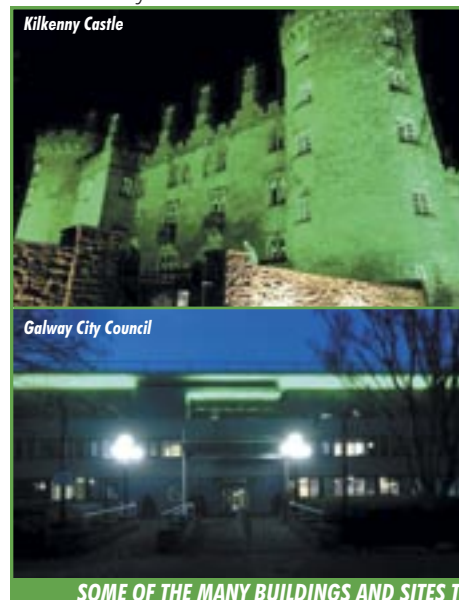


Nicole Grier (centre) who spoke at Knock Basilica about her late mother's organ donation, with her husband Kieran and sister Chloe.

THE BRANCHES

The IKA's Branch network has been the backbone of every Donor Week campaign. Volunteers on the ground in communities across the country devote their time and energy promoting the organ donor card and sharing their own lived experience to really bring home the life transforming impact of organ donation.

continued next page



SOME OF THE MANY BUILDINGS AND SITES THAT WERE LIT UP IN GREEN FOR DONOR WEEK.

This year, Branches were encouraged to focus their efforts on the two Saturdays of Donor Week. Building on the positive experiences from Branch engagement for World Kidney Day fundraising activities, a WhatsApp group was set up to facilitate communication, and social media support was put in place to amplify the incredible work of our dedicated volunteers.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The goal of Donor Week has always been to maximise public awareness: getting the campaign message out to as many people as possible. To achieve this, the Association has been working with valued partners who have a presence in communities across the country.

It was great to partner with **An Post** again this year. In recent years they have been consistent in taking organ donor cards for their busiest outlets and using their digital screens to promote the campaign messaging. This year, to bring innovation to the partnership, they arranged for their offices in the EXO building at the Docklands in Dublin 1 to be lit up in green and they put an organ donation message on their digital totem sign outside the building. The GPO was also lit up in green and an article about the campaign featured in the May edition of the An Post newsletter.

Libraries Ireland came on board again this year, using their community network of libraries to amplify the campaign messaging as part of their *Healthy Ireland at your Library* programme.

Community pharmacies are also at the heart of towns and cities throughout the country and having six of the largest chains supporting the promotion of organ donation really added to the campaign's reach.

The relationship with the **Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU)** continues to flourish. The IKA was invited to have a stand at their conference in Carlow just before Donor Week and local branch member, **Amber O'Rourke** (age 18) had the opportunity to share her transplant story with Minister for Health, **Jennifer Carroll MacNeill** when she visited the stand.

The IPU has a magazine that goes out to all its members and the May



An Post's totem sign at Dublin Docklands, 'Organ Donors Save Lives'.

issue included an article outlining Prof. Peter Conlon's perspective on the organ donation and transplantation landscape in Ireland as well as an insert of the campaign poster.

Bauer Media (formerly Clear Channel) continues to be a loyal supporter of Donor Week. They promoted the campaign poster through over 50 of their advertising displays spread across shopping centres and other community locations around the country.

New partners this year included **Dublin City Council**. Their enthusiasm in embracing the messaging around organ donation was very encouraging and included welcoming IKA volunteers to their offices in Wood Quay and at their Operations Depot in Ballymun, and highlighting the campaign in their staff newsletter.

There was equally supportive engagement from the **HSE Communications Team**. They facilitated the dissemination of the campaign message through their internal channels as well as their Partner Pack which is distributed to



Carlow Branch member Amber O'Rourke, Health Minister Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, TD, at the IPU conference.



An Post's Conor Moloney and his wife Patricia, Salthill, Galway.

many charities every month.

Prof. Peter Conlon, the recently appointed Clinical Lead of Organ Donation Transplant Ireland, facilitated a well-attended public session on the importance of organ donation, with a panel of three transplant recipients, in the **Royal College of Surgeons Ireland's Humanarium** in Dublin city centre during Donor Week. The digital wall display in the Humanarium also embraced the green theme throughout Donor Week.

The **Irish Nephrology Society** Summer Conference was on the first weekend of Donor Week, and they continued their long-standing support in providing the IKA with a stand at the event. The Society, along with the Irish Nephrology Nurses Association, also facilitated communication with hospitals interested in receiving donor cards and posters for use in promoting organ donation during the campaign.

Following on from its success last year, the **Liver Ireland Support Network (LISN)** scheduled a public walk in Dublin city centre promoting organ donation to coincide with the beginning of Donor Week.

Martina and Denis Goggin, from the **Strange Boat Donor Foundation**, hosted a North/South Organ Donation event at the 'Circle of Life' Garden in Salthill, Galway that was a perfect way to conclude the Week (see pages 4-6).

TELLING THE STORY

The individual stories of the lived experience of organ donation and transplantation are at the heart of Donor Week. To maximise their



IKA staff and volunteers were guests of Senator Mark Daly at Leinster House. From left: Liz O'Sullivan (Chair); Colin White; Jacqueline Burke; James McShane; Carol Moore (CEO); Senator Mark Daly; Emer Casey; Alanna Kennedy; Louise Wayenberg, Tiberius Pereira; and Rachel O'Hara.

At the Mansion House: Daire Casey with his kidney donor mum Emer Casey.



At the launch: Mater Hospital representatives Maria Ryan, Paul Hynes, Dr. Katie Murphy; Karen, Sophie and Stephen Comerford (heart transplant); Robert McCutcheon, Irish Heart & Lung Transplant Association; Zita Lawler, Mater Hospital; and Steve Jnr. Comerford.

reach and their impact, a comprehensive media campaign was put in place.

The groundwork for the campaign is extensive. Local media likes local stories and national media likes new angles and exclusives. Social media content also has to be framed according to the platform it is on.

With that in mind, people willing to share their stories had to be identified, their stories framed, and a plan put in place to determine where each story would likely land best in terms of impact, considering questions such as whether it is good for radio; whether it has a local angle; and whether the medical media would be interested, among others.

The launch of Donor Week is set up to drive media interest, with the presence of the Minister for Health always adding gravitas and increasing the campaign's profile. The personal testimonies shared at the launch by people affected by organ donation and transplantation are always among the most powerful and moving moments. Having presentations from high profile healthcare professionals who spoke at the launch offered additional hooks to attract media interest while

sharing important updates.

Social media offers a platform to amplify campaign messaging, but it is important to understand that it is not simply a case of copying and pasting content from elsewhere. Each platform attracts a different audience, and they also have nuanced differences in relation to how their algorithms prioritise the content that is pushed out to their users.

The statistics shared here offer an indication of the impact of the mainstream media / social media

campaign but it is important to understand that they do not capture the complete picture. For example, the media monitoring service does not capture all media coverage which included considerable national and local broadcast, print and online media, and it is not possible to capture the reach and value when media outlets share their content via their own social media channels.

It is interesting to note the type of content that resonated most on social media. On the Donor House managed Facebook account, posts from the launch event about an organ donor family story and a family with both the father and daughter on dialysis, along with a post about the 'Circle of Life' Garden event, together accounted for over 200,000 views.

When campaigning on social media, it is important to reach 'outside your bubble' with your messaging. It was therefore very encouraging to see that over 94% of the people who viewed the video of the donor family who attended the launch were not followers of the IKA Facebook account.

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At the launch: Minister Jennifer Carroll MacNeill with representatives of ODTI and the IKA, Saoirse McDonagh Davis (front centre) and transplant recipients and their family members.



Kidney patient Saoirse McDonagh Davis (centre) with Minister Jennifer Carroll MacNeill to her left and CHI Temple Street staff from left: Suzanne Bradley, Caitriona O'Connor, Sarah McDonald, Yvonne O'Reilly and Bernie Kelliher.

COMMENTARY

This year's Donor Week campaign once again brought home the profound impact organ donation can have on donor families and transplant recipients alike. The stories shared are a powerful reminder of how precious life is, and why it matters to talk to your family about your wishes in the event of your death.

Feedback from the week highlights a need for clarity in all public messaging about organ donation. With the role of family involvement in the process retained under the Human Tissue Act, a clear 'call to action' to trigger the family conversation about organ donation remains central and the Organ Donor Card continues to fill the role of 'ice-breaker'.

With Code 115 now recorded on 1.65 million driving licences, this Road Safety Authority statistic gives a very positive message and, in the bigger picture of developing a culture of organ donation, underlines the value of giving the public an easy,



Christine Hegarty, Road Safety Authority and Minister Jennifer Carroll MacNeill, TD.

everyday way to express their support for organ donation.

There are some encouraging signs in relation to groundwork being done to develop the existing organ donation and transplantation programmes, for example, we welcome the impending publication of the Irish Potential Donor Audit by the National Office of Clinical Audit. There is also a greater acceptance that more must be done in relation to living donation, consideration of older potential organ donors and donation after circulatory death. For now, however, Organ Donor Awareness Week will continue to focus primarily on the public's engagement with organ donation.

LOOKING AHEAD

It is now over one year since Part 2 of the Human Tissue Act 2024 (which deals with donation and transplantation) commenced, and it is important to remember the following provision in the legislation: "The Minister shall, not later than 3 years after the commencement of this section, carry out a review of the operation of the Relevant Organ Donation Opt-Out Register." Consideration will need to be given to how the Irish Kidney Association will engage in the process and ensure that it brings its considerable experience to bear.

Donor Awareness Week 2026 has come and gone, but its impact endures. The conversations started, the stories shared, and the partnerships forged will carry the message forward.

The IKA would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who played a part and urges every reader to continue to share the message: *Don't leave your loved ones in doubt.*



Orla Thornton, Marketing and Comms at TUS Athlone Campus supported the campaign. Her late sister was an organ donor.

MEDIA — MAY 1ST - JUNE 10TH

COVERAGE PRINT AND ONLINE, NATIONAL AND LOCAL.

Overall Reach: 14,196,984

Overall Value: €960,687

TV & RADIO

Television: 3 programmes

National Radio: 6 programmes

Local Radio: 24 programmes

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: (Donor House)

Total reach: 353,730

Total views: 436,074

Engagement Rate: 1.97% vs 1.8%*

Instagram: (Donor House)

Total reach: 81,516

Total views: 164,376

Engagement Rate: 4.91% vs 4.4%*

LinkedIn: (Donor House)

Impressions: 10,707

Engagement Rate: 8.65% vs 3.0%*

Facebook: (IKA Branches)

Total reach: 37,806

Total views: 62,995

Instagram: (IKA Branches)

Total reach: 36,207

Total views: 50,426

Unique impressions: 6,126

*Non-profit sector average (Source: Hootsuite)

Personal Stories Shared

An integral part of the national launch of Organ Donor Awareness Week each year is hearing the personal stories of individuals and families whose lives have been affected by organ failure, transplantation and organ donation. These powerful first-hand accounts illustrate the human impact behind the campaign, bringing to life the challenges of living with organ failure, the hope offered by transplantation and the extraordinary generosity of organ donors and their families. They also reflect the exceptional care provided by transplant and renal teams across Ireland, together with the invaluable support of patient advocacy organisations that accompany patients and their families throughout their transplant journey. Their stories resonate strongly with both the media and the public and are widely shared, helping to raise awareness, encouraging conversations about organ donation and inspiring others to share their wishes with their loved ones.

STELLA McDONAGH - WIFE AND MOTHER OF DIALYSIS PATIENTS

"A father and his daughter, both sick, both exhausted, both fighting the same illness, both enduring the same treatment...and yet rarely able to sit in the same room together." This powerful reflection from **Stella McDonagh** captured the devastating impact of kidney disease on her family and was one of the most compelling moments of the launch.

Stella from Liscannor, Co. Clare, delivered a poignant presentation about her husband Garry and their 11-year-old daughter Saoirse, who were both awaiting kidney transplants due to Alport Syndrome, a rare inherited kidney disease. Garry's mother, Mary, lived with the same condition and had spent more than 20 years on haemodialysis before she passed away in February 2026.

Garry is waiting for his third transplant, while Saoirse was awaiting her first. Three days each week, Garry attends haemodialysis at University Hospital Limerick, while Saoirse travelled to Children's Health Ireland (CHI) at Temple Street in

Dublin for her dialysis, meaning father and daughter rarely saw each other despite undergoing the same life-sustaining treatment.

Stella described the immense emotional, physical and practical toll dialysis places on families and appealed to everyone to discuss organ donation with their loved ones.

Saoirse was photographed with the Minister and the CHI Temple Street staff who care for her, with the image featured prominently in *The Irish Times* the following day, as well as in a number of other national and regional newspapers.

We are delighted to update you that, since the launch, Saoirse has received the life-changing call for a kidney transplant.

MARY McHUGH - MOTHER OF A DECEASED ORGAN DONOR

"Knowing that she has helped to save four lives is of great pride to our family." Mary McHugh's deeply moving tribute to her daughter **Jayne** was a poignant reminder that, even in the midst of unimaginable grief,

organ donation can bring hope and a second chance at life to others.

Mary McHugh from Ballinasloe, Co. Galway attended the launch accompanied by her husband Michael Kenny and their daughters, Aoife and Nollaig. Mary shared the story of their beloved daughter Jayne, who died two years earlier following a subarachnoid haemorrhage despite the best efforts of medical teams at Portiuncula University Hospital and Beaumont Hospital.

Mary spoke warmly of Jayne's humour, generosity, intelligence, love of drama, poetry and horses, describing how her mare, *Lady*, led her final journey to her funeral.

She recalled that Jayne had carried an organ donor card from her teenage years and that honouring her daughter's wishes resulted in the donation of her liver, heart and kidneys, saving four lives. Mary also reflected on the personal significance of organ donation, as her cousin Charlie underwent a successful organ transplant later that

continued next page



Garry Davis and his wife Stella McDonagh and their daughter Saoirse.



Mary McHugh and her husband Michael Kenny, parents of deceased donor Jayne McHugh, with their daughters Aoife (left) and Nollaig (right).

same year.

She concluded by describing the immense comfort her family received from an anonymous letter sent by one of Jayne's organ recipients, expressing heartfelt gratitude for the renewed chance at life made possible through Jayne's extraordinary gift.

GRATEFUL TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS

IRENE McGRATH - LUNG TRANSPLANT



Gary and Irene McGrath.

Irene McGrath from Glasheen, Cork City, received a double lung transplant at the Mater Hospital after developing Scleroderma, a rare autoimmune disease that caused severe scarring of her lungs.

Following three and a half years on the transplant waiting list and six unsuccessful donor calls, she finally received her life-saving transplant at the Mater Hospital. Now over five years post-transplant, Irene has returned to work, travel, sport, and the gym. She remains deeply grateful to her donor, their family, and her medical teams.

At the launch, Irene attended with her husband, Gary, saying, *"Life is not a dress rehearsal. Every day after my transplant is a gift, and I honour my donor by living life to the fullest and encouraging everyone to say yes to organ donation."*

STEPHEN COMERFORD - HEART TRANSPLANT

Attendees heard from **Stephen Comerford**, a heart transplant recipient from Carrigtwohill, Co. Cork, who attended with his wife Karen and their two children, Sophie and Steve. Stephen shared his powerful personal journey, recalling how his



Simon Quinn with the Comerford family: Karen, Steve Jr., Stephen and Sophie.

brother Gary died suddenly at just 15 years of age while playing soccer in 1996. Following Gary's diagnosis with Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy, family screening revealed that Stephen had Dilated Cardiomyopathy. He lived with the condition for more than 20 years before being diagnosed with end-stage heart failure in 2025. After two unsuccessful donor calls, he received a life-saving heart transplant at the Mater Hospital, giving him *"a new heart, a new lease of life and a second chance."* He shared, *"I recall during my recovery in hospital my cardiologist, Professor Emer Joyce, telling me that the life-ending condition I had was gone. Those words were powerful."*

Stephen paid tribute to his donor and their family, as well as his own family, medical teams and transplant organisations, and urged everyone to have a conversation about organ donation with their loved ones. *"Today and every day I think about my donor and his family. The decision they made has saved my life and I will be forever grateful to them for that."*

SHANNAN BYRNE - LIVER TRANSPLANT

Shannan Byrne, a liver transplant recipient from Co. Wicklow, shared her experience of living with Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis (PSC), a rare liver disease she was diagnosed with in her early teens. Her condition was managed for many years, and despite the challenges it posed, she managed to complete university and qualify as a solicitor. Her health deteriorated rapidly in 2024 and she was placed on the liver transplant waiting list in early 2025.

After receiving a life-saving liver transplant at St. Vincent's University Hospital in the summer of 2025, Shannan described the difference as *"night and day"*, allowing her to look to the future with optimism. She paid tribute to her donor and their family, the transplant team at St Vincent's University Hospital, and her parents, brothers and fiancé, Conor, to whom she became engaged following her transplant – a milestone she described as part of the future her donor had made possible. Shannan encouraged everyone to discuss



Shannan Byrne with her parents John and Jennifer and fiancé Conor Duff.



Donal Kenny with his parents Eileen and Tony.



Keith and Elena Fitzpatrick on Virgin Media News.

organ donation with their loved ones, emphasising that one decision can give another person a second chance at life.

"Your decision could change someone's life, just like it did for me."

DONAL KENNY - KIDNEY AND PANCREAS TRANSPLANT

Donal Kenny, a recent simultaneous kidney and pancreas transplant recipient from Shankill, Co. Dublin was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes 21 years ago. He attended the launch with his parents Tony and Eileen.

Donal developed kidney failure in 2018 and spent several years on dialysis while awaiting a transplant. In 2025, he underwent a successful kidney and pancreas transplant at St. Vincent's University Hospital. Following his transplant, he regained his energy, returned to normal life and no longer needed daily insulin injections or constant blood glucose monitoring.

Donal thanked his donor and their family, as well as the renal team at St. Vincent's Hospital, and encouraged everyone to discuss organ donation with their loved ones.

Donal's heartfelt reflection highlighted the life-changing impact of organ donation, demonstrating how his double transplant restored his health, independence and quality of life. *"With that selfless act, my life was completely changed for the better."*

KEELYN HALPIN MURPHY - KIDNEY TRANSPLANT

Although she was not speaking at this year's national launch, Keelyn Halpin Murphy, a Dublin primary school teacher and mother of three, from Malahide, Dublin, attended the event following a life-changing kidney

transplant. At last year's Organ Donor Awareness Week launch, she shared her experience of undergoing dialysis while waiting for a donor kidney.

Keelyn, who lives with PKD, a hereditary kidney disease, underwent a successful transplant on October 20th after receiving a kidney from her cousin's husband, Ronan Brady, a father of three who lives in Terenure.

The transplant followed unsuccessful donor assessments involving Keelyn's husband and brother, while her cousin – whose mother had donated a kidney to Keelyn's mother 24 years earlier – was also unable to donate.

Following the transplant Keelyn described the improvement in her health as immediate, saying her complexion brightened, her energy returned and she realised how unwell she had become before her transplant.

Her story received significant national coverage through an interview on RTE News television and radio, sharing how her *"life was on hold"* until her transplant and helping



Keelyn Halpin Murphy.

to raise further awareness of the life-changing impact of living kidney donation.

KEITH AND ELENA FITZPATRICK - PAIRED EXCHANGE KIDNEY TRANSPLANT

Although not attending the national launch, Keith and Elena Fitzpatrick from Raheny, Dublin, generously shared their story through Virgin Media News during Organ Donor Awareness Week. The IKA's CEO Carol Moore was also interviewed for the news feature.

Following Keith's diagnosis with end-stage kidney disease, Elena donated a kidney through the Kidney Paired Exchange Programme, resulting in a three-way transplant involving Belfast, Manchester and Edinburgh that gave three people a second chance at life. Their interview highlighted the importance of discussing organ donation as a family and helped raise awareness of both living kidney donation and the life-changing impact of transplantation with Elena stating, *"Organ donation doesn't just save lives, it gives families their future back."*

GRATITUDE TO ALL WHO SHARED THEIR STORIES

The Irish Kidney Association is sincerely grateful to all of the individuals and families who so generously shared their personal experiences throughout Organ Donor Awareness Week, whether by speaking at the National Launch or through interviews with national and local media. Their courage, openness and generosity played an invaluable role in raising awareness, encouraging conversations about organ donation and inspiring others to share their wishes with loved ones. Their stories remain at the heart of the campaign and continue to be its most powerful ambassadors.



Sam Kinahan (seated) on the set of News2Day with his parents Chloe and Ivan and presenters Cathal Dowd (left) and Florence Okojie (right).

SAM KINAHAN - LIVING KIDNEY DONOR

As part of Organ Donor Awareness Week, Sam Kinahan (11) from Donaghmede, Dublin, featured on RTÉ Children's TV News, News2Day, where he shared his transplant story. Sam began dialysis at just four months of age before receiving a life-changing kidney transplant from his father, Ivan, when he was five-years-old.

EMER CASEY & DAIRE CASEY - LIVING KIDNEY DONATION

Although not speaking at the National Launch, Emer Casey from Leixlip, Co. Kildare, and her son Daire attended briefly during the event. Emer, who donated a kidney to Daire in 2021 after he developed end-stage kidney disease, also shared their inspiring story in a pre-recorded feature for RTÉ Radio 1's *Sunday Miscellany* during Organ Donor Awareness Week. You can read Emer's story on page 56.

JOHN & ED REYNOLDS - DUBLIN

Celebrating the 10th anniversary of their living donor kidney transplant, John Reynolds and his kidney donor brother Ed, shared their story on RTÉ Radio 1 with David McCullagh.



John (left) and Ed Reynolds with Radio 1 presenter David McCullagh.

OUT AND ABOUT DURING DONOR WEEK 2026



Traveller Women's Project in Kildare Town.



Prof. Peter Conlon (4th from left) led a lunchtime session, open to the public, on the impact of organ donation at the RCSI's Humanarium in Dublin.



John Broderick, National Member Forum representative for Offaly Branch, in Tullamore.



Members of the Mayo Branch joined staff from the Renal Dialysis Unit at Mayo University Hospital.



Members of the Mayo Branch joined staff from the Renal Dialysis Unit at Mayo University Hospital.



Staff of Renal Dialysis Unit, Mayo University Hospital with Branch members.



Justine Carlius Bongcaras, Shane Power, Joe Moynihan, Frances Moynihan, J.D. Casey at Waterford Haeleon Dungarvan.



At the Farmers Market in Carrick-on-Shannon, Leitrim were Annetha Kieran, Cathriona Charles and Frank Heslin.

OUT AND ABOUT DURING DONOR WEEK 2026



Simon Walsh, Dublin North Branch, at Beaumont Hospital.



Meabh and Allsun Henderson at Dublin City Council's NCOD, Ballymun.



Joe and Angela Kirwan, Laois Branch at Dunnes Stores Portlaoise.



Alceina O'Brien, Galway Branch with Grace Gardiner, CNS Renal team, University Hospital Galway.



Michael Walsh, Paul Greaney, Paul Grealish, Peadar O'Hici at Galway University Hospital.



Elsie Moore, Brendan Herbert, Kerry Branch



Dublin South Branch members Donal Murphy, Joan Murphy, Ruth Geraghty Byrne, with Oonagh Smith, Renal Dietician at Tallaght Hospital.



Dublin South Branch members Brid and Liz O'Sullivan at Citywest SC.



Dublin South members Paddy & Marguerite Snyed at Citywest SC.



Dublin South Branch members Jomar Masquer & Trudi Mulreany, at Ashleaf SC, Crumlin.



Dublin South members Joan O'Neill, Lorna O'Leary, Caroline Roberts, in Liffey Valley SC.



Dublin South members Vincent & Benita Harboure at Tallaght Hospital.



Liver Ireland Support Network at Iveagh Gardens.



Delegates at the Irish Nephrology Conference including IKA CEO Carol Moore (standing fourth from right).



At Dublin City Council's NCOD in Ballymun were Paul Bryan, kidney recipient and his wife Annette and John Kelly, liver recipient.

RARE KIDNEY DISEASE: It Might Be In Your DNA!

Rare diseases are conditions that affect a small percentage of the population. In Europe, a disease is considered rare if it affects no more than five people per 10,000. It is estimated that approximately 30 million people have rare diseases in 48 countries in Europe.



Christian Esteves.

By
CHRISTIAN ESTEVES
and
PROF. PETER CONLON



Prof. Peter Conlon.

There are more than 6,000 unique rare diseases, and more than 400 of these affect the kidneys. While many forms of rare kidney disease (RKD) are caused by genetic conditions many other causes are also important.

In Ireland, more than a third of the population with kidney disease have a family member affected as well, suggesting a genetic cause. This is why family history is so important when doctors are trying to understand the cause of kidney problems.

RKDs include Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD), Autosomal Dominant Tubular Interstitial Kidney Disease (ADTKD), IgA Nephropathy and Alport's Syndrome. Many of these can be under diagnosed because early symptoms can be very mild, vague or there may be no apparent symptoms.

RECOGNISING THE SIGNS

It might start with simple tiredness, protein and blood in the urine, swollen ankles, high blood pressure, formation of kidney stones, recurrent urinary tract infection or worsening kidney function. Some inherited conditions are suggested by a strong family history of hearing loss, eye problems, gout, or kidney disease at a young age.

Your healthcare team may suspect a rare kidney disease when kidney problems seem unusual, started early, affect several relatives, or do not fit a common pattern. In some families, the first sign is kidney failure in one relative, raising concerns that others may be at risk too.

Diagnosis usually begins with a detailed medical history, family history, blood and urine tests, and kidney imaging such as ultrasound or CT scan of the kidneys. When inherited disease is suspected, genetic testing is often the most useful next step because it can confirm the cause of the kidney disease and guide family screening.

ANSWERS THROUGH RESEARCH

Established in 2014 by Beaumont

Hospital and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), the Renal Genetic Clinic, grew out of the Irish Kidney Gene Project led by Professor Peter Conlon. Its purpose is to understand the genes causing kidney diseases in Ireland.

The clinic runs a national referral programme for people with suspected genetic kidney disease and has reviewed more than 1,800 patients since its establishment. As a result of advances in research, in 2021 the research team used specialised genetic testing that reads the part of the DNA, to look for changes that might cause the kidney disease. The study was a major success, finding genetic diagnosis for about half of the patients involved.

EUROPEAN COOPERATION

This important work in Ireland is part of a much bigger team effort across Europe. The European Rare Kidney Disease Reference Network (ERKNet) brings together specialist centres across Europe to improve diagnosis, treatment, and long-term care for people with rare kidney diseases. This European Union (EU) programme has received funding from the EU's Health Programme. ERKNet includes 24 EU countries, 72 centres, and more than 70,000 patients.

ERKNet is important because it helps doctors across Europe share expertise, facilitate the discussion of complex cases, develop new guidelines, and support clinical research to improve diagnosis and treatment of RKDs. The network also connects patient communities with specialist teams through virtual consultation services and patient representative groups.

The European Rare Kidney Disease Registry (ERKReg) collects anonymised patient data so that specialists can learn more about these diseases, track outcomes and provide better care across hospitals. The Registry also allows your healthcare provider faster access to new therapies through clinical trials, and compare their care against others to



ERKNet by numbers – Source: <https://www.erknet.org/about-us/about-erknet>

ensure they are delivering the best possible service. ERKReg participation has been approved by the RCSI Ethics committee and only occurs after the patient signs the written consent.

PATIENT SUPPORT

In Ireland, the National Rare Diseases Office, established in 2015, is the HSE's national coordination hub for rare diseases. It helps support people with rare conditions and their families, by improving access to services and making information easier to find. For patients, this national support is important because rare diseases often need collaborative care from different specialists.

This office can help you by providing reliable information about genetic and rare conditions and providing guidance on where to go for specialised care. It is also responsible for the management of Orphanet, a European data portal for rare diseases to help doctors connect with local and European experts to discuss highly complex cases. For more information, you can visit their website, <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/rare-diseases/>.

Christian Esteves has recently been appointed as the Rare Kidney Disease Clinical Coordinator in

Beaumont Hospital. He aims to help patients and their families feel supported along the way. He works closely with kidney doctors, nurses, and other members of the team to help coordinate care, guide referrals, and make sure patients move through the right pathway as smoothly as possible. A big part of the role is being a point of contact for patients, families, and carers, offering information and education, support, and reassurance when they

need it.

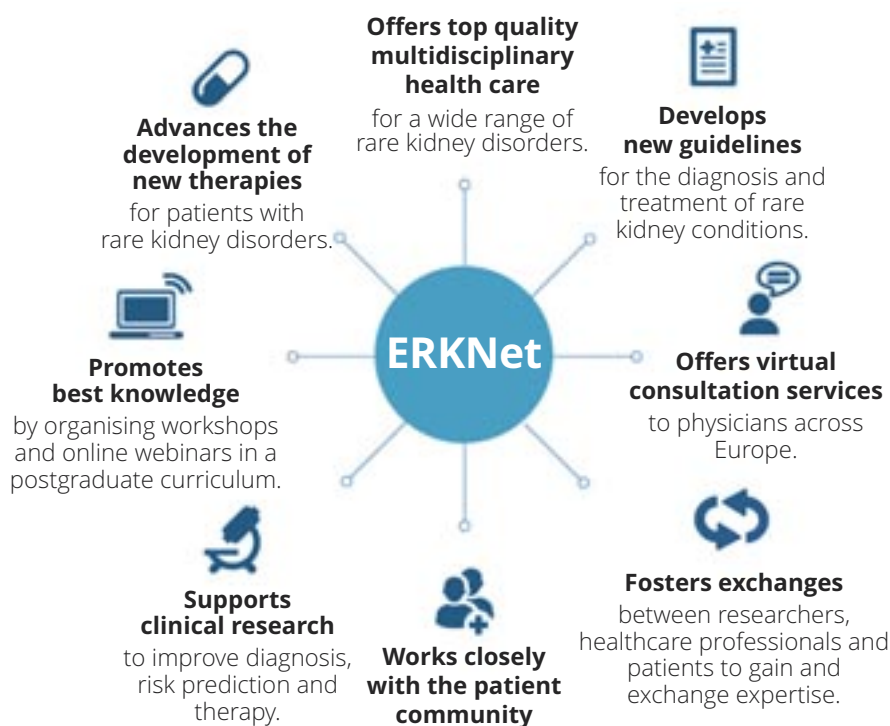
Christian's role also links in with the National Rare Diseases Office and the wider ERKNet network. This means helping with care pathways, registry work, quality improvement, and making sure patients' voices are part of how services develop. His aim in this role is to improve the care provided to people with rare kidney diseases.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR DIAGNOSIS

A rare kidney disease diagnosis can feel overwhelming, especially when symptoms are mild at first or when the condition has affected several family members. But a confirmed diagnosis can bring clarity, guide treatment, access to the right specialist team, and better advice for relatives through family counselling and decisions about screening relatives or kidney donors. It can also reduce unnecessary tests and help patients understand what to expect next.

If kidney disease runs in your family, if you were diagnosed at a young age, or if your kidney disease has not been fully explained, it may be worth asking your healthcare team about genetic testing.

Patients and families can contact the Irish Kidney Gene Project at Beaumont Hospital by email at irishkidneygeneproject@beaumont.ie for appointments and general enquiries.



Activities of ERKNet – Source: <https://www.erknet.org/about-us/about-erknet>

A Landmark **AGM** for the **IRISH KIDNEY ASSOCIATION**

Members vote overwhelmingly in favour of constitutional changes designed to strengthen governance, protect the patient voice and futureproof the Association.

AGM BUSINESS

On Saturday July 4th, the 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in the Aspect Hotel, Dublin with an attendance of 67 members and guests, together with IKA staff. Following a welcome from Chairperson Liz O'Sullivan and a minute's silence in memory of deceased members and colleagues, the Association's formal business was conducted.

Members approved the minutes of the 2025 AGM. Eoin Madden, National Honorary Treasurer, presented the audited accounts for the year ended December 31st, 2025, highlighting the contribution of volunteers, staff and supporters across the country. Members also approved the reappointment of Azets as auditors and authorised the Directors to fix their remuneration.

Chairperson Liz O'Sullivan delivered the Directors' Report, reflecting on another busy and productive year for the Association. Highlights included the continued delivery of patient services, progress across advocacy and organisational development initiatives, the reopening of the National Kidney Support Centre (NKSC) in Beaumont, and preparations for the next strategic planning cycle. The achievements of participants in the recent Transplant Sports Ireland games were also recognised.

MEMBERS APPROVE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES FOR THE FUTURE OF THE IKA

One of the most significant items of business at this year's AGM was the vote on a series of constitutional changes designed to support the long-term future of the IKA. Following a lively question and answer session, we are pleased to report that members approved the proposals by an overwhelming majority with over



Liam Buttle, Aodhagan Cullen, Elsie Moore, Eoin Madden, Liz O'Sullivan, Carol Moore, Eddie Flood, Chloe Kinahan.

90% of members voting for the changes.

These changes are the peak of our Futureproofing Project, which has focused on ensuring that the IKA can continue to provide services and support to kidney patients across Ireland, while operating effectively in an increasingly complex regulatory and governance environment. The approved changes strengthen how the Association is governed, safeguard member representation, and modernise a number of important processes.

PUTTING MEMBERS AND PATIENTS AT THE CENTRE OF EVERYTHING WE DO

A key change is the formal recognition of the National Member Forum within the Constitution. Established in 2025, the Forum provides a dedicated space for people with lived experience of kidney disease, including patients, family members, carers and living donors, to shape the work of the IKA.

By enshrining the Member Forum in the Constitution, members have safeguarded the Forum, ensuring it can only be disbanded by a vote of IKA members at an AGM or EGM. The Forum will continue to play an important role in informing IKA policy, strategy and advocacy work, while also having a direct role in the election of Board directors.

A NEW BOARD STRUCTURE

Members also approved a new Board structure that will see the IKA move to a smaller, skills-based Board.

The current model, which provides for one director from each Branch, has served the organisation well for many years. However, the requirements of the Charities Governance Code mean that Boards have to select directors based on skills and experience and not just geography.

Under the new structure, the Board will comprise 11 directors. Six



directors will be elected by and from the National Member Forum, ensuring strong geographic representation and a strong bond to the experiences of members across the country. The remaining five directors will be selected through a process designed to ensure the Board has the skills, expertise and diversity required to oversee the organisation effectively and meet its legal and governance responsibilities.

The new structure is intended to help the Board operate more efficiently, strengthen strategic decision-making, and position the IKA to thrive for generations to come.

A MANAGED TRANSITION

To ensure a smooth implementation of the new governance model, a transition period is now in operation up to the date of the 2027 AGM.

During this period, the current Board will remain in place, while six directors elected by the National Member Forum will join them. This temporary arrangement will allow existing and new directors to work side-by-side, supporting knowledge transfer, continuity and stability as the organisation moves to the new structure.

Following the 2027 AGM, the Association will move fully to the new 11-member Board.

MODERNISING THE CONSTITUTION

Alongside the Futureproofing Project changes, members also approved a number of important updates to modernise the Constitution and align it with current charity governance best practice.

These include expanding the IKA's charitable objects to allow us to support people who are likely be affected by end stage kidney disease. This will allow us to campaign for the prevention of kidney disease.

Approved changes to membership processes will allow applications to be made electronically and streamline administrative procedures. Other amendments improve clarity, strengthen governance arrangements, manage potential conflicts of interest, and ensure the Constitution reflects how the organisation operates today.

While many of these changes are



Liz O'Sullivan, Eddie Flood and Carol Moore.



Michelle Horan and Carol Moore.



Colin Mackenzie and Carol Moore.

administrative in nature, together they provide a stronger and more practical constitutional framework for the Association's future.

NEXT STEPS

With the constitutional changes now approved by members, the Board's immediate priority will be implementation.

Over the coming months, we will work with our legal adviser to complete the formal lodging of the updated Constitution and the relevant resolutions with both the Companies Registration Office (CRO) and the Charities Regulator.

At the same time, we will work closely with the National Member Forum to organise and run the election process that will see six Forum representatives elected to the Board as part of the transition arrangements.

The Board would like to thank all members who engaged with the consultation process, attended information sessions, submitted questions, and participated in the AGM vote. The strong support shown by members represents an important endorsement of the steps being taken to strengthen the IKA and ensure it remains a strong, effective and member-focused organisation into the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The AGM also provided an opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of a number of Branch officers and Member Forum representatives who had stepped down from their roles, and to thank retiring directors Michelle Horan, Eddie Flood (previously a National Officer and Chairperson) and Cathriona Charles for their commitment, dedication and service to the IKA over many years.

They spent endless hours working on the IKA's behalf, often in very

difficult circumstances, from the COVID-19 period to ensuring that the NKSC was returned to us.

Cathriona Charles is still volunteering with the Member Forum. Unfortunately she could not attend the meeting, due to family illness. Eddie Flood continues to fundraise. These volunteers sum up all that is good about the IKA: people who are passionate about helping others.

To celebrate the reopening of the NKSC, former National Honorary Chair Colin Mackenzie presented a beautiful drawing of the centre to CEO Carol Moore in honour of his late wife Patricia Mackenzie. Many of you will remember Patricia who worked for many years in the NKSC. We will always remember the ones who went before us and whose achievements we build on. The picture will go on display in our Munster Kidney Support Centre.

After a delicious lunch, attendees enjoyed an engaging presentation from consultant nephrologist Dr Niamh Kieran of Galway University Hospital. Dr Kieran explored the concept of integrated care and highlighted the benefits for patients when healthcare professionals work collaboratively to support people living with kidney disease.

A WORD OF THANKS

Finally, thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to this year's AGM, helping to make it such a positive and productive occasion. We are grateful to our members, volunteers, Member Forum representatives, directors, staff and particularly Dr Niamh Kieran, for their time, expertise and ongoing commitment to the IKA. Your support and engagement continue to strengthen our organisation and help us make a meaningful difference to kidney patients and their families across Ireland.

Making Peace with the Mirror



Body Image and Chronic Kidney Disease



By AOIFE SMITH
COORDINATOR OF
COUNSELLING SERVICES

Summer and warm weather bring a natural shift in how we dress. For most of us, it is a time for short sleeves, lighter clothing, and enjoying the sun, but for those living with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), this seasonal change can bring a quiet, underlying anxiety.

In the cooler months, heavy layers and long sleeves offer a comforting protection. When the weather warms up, that protection is removed. Some patients now face a difficult choice: feel physically hot and uncomfortable, or feel emotionally exposed by letting fistulas, grafts, dialysis lines, or surgical scars show.

If you find yourself pulling down your sleeves or hiding your body this summer, please know you are not alone. Physical changes are not just a medical demand; they also require an emotional and psychological adjustment.

WHAT IS BODY IMAGE AND "BODY WHOLENESS"?

To understand why these physical signs feel so heavy, it might help to look at what body image truly means. Body image is not about vanity or trying to look perfect. It is the internal mental picture we hold of our physical self: how we perceive ourselves and how we believe others see us combined with how we feel inside our own skin.

In psychology, we often talk about a sense of body wholeness. When we are healthy, our body is "transparent", it quietly does its job in the background without us

having to think about it. We feel seamless and whole.

Chronic illness can completely disrupt this transparency. The body becomes highly "visible". It is poked, prodded, operated on, and physically changed by medical necessities. When a fistula is created on an arm or a catheter is placed, that sense of body wholeness is broken.

What makes this particularly difficult is that these markings can become a permanent, visual representation of the illness itself. Every time we catch our reflection or glance down, we are presented with a reminder

Thank you to all who called or emailed the counselling services. Please continue to email me with topics that might benefit you 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



"This is my medical access, it keeps me healthy."

of our 'patient-hood'. This constant visual indication can profoundly impact our sense of wholeness, making it feel as though the illness has taken over our entire physical identity, overshadowing the body we once knew, and leaving us feeling disconnected from our own skin.

THE MIXED EMOTIONS OF CHRONIC ILLNESS

When our physical wholeness is disrupted, it triggers a wide range of intense, valid, and sometimes contradictory emotions. You might find yourself experiencing:

- **Grief for the Past:** Hiding an arm or a scar can often represent grieving the body you used to have, a body that didn't draw stares or require explanations.
- **The Mind-Body Mismatch:** Your body may require immediate medical interventions and life-saving treatments, but your mind needs much more time to grieve, process, and catch up to this new reality.
- **Contradictory Feelings:** It is entirely normal to feel incredibly grateful for the treatment keeping you alive, while simultaneously feeling resentful or angry about the physical marks it leaves behind.

THE TRANSPLANT MIRROR

These body image challenges do not belong only to those on dialysis.

Transplant recipients face their own unique relationship with the mirror.

A transplant is a beautiful milestone, but it brings a new set of physical and emotional adjustments. The medications required to keep the new kidney safe can cause distinct changes, such as a changing facial shape, unexpected weight fluctuations, skin changes, and prominent surgical scars.

Psychologically, a transplant patient might struggle with holding a profound sense of gratitude alongside frustration over these new side effects. It can feel confusing to look in the mirror and see a body that has been saved, yet still feels changed and unfamiliar.

STEPS TOWARD RECLAIMING COMFORT IN YOUR SKIN

Adjusting our mindset around our changing bodies is a gradual process. It doesn't happen overnight, and there is no right or wrong way to navigate it. Here are a few psychological strategies to help you find stability and self-compassion this summer:

- **Practice Body Neutrality:** If loving your body or your scars feels too difficult right now, aim for neutrality. This means recognising your body for what it does rather than how it looks. Your arm, your fistula, or your surgical site is working incredibly hard to keep you here getting the treatment that you need.
- **Prepare a Gentle "Script":** The fear of people staring can make us hide away. If you choose to wear short sleeves, it can help to have a simple, one-sentence explanation ready so you aren't caught off guard. Try: *"This is my medical access, it keeps me healthy."*

- **Remember Your Right to Privacy:** You owe no one an explanation. If someone looks or asks, a simple, "It's just for medical reasons," followed by a change of subject is completely within your right. You hold the power of choice.

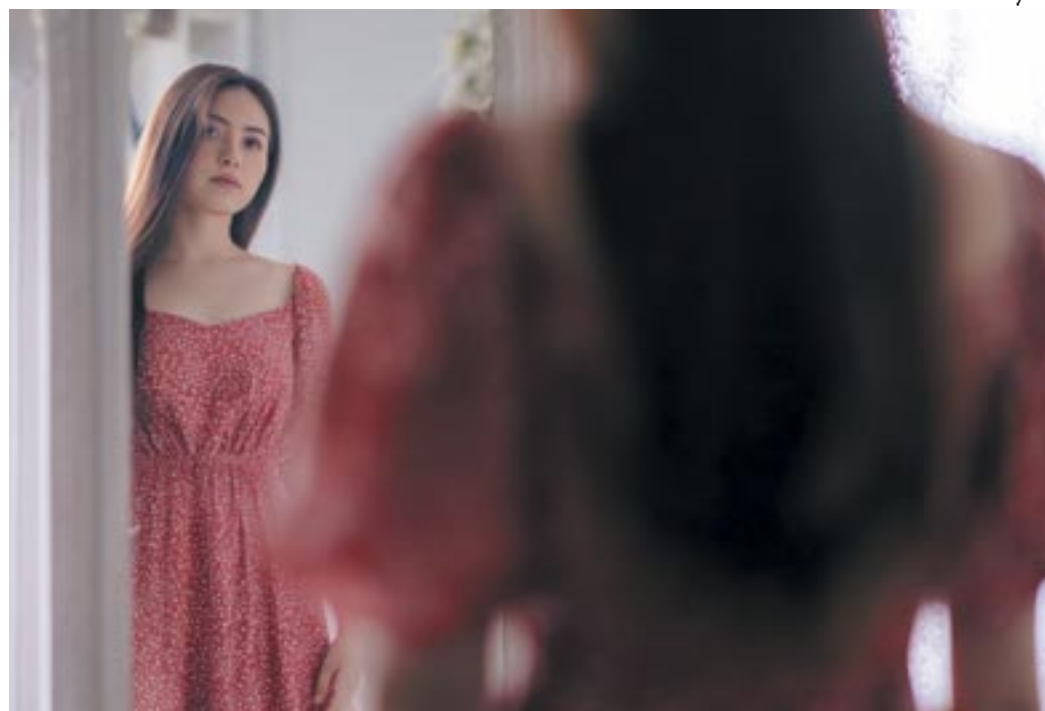
- **Reframe the Narrative:** A fistula or a scar represents a literal lifeline. Just as a tree develops unique bark to survive a harsh climate, your physical changes are proof of your resilience, your history, and your ongoing strength.

Be gentle with yourself as you navigate the warm weather this year. Move at your own pace, take it one small act of self-compassion at a time, and remember that your identity is much vaster than any mark on your skin.

You do not have to walk this path alone, we are always here to support you along the way.

And one final thought as the sun continues to shine, if you are rolling up your sleeves, don't forget the sunscreen!!

Aoife





Noel's and his wife Caroline with their 11 grandchildren.

This year marks a very special milestone for **Noel Farrelly** from Tyholland, Co. Monaghan. He celebrated his 70th birthday in January surrounded by his loving family - a milestone made possible by a living donor kidney transplant he received 47 years ago thanks to his late sister Kathleen who had given birth just five months before.

By
GWEN O'DONOHUE

A Sister's Legacy, 47 Years On

On April 3rd, 1979, Noel underwent a life-saving kidney transplant at Jervis Street Hospital, at a time when transplantation in Ireland was still in its early stages. The Irish Kidney Association had been founded just one year earlier, as awareness and support for kidney patients and organ donation were only beginning to grow across the country. The transplant surgery was successfully carried out by renowned surgeon Mr. Hanson, whose skill and dedication helped give Noel a second chance at life.

Noel was born with just one kidney and experienced kidney problems from childhood after developing reflux disease. Diagnosed with kidney disease at the age of 19, he spent almost a year on dialysis at St Mary's Hospital in the Phoenix Park before receiving the transplant that would transform his life.

With six siblings, the only suitable donor match was his sister, Kathleen Gaffney. In an extraordinary act of love

and selflessness, Kathleen donated one of her kidneys to her brother just five months after giving birth to her first child.

Noel was 23-years-old at the time, while Kathleen was 30 and adjusting to life as a new mother. It was a significant decision for Kathleen and her supportive husband, a Tipperary man also named Noel, particularly with their baby just five months old. The couple later went on to have a second child.

Kathleen's gift transformed Noel's future. Thanks to her donation, he went on to marry Caroline, and together they built a happy family life, raising three sons and a daughter. Today, Noel is also a proud grandfather to 11 grandchildren. Over the years, the family has shared countless special moments, including the wedding of one of Noel's sons last year, celebrations for Noel's 70th birthday in January this year, and the 47th anniversary of his kidney transplant in April.



The Farrelly family attending the wedding of Noel's son Kevin (groom) and his bride Joanne, left to right, brother Declan holding his child Farrah, Lucia and Tara (daughters-in-law), brother Gary, mother Caroline, Kevin (groom), Joanne (bride), Noel (father and transplant recipient), Laura Farrelly and her husband Nathan Curry with nieces and nephews.

Noel's daughter, Laura, who works as a nurse at Cavan General Hospital, reflected on the immense gratitude their family continues to feel for her late aunt Kathleen's decision nearly five decades ago.

She said, *"Although Kathleen sadly passed away in 2021, her legacy lives on every day through my father and the many family moments her generosity made possible. Forty-seven years after the transplant, dad's story remains a powerful testament to the success of organ donation and transplantation, and to the impact one person's decision to donate can have across generations. We are forever grateful to her."*

Kathleen's decision in 1979 continues to echo through the years, reflected in the life Noel has been able to live and in every family memory he continues to create. His journey is a story of hope, a testament to the lasting impact of Kathleen's decision, and a powerful reminder of how the gift of organ donation can touch lives for generations.

Noel on his 70th birthday with some of his grandchildren.



The Gift of Life Ball Returns in 2026

We are delighted to announce the return of the **Gift of Life Ball** on **Saturday, November 14th, 2026.**

Transplant recipients Sally Nagle, Lynda Dawes, and Annie Foley are proud to bring this special event back following the tremendous success of the previous balls in 2018 and 2024. This year's ball will be held at the Raddison Blu Hotel in Cork.

The **Gift of Life Ball** is a celebration of organ donation, hope, resilience, and the incredible difference that transplantation makes to people's lives. It is also an opportunity to raise vital funds for the **Munster Kidney Support Centre** beside the Cork University Hospital, whose invaluable work supports kidney patients and their families throughout their treatment journey.

The Centre provides accommodation and practical support for patients and families attending hospital appointments and treatments, helping to ease both the financial and emotional pressures they may face.

Join us for an unforgettable evening of inspiring stories, live music, dancing, fantastic prizes, great company, and heartfelt celebration. Together, we will honour the gift of organ donation and the positive impact it has on so many lives.

Tickets are now on sale!

- Individual Ticket: €100
- Table of 10: €950

To reserve your tickets, please contact giftoflifeball@gmail.com or drop us a message through Facebook and Instagram at **Gift of Life Ball**.



Protecting Your Kidney Health:

A Holistic Approach to Prevention, Care and Treatment

At the Irish Kidney Association's AGM on July 4th, **Dr. Niamh Kieran**, Consultant Nephrologist at Galway University Hospital, gave a fascinating presentation on the growing shift toward integrated, cardiovascular-kidney-metabolic care – a model that treats heart disease, diabetes and kidney disease not as separate conditions, but as closely linked parts of the same picture. It was a timely reminder for everyone in the room that kidney health rarely exists in isolation, and that the way we think about, screen for, and treat chronic kidney disease (CKD) is changing.



By COLIN WHITE
National Advocacy Manager



CKD affects around 1 in 10 adults, yet it remains one of the most overlooked conditions in healthcare today. Unlike a heart attack or a stroke, kidney disease rarely announces itself. There is no sudden pain, no dramatic moment. Kidney function can decline quietly for years, often without obvious symptoms, until the disease is already advanced – sometimes so advanced that dialysis or transplant are the only options left. That is what makes kidney disease so difficult – by the time most people notice something is wrong, the best opportunity to slow it down may have already passed.

YOU ARE RARELY DEALING WITH JUST ONE THING

If you live with CKD, you will know it rarely comes on its own. Diabetes, high blood pressure, weight, and heart disease are often part of the same

picture – and it works both ways. Poorly controlled diabetes and blood pressure are two of the biggest causes of kidney damage, and once your kidneys are affected, that in turn puts more strain on your heart, makes blood pressure harder to manage, and complicates your diabetes control too.

In fact, if you have CKD, you are more likely to have a heart-related event than to ever reach kidney failure – something that often gets lost when kidney disease is treated as "just" a kidney problem, seen only by kidney specialists.

This is why health systems around the world are starting to think differently. Instead of separate clinics, separate appointments and separate specialists for your heart, your diabetes and your kidneys, there is a growing shift toward joined-up care – the integrated approach Dr. Kieran spoke about, which is already

happening in Galway.

The idea is simple – if you have one of these conditions, you are at real risk of the others, so catching kidney problems early doesn't just protect your kidneys – it protects your heart too.

WHY THIS MATTERS

- One test can do the work of several. A simple blood test (eGFR) and urine test can flag kidney problems at the same time as your diabetes or blood pressure check – no extra appointment is needed. Yet many routine health checks still do not include them.
- Some treatments help more than one condition at once. Certain medicines – the SGLT2 inhibitors Dr. Kieran spoke about are a good example – protect your kidneys, your heart, and your blood sugar all at the same time.
- Catching it early saves more than money. Finding kidney problems sooner, rather than managing a crisis later, means fewer people



**Dr. Niamh Kieran, Consultant Nephrologist,
Galway University Hospital.**

ending up on dialysis – and that matters to patients, families, and the health service alike.

- The same people are often missing out twice over. Communities with less access to healthcare tend to carry the heaviest burden of undiagnosed

kidney disease, diabetes, and heart disease. Fixing this properly means fixing it once, together – not three separate times.

WHY WE MAKE THIS CASE TOGETHER

This is also why, as a patient community, we should not talk about kidney health in isolation. When we call for better kidney screening, a national kidney registry, or inclusion in the Chronic Disease Management Programme at primary care level, we are not just making the case for kidneys – we're making the case for hearts, for diabetes control, and for better health overall.

That is a stronger story, and one far more likely to be heard. Health planners are increasingly thinking in terms of shared risk factors and joined-up care, so when kidney health is framed as part of that same bigger picture – rather than a separate "ask" – it carries more weight. Better kidney screening is not competing with cardiovascular or diabetes campaigns; it is part of the same fix, for everyone.

BLOOD PRESSURE RESEARCH STUDY UNDERWAY

Many people have high blood pressure and do not even know it. Finding it early and managing it can help reduce your risk of stroke and heart attack.

Dr. Natalie Walsh at the University of Galway is leading a new project to create a simple, easy-to-understand guide for patients with resistant hypertension (high blood pressure that is hard to control). The guide is being developed with input from patients themselves, using their real-life experiences and feedback, to ensure it is clear, helpful, and meets the needs of those living with the condition.

Recruitment for patient participants closed at the end of July, with patient workshops expected to take place during August and September across five locations: Cork, Letterkenny, Limerick, Dublin and Galway.

BLOOD PRESSURE

It affects us all... but do you take it seriously?

"IT'S JUST A BIT OF BLOOD PRESSURE..." ...but is it?

"I'D KNOW IF IT WAS HIGH..." but would you?

"AH, IT'S GRAND..." But should you get it checked?

"IT'S A LITTLE ON THE HIGH SIDE..." ...but do you know if it's safe?

Help us make blood pressure care more patient-friendly.

Many people have high blood pressure and don't even know it. Finding it early and managing it can help reduce your risk of stroke and heart attack.

Do you know your numbers?

We want to hear from real people. Your voice matters.

- Please register your interest by 31st of July 2026. Discussion groups will take place in August and September 2026.
- All participants will be reimbursed for their time.
- Discussion groups will be held in five locations: Cork, Letterkenny, Limerick, Dublin and Galway.

To take part, see universityofgalway.ie/ppi

scan the QR Code or WhatsApp 086 8325015

UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

If you want to learn more about this project, please visit universityofgalway.ie/ppi or contact the research team at 086-8325015.



BETTER HEALTH SERVICE COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY 2026

The HSE is working to improve how they communicate with patients and service users through the HSE Health App, email, SMS and letters.

The goal of the survey is to understand patients' experience of communications received from the health service to understand how they can do better. The first phase of the project was a patient survey which has now closed. They will use the feedback from this survey to recruit for planned workshops, both online and in person, this August and September.

Respondents' feedback will help shape future HSE communications to ensure they work well for everyone.





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



An incredible 120 women from 22 counties chose to represent the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) in this year's VHI Women's Mini Marathon on Sunday May 31st, 2026. The day began with a delicious breakfast reception at the Iveagh Hotel on Harcourt Street sponsored by Le Roche Posay.



Denise Cunningham and Amanda Flynn.

Each participant received a goodie bag of sponsored items, and the IKA wishes to thank Irish award-winning brand **FARO** for its generous sponsorship of Ultimate Gift Sets, as well as **Revive Active** and the **Iveagh Garden Hotel** for their support.

The 10km race started at 12.30pm at Fitzwilliam Street upper and followed the route through Donnybrook, to Stillorgan pass Nutley Lane and Merrion Road, finishing at Baggot Street Lower.

Among the participants were women currently undergoing dialysis treatment themselves, mothers supporting children awaiting transplants, living organ donors, transplant recipients honouring their



Lindsay McGouran, Jinky and Yvette.

donors and families remembering loved ones lost to kidney disease.

Participants travelled from across the country, from Kerry to Kilkenny, Roscommon to Dublin, united by a shared determination to raise awareness and support the work of the IKA.

Ranging in age and running experience, they have already formed a close-knit support network through an IKA WhatsApp group, where they share training updates, fundraising milestones, and personal stories – building a community rooted in encouragement, friendship and girl power.

The IKA thanks all the ladies who took part for the IKA, raising nearly **€50,000** to support our work.



Michelle Moore and family.



O'Callaghan family running for Frankie.



Jennifer Brilly, Sarah Quinlisk and Trish Ryan.



Jessie Doyle, Alanna Kennedy and Andreina Perez.



Rhona Gardiner.



Claire Walsh.



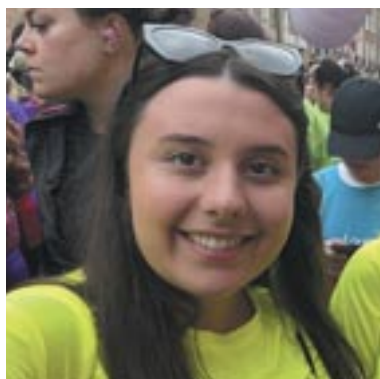
Cecile McInerney



Jessie Doyle



Marie McLoughlin



Tori Mooney



Lisa-Nicole Dunne, Claire Byrne, Aimee Quinn and Jamee Massey.



Nandini Narayanan, Shanthy Priya Mohan.



Sarah Kennedy and Olivia Craig



Shanthy Priya Mohan, Nandini Narayanan and Shenbagam Manikandan.

To find out more, visit the IKA's webpage www.ika.ie/minimarathon/ where you can read some of the inspiring stories shared by the participants.

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



Theresa Riddell and Sharon Meredith.



IKA Team members: (back row), Ciara Edwards, Carrie McMullan, Lisa Fitzpatrick, Deirdre Markey, (front): Sinead Connell and Caroline Connolly with Iveagh Hotel Staff members.



Clara Evans



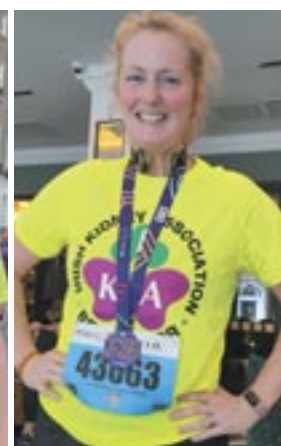
Rhona Gardiner



Claire Byrne and Jamee Massey



Aimee Quinn



Olivia Howe



Olivia Howe



Olivia and Grace Craig.



Victoria and Ines Billings



Siobhan Ryan, Sarah and Trish.



Rose Fay and Priscilla O'Connor



Caoimhe Glancy, Deirdre Markey and Isabelle McLornan.



MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE

Greetings from sunny Cork! Now that our colleagues at the National Kidney Support Centre in Dublin are up and running, we are delighted to share some news of new patient support services offered here in the Munster Kidney Support Centre (MKSC).

BREW & RENEW

We held the inaugural Brew & Renew coffee morning on June 3rd. This event is volunteer led and plans are in place to host the event on the first Wednesday of every month.

The coffee morning gives patients attending clinic or hospital appointments, and those who simply want to drop in, an opportunity to catch up in a relaxing environment, share stories and enjoy some refreshments.

We had the pleasure of welcoming some new patients at the June event and once again witnessed the invaluable support that kidney patients offer each other.

If you wish to join us, the coffee morning runs from 10am to 1pm in the Centre.



RAISING AWARENESS

Colette Hawe, one of our Patient Support Officers, had the pleasure of speaking with pupils from Scoil Naomh Pádraig in Kanturk about our work and minding their health. This invitation followed on from the school's generous donation to the Lehane family's fundraiser. We are very grateful to them.

We look forward to visiting more schools from September promoting Organ Donor awareness.



Pupils from Scoil Naomh Pádraig in Kanturk present a cheque to Aileen Lehane, their contribution to the Lehane Family's fundraiser in aid of the IKA. (l-r): Colette Hawe, IKA, Frankie Healy, Darcey Hayes, Sarah Kate Aherne, Dan Duggan, and Aileen Lehane.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In conjunction with the Dialysis Unit in Cork University Hospital, we have begun regular visits to the dialysis ward to meet with patients and offer assistance from the IKA as needed. These visits afford us the opportunity to meet patients who weren't previously aware of the many services we can offer.

We took the opportunity to extend an invitation to them to visit us at the Support Centre. Many thanks to Joanne and her wonderful staff for accommodating us.

Take care,

Colette, Sally, Edel and Jennifer



Colette Hawe, Patient Support Officer speaking with pupils from Scoil Naomh Pádraig in Kanturk.

OPENING HOURS:

MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE

Drop-in

Mon - Thurs: 9.30am - 6.00pm
Fri 9.30am - 3.30pm

For emergency bookings:

Saturday, Sunday
12.00pm - 4.00pm

SUPPORT MAGAZINE SPRING PRIZE WINNER

The winner of the Family Mini Break at the Clayton Hotel, Dublin Airport and a

Family Day Pass to Dublin Zoo was

Mary B Lacey

Riverview, Co. Kilkenny.

Celebrating the Success of our Peer Support Training Programme

There's something very inspiring about a group of passionate individuals coming together with a shared goal - to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

Recently, nine dedicated volunteers completed our Peer Support Training Programme, marking a significant milestone not only for them but also for our wider kidney community. They have been given invaluable support from our experienced peer support volunteer group, expert facilitators and healthcare professionals over the last few months. Our new volunteers, driven by kindness and an admirable commitment, will soon be ready to offer support to people living with end stage kidney disease (ESKD).

This team will strengthen the peer support we already offer in a way that resonates deeply with those they will meet. Peer Support is an online service provided by the IKA where volunteers with lived experience can provide practical advice, empathy and guidance to those living with ESKD.



By **LISA TOLAND**,
PEER SUPPORT COORDINATOR



Peer Support Volunteer team meeting, June 2026.

WHY PEER SUPPORT MATTERS FOR CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

Living with chronic kidney disease (CKD) can be an isolating experience. Patients often face physical discomfort, emotional strain, and uncertainty about their future health. This is where peer support plays a crucial role.

Peer support offers a unique form of assistance. This support comes from someone who truly understands because they have walked a similar path. Volunteers with firsthand or closely related experience provide empathetic listening, practical advice, and reassurance that can't always be found in clinical settings.

This connection helps reduce feelings of loneliness and anxiety,

empowers patients to manage their health more confidently, and fosters hope even during difficult times.

Our newly trained volunteers are equipped to create this exact kind of supportive environment. By sharing their kindness and understanding, they help bridge the gap between medical care and emotional wellbeing, making a profound positive impact on the quality of life for those with CKD.

THE JOURNEY OF OUR VOLUNTEERS: DEDICATION AND GROWTH

Training to become a peer supporter is no small feat. Over the course of the programme, these nine volunteers immersed themselves in learning about the challenges faced by individuals with CKD. They

developed essential skills such as active listening, empathy, and problem-solving, all tailored to meet the specific needs of those living with this chronic condition. What made this journey remarkable was not just the acquisition of knowledge, but the growth of the group as confident, compassionate advocates.



Peer Support Volunteer training.

Throughout their training, the volunteers benefited greatly from the guidance and encouragement of our existing group of peer support volunteers. This mentorship created a nurturing environment where ideas were exchanged freely, and our new volunteers were able to benefit from the experiences of our existing volunteer group.

The sense of camaraderie and mutual respect fuelled their motivation and is helping to build the confidence of the new team.

LOOKING AHEAD: BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES THROUGH PEER SUPPORT

The completion of this Peer Support Training Programme is just the beginning. Our new volunteers are now getting ready to step into their roles with enthusiasm and empathy, working alongside the existing team to expand the reach and effectiveness of our support network.

Together, they will provide a robust support service for individuals with ESKD, their families and carers. We will regularly have team meetings and provide ongoing support and educational sessions designed to help the volunteers grow in their roles.

As we celebrate this achievement, we also renew our commitment to nurturing a vibrant community where every person feels valued and supported. The ripple effect of this programme extends beyond the volunteers themselves – it touches families, caregivers, and healthcare providers, fostering a culture of compassion and understanding.

We are so grateful for the dedication of these nine incredible volunteers. Their kindness and drive remind us all of the power of human connection. Through peer support, those facing the challenges of chronic kidney disease no longer walk alone. They have a caring community right beside them, ready to listen, encourage, and uplift.

We wish them well in their new journey and look forward to supporting them.

ACCESSING PEER SUPPORT

If you are interested in accessing peer support, please contact us via the IKA website www.ika.ie/peersupport or email peersupport@ika.ie



PEER SUPPORT SUMMER TEAM MEETING

Reflecting, Growing and Recharging

Our recent Peer Support team meeting brought our established team together for a day of reflection, collaboration and wellbeing, providing an opportunity to celebrate achievement while looking ahead to the future of the service.

The morning reflected on the past few months. Team members shared their experiences, discussed successes and challenges, and highlighted the positive impact that peer support continues to have for those accessing the service. These conversations provided valuable insights into what has been working well and where there are opportunities for further development.

A key area of discussion was the experience of supporting our new group of volunteers. The team reflected on how the mentoring had worked, sharing feedback on the support they provided to our new volunteers and identifying ways to strengthen this experience going forward. The commitment and enthusiasm shown by both new and experienced volunteers was recognised as a vital part of building a confident and sustainable peer support team.

We also held a brainstorming session focused on extending the service. The team brought their experience and insight and displayed their openness to evolving the service to meet the need of the community.

In the afternoon, we focused on wellbeing and the team were facilitated in a session to recharge, unwind and reconnect after a very busy period. These activities reinforced the importance of self-care, recognising that looking after our own wellbeing enables us to continue to support others effectively.

The meeting was a valuable opportunity to reflect on progress, strengthen connections and inspire new ideas for the future. As we move forward, we are committed to supporting one another, welcoming new volunteers, and growing the peer support service for the benefit of others.

We wish to thank our volunteers who constantly inspire us and we are extremely grateful to them for the roles they play.

**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.**



By **CARRIE McMULLAN**
Communications Executive

SOCIAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

Using AI Responsibly For Creating Posters



Artificial intelligence (AI) is changing how people create posters, social media graphics and promotional materials. It has broken the barrier to entry by producing professional-looking designs quickly, even without design experience. However its use raises important questions about creativity, accuracy and trust. In order to use it responsibly, we must understand both its advantages and limitations.

WHAT IS AI AND HOW CAN IT HELP IN CREATING DESIGNS?

AI is a technology that allows computers to complete tasks we usually associate with human capabilities. Generative AI, including tools like ChatGPT, can create new text, images and designs based on prompts provided by users. Many of us see the impact of these tools without realising it. We have seen an increase in AI-designed posters for Irish Kidney Association (IKA) fundraisers, and we have noticed some common patterns emerging.

Let's explore an example of what AI can create for an IKA fundraiser by providing Chat GPT with the following prompt:

'Generate an image for Instagram for my fundraising event that is for the Irish Kidney Association. Their brand colours are purple and green.'

My fundraiser is a bake sale in Greencastle Community Centre on Saturday September 29th from 10am to 1pm. Include the Irish Kidney Association logo and the Greencastle Community Centre logo. I will have raffle tickets on sale as well and I will have a raffle draw at the end of my bake sale at 1pm.' This prompt created the poster below.



@IrishKidneyAssociation

@IrishKidneyA

irishkidneyassociation

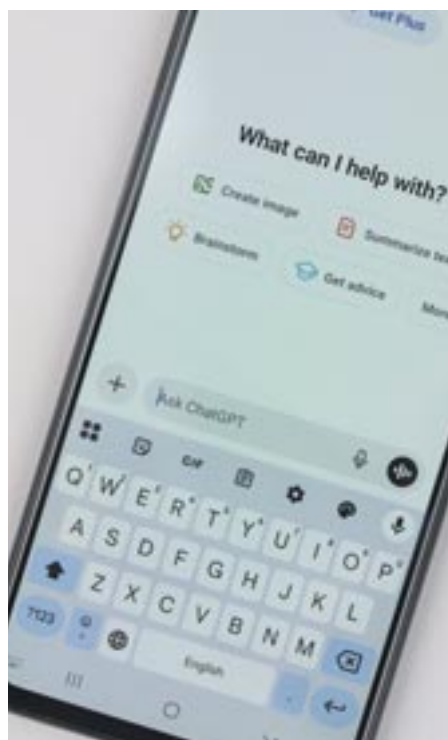
In seconds, AI can create a polished and eye-catching poster. However, there are clear signs that reveal it is AI-generated.

- **The Irish Kidney Association and Greencastle Community Centre logos are incorrect.** AI cannot copy and paste an exact logo, instead it can only attempt to create something similar.
- **It does not have a unique look.** AI relies on specific templates and uses similar fonts, colours and layouts so you have probably seen this poster with different text and images many times before.
- **It is overcrowded.** AI tries to squeeze in every detail from the given prompt and doesn't have the human ability to know what to highlight, what to simplify and what to leave out.

"But I don't have any design skills. I need to use AI to make a good poster."

You don't need to have graphic design skills to create an effective poster. The most important thing is that people can quickly understand what the event is, where and when it is taking place, and that it supports the IKA. Simple, free tools such as Canva (www.canva.com) can help you create professional-looking designs using ready-made templates.

The poster below was created in Canva using an existing template, which can be adapted to suit your



needs. Canva provides thousands of template options for posters and social media graphics, allowing you to change text, images, add the IKA logo and apply brand colours while staying in full control over the final design.

THE BENEFITS AND RISKS OF USING AI

There is no denying that AI-generated designs offer several benefits, but we must also consider the risks.

The benefits

- It saves time.

- It helps people with limited design experience.
- It can support small teams who don't have the resources to pay for professional graphic design work.

The risks

- AI does not understand an organisation's values, audience or purpose in the same way a person does.
- It can produce inaccurate information, unrealistic images or designs that do not reflect real experiences.

- One of the most concerning risks is that AI-generated designs raise copyright concerns. AI cannot create on its own and instead learns from existing artwork so ownership is unclear and artists may feel their work is used without permission or credit.
- As AI-generated content becomes more common, there are concerns that it could diminish demand for the skills and services of creative professionals whose work has traditionally supported charities and community organisations.
- AI tools rely on energy-intensive data centres and significant computing power. While occasional use is unlikely to have a major impact, AI should be used thoughtfully, avoiding the generation of unnecessary content, balancing convenience with environmental responsibility.

HOW TO USE AI RESPONSIBLY

As a charity, we must protect the trust we have built with our supporters, we must not risk sharing misleading or insensitive information and we want our work to feel real, respectful and true to the lives of kidney patients and their families. For this reason, we encourage our volunteers to use the alternative options where possible.

The IKA will be providing further guidance for Branches and fundraisers on the use of AI, including IKA-branded template posters. In the meantime, a few simple checks can make a big difference before you use an AI-generated poster to promote an event in support of the IKA.

- Check the IKA logo and any additional logos are correct
- Check the text is correct including spelling, dates and times, and contact details
- Check that the branding including the colours and images are appropriate for the IKA.

Most importantly ask yourself 'Does this feel like the IKA?'

If the answer is yes, you are being thoughtful and responsible in your use of AI, using it as a helpful tool while keeping people, honesty and authenticity at the centre.

For any queries or suggestions, please email: carrie@ika.ie. You can visit the website at www.ika.ie.



IKA National Kidney Support Centre



By **LISA WHELAN**
SUPERVISOR

The Irish Kidney Association (IKA) has been working on upgrading and future-proofing our National Kidney Support Centre (NKSC) on the grounds of Beaumont Hospital over the past 12 to 18 months.

We are delighted to share that, thanks to the incredibly hard work of our contractors, IKA staff, IKA members and volunteers, the NKSC is **NOW OPEN**.

IS NOW OPEN!

This NKSC is a “home away from home” for kidney patients and their loved ones or carers. Day visitors can drop in for a cup of tea while awaiting clinic appointments, which often presents the opportunity to meet other patients, many of whom may be on a similar journey. Overnight accommodation is also available if the need arises in one of the beautiful eight ensuite bedrooms. The centre offers a mix of accessible, twin, double, triple and family bedrooms.

The communal spaces comprise a kitchen, dining and living area, and a quiet room, with landscaped gardens for all to enjoy together or for a still moment away from the hospital environment; there is something to suit all.

We aim to provide a warm, welcoming and supportive environment from our wonderful NKSC team: Patient Support Officers, Jeremy Lawler, Lisa Schrimsher, Farheen Pillai and Supervisor, Lisa Whelan.

Call the NKSC to check availability should you require our services. Opening hours for day visiting are **Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 6pm** and **Friday 9.30am to 3.30pm**.

Contact Details:

- 📍 IKA National Kidney Support Centre
Beaumont Hospital
Dublin 9, D09 Y5R3
- ☎ 01-690 8887
- ✉ nationalsupportcentre@ika.ie

Due to capacity and availability, overnight accommodation is prioritised to those living outside of the greater Dublin area.

PATIENT SUPPORT OFFICERS



FARHEEN PILLAI



LISA SCHRIMSHER



JEREMY LAWLER



Living room



Kitchen area



Reception area



Bedroom hallway



Sage room for reflection and quiet time.



Living room



Double accessible bedroom



Family bedroom



Twin bedroom



Triple bedroom





THANK YOU!

€204,047

We couldn't have done it without you

Thank you so much to everyone who supported our fundraising campaign to redevelop the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) National Kidney Support Centre (NKSC). **The final total raised was €204,047***

*total at time of going to print.

The Centre recently had it's first guests and will continue to provide a *home away from home* for kidney patients and their families across Ireland for years to come. This is a huge milestone for the IKA and we could not have done it without our generous supporters.

Please note that if you are currently fundraising for the NKSC, these funds can still be added to the final total!

Just email: fundraising@ika.ie and we'll be happy to organise this for you.

Kitchen dining area



Reception area



Sage room



Garden seat donated in memory of Vera Frisby,
a stalwart IKA volunteer from Waterford



Community space



En suite



Accessible en suite



2026 Dublin Marathon

Matthew Hamm from Moate in Westmeath is undertaking his first Dublin Marathon this October. Matthew wanted to compete in this year's Dublin marathon to push his personal boundaries and see what he could truly achieve.



Matthew Hamm, Dean Broderick and Thomas O'Shaughnessy at the summit of Croagh Patrick



Matthew Hamm.



Matthew Hamm and his twin sister Nadine.

I was never able to play competitive contact sport, and in the last five years I have found myself running more."

"When I saw I had the opportunity to fundraise, it became a no brainer, and the fact I can do it for a charity that is so personal to me made choosing to do this marathon an easy decision".

Matthew was born with just one kidney, but thankfully it has never stopped him from living a full,

healthy life. Growing up, he was aware that his situation was a little different, but it never defined who he was or what limits he could achieve.

"Thanks to the healthy life I am fortunate to live, I have a deep appreciation for the incredible work of organisations like the Irish Kidney Association and for those who face far greater kidney or health related challenges every day," he said.

Through his fundraising efforts, Matthew hopes to raise awareness and support for kidney patients and families, while also giving back to a community that provides vital support and hope to so many people across Ireland.

"I have a strong desire to push myself and achieve personal goals that I never thought would be possible for me," he shared. *"My reasons for choosing to raise funds for the IKA are deeply personal, not only because I was born with one kidney, but also my grandmother unfortunately lost a kidney while battling cancer."*

This year's Dublin Marathon will take place on Sunday, October 25th through Dublin City with

recognisable streets, neighbourhoods, and landmarks, combining flat sections with challenging climbs.

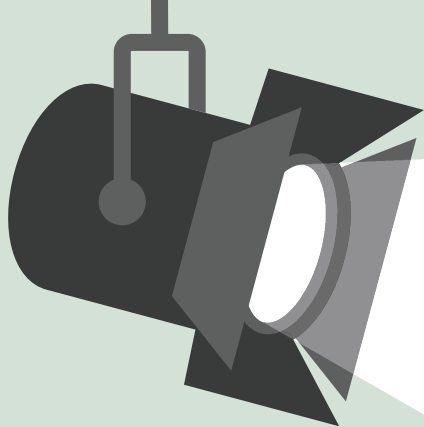
The course begins with a downhill start from Leeson Street and at the 6km point, runners enter the Phoenix Park. The final stretch brings runners along Merrion Road, past the RDS, to the Pepper Canister Church, where supporters will be gathered to cheer the runners' across the finish line.

SUPPORT TEAM IKA

AT THIS YEAR'S
DUBLIN MARATHON
Sunday, October 25th

Are you planning to support our runners at the Dublin Marathon this year? Or maybe you've always wanted to watch the event and soak up the atmosphere? If so, let us know and we'll send you some IKA merchandise to stand out from the crowd and support our runners. Get in touch with fundraising@ika.ie





SPOTLIGHT ON... VOLUNTEER

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

Harry Ward is a stalwart of the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) Dublin North Branch whose dedication and commitment have made him a familiar and respected figure not only across Dublin but throughout the wider IKA community. Since beginning his volunteering journey with the IKA in 2007, Harry has worn many hats, generously giving his time and expertise in a variety of roles including with the **Living Well Programme** and with **Transplant Team Ireland**, where he is currently the Team Manager. Harry also served as team captain from 2010 until 2024.

Over the years, Harry has provided unwavering support to countless kidney patients and their families as they navigate every stage of their kidney journey. Through his kindness, compassion, and willingness to help wherever needed, he has built lasting friendships and meaningful connections with so many people within the kidney community.

Those who know Harry speak of his reliability, generosity, and quiet dedication. He has been a constant source of encouragement, a trusted friend, and a reassuring presence for those facing some of life's greatest challenges. His selfless commitment exemplifies the very essence of volunteering and the power of genuine human connection.

Harry Ward



DUBLIN NORTH BRANCH

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

A. It is very important to me to volunteer as I feel with my life experience, I have a lot to offer to others.

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

A. I had a very successful kidney transplant in July 2007, so I knew I wanted to give back to others.

Q. How did you get involved with the IKA?

A. I saw an advertisement in the *Evening Press* about the Service of Remembrance; it was such a memorable day. My emotions were all over the place. I think of my donor and family every day.

Q. What time commitment does it demand of you?

A. One thing I had was plenty of time as my consultant advised me to retire from work; I was able to give as much or as little time as required.

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

A. I decided eight weeks after my transplant to do a year-long course for a certificate in

counselling. I felt I needed it to be able to learn how to listen to people and not just jump in with my story.

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

A. I suppose the most memorable time for me was setting up the **Living Well** program to help others with their day-to-day life and to take control of their appointments with consultants, making sure to ask every question you have. I would encourage everyone to join **Transplant Sport Ireland** for your physical and mental health. We are like a family more than a team. It is ok if life gets in the way – start tomorrow or the day after.

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

A. If you are thinking of becoming a volunteer, just pick up the phone or send an email. Even if you only have a couple of hours a week, just do it. You will definitely enjoy the experience and make wonderful friends. All you need is you.



Harry with son Dylan and grandchildren Cuan & Croia.



Harry with Edel Collins, fellow Transplant Sports Ireland competitor.

Poetry with Purpose

We are delighted to share that Pat Mulcahy, a kidney patient from Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, has published a new poetry collection titled *'A Bottle of Smoke'*, with all proceeds going to support the Irish Kidney Association (IKA).

Pat, who receives dialysis treatment in Limerick, has already donated €210 to the IKA from sales of the book. He is hoping to sell even more copies to further support the work we do for kidney patients and their families across Ireland.

Pat was inspired by the people and voices around him, as well as his own reflections on life. His collection includes humorous and witty pieces alongside more reflective works on family and emotion. His love for sport and his deep connection to the GAA also feature throughout the book.

We are incredibly grateful to Pat for his generous support and for



channelling his creative energy into such a meaningful project.

To purchase a copy of *'A Bottle of Smoke'*, you can contact Pat directly at 087-2572092. The book costs €15 including postage.

SUMMER

giveaway

WIN ONE OF 2 X €100

ONE4ALL GIFT VOUCHERS!

We're excited to launch our **SUMMER GIVEAWAY!** This is your chance to win one of two **€100 One4All gift vouchers**. Whether you're planning a summer treat, a family day out, or simply want to spoil yourself, these vouchers are the perfect prize. Enter now for your chance to win, and don't miss out on this fantastic summer opportunity.

Two prizewinners will each receive a **€100 One4All gift card**, with thousands of choices of outlets on where to spend them.

To be in with a chance to win, email carrie@ika.ie with your name, address and phone number making sure to include **GIVEAWAY** in the subject line.

The winners will be picked on Friday, September 11th, 2026, using a random number generator, numbers will be assigned chronologically to entries.

So go on, get your entry in, and you could be a winner! The closing date for receipt of entries is **Friday, September 11th, 2026**.

By entering this competition, you agree to your name being published in the Autumn/Winter 2026 issue of *SUPPORT* magazine.

STRONGER TOGETHER

The role of the Irish Kidney Association in providing a network of support and helping people to live their best lives

By **COLIN WHITE**
National Advocacy Manager

FINDING YOUR TRIBE

If you have spent some time living in another country, you may be able to relate to 'culture shock' – that feeling of disorientation experienced when you arrive in an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes.

The Irish abroad are renowned for finding and supporting each other. Whether it is a community built around the GAA or through the inevitable Irish pub, there are opportunities to 'find your tribe' – people who can help you make sense of your surroundings and your new life whilst keeping you grounded.

A diagnosis of kidney failure can bring many similar feelings. There is a new language with talk of estimated glomerular filtration rates, Kt/V and the like. On top of that, the hospital setting itself can be very disconcerting – people with a broad range of ailments, long corridors, unfamiliar machines, and a hierarchy of roles to understand.

Rooted in its membership, the Irish Kidney Association (IKA) brings together people with lived experience of kidney disease, whether as a patient or a family member, to ensure that nobody faces that journey alone, uninformed, or unheard. The Association is here to be 'your tribe'.

The strength of our Association lies in the fact that it is there when you need support **and** there where you are ready to give it.

EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

Education and advocacy provide the foundations upon which the Association develops resilience, empowers our community, and provides support.

Empowerment begins with understanding. A patient who



understands their diagnosis, their treatment options, and their rights within the healthcare system is a patient who can participate meaningfully in their own care.

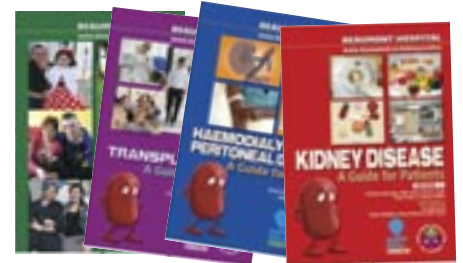
For people living with chronic kidney disease (CKD), early and accessible education can be transformative. Understanding the risk factors – diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, family history, age, and long-term use of over-the-counter medications – helps patients and their families recognise the condition earlier, engage with their GP sooner, and slow or prevent progression to end-stage kidney disease (ESKD). Simple blood and urine tests can determine kidney health, yet too many people remain unaware that these options exist, or that their circumstances place them at risk in the first place.

For those already living with ESKD, or requiring dialysis or transplantation, education takes on even greater urgency. Patients need clear, accessible, and trustworthy information about their treatment options. For example, education can help with understanding the differences between home and hospital-based dialysis, what a transplant assessment involves, what medications do and why adherence matters, and how lifestyle adjustments can all support better outcomes.

When patients have this knowledge, they are better equipped to have meaningful conversations with their clinical teams, to ask the

right questions, and to make informed choices aligned with their own values and circumstances.

The IKA provides a supportive framework through a range of channels. These include written resources such as the series of patient guides produced in collaboration with Beaumont hospital, online through our website and social media channels, and peer support through the Branch network and the IKA Peer Support service.



The IKA also provides direct patient services such as counselling, holiday dialysis and social welfare advice. Crucially, we strive to ensure that information is not only accurate and up to date, but easy to understand, inclusive in reach, and sensitive to the emotional impact that comes with a serious long-term diagnosis.

ADVOCACY: AMPLIFYING THE PATIENT VOICE

Education empowers individual patients. Advocacy empowers patients collectively. If education helps a person navigate the system as it exists, advocacy works to change the system for the better.

At a national level, the IKA

advocates on behalf of the entire kidney patient community – engaging with the HSE and the Department of Health as well as the policymakers to ensure that kidney disease receives the priority, resources, and strategic attention it demands. With over 5,400 people in Ireland currently living with ESKD – a number that is growing at approximately 3% per year – and CKD affecting an estimated 1-in-10 of the general population, the scale of the challenge is significant. Yet kidney disease has historically struggled to command the political visibility of other chronic conditions.

STRONGER TOGETHER: EXTERNAL PARTNERS

The IKA is working to close that gap. In recent years, the Association's work in promoting awareness of CKD has opened opportunities to work with other charities such as Diabetes Ireland, Croí, and the Irish Heart Foundation as we learn about the interconnected nature of many illnesses.

The HSE's **Chronic Disease Management Programme**, launched in 2020, is a positive development as it is showing the benefit of early identification and management of chronic illnesses at GP level. It is also highlighting the benefits of managing the overall health of a person with a chronic illness rather than focusing separately on each ailment.

Under the previous government, the Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD, committed to adding CKD to the programme and the current Minister for Health, Jennifer Carroll MacNeill TD, has reaffirmed the commitment. It is noteworthy that CKD is one of the most common comorbidities amongst the conditions already covered by the Chronic Disease Management Programme.

In advocating for delivery on this commitment, and other developments, the IKA is working closely with healthcare professionals through bodies such as the Irish Nephrology Society, the Irish Nephrology Nurses Association, the Renal Interest Group of the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute, Renal Physiotherapists, Renal Social Workers, and others.



Recently, five members of the IKA's National Member Forum joined a working group of healthcare professionals carrying out a scoping exercise in relation to the development of a **National End Stage Kidney Disease Data System**. This is testament to the fact that the patient voice is becoming an integral part of healthcare development, and it is important that the IKA facilitates such opportunities for patients and carers to have their voice heard.

ADVOCACY TAKES MANY FORMS

It is about making the case for investment in services, such as the expansion of home dialysis programmes or the development of a national ESKD data registry. It also means ensuring that services are fit for purpose by working towards patient representation in governance structures – on national advisory groups, in clinical research frameworks, and in the policy conversations that directly affect their care.

It means raising public awareness, not just of kidney disease itself, but of the systemic barriers – inequities in access, gaps in early detection, and inconsistencies in service provision – that prevent patients from receiving the care they deserve, regardless of where they live.

Most fundamentally, advocacy means insisting that patients are not passive recipients of decisions made about them, but active participants in shaping the healthcare system they depend upon. The IKA's position must be unequivocal – the patient voice is not a courtesy addition to policy discussions; it is an integral element of policy development.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE TWO

Education and advocacy are not separate functions – they are mutually reinforcing. Patients who are educated about their condition are better able to express their needs and experiences. Their real-world knowledge, in turn, strengthens the advocacy case far beyond what data

alone can achieve. When a person living with kidney disease speaks about what it means to travel three times a week for dialysis, or to wait years for a transplant, or to struggle to find consistent information about home therapy options, that testimony carries weight that no policy document can replicate.

Therefore, as we look to develop the next Strategic Plan for the Association, we need to reflect on the importance of placing patients, and their family members, at the centre of advocacy efforts – not as symbols, but as experts. Every campaign, every submission, every call for change to be grounded in the lived experience of the people we represent.

LOOKING AHEAD

As kidney disease becomes an increasingly significant public health challenge in Ireland, the role of the IKA will only grow in importance. The coming years will bring new treatments, new digital health tools, and new models of care – all of which will require patients to be informed, engaged, and empowered participants, not bystanders.

The IKA is committed to ensuring that every person affected by kidney disease in Ireland – whether newly diagnosed or with long managing ESKD – has access to the education they need to understand their condition, the support they need to navigate their care, and the advocacy they deserve to ensure that the system works in their best interests.

Empowered patients do not just have better outcomes, they build a better healthcare system for everyone who comes after them.

Holidays Abroad for Dialysis Patients



“Holidays are a reminder that life is meant to be lived, experiences are meant to be cherished, and memories are meant to be made.”



By **DEBORAH CERVI**
Holiday Co-ordinator

For most people, the biggest holiday dilemma is choosing between a beach resort or a city break. For those on haemodialysis, the challenge begins much earlier and involves far more than just packing a suitcase.

Planning a holiday while undergoing haemodialysis treatment requires careful preparation. Last-minute travel is generally not feasible, as arranging dialysis away from your home unit involves significant coordination between dialysis units, medical teams and coordinators across different countries.

But with the right preparation, a safe and restful break is absolutely achievable.

THE GOLDEN RULE: PLAN EARLY

If there is one piece of advice I would emphasise above all else, it is this: **do not book flights or pay deposits on your holiday until your dialysis sessions abroad have been confirmed.**

I understand that flights are often cheaper the earlier you book, but the reality is that dialysis availability cannot be guaranteed until all paperwork is complete and dialysis sessions are confirmed. And once you have paid for non-refundable travel, the stress of trying to secure dialysis can quickly undo all the benefits of a holiday before you have even left home. And in some cases, it isn't possible at all.

To give yourself the best possible chance of securing treatment and enjoying a safe and stress-free holiday, I recommend speaking to your nurse in your dialysis unit or myself in Donor House **at least 6–8 weeks in advance.** This allows sufficient time to:

- Book dialysis sessions at your destination
- Transfer your medical records and clinical history, and
- Confirm the receiving dialysis unit has space for you during your stay.

Bear in mind that demand is especially high during peak travel seasons and popular tourist areas fill up fast. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, many dialysis units have reduced capacity, making early planning even more essential. While every effort will be made to find suitable options, availability cannot be guaranteed in every location.

HOW TO MAKE AN ENQUIRY

If you are considering a holiday abroad in 2026 or if you would like some advice on which destinations are currently viable, there are several ways you can get in touch.

You can complete the secure enquiry form on the IKA website at <https://ika.ie/patient-holidays/>

Alternatively, you can contact me:

- Phone: 01-6205306
- Email: deborah@ika.ie

DESTINATIONS TO AVOID IN 2026

While we always want to encourage patients to enjoy a change of scenery, we also have a duty to be honest about where dialysis is simply not available. At present, two popular regions are proving particularly difficult:

- **Alicante Region (Spain) – including Alicante, Benidorm, and Torrevieja.**

Dialysis units in this region are under severe pressure due to high local demand. At present, many are operating at full capacity and are not accepting holiday patients. Booking travel here is not advised as dialysis cannot be guaranteed.

- **Algarve (Portugal) – including Faro, Portimao and Tavira.**

Similarly, dialysis services in the Algarve are also experiencing increased demand and availability for visiting patients is very limited. Again, we cannot advise travelling here without confirmed dialysis in place as treatment cannot be guaranteed.

TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS

In most cases, patients are responsible for arranging their own transport to and from the dialysis clinic while abroad. This is something to factor into your planning, particularly if the clinic is not within walking distance of your accommodation.

That said, some destinations do offer transport services or can assist in organising local travel.

IKA HOLIDAY HOMES IN IRELAND

For those who prefer to stay closer to home, the IKA Holiday Homes continue to provide a wonderful opportunity for patients and families to enjoy a break in familiar surroundings.

- **Tramore:** Open from May to October
- **Kerry:** Open year-round but please note that dialysis is only available in Kerry from May to September.

Demand for these homes remains very high, and availability is limited. A waiting list is in place for those who could not be accommodated initially. If cancellations occur, places will be offered to those on the waiting list.

The IKA remains committed to accommodating as many families as possible each year, and we are always grateful for the patience and understanding shown by our community.

A FINAL WORD

Wherever your travels take you,



whether to the sunny shores of Spain, the quiet hills of Kerry, or somewhere in between, I hope your summer brings happiness, rest, and good memories.

Dialysis may be part of your life, but it does not have to define your

holiday. With careful planning, realistic expectations, and a little patience, a change of scenery is still very much within reach.

I wish everyone an enjoyable summer.

Warm regards,

Deborah

Although high temperatures can impact anyone, the following groups face a higher risk: older adults, babies and young children, people with ongoing health issues, transplant patients, pregnant women, and anyone who works or spends a lot of time outside.

The HSE recommends the following tips to stay safe during a heatwave.

HEATWAVES: 10 SAFETY TIPS



**Avoid the sun
between 11am and
3pm**



**Wear light
coloured, loose
clothing**



**Close curtains;
keep your house
cool**



**Avoid extreme
exercise**



Stay hydrated



**Avoid excess
alcohol**



**Have a healthy
balanced diet**



**Take cool baths
or showers**



**Check on family,
neighbours and
friends**



**Sprinkle water
over your skin or
clothes**

These safety tips are based on HSE guidance, July 2026.

A Taste of Summer:

FRESH RECIPES FOR SUNNY DAYS

Summer is all about enjoying simple, flavourful food and making the most of longer days with family and friends. Eating well for kidney health can still be full of variety and enjoyment, and seasonal ingredients offer plenty of inspiration.

In this issue, we're sharing three easy, kidney-friendly recipes that are perfect for summer, from a refreshing side dish to a satisfying main and a delicious dessert, proving that healthy eating can be both practical and delicious.



BBQ PULLED PORK BURGERS

PREP: 20 MINUTES
COOK: 1 HOUR 45 MINUTES
SERVES: 8

Ingredients

800g shoulder of pork
1 tbsp olive oil

Rub

1 tsp light soft brown sugar
1 tsp sweet smoked paprika
1 tsp garlic powder
½ tsp cayenne pepper
½ tsp ground cumin

Coleslaw

100g white cabbage, shredded
100g red cabbage, shredded
1 small carrot, washed and grated
¼ red onion, peeled and sliced
50g soured cream

BBQ sauce

180g tinned chopped tomatoes
20ml vinegar
30g light soft brown sugar
40g runny honey
1 dsp Worcestershire sauce
½ tsp mustard powder
½ tsp garlic powder

To serve

8 large crusty/soft bread buns

Method

Make the rub by mixing all the ingredients together and then mix with the olive oil and rub into the pork shoulder. For maximum flavour, allow the meat to marinade for a few hours or even overnight covered and refrigerated. However, the pork can be cooked straight away.

Preheat your air fryer to 180°C on the roast setting. Wrap the pork in tin foil and cook for 90 minutes. Check the meat temperature has reached at least 85°C using a meat thermometer. If not, cook for a further 15 minutes. The pork can also be cooked in a conventional oven at 130°C for approximately 6 hours.

When the pork is cooked, remove and loosen the tin foil and leave the meat to rest for 10 minutes. Then shred the pork into strands using 2 forks.

Whilst the pork is cooking, prepare the BBQ sauce. Whisk all the ingredients together, then blend until smooth. Put into a small pan over a medium heat and warm until the sugar has dissolved. Turn up

the heat and bring to a simmer, then lower the heat and cook for about 15 minutes, until the sauce thickens slightly.

Prepare the coleslaw by mixing all the ingredients in a bowl.

Once all the elements are prepared, you can serve the pulled pork in the buns, pour over some BBQ sauce and serve with the coleslaw and sour cream.

Nutritional info

Low phosphate ✓
Low potassium ✓
Low protein ✗
Low salt ✓
Low fat ✗

Carbohydrates
55g
Energy
500kcal



BEAN AND COUSCOUS SALAD

PREP: 20 MINUTES

COOK: 5 MINUTES

SERVES: 4

Ingredients

1 tbsp olive oil
1 red onion, finely chopped
150g couscous
240ml low salt vegetable stock
1 red pepper, chopped into 1cm pieces
400g tin three bean salad, in water
10g fresh parsley, chopped (optional)

Nutritional info

Low phosphate ✓	Carbohydrates
Low potassium ✓	87g
Low protein ✓	Energy
Low salt ✓	490kcal
Low fat ✓	

Chop the onion and pepper and set aside.

Make the vegetable stock and measure the couscous. Stir the hot vegetable stock into the couscous, cover and leave to sit for five minutes.

Heat the olive oil in a small pan. Sauté the onion on a low heat for five minutes or until soft, then remove the pan from the heat.

Uncover the couscous and use a fork to fluff it up. Add the cooked onion and fresh pepper, then drain the bean salad and add to the couscous. Stir gently until well mixed. If using parsley, sprinkle it over the salad before serving.



ETON MESS

PREP: 10 MINUTES

COOK: 7 MINUTES

SERVES: 6

Ingredients

4 individual meringue nest
400ml double cream
1 tsp vanilla extract
150g fresh raspberries
150g fresh blueberries
1 tsp ginger cordial (optional)
4 ginger biscuits (optional)

Raspberry coulis

200g frozen raspberries
30g caster sugar
1 tsp lemon juice

For the coulis, tip all of the ingredients into a saucepan and heat for 5-7 mins. Blend in a food processor until smooth, then pass through a sieve to remove the pips. Set aside until ready to serve.

Break up the meringues into pieces and set aside. Lightly whip the cream until soft peaks form. Be careful not to over whip it. Gently fold in the raspberries, blueberries, and meringue pieces.

Add the vanilla extract and ginger cordial if using. Stir through some of the raspberry coulis. You want a ripple effect with the raspberry running through it. Serve drizzled with the raspberry coulis.

For an extra flourish, crumble the ginger biscuits over the top.



Reprinted courtesy of
Kidney Care UK –
(www.kidneykitchen.org)



Nutritional info

Low phosphate ✓	
Low potassium ✓	
Low protein ✓	
Low salt ✓	
Carbohydrates	24.8g
Energy	438kcal



MAKING MEMORIES, REMOVING BARRIERS



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

Planning a family day out should be exciting, not stressful. Yet for many families, a simple trip can involve hours of research. Questions like “Is it wheelchair accessible?”, “Are there accessible toilets?”, “Is there a quiet space for sensory breaks or to undertake dialysis?” and “Can carers attend free of charge?” often determine whether a day out is possible.

Thankfully, Ireland is becoming more inclusive, with many attractions recognising that every family deserves the chance to enjoy memorable experiences together. Because accessibility needs vary it's worth checking a venue's website or contacting them directly before you go.

Days Out in Ireland for Families Living with a Chronic Condition or Disability



Rhinoceros near rocks in a wide area in Dublin Zoo.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT ACCESSIBLE FAMILY DAY OUT?

The answer looks different for every family. Some families need step-free access and wheelchair-friendly paths, while others may require sensory-friendly spaces, hoist-equipped changing facilities, quiet rooms, hearing assistance, or accessible parking.

RECOMMENDED ACCESSIBLE FAMILY ATTRACTIONS

Dublin Zoo (Dublin City)

Dublin Zoo has made real efforts to welcome visitors with additional needs. The zoo offers wheelchair-accessible pathways, accessible toilets, concession tickets for visitors with disabilities, and free admission for one accompanying carer.

It is a fantastic day out where children can enjoy wildlife while families can move around at their own pace.



A group of pink flamingos in their habitat in the Dublin Zoo.

Fota Wildlife Park (Co. Cork)

Fota is committed to accessibility and offers extensive facilities for visitors with physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities. The 100-acre park features wide buggy and wheelchair-friendly pathways, complimentary wheelchair loans, and significant ticketing discounts for carers and visitors with special needs.



Fota Wildlife Park in Co. Cork.

Airfield Estate (Dundrum, Dublin)

This working farm and gardens has wide accessible pathways, wheelchair-friendly facilities and hands-on farming experiences that children love, from meeting farm animals to watching cow milking demonstrations, or simply enjoying the beautiful gardens in a calm environment.

Delta Sensory Gardens (Carlow)

Designed to stimulate all five senses, the Delta Sensory Gardens offer fully accessible themed gardens, water features, sculptures and peaceful surroundings. It's a gentle, calming escape that works well for families who need a slower pace, and is particularly suitable for children and adults with sensory needs.



Rollercoaster at Emerald Park.

Emerald Park (Co. Meath)

Formerly Tayto Park, Emerald Park continues to provide accessibility supports, including disability admission policies, accessible facilities, and family attractions

HELPFUL TIPS BEFORE YOU VISIT



- Contact attractions in advance to discuss your specific accessibility requirements.
- Ask about free or discounted carer admission.
- Check whether accessible parking is available close to the entrance.
- Find out if quiet rooms or sensory spaces are available.
- Bring any documentation required for concession tickets if applicable.
- Allow extra travel time so the day remains enjoyable and relaxed.

suitable for a range of ages and abilities. Families should check ride-specific access information before your visit.

Accessibility is about Inclusion, and the Irish Kidney Association are passionate about ensuring that our members do not feel excluded due to living with Kidney Disease.

Accessible attractions are about more than ramps and lifts. They're about creating an environment where every child can participate, every parent feels supported, and every family can create lasting memories without unnecessary barriers.

But we know that affordability can be a real barrier too. That's why the IKA has a number of vouchers for



Tír na nÓg Land at Emerald Park.

families who need a little extra support. If this applies to you, please ask that someone on your medical team get in touch with our dedicated patient support team at patientsupport@ika.ie.

We'd love to help. After all, every family deserves the chance to enjoy a great day out together.

SUPPORT DEADLINE

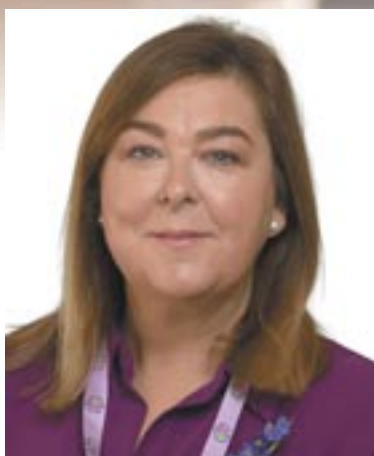
The deadline for submission of Branch notes for the **AUTUMN/WINTER** edition of **SUPPORT** is **Sunday 8th November 2026**.

QUIZ TIME

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

1. Name the Shamrock Rovers player who played for Cape Verde in the recent Football World Cup Finals?
2. In what British City is John Lennon International Airport?
3. On what date did Ireland assume the Presidency of the EU?
4. Jefferson City is the Capital of what American State?
5. In what year was the last commercial flight by Concorde?
6. Name the New York venue that recently hosted the wedding of Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce?
7. Who is the current presenter of the popular TV show *Deal or No Deal*?
8. What is the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea?
9. What motor company makes the Sportage model of car?
10. For what book did Irish writer Roddy Doyle win the 1993 Booker Prize?

QUIZ ANSWERS 1. Pico Lopes; 2. Liverpool; 3. July 1st, 2026; 4. Missouri; 5. 2003; 6. Madison Square Garden; 7. Stephen Mulhern; 8. Sicily; 9. Kia; 10. Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha.



By SARAH BUCHANAN
Projects Manager

When people think about volunteering, they often picture fundraising events, storytelling, or helping at organ donor awareness activities. While these are all core to the Irish Kidney Association (IKA), volunteering within the organisation is so much more than that. At its heart, volunteering is about people. It is about connection, commitment, kindness, understanding, and being there for one another.

The Human Connection of **VOLUNTEERING**

Across Ireland, our volunteer community stretches far and wide, with 25 Branches supporting local communities. Our volunteers come from many different backgrounds. Some have experienced their own kidney journey, while others are family members, friends, or simply people who want to make a difference. Together, they form a community built on empathy, commitment support and shared purpose.

Whether you are a Branch Officer, Member Forum Representative, Board Member, Living Well Volunteer, Peer Support Volunteer, someone helping behind the scenes, or an ad hoc volunteer, every role matters. It is the people who make the IKA what it is today.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Sometimes the greatest support comes from the simplest moments, like a chat over a cup of tea, a warm welcome at a Branch meeting, a conversation between two strangers, in the IKA Support Centres or a reassuring

smile from someone who truly understands. These small acts of kindness may seem ordinary, but their impact can be extraordinary.

For someone living with chronic kidney disease, or supporting a loved one, speaking to another person who has travelled a similar path can bring comfort that is difficult to put into words. It reminds us that we are not alone. It gives hope, reassurance, and the confidence to face whatever comes next.

That is the ripple effect of volunteering. One conversation can lift someone's spirits. One act of kindness can inspire another. Two strangers meeting through the IKA can become lifelong friends. These connections strengthen not only individuals but our entire community.

GIVING BACK IN YOUR OWN WAY

Every kidney journey is unique, and so is every volunteer journey. There may be times when someone feels ready to give back, and there may be times when their own health or circumstances

mean they need to step back. That is okay. Volunteering is not a race, and there is no right or wrong time to become involved. The IKA welcomes volunteers at every stage of their journey, and every contribution, big or small is valued.

Volunteering is much more than shaking a bucket, sharing a story, or helping at an event. It is about creating a sense of belonging and strengthening a community of shared purpose. It is about offering hope, building friendships, supporting others, and reminding people that someone is always there to listen.

Our volunteers are the heart of the IKA. Their generosity, support, compassion, and willingness to stand alongside others makes a difference every single day. Without them, our community simply would not exist.

GETTING STARTED

If you've ever had that little niggle telling you that you would like to get involved, make new friends, support others, or give something back, perhaps now is the time to take that first step.

There is a place for everyone within our volunteer community, and you never know how one conversation or one small act of kindness could change someone's life, including your own.

After all, it's all about the human connection.

To volunteer, be it ad hoc, Branch level, raising organ donor awareness, telling your story, or skills based, for example finance, communication's, IT, or fundraising, please reach out to your local branch or email volunteer@ika.ie or phone Donor House 01-62059306.



**BOOK
YOUR PLACE
NOW!**

41st Annual Service of Remembrance & Thanksgiving



at the

Church of The Holy Child
Thatch Road, Whitehall,
Dublin 9, D09 E2R2

on

Saturday, November 21st, 2026

at 1.00pm

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

We are pleased to announce that the **41st Annual Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving** will be held at the **Church of The Holy Child**, on **Saturday, November 21st, 2026**.

The Church can accommodate up to 1,500 attendees.

To ensure your place,

PLEASE BOOK EARLY.

We kindly ask that you register in advance to help us prepare for the numbers. This will also allow us to make arrangements for an overflow facility next door if needed.



You can reserve your place online by scanning the QR code below with your phone camera or using the link www.ika.ie/service2026. Alternatively, you can email: info@ika.ie or phone: 01-6205306.

We will do our best to accommodate walk-ins on the day, if space allows, keeping in mind the safety of all, especially our many immunocompromised attendees. 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 5kms from the city centre on Dublin's northside (postcode D09 E2R2). It is well serviced by public bus and there is a bus stop within a few minutes' walk. We look forward to seeing you on the day. Look out for more details on our social media and website www.ika.ie



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

NO MORE BUNGEE JUMPING!

A Mother's Gift, A Second Chance at Life

Life was pretty ordinary for a family of five, busy but ordinary. My husband Brendan and I were both working full-time, I as a nurse, and together we were raising three children, all was well until April 2016 when our eldest son, Daire, then 20 years old, suddenly got very, very sick. After a few visits to the GP, a referral was made to Dr. Denise Sadlier in Mater Misericordiae University Hospital on foot of a raised creatinine level, detected in a routine blood test.

By living kidney donor mum
EMER CASEY

Following a kidney biopsy Daire was diagnosed with IgA Nephropathy, an auto immune condition of the kidneys we had never heard of.

Life progressed as it does, Daire was studying in DCU, managing his condition well until late 2020, when his kidney function plummeted to 10%. On Dr. Sadlier's advice, Daire was to commence peritoneal dialysis and the transplant process. I can't imagine the emotions for a previously young, fit 25-year-old, thrown into the world of End Stage Kidney Disease. Getting our heads around the logistics of home Peritoneal Dialysis, was a lot, we all needed a minute!

The strict clean, germ-free procedures were one thing; the rituals and routines of a nightly programme quickly became our new normal. The Excel spreadsheet and stock control with Baxter for Daire's dialysis supplies was another, then there was the refuse!

Dialysis is a lifesaving intervention because when your kidneys fail,



The Casey family: Brendan, Éabha, Oisín, Emer and Daire. Both Oisín and Daire will be running in the Dublin City Marathon for the IKA.

without it or a transplant you cannot survive.

But when you're 25, you would be forgiven for finding it arduous and tough going, a bout of peritonitis thrown into the mix didn't help the multitude of emotions and feelings of despair and despondency.

In December 2020, Daire was placed on the transplant list in Beaumont Hospital and the very next day my husband Brendan and I opted in to be considered as potential living donors.

We could see the toll dialysis was taking on Daire, his kidney function was so low, exhaustion was the main theme. Daire was continuing to try to work, the cloud of the pandemic allowed the silver lining of working from home so with no commute and the ability to rest on the couch for every lunch break, Daire was able to keep working for longer than he ordinarily would have been able to, all the while feeling like a passive observer in his own life.

Meanwhile following both our tests, I was deemed a suitable donor and so got busy with tests, scans and assessments. Restrictions were everywhere due to the pandemic, but I couldn't fault any of the process, everything and everyone worked as best they could with the resources and within the limitations that were in place.

The journey to surgery is up and down to say the least, waiting on test results hindered by the COVID-19 pandemic brought a myriad of emotions. What I didn't know then

but do now, is that the transplant team is exceptional, no matter how busy, stretched or stressed they are, they are always and I mean always are at the end of the phone, always reassuring and gently guiding you through the whole process.

The day of our surgery arrived in June 2021, thankfully there were no last-minute hiccups. I was so grateful that I was able to be there with Daire during this entire time. COVID-19 restrictions meant no visitors, only essential staff and appointments carried on. I felt so well and healthy, I didn't need to be there but being the donor felt like a free pass to accompany my son on his transplant journey, I was grateful to be there with him.

Dr. Dilly Little is a wonderful woman and a formidable transplant surgeon whom I warmed to instantly, she was at pains to point out I was opting into surgery I didn't need so I could back out at any time. But I did need to be there, I needed to give Daire a fighting chance at the rest of his life.

At 8am on Monday June 28th, 2021, I was brought to the operating theatre. Dr. Little met me there, shook my hand and thanked me for what I was about to do, in that moment any apprehension or nervousness I had about the surgery vanished, I became completely relaxed, I was fully confident that all the staff in the theatre were capable, competent and highly trained, I was in good hands!

Our surgery went without a glitch.



Emer on RTÉ Radio 1
Sunday Miscellany
for Organ Donor
Awareness Week.

When Daire came back from theatre and his blood pressure was 130/85, I was so relieved, I fell back asleep and let the anaesthetic wear off!

I am happy to report the Daire and I have quickly recovered.

Dr. Little's parting words on my discharge from Beaumont Hospital were: no more bareback horse riding, downhill skiing or bungee jumping! I am happy to report I have kept Dr Little's advice, plenty of climbing mountains and jumping in lakes but no more bungee jumping!

The transplant marked the beginning of a new chapter, not just for Daire, but for our whole family. I returned to my nursing job. With health restored, Daire embraced life with an energy that seemed to make up for lost time.

He travelled abroad spending two years in Vancouver, then on to Berlin, and later adventures across Vietnam with his girlfriend. Each place, each journey, a quiet celebration of what had been given and what had been regained.

Today, aged 30, he is thriving. He is strong, fit, and full of purpose. In May, he and his younger brother Oisín, 23, stood side by side at the start line of a triathlon, a powerful testament to resilience and second chances.

Oisín carried that same spirit through the 2025 Dublin City Marathon, raising funds for the IKA and promoting organ donor awareness in gratitude for his brother's renewed health. This October, they will run the Dublin Marathon together, again raising funds for the IKA.

We were very fortunate from the beginning of our journey – I was deemed a suitable donor for Daire, we had our surgery and we both recovered. We are acutely aware that others are not so fortunate. Everybody waiting on a transplant is waiting on the generosity of others, in their darkest hour to think of someone other than themselves.

If I can impart one thing, please have the conversation, please share your wishes and please, don't leave your loved ones in doubt...Please.

REMEMBERING Lorraine Costello

We remember with gratitude the life and legacy of **Lorraine Costello**, who died unexpectedly but peacefully on April 4th, surrounded by her family.

Her contribution spanned almost the entire history of the Association, and her compassion, dedication and unwavering support touched generations of patients and families.

To detail Lorraine's involvement with the Irish Kidney Association is to write the history of the organisation. As Patient Support Officer, she was a consummate professional whose work was always rooted in compassion. She was there for so many of the seminal moments in the development of our community – a quiet, reassuring presence, often leading but never seeking the spotlight.

Having retired in 2020 it was a source of great joy last year that Lorraine attended the 40th Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving, alongside Phyllis Cunningham, so that they could both be acknowledged for their vision as co-founders of the Service and see that their legacy has touched, and will continue to touch, the lives of so many.

A true measure of Lorraine is in the countless amongst us who can share examples of how she was there for them, whether as a friend or in their hour of need. It is now beholden on us all to ensure that the heart that Lorraine gave to the work of the IKA continues to beat strongly for generations to come.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to her husband Frank, her daughter Críodhna and son Colin, her extended family and all who knew and loved her.

May she rest in peace.





Transplant Sport Ireland

Transplant Sport Ireland (TSI) was delighted to have 24 athletes competing in the European Transplant Games in Arnhem, Netherlands from June 21st-28th. Despite only having two and a half days of competition due to an extreme heat warning, the team still managed to win a staggering 28 medals.



SWIMMING

Monday was the first day of events for the TSI athletes. With a 9am start in the swimming pool, it wasn't long before the medals flowed in.

17-year-old **Scott Murray**, Waterford, swam an amazingly fast 100m Freestyle clinching TSI's first gold of the Games! This was followed quickly by **Peter Heffernan**, Skerries taking gold in his 100m freestyle.



Above: Scott Murray collecting his first gold medal in swimming.
Below: Scott in Lane 4.



Irish Athletes Triumph at European Transplant Games



Peter Heffernan who won 5 gold medals.



Rob Sheahan collecting his first gold medal for swimming.

Day one was a particularly exciting day for **Rob Sheahan**, Askeaton Limerick. In addition to celebrating his 36th birthday, and the anniversary of his transplant 'wake up day', he swam a stormer in his 50m backstroke, sealing a trio of gold

medals for the TSI swimmers. Rob is the first person in Ireland to have a double lung and liver transplant. The groundbreaking surgery gave Robert a second chance at life and opened the door to opportunities that once seemed impossible.

One of the moments he is most proud of was earning the confidence of the medical team to undergo such a complex and pioneering procedure. *"Convincing the medical team I was the right candidate for the first-of-its-kind surgery performed in Ireland, and now representing my country, is something I'm incredibly proud of."*

What began as a determination to simply feel healthier has grown into something much bigger: *"It began as trying to feel better and become healthy, but it has now become a motivation to succeed and honour the gift that was given to me."*

Sport plays an important role in Robert's life and recovery. Competing with TSI allows him to celebrate the opportunities his transplant has given him, while paying tribute to his donor and donor family. His message about organ donation is both simple and powerful, *"You have the power to positively change the trajectory of multiple people's lives."*

Scott Murray and Peter Heffernan went on to secure further gold medals in their 50m backstroke events, and living donor



(L-R): Supporter Anthony Murray (Scott's dad); TSI Team Manager Harry Ward; swimmers Peter Heffernan, Rob Sheahan and Scott Murray, who between them won 13 gold medals with swim coach Kevin Sheahan.



Tomas Ó hAileagáin with partner Chloe at the airport welcoming him back after winning 2 gold medals (swimming & 5k) in Arnhem.

Tomas Ó hAileagáin, Wexford and Carlow, won gold in the Donor Relay bringing the total to an amazing six gold medals in the pool on day one.

On day two, TSI swimmers went on to add another eight medals to their collection. Peter and Scott each took gold in the following three events: 50m breaststroke, 50m freestyle and 100m backstroke in their respective groups. Rob won a further two gold medals in his events, namely 50m breaststroke and 50m freestyle, and Tomas won another gold, this time in the Living Donor Relay.

This made it an unbelievable 14 medal haul for TSI in the pool – surely an Irish record at a European Games!

DARTS

Edelle Collins, Castleknock, Victor Conroy, Laois, Mike Keohane, West Cork, Gerry McKenna, Naas, Marie O'Connor, Lahinch, Finny O'Regan, Dublin 1 and Tom O'Reilly, Clonsilla represented TSI in the Darts competition, bringing home three medals for Ireland: gold for Marie, silver for Tom, and bronze for Edelle.



TSI Darts team (l-r): Mike Keohane, Marie O'Connor, Edelle Collins, Finny O'Regan, Gerry McKenna and Tom O'Reilly.



Edelle Collins and Tomas Ó hAileagáin celebrate their medal success.

BOWLING

The singles ten-pin bowling took place in the Bowling Alley. Athletes Tom O'Reilly, Clonsilla, Marie O'Connor, Victor Conroy, and Gerry McKenna represented Team Ireland admirably with Marie taking silver and Gerry taking bronze.

This brought the Irish medal tally to 18 medals after just two days of competition.

PETANQUE AND TENNIS

Over at Petanque, in blistering heat, Team Manager Harry Ward led the way by clinching a well-earned silver medal.



Marie O'Connor collecting her gold medal for Darts.



(L-R): Ten-pin bowlers Gerry McKenna, Marie O'Connor and Tom O'Reilly.



Team Manager Harry Ward collecting his silver medal for Petanque.

By Wednesday morning, an imminent weather heat warning brought sports cancellations and changes to all events. On what turned out to be the last day of competition, Finbarr O'Regan, competed in Tennis singles and Edelle Collins, Victor Conroy, Gerry McKenna and Harry Ward competed in Petanque doubles.

Continued next page...

EUROPEAN TRANSPLANT GAMES continued...

GOLF

Our five golfers were also in action in the singles event from early morning and it was medals all-round. **Ron Grainger**, Castleknock took silver, **James Nolan**, Kilcullen and **J.P. O'Neill**, Kildare also won silver medals, and **Marie O'Connor**, Lahinch and **Tom O'Reilly**, Clonsilla won bronze.



Mairead O'Mahony and Tomás Ó hAileagáin celebrating their medal success in the 5k Mini Marathon.

ATHLETICS

Over in the Old Dutch Museum the only athletics event scheduled was the 5km Mini-Marathon which took place at 8am to beat the heat. But with temperatures already in the 30s, it was yet another difficult ask.

However, TSI Athletes **Tomás Ó hAileagáin** and **Mairead O'Mahony**, Berrings, Cork, competed the race in the very challenging conditions and it was gold for Tomás and silver for Mairéad.

For Mairéad, competing as a transplant athlete is deeply personal.



Winning golfers (l-r): Golf sports captain Ron Grainger, JP O'Neill, Marie O'Connor, Tom O'Reilly and James Nolan.

"Having competed in athletics with Blarney Inniscarra Athletic Club until my diagnosis, on joining Transplant Sport Ireland, I felt that I was reconnecting with something I loved so much, which was taken from me on my cancer diagnosis," she said. "I was so excited to potentially achieve some of the dreams which, as a 17-year old, I thought were gone forever." Her message about donation is simple and powerful: "You are literally saving a life and making the greatest difference to the lives of their loved ones."



Robert McCutcheon and wife Irene.

TABLE TENNIS

Table Tennis was the last event of the Games and **Robert McCutcheon**, Dublin took the bronze here. Robert was recently elected as President of the European Heart and Lung Transplant Federation, so it was double celebrations for him and wife Irene.

CODE RED

By lunchtime on Wednesday, it was announced that Arnhem was under a government-directed Code Red heat warning and the rest of the Games' competitions were cancelled. Whilst disappointing for all athletes, the safety of all was a priority. The Gala Dinner did manage to go ahead indoors on Saturday and was a real celebration of life.



TSI athlete Gerry McKenna receiving his bronze medal for Ten-Pin Bowling.



Enjoying Culture Night in Arnhem (l-r): Marie O'Connor, Mike Keohane, Dee Keohane, Harry Ward.



Enjoying the Gala Dinner were (l-r): Pat O'Sullivan, Victor Conroy, Tom O'Reilly, Gerry McKenna and Finny O'Regan.



Gerry McKenna giving his bronze medal to his living donor – his sister Nicola at Dublin Airport.

A WARM WELCOME HOME

A large crowd awaited TSI athletes and supporters at Dublin Airport, ready to welcome home the team with pride, cheers, and celebration – a fitting tribute to these extraordinary athletes whose journeys embody courage, resilience, and the enduring legacy of organ donation.

Gerry McKenna said: "I'm most proud of my sister for her incredible gift and also the other family members who offered and got tested to become donors. I'm very lucky to have such a great family." Competing at the European Transplant Games is about much more than sport: "This is my first Games. I'm motivated to compete to demonstrate the success of living donor transplantation and to honour Nicola, my incredible living donor."

THE REAL GOAL OF THE GAMES

Following only two days of competition, our TSI athletes won an astonishing 16 gold, 7 silver and 5 bronze medals. But it's not just about medals. The real celebration is that 24 Irish athletes travelled to the Netherlands to take part in the European Transplant Games 2026, each carrying a powerful story of resilience after overcoming significant medical challenges.

Some competed, while others could not, but every athlete in Arnhem stood as a living testament to the gift of organ donation. Their presence alone was a celebration of life, of second chances, and of the extraordinary generosity of donors and their families.

By showing up, taking part, and honouring their donors through sport, they demonstrate the life-changing power of organ donation in the most powerful way possible.

Transplant Sport Ireland is immensely proud of each and every one of you.

TSI ATHLETES IN ARNHEM, NETHERLANDS

Carlow	Tomás Ó hAileagáin – Living Donor
Clare	Marie O'Connor, Kevin Haugh
Cork	Mike Keohane, Mairead O'Mahony, Mick O'Shea, Pat O'Sullivan
Cavan & Donegal	Louise MacDevitt Farrelly
Dublin	Team Manager Harry Ward, Ron Grainger, Laura McDowell, Edelle Collins, Peter Heffernan, Tom O'Reilly, Finbarr O'Regan, Robert McCutcheon
Kildare	James Nolan, Gerry McKenna
Kilkenny	JP O'Neill, Pat Savage
Laois	Victor Conroy
Limerick	Trevor Lynch, Robert Sheahan
Waterford	Scott Murray



Back row (l-r): Team Manager Harry Ward (Dublin), Gerry McKenna, originally from Monaghan, living in Naas, Peter O'Reilly (Dublin), Robert Sheahan (Limerick), Trevor Lynch (Limerick, living in UK), Ron Grainger (Dublin), Mike Keohane (Cork), Tomás Ó hAileagáin (Carlow), Scott Murray (Waterford), Mick O'Shea (Cork) and James Nolan (Kildare).

Front row (l-r): JP O'Neill (Kilkenny living in Kildare), Pat Savage (Kilkenny living in Carlow), Mairead O'Mahony (Cork), Darren Cawley, guest speaker and transplant athlete from Mayo, Patrick O'Sullivan (Cork), Marie O'Connor (Clare), Laura McDowell (Dublin), Edelle Collins (Dublin), Louise MacDevitt Farrelly (Cavan). Missing from Team Photo: Robert McCutcheon (Dublin), Kevin Haugh (Clare), Tom O'Reilly (Dublin), Finbarr O'Regan (Dublin), Peter Heffernan (Dublin), Victor Conroy (Laois).



Eoin Madden speaking at the 'Circle of Life' Garden.

ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK 2026

We had a busy, productive Organ Donor Awareness Week (ODAW) in Galway this year.

Our dedicated volunteers joined Regional Clinical Lead in Organ Donation Dr. Emer Curran, and CNS Renal MPH, Grace Gardiner at the University Hospital Galway to share resources and speak to patients and visitors about organ donation.

A sample 'Thinking of You Memory Box' was on display. The Memory Boxes were launched by the Saolta University Health Care Group during ODAW 2023 to celebrate organ donors and to mark a significant part of the journey of donor families who have lost a loved one. The initiative aims to support patients in their final days of life and their families into bereavement and beyond.



At University Hospital Galway during ODAW were Dr. Emer Curran, Peadar O'hici, Rhona Black, Alceina O'Brien and Paul Grealish.

GALWAY

By MICHELLE GERAGHTY



Members of the Galway Branch meeting the President of Ireland (l-r): Carol Moore, CEO IKA; President Catherine Connolly, Gwen O'Donoghue, Senior Media Officer, IKA; Michael Walsh, Deputy Chair Galway Branch; Samantha Lee, Treasurer Galway Branch and Peadar O'hici, Secretary Galway Branch.



Organ Donation Webinar for HSE Staff hosted by Organ Donor Nurse Managers.



Donor Family Memory Box.

We would like to thank Galway Branch volunteers Peadar Ó hici, Paul Greaney, Alceina O'Brien, Rhona Black, Evelyn Horan and consultant nephrologist Dr Niamh Kieran for supporting the HSE team.

ORGAN DONATION WEBINAR

On May 20th, Galway's representative on the IKA National Member Forum, Alceina O'Brien, was invited to speak as a patient advocate at a webinar hosted by Organ Donor Nurse Managers from across multiple HSE regions. ICU nurses, theatre staff, and physiotherapists attended the event

in person at the University of Limerick, while others joined online from hospitals nationwide.

The webinar aimed to promote organ donation among HSE staff, highlighting the hope and humanity at the heart of organ donation. Alceina shared her personal journey as a kidney and pancreas transplant patient, from the challenges of dialysis, through her transplant and recovery, to life on the other side.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Organ Donor Nurse Managers Bernie Nohilly, Karen Healy, Nicki Phillips, Breda Doyle, Gillian Shanahan and Orla Cradock for hosting this wonderful event and for inviting Alceina to share her story.

Most of all, we want to acknowledge the passion, empathy, and dedication they bring to their roles every day, and the unwavering support they offer to donor families across the country. Their vital work often takes place behind the scenes, but it makes an immeasurable difference to donor families and organ recipients alike.



North/South Collaborative Organ Donation Transplantation Event.

ACORN LIFE

On the first day of ODAW, our Chair, Eoin Madden visited Acorn Life Group's Head Office in Galway for an inspirational charity partner session. Acorn Life is an Irish-owned Life Assurance company that has been operating since 1989. Every year they choose three charity partners.

In 2026, their chosen charities were First Light, Clóna's Foundation and the IKA. Eoin presented on behalf of the IKA, using the opportunity to promote organ donation and our work to support patients.

The event in Galway featured presentations from each organisation, followed by a collaborative lunch.

Acorn Life kindly donated €10,000 to the re-opening of the National Kidney Support Centre. The IKA was nominated by Acorn employee Tony Raftery, whose son is currently receiving dialysis treatment.

We'd like to extend our thanks to Tony and all at Acorn Life for the opportunity to promote organ donation and for their generous donation.

CIRCLE OF LIFE EVENT

We closed out ODAW at a North/South Collaborative Organ Donation Transplantation event held at the 'Circle of Life' Organ Donor Commemorative Garden in Salthill. Our Branch Chair, Eoin Madden, who is also the IKA's National Treasurer, spoke alongside a distinguished group that included President of Ireland Catherine Connolly, sharing his story and his most recent transplant in Belfast.

Eoin received his kidney through the paired exchange programme. His wife Michelle donated hers to a stranger, which enabled Eoin to receive a kidney from that recipient's donor.

The programme, run by the team at Belfast City University Hospital, makes this possible when a loved one isn't a direct match.

We would like to thank event organisers Martina and Denis Goggin of the Organ Donation Strange Boat Foundation for extending an invite to the IKA and to Galway Branch members.

The Goggins created the 'Circle of Life' Garden in memory of their son Eamonn, whose organs saved four

lives after a tragic road accident in 2006.

The garden, which was lit up in green for ODAW, is a calm and reflective space where donor families and recipients can come to remember and honour their loved ones, and to give thanks. We're so grateful to have it on our doorstep.

BRANCH MEETINGS AND SUMMER SOCIAL

Since our last update, the Branch met online in April and in person at Scotty's American Diner in June. On July 18th, we let our hair down at our Afternoon Tea Summer Social at the Train Station Gym. Organised by Alceina O'Brien, the event was a resounding success, giving Branch members new and old the opportunity to share experiences, have a bit of craic, and enjoy some delicious treats supplied by Kevin Nugent, owner of Mr Waffle and Ground & Co. Galway.

A highlight of the event was the opportunity to formally thank retired officers Bernie Coyne, Mary Ryan, and Christine Curley for their outstanding long-service contributions to the Branch. Flowers were presented to Bernie and Mary at the event as a token of our gratitude. We were sorry that Christine was not able to join us on the day.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Scotty's American Diner, the Train Station Gym and Mr. Waffle/Ground & Co for their ongoing support of our branch.

JOIN US

Follow us on social media for news of our upcoming meetings

📧 @galwayIKA and

📱 @Galway IKA Branch



Galway Branch Officers at the Summer Social: Michael Walsh, Alceina O'Brien, Eoin Madden, Michelle Geraghty, Samantha Lee and Peadar Ó hici.



Eoin Madden, Chair presenting flowers to Mary Ryan and Alceina O'Brien presenting flowers to Bernie Coyne in recognition of their decades of service to the Branch.



GOLF CLASSIC FUNDRAISER

Dundalk couple Augustine (Gus) and Catherine Goss hosted a special Golf Classic at Greenore Golf Club, Co. Louth, on Friday, May 15th, on the eve of Organ Donor Awareness Week, raising €9,532 for the Irish Kidney Association's (IKA) Support Centre. In July the couple presented the proceeds to the IKA at the National Kidney Support Centre where they were gifted a framed picture of the Centre drawn by former IKA National Chairman Colin Mackenzie.

This year marks two significant milestones for the couple – their 41st wedding anniversary and five years since Catherine donated a kidney to her husband. Looking back with gratitude, they reflected on a remarkable journey that saw Augustine undergo home dialysis seven nights a week for seven months before receiving a life-changing kidney transplant in 2021.

Set against the spectacular backdrop of the Cooley Peninsula overlooking Carlingford Lough, the successful golf fundraiser brought together golfers, supporters and transplant recipients for a memorable day of sport, friendship

LOUTH/MEATH

By SANDY FLANAGAN



Gus and Catherine Goss (centre) attending a cheque presentation at the National Kidney Support Centre with IKA staff Sarah Buchanan, Project Manager, from Dundalk (left) and Gwen O'Donoghue, Senior Media Officer (right).

and celebration.

A total of 40 teams of four took part in the event, highlighting the life-changing impact of organ donation while raising funds for the IKA National Kidney Support Centre. The day was a fitting celebration of the gift of life, the generosity of organ donors and their families, and the strength of the community that continues to support kidney patients across Ireland.

Playing on the course she describes as being "like playing in her own back yard" was heart transplant recipient Bronagh Daly from Greenore, a speech and drama teacher. 15-years-ago, she received her life-saving heart transplant in 2011 at the age of 40, when her children were just four and 18-months-old.

The successful Transplant Sport Northern Ireland golf team also fielded a team of four golfers, including two who donated kidneys as living donors (one an altruistic donation to a stranger), as well as a kidney transplant recipient and a liver recipient, both of whom are

grateful to their deceased donors.

Transplant Sport Ireland also fielded a team of grateful transplant recipients.

This was the second Golf Classic organised by Gus and Catherine in aid of the IKA, building on the success of their inaugural fundraiser at Greenore Golf Club in 2022, just one year after Augustine's transplant. That event raised almost €18,000 for the IKA and attracted a large turnout, proving to be a tremendous success.

This year's Golf Classic was another memorable occasion, bringing together golfers, supporters and transplant recipients for a day of sport, friendship and celebration. During the prize presentation that evening, Gus delivered a heartfelt speech reflecting on his transplant journey, Catherine's extraordinary gift, and the importance of organ donation. His emotional words were met with a standing ovation from those in attendance, which included our Branch Chair Louise Wayenberg and her husband Cliff.



Tiernan McCann, Gus Goss, Eoin Murphy, Catherine Goss, Paul Byrne and Hugh Clarke.



Pam Cassidy, Tom O'Reilly and Rosie McCrea, Transplant Sport Ireland team. Pic: Newspics Photography.



James McCourt, Mark Hughes, Jenny Shields and Cecil Floyd, Transport Sport Northern Ireland. Pic: Newspics Photography.



Donal Feen travelled from Cork to play.

The affable Augustine, who works for Cookstown Dairy Services, said: "This year means so much to us. We are celebrating 41 years of marriage and five years since Catherine gave me the greatest gift anyone can give – the gift of life. Organising this event is our way of giving something back and raising awareness so that more families can have the same second chance we've had."

He added: "The Irish Kidney Association provides fantastic support for kidney patients and their families, and we are proud to support its work in any way we can."

Gus thanked all the golfers who took part, the officials, members and kitchen staff at Greenore Golf Club, and the many individuals and organisations whose generosity helped make the event such a success.

He also expressed his sincere appreciation to the event sponsors, including Dundalk Credit Union, Value Centre Dundalk, Old Warehouse Restaurant & Bar, Tullamore, Peter Mark (Hair), Spotlight Oral Care and Keogh's Crisps, as well as the many other individuals and businesses whose contributions helped create a generous prize fund for golfers and an outstanding raffle.

Special thanks was also extended to the host venue, Greenore G.C.,



Gus Goss, Jackie Quinn, Golf Ireland and Catherine Goss.



Gus Goss, Greenore GC Lady Captain Roisin Finn, Catherine Goss.

and to Esker Hills G.C. in Offaly, Dundalk G.C., Ardee G.C., County Louth G.C. (Baltray), and many other clubs throughout the north Leinster region. Much of this support came through the entering of teams, sponsorship of prizes, and helping to raise awareness of this important cause, all of which was greatly appreciated.

The Louth/Meath Branch of the IKA extends its warmest thanks to



Noreen McCarton and Lisa Crudden. Pic: Newspics Photography.

Gus and Catherine and to everyone who gave their time, support and generosity to this very special event.

BRANCH MEETING

Our next Branch Meeting will be held on September 16th in the Monasterboice Inn – Front Bar. We look forward to seeing you there and, as always, **NEW** and **OLD** members are very welcome.

BRANCH CONTACT

If you are unable to attend our meetings and would like to join our WhatsApp Group, please don't hesitate to contact Sandy on 083-3325677.

WhatsApp is an easy and efficient way to communicate with Branch members. We share information on upcoming events such as meetings, fundraisers and IKA events. It's the best place to keep up with what we are doing in Louth and Meath.



Gerard Woods, Gerard McCormack and Catherine Goss.



Augustine (Gus) Goss, Bronagh Daly, Sharon McGeough, Stephanie Malone and Eamonn McCarton.



Patricia Callaghan receiving a cheque from the Derry & Donegal Presbytery Choir.

Greetings from Donegal.

Recently we were invited to a wonderful concert by the Derry & Donegal Presbytery Choir in Ramelton, Co. Donegal where we were presented with a cheque for €1,355. We wish to thank the choir for a wonderful evening and for their kindness.

DONEGAL

By PATRICIA CALLAGHAN



Seamie McDermott and Vinney Gillespie cycle from Malin to Mizen Head and back.



CONDOLENCES

Our sympathies to the family and friends of Liam Kennedy, Newtown, Donegal Town, a patient in the dialysis ward, University Hospital Letterkenny. Liam sadly passed away recently.

MALIN TO MIZEN HEAD TO MALIN FUNDRAISER

Two Donegal cancer survivors, Ballybofey friends Seamy McDermott, a kidney transplant recipient, and Vinney Gillespie, have completed their charity cycle from Malin Head to Mizen Head and back,

covering more than 1,100km.

The pair finished at Malin Head on Sunday evening May 31st, after cycling a staggering 567km each way to raise awareness of organ donation and support the IKA's National Kidney Support Centre.

Reflecting on the challenge, Seamy said the journey brought a huge sense of relief, pride and gratitude, with the heat and long days on the road making the achievement even more rewarding.

That's all from the Donegal Branch, have a lovely summer!

LEITRIM

By CATHRIONA CHARLES

Our three officers, Annetha Kieran, Cathriona Charles and Frank Heslin spearheaded our Organ Donor Awareness campaign for 2026. Together, they celebrated 70 years of life with their transplanted kidneys. Frank was transplanted in 2001, Annetha in 2014, and Cathriona is celebrating an incredible 36 years with her kidney, having been transplanted in 1990.

Thanks to the support of Gwen O'Donoghue in Donor House, Annetha, Cathriona and Frank featured in a lovely article in our local paper, the *Leitrim Observer*, and were interviewed on Shannonside radio. The interview is available on the Shannonside FM website as a podcast.

The Branch also held a stall in the lovely Farmer's Market in Carrick-on-Shannon where we chatted to lots of people about organ donation and gave balloons to lots of happy children.

We also had tables in Kieran's Total Health pharmacies.

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.



Paul Hackett, Anne Hackett

ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK

The Tipperary Branch held its AGM in the Anner Hotel Thurles, on Wednesday, April 8th. We were delighted to welcome a new member to the Branch.

During May, in the lead up to Organ Donor Awareness Week, we visited local pharmacies, doctors' surgeries, primary care centres and gyms throughout our local areas. Organ Donor Awareness posters were displayed, and Donor Cards were made available for members of the public.

Our Chairperson Anne Hackett shared her own personal experience of living with chronic end-stage kidney disease and receiving a kidney transplant. By telling her story, she highlighted the life-changing impact of organ donation and encouraged people to have these important conversations with their families and loved ones by raising awareness on the importance of organ donation.

We hope that the work carried out by Branch volunteers in our local communities, will encourage more people to become organ donors.

CLOGHEEN FUNDRAISER

On Friday, June 19th, The Duhill Chancers' hosted a very enjoyable social evening with a variety concert, in aid of the Tipperary Branch and St. Teresa's Unit in Clogheen Hospital, Co. Tipperary.

TIPPERARY

By ALISON FOGARTY



Members of The Duhill Chancers presenting a cheque to the Tipperary Branch. (Back, l-r): Anne Walsh, Richie Morrissey, Paddy Lonergan, Liam Hunger, Brendan McCarthy, Michael Anglim, Lina Ryan. (Front, l-r): Michael Fennessy and Kathleen Moloney.

The event was a great success raising a total of €6,176 which was shared equally between the two charities, each receiving €3,088.

We would like to thank everyone who supported the event. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

NENAGH FUNDRAISER

Donal Morrissey recently held a fundraising event in Nenagh in aid of the IKA. Donal brightened the day with a display of balloons at the event which raised €2,947.50.

Well done, Donal.



Donal Morrissey.

CLONMEL FUNDRAISER

We would also like to thank Carmel Fitzsimmons and everyone at the Bridge Club Clonmel, for their support. Carmel recently presented a cheque to Branch Chairperson Mary Adamson following a fundraising bridge night. We are very grateful for their support.

CONGRATULATIONS

We are delighted to share some amazing news with our members. Our Board member Francis Hogan recently received a kidney transplant, and Johnny Tuohy received a kidney and pancreas transplant. From everyone at our Branch we wish you both continued good health and a speedy recovery.

CONDOLENCES

On behalf of everyone in the Tipperary Branch, we wish to extend our sincere sympathies to the family of Pat Aylward, a former member and Chairperson of the Branch who passed away recently. Pat made a valued contribution during his years of service and will be fondly remembered by all who knew him. May he rest in peace.

Finally, we would like to wish all our members and their families a healthy and safe summer. We look forward to seeing you all in September for our next meeting. Keep an eye on our Facebook and Instagram pages for further details.



Carmel Fitzsimmons presenting a cheque to Mary Adamson, Treasurer, Tipperary Branch, IKA.



Back: William Kennedy, Adam O'Shea, Cíalan Walsh, Eoin Huggard.
Front: Gabriel Scott, Nathan Galvin and Kayden Neary.

VINTAGE ANNUAL FIELD DAY

Inspired by nine-year-old kidney patient Cíalan Walsh from Waterville, Co. Kerry, the local Iveragh Vintage Club dedicated its annual Field Day, held on a sunny day in July, to him this year.

Each year, the Vintage Club chooses a local cause to highlight and support. This year, the event shone a spotlight on Cíalan's inspiring journey while also raising awareness of the importance of organ donation. His mother, Fiona, a native of Trim, Co. Meath, and her Kerry husband Jonathan, set up an information stand with the support of the Kerry Branch of the Irish Kidney Association.

Cíalan was born with Multicystic Dysplastic Kidney (MCDK), a condition in which one kidney never developed properly, while the function of his remaining kidney has gradually declined over the years. In December 2025, he began dialysis treatment and now undergoes eight hours of dialysis every night while awaiting a kidney transplant.

The Iveragh Vintage Club Annual Field Day featured a huge array of

KERRY

By THERESA LOONEY



Sitting on his great-grandfather's restored 1961 Massey Ferguson 35 tractor Cíalan Walsh photographed with Christopher Fenton, a friend of the Walsh family and Ger Egan of Egans garage.



The Walsh family: Orlaith and Cíalan with their parents Jonathan and Fiona.



Breda O'Sullivan, Paudie O'Connell and Fiona Walsh.



Looney's Garage pink car with IKA logo at the Vintage Field Day.



vintage tractors, cars and machinery. Visitors enjoyed threshing demonstrations, sheaf throwing, sheep shearing, live music, dancing, children's entertainment and a large raffle, making it a memorable day for all the family.

Among the standout attractions was a very special tractor with deep family significance – Cíalan's great-grandfather, Victor Shalvey's, 1961 Massey Ferguson 35. Cíalan never had the opportunity to meet his great-grandfather, who passed away in 1996. The tractor had remained idle since then.

Wanting to honour both his family heritage and his grandson, Cíalan's grandfather, Noel Shalvey – Fiona's father – lovingly restored the vintage



Kayden Neary, Eoin Huggard O'Connor, Adam O'Shea, Gabriel Scott and Cíalan Walsh.

tractor before making the remarkable journey from Trim, Co. Meath, to Waterville, Co. Kerry, driving it all the way for the special occasion.

The beautifully restored Massey Ferguson 35 became a fitting symbol of family, determination and community spirit, reflecting the tremendous support shown to Cíalan and his family by the Iveragh Vintage Club and everyone who attended the event.

Amber and Jessica Donnelly before their hair chop.



Amber and Jessica Donnelly proudly show their hair for donation to the Little Princess Trust.



CUT FOR A CAUSE

The Kerry IKA Branch benefited from a successful Family Fun Fundraiser organised by Sandra Flynn Donnelly and her daughters, Jessica (12) and Amber (7) Donnelly from Milltown. Held in July at Faha Court & The Courtyard, Killarney, the event had raised over €18,000 at the time of going to press. It was officially launched by kidney transplant recipient and Special Olympics Ireland gold medallist Joe Buckley from nearby Faha, whose inspiring story highlighted the life-changing impact of organ donation.

At the event Jessica and Amber each had 12 inches of their hair cut to donate to the Little Princess Trust while raising funds for the Kerry IKA Branch. Jessica was making her second hair donation, having just a year ago raised €1,600 for LauraLynn Children's Hospice, while her young sister Amber proudly made her first donation.

Volunteering their skills to cut the girls' hair were hairdressers Melissa O'Connor and Sandra Fitzgerald.

Kerry Branch PRO Theresa Looney congratulated Joe Buckley on his outstanding success at the recent Special Olympics Ireland Games.

Representing Kerry Stars Special Olympics Club, Joe won gold in the 100m and came fourth in both the mini javelin and relay events.

Theresa presented Joe with a beautifully decorated gold cake in recognition of his recent sporting success.

She expressed her heartfelt thanks to Jessica and Amber, along with their mother, Sandra, for organising such an enjoyable gathering filled with fun activities. She also thanked everyone who attended for their support and all



Special Olympics Gold Medallist Joe Buckley with his parents Jack and Noreen Buckley and Theresa Looney, Kerry IKA.

those who generously contributed to the fundraiser, which she declared an outstanding success, raising such a significant amount in support of Kerry kidney patients and their families.

Continued next page...



Kasia Kolodziej, Gina Haliday, Theresa Looney, Susan Cahalane, Kayla O'Donoghue, Eleanor O'Doherty, Sandra Flynn Donnelly, Debbie Templeton, and Jessica Donnelly.



The Donnelly Family: Amber and Jessica before their hair cut with their parents Eric and Sandra and brother Osin.

KERRY CONTD...



Front Row: Billy Joy, Eleanor O'Doherty, Paddy and Theamae Mulvaney, and Nicole Kerrigan. Back Row: Liam and Marina Mulvaney.



Noreen O'Brien, Mary O'Sullivan, Rosaleen Evans and Mary Coffey.



Jake O'Sullivan, Aisling McKenna, Tommy and Margaret Johnston.



Miley O'Connor, Joanna Naughton, John Warren and Aidan Warren.



Fun and games at Faha.

SLIGO By ANNA MITCHELL KENNY

AGM AND BRANCH UPDATES

Our AGM took place on Saturday, June 27th at the Glasshouse Hotel, Sligo Town. We began by acknowledging and remembering our recently deceased members with a minute's silence.

We extended our sincere thanks to two of our longstanding Branch officers who retired recently: Geraldine McHugh, Branch Secretary and Brian McHugh, Treasurer and PRO. Their service and contribution have proven priceless to the success of the Branch in all our endeavours.

The attendees were then addressed by the Chairperson, Sean Fowley, the Secretary, Anna Mitchell Kenny, the acting Treasurer, Marie Fowley and the National Member

Forum representative Fidelma Hanly.

Information was shared on the ongoing efforts to secure a new Dialysis Unit that will be fit for purpose to respond to the increasing need for space and dialysis time.

All donations and fundraising events to date were acknowledged with gratitude. Thanks was extended to the individuals who fundraised and supported us on our Fundraising and Information days.

Attendees were updated in relation to the activities of the IKA's newly established National Member Forum and the role it will play in giving a voice to members and patients in the immediate future.

Thank you to everyone who

supports us in our efforts, and we look forward to being able to support members and patients in every way we can.

UPCOMING FUNDRAISER

We look forward to supporting Fiona Doddy as she takes part in the Bunninaden Road Race fundraiser in aid of the Sligo Branch of the IKA on September 19th.

DOORLY PARK GARDEN

Our lovely garden in Doorly Park has been restored to its glory after the storm ravages of recent times. This was achieved thanks to the efforts of many of our members in cooperation with a landscape gardener and the local council.



The Mayo Branch of the Irish Kidney Association was delighted to restart its activities this April, renewing our commitment to supporting kidney patients and promoting organ donation across the county.

We extend our sincere thanks to the previous Branch officers for their tremendous work, dedication, and service over the years.

As we begin this new chapter, we warmly welcome new members to join us, get involved, and help strengthen the vital work of the IKA within our Mayo community.

BERLIN MARATHON FUNDRAISER

The Mayo Branch is also asking the wider community to please support Colin Scanlon, who will be running the Berlin Marathon this September in aid of the IKA. Colin is undertaking this incredible challenge to raise awareness and vital support for kidney patients and organ donation.

You can follow his updates and fundraising progress on the Mayo IKA Facebook page.

ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK

A huge thank you to all our Mayo Branch members who distributed organ donor cards and posters across the county and organised local events to raise awareness during this year's Organ Donor Awareness Week (ODAW). It's so positive to see the Branch active again – your energy and commitment is truly inspiring.

Members of the Mayo Branch were delighted to attend a special Mass for organ donors and their families at Knock Basilica, Co. Mayo during Organ Donor Awareness Week. The Branch extends a heartfelt thank you to Knock Shrine

MAYO

By FRANCES COLEMAN



Organ Donor Awareness Week (ODAW) at Mayo University Hospital (l-r): Annette Geraghty (Advanced Nurse Practitioner); Ann Ivers (Mayo IKA); Denise Conroy (Senior Medical Social Worker); Anna-Marie McHale (Mayo IKA); Frances Coleman (Mayo IKA) and Dr. Alaeldin Abdulla (Consultant Nephrologist).



ODAW at Moloney's SuperValu, Ballina, Co. Mayo, (l-r): Mayo Branch members, Frances Coleman, Anna-Marie McHale and Keith Scanlon.



Garda National Women's Network Conference at the Loughrea Hotel & Spa during ODAW, (l-r): D/Inspector Yvonne Martin; D/Garda Paula Griffin; Garda Commissioner Justin Kelly and D/Garda Anna-Marie McHale.

for hosting such a beautiful and meaningful event, honouring both

Donors and Transplant recipients and their families.



Walter Kent, Wexford Branch, Catherine Mein, B Braun Dialysis unit, Wexford, Deirdre Markey, IKA Donor House, Eddie Kehoe, Wexford Branch.

Deirdre Markey from Donor House very kindly attended our Branch meeting in the Talbot Hotel, Wexford on Tuesday, May 5th. Michelle Geraghty joined the meeting via zoom, and both gave a very full and informative presentation on futureproofing of the IKA. A very lively discussion followed with a lot of questions being asked of both Deirdre and Michelle. It was a very worthwhile and informative meeting, and we greatly appreciate Deirdre and Michelle taking time out of their busy schedules to attend.

Walter Kent, Branch Secretary arranged for Deirdre to visit BBraun dialysis unit in Drinagh while she was in Wexford.

ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK (ODAW)

During this year's ODAW, we had a stand at the Wexford Volunteer Expo in the Talbot Hotel. There were



Wexford Branch members Catherine Murphy, Trish Boyce and Celine Tracey took on an abseil challenge in Croke Park raising funds for St Damien's Ward, Beaumont Hospital.



Eddie Kehoe, Pauline Atkinson, Hugh McGuire.



Liam Buttle, Janine Kenny Murphy, Eddie Kehoe.



Walter Kent at Wexford Expo.

WEXFORD

By DORA KENT



Wexford Branch welcomed Deirdre Markey to our meeting in the Talbot Hotel, (l-r): Frank Kent, Aoife Honan, Hugh McGuire, Walter Kent, Deirdre Markey, Liam Buttle, Stefanie Honan, Eddie Kehoe.



Liam Buttle, Aoife Honan, Wexford Branch members; Sinead Hore, High Meadows Community Hub, Janine Kenny Murphy and Eddie Kehoe, Wexford Branch members at a cheque presentation from Wexford Credit Union Night Run.

over 50 groups at the Expo and a huge number of people passed through during the day. It was a great way of getting out the message of organ donation to so many people and we are delighted to share that lots of new volunteers signed up to support us.

Many thanks to Walter for organising and for setting up the stand along with Liam, Catherine and Dora, and to our members who turned up on the day to cover the stand, including Aoife and Stefanie, Eddie and Janine and Hugh and Pauline.

BANNOW RATHANGAN SHOW

We had another very successful day at the Bannow Rathangan Show this year on Thursday, July 9th with the IKA information trailer. Lots of donor cards and information leaflets were given out to the many visitors at the event. Thank you to Liam, Catherine and Walter for organising and setting up the trailer on site, and to all the volunteers who helped out on the day, including Eddie, Dora, Aoife, Stefanie, Caroline, and to Marion who came along from the Waterford Branch to give us a hand.



Eddie Kehoe, Hugh McGuire and Walter Kent at the Gurriers MCC charity bike run for the Irish Kidney Association.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Sinead Hore, High Meadows Community Hub presented a cheque to Wexford Branch for €2,150 proceeds from the annual Wexford Credit Union night run held in February.

Wexford Branch member Trish Boyce, along with her friends Catherine Murphy and Celine Tracey, successfully completed a daring challenge to abseil down Croke Park on Friday, July 10th to raise funds for St. Damiens Ward, Beaumont Hospital. Trish donated a kidney to her dad John three years ago and knows first-hand the vital care provided to kidney patients by the staff in St. Damiens.



Wexford Branch members Liam Buttle (back row left), Pauline Atkinson (centre from right) and Walter Kent (right) with Pauline Murphy White, her son Jason and members of the Gurriers MCC who organised the charity Bike run for the Irish Kidney Association.



Councillor Jim Codd (centre) showing his support for IKA at the Gurriers MCC charity Bike run with Liam Buttle, Hugh McGuire and Walter Kent, Wexford Branch.

There was a great turnout in Taghmon on Sunday, July 12th for the Charity Vehicle Run organised by The Gurriers MCC. This is the second year Jason and his friends have organised this event and proceeds this year will be shared between the IKA and Blood Bikes Southeast.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to 22-year-old Ben Kelly from Gorey who underwent his third kidney transplant in February this year.

Finally, congratulations and best wishes to three of our members who celebrated transplant milestones recently. Eddie Kehoe, 43 years, Ann O'Connor, 40 years and Hugh McGuire, 15 years.

DUBLIN NORTH

By ANN HATCH

During Organ Donor Awareness Week (ODAW) our Dublin North Branch volunteers went all out in an effort to raise awareness by chatting to people about kidney health and organ donation. They also encouraged people to consider becoming a donor by distributing organ donor cards.

A number of our volunteers visited Beaumont Hospital to speak with patients, staff and visitors, while others attended Dublin City Council's North County Operations Depot in Ballymun on May 20th and 21st.

On behalf of the Dublin North Branch of the IKA, we would like to thank the staff of Beaumont Hospital and the Dublin City Council Depot for hosting us and for the warm welcome that we received at both locations.



Colm Mackenzie, Ron McAuley, Caroline Gilligan, Margaret Quinn at Beaumont Hospital during Organ Donor Awareness Week.

Our Branch Chairman and committee would also like to take this opportunity to share a massive thank you to all Branch members

and volunteers for their hard work and support during Organ Donor Awareness Week.



We hope you have all been enjoying the beautiful spell of summer weather and have had the opportunity to spend some time outdoors with family and friends. It has been another busy few months for the Limerick Branch, and we continue to be humbled by the kindness and generosity shown by our local community.

SALESIAN COLLEGE BAKE SALE

A huge thank you goes to the staff and students of Salesian College, who organised a wonderful bake sale. The event was organised by a student with a personal connection to our Branch Secretary, James Reardon, and raised an incredible €783. We sincerely thank everyone who baked, donated, supported and contributed to such a fantastic fundraiser.

CONDOLENCES AND THANK YOU

We would also like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Hynes family who, during a very difficult time following the passing of their father Willie, chose to hold a collection at his funeral in aid of the Irish Kidney Association. Willie had been living with chronic kidney disease. Their generous donation of €500 is greatly appreciated. We offer our sincere sympathies to the family and thank them for thinking of others during their time of grief.

DIALYSIS CARE PACKS

The support we receive from our community allows us to continue developing new initiatives. One project we are particularly proud of is our Dialysis Care Pack initiative. Beginning dialysis can be a daunting and overwhelming experience, and these packs provide practical items that can make those first weeks a

LIMERICK

By DEBBIE SHEEHY

little easier. If you would like to learn more about the care packs, or if you know someone who may benefit from one, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

BRANCH AGM

We were delighted to hold our first AGM in May. Our committee members remain unchanged, and we are looking forward to another productive year working on behalf of kidney patients and their families throughout the region. Although we know that Rome wasn't built in a day, we firmly believe that every small step we take brings us closer to building a stronger, more connected Branch. We are proud of the progress we have made since re-building the Branch and are excited about what lies ahead.

SUMMER SOCIAL

We were delighted to host our Summer Social on Saturday, July 25th. These gatherings provide a wonderful opportunity for patients, transplant recipients, donors, carers and families to come together in a relaxed and supportive environment. We look forward to sharing photos and highlights from the event in our next edition.

As we all enjoy brighter, warmer days, we would like to gently remind everyone, particularly our transplant



L-R: Patrick Hynes, Colette Coonan, Mary Hynes, Colin Hynes, Marie Keating.

recipients, to take extra care in the sunshine. Please remember to wear a high-factor sunscreen, stay well hydrated, seek shade during the hottest part of the day and enjoy the summer safely.

FOLLOW US

Finally, please continue to follow our social media pages and join our WhatsApp group for updates on meetings, events and Branch activities. We always welcome new faces and encourage anyone who would like to become involved to come along. Please contact our Branch Secretary if you would like to be added to our WhatsApp group.

From all of us on the Limerick Branch committee, thank you for your continued support. We wish you and your families a safe, healthy and enjoyable summer.

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 with the details (including what type of event it is, where, when it will be held, ticket and price information).



Paul Donohoe, Chairman Cavan/Monaghan IKA and Michael 'Bricker' Wall.

A LEAP OF FAITH

At the time of going to print, Michael Wall was preparing to take a leap of faith – quite literally – as he geared up for a Charity Sky Dive at Irish Sky Dive Centre, Clonbullogue, Co Offaly on August 8th. 'Bricker' as he is known, is a frontline healthcare worker and former member of the Defence Forces and is living with diabetes and middle-stage chronic kidney disease.

Although he is likely to need a transplant in the future, his motivation is firmly focused on helping others. Michael is kindly donating all proceeds from the skydive to the National Kidney Support Centre.

The members of the Cavan Monaghan Branch wish him all the very best of luck with his skydive.

CAVAN/MONAGHAN

By PAUL DONOHUE



Left to right: Aisling Woods, Fr. Noel Conlon, Gerard McArdle, Sinead McArdle, Patricia, Mark and Paul Conlon.



Back row: Gary O'Reilly, Ann Cadden, Donie Harten, Mary Sullivan. Front row: Aodhan Cullen, Grainne Lovett, Rose Dalton, Therese Dowd (Dialysis Nurse) Anna May Lynch (CNM Dialysis Unit), Eamonn Dalton.

ANNUAL CHARITY WALK

Our Branch wishes to extend our sincere thanks to the committee of the Fr. Noel Conlon Annual Charity Walk, Iniskeen, who this year donated all proceeds from the walk to the National Kidney Support Centre at Beaumont Hospital. An incredible €22,245 was raised.

The walk was inspired by Mark Conlon, who received his first kidney transplant as a young boy, and a second kidney from his father Paul ten years ago.

SPECIAL THANKS

We'd like to give a special mention of thanks to the Mullahoran Annual Walk Committee who, over the past 20 years have donated €240,000 to the IKA, Cavan Dialysis Unit, Transplant Sport Ireland, and the National Kidney Support Centre.

CONDOLENCES

We would like to extend sincere sympathy to the family and friends of the late Oliver O'Reilly, Loughduff, (RIP) who sadly passed away recently. Oliver was a congenial



Patricia, Mark and Paul Conlon with Paul Donohoe, Cavan/Monaghan Branch.

gentleman and a great character. He was a long-time member and supporter of the Cavan/Monaghan IKA, worked tirelessly fundraising and was instrumental in working to help establish the Dialysis Unit at Cavan General Hospital.

He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.



Oliver O'Reilly RIP



ORGAN DONOR AWARENESS WEEK

We had a very good response from Branch members and their families and carers to our appeal for volunteers to help promote organ donation during the IKA's annual campaign. This year we had volunteers engaging with shoppers in Ashleaf Shopping Centre, Crumlin, Liffey Valley Shopping Centre and Citywest Shopping Centre.

Additionally, we had volunteers chatting to patients, visitors and staff of Tallaght University Hospital, getting the message out. We also engaged on a couple of fronts with staff at Dublin City Council offices, Wood Quay as well as with their works centre.

Thanks once again to all those who were able to support this initiative. There was largely a very positive reaction from most people, and some members of the public thanked us for taking the time to volunteer and engage with them. We felt that we got the message out to a lot of people over the week. If the promotional activities help contribute to even one organ transplant, I think it is well worth the effort.

BRANCH MEETINGS

We moved location for our Branch meeting on April 20th to St. Andrew's Resource Centre, Rialto to be closer to the city centre. As with previous meetings this year, there was a good turnout of patients and carers for a chat over a cuppa about all things kidney related.

It was fascinating to hear the various shared experiences from those living 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

DUBLIN SOUTH

By GERRY McKENNA



Back row (l-r): Niall O'Higgins, Aidan Cronin, Lorna O'Leary, Liz O'Sullivan, Dr Roisin Rynne (TUH), John O'Connor, Ann Hartnett O'Connor, Pam Cassidy. **Front row:** Arlene Hughes, Patrick Sneyd, Marguerite Sneyd, Paul O'Brien, Bernie Watters.

recent activities. Forum members will focus on patient issues, improvement of kidney health care services in Ireland and provide critical insights on the quality of IKA care and services.

Subsequent Branch meetings were held on Wednesday, May 13th and Wednesday, June 10th, both held at Rua Red, Tallaght. At the meeting on June 10th, we were joined by two excellent presenters.

Our first speaker was **Aine Tierney – PhD student from the University of Galway** (formerly NUIG).

Aine is working on a Health Research Board (HRB) funded survey study which is trying to understand why home hemodialysis is not widely used in Ireland. The goal is to understand individuals' attitudes toward the potential barriers to using home dialysis. Is it fear, worry about managing treatment at home, or something else? We emailed the survey to our membership, and several of our Branch members have completed it. Hopefully it will provide some insight into low take-up of home haemodialysis.

We also had an excellent presentation from **Dr Roisin Rynne, Dermatologist** from Tallaght Univeristy Hospital entitled *'Your skin matters: preventing and detecting skin cancer'* followed by a very engaging Q&A session. Everyone agreed this was a very useful presentation.

We decided to take a break over the summer so our next meeting will

be in Rua Red Arts Centre, Tallaght, D24 KV8N on Wednesday, September 2nd from 7-9pm. Please join us if you can for a cuppa and a chat. You are welcome to bring a friend or family member/carer along if you wish. In the meantime, we hope everyone has a lovely summer. And please mind yourselves in the hot weather!

CONDOLENCES

We send condolences to the family and friends of all deceased members of the Branch. May they rest in peace.

In particular, we lost a very dear friend of our Branch of many years, Colin Clare who sadly passed away on April 2nd last.

Colin was involved with the Irish Kidney Association many years ago as a staff member for a period and also served as Chairperson of our Dublin South Branch. Colin was an absolute gentleman, incredibly supportive to fellow kidney patients and was heavily involved in promoting organ donor awareness on behalf of the IKA and fellow patients. We owe Colin a debt of gratitude for his help to further the understanding of organ donation, which benefits all of us patients. Thank you, Colin.

Our sympathies from the Branch go out to his wife Caroline, Christopher, Carolyn and Colly and also to his living kidney donor Paul as well as extended family.

May he rest in eternal peace.



KILKENNY

By LINDA BRENNAN

Greetings from sunny Kilkenny.

We were delighted to support Organ Donor Awareness Week in May. Seamus O'Farrell and Shem Carrigan had a great response at Nowlan Park before a Kilkenny Senior Hurling Championship match. Additionally, we were able to get an advert in the Leinster match programmes for that weekend. Many thanks to the Leinster Council for facilitating this.

Hugh and Sharon Byrne were delighted with the response they received in Supervalu Thomastown. Similarly, Bridget Langton, Micheal Doyle and Mary Kelly put in a great stint in ALDI Graiguenamanagh fielding questions from a curious public.

MARY'S CLIMB AT 70

Our Chairperson Mary Rooney successfully climbed Croagh Patrick on March 31st with her family. It was also the day she turned 70! She has received two transplants in the last 20 years and wanted to give back to the community. They raised €1,890 and all proceeds from her GoFund me page were donated to the Kilkenny Branch of the IKA.



Inset: Mary Rooney, Chair, Kilkenny Branch. Mary with members of her family at the start of the climb.



At the Kilkenny Summer Lunch in Langtons.

What an achievement and well done everyone.

SUMMER LUNCH

There was a great turnout for our Summer lunch in Langton's Kilkenny. Great chat and banter. Thanks to all who attended.

SPONSORED WALK

Branch member Stephen Breen and his daughter Carmel organised a sponsored walk in the Tullaroan GAA pitch on Sunday, July 12th to raise funds for the IKA. We appreciate all the hard work invested in these activities.

CELEBRATIONS

In our Branch, in the town of Graiguenamanagh alone, May is a popular month for transplants – what a coincidence! Michael Doyle who received his transplant in May 2025 is doing great, as is our newest transplantee, Derek Deegan. We wish them all continued good health.

Finally, congratulations to our

Treasurer Bridget Langton who was 30 years transplanted. We hope this gives hope and encouragement to our members nationwide.



Bridget Langton, Treasurer - 30 years transplanted.



Newly transplanted Derek Deegan with wife Anita and daughters Meabh and Róisín.



Derek Deegan hurling



Michael Doyle – One year transplanted.



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)

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 | www.ika.ie

NATIONAL KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE, Beaumont Hospital, Dublin D09 Y5R3 - **NEWLY REOPENED**

Telephone: 01-6908887 | Email: nationalkidneysupportcentre@ika.ie

MUNSTER KIDNEY SUPPORT CENTRE, Glenflesk, Wilton Avenue, Bishopstown, Cork T12 X6XP

Telephone: 021-2044555 | Email: munsterkidneysupportcentre@ika.ie

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SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE IKA

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

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY



STANDING ORDER REQUEST FORM

To: The Manager of _____

(Your bank's name and address)

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____ Ph: _____

PLEASE CHARGE TO MY / OUR ACCOUNT: Name of Account: _____

IBAN: Bank Identifier Code - BIC:

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

My regular ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Yearly DONATION of Amount € _____

(Please tick as appropriate)

to start on Date: ____ / ____ / ____

AND CREDIT TO THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT:

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

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

As long as you are a PAYE or self-employed tax payer, when you donate €250 or more in a year (€21 or more per month), the Revenue Commissioners will give the Irish Kidney Association CLG an extra rebate of 45%. For example, if you give €250 in one year, the IKA would gain an extra €112, at no extra cost to you. To download a CHY3 form please go to www.ika.ie/tax-back-donations



ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE MANDATE FORM PLEASE SEND IT TO YOUR BANK.

CHARITY REG. NO. 20011260

IKA SUPPORT SUMMER 2026

LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

September
is National
Wills Month



SCAN FOR DETAILS



The Irish Kidney Association has been a great support to my husband who has chronic kidney disease, giving us a great holiday which we had not had for 10 years. I am immensely grateful for that.

– Family member



WHY LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL?

Chronic Kidney Disease affects one-in-10 people and life is not easy for kidney patients or those who care for them. The IKA supports patients, their families, and carers, in many practical ways, offering help and guidance. We also campaign tirelessly for improvements in kidney healthcare provision in Ireland. **Chronic Kidney Disease is rapidly increasing worldwide, so demand for our services is also increasing.** The majority of our funding comes from voluntary donations. A gift in your Will allows us to continue providing a vital range of patient services and expand our campaigning and advocacy at a critical time.

A legacy gift to the Irish Kidney Association will support kidney patients and their families for many years to come

You don't need to be wealthy to leave a gift to the Irish Kidney Association in your Will. If you decide to do so, it is simple to carry out. **We have teamed up with FreeWill.ie to provide people aged 53+ with a FREE online service to create or update your Will**, using its Will drafting tool. This online offering is suitable for many people. For those with more complex circumstances, it is generally recommended to use the services of a solicitor.

For more details on our Free Will service, or on leaving a legacy gift, phone Donor House on 01-620 5306 or email fundraising@ika.ie.

Forget-me-not, for my legacy lives on in all that I have done