

Kent Kidney Care Centre Counselling Service

Information for patients and their families

The Renal Team knows that kidney disease is a life changing illness, which has a major impact on peoples lives. Very often we cannot change our situation but we can change how we engage with or manage our health and wellbeing.

What help is available?

Psychological and emotional intervention is available at any stage of your referral to the Kent Kidney Care Centre, for you or your family members.

Even if you do not want to talk about your personal feelings in detail, the counsellor can still support you in dealing with any difficulties you may be having.

The service can be used:

- as an information resource
- for advice or as an advocacy service
- as support; and/or
- for counselling.

Will I be able to talk to someone I do not know?

Sometimes it is easier to talk to someone who does not know you and who is trained to help with personal and emotional matters. If you or a member of your family are unsure if you want counselling, the counsellor will be happy to discuss this with you.



What sort of issues/concerns do people bring to counselling?

- Shock after diagnosis.
- Adjustment to life with kidney disease.
- Decision-making regarding treatment options or medical procedures.
- Concerns about particular types of treatment.
- Emotional or relationship difficulties brought about by illness or treatment.
- The stress of adjusting to new treatments, such as transplantation.
- Kidney donation and its implications.
- Sexual difficulties.
- Keeping to treatment regimens.
- Sometimes feeling that it's all too much.
- Feeling anxious or depressed.
- Bereavement, loss, and grief of a loved one.

What is counselling?

Counselling gives you the opportunity:

- to share your thoughts, feelings, and experiences without fear of rejection or criticism; and
- to reflect on your situation, which may help you come to terms with it and put things into perspective.

You choose what and how much you wish to share with the counsellor.

How many counselling sessions will I need?

Sessions are arranged according to the individual's needs. Some people may ask for one or two sessions, others may choose short term counselling, such as one to six sessions. We currently offer a maximum of 13 sessions.

You may decide with your counsellor to explore in more depth the issues being faced as a result of renal failure. Together you can decide what you want to explore or resolve, and the number of sessions to have.

How long are the sessions? And, where do I speak to the counsellor?

A session typically lasts for one hour. The sessions can take place at a patient's bedside or in the dialysis areas. However, for more privacy the counselling room is preferred.

Outpatient appointments are offered in person at Kent and Canterbury Hospital, or virtually either via phone or video link. If you would prefer an appointment at one of our satellite units, please discuss this with the counsellor at your assessment appointment.

Is the session confidential?

Yes. All discussions that take place between you and your counsellor are confidential. The content will not be shared with anyone outside of the counselling service without your consent, except for legal reasons. These reasons will be explained further at your first meeting with the counsellor.

How do I get in touch with the counsellor?

You can ask a member of the Renal Team to complete a referral form for you, or you can contact the counsellor directly Monday to Friday by telephone or by going to their office in person (see below for contact details).

How much will it cost?

The service is free to NHS patients and their relatives who have contact with the Renal Team.

What if I need to cancel my appointment?

If you need to cancel an appointment, please contact the counsellor as soon as possible to arrange another appointment.

How do I contact the renal counsellors?

The counsellors for the Renal Department are:

- **Amanda Bevin and Sharon Byrne**
Renal Outpatients
Kent and Canterbury Hospital
Ethelbert Road
Canterbury CT1 3NG

Telephone: 01227 86 43 80 (answer machine available)

Email: abevin@nhs.net or sharon.byrne3@nhs.net

Web: www.kentrenal.org

We also provide placements for training counsellors who act as volunteers for the service.

What is the Kent Kidney Care Support Group?

Anyone with kidney problems and their families can join our support group. It is an opportunity to meet people and gain support, knowledge, and friendship.

During Covid the group meets every month via Zoom, usually from 10:30am to 12:30pm. For the link to these meetings, either speak to one of the renal counsellors or go to the Kent Kidney Patients Association web site www.kentkidneypatients.co.uk/

At your request, we can invite to these meetings guest speakers from the health professions or supporting organisations (such as dietitians or carers support) to provide answers to any questions you may have.

If you would like to know more or get involved, please contact the renal counsellors.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation