



West Midlands Renal Network

**NHS**

*Warwickshire*

# Peer Support for Kidney Patients



# Introduction

It is important for people with a long term condition such as chronic kidney disease to be given high quality support and information when making decisions about their treatment.

This leaflet gives general information about Peer Support. It explains:

- What Peer Support is
- Who Peer Supporters are
- How Peer Support can help you, your family or carers
- Which local kidney units offer a peer support service
- How to access Peer Support



# What is Peer Support?

Nobody understands what you're going through as well as people who have gone through the experience themselves. Peer Support involves kidney patients helping other kidney patients who are facing similar situations. It aims to give short term practical, emotional and social support to people with chronic kidney disease, their families or carers based on common experiences. Peer Support offers an opportunity to have a one-to-one chat and share your story either face to face or over the telephone with an experienced kidney patient.

Peer Support is intended to complement the care and education you receive from your kidney healthcare team and is therefore an additional service which is available if you want it.

# Who are the Peer Supporters?

The Peer Supporters are:

- Patients or carers who have first-hand experience of chronic kidney disease
- Unpaid volunteers
- Trained to provide support to fellow kidney patients

They all have had:

- A criminal records check
- Approved by the Hospital
- A wide range of different experiences and are of different ages and backgrounds

# Which Kidney units offer a Peer Support service?

Currently the following hospitals are offering a Peer Support service:

- Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust
- Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust
- Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham

If your hospital does not have a Peer Support Service, please contact the West Midlands Renal Network and they will liaise with a unit to help you.

# What Peer Supporters cannot offer

Peer Supporters are not trained counsellors and cannot offer advice about:

- Medical treatments
- Kidney diseases
- Medications

You should get medical advice from a healthcare professional such as:

- Your GP
- Your kidney doctor
- Your kidney nurse

# Is Peer Support confidential?

All discussions between you and the Peer Supporter will be treated confidentially. However, occasionally the Peer Supporter may feel it is necessary to speak to a kidney doctor or nurse if they feel that you or someone else is at risk of serious harm.

# How can Peer Support help me?

Although each person's experience is unique, many individuals find it helpful to talk with someone who is or has been in a similar situation. Peer support is important as it can provide support with decision making at times when treatment choices need to be made and can reduce the sense of anxiety and feeling alone. Many benefits have been described from other similar Peer Support Services. These include:

- Reassurance of knowing you are not alone
- Being able to talk to someone who has had to cope with similar experiences and understands the challenges you are facing
- Sharing common experiences
- Receiving reassurance and encouragement
- Getting practical help and information
- Feeling more in control
- Increased confidence
- Better understanding of your treatment and treatment options
- Coming to terms with starting treatment



# How can I meet a Peer Supporter?

If you want to meet a Peer Supporter please talk to your kidney doctor or nurse in your kidney unit. They will then take down some information, match you to a Peer Supporter and arrange for you to meet or talk to them by phone or email.

# Additional sources of information?

If you have any questions about the Peer Support Service please speak to one of the kidney doctors or nurses in your unit.

Alternatively please use the contact details for your local kidney service on page 8.

Hospital Trust	Lead(s)	Contact Details
Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust	Annette Dodds Bridget Ferris Dr Hugh Rayner	<p><b><u>0121 424 2677</u></b> Monday - Friday 8am – 4pm</p> <p>A specific email address has been created. <b><u>kidneysupport@heartofengland.nhs.uk</u></b> Emails will be checked daily Monday – Friday 8am – 4pm</p>
The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust	Jean Shears	<p><b><u>01902 695 466</u></b> (office receptionist) available Monday - Friday 9am – 5pm</p> <p>A specific email address has been created. <b><u>rwh-tr.kidneysupport@nhs.net</u></b> Emails will be checked daily Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm</p>
Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham	Haemodialysis Co-ordinator Dr Clara Day	<p><b><u>0121 371 3006</u></b> <b><u>0121 371 5853</u></b> (secretary)</p> <p>A specific email address has been created. <b><u>kidneysupport@uhb.nhs.uk</u></b> Emails will be checked daily Monday – Friday 8am – 4pm</p>

The West Midlands Renal Network website is [www.wmrn.co.uk](http://www.wmrn.co.uk)



This leaflet has been produced as part of a national NHS Kidney Care project.