

# How can a renal social worker help me?



Working together for better patient information

## What does a renal social worker do?

Renal social workers work with other members of the kidney multi-disciplinary team in children's or adult hospitals and dialysis units. They also have direct links with local authority social work teams and specialist charities.

Renal social workers are skilled in offering practical support and advice to children, young people, adults and carers living with kidney disease.

This may involve:

- Providing emotional support with adjusting to a diagnosis and support with living with a long-term condition like kidney disease.
- Talking through the practical and social implications of treatment decisions, to maximise quality of life and wellbeing.
- Attending multi-agency meetings to agree practical support plans.
- Visiting you at home to discuss treatment options and talk through what will work best for you as a family.
- Support with benefit applications, appeals and change of circumstances.
- Support with charitable grant applications. These can be for financial assistance, white goods, furniture, household items, sheds for storage of dialysis supplies, holidays or specialist equipment.
- Support with housing issues including council tax benefits, adaptations to enable better home care or consideration for re-housing on medical grounds.
- Support to access food banks.
- Help with legal issues including power of attorney and will writing.
- Support with accessing local authority schemes such as Blue Badges or Disabled Facilities Grants.
- Support with work issues such as advice on how to negotiate with employers.

Renal social workers can also help by referring, signposting and working with other agencies, such as:

- schools, including contributions to education, health and care plans (EHC plans)
- occupational therapists
- specialist charities (such as Women's Aid and Shelter)
- social care
- play specialists
- psychology services
- employers
- utility companies
- solicitors
- other health professionals





## How can I see a renal social worker?

There are renal social workers in many, but not all, of the UK's 84 kidney units. Renal social workers are employed by local councils or the NHS and the services provided can vary from unit to unit. Please talk to your healthcare team if you would like to be referred to a renal social worker.

## Are discussions with renal social workers confidential?

Yes. Any discussions that you have with social workers are kept confidential and they will ask your permission before recording anything in your medical notes. Your social worker will not pass on any information that you have shared without your permission unless they feel that you or someone else is at risk of harm, in which case they have a duty to report it.



## What support can a renal social worker offer?



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# Where can I find out more information?

- **Kidney Care UK** Get support [www.kidneycareuk.org/get-support](http://www.kidneycareuk.org/get-support)
- **Citizens Advice** [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
- **Renal social workers group** [www.ukrswg.co.uk](http://www.ukrswg.co.uk)

## Contact us to see how we can support you

Call free on  
**0808 801 00 00**

*(Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)*

[support@kidneycareuk.org](mailto:support@kidneycareuk.org)

[www.kidneycareuk.org](http://www.kidneycareuk.org)



If you have feedback about this leaflet, please let us know at: [feedback@kidneycareuk.org](mailto:feedback@kidneycareuk.org)

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