Mapping the landscape of peer support for kidney patients in the UK: Results from national survey 2024

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Background

- **Peer support** links people with advanced kidney disease to others with lived experience.
- By providing **emotional and informational support**, it:
  - reduces isolation, builds confidence and aids mental wellbeing
  - improves understanding of kidney disease, treatment adherence, and quality of care
- Despite national guidance, peer support remains **underused** and **inconsistently delivered** in the UK.
- The **Kidney Quality Improvement Partnership (KQIP)** provides resources and support to embed peer support more widely.

Aims

- **Map current peer support** provision in UK kidney centres.
- **Identify barriers and facilitators** from healthcare professionals and service users.
- **Inform national strategy and quality improvement initiatives** to support wider and more equitable adoption of peer support

Methods

A national online survey was co-designed with clinicians and patients. Distributed to healthcare professionals in all UK kidney units, it captured:

- **Availability, structure, and duration** of peer support programmes
- **Operational delivery models**, including staffing, referral pathways, and training
- **Perceived barriers and enablers** to implementation and sustainability

Results

- Response rate: 44 of 67 UK kidney centres (66%)
- **Variation in availability**: 34 reported having access to an established peer support programme (77%)

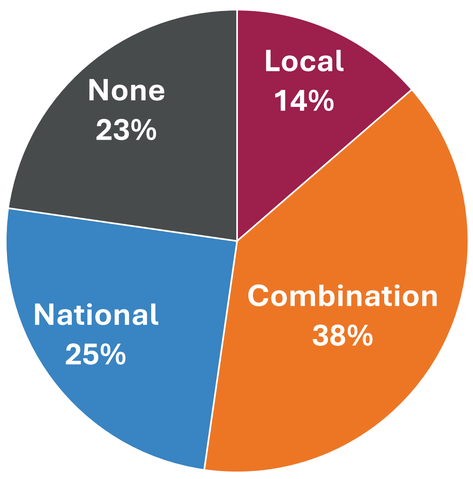


Figure 1: Delivery models

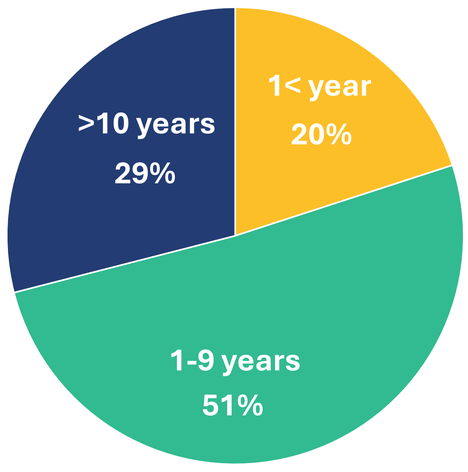


Figure 2: Duration

- **Variation in delivery (figure 1):** 11 national (25%), 6 local (14%), 17 using a combination (38%)
- **Variation in duration (figure 2):** 20% recent adoption

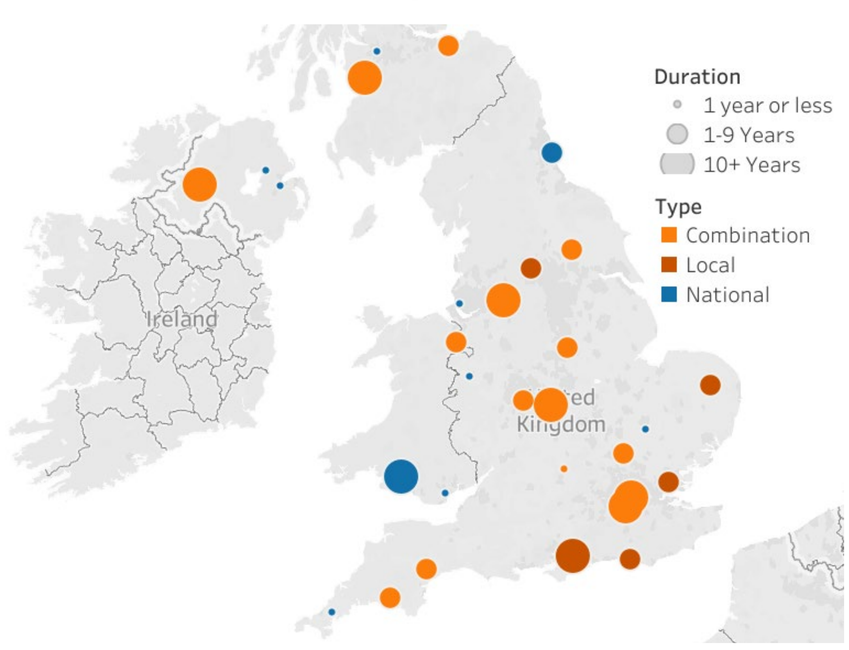


Figure 3: Peer support provision map

- **Geographical variation (figure 3):** Regional inconsistencies; some areas lack any provision.
- **Barriers to implementation**:
  - Lack of **awareness** among staff and patients
  - Insufficient **funding** to recruit and train supporters
  - Limited **infrastructure**, such as time or personnel

Discussion and next steps

- **23%** of UK kidney centres **lack peer support.**
- **Wide variation** in service delivery and resources.
- Need a **coordinated national approach** to embed peer support as a standard part of kidney care:
  - **Integration into MDTs**
  - **E-learning resources**
  - **Local peer support leads**

Next steps:

1. **Establish regional links** to raise awareness and expand peer support in under-served areas.
2. **Share best practices** through virtual and face-to-face national events.
3. **Evaluate care models** to show cost-effectiveness and sustainability.

Want to learn more?
Scan the QR code and create a free login to access **KQIP's Peer Support resources** on the **UKKA Education Hub**.