



## Create and Connect - Online Arts-Based Interventions to Support the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Patients with End-Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD)

We aim to support ESKD patients who are self-isolating, by providing online arts activities to improve and support their mental health and wellbeing.

# How the Renal Arts Group (RAG) began

William Johnston began to write poetry and plays during his dialysis sessions. Writing helped William express his emotions and communicate more effectively with healthcare staff. It also passed the time spent on dialysis. This was the beginning of the Renal Arts Group!

2017 - full-time funding for Claire Carswell, a mental health nurse with a psychology degree, to undertake a PhD studentship aimed at developing and implementing an arts-based intervention for patients during haemodialysis.

2018 - Kidney Care UK funded a part-time Administrator role to support the work of RAG. Subsequent funding awarded by Northern Ireland Kidney Research Fund for 2 years.





# Aims of RAG

- To improve quality of life and well-being of people with ESKD, using arts-based interventions.
- Giving a voice to patients with kidney disease
- Social impact and public engagement - working in conjunction with arts subjects where public engagement is an integral aspect to raise awareness
- Production of intradisciplinary work - close collaboration between academic researchers, healthcare staff, policy makers and service users.
- <https://youtu.be/kDxS8A8bbkk>

# ESRC Create & Connect

RAG works alongside people diagnosed with ESKD and their families, utilising various art forms to support their mental health and wellbeing.

These individuals have been seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic being extremely clinically vulnerable and are 'shielding' at home. This includes limited face-to-face contact, with ongoing measures likely to be in place for the foreseeable future.

Our initiative includes developing a series of online art-based activities to be offered virtually that will build upon the work of RAG and provide mental health and wellbeing support for patients who face an extended, lonely period of self-isolation.





RAG successfully moved an Arts Council NI funded script development project online enabling participants to attend during lockdown. We received positive feedback on our fast response to the situation and we wanted to build on this work by coordinating a series of online arts workshops for the renal community.

We are working with group members, patients and arts practitioners to develop appropriate activities as an introduction to a range of art forms, including visual art, creative writing and music, which will be accessible online.

- Printmaking with Ruth Osborne
- Drawing with Claire Carswell
- Blues Guitar with Ian Walsh
- Creative Writing with Shannon Yee
- Song-writing with Daniel O'Rourke



## Project Partners

- Northern Ireland Kidney Patients Association is a charitable voluntary organisation, dedicated to the support of Northern Ireland's kidney patients. The association has almost 400 members, is self-funding and run by kidney patients, their relatives and friends.
- Kidney Care UK is the leading kidney patient support charity in the UK, providing practical, financial and emotional support for kidney patients and their families and campaigning to improve care services across the UK.
- Kidney Beam is a new online platform that provides access to live and on-demand exercise and wellbeing sessions, funded Kidney Research UK.
- Facilitators including RAG members, patients, academics, researchers and arts practitioners





# Keep in touch!

The arts activities will run once a month beginning in October. You can keep up to date about all our projects by visiting our website

[www.qub.ac.uk/sites/renal-arts-group](http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/renal-arts-group)

or by following us on our social media channels.

[www.twitter.com/RenalArtsGroup](http://www.twitter.com/RenalArtsGroup)

[www.facebook.com/renalartsgroupqub](http://www.facebook.com/renalartsgroupqub)

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