

Wales & West Utilities Vulnerability & Carbon Monoxide Allowance (VCMA) Registration Form

Information required	Description
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Address	Wales & West House, Spooner Close, Celtic Springs, Coedkernew, Newport, NP10 8FZ
Project title	Welsh Kidney Network - Patient Support & Advocacy Service
Total VCMA funding required (£k)	£568,000
Problem	<p>Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is common, affecting up to 1 in 10 of the adult population, and the numbers are expected to rise over the next decade, driven by the increase in diabetes, obesity, and vascular disease. A small but significant proportion of patients with CKD develop advanced progressive disease. Advanced kidney disease leads to several symptoms including breathlessness, nausea, itching and lethargy. Left untreated this is a life-threatening illness. Currently across Wales, 1500 patients with advanced kidney disease are reliant on dialysis to keep them alive. Dialysis in a hospital or satellite unit is collectively called Unit Haemodialysis (UHD) and is undertaken 3 times a week for at least 4-hour sessions at a time.</p> <p>Patients with advanced kidney disease face many barriers to remaining in or joining the workforce after starting dialysis. These include poor employment opportunities because of disadvantaged socioeconomic status, fatigue and other symptoms of renal failure, depression and feelings of social isolation, comorbid diseases, transportation issues and scheduling conflicts with dialysis. In addition, many patients on dialysis also have anaemia, which leads to difficulties in maintaining body temperature, making the need for a warm home imperative so utility usage is higher than average. The consequent low income, particularly when compounded by increasing cost of living which are becoming more acute</p>

Criteria

	<p>by the day means many of our patients live in relative poverty.</p> <p>In Wales, 45% of people on all forms of renal replacement therapy are noted to be in the 4th (22%) and 5th (23%) most deprived quintiles. Although there are government led benefit departments, citizens advice services available these services are not deemed suitable for patients with advanced kidney disease due to the time constraints patients have to work within due to treatment regimes, the impact on their physical and mental health wellbeing and the negative impact this has on their ability to focus, absorb and act upon complex information and often complex processes to ensure that they have access to the benefits and welfare support they are entitled to.</p>
<p>Scope and Objectives</p>	<p>The project will provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding for the development of a welfare and benefit support network for patients with advanced kidney disease in Wales. • Timely, trusted advice and welfare support through 3 x Advocacy Officers, recruited and managed by Kidney Care UK (KCUK) with the specialist benefit provision being provided by Auriga Services under a sub-contract arrangement with KCUK. Each officer will be allocated to a region in Wales that provides the provision of renal dialysis services. These are hosted by Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (CVUHB), Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB) and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB). The Welsh Kidney Network (WKN) will have oversight due to its commissioning responsibility for provision of all special adult kidney care for the population of Wales. This includes all dialysis and kidney transplant services. <p>This model is specifically designed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise income. • Reduce utility-related expenditure.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a wealth of psychosocial help to support kidney patients across Wales, through one-to-one support to patients and their families. • Provide access to unclaimed welfare benefit entitlement and subsequently assist the individual with the application and form filling process. • Provide access to the appropriate utility company social tariffs and schemes and help with the application process. • Initiate conversations and introduce relevant charitable organisations that can help reduce utility debt.
<p>Expected outcomes and the associated actions.</p>	<p><u>Tangible outcomes to kidney patients across Wales:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly increases patients' income through unclaimed welfare benefit entitlement, identifying additional income through grants etc. • Reduce the level of financial burden through debt advice. • Increase the number of patients on the Priority Service Registers (PSR). • Identify and support patients to fully utilise the energy/water efficiency and cost reductions available through the various schemes available i.e., warm home assistance, tariff advice. • Increase the awareness and access to Carbon Monoxide alarms. • Increase access and equity to telephone counselling and advocacy support for kidney patients across Wales. • Identify and provide access to other eligible welfare support such as aids and adaptations, blue badges, occupational therapy, wheelchairs, medical exemption cards, and more. • Refer to other support organisations. • Increase the use of digital self-help tools i.e., Ask Bill <p><u>Qualitative outcomes to kidney patients across Wales:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase confidence and independence including feeling safe and secure in their own homes.

Criteria

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve mental health. • Improve patient’s ability to self-manage and focus on improving their health conditions. • Provide clarity and signposting to the wider support network for kidney patients. • Empower patients to become more resilient financially.
Scale of VCMA project and SROI calculations	Advocacy Officers working on this project aim to support 50% of the total CKD patients in Wales, of which, 70% will be referred into Auriga Services for financial assistance. This project therefore has a forecasted SROI per £1 spent between £8.87.
Project Partners and third parties involved	The project is being funded by Wales & West Utilities and run in partnership between Welsh Kidney Network, Kidney Care UK, and Auriga Services.
VCMA Project start and end date	Our partnership with WKN, KCUK, and Auriga Services will begin in January 2023, with project delivery kicking off on 1 April 2023 and ending on 31 March 2025.
Geographical area	This project will support CKD patients in hospitals throughout Wales.

Please return all completed forms to: VCMA@wwutilities.co.uk

For further information on the VCMA please use the below link to the Ofgem guidance document:

[Vulnerability and Carbon Monoxide Allowance \(VCMA\) Governance Document | Ofgem](#)