

Popham Kidney Chronicle

Issue 10: June 2026

Here at Popham Kidney Support, so much of what we are able to deliver is made possible by the hard work of our unpaid volunteers. They are our heroes, making a real difference to the lives of so many people.



Celebrating our volunteers and seeking more

This issue celebrates the volunteers who support our charity year after year. They include our **Peer Mentors**, who share their lived experience; our **Counsellors**, who work alongside the Peer Mentor team to support emotional wellbeing; our **Trustees**, who help guide the charity; and our **Group Facilitators**, who create welcoming spaces for people affected by kidney disease.

Then there are our **fundraisers**: amazing people who give their time to help keep our services funded and available. From the **Paul Popham Running Club committee**, who keep active while raising vital funds, to our **Charity Champions**,

who are out in the community raising awareness of Popham Kidney Support and kidney disease, their support is invaluable.

But we are always looking for more volunteers. As the charity grows, we need more heroes than ever.

Do you see yourself in one of these roles? Could you give back, support others or help shape the future direction of Popham Kidney Support?

To meet some of our amazing volunteers, turn to page 3.

**Volunteers' Week Monday
1 June - 7 June 2026**

you are not alone

Call us: **0333 2001285** w: **pophamkidneysupport.org.uk**

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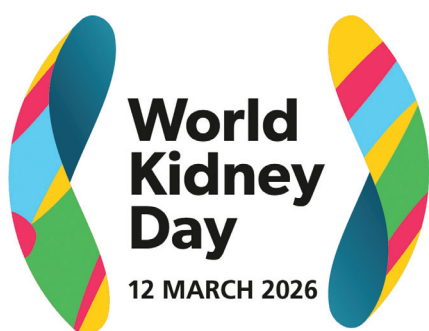
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Popham
KIDNEY SUPPORT

SNAPSHOT

Celebrating World Kidney Day!

Thursday 12th March was **World Kidney Day (WKD)**, a global annual awareness campaign dedicated to raising awareness of kidney health, encouraging early detection, and promoting healthier lifestyles to help prevent kidney disease.



Your kidneys are small but powerful organs, working constantly behind the scenes to filter waste from your blood, balance fluids in your body and help regulate blood pressure. Despite their importance, kidney disease is often misunderstood or overlooked.

As a charity supporting people affected by kidney disease, we know how important awareness, education and support can be. At Popham Kidney Support, we provide support to children, young people and adults living with kidney disease, as well as their families, across Wales. Our aim is simple: to ensure that no one facing kidney disease has to go through it alone.

What can you do?

Looking after your kidneys doesn't have to be complicated. There are a number of simple ways you can take action to protect your kidney health and support others who may be affected.

- **Get checked** - if you have risk factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes or a family history of kidney disease, regular kidney function tests can help detect problems early.
- **Stay hydrated** - drinking enough water helps your kidneys function properly and flush out waste from the body.

- **Eat well** - a balanced diet with less salt and fewer processed foods can help protect your kidneys and overall health.
- **Spread awareness** - talking about kidney health and sharing information can help others learn more about the risks and the importance of early detection. You can also join the conversation online using **#WorldKidneyDay**.
- **Support kidney charities** - charities play a vital role in supporting patients, providing education and campaigning for better services.



At Popham Kidney Support, we offer services designed to improve the emotional, financial and physical wellbeing of people living with kidney disease. Whether someone is newly diagnosed or has been managing their condition for many years, we provide guidance and support every step of the way. We also work closely with Kidney Community Wales, campaigning to ensure that everyone living with kidney disease has access to the services, care and support they need.



Why does World Kidney Day matter?

Kidney disease often develops quietly, with few noticeable symptoms in the early stages. Because of this, many people may not realise there is a problem until their kidneys have already been significantly affected.

Globally, millions of people are living with chronic kidney disease, and many cases could be prevented or managed more effectively through better awareness, early detection and healthier lifestyles.

World Kidney Day helps shine a spotlight on kidney health, encourages people to take action, and supports the wider kidney community by promoting education, prevention and improved access to care.

Your kidneys work hard for you every single day - it is time to return the favour.

So, please, take a moment to think about your kidney health, learn more about the risks, and encourage others to do the same. Small steps today can make a big difference to your long-term health.

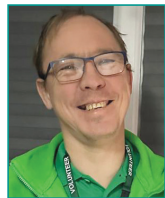


THINK KIDNEY DISEASE ISN'T SERIOUS?



NEWS

Meet our volunteers



Alan Jones

Peer Mentor

For more than 15 years, kidney disease has been a defining part of my life.

My journey has taken me through kidney failure, peritoneal dialysis, haemodialysis, kidney rejection, and two kidney transplants. Each stage brought its own challenges. When I received my second transplant in 2018, everything changed. I finally felt like I could breathe again - that sense of freedom, energy, and hope is something I will never take for granted.

Looking back, I often wish I had had someone to guide me through the uncertainty. Someone who understood not just the medical side of things, but the fear, frustration, and emotional weight that come with kidney disease.

That is one of the reasons I was drawn to Popham Kidney Support. When I discovered the charity, I recognised immediately how valuable that kind of support network could be. Here was a place where people genuinely "got it," where lived experience was used to lift others up. I knew I wanted to be part of it.

Becoming a Peer Mentor felt like a natural step. I knew what it felt like to sit in a clinic or a dialysis unit and feel overwhelmed. Now, I am able to listen, share my experiences, and reassure people who are walking the same path I once did. Facilitating Kidney Café sessions has become another meaningful part of my volunteer work.

My motivation is deeply personal. I volunteer to honour my donors and their families, whose bravery and generosity gave me a second chance. Giving my time, my experience, and my support is one way I can pay that gift forward. None of us should have to face kidney disease alone.



Gwyn Williams

Peer Mentor

My kidney journey started in March 2020, during

Covid. I was 70 years old. The home therapies nurses encouraged me to try peritoneal dialysis at home. I declined a transplant opportunity because of Covid. By the time the Covid threat had receded, I

had become used to PD and now feel that home dialysis is something I can live with.

One of my home therapy team gave me a Popham application form and told me she thought I would be good at it.

I do my volunteering because I want to help patients who are suffering, particularly those who are newly diagnosed and have no idea what's in store. I believe Popham support services are most beneficial to newly diagnosed kidney patients. I remember being issued with an excellent pack of information about types of dialysis and transplant by the Renal unit. But there was no one to discuss it with. I always tell patients that I'm on dialysis and living a fairly normal life, and that usually helps enormously.



Gill Shepherd

Trustee

My connection with Popham Kidney Support is deeply personal - Paul Popham was my brother-in-law.

I knew him from childhood, and he was like a brother to me. I've supported the charity since it began and have been a Trustee since 2022. Through Paul, I saw first-hand the impact kidney disease can have, not just medically, but emotionally and financially, on every member of the family.

As a volunteer trustee and member of the Grant Committee, I help review applications for financial support from patients and families facing extremely difficult situations. That might cover extra costs, and the changes that come with treatment or recovery after a transplant. I always try to see the person behind the application, not just the form itself.

My role is to consider each case carefully and fairly, ensuring the charity's funds are used where they can make the greatest difference, while following the proper guidelines.

What matters most to me is knowing that the support we give can ease some of the pressure. Even a small grant can help people feel more stable and less alone.

Being involved in this work is also a way for me to honour Paul's memory. I am proud to support Popham Kidney Support and to play a part in helping patients and their families when they need it most.



Nigel Butler

Kidney Café Facilitator

My journey with Popham Kidney Support began in 2020 when my mum

experienced kidney failure and I became her carer. During that time, I came to understand just how overwhelming kidney disease can be, not only for the patient, but for the whole family. The emotional strain, the appointments, the uncertainty, and the need for understanding from people who truly "get it" made a lasting impression on me.

Wanting to give something back, I began volunteering with the charity and took on the role of Kidney Café Facilitator. For me, the Kidney Café is about connection. It's about creating a place where people feel listened to, understood, and less alone in their journey.

Alongside facilitating the group, I also volunteer in other roles within the charity whenever I can. I've seen first-hand how powerful peer support can be. Families often arrive feeling anxious or unsure, and leave feeling reassured after meeting others who have walked a similar path.



Brenda Board

Peer Mentor

I was diagnosed with kidney cancer in 2013. I

needed a tumour removed (partial nephrectomy). My kidneys were functioning at 28%. Due to having cancer, I was only put on the list for a transplant in 2018. I experienced many difficulties while waiting but in March 2021 a kidney became available. My transplant took place and has worked amazingly.

I had become isolated since Covid, but when a transplant nurse in Morriston Hospital recommended attending the Popham Kidney Café, I did. It helped me feel less isolated and I later joined the training course to become a Peer Mentor.

I have mentored four people since joining and found it so rewarding and informative. Everyone has different experiences.

I also find the Popham Kidney Café extremely rewarding. Attendees bring their own stories, personalities, humour and concerns. I always wanted to give back to the renal community and help people feel important, valued and not alone.

Join PKS Volunteer Team:

Contact us today:

enquiries@pophamkidneysupport.org.uk
0333 2001 285

<https://pophamkidneysupport.org.uk/about-us/apply-to-us/>

PATIENTS

Why our Kidney Cafés matter

Our Kidney Cafés are informal peer-support groups run by people living with kidney disease, for others affected by it.

They take place in locations across Wales and offer a space where patients, families and carers can speak with others who understand the day-to-day realities of the condition.

Whether the conversation is about treatment, managing appointments, or simply how people are coping, these meetings provide a chance to share experiences and feel less alone. Join us at the next session.

Our current Kidney Café locations:

- **Swansea**
- **Llynfi Valley**
- **Upper Swansea Valley**
- **Wrexham**
- **Rhyl**
- **Welshpool**
- **Flintshire**
- **Port Talbot**
- **Penrhiwllan**
- **Pembrokeshire**

Find your nearest Kidney Café and upcoming dates here.



New Port Talbot Kidney Café

Join us in person at the **Port Talbot Kidney Café**, a friendly spot to chat, share stories, and get support if you're dealing with kidney issues. It's all about creating a relaxed vibe where you can connect with others going through similar experiences. Drop by, grab a cuppa, and feel right at home with us. Can't wait to see you there!

Address: Aberafan Shopping Centre, 1st Floor, Port Talbot, SA13 1PB

Date: Every 3rd Monday, 10am to 12.30pm

Upper Swansea Valley Kidney Café

Following the recent announcement of our new meeting time, the **Upper Swansea Valley Kidney Café** held its first morning session - and we wanted to take a moment



to thank everyone who came along and helped make it such a positive start!

The session marked the beginning of our new 10am-12pm schedule and gave patients, peer mentors and supporters the chance to meet earlier in the day. To mark the occasion, we shared breakfast together and held a small darts fundraiser, raising £45 for the group.

Most importantly, it was a good opportunity for people to reconnect and welcome newer faces.

Address: Aberafan Shopping Centre, 1st Floor, Port Talbot, SA13 1PB

Date: Every 3rd Thursday, 10am to 12pm

A special thank you goes to our peer mentors, **Steve Lee** and **Neil Amber**. Their time, understanding and willingness to share their own experiences are a huge part of what makes the café feel welcoming and helpful to others.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to **Abercrave Rugby Club**, who continue to host the café throughout the year. Having a dependable and comfortable place to meet makes these gatherings possible, and their ongoing support is greatly appreciated by everyone who attends.

Home Dialysis - a pilot project

We collaborated with Renal Psychology Team South West & East Wales on a pilot project in 2025-2026, at Penllergare Valley Woods, whereby a number of patients on home dialysis met regularly over the course of five months to share their experiences of home treatment and try some gentle wellbeing activities.

The group was set-up by the Renal Psychology Service in collaboration with Popham Kidney Support and Kidney Wales.

Through the group sessions, people noticed that they felt better for being able to talk to one another and share their experiences. The focus on wellbeing meant people could try various wellbeing activities such as Tai Chi, Mindfulness, singing and crafting. People felt that their mood improved and they gained some confidence to try something new.

Due to the success of the group, they have arranged regular meet ups throughout 2026. It is a very relaxed and informal space to help develop support for one another. The group meet in the woodland

centre in the heart of the Penllergare Valley Woods and you can enjoy a short stroll from the car park to reach the woodland centre.

If you are on home dialysis, or you might be living alongside someone at home or in some other way supporting someone on home dialysis treatment, you are encouraged to come along and meet other people who are in a similar situation.

If you would like to talk to someone about the group and whether it might be something you want to join please feel free to contact the Renal Psychology department. Email:

renal.psychology.cav@wales.nhs.uk



SUPPORTERS

Paul Popham Running Club goes pan-Wales

We're delighted to announce the nationwide expansion of Paul Popham Running Club (PPRC) across Wales! This exciting expansion follows growing demand and the continued success of PPRC's flagship Swansea running club.

The rollout is being supported by partnerships with **Freedom Leisure** and **Legacy Leisure**, enabling the club to strengthen and grow its community-based running network across the country.

New clubs are set to launch at Freedom Leisure sites including Ystradgynlais Sports Centre, Brecon Leisure Centre, Maldwyn Leisure Centre, Bro Ddyfi Leisure Centre, Waterworld Leisure and Activity Centre, and Llandudno Junction Leisure Centre. Additional clubs will also open at Legacy Leisure sites - Cardiff International Pool & Gym and Cowbridge Leisure Centre - alongside a standalone club in Haverfordwest.

Kicking off the nationwide expansion, the Haverfordwest club launched on 8th March. The club is led by **Lucy Jamieson** and **Tom Hoare**, who will deliver weekly sessions and offer guidance and encouragement to runners of all abilities. Since 2016, we have been proud to run the Paul Popham Running Club as

part of our mission to raise awareness of kidney health and support those affected by kidney disease. Now celebrating its 10th anniversary, the club aims to encourage people of all ages and abilities within the local community to develop a lifelong love of running and to recognise the positive impact it can have on both physical and emotional wellbeing, while also raising awareness of **Popham Kidney Support**.

Jo Popham, President of Paul Popham Running Club and our CEO, said: "For many years we have dreamed of creating a network of running clubs across Wales, reaching more communities and giving people the opportunity to experience the benefits of running."

"These partnerships with Freedom Leisure and Legacy Leisure are helping us make that vision a reality."

As a club, we want to encourage people to prioritise their health. Regular exercise can play an important role in supporting their physical and mental health.



"The club is also a tribute to my father, Paul Popham, whose experience with kidney disease and his love of running, football and keeping fit in general, inspired its creation. Through every new club, we continue to honour his legacy by raising awareness of Popham Kidney Support and kidney disease, while supporting others on their own fitness journeys."

PPRC is also looking for volunteer run leaders to help grow our clubs across Wales. Volunteers play a vital role in building local communities and promoting kidney health. Successful applicants receive Welsh Athletics training and ongoing support from both the charity and Freedom Leisure.

Haverfordwest is now up and running!

We are excited to announce the first new PPRC which was launched on the 17th May 2026 at Haverfordwest.

To find out more about the club in Haverfordwest visit:

<https://www.paulpophamrunningclub.co.uk/join-us/haverfordwest/>

To set-up your own please check our website page and apply or ask for more information:

<https://www.paulpophamrunningclub.co.uk/volunteering/>



SUPPORTERS

100 Easter Eggs donated

This Easter, we at Popham Kidney Support were pleased to receive the generous support of **Christine Griffiths of Wonderful Welshies Events and Wonderful Welshies Wedding Fayres**.



They kindly donated an amazing 100 Easter eggs for children at the **Children's Kidney Centre** in Cardiff, as well as for our Easter day out!

The Children's Kidney Centre supports young patients living with kidney conditions, many of whom spend long periods attending appointments, treatment sessions, and hospital stays.

At Popham Kidney Support, we aim to provide practical and emotional support to these children and their families, and donations like this help us bring small moments of joy during what can be a challenging time.

Christine, who runs her events business from Ystradgynlais, felt a strong personal connection to the hospital. At the age of three, she was diagnosed with a Wilms tumour and underwent surgery, treatment and chemotherapy at University Hospital of Wales, followed by annual check-ups for the next ten years.

Now a mum of three and living a full and happy life, Christine wanted to give something back to the place that cared for her as a child. Her Easter donation will help ensure the children currently on the wards receive a small treat and reminder that people are thinking of them.

Christine said: *"The care I received as a child stayed with me, and I've always wanted to give something back. Supporting the children at the Kidney Centre this Easter feels really special, and I hope the treats remind them they're not alone."*

We're extremely thankful to Christine for her kindness and for supporting children and families affected by kidney disease this Easter.

PKS Team take on London Marathon 2026

Our CEO, **Jo Popham**, Peer Support and Patient Service Officer, **Claire Popham**, and **Dean Matthews** took on the challenge of the **London Marathon** in April this year.

Our PKS Team raised a massive £2173.66. Ahead of the marathon, our affiliate running club, **Paul Popham Running Club (PPRC)**, organised a quiz night to support our team and also PPRC member **Jeannie Watkins** who raised funds for **Purple Hearts**.

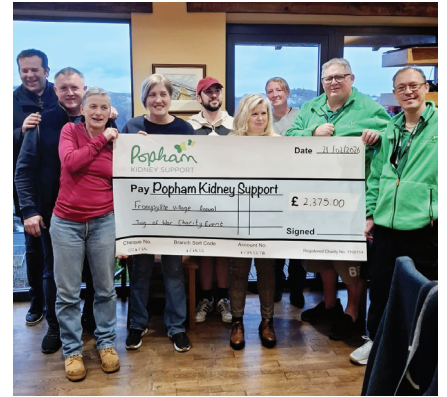
Held at The Albert Hall, the event brought together more than 70 people for an evening of friendly competition and fundraising. Teams took on a range of quiz rounds, making for a lively and entertaining evening.

In total, an amazing £953 was raised, a credit to the generosity and support of everyone involved. A sincere thank you



to everyone who came along, donated and supported the event.

It was a great evening, and your support means a lot to our team!



Mo and the Tug of War

We were delighted to be chosen as the beneficiary of Froncysyllte's much-loved annual New Year's Day tug of war fundraiser, which once again brought the whole village together in support of our charity.

The event, a long-standing tradition in Froncysyllte near Wrexham, saw residents of all ages line both sides of the canal to cheer on volunteer pullers as they competed in a lively best of three contest, with the losing team taking an inevitable dip into the canal.

This year, the organisers selected us as their chosen charity, recognising the importance of local support for people affected by kidney disease. The suggestion came from the landlady of the Aqueduct Inn, who had become aware of our work through fundraising and support activity in the Wrexham area - such as our Wrexham Kidney Cafe, peer support service and regular bucket collections in the area.

One of the event organisers, **Mo Fazakerley**, Treasurer of Froncysyllte Community Centre, explained that the tug of war has long been a collective village effort, with everyone playing a part on the day. We were incredibly grateful to be supported by such a close-knit community, especially one that understands the value of helping people locally.

Villagers also sold mince pies and drinks in exchange for donations, while raffle prizes were generously donated by local residents and businesses.

The original fundraising target of £1,000 has already been exceeded, with £1,269 raised so far.

KIDS

Transition Youth Programme (TYP) - June

Join us for an engaging evening designed for young people (13+) living with kidney disease and their parents and carers.



This session will focus on Dialysis, exploring the pros and cons of each haemodialysis treatment option.

You will learn how the different options work and receive clear, comprehensive information to help better understand all available haemodialysis treatments.

We will also be offering a parent and carer support session from 5.30pm-6.30pm, giving parents and carers an opportunity to talk to others about their experiences in a safe and supportive environment.

After the workshop, enjoy food together before taking part in an energising West African djembe drumming experience led by the talented **Successors of the Mandingue!**

- Day: Wednesday 3rd June
- Time: 5.30pm to 8pm
- Venue: Grange Pavilion, Grange Gardens, Cardiff, CF11 7LJ



Ways to book on

- To book on to TYP follow this link
- To book on to Parent and Carer Support follow this link
- Email: evie@pophamkidneysupport.org.uk
- Phone: 0333 2001 285

Booking is essential

Easter day out 2026: Treetop Golf!

This Easter, we were pleased to bring together children living with kidney disease and their families for a relaxed and enjoyable day out.



We welcomed 10 families to **Treetop Golf** in Cardiff, where everyone spent two hours playing one or two rounds of golf. It was a

great opportunity for children with kidney disease and their families to spend time together, with some friendly competition and plenty of holes in one along the way.

Alongside the golf, young kidney patients, their families and our team spent time sitting together, enjoying food and refreshments, and chatting about their experiences and day-to-day life.

Each child also received an Easter egg, kindly donated by **Christine Griffiths** of **Wonderful Welshies Events** and **Wonderful Welshies Wedding Fayres**.



Their generosity was very much appreciated and added something extra to the day.

We're grateful to everyone who helped make the day possible and to the families who joined us.

We look forward to welcoming them all again at future events...**why not join us!**

From all of us at Popham Kidney Support, Happy Easter!

We're looking for Trustees



We are recruiting Trustees to join our Board. Trustees help shape our strategic direction and governance, working collaboratively with our small, passionate team to support collective decisions.

We particularly welcome people with lived experience of kidney disease, renal healthcare professionals, and those with legal or fundraising expertise, all of whom will have direct input into relevant areas of our work.

You'll help grow our impact across Wales - supporting our flagship Peer Support Service, new Youth Transition Programme, and expanded primary care services.

Becoming a Trustee with **Popham Kidney Support** means joining a passionate, award-winning charity dedicated to ensuring that no kidney patient in Wales faces their journey alone.

Want to make a real difference? We'd love to hear from you.

To find out more and to apply, visit: <https://reachvolunteering.org.uk/op/trustee-2265>

LATEST

5K Series returns

The Swansea Bay Summer 5K Series returns for 2026, promising another season of fun, fitness, and fundraising along the stunning Swansea Bay coastline.



Organised by **Paul Popham Running Club (PPRC)**, the series brings together runners of all abilities - from dedicated club members to casual runners - all supporting our charity, **Popham Kidney Support**.

The 2026 series will feature three fully licensed, Welsh Athletics-affiliated 5K races. Each course is designed to challenge experienced runners while remaining accessible for newcomers, offering a scenic and enjoyable experience for everyone.

Runners can sign up for individual races or secure their place for the full series.

Race dates for 2026 are:

- Wednesday 13th May
- Wednesday 10th June
- Wednesday 8th July

The children's fun run (ages 11 and under) will begin at 5:00pm, followed by the main 5K race at 7:00pm.

Trophies will be awarded to the top three finishers in Junior, Female, Male, and Masters categories for each race, with an additional trophy presented to the overall series winner in each category.

Young participants in the 1K and 2K fun run around the Cenotaph will also compete for trophies, and an additional award to the best-turned-out school.

This is a milestone year for Paul Popham Running Club, which celebrates 10 years since launching in 2016. In this time, the club has supported runners of all abilities - from beginners working towards their first 5K to experienced athletes training for 10Ks, half and full marathons, and triathlons. The club has grown into a vibrant community, offering multiple training groups and hosting licensed events that combine social connection with fitness and wellbeing.

All proceeds from the series will go directly to the charity, helping us continue our work supporting individuals and families affected by kidney disease through education, advocacy and community resources.

To find out more and to book your ticket for the next race, visit:

<https://www.paulpophamrunningclub.co.uk/news/swansea-bay-summer-5k-series/>

Meet our new team member

Evie: our new Children & Youth Co-ordinator



We're delighted to introduce **Evie Watkins**, our Children & Youth Co-ordinator here at Popham Kidney Support.

Evie recently joined the team after graduating with a degree in Psychology and gaining experience in mental health support.

She's passionate about helping children and young people feel confident, empowered, and supported as they navigate life with kidney disease.

As a member of the Paul Popham Running Club, Evie has already seen the charity's impact first-hand, and now she's excited to play an even bigger role!

In her role, Evie will be developing wellbeing and confidence-building activities; creating opportunities for young people to learn, grow, and connect; and working closely with parents and carers to ensure families feel supported.

If you're a young person, parent, or carer and would like support, information, or to get involved, Evie would love to hear from you.

Contact Evie:

evie@pophamkidneysupport.org.uk

Meet the team at Popham Kidney Support



Joanne Popham

CEO

joanne@pophamkidneysupport.org.uk



Claire Popham

Peer Support and Patient Service Officer

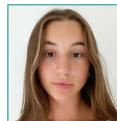
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Ava Houston-Phillips

Administrative Assistant

ava@pophamkidneysupport.org.uk



Evie Watkins

Children & Youth Coordinator

evie@pophamkidneysupport.org.uk

you are not alone

To get in touch:

Popham Kidney Support

11 Tawe Business Village, Enterprise Park,
Llansamlet, Swansea SA7 9LA

Call us: **0333 2001 285**

support@pophamkidneysupport.org.uk

pophamkidneysupport.org.uk



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