

The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing to you to seek a commitment from your government to address the urgent and growing burden of kidney disease. While we are pleased to see an emphasis on cardiovascular disease, we are disappointed kidney disease was largely omitted from the 10 Year Health Plan and believe this is a significant gap. Kidney disease is an important risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Therefore, prioritisation of the detection and treatment of kidney disease would be a key step in the government's welcome aim to reduce these challenging conditions.

We are people living with kidney disease, family members, friends and clinicians supporting people with the condition. We see firsthand the devastating impact of kidney disease on individuals and their families.

There are now an estimated 7.2 million people living with kidney disease in the UK alone – more than 1 in 10 of the population – and the numbers are growing rapidly, threatening to overwhelm the NHS. By 2033, kidney disease could cost the UK economy over £14 billion per year overall and £10.9 billion in direct costs to the NHS. Yet it remains a low priority.

The World Health Organisation recently adopted its first-ever resolution on kidney disease, showing that kidney health promotion and prevention of kidney disease is now recognised as a global priority. It marked a pivotal, international acknowledgement of the growing prevalence and harm of kidney disease and of the indisputable evidence that measures targeting kidney disease can save lives, improve quality of life, and protect economies and the viability of health systems. It recognised kidney disease alongside cardiovascular disease, cancer and chronic respiratory disease as a strategic focus. We would like to thank the UK government for its hard work and leadership in ensuring the WHO chronic kidney disease resolution was accepted.

Kidney disease is the third fastest-growing cause of death globally. Currently around 60,000 people have such severe kidney disease that they rely on dialysis or transplantation to stay alive in England. But these are high-risk, invasive treatments that do not offer a cure. Dialysis can involve travelling to hospital three times a week for four-hour sessions. This has a huge impact on people's physical and mental health and their ability to work or attend school, not to mention the impact on their families. There are currently more than 30,000 adults and children who rely on dialysis to stay alive, and this figure is projected to increase to as many as 143,000 by 2033.

However, early detection of kidney disease and intervention can delay or prevent progression to kidney failure in many cases. New medications can target common kidney diseases caused by high blood pressure and diabetes and recently-developed innovative therapeutics can alleviate some rarer immunological and genetic causes of kidney disease.

We believe that in order to tackle the increasing burden of kidney diseases and fully utilise the significant preventative potential of new medications, a national strategy on kidney disease is required. This will deliver a better quality of life for patients and better value for the NHS and the economy. Early intervention can save kidneys and lives and can truly move our health service from disease to prevention.

We call on your government to finally tackle a condition which has been under-prioritised for decades and to grasp the opportunity for the UK to become a world leader in kidney disease detection, prevention and management.

The kidney community stands ready to support the development and the delivery of such a strategy.

Yours sincerely,

