Driving Discoveries 2026

Celebrating progress in renal science and accelerating innovation for people with kidney disease and those at risk.

Day one – Wednesday 16 September

10am – 10.30am Arrival, registration and coffee
Deansgate Foyer
Poster placement on display boards

10.30am – 11am Welcome from Kidney Research UK
Dr David Crosby, chief research officer
Fiona Carragher, chief executive

Introduction to our Driving Discoveries 2026 co-chairs

Emeritus Professor Richard Sandford, honorary consultant in clinical genetics in the East of England Medical Genetics Service and Reader in Renal Genetics, University of Cambridge

Mrs Angela Watt, ex-trustee Kidney Research UK, retired renal nurse and patient

11am – 12.10pm Session one – data science and AI

'Systems Nephrology: unlocking the power of big data and AI to drive discovery science'

Dr Julio Saez Rodriguez, head of research, EMBL-European Bioinformatics Institute

Panel discussion: 'How do we make the most of the unique landscape of kidney health data science?'

Panel members: Professor Dorothea Nitsch, Professor Samira Bell, Dr Andrew Lewington, Dr Rachel Hung, Abigail Green and Dr Julio Saez Rodriguez

Audience Q&A

12.10pm – 12.45pm The debate

Facilitator: Dr David Crosby, chief research officer

'Nephrology as a stand-alone discipline should be dismantled – we should move entirely to a more systems physiology-based CardioVascular Renal Metabolic (CVRM) health'
For – Dr Kristin Veighey
Against – Professor Jeremy Hughes

12.45pm – 1.55pm Lunch
Networking and poster viewing

Podium

Hosted networking tables – opportunity for informal chat with Kidney Research UK staff

1.55pm – 2.55pm Short presentations session one - understand and prevent

Burden and impact of undiagnosed cognitive impairment in advanced chronic kidney disease: An interim analysis of the CogCKD study cohort
Dr Kerry-Lee Rosenberg, University College London

Can we use the 'endothelial fingerprints' on red blood cells as a commercially viable diagnostic in kidney disease and beyond?
Dr Matthew Butler and Dr Arne Scott, University of Bristol

Single-cell transcriptomics identifies reversible myofibroblast trajectories and ERK signalling in a pre-clinical model of posterior urethral valves
Dr Jess Trundle, Institute Child Health, UCL

Urinary fibronectin predicts progression of chronic kidney disease in two independent cohorts
Dr David Baird, University of Edinburgh

2.55pm – 3.25pm Rapid-fire presentations one - understand and prevent

Single cell RNA-seq pseudotime analysis of Wilms and Matched Kidney organoids delineates clear evolutionary trajectories and cell of origin.
Max Pachl, Birmingham Children's Hospital University of Birmingham

Impaired kidney development in a Wt1R394W/+ model of childhood glomerular disease
Emily Moore, Institute of Child Health, UCL

Microbial-derived HLA ligands reveal a previously underexplored antigenic landscape in clear cell renal cell carcinoma
Jean-Benoit Tanis, Sir Francis Crick Institute

Modeling Rare Disease in TMEM260 edited renal organoids reveals novel regulator of early renal repatterning and cellular reprogramming.
Jessica Kepple, University of Oxford

Predicting acute kidney injury in hospitalised children
Anthony Evans, University of Liverpool

The cellular oxygen sensing pathway as a novel regulator of BK polyomavirus replication and innate sensing
Madeline Jane Carey, University of Oxford

3.25pm – 4.25pm Afternoon break
Networking and poster viewings

Deansgate Foyer

4.25pm – 4.55pm Rapid-fire presentations two - protect and treat

Filtration fraction is higher in children post-kidney transplantation and associates with lower serum creatinine
Barian Mohidin, Institute of Child Health, UCL

Developing new treatments for cystic kidney disease
Katarzyna Szymanska, University of Leeds

Organoid models for assessment of novel therapeutics against BK polyomavirus
Stephen AL Icaza, University of Cambridge

Discovering new therapies for, and advancing our understanding of, cystinuria
Robert Pope, University of Bristol

Advanced therapies for early onset lower urinary tract diseases: towards CHRM3 gene therapy
Zoe Hickman, University of Manchester

Targeting the epigenetic modifier euchromatic histone lysine methyltransferase 1 (EHMT1) as a new therapy for diabetic kidney disease
Jenny Hurcombe, University of Bristol

4.55pm – 5.25pm Fireside chat : 'Addressing paediatric and rare kidney disease - Where next following the Collectively Common report?'

Facilitator: Dr Sam Lawes, director of research development and partnerships

Professor Rachel Lennon, University of Manchester

Dr Ben Reynolds, University of Glasgow

5.25pm – 5.30pm Summing up of the day - co-chairs

5.30pm- 6.30pm Early Careers Forum

Facilitator: Elaine Davies, director of research operations

Networking and poster viewing

Evening

7.30pm Pre-dinner drinks | 8pm Informal sit-down dinner

9.30pm – 11pm Live music performance by ' Hell Yeah!' band

Day two – Thursday 17 September

9am – 9.10am Good morning for day two – Driving Discoveries 2026 co-chairs welcome

9.10am – 10.20am Session two – kidneys and cancer

'Understanding cancer behaviour in kidney transplant recipients: a challenge at all scales'

Dr Matthew Bottomley, academic nephrologist and research group lead, University of Oxford

Panel discussion: 'kidneys and cancer: the challenges and opportunities'

Panel members: Dr Tom Mitchell, Dr Osin Kavanagh, Ms Fran Burns and Dr Matthew Bottomley

Audience Q&A

10.20am – 11.05am Panel discussion session: Understanding and addressing health inequalities in kidney research and care

Introductions: Tracey Murray, director of programmes
Panel Chair: Professor Shivani Sharma

Panel members: Bernadette Adeyileka-Tracz, Associate Professor Sunil Daga, Abigail Green

11.05am – 12.05pm Morning break
Networking and poster viewing

Deansgate Foyer

12.05pm – 1.05pm Short presentations session two - protect and treat

12.05pm Spatio-temporal mapping of the Col4a5-/Y mouse model of Alport syndrome identifies Cd44 as an early biomarker of focal kidney injury
Dr Richard Naylor, University of Manchester

12.20pm How can we make a better HCMV vaccine? Insights into the cross-herpesvirus conservation of a novel antigenic domain of HCMV gB
Dr Anastasia Lankina, University College London

12.35pm Personalising ADPKD risk: How combined medical data predicts disease progression
Dr Andrew Streets, University of Sheffield

12.50pm Modulating immunometabolism in CD4 T cells and monocytes as a potential host-directed therapy for mycobacterium tuberculosis in end-stage kidney disease
Dr Joseph Sturman, University of Birmingham

1.05pm – 2.20pm Lunch
Networking and poster viewing

Podium
Hosted networking tables – opportunity for informal chat with Kidney Research UK staff

2.20pm – 3.30pm Session three – the interaction between multiple long-term conditions (including mental health) and kidney disease

'The realities of multiple long-term conditions in research and health care'

Professor Sam Seidu, professor of primary care diabetes and cardiometabolic medicine, Leicester Diabetes Centre

Panel discussion: 'Working together to tackle multiple health conditions'

Panel members: Dr Manish Saxena, Professor Indy Dasgupta and Professor Sam Seidu

Audience Q&A

3.30pm – 3.45pm Reflections from patients

Facilitator: Chris Davies, patient and public involvement manager

3.45pm – 4pm Conference reflections

Reflections from co-chairs
Kidney Research UK chairman's concluding remarks

Awards for: best oral, best poster

4pm Close of the formal programme

Afternoon refreshments and networking before departure

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATOR

Kidney Research UK is a registered charity no. 252892. Scottish charity no. SC039245.

None of our supporters have had any input into the agenda.

The programme may be subject to final changes.