

Meet the Trustees – Professor Rachel Lennon

Rachel joined the KFL Board of Trustees in November 2013 and is our longest serving Trustee.

Can you tell us a little about your clinical role and specialty?

I wear two hats- I'm a paediatric nephrologist at the Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, where I look after children and young people with genetic forms of kidney disease and the other half of my life is spent at the University of Manchester, where I lead a research team. We're specifically interested in the "filters" of the kidney—trying to understand why they sometimes fail and how we can fix them.

What led you to focus on kidney disease in your career?

I've always been fascinated by the sheer complexity of the kidney. It's this incredibly delicate biological sieve that has to work 24/7. When I started my training, I was drawn to the mix of high-level science and the long-term relationships you build with patients and their families. In paediatric nephrology, you often follow a child's journey for years, and that connection is really special.

What inspired you to become a trustee for Kidneys for Life?

I've seen first-hand how much of a difference the charity makes to our patients in Manchester. Whether it's funding a vital piece of lab equipment or a research project to helping a family through a tough time, their impact is huge. I wanted to step up as a trustee to help bridge the gap between the research we do at the university and the real-world benefits for the people living with kidney disease.

What developments in kidney research are you most excited about right now?

Right now, I'm incredibly excited about "precision medicine." For a long time, we've treated many kidney diseases with a "one size fits all" approach, but we're finally getting to the point where we can look at a patient's specific genetic makeup and tailor the treatment to them. We are moving into an era where treatments are becoming specific for the underlying problems causing kidney disease- including gene and molecule-targeted treatments.

Kidneys for Life

Renal Research Labs, Manchester Royal Infirmary, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9WL

Tel: 0161 276 6671 Email: fundraiser@kidneysforlife.org

Charity Registration No. 505256



What is one thing you wish more people understood about kidney disease?

I wish people knew how "silent" it can be. You can lose a lot of kidney function before you actually feel sick, which is why early detection is so important. Also, kidneys aren't just about waste—they control your blood pressure, your bone strength, and your energy levels. They are the ultimate multi-taskers!

Best advice you've ever received?

"Science is a team sport." It's easy to think of researchers as people working alone in a dark lab, but the best breakthroughs happen when you collaborate. I've learned that surrounding yourself with people who have different skills and perspectives is the only way to solve the big, complicated problems.

Outside of medicine, how do you like to unwind?

I love being outside and active. I'm a runner and will be running my 9th marathon later this year. Still at the stage where the training will make a difference!

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