

The key services we provide are:

Emotional and Practical Stoma Support

We offer several platforms for ostomates to connect with one another, seek support, share experiences, and find solace in knowing they are not alone on their journey.

24/7 Stoma Helpline (0800 328 4257):

Our free Stoma helpline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is here for anyone that has questions, needs support or just wants to talk to someone with a stoma. All of our volunteers have a stoma and are fully trained. Last year, over 5,000 people received the help they needed by calling the helpline.

Telephone Befriending Service:

Our 'Befriender' volunteers provide regular, proactive telephone contact to those experiencing loneliness or social isolation. Stoma care nurses are able to refer their patients, or patients may choose to contact us themselves.

Private Facebook Support Group:

This moderated group provides a safe and confidential space for ostomates and people associated with them, to 'meet' and support one another. Members can share hints and tips for resolving practical stoma management issues. Membership currently stands at 11,000. Search Colostomy UK Support Group on Facebook to request to join.

Live Chat

Our website enables visitors to chat anonymously and instantly with a member of the Colostomy UK team during office hours. Support can be sought on difficult subjects, such as sexual function, without the need to speak to someone or even identify oneself.

Information Resources

We provide comprehensive and up-to-date information on various aspects of living with a stoma, empowering people to make informed decisions about their care.

Support Literature:

Our current library comprises over 20 titles, all of which are available free of charge, both in paper format and as downloads from our website. All our literature is peer-reviewed by ostomates, and all medical content is either sourced from, or reviewed by, healthcare professionals. I have enclosed a copy of some of these titles for you. If you would like to order more to give to your patients, please do get in touch with us or send back the literature order form that I've enclosed.

Tidings Magazine:

We produce a free support magazine which is shared with 22,000 subscribers, four times a year. The magazine has a mix of real lives stories, a dear nurse feature and articles from healthcare professionals. Many ostomates tell us that they read the magazine from cover to cover and retain their copies for future reference.

Website:

This functions as an information portal where all our support literature titles and editions of *Tidings* magazines are available to download free of charge. An up-to-date list of all current ostomate support groups is also available on our website.

Support groups and open days:

We'd love to attend and support any open days or support groups you may be running. Please do keep us mind. We plan to launch a 'how to' guide to help anyone wishing to start up their own support group, later this year, which we are happy to share with you.

Wellbeing

We conduct workshops focused on enhancing physical and emotional wellbeing.

Active Ostomates:

In collaboration with support groups in the UK, we put on a range of activities, all accessible and free of charge, including: yoga, Pilates, Zumba, art, swimming, mindfulness & meditation. In 2022, 2,412 people attended a total of 88 virtual Active Ostomates classes. Patients can register for these on our website at www.colostomyuk.org/active-ostomates/.

'Caring for a person with a stoma' workshops:

Delivered by a stoma care nurse, these virtual workshops provide professional social care staff, local authority reablement teams and family members with practical advice and guidance on how to care for someone with a stoma. Patients can register for these on our website at <https://www.colostomyuk.org/support/caring/care-workshop-registration/>.

Rugby League

Our Team Colostomy UK Rugby League team was formed in 2018 to prove that a stoma is no barrier to playing even the toughest of contact sports. The team plays around 10 games a year and regularly receives great media coverage.

Advocacy

We raise awareness and campaign for change in how stomas are understood and viewed among the wider public, with the aim of improving how people with stomas are treated and helped in their daily lives.

Stoma Aware Campaign:

We seek to address public ignorance about stomas in two key ways: Firstly, by raising awareness about stomas and the needs of ostomates; and secondly, through working directly with businesses and organisations, public bodies, tourist attractions, sporting venues, airports etc, to help them to make their facilities 'stoma friendly', as well as providing their customer-facing staff with stoma awareness training.
