

Bereavement Café



*Peer to peer
support
at time of loss*

Authors: Julieanne Conlon
Aislinn Delaney, Karolina Jacobsson, Margaret Isaac, Jackie Whyte
Northern Ireland Hospice, Belfast

“Relaxed atmosphere, just listening to others who have experienced the loss of a loved one, helped me understand and deal with my own grief.”

Bereavement Café attendee

Aim

- Enhance existing NI Hospice Bereavement support service provision.
- Recognition of the impact of Covid-19 Pandemic and increased need for social support in bereavement care.
- Accessible to all bereaved individuals, including those not previously known to NI Hospice services.
- Flexible and informal service available with no commitment to session attendance.
- Safe and supportive environment for bereaved people to connect with others who have experienced the loss of a loved one.
- Encourage peer to peer support in a time of loss and grief.
- Building networks and resources within the local community.



Methods

- Social work team set up a working group.
- Scoping exercises undertaken with UK hospices.
- Liaising with NI Hospice Clinical Leads team for agreement.
- Identifying time and place and other resources required.
- Working with Communications team to establish logo and developing resources to promote the café.
- Promotion of the café through social media, NI Hospice website and information being left at Community Hubs and Trust facilities.

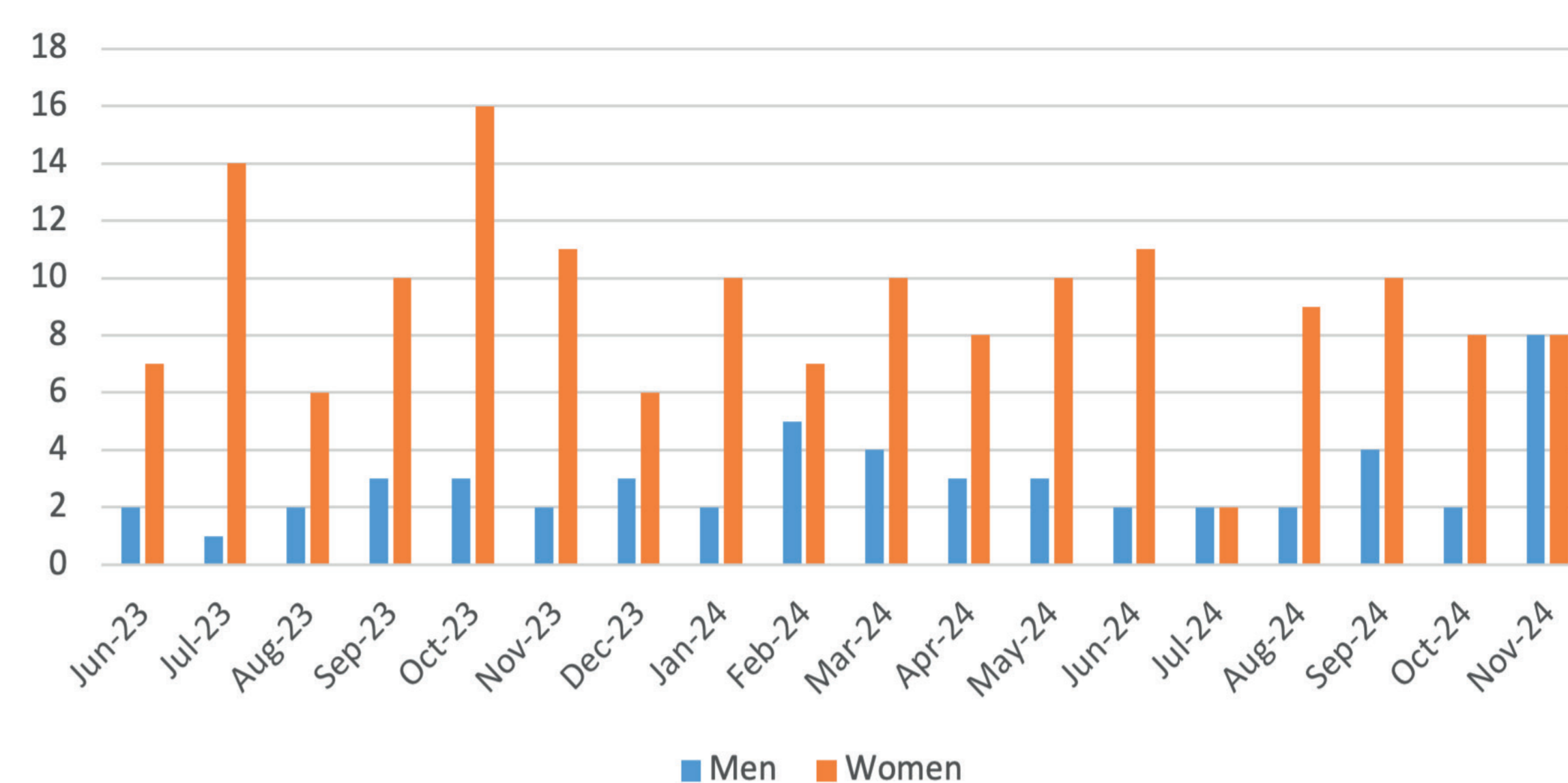
References and acknowledgements

- NI Hospice.

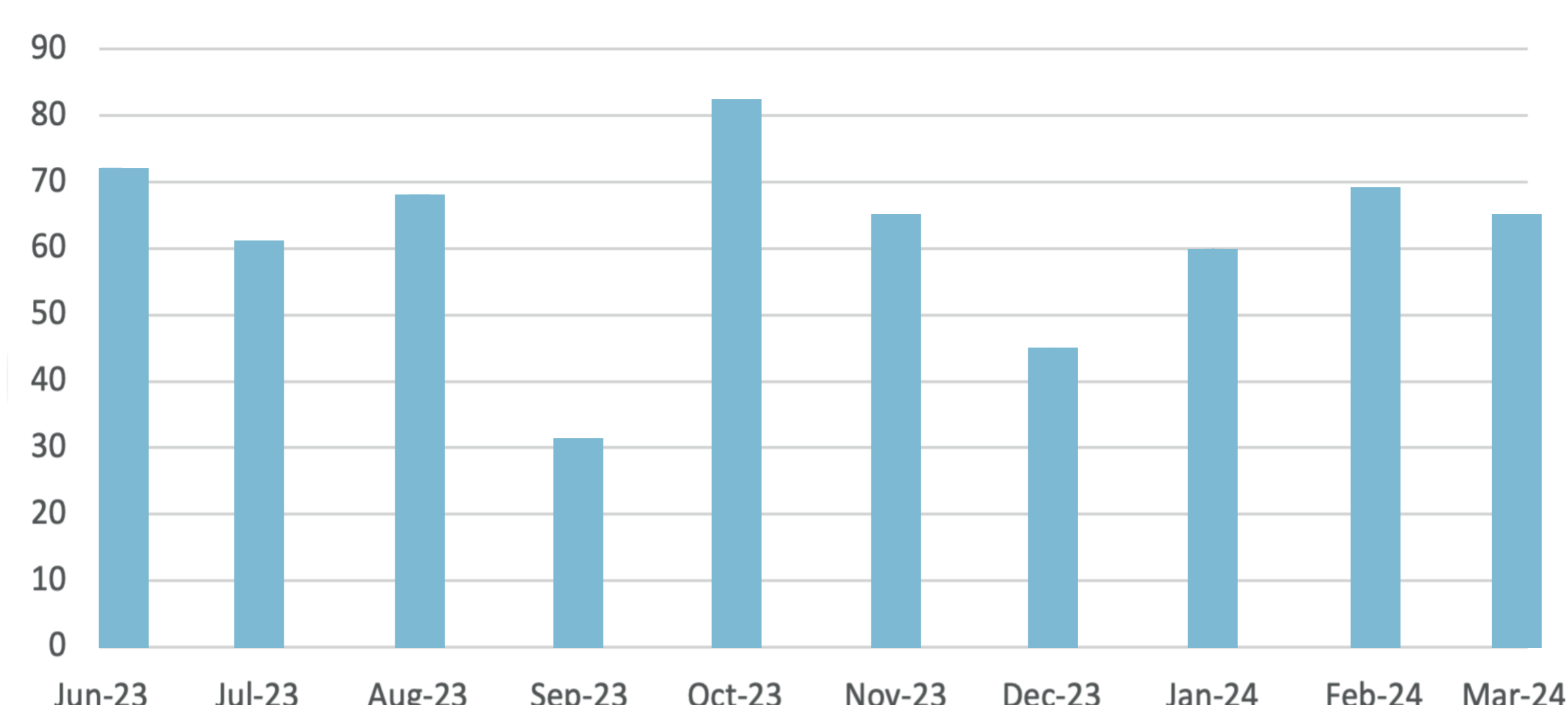
Results

- First café opened, May 2023 on the first Wednesday of the month for up to 90 min. Data collected from voluntary feedback evaluations from June 2023.
- Open to any bereaved person, regardless of previous hospice involvement. Average length of time since bereavement less than 12 months.
- Data available demonstrated positive experiences for all attendees.

Attendance 2023-2024



Age of attendees - Average age 53.6 years



Conclusion

- NI Hospice bereavement café continues to operate and has proved successful in meeting initial aims.
- Positive feedback from attendees, including building friendships, support networks and sharing resources.
- Development of bereavement café training programme to recruit volunteers and deliver training to local community and voluntary groups.
- Further expansion of Bereavement café model across other geographical locations providing NI Hospice care.