The Sarcoma UK Bereavement Peer Support Service



Introduction

The Sarcoma UKSupport Line (SL) Team are healthcare professionals with a variety of backgrounds. Sarcoma UK provide support to existing sarcoma peer support groups across the UK, typically led by those with personal experience or by sarcoma clinical teams. However, they recognised the need for a support service for those bereaved because of sarcoma, connecting individuals who share common experience and enabling them to gain comfort from one another and feel less alone in their grief. The SL Team determined that, given the difficult and unpredictable nature of grief, a bereavement support group is best facilitated by the
SL Team.

Method

The SL Team completed dedicated training and met with other charities providing bereavement support, to prepare for
creating and facilitating the bereavement support group. Comprehensive guidelines were established to ensure a safe space, emphasising confidentiality, respect for individual differences, and acceptance
of all emotions.

A registration of interest form was co- developed with a bereaved parent and distributed via social media. The team decided not to place any restrictions on who could register for the group, for example, duration since bereavement, with the only exception that the person with sarcoma had received care within the UK.

On reviewing registration data, including relationship to the person who had died and age factors, the decision was made to offer three separate meetings: one for parents of children under 25, one evening, and one morning group.

Results

The onlinesupport group was launched in July 2025.

The registration of interest form has been completed by more than 70 individuals and across the three meetings, over 20 different people have attended.

"Only join when you're ready but please do join. The support line staff are always there too, ready to answer questions."

"The groups are small, and you don't have to join every month. Sometimes I've felt I couldn't face the group but have come away feeling much better."

"A safe space for anyone who has lost someone affected by sarcoma, in my case my daughter. You will find people who understand the different emotions of grief and gain support from other members, realising the feelings you're having are normal."



Conclusion

Monthly meetings were held for the first six months, with attendance levels and feedback from attendees reviewed thereafter. The support team will continue to facilitate at least two bereavement support groups each month, with a further review in July 2026. New registrations for the group are received each week. The SL team will continue to gather feedback from attendees and develop this support group in response to needs and wishes.