

Use of the Sarcoma UK Direct Referrals Service by the Swansea Sarcoma Nurse Team

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Introduction

Recognising that making that first call for support is difficult for some people, the Swansea Sarcoma Nurse Team and Sarcoma UK support line (SL) team piloted a Direct Referrals Service from October 2020 – February 2021. This service offers every patient treated by the South Wales Sarcoma Service direct referral to the Sarcoma UK SL for additional support, ideally at the point of diagnosis. The SL team are fortunate to have time to spend listening and talking to people. Following the successful pilot, the decision was made to maintain the South Wales service and extend the offer, initially to a limited number of other UK sarcoma teams.

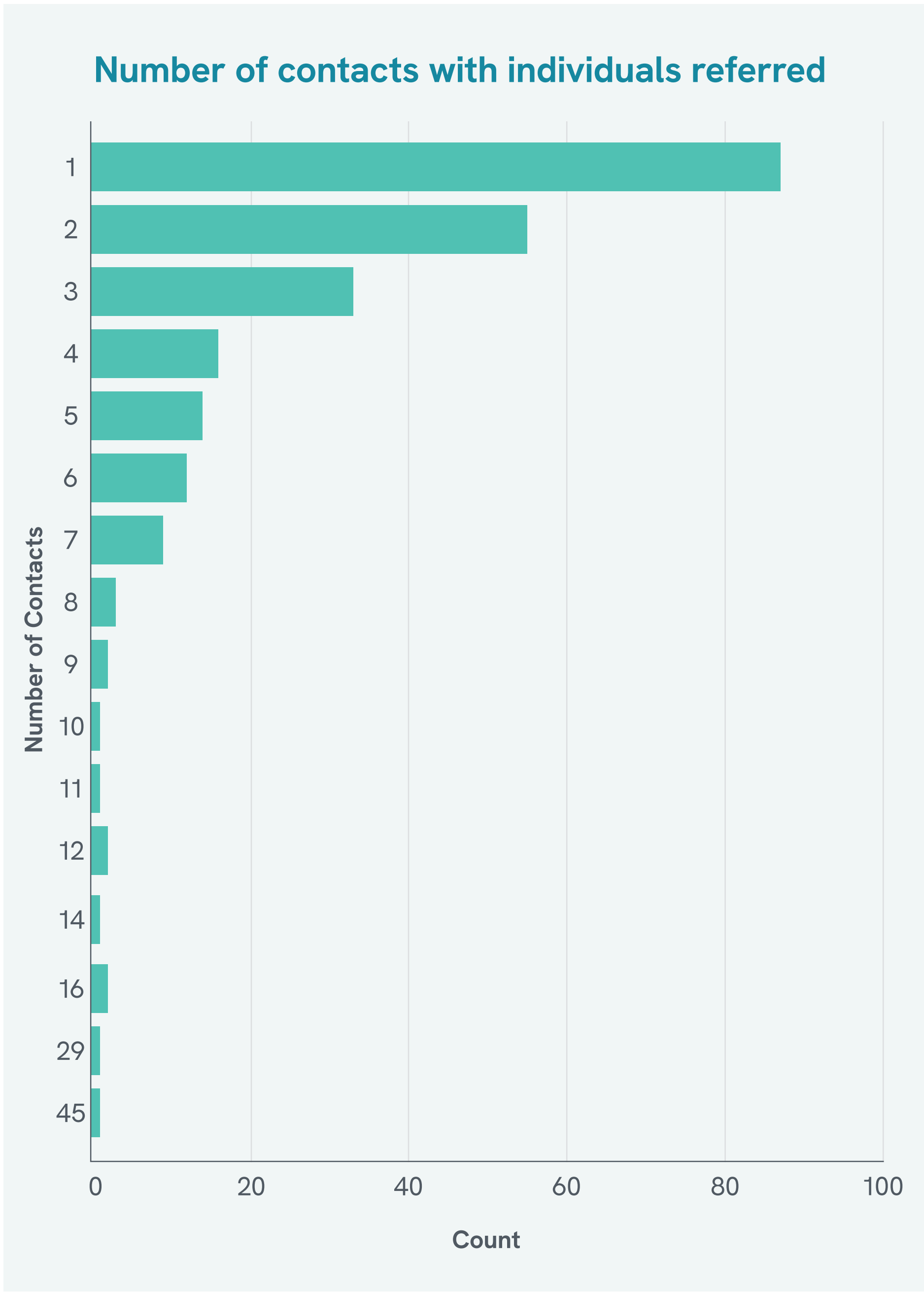
Method

The Swansea team offer this as an opt-out service to every patient with a new diagnosis that are directly managed by their service.

- Patients and carers/families are made aware of Sarcoma UK and written/electronic info is provided.
- The benefits of involving the SL team and direct referral is explained & verbal consent to referral is obtained
- Referral is made by email, sharing only a name and contact number
- After one week, the SL team facilitate an initial call to each person referred
- First contact includes:
 - Introduction
 - Opening times
 - Ways to contact
 - Offer extended to family/carers
 - Reinforcing ‘no question is a silly question’
 - Signposting to other charities and organisations to best support needs
 - Highlighting information available on Sarcoma UK’s website
- Often arrange a further call for 2–3 weeks’ time.
- Safety netting/feedback to referring team if required

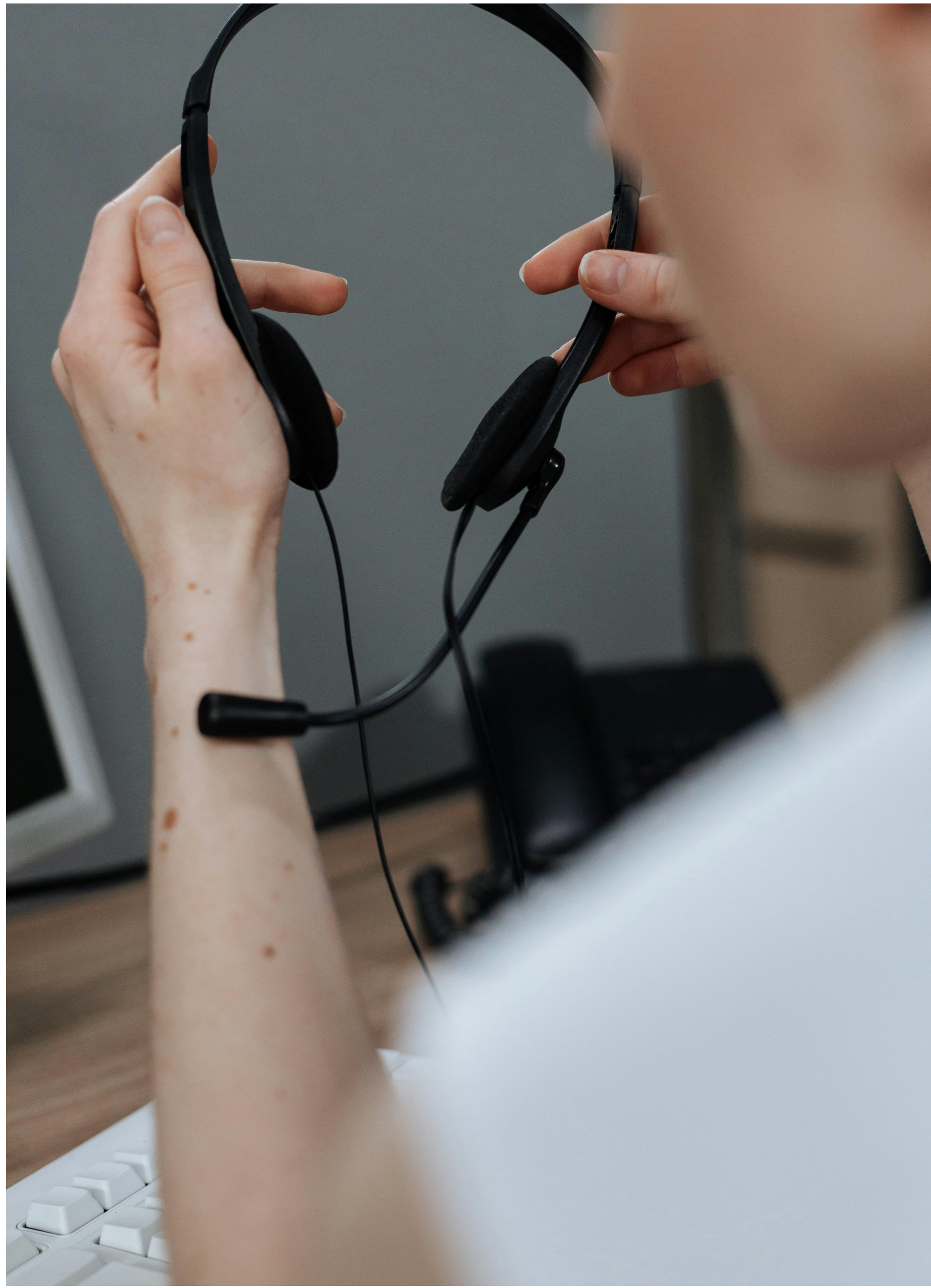
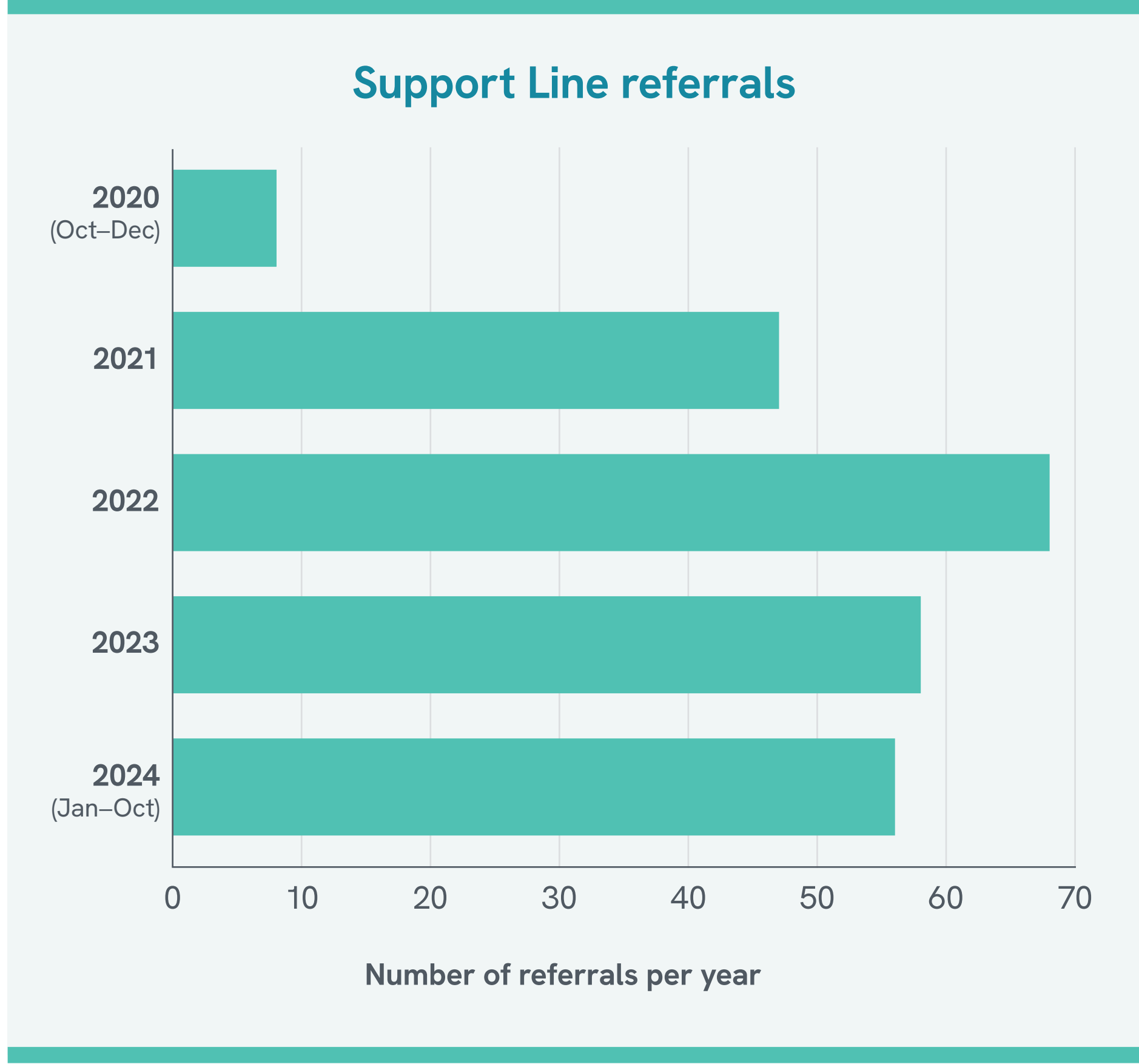
Results

At the time of producing this poster presentation, the team have had 1,024 contacts with 240 people referred by the Swansea team. The graph below shows the number of contacts the SL team have had with individuals, ranging from 1 contact with 87 people, to 45 contacts with 1 individual.



The SL team find having no clinical details allows them to fully grasp what the person affected by sarcoma has understood from the information received about their diagnosis and plan of care. Sometimes people choose to discuss their diagnosis, future plans and their home and family life.

Feedback from the Swansea team and from individuals contacted has been positive.



The Support Line Team

“We are speaking to individuals who would not otherwise reach out for additional support. We understand that making that first call for support is difficult for some people.”

“The SL team find having no clinical details allows them to fully grasp what the person affected by sarcoma has understood from the information received about their diagnosis and plan of care.”

Feedback from the Swansea team

“This has been a gamechanger for us and our patient group. The referral process is so quick and easy. Just a small number of patients have declined the first offer and many accept a referral later, once they’ve had time to process all the information they get around the time of diagnosis.”

“It’s so reassuring to know that our patients and their families are having that additional expert support and guidance from a team that we know and trust.”

Conclusion

The SL team are speaking to individuals who would not otherwise reach out for additional support.

The clinical team highly values the straightforward process that allows equitable access to impartial, up to date and expert advice and support for their patient group.

The Sarcoma UK SL team are available to support anybody affected by sarcoma and would encourage the direct referrals service to be used effectively by all the teams recruited. The SL team have now rolled this service out to 14 other sarcoma teams. The plan is for the service to be rolled out even more widely.

