

**Liverpool
Women's
Hospital**



**University Hospitals
of Liverpool**
Group

Honeysuckle Bereavement Service

Annual Report

October 2024

Introduction

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust specialises in the health of women and babies – both within the hospital and community.

Each year the trust delivers approximately 7,500 babies, carries out around 50,000 gynaecological inpatient and outpatient procedures, cares for over 1,000 poorly and premature newborns, performs around 1,000 IVF cycles, and conducts over 4,000 genetic appointments.

Having a baby is safer now than ever before, however, sadly sometimes pregnancy does not have the happy ending hoped for. It is always a very sad and difficult time when families are faced with the loss of their babies, during any stage of pregnancy or shortly after birth.

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust strives to provide gold standard bereavement care – believing if families receive the right care at the right time this can have a positive impact on their bereavement journey.

The trust's dedicated baby bereavement team, The Honeysuckle Team are a vital part of this.

The team work collaboratively with the trust's gynaecology, maternity and neonatal services to ensure staff are fully equipped and empowered to provide the best possible care to women and their families.

This year The Honeysuckle Team have expanded to provide a 7 day service and provide additional services including new resources and support groups, aiming to provide comprehensive care that addresses the emotional, psychological, and practical needs of bereaved families.

This report highlights the work undertaken by our bereavement services at Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust during 2023. The report includes the achievements, ongoing projects and future plans for the bereavement service.

Facts and Figures – Gynaecology

The team provide support to women and families who experience miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy and termination of pregnancy for fetal anomaly within Liverpool Women's gynaecology services.

Supported **874** early pregnancy losses – including miscarriage, ectopic and molar pregnancies

Supported **55** second trimester pregnancy losses – including miscarriage and termination for fetal anomaly

Facilitated **14** funeral director collections

Facilitated **33** communal cremation services

Facilitated **24** family visits to Honeysuckle suite

Supported **365** termination of pregnancy

Supported **11** families with taking their pregnancy remains home for private burial

Facilitated post mortem examinations for **27** second trimester pregnancy losses with Alder Hey Children's Foundation Trust

Facilitated histopathology testing for **821** early pregnancy losses with Liverpool University Foundation Trust

Facts and Figures - Maternity

The team provide support to women and families who experience mid trimester miscarriage, stillbirth and termination of pregnancy for fetal anomaly within Liverpool Women's maternity services.

Facilitated **103**
family visits to
Honeysuckle suite

Facilitated **2**
communal
cremation services

Facilitated **53**
funeral director
collections

Supported **3** families
with taking their
babies to hospice
after death

Supported **125** second
and third trimester
pregnancy losses,
including stillbirth, mid
trimester miscarriage and
termination for fetal
anomaly

Supported **15**
families with taking
their babies home
after death

Facilitated **43** post
mortem examinations with
Liverpool Alder Hey
Children's Foundation

Facts and Figures - Neonatal

The team provide support to women and families who experience the death of their babies within the early neonatal period.

Facilitated **39**
funeral director
collections

Supported **46**
families who have
experienced
neonatal death

Facilitated **8** post
mortem examinations
with Liverpool Alder
Hey Children's
Foundation Trust

Facilitated **71** visits
to Honeysuckle suite

Supported **2**
families with
taking their
babies home
after death

Supported **5**
families with taking
their babies to
hospice after death

Registration of Stillbirth and Neonatal Death

The team facilitate appointments for families to register their babies stillbirths and deaths in conjunction with Liverpool City Council's register office.

In 2023, 97 families were supported with registration appointments.

During and following COVID 19 pandemic registration appointments were moved from the hospital site. Collaborative working between Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust and Liverpool City Council has ensured the register office will return to Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust site in November 2024.

Debrief Appointments

Consultant debrief appointments are offered in order for bereaved families to understand why their baby has died and to plan for future pregnancy.

A vital element of these appointments is the environment they are held in. A room within the Honeysuckle Team office identified as a safe space where families could be welcomed and offered emotional support.

In 2023, 62 debrief appointments took place.

Bereavement charity 4 Louis are funding a refurbishment of this debrief room by the end of 2024, making it more comfortable for bereaved families.

Perinatal Mortality Review Tool (PMRT)

PMRT is a national tool designed with user and bereaved parent involvement to support high quality standardised perinatal mortality reviews on the principle of 'review once, review well'. The aim of the PMRT programme is to support standardised perinatal mortality reviews across NHS maternity and neonatal units in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Honeysuckle Team's role within PMRT is to act as an advocate for bereaved parents by:

- Providing detailed information about PMRT process to parents.
- Offering parents the opportunity to contribute to the process by submitting their comments and questions.
- Attending and participating in the multidisciplinary reviews, sharing any parental comments or points parents wanted to raise.

- Providing emotional support to parents throughout the process – including during their debrief appointment and after this.

In 2023, 22 maternity cases were reviewed as part of PMRT at Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust, The Honeysuckle Team offered support to all cases, with 62% of families submitting comments for the review.

In 2023, 38 neonatal cases were reviewed as part of PMRT at Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust, The Honeysuckle Team offered support to all cases, with 35% of families submitting comments for the review.

Staff Training

Bereavement training is provided to doctors, midwives, nurses and support staff at Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust.

Training is provided to equip staff with the necessary skills to sensitively support grieving families effectively. These sessions provide comprehensive education on the emotional and psychological aspects of baby loss, enhancing the ability of staff to offer empathetic and informed care. The impact of the training is profound, leading to improved patient satisfaction, strengthened trust between families and healthcare providers, and a more supportive and understanding hospital environment.

Ultimately regular bereavement training ensures all staff members are prepared to provide the highest standard of care during some of the most challenging moments for families.

In 2023 89% of our midwives received bereavement training from the team's specialist midwives.

In 2023 The Honeysuckle Team led on a new training package for staff that reflects new regional guidelines and pathways for mid trimester pregnancy loss and stillbirth. Feedback from this training shows that attendees find it informative and beneficial.

Currently 108 of our nurses and midwives have received the new training.

91% of staff were very satisfied with the training.

95% of staff felt their expectations were met.

86% of staff were very likely to recommend the training to colleagues.

Staff gave the training an overall rating of **9.23 out of 10.**



Feedback from Families

The Honeysuckle Team are always eager to gain feedback from families to help improve services for the future. The team utilize the national Maternity Bereavement Evaluation Measure questionnaire for this.

In 2023, 205 questionnaires were sent to out with 131 responses received.

91% of families felt staff communicated with them in a sensitive way.

95% of families felt confident in the NHS staff caring for them.

100% of families felt their babies were always treated with dignity and respect.

Ongoing Support – Monthly Support Group

The Honeysuckle Team's specialist bereavement midwives run a monthly support group. Group sessions take place in a calm, welcoming environment with refreshments, crafts, thought cards and a listening ear for anyone affected by baby loss.

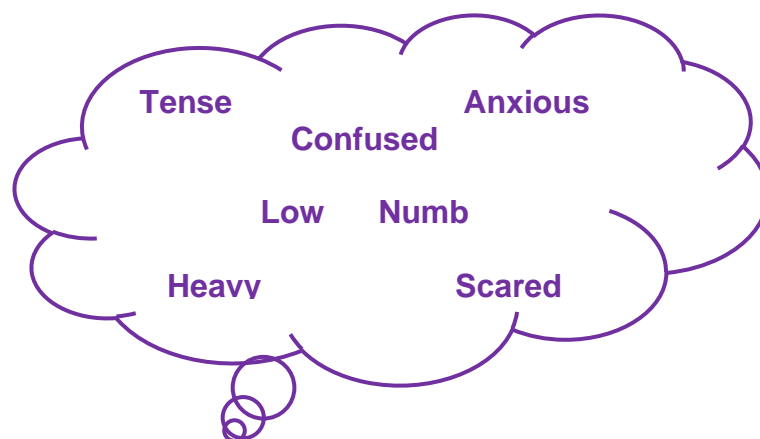
In 2023 a total of 231 bereaved adults attended 12 support group sessions including 72 males and 159 females.

Feedback is gained at the end of each session:

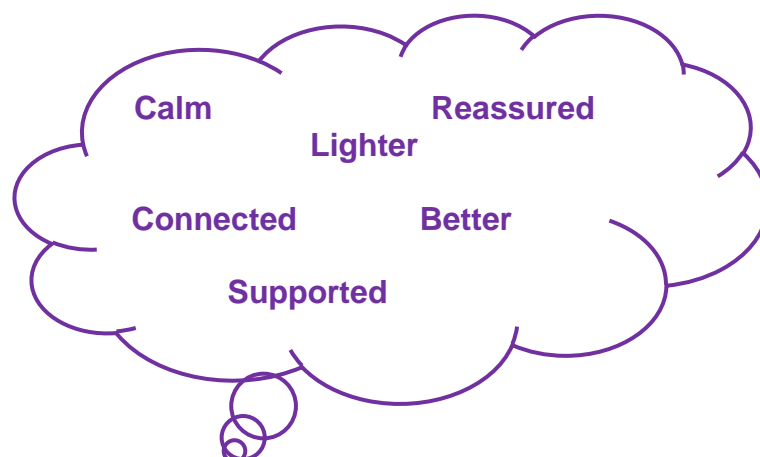
100% of attendees would recommend the group to others.

Attendees gave the content of the group sessions a rating of **4.8 out of 5.**

Families are asked how they feel at the beginning of group



Families are asked how they feel at the end of group



Ongoing Support - Honeysuckle FC

Following requests for specialist support for men who have experienced baby loss, Honeysuckle FC was set up in collaboration with Liverpool Football Club Foundation.



Bi weekly sessions consist of one hour of talking therapy / peer support with mental health coaches from LFC Foundation, followed by one hour of football.

3 dedicated Honeysuckle peer support volunteers assist with the running of the sessions. The volunteers have received bespoke training and are offered supervision sessions to support them.

Honeysuckle FC has a positive impact on men's physical and mental health and helps support positive relationships with partners and family members.

Honeysuckle FC fills an important gap in offering bereavement support, there is a need for increased awareness about the importance of support for men experiencing baby loss and the stereotypes and misconceptions which can persist about men's grief.

In 2023, 26 Honeysuckle FC sessions were held, with over 400 attendees.

A recent evaluation of Honeysuckle FC reported this support as 'lifesaving' and 'life-changing'.

Please see link to evaluation <https://doi.org/10.25416/edgehill.25879408.v1>



Ongoing Support – Children’s Events

Liverpool Women’s recognise the unique grief experienced by children who are affected by baby loss. In 2023 The Honeysuckle Team held events at the hospital site and in the community at Bobby’s Base – a space run by The Bobby Colleran Trust – for bereaved children to have a safe space to express their feelings and navigate their own grief journey with support and understanding.

Over 100 children attended these events.

Thank you to The Bobby Colleran Trust for supporting these events.

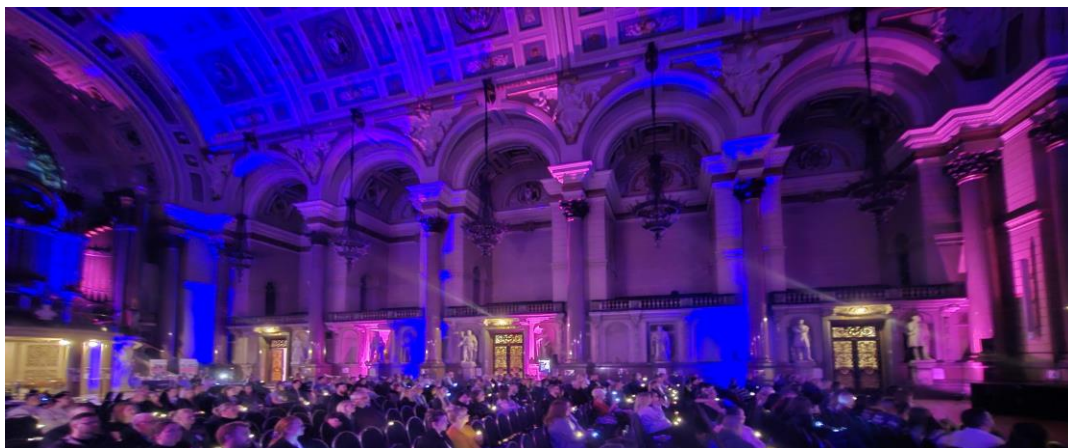


Ongoing Support – Annual Remembrance Service

Liverpool Women’s hold an annual service of remembrance for families affected by baby loss. The service is a time to unite to commemorate their babies’ lives and lost pregnancies.

2 sessions of the service are held on the same day – an earlier session for adults and children and a later session for adults only.

In 2023 479 adults and 92 children attended the service.



Ongoing Support - Honeysuckle Garden

There is a dedicated area within the grounds of Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust for bereaved families to visit, known as Honeysuckle Remembrance Garden.

Jaguar Land Rover made great improvements to the garden in 2023, providing a warm, covered area for families to visit all year round.

The garden is a serene space, offering a place of solace and reflection. Many families visit the garden at the time of their loss, making special memories with their babies. Families often return to the garden throughout their journey of remembrance and healing, not just at the time of their loss.

The remembrance garden underscores Liverpool Women's commitment to providing ongoing support to bereaved families.

Volunteers

At Liverpool Women's our volunteers help deliver services and projects throughout the organisation in a variety of roles. They bring a diverse range of experience, skills and knowledge and they are an amazing group of people who, not only enjoy making a difference but are essential to improving our patients journey and supporting staffs wellbeing.

The support of volunteers is greatly appreciated within the Honeysuckle Team. Volunteers support The Honeysuckle Team with their ongoing support sessions, such as monthly support group, children's events and annual remembrance service.

In 2023 The Honeysuckle Team recruited 3 Peer Support Volunteers. These are all bereaved dads keen to help by offering support, understanding and friendship to others after the loss of a baby. They also assist with the organising of events for Honeysuckle FC. Specialised bereavement training and clinical supervision is facilitated by Liverpool Women's for these Peer Support Volunteers.

Special thanks to Honeysuckle Volunteers for their amazing contribution to the bereavement service.

Our Future

Liverpool Women's strive to be a recognized leader of gold standard bereavement care. There are plans for the growth of the trust's bereavement services.

Over the next year, The Honeysuckle team will:

- Continue to highlight the excellent care at Liverpool Women's including raising awareness of The Honeysuckle Team.
- Analyse training needs in relation to post mortem consent to ensure Liverpool Women's is in line with actions identified in the Ockenden report. Adequate number of staff to be trained to confidently counsel families about post mortem within 48 hours of the death of their baby.
- Plan for Honeysuckle midwives to support families in subsequent pregnancies following baby loss through the trust's Rainbow clinic.
- Support the return of Liverpool Register Office to Liverpool Women's site – the office will facilitate birth appointments within the maternity department as well as stillbirth and death appointments within the Honeysuckle office.
- Improve the Honeysuckle office to provide a more comfortable and spacious environment for families attending debrief and registration appointments.
- Introduce North West Regional Mid Trimester Pathway within Gynaecology division, including upload of pathway to digital system. This will fit in line with the current digital system in maternity.
- Explore feedback from families in order to shape and improve services for the future. Access to physical and mental health training, walking groups and a choir are some of the ideas families have shared.
- Welcome additional Peer Support Volunteers and ensure adequate training and supervision is offered to all.

Acknowledgements

Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust could not provide the care to bereaved families without the support of:

- 4Louis
- Bobby Collieran Trust
- Jaguar Land Rover
- Liverpool Bereavement Services
- Liverpool Football Club Foundation
- Love Jasmine
- Seat Loader

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR OUR
PROGRAMS**