

# Early identification of patients with additional needs on a cancer pathway

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## Background

Patients on a cancer pathway with pre-existing conditions or additional needs such as a learning disability, dementia, or a mental health condition, sometimes require adjustments to prevent unnecessary delay and improve experience. At our cancer tracking meetings, it was recognised that these patients and the adjustments needed were often identified at a late stage of the pre-diagnostic pathway. We believed this was impacting on the length of their cancer pathways, however without a way to identify these patients, we were unable to demonstrate this, and unable to proactively address their needs.

Our aim was to create a system to identify these patients, to assess if they experience a difference in meeting national cancer waiting times, and to be able to offer reasonable adjustments proactively.

## Method

- Collaborative working throughout the trust and with two lived experienced partners
- Created a digital flagging system for additional needs on our cancer registry system
- Continually improved our process for flagging patients – the earlier the better
- Introduced proactive support for these patients

## Results

We now have a digital flagging system that includes flags for 15 additional needs. This has provided quantifiable data that demonstrates an increase in the length of the cancer pathway for patients with additional needs against national cancer waiting times.

This flagging system has enabled processes to be implemented to improve patient experience:

- All patients with additional needs are now highlighted for weekly discussion at cancer patient tracking meetings
- Early support is now offered from our Learning Disability and Dementia specialist nursing teams
- Consistent reasonable adjustment offers are being developed

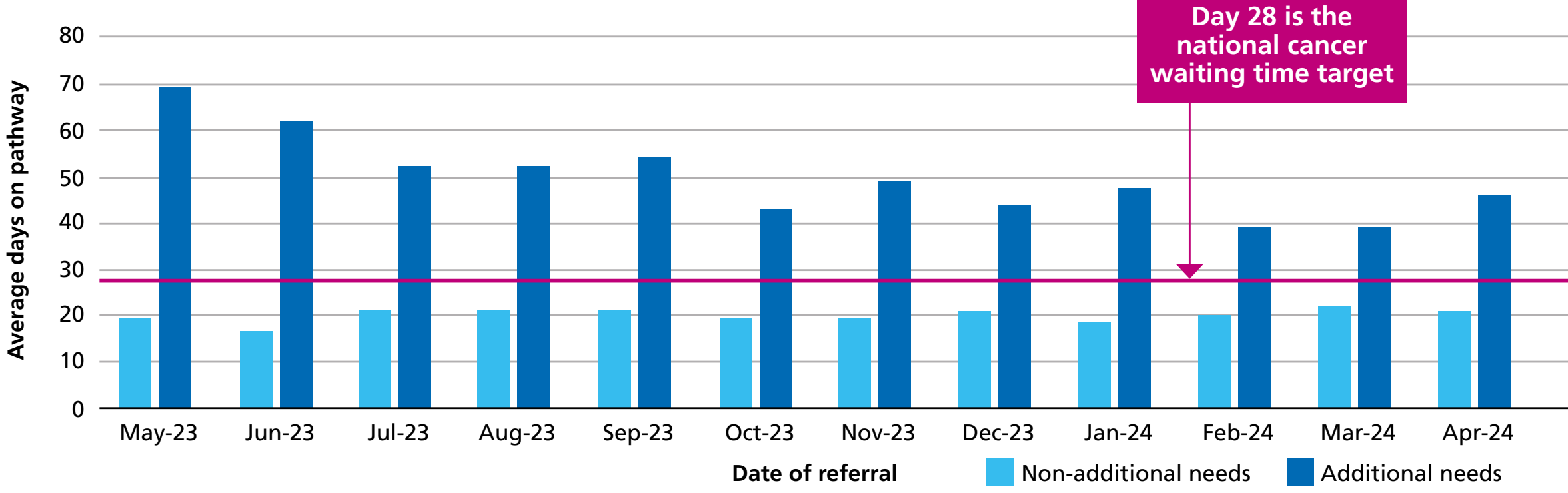
Since introducing these processes, a reduction in length of time on the pathway is demonstrated for these patients

Some of our additional needs flags

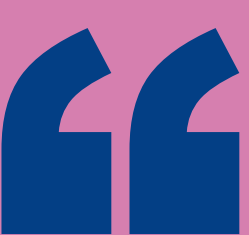
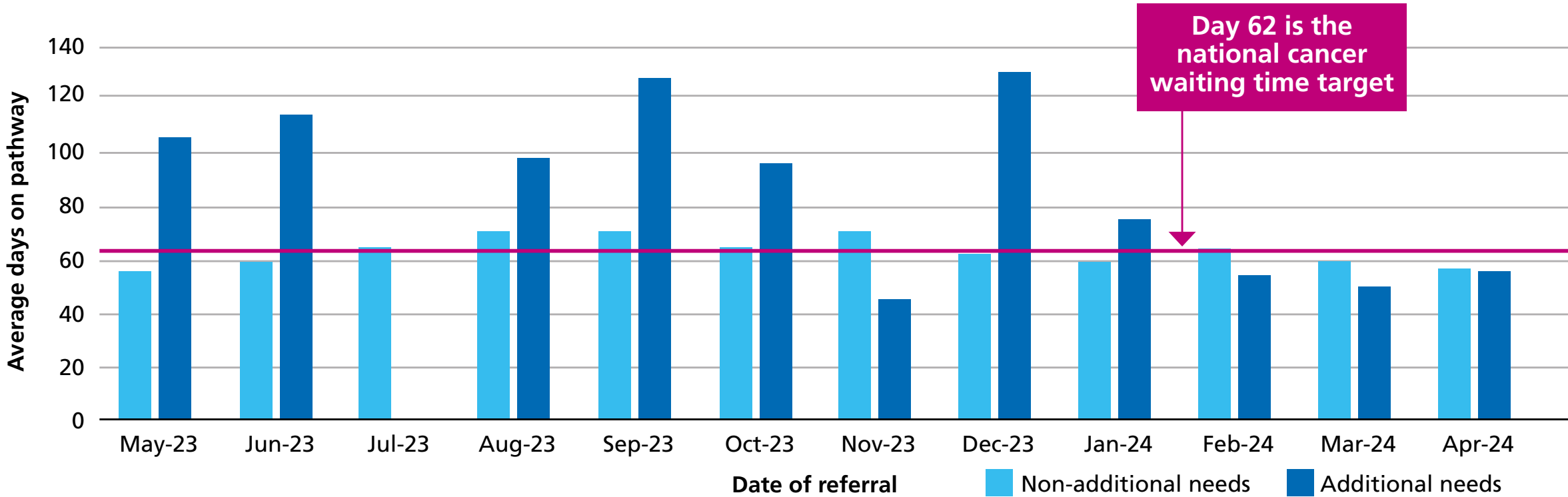
- Learning disability
- Dementia
- Autism
- ADHD
- Anxiety
- Lives in a care home
- Mental health conditions
- Patient has a carer
- Patient is a carer
- Requires a best interest meeting



Average number of days from referral to diagnosis or ruling out cancer



Average number of days from referral to treatment



*It would have been good if a learning disability nurse was at some of my appointments. I often didn't understand what the Doctors meant. Mum always had to explain things to me.*

*I always had to try to ring up to change my appointments to later on if they were early because I have carers in the morning.*







**Sherwood Forest Hospitals**  
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# Early identification of patients with additional needs on a cancer pathway

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# Background

Patients on a cancer pathway with pre-existing conditions or additional needs sometimes require adjustments to prevent unnecessary delay and improved experience

Patients with additional needs and the adjustments required were often being highlighted at a late stage of the pre-diagnostic pathway

Anecdotally, it was felt that these patients often had a prolonged pathway, but we could not quantify this

Once needs were identified, there was a lack of consistency with reasonable adjustments being offered and made



# Aim

*To create a system to identify patients with additional needs on the pre-diagnostic cancer pathway, to assess if they experience a difference in meeting national cancer waiting times, and to be able to offer reasonable adjustments proactively*



# Our Team

Cancer  
Registry  
System  
Developers

Macmillan  
Lead  
Cancer  
Nurse

Operation  
and  
Service  
managers

Dementia  
Specialist  
Nurse

Breast  
Cancer  
Clinical  
Nurse  
Specialist

Learning  
Disability  
Specialist  
Nurse

Cancer  
Pathway  
Coordinators

Appointment  
booking  
team  
manager

Lived  
experience  
partners-  
Kathryn  
and  
Christine

Macmillan  
Cancer  
information  
and support  
lead





Kathryn:

*"It would have been good if a learning disability nurse was at some of my appointments. I often didn't understand what the Doctors meant. Mum always had to explain things to me"*

*"I always had to try to ring up to change my appointments to later on if they were early because I have carers in the morning."*

## Our Lived Experience Partners



Christine (Kathryn's mum):

*"You could tell that when we went to appointments people didn't usually know that Kathryn had a learning disability, and they explained things to her in a way that she didn't understand."*



# What We Did

- ▶ Created a digital flagging system for additional needs on our cancer registry system
- ▶ Process mapped from referral to first appointment to continually improve how we can flag patients at the earliest stage
- ▶ Developed the flagging system to introduce new flags when different needs were highlighted
- ▶ Highlighted all patients with additional needs for weekly discussion at our cancer patient tracking meetings
- ▶ Introduce proactive support for these patients, such as early support from learning disability and dementia specialist nurses



# Our Stakeholders and how we have worked together





# Results

- ▶ We now have a digital flagging system that includes flags for 15 additional needs
- ▶ Some of our additional needs flags:

Learning disability

Lives in a care home

Dementia

Mental Health Conditions

Autism

Patient has a carer

ADHD

Patient is a carer

Anxiety

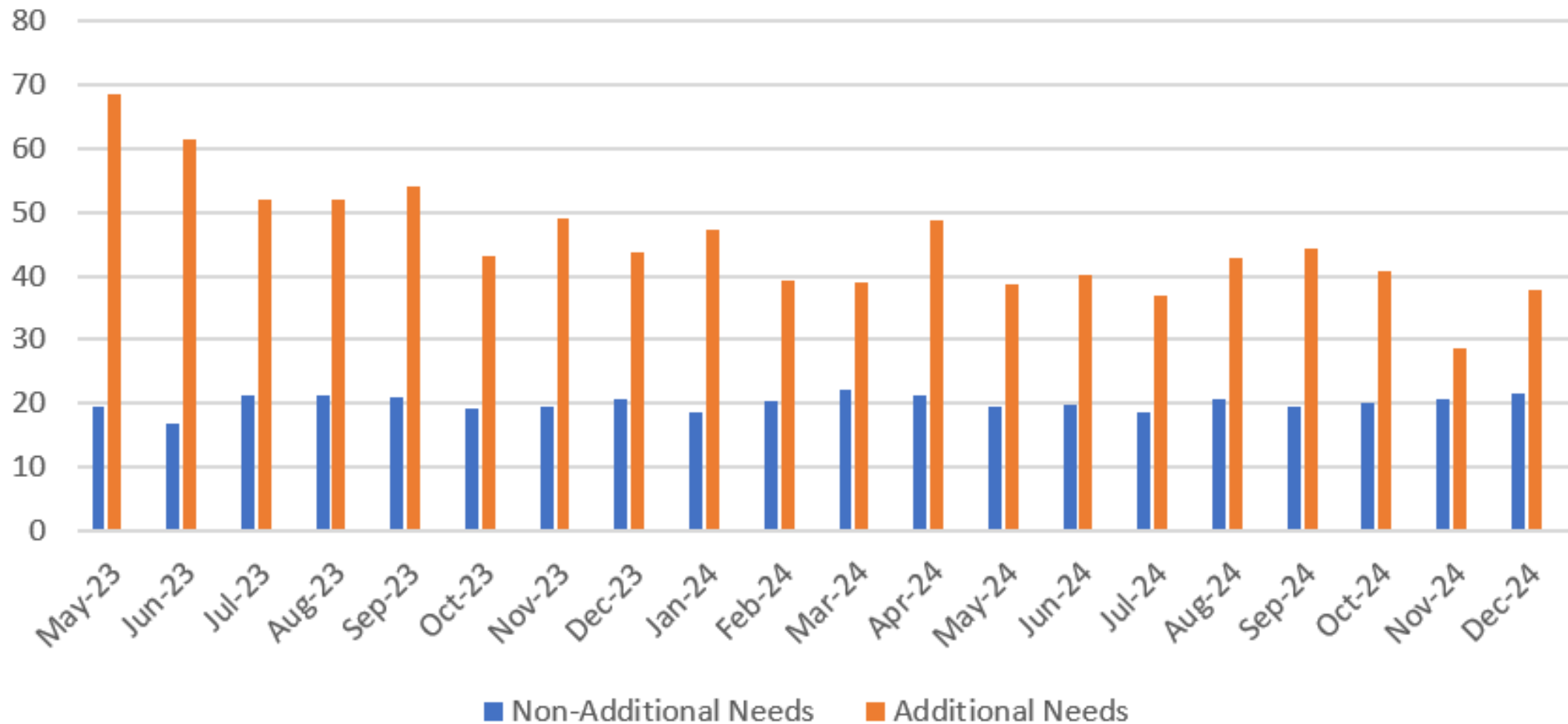
Requires a best interest meeting

- ▶ We now have quantifiable data to compare cancer pathway lengths for patients with and without additional needs



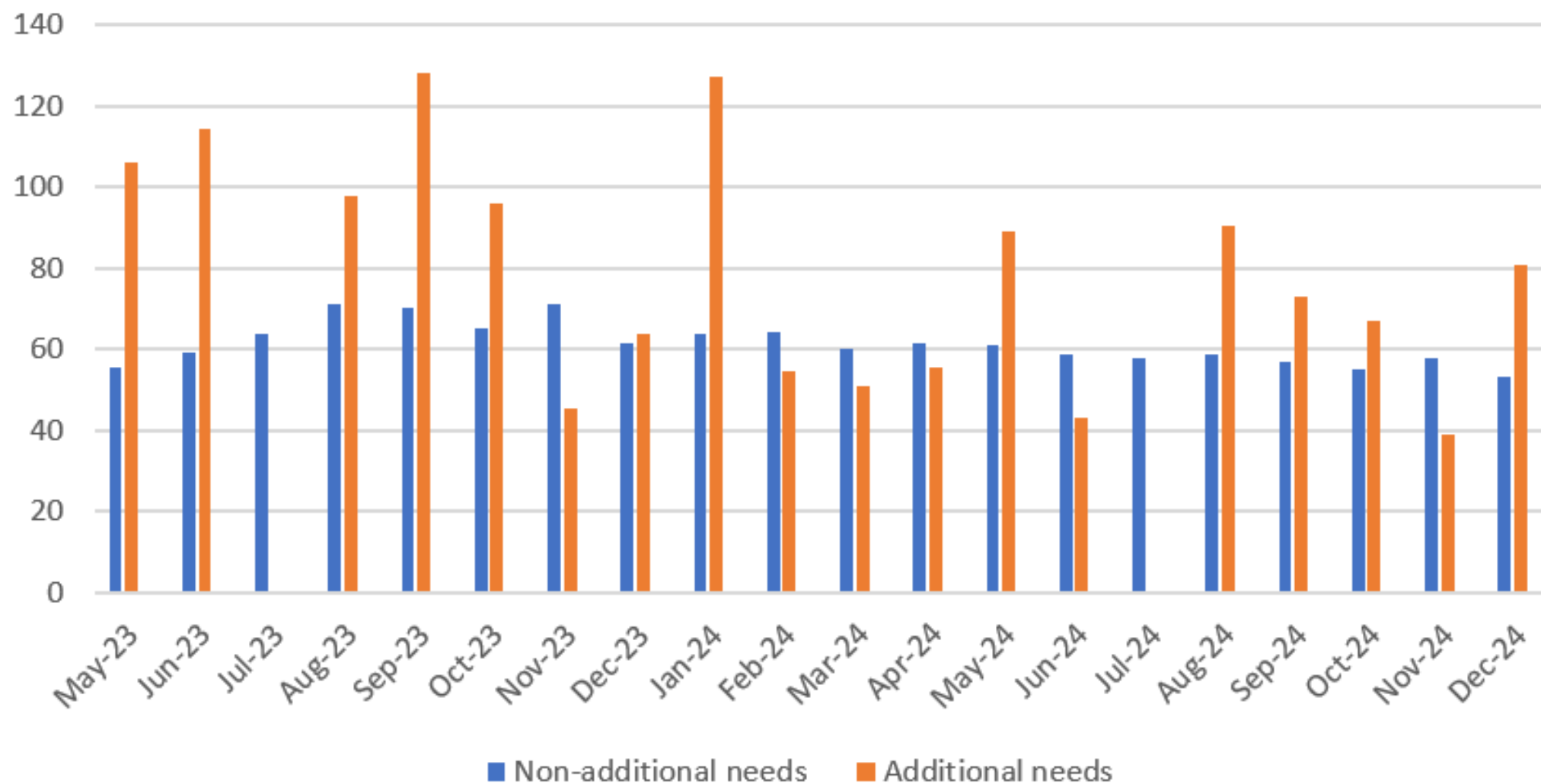


## Average number of days from referral to diagnosis or ruling out cancer





## Average number of days from referral to treatment





# What Next?

Now involving more specialist teams for early support such as Mental Health Nurse Specialist

Liaising with GPs to change referral forms to standardise additional needs section

Developing and establishing consistent reasonable adjustment offers

Routine phone call at beginning of pathway to explore any needs and support required

Resource packs being created for tumour sites to provide support to different groups of patients



# Thank you for listening!



## Any questions?

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