



‘Easy access’: an alternative to the ‘refer-assess-treat’ paradigm for supporting children and families to access speech and language therapy advice and support in the Early Years

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Today's presentation:

- Context for why we might want to organise our service delivery differently?
- Key examples of where this has led to easier access
- Focus on recent case study introducing community based, easy access walk-in sessions as an alternative to traditional referral processes

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System challenges

- Continual policy changes
- Structural changes in Local Authority and Health organisations
- Impact of the COVID pandemic
- Increased referrals and emerging evidence of increasing need in the population
- Increased waiting lists and waiting times
- Pressure to focus on 'specialist' inputs at the expense of early intervention and prevention systems that can enable access to specialist support where needed
- Over emphasis on waiting lists and inputs as key metrics for change
- Challenge of recruiting speech and language therapists

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System enablers

- Increased awareness of the importance of early language and communication skills and the impact on long term trajectories
- Supporting children and young people with speech, language and communication needs and their families is increasingly recognised as a priority for Local Authority Early Years, SEND, Schools and Settings, as well as Health systems
- There is increasing interest in understanding population need and building co-designed systems to address need with resource following need not historical patterns of delivery or demand



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2003 - 2023

Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs within integrated children's services

Position Paper
Marie Gascoigne
January 2006



The Bercow Report

A Review of Services for Children and Young People (0-19) with Speech, Language and Communication Needs

Speech, language and communication needs

Tools for commissioning better outcomes: introduction




Better Communication:

Shaping speech, language and communication services for children and young people




Implementing the SEND reforms

Joint commissioning for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs




COMMISSIONING FOR SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS (SLCN): USING THE EVIDENCE FROM THE BETTER COMMUNICATION RESEARCH PROGRAMME

MARIE GASCOIGNE



Talking About a Generation

CURRENT POLICY, EVIDENCE AND PRACTICE FOR SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION



MARIE GASCOIGNE AND IAN GROSS
BETTER COMMUNICATION CIC



Bercow: Ten Years On

An independent review of provision for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs in England.

Public Health England

Education Endowment Foundation

Early Language Development:
Needs, provision, and intervention for preschool children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds

A Report for the Education Endowment Foundation
October 2017

Law, J.
Charlton, J.
Dockrell, J.
Gascoigne, M.
McLean, C.
Theakston, A.

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Public Health England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Best start in speech, language and communication:

Guidance to support local commissioners and service leads



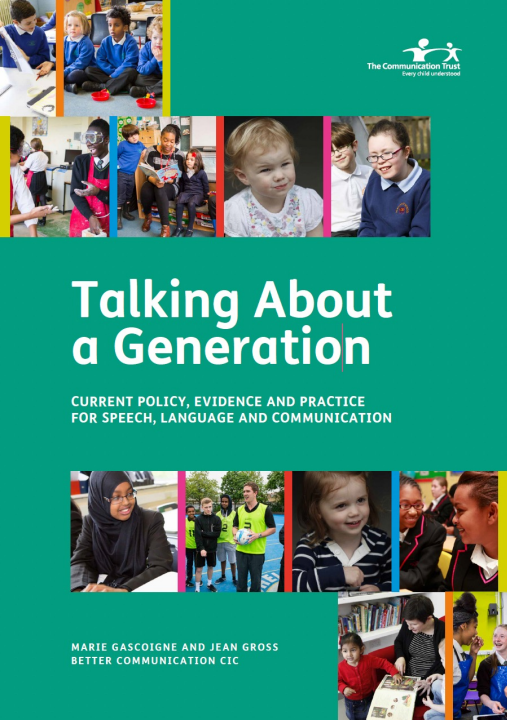
EQUITY FOR ALL: CHILDREN'S SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICES IN SCOTLAND

Marie Gascoigne

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December 2021

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https://speechandlanguage.org.uk/media/3215/talkingaboutageneration_report_online_update.pdf

Moss, G and Washbrook, E (2016) The Gender Gap in Language and literacy Development. Bristol: Uni of Bristol



Save the Children (2016) Early Language development and children's primary school attainment in English and maths: new research findings. London: Save the Children

Law, J. et al (2010) Modelling developmental language difficulties from school entry into adulthood. Journal of speech, language and hearing research, 52, 1401-1416

Best start in speech, language and communication:

Guidance to support local commissioners and service leads

THE BALANCED SYSTEM® HIGH LEVEL OUTCOMES FOR SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION NEEDS



FAMILY SUPPORT	ENVIRONMENT	WORKFORCE	IDENTIFICATION	INTERVENTION
FS3. Specialist - Parents and carers of children with specialist SLCN receive specific specialist support to ensure confidence in their role as a key communication partner for their child and to increase their understanding of the specific communication challenges associated with their child's needs. Young people with SLCN are enabled to be active participants decisions about their support.	EE3. Specialist - Places where children and young people with specialist and complex SLCN spend their time for learning and leisure are communication friendly. The necessary adaptations are in place to maximise access in addition to the enhancements expected at a universal and targeted levels.	WW3. Specialist - Knowledge skills and expertise are developed in identified members of the wider workforce in order to ensure that, working with specialist support, there are staff that are confident and competent to support the delivery of specialist interventions including individual and small group work, support parents, adapt the environment and identify children who need specialist support.	ID3. Specialist - Children with specialist SLCN have their needs identified effectively and quickly. This includes multidisciplinary assessment where appropriate.	IN3. Specialist - Children and young people needing specialist intervention for their SLCN receive appropriate and timely provision in the most functionally appropriate context for their needs. Progress measures will include activity, participation and well-being goals in addition to goals relating to their core SLC impairment.
FS2. Targeted - Parents and carers of children with identified speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) access additional specific support to ensure confidence in their role as a key communication partner and educational support for their child. Families and young people with SLCN are supported to make choices and access services.	EE2. Targeted - Places where children and young people with identified SLCN spend their time for learning and leisure are communication friendly. Appropriate additional enhancements are made that enable children and young people with identified SLCN to more easily understand and to express themselves.	WW2. Targeted - The wider workforce is supported to develop specific knowledge and skills to support children and young people with identified SLCN. Setting and school staff are confident and competent to deliver targeted interventions, support parents, adapt the environment and identify children who need additional support.	ID2. Targeted - Efficient and accessible processes are in place that support the identification of more specific SLCN. The wider workforce, setting and school staff are supported to be confident and competent to identify children and young people who may require targeted support and/or referral to specialist services for their SLCN.	IN2. Targeted - Children and young people benefitting from targeted interventions will have access to evidence based targeted interventions to develop core speech, language and communication skills delivered in the most appropriate functional context. These might include 1:1 and / or small group interventions that are typically designed by specialist practitioners and delivered by those with appropriate training.
FS1. Universal - All parents and carers are supported with information and resources to encourage their role as effective primary communicative partners for their children. Families and young people are able to make proactive choices with respect to their child's or own needs.	EE1. Universal - Places where children and young people spend their time for learning and leisure are communication friendly. Environments have appropriate enhancements that make it easier for all children and young people to understand and express themselves.	WW1. Universal - The wider workforce is supported to have a good basic understanding of speech, language and communication including supportive strategies. Setting and school staff are confident in their role as facilitators of communication. The wider workforce has access to appropriate training around speech, language and communication.	ID1. Universal - Early identification of children and young people whose speech, language and communication needs may require targeted or specialist support is as efficient and accessible as possible. Preidentification information and advice is available in a given area, school or setting.	IN1. Universal - Homes, settings and schools are supported to develop the language and communication skills of all children and young people through language enrichment and supportive activities.

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Recommends ‘whole system’ approaches to building local early services for families and signposts to the Balanced System® Outcomes Framework as an effective model



Creating the conditions for robust early language development for all – Part 1: Evidence informed child language surveillance in the early years

Reilly and McKean (2023)

Creating the conditions for robust early language development for all – Part 2: Evidence informed public health framework for child language in the early years

McKean and Reilly (2023)

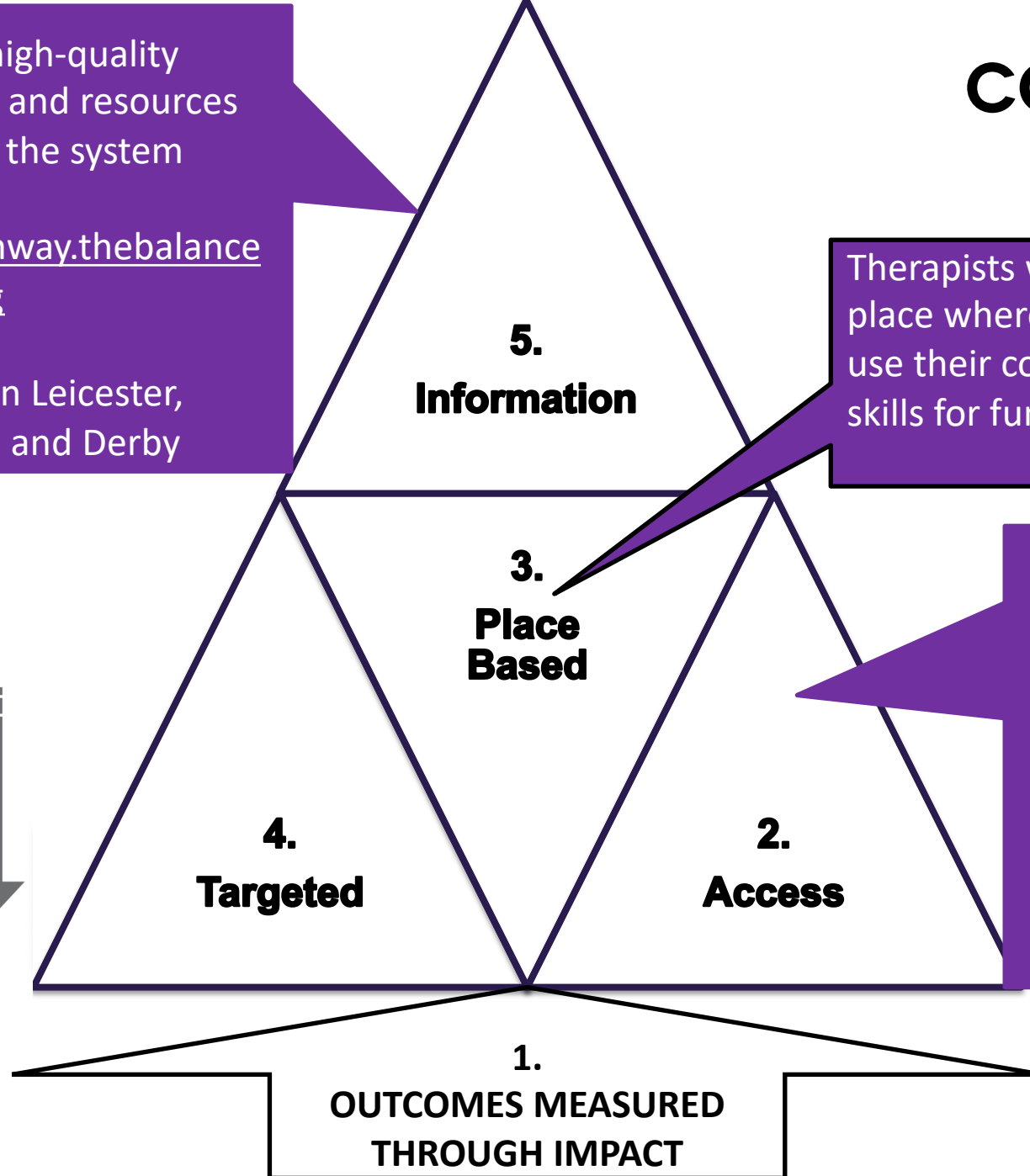
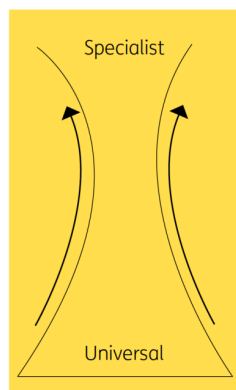


Accessible high-quality
information and resources
from across the system
Eg
[https://pathway.thebalance
dsystem.org](https://pathway.thebalancesystem.org)

Developed in Leicester,
Nottingham and Derby

CORE DELIVERY PRINCIPLES

Figure two: The vortex effect – the implication of
underinvestment in targeted provision



Therapists working at
place where CYP need to
use their communication
skills for functional impact

Moving away from the
'refer – assess – treat'
paradigm towards easy
access to the most
immediate support even
if more specific
intervention may also be
indicated

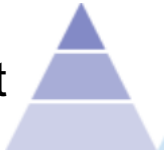


DELIVERING THE BALANCED SYSTEM® PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

Delivery Principle 2: Access

Simple and easy access to the right **information**, **assessment** and **support** for children, young people and their families

Family Support



- Early identification – meaning not only early in life but early in the emergence of need at any age
- Easy access – simplest route to support at the lowest level even if further progression through the system required

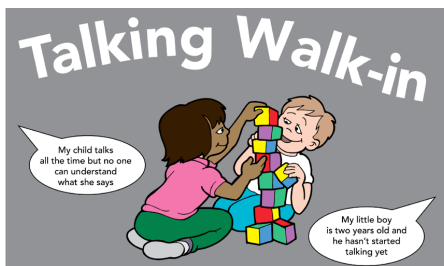
Identification



- Appropriate assessment - enquiry based process, not standard 'set', with the option to signpost to appropriate support that may be part of the whole even if further assessment becomes indicated



2003 - Children's Integrated SLT Service for Hackney and the City



Do you have questions or concerns about your pre-school child's speech, language or communication development?

Come along to a local "Talking Walk-In", where your child can enjoy play in a small group and you can chat to one of our speech and language therapists.

This is the first point of contact for the Early Years Speech and Language Therapy Service for children under 5 in Hackney.

(For children in Hackney Schools please contact your school SENCO)

Everyone is welcome. No appointment necessary. Please bring your child's Red Book

For more information please contact the Speech and Language Therapy Hotline on Tel: 0207 683 4587 E-mail: slinfo@chpct.nhs.uk

City and Hackney the learning trust
Teaching Primary Care Trust
Children's Integrated Speech and Language Therapy Service for Hackney and the City

2011- Worcestershire

Is your child
0 – 5 years old?

Are you worried about
your child's talking or
understanding?

Would you like some advice
from your local speech and
language therapist?



'Drop in' to a Talking Walk-In
Chestnut Children's Centre
Every 2nd and 4th Monday of the month
From 10-12 noon

Your chance to talk to a speech and language therapist about any concerns you may have. No appointment necessary. Check with your Children's Centre for more information and further details.

2021 - Forth Valley



Children's Speech and
Language Therapy

**Changes to our
service.**



**EQUITY FOR ALL: CHILDREN'S SPEECH AND LANGUAGE
THERAPY SERVICES IN SCOTLAND**
CASE STUDY:
**NHS FORTH VALLEY
SPEECH, LANGUAGE &
COMMUNICATION NEEDS**
SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION
SERVICE ANALYSIS, DELIVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

2022 - Lancashire



2023 - East Kent, Dorset, Birmingham, Stockport



Ready **STEADY** Chat

The NEW easy access pathway to speech and language therapy for children who have not started school, will commence from the 17 April 2023.

You will be able to bring your child along to one of our regular NHS:

Speech Therapy **E**arly **A**dvice **D**rop **I**n's

The Drop-In session is a pre-bookable session for parents/carers who have concerns about their child's speech, language and/or communication development. You will have the opportunity to discuss your concerns with a Speech and Language Therapist.

If you feel your child may struggle being in a group with other children, or become distressed in new or unfamiliar places then we offer a virtual session instead.

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Description

What is a Talking Walk-in?

A Talking Walk-in is an initial assessment session run by the speech and language therapy service.

These assessment sessions are run from Children's Centres all over the borough.

If you have concerns about your child's speech or language development you can call the SLT team on 020 7683 4262 and book into one of these sessions.

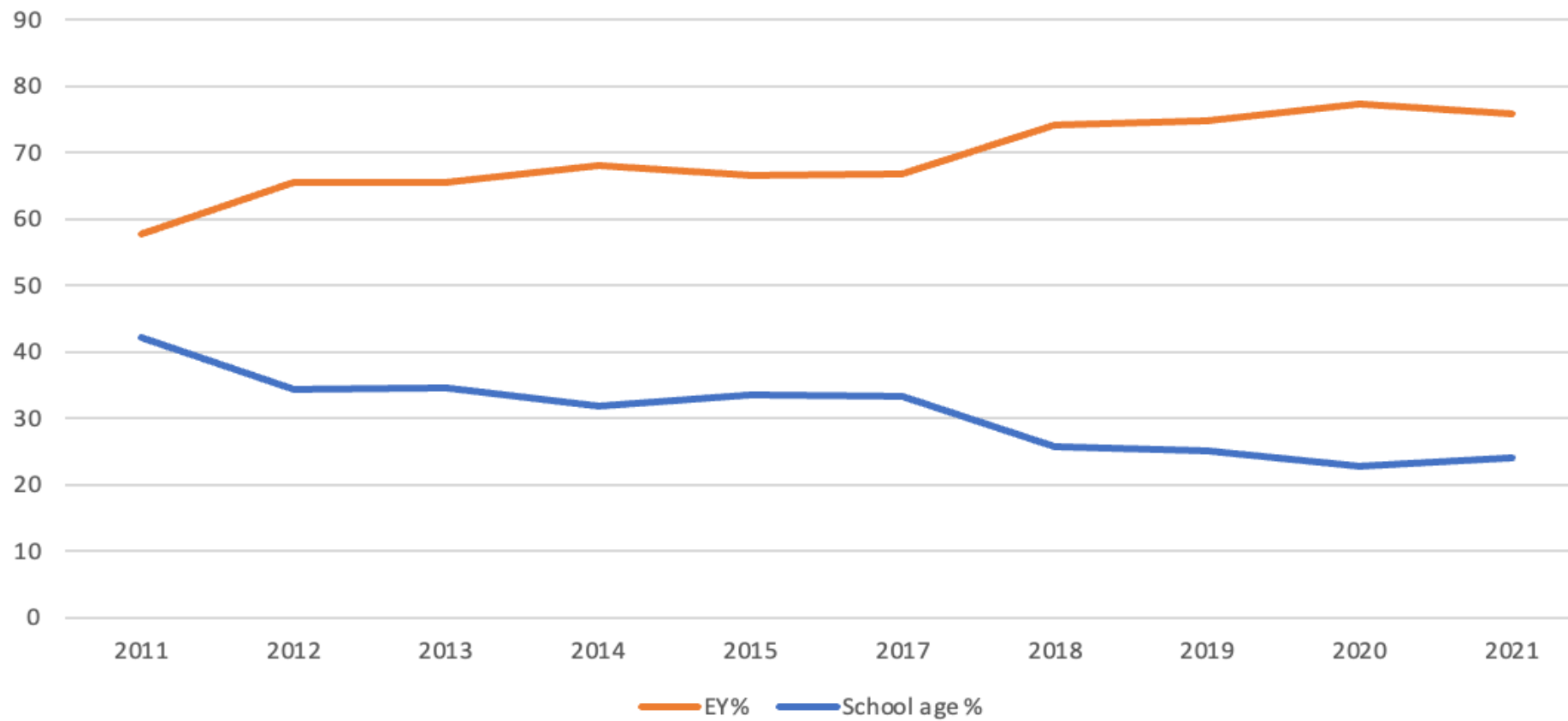
It is an informal play based session for children who are under 5 years old.

It is the way that most families in Hackney first access speech and language therapy.

BE THE FIRST TO WRITE A REVIEW
PRINT
ADD TO MY SHORTLIST
SMS Social
Mobile number
SEND SMS



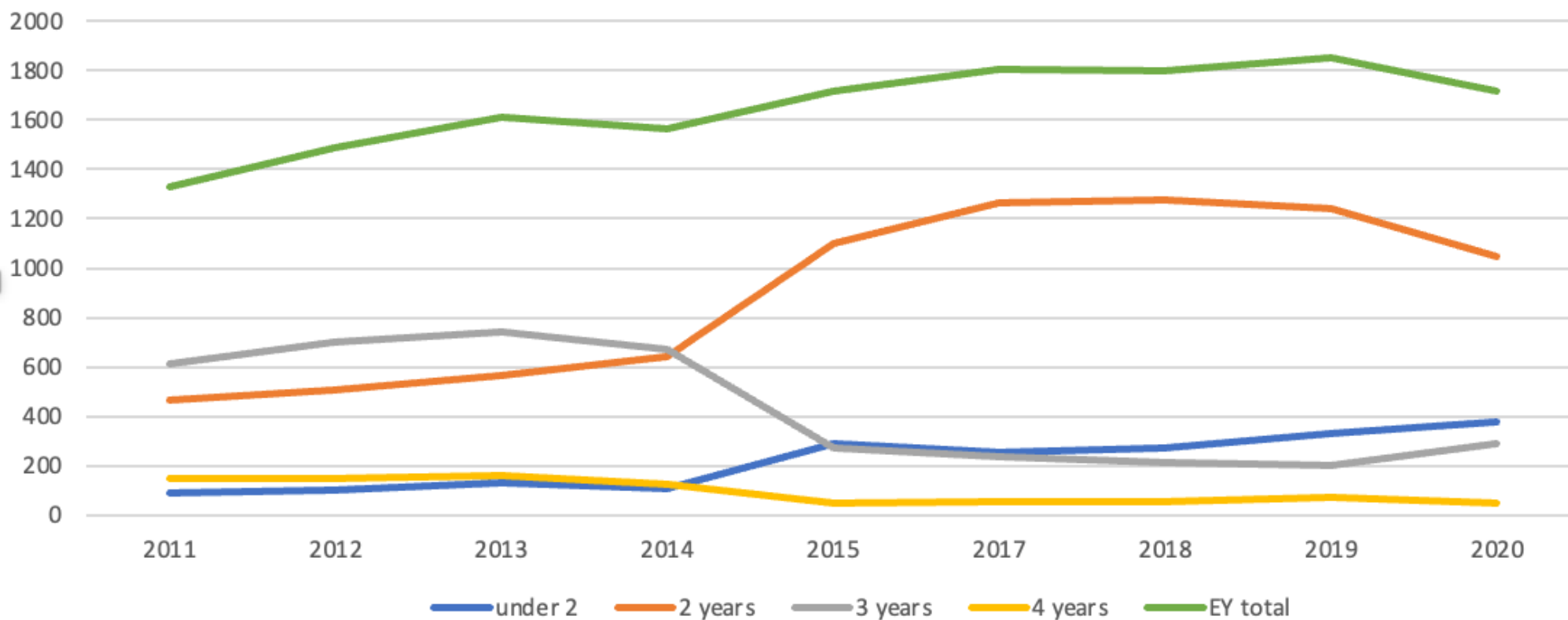
Showing the shift in early access towards the EY relative to school age



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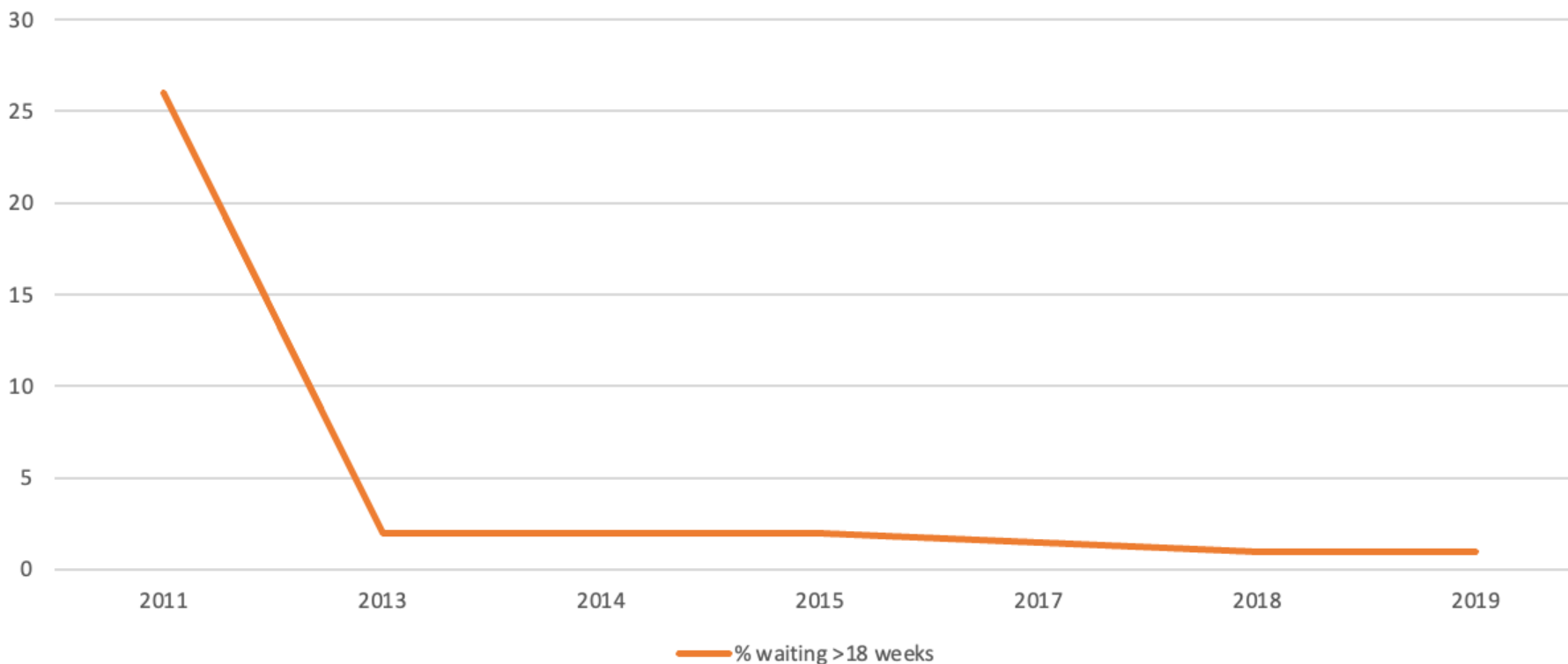
Showing Early Years Identification trends over 10 years



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Change in % waiting over 18 weeks over time



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Key messages from Worcestershire

- Service transformation using the Balanced System® had significant impact on access to provision for both Early Years and School Age
- The impact of the Talking Walk-ins in the Early Years was evidenced in both the reduction in longest wait and percentage waiting over 18 weeks and the maintenance of this position over subsequent years
- The percentage of children accessing support for the first time in the early years has also increased relative to school age

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Implementing the Balanced System® in Lancashire

Easy Access, Family Support and Early Identification

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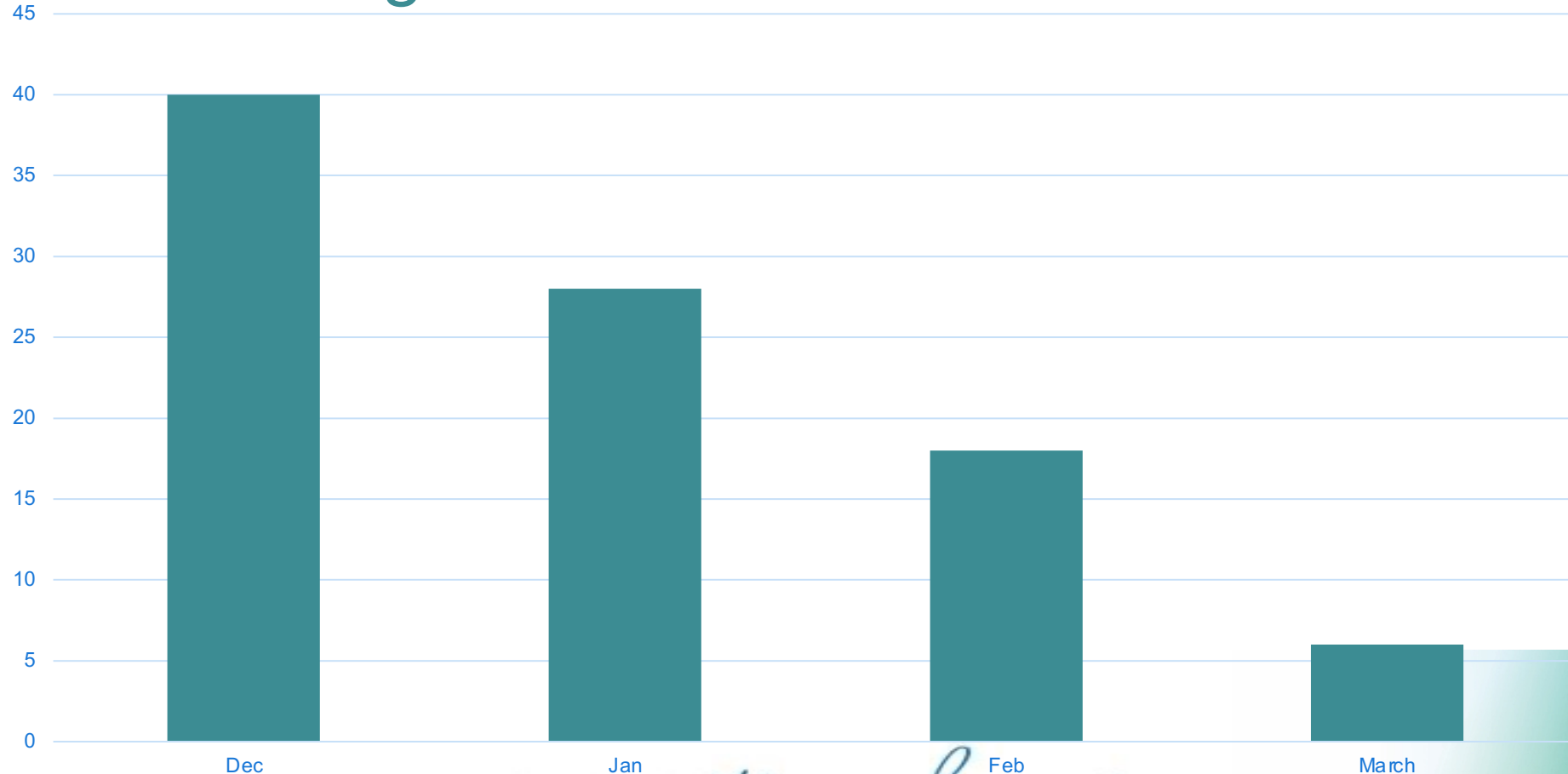


- Multi-agency drop in, with involvement and attendance from colleagues from the Local Authority, health visiting as well as the speech and language therapy team.
- Public Health leads key to driving change in the system
- Launched drop ins in December 22
- First site was identified through the Balanced System® needs analysis suggesting up 55% of children 0-4 may have or be vulnerable for SLCN
- Example of provision following need
- The sessions were held weekly
- Initially, 12-14 children from the waiting list were invited weekly as well as the morning having an open drop in element.

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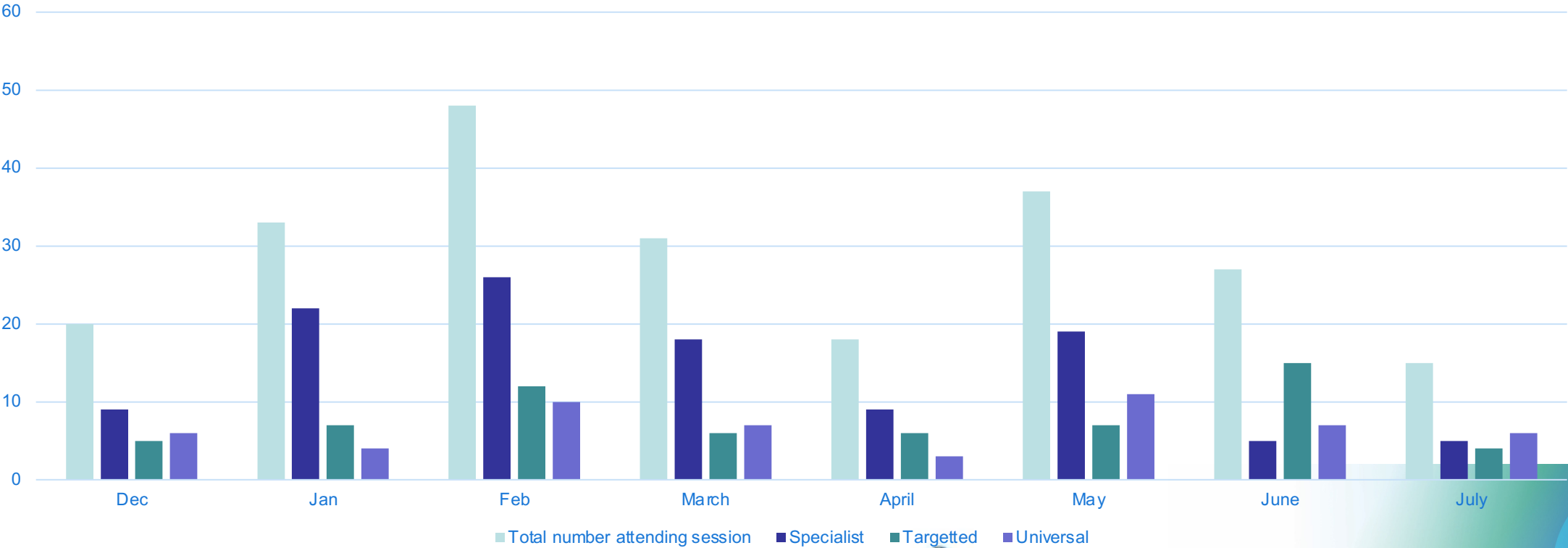
Length of wait for children in weeks



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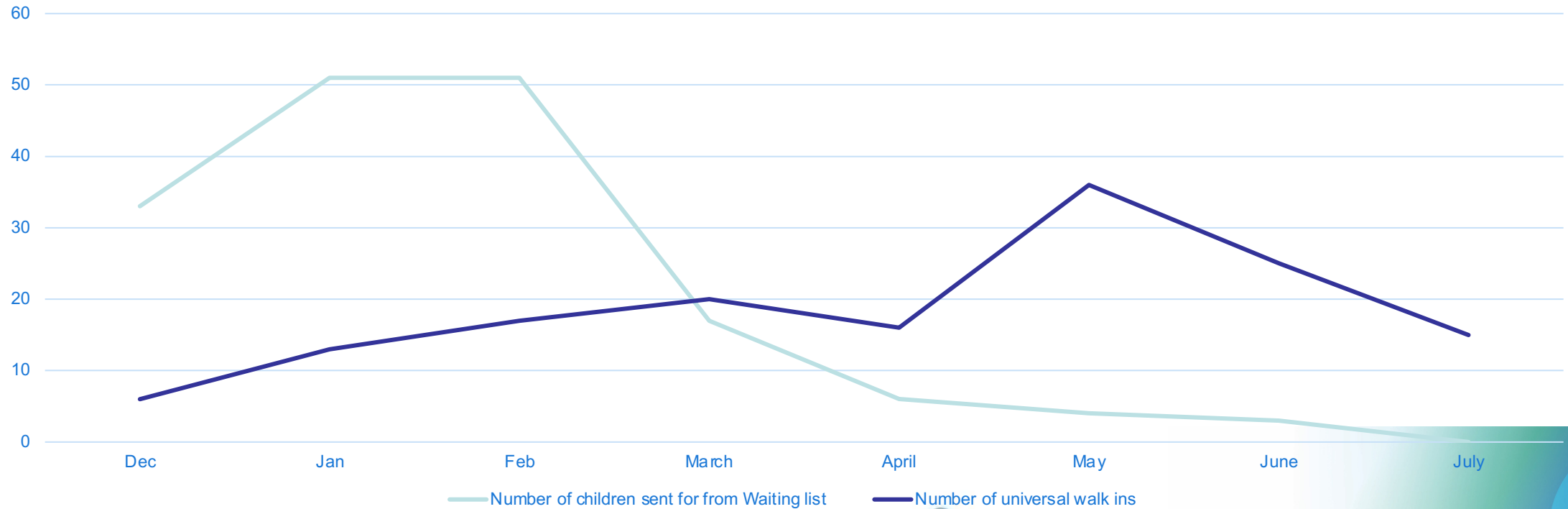
Recommended provision following walk in



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Proportion of waiting list children and open access drop in families over time



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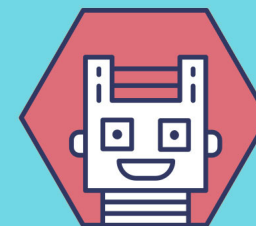
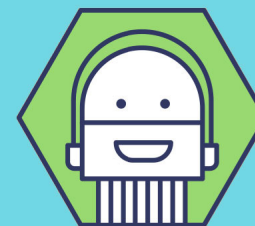
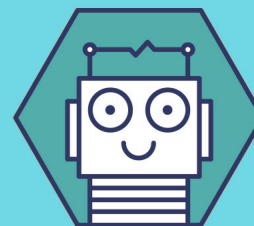
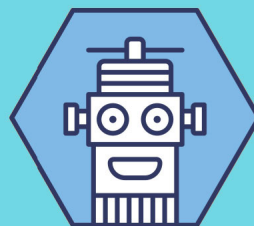
Outcomes

- We measured parental evaluations which looked at their satisfaction around advice, setting, ease of access as well as asking them to identify what they had been advised to do differently with their children. Parental satisfaction was very high
- Attendance from children on the waiting list was at 55%.
- Waiting lists for pre school children in this area were at 0 weeks from Feb end. There is now no waiting list.
- Parents went away with advice from the Speech and Language Therapist as well as holistic support from the Child and Family Wellbeing service around other support available. This might include info on free nursery placements, support around domestic violence etc.
- Children received an SLT assessment, further appointments with the SLT if indicated, a free book and info about local libraries and sessions in the community to support Speech and Language development

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**THE[®]
BALANCED
SYSTEM**



Lancashire - Drop In Evaluation

209 responses

Lancashire - Drop In Evaluation

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How easy has it been to get advice about your child's speech and language today?

Very hard



(0%)



(0%)



2 (1%)



12 (6%)



195 (93%)

Very easy

Graph data

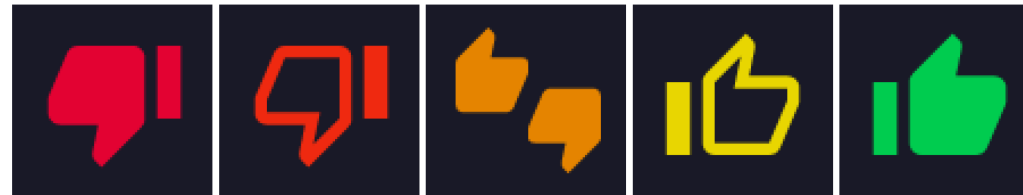


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How helpful was the advice you have been given today?

Not very helpful



(0%)

(0%)

1 (0%)

12 (6%)

196 (94%)

Very helpful

Graph data

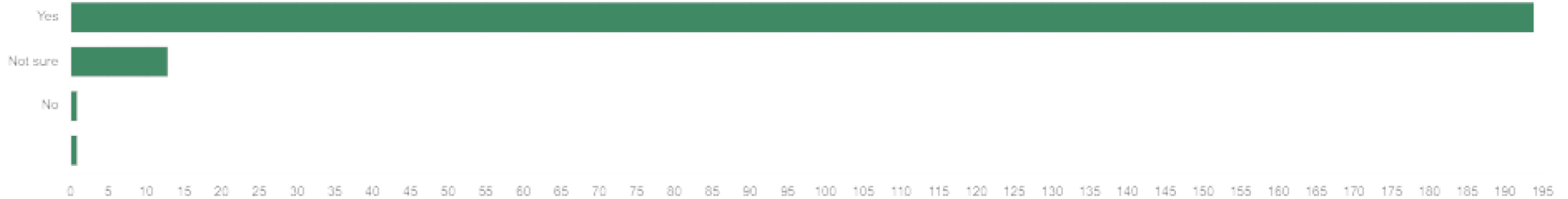


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Do you feel confident that the advice you have been given today will help your child's speech and language to improve?

Graph data



Do you understand the next steps for your child?





What will you try with your child after the session today to support their communication?

The most frequent theme found in these user responses involved various strategies for enhancing communication. This includes "speaking with him", making him "make choices", "mirroring communication", "playing on his level", "using more gestures", and "repeating correct sounds". These strategies were mentioned numerous times throughout the responses indicating a primary focus on consistent interactive communication towards improving children's speech and language

Core themes

- Use strategies, advice and resources
- Seek opportunities for group activities and intervention
- Implement tools and techniques
- Encouraging and praising

Several users mentioned their plans to "attend group sessions" or "chat groups". These citizens are keen to use community resources, indicating satisfaction with groups as a valuable tool to aid their child's communication development.

Core Themes from 209 qualitative responses analysed through the Balanced System® Prove It! Tool using AI

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What could we do to make the Walk-In sessions better? Any other comments?

The general sentiment expressed by users is overwhelmingly positive, indicating they're pleased with the current state of the service.

Phrases such as "Nothing, it was brilliant", "Everything was fair", "Fantastic and Friendly", "Nothing, thank you", "Everything was explained fully", "A great idea" and other affirmations were frequent, suggesting strong approval of the service. Additionally, the helpful and welcoming nature of the staff was extolled by multiple users.

The service is seen as being very helpful, useful, polite and welcoming, with one user describing it as an 'excellent service'. It is being used for advice/support, as per the comments, "Really glad we came", "I feel I got the best advice", "Lots of helpful information and lovely to speak to someone who understands".

In summary, the feedback indicates that users are broadly very satisfied with the service as it stands, with minimal suggestions for improvement or specific enhancements. This suggests the service is well-regarded and effectively meets the needs of its users.

Core Themes from 209 qualitative responses
analysed through the
Balanced System® Prove It! Tool using AI

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- Better Communication CIC is a not-for-profit organisation established in 2011 to support outcomes-focused change for children and young people

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