Oldham Care Organisation
Northern Care Alliance
NHS Foundation Trust

Signalong with A&E

Quality Improvement Project
(Use of signing in Paediatric A&E)

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Signalong

- Sign supported communication system
  - Used by children in and around Oldham
  - Key-word sign language
  - Derived from British Sign Language (BSL)

- Supports speech and language development
  - Meeting Milestones

- Introduction to paediatric A&E:
  - Allow voices to be heard
  - Improve overall communication

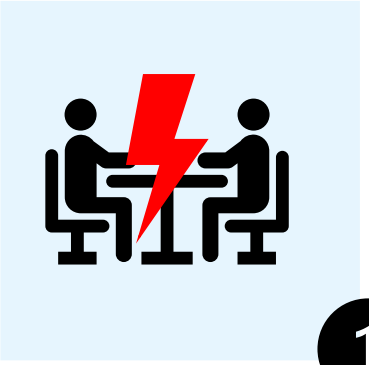
Signalong
the communication charity
charity no: 1039788

Improve

Access

Care

Background:



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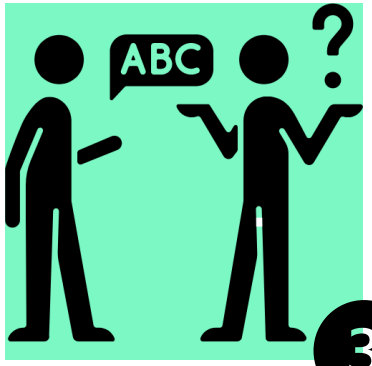

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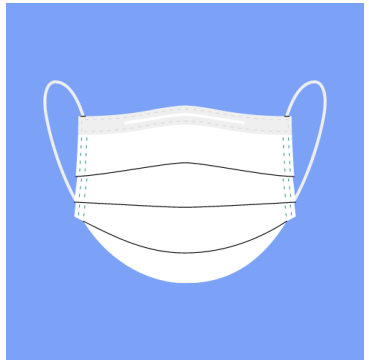

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6

MENCAP Children's Report (December 2020):

- Only 20% of people who replied reported that hospital staff make enough reasonable adjustments to ensure their child had a positive experience in hospital.
- Communication repeatedly mentioned by patients as important with augmented communication, including signing, specifically mentioned
- "They expressed a need for training in how to communicate with children with learning disabilities that they don't currently receive." (7)

Method:

2nd February

Vocab survey sent out to staff to collect frequently used vocab to guide the project

12th April

Send **Pre-intervention Survey** out to staff electronically

19th April

Launch project with 'Signalong day'

Sign board put up in paeds A&E department

Month of May

Photographs of staff members signing added to the EM Oldham website every 2 weeks with each sign board change

11th May

Hospital film team in A&E filming staff members sign

17th June

Film of staff signing sent out uploaded to the website

23rd & 24th June

Drop-in teaching session

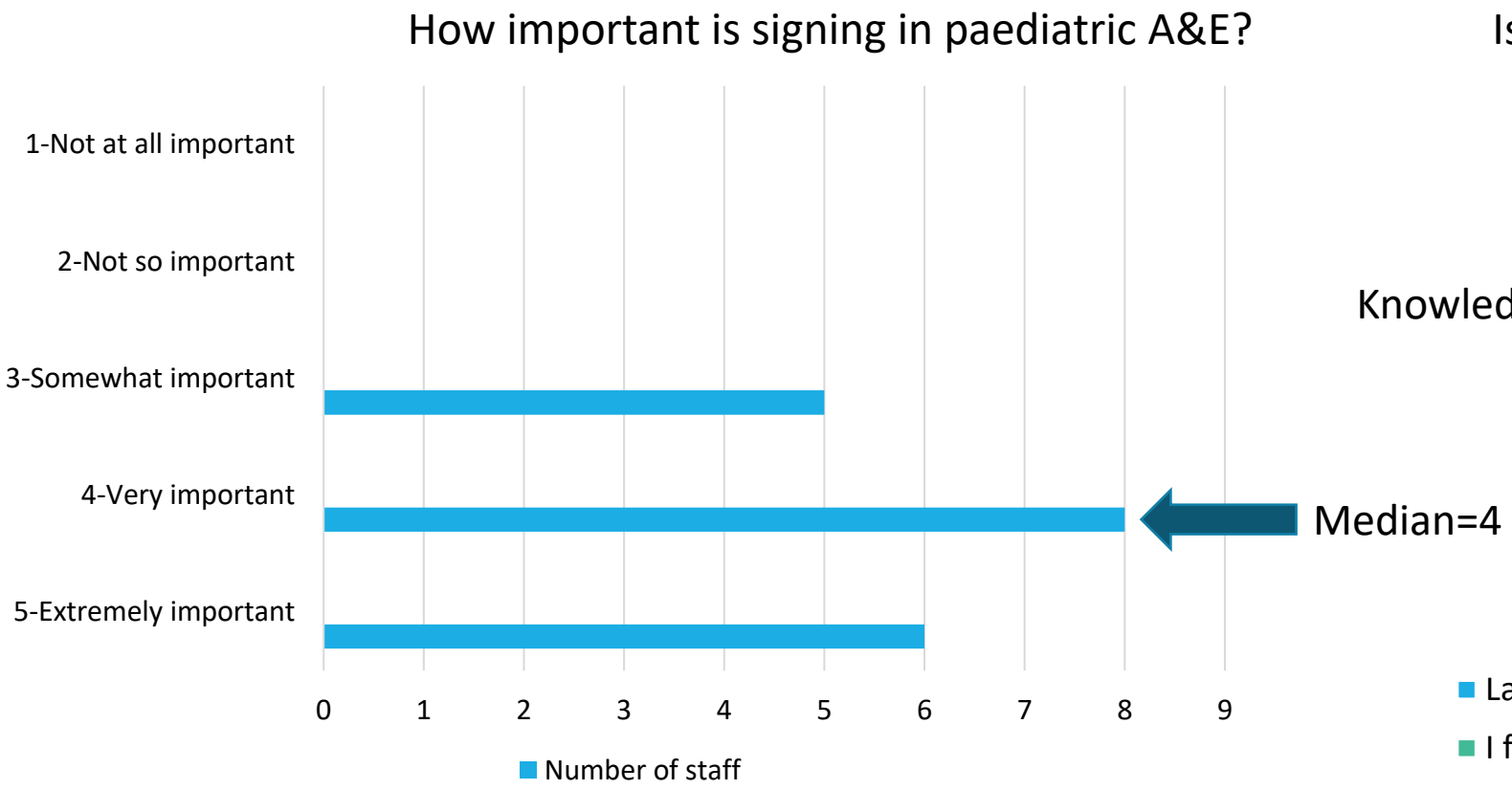
5th July

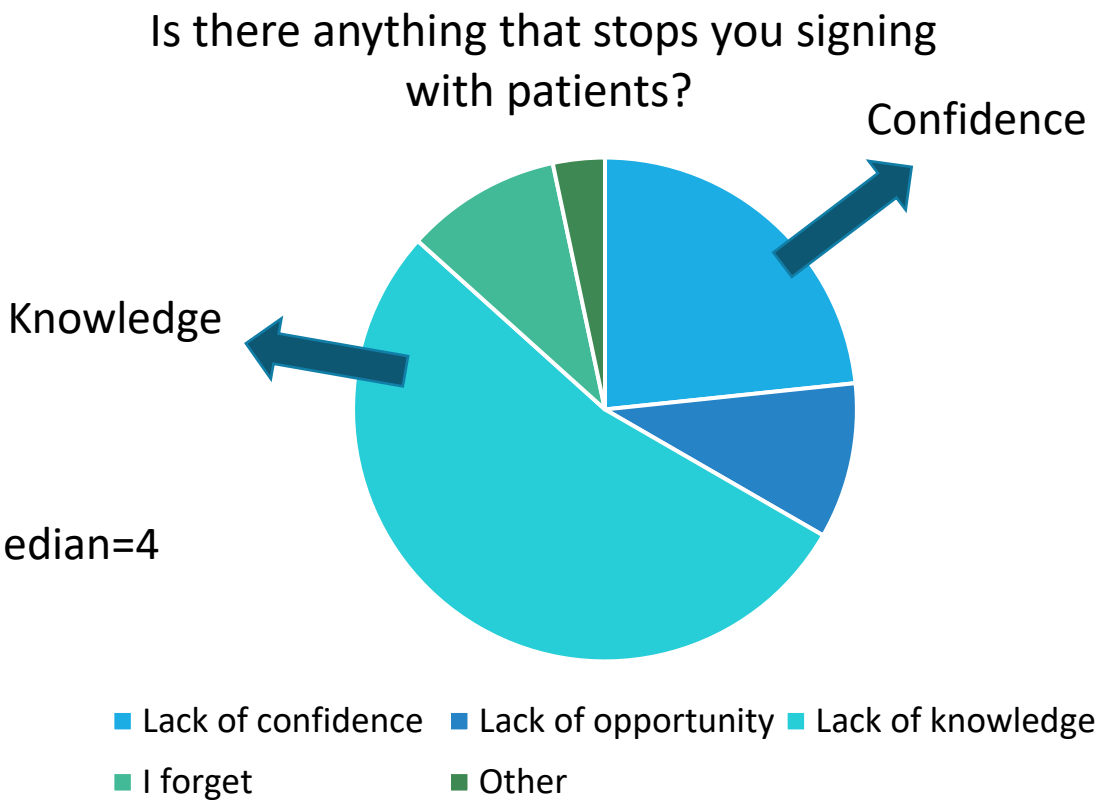
Post-intervention Survey

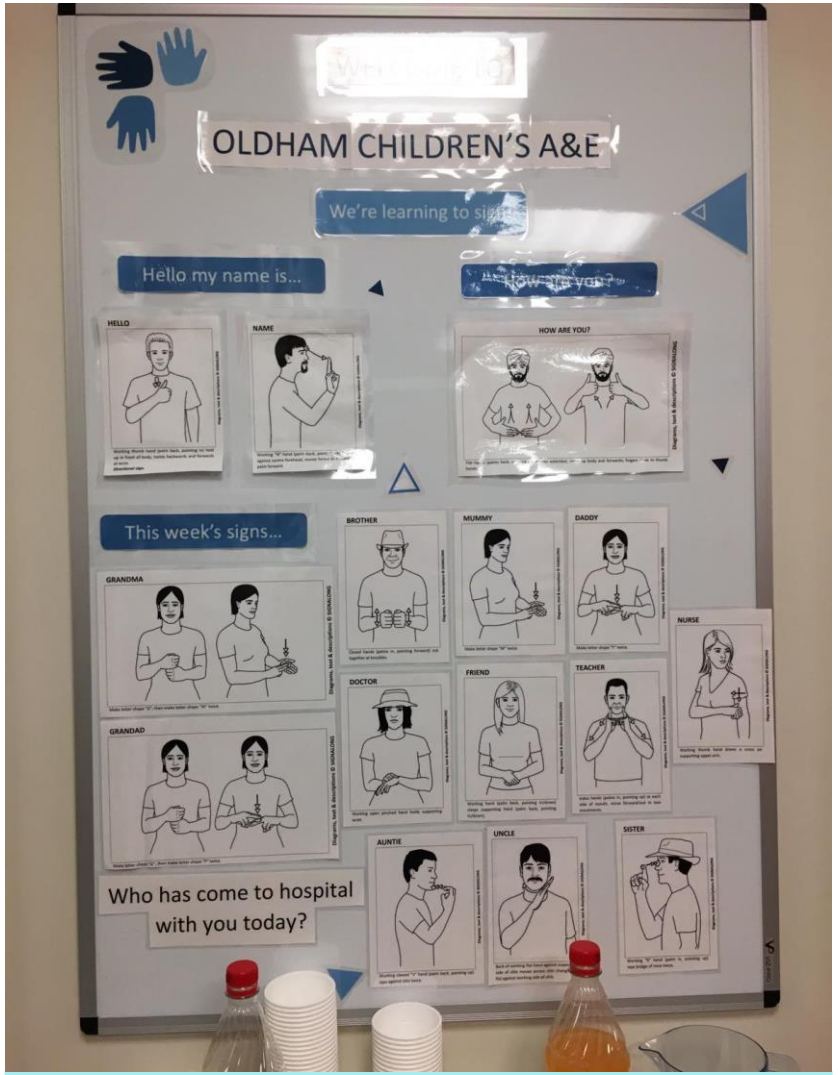
To staff

Contact made with local primary schools for feedback

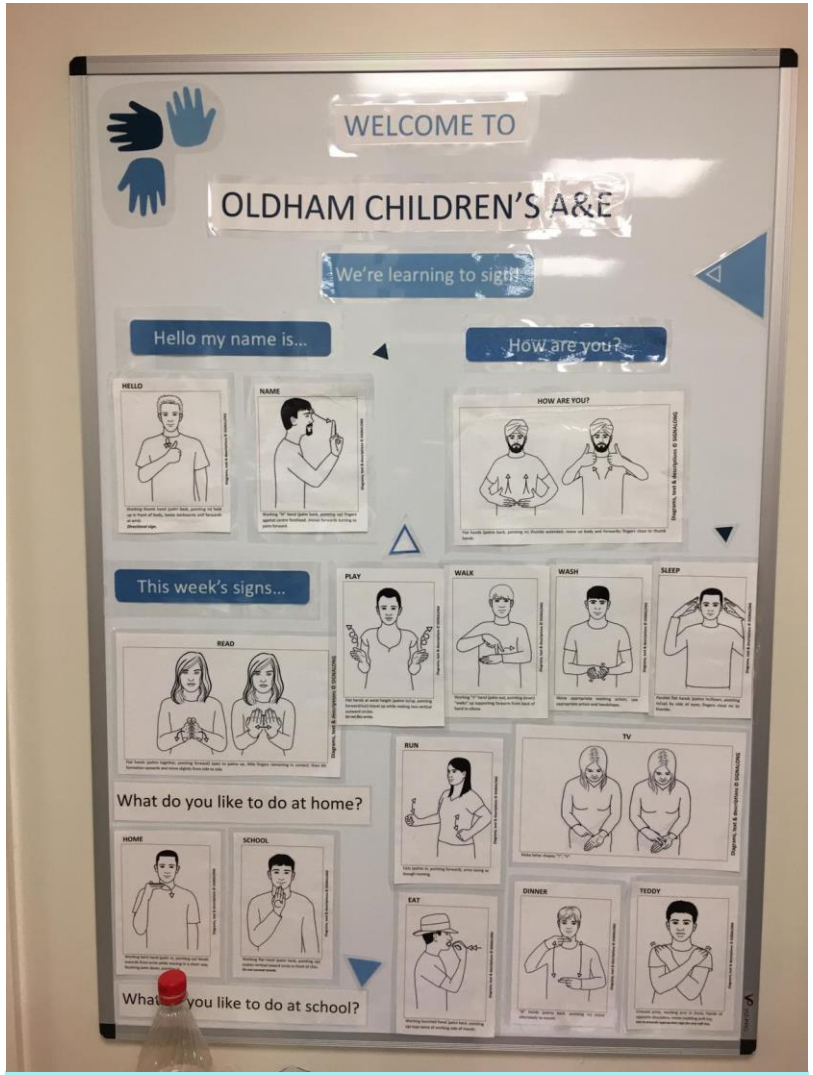
Pre-project:


How important is signing in paediatric A&E?
1-Not at all important
2-Not so important
3-Somewhat important
4-Very important
5-Extremely important
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
Number of staff
Median=4


Is there anything that stops you signing with patients?
Confidence
Knowledge
Lack of confidence
Lack of opportunity
Lack of knowledge
I forget
Other



People



Activities

Things in A&E

Signing library: https://www.emoldham.com/signalong

Signing video:

Results: survey data

Aim 1: To improve the percentage of staff who are able to introduce their name and role in Signalong sign language in 3 months.

5% → 80%

Aim 2: To improve staff overall confidence levels in using 53 Signalong signs over 3 months.

5-Extremely confident

4-Very confident

3-Somewhat confident

2-Not so confident

1-Not at all confident

Aim 3: For all staff working in paediatric A&E to know how to sign at least 20 of 53 staff selected phrases and vocab over a 3 month period.

$\frac{3.1}{53}$ → $\frac{14.3}{53}$

Staff qualitative feedback:

Online sign library

"Helpful to have all the signs in one place to practice outside of work."

"Helpful refresher of commonly used signs! Acted as prompt to practice the signs of the week whenever passing."

Signing video

"A helpful summary! Also feel the video highlighted that staff throughout the department were involved and enthusiastic about learning signing and creating a signing culture in ED."

Signing board

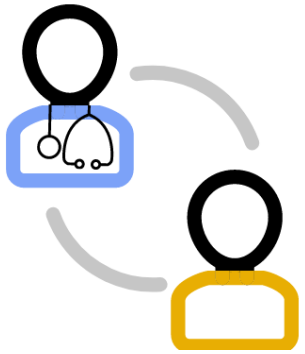
"The letters over Paeds High care. Helps me with remembering the letters when I need to remember"

"Absolutely loved this educational development"

"I liked that there was access to resources both in the department and online. I feel that the project has created the beginning of a signing culture in ED and there were plenty of opportunities to practice with colleagues and learn together"

"Real enthusiasm and a variety of ways to engage - teaching sessions/online videos and pics/the board etc. Meant people could engage when and how they had time."

“An elderly gentleman and his daughter both used signing to communicate as well as lip reading and both were very, very touched that I could do a basic introduction and the odd sign (e.g. for X-ray). They felt that I had made an effort to communicate that they weren’t used to seeing and it really helped patient/doctor relationship and trust.”



“I was asked to sit with a teenager who was very distressed as he was in pain. He was autistic and unable to say a lot of words. I was told he could use some signs and I began to communicate with him using sign. I was able to ask him where the pain was, ask him if he wanted medicine and explain that we had to wait for a doctor. He seemed to settle down a little. He had to be transferred to another hospital and I was able to tell him using sign that we were going in an ambulance and communicate with him on the way to the other hospital to make sure he was ok.”

“I took a small child to have an Xray. I used the preparation file to explain what was going to happen and in the back of the file it has the sign for Xray. He was able to copy me then show his mum the sign for Xray. When we got back to A&E I asked if he could show the play specialist the sign for Xray and he did.”

One of the domestic staff said, “I look forward to seeing what the next sign will be, I’ve been practicing”.

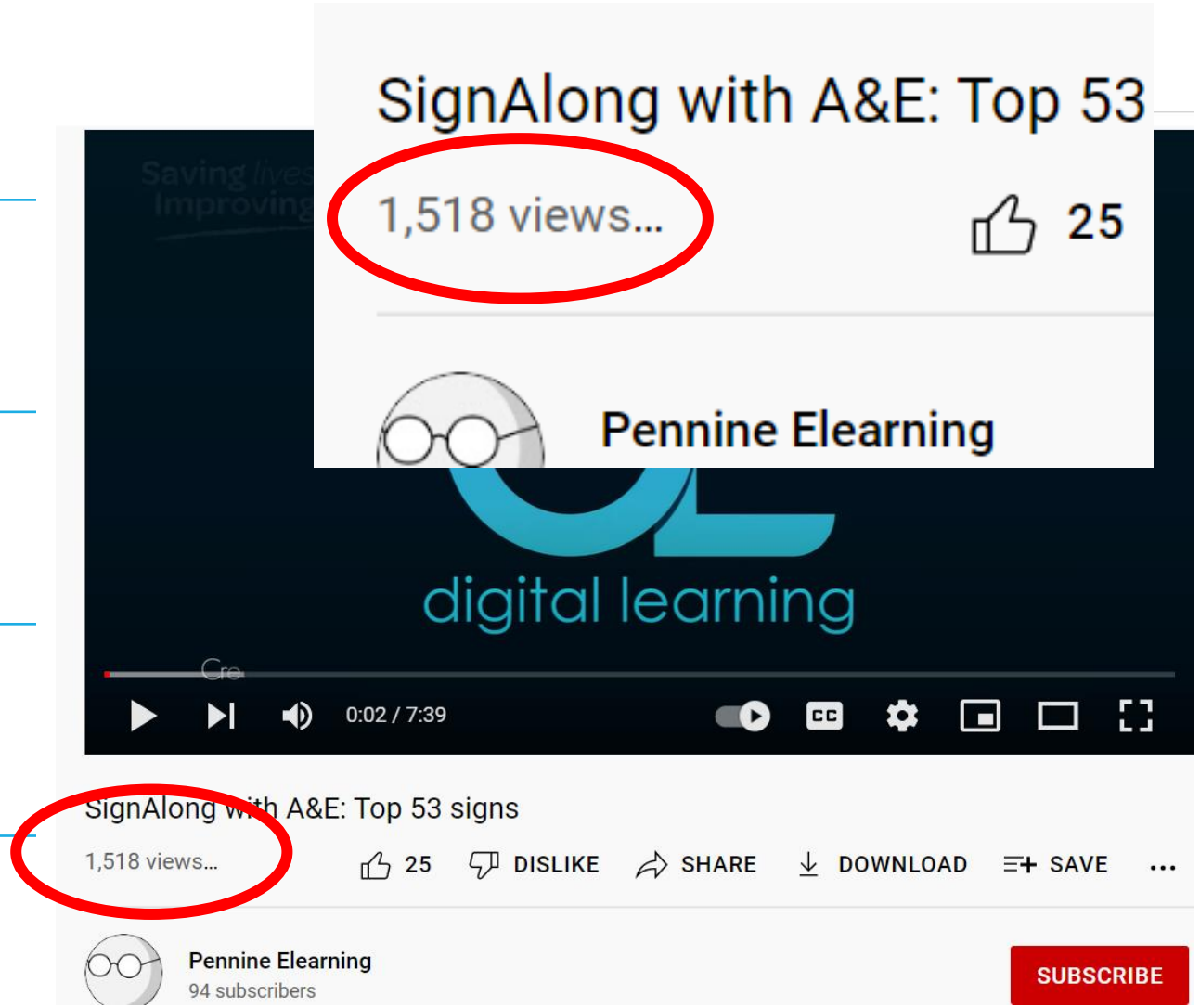
Limitations:

Relatively small numbers of data

Potential for un-matched pre and post-intervention feedback

Potential bias of staff filling in survey most interested and therefore most likely to have engaged

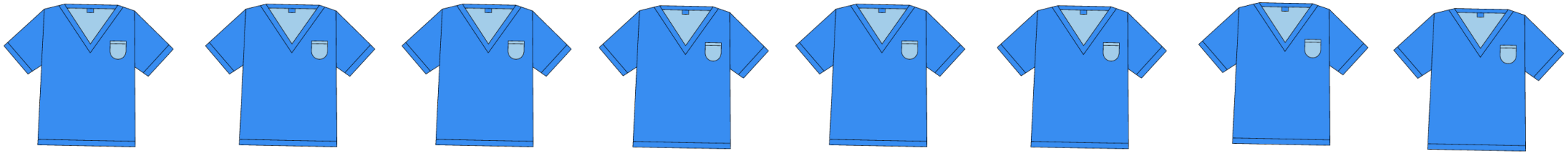
Patient data collection

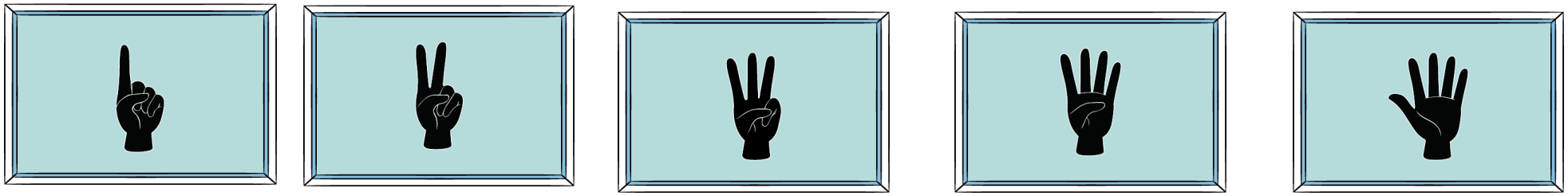


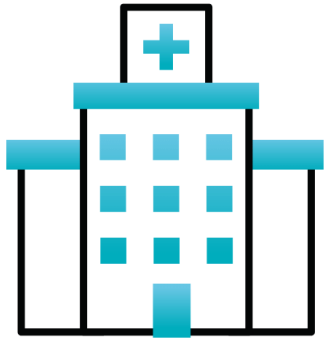
Recommendations:

1. Reduce the number of signs to 20
2. Introduce ‘sign of the week’
3. Make further departmental resources based on staff feedback e.g. flip cards
4. Introduce signing to daily departmental teaching
5. Instigate ‘Signing team’ to support sustainability
6. Offer CPD certified signing courses to staff
7. Roll-out change to other paediatric departments

Today:







Conclusion:

- Survey data:
  - Increased percentage of staff members who can introduce their name and job role using signing
  - Increase in staff confidence levels and knowledge of signs, the two main limiting factors to staff members signing
- Multi-disciplinary staff team involvement
- Organic spread beyond the original aim
- Small change that makes a big difference to patients
- Sustained departmental change
- Staff well-being enhanced

With thanks to the Film Team and Patient Experience Team for all their help and support.

And to ALL the staff in A&E for their enthusiasm and engagement!

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