



Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Increasing Uptake of Antenatal Education

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Introduction

Supporting families in the first 1001 days of a baby’s life is a key approach in improving the long term health outcomes of children and young people. As a team we considered the wide range of services that support families at this important time, to identify where quality needed to be improved and there was a suitable opportunity to do so.

Uptake of antenatal education was identified because there was already an evidence-based established in Blackpool, uptake remained low after the Covid-19 pandemic, and there was an opportunity to do something different through the newly established national Family Hub programme.

Key members of the team were identified based on their experience in working to support children and young people and their families and carers, and/or experience in tackling health inequalities.

Aim

Using a systems change approach we will increase uptake of Baby Steps antenatal education for mothers booked in at the Blackpool North Family Hub from 12.1% to 50% by June 2023

Initial Assessment

Our initial assessment of the baseline data showed that uptake of antenatal education was 12.1%. This was the percentage of live births (i.e. the number of babies born) where the mother (and sometimes birth partner too) completed the Baby Steps antenatal education programme.

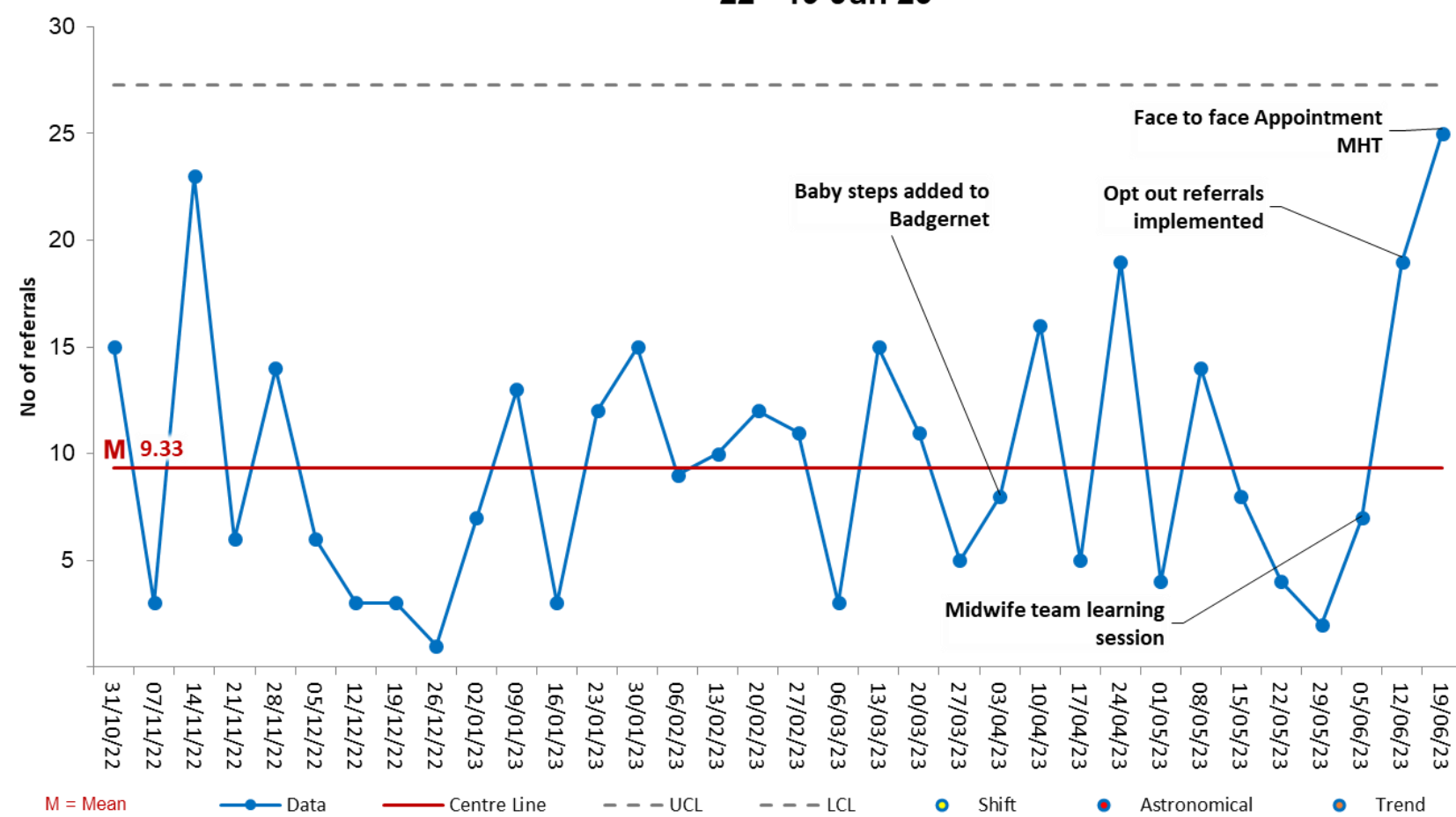
In addition to this we also reviewed the availability of the Baby Steps programme. In doing this we found that with the existing capacity in the service the highest uptake that could be reached was 50%, before services would need to put additional courses on (i.e. there was not enough provision for every pregnant woman and their birth partner to attend Baby Steps).

Change Ideas

- Change of process and electronic system for referring women to antenatal education. This was made an "opt-out" in Badgernet.
- Provided the right environment at Blackpool North Family Hub by setting up a clinical room.
- Ensured the views of people using the service and people working in it were considered through empathy interviews and questionnaires.
- Established multi-agency quality improvement approach.

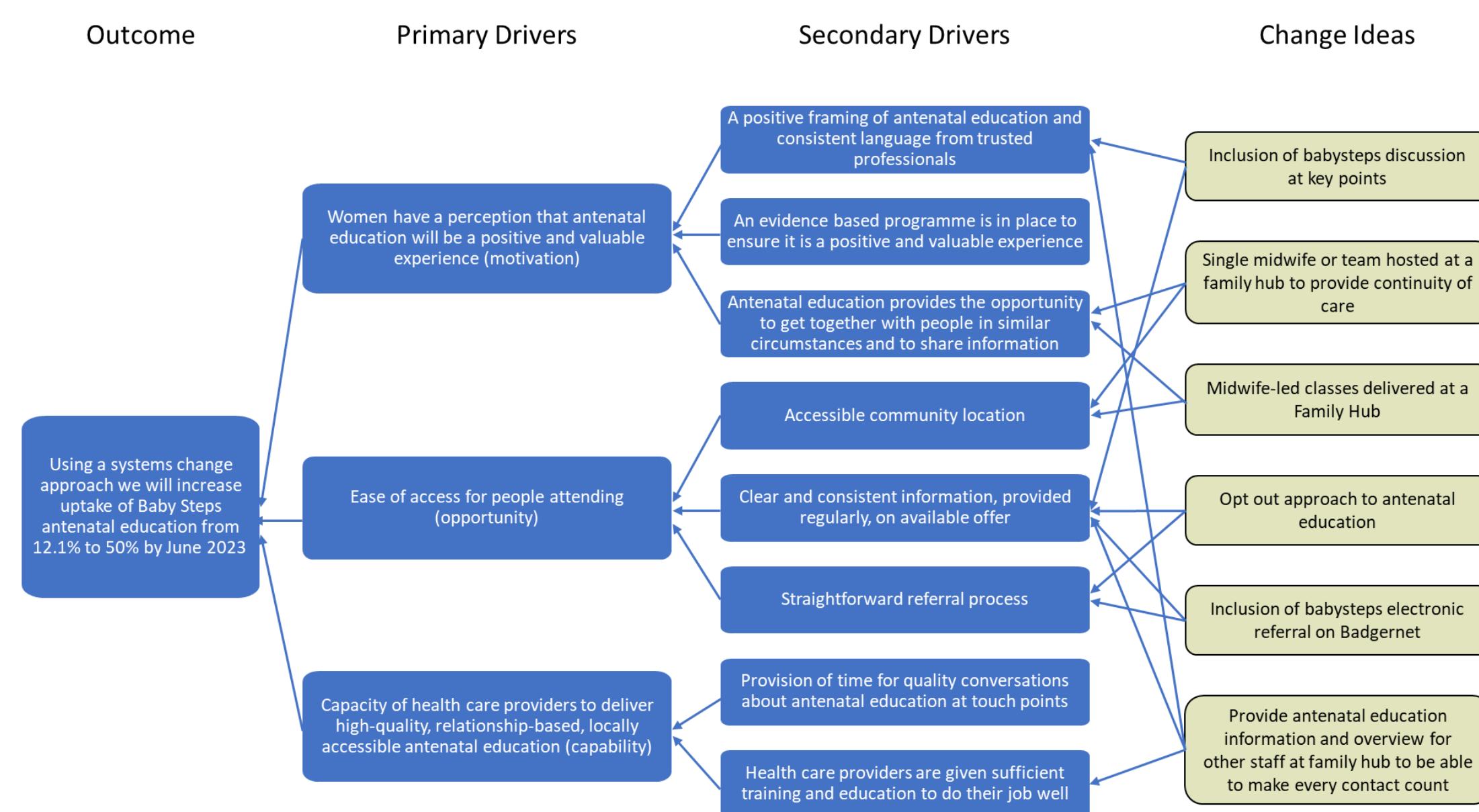
Results

Chart to show the number of baby step referrals, per week between 31 Oct 22 - 19 Jun 23



This data shows the number of weekly referrals received by the antenatal education team, the aim is to increase referrals which will improve the uptake of antenatal classes. This is actual referrals, not the proportion of pregnant women referred. We are exploring if the lower number of referrals are a result of a lower number of pregnant women being identified. The efficacy of the opt out referral process will be the tested using a PDSA cycle.

Driver Diagram



Parent Feedback

17 empathy interviews were carried out between February and March 2023. The stories from the empathy interviews were used to develop change ideas and influence their testing and implementation. Here are some things we heard from parents who took part in empathy interviews:

Workforce Feedback

People who work in health and care services associated with antenatal education were asked to complete an online survey about antenatal education. People who responded included people who work in the Family Hub and the midwife team. This feedback was used to identify change ideas.

Lessons Learned

We are part way through the project and still learning. In light of progress, one key lesson is to be ambitious but realistic – change takes time! We have also learned that:

- It is important to be resilient and tenacious
- Having conversations (not “engaging”) with services users and delivery teams about what you are doing needs to start earlier and be ongoing.
- Testing and retesting is a key part of quality improvement. Things do not always work out how you expect (see our data to the left!).

Sustainability and Spread

It is early in our project to consider sustainability and spread. We are still working on the change ideas that will increase the uptake of antenatal education. Once we understand the right combination and level of change required we will look at how this could be tested and implemented in the other Family Hubs in Blackpool.

Acknowledgements

The project team would like to thank Emma Bartlam, Patient Engagement Officer, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals, for conducting empathy interviews for the project.