



# Improving Early Language Development: Using Quality Improvement Methodology and Communication Strategies to Support Children\* in Early Learning and Childcare settings (ELCCs) in SIMD 1 and 2.

\*3-4 year olds attending ELCCs located in SIMD 1 and 2 who are not meeting expected speech, language and communication (SLC) milestones but not requiring clinical intervention.

**Aim:** By February 2025 children identified as having below expected levels of speech, language and communication development ('amber' on eLIPS observational tool for 'saying') will achieve age appropriate levels ('green' on the eLIPS observational tool).

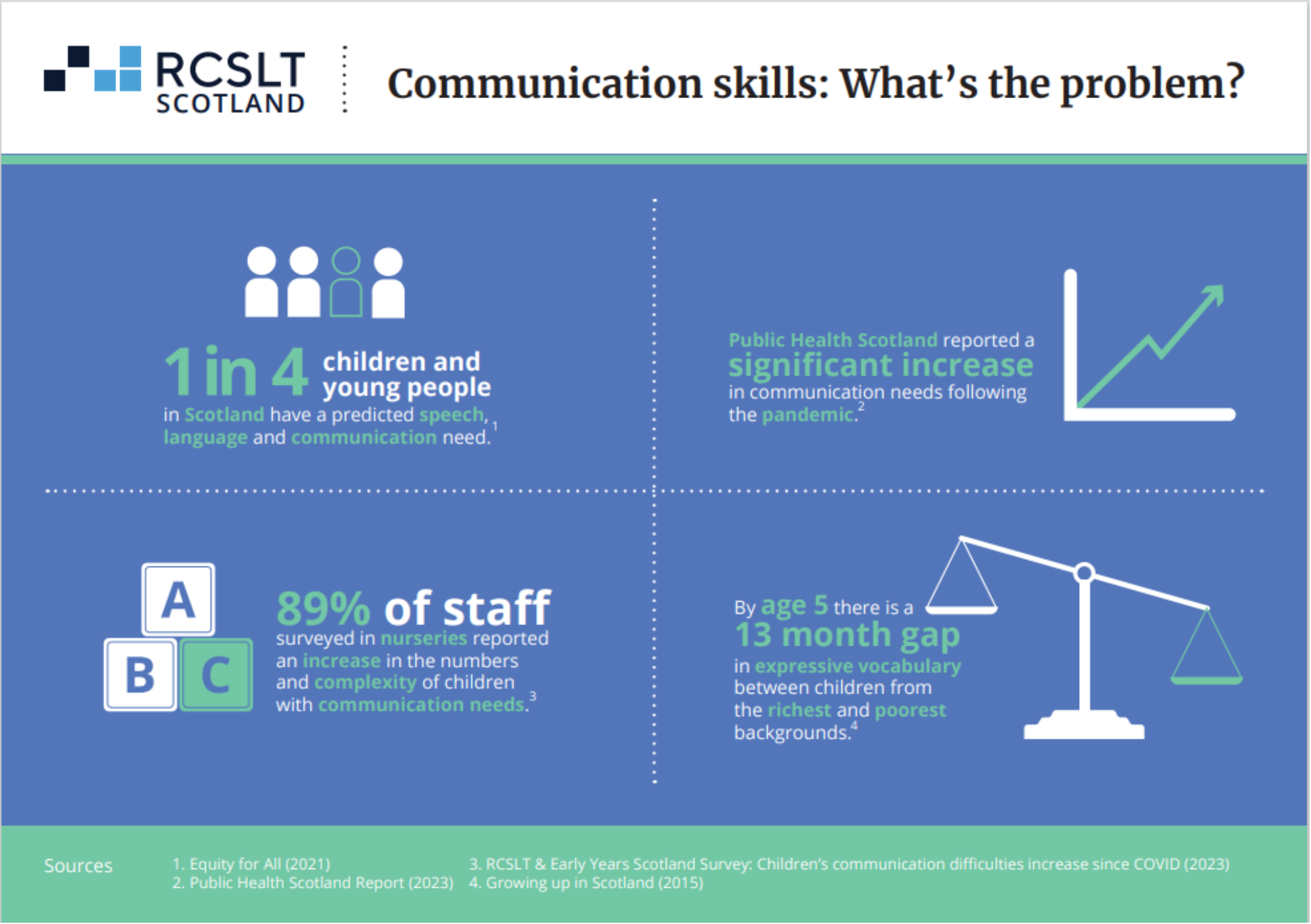
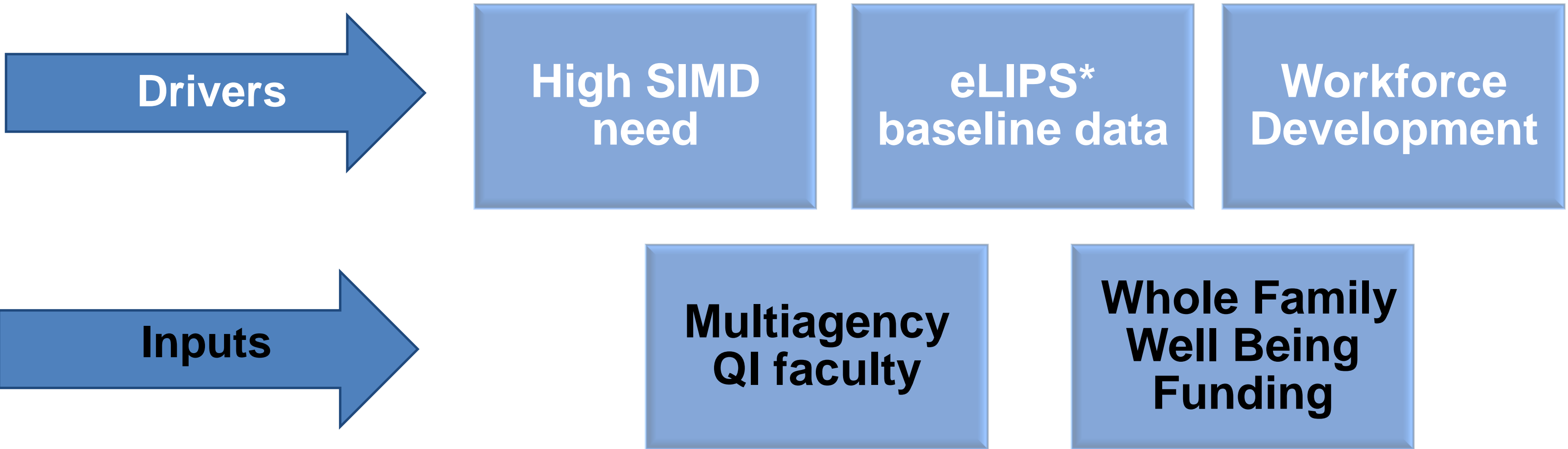


Figure 1 [Communication Skills: What's the Problem and Why does it Matter?](#)  
[National Early Language and Communication \(NELC\) Project](#)



## Method

The Early Years workforce received training and support from the multi-agency faculty to

- use eLIPS\* data to identify children not meeting SLC milestones and gather baseline assessment data.
- follow an improvement journey, i.e. apply QI tools to analyse causes of slow progress and set clear, measurable aims (Figure 2)
- develop a theory of change specific to the improvement focus.
- extend knowledge and understanding of the 'Communication High 5' strategies.
- test changes, prioritising high impact/low effort changes.
- measure progress and learning over time using run charts.
- summarise their findings in an improvement poster (Figure 3)
- create an implementation plan to sustain improvements.



- The Communication High 5 strategies are
- Be face-to-face with a child.
  - Provide thinking time.
  - Turn questions in to comments.
  - Model 'wow' words.
  - Use signs, symbols and/or objects to support understanding of language.

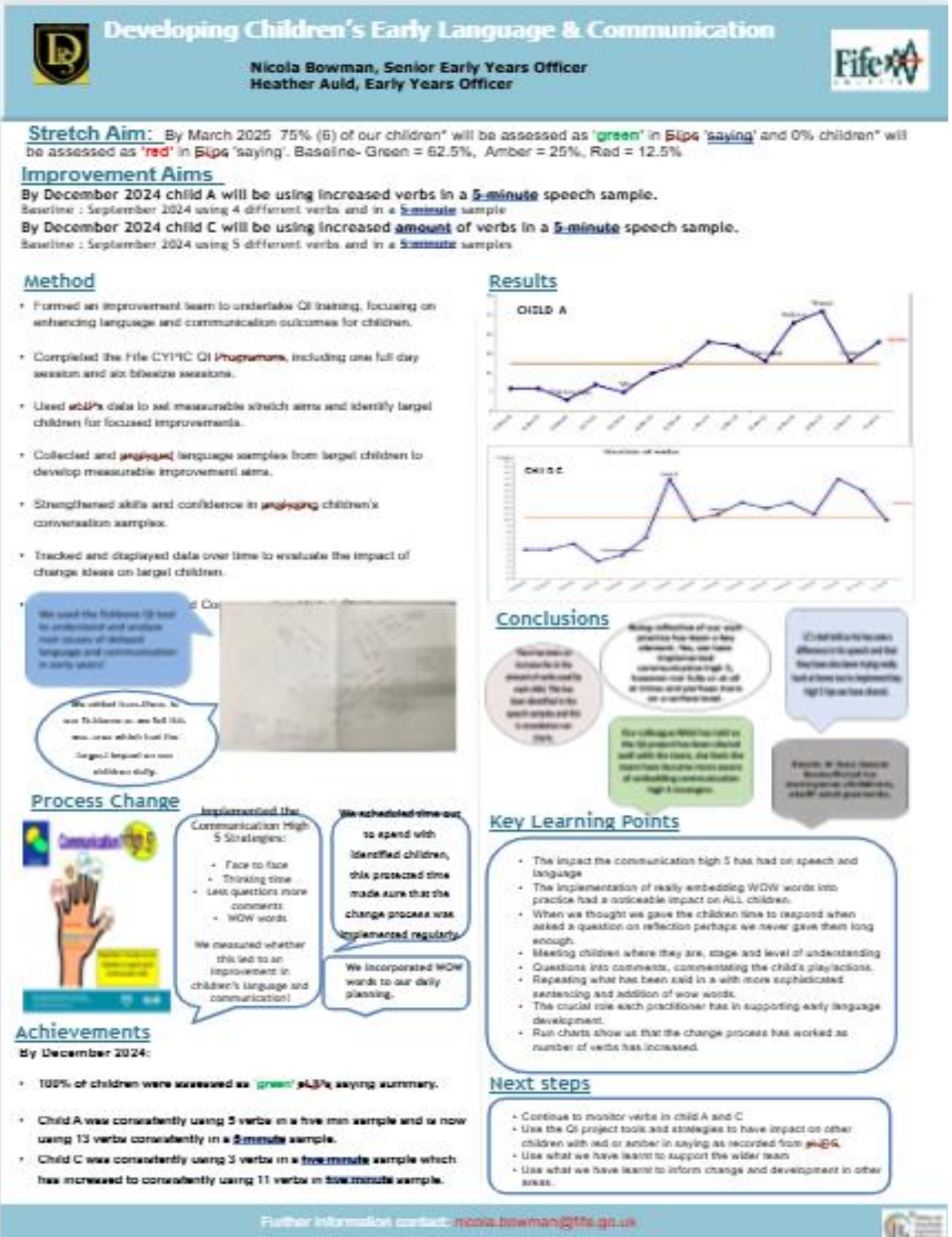


Figure 3

## Workforce - key learning

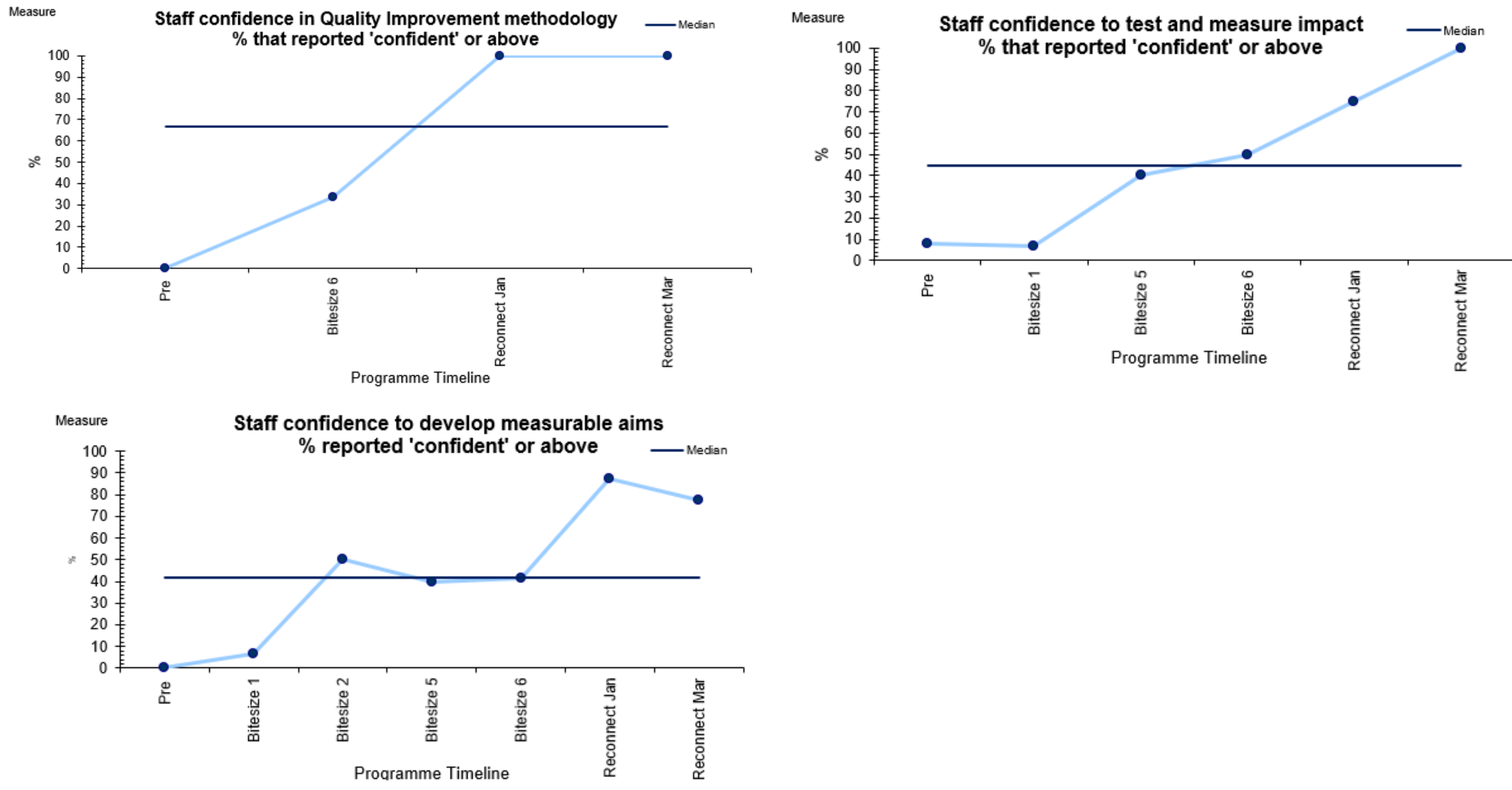
Can see from our run charts that this strategy has a positive effect on our children.

The data from the result of the high 5 that we have implemented has been amazing!

I am now enthusiastic to share our data and enthusiasm with the rest of our team, so they can also experience its benefits and see the changes and improvements first hand.

Much deeper understanding of the strategies and taking them to the next level to support children

## Outcomes & Results



- Data indicated increased staff confidence in using both QI techniques and the *Communication High 5* strategies.
- Each setting successfully used QI methodology to measure changes and the impact on children's spoken language.
- Practitioners were able to track improvements in children's spoken language across all ELCCs, i.e. target children moved from 'amber' to 'green' on eLIPS observational tool.

## Conclusions & Next Steps

- Quality Improvement methodology has been a catalyst for robust application of the Communication High 5 strategies.
- The workforce has been empowered to create the conditions for change and to track change in spoken language using run charts.
- The data indicates that the project can be spread.
- Assurance processes are required to ensure sustainability.