Improving how we improve post pandemic

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Penny Pereira
Q Managing Director
The Health Foundation

@PennyPereira1

Dr Amar Shah
Chief Quality Officer
East London NHS Foundation Trust

@DrAmarShah

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This session

How healthcare providers used improvement in responding to covid

What we have learnt about improvement

Opportunities for improving how we improve

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Analysis » Quality Improvement

Quality improvement at times of crisis

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Amar Shah, chief quality officer [1 3], Penny Pereira, Q initiative director [4], Paula Tuma, quality improvement adviser [5]

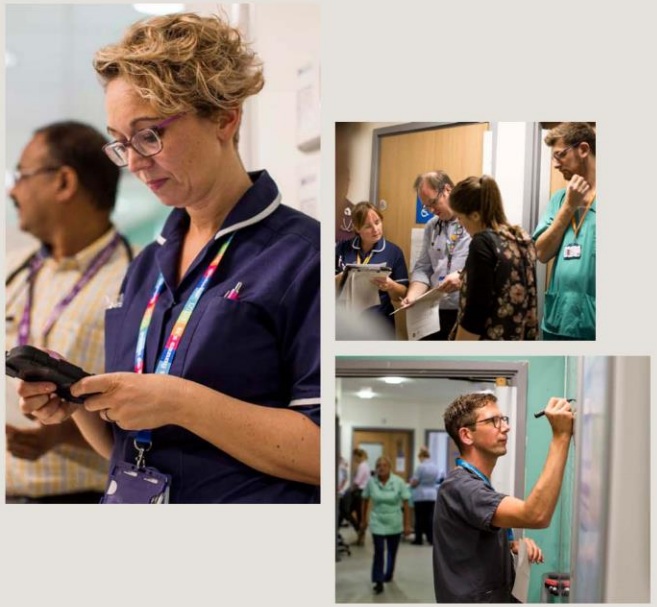
Author affiliations

Making rapid change during covid-19 has lessons for how to improve healthcare, argue **Amar Shah and colleagues**

Health systems across the globe have faced unprecedented strain and uncertainty during the coronavirus pandemic. Healthcare providers have had to respond rapidly, making major changes to all aspects of healthcare from moving to remote delivery of primary care services to creating covid "hot" and "cold" zones and developing innovations which are likely to have both short and long term consequences for the health of the population.

Quality improvement has been increasingly used globally over the past decade to change healthcare. Evidence of success is mixed.[1] Have such approaches added any value to healthcare service delivery during these unparalleled rapid changes? Are scientifically based approaches to complex system change, such as quality improvement, helping healthcare providers during a crisis?

https://www.bmj.com/content/373/bmj.n928



The role of improvement during the response to COVID-19: insights from the Q community

Matthew Hill, Jo Scott and Henry Cann
March 2021

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Did the role of improvement approaches increase or decrease for you during the response to COVID-19?

A. Increased

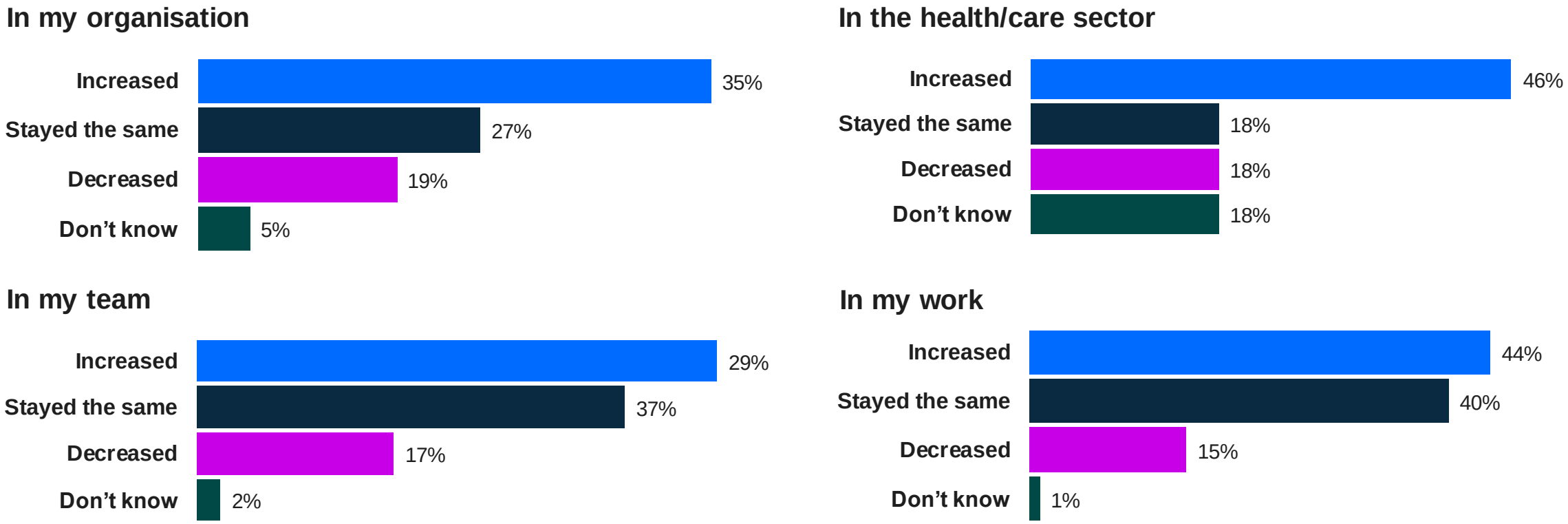
B. Stayed the same

C. Decreased

D. Don't know

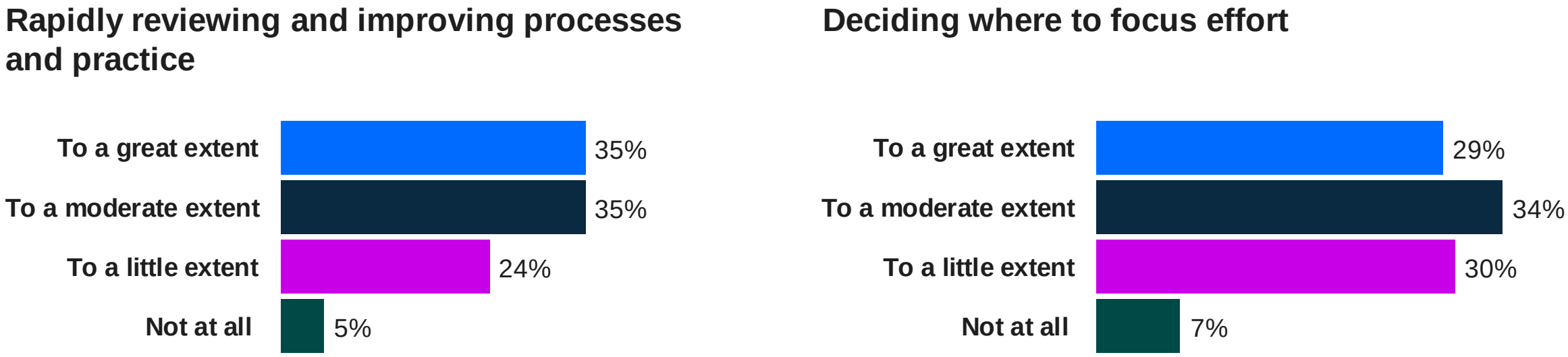
What 200+ improvers in the UK reported (Aug / Sept 2020)

Figure 1: Did the role of improvement tools, methods, approaches and mindsets increase or decrease during the response to COVID-19?

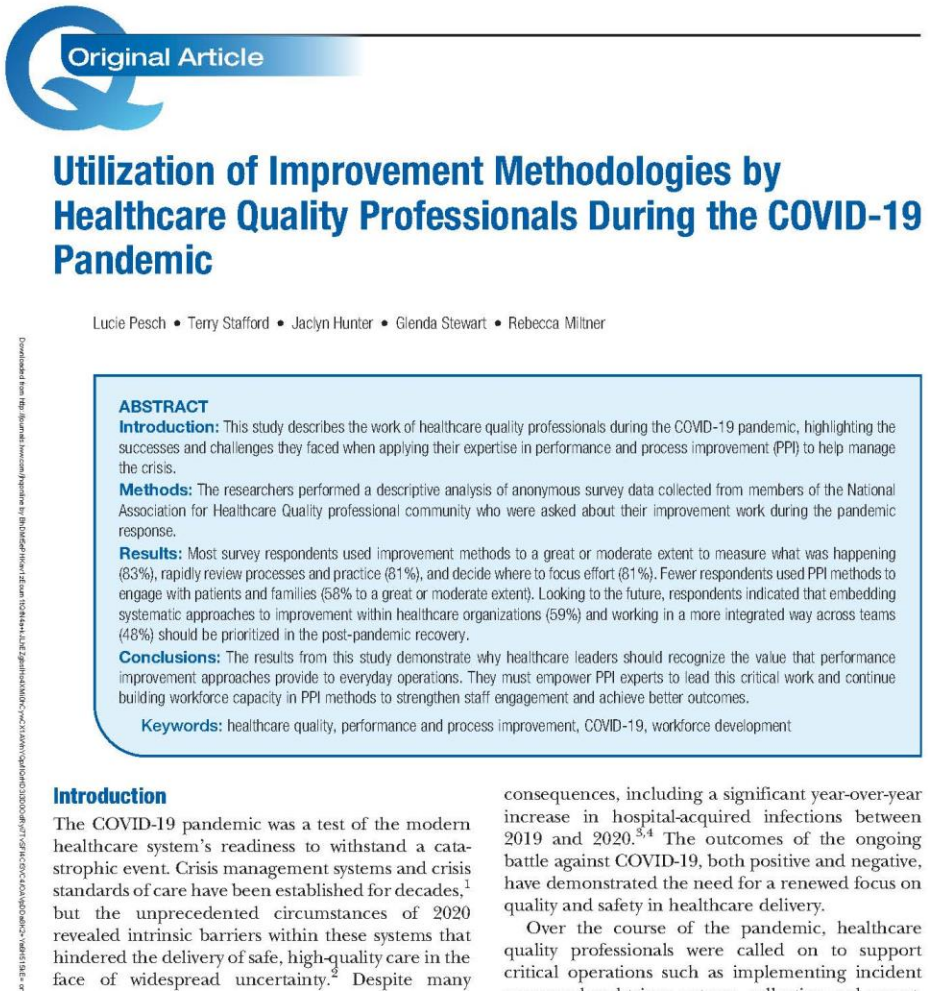


For what purposes was improvement used?

Figure 2: The extent to which improvement tools, methods, approaches and mindsets were used for different purposes



Some similar patterns from a group in the US…



Original Article

Utilization of Improvement Methodologies by Healthcare Quality Professionals During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Lucie Pesch • Terry Stafford • Jaclyn Hunter • Glenda Stewart • Rebecca Miltner

ABSTRACT

Introduction: This study describes the work of healthcare quality professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the successes and challenges they faced when applying their expertise in performance and process improvement (PPI) to help manage the crisis.

Methods: The researchers performed a descriptive analysis of anonymous survey data collected from members of the National Association for Healthcare Quality professional community who were asked about their improvement work during the pandemic response.

Results: Most survey respondents used improvement methods to a great or moderate extent to measure what was happening (83%), rapidly review processes and practice (81%), and decide where to focus effort (81%). Fewer respondents used PPI methods to engage with patients and families (58% to a great or moderate extent). Looking to the future, respondents indicated that embedding systematic approaches to improvement within healthcare organizations (59%) and working in a more integrated way across teams (48%) should be prioritized in the post-pandemic recovery.

Conclusions: The results from this study demonstrate why healthcare leaders should recognize the value that performance improvement approaches provide to everyday operations. They must empower PPI experts to lead this critical work and continue building workforce capacity in PPI methods to strengthen staff engagement and achieve better outcomes.

Keywords: healthcare quality, performance and process improvement, COVID-19, workforce development

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic was a test of the modern healthcare system's readiness to withstand a catastrophic event. Crisis management systems and crisis standards of care have been established for decades,[1] but the unprecedented circumstances of 2020 revealed intrinsic barriers within these systems that hindered the delivery of safe, high-quality care in the face of widespread uncertainty.[2] Despite many consequences, including a significant year-over-year increase in hospital-acquired infections between 2019 and 2020.[3,4] The outcomes of the ongoing battle against COVID-19, both positive and negative, have demonstrated the need for a renewed focus on quality and safety in healthcare delivery.

Over the course of the pandemic, healthcare quality professionals were called on to support critical operations such as implementing incident

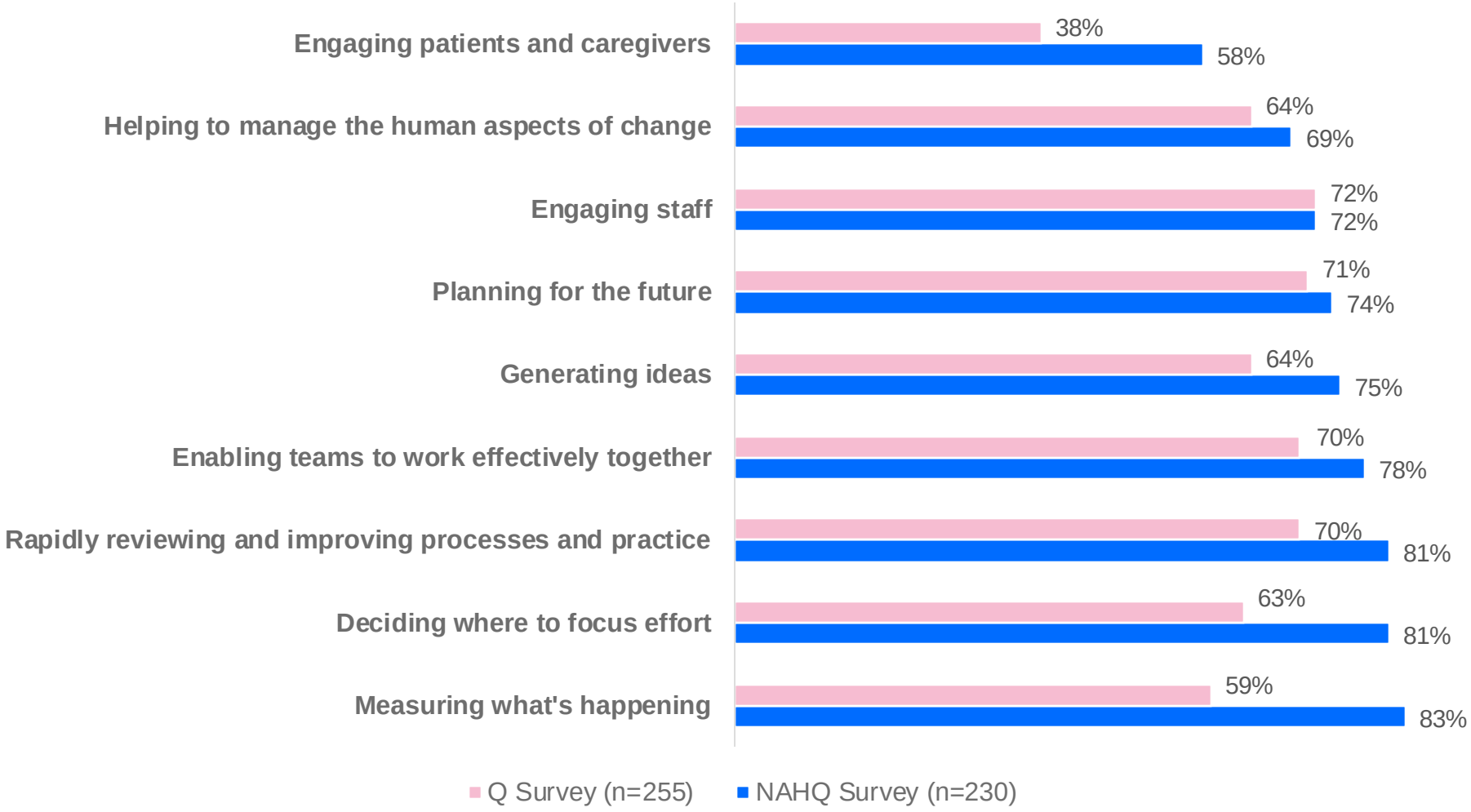
Survey replicated in the US later in the pandemic

Increasing importance of improvement shared

Many shared lessons

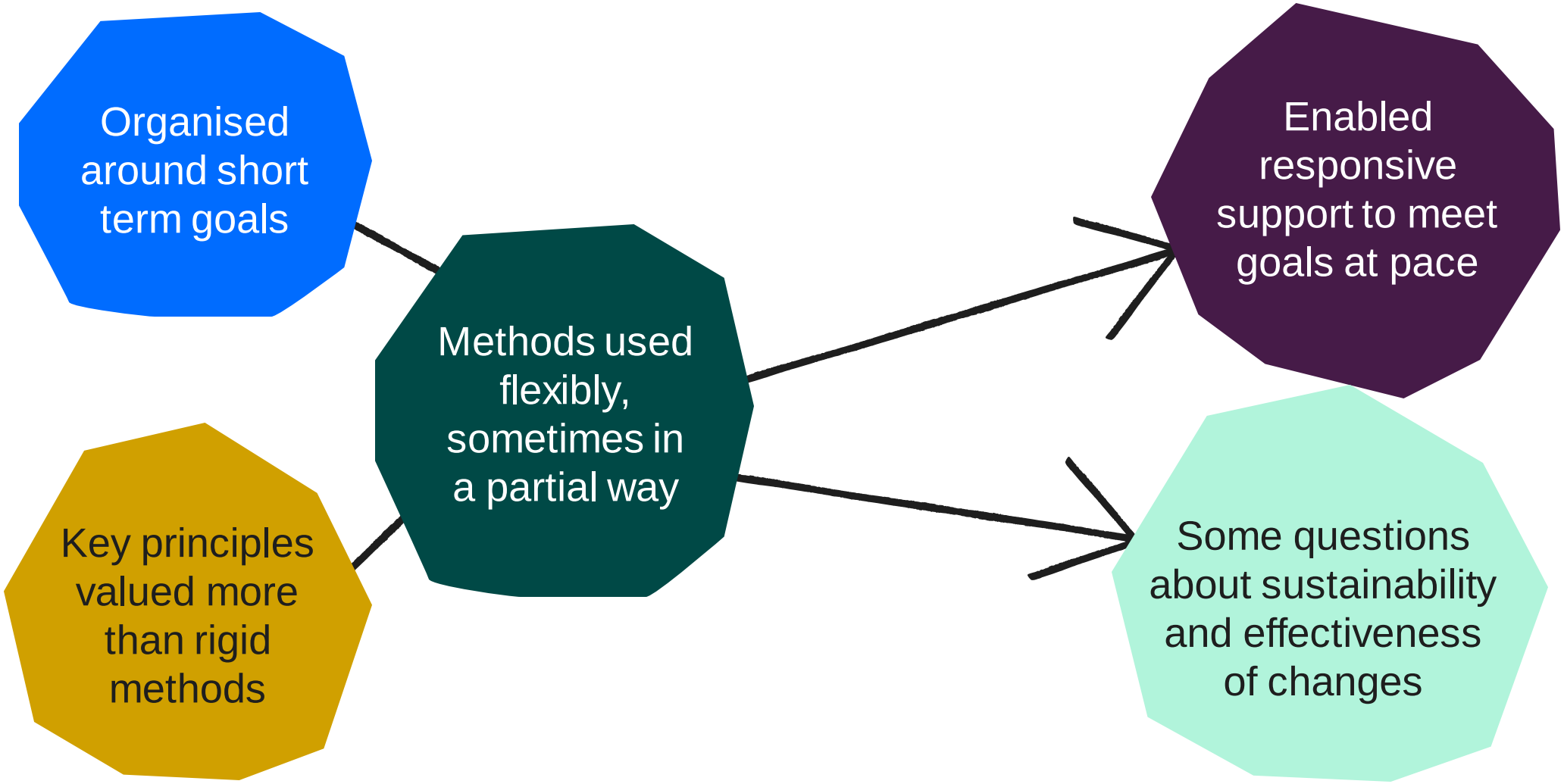
https://journals.lww.com/jhqonline/Fulltext/2022/06000/Utilization_of_Improvement_Methodologies_by.1.aspx

…but also differences



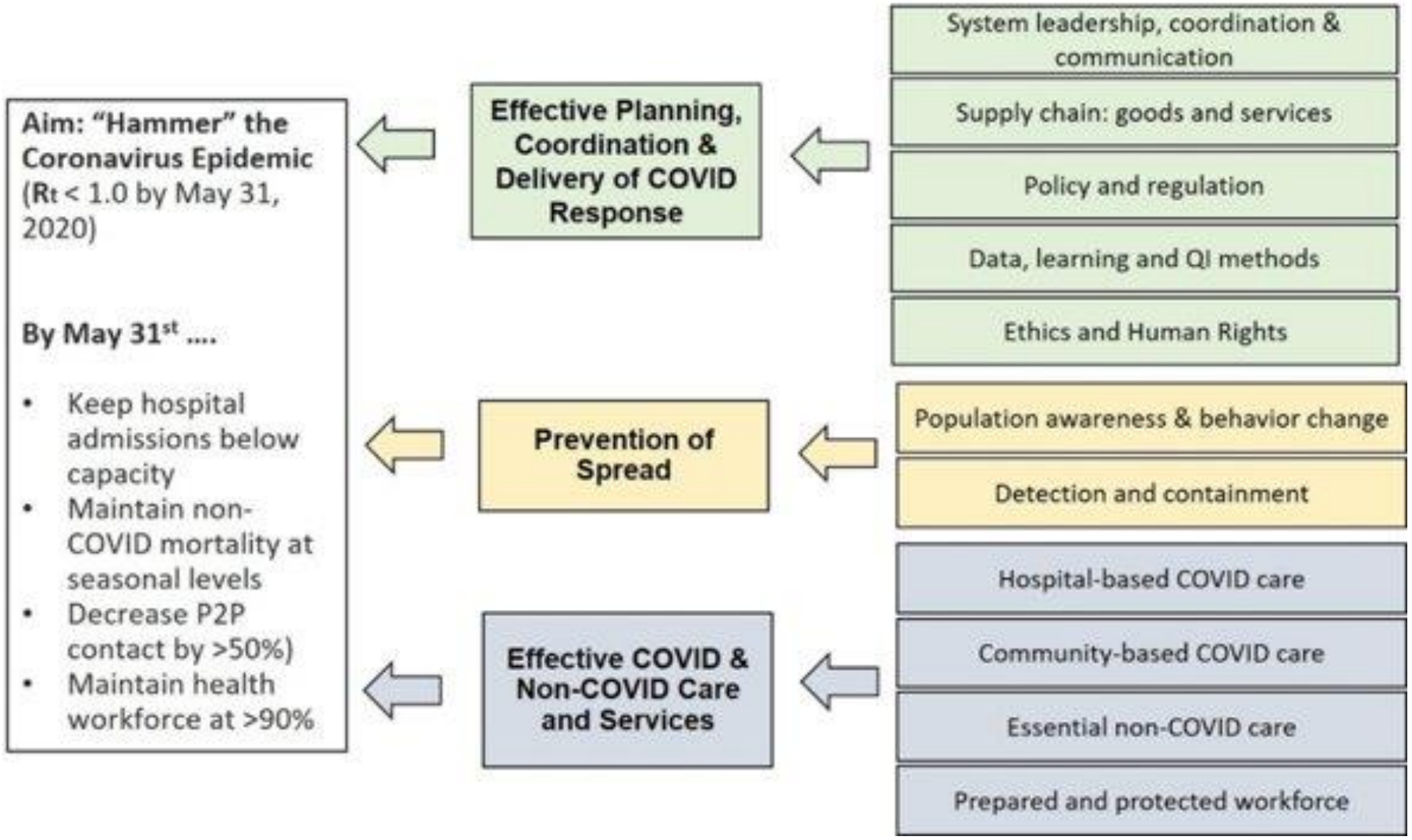
How did improvement help where you are?

Improvement took a distinct form in response to crisis



Examples of how improvement has been used

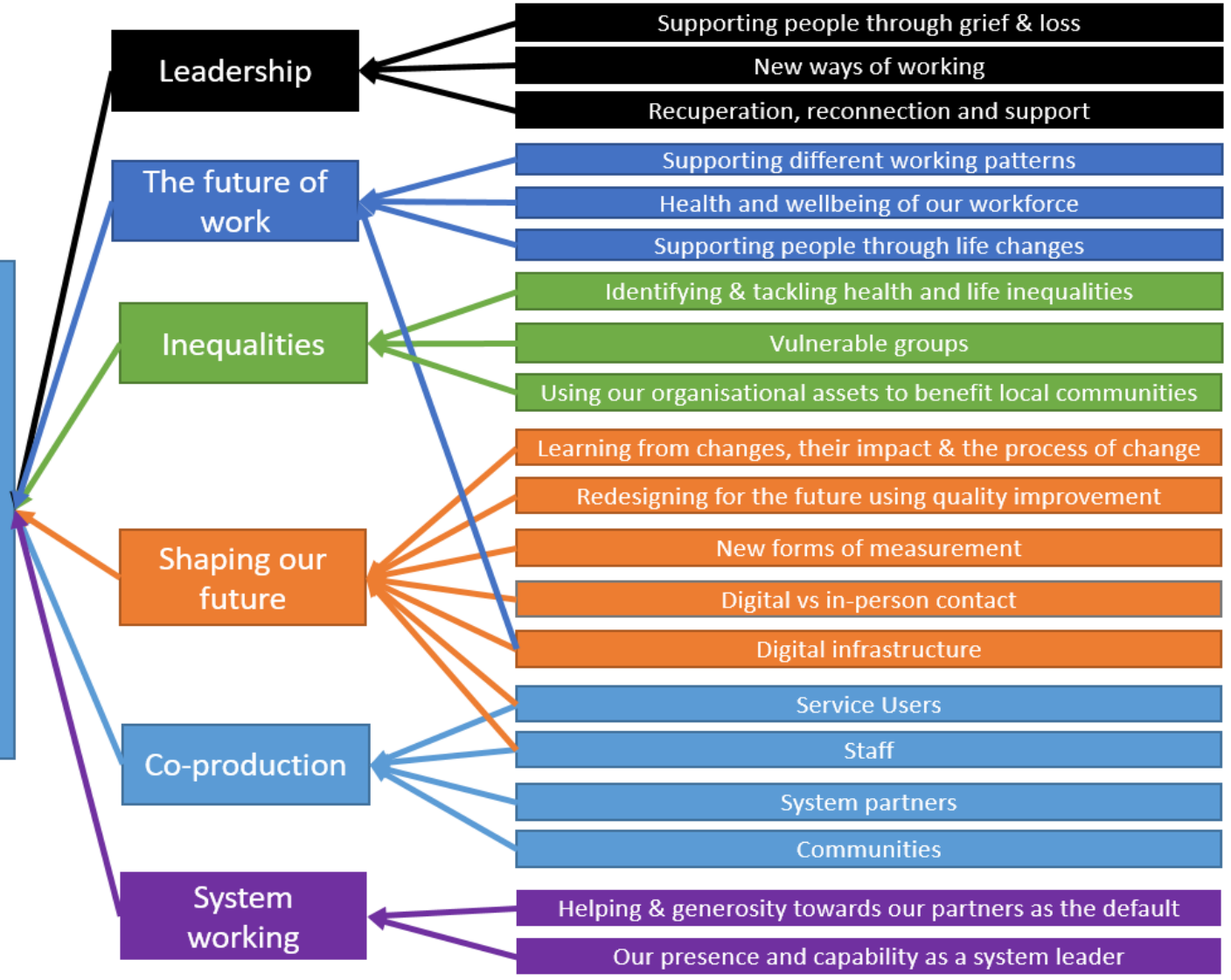
Creating a common theory about how to tackle complex problems



Creating a common theory about how to tackle complex problems

To learn and shape our future so that we can improve quality of life for the communities that we serve.

To improve the wellbeing of service users and staff now and for the future.



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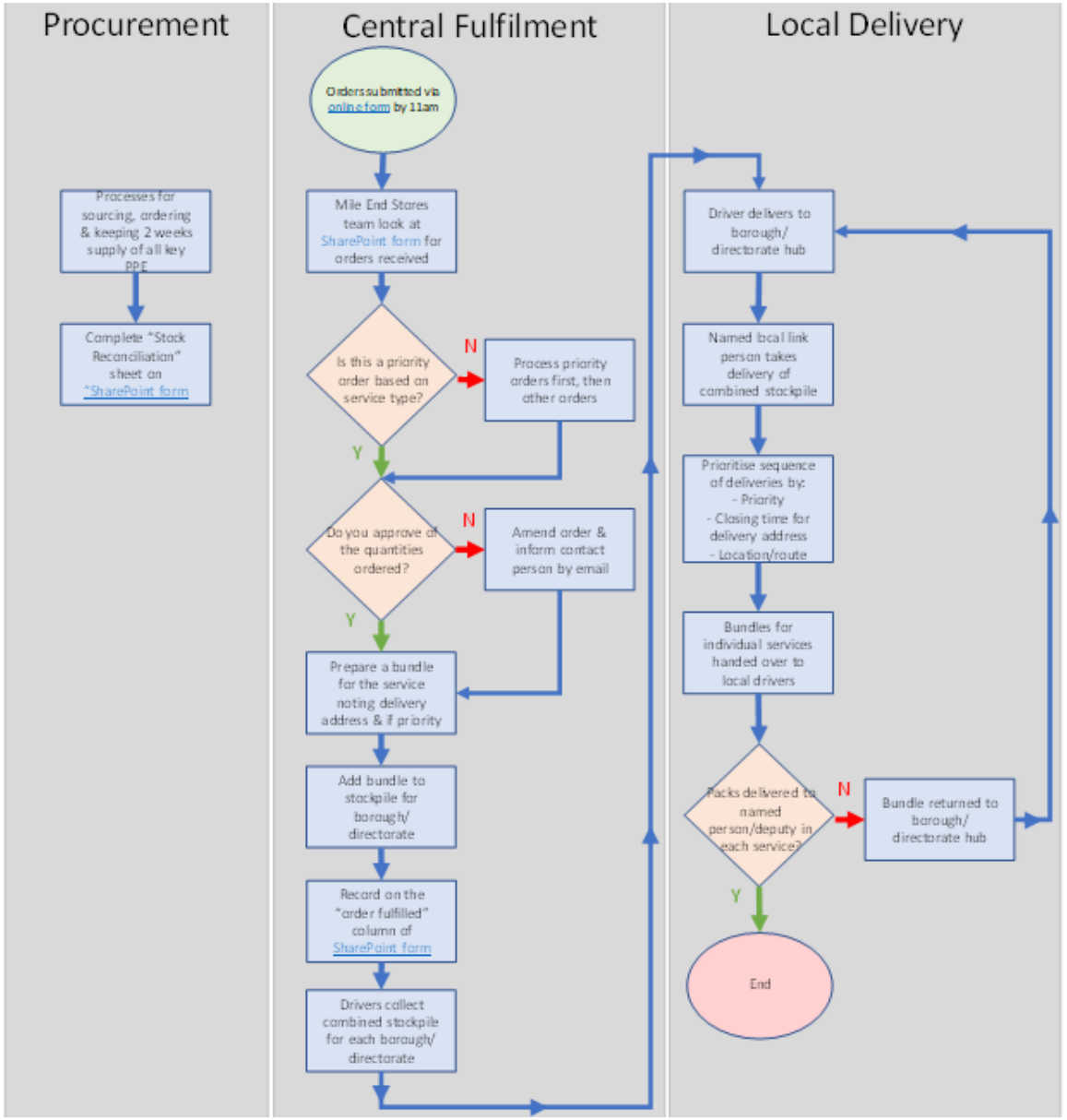
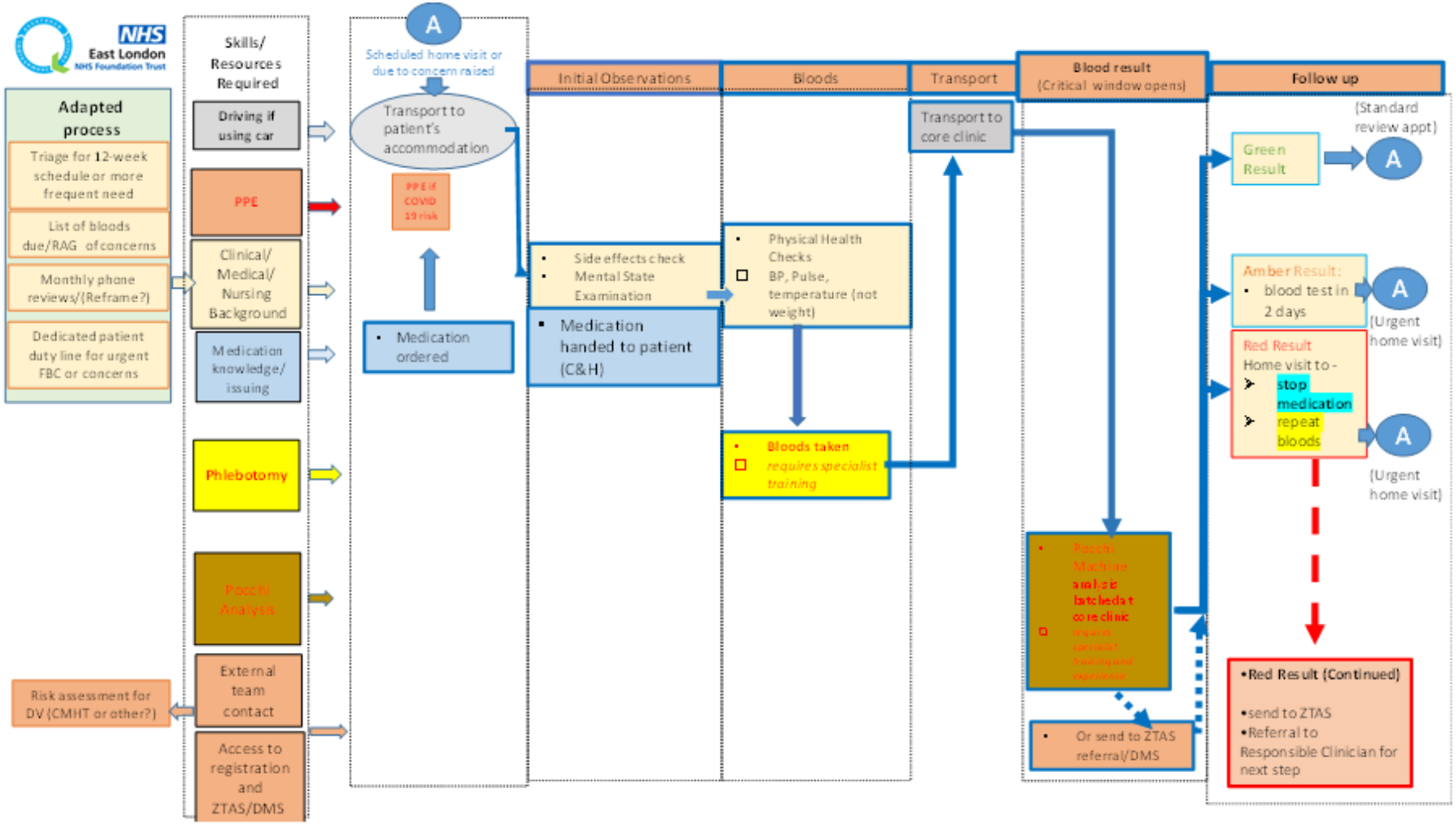
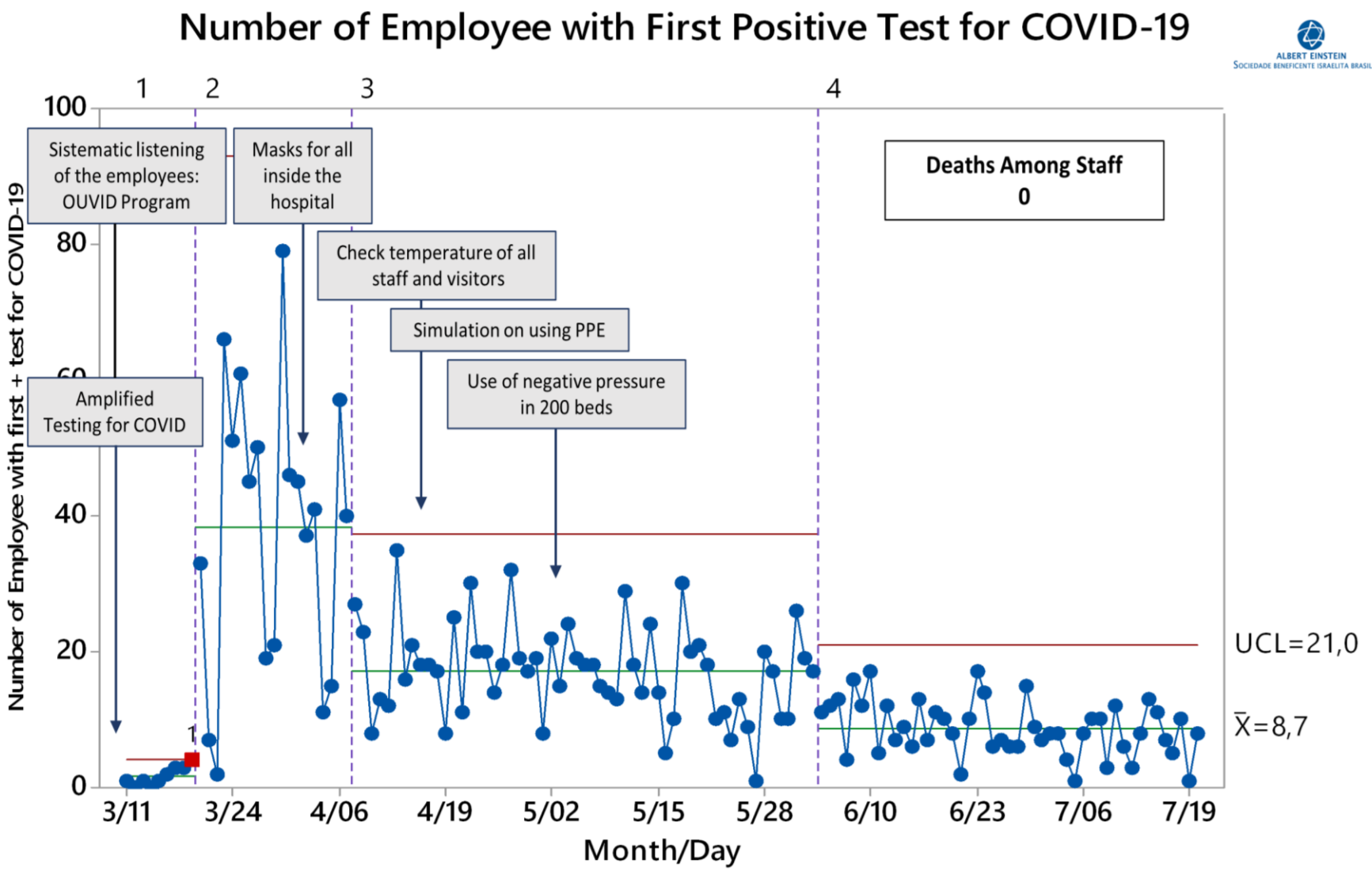
Understanding and improving processes



Understanding and improving processes



Measurement to inform decision making



Measurement to inform decision making

PDSA cycles to test and scale rapidly

Supporting learning and redesign for the future

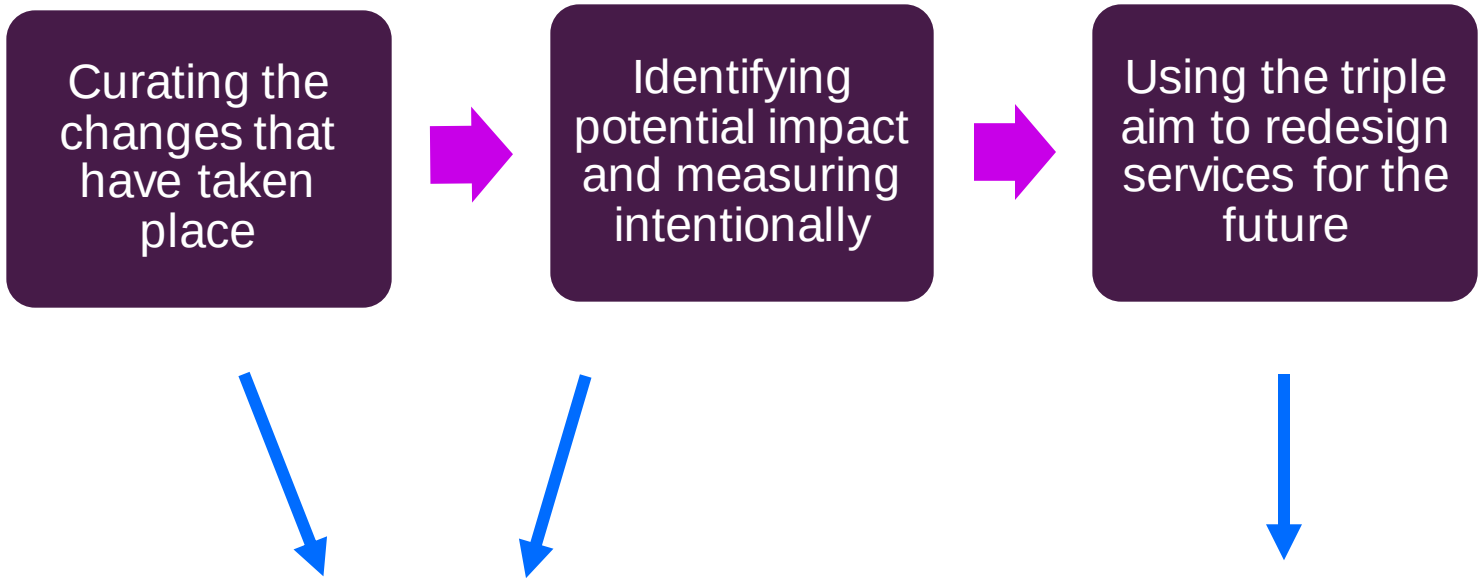
	STOPPED	STARTED
STARTED	**END** We've done these things to respond to immediate demands but they are specific to the crisis	**AMPLIFY** We've been able to try these new things and they show some signs of promise for the future
STOPPED	**LET GO** We've been able to stop doing these things that were already / are now unfit for purpose	**RESTART** We've had to stop these things to focus on the crisis but they need to be picked up in some form

New practice

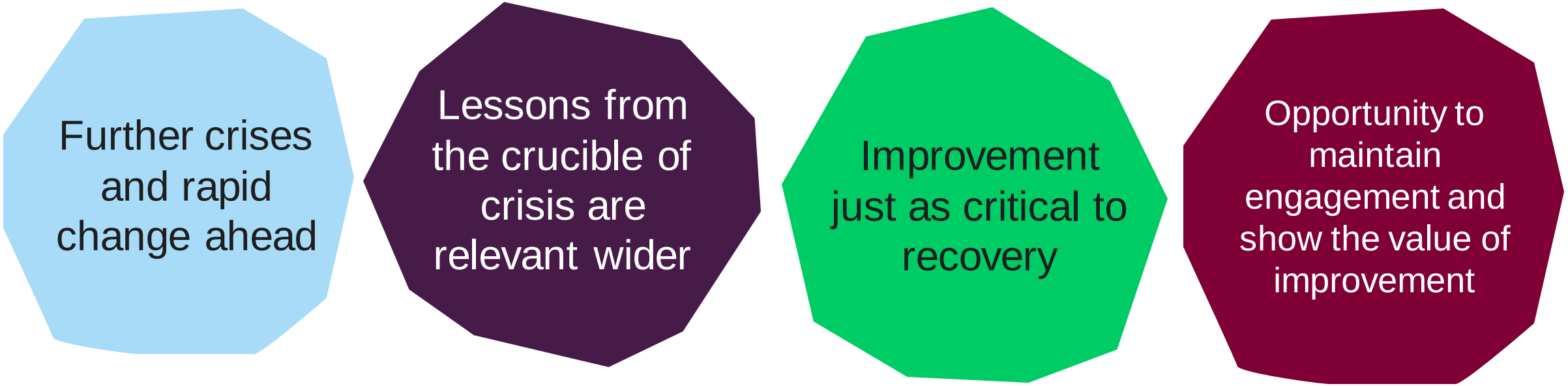
Use QI for implementation

Old practice

Supporting learning and redesign for the future



Why does this matter now?



What does the future of quality improvement hold?

1. Continue to build our improvement muscle
2. Continue to support our leaders to lead improvement
3. Put improvement in everyone's hands
4. Use the rigour of QI for complex problem solving
5. Pay attention to equity in the way we design and lead improvement

Thank you

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8 Salisbury Square
London EC4Y 8AP

T +44 (0)20 7664 4661
E q@health.org.uk

@theQCommunity
q.health.org.uk

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