



Health Social Workers in Emergency Department 7 days/week from 07:00 – 23:00 hours

**Hospital Name: Waikato District Health Board
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**HRT 1616 Allied Health Improvement Group
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Key Problems

- ED staff were struggling to deal with managing complex patients who required psychosocial supports to be safely discharged from ED.
- Inability to meet the 6 hour ED target.
- Complaints from patients and whanau who felt they received little information and attention when in ED.
- Gaps in the screening and intervention for family violence issues.
- Lack of consistent and equitable delivery of social work service to ED.

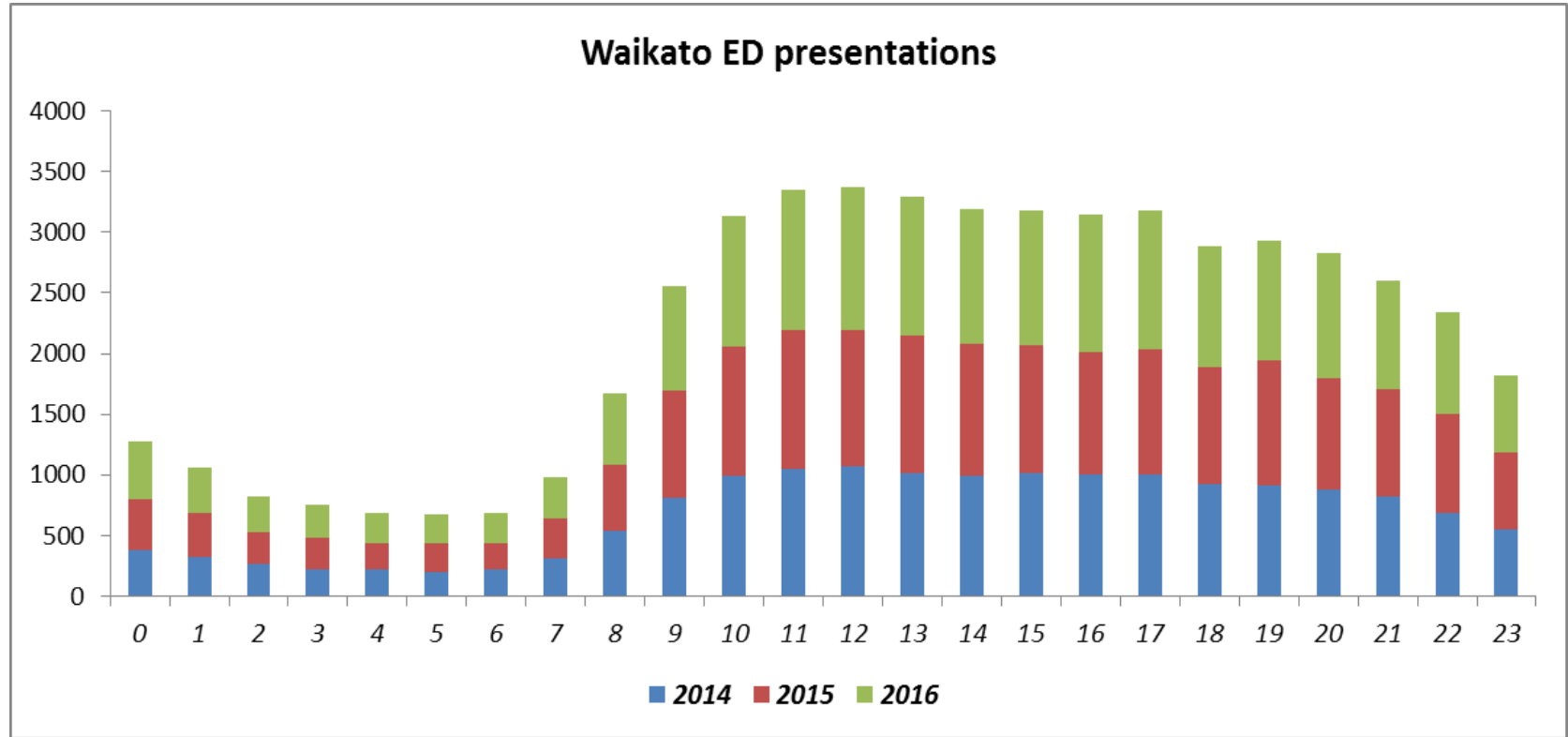
Aim of this Innovation

- To support a safe and more timely discharge.
- Support patient and families in ED.
- Reduce patient and whanau dissatisfaction and frustration by having a social worker supporting their ED journey.
- Prevent other ED clinicians being tied up with work which is not their key role.
- Increase screening and intervention for family violence.

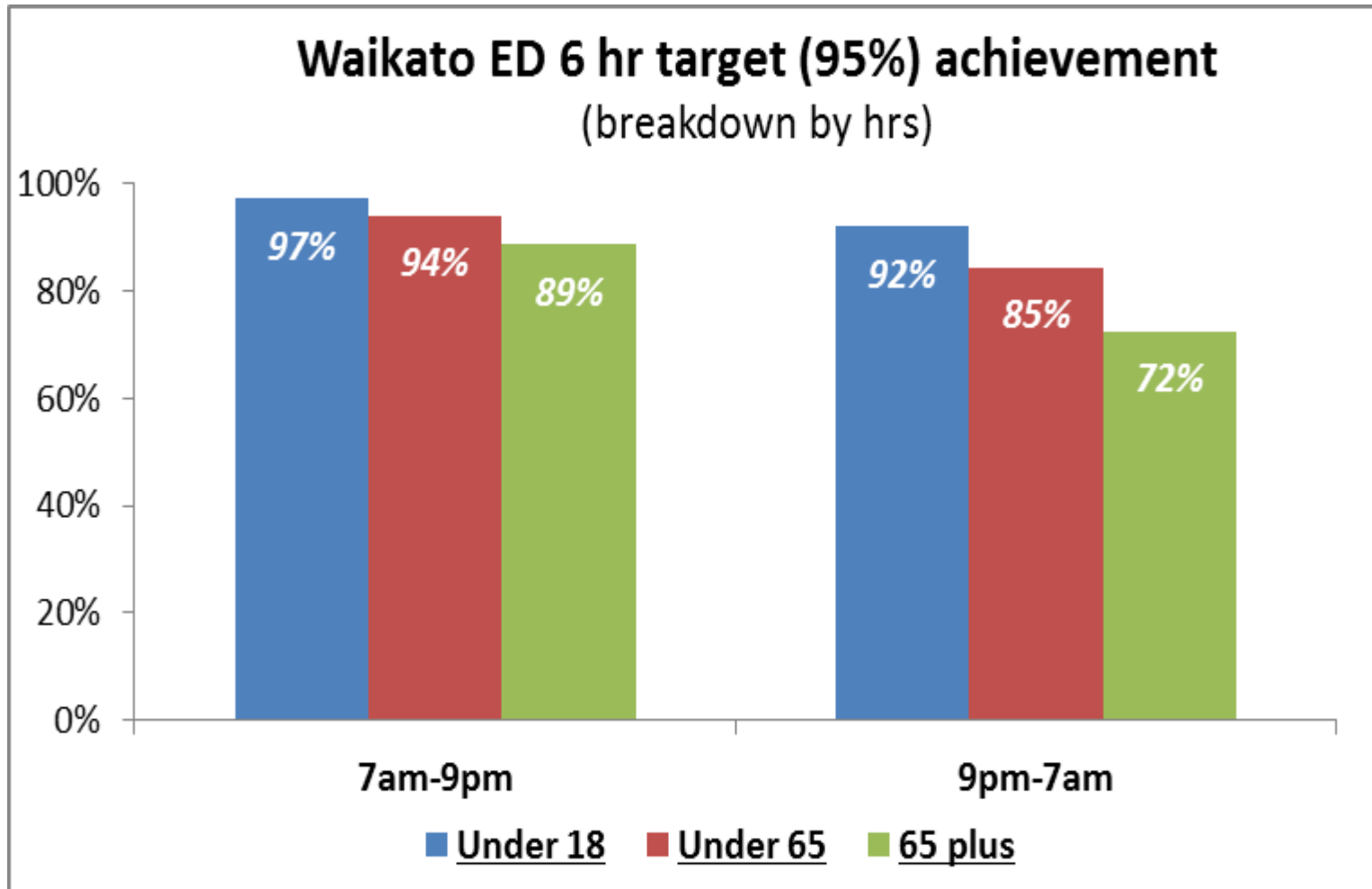
Baseline Data

- Social workers were available from Monday to Friday during business hours (08:00 – 16:30 hours).
- Typical presentation times to ED.
- Subjective reporting that patients remained in ED overnight awaiting social work assessment and intervention the following day.
- Subjective reporting that if the ED presentation fell over a weekend some patients were admitted to the wards for social reasons.

ED Presentations by Hour



ED 6-hour Target Achievement

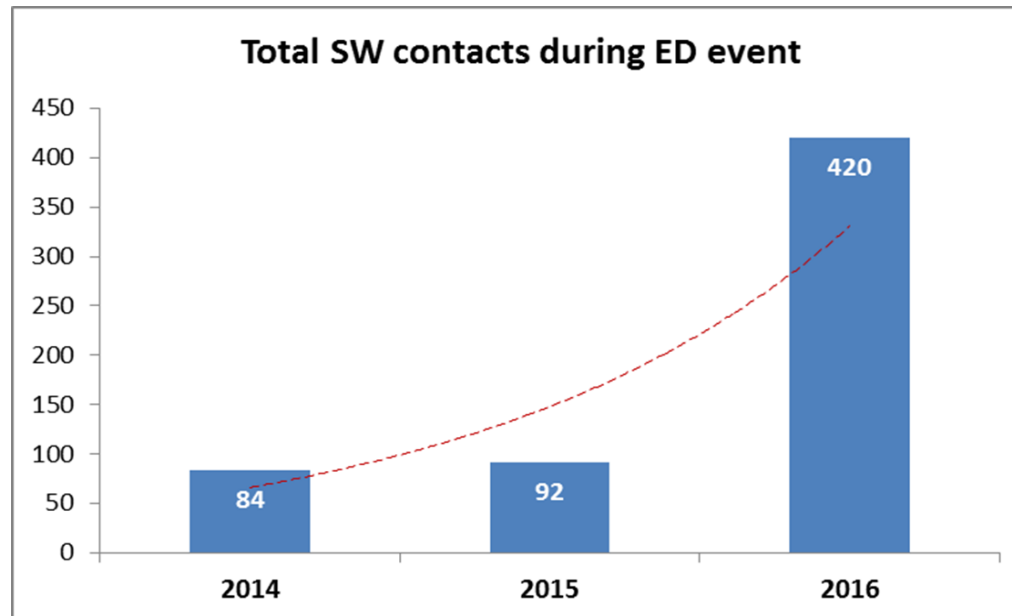


Key Changes Implemented

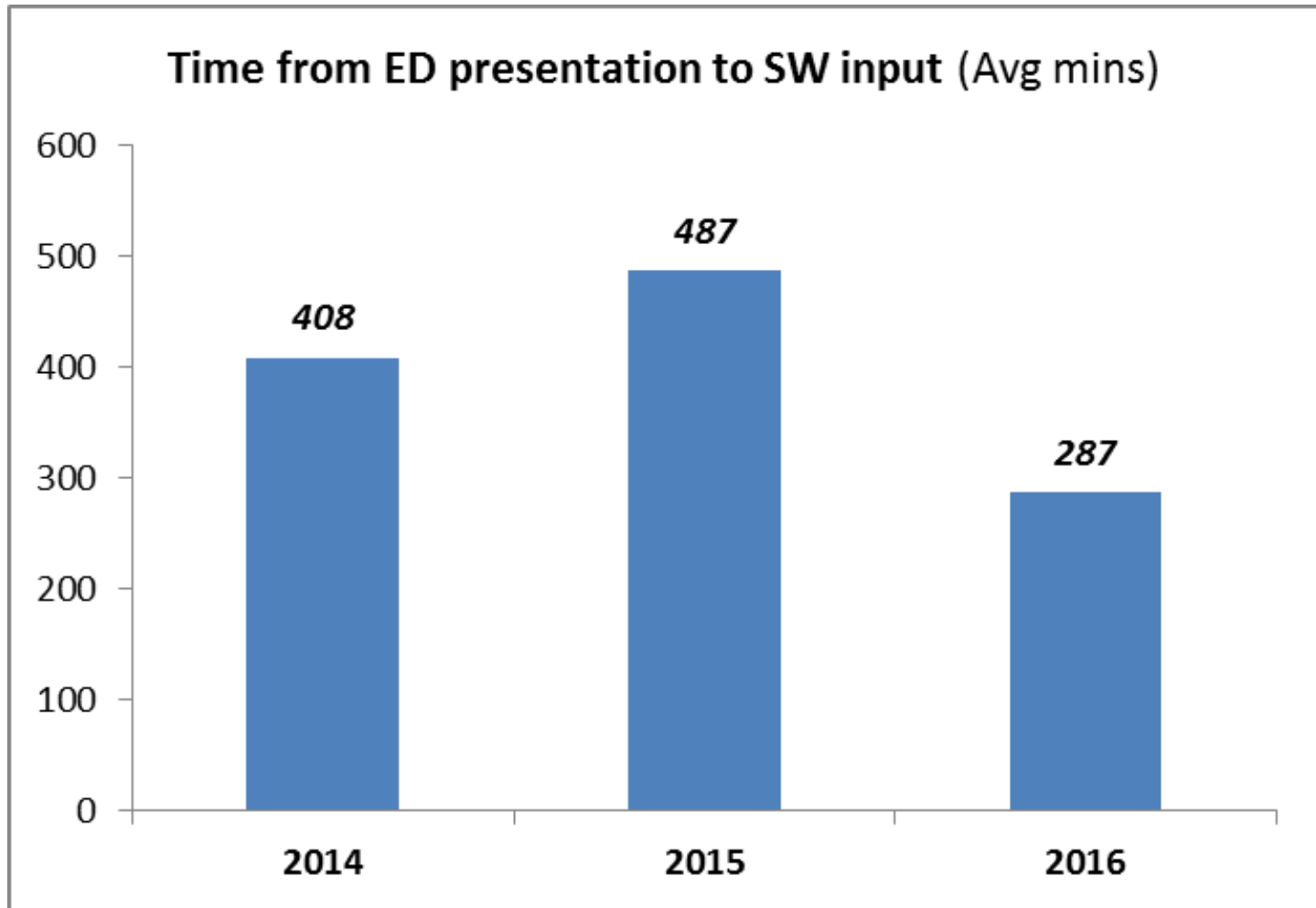
- A 3 month trial of social work in ED – Monday to Sunday from 7am to 11pm. Funding was to be part funded from existing resources and part funded from existing vacancies in Allied Health, and a fixed-term contract of 3 months was sought.
- Initially the option of an on-call service was considered from 11pm till 7am, but the demand for this was not evident from the data.

Outcomes

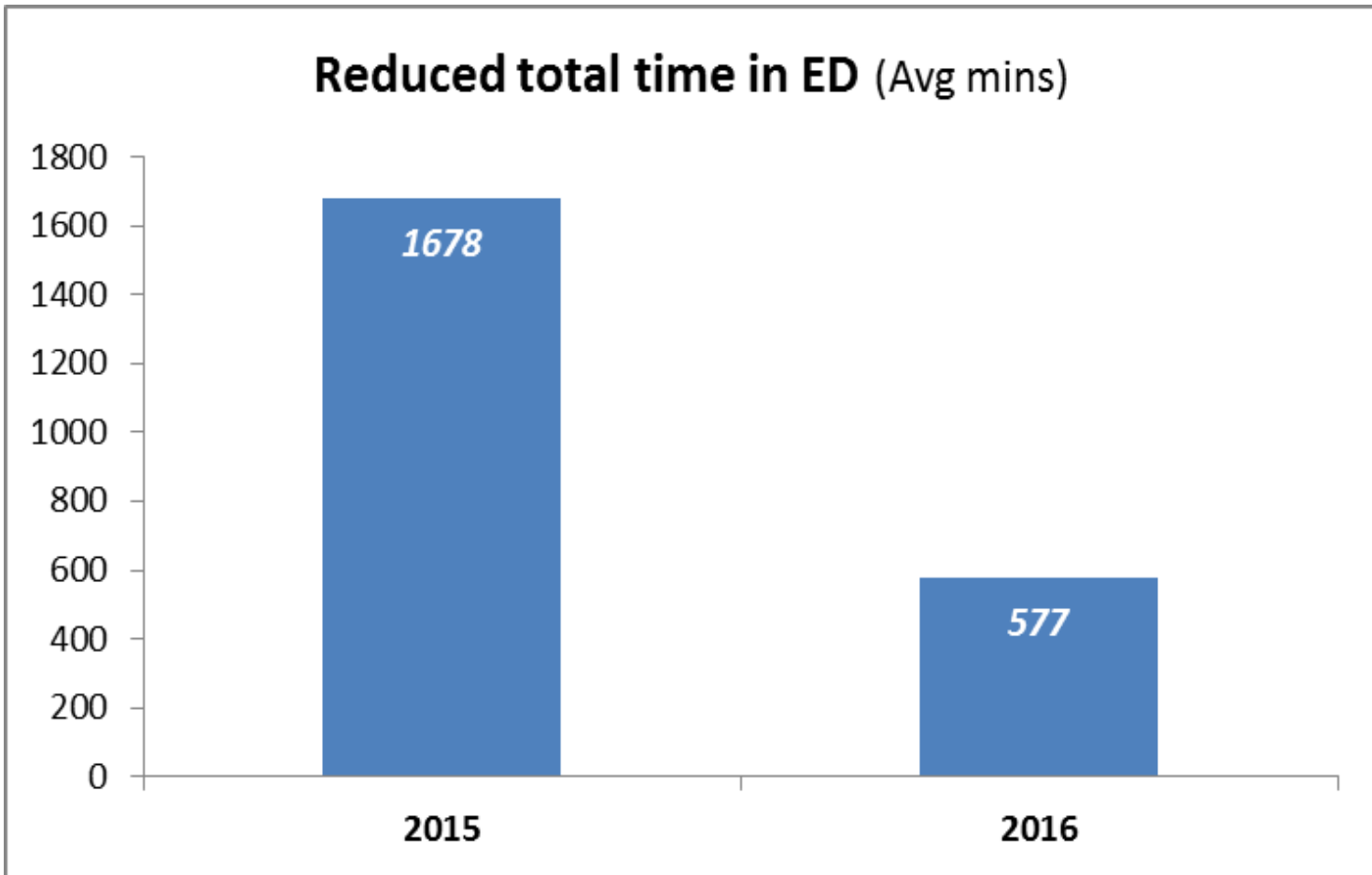
- 44 patients identified as avoiding admission for social reasons.
- Increased productivity from social workers over the period of the trial (saw more than 4 times the patients expected with only 3 times the amount of increased resource).



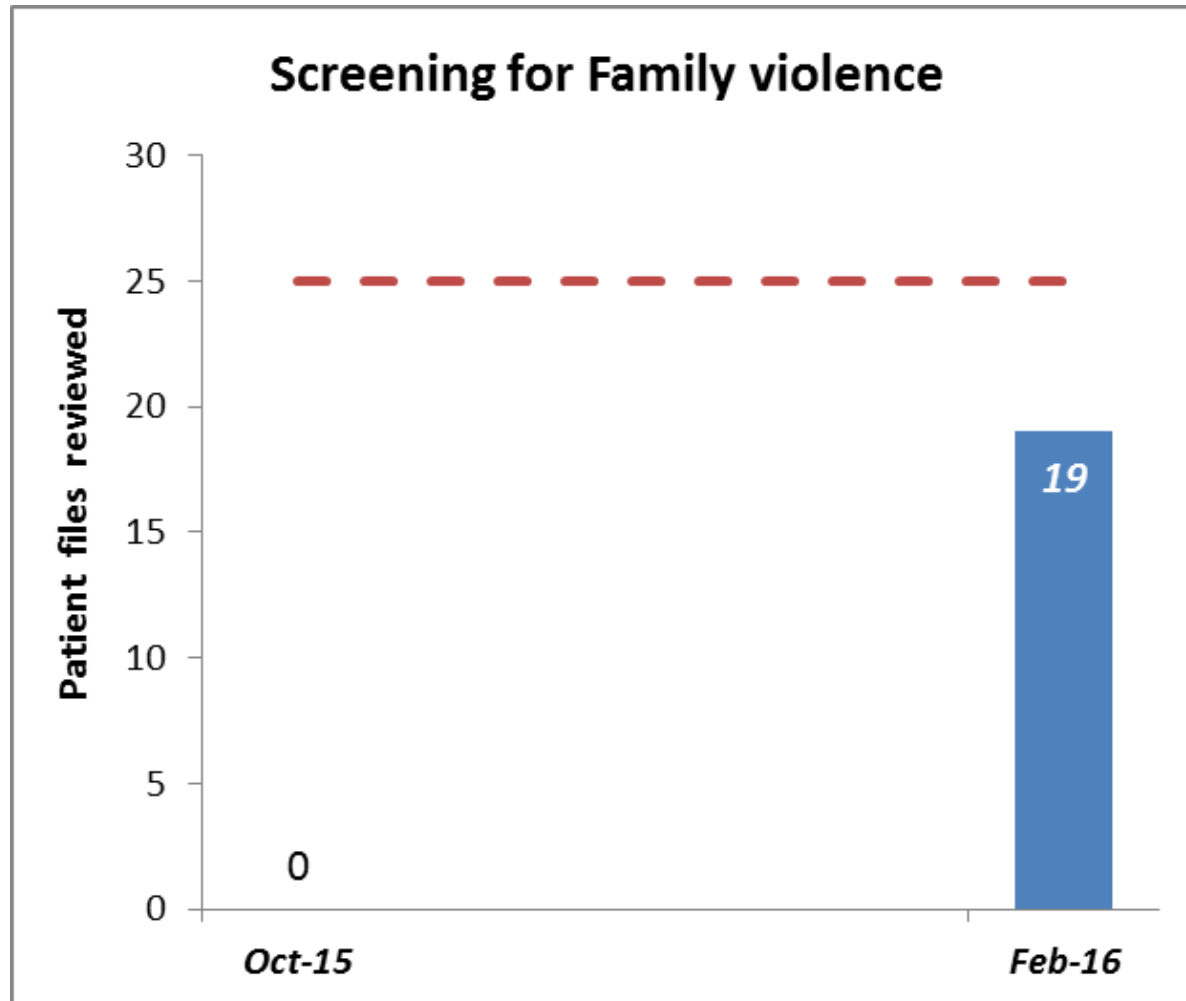
Improved Timeliness of Referral to Social Work



Total Time in ED Reduced by Almost a Third (compared to the previous year)



Increased Screening for Family Violence in ED by Nursing Staff



ED Staff and External Agency Feedback

Decreased repeat presentations to ED

Improved flow in the department

Huge thank you from CYFS for good timely communication to support a complex abuse case

We feel more confident and comfortable to screen for family violence knowing that social work will follow-up

We can get on with what we really need to do

Change in morale and positivity in the department

Lessons Learnt

- Once approval was granted, we worked with our Human Resources department and the unions regarding changes to the working hours. One of the main reasons for this being successful was that we had buy-in from social work themselves and when we went out for expressions of interest, we had a number of staff offering to work the extended hours and only required one person to be employed on a fixed-term contract.
- The trial proved not only positive for the patients and families, but also for the entire ED department. The staff reported a happier work environment.

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