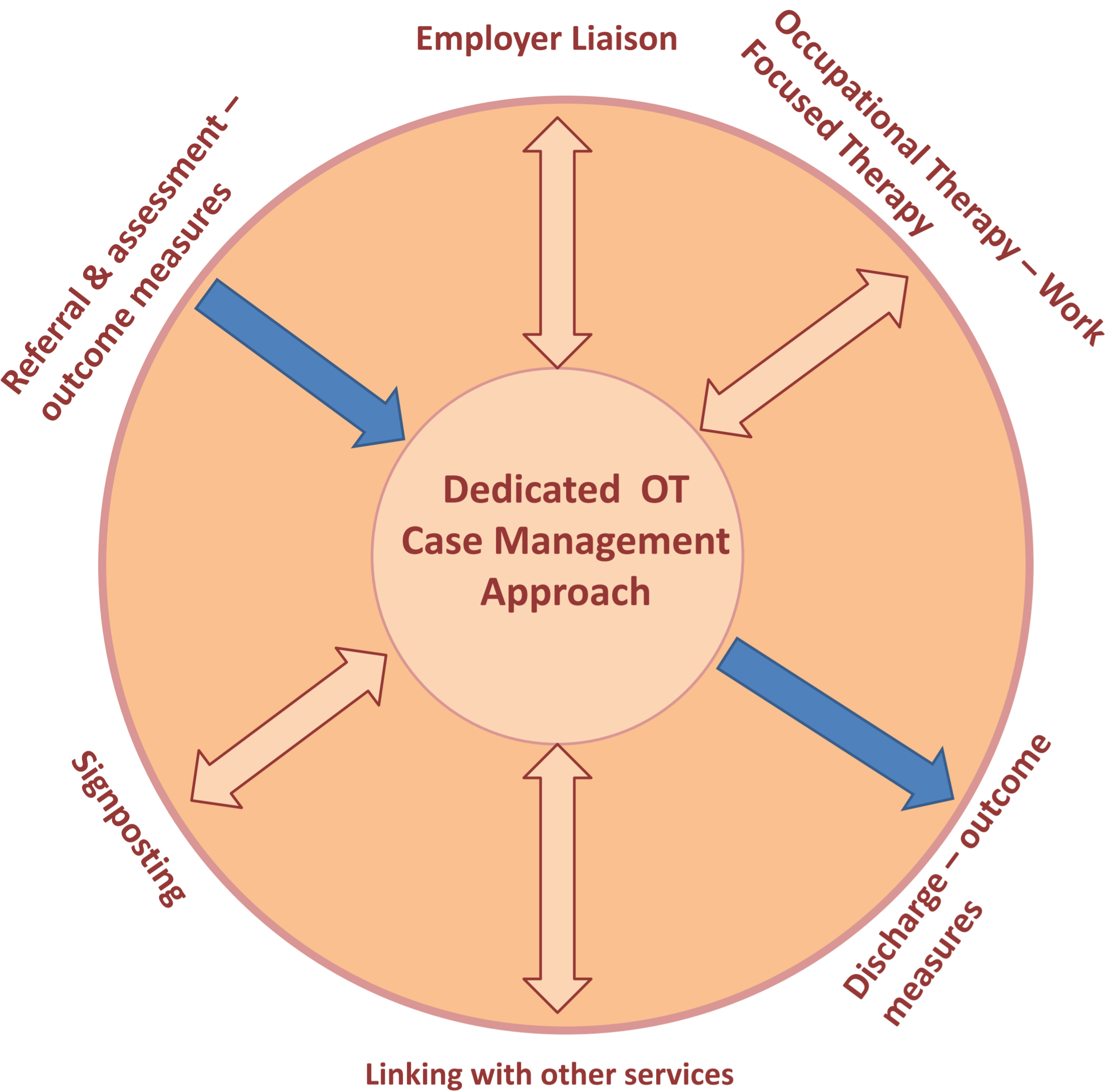


Reducing NHS and HSCP Staff Sickness Absence Through Brief Intervention Occupational Therapy



Lothian Work Support Services



Background

NHS and HSCP staffing are under unprecedented and extreme pressures (Audit Scotland). The extent of 'lost staff capacity' to long term sickness absence in Lothian is a major problem.

West Lothian HSCP funded an Employee Rehab Service for a two-year trial, offering Occupational Therapy Led Vocational Rehabilitation for employees with health conditions impacting their work.

The service adopted a bio-psycho-social approach utilising case management and work-focused therapies to maintain employees in work or help them return to work. The service was delivered across Lothian. The service evaluation report summarised key findings between 9 May 2022 and 30 October 2023.

Aim

- Prevent sickness absence of NHS & HSCP employees
- Facilitate earlier return to work after sickness absence
- Offer practical solutions addressing physical, emotional and cognitive health factors
- Reduce direct and indirect organisation sickness absence costs
- Release staff capacity back into care system

Process & Measurement

- Early contact within 4 days of referral
- Use of a dedicated Return to Work Process
- Implementation of Case Management Procedures as a structured offer
- Continuous Employee Engagement – week to week
- Increased work focused content
- Enhanced services coordination
- Greater workplace and manager support
- Skilled & Certified Disability Occupational Therapists – to the UK standard

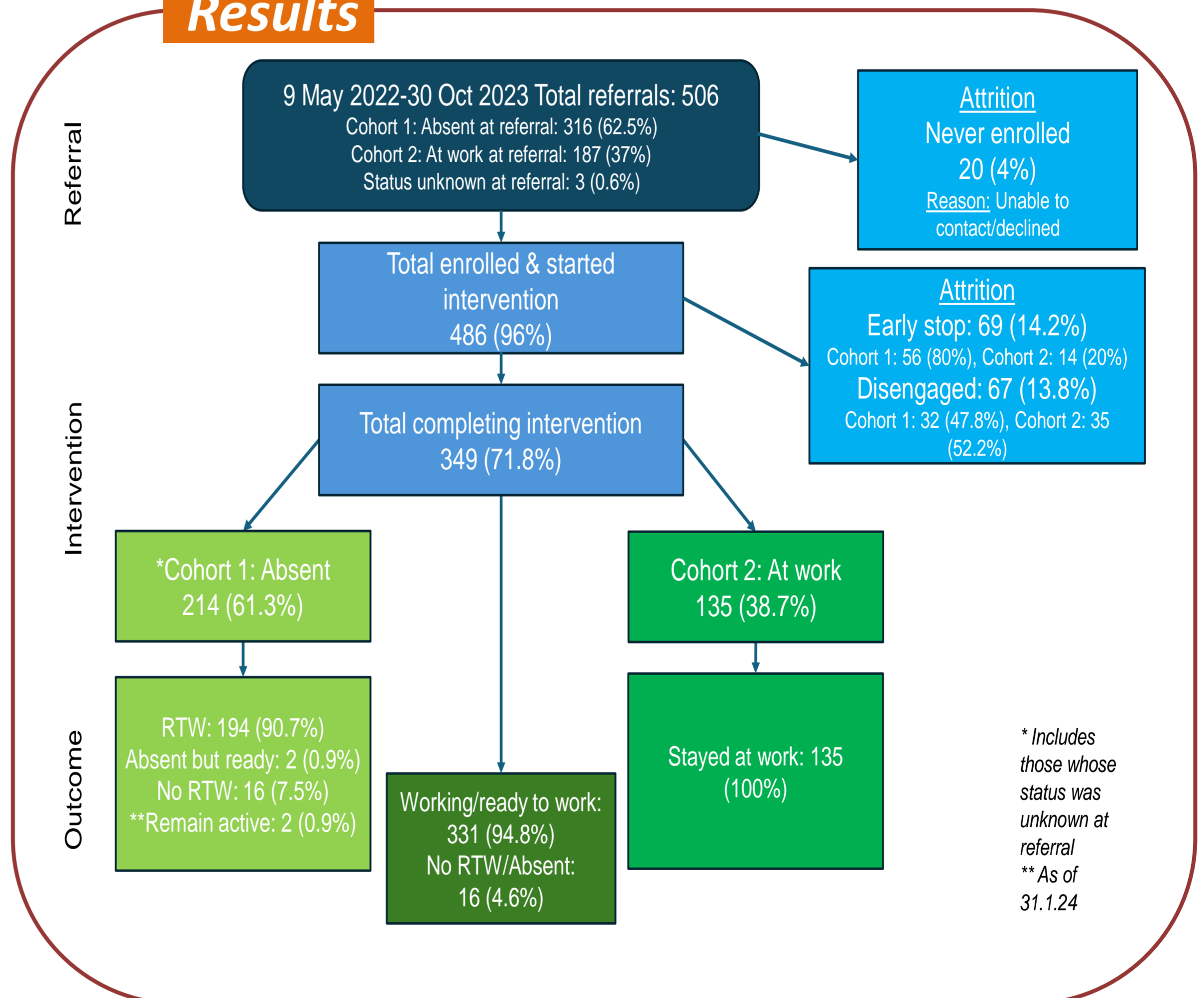
Results

- Provision of the Occupational Therapy Vocational Rehabilitation intervention positively affected staff in returning to work from sickness absence and remaining at work with a health condition.
- Over 90% of those in the absent from work cohort who completed the intervention returned to work.
- 100% of those in the present at work cohort remained at work.
- Improvements across multiple health outcome measures
- Identifying trends in the attrition cohort is an area for further examination.

Next Steps

- Promotion of Case Management Occupational Therapy and work focus rehab as part of a corporate approach
- Assist newly emerging sickness absence developments as a structured offer that has utility to NHS Lothian and HSCPs

Results



Focus Group Feedback

Helps managers "Case manages the issues"
 Valued by employees
 Personal
 Understood
 Disability Sensitive
 REHAB Focused
 Person-centred
 Early support