Preventing challenging behaviour of adults with complex needs in supported accommodation

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- *This presentation is based on independent research commissioned and funded by the NIHR School for Social Care Research. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the NIHR School for Social Care Research or the Department of Health, NIHR or NHS.*

Project staff

- Peter McGill (Principal Investigator)
- Vivien Cooper, Lisa Hopkins, Glynis Murphy (Co Investigators)
- Leah Vanono, Will Clover, Emmett Smyth (Research Associates)
- Christopher Joyce, Kate Henderson, Susy Davis and Roy Deveau (Research Assistance)

Background

- Some people with learning disabilities display "challenging" behaviour
- Such behaviour is difficult to manage and sometimes leads to restrictive practices such as restraining the person
- Challenging behaviour is often seen as the person's "problem" – needing "treatment"
- Providing social care support that makes challenging behaviour less likely would reduce the need for individual "treatment"

Aims and objectives

- This project is evaluating the prevention of challenging behaviour through improvements in social care.

- In particular, do changes in social care:
    I. Prevent and reduce severity of challenging behaviour?
    II. Enhance quality of life?
    III. Enhance staff working life?
    IV. Enhance quality of life for co-tenants?
    V. Reduce the need for specialised behaviour and other support?

Methods

- Cluster randomised controlled trial
- Baseline data collected within *Dimensions* settings
- Random allocation of settings to experimental/control groups
- Intervention in experimental settings for 9-12 months during 2013-14
- Follow up data on challenging behaviour, quality of social care and the effects of the intervention on people living in the settings and the staff supporting them

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Measures

- Data on service users including
  - Aberrant behaviour checklist (primary outcome measure)
- Observations
  - Momentary time sampling of service user activity and staff support
  - Rating of quality of staff support (active support measure)
- Data on staff including
  - Ratings of impact of intervention

Experimental and control groups

- 11 vs 13 services (mixture of residential care/supported living)

- Range of 1-8 people supported in each setting; 38 people in experimental group, 43 in control group (roughly two-thirds of whom display behaviour described as challenging)

- Approximately 140 staff in each group

Intervention

- Structured model of social care

- Agreeing goals or standards for the setting to achieve (cf. Lavigna et al's periodic service review)

- Support, training, monitoring and feedback with staff

- = Setting wide positive behaviour support
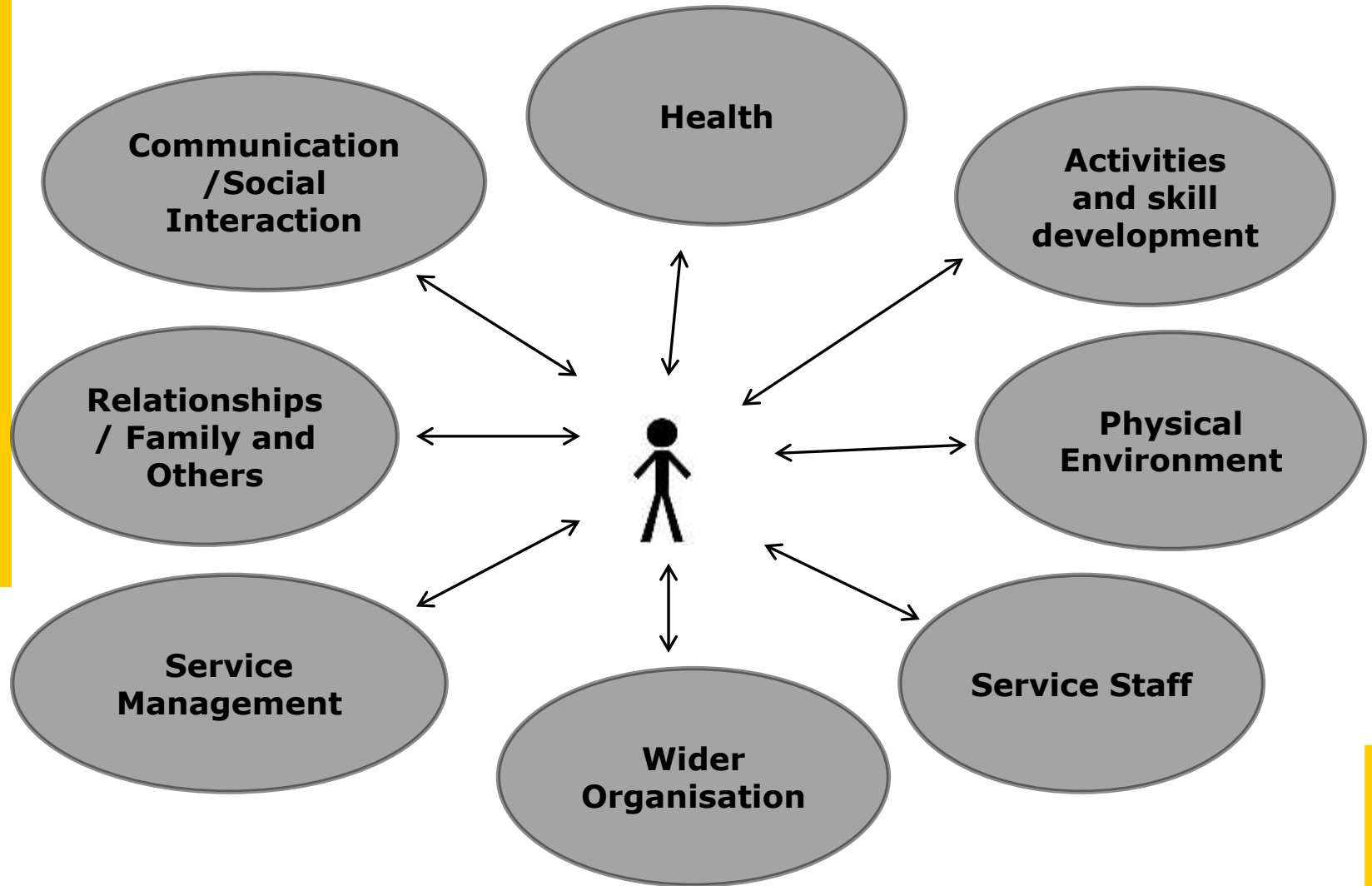
Theory of change

- Achieve standards in each house that have individual or general impact
- By achieving the standards we
  - Increase/improve the resources available
  - Improve the organisation of the setting
  - Change the way staff work
- Consequently
  - Better lives for the people supported
  - Better lives for supporters
- And less challenging behaviour

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Outcomes (1)

- Standards set and very substantially achieved

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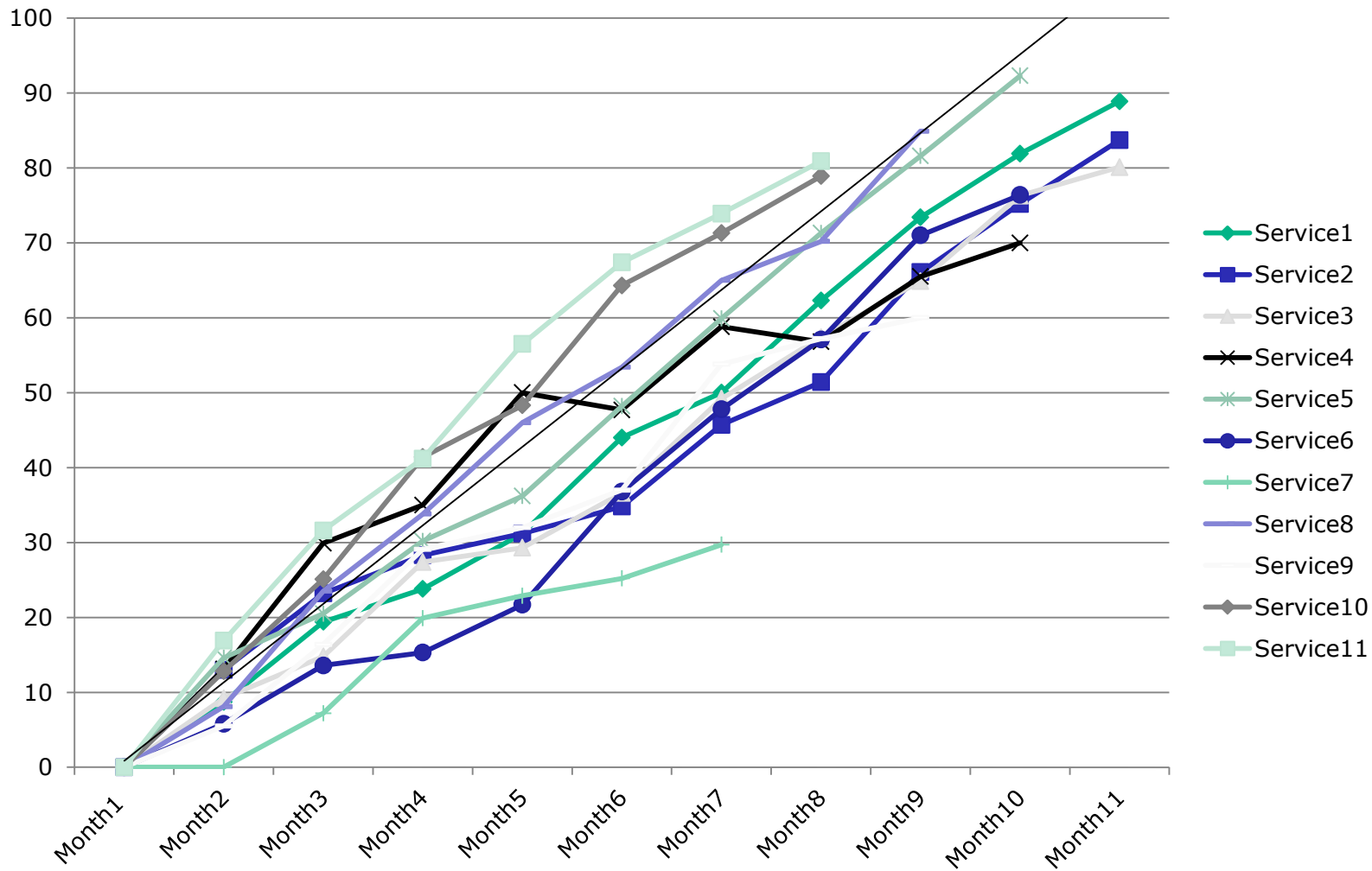
Outcomes (2)

- The way staff worked changed substantially
  - Provided more choice, more activities, presented demands more carefully etc (active support scores increased by almost 50% while control group scores went down)
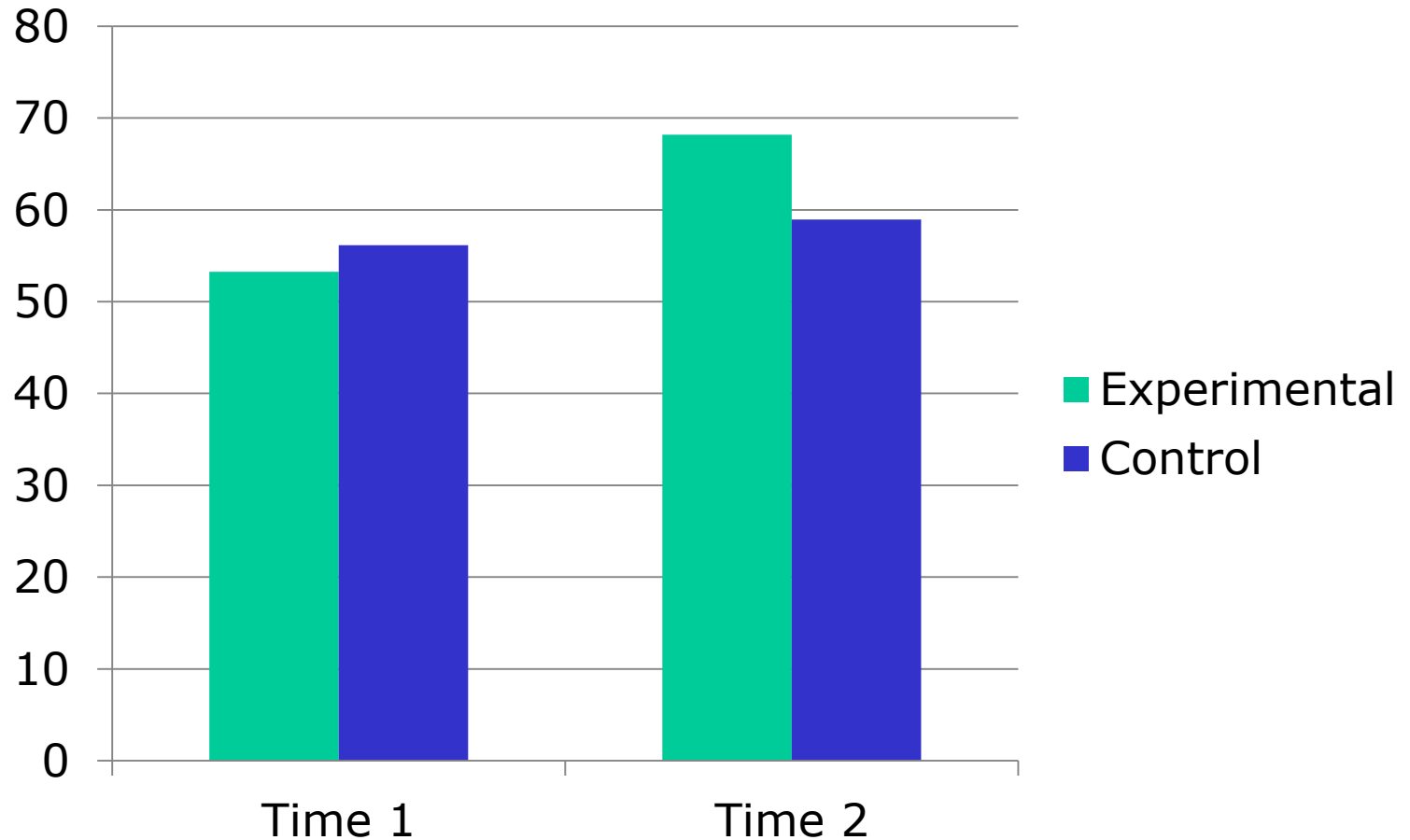
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Changes in Active Support Measure scores
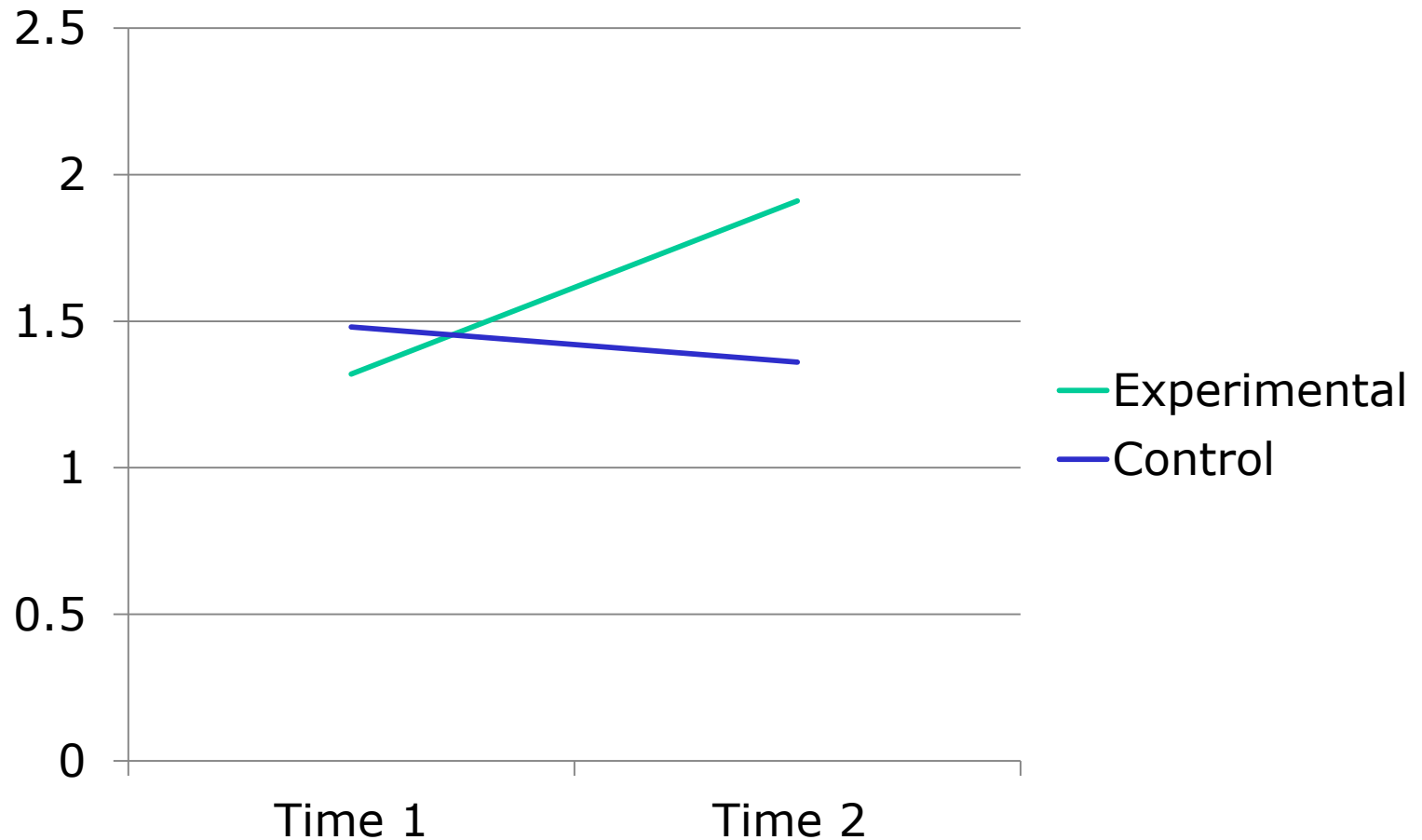
Outcomes (3)

- Better lives for the people supported
    - Meaningful activity increased from 53% to 68% in experimental group (56 to 59% in control group)

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Percentage meaningful activity

Outcomes (4)

- Better lives for supporters
  - 62% of staff reported better working quality (29% no change, 8% worse),74% reported enjoyable, 72% that had gained skills

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Outcomes (5)

- Substantial reduction in challenging behaviour
  - ABC score reduced significantly (43 to 15 vs 49 to 41)
  - Observed challenging behaviour reduced from 25% to 10% (vs 26 to 19% in control group)

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Aberrant Behaviour Checklist scores
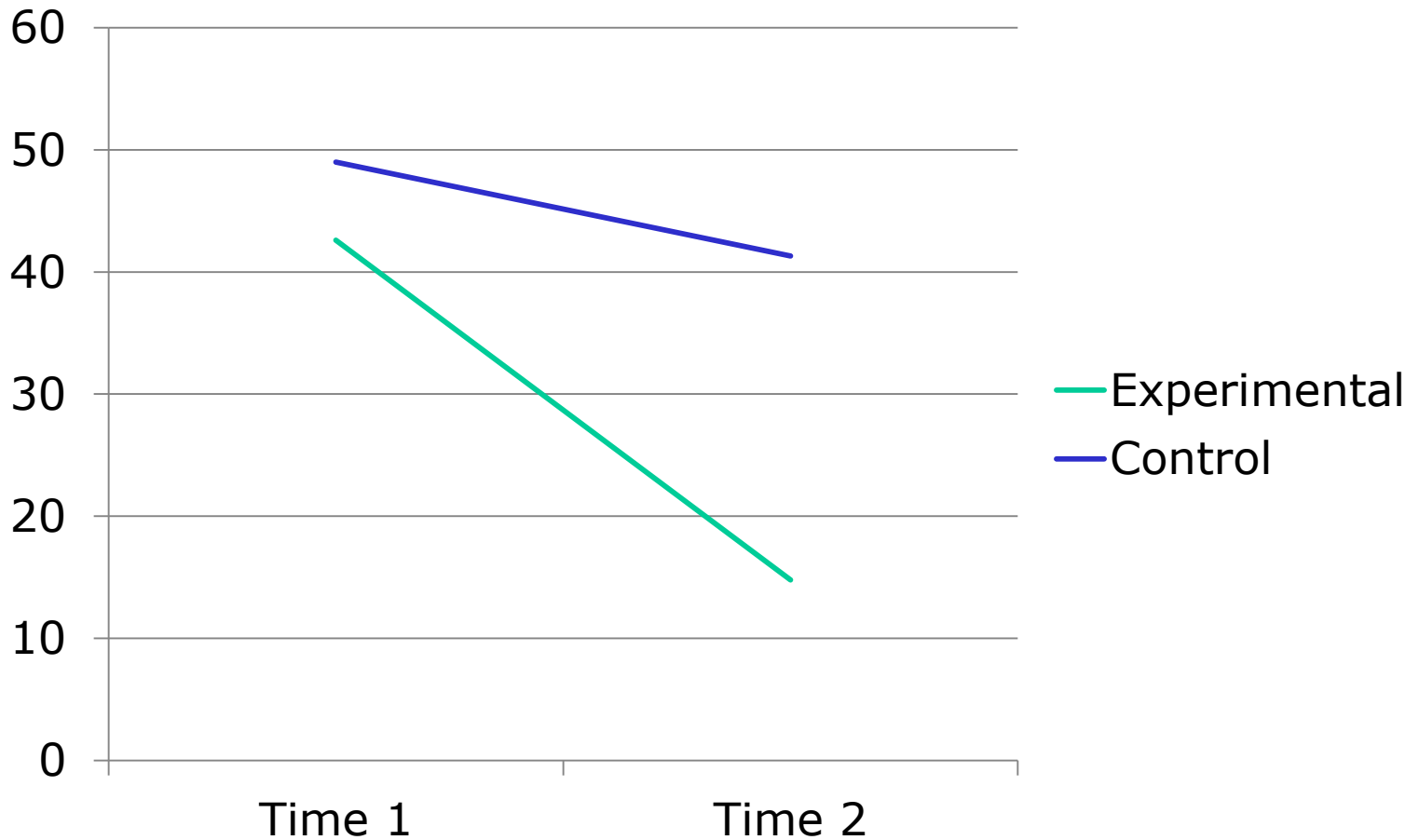
Reflections

- Basic premise (social care related to challenging behaviour) supported

- The intervention model is generally acceptable, often greeted with enthusiasm and seems to be capable of producing change

- Research approach perfectly viable but resource intensive and requires organisational support

- Not a replacement for individually focused positive behaviour support but may (next steps) produce more sustainable and systemic change that affects more people

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