

Improving Outcomes for Children with Additional Support Needs

The number of children in East Ayrshire’s Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Settings with an additional support need (ASN) is rising. In 2022, **296** children aged 2-5 were considered to have an additional support need, including those with a diagnosis of, or undergoing assessment for, ASD. In 2025, the figure was **413** (15.7%).

Scotland has groundbreaking legislation for children who face additional barriers to learning and to fulfilling their potential (Additional Support for Learning Legislation, 2019) – the challenge is translating that intention into practice. In 2022, Onthank ECC in East Ayrshire undertook testing and found universal change ideas improved outcomes for children with ASN. The learning was shared with 8 more ECCs in 2023 and Quality Improvement tools were introduced. To fully understand the impact and identify shareable learning, a more rigorous approach to Quality Improvement was required. Cohort 2024/2025 demonstrated significant improvements in wellbeing for children, as well staff confidence and the use of QI methodology. This learning shaped Cohort 2025/2026.

A child’s level of wellbeing is intrinsically linked to levels of involvement and motivation to learn and as such was the agreed outcome measure for the programme.

Aim

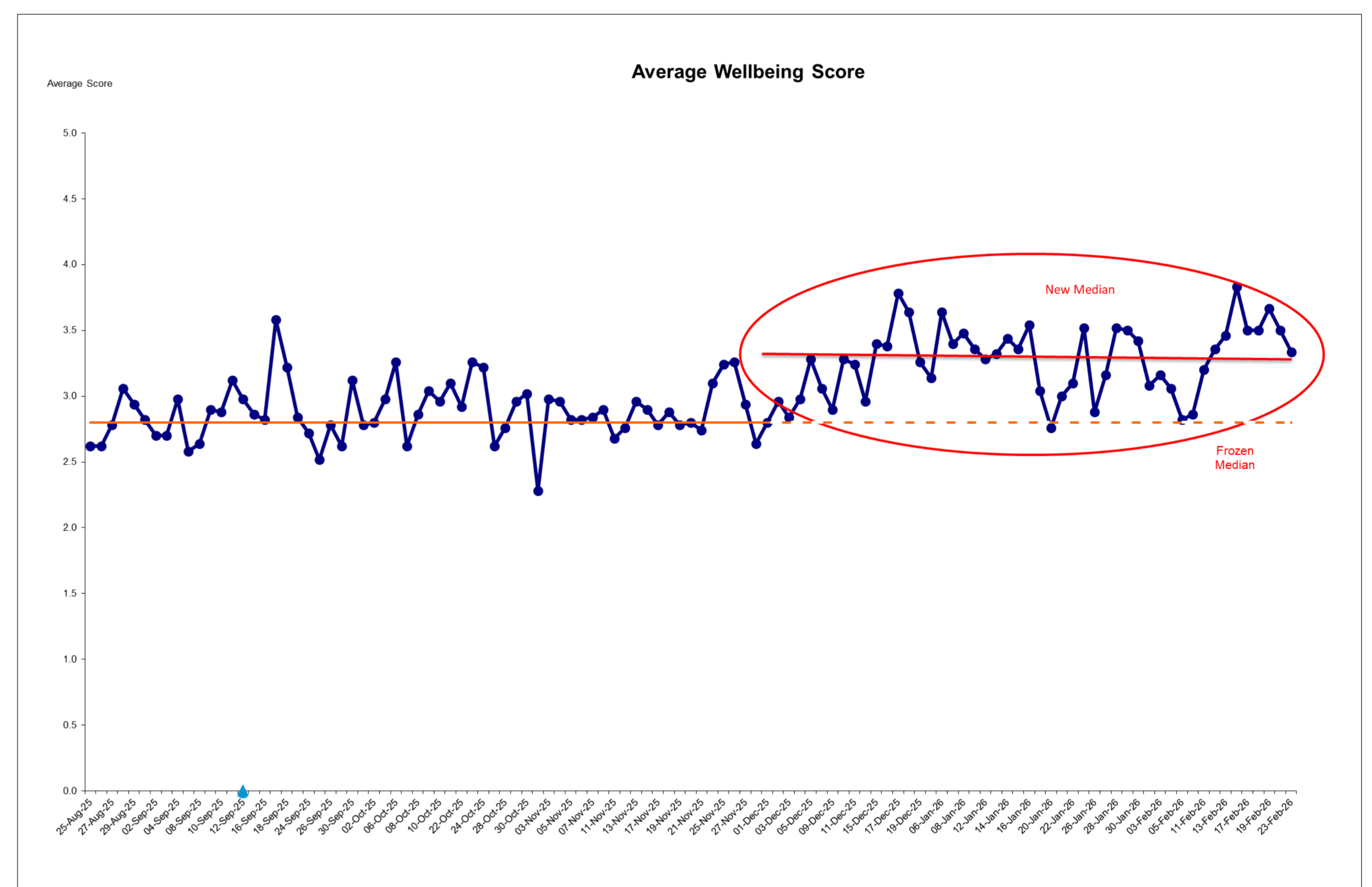
By April 2026, improve the average daily wellbeing score of children with additional support needs from 2.8 to 4 (using Leuven Wellbeing Scale)

Method

- Established a multi-disciplinary faculty
- Invited ECC’s onto an 8 month QI Programme to test a refined change theory
- Practitioners used run charts to track variation on children’s wellbeing and progress towards their settings aim
- Used QI tools & techniques to understand their system, identify a priority and test changes aligned to a secondary driver
- Online GLOW Team for resources and networking
- Site visits from faculty subject matter experts & previous participants

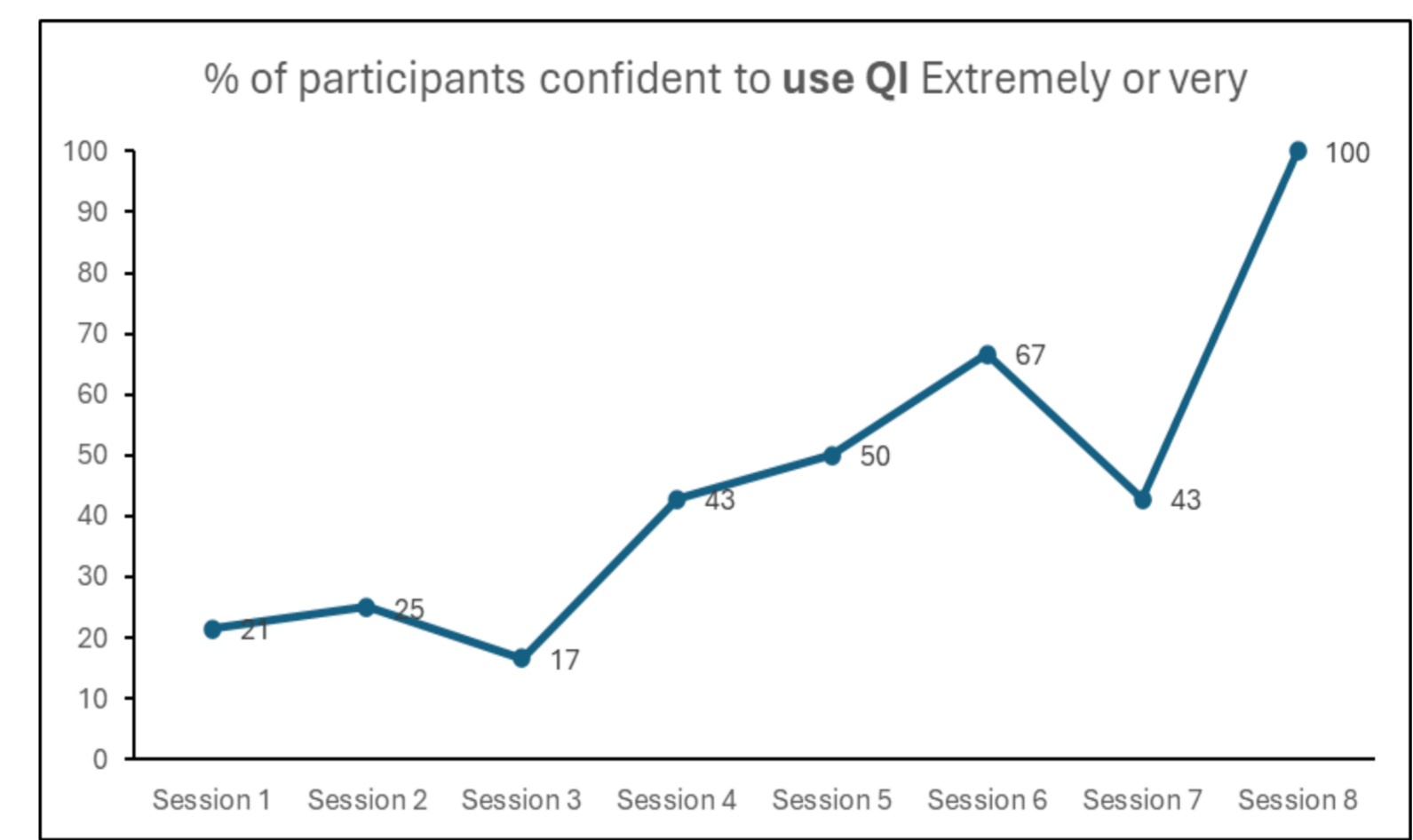
Results

- 6 settings completed the programme



Change Theory 2.0

Vision: All children in ELC thrive and reach their full potential

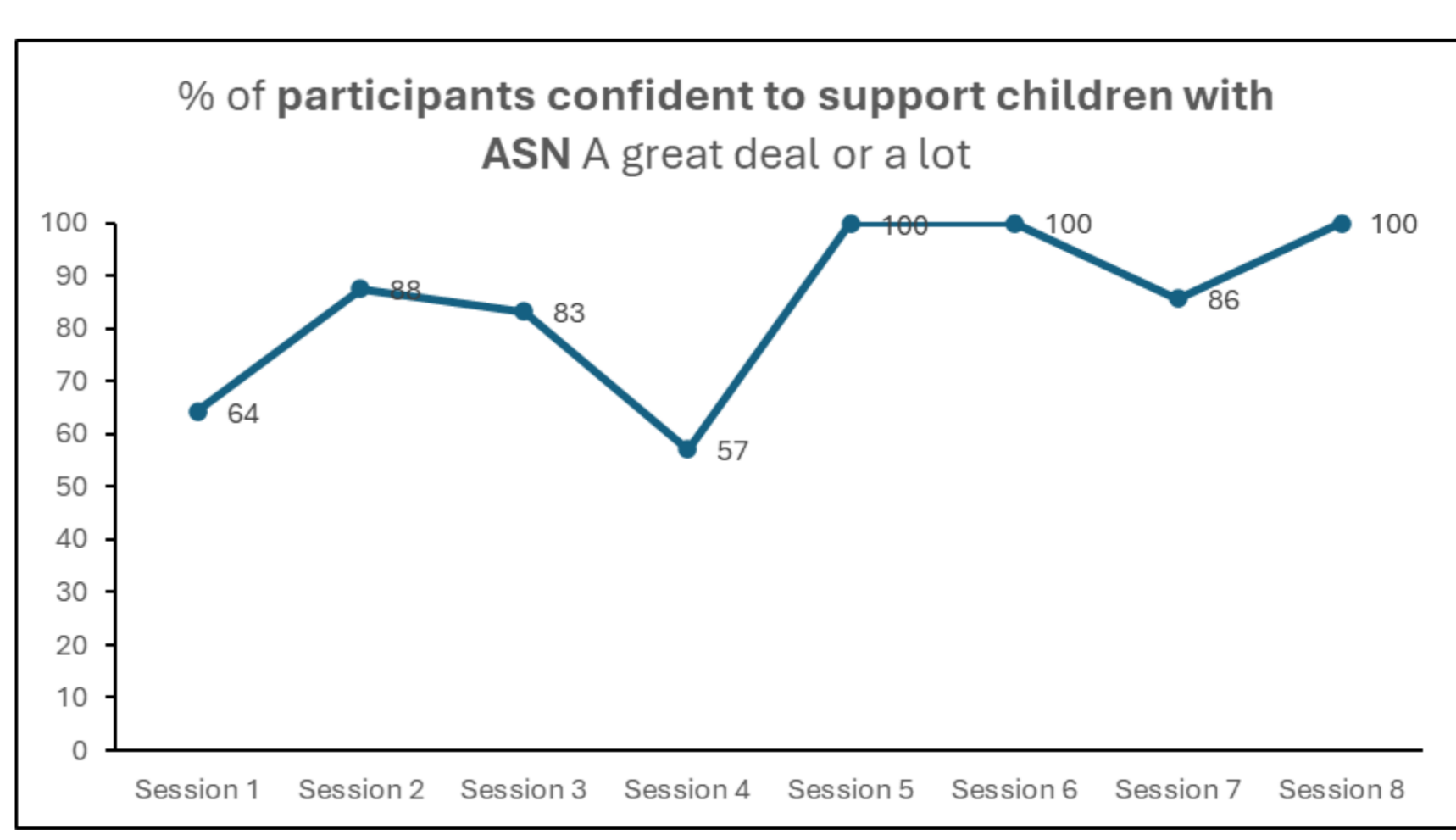
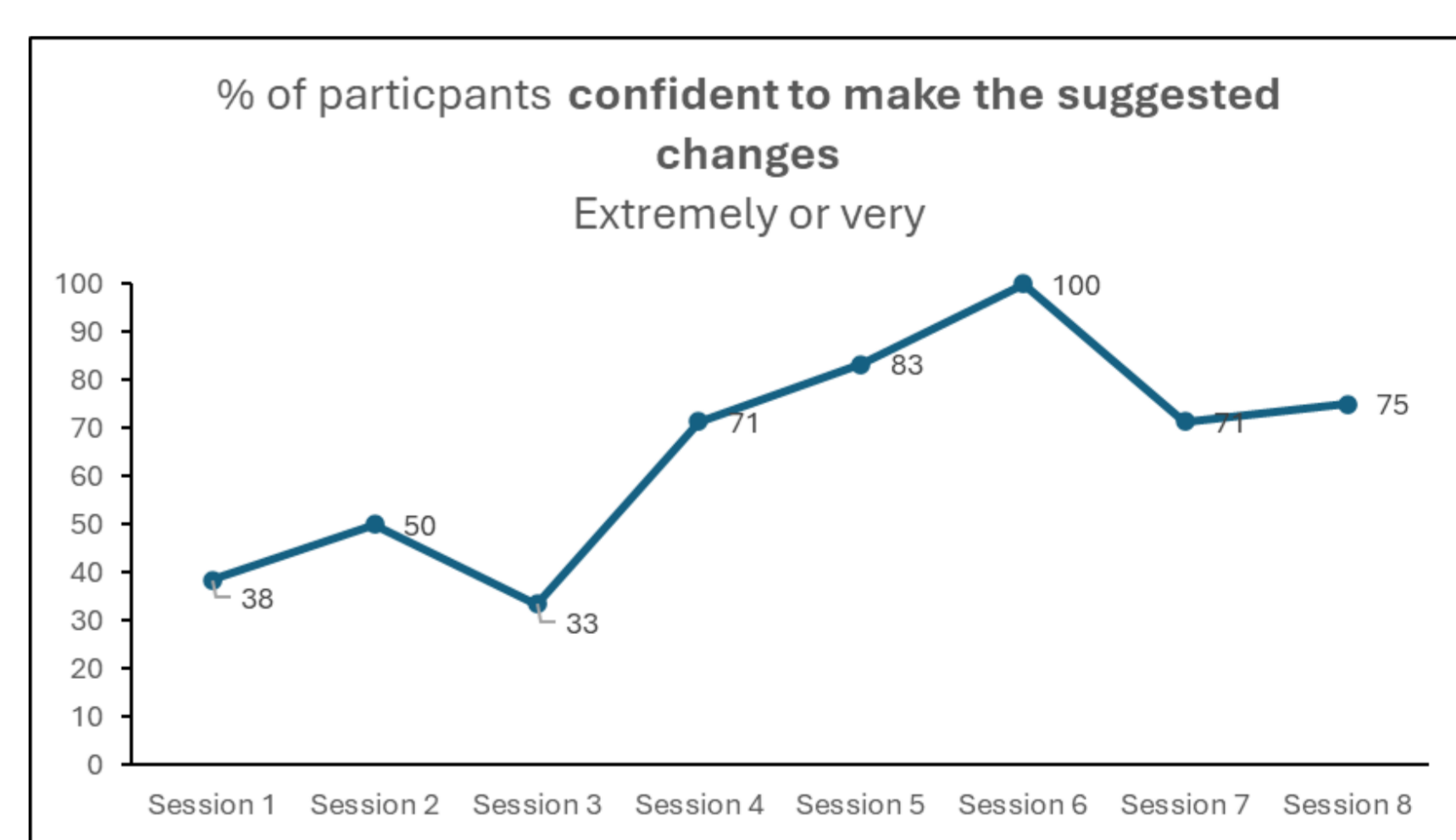


“It’s been so good to get round the table and discuss issues and ideas together with the time and space to do it properly”

Changes made this Cohort

- Specialist input from Speech & Language Therapist and Occupational Therapist earlier in the programme with follow up inputs later in the programme
- Process measures gathered from participants after every session
- Previous participants support sessions and visit settings
- Shortened programme to 8 months

“Be confident in making small changes to increase children’s wellbeing”



“It has been really helpful to have input from professionals and to ask questions related to changes before we made them”

“I have learned so much and now have the confidence to try out new ideas within the setting. I am more confident in leading change”

Next steps

- Invite applications for Cohort 2026/2027 to begin in August
- Ensure senior leader engagement and buy in
- Further refine the Change Theory