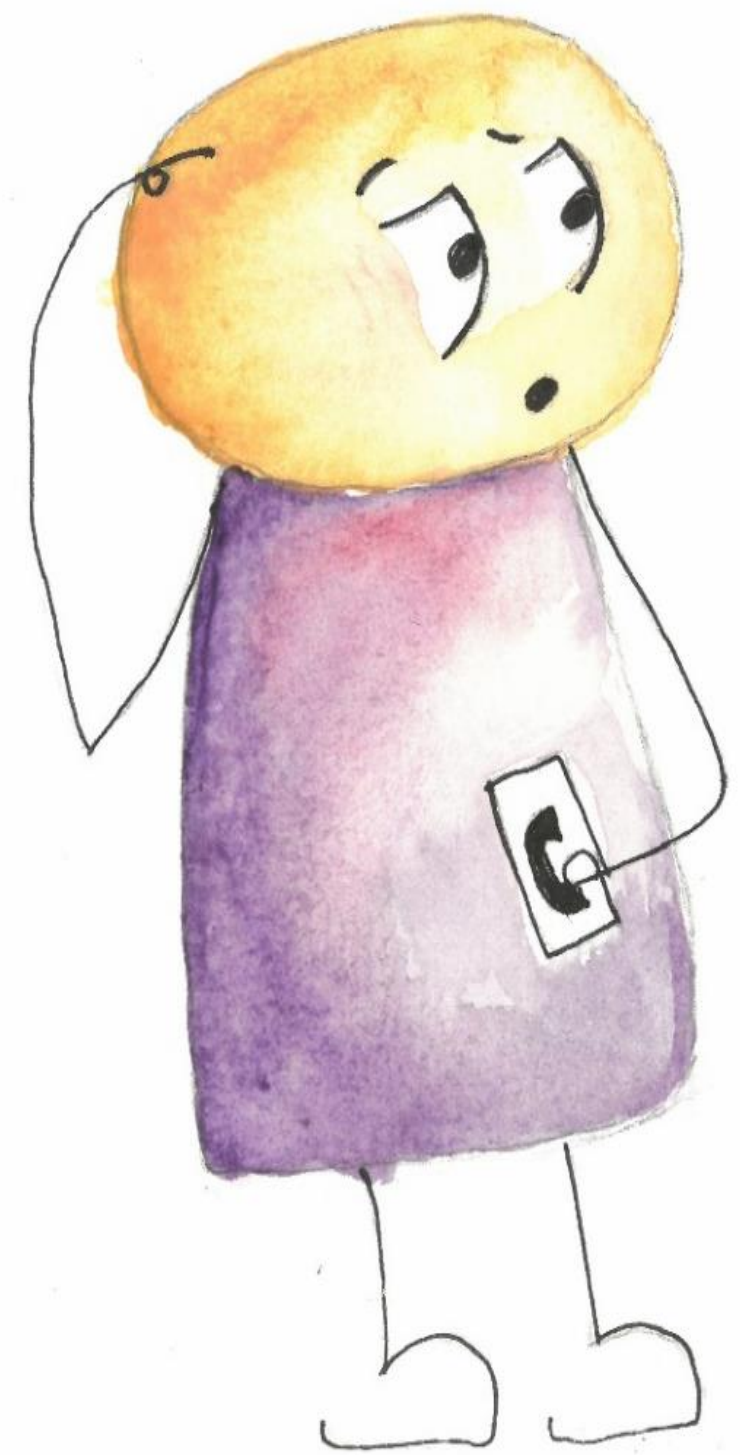


Improving child maltreatment response decision-making: A Behavioural Insights randomized control trial

Annalese Bolton, Ben R. Newell, Simon Gandevia, James Peek, Elena Berrocal Capdevila

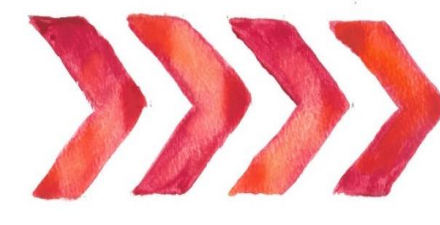


Should I call FACS?



The issue

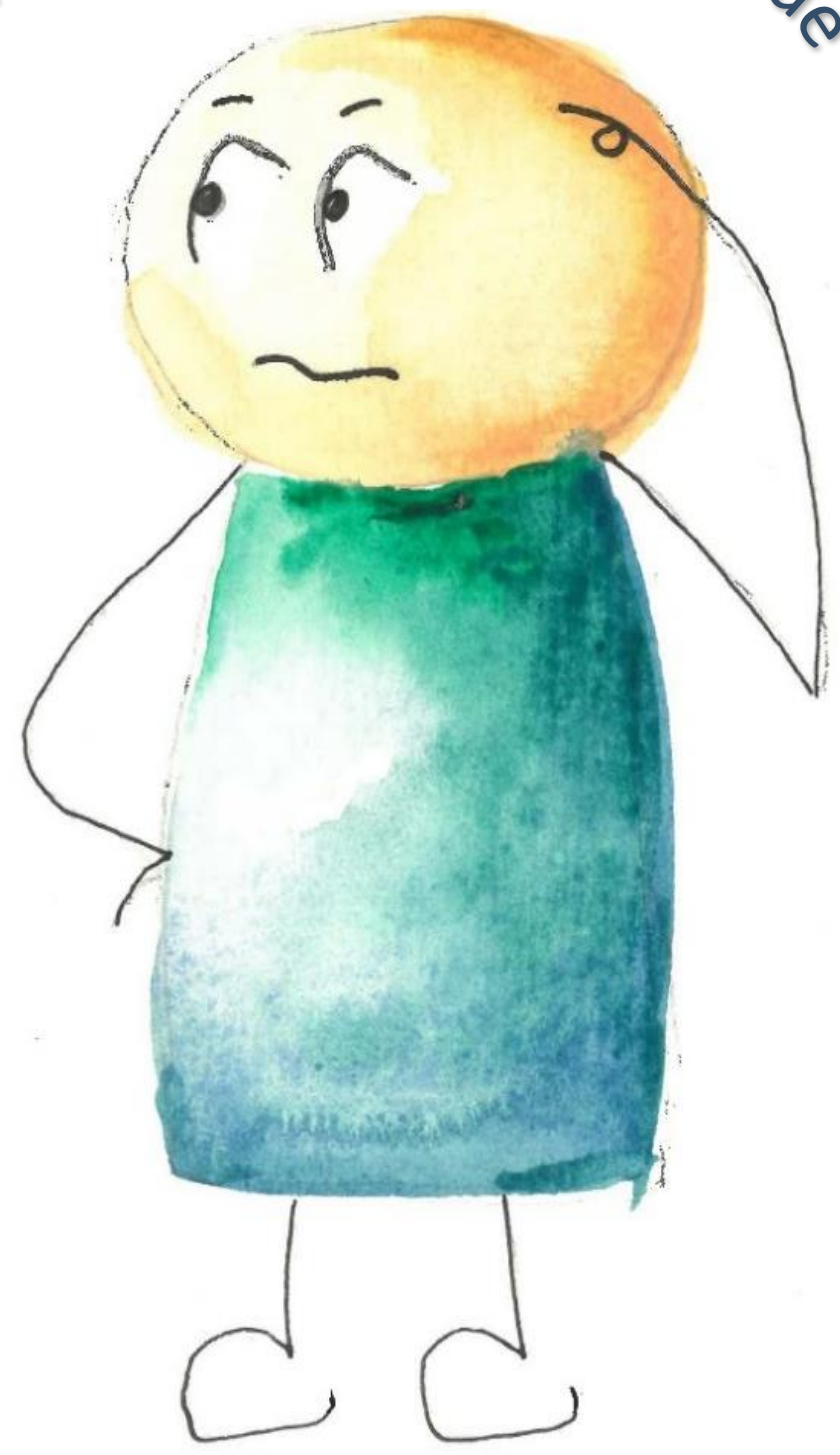
The New South Wales Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) only deal directly with cases where there is a Risk of *Significant Harm* (ROSH). Valuable FACS resources are spent processing abundant Non-ROSH reports that result in no benefits to lower-risk families.



Our goal

Increase reporting accuracy (i.e. reduce Non-ROSH, maintain ROSH) by altering the standard feedback letter ("*Control*") to encourage mandatory reporters (people who work with children) to consider alternative responses to future lower risk situations.

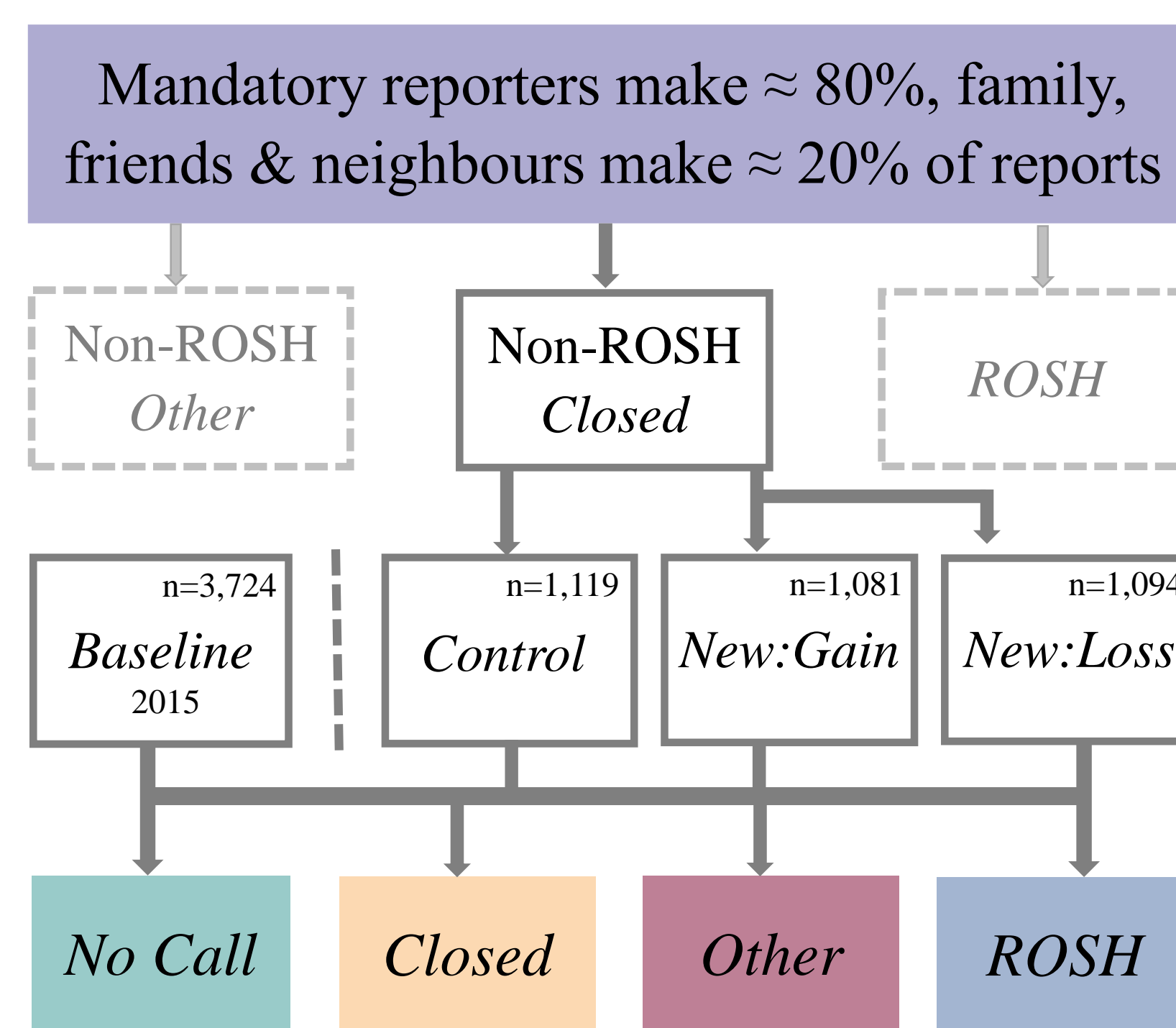
I'll use the Response Guide



What we did

We developed a new feedback letter that...

- was easy to read and visually attractive¹
- made alternative responses salient² via a 'Response Guide'
- included a persuasive message³ framed as a gain or loss⁴ (*New:Gain* and *New:Loss*) to encourage future use of the Response Guide



N = 7,018

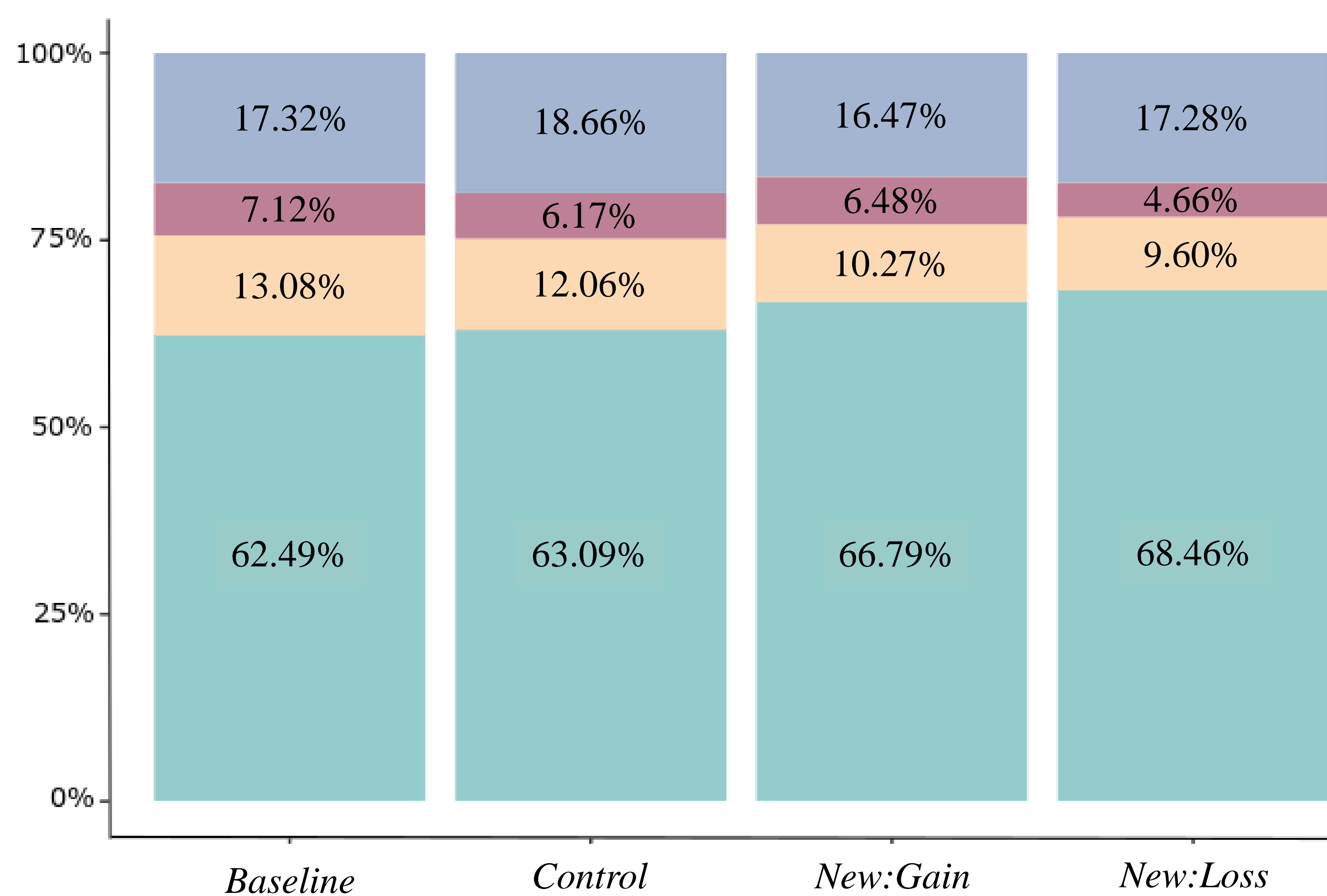
Trial Design

- Step 1: People report their concerns to FACS
- Step 2: FACS categorizes report outcomes
- Step 3: From 6 July – 9 October 2016 we sent mandatory reporters who made a *Closed* report 1 of 3 letters
- Step 4: We monitored the outcomes of participants subsequent reporting behaviour (11 October cut-off)

Success! We increased reporting accuracy

Reducing Non-ROSH by 3% saves 1,144 - 1,716 casework hours per year

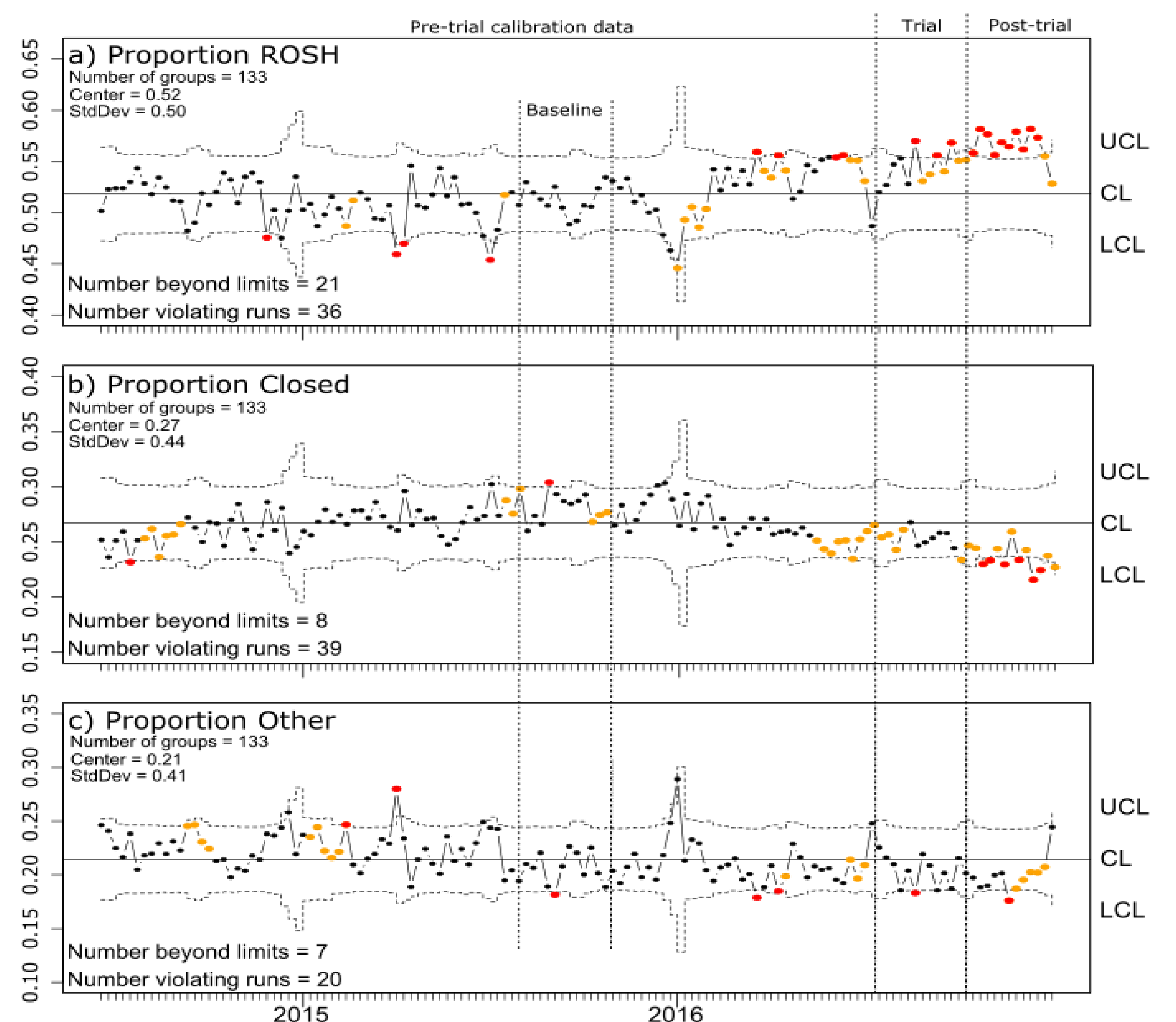
As hypothesised the new letters, particularly *New:Loss*, increased the reporting accuracy of mandatory reporters' involved in the trial:



There were: 1) No differences in ROSH, 2) *New:Gain* had significantly less subsequent reports than *Baseline*, and 3) *New:Loss* had significantly less, a) subsequent reports than *Control* & *Baseline*, and b) *Closed* reports than *Baseline*

Our trial had a notable impact on total report outcomes:

Weekly total report outcome proportions



Post-trial, the Response Guide was made available to everyone online