Teacher Choices:
how we're building evidence around everyday practice

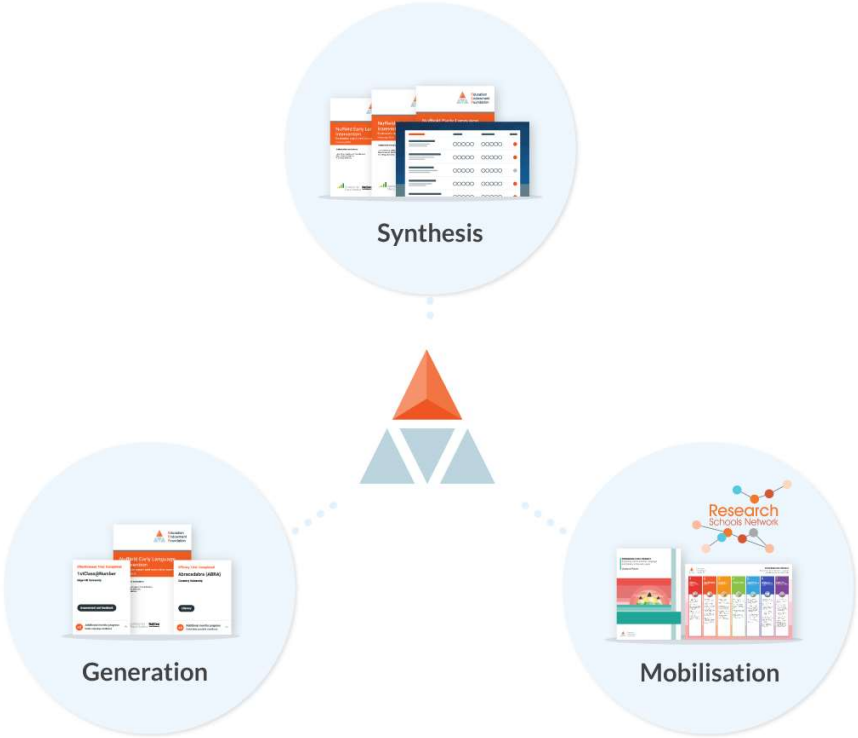
May 2025

About the EEF

We are an independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. We do this by supporting schools, nurseries and colleges to improve teaching and learning through better use of evidence.

We do this by:

- **Synthesising evidence.** Summarising the best available evidence on teaching and learning in an accessible way.
- **Generating evidence.** Funding independent evaluations of programmes and approaches that aim to raise the attainment of children and young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
  - ➢ This includes our **Teacher Choices** research
- **Mobilising evidence.** Supporting education practitioners, as well as policymakers and other organisations, to use evidence in ways that improve teaching and learning.



Teacher Choices: how EEF is building evidence around everyday practice

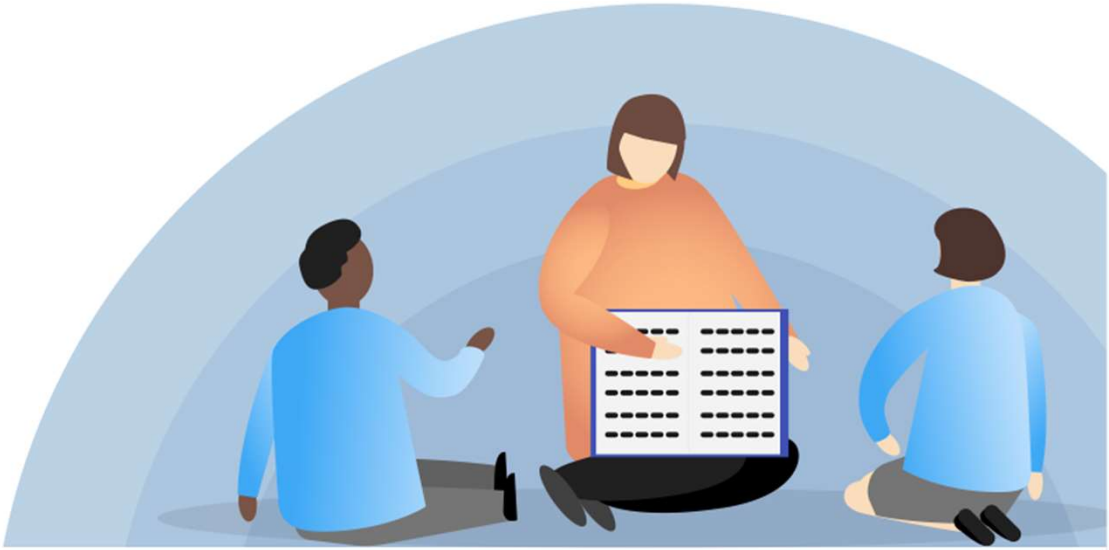
Getting to the heart of teaching and learning

- The vast majority of the EEF's impact evaluations have concerned educational programmes.
- But lots else happens in classrooms with the potential to affect pupil learning.
- Teachers make decisions in their day-to-day practice for which evidence supporting one choice over another is limited.
- Teacher Choices trials set out to directly compare the decisions teachers routinely make in the classroom.

- The EEF has commissioned 7 Teacher Choices studies to date with participation from over 430 schools and 1,000 teachers.

Principles of Teacher Choices trials

- A genuine dilemma faced by teachers.
- Easy to define so that options are clear and distinct.
- Straightforward to implement without additional training and resources.
- Feasible to evaluate.

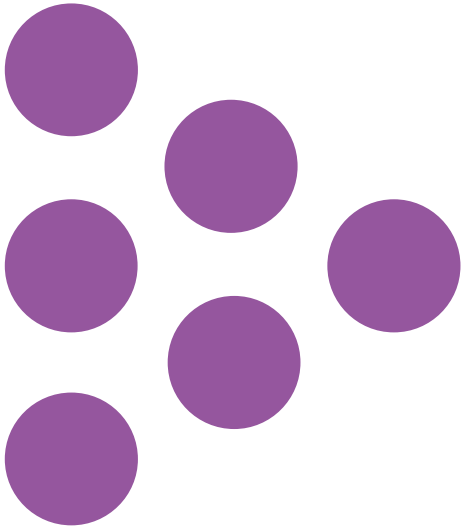


NFER
National Foundation for Educational Research

ChatGPT in Lesson Preparation

Trial design and findings

Palak Roy, NFER



Study rationale & scope

Why focus on ChatGPT?

- ChatGPT available since November 2022, evidence lacking
- Aligned with the teacher guide developed by Bain & Hg Foundation

Why teacher workload?

Theorised pathways to improved pupil outcomes: improved **quality and variety** of planned lessons and **reduced teacher workload** for lesson preparation

- Short-term lesson planning during summer term (April–July 2024)
- Assumed existing schemes of work and learning objectives
- 10-week implementation period, split into two phases, using assigned choice

Trial design

- State secondary schools in England
- Year 7 or 8 science teachers
- Cluster RCT with school-level randomisation
- Stratified by school size

- Baseline teacher workload
- Primary outcome – teacher workload (week 6-10)
- Secondary outcomes included lesson quality

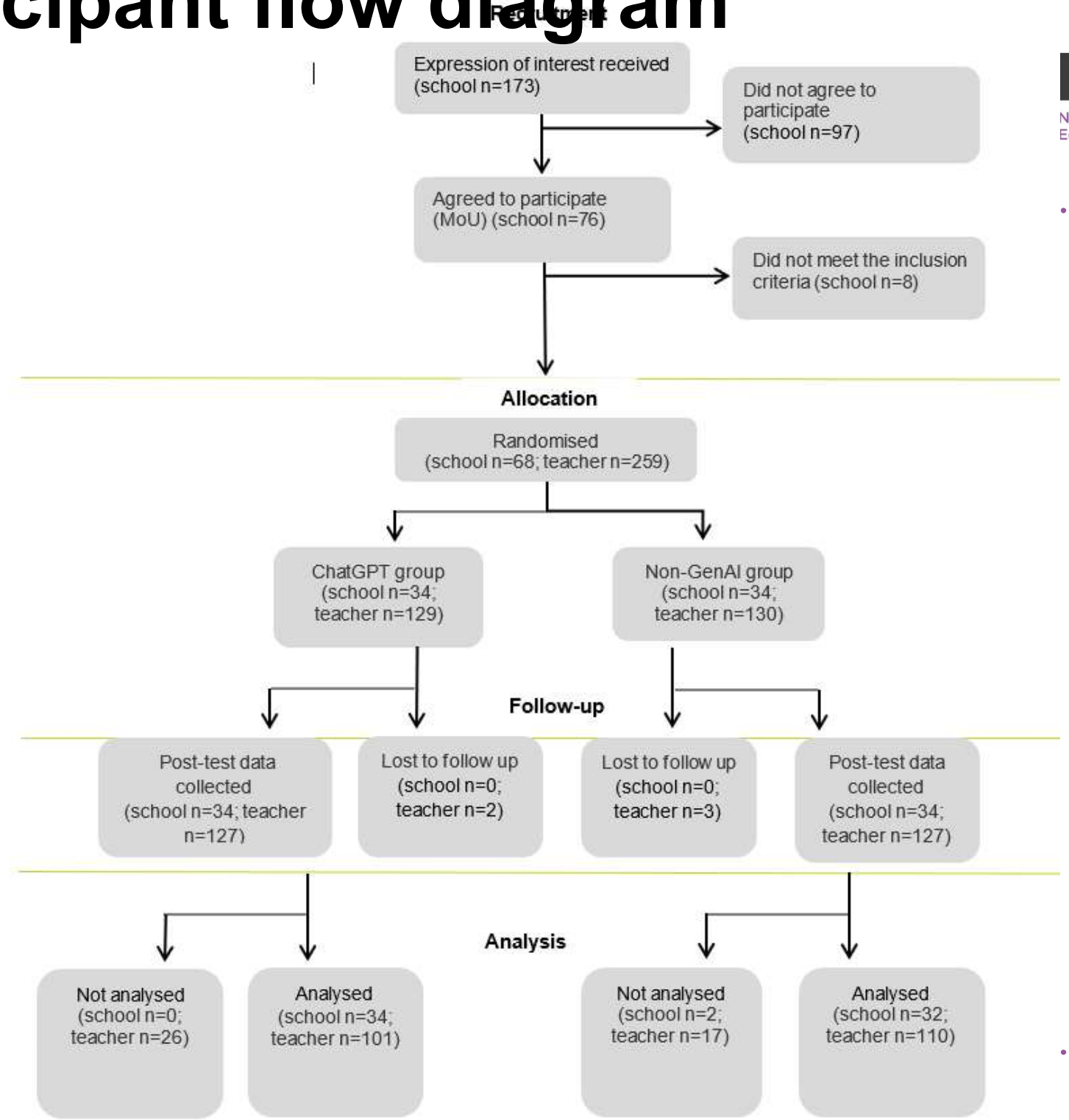
Intervention group (ChatGPT)

- asked to prepare upcoming lessons using ChatGPT
- Encouraged to use the online guide
- Not use any other GenAI for lesson and resource preparation

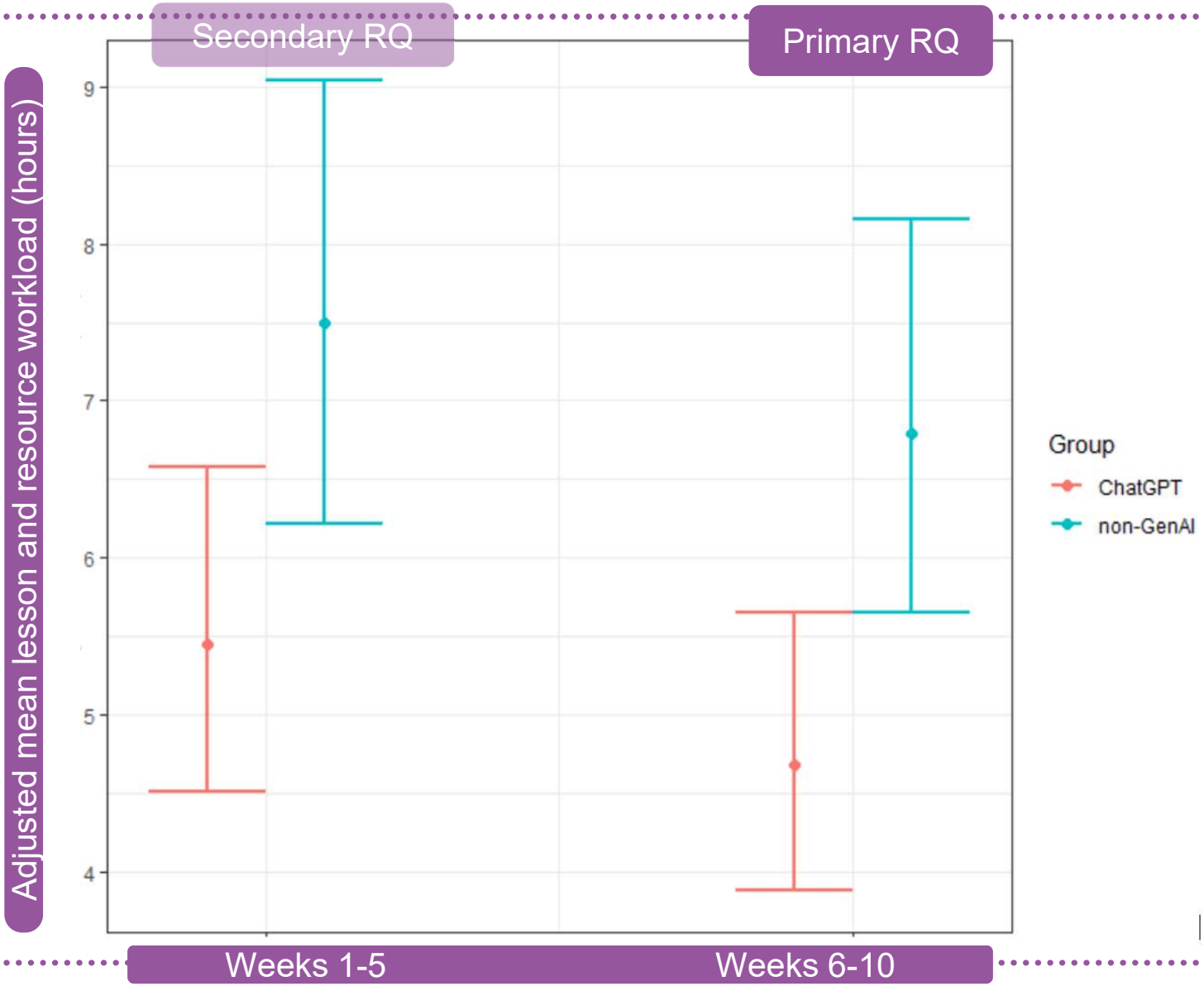
Control group (non-GenAI)

Not use any GenAI in lesson and resource preparation for any lesson they deliver

Participant flow diagram



Key findings: ChatGPT group saved time



Key findings: Quality was maintained (secondary RQ)

- Independent panel of experienced science teachers (blind to group allocation) reviewed and ranked a sample of lesson resources from both groups

There was no difference in quality between the two groups.

- Reassuring, as time savings would not be worth it if the lessons produced were of lower quality or scientifically inaccurate
- Caution: the sample of resources was limited

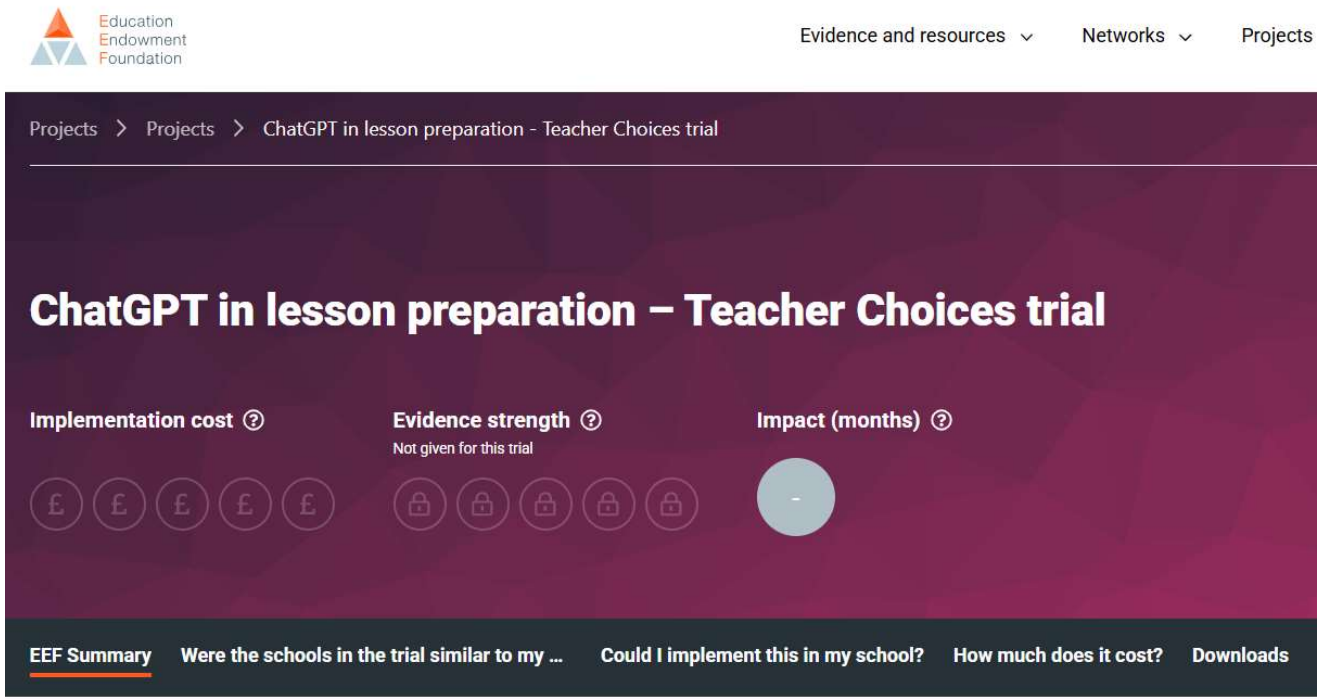
Context: How did teachers use ChatGPT?

- Used for one or two activities, not whole lessons - creating quizzes/questions or finding new ideas for lesson activities
  - Availability of pre-prepared resources (e.g. from colleagues or previous teaching) influenced when they decided to use ChatGPT
  - Useful for creating resources for cover lessons
  - Some tailoring e.g. specifying difficulty level or age group
  - Few teachers used follow-up questions to refine their prompts – this is an area where teachers may need additional guidance

Key takeaways

- The ChatGPT group spent less time on Y7/8 lesson and resource prep (69%) than the non-GenAI group in weeks six to ten of the trial. This equates to an average saving of 25 minutes per week.
- The time saving for the ChatGPT group occurred even though teachers used ChatGPT to support a relatively modest amount of their overall Year 7/8 planning.
- Importantly, quality of the lesson resources did not appear to differ. Most teachers perceived that learning and engagement was similar when using ChatGPT, and no teachers reported adverse effects on pupils.

Thank you



Evaluation report on EEF website

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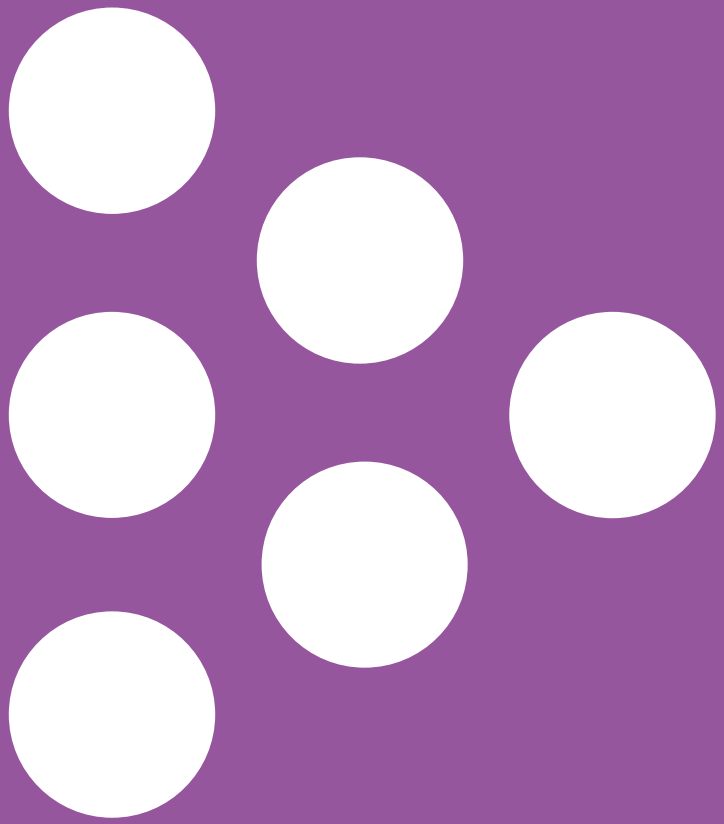

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