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A Clustered RCT to Test the Impacts of Behavioural Interventions in Reducing Failure to Attend Rates on Voluntary Employment Support Provision.

RCT in Social Sciences Conference

Date: 6th September 2017

Presenter: Mark Langdon

Summary...



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- **Outline what we mean by ‘Behavioural Intervention’ or ‘Nudge’**
- **Describe how ‘nudges’ are being used in everyday situations and how the UK Government is making use of such techniques**
- **Outline the catalysis for this trial**
- **Summarise the trial interventions and design**
- **Present some early (indicative) results**

What is a 'Nudge'?



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- Sunstein (2017) summarises the definition of a 'Nudge' as “*approaches that steer people in particular directions, but also allow them to go their own way*”
- Adam Oliver defined 'Nudge' in a similar way, but considered its effects along three axis; cost, regulation, *awareness*
- A nudge should be, either or:
 1. Low/no cost,
 2. Low /no regulation
 3. Low/no *awareness*
- A 'Nudge' understands the common errors in our everyday thinking and attempts to either override or makes use of these errors in order to shape an individuals choices and behaviour. Since 1974 this has been a growing field of research.
- A Recommended Retail Price
- Free Trial Periods e.g. Amazon Prime

What is a 'Nudge'?

Before we understand what a 'Nudge' is we have to understand what a cognitive bias is... tendencies to think in certain ways that can lead to systematic deviations from logical/rational decisions.

Decision-making

- Ambiguity effect
- Automation bias
- Anchoring
- Hindsight bias
- Bandwagon effect
- Optimism bias
- Gambler's fallacy
- Framing effect
- Rhyme as reason effect
- IKEA effect
- Reactance
- Loss aversion
- Innovation bias

Social Bias

- Authority bias
- Egocentric bias
- Halo effect
- Just-world hypothesis
- Group attribution error
- Social Norm
- In-group bias

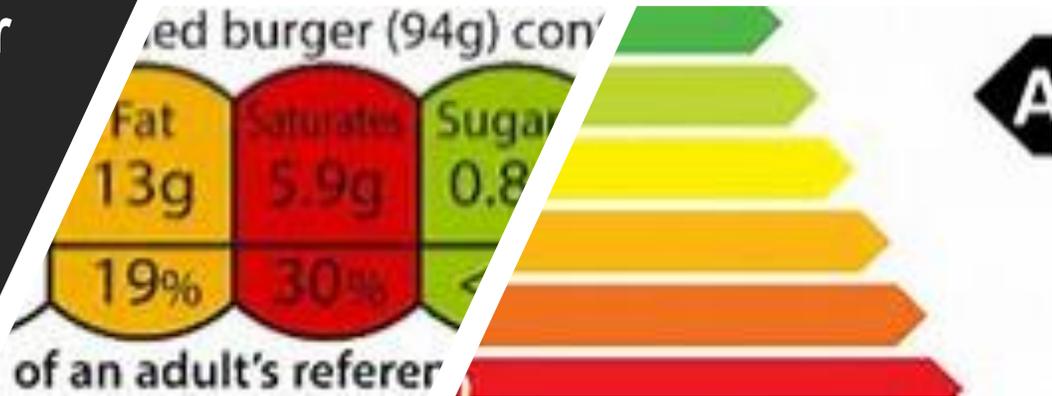
Memory Bias

- Positivity effect
- Spacing effect
- Telescoping effect
- Primacy effect, recency effect
- Mood-congruent memory bias
- Bizarreness effect
- Picture superiority effect

Examples of nudging in Government



Graphic warnings on cigarette packets;
Energy efficiency labels
Food nutrition fact labels
Automatic enrolment for
Organ donation and pension schemes

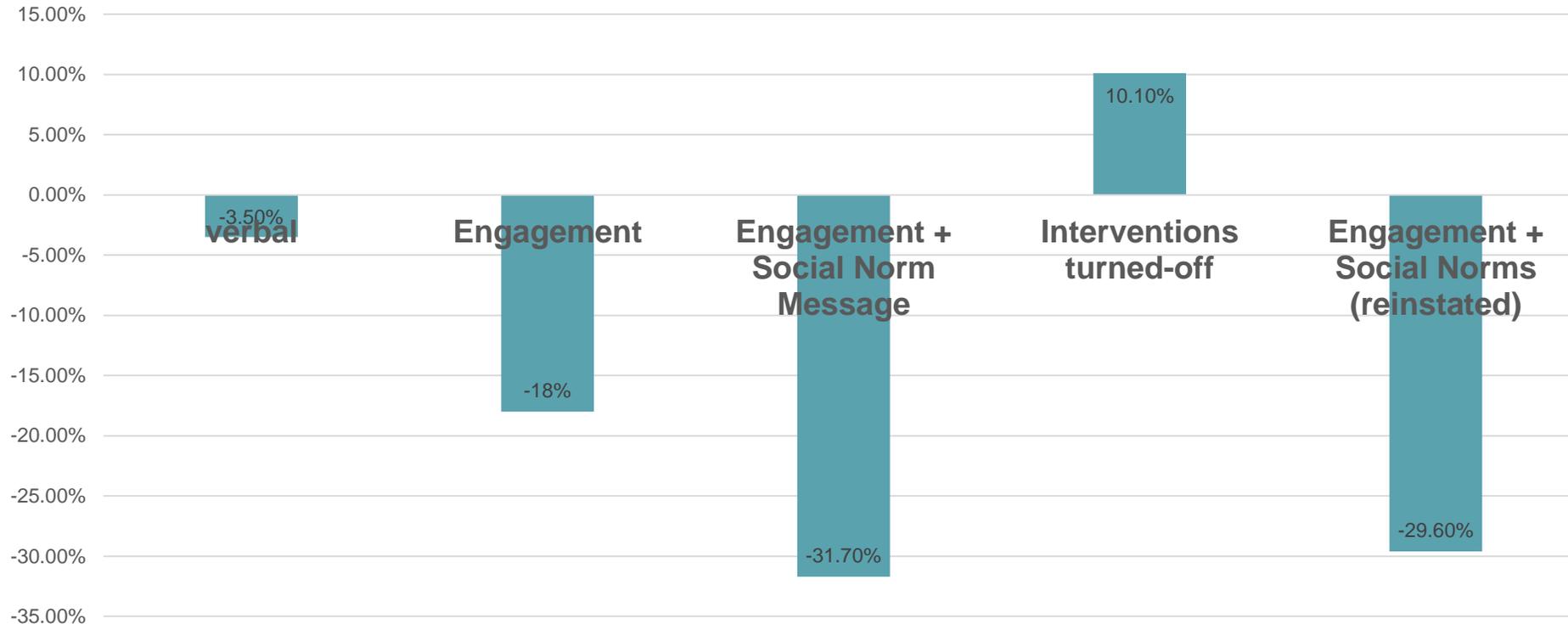


Can we use 'nudging' to improve service efficiency?

Reducing Fail To Attend (FTA) in the NHS...

The Group Work feasibility study reported a 49% FTA rate. Is there anything we could do to help improve this. Inspired by Martin et al (2012) NHS GP FTA reduction

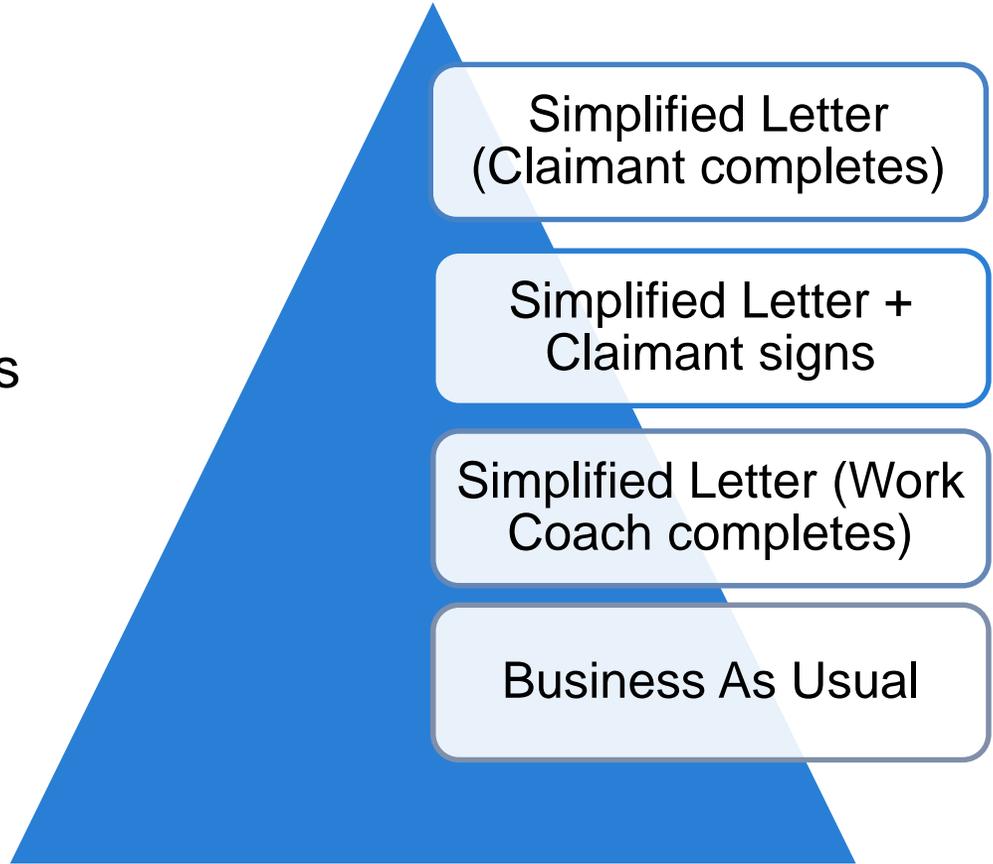
Chart 1: Chart to show GP FTA Rate experiment Outcomes



Can 'nudging' offer an opportunity to help improve the efficiency of Government Active Labour Market services?

Testing nudge in the UK Active Labour Market to reduce FTA rates for an employment support intervention...

Order is
indicative of
expected
effectiveness



Giving us a 4 arm
trial...

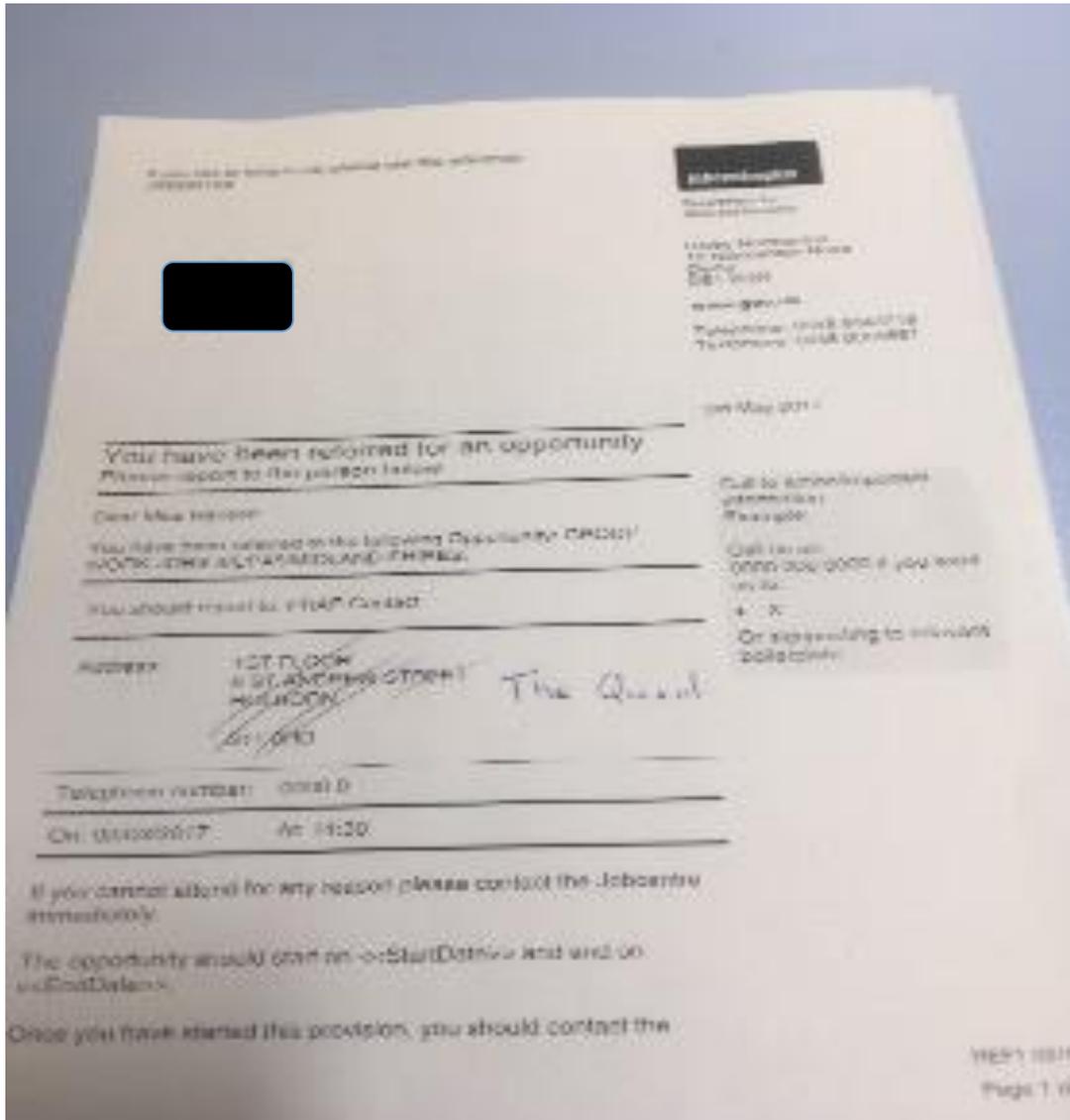
Examples of 'nudged' referral letters



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Business As Usual (Control Group)

*This form is generated
from the LMS system.*

*However, we have also
observed Work Coaches
using post-it notes and
asking Claimants to input
the appointment details
into their mobile phone
calendars.*

Examples of 'nudged' referral letters



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Group Work Handover Form

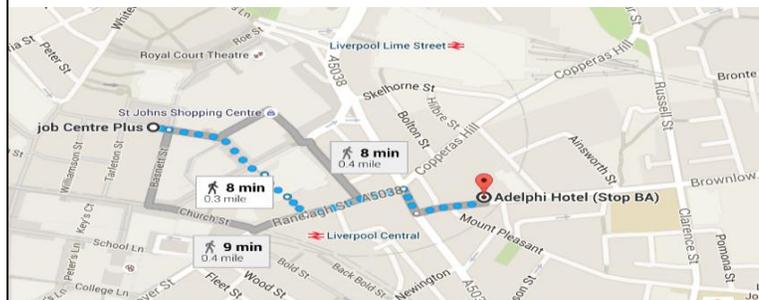
Dear

Thank you for agreeing to take part in Group Work programme.

You have agreed to attend a reception meeting to find out more about the Group Work programme and how it could help you.

Your appointment details are, as follows:

Date:	Tuesday, 5 th April 2016
Time:	10:30
Location:	Adelphi Hotel Conference Room 4 Ranelagh Place Liverpool L3 5UL See map below



This initial meeting will last for approximately 45 minutes. When you arrive please ask forMr Julian Cope.....

Mr Cope will tell you how to claim back your travel expenses.

If you need to change or cancel this appointment please contact Danielle Dax on 0114259 4404.

Simple Letter

Work Coach rings the provider to book the appointment and completes the appointment details.

The rationale for this model is based on providing clear information to the claimant and thus reducing the number of steps the claimant must take in order to achieve the desired outcome, in this case attending the employment support meeting.

Examples of 'nudged' referral letters



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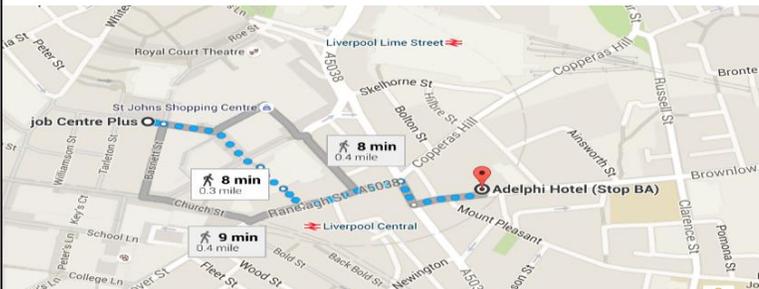
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Simple Letter – with Claimant Engagement

Work Coach rings the provider to book the appointment, but this time hands the phone over to the Claimant who agrees the time with the provider and the claimant completes the appointment details

As you can see the format and information within this referral type is the same as the simple letter. However this model is designed to take advantage of the cognitive bias known as the Ikea effect (Norton et al 2011), which shows that people have a tendency to over value things they build themselves.

Examples of 'nudged' referral letters



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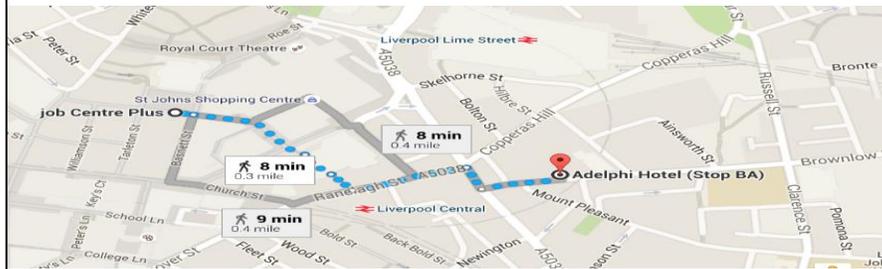
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Signed: *John Cooper-Clarke*

Simple Letter – with Claimant Commitment

Work Coach rings the provider to book the appointment and completes the appointment details. The claimant then signs the letter to say they will attend the meeting.

As you can see the format and information within this referral type is the same as the simple letter, with the exception of the added statement and place to sign the letter.

This model is designed to take advantage of the cognitive bias known as Social Commitment and the ethical framework within which society organises itself and naturally maintains order, based on the work by Mead (1934) and other researchers to date. which shows that people have a tendency to follow through on the commitments they make to others.

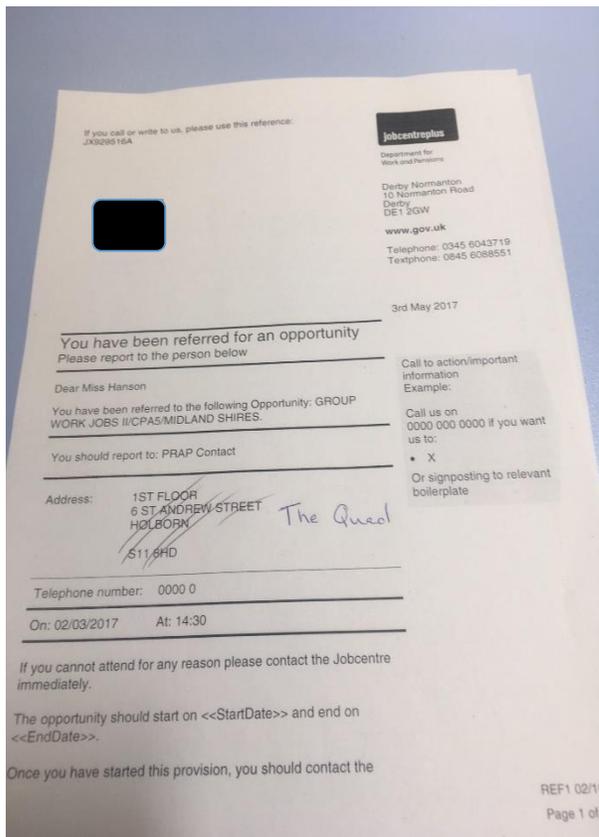
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Trial Design...

- **Clustered design (operationally easier to implement and reduce contamination)**
- **52 Jobcentre Plus Offices, across 5 Districts**
- **Block randomisation (to account for possible variations in local labour market conditions and spreading the risk/benefit across providers)**
- **4 Blocks (2 neighbouring districts merged due to low numbers of offices)**
- **Testing 3 behavioural interventions against Business as Usual**

Field work started 9th Jan 2017 currently still running...

Results (indicative findings based on data to end of July, findings may change after further analysis)

	Number of Claimants agreeing to be Referred	Number of Claimants attending the Reception Interview	FTA Rate (%)	Sig.
BAU	791	525	33.63	
Simplified Letter	902	589	34.70	p=0.3212
Engagement Letter	451	341	24.39	p=0.0002
Commitment Letter	713	453	36.47	p=0.1248
Total	2857	1908		

Chi² = 0.00016

Results (continued)...

The FTA rate has improved compared to the feasibility study (likely due to the additional training received by Work Coaches)

The FTA rates for BAU, Simple Letter and Claimant Commitment Letters are similar (no significant difference)

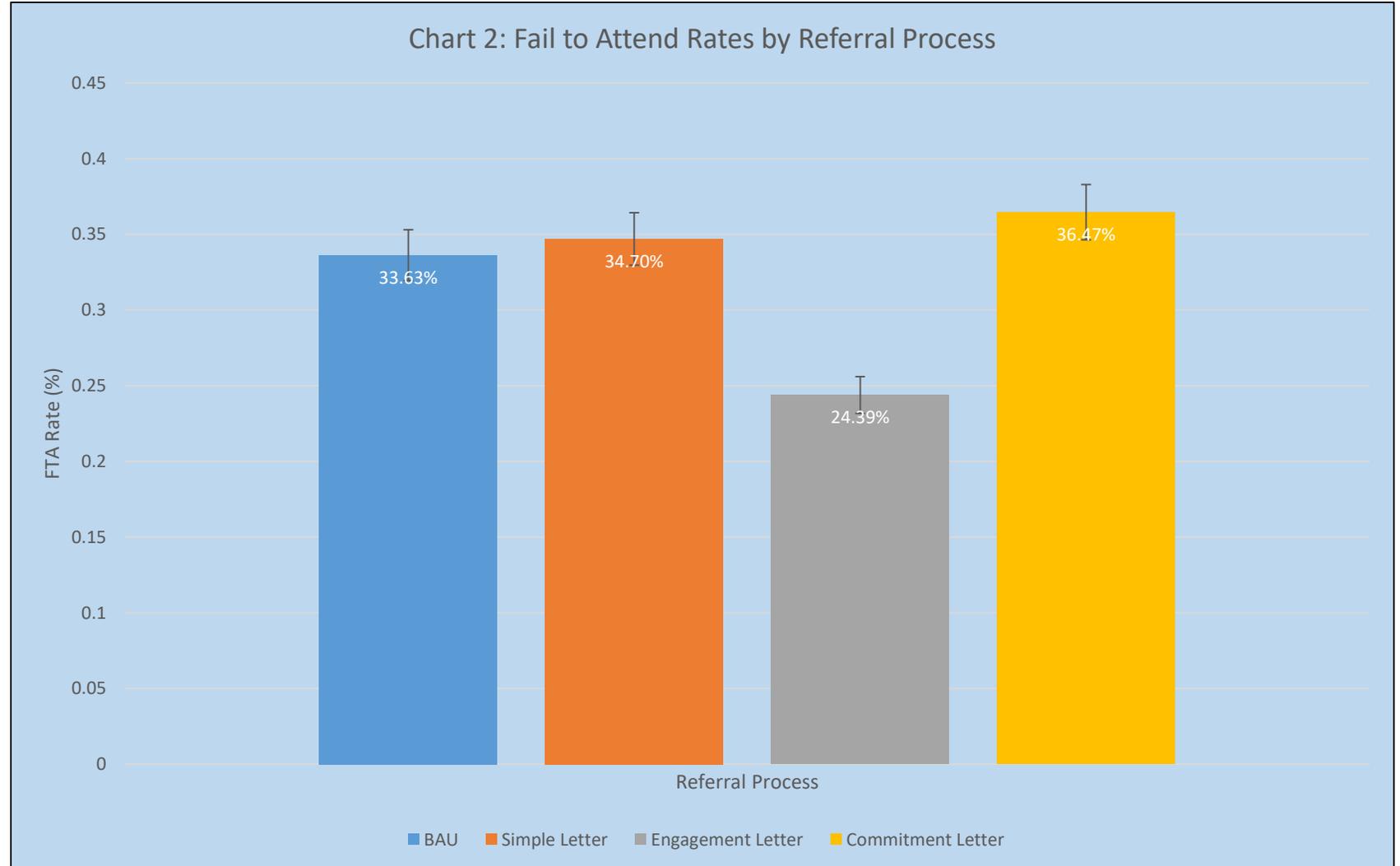
There is a significant difference in the FTA rates between BAU and the Claimant Engagement process.



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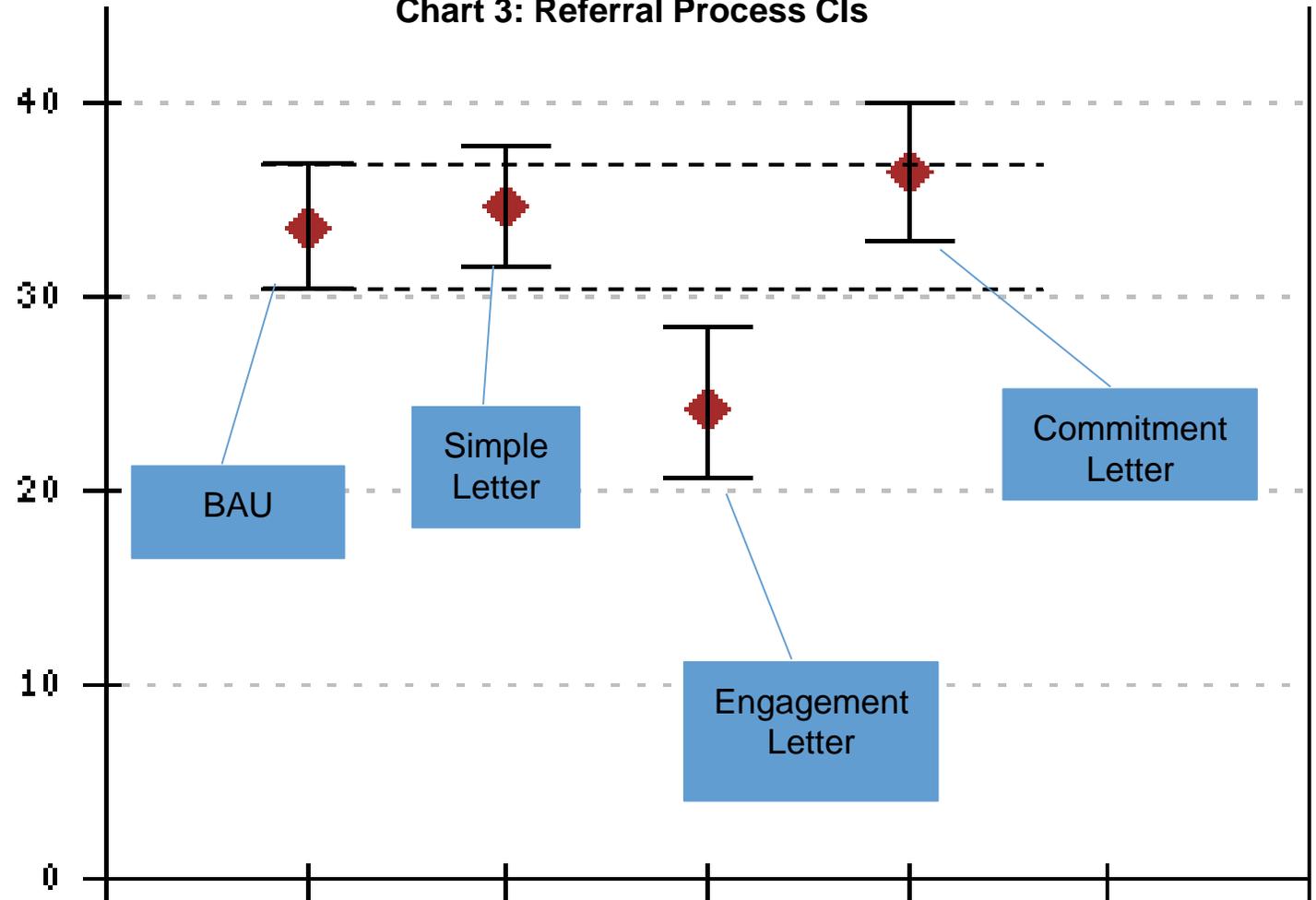
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Results (continued)...

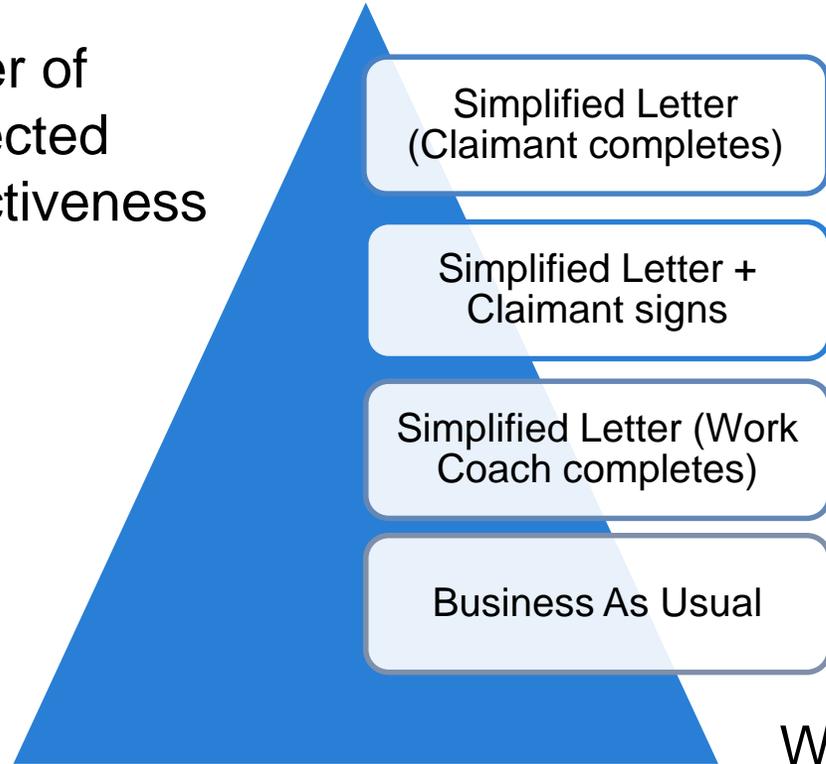
There is no overlap in confidence intervals, for the engagement letter process and the BAU process, which would suggest that there may be a positive improvement in performance to the business, over and above Business as Usual.

Chart 3: Referral Process CIs

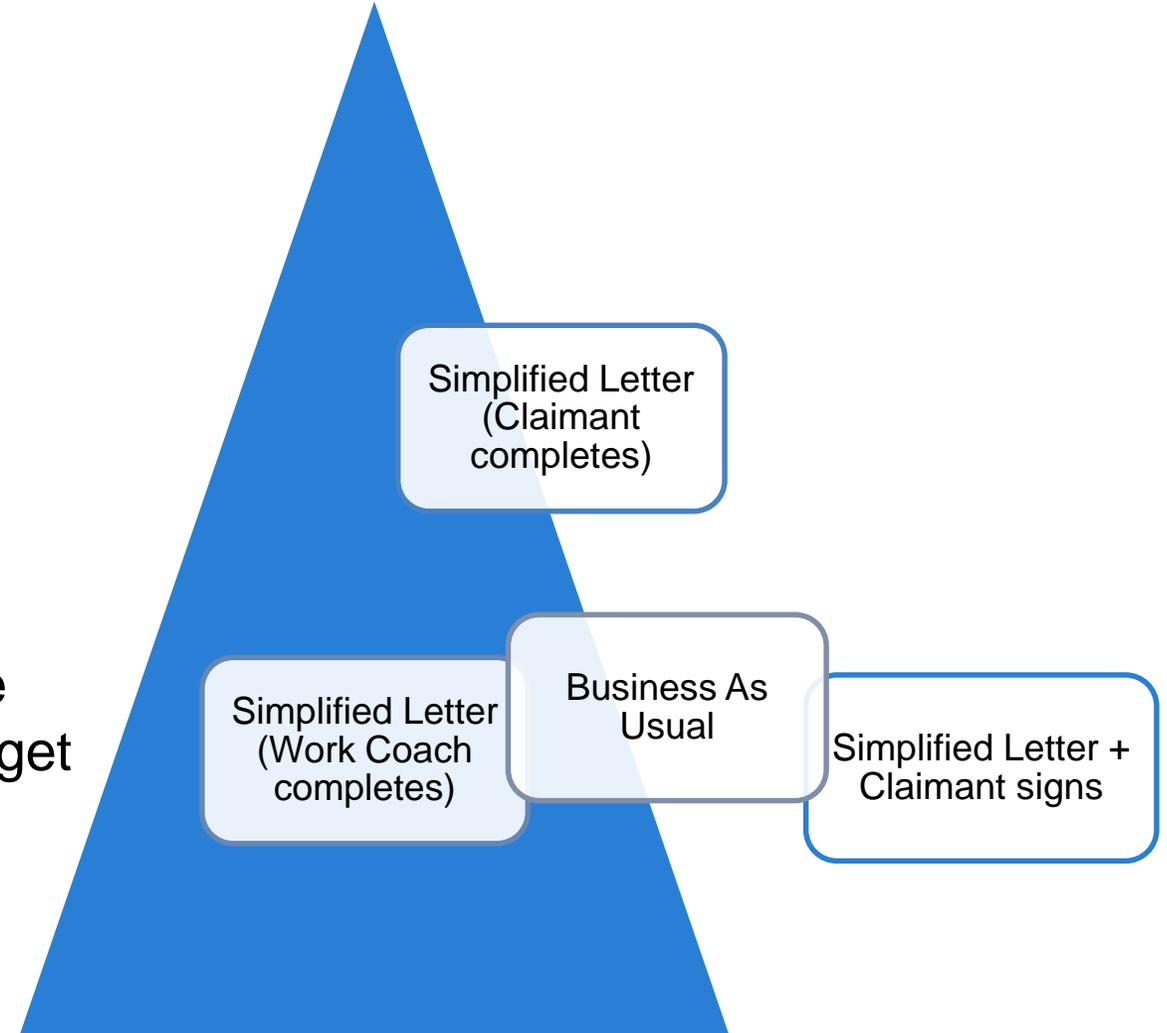


Back to the hypothesis...

Order of expected effectiveness



What we actually get is this...



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Next Steps.....



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- **Consider stopping the experiment...**
- **Further analysis required – any suggestions?**

Thank you!

References



Sunstein. C., (2017) Nudges that fail. *Behavioural Public Policy*, vol. 1: 1, pp. 4-25

Oliver. A., (2015) presentation at Institute of Decision-making, University of Sheffield

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Callanan. M., Ming Mok. T., Edovald. T., (2015) *Evaluation of the Group Work Psychological Wellbeing & Work Feasibility Pilot*. Research Report No. 905; Department for Work and Pensions; ISBN: 9781911003014

Norton, Michael; Mochon, Daniel; Ariely, Dan (2011). ["The IKEA effect: When labor leads to love"](#) (PDF). *Journal of Consumer Psychology*. 22: 453–460.

Mead. G.H, (1934) *Mind, Self, and Society*. University of Chicago Press