


# A Service Evaluation of Early Positive Approaches to Support (E-PAtS) in Cardiff and the Vale.

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## What is E-PAtS?

The E-PAtS family carer support programme was developed by Dr Nick Gore, and Dr Jill Bradshaw at Tizard Centre University of Kent, and colleagues (Gore, Bradshaw, Hastings, Austin & Sweeney 2002). E-PAtS is intended to support families of children (aged 0-5) with an emerging learning or developmental disability. E-PAtS is designed to provide support at an early stage in ways that are designed specifically for this group of families. E-PAtS provides high quality information and sensitive support in the early years to help build bright futures for children with disabilities and their families. E-PAtS was co-produced by professionals and parent carers and is co-facilitated by professionals and trained family carers over 8 sessions. The sessions support **wellbeing and resilience for carers, provide guidance on accessing services and supports** and together cover key aspects of children's development, such as, **communication, sleep, everyday skills and behaviours that challenge**. E-PAtS has longevity in that it puts supports in place whilst children are still young as a proactive measure to support their family quality of life. Our vision for E-PAtS in Cardiff and the Vale is a future where every child born with a learning or developmental disability has the opportunity to achieve their potential; by providing them with the right support they can have the best start in life. We want every family to get the support that meets their child's needs as early as possible.



**E-PAtS**  
Somewhere over the rainbow dreams come true,  
My world makes sense to others,  
They understand me too.  
Somewhere over the rainbow life is good,  
Days are smile filled and happy just like I hoped they could.  
One day I wished upon a star,  
For some support and here you are.  
Where I'd be heard and listened to.  
It's not so hard when folks try to.  
Where issues fade like melting snow  
And sound advice is where to go, it's where to find it?  
Somewhere over the rainbow way up high,  
There's a group that I heard of, E-PAtS now let us unify.  
By Judy (A parent carer and trained E-PAtS Parent facilitator)

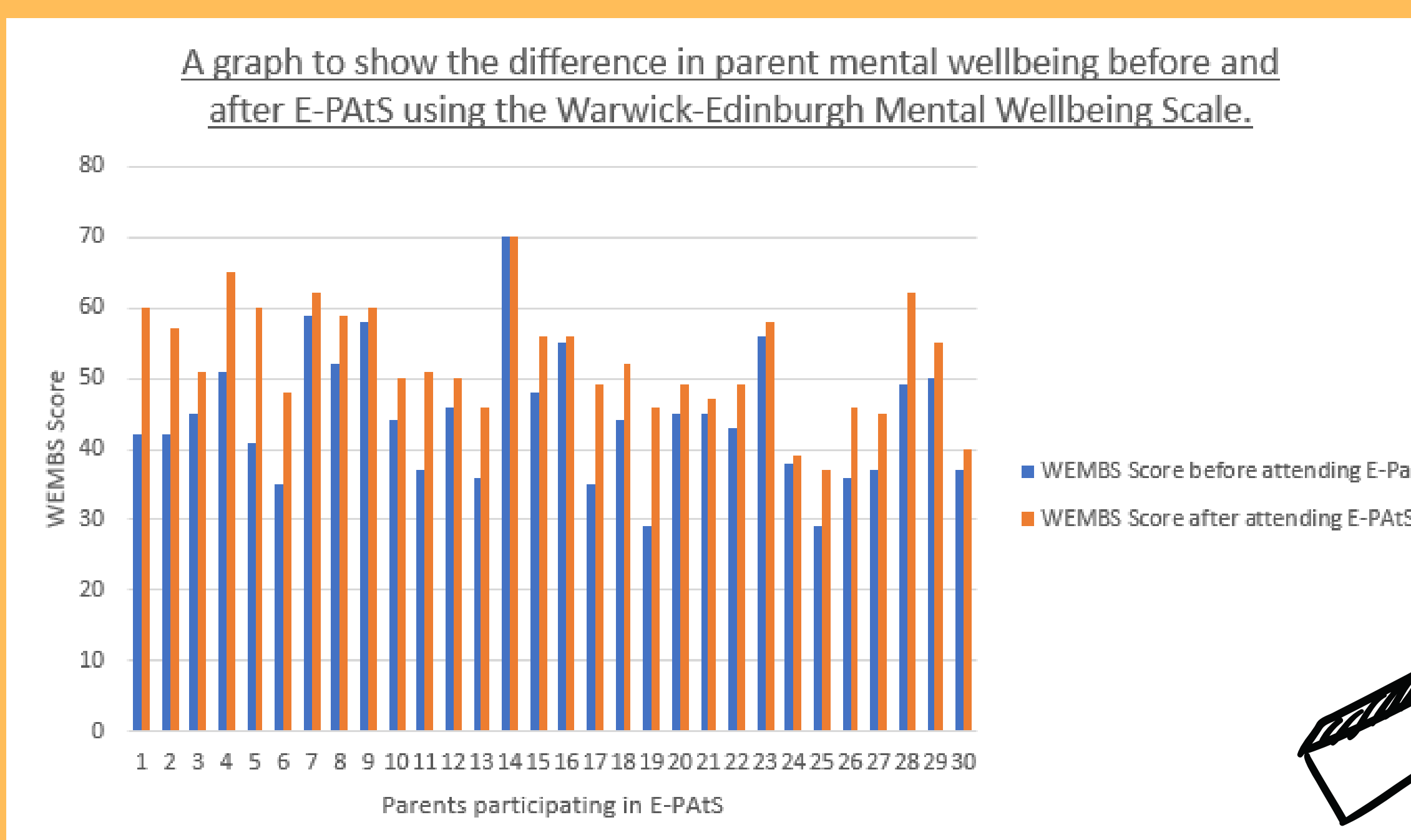
"Its amazing. There's so much to learn and so much help out there that we wouldn't of known about if we didnt go"

- E-PAtS so far:**
- 8 Professionals and 10 Parent carers have been trained to become E-PAtS facilitators.
  - Cardiff and Vale UHB have run 11 groups since November 2021.
  - E-PAtS has been delivered to 48 parents.
  - 16 parents are currently taking part in an E-PAtS group.
  - 39 parents are on the waiting list to join a group in September 2023.

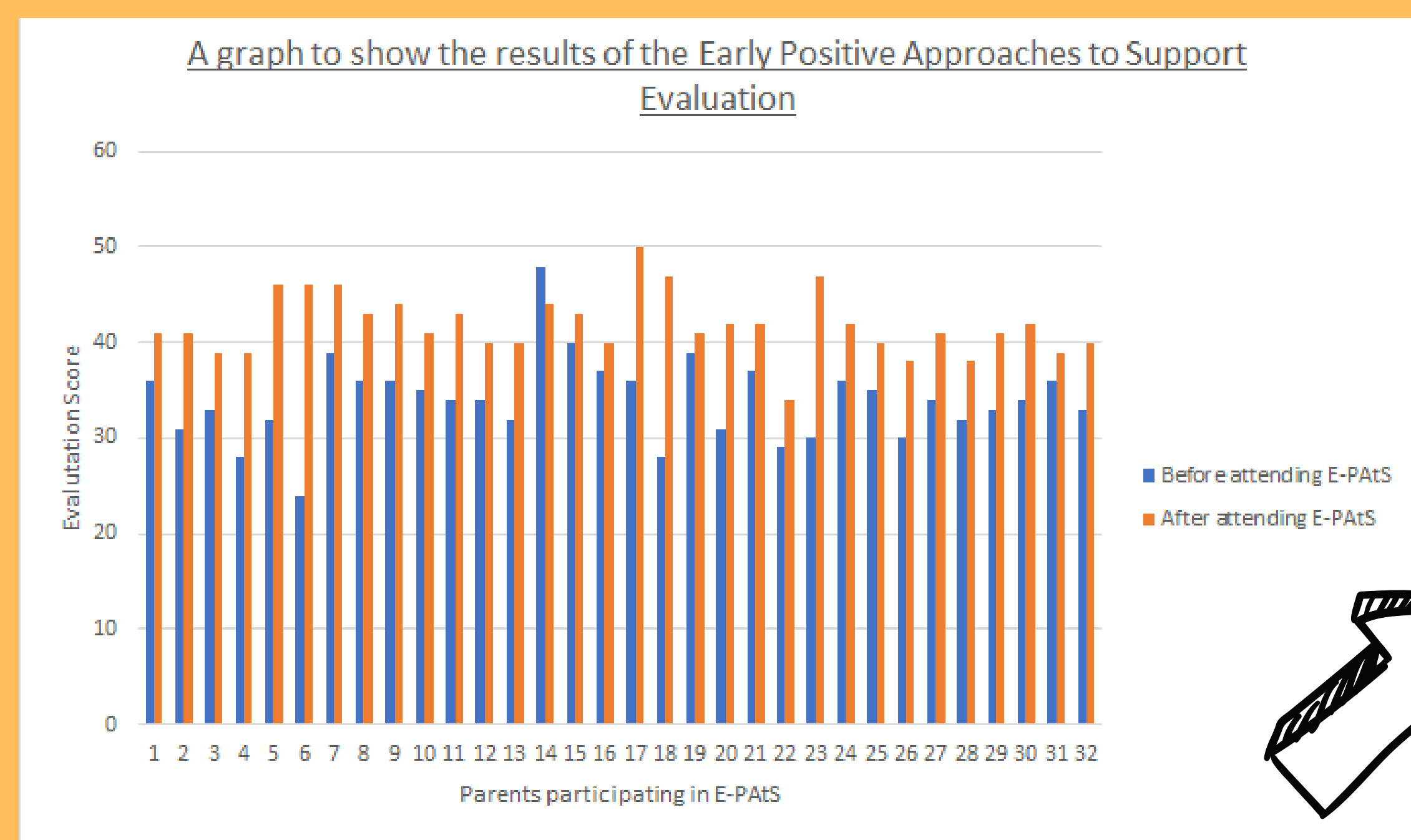
"It has given me the confidence to be able to stand up and say yes/no to certain things regarding my child. I felt so empowered doing my sons IDP with all these "superior professionals" in the room"

## Method

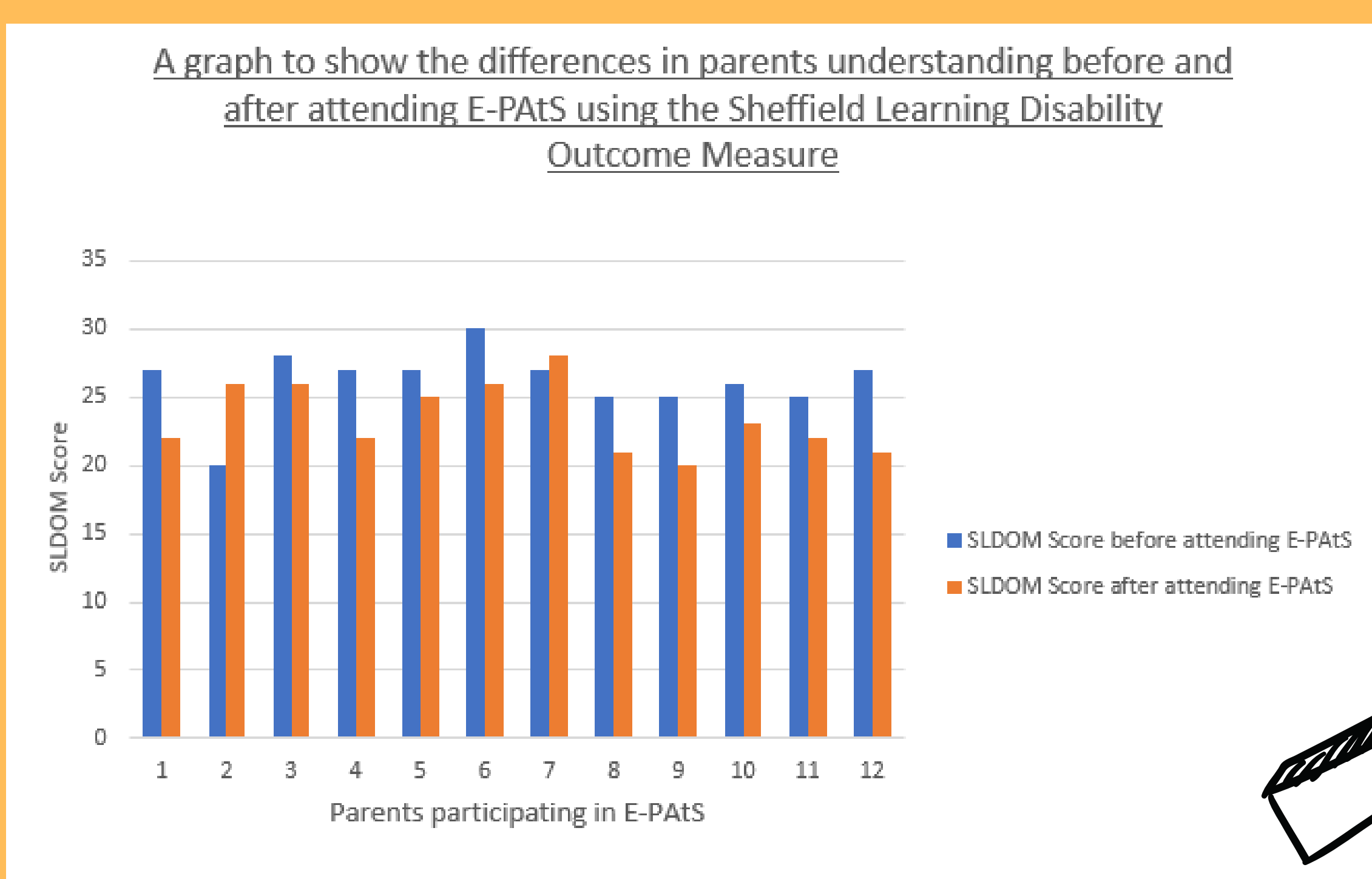
As part of our service evaluation we collected questionnaire data about wellbeing (The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale - Stewart-Brown & Janmohamed, 2008) and experience of attending E-PAtS (E-PAtS in-session evaluation measure) from 32 family carers, questionnaires about parental efficacy (The Brief Parental Self-Efficacy Scale - Woolger et al, 2012) and aspects of children's behaviour (The Sheffield Learning Disabilities Outcome Measure - Girgis et al, 2012) from 12 family carers who attended E-PAtS. All questionnaires were completed at the first session and repeated at the 8th session.



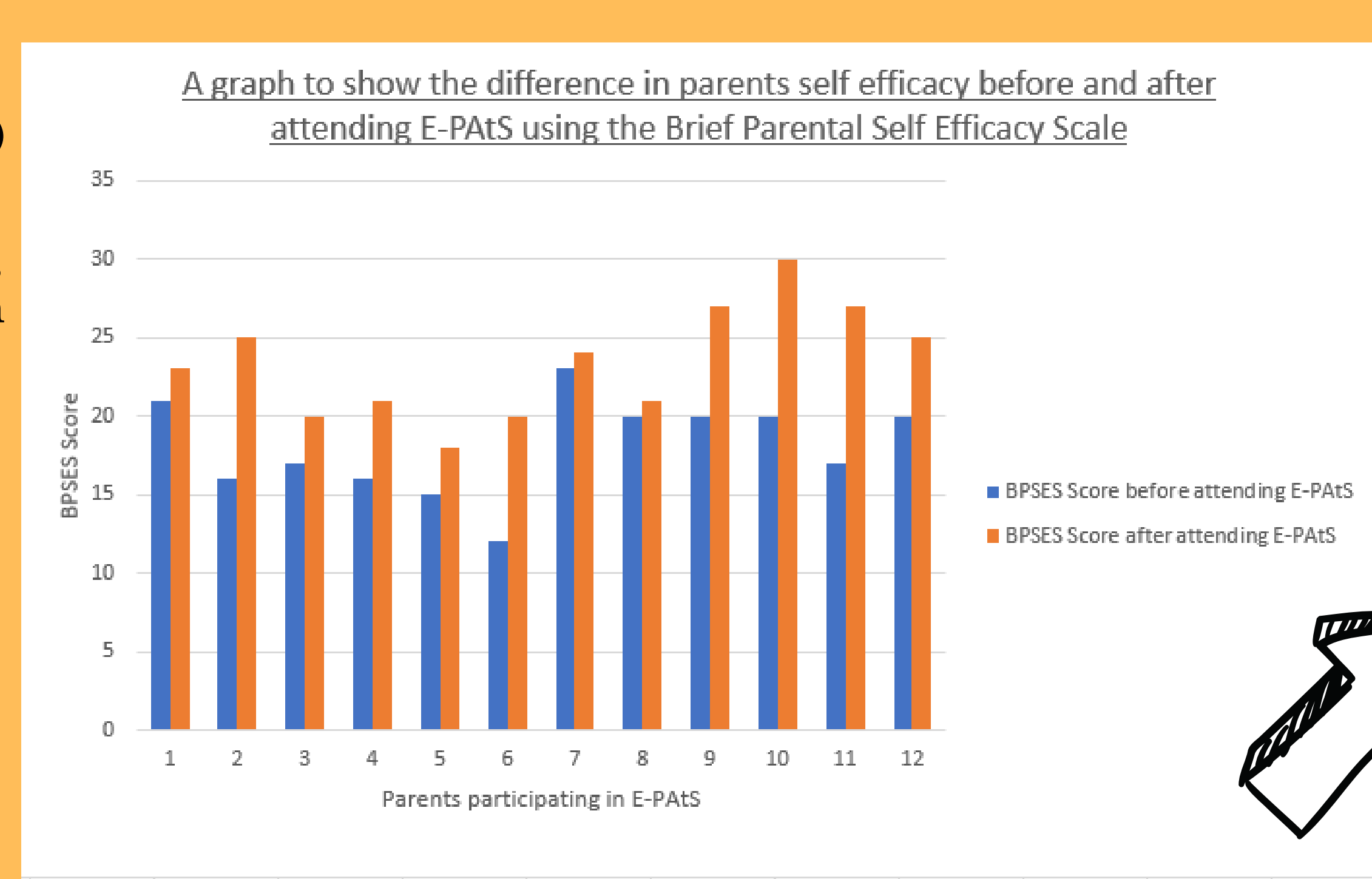
After completion of E-PAtS, mental well-being scores increased (M = 53, SD = 7.8) indicating a positive change to the parent carer from when they first started E-PAtS (M = 44.5, SD = 9.1).



Parents scored lower before attending E-PAtS (M = 34, SD = 4.3), in comparison to the scores received at the end of the 8-week programme (M=42, SD = 3.2). Parents scored higher on statements that reflect improvement in knowledge surrounding support available to them, and knowledge in skills of how to support their child's development.



The decrease in scores after taking part in the E-PAtS programme (M = 24, SD = 2.5) suggests that parent carers have an even better understanding of their child's behaviours and confidence in managing them, as well as understanding and an improvement in their relationship with their child in comparison to when they first joined an E-PAtS group (M = 26, SD = 2.3).



Parent carers scored higher after taking part in E-PAtS (M = 23, SD = 3.4) compared to at the start of E-PAtS (M = 18, SD = 2.96), indicating higher levels of parental self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can be defined as "parents' belief about their ability to influence their child in a health and success-promoting manner" (Eccles & Harold, 1996), as it has been found that parental self-efficacy is a key factor in promoting healthy functioning for both parents and their children (Albanese, Russo, & Geller, 2019)

## The future of E-PAtS in Cardiff and the Vale

- Continue to Embed E-PAtS into the NHS, Local communities and nurseries allowing it to be made accessible for all parents who need support.
- Provide every family with the correct support to meet their child's needs as early as possible.
- Train more professionals and parent carers to facilitate E-PAtS.
- Continue to demonstrate the effectiveness of Co-Production.
- Create an understanding of the value of lived experience in service systems working with this population.

"I find it a lot easier to open up about my struggles with my daughter because i am not the only one that feels like this"