



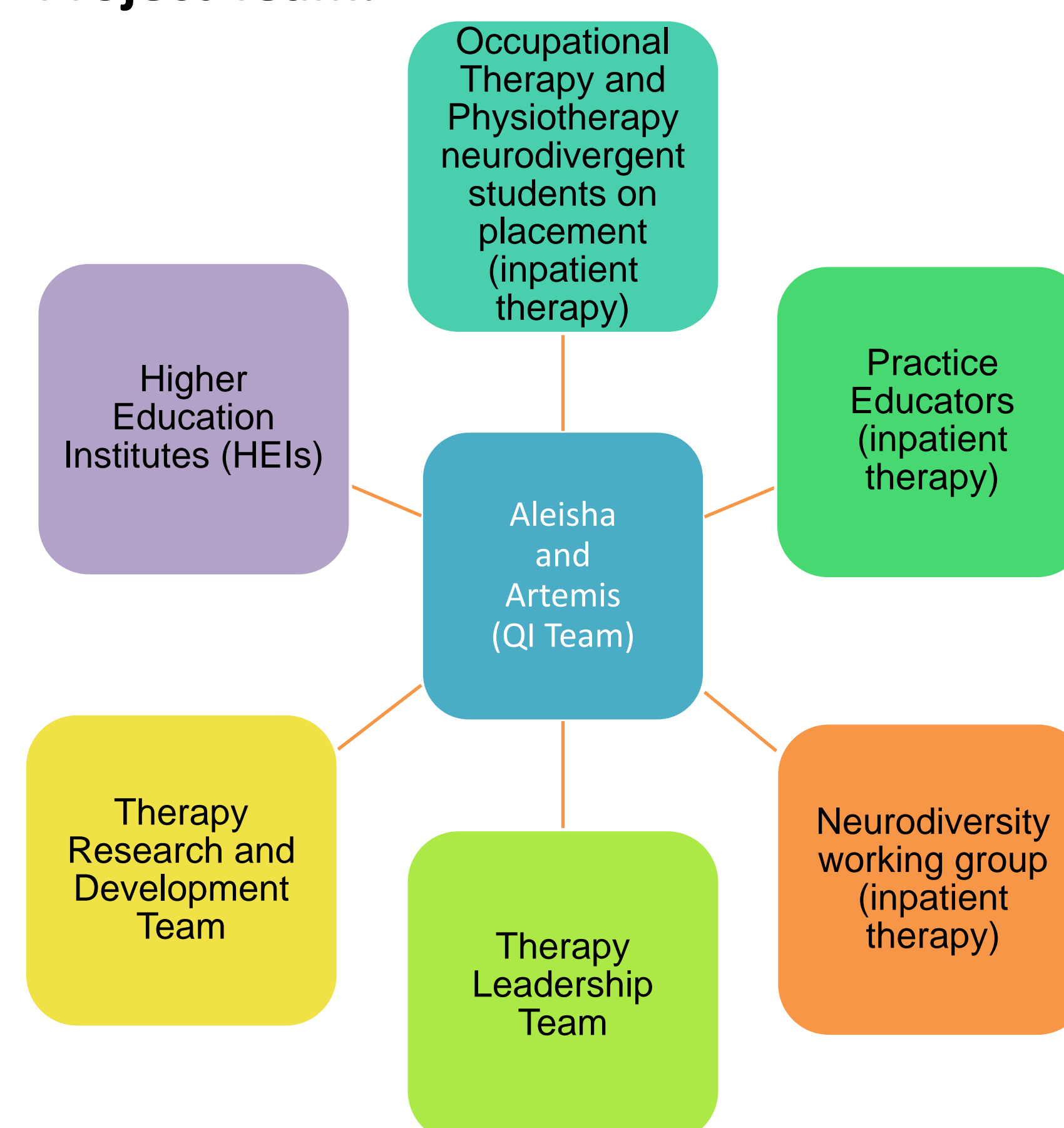
Background:

Each academic year, the Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Department accommodate over one hundred students on practice placements. Neurodiversity is becoming more prevalent amongst students in higher education, with the rise in diagnoses and general awareness. Practice Educators have felt ill-equipped to support neurodiverse students due to lack of understanding of neurodiversity, awareness of reasonable adjustments and strategies to optimise learning in a clinical setting. This is consistent with research findings when looking into Nursing Education. This Quality Improvement (QI) Project aims to improve the experiences of students and practice educators on practice placements.

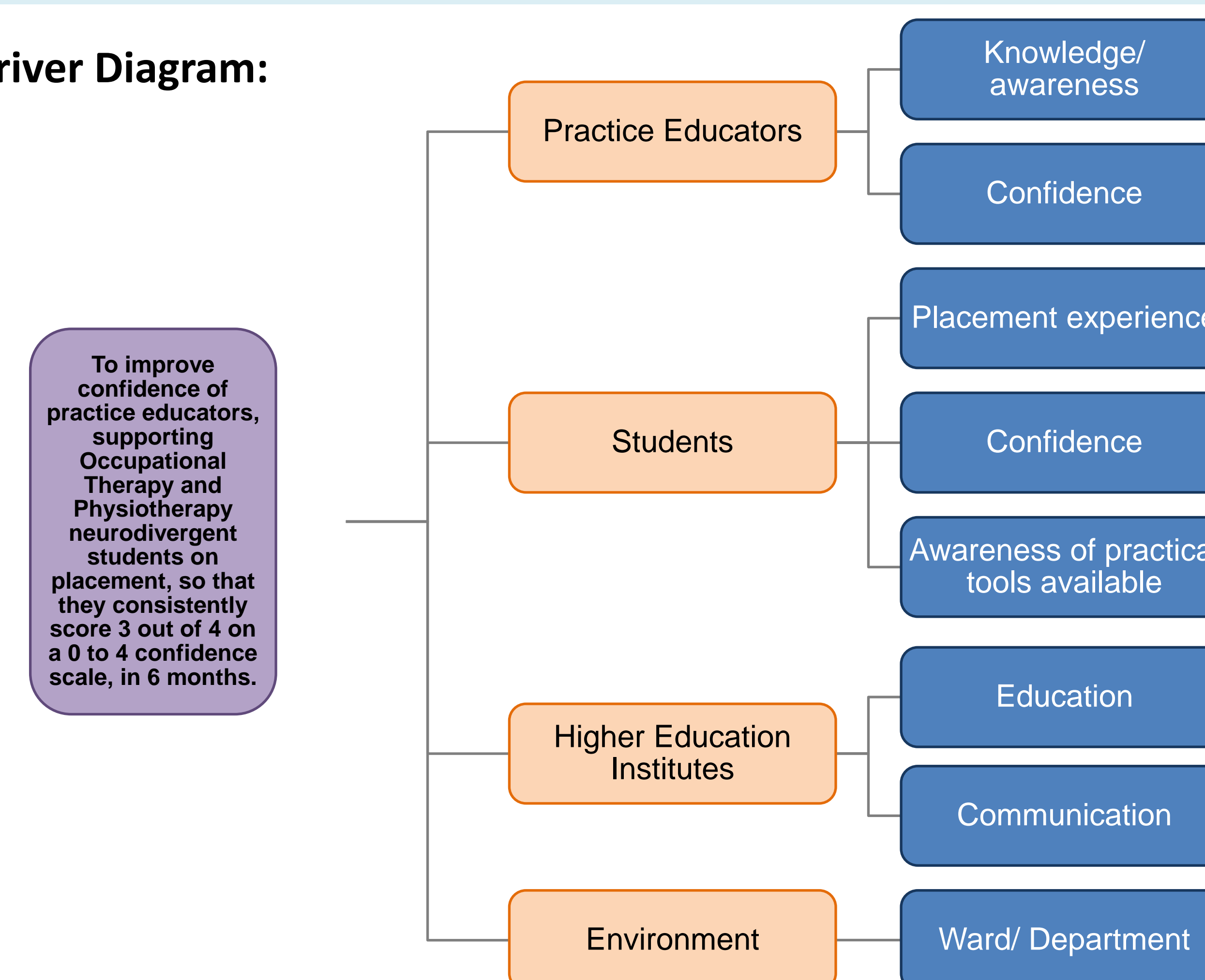
Aim:

To improve confidence of practice educators, supporting Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy neurodivergent students on placement, so that they consistently score 3 out of 4 on a 0 to 4 confidence scale, in 6 months.

Project Team:



Driver Diagram:



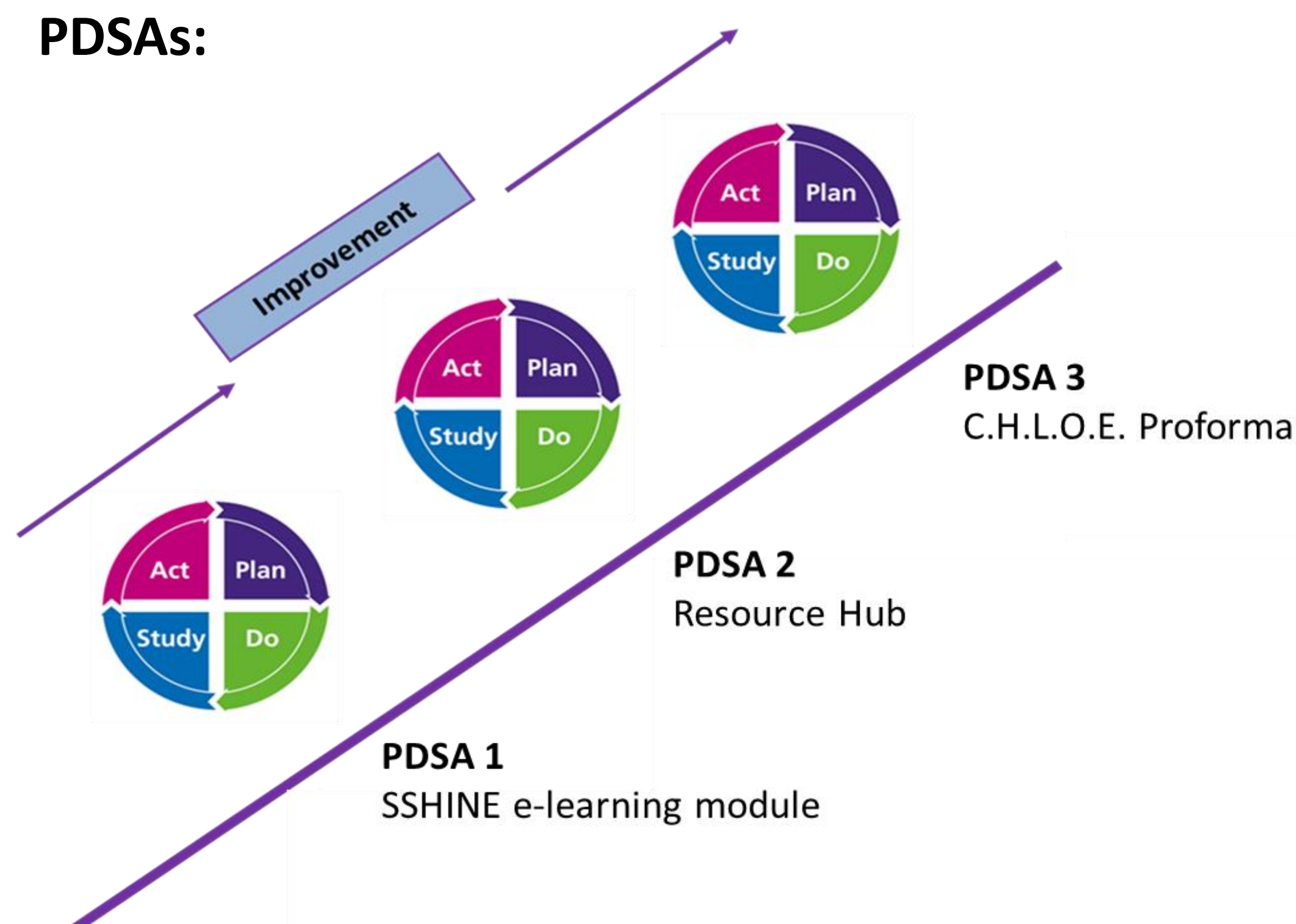
Measures:

Outcome measures: the level of confidence of Practice Educators.

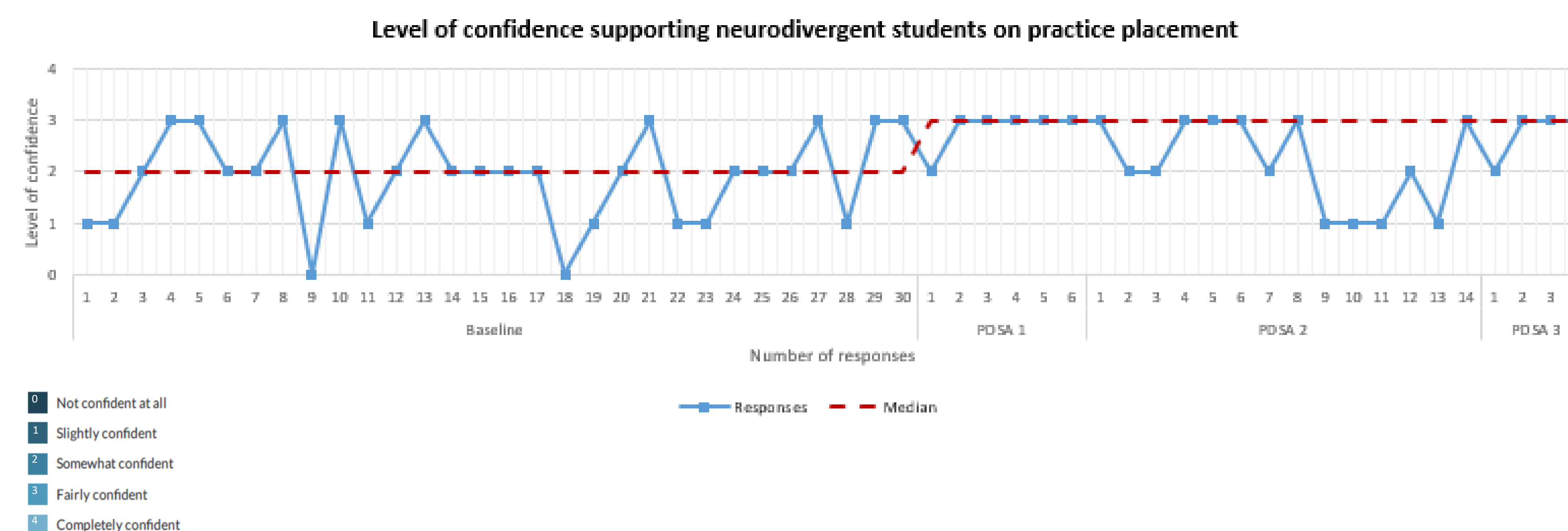
Process measures: feedback form before and after each change idea.

Balancing measures: baseline knowledge of neurodiversity through experience/training. Reduced clinical time with patients -> delays in discharges. Reluctancy to use Proforma/complete surveys.

PDSAs:



Data:



Results:

- The overall confidence levels among practice educators improved to 3 out of 4 on a 0 to 4 confidence scale, across the full 6-month project period.
- Although confidence was the key outcome measure, it proved difficult to assess reliably due to the subjective nature of confidence and the many external factors that influence it.

Challenges	Positives & Impact
Confidence is multifactorial – affected by prior experience, level of training, student needs, and previous PDSA exposure	Very positive qualitative feedback from educators across all PDSAs
Inconsistent educator cohort – anonymous responses meant individual progress couldn't be tracked	Increased awareness of neurodiversity across the therapy department
Limited engagement – high clinical demands and competing priorities reduced participation	Positive student feedback , particularly about the CHLOE form facilitating early supportive conversations
Data collection issues – change in questionnaire platform and difficulties with data extraction/comparison	Short-term confidence improvements seen after each individual PDSA cycle
Broad and complex topic – neurodiversity requires more condition-specific guidance	Strong interest from stakeholders across the Trust, leading to increased networking and plans for broader rollout

Next Steps:

- Share QI outcome with key stakeholders.
- Standardise and share the CHLOE document across the Therapy Department (Inpatient and Outpatient) - consider embedding it into pre-placement processes.
- Maintain and expand the resource hub, updating it with condition-specific examples and real educator/student case studies.
- Consider turning the e-learning into a mandatory or optional CPD module as part of educator training.
- Link with the neurodiversity network.