

# Inconsistency to excellence: Transforming newborn hearing screener training in the Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program



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## Introduction

The Victorian Infant Hearing Screening Program (VIHSP), is one of the largest community workforces within the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, employing 160 staff who work across 63 maternity services throughout Victoria. Operating seven days a week, 364 days a year, VIHSP aims to ensure that every newborn receives timely and effective hearing screening. To maintain excellent standards, it is essential that all staff undergo comprehensive, ongoing, high-quality training.

## Aim

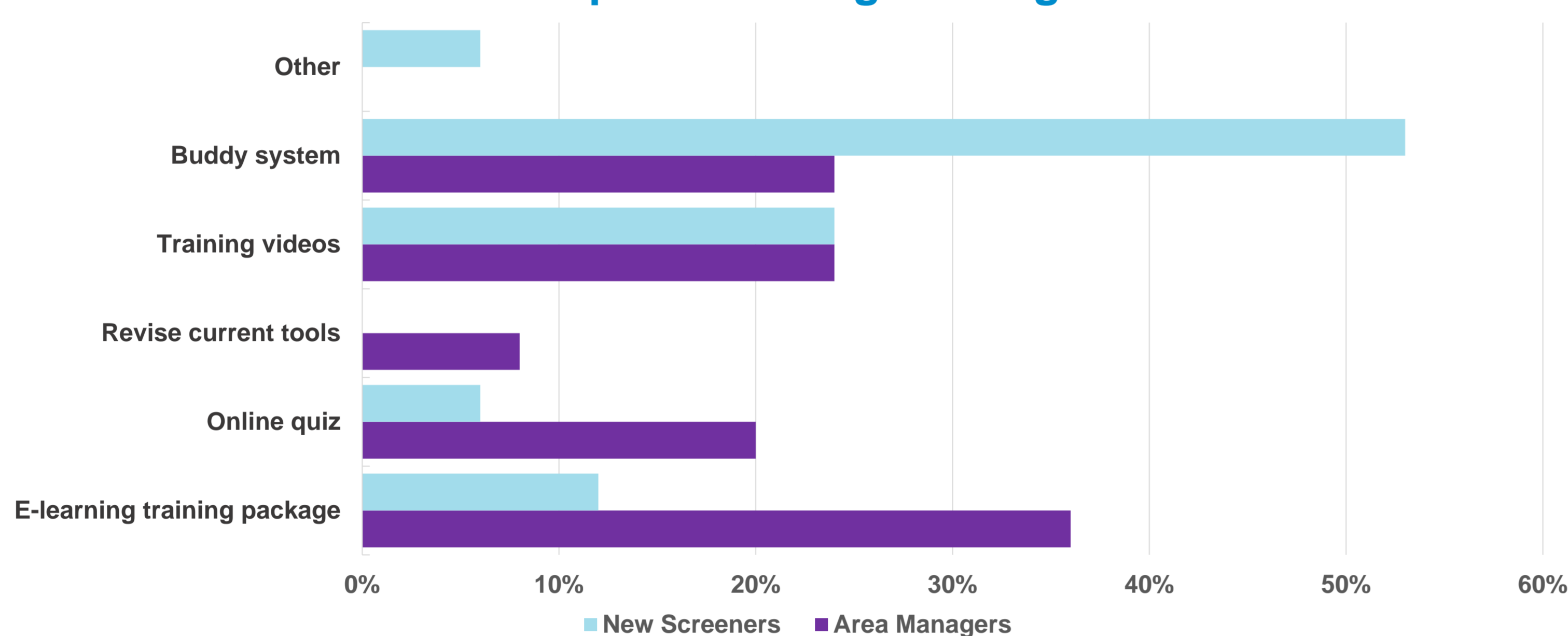
The aim was to assess whether our existing training resources were effectively meeting the evolving needs of VIHSP. Our goal was to ensure that they align with best practices, address any identified gaps, and continue to support the skill development of screeners and other program staff.

## Method

To review the effectiveness of our existing training resources, we engaged with Area Managers, who are responsible for training new screeners, to gather feedback on the current materials. Area Managers were asked to evaluate the existing training resources, focusing on areas such as clarity, relevance, and alignment with program needs. Recently trained Screeners were also surveyed, to understand their experiences with the training and whether they felt adequately prepared for their roles.

Based on the feedback gathered from both Area Managers and Screeners, we identified key gaps in the training resources, including a lack of structured flow, an absence of visual aids, limited flexibility in the training delivery, and inconsistencies in the training content. Additionally, some Screeners expressed a desire for the opportunity to shadow experienced Screeners during their training to gain practical, real-world insights.

Gaps in existing training

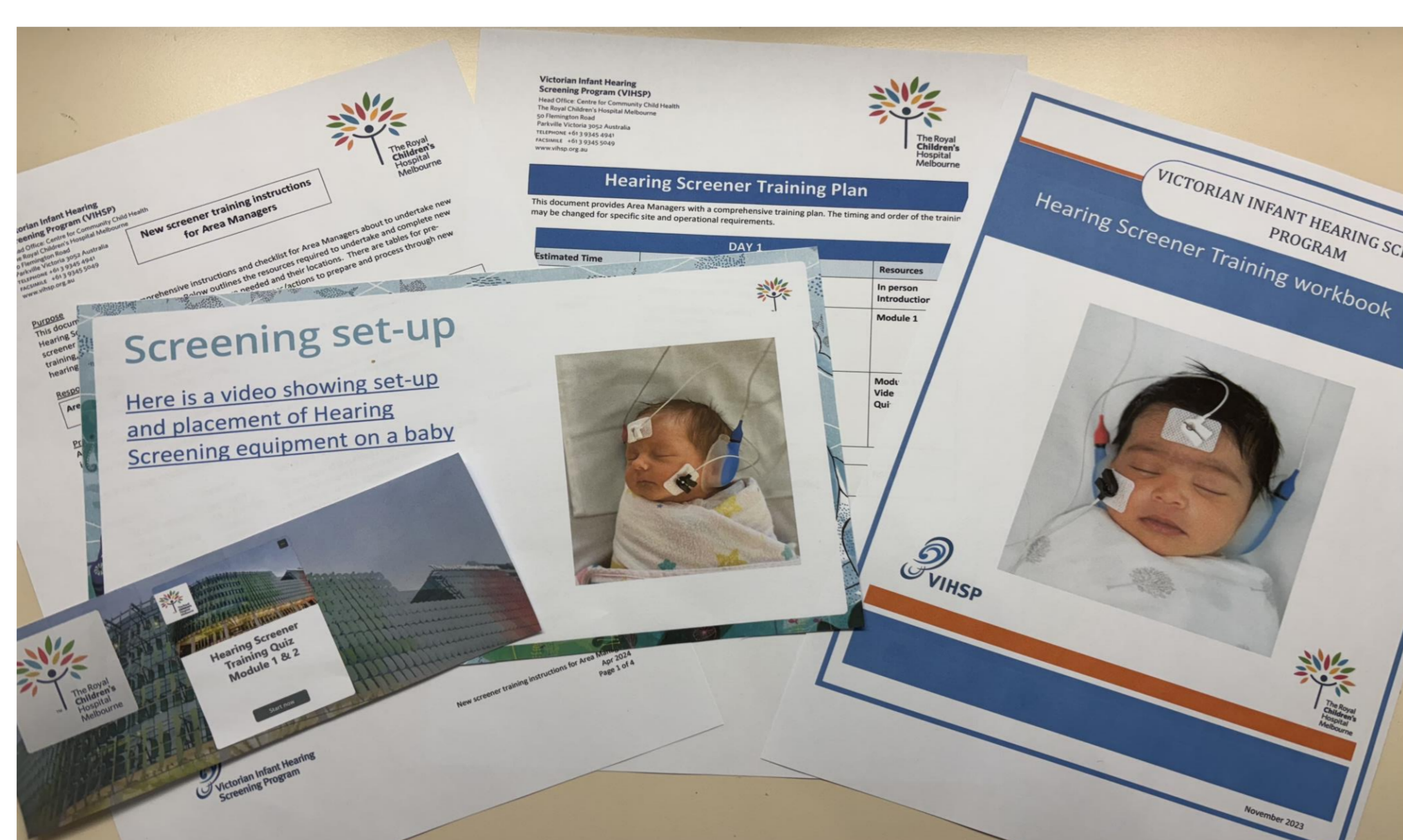


## Results

To address the identified gaps, we developed a mix of updated training modules and mini e-learns to improve the flow of training; and instructional videos and quizzes to allowing for a blend of visual, auditory, and interactive learning opportunities.

The upgraded resources ensure that all key topics are covered in a consistent and thorough manner. This includes the integration of mandatory RCH resources, ensuring better compliance and training consistency.

Recognising that adult learners have diverse learning styles; we looked to incorporate a variety of approaches into the training resources. This approach was designed to ensure that all learners, regardless of their preferred learning style, would find the training effective and engaging. The new resources also enabled Area Managers to tailor the training program based on individual learning speeds, capabilities and availability. This customisation ensured that training is more adaptable to both the Area Manager's schedule and the needs of new staff, leading to a more efficient and effective learning experience.



## Rollout

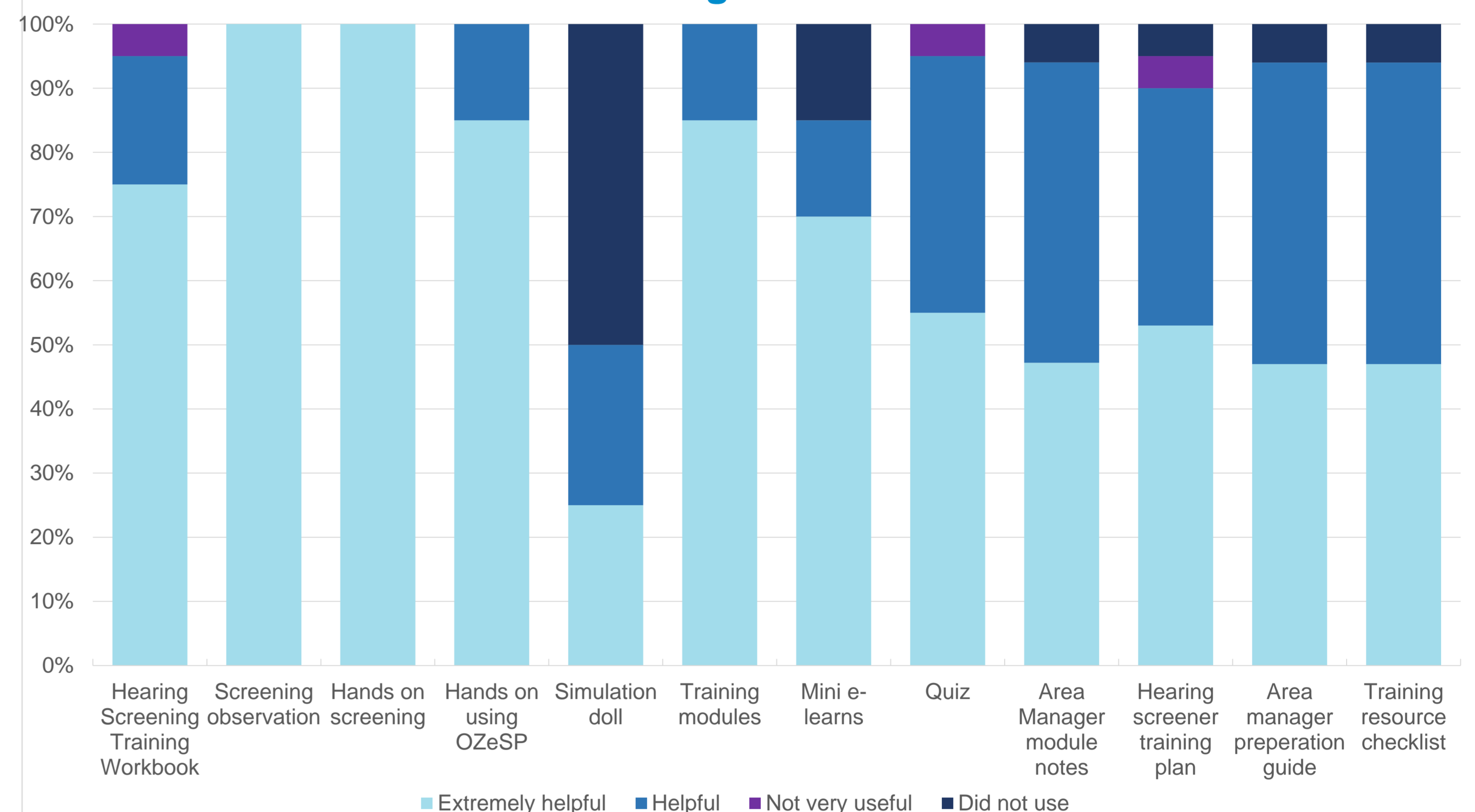
Following rigorous review of the new resources by the VIHSP senior team prior to launch, the training materials were rolled out across the state in February 2024. Area Managers were provided with 'train-the-trainer' sessions and those that were piloting the training were given one-on-one support. Their feedback was used to further refine the resources.

## Results

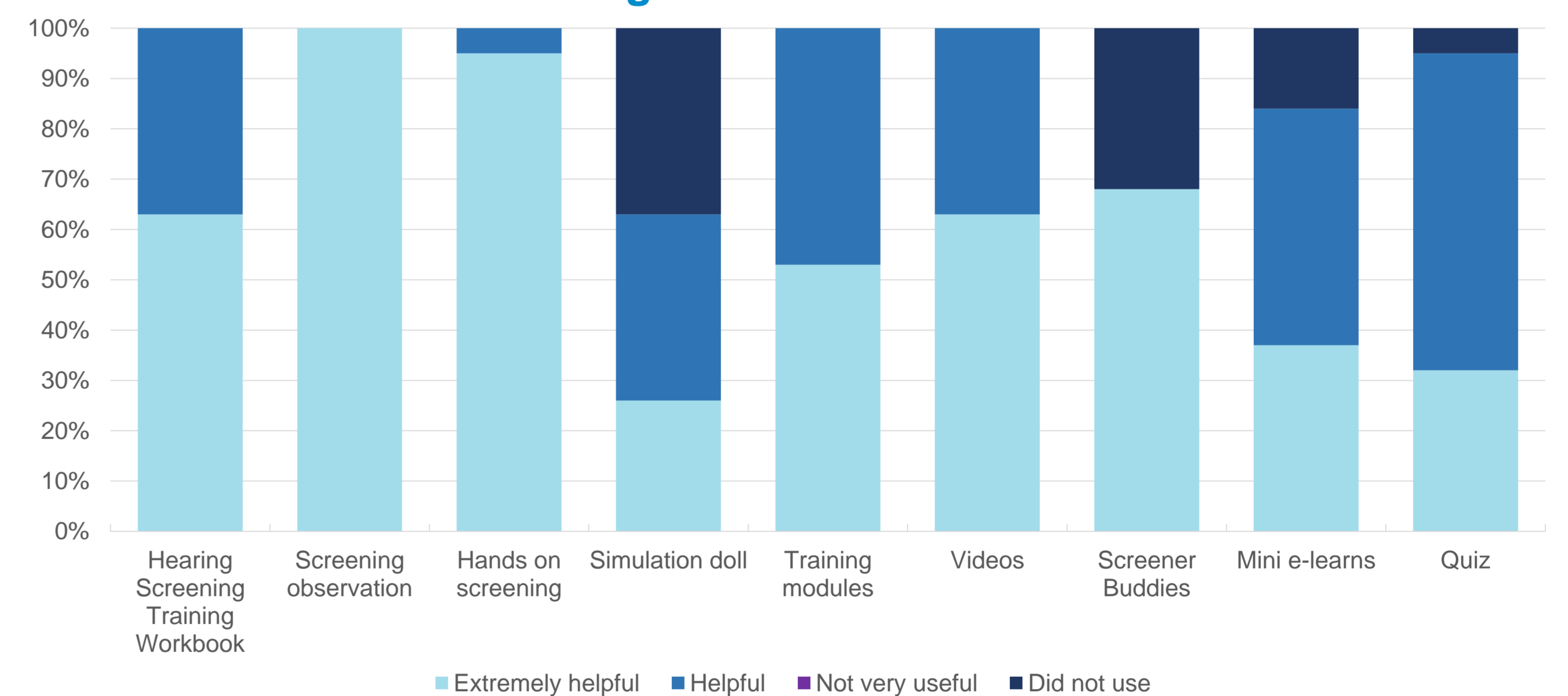
To maintain consistency in training, all new staff were required to utilise the updated resources. We gathered feedback from both new Screeners and Area Managers through online surveys to evaluate their experiences with the revised materials. The surveys focused on aspects such as the usefulness, clarity, and impact of the new resources, enabling us to assess their effectiveness and make necessary improvements.

The feedback revealed that Screeners found the new resources both engaging and comprehensive. Area Managers reported a noticeable increase in staff engagement, attributing it to the more targeted and efficient learning opportunities provided by the new resources. The integration of mandatory materials and the ability to customise training have streamlined the process and ensured that all essential content is consistently covered. Additionally, allowing staff to identify their preferred learning styles has further enhanced the training experience, enabling future modules to be tailored to individual preferences, which in turn boosts engagement and retention.

Area Manager Evaluation



Hearing Screener Evaluation



## Conclusion

The shift to a flexible, multi-model training resource system represents a significant advancement in VIHSP's training program. Feedback from both new and existing staff has been overwhelmingly positive, and the new resources have demonstrated clear improvements in training outcomes.

Training materials are now available online, allowing staff to revisit content as needed. This flexibility is especially valuable for reinforcing concepts or for staff who wish to review specific topics at their own pace, ensuring long-term retention of key information.

The new resources are not limited to new hires; existing staff members also have access to the upgraded training materials. This has proven beneficial for ongoing professional development, allowing staff to refresh their knowledge or gain deeper insights into specific topics.

With the ability to customise training, accommodate various learning styles, and provide on-demand access to materials, the new approach enhances both the quality and accessibility of training for all staff. Hearing Screeners have clearly indicated a desire to have more time to shadow fellow screeners. This approach will be further explored to determine a strategy that does not have significant budgetary implications.

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the VIHSP Senior Area Managers, Area Managers, Hearing Screeners, and the wider VIHSP team for their assistance in the development and evaluation of the training resources.