

ALERT: I'm getting alert fatigue!

Improving patient safety by reducing the number of alerts seen by staff at Greencroft Medical Practice (North), Annan

Background

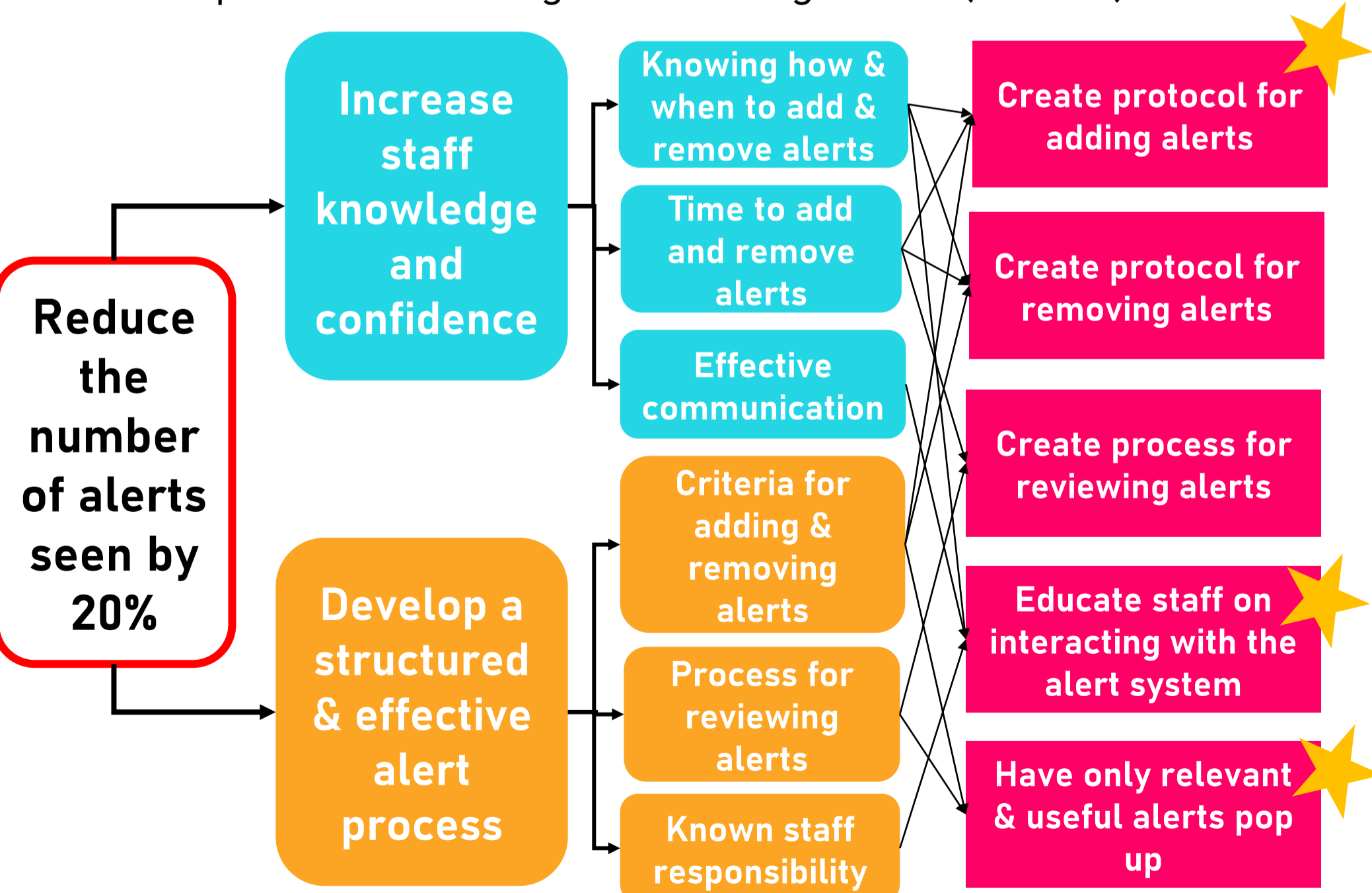
Pop-up alerts on the EMIS system are designed to improve staff awareness of key information and improve patient safety. However, desensitisation of staff to these alerts due to over-exposure overtime, defined as alert fatigue, threatens this. Indeed, one study found the likelihood of accepting an alert decreased by 30% for each alert encountered (1). This was identified as a problem by staff at the North practice, Annan, with concerns that patient safety would be compromised if not addressed.

Aim

To reduce alert fatigue by reducing the number of alerts seen by staff by 20%, by the 27th March 2023, in order to improve patient safety.

Driver Diagram

We developed tests of change for 3 change ideas (starred)



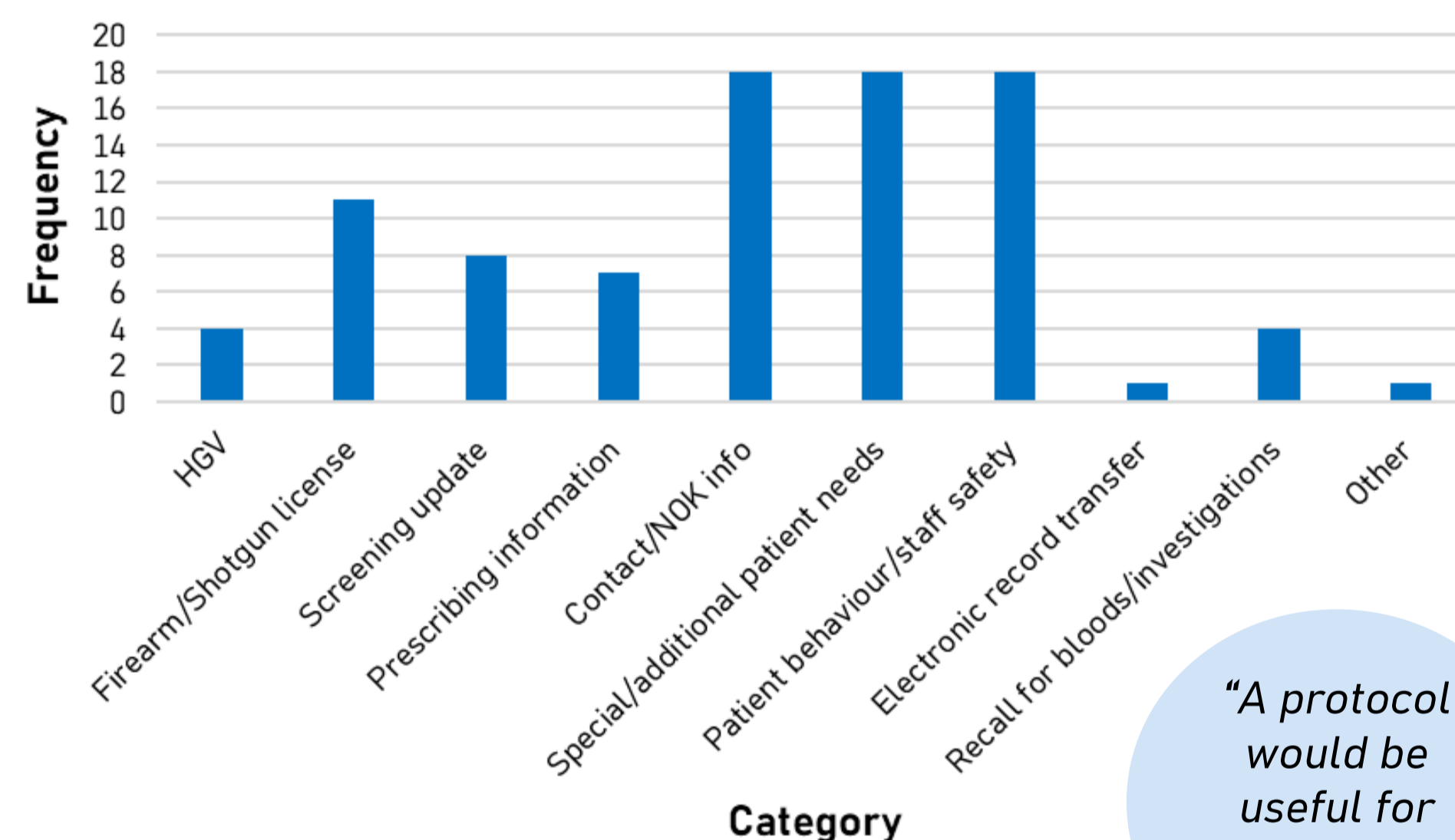
Understanding the Problem

We investigated the problem by engaging key stakeholders in discussions about alerts, collecting questionnaires on stakeholder views and use of the system, auditing and categorising current alerts on EMIS.

The key issues were:

- Low staff knowledge and confidence adding or removing alerts.
- A large burden of alerts currently on the system.
- No shared adding or review process for current alerts.

Display of alert categories staff found useful



"A protocol would be useful for where alerts should be"

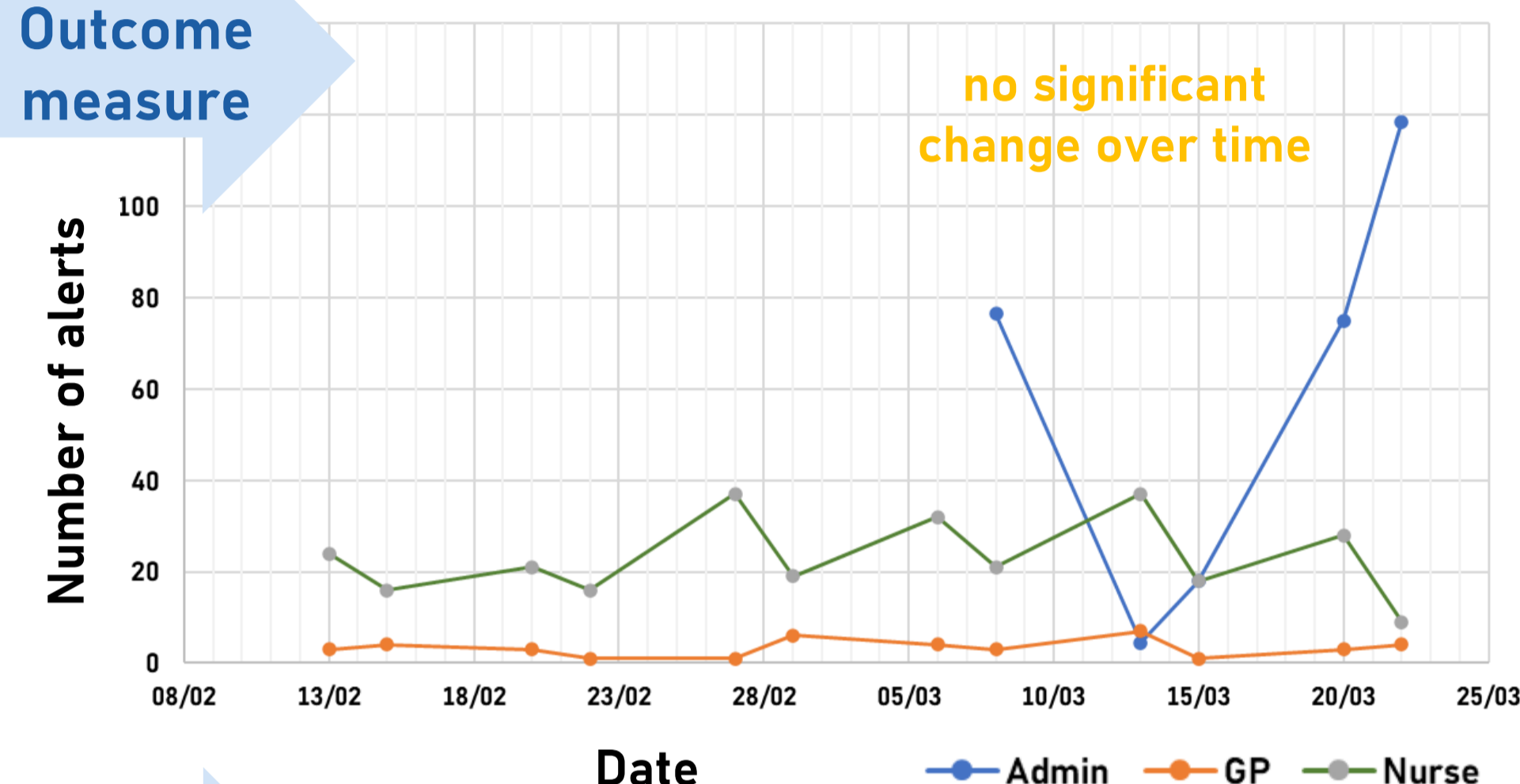
Tackling the Problem

- Questionnaire to staff to gain **final consensus** on which alert categories should pop up where on the system
- Created and tested a **protocol** on adding 'contact' alerts
- Tested **flowchart** showing staff how to remove alerts
- **Deleted** 219 'electronic record' alerts from the system
- **Reviewed** 80 alerts in two other categories

Results

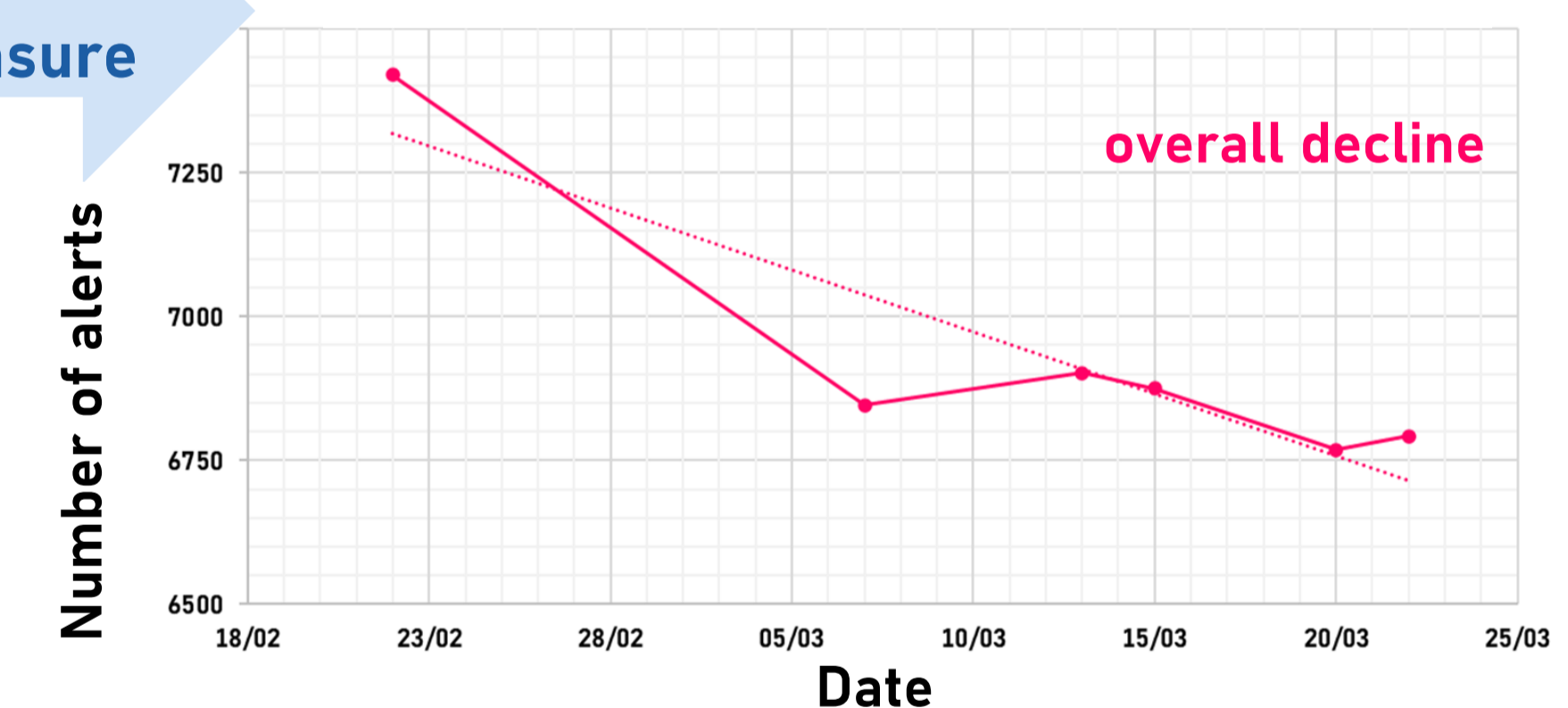
Outcome measure

Number of alerts seen per typical work session



Process measure

Total number of alerts on the system



Balancing Measures: It takes ~50 seconds to delete, and ~1 minute 9 seconds to review, one alert.

Conclusion

While the aims statement was not achieved, there was a decrease in alerts on EMIS. The alert pop up consensus, protocol and flowcharts tested in the project may guide future interventions.

"No great difference noticed, but I would now take alerts off myself"