

# Using Randomised Control Trials to test the effectiveness of service improvements

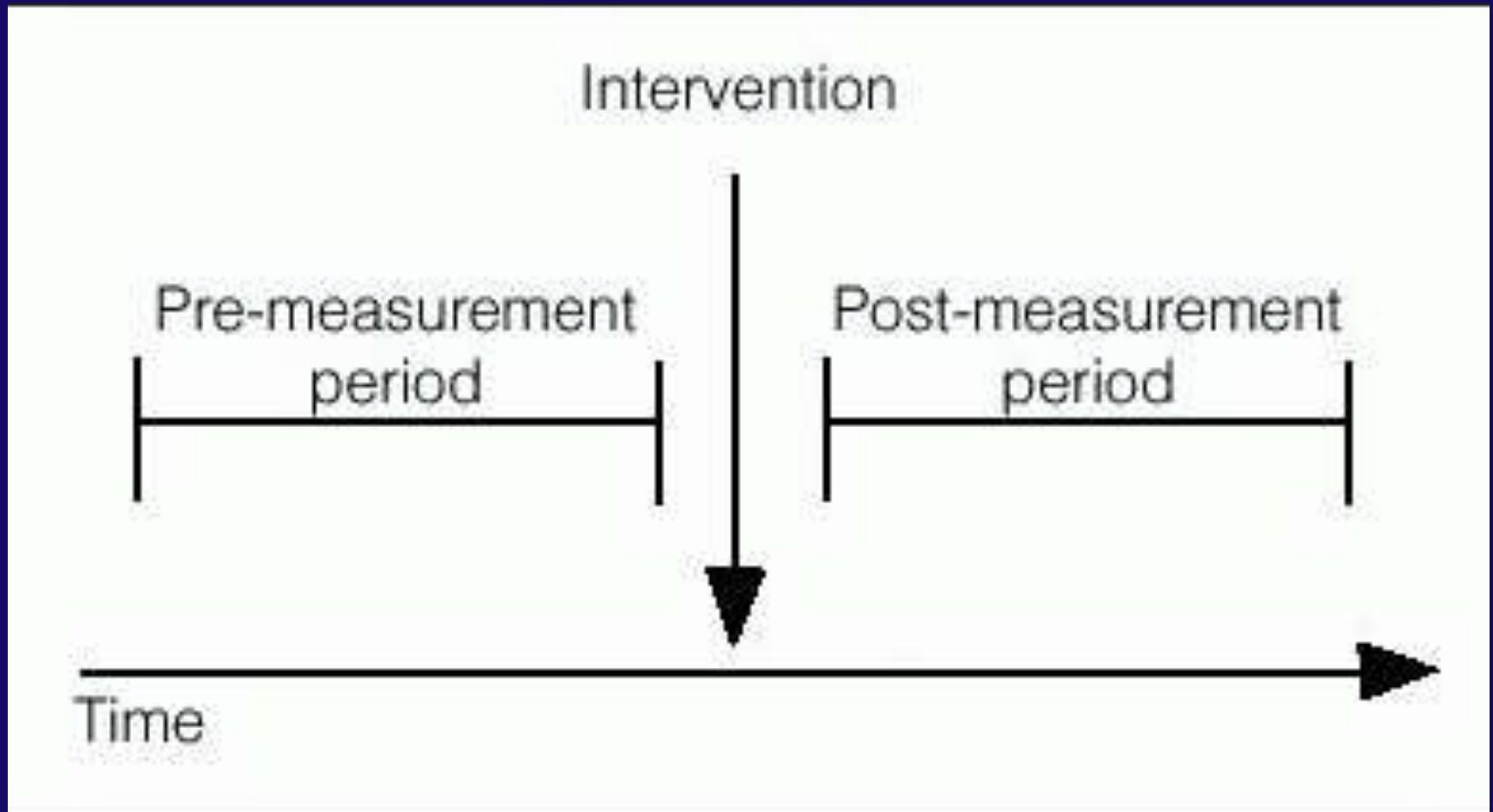
Toby Blume & Sherilyn Dos Santos



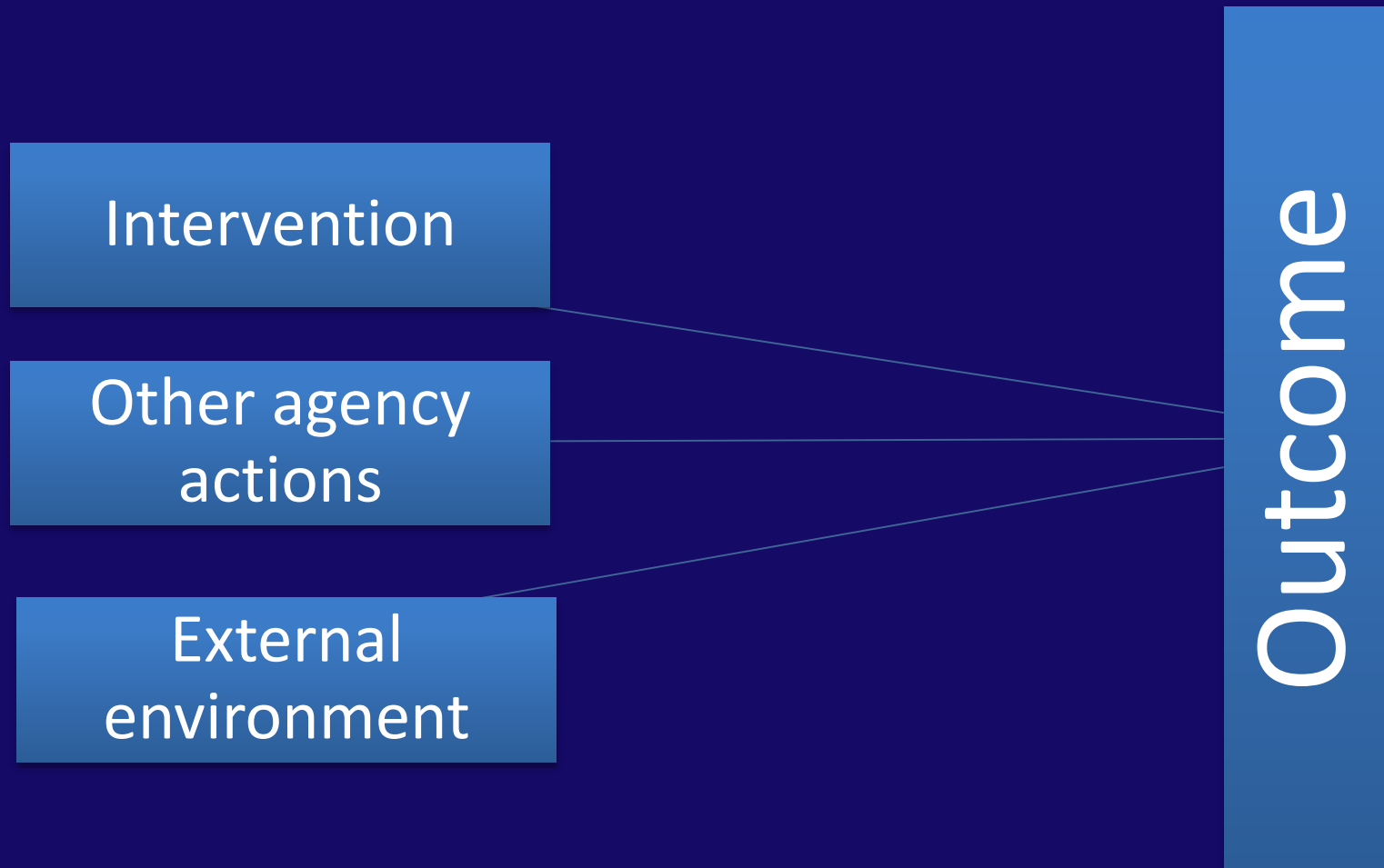
# Overview

- The current financial climate
- The need to do things differently as well as do different things
- Evidenced based policy making
- Randomised Control Trials (RCT's) one way of developing evidence

# Standard evaluation process

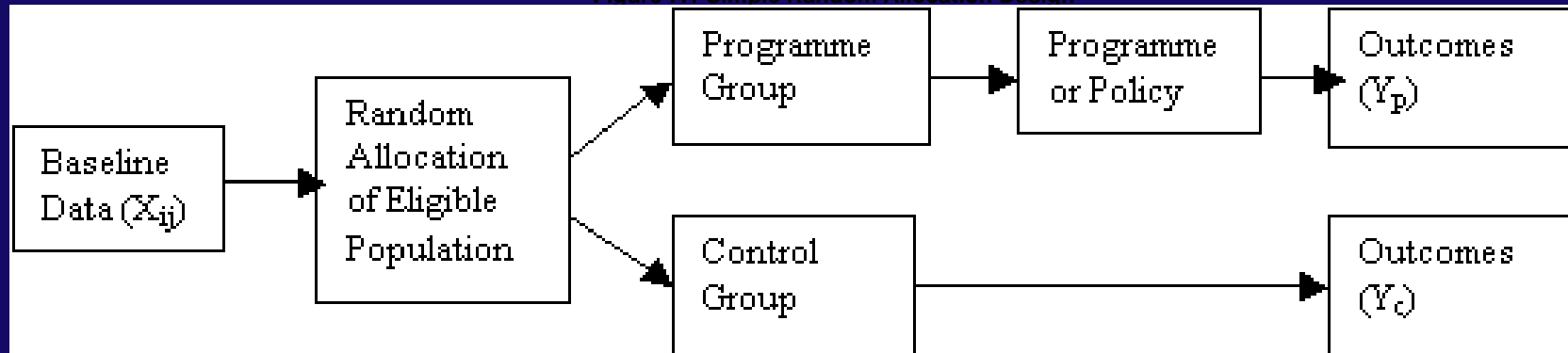


# Causation in policy evaluation



# Simple Random Allocation Design

Figure 7.1 Simple Random Allocation Design





Lambeth

# Nudging residents to increase Council Tax collection

# What we set out to do

- Test how ‘nudges’ could be used to improve council tax collection
- Using a ‘randomised controlled trial’ (RCT)



# Why?

- Improve collection rates
- Reduce costs
- Help residents
- Determine attribution





# How?

Three CT Bill modifications:

1. Simplification
2. Social Norm
3. Combined (1+2)
4. Plus a control group



**Lambeth**

Council Tax  
Bill for 2014/15

Your Account number  
[REDACTED]

**Simplification**



**Key Information**

- Pay your council tax now or your bill could go up by £127
- Make your first payment before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014
- Tell us now if we have any of your details wrong



**Lambeth**

Council Tax  
Bill for 2014/15

Your Acc  
[REDACTED]

**Social Norm**

over 95% of  
Lambeth residents  
pay their council tax

**Combined**



**Lambeth**

Council Tax  
Bill for 2014/15

Your Account number  
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**Key Information**

- Pay your council tax now or your bill could go up by £127
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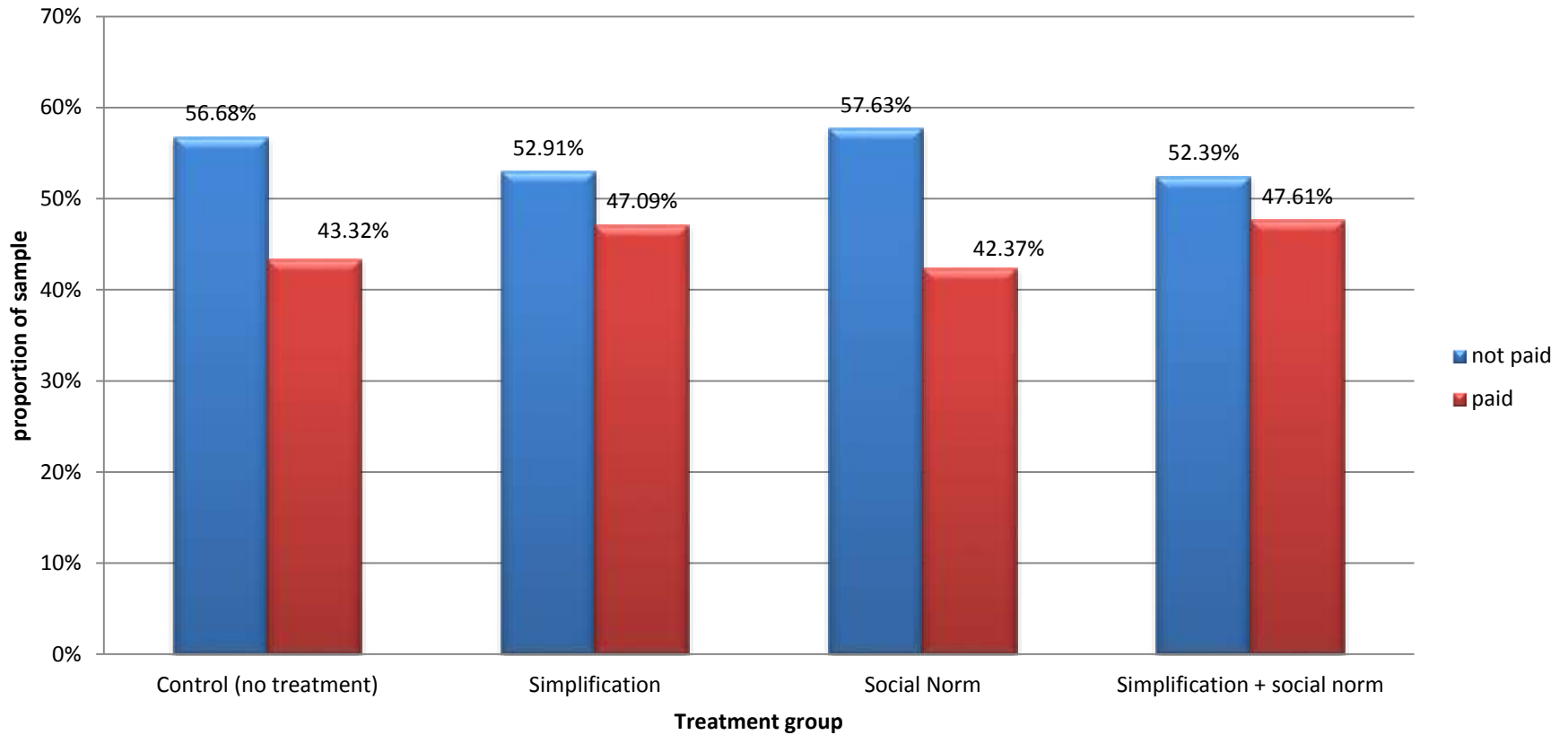
# Where and When?

- 8,000 households in 3 Wards
- Bills sent out early March
- Accounts monitored to assess effects

# What we found

- Simplification increased numbers paying by 8 per cent
- Treatments increased revenue collection by one percentage point

## Council Tax collection RCT treatment effect on payer rates

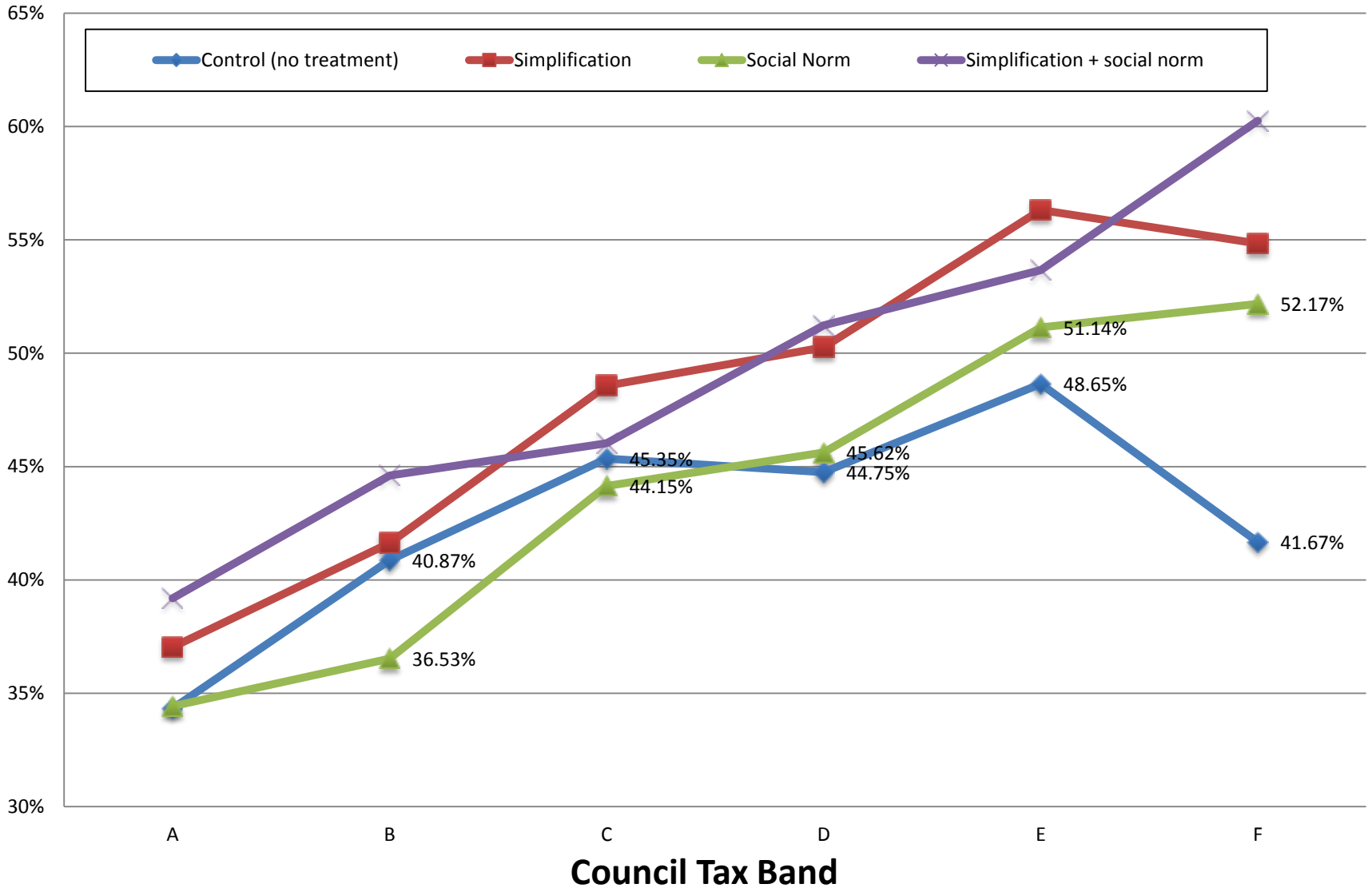




# What we found

- Consistent effect across ward, past payment record & deprivation
- Social norm more effective among higher CT bands

# Treatment effect by Council Tax band (% paid accounts)



# Where next?

- Testing & refining CT billing
- Text message reminders
- Single Person Discount
- Internal comms
- Waste minimisation



# Thank You!

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