



**Singapore Healthcare
Management 2022**

Spirit of Cross Department Collaboration



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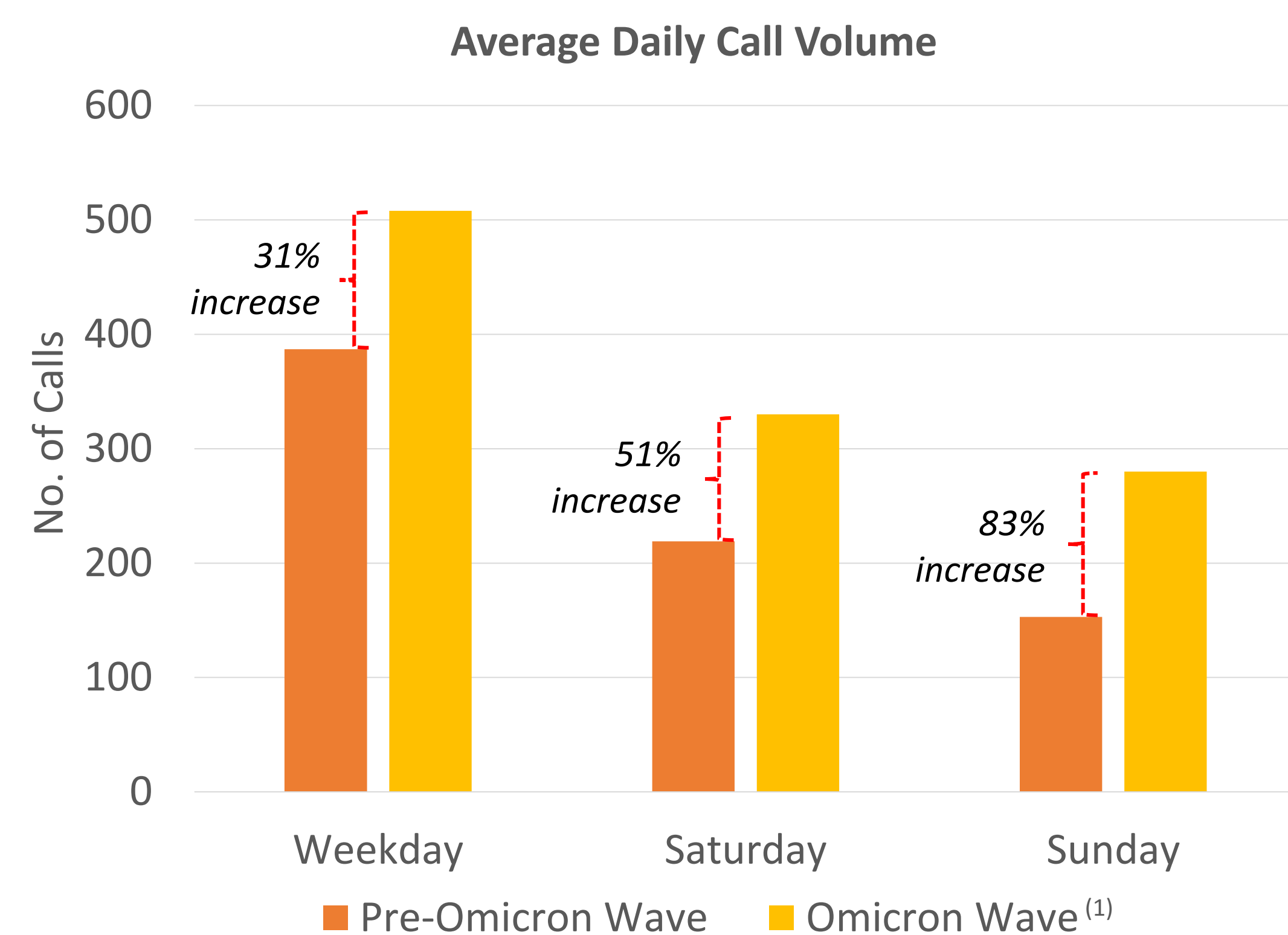


Introduction

- During the COVID-19 Omicron wave between **End Jan 2022 – Early Apr 2022**, there was a **surge** in calls received by the Sengkang General Hospital (SKH) General Enquiry Hotline.
- To manage the influx of calls while maintaining service standards, there was a need for **additional manpower** to be deployed to support ground operation.
- This provides an opportunity to explore **cross deployment** of staff from other departments to help in handling of calls.

Problem

- Surge** in daily General Enquiry call volume, contributed by the following factors.
 - Suspension of Inpatient visitors and increased A&E visits – NOK enquiring on bed status and update on patient condition.
 - Increased call activations for transfer of COVID-19 patients – e.g. intra-ward transfer.
- The team faced difficulty in meeting KPI of **abandoned call rate < 5%**.
 - Manpower were adjusted during weekdays to cope with call volume.
 - However, manpower adjustment over weekends was challenging.
- High level of stress** experienced by the team which was **unsustainable** in the long run.
 - Increased workload and managing anxious callers.
 - Increased OT frequency.



Methodology

Discussion & Planning

- Identify duration and timing requiring external support
- Define roles and scope of calls to be handled by volunteers
- Simplify existing workflows for volunteers

Calling for Volunteers

- SOC PSAs (Patient Service Associates) identified as suitable candidates
 - Customer service centric role
 - Daily interactions with patients
 - Possess general knowledge of Hospital workflows

Preparation

- Prepare Volunteer Guide
 - Useful phraseology
 - Step-by-step on handling various call types
- Apply access rights to IT systems
- Identify Call Centre buddy to provide on-duty support

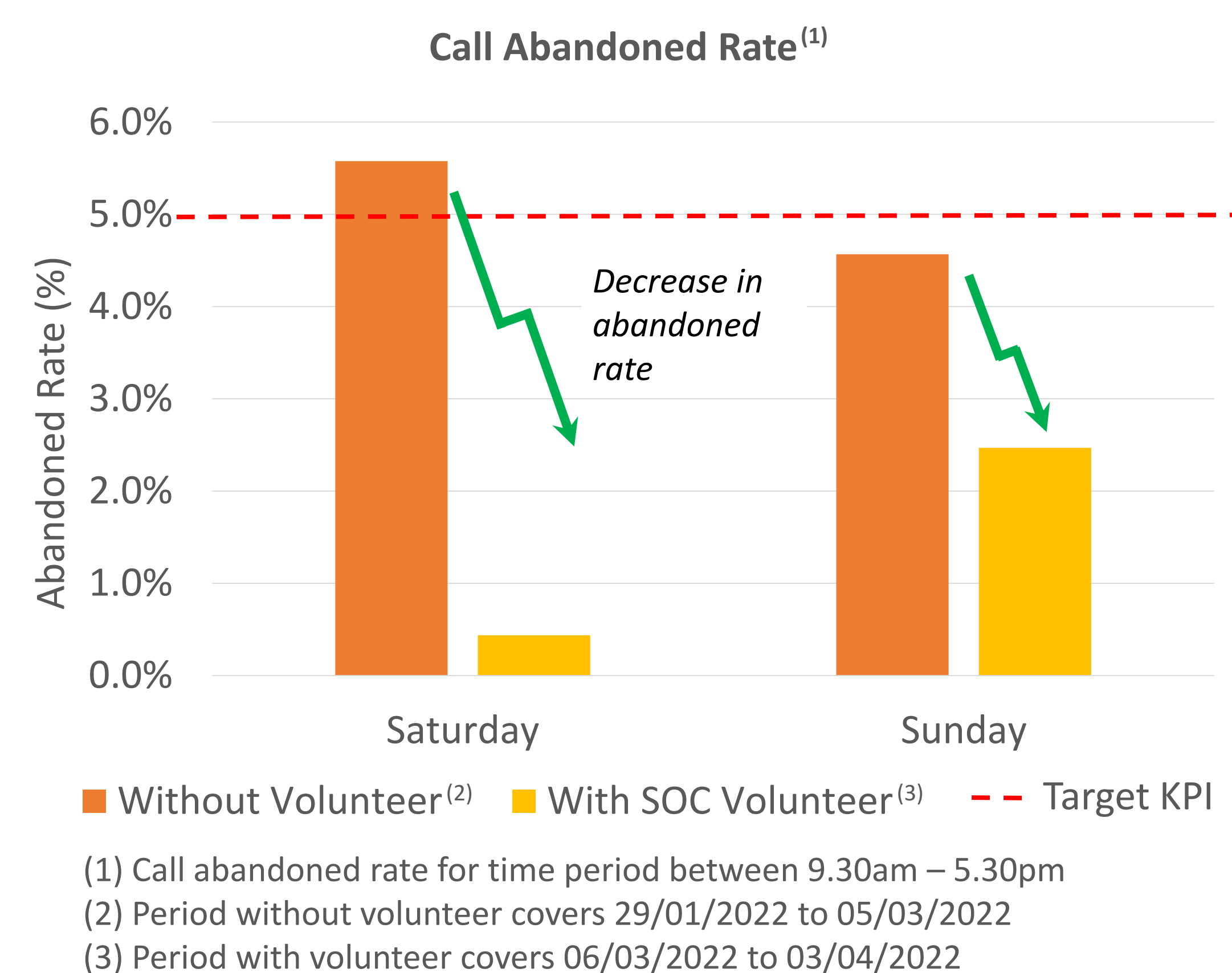
Training

- 4 hours of training:
 - Theory
 - Supervised live call handling
- Ensure volunteers equipped with required knowledge
- Able to maintain Department's service standards



Results

- 5 SOC PSAs** volunteered over the weekends from **6 Mar 2022 to 3 Apr 2022**.
- Shift timing between **9.30am and 5.30pm** to cover Call Centre's busiest period.
- Each volunteer able to handle on average **~45 calls** per shift.
 - Volunteers largely able to handle calls **independently**.
 - Able to provide **accurate assistance** to callers' requests and enquiries.
- Call abandoned rate maintained **well below 5%**, with clear improvement compared to period without volunteer.
- Decreased stress level** and **improved morale** for Call Centre team with the additional help provided.
- SOC PSAs able to gain **exposure** and **appreciation** of other department's operations through this collaboration.



Conclusion

Suitability & Feasibility

- SOC PSAs possess **suitable skill sets** to manage General Enquiry calls and able to be trained within **short** amount of time.
- Proven **business continuity plan** to assist Call Centre if department is faced with manpower constraints.
- 5 SOC PSAs** successfully deployed to Call Centre over the weekends from **6 Mar 2022 to 3 Apr 2022**.
- Call abandoned rate during timing with additional PSAs deployed **maintained below 5%**.

Fostering Collaboration

- SOC PSAs provided with **exposure** and **appreciation** for other department's roles.
- Improved workplace morale** and **decreased stress level** for Call Centre staff.
- Strong team spirit** fostered amongst staff from both departments to assist each other when required.