

# *SWAHS* *Health Care Interpreter Service*

## Introduction of 24-hour Call Centre to Improve Access to Services

Prepared by Sally Sahyoun  
24 Hour Health Care Interpreter Service Call Centre  
SWAHS

# Aim

- To improve access to language services
- To improve call response times
- To provide rapid and efficient response to consumer needs
- To improve satisfaction of health care providers accessing the service

# Nature and Extent of the Problem

- Telephone interpreting capacity was limited by the existing telecommunication system
- Telephone interpreting services were purchased from Commonwealth Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)
- Long waiting times on the bookings queue and high rate of abandoned calls
- 12% of HCIS customers surveyed were satisfied with the booking process

# Strategic importance

- Provision of professional interpreters for CALD patients ensures equal access to health services.
- HCIS needs to respond effectively to service demand and to ensure that CALD clients are not denied access to language services due to inefficiency in the booking process or the lack of flexible interpreting services.
- HCIS must respond to urgent need including disasters and medical emergencies in remote areas

# Planning

Strategies included :

- Conduct internal review of HCIS administrative structure
- Conduct consultations with HCIS staff
- Review literature on call centre models and other comparable services

# Implementing solutions

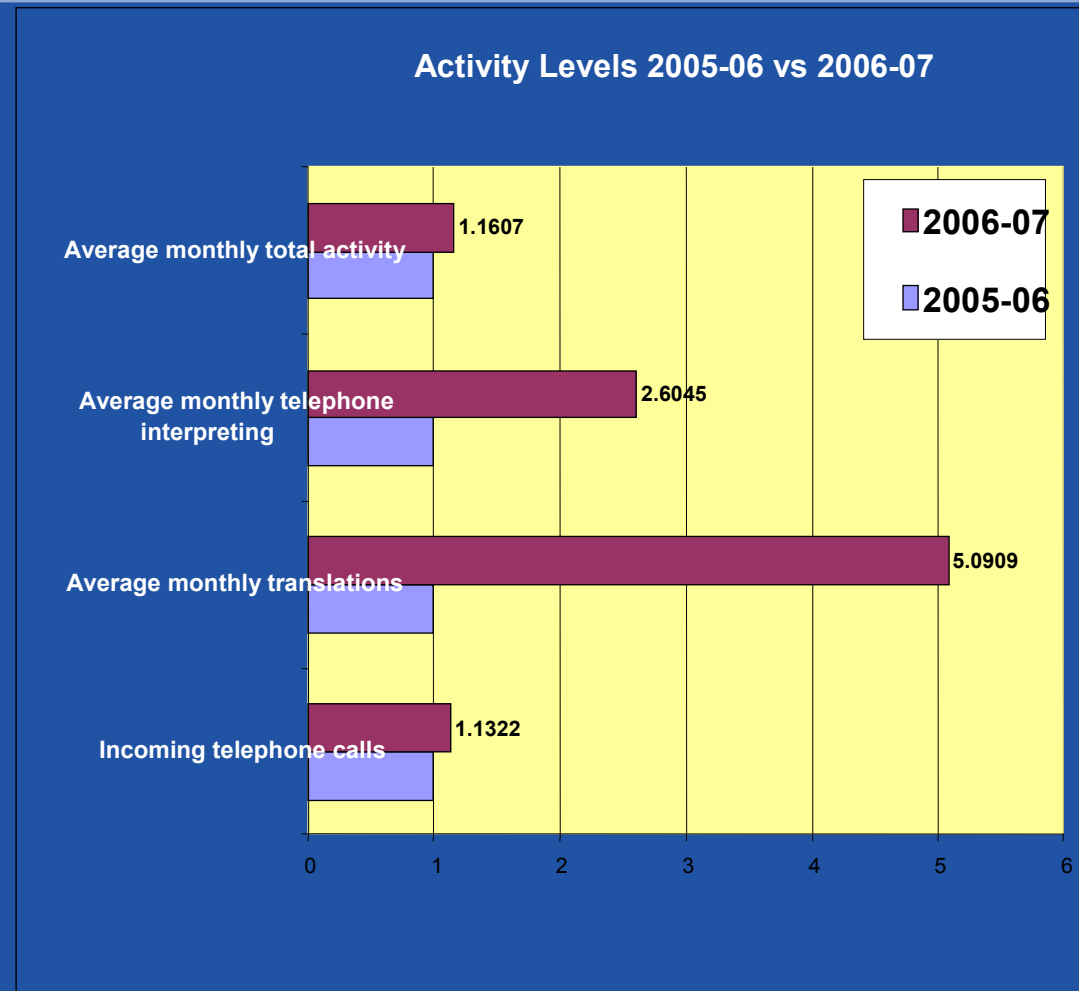
- Call monitoring software
- Upgrade to the communication services- Tele-Bridge teleconferencing facility
- Booking via e-mail and fax in order to reduce pressure on the phone queue line

# Implementing solutions Cont

- In March 2006, 6 new Customer Service Officers (CSOs) were recruited to offer 24-hour service.
- Introduction of staff performance monitoring systems
- Videoconference equipment

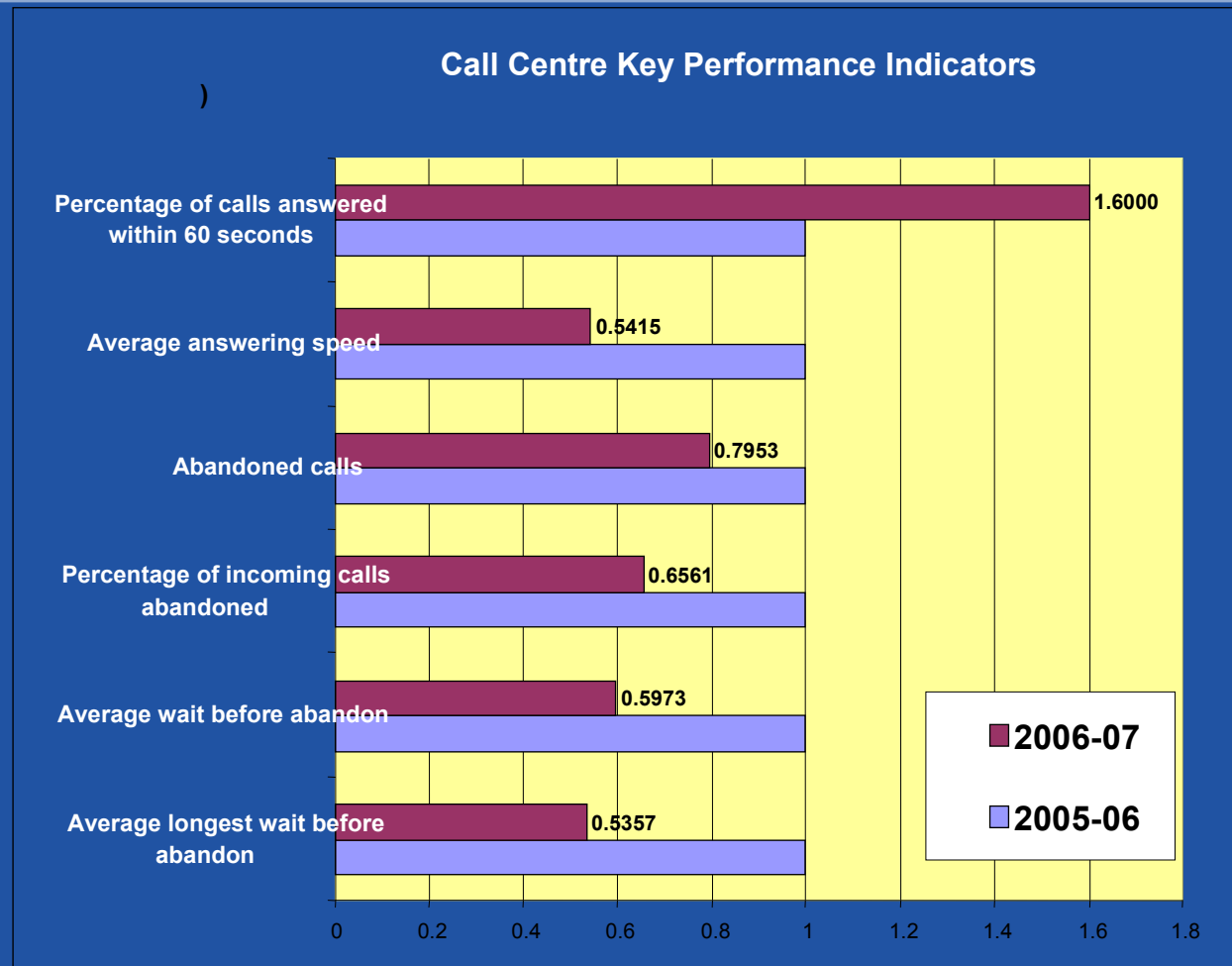
# Outcomes & Evaluation

- Total Activity increased by 16.09%
- Phone Interpreting increased by 160.41%
- Translation Occasions of Service increased by 426.70%
- Incoming Calls to the HCIS Call Centre increased by 13.21% per month



# Outcomes & Evaluation Cont

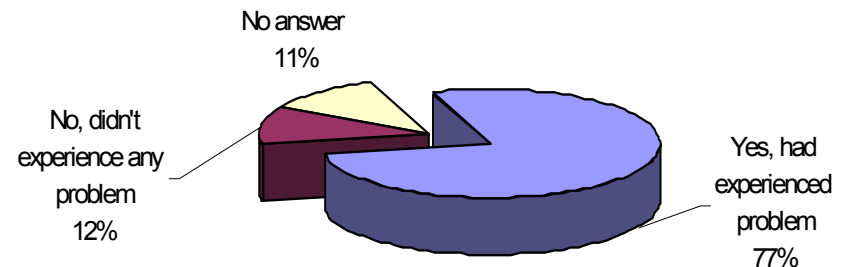
- Percentage of incoming calls answered within 60 seconds – increased by 60%
- Average answering speed – improved by 46%
- Abandoned calls – reduced by 20%
- Percentage of incoming calls abandoned – reduced by 34.42%
- Average waiting time before call abandoned – reduced by 40.2%



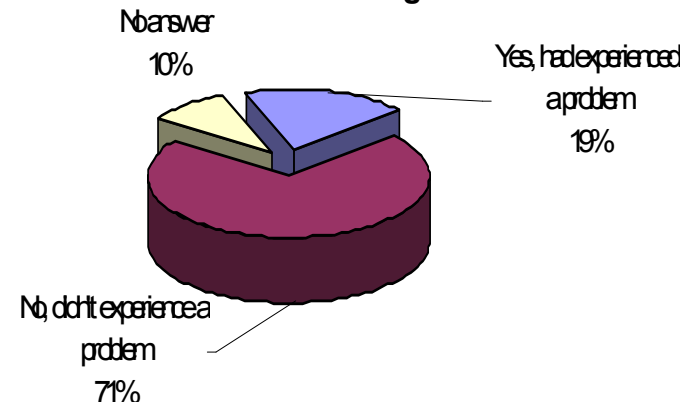
# Outcomes & Evaluation Cont

- Customer Satisfaction with the HCIS booking process has increased significantly
- In 2004, 77% of respondents reported that they had experienced a problem with the booking process compared to 19% in 2007

Customer Satisfaction with HCIS Booking Process



Level of Satisfaction with HCIS Booking Process 2006/07



# Sustaining Change

- The 24-hour on-site, telephone and videoconference interpreting services are promoted on a regular basis to ensure user awareness of the language services available.
- Requests via email and fax are also actively promoted.
- HCIS continues to monitor the average call waiting time and abandoned calls.
- Call Centre staff are coached regularly and their performance is monitored.

# Lessons Learned

- The essential ingredients for successful change management are teamwork, consultation, and collaboration
- On going call monitoring statistics
- Performance monitoring systems, measuring both individual and team performance

# Future Scope

- Development of HCIS Online Booking System
- Development of an automated system for direct access by telephone to contract interpreters
- Expansion of translation service

# Future Scope Cont



Expansion of mobile/portable videoconference units to:

Reduce waiting time for interpreter services

Reduce interpreter travel time and increase Service efficiency

Increase cost effectiveness due to minimized travel cost.