

Project Title

Business Office Transformation - to Empower, Engage and Design Patient Journey
Centric Process

Project Lead and Members

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Organisation(s) Involved

SingHealth General Hospitals

Healthcare Family Group(s) Involved in this Project

Healthcare Administration

Applicable Specialty or Discipline

Administration

Project Period

Start date: Apr 2021

Completed date: Jun 2021

Aim(s)

- To redesign and transform the following SGH Business Office transactions by harnessing technology to provide the hassle free patient services and experience.

Background

See poster appended/ below

Methods

See poster appended/ below

Results

See poster appended/ below

Conclusion

See poster appended/ below

Additional Information

Singapore Healthcare Management Congress 2022 – Merit Award (Patient Experience category)

Project Category

Care & Process Redesign, Quality Improvements, Design Thinking, Productivity, Manhour Saving, Time Saving

Technology, Digitalisation, Digitization

Keywords

Business Office, Patient Financial Service, PFS, Digitalisation, Digitization, Self-Help Service, Patient Experiences

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Business Office Transformation - to Empower, Engage and Design Patient Journey-Centric Process

Singapore Healthcare Management 2022

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1. Patient Financial Services 2. Finance & Accounting 3. Communications

Background of the problem

Currently, patients and Next of Kins (NOKs) come to Business Office (BO) front counter for various administrative processes such as 1. Payments, 2. Enquiries on insurance and Medisave/Medishield coverage, 3. Documents submission, and 4. Enquires on settlement of outstanding bills (i.e. installment applications). BO front counter operates only during office hours and patients/NOKs are not able to access these services at their own time at their own convenience. This project was initiated to review and improve BO work processes for better patient experience in SGH.

Mission Statement

To redesign and transform the following SGH Business Office transactions by harnessing technology to provide the hassle-free patient services and experience.

- Collection of payment and processing refunds
- Patient enquiries
- Submission of documents
- Settlement of outstanding bills

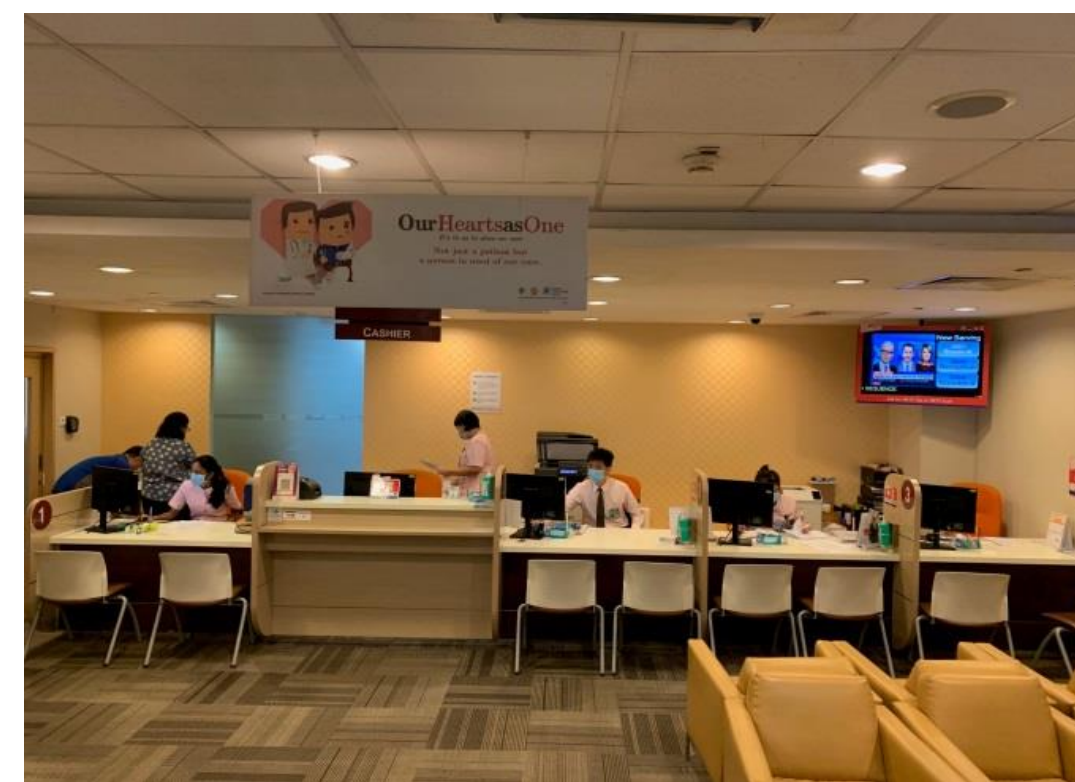


Figure 1 Business Office counters

Analysis of problem

The current patient journey starts from the main entrance, where patients select the type of service that they want, and get a queue number. So the first thing that the team did, is to analyse data from Q-matic machine. From there, we understand that BO handles 250 cases per day, where 20% requires further assistance from back office staff.

Detail breakdown of BO services:

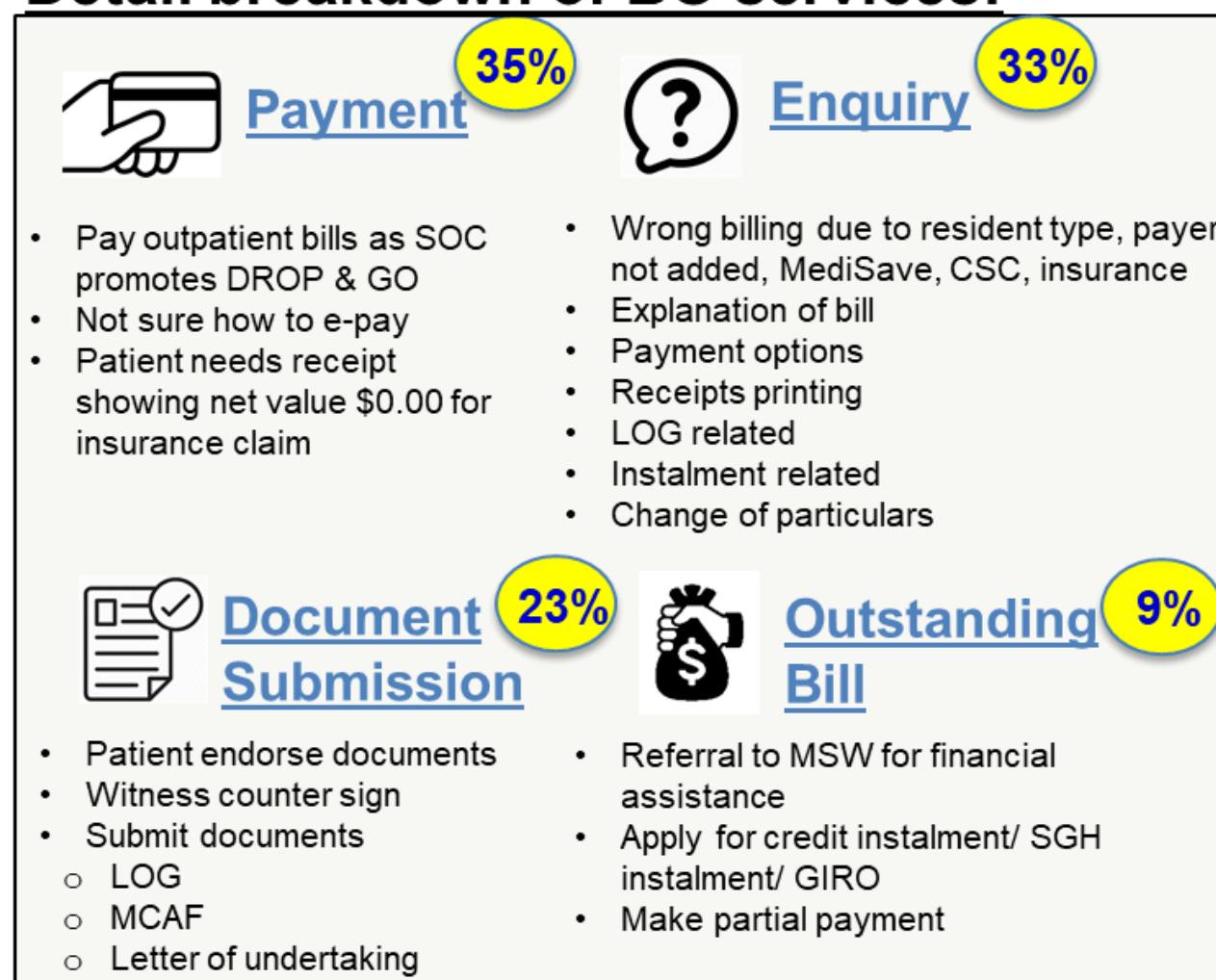


Figure 3 Design thinking workshop

Figure 2 Breakdown of current BO services

The team then spent 2 half-days to discuss how to redesign a BO that meets patients' and NOKs' needs. 6 volunteers from SingHealth Patient Advocacy Network (SPAN) were invited to participate in the workshop.

Two paper prototypes were built to illustrate the change ideas:

1. A finance app and/or portal that allows patients to access the finance-related information and services at their convenience
2. A self-help station to settle finance-related matters in SGH campus

The ideas from the two paper prototypes were then followed up by different departments to actualise. Content digitalization, including forms digitalization and FAQs databank is handled by Process Transformation & Improvement.

Interventions / Initiatives

Forms digitalization

Total of 84 forms were reviewed and a total of 29 forms were eliminated. The team then focused on developing change ideas, and piloted the digital forms using smart PDF as well as FormSG developed by GovTech. The first e-form was deployed during COVID-19 circuit breaker. More importantly, data analysis on FormSG requests received from Apr to Jun 2021 shows that 48% were submitted outside of BO working hour. Average turn-around time to get back to patients was 1.7 days.

FAQs databank

Based on the most frequently asked questions by patients and NOKs, a list FAQs was built for patients to take reference from. The FAQ list also served as the baseline when Business Office created their chat bot, Ask Billie.

Landing Page

A webpage is created to host patient finance related e-forms and FAQ list at SGH website. On the landing page, the most popular services appear at the top. The other services are grouped by inpatient and outpatient for easier search.

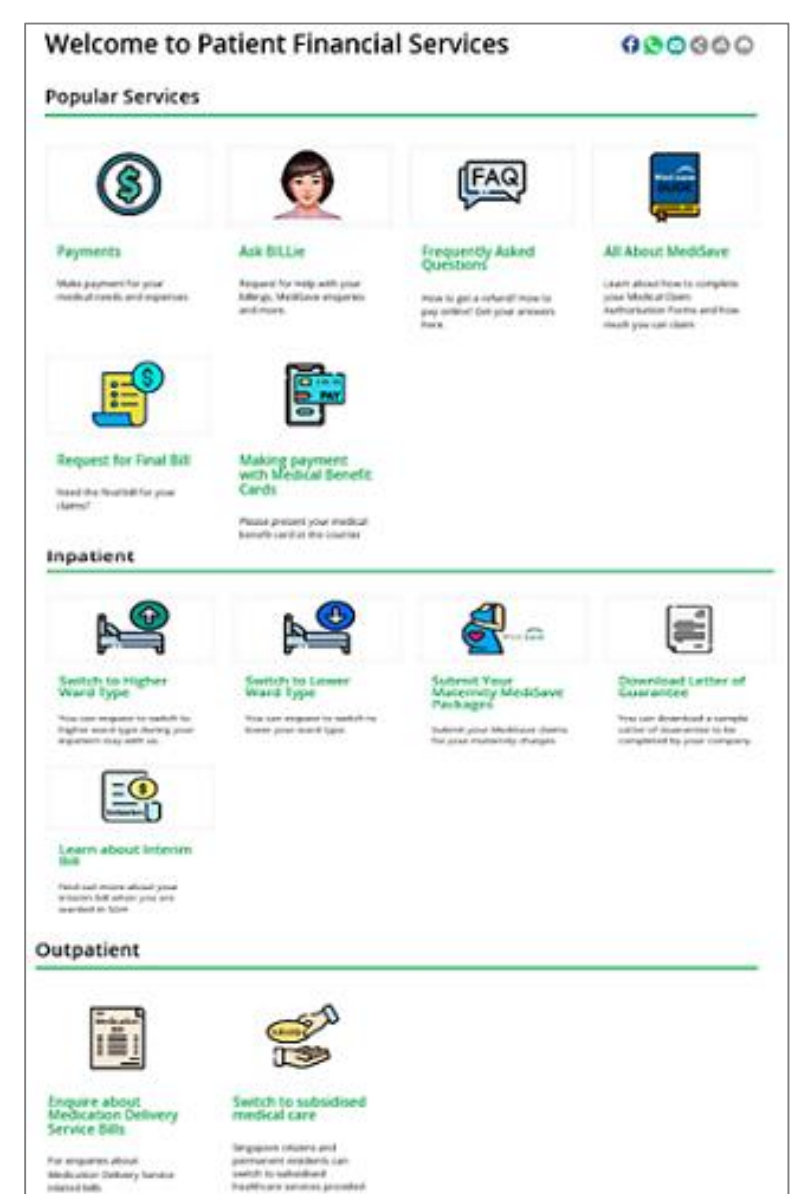


Figure 5 Patient Financial Services Webpage

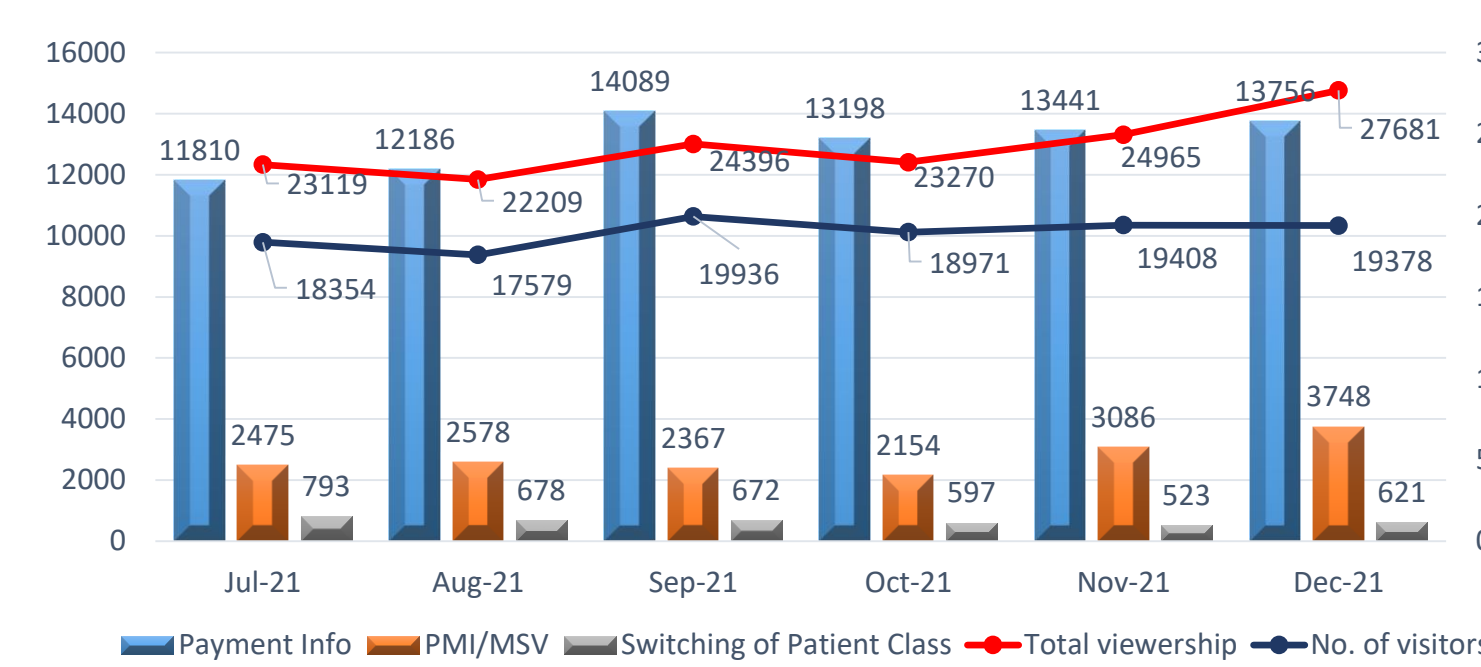


Figure 4 Most popular online search (Top 3)

24 hour Self-help Lobby

Business Office is formally renamed as Patient Financial Services (PFS) with the opening of new lobby on 5th Jul 2021. Most of the services were moved to backend. There are 3 PFS staff assisting patients when necessary.

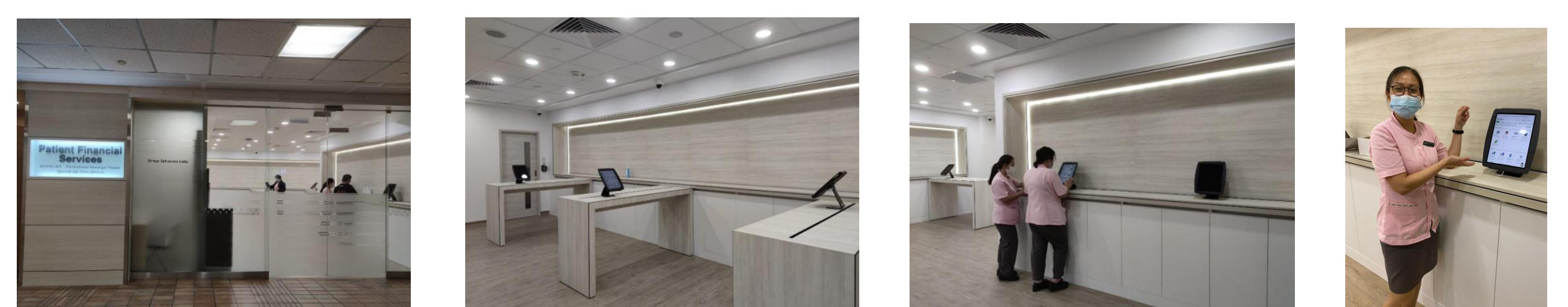


Figure 6 The 24 hour self-help lobby

Results

Project team achieved significant improvement results as shown on Figure 7.

Sustainability Plans

Digital forms have been shared and spread to KKH. SGH PFS will continue to collect feedback from patients and NOKs for continuous improvement.

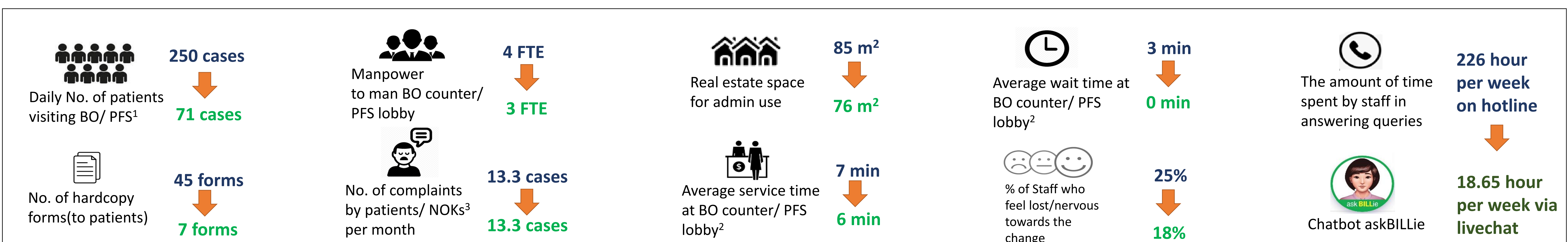


Figure 7 Results achieved after Business Office counters were converted to 24 hour self-help lobby

Data source:
1 Baseline - Business Office queue system data (Q-matic) from Apr to Jun 19; post-implementation - Daily visit data collection at PFS lobby from 5th Jul 21 to 31st Aug 21;
2 Baseline - Business Office queue system data (Q-matic) from Apr to Jun 19; post-implementation - Time Motion Study done at PFS on 5th, 6th, 10th, 17th Aug, sample size 54;
3 Baseline - Patients' billing related feedback from Office of Patient Experience in CY 2018; post-implementation - Patients' billing related feedback from Jan to Jul 21;
4 Baseline - Business Office staff survey done by Future Health System (FHS) in Jun 21, sample size = 73; post-implementation - PFS staff survey done by FHS in Sep 21, sample size = 22.