

Funding and Service Agreement
Lump Sum Grant
Designated Hotline For Carer Support

I. Service Definition**Introduction**

In July 2020, the Labour and Welfare Bureau commissioned The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Consulting Team to conduct a “Consultancy Study on Needs and Support Required of Carers of Elderly Persons (EPs) and of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Hong Kong” (“the Consultancy Study”) to study on the needs and support required of informal unpaid carers of elderly persons and persons with disabilities in Hong Kong with a view to providing effective, carer-centric and sustainable support to the carers. According to the Consultancy Study, the government should set up special services for carers, including setting up a hotline which aims at providing more support to the carers, and strengthening their capacity to address the needs of the carers.

Purpose and Objectives

2. The objectives of the Designated Hotline for Carer Support (Carer Hotline) are to provide timely and effective intervention to carers through the provision of phone consultation, counselling, immediate outreaching, and referrals to appropriate service units for services, etc., and to address the problems arising from caregiving distress surged suddenly or tremendously due to challenging caregiving situation or changes in some aspects of caregiving episodes.

Target Service Users

3. The main target service users of Carer Hotline are Carers of EPs and of PWDs¹ who require service information or assistance regardless of their age, gender and race.

Nature and Contents of Service

4. The Carer Hotline adopts a coordinated approach with collaboration with different service units/sectors to support Service Users who require assistance and to bridge up the needy Carers to various appropriate services available. Through social worker’s instant and individualised needs assessment and interventions (including crisis

¹ It defines as the persons who have various kinds of disabilities such as (a) attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD); (b) autism; (c) hearing impairment; (d) intellectual disability; (e) physical disability; (f) mental illness; (g) specific learning difficulties; (h) speech impairment; (i) visceral disability; and (j) visual impairment.

intervention), Carer Hotline has to provide Services to the needy Service Users for early identification of their welfare needs with the following key components:

(a) Hotline Service

- (1) To provide 24-hour Services operated by registered social workers;
- (2) To provide professional advice or counselling to Carers over phone to address the need of the Service Users;
- (3) To handle enquiries for providing service information;
- (4) To make referrals² to service units of SWD/government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)³, if follow-up action is required;

(b) Outreaching Service

- (1) To perform outreaching duties in the form of on-site support and assessment, and/or to escort EPs/PWDs in-need to residential respite service units or any places as assessed suitable for all necessary cases⁴;
- (2) To follow up the cases out-reached and make referrals to other service units⁵ if long-term follow up action is required for such cases; AND

(c) Support Service

- (1) To support the Carers to receive the respite services through various assistance including -
 - to facilitate needy carers to use respite service as and when required; and

² The Carer Hotline should normally keep on following-up the welfare of the Service Users while pending the confirmation, such as reply slip, from the service units to receive referrals and take up the case. In case the Carer Hotline cannot receive the reply slip of referral within the specified period of return, the Carer Hotline has to liaise with the respective service unit for follow-up.

³ Services of SWD and NGOs may include District Elderly Community Centre (DECC), Neighbourhood Elderly Centre (NEC), District Support Centre for Persons with Disabilities (DSC), Integrated Family Service Centre (IFSC), Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness (ICCMW) or home care services etc.

⁴ Except cases involving (i) suspected child abuse or elder abuse; (ii) psychiatric emergency; (iii) sexual violence cases; (iv) suicidal cases and (v) related to statutory procedures will be handled by other existing mechanisms and SWD will provide the Service Operator relevant guidelines from time to time.

⁵ For example, community support services with case management include IFSC, DECC, NEC, DSC, Home Care Service for Persons with Severe Disabilities and Integrated Support Service for Persons with Severe Physical Disabilities, etc.

- to provide Travelling Subsidy⁶ to Carers with financial need whose EPs or PWDs (especially those with mobility problem) are in need of urgent admission to residential respite service;
 - (2) To form partnership and effective collaboration with various service providers of respite service units to ensure successful arrangement/admission of needy EPs/PWDs to day or residential respite service units, and to give related feedback to SWD in respect of the respite services, if any;
 - (3) To establish the referral mechanism/network with various service providers of mainstream welfare ⁷ /health/ education/ housing/ transportation/ innovative technology services, for strengthening Carer's capacity in taking care of the EPs/PWDs; AND
 - (4) To promote the Services of Carer Hotline regularly so as to remind Carers of its existence through various means including distribution of leaflets, posters; conducting programmes/activities; and maintain an updated service webpage which should be linked up with the Information Gateway. Besides, the Service Operator may consider to engage suitable volunteers to follow-up simple and straight forward enquiry calls in the second-tier level after social workers' assessment, as appropriate.
5. The Service Operator has to keep close communication and/or attending regular meetings with SWD to ensure that the Carer Hotline operates smoothly at any time and can meet the actual needs of Service Users.

II. Performance Standards

6. The Service Operator is required to meet the performance standards including Essential Service Requirements, output standards and outcome standards.

⁶ The Central Item (CI) will be allocated by SWD to the Service Operator quarterly and subject to review and reflected in 2025-26 Central Item and the Service Operator is required to submit a quarterly report of the utilisation of the CI.

⁷ Mainstream welfare such as IFSC, DECC, DSC, Parents/ Relatives Resource Centre (PRC), home care services, day care services, Support Centre for Persons with Autism (SPA), the Samaritan Befrienders Hong Kong - Suicide Crisis Intervention Centre, Outreaching Team for Ethnic Minorities (OTEM) and Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents (CHEER) etc.

Essential Service Requirements

7. The Service Operator is required to comply with the Essential Service Requirements (ESRs) as follows, i.e. the Carer Hotline should:

- (a) operate the hotline on 24-hour basis all through the year;
- (b) handle all the calls requiring counselling service by registered social workers⁸; and
- (c) operate under the supervision and guidance of a registered social worker (a degree holder) who should have no less than 5 years of experience in social work practice.

Output Standards

<u>Output Standard (OS)</u>	<u>Output Indicator</u>	<u>Agreed Level</u>
	Hotline Service	
1(a)	Minimum number of telephone lines operated in the first two financial years	30 lines
1(b)	Minimum number of telephone lines operated after the first two financial years	20 lines
2	Out of the total number of calls in need of ongoing counselling / welfare services to be referred for follow-up services, the percentage of these calls being referred to appropriate service unit within next day in a year	90%
	Outreaching Service⁹	
3	Out of the total number of outreaching cases, the percentage of cases with staff's arrival time at the scene through immediate outreaching not exceeding 60 minutes in a year	80%

⁸ Registered social worker refers to the definition governed by the Social Workers Registration Ordinance (Cap.505).

⁹ Outreaching service refers to the visits conducted to Carers of elderly persons and Carers of persons with disabilities at their residence or other places outside the premises of the service unit.

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<u>Output Standard (OS)</u>	<u>Output Indicator</u>	<u>Agreed Level</u>
4	Out of the total number of outreaching cases in need of follow-up services, the percentage of these cases being referred to appropriate service unit within next day of outreaching in a year	90%
5	Out of total number of EPs/PWDs in need of urgent respite services, the percentage of escort service was provided in a year	90%
Support Service		
6	Out of total number of incoming calls in need of information of respite services, the percentage of calls with the vacancy information of respite services given on the same day in a year	90%
7	Total number of publicity activities/programmes ¹⁰ for service promotion of the designated hotline for carer support in a year	12

Outcome Standards

<u>Outcome Standard (OC)</u>	<u>Outcome Indicator</u>	<u>Agreed Level</u>
1	Rate of carers indicating usefulness of the information/ counselling provided in the hotline service in a year	80%
2	Rate of carers requiring service, including outreaching service/ referral service, indicating satisfaction after receiving the service in a year	80%

Service Extension

8. In the event that the total number of incoming calls exceeds the prevailing capacity of the total number of physical lines and the situation persists, the Service Operator is required to materialise extra physical lines progressively according to

¹⁰ The publicity activities can be conducted through various means, such as service promotion collaborating with other organisations/service units/in district meetings or promotion through online mode or social media etc.

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operational need and to deploy its own human resources as a temporary measure to manage the upsurge of service demand timely so as to maintain efficient operation of the hotline services. If the situation persists for more than one month and whereby the situation justifies, SWD would review the need for additional allocation of resources on a pro-rata unit cost basis subject to the approval from the Director of Social Welfare.

Quality

9. The Service Operator shall meet the requirements of the 16 Service Quality Standards (SQSs).

III. Obligation of SWD to Service Operator

10. SWD will undertake the duties set out in the General Obligation of SWD to the Service Operator as specified in the Funding and Service Agreement (FSA) Generic Sections.

IV. Basis of Subvention

11. The basis of subvention is set out in the offer and notification letter issued by SWD to the Service Operator.

Funding

12. An annual subvention will be allocated on a Lump Sum Grant (LSG) mode to the Service Operator for a time-defined period of five years from 18.9.2023 to 30.9.2028. This lump sum has taken into account personal emoluments, including provident fund for employing qualified professionals and supporting staff, and other charges (covering all other relevant operating expenses including employees' compensation insurance, public liability insurance, volunteer training and other allowance, and transportation expenses of staff, etc.) applicable to the operation of the project and recognised fee income, if any. Rent and Rates in respect of premises recognised by SWD for delivery of the subvented activities will be reimbursed separately on an actual cost basis.

13. In receiving the LSG, the Service Operator is accorded flexibility in the use of the grant but required to observe the guidelines set out in the latest LSG Manual, LSG Circulars, management letters and correspondence in force as issued by SWD on subvention policies and procedures. The LSG will be subject to adjustments including salary adjustments in line with civil service pay adjustments and other charges in line with the price adjustment factor, currently the Composite Consumer Price Index. The Government will not accept any liabilities or financial implication arising from the project beyond the approved funding.

Payment Arrangement, Internal Control and Financial Report Requirements

14. Upon the Service Operator's acceptance of the FSA, payment of the LSG subventions will be made on a monthly basis.

15. The Service Operator is responsible for maintaining an effective and sound financial management system, including budget planning, projection, accounting, internal control and auditing. It should maintain proper books and records and supporting documents on income and expenditure relating to the project and make them available for inspection by the Government representative.

16. The Service Operator shall submit the Annual Financial Report (AFR) as reviewed and the annual financial statements of the non-governmental organisation (NGO) as a whole as audited by a certified public accountant holding a practising certificate as defined in the Professional Accountants Ordinance (Chapter 50) and signed by two authorised representatives of the NGO, i.e. Chairperson/NGO Head/Head of Social Welfare Services in accordance with the requirements as stipulated in the latest LSG Manual. Furthermore, the Service Operator is required to account for the income and expenditure of Travelling Subsidy separately as Central Item in the AFR. The AFR should be prepared on a cash basis and non-cash items such as depreciation, staff leave accrual etc. should not be included in the AFR.

Corruption Prevention and Probity Requirements

17. It is the responsibility of the Service Operator to ensure that its management, board members and staff comply with the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap. 201) and the relevant requirements. The Service Operator shall prohibit the members, staff, agents, and contractors from offering, soliciting or accepting advantages when discharging their duties under the FSA. With regard to the provision of the subvented services, the Service Operator shall avoid and declare any conflict of interest.

18. The Service Operator should also make reference to the relevant guidelines on corruption prevention and probity requirements to uphold integrity in every aspect, including but not limited to the governance structure, internal control, financial/fund management, procurement, staff administration, delivery of services/activities, management of maintenance works as set out in the "Best Practice Checklist on Governance and Internal Control in Non-Governmental Organisations" and the "Integrity and Corruption Prevention Guide on Managing Relationship with Public Servants" issued by the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

V. Validity Period

19. This FSA is valid for a time-defined period. Should the Service Operator be in breach of any terms of condition of this FSA and fail to remedy the same in such manner and within such time as shall be specified in a written notice from SWD, SWD may after expiry of such notice, terminate this FSA by giving 30 days' notice in writing to the Service Operator.

20. SWD may immediately terminate the FSA upon the occurrence of any of the following events:-

- (a) the Service Operator has engaged or is engaging in acts or activities that are likely to constitute or cause the occurrence of offences endangering national security or which would otherwise be contrary to the interest of national security;
- (b) the continued engagement of the Service Operator or the continued performance of the FSA is contrary to the interest of national security; or
- (c) the SWD reasonably believes that any of the events mentioned above is about to occur.

21. Where there is any change to the performance standards within the agreement period, SWD will seek mutual agreement with the Service Operator and the Service Operator will be required to achieve new requirements in accordance with the specified implementation schedule.

22. Continuation of service for the next term will be subject to the relevant considerations such as the prevailing policy directive, service needs and the performance of the Service Operator. SWD reserves the right to reallocate the project.

VI. Other References

23. Apart from this FSA, the Service Operator should also comply with the requirements/commitments set out in the Service Specification, and the Service Operator's proposal and supplementary information, if any. When these documents are in conflict, this FSA shall prevail. The Service Operator's compliance with all these documents will be closely monitored by SWD.