

FUNDING AND SERVICE AGREEMENT¹**Cyber Youth Support Teams****(A) Service Definition****(1) Introduction**

To address the at-risk and hidden youth who may not prefer conventional mainstream services, Cyber Youth Support Teams (CYSTs) are set up to proactively approach and engage them through cyber means. The CYSTs provide professional social work intervention with online and offline counselling and group/ programme services to at-risk and hidden youth. The CYSTs will form partnership with other community stakeholders and organisations to foster cross-sectoral collaboration to address the needs of at-risk and hidden youth.

(2) Purpose and Objectives

The purposes of CYSTs are to identify and approach at-risk and hidden youth through online platforms, provide them with immediate support and assistance, and connect them to relevant mainstream services for follow up with the objectives below –

- (a) proactively search and approach at-risk and hidden youth through online platforms popular among youth (such as Facebook, Instagram, Discord, Threads, etc.), provide intervention, support and counselling (viz preventive, developmental, supportive and remedial levels) through online and offline means as well as referral services to relevant mainstream services for follow up;
- (b) provide real time and round-the-clock online text-based counselling and support services for young people experiencing emotional distress or facing immediate risks through an online platform;
- (c) form partnership, strategic alliance and cross-sectoral collaboration with other community stakeholders and organisations, including subvented and self-financing welfare service units both within and outside the CYSTs' own organisations, government departments, local bodies, schools, religious groups, other professionals, etc. to address the needs and problems of the at-risk and hidden youth; and

¹ This Funding and Service Agreement is a sample document for reference only.

- (d) mobilise community resources, arrange training, promote community education, handle case referrals, answer enquiries, etc. on matters relating to at-risk and hidden youth in their respective serving regional clusters.

(3) Service Nature and Contents

Each CYST is required to provide an integrated service delivery model/ protocol, technical development/ support and authenticity system as well as to suggest innovative programme means for their CYST, which may include, but not limited to, the following –

- (a) develop a website with relevant web-based services/ use instant messaging software on mobile phones and computers to engage at-risk and hidden youth for further contacts with social workers. Being the webmaster, the Service Operator is required to establish the authenticity system on those web-based services before in use;
- (b) search for and engage at-risk and hidden youth, including those who are manifesting various at-risk and hidden behaviours and are in need of social work intervention through online services;
- (c) provide real time and round-the-clock online text-based counselling, support services and thematic care counselling to young people experiencing emotional distress or facing immediate risks and promote their mental wellness and resilience through an online youth-emotional-support platform shared among CYSTs, thereby reducing the risk of suicide among young people;
- (d) provide guidance, support and counselling services viz preventive, developmental, supportive and remedial levels for service users and their significant others² to overcome their difficulties and problems;
- (e) organise online and offline group activities and programmes for enhancing at-risk and hidden youth's problem-solving skills, conflict resolution, resilience, stress management, life skills training, positive life and value enhancement, etc.;
- (f) mobilise at-risk and hidden youth to receive offline services and connect them to other mainstream services, employment programmes, etc. when necessary and as appropriate;

² "Significant others" refer to the immediate family members or carers of the service users.

- (g) share a case management system among CYSTs for case checking to avoid duplication of cases handling as the CYSTs do not have specific catchment area in online services;
- (h) establish referral mechanism/ network and interfacing with other mainstream services, such as Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSCs), Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs), clinical psychological services, psychiatric services, Suicide Crisis Intervention Centre, etc.;
- (i) provide public education and training in the community/ welfare/ education sectors as well as foster cross-sectoral collaboration and partnership with community stakeholders and organisations to address the needs of and provide support for at-risk and hidden youth;
- (j) engage and train volunteers to provide live chat services for young people experiencing emotional distress or facing immediate risks; and
- (k) provide any other services to meet the changing service needs of the service users.

(4) **Target Service Users and Eligibility Criteria**

It refers to at-risk and hidden youth, mainly aged 6 to 24, who have emotional or behavioural problems and are manifesting or engaging in various at-risk behaviours in the Internet. Given that there may be difficulties in verifying the real age of the persons connected in the online platforms (including the online youth-emotional-support platform) at the initial contact/ outreaching stage, to cater for immediate needs of persons connected and allow flexibility in service provision, transitional intervention may be provided by CYSTs on a need basis for those persons connected online but are later confirmed to be outside the age range of 6 to 24. CYSTs should refer them to appropriate mainstream services as soon as practicable.

(B) **Service Performance Standards**

(5) **Essential Service Requirements**

The Service Operator must comply with the following Essential Service Requirements-

- (a) essential staff includes registered social worker, with at least one holding a recognised degree in social work; and
- (b) the online youth-emotional-support platform service, staffed by trained volunteer, should be provided under supervision of registered social worker.

(6) **Service Output and Outcome Standards**

The Service Operator is required to meet the agreed level of service output and service outcome standards.

Service Output

Service Output Standard (OS)	Service Output Indicator	Agreed Level
1	Total number of youth served in a year, including a. at-risk/ hidden youth engaged ^{Note 1} through online outreaching approach (Target Level: 1 200); and b. youth ^{Note 2} served through the youth-emotional-support platform for chat services (Target Level: 2 400)	3 600
2	Total number of cases served in a year, including a. cases served ^{Note 3&4} , for youth reported under OS 1a (Target Level: 250) and b. thematic care service ^{Note 5} cases for youth reported under OS 1b (Target Level: 30)	280
3	Total number of cases closed for youth reported under OS 2a having achieved the case goal(s)/ plan in a year	50
4	Total number of counselling sessions rendered in a year, including a. counselling sessions rendered to youth reported under OS 2a ^{Note 6} in	2 120

	a year (Target Level: 2 000) b. thematic care counselling sessions Note 5 rendered to youth reported under OS 2b in a year (Target Level: 120)	
5	Total number of cases with referrals made to mainstream service units Note 7 in a year including a. cases Note 8 from youth reported under OS 1a and OS 2a with referrals made to mainstream service units Note 7 (Target Level: 75) b. youth reported under OS 1b and OS 2b with referrals made to mainstream service units Note 7 (Target Level: 75)	150
6	Total number of group/ programme sessions Note 9&10 conducted in a year	190
7	Total number of chat service sessions Note 11 in a year	6 570
8	Total number of training sessions provided for volunteers	11*
9	Total number of active volunteers Note 12	56*

Service Outcome

Service Outcome Standard (OC)	Service Outcome Indicator	Agreed Level
1	Percentage of service users indicating positive change (e.g. enhancement of resilience, improvement in problem solving skills, etc.) after receiving counselling service/ the online emotional support chat service/ thematic care service in a year Note 13	75%

2	Percentage of service users ^{Note 14} indicating positive change (e.g. enhancement of resilience, improvement in problem solving skills, etc.) after participating in groups/programmes in a year ^{Note 15}	75%
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*There are different additional output/ outcome standards committed by individual operators. Actual agreed level of respective service unit will be subject to the agreement with the service operator.

(7) **Service Quality Standards**

The Service Operator shall meet the requirements of the 16 Service Quality Standards.

(C) **Subvention**

- (8) The Service is subvented by the SWD under the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) Subvention System and the basis of subvention is set out in the notification letter issued by the SWD. The Service Operator is required to observe the rules of subvention according to the prevailing LSG Subvention Manual, circulars, guidelines, management letters and relevant correspondence issued by the SWD. The Government will not accept any liabilities or financial implications arising from the Service other than the amount of subvention as approved by the SWD.
- (9) The amount of subvention has taken into account the personal emoluments of staff, including provident fund for employing qualified staff, and other charges (covering all other relevant operating expenses such as utilities, programme and administrative expenses, air-conditioning, minor repairs and maintenance, employees' compensation insurance and public liability insurance, etc.) applicable to the operation of the Service and recognised fee income, if any. Rent and rates in respect of the premises recognised by the SWD for delivery of the Service will be reimbursed separately on an actual cost basis.
- (10) Upon the Service Operator's acceptance of the Funding and Service Agreement (FSA), payment of subvention will be made on a monthly basis.

(D) **Validity Period**

- (11) This FSA is valid for the specified period. Should the Service Operator breach any terms or 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 the SWD, the SWD may, after expiry of such notice, terminate this FSA by giving 30 days' notice in writing to the Service Operator.

- (12) Where there is any change to the service performance standards within the agreement period, the 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.
- (13) Renewal of the FSA 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. The SWD reserves the right to reallocate the Service.
- (14) The 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.

(E) Others

- (15) In addition to this FSA, the Service Operator shall also comply with the requirements according to the relevant Service Specifications, and the Service Operator's proposals and supplementary information, if any. Where these documents are in conflict, this FSA shall prevail.
- (16) In the event of any dispute or difference arising out of or in connection with the FSA, the SWD and the Service Operator shall first refer to mediation in accordance with The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Mediation Rules prevailing at the time. If the said dispute or difference is not settled by mediation, the SWD or the Service Operator may institute litigation/ arbitration in respect of the said dispute or difference. The SWD and the Service Operator agree that the courts of Hong Kong shall have exclusive jurisdiction in respect of the said dispute or difference.

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Notes and Definitions

(Note 1) **Engaged youth** refers to service users who have built up relationship with social workers with preliminary contacts.

(Note 2) **Youth** refers to individual young people who have been served by the online youth-emotional-support platform with live chat service. These are distinct users, meaning each individual is counted only once, regardless of the frequency they are engaged in the service in a year.

(Note 3) **Case** should have service user's consent to receive social work intervention with agreed goal(s)/ plan.

Output Standard 2: Total number of active cases at the end of March of the year (to be carried forward to next year) plus all the closed cases in a year [That is, the sum of (No. of cases closed having achieved the case goal(s)/ plan of the month) and (No. of cases closed without achieving the case goal(s)/ plan) in a year.

(Note 4) If the actual output of OS2 reaches 95% to below 100%, 90% to below 95% and 85% to below 90% of the agreed level, the agreed level for OS6 may be adjusted upward by 7%, 14% and 21% respectively.

(Note 5) **Thematic care service/ thematic care counselling session** refers to theme/ module based counselling sessions provided to address specific issues, such as emotional management, study/ career, etc faced by youth who prefer text-based counselling over face-to-face service or those who need a transitional period from online to offline services.

(Note 6) Each **counselling session** should last for 45 minutes. Counselling sessions can be provided to the at-risk/ hidden youth and their significant others (i.e. the immediate family members or carers of the at-risk/ hidden youth). Breakdown of the counselling sessions for at-risk/ hidden youth and significant others is required to be specified in the Statistical Information System (SIS) Form.

(Note 7) **Mainstream services** include young people services, schools, family service, residential service, medical setting, drug rehabilitation setting, employment service, legal service, etc. They also include tangible services like short-term food assistance service, District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development (Direct Cash Assistance), trust fund, etc. A case which has been referred to more than one service units should be counted once only.

(Note 8) **"Cases"** refers to active cases and potential cases. **"Potential**

cases” refers to at-risk/ hidden youth being engaged in OS1a. Social workers identified their welfare needs and made referrals for them but the targeted youth refused to be an active case.

- (Note 9)** **Group/ programme sessions** include both online and offline activities. Group/ programme sessions can be provided to at-risk/ hidden youth and their significant others with at least three or more participants in each session. Breakdown of the programme sessions for at-risk/ hidden youth and significant others is required to be specified in the SIS Form. One session should last for at least 1 hour. In case of a whole day programme, a maximum of 3 sessions can be counted.
- (Note 10)** If the actual output of OS6 reaches 95% to below 100%, 90% to below 95% and 85% to below 90% of the agreed level, the agreed levels for OS2 may be adjusted upward by 7%, 14% and 21% respectively.
- (Note 11)** Chat service sessions are individual text-based, synchronous (real-time) counselling or emotional support interactions between youth service users and social workers/ trained personnels/ volunteers on the online emotional support platform. Each chat service session should last for 15 minutes.
- (Note 12)** Active volunteers are individuals who have completed the systematic training curriculum, including foundational and advanced training, to equip them with skills needed for text-based counselling and emotional support for youth and have participated in direct chat service in a year.
- (Note 13)** The percentage is calculated by taking average of the following:
- (i) basing on the “number of service users indicating positive change (e.g. enhancement of resilience, improvement in problem solving skills, etc.) after receiving counselling service under OS 2(a)” against the “total number of cases closed” and
 - (ii) basing on the “number of youth receiving online emotional support chat service/ thematic care service indicating positive change (e.g. enhancement of resilience, improvement in problem solving skills, etc.) after the chat session/ thematic care service” against the “total number of youth having completed questionnaires after receiving chat service sessions and total number of youth having completed questionnaires after thematic care counselling cases closed”. The number of respondents should not be less than 10% of the total number of youth receiving single chat service/ thematic care services.
- (Note 14)** The number of respondents should not be less than 15% of the total number of participants of groups, programmes and trainings.

(Note 15) The percentage is calculated basing on the “number of service users indicate positive change in questionnaires after participating in online and offline groups/ programmes” against the “total number of participants participated and completed the questionnaires in groups/ programmes”.