Heads of Subvented Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Dear Sir/Madam,

Further to our letter of 30 October 2020, I write to set out the flexible arrangements adopted by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) in implementing the Service Performance Monitoring System (SPMS) in 2020-21 in view of the latest development of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Background

2. To prevent and control the spread of the COVID-19, SWD announced the special arrangements for welfare services subsidised by SWD through press releases on 9 May, 14 July, 14 September, 30 November 2020 and 16 February 2021. Most subvented service units, apart from residential service units and hotline services, should have suspended the non-core services or have only provided services on a limited scale in 2020-21. In the latest press release of 16 February 2021, in view of the latest epidemic situation, SWD announced that subsidised welfare services operated by NGOs will on the basis of their present operations resume normal operation in a gradual manner.

3. Taking into account the special circumstances associated with COVID-19 and social incidents in 2019-20, we announced vide our letter of 8 April 2020 the flexible arrangements adopted by SWD in implementing the SPMS in 2019-20. In light of the latest development of COVID-19, we further informed you vide our letters of 24 July and 30 October 2020 that SWD will continue to adopt a flexible approach in implementing SPMS in 2020-21 when assessing the performance of subvented service units against the Output/Outcome Standards (OS/OCs) and other service requirements as laid down in the Funding and Service Agreements (FSAs).
Flexible Arrangements for Implementing SPMS in 2020-21

4. Flexible arrangements for implementing SPMS in 2020-21 are set out below:

(a) Submission Schedule of Statistical Information System (SIS) Forms and Self-assessment Reports (SARs)

5. Under the current SPMS, subvented service units are required to submit the 4th quarterly SIS Forms and the yearly SARs on or before 20 April. Owing to the special arrangements for welfare services in 2020-21, we appreciate that service units and NGOs respectively may need more time to compile the full year OS/OCs achievement rates in 2020-21 and conduct self-assessment on the compliance with Essential Service Requirements (ESRs), Service Quality Standards (SQSs) and OS/OCs indicators. The submission deadline of the “4th quarterly SIS Forms” and the “Yearly SARs for 2020-21” is hereby extended from 20 April 2021 to **30 June 2021**.

(b) Reporting of circumstances leading to under-achievements of ESRs, SQSs and/or OS/OCs

6. While subvented NGOs have the responsibility to ensure that the use of subventions meets the objectives and requirements set out in the FSAs, it is understandable that the operation of a certain number of service units has been affected by the epidemic during the year 2020-21. Same as the flexible arrangements adopted in 2019-20, in the event that the service units are unable to meet the standards in ESRs, SQSs and/or OS/OCs in 2020-21 due to circumstances in relation to the special arrangements as announced by SWD as mentioned in paragraph 2 above, NGOs may give a succinct account in the modified yearly SARs for 2020-21 (Annex) of the relevant circumstances leading to the under-achievement(s) as elaborated below -

**Unmet area of SQSs / ESRs**

(i) In the SAR for 2020-21 (Annex, P.1),

I. Result of Self-assessment on 16 SQSs and ESRs
   ✷ please fill in “Name of Service Unit(s) with Non-compliance” and “Unmet Area of SQS(s)/ESR(s)” (e.g. minimum number of operating sessions in a week) in the table;

(ii) If the unmet areas in SQSs/ESRs of service units concerned are due to circumstances relating to COVID-19, NGOs can fill in one “Action Plan” (Appendix 1 to Annex) for all the unmet areas; and tick “Not applicable” under Item IV (Action(s) to be taken for achieving the above area) and Item V (Planned time frame for completing the action(s)).
Unmet OS/OCs

(i) In the SAR for 2020-21 (Annex, P.2) -

II. Result of Self-assessment on OS/OCs Performance

✧ please fill in “Name of Service Unit(s) with Unmet OS/OCs” and the “Unmet OS/OC(s)” (e.g. minimum number of programme sessions in a year) in the table;

(ii) If the underperformed OS/OCs of service units concerned are due to circumstances relating to COVID-19, NGOs can fill in one “Action Plan” (Appendix 2 to Annex) for all the underperformed OS/OCs; and tick “Not applicable” under Item II (Action(s) taken and result (effectiveness) / action(s) to be taken to meet the Agreed Level of the OS/OC in the following year) and Item III (Planned time frame for completion of the action(s) proposed above).

Extension of Monitoring Cycle of 2018-21 and Special Visitation Programme of 2016-21

7. To allow more time for NGOs to devise contingency measures in combating the epidemic and to tie in with the special service arrangements, service performance monitoring visits under the Monitoring Cycle of 2018-21 and the Special Visitation Programme (SVP) of 2016-21 have been suspended for some months in 2020. Alternative measures for conducting visits via electronic means have been adopted since January 2021 subject to the development of the epidemic situation. In view of the practical difficulties encountered in the Monitoring Cycle of 2018-21 and the SVP of 2016-21, it was discussed and endorsed in the 46th meeting of the Lump Sum Grant Steering Committee held on 31 December 2020 that both the Monitoring Cycle of 2018-21 and the SVP of 2016-21 would be tentatively extended for 12 months to 31 March 2022. While SVP of 2016-21 is a one-off arrangement, SWD will duly announce to subvented NGOs about the arrangements of the next Monitoring Cycle of 2022-25 nearer the time.

8. We will keep in view the situation of COVID-19 and make arrangements as appropriate in respect of the SPMS implementation in 2021-22. If you have any enquiries, please contact Miss CHOW Mei-yee, Senior Social Work Officer (Subventions)3, on 2832 4307.

Yours sincerely,

Signed

(Ms LAM Bun-ngee)
for Director of Social Welfare

Encl.

c.c. Chairpersons of Subvented NGOs