

MEDIA RELEASE

NCSS Act Amendments to Reflect Its Role as Sector Developer, Drive Better Outcomes for Those in Need

SINGAPORE, 13 JANUARY 2026 – The National Council of Social Service (NCSS) (Amendment) Bill 2025, introduced by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF), was passed in Parliament on 13 January 2026. The Bill reflects and empowers NCSS' expanded role as sector developer, focused on driving better outcomes for those in need in Singapore.

Responding to evolving social needs

2 Social issues have become increasingly complex over the years, requiring greater collaboration across multiple service providers and other stakeholders. The social service landscape has also evolved, with the growth of new players. While Social Service Agencies (SSAs) remain our sector's backbone, we now have more stakeholders such as social enterprises, corporates, and philanthropic organisations. In response to these changes, NCSS' scope has expanded beyond a membership body to a sector developer, working with various partners across the larger social service ecosystem, beyond member organisations, to better serve our community's needs.

Sector engagement

3 Feedback from current NCSS members and the public has been instrumental in shaping the proposals in the Bill. Engagements on the proposed amendments first commenced at the NCSS Annual General Meeting in July 2024. In total, almost 300 NCSS members have been engaged on the proposals. A public consultation was also conducted on REACH.

Empowering sector wide development

4 The key amendments to the Act:

a. Reflect and empower NCSS' expanded role as sector developer, focused on:

- Strengthening social service delivery;
- Building social service sector capabilities; and
- Developing a robust social service ecosystem which includes community support, philanthropy and volunteerism.

b. Introduce a streamlined “sector membership” framework for organisations in the sector:

- Instead of NCSS’ current three tiers of membership for organisations in the sector, there will be a single sector membership tier; no membership fees will be charged; and
- Providing that organisations which have the primary function of providing, or directly supporting the provision of, a social service in Singapore may apply for sector membership.

c. Strengthen the Council to ensure it is fit-for-purpose and that the sector is well-represented by:

- Providing for a fully Minister-appointed Council of 15-27 individuals for flexibility to determine optimal size and mix to meet sector’s needs;
- Legislating that at least half of the Council (excluding Chairperson) must be appointed from individuals nominated by sector members;
- Allowing employees of sector members to sit on the Council;
- Setting the Council term at three years so Council members have a longer runway to contribute meaningfully to NCSS’ work.

d. Update and align the Act with those of other statutory boards, such as:

- Modernising the language and structure of the Act; and
- Strengthening clauses relating to the governance of the Council, the Community Chest and NCSS’ committees to maintain high standards of conduct and governance.

5 As part of its expanded role as sector developer, NCSS will do more to support SSAs to strengthen social service delivery by equipping them with data, forge collaboration with partners in the ecosystem and support SSAs in impact measurement through the Sector Evaluation Framework. We will also ramp up efforts to develop the sector’s organisational and professional capabilities, for example by supporting SSAs to harness volunteers and technology to improve services, and enhancing development opportunities for social service professionals. NCSS is also facilitating greater collaboration with SSAs and other stakeholders, for example, by piloting a service delivery model between SSAs and recruitment agencies, to support persons with mental health needs in achieving better employment outcomes.

6 “NCSS has always been guided by the needs of service users. As Singapore’s social challenges evolve, NCSS’ role too has evolved – from being a membership body to that of a sector developer. The Act amendments therefore reflect MSF’s and NCSS’ commitment to build a future-ready and sustainable social service ecosystem with enhanced capabilities to deliver impactful outcomes for individuals and families in need in Singapore and to improve their quality of life,” said Ms. Anita Fam, President, NCSS.

7 The amended Act is targeted to take effect on 1 August 2026.

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About the National Council of Social Service (NCSS)

NCSS is the sector developer for social services in Singapore. Its mission is to develop a sustainable social service sector that improves quality of life, by driving partnerships, transformation and sustainability of social services. Community Chest and Social Service Institute (SSI) are part of NCSS. For more information visit www.ncss.gov.sg

Annex A – Examples of multi-agency collaborations initiated by NCSS to better serve the community's needs

Social issues have become increasingly complex, requiring greater collaboration across multiple service providers and other stakeholders. As sector developer, NCSS brings together community partners and SSAs to better serve our community's needs.

(a) grovve

SSAs and community partners are offering specialised mental health services for youths, transforming the way young people access Singapore's social services. 'grovve' is Singapore's first integrated wellness centre designed with youths for youths and their caregivers.

Youths can access a comprehensive range of services and general wellness activities, provided by four SSAs working collaboratively. Led by SHINE Children and Youth Services and supported by Brahm Centre, Limitless, and TOUCH Community Services, youths will benefit from specialised on-site support and intervention programmes. The centre also offers online services, including a Digital Wellness Concierge, and mental health screenings with e-resources, as well as private forums and chats for support.

Visit <https://mindline.sg/grovve> for more information.

(b) JiaYou Centre

Services that are fragmented and difficult to navigate remain a significant barrier to help-seeking. To address this, NCSS worked with stakeholders to integrate services in locations frequented by their target audiences.

JiaYou Centre at Chinatown Point is a multi-agency collaboration funded by NCSS, serving as a one-stop hub for seniors and caregivers. It was launched in August 2024, as a collaboration between Montfort Care, Fei Yue Community Services, and Yong-en Care Centre. It offers integrated services to support the challenges of ageing and caregiving. The centre provides guidance, resources, and programmes such as support groups, training workshops, and exhibitions that promote a positive mindset, and also equips caregivers with essential skills.

Visit <https://jiayou.org.sg/> for more information.

(c) Community Law Centre @Realm of Tranquility

Recognising the need to bring legal assistance closer to those with mobility and technology challenges, Pro Bono SG collaborated with Realm of Tranquility to set up a new community law centre at its premises in Woodlands.



The centre works with community partners such as Family Service Centres, Social Service Offices and SSAs in the Northwest district to provide free legal aid.

Supported by NCSS' 4ST Partnership Fund, the centre is Pro Bono's second community project. The first community law centre was in collaboration with Tian De Temple in Hougang.

AMENDMENTS TO THE NCSS ACT

WHY AMEND THE ACT?

Key milestones of NCSS

1958

Singapore Council of Social Service (SCSS) formed to coordinate and promote voluntary welfare services

1992

- National Council of Social Service Act passed by Parliament
- SCSS restructured as the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), to play a strategic and proactive role in welfare planning and provision
- NCSS to represent members' interests
- Serve as a bridge between Government and the sector

2026

NCSS (Amendment) Bill

Reflect and empower NCSS' role as Sector Developer and align its governance with other public bodies

With evolving social needs and changes to the social service sector, NCSS has taken on a larger role as sector developer. The amendments to the Act empowers NCSS to take on this expanded role to develop a future-ready social service sector, focused on driving better outcomes for those in need in Singapore.



Key trends in today's social landscape

Increasingly complex and cross-cutting social needs require holistic and sustained interventions

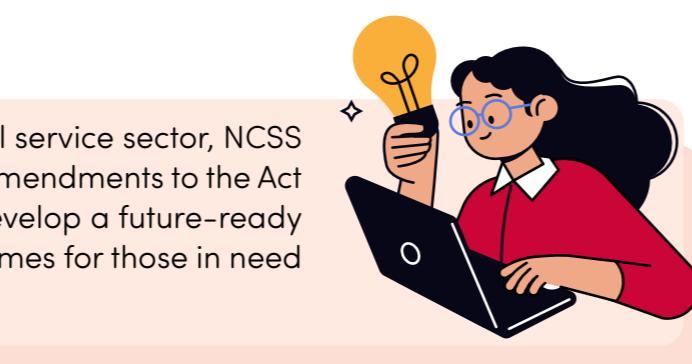


Landscape has expanded beyond SSAs, to include Social Enterprises, and philanthropic organisations, etc

Growing public interest and expectations in social issues



Donors and funders **seek greater impact and accountability**



WHAT ARE THE KEY CHANGES?

Current	Amended Act
 <p>Reflect & empower NCSS' expanded role as sector developer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCSS' objectives primarily focused on its role as a membership body
 <p>Introduce a streamlined Sector Membership Framework for organisations in the sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tiered Membership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full Members: provide direct social services Associate Members: active interest in social service but no direct provision Honorary members: rendered outstanding social service Membership Fees apply
 <p>Strengthen Council & its committees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Size: 23 members, about half elected by member organisations Board Term: 2 years
 <p>To update & align the Act with other statutory boards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act has remained largely unchanged since enactment in 1992
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Size: 15 to 27 members appointed by the Minister of Social and Family Development, with at least half nominated by sector members Employees of sector members allowed to sit on Council Council Term: 3 years
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modernise the language and structure of the Act Strengthen clauses relating to the governance of the Council, Community Chest and NCSS' committees to maintain high standards of conduct

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A SECTOR DEVELOPER?

As sector developer, NCSS seeks to uplift the sector and improve the quality of life of service users.

