LABOUR FORCE IN SINGAPORE 2023

1. Introduction

1.1 The report on the Labour Force in Singapore draws on data from the Comprehensive Labour Force Survey (CLFS). Unlike the Monthly Labour Force Surveys, the CLFS is run annually with a larger sample, longer survey duration, and measures a wider range of labour market indicators. The breadth and depth of information from the CLFS enables a comprehensive review of the resident population performance, in relation to longer-term structural trends. The key findings are distilled in this annual report. This year's report showed that the labour market remained tight, as indicators related to labour underutilisation continued to improve. However, the weaker economic outlook has slowed labour market improvements in the short-term. The report also includes insights on own account workers and training from the Labour Force Supplementary Surveys.

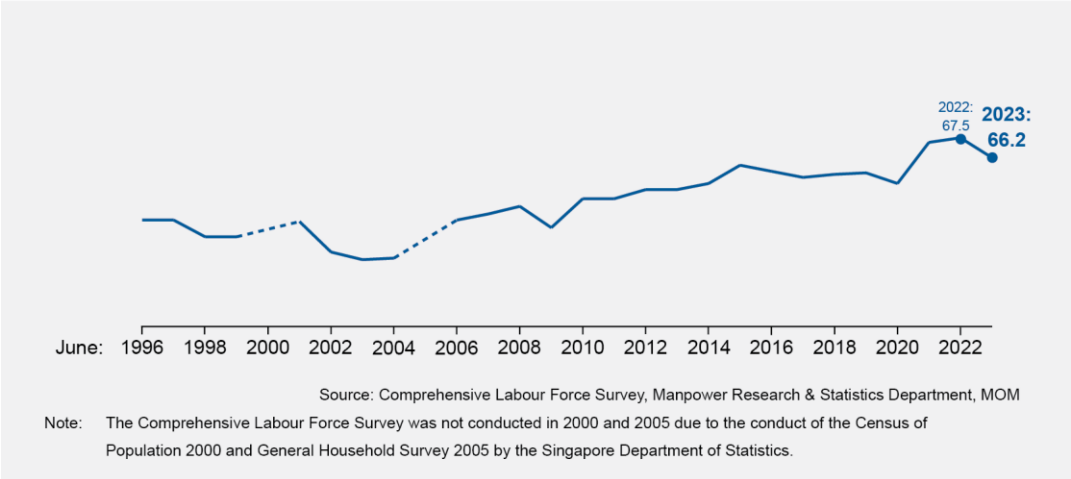
2. Labour Force

Singapore continued to have one of the highest employment rates compared to OECD countries

2.1 After reaching a historical high of 67.5% in 2022 when the labour market was exceptionally tight, the employment rate for residents aged 15 and over declined to 66.2% in 2023. As indicated by the low unemployment rate, the reason for its decline over the year was due to more of them staying outside the labour force[4] instead of difficulties with seeking employment. Over the last decade, employment rate rose by 1.1%-point from 2018 to 2023, following a similar increase from 2013 to 2018 (1.0%-point).

Chart 1 Employment rate of residents aged 15 years and over

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

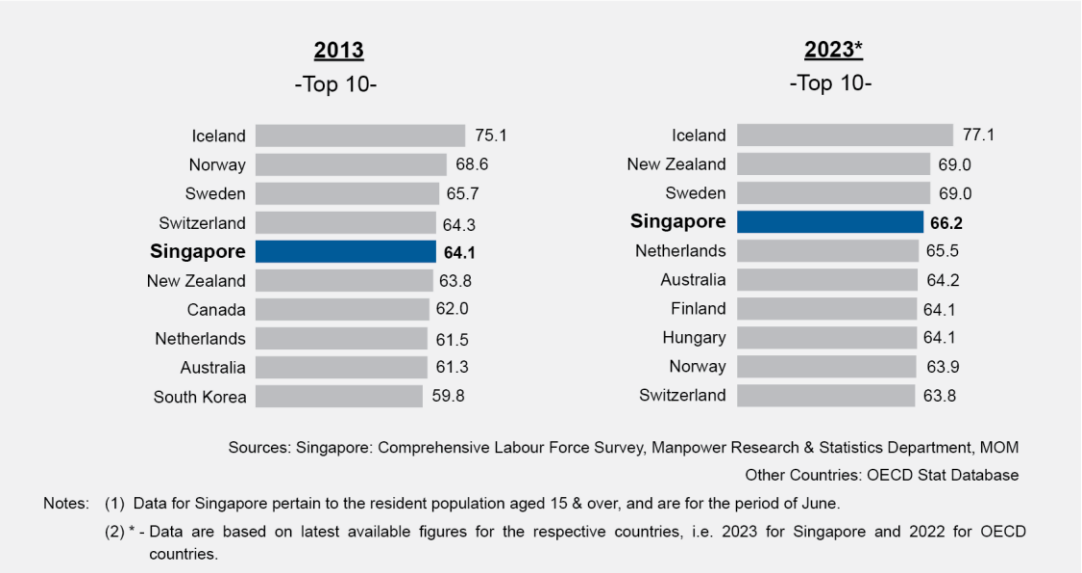
Note: The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2000 and 2005 due to the conduct of the Census of Population 2000 and General Household Survey 2005 by the Singapore Department of Statistics.

[4] The labour force participation rate among residents aged 15 and over declined from 70.0% in 2022 to 68.6% in 2023.

2.2 Singapore has the fourth highest employment rate when compared to countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).[5] As a result of policies aimed at encouraging women to return to the workforce[6] and improving the employability of older workers,[7] Singapore has consistently maintained its high ranking over the decade despite an ageing workforce.

Chart 2 Employment rate (aged 15 years and over) in Singapore and OECD countries

Per Cent



Sources: Singapore: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM
Other Countries: OECD Stat Database

Notes: (1) Data for Singapore pertain to the resident population aged 15 & over, and are for the period of June.
(2) * - Data are based on latest available figures for the respective countries, i.e. 2023 for Singapore and 2022 for OECD countries.

2.3 The employment rate for seniors aged 65 and over eased for the second consecutive year, from 31.0% in 2022 to 30.6% in 2023, following a large increase from 2020 to 2021. Nonetheless, compared to the pre-pandemic level in 2019, this figure in 2023 was still higher by 3.0%-points. The decline was in the self-employed pool – mainly in *Transportation & Storage*, *Wholesale Trade*, and *Retail Trade*. Business models have changed since the pandemic, for example, a shift from physical to online sales channels. This, coupled with the challenging business outlook, may have led more older self-employed to retire.

2.4 For youths aged 15 to 24, their employment rate eased further from its peak in 2021 (37.2%), to 34.5% in 2022 and 33.2% in 2023. The high in 2021 was influenced by the COVID-19 situation. With the resumption of in-person classes and programmes such as co-curricular activities, overseas attachments and exchange programmes, more of the youths may focus on their academic and co-curricular learning activities instead of taking on employment while schooling.

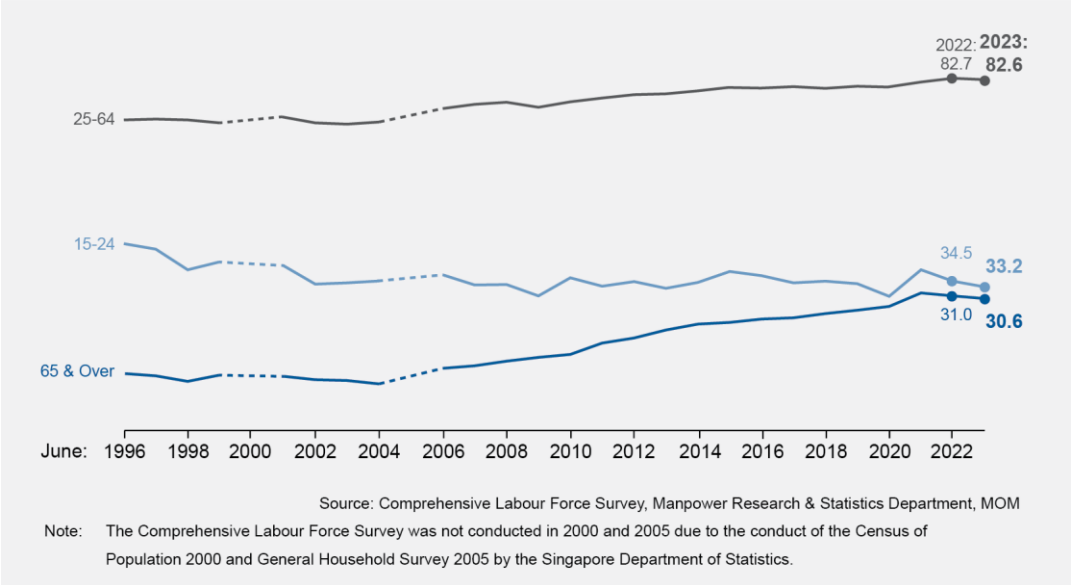
[5] Comparison was made to the OECD member countries, most of which are high-income countries similar to Singapore. The OECD also provides a comprehensive statistical database that facilitates harmonised comparisons across a broad spectrum of indicators.

[6] While the overall female employment rate remains lower than the overall male employment rate (72.5%), it has improved over the decade from 55.6% to 60.3%.

[7] The introduction of the Retirement and Re-employment Act (RRA) in 2012 and the increase in statutory re-employment age have raised the employment rate. A study by Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry found that the implementation of the RRA raised the employment rate of those eligible by 1.6%-points on average per annum from 2011 to 2015. The Manpower Research & Statistics Department updated this study in 2023 and found that the increase in re-employment age from 67 to 68 in 2022 raised the employment rate of those eligible by 1.2%-points.

Chart 3 Resident employment rate by age

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

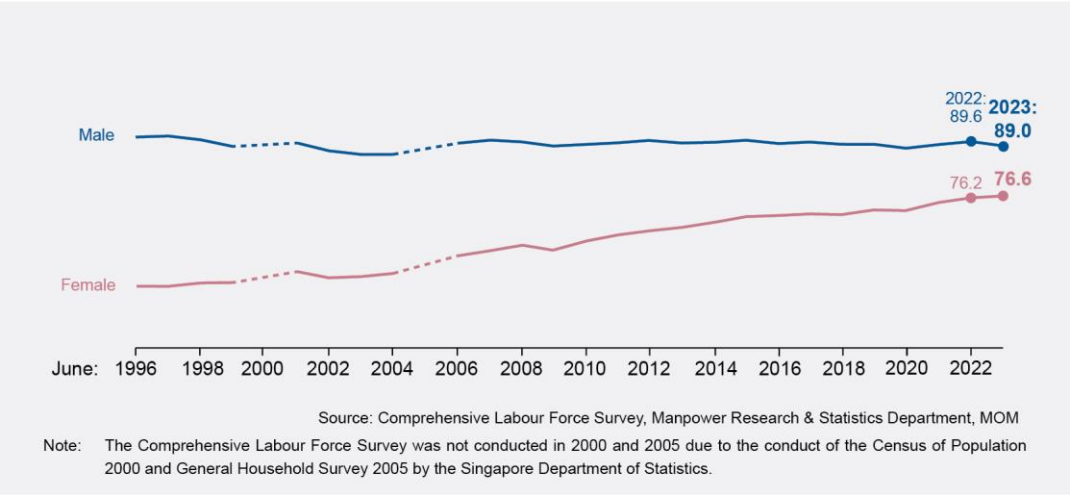
Note: The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2000 and 2005 due to the conduct of the Census of Population 2000 and General Household Survey 2005 by the Singapore Department of Statistics.

2.5 The employment rate for residents in the age group of 25 to 64 remained high and broadly stable at 82.6% in 2023. While the employment rate for males in this age group fell in 2023, the employment rate for females in this age group continued to trend upwards. For females, the increase from 76.2% in 2022 to 76.6% in 2023 has moderated from the increase seen in the past two years, when the economy was rapidly recovering from the pandemic. The employment rate for their male counterparts decreased from 89.6% in 2022 to 89.0% in 2023, but remained close to the average over the past decade from 2013 to 2022 (89.1%). The decrease was a reflection of the economic slowdown affecting trade-related sectors such as *Manufacturing* and *Wholesale Trade* where men formed a larger share of the workforce.

2.6 While the employment rate for females has improved over time, there remains room for improvement for the subgroup aged 45 to 59. Close to half (48.6%) of this group who were outside the labour force have secondary or below qualifications and the majority (61.7%) of them had also left their job for at least a decade or possess no work experience. Skills upgrading and job search assistance will be helpful in bringing more of them into the workforce. To this effect, the “Earn and Save” Bonus in the new Majulah Package will encourage more women in their 50s to join the workforce and improve their retirement adequacy.

Chart 4 Employment rate of residents aged 25 to 64 by sex

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

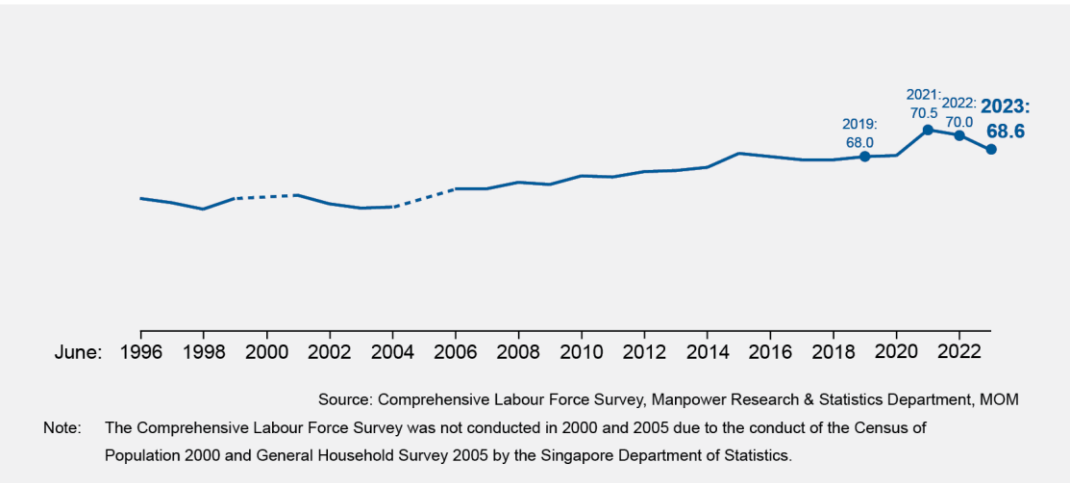
Note: The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2000 and 2005 due to the conduct of the Census of Population 2000 and General Household Survey 2005 by the Singapore Department of Statistics.

Labour force participation rate has trended up for over two decades, but the increase is expected to slow with an ageing population

2.7 Over the longer term, Singapore's resident labour force participation rate has trended up. After reaching a peak in 2021 when more workers had temporarily filled short-term pandemic-related jobs (e.g. *temperature screeners, safe distancing ambassadors*), the resident labour force participation rate eased gradually to 68.6% in 2023. The rate in 2023 was, however, still higher than the levels of the pre-COVID years. Looking forward, the increase in overall labour force participation rate will be dampened by the effects of an ageing population as older residents, who tend to participate less in the labour force than those younger, form a rising share of the population.

Chart 5 Labour force participation rate of residents aged 15 years and over

Per Cent



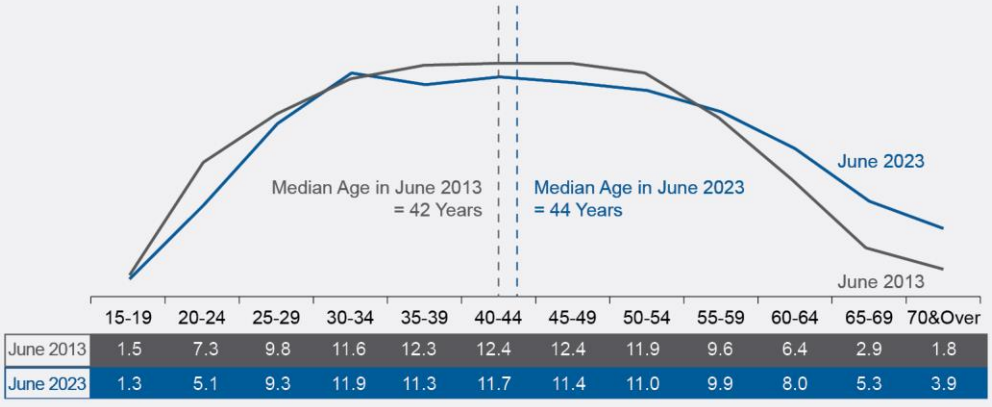
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2000 and 2005 due to the conduct of the Census of Population 2000 and General Household Survey 2005 by the Singapore Department of Statistics.

2.8 The resident labour force has aged over the past decade, with the median age of the resident labour force rising from 42 years in 2013 to 44 years in 2023. While those aged 65 and over[8] still formed a small percentage of the labour force (4.7% in 2013 to 9.2% in 2023), the share aged 55 and over has risen more notably, from 20.7% in 2013 to 27.0% in 2023. This was a result of the ageing[9] population and a large increase in the labour force participation rate of residents aged 55 and over during the same period (from 47.6% to 50.1%).[10] Longer working lives, coupled with a rising life expectancy,[11] mean that many of the residents aged 55 to 64 today will form the growing pool of the labour force aged 65 and above over the next ten years.

Chart 6 Resident labour force by age

Per Cent



	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70&Over
June 2013	1.5	7.3	9.8	11.6	12.3	12.4	12.4	11.9	9.6	6.4	2.9	1.8
June 2023	1.3	5.1	9.3	11.9	11.3	11.7	11.4	11.0	9.9	8.0	5.3	3.9

Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Data for each year may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

[8] The United Nations refers to the share of the population above an age threshold to define how old a country is. For developed countries, a country is defined as “ageing” when the share of people aged 65 and over is 7% to 14%, “aged” when it is 15% to 20%, and “super-aged” when it is 21% or more.

[9] The share of residents aged 55 and over in the working-age population (aged 15 and over) increased from 28.1% in 2013 to 36.8% in 2023. Source: Singapore Department of Statistics.

[10] While residents aged 25 to 54 now formed a smaller share in the resident labour force, their labour force participation rate has similarly increased (from 85.9% to 89.6%).

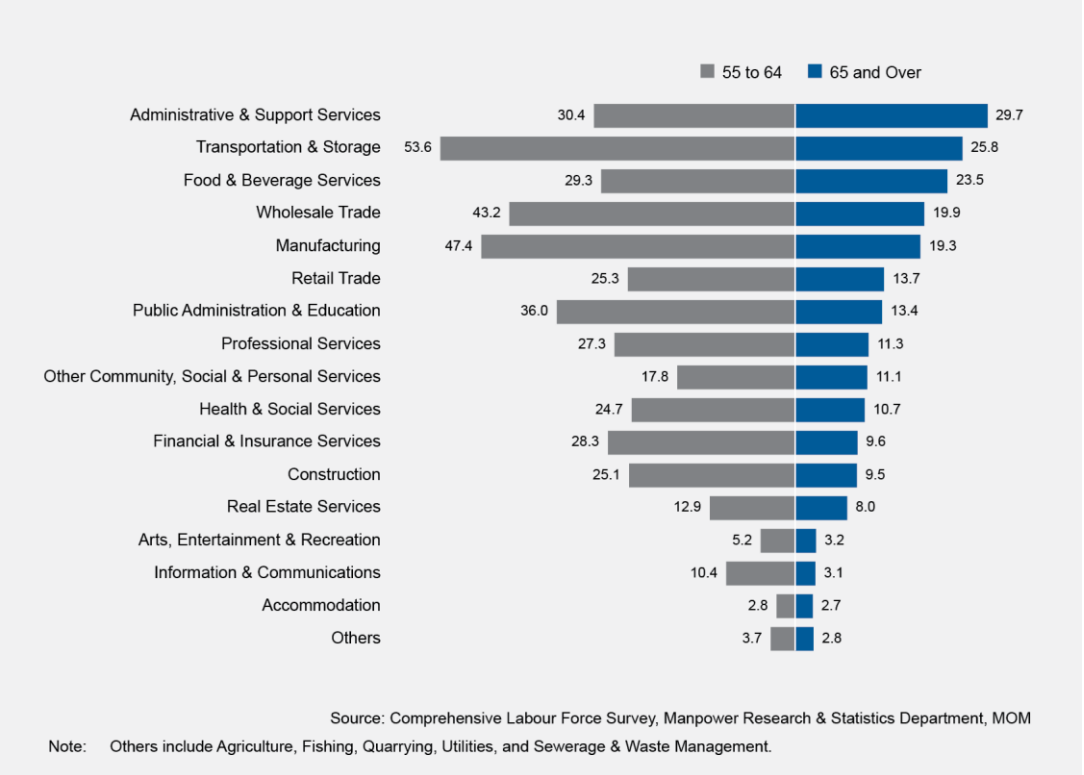
[11] The life expectancy at birth for residents rose from 82.1 years in 2012 to 83.0 years in 2022. Source: Singapore Department of Statistics.

2.9 Seniors aged 65 and over commonly worked in *Administrative & Support Services* (e.g. cleaners, security officers, landscape workers), *Transportation & Storage Services* (e.g. taxi drivers, private-hire car drivers, bus drivers), and *Food & Beverage Services* (e.g. hawkers/stall holders, kitchen assistants, food/drink stall assistants). The higher share of seniors in these sectors shows their tendency to work in sectors with less stringent entry requirement due to their weaker educational profile. The prevalence of part-time employment and self-employment in these sectors may also have attracted seniors who prefer greater autonomy over their work schedule.

2.10 In comparison, employed residents aged 55 to 64 were distributed across more sectors. While *Transportation & Storage, Manufacturing*, and *Public Administration & Education* have traditionally been employing sizeable numbers in this age group, sectors such as *Financial & Insurance Services*, *Professional Services*, and *Health & Social Services* saw a doubling in the number of residents aged 55 to 64 from 2013 to 2023. With rising manpower demand, these growth sectors, which typically hire more professionals, managers, executives & technicians (PMETs), will likely see more older workers in the coming years given that future cohorts of seniors would be more educated than past cohorts.[12]

Chart 7 Industry profile of employed residents aged 55 and over, 2023

Number ('000)



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Others include Agriculture, Fishing, Quarrying, Utilities, and Sewerage & Waste Management.

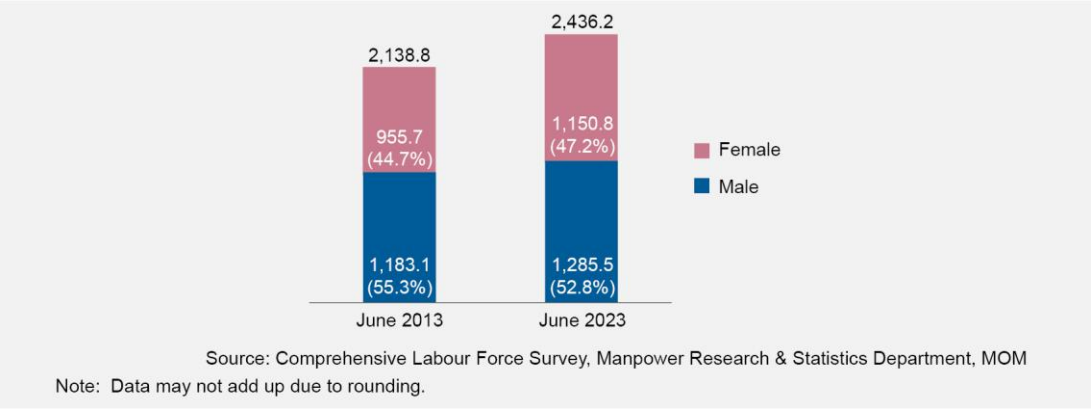
[12] In 2023, the tertiary-educated share of employed residents aged 55 to 64 was 36.5%, higher than the share among employed residents aged 65 and over (19.5%).

Females formed a rising share of the resident labour force

2.11 The share of females in the resident labour force has increased from 44.7% in 2013 to 47.2% in 2023. This reflects the increase in female labour force participation rate (from 58.1% in 2013 to 62.6% in 2023), due to the rising educational profile[13] of females and facilitative workplace practices (e.g. flexible work arrangements) to help females stay in the labour force. During the same period from 2013 to 2023, males continued to participate in the labour force at a high rate (from 75.8% to 74.9%).

Chart 8 Resident labour force by sex

Number ('000)

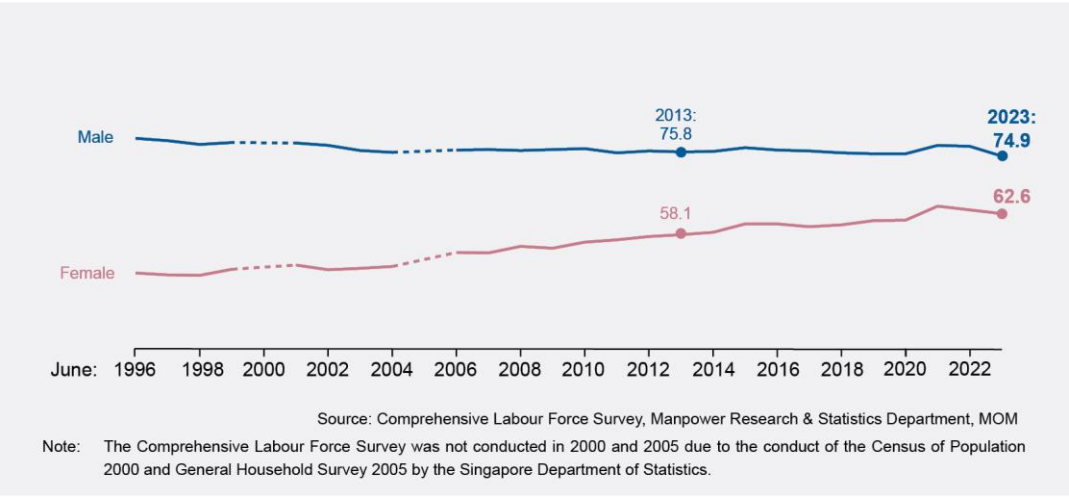


Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Data may not add up due to rounding.

Chart 9 Labour force participation rate of residents aged 15 years and over by sex

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2000 and 2005 due to the conduct of the Census of Population 2000 and General Household Survey 2005 by the Singapore Department of Statistics.

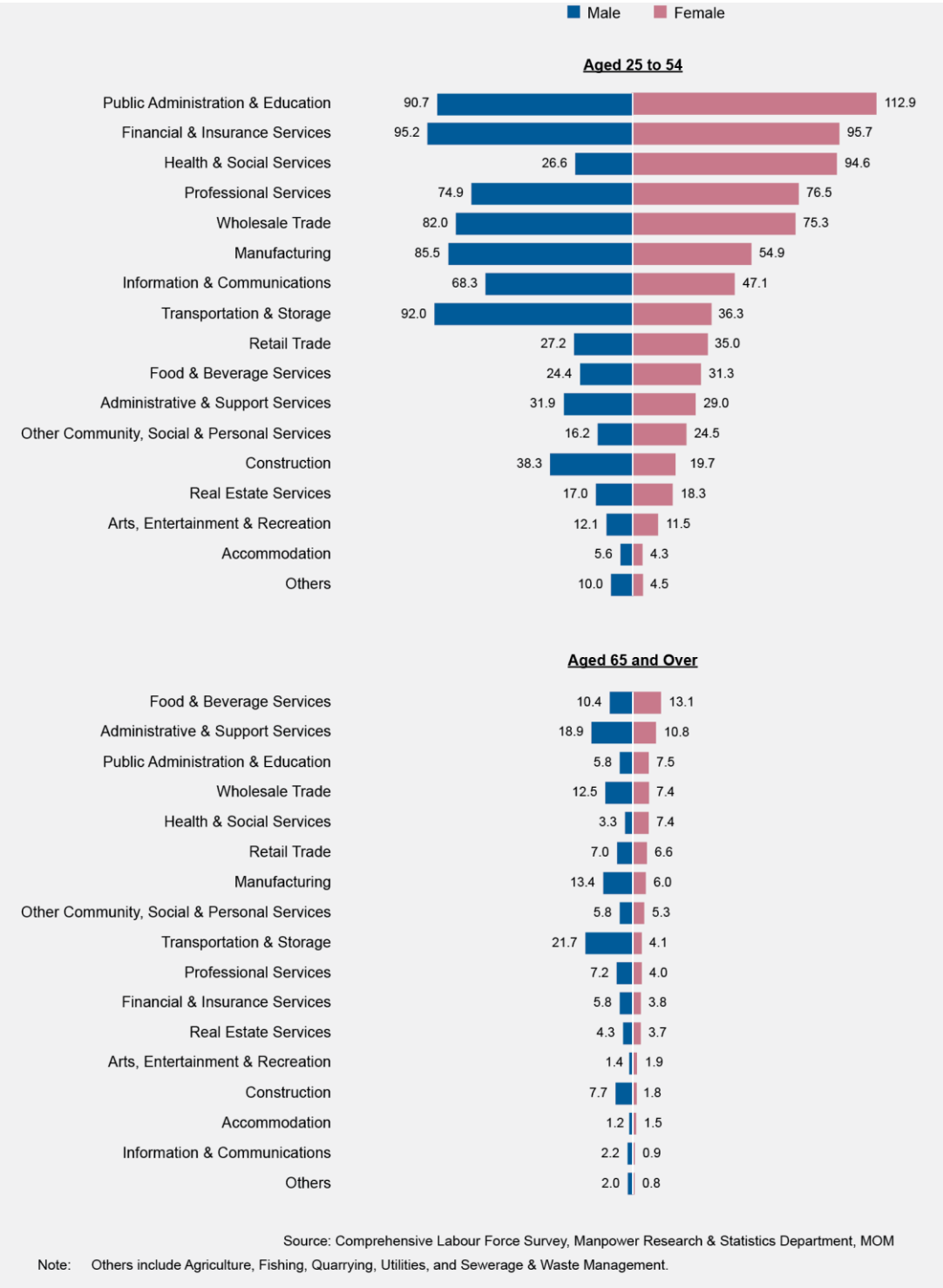
2.12 Employed females aged 25 to 54 were concentrated in *Public Administration & Education*, *Financial & Insurance Services*, *Health & Social Services*, and *Professional Services*, where they commonly worked in jobs such as teachers, nurses, accountants, budgeting & financial accounting managers, personnel/human resource managers, and financial analysts. There were also sizeable numbers of females working in *Manufacturing* and *Information & Communications*, but their numbers were lower than males. Females' choice of industry could be influenced by their personality and psychological traits, skills, value placed on workplace flexibility to better manage work-life demands, as well as social and cultural norms.

[13] The tertiary-educated made up 65.0% of resident females in the labour force in 2023, up from 51.5% in 2013.

2.13 At the older ages of 65 and over, there was a larger difference in the industries employing males and females. The top industries employing females in their senior years include *Food & Beverage Services* and *Public Administration & Education*, while industries where senior males were in include *Transportation & Storage* (e.g. drivers) and *Manufacturing* (e.g. manufacturing managers).

Chart 10 Industry profile of employed residents by sex, 2023

Number ('000)



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

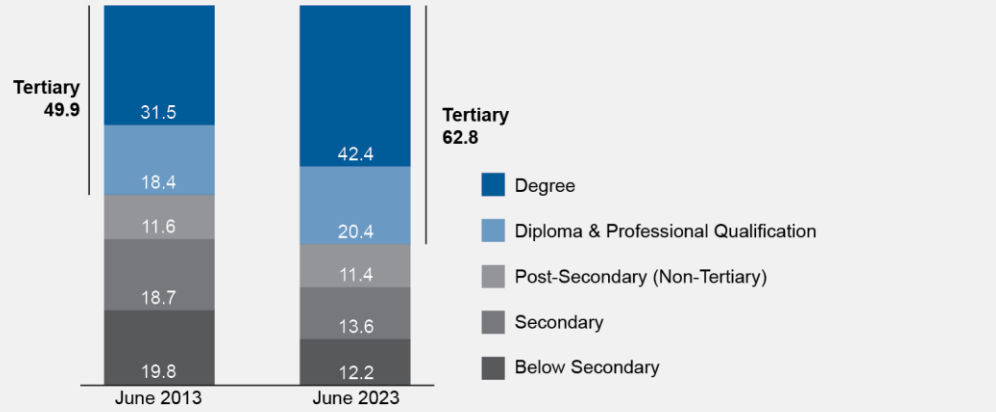
Note: Others include Agriculture, Fishing, Quarrying, Utilities, and Sewerage & Waste Management.

The labour force saw an increasing share of degree graduates

2.14 The educational profile of the labour force has improved over the years. Residents in the labour force with tertiary qualification (i.e. with a degree, diploma or professional qualification) increased from around five in ten residents (49.9%) in 2013 to six in ten residents (62.8%) in 2023. The increase was more pronounced for those with degree qualifications, from 31.5% to 42.4%.

Chart 11 Resident labour force by highest qualification attained

Per Cent



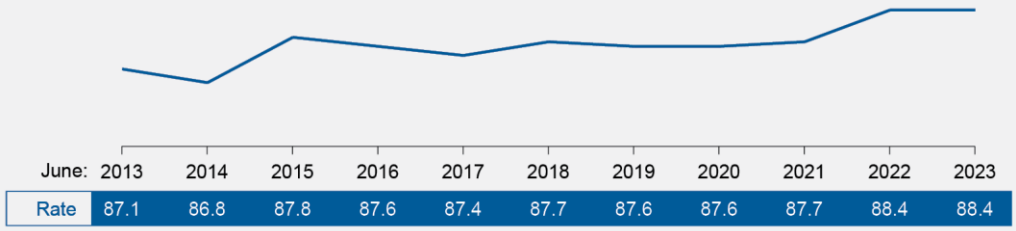
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Data for each year may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

2.15 Our degree holders have achieved good employment outcomes over the years. The employment rate of degree holders aged 25 to 64 remained at the high of 88.4% in 2023, after an increase in 2022 from the broadly steady rate over the preceding few years.[14]

Chart 12 Employment rate of resident degree holders aged 25 to 64

Per Cent



June:	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Rate	87.1	86.8	87.8	87.6	87.4	87.7	87.6	87.6	87.7	88.4	88.4

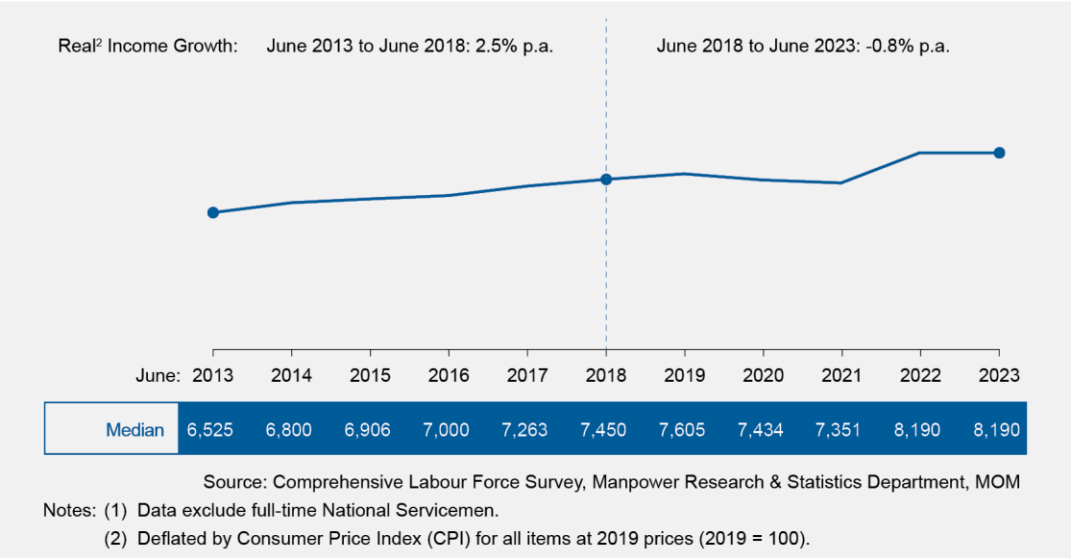
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

[14] The employment rate among resident degree holders aged 25 to 64 reached a last high of 88.9% in 2001.

2.16 The median income of full-time employed degree holders held steady at $8,190 in 2023. Dampened by the higher inflation in the recent two years and the impact of the COVID-19 recession, the median income of full-time employed degree holders declined in real terms (at -0.8% per annum (p.a.)) over the recent five years (2018 to 2023). However, over the longer-term (2013 to 2023), real median income of full-time employed degree holders grew (0.9% p.a.).

Chart 13 Median gross monthly income from employment (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed resident degree holders

Dollars



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

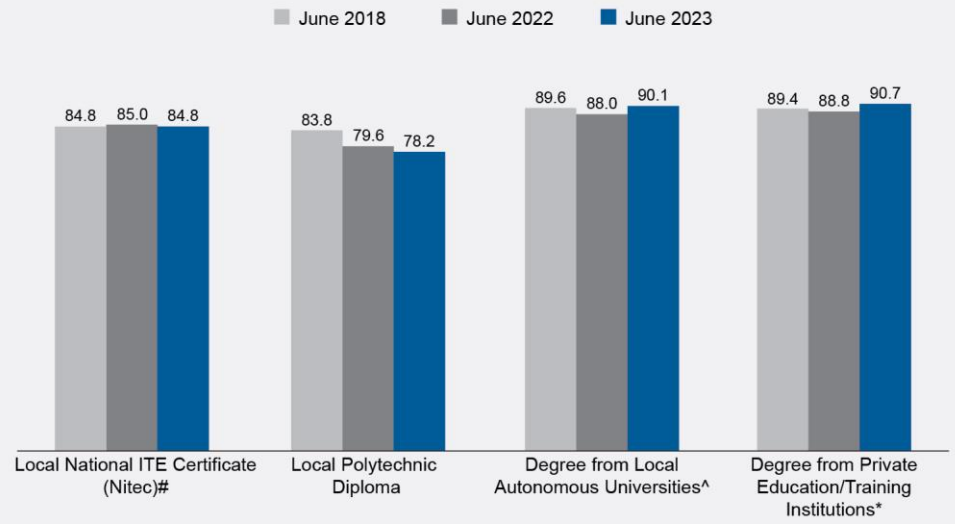
Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
(2) Deflated by Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all items at 2019 prices (2019 = 100).

2.17 Among the young aged 25 to 29, the employment rates of degree graduates from local institutions of higher learning edged up slightly. For those who were in full-time employment, there was also an increase in the median incomes.[15] Employment rates of young Nitec graduates remained broadly stable and their median income continued to increase. Among young local polytechnic diploma holders, their employment rate edged down slightly from 2022 and five years ago, as more deferred entry into the labour force to further their studies. Their median income in 2023 was comparable to a year ago, but still an increase from five years ago.

[15] In 2023, those in full-time employment made up more than nine in ten (96.9%) of the employed graduates aged 25 to 29 (excluding full-time National Servicemen) from local institutions of higher learning (i.e. with degree, polytechnic diploma and Nitec). These employed graduates include those who worked as employees (95.1%) – either on permanent contracts (86.2%) or fixed-term contracts/casual/on-call employment (8.9%) – as well as the self-employed (4.9%).

Chart 14 Employment rate of residents aged 25 to 29 from local institutions of higher learning

Per Cent

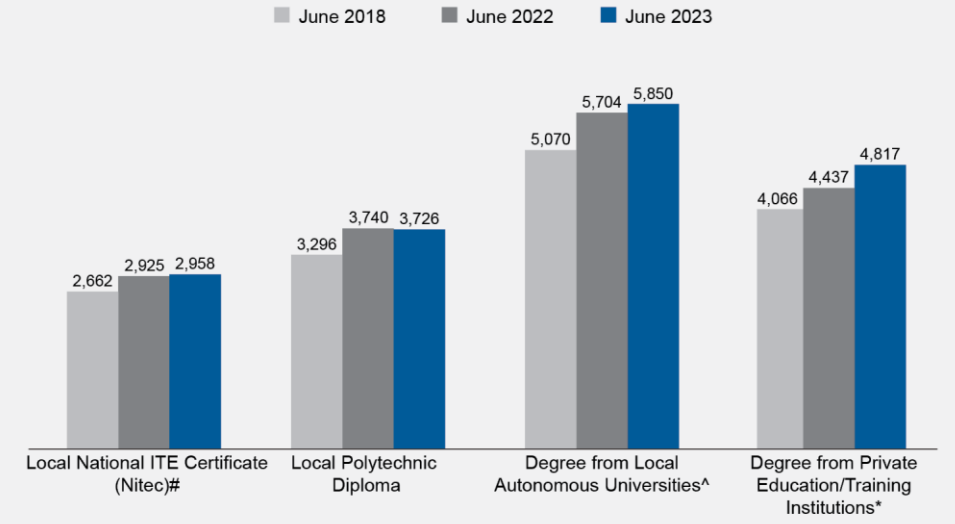


Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) # – Includes Higher Nitec and Master Nitec.
(2) ^ – Includes qualifications awarded by overseas partner universities/institutions of the Singapore Institute of Technology.
(3) * – Includes qualifications awarded by their overseas partner universities/institutions.

Chart 15 Median gross monthly income from employment (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed residents aged 25 to 29 from local institutions of higher learning

Dollars



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

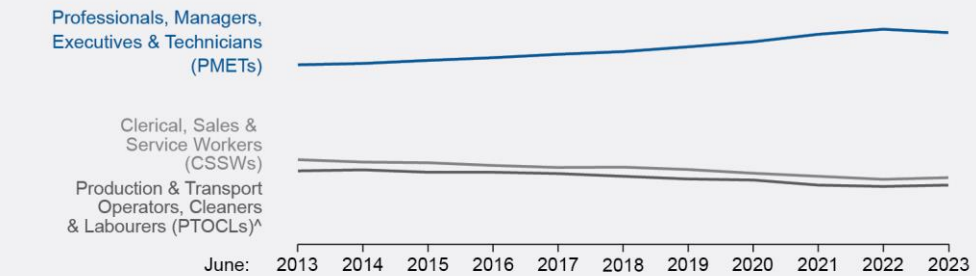
Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
(2) # – Includes Higher Nitec and Master Nitec.
(3) ^ – Includes qualifications awarded by overseas partner universities/institutions of the Singapore Institute of Technology.
(4) * – Includes qualifications awarded by their overseas partner universities/institutions.

The proportion of employed residents in PMET jobs declined slightly after rising over the last decade

2.18 The proportion of PMETs among employed residents moderated in 2023 (62.6%), after reaching a historical high in 2022 (63.6%).[16] The proportion of PMETs continued to rise in the growth sectors such as *Information & Communications* and *Financial & Insurance Services*.[17] However, these increases were outweighed by the decline in *Manufacturing* and *Wholesale Trade*, reflecting the faster pace of restructuring in these sectors, coupled with a weaker economic outlook.[18]

Chart 16 Employed residents by occupation

Per Cent



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
PMETs	53.1	53.5	54.4	55.2	56.2	57.0	58.4	59.9	62.1	63.6	62.6
CSSWs	25.1	24.4	24.2	23.4	22.8	22.9	22.2	21.1	20.2	19.3	19.8
PTOCLs^	21.8	22.1	21.4	21.4	21.0	20.2	19.4	19.1	17.6	17.2	17.6

Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data are classified based on Singapore Standard Occupational Classification (SSOC) 2020. Data before year 2020 which were coded based on earlier versions of the SSOC were mapped to SSOC 2020 as far as possible to facilitate data comparability.

(2) ^ – Includes Agricultural & Fishery Workers and Workers Not Elsewhere Classified.

(3) Data for each year may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

[16] There was also a slight dip in the proportion of PMETs among employed residents from 52.7% in 2011 to 52.4% in 2012, but the proportion resumed its uptrend from 2012 to 2022.

[17] In these sectors, PMETs formed about nine in ten of employed residents. PMETs formed about seven in ten of employed residents in *Manufacturing* and *Wholesale Trade*.

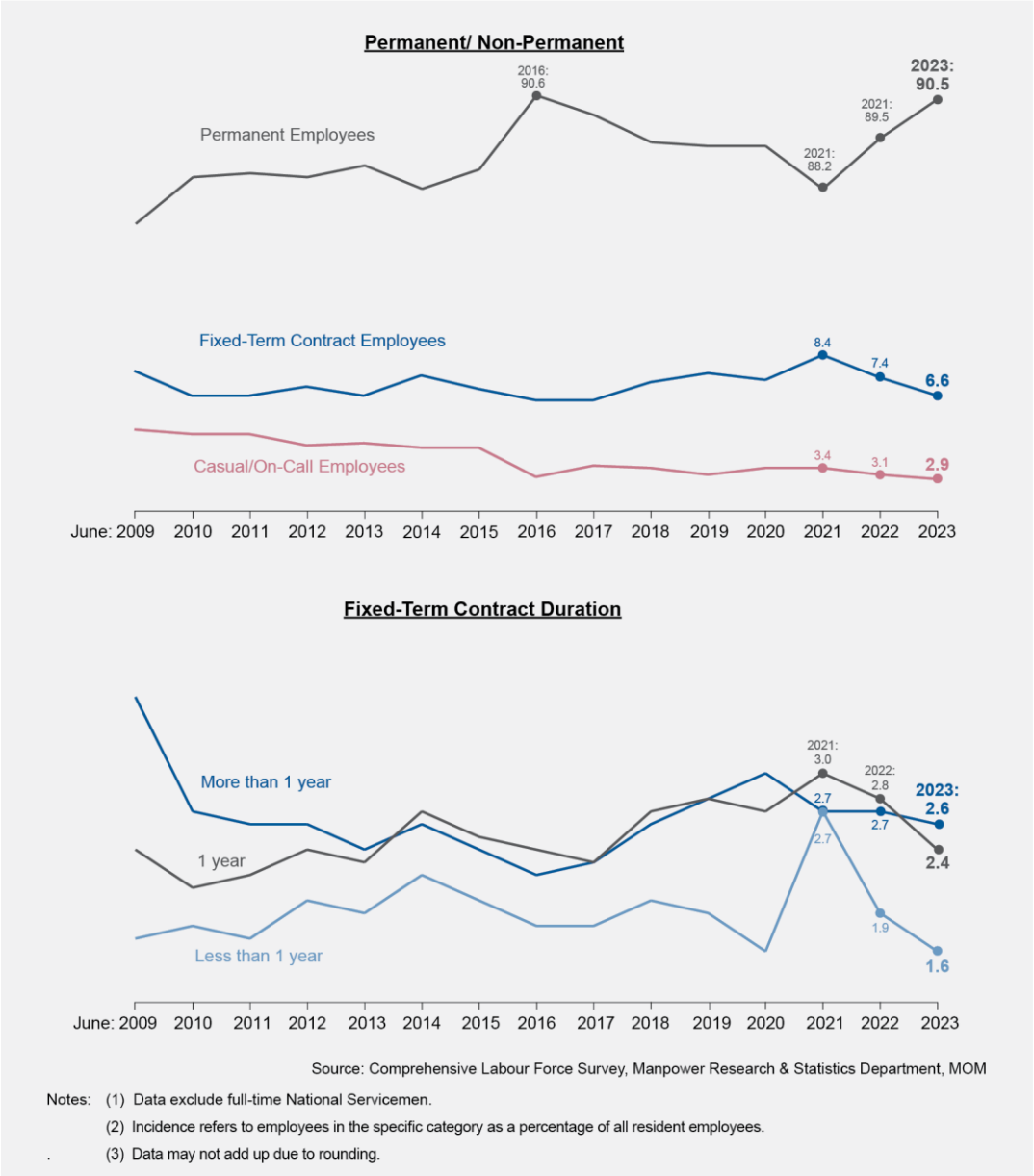
[18] This reflects the global electronics downcycle, affecting PMET-concentrated *Electronics* and *Fabricated Metal Products, Machinery & Equipment Manufacturing*, with spillover effects on *Wholesale Trade*. This too was borne out by higher PMET retrenchment in these sub-*Manufacturing* sectors and *Wholesale Trade*. In other sub-*Manufacturing* sectors where non-PMETs were in, retrenchments did not increase.

Higher share of employees in permanent positions

2.19 More resident employees were hired in permanent roles. The share of permanent employees rose to 90.5%, comparable to its previous peak of 90.6% seen in 2016. Correspondingly, the share of casual/on-call workers and fixed-term contract workers has declined to lows of 2.9% and 6.6% respectively in 2023. This decline in fixed-term contracts was largely from those with contracts of one year or less.

Chart 17 Incidence of resident employees by type of employment

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

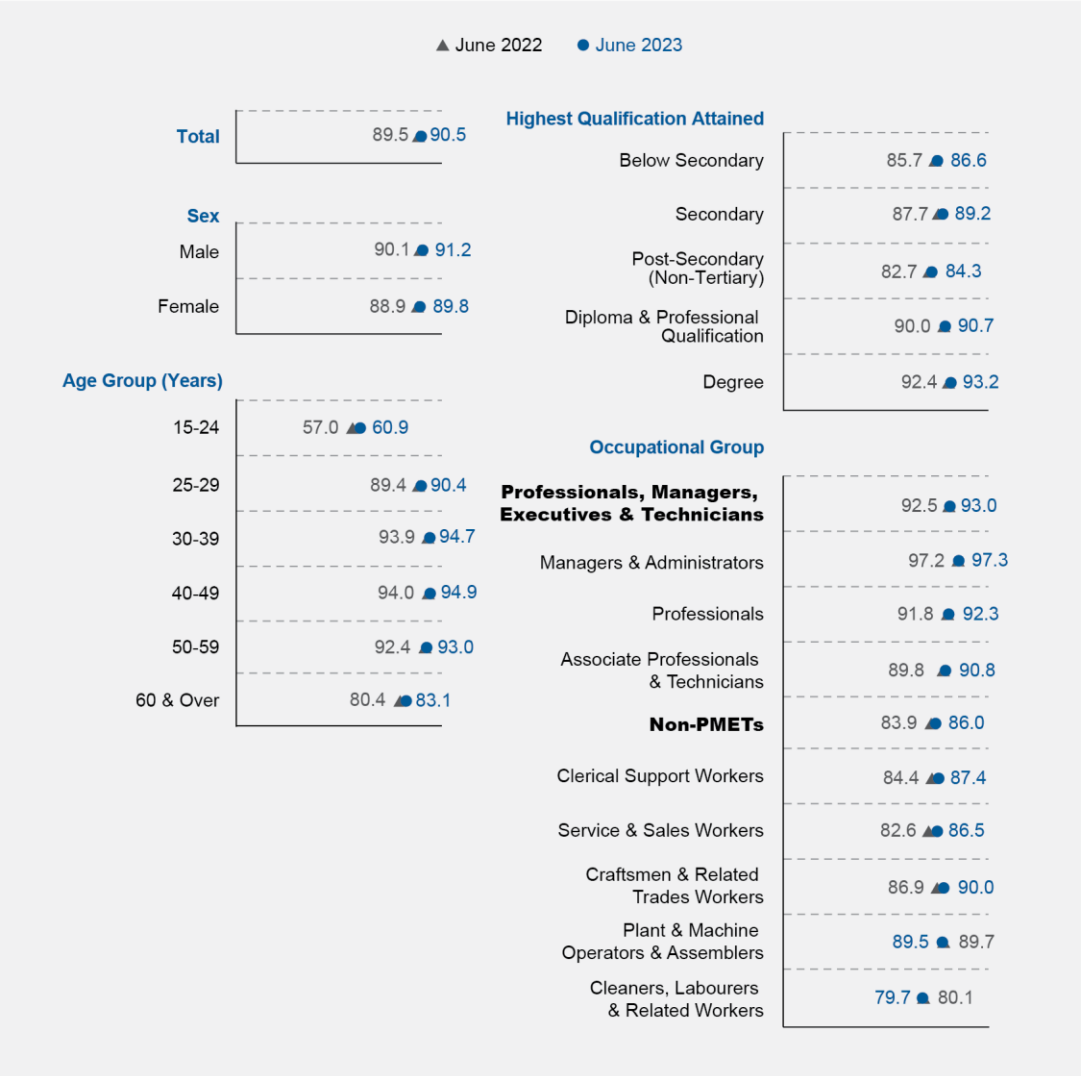
(2) Incidence refers to employees in the specific category as a percentage of all resident employees.

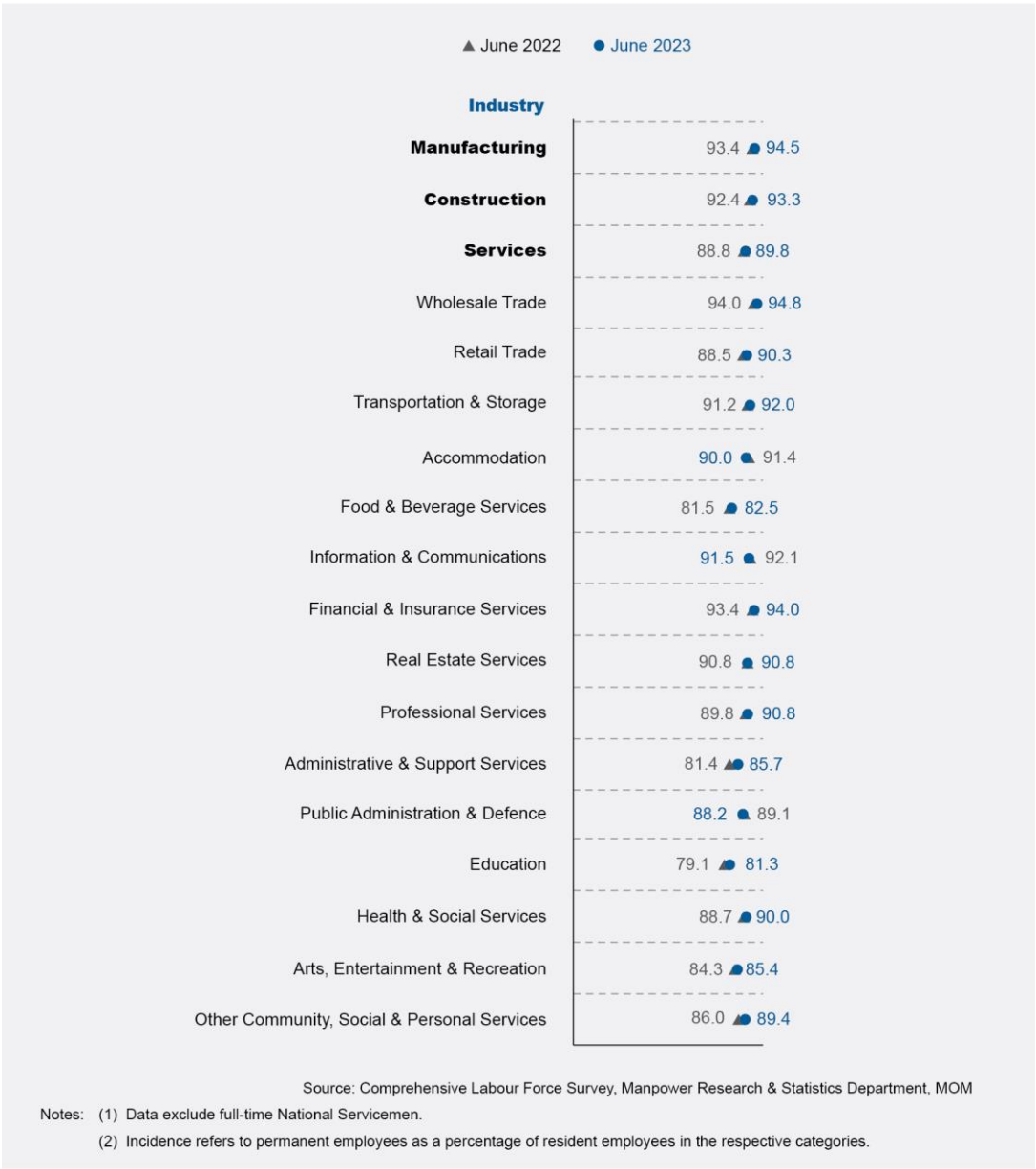
(3) Data may not add up due to rounding.

2.20 The increase in the proportion of permanent employees was broad-based across sectors including growth sectors such as *Health & Social Services, Financial & Insurance Services,* and *Professional Services*. In other sectors such as *Transportation & Storage*, *Food & Beverage Services,* and *Administrative & Support Services*, there was also an increase in permanent employees, mainly in non-PMET jobs.

Chart 18 Incidence of resident permanent employees by characteristics

Per Cent





Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

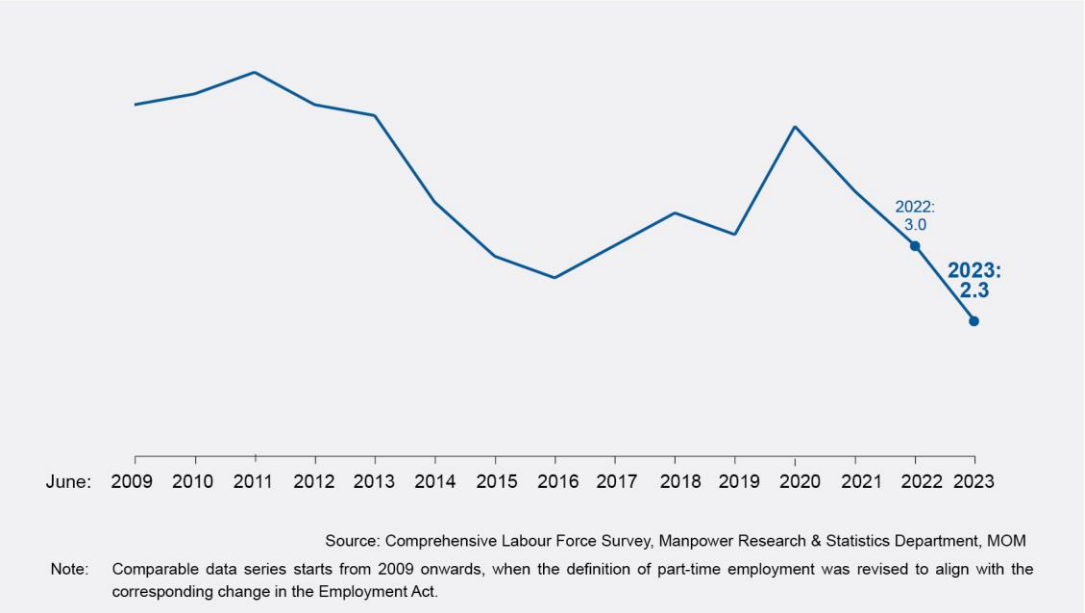
(2) Incidence refers to permanent employees as a percentage of resident employees in the respective categories.

Time-related under-employment rate fell to its lowest in over a decade

2.21 The resident time-related under-employment rate declined further from 3.0% in 2022 to 2.3% in 2023, reaching its lowest in over a decade.

Chart 19 Resident time-related under-employment rate

Per Cent



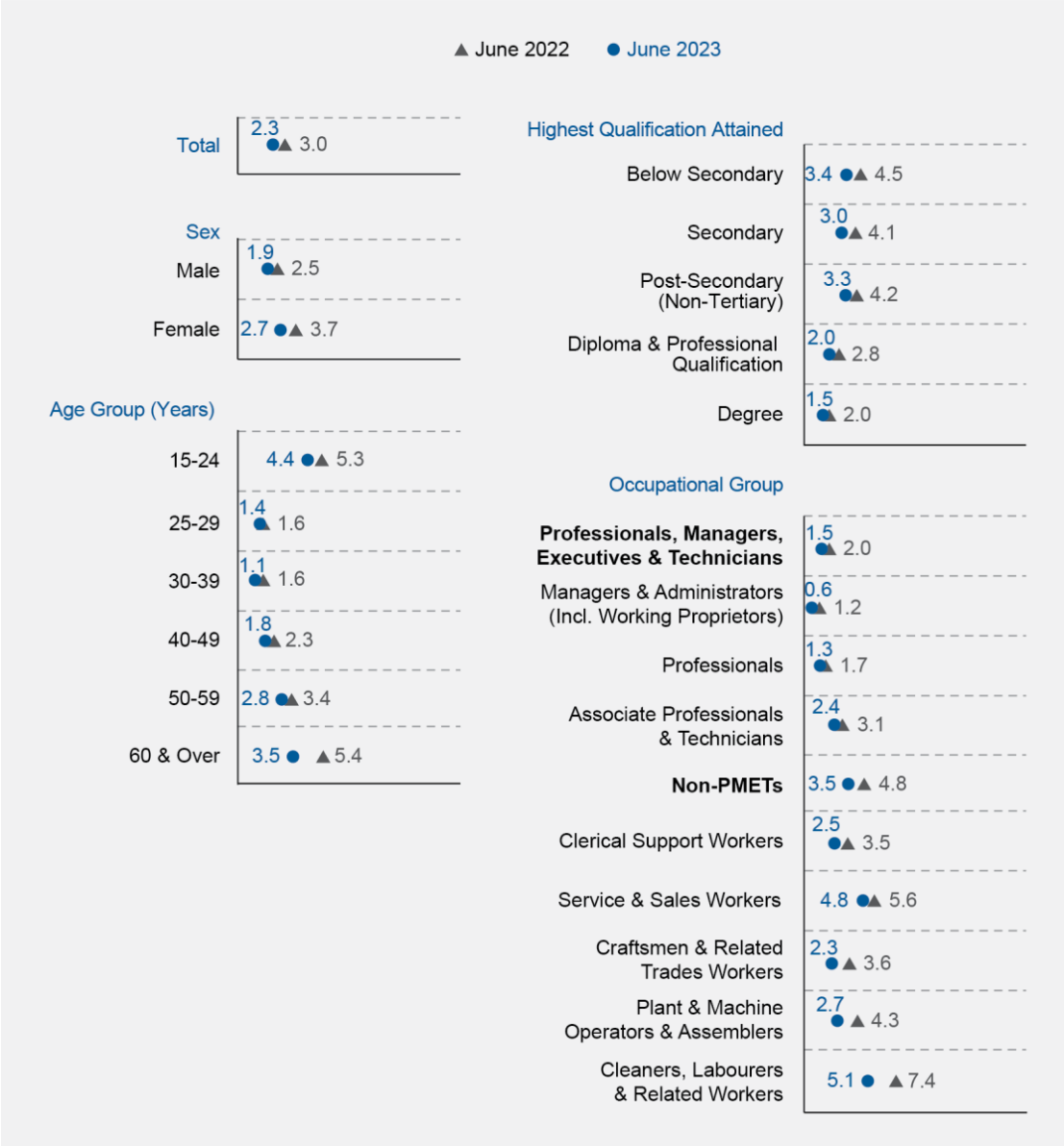
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Comparable data series starts from 2009 onwards, when the definition of part-time employment was revised to align with the corresponding change in the Employment Act.

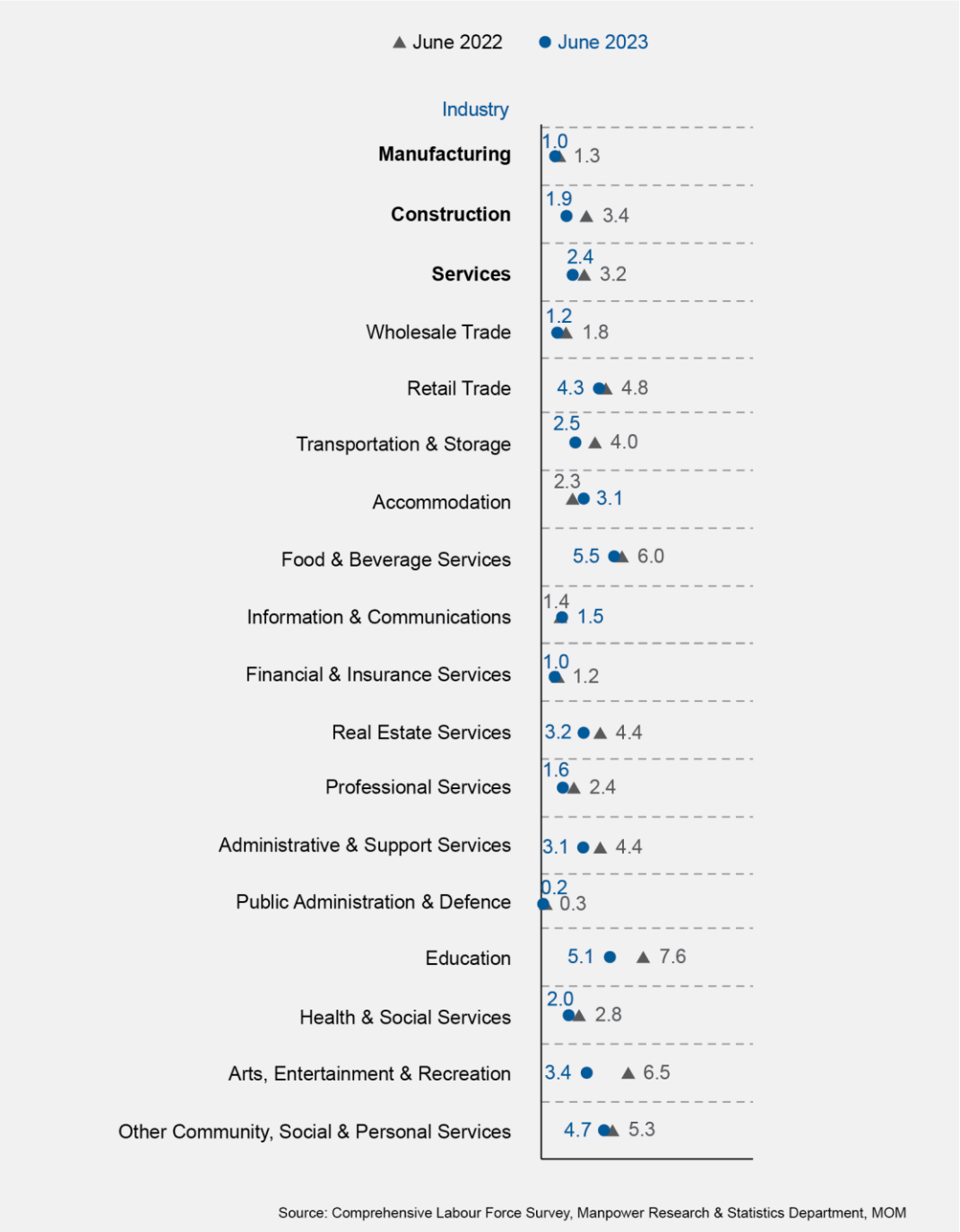
2.22 The decline was broad-based across age, qualification attainment, and occupational groups. It was more pronounced for non-PMETs (from 4.8% in 2022 to 3.5% in 2023) than for PMETs (from 2.0% to 1.5%). Specifically, the decline in time-related under-employment rate was larger for *cleaners, labourers & related workers* (e.g. cleaners, kitchen assistants) and *plant & machine operators & assemblers* (e.g. drivers), as demand for workers rose further with the recovery of travel and consumer-facing sectors. Most sectors saw a fall in time-related under-employment rate, with an exception being *Accommodation* where the incidence edged up due to more part-timers in the sector.[19] *Arts, Entertainment & Recreation* experienced the largest percentage-point drop in time-related under-employment rate (3.1%-points) due to a pick-up in demand following the resumption of recreational and entertainment events.

Chart 20 Resident time-related under-employment rate by characteristics

Per Cent



[19] In the *Accommodation* sector, the incidence of part-time employment doubled from 7.7% in 2022 to 14.0% in 2023. This resulted in a rise in the time-related under-employment rate from 2.3% in 2022 to 3.1% in 2023, although this figure remained lower than the pre-pandemic level of 4.2% in 2019.



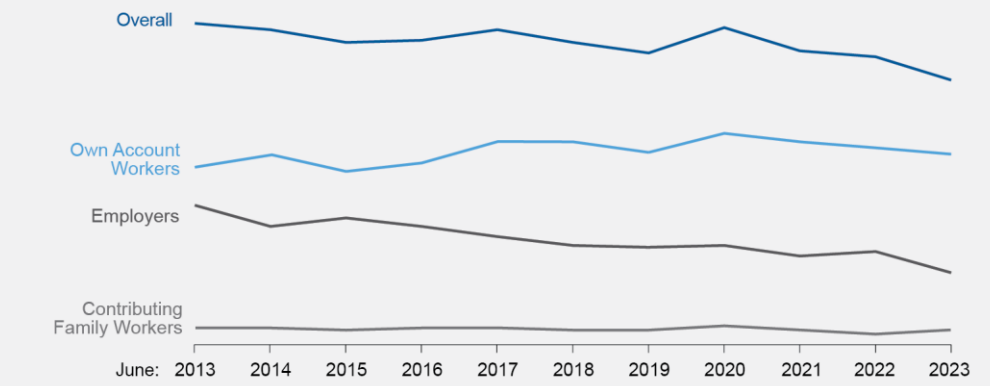
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Continued decline in self-employed workers

2.23 The proportion of self-employed residents continued to decline from 13.3% in 2022 to a new low of 12.2% in 2023. This decline was driven by the drop in the share of employers (from 4.1% to 3.1%) and own account workers (from 9.0% to 8.7%). Correspondingly, there was an increase in the share of employees, a continuation of the trend since the economic recovery (from 85.3% in 2020 to 87.8% in 2023). This increase could be due to the higher number of job openings[20] and workers' preference for employee jobs, which offer more job stability amid greater economic uncertainties.

Chart 21 Proportion of self-employed among employed residents

Per Cent



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Overall	14.9	14.6	14.0	14.1	14.6	14.0	13.5	14.7	13.6	13.3	12.2
Own Account Workers	8.1	8.7	7.9	8.3	9.3	9.3	8.8	9.7	9.3	9.0	8.7
Employers	6.3	5.3	5.7	5.3	4.8	4.4	4.3	4.4	3.9	4.1	3.1
Contributing Family Workers	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.4

Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Data for "own account workers", "employers" and "contributing family workers" may not add up to the overall figure due to rounding.

Own Account Workers

2.24 A Labour Force Supplementary Survey has been conducted yearly since 2016, to collect additional statistics on the number of residents engaged in own account work. Given the ad hoc and transient nature of own account work, the reference period of this supplementary survey was longer, covering own account work done over the course of the year, rather than over the week. The longer reference period enables us to capture more accurately the prevalence of own account work, and the experiences of these workers.

[20] The number of job vacancies (seasonally adjusted) reached a high of 126,000 in March 2022, after trending up from a low of 41,800 in June 2020. The number has since eased but remained high at 87,900 in June 2023, compared to the pre-pandemic range of around 50,000 to 60,000 job vacancies.

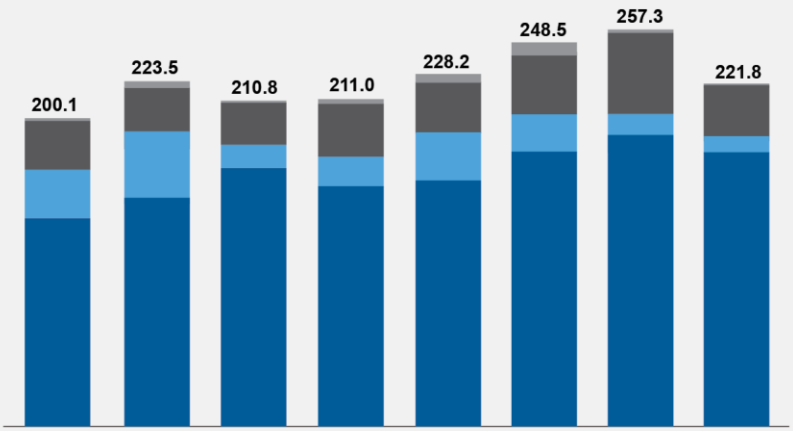
Number of resident primary own account workers has declined

2.25 There were 221,800 residents who did own account work as a regular form of employment over the one-year period ending mid-2023. A decline was observed for regular primary own account workers (from 202,700 in 2022 to 187,800 in 2023) – workers who did own account work as their main job and livelihood. These primary own account workers, who formed the large majority of all resident regular own account workers, made up 7.6%[21] of all employed residents in 2023. There was a small number who did own account work on the side (secondary own account workers: 34,000). This number has also decreased in 2023 but remained comparable to the pre-pandemic level in 2019.

2.26 Among regular primary own account workers, those who did such work on a preferred basis increased (from 93.1% in 2022 to 94.1% in 2023). Most of these regular primary own account workers preferred this work arrangement because they felt that this form of employment gave them greater flexibility (46.0%) in work hours/location and greater freedom in choice of work (25.4%).

Chart 22 Resident regular own account workers

Number ('000)



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Primary	**166.8**	**190.9**	**182.1**	**174.8**	**190.9**	**201.8**	**202.7**	**187.8**
Preferred	134.6	147.9	167.3	155.1	158.9	177.7	188.6	176.8
Non-Preferred	32.2	43.0	14.8	19.6	32.0	24.1	14.0	11.0
Secondary	**33.3**	**32.6**	**28.7**	**36.3**	**37.3**	**46.8**	**54.6**	**34.0**
Preferred	31.8	28.9	27.4	34.4	31.9	38.8	52.6	33.0
Non-Preferred	s	3.7	s	s	5.4	8.0	s	s

Source: Supplementary Survey on Own Account Workers, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data refer to residents in own account work as a regular form of employment for the 12-month period ending the middle of the year.

(2) "s": Data suppressed due to small number covered.

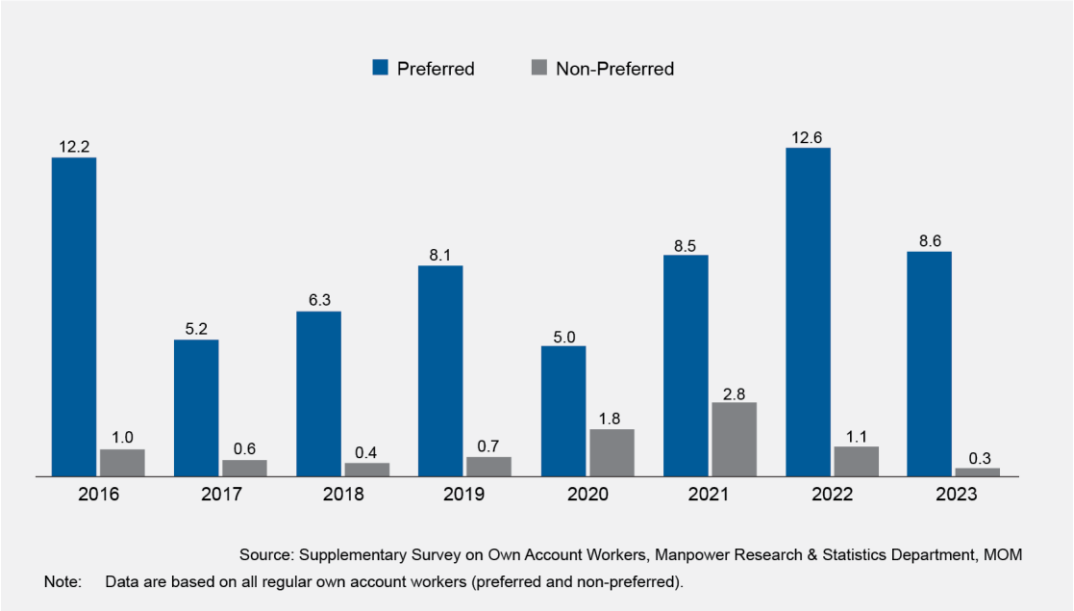
(3) Data may not add up due to rounding.

[21] The estimate is derived based on the number of regular primary own account workers, as a proportion of total resident employment (average over 12 months ending the middle of the year).

2.27 In line with the overall fall in tendency to change jobs, there was a decline in the percentage of regular own account workers transiting into full-time employee jobs, both among those who preferred own account work and those who felt otherwise. Among regular own account workers, 8.6% did own account work by choice and switched to full-time employee jobs in 2023. This was lower than the corresponding percentage in 2022 (12.6%), but comparable to the share pre-pandemic (8.1% in 2019).

Chart 23 Resident regular own account workers who were in full-time employee jobs in June

Per Cent



Source: Supplementary Survey on Own Account Workers, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

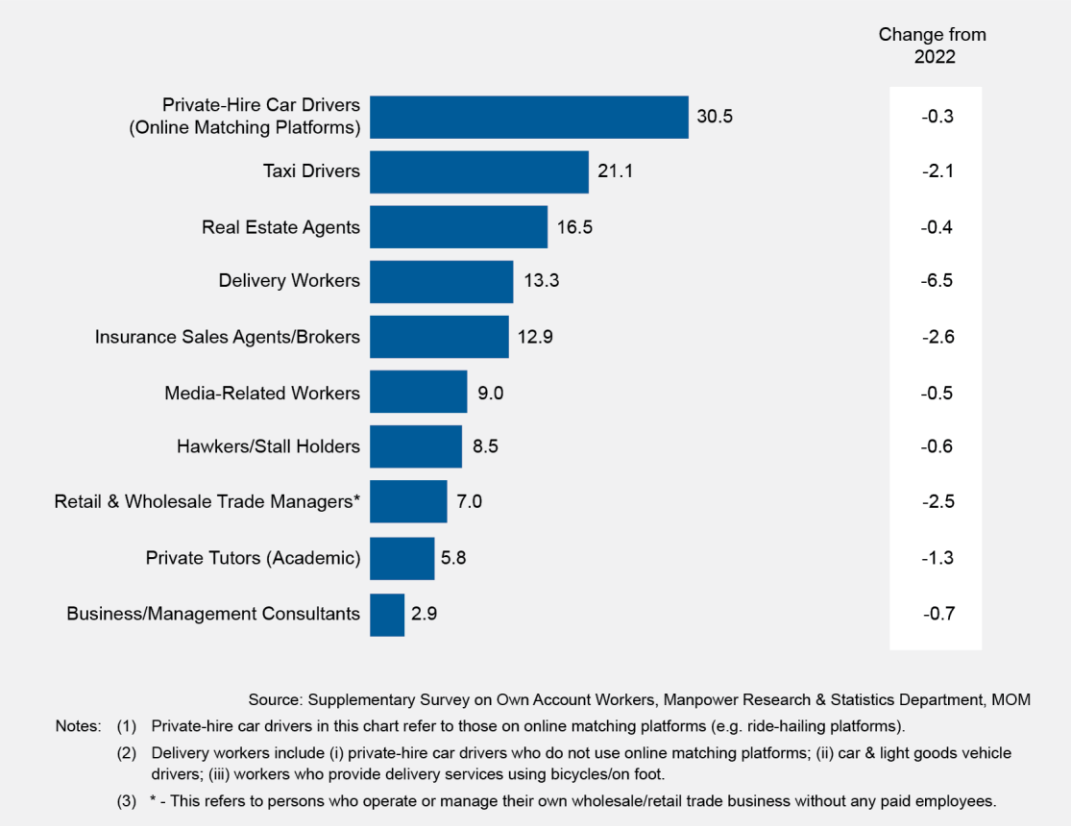
Note: Data are based on all regular own account workers (preferred and non-preferred).

Private-hire car drivers, taxi drivers and delivery workers remained top occupations of primary own account workers

2.28 The most common occupation among regular primary own account workers in 2023 was *private-hire car drivers* (30,500). They have taken the top spot since 2020, when the pandemic led to large droves of workers on online ride-hailing platforms. *Taxi drivers* (21,100) and *delivery workers* (13,300), who have since been more associated with work on digitally intermediated platforms, were also among the top occupations. Sales jobs such as *real estate agents* (16,500) and *insurance sales agents/brokers* (12,900), continued to form a sizeable percentage of resident regular primary own account workers in 2023.

Chart 24 Top occupations among resident regular primary own account workers, 2023

Number ('000)



Source: Supplementary Survey on Own Account Workers, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Private-hire car drivers in this chart refer to those on online matching platforms (e.g. ride-hailing platforms).

(2) Delivery workers include (i) private-hire car drivers who do not use online matching platforms; (ii) car & light goods vehicle drivers; (iii) workers who provide delivery services using bicycles/on foot.

(3) * - This refers to persons who operate or manage their own wholesale/retail trade business without any paid employees.

Seniors formed a larger and growing share of primary own account workers

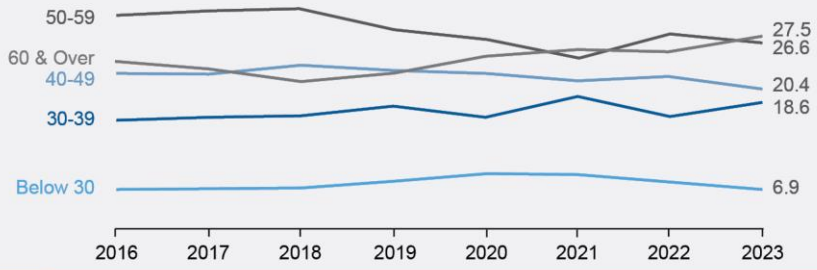
2.29 As own account work accords more work flexibility, it is an option for workers who wish to have a gradual step-down into their retirement years. As such, a majority of regular primary own account workers were residents aged 50 and over (2023: 54.1%). In recent years, there was an uptrend in the share of those aged 60 and above (27.5%). Those aged below 30 (6.9%) formed a small percentage of the regular primary own account workers.

2.30 Degree holders formed nearly one in three (28.9%) of the regular primary own account workers, lower than their share among the labour force (42.4%). Those with below secondary (19.2%) and secondary (21.2%) qualifications were still over-represented among primary own account workers as many were seniors with lower education. However, as future cohorts of seniors will have a higher education profile than senior workers today, the higher educated will form a larger share of own account workers.

Chart 25 Resident regular primary own account workers

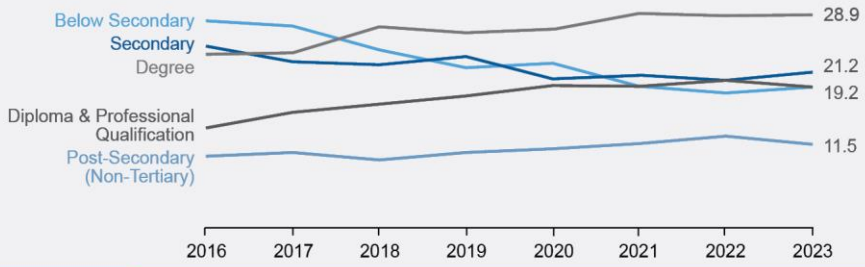
Per Cent

By Age Group



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Below 30	6.9	7.0	7.1	8.0	9.0	8.9	7.9	6.9
30-39	16.2	16.6	16.8	18.1	16.6	19.4	16.7	18.6
40-49	22.5	22.4	23.6	22.9	22.5	21.5	22.1	20.4
50-59	30.3	30.9	31.2	28.5	27.1	24.5	27.8	26.6
60 & Over	24.1	23.1	21.4	22.5	24.8	25.7	25.4	27.5

By Highest Qualification Attained



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Below Secondary	28.1	27.4	24.2	21.8	22.4	19.3	18.4	19.2
Secondary	24.7	22.6	22.2	23.3	20.3	20.8	20.1	21.2
Post-Secondary (Non-Tertiary)	9.9	10.4	9.4	10.4	10.9	11.6	12.6	11.5
Diploma & Professional Qualification	13.7	15.8	16.9	18.0	19.4	19.2	20.1	19.2
Degree	23.6	23.8	27.3	26.5	27.0	29.1	28.8	28.9

Source: Supplementary Survey on Own Account Workers, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

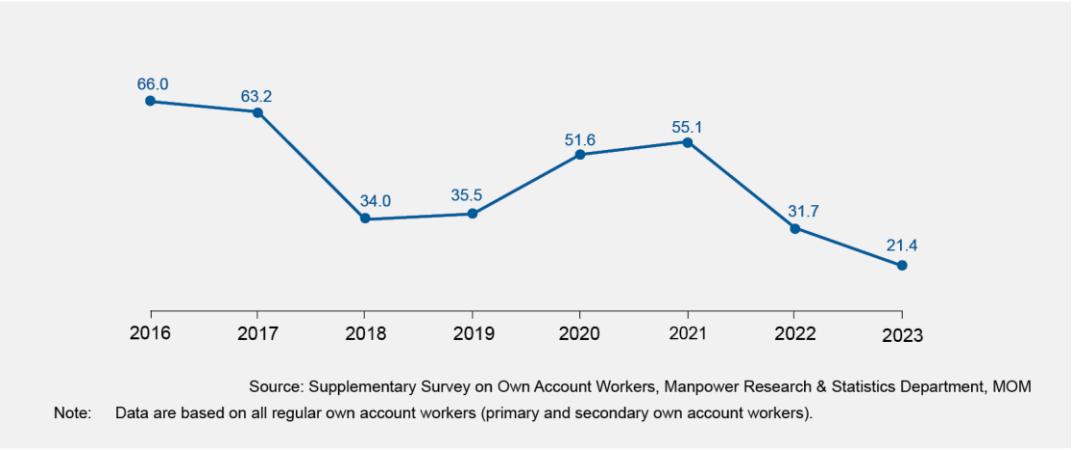
Note: Data may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Fewer own account workers faced challenges

2.31 The share of regular own account workers who faced challenges continued to decline in 2023 (21.4%) from 2022 (31.7%). The share was also significantly below pre-pandemic levels (35.5% in 2019). This decline followed from longer-term collective efforts from the government and tripartite partners to address key issues that own account workers faced, such as concerns regarding healthcare, retirement, payment-related disputes, and loss of income in the event of work injury.[22]

Chart 26 Resident regular own account workers who faced challenges with own account work

Per Cent



Source: Supplementary Survey on Own Account Workers, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

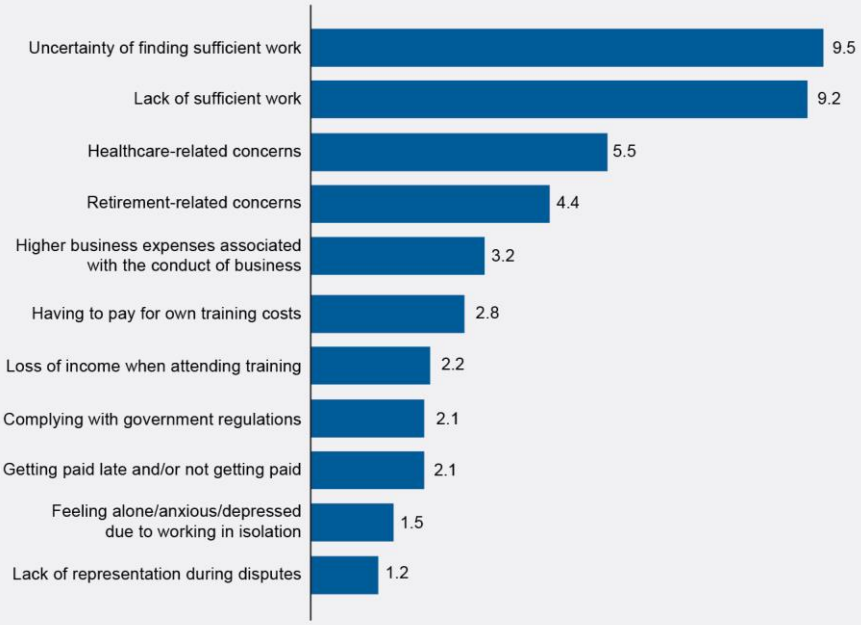
Note: Data are based on all regular own account workers (primary and secondary own account workers).

[22] Recommendations from the Tripartite Workgroup on Self-Employed Persons have been implemented since March 2018. From 2024 onwards, there will be legislative changes and implementation of the proposed recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Platform Workers.

2.32 Uncertainty of finding sufficient work (9.5%) and lack of sufficient work (9.2%) were the top challenges faced by own account workers in 2023. These two challenges were among the top difficulties identified since 2020, together with healthcare- and retirement-related concerns.

Chart 27 Challenges faced by resident regular own account workers, 2023

Per Cent



Source: Supplementary Survey on Own Account Workers, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data are based on all regular own account workers (primary and secondary own account workers).
(2) Each worker may indicate multiple concerns.
(3) Concerns cited by less than 1% of own account workers are not separately reflected here.

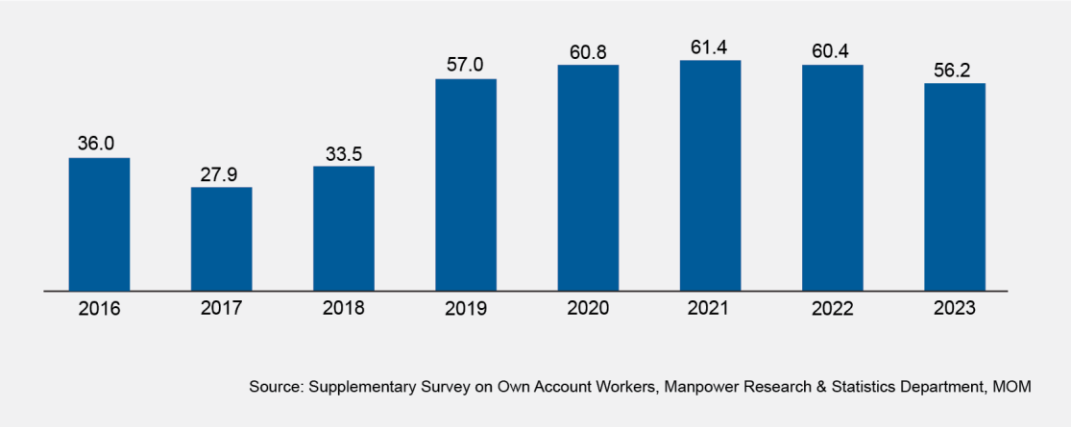
Majority of primary own account workers continued to utilise online channels, including online matching platforms

2.33 There is currently no internationally agreed statistical definition on digital platform employment. Singapore is partnering with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to develop internationally agreed statistical definitions on digital platform employment.[23]

2.34 As digitally-enabled business models such as online matching platforms continue to gain prevalence, 56.2% of regular primary own account workers utilised online channels to advertise and obtain business. This includes 35.4% who took up work via online matching platforms. In this report, online matching platforms refer to labour sharing platforms that serve as intermediaries to match or connect buyers with workers who take up piecemeal or assignment-based work.[24] While these figures represent a slight decline in the usage of online channels for own account workers compared to 2022,[25] they still point towards a high usage of digital tools by own account workers for their businesses as more than half of the regular primary own account workers continued to utilise online platforms.

Chart 28 Usage of online channels for resident regular primary own account workers

Per Cent



Source: Supplementary Survey on Own Account Workers, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

[23] For more details, see *Report: Development of Labour Market Indicators – From Inception to International Endorsement* available on stats.mom.gov.sg.

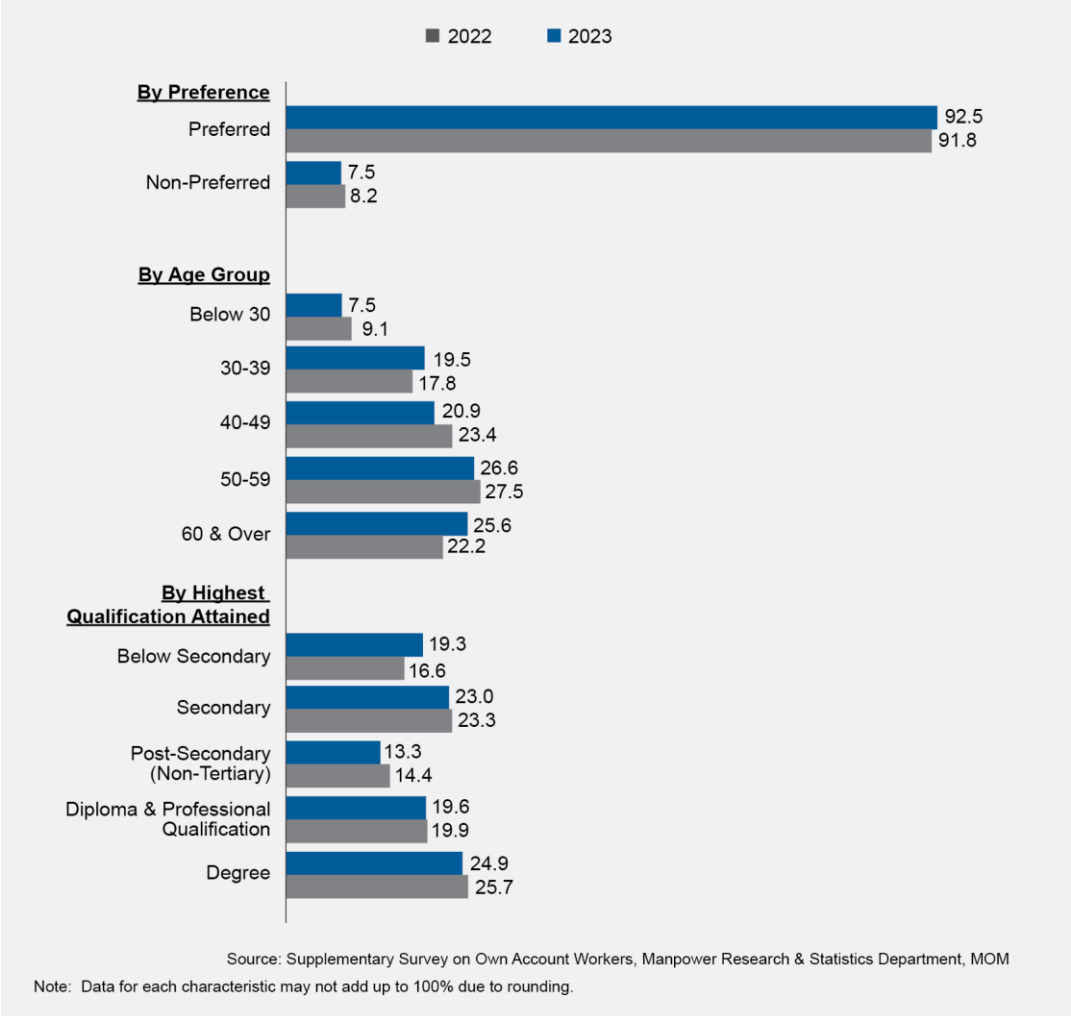
[24] Such platforms could be either websites or mobile applications, covering services such as ride-hailing, goods/food delivery, creative work, etc.

[25] In 2022, 60.4% of regular primary own account workers utilised online platforms, including 38.3% who utilised online matching platforms.

2.35 The age profile of own account workers using online channels mirrored that of all primary own account workers. Among regular primary own account workers using online channels, most were older workers aged 50 and over. The vast majority also took on the work on a preferred basis (2023: 92.5%). The share of regular primary own account workers using online channels aged 60 and over saw an increase from 22.2% in 2022 to 25.6% in 2023, while the share of regular primary own account workers with below secondary education using such channels increased from 16.6% in 2022 to 19.3% in 2023 as well. This is likely the result of the continued increase in digital inclusivity for all age groups and education backgrounds in recent years.

Chart 29 Resident regular primary own account workers who used online channels

Per Cent



Source: Supplementary Survey on Own Account Workers, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

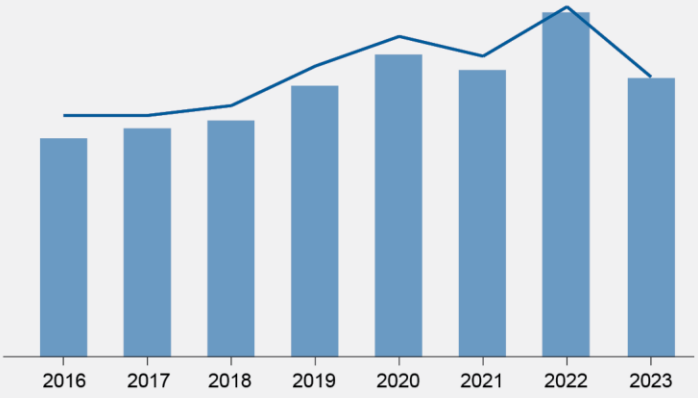
Note: Data for each characteristic may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

2.36 Those who used online matching platforms include a group of platform workers who are own account workers utilising transport and delivery service matching platforms in the course of their work. Their work arrangement with platforms could resemble those of employees.[26] Examples of such jobs include *taxi drivers* (22,200), *private-hire car drivers* (33,600), and *delivery workers* (14,700). Since 2016, there has been a general rise in the number of resident regular platform workers (56,000 to 70,500), excluding the pandemic years which represented a choppier period. Part of this is due to the growing overall resident workforce. As a share of total resident employment, the share in 2023 (2.9%) was similar to that in the pre-pandemic years (2016-2019).

2.37 In 2023, there was a decline in the number and percentage of resident regular platform workers. This was mainly from *delivery workers* (from 25,500 to 14,700), likely due to the easing in demand for deliveries (e.g. for food or groceries) post-pandemic. The increased job vacancies and job stability associated with employee jobs could also have prompted these platform workers to take up employee jobs.

Chart 30 Resident regular platform workers

Number ('000)



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of resident regular platform workers	56.0	57.9	59.9	69.6	77.4	73.2	88.4	70.5
As a percentage (%) of all employed residents*	2.5	2.5	2.6	3.0	3.3	3.1	3.6	2.9

Source: Supplementary Survey on Own Account Workers, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: * - The proportion is derived based on the number as a percentage of the total resident employment (annual average).

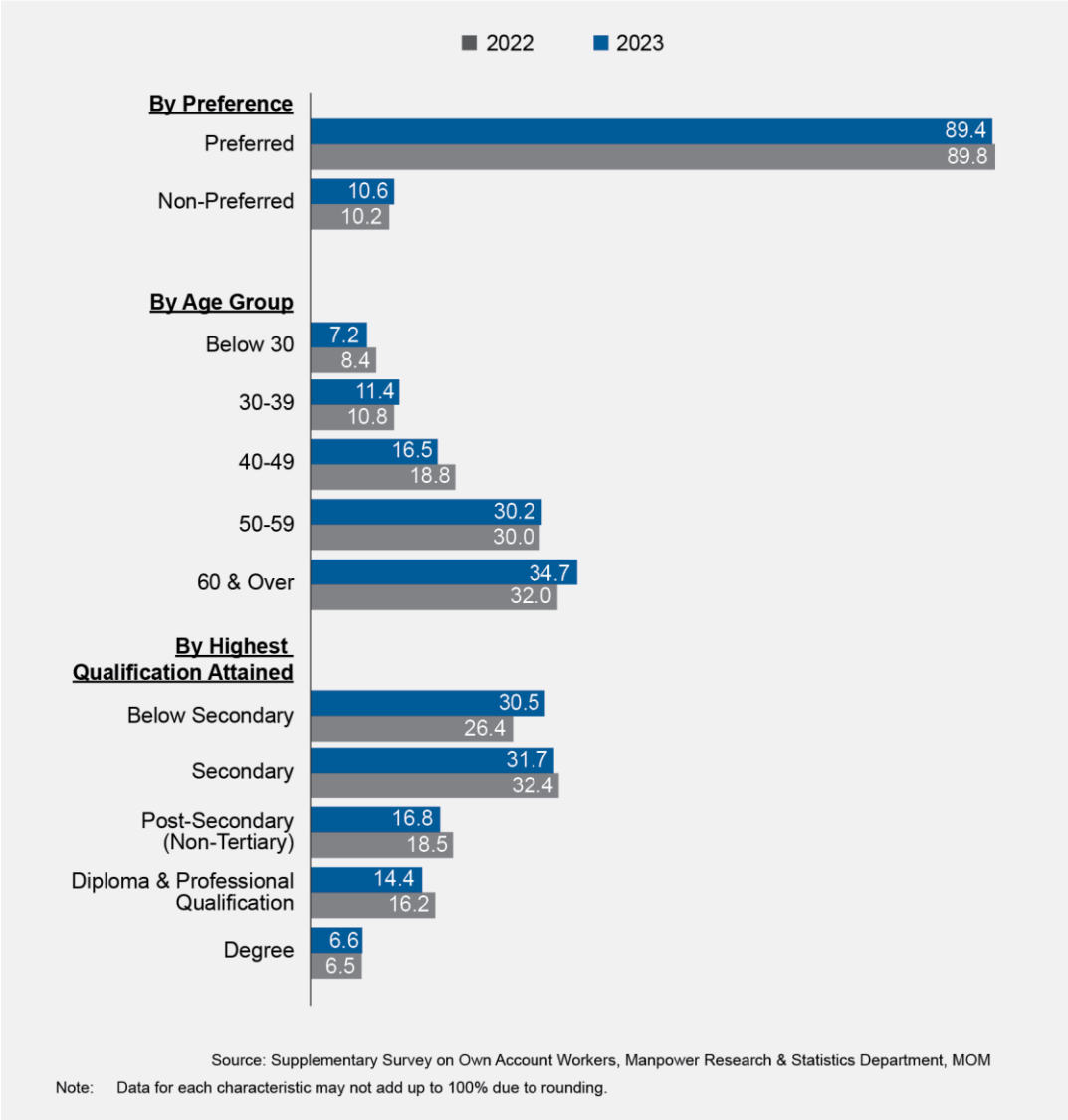
[26] The platform companies set the price of the service, determine which jobs are assigned to which workers, and manage how the workers perform, including penalties and suspensions.

2.38 Among regular primary platform workers, a slightly greater proportion of workers were doing the job on a non-preferred basis (2023: 10.6%) as compared to overall regular primary own account workers (2023: 5.9%). This could be because work flexibility and freedom of choice of work – typically the motivations for own account work – may be less evident in platform occupations. For example, delivery workers may have less control over the assignment of their tasks through online matching platforms as compared to real estate agents, insurance sales agents/brokers or private tutors, who have more control over how their work is organised.

2.39 The share of young people aged below 30 and degree holders among regular primary platform workers remain the smallest in 2023. This suggests that most young people in the labour force with tertiary education still show greater inclination towards full-time salaried employment opportunities, which usually require a more diverse skill set and extensive knowledge base.

Chart 31 Resident regular primary platform workers

Per Cent



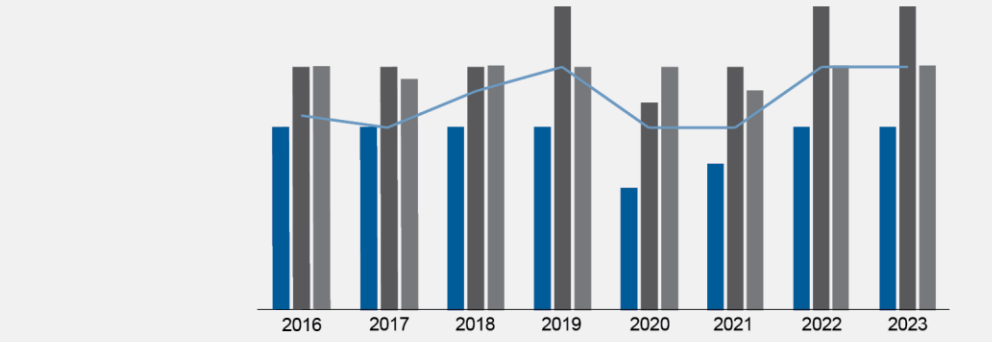
Source: Supplementary Survey on Own Account Workers, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Data for each characteristic may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

2.40 The median income of full-time platform-related occupations in 2023 ($2,000) remained the same as a year ago. This was observed for *private-hire car drivers* ($2,500), *delivery workers* ($2,000) and *taxi drivers* ($1,500). However, their median incomes were higher than during the pandemic years.

Chart 32 Median gross monthly income from employment of full-time resident own account workers in platform-related occupations

Dollars



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Platform-Related Occupations	1,600	1,500	1,800	2,000	1,500	1,500	2,000	2,000
Taxi Drivers	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,000	1,200	1,500	1,500
Private-Hire Car Drivers	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,500	1,700	2,000	2,500	2,500
Delivery Workers	2,000	1,900	2,000	2,000	1,999	1,800	2,000	2,000

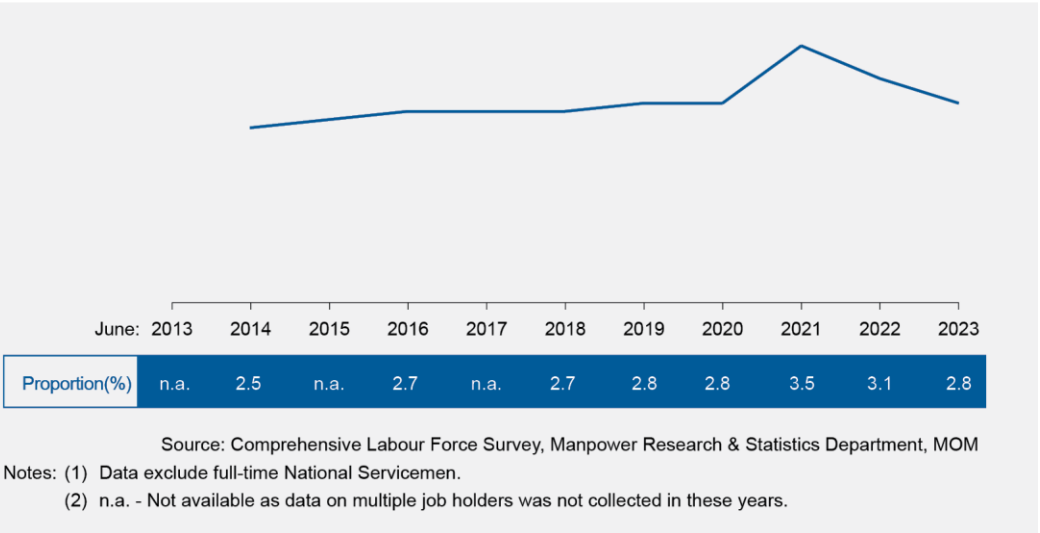
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

The proportion of workers who held multiple jobs continued its decline

2.41 Multiple jobholding remained uncommon in Singapore with 2.8% of workers in 2023 holding multiple jobs. The proportion declined from its peak in 2021 (3.5%) to 3.1% in 2022 and further to 2.8% in 2023, around the pre-pandemic rate. The decline was larger for the self-employed (from 6.9% in 2022 to 5.5% in 2023) than employees (from 2.6% to 2.4%).

Chart 33 Proportion of employed residents holding multiple jobs

Per Cent



June:	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Proportion(%)	n.a.	2.5	n.a.	2.7	n.a.	2.7	2.8	2.8	3.5	3.1	2.8

Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

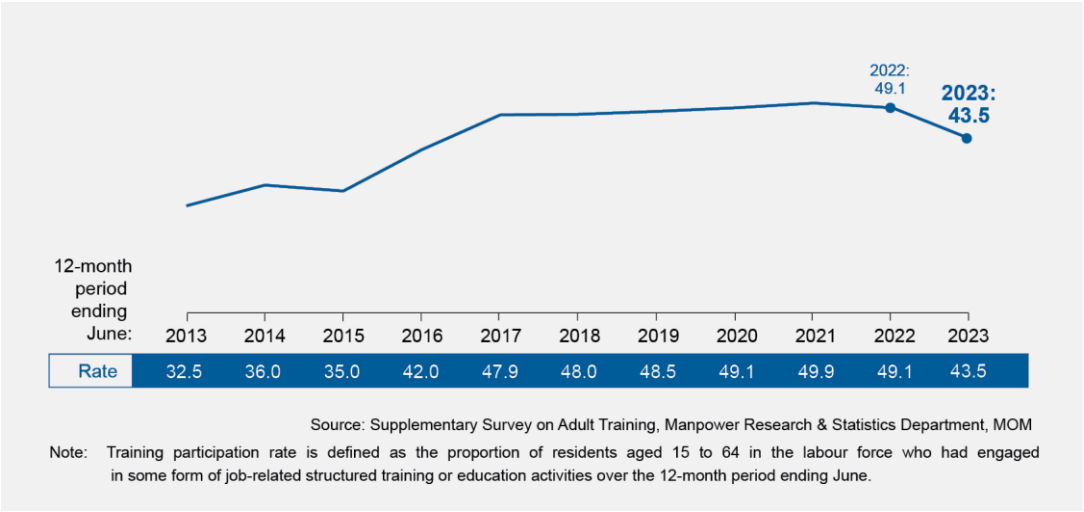
Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
(2) n.a. - Not available as data on multiple job holders was not collected in these years.

3 Training

3.1 After maintaining near the 50%-mark for six consecutive years (from 2017 to 2022), the training participation rate of the resident labour force declined from 49.1% in 2022 to 43.5% in 2023.

Chart 34 Training participation rate of resident labour force

Per Cent



Source: Supplementary Survey on Adult Training, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Training participation rate is defined as the proportion of residents aged 15 to 64 in the labour force who had engaged in some form of job-related structured training or education activities over the 12-month period ending June.

3.2 The fall in training participation was mainly due to a scale-back in online training. The proportion of trainees who participated in training online decreased significantly from 54.8% in 2022 to 40.4% in 2023, following a slight pull-back in 2022. While the decline was expected given that workers have acclimatised to in-office routines and would also no longer require extensive training support following the post-COVID-19 recovery, the finding suggests that the use of online training has lifted the training participation rate higher than it would have otherwise been during the pandemic years.

3.3 Looking forward, the proportion of online training attendees is likely to remain higher than the pre-pandemic levels of around 30.0% as online training allows for more flexibility in venue and class size, as well as lower organising costs.

Chart 35 Proportion of structured training attendees who participated in online training

Per Cent



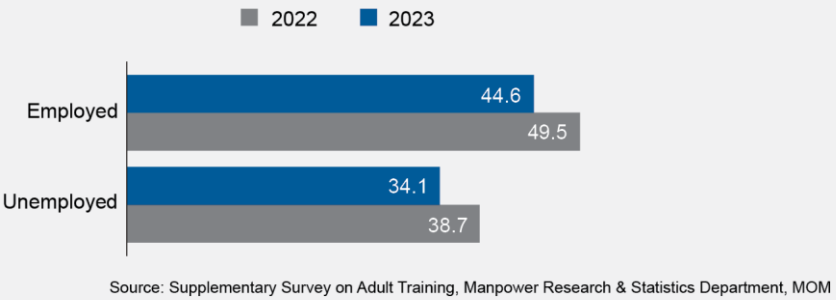
Source: Supplementary Survey on Adult Training, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Figures are based on residents in the labour force who have attended structured training.

3.4 Training participation rates declined for both employed (49.5% in 2022 to 44.6% in 2023) and unemployed residents (38.7% in 2022 to 34.1% in 2023). For the unemployed, this was the second consecutive year of decline after an all-time high in 2021 (45.8%) when more jobseekers could have attended training for new jobs following the immediate post-pandemic resurgence in hiring. Job-related training remains key for jobseekers to gain industry exposure, skillsets, and networking opportunities to boost their chances of finding employment.

Chart 36 Training participation rate of resident labour force by labour force status

Per Cent



Source: Supplementary Survey on Adult Training, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

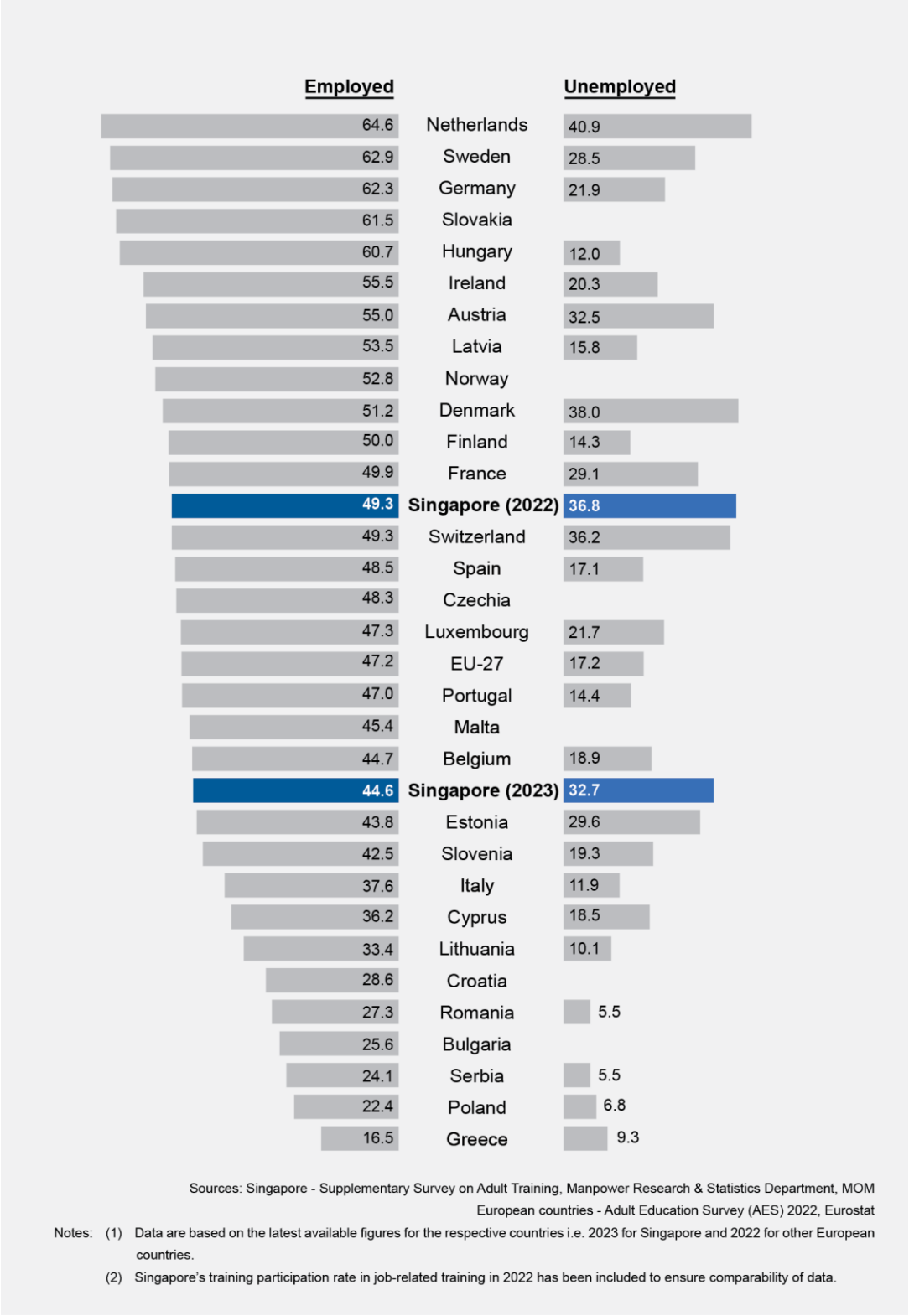
3.5 Singapore's training participation rate among employed residents aged between 25 and 64 (2023: 44.6%; 2022: 49.3%) was within the range of the training participation rate of many European countries.[27] At the higher end of the spectrum include the Netherlands (64.6%), Sweden (62.9%), Germany (62.3%), Norway (52.8%), and Denmark (51.2%); they were typically associated with stronger in-firm training and work-based learning (e.g. apprenticeships).

3.6 Attesting to the extensive support from public institutions to help individuals upskill and reskill for new jobs, Singapore performed significantly better than many European countries on the training participation rate of unemployed residents aged between 25 and 64.

[27] Comparisons were made to these European countries because they are mostly high-income countries similar to Singapore, and comparable statistics on their training participation rate are readily available from Eurostat. The statistics for these European countries are available for the year 2022; hence the statistic for Singapore for the corresponding year was also included.

Chart 37 Comparison of training participation rate of resident labour force aged 25 to 64 with selected European countries by labour force status

Per Cent



Sources: Singapore - Supplementary Survey on Adult Training, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM
European countries - Adult Education Survey (AES) 2022, Eurostat

Notes: (1) Data are based on the latest available figures for the respective countries i.e. 2023 for Singapore and 2022 for other European countries.

(2) Singapore's training participation rate in job-related training in 2022 has been included to ensure comparability of data.

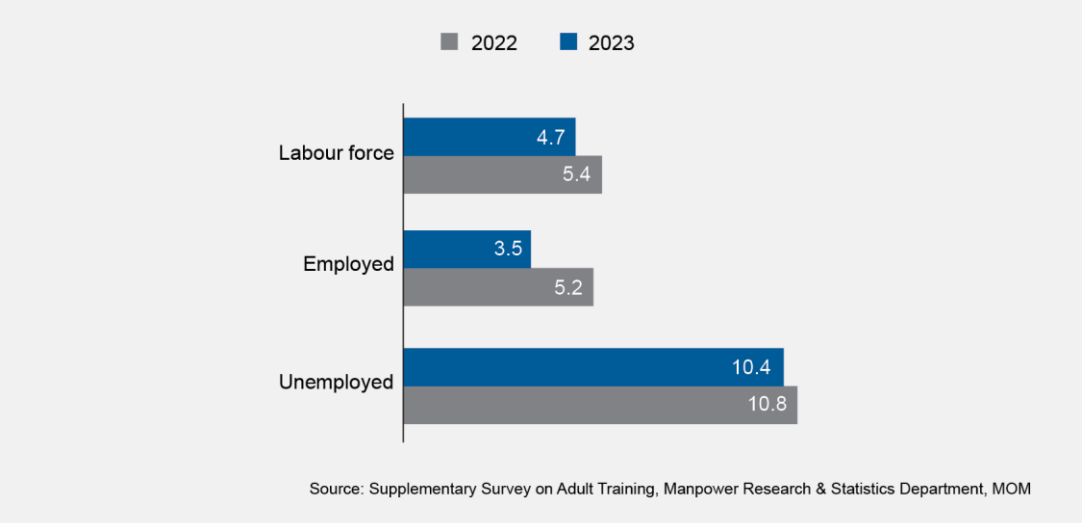
3.7 In line with the overall decline in training participation of the labour force, the overall training intensity[28] also saw a decrease from 5.4 days in 2022 to 4.7 days in 2023. The training intensity fell by more for the employed (5.2 days to 3.5 days) than the unemployed (10.8 days to 10.4 days).

[28] Training intensity is measured by the average number of training days per adult in the labour force.

For the employed, training intensity continued to decline after peaking in 2020 at the height of the pandemic. Workers could have reduced their time spent on training when work activities gradually returned to pre-pandemic normality.

Chart 38 Training intensity of resident labour force by labour force status

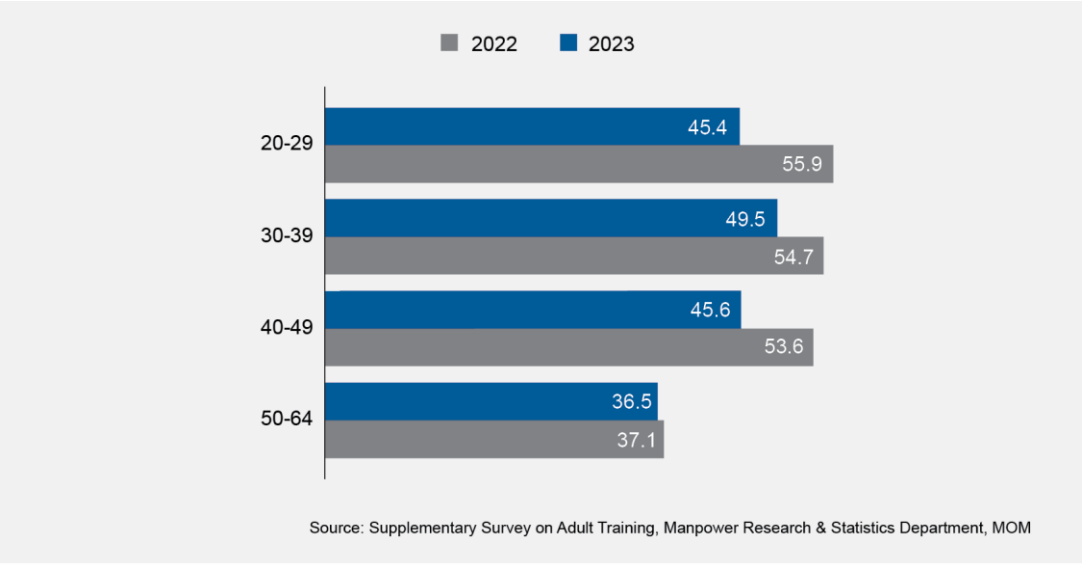
Days



3.8 While training participation rate dropped across all age groups, the decline was larger among the young aged 20 to 29 (55.9% in 2022 to 45.4% in 2023), and less so among those older aged 50 to 64 (37.1% in 2022 to 36.5% in 2023). Over the longer term, the training participation rates of residents aged 40 to 49 and 50 to 64 have been trending up and closing in with that of those younger.[29] Collective efforts by agencies to upskill the workforce such as the Council for Third Age (C3A) and SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) will help provide greater accessibility to job-related upskilling and learning opportunities for the mature and older workers.

Chart 39 Training participation rate of resident labour force by age group

Per Cent

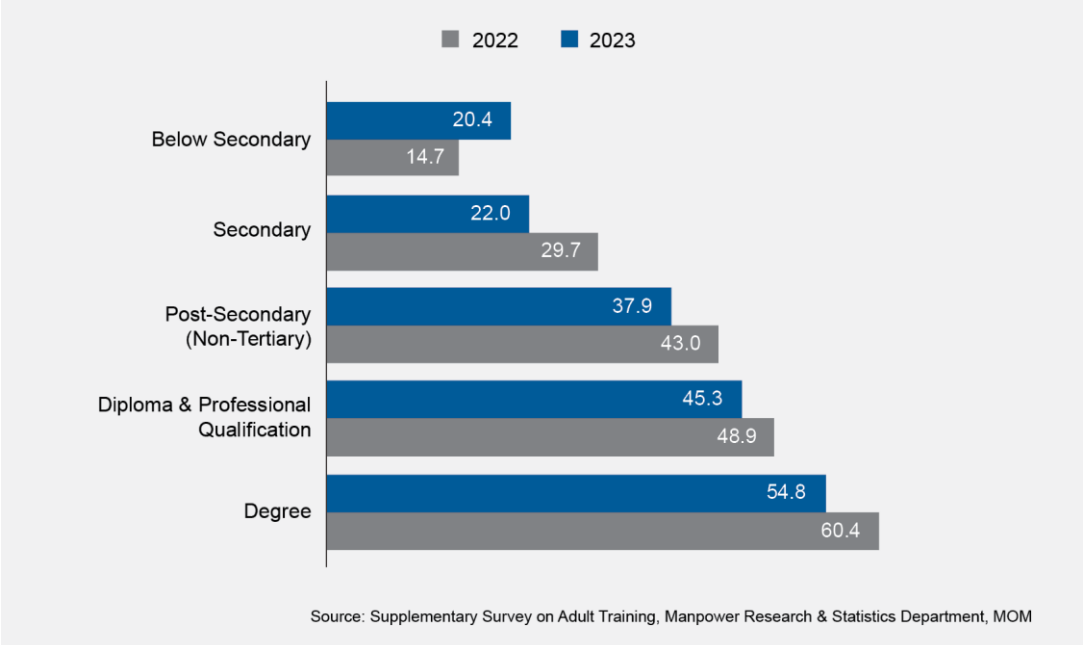


[29] The training participation rate rose from 34.4% in 2013 to 45.6% in 2023 for residents aged 40 to 49, and from 23.0% in 2013 to 36.5% in 2023 for residents aged 50 to 64.

3.9 Residents with below secondary education saw an increase in their training participation rate to 20.4% in 2023, the highest since 2018 (25.4%). However, they still lag the tertiary-educated, who remained more likely to participate in training in 2023 (degree: 54.8%; diploma & professional qualification: 45.3%).

Chart 40 Training participation rate of resident labour force by highest qualification attained

Per Cent



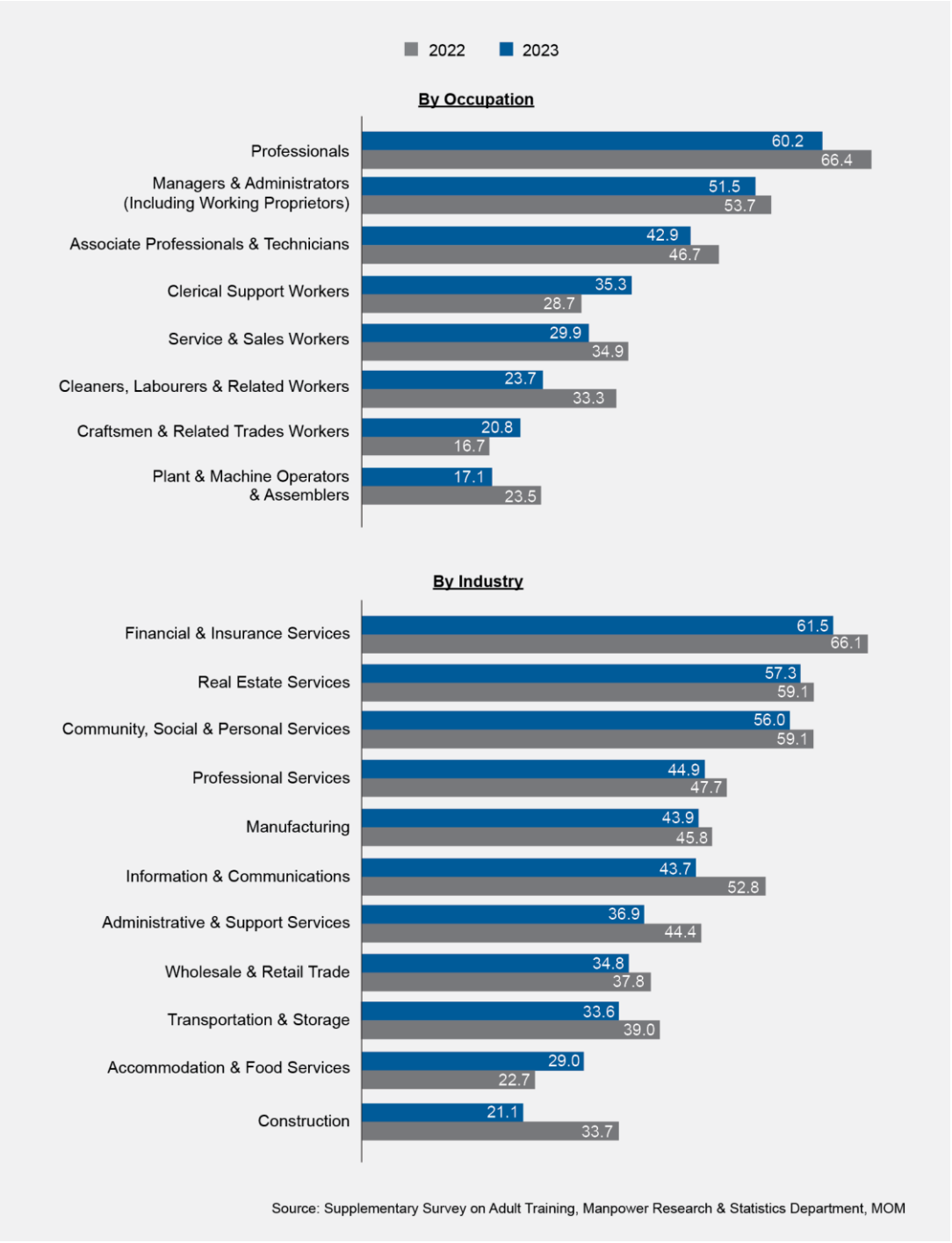
3.10 Mirroring the fall in training participation among the young and tertiary-educated, there was a decline in training participation rate across all PMET occupational groups, with the greatest decline observed among *professionals* (from 66.4% in 2022 to 60.2% in 2023). Despite so, PMETs remained more likely than non-PMETs to participate in training. While PMETs have a higher likelihood to undertake training as their jobs tend to require a wider range of skills, training remains a key pathway for all, including non-PMETs, to gain skills to succeed in work and increase the potential for career and wage progression.

3.11 Among non-PMETs, *clerical support workers* (28.7% to 35.3%) and *craftsmen & related trades workers* (16.7% to 20.8%) saw an increase in training participation from 2022 to 2023. The remaining non-PMET occupational groups saw declines in training participation over the year. Going forward, the expansion of the Progressive Wage Model will help to further boost training of non-PMETs (e.g. clerks, drivers, sales workers) and uplift their wages.

3.12 There was a broad-based decline in training participation rate across all industries except *Accommodation & Food Services*, which saw an increase in participation rate (from 22.7% in 2022 to 29.0% in 2023).

Chart 41 Training participation rate of employed residents

Per Cent



Source: Supplementary Survey on Adult Training, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Training Outcomes

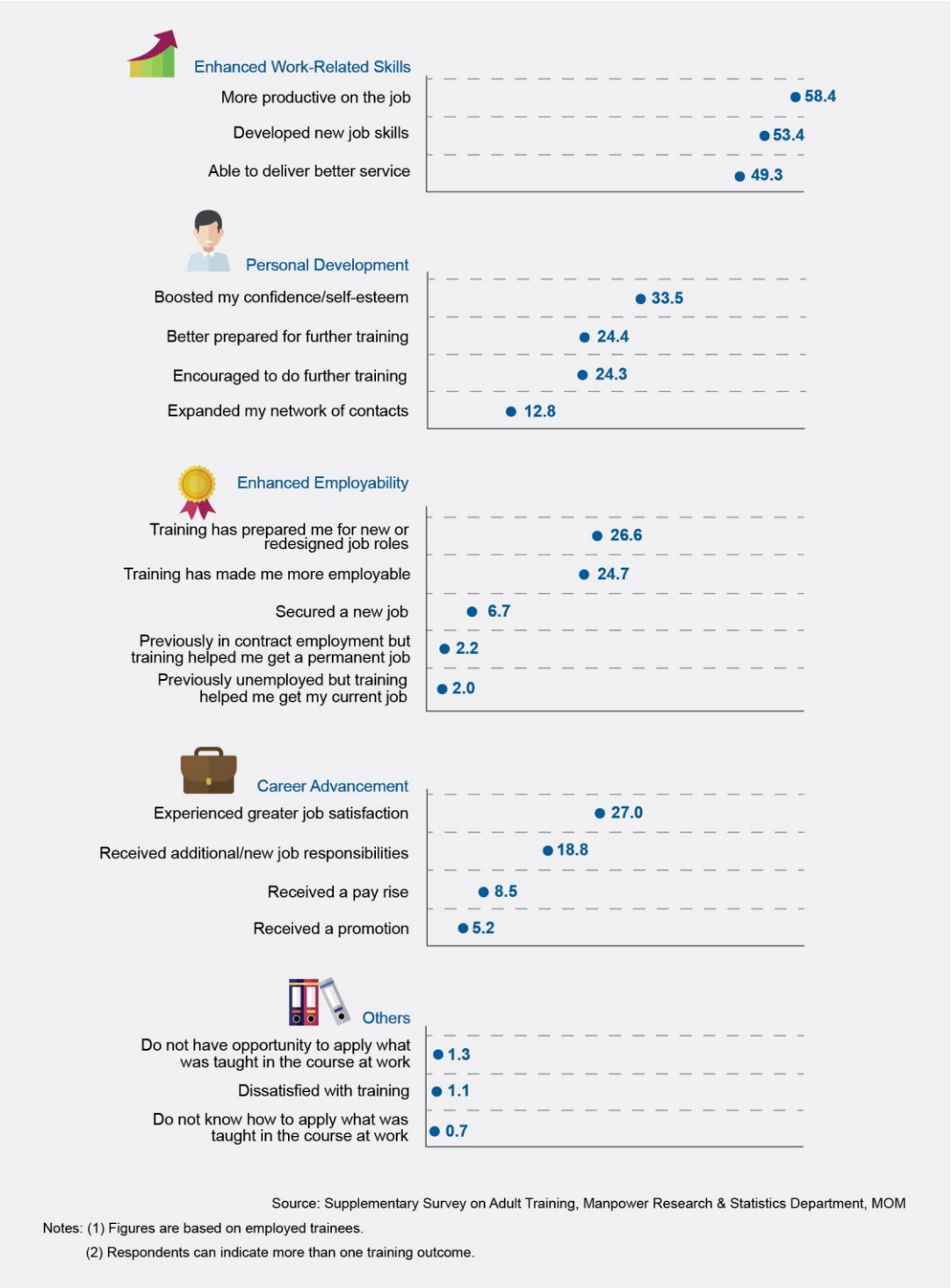
3.13 A large majority of the workers (93.4%) reported having at least one tangible outcome of attending training. Workers assessed that training has helped them become more productive on the job (58.4%), develop new job skills (53.4%), and deliver better service (49.3%). Significant proportions of employed trainees also indicated that training has prepared them for new roles and responsibilities (26.6%) and enhanced their employability (24.7%).

3.14 Workers are less likely to indicate positive outcomes associated with career and wage progression immediately post training. Outcomes such as a pay rise (8.5%) or a promotion (5.2%) were less common as they typically depend on improved work performance that is sustained over time. As a sizeable group of trainees (18.8%) were assigned additional or new job responsibilities after participating in training, they are likely to benefit from increased wages and promotion over time.

3.15 Employed workers also reported intangible outcomes after participating in training. In terms of personal development, some felt a boost in confidence and self-esteem (33.5%), while others felt better prepared (24.4%) and more motivated (24.3%) for further training programmes.

Chart 42 Training outcomes of employed residents, 2023

Per Cent



Source: Supplementary Survey on Adult Training, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Figures are based on employed trainees.

(2) Respondents can indicate more than one training outcome.

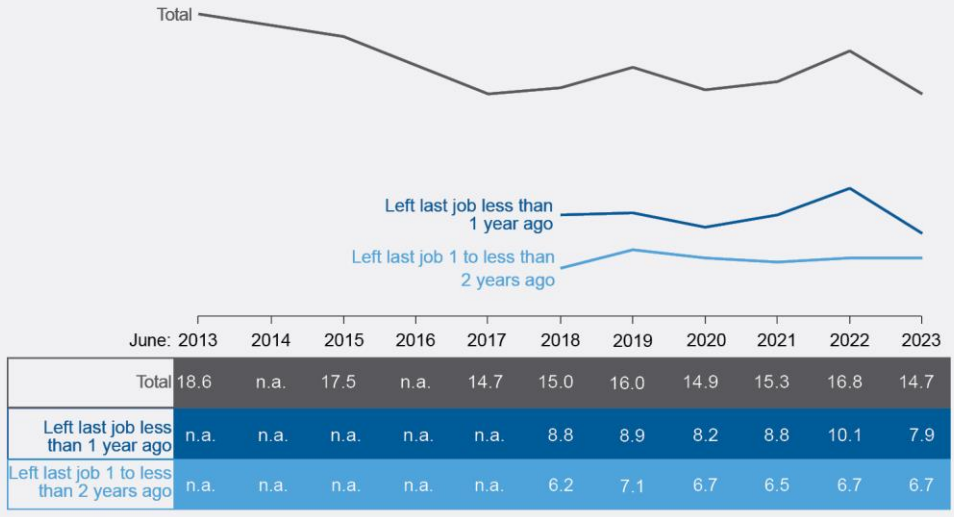
4 Job Mobility and Tenure

Incidence of job change fell

4.1 The proportion of employed residents who had changed jobs over the last two years fell to 14.7% in 2023, back to the pre-COVID range of rates. This decrease could be due to more staying in their current job when hiring eased and economic uncertainties rose.

Chart 43 Proportion of employed residents who had changed jobs in the last two years

Per Cent



June:	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	18.6	n.a.	17.5	n.a.	14.7	15.0	16.0	14.9	15.3	16.8	14.7
Left last job less than 1 year ago	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	8.8	8.9	8.2	8.8	10.1	7.9
Left last job 1 to less than 2 years ago	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	6.2	7.1	6.7	6.5	6.7	6.7

Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

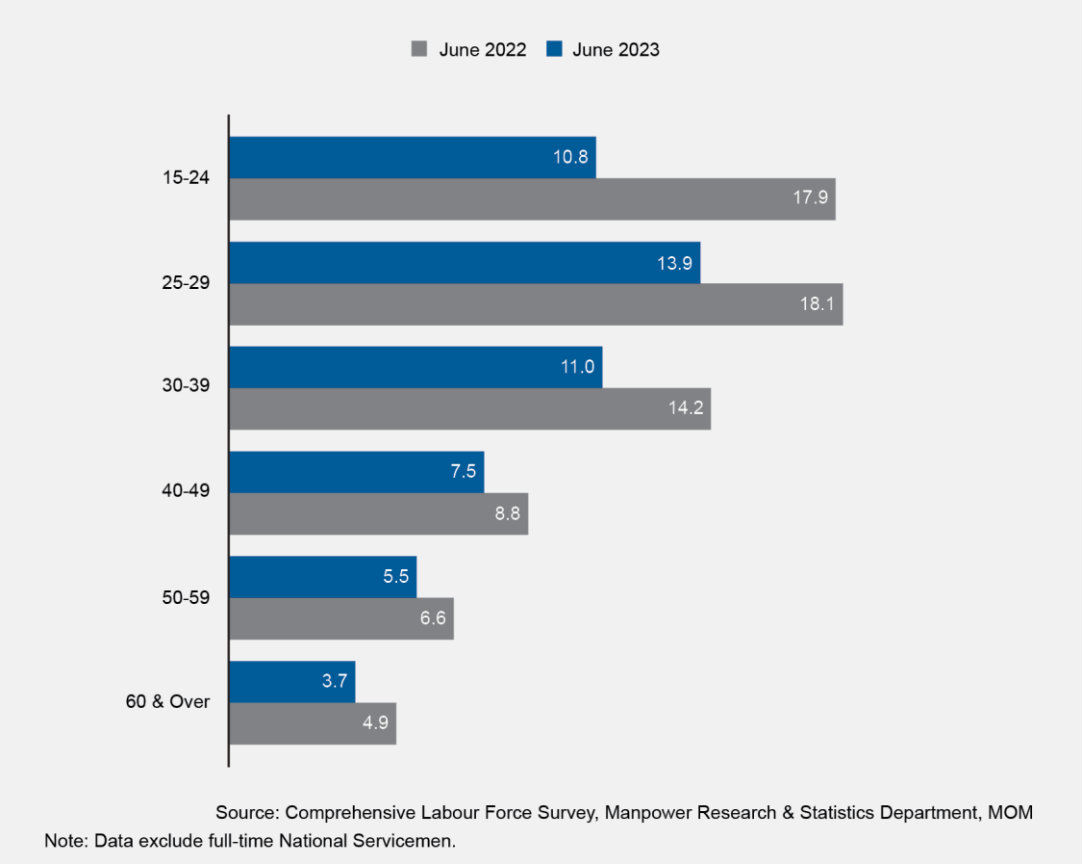
(2) n.a. – Not available as data on job change or the further breakdown into when left last job was not collected in these years.

(3) Comparable data for job change is available from 2013 onwards.

4.2 The incidence of job change fell across all ages. A larger decline was observed among youths aged 15 to 24 as more of them returned to full-time studies and did not seek out vacation jobs when opportunities for temporary jobs fell. Workers aged 25 to 29 continued to have the highest incidence of job change. They are more likely to change jobs as they are in the earlier stage of their career and still exploring different career options.

Chart 44 Proportion of employed residents who had changed jobs in the last one year by age

Per Cent



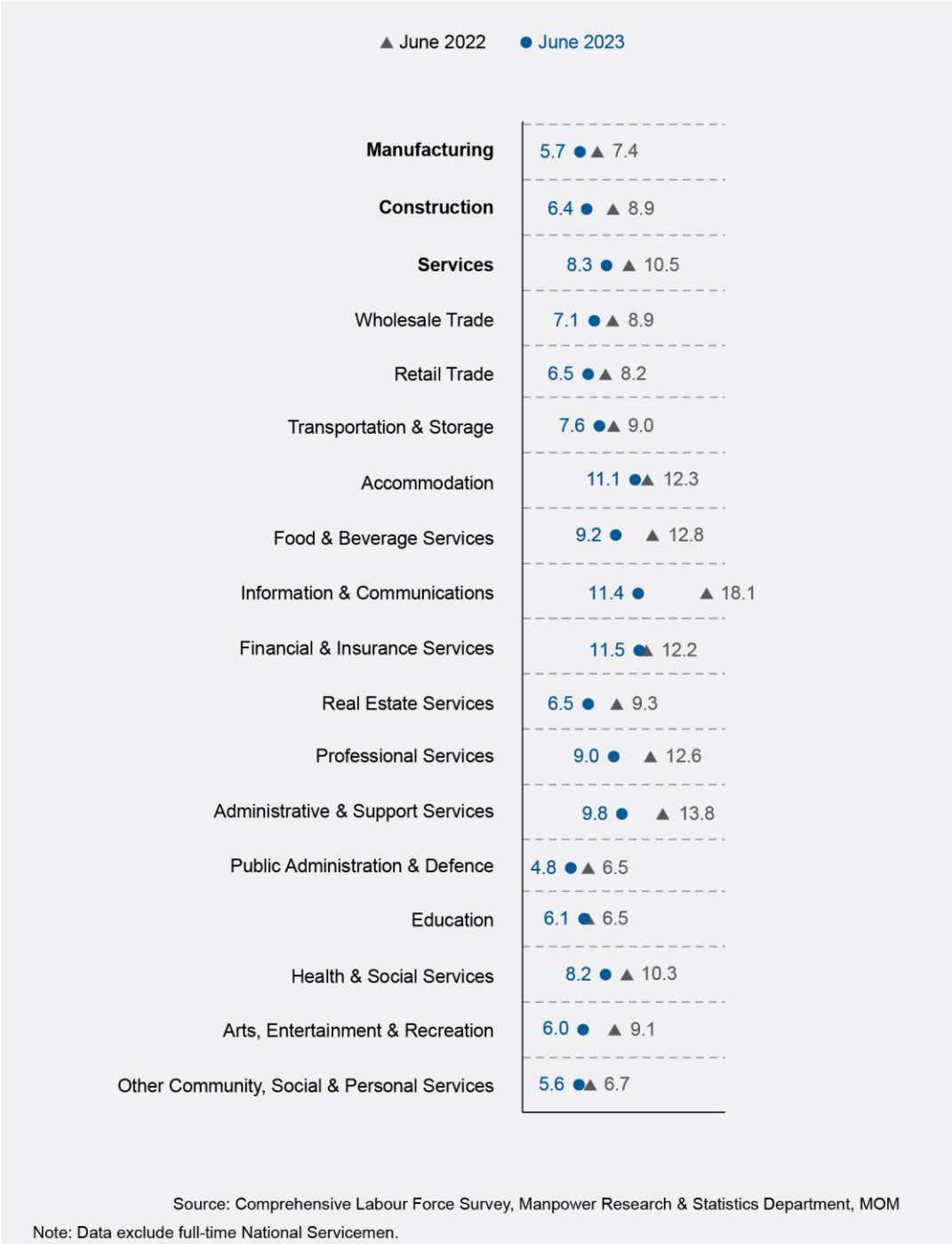
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

4.3 The incidence of workers who had changed jobs in the recent year fell across all industries. *Information & Communications* and *Administrative & Support Services* remained industries with higher incidence of workers with job changes, though the incidence has come down significantly. As hiring has eased back to pre-COVID normality, both PMETs (from 10.5% in 2022 to 8.2% in 2023) and non-PMETs (from 9.4% to 7.5%) saw a drop in the incidence of job change.

Chart 45 Proportion of employed residents who had changed jobs in the last one year by current industry

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

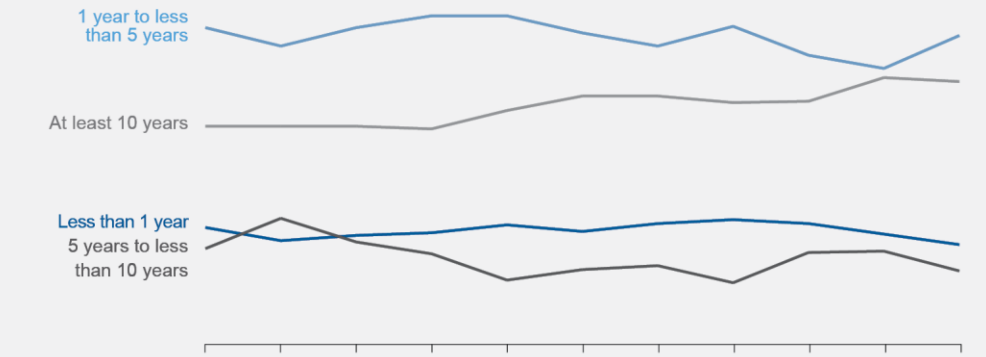
Proportion of employees who took up their current job in the recent year fell

4.4 As fewer workers had changed jobs in the last one year, the share of employees with a tenure of less than one year fell from 17.9% in 2022 to 16.4% in 2023.

4.5 About half of all employees have been in their job for at least five years. In particular, the share of employees who have been in their job for at least 10 years increased for those in their 50s and over. The increase in longer-tenured employees reflects collective efforts to keep older workers employable and relevant to changing job demands. These efforts include training, re-skilling, and policies such as Retirement and Re-employment Act to help older workers who wish to continue working stay employed.

Chart 46 Distribution of resident employees by years in current job

Per Cent



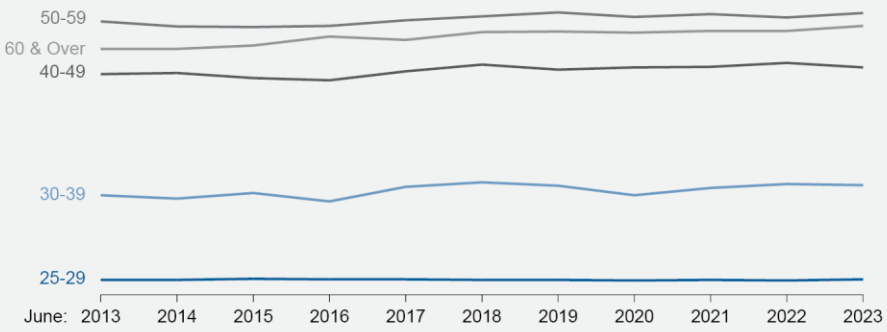
June:	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Less than 1 year	18.1	20.4	18.6	17.7	15.7	16.5	16.8	15.5	17.8	17.9	16.4
1 year to less than 5 years	34.9	33.5	34.9	35.8	35.8	34.5	33.5	35.0	32.8	31.8	34.3
5 years to less than 10 years	19.7	18.7	19.1	19.3	19.9	19.4	20.0	20.3	20.0	19.2	18.4
At least 10 years	27.4	27.4	27.4	27.2	28.6	29.7	29.7	29.2	29.3	31.1	30.8

Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
(2) Data for each year may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Chart 47 Proportion of resident employees who had worked for at least 10 years in their current job by age

Per Cent



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
25-29	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.7
30-39	15.7	15.1	16.1	14.6	17.2	18.0	17.4	15.7	17.0	17.7	17.5
40-49	37.3	37.5	36.6	36.2	37.8	39.0	38.1	38.5	38.6	39.3	38.5
50-59	46.7	45.8	45.7	45.9	46.9	47.6	48.3	47.5	48.0	47.4	48.2
60 & Over	41.8	41.8	42.4	44.0	43.4	44.8	44.9	44.7	45.0	45.0	45.9

Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

(2) The proportion of youths aged 15-24 who had worked for at least 10 years in their current job was nil or negligible, and hence not plotted in the chart.

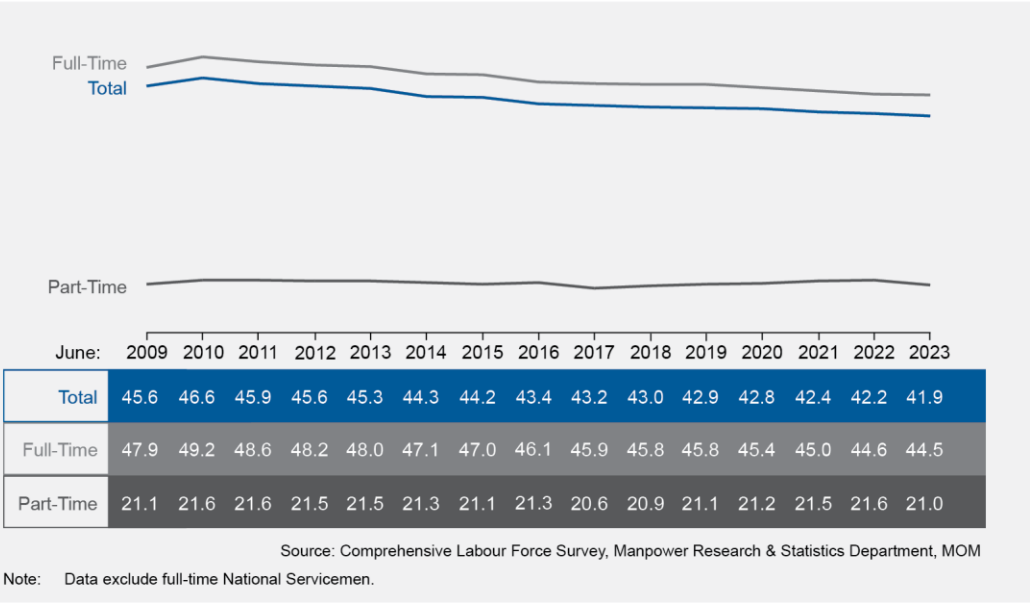
5 Usual Hours Worked

Average usual hours worked continued to decline for more than a decade

5.1 The average weekly usual hours worked among employed residents decreased from 45.3 in 2013 to 41.9 in 2023. The steady decline was largely due to a fall in the average usual hours worked of full-timers (from 48.0 in 2013 to 44.5 in 2023). Part-timers, who formed a slightly larger share of the workforce[30] over the years (from 10.2% in 2013 to 10.8% in 2023), had comparatively stable usual work hours at around 21.0 hours.[31]

Chart 48 Average (mean) usual hours worked per week of employed residents by nature of employment

Hours Per Week



June:	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	45.6	46.6	45.9	45.6	45.3	44.3	44.2	43.4	43.2	43.0	42.9	42.8	42.4	42.2	41.9
Full-Time	47.9	49.2	48.6	48.2	48.0	47.1	47.0	46.1	45.9	45.8	45.8	45.4	45.0	44.6	44.5
Part-Time	21.1	21.6	21.6	21.5	21.5	21.3	21.1	21.3	20.6	20.9	21.1	21.2	21.5	21.6	21.0

Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

Decline in Singapore's average usual hours worked among the largest compared to OECD countries

5.2 Singapore's steady decline in usual hours worked is in line with trends observed among developed countries. In general, workers in Singapore work relatively longer hours than in many OECD countries[32] as part-time employment is less prevalent here.[33] However, the difference has narrowed. Over the last ten years, Singapore's decrease in average working hours was larger than in most OECD countries, except for South Korea (increase in part-time work) and Iceland (more workers were on shorter workweeks). In Singapore, the decline was mainly due to shorter

[30] Excluding full-time National Servicemen.

[31] The overall decline in usual hours worked among employed residents from 2013 to 2023 (-3.4 hours per week) can be broken down into contribution from the decline in the average weekly usual hours worked of the full-time employed (-3.1 hours) and the part-time employed (-0.1 hour), as well as the change in full-time/part-time share (-0.2 hours).

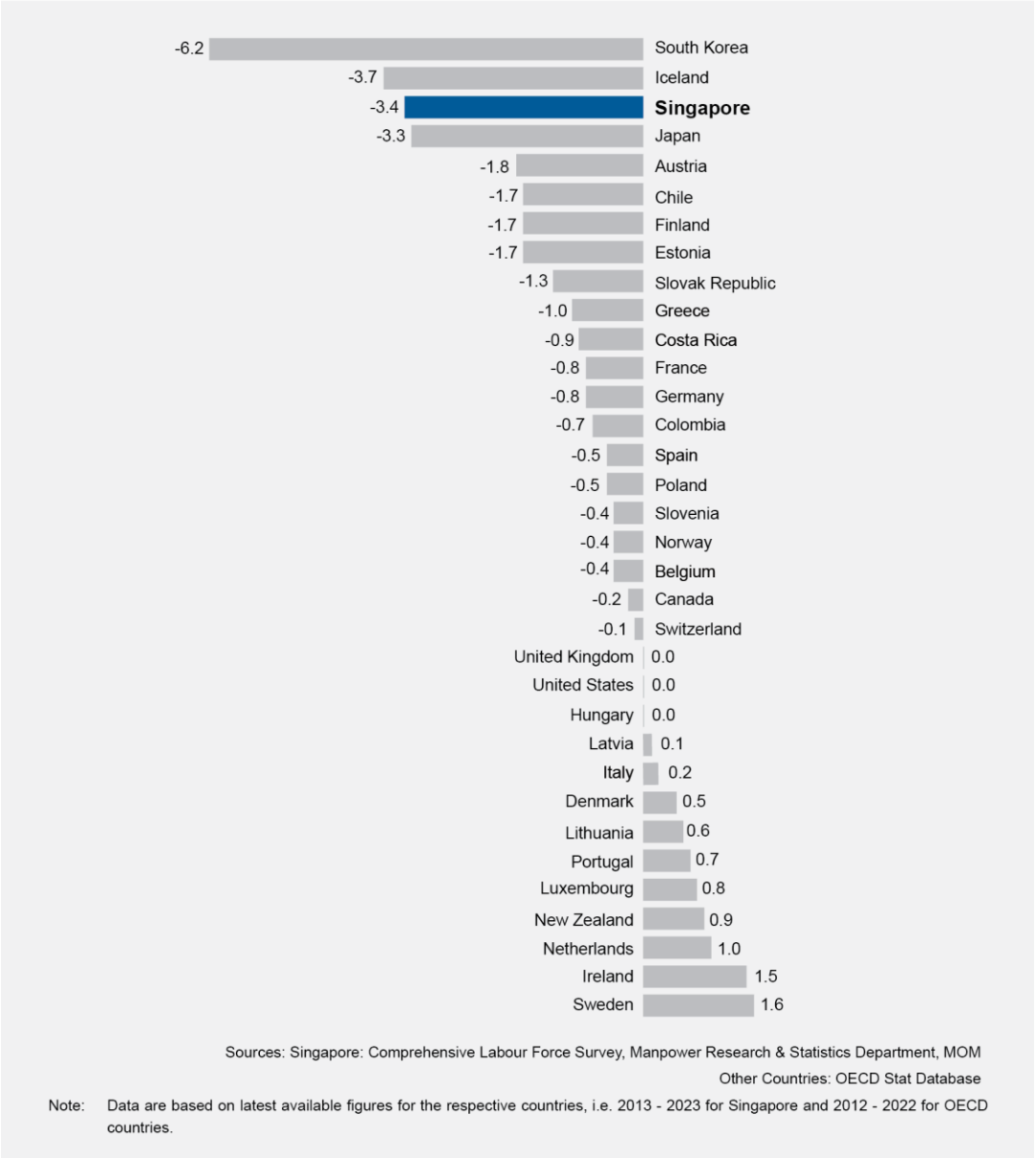
[32] Comparison was made to the OECD member countries, most of which are high-income economies similar to Singapore. OECD also provides a comprehensive statistical database that facilitates harmonised comparisons across a broad spectrum of indicators.

[33] As the national definition of part-time employment varies across countries depending on the hour cut-off (generally 30 or 35 hours per week), part-time employment is proxied by those who usually worked less than 35 hours per week, for the purpose of international comparison. In Singapore, the proportion of employed residents who usually worked less than 35 hours per week was 10.8% in 2023. This is lower than in the OECD countries (22.4% in the OECD, based on latest available statistics in 2022).

workweeks and the increase in the number of workers in full-time PMET jobs (PMETs have shorter usual working hours than non-PMETs on average for full-timers).

Chart 49 Change in average (mean) usual hours worked per week in Singapore and OECD countries over the last decade

Hours Per Week



Sources: Singapore: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM
Other Countries: OECD Stat Database

Note: Data are based on latest available figures for the respective countries, i.e. 2013 - 2023 for Singapore and 2012 - 2022 for OECD countries.

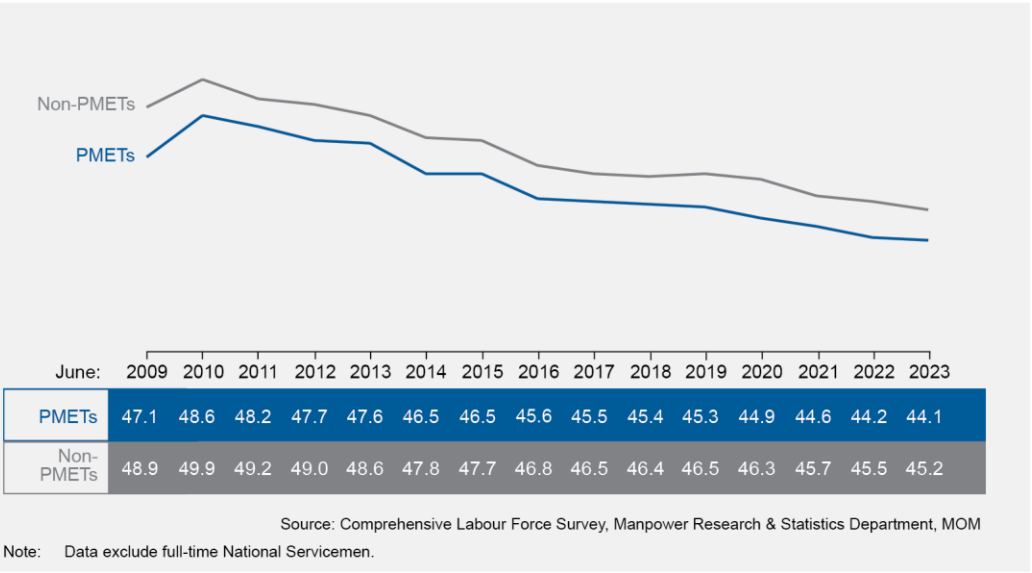
Both PMETs and non-PMETs working full-time saw a sustained decline in average usual hours worked over the decade

5.3 Among full-timers, the average weekly usual hours worked have trended down since 2013 for both PMETs (from 47.6 to 44.1) and non-PMETs (from 48.6 to 45.2). This decline was due to continued efforts to reduce excessive work hours[34] and raise productivity.[35] For PMETs, the reduction in work hours reflects efficiency gains through greater technology adoption and flexi-work arrangements such as tele-working. For non-PMETs, the decline reflects continuous efforts to redesign jobs, supported by initiatives such as WSG's Career Conversion Programme through Job Redesign Reskilling, the Support for Job Redesign under Productivity Solutions Grant, and the Progressive Wage Model (PWM).

5.4 With the advent of new technologies and the expansion of the PWM to upskill workers to perform higher-value tasks,[36] there is potential to further reduce work hours and improve productivity of non-PMETs. This includes those in roles such as drivers, private security officers, and waste management workers, in which working hours are longer.

Chart 50 Average (mean) usual hours worked per week of full-time employed residents by occupation

Hours Per Week



June:	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
PMETs	47.1	48.6	48.2	47.7	47.6	46.5	46.5	45.6	45.5	45.4	45.3	44.9	44.6	44.2	44.1
Non-PMETs	48.9	49.9	49.2	49.0	48.6	47.8	47.7	46.8	46.5	46.4	46.5	46.3	45.7	45.5	45.2

Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

[34] The percentage of full-time employed residents who usually worked more than 48 hours a week has declined, from 32.7% in 2013 to 17.3% in 2023. This decline could be attributed to collective initiatives to reduce work hours for sufficient rest and improved productivity. For instance, the tripartite Workplace Traffic Safety Management Guidelines, updated in 2021 from 2014, included recommendations to limit shifts to no more than 12 hours including overtime. The Tripartite Advisory on Mental Well-being at Workplaces introduced in 2020 also included recommendations to provide clarity on after-hours work communications, so that workers have adequate rest outside of work hours.

[35] Growth in productivity, measured using real value-added per worker, has picked up pace. Since the pandemic, it rose by 4.7% p.a. from 2020 to 2022, up from 1.3% p.a. from 2013 to 2020.

[36] For example, from September 2022, in-house employers are required to meet the PWM requirements for their in-house security officers, cleaning and landscaping workers. Drivers are covered under the occupational PW from March 2023, and waste management is a new sector covered under PWM from July 2023.

6 Income

Income growth has slowed

6.1 Nominal incomes continued to increase, but at a more moderate pace compared to most years in the last decade. The median (P50) gross monthly income from employment of full-time employed residents was $5,197 in 2023, a 2.5% increase from $5,070 in 2022. This increase was lower than the annualised average rate of increase (3.4% p.a.) from 2013 to 2023. At the 20th percentile (P20), income was $2,826 in 2023, a 1.7% increase from $2,779 in 2022. This was also lower than the 4.1% p.a. increase from 2013 to 2023.

Over the longer term, income at the 20th percentile continues to outpace the median, narrowing the income gap between P20 and the median

6.2 After adjusting for inflation,[37] real income at the median (-2.2%) and at the P20 (-3.0%) of full-time employed residents fell in 2023. With WIS and related payments included, real income at the P20 saw a smaller decline (-2.0%).[38] The decline in 2023 has dampened gains from 2018 to 2023 (0.5% p.a. at median; 1.1% p.a. at P20) compared to 2013 to 2018 (3.5% p.a. at median; 4.2% p.a. at P20).[39] However, over the longer-term, real income growth for the P20 worker still outpaced that of the median worker, due to measures to uplift lower-wage workers.[40] As a result, the gap in income between the P20 and P50 worker has narrowed.[41]

[37] The Consumer Price Index for all items increased by 4.8% in 2023, compared to 6.1% in 2022. Source: Singapore Department of Statistics.

[38] From 1 Jan 2023, there are enhancements to the WIS. There is a rise in the qualifying income cap for WIS, from $2,300/month to $2,500/month. Also, Workfare is extended to younger workers, aged 30 to 34.

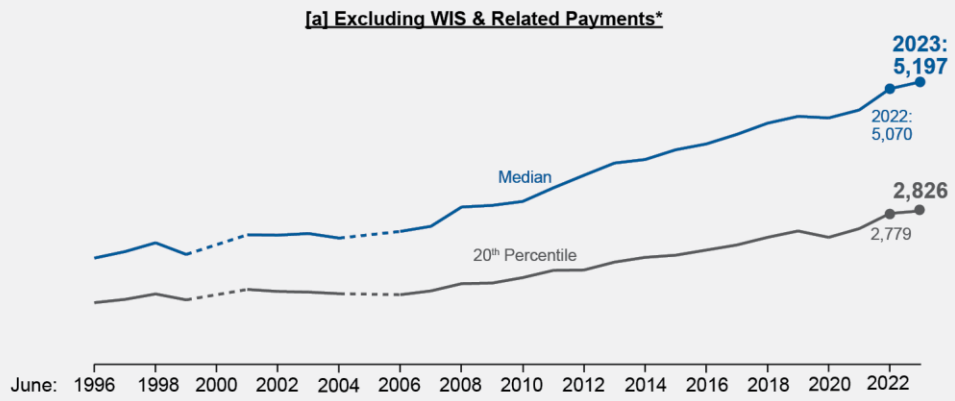
[39] After including WIS and related payments, real income at the P20 rose by 1.4% p.a. from 2018 to 2023, and by 3.9% p.a. from 2013 to 2018.

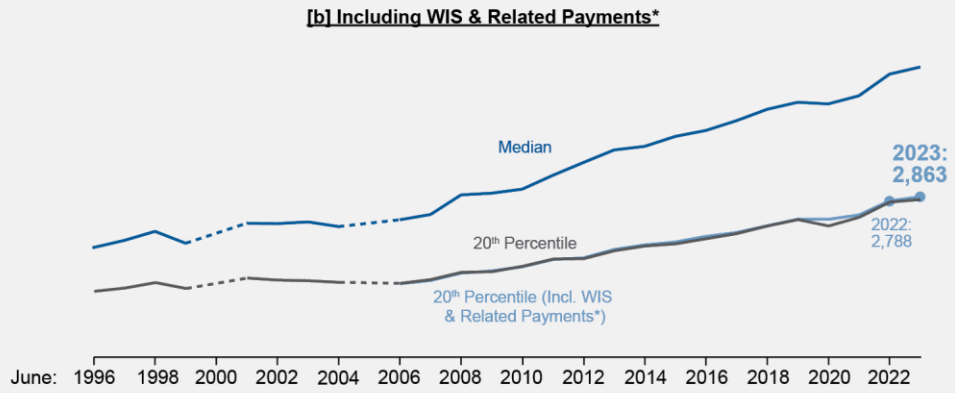
[40] These measures include the National Wage Council's recommendation of built-in wage increase for lower-wage workers and the Progressive Wage Model in the Cleaning, Landscaping, Security sectors, as well as PWM initiatives including the expansion of occupational PW and the increase in Local Qualifying Salary (LQS) requirement since 2022.

[41] This refers to the ratio of the 20th percentile income to the median income of full-time employed residents. The ratio has increased from 0.51 in 2013 to 0.54 in 2023.

Chart 51 Gross monthly income from employment (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed residents

Dollars





Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey and Administrative Records, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

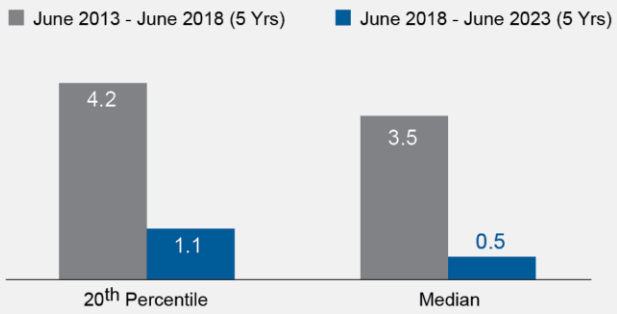
Notes: (1) * – Refers to Workfare Income Supplement (WIS), Workfare Special Payment (WSP), Workfare Bicentennial Bonus, Workfare Bonus and Workfare Special Bonus, which started from 2006.

(2) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

(3) The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2000 and 2005 due to the conduct of the Census of Population 2000 and General Household Survey 2005 by the Singapore Department of Statistics.

Chart 52 Annualised change in real* gross monthly income from employment (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed residents

Per Cent Per Annum



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

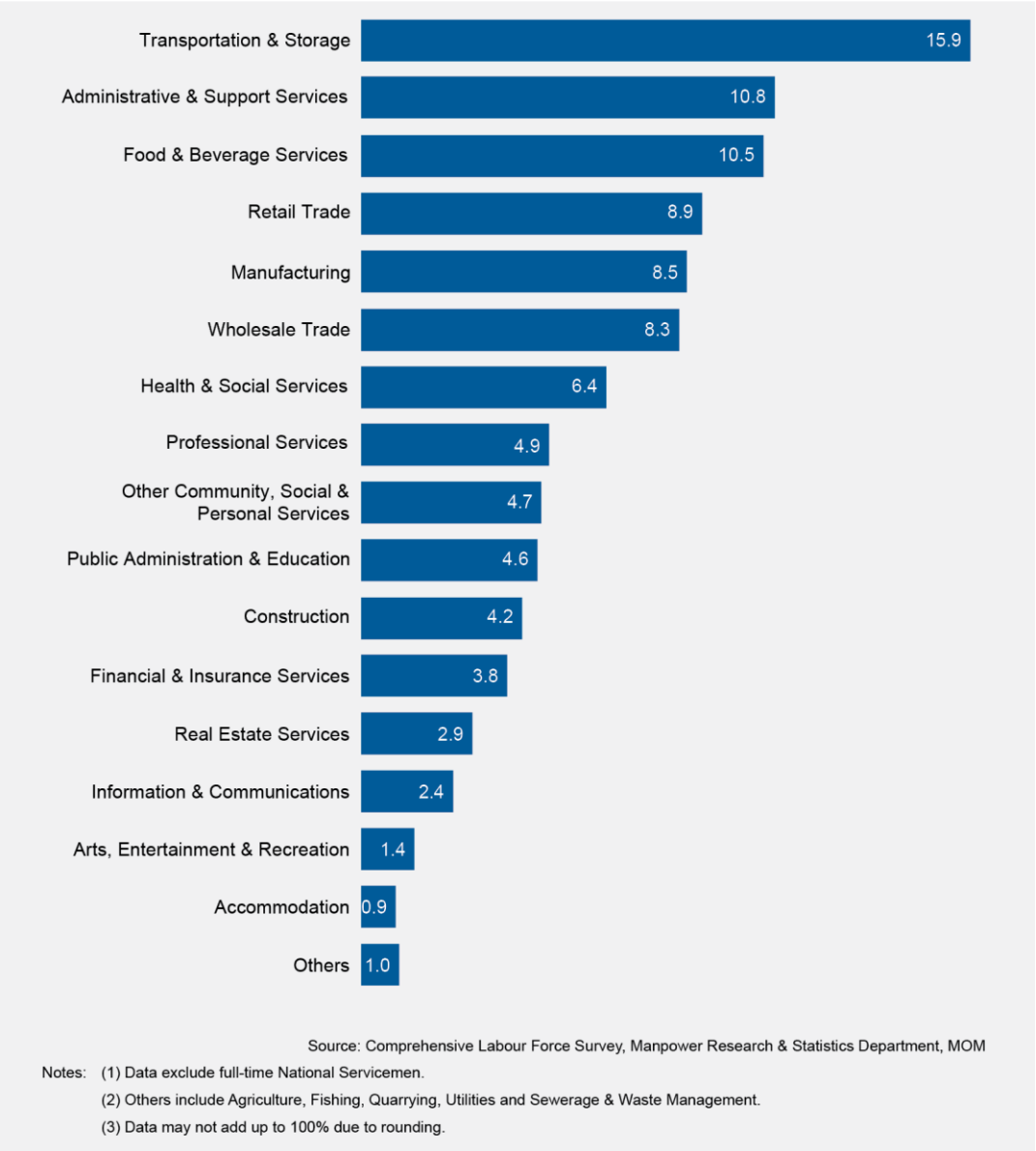
(2) * – Deflated by Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all items at 2019 prices (2019 = 100).

6.3 In 2023, there were 434,200 lower-wage workers,[42] of which about one in five (20.2%) were self-employed. This was higher than the percentage of self-employed among all full-time employed residents (11.1%), signalling the poorer income outcomes among self-employed persons.

6.4 *Transportation & Storage* (15.9%) (e.g. taxi drivers, private-hire car drivers) was the top industry that lower-wage workers were commonly employed in, in part due to the higher incidence of the self-employed among lower-wage workers. Other industries that lower-wage workers were commonly employed in include *Administrative & Support Services* (10.8%) (e.g. cleaners, security officers) and *Food & Beverage Services* (10.5%) (e.g. food & drink stall assistants, hawkers, waiters).

Chart 53 Distribution of full-time employed residents with gross monthly income from employment (excluding employer CPF contributions) at or below $2,500 by industry, 2023

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
(2) Others include Agriculture, Fishing, Quarrying, Utilities and Sewerage & Waste Management.
(3) Data may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

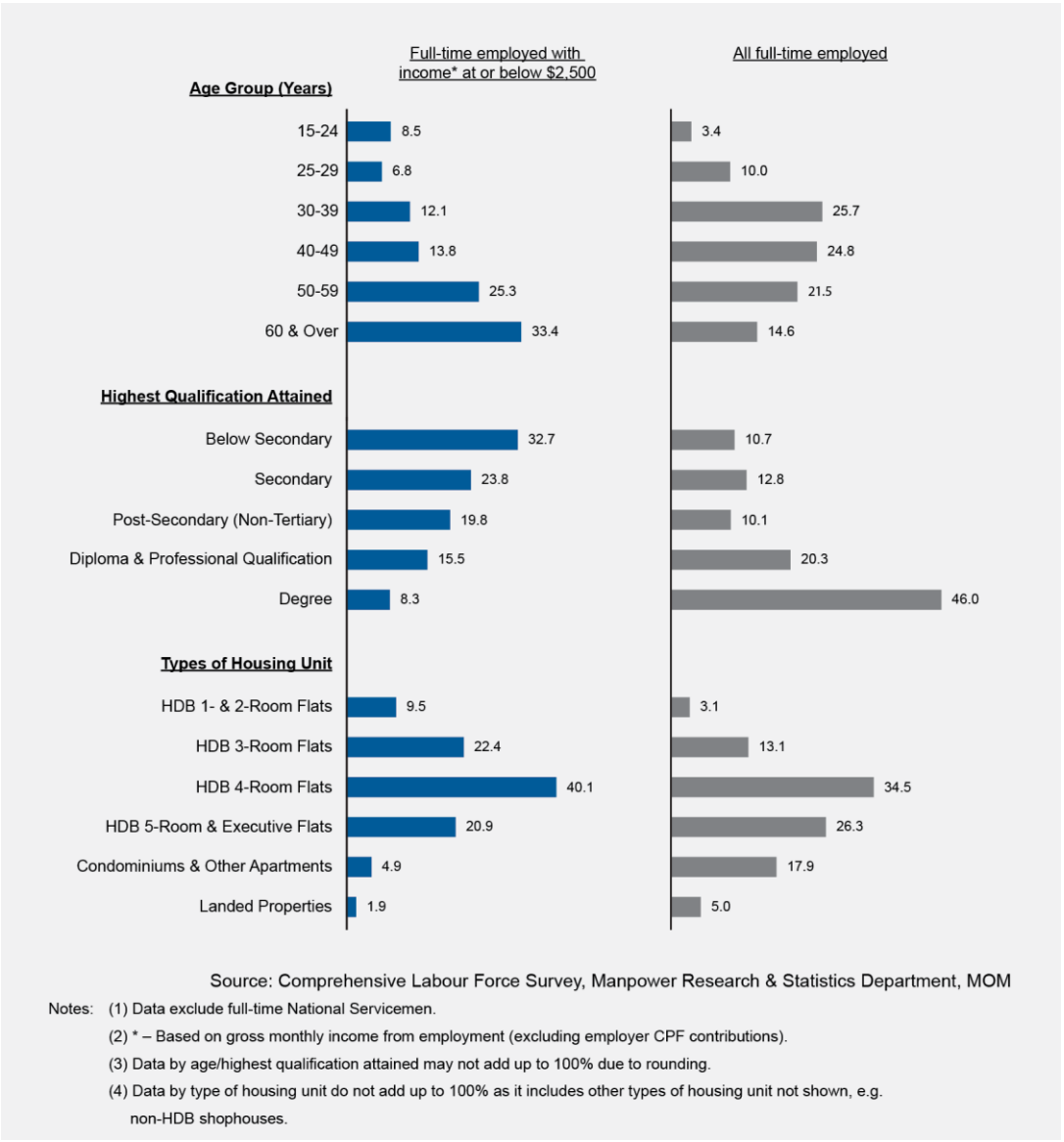
[42] Proxied by full-time employed residents earning less than or equal to the 20th percentile gross monthly income (excluding employer CPF contributions), which was $2,500 in 2023.

6.5 Lower-wage workers were mostly older (aged 50 and over) and less educated (with secondary and below qualifications). Lower-wage workers were also more likely to be older and less educated when compared to full-time employed residents. Focusing on reskilling and upskilling lower-wage workers will help them stay relevant to the needs of the labour market and uplift their wages.

6.6 A higher concentration of lower-wage workers were staying in HDB 1- to 4-room flats compared to their corresponding percentage among full-time employed residents. Besides WIS and related payments that help lower-wage workers meet their expenditure needs and save for retirement, Government assistance such as U-Save and Service & Conservancy Charges rebates also help cushion the impact of rising cost of living, with those residing in smaller HDB flats benefitting more.

Chart 54 Distribution of full-time employed residents by age group, highest qualification attained and type of housing unit, 2023

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
(2) * – Based on gross monthly income from employment (excluding employer CPF contributions).
(3) Data by age/highest qualification attained may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
(4) Data by type of housing unit do not add up to 100% as it includes other types of housing unit not shown, e.g. non-HDB shophouses.

7 Unemployment[43]

Unemployment rates improved for both PMETs and non-PMETs

7.1 The improvement in unemployment rate was observed for both PMETs and non-PMETs. Non-PMETs saw a larger decline in unemployment rate[44] (from 4.4% in 2022 to 3.6% in 2023) compared to PMETs (from 2.6% to 2.4%). Similarly, non-PMETs also experienced a bigger decline in their long-term unemployment rate (from 0.7% to 0.5%) compared to PMETs (0.5% to 0.4%). Unemployment among non-PMETs will likely stay low, as the recovery in inbound tourism gives support to the hiring of non-PMETs, particularly in sectors such as *Food & Beverage Services* and *Retail Trade*.

7.2 Among PMETs, most age groups experienced a decline in unemployment rates, except for those in their 40s. The higher unemployment rate for those in their 40s was due to more leaving their previous jobs due to work conditions.[45] For PMETs in their 40s, the rise in unemployment rates came from professionals, as well as the associate professionals & technicians. However, their unemployment is likely to be frictional in nature, as their long-term unemployment rate remained low.

7.3 Across age groups, unemployment rates among non-PMETs fell and their long-term unemployment rates also remained stable and low.

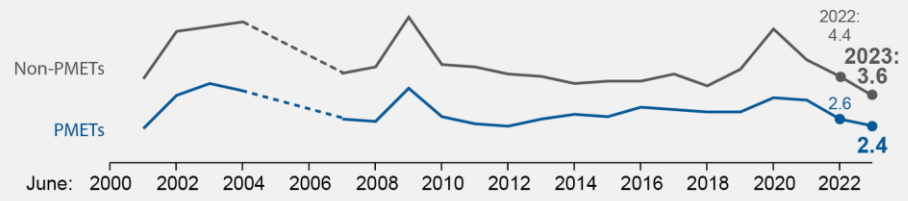
[43] Top-line seasonally adjusted unemployment rates are reported on a monthly basis, with breakdown by age and education available quarterly. With a larger sample size, the CLFS enables us to collect additional information of unemployment rates by occupation and industry. For analysis of unemployment trends at the top-line and by age and highest qualification attained, please refer to the Monthly Unemployment Situation and quarterly Labour Market Reports.

[44] The PMET and non-PMET unemployment rates are non-seasonally adjusted figures and refer to June periods. They should not be analysed alongside quarterly unemployment rates, which are adjusted for seasonality to facilitate quarter-on-quarter analysis.

[45] More unemployed PMETs in their 40s left their last job due to long working hours/demanding work.

Chart 55 Unemployment rate of resident PMETs and non-PMETs

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude unemployed residents without work experience and are non-seasonally adjusted. They should not be analysed alongside quarterly unemployment rates, which are adjusted for seasonality to facilitate quarter-on-quarter analysis.

(2) The unemployment rate by occupation is obtained by dividing the number of unemployed who previously worked in a given occupation by the sum of the number of workers employed in this occupation and the unemployed who previously worked in the occupation.

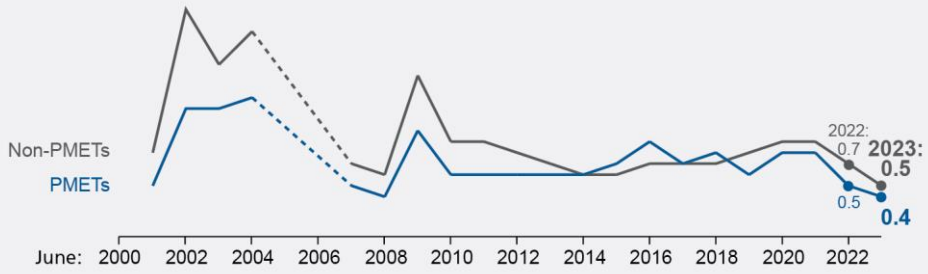
(3) Data are classified based on Singapore Standard Occupational Classification (SSOC) 2020. Data before year 2020 which were coded based on earlier versions of the SSOC were mapped to SSOC 2020 as far as possible to facilitate data comparability.

(4) The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2000 and 2005 due to the conduct of the Census of Population 2000 and General Household Survey 2005 by the Singapore Department of Statistics.

(5) Data for 2006 are not available, as the level of occupational detail collected in 2006 did not support mapping to the latest version of the SSOC.

Chart 56 Long-term unemployment rate of resident PMETs and non-PMETs

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude unemployed residents without work experience and are non-seasonally adjusted. They should not be analysed alongside quarterly long-term unemployment rates, which are adjusted for seasonality to facilitate quarter-on-quarter analysis.

(2) The long-term unemployment rate by occupation is obtained by dividing the number of long-term unemployed who previously worked in a given occupation by the sum of the number of workers employed in this occupation and the unemployed who previously worked in the occupation.

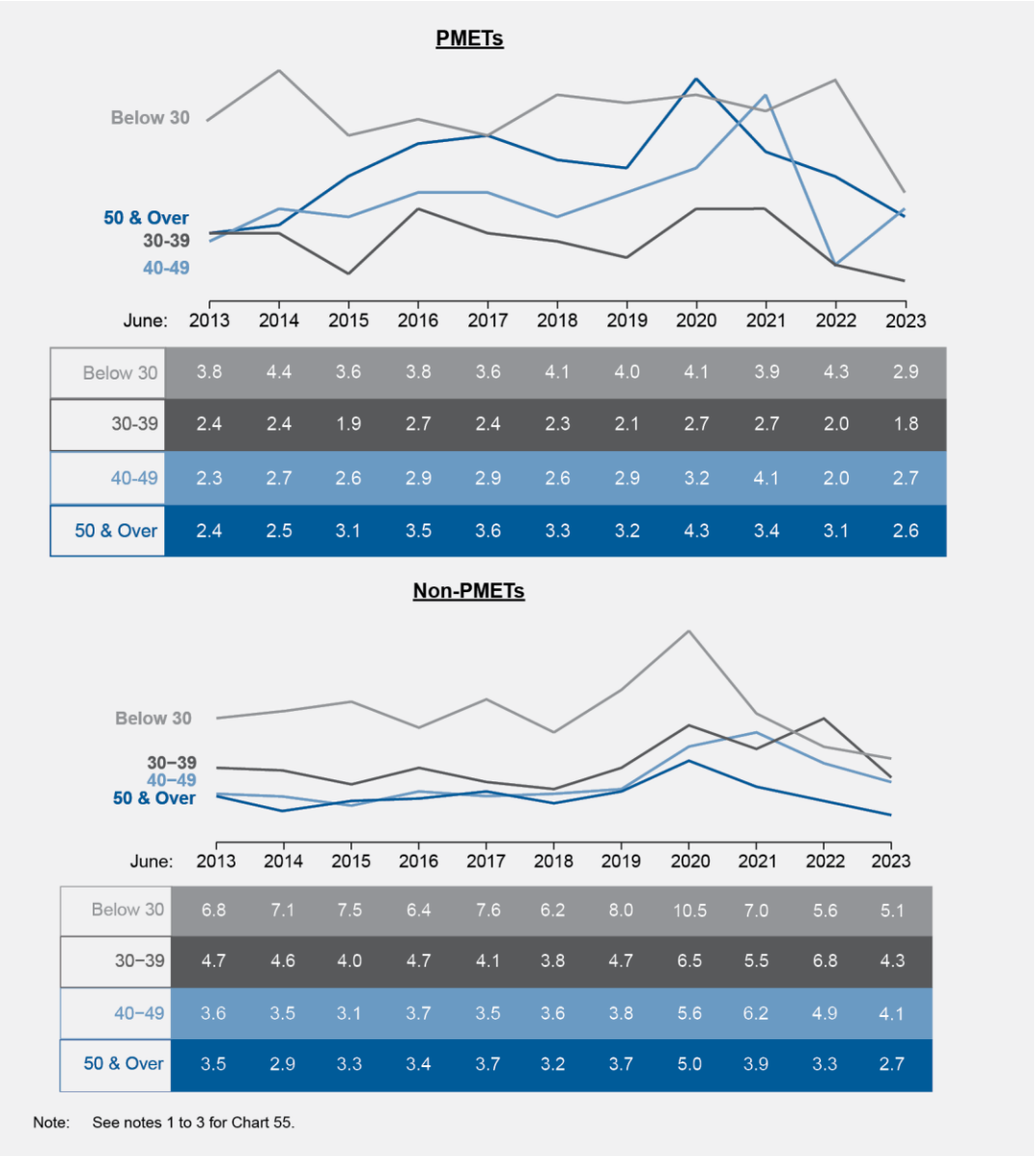
(3) Data are classified based on Singapore Standard Occupational Classification (SSOC) 2020. Data before year 2020 which were coded based on earlier versions of the SSOC were mapped to SSOC 2020 as far as possible to facilitate data comparability.

(4) The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2000 and 2005 due to the conduct of the Census of Population 2000 and General Household Survey 2005 by the Singapore Department of Statistics.

(5) Data for 2006 are not available, as the level of occupational detail collected in 2006 did not support mapping to the latest version of the SSOC.

Chart 57 Unemployment rate of resident PMETs and non-PMETs by age

Per Cent



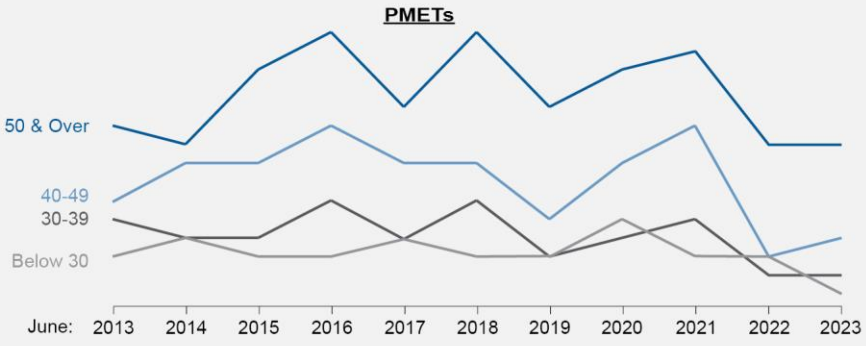
PMETs	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Below 30	3.8	4.4	3.6	3.8	3.6	4.1	4.0	4.1	3.9	4.3	2.9
30-39	2.4	2.4	1.9	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.1	2.7	2.7	2.0	1.8
40-49	2.3	2.7	2.6	2.9	2.9	2.6	2.9	3.2	4.1	2.0	2.7
50 & Over	2.4	2.5	3.1	3.5	3.6	3.3	3.2	4.3	3.4	3.1	2.6

Non-PMETs	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Below 30	6.8	7.1	7.5	6.4	7.6	6.2	8.0	10.5	7.0	5.6	5.1
30–39	4.7	4.6	4.0	4.7	4.1	3.8	4.7	6.5	5.5	6.8	4.3
40–49	3.6	3.5	3.1	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.8	5.6	6.2	4.9	4.1
50 & Over	3.5	2.9	3.3	3.4	3.7	3.2	3.7	5.0	3.9	3.3	2.7

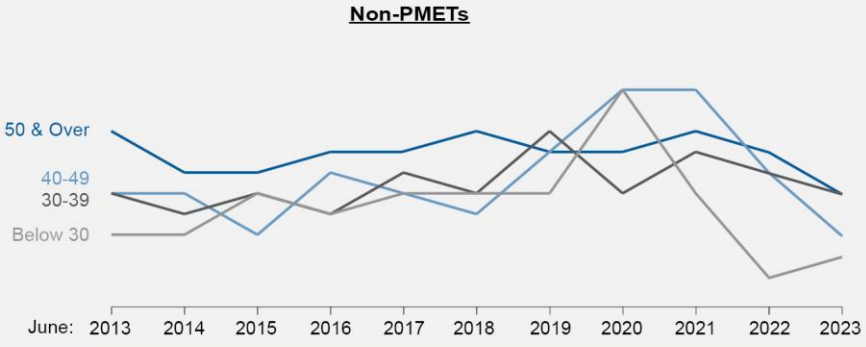
Note: See notes 1 to 3 for Chart 55.

Chart 58 Long-term unemployment rate of resident PMETs and non-PMETs by age

Per Cent



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Below 30	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.1
30-39	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.2
40-49	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.8	1.0	0.3	0.4
50 & Over	1.0	0.9	1.3	1.5	1.1	1.5	1.1	1.3	1.4	0.9	0.9



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Below 30	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.1	0.6	0.2	0.3
30-39	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.6
40-49	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.8	1.1	1.1	0.7	0.4
50 & Over	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.6

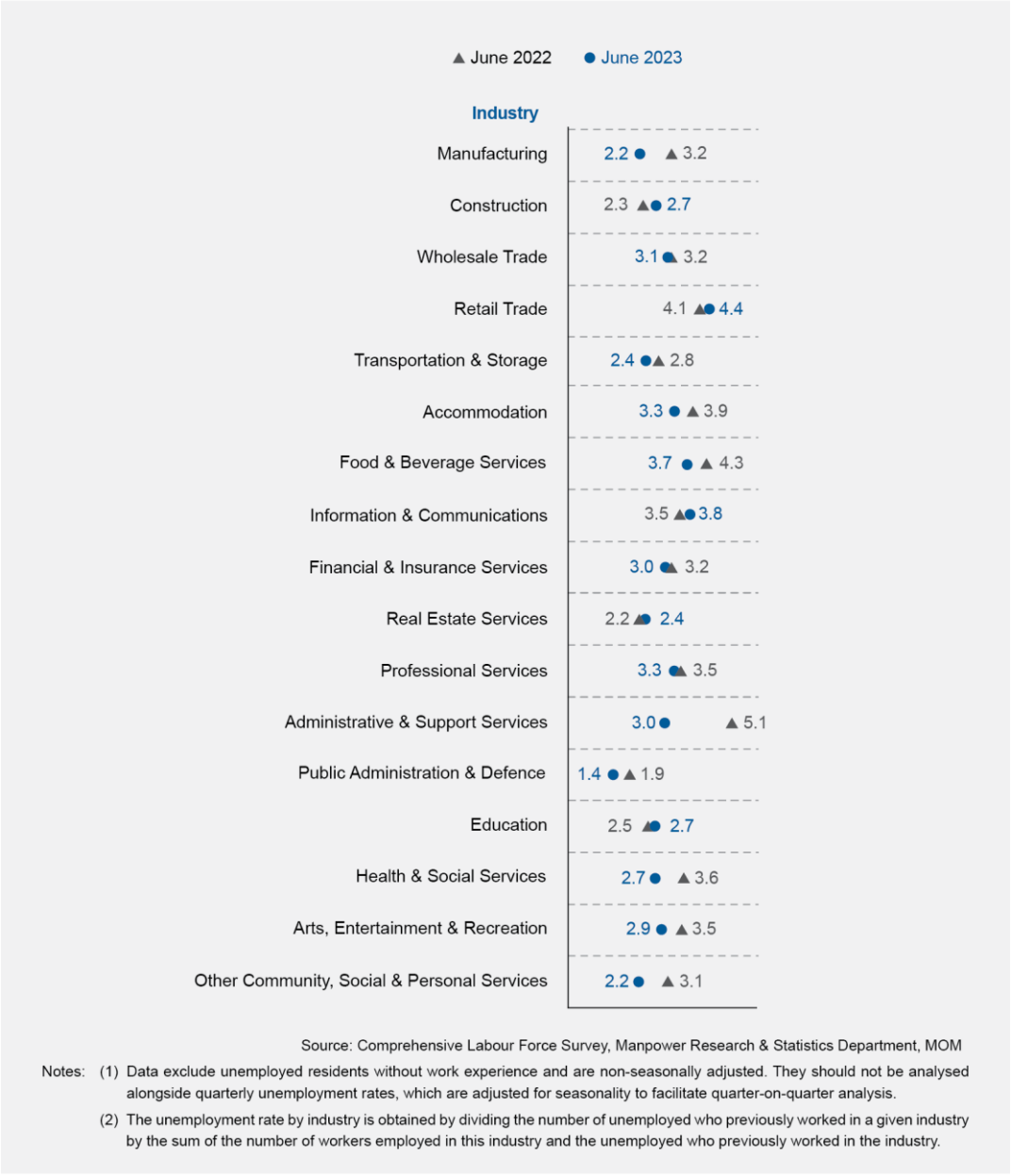
Note: See notes 1 to 3 for Chart 56.

7.4 The decline in unemployment rates was generally broad-based across industries. The key exceptions were *Retail Trade,* and *Information & Communications* which had experienced heightened retrenchments since the second half of 2022.

7.5 The long-term unemployment rates, after declining to pre-COVID range, remained low across industries.

Chart 59 Resident unemployment rate by industry

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude unemployed residents without work experience and are non-seasonally adjusted. They should not be analysed alongside quarterly unemployment rates, which are adjusted for seasonality to facilitate quarter-on-quarter analysis.

(2) The unemployment rate by industry is obtained by dividing the number of unemployed who previously worked in a given industry by the sum of the number of workers employed in this industry and the unemployed who previously worked in the industry.

Chart 60 Resident long-term unemployment rate by industry

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude unemployed residents without work experience and are non-seasonally adjusted. They should not be analysed alongside quarterly long-term unemployment rates, which are adjusted for seasonality to facilitate quarter-on-quarter analysis.

(2) The long-term unemployment rate by industry is obtained by dividing the number of long-term unemployed who previously worked in a given industry by the sum of the number of workers employed in this industry and the unemployed who previously worked in the industry.

7.6 Most people leave to seek another job for voluntary reasons. When the labour market was tight in 2022, more unemployed were encouraged to quit when they were dissatisfied with their *relationship with colleagues/bosses*, *pay* or *disinterested with their job.* The share of unemployed who cited these reasons has since declined in 2023. There was an increase in the unemployed who had left their last job for *further studies or on course*, as more could be seeking a new job upon completion of their education or training. Some left their jobs because they felt an *underutilisation of skills and qualifications* or *poor career prospects*. However, they made up a small percentage of the unemployed compared to those who had left their jobs due to *long working hours/demanding work* and *housework/care of children, elderly, or sick relatives*. These suggest that compared to perceived job stagnation, a more common factor for voluntary unemployment was the need for self-care and family care.

7.7 The unemployed could also leave their job involuntarily due to a termination of employment by the employer and a cessation of business.[46] *Retrenchment* was the top reason why unemployed residents, mostly PMETs, left their last job involuntarily in 2023. This follows the recent rise in retrenchments.[47] As there was a fall in other forms of involuntary unemployment (e.g. *cessation of business*), the involuntary unemployment rate among residents held steady over the year at 0.8% in 2023. This remained lower than the pre-COVID level of 1.1% in 2019.[48]

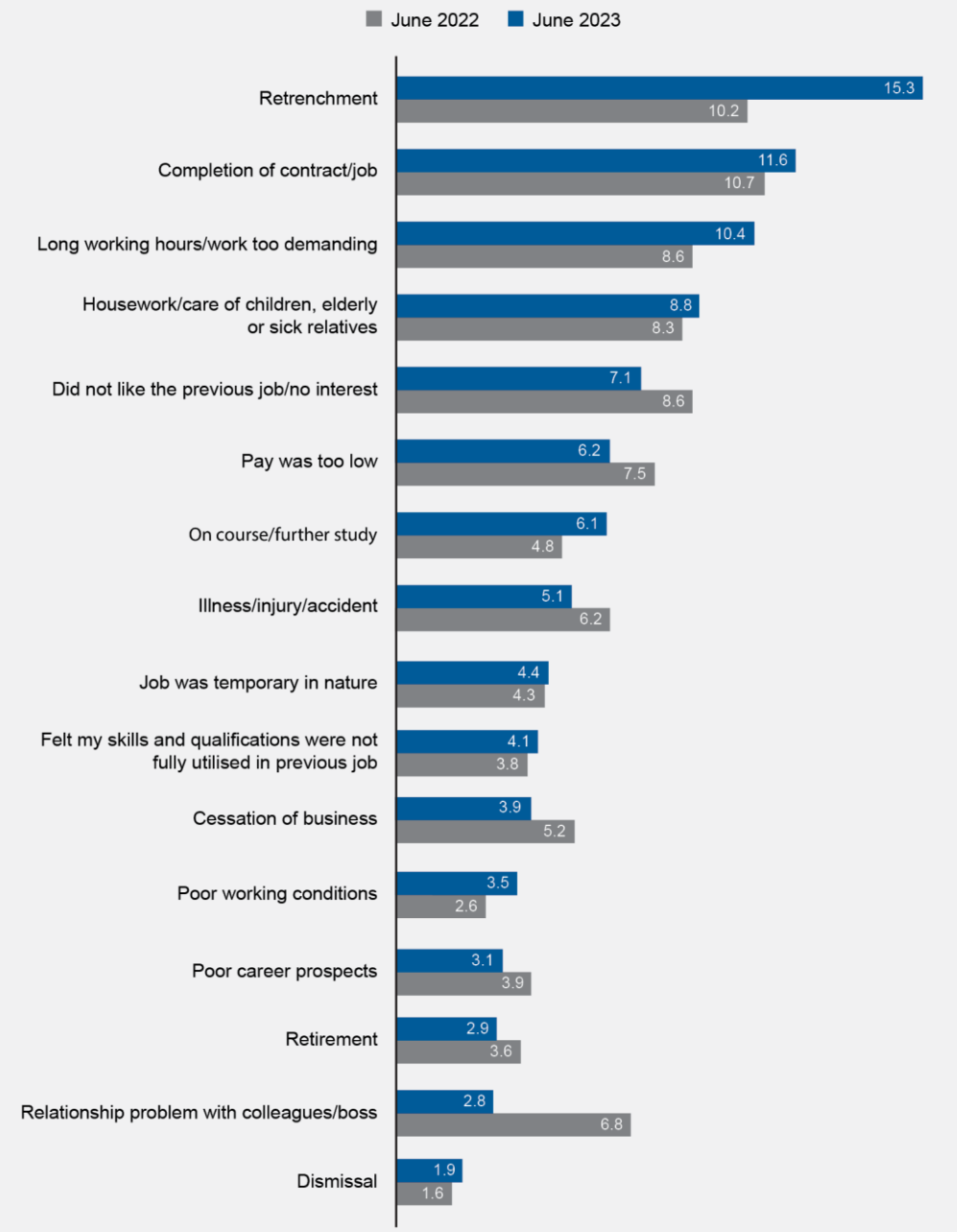
[46] The involuntary reasons for unemployment includes retrenchment, temporary layoff without pay, cessation of business, dismissal, non-renewal or loss of temporary job and termination due to illness/injury/accident.

[47] Source: Labour Market Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM.

[48] The involuntary unemployment rate refers to the unemployed residents who left their jobs involuntarily, expressed as a percentage of the resident labour force. Data exclude unemployed residents without work experience and are non-seasonally adjusted. They should not be analysed alongside quarterly unemployment rates, which are adjusted for seasonality to facilitate quarter-on-quarter analysis.

Chart 61 Main reason for leaving last job among unemployed residents

Per Cent



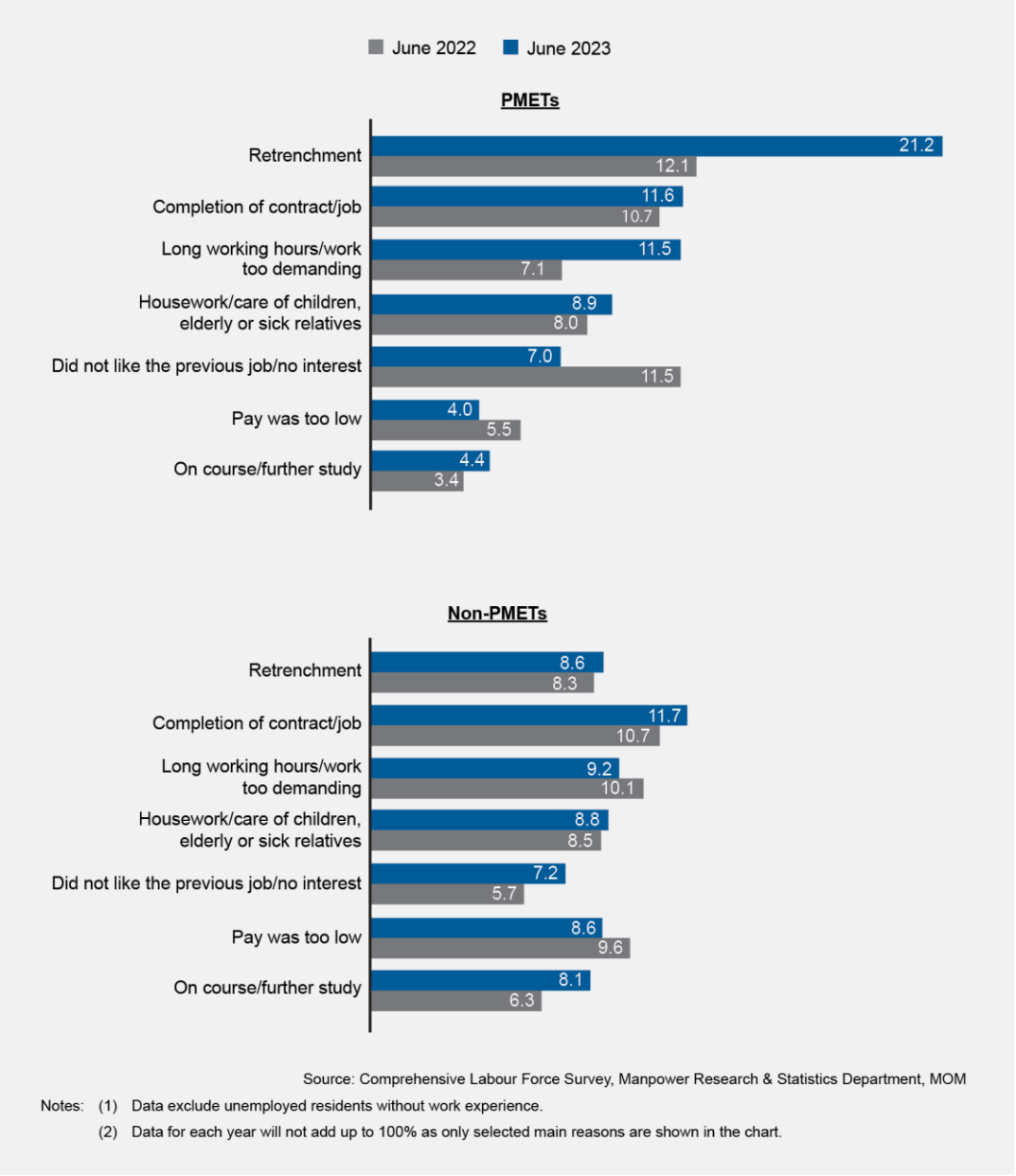
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude unemployed residents without work experience.

(2) Data for each year will not add up to 100% as other reasons with smaller numbers are not shown here (but available in the Statistical Tables).

Chart 62 Selected main reasons for leaving last job among unemployed resident PMETs and non-PMETs

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Data exclude unemployed residents without work experience.

(2) Data for each year will not add up to 100% as only selected main reasons are shown in the chart.

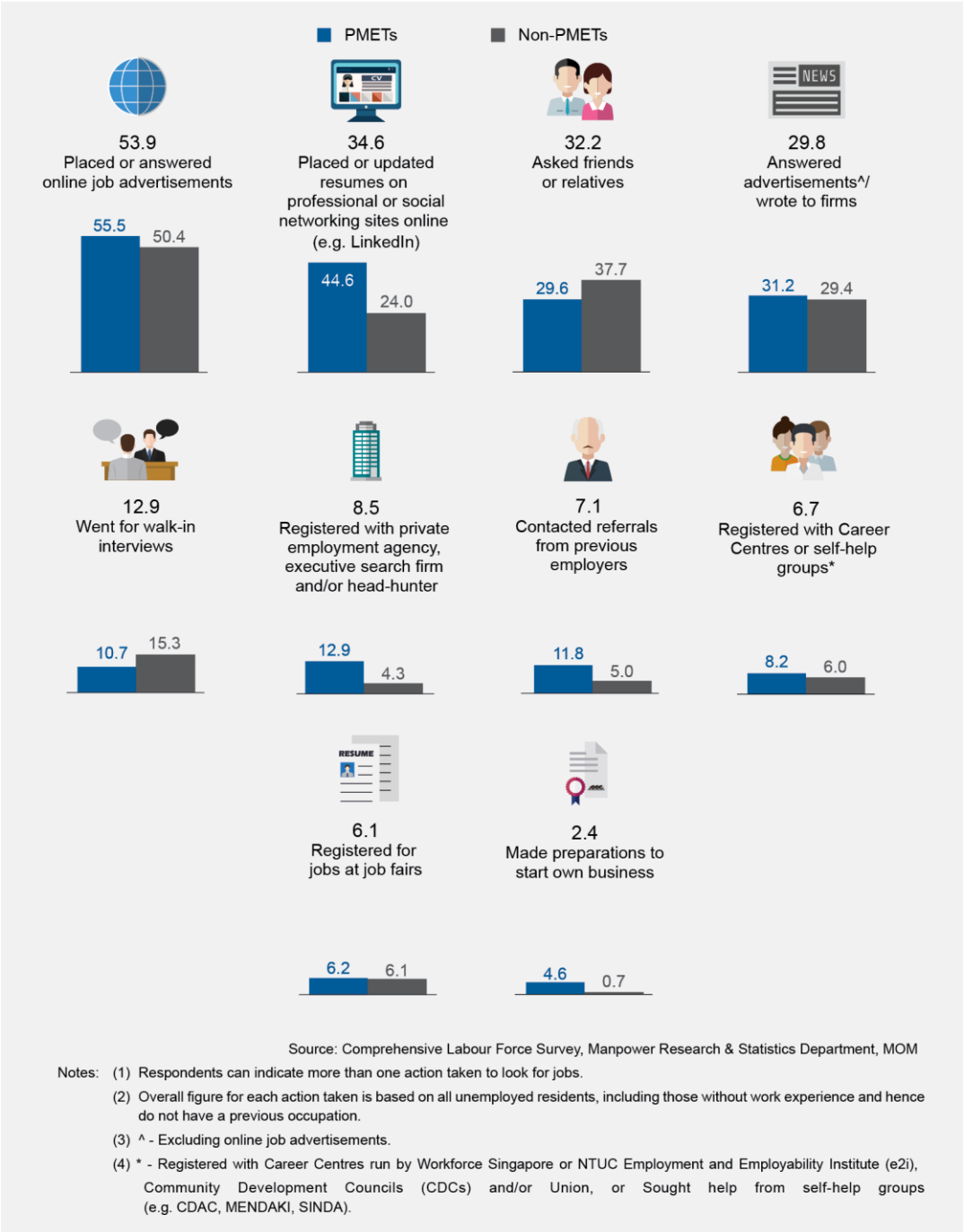
Majority of unemployed used digital means for job search

7.8 Most unemployed residents searched for jobs digitally. Placing/answering online job advertisements (53.9%) remained the most common job search mode for unemployed residents, followed by placing/updating resumes on professional/social networking sites (34.6%).

7.9 Traditional job search methods, such as asking friends/relatives or attending walk-in interviews, were still more common modes of job search among non-PMETs compared to PMETs. While non-PMETs were less likely than PMETs to search for jobs digitally, there was a rise in the share of non-PMETs who tapped on online job advertisements (from 40.6% in 2018 to 50.4% in 2023) and professional/social networking sites (from 14.8% to 24.0%).

Chart 63 Unemployed residents by modes of job search and previous occupation, 2023

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Respondents can indicate more than one action taken to look for jobs.

(2) Overall figure for each action taken is based on all unemployed residents, including those without work experience and hence do not have a previous occupation.

(3) ^ - Excluding online job advertisements.

(4) * - Registered with Career Centres run by Workforce Singapore or NTUC Employment and Employability Institute (e2i), Community Development Councils (CDCs) and/or Union, or Sought help from self-help groups (e.g. CDAC, MENDAKI, SINDA).

8 Persons Outside the Labour Force

Increase in residents outside the labour force as fewer students took on temporary jobs

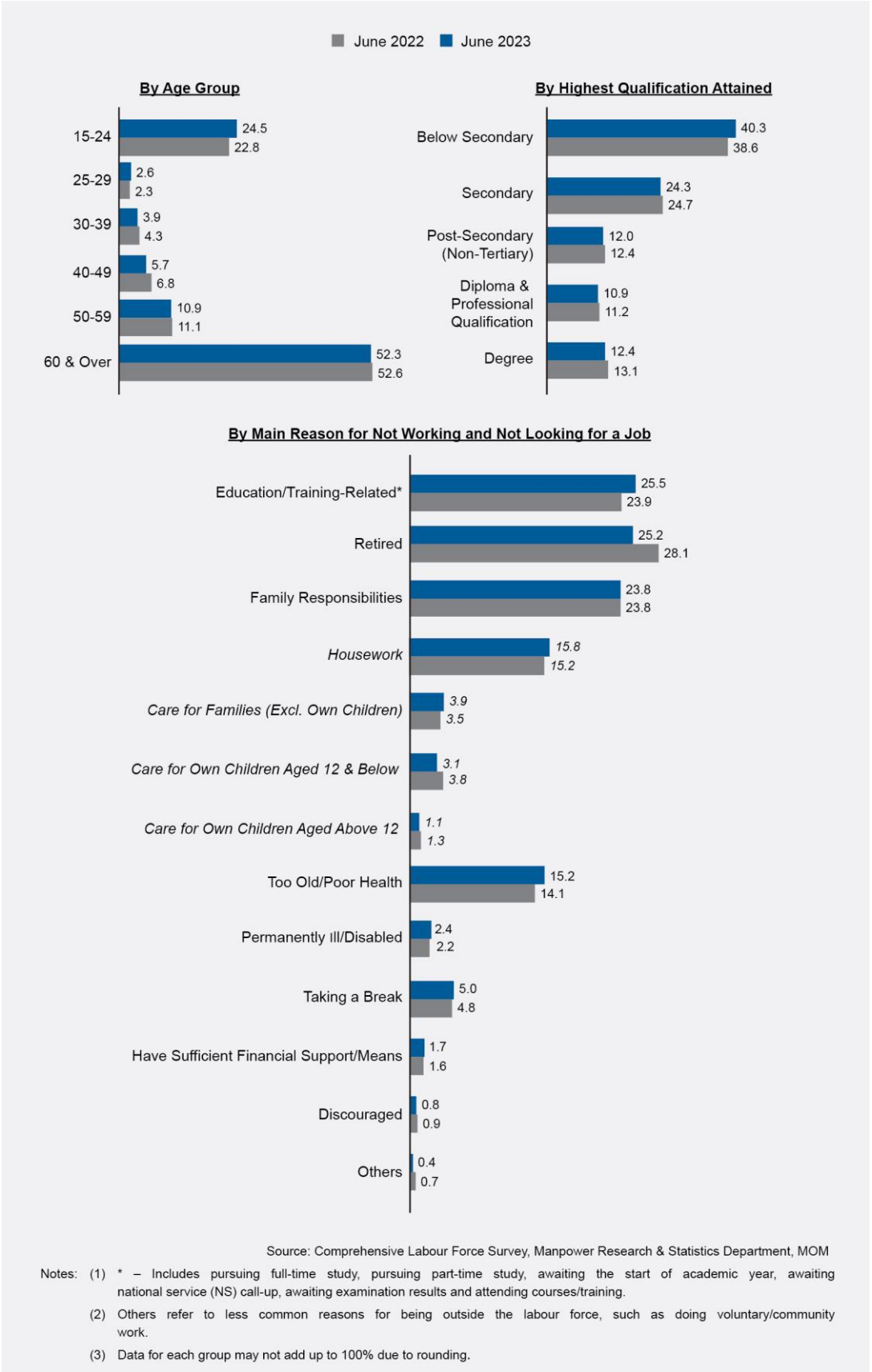
8.1 There were 1.12 million residents who were outside the labour force in 2023, an increase from 1.05 million in 2022. This rise was mainly due to fewer students taking on temporary jobs.

8.2 The share of youths aged 15 to 24 among residents outside the labour force increased from 22.8% in 2022 to 24.5% in 2023, but was lower than the pre-pandemic share (27.3% in 2019). With fewer youths taking up temporary work, those pursuing education/training among residents outside the labour force also increased from 23.9% in 2022 to 25.5% in 2023.

8.3 Housework and caregiving remained common reasons for being outside the labour force, but the share has held steady over the year at 23.8% in 2023, after declining from 27.6% in 2018. The decrease is helped by more women participating in the labour force. With flexible work arrangements becoming more prevalent after the pandemic, this may have helped more caregivers fulfil responsibilities both at home and at work. While the share of retirees among those outside the labour force has declined from 28.1% in 2022 to 25.2% in 2023, it is expected to increase over time with an ageing population.

Chart 64 Profile of residents outside the labour force

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) * – Includes pursuing full-time study, pursuing part-time study, awaiting the start of academic year, awaiting national service (NS) call-up, awaiting examination results and attending courses/training.

(2) Others refer to less common reasons for being outside the labour force, such as doing voluntary/community work.

(3) Data for each group may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

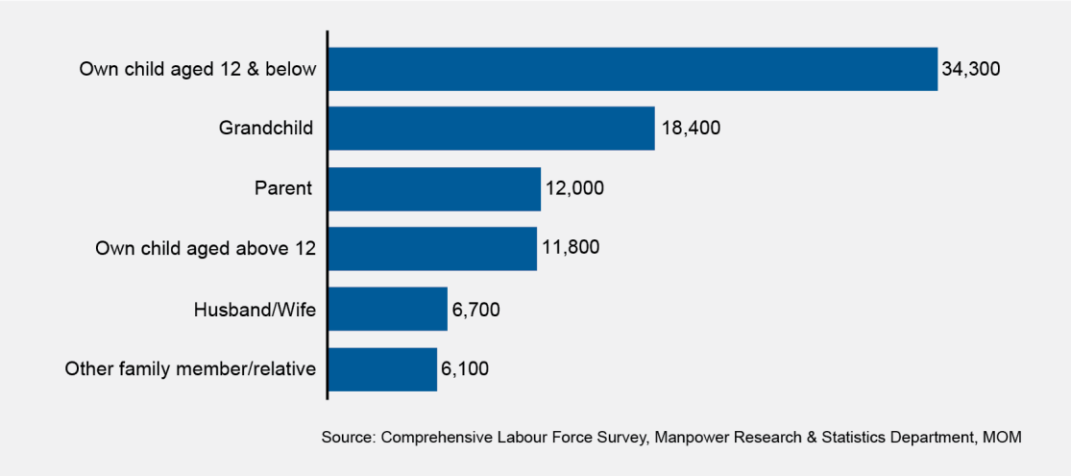
8.4 In 2023, the number and share of residents outside the labour force who were not working mainly due to caregiving responsibilities fell from 90,300 (8.6%) to 89,500 (8.0%) in 2023. Most caregiving responsibilities were for taking care of children, be it their own or their grandchild, the bulk (34,300) of which were for their young child aged 12 and below.

8.5 Other than taking care of children, caregivers outside the labour force were commonly looking after their parents (12,000). Nearly all their parents were either aged (in their 80s or over), ill, or disabled parents (92.2%). These caregivers tend to be in their 50s and of single marital status.[49] Retirement adequacy may become an issue for them, and they may require additional community and financial support especially in their later years.

8.6 A large majority of caregivers (92.8%) were outside the labour force as they preferred to personally provide the caregiving needs. As such, availability of flexible work arrangements and practices[50] which provides a more supportive and inclusive workplace would allow them to work whilst fulfilling their caregiving responsibilities.

Chart 65 Residents outside the labour force mainly due to caregiving by relationship of care recipient to caregiver, 2023

Number



[49] Of the residents who were outside the labour force mainly due to caregiving responsibilities to their parents, 44.7% were aged 50 to 59, and 47.6% were singles. These were higher than their share among all residents outside the labour force (10.9% and 33.4% respectively), as well as their share among the resident population aged 15 and over (17.7% and 29.7% respectively).

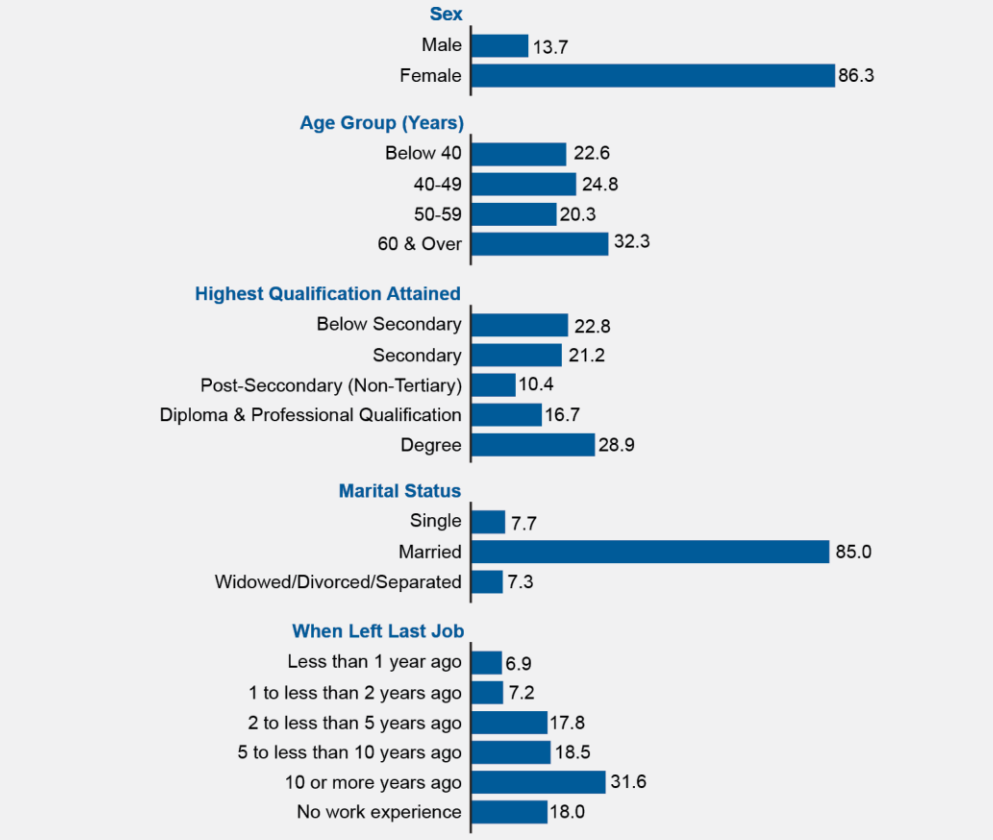
[50] This includes the Tripartite Standard on Flexible Work Arrangements (TS-FWA), Tripartite Standard on Work-Life Harmony and Tripartite Standard on Unpaid Leave for Unexpected Care Needs. Tripartite partners have convened a new workgroup to develop Tripartite Guidelines on FWAs by 2024.

8.7 Caregivers who were outside the labour force were mainly females (86.3%) or those in their 50s and over (52.6%). Those in the 40s also made up a sizeable share (24.8%). Among those in their 40s, the caregivers were mostly females who were looking after their own child (79.8%).

8.8 Resident caregivers outside the labour force tend to have dated[51] or no work experience (49.6%). Should they decide to return to the labour force, they could tap on available government support such as career guidance and training services for skills upgrading. The proportion of caregivers who had left the workforce in the recent year fell in 2023 (from 8.9% in 2022 to 6.9%). The fall could reflect the greater adoption of flexible work arrangements, which helped more workers to continue working whilst fulfilling their family responsibilities.

Chart 66 Profile of residents outside the labour force who are not working mainly due to caregiving, 2023

Per Cent



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

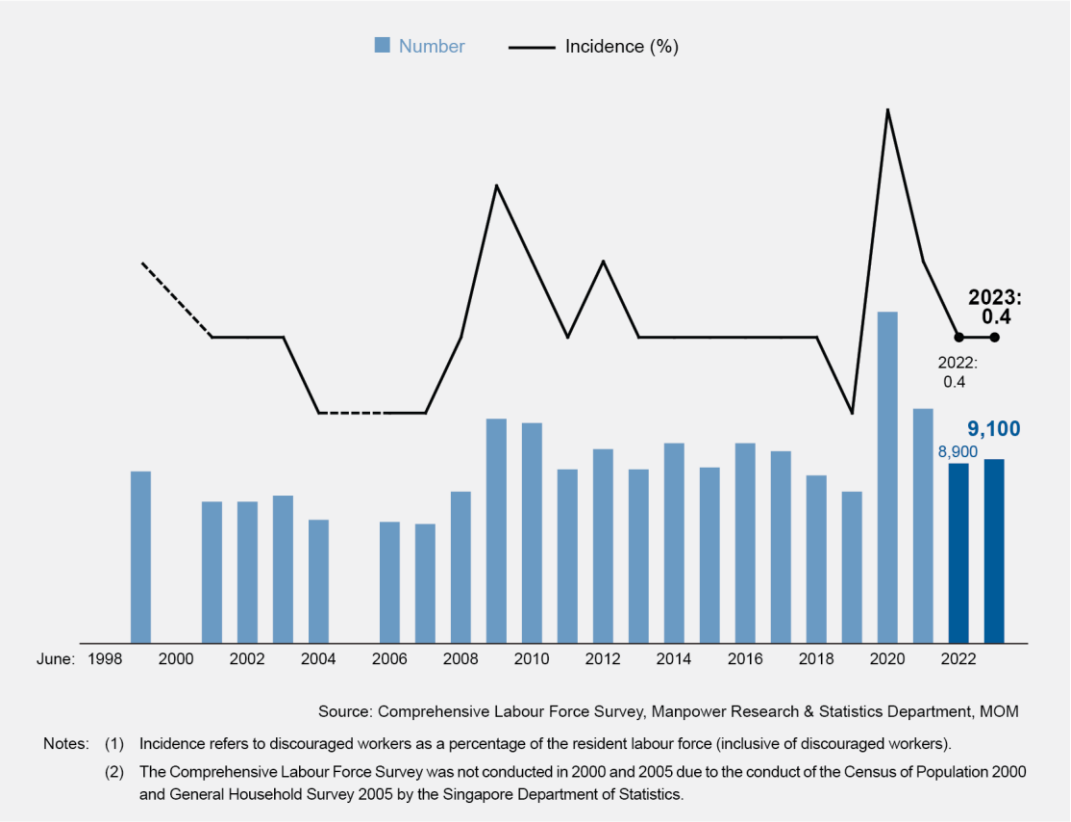
Note: Data for each characteristic may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

[51] This refers to residents outside the labour force who have left their last job 10 or more years ago.

Incidence of discouraged workers remained low

8.9 The incidence of discouraged workers, i.e. those not looking for work because they feel their job search will not yield results, remained low at 0.4% in 2023. The number of discouraged workers in 2023 (9,100) was broadly unchanged compared to 2022 (8,900).

Chart 67 Residents discouraged from seeking work



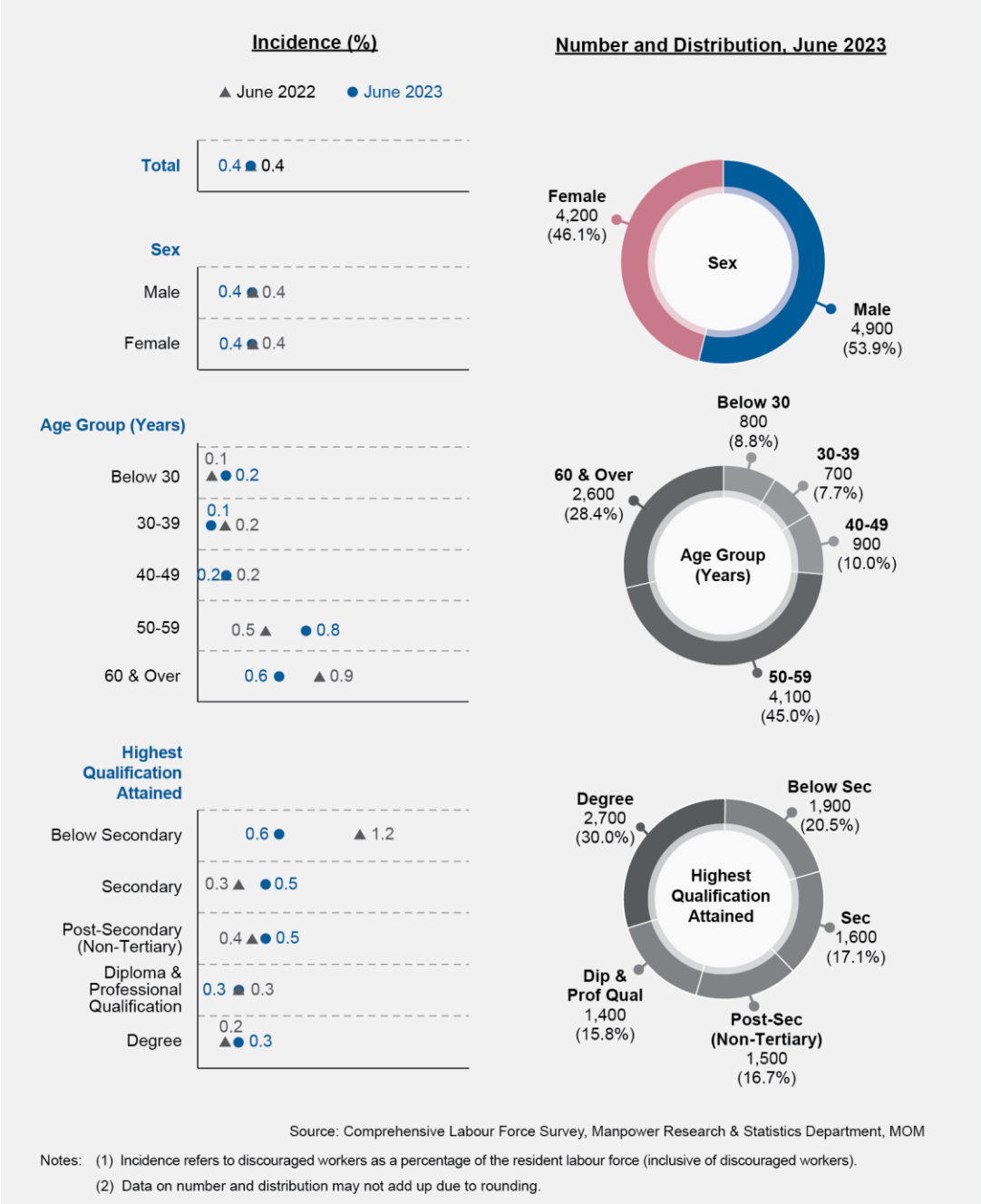
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Incidence refers to discouraged workers as a percentage of the resident labour force (inclusive of discouraged workers).

(2) The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2000 and 2005 due to the conduct of the Census of Population 2000 and General Household Survey 2005 by the Singapore Department of Statistics.

8.10 Most discouraged workers were in their 50s (45.0% of all discouraged workers) followed by those aged 60 and over (28.4%). There was an increase in the incidence of discouraged workers among those in their 50s, from 0.5% in 2022 to 0.8% in 2023. They were mainly tertiary-educated, and had left their last job for at least two years. For other age groups, the incidence of discouraged workers has remained low and stable (for those aged below 50) or has improved (for those aged 60 and over).

Chart 68 Profile of residents discouraged from seeking work



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) Incidence refers to discouraged workers as a percentage of the resident labour force (inclusive of discouraged workers).
(2) Data on number and distribution may not add up due to rounding.

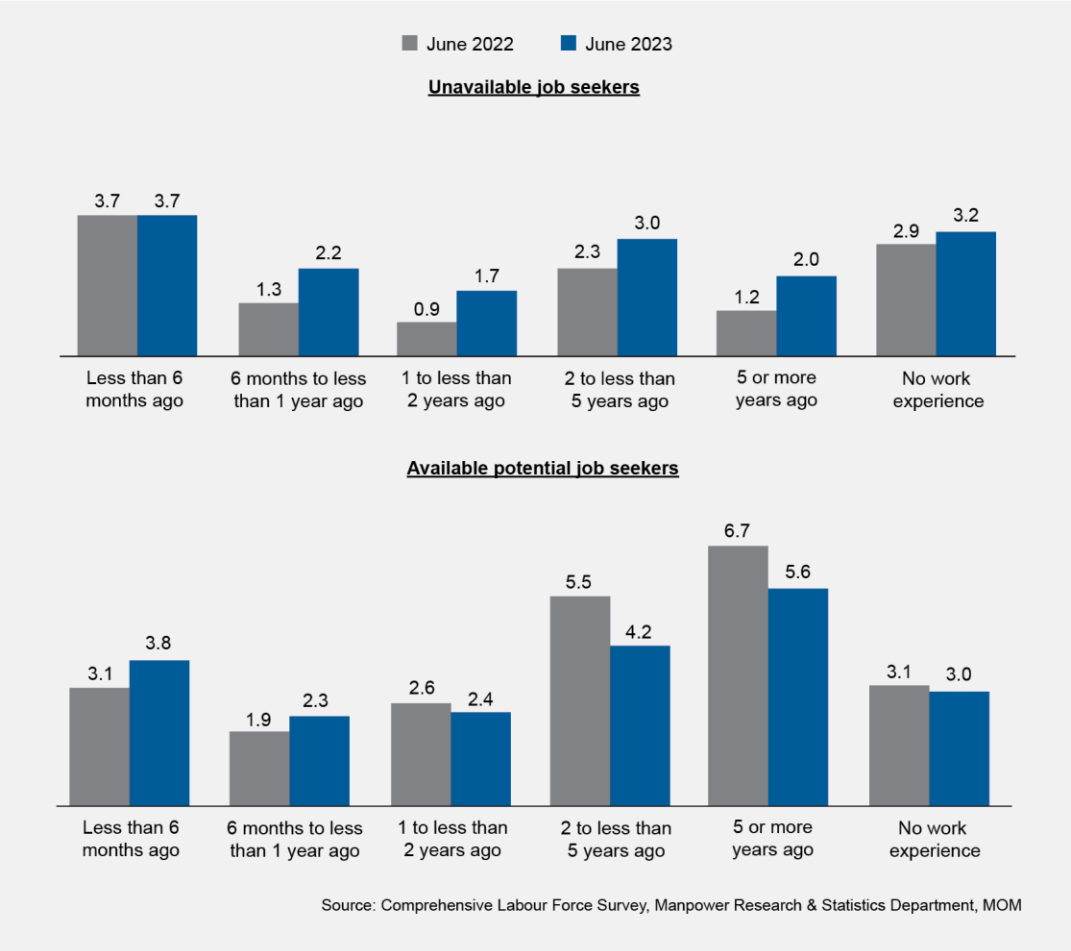
Residents outside the labour force with relatively stronger labour market attachment remained a small minority

8.11 The ILO has developed two indicators to identify residents outside the labour force with relatively stronger labour market attachment. These are persons who may not be immediately looking or available for work, but are nonetheless a pool who can augment the labour force in the near term. They are "*unavailable job seekers"* – those who are actively looking for work but are currently not available for work as yet, and "*available potential job seekers"* – those who are not actively looking for jobs but want to and available to work.

8.12 The number of residents outside the labour force with relatively stronger labour market attachment (37,200 or 3.3%) remained a small minority. However, the number of *"unavailable job seekers"* has increased from 12,300 (1.2% of residents outside the labour force) in 2022 to 15,900 (1.4%) in 2023. More indicated that they were taking a break (from 4,300 to 5,800) and taking care of their family (from 2,100 to 3,400). This is a positive sign as it means that they are still seeking work and their unavailability for work is likely temporary.

Chart 69 Unavailable job seekers and available potential job seekers by when left last job

Number ('000)

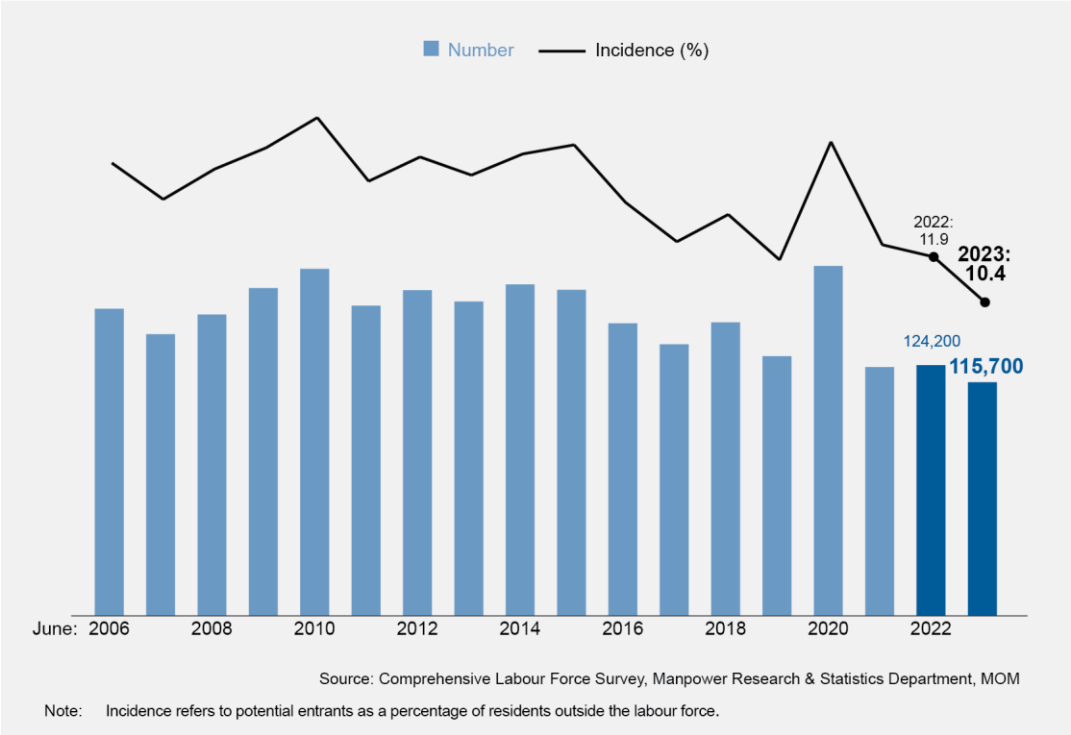


Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

The share of potential entrants continued its downtrend

8.13 Reflecting the tight labour market, the number and incidence of potential entrants, i.e. residents who intended to look for jobs within the next two years, continued its downtrend, decreasing from 124,200 or 11.9% of residents outside the labour force in 2022 to 115,700 or 10.4% in 2023. With the population ageing, there comes with it a growing pool of older residents who are less likely to want to look for work in the future compared to their younger counterparts. This means that the downtrend in potential entrants is expected to continue.

Chart 70 Resident potential entrants into the labour force



Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Incidence refers to potential entrants as a percentage of residents outside the labour force.

8.14 The decrease in the incidence of potential entrants among those outside the labour force was broad-based. In general, the incidence of potential entrants was higher among those younger and better educated.