LABOUR FORCE IN SINGAPORE 2021

1. Introduction

1.1 An advance release for this report was released in December 2021. This final report presents more detailed findings from the Comprehensive Labour Force Survey (CLFS).[1] Unlike the Monthly Labour Force Surveys, the CLFS is run annually with a larger sample, longer survey duration, and measuring a wider range of labour market indicators. The report also includes insights on own account workers and training from the Labour Force Supplementary Surveys.

2. Labour Force

Broad-based increase in employment rates

2.1 After declining in 2020, the employment rate for residents aged 15 & over increased significantly from 64.5% in 2020 to 67.2% in 2021. This reflected the economic recovery and measures such as the SGUnited Jobs and Skills Package, Jobs Support Scheme and Jobs Growth Incentive.

2.2 The improvement was broad-based. Among residents aged 25 to 64, employment rate rose from 80.3% to 81.8%. This reflected increases in employment rate among men (from 87.9% to 88.9%) and women (from 73.2% to 75.1%).

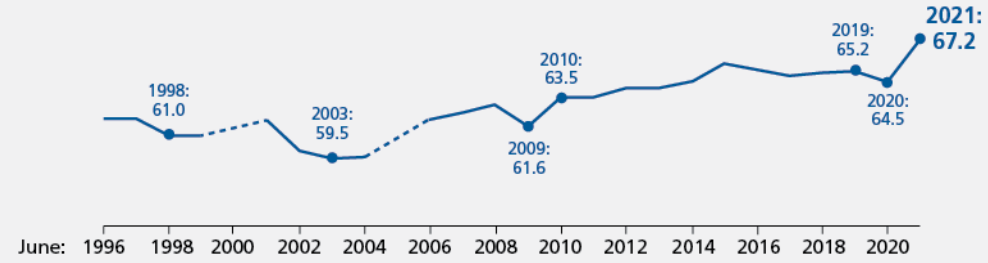
2.3 Sustained efforts to raise the employability of seniors continue to yield results. The employment rate of seniors aged 65 & over rose in 2020 despite the recession. In 2021, it continued to increase at a faster pace (from 28.5% to 31.7%).

2.4 Youths (aged 15 to 24) have relatively lower employment rate than residents aged 25 to 64, as the majority of youths in Singapore are in education or training. The employment rate of youths rose from 30.9% in 2020 to 37.2% in 2021. This was mainly due to more students taking on part-time or temporary work on the sides.

[1] Data in this report are for June periods and pertain to residents (comprising Singapore citizens and permanent residents) aged 15 & over, unless stated otherwise.

Chart 1 Employment rate of residents aged 15 and over

Per Cent

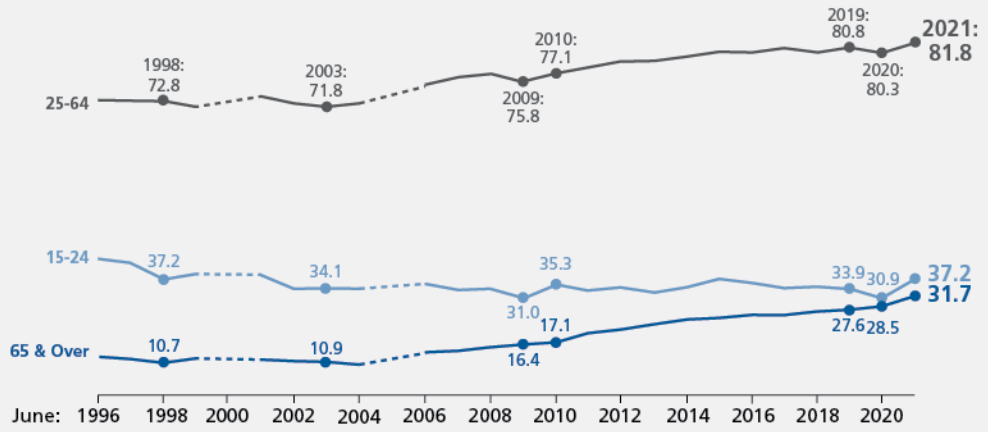


Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

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 Department of Statistics.

Chart 2 Resident employment rate by age

Per Cent

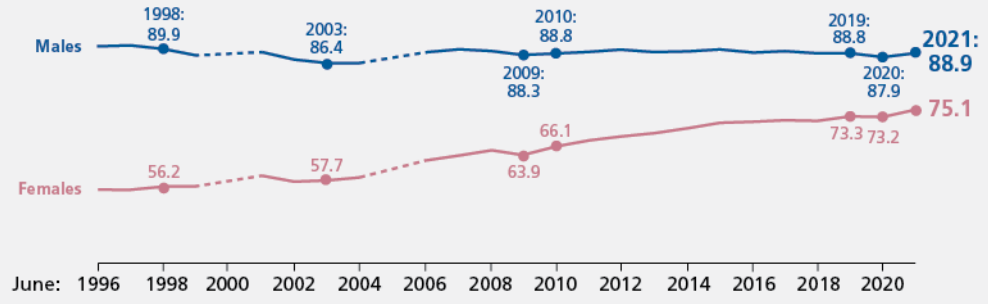


Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

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 Department of Statistics.

Chart 3 Employment rate of residents aged 25 to 64 by sex

Per Cent



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

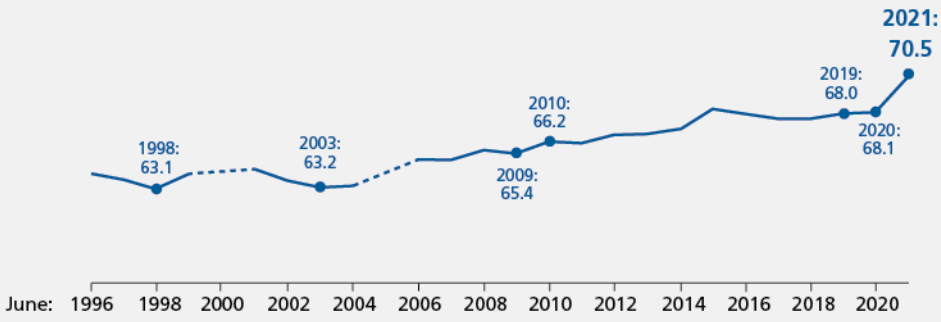
Note: The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2000 and 2005 due to the conduct of the Census of Population 2000 and General Household Survey 2005 by the Department of Statistics.

Labour force participation rate rose at a faster pace in 2021

2.5 The improvement in employment rates was largely due to a rise in labour force participation rate. Labour force participation rate for residents aged 15 & over rose at a faster pace in 2021, from 68.1% in 2020 to 70.5% in 2021. The increase was broad-based across broad age groups and gender.

Chart 4 Labour force participation rate of residents aged 15 and over

Per Cent



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

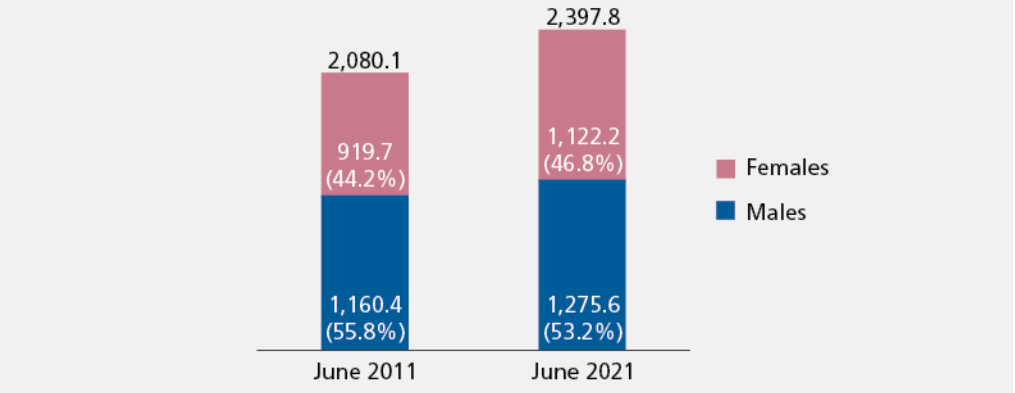
Note: The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2000 and 2005 due to the conduct of the Census of Population 2000 and General Household Survey 2005 by the Department of Statistics.

Share of females in the labour force rose

2.6 As labour force participation rate for females trended up while that for males remained high and broadly stable, the share of females in the resident labour force increased from 44% in 2011 to 47% in 2021. This was also higher than a year ago (46%), as labour force participation rate rose faster for women (+3.0%-points) than men (+1.8%-point) over the year.

Chart 5 Resident labour force by sex

Number ('000)



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

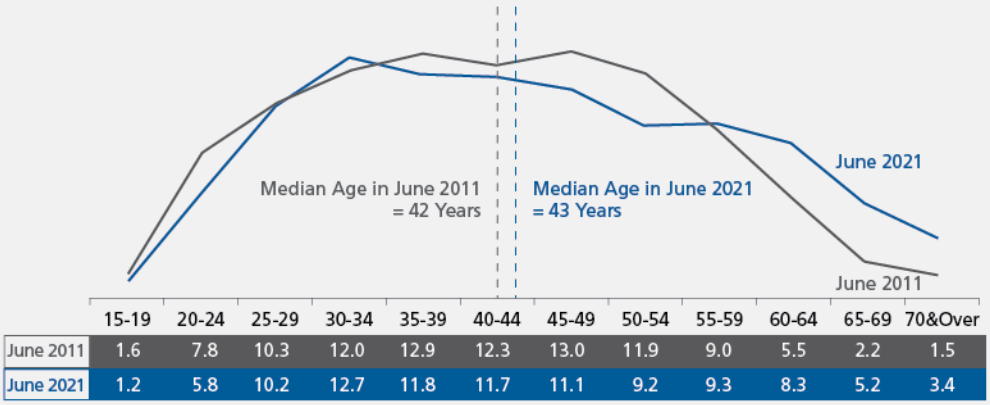
Note: Data may not add up due to rounding.

Share of seniors in the labour force continued to rise

2.7 Reflecting population ageing[2] and the significant increase in their labour force participation rate, the share of seniors aged 55 & over in the resident labour force continued to rise from 18% in 2011 to 26% in 2021. While labour force participation rate also rose among residents in the prime working-ages of 25 to 54, their share of the resident labour force decreased from 72% to 67% due to lower birth rates and post-war baby boomers moving into senior ages.[3] Nevertheless, they still formed the majority in the resident labour force.

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 2011	1.6	7.8	10.3	12.0	12.9	12.3	13.0	11.9	9.0	5.5	2.2	1.5
June 2021	1.2	5.8	10.2	12.7	11.8	11.7	11.1	9.2	9.3	8.3	5.2	3.4

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

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

2.8 *Wholesale Trade*, *Food & Beverage Services*, *Land Transport & Supporting Services*, *Retail Trade*, *Construction* and *Cleaning & Landscaping* had among the highest number of senior workers aged 55 & over, reflecting the above-average incidence of seniors in their workforce. Other than *Wholesale Trade*, jobs in these industries commonly require workers to be physically present at the workplace.

[2] The share of residents aged 55 & over in the working-age population (aged 15 & over) increased from 26% in 2011 to 36% in 2021. Source: Singapore Department of Statistics.

[3] The share of residents aged 25 to 54 in the working-age population decreased from 58% in 2011 to 51% in 2021. Source: Singapore Department of Statistics.

Chart 7 Top industries among employed residents aged 55 and over, June 2021

Number



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

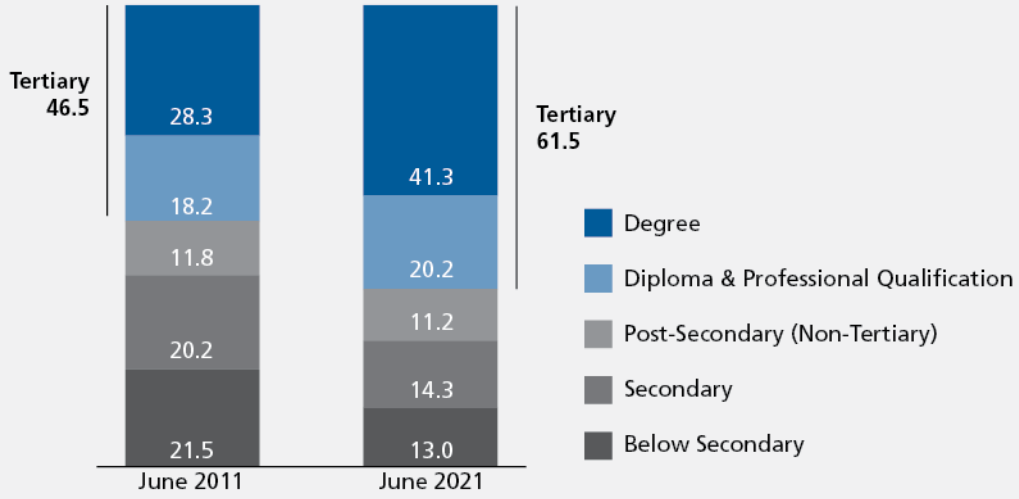
Note: Incidence refers to the number of employed residents aged 55 & over as a percentage of all employed residents in the same industry.

Degree graduates made up an increasing share of the labour force

2.9 With more opportunities to pursue higher education over the years, the share of resident labour force with degree qualifications rose significantly from 28% in 2011 to 41% in 2021. Including diploma & professional qualification holders, collectively around six in ten (61%) residents in the labour force in 2021 were tertiary graduates.

Chart 8 Resident labour force by highest qualification attained

Per Cent



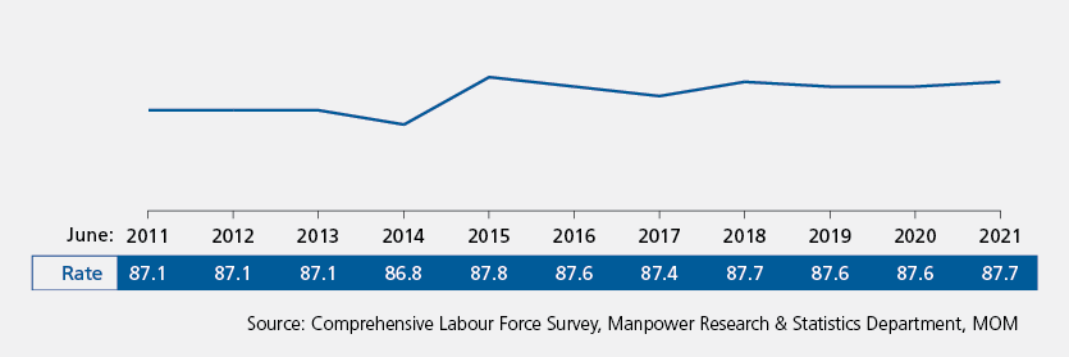
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

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

2.10 As degree holders mostly work in sectors that were less impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic,[4] their employment rate stayed high. The employment rate of degree holders aged 25 to 64 edged up to 87.7% in 2021, after remaining unchanged at the height of the pandemic in 2020.

Chart 9 Employment rate of resident degree holders aged 25 to 64

Per Cent



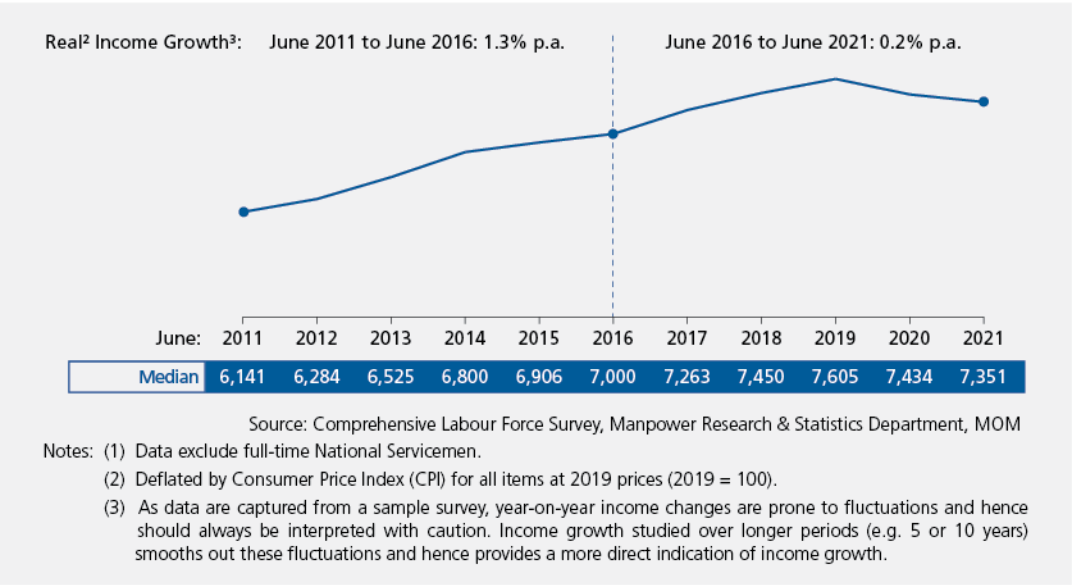
June:	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Rate	87.1	87.1	87.1	86.8	87.8	87.6	87.4	87.7	87.6	87.6	87.7

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

2.11 However, median income of full-time employed degree holders fell, pulled down by lower bonuses amid the more uncertain economic climate. This had a larger impact on degree holders as they are concentrated in higher-income groups, where a larger share of income came from bonuses. Reflecting the decrease in the recent two years and higher inflation in 2021, median income for full-time employed degree holders only grew slightly in real terms in the recent five years.

Chart 10 Median gross monthly income from work (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed resident degree holders

Dollars



June:	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Median	6,141	6,284	6,525	6,800	6,906	7,000	7,263	7,450	7,605	7,434	7,351

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).
(3) As data are captured from a sample survey, year-on-year income changes are prone to fluctuations and hence should always be interpreted with caution. Income growth studied over longer periods (e.g. 5 or 10 years) smooths out these fluctuations and hence provides a more direct indication of income growth.

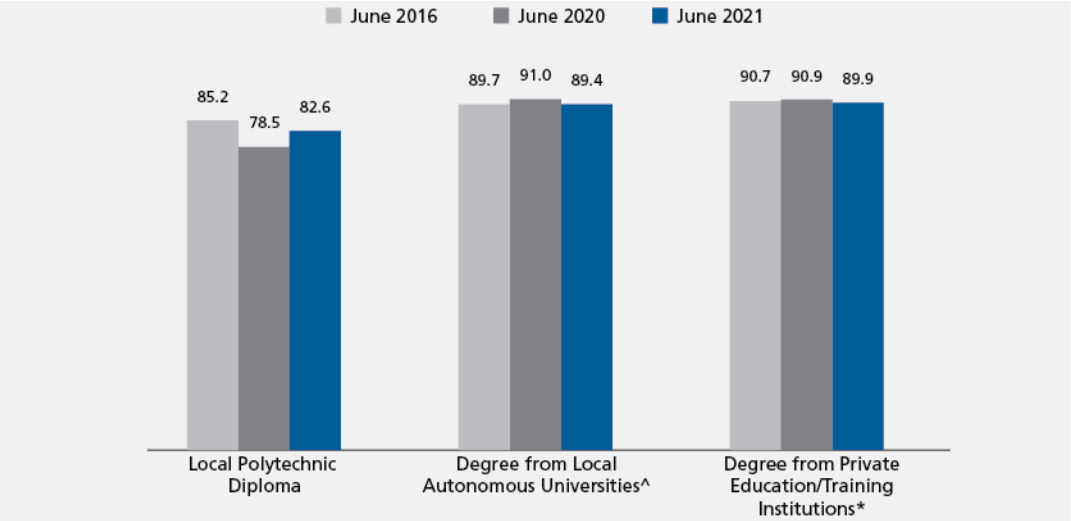
2.12 The employment rate among young local polytechnic diploma holders aged 25 to 29 rebounded in 2021. However, this was lower than for the cohort five years ago in 2016 as more young diploma holders stayed outside the labour force to pursue education. Employment rate among young degree holders from both local autonomous universities and private education institutions held up well at close to 90%, though they were slightly lower than a year ago as more were outside the labour force

[4] Degree holders commonly work in the modern services industries namely *Financial & Insurance Services*, *Professional Services* and *Information & Communications*, and also in *Public Administration & Education*.

to pursue further education. The median incomes for young graduates fared less well, as more of them were in shorter term contract of a year or less and bonuses decreased amid economic uncertainties.

Chart 11 Employment rate of residents aged 25 to 29 from local tertiary institutions

Per Cent



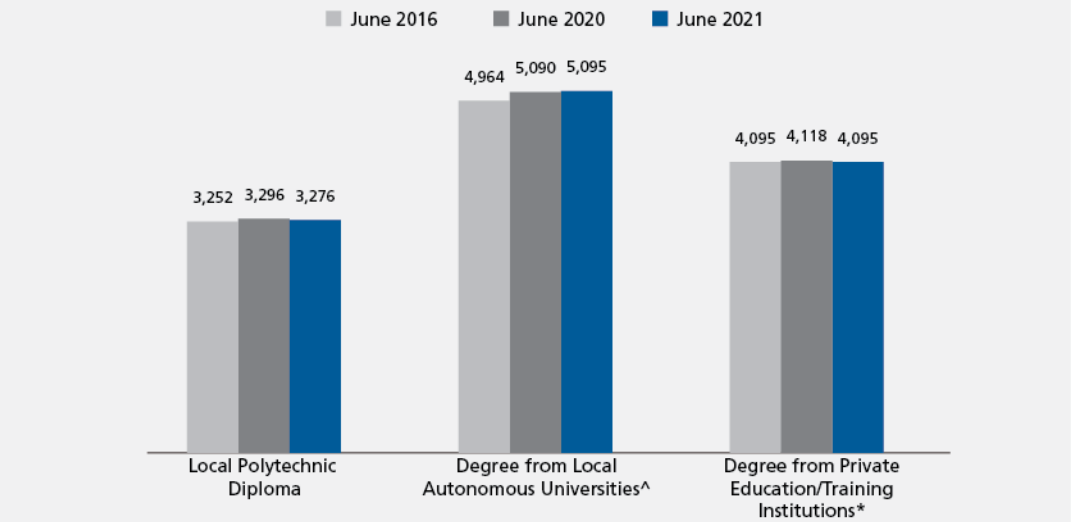
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Notes: (1) ^ – Includes qualifications awarded by overseas partner universities/institutions of the Singapore Institute of Technology.

(2) * – Includes qualifications awarded by their overseas partner universities/institutions.

Chart 12 Median gross monthly income from work (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed residents aged 25 to 29 from local tertiary institutions

Dollars



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

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

(2) ^ – Includes qualifications awarded by overseas partner universities/institutions of the Singapore Institute of Technology.

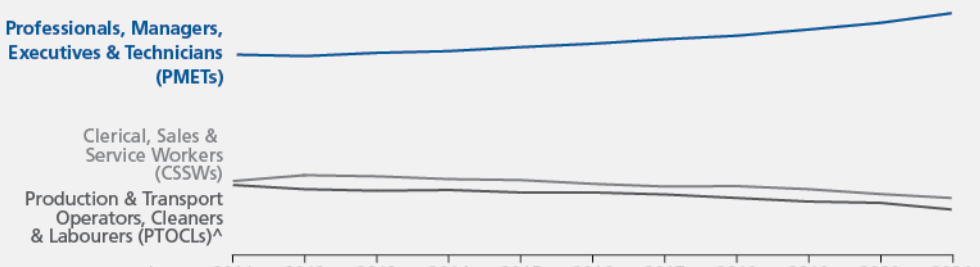
(3) * – Includes qualifications awarded by their overseas partner universities/institutions.

Share of PMETs in the resident workforce rose faster

2.13 The share of professionals, managers, executives & technicians (PMETs) among employed residents rose at a faster pace compared to earlier years. More residents were hired into PMET roles reflecting demand from *Public Administration & Education*, *Healthcare*, *Financial & Insurance Services* and *Professional Services*. On the other hand, non-PMET employment continued to decline, as sectors with higher share of non-PMETs in their workforce such as *Administrative & Support Services*, *Transportation & Storage* and *Accommodation* continued to be affected by travel and safe management measures.

Chart 13 Employed residents by occupation

Per Cent



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
PMETs	52.7	52.4	53.1	53.5	54.4	55.2	56.2	57.0	58.4	59.9	62.1
CSSWs	24.2	25.4	25.1	24.4	24.2	23.4	22.8	22.9	22.2	21.1	20.2
PTOCLs^	23.1	22.2	21.8	22.1	21.4	21.4	21.0	20.2	19.4	19.1	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.

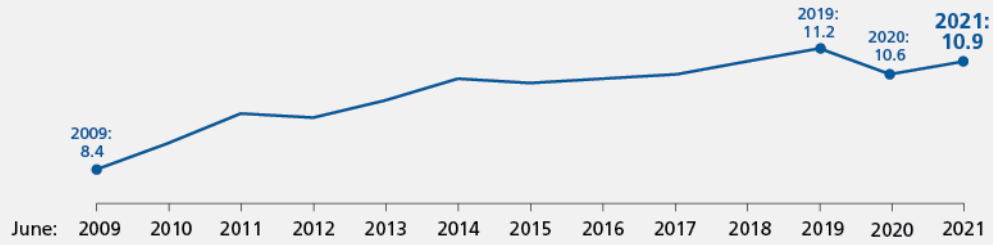
(3) Data for each year may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Part-time share of employment rebounded, but below its peak in 2019

2.14 The share of part-timers in the resident workforce rebounded from 10.6% in 2020 to 10.9% in 2021. This was below its peak of 11.2% in 2019 before the pandemic, having trended upwards over the decade. Part-time share of employment rose in most industries in 2021. However, *Accommodation*, *Retail Trade* and *Arts, Entertainment & Recreation* continued to cut back on part-timers, reflecting the impact of international travel restrictions and safe management measures.

Chart 14 Share of part-time employed among employed residents

Per Cent



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

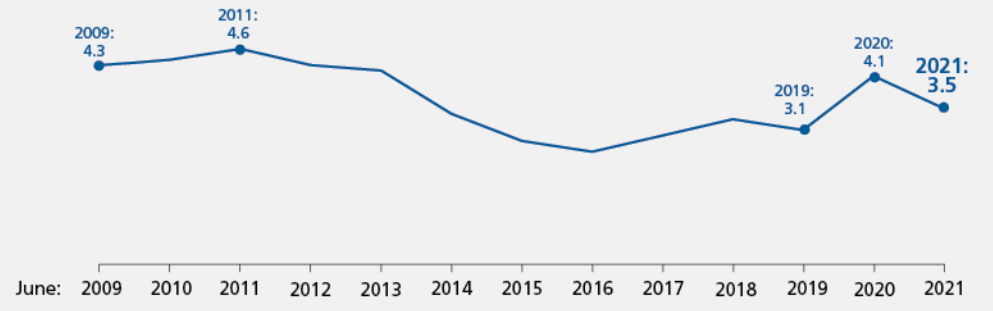
Note: Comparable data series starts from 2009 onwards, when the definition of part-time employment was revised to align with the corresponding change in the Employment Act.

Time-related under-employment rate eased, though it remained above pre-COVID rates

2.15 Resident time-related under-employment rate[5] eased from 4.1% in 2020 to 3.5% in 2021, though it remained above pre-COVID levels. Most groups experienced improvements, including lower-educated and older workers who were more affected in 2020. By industry, time-related under-employment rate was highest in *Food & Beverage Services* and *Education* in 2021 and remained above pre-COVID levels. This reflects the suspension of dine-in and in-person tuition/enrichment classes during the Heightened Alert period. *Administrative & Support Services* (reflecting trends in Cleaning and Employment Agencies)[6], *Real Estate Services*[7] and *Transportation & Storage* (reflecting Air Transport)[8] also had notably higher rates than their pre-COVID levels.

Chart 15 Resident time-related under-employment rate

Per Cent



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

Notes: (1) Time-related under-employed persons refer to part-timers (i.e. those whose normal hours of work are fewer than 35 a week) who are willing and available to work additional hours.

(2) Time-related under-employment rate refers to time-related under-employed persons as a percentage of all employed persons.

(3) 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.

[5] Time-related under-employment rate refers to part-timers who are willing and available to engage in additional work, as a percentage of all (full-time and part-time) employed persons.

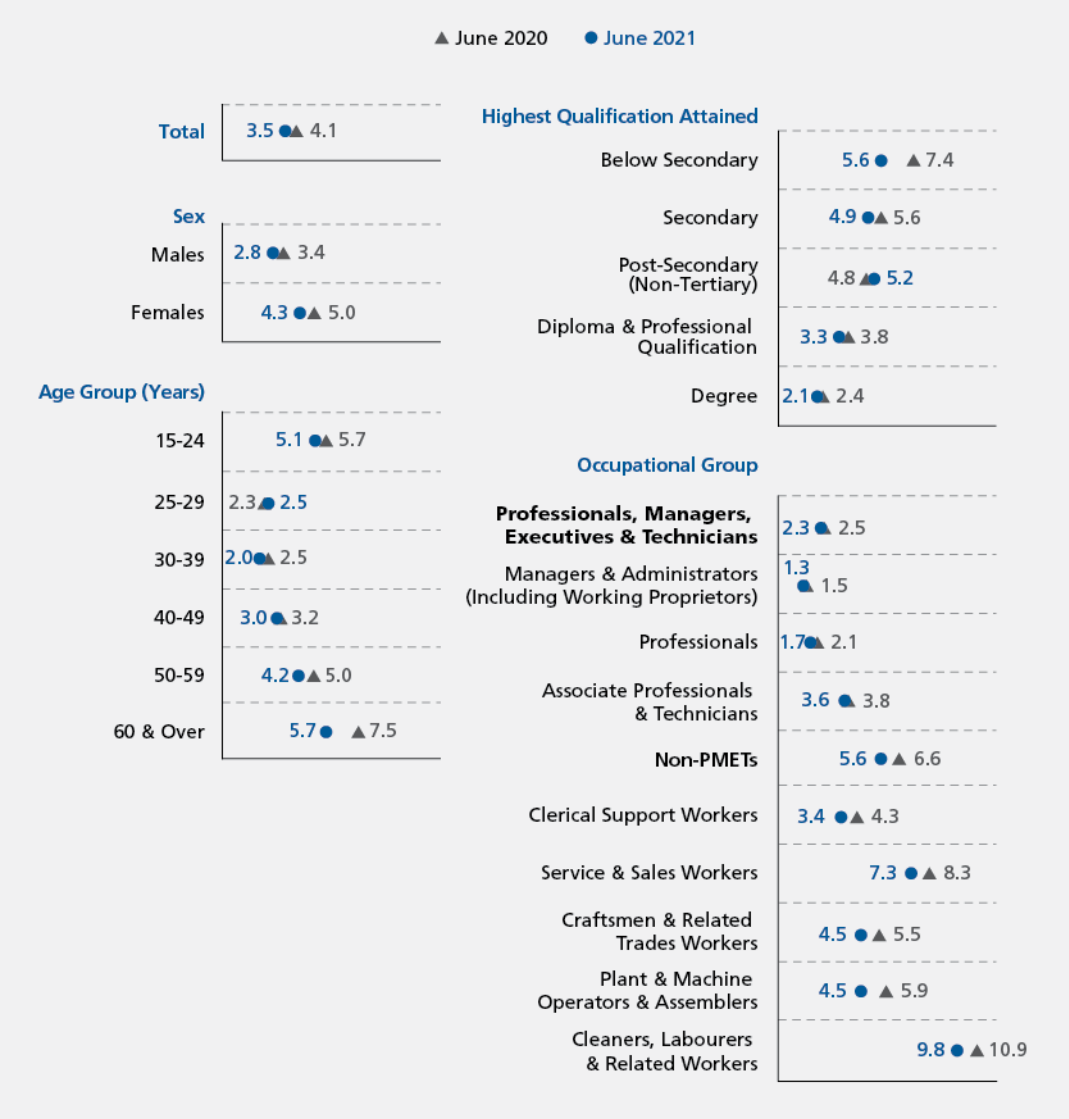
[6] This reflects reduced demand for office and home cleaning services due to work-from-home arrangements and restrictions on household visitors. In addition, more took up non-permanent part-time jobs via employment agencies but would like to work additional hours.

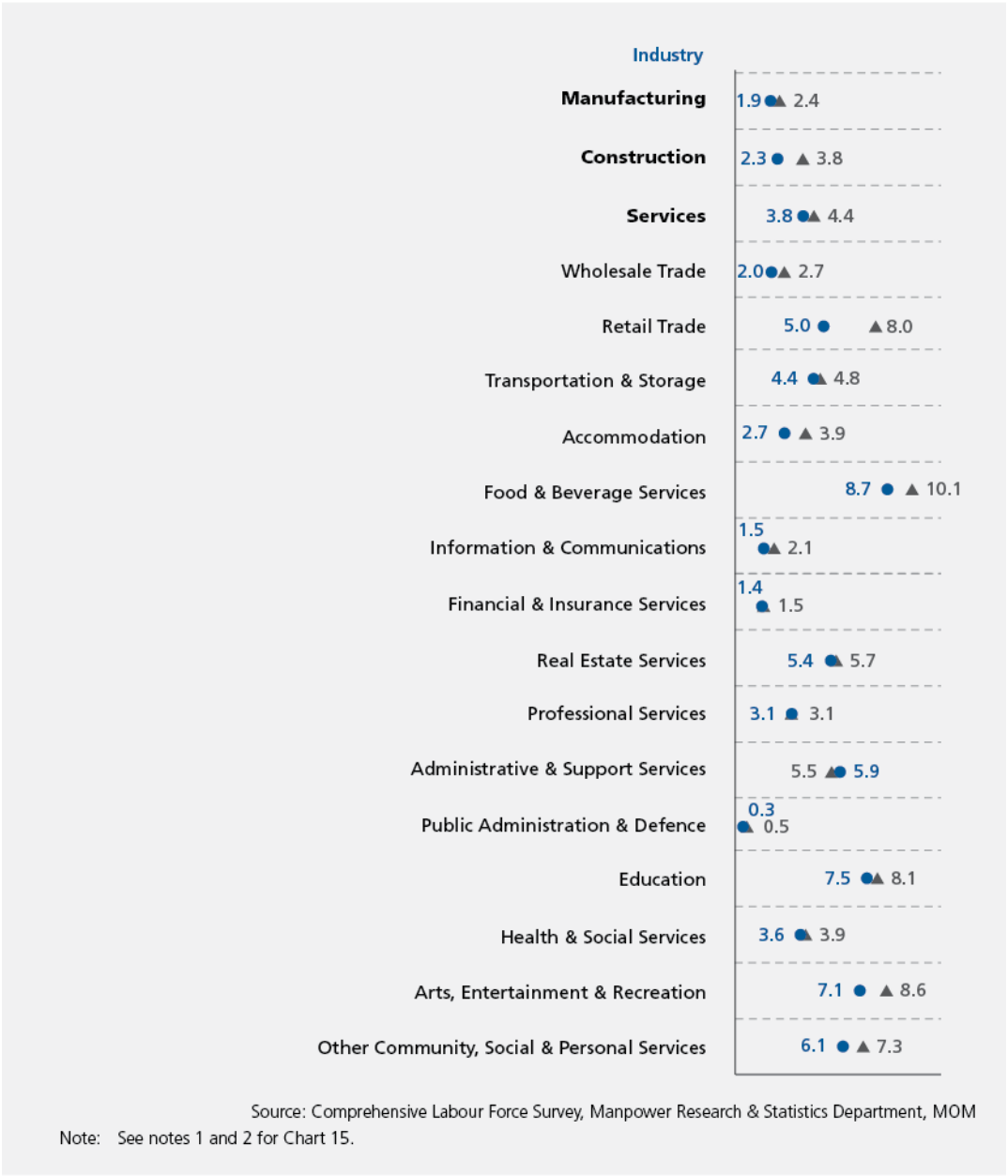
[7] This reflects the cap on visitors for property viewing during the Heightened Alert.

[8] This reflects international travel restrictions.

Chart 16 Resident time-related under-employment rate by characteristics

Per Cent





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

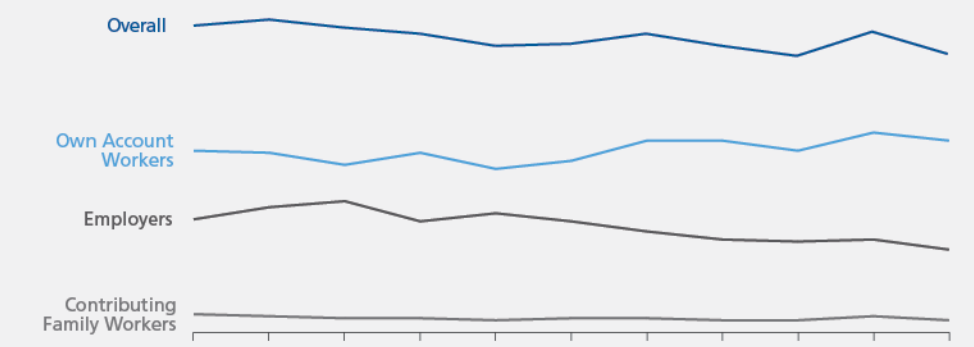
Note: See notes 1 and 2 for Chart 15.

Fewer workers in self-employment

2.16 As the number of salaried employees increased significantly with more job opportunities amid the economic recovery and fewer were self-employed, the share of self-employed in the resident workforce fell from 14.7% in June 2020 to 13.6% in June 2021. There were decreases across all three categories of self-employed, namely employers, own account workers and contributing family workers. Decreases in self-employed share of employment was broad-based, led by workers in their 40s and 50s, those with below-secondary qualifications, and non-PMETs.

Chart 17 Proportion of self-employed among employed residents

Per Cent



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Overall	15.0	15.3	14.9	14.6	14.0	14.1	14.6	14.0	13.5	14.7	13.6
Own Account Workers	8.8	8.7	8.1	8.7	7.9	8.3	9.3	9.3	8.8	9.7	9.3
Employers	5.4	6.0	6.3	5.3	5.7	5.3	4.8	4.4	4.3	4.4	3.9
Contributing Family Workers	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.6	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

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

2.18 The number of regular own account workers rose for the second consecutive year. This was due to more residents engaging in such work arrangement by choice in 2021, as they enjoyed the flexibility and freedom associated with own account work, as well as the ability to control their career. The pandemic has also changed work and lifestyle patterns, leading to shifts in business demand for own account workers. As working from home remained the default, demand for point-to-point transport services fell, resulting in fewer private-hire car drivers and taxi drivers. With the surge in e-commerce and increased reliance on delivery services, the number of delivery workers rose further in 2021.

More regular own account workers chose this work arrangement as their livelihood

2.19 More residents were engaged in own account work as a regular form of employment over the one-year period from July 2020 to June 2021 (248,500), from 228,200 in 2020.

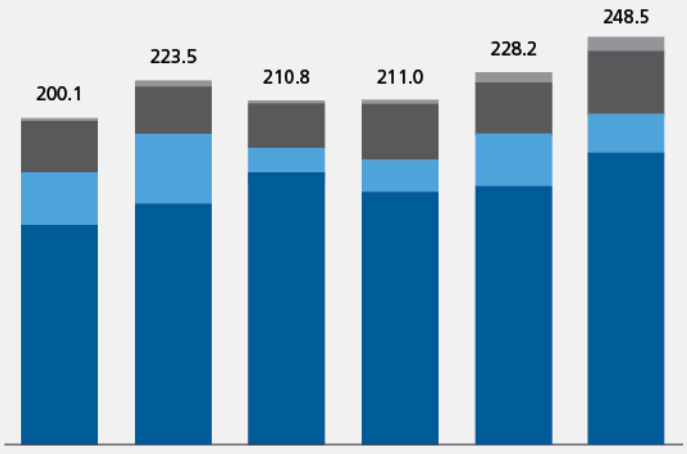
2.20 For the most of them, own account work was their main job and livelihood (i.e. primary own account workers: 201,800), and they formed 8.5% of all employed residents in 2021.[9] Compared to a year ago, the number of such workers has increased, as more preferred[10] own account work (from 158,900 in 2020 to 177,700 in 2021).

2.21 The remaining did own account work on the side (secondary own account workers: 46,800). This number has increased for the third consecutive year, mainly by choice as they preferred own account work.

2.22 In all, the vast majority engaged in regular own account work by choice (216,500 or 87%). Their top reasons for being in own account work include enjoying the flexibility (69%) and freedom (40%) associated with own account work, and having the ability to control their career (33%). While those who engaged in own account work on a non-preferred basis (32,000) has declined from 2020, some vulnerability remains as their numbers hovered above the levels seen in 2018 and 2019.

Chart 18 Resident regular own account workers

Number ('000)



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Primary	**166.8**	**190.9**	**182.1**	**174.8**	**190.9**	**201.8**
Preferred	134.6	147.9	167.3	155.1	158.9	177.7
Non-Preferred	32.2	43.0	14.8	19.6	32.0	24.1
Secondary	**33.3**	**32.6**	**28.7**	**36.3**	**37.3**	**46.8**
Preferred	31.8	28.9	27.4	34.4	31.9	38.8
Non-Preferred	s	3.7	s	s	5.4	8.0

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.

[9] 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).

[10] Persons for whom own account work is not their preferred choice of work refer to those who engage in own account work because they are unable to find work as an employee. Among multiple job holders, it includes those who are unable to find full-time work. Those for whom own account work is a preferred choice of work refer to the remaining who do not fall into the above estimate.

2.23 The gradual economic recovery and tighter labour market facilitated more own account workers to find employee work. Among those who had done regular primary own account work in the past year, 8.0% switched to employee work as their main job by June 2021. This was higher than the rate (4% to 5%) seen in past years. Reflecting improved business conditions and government efforts to support local hiring, another 3.5% were able to expand their business and became employers with employees under their payroll by June 2021. Most (90%) of the regular primary own account workers who remained in their existing work arrangement did so by choice.

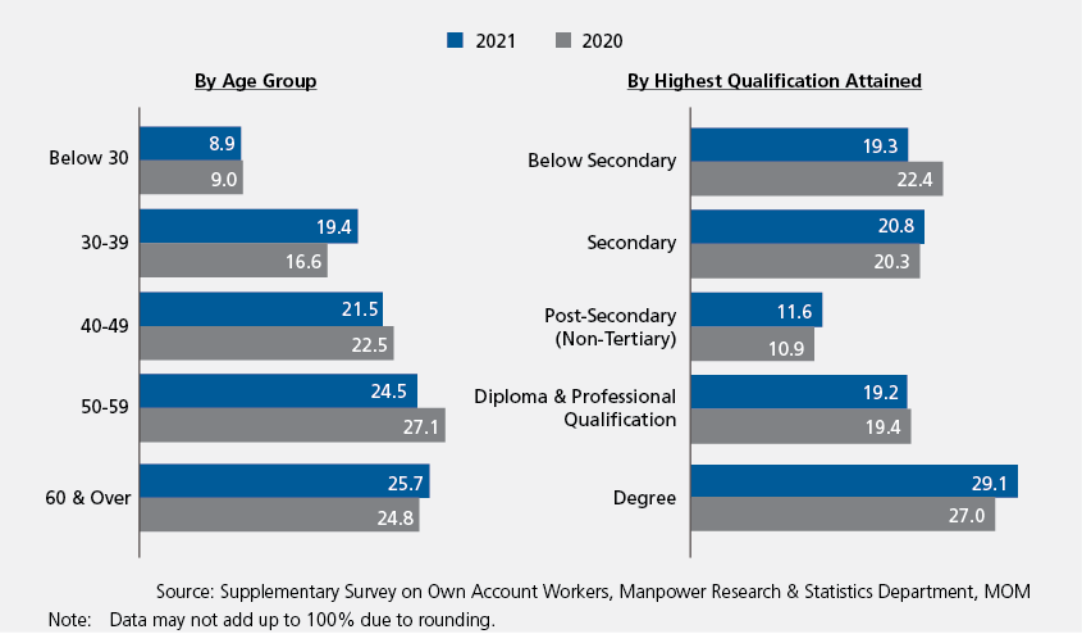
2.24 Online channels continued to be a crucial tool for business outreach. Three in five (60%) regular own account workers utilised online channels to advertise and obtain business, including a third (33%) who took up work via online matching platforms.[11] However, there was a dip in those who utilised online matching platforms (from 37% in 2020), as demand for point-to-point transport services waned when working-from-home remained the default work arrangement.

2.25 Among regular primary own account workers, majority were residents aged 40 & over in 2021 (72%). Though the percentage in their 30s edged up (from 17% to 19%, attributed entirely to more in own account work on a preferred basis), proportionately more in this age group were in employee work.

2.26 In line with the slight rise in the share of own account workers who were younger, the share who were tertiary educated also posted a slight uptick (from 46% to 48%, due to those with degree qualifications). The increase mirrors the improvement in educational profile among employees.[12]

Chart 19 Resident regular primary own account workers

Per Cent



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

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

[11] In the absence of internationally agreed statistical definition, online matching platforms are defined as labour sharing platforms that serve as intermediaries to match or connect buyers with workers who take up piecemeal or assignment-based work. Such platforms could be either websites or mobile applications, covering services such as ride-hailing, goods/food delivery, creative work, etc.

[12] The tertiary-educated share among employees rose from 61% in 2020 to 63% in 2021, and was higher than the percentage of tertiary graduates among regular primary own account workers.

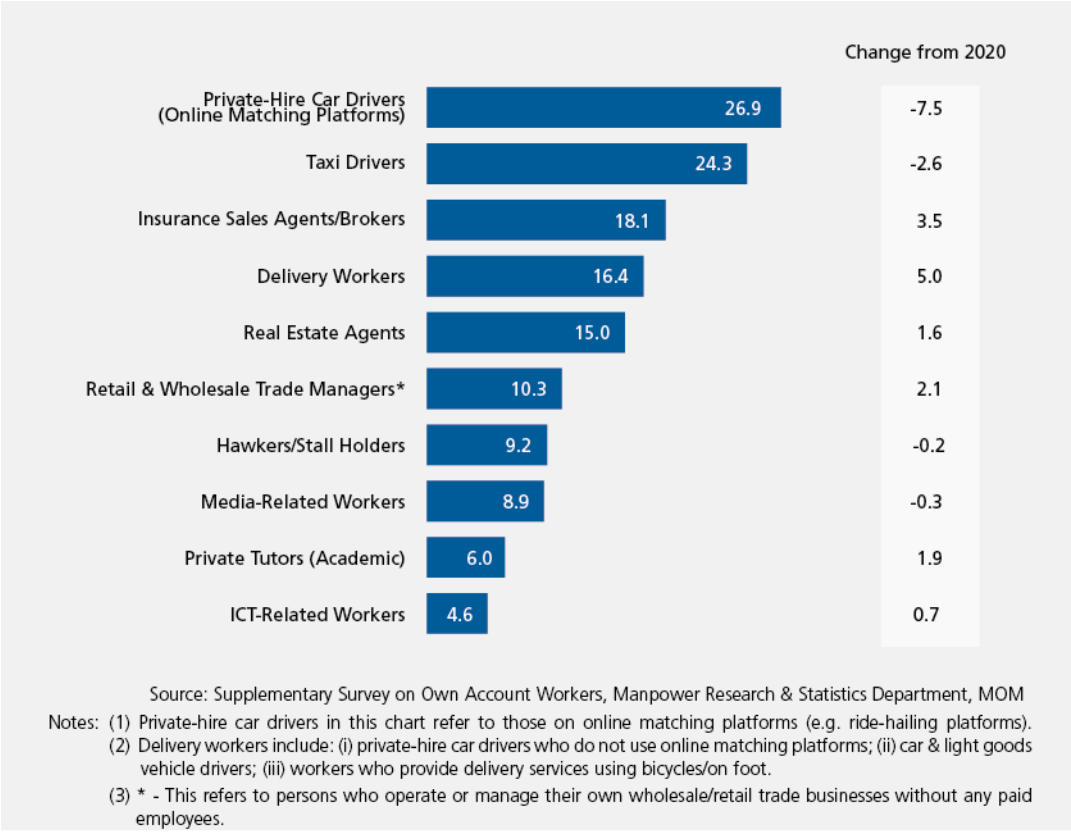
2.27 Although private-hire car drivers and taxi drivers remained the most common occupations among regular primary own account workers in 2021, their numbers have fallen as demand for private transport services fell. Conversely, the number of delivery workers continued to increase for the third consecutive year, as dine-in restrictions and other safe distancing measures led to heightened demand for delivery services. In 2021, it overtook real estate agents to be the fourth most common occupation.

2.28 The increase in delivery workers was driven mostly by residents with non-tertiary qualifications. Most delivery workers did own account work as their main livelihood by choice, and their numbers grew over the year.

2.29 Besides work that involved the use of online-matching platforms, other common occupations that regular primary own account workers engaged in include insurance sales agents/brokers, hawkers/stall holders and media-related workers.

Chart 20 Top occupations among resident regular primary own account workers, 2021

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 businesses without any paid employees.

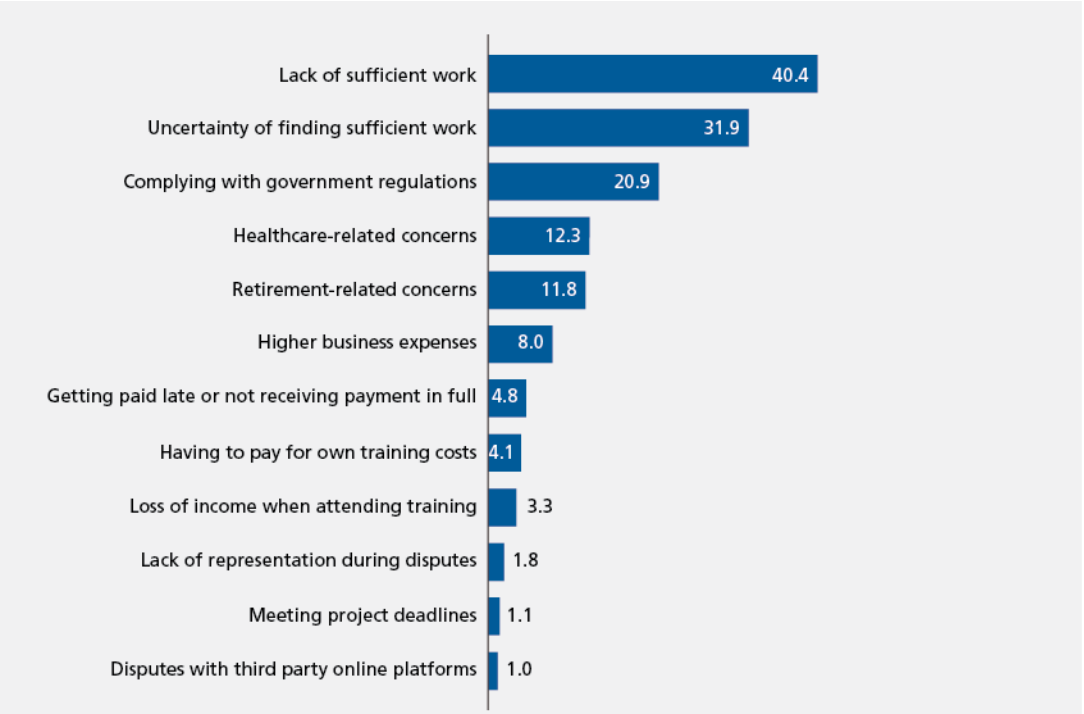
Finding sufficient work, as well as complying with government regulations amid the prolonged pandemic were the chief concerns

2.30 Slightly over half (55%) of regular own account workers faced challenges at work in 2021. This was similar to the preceding year (52%). They were most concerned about the *lack of* (40%) or *uncertainty of finding sufficient work* (32%), and these continued to be the top difficulties faced. As the prolonged pandemic necessitated a range of safe management measures, *complying with government regulations* (21%) also posed a challenge to own account workers. The proportion with healthcare-related concerns (12%, e.g. *insufficient savings for healthcare*, *lack of medical benefits* and *paid sick leave*), as well as retirement-related concerns (12%), decreased slightly from a year ago (17% and 14% respectively).

2.31 About three in five (59%) of those who faced challenges in the course of own account work felt that the difficulties have alleviated from the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most (77%) have taken steps to cope with the difficulties faced, including putting in longer hours (37%) or relying on other forms of income, e.g. from investment or their personal savings (32%).

Chart 21 Challenges faced by resident regular own account workers, 2021

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.

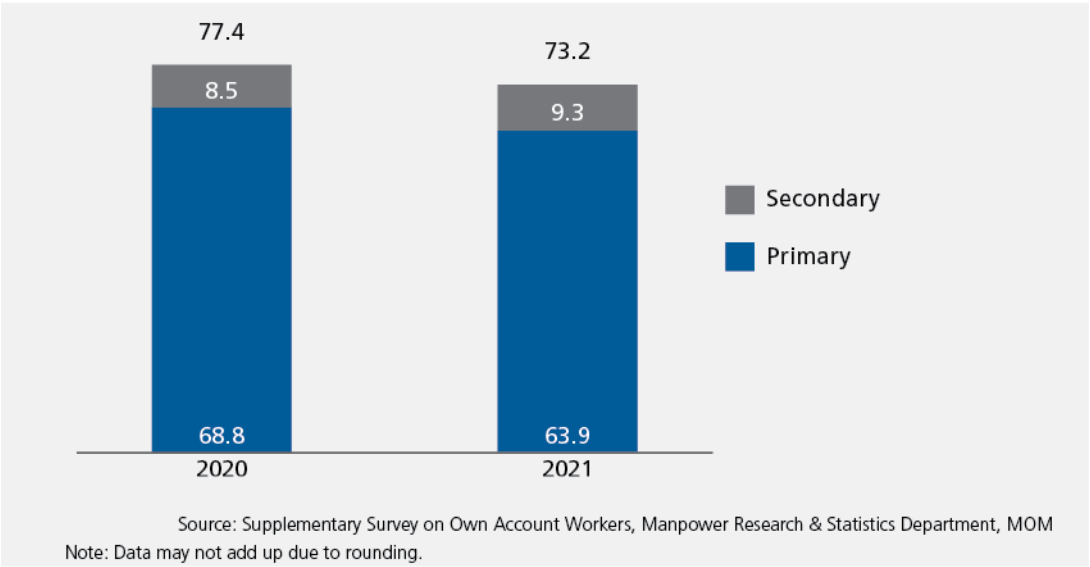
A Profile of Platform Workers in Singapore

2.32 Platform workers are own account workers who rely on transport and delivery service matching platforms to obtain work. Their work arrangements with platforms could resemble those of employees.[13] In 2021, around three in ten (or 73,200) regular own account workers were platform workers, working as taxi drivers (26,300), private-hire car drivers (30,600) or delivery workers who used online matching platforms (16,700).[14]

2.33 Similar to the larger pool of own account workers, most platform workers were primarily engaged in own account work as their main job and livelihood. Their numbers have declined from a year ago, due to fewer who engaged in it on a non-preferred basis.[15] On the other hand, the number of platform workers who did own account work on the side edged up over the year.

Chart 22 Resident regular platform workers

Number ('000)



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

Note: Data may not add up due to rounding.

[13] 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.

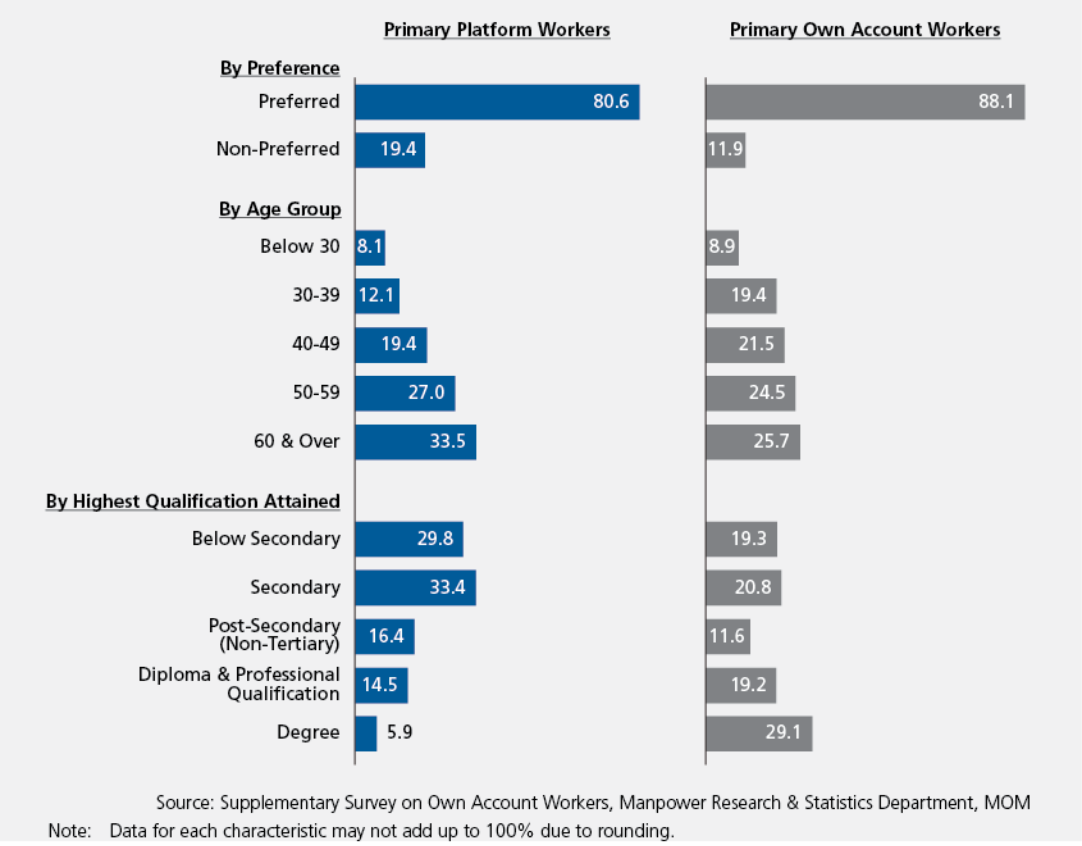
[14] The number for the specific occupations (i.e. taxi drivers, private-hire car drivers, delivery workers using online matching platforms) would add up to be more than the total number of platform workers, because an individual can have more than one occupation.

[15] The share of regular primary own account workers who worked as taxi drivers, private-hire car drivers or delivery workers by choice rose from 72% in 2020 to 81% in 2021.

2.34 Most of the regular primary platform workers engaged in own account work by choice, though they were less likely to prefer such work compared to other primary own account workers. The bulk of platform workers were older residents aged 50 & over, and had non-tertiary qualifications. They were also more likely to be older or lower-educated compared to all primary own account workers.

Chart 23 Resident regular primary own account workers by characteristics, 2021

Per Cent



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

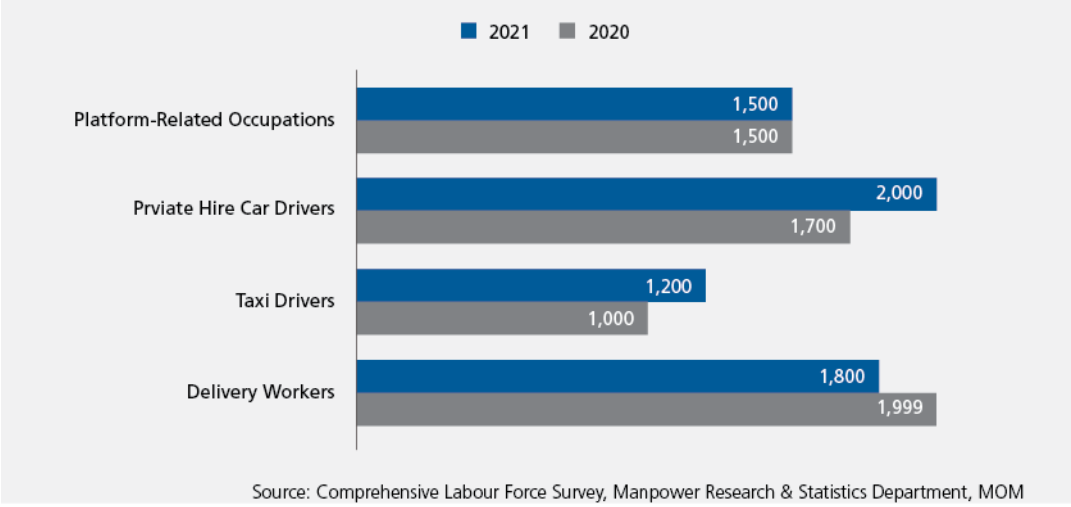
Note: Data for each characteristic may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

2.35 In 2021, the median income earned by private-hire car drivers ($2,000) and taxi drivers ($1,200) rose from the preceding year, which coincided with the Circuit Breaker period. Their increase in earnings could also reflect the higher number of passenger trips taken on per driver, as there were fewer private-hire car drivers and taxi drivers in 2021. Overall, the median income earned by full-time platform workers ($1,500) in 2021 was unchanged from the preceding year, weighed down by the slight decline in income earned by delivery workers ($1,800).

2.36 For the broad majority, the lower income earned by platform workers relative to the median worker is likely not a concern, as most preferred own account work and have fully paid for their housing. In 2021, 92% of regular primary platform workers resided in a house owned by themselves or their household members, including 50% whose house was fully paid for, most commonly living in HDB 4-room flats (46%).

Chart 24 Median gross monthly income from work of full-time resident own account workers in platform-related occupations

Dollars

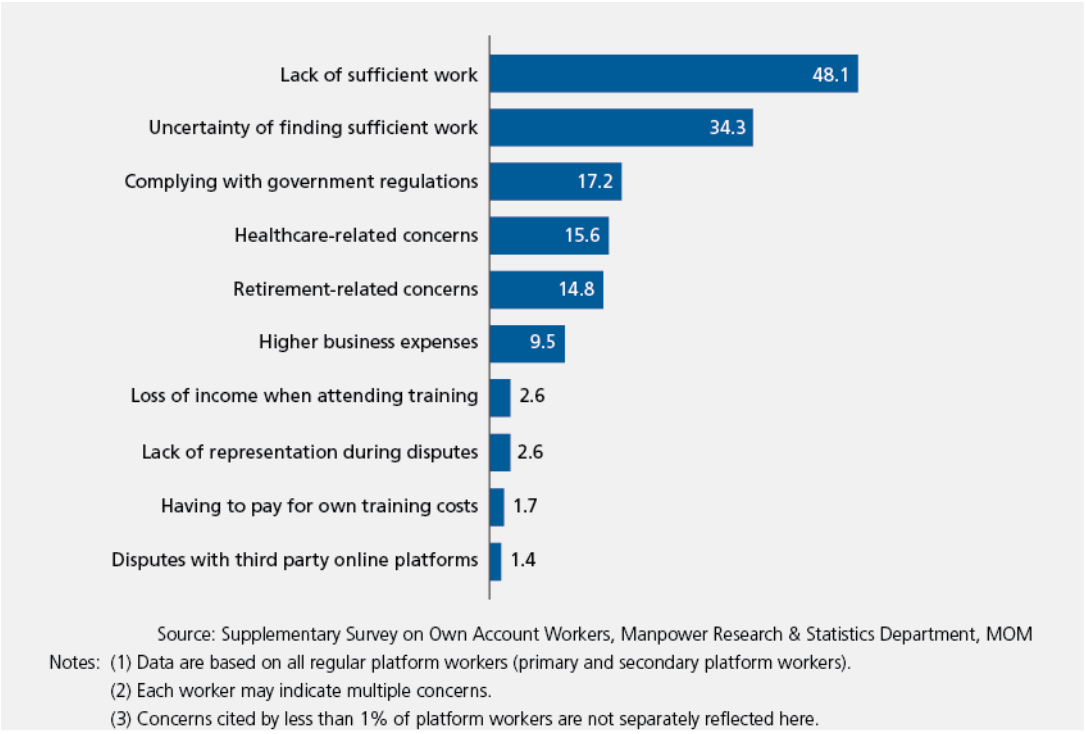


Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

2.37 More than half of regular platform workers (58%) faced challenges in the course of their work. Whilst their top challenges faced were similar to those raised by all regular own account workers, they were slightly more likely to cite healthcare-related and retirement-related concerns, as well as issues with dispute resolution.

Chart 25 Challenges faced by resident regular platform workers, 2021

Per Cent



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

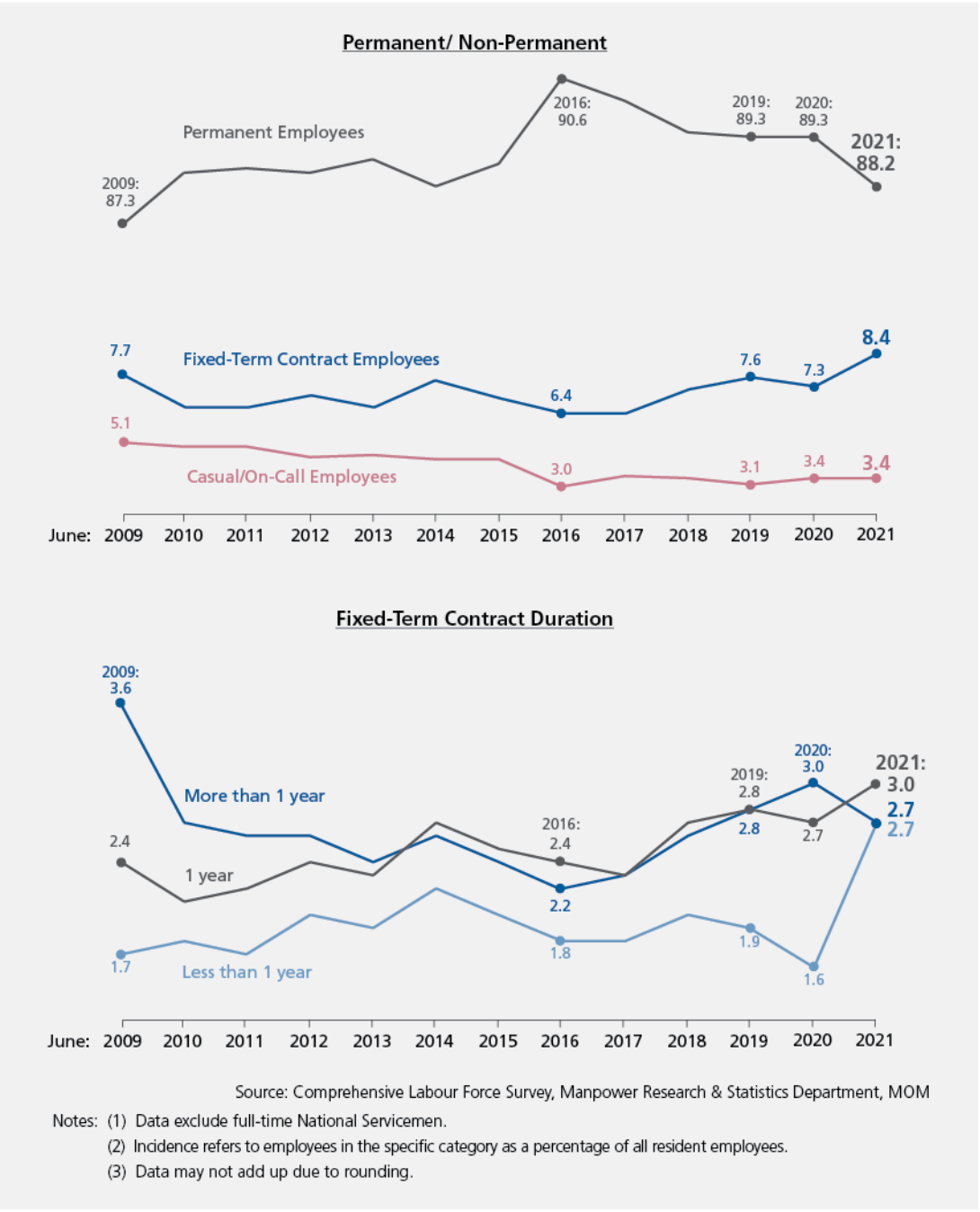
Notes: (1) Data are based on all regular platform workers (primary and secondary platform workers).
(2) Each worker may indicate multiple concerns.
(3) Concerns cited by less than 1% of platform workers are not separately reflected here.

Higher share of employees on fixed-term contracts

2.38 The vast majority of resident employees were permanent employees (88%). However, an increase in demand for temporary manpower for COVID-related activities and economic uncertainty led to a new high in the share of those on fixed-term contracts at 8.4%. This was up from 7.3% in 2020, and driven by increases among residents on shorter contracts of less than one year.

Chart 26 Incidence of resident employees by type of employment

Per Cent



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

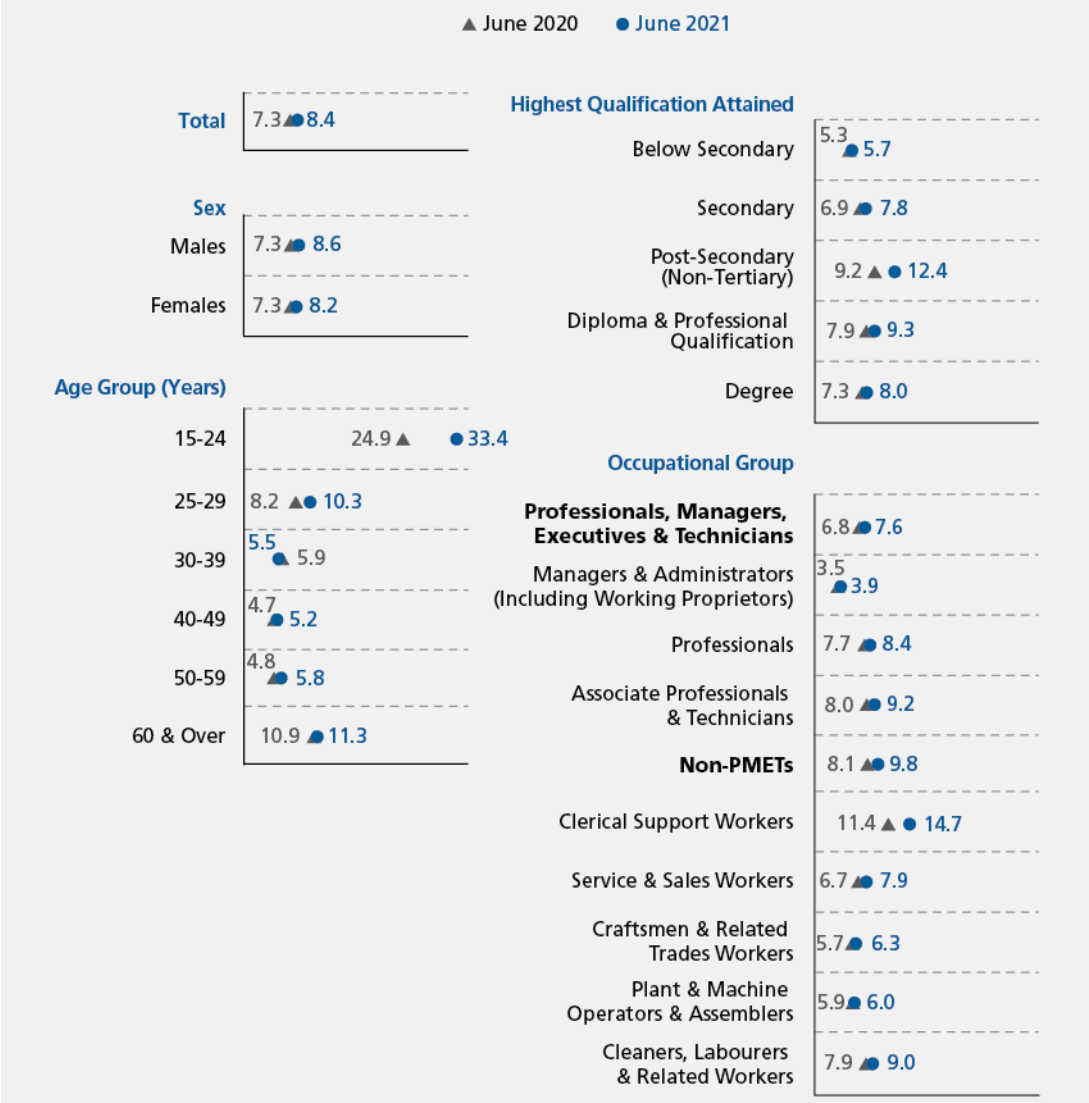
Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
(2) Incidence refers to employees in the specific category as a percentage of all resident employees.
(3) Data may not add up due to rounding.

2.39 The increase in incidence of fixed-term contract employees was led by *Public Administration & Defence*, *Accommodation*, *Health & Social Services* and *Real Estate*. The increase was more notable among non-PMETs (e.g. clerks, temperature screeners, safe distancing ambassadors, swabbers/swab assistants and healthcare assistants), and younger workers aged below 30 (including those on vacation jobs/internships).

2.40 Currently, temporary work is largely driven by demand from COVID-ops. As the COVID situation stabilises, demand for manpower from these activities will start to fall but we do not expect demand to completely disappear. Fixed-term contracts of one year or less was already rising in pre-COVID years. Hence, while the proportion is unlikely to remain at this heightened level, it may possibly settle above pre-COVID norms.

Chart 27 Incidence of fixed-term contract resident employees by characteristics

Per Cent





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

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

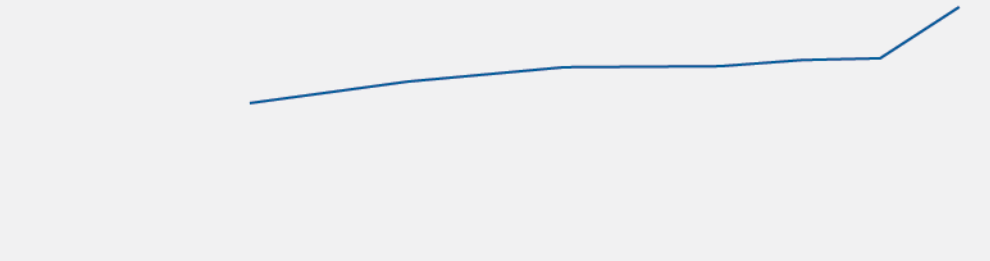
(2) Incidence refers to fixed-term contract employees as a percentage of resident employees in the respective categories.

While more workers held more than one job, they remained a small minority

2.41 There was a relatively larger increase in proportion of multiple job holders from 2.8% in 2020 to 3.5% in 2021, though they remained a small minority. The self-employed experienced a larger increase (from 6.7% to 8.1%) than employees (from 2.1% to 2.7%). There were larger increases in proportion of multiple job holders working in sectors that were impacted by safe management and border measures and output has yet to recover to pre-COVID levels. These sectors include *Construction*, *Other Community, Social & Personal Services* (pulled up by hairdressing, beauty & personal care services), *Accommodation*, *Administrative & Support Services* (e.g. employment agencies and travel agencies) and *Retail Trade*.

Chart 28 Proportion of employed residents holding multiple jobs

Per Cent



June:	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Proportion(%)	n.a.	2.2	n.a.	2.5	n.a.	2.7	n.a.	2.7	2.8	2.8	3.5

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

Training participation edged up in 2021

3.1 Training participation in the labour force has nearly doubled in the decade. The pandemic has altered the way training is being conducted – with more than half of the trainees attending training conducted via on-line or e-learning courses.

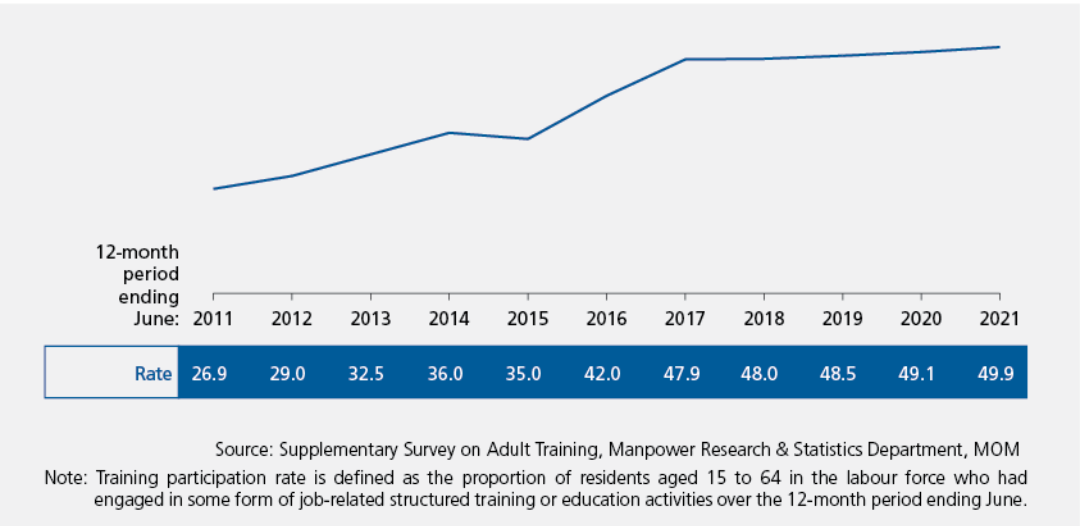
3.2 The training participation rate continued to climb despite the pandemic, from 49% in 2020 to 50% in 2021.[16] Reflecting restrictions to in-person classes due to COVID-19, the prevalence of online or e-learning courses rose for the third consecutive year to 58% in 2021.

3.3 Training intensity, measured as the average number of training days per adult in the labour force, eased back to pre-COVID level[17] at 6.6 days in 2021, as trainees on average spent slightly less time in training, alongside the gradual resumption of business activities at the workplace.

3.4 Despite restrictions to in-person training activities, few non-trainees had deferred their training plans (8.0%).[18] A sizeable proportion of non-trainees in 2021 had also attended training in the recent five years.

Chart 29 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.

3.5 In a softer job market, training enables jobseekers to acquire relevant work experience, skills and networks to boost their employability. In 2021, the training participation rate of the unemployed rose sharply, continuing the uptrend from 2012. For employed residents, the incidence of training held steady over the year, though we see training participation among self-employed persons returning to its pre-COVID rate,[19] possibly as work activities resumed[20] alongside the economic recovery.

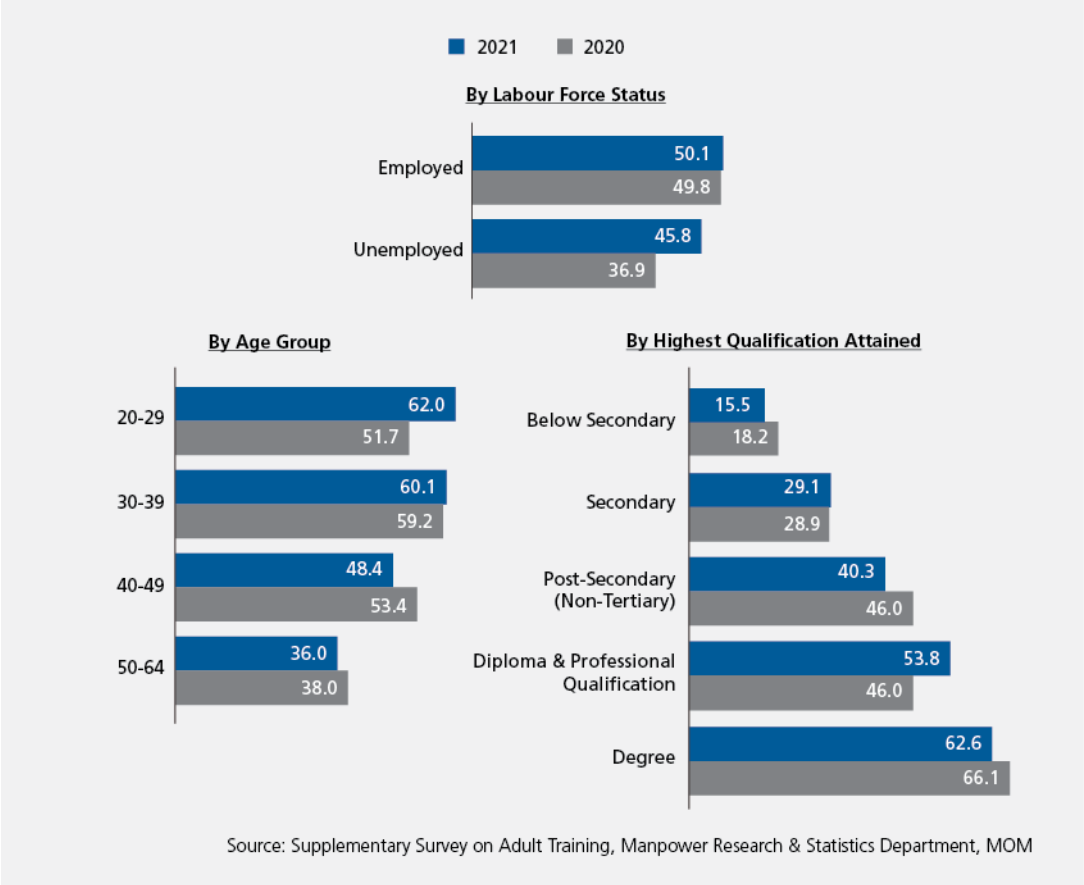
[16] This refers to training participation over the 12-month period ending June of the respective years. Data in this section pertain to those aged 15 to 64.
[17] Training intensity was 6.5 days in 2019.
[18] Non-trainees deferred their training commonly because of their preference for face-to-face training (36%) and family commitments (33%).
[19] Training participation rate among self-employed residents declined from 37% in 2020 to 29% in 2021, and was close to the 27% in 2019.
[20] Time-related under-employment rate among self-employed posted a larger decline over the year (-0.8%-point) compared to employees (-0.5%-point).

3.6 Trends were mixed across age and education groups. Following the expansion of work-study programmes and higher university enrolment, younger residents in their 20s, and those with diploma & professional qualifications saw higher training participation rates over the year.

3.7 For the mature aged 40 & over, training participation rate fell back to 2019 levels,[21] likely because those who were placed on retraining programmes in 2020 during periods of business slack[22] gradually resumed their usual work arrangements. Nevertheless, compared to a decade ago, more mature workers have undertaken training to keep their skillsets relevant in the rapidly changing employment landscape. As mature residents tend to be less educated, their decline in training participation in 2021 also weighed on the training participation rate of the non-tertiary educated. Observably, below secondary and post-secondary (non-tertiary) educated residents saw declines in their training participation rate.

Chart 30 Training participation rate of resident labour force

Per Cent



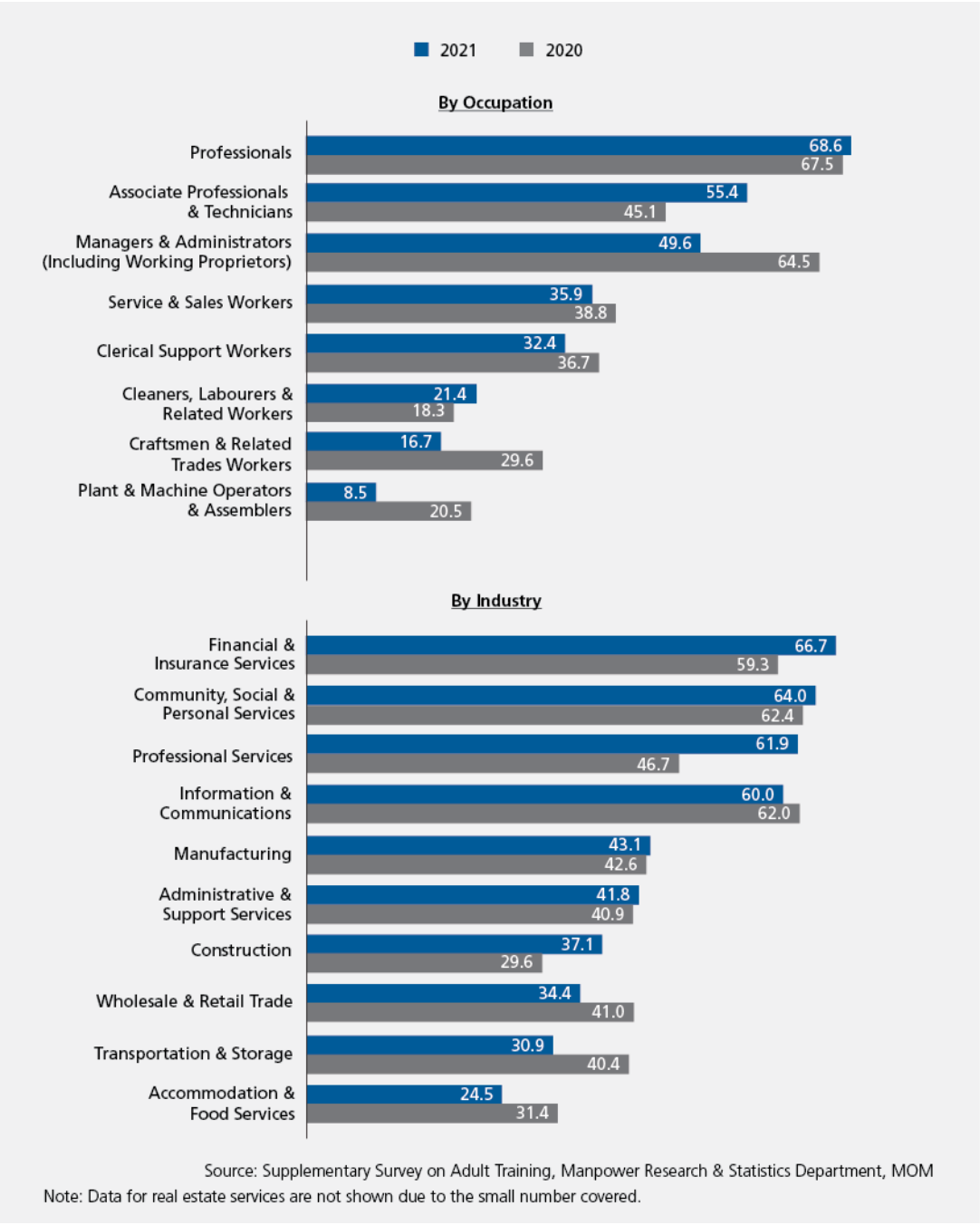
Source: Supplementary Survey on Adult Training, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

3.8 The training participation rate for PMETs was unchanged over the year (59%), but declined for non-PMETs (from 32% to 28%; seen across most detailed occupational groups). Reflecting the higher concentration of non-PMETs, larger declines in the training participation rate were observed among workers in *Transportation & Storage, Accommodation & Food Services* and *Wholesale & Retail Trade* as well. After declining in 2020, there were notable increases in the training participation rate of workers in higher-skilled sectors of *Financial & Insurance Services* and *Professional Services*, to rates similar or higher than in 2019.

[21] The training participation rate of resident labour force was 50.0% for residents aged 40 to 49, and 35.7% for residents aged 50 to 64 in 2019.
[22] In the year ending June 2020, a total of 87,580 employees were placed on short work-week or temporary layoff, and this declined to 52,550 a year later.

Chart 31 Training participation rate of employed residents

Per Cent



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

Note: Data for real estate services are not shown due to the small number covered.

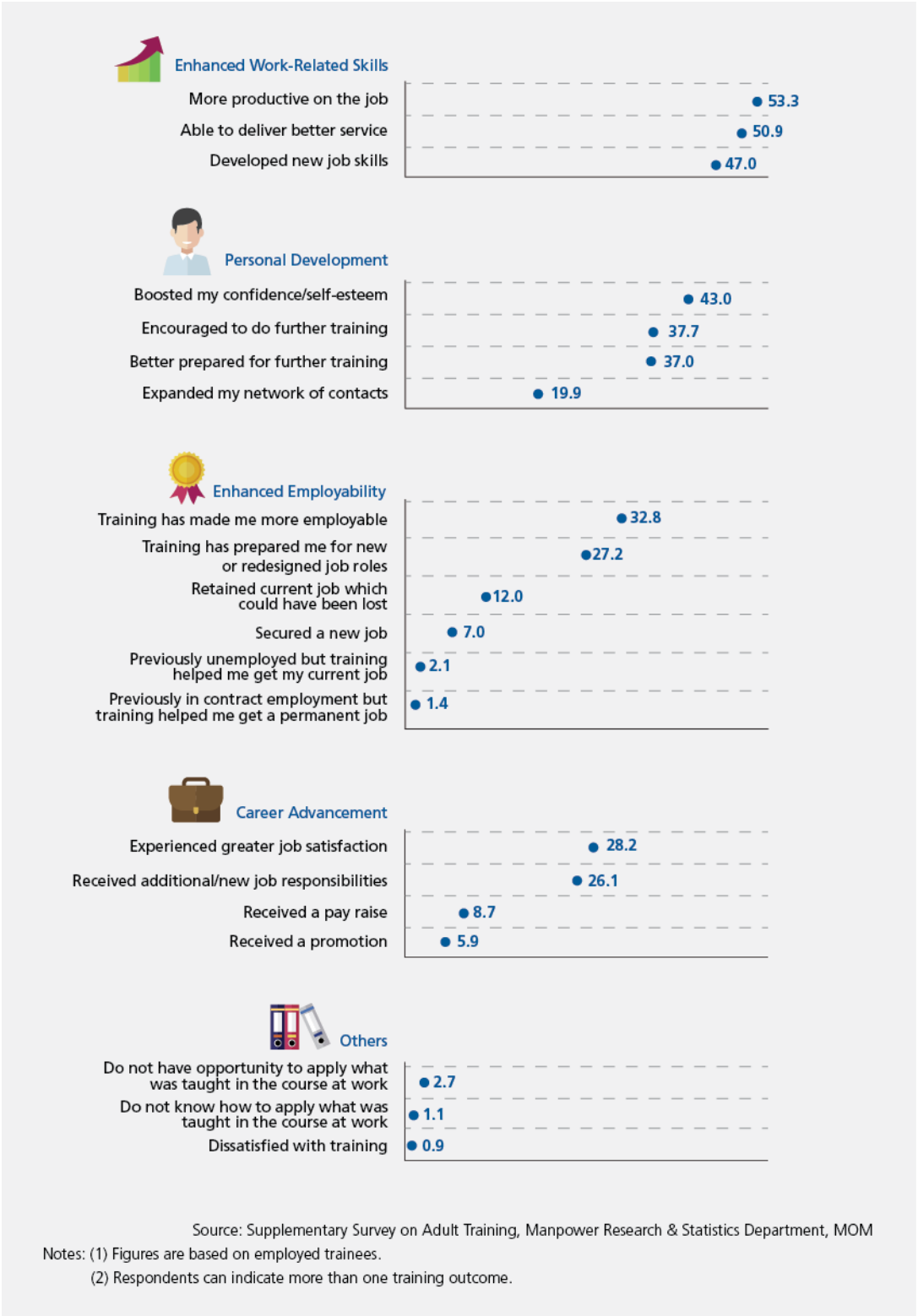
3.9 Most employed trainees (91%) recognised the importance of attending job-related structured training, and this was borne out in the positive outcomes reported by trainees from the training undertaken in 2021. It led to tangible outcomes such as enhanced work-related skills, with about half of employed trainees reported being more productive (53%), having the ability to provide better service delivery (51%) or gaining new job-related skills (47%) after training. Training also enhanced the employability of workers, with 18% stating that training helped them retain their existing job or obtain a new job.[23] Training also has intangible benefits; it builds self-efficacy by boosting confidence and self-esteem (43%), encourages (38%) and prepares (37%) workers for further training.

[23] Refers to retained current job which could have been lost, secured a new job, previously unemployed but training helped to get current job, or previously in contract employment but training helped to get a permanent job.

3.10 An immediate rise in pay (8.7%) or promotion (5.9%) were less common, as these are generally outcomes tied to better work performance post-training. Nevertheless, around a quarter (26%) of trainees were accorded new or additional job responsibilities following training. These workers may potentially benefit from higher pay or promotion upon better work performance with time.

Chart 32 Training outcomes of employed residents, 2021

Per Cent



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

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

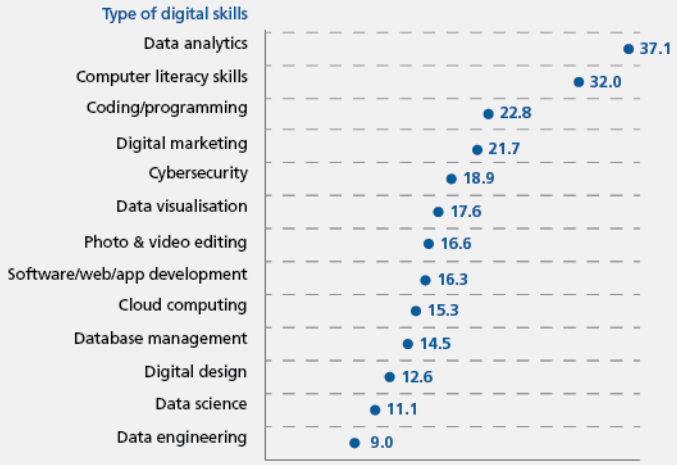
(2) Respondents can indicate more than one training outcome.

3.11 Employed trainees commonly took up job-related structured training in digital technology skills (35%), critical core & soft skills (25%) and core business development & marketing skills (15%). These are transferrable or core work skills required to work competently.

3.12 Reflecting the rising importance of digital skills in today's economy, most residents in the labour force who intended to attend job-related structured training next year have plans to pick up digital technology skills (75%). This was to help enhance their work productivity (57%) and aid in their career advancement (54%). Data analytics, computer literacy skills, coding or programming, digital marketing and cybersecurity were the most popular forms of digital skills.

Chart 33 Resident labour force who intend to pick up digital technology skills for work by type of skill sets they are interested in, 2021

Per Cent



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

Notes: (1) Figures are based on resident labour force who intended to attend job-related structured training on digital technology in the next year.

(2) Respondents can indicate more than one type of digital skill they are interested in.

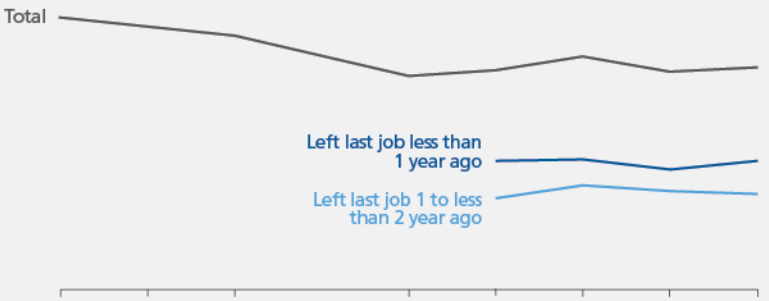
4. Job Mobility and Tenure

Incidence of job change within the last one year rebounded to around pre-COVID levels

4.1 The economic recovery has resulted in an increase in job opportunities. Consequently, the proportion of employed residents who had changed jobs in the last one year increased from 8.2% in June 2020 to 8.8% in June 2021. As this was around pre-COVID levels in 2018 and 2019, it does not suggest that there has been a sharp increase in workers switching jobs.

Chart 34 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
Total	18.6	n.a.	17.5	n.a.	14.7	15.0	16.0	14.9	15.3
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
Left last job 1 to less than 2 year ago	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	6.2	7.1	6.7	6.5

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

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

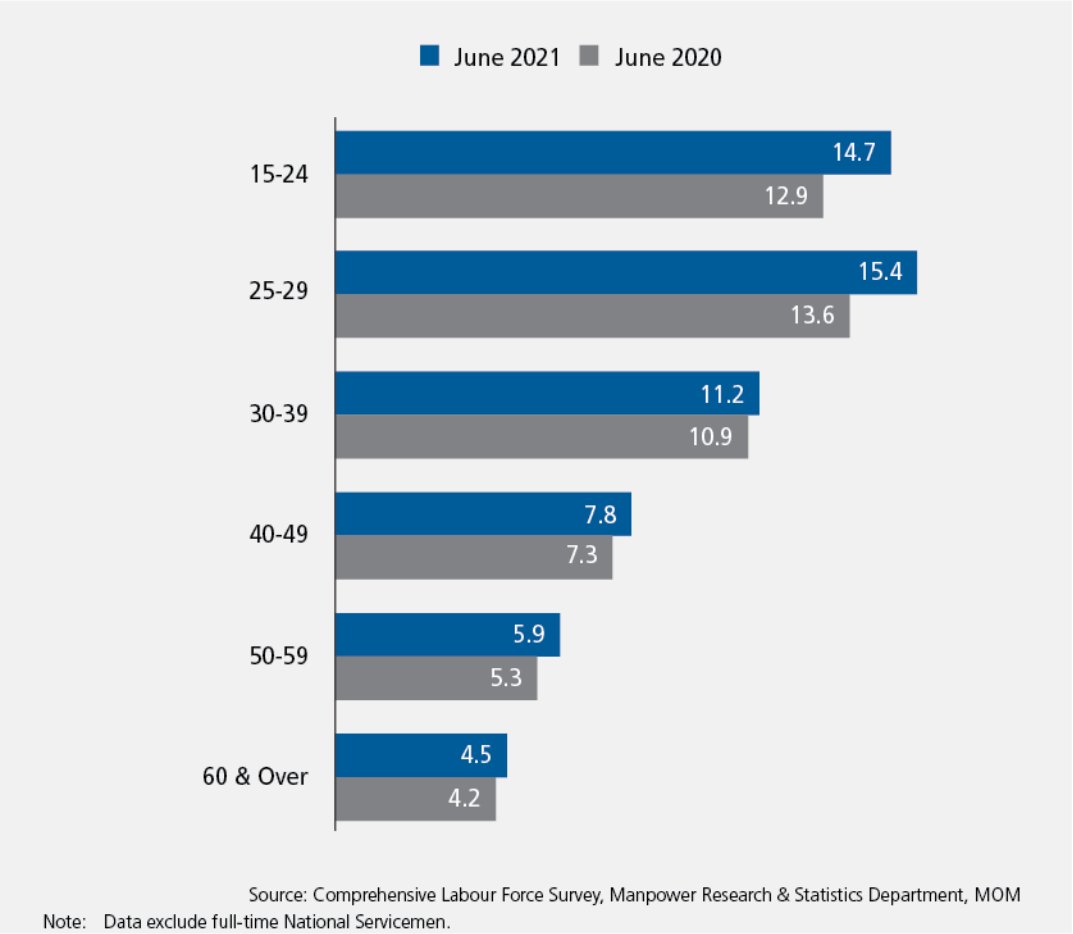
(2) n.a. – Not available as data on job change or the further breakdown into when left last job was not collected in these years.

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

4.2 Younger workers aged below 30 posted larger rebound in incidence of job change in the recent year. They continued to have the highest incidence of job change among the age groups, as they are in the earlier stages of their career and still exploring career options.

Chart 35 Proportion of employed residents who had changed jobs in the last one year by age

Per Cent



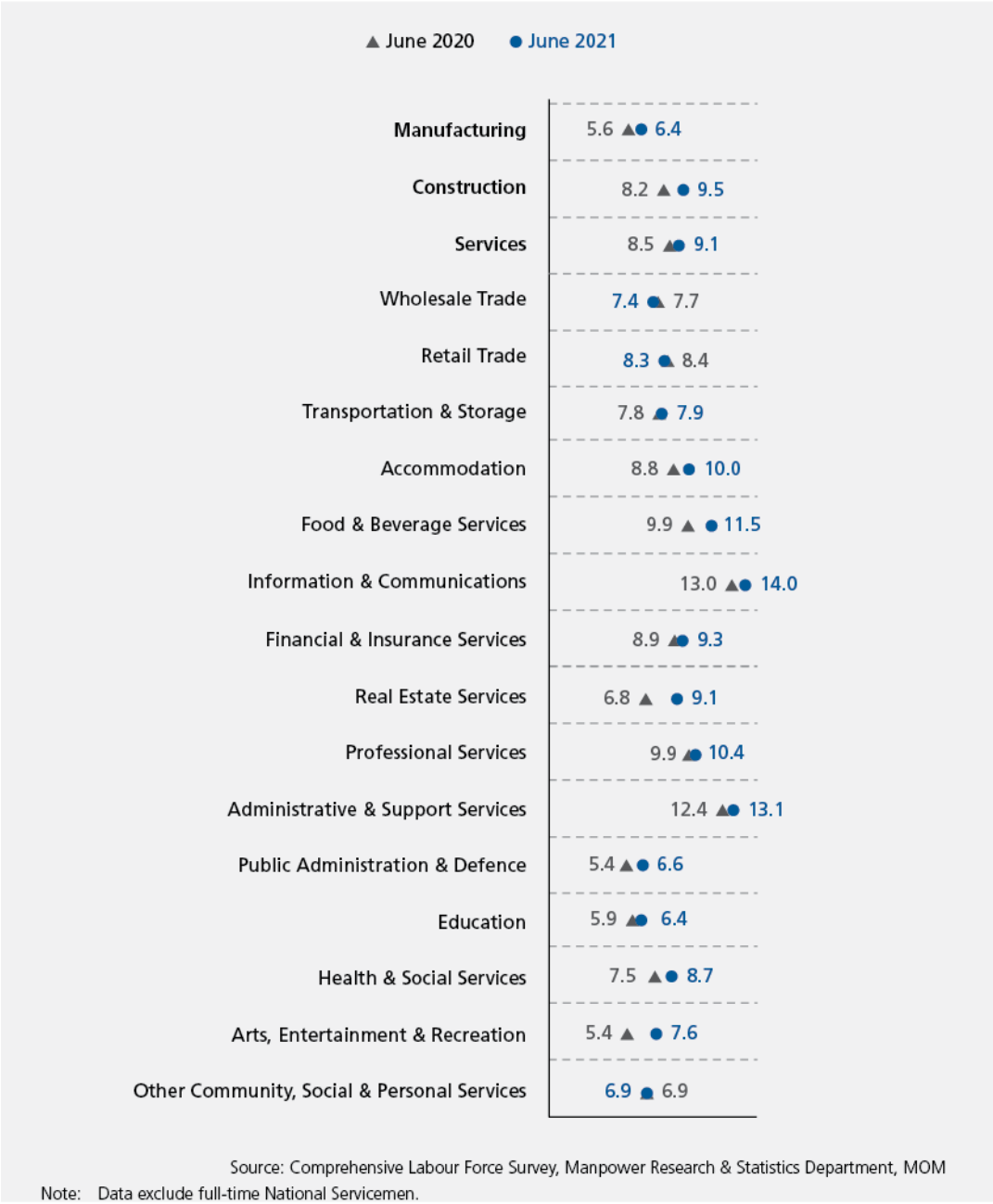
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

4.3 The incidence of workers with job change in the recent year increased by a larger extent in sectors more affected during the height of the COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, such as *Arts, Entertainment & Recreation*, *Food & Beverage Services* and *Accommodation*. It also rose notably in *Health & Social Services*, *Public Administration & Defence* and *Information & Communications*, reflecting the strong demand for workers in these sectors.

Chart 36 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.

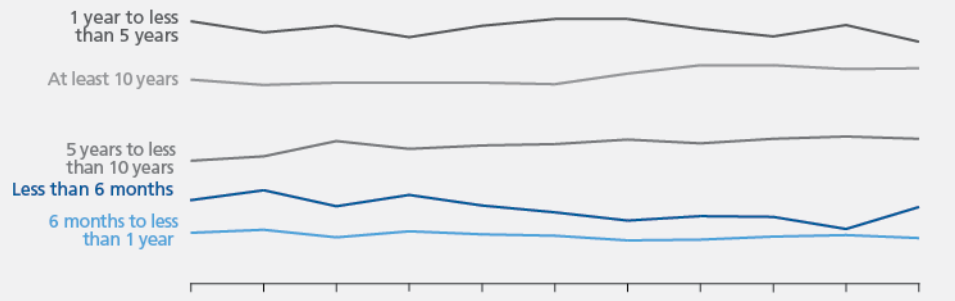
Large increase in proportion of employees who started work in current job in recent half year

4.4 As more residents entered the labour force, and/or changed jobs, the share of employees who started work with their current employer in the recent six months rebounded strongly from 8.1% in 2020 to

11% in 2021. This was supported by strong hiring in growth sectors and the recovery from the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic in the middle of 2020.

Chart 37 Distribution of resident employees by years in current job

Per Cent



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Less than 6 months	12.0	13.1	11.1	12.5	11.2	10.3	9.1	9.8	9.7	8.1	11.0
6 months to less than 1 year	7.6	8.0	7.0	7.8	7.4	7.3	6.6	6.7	7.1	7.3	6.8
1 year to less than 5 years	35.5	34.1	34.9	33.5	34.9	35.8	35.8	34.5	33.5	35.0	32.8
5 years to less than 10 years	17.1	17.7	19.7	18.7	19.1	19.3	19.9	19.4	20.0	20.3	20.0
At least 10 years	27.8	27.1	27.4	27.4	27.4	27.2	28.6	29.7	29.7	29.2	29.3

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.

4.5 There were large increases in proportion of resident employees who had been with their current employer for less than six months across the age groups, more so among younger employees aged below 30.

Chart 38 Proportion of resident employees who had worked for less than six months in their current job by age

Per Cent



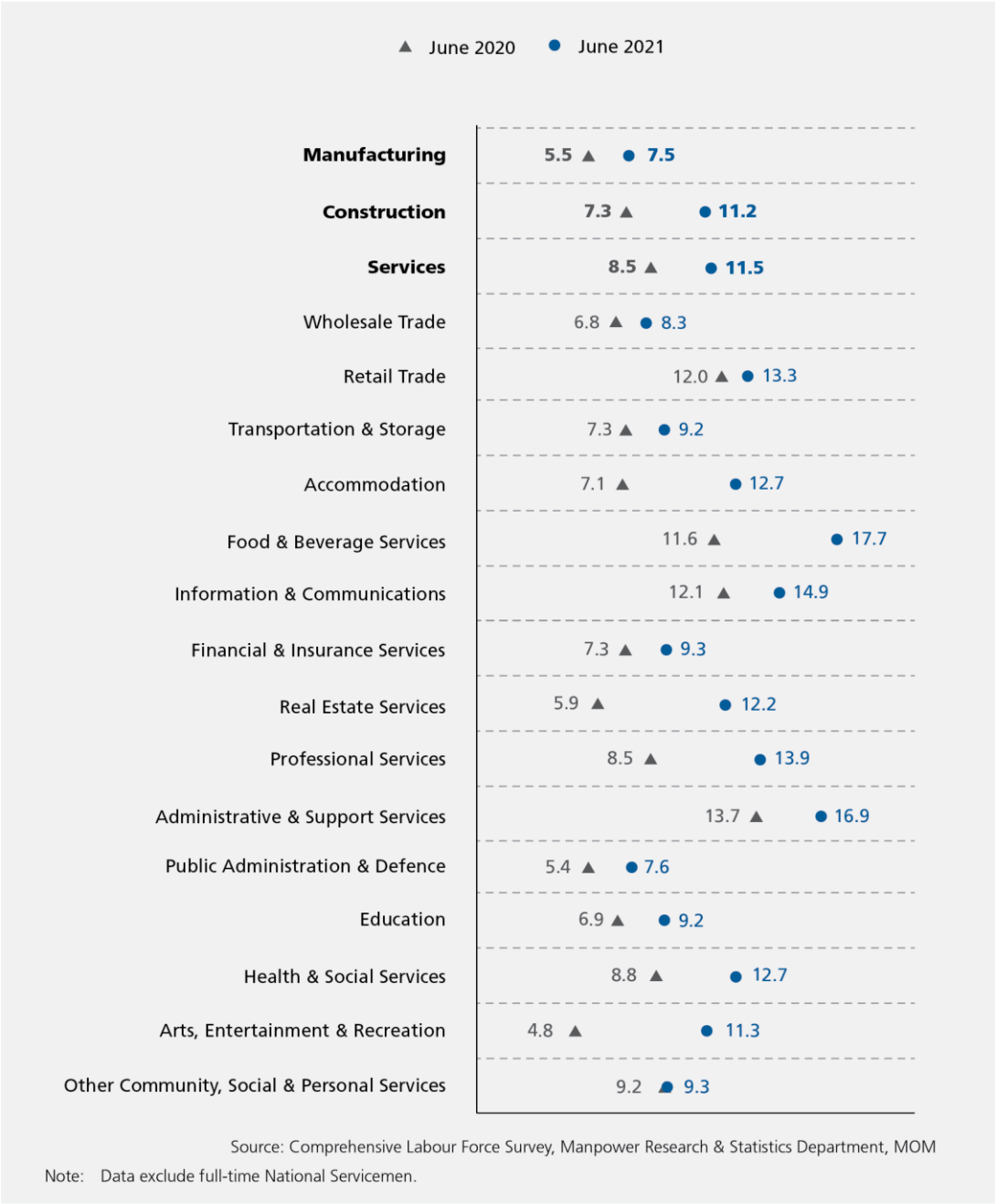
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

4.6 The increase in proportion of residents who had been in their current job for less than six months was led by the rebound in sectors more severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, such as *Arts, Entertainment & Recreation*, *Real Estate*, *Food & Beverage Services* and *Accommodation*. We also observed large increases in growth sectors such as *Health & Social Services* and *Information & Communications*. This reflects continued strong demand for healthcare manpower due to population ageing, ramping up of healthcare and vaccination capacities; and accelerated trends in digitalisation.

Chart 39 Proportion of resident employees who had worked for less than six months in their current job by industry

Per Cent



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

Note: Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

5. Usual Hours Worked

Average usual hours worked of full-timers continued to decline

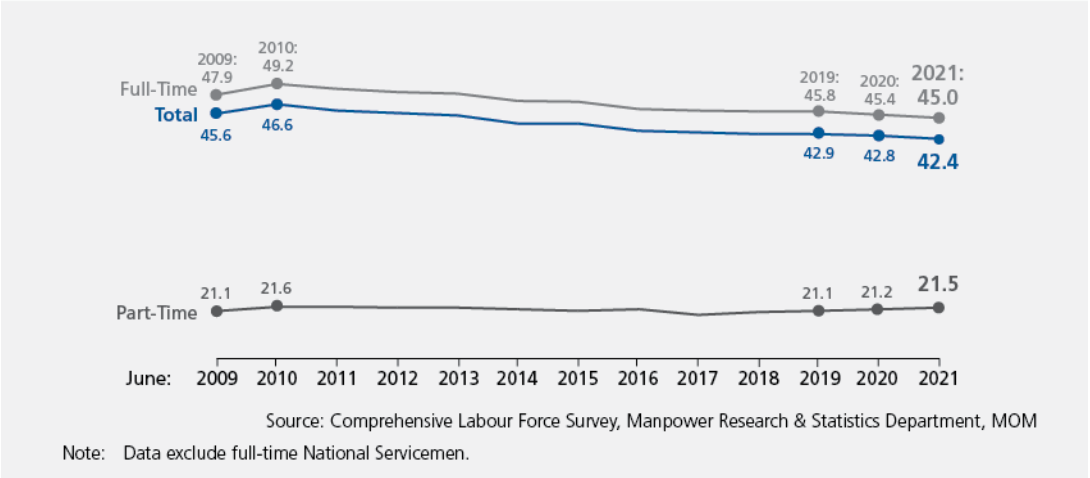
5.1 The average weekly usual hours worked of employed residents declined from 42.8 hours in 2020 to 42.4 hours in 2021,[24] continuing a downtrend we have observed over the decade. The underlying downtrend reflect greater value workers place on work-life harmony, and more companies offering flexible work arrangements.[25] This increased flexibility help workers better manage their commitments while maintaining productivity. Productivity gains made via technological advancements over time also contributed to the downtrend in working hours.

5.2 Much of the movement at the overall level is reflective of the decline in working hours among full-timers, who make up the vast majority of employed residents. Full-timers continued to put in fewer hours of work in 2021. The average weekly usual hours worked among full-time employed residents was 45.0 hours in 2021, lower than 45.4 hours in 2020. The decline was observed across industries[26] which is reflective of the underlying downtrend which we have observed since 2010. However, in some industries, there were higher than average declines in usual hours worked – e.g. in *Transportation & Storage*, *Food & Beverage Services*, *Arts, Entertainment & Recreation*, *Accommodation* and *Retail Trade*. The bigger decline reflects the on-going dining and travel restrictions which have impacted the volume of work available.

5.3 The average usual hours worked among part-timers has edged up in recent years. However, the trend over the decade has remained broadly stable. Reflecting a general increase in economic activity, part-timers put in more hours of work across most industries over the year, except for sectors affected by the on-going restrictions such as *Accommodation*, *Transportation & Storage* and *Wholesale Trade*.

Chart 40 Average (mean) usual hours worked per week of employed residents by nature of employment

Hours Per Week



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

Note: Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

[24] The Labour Market Report Second Quarter 2021 reported that there was an increase in average weekly total paid hours worked per employee in June 2021. This was due to more pronounced declines in average weekly total paid hours (-1.3 hours) compared to weekly usual hours worked (-0.1 hour) in June 2020, as employees experienced temporary decreases in working hours at the height of COVID-19 restrictions in June 2020. Comparing the change between June 2019 and June 2021, both average usual hours worked per week and average weekly paid hours worked per employee declined, and by a similar magnitude.

[25] Based on results from a statistical model published in the Conditions of Employment 2018 report, flexible work arrangements was the top factor that affected firms' resignation rates.

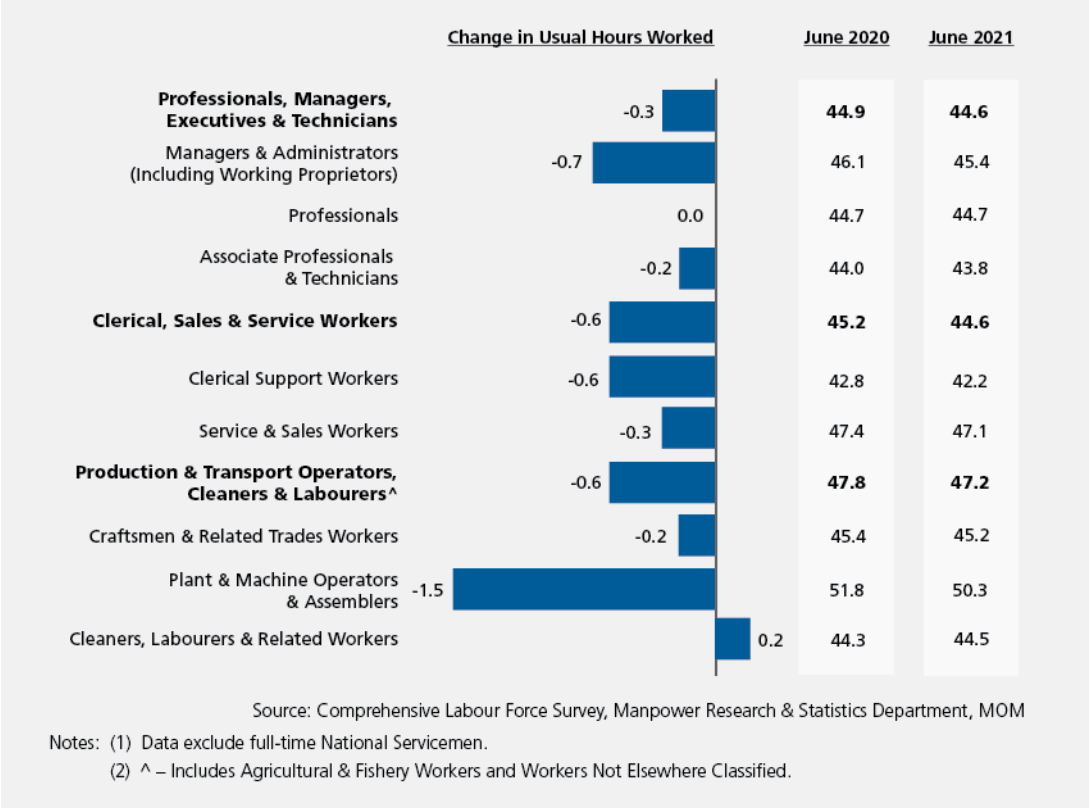
[26] Except in *Information & Communications* where the average usual hours worked edged up slightly over the year (+0.1 hour), and *Education* where it was unchanged from a year ago.

Average usual hours worked of full-timers declined across occupational groups, except for cleaners, labourers & related workers which edged up over the year

5.4 Among full-timers, the average usual hours worked per week declined across occupational groups over the year, except a slight increase among *cleaners, labourers & related workers*.[27] This reflects demand for more frequent cleaning and disinfection in commercial and industrial buildings due to the COVID-19 situation, and longer working hours among manufacturing labourers and attendants in the healthcare sector. In contrast, *plant & machine operators & assemblers* posted a larger decline over the year.

Chart 41 Change in average (mean) usual hours worked per week of full-time employed residents by occupation

Hours Per Week



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

Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
(2) ^ – Includes Agricultural & Fishery Workers and Workers Not Elsewhere Classified.

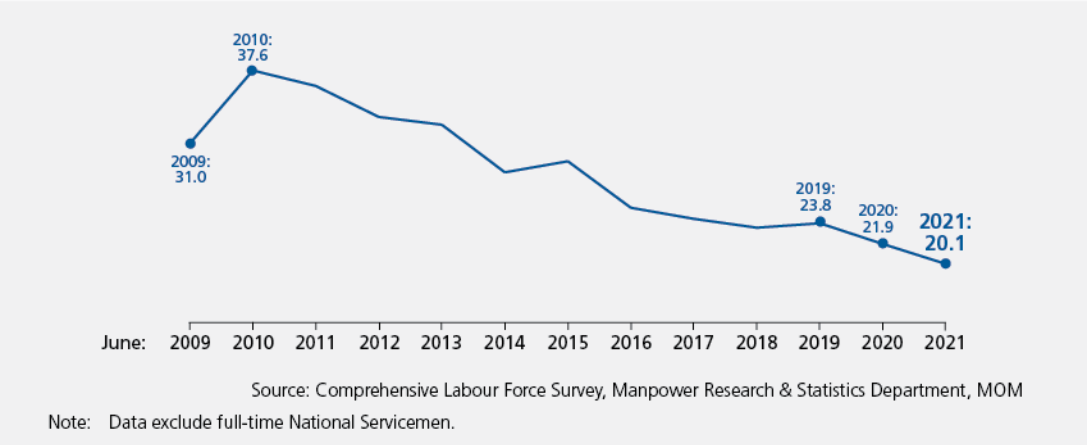
[27] For professionals, average usual hours worked was unchanged over the year.

Proportion of full-timers working long hours continued to decrease

5.5 Long working hours can have an impact on workers' well-being, family life, and productivity. The proportion of full-time employed residents who usually worked over 48 hours a week has trended down from the peak of 38% in 2010 and continued to decrease from 22% in 2020 to 20% in 2021. The decrease in the recent year was observed across most industries. However, the proportion of full-timers usually working more than 48 hours a week in *Health & Social Services* edged up from 13.7% to 14.0%, reflecting the impact of the pandemic.[28]

Chart 42 Proportion of full-time employed residents who usually worked more than 48 hours per week

Per Cent



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

Note: Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

[28] The proportion of full-timers usually working more than 48 hours a week also edged up slightly in *Wholesale Trade* (from 15.1% to 15.3%) and *Education* (from 22.0% to 22.1%).

6. Working from Home Due to COVID-19 Situation

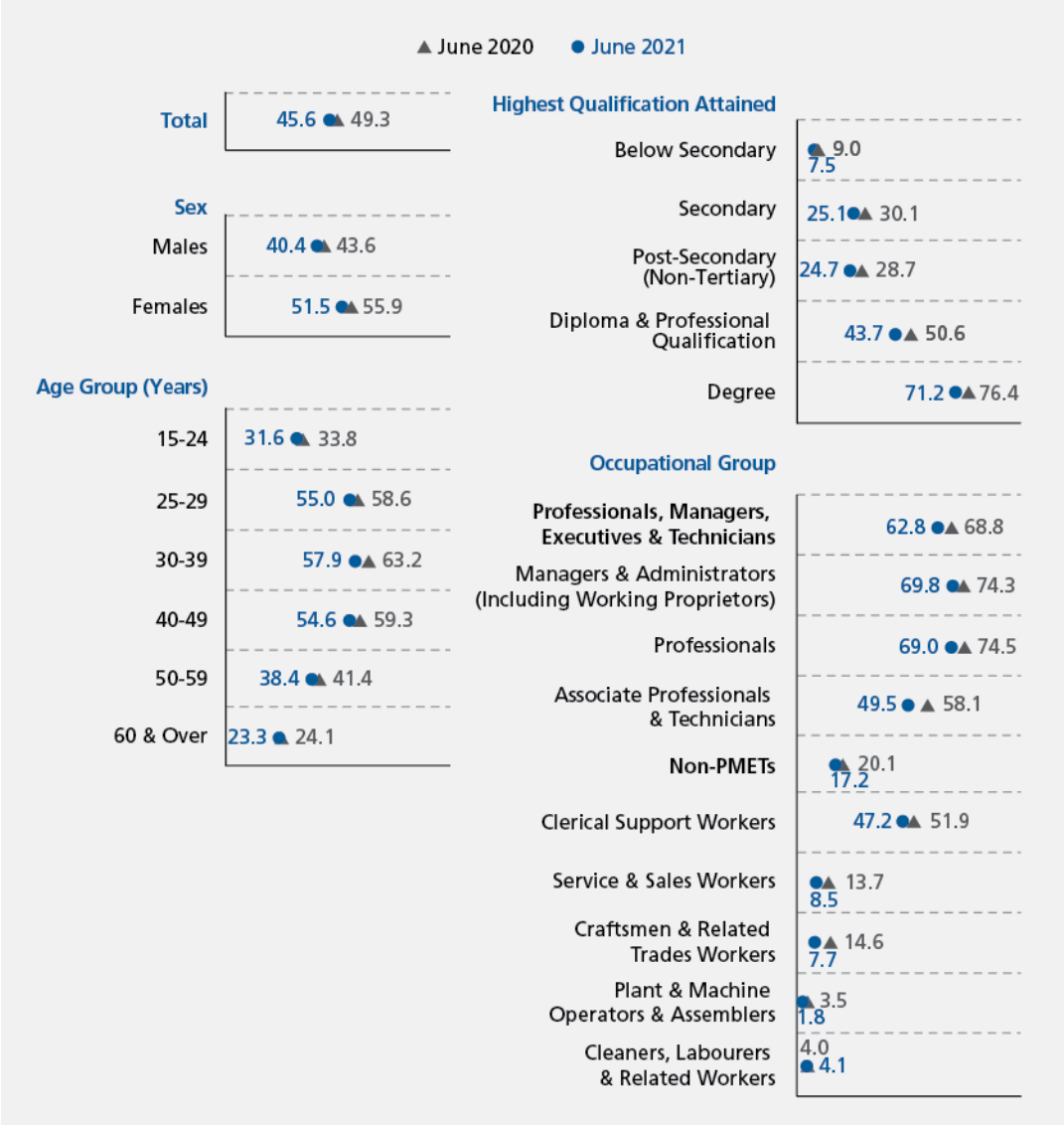
Working from home remained prevalent, with larger decreases in industries with greater need for workers to be on-site

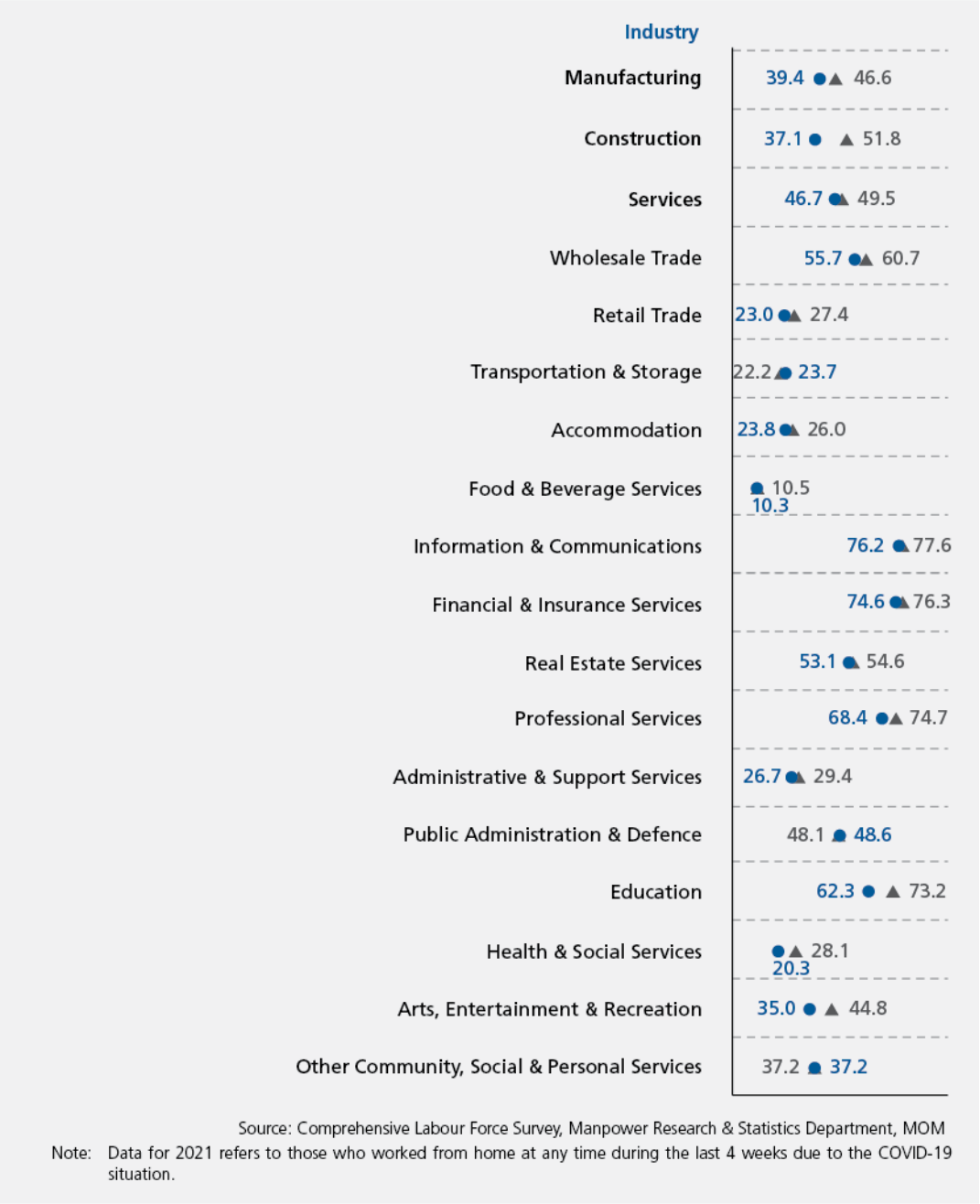
6.1 The proportion of employed residents who worked from home due to the COVID-19 situation remained high at 46% in June 2021, as this was the default work arrangement for workers who could do so. This is lower than the 49% a year ago, as more workplaces allowed more workers on site.

6.2 Industries where there is greater need for workers to be on site, use specialised equipment or require face-to-face interactions saw more workers returning to the physical workplace. Hence, *Construction*, *Education*, *Arts, Entertainment & Recreation*, *Health & Social Services*, *Manufacturing* and *Professional Services* saw the largest decrease in proportion of workers working from home.

Chart 43 Proportion of employed residents who worked from home because of COVID-19 situation

Per Cent





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

Note: Data for 2021 refers to those who worked from home at any time during the last 4 weeks due to the COVID-19 situation.

7. Income

Higher inflation dampened improvements in income growth

7.1 The nominal median income of full-time employed residents grew from $4,534 in 2020 to $4,680 in 2021 (3.2%), after decreasing in 2020 (-0.6%). After adjusting for inflation,[29] real median income growth was smaller but remained positive at 0.9% in 2021, more than offsetting the decline of 0.4% in 2020.

Income at the 20th percentile rebounded, and surpassed pre-COVID levels after including government transfers

7.2 Income at the 20th percentile of full-time employed residents rose by 4.4% in real terms in 2021, and recovered to around its pre-COVID level. After including Workfare Income Supplement (WIS)-related payouts, the 20th percentile income surpassed its pre-COVID level by 0.5% p.a.[P].[30] WIS and the Workfare Special Payment (WSP) also helped stabilise the ratio of income at the median to 20th percentile in the last two years during the pandemic.

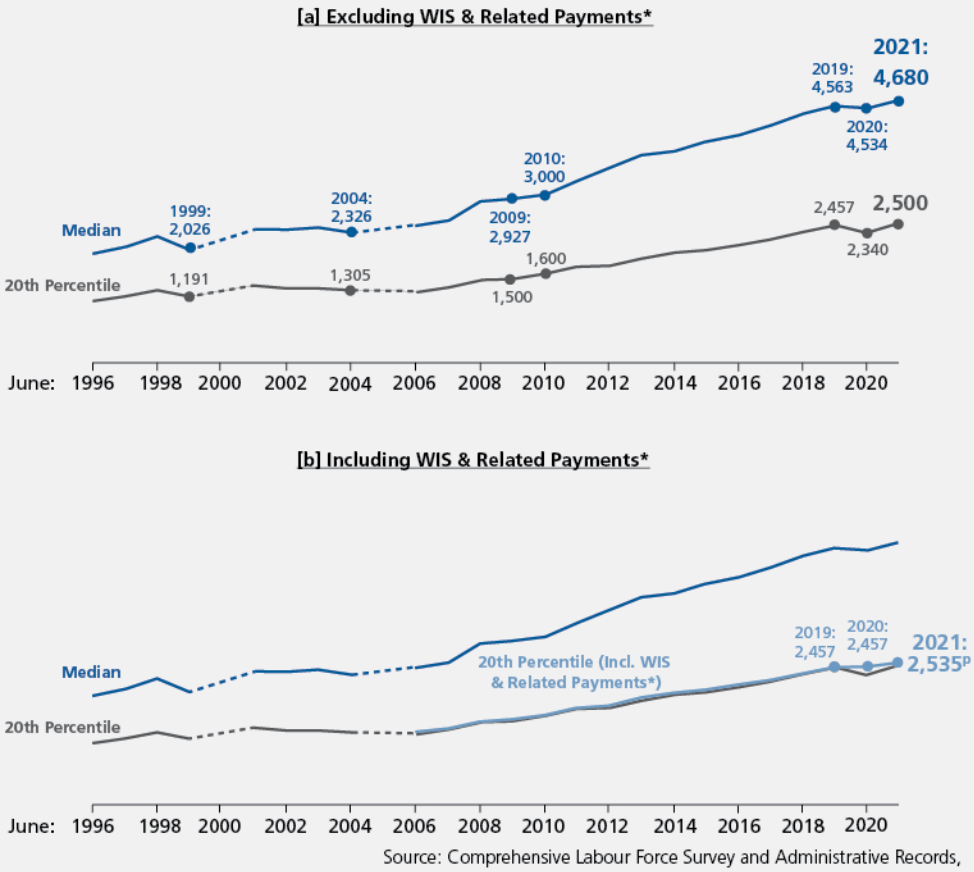
7.3 When compared over a five-year period (2016 to 2021), real income growth for middle- and lower-income earners remained positive. Real income growth at the 20th percentile (2.7% p.a.) of full-time employed residents was higher than the median income growth (2.1% p.a.).

[29] The Consumer Price Index for all items increased by 2.3% over the year in 2021. Source: Singapore Department of Statistics

[30] Data on WIS and related payouts (such as WSP) are preliminary, based on latest available data.

Chart 44 Gross monthly income from work (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) * – Includes Workfare Income Supplement (WIS), Workfare Special Payment (WSP), Workfare Bicentennial Bonus, Workfare Bonus and Workfare Special Bonus, which started from 2006.

(2) P – Preliminary, based on latest available data for WIS and related payments.

(3) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

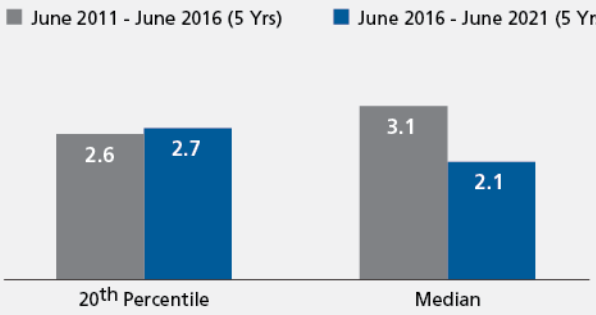
(4) The Comprehensive Labour Force Survey was not conducted in 2000 and 2005 due to the conduct of the Census of Population 2000 and General Household Survey 2005 by the Department of Statistics.

(5) Before 2009, full-time refers to employment where the normal hours of work is at least 30 hours per week. From 2009 onwards, it refers to employment where the normal hours of work is at least 35 hours per week.

(6) As data are captured from a sample survey, year-on-year income changes are prone to fluctuations and hence should always be interpreted with caution. Income growth studied over longer periods (e.g. 5 or 10 years) smooths out these fluctuations and hence provide a more direct indication of income growth.

Chart 45 Annualised change in real* gross monthly income from work (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.

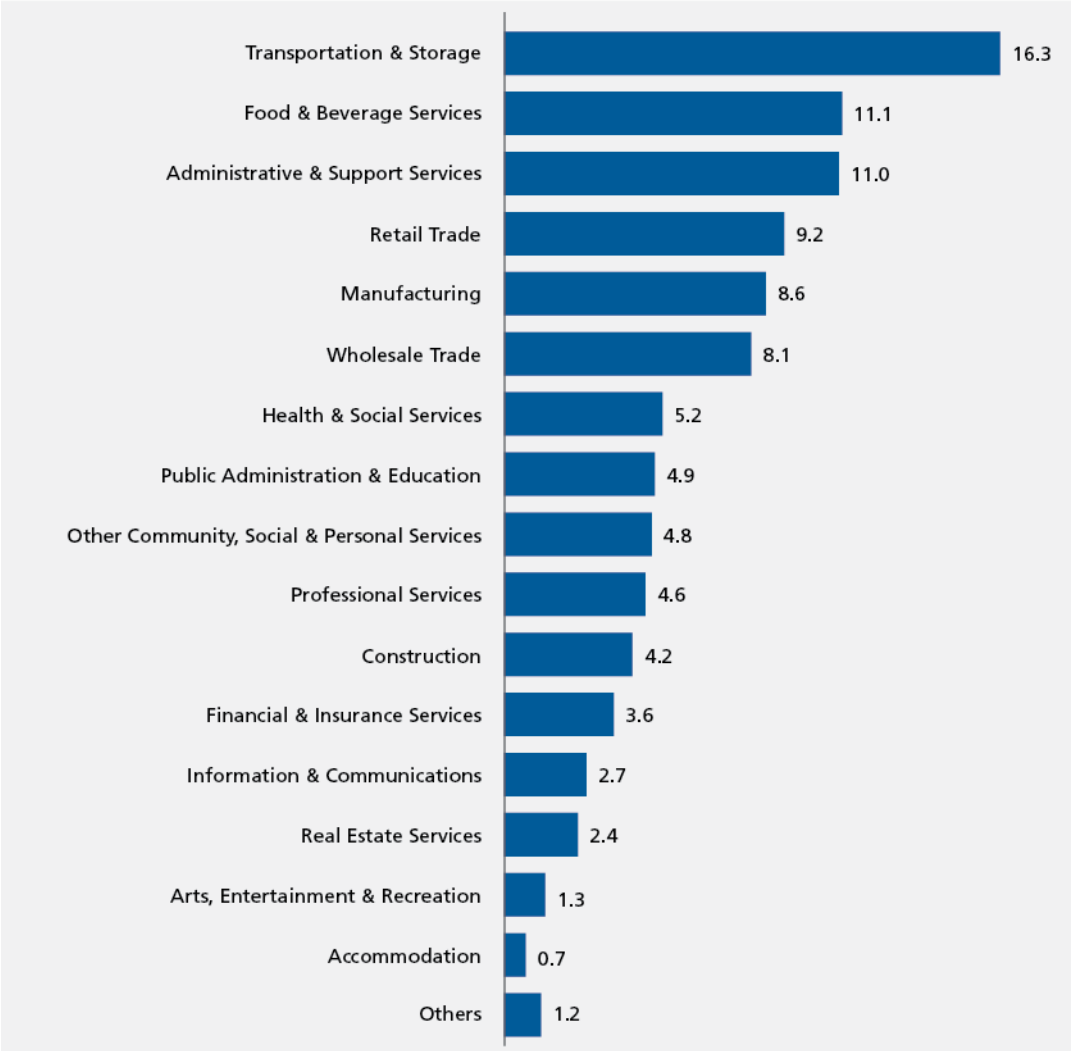
(2) * – Deflated by Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all items at 2019 prices (2019 = 100).

7.4 Lower-wage workers[31] numbered 402,200 in 2021, of which one in four (100,800) were self-employed and three in four (301,400) were employees.

7.5 Lower-wage workers were commonly employed in *Transportation & Storage* (16%) (e.g. taxi drivers, private-hire car drivers), *Food & Beverage Services* (11%) (e.g. food & drink stall assistants, hawkers, waiters), *Administrative & Support Services* (11%) (e.g. cleaners, security officers), *Retail Trade* (9.2%) (e.g. shop sales assistants, cashiers) and *Manufacturing* (8.6%) (e.g. clerks).

Chart 46 Distribution of full-time employed residents with gross monthly income from work (excluding employer CPF contributions) at or below $2,200 by industry, June 2021

Per Cent



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

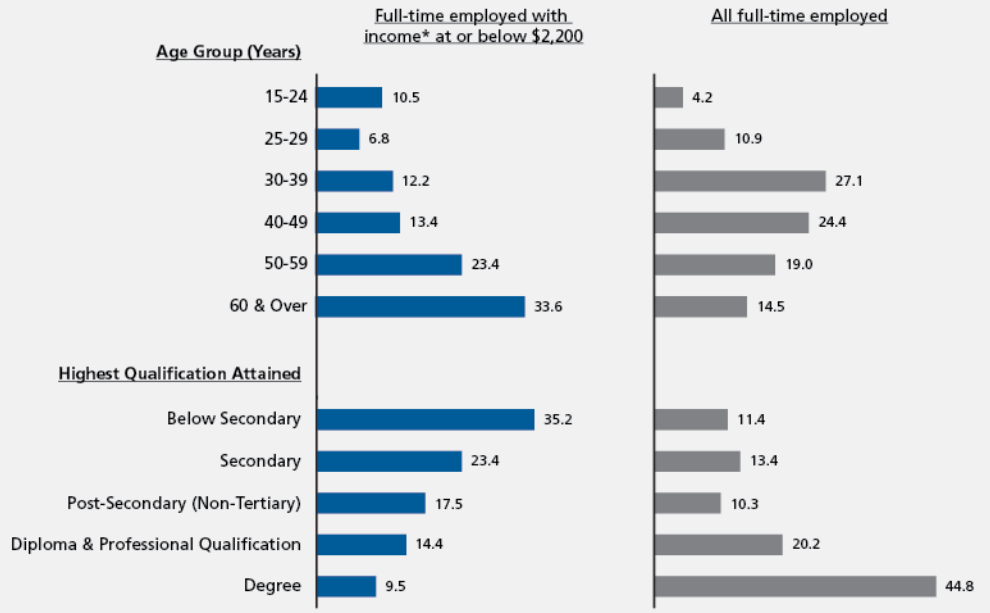
Notes: (1) Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.
(2) Others include Agriculture, Fishing, Quarrying, Utilities and Sewerage & Waste Management.
(3) Data may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

[31] Proxied by full-time employed residents earning less than or equal to the 20th percentile gross monthly income (excluding employer CPF contributions), which was $2,200 in June 2021.

7.6 Most of the lower-wage workers were older workers aged 50 & over, or lower-educated residents with secondary or lower qualifications. The older and lower-educated formed a higher share among lower-wage workers than among all full-time employed residents. Even though they earn relatively lower income, home ownership among the lower-wage workers is high. Over nine in ten (91%) lower-wage workers stayed in a house owned by themselves or their household members, most commonly in HDB 4-room flats (39%).

Chart 47 Distribution of full-time employed residents by age group and highest qualification attained, June 2021

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 work (excluding employer CPF contributions).
(3) Data by age/highest qualification attained may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

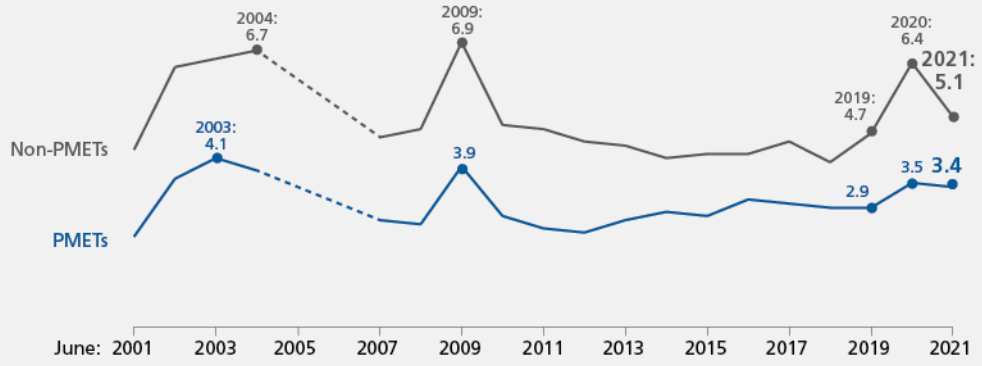
8. Unemployment[32]

Unemployment rates improved, particularly among non-PMETs, though they have yet to decrease to pre-COVID rates

8.1 The unemployment rate (non-seasonally adjusted)[33] for non-PMETs improved significantly by 1.3%-points, from 6.4% in 2020 to 5.1% in 2021. The unemployment rate for PMETs also edged down from 3.5% to 3.4%. Unemployment rates improved in most age groups, except that it rose for PMETs and non-PMETs in their 40s, contributed by more leaving their last jobs because they were dissatisfied with some aspects of the job.[34] Nevertheless, unemployment rates remained above pre-COVID rates.

Chart 48 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 2005 due to the conduct of the General Household Survey 2005 by the 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.

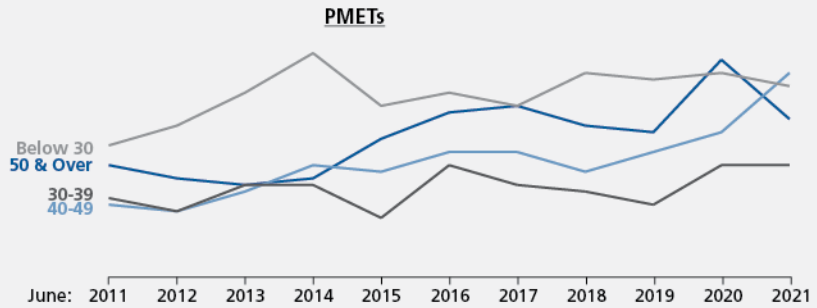
[32] Top-line seasonally adjusted unemployment rates are reported monthly, with breakdown by age and highest qualification attained available quarterly. With a larger sample size, the CLFS enables us to collect additional information of unemployment rates by occupation and industry. For analysis of unemployment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

[33] 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.

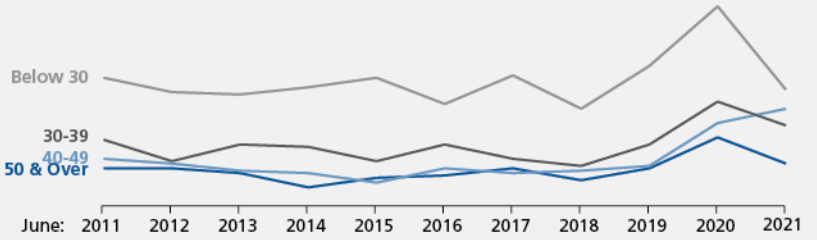
[34] There was an increase in unemployed PMETs and non-PMETs in their 40s who left their last job due to dissatisfaction with working hours, demanding work, pay, working conditions, lack of interest, or poor use of their skills/qualifications.

Chart 49 Unemployment rate of resident PMETs and non-PMETs by age

Per Cent



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Below 30	3.0	3.3	3.8	4.4	3.6	3.8	3.6	4.1	4.0	4.1	3.9
30-39	2.2	2.0	2.4	2.4	1.9	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.1	2.7	2.7
40-49	2.1	2.0	2.3	2.7	2.6	2.9	2.9	2.6	2.9	3.2	4.1
50 & Over	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.5	3.1	3.5	3.6	3.3	3.2	4.3	3.4



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Below 30	7.5	6.9	6.8	7.1	7.5	6.4	7.6	6.2	8.0	10.5	7.0
30-39	4.9	4.0	4.7	4.6	4.0	4.7	4.1	3.8	4.7	6.5	5.5
40-49	4.1	3.9	3.6	3.5	3.1	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.8	5.6	6.2
50 & Over	3.7	3.7	3.5	2.9	3.3	3.4	3.7	3.2	3.7	5.0	3.9

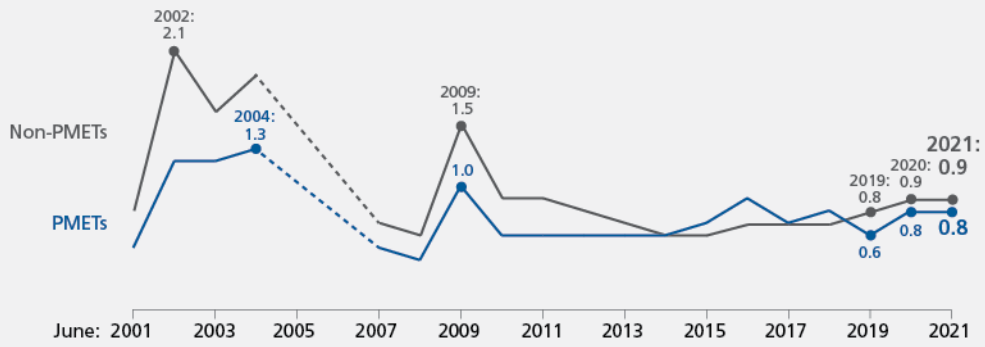
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Note: See notes 1 to 3 for Chart 48.

8.2 The long-term unemployment rates for PMETs and non-PMETs remained unchanged in 2021, after increasing in 2020. The rates improved for residents aged below 30, but mostly rose in other age groups. Additionally, the long-term unemployment rates remained relatively higher among residents aged 40 & over. The elevated long-term unemployment rate compared to pre-COVID suggests that some workers who were displaced earlier on during the pandemic could have faced challenges in their job search.

Chart 50 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.

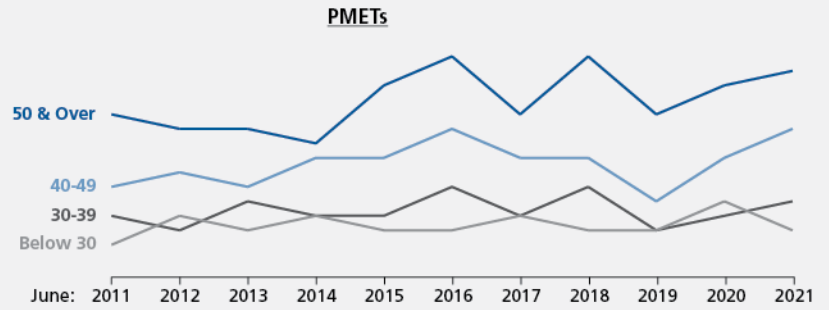
(3) Data are classified based on Singapore Standard Occupational Classification (SSOC) 2020. Data before year 2020 which were coded based on earlier versions of the SSOC were mapped to SSOC 2020 as far as possible to facilitate data comparability.

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

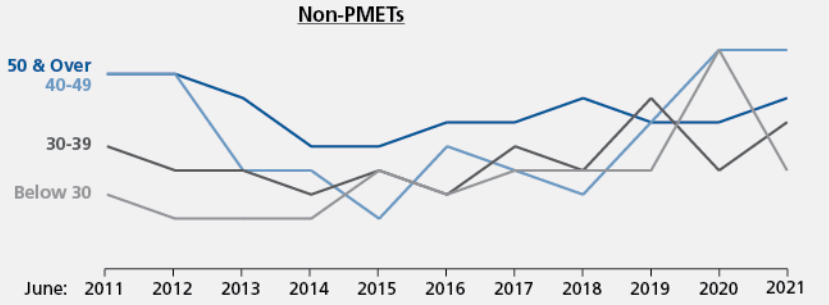
(5) Data for 2006 are not available, as the level of occupational detail collected in 2006 did not support mapping to the latest version of the SSOC.

Chart 51 Long-term unemployment rate of resident PMETs and non-PMETs by age

Per Cent



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Below 30	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.3
30-39	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.5
40-49	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.5	0.8	1.0
50 & Over	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.3	1.5	1.1	1.5	1.1	1.3	1.4



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Below 30	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.1	0.6
30-39	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.6	0.8
40-49	1.0	1.0	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.8	1.1	1.1
50 & Over	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9

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

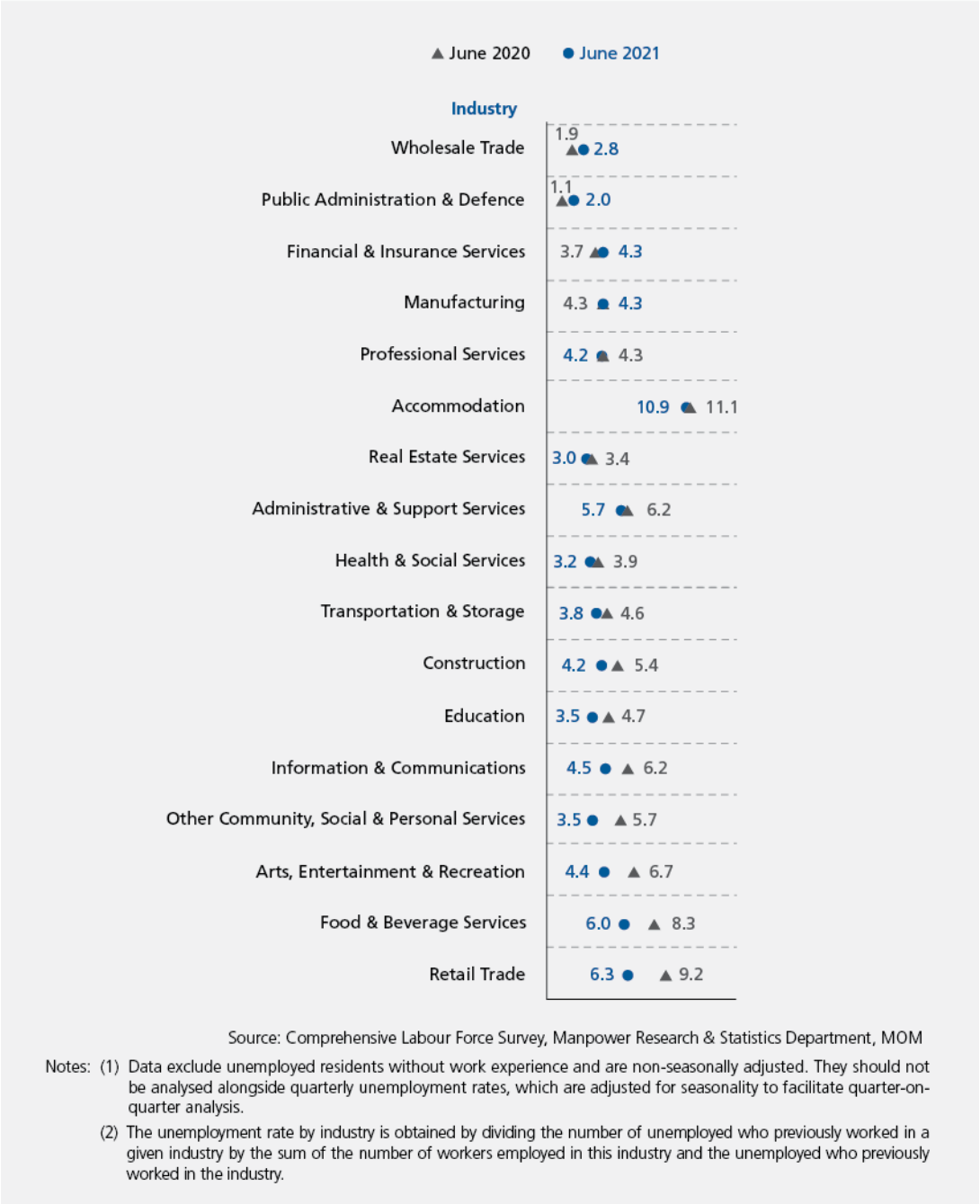
Note: See notes 1 to 3 for Chart 50.

8.3 Unemployment rates improved across most industries in 2021, with stronger improvements among industries that experienced higher increases in 2020 such as *Retail Trade*, *Food & Beverage Services*, *Other Community, Social & Personal Services*, *Construction* and *Education*. The unemployment rate eased slightly in *Accommodation*, but remained relatively high due to the impact of international travel restrictions and low visitor arrivals. Meanwhile, unemployment rate rose further in *Wholesale Trade* and *Financial & Insurance Services*, as more left their last jobs due to factors such as pay, working hours and demands of the job, amid an increase in job vacancies[35] due to the economic recovery.

[35] As reported in the Labour Market Report Second Quarter 2021, the number of job vacancies rose from 3,800 in June 2020 to 5,500 in June 2021 in *Wholesale Trade*, and from 4,500 to 7,000 in *Financial & Insurance Services*. There were also increases in job vacancies in many other industries.

Chart 52 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.

Fewer unemployed left their last job involuntarily as economy recovers

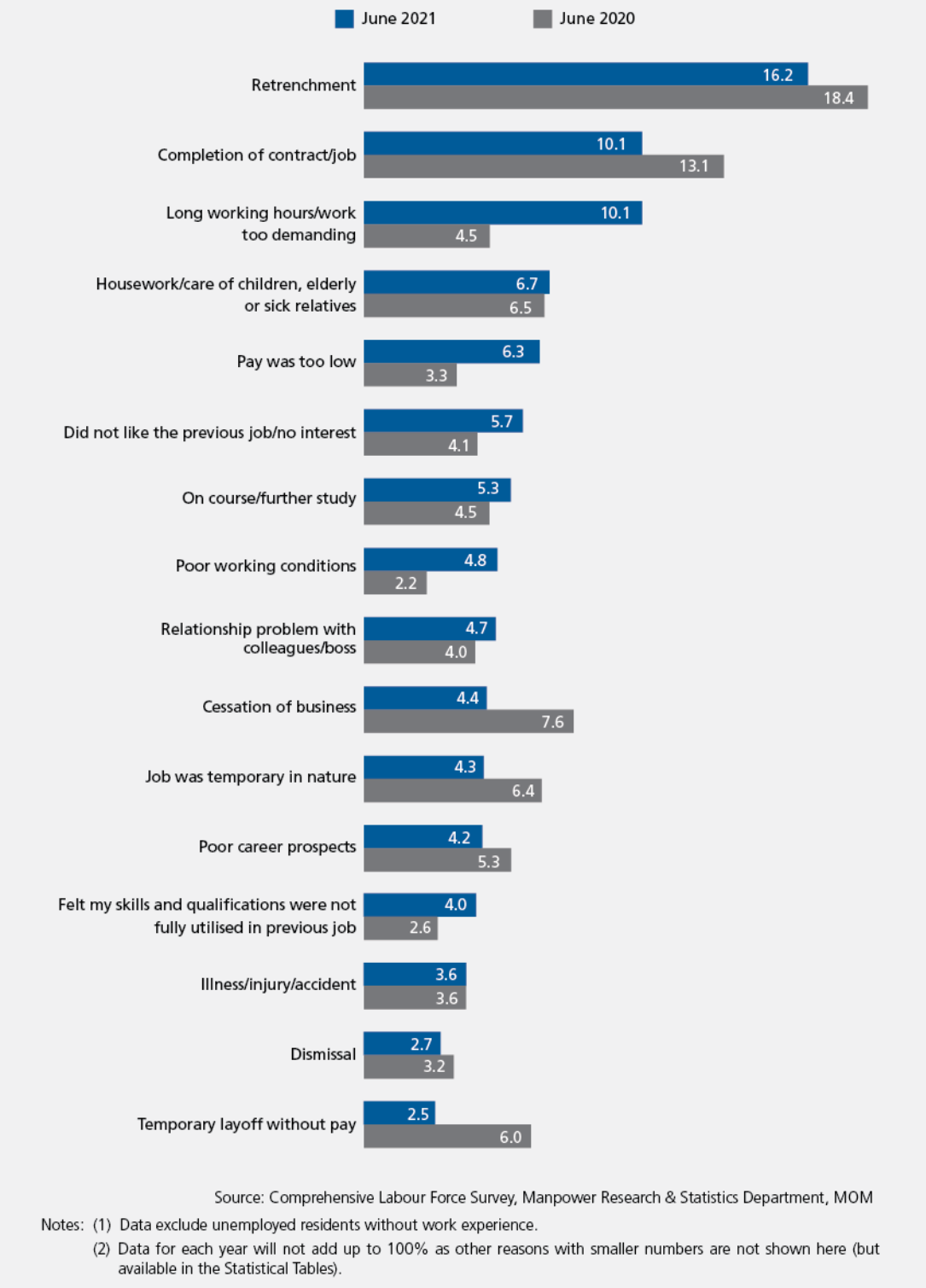
8.4 Reflecting the economic recovery, the share of unemployed residents[36] who left their last job due to *retrenchment* (from 18% to 16%), *cessation of business* (from 7.6% to 4.4%) and *temporary layoff without pay* (from 6.0% to 2.5%) decreased over the year. However, the shares for *retrenchment* and *temporary layoff without pay* were still higher than the pre-COVID shares in 2019 (11% and 0.5% respectively). The share of unemployed who left their last job due to these three reasons decreased for both PMETs and non-PMETs.

[36] Based on unemployed residents who had worked before.

8.5 Meanwhile, an increased number and share of unemployed left their last job due to dissatisfaction with *long working hours/demanding work*, *low pay* or *working conditions*. This was observed for both PMETs and non-PMETs. As job opportunities rose with the economic recovery, more workers could have been encouraged to look for a more suitable job. Nevertheless, the overall unemployment situation has improved, and resignation rate and prevalence of job change have not risen above their pre-COVID levels.

Chart 53 Main reason for leaving last job among unemployed residents

Per Cent



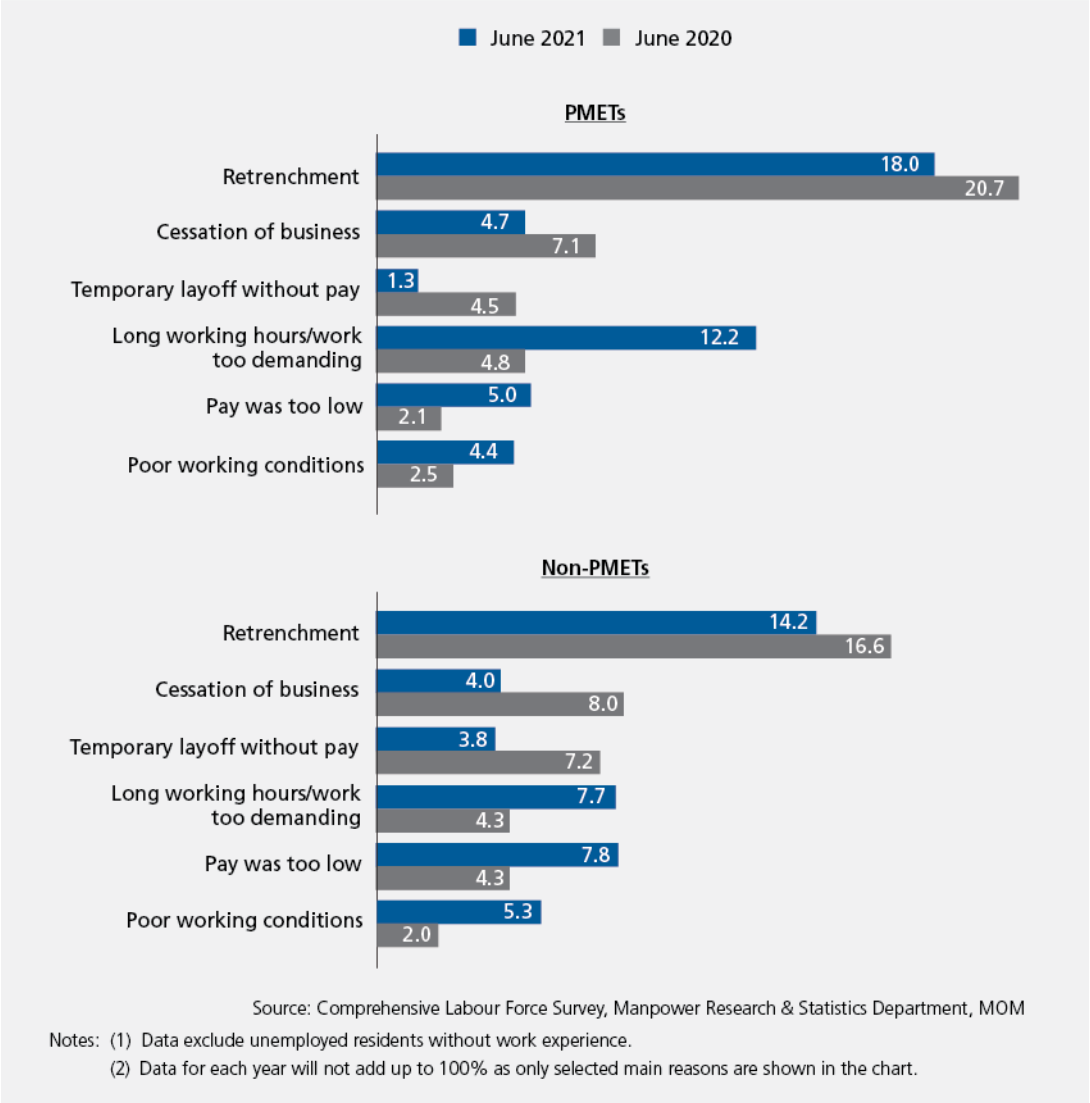
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

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 54 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.

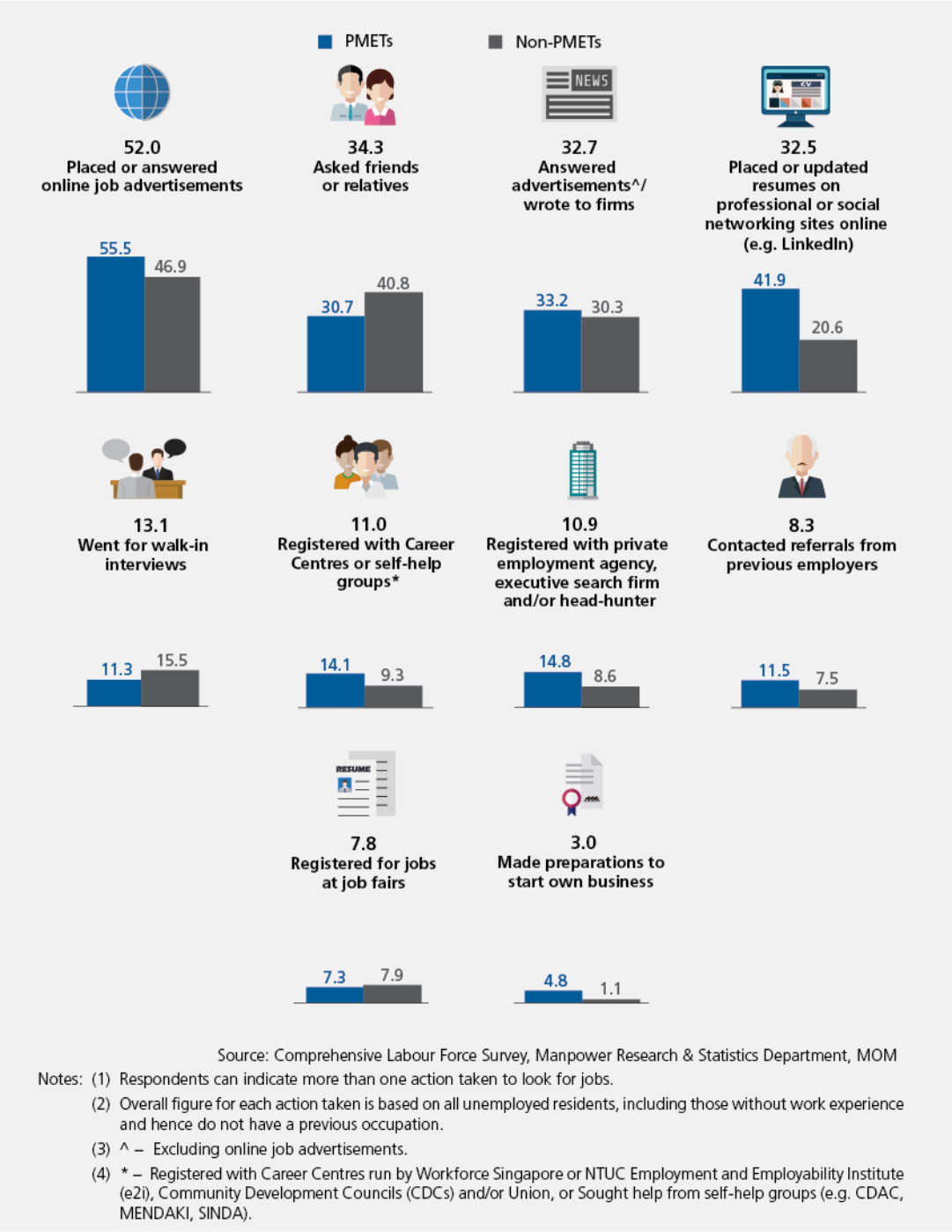
Placing/answering online job advertisements overtook asking friends/relatives as the most common mode of job search among non-PMETs

8.6 Amid trends in digitalisation and efforts to support the population in picking up digital skills, placing/answering online job advertisements (47%) overtook asking friends/relatives (41%) as the most common mode of job search among non-PMETs. The proportion of unemployed non-PMETs who placed/updated resumes on professional/social networking sites also increased in the recent two years. More unemployed non-PMETs went for walk-in interviews than a year ago as more physical workplaces re-opened after the Circuit Breaker, though the share remained lower than in pre-COVID periods. However, fewer of them registered for jobs at job fairs, reflecting the impact of safe management measures.

8.7 Among unemployed PMETs, job search via online modes i.e. placing/answering online advertisements (56%) and placing/updating resumes on professional/social networking sites (42%) remained most common. We observed an increased share of unemployed PMETs registering with Career Centres run by Workforce Singapore (WSG)/NTUC e2i or seeking help from self-help groups in the recent two years. Public career-matching services were beefed up to support job seekers during the pandemic, which could have encouraged more PMETs to tap on this mode of job search.

Chart 55 Unemployed residents by modes of job search and previous occupation, June 2021

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).

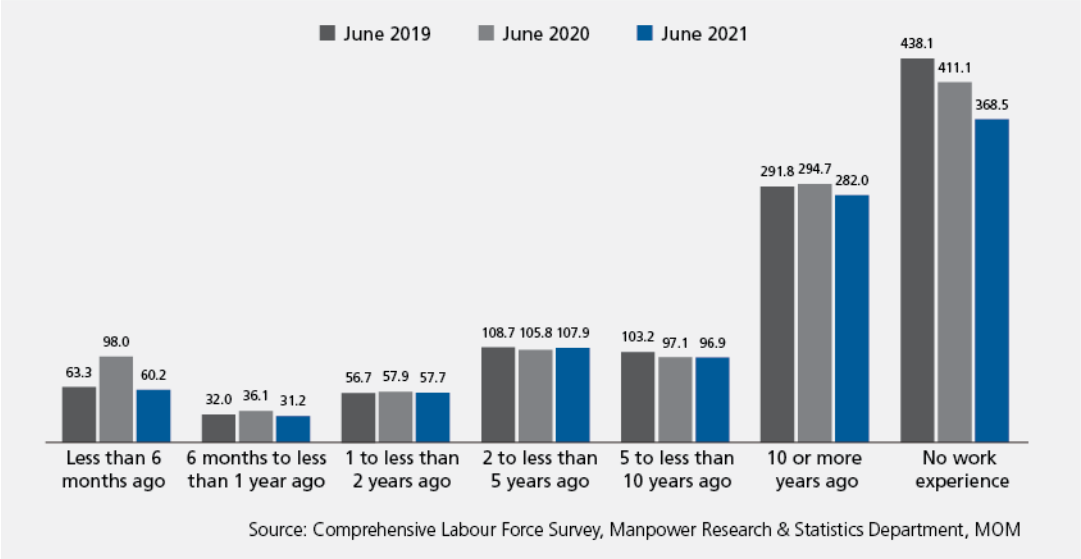
9. Persons Outside the Labour Force

Large decrease in residents outside the labour force, as labour force participation rate rose significantly

9.1 With the labour force participation rate increasing significantly, there was a correspondingly large decrease in number of residents outside the labour force from 1,100,800 in 2020 to 1,004,400 in 2021. This reflects a sharp fall in number of recent job leavers who were outside the labour force (i.e. those who had left their last jobs within the last six months). The number had risen markedly in 2020 as more left the labour market to pursue education/training or took a break at the height of the COVID-19 restrictions, but decreased in 2021 to around pre-COVID level with the economic recovery. There were also fewer residents outside the labour force without work experience, as more youths participated in the labour force and the numbers in mature age groups gradually trended downwards amid rising female labour force participation.

Chart 56 Residents outside the labour force by when left last job

Number ('000)



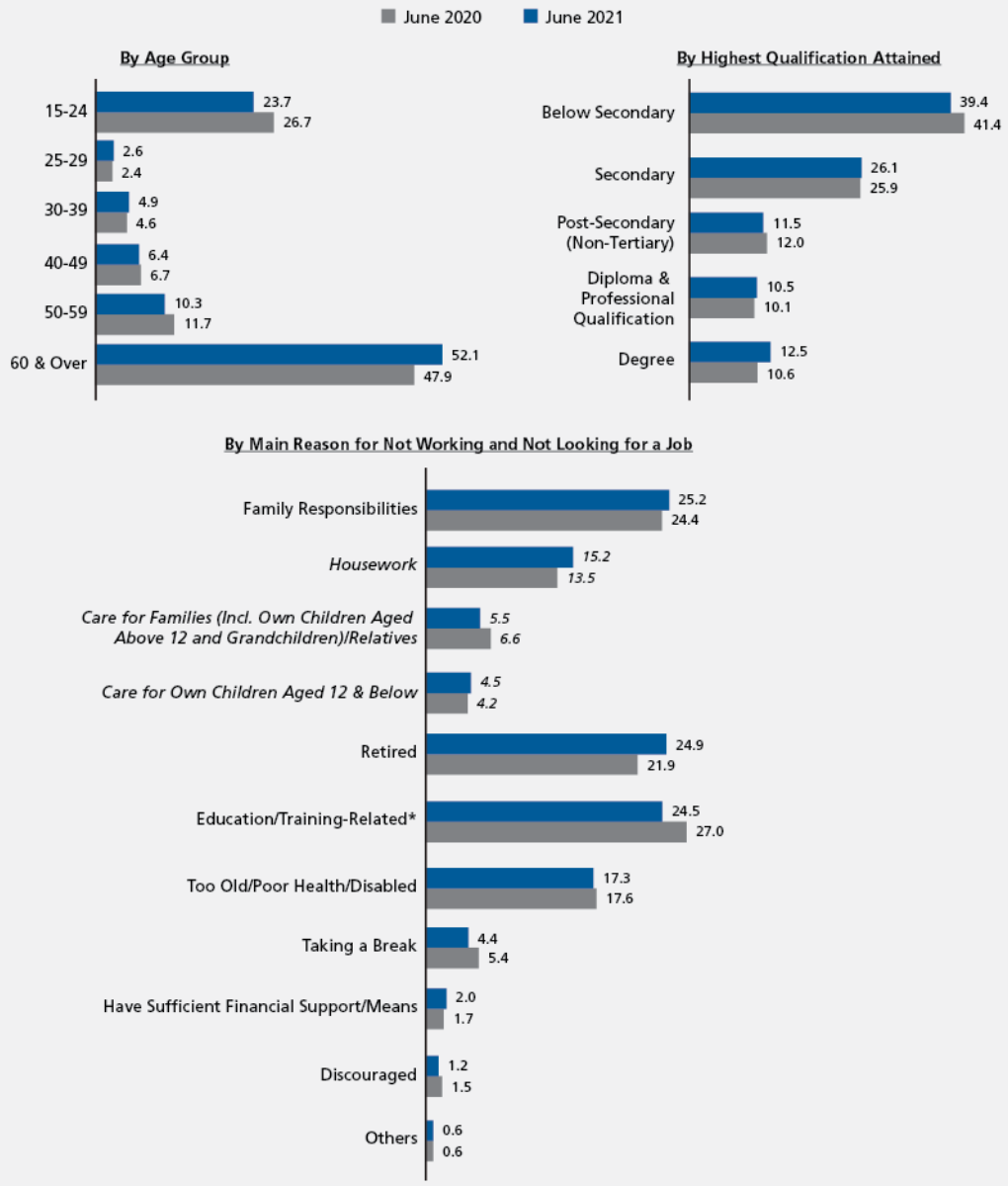
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

9.2 Reflecting the notable increase in youth labour force participation rate and decrease in youth population, the share of those aged 15 to 24 among residents outside the labour force fell from 27% in 2020 to 24% in 2021. On the other hand, the share of seniors aged 60 & over increased from 48% to 52%. This reflects the impact of population ageing, as more baby boomers enter their senior years. Nevertheless, among the resident population aged 60 & over, labour force participation rate continued to trend upwards.

9.3 Reflecting the changes in age profile, the share of residents outside the labour force who were not working because they were retired increased from 22% to 25%, while the share of those pursuing education/training decreased from 27% to 25%. The proportion of residents outside the labour force who were taking a break also decreased, from 5.4% during the height of the COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 to 4.4% in 2021.

Chart 57 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 for the start of academic year, awaiting National Service (NS) call-up, awaiting examination results and attending courses/training.

(2) Discouraged workers are persons outside the labour force who are not actively looking for a job because they believe their job search would not yield results. Reasons cited for being discouraged include: (a) Believes no suitable work available; (b) Employers' discrimination (e.g. prefer younger workers) and (c) Lacks necessary qualification, training, skills or experience.

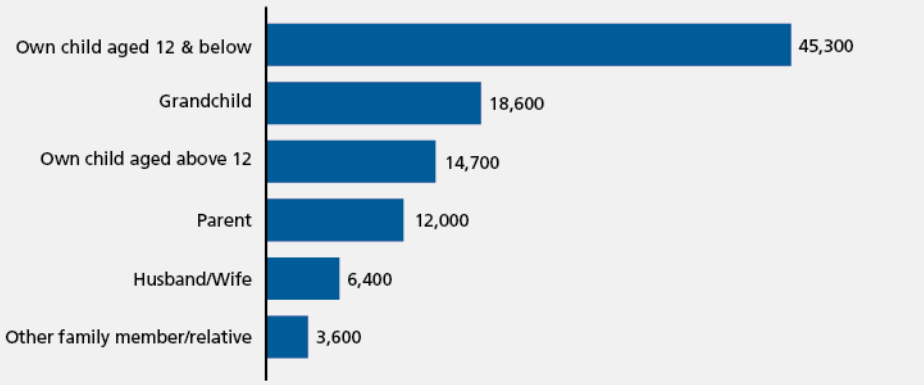
(3) Others refer to less common reasons for being outside the labour force, such as doing voluntary/community work.

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

9.4 100,700 or 10% of the residents outside the labour force in 2021 were not working mainly to take care of their young children or other family members/relatives. This decreased from 119,400 in 2020, reflecting the rising labour force participation among women and seniors who form a larger group among caregivers. Close to half or 45,300 of these caregivers in 2021 were taking care of their child aged 12 & below, and another 14,700 taking care of their child aged above 12. Other common groups of caregivers were those taking care of their grandchild (18,600) or parent (12,000).

Chart 58 Residents outside the labour force mainly due to caregiving by relationship of care recipient to caregiver, June 2021

Number



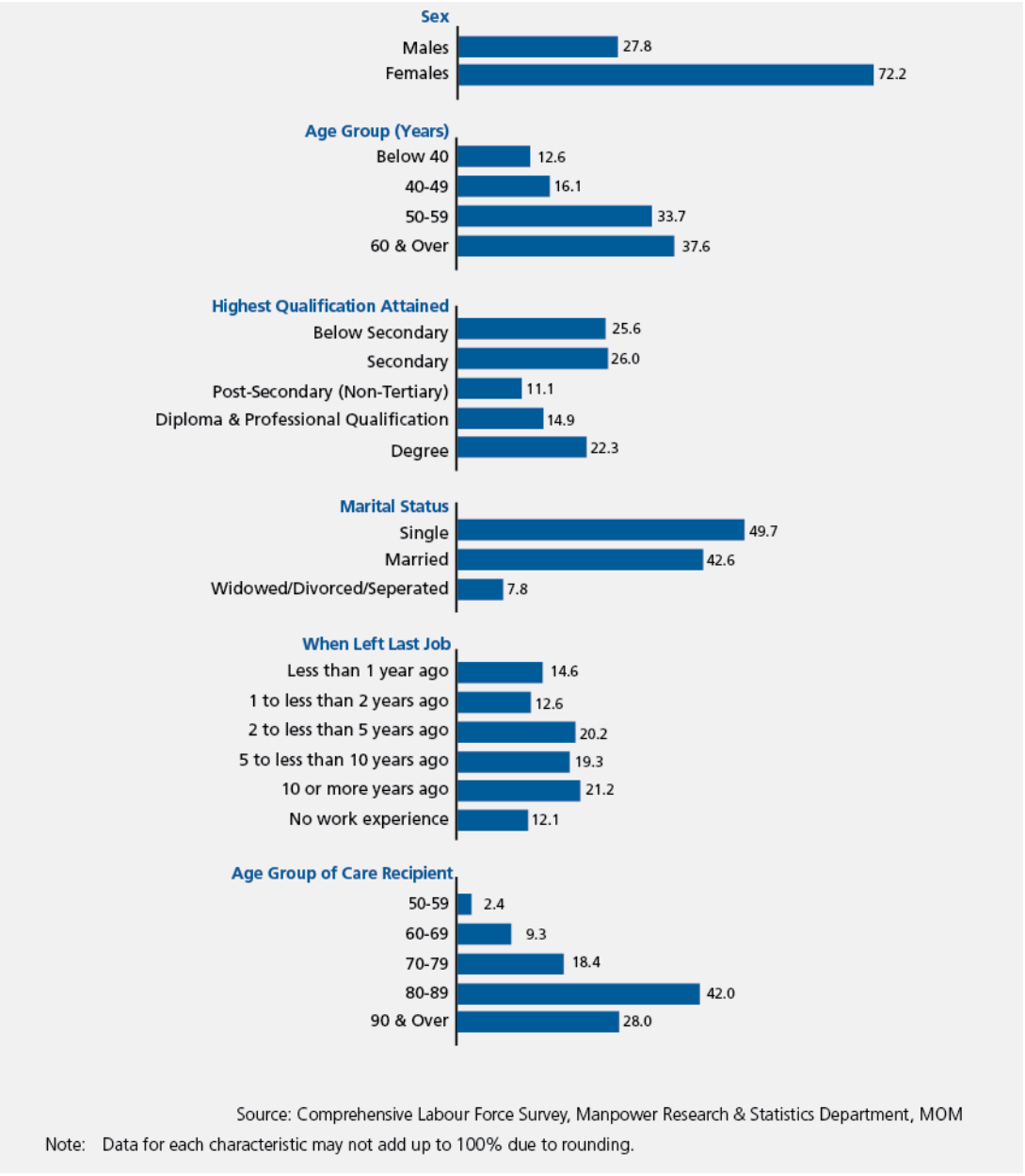
Source: Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

9.5 Residents outside the labour force mainly to take care of their parent were mostly seniors aged 60 & over (38%) or in their 50s (34%). Many of them were taking care of aged parents in their 80s (42%) or older (28%); and slightly over half or 52% of the parents were ill or disabled. Given population ageing and shrinking family sizes, those taking care of their aged parents will likely need additional support in the years ahead.

9.6 Those taking care of their parent tend to have more recent work experience having left their last job for a median of 4 years, compared with the overall median of 7 years.[37] One in two residents outside the labour force to take care of their parent was single (50%), notably higher than one in three (33%) among all residents outside the labour force.[38]

Chart 59 Profile of residents outside the labour force who are not working mainly to take care of parent, June 2021

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.

[37] Among those outside the labour force with work experience.

[38] This was also higher than the share of singles in the working-age resident population aged 15 & over (31%).

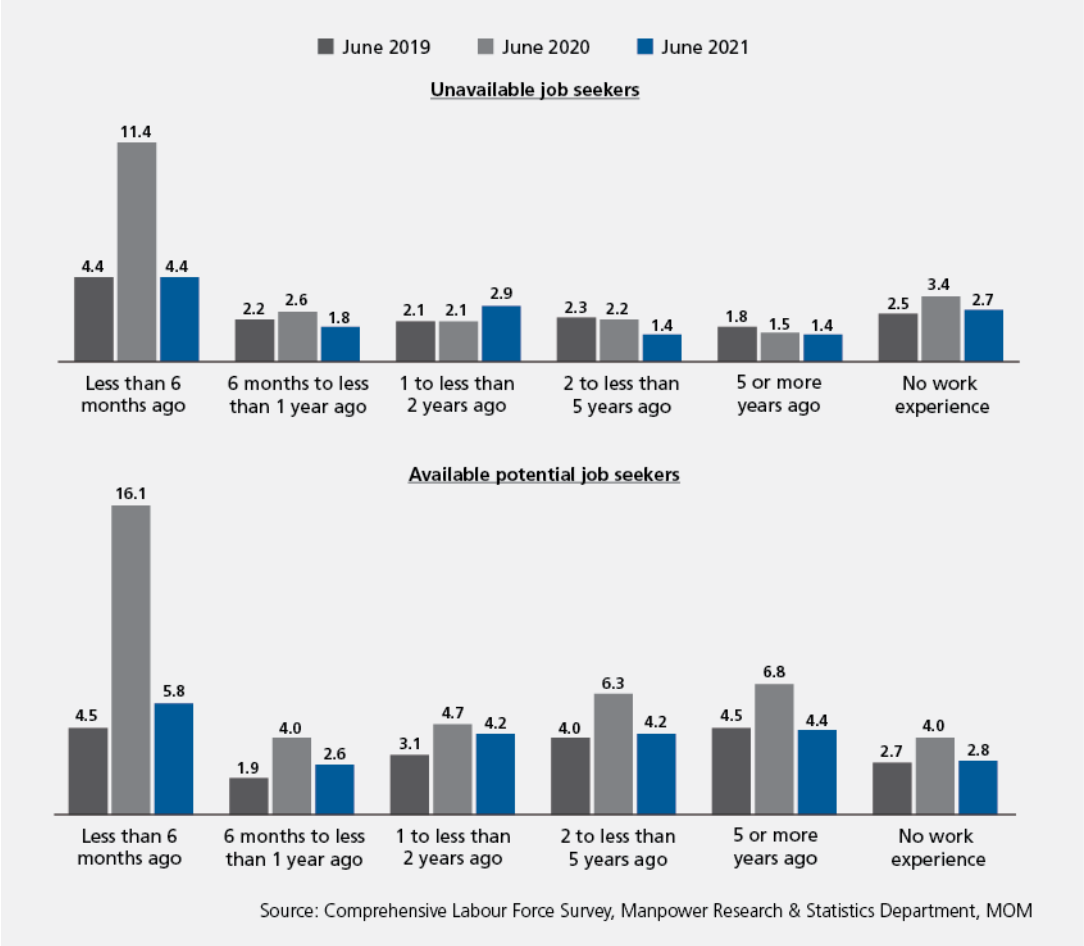
9.7 The International Labour Organisation (ILO) developed new indicators in recent years to identify residents outside the labour force with relatively stronger labour market attachment. Two new descriptors were developed i.e. "*unavailable job seekers*" – those who are actively looking for work but 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.

Residents outside the labour force with relatively stronger labour market attachment decreased to around pre-COVID levels

9.8 As labour force participation rate has increased significantly, the number of residents outside the labour force with relatively stronger labour market attachment decreased to around pre-COVID levels. The number of unavailable job seekers fell from 23,300 (2.1% of residents outside the labour force) in 2020 to 14,500 (1.4%) in 2021, similar to 2019 levels (15,300 or 1.4%). The number of available potential job seekers decreased from 41,900 (3.8%) to 23,900 (2.4%), but was still slightly above 2019 levels (20,700 or 1.9%). The decreases were driven by residents who left their last job less than six months ago.

Chart 60 Unavailable job seekers and available potential job seekers by when left last job

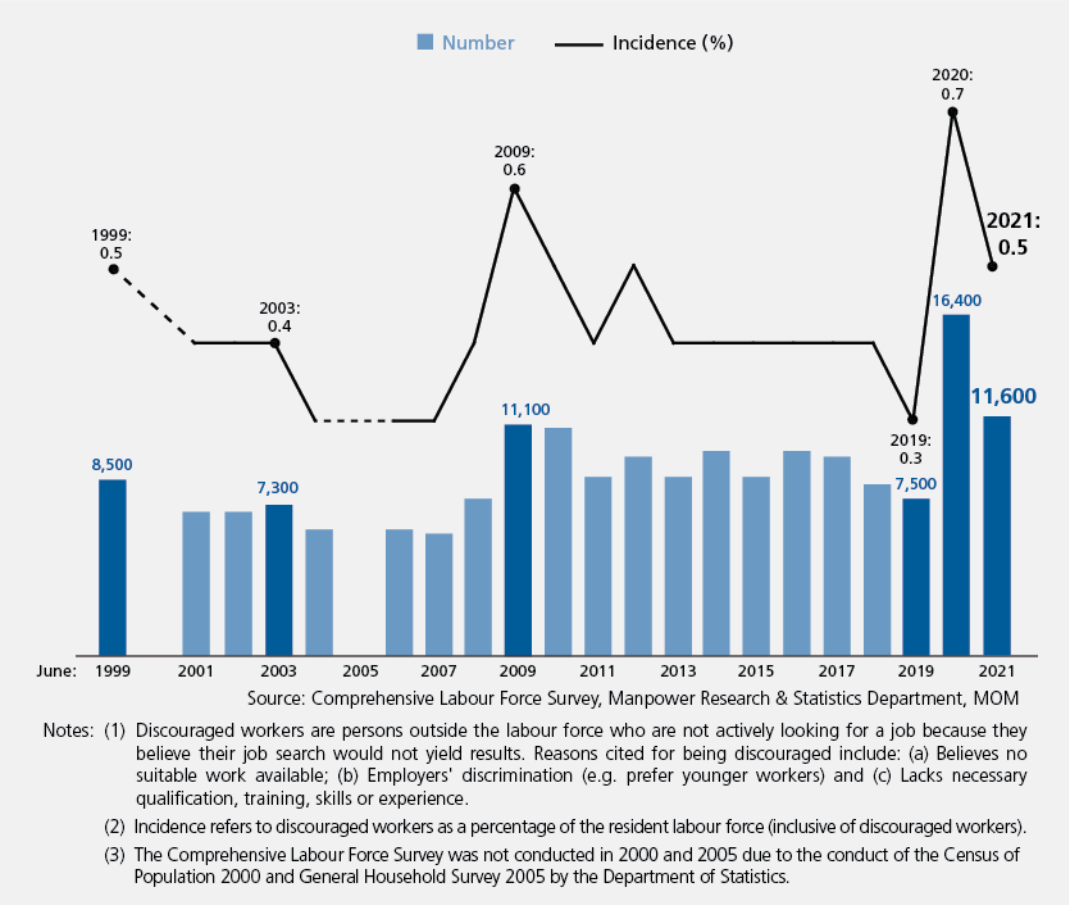
Number ('000)



Number and incidence of discouraged workers fell, though it remained high for older residents

9.9 The number of discouraged workers, i.e. those not looking for work because they felt their job search will not yield results,[39] decreased from the high of 16,400 in 2020 (0.7% of the resident labour force[40]) to 11,600 (0.5%) in 2021.[41] However, it remained higher than pre-COVID levels.

Chart 61 Residents discouraged from seeking work



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

Notes: (1) Discouraged workers are persons outside the labour force who are not actively looking for a job because they believe their job search would not yield results. Reasons cited for being discouraged include: (a) Believes no suitable work available; (b) Employers' discrimination (e.g. prefer younger workers) and (c) Lacks necessary qualification, training, skills or experience.

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

(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 Department of Statistics.

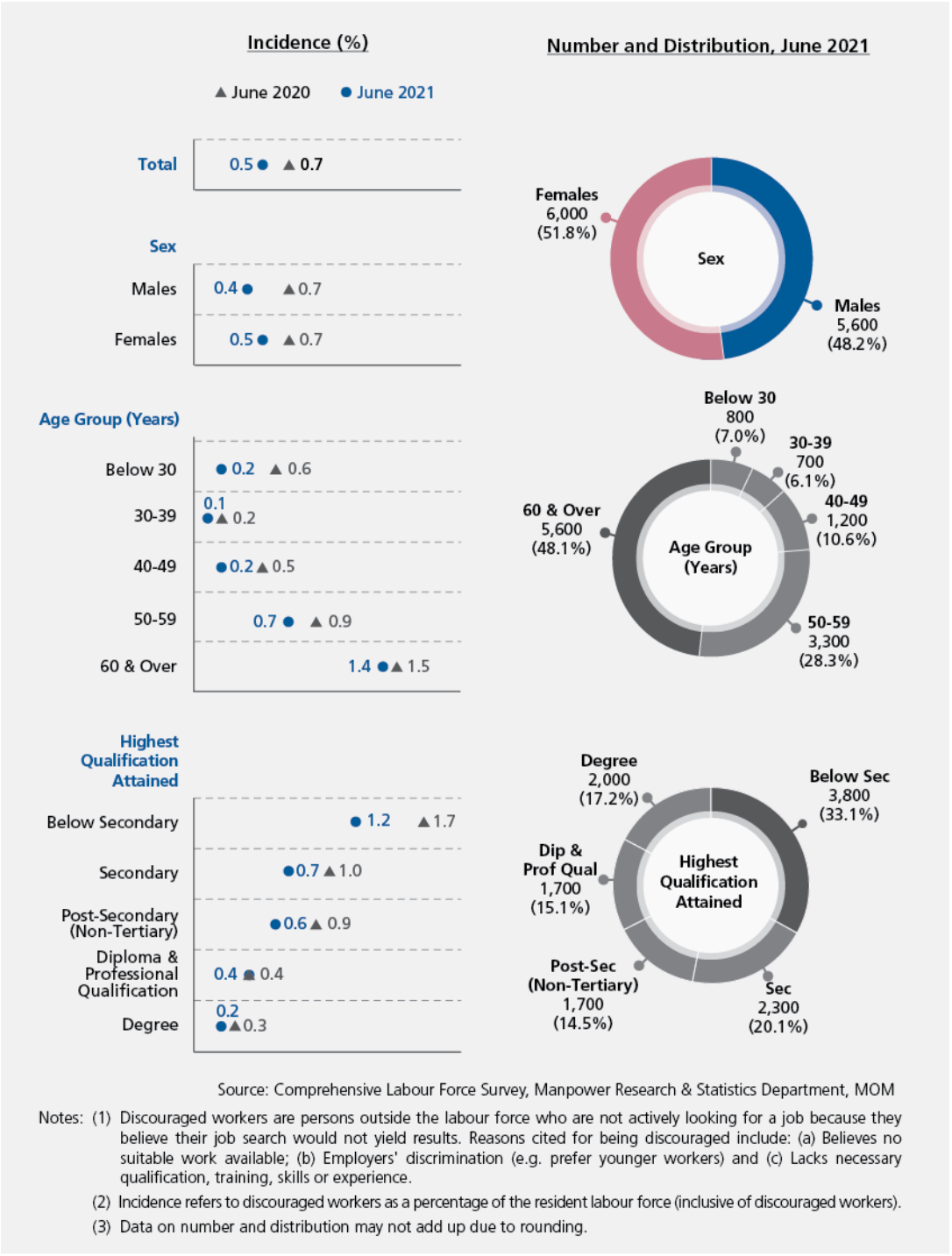
[39] Reasons cited for being discouraged include: (a) Believes no suitable work available; (b) Employers' discrimination (e.g. prefer younger workers) and (c) Lacks necessary qualification, training, skills or experience.

[40] Inclusive of discouraged workers.

[41] ILO introduced a new definition of discouraged workers in recent years. This new definition required that aside from holding the belief that their job search would be futile, the individual would also need to show a continued desire for employment and be currently available to work (i.e. available potential job seekers). Based on the stricter criteria, the number of discouraged workers also decreased from 7,600 in 2020 to 4,400 in 2021.

9.10 The decrease in discouraged workers was experienced across most groups, including those with non-tertiary qualifications. Nevertheless, the number (5,600) and incidence (1.4%) of discouraged workers was highest for residents aged 60 & over. They made up close to half or 48% of the discouraged workers in 2021.

Chart 62 Profile of residents discouraged from seeking work



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

Notes: (1) Discouraged workers are persons outside the labour force who are not actively looking for a job because they believe their job search would not yield results. Reasons cited for being discouraged include: (a) Believes no suitable work available; (b) Employers' discrimination (e.g. prefer younger workers) and (c) Lacks necessary qualification, training, skills or experience.

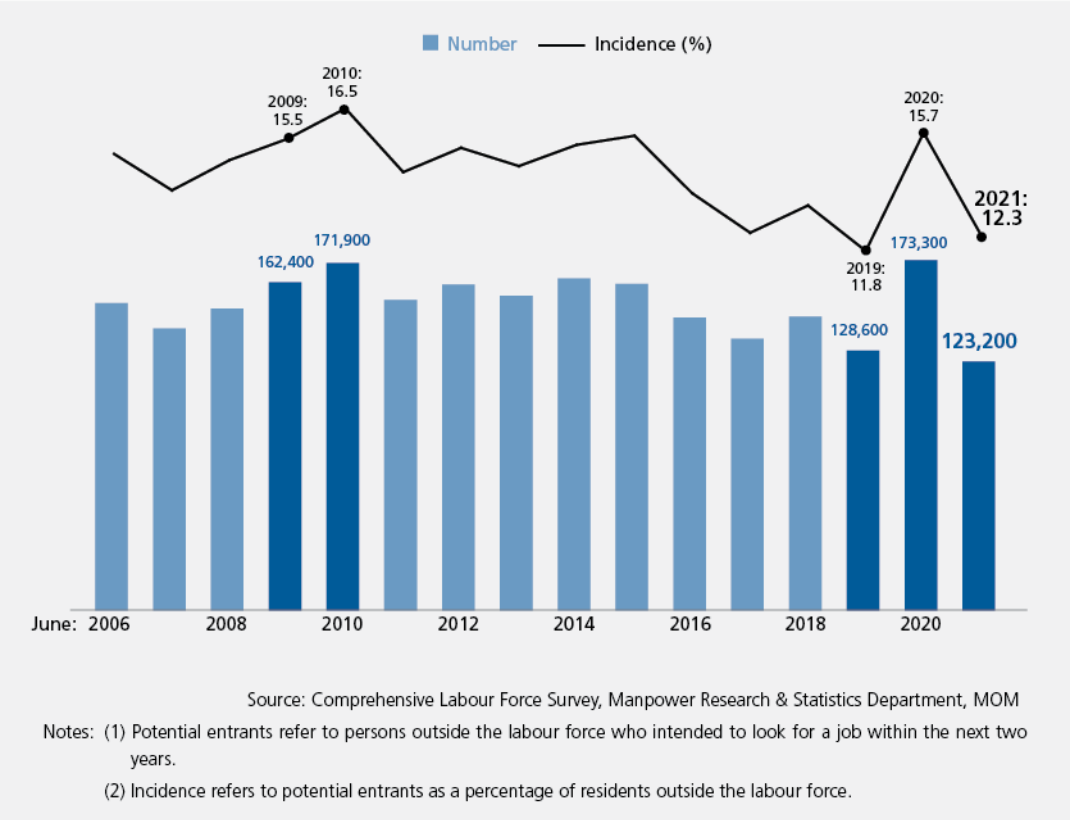
(2) Incidence refers to discouraged workers as a percentage of the resident labour force (inclusive of discouraged workers).

(3) Data on number and distribution may not add up due to rounding.

Number of potential entrants reverted to its previous downtrend

9.11 The number of potential entrants resumed its downtrend in 2021, following the spike in 2020 when many recent job leavers left the labour market temporarily amid the COVID-19 restrictions. 123,200 residents outside the labour force in 2021 intended to look for work in the next two years, a sizeable reduction from 173,300 in 2020. They formed 12.3% of the significantly reduced pool of residents outside the labour force in 2021, slightly higher than the 11.8% in 2019 before the onset of the pandemic.

Chart 63 Resident potential entrants into the labour force



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

Notes: (1) Potential entrants refer to persons outside the labour force who intended to look for a job within the next two years.

(2) Incidence refers to potential entrants as a percentage of residents outside the labour force.

9.12 The incidence of potential entrants remained highest among younger residents aged 25 to 29, where nearly one in two (48%) of those outside the labour force intended to look for jobs in the next two years, followed by one in three (33%) of those in their 30s and 30% of those in their 40s. Given the larger concentration of youths and seniors among residents outside the labour force, in terms of distribution those aged 15 to 24 (27%) and 60 & over (18%) still formed the largest groups among the potential entrants. Nevertheless, the profile of potential entrants is not as heavily concentrated at the two ends of the age spectrum compared to the entire pool of residents outside the labour force.

9.13 A higher share of tertiary-educated residents outside the labour force were potential entrants (degree: 27%, diploma & professional qualification: 23%) than those with non-tertiary qualifications (4.9% to 18%). As a result, the tertiary-educated made up close to half or 47% of the potential entrants, despite their low representation among residents outside the labour force.