

LABOUR FORCE IN SINGAPORE 2019

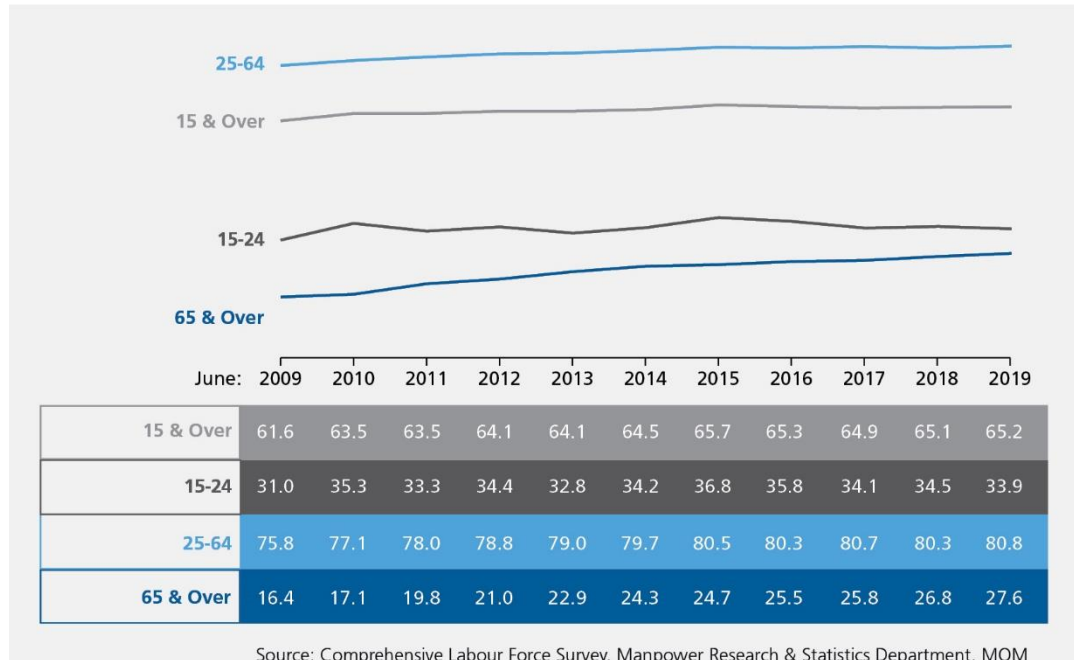
1. Labour Force

Employment rate among residents aged 25 to 64 and older residents increased

- 1.1 The employment rate for residents aged 15 & over edged up from 65.1% in 2018 to 65.2% in 2019.⁵ For residents aged 25 to 64, the employment rate rose from 80.3% to 80.8%. This reflects the improvement among women (from 72.3% to 73.3%), while the employment rate for men stayed high (88.8%) and was one of the highest compared with OECD economies (6th).
- 1.2 Continued efforts to strengthen the employability of older workers saw the employment rate for residents aged 65 & over rise firmly from 26.8% to 27.6%, with increases for both males and females. Both the tertiary (from 36.7% to 38.1%) and non-tertiary (from 25.5% to 26.1%) educated contributed to the increase in employment rate for those aged 65 & over.
- 1.3 Among the three age groups, the weaker segment was youths aged 15 to 24 (declined from 34.5% to 33.9%), as students found it harder to secure vacation jobs amid greater caution in hiring.

Chart 1 Resident employment rate by age

Per Cent



⁵ Data in this report are for June of the respective years and pertain to residents aged 15 & over, unless stated otherwise.

Chart 2 Employment rate of residents aged 25 to 64 by sex

Per Cent



Chart 3 Employment rate of residents aged 65 and over

Per Cent



Labour force participation rate edged up in 2019, and held broadly steady since 2015

- 1.4 The resident labour force participation rate (LFPR) edged up from 67.7% in 2018 to 68.0% in 2019. The LFPR has held broadly steady since 2015, with increases among women and older residents offsetting the downward impact of ageing.

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

Per Cent

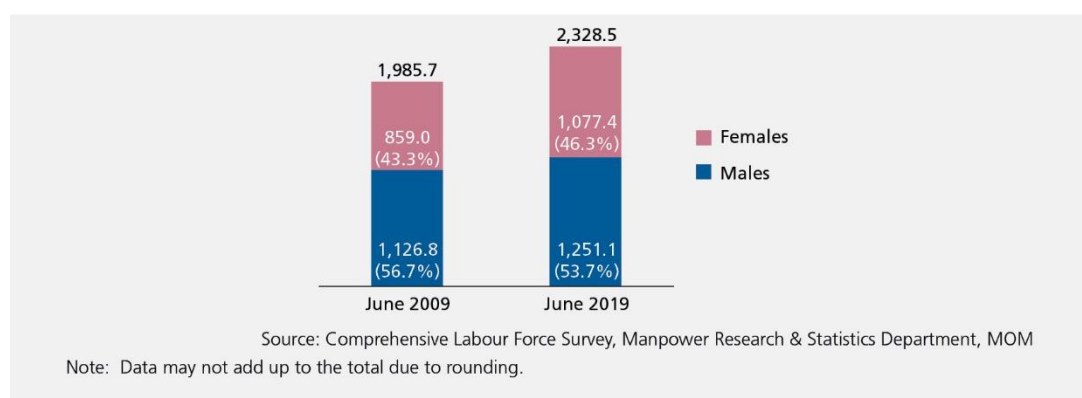


More females in the labour force

- 1.5 As female LFPR rose over the decade while that for males was broadly stable,⁶ the share of females in the labour force increased from 43% in 2009 to 46% in 2019. This reflected increased prevalence of flexible work arrangements,⁷ and higher educational attainment among females.⁸

Chart 5 Resident labour force by sex

Number ('000)



⁶ The LFPR for females rose from 55.2% in 2009 to 61.1% in 2019. For males, the LFPR was broadly stable at 75.4% in 2019 compared with 76.3% in 2009.

⁷ Proportion of establishments offering at least 1 ad hoc flexible work arrangement (FWA) (e.g. unplanned time-off) rose from 68% in 2013 to 84% in 2018, while those offering formal FWAs (e.g. part-time work or flexi-time/staggered hours) rose from 44% in 2013 to 53% in 2018. Source: Report on *Conditions of Employment 2018*, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

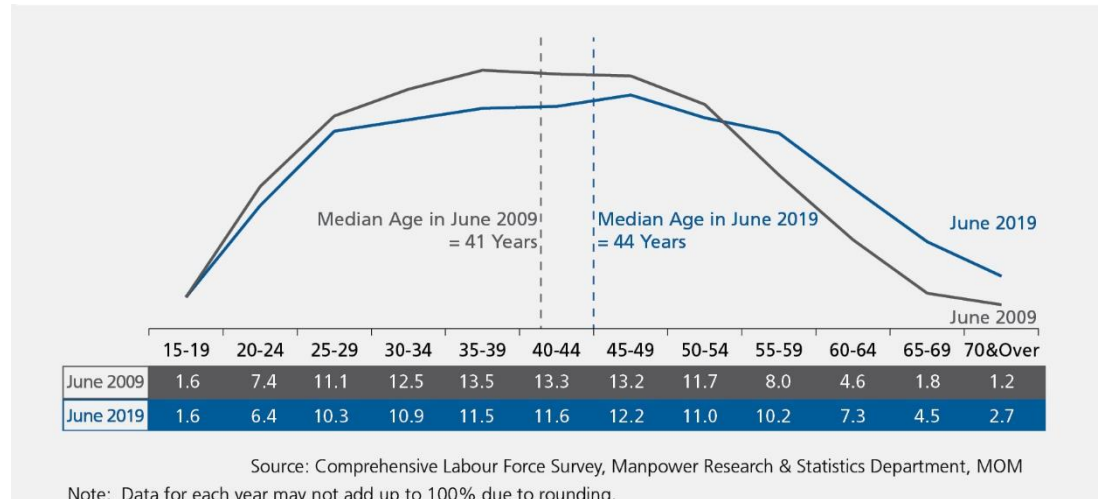
⁸ Females with tertiary qualifications were more likely to be in the labour force than females with lower qualifications.

More older residents in the labour force

- 1.6 With population ageing⁹ and sustained rise in LFPR of older residents, the share of residents aged 55 & over in the labour force rose substantially from 16% in 2009 to 25% in 2019. Meanwhile, the share of the resident labour force aged 25 to 54 declined from 75% to 67% even as their LFPR increased, as the population cohorts moving into these age bands were smaller than those who moved out due to lower birth rates.¹⁰ As a result, the median age of residents in the labour force rose from 41 years in 2009 to 44 years in 2019.

Chart 6 Resident labour force by age

Per Cent



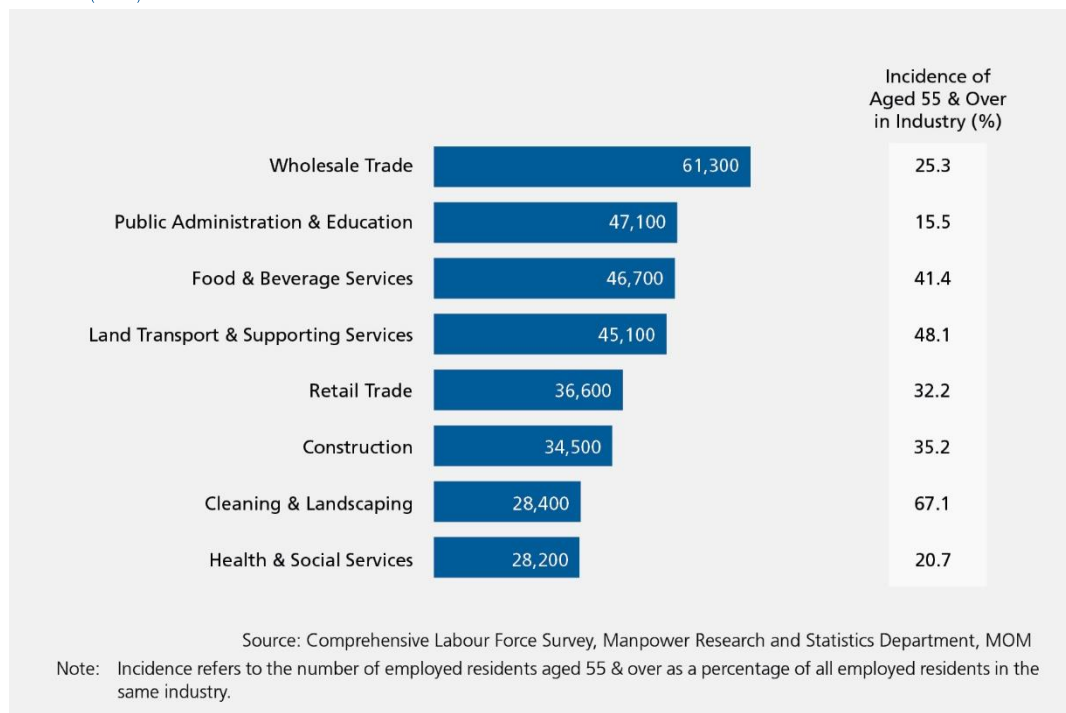
- 1.7 While wholesale trade and public administration & education employed the biggest number of older workers aged 55 & over, the number of older workers as a proportion of all workers (i.e. incidence) in these industries was not large. Instead, industries with above-average incidence of older workers aged 55 & over were food & beverage services (e.g. food/drink stall assistants, hawkers), land transport & supporting services (e.g. taxi, private hire car and bus drivers), retail trade (e.g. shop sales assistants), construction (e.g. working proprietors, supervisors/general foremen) and cleaning & landscaping (e.g. cleaners). These industries also had relatively high numbers of older workers.

⁹ The share of residents aged 55 & over among working-age resident population (aged 15 & over) rose from 24% in 2009 to 34% in 2019. Source: Singapore Department of Statistics

¹⁰ The share of residents aged 25 to 54 among working-age resident population (aged 15 & over) fell from 59% in 2009 to 52% in 2019. Source: Singapore Department of Statistics

Chart 7 Top industries among employed residents aged 55 & over, June 2019

Number ('000)

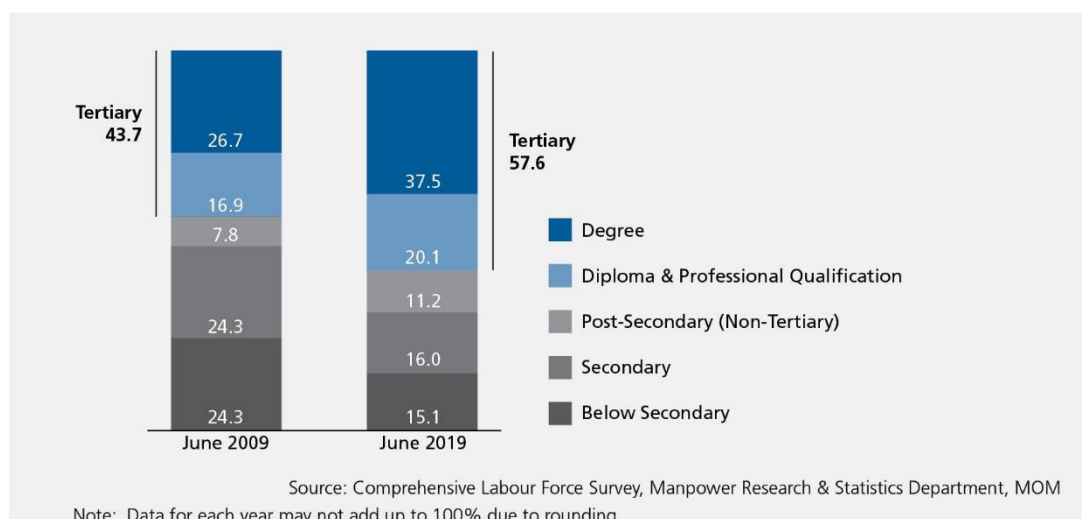


More tertiary-educated in the labour force

1.8 As younger cohorts with greater access to higher education enter the labour force and older cohorts progressively retire, the profile of residents in the labour force became better educated than before. Close to six in ten (58%) in 2019 were tertiary-educated, much higher than the 44% in 2009. The rise came mainly from degree holders, whose share in the labour force rose to 37%, up from 27% ten years ago.

Chart 8 Resident labour force by highest qualification attained

Per Cent



1.9 Even though the number of degree holders has grown significantly, they continued to perform well in the labour market. The employment rate of graduates stayed high at close to 90% for those aged 25 to 64. Median income for full-time employed degree holders also grew faster in the recent five years (2014 to 2019) compared with the earlier five years (2009 to 2014).

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

Per Cent

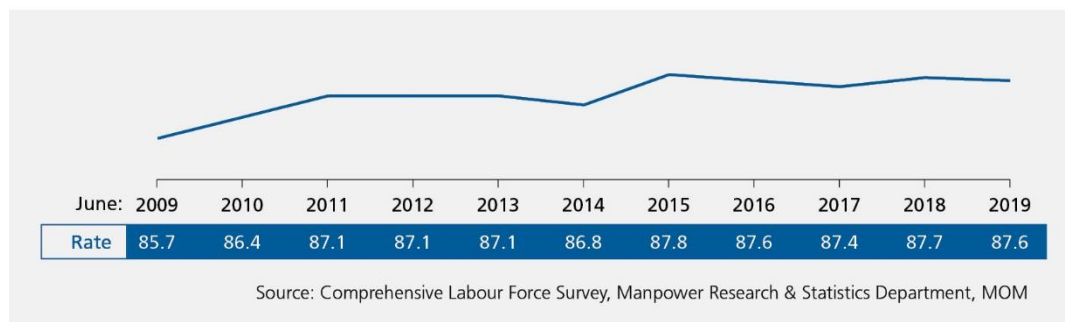
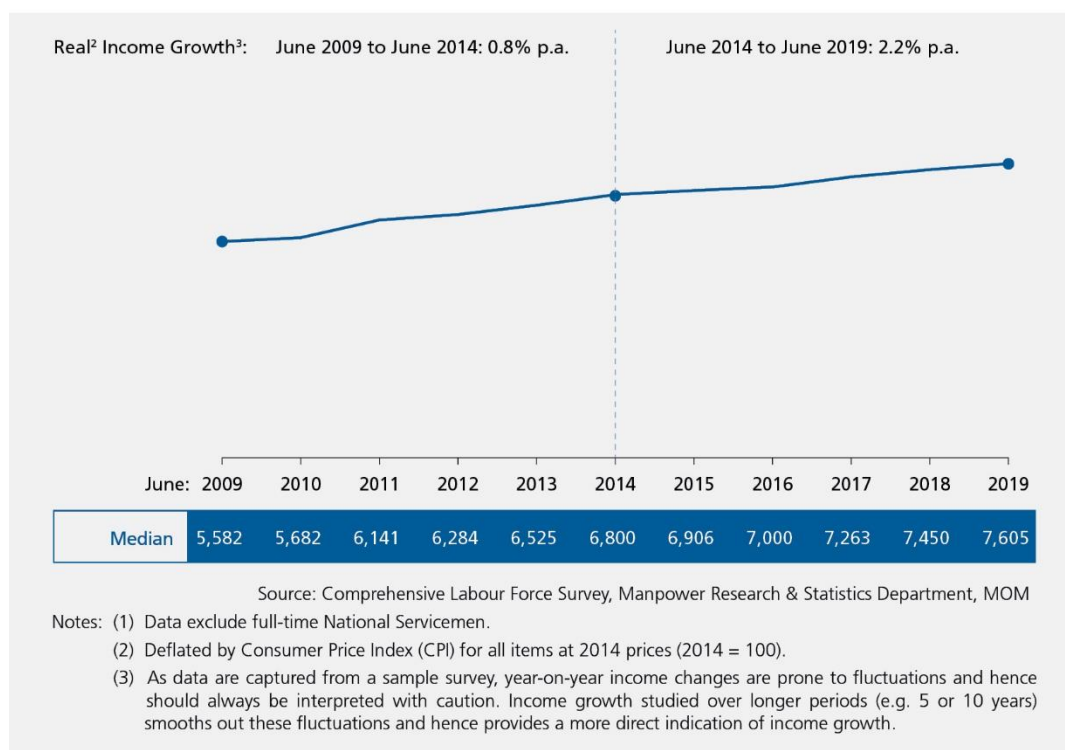


Chart 10 Median gross monthly income from work (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed resident degree holders

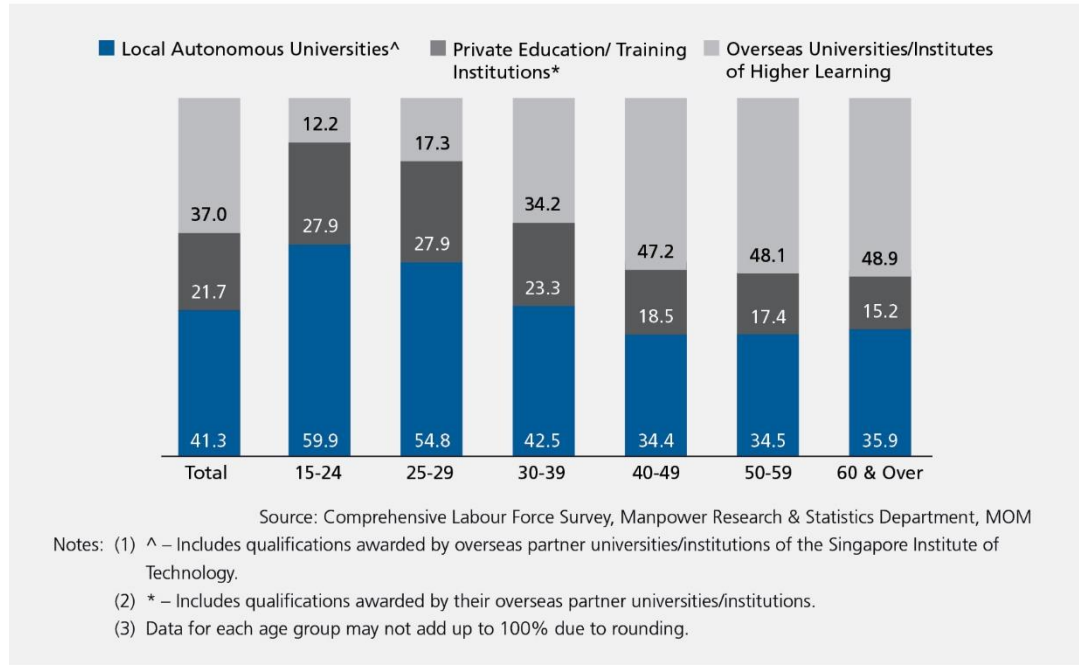
Dollars



1.10 Graduates from local autonomous universities¹¹ continued to form the largest group (41%) among degree holders in the resident labour force in 2019. They formed the majority among young graduates aged 25 to 29 (55%), supported by the increase in publicly funded university places over the years. Reflecting increased prevalence of education upgrading, a higher proportion of young graduates obtained their degree from private education or training institutions in Singapore¹² than older graduates.

Chart 11 Degree holders in resident labour force by place of study, institution that awarded degree and age, June 2019

Per Cent



¹¹ This refers to the National University of Singapore (including the former University of Singapore), Nanyang Technological University (including the former Nanyang University and Nanyang Technological Institute), National Institute of Education, Singapore Management University, Singapore University of Technology and Design, Singapore Institute of Technology (including qualifications awarded by its overseas partner universities/institutions) and Singapore University of Social Sciences (formerly known as SIM University).

¹² Includes qualifications awarded by their overseas partner universities/institutions.

1.11 Young degree holders continued to have good employment outcomes. The employment rate for degree holders aged 25 to 29¹³ from local autonomous universities remained high at around 90% in 2019, similar to that for young degree holders from private education institutions and higher than that for local polytechnic diploma holders.¹⁴ Among young degree holders in employment, the vast majority or around nine in ten held permanent jobs, predominantly working full-time. Young degree holders aged 25 to 29 in 2019 also earned more than the previous cohort in 2014.

Chart 12 Employment rate of residents aged 25 to 29 from local tertiary institutions

Per Cent

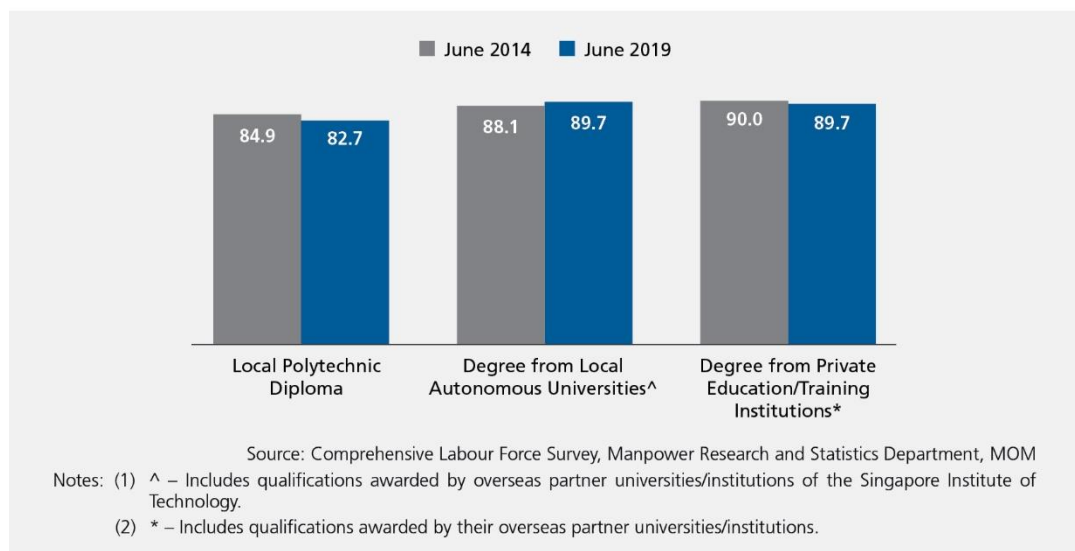
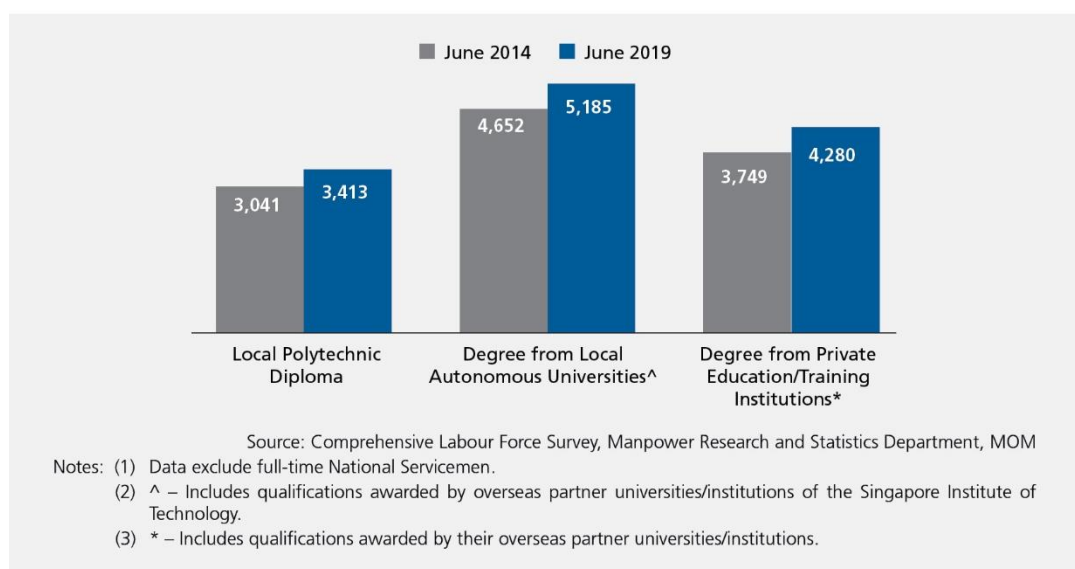


Chart 13 Median gross monthly income from work (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed residents aged 25 to 29 from local tertiary institutions

Dollars

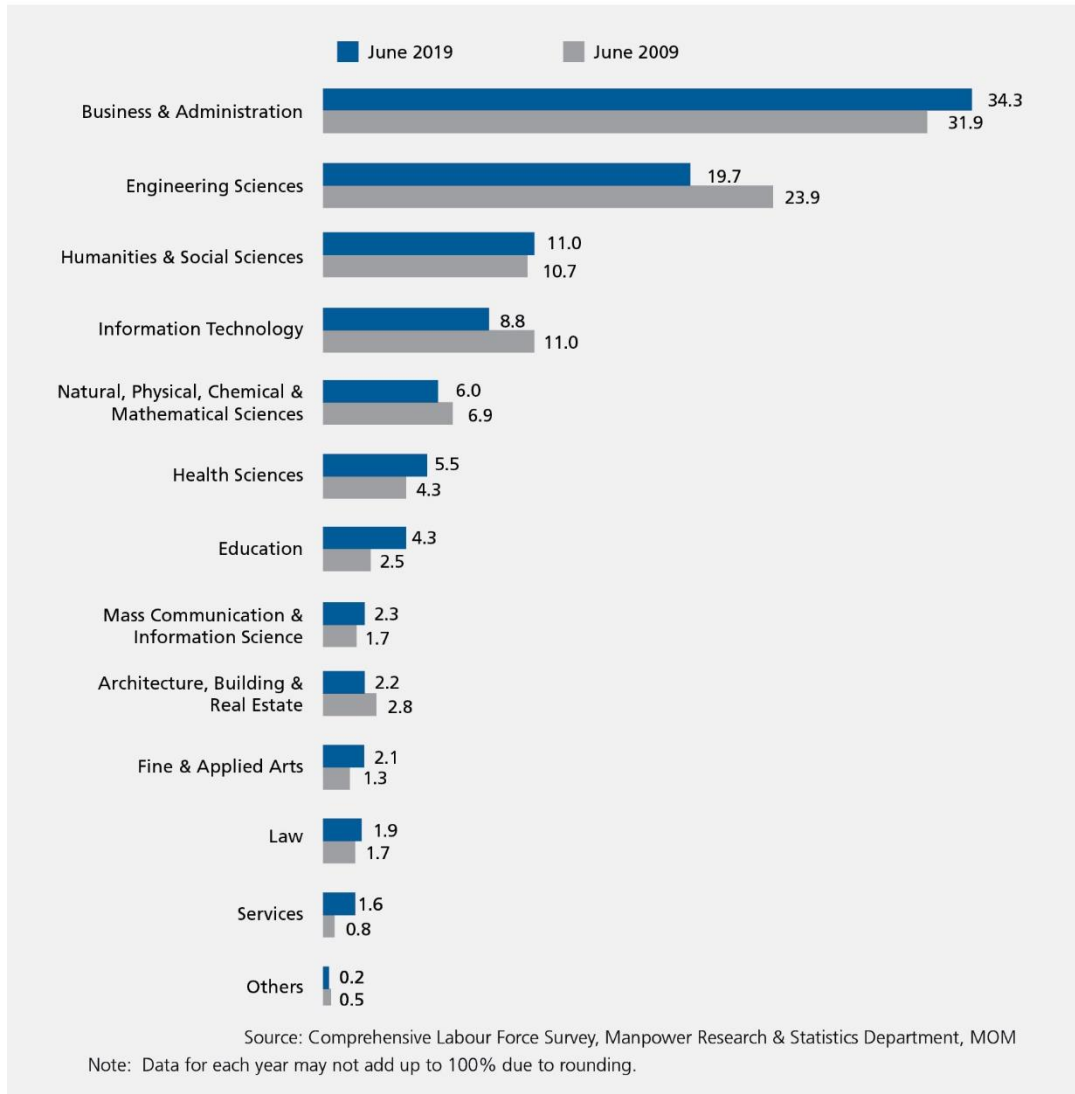


¹³ This captures the labour market experience of graduates a few years after graduation.

¹⁴ The employment rate for young polytechnic diploma holders was slightly lower than that for their counterparts five years ago, as more pursue further studies.

1.12 Business & Administration (34%) continued to be the most common field of study among degree holders in the resident labour force in 2019. This is up from 32% in 2009, boosted by the increased prevalence of education upgrading via private education institutions. Other fields of study that gained share over the decade include health sciences, reflecting the increased demand for healthcare workers amid population ageing, and education. Except for health sciences, there was a decline in share of degree holders from most Science, Engineering & Technology disciplines, especially for Engineering Sciences (from 24% to 20%).

Chart 14 Degree holders in resident labour force by field of study
Per Cent

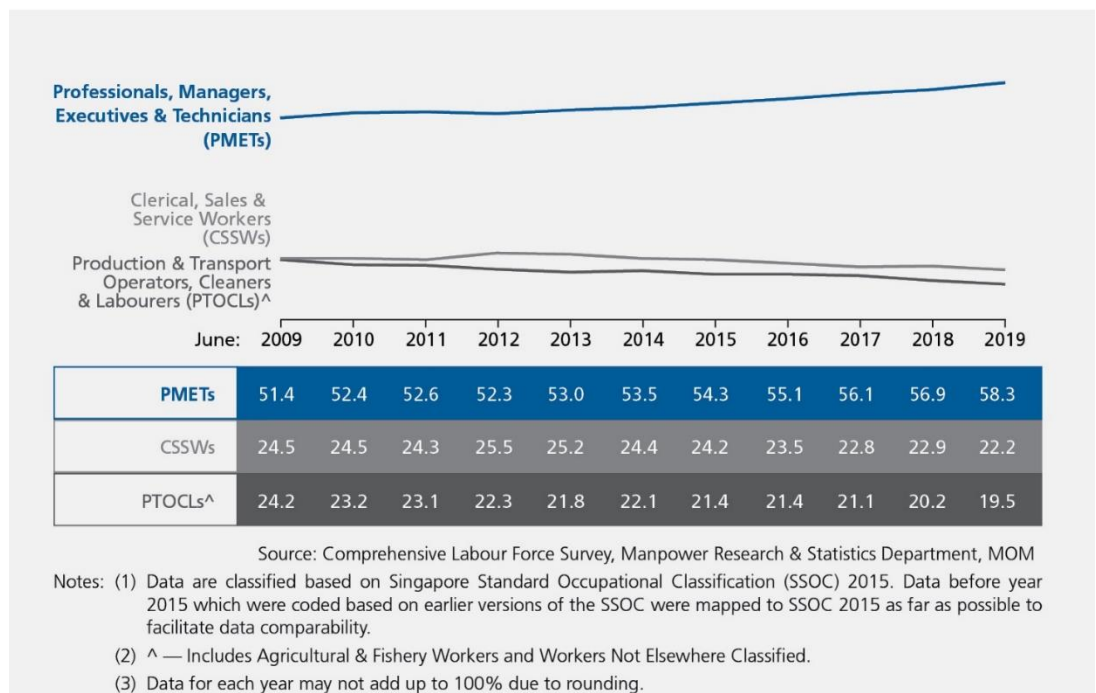


Higher PMET share among employed residents

- 1.13 With the labour force becoming better educated, the share of professionals, managers, executives & technicians (PMETs) among employed residents trended up over the decade, from 51% in 2009 to 58% in 2019. Correspondingly, the share of non-PMETs declined over the decade, more so among the production & transport operators, cleaners & labourers.
- 1.14 The increase in PMET share of the resident workforce in the recent year was faster than in earlier years, as employment growth in PMET-concentrated sectors such as information & communications, financial & insurance services, professional services and community, social & personal services remained firm despite the economic headwinds.

Chart 15 Employed residents by occupation

Per Cent



Slight increase in time-related under-employment due to inability to find a full-time job

- 1.15 Overall, the time-related under-employment rate¹⁵ eased from 3.3% in 2018 to 3.1% in 2019, after increasing in the preceding two years. However, there was a slight uptick in the proportion of employed persons who were time-related under-employed because they could not find a full-time job. Time-related under-employment rate for women decreased, while the rate for men continued its gentle uptrend from 2.5% to 2.6% as more of them were unable to find full-time work (+0.2%-pt among employed males).

¹⁵ Refers to part-timers who are willing and available to work additional hours as a percentage of all (full-time and part-time) employed residents.

Chart 16 Resident time-related under-employment rate

Per Cent

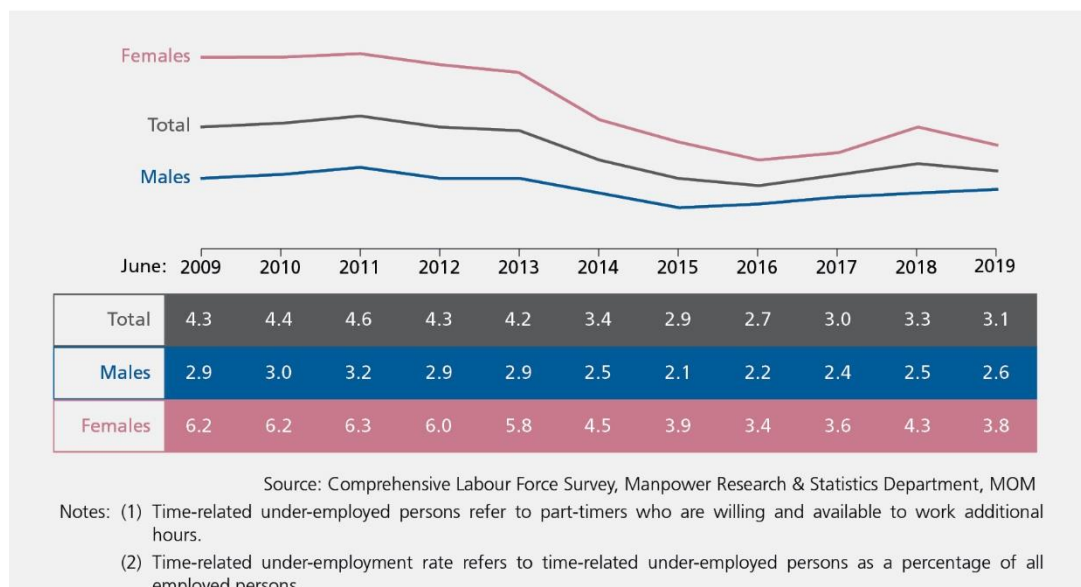
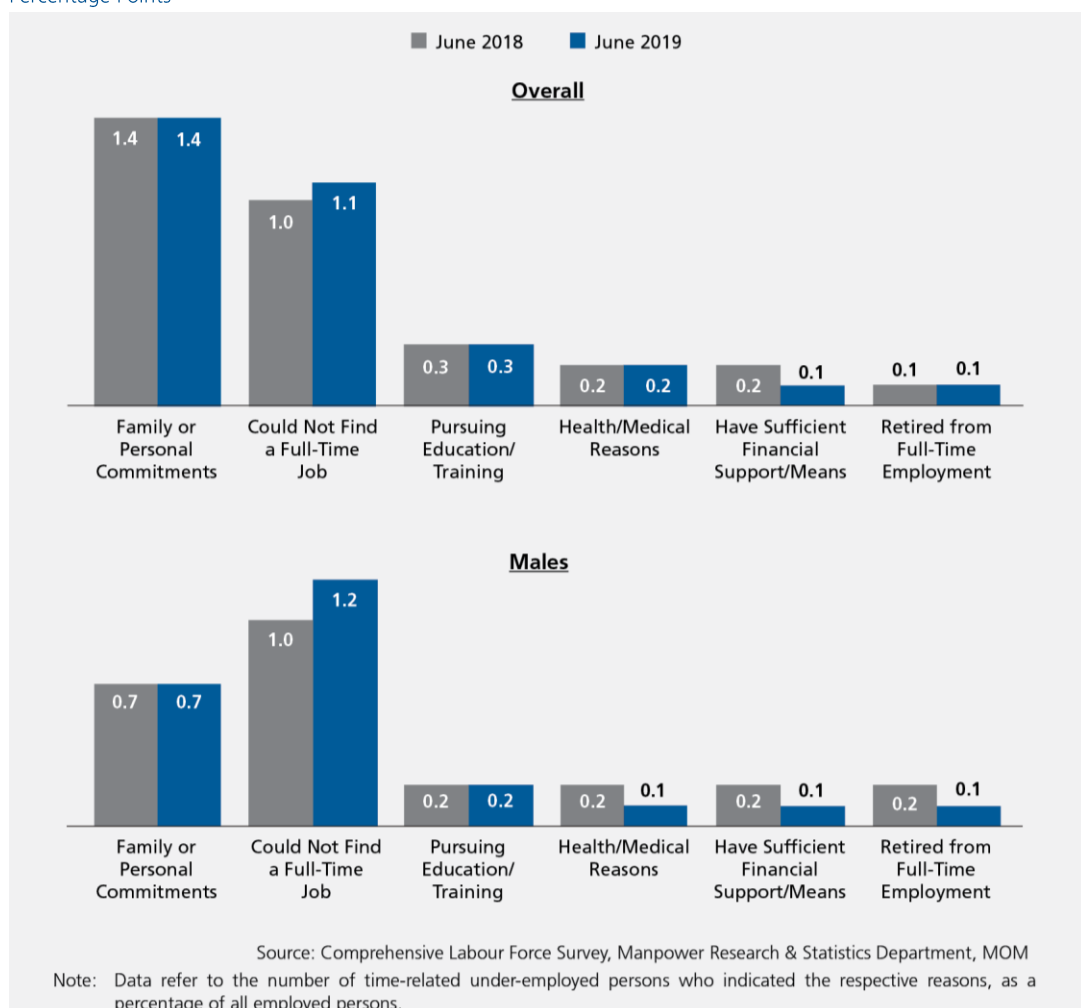


Chart 17 Contribution to resident time-related under-employment rate by main reason for working part-time rather than full-time

Percentage Points



1.16 While time-related under-employment rate declined, the part-time share of the resident workforce continued to increase, reflecting the rise in part-timers who were not willing or were not available to work longer hours. Non-PMETs led the increase in part-time share of employment in the recent year (from 17.5% in 2018 to 18.4% in 2019), especially plant & machine operators & assemblers (e.g. taxi drivers, motorcycle deliverymen), cleaners, labourers & related workers (e.g. hand packers, kitchen assistants, food/drink stall assistants) and clerical support workers.

Chart 18 Share of part-time employed among employed residents

Per Cent

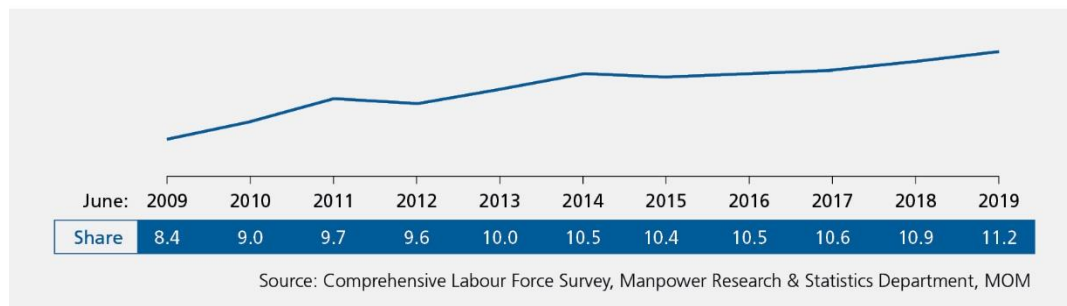
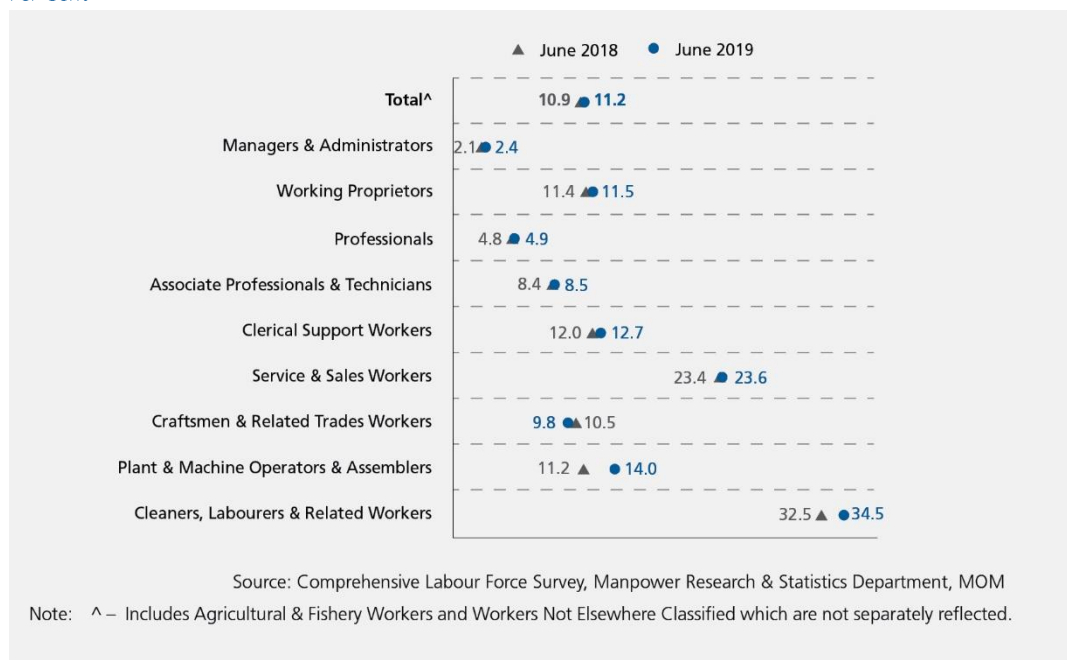


Chart 19 Share of part-time employed among employed residents by occupation

Per Cent

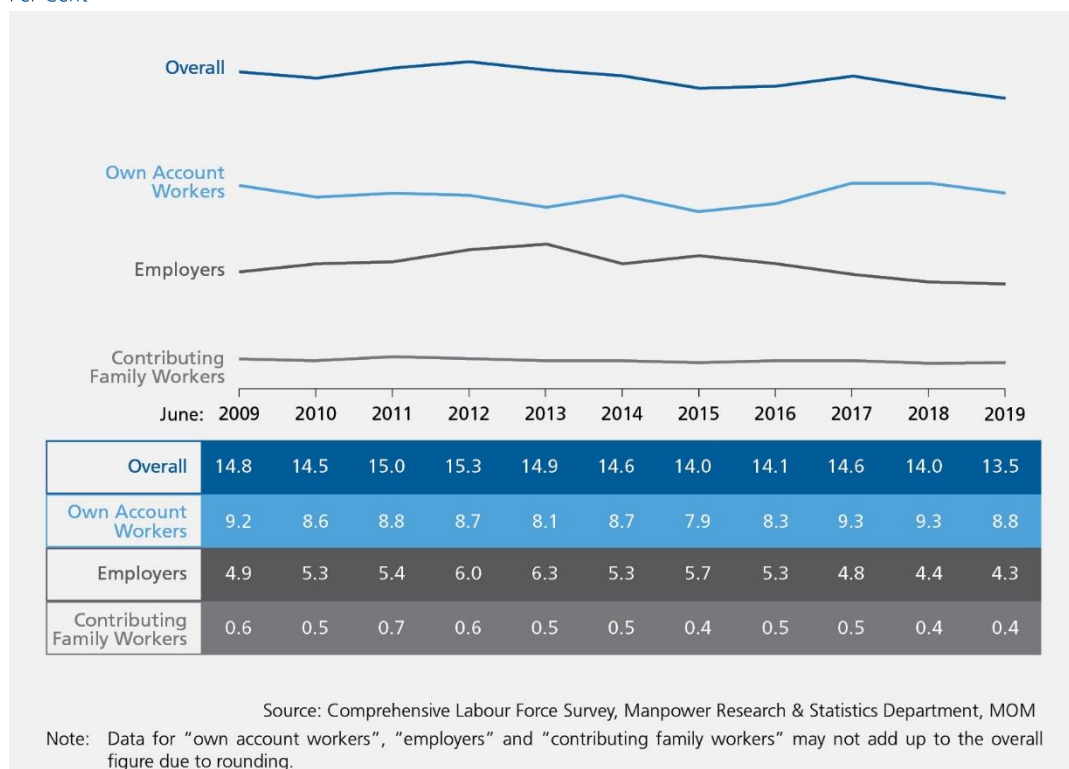


Share of own account workers in the resident workforce eased

1.17 Among residents employed in the reference week in June 2019, 87% were employees and 13% were self-employed in their main¹⁶ or primary job. As the number of salaried employees continued to rise firmly, the share of self-employed in the resident workforce eased for the second consecutive year. The decrease in 2019 mainly came from own account workers (i.e. individuals who operate their own business or trade without employing any paid employees), easing from the uptrend in recent years. The share of employers in the resident workforce also dipped.

Chart 20 Proportion of self-employed among employed residents

Per Cent



1.18 A Labour Force Supplementary Survey has been conducted yearly since 2016, to collect statistics on the number of resident workers engaged in own account work over the course of a year, given the ad hoc and transient nature of the working arrangements of own account work.

Number of regular own account workers held steady in 2019

1.19 Over the one-year period ending June 2019, 211,000 residents were engaged in own account work as a regular form of employment, similar to 2018 (210,800). The majority, or 174,800, did own account work regularly as their primary job during the one-year period, and they formed 7.5% of all employed residents.¹⁷ Online channels were the most common method of obtaining work among regular own account workers (56% or 118,000, including 67,600 who took up work via online matching platforms¹⁸). It was also common to rely on referrals (53%).

¹⁶ For persons who held more than one job during the week preceding the survey interview (i.e. the reference period), their employment status is based on the job in which they usually work the longest hours.

¹⁷ The estimate is derived based on the number of regular primary own account workers as a proportion of total local employment (average over 12 months ending June 2019).

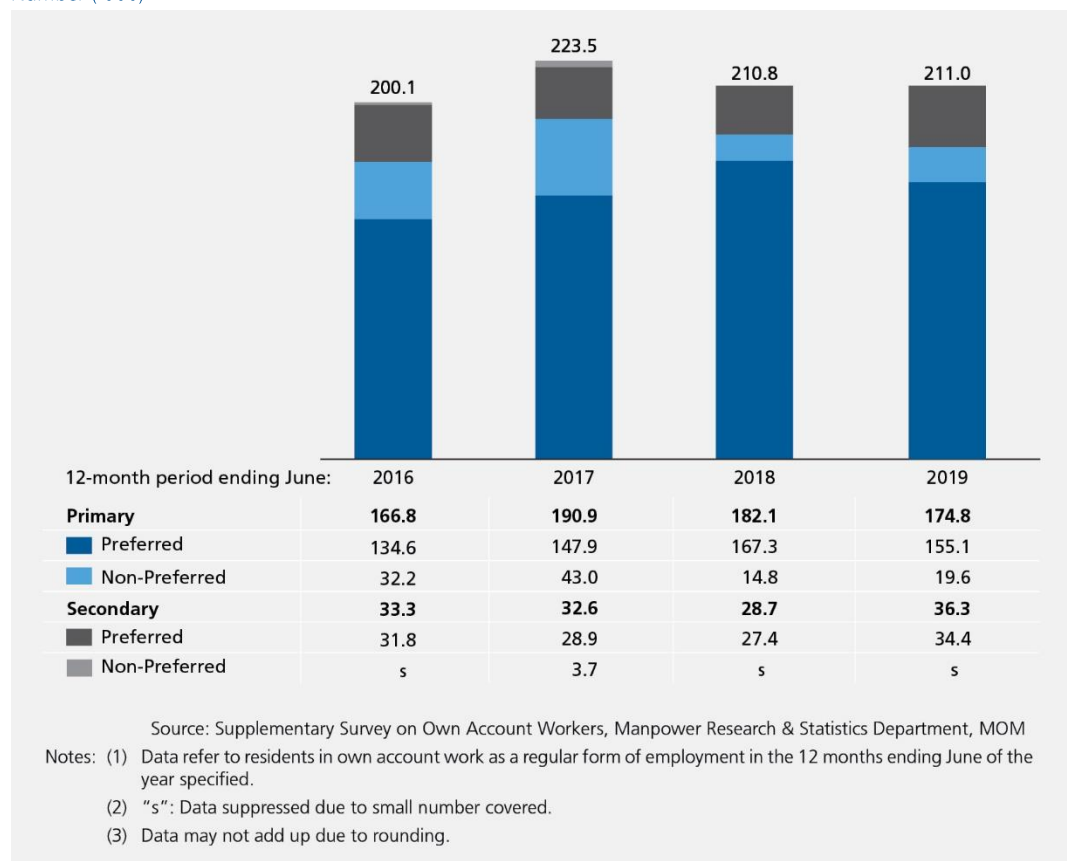
¹⁸ In the absence of internationally agreed statistical definition, online matching platforms are defined as labour sharing platforms that serve as intermediaries to match or connect buyers with workers who take up piecemeal or assignment-based work. Such platforms could be either websites or mobile applications, covering services such as ride-hailing, goods/food delivery, creative work, etc.

1.20 There was an increase in persons engaging in own account work on the side (secondary own account workers), from 28,700 in 2018 to 36,300 in 2019. Nearly all of the increase came from those who took on own account work by choice.¹⁹ Secondary own account workers were mostly engaged in own account work due to its flexible nature, and to supplement their main income.

1.21 On the other hand, the number of residents who were engaged in own account work as their main job (primary own account workers) declined over the year from 182,100 in 2018 to 174,800 in 2019. As the labour market weakened in 2019,²⁰ the number of primary own account workers engaging in such work on a non-preferred basis rose from 2018 (14,800) to 2019 (19,600), but remained significantly lower than in 2016 (32,200) and 2017 (43,000).

Chart 21 Resident regular own account workers

Number ('000)



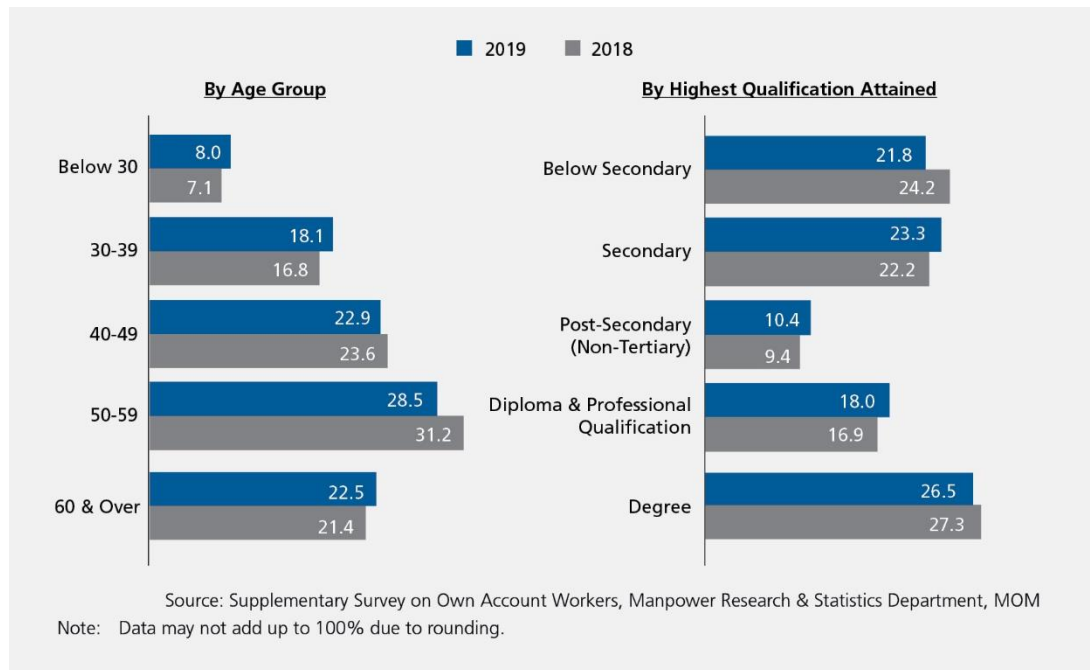
¹⁹ Persons for whom own account work is not their preferred choice of work refer to those who engage in own account work because they are unable to find work as an employee. Among multiple job holders, it includes those who are unable to find full-time work. Those for whom own account work is a preferred choice of work refer to the remaining who do not fall into the above estimate.

²⁰ The seasonally-adjusted resident unemployment rate trended up from September 2018, while job vacancies declined after peaking in December 2018.

1.22 The age and education profile of regular primary own account workers in 2019 was broadly unchanged from 2018. The majority were in their 40s, and 50 & over. Reflecting their older age profile, majority of the regular primary own account workers had non-tertiary qualifications (56%), unchanged from 2018.

Chart 22 Resident regular primary own account workers

Per Cent



1.23 The common occupations²¹ that regular primary own account workers worked in were taxi drivers, working proprietors²², insurance sales agents/brokers and real estate agents. The numbers working in these occupations were broadly stable over the year.

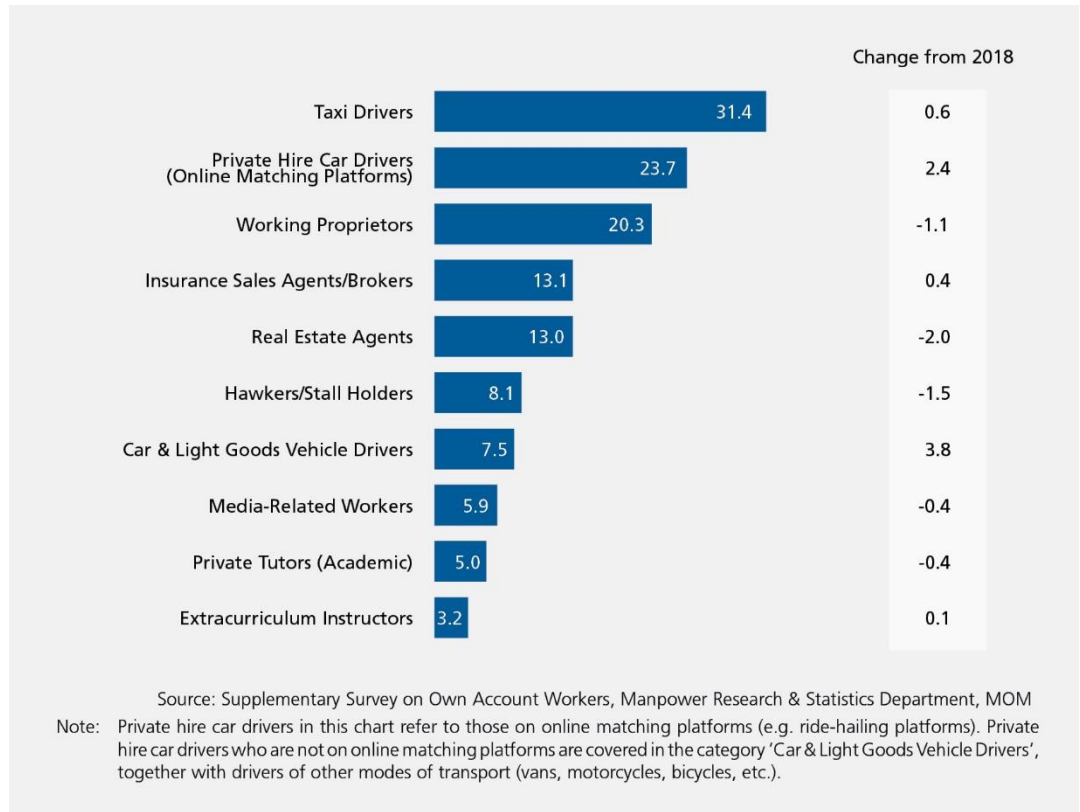
1.24 With the proliferation of online platforms that match clients to providers of various paid labour services, more primary own account workers were in occupations that typically made use of such platforms. In 2019, the number working as private hire car drivers rose to 23,700; and to 7,500 for delivery drivers (i.e. car & light goods vehicle drivers). Taken together, the bulk of the increase in these two occupations was from residents who were engaged in own account work on a preferred basis.

²¹ These were consistently the top common occupations among own account workers in the past decade as well, based on the Comprehensive Labour Force Survey.

²² Working proprietors refer to self-employed persons who operate and manage their own businesses without any paid employees. Examples include businesses in wholesale & retail trade (e.g. provision shops, blog shops) or service providers (e.g. renovating, printing services). Self-employed professionals, insurance sales agents, real estate agents, hawkers, electricians, etc. who perform the principal tasks of their respective occupations are classified in these occupations and not as working proprietors.

Chart 23 Top occupations among resident regular primary own account workers, 2019

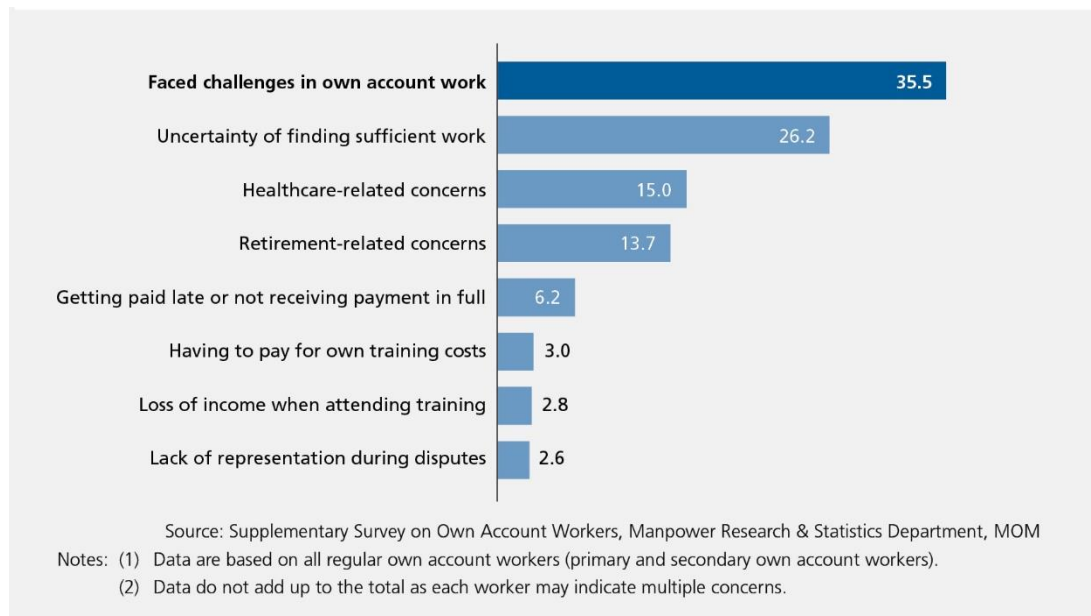
Number ('000)



1.25 The proportion of regular own account workers who faced challenges in their work was about the same in 2019 (35%) compared to 2018 (34%). *Uncertainty of finding sufficient work* (26%) remained their top concern. This was followed by *healthcare-related concerns* (15%), such as the *lack of medical benefits* or *paid sick leave* and *having insufficient savings for healthcare*, as well as the apprehension over their *financial security for retirement* (14%).

Chart 24 Challenges faced by resident regular own account workers, 2019

Per Cent

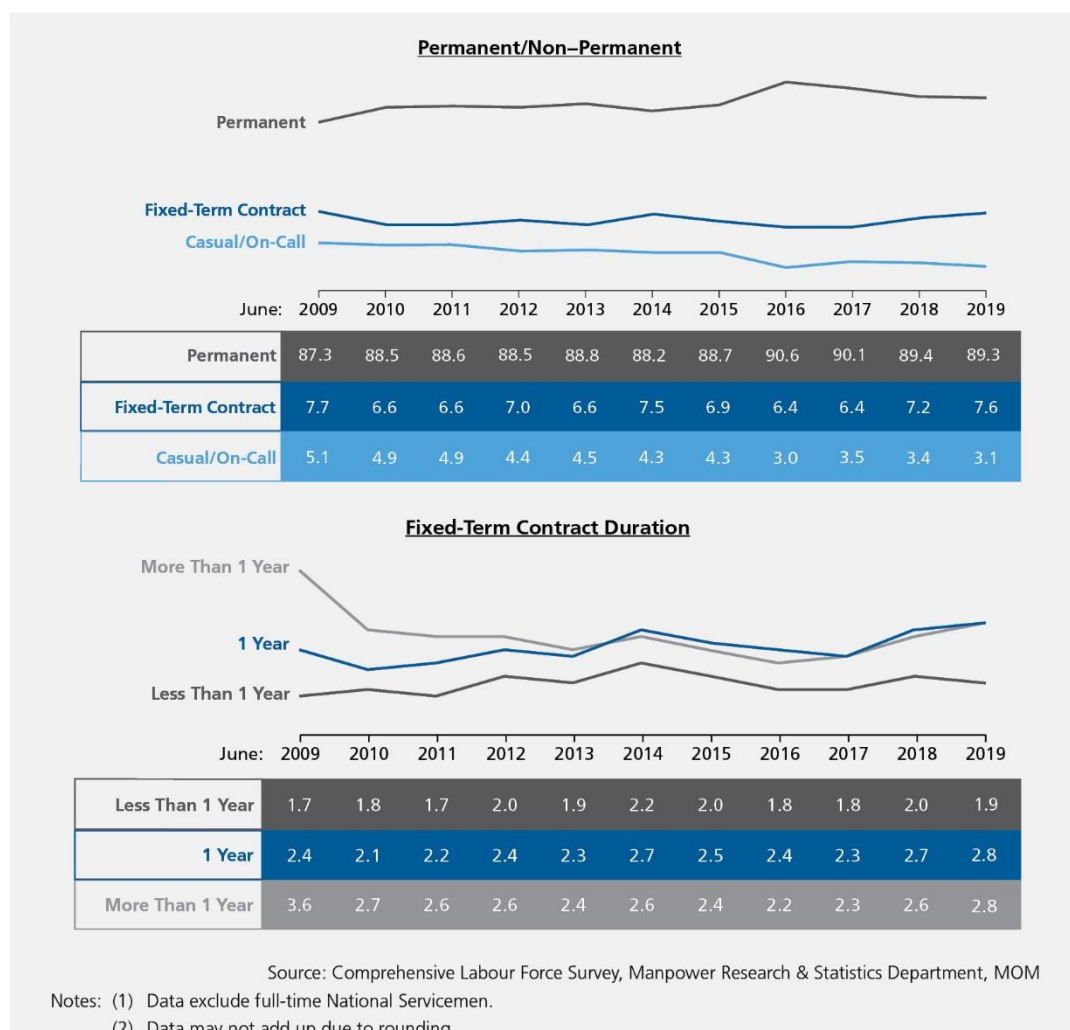


Continued rise in proportion of employees on fixed-term contracts, suggesting greater caution among employers on hiring amid uncertainty

- 1.26 The proportion of resident employees on fixed-term contracts continued to increase from 7.2% in 2018 to 7.6% in 2019. This reflected increases for those on fixed-term contracts of one year (from 2.7% to 2.8%) or longer (from 2.6% to 2.8%). The increase in incidence of fixed-term contract employees was larger for PMETs (from 6.3% to 6.8%) than non-PMETs (from 8.5% to 8.7%). Among the age groups, young residents aged 25 to 29 and those in their 50s posted larger increases in incidence of fixed-term contract employees.
- 1.27 Permanent employees continued to form the vast majority among resident employees, even though their share dipped slightly from 89.4% to 89.3%. The proportion of casual/on-call employees continued to decrease, reflecting the improvement in education profile of the labour force.

Chart 25 Resident employees by type of employment

Per Cent

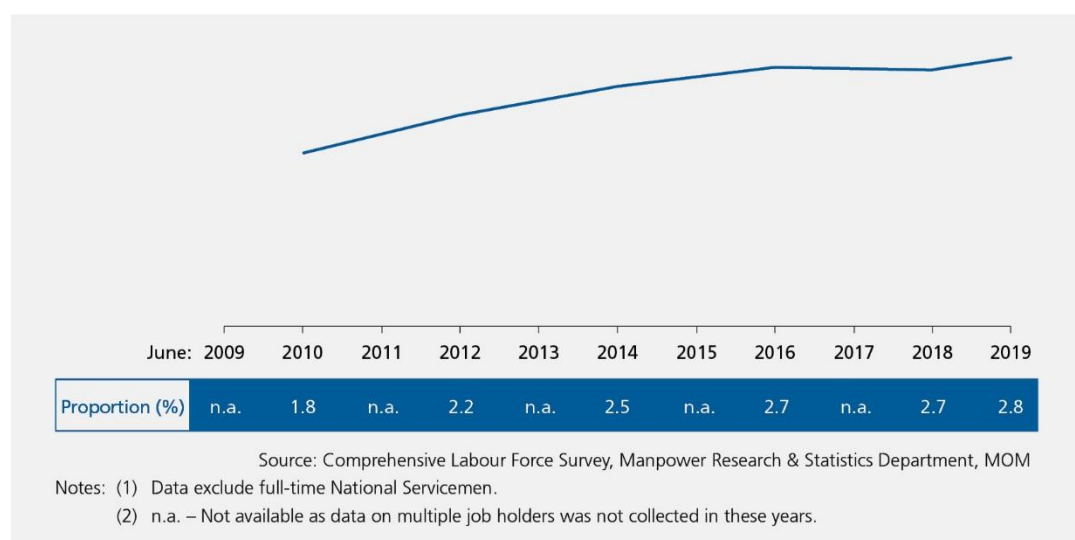


Proportion of multiple jobholders continued to trend up, but increase was slower in recent years

1.28 The proportion of multiple jobholders continued to trend up, but the pace of increase was slower in recent years and they remained a small minority. In 2019, 2.8% of employed residents held more than one job, up from 2.7% in 2018 and 1.8% in 2010²³. The increase in incidence of multiple jobholders in the recent year was led by those who were self-employed in their main job (from 5.6% to 6.0%), while the incidence for employees edged up slightly from 2.2% to 2.3%. The self-employed also posted a larger increase in incidence of multiple jobholders from 2010 to 2019 (from 3.6% to 6.0%) than employees (from 1.5% to 2.3%).

Chart 26 Proportion of employed residents holding multiple jobs

Per Cent

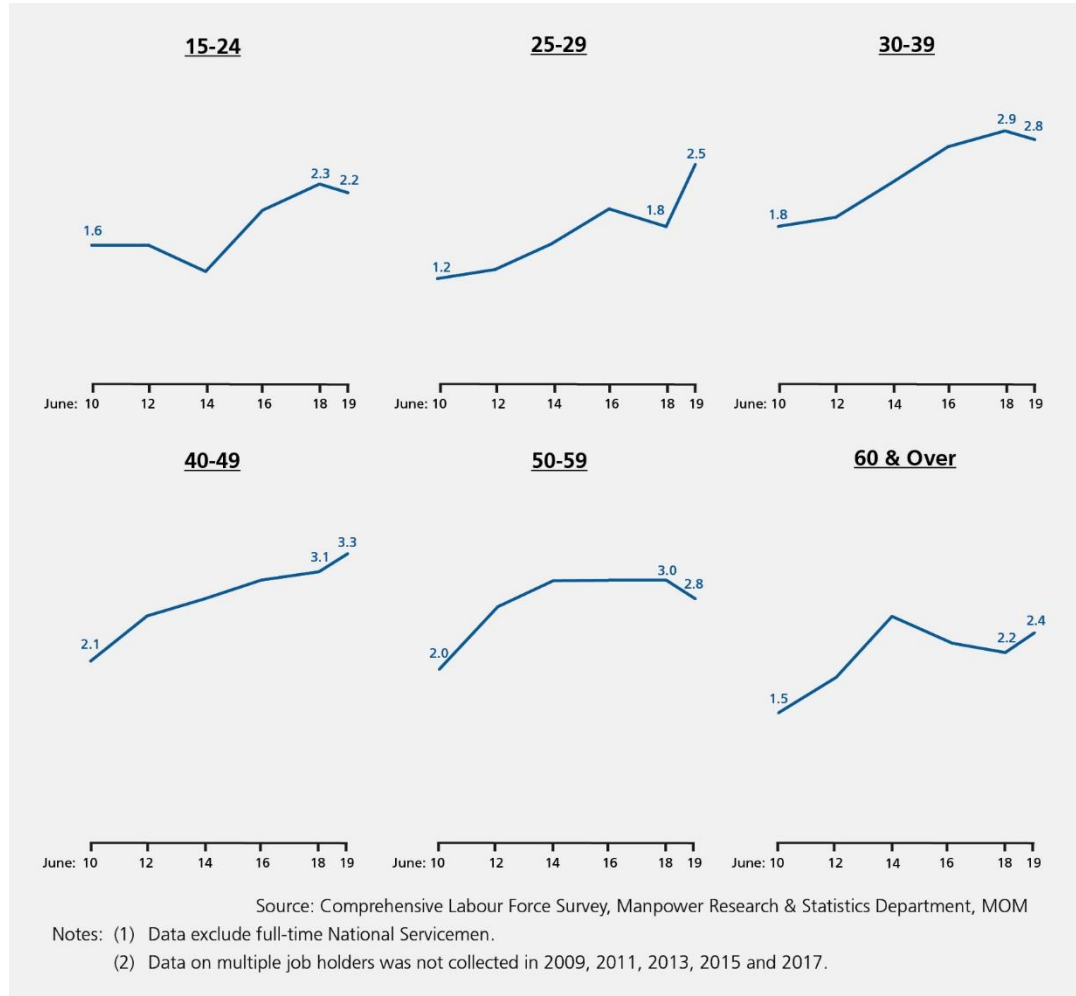


²³ Data for 2009 are not available, as the question on number of jobs held was asked once in every two years before 2019.

1.29 The incidence of multiple jobholders among young residents aged 25 to 29 rebounded, resuming a general uptrend observed over the decade. There was also a sustained increase in multiple jobholders among residents in their 40s. The incidence among older residents aged 60 & over ticked up, though it remained below its high in 2014. On the other hand, the incidence of multiple jobholders eased in the remaining age groups.

Chart 27 Proportion of employed residents holding multiple jobs by age

Per Cent



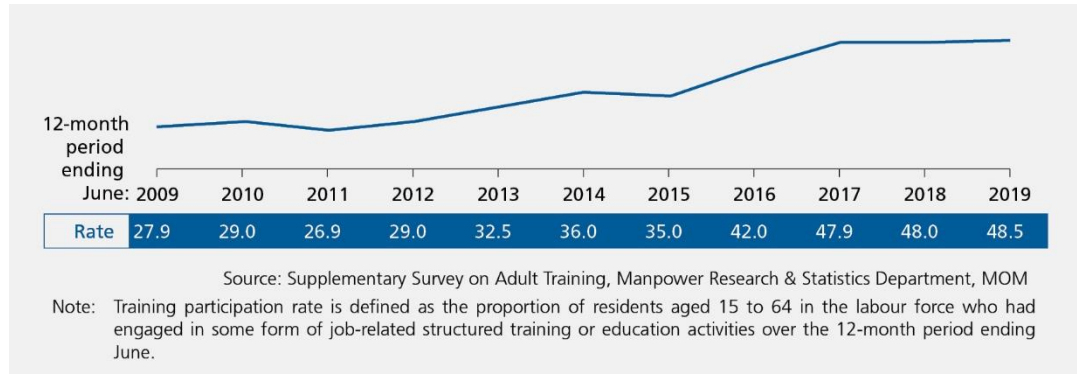
2. Training

Training participation continued to increase

- 2.1 The training participation rate for the resident labour force aged 15 to 64 rose from 48% in 2018 to 49% in 2019.²⁴ There has been a steady increase in training participation since 2015, reflecting efforts to promote continuous training in the workforce.

Chart 28 Training participation rate of resident labour force aged 15 to 64

Per Cent



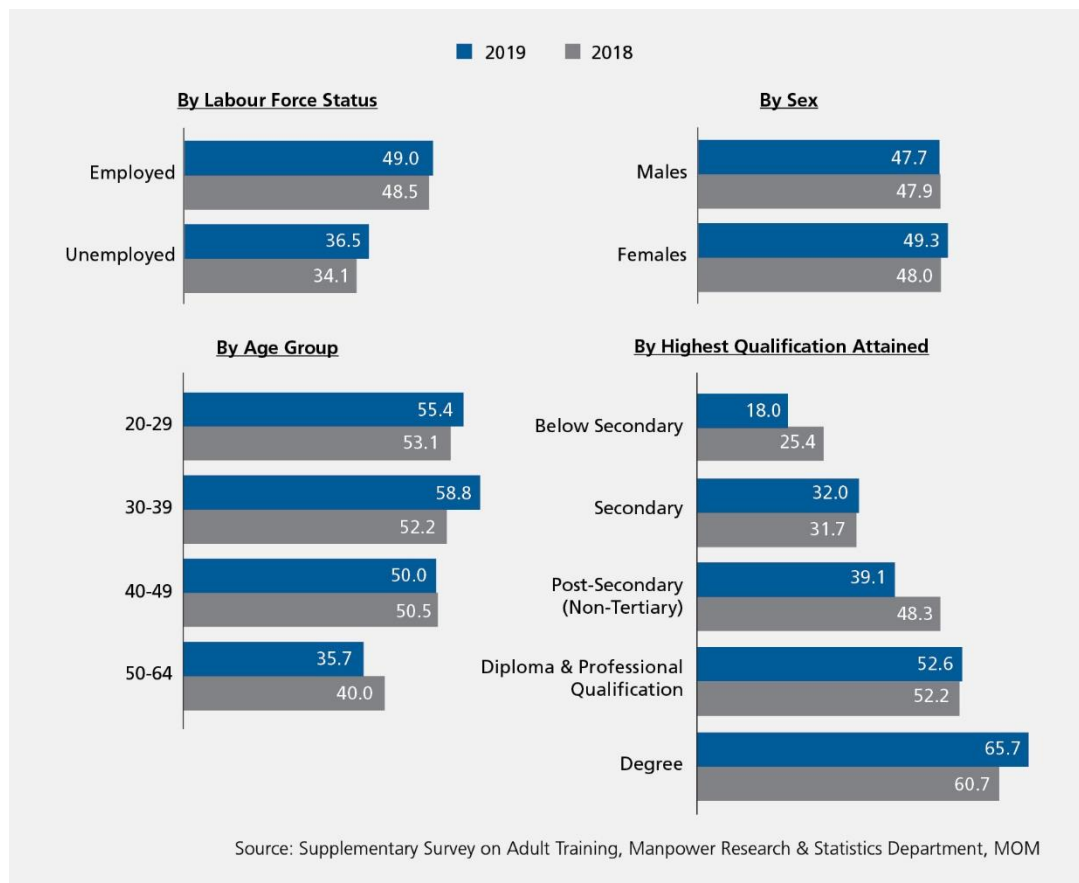
- 2.2 Training participation for the employed was expectedly higher than the unemployed, as the employed also benefit from training programmes initiated by employers. However, there was a notable increase in training participation among the unemployed (from 34% to 37%), indicating jobseekers' growing initiative to upskill themselves to be ready for their next employment.
- 2.3 By gender, females were slightly more likely to participate in training compared to males, who saw their training participation rate dip for the first time in four years. Across age and education groups, training participation was mixed. Younger residents aged below 40 as well as the tertiary educated continued to have a higher training participation rate. Among those aged 50 to 64, training participation rate slipped in 2019, largely mirroring the decline among those with below secondary education.²⁵

²⁴ This refers to training participation over the 12-month period ending June of the respective years.

²⁵ When asked about the reasons for not participating in training, non-trainees with below secondary education were more likely to indicate that they have not given a thought about training (2019: 29%), compared to other education groups (2019: 23%). In a widely cited paper by Fouarge et al (2010) titled "Why Do Low-Educated Workers Invest Less In Further Training", the authors acknowledged the well documented finding of the lower training participation among the less educated in the economic literature, and they found that less educated workers are significantly less willing to participate in training, because of different economic preferences (future orientation, preference for leisure) as well as personality traits (locus of control, exam anxiety, and openness to experience).

Chart 29 Training participation rate of resident labour force aged 15 to 64

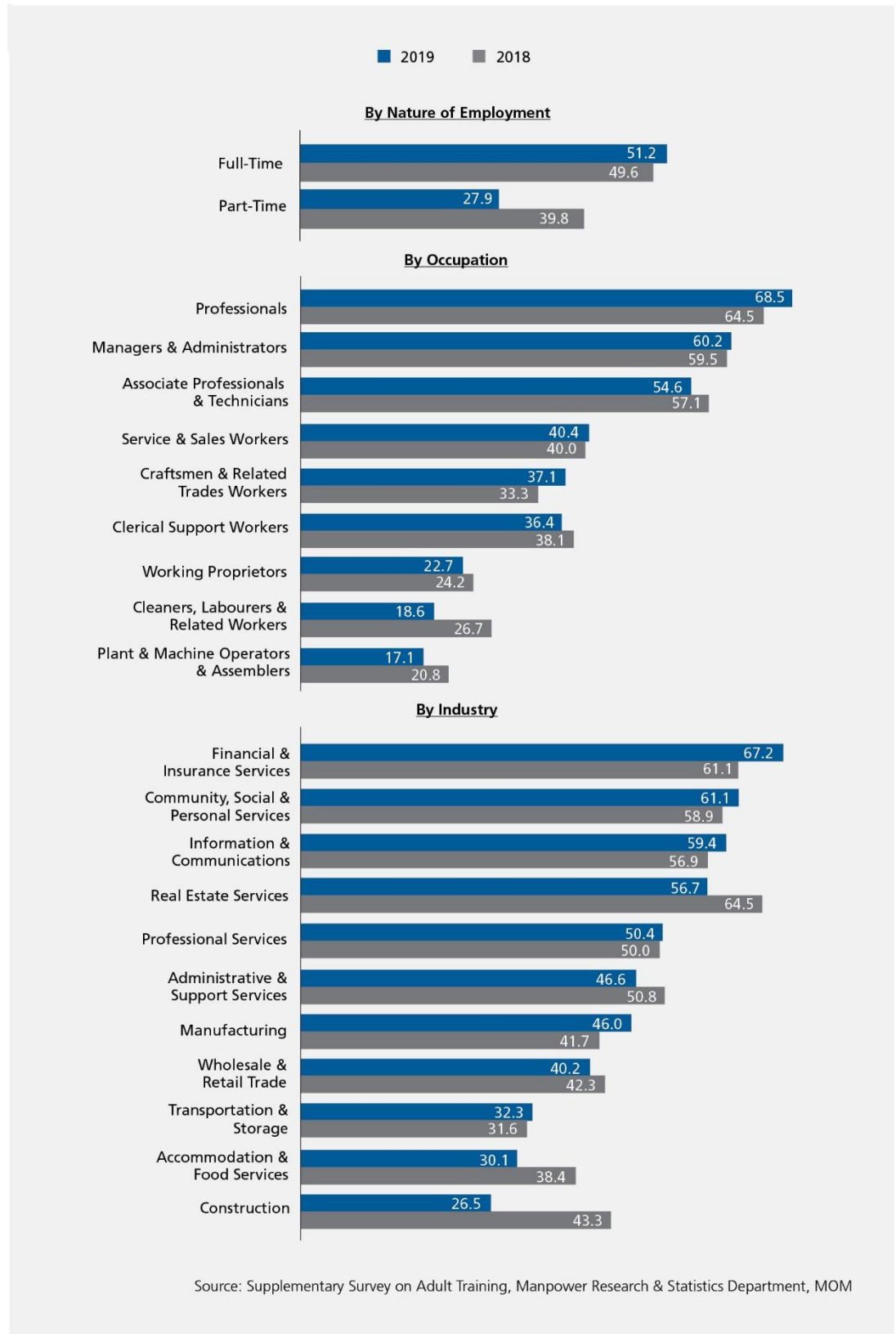
Per Cent



- 2.4 Similar to past years, full-timers (51%) had a higher training participation rate than part-timers (28%), given the stronger labour market attachment of full-timers. The training participation rate of part-timers in 2019 was weighed down by declines among those who were older, as well as those with non-tertiary qualifications.
- 2.5 Across occupational groups, the training participation rate was higher for PMETs (59%), compared to clerical, sales & service workers (38%) and production & transport operators, cleaners & labourers (22%). Among PMETs, training participation rate was the highest for *professionals*, reflecting their need to acquire knowledge and skills in pace with professional development to perform roles at the apex of skill specialisation. Among production & transport operators, cleaners & labourers, *craftsmen & related trades workers* were most likely to participate in training. On the other hand, *plant & machine operators & assemblers* and *cleaners, labourers & related workers* saw a decline in training participation after two straight years of increase.
- 2.6 By industry, PMET-dominated sectors including financial & insurance services (67%), community, social & personal services (61%), information & communications (59%), and professional services (50%) also had above-average training participation rates. Those employed in industries which tend to rely more on labour-intensive work, such as construction (27%) and accommodation & food services (30%), were less likely to attend training.

Chart 30 Training participation rate of employed residents aged 15 to 64

Per Cent

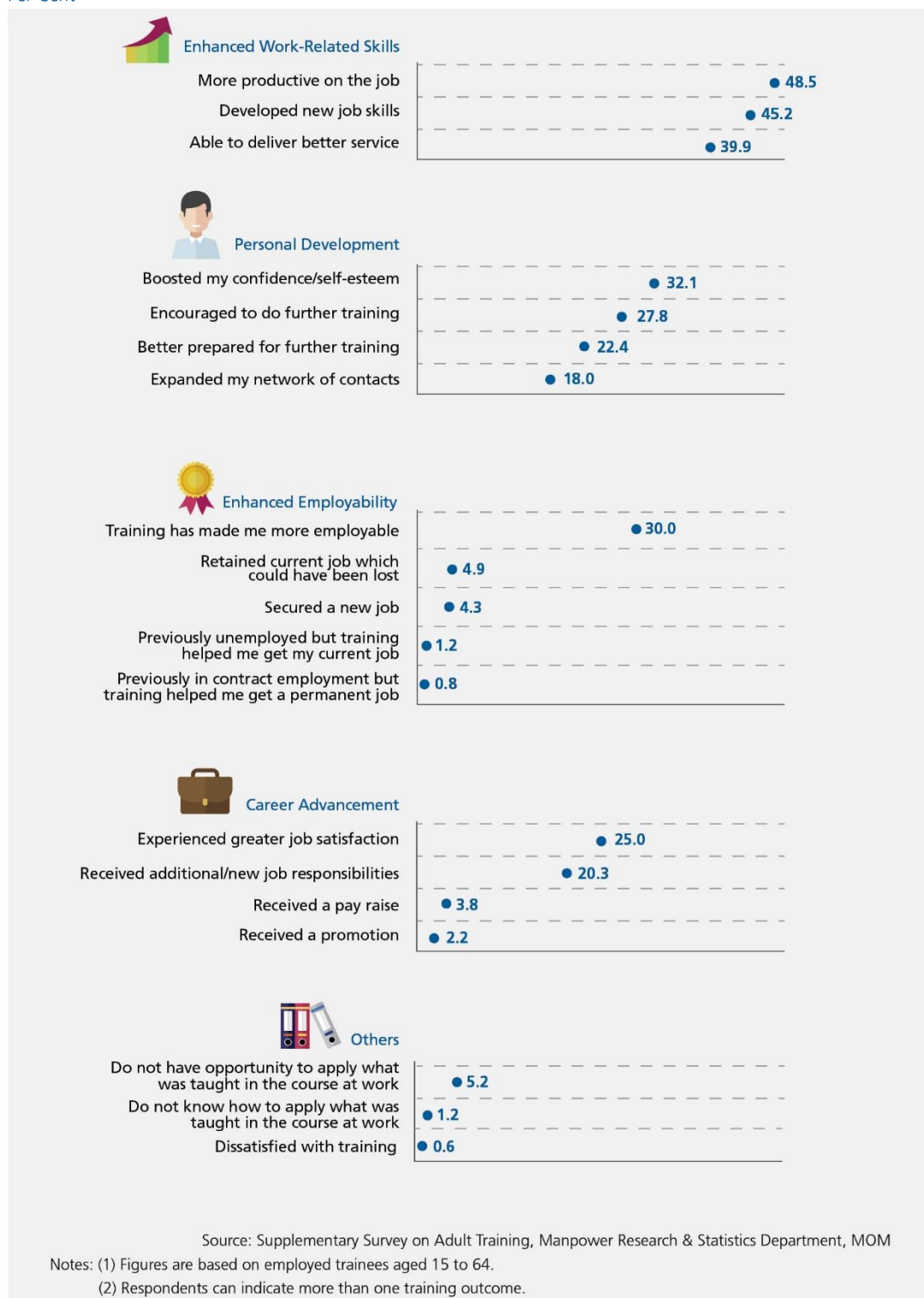


2.7 Training benefits workers in different ways. The favourable outcomes from training were commonly in terms of enhanced productivity on the job (49%), acquisition of new job-related skills (45%) and enhanced service delivery (40%). Sizeable shares of employed trainees also felt a boost in confidence and self-esteem (32%), and greater employability as a result from training (30%).

2.8 A handful of trainees also reported that they obtained a new job (4.3%) or received a pay increase (3.8%) and/or promotion (2.2%). These are less frequently cited, as they are typically not the immediate outcomes of training since workers would need time to display better work-related performance post-training. A minority did not give an evaluation of training, as they had yet to use their new skills at work (5.2%), or were unsure how to go about applying their training to their daily work (1.2%).

Chart 31 Training outcomes of employed residents aged 15 to 64, 2019

Per Cent



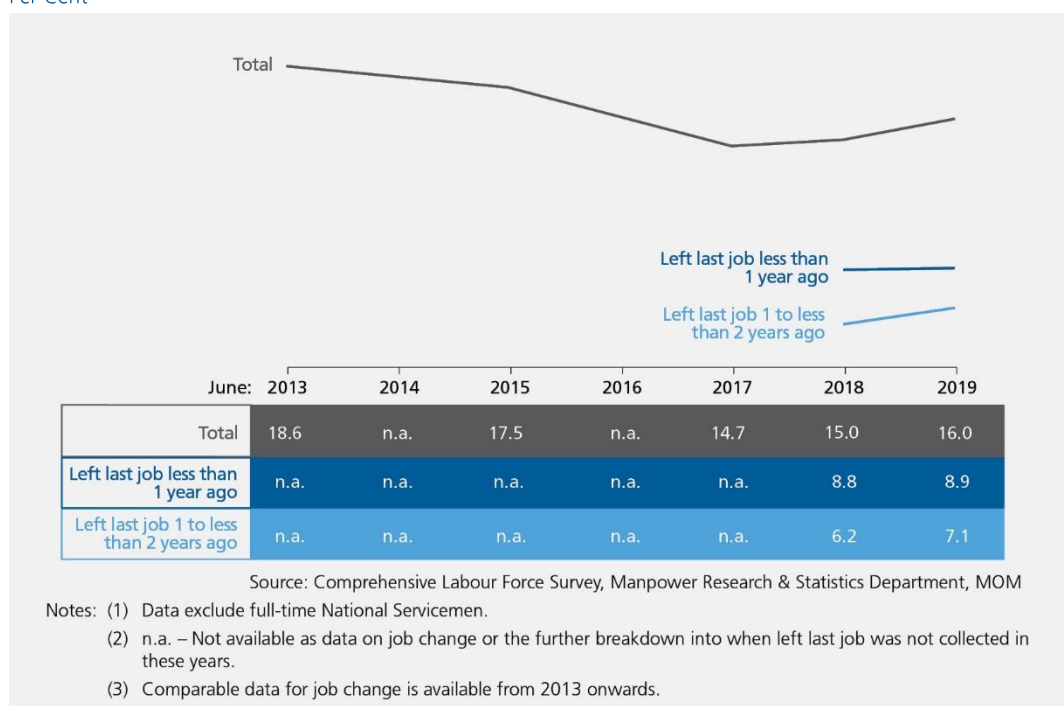
3. Job Mobility and Tenure

Only slight increase in proportion of workers who switched jobs in recent year

3.1 Among residents employed in June 2019, 16% had changed jobs in the last two years (between June 2017 and June 2019), up from 15% of the workers in June 2018 (for job change between June 2016 and June 2018). However, the increase predominantly reflect job changes that took place one to less than two years ago. The proportion of employed residents who changed jobs and left their previous job within the last one year only increased slightly from 8.8% in June 2018 to 8.9% in June 2019, as the tightening of the labour market in 2018 started to ease in 2019.²⁶ The slight increase was driven by residents in their 30s and 40s. In the remaining age groups, the proportion of workers who changed jobs in the recent year either dipped or were unchanged.

Chart 32 Proportion of employed residents who had changed jobs in the last 2 years

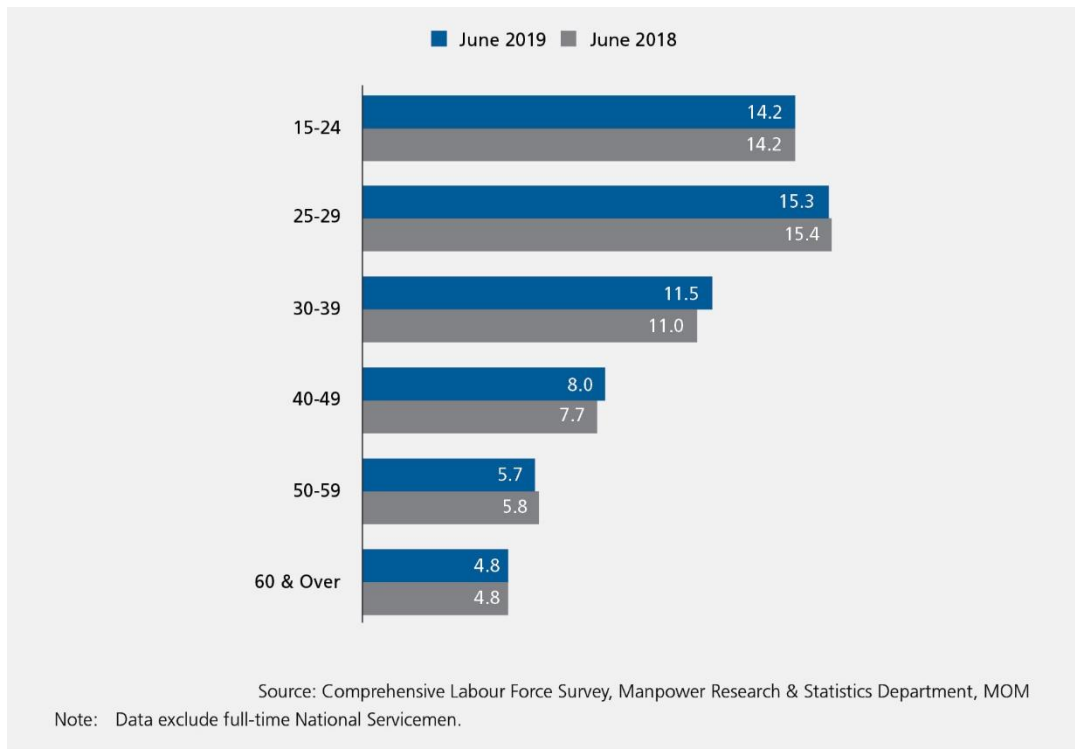
Per Cent



²⁶ The Monetary Authority of Singapore's Labour Market Pressure Indicator declined for the second consecutive quarter in the second quarter of 2019, suggesting the labour market has softened. Source: Monetary Authority of Singapore, *Macroeconomic Review*, Volume XVIII, Issue 2 (October 2019)

Chart 33 Proportion of employed residents who had changed jobs in the last 1 year by age

Per Cent



More workers in their current job for less than a year, but pace of increase moderated

- 3.2 The proportion of resident employees who started working with their current employer for less than a year continued to increase from 16.5% in 2018 to 16.8% in 2019, as the proportion of workers who switched jobs as well as the employment rate edged up at the same time. However, the extent of increase was smaller than the previous year as the labour market tightness eased.
- 3.3 At the other end, the proportion of resident employees who had been with their employer for at least ten years stabilised, following large increases in the last two years. Unlike in the last two years when a larger number of workers who started working in their jobs during the high employment growth years before the 2009 recession crossed the ten-year mark, fewer did so in the recent year as employment growth was slower from June 2008 to June 2009 during the recession then. Reflecting this, there was a fall in proportion of employees in their 30s and 40s who worked for at least ten years in 2019, as many of them started working or were in the early stages of their careers then.

Chart 34 Distribution of resident employees by years in current job

Per Cent

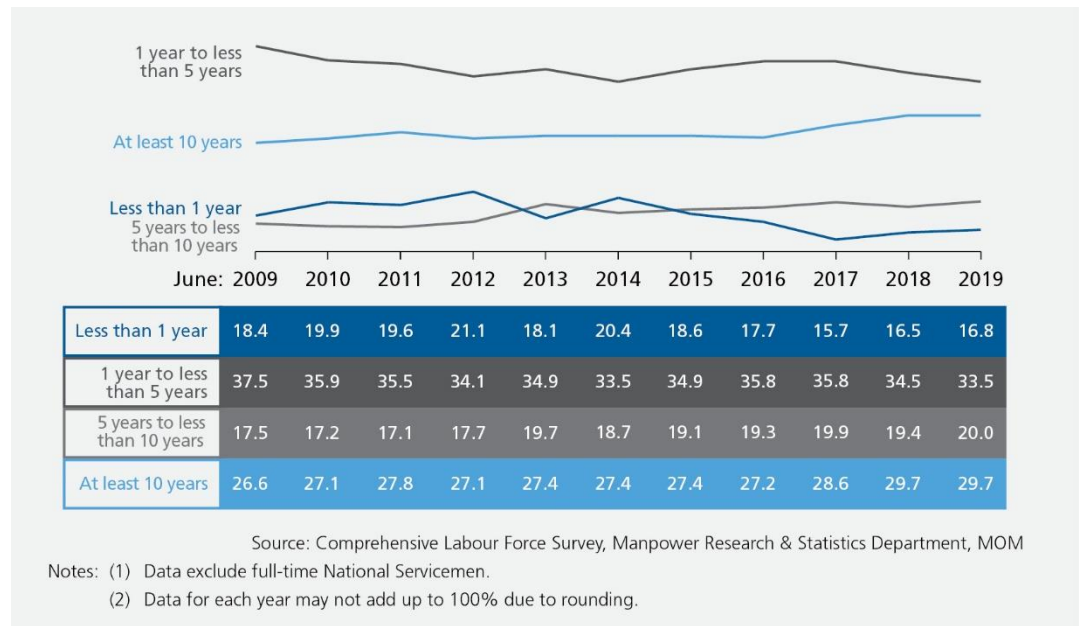


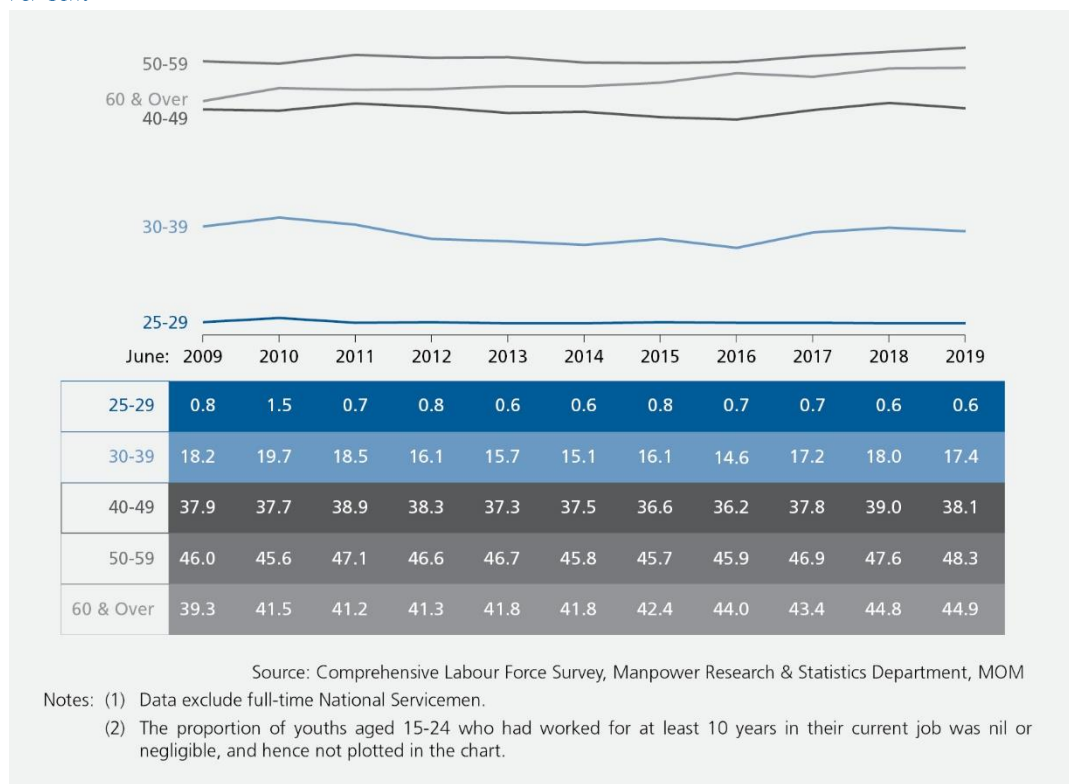
Chart 35 Proportion of resident employees who had worked for less than 1 year in their current job by age

Per Cent



Chart 36 Proportion of resident employees who had worked for at least 10 years in their current job by age

Per Cent



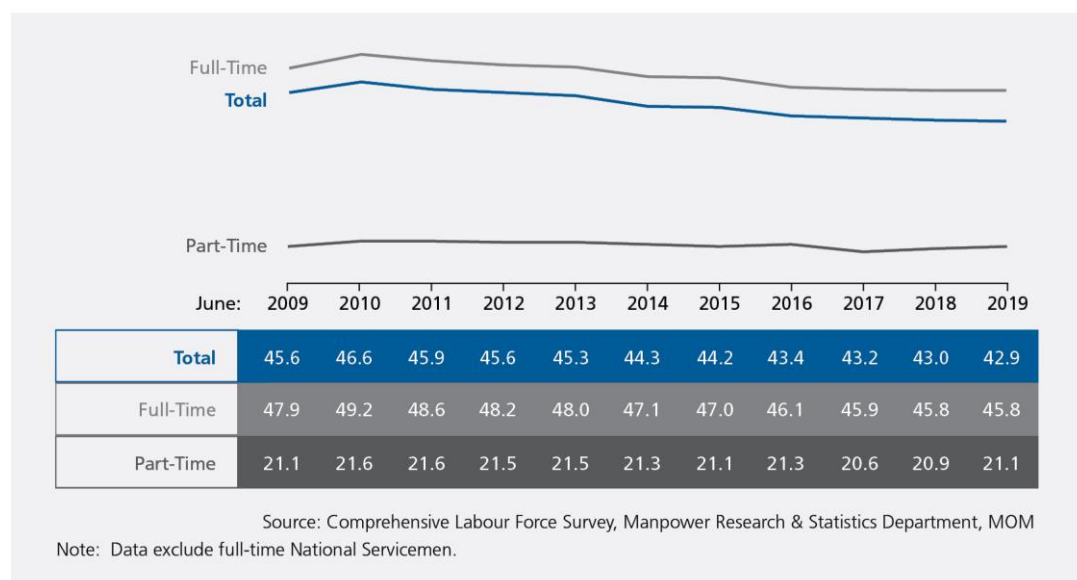
4. Usual Hours Worked

Average usual hours worked continued to decline

- 4.1 The average weekly usual hours worked among employed residents decreased for the ninth successive year, from 43.0 hours in 2018 to 42.9 hours in 2019. The decline reflects the continued increase in share of part-timers in the workforce, which outweighed the slight increase in average usual hours worked of part-timers from 20.9 to 21.1 hours. The average usual hours worked of full-timers held steady in 2019, after trending down from its peak in 2010.

Chart 37 Average (mean) usual hours worked per week of employed residents by nature of employment

Hours Per Week



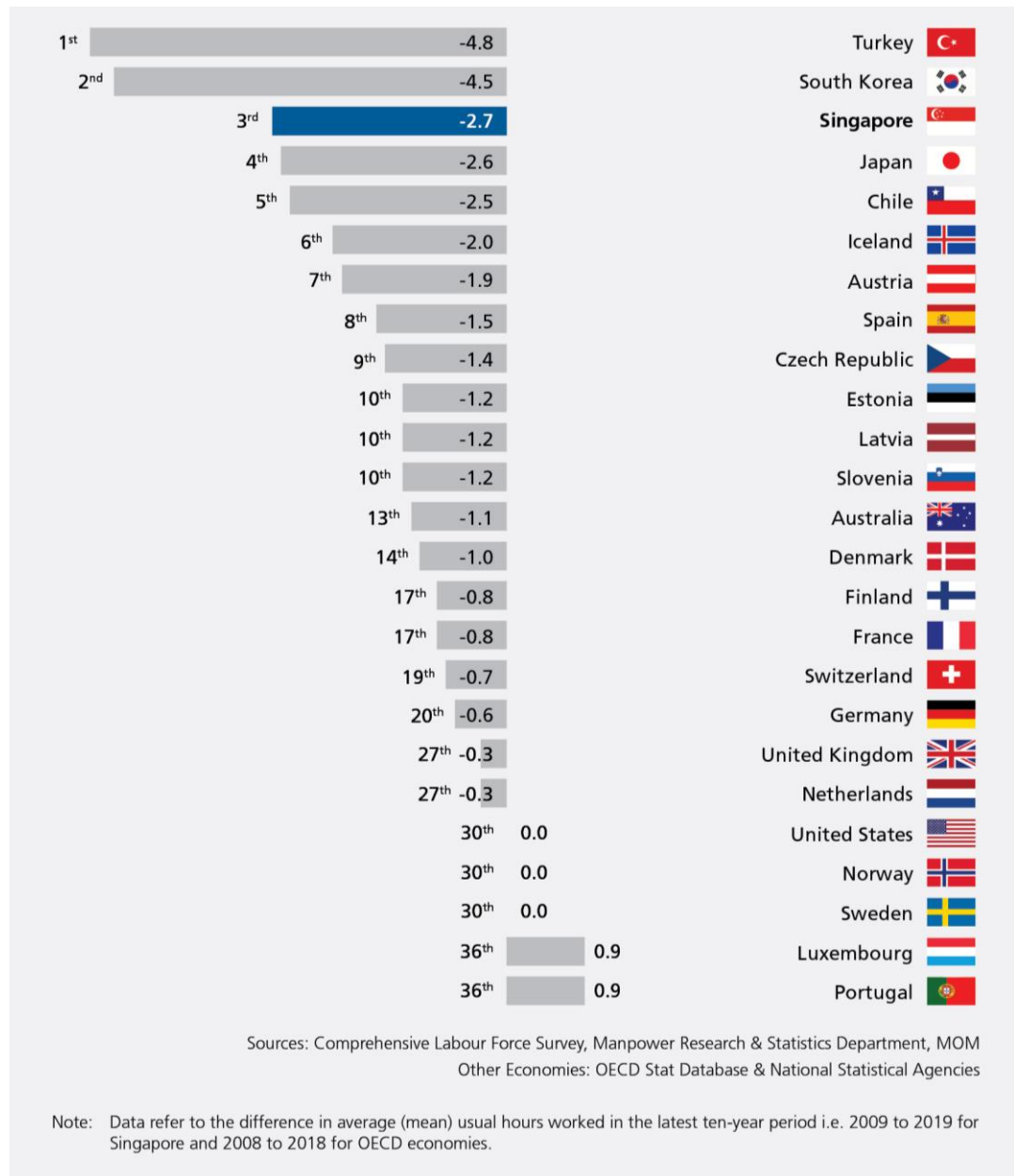
Decline in Singapore's average usual hours worked among the largest compared to OECD economies

- 4.2 Workers in Singapore work relatively longer hours than in many OECD economies²⁷ as part-time employment is less prevalent here. However, the difference has narrowed as Singapore's decrease in average working hours is larger than in most OECD economies. We registered the third-largest decline in average usual weekly hours worked compared to OECD economies over the last ten years. This was due to growing prevalence of residents in part-time work, shifts in occupation/industry composition to more PMET jobs (with shorter average usual working hours) and productivity gains made via technological advancements over time.

²⁷ Comparison was made to the OECD member countries, most of which are high-income economies similar to Singapore. OECD also provides a comprehensive statistical database that facilitates harmonised comparisons across a broad spectrum of indicators.

Chart 38 Change in average (mean) usual hours worked per week in Singapore and OECD economies over last ten years

Hours Per Week

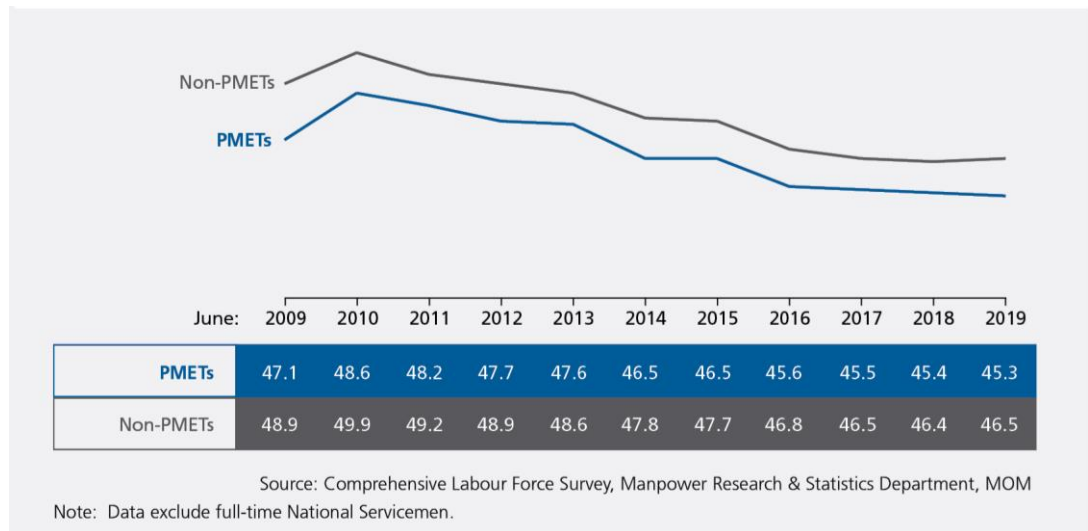


Both PMETs and non-PMETs working full-time saw a decline in average usual hours worked over the decade

- 4.3 Among full-timers, the average usual hours worked per week for both PMETs and non-PMETs were on the downtrend over the decade.
- 4.4 In the recent year, average usual hours worked for PMETs working full-time continued to fall from 45.4 hours in 2018 to 45.3 hours in 2019, but edged up for non-PMETs from 46.4 hours to 46.5 hours. The slight increase for non-PMETs came from production & transport operators, cleaners & labourers, reflecting increases in several industries including construction, wholesale trade, retail trade, transportation & storage, professional services and administrative & support services. Meanwhile, average usual hours worked for clerical, sales & service workers remained the same.

Chart 39 Average (mean) usual hours worked per week of full-time employed residents by occupation

Hours Per Week



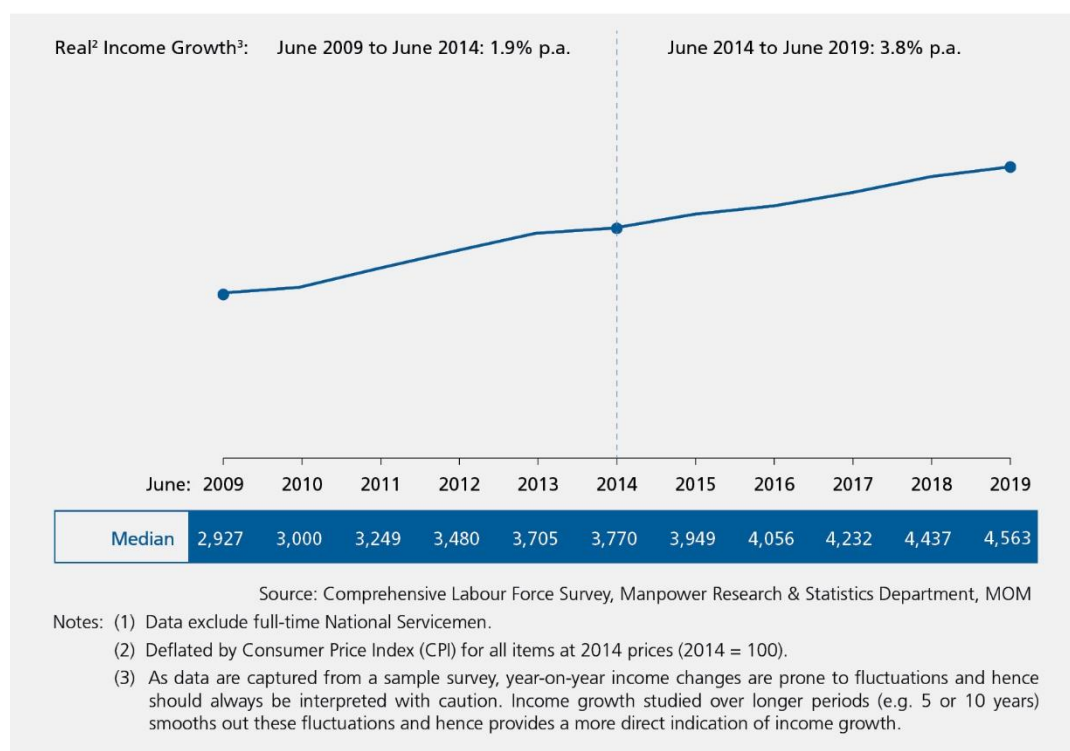
5. Income

Real median income continued to grow, but at a slower pace

- 5.1 Workers' income continued to grow, though it has moderated from a year ago. The real median²⁸ gross monthly income from work of full-time employed residents grew by 2.2% in 2019, lower than the growth of 4.4% in 2018. Nevertheless, the real median income growth of 3.8% p.a. in the recent five years from 2014 to 2019 was significantly higher than the 1.9% p.a. in the preceding five years from 2009 to 2014.

Chart 40 Median gross monthly income from work (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed residents

Dollars



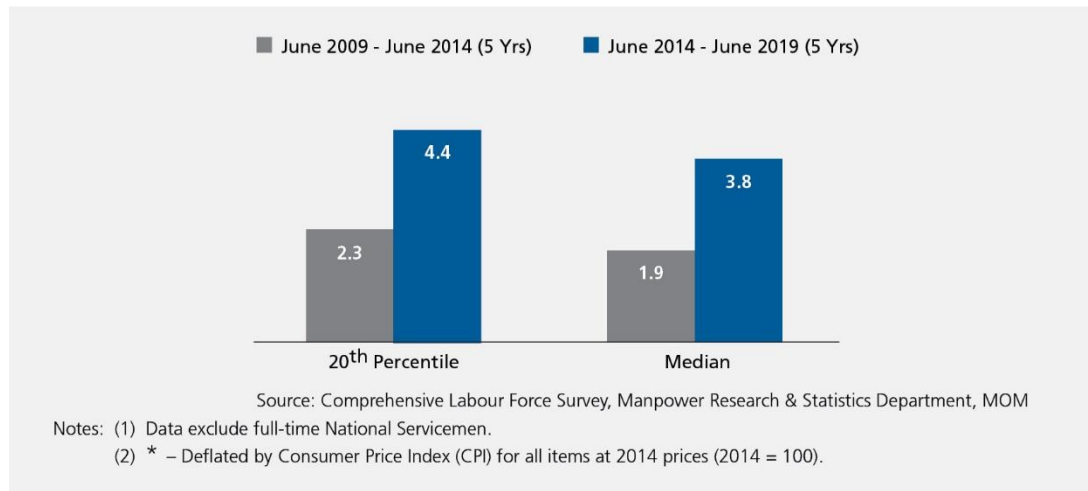
²⁸ The median income is the income such that half of the workers earn less and the other half earn more.

Lower-income earners experienced faster income growth than the median worker, narrowing their income gap

5.2 Over the last five years from 2014 to 2019, income at the 20th percentile²⁹ of full-time employed residents increased by 4.4% p.a. in real terms, higher than the 3.8% p.a. at the median and significantly higher than in the preceding five years from 2009 to 2014. This was helped by collective policy measures such as the Progressive Wage Model, Wage Credit, Special Employment Credit, and foreign workforce policy adjustments. As a result, their income gap with the median worker³⁰ narrowed.

Chart 41 Annualised change in real* gross monthly income from work (including employer CPF contributions) of full-time employed residents

Per Cent Per Annum



²⁹ The 20th percentile income of full-time employed residents was \$2,457 (including employer CPF contributions) and \$2,167 (excluding employer CPF contributions) in June 2019.

³⁰ Refers to the ratio of the median income to the 20th percentile income of full-time employed residents.

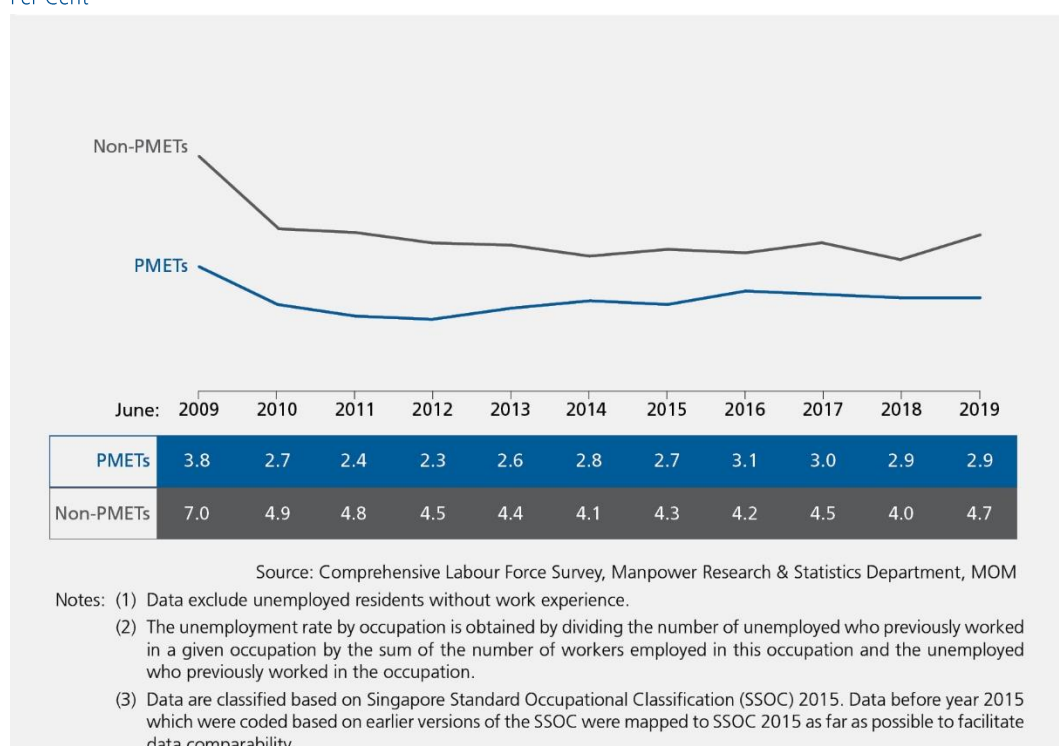
6. Unemployment³¹

Unemployment rate held steady for PMETs, but rose for non-PMETs

- 6.1 The non-seasonally adjusted³² unemployment rate for PMETs held steady at 2.9% in 2019, as employment growth remained firm in PMET-concentrated industries such as modern services³³. Unemployment rate improved for PMETs in most age groups except for PMETs in their 40s. The PMET long-term unemployment rate decreased from 0.8% to 0.6% over the same period, improving for those in their 30s and older but remained unchanged for those below 30.
- 6.2 For non-PMETs, the unemployment rate increased from 4.0% to 4.7%. This reflects cyclical effects such as the US-China trade conflict that affected manufacturing output and retail trade, and increased labour turnover in food & beverage services. Non-PMET unemployment increased for all age groups, and more so for those aged below 40. The long-term unemployment rate for non-PMETs rose slightly from 0.7% to 0.8%, with the increase concentrated among those in their 30s and 40s while it eased for older non-PMETs aged 50 & over.

Chart 42 Unemployment rate of resident PMETs and non-PMETs

Per Cent



³¹ This section covers more details of the characteristics of the unemployed based on the mid-year Comprehensive Labour Force Survey, including the unemployment rates by occupation and industry, and their profile by reasons for leaving last job, unemployment duration and job search methods. For analysis of unemployment rate trends at the top-line and by age, highest qualification attained and sex, please refer to the quarterly Labour Market Reports.

³² Unemployment/long-term unemployment rates by occupation/industry are non-seasonally adjusted because they pertain specifically to June periods, and comparisons over time is not affected by seasonality. Therefore, they should be compared with the non-seasonally adjusted unemployment rate at the top line, rather than the seasonally adjusted rate.

³³ This includes information & communications, financial & insurance services and professional services.

Chart 43 Unemployment rate of resident PMETs and non-PMETs by age

Per Cent

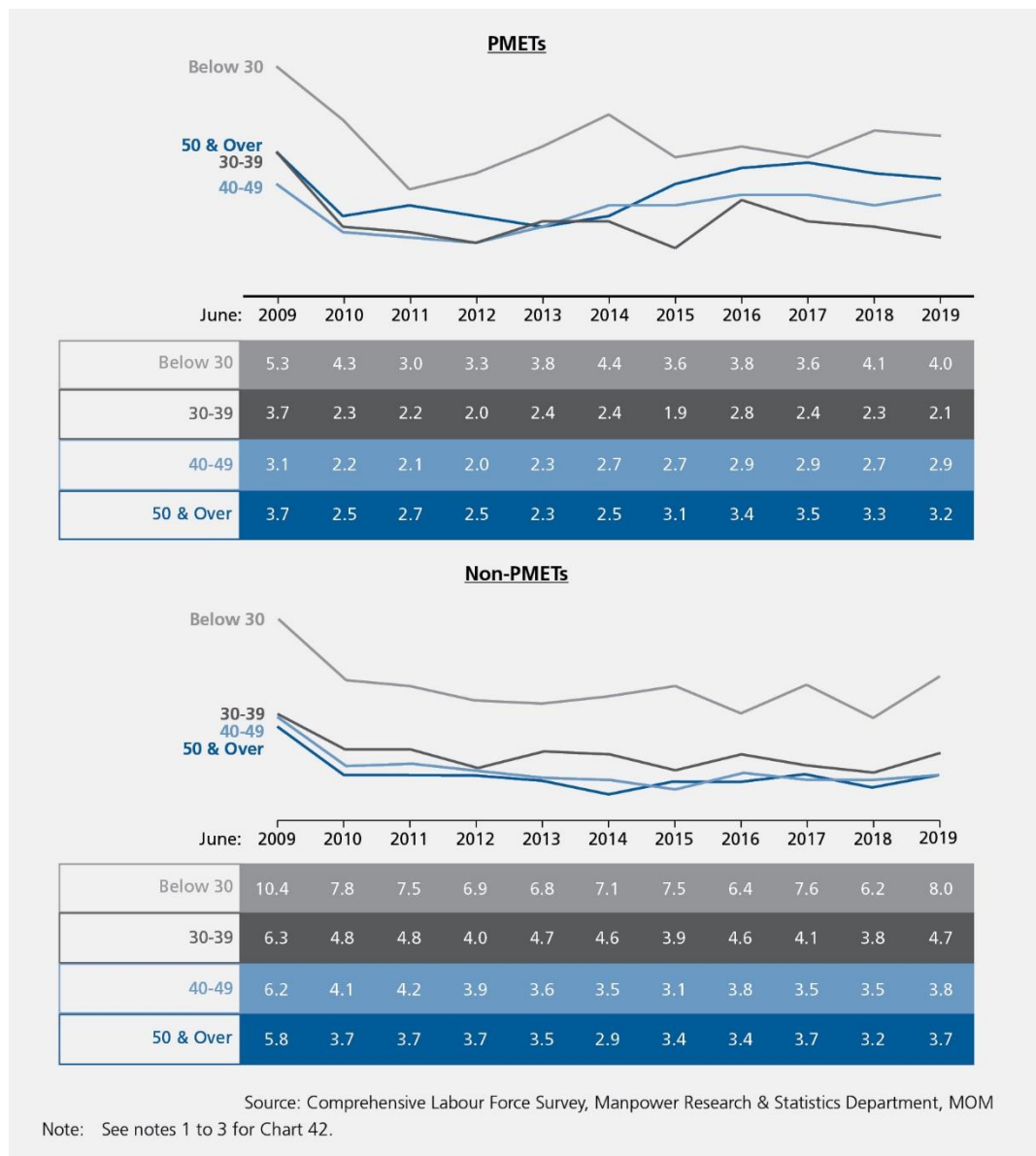


Chart 44 Long-term unemployment rate of resident PMETs and non-PMETs

Per Cent

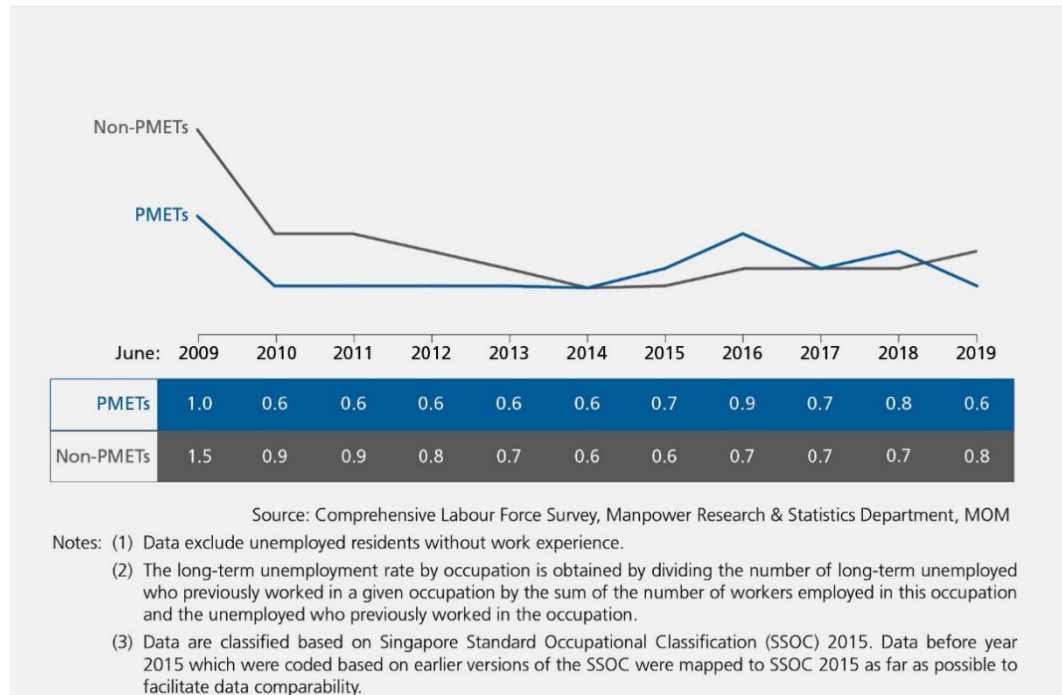
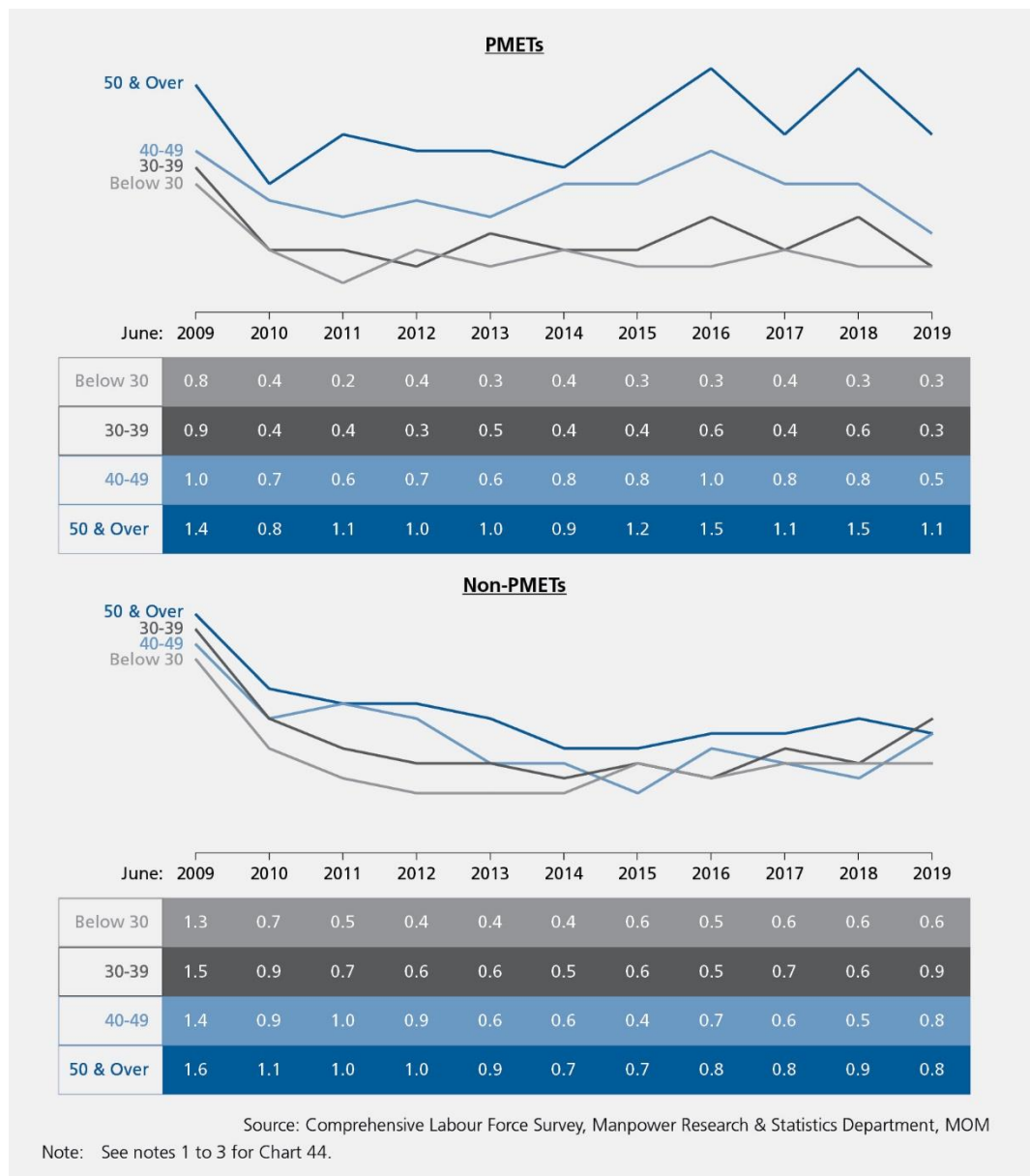


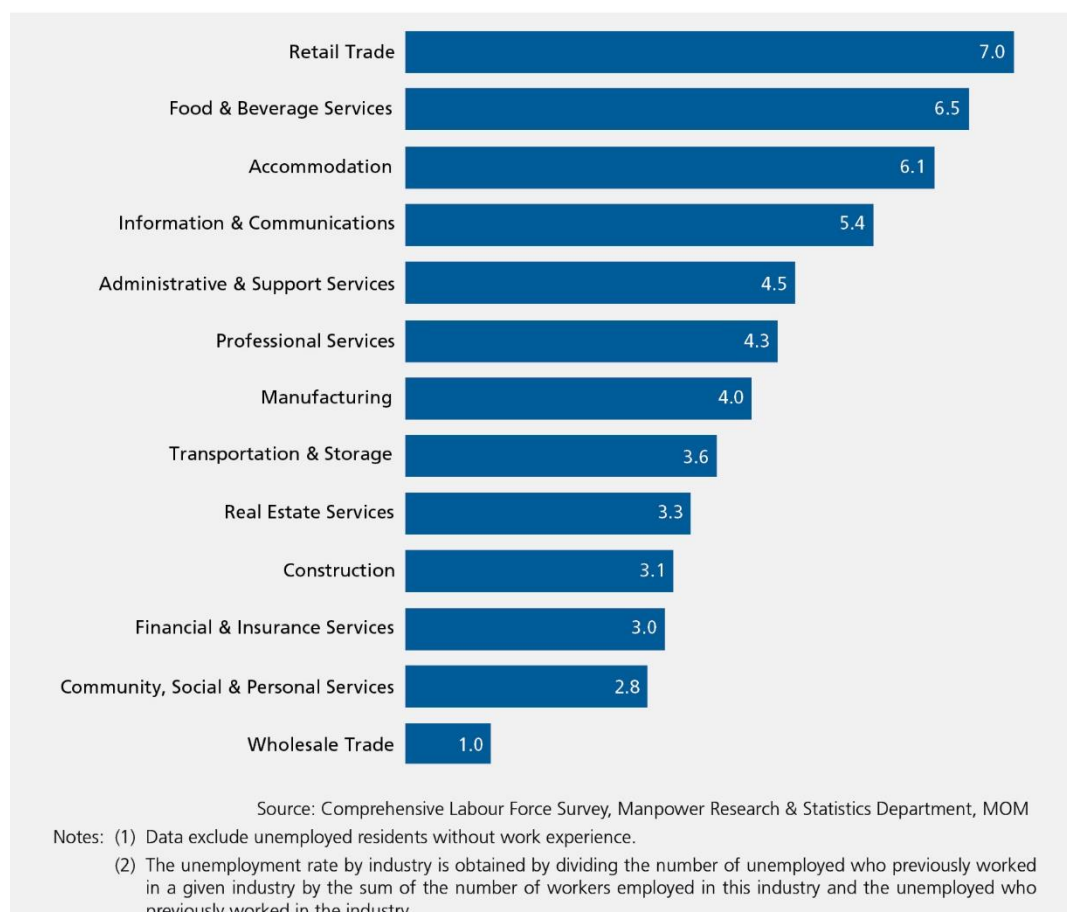
Chart 45 Long-term unemployment rate of resident PMETs and non-PMETs by age
Per Cent



6.3 Reflecting weak retail sales volume³⁴ and increase in labour turnover in food & beverage services³⁵, retail trade (7.0%) and food & beverage services (6.5%) overtook accommodation (6.1%) as the industries with the highest unemployment rates in 2019. Information & communications (5.4%) had relatively higher unemployment rate among the PMET-concentrated industries, amid on-going restructuring and the industry’s fast-evolving skills landscape.

Chart 46 Resident unemployment rate by industry, June 2019

Per Cent



³⁴ Overall retail sales volume declined by 4.7% in the second quarter of 2019, weighed down by the 17% fall in motor vehicle sales. Non-motor vehicle retail sales volume contracted by 1.8%. Source: Economic Survey of Singapore Second Quarter 2019, MTI

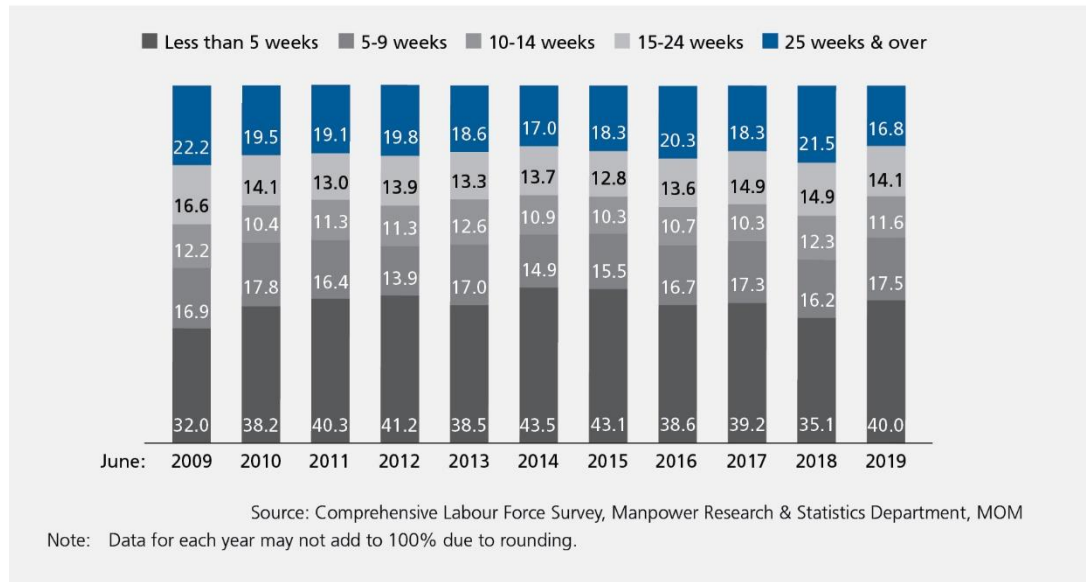
³⁵ The average monthly recruitment rate in food & beverage services increased from 4.2% in the second quarter of 2018 to 4.7% in the second quarter of 2019, while the average monthly resignation rate increased from 3.8% to 4.4%. Source: Labour Market Survey, Manpower Research & Statistics Department, MOM

Increase in unemployment in recent year observed among those with relatively shorter unemployment durations

- 6.4 The increase in unemployment in 2019 was observed among those who recently started job search rather than the long-term unemployed. Most of the increase was among those with unemployment duration of less than 5 weeks, whose share among unemployed residents increased from 35% in 2018 to 40% in 2019. In contrast, the number of long-term unemployed residents (unemployed for 25 weeks or longer) decreased from 19,200 (22% of unemployed residents) to 16,500 (17%).

Chart 47 Unemployed residents by duration of unemployment

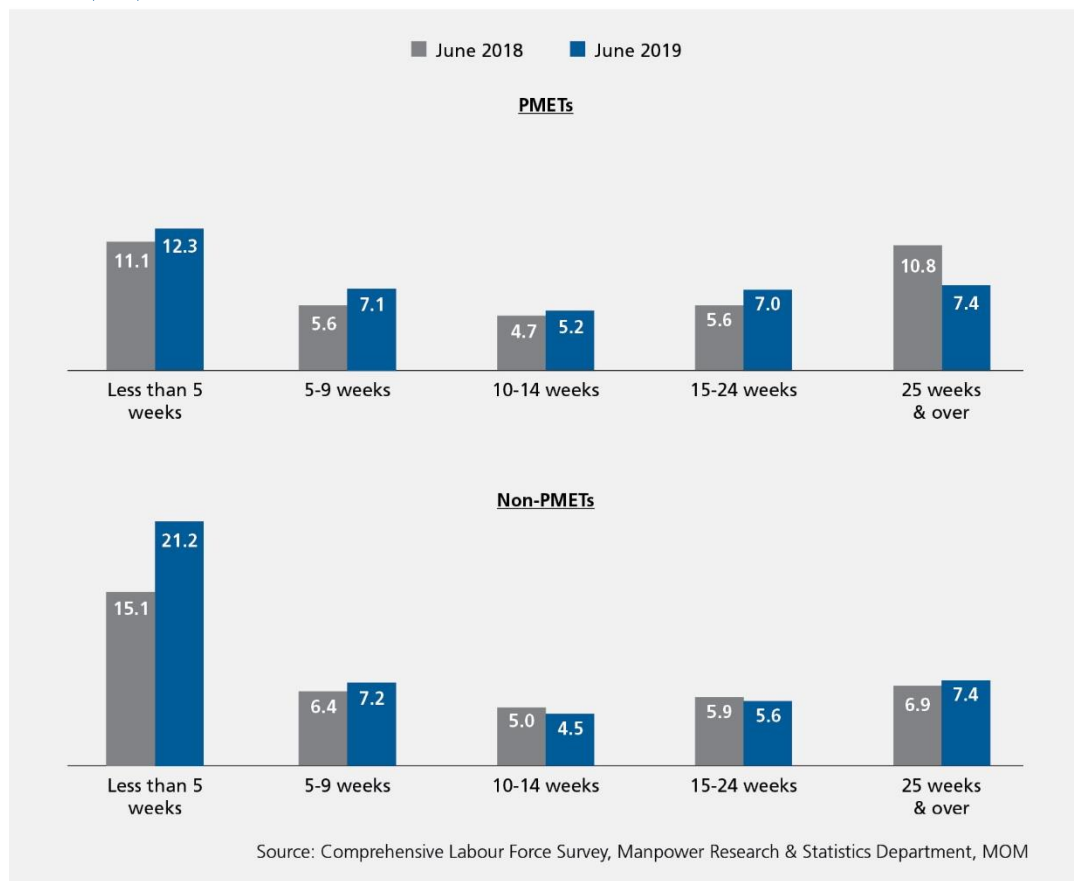
Per Cent



- 6.5 While there was a marked increase in unemployment among non-PMETs, the bulk of the increase came from those who recently started job search and much less so from the long-term unemployed. Among PMETs, the marked decrease in number of long-term unemployed balanced the increase in those unemployed for less than 25 weeks. These trends shifted the median duration of unemployment downwards, from 12 weeks to 10 weeks for PMETs and from 8 weeks to 6 weeks for non-PMETs.

Chart 48 Unemployed PMETs and non-PMETs by duration of unemployment

Number ('000)



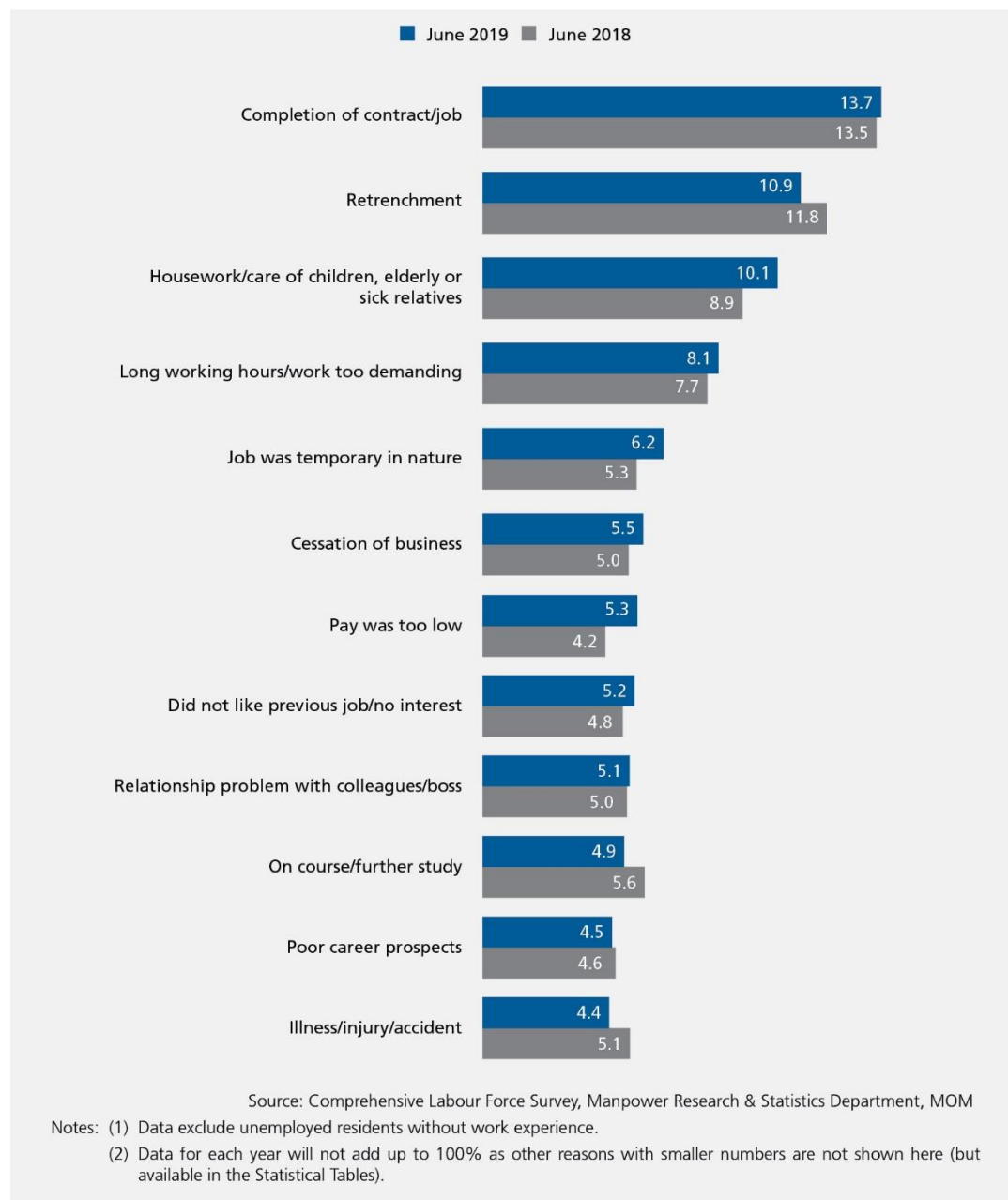
Increase in unemployed over the year largely due to family responsibilities and less favourable aspects of the job rather than retrenchment

6.6 Although economic growth moderated, retrenchment was not the key driver of the increase in unemployment. The number of unemployed residents in 2019 whose main reason for leaving last job was retrenchment was similar to that in 2018, and their share among unemployed residents with work experience decreased from 12% in 2018 to 11% in 2019. The share of unemployed who left their last job due to retrenchment decreased for both PMETs and non-PMETs.³⁶ The increase in unemployment in 2019 largely came from those who left their last job due to housework, care of children, elderly or sick relatives, or because of less favourable aspects of the job such as long working hours/work too demanding, job was temporary in nature and low pay.

³⁶ Among unemployed PMETs, the share of those who left their last job due to retrenchment dipped from 16.0% in 2018 to 15.9% in 2019. The decrease for non-PMETs was from 7.7% to 6.7%.

Chart 49 Top main reasons for leaving last job among unemployed residents

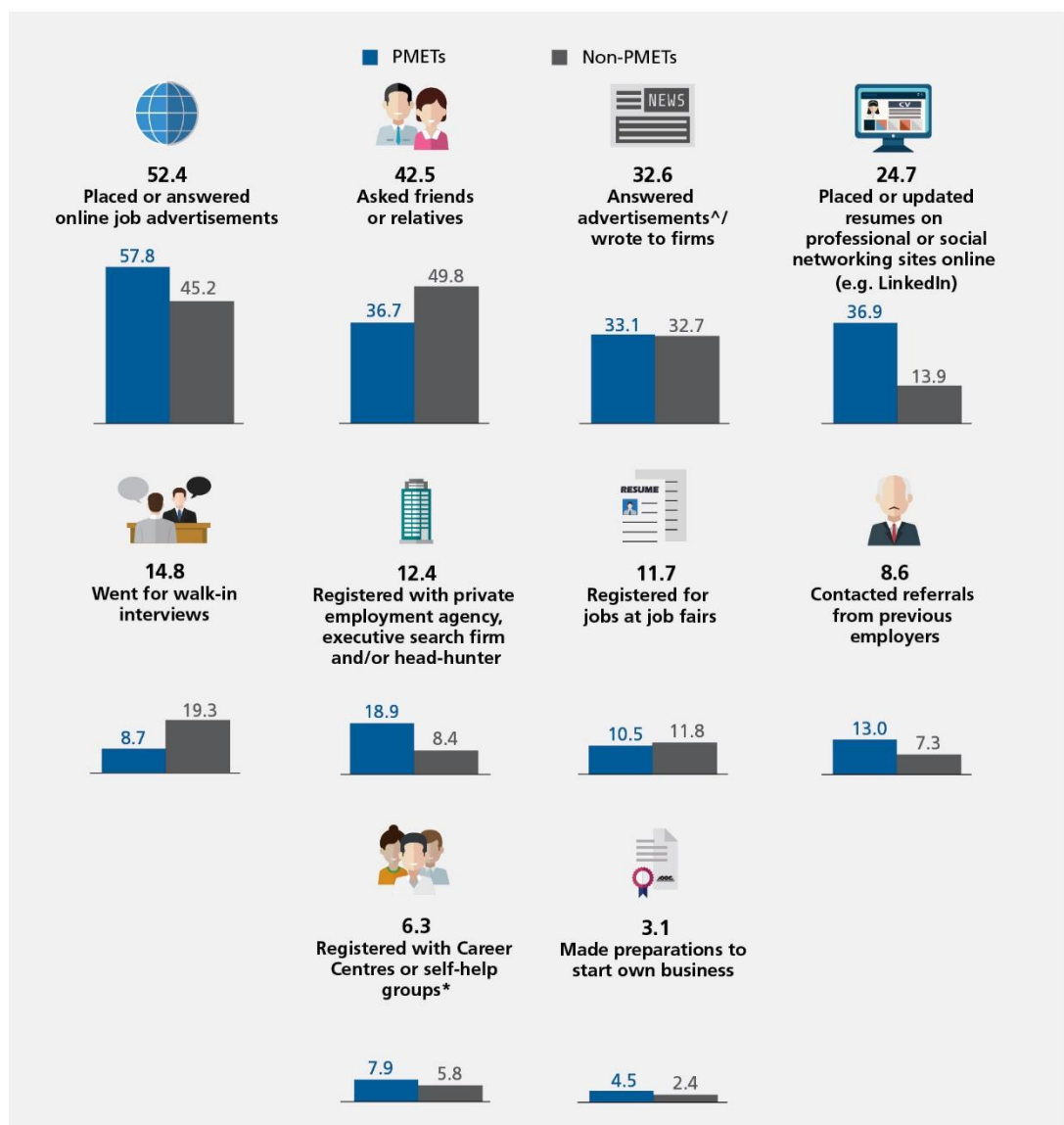
Per Cent



6.7 PMETs most commonly searched for jobs online, namely placing or answering online job advertisements (58%) and placing or updating resumes on professional or social networking sites online (37%). Amid increasing digitalisation in the economy, the latter overtook asking friends or relatives (37%) and answering non-online advertisements/writing to firms (33%) as the second most common mode of job search among PMETs.

6.8 Among non-PMETs, asking friends or relatives remained the most common mode of job search and one in two (50%) did so. Placing or answering online job advertisements (45%) is gaining popularity among non-PMET job seekers, whereas answering job advertisements that are not online or writing to firms (33%) is losing share.

Chart 50 Unemployed residents by modes of job search and previous occupation, June 2019
Per Cent



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

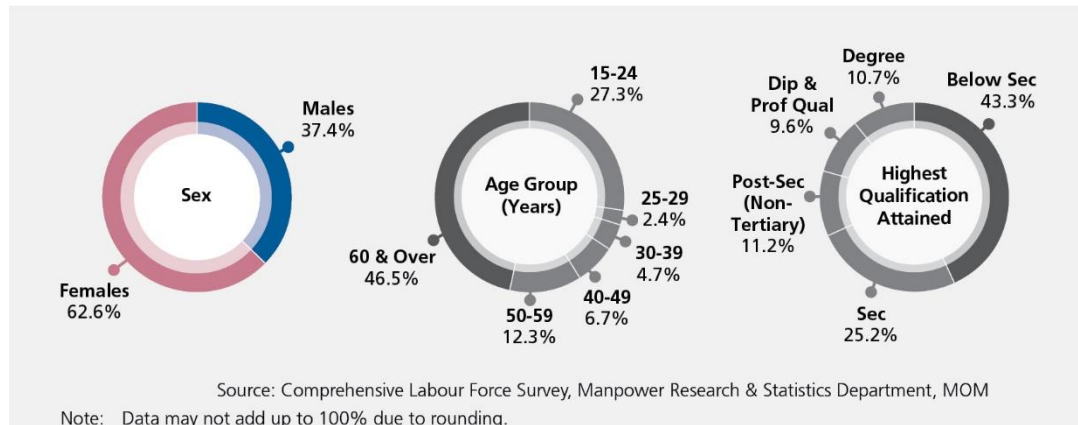
Notes: (1) Respondents can indicate more than one action taken to look for jobs.
 (2) Overall figure for each action taken is based on all unemployed residents, including those without work experience and hence do not have a previous occupation.
 (3) ^ – Excluding online job advertisements.
 (4) * – 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).

7. Persons Outside the Labour Force

Residents outside the labour force were mainly females, older and less educated

- 7.1 There were 1.09 million (or 32.0%) residents aged 15 & over who were outside the labour force in 2019, broadly similar to 2018 (1.09 million or 32.3%). Despite an ageing population, the number of residents outside the labour force had only trended up gently from 1.05 million in 2009, as the proportion of the population aged 15 & over who were outside the labour force declined from 34.6%.
- 7.2 Close to half of the residents outside the labour force were aged 60 & over (47%), many of whom were retired. Another 27% were youths aged 15 to 24, predominantly students. Reflecting the higher proportion of older residents, most residents outside the labour force held below secondary (43%) and secondary (25%) qualifications.

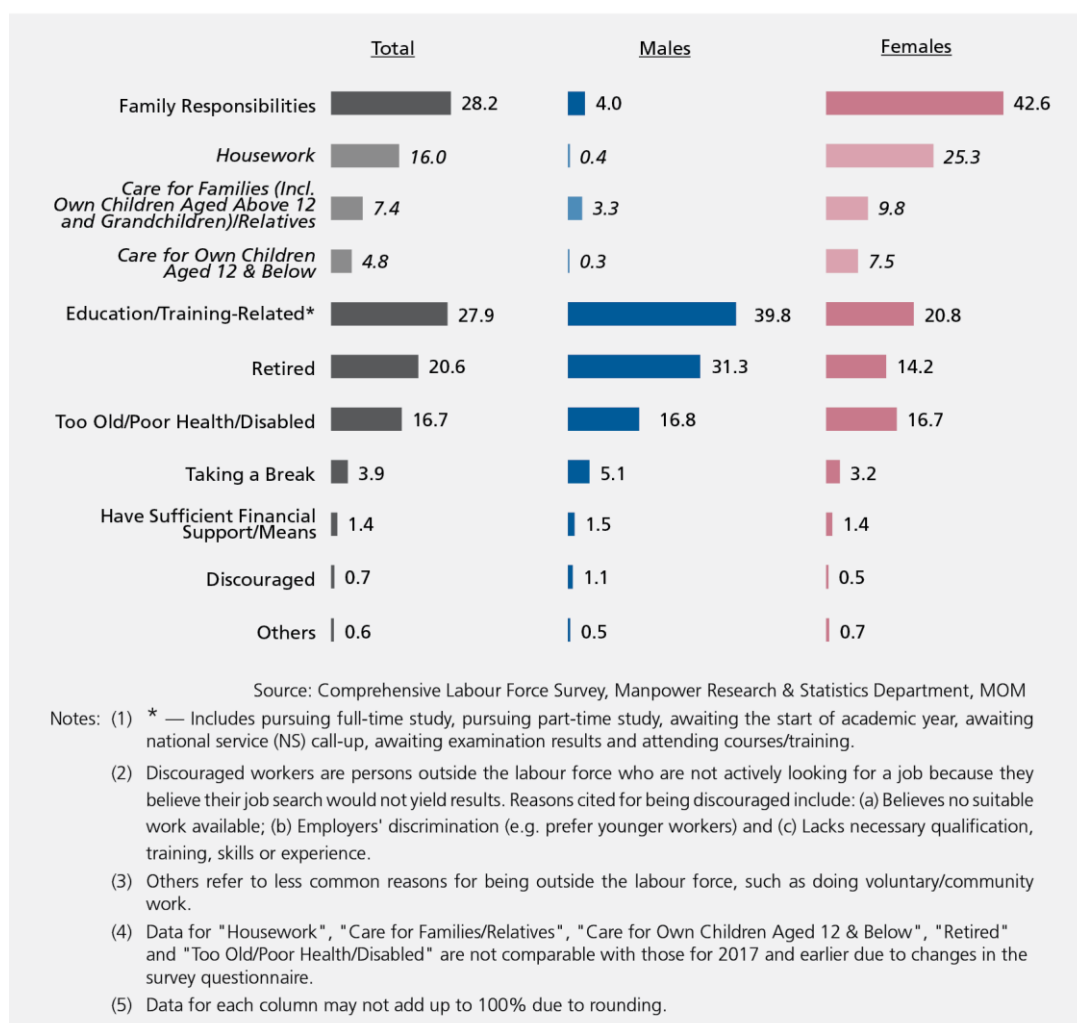
Chart 51 Profile of residents outside the labour force, June 2019



7.3 Women (63%) formed the majority of residents outside the labour force. Many of them (43%) did not participate in the labour market because of family responsibilities, including housework (25%), taking care of own children aged 12 & below (7.5%) or other family members (including children aged above 12 and grandchildren)/relatives (9.8%). On the other hand, as males outside the labour force were predominantly youths and older residents, the common reasons they indicated were education/training (40%) and retirement (31%).

Chart 52 Residents outside the labour force by main reason for not working and not looking for a job, June 2019

Per Cent

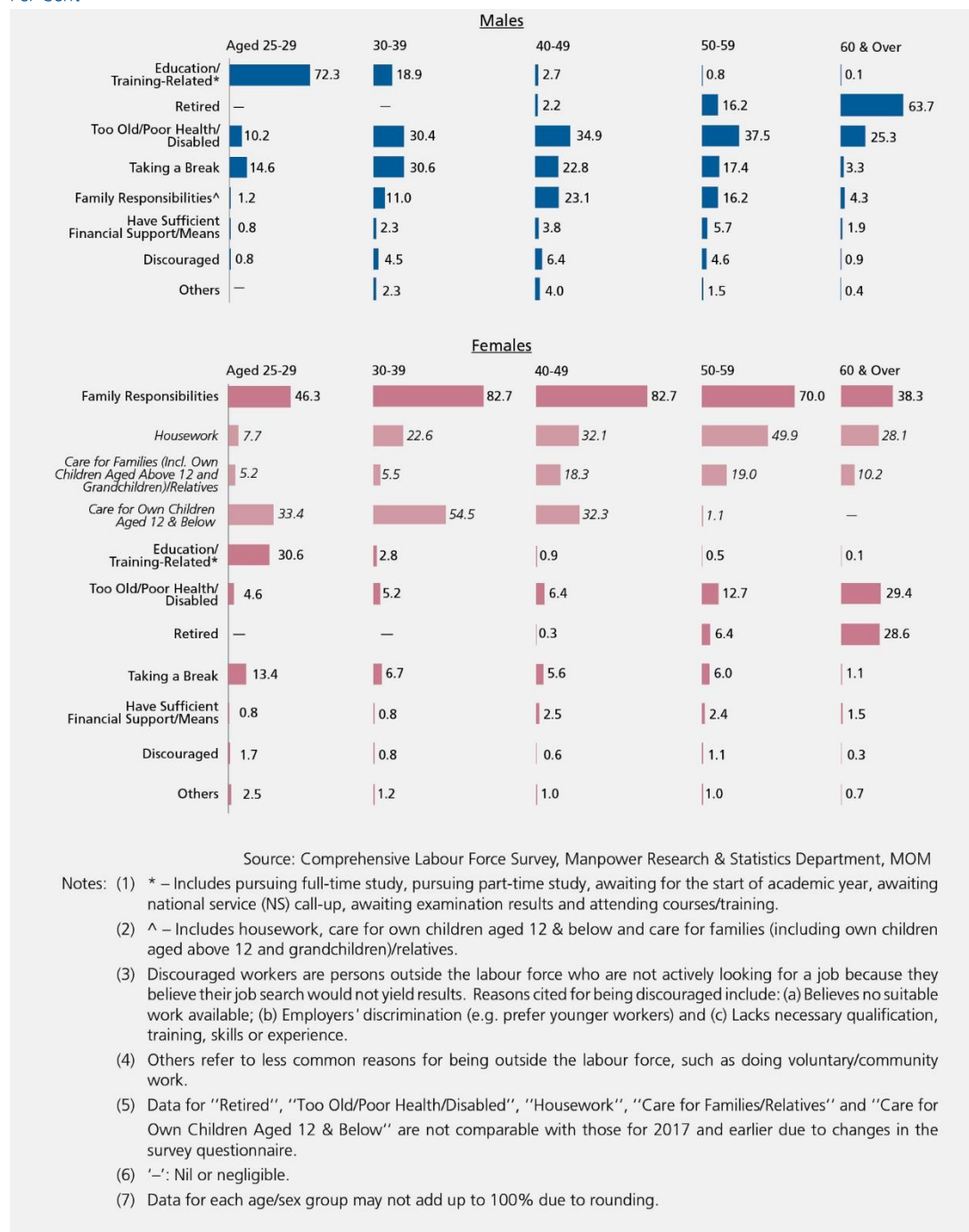


7.4 Only a small number of men in their 30s and 40s were outside the labour force, commonly because of poor health/disability (30 to 39: 30%, 40 to 49: 35%) and taking a break (30 to 39: 31%, 40 to 49: 23%). Another common reason among males in their 40s was family responsibilities (23%), such as to take care of their family member/relative (14%) (mostly elderly aged 65 & over) or own children aged 12 & below (7.5%).

7.5 The vast majority of women outside the labour force in their 30s and 40s (both 83%) were not working because of family responsibilities, mostly to take care of their young children aged 12 & below (30 to 39: 55%, 40 to 49: 32%). Care for own children aged 12 & below was also the most common reason for not working among women aged 25 to 29 (33%). The vast majority of these women were outside the labour force because they preferred to look after their young children rather than because they felt suitable care services were not available or too expensive.³⁷

Chart 53 Main reason for not working and not looking for a job by selected age groups and sex, June 2019

Per Cent



³⁷ 89% of females aged 25 to 29 who were outside the labour force to take care of their own children aged 12 & below did so because they preferred to look after their own children. The corresponding figures were 92% for females aged 30 to 39 and 95% for those aged 40 to 49.

7.6 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.

Unavailable job seekers and available potential job seekers tend to have more recent labour market experience

7.7 In Singapore, there were 15,300 (1.4% of those outside the labour force) unavailable job seekers and 20,700 (1.9%) available potential job seekers in 2019. Unlike those outside the labour force in general, the unavailable job seekers and available potential job seekers had more recent labour market experience, with 43% and 31% respectively having left their last job within the past one year. Many of them were taking a break or pursuing education/training.

Chart 54 Residents outside the labour force by when left last job, June 2019

Per Cent



7.8 A larger share of unavailable job seekers and available potential job seekers were tertiary-educated, unlike the remaining residents outside the labour force who mostly held below-secondary qualifications. The unavailable job seekers have a relatively younger age profile with close to six in ten (56%) aged below 40. Even though available potential job seekers have an older age profile, they were more evenly distributed in the 60 & over (27%) and 50 to 59 (26%) age groups, unlike the rest of the residents outside the labour force where nearly half were aged 60 & over.

Chart 55 Residents outside the labour force by highest qualification attained, June 2019

Per Cent

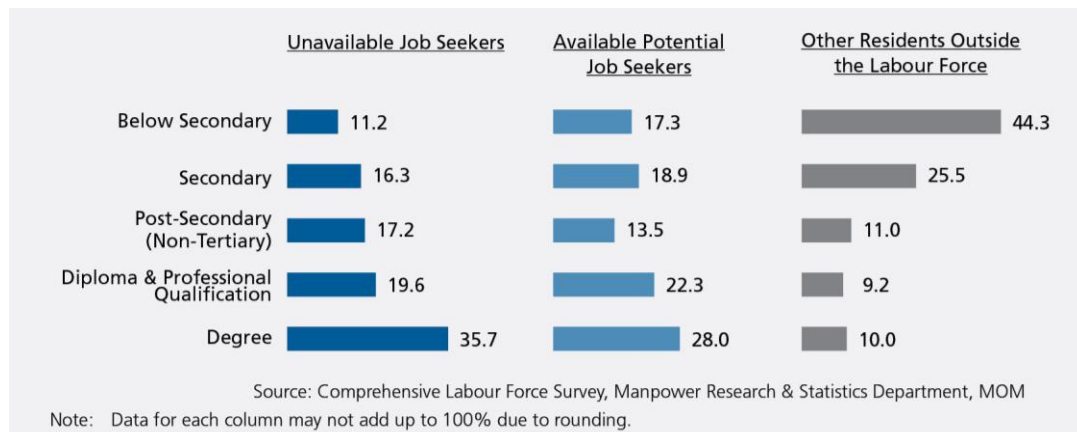
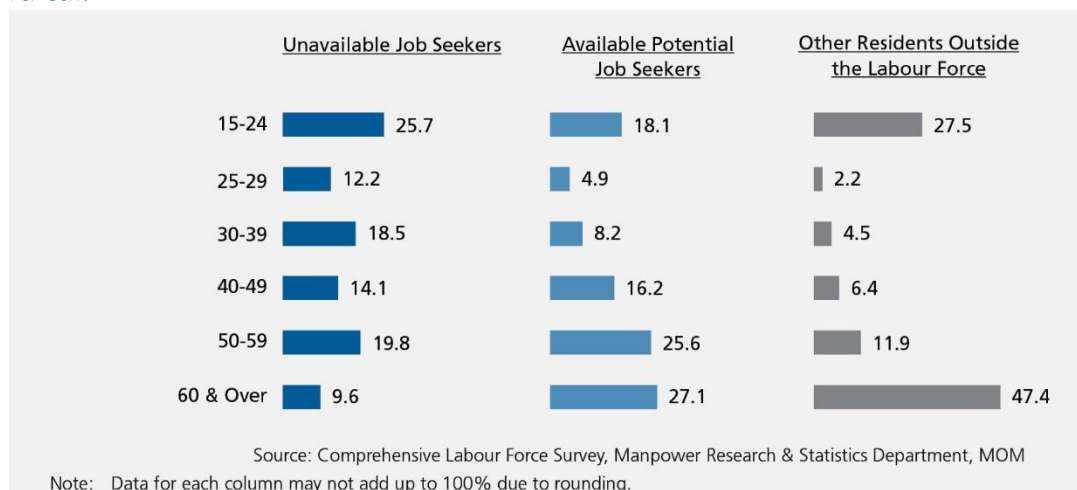


Chart 56 Residents outside the labour force by age, June 2019

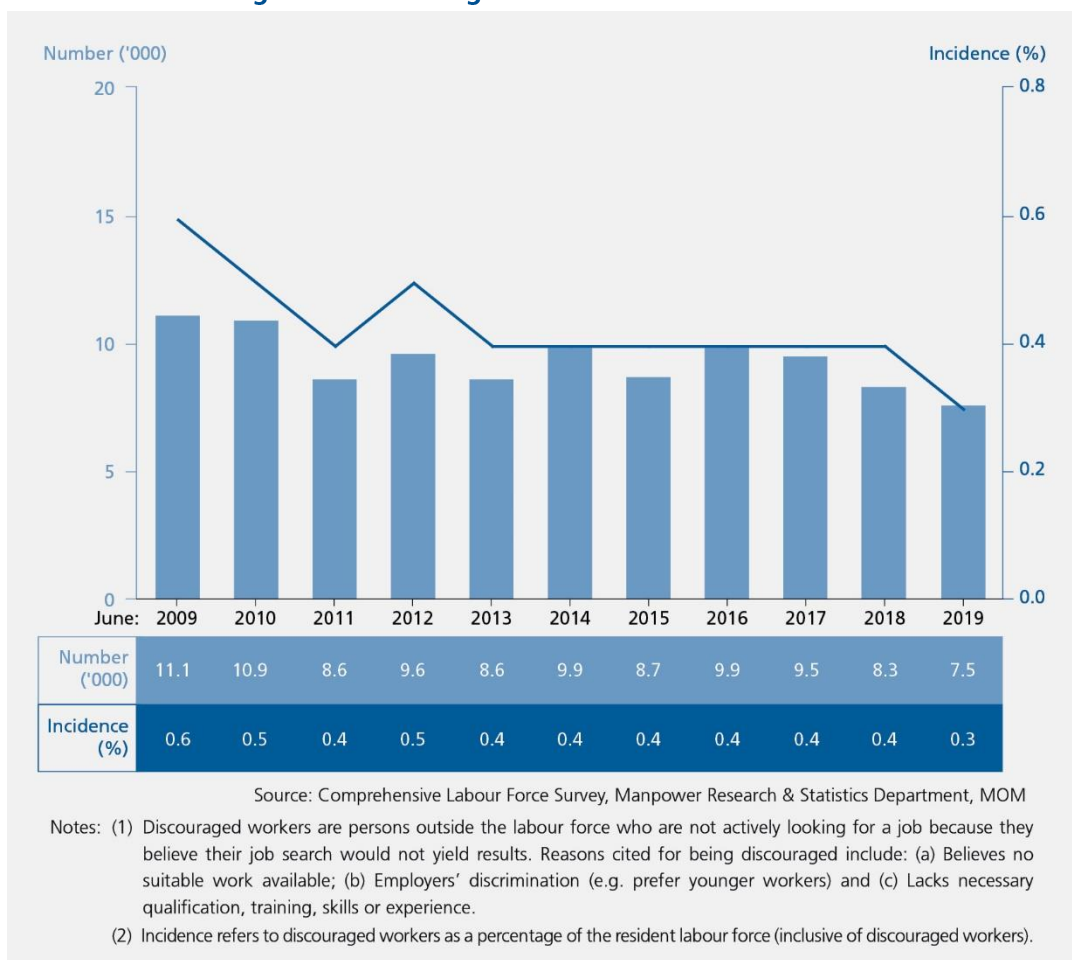
Per Cent



Continued downtrend in discouraged workers

7.9 The number of discouraged workers continued to decrease from 8,300 (0.4% of the resident labour force³⁸) in 2018 to 7,500 (0.3%) in 2019.³⁹

Chart 57 Residents discouraged from seeking work

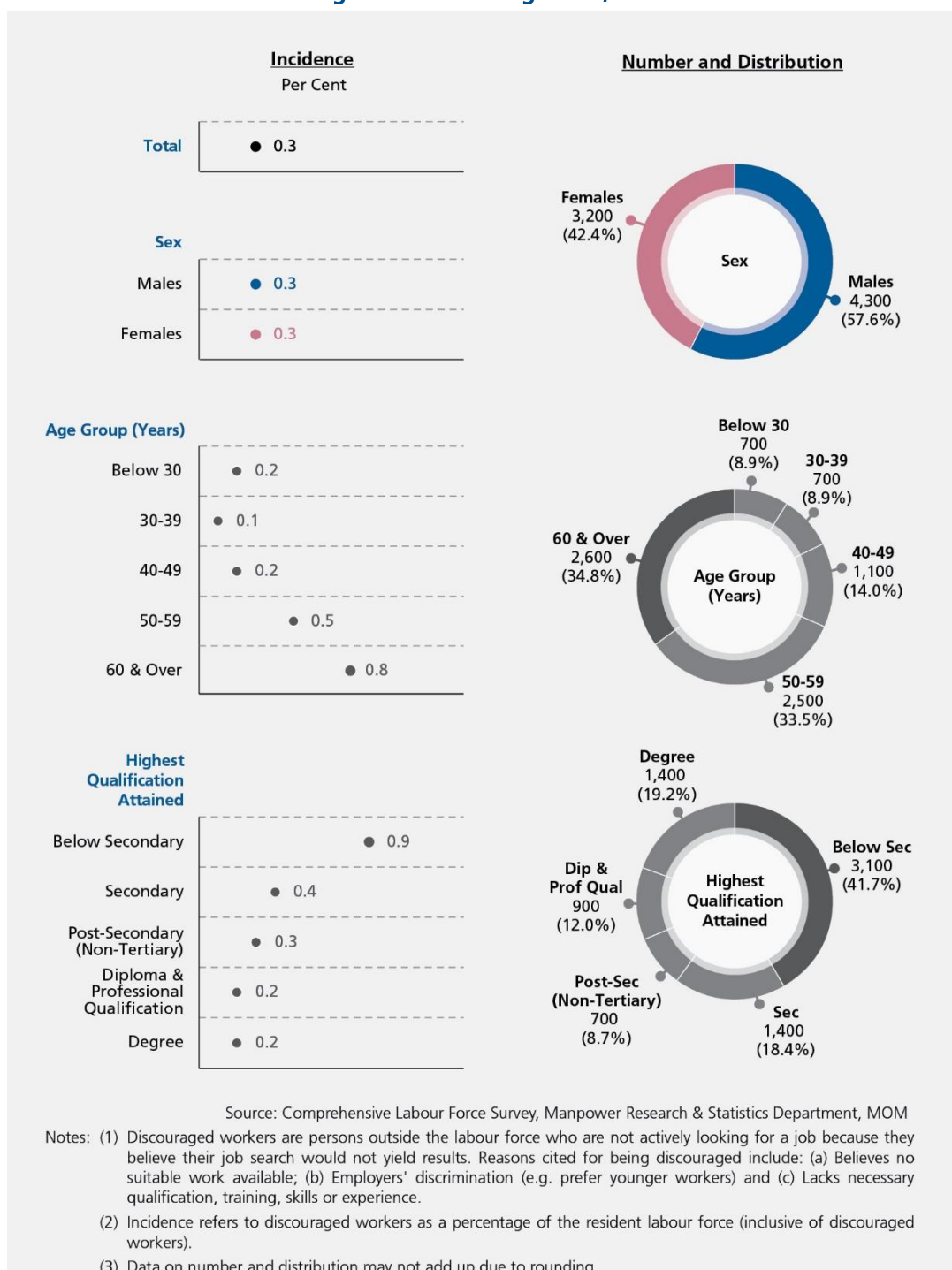


³⁸ Inclusive of discouraged workers.

³⁹ The International Labour Organisation (ILO)'s new definition of discouraged workers included additional criteria that they must be available potential job seekers (i.e. wanted and were currently available to work even though they did not actively seek employment). Based on this definition, the number of discouraged workers is lower at 2,200 in 2019.

7.10 Discouraged workers had a relatively older age profile, with close to seven in ten aged 60 & over (35%) or in their 50s (34%). Those aged 60 & over had the highest incidence of discouraged workers among the age groups (0.8%). Reflecting the larger proportion of older residents among discouraged workers, most discouraged workers held below secondary qualifications (42%).

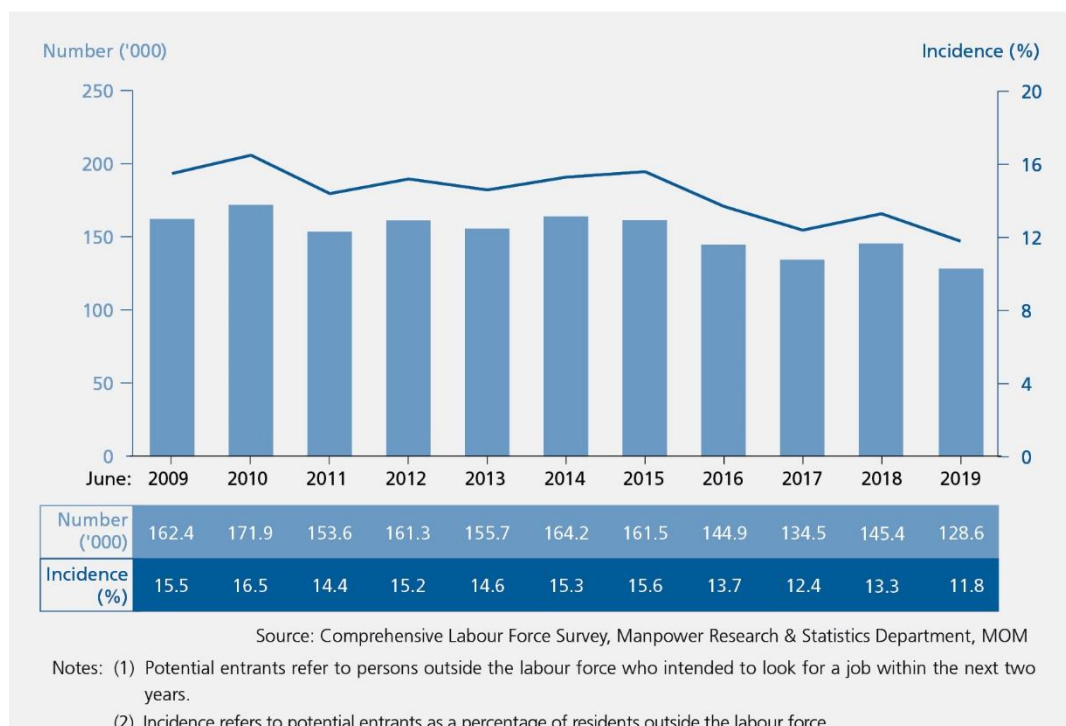
Chart 58 Profile of residents discouraged from seeking work, June 2019



Number of potential entrants decreased to a new low

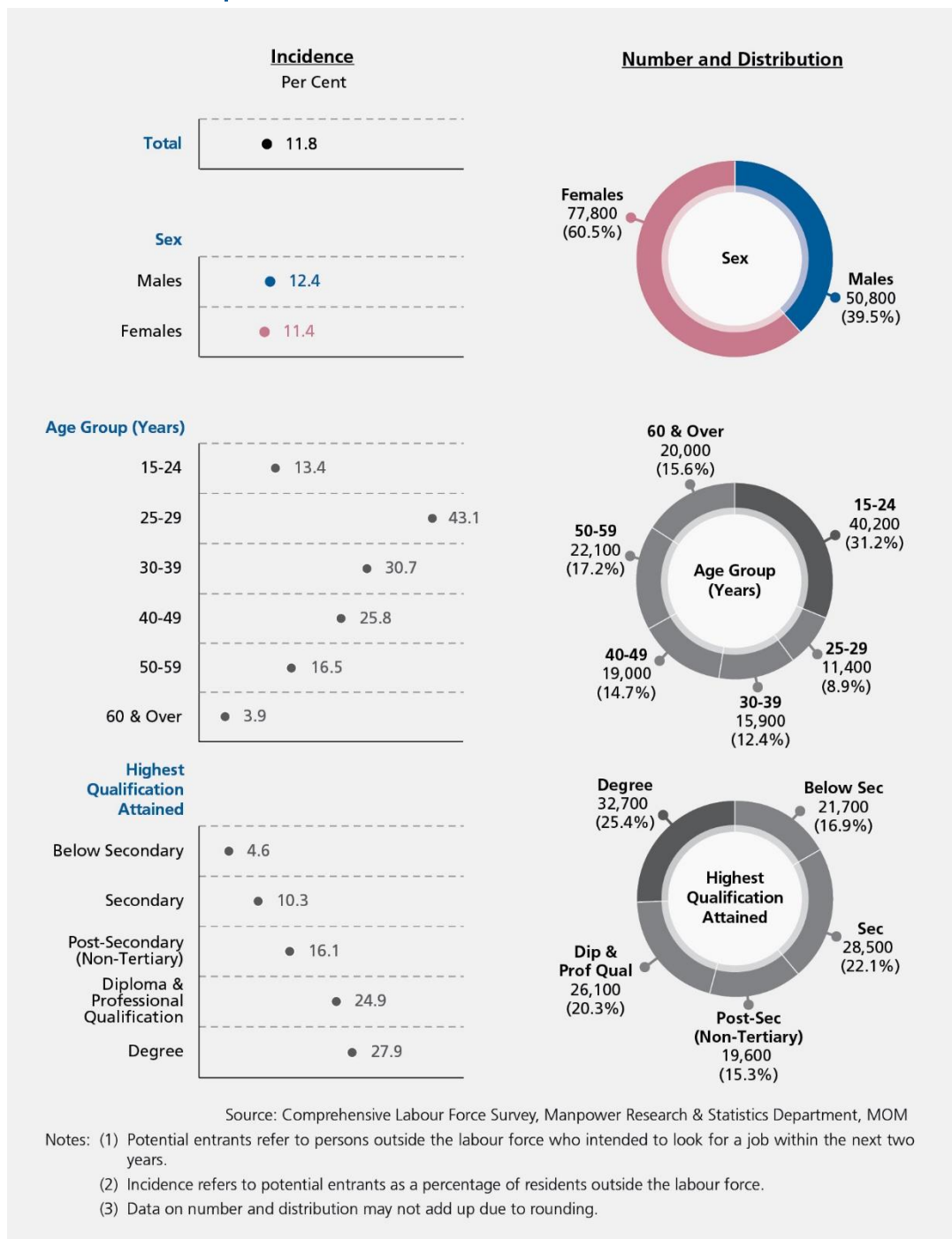
7.11 As labour force participation rose and population ageing continues, there were fewer residents outside the labour force who intended to look for jobs within the next two years. There were 128,600 potential entrants making up 12% of those outside the labour force in 2019, the lowest since the start of comparable series from 2006.

Chart 59 Resident potential entrants into the labour force



7.12 Like in earlier years, majority of the potential entrants in 2019 were females (61%), as they formed a larger proportion (63%) of residents outside the labour force. Apart from youths aged 15 to 24, younger residents were more likely to be potential entrants compared to their older counterparts, with the incidence of potential entrants ranging from 43% among those aged 25 to 29 to 16% among those in their 50s and 3.9% among those aged 60 & over. Educational qualification also played a role, where tertiary-educated residents were more likely to be potential entrants than those with non-tertiary qualifications.

Chart 60 Profile of resident potential entrants into the labour force, June 2019



7.13 41% or 52,400 of the potential entrants preferred to work part-time. While most of the male potential entrants aged 25 to 49 and females aged 25 to 29 preferred full-time employment, a sizeable share of female potential entrants and those in older age groups preferred to work part-time. This suggests that a greater availability of suitable part-time job opportunities may help more of them successfully return to the workforce, and could ease potential tightness in the labour market as population ageing continues alongside population growth.

Chart 61 Proportion of resident potential entrants who preferred to work part-time by age group and sex, June 2019

Per Cent

