



Annual Report 2019

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1. Introduction

The Social Work Accreditation and Advisory Board (SWAAB), formerly known as the Social Work Accreditation Board (SWAB), was formed on 1 January 2009. The accreditation of social workers and social service practitioners was implemented on 1 April, the same year. Accreditation is voluntary. It started with manual registration and switched to online system on 1 April 2011.

Registered Social Workers (RSWs) and Registered Social Worker-Provisionals (RSW-P) are professionals who have a recognised degree or graduate diploma in social work. Registered Social Service Practitioners (RSSP) are professionals and practitioners who do not have a degree or graduate diploma in social work but have many years of experience in the field. Accreditation is renewable once every two years upon fulfilment of 60 Continuing and Professional Education (CPE) credits. As the accreditation of Social Service Practitioners was introduced for a limited period of three (3) years, no new practitioners were accredited in this category since 1 July 2012. Those who were accredited could continue to renew their accreditation or pursue a degree or graduate diploma in social work to enable them to convert to RSW-P, followed by RSW.

The Board maintains the Register of RSWs, RSW-Ps and RSSPs, issues certificates of accreditation and promotes the professional standards and good conduct of registered social workers and practitioners. The Board specifies pre-registration requisites, approves Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credits for renewal and investigates into any complaints received against registered professionals. Registrants found to have breached professional conduct may be reprimanded, suspended or removed from the Register. With the transformation of SWAB to SWAAB in January 2014, the Board has expanded its role to provide leadership in the professional development of social workers.

This Annual Report documents the activities and registration statistics as at 31 December 2019.

2. Social Work Accreditation and Advisory Board Members

Position	Name	Designation	Organisation
Chairman	Ms Ang Bee Lian	Director of Social Welfare	Ministry of Social and Family Development
Vice-Chairman	Ms Long Chey May	Group Chief Patient Officer	National University Health System
		Deputy Director, Allied Health	Ng Teng Fong General Hospital & Jurong Community Hospital
		President	Singapore Association of Social Workers
Member	Dr Katijah Dawood	Divisional Director, Family Services West & Clinical Services	Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities
Member	A/P Esther Goh	Head, Social Work Department	National University of Singapore
Member	Ms Julia Lee	Senior Director, Social Work & Programme Development	TOUCH Community Services Ltd
Member	Ms Elaine Loo	Director, Membership & Strategy Implementation	National Council of Social Service
Member	Ms Lilian Mark	Head, Medical Social Work	Institute of Mental Health
Member	Dr Vincent Ng	Chief Executive Officer	AMKFSC Community Services Ltd
Member	A/P Seng Boon Kheng	Head, Social Work Programme, S R Nathan School of Human Development	Singapore University of Social Sciences
Member	Ms Morene Sim	Director	Inlingua School of Languages
Member	Ms Tan Sze Wee	Executive Director	Rainbow Centre
Member	Dr Peace Wong	Senior Lecturer, Social Work Department	National University of Singapore

Accreditation Secretariat

Name	Designation	Organisation
Ms Joanna Tan	Head, Accreditation	Singapore Association of Social Workers
Ms Low Li Ming	Assistant Head, Accreditation (from 2 January 2020)	Singapore Association of Social Workers
Ms Sharon Song	Senior Executive, Accreditation (from October 2019)	Singapore Association of Social Workers

3. Chairman's Message

Since the introduction of the Accreditation Framework in April 2009, the Board has accredited 2,048 social workers and social service practitioners as at 31 December 2019. 77% were made up of Registered Social Workers, 17% Registered Social Workers (RSW) – Provisional (RSW-P) and 6% Registered Social Service Practitioners (RSSP). We achieved an overall renewal rate of 85%. This report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the Board for the past year.

In 2019, there were 162 new Registered Social Worker- Provisionals (RSW-P) and 103 new Registered Social Workers (RSW) who were accredited by the Board. A total of 697 renewal applications (38 RSW-P, 616 RSW and 43 RSSP) were also processed. There were 107 RSW-P who converted to RSW and 2 RSSP to RSW-P or RSW during the year.

As part of our process improvement efforts, we have made 3 changes over the last one year. To ensure our contact data are up-to-date and our sector profiling reports are accurate, the Board has made it compulsory for all applicants to update their latest employment details prior to renewal of their accreditation status. The Board has also tightened the criteria for Character Referee i.e. referee must know the applicant for at least 3 years. In addition, a robust review on the Accreditation guidelines was carried out to ensure a balance consideration was made for both clients and Social Workers who may have past criminal records or mental health issues. The review has led to an amendment to the declaration statement.

The 3rd Supervision Seminar “Intentional Supervision – Impacting Singapore Social Work Supervision” was held on 8 July 2019 at the National University of Singapore. 300 senior Social Workers and supervisors from various sectors attended the seminar. The program included presentations from our invited overseas speakers – Professor Liz Beddoe from University of Auckland, New Zealand and Dr Agnes Ng from The Nurturing Education, Hong Kong. The participants greatly benefited from the engaging and thought-provoking sessions which were creatively set-up by each workgroup.

This year, we celebrated OSWA's 20th Anniversary during the award presentation ceremony held at the Istana on 15 November 2019. This marked a special milestone for the Outstanding Social Worker Award, which is the most prestigious award in Singapore. Past OSWA and PSWA winners were invited to the ceremony for this joyous occasion and a lighthearted video clip was shown in recognition of the two decades of Social Workers' achievements and their great inspiration to all.

As in previous years, the SWAAB Secretariat had continued to visit social service and healthcare agencies to promote and gather feedback and suggestions on accreditation. The total number of agencies visited to date is 140. The inputs received had enabled the Board to fine-tune the accreditation and renewal criteria.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their service and contributions during the year. My appreciation also goes to the Accreditation Secretariat for their hard work and dedication in ensuring the smooth administration of the accreditation framework and timely support to the Board. I also like to urge all accredited Social Workers and practitioners to continue to uphold the standards of practice and ethics so as to raise the quality and image of the profession.

Ang Bee Lian (Ms)
Chairman
Social Work Accreditation and Advisory Board

4. Demographics

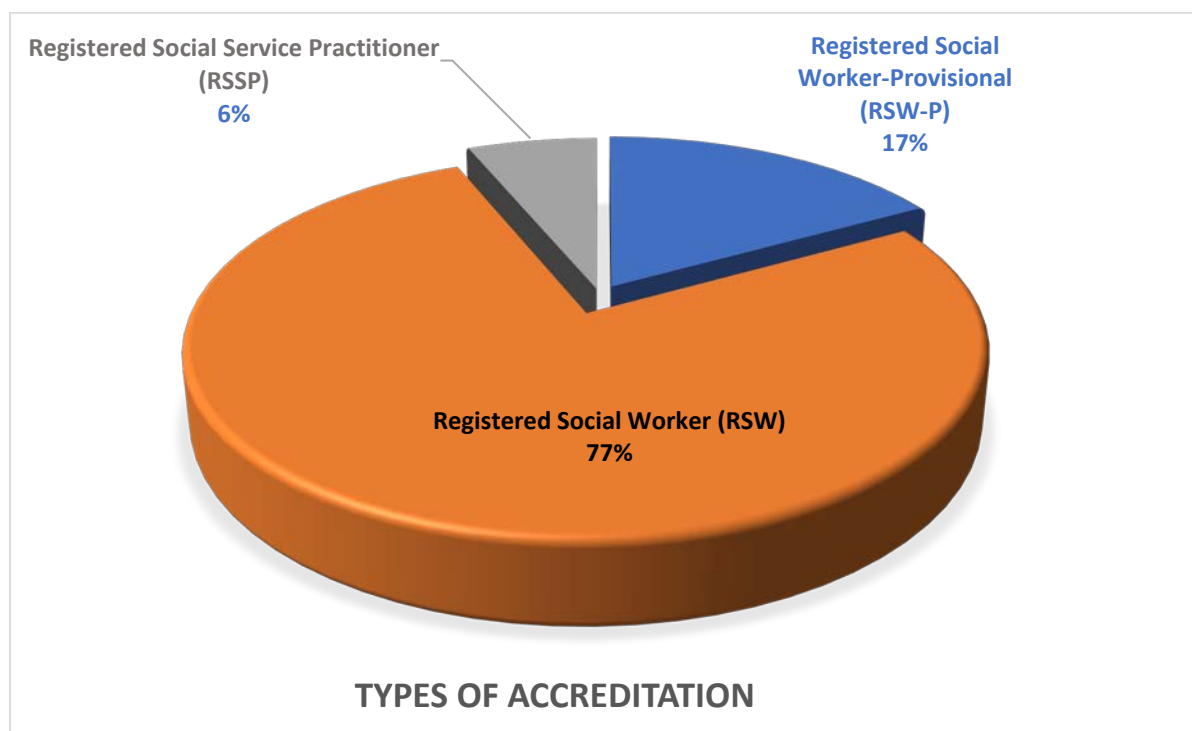
4.1 Number and Types of Accreditation

As at 31 December 2019, there were 2,048 accredited Social Workers and Social Service Practitioners as compared to 1,934 on 31 December 2018. This was an increase of 5.9%.

Table 1: Number and Types of Accreditation as at 31 December 2019

Type	2018	2019	Increase / Decrease (Numbers & %)
Registered Social Worker-Provisional (RSW-P)	334	347	13 (3.9%)
Registered Social Worker (RSW)	1,462	1,572	110 (7.5%)
Registered Social Service Practitioner (RSSP)	138	129	-9 (-6.5%)
Total	1,934	2,048	114 (5.9%)

Chart 1: Number and Types of Accreditation as at 31 December 2019



4.2 Sector Distribution

Most of the accredited professionals practised in the social service agencies. The second largest group practised in the public healthcare sector comprising restructured hospitals, specialist centres and polyclinics. The third largest group practised in the government ministries and statutory boards.

Table 2: Sector Distribution by Accreditation Type as at 31 December 2019

Sectors of Employment	Sector Distribution			Total
	RSW-P	RSW	RSSP	
Social Service Agencies	294	1,043	91	1,428
Public Healthcare (Restructured Hospitals, Specialist Centres*, Polyclinics)	26	267	7	300
Government Ministries & Statutory Boards	13	150	25	188
Self-Employed	0	3	5	8
Not in Employment	12	80	0	92
Others	2	29	1	32
TOTAL	347	1,572	129	2,048

*For eg, National Cancer Centre/ National Heart Centre/ Singapore National Eye Centre

Chart 2a: Sector Distribution of Accreditation Professionals as at 31 December 2019

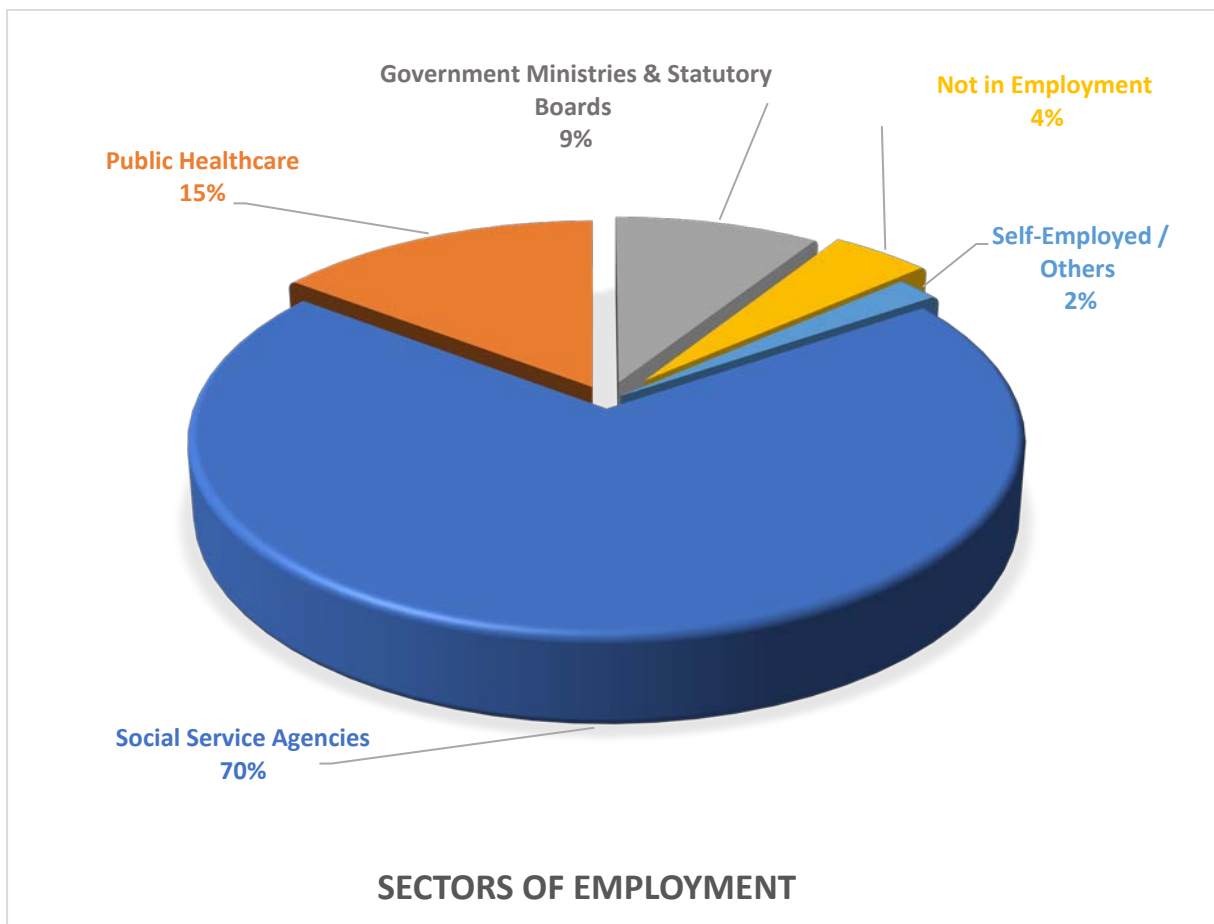


Chart 2b: Sector Distribution of RSW-P as at 31 December 2019

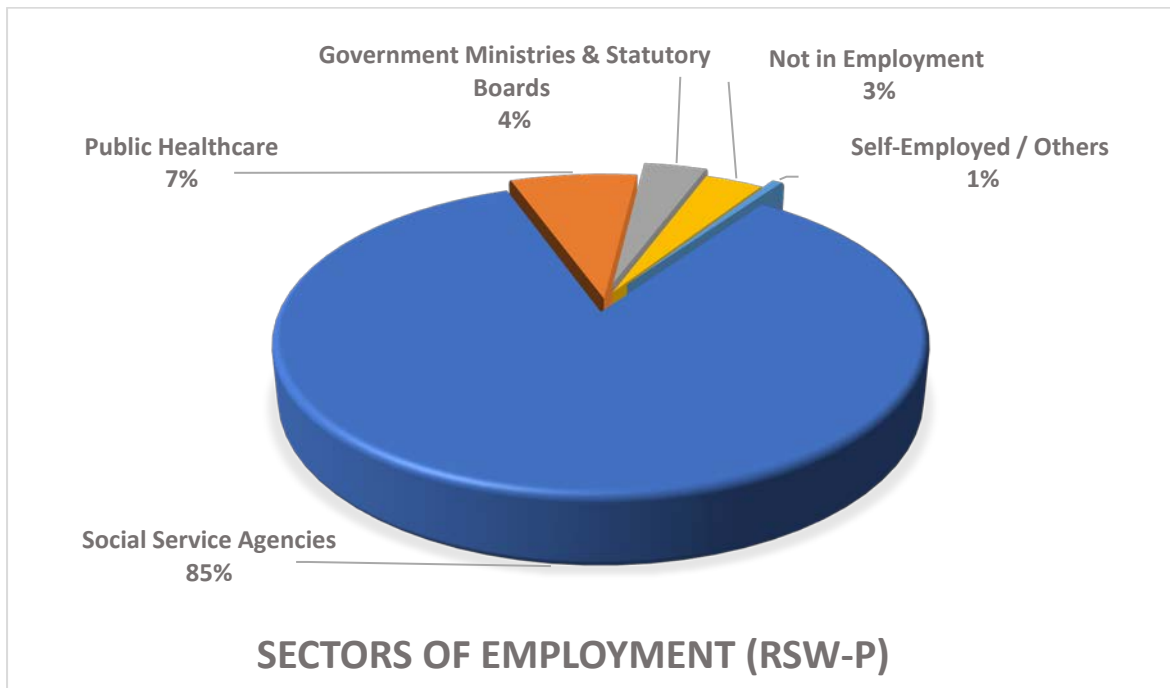


Chart 2c: Sector Distribution of RSW as at 31 December 2019

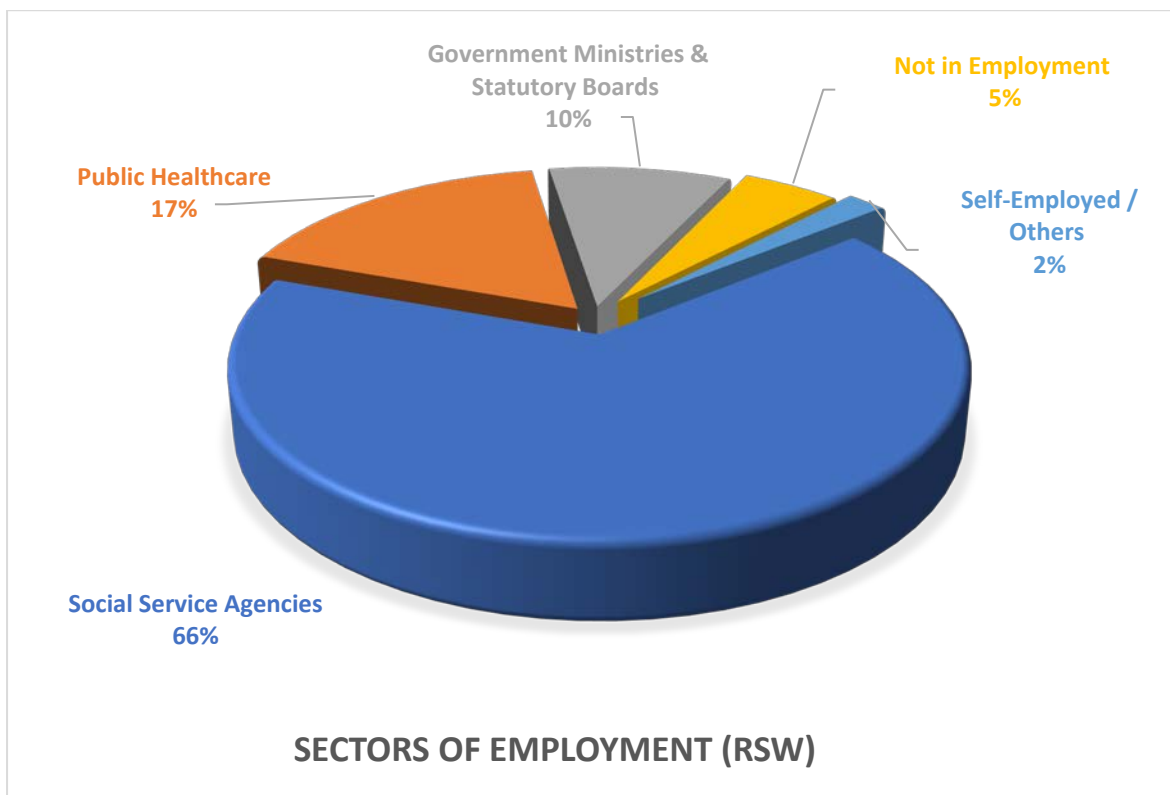
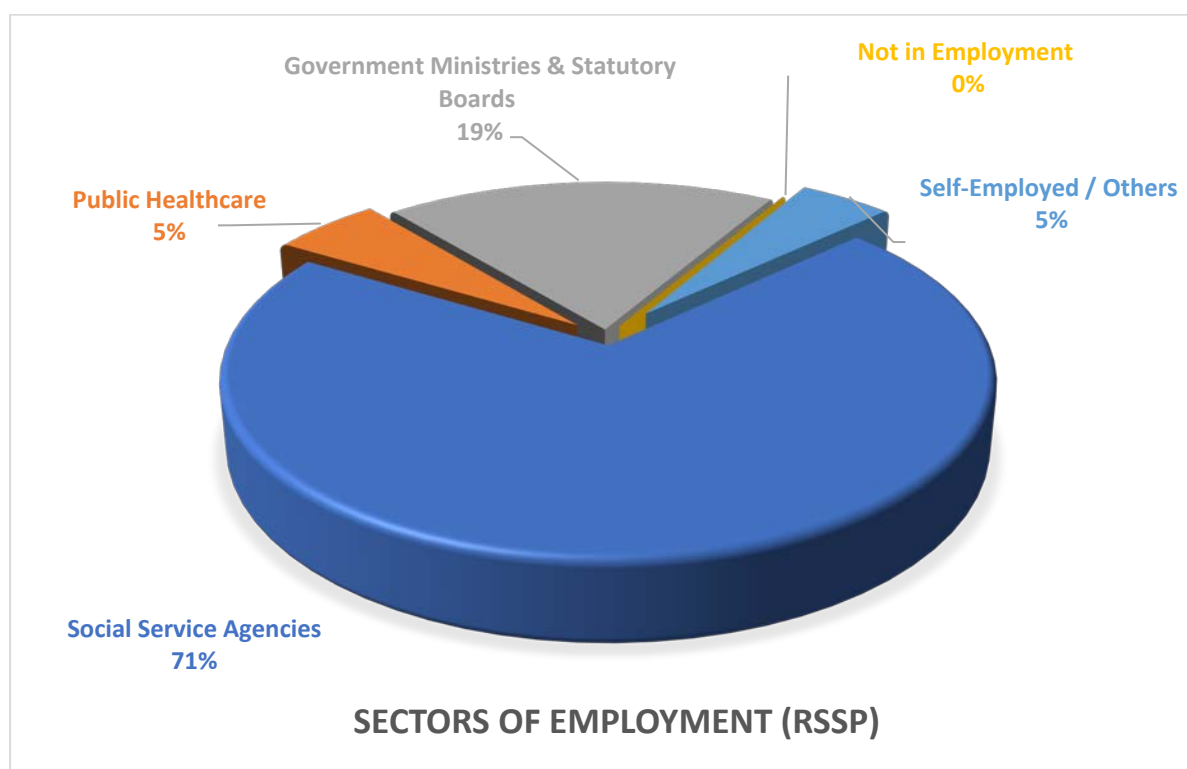


Chart 2d: Sector Distribution of RSSP as at 31 December 2019



4.3 Country of Qualifying Qualification of Accredited Professionals

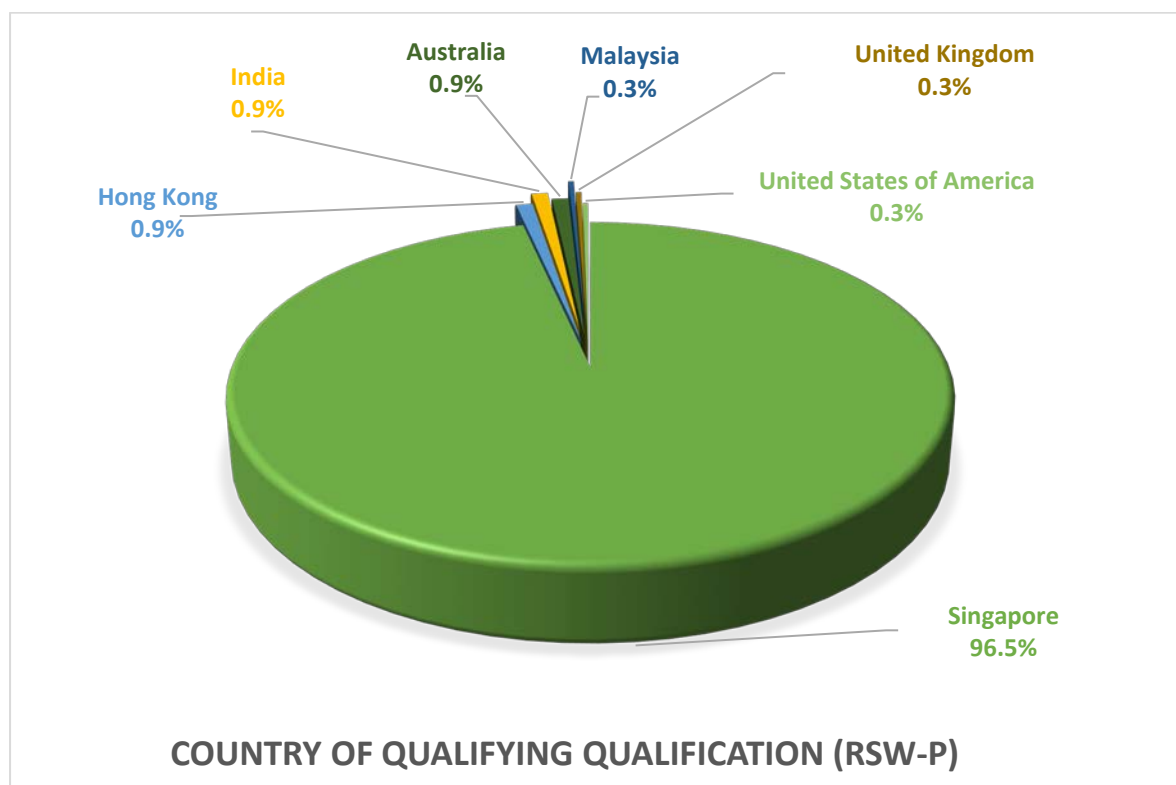
4.3.1 Registered Social Worker – Provisionals (RSW-P)

Majority of the Registered Social Worker – Provisionals with Social Work qualification are from Singapore. Other countries where RSW-Ps obtained their qualification includes Hong Kong, India, Australia, Malaysia, United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Table 3: Country of Qualifying Qualification for RSW-Ps as at 31 December 2019

Country of Qualifying Qualification	2019
Singapore	335
Hong Kong	3
India	3
Australia	3
Malaysia	1
United Kingdom	1
United States of America	1
Total	347

Chart 3: Country of Qualifying Qualification for RSW-Ps as at 31 December 2019



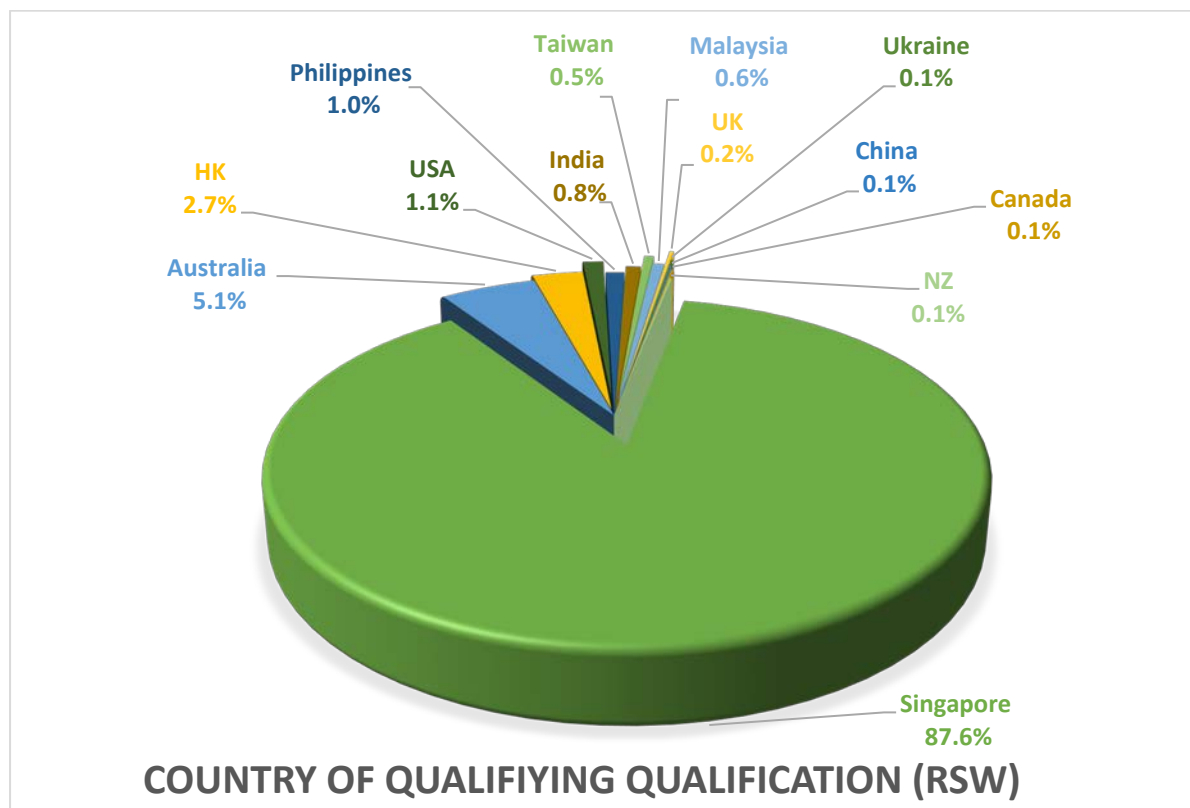
4.3.2 Registered Social Workers (RSW)

Most of our Registered Social Workers qualified in Social Work came from Singapore. Other countries where RSWs had obtained qualification in Social Work include Australia, Hong Kong, United States of America, Philippines, India, Taiwan, Malaysia, United Kingdom, Ukraine, China, Canada and New Zealand.

Table 4: Country of Qualifying Qualification for RSWs as at 31 December 2019

Country of Qualifying Qualification	2019
Singapore	1,378
Australia	81
Hong Kong (HK)	43
United States of America (USA)	18
Philippines	15
India	12
Taiwan	8
Malaysia	9
United Kingdom (UK)	3
Ukraine	1
China	2
Canada	1
New Zealand (NZ)	1
Total	1,572

Chart 4: Country of Qualifying Qualification for RSWs as at 31 December 2019



4.3.3 Registered Social Service Professionals (RSSP)

No information is provided in this section for RSSP as they were not accredited based on having social work qualification but on having other qualifications and/or certain number of years of experience in the sector.

4.4 Demographic Profile of Accredited Professionals

The social work and social service professionals are relatively young and female dominated, with majority of them within the age group of 30-39, followed by those in the 40-49 range.

Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents (PRs) make up 98% of the pool across the three accreditation groups. Table 5 shows the demographic profile of accredited professionals by gender, age and nationality.

Table 5: General Profile of Accredited Professionals as at 31 December 2019

Demographic Profile	Number and Percentage of Each Group			Total
	RSW-P	RSW	RSSP	
Gender				
Male	93	366	34	493
Female	254	1206	95	1,555
Age				
20 - 29	182	213	0	395
30 - 39	103	701	16	820
40 - 49	40	436	42	518
50 - 59	19	170	35	224
60 and above	3	52	36	91
Nationality				
Singapore Citizens & PRs	340	1539	129	2008
Non-Citizens	7	33	0	40

Chart 5a: Total number of Accredited Professionals by Gender

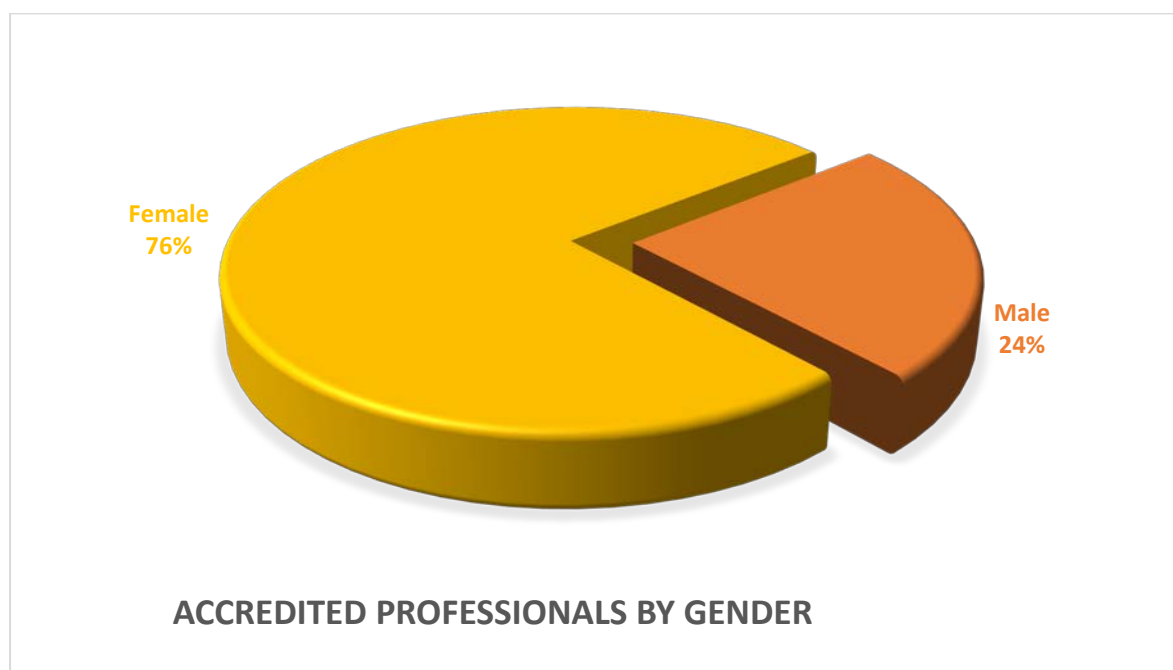


Chart 5b: Total number of Accredited Professionals by Age Group

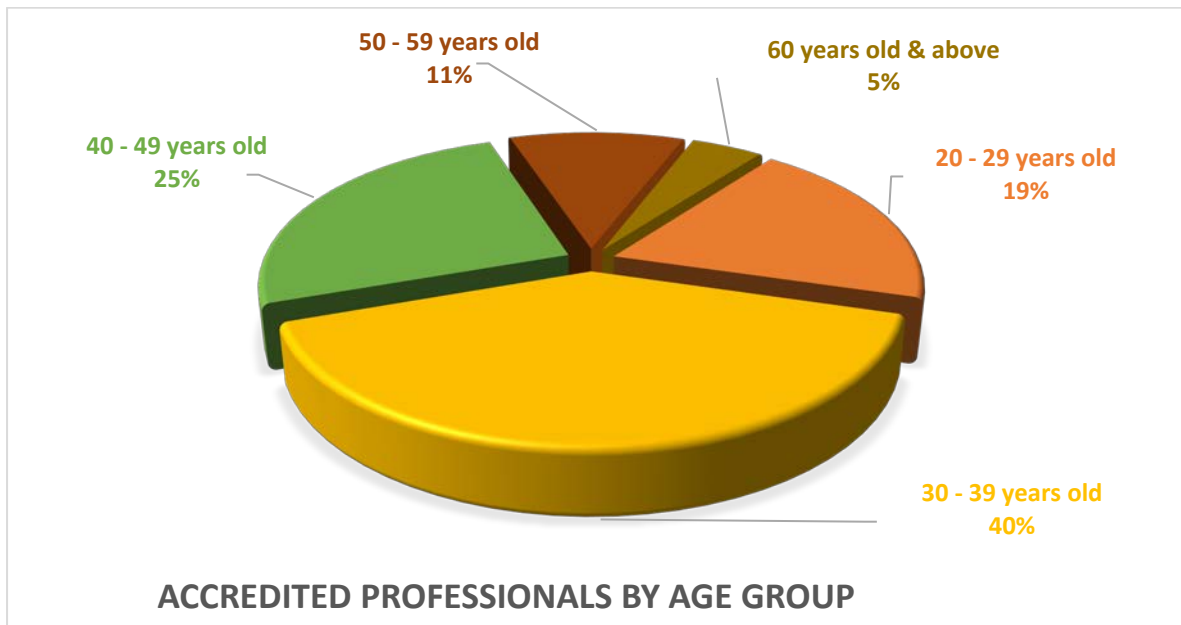
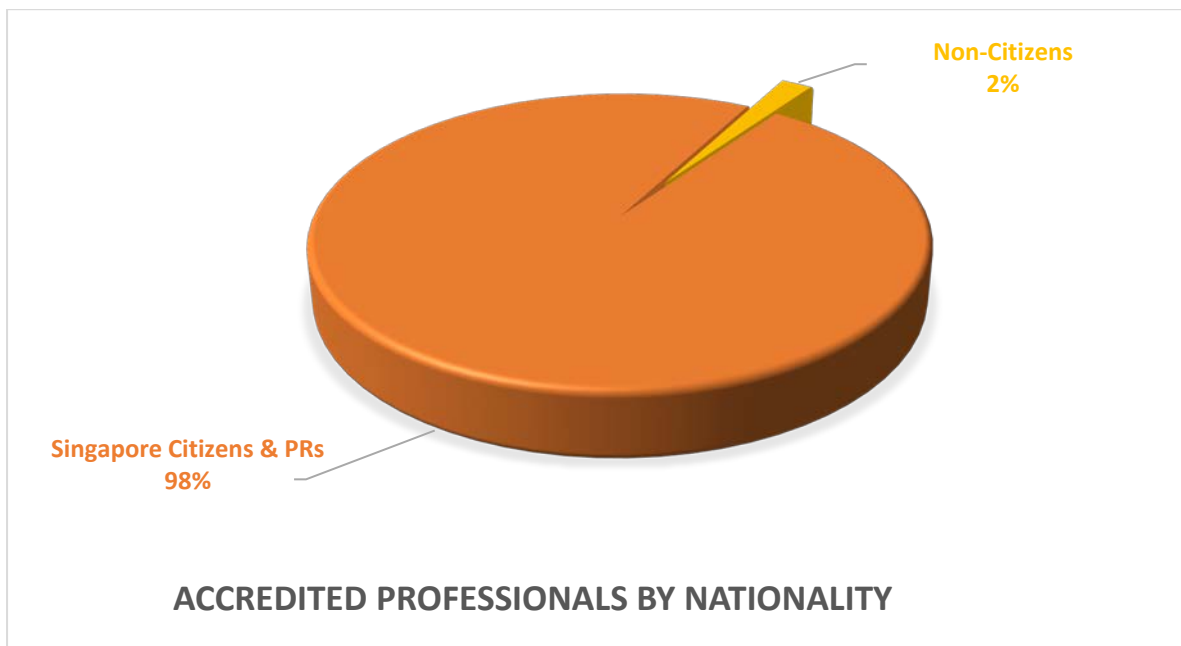


Chart 5c: Total number of Accredited Professionals by Nationality



5. Accreditation Status in the Past Five Years

Table 6: Accreditation Status from 2015 to 2019

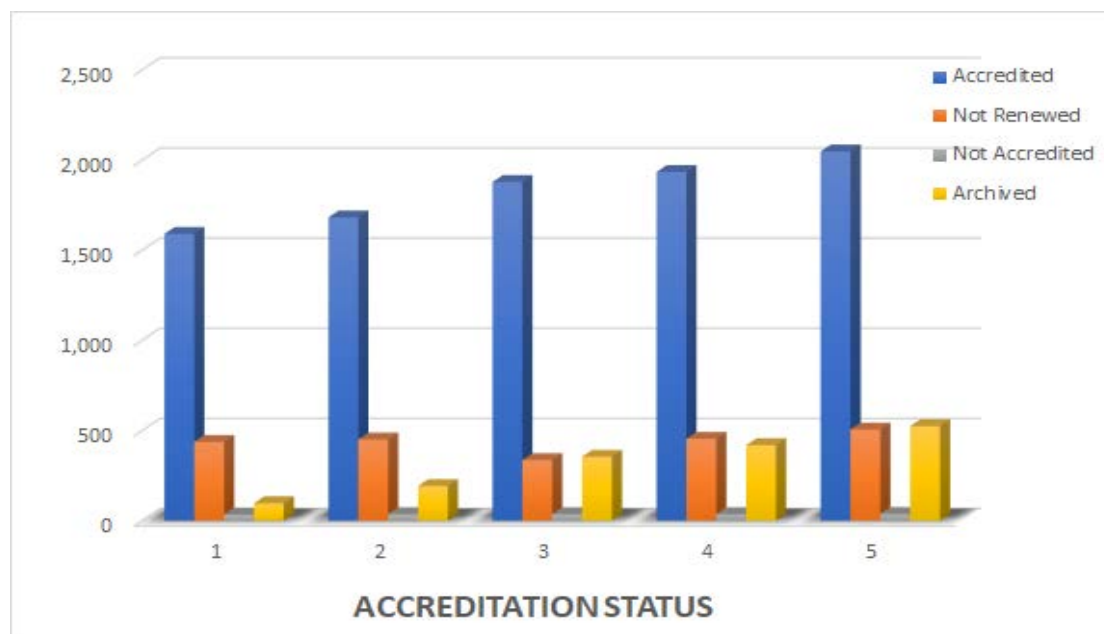
Status	as at 31 December 2015	as at 31 December 2016	as at 31 December 2017	as at 31 December 2018	as at 31 December 2019
Accredited	1,591	1,682	1,879	1,934	2,048
Not Renewed*	437	450	336	454	506
Not Accredited**	34	36	36	36	38
Archived***	97	192	355	419	525

*Key reasons given on non-renewal are they are retired / resigned from organization / left sector / moved overseas.

**These are members who have yet to renew their accreditation within the grace period of 3 years.

*** These are members who have lapsed their 3 years grace period for renewal.

Chart 6: Accreditation Status from 2015 to 2019



6. Retention Rates in the Past Five Years

Table 7: Retention rates from 2015 to 2019

Retention Rate	as at 31 December 2015	as at 31 December 2016	as at 31 December 2017	As at 31 December 2018	As at 31 December 2019
RSWP	86%	85%	87%	89%	85%
RSW	86%	86%	91%	87%	85%
RSSP	74%	76%	84%	72%	73%
Overall	84%	85%	89%	87%	85%

Chart 7: Retention Rates from 2015 to 2019



7. Queries / Feedback Reviewed

In 2019, Secretariat received and handled three (3) queries / feedback, relating to handling staff misconduct, feedback from clients on social workers' service delivery and general advice on appointment titles.