
PROGRESS ON SINGAPORE WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

The Government is committed to building a society where all Singaporeans have full and equal opportunities to flourish and achieve their aspirations. This includes our commitment to advance the status and well-being of Singapore women.

While Singapore women have made great strides, they continue to face challenges in various domains. In 2020, the Government launched a whole-of-society review of Singapore women's development. Through a year-long nationwide Conversations on Singapore Women's Development, we consulted and gathered views from close to 6,000 Singaporeans, women and men, to better understand challenges faced by women and identify ways to help Singapore women make further progress. Feedback from the Conversations shaped the White Paper on Singapore Women's Development, which was published in March 2022 and unanimously endorsed by the Singapore Parliament. The White Paper reflects the shared vision of Singaporeans, and outlines concrete actions towards a fairer and more inclusive society, where men and women partner each other as equals and both can pursue their aspirations freely and fully.

In the two years since the White Paper was published, Singapore has made further progress in areas such as equal opportunities in the workplace, greater support for caregivers, and strengthening protection against violence and online harms. Women's participation in the labour force remains on the uptrend and women are increasingly represented in traditionally male-dominated occupations such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), as well as in leadership roles.

It takes a whole-of-society effort to shift mindsets on gender roles in the family, workplace and society, and to address challenges that women face. As a nation, we value the importance of respect and partnership between men and women, and the roles of families and the community in women's development. The Government will continue to partner schools, workplaces and the community to ensure that both women and men have equal opportunities to pursue their aspirations across all stages of life. This report provides an update on the progress that has been made as we work towards achieving the shared vision in the White Paper.

You can read the White Paper on Singapore Women's Development here:

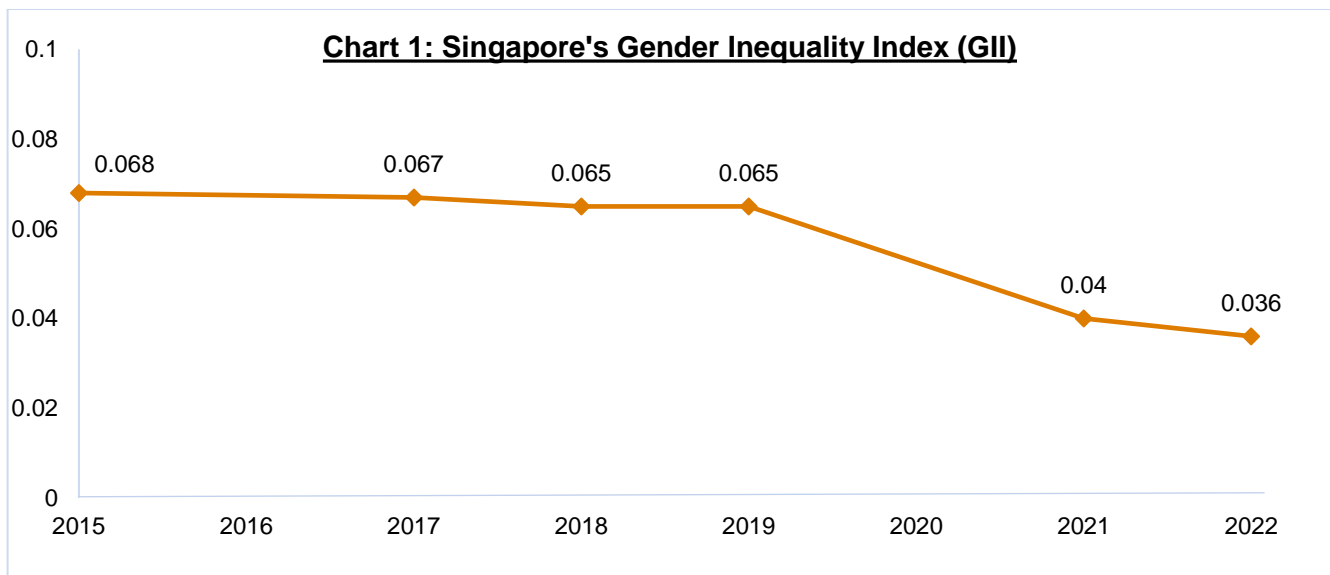


Progress in Women's Development

Singapore has continued to make progress in women's development, maintaining strong international rankings on gender equality, and sustained improvements in health and education outcomes.

Strong international ranking in gender equality

In the latest United Nations (UN) Human Development Report's Gender Inequality Index (GII) published in March 2024, Singapore was ranked **8th globally out of 166 countries**, and **first in Asia Pacific**, for having a low level of gender inequality. The UN GI is a composite measure of gender inequality along three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment (in terms of education and participation in politics), and the labour market. Singapore's performance on the GI has improved over the years, in terms of lower maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rate, increased educational attainment, and higher labour force participation. Singapore's GI score **decreased from 0.068 in 2015 to 0.036 in 2022**. A lower GI value indicates that a country has a lower level of gender inequality (Chart 1).



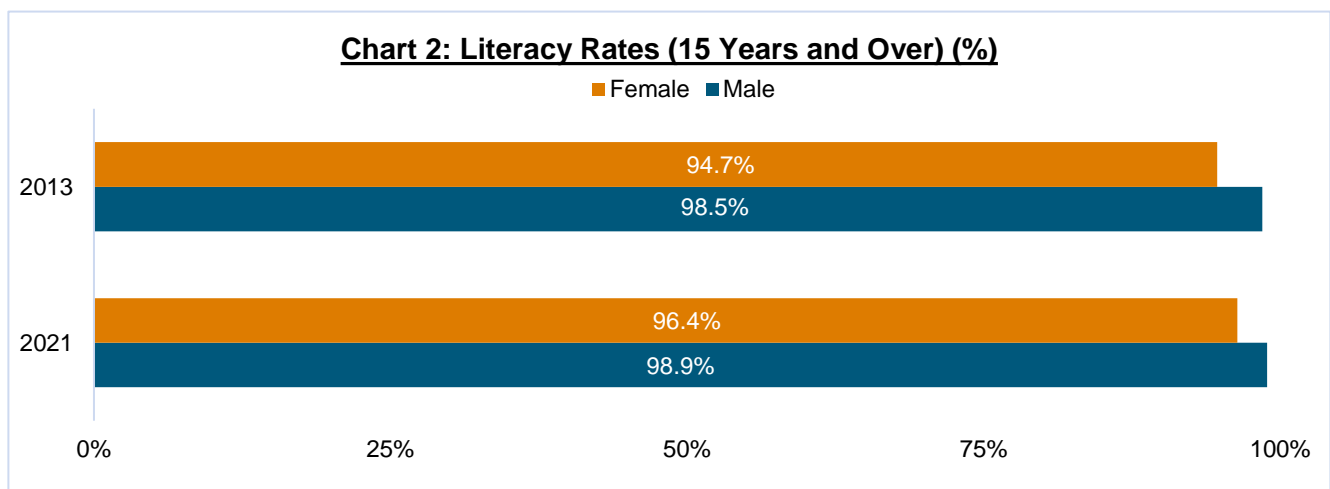
Source: UN Human Development Reports

Note: A score of 0 indicates perfect equality, while a score of 1 is total inequality

Sustained high literacy and equality in education

Today, men and women in Singapore have comparable educational outcomes and achievements. Since its independence, Singapore has invested heavily in education to empower Singaporeans to reach their fullest potential and sustain social mobility. Our education system is highly regarded, with strong outcomes, and compares well internationally.

Women have sustained high literacy and equality in education, where female literacy rate (for 15-year-olds and above) is stable and above 95% since 2015. The gap between male and female literacy rate has also **narrowed, from 3.8 percentage points in 2013 to 2.5 percentage points in 2021** (Chart 2). The proportion of university graduates who are female has remained stable at approximately 50% since 2013.



Source: Singapore Department of Statistics

Sustained improvements in health outcomes

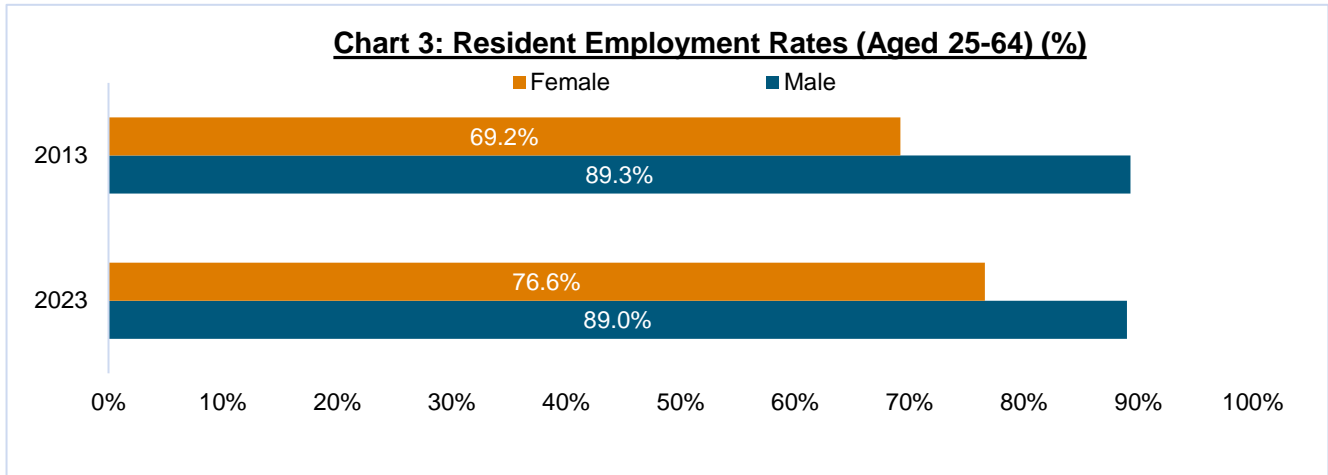
Singapore has sustained a strong and resilient healthcare system over the years. We have invested heavily in our healthcare infrastructure and workers. Today, Singapore has one of the highest life expectancies and lowest infant mortality rates in the world.

Singapore women's life expectancy is among the highest in the world at 85.2 years in 2022. Our infant mortality rate, one of the lowest in the world, has remained at around 2 per 1,000 resident live births over the past decade. Maternal mortality ratio also remains one of the lowest in the world at 2.8 per 100,000 live births in 2022.

Equal Opportunities in the Workplace

Over the decades, Singapore has made significant progress in providing equal opportunities in the workplace for both men and women. Our women have made great strides in both the private and public sectors and are leaders in many fields.

Increased economic participation



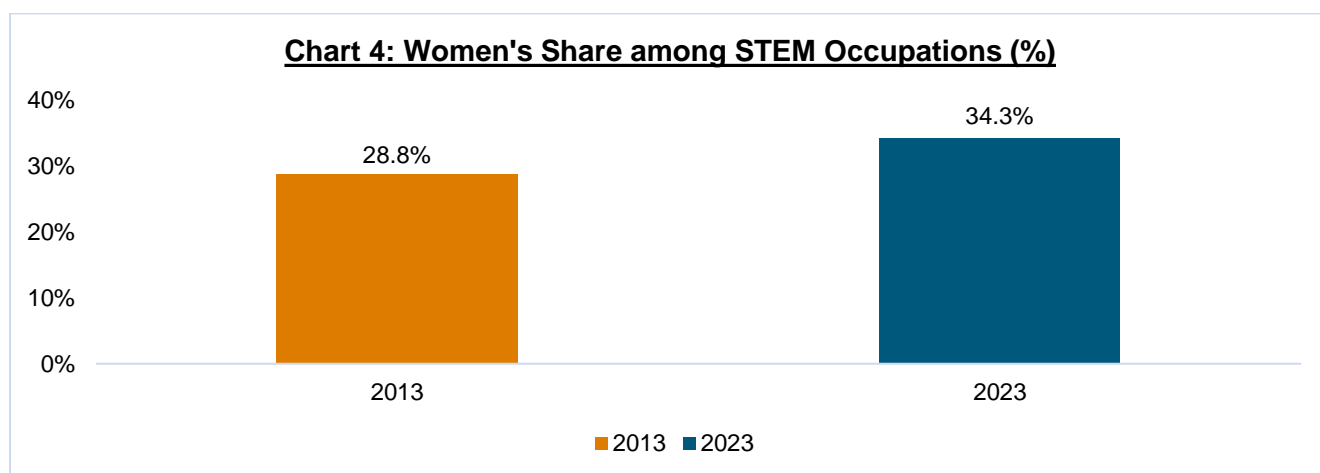
Source: Ministry of Manpower

Today, women are highly educated and enjoy equal opportunities in the workplace. Measures such as Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) and other workplace arrangements have enabled women to participate in the economy more fully. The resident employment rate for females aged 25-64 has **increased from 69.2% to 76.6% in the past decade**. The gap between male and female employment rates has also **narrowed in the past decade from 20.1 percentage points in 2013 to 12.4 percentage points in 2023** (Chart 3).

There has also been an upward trend in the proportion of women employed in Professional, Managerial, Executive, and Technician (PMET) roles and traditionally male-dominated areas. The share of women aged 15 & over among PMET occupations has also **increased, from 42.3% in 2013 to 46.7% in 2023**.

Increasing the proportion of women in STEM

The share of women in STEM occupations has **increased from 28.8% to 34.3% in the past decade** (Chart 4). To encourage more women to participate in STEM fields, Singapore has a broad range of efforts targeted at different parts of the STEM pipeline. In schools and post-secondary institutions, students are encouraged to explore a variety of education and career pathways through **Education and Career Guidance (ECG)**. ECG Counsellors guide students to better understand their interests and strengths, and not to be limited by gender stereotypes in their education and career choices. Since 2019, the Government has also been working with industry and community partners under the SG Women in Tech movement to attract, retain and develop women talent in tech.



Source: Ministry of Manpower

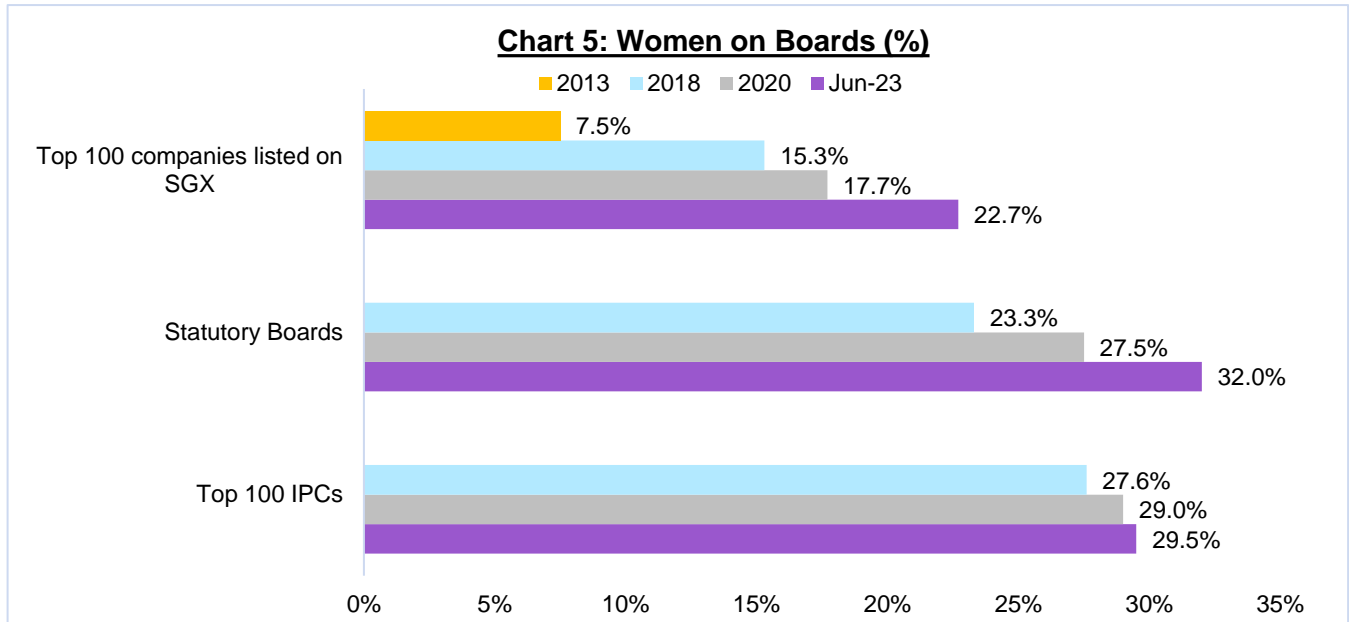
Increased representation of women in leadership

Women representation in leadership roles in the private, public, and people sectors continued to improve.

Through raising public awareness of the importance of board diversity and working with stakeholders to develop a pipeline of board-ready women, the **Council for Board Diversity (CBD)** aims to jointly promote and achieve sustained increases in women's representation on the boards of the top 100 companies listed on the Singapore Exchange (SGX), Statutory Boards, and top 100 Institutions of a Public Character (IPC). The Government works with the CBD to achieve measurable targets to increase women's representation on the boards of top 100 companies listed on the SGX to 25% by 2025 and 30% by 2030. CBD also set targets to increase women's representation on the boards of the top 100 IPCs and Statutory Boards to 30% as soon as possible.

In 2022, the SGX Listing Rules were also revised to require companies to disclose their board diversity policy, including gender diversity policy.

As at June 2023, Statutory Boards have **exceeded the 30% target** of women on boards while the top 100 IPCs are **close to meeting their 30% target**. For the top 100 SGX-listed companies, the percentage of women on boards **tripled from 7.5% in 2013 to 22.7%** as at June 2023, and is making headway towards the target of 25% (Chart 5).



Source: Council for Board Diversity

Note: Data collection by the Council for Board Diversity on percentage of women on the boards of Statutory Boards and top 100 IPCs commenced in 2018.

Improved representation in politics and public life

Singapore encourages women’s participation in politics and public life. The principle of meritocracy, where both men and women are provided equal opportunities, applies in both the public sector and the private sector. Our women are well-represented in the public sector, including at the highest decision-making levels.

Female participation in politics has continued to increase. Women occupied 31 out of 104 seats in the 14th Parliament which commenced in 2020, making up **almost 30% of Parliament**, compared to 25.3% in the 13th Parliament which commenced in 2016. This percentage is also higher than the Inter-Parliamentary Union’s average of 26.9% (2023) and in line with the United Nation’s target of at least 30% women lawmakers in each parliament.

Women’s representation in politics and public life ensures that women’s issues and perspectives are given due attention, through thorough discussions in the formulation of policies, national directives, and laws.

Narrowed gender pay gap

The unadjusted median gender pay gap¹ of full-time resident employees aged 25-54 in Singapore has **narrowed from 16.3% in 2018 to 14.3% in 2023**. One key reason for the gender pay gap is occupational differences. When we compare men and women with similar characteristics in age, education, occupation, industry, and usual hours worked, the **adjusted gender pay gap is lower at 6.0%² in 2023**. The adjusted gender pay gap in Singapore reflects unmeasured characteristics, such as differences in the effects of parenthood and caregiving responsibilities, which women tend to shoulder more than men.

Enabling women's fuller participation in the workplace

We have increased access to FWAs and other family-friendly workplace practices by encouraging employers to adopt such practices through the Tripartite Standards on Flexible Work Arrangements, Work-Life Harmony, and Unpaid Leave for Unexpected Care Needs. Among employees aged 25-64 who required FWAs, **around eight in ten had access to the FWA that they required in 2022**, up from about six in ten in 2013.

The Government recently introduced **guidelines on FWA Requests**, which will come into effect on 1 December 2024. The mandatory guidelines will shape the right norms and expectations around FWAs, by setting out how employees should request for FWAs and use them, and how employers and supervisors should handle FWA requests. Greater access to FWAs will allow men and women to better manage work and personal responsibilities, enabling both to share caregiving responsibilities at home and support each other in their participation in the workplace.

Workforce Singapore (WSG) and the National Trades Union Congress' Employment and Employability Institute (e2i) offer a suite of career facilitation programmes and services to provide support to all jobseekers, including women looking to return to the workforce. Since 2018, WSG and e2i have **nearly doubled the number of women placed in jobs**. Close to 50% of WSG and e2i job placements are women, similar to the share of the labour force (48% in 2022).

The Government will also be introducing the **Workplace Fairness Legislation** in Parliament later this year, which will strengthen protections against workplace discrimination on the basis of sex, marital status, and caregiving responsibilities, among other protected characteristics. While most employers uphold fair employment standards, some workers still encounter discrimination or discriminatory practices. The proportion of resident employees who reported being discriminated at work due to their sex **dropped from 2.1% in 2021 to 1.9% in 2022**, based on the Ministry of Manpower's Fair Employment Practices Survey (2022).

¹ The unadjusted gender pay gap is calculated as: $[1 - \text{Median income of women} / \text{Median income of men}] \times 100\%$.

² More information on the adjusted gender pay gap can be found at <https://stats.mom.gov.sg/Pages/Update-on-Singapores-Adjusted-Gender-Pay-Gap.aspx>.

In addition to these measures by the Government, employers and employees, must recognise and challenge gender stereotypes in the workplace. This includes working with employers to build supportive workplaces that help both male and female employees balance their responsibilities within and outside work.

Recognition and Support for Caregivers

Caregivers are the cornerstones of our families. Caregiving will become an even more significant responsibility as our society ages. While more men have stepped up to assume caregiving duties, there are still discrepancies in gender roles at home, with women shouldering a disproportionate share of the caregiving load.

The 2022 survey on Quality of Life in Singapore by the National Council of Social Service found that:

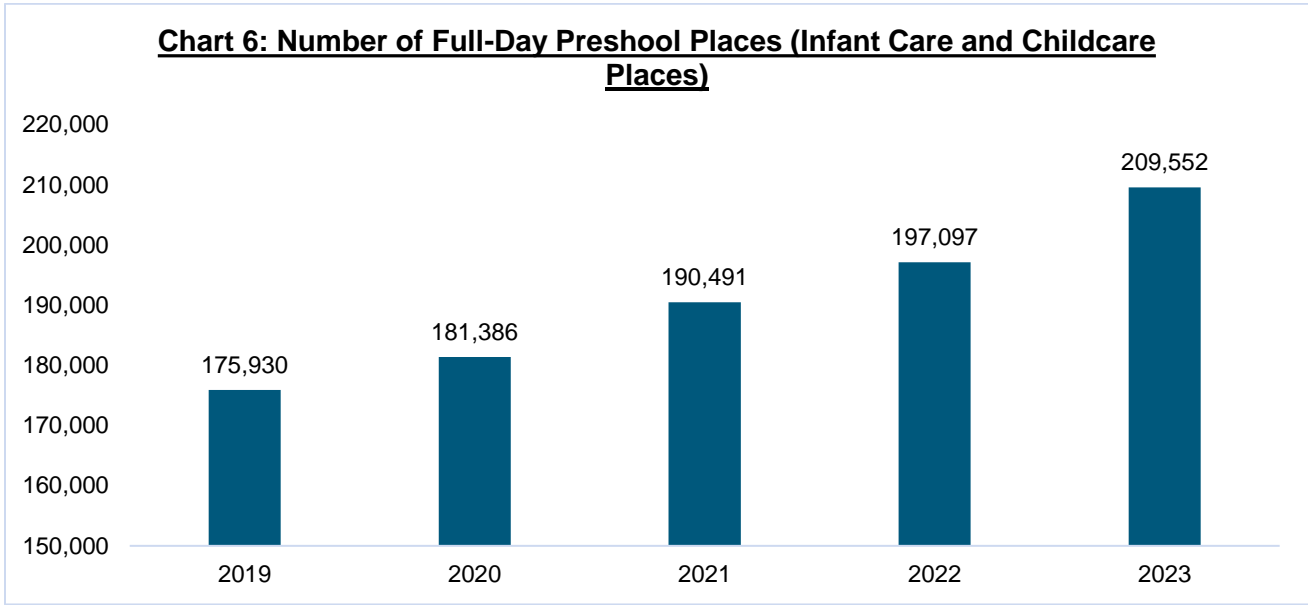
- About 40% of caregivers are male, while the majority of caregivers are women (60%).
- Caregivers reported a slightly lower overall quality of life compared to non-caregivers.
- However, there were no significant differences in the quality of life scores between male and female caregivers.

Easing caregivers' load

Caregiving is a challenging and often long-term responsibility. It is important to allow caregivers to take time off for self-care and to recharge, and to better enable them to balance their caregiving role with other commitments.

Through the **Caregiver Support Action Plan** launched in 2019, the Government has rolled out a suite of measures to support caregivers, including respite care services, to ensure caregivers are able to take breaks to care for themselves, and setting up of outreach teams to support caregivers in self-care through health and wellness activities, stress management and future-planning. Caregivers are also linked up with support groups and counselling services where needed.

To better support caregivers of young children, more than 10,000 full-day preschool places have been developed since 2022. The number of full-day preschool places has **increased over the years, to over 200,000 today**. This is enough to accommodate every resident child aged three and above (Chart 6). **80% of children will be able to enrol in a Government-supported preschool by around 2025**, up from over 65% today.



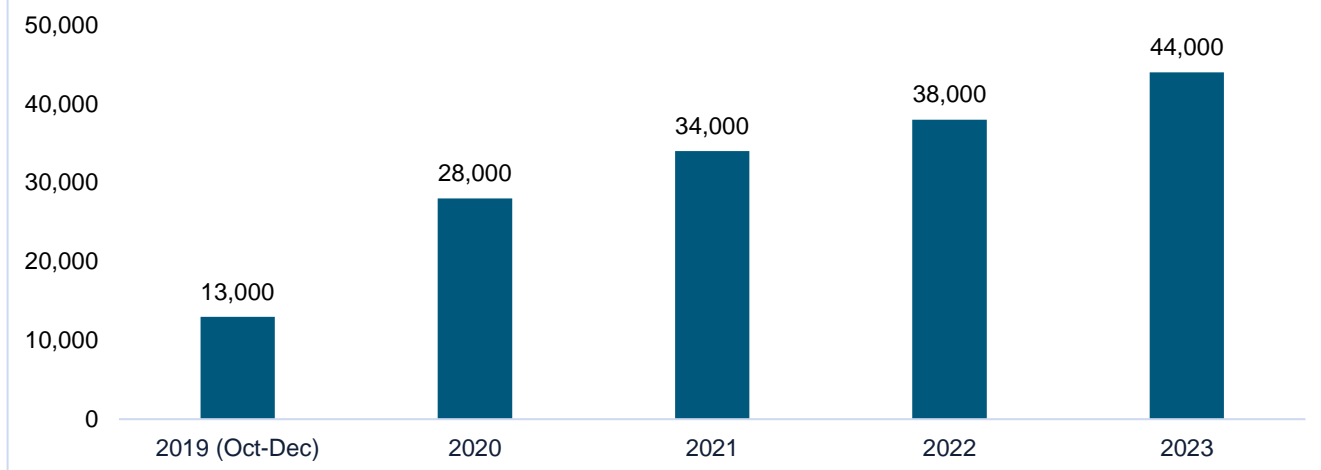
Source: Ministry of Social and Family Development

In the second half of 2024, the Early Childhood Development Agency will also launch an **infant childminding pilot** to grow affordable, safe, and reliable childminding services as an alternative infant care option for parents. The pilot aims to serve 500 infants in the first year. Parents using full-day childminding services under the pilot can expect to pay around \$700 per month, which is similar to what a median-income family pays for full-day infant care at Government-supported centres after Basic and Additional subsidies.

Reducing financial strain on caregivers

As the demand on familial caregivers increases due to our ageing society, the Government has stepped up support to meet caregiving needs. The Government provides a range of financial support schemes to defray long-term caregiving costs, including means-tested subsidies for long-term care services and the **Home Caregiving Grant (HCG)**. In 2023, the HCG was enhanced from \$200 per month to up to \$400 per month to defray caregiving costs, with more help provided to eligible lower-income households. The **number of HCG beneficiaries has increased** since scheme inception in 2019, with about **44,000 beneficiaries** receiving the HCG in 2023 (Chart 7).

Chart 7: Number of Unique HCG Beneficiaries Since Scheme Inception



Source: Ministry of Health

Note: The numbers in Chart 7 are rounded off.

To help all Singaporeans, including women and caregivers, build sufficient savings for retirement, the Government has been progressively enhancing the Central Provident Fund (CPF) system and other support measures over the years. To encourage CPF members to top up their own CPF savings and that of their loved ones, the Government raised the **Retirement Sum Topping-Up (RSTU) scheme** tax relief cap from \$7,000 to \$8,000 from 1 January 2022. As of December 2023, seven in ten seniors who received CPF top-ups via the RSTU from loved ones are women. In addition, the Government introduced the **Matched Retirement Savings Scheme (MRSS)**, which boosts retirement savings of older Singapore citizens by matching every dollar of cash top-ups made to eligible members up to a cap of \$600. From 2025 onwards, the matching grant will be increased to \$2,000 per year with a \$20,000 cap over an eligible member's lifetime. As of December 2023, about two out of three MRSS grant recipients are women. For seniors who had lower incomes during their working years and have little family support, the **Silver Support (SS)** scheme provides quarterly cash payments of up to \$900. From 2025 onwards, these payments will be raised by 20%, up to \$1,080. As of December 2023, about two out of three SS recipients are women, including many caregivers who were not able to work much when they were younger.

Increased retirement support for women



7 in 10

seniors who received CPF top-ups via the RSTU from loved ones are **women**



2 in 3

MRSS & SS recipients are **women**

Sharing caregiving responsibilities between men and women

The Government has encouraged more equal sharing of parental responsibilities that can help women better balance work and family responsibilities and maximise their potential at work. **Government-Paid Paternity Leave** was introduced in 2013, and in recent years, take-up rates have **increased from 47% in 2016 to 53% in 2021**. This reflects that more fathers are playing an active role in raising their children, which can help more mothers to stay active in the workforce. To encourage fathers to play a bigger role in raising children, Government-Paid Paternity Leave was **increased by an additional two weeks** on a voluntary basis in 2024, to a total of four weeks. Employers who offer the additional leave will be reimbursed by the Government. **Unpaid Infant Care Leave** was also **doubled to 12 days** per year per parent, in the child's first two years, so that parents can take more time off to care for and bond with their child, or to settle caregiving arrangements. We aim to make the additional two weeks of Government-Paid Paternity Leave mandatory as soon as possible and also consider how paid parental leave can be further increased to better support parents' needs while managing impact on business costs and operations.

Supporting caregivers

To better support caregivers, the **Agency for Integrated Care (AIC)** serves as a one-stop resource to help caregivers access the support they need. It provides tailored and bite-sized online resources and rolled out the Care Services Recommender on the SupportGoWhere portal. Respite care options for caregivers of seniors were also expanded to include more home-based and ad hoc respite, so that caregivers have time for self-care and can better manage work, family and personal commitments.

The Government also worked with AIC to set up caregiver community outreach teams to provide socio-emotional support for vulnerable caregivers with or at risk of developing mental health conditions. **Caregiver Support Networks** have also been established to provide platforms for caregivers to engage in activities and leverage the social capital among people with common experiences for socio-emotional support in the community. These build on existing measures to support families in their caregiving duties, such as the Caregivers Training Grant and the Elderarer Foreign Domestic Worker Scheme.

Supporting Women’s Health

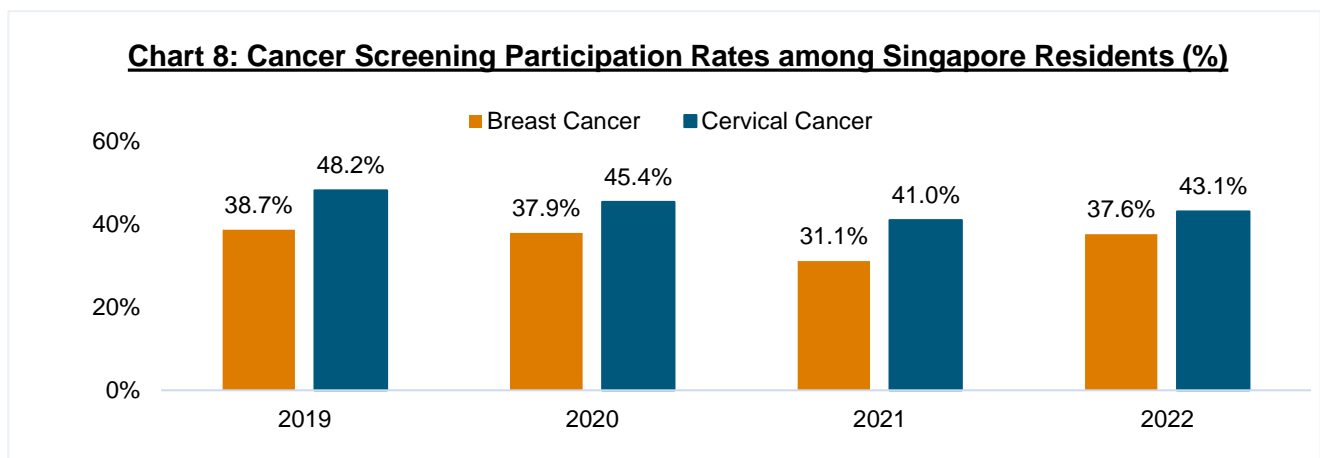
Women enjoy strong health outcomes in Singapore, along with high life expectancy. Healthcare services have been improved for different groups of women such as caregivers, mothers and the elderly. These aim to provide women greater opportunities and agency to achieve their aspirations.

Continued improvements to support women in taking care of their health

Singapore implemented **Healthier SG** in 2023 to focus on preventive care. Eligible residents, including women, can enrol in Healthier SG with their preferred family clinic, and be supported in co-creating a Health Plan with health goals. Nationally recommended health screenings, including breast cancer screening in older women, are fully subsidised for enrolled citizens (Chart 8).

For cervical cancer prevention, the Ministry of Health (MOH) **fully subsidises human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination** for all Secondary 1 and 2 female students as part of the Health Promotion Board’s school-based health programme. HPV vaccination is also subsidised for eligible female Singaporeans aged 9-26 at Community Health Assist Scheme GP clinics and polyclinics.

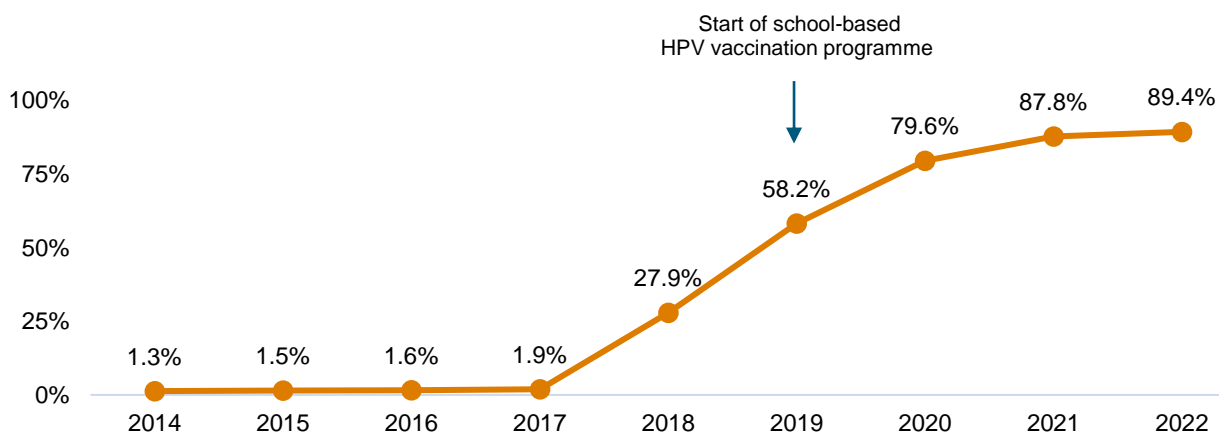
Singapore is close to attaining the World Health Organization’s 2030 target of 90% of girls being fully vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by the age of 15, with **89.4% of females aged 15** having received the nationally recommended doses of the HPV vaccine in 2022 (Chart 9).



Source: Ministry of Health National Population Health Survey (2022)

Note: Breast cancer screening rates are the proportion of female residents aged 50-69 years who had a mammogram in the past two years. Cervical cancer screening rates are the proportion of female residents aged 25-74 years who had a Pap smear test in the past three years or a HPV test in the past five years.

Chart 9: Proportion of Females Aged 15 Years who Received the Nationally Recommended Doses of HPV Vaccine (%)



Source: Health Promotion Board

Note: Data based on 15-year-old age cohort in respective reporting years. Those who received vaccination after 15 years of age are not included in the numerator. The school-based HPV vaccination programme for Secondary 1 and 2 female students began in April 2019.

Improving maternal and child health

MOH convened an inter-agency taskforce, from 2021 to 2023, to recommend the **Child and Maternal Health and Well-being Strategy and Action Plan**. The taskforce has reviewed policies and programmes to support women with their health and well-being across the pre-conception, pregnancy and post-pregnancy stage. As a result of these efforts, the Government has worked with partners to pilot the Family Nexus programme in the community, improving access to integrated health and social services for families. The taskforce report will be published in 2024.

Improving older women's health

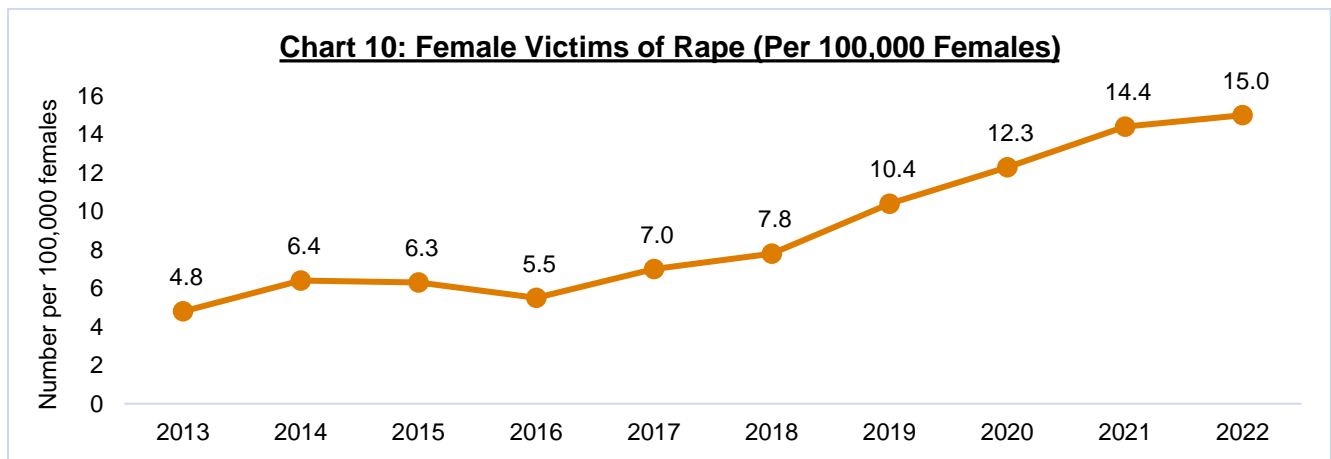
We are strengthening our healthcare system to meet increasing demand from an ageing population. We continue to **invest heavily in building new healthcare infrastructure and upgrading existing ones** – hospitals, community hospitals, senior care facilities – to ensure high quality yet affordable care for all, including for older women. For example, MOH has upgraded the design and living conditions in nursing homes and reinforced support for dementia care. MOH is also collaborating with AIC to elevate the quality of aged care services, through implementing capability-building programmes and organising sector forums for service providers to share best practices.

We are also expanding the range of social and long-term care services in the community to meet our seniors' desire to age in place. For example, setting up more active ageing centres within our public housing estates to provide a wider range of activities to keep our seniors healthy and engaged; two-thirds of participants are women. We have also launched **Age Well SG** in 2023 as a new national programme to support our seniors to age actively, stay socially connected, and be cared for within their communities.

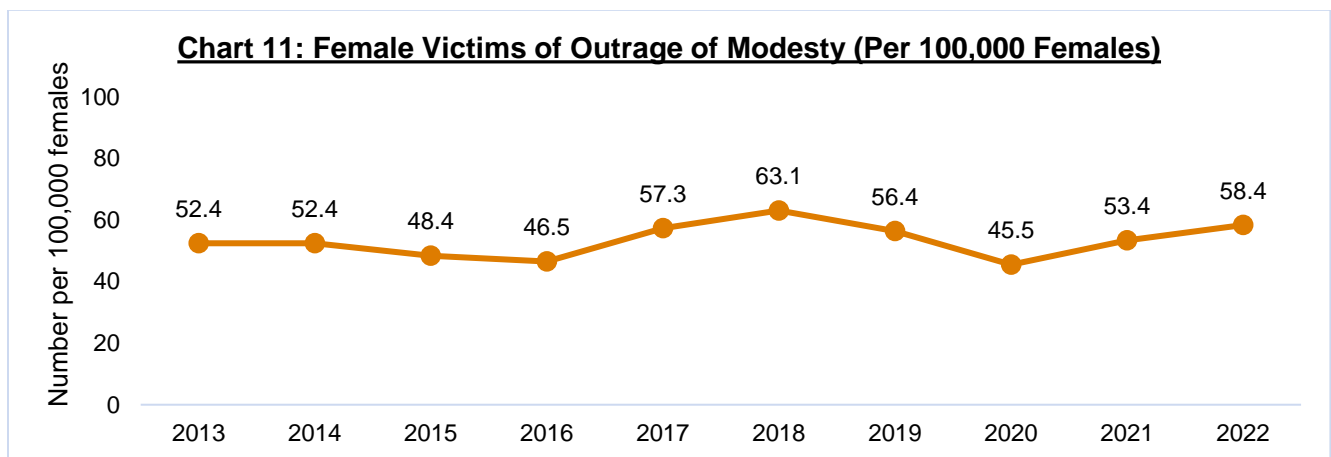
Enhancing Protection against Violence and Harm

Singapore consistently ranks as one of the safest nations globally according to Gallup’s Global Law and Order index. The Government has implemented robust strategies to address violence and safeguard women across various sectors, including homes, schools, workplaces, and public areas. Moving forward, efforts to bolster safety measures will continue and evolve across multiple domains.

Nevertheless, sexual and hurt offences against women still occur. While the number of female victims of rape per 100,000 females has increased from 2013 to 2022 (Chart 10), the number of female victims of outrage of modesty per 100,000 females has remained relatively stable over the same period (Chart 11). The Singapore Police Force (SPF) will continue to work closely with its stakeholders to raise awareness of outrage of modesty among the public.



Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, Singapore Police Force



Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, Singapore Police Force

Note: The decrease from 2019 to 2020 is partly due to the low ridership on public transport, low footfall at shopping malls and the closure of public entertainment outlets during the Circuit Breaker.

Through legislation and enforcement, the Government continues to take seriously any incident of sexual violence against women, including rape and outrage of modesty. These measures have evolved to meet the changing context and nature of harms such as emerging trends in the online sphere.

The **maximum imprisonment term for outrage of modesty was increased from two years to three years** with effect from 1 March 2022. This is to enhance deterrence and allow the courts to deal with egregious cases more severely.

In February 2024, as part of the Criminal Procedure (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill, we introduced a new sentencing option – the **Sentence for Enhanced Public Protection** – which allows for a serious offender, such as serial serious sex offenders, to be detained until he or she no longer poses a significant threat to public safety.

SPF also formed the **Sexual Crime and Family Violence Command** in 2023. This was to raise the standards of investigations and provide better oversight of the management of sexual crime and family violence cases.

To tackle outrage of modesty cases, the fourth edition of the **Safe Clubbing Campaign** was launched in January this year to promote a safe environment for patrons and staff of public entertainment outlets through education on individual responsibility such as drinking in moderation. Additionally, SPF launched the first **Police concept train** in November 2023, which aims to raise awareness among public transport commuters. Cautionary messages are displayed prominently on the floor as well as on the interior sides of the MRT cabins, to warn would-be perpetrators of consequences.

Enhance protection for victim-survivors of family violence

The home should be a safe space. Unfortunately, instances of family violence still occur. In 2023, the **Women's Charter** was amended to empower family violence victim-survivors to better protect themselves, strengthen the Government's ability to intervene in family violence cases and empower the Court to make additional rehabilitative provisions, raise penalties and strengthen enforcement against breaches. To empower victim-survivors to better protect themselves, the amendments allow victim-survivors to apply for a **Stay Away Order** or a **No Contact Order** or both. This is in addition to Counselling and Domestic Exclusion Orders, which are already available. The perpetrator who is subjected to a Stay Away Order cannot enter or remain in areas frequented by the victim-survivor, such as a workplace. A No Contact Order prohibits the perpetrator from visiting or communicating with the victim-survivor.

The amendments also allow the Court to issue a **Mandatory Treatment Order** if it is satisfied that the perpetrator is suffering from a treatable psychiatric condition that is likely to be a contributing factor to the occurrence of family violence. The Counselling and Mandatory Treatment Orders may continue even if the Personal Protection Order is revoked subsequently so that the necessary interventions can be completed adequately.

The legislative amendments made clearer that the definition of family violence covers physical, sexual, and emotional or psychological abuse.

The 24-hour **Domestic Violence Emergency Response Team (DVERT)** was launched in 2023 for MSF staff trained in areas such as social work and psychology to respond jointly with the Police for family violence cases with immediate safety risks to the victim-survivor. DVERT will be empowered to issue **Emergency Orders** on site in high-risk cases. This will better protect victim-survivors at the onset of violence while further action is taken to ensure their safety, such as applying for a Personal Protection Order or an Expedited Order or putting in place a safety plan. Any further act of family violence that breaches the Emergency Order will be considered an arrestable offence.

Tackling online harms

In this digital era, online harms have emerged as a new form of threat to women's safety. A 2023 survey conducted by SG Her Empowerment (SHE), a local civil society organisation, found that female youths were more at risk for online harms of a sexual nature. 22% of female youths reported experiencing sexual harassment online, compared to 12% of male youths.

The Government has recently introduced a suite of legislative measures to deal with harmful online content and behaviour, including those targeted at women and girls.

In November 2022, the Government amended the **Broadcasting Act** to empower the Government to issue directions to providers of Online Communication Services to block egregious content found online from being accessed by Singapore users, for example, content that advocates physical or sexual violence.

A **Code of Practice for Online Safety** was introduced in July 2023 to require designated social media services with significant reach or impact in Singapore to put in place measures to minimise Singapore users' exposure to harmful online content, including sexual or cyberbullying content.

In July 2023, a new **Online Criminal Harms Act** was passed to empower the Government to direct online services to block criminal activities online from being accessed by Singapore users, including crimes affecting individual safety such as the communication of voyeuristic materials in Singapore and online child sexual exploitation, or stop persons and entities from communicating such criminal content online.

To bolster community support for victims of online harm, SHE established **SHECARES@SCWO** in January 2023, Singapore's first one-stop support centre for survivors of online harms. Set up in collaboration with the Singapore Council of Women's Organisations, the centre provides holistic support and a safe space for survivors, particularly girls and women, to turn to when they encounter online harms. Services provided include a helpline, text-line, pro bono counselling support and legal clinics, and help with the reporting of online harms.

Providing holistic and effective relief from harassment

The **Protection from Harassment Court (PHC)** is a specialist court dedicated to dealing with harassment matters, both offline and online. The PHC, which commenced operations in June 2021, has made it simpler and faster for victims of harassment to obtain relief. The PHC generally hears applications for Expedited Protection Orders within two to three working days from the date of the application, and within 24 hours where there is a risk of violence or actual violence.

Promote values of respect and safety

To reinforce a culture of safety and respect in our society and address the deeper societal mindsets that influence perpetrators' beliefs and behaviour, the Government is working together with stakeholders to create a safe environment for victims to report instances of harm or violence, and partner schools and parents to instil key values such as respect between men and women in our young.

To strengthen measures to prevent youth sexual offending, we see the importance of building up the capabilities of our professionals so that they can deliver more effective interventions. An **Early Identification and Intervention Resource Package for Youths with at-risk Sexual Behaviours** has been developed to help professionals in the early identification of inappropriate behaviours. Professionals will also be guided on how they can intervene, with tiered responses to manage these youths with at-risk sexual behaviours. The aim is to train half of all school and community counsellors by end-2024 in using this resource package, and the remaining to be trained by end-2025.

Every Singaporean also has a role to reinforce a culture of safety and respect through their everyday actions and habits. Parents play a key role in educating their children from young. Men and women can actively speak out against disrespect and objectification of women. Together, we can create an environment where our women and girls feel safe and respected.

Mindset Shifts

Beyond policy and legislation, a whole-of-society effort is needed to shift mindsets and break gender stereotypes to achieve progress on gender equality. Even as the Government continues to support women in the workplace, family and society, we must continue to identify and overcome persistent stereotypes and unhelpful mindsets. Changing mindsets on gender roles requires the partnership of both men and women. This partnership starts in the family, and continues in our schools, workplaces, and in the community.

Education

To address gender stereotypes and mental models more directly, especially those that impact women in their career choices and familial roles, the **Character and Citizenship Education** curriculum in schools was enhanced in 2021. In emphasising the importance of every individual's contribution to both career and family dynamics, students are taught to cultivate respect and empathy towards others. Furthermore, they gain an understanding of the equity of familial roles regardless of gender, and that parental roles and familial responsibilities can be shared and mutually agreed upon amongst family members.

Through Education and Career Guidance, students are also encouraged to explore a variety of education and career pathways based on their strengths and interests, and not be limited by gender stereotypes. Women have comprised close to **40% of students studying STEM courses** in our tertiary institutions since 2017. In 2020, women also make up **41% of our tech workforce**, higher than the global average of 28%.

Workplace

In the workplace, managers and colleagues can support and help facilitate the re-entry of mothers back to the workforce as well as provide equal support for fathers who need to take leave to care for their children. While there has been a positive mindset shift towards workplaces being more supportive of fathers' involvement in child-raising, as seen by the increase in the take-up rate for paternity leave, more remains to be done.

Shared responsibility in caregiving

The 2021 Marriage and Parenthood Survey³ saw a shift in perceived gender roles; the proportion of respondents who felt that "ideally, mothers should take care of her children full-time" **fell from 40% in 2016 to 24% in 2021** for single respondents. For married respondents, it **fell from 56% in 2016 to 40% in 2021**. With increased effort to address traditional gender stereotypes, such as through the **Families for Life movement** to promote active fatherhood and parenting as a team, and the Centre for Fathering's **Dads for Life** and **Mums for Life movements**, we can make further progress towards more equal partnership in parenting and sharing of caregiving responsibilities in the family.

³ Source: The National Population and Talent Division, Strategy Group, Prime Minister's Office.

Conclusion

The White Paper serves as a 10-year roadmap to guide our whole-of-society effort. Steady progress is being made in the implementation of the action plans, and the Government will undertake a mid-point review in 2027.

It takes a whole-of-society effort to make sustained progress towards a society underpinned by our shared values of fairness, equality, respect and solidarity. Let us all work together towards a fairer and more inclusive society, where both women and men can pursue their aspirations freely and fully.