# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2017

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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 2009. Accreditation is voluntary. It started with manual registration and switched to the online system on 1 April 2011.

Registered Social Workers (RSWs) and Registered Social Worker-Provisionals (RSW-P) consist of 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 years of experience in the field. Accreditation may be renewed every two years upon fulfilment of 60 Continuing and Professional Education (CPE) credits. As the accreditation of social service practitioners was to be for a three-year window period, 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 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 against a registered professional. Registrants found guilty of professional misconduct 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.

The Annual Report documents the activities and registration statistics as at 31 December 2017.

## SOCIAL WORK ACCREDITATION AND ADVISORY BOARD

### (1 JANUARY 2016 TO 31 DECEMBER 2017)

| Position | Name | Designation | Organisation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chairman | Ms Ang Bee Lian | Director of Social Welfare | Ministry of Social and Family Development |
| Vice-Chairman | Ms Tina Hung | Deputy Chief Executive Officer | National Council of Social Service |
| Member | Ms Agnes Chia | President (until 20 August 2017) | Singapore Association of Social Workers |
| Member | Ms Long Chey May | Senior Assistant Director, Allied Health & Head, Medical Social Services<br><br>President (from 21 August 2017) | Ng Teng Fong General Hospital & Jurong Community Hospital<br><br>Singapore Association of Social Workers |
| Member | Ms Morene Sim | Director | inlingua School of Languages |
| Member | A/Prof Esther Goh | Head, Social Work Department | National University of Singapore |
| Member | Dr Peace Wong | Senior Lecturer, Social Work Department | National University of Singapore |
| Member | A/Prof Seng Boon Kheng | Head, Social Work Programme, School of Human Development and Social Services | Singapore University of Social Services |
| Member | Mr Abdul Halim A. | Director, Community Outreach and Development | Jamiyah Singapore |
| Member | Ms Julia Lee | Senior Director, Social Work & Programme Development | TOUCH Community Services Limited |
| Member | Dr Katijah Dawood | Divisional Director | Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities – Centre for Family Harmony, Clinical Services & Family Services (West) |

### SECRETARIAT

| Name | Designation | Organisation |
|---|---|---|
| Ms Nancy Teo | Head, Accreditation & Programme Director | Singapore Association of Social Workers |
| Ms Jerene Chua | Assistant Head, Accreditation | Singapore Association of Social Workers |
| Ms Joelle Tan | Senior Executive, Research and Policy (until 30 July 2017) | Singapore Association of Social Workers |
| Ms Lydia Lim | Executive, Policy and Research (from 1 August 2017) | Singapore Association of Social Workers |
| Ms Jean Ng | Senior Administrative Executive | Singapore Association of Social Workers |

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

This report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the Board in 2017. In 2017, the Board accredited 143 Registered Social Worker-Provisionals (RSW-Ps) and 195 Registered Social Workers (RSWs), renewed 504 RSWs, 26 RSW-Ps and 49 Registered Social Service Practitioners (RSSPs). There were also 89 RSWPs who converted to RSWs and 2 RSSPs to RSW-Ps or RSWs during the year. Since the accreditation framework was set up on 1 April 2009, the Board has accredited 1879 social workers and social service practitioners as at 31 December 2017. The renewal rate for the Registered Social Worker-Provisionals (RSW-P), Registered Social Workers (RSW) and Registered Social Service Practitioners (RSSP) were 87%, 91% and 84% respectively, with the overall renewal rate being 89%.

SWAAB held its second social work supervision seminar on ""Social Work Supervision in Singapore: Innovative Ways to Chart the Bare Essentials" on 7 July 2017 at the National University of Singapore (NUS). The seminar was attended by about 300 senior social workers and supervisors with speakers from New Zealand, Hong Kong and senior social workers from Singapore. The seminar also saw the launching of the Guidelines on Social Work Supervision developed by a work group led by Dr Peace Wong, SWAAB member and Senior Lecturer, Social Work Department, NUS. The Guidelines consist of minimum standards for social work supervision as well as useful templates and checklists for the evaluation of supervision and forging of a contract between supervisor and supervisee. One of the outcomes of the Guidelines was the raising of the minimum number of years of social work experience required of a supervisor for providing supervised practice for RSW accreditation, from three to four years.

As in the 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 was 136. In general, the feedback was that the criteria for accreditation, CPE credits submissions and renewal are reasonable and realistic especially after the reduction of credits from 160 to 60 in September 2015 and that the on-line system is user-friendly. Although most felt that accreditation did not have any impact on their clients or employers, they were of the view that mandatory licensing is good for the profession and should be implemented as soon as possible since it would help promote standards and raise the profile of social workers. Those who disagreed felt that mandatory accreditation would aggravate the current shortage of social workers. The inputs received have enabled the board to fine-tune the accreditation and renewal criteria during the year.

The end of 2017 also saw a renewal of Board members as the two-year term came to an end. I would like to thank the former Vice-Chairman, Ms Tina Hung, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the National Council of Social Service and members, Ms Agnes Chia, former President of the Singapore Association of Social Workers and Mr Abdul Halim, Director, Community Outreach and Development Jamiyah Singapore for their valuable contributions to the Board over the years. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new members to the Board. They are Ms Lilian Mark, Head, Medical Social Work, Institute of Mental Health, Ms Tan Sze Wee, Executive Director, Rainbow Centre, Mr Vincent Ng, Chief Executive Officer, AMKFSC Community Services Ltd and Ms Elaine Loo, Director, Central Youth Guidance Office, Ministry of Social and Family Development.

My heartfelt appreciation also goes to the seven members who have agreed to continue serving on the Board for the new term of office from 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2019. The full list of Board members may be found on our website at www.swaab.org.sg. I also thank the Accreditation Secretariat for providing quality and timely support to the Board. Lastly, may I urge all accredited social workers and social service practitioners to continue to uphold the standards of practice and ethics of social work so as to raise the quality and image of the profession.

Ms Ang Bee Lian
Chairman
Social Work Accreditation and Advisory Board

DEMOGRAPHICS

NUMBER AND TYPES OF ACCREDITATION

As at 31 December 2017, there were 1879 accredited social workers and social service practitioners as compared to1682 on 31 December 2016.  This was an increase of 12%.


Table 1: Number and Types of Accreditation as at 31 December 2017

| Type | 2016 | 2017 | Increase/Decrease (No. & %) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Registered Social Worker-Provisional (RSW-P) | 235 | 275 | 40 (17 %) |
| Registered Social Worker (RSW) | 1256 | 1432 | 176 (14 %) |
| Registered Social Service Practitioner (RSSP) | 191 | 172 | -19 (-10 %) |
| TOTAL | 1682 | 1879 | 197 (12 %) |


Chart 1: Number and Types of Accreditation as at 31 December 2017



**Number and Type of Accreditation**
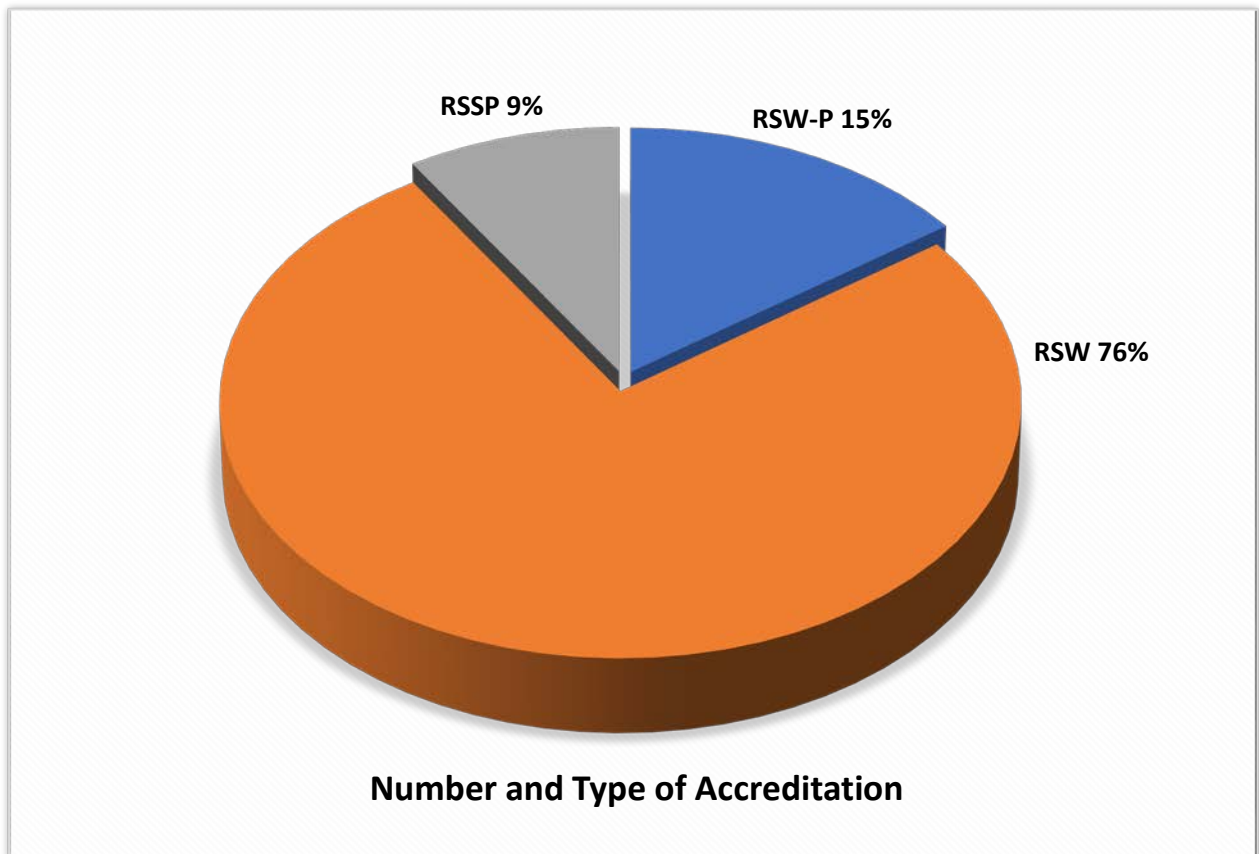
SECTOR DISTRIBUTION

Most of the accredited professionals practised in the social service organisations. 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 2017

| Sectors of Employment | Sector Distribution | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | RSW-P | RSW | RSSP | |
| Social Service Organisations (SSO) | 215 | 877 | 121 | 1213 |
| Public Healthcare Sector (Restructured Hospitals, Specialist Centres, Polyclinics) | 38 | 320 | 7 | 365 |
| Government Ministries & Statutory Boards | 9 | 142 | 32 | 183 |
| Self-employed | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Unemployed | 8 | 73 | 4 | 85 |
| Others | 5 | 19 | 7 | 31 |
| TOTAL | 275 | 1432 | 172 | 1879 |

Chart 2a: Sector Distribution of Accredited Professionals as at 31 December 2017



Government Ministries & Stat Boards 9%

Self-employed/ Unemployed 5%

Public Healthcare Sector 19%

Others 2%

SSO 65%

**Sectors of Employment**
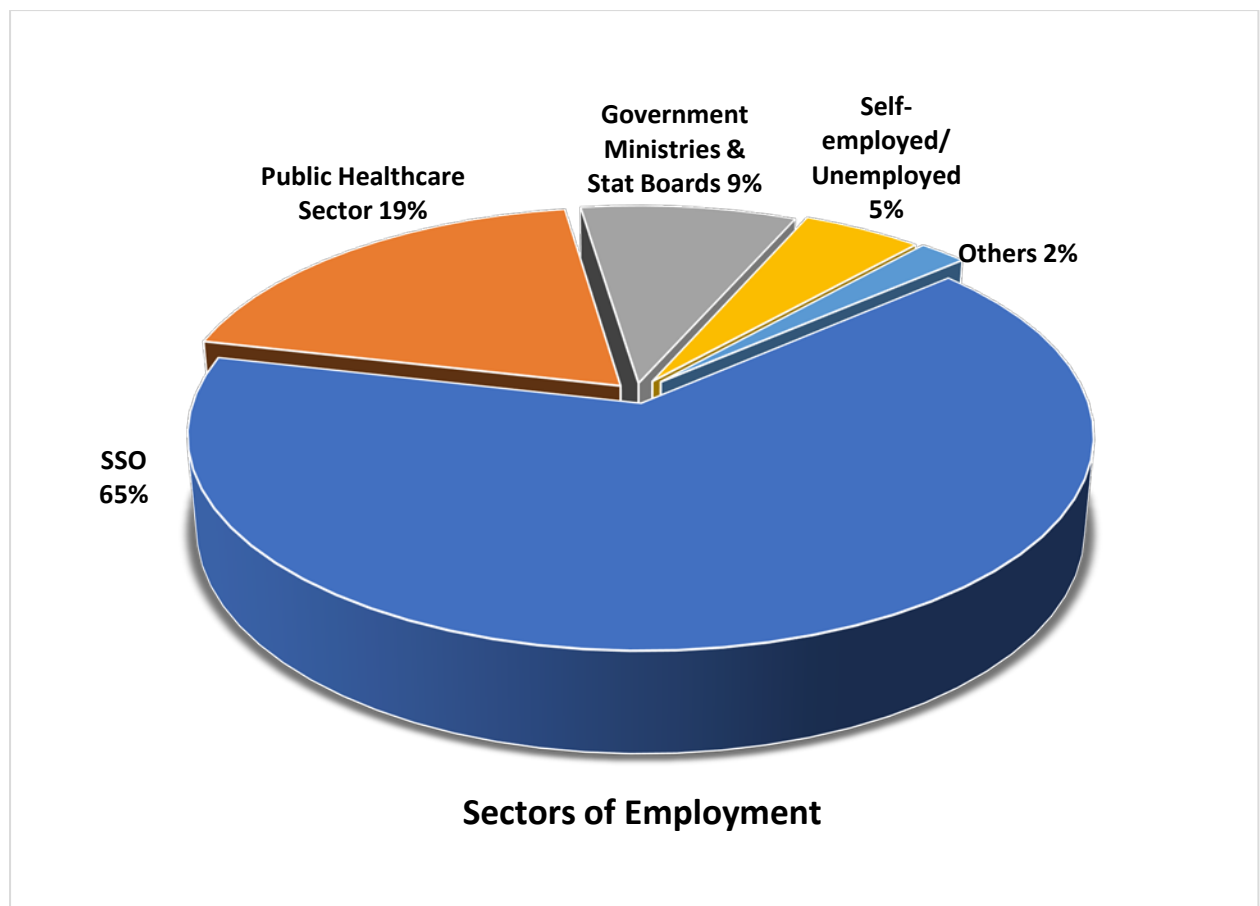
Chart 2b: Sector Distribution of RSW-Ps as at 31 December 2017



**Sectors of Employment (RSW-P)**

Public Healthcare Sector 14%
Government Ministries & Stat Boards 3%
Unemployed 3%
Others 2%
SSO 78%
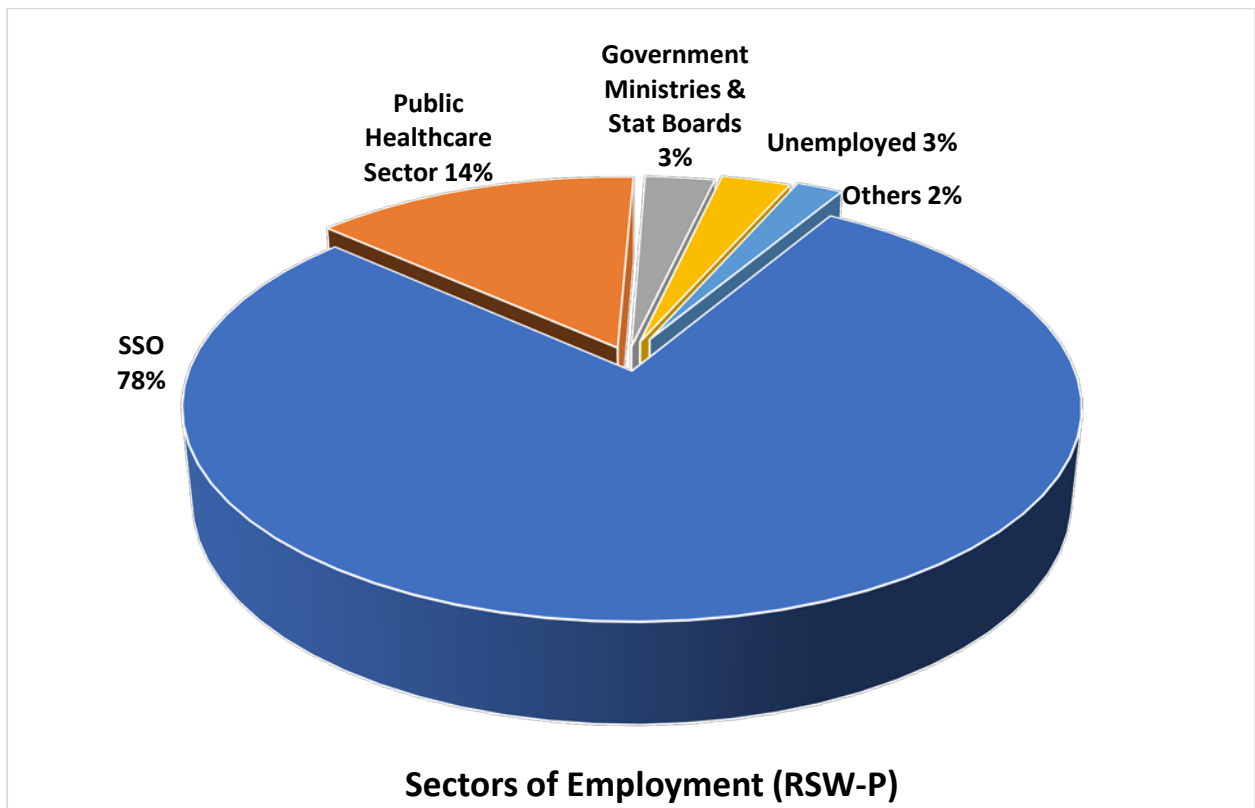
Chart 2c: Sector Distribution of RSWs as at 31 December 2017
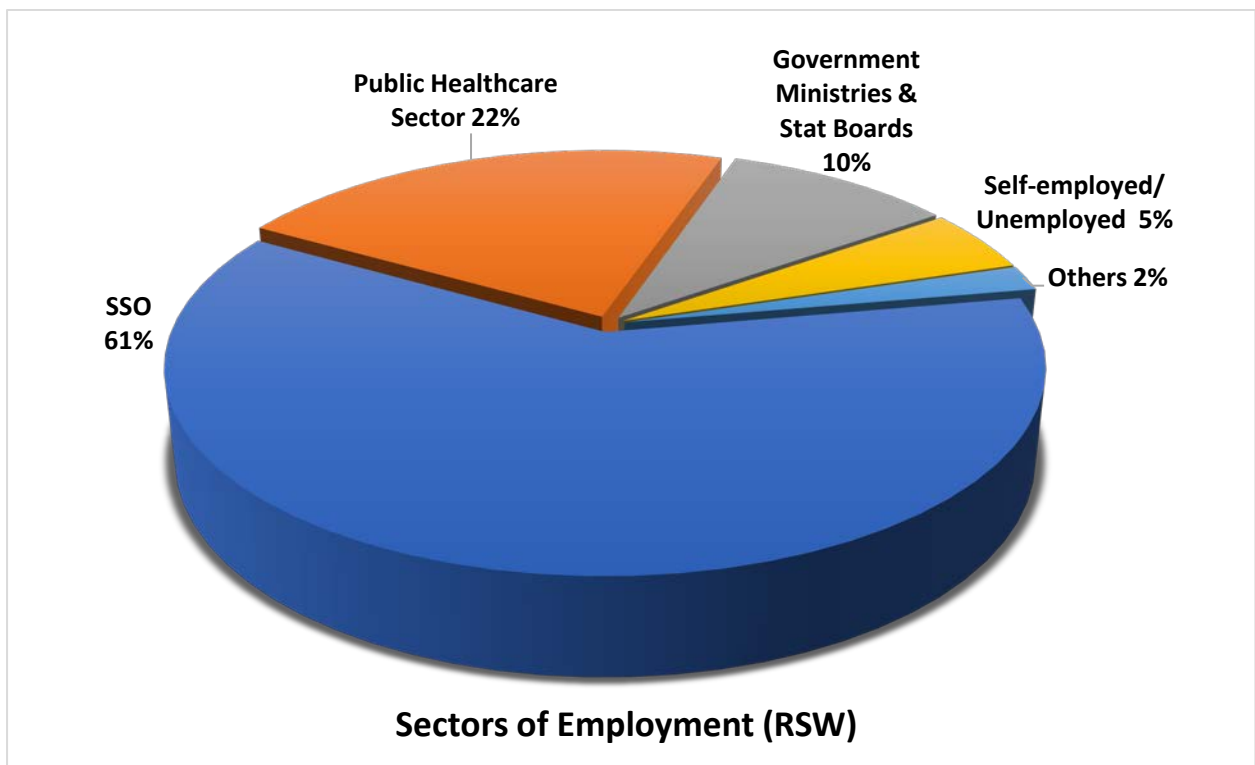


**Sectors of Employment (RSW)**

Public Healthcare Sector 22%
Government Ministries & Stat Boards 10%
Self-employed/ Unemployed 5%
Others 2%
SSO 61%

Govenment
Ministries & Stat
Boards 19%

Self-employed/
Unemployed 3%

Public Healthcare
Sector 4%

Others 4%

SSO 70%

**Sectors of Employment (RSSP)**

COUNTRY OF QUALIFYING QUALIFICATION OF ACCREDITED PROFESSIONALS

1. REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKER-PROVISIONALS (RSW-Ps)

A majority of registered social worker-provisionals qualified in Social Work from Singapore. Other major countries where our RSW-Ps were qualified from include Hong Kong, India, Australia, The Philippines, Canada, China, Malaysia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

Table 3: Country of Qualifying Qualification for RSW-Ps (Year 2017)

| Country of Qualifying Qualification | 2017 |
|---|---|
| Singapore | 257 |
| Hong Kong (HK) | 8 |
| India | 3 |
| Australia | 3 |
| Canada | 1 |
| Malaysia | 1 |
| Ukraine | 1 |
| United Kingdom (UK) | 1 |
| TOTAL | 275 |

Chart 3: Country of Qualifying Qualification for RSW-Ps
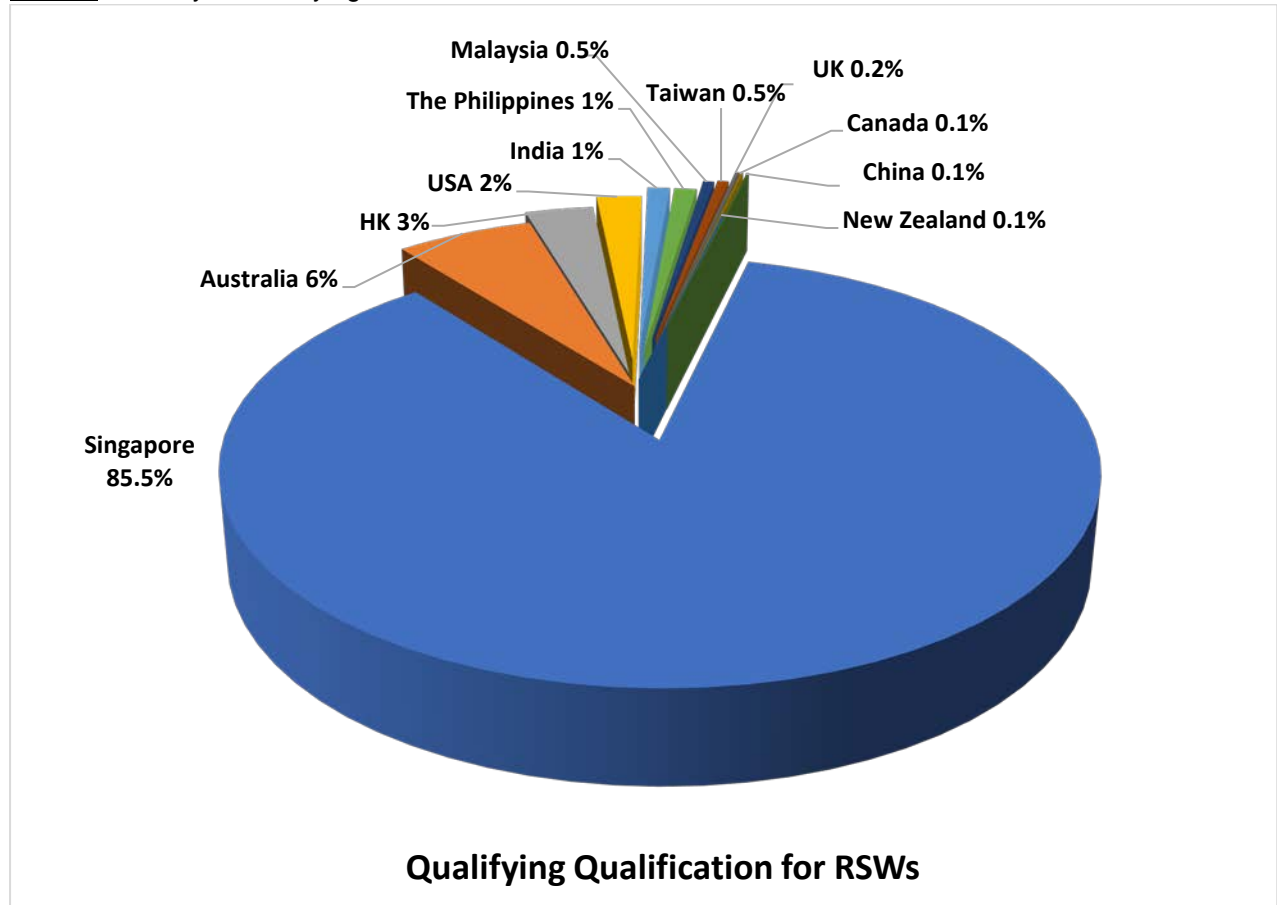


**Country of Qualifying Qualification for RSW-P**
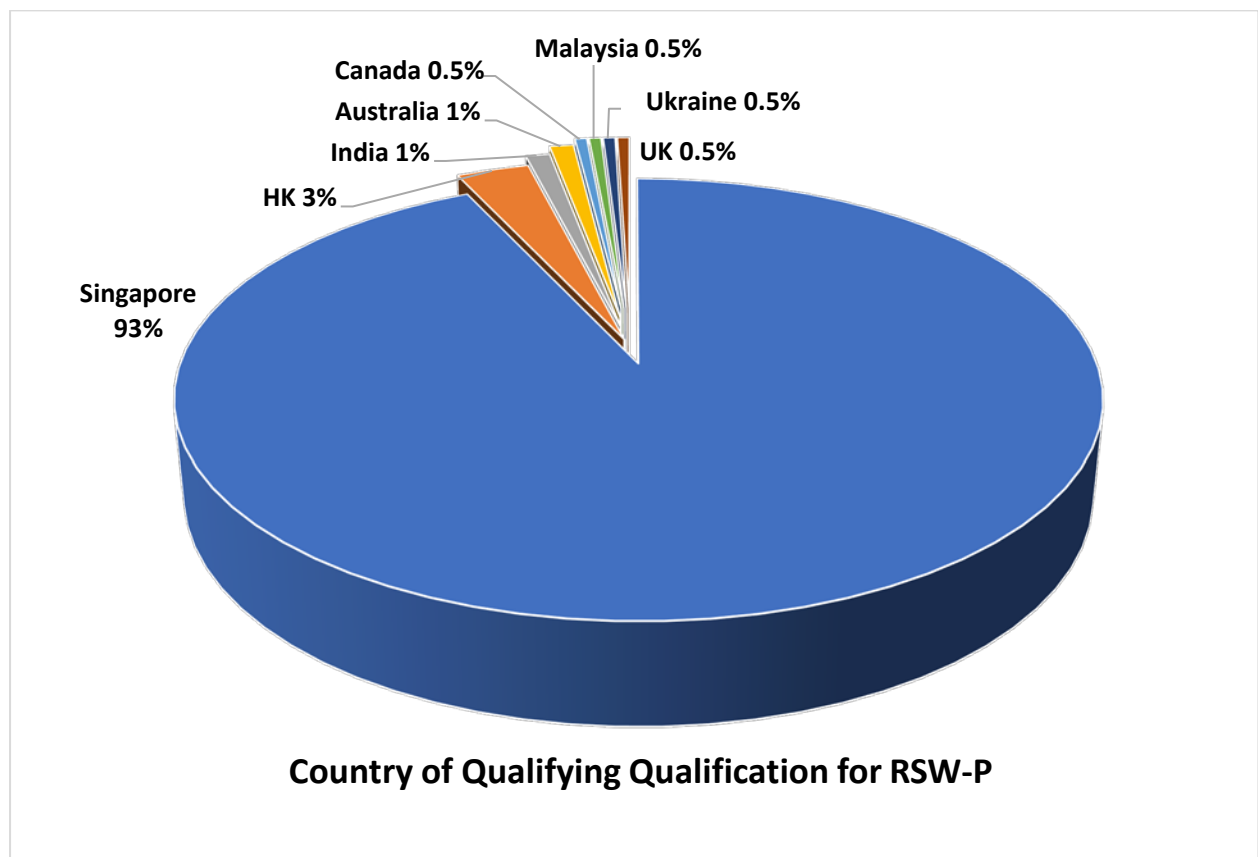
2. REGISTERED SOCIAL WORKERS (RSWs)

Most of our registered social workers qualified in Social Work from Singapore. Other major countries where our RSWs were qualified from include Australia, Hong Kong, the United States of America, India, The Philippines, Malaysia, Taiwan, the United Kingdom, Canada, China and New Zealand.

Table 4: Country of Qualifying Qualification for RSWs (Year 2017)

| Country of Qualifying Qualification | 2017 |
| --- | --- |
| Singapore | 1225 |
| Australia | 85 |
| Hong Kong (HK) | 44 |
| United States of America (USA) | 26 |
| The Philippines | 15 |
| India | 14 |
| Malaysia | 8 |
| Taiwan | 8 |
| United Kingdom (UK) | 3 |
| China | 2 |
| Canada | 1 |
| New Zealand | 1 |
| TOTAL | 1432 |

Chart 4: Country of Qualifying Qualification for RSWs



**Qualifying Qualification for RSWs**

3.  REGISTERED SOCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS (RSSPs)

Country of Qualifying Qualification for RSSPs

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

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF ACCREDITED PROFESSIONALS

The social work and social service professions are young and female dominated, with the majority of them within the age group of 30 - 39, followed by those in the 40 - 49 age group. Singapore Citizens and Permanent Residents (PRs) make up 97% 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 2017

| Demographic Profile | Number and Percentage for Each Group | | | Total |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | RSW-P | RSW | RSSP | |
| Gender | | | | |
| Male | 80 | 328 | 56 | 464 |
| Female | 195 | 1104 | 116 | 1415 |
| Age | | | | |
| 20-29 | 120 | 211 | 0 | 331 |
| 30-39 | 95 | 674 | 35 | 804 |
| 40-49 | 37 | 382 | 50 | 469 |
| 50-59 | 21 | 135 | 56 | 212 |
| 60 and above | 2 | 30 | 31 | 63 |
| Nationality | | | | |
| Singapore Citizen & PR | 264 | 1384 | 172 | 1820 |
| Non-Citizen | 11 | 48 | 0 | 59 |
| TOTAL | 275 | 1432 | 172 | 1879 |

Chart 5a: Total number of Accredited Professionals by Gender as at 31 December 2017



Female  75%    Male 25%
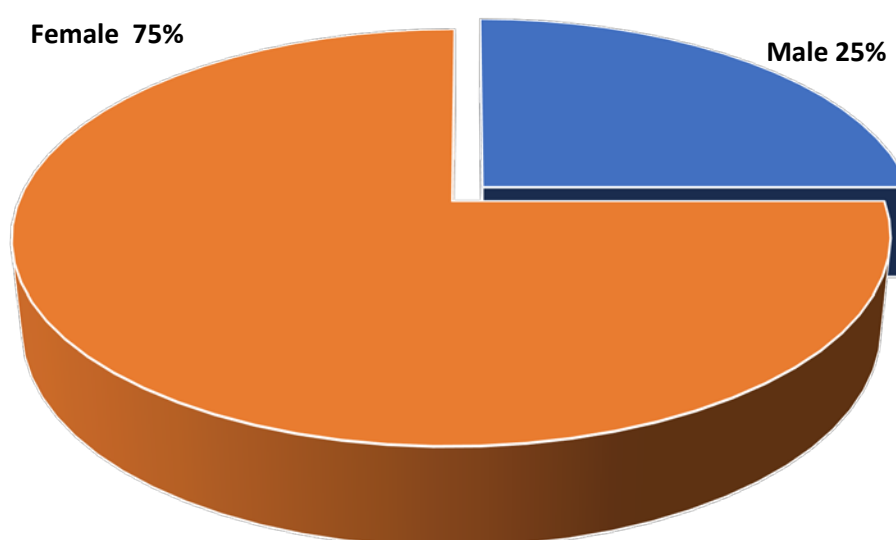
**Accredited Professionals by Gender**

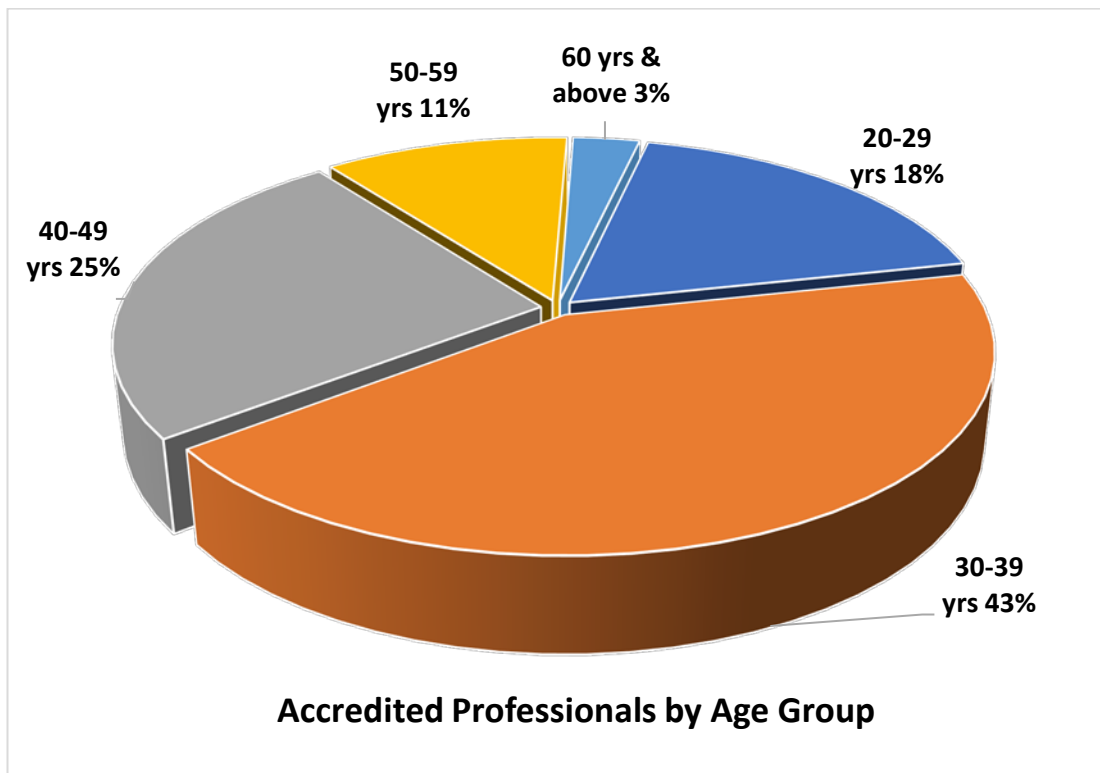Chart 5b: Total number of Accredited Professionals by Age Group as at 31 December 2017



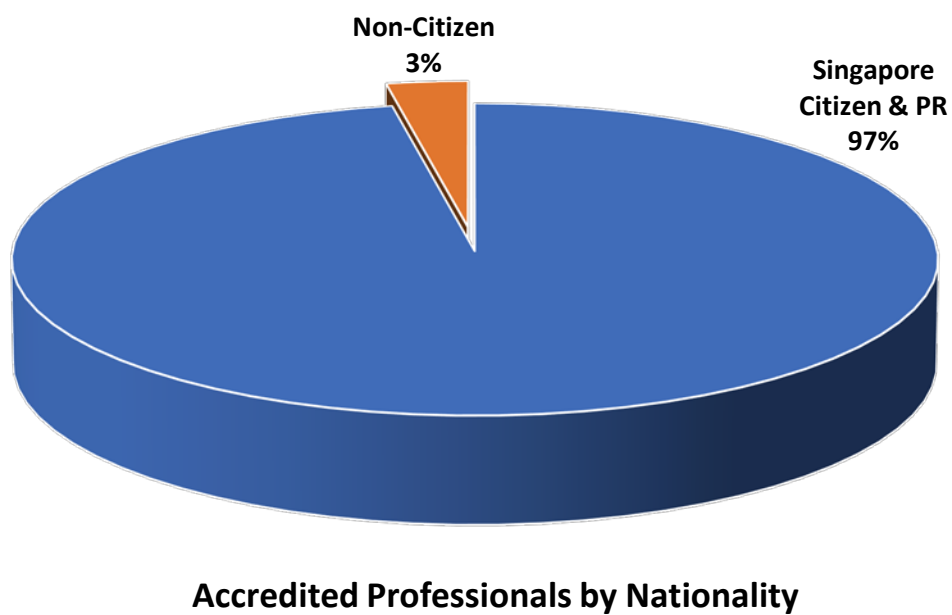**Accredited Professionals by Age Group**

- 60 yrs & above 3%
- 50-59 yrs 11%
- 40-49 yrs 25%
- 20-29 yrs 18%
- 30-39 yrs 43%

Chart 5c: Total number of Accredited Professionals by Nationality as at 31 December 2017



**Accredited Professionals by Nationality**

- Non-Citizen 3%
- Singapore Citizen & PR 97%

ACCREDITATION STATUS IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS

Table 6: Accreditation Status from 2013 to 2017

| Status | as at 31 December 2013 | as at 31 December 2014 | as at 31 December 2015 | as at 31 December 2016 | as at 31 December 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Accredited | 1457 | 1482 | 1591 | 1682 | 1879 |
| Not Renewed | 351 | 451 | 437 | 450 | 336 |
| Not Accredited | 33 | 35 | 34 | 36 | 36 |
| Archived | 0 | 35 | 97 | 192 | 355 |

Chart 6: Accreditation Status from 2013 to 2017



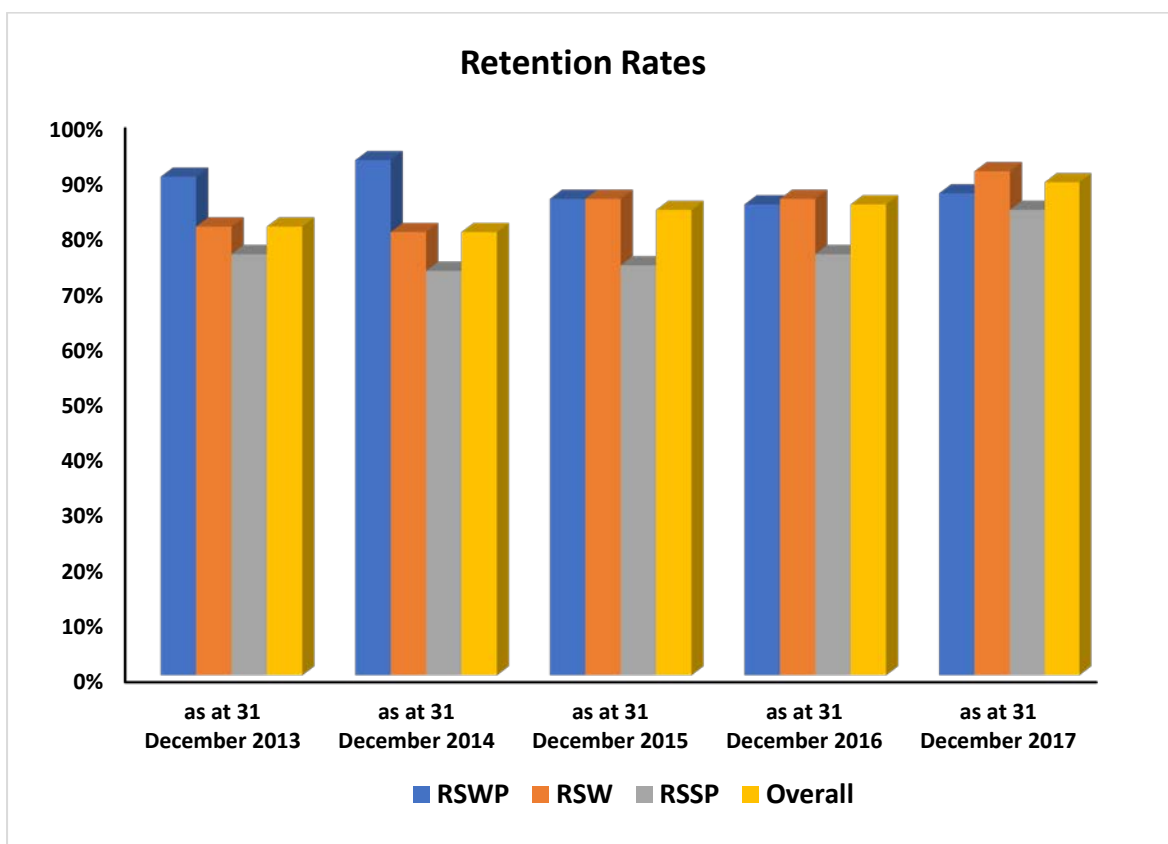Chart 6: Accreditation Status from 2013 to 2017
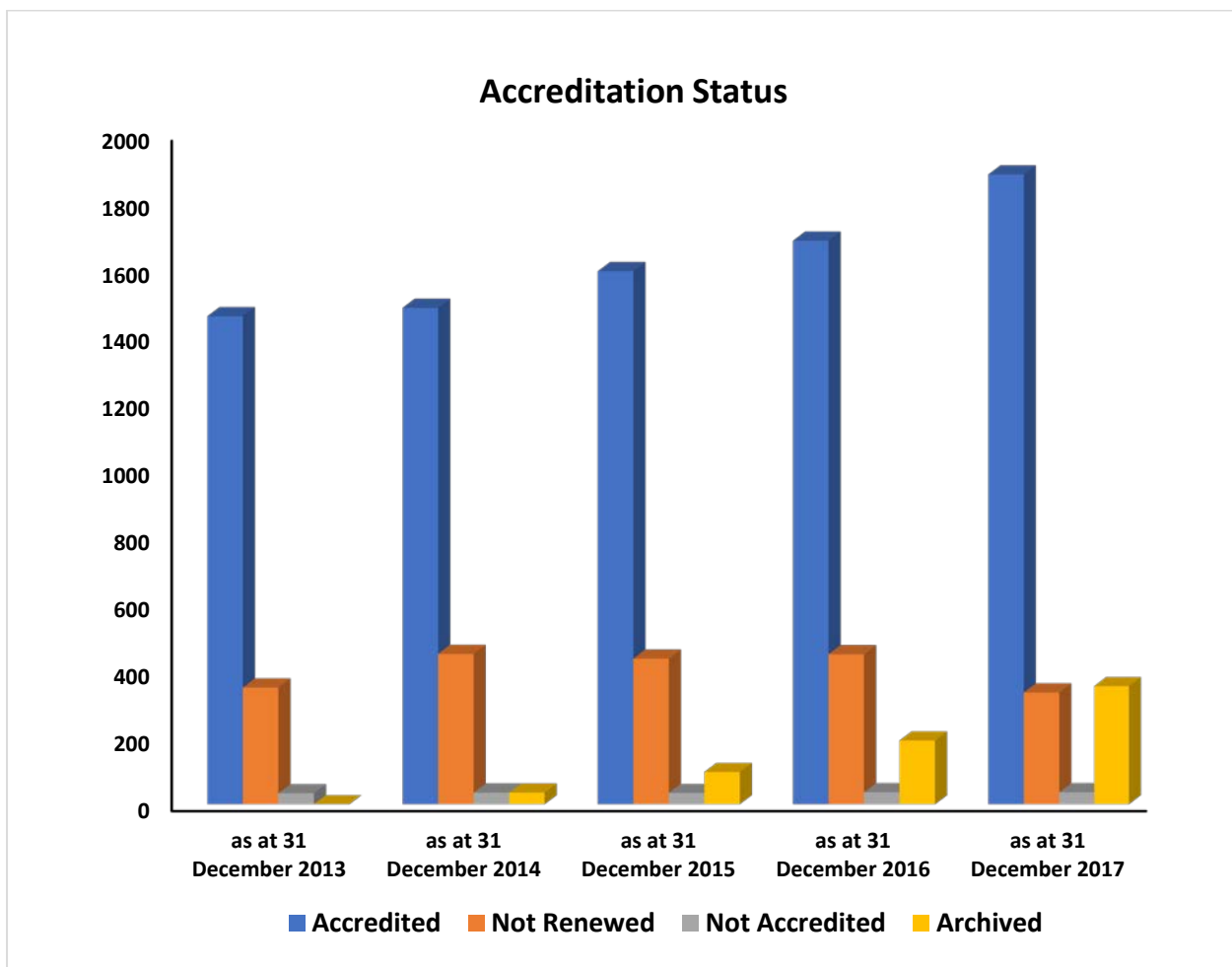
RETENTION RATES IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS

Table 7: Retention rates from 2013 to 2017

| Retention Rate | as at 31 December 2013 | as at 31 December 2014 | as at 31 December 2015 | as at 31 December 2016 | as at 31 December 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| RSWP | 90% | 93% | 86% | 85% | 87% |
| RSW | 81% | 80% | 86% | 86% | 91% |
| RSSP | 76% | 73% | 74% | 76% | 84% |
| Overall | 81% | 80% | 84% | 85% | 89% |

Chart 7: Retention rates from 2013 to 2017

COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK

In 2017, SWAAB received three complaints and one feedback regarding accredited professionals. The first complaint involved inaccuracies and mishandling of case reports by a RSW. The second was about a RSW discussing client's financial information with the client's relative in a public area. The third was a feedback from an employer regarding the dual relationship between its former employee and social work students supervised by the latter when he was with the organisation. The fourth complaint involved a client's allegation that the accredited professionals had not sought his consent to be his social workers.

All the cases were investigated by the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) and appropriate follow up actions were taken. The Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures were reviewed and amended based on the recent experience. A course was also designed, with the help of the Family Resource and Training Centre, to educate social workers on proper social report writing.