



# ANNUAL REPORT 2021

For the year ended 31 December 2021

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Dear Social Workers, Social Service Practitioners, and friends,

The Social Work Accreditation and Advisory Board (SWAAB) works to advance professional standards of practice and to enhance the professional growth and development of social workers in Singapore. This report provides an overview of the accreditation system and other activities undertaken by the Board in the year 2021.

The Board oversees the accreditation framework, a key mechanism for upholding good practice and professional standards. Since the introduction of the accreditation system in April 2009, the Board has accredited 2,273 social workers and social service practitioners as of 31 December 2021. Of which, 80% were Registered Social Workers (RSWs), 15% Registered Social Workers–Provisional (RSWPs) and 5% Registered Social Service Practitioners (RSSPs).

SWAAB approved the Review of Accreditation Framework Workgroup’s recommendations on revised accreditation requirements, Continuing Professional Education (CPE) guidelines and accreditation process. Key recommendations included the introduction of an online ethics quiz for new applicants, fulfilment of 1,000 post-qualification supervised practice hours for accreditation as RSWs, inclusion of new CPE activities, amendments to forms and declarations to enhance clarity of key essential information to facilitate decision making and Short Messaging System (SMS) alerts to practitioners who did not renew their accreditation status. These changes will be implemented in stages along with the accreditation system upgrade which is expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2022.

While COVID-19 restrictions impeded our outreach and psychoeducation efforts to healthcare and social service agencies, three virtual sharing sessions to promote accreditation reached out to more than 146 agencies.

SWAAB organised the 4<sup>th</sup> Social Work Supervision Seminar on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and attracted the participation of more than 400 practitioners. The virtual seminar based on the theme “Riding the Waves and Rethinking Social Work Supervision” included 17 Workshops presentations by both overseas and local speakers. Representatives from different countries including Singapore, Ireland, South Africa, Taiwan and USA, shared the supervision practices in their respective countries and engaged in a panel discussion with the seminar participants on “Rethinking Social Work Supervision”. The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Social Work Supervision Guidelines was also launched during the event. The revised edition incorporated domains of the competency framework of social work supervision. The seminar proceedings can be accessed via the website of the Singapore Association of Social Workers (SASW).

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 appreciate the Chairpersons and members of the various workgroups for stepping forward to share their expertise and the hard work to review and recommend ways to improve social work practice and professional development of our practitioners.

Last but not least, I would like to encourage and 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)

Chairperson

Social Work Accreditation and Advisory Board

# ABOUT SWAAB

The first Social Work Accreditation and Advisory Board (SWAAB), formerly known as the Social Work Accreditation Board (SWAB), was formed on 1 January 2009.

SWAAB oversees the accreditation framework, reviews mechanisms to maintain professional social work practice, provides thought and professional leadership on the development of social work and its professionals in Singapore, and provides consultations and inputs to Government on issues affecting the profession and initiatives targeted at the professionalisation of social workers and social service practitioners.

The accreditation system for social workers and social service practitioners (SSPs) was launched on 1 April 2009. The accreditation framework is owned by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF). Since its inception, the System has been administered by the Accreditation Secretariat of the Singapore Association of Social Workers (SASW).

The accreditation system contributes to the longer-term goal of levelling up the practice standards of social workers and social service practitioners in Singapore. The accreditation system aims to:

- a. ensure professional standards of Social Work practice
- b. promote continuing education and training of social workers and social service practitioners
- c. uphold professional conduct and ethics
- d. improve the professional image of social workers and social service practitioners

SWAAB sets accreditation requirements and provides leadership in the professional development of social workers. Eligible social workers and SSPs can apply for accreditation as RSWPs or RSSPs. The accreditation of RSSPs was introduced for a limited period of three (3) years up till 30 June 2012 to recognise experienced practitioners in the social service sector but who did not have a recognised qualification in Social Work. RSWPs and RSSPs can apply to be converted to RSWs upon achievement of the required supervised practice hours or recognised social work qualifications.

Each approved accreditation application has a validity of two years and may be renewed upon fulfilment of 60 Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credits within the two years period. Please refer to Appendix A for the accreditation requirements for new applications, conversions and renewals.

SWAAB promotes professional standards and good conduct of registered social workers and practitioners. Registered practitioners are issued with certificates of accreditation and expected to exhibit professional conduct at all times and uphold professional standards and the public image of the profession. The Board maintains the register and may reprimand, suspend or remove from the register a registered practitioner found to have breached professional conduct.

This Annual Report documents the activities and highlights of SWAAB and the accreditation system as of 31 December 2021.

# SWAAB MEMBERS AND WORKGROUPS

The chairperson and members of SWAAB are appointed by MSF. For the term from 01 January 2020 to 31 December 2021, the board comprised of the following:

Position	Name	Designation	Organisation
Chairperson	Ms Ang Bee Lian	Director-General of Social Welfare	MSF
Vice-Chairman	Ms Long Chey May	Group Chief Patient Officer	National University Health System
		President (2017 – 2021)	SASW
Member	Ms Elaine Loo	Director, Membership & Strategy Implementation	National Council of Social Service
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	Dr Katijah Dawood	Divisional Director, Family Services	Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities
Member	Mr Lee Seng Meng	Executive Director	SHINE Children & Youth Services
Member	Ms Lilian Mark	Head, Medical Social Work	Institute of Mental Health
Member	Mr Mohd Ali Bin Mahmood	Community Development & Social Work Consultant	BROMOHD – The Practice
Member	Ms Morene Sim	Director	Inlingua School of Languages
Member	Dr Peace Wong	Senior Lecturer, Social Work Department	National University of Singapore
Member	Prof Seng Boon Kheng	Head, Social Work Programme, S R Nathan School of Human Development	Singapore University of Social Sciences
Member	Ms Tan Sze Wee	Executive Director	Rainbow Centre
Member	Dr Vincent Ng	Chief Executive Officer	AMKFSC Community Service Ltd

Various workgroups and committees were formed to focus on specific areas and events to support the overall purpose of SWAAB. The workgroups and their members are as follow:

### Review of Accreditation Framework Workgroup

Position	Name	Designation	Organisation
Chairperson	Ms Julia Lee	Senior Director, Social Work & Programme Development	TOUCH Community Services Ltd
Member	Mr Lee Seng Meng	Executive Director	SHINE Children & Youth Services
Member	Mr Mohd Ali Bin Mahmood	Community Development & Social Work Consultant	BROMOHD – The Practice

### Social Work Supervision Seminar 2021 Organising Committee

Position	Name	Designation	Organisation
Chairperson	Dr Peace Wong	Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Work	National University of Singapore
Member	Ms Yogeswari Munisamy	Senior Principal Social Worker, Child Protective Service	MSF
Member	Ms Firdawati Masri	Assistant Director, Strategic Sector & Capability Building	Social Service Institute, National Council of Social Service
Member	Mr Udhia Kumar	SASW Member	SASW
Member	Ms Hilyah Saparin	Divisional Director (Specialist)	AMKFSC Community Services
Member	Mr Pepsi Zewet	Centre Head, Fei Yue Family Services at SSO @ Taman Jurong	Fei Yue Community Services
Member	Ms Siti Adilah Rahiman	Senior Medical Social Worker	Institute of Mental Health
Member	Ms Geraldine Foo	Senior Medical Social Worker	Singapore General Hospital
Member	Ms Jenny Goh	Deputy Head, Medical Social Service Manager, Principal Medical Social Worker	Yishun Healthcare Khoo Teck Puat Hospital
Member	Ms Norriyanah Binte Omar	Assistant Director (Community Corrections Halfway House/ Home Detention, Intervention)	Singapore Prison Service
Member	Ms Ang Seow Ping	Assistant Director, Correctional Rehabilitation Services Branch (Women), Psychological & Correctional Rehabilitation Division	Singapore Prison Service

### Review of Social Work Supervision Guidelines Workgroup

Position	Name	Designation	Organisation
Chairperson	Dr Peace Wong	Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Work	National University of Singapore
Member	Dr Chung You Jin	Senior Lecturer, Social Work Programme & Practicum, SR Nathan School of Human Development	Singapore University of Social Sciences
Member	Ms Melissa Lim	Principal Social Worker	SHINE Children and Youth Services
Member	Mr Paulus Sutjipto	Senior Social Worker, Office of the Director-General of Social Welfare	MSF
Member	Mr Pepsi Zewet	Centre Head, Fei Yue Family Services at SSO @ Taman Jurong	Fei Yue Community Services
Member	Ms Petrine Lim	Master Student Welfare Officer	Ministry of Education
Member	Mr Terence Tan	Senior Therapist	Counselling and Care Centre

### Review of Supervised Practice Workgroup

Position	Name	Designation	Organisation
Chairperson	Dr Peace Wong	Senior Lecturer, Department of Social Work	National University of Singapore
Member	Ms Bridget Monica Das	Head, Psychosocial Services	Renci Hospital
Member	Ms Julia Lee	Senior Director, Social Work & Programme Development	TOUCH Community Services Ltd
Member	Mr Lee Seng Meng	Executive Director	SHINE Children & Youth Services
Member	Mr Tony Ong	Senior Therapist	Counselling and Care Centre
Member	Ms Yogeswari Munisamy	Senior Principal Social Worker, Child Protective Service	MSF

### Accreditation Secretariat

Name	Designation	Organisation
Ms Theresa Lee	Head, Accreditation & Programme Director	SASW
Ms Low Li Ming	Assistant Head, Accreditation & Programme	SASW
Ms Sharon Song	Senior Executive, Accreditation & Programmes	SASW
Ms Grace Teo	Senior Executive, Programmes and Research	SASW

# ACCREDITATION STATISTICS

## Accreditation Categories

As of 31 December 2021, there were a total of 2,273 accredited social workers and social service practitioners. While the number of RSWPs and RSSPs decreased slightly by 0.6% and 6.6% respectively, the increase of 10.9% in the number of RSWs resulted in an overall increase of 8.3% in the total number of accredited practitioners from 2,084 as of 31 December 2020.

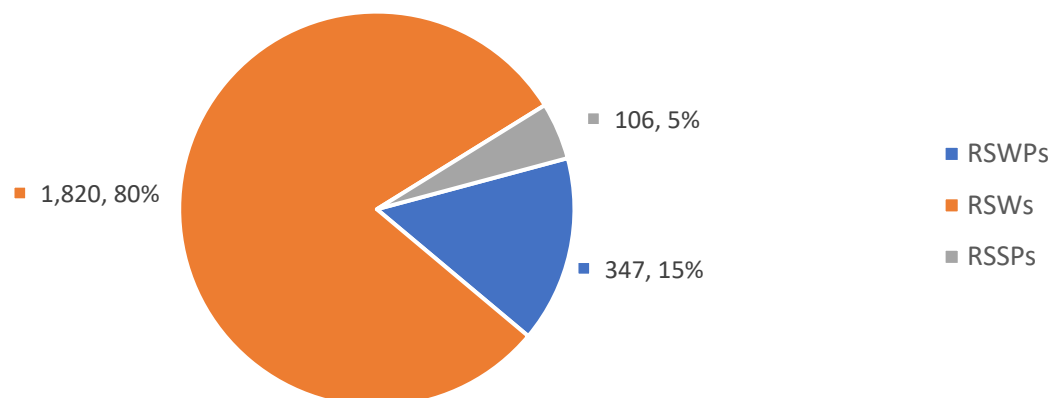
**Table 1: Year-Over- Year Comparison of Number of Accredited Practitioners by Accreditation Categories**

Category	As of 31 December, in		Year-Over-Year Change	
	2020	2021	(No.)	(%)
<b>Registered Social Workers-Provisional (RSWPs)</b> Social workers with less than a year of post qualification full-time practice in a social work position in Singapore, and are employed in a social work position in Singapore at the point of application	349	347	-2	-0.6%
<b>Registered Social Workers (RSWs)</b> Social workers with at least a year of post qualification full-time practice in a social work position in Singapore, 80 hours of in-employment training and 1,000 hours of supervised practice from a qualified supervisor	1,622	1,820	198	10.9%
<b>Registered Social Service Practitioners* (RSSPs)</b> Practitioners who do not have a recognised social work qualification but have many years of relevant social service practice experience.	113	106	-7	-6.6%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,084</b>	<b>2,273</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>8.3%</b>

\*Application for accreditation as Registered Social Service Practitioner no longer accepted from 01 July 2012.

RSWs formed most of the accredited practitioners at 80% while the percentages of RSWPs and RSSPs were 15% and 5% respectively. The number comprised 80% RSWs, 15% RSWPs and 5% RSSPs.

**Chart 1: Number of Accredited Practitioners by Accreditation Categories**





## Sector Distribution

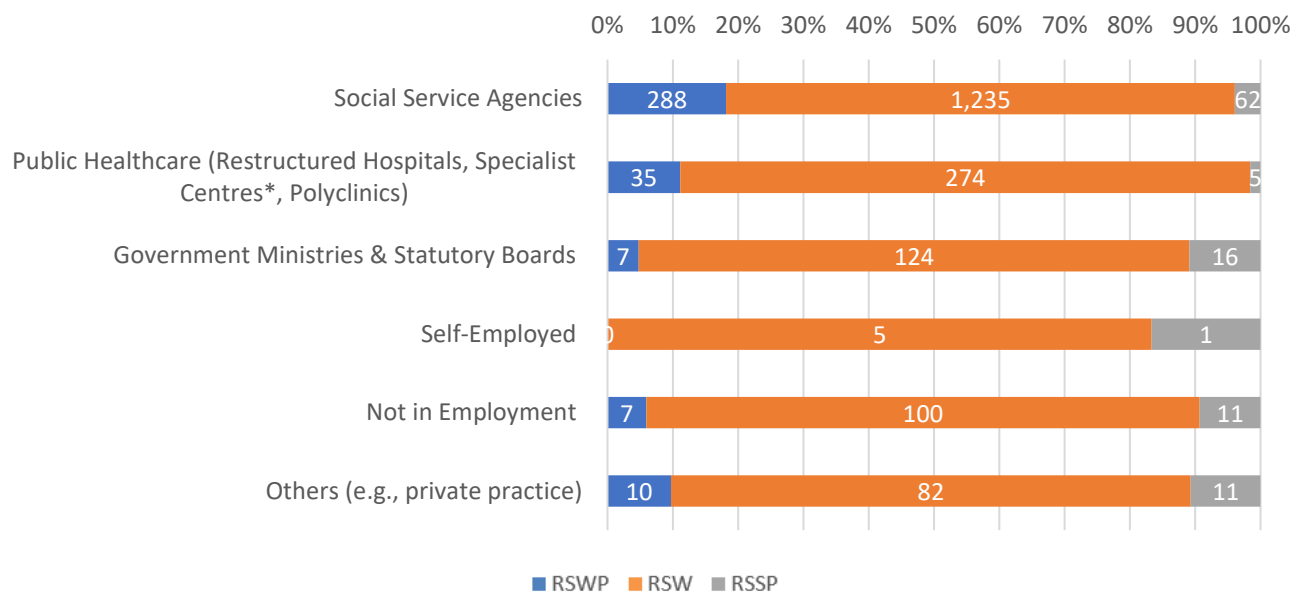
Most of the accredited professionals were employed in social service agencies. The second largest group practiced in the public healthcare sector comprising restructured hospitals, specialist centres and polyclinics. The third largest group practiced in the government ministries and statutory boards.

**Table 2: Number of Accredited Professional by Accreditation Categories and Sectors**

Sectors of Employment	Sector Distribution			Total
	RSWP	RSW	RSSP	
Social Service Agencies	288	1,235	62	1,585
Public Healthcare (e.g., restructured hospitals, polyclinics, specialist centres*)	35	274	5	314
Government Ministries & Statutory Boards	7	124	16	147
Self-Employed	0	5	1	6
Not in Employment	7	100	11	118
Others	10	82	11	103
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>1,820</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>2,273</b>

\*E.g., National Cancer Centre Singapore/ National Heart Centre Singapore/ Singapore National Eye Centre.

**Chart 2: Sector Distribution of Accredited Professionals as of 31 December 2021**



## Country of Social Work Qualifications

90.9% of the RSWs and RSWPs obtained their social work qualifications from local universities. Most of the foreign social work qualifications were obtained from Australia and Hong Kong. 45.7% of those foreign social work qualifications were from Australia while 18.8% were from Hong Kong.

No information is available for RSSPs in this section. RSSPs do not have any social work qualifications and hence this information is not applicable for RSSPs.

**Table 3: Number and Percentage of RSWPs and RSWs by Country of Social Work Qualification**

Country of Social Work Qualification	RSWP		RSW		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Singapore	338	97.4%	1,632	89.7%	1,970	90.9%
Australia	4	1.2%	86	4.7%	90	4.2%
Hong Kong (HK)	1	0.3%	36	2.0%	37	1.7%
United States of America (USA)		0.0%	16	0.9%	16	0.7%
India		0.0%	13	0.7%	13	0.6%
Philippines		0.0%	12	0.7%	12	0.6%
Malaysia	3	0.9%	9	0.5%	12	0.6%
Taiwan		0.0%	8	0.4%	8	0.4%
United Kingdom (UK)	1	0.3%	4	0.2%	5	0.2%
Ukraine		0.0%	1	0.1%	1	0.0%
China		0.0%	2	0.1%	2	0.1%
Canada		0.0%	1	0.1%	1	0.0%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,820</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>2,167</b>	<b>1</b>

## Demographic Profile of Accredited Professionals

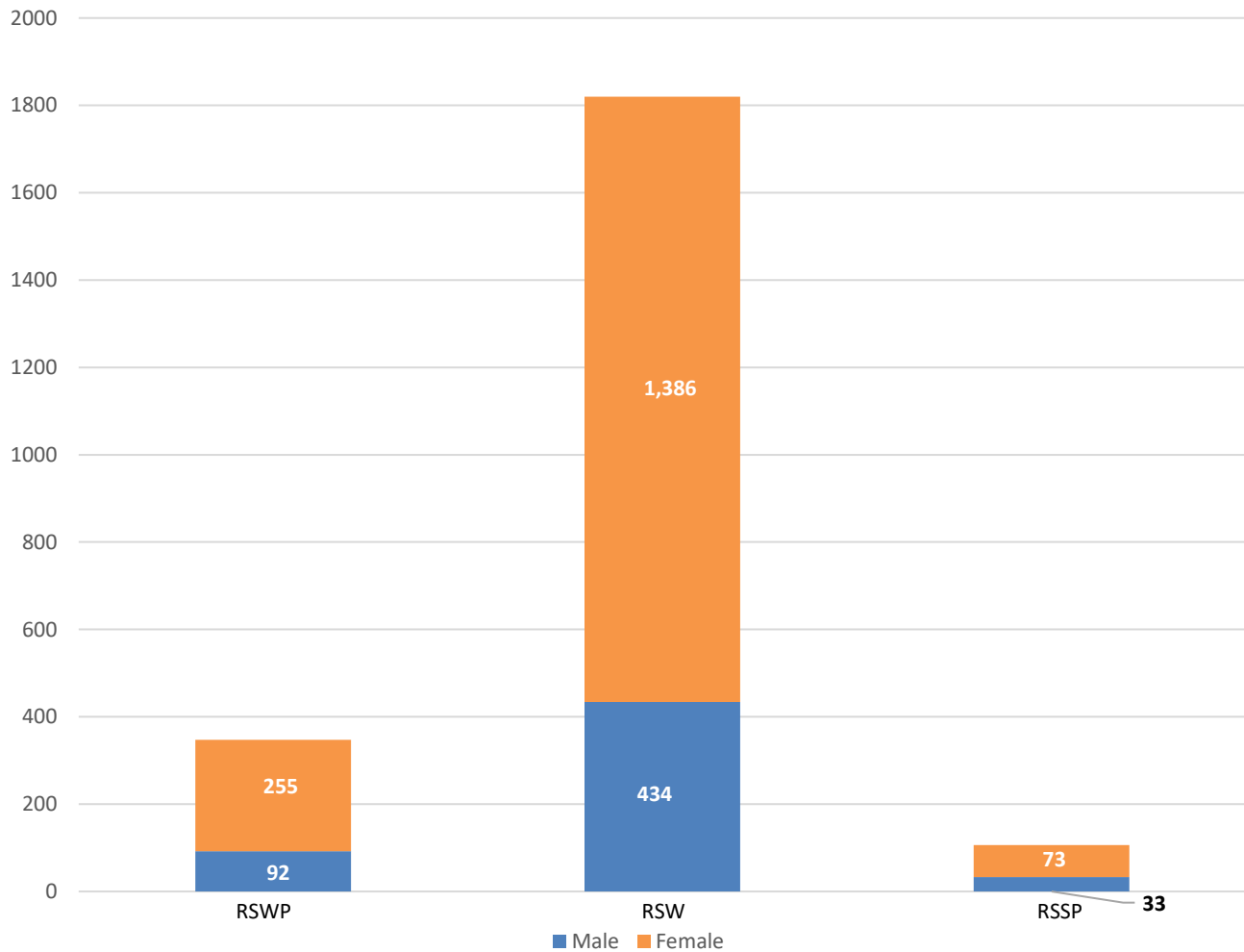
### i. By Sex

Across the different accreditations categories, there were more females than males in 2021 as per previous years. In 2021, there were 75.4% female accredited professionals and 24.6% male accredited professionals.

**Table 4a: Number and Percentage of Accredited Professionals by Sex and Accreditation Categories**

Demographic Profile Sex	RSWP		RSW		RSSP		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	92	26.5%	434	23.8%	33	31.1%	559	24.6%
Female	255	73.5%	1,386	76.2%	73	68.9%	1,714	75.4%

**Chart 3a: No. of Accredited Professionals by Sex and Accreditation Categories**



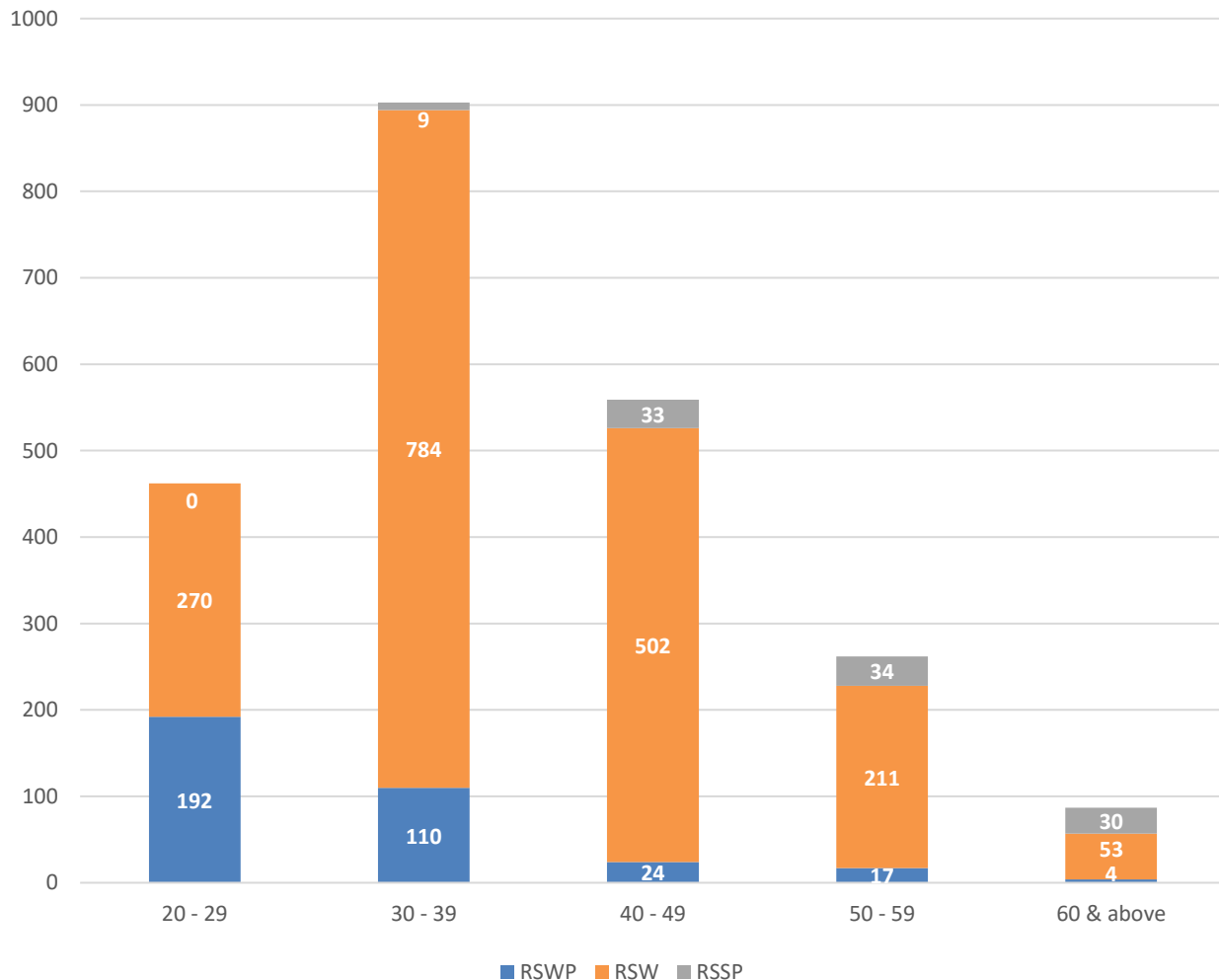
## ii. By Age Groups

RSWPs tend to belong to the younger age groups. 55.3% of RSWPs are in their twenties while 70.7% of RSWs are in their thirties and forties and 91.5% of RSSPs are aged forty and above.

**Table 4b: Number and Percentage of Accredited Professionals by Age Group and Accreditation Categories**

Demographic Profile Age	RSWP		RSW		RSSP		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
20 - 29	192	55.3%	270	14.8%	0	0.0%	462	20.3%
30 - 39	110	31.7%	784	43.1%	9	8.5%	903	39.7%
40 - 49	24	6.9%	502	27.6%	33	31.1%	559	24.6%
50 - 59	17	4.9%	211	11.6%	34	32.1%	262	11.5%
60 & above	4	1.2%	53	2.9%	30	28.3%	87	3.8%

**Chart 3b: No. of Accredited Professionals by Age Group and Accreditation Categories**



### iii. By Citizenship

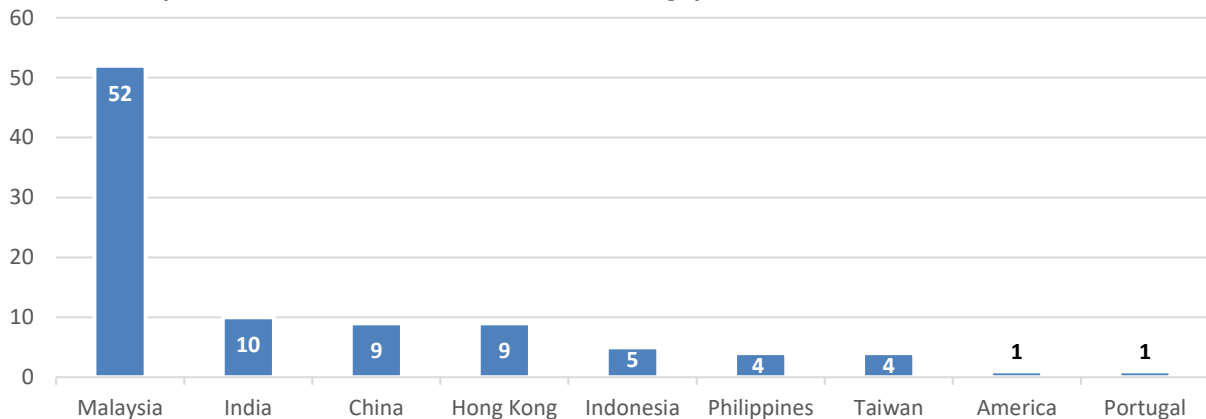
In 2021, 94.3% of the accredited professionals were Singapore Citizens, 4.2% were Singapore Permanent Residents and 1.5% were foreigners.

**Table 4c: Number and Percentage of Accredited Professionals by Citizenship and Accreditation Categories**

Demographic Profile	RSWP		RSW		RSSP		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Singapore Citizen	331	95.4%	1,716	94.3%	96	90.6%	2,143	94.3%
Singapore PR	13	3.7%	73	4.0%	10	9.4%	96	4.2%
Foreign Citizen	3	0.9%	31	1.7%	0	0.0%	34	1.5%

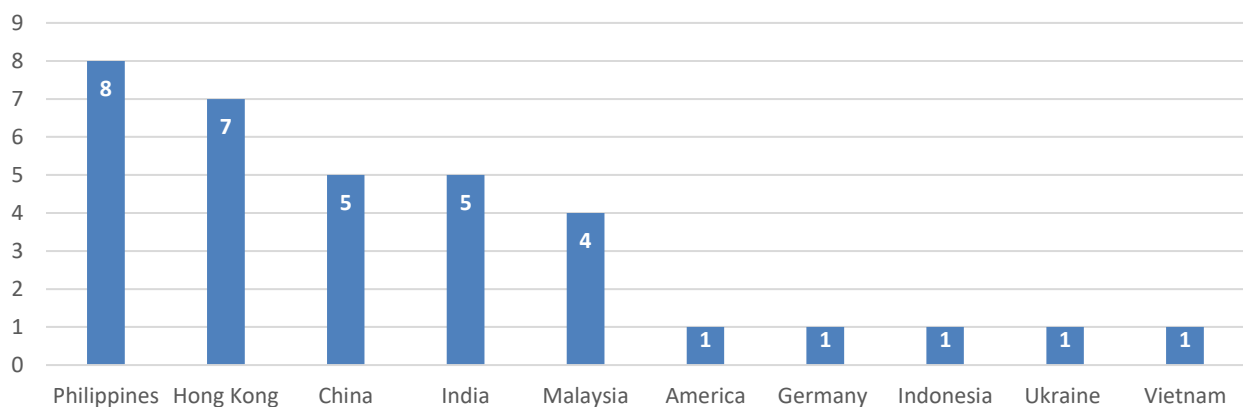
54.7% of accredited professionals who are Singapore Permanent Residents were from Malaysia. The other top 5 countries include India, China, Hong Kong and Indonesia.

**Chart 3c: Citizenship of Accredited Professionals who are Singapore Permanent Residents**



85.3% of accredited professionals of foreign citizenships were from Philippines, Hong Kong, China, India and Malaysia.

**Chart 3d: Citizenship of Accredited Professionals who are of Foreign Citizenship**



## Accreditation Status in the Past Five Years

The number of accredited professionals has been increasing over the past 5 years. In 2021, the increase of 189 accredited professionals was the largest increase from 2017 to 2021.

The number of non-renewals (i.e., accredited professionals who did not renew their accreditation but remain within the grace period of 3 years for renewal) decreased from 696 in 2020 to 596 in 2021. The decrease reversed the trend of increasing non-renewals from 2017 to 2020.

The number of archived members (i.e., members who did not renew their accreditation status within the grace period of 3 years) continued to increase. 2021's Year-On-Year increase of 201 members was the highest from 2017 to 2021.

Key reasons indicated for not renewing accreditation status included retirement, resignations, and re-location to another country.

**Table 5: Accreditation Status from 2017 to 2021**

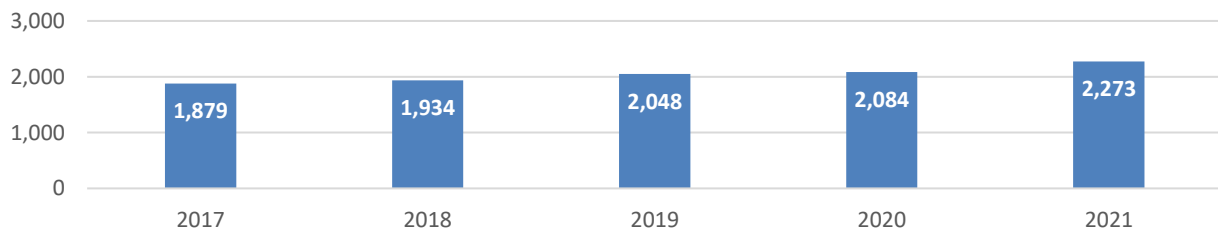
Status	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
Accredited	1,879	1,934	2,048	2,084	2,273	2,044
Not Renewed*	336	454	506	696	596	518
Archived**	355	419	525	560	761	524
Not Accredited	36	36	38	38	37	37

Note: Figures are as of 31 December of each year.

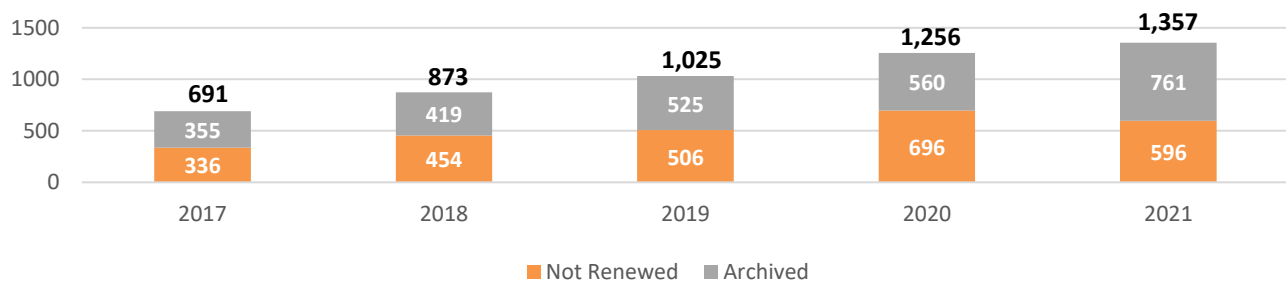
\*These are members who have yet to renew their accreditation within the grace period of 3 years.

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

**Chart 4a: No. of Accredited Professionals from 2017 to 2021**



**Chart 4b: No. of Members Whose Accreditation Status were Not Renewed or Archived from 2017 to 2021**



## Retention Rates in the Past Five Years

In 2021, the overall retention rate of accredited professionals was 81%. This was an increase from 77% in 2020 but remains below the five-year average of 84% from 2017 to 2022. The retention rate of RSSP at 79% is the highest among the different accreditation categories.

**Table 6: Retention Rates of Accredited Professionals from 2017 to 2021**

Accreditation Category	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Average
RSWP	87%	89%	85%	73%	73%	81%
RSW	91%	87%	85%	80%	82%	85%
RSSP	84%	72%	73%	68%	79%	75%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>84%</b>

## FEEDBACK RECEIVED

In 2021, Accreditation Secretariat received and handled two cases of feedback on concerns related to practice matters. The number was lower, compared to 4 cases of feedback received in the year 2020. The two cases received in 2021 were referred to the Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) which investigated and assessed that the practice demonstrated in both cases to be appropriate in managing the situation.