



PEOPLE'S ACTION PARTY

# TAKE ACTION FOR WOMEN IN SINGAPORE

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PAP WOMEN'S WING & YOUNG PAP  
JOINT PAPER ON WOMEN'S  
DEVELOPMENT

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# INTRODUCTION

The PAP has been a champion for women since the start of the Party. In Government, it has consistently pursued policies that have enabled women to make great progress in health, education and workforce participation. In 1989, PAP became the first political party in Singapore to launch a Women's Wing. Since then, successive generations of women activists and MPs have also worked to shape policy, behind the scenes and in Parliament. We have presented position papers to provide recommendations to the Government that advance the cause of women's development. Many of these have been translated into policies and programmes<sup>1</sup>.

We welcome the Government's recent call for a holistic review of issues relating to women and the 'Conversations on Women's Development' to seek the views of the society. The Women's Wing (WW) and Young PAP (YP) are jointly presenting a paper for the Government's consideration. This first joint submission reflects our shared sense of enthusiasm and commitment to help women succeed in all aspects of life in Singapore.

The joint WW-YP team reached out to people of different age groups and backgrounds. Four dialogue sessions were organised in total, attracting active participation by women and men. At each session, participants raised issues facing women in schools, workplaces and at home. Surveys were conducted to understand the community's sentiments. Sessions with our activists and fellow MPs enabled a deep dive on some of the recommendations. We received valuable inputs from more than 1,500 people from all walks of life.

We have identified three key areas:

- Enabling more choices for women at home, at work and in the community
- Promoting more equal sharing between men and women of the caregiving responsibilities for our children and elders
- Rallying the whole of society to change mindsets and advance women's developments, recognising that men can also help remove barriers

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to Annex 1 for write up on Women's Wing position papers.

# ENABLE MORE CHOICES FOR WOMEN

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Much progress has been made since the Women's Charter was enacted in 1961. Nevertheless, women in Singapore continue to face challenges at home, at work and in the community. Although a higher proportion of women now complete tertiary education in polytechnics and universities, women are under-represented in C-Suite positions; as well as in emerging & growth sectors such as finance and technology. Within families, women are more likely to carry heavier responsibilities for caregiving and have to struggle with career trade-offs. Some exit the workforce temporarily to take care of their children and will face barriers when returning to work. What more can we do to build a fairer ecosystem with more choices for women to pursue their aspirations?

## Recommendation 1: Scale-up a nationwide movement to help women enter, and progress in, growth sectors

### Context

There is a disparity between what men earn as compared to what women earn – a gender pay gap. In reviewing the data to understand the disparity, we note there is still a higher share of women in the lower income bands compared to men.

### Distribution of Full-Time Employed Male/Female Residents by Gross Monthly Income from Work (Excluding Employer CPF Contributions), 2010 and 2020 (June)



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

Note: Data exclude full-time National Servicemen.

To be able to close this gap, we need to see more women in emerging and growth sectors (STEM-related fields such as information & communication technology, advanced manufacturing, healthcare and biomedical sciences) so they can capitalise on the economic benefits and reap the financial gains. Women, are however, under-represented in certain emerging sectors. They make up a lower share of employed residents in STEM occupations such as science & engineering professionals, information & communications technology professionals, physical & engineering science associate professionals and information & communication technicians<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Comprehensive Labour Force Survey Reports for 2010 & 2020, MOM.

While we see an encouraging development in the number of young women pursuing diplomas and degrees in STEM fields<sup>3</sup>, we still see an attrition in the numbers that eventually pursue a career in these industries<sup>4</sup>.

There is also a need to develop more women leaders in these fields<sup>5</sup>. One of the biggest challenges that businesses face today is the competition for talent. By not tapping adequately on well-educated and capable women, these businesses are losing out on an important and valuable talent pool. A BCG Study, *Boosting Women in Technology in Southeast Asia*, has shown that companies where women account for more than 20% of the leadership/management team have approximately 10% higher innovation revenues than companies with a male dominant leadership/management team. The study highlights that gender diversity helps to address the issue of a shortage of talent in the STEM sector and helps companies increase innovation and agility.

We do not expect all young women to pursue or even be interested in the emerging sectors, but it is important to ensure that they are given exposure and opportunities in different fields, and are not limited by stereotypes of the types of jobs women are expected to pursue or face challenges in male-dominated industries. One key growth sector is digital technology. We will see digital transformation in all sectors, and we need to prepare everyone for this change. We should encourage more young women into this sector.

Singapore has done well in addressing this area by providing education opportunities to both boys and girls. Targeted intervention is required to accelerate further progress.

### Details of recommendation

We should study the reasons that lead to the lack of women in certain sectors and address these. Certain stereotypes may still exist, leading to women or young girls choosing certain career options. There may also be a lack of support at the workplace or a conducive corporate culture to bring more women into the sectors.

We propose to **leverage on existing national movements and efforts like the SG Women in Tech movement to encourage young women and create more awareness about STEM (especially the technology sector) as a career** for women. We should strengthen our efforts so that **more extensive and structured programmes** can be carried out for girls and young women at different age groups and from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Young girls should be exposed to **more female role models** who would inspire them to pursue technology-related or STEM subjects in school. For the older students and those who are in IHLs, we should connect them with **mentors who can guide them** to navigate different industries and pursue a career in the emerging sectors. There should be **career mentors for the young women** who choose to enter these fields as well as **collaboration with**

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<sup>3</sup> The Straits Times [16 February 2021], More Women Pursuing Degrees in Stem Fields

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/more-women-pursuing-degrees-in-stem-fields>

As per the article, there has been an increase in women from 38 percent in 2017 to 41 percent in 2019 based on combined university intake information.

<sup>4</sup> The Straits Times [7 March 2021], Only 58% of women with Stem qualifications work in related jobs compared with 70% men: Study

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/parenting-education/only-58-of-women-with-stem-qualifications-work-in-related-jobs>

<sup>5</sup> BCG, IMDA, SG Women in Tech [October 2020] - Boosting Women in Technology in Southeast Asia

<https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/boosting-women-in-southeast-asia-tech-sector>

**organisations within this community which have good women leadership onboarding and pipeline development programmes** in place. There have been several organisations and companies which have conducted meaningful programmes to encourage female youth towards STEM-related degrees and careers. We should encourage other organisations to launch similar programmes. Organisations are missing out on a talent base if they do not effectively tap on the pool of educated and talented women. We should **encourage businesses to develop effective strategies to compete for the talent base**.

## **Recommendation 2: Introduce legislation to regulate merit-based employment and penalise discriminatory conduct, to achieve more diverse and inclusive workplaces**

### **Context**

It is imperative to build a more robust, productive workforce for Singapore to sustain economic and social success in the future for both men and women. Much has been done and significant growth seen in education, career, and leadership development for women, through our education system and through initiatives such as the Council of Board Diversity. What women want is to be treated fairly at the workplace. On many occasions, although there may not be outright discrimination, women feel they may have been passed over, for opportunities or promotions, or given a lower grade in their appraisal; and perceived to be doing less because of competing caregiving responsibilities.

We believe it is critical to enshrine in law the basic expectation of merit-based employment practices, and to ensure that employers are appropriately held accountable for discriminatory hiring practices. Such legislation will apply equally to men, but provide assurance to women that they are assessed fairly and not assumed to be less able to perform because they are married and/or have children. There is also a need for more employers to recognise the value of having women in their workforce, as diversity strengthens the organisation<sup>6</sup>.

### **Details of recommendation**

In Singapore, the **Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices** require employers to treat all jobseekers and employees based on merit. Employers who discriminate against women can have their work pass privileges curtailed. For wrongful dismissals, the Employment Act provides redress at the Employment Claims Tribunals. The Employment Act also has specific provisions to protect a pregnant employee or one on maternity leave.<sup>7</sup> These frameworks provide some protection of women against discrimination.

To achieve greater parity between men and women at the workplace, we need to reduce workplace discrimination, as it discourages women and deprives them of career opportunities. To this end, three specific recommendations are proposed:

- 1) **Legislate the Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices** for stronger enforcement of fair employment practices across all workplaces.

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<sup>6</sup> BCG [30 April 2020], The Diversity Dividend in Southeast Asia  
<https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/diversity-dividend-in-southeast-asia>

<sup>7</sup> It is an offence to not pay a pregnant employee her due maternity benefits if she is dismissed without just cause or excuse. There are also specific provisions under the EA and Child Development Co-Savings Act (CDCA) requiring employers to provide maternity benefits and leave, and other caregiving-related leave such as childcare, adoption, and parental leave. Contravention of these provisions is an offence, and claims for the employer to pay according to the provisions can also be filed at the Employment Claims Tribunal.

- 2) **Provide protection from reprisal for reporting or whistleblowing of workplace discrimination.** This will allow employees to feel safe to provide information on discrimination at the workplace.
- 3) **Provide more training and facilitation** that can be implemented to edify employers about the value of having a diverse team which includes women, and provide information on how to create fair workplace practices, where both women and men can thrive. Discussions with the employers could cover the following areas:
  - i) Capability building (e.g. cross sector mentorship, sponsorship, and tailor made skills enhancement programmes) to identify and bridge capability gaps between men and women beyond just gender-based metrics at the leadership level.
  - ii) Create structured workplace systems to promote inclusion such as fair assessment for employees who choose to have flexible work arrangements.
  - iii) Promote local organisations which show good examples of promoting a diverse and inclusive work environment.
  - iv) Active engagement with companies on their challenges in building a diverse and inclusive work environment, providing resources to help address these.

### **Recommendation 3: Partner organisations and employers to develop holistic support packages and support networks for women to re-enter the workforce and rebuild their careers**

#### **Context**

Women face challenges when they take a career break to perform their caregiving duties and then want to go back into the workforce. They struggle to maintain a consistent employment cycle without seeing the responsibilities such as caregiving and building families as trade-offs. We see significant gaps where female labour participation rates steadily decrease from 88.3% between the ages of 30 – 34 to 71.3% between the ages of 50 – 54. In comparison, the male labour force participation rate remained steady at 96.8% and 93.9% respectively<sup>8</sup>.

There are existing programmes and packages to support individuals who are transiting into a new career and wish try out new sectors e.g. like Professional Conversion Programmes, career coaching, Career Trials, SkillsFuture programmes. Organisations like Mums-At-Work and Daughters of Tomorrow work closely with women who are keen to go back to work after taking some time to focus on taking care of their children or family members.

However, women who leave the workforce to provide family care-giving continue to face difficulties getting back to work<sup>9</sup>. Women who held blue collar jobs have little access to flexible arrangements that allow them to care for their family. Women who were PMETs find that their career options and opportunities are especially limited. There are other significant challenges to rebuild their careers. The unfamiliarity and fear of the fast-changing work environment and lack of awareness of existing resources may be hurdles that prevent women from taking the

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<sup>8</sup> Department of Statistics Singapore, Resident Labour Force Participation Rate, 2020

<sup>9</sup> CNA [Updated 27 April 2021] Commentary: 'Super mums' have one simple request. Don't hinder them from returning to work. <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/commentary/working-mothers-return-to-work-flexible-work-arrangements-family-10625336>



step back into the workforce. Further, they may still have concerns of pursuing a career alongside their caregiving responsibilities. Some women, like single mothers, may face additional challenges to put their housing and childcare arrangements in order before they are able to return to work or focus on their careers.

### **Details of recommendation**

The Government should **partner organisations** like Mums-At-Work, Daughters of Tomorrow, NTUC-Women & Family Division and Mendaki Sense, and **develop a support package to channel women to the schemes available for refresher or reskilling courses, and provide guidance in navigating the current work environment in different sectors.** Some focus and attention should be given to **help women obtain suitable work opportunities and get back on track with their careers.** We should also ensure that such programmes are available within the community through the grassroots network. For example, the Career Options and Opportunities Job Fair which was organised in Punggol<sup>10</sup>, was a platform where resources were consolidated and women were given an avenue to be matched with progressive employers. The Government should **work with employers and provide them with resources and incentives to create “returnship” programmes that could help women regain their confidence and familiarise themselves with current work culture.**

Government should **support partner organisations in creating a more permanent platform or support network** where more women who are considering going back into employment could have **quick access to the information and support** they need, be **plugged into a community support network to stay connected with the industry** they were in, and be **assisted in their transition back into the workforce.**

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<sup>10</sup> The Straits Times [27 March 2021] Women-focused career fair offers over 200 jobs <https://str.sg/J9yX>

# PROMOTE MORE EQUAL SHARING OF CAREGIVING RESPONSIBILITIES & ENHANCE SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS

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To ensure that women have the option to build their careers and pursue their aspirations, we need to also support them in their caregiving roles. We should recognise that social norms exert pressure on women to be the main caregivers in households. Some in the community may also not be as accepting of fathers who step up and choose to be a more active parent. Traditional stereotypes of gender roles ought to be challenged. In caring for the young, how can we continue to nudge more equal sharing of caregiving responsibilities between fathers and mothers? Families also face challenges in caring for their elderly. Many elderly want to age in place and be taken care of at home. Some of them are cared for by their family members (usually the women in the family) and some may opt to get more professional help. In any case, caregiving can be physically, emotionally and financially draining. What can we do to provide better support to caregivers?

## **Recommendation 4: Give parents full flexibility to decide how to share maternity and paternity leave**

### **Context**

Both fathers and mothers should equally share the responsibility of caring for their children. Families may decide that each parent play different roles but we should encourage both parents to take part in the day-to-day tasks and share the load of chores and caregiving duties. We see a lot more fathers now playing a very active role in caregiving. We need to build on this and create a culture within the community where caring for children is gender-neutral. If fathers are given the opportunity and time to be with their children, especially when they are young, this will help dissipate the traditional gender role stereotypes. We should start this habit early, at the point when the child is born, and encourage both parents to fully participate in the experience of caring for their newborn.

Some have suggested more paternity leave so that fathers can spend more time with their babies when they are born. However there is a low take-up rate of the current paid paternity leave that has already been offered<sup>11</sup>. This points to a certain culture or expectation in our society. Some fathers have shared that people at their workplace may not appreciate why fathers need such a long break when the baby is born. Some may still feel that the role of caring for the young infant is best played by only the mother and the father does not have significant duties at this juncture. We need to shift this mindset and allow for a better sharing of roles. Currently, a working father can share up to 4 weeks of his wife's 16-week maternity leave if the wife agrees.

In reviewing this issue, we note that over the years, there have been significant improvements in the Government-paid leave provisions. The duration of maternity leave has been extended significantly and paid paternity leave has also been increased. This is significant as compared to countries like the US, where there are no provisions for paid maternity or paternity leave<sup>12</sup>. In Singapore, we also have Government-paid childcare leave. We also note that the Government takes a calibrated approach and also considers the needs and challenges of employers in rolling out various measures. Therefore, while we should work towards an expansion of the Government-paid leave provisions, we should consider the challenge it would impose on employers and move progressively to achieve the desired outcome.

### **Details of recommendation**

It would be ideal for more Government-paid leave to be given to both mothers and fathers. Pregnancy and childbirth can be physically and emotionally exhausting. A mother who has just delivered needs time to recuperate and adjust her routines with the baby. A father also should be given time to be with the child and be actively involved. However, we note that the current pandemic situation has been challenging for businesses and employers. To impose further requirements of employers now may not be the wisest move. Nevertheless, we need to continue with efforts to nudge fathers to play a more significant role.

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<sup>11</sup> The Straits Times [7 August 2019] – 6 in 10 dads did not take paternity leave last year, says MSF  
<https://www.straitstimes.com/politics/parliament-6-in-10-dads-did-not-take-paternity-leave-last-year>

<sup>12</sup> The New York Times [19 February 2020] Why Dads Don't Take Parental Leave  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/19/parenting/why-dads-dont-take-parental-leave.html?smid=url-share>

One way to do this is to **give full flexibility of sharing of parental leave between mothers and fathers**. The Government should **lift the limitation on the number of days of maternity leave parents can convert to parental leave**. We recognise that the limitation is put in place to acknowledge the fact that the mother should be entitled to have a sufficiently long recovery period. However, such flexibility gives a choice to the woman and full flexibility to a couple to decide, whether the father or mother takes on the caregiving role of the young child. This signals that both parents are in a position to share the caregiving role equally.

Further, as part of the engagement with employers on work-life harmony, we should also continue **to encourage employers to allow fathers to take leave or time-off** to perform their caregiving roles. These efforts could further nudge fathers to play a bigger role in caring for their children. Eventually, we should **work towards an expansion of the Government-paid leave provisions** to support parents in performing their caregiving duties.

### **Recommendation 5: Increase financial support to caregivers of seniors to help relieve financial strain and out-of-pocket expenses**

#### **Context**

Both men and women can be caregivers of seniors, and the Government's support for caregivers is not specific to any gender. Nevertheless, in many circumstances, women tend to carry a disproportionate share of the caregiving role. Many women have sacrificed careers, and often also their own well-being and future, to care for their family members. There is no remuneration given for this informal caregiving. This issue of unpaid work has been a source of concern as the women involved often do not have earnings or savings (in CPF accounts or in their own accounts) and they lose out in the long run. It may be challenging to fully address this issue but some support could be given to help with their financial needs.

Caregivers also bear a financial strain in caring for their family members<sup>13</sup>. Subsidies for medical costs and long-term care help to alleviate some of the expenses, however, there are often significant out-of-pocket expenses that the caregivers have to pay for. The Home Caregiving Grant has been very helpful with these expenses as it allows for some flexibility of use by the families. However, many feel that the quantum may be insufficient to help support the needs of some families.

#### **Details of recommendation**

We would like to propose that the **existing criteria for the Home Caregiving Grant be reviewed and the quantum be increased**. There are significant expenses that caregivers need to incur and more support will help to alleviate the financial burden faced by the family. The average out-of-pocket expenses should be assessed and the grant pegged to this quantum. Some families in the middle-income group may not qualify under the current Grant rules and would benefit from the support provided.

In addition, we propose **creating a Matched Retirement Savings Scheme for designated caregivers of seniors who are eligible for the Home Caregiving Grant**. This would encourage families to commit allowances and monies to the CPF account of the family member who would undertake the full-time care of the patient. The Government could match this amount, guaranteeing some form of retirement adequacy for these caregivers. This arrangement should not discriminate between male or female caregivers, but as there are

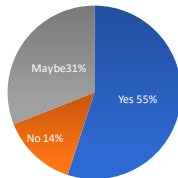
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<sup>13</sup> Refer to PAP WW- NTUC WAF Senior Caregiving Preparedness Survey Results - The results from the survey show that 77% of respondents are unsure if they can afford the financial strain of caregiving.

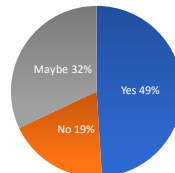
currently many more women who end up being the informal caregiver, they would benefit more from this and would be recognised for their contribution towards the family.

## Results from Senior Caregiving Preparedness Survey

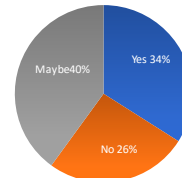
- I can make time to escort elderly family member for medical appointments



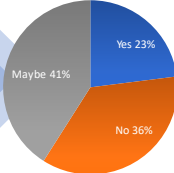
- I know what to do when an emergency involving an elderly family member arises



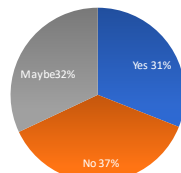
- I know how to take care of emotional needs of elderly family member



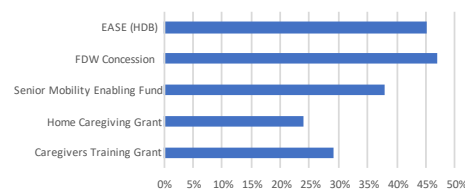
- I can afford caregiving expenses



- I know where to get help from for elderly caregiving



- Awareness of caregiving financial assistance



Senior Caregiving Preparedness Survey conducted by PAP Women's Wing and NTUC Women & Family Unit

### Recommendation 6: Organise voluntary respite services for caregivers and raise the awareness of support programmes

#### Context

There is a need to give meaningful respite to caregivers, especially those that suffer from caregiver burnout. Respite care for caregivers is often perceived as the most important and common form of support to alleviate the caregiving burden and stress. Respite care can provide caregivers a break from normal caring duties for a short period or over an extended period, so that they too can enjoy a healthier mental state and not feel burdened by their duties. There is still a lack of awareness of the existing support programmes for caregivers<sup>14</sup>. Caregivers should also be made aware of the support programmes that are available to them and be able to easily access the necessary information.

#### Details of recommendation

We should **set up a volunteer caregiver programme where volunteers can provide short-term or ad-hoc respite care for the elderly**. An application could be set up to **match trained volunteers within a particular neighbourhood with caregivers** who need the services (e.g. those who require short-term help of less than 4 hours a week). A **basic training and screening programme** could be set up before volunteers are put in a list, to ensure that they are equipped with the necessary skills. Reviews from users, **awards and recognition** would help to ensure that the volunteers are valued for their time.

<sup>14</sup> Refer to PAP WW-NTUC WAF Senior Caregiving Preparedness Survey Results – The results from the survey show only 31% of respondents know where to get help from elderly caregiving.

Additionally, we could create more awareness of the support programmes for caregivers by having **a one-stop platform for caregivers to access support**. While we work on improving the framework of support available to caregivers, there is plenty that caregivers could avail themselves of in the meantime. AIC has been providing support on this front and it may be apt for **AIC to conduct a more enhanced outreach to create more awareness and improve accessibility to services**.

## **Recommendation 7: Enhance options for long-term home-based care for the elderly**

### **Context**

In the short to medium term, we may need to look at more immediate solutions to address concerns, like the volunteer caregiver programme above. However, for a more sustainable and long-term solution, we should look at creating a sector of caregivers. There is a demand for trained and suitable caregivers who can take care of seniors at home. Currently, many families rely on helpers or family members. We should widen the options available for these families.

Many caregivers (mostly women) spend a significant part of their life caring for their loved ones. When their loved ones pass on, these individuals end up feeling lost and may not be able to find a meaningful career as much of their experience had only been in caregiving. There is an opportunity to create career options for these women.

### **Details of recommendation**

We propose **nurturing an ecosystem of trained caregivers**. This would entail amongst other things, **improving and upskilling the current labour pool which provides caregiving, training more of our people to be equipped for long-term home care work and creating new certification and regulation frameworks**. This would in turn create new opportunities for employment, and for both fixed and freelance employment. We should develop a skills development framework, or even introduce a Progressive Wage Model framework, so that those who join the industry as medical escorts and care companions, for example, are trained and well-equipped for long term care. As this home care model is community-based, we should be mindful to avoid onerous regulation and compliance burdens that would deter participants.

# CHANGING MINDSETS TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

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There is a need to rally the community in our effort to achieve fairness and equal respect between genders. It is important to change mindsets and we need everyone to play their part. Educators, parents and families need to review some of the existing norms that are impeding our progress and causing issues within the community. Both women and men have a role to play in building a progressive community. What are some specific areas that we could review to change current perceptions and norms so that we can better shape our values as a community and advance women's development in society?

## **Recommendation 8: Regularly update the sexual education curriculum to keep up with evolving norms, with a specific focus on the curriculum for secondary school students**

### **Context**

In our conversations, many observed that the transgressions that we see happening against women are a result of a lack of respect for women. There is now more access to hypersexualised content, especially in the media and on online platforms; constant exposure to such content has normalised the degradation of women and girls. Our young ones spend a significant amount of time online, so the evolving trends and norms in that space can be disconcerting and impact them offline. We see an increasing risk of encounters with sexual predators online as well of incidents of sexual harassment. In an increasingly complicated world, our children may struggle to discern what is appropriate behaviour and how to protect themselves.

We can change mindsets and correct the negative narratives or perception about women through sexual education. Sex is seen as a taboo topic but if we do not address the issue properly, our young ones are going to learn from other sources without the necessary guidance and values. It is important to go upstream and guide our young ones early. Some we spoke to propose a review of the sexual education curriculum to change mindsets about how boys and men view women, how women view themselves and also how boys and girls can manage boundaries. Based on their own experiences which may have been some years ago, the sexual education that they have gone through had not addressed the needs and curiosity of youth.

We note that over the years, the Ministry of Education have developed and improved upon the sexuality education curriculum in schools<sup>15</sup>. The curriculum is organised around themes of human development, interpersonal relationships, sexual health, sexual behaviour as well as culture, society and the law. The curriculum teaches values like respect and consent and goes through various scenarios with the students. There is also a tiered and curated approach for students of different ages. These are good developments. However trends, especially online, evolve quickly and we need to be current. Students who are in secondary schools should also be given some attention as they are going through puberty and may be most vulnerable to hypersexualised content. Educators, parents, religious leaders and many others in the community can play a role in teaching the correct values to our young ones.

### **Details of recommendation**

We propose a **timely and regular update of the sexual education curriculum** to continue to extol values like respect and consent as well as create an awareness of current issues, norms and appropriate responses to the same. It is important to start sexual education early to build on children's maturity and understanding. However, it is also important to give a **special focus to students in secondary schools as they navigate puberty**, which is a period in their lives where they are exploring various issues and developments (physically and emotionally) and may be the most vulnerable. Schools should look to **curate an appropriate curriculum that would address their needs** and **consider involving partners** like youth groups who can provide peer support. **Parents should also be equipped with knowledge and skills** to have their own conversations on sexual matters with their children and build the right values. This role cannot be left to the teachers alone. Schools should **create safe spaces for students to ask sex-related questions** and **train and empower peer leaders** who can provide support.

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<sup>15</sup> MOE Sexuality Education: Scope and teaching approach - <https://www.moe.gov.sg/programmes/sexuality-education/scope-and-teaching-approach>



## Recommendation 9: Promote open reporting of workplace harassment

### Context

Any employee who encounters workplace harassment should report it quickly so that an investigation can be triggered, and appropriate remedial, corrective and preventive actions be taken. Importantly, reporting of workplace harassment allows counselling and mental support to be rendered to the victim or survivor. Today, the main avenues for women to report incidents of workplace harassment include their supervisors, company HR, Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment (TAFEP), the Police and some NGOs.

According to the Ministry of Manpower, between January 2019 and October 2020, TAFEP handled around 80 cases of workplace harassment reported<sup>16</sup>. There are grounds to believe that there are more cases of workplace harassment than what has been reported. Some women may be afraid to report workplace harassment to someone in their company if the perpetrator is their superior, or if they are unaware of avenues outside of their companies that they can seek help from. Women may also not report harassment if they think that no one will believe them or they could be blamed instead.

### Details of recommendation

The Tripartite Advisory on Managing Workplace Harassment spells out how workplace harassment should be handled, including responsibilities of the employers and what the affected people should do. To proliferate adoption of the advisory, TAFEP should play a more active role in **promoting the advisory and getting companies to develop capabilities and resources to enable safe reporting of workplace harassment and deal with harassment allegations**.

Not all women feel comfortable to report workplace harassment to their supervisors or company HR departments. TAFEP should partner suitable NGOs to **publicise the avenues where victims of harassment can seek help** beyond their companies.

To increase societal awareness of workplace harassment, **TAFEP should lead a tripartite effort to campaign for zero tolerance to work harassment**. The campaign objective would be to raise awareness on what constitutes harassment and empower women to speak up against harassment.

## Recommendation 10: Allow freezing of women's eggs

### Context

The term "social" had been used to distinguish social egg-freezing from the egg-freezing that is permissible due to certain medical conditions. However, the use of the word insinuates a casual approach to the matter and does not reflect the seriousness of the decision. We recommend not to use the word "social".

The reproduction rate of Singaporean women has continued to decline over the past two decades despite the availability of monetary and other social incentives put in place by the Government to encourage procreation. We see Singaporean women today opting to pursue their career aspirations and wanting to delay marriage and childbirth. These reflect the

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<sup>16</sup> MOM's Written Answer to Parliamentary Question [4 January 2021]

changing realities in Singapore. We should continue our efforts to make it conducive for people to marry and have children early, but we need to be cognisant of these current realities and consider pragmatic, multi-pronged approaches to address our declining birth rates and support women in their journey to motherhood<sup>17</sup>.

There is a concern that allowing women to freeze their eggs encourages them to delay finding a partner and having a child. This is a mindset that we need to shift. The important issue is that there is a desire on the part of some women to have the option to extract her eggs while she is younger<sup>18</sup>. We should understand that the process of extracting the eggs takes a toll on a woman's body. Hence a woman would not make this choice lightly. Finding the right partner may not be so easy for everyone and we should give options to women.

The quality of a woman's eggs declines over time and there is value in giving a woman the option to preserve her eggs earlier, when she is younger. The success of an assisted conception, should this be necessary in the future, may be improved as compared to a situation where a woman is only extracting her eggs at a later age. Some women who can afford it, are already doing this procedure overseas<sup>19</sup>. There is an urgent need to review the current position.

### Details of recommendation

We propose therefore that the **Government reviews its position on egg-freezing for non-medical reasons**. We hope that the procedure is allowed for women. To provide some control it may be necessary to **put in place a regulatory framework** to impose conditions or limit the use of the eggs to certain circumstances, for example only within the confines of marriage.

### **Recommendation 11: Create a national reproductive health screening programme for married couples**

#### Context

We see many women starting to plan or build their families between the ages of 30 to 35. However, there has not been a concerted effort to help women understand more about their reproductive health, fertility, and the choices they have. Some of them may face challenges in conceiving, they feel a lack of support and the social pressures on them. The assumption often made by people in the community is that the "fault" lies with the woman in not being able to conceive. Factually, the couple's infertility can also arise from issues that the man may face. We need to shift this narrative and change mindsets. Both women and men are equally responsible for their reproductive health and we need to equip married couples very early on with the correct information and knowledge so they can maximise their potential for conceiving.

#### Details of recommendation

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<sup>17</sup> The Straits Times [11 July 2021] Dilemma of Social Egg Freezing for Women in Singapore. This warrants a rethink on government's policies to expand the family circle for young couples <https://www.straittimes.com/opinion/dilemma-of-social-egg-freezing-for-women-in-singapore-0>

<sup>18</sup> Channel News Asia [Updated 24 May 2021] Doing it for Myself: The women freezing their eggs to raise their chances of conceiving <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/social-egg-freezing-singapore-women-ivf-11314552>

<sup>19</sup> The Straits Times [2 November 2019] Singaporean Actress Ase Wang chooses Bangkok for social egg freezing <https://str.sg/JwGT>

We propose therefore that the **Government develops a National Screening programme for reproductive health for married couples**. We should encourage couples to undergo this screening, or at least understand their reproductive health, very early in the marriage. When couples understand their bodies better, they would be better able to make decisions and plans in relation to starting a family.

### **Recommendation 12: Create a support network for single mothers**

#### **Context**

Raising children while balancing careers is hard enough, even when both men and women share the burden. This balancing act is even more challenging for single parents. In our conversations, some have raised the challenges faced by single mothers who have to deal with issues of childcare, finances and housing. There may be existing prejudices against single mothers, including divorcees and unwed mothers. These women may challenge the typical family structures but some are put in these situations not by choice. They face hardships, and often feel unsupported and left out of certain policies. We should work to shift the mindset of people in society. We should rally the support of the community to help them navigate some of the day-to-day challenges they face. If we help the mothers, we can help the children and there is a better chance that they will do well in life and have a better future.

#### **Details of recommendation**

We propose therefore that more support be given to single parents through partnerships with appropriate social service agencies. There are currently agencies which specialise in support for divorced families (Divorce Support Specialist Agencies) and they also provide holistic support for divorced individuals. We should take a similar approach for single parents. The agencies with the appropriate expertise could work with single parents with **a stronger case-management process to help them** navigate various issues like housing and childcare. We should also work with these agencies and the community to **create a support network where such parents can get emotional support as well as access to useful resources** to help them address issues or uplift themselves from their circumstances.

## CONCLUSION

We have outlined 12 specific recommendations to further strengthen women's development in Singapore. They are:



- 01.** Scale-up a nationwide movement to help women enter, and progress in, growth sectors
- 02.** Introduce legislation to regulate merit-based employment and penalise discriminatory conduct, to achieve more diverse and inclusive workplaces
- 03.** Partner organisations and employers to develop holistic support packages and support networks for women to re-enter the workforce and rebuild their careers
- 04.** Give parents full flexibility to decide how to share maternity and paternity leave
- 05.** Increase financial support to caregivers of seniors to help relieve financial strain and out-of-pocket expenses
- 06.** Organise voluntary respite services for caregivers and raise the awareness of support programmes
- 07.** Enhance options for long-term home-based care for the elderly
- 08.** Regularly update the sexual education curriculum to keep up with evolving norms, with a specific focus on the curriculum for secondary school students
- 09.** Promote open reporting of workplace harassment
- 10.** Allow freezing of women's eggs
- 11.** Create a national reproductive health screening programme for married couples
- 12.** Create a support network for single mothers

The recommendations build on the significant progress made by women over the years and recent policy enhancements implemented by the PAP government that benefit women greatly. They include expanded pre-school provision and higher fee subsidies, and schemes like Silver Support where two in three recipients are women.

The recommendations also complement each other. For example, to help women progress in the careers, it would be better if they did not have to drop out of work or take a step back in the first place. That requires access to better support for caregivers and single mums.

If implemented, these recommendations will:

- Give women more options to progress in their careers
- Moderate challenges women face, such as workplace discrimination and harassment
- Enable more equal sharing of caregiving responsibilities between women and men
- Reshape attitude and norms in our society that impede women
- Promote equal opportunities for women to achieve their aspirations

We call on the Government to seriously consider the 12 recommendations jointly submitted by the PAP Women's Wing and Young PAP, and to respond to them positively in the forthcoming White Paper. For women in Singapore to make further progress aligned with their aspirations, we need to rally the community. PAP will continue to champion progress for women in Singapore so that they can be empowered to realise their full potential to lead full and happy lives.



## ANNEX 1

FOCUSSED AREAS/ RECOMMENDATIONS IN WW'S PAPERS	GOVERNMENT'S INITIATIVES
<p><b>Housing Policies – Facilitate more couples to live near parents (Marriage and Parenthood, 23 Aug 2012)</b></p>	<p><b>5 Jun 2014 – Poll conducted by MND: Most favour higher priority for families to live near parents</b>            Nine out of 10 Singaporeans support greater priority for those who apply to live in the same town - in both mature and non-mature estates.</p> <p>ST article - <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/housing/most-favour-higher-priority-for-families-to-live-near-parents-poll">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/housing/most-favour-higher-priority-for-families-to-live-near-parents-poll</a></p> <p><b>24 Aug 2015 – PM Lee announced new Proximity Housing Grant scheme will encourage couples to move nearer their parents</b>, or vice-versa. For most young parents, grandparents are the preferred caregivers, provided they are healthy and willing. Living close by also means that when the time comes, it will be easier for children to care for their ageing parents.</p> <p>ST article - <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/giving-young-couples-help-to-start-families">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/giving-young-couples-help-to-start-families</a></p> <p><b>12 Nov 2020 – Revised housing grants</b>            From HDB Website- <a href="https://www.hdb.gov.sg/residential/buying-a-flat/resale/financing/cpf-housing-grants/living-with-near-parents-or-child">https://www.hdb.gov.sg/residential/buying-a-flat/resale/financing/cpf-housing-grants/living-with-near-parents-or-child</a></p>
<p><b>Housing Policies – Encourage more couples to live with their parents (Marriage and Parenthood, 23 Aug 2012)</b></p>	<p><b>29 Aug 2013 – 3-generation flats for extended families</b>            The Government wants extended families to live together and provide a support network.</p> <p>Today article - <a href="https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/new-three-generation-flats-extended-families">https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/new-three-generation-flats-extended-families</a></p>
<p><b>Housing Policies – Option of renting a flat while waiting for BTO (Marriage and Parenthood, 23 Aug 2012)</b></p>	<p><b>31 Oct 2014 – More provisional flats, new co-rental option for couples waiting for BTO to be built</b>            Parenthood Provisional Housing Scheme (PPHS) began in January 2013</p> <p>ST article - <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/housing/more-provisional-flats-new-co-rental-option-for-couples-waiting-for-bto-to-be">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/housing/more-provisional-flats-new-co-rental-option-for-couples-waiting-for-bto-to-be</a></p>
<p><b>Affordable and good quality pre-school (Marriage and Parenthood, 23 Aug 2012)</b></p> <p><b>Expand the Anchor Operator and Partner Operator Preschool Scheme so that at least 80% of pre-schooler households can access affordable and quality full-day childcare within a 10-minute walk.</b></p>	<p><b>13 Mar 2015</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 360 SPARK-certified pre-schools</li> <li>• Introduced a new Commendation Category to recognise strong teaching and learning practices and we hope that this continues to grow and proliferate across the entire sector</li> <li>• Thirty-one thousand children have since benefited from the additional subsidies, with the lowest income tier paying as low as \$3 per month for a full-day childcare service, and 10,000 have benefited from the enhanced KIFAS since January this year, and the lower-income families pay as little as \$1 to \$2 per month for the kindergarten services.</li> <li>• Top-up of \$300 or \$600 to the Child Development Account (CDA) account for all Singaporean children aged zero to six years old in 2015. This will assist the families with the cost of raising their children, through kindergarten or childcare fees, or healthcare-related expenses.</li> </ul>

(Parenthood and Young Families, 30 Jul 2019)

From Budget COS –  
<https://sprs.parl.gov.sg/search/sprs3topic?reportid=budget-477>

**Aug 2019:** At the National Day Rally 2019, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong announced that the Government will ramp up efforts to improve families' access to affordable and quality preschools. By around 2025, 80 per cent of preschoolers can have a place in a government-supported preschool, up from about 50 per cent in 2019.

**7 Oct 2019**

- 2020, 330, or 1 in 5 childcare centres will be increasing their full-day childcare fees for Singapore Citizen children. The other 1,200 childcare centres will not be adjusting their fees. The number of centres increasing fees in 2020 is broadly comparable to previous years. In 2018, 540 centres raised fees. In 2019, 220 did so.
- From time to time, preschools adjust their fees to keep up with operational costs but most manage their fee increases, in order to remain competitive. Of the centres raising fees in 2020, the median increase is within 5% of fees, comparable to previous years. In absolute terms, the median increase is around \$35.
- Among some of the centres raising fees are those run by Anchor Operators and Partner Operators. These are centres operating below the stipulated fee caps, which have been maintained at current levels since 2014 for Anchor Operators and 2016 for Partner Operators. The industry median fees have thus remained unchanged at \$856 since 2016.

From MSF - <https://www.msf.gov.sg/media-room/Pages/Preschool-fee-hikes-and-affordability.aspx>

**25 Nov 2019:** More Families to Benefit from Lower Fee Caps at 324 Childcare Centres Appointed as Partner Operators  
ECDA Press Release -  
<https://www.ecda.gov.sg/PressReleases/Pages/More-Families-to-Benefit-from-Lower-Fee-Caps-at-324-Childcare-Centres-Appointed-as-Partner-Operators.aspx>

- More affordable preschools with lower fee caps from 1 January 2021
- A 30% increase in childcare centres on the Partner Operator scheme
- The fee caps for POP centres will be lowered in the new term to \$760 and \$1,330 per month for full-day childcare and infant care services respectively, compared to the existing fee caps of \$800 and \$1,400 per month.
- Families now pay less for preschool, as the income ceiling for childcare and infant care Additional Subsidy was raised from \$7,500 a month to \$12,000 a month. Subsidy amounts were also increased across all eligible income tiers.
- ECDA aims to lower fee caps further at government-supported preschools so that working families with a child in full-day childcare will, after Basic Subsidy, pay around the equivalent of primary school fees plus after-school student care fees, which currently

	total around \$300 per month. This is before means-tested preschool subsidies are applied.
<p><b>Pro-family HR Practices- Flexible working arrangements (Marriage and Parenthood, 23 Aug 2012)</b></p> <p><b>Embed pro-family work environment -Set guidelines on pro-family employment practices in Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices</b></p> <p><b>- Legislate Flexible Work</b></p> <p><b>- Enhance government support schemes for flexi work (Women @ Work, 20 Feb 2013)</b></p> <p><b>Developing Industry-Specific Flexi Working Arrangements (FWAs) (Women's Perspective &amp; Aspiration, 16 July 2016)</b></p> <p><b>Adopt an industry-based and job-specific approach to promote flexible workplace arrangements (FWA). (Parenthood and Young Families, 30 Jul 2019)</b></p>	<p><b>7 Aug 2017 - Singapore workers will be offered more flexi-work options, like choosing when to start and finish work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While voluntary, the initiative requires employers to make a public commitment to a set of good practices if they adopt the tripartite standard on flexible work arrangements.</li> </ul> <p>ST article - <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/250-companies-adopt-new-standard-on-flexi-work-arrangements">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/250-companies-adopt-new-standard-on-flexi-work-arrangements</a></p> <p><b>April 2013 – Government introduced Work-Life Grant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Work-Life Grant was introduced in April 2013, to provide funding support to companies, for the implementation of Flexible Work Arrangements (FWAs) for all employees. This scheme funds companies so they can help groups such as mothers get back to work. The scheme was subsequently enhanced and extended in July 2018 and employers found it easier to get financial help for trying out flexible work arrangements. This was part of a government bid to better help women achieve both career and family aspirations.</li> </ul> <p>ST Article (5 Mar 2018) - <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/manpower/flexi-work-scheme-for-firms-extended-and-enhanced">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/manpower/flexi-work-scheme-for-firms-extended-and-enhanced</a></p> <p><b>3 Mar 2020: MOM COS by SPS Low Yen Ling</b></p> <p>Providing details on some measures, Ms Low said the ministry will produce sector-specific resources to help companies implement FWAs, since some of them might have challenges in adopting these arrangements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The TAFEP website will also be revamped as a one-stop resource for everything to do with FWAs, for instance, consolidating all implementation guides, so it will make it easy for companies to adopt, she added.</li> <li>• MOM will also launch an online free-to-use employment contract builder to help employers include clauses on FWAs into their employees' contracts.</li> <li>• HR executives and senior managers who have successfully executed FWAs will be invited to share their practices with other professionals.</li> </ul> <p>CNA Article – <a href="https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/budget-2020-parental-care-leave-flexible-work-arrangement-12496070">https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/budget-2020-parental-care-leave-flexible-work-arrangement-12496070</a></p> <p><b>3 Mar 2020 - Govt will support mothers transitioning back to work with more flexible work arrangements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The government had more than tripled the Work-Life Grant from S\$30 million to S\$100 million in Jul. 2019 to encourage more companies to provide FWAs in general.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career Trial programme, under the Adapt and Grow (A&amp;G) initiative, had been expanded in May 2019 to include part-time jobs to cater for those who prefer part-time work.</li> </ul> <p>Mothership article - <a href="https://mothership.sg/2020/03/working-mothers-support-mom/">https://mothership.sg/2020/03/working-mothers-support-mom/</a></p>
<p><b>Pro-family HR Practices- Lack of employment opportunities for mothers in the PMET category (Marriage and Parenthood, 23 Aug 2012)</b></p> <p><b>Build the Necessary Capabilities and Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- help women stay and rejoin the workforce.</li> <li>- Provide skills training to help prepare women to return to the workforce, including pre-placement training.</li> <li>-Set up employment facilitation services for back to work women and employers. (Women @ Work, 20 Feb 2013)</li> </ul> <p><b>-Provide incentives to employers to support women returning to work</b></p> <p><b>-Back to Work Employment Credit Scheme (BWEC) and 'Preferential' status for companies for adopting fair employment practices</b></p> <p><b>- Responsible for the hearing of complain cases relating to pro-family employment practices under Fair Employment Practices, and later in enforcing flexible work legislation.</b></p>	<p><b>Mar 2013 – MOM launched WorkPro programme and provided incentives to employers to hire back-to-work local.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the WorkPro initiative, companies that came on board the programme would receive a New Hire Retention Incentive of up to \$2,000 for each newly hired back-to-work local or mature worker earning below \$4,500.</li> <li>• Government recognised that those who had not been working for some time might need more on-the-job training (OJT) initially, to prepare them for work. WorkPro then provided employers with an OJT Training Allowance equivalent to one month's salary, capped at \$2,000 per worker, for each back-to-work local hired and trained.</li> <li>• To incentivise back-to-work locals to stay on the job, those earning less than \$4,500 will receive a retention bonus of up to \$1,200 each under WorkPro if they remain employed with the company over a year.</li> </ul> <p><b>Mar 2013 – MOM's efforts in promoting work-life balance and starting WorkPro programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Manpower intensified its efforts and work through the Tricom and the Employer Alliance to support and incentivise companies to implement work-life strategies.</li> <li>• It also encouraged positive behaviour through education and promotion, and create the conditions for sustainable work-life strategies.</li> <li>• In 2013, the Government consolidated and enhanced the WoW! Fund, ADVANTAGE!, and Flexi-works!, into a one-stop programme called "WorkPro" – to build Progressive Workplaces. WorkPro will help employers to improve work-life harmony and better attract and retain locals. It will also help companies tap on back-to-work locals and older workers by supporting job-redesign, on-the-job training, recruitment, and retention efforts.</li> </ul> <p>14 Mar 2013 - <a href="https://www.mom.gov.sg/newsroom/speeches/2013/committee-of-supply-speech-2-by-dr-amy-khor-minister-of-state-for-manpower-14-march-2013-300-pm-parliament">https://www.mom.gov.sg/newsroom/speeches/2013/committee-of-supply-speech-2-by-dr-amy-khor-minister-of-state-for-manpower-14-march-2013-300-pm-parliament</a></p> <p><b>Jan 2017 - NTUC lays out roadmap to get women, seniors back to work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Returnship Programme help more women rejoin the workforce, allows them to join a firm for a trial period before they are formally employed, and at the same time, receive a salary that could be covered by the authorities.</li> </ul> <p>Today article - <a href="https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/ntuc-lays-out-roadmap-get-women-seniors-back-work">https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/ntuc-lays-out-roadmap-get-women-seniors-back-work</a></p>

<p>(Women @ Work, 20 Feb 2013)</p> <p><b>Leveraging on the SkillsFuture package for Back-to-Work Women (Women's Perspective &amp; Aspiration, 16 July 2016)</b></p>	<p><b>14 May 2019 - More than 960 firms adopt standard to handle staff grievances</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/politics/parliament-more-than-960-firms-adopt-standard-to-handle-staff-grievances-including-sexual">https://www.straitstimes.com/politics/parliament-more-than-960-firms-adopt-standard-to-handle-staff-grievances-including-sexual</a></p> <p><b>8 Oct 2019 - New courses for mums returning to workforce</b> 35 courses, including nine that are new, have been curated as part of a partnership between Ngee Ann Polytechnic and social enterprise Mums@Work. They include professional image makeover, developing a digital portfolio, starting a home enterprise, and insights on emerging technologies, including blockchain and smart contracts, AI and robotics. The remaining 20 online courses will arm the mothers with professional skills for specific industries such as healthcare and landscaping.</p> <p>ST Article - <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/manpower/new-courses-for-mums-returning-to-workforce">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/manpower/new-courses-for-mums-returning-to-workforce</a></p> <p><b>3 Mar 2020</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The government will help to support mothers who want to transition back to work by continuing to push for full-time work with flexible work arrangements</li> <li>• The government has also expanded options for part-time work, given that women who have left the workforce for an additional period of time may need more help to find work</li> </ul> <p>Mothership article - <a href="https://mothership.sg/2020/03/working-mothers-support-mom/">https://mothership.sg/2020/03/working-mothers-support-mom/</a></p>
<p><b>Increase Women Representation in Top Positions - ensure women are well represented in the nomination and recruitment process, as part of management and board succession plans. (Women @ Work, 20 Feb 2013)</b></p> <p><b>Strengthening Diversity in Corporate Leadership (Women's Perspective &amp; Aspiration, 16 July 2016)</b></p> <p><b>20% directorships on SGX-listed companies (Gender Diversity, 23 Aug 2017)</b></p> <p><b>Boards of public listed companies to</b></p>	<p><b>24 Mar 2017 – PAP WW &amp; BoardAgender made recommendations to MAS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The two organisations advocate that companies should adopt a target of at least 20 per cent female board representation by 2020.</li> </ul> <p>PAP Article - <a href="https://www.pap.org.sg/womens-wing/strengthening-gender-diversity/">https://www.pap.org.sg/womens-wing/strengthening-gender-diversity/</a></p> <p><b>17 Jan 2019 – Formation of Council for Board Diversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the last four years, the proportion of women on the boards of Singapore's top 100 listed companies doubled to 15 per cent. It will have expanded scope to look at boards of organisations in public and people sectors</li> </ul> <p>ST Article - <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/new-council-aims-to-get-more-women-on-boards">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/new-council-aims-to-get-more-women-on-boards</a></p> <p><b>6 Apr 2020 – The Council for Board Diversity (CBD), was formed by MSF in 2019 to increase the representation of women on the boards of private, people and public sectors organisations.</b></p> <p>Respond from Mr Desmond Lee - <a href="https://sprs.parl.gov.sg/search/sprs3topic?reportid=written-answer-5875">https://sprs.parl.gov.sg/search/sprs3topic?reportid=written-answer-5875</a></p> <p>CBD website - <a href="https://www.councilforboarddiversity.sg/">https://www.councilforboarddiversity.sg/</a></p>

<p>set targets on board diversity (Gender Diversity, 23 Aug 2017)</p>	
<p>Having Smart Women for a Smart Nation (Women's Perspective &amp; Aspiration, 16 July 2016)</p>	<p><b>17 Oct 2019 – Women In Tech Breakfast Dialogue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Announced the introduction of MentorConnect Programme &amp; SG Women In Tech Community Platform</li> </ul> <p>IMDA Press Release - <a href="https://www.imda.gov.sg/news-and-events/impact-news/2019/11/Empowering-women-in-tech">https://www.imda.gov.sg/news-and-events/impact-news/2019/11/Empowering-women-in-tech</a></p> <p><b>4 Sep 2020 - Inaugural list honouring 100 outstanding women in Singapore's technology sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MOS Gan described them as role models and trailblazers who show what is possible. The Singapore Women in Tech list was compiled by the Singapore Computer Society in partnership with the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) and Mediacorp.</li> </ul> <p>ST Article - <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/tech/getting-more-women-into-tech-sector-starts-with-finding-something-you-love-to-do-gan-siw-huang">https://www.straitstimes.com/tech/getting-more-women-into-tech-sector-starts-with-finding-something-you-love-to-do-gan-siw-huang</a></p> <p><b>20 Oct 2020 - Singapore Women in Tech Marks One Year of Advancing Diversity in Tech Sector through Strong Industry Collaborations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansion of MentorConnect Programme with DBS, VMWare, AON and BHP to promote development of women tech professionals</li> <li>Coordinated, multi-stakeholder effort required to attract and retain female talent in tech, according to findings from BCG study</li> </ul> <p>IMDA Press Release - <a href="https://www.imda.gov.sg/news-and-events/Media-Room/Media-Releases/2020/Singapore-Women-in-Tech-Marks-One-Year-of-Advancing-Diversity-in-Tech-Sector-through-Strong-Industry-Collaborations">https://www.imda.gov.sg/news-and-events/Media-Room/Media-Releases/2020/Singapore-Women-in-Tech-Marks-One-Year-of-Advancing-Diversity-in-Tech-Sector-through-Strong-Industry-Collaborations</a></p>
<p>Medical insurance for newborns (Marriage and Parenthood, 23 Aug 2012)</p>	<p><b>26 Aug 2015 – Cash gift and Grant for newborn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Baby Bonus cash gift for children of married couples will be increased by \$2,000, bringing the amount they will receive to at least \$8,000</li> <li>The Medisave grant for a newborn will be raised as well, by \$1,000 to a total of \$4,000, which will help pay for the child's MediShield Life premiums and other medical expenses.</li> </ul> <p>ST article - <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/bigger-baby-bonus-and-medisave-grant-for-newborns">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/bigger-baby-bonus-and-medisave-grant-for-newborns</a></p>
<p>Enhance inclusivity of children with special needs, through expanding learning opportunities, therapies and treatments within the school system.</p>	<p><b>Jul 2019: Autism Resource Centre (Singapore), which offers the national curriculum to students with ASD in Pathlight School, will operate its second school in Tampines.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This school will provide about 500 primary level school places and will be located at the site of the former East View Primary School at Tampines Street 91.</li> </ul> <p>ST Article – <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/education/new-pathlight-campus-in-tampines-from-january-2023-to-meet-demand">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/education/new-pathlight-campus-in-tampines-from-january-2023-to-meet-demand</a></p>

<p>(Parenthood and Young Families, 30 Jul 2019)</p>	<p><b>Nov 2019: MOE will be working with various Social Service Agencies (SSAs) to set up three new Government-funded SPED schools for students with moderate-to-severe SEN who have ASD:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New school for students with moderate-to-severe SEN who have ASD and intellectual impairment. Metta Welfare Association will be operating this new SPED school in 2021 for students who have ASD and intellectual impairment. The new purpose-built school will be located in the East. It will provide about 25 places per cohort, which at a steady state, will translate to 300 additional school places for students with ASD and intellectual impairment.</li> <li>• Two new schools for students with moderate SEN who have ASD and can access the National Curriculum. MOE will be opening two new SPED schools which will deliver the Singapore primary and secondary national curriculum, and a suitable post-primary programme for students who are unable to access the national secondary curriculum. MOE is working with Autism Resource Centre (Singapore) to set up one of these two schools.</li> </ul> <p>ST Article – <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/education/more-peer-support-initiatives-for-special-needs-students-moe-to-set-up-3-new">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/education/more-peer-support-initiatives-for-special-needs-students-moe-to-set-up-3-new</a></p> <p><b>5 Nov 2020: Expansion and Redevelopment of Two Special Education Schools to Better Support Students' Educational Needs</b> Chaoyang School (CYS) and Tanglin School (TS) will be redeveloped and co-located at a new site in 2025. They serve primary students aged 7-12 years old and secondary students aged 13-16 years old respectively.</p> <p>MOE Press Release - <a href="https://www.moe.gov.sg/news/press-releases/20201105-expansion-and-redevelopment-of-two-special-education-schools-to-better-support-students">https://www.moe.gov.sg/news/press-releases/20201105-expansion-and-redevelopment-of-two-special-education-schools-to-better-support-students</a></p> <p><b>10 Dec 2020: 7 Special Education Schools Get New Campuses to Provide Quality and Affordable Education to More Students</b> Four SPED schools will begin operations at their respective permanent sites between 2022 and 2024. Each school will provide 25 school places per year and will have an eventual total capacity of 300 places.</p> <p>MOE Press Release - <a href="https://www.moe.gov.sg/news/press-releases/20201210-7-special-education-schools-get-new-campuses-to-provide-quality-and-affordable-education-to-more-students">https://www.moe.gov.sg/news/press-releases/20201210-7-special-education-schools-get-new-campuses-to-provide-quality-and-affordable-education-to-more-students</a></p> <p><b>16 Feb 2021: Early childhood programme that integrates early intervention to be piloted to help kids with special needs</b> An Inclusive Support Programme that will integrate the provision of early intervention and early childhood services will be piloted to help children with special need</p> <p>ST Article - Budget 2021: Early childhood programme that integrates early intervention to be piloted to help kids with special needs <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/budget-2021-early-childhood-programme-that-integrates-early-intervention-to-be-piloted-to">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/budget-2021-early-childhood-programme-that-integrates-early-intervention-to-be-piloted-to</a></p> <p><b>30 April 2021:</b> ST Article - <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/parenting-education/more-targeted-support-for-pre-schoolers-with-developmental-needs-in">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/parenting-education/more-targeted-support-for-pre-schoolers-with-developmental-needs-in</a></p>
<p>Shared Parental Leave</p>	<p><b>13 Apr 2016 – Working mothers able to share maternal leave with spouse</b></p>

<p><b>(Marriage and Parenthood, 23 Aug 2012)</b></p> <p><b>Shared Parental Leave and Childcare Leave</b> - Increasing the duration of the shared parental leave and extending childcare leave to single parents. <b>(Women @ Work, 20 Feb 2013)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working mothers will be able to share up to four weeks of their paid maternity leave with their husbands from July 2017</li> <li>Those whose babies are born from Jan 1, 2017, will get two weeks of paid paternity leave.</li> </ul> <p>ST article - <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/parliament-fathers-to-get-longer-paternity-leave-and-shared-parental-leave-from-2017">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/parliament-fathers-to-get-longer-paternity-leave-and-shared-parental-leave-from-2017</a></p> <p><b>14 Mar 2013 - Single parents to enjoy infant care and childcare leave</b> Single unwed parents will also enjoy six days of unpaid infant care leave a year if they have a child below the age of two. CNA article <a href="https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/single-parents-to-enjoy-infant-care-and-childcare-leave-from-may-8342600">https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/single-parents-to-enjoy-infant-care-and-childcare-leave-from-may-8342600</a></p>
<p><b>Accessibility to Children Care Services</b> -Improve accessibility of childcare centres -include more schools in the after-school care scheme. <b>(Women @ Work, 20 Feb 2013)</b></p>	<p><b>1 Feb 2016 – More childcare centres set up at workplaces</b></p> <p>ST article - <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/more-childcare-centres-set-up-at-workplaces">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/more-childcare-centres-set-up-at-workplaces</a></p> <p><b>25 April 2016 - Student care centres for all primary schools by end-2020</b></p> <p>ST article - <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/student-care-centres-for-all-primary-schools-by-end-2020">https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/student-care-centres-for-all-primary-schools-by-end-2020</a></p> <p><b>11 May 2021 – Expanding after school care for secondary school students</b></p> <p>From MOE - <a href="https://www.moe.gov.sg/news/parliamentary-replies/20210511-expanding-after-school-care-and-programmes-for-secondary-schools">https://www.moe.gov.sg/news/parliamentary-replies/20210511-expanding-after-school-care-and-programmes-for-secondary-schools</a></p>
<p><b>More Protection &amp; Training Programs for Freelancers &amp; Contract Workers</b> - Amend legislation to enable freelancers to receive payments to their Central Provident Fund accounts, medical benefits and compensation under the Work Injury Compensation Act. - Provide more individual-initiated training opportunities <b>(Women @ Work, 20 Feb 2013)</b></p>	<p><b>5 Nov 2019 - CPF Act amended to allow freelancers working in public sector to be part of pilot CAYE scheme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>about 6,000 self-employed persons will be included within these programmes, such as freelance sports coaches for schools.</li> <li>The scheme is meant to help this group of people or those who do freelance work keep up with their MediSave contributions, and to “strengthen their protection against health shocks”</li> </ul> <p>Today article - <a href="https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/cpf-act-amended-allow-freelancers-working-public-sector-be-part-pilot-caye-scheme">https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/cpf-act-amended-allow-freelancers-working-public-sector-be-part-pilot-caye-scheme</a></p> <p><b>3 Mar 2020 - Freelancers to get training allowance of \$7.50 an hour for eligible courses in next 3 months</b></p> <p>ST article- <a href="https://www.straitstimes.com/politics/parliament-freelancers-to-get-training-allowance-of-750-an-hour-for-eligible-courses-in">https://www.straitstimes.com/politics/parliament-freelancers-to-get-training-allowance-of-750-an-hour-for-eligible-courses-in</a></p>
<p><b>Increase support for assisted reproduction- Increase IVF subsidy from \$3k to \$5k for 5 cycles</b></p>	<p><b>22 Mar 2016 – up to 75% co-funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since the start of 2013, eligible couples seeking ART treatment in public hospitals can receive up to 75 per cent in co-funding from the Government for a maximum of three fresh and three frozen cycles.</li> </ul>

**(Marriage and Parenthood, 23 Aug 2012)**

**Remove the age limit of 45 years for females to access In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) and equalise the cap of fresh IVF cycles for women of all ages.**

**(Parenthood and Young Families, 30 Jul 2019)**

ST article - <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/health/more-singapore-couples-getting-help-to-conceive>

**28 Aug 2019: Singapore to remove age limit for IVF treatments, introduce new subsidies**

- The age limit will be removed from Jan 1, 2020.
- A cap on the number of IVF cycles a woman can undergo – currently set at 10 cycles for women aged 40 and below, and five for women above 40 – will also be removed.
- Women who are 40 years old and above will also get government co-funding for up to two of six ART cycles, as long as they had sought help to procreate before they turned 40.
- Eligible couples seeking ART treatment at public assisted reproduction (AR) centres can receive co-funding of up to \$7,700 per fresh cycle and \$2,200 per frozen cycle, for three fresh cycles and three frozen cycles.

ST article - <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/lower-pre-school-fees-and-more-help-with-fertility-treatments-to-encourage-marriage-and>

From MOH - <https://www.moh.gov.sg/news-highlights/details/more-support-for-childhood-preventive-healthcare-and-fertility-treatments>

CNA Article Link - <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/ivf-treatments-age-limit-subsidies-iui-fertility-treatments-11848862>