

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
SINGAPORE
OFFICIAL REPORT
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ACCIDENTS INVOLVING E-BIKES AND PERSONAL MOBILITY DEVICES

1 **Mr Sitoh Yih Pin** asked the Minister for Transport (a) what is the number of accidents involving e-bikes and personal mobility devices this year; (b) what is the number of injuries or fatalities that have resulted from these accidents; and (c) what are LTA's plans to reduce or mitigate such accidents from occurring.

Mr Khaw Boon Wan: For the first half of this year, there were about 90 accidents involving power-assisted bicycles (PABs) and personal mobility devices (PMDs), resulting in four deaths and about 90 injuries. The majority of these accidents took place on the roads.

With the passage of the Active Mobility Bill, rules on safe riding behaviour, including speed limits and device specifications, will come into force by the end of this year. There will be stiff penalties for offences such as reckless riding. In the meantime, LTA is stepping up its enforcement efforts and has issued over 1,400 advisories for unsafe riding. LTA has also commenced registration of PABs.

We will continue to complement enforcement efforts with public education and outreach programmes. The Safe Riding Programme will be launched to educate cyclists and PMD users on safe riding practices. More than 800 people have volunteered for the Active Mobility Patrol Scheme and are helping to educate fellow residents on safe riding practices.

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OPENING OF ARTIC AND OTHER REGIONAL TRADE AND CONNECTIVITY ROUTES

2 **Mr Desmond Choo** asked the Minister for Transport with the increasing viability of the Arctic shipping route and the potential opening of other regional trade and connectivity routes (a) how is Singapore re-positioning itself to meet such challenges; and (b) how will PSA need to transform to thrive in the new trade landscape.

Mr Khaw Boon Wan: At present, it is too early to determine the long term impact of the opening of the Arctic shipping routes on the port of Singapore. Current commercial viability of these routes is low for a number of reasons. Sailing through the Arctic is still largely confined to the summer months, making it difficult to operate scheduled services, which is critical to

container shipping. There are also limited opportunities for shippers to lift and drop off cargo as areas enroute through the Arctic are largely unpopulated. Further, ships sailing through the Arctic require specialised ice-breaking equipment, and have to pay higher insurance premiums due to the extreme conditions. In 2016, only 19 sailings were made through the Northern Sea Route, which is the main Arctic sea route.

Regardless of the competition posed by the Arctic shipping routes and other regional trade and connectivity routes, our priority has been to ensure that the port of Singapore continues to improve its competitiveness. We have plans to increase port capacity, so that Singapore has the capacity to meet the long term needs of container lines. To this end, development on the new Tuas Terminal has commenced and when fully completed, this terminal will be able to handle up to 65m twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs).

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore is also working closely with PSA to build a better port through investing heavily in technology. For instance, PSA has deployed a fully-automated yard crane system at the new berths at the Pasir Panjang Terminal to enhance efficiency, reliability and workplace safety.

The Government will continue to monitor global developments and work with industry partners to ensure that Singapore retains its edge as a global hub port and international maritime centre.

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ACCIDENTS INVOLVING UNAUTHORISED AND ILLEGALLY MODIFIED POWER-ASSISTED BICYCLES

3 Mr Dennis Tan Lip Fong asked the Minister for Transport (a) of the number of accidents involving power-assisted bicycles in the past two years, what percentage of these cases involve power-assisted bicycles which have not been authorised for use in Singapore or have been illegally modified; (b) whether any penalty has been imposed in all these cases specifically for unauthorised use or illegal modification; and (c) if so, what have been the penalties imposed.

Mr Khaw Boon Wan: We currently do not track the number of accidents involving power-assisted bicycles (PABs) that are non-compliant for use in Singapore or have been illegally modified. However, moving forward, LTA will work towards tracking such cases as part of enforcement actions against errant PAB users.

Users of non-compliant or illegally modified PABs may be fined up to \$5,000, or jailed up to three months, or both for the first offence. For subsequent offences, the offender may be fined up to \$10,000, or jailed up to six months, or both.

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VESSELS USING/TRANSITING STRAITS OF SINGAPORE AND OTHER WATERS UNDER JURISDICTION OF SINGAPORE VESSEL TRAFFIC SERVICE

4 **Mr Dennis Tan Lip Fong** asked the Minister for Transport in each of the past 10 years (a) what has been the number of vessels using and/or transiting through the Straits of Singapore and other waters under the jurisdiction of the Singapore Vessel Traffic Service; and (b) what has been the number of reported collisions, sinkings, groundings and contacts with fixed objects involving one or more vessels in the Straits of Singapore and other waters under the jurisdiction of the Singapore Vessel Traffic Service.

Mr Khaw Boon Wan: The Singapore Strait is a busy waterway with 84,000 vessels transiting through it in 2016. The Singapore port is also a major transshipment hub and receives an average of 380 vessels a day, or close to 139,000 vessels a year.

Despite the heavy traffic, the number of major incidents has dropped over the years, from 13 in 2011, to 1 each in 2015 and 2016. See Table 1.

Table 1: Vessel Traffic and Major Incidents¹ in Singapore Waters

		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Till 15 Sep 2017
Port Limits	Vessel Arrivals	128,568	131,695	130,575	127,299	127,998	130,422	139,417	134,883	132,922	138,998	101,705
	Number of Incidents	5	5	6	11	9	8	6	3	1	0	0
Singapore Strait (Singapore Territorial Waters)	Vessel Transits	84,807	85,973	88,715	83,910	77,680	79,284	82,861	86,142	84,091	84,332	58,458
	Number of Incidents	3	3	1	1	4	0	0	1	0	1	2
Total Number of Incidents		8	8	7	12	13	8	6	4	1	1	2

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LONGER PRE-DEFINED TIME PERIOD AT SIGNALISED PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

5 **Mr Pritam Singh** asked the Minister for Transport (a) what factors does LTA consider when the pre-defined time period for pedestrians to cross at signalled pedestrian crossings is increased; and (b) whether LTA will consider increasing such pre-defined time period by up to five or ten seconds in mature neighbourhoods or at roads that cannot be enhanced as Silver Zones due to the high volume of traffic, due to an increasing elderly population.

Mr Khaw Boon Wan: The main factor is the width of the road. All signalised pedestrian crossings are programmed with a steady green man time of six to 10 seconds, and a flashing green man time of one second per metre in road width.

Pedestrian crossings that are used by high numbers of seniors or persons with disabilities have the Green Man Plus scheme. When these pedestrians tap their concession cards on the reader, they will have more time to cross. Depending on the width of the road, the green man time can be extended by up to 13 seconds. There are currently 760 Green Man Plus crossings, and we will increase this number to 1000 by end-2018.

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¹ Major incidents are those involving loss of lives or pollution or those that affect safety of navigation in surrounding waters.

EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN SINGAPOREAN CORE

6 **Mr Patrick Tay Teck Guan** asked the Minister for Manpower (a) whether he can provide an update on the Ministry's efforts in strengthening the Singaporean core and in particular (i) the total number of companies on the watchlist and (ii) the number of 'triple weak' companies where executive measures have been taken against them; and (b) whether the Ministry will take harsher measures against recalcitrant companies such as a moratorium on obtaining government contracts or penal sanctions.

Mr Lim Swee Say: To encourage employers to strengthen the complementarity of foreign manpower with our local workforce instead of substituting foreigners for local workers, we take into consideration whether the employers have treated our local workers fairly when we process their applications for Employment Passes (EP). While the vast majority of employers are fair, there is evidence that a small minority are not. For these employers, we subject their EP applications to further scrutiny under the Fair Consideration Framework Watchlist.

We currently have about 300 firms on the Watchlist. The Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices has been working with them to improve their HR practices. More than 60 firms have already made significant improvements and exited the Watchlist, while 25 firms that remain uncooperative have had their work pass privileges curtailed. In all, about 1,700 EP applications were either withdrawn by the firms, or rejected or withheld by MOM. Over the same period, these firms considered Singaporeans more fairly and hired about 1,700 more Singaporean PMETs. We will continue to help them improve their HR practices.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are progressive employers who believe in strengthening their Singaporean Core and nurturing human capital as their core asset. We have recognised over 70 of them under the Human Capital Partnership Programme. We support them proactively with relevant grants and incentives under various government schemes to develop their employees and strengthen their Singaporean core. Their work pass applications are also processed more timely. We will continue to grow the community of progressive employers with our tripartite partners and sector agencies.

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AUTO-INCLUSION, APPLICATION AND FUNDING FOR ADAPT AND GROW SCHEMES

7 **Mr Patrick Tay Teck Guan** asked the Minister for Manpower whether the Ministry will consider auto-inclusion, auto-application and auto-funding for the Adapt and Grow schemes such as the career support programmes instead of making employers and companies apply for the schemes.

Mr Lim Swee Say: A vast majority of jobseekers and employers are able to find suitable matches on their own through recruitment agencies, job advertisements, job portals or their own networks. Adapt and Grow schemes, such as the Professional Conversion Programme and the Career Support Programme, are intended to provide targeted help for jobseekers who need additional assistance to overcome skills requirements or wage expectation mismatches. These schemes provide substantial training and temporary wage support to help jobseekers (especially mature and/or long term unemployed) and their prospective employers to bridge gaps in skills or wage expectations, so that they can better secure job matches.

Auto-inclusion, auto-application or auto-funding approaches would not only require significantly more public funding, but also weaken our efforts in targeting support at those who truly need the extra assistance.

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BREAKDOWN OF ANNUAL FOREIGN WORKER LEVIES COLLECTED

8 **Mr Louis Ng Kok Kwang** asked the Minister for Manpower (a) what is the annual breakdown of foreign worker levies which have been collected each year since 2012; and (b) whether the Ministry will consider channelling some of these levies into a fund to provide subsidies for (i) households who need foreign domestic workers (FDWs) but are unable to afford the costs or (ii) financial assistance to FDWs who require help in exceptional circumstances.

Mr Lim Swee Say: The annual breakdown of foreign domestic worker (FDW) levies collected since 2012 is as follows:

FY	Total FDW levy collections
2012	\$495 million
2013	\$429 million
2014	\$443 million
2015	\$353 million
2016	\$342 million

Similar to other sources of Government revenue, the levies collected go into the Consolidated Fund. This is then used to fund all areas of Government expenditures including financial assistance schemes to support households in need.

One such assistance scheme is the FDW Grant administered by the Agency of Integrated Care. Eligible households with family members who require permanent assistance with three or more Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) can apply for an FDW Grant of \$120 per month. This grant is means-tested and can be used to offset the cost of hiring an FDW. Since 2012, over 17,000 have benefitted from the FDW Grant.

Additionally, Singaporean households with children, elderly persons, or persons who require help with at least one ADL are offered a concessionary FDW levy rate of \$60, much lower than the full FDW levy rate of \$265.

FDWs who are in need of financial assistance can already turn to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) like the Centre for Domestic Employees (CDE). These NGOs play an important role and have raised funds to provide humanitarian aid to FDWs. Instead of the government providing direct financial assistance to FDWs, we should continue to support the work of these NGOs.

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PROPORTION OF WORKERS RE-EMPLOYED OVER LAST FIVE YEARS

9 **Mr Desmond Choo** asked the Minister for Manpower (a) what is the proportion of workers re-employed over the last five years, and (b) what is the proportion of re-employed workers who are re-employed without wage adjustments.

Mr Lim Swee Say: Based on MOM's Labour Market Supplementary Survey, from 2012 to 2016, over 98% of private sector local employees who wished to continue working were offered re-employment at age 62. This included over 95% who accepted re-employment in the

same job, be it on a new or existing contract.

Of those who accepted re-employment in the same job at age 62, around 96% did not receive any cut in basic wages in 2012. This proportion rose to 98% in 2016.

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POLICY ON USE OF SMARTPHONES IN ARMY CAMPS

10 **Er Dr Lee Bee Wah** asked the Minister for Defence since the relaxation of the policy on the use of smartphones in army camps in March 2016, how many SAF personnel have taken up the offer and disabled or sandblasted the camera lens on their smartphones so that they can use the phones in the camps' red zones.

Dr Ng Eng Hen: The security zoning system was introduced in September 2012 to allow servicemen to carry camera equipped mobile phones into SAF camps to facilitate the use of information technology, whilst protecting the security of sensitive information in SAF premises. Under the security zoning system, camp complexes are divided into Red and Green Zones. Our servicemen are allowed to bring in camera-enabled mobile phones into Green Zones while no camera-enabled devices are allowed into Red Zones. Unauthorised photography and videography remain prohibited in both zones. Our servicemen are briefed on the importance of maintaining information security and are aware of the need for individual responsibility to abide by the requirements.

The SAF has progressively refined security zoning in SAF camps and premises, balancing the need for security with greater flexibility for servicemen. The security zoning has worked well and has not compromised security. Since 2012, we have consolidated spaces involving sensitive and classified information into Red Zones, while allowing servicemen who work in the less-sensitive Green Zones greater flexibility to use their camera-enabled mobile phones. On 1 March 2016, further revisions were made to enable servicemen to bring tablets and laptops into Green Zones. For Red Zones, camera-enabled mobile phones whose camera functions have been disabled in compliance with the SAF's standards are allowed.

For SAF personnel working in camps that have both Green and Red Zones, less than 10% of the population disable or sandblast the camera lens of their mobile phones because (a) the majority of the servicemen operate within Green Zones, (b) servicemen with camera smartphones may choose to deposit their phones in locker facilities before entering Red Zones,

and (c) some servicemen prefer to use non-camera smartphones. For the remaining Red-Zoned camps, about three-quarters of the servicemen disable their camera on the smartphone and the remaining one-quarter prefer to use a non-camera smartphone. These smartphones are subjected to security checks and verifications.

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SUBSIDIES FOR NSMEN TO BUY PERSONAL TABLETS AND LAPTOPS FOR E-LEARNING USE

11 **Er Dr Lee Bee Wah** asked the Minister for Defence whether the Ministry will consider giving subsidies for NSmen to buy personal tablets and laptops for e-learning use given the relaxation on the usage of electronic devices in army camps.

Dr Ng Eng Hen: As part of the 3rd Generation SAF learning transformation, the SAF uses digital learning tools via its LEARNet platform, which allows national servicemen to access online training content for self-directed learning. National servicemen who need to access LEARNet for e-learning will be provided with the necessary electronic devices. For instance, recruits in BMTC are issued tablets to access e-learning modules on weapon handling and individual field craft during their Basic Military Training. As these devices are provided, there is no need to use their own personal electronic devices to access the online training materials, and hence no subsidy is provided. NSmen from low income households who require financial assistance to purchase electronic devices can benefit from the Infocomm Media Development Authority's Home Access Programme. Under the scheme, eligible families are provided with home Internet access and basic computing equipment, such as a tablet, at subsidised rates.

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E-REGISTRATION WITH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FOR SINGAPOREANS TRAVELLING ABROAD IN VIEW OF THREATS TO GLOBAL SAFETY

12 **Mr Seah Kian Peng** asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs in view of the increasing threats to global safety, what are the Ministry's plans to get more Singaporeans to e-register with the Ministry when they travel.

Dr Vivian Balakrishnan: MFA encourages Singaporeans to eRegister their overseas travels through the MFA website or MFA@SG mobile application in our public outreach and messaging. To get more Singaporeans to do so, we will continue to make it easier and more convenient for them. For example, we have reduced the number of fields required to make the process more user-friendly. The MFA App is now linked to the Ministry of Home Affairs SGSecure application. We have also collaborated with SATS Ltd to allow Singaporeans to eRegister via SATS' new travel application, and we are open to work with other partners to improve our consular services. We will continue to leverage technology to offer more convenient online platforms. One of our current priorities is to finalise the MFA Chatbot -- in collaboration with Govtech -- which can interact with users through conversational channels on social media platforms such as Facebook Messenger, and allow users to eRegister. While we continue to explore different platforms for eRegistration, we are mindful that it is essentially a voluntary exercise. As our resources are often stretched and focused on providing assistance to those in genuine need during crises and emergencies, we also urge Singaporeans to do their part by taking precautions and practicing personal responsibility by staying vigilant, observing local laws, purchasing travel insurance, and staying in touch with family and friends when overseas.

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MOTORISTS AND TAXI DRIVERS COMMITTING SAME TRAFFIC OFFENCE IN PAST THREE YEARS

13 **Mr Gan Thiam Poh** asked the Minister for Home Affairs (a) how many motorists have committed the same traffic offence (i) once (ii) twice and (iii) more than thrice in each of the past three years; (b) what is the percentage of such offenders against the total number of licensed motorists; (c) how many of such offences have been successfully appealed against; and (d) what is the percentage of successful appeals out of the total number of offences in each category.

14 **Mr Gan Thiam Poh** asked the Minister for Home Affairs (a) how many taxi drivers have committed the same traffic offence (i) once (ii) twice and (iii) more than thrice per year in each of the past three years; (b) what is the percentage of such offenders against the total number of licensed taxi drivers; (c) how many offences have been successfully appealed against; and (d) what is the percentage of successful appeals out of the total number of offences by taxi drivers in each category.

Mr K Shanmugam: The majority of motorists who committed traffic violations were not repeat offenders.

For the most common traffic violation of speeding, in the past three years, 4.7% of all licensed motorists were first-time offenders, 0.6% had offended twice, while 0.1% had offended more than twice.

The numbers are lower for other violations. In the past three years, for running a red light, 1.6% of all licensed motorists were first-time offenders, while 0.02% were repeat offenders.

The proportion of taxi drivers who were traffic offenders was higher.

For speeding, in the past three years, 8.9% of all taxi drivers were first-time offenders, 2.2% had offended twice, while 0.8% had offended more than twice.

For running a red light, 2.7% of all taxi drivers were first-time offenders, while 0.1% were repeat offenders.

The Traffic Police (TP) has continually engaged motorists, taxi drivers, the taxi companies and National Taxi Association (NTA) on safe driving practices. For example, TP has collaborated with taxi companies to remind taxi drivers of accident-prone and enforcement areas through the Mobile Data Terminals in taxis. To reduce speeding and beating of red lights, TP has erected more prominent warning signs of the use of enforcement cameras.

In respect of appeals, it has to be noted that traffic violations impact on the safety of other motorists and pedestrians. Very few appeals are acceded to, and only where there are very strong extenuating factors such as a medical emergency.

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AVERAGE RESPONSE TIME BY EMERGENCY SERVICES TO ROAD

ACCIDENTS

15 Ms **Joan Pereira** asked the Minister for Home Affairs (a) since 2015, what has been the average response time by the emergency services to road accidents involving injuries and fatalities; and (b) whether the Ministry will consider new systems, such as eCall which is an emergency call feature installed in all cars sold within the EU, to reduce the response time by automatically calling the nearest emergency centre.

Mr K Shanmugam: Over the past three years, SCDF responded to road traffic accidents

that required rescue operations (such as the extrication of trapped victims), within 8 minutes, 90.1% of the time. SCDF responded to other road traffic accidents that required ambulances to attend to injuries but did not require rescue operations, within 11 minutes, 84.6% of the time. These were within SCDF's target response times for rescue and ambulance calls respectively.

An eCall system involves the installation of an in-vehicle device, which will automatically contact and send its location to a helpline in the event of an accident. The eCall system can help to improve response time, but it also faces implementation challenges such as high false alarm rates. SCDF will continue to monitor the development of the eCall system as well as other technologies, and study their applicability to Singapore.

SCDF must always be ready to respond to emergencies promptly. False alarms, non-emergency and nuisance calls bog down SCDF's '995' call centre, impose additional load on SCDF's resources, and deprive persons in distress of timely intervention from SCDF. We urge members of the public to exercise civic responsibility and call '995' only when necessary.

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JUVENILE DELINQUENTS BY GENDER SINCE 2013

16 **Dr Chia Shi-Lu** asked the Minister for Home Affairs in respect of annual statistics for juvenile delinquents since 2013 and by gender (a) what are the five main categories of crimes committed; (b) what are the distributions by age groups (below 13, 13-14, 15-16, above 16 years old); and (c) what are the distributions by racial groups.

Mr K Shanmugam: The youth crime situation in Singapore is under control.² The number of youth offenders arrested has gone down in the past decade by about 35%, from 4,280 in 2006 to 2,788 in 2016.

Shop Theft, Bicycle Theft, Other Forms of Theft, Rioting, and Sexual Penetration of Minor under 16 Years Old, were the most common offences.

The age and gender distribution of youth offenders from 2013 to June 2017 is in the table below.

² "Youth" refers to persons from 7 years old to below 20 years old.

	7 – Below 12 years old	12 – Below 14 years old	14 – Below 16 years old	16 – Below 18 years old	18 – Below 20 years old	Total	As a percentage of Total Youths
Male	5.3% (550)	11.2% (1,167)	27.0% (2,827)	31.3% (3,273)	25.2% (2,637)	100% (10,454)	77.5%
Female	4.4% (134)	11.2% (340)	26.2% (794)	30.0% (908)	28.2% (853)	100% (3,029)	22.5%
Total	5.1% (684)	11.2% (1,507)	26.9% (3,621)	31.0% (4,181)	25.9% (3,490)	100% (13,483)	

There is an over-representation of minority races among youth offenders. Police work with self-help and community groups including Yayasan MENDAKI and Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA), to address these concerns.

Indeed, youth crime is a multi-faceted problem that requires a multi-agency approach for effective and lasting results. Educational institutions, other law enforcement agencies, the social services sector and parents all have a role to play. Police will continue to work with relevant stakeholders and partners to keep our youths away from crime.

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SUGAR CONTENT IN FORMULA MILK

17 **Mr Yee Chia Hsing** asked the Minister for Health whether the Ministry currently monitors or regulates the amount of sugar in infant and children's formula milk so as to prevent an excessive preference for sweetness in later years.

Mr Gan Kim Yong: Based on a recent survey by the Health Promotion Board (HPB), none of the infant formula milk for children 0 to 12 months contained any added sugar. As for children's formula milk for 1 year and above, two products contained added sugar of around 2g per 100ml of milk. Another product, a high-calorie formula for supplemental nutrition, contained 7g of added sugar per 100ml of milk.

HPB recommends that children aged 1 year and above can take full cream milk, if they are eating and growing well. HPB further recommends that parents planning to give their children high-calorie formula milk as a nutritional supplement should consult their child's paediatrician or nutritionist.

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WITHDRAWAL OF SUBSIDIES FOR SENIORS' MOBILITY AND ENABLING FUND

18 **Ms Joan Pereira** asked the Minister for Health under what circumstances will subsidies for the Seniors' Mobility and Enabling Fund be withdrawn if there are no changes in one's household income.

Mr Gan Kim Yong: Under the Seniors' Mobility & Enabling Fund (SMF), Singaporeans aged 60 years and above can apply for means-tested subsidies to offset the cost of assistive devices, home healthcare items and transport services to MOH-funded eldercare and dialysis centres. They would need to meet the scheme's household monthly income criteria and assessed by qualified healthcare staff to require the equipment or services to live independently in the community.

As long as they continue to receive care services and the eligibility conditions continue to be met, the SMF subsidies will not be withdrawn. Seniors with queries or appeals on the SMF can contact the Agency for Integrated Care.

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PROGRESS OF STUDY ON ARCHAEOLOGY IN SINGAPORE

19 **Assoc Prof Daniel Goh Pei Siong** asked the Minister for Culture, Community and Youth (a) whether the Ministry can provide an update on the progress of the study on archaeology in Singapore that has been undertaken to address gaps in law and regulations in this field; and (b) when can the findings and recommendations of the study be published.

Ms Grace Fu Hai Yien: The review carried out by the National Heritage Board (NHB) of its legal powers on archaeology is on-going.

NHB met members of the archaeology community in 2016 to gather feedback on proposed legislative amendments to the NHB Act and NHB's archaeology related strategies and initiatives.

Based on feedback gathered from these engagement sessions, we agreed that there is a need to do the following:

- Clarify the ownership of archaeological artefacts recovered;

- Put in place regulations or guidelines governing how Singapore conducts archaeological excavations;
- Report all archaeological finds to NHB;
- Ensure that archaeological excavations or investigations are conducted at an early stage or in tandem with development works where necessary; and
- Protect maritime archaeological sites and artefacts.

NHB is exploring legislative changes to the NHB Act to address the above issues and will be organising another session with the stakeholders in October 2017 to seek their views for the various legislative changes, strategies and initiatives that are being proposed to protect Singapore's archaeological heritage.

NHB will also seek feedback on its approach and strategies for archaeology during the public consultation phase for the broader Heritage Plan for Singapore in early 2018. Following this, the final strategies and initiatives regarding archaeology will be announced next year, at the launch of the Heritage Plan for Singapore.

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REVIEW OF HDB'S GOODWILL REPAIR ASSISTANCE SCHEME

20 **Dr Intan Azura Mokhtar** asked the Minister for National Development whether the Ministry will consider reviewing the Goodwill Repair Assistance Scheme to (i) have HDB bear the full cost of repairs for ceiling leaks/structural defects resulting from normal wear and tear or (ii) have only the unit owner who had carried out internal renovation works that may have led to the ceiling leaks, to co-share the cost of the goodwill repairs with HDB.

Mr Lawrence Wong: Flat owners are responsible for the maintenance of the interior of their flats. The repair of leaks in the party structure (i.e. the floor slab between flats) is a joint responsibility between upper- and lower-floor flat owners. Hence, when there is a leak, both upper- and lower-floor flat owners will need to liaise with one another to investigate and carry out repairs.

Notwithstanding, HDB does offer assistance to affected flat owners through the Goodwill Repair Assistance (GRA) scheme where HDB pays 50% of the ceiling leak repair cost, while the remaining 50% is shared equally between the upper- and lower-floor flat owners. There is no plan for HDB to bear the full cost of repairs under the GRA scheme, as this would remove the

responsibility of flat owners for the maintenance and upkeep of their flat.

The GRA provides assistance to flat owners to repair ceiling leaks and spalling concrete due to natural wear and tear. For cases where investigations ascertain that leaks are due to renovations carried out at the upper floor flat, the upper floor flat owner will be fully responsible for rectifying the leak, and will have to bear the full cost of repair.

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT/STUDIES FOR LAND ACQUISITION FOR EXPANSION OF TENGAH AIR BASE

21 **Mr Louis Ng Kok Kwang** asked the Minister for National Development whether any environmental impact assessment or studies have been done in relation to the land acquisition for the expansion of Tengah Air Base.

Mr Lawrence Wong: An environmental study will be carried out before the land preparation works for the expansion of Tengah Air Base (TAB) commence. The study will guide the implementation of mitigation measures to minimise the potential impact of the TAB expansion on flora and fauna in that area.

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HDB FLAT OWNERS ILLEGALLY ACQUIRING ANOTHER PROPERTY WITHIN MINIMUM OCCUPANCY PERIOD AND SELLING THEIR HDB FLAT THEREAFTER

22 **Mr Murali Pillai** asked the Minister for National Development whether HDB will update its powers under the Housing and Development Act to enable it to take enforcement action against flat owners who, within the minimum occupancy period, acquire an interest in another property in contravention of HDB regulations and thereafter sell their HDB flat to prevent the flat from being acquired under section 56(1) of the Act.

Mr Lawrence Wong: HDB flats are public housing and are meant for owner occupation. The purchase of another property by an HDB flat owner within the minimum occupation period is an infringement under the Housing & Development (H&D) Act. The penalty for such infringements is the compulsory acquisition of the HDB flat under Section 56 1(b) of the H&D

Act, or the imposition of a financial penalty on the flat owners under the Housing and Development (Financial Penalties) Rules 2015.

HDB monitors and takes enforcement actions against flat owners who acquire an interest in another property in contravention of HDB regulations. In addition, there are safeguards in place to prevent such flat owners from selling their HDB flat, to prevent the flat from being acquired under Section 56 (1) of the Act. The flat owner will only be allowed to sell the HDB flat after investigations on any suspected infringement are completed, and the appropriate action taken. At this juncture, HDB has sufficient legislative powers to take action against such flat owners.

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ESCALATOR ACCIDENTS IN PAST THREE YEARS

23 **Assoc Prof Daniel Goh Pei Siong** asked the Minister for National Development (a) how many escalator accidents have happened in the past three years that have not been due to user behaviour; and (b) whether there has been an improvement in escalator safety since the introduction of a stricter maintenance regime in November 2016.

Mr Lawrence Wong: Since the mandatory reporting of escalator incidents started on 1 November 2016, there have been 13 incidents due to technical faults (i.e. not due to user behaviour).

As the tightened maintenance regime was only put in place in November 2016, we are still monitoring its effects. Improving escalator safety goes beyond having a robust maintenance regime. Everyone – the authorities, owners, escalator contractors, and the public – has a role to play. BCA has been working with building owners and transport operators to raise public awareness on the safe use of escalators. The public also has to exercise due care when using escalators. This includes safe practices like holding onto handrails and not leaning on the sides of the escalators. Users with prams or bulky items, as well as the elderly and the infirm, should also try to take lifts where possible.

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NOISE LEVEL BREACHES AT CONSTRUCTION SITES

24 **Assoc Prof Fatimah Lateef** asked the Minister for the Environment and Water

Resources (a) in the last five years, how many construction companies have breached the rules on (i) noise levels at construction sites (ii) dengue breeding at work sites and (iii) causing disamenities by working on Sundays and public holidays; and (b) what proportion of these companies are recurrent offenders.

Mr Masagos Zulkifli B M M: The National Environment Agency (NEA) stipulates maximum permissible noise limits for construction sites. In September 2011, the NEA introduced the “no-work rule” whereby work activities are not permitted at construction sites located within 150 metres of residential premises and noise-sensitive premises such as hospitals and schools on Sundays and Public Holidays. In January 2017, the “no-work rule” was adjusted to permit a list of quieter works such as painting and wall plastering in such sites on Sundays and Public Holidays.

Between January 2013 and June 2017, the NEA penalised 411 construction companies for exceeding the noise limits at construction sites and 723 companies for breaching the “no-work rule”. Of these, about half were repeat offenders. The maximum penalty for violating the construction noise limits or the “no-work rule” is a court prosecution with a fine not exceeding \$40,000.

Besides enforcement, the NEA has set up a fund to encourage and incentivise the construction industry to control and reduce noise at source. The Quieter Construction Fund (QCF) provides subsidies to contractors who invest in quieter construction technologies, noise control equipment and other innovative solutions.

Construction sites with poor housekeeping are potential grounds for mosquito breeding. Over the last five years, the NEA carried out over 45,500 inspections of construction sites and issued more than 4,500 summonses to contractors for mosquito breeding. Over 420 court prosecutions have also been taken against errant contractors for repeat offences and more than 380 Stop Work Orders (SWOs) have been issued. The majority of these enforcement actions were taken after 2013 as a result of a tightened enforcement regime.

Notwithstanding the attention given to construction sites, many mosquito breeding sites are in fact found in homes. It is, therefore, important for everyone, including businesses and home owners, to remain vigilant and play his part to prevent mosquito breeding.

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LOCATION OF HAWKER CENTRE TO BE BUILT IN BUKIT BATOK TOWN

25 **Mr Murali Pillai** asked the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources (a) what will be the location of the hawker centre to be built in Bukit Batok Town; and (b) what is the expected date of completion of the hawker centre.

Mr Masagos Zulkifli B M M: Bukit Batok is one of the towns identified to have a new hawker centre by 2027. My Ministry is at the early stages of planning for this centre and we will provide more details on the location and timeline when the plans are ready.

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EFFECTIVENESS OF ENFORCEMENT OF TWO-HOUR RULE ON DISPOSAL OF LEFTOVER CAT FOOD IN PUBLIC SPACES

26 **Miss Cheryl Chan Wei Ling** asked the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources for the past three years, how effective has enforcement been in ensuring cat feeders abide with the two-hour rule of disposing any leftover cat food in public spaces.

Mr Masagos Zulkifli B M M: The National Environment Agency (NEA) oversees the cleanliness of public spaces in Singapore. Food left behind from the feeding of stray animals may attract pests such as cockroaches and rats and endanger public health. Containers with stagnant water also enable mosquitoes to breed.

Members of the public who feed stray animals without clearing the leftover food or food containers may be fined up to \$2,000 for the first offence under the Environmental Public Health Act.

Over the past three years, the NEA has received about 1,600 cases of feedback on the feeding of stray cats. In most cases, the cat feeders were compliant in clearing any leftover food within two hours. NEA had to proceed with enforcement action in only two cases where the cat feeders refused to comply with NEA's instructions to clean up after the feed.

NEA and the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) also request Town Councils to dispose leftover food and litter to safeguard public hygiene and to put up advisories to remind their residents to clean up after feeding. In addition, both NEA and AVA will continue to work with animal welfare groups such as the Cat Welfare Society (CWS) to ensure proper

stray animal feeding practices. AVA is also working with CWS to produce a community engagement handbook which includes information on responsible feeding practices. The handbook will be distributed to community cat carers and volunteers.

Everyone has a part to play in keeping our public spaces clean. We would like to urge all animal feeders to act responsibly and clear any leftover food or containers after feeding stray animals in our public spaces.

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OUTCOME OF PILOT INSTALLATION OF FOOD WASTE DIGESTERS IN SCHOOLS

27 **Mr Melvin Yong Yik Chye** asked the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources (a) what is the outcome of the pilot installation of food waste digesters in schools; and (b) whether the Ministry will consider installing such food waste digesters in more schools and other places such as hawker centres and coffee shops to promote recycling.

Mr Masagos Zulkifli B M M: In April this year, the National Environment Agency (NEA) launched the 'Love Your Food @ Schools' Project to encourage schools to establish a culture of not wasting food. To complement this food waste reduction effort, NEA partnered 10 schools to pilot the use of food waste digesters, and to involve them in a range of activities such as food waste segregation, educational talks on food waste, and learning journeys for neighbouring schools and community partners.

We have seen positive results in participating schools. For example, food waste has been reduced from 18kg to less than 10kg per day in Greendale Primary School, and from 24kg to 18kg per day in Admiralty Primary School. The pilot is expected to last two years. At the end of the pilot, we will evaluate the closed-loop food waste management programme and consider future plans for other schools.

My Ministry sees potential for greater use of food waste digesters. They could be deployed in hawker centres and coffee shops as the Member has suggested, or other premises such as shopping malls. However, we recognise that there are economic and practical constraints, such as the cost of the digesters and availability of space. Currently, we are conducting a pilot at Block 628 Ang Mo Kio Ave 4 Market to digest food waste generated by stallholders and patrons on-site. Under the contract for Public Waste Collection in the Pasir Ris – Bedok sector, on-site food

waste treatment will be made available at two hawker centres – Block 58 New Upper Changi Road hawker centre and Block 16 Bedok South Road hawker centre. We will deploy food waste digesters at other hawker centres where suitable.

We hope to see more businesses implement food waste reduction initiatives and adopt on-site food waste treatment solutions. Businesses interested in installing on-site food waste digesters may also apply to the NEA 3R Fund for support.

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RACIAL AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTIONS OF STUDENTS IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

28 **Mr Gan Thiam Poh** asked the Minister for Education (Schools) (a) what percentage of the racial and household income distributions of students in the primary and secondary schools differs from the national racial and income distributions; (b) whether such differences have an impact on the schools' results; and (c) what measures are in place to assist schools where there is a negative impact from the difference in racial and income distributions.

Mr Ng Chee Meng: While all our primary and secondary schools deliver the national curriculum, they may vary in terms of the distinctive programmes they offer, their culture and other characteristics. Together, these factors influence parent and student choice, and contribute to variations in ethnic and socio-economic profile of students in each school.

Today, about 1 in 10 schools differ noticeably from the national norm in terms of racial distribution, excluding the SAP schools which would naturally have a much higher proportion of Chinese than the national norm. The numbers have remained stable over the last few years. MOE currently does not collect information on students' household income across the system.

Worldwide, socio-economic status, or SES, is known to correlate positively with students' academic performance. As for ethnicity, while we see differences in the performance of students from the different ethnic groups, the performance of Malay students at the national examinations has improved over time, closing the gap with the students from other ethnic groups.

However, SES and ethnicity are not the key determinants of student performance. Many other factors contribute to student achievement, including student motivation, as well as support at home and from the broader community, and the quality of school experience.

What is more important is that MOE is committed to provide a quality education for our

students regardless of their background. All school leaders and teachers undergo quality and continuous professional development and good practices are disseminated across schools, with high quality curriculum resources are centrally provided. MOE also resources schools based on their needs and student profiles. For example, depending on the profile of the school, more manpower may be provided for counselling and student support and levelling-up programmes, such as the Learning Support Programmes and the School-based Dyslexia Remediation Programme. Financial assistance has also been enhanced to ensure that needy students can continue to access education. MOE also partners with the community, including Self-Help Groups (SHGs), to reach out to families or students who need additional assistance beyond MOE.

Through these efforts, our schools have shown results in enabling their students, regardless of their background, to excel and perform beyond expectation. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a series of international studies conducted by the OECD, Singapore consistently has one of the highest percentages of resilient students (i.e. students from disadvantaged background but achieve good performance in school) among the participating countries. MOE will continue to ensure that an education in our schools remain accessible to all Singaporeans and that no one will be left behind.

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PASSING RATE FOR NATIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS AWARD/ASSESSMENT SCHEME IN 2007 AND 2016

29 **Miss Cheryl Chan Wei Ling** asked the Minister for Education (Schools) (a) what is the passing rate for the National Physical Fitness Award/Assessment (NAPFA) Scheme in 2007 and 2016; (b) whether students are adequately prepared in schools for the annual assessment; and (c) for students who are unable to manage the 2.4km walk-run, how do schools assist them in coping within their ability.

Mr Ng Chee Meng: Since the review of the National Physical Fitness Award (NAPFA) scheme in 2014, the NAPFA test has been reframed as an educational tool to teach students the various components of fitness, and how these contribute to active and healthy living. The frequency of the NAPFA test for students has correspondingly been revised from an annual test to alternate year testing from Primary 4 onwards.

Fitness training is therefore integrated into all physical activities within the Physical Education (PE) curriculum. Specific knowledge and skills on training for fitness are imparted as part of the Physical Health and Fitness component.

Aligned with this, schools teach students how they could train for fitness, including for the 2.4km Run-Walk by building from low intensity training and progressing gradually towards the actual NAPFA test. Students are also taught to set personal targets appropriate to their individual ability, with the focus on self-improvement rather than passing the NAPFA test.

The reduced emphasis on the NAPFA test and test frequency allows students to use the freed-up time for more diverse physical activities. It also encourages them to enjoy physical activities and sports during PE lessons, and develop life-long habits for sustaining health and fitness. As NAPFA test is meant as an educational tool, and not as a national fitness index for students, there is no basis for comparing NAPFA test passing rates nationally over time.

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HIGHEST LEVEL OF MAINSTREAM EDUCATION ATTAINED BY HIGH-FUNCTIONING INTELLECTUALLY-DISABLED CHILDREN

30 Ms **Rahayu Mahzam** asked the Minister for Education (Schools) (a) to date, what is the highest level of mainstream education attained by high-functioning intellectually disabled children; and (b) what is the support given to assist high-functioning intellectually disabled children to remain in mainstream schools.

Mr Ng Chee Meng: “High-functioning intellectually disabled” children would be referring to those with mild intellectual disability. Students with Intellectual Disability usually show significant limitations in cognitive and daily living skills, as expressed in conceptual, social and practical adaptive functions. They may also have emotional and motivational problems arising from persistent difficulties in learning.

Typically, the needs of students with intellectual disability are best served in the Special Education (SPED) schools as they have customised programmes where these students are taught by specially trained teachers who can cater to their specific learning needs and supported by allied professionals such as allied health, paramedical, social and psychological support and post-school transition support.

These schools also offer a customised curriculum with a vocational education programme

to equip students with independent living and workplace readiness skills. Some of these students eventually attain vocational certification and/or progress to ITE.

There are two SPED schools offering vocational certification programmes for students with mild intellectual disability – APSN Delta Senior School and Metta School which offers the Workforce Skills Qualifications and the ITE Skills Certificate, respectively. Generally, the students are able to be gainfully employed upon obtaining their vocational certification.

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ANNUAL INFOGRAPHIC ON USAGE OF NATIONAL MANPOWER, TRAINING AND UPGRADING SCHEMES

31 **Mr Patrick Tay Teck Guan** asked the Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) whether the Ministry will consider issuing an infographic annually to update individuals and companies of their usage of national manpower, training and upgrading schemes and subsidies such as those under Adapt and Grow and SkillsFuture.

Mr Ong Ye Kung: Agencies such as SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) and Workforce Singapore (WSG) actively promote their schemes and programmes to encourage take up. They do so with the help of industry associations and unions. We also encourage employers to invest in the workforce, and to build companies' capabilities to invest in human capital development. This is done through programmes such as the SkillsFuture Leadership Development Initiative, and the SkillsFuture SME Mentors programme.

Later this year, we will launch the MySkillsFuture portal to empower Singaporeans to chart their own career and learning pathways. Individuals will be able to use MySkillsFuture to regularly check on their usage of their SkillsFuture Credit. We will also be launching the SkillsFuture Advice for Individuals programme to provide advice at the community level on how Singaporeans can benefit from the different SkillsFuture and Adapt and Grow programmes.

Given the various outreach efforts, and that the schemes are constantly evolving, we do not plan to issue individualised updates on annual utilisation of such programmes. However, we certainly hope that individuals and companies take an active interest in upgrading themselves, and leverage on various programs and schemes.

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JUVENILE OFFENDERS ADMITTED INTO JUVENILE HOMES SINCE 2013

32 **Dr Chia Shi-Lu** asked the Minister for Social and Family Development (a) how many juvenile offenders have been admitted into juvenile homes each year since 2013, by gender; and (b) what is the average length of stay in the homes, by gender.

Mr Desmond Lee: Under the Children and Young Persons Act, juveniles who commit offences may be ordered by the Youth Court to be sent to a Juvenile Rehabilitation Centre (JRC) or a Place of Detention. Those sent to a Place of Detention are typically also placed on probation.

The Singapore Boys' Home (SBH) and Singapore Girls' Home (SGH) function as both types of facilities. The number of juveniles admitted to SBH and SGH each year is in Table 1.

Table 1 – Juveniles Admitted to SBH and SGH		
Year of Admission	SBH (Male)	SGH (Female)
2013	233	45
2014	224	33
2015	194	29
2016	130	26

Of the juvenile offenders who were discharged from the JRC between 2013 and 2016, the average duration of stay was 20 months in SBH and 24 months in SGH. In that same period, the average duration of stay for those discharged from a Place of Detention was three weeks each in SBH and SGH.

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EXTENSION OR PERMANENT WAIVER OF APPLICATION FEE FOR LASTING POWER OF ATTORNEY FORM 1

33 **Mr Pritam Singh** asked the Minister for Social and Family Development (a) whether the Ministry intends to further extend or permanently waive the application fee for the Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) Form 1 beyond the 31 August 2018 extension; and (b) how many new LPA Form 1 applications have been received by the Office of the Public Guardian since the August 2016 announcement of the extended fee waiver for LPA Form 1 applications for Singaporeans.

Mr Desmond Lee: More Singaporeans are taking steps to safeguard their future by making a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA). The LPA empowers a person to appoint someone reliable and trustworthy to act on his behalf should he lose the capacity to make decisions.

We first waived the LPA Form 1 application fee from 1 September 2014 to 31 August 2016. We subsequently extended the fee waiver from 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2018. From 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017, we have received 11,503 unique LPA Form 1 applications.

We are currently studying how effective the application fee waiver and other measures have been, so far, in encouraging people to make their LPAs early.

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NUMBER OF COMCARE APPLICATIONS WITHDRAWN AFTER SUBMISSION

34 **Mr Leon Perera** asked the Minister for Social and Family Development (a) for each year from 2011 to 2016, what is the number of ComCare applicants who have withdrawn their applications after having submitted them; and (b) what is the breakdown of the reasons for their withdrawal.

Mr Desmond Lee: Between 2011 and 2016, the proportion of ComCare applications that were withdrawn after submission averaged about 2% per year.

Applicants may withdraw their applications because they subsequently find a job and hence no longer require help. They may also withdraw their applications because they do not want to share the necessary documents or allow us to speak with their family members to better understand their financial situation.

Whatever the case, we will always advise the applicants that they can return to the Social Service Office should they change their minds and decide to step forward for assistance in future.

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NUMBER OF CHILDREN BELOW AGE OF FOUR DIAGNOSED WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

35 **Ms Rahayu Mahzam** asked the Minister for Social and Family Development (a) what is the current percentage of children below the age of four who are diagnosed with special needs;

and (b) of these, how many have been diagnosed with intellectual disabilities.

Mr Desmond Lee: Child development programmes in our public healthcare system are provided by KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH) and National University Hospital (NUH). These programmes extend medical diagnosis, assessment and early intervention services to children aged 0 to 6 years old who have developmental needs and behavioural issues. In 2016, 2,170 children under the age of four (or about 1.4% of the cohorts) were diagnosed with varying degrees of developmental issues and needs.

It is difficult to make a firm diagnosis of intellectual disability for very young children, except for those with specific genetic conditions, severe autism and severe cerebral palsy that are known to cause intellectual disabilities. Some will grow out of their developmental challenges after early intervention.

Early intervention remains a key area of focus for children with developmental needs to maximise their potential. Besides KKH and NUH, early intervention services in the community are provided through MSF-funded Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC) and Development Support (DS) programme for children with milder needs in preschools.

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NUMBER OF CHILDREN REFERRED TO EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMME FOR INFANTS AND CHILDREN IN LAST FIVE YEARS

36 **Ms Rahayu Mahzam** asked the Minister for Social and Family Development (a) in the last five years, what is the number of children referred to the Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC); (b) what is the current average waiting time for the child to be enrolled in EIPIC centres upon application; and (c) whether there are initiatives in place to enhance the curriculum for EIPIC and building the capabilities of the educators who deliver the programme.

Mr Desmond Lee: The Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC) provides developmental and therapy services for infants and young children at risk of moderate to severe developmental delays. Early intervention maximises their developmental potential and minimises the risk of secondary disabilities developing.

There are currently 21 EIPIC centres run by 10 Voluntary Welfare Organisations (VWOs) located across Singapore. From 2012 to 2016, a total of about 6,500 children were referred to EIPIC centres, or approximately 1,300 children annually.

The average waiting time for enrolment in an EIPIC centre today is approximately five months, a reduction from the six month waiting time in 2016. By 2018, there will be 500 more EIPIC places, bringing the total to 3,200 places. This should bring down the waiting time further.

Parents may also consider enrolling their children in selected private early intervention centres under the Pilot for Private Intervention Providers (PIIP) programme. This serves as an alternative to VWO EIPIC centres. Children enrolled in these centres are similarly subsidised for the early intervention programme.

Currently, children with mild developmental needs are supported through the Development Support (DS) programmes in selected preschools. MSF is studying how DS can be enhanced to support children with moderate developmental needs within the preschool setting. This will facilitate timely support and intervention for children with mild to moderate developmental needs in their natural setting.

All EIPIC teachers must hold an Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Intervention (Special Needs) (ADESN).

MSF is currently working with the National Council of Social Service and SkillsFuture Singapore to develop the Skills Framework for Social Service (SF-SS), which will be ready in 2018. The framework will include a skills map that articulates the skills and competencies required to enter the profession and progress as EIPIC teachers, as well as professional development programmes that EIPIC teachers can take on for skills upgrading and mastery. This will better equip both existing EIPIC teachers and potential entrants to identify relevant training opportunities, and plan their professional development pathways.

MSF has also appointed consultants from KK Women's and Children's Hospital and National University Hospital to help EIPIC centres build capabilities and enhance early intervention standards.

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