

[About us](#)[Work passes](#)[Employment practices](#)[Workplace safety and health](#)[More](#) ✓[myMOM Portal](#)

Speech By Minister of State for Manpower Dinesh Vasu Dash at Ministry of Manpower at Committee of Supply 2026

Dinesh Vasu Dash, Minister of State for Manpower, Parliament House

3 March 2026 [Employment practices](#) [Foreign manpower](#) [Workplace safety and health](#) [Skills, training and development](#)

A. Introduction

A1. Minister Tan See Leng has set out MOM's bold agenda to equip our businesses to seize emerging opportunities and chart a course for growth. As we build the economy of tomorrow, our commitment is that each and every worker will be supported. And that no worker will be left behind!

A2. This is the spirit of a "We First" Singapore, where everyone has their place and can participate with dignity. Most importantly all contributions, particularly those from our vulnerable workers, will have to be recognised and uplifted.

A3. In my speech today, I will elaborate on three areas.

- a. First, our tripartite efforts to uplift lower-wage workers, and how we will progress this work in the next-bound;
- b. Second, our drive to strengthen workplace safety and health, such that our workers continue to return home safely to their loved ones; and
- c. And third, how we will continue to support our migrant workers, who live and work alongside us as they contribute to our nation.

B. Uplifting Lower-Wage Workers

B1. Let me start with our efforts, together with unions and employers, to uplift Lower-Wage Workers. These efforts embody the very heart of our social compact – our promise to walk with our lower-wage workers every step of the way. As you contribute to Singapore's progress, so too will you share in the rewards and opportunities that accompany that progress.

B2. We have forged over time a distinctly Singaporean approach to supporting our lower-wage workers. First, we drive sustainable wage improvement.

- a. We have uplifted wages for lower-wage workers without putting their jobs at risk through the Progressive Wage Model, or PWM.
 - i. PWMs serve as wage ladders across nine sectors and occupations. These are negotiated by tripartite partners with reference to considerations such as productivity and business conditions, ensuring that wage growth does not exceed what the sector or occupation can bear.
 - ii. PWMs also map out clear pathways for training and progression. Wage increments are therefore sustainable for employers, as they come alongside productivity growth.
- b. Lower-wage workers not covered by PWM may benefit from the Local Qualifying Salary, or LQS. Firms may pay their local workers at least the LQS if they hire foreign workers.
- c. Lower-wage workers receive additional support through the Workfare Income Supplement scheme, or WIS, which supplements their incomes and helps them save for retirement. Since its inception in 2007, WIS has supported over 1.1 million workers with \$12.7 billion in payments.
 - i. Associate Professor Jamus Lim called upon the Government to increase the qualifying monthly wage cap for WIS. We did so last year, when we raised the qualifying wage cap from \$2,500 to \$3,000.
 - ii. The 20th income percentile for for a full-time resident employee is at about \$2,800 currently. So, the WIS qualifying monthly wage cap of \$3,000 continues to target Singaporean workers with earnings in the bottom 20%, with some support to those that are slightly above. At the same time, we also increased WIS payments to up to \$4,900 per year.
 - iii. We have, and will continue to review WIS regularly to ensure it remains effective in supporting lower-wage workers, complementing the PWM and LQS.

B3. **Second, we provide various forms of support for businesses to transform.** As **Mr Melvin Yong** highlighted, business transformation is crucial as it enables sustainable wage growth through productivity improvement. It also unlocks opportunities for lower-wage workers to take up higher value-added job roles. Recognising that this is a process that takes time, and to cushion the impact on business costs, the Government introduced the Progressive Wage Credit Scheme, or PWCS, at Budget 2022.

B4. **Third, we enable progression for our lower-wage workers through support for training and upskilling.**

- a. Schemes such as Workfare Skills Support (WSS) reduce the opportunity cost of training for lower-wage workers.
- b. This opens doors for workers to move up in their careers, including progressing up PWM job ladders.

B5. Our approach had delivered tangible outcomes for lower-wage workers.

- a. Today, 150,000 lower-wage workers benefit from wage and career progression pathways through the PWM, more than five times the number in 2020.
- b. The LQS requirement was also broadened in 2022, such that firms hiring foreign manpower are required to pay the LQS to all their local workers. This ensures that no Singaporean worker is left behind. Another 104,000 lower-wage workers not covered by PWMs are therefore supported by the LQS.
- c. This has made a significant difference for the incomes of lower-wage workers. From 2021 to 2025, real income at the 20th percentile rose cumulatively by 10.1%, outpacing the 7.4% increase at the median level.
- d. Workers in PWM sectors have and will continue to see improvement in their wages, as our economy grows.
 - i. As an illustration, the baseline wage requirement for entry-level office and commercial cleaners has increased by about 50% cumulatively since 2021. By 2028, it will be \$2,420, almost twice the requirement in 2021 of \$1,274.
 - ii. Likewise, compared to 2021, entry-level outsourced security officers can also expect to earn a higher monthly gross wage by about 40% in 2026, and 60% in 2028.

ii. Supporting Wage Outcomes for Lower-Wage Workers

B6. This is progress that we can be proud of – progress that reflects the collective resolve of unions, employers and the Government working in unison to improve the livelihoods of our lower-wage workers. But we are committed to going even further. We will build on our efforts across each of these areas, to further uplift and upskill our lower-wage workers, and broaden the range of good jobs as recommended by the Economic Strategy Review Committee.

B7. First and foremost, we must sustain our momentum in uplifting wages.

- a. In 2025, tripartite partners announced updated wage schedules for Retail, In-House Security, Administrators, and Drivers.
- b. The remaining PWM sectors will negotiate their next-bound of wage schedules later this year.

B8. As announced by PM at Budget, the Government will also raise the LQS so that our lower-wage workers continue to see wage improvement.

- a. We will raise the LQS threshold from \$1,600 to \$1,800 for full-time local employees. This will be implemented from 1 Jul 2026.
- b. Raising the LQS to keep pace with wage growth ensures that locals are employed meaningfully, rather than token jobs just so that firms can access foreign workers.

iii. Encouraging Business Transformation

B9. Second, we will spur business transformation to raise productivity and create better jobs, including for our lower-wage workers. Mr Melvin Yong would be pleased to note that MOM will be introducing various initiatives in support of this.

a. Minister spoke about these initiatives earlier. For example, the SkillsFuture Workforce Development Grant (Job Redesign+) (WDG(JR+)) will be rolled out in March this year, to provide enhanced funding support for job redesign and workforce transformation, as part of the Enterprise Workforce Transformation Package (EWTP). We will also launch the redesigned SkillsFuture Enterprise Credit, or SFEC this year, to provide additional support for workforce development.

B10. Businesses have also shared their concerns around near-term economic uncertainties and manpower costs. We hear these concerns – businesses will not be left alone to deal with cost pressures as they seek to do their part for our lower-wage workers.

- a. You would have also heard from PM at Budget that we will extend PWCS to 2028. This builds on four earlier enhancements to PWCS, most recently in 2025.
- b. Since the scheme was introduced in 2022, PWCS has supported wage improvement for lower-wage workers, even as firms undertake the longer journey of transformation.
 - i. For wage increases between 2022 and 2024, the Government supported about \$3.6 billion of PWCS funding to over 110,000 employers.
 - ii. These wage increases have been meaningful – the median monthly increase supported by PWCS was about \$250, across more than 710,000 workers.
- c. Mr Pritam Singh asked about the outcomes of the PWCS, including how it has been tied to business transformation, sector productivity, and worker upskilling.
- d. Uplifting wage outcomes for lower-wage workers and narrowing the wage gap with the median, is in itself, a key objective of this government. I shared earlier how we have performed well on these measures and these are measures in real income terms.

e. But, ultimately, productivity needs to rise for wages to be sustained. Raising productivity is therefore a key focus of the PWM, as it links wage growth to skills development, career progression and job redesign.

i. This is complemented by our enterprise grants that enable business transformation and job redesign, and support for upskilling such as the Workfare Skills Support.

f. PWCS provides transitional co-funding for wage increases given to lower-wage workers, allowing businesses the space to restructure business processes and reap productivity improvements.

g. There are many good examples of forward-looking companies which have moved to innovate and evolve.

i. Take for instance ISS Facility Services Singapore. ISS has benefitted from PWCS support in providing its lower-wage workers wage increases, as well as productivity improvements through various technology-enabled solutions. For example, ISS's cleaning services now deploy a fleet of more than 130 cleaning autonomous robots, which have led to considerable gains in productivity.

ii. ISS's investments in technology and automation have also unlocked opportunities for its workers to progress to more value-added roles. For example, Mr Arthur Lim, a healthcare cleaner under the PWM, has been able to take on more complex duties with greater technical requirements.

iii. Mr Lim tapped on upskilling opportunities, including those supported by the Workfare Skills Support scheme. He is now proficient in operating specialised equipment such as UV disinfection machines, and also manages enhanced healthcare cleaning protocols and contributes to infection control workflows. Mr Lim shares that learning these new skills has given him a renewed sense of purpose and contribution to his workplace.

iv. Likewise, there are F&B firms that are adapting to enhance their capabilities and boost business performance, as stated in the Singapore Productivity Centre's recent Food Services Productivity Report. For example, Sushi Express leverages sushi robots – these have reduced the time taken to mould a piece of sushi to below 15 seconds, while improving production consistency.

h. With this PWCS extension, we will continue to support businesses in doing so. In deciding on these enhancements, we took into account the current uncertainty in the global economic landscape, business conditions and outlook, as well as consultations with tripartite partners, amongst other factors.

i. The Government will co-fund up to 30% of wage increases given to eligible lower-wage workers in 2026 – this is actually higher than the 20% which was originally announced. Co-funding support provided in 2027 and 2028 will be at 30% and 20% respectively.

B11. The extended PWCS support in 2027 and 2028 will also have a higher minimum qualifying threshold for wage increases of \$200, from \$100. This better encourages and rewards businesses that invest in transformation and workforce development, in line with PWCS's objectives.

B12. We urge employers to take advantage of the Government's various forms of support, including the initiatives to be rolled out as part of the EWTP such as the SkillsFuture Workforce Development Grant (Job Redesign+) (WDG(JR+)) and the SFEC. Employers can leverage these to further their respective transformation journeys, and support their lower-wage workers in skills upgrading to perform higher value jobs.

B13. This brings me to our third area of focus – our support for lower-wage workers in upskilling. As Ms Yeo Wan Ling observed, this will allow our workers to move alongside instead of being displaced by business transformation, so they can take on new roles and advance in their careers.

B14. Minister outlined how Career Health SG empowers individuals to take charge of their careers, and how we are evolving our SkillsFuture movement to refresh our jobs and skills ecosystem. These are moves that will support all workers in their career planning and upskilling journey.

B15. However, lower-wage workers may face unique constraints in stepping away from work to pursue training. This therefore becomes a Catch-22 situation, as taking time off to upskill, may mean forgoing income that they may need for immediate expenses. Lower-wage workers can be assured that the Government understands these challenges. They will not have to choose between earning an income today, and equipping themselves with skills for tomorrow.

B16. Those who pursue long-form courses can now benefit from the new Workfare Skills Support (Level-Up) scheme.

i. As announced at Budget 2025, trainees undertaking long-form courses will be supported with a Training Allowance significantly higher than existing WSS support for short-form courses. These long-form courses include Nitec or Higher Nitec qualifications, Diplomas, Post-Diplomas or undergraduate degrees.

ii. I am pleased to share that we will broaden the list of courses supported by WSS (Level-Up), to include long-form Workforce Skills Qualification, or (WSQ), full qualifications. These courses will be similarly eligible for the Training Allowance under the SkillsFuture Level-Up Programme. The changes will take effect from fourth quarter of this year.

iii. WSS (Level-Up) will support lower-wage workers in pursuing these more substantive forms of upskilling and reskilling, without needing to worry about making ends meet.

iv. To give just a few examples, Retail workers can benefit from the higher Training Allowance to undertake a Nitec qualification in Retail Services or a Diploma in Retail (Operations).

B17. At the same time, we will also enhance the WSS (Basic) scheme to support workers undertaking shorter training. This will better help workers meet their PWM training requirements or take up Workforce Skills Qualifications courses.

a. We will increase the Training Allowance for self-sponsored trainees from \$6/hr to \$10.50/hr, effective from 1 Jul 2026.

b. With the increase in the hourly Training Allowance, workers can now actively consider training without having a significant reduction in pay.

c. We will also streamline the scheme to reduce complexity. Only trainees who attain full qualifications will receive the Training Commitment Award of \$800 per year. Full qualifications are sets of related courses that result in a formal qualification, such as WSQ Qualifications or Academic Continuing Education and Training Qualifications. These have been found to lead to better outcomes for trainees, compared to modules that do not lead to formal qualifications.

d. Mr Melvin Yong suggested developing better AI-relevant skills pathways. He would be glad to know that the courses supported by WSS include industry-relevant AI skills courses that are suitable for lower-wage workers, so that they are not left behind amidst AI transformation.

v. Call to Action

B18. Our work is not complete:

- a. Employers must press on with wage increases for lower-wage workers and go the extra mile in redesigning jobs and business processes;
- b. Workers should embrace opportunities for upskilling and chart new paths to build in their careers;
- c. The Government will partner employers and workers, through co-sharing the near-term costs of transformation, and ensuring that training and skills upgrading remain accessible.
- d. Consumers, too, have a role to play. Consumers can make their choices count, by supporting businesses which pay Progressive Wages to their lower-wage workers. They can look out for and support businesses who have attained the Progressive Wage Mark.

B19. Our promise to lower-wage workers is this: we are united with you, and we are here to support you in every way that we can. You can count on our support, now and we will be here in the years to come.

C. Ensuring Safety in the Workplace

C1. Let me now move to my second segment - ensuring safety in our workplaces. Through the collective efforts and commitment of all stakeholders, our Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) performance has continued to improve.

a. I am heartened by the steady progress towards our WSH 2028 goal of sustaining the fatal injury rate below 1.0. Singapore's workplace fatal injury rate for 2025 was 0.96 per 100,000 workers. This is the lowest on record, other than when COVID-19 disrupted work.

C2. That said, we must not rest on our laurels and take this progress for granted. Every workplace death is a tragedy. We must continue to stay vigilant in uplifting our WSH standards and to build a strong and sustainable Workplace Safety and Health culture. There are many companies who have heeded this call to action.

a. One such example is Teambuild (ICPH) Pte Ltd, an SME in the Manufacturing sector. Teambuild has invested in technology to redesign work processes and create safer workplaces for their workers. By introducing rebar mesh welding machines and automated stackers for completed Prefabricated Prefinished Volumetric Construction (PPVC) units, Teambuild has also reduced the need for manual handling of these very heavy materials.

b. This has in turn brought down musculoskeletal injuries for workers, it has also improved the firm's productivity and reduced project costs by about \$180,000 per year, and hence a double benefit.

c. Teambuild's efforts show that when companies prioritise their workers' safety and health, they also build a more productive and sustainable business over time.

C3. As the nature of work evolves and our workforce changes, new opportunities emerge alongside new challenges for workplace safety and health. Greater use of digital technology and an ageing workforce are two such examples.

a. Together with NTUC and SNEF, MOM will be launching an Alliance for Action on Safety and Health for Employment Longevity (AfA-SHEL) in the second half 2026.

b. Mr Melvin Yong emphasised the need to go beyond traditional high-risk industries and to pay greater attention to common work-related injuries and occupational diseases. He also underscored the importance of moving upstream to make workplaces safer. We agree and have incorporated part of his suggestions, into three focus areas of AfA-SHEL:

- i. First, injury prevention for the general workforce.
- ii. Second, support for those returning to work after an injury or health episode; and;
- iii. Third, workplace adaption and job redesign, to make workplaces safer and more sustainable for our increasingly diverse workforce comprising of people with varied physical and health needs.
- iv. We also agree with Mr Yong's calls to treat fatigue as a core safety issue and better leverage technology in the WSH space. These are areas that the AfA-SHEL could explore, through prototypes of technological solutions or fatigue management systems customised for specific workplace settings. We welcome the Labour Movement's active participation in the AfA-SHEL.

C4. Mr Melvin Yong has also underlined the importance of the Government's role in driving change through procurement policies.

a. That is why WSH requirements for public sector construction and construction-related projects have been raised since April 2024. The enhancements, which include a requirement to adopt mature WSH technologies when tendering for projects that are at or above \$3 million, are aimed at raising WSH standards.

C5. On platform workers, Ms Yeo Wan Ling has called on MOM to leverage the Platform Workers Trilateral Group to explore how we can strengthen platform worker safety. We have taken in the Member's suggestions into consideration and more will be announced later this month.

D. Supporting Our Migrant Workers

D1. Let me now move to my third segment, supporting our Migrant Workers. They have worked tirelessly to build and to keep our towns and homes running smoothly every day.

D2. Over the years, we have worked closely with employers, dormitory operators and community partners to build a resilient ecosystem supporting migrant workers' wellbeing – spanning their housing, healthcare and recreation needs.

a. These efforts have been impactful. In the 2024 Migrant Worker Experience Survey, more than 9 in 10 migrant workers shared that they were satisfied with working and living in Singapore – the highest level since the survey was first conducted in 2011.

D3. Migrant worker housing has been our key priority. Migrant workers have built our homes, and it is our responsibility to ensure that they too have a conducive place to rest after a hard day's work. Good rest also ensures that they can continue working well and safely. That is why we have raised dormitory standards and enhanced pandemic preparedness in recent years.

a. To support existing dormitories in meeting improved standards by 2030, MOM has introduced the Dormitory Transition Scheme Grant to help defray retrofitting costs for about 900 existing dormitories.

b. These improvements include provisions such as ensuite toilets and isolation facilities, for better public health resilience.

c. By 2040, all new and existing dormitories will meet the New Dormitory Standards, providing residents with more spacious rooms, including in-room Wi-Fi coverage as well.

D4. Improving the housing conditions of migrant workers does not necessarily mean higher costs. Earlier this year, MOM opened the first Government built-and-owned dormitory. The NESST Tukang Dormitory, as it is called, went beyond regulatory standards to incorporate design features shaped by migrant workers' feedback, improving liveability and pandemic resilience at the same time. Notwithstanding these innovations, NESST Tukang is able to offer bed prices below those of dormitories that meet the new dormitory standards and is expected to be financially sustainable.

a. I invite dormitory operators to join the Government in reimagining what is possible for migrant worker housing in Singapore. MOM is committed to working with you to testbed innovations and enhancements for the dormitory industry, as we press on with the construction of our second dormitory at Sengkang West.

D5. Equally important are the spaces where our migrant workers can spend their rest days, build friendships and connect with the wider community. To this end, MOM had made significant strides to transform and enrich Recreation Centres (RC), which have seen higher visitorship over time.

a. Ms Yeo Wan Ling and Mr Melvin Yong have called on the Ministry to continue enhancing migrant workers' access to key amenities and community spaces.

b. I am pleased to share that building on existing RCs, we will introduce the Recreation Hub (RH) model. This will have an expanded scale and range of offerings for our migrant workers. This will start with the redevelopment of Soon Lee RC into the first Recreation Hub. In 2030, migrant workers can look forward to a Soon Lee Recreation Hub that is two to three times larger with upgraded facilities and more offerings.

c. Beyond this model, MOM will also pilot smaller-scale satellite RCs to bring social and recreational options closer to where migrant workers live.

D6. Even as we improve the physical infrastructure of housing and recreation centres, what truly makes our migrant workers feel at home is the assurance that Singaporeans accept them and appreciate their contributions. How we treat our migrant workers in our daily lives says much about who we are as a people, and as a society.

E. Conclusion

E1. Mr Chairman, I would like to conclude on our efforts to support vulnerable workers, which are an investment in social cohesion and resilience – they will preserve confidence in our social compact, and foster enduring trust.

E2. The Government is firmly committed to this undertaking, and will continue to pursue it in close collaboration with our tripartite partners. Together, we will walk alongside every worker as we move forward with confidence.

Thank you.

[Report vulnerability](#)  [Privacy](#) [Terms of use](#) [Legislation](#) [Sitemap](#) [Supported browsers](#)

© 2026 Government of Singapore

Last Updated: 04 March 2026