

Foreign Worker Experience Survey 2018

Report on Findings

1 Introduction

1.1 Objective and scope of survey

This survey provides a better understanding of the experience of foreign workers (FW) working in Singapore. The results of the survey will aid MOM and stakeholders in developing policies, programmes and initiatives to support FWs especially in the areas of well-being and employment conditions. For the purposes of this survey, “FWs” refers to non-domestic Work Permit (WP) and S Pass Holders.¹

The survey covered the following aspects of FWs’ experiences in Singapore:

- Overall satisfaction with working in Singapore;
- Future intentions and whether they would recommend Singapore as a place to work;
- Pre-employment experiences;
- Working conditions and other experiences during employment;
- Awareness and use of channels for work injury assistance and information on employment rights; and
- Perceptions of MOM and their workplaces.

Previous FW surveys were conducted in 2014 and 2011. Where applicable, comparisons with previous survey findings have been included in this report.

1.2 Sampling methodology

The final report was based on a sample of 3,045 respondents, comprising 2,523 WP Holders and 522 S Pass Holders. The respondents were selected randomly, and the sampling frame was designed to be generally representative of the FW population profile, including characteristics such as the sector in which the worker was employed and nationality.

1.3 Data collection methodology

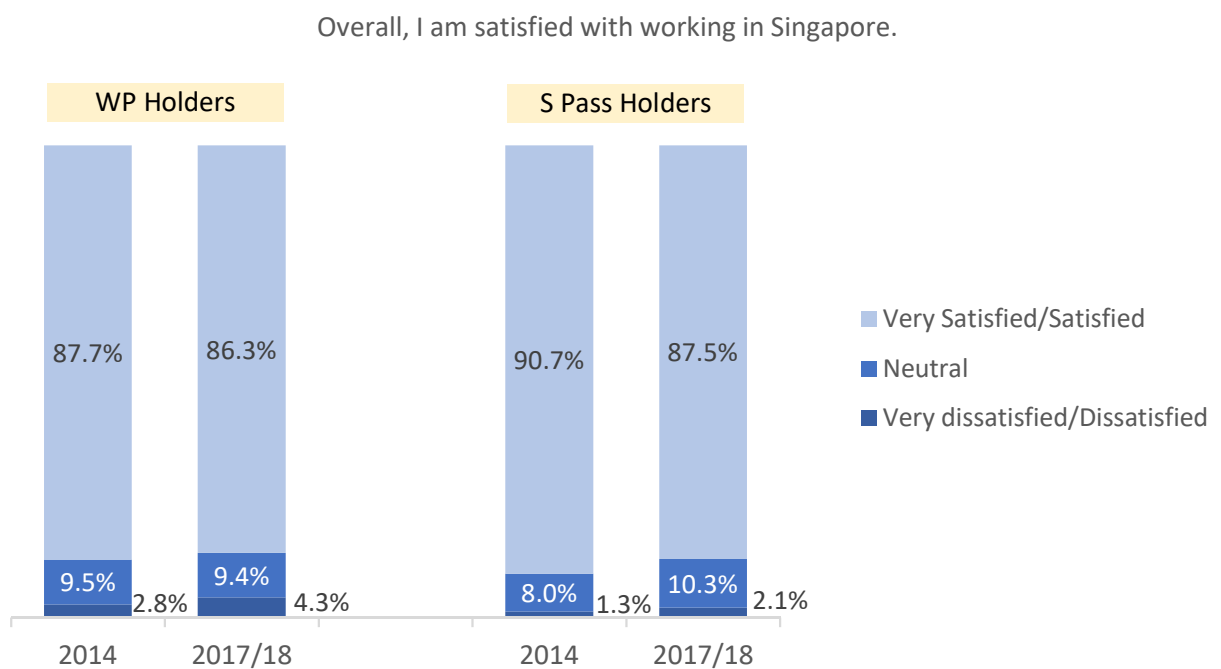
This was a pen-and-paper self-administered survey in English or in the native language of the respondent. All respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their responses and that only aggregated data would be reported.

¹ A Work Permit (WP) is generally issued to a semi-skilled or unskilled foreign worker, while an S Pass is issued to a mid-level skilled worker (e.g. technician) who earns a fixed salary of at least \$2,200 to work in Singapore.

2 Overall Satisfaction Levels, Future Intentions and Recommendation of Singapore as a Place for Work

2.1 Satisfaction levels of FWs

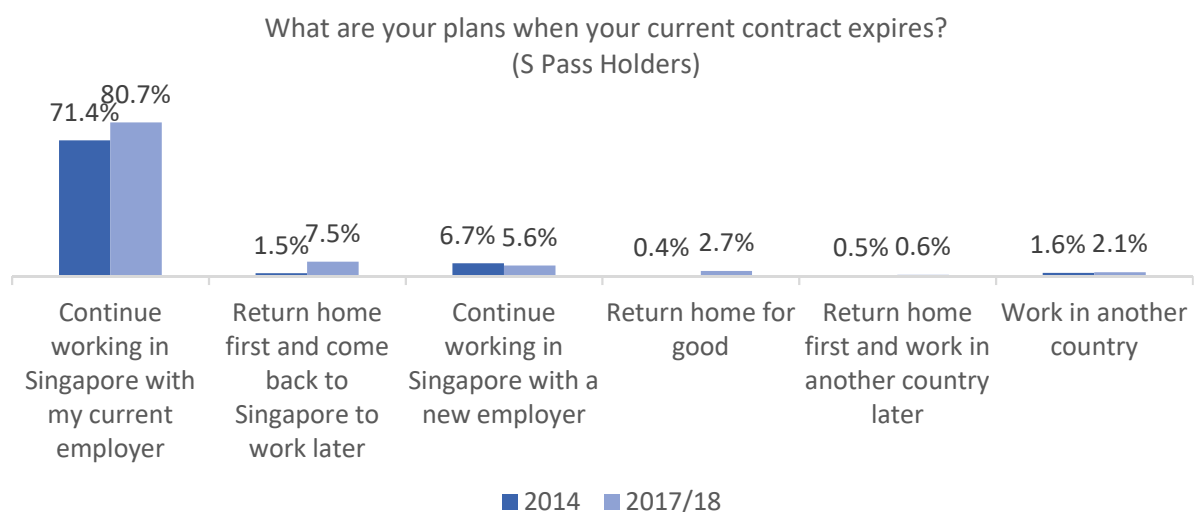
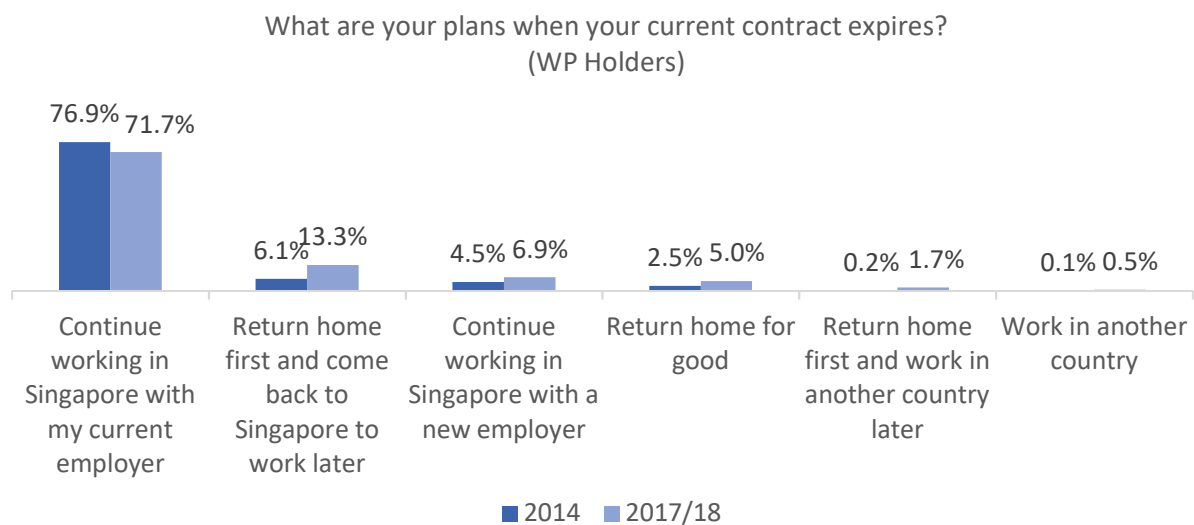
2.1.1 Generally, FWs had high levels of satisfaction with working in Singapore. 86.3% of WP Holders and 87.5% of S Pass Holders were satisfied with working in Singapore. These results are similar to that in 2014, where 87.7% of WP Holders and 90.7% of S Pass Holders were satisfied with working in Singapore.



2.2 Future intentions of FWs

2.2.1 Most FWs planned to continue working in Singapore. When asked about their future plans after their current contracts expired, 91.9% of WP Holders and 93.8% of S Pass Holders said they planned to continue working in Singapore with their current employer, or a new employer, or after first going home.

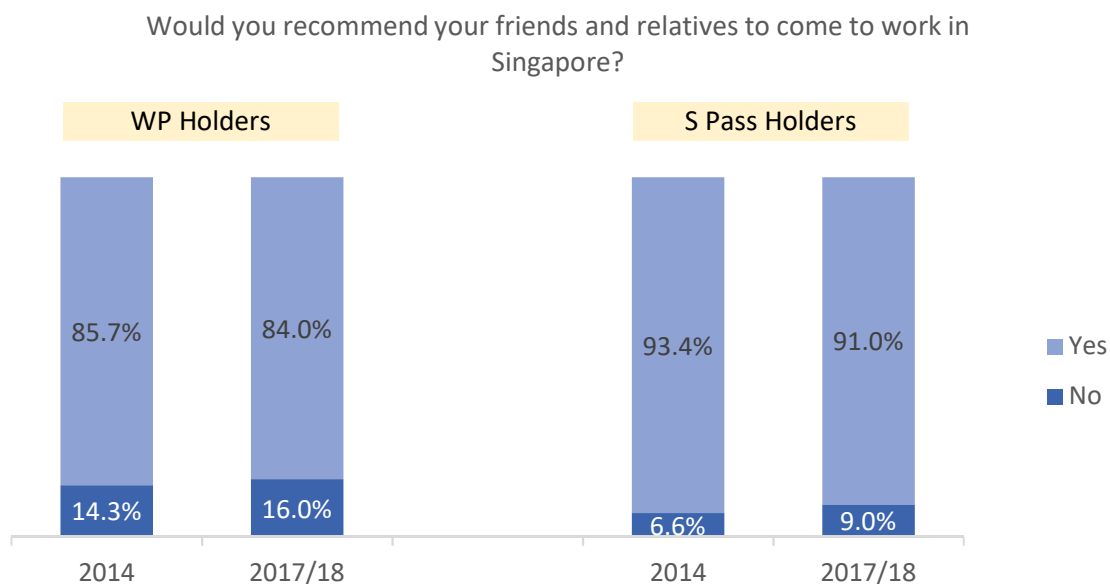
2.2.2 Compared to 2014, more WP and S Pass Holders planned to continue working in Singapore after their current contract expired.² The proportion of WP Holders who planned to continue working in Singapore with their current employer dropped from 76.9% to 71.7%, but a greater proportion (from 10.6% in 2014 to 20.2% in 2018) would either return to Singapore to work after going home first, or continue working in Singapore with a new employer.



² In 2014, 9.6% WP Holders and 17.8% S Pass Holders said they were unsure about their plans.

2.3 Recommending Singapore as a place to work

2.3.1 Most FWs would recommend Singapore as a place to work. 84.0% of WP Holders and 91.0% of S Pass Holders indicated that they would recommend Singapore to their friends and relatives as a place for work.



2.3.2 Good pay, good living conditions, and safety and security were the key reasons FWs would recommend Singapore as a place to work.

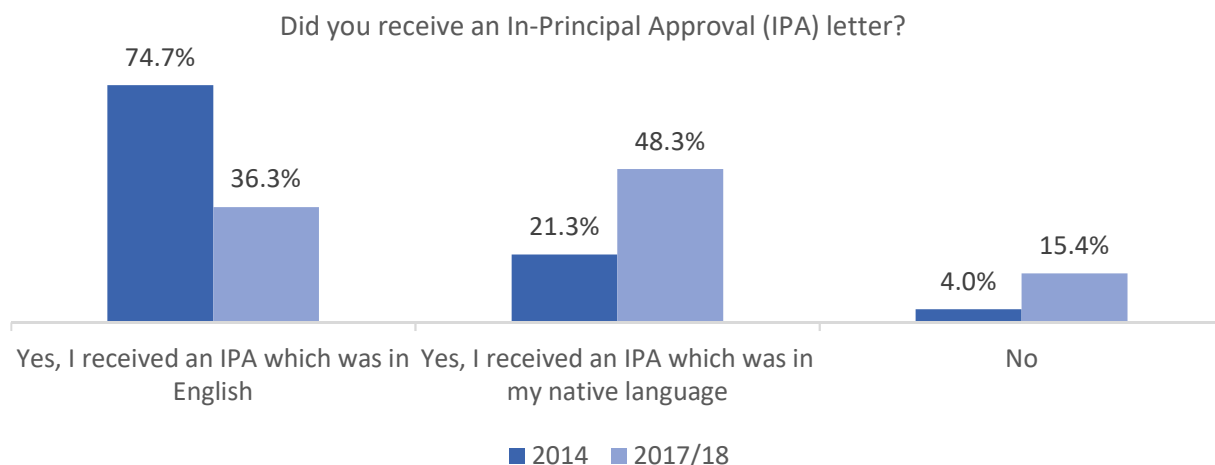
Top five reasons for recommending Singapore as a place to work (multiple options allowed)

Reasons most commonly cited	WP Holders		S Pass Holders	
	2014	2018	2014	2018
Good pay	71.7%	67.0%	71.8%	74.7%
Safe and secure country	35.4%	62.6%	39.1%	74.3%
Good living conditions	34.2%	55.7%	51.0%	75.4%
Good working conditions	44.3%	48.1%	52.8%	66.9%
Good prospects	19.0%	29.3%	16.6%	31.4%

3 Pre-Employment Experiences

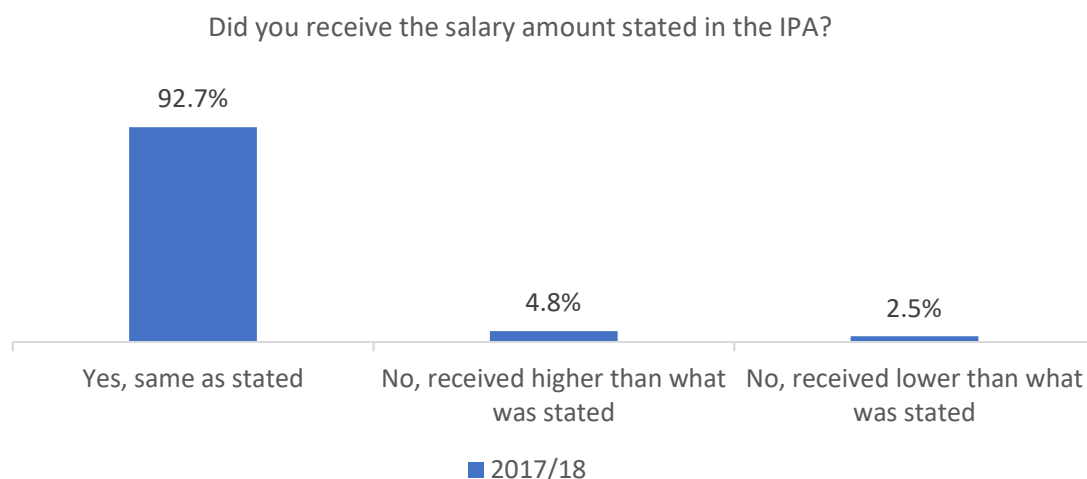
3.1 Receiving the In-Principle Approval (IPA) letter³

3.1.1 Most non-Malaysian WP Holders (84.6%) received their IPA letters in either English or their native language. A higher proportion of WP Holders received an IPA letter in their native language in 2018 (48.3%), compared to 2014 (21.3%).



3.2 Receiving the salary amount stated in the IPA letter

3.2.1 Among those who received the IPA letter, nearly all received the same salary amount as stated in the IPA letter. 92.7% WP Holders mentioned that they received the same salary amount as stated in the IPA letter.

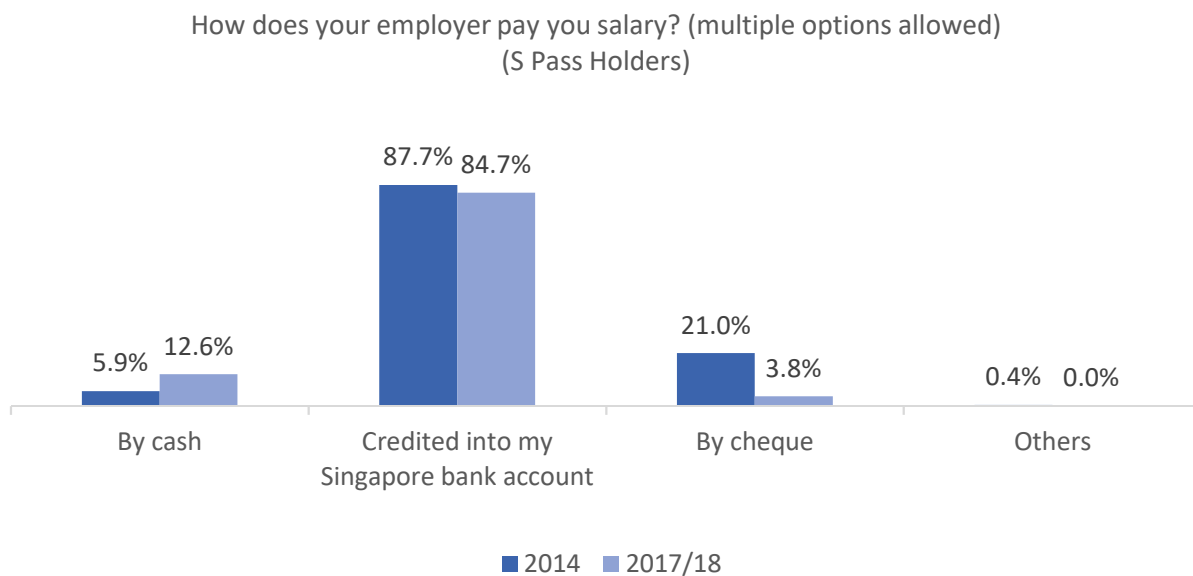
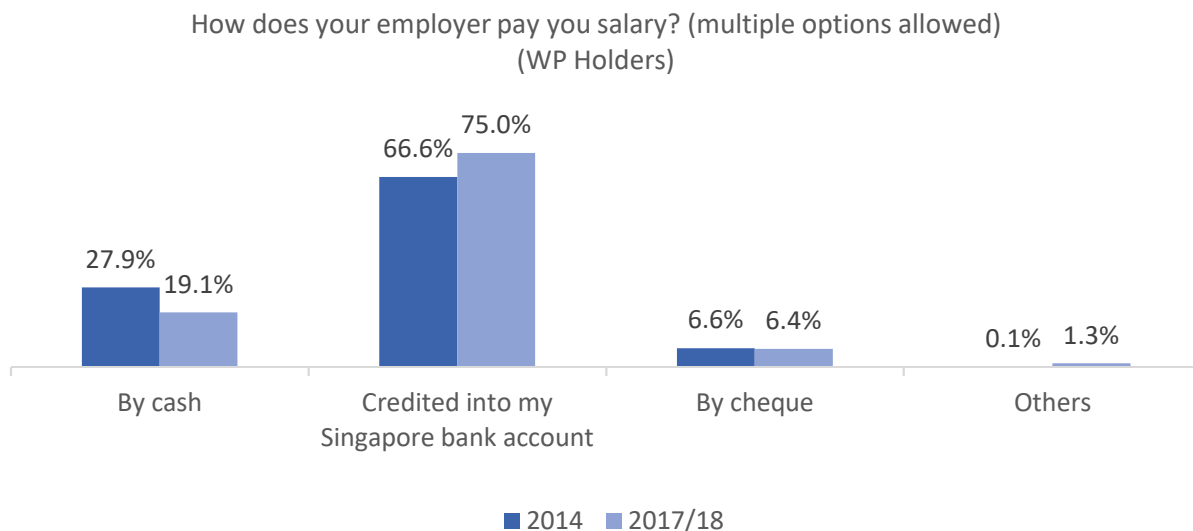


³ An IPA letter is issued by the MOM's Work Pass Division upon a successful application of a Work Permit.

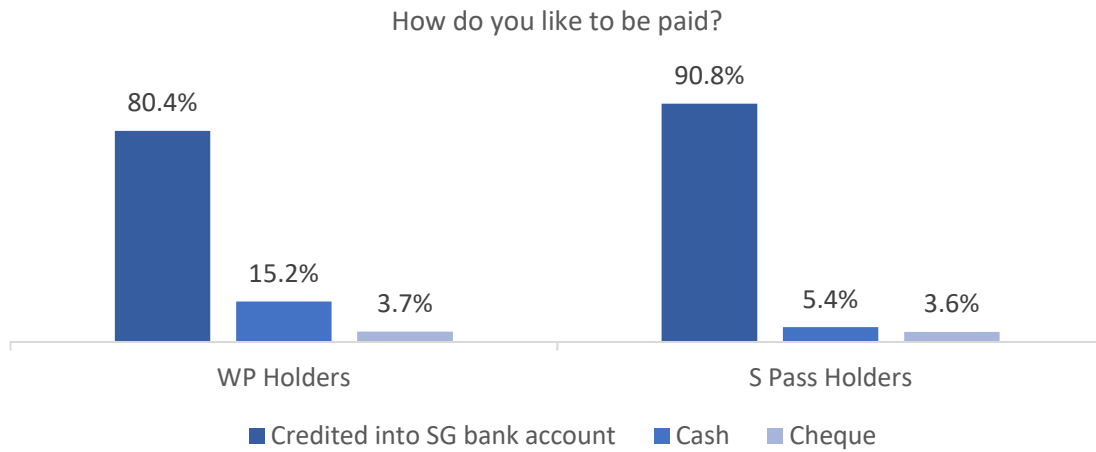
4 FWs' Working Conditions and Experiences during Employment

4.1 Mode of salary payment

4.1.1 Most FWs had their salary credited into their Singapore bank account. Compared to 2014, a higher proportion of WP Holders received their salary through their Singapore bank account (75.0% in 2018, compared to 66.6% in 2014). Among S Pass Holders, 84.7% of them indicated that their salary was credited directly into their Singapore bank account.

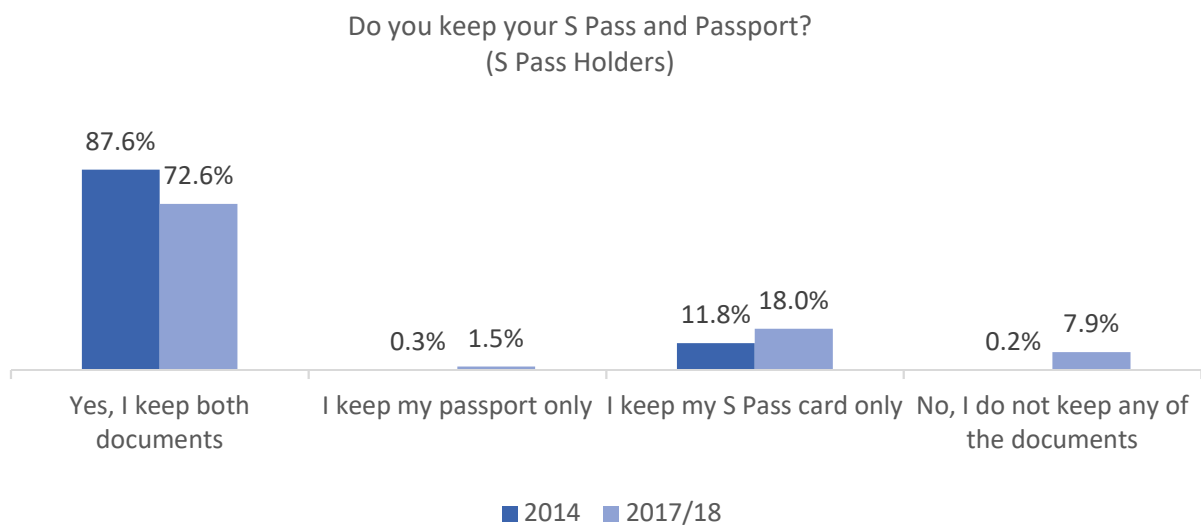
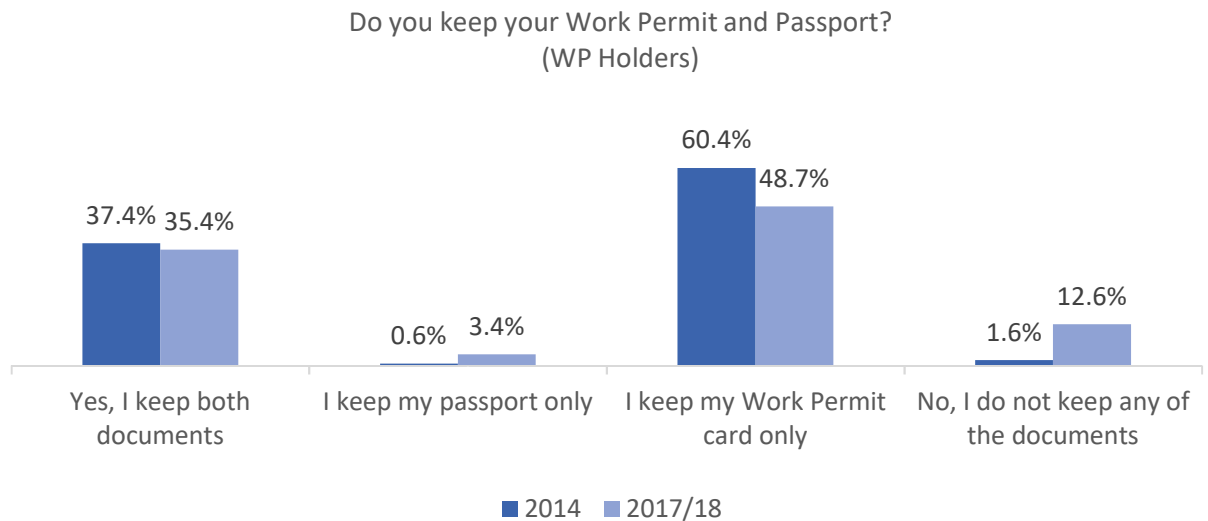


4.1.2 Most FWs (80.4% of WP Holders and 90.8% of S Pass Holders) preferred for their salaries to be credited into a Singapore bank account. A minority preferred to be paid in cash or by cheque. Among those who preferred cash payments, convenience was the main reason for preferring cash, for both WP and S Pass Holders.



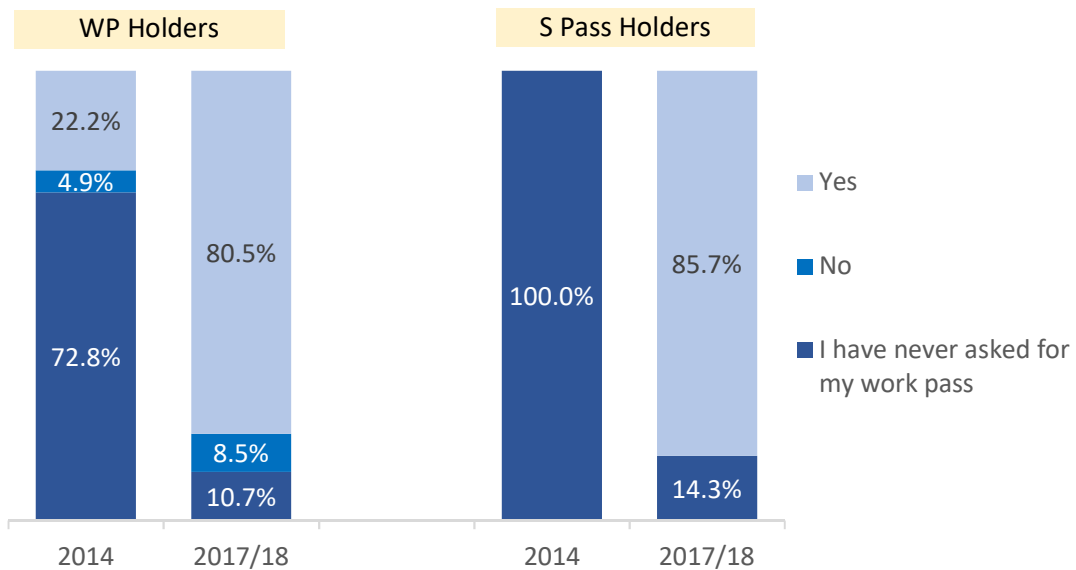
4.2 Keeping of personal documents

4.2.1 Most FWs (87.4% of WP Holders and 92.1% of S Pass Holders) kept both their passport and work pass, or either one of the two documents. 35.4% of WP Holders and 72.6% of S Pass Holders kept both their passport and work pass. 52.1% of WP Holders and 19.5% of S Pass Holders kept either their passport or work pass. 12.6% of WP Holders and 7.9% of S Pass Holders kept neither their passport nor work pass.



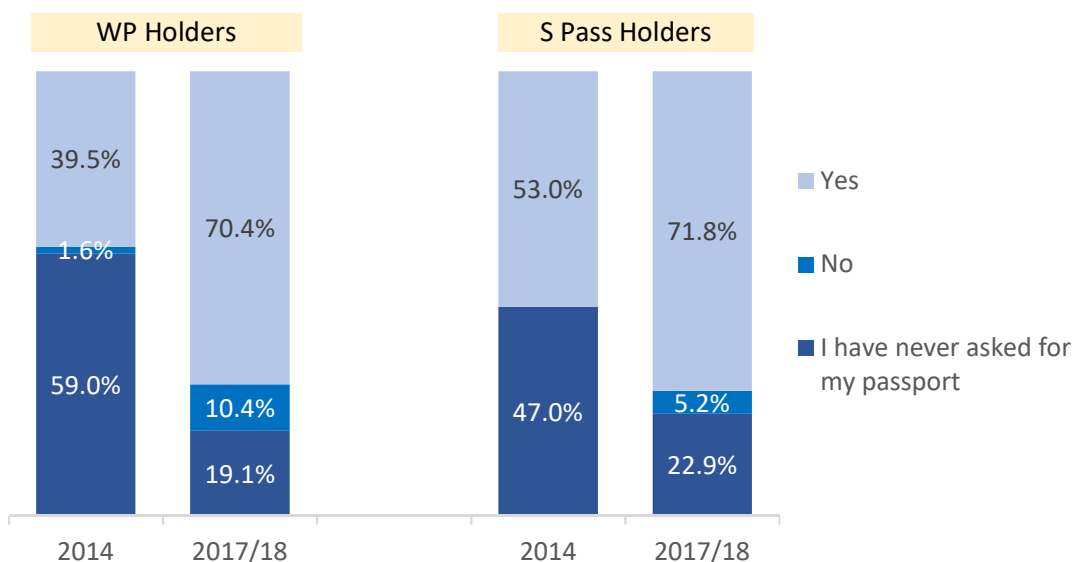
4.2.2 Among the minority of WP and S Pass Holders who did not keep their work pass, 80.5% of WP Holders and 85.7% of S Pass Holders have gotten it back upon request.

Have you been returned your work pass when you asked for it?



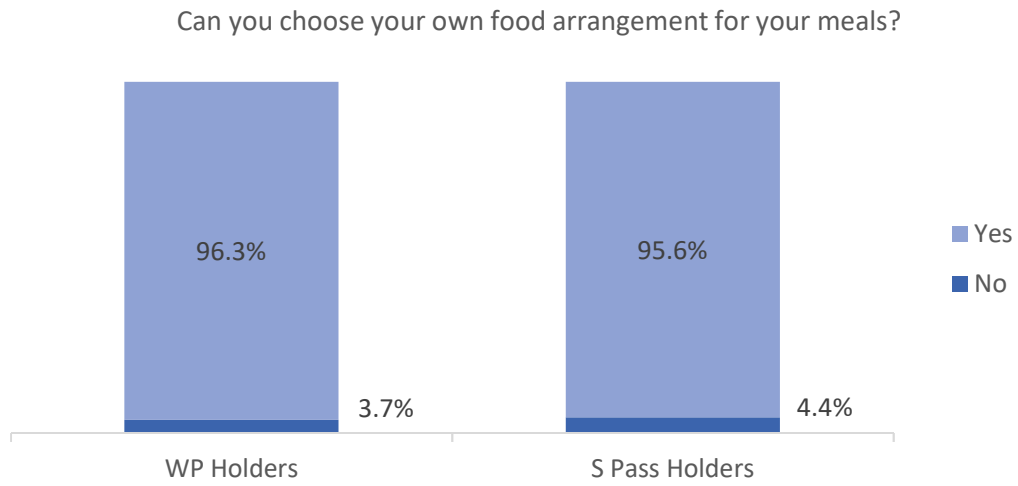
4.2.3 Compared to 2014, among FWs who did not keep their own passports, a higher proportion of WP Holders (70.4% in 2018, compared to 39.5% in 2014) and S Pass Holders (71.8% in 2018 compared to 53.0% in 2014) had gotten their passports back upon request.

Have you been returned your passport when you asked for it?

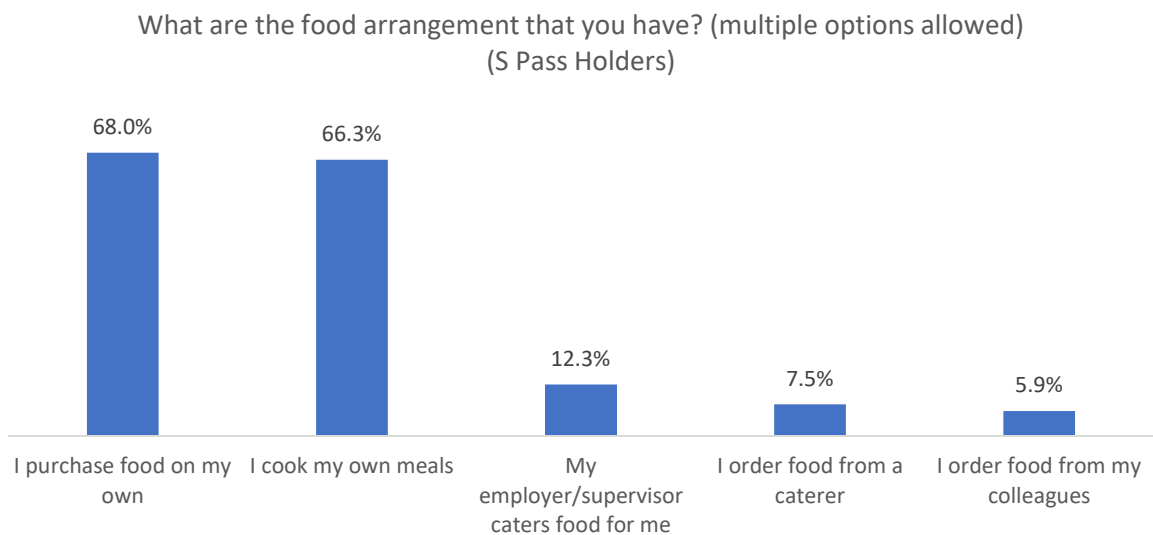
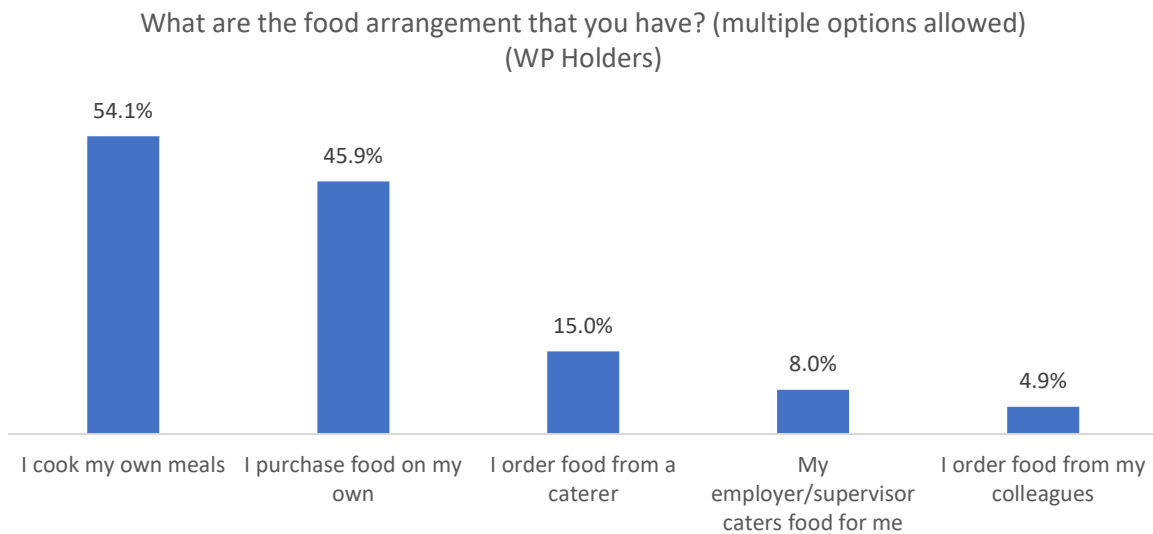


4.3 Food arrangements

4.3.1 The majority of WP Holders (96.3%) and S Pass Holders (95.6%) could choose their own food arrangements.



4.3.2 The most common food arrangements amongst WP Holders were self-cooked meals (54.1%) and purchasing food on their own (45.9%). Food catering arranged by WP Holders themselves (15.0%), employers/supervisors (8.0%), or colleagues (4.9%) were less common.

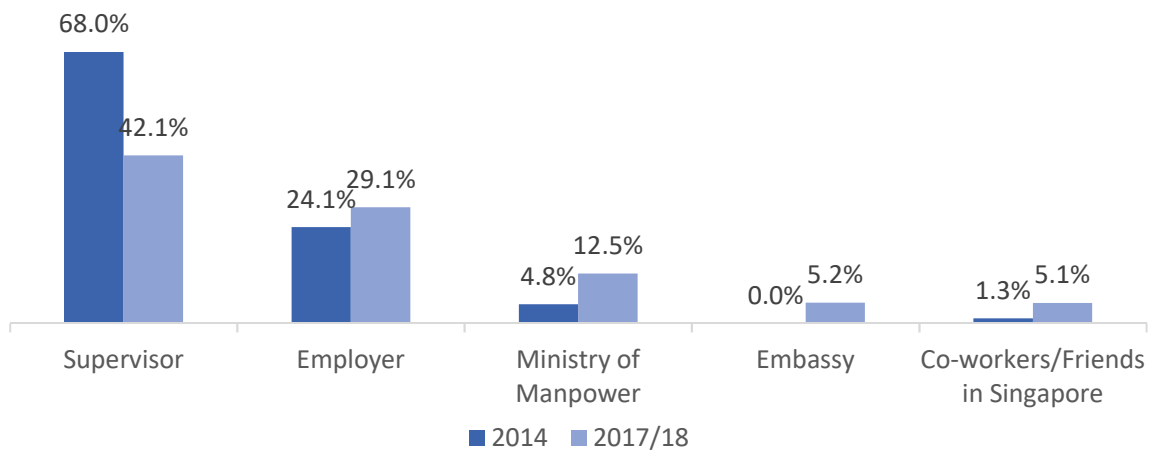


5 Channels of Assistance for Work Injury and Channels of Getting Information about Employment Rights

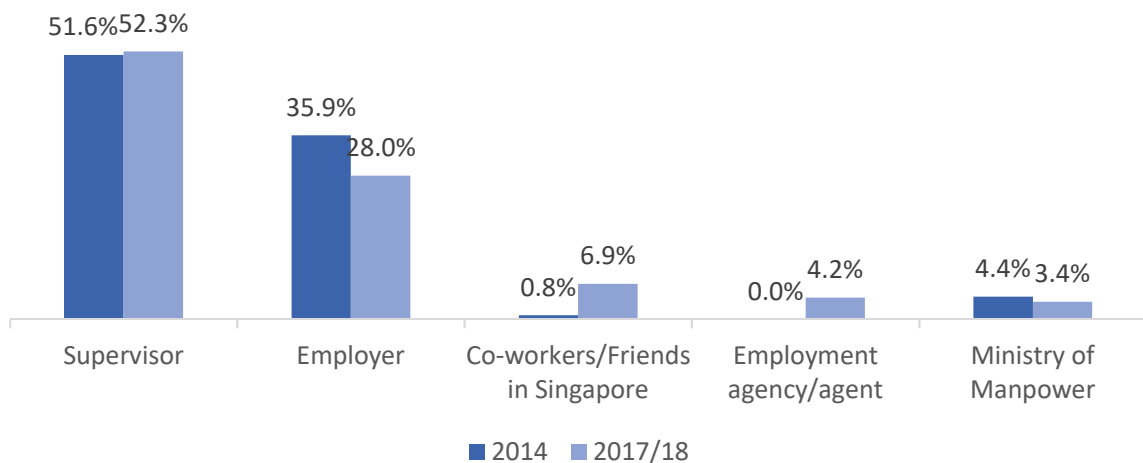
5.1 Channels of assistance for work injury

5.1.1 FWs preferred to approach their supervisor for work injury assistance. 42.1% of WP Holders and 52.3% of S Pass Holders would turn to their supervisor if they suffered an injury at work.

Who is the most preferred person or organisation that you would approach if you suffered a work injury?
(WP Holders)

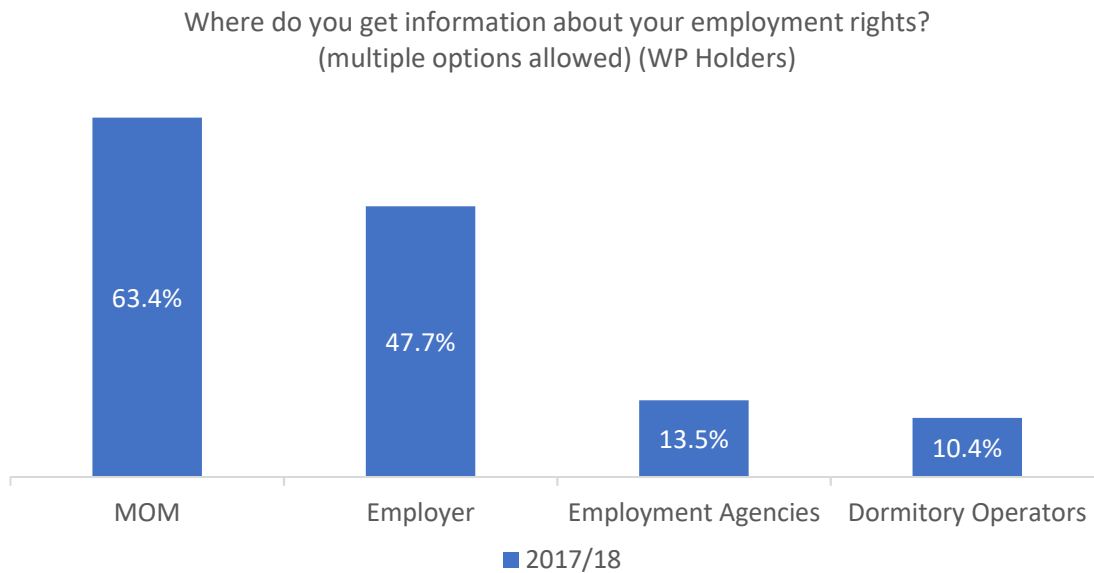


Who is the most preferred person or organisation that you would approach if you suffered a work injury?
(S Pass Holders)

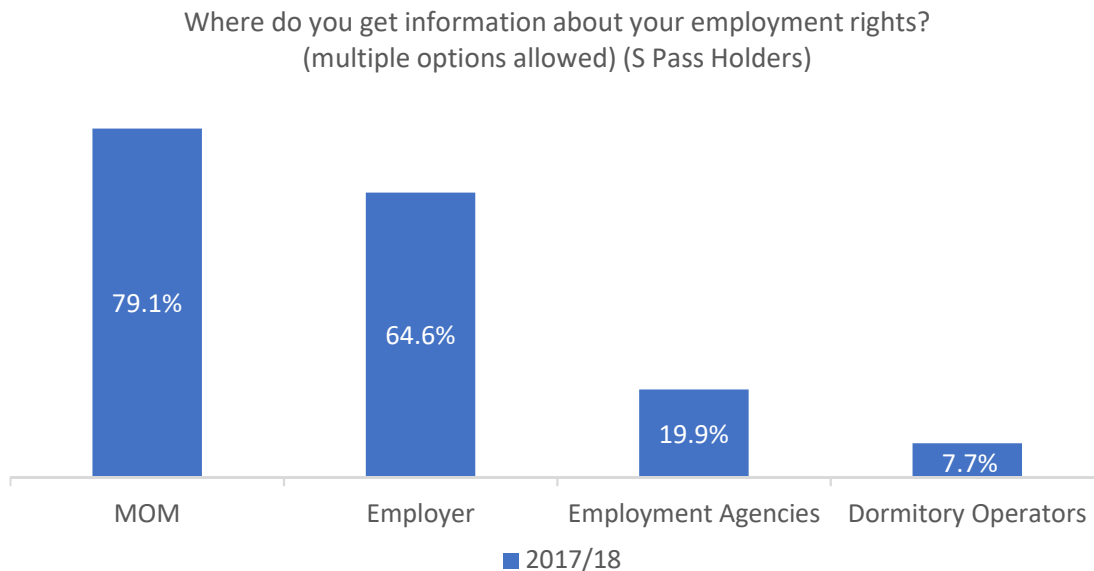


5.2 Sources of information about employment rights

5.2.1 The two most common sources of information about employment rights were MOM and employers. 63.4% of WP Holders indicated that they obtained information about their employment rights from MOM, while 47.7% shared that they received information from their employer.



5.2.2 MOM, followed by employers, were the most common sources of information on employment rights for S Pass Holders.



6 Perception of MOM/Workplace

6.1 Perception of MOM/Workplace

6.1.1 The majority of WP Holders and S Pass Holders agreed that MOM did well in protecting foreign workers, and perceived working conditions at their workplace to be safe.

6.1.2 Most WP Holders and S Pass Holders also agreed that MOM was easy to approach and concurred that they could reach out to MOM if they encountered any unfair behaviour at work.

