

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

### **Household and Housing Characteristics**

#### ***Household***

A household refers to (i) a group of two or more persons living together in the same house and sharing common food or other essential arrangements for living; or (ii) a person living alone or living with others but having his own food or other essential arrangements for living. Although persons may be living in the same house, they may not be members of the same household.

#### ***Resident Households***

A resident household refers to a household where the household reference person is a resident, i.e. Singapore citizen or permanent resident.

#### ***Main Income Earner (MIE)***

The main income earner (MIE) in the household is the household member who receives the highest income from all sources, excluding domestic helpers. When there is a tie between two members, the MIE refers to the older of the two.

#### ***Household Reference Person***

The household reference person is as reported by the surveyed household and usually refers to the oldest member, the main income earner, the owner-occupier of the house, the person who manages the affairs of the household or the person who supplied the information pertaining to other members.

In previous HES, survey respondents were asked to identify the ‘head of household’. The identified person is used as the reference person to determine relationships between household members. In the HES 2023, the term ‘household reference person’ replaced ‘head of household’.

### ***Household Size***

Household size refers to the total number of members in the household, including domestic helpers.

### ***Number of Employed Persons in Household***

The number of employed persons in the household includes members of the same household who were employed during the survey reference period. Domestic helpers in the household are excluded.

### ***Type of Dwelling***

A dwelling refers to a building or part of a building used or intended to be used by one or more persons as living quarters. Each dwelling has its own separate entrance with direct access to a public road or pathway. A dwelling may be a residential building by itself, or a unit in a residential building, or part of a non-residential building such as a shop or factory with space used as living quarters.

The dwellings are broadly classified into these three categories: Housing and Development Board (HDB) flats, condominiums and other apartments, and landed properties.

The [Singapore Standard Classification of Type of Dwelling \(Jan 2012\)](#) is used to classify the population and households by type of dwelling.

### ***Household Living Arrangement***

Household living arrangement refers to the classification of a household according to the household composition, age and marital status of household reference person and age group of the youngest child of the household reference person. Households are broadly classified into:

#### ***Couple-Based***

Refers to households with a married household reference person and spouse. This category is further split into those living with child(ren) and without children.

### *Other Households*

Includes:

Lone parent households whose household reference person is never-married/widowed/divorced/separated and living with child(ren) aged below 16 years or never-married child(ren);

Other households with family nucleus such as a divorced household reference person living with elderly parents only, or a widowed household reference person living with the son and daughter-in-law;

One-person households; and

Other households without family nucleus such as a never-married household reference person living with never-married siblings, or a household reference person living with unrelated persons only.

## **Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics**

### ***Highest Qualification Attained***

Highest qualification attained refers to the highest grade or standard a person has passed or the highest level where a vocational/skill certificate, diploma, or degree is awarded. The classification of highest qualification attained is based on the [Singapore Standard Educational Classification \(SSEC\) 2020](#).

## ***Occupation***

Occupation refers to the type of work performed during the reference period, which may not necessarily be related to their work experience, employment status or qualifications. In the case of persons who performed two or more jobs, their occupation would refer to the one in which they usually work the longest hours during the reference period. The classification of occupations is based on the [Singapore Standard Occupational Classification \(SSOC\) 2024](#).

## ***Household Income from All Sources***

Household income from all sources refers to recurrent and regular income from employment, as well as income from investment, rental and other sources such as cash and in-kind contributions from relatives/friends who are not members of the household, pension and regular government transfers. Interest from Central Provident Fund (CPF) balances are also included. Irregular receipts or one-off payments such as proceeds from sale of properties, capital gains from trading of stocks and shares, windfalls, non-recurring insurance payouts and lump sum CPF withdrawals are excluded.

## ***Household Income from All Sources Per Household Member***

Household income from all sources per household member refers to the household income from all sources divided by the total number of members (household size) in the household. For example, if there is one person in a household of four receives income, his/her income is divided by four to derive the household income per household member.

Income received is classified according to the following **main sources of income**:

### ***Income from paid employment:***

This refers to the income received by employed members of the household from employment during the month preceding the survey month, before tax or loan repayment. It includes the basic wage or salary, employer's and employee's CPF contributions, leave allowance and overtime pay, commissions, tips, wage supplements, as well as income in-kind provided by the employer, e.g. food, transport and lodging. One-twelfth of the annual bonus as well as regular income received from secondary employment are also included. It excludes income received by domestic helpers in the household.

### *Income from self-employment:*

This refers to the average monthly receipts or profits a person earns from business, trade or profession, after deducting all operating expenses incurred such as purchases of materials and services, rent for premises or machineries, cost of repair of machineries and fixtures. When a person's income is derived from a partnership, his income refers to his share of the net profit. Also included are the regular incomes received from any secondary business engagements, estimated value of goods (at current retail price) taken from shop or farm for household's own consumption.

### *Rental Income:*

This refers to the gross monthly rentals received from renting out houses, including subletting of rooms, shops or other fixed assets (e.g. equipment, machinery).

### *Investment Income:*

- Interest from savings: This refers to monthly interest received or credited for saving/fixed deposits with banks and finance companies in the twelve months preceding the survey period.
  
- Interest earned from CPF balances: This refers to average monthly interest earned on all CPF accounts, i.e. Ordinary Account, Special Account, Retirement Account and Medisave Account
  
- Dividends from Investments and Interest from other sources: This refers to the average monthly amount of dividends received from stocks and shares, exchange traded funds (ETF), growth funds and unit trusts in the twelve months preceding the survey period. It also includes monthly interest received from bonds and other sources such as Government securities and Singapore Saving Bonds (SSB) in the twelve months preceding the survey period, as well as interest on loans extended to any persons who are not members of the same household.

*Other Sources:*

- *Contributions*: This refers to the average monthly cash or in-kind contributions given by any persons who are not members of the same household, e.g. children, relatives and friends staying in another household in the twelve months preceding the survey period. It includes alimony or regular money allowance received by the divorcee.

- *Pension*: This refers to the monthly payment received by the retired person. Gratuity received on retirement in lump sum is excluded.

- *Social Welfare Grants*: This refers to public assistance or regular allowances received by the household or person from the government or charitable organisations in the twelve months preceding the survey period. It includes receipts in cash or in kind.

- *Bursary, Scholarship and Fellowship*: This refers to the average monthly grants from such awards received by students or persons for studying, training or research in educational institutions, training or research centres.

- *Payouts from Annuities, CPF Retirement Sum Scheme (RSS) and CPF Lifelong Income for the Elderly (CPF LIFE)*: This refers to the annuities payments from private insurance schemes and banks, as well as regular payouts from CPF RSS and CPF LIFE. Lump sum withdrawals from CPF on reaching 55 years are excluded.

- *Regular Payment from Insurance Policies*: This refers to the regular (income loss) compensation payout due to critical illness, disability or other conditions covered by the insurance protection policy. Regular payouts from savings/endowment and life insurance policies are also included. Non-recurring insurance claims are excluded.

- *Regular Government Transfers*: This refers to government transfers given on a regular basis and not tied to any particular expenditure item, e.g. Workfare Income Supplement, Edusave Pupils Fund, U-Save rebates, Regular GST Vouchers.

Besides regular transfers, some government transfers are disbursed on an ad-hoc, irregular basis over a specific period or at specific life stages. Examples include Assurance Packages, Workfare Skills Support Scheme and Matched Retirement

Savings Scheme. Such irregular transfers are excluded from the households' income reported in the HES.

Other transfers that lead to a direct reduction in expenditure incurred by households are reflected as lower expenditure reported by respondents in the HES and not reflected in income. Examples include rebates on Service and Conservancy Charges (S&CC), centre-based infant and childcare subsidies, education subsidies, public rental subsidies, subsidies under the Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS) and inpatient and outpatient care subsidies.

### ***Income Decile (decile group)***

An income decile group is one tenth of all households arranged by their incomes from minimum to maximum. In the HES, income is ranked by households' monthly income from all sources (excluding imputed rental of owner-occupied accommodation) per household member. The first decile group is the first one-tenth (the 10% of all household with lowest incomes). The last decile is the one-tenth of the households with the highest incomes.

Not all households are consistently in the same decile group from year to year. For example, a household may move down from a higher decile in a particular year due to temporary change in employment status of a household member, before moving up the decile in the subsequent year. In comparing the performance of any particular decile group over time, it is therefore relevant to note that they may not pertain to the same group of households.

### ***Quintile (quintile group)***

A quintile divides the population into five equal groups (from lowest to highest) such that each group represents 20%, or one fifth, of all households.

***Income quintile*** group refers to households as grouped after ranking by their monthly household income from all sources (excluding imputed rental of owner-occupied accommodation) per household member.

***Expenditure quintile*** group refers to households as grouped after ranking by their monthly household expenditure (excluding imputed rental of owner-occupied accommodation) per household member.

As illustrated for “Income Decile”, households may move across different quintiles over time. For comparison of group over time, they may not pertain to the same group of households.

### *Expenditure*

Expenditure data refer to consumption expenditure incurred by households. Household consumption expenditure is the value of consumer goods and services acquired, used or paid for by a household for the satisfaction of the needs and wants of its members. Non-consumption expenditure such as loan repayments, income taxes, purchase of houses is excluded.

The consumption expenditure on owner-occupied accommodation is estimated using the rental equivalence method, which measures the shelter cost in terms of the expected rental the owner would have to pay if he were a tenant of the premises. It is estimated based on the Annual Assessed Values (AAVs) provided by the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS). Monthly mortgage repayments are not included in the consumption expenditure on owner-occupied accommodation.

The imputed rental of owner-occupied accommodation is included when analysing the detailed share of household expenditure by goods and services.