



**News @ AsiaOne**

## Maid agents can help employers

When maids run away, agents should find a replacement or provide counselling. -myp

Tue, Nov 16, 2010  
my paper

I REFER to Madam Jaylin Yeo's letter, "[Employers bullied by maids need help too](#)" (my paper, Nov 10).

The word "bullying" is inaccurately used by Madam Yeo. The term "bully" connotes an unequal relationship in which a stronger party intimidates a smaller or weaker one.

In an employer-employee relationship, the employer is invariably assumed to be the one with more authority and power.

It is for this reason that the Foreign Manpower Management Division was set up by the Ministry of Manpower - to ensure the well-being of foreign workers during their working stint in Singapore.

The maid highlighted by the writer was more than likely to have been overwhelmed by the responsibility and demands of taking care of a six-year-old child with special needs.

Nevertheless, it is most irresponsible of her to have run away without a thought for the plight of her employer.

No maid agent will condone maids running away.

In this instance, the employer could work with the agent, who can assist by quickly providing a change of maid or by counselling the maid to stay on until a replacement can be found.

The writer's suggestion that the Ministry of Manpower make maids (who are in a financially weak position) set aside a sum of money to defray employers' costs, in the event that they run away, is unfair and against the law.

It is an accreditation requirement that maid agents inform maids of their job scope and duties in advance.

Nonetheless, in their eagerness to secure a job overseas, many maids accept jobs without due consideration of the responsibilities.

The writer also stated that "unscrupulous agents would be most happy to recycle such maids as they could earn one to two months' commission by doing so".

However, most agents do exercise due diligence in matching maids and clients so that they will not be laden with problems subsequently.

After all, when an employer returns a problematic maid, the agent suffers too, as he has to incur additional costs and invest additional time.

Frequently, the agent is in a position similar to that of the employer when it comes to the real reasons behind premature termination of a maid's contract.

However, we take consolation that most reasons for termination are not criminal in nature, as the maid would otherwise be blacklisted and not be allowed to work in Singapore.

As Singapore is fast becoming a less-preferred destination for maids, Singaporeans should manage their expectations.

**MS SHIRLEY NG**  
**PRESIDENT**  
**ASSOCIATION OF EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES (SINGAPORE)**

my paper logo with a stylized 'my' and 'paper' in blue and red.

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