

Maids must know right amount of fees to pay

THE call by an association representing maid agents in Singapore to cap fees collected from foreign maids baffles me ("Call to cap fees collected from maids"; Thursday).

A better solution is to educate maids on the right amount of fees they should pay.

Placement fees are made up of different components, which may vary depending on the country of origin of the maids. The amounts may be inconsistent even in the same country and are frequently not transparent to maids, employers and the Singapore agents.

Besides local and foreign agents' commissions, these fees may also include fees of recruiters in the maids' home towns, and advances made to the maids and their families before the workers report to the foreign training centres.

A portion of the placement fee may, therefore, comprise the

maids' personal debts.

The maids' home government plays a critical role in educating its nationals on the rightful amount of placement fees that should be borne by them.

This will minimise the risks of profiteering by local and foreign agents at the maids' expense.

One should bear in mind that cases of overcharging come to light only when the victim lodges a complaint.

In the long run, it bodes well for the industry when Singapore

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SERIOUS ISSUE

The call to cap fees collected from maids is indeed timely. A standardised system of payment should be devised to protect maids as well as employers. The current policy allowing agents to collect two months of the maids' wages in commission is a great financial strain on those who have already been fleeced by agents in their home country. The unethical practice of agents collecting eight to nine months of a maid's pay should be seriously addressed to ensure maids are protected from paying such exorbitant sums.

— Padmini Kesavapany (Mrs)

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agents are compelled to be transparent on the quantum of their service fees, without hidden components in placement fees.

Singapore employers must realise that a discontented maid is likely to prematurely terminate her contract, which, in turn, translates to unrecoverable placement fees.

Engaging a maid should be fair to all stakeholders.

Shirley Ng Chiou Peng (Ms)
Member, Association of
Employment Agencies (Singapore)

Replacing concession cards

WE THANK Ms Clara Chua Sieo Peng for her feedback ("Improve process to replace concession card"; Feb 19).

When a concession card is presented for replacement at our concession card replacement office (CCRO) and is still readable by a card reader, the remaining value will be immediately transferred to the new card.

As Ms Chua's child's concession card was corrupted, the card could not be read. Hence, a claim for refund had to be filed and the corrupted card sent back to TransitLink's headquarters for the refund to be processed.

As the infrastructure of a CCRO is different from that of a ticket office (TO), we are not able to replicate the full suite of the CCRO services at all TOs. To make it more convenient for our customers, TransitLink recently opened two new CCROs at Admiralty and Somerset MRT stations.

These are in addition to the six existing ones at Ang Mo Kio