

EA Alert Dated: 10 Aug 2017

EA Alert: Underage FDWs – MOM Stepping Up Checks

Dear Key Appointment Holder and EA Personnel,

This advisory is applicable to employment agencies (EAs) which place foreign domestic workers (FDWs). Since 2005, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) has introduced a minimum entry age requirement of 23 years old for all FDWs. Being the intermediary between employers and FDWs, MOM expects your EA to exercise diligence to ensure that all FDWs met the prevailing minimum age requirement.

2 Despite repeated reminders to all EAs to conduct proper checks such as face to face interviews and assessing their physical appearances, we continue to detect underage FDWs. MOM has stepped up efforts to detect underage FDWs at various touch points, including the Settling-in-Programme (SIP), during fingerprinting at MOM Services Centre, and through inspections of interim FDW housing premises. In the month of July 2017, a total of 32 FDWs were found to be under 23 years old and were sent home.

3 MOM requires your EA to assess the quality of your overseas suppliers. Are you working with trusted overseas partners? Please take the following steps before deploying an FDW to her employer:

- a) Examining the FDW's original official documents e.g. passport, educational certificate, and other relevant documents;
- b) Conducting your own screenings to examine if her physical appearance, mannerisms, speech reflect the age she declares herself to be; and
- c) Conduct an interview to gather information on the FDW's family history, including the age of the parents and siblings, her education history and work experience, to ascertain if her declared age is consistent with the information gathered from the interview.

4 EAs are to keep proper documentary records of the above checks and make such records available upon request by MOM for verification purposes. You must be prepared to produce a copy of the FDWs' national identity card and family register. Should you suspect a particular FDW to be underage, your EA must stop her deployment to her employer and send the FDW home.

5 Failure to ensure that FDWs meet entry requirements is a breach of licensing condition 7, and EAs found culpable may be fined up to \$5,000 or jailed up to 6 months. MOM will also impose administrative actions such as demerit points, suspension of EAs' licences and WPOL/EPOL accounts or revocation of licences.

6 We urge EAs to immediately step up your efforts to review your current recruitment processes, including the overseas agents that you work with, and to take any necessary corrective measures.

7 MOM will continue to share important EA-related information with all EAs through this channel. Please keep your EA email address updated. For further clarification, you may call 6438 5122 or email MOM_FMMD@mom.gov.sg.