

PUTRAJAYA: Several foreign maid agencies are believed to have scammed their customers out of RM8.1 million last year by giving them "troublemaker" maids, who ran away after working for just a few months.

National Consumer Complaints Centre senior manager M. Matheevani said these agencies practised a "recycling" tactic by ensuring that maids, who were hired out after potential employers placed a deposit of between RM8,000 and RM10,000, created problems before running back to the agency.

These hapless employers would be forced to fork out more money to get another maid, as their deposits could not be refunded.

Even in cases where clients were reimbursed, they would only get a partial sum. Meanwhile, the runaway maid would be sent to another family, only to repeat the cycle.

"We received many complaints from employers who claimed they were cheated by the agencies and lost thousands of ringgit just to hire a maid.

"It is a serious problem and these are only cases which are reported. There could be more," she told the New Straits Times.

Last year, the centre received 1,363 complaints, almost double of the 746 complaints in 2009.

Matheevani said there were also cases where the maids could not do any housework, although the employers were promised qualified and experienced workers.

There were also instances when documents, such as permits and health checks, were incomplete despite employers having paid a hefty price for the maids.

"We had one complainant, who paid RM10,000 for a maid who did not have a permit and had not undergone a health check."

She said if there were others who had faced similar problems, they should lodge a complaint with the with the centre to prevent future employers from falling into the trap.

Source: http://www.nst.com.my/articles/04magen/Article/