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## MOM will take up issue with employers if workers are not paid: Lawrence Wong



For pay issues, whether as a Singaporean or foreign worker, one should alert the Manpower Ministry so it can take up the issue with the employer appropriately. PHOTO: ST FILE

🕒 PUBLISHED AUG 22, 2020, 5:00 AM SGT

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If there are instances where foreign workers are not being paid, the Government will approach the employer to find out what is going on as it expects employers to do their part and pay their workers, Education Minister Lawrence Wong said yesterday.

He was responding to a question on complaints over foreign workers who had not been paid or were unable to return to work as they were without jobs.

"The Government has been providing considerable support to employers, and we do expect employers to do their part to continue to pay the workers," Mr Wong said during a multi-ministry task force virtual press conference.

Health Minister Gan Kim Yong added that for pay issues, whether as a Singaporean or foreign worker, one should alert the Manpower Ministry (MOM) so it can take up the issue with the employer appropriately.

"It is important to ensure that our workers get paid," said Mr Gan, regardless of whether one is a local or migrant worker.

On workers being unable to return to work, Mr Wong, who co-chairs the task force with Mr Gan, said feedback from many employers was that they were very eager to have their workers resume work as soon as possible.

However, he noted that there could be several reasons why this was not yet possible.

One is that the work could be tied to other parts of the ecosystem of contractors, some of whom still have issues to sort out, so the projects are still suspended.

Another reason that work is unable to resume could be the employer is unable to meet certain safe distancing requirements.

Mr Gan added that with the general slowing of the economy, some employers may not have work for their workers.

"MOM has exercised flexibility to allow some of these (migrant workers) to switch employers so that they can find jobs while in Singapore," he said.

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Mr Gan said some migrant workers may decide to return to their home countries as they prefer to be reunited with their families.

While help is being given to facilitate their repatriation, this also depends on whether the migrant workers are allowed to return or whether they have met the requirements of their home country before returning.

Despite these factors, Mr Wong said more and more cleared workers have been returning to the workplace.

This ties in with the timeline for all dormitories to be declared clear of Covid-19, which was announced by MOM on Wednesday.

While the dormitories have been cleared, there will be a bit of a time lag before all workers are able to resume work, said Mr Wong.

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