

The federal government has moved to protect foreign workers who've been brought to Canada to be live-in caregivers by imposing tighter restrictions on employers.

The changes will include the creation of a public "blacklist" that will articulate the names of employers who fail to comply with minimum standards for working conditions. The blacklist will be posted on Citizenship and Immigration Canada's website.

As well, employers who fail to comply with regulations will be banned from hiring another live-in caregiver for a two-year period after they have been found to have breached conditions of the program. The changes became effective April 1.

The federal government is also proposing to undertake more rigorous assessments of the authenticity of employer offers.

There have been complaints in the past about abuse, poor working conditions and wages that fall below minimum wage standards, says Shokoofeh Moussavi, settlement and integration manager for the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association in Alberta.

"Some employers do not pay adequately, mistreat caregivers or have unrealistic expectations. There needs to be more accountability on both sides and more protection. Caregivers and employers need to be aware of their rights and responsibilities," she says.

The demand for such live-in caregivers is increasing as Canada's population ages, says Marna Martin, chair of immigration and labour issues for the Canadian Coall

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