

5 February 2010 - The Philippine Embassy in London issued an advisory for Filipino online jobseekers looking for employment in the United Kingdom, advising them to be more cautious in view of the rampant cases of bogus internet job offers.

They should be wary of attractive jobs offered by the employers or their agents who would ask applicants to remit a certain amount of money purportedly to pay for the processing of their visas or work permits and other travel-related expenses.

The Embassy, through the Philippine Overseas Labor Office (POLO), urges all Filipino jobseekers to be more discerning as these internet job offers come in various schemes to defraud them of their hard-earned money.

Among the UK jobs which have been offered to Filipino applicants lately include positions like nannies, au pair, hotel staff, store managers, salespersons and engineers.

The following information/advisory should serve as a guide to UK-bound Filipino jobseekers:

- o To ascertain the authenticity of job orders, employment contracts as well as the legitimacy of UK employers, Filipino jobseekers are advised to check with the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency (POEA). They may also send their email-request for verification by POLO London at polo.london@yahoo.co.uk. It is not enough to know if the employers really exist or that the jobs are available. Filipino jobseekers should also verify for themselves by using internet search engines like Google or contacting the UK employers directly through their official websites;
- o Filipino jobseekers who have been 'offered' positions through the Internet should advise their prospective UK employers to submit the original copies of their employment documents to the POLO Office, Philippine Embassy in London for verification and authentication. For their part, they should not rely on scanned documents sent to them by emails such as employment contract, appointment letters and the like, as most of these are found to be forged or fabricated;
- o Job offers requiring applicants to pay or remit money are highly suspicious. Charging of fees, including payment for visa and 'work permit' expenses are generally prohibited under the UK

employment regulations;

o The new UK Points-Based Immigration System has done away with the work permit requirement, and is now replaced by the certificate of sponsorship. To be able to issue a certificate of sponsorship in favor of a candidate or applicant, the prospective UK employer should be duly licensed as a sponsor by the UK Border Agency (UKBA). Filipino jobseekers should verify the status of their prospective employers in the list of sponsors which can be found at the UKBA website: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk . Payment for the certificate of sponsorship is also shouldered by the UK employer;

o Application for UK visa is done in the country of origin (i.e., at the British Embassy in Manila), and not in the UK. Visas are issued based on the points criteria for qualifications, prospective earnings, maintenance funds and English language proficiency. Since the visas are applied at and issued by the British Embassy in Manila, applicants should not give credence to the scanned copies of visas purportedly applied in their behalf by their employer's agents, including immigration consultants, solicitors or travel agents;

o As to the hiring of nannies or domestic workers, it is an important requirement for purposes of domestic worker visa application that the candidate must have worked with the sponsoring employer for at least one year prior to the date of application. Hence, to qualify to come to the UK to work as a nanny or domestic worker, the Filipino applicant must be an established member of the employer's household. The visa is also applied at the British Embassy in Manila;

o On hiring of au pair, it is advised that no au pair visas will be issued by the British Embassy to Filipino nationals, since the Philippines had never been included in the UK's list of au pair countries. In addition, the au pair visa scheme was abolished effective on November 26, 2008 and has been replaced by the Youth Mobility Scheme under the new UK Points-Based System.

For further clarifications or inquiries, prospective jobseekers can contact POLO London at the Philippine Embassy, at telephone 0044 (0)20-7451-1833 (32) or email at polo.london@yahoo.co.uk . END