As a migrant, do you feel bullied, threatened or intimidated by your employer?

If you are a migrant worker you have the same rights as all other workers in New Zealand. It is not acceptable for your employer to take advantage of you. It may even be against the law.

The Labour Inspectorate and Immigration New Zealand are here to protect you – even if you are here without the right visa.

Ask yourself:

• Do you feel bullied, threatened or intimidated by your employer?
• Is your employer refusing to return your passport, travel tickets or money to you?
• Are you being paid less than the minimum wage? Are your wages being withheld? Or are you having to pay your own wages?
• Do you have to work long hours, without having time off for holidays?
• Are you being forced to work to pay off debt to your employer?
• Has your employer threatened you with deportation?
• Does your employer restrict your freedom of movement or access to a telephone?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, you should seek help. You may be a victim of ‘migrant exploitation’.

You can help victims of migrant exploitation

If you see something that is ‘just not right’ – like a person being bullied, threatened or intimidated by their employer, or someone who is working excessively long hours – then it might be illegal. You can help them by encouraging them to report it, or by reporting it yourself.
Making a complaint about exploitation will not affect your immigration status

You may be fearful of coming forward, but Immigration New Zealand will treat you fairly if you make a credible complaint of migrant exploitation.

Immigration New Zealand or the Labour Inspectorate can take action against your employer and help enforce your rights. If you work with Immigration New Zealand and the Labour Inspectorate to investigate cases of exploitation, you may be eligible to remain in New Zealand while your complaint is looked at and resolved, even if you have been working without the right visa.

Call 0800 20 90 20 to talk to someone at the Labour Contact Centre about the problems in your workplace.

Your case will be referred to the Labour Inspectorate, who can assess your complaint and will work with Immigration New Zealand to decide if action should be taken against your employer.

If you feel physically threatened or your personal safety is at risk, you can call your local police or dial 111 if it is an emergency.

Or you can provide anonymous information to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

You can find out more about your employment rights, including the minimum wage, at www.dol.govt.nz/er/minimumrights or by calling 0800 20 90 20.

This pamphlet is also available in other languages at www.immigration.govt.nz/exploitation.