

Immigration Department extends scope of Smart Renewal service

The Immigration Department (ImmD) announced today (July 15) that the scope of the Smart Renewal service will be extended on July 20. Apart from online applications for visas for further employment of foreign domestic helpers (FDHs), the Smart Renewal service will also be applicable to the same category of applications submitted by post or drop-in box, with a view to further enabling persons applying for visas for FDHs.

Introduced on March 5 this year, the Smart Renewal service was initially applicable to online applications for visas for further employment of FDHs (i.e. applications for contract renewal with the same employer, completion of the remaining period of the current contract, or deferral of home leave of FDHs under the special arrangement amid the COVID-19 pandemic). Persons applying for the visas may, upon approval of their applications, pay the visa fee through various means and collect the visas by post, without having to attend an office of the ImmD for going through the formalities.

An ImmD spokesperson said, "From the launch of the Smart Renewal service to the end of June this year, applicants of over 21 500 applications for visas for further employment of FDHs paid their visa fees and collected their visa labels through the Smart Renewal service. The percentage of online submission of applications for visas for further employment of FDHs nearly doubled from about 15 per cent before the launch of the service to almost 30 per cent (as at the end of June this year). In view of the positive public response to the Smart Renewal service, the ImmD has decided to extend the scope of the service on July 20 to cover all applications for visas for further employment of FDHs received by the ImmD on or after that day, regardless of whether they are submitted online, or by post or drop-in box."

Persons who submit their visa applications can, upon approval of their applications, pay the visa fee with the General Demand Note (GDN) enclosed with the notification of the application result. Payment can be made by various means, such as the Faster Payment System, Internet banking, the Payment by Phone Service or automatic teller machines, or in person at a post office or convenience store. The details are set out on the back of the GDN. Upon the ImmD's acknowledgement of the receipt of the visa fee paid by one of the methods specified in the GDN, the visa and/or extension of stay label(s) will be mailed to the correspondence address provided by the employer. The visa and/or extension of stay label(s), upon receipt, should be properly affixed to the FDH's passport according to the enclosed instructions. In case no correspondence address has been provided, the visa and/or extension of stay label(s) will be sent to the contractual address. In other words, FDHs or their employers need not attend any office of the ImmD to pay the visa fee or collect the visa label(s).

As for other applications for entry visas or for change of employer, and

applications requiring an in-person submission or an interview due to special or individual circumstances, the application procedures as well as the arrangements for payment of the visa fee and collection of visa label(s) will remain unchanged.

Moreover, a dedicated webpage on "Online Services for Foreign Domestic Helpers" (www.immd.gov.hk/fdh) has been specially set up to not only provide the details of the Smart Renewal service, but also combine the links for various services, such as applications for visas and extension of stay for FDHs, enquiry of application status, submission of supplementary document(s) and notification of premature termination of an employment contract, so as to further enable the public in accessing FDH-related online services.

The ImmD spokesperson appealed to members of the public to submit online applications for visas for further employment of FDHs through the above dedicated webpage or the ImmD mobile application as far as possible, so as to reduce travelling and contribute to the efforts in fighting the virus together. For enquiries, please call the enquiry hotline at 2824 6111, fax to 2877 7711 or send an email at enquiry@immd.gov.hk.