

Main round registration for Certificate of Sponsorship under Hong Kong/United Kingdom Working Holiday Scheme to open on February 18

The Labour Department (LD) announced today (January 21) that the main round registration for the Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) under the Hong Kong/United Kingdom (UK) Working Holiday Scheme will commence on February 18. Youths holding the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) passport and interested in participating in the UK's Youth Mobility Scheme (YMS) may submit their registrations for the CoS to the LD from February 18 to March 1 this year (both dates inclusive), before applying for a Tier 5 (YMS) visa with the UK from April 10 to July 9 this year (both dates inclusive).

According to the arrangement agreed between Hong Kong and the UK, youths from Hong Kong can apply for a Tier 5 (YMS) visa allowing them to stay in the UK for up to two years, during which they can engage in short-term employment to finance their stay, privately funded studies and/or voluntary work of choice. The annual quota is 1 000 for HKSAR passport holders.

Applicants for the CoS have to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- The applicant must be a holder of a valid HKSAR passport;
- The applicant must be aged between 18 and 30 on the day the visa application is made; and
- The applicant must not have previously spent time in the UK as a "Working Holidaymaker" or a YMS temporary migrant.

Applicants who wish to obtain a CoS can download the relevant registration form online (www.whs.gov.hk/res/pdf/UK_regform.pdf) and submit the completed registration form together with the required supporting documents to the LD during the registration period. Applications submitted outside the registration period will not be processed. In the event that there are more eligible registrants than the available quota (i.e. 1 000 for the main round registration), a computer ballot will be drawn to randomly select successful registrants.

Holders of the British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) passport do not need to apply for the CoS and can submit their applications for the Tier 5 (YMS) visa directly to the UK Visa Application Centre in Hong Kong.

For details on obtaining a CoS, please refer to the LD's website: www.whs.gov.hk/en/partners.php?location=UK#cos. Please also visit www.whs.gov.hk for details relating to the Working Holiday Scheme.