

PARENTAL PLANNING:

A guide for servicepersons in the NZ Army



Foreword From The Chief Of Army

Hā ki roto (Deep breath in)!

You are starting, or are about to start, something that is incredibly special yet life changing. Becoming a parent, whether that be biologically or by taking guardianship of a child, brings about huge change in a person's life. Combined with meeting the challenges which life in the military often presents, it can seem like a daunting prospect. Be assured that our Army is here to support you.

I personally understand the pressures placed upon military families, particularly when balancing the demands of raising children with the requirements of service life. At times the two can seem incompatible, however retaining the talent and skills of our people is critical to the success of our organisation. I hope that by providing caregivers within our organisation both the knowledge and the support to successfully continue their careers we will be able to achieve this.

Understanding what is required, as well as the options that are available to you, will ensure that your employment runs smoothly as you begin military life with a young family. I also encourage you to reach out if you need additional support, it is available.

This guide has been developed primarily for Service Personnel within the NZ Army. Some aspects necessarily relate to pregnancy and childbirth for women, however it also contains information for any member of the Army who may be eligible to take parental leave, or who wants to better understand the policies and support available to new parents. Again, take heart in the fact that the Army is here to support you through this life changing journey.

**He waka eke noa
(We are all in this together)!**



Policy

This guide aims to support you by drawing together in one place various aspects of policy which relate to members who are pregnant, seeking to take permanent care of a child under the age of six, or the partners of a primary carer.

This version is current with effect May 2020, and it will be next reviewed in 2021. The information included in this guide is for guidance only and the ultimate authority for the provisions are contained in the following references:

- DFO 3 Part 8 Chapter 8 Leave (Military)
- DFO 3 Part 12 Chapter 1 Flexible Working
- DFO 3 Part 12 Chapter 4 Family Support
- DFO 3 Part 12 Chapter 10 The Employment of and Support during Pregnancy and Breastfeeding
- NZ P23 NZ Army Orders for Dress Part 5, Chapter 1, Sect 2, Scale 106
- HR Toolkit

This guide is complemented by a checklist at Annex A which provides a series of key career-related activities that you need to begin thinking about both prior to and during parental leave, and which will assist you with a successful return to work. The following websites also have useful information relating to pregnancy and parental leave within New Zealand that you may wish to further review:

- www.health.govt.nz
- www.ird.govt.nz
- www.workandincome.govt.nz

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Definitions

The following table provides definitions of some key terms that will be used throughout this handbook.

Term	Definition
Lead Maternity Carer (LMC) or Mātanga Tiaki Hapūtanga	A LMC is a community or hospital based midwife; a general practitioner (GP) or family doctor; a private obstetrician or a hospital maternity service chosen by the member to manage their care throughout pregnancy and for 4–6 weeks after giving birth.
NZDF Medical Practitioner	A doctor registered with the Medical Council of NZ and employed by NZDF in either a uniformed or civilian capacity. Sometimes referred to as a Medical Officer (MO).
Member	Unless specifically stated this guide refers to a member as being a Regular Force member of the NZDF.
Health and Safety Risk	The likelihood that a person will be harmed or experience adverse health effects due to exposure to hazards in the workplace or likelihood of a situation of damage, loss or harmful effects to property, equipment or the environment that a hazard may lead to.
Primary Carer	A primary carer is defined as one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A female (the biological mother) who is pregnant or has given birth to a child or children.• The partner of the biological mother, or in all other cases, the partner of the member nominated to be the primary carer who either succeeds to their partner's right to parental leave and parental leave payments to the partner.• In all other cases, a member other than the biological mother or her partner, who takes the permanent primary responsibility for the care, development and upbringing of a child or children under the age of six years.

Term	Definition
Primary Carer Date	The primary carer date in respect of a member, who is not the biological mother of a child or the biological mother's partner, means the date the member becomes the primary carer in respect of a child under the age of six years.
Date of Confinement	The date labour commences, immediately prior to the birth of the child.
Flexible Working Arrangement	Any arrangement agreed that varies working conditions to meet the needs of members of the NZDF whilst still ensuring the work requirements can be met. This may include; reduced hours, job splitting, job sharing, working from home or other locations, and working outside of core hours. Arrangements are for a specified time and are subject to review.

Support Agencies Available

NZDF4U Helpline and Wellbeing Counselling Support

All members of NZDF and the Defence community can contact 0800 NZDF 4 U (0800 693 348) for 24/7 confidential support. This includes regular force, civilians, veterans, reserves and family members. A health professional (outside of the NZDF) will assess what's going on and discuss support options.

Defence Health

Each camp and base has a Defence Health Centre where you can seek medical advice and support as a member of the Regular Force. Locations and contact details can be located on the NZDF Intranet <http://orgs/sites/nzdf-health/lp/health-centres.aspx>

NZDF Chaplains

The role of NZDF Chaplains is to provide spiritual, religious and pastoral ministry to NZDF members and their families. Information about the locations and contact details for the NZDF Chaplains can be found on the NZDF intranet at <http://communities/nzdf-cs/ChaplaincyLocationsPages/HQNZDF%20and%20HQJFNZ.aspx>

NZDF Social Workers

NZDF Social Workers are available to support the wellness and provide advice to all NZDF members (civilian and military) and their families. A list of locations and phone numbers for NZDF social workers can be found on the internet site <https://force4families.mil.nz/nzdf-social-workers>

Human Resource Advisors (HRAs)

HRAs form part of the HR Services Delivery Team and are available to provide advice on HR related matters, including supporting conversations with managers about policy and employment related matters. A list of locations and contact details for HRAs can be found on the NZDF intranet at http://orgs/imx/hr-toolkit/LP/HRA_Contact_Details.aspx

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Advisors (SAPRA)

SAPRAs are subject matter experts in the field of sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual violence. SAPRAs provide advice and information to all NZDF personnel on sexual violence prevention strategies and best practice for the response to cases of sexual violence. This includes advice, information and support for victims/survivors, command and bystanders. You can contact a SAPRA by calling 0800 6933 24.

Financial Information

To help you make better informed financial decisions, the NZDF has brought together a range of resources for you to use. These are available via the HR Toolkit http://orgs/imx/hr-toolkit/LP/pa_super_g_fi.aspx

CHAPTER 1: **FINDING OUT THAT YOU ARE PREGNANT**

*Ahakoā he iti, he pounamu
Although small, it is precious - like greenstone.*

You have just found out you are hapū (pregnant). For some women, this is planned and welcome news. For others, less so, and it can be a real shock.

Everyone, particularly during your first pregnancy, will be feeling uncertain and potentially worried about what is going to happen and how this will change your life. Everyone's experience of pregnancy and maternity is different and there are no right answers. The most important thing you need to focus is on looking after yourself and your pēpi (baby).

Your body and mind will go through considerable physiological and psychological changes during your pregnancy. Your lead maternity carer (LMC) or Mātanga Tiaki Hapūtanga should give you a booklet which shows the different stages of pregnancy and how it might impact on your body. There are also lots of short films on the internet which show you what is likely to happen.



Medical

It is strongly recommended you advise your Defence Health Centre as soon as you think you are hapū, even though this is not who will be providing your antenatal care. Your medical grading will need to be changed to acknowledge your pregnancy. This is primarily for health and safety reasons to protect you and your unborn pēpi . It ensures that your medical grading is reviewed to make sure you are employed on duties which are appropriate while pregnant.

It is also your responsibility to ensure that your NZDF Medical Practitioner is kept informed of all information relating to the pregnancy as it progresses.

Entitlement to Health Care Costs

The NZDF does not pay for obstetric care, however, normal entitlements to general medical care for a member of the Regular Forces will continue as part of your conditions of service. You will be responsible for any costs incurred where you elect pregnancy management that falls outside public funding, such as private obstetric care and specialist obstetric care. You are also responsible for any costs related to assisted conception. If you have private health insurance you may wish to consult them about obstetric cover inclusions.

Informing the Chain of Command

Telling your chain of command you are pregnant may seem like a daunting task. The earlier you choose to do so, the sooner you can work together to ensure you are employed on appropriate duties and the necessary health and safety considerations have been taken into account. This also opens the lines of communication to discuss options for parental leave and any other concerns you may have.

If you are unsure about communicating with your chain of command about your pregnancy, you are encouraged to seek advice and assistance from a Human Resources Advisor, NZDF Medical Practitioner, Social Worker, Chaplain, or other support person who you feel comfortable speaking with.

Disclosure of pregnancy

You can be assured that if you disclose your pregnancy to your manager, they in turn are not to disclose that information to any other person unless you consent to that disclosure; or the other person needs to know the restrictions imposed upon you as a result of your pregnancy in order to protect the health and safety of yourself or your colleagues. In this instance, only the restrictions are to be communicated, not the reason for the restrictions. You should discuss disclosure of this information with your manager to ensure that disclosure requirements are understood by both of you.

Health and Safety Considerations

To minimise harm to you and your unborn child, your chain of command should conduct a risk assessment of your current job and the environment in which you work, putting in place protective measures as required. The duty restrictions imposed on the member are to be determined by your manager in consultation with yourself, the medical officer and a health and safety advisor. It is also your responsibility to take all reasonable actions to comply with these restrictions.

Subject to health and safety and medical advice, unless you elect to do so, for the duration of your pregnancy, you will not be required to:

- attend field exercises,
- be rostered for shift work,
- be rostered on watches/duty,
- be required to undertake extra duties outside of the normal work period,
- undertake drill or parades,
- undertake weapons training, or
- undertake any other duties against medical or health and safety advice.



Exemption from Fitness Testing

Following confirmation of pregnancy, a member is exempt from fitness testing, contact sports, and formal fitness classes (including unit PT and unit sports). You should seek professional advice from the MO or your LMC on an appropriate exercise regime that is within the limitations of your pregnancy. You may elect to undertake fitness testing, contact sports and formal fitness classes, but again should seek advice from your NZDF Medical Practitioner or LMC prior to doing so.

Please note that you should receive a medical exemption form (MD 917) from the Medical Officer, however you need to take this to a Physical Training Instructor (PTI) to be loaded on HRMIS as a G4 (medically excused) RFL qualification for your exemption to be recognised.

Maternity Wear

As you move into your second and third trimesters of pregnancy you will most likely find that you will need to alter your current uniform or be issued the maternity uniform. It is acknowledged that having well-fitting clothing during your pregnancy is important for both your physical wellbeing and your personal self-esteem.

The NZ P23 provides the authorised maternity clothing scale for issue to Army personnel, and this is to be issued to all female officers and soldiers of the NZ Army as required. Over-issue is authorised at CO discretion when it is deemed there is a need. All clothing in this scale, including MCU and MTP when it is issued, is also authorised to be amended as required for individuals by regional clothing store tailors. Alternatively, CO's also have the authority to approve civilian attire (at the member's cost) to be worn by pregnant women in lieu of uniform so don't be afraid to request this through your manager if you feel that this would be a better option for you during your pregnancy.



CHAPTER 2: **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

*Nā tō rourou, nā tōku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi.
With your knowledge and my knowledge we will thrive.*



Assisted Conception

Assisted conception is the name given to the variety of treatments in support of conception, such as In vitro fertilisation (IVF). The investigation and diagnosis of fertility issues and any subsequent treatment takes time and can affect you and your partner with increased levels of stress associated with the process. It is important to maintain communication with your manager so that they can understand the situation and can provide support where required. If you feel uncomfortable discussing this with your manager, you may wish to seek advice or support from an HRA, social worker, or NZDF Medical Practitioner, to discuss your options during the assisted conception process and to support you in communicating your needs to your manager.

Unplanned pregnancy

There are situations where you might find yourself accidentally pregnant. You may feel surprised, uncertain, numb, or even a certain amount of shock in this situation. It is also acknowledged that there may be aspects of social or cultural stigma related to an unplanned pregnancy. It is important for you to take time to think about the situation, and talk with people that you trust about your options.

There are a number of support agencies within the NZDF that you may wish to seek support from, including social workers, psychologists and chaplains, who can provide advice and emotional support. It is recommended that you seek medical support as soon as possible in order to ensure your physical wellbeing is looked after.

Adoption

Adoption is described in NZDF policy as taking the “permanent primary responsibility for the care, development and upbringing of a child or children under the age of six years.” This can include formal adoption, or informal forms of adoption such as puke or whangai. While the pregnancy aspects of this guide may not apply to you, some of the sections will assist you with understanding such things as your entitlements to parental leave, government parental leave payments, and your career management on return to work. You are again encouraged to discuss your situation with your manager in order to gain the support that you need prior to, during, and post adoption of a child.

Termination of pregnancy

Some women may choose to have a termination. Should you decide this, seeking help early from a medical practitioner is very important. Seeking support and counselling is also recommended. Counselling is available through the NZDF’s Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), and again social workers, psychologists or chaplains are available within the NZDF for advice and emotional support.

If you choose to go ahead with a termination you do not need to advise your manager unless you choose to do so. It is however recommended that you speak confidentially with an NZDF Medical Practitioner as you may be provided sick leave, and you might be required to be on light duties during the recovery process.

The Loss of a Child

The loss of a child is always hard on a woman, her partner and family. Miscarriage and still birth can also take a long time to recover from. Having the right support around you will help you to deal with these situations. You should speak to your LMC or doctor about your feelings as they will be able to help and may refer you for further support if needed. There are also a number of organisations within the NZDF available to support taha hinengaro (emotional mental health). These include social workers, psychologists and chaplains, who can support you and your partner following the loss of your baby. The NZDF's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is also available to provide confidential counselling support for you and your family.

Miscarriage

A miscarriage occurs when the body terminates a pregnancy on its own, before the pregnancy has carried to 20 weeks. Statistics indicate that miscarriage occurs more frequently than we may realise. You should therefore not feel alone in this situation, or be afraid to talk to someone about what has happened.

A Servicewoman who has a miscarriage will not be entitled to parental leave or government parental leave payments, but normal sick leave provisions will apply. You are able to make a confidential appointment with an NZDF Medical Practitioner to discuss your sick leave options, or to seek further counselling support.

Stillbirth

Stillbirth is when you lose a baby after the first 20 weeks of pregnancy. If your baby is stillborn you are still eligible for government parental leave payments as detailed in the parental leave section of this guide.

Using this entitlement will allow you to take time away from work to attend to your health and wellbeing. You are also able to make a confidential appointment with an NZDF Medical Practitioner to seek further counselling support.

Disability and Illness

Very rarely, you may discover that your baby is going to be born with a genetic disorder such as Down Syndrome, or an illness such as a heart condition. This can be an extremely stressful and worrying time for you. It can also be very isolating as it is often difficult knowing how to share this news with others.

The vision you may have had of your birth, coming home from hospital, and potentially life in general, may now also look very different. You are however, not alone. There are many, many families who have faced a similar journey to you with very positive outcomes. As well as the usual range of NZDF supports such as social workers, psychologists and chaplains, Parent to Parent is a nationwide service that is free and confidential, designed to inform, educate and support families. This organisation can research the most up to date information on any condition your baby may have. They can also direct you to other more specific support groups.

When your baby is born you may also be eligible for the Child Disability Allowance, which is a fortnightly (non-income tested) payment in recognition of the extra care and attention your baby needs. Your paediatrician or child's GP will be able to help you apply for this.

CHAPTER 3:

PARENTAL LEAVE PROVISIONS

Parental leave provisions are available within the NZDF for members who either give birth to a child, or who take permanent and primary care for the development and upbringing of a child under the age of six. Applying for parental leave and government parental leave payments can at times seem complicated, so while this guide will explain the key aspects of this process you are encouraged to speak with an HR Advisor, or call the HRSC, if you need further assistance.

Special Parental Leave (Special PNL)

Members who qualify for PNL (whether they have applied for PNL or not) are entitled to 10 days' Special PNL for reasons connected with the pregnancy or birth, or when assuming the permanent responsibility for the care of a child. Special PNL may be taken from the date entitlement is established up until 30 days after the date of confinement or primary carer date. If Special PNL is not used within this period, it is forfeited. Special PNL may be taken in half or full days and is applied for via ESS as Special Parental Leave.

The following leave provisions are available to eligible service members of the Armed Forces:

- Special Parental Leave (Special PNL - paid); and
- Parental Leave (PNL - unpaid).
- Keeping in Touch (KIT) days (discussed in Chapter 4)

Special PNL is to be used for complications or illness directly related to a pregnancy. Where an entitlement to Special PNL has been exhausted, usual sick leave provisions are to apply. Where extensive sick leave beyond a total of 91 days is necessary, Parental Leave should commence early, based on a recommendation from your LMC.

Parental Leave (PNL)

Members are entitled to Parental Leave (PNL) if you are the primary carer of a child, and you meet the employment threshold. The employment threshold is where you have served, or been employed continuously, as a member of the NZDF for at least an average of 10 hours a week in the six or 12 months immediately preceding the following:

- The expected date of delivery of the child, in the case of a child to be born; or
- primary carer date in any other case, when assuming responsibility for the care of a child who is under the age of six.

Parental leave can commence up to six weeks before the expected date of delivery, or on a date specified by your LMC. Where you are the biological parent, you are required to apply for PNL at least three months before the expected date of delivery. Alternatively, where you assume responsibility for the care of a child under the age of six you must apply at least 14 days before the primary carer date.

Where a primary carer and their partner are each individually entitled to PNL in respect of the same child, you may share (as you choose, concurrently or consecutively) your PNL entitlement up to the maximum combined period. The maximum period of (individually or shared) entitlement is calculated in the following table.

Members who have completed an average of 10 hours a week in the immediately preceding...	Are entitled to PNL of...
Six months	26 weeks
Twelve months	52 weeks

Parental leave will cease on the date requested within your application, however you may request early cessation of PNL by providing at least one month's notice in writing.

Accrual of Annual Leave (AL) while on Parental Leave

Annual Leave (AL) will continue to accrue consistent with your employment percentage on the day before starting Parental Leave. If you are undertaking a flexible working arrangement with reduced hours, AL will continue to accrue at the reduced rate for the duration of the flexible working arrangement, including through any period of Parental Leave.

Qualifying Service while on Parental Leave

The entire period of PNL, including any approved extension, is to count as qualifying service for seniority, terminal benefits and Service awards. However any period of PNL does not count as service for satisfying any ROSO imposed under Section 53 of the Defence Act.

IRD Parental Leave Payment Scheme

The Government's Parental Leave Payment scheme is administered by the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) and is available to members who:

- are the primary carer in respect of a child
- meet the parental leave payment threshold test, and
- take parental leave or negotiated carer leave.

Parental leave payments are payable for one continuous period of 26 weeks. If part of the entitlement is transferred, the period will be one continuous period per person, so long as the two continuous periods together do not exceed 26 weeks.

The process of applying for parental leave payments is completed via the **IR880 Paid parental leave** (PPL) application or **IR881 Paid parental leave** (PPL) transfer.

When the HRSC receives your IR880 or IR881 they will assess and it and, where you are assessed as eligible, HRSC will complete the employer section of the IR880 and the IR881 (if applicable), and send the form back to you to send to the IRD for their action. The IRD will then contact you to advise you of the details of your payments.

If you receive income from the NZDF while in receipt of parental leave payments, the lower payment of NZDF income or parental leave payments are subject to secondary tax. Income from the NZDF may include:

- allowances such as Non-operational posting allowance (NOPA) or Operational enabling allowance: Posting readiness (OEAPR)
- income for Keeping in touch days, or
- paid leave types such as Annual leave (AL), Stand-down leave (SD) or Equivalent leave (EQL).

If you are likely to receive income from the NZDF while you are on Parental leave, you need to select a secondary tax code for either your NZDF income (IR330) or parental leave payments (in the IR880 or IR881).

Preterm Baby Payments

You may also be able to get preterm baby payments in addition to parental leave payments if you are caring for a baby who was born live before the end of 36 weeks' gestation, and you are eligible for parental leave payments. Preterm baby payments are available for a continuous period of up to 13 weeks.

If your Plans Change

You may return to duty earlier than your planned return date by mutual agreement with your manager for any reason. You may also choose to extend your parental leave, as long as it remains within your entitlement. If this occurs, you will need to discuss this with your manager and then advise HRSC of the agreed changes in writing, giving at least one month's notice.

Where you are required to return to duty during your parental leave to attend a course for service reasons, the parental leave period will be extended by the duration of the course. Any period of work that you undertake that is not to attend a course for service reasons however, does not extend the parental leave entitlement period, but is inclusive.



CHAPTER 4: **WHILE ON PARENTAL LEAVE**

*Me aro koe ki te hā o Hineahuone.
Pay homage to the essence of womankind.*

Maintaining Contact

The arrival of your pēpi or child, whether that be by birth or adoption, is likely to be your main focus once you begin parental leave. The Army may become a distant concern, however if your aim is to return to work following your parental leave, there will come a point when you need to make contact with your current or future unit. There are many aspects you may need to consider before returning to work such as: childcare options, breastfeeding, starting a new job, and rebuilding your fitness levels to mention just a few.

Dealing with these concerns may seem overwhelming, especially if you generally feel out of touch with Army life. It is normal to feel detached or worried about returning to work. On the other hand you may also be looking forward to returning! Either way it is recommended that you establish a point of contact within your unit before you go on parental leave and maintain communication with them throughout. If possible, you should also maintain contact with your manager as they have a key role in promoting your wellbeing when you arrive back at work.



Keeping in Touch (KIT) days

Keeping in Touch (KIT) days are a good way to stay connected with your workplace without affecting your government funded parental leave payments. They are days when you can return to work while you are on parental leave, providing an opportunity to keep up your contact with your unit, or to participate in unit training (for example). KIT days are optional, but if you wish to apply for keeping in touch (KIT) days you need to discuss your intention with your manager.

You can apply to take KIT days via email, and the email is to include your service number, name, time, date and number of KIT hours requested to be taken. If you are in receipt of parental leave payments, you may not apply for KIT days until your baby is 28 days old, and the maximum period of KIT days cannot exceed 64 hours. However, members in receipt of preterm baby payments are not required to wait until after the 28th day from their child's birth and are also entitled to an additional three KIT hours for every week they receive preterm baby payments.

If your request is approved, once you have completed the KIT day application your manager will send the details to the HRSC for processing. Your manager will also advise you once your attendance has been entered in SAP and you can keep track of the number of KIT days/hours you have remaining on ESS.

The NZDF will pay you for your KIT hours, however you must keep track of the number of hours remaining, as if you exceed the maximum entitlement it is deemed that you have returned to work. It is also important to note that KIT days are only available during the period that you are receiving the government parental leave payments.

Pay and Allowances

It is acknowledged that becoming a parent, and taking parental leave, may mean that you need to review your budget to accommodate increased expenses during a period of time when you will be potentially receiving a lower income. The NZDF has a range of budgeting tools and services which you can access via the links at the beginning of this guide.

You may also be eligible for additional government support, such as Working for Families payments, depending on your income and your family situation. You can visit the IRD website, or call the IRD helpline, if you wish to find out about your eligibility for government support.

Members of the Regular Forces granted PNL are eligible to continue receiving Non Operational posting allowance (NOPA); the Operational enabling allowance: and posting readiness (OEAPR). You will also retain your entitlement to Service accommodation subject to usual eligibility criteria. You may also elect to either continue or suspend your superannuation contributions for a period of PNL in excess of 35 days.

Medical Care

While pregnancy or birth related medical issues should be dealt with by your LMC, while you are on parental leave you remain eligible for general medical and dental care through the NZDF. You can make an appointment in the usual way at your local Defence Health Centre (DHC) or dental clinic.

CHAPTER 5:

RETURNING TO WORK

Posting on Return to Work

Wherever possible, it is the NZDF's intent to retain members' skills and experience by offering them suitable positions on return to work from any period of PNL.

The position held by a member prior to taking PNL will usually be held open or filled temporarily. However where this is not practicable and a permanent appointment is made, career management will seek to find a similar position as that held at the time of commencing PNL. A similar position means a position in the same rank in the same location, or another location within the posting region.

If a position within the posting region is not available, in consultation with you, one of the following options may be approved:

- an extension of PNL for up to a further 52 weeks until the position or a similar position becomes available;
- permanent posting to another posting region, with normal entitlements for transfer expenses applying; or
- the appointment of the member to a different position in the same posting location (i.e. a position in a lower or higher rank, or one involving different duties)
- where PNL or an extension of PNL expires, and no position is available, the member may be terminated with three months' notice. (Please note that this action is highly unlikely, and would require the Service to demonstrate that no position is available having applied the first three options above in the first instance).

Childcare Options

There are a range of Early Childhood Education (ECE) options that you may wish to investigate before returning to work so that you can find the best solution for you and your family. The NZDF does not provide assistance towards childcare costs, however you may be eligible for Work and Income (WINZ) subsidies.

Each camp location has an ECE facility, however these are privately owned and you will need to discuss spaces available and enrolment directly with the relevant centre. If you are posted to a new location, you may also wish to speak with the Defence Community Facilitators who provide information to help people settle into camp life.

Medical Grading

When you return to work after giving birth, you will be required to book a medical appointment in order for an NZDF Medical Practitioner to review your medical grading. Medical grading reviews will take into account the needs of a member who is breastfeeding, and if you are exempt from any duties on the basis of medical advice your manager will be advised.

Fitness Testing Exemption

Following confirmation of pregnancy, you will be exempt (unless you choose to do so) from fitness testing, contact sports, and formal fitness classes (including unit PT and unit sports). To provide an opportunity to regain the required fitness level for service, the fitness testing exemption will remain in place for 12 months after the date of delivery of the child. An NZDF Medical Practitioner may also extend this period for reasons related to pregnancy or breastfeeding. You may, however, choose to be fitness tested at any time during the period of fitness testing exemption. If you fail a fitness test during the period of exemption, this failure is not to be recorded in your records.

Every individual is different and every pregnancy is different, and it is important that you work with the medical and fitness staff to manage your return to physical training. If you have any concerns you should liaise with an NZDF Medical Practitioner in the first instance.



Career Management

A period of parental leave can mean you are out of the working environment for up to 52 weeks and this may have an impact on normal reporting timelines or board processes associated with your rank and career stage. The Army is committed to ensuring that you are not discriminated against or treated any less favourably as a result of your pregnancy.

Usually, your annual report should be completed prior to parental leave to ensure that any promotion or appointment board will have the most recent report to consider. This may not fill a complete reporting cycle as reporting timelines vary by rank, but care will be taken to ensure you are not disadvantaged. You should however, consult your chain of command and career manager to ensure sufficient time for your annual report to be conducted prior to your planned parental leave. You are encouraged to be proactive in initiating your annual report and ensuring its completion.

During the pregnancy and breastfeeding support period, opportunities related to your career, training and promotion remain unchanged. You will not be required to attend courses, but may elect to do so. If you are eligible for time-based promotion through accrual of required seniority, but lack the course qualification due to pregnancy or being on parental leave, you will also be given protected seniority for the required period to gain that qualification in accordance with normal service criteria.

Attending Courses

You are not required to attend courses during the breastfeeding support period, however you may elect to do so on advice from an NZDF Medical Practitioner, and where it is reasonable and practical to do so in the opinion of the course manager.

If you need to attend a promotion/trade training course that requires a level of fitness, then some exemptions apply to the fitness testing criteria. If the course is classroom based you will not be excluded from the course on fitness grounds, and you will pass the course in accordance with course requirements. Additionally, any delay in completing a course requiring a certain level of fitness will not affect your promotion prospects.

Please note that if you have a medical exemption (MD 917) from an NZDF Medical Practitioner, you need to take this to a PTI to be loaded on HRMIS as a G4 (medically excused) RFL qualification for your exemption to be recognised.

Where you may need to withdraw from a course because physical activity is critical to achievement of course objectives, you will be rescheduled on the first available course on resumption of duty, and your seniority in rank or trade will be protected. You will not however, be withdrawn from a course unless a Medical Officer deems that there is a physical/medical reason for you to do so.

Breastfeeding

The NZDF has a breastfeeding policy which enables members to either breastfeed or express milk for their child during work hours, so you should not feel pressured to discontinue breastfeeding because you are returning to work. The breastfeeding support period begins from the date of birth of the child until the child's first birthday.

During the breastfeeding support period you will not be required to make up additional time for duties not performed, and your manager will be expected to manage your workload to take into account these additional breaks. Applications to extend the breastfeeding support period can be made to your manager, and will be assessed on a case by case basis (the minimum approval level is a Major, or equivalent rank).

You are entitled to paid breaks of up to two hours per day, during your planned working time, in order to breastfeed or express milk. The duration and frequency of breaks are as agreed between yourself and your manager, and are in addition to other rest and meal breaks.

Applications for breaks for breastfeeding are to be made on form MD1477

Application for Breaks for the Purpose of Breastfeeding/Expressing of Breastmilk.

Additionally, if you need to travel from the workplace to breastfeed your child, you are also entitled to an additional 30 minutes per day of paid travel time.

If you wish to breastfeed in your work location, a suitable room will be provided by your manager. Furthermore, a clean and safe storage facility for you to store expressed breast milk must also be provided.



During the breastfeeding support period, you will be able to carry out your normal duties to the maximum extent possible. However, unless you elect to do so, you will not be required to do the following:

- attend field exercises;
- attend courses;
- be rostered for shift work;
- be rostered on watches;
- attend short notice tasks or travel;
- be deployed overseas, or within New Zealand;
- be deployed on an operational deployment;
- serve at sea;
- be required to undertake extra duties outside of the normal work period; or
- be required to undertake any duties against the advice of an NZDF Medical Practitioner or your LMC.

Flexible Working

Returning to work full time can be a daunting prospect when juggling the demands of a young family. The NZDF supports a range of flexible working options which you may wish to explore as a way to transition back into the workforce, and to help you to meet both work and family demands.

The NZDF defines a flexible working arrangement as any arrangement that varies working conditions to meet the needs of members whilst still ensuring the work requirements can be met. These arrangements can differ significantly in the degree of flexibility they allow, and some may be better suited than others depending on the requirements of your role or unit.

There are many options for flexible work, which can include working from home or other locations, reduced hours, working outside of core hours, or a combination of these. The following are the most commonly used flexible working options:

- Varied working hours - a flexible arrangement which allows members of the NZDF to work their standard hours (e.g. full-time hours) but with a varied start/finish time or on different days (e.g. compressed work week).
- Varied working location – an arrangement that allows members of the NZDF to work away from the office; at home or another location.
- Reduced hours – a flexible working arrangement that allows a reduction in the number of hours a member of the NZDF would normally be expected to work in their role.

If you think that a flexible working arrangement would support you to care for your young family, you should familiarise yourself with the NZDF Flexible Working Arrangements policy and flexible working implementation guide (DFO 3, Part 12, Chapter 1 & HR Toolkit). Also, familiarise yourself with the various types of flexible work arrangements available and think about what type of flexible working arrangement you would like to request and how that might work in your current position. You will then be ready to have a conversation with your manager about your request, and you can then also submit your application through ESS.

It should be noted also that if approved, flexible working arrangements in the NZDF are for a specified duration and are subject to review.

Time off for Dependents

At times you may find that due to illness, accident or other family circumstances that you need to take time off work to care for your child or children at home. Compassionate leave is a leave type that is intended to ensure that all Regular Force members have an entitlement to take a short period of leave for these types of domestic situations which require immediate action or attention. If you need time off in such a situation you should discuss with your manager in the first instance. Compassionate leave can be approved by a Commanding Officer, and is applied for via ESS.

Deployments

During the breastfeeding support period there will be no expectation that you will be required to be deployed (unless you wish to do so). You should discuss this with both your manager and career manager so that you are aware of any future deployment expectations. It is the intent of career management that you have ample warning if you were to be required to deploy. However, developing a support network to help with your childcare requirements is a sensible thing to begin thinking about, as this will provide stability of childcare if you were required to be away from home for any length of time.

Parental Returning Incentive

The parental returning incentive payment (PRI) is a mechanism to retain parents who take PNL. The incentive rewards members based on their capacity to return to full-time duties. It is intended to encourage members of the Armed Forces who take PNL to return to work in a full-time capacity, and in the long-term continue to maintain a future commitment to the NZDF. To qualify for a PRI payment, the member must qualify for 52 weeks' parental leave, take parental leave of at least six weeks, and return to work for no less than 26 weeks.

The 26 week period can be made up of any period the member returns to work from parental leave (except for keeping in touch days); including periods where parental leave is suspended if you attend a course required for promotion or service reasons. An application for PRI can be made by sending an email request to HRSC on a date, on or between 26 weeks and 1 days (183 days), and 78 weeks (18 months) of returning to work. PRI is paid as a lump sum payment of up to a maximum period of 6 weeks' pay. Entitlement is calculated as follows:

If you member take...	And return to work for...	Then you are eligible for...
6 weeks or more parental leave	26 weeks at 100% employment	Full PRI payment
6 weeks or more parental leave	26 weeks at less than 100% employment	Partial PRI payment
6 weeks or more parental leave	Less than 26 weeks at 100% employment and takes release	NIL PRI Payment
Less than 6 weeks parental leave	26 weeks at 100% employment	Partial PRI payment
Less than 6 weeks parental leave	26 weeks at less than 100% employment	Partial PRI Payment

CHAPTER 6: **INFORMATION FOR SERVICE PARTNERS**

The NZDF is committed to supporting families as a whole. 'Family' is described in DFO 3 as the spouse or partner and natural, step, foster or adopted children, the parents or siblings of the member; and includes the children of a spouse (in a recognised relationship) over whom the member has assumed responsibility on a part-time or full-time basis; and may also include other bona fide relations and relations by marriage who are part of the member's household. As a serving military partner it is important to understand the entitlements available to you which will enable you to support a pregnant partner or young family, and these are outlined [below](#).



Special Parental Leave

Special Parental Leave is available to serving partners of primary carers in order to enable them to attend antenatal appointments, to support their partner during and immediately after the birth of a child, or on taking the primary care of a child. Serving members are entitled to ten days' Special Parental Leave, and this can be applied for via ESS.

Compassionate Leave

At times you may find that due to illness, accident or other family circumstances that you need to take time off work to care for your child or children at home.

Compassionate leave is a leave type that is intended to ensure that all Regular Force members have an entitlement to take a short period of leave for these types of domestic situations which require immediate action or attention. This includes the birth of a child, where the member is the partner of a mother; or the adoption of a child and subsequent to the adoption where the member is the partner of the primary caregiver.

Compassionate leave can be approved at the discretion of your Commanding Officer where all entitlement to Special Parental Leave has been used, and if you need time off in such a situation you should discuss with your manager in the first instance and apply via ESS.

Parental Leave

Where a primary carer and their partner are each individually entitled to Parental Leave in respect of the same child, you may share (as you choose, concurrently or consecutively) your PNL entitlement up to the maximum combined period. For example, where you are both eligible for 52 weeks parental leave, you may choose to take 26 weeks parental leave at the same time as the other parent. Or you may choose to take 26 weeks each at separate times. This may be in the situation of a child being born, or when you jointly assume responsibility for the care of a child who is under the age of six.

If the partner of the member is not a member of the NZDF, and the equivalent provisions apply, the member is to declare any period of PNL taken or intended to be taken by their partner, in respect of the child the member is the primary carer for.

Government parental leave payments can also be shared with a partner, where eligibility exists and the partner chooses to take parental leave. Parental leave payments are payable for one continuous period not exceeding 26 weeks. If part of the entitlement is transferred, the period will be one continuous period per person, so long as the two continuous periods together do not exceed 26 weeks.

Further information in regards to governmental parental leave payments and entitlements can be found on the Inland Revenue Department website www.ird.govt.nz.

Flexible Working

The NZDF defines a flexible working arrangement as any arrangement that varies working conditions to meet the needs of members whilst still ensuring the work requirements can be met. These arrangements can differ significantly in the degree of flexibility they allow, and some may be better suited than others depending on the requirements of your role or unit. There are many options for flexible work, which can include working from home or other locations, reduced hours, working outside of core hours, or a combination of these.

A flexible working arrangement may help you to meet the demands of looking after a young family, particularly during times when your partner has recently given birth or has pregnancy related illness. For example, you may need flexibility in your start and finish times at work to enable you to drop off or pick up other young children at school.

If you think that a flexible working arrangement would support you to help care for your young family, you should familiarise yourself with the NZDF Flexible Working Arrangements policy or Flexible working implementation guide (DFO 3, Part 12, Chapter 1 & HR Toolkit). Also, familiarise yourself with the various types of flexible work arrangements available and think about what type of flexible working arrangement you would like to request and how that might work in your current position. You will then be ready to have a conversation with your manager about your request, and you can also submit your application through ESS. It should be noted also that if approved, flexible working arrangements in the NZDF are for a specified duration and are subject to review.



ANNEX A:

PREGNANCY CHECKLIST

The following checklist provides a guide to some of the key work-related things that you need to do or think about during your pregnancy, and on return from parental leave. This will be complemented by your own checklist, including scans and medical appointments, which should be provided by your Lead Maternity Carer.

During Pregnancy

Serial	Activity	Considerations
1	Appointment with an NZDF Medical Practitioner.	Discuss options for LMC, med grading, and pregnancy related health and safety issues. You will be given an MD 917 to confirm your exemption from fitness testing. This will need to be taken to the gym by you for a PTI to load onto HRMIS (G4).
2	Inform Chain of Command.	Discuss disclosure requirements and confirm health and safety requirements within the workplace during pregnancy.
3	Manager conduct health and safety risk assessment.	Assess health and safety risks and options to ensure the safety of yourself and your baby. Manager to seek medical advice as required.
4	Seek advice about fitness training.	You will be exempt from unit PT and fitness testing, however you are encouraged to remain active during your pregnancy. Seek advice from MO, Physio or LMC as required.
5	Order maternity uniform.	Can be ordered during both second and third trimesters. Tailoring of uniforms is also available via local camp tailors.
6	Discuss parental leave options.	Familiarise yourself with your entitlements for parental leave and government parental leave payments. Discuss your preferred leave options with your manager.
7	Submit parental leave application.	Submit three months prior to leave date requested.

Serial	Activity	Considerations
8	Submit application for Government Parental Leave Payments.	Complete IR 880 (from IRD website) Attach a certificate from LMC to confirm pregnancy. Send to HRSC, who will in turn provide a letter from your employer (NZDF) which confirms your eligibility. Send all documents to IRD, who will contact you to confirm payment details.
9	Complete PDR for current reporting period.	This may not be a full reporting period, depending on when your parental leave begins. However it is important to have your PDR completed so that it can be reviewed by your 1 up and 2 up reporting officers as required.
10	Update Will.	Highly recommended to ensure currency and to recognise change in family status.
11	Establish unit point of contact (POC) and preferred method of contact.	This is recommended, but only if desired.

During Parental Leave

Serial	Activity	Considerations
12	Advise unit POC of birth of baby.	This is recommended, but only if desired.
13	Post-Partum Physio Appointment.	Not compulsory, but recommended at approximately 6 weeks post-partum. This can be arranged by referral through the DHC.
14	Confirm any change to parental leave plan.	At least one month prior to nominated end of leave date.
15	Confirm childcare arrangements.	Any application for flexible working arrangements to suit childcare arrangements should be submitted at least one month prior to returning to work.

On Return to Work

Serial	Activity	Considerations
16	Appointment with NZDF Medical Practitioner.	To confirm med grading and discuss any restrictions on duties to be performed.
17	Interview with manager.	Discuss health and safety risk assessment, breastfeeding requirements, personal wellbeing, childcare arrangements, forecast of unit activities, and options for flexible working.
18	Physical training plan.	Discuss postpartum physical training plan with NZDF Medical Practitioner and Physios to return to full fitness.
19	Career management interview.	Discuss upcoming course requirements, postings and general career management queries or concerns.



