



21 November 2023

Tēnā koe

On 8 November 2023, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act), the following information:

- *A summary of support, information and entitlements you provide to your employees who take parental leave and return to work at your agency; and*
- *Copies of policies and procedures at your agency that relate to information and support provided to employees who take parental leave and return to work.*

In response to the first part of your request, please see **Appendix one** which provides a collation of information, support, and entitlements that the Ministry supplies in a parental support hub on our intranet. The Ministry's provisions go beyond those outlined in legislation and include an ex-gratia payment and annual leave paid at the higher of either average weekly earnings or ordinary weekly pay.

In response to the second part of your request, please see **Appendix two** which is a collation of policies and procedures that relate to information and support provided to employees who take parental leave and return to work. This includes guidance and support regarding breastfeeding and expressing at work, and flexible working arrangements.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

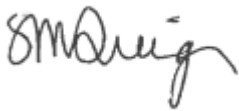
- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments (only if relevant) on the Ministry's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response to your request for information the Ministry provides to employees who take parental leave and return to work, including relevant policies and procedures, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Quigan', written in a cursive style.

Sarah Quigan  
**Manager Official Information  
Ministerial and Executive Services**

**Appendix one:** A collation of information, support, and entitlements that the Ministry supplies in a parental support hub on the intranet. The Ministry's provisions go beyond those outlined in legislation and include an ex-gratia payment and annual leave paid at the higher of either average weekly earnings or ordinary weekly pay.

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RELEASED UNDER THE  
OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

## Preparing to go on parental leave | what to expect while you are away

Here you will find some helpful resources on what to plan for on your journey as a working parent at MSD, whether it is your first or 10th child we encourage you to become familiar with our processes and the support that is out there for you.

On this Page:

### MSD's support:

#### How to apply for parental leave with MSD

MyHR makes applying for parental leave easy. Just enter your planned leave like you would normally do but instead select 'parental leave' as the type of leave being requested. The amount of parental leave available depends on your length of service. You may either be eligible for 26 weeks or 52 weeks depending on the length of time you have been employed with MSD. Please see the parental leave policy and guide to help you work out your eligibility.

[Parental leave policy \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/leave/parental-leave-policy.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/leave/parental-leave-policy.html)

[Guide on how to apply for leave in myHR \[http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/document/resource/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/applying-for-leave-in-myhr.pdf\]](http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/document/resource/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/applying-for-leave-in-myhr.pdf)

#### When to apply for parental leave

If you or your spouse/partner are having a baby and want to take parental leave you should submit your parental leave application to your manager at least one month prior to when you want to take any form of parental leave.

If the parental leave relates to becoming a permanent primary carer for a child under 6 years, make the application as soon as possible but give at least 14 days' notice.

Getting to grips with the different types of leave that make up parental leave.

Primary Carer leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unpaid leave up to 26 weeks.</li> <li>• Leave must be taken over one continuous period starting:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ no earlier than six weeks before the expected due date (it may start earlier in certain circumstances) and</li> <li>◦ no later than the date of birth.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>In any other case primary carer leave starts on the date the employee becomes the primary carer in respect of the child.</p>
Partner's leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either one week or two weeks' unpaid leave (depending on the 26 week or 52-week parental leave eligibility criteria described above), to be taken in one continuous block.</li> <li>• Leave may be taken up to 21 days before the expected due date or from the date of birth (or the date you intend to become the primary carer of a child under six years).</li> <li>• Partner's leave must end 21 days after the baby is born (or the date discharged from hospital if that is more than 21 days after birth).</li> </ul>
Extended leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unpaid leave up to a maximum of either 26 weeks or 52 weeks (less any Primary Carer leave taken). For example, if you are entitled to 52 weeks parental leave and take 26 weeks Primary Carer leave there is 26 weeks leave left to take as Extended leave.</li> <li>• This leave can be shared (either separately or at the same time) between both the person who is pregnant or has given birth and their spouse/partner (assuming both are eligible for parental leave) and can be taken in more than one block.</li> <li>• Extended leave can start any time after the baby's birth (in the case of a baby born to you or your partner) and must end either on the date they turn six months or 12 months (depending on whether you are eligible for 26- or 52-weeks parental leave).</li> <li>• In any other case (eg someone taking permanent primary responsibility for the upbringing of a child under 6 years old), it can start from the first date which you or your spouse/partner become primary carer of a child you are taking permanent responsibility for; and must end on either the six month</li> </ul>

	anniversary or the 12 month anniversary of the date you or your spouse/partner became primary carer of that child.
Special leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before starting Primary Carer leave, the person who is pregnant can take up to 10 day ' unpaid leave for rea on connected with the pregnancy</li> </ul>
Negotiated Carer leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you're not entitled to Primary Carer leave but are entitled to the parental leave payments (made by IR), you may make a request for unpaid Negotiated Carer leave. It doe n't form part of the overarching parental leave therefore doesn't provide benefits such as annual leave during the absence or eligibility to the ex-gratia payment. It does however provide some employment protection under the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987</li> </ul>
Paid parental leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The payment admini tered by IR and u ually coincide with the period of Primary Carer leave.</li> </ul>

### Flexible working

You may find that you are needing to lean on flexible working arrangements whilst on your pregnancy journey. This may look different and unique for each individual. You may find that you will be juggling doctor / midwife appointments along with morning sickness or fatigue. Sick leave or special leave (as described above in the definitions) may be appropriate depending on your circum tance. You may want to reduce your hour of work. Have a look at MSD' fle ible working guideline to help you work with your team leader to find a solution that works for the business, your team leader and yourself.

[Flexible Working Guideline - Doogle \(.i.govt.nz\) \[http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/flexible-working/flexible-working-guidelines.html\]](http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/flexible-working/flexible-working-guidelines.html)

[Reasonable Accommodation in Employment Policy - Doogle \(ssi.govt.nz\) \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/hr-policies/reasonable-accommodation-in-employment-policy.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/hr-policies/reasonable-accommodation-in-employment-policy.html)

### Ex gratia payment

While preparing to go on parental leave, you might also like to be aware of MSD's ex-gratia payment. This payment, as part of MSD' employee benefit, is an incentive that pay MSD employee upon their return to work from parental leave. If you qualify for this payment you may be asked by you manager as to how you would like to receive the payment.

Please refer to the Policy and Guide or the FAQ for more information.

### Staff Assistance Unit (SAU)

The Staff Assistance Unit team may be able to support you as a working parent at MSD when going through hard hip.

Depending on your eligibility (whānau income tested) you may get support with things like Childcare Assistance, Working for Families and other type of financial assistance.

For more information on the Staff Assistance Unit, the team, how to get in touch or to see if you qualify, click on the link below.

[Staff Assistance Unit \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-benefits/staff-assistance-unit.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-benefits/staff-assistance-unit.html)

### MSD Personal Accident Insurance

All permanent MSD employee aged 18-80, are automatically covered by MSD' Group Personal Accident Insurance 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

MSD can support you with lump sum payment if you are dealing with any accidental injuries or ill health toward you or your whānau.

More information can be found in the link below.

[MSD Personal Accident Insurance \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/pay-and-benefits/accident-insurance.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/pay-and-benefits/accident-insurance.html)

### Other MSD support

[Financial Mentoring \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing/benestar-mycoach-for-money-flyer.pdf\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing/benestar-mycoach-for-money-flyer.pdf)

[Workplace mental health and wellbeing \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/workplace-mental-health-and-wellbeing/index.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/workplace-mental-health-and-wellbeing/index.html)

[EAP \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/eap-benestar/index.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/eap-benestar/index.html)

[Poutuarā – peer support \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/peer-support/index.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/peer-support/index.html)

[Di counted health insurance for MSD staff \[http://doogle.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-benefit/health-in-urance.html\]](http://doogle.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-benefit/health-in-urance.html)

## External Support

### Applying for Paid Parental leave (PPL) with IR

You may be eligible for government funded paid parental leave which is administered by Inland Revenue (IR). Paid parental leave is **not** administered by MSD. To be eligible for parental leave payments from IR you must have worked for at least an average of 10 hours a week for the previous 6 or 12 months up to the expected due date of the baby, or the date you or your spouse/partner becomes the primary carer of the child.

For more information, please refer to the Parental Leave Policy and Guide on Doogle

To find out how much you are eligible for or to apply for Paid Parental leave, click on the link below that takes you to the IR website.

[Paid parental leave \[https://www.ird.govt.nz/paid-parental-leave\]](https://www.ird.govt.nz/paid-parental-leave)

### Best Start payment

Best Start is a government payment (of \$69 weekly as at May 2023) for each child born to provide extra support to families. Families who qualify for this payment will receive the payment until the child turns one. After your child turns one, the payments become income tested and you may continue to receive the payments depending on your whānau income. Note that if you are on Paid Parental leave (PPL), you won't receive any payments until your PPL ends.

For more information on Best Start and how to apply, follow the link provided below.

[Apply for Best Start payment \[http://www.ird.govt.nz/takia/apply-for-best-start\]](http://www.ird.govt.nz/takia/apply-for-best-start)

### SmartStart

SmartStart provides information and support services for you and your whānau. The support stages range from trying for a baby, to pregnancy as well as supporting parents with children from birth to six years old's. You can easily select which stage is relevant to you.

#### SmartStart Pregnancy - has information about the following topics:

- The early weeks of pregnancy
- Choosing a Lead Maternity Carer (LMC)
- Becoming a dad
- Your health while pregnant
- Antenatal depression
- Coping if you're alone.

#### SmartStart Birth to One Year Old has information about the following topic

- Your newborn pēpi (baby)
- Self care after giving birth
- Registering the birth
- Enrol with a Well Child Tamariki Ora provider
- Postnatal depression and men with depression after the birth of a child
- Breastfeeding
- When to get help for your baby
- Coping with a crying baby, coping with lack of sleep,

To access all the resources from SmartStart, registering your baby or finding services near you, click on the link below.

[SmartStart service \[http://smartstart.service.govt.nz/\]](http://smartstart.service.govt.nz/)

### Plunket – preparing for your baby

There's lots you can do to get ready for your baby, and here you'll find information to help you:

- look after yourself during pregnancy
- sort out your finances
- find all the pēpi equipment you need
- prepare for the birth of your pēpi

## Frequently asked questions

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### Can I share my parental leave with my partner?

Yes, you are able to share your parental leave entitlement with your partner, however depending on your eligibility, both of you will only be able to take a maximum of 52 weeks of parental leave shared between the two of you before the baby reaches 12 months old. Under New Zealand legislation, only the biological mother has an entitlement to primary carers leave, unless they agree to share this entitlement with their partner or any other exceptional circumstance. This is also why we ask partners for a letter confirming you are their partner, and they are providing their entitlement to you.

### Taking annual leave before parental leave commences

You don't need to take your annual leave before starting parental leave. You may request to take annual leave before your parental leave starts via myHR as you would normally. Taking annual leave prior to your pēpi being due or is born is a personal preference.

If you have approved annual leave that extends past the baby's expected due date, this will reduce the overall amount of time you may have available to take parental leave.

For example, if you take annual leave for three weeks past baby's birth, (and assuming you are eligible for 52 weeks parental leave), you would only have 49 weeks remaining available to take as parental leave before baby turns 12 months old (remember, extended leave must end on the date baby turns either 6 months or 12 months depending on whether you are eligible for 26 weeks or 52 weeks parental leave).

### What happens to my annual leave balance when I go on parental leave?

You will continue to accrue annual leave as parental leave is considered continuous service. If you take 52 weeks of parental leave, you will return with a year of your annual leave available.

See the full list of FAQs [here \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/parental-leave-faq.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/parental-leave-faq.html)

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Content owner: [People Culture and Inclusion](#) Last updated: 20 June 2023



## Parental Leave Frequently Asked Questions

These 'questions and answers' aim to enhance your understanding of the application of parental leave here at MSD. This information is not intended to replace our existing policy and guidance but to compliment them.

On this Page:

### Applying for parental leave with MSD

#### When should I apply for parental leave?

If you or your spouse/partner are having a baby and want to take parental leave you should submit your parental leave application to your manager at least one month prior to when you want to take a form of parental leave, but it is recommended to do it three months in advance to give yourself ample time to prepare

If the parental leave relates to becoming a permanent primary carer for a child under 6 years, make the application as soon as possible but give at least 14 days' notice.

#### What do I need to supply to my manager when I apply?

**If you are having a baby;** include the following in the comment field of the MyHR leave request:

the expected due date of baby's birth (attach a certificate from the midwife or medical practitioner)

whether you want to take any annual leave (and how much) prior to starting parental leave (enter the annual leave request into MyHR as you would normally)

the date you want to start parental leave

the date you want to return from parental leave

whether your spouse/partner intends to take parental leave (if so, how much parental leave they will be taking; their name and the detail (name and address) of their place of work if employed)

the combined amount of parental leave both parents want to take (which can't exceed 52 weeks and could be less if you're taking annual leave past the date of birth).

**If you are the spouse/partner of someone having a baby;** as well as points 1-6 above include the following:

a letter from your spouse/partner confirming that you are their spouse/partner and will be taking on care of the child (not to be confused with you taking care of other siblings).

**If you are taking permanent primary responsibility for the care, development and upbringing of a child under 6 years;** as well as points 1-6 above include the following:

a certified copy of a court order placing the child in your day to day care or custody, or

a copy of a letter from Oranga Tamariki or the organisation who has custody of the child confirming that you will be the primary carer of the child, or

a copy of the application for parenting order or adoption order and a statutory declaration in [Form 1](#)

[\[http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2016/0068/latest/DLM6781044.html\]](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2016/0068/latest/DLM6781044.html), (from Schedule 2 of the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Regulations 2016), or

if none of the above 3 can be provided, a statutory declaration in [Form 1](#)

[\[http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2016/0068/latest/DLM6781044.html\]](http://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2016/0068/latest/DLM6781044.html).

#### How do I apply for parental leave in myHR?

A parental leave application is made by entering a leave request within MyHR. Enter any annual leave you want to take prior to starting parental leave, as a leave request in myHR like you would normally

[applying-for-leave-in-myhr.pdf](#) [\[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/applying-for-leave-in-myhr.pdf\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/applying-for-leave-in-myhr.pdf)

#### Can I share my parental leave with my partner?

Yes, you are able to share your parental leave entitlement with your partner whichever way you would like, however the both of you will only be able to take a maximum of 52 weeks of parental leave shared between the two of you before the baby reaches 12 months old. Under New Zealand legislation, only the biological mother has an entitlement to primary carers leave, unless they agree to share this entitlement with their partner or any other exceptional circumstance. This is also why we ask for a letter from your partner confirming you are their partner, and they are providing their entitlement to you.

#### Can I take parental leave if I am adopting a child?

Yes, you are entitled to the same amount of parental leave when adopting a child under 6 years of age. Refer to in



## [Paid Parental Leave](#)

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### How do I know if I qualify for Paid Parental Leave?

If you are taking time off work to care for your baby or a child who has come under your care, including having a new permanent primary responsibility of a child under 6, you may be eligible for Paid Parental Leave

Paid Parental Leave is a payment administered by Inland Revenue (IR), therefore MSD has no discretion regarding eligibility. You need to have worked an average of 10 hours a week, in at least 26 of the weeks in the year before the due date or the date the child comes into your care.

You can find out more about your eligibility by visiting the MBIE website

[MBIE Parental Leave and payment eligibility table \[https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/parental-leave/eligibility/eligibility-table/\]](https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/parental-leave/eligibility/eligibility-table/)

### How do I apply for Paid Parental leave?

Applying for Paid Parental leave can be done online through the IR website. You will be asked to gather your information i.e your tax code, bank account number, evidence of your baby's due date or court order of child coming into your care prior to applying online.

For more information on applying for Paid Parental leave visit the IR website

[Applying for Paid Parental leave with IR \[https://www.ird.govt.nz/paid-parental-leave/\]](https://www.ird.govt.nz/paid-parental-leave/)

### What happens in the case of surrogacy?

As long as the **adopting parent** and the **surrogate birth mother** meet the criteria for paid parental leave, then they both would be entitled to paid parental leave.

If the **surrogate birth mother** meets the parental leave eligibility criteria they could take 26 weeks primary carer leave. They wouldn't be eligible for extended leave (as that portion of parental leave requires the person to be caring for the baby).

### What happens if I have a premature birth?

If you are entitled to parental leave, and you give birth before the 36<sup>th</sup> week of gestation, you will be entitled to preterm baby payment from IR

Please check the IR website as to what this means for your paid parental leave

[When paid parental leave starts \(ird.govt.nz\) \[https://www.ird.govt.nz/paid-parental-leave/when-it-starts#:~:text=If%20your%20baby%20is%20premature,your%2036th%20week%20of%20pregnancy.\]](https://www.ird.govt.nz/paid-parental-leave/when-it-starts#:~:text=If%20your%20baby%20is%20premature,your%2036th%20week%20of%20pregnancy.)

In relation to the parental leave from MSD, if the baby has arrived earlier than six weeks prior to the due date, the time before those six weeks is part of your primary carer leave but doesn't count towards the overall 52 weeks parental leave. The 52 weeks' timeframe would start from six weeks prior to due date.

We encourage you to keep your manager informed so that they can best support you.

## Other types of leave related questions

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### Taking annual leave before parental leave commences

You don't need to take your annual leave before starting parental leave. You may request to take annual leave before your parental leave starts via myHR as you would normally. Taking annual leave prior to your baby being due or is born is a personal preference.

If you have approved annual leave that extends past the baby's expected due date, this will reduce the overall amount of time you may have available to take parental leave.

**For example**, if you take annual leave for three weeks past baby's birth, (and assuming you are eligible for 52 weeks parental leave), you would only have 49 weeks remaining available to take as parental leave before baby turns 12 months old (remember, extended leave must end on the date baby turns either 6 months or 12 months depending on whether you are eligible for 26 week or 52 week parental leave)

### What happens to my annual leave balance when I go on parental leave?

You will continue to accrue annual leave as parental leave is considered continuous service. If you take 52 weeks of parental leave, you will return with a year of your annual leave available.

### What does my annual leave balance look like when I return from leave part – time?

Annual leave is recorded in week but can be taken in hour. For example a full time employee your employment agreement may provide 23 days annual leave which equates to 4.6 weeks (184 hours). As a part time employee working 20 hours per week you still get 4.6 weeks however 4.6 weeks of 20 hours per week equates to 92 hours.

If you work part time, your leave will be worked out (pro-rated) based on the number of hours you're scheduled to work.

### What happens to my sick and dependent leave balance while I'm on parental leave?

As parental leave is considered continuous service you will continue to receive your other leave types as well. If your anniversary date occurs during your period of parental leave, you will receive your allocation of sick leave and dependent leave as if you weren't away.

### Can I apply for leave while I am on parental leave? (i.e. sick, annual, dependent, bereavement leave)

No. You can only be on one type of leave at a time. Requesting any other form of leave can only be for dates outside your period of parental leave.

**Note:** If you take leave without pay directly after your parental leave, you would disqualify yourself from the ex-gratia payments available.

If you want to apply for any leave, then please reach out to your manager to discuss.

## Keeping in touch

### What are the benefits of Keeping In Touch days (KIT) and how can they be used?

Keeping In Touch days, also known as KIT days, are an agreed limited amount of time you may choose to work (up to 64 hours) without your parental leave ending. You can start KIT days after the first 28 days of the birth of your baby, and you will receive full pay for any hours worked for the purposes of KIT days.

KIT days mean that you can stay connected with your team and the work and can be used for things like attending team planning days or important meetings/events, refreshing skills, being involved in decisions that impact your role and becoming familiar with new processes or procedures.

You may wish to consider KIT days as part of your transition back into the workplace.

### How can I apply for other opportunities within MSD if I've handed in my devices and don't have any access to MSDs intranet?

You are still able to apply for opportunities whilst on parental leave, but you may need to reach out for help with any internally advertised roles (via the email contact for the advertised role). If the role is advertised externally then you are able to apply online the same way you did when you joined us. However, for any internal only advertisements you would need to speak with your manager to get them to notify you of any upcoming opportunities. You may also reach out to the Recruitment team who may be able to arrange a notification for you as well.

### Can I access my MSD email from my personal device while on parental leave?

Yes, you can, providing that you have an iDevice. Some restrictions may apply to protect MSD information.

It may be a good idea to monitor the usage of accessing information as this could be considered as work.

For more information on the BYOD Policy and how to set up, visit the Doogle page below.

[BYOD Policy and Requirement \[http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/helping-you/my-device/mobile-byod-policy-and-requirement.html\]](http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/helping-you/my-device/mobile-byod-policy-and-requirement.html)

### Can I access MyHR from my personal device?

Yes, you can access MyHR through your personal device. You can access MyHR from most PCs using single sign on. For tablets or smartphones you can use the SuccessFactors App and you don't need a Ministry smartphone to access.

Follow the steps on this page to set up your MyHR account on your device.

[Accessing myHR \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/myhr/accessing-myhr.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/myhr/accessing-myhr.html)

### Can I do any paid work during parental leave?

Yes, you are able to use Keeping in Touch (KIT) days to do paid work for us, to a maximum of 64 hours over the period of your parental leave, without this impacting on any of your parental leave payment or parental leave. However, if you work over 64 hours you are considered back at work and your parental leave will stop and any payments made to you after the date you

returned are required to be repaid to Inland Revenue. KIT days are paid at your normal rate of pay and are an option to use to help you transition back to work.

If you want to complete any KIT days during your parental leave, please reach out to your manager to discuss

## Bereavement

### What happens to my parental leave if my child dies?

In the event of the death of the child including still birth or miscarriage, you (the biological mother/parent) may be able to continue taking primary carer leave (if you are already on that form of parental leave). This also applies for Paid Parental Leave – [click here for more info \[https://wheturangitia.services.govt.nz/newborn-death/financial-information-and-entitlements\]](https://wheturangitia.services.govt.nz/newborn-death/financial-information-and-entitlements).

In the event that the biological mother dies, the spouse or partner, or person nominated as the primary carer of that child may take over the biological mother's entitlement for paid parental leave.

### Can I take bereavement/tangihanga leave if I miscarry before my parental leave starts?

Whether or not you take bereavement leave or are on primary carer leave will be dependant on the timing of the miscarriage etc. If complications with the pregnancy start that may instigate an early start to primary carer leave. If you have commenced primary carer leave and subsequently lose the baby through miscarriage or stillbirth, you would have more time available by remaining on primary carer leave (you can remain on primary carer leave for the full 26 weeks if eligible). If you haven't commenced primary carer leave then bereavement / tangihanga leave is the appropriate form of leave.

The bereavement leave provision in your employment agreement covers miscarriage or death during a pregnancy. You may take a minimum of three days' bereavement leave if you meet the eligibility criteria.

You can only take one form of leave at a time, and you can't split primary carer leave to take other forms of leave in the middle.

Please see the below for more information:

[Leave management guide \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/index.html#BereavementandTangihangaLeave5\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/index.html#BereavementandTangihangaLeave5)

## Return from parental leave

### Can I end my parental leave early?

It will depend on the circumstance of why you are wanting to end your parental leave early. Some examples of when you may end your parental leave early are:

miscarriage, stillbirth or death of the child  
if you or your spouse will no longer be the primary carer of the child

You should discuss your request with your manager if you are looking to end your parental leave early. If you are simply wanting to return to work early (and the above reasons don't apply) your manager will need to work through whether your early return is feasible. If your role has been temporarily back-filled for an anticipated period of absence, they may need to consider the notice required to be provided to the person back-filling your role etc. It is not necessarily an automatic agreement to your early return therefore it really helps to keep up discussion with your manager about your plan.

### Do I need to organise my IT or Site access before returning?

No, you do not need to organise anything, your manager will have this ready for you upon your return.

### I am still breastfeeding and planning to return to work. What information is there available to support me with this?

It would be a good idea to get in touch with your manager as early as possible if you wish to breastfeed or express in the workplace. To help with the transition back into the workplace, it would be a good idea to put a plan in place so that your needs are being met, the manager has time to make arrangements if required.

To help with putting a plan in place, please see the breastfeeding and expressing in the workplace guidance.

[Breastfeeding and expressing in the workplace guide \[http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/breastfeeding-and-expressing-in-the-workplace.html\]](http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/breastfeeding-and-expressing-in-the-workplace.html)

## Ex gratia payment

### Would I still be eligible for the ex-gratia payment if I take annual leave after taking parental leave?

No, the intent of the ex-gratia payment is an incentive to return from parental leave. You can request to take leave without pay if you are wanting to spend more time away from work, however this will impact your eligibility to the ex-gratia payment. If you had annual leave entitlement left over when you commenced parental leave you could apply for that leave (noting your manager may not approve the annual leave request).

The annual leave you accrue while on parental leave is not available for you to take until you have returned from parental leave. This is because if you leave during parental leave, your service is considered to have finished from the date you commenced parental leave. The annual leave you accrued during the parental leave therefore only becomes a part of your balance after you have returned to work

### **Is there any difference in taking my ex-gratia payment in one lump sum vs fortnightly payments?**

Receiving the ex-gratia payment fortnightly or as one lump sum is more of a preference on how you would like to receive the payment.

Whether you are receiving other payment that are impacted by any variation to your salary may impact your decision. Variances in tax (fortnightly vs lump sum) are based on normal taxation factors, so it would be best to seek independent taxation advice to know the best course of action for you. You can find more information on lump-sum taxation at:

[Lump sum payments \[https://www.ird.govt.nz/employing-staff/payday-filing/non-standard-filing-of-employment-information/lump-sum-payment\]](https://www.ird.govt.nz/employing-staff/payday-filing/non-standard-filing-of-employment-information/lump-sum-payment)

### **When do I advise whether I want my ex-gratia payment in one lump sum v fortnightly payment?**

Ideally let your manager know before you come back to work so they can update the parental leave record in myHR. Otherwise, you need to let payroll know straight away on your return so the fortnightly payment can be set up correctly from your first pay.

Would I still be eligible for ex-gratia at the full amount or will it be pro-rated if coming back part time?

The payment for the ex-gratia payment is based on your normal rate of salary and hours of work before you went on parental leave, so returning on different hours will not change the amount paid to you. It is only when you take less than 6 weeks of parental leave that the amount paid to you is pro-rated.

### **If two parents share parental leave and both come back to work, will they split the ex-gratia payments?**

No, the ex-gratia payment isn't split between partners. If you and your spouse or partner both work for a public service agency then only one may receive the ex-gratia payment.

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Content owner [People Culture and Inclusion](#) Last updated 24 July 2023

Home » Working here » Working for us » Leave management guide » **Returning to work from parental leave and other helpful resources for working parents**

## Returning to work from parental leave and other helpful resources for working parents

Here you will find some helpful resources and supports that MSD has for parents who have returned to work from parental leave.

On this Page:

### MSD Support

#### Flexible working

Now that you have returned to work, things may look different in your life. Whether this means day-care/school pickups/drop offs, additional appointments and more, you may need additional support from your team leader to manage your new work-life balance.

You may need additional support with flexible working arrangements, this will depend on your role, your team capacity and team leaders vision for what will work in your team. Have a look at MSD's flexible working guidelines to help you work with your team leader to find a solution that works for the business, your team leader and yourself.

[Flexible Working Guidelines \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/flexible-working/flexible-working-guidelines.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/flexible-working/flexible-working-guidelines.html)

[Reasonable Accommodation in Employment Policy \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/hr-policies/reasonable-accommodation-in-employment-policy.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/hr-policies/reasonable-accommodation-in-employment-policy.html)

#### Breastfeeding or expressing in the workplace

We want to ensure that the transition back to work at MSD is a positive experience, this means that creating a safe and supportive environment for breastfeeding parents is essential.

The breastfeeding and expressing at the workplace guide supports the conversation between you and your manager and to work together to put a plan in place that works for you both.

\*Note: while the term breastfeeding is used, inclusive language such as chestfeeding or bodyfeeding should be used where appropriate to the individual.

[Breastfeeding or expressing in the workplace guide \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/breastfeeding-and-expressing-in-the-workplace.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/breastfeeding-and-expressing-in-the-workplace.html)

#### Leave management

You may want to know more about other types of leave MSD have. For instance, starting daycare may mean that your child is bringing home more bugs to you and whānau, it may be good to know what you are eligible for.

[Leave management guide \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/index.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/index.html)

#### Te ara piki | your development

Remember that your development doesn't necessarily need to be moving from one role to the next. Have a think about what you want to see in your future and utilise the Te ara piki guides to talk to your team leader about how they can support you to make your goals happen whilst realising that you have your own timeframes and your own needs.

[Te ara piki \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/te-ara-piki/index.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/te-ara-piki/index.html)

#### Carewise

CareWise is a programme centred around ensuring carers are recognised and supported at work, so they can better manage the pressures of employment and caring. A carer might be an individual, family member, whānau and aiga who provide care and support for someone close to them who needs additional assistance with their everyday living because of a disability, including a health condition, illness or injury.

Check out the carers hub on Doogle in the link below

[Carers hub \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/business-groups/people-culture-strategy/people-culture-inclusion/carers-hub.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/business-groups/people-culture-strategy/people-culture-inclusion/carers-hub.html)

#### MSD Personal Accident Insurance

All permanent MSD employees aged 18–80, are automatically covered by MSD's Group Personal Accident insurance – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

MSD can support you with lump sum payments if you are dealing with any accidental injuries or ill health towards you or your whanau.



More information can be found in the link below

[MSD Personal Accident Insurance \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/pay-and-benefits/accident-insurance.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/pay-and-benefits/accident-insurance.html)

## Other MSD supports

[Financial Mentoring \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing/benestar-mycoach-for-money-flyer.pdf\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing/benestar-mycoach-for-money-flyer.pdf)

[Workplace metal health and wellbeing \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/workplace-mental-health-and-wellbeing/index.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/workplace-mental-health-and-wellbeing/index.html)

[EAP \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/eap-benestar/index.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/eap-benestar/index.html)

[Poutuarā – peer support \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/peer-support/index.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/peer-support/index.html)

[Discounted health insurance for MSD staff \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-benefits/health-insurance.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-benefits/health-insurance.html)

## External Support

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### SmartStart

SmartStart provides information and support services for you and your whanau. The support stages range from trying for a baby, to pregnancy as well as supporting parents with children from birth to six years old's. You can easily select which stage is relevant to you.

#### SmartStart Birth to One Year Old - has information about the following topics:

- Managing new behaviors
- Keeping your child safe
- Health and nutrition
- Returning to work
- Coping with work and stress.

To access all the resources from SmartStart, registering your baby or finding services near you, click on the link below.

[SmartStart services \[https://smartstart.services.govt.nz/\]](https://smartstart.services.govt.nz/)

### Whanau Awhina, Plunket – Returning to work

Going back to work can be a shock to the system after being on maternity leave. Planning your return to work – like childcare, whether you'll continue breastfeeding or expressing, your new schedule, and budgeting – can make things much easier.

[Whānau āwhina, Plunket – Returning to work \[https://www.plunket.org.nz/being-a-parent/looking-after-you/returning-to-work\]](https://www.plunket.org.nz/being-a-parent/looking-after-you/returning-to-work)

### Triple P Parenting Course will help you

- Raise happy, confident kids
- Manage misbehaviour so everyone in the family enjoys life more
- Set rules and routines that everyone respects and follows
- Encourage behaviour you like
- Take care of yourself as a parent
- Feel confident you're doing the right thing

[Parent and family help – Free online parenting courses \[https://www.parenthelp.org.nz/3466-2/\]](https://www.parenthelp.org.nz/3466-2/)

## Frequently asked questions

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### What does my annual leave balance look like when I return from leave part – time?

Annual leave is recorded in weeks but can be taken in hours. For example as a full time employee your employment agreement may provide 23 days annual leave which equates to 4.6 weeks (184 hours). As a part time employee working 20 hours per week you still get 4.6 weeks however 4.6 weeks of 20 hours per week equates to 92 hours.

If you work part time, your leave will be worked out (pro-rated) based on the number of hours you're scheduled to work.

### Can I end my parental leave early?

It will depend on the circumstances of why you are wanting to end your parental leave early. Some examples of when you may end your parental leave early are:



miscarriage, stillbirth or death of the child

if you or your spouse will no longer be the primary carer of the child

You should discuss your request with your manager if you are looking to end your parental leave early. If you are simply wanting to return to work early (and the above reasons don't apply) your manager will need to work through whether your early return is feasible. If your role has been temporarily back-filled for an anticipated period of absence, they may need to consider the notice required to be provided to the person back-filling your role etc. It is not necessarily an automatic agreement to your early return therefore it really helps to keep up discussions with your manager about your plans.

See the full list of FAQs [here \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/parental-leave-faq.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/parental-leave-faq.html)

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## Navigating through miscarriage, loss or grief

On this page you will find some resources, tools and information on how to get the support you need when going through the challenges of bereavement. Team leaders and team members can also learn how to best support their colleagues going through these difficult times.

On this Page:

### Supporting you with grief

Grief can come in many different ways as a parent. Whether it is a pregnancy loss, new-born loss, fertility loss or a parent loss. Experiencing any type of loss is devastating and can be very challenging to navigate through.

It is important to know what supports are available to help you through this challenging time and that you are not alone as you may feel waves of isolation. People deal with grief in their own unique ways and in their own timing, be kind and gentle to yourself.

### MSD Support

#### Talking to your people leader

Talk to your manager if you feel comfortable doing so – you may want to discuss things such as taking time off work to process, or what your transition back to work will look like.

#### Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

EAP is a private and confidential counselling with qualified professionals for anything that's impacting on your wellbeing, whether it's work-related or personal. Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provider is Benestar.

Benestar is able to provide a diverse range of counsellors to respond to any specific needs or preferences you may have, including but not limited to:

[Māori and Pasifika EAP Counsellors \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/eap-benestar/maori-and-pasifika-counsellors-in-benestar-network.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/eap-benestar/maori-and-pasifika-counsellors-in-benestar-network.html)

[LGBTQIA+ EAP list \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/eap-benestar/lgbtqia-specialist-counsellors.xlsx\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/eap-benestar/lgbtqia-specialist-counsellors.xlsx)

Call Benestar on **0800 360 364**

Or email [counsellingsupportnz@benestar.com](mailto:counsellingsupportnz@benestar.com) [<mailto:counsellingsupportnz@benestar.com>]

**If you are in crisis or need support urgently, please phone and advise this and someone will be able to assist you.**

More information on how to access counselling or resources on wellbeing, visit the link below.

[Employee Assistance Programme \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/eap-benestar/index.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/eap-benestar/index.html)

#### Poutuarā – peer support at MSD

The purpose of the Poutuarā programme is for our people to be able to talk to a trained colleague (Mental Health First Response) about any challenges they may face in their work or personal life and be guided to appropriate ongoing supports. What you talk about with a peer supporter stays private and confidential.

##### The benefits of Poutuarā

An empathetic ear for what's worrying you  
Guidance on appropriate supports and getting help  
Helping you process what is going on  
Feeling like someone has your back.

More information on Poutuarā and how to access a peer support visit the Doogle page below.

[Poutuarā – peer support \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/peer-support/index.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/peer-support/index.html)

#### Wellbeing@MSD

It is important to care for yourself while you are grieving. Every person grieves and copes differently, here is a selection of self-care strategies that you may find useful.

[Self-care \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/workplace-mental-health-and-wellbeing/self-care.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/workplace-mental-health-and-wellbeing/self-care.html)

#### MSD Personal Accident Insurance

All permanent MSD employees aged 18–80, are automatically covered by MSD's Group Personal Accident insurance – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

MSD can support you with lump sum payments if you are dealing with any accidental injuries or ill health towards you or your whānau.

More information can be found in the link below

[MSD Personal Accident Insurance \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/pay-and-benefits/accident-insurance.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/pay-and-benefits/accident-insurance.html)

### External support

#### Resources for experiencing Miscarriage

##### Miscarriage Matters

An organisation devoted to improving the experience of miscarriage in New Zealand by empowering people with information, advocacy and support. Here are some things you can find on this website:

information about pregnancy loss  
the emotional impact of dealing with grief and loss  
self-care

when and how to access help  
looking forward  
legal information

[Miscarriage matters \[https://www.miscarriagematters.org.nz/\]](https://www.miscarriagematters.org.nz/)

##### Whetūrangitia

Whetūrangitia provides information for family and whānau experiencing the death of a baby or a child. This government agency provides you with information and support services when experiencing any of the following:

miscarriage  
stillbirth  
fetal abnormality  
new-born death  
infant and child death

[Wheturangitia \[https://wheturangitia.services.govt.nz/\]](https://wheturangitia.services.govt.nz/)



**Appendix 2** – Policies and procedures that relate to information and support provided to employees who take parental leave and return to work. This includes guidance and support regarding breastfeeding and expressing at work, and flexible working arrangements.

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## Parental Leave policy

Parental leave is an overarching leave type (made up of Primary Carer leave, Partner's leave, and Extended leave). It provides unpaid leave for either a person who is pregnant or has given birth (and is taking on care of the child), their spouse/partner, or an employee taking on permanent primary care for a child under 6 years.

On this Page:

### Purpose and scope of the policy

#### Purpose

MSD supports employees through a variety of family-friendly provisions including parental leave.

This policy and supporting guide outlines MSD's parental leave provisions so employees know how parental leave works, what to do and what support they can get.

#### Scope

Parental leave is available to all MSD employees (excluding employees on a casual employment agreement).

### Parental leave entitlements

The amount of parental leave available depends on your length of service.

There are two criteria tests to determine the amount of parental leave someone may be eligible for:

**six-month employment criteria** – if you have been employed by MSD for at least an average of 10 hours a week in the six months immediately preceding the expected due date, or the date taking permanent responsibility for the care of a child under six years = you will be entitled to 26 weeks' parental leave

**12-month employment criteria** – if you have been employed by MSD for at least an average of 10 hours a week in the 12 months immediately preceding the expected due date, or the date taking permanent responsibility for the care of a child under six years = you will be entitled to 52 weeks' parental leave.

For further information and clarification on parental leave and payment, refer to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) eligibility table.

[MBIE eligibility table \[https://www.employment.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/tools-and-resources/documents/parental-leave-payment-eligibility-factsheet.pdf\]](https://www.employment.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/tools-and-resources/documents/parental-leave-payment-eligibility-factsheet.pdf)

### Key principles of parental leave

Service is continuous during a period of parental leave (ie the time you have worked with MSD is not broken or reduced by the time you are away on parental leave).

Parental leave will not extend beyond the expiry date of a fixed term agreement.

The amount of parental leave available is the same for one child as it is for multiple births or becoming a primary carer for multiple children on the same date/time.

Your position will be kept open while you're on parental leave (unless your position is key to the organisation and a temporary replacement is not practical), you will return to the same (or similar) position.

Your position is protected unless impacted by an organisational change (eg a restructure).

You will be entitled to a further period of parental leave for another child after you have been back at work from the previous parental leave for at least six months.

Regardless of when parental leave starts, (for a child born to you or your spouse/partner) parental leave cannot extend beyond the date your child:

turns six months old or their first birthday (based on 26 weeks or 52 weeks parental leave eligibility respectively).

Regardless of when parental leave starts, (if you become the permanent primary care responsibility of a child under six years), parental leave cannot extend beyond the date of:

either six months or 12 months after the date you took on primary care (based on 26 weeks or 52 weeks parental leave eligibility respectively).

You are encouraged to return to work following parental leave. You may be supported via an ex-gratia payment (refer to your employment agreement or the Parental Leave Guide for further information on eligibility) and the potential for flexible working arrangements.

### Key benefits

Benefits are summarised below, please refer to the full guide for further explanation. Based on employee eligibility and applicable employment agreements, the key parental benefits include:

#### Leave:

Primary Carer leave  
 Partner's leave  
 Extended leave  
 unpaid Special leave

#### Payment:

paid parental leave via Inland Revenue (IR) which usually coincides with Primary Carer leave  
 paid Keeping in Touch (KIT) days and  
 ex-gratia payment.

### Responsibilities

Person/Party	Responsibilities
MSD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must keep an employee's position open while they are on parental leave, except where it can be shown that the position is key to the organisation and a temporary replacement is not practicable, or a redundancy situation arises.</li> </ul>
<b>Employee</b> before taking parental leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide at least one months' notice of your parental leave application, indicating whether you want to request any other forms of paid leave before starting parental leave (fill in the parental leave application in myHR).</li> <li>If you want to take other forms of paid leave prior to parental leave, enter these into myHR as a normal leave request.</li> <li>Make alternative arrangements for any deductions/contributions currently being made from your fortnightly salary to be covered, where necessary.</li> </ul>
<b>Employee</b> before returning from parental leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide your manager with one months' notice (in writing or via email) of your intention to return to work.</li> <li>If you want to change your working hours etc when you return to work, consider this prior to your return and make an application to your manager early (ie a flexible working application), so it may be considered and, if approved, arrangements made before your to your return.</li> <li>If you are eligible for the ex-gratia payment, consider whether you would like the payment as fortnightly instalment payments or a lump sum at the end of six months after you return to work. If you want fortnightly instalment payments you must request this (in writing or via email) as soon as you return to work.</li> </ul>
<b>Manager</b> before employee commences parental leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss options with AskHR if the employee's situation changes. Sometimes a medical professional may recommend an employee starts their parental leave earlier than originally planned. Talk to AskHR to understand the implications for the employee's application should this happen so you can keep your team member well informed.</li> <li>Approve the parental leave request in myHR in a timely manner.</li> </ul>
<b>Manager</b> after employee indicates their return to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initiate the employee's return to work within myHR to ensure the employee is paid appropriately when they return to work.</li> <li>Advise AskHR if the employee indicates a different return date or if you have agreed a change in hours etc.</li> </ul>

### Definitions

Word/phrase	Definition
Primary Carer leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unpaid leave up to 26 weeks.</li> <li>Leave must be taken over one continuous period starting:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no earlier than six weeks before the expected due date (it may start earlier in certain circumstances) and</li> <li>no later than the date of birth.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	In any other case primary carer leave starts on the date the employee becomes the primary carer in respect of the child.
Partner's leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either one week or two weeks' unpaid leave (depending on the 26 week or 52-week parental leave eligibility criteria described above), to be taken in one continuous block.</li> <li>• Leave may be taken up to 21 days before the expected due date or from the date of birth (or the date you intend to become the primary carer of a child under six years).</li> <li>• Partner's leave must end 21 days after the baby is born (or the date discharged from hospital if that is more than 21 days after birth).</li> </ul>
Extended leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unpaid leave up to a maximum of either 26 weeks or 52 weeks (less any Primary Carer leave taken). For example, if you are entitled to 52 weeks parental leave and take 26 weeks Primary Carer leave there is 26 weeks leave left to take as Extended leave.</li> <li>• This leave can be shared (either separately or at the same time) between both the person who is pregnant or has given birth and their spouse/partner (assuming both are eligible for parental leave) and can be taken in more than one block.</li> <li>• Extended leave can start any time after the baby's birth (in the case of a baby born to you or your partner) and must end either on the date they turn six months or 12 months (depending on whether you are eligible for 26- or 52-weeks parental leave).</li> <li>• In any other case (eg someone taking permanent primary responsibility for the upbringing of a child under 6 years old), it can start from the first date which you or your spouse/partner become primary carer of a child you are taking permanent responsibility for; and must end on either the six month anniversary or the 12 month anniversary of the date you or your spouse/partner became primary carer of that child.</li> </ul>
Special leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before starting Primary Carer leave, the person who is pregnant can take up to 10 days' unpaid leave for reasons connected with the pregnancy.</li> </ul>
Negotiated Carer leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you're not entitled to Primary Carer leave but are entitled to the parental leave payments (made by IR), you may make a request for unpaid Negotiated Carer leave. It doesn't form part of the overarching parental leave therefore doesn't provide benefits such as annual leave during the absence or eligibility to the ex-gratia payment. It does however provide some employment protection under the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987.</li> </ul>
Paid parental leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The payment administered by IR and usually coincides with the period of Primary Carer leave.</li> </ul>
Keeping in touch (KIT) days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can work up to 64 hours during parental leave without stopping parental leave (but this must be 28 days after the baby's birth). Rules are slightly different for parents of preterm babies.</li> </ul>
Ex-gratia payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After six months return from parental leave, MSD provides up to 32 days' pay as a lump sum or on-going payment (the amount depends on your employment agreement) if you have taken at least six weeks Primary Carer or Extended leave.</li> <li>• Alternatively, the payment can be requested as fortnightly pro-rated payments upon return from parental leave, with the final payment made at the completion of six months. This option must be requested (in writing or via email) to your manager as soon as possible.</li> </ul>

## Related policies and additional information

[Parental Leave Guide \(Word 269.38KB\)](http://doogle/documents/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave-guide.docx) [<http://doogle/documents/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave-guide.docx>]

[Flexible working arrangements](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/flexible-working/flexible-working-guidelines.html) [<https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/flexible-working/flexible-working-guidelines.html>]

For information on the government-funded parental leave payment, refer to the MBIE website or contact them on 0800 20 90 20.

[Government-funded parental leave payment](https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/parental-leave/) [<https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/parental-leave/>]



# PARENTAL LEAVE GUIDE

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# Parental leave – guide

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Parental leave is the overarching term that includes Primary Carer leave, Partner's leave and Extended leave. All forms of leave that make up parental leave are unpaid and may apply to you if you are a permanent or fixed term employee who is:

- the person who is pregnant or has given birth (and is taking on permanent care of the child), and/or their partner (includes a married, civil-union or de facto relationship with a different or same-sex partner)
- a permanent primary caregiver for a child under 6 years (in cases of adoption, whāngai, and other permanent caregivers).

The core provisions of parental leave are provided via the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987. There are additional provisions which the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) provides which this guide describes in further detail. This guide should be read in conjunction with the parental leave section in your employment agreement.

## Working out your eligibility for Parental leave

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### Eligibility – the 6-month and 12-month employment criteria tests

There is a period of time that you need to have worked in MSD to be eligible for either 26 weeks or 52 weeks parental leave.

There are two criteria tests to decide parental leave entitlement:

- **6-month employment criteria** – if you have been employed for at least an average of 10 hours a week in the 6 months immediately preceding the baby's expected due date, or date taking permanent responsibility for the care of a child under 6 years = you will be entitled to 26 weeks' parental leave.
- **12-month employment criteria** – if you have been employed for at least an average of 10 hours a week in the 12 months immediately preceding the baby's expected due date, or the date taking permanent responsibility for the care of a child under 6 years = you will be entitled to 52 weeks' parental leave.

### Other eligibility principles

- If you are on a fixed term agreement, parental leave will not extend beyond the expiry date of your agreement.
- The amount of leave available is the same for one child as it is for multiple births.

## Types of leave

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There are different entitlements to leave depending on whether you meet the [6-month or 12-month employment criteria](#). Based on your eligibility the following types of unpaid leave are available under the overarching term of parental leave.

### Primary Carer leave

Primary Carer leave is up to 22 weeks unpaid leave which must be taken as one continuous period starting up to six weeks before the baby's expected due date or date of taking on care of the child. In certain circumstances you may start Primary Carer leave earlier (eg on the advice of your medical practitioner or midwife). Primary Carer leave must start no later than the baby's birth (or the date you become the primary carer of a child under 6 years).

Any Primary Carer leave taken earlier than six weeks before the baby's expected due date (by medical or employer direction) doesn't count towards the overall 26 or 52 week total parental leave period.

Primary Carer leave applies to:

- The person who is pregnant or has given birth (and is taking on care of the child), or their spouse or partner if they have all or part of the birth person's parental leave payments transferred to them
- The person who is going to have the primary responsibility for the care, development and upbringing of a child under 6 years on a permanent basis; for example through adoption, or home for life or whāngai (but it doesn't include foster care or other temporary care arrangements). If an employee has a spouse or partner they need to choose who will be the primary carer.

### Meaning of Primary Carer

For the purposes of Primary Carer leave the term 'primary carer' means:

#### Definition:

1. The person who is pregnant or has given birth to the child the parental leave application is for.
2. The spouse or partner of the pregnant person, if they take over all or part of the pregnant person's entitlement to the parental leave payment; or the pregnant person transfers all or part of their entitlement.
3. A person (other than the pregnant person or their spouse/partner) who is taking permanent primary responsibility for the care, development and upbringing of a child under the age of 6 years (if more than one person is taking on the care, then one person must be nominated as the primary carer).

Extended leave relates to the full period of either 26 or 52 weeks unpaid leave (including any period of Primary Carer leave taken) and applies to both the pregnant person and spouse/partner for a birth or the person nominated as the primary carer for a child under 6 years. Extended leave applies to both the person who is pregnant or has given birth and/or their spouse/partner and can start any time after the birth (or date taking primary care of the child) and can be taken in more than one block. Primary Carer leave applies to the person who is pregnant or has given birth (unless transferred to their spouse/partner) or the person identified as the primary carer in the situation of taking on primary care of a child under 6 years. Primary Carer leave must start no later than the date of birth (or date taking primary care of the child) and can only be taken in one block.

## What's the difference between Primary Carer leave and Extended leave?

Extended leave is unpaid leave up to a maximum of either 26 weeks or 52 weeks (less any Primary Carer leave taken) dependent on meeting the [6-month or 12-month employment criteria](#). For example, if you are entitled to 52 weeks parental leave and take 22 weeks Primary Carer leave there are 30 weeks leave left for you to take as Extended leave before your baby turns 12 months old. This leave can start any time after the birth of the baby and must end on either the date the baby turns 6 months or 12 months (dependent on whether you are eligible for 26 or 52 weeks parental leave). Extended leave can be shared (either separately or at the same time) between both you and your partner (assuming you both meet the [6-month or 12-month employment criteria](#) for parental leave). It can be taken in one block, or in two or more blocks, however, if taken in more than one block the dates must be agreed with the employer.

## Extended leave

Partner's leave may start up to three weeks before the baby's expected due date, or within three weeks of the baby's expected due date or date of the child started; and must end three weeks after the baby is born. Should the baby be in hospital immediately following birth, the length of Partner's leave is not extended, however it can be taken any time up until the date the baby is discharged from hospital if that is more than three weeks after birth. Partner's leave (depending on whether you meet the [6-month or 12-month employment test](#)).

If you are the spouse or partner of the primary carer and you will be providing care for your child, you may take in one continuous block either one or two weeks unpaid Partner's leave

## Partner's leave



## Negotiated Carer leave

If you are going to be the primary carer and meet the criteria for parental leave payments (from IR), but don't meet the eligibility criteria for taking parental leave, you can request Negotiated Carer leave. This is an agreed period of unpaid leave. Examples where this might occur: an employee has recently joined MSD but their previous employment means they meet the payment criteria; or an employee works part-time for more than one employer.

Refer to the [MBIE website](#) for the reasons an employer can decline this request.

## Special leave

If you are pregnant, you may take an additional 10 days leave without pay for pregnancy-related reasons (eg antenatal classes, scans or midwife appointments). This leave is only available before Primary Carer leave begins.

## Payments related to Parental leave

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### Paid Parental leave

You may be eligible for government-funded paid parental leave (22 weeks as at 1 July 2018, 26 weeks from 1 July 2020) which is administered by Inland Revenue (IR). The amount you receive is dependent on the level of your income.

[Check how much paid leave you may be entitled to.](#)

To be eligible for paid parental leave from IR you must have:

- worked for at least an average of 10 hours a week for the previous 6 or 12 months up to the expected due date of the baby, or the date you or your spouse/partner becomes the primary carer of the child. Note: unlike the parental 'leave' requirement, the time worked criteria for the IR payments doesn't have to be only with MSD.

In the case of a birth, the primary eligibility for paid parental leave belongs with the person who is pregnant or who has given birth. If their spouse/partner is also eligible then they may transfer part or all of their entitlement to their partner. In the case of adoption, whāngai, and other permanent caregivers you can choose who has primary eligibility for paid parental leave. That parent may then transfer part or all of the entitlement to the other parent.

You can apply for paid parental leave from IR at any time, but an application must be made before you return to work from parental leave. Provide the IR880 form to your manager who can validate your income declaration and fill in the MSD IR number. You can then forward the form to IR. If you are taking annual leave past the baby's expected due date you need to specify on the IR form the date you are commencing parental leave as this will impact when you start receiving the paid parental leave



payment. If you are receiving annual leave payments and paid parental leave payments at the same time you may be taxed at a higher rate.

There is an expectation that you will not perform any paid work (other than [Keeping in Touch](#)) while receiving payments through the Government paid parental leave scheme.

If you either return to work or resign while receiving paid parental leave payments you should call IR on 0800 377 777 and advise them of the date you are returning to work or resigning as this may impact your payment from them.

[Read the information on the IR website and fill out the form if you wish to apply.](#)

Alternatively you can contact the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) on 0800 20 90 20 for more information.

## **Ex-gratia payments**

The MSD ex-gratia payment provides additional financial support and incentive for employees to return to work following parental leave.

MSD provides up to 32 days' pay via an ex-gratia payment when an eligible employee has taken at least six weeks Primary Carer or Extended leave depending on your employment agreement. If you take less than six weeks parental leave the payment will be calculated on a pro-rata basis. The ex-gratia payment is not paid for periods of Partner's leave taken.

If you qualify for this payment you can choose to:

- have it paid either as one lump sum after being back at work for six months; or
- receive the equivalent payment in fortnightly pro-rated payments for six months from the date you return to work. This option must be requested (in writing or via email) as soon as you have returned to work.

If you are receiving the ex-gratia payment fortnightly and leave MSD before being back at work for six months, you would not be entitled to any remaining portion.

If your partner also works in the public sector, and they took parental leave for the same child, only one of you can claim an ex-gratia payment.

The ex-gratia payment is based on your normal rate of salary and hours of work before you went on parental leave. To qualify for this payment, you must have:

- been on Primary Carer leave and/or Extended leave from MSD, and
- had care of your child in terms of the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987, and
- completed six months service since your return or elected to take the [payment in instalments](#).

# Applying for Parental leave and notice periods

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## Notice period to apply for Parental leave

If you or your spouse/partner are having a baby and want to take parental leave you should submit your parental leave application to your manager at least one month prior to when you want to take a form of parental leave. If the parental leave relates to becoming a permanent primary carer for a child under 6 years, make the application as soon as possible but give at least 14 days' notice. A parental leave application is made by entering a leave request within MyHR. Enter any annual leave you want to take prior to starting parental leave, as a leave request in myHR like you would normally.

What information you need to provide in your parental leave application is dependent on your circumstances.

If you are having a baby; include the following in the comment field of the MyHR leave request:

1. the expected due date of baby's birth (attach a certificate from the midwife or medical practitioner)
2. whether you want to take any annual leave (and how much) prior to starting parental leave (enter the annual leave request into MyHR as you would normally)
3. the date you want to start parental leave
4. the date you want to return from parental leave
5. whether your spouse/partner intends to take parental leave (if so, how much parental leave they will be taking; their name and the details (name and address) of their place of work if employed)
6. the combined amount of parental leave both parents want to take (which can't exceed 52 weeks).

If you are the spouse/partner of someone having a baby; as well as points 1-6 above include the following:

7. a letter from your spouse/partner confirming that you are their spouse/partner and will be taking on care of the child (not to be confused with you taking care of other siblings).

If you are taking permanent primary responsibility for the care, development and upbringing of a child under 6 years; as well as points 1-6 above include the following:

1. a certified copy of a court order placing the child in your day-to-day care or custody, or
2. a copy of a letter from Oranga Tamariki or the organisation who has custody of the child confirming that you will be the primary carer of the child, or

3. a copy of the application for parenting order or adoption order and a statutory declaration in [Form 1](#) (from Schedule 2 of the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Regulations 2016), or
4. if none of the above 3 can be provided, a statutory declaration in [Form 1](#).

## **Manager receiving the Parental leave application**

It's important that you process your part of the parental leave application as quickly as possible. There are additional steps and validation that HR need to complete before the leave can be confirmed to the employee.

When you receive a parental leave application, please:

1. Check that the required information outlined above has been included in the application.
2. Check the eligibility for the amount of parental leave requested. If you're not sure check with AskHR.
3. When all the information has been provided, select "approve" on the parental leave application in myHR which will endorse the application and forward it to HR for further processing. Please note that while you have selected "approve", this is not the final approval of the application. The employee will receive the confirmation of approval via you from AskHR when the application has been checked.
4. Validate the employee's income declaration on the IR880 form. Fill in the MSD IR number on the form (070-507-963) before providing it back to the employee.
5. Contact AskHR if the employee's situation changes. Sometimes a medical professional will recommend an employee starts their parental leave earlier than originally planned. Talk to AskHR to understand the implications for the employee's application should this happen so you can keep your team member well informed.

When your team member has indicated they are returning to work, initiate their return in myHR to ensure they receive their pay in the first available pay period after they have returned.

## **Returning from Parental leave**

It is very important that you let your manager know in advance (in writing or via email) when you intend to return to work to ensure that the same (or similar) position you held before you left can be made available to you.

If you do not tell your manager that you plan to return to work and your parental leave period ends, your job will not continue to be held open.

You may apply for vacancies during your absence. Keep in touch with the office to find out about positions of interest and have this information sent to you.

## Extending Parental leave

If you have applied for less than your full entitlement of parental leave and you want to extend your leave beyond what you had originally planned, your manager may consider approving additional parental leave up to the maximum of your entitlement.

In this situation, write to your manager at least one month before your scheduled return to work date. You should ensure you outline reasons and include a preferred return to work date in the letter.

## Requesting to return early

You may request to return to work earlier than you had previously agreed. Contact your manager and discuss what you want to do. Your manager may be able to approve this, dependent on operational circumstances.

There are certain circumstances when you are entitled to end your parental leave and return early such as:

- your child is miscarried
- your child is stillborn or dies
- you or your partner decides to adopt your child to someone else and you are no longer caring for the child
- you do not have care of the child.

In these circumstances, you need to write to (or email) your manager providing one month's notice of when you intend to return to work.

## Submitting your resignation during Parental Leave

If you decide not to return to work, you are required to give your manager one month's notice of your resignation in writing (or via email) (or one week's notice if you are a fixed term employee).

If your reason for not returning is to continue caring for your child, you must include this in your resignation letter to ensure you can be given preferential re-employment status which is available if you resign to care for pre-school children. This can benefit you if you reapply for a position within four years from the date you resign or five years from the date of taking parental leave.

Your resignation takes effect from the date you started parental leave, and any leave balance (excluding sick leave) which was remaining when you started parental leave will be paid to you.

Note: you do not receive any annual leave that accrued during the period of parental leave.

## Keeping in Touch days

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You can agree with your manager to work a limited amount of time during parental leave. These are referred to as "Keeping in Touch" (KIT) days. KIT days enable you to work up to a total of 52 hours (64 hours from 1 July 2020) without parental leave ending.

This paid work must be 28 days after the baby's birth; however there are different provisions for primary carers of a pre-term baby.

## Casual work

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Casual work with MSD (outside of Keeping in Touch days) is not possible without breaking parental leave.

If you want to do casual work, you need to be aware that:

- your parental leave will stop
- if you are receiving paid parental leave payments from IR these may stop
- any paid parental leave payments received after the date IR assess parental leave to have stopped will be treated as an overpayment and would have to be paid back
- you will not continue to accrue annual leave for the period of your absence
- your eligibility for the MSD ex-gratia payment may be impacted depending on the period of time you take general leave without pay.

## Parental leave and other leave types

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### Taking leave prior to starting Parental leave

You don't need to take all of your annual leave before starting parental leave. You may request to take annual leave before your parental leave starts via myHR as you would normally. Your manager can approve or decline an annual leave request.

If you have approved annual leave that extends past the baby's expected due date, this will reduce the overall amount of time you may have available to take parental leave. For example, if you take annual leave for three weeks past baby's birth, (and assuming you are eligible for 52 weeks parental leave), you would only have 49 weeks remaining available to take parental leave before baby turns 12 months old (remember, Extended leave must end on the date baby turns either 6 months or 12 months depending on whether you are eligible for 26 weeks or 52 weeks parental leave).

## Annual leave accrual while you are on Parental leave

Annual leave will continue to accrue while you are on parental leave. When you take this annual leave MSD will pay it at the rate of your ordinary weekly earnings (rather than your average weekly earnings as per the Holidays Act which are usually significantly lower following a period of unpaid leave).

If you resign while you are taking parental leave, your resignation is treated as taking effect from the day you started parental leave. This means you won't be entitled to be paid any annual leave accrued during the period of parental leave.

## Other points of interest

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### Parental leave counts as 'service'

Your time spent on parental leave counts towards your continuous service with MSD.

Service is calculated as at the expected due date (in the case of birth) or the date care of the child started (in the case of taking permanent responsibility for the care of a child under 6 years).

### Subsequent periods of Parental leave

Parental leave can be taken for another child provided you meet the eligibility criteria. Please note, while a period of previous parental leave counts as service, you need to have been back at work for at least six months after your return from a previous period of parental leave, in order to be eligible for another period of 26 weeks parental leave relating to a different child (or 12 months for a subsequent 52 weeks parental leave).

### Your job is protected while you are on Parental leave

When you return to work from parental leave you will return to the same (or similar) position you held prior to going on parental leave. A similar position is one that:

- is at the equivalent salary and job sizing
- is at the same or other location within reasonable traveling distance
- involves responsibilities broadly comparable to the previous position.

The exceptions would be if your position cannot be kept open because a temporary replacement is not feasible due to it being a key position or because the position is affected by an organisational change. If this applies to you, your manager will contact you to discuss the process and options available to you.



## Retirement savings scheme deductions

If you have deductions from your salary, these will stop when your pay stops, so you will need to make alternative arrangements.

### KiwiSaver

If you belong to KiwiSaver, your contributions will stop automatically when you stop being paid by MSD. You can continue to make contributions to KiwiSaver while on parental leave by contacting Inland Revenue or by making payment directly to your KiwiSaver scheme provider.

### Other government agency superannuation schemes

You may be a member of the State Sector Retirement Savings Scheme (SSRSS) or Individual Retirement Plan (IRP). If so, contributions from your salary will be suspended for the period of leave. If you want to keep contributing while on leave you will need to make private arrangements directly with the company managing your scheme.

### Employer superannuation contributions following your return from parental leave

There are no employer contributions from paid parental leave payments (the payment received from Inland Revenue).

If you wish, you can receive the employer contributions you missed during the period of parental leave by providing confirmation you have made the employee contribution for the same period.

You have up to seven months to request employer contributions and your ex-gratia payment can be used for this purpose.

For KiwiSaver and SSRSS MSD will match your contributions for the period, up to the maximum levels (3%).

If you joined the IRP before October 1998 and you provide evidence that you contributed a minimum of \$10 per week to IRP during your period of leave, MSD will pay the employer contribution arrears for the same period once you have been back at work for six months.

### Union membership

If you are a union member, your union fees will stop while you are on parental leave. When you return to work, your fees will recommence automatically.

The PSA and WINS continue to regard you as a member while you are on parental leave and cover you as if you were at work.

## Recommencement of deductions

Please note all deductions including superannuation, union fee deductions and cell phone billing are automatically resumed when you return from parental leave.

## Breastfeeding and Expressing in the Workplace

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This guidance aims to support you in creating an inclusive environment to those breastfeeding or expressing in the workplace. This information is not intended to replace our existing policy and guidance but to compliment them.

On this Page:

### Purpose of this Guidance

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Workplaces are required to accommodate appropriate spaces and adequate breaks to support people transitioning back into the workforce, specifically those who are breastfeeding.

Further information is available on the [Employment New Zealand \[http://www.employment.govt.nz/hour\\_and\\_wages/breaks/breastfeeding-at-work/\]](http://www.employment.govt.nz/hour_and_wages/breaks/breastfeeding-at-work/) website. Implementing practical steps to support the individual with their choice to continue breastfeeding, contributes to a supportive and inclusive working environment at MSD.

### Breastfeeding at work

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Workplaces are required to accommodate appropriate spaces and adequate breaks to support people transitioning back into the workforce, specifically those who are breastfeeding.

Further information is available on the [Employment New Zealand \[https://www.employment.govt.nz/hours-and-wages/breaks/breastfeeding-at-work/\]](https://www.employment.govt.nz/hours-and-wages/breaks/breastfeeding-at-work/) website. Implementing practical steps to support the individual with their choice to continue breastfeeding, contributes to a supportive and inclusive working environment at MSD.

This document provides guidance to people leaders on how to plan and support their employees who request to breastfeed or express in the workplace, and support and guidance to employees returning from parental leave.

### Considerations for People Leaders

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#### Context

The transition back to work can be a challenging time for some. For employees who are wanting to continue to breastfeed or expressing milk to help with their transition back to work, we want them to feel as safe and as comfortable as possible.

#### Understanding and supporting your employee

Whether it's time away to breastfeed, or extra breaks for expressing milk, combining that with work may be a juggling act. We encourage you to be flexible and understanding with your employee, and them with you.

The considerations below will help towards putting together a plan of action.

#### Communication

Start the conversation early, connect with your employee a few weeks before their expected return to work date to understand the needs of the individual and put a plan together that works for the employee, and the needs of the business. Allow your employee to lead the conversation, they will know what is best for them. Be supportive, flexible, and open to suggestions.

Our employees know that we may not be able to accommodate all of their requests, all of the time. When we keep the communication open that helps them to better understand our reasons why.

With open communication up front, our people can better understand our reasonings and we can manage their expectations.

Remember to continue to communicate and check in regularly with the employee throughout their transition if anything may need adjusting.

#### Finding an appropriate place

As not all offices are fitted in the same way, you may have to be creative in supporting the employee needs. If its challenging to find a space that is adequate, it may be helpful to consider other options like flexible working hours, longer lunch breaks or working from home options. Have a conversation with the employee to understand what they may need for their experience to be positive.

[Flexible Working Guidelines \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/flexible-working/flexible-working-guidelines.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/flexible-working/flexible-working-guidelines.html)

#### Things to consider when helping your employee find a suitable space

is the room private (e.g., no glass walls) with a door that is lockable from the inside?)

do they need an 'in use' sign or any other signage on the door?

are there security cameras overhead? If so, think about an alternative space

have the employee check whether there are any bookings for that room at the same time? Or is it possible to book the room in advance?

In addition to the considerations above, ask the employee what they may need in order to support them with their request, here are some examples of things that may come up (noting that you may need to set expectations as your office space may not always be able to meet these requests):

a table and chair – the employee might be comfortable in using their own office chair as this can be adjusted to suit.

a power socket /wall plug (if using an electric breast pump)

access to a wheelchair

access to a fridge

a communal fridge is fine as breastmilk is considered as food. It is recommended that the employee stores this in a labeled container.

### Time for breastfeeding / expressing

Timings and frequencies of breaks and whether the breaks are paid or unpaid will be dependent on what time commitment is being requested. This should be discussed and agreed between manager and employee in advance. This needs to be clear so having something in writing may be helpful

Consider whether requested breaks are connected to existing breaks (e.g., lunch time) or if they are separate.

### Here are some examples:

if your employee is requesting 2 x 20-minute breaks these could be incorporated with morning and afternoon breaks and be paid.

if your employee is requesting 2 x 1 hour break, this is a significantly greater time commitment and could be broken into some time being paid and some unpaid e.g., - first 30 minutes are paid and the second 30 minutes unpaid

if requested, can you support them with parking onsite if they prefer to travel to their child to breastfeed rather than express milk?

### Managing the rest of the teams' expectations and creating an inclusive and safe environment

Firstly, it is a good idea to discuss this with your employee when you are talking to them about their return to work, before sharing any information with the team. Have a think about what the team need to know to ensure they can support their colleague? i.e., will they need to know what room would be unavailable while their colleague is tending to their need? These conversations may look to cover the following points:

this may be a case of letting your team know that the workplace is breastfeeding friendly environment and that people don't make any inappropriate comments or remarks

whether you will need to support your employee by finding cover for them in advance while they tend to their needs? E.g., they work front of house in the Service Centre

ensuring that the team are cooperative to any temporary change and understanding that there may be disruption associated with having a baby at work.

communicating the storage of milk in the fridge (it could be as simple as a reminder that if there are labelled items in the fridge to please not touch those)

again, checking if the team member feel comfortable if communicating any of the above point

## Considerations for the Individual

### Communication

Start the conversation early, connect with your manager a few weeks before the return to work to understand the needs of the team and your manager. Put a plan together that works for you both. Although your manager may make first contact, feel free to lead the conversation as you will know what works best for you. Both parties will need to be flexible, and open to suggestions.

### Remember to continue to communicate throughout this journey. i.e.

have things changed for you?

do you no longer require time to express/breastfeed? Do you need more time?

what's working well? What isn't working well?

is there anything that needs to be adjusted?

### Finding an appropriate place

is the room private (e.g. no glass walls) with a door that is lockable from the inside?

would you need an 'in use' sign or any other signage on the door?

are there security cameras overhead? If so, think about an alternative space

have you checked whether there are any bookings for that room at the same time? Or is it possible to book the room in advance?

In addition to the considerations above, have a think about whether you may need any of the following:

a table and chair (you may be comfortable in your own office chair as you can adjust to your own level of comfort)

a power socket /wall plug (if using an electric breast pump)

have a think about where you can store your equipment when not in use

access to a washbasin

access to a fridge

### **Time for breastfeeding/preparing**

Timings and frequencies of breaks are to be discussed in advance. Whether they are paid or unpaid will be dependent on the length and frequency being requested. For example whether they are incorporated into existing breaks or whether they are additional. This needs to be clear so having something in writing may be helpful.

Consider whether breaks are connected to existing breaks (e.g., lunch time) or if they are separate.

#### **Here are some examples:**

if you are requesting 2 x 20-minute breaks these could be incorporated with morning and afternoon breaks and be paid.

if you are requesting 2 x 1-hour breaks, this is a significantly greater time commitment and could be broken into some time being paid and some unpaid e.g., first 30 minutes are paid and the second 30 minutes unpaid.

is there support needed with parking onsite if you need to travel to your child to breastfeed rather than express milk?

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## Helpful resources for people leaders

Having an employee go on parental leave can be a challenging time for managers and teams. Below you will find some helpful resources on how to best support yourself, your team and the person on parental leave.

On this Page:

### MSD support

#### Parental leave policy and guide

Be sure to familiarise yourself with the MSD's Parental Leave Policy and guide to help have supportive conversations with your team member going on parental leave

[MSD's Parental Leave Policy and Guide \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/leave/parental-leave-policy.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/leave/parental-leave-policy.html)

#### Keeping in touch

One way you can continue to support your team member while on parental leave is by keeping connected. It might be a good idea to make sure you are communicating any significant changes that may effect your team member while they are away.

You team member may also request Keeping in Touch days (KIT)

KIT days are a limited amount of time the team member may choose to work (up to 64 hours) without their parental leave ending, this is agreed by you, the people leader. KIT days start after the first 28 days of the birth of the baby. Note that there are different provisions for primary carers of a pre-term baby.

KIT days could look like your team member attending team planning days or important meetings events, refreshing skills, being involved in decisions that impact their role and becoming familiar with new processes or procedures.

It may be something to consider to help with supporting the team member transition back into the work place.

#### Flexible working

As a people leader, you may be asked to consider flexible working options such as reduced hours of work. Appreciating that flexible working may look different for each individual, and different role / business unit, but having an understanding of how this can work and knowing how to be supportive with the requests can impact the individual in many positive ways, including the mental health and wellbeing of our MSD people. For more information on how you can support your employee with flexible working, see the Doogle pages in the links below.

[Flexible working Policy and Guidelines \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/flexible-working-policy.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/flexible-working-policy.html)

[People Leaders Flexible Working Webinars 2022 \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/flexible-working-webinar.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/flexible-working-webinar.html)

#### Managers checklist

The managers checklist is a guidance tool to help you with the steps taken throughout your employees parental leave journey – preparing to go on leave, while on parental leave, preparing for the return as well as the transition back into the workplace.

[Managers checklist for supporting a team member on their parental leave journey \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/parental-leave-managers-checklist.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/parental-leave-managers-checklist.html)

#### Breastfeeding in the workplace guide - Creating an inclusive and safe environment

We want to ensure that the transition back to work at MSD is a positive experience, this means that creating a safe and supportive environment for breastfeeding parents is essential. Creating an inclusive environment will positively influence an employee in their decision to continue with their breastfeeding needs while transitioning back to work. Below is a guide to help you have a supportive conversation with your employee with some considerations to think about when putting together a breastfeeding / expressing milk in the workplace plan.

\*Note: while the term breastfeeding is used, inclusive language such as chestfeeding or bodyfeeding should be used where appropriate to the individual.

[Breastfeeding and Expressing in the workplace guide \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/breastfeeding-and-expressing-in-the-workplace.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/breastfeeding-and-expressing-in-the-workplace.html)

#### Welcome back-pack

Creating a positive experience for your employee when they return from parental leave is important. Routines would have been shifted for your employee so it would be good to think of some ways to make their transition back to work effortless.

The welcome back-pack template is another addition you could consider (along with a warm welcome back into the office) when welcoming your team member back into the workplace. This template can cover things like a welcoming message from you (the people leader), messages from the team, changes to the team, updates on work programmes and any other helpful item. It is a template so you can be as creative as you like. You may also consider handing this to your team member slightly ahead of the transition back to work to get them up to speed.

***Welcome back – pack template (Link to be added soon)***

## External support

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### Parental leave

Information about parental leave and associated entitlements such as government-funded parental leave payments.

[Parental leave MBIE \[http://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holiday/\\_parental-leave/\]](http://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holiday/_parental-leave/)

### Breastfeeding at work

Employers must provide appropriate facilities and breaks for employees who want to breastfeed at work. This can be unpaid or paid, depending on the workplace policy.

[Breastfeeding in the workplace – MBIE \[https://www.employment.govt.nz/hours-and-wages/breaks/breastfeeding-at-work/\]](https://www.employment.govt.nz/hours-and-wages/breaks/breastfeeding-at-work/)

## Frequently asked questions

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Here are some frequently asked questions that your team member may ask you for support on.

[Parental leave FAQs \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/parental-leave-faq.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/parental-leave-faq.html)

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Home » Working here » Working for us » Leave management guide » Parental leave » **Managers checklist for supporting a team member on their parental leave journey**

## Managers checklist for supporting a team member on their parental leave journey

This checklist is to be used as a guidance tool in conjunction with additional relevant information. Please consult the [Parental Leave Policy](#) in the first instance.

On this Page:

### Preparing for parental leave

#### Confirm the pending parental leave arrangement

Celebrate the new for your team member and, when they are ready and have given permission, you can begin discussing the next steps. (Remember to think about your team members' privacy, although they have shared the news with you, they may not be ready for it to be shared wider yet).

Discuss the timeline for going on parental leave as well as first thoughts as to when and how they might like to return to work. Remember this can change between birth and returning to work

Start thinking about whether you will need to back fill this position, have a look at the secondment policy below.

#### Helpful information

[Parental leave policy](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/leave/parental-leave-policy.html) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/resources/helping-staff/policies-standards/hr/leave/parental-leave-policy.html]

[Secondment Guidelines](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/managing-staff/recruiting-staff/secondments.html) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/managing-staff/recruiting-staff/secondments.html]

#### HR Systems

Advise the team member to apply for parental leave within myHR

Support the team member with sourcing information about entitlements for parental leave? Point the team member to the [Parental Leave Hub](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave-hub.html) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave-hub.html], on doogle for links to the eligibility test and external resource

Approve the application in myHR which will endorse the application and forward to HR for assessment and processing

Contact askHR, to have them involved right from the beginning as parental leave may be complex in some situations. AskHR may contact you first before approving the request. The team will also prepare an approval letter to be signed by the manager.

Advise the team member they need to apply to Inland Revenue (IR) if applying for Paid Parental Leave (it is not an MSD payment).

Note be sure to contact askHR if there are any changes to the application. For example if a medical practitioner recommends the team member starts parental leave earlier.

#### Helpful Information

[Manage a parental leave application - myHR guide for managers](#) [Manage%20a%20parental%20leave%20application%20-%20myHR%20guide%20for%20managers%20%20Parental%20Leave%20-%20further%20information%20and%20contacts%20Paid%20Parental%20leave%20-%20IR%20]

[Parental Leave - further information and contacts](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/paid-parental-leave.html) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/paid-parental-leave.html]

[Paid Parental leave – IR](https://www.ird.govt.nz/paid-parental-leave) [https://www.ird.govt.nz/paid-parental-leave]

#### Agree on frequency of communication and IT

While some team members on parental leave may choose to be contacted often others may prefer to have minimal contact until they plan for their return.

Give your team member the heads up that while on parental leave, they will have to hand in their MSD devices and access cards. So, discuss how they would like to be kept in touch with (personal mobile, email etc.). If the team member would like (this is totally optional) they are able to get a MyHR app on their phone and access their email by the BYOD system

#### Helpful information

[Parental Leave Guide](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/helping-you/msd-service-desk/mobility/byod-policy-and-requirements.html) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/helping-you/msd-service-desk/mobility/byod-policy-and-requirements.html]

[BYOD Policy and Requirements](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/helping-you/msd-service-desk/mobility/byod-policy-and-requirements.html) [https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/helping-you/msd-service-desk/mobility/byod-policy-and-requirements.html]

### While on parental leave

#### Communication

Respect your team members' preference of communication and be conscious this can change. Contact your team member at least 8 - 10 weeks (about 2 and a half months) prior to the planned return date, or earlier if they reach out first.

The team member must give notice of return in writing at least 21 days (about 3 weeks) before the end of their parental leave.

### Keeping in touch days (KIT)

For example, if during the period of parental leave there are significant events such as planning days or specialized training etc that the team member would like to be involved in, they can use KIT days. KIT days are up to 64 hours of paid working time that does not impact the IR payment and does not break the period of parental leave

KIT can also help to ease team members back into the business after a period of leave. A lot can change between a team member starting parental leave and when they return up to 12 months later, so it can be good to get team members up to speed gradually before their first official day back.

This can also be an opportunity for the team member to refresh their skills, take part in training, or get to know new team members.

### Helpful information

[Parental Leave Guide \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave-guide.docx\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave-guide.docx)

## Preparing for the return

### Begin preparing for their return

Give yourself time before your team member's return to work to organise a meeting with them to discuss the timeline and plans for their return to work. (Reach out with 8-10 weeks prior to their scheduled return).

Ask the team member how they see their transition to work. This could include flexible working arrangements with an agreed graduated return i.e. either adjusted hours for first 2 weeks then scaled up or specified days that are scaled. Let the team member guide this conversation.

Use this time to discuss the return to their role, has their role changed? Has the team structure changed? and share any resources relating to their role i.e. work programmer, priority areas as well as additional parental leave guidance such as flexible working policies, breastfeeding guidance, FAQs, etc.

### Helpful information

[Returning to work from parental leave \[https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/parental-leave/returning-to-work/#:~:text=has%20more%20information,-,Notice%20of%20return,intend%20to%20return%20to%20work.\]](https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/parental-leave/returning-to-work/#:~:text=has%20more%20information,-,Notice%20of%20return,intend%20to%20return%20to%20work.)

[Flexible working \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/flexible-working/flexible-working-guidelines.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/flexible-working/flexible-working-guidelines.html)

### Consider breastfeeding needs

Refer to MSD's breastfeeding and expressing at the workplace guidance documents.

### Helpful information

[Breastfeeding rights in the workplace \[https://www.employment.govt.nz/hours-and-wages/breaks/breastfeeding-at-work/\]](https://www.employment.govt.nz/hours-and-wages/breaks/breastfeeding-at-work/)

[Breastfeeding and Expressing in the workplace \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/breastfeeding-and-expressing-in-the-workplace.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave/breastfeeding-and-expressing-in-the-workplace.html)

### Prepare paperwork for the return and IT equipment

If your team member has requested any changes to their hours upon their return, you may need to prepare a formal agreement. Contact askHR for assistance.

Remember to prepare any MSD devices your team member may need (phone, laptop, headset etc.). This is also a good time to check whether their access cards are still valid

This may also be a good time to preemptively think about and organise any refresher training that may be required upon the team members return.

### Ex-gratia payment

Talk to your team member about the MSD ex-gratia payment and ask them to consider if they would like payment in one lump sum (6 months after the return) or as fortnightly installments (from the day they return). If they are wanting the fortnightly installments, this needs to be requested in writing or email as soon as they return.

### Helpful information:

[Parental Leave Guide \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave-guide.docx\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/documents/working-here/working-for-us/your-leave/parental-leave-guide.docx)

### Prepare a welcome back-pack

To prepare a warm welcome back we recommend you gather your team to create a welcome back notice for the team member, see optional the template below.

It could be helpful to also provide your team member with additional information about key changes that have happened in your team, to your work and provide an overview of the work program where applicable.

### Helpful information

Welcome back pack

### Introduce a buddy system if appropriate

One of the best ways to build a supportive culture for new parents is through peer-to-peer support. Team members who are feeling apprehensive about returning to work may benefit from the knowledge and experience of a colleague who has been through it before.

### During the transition back to work

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#### Update myHR on the first day back

Update the team member leave request with the actual return date on the day the team member comes back. Also in myHR, update the team member's preference on how or if they are receiving the ex-gratia payment. See the image below.

[Image]

[Return from parental leave process in myHR \[http://ri.earticulate.com/hare/A5nGwxMIIU-4C\\_nL7Ny\\_plv\\_YCEGrs#/lessons/XBOuCG8zVfCDzmxS4\\_pifl3qAvPIvAMp\]](http://ri.earticulate.com/hare/A5nGwxMIIU-4C_nL7Ny_plv_YCEGrs#/lessons/XBOuCG8zVfCDzmxS4_pifl3qAvPIvAMp)

#### Schedule regular check in

It is important to regularly check on your team member as they transition back to work. Are they facing any challenges? Do they feel engaged? Has anything changed for them, what's working and what isn't working, do they feel supported? How can I better support them as their manager?

#### Make getting help easy

Ensure your team member knows who to reach out to if they need support or assistance on their return to work. The personal touch matters. This is particularly important for remote team members who may be feeling isolated.

MSD provides an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), it is worth communicating the services available and how team members can access support. There may be dedicated post-natal services available. Low take-up of an EAP is often the result of team members not knowing what type of support is available and how to access it.

### Helpful information

[EAP/Benestar \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/eap-benestar/index.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/eap-benestar/index.html)

[Wellbeing@MSD \[https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/index.html\]](https://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/index.html)

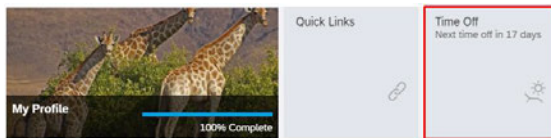
[Poutuarā \[http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/peer-support/index.html\]](http://doogle.ssi.govt.nz/working-here/keeping-healthy-and-safe/wellbeing-at-msd/peer-support/index.html)

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## Applying for leave in myHR

1. To apply for leave, view previously taken and upcoming leave select the 'Time Off' tile from your myHR home screen.



2. To apply for leave, select 'New Absence' in the bottom right corner.

Select the type of leave you're applying for in the drop down box along with the start and end dates of your request and click 'Send Request'.

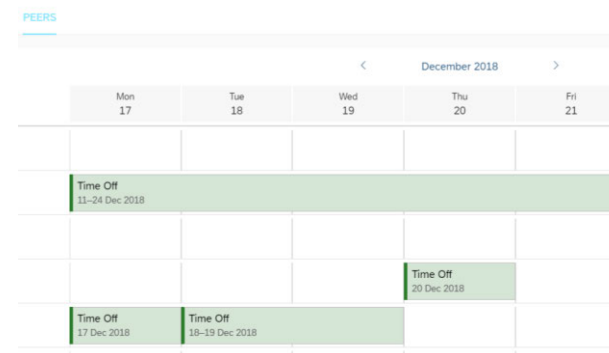
This will also calculate how many hours you are requesting in total.

**Note** – your request will now show as 'Pending' and waiting for your manager to approve the request. Once it has been approved, the status will change to 'Approved'.

**Planned leave** – can be used if you do not currently have enough Annual Leave to take leave in the future. Once you have accrued enough leave for your request you will need to cancel the Planned Leave and apply for Annual Leave.

On the right hand side of the leave screen you can view your current leave balances (as at today) and your upcoming leave. If you want to view more, click 'Show All' this will show public holidays and your upcoming leave you have requested.

If you would like to view leave that your peers have requested, click 'Show Team Absences'. This will give you a view of who has requested leave to make sure you aren't all away at once.



**Checking accrued leave balances** – log into HRKiosk via Doogle for accurate leave balances, leave history and your payslips.