

PARENTAL LEAVE FAQs FOR THE NEW MECA

July 2017

1. How many weeks of paid parental leave (PPL) do I get?
If you are in receipt of the statutory (IRD) parental leave payment, then you are entitled to 14 weeks on full pay by means of the DHB topping up the difference between your full pay and the IRD payment. (The IRD payment is for 18 weeks – currently capped at \$516.85 before tax per week.) If you will not be receiving the IRD payment (including not being entitled to it) then you are still entitled to 6 weeks on full pay (as per the previous MECA).
2. Do I have to apply for this?
Yes. Although parental leave is a contractual entitlement, you need to notify the employer three months before the commencement of your leave (or as soon as practicable if there are circumstances outside of your control). You will also need to apply to IRD for the statutory parental leave payment through IRD.
3. Does the new PPL clause change the amount of unpaid leave I can apply for?
No. You are still entitled up to 12 months of unpaid leave if you have completed 12 months service, and up to 6 months unpaid leave if you have less than 12 months service with the employer.
4. I am already on parental leave. Does the new clause affect me?
The new provision comes into effect on 1 July 2017 (but not until the MECA is ratified in August 2017). You may be entitled to retrospectively receive the monetary equivalent of the new top up provision (offset set against payments already received under the old provision). Please contact your Industrial Officer to discuss. Your entitlement to the statutory payment is unaffected.
5. I have worked at my current DHB for less than 12 months. Do I qualify for the 14 weeks' paid entitlement?
Yes. You are entitled to have the 14 weeks top up (or alternatively the 6 weeks leave) irrespective of whether you are entitled to the 6 months or 12 months' unpaid leave.
6. Does my service at other NZ DHBs count towards qualifying for PPL?
No. For the purposes of parental leave the service must be with the DHB you are taking leave from (with service broken by periods of no more than 3 months).
7. I don't qualify for the 14 weeks of paid parental leave because I am not entitled to the statutory parental leave payment. Do I have any entitlement?
Yes. You are entitled to 6 weeks paid leave.
8. I will not be the primary caregiver; do I have any entitlements to leave?
It is possible to share the primary carer role with a partner (in which case you can share the paid leave). It is also possible to share the unpaid leave with a partner. See also question 9 re partner leave.
9. What leave is the partner (non-primary caregiver) entitled to? Is this different from the previous MECA?
Under the new MECA the partner of a primary carer is entitled to 2 weeks' partner leave on full pay.
10. I work less than 10 hours a week and am not entitled to statutory parental leave. Am I entitled to any parental leave under the MECA?
Yes. As long as you meet the definition of a primary care giver under the Parental Leave and Protection of Employment Act 1987, you are entitled to leave under the MECA, of which six weeks is on full pay, even if you have no entitlement to leave under the Act.