

Have recent changes to PPL brought NZ up to (international good practice) standard?

Heather McDonald, Heathrose Research

Suzy Morrissey, Victoria University of Wellington, NZ

Outline of presentation

- Brief summary of PPL in NZ
- What were the recent changes?
- What else in NZ needs attention?

Summary of PPL in NZ

- 18 weeks paid leave, to mother (unless adopting), but all transferable if not 'primary carer'
- Wage replacement but to low cap of minimum wage
- 52 weeks (total) leave (unpaid except for 18 weeks) and job protection
- Work related eligibility tests (employed and self employed)
- 2 weeks unpaid leave for fathers/partners

Recent changes

- Employment:
 - 10 hours/week, any 26 of 52 weeks before due date/adoption
 - One or more employers
- Covers:
 - recently changed jobs, seasonal, casual, fixed term
 - Those less likely to access provisions

Recent changes

- Family arrangements:
 - Birth mother/an adoptive parent has *primary entitlement*
 - *Transfer* to father, partner (defacto, married, same-sex), other adoptive parent
- New: transfer to other permanent caregivers such as grandparents, whangai, guardians, 'home-for-life'

Recent changes

- Increased duration
- Now 18 weeks
- Still below OECD average and WHO breastfeeding guidelines

What else
needs
attention in
NZ? –
Payment rate

- Minimum wage rate:
 - Impacts on use by fathers
 - Short duration also a factor
- Fathers take annual leave, or combine different types of leave, but not PPL
- Limited desire to consider other funding sources

What else
needs
attention in
NZ? – equality
/rights based
discussion

- Rights of the child? 'other' parent/carer?
- Undervalues care role and work undertaken by women
- Recent legal challenges
 - Terra Nova (Bartlett) case – rest home workers, ruled would be paid more if a male-dominated industry
 - Ministry of Health v Atkinson and Ors – caring for disabled relative 'for love' does not require payment



Thank you

Any questions?

