

# **Services for Children of Viet Nam & Grapple Veterans**

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# Policy

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## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out the programme of services specific to children of Viet Nam and Operation Grapple veterans.
- 1.2 It covers the counselling, genetic counselling, and health services funded under the programme. It does not cover ex-gratia payments—for these, see *Ex-Gratia Payments (Children of Viet Nam Veterans) Policy*.

## 2. Legislative reference

- 2.1 These services are not legislated. We provide them under Cabinet decisions made in 2001 and 2002.
  - *Cabinet Minute (01) 12/9*
  - *Cabinet Minute (02) 18/3*.

## 3. Eligibility

- 3.1 When someone seeks assistance under this policy, we must first consider whether there is eligible service and an eligible relationship.

### Eligible service

- 3.2 The claimant must have a parent with qualifying operational service in either Viet Nam or Operation Grapple.

### Eligible relationship

- 3.3 Most services under this policy are restricted to a veteran's natural-born children, born after return (temporary or permanent) from Viet Nam or Operation Grapple. The exception is psychological counselling, which can be for the veteran's:
  - natural-born children
  - adopted children, including whāngai
  - stepchildren, if raised as the veteran's children
  - grandchildren, if raised as the veteran's children.

### Documents needed to establish eligibility

- 3.4 To establish eligibility, we need documents (originals or certified copies) verifying:
  - the veteran's eligible service in Viet Nam or Operation Grapple
  - the eligible child-parent relationship.

- 3.5 For the child-parent relationship, evidence needed depends on the type of assistance sought:
- **If psychological counselling is sought**  
We need documents that credibly demonstrate an eligible child-parent relationship (could be one or more of birth certificate; adoption papers; parenting orders; other documents such as a lawyer's letter or a statutory declaration).
  - **If other services are sought (genetic counselling, health costs)**  
We need full birth certificate, showing the child is the veteran's natural child, born after the veteran's return from Viet Nam or Operation Grapple.

## 4. Services we may fund

- 4.1 The services we may fund under this policy are:
- family/psychological counselling
  - genetic counselling
  - out-of-pocket health costs for an accepted condition.
- 4.2 We fund services within New Zealand only, and do not cover costs that could be covered by another government agency.

## 5. Psychological counselling

- 5.1 We can fund family/psychological counselling, as a short-term intervention, if all the following apply:
- the counselling is needed
  - the need relates to the parent's service in Viet Nam or Operation Grapple
  - we have given pre-approval.
- 5.2 When counselling is requested, we require a needs assessment by a suitable health practitioner. So long as we have pre-approved this, we will pay for it. The assessing practitioner should be asked to report on:
- the need for the counselling (including relation to service)
  - the scope and aims of any counselling recommended, and the number of sessions needed.
- 5.3 If we approve counselling, we will normally only fund it within the assessment's recommendations. Where appropriate, however, we may use discretion to approve minor variations (such as a different counsellor).
- 5.4 Usually, the maximum number of sessions we will fund for an individual is 10. Where that amount has been used, we may refer claimants to their district health board instead. However, the Manager Veterans' Services has discretion to approve funding for further sessions, if the case for it is compelling.

- 5.5 Counselling requests under this policy should be administered in line with the following sections of our *Mental Health Treatment Policy*:
- section 7 (situations where there is urgent need)
  - section 8 (definitions of treatment providers).

## 6. Genetic counselling

- 6.1 Genetic counselling is the process of determining occurrence or risk of a genetic disorder in a family, and helping people understand and adapt to the medical, psychological and familial implications of genetic contributions to disease. It involves:
- interpretation of family and medical histories to assess the chance of disease occurrence or recurrence
  - education about inheritance, testing, management, prevention, resources and research
  - discussion to promote informed choices and adaptation to the risk or condition.
- 6.2 Our funding for these services is contingent on their availability. It can cover:
- a GP appointment (for the referral); and
  - any costs of the genetic counselling that are not publicly funded.
- 6.3 The referral would normally be to Genetic Health Service NZ. Information, including contact details, is at: <https://www.genetichealthservice.org.nz/>

## 7. Out-of-pocket costs of health services for accepted conditions

- 7.1 There are 5 conditions for which we may be able to assist with health costs (if service and relationship criteria have been met):
- *cleft lip*
  - *cleft palate*
  - *adrenal gland cancer*
  - *acute myeloid leukaemia*
  - *spina bifida manifesta*.
- In the case of spina bifida, we fund health services only if it is *manifesta*; but pay ex-gratia awards for both *occulta* and *manifesta*—see *Ex-Gratia Payments (Children of Nam Veterans) Policy*.
- 7.2 We require sufficient medical evidence to confirm that the condition is present.

### **Costs that don't need pre-approval**

- 7.3 The following can be reimbursed without pre-approval if needed for treatment of the condition:
- GP visits
  - pharmaceuticals on the Pharmac list
  - scans up to \$1000.

### **Non-subsidised pharmaceuticals**

- 7.4 For non-subsidised pharmaceuticals, the guidelines and procedure in the *Treatment Policy* (sections 7.1–7.7) apply.

### **Other services**

- 7.5 Other services, such as physiotherapy, may be funded if incurred as part of treatment in the public system.
- 7.6 These require pre-approval, which must go through a Rehabilitation Advisor. Before pre-approving, we must be satisfied that:
- the services are necessary and appropriate (in line with our *Treatment Policy*, sections 4.2–4.3)
  - the costs cannot be covered by other government agencies, such as the public health system or Work and Income.

## **8. Case management & treatment plan**

- 8.1 When providing (or considering) funding for services, we may also set up the following:

### **Case management**

- 8.2 Once we have established eligible service/relationship, we should set up case management, and continue it until the individual is no longer seeking/getting services under this policy.

### **Treatment plan**

- 8.3 Once we have approved any services, we should consider whether a treatment plan would be helpful in managing them. If so, we may set one up.

## 9. Travel

- 9.1 We can reimburse travel (within New Zealand), if it is:
- undertaken so as to receive approved assessments or services under this policy; and
  - necessary.
- 9.2 Administration of travel costs should align with the following sections of our *Travel for Treatment & Rehabilitation Policy*:
- section 4.4 (as to use of nearest provider)
  - sections 5.9 (as to timeline for claims)
  - section 6 (as to what, and how much, we will reimburse).

## 10. Payment of claims

- 10.1 For general GP visits, and pharmaceuticals on the Pharmac list, the claimant must pay upfront. They can seek reimbursement by sending us the receipts, with a signed note affirming that the costs claimed are for the accepted condition. (If further assurance is needed, we may check with the provider).
- 10.2 For travel, the claimant must pay upfront. They can seek reimbursement by sending us evidence of travel. (In general, the evidence should show the travel was undertaken for the appointment. However, we can use discretion to accept a lower standard of evidence, if this seems reasonable in the circumstances).
- 10.3 For most other services, we will normally pay the provider directly.

## 11. Assistance from other organisations

- 11.1 The following trusts can make grants to Viet Nam veterans or family members. Both trusts set out on their websites the kind of situations they will consider assisting:
- **Viet Nam Veterans & their Families Trust**  
May assist Viet Nam veterans or their families with some expenses, to relieve poverty or hardship.  
[www.communitymatters.govt.nz/viet-nam-veterans-and-their-families-trust](http://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/viet-nam-veterans-and-their-families-trust)
  - **Vietnam Veterans (Neville Wallace Memorial) Children's & Grandchildren's Trust**  
May assist children or grandchildren of Viet Nam veterans to realise their potential.  
[www.evsayouthtrust.org.nz](http://www.evsayouthtrust.org.nz)

## Glossary

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### **health practitioner** *[see section 7 of the Veterans' Support Act 2014]*

Has the same meaning as in section 5(1) of the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

### **qualifying operational service** *[see Section 8 of the Veterans' Support Act]*

Means:

- (a) service on any deployment treated as a war or emergency for the purposes of the War Pensions Act 1954; and
- (b) service on any deployment declared to be operational service under section 9 of the Veterans' Support Act 2014.

### **travel costs** *[see Section 42 of the Veterans' Support Act]*

Means the cost of:

- (a) travel
- (b) meals and accommodation reasonably associated with the travel
- (c) actual and reasonable out-of-pocket expenses associated with the travel.

### **veteran** *[see Section 7 of the Veterans' Support Act]*

Means:

- (a) a member of the armed forces who took part in qualifying operational service at the direction of the New Zealand Government; or
- (b) a person:
  - (i) who has been:
    - (A) appointed as an employee of the Defence Force under section 61A of the Defence Act 1990; or
    - (B) seconded to the Defence Force with the permission of the Chief of Defence Force; and
  - (ii) who took part in qualifying operational service at the direction of the New Zealand Government; or
- (c) a person who, immediately before the commencement of Part 3 of this Act, is eligible for a pension under the following provisions of the War Pensions Act 1954:
  - (i) section 19 (but only if the person was a member of the forces):
  - (ii) section 55 or 56:
  - (iii) Parts 4 and 5.