VISA PAK ISSUE 693 — 16 OCTOBER 2026

Immigration Instruction updates to family of New Zealander visas

Context

The 'Family of New Zealander' temporary visa products are moving to ADEPT on 16 November 2026. In this context 'New Zealander' includes both citizens and residence class visa holders.

In advance of the ADEPT build, the immigration instructions were reviewed to identify any areas that could be clarified. Although only the temporary visas are moving to ADEPT, the review covered both temporary and residence visa types. The review also identified some broader improvements in the health instructions.

New instructions from this review will become effective on 16 November to align with the ADEPT go live date. These instructions have been reflected in the ADEPT Family of New Zealander design.

This Visa Pak provides more detail about the changes and should be read in conjunction with the new instructions themselves (see the Amendment Circular 2026-30 dated, 16 October 2026).

Key changes

Most of the changes to instructions are clarifications or corrections that do not affect existing processes. However, the following changes require the attention of staff who process the relevant visa categories and those who provide information to applicants:

- Creation of student visa instructions for children of New Zealanders
- Increase in duration for visitor visas for children of New Zealanders from 9 to 12 months
- Changes to partnership work and visitor visa instructions to ensure that visas allowing a total stay of 36 months are not granted until the couple have lived together for at least 12 months
- Ability to defer Partnership Category residence applications where the supporting partner has unresolved character issues

Staff seeking more detailed information about the changes should refer to appendix 1 below which summarises the differences between the instructions in effect before and after 16 November 2026.

NEW ZEALAND
IMMIGRATION

Appendix 1

Details of family of New Zealander instructions changes effective from 16 November 2026

Note: Immigration instructions in the Operational Manual will be updated after 16 November.

Before that date, refer to Amendment Circular 2026-30 to view the new instructions.

Temporary entry

Change area	Current and new instructions
Student visa for children of New Zealanders *See U8.30 (from 16 November 2026)*	**Current instructions** Currently, there is a visitor visa category for children of New Zealanders but no equivalent student visa category. However, the Ministry of Education recognises these children as domestic students where they have applied for citizenship or residence and hold a student visa. These children are often granted visas by exception, requiring the use of manual processes by both applicants and INZ staff. **New instructions** A new visa category has been created, modelled on the visitor visa category for dependent children of New Zealanders. Key features are: • 12-month duration • Requirement to have applied for citizenship or have a residence application in progress • No requirement to meet maintenance funds or accommodation requirements
Visitor visa duration for children of New Zealanders *See V3.20*	**Current instructions** Visitor visas for children of New Zealanders can be granted for 9 months from the date of arrival initially, then up to two years if required. Often this visa is used where children have applied for New Zealand citizenship or residence, which generally takes 6-9 months. This means the 9-month duration can be just short of the time required. **New instructions** Duration has been increased to 12 months and clarified that it applies from the date of arrival if the applicant is offshore, or the date of grant if onshore.
Duration of partnership work and visitor visas *See V3.15.1 and WF2.1*	**Current instructions** Instructions state where a couple have been living together for less than 12 months, their first visa can be for a maximum of 12 months, and further visas can be granted for up to a total stay of 36 months. This means that any visa after the first can allow a stay of 36 months in total, even when the couple have not yet lived together for 12 months (i.e. they could apply for a visa to take them up to a total of 36 months immediately after being granted their first 12-month visa). The policy intent is for longer term partnership visas to only be available once the couple have lived together for at least 12 months. **New instructions**

	The wording has been amended to better reflect policy intent by removing reference to a 'first' visa and inserting 'After a couple have been living together for 12 months…' to the start of the provision that allows a visa of up to 36 months.

Residence

Change area	Current and new instructions
Deferral of residence applications to await supporting partner character outcome *See R5.95 and A5.35*	**Current instructions** Supporting partners are not eligible to support residence applications where they have convictions for family violence or sexual offending. Where a supporting partner has the potential to get a conviction in the future that would make them ineligible (e.g. because they have been charged with an offence but haven't been to court), there is no mechanism to put the application on hold to await the outcome. **New instructions** Instructions allow a residence application to be deferred where the supporting partner is subject to an arrest warrant, has been charged with an offence, is under investigation, or wanted for questioning in relation to an offence that would make them ineligible to support a residence application. The instructions align with the existing deferral process used for residence applicants with potential character concerns. A minor change has also been made to clarify that police certificates provided by supporting partners are subject to the same requirements as police certificates provided by applicants.
Requirements for grant of PRV to a partner of a New Zealand citizen living overseas *See F2.5.1*	**Current instructions** Partners of New Zealand citizens can be granted a PRV provided certain conditions are met, including that the couple have lived together offshore for at least five years, and are either still offshore or have returned to New Zealand in the past three months. Where the couple have travelled separately, it makes it difficult to apply the instructions, because some of the requirements relate to the applicant's location whereas other parts relate to the location of the supporting partner. **New instructions** The requirements have been changed to all refer to the supporting partner's location.
English language requirements for partners and children who could have been included in an earlier application *See F2.40.1 and F5.30*	**Current instructions** The instructions require that partners and children who could have been included in an earlier application of certain specified residence types have to meet English language requirements if they later apply under the Partnership or Dependent Child categories. These instructions have not been updated to reflect all the residence types where secondary applicants would have had to meet English language requirements. It can also be difficult to determine which requirements should apply. **New instructions** The instructions include a full list of all residence visa types where secondary applicants must meet English requirements, along with links to the applicable requirements for each. A general provision

	has also been included to ensure that English language requirements are still applied if the list is not updated.

Health

Change area	Current and new instructions
How medical certificates are provided *See A4.5, A4.20 and A4.25*	**Current instructions** Applications must include medical and x-ray certificates if they meet certain criteria about length of stay and visa type. Separate provisions allow an immigration officer to request certificates if they are not required by the online form if necessary to determine the applicant has an acceptable standard of health. The ADEPT process is supported by existing provisions allowing medical certificates to be requested after submission when not required by an online form. However, these provisions could imply it is always a case-by-case decision by an immigration officer rather than an automated process. **New instructions** Instead of setting out which applications must include medical certificates, the instructions state which applicants must provide medical certificates, allowing for provision either with the application or afterwards. A new provision sets out the different ways medical certificates may be provided, including by post-submission request. A note specifies that post-submission requests can be automated. Note: no changes have been made to the general provisions that allow an immigration officer to request medical certificates where there are risk factors.
Which residence applicants provide Limited Medical Certificates (LMCs) *See A4.20*	**Current instructions** Instructions say that LMCs can be provided by residence applicants who meet the criteria for residence under the Partnership or Dependent Child category. This could imply that applicants under *other* categories (e.g. Skilled Migrant) could provide an LMC if they also meet the criteria under Partnership or Dependent Child categories. Additionally, it could imply that applicants under Partnership or Dependent Child categories, who do not meet the criteria for residence, have to provide a General Medical Certificate (GMC) instead, whereas in fact their application would be declined rather than different medicals requested. **New instructions** Instructions have been clarified to state that applicants under the Partnership and Dependent Child residence categories provide LMCs.
Assessing a General Medical (GMC) where an LMC could have been provided	**Current instructions** Instructions are silent about how to manage situations where applicants incorrectly provide GMCs when they could have provided LMCs, however in practice, where this is identified, INZ only assesses the parts of the GMC that are also included in an LMC. This supports efficiency by preventing over-

See A4.20 and A4.25	assessment and allows INZ to consider only the information that is relevant to the outcome of the application. **New instructions** New provisions allow for the existing practice of assessing GMCs provided in place of LMCs based only on the information within the GMC that would be contained in an LMC.
LMCs and waivers for temporary visa applicants *See A4.25, A4.65 and A4.70*	**Current instructions** Temporary visa applicants may provide a LMC if they meet residence requirements for the Partnership or Dependent Child category. The same formulation is used for determining whether temporary applicants can be considered for a medical waiver. In both cases, eligibility is determined by reference to specific provisions within the Partnership and Dependent Child residence categories. For partners, the linked residence provision requires an immigration officer to be satisfied that the couple have been living together for 12 months. However, when medical certificates are provided, no immigration officer assessment has occurred. For children, the linked residence provision requires the supporting parent to be eligible to support a residence application, which generally requires the parent to be actually residing in New Zealand. This would require parents living offshore to travel to New Zealand in advance of their children in order for the child to provide an LMC and be eligible for a waiver, which does not align with policy intent or operational practice. **New instructions** The links to residence criteria have been removed, and instead: • The provisions for partners incorporate the requirement to be living together for 12 months directly • The provisions for children link to the dependent child definition for being included in a residence application, which matches that within the dependent child category but without the requirement for the parents to be eligible to support for residence
Health settings for children included in a Partnership Category application who are not the child of the New Zealand partner *See A4.60, A4.70 and R5.96*	**Current instructions** Children included as secondary applicants in a Partnership Category application can provide LMCs. However, the provision that requires the grant of waivers refers only to applicants who are the dependent child of a New Zealander. This creates a mismatch between the ability to provide LMCs and the requirement to be granted waivers for children included as a secondary applicant who are *not* the dependent child of a New Zealander (i.e. where they are a child of the principal applicant from an earlier relationship). The criteria for applicants who must be granted waivers and who can provide LMCs are intended to align, as the LMC only tests for conditions that cannot be waived. **New instructions** The instructions for who can be granted a waiver have been updated to refer to applicants applying for or included in a Partnership Category application, instead of referring to partners or children of New Zealanders. This ensures children included in a Partnership Category application both provide LMCs and must be granted a waiver, regardless of whether or not they are the child of a New Zealander.