

Support Services Book 1



Introduction to Support Services and Advisors



“People helping People”

Support Services Book 1 - Introduction to Support Services and Advisors

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Version control

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Welcome to the RSA - “People helping People”

As a Support Advisor you are a part of one of the oldest and largest voluntary support organisations in New Zealand. The RSA was founded in 1916 by wounded veterans returning from World War One. Its establishment recognised a need to support one another, to provide care for veterans and their families, as well as the families of those men and women who would never return. An early role was to honour the memory of those who paid the supreme sacrifice. Support and remembrance continue to be at the core role of the organisation.

The number one strategic pillar of the RSA strategy 2021 – 2024 is Support. This is reflected in the RSA mission of “Supporting those impacted by Military Service.” Support Services plays a critical role in delivering the intent of the RSA support mission of “People helping People”. Being a Support Advisor, you will need to know:

- ☒ who you report to
- ☒ who else in the organisation you need to have working relationships with
- ☒ what your specific duties and tasks are
- ☒ what procedures and policies (national and local) are relevant to your role
- ☒ what skills and qualifications you might be expected to have to perform effectively in your role.

This booklet has been revised to provide new Support Advisors and RSA executive members with an overview of Support Services and the role of Support Advisors to impart understanding in how the RSA provides support to our clients - current and ex-service members of the NZDF and their families.

People have different motivations for volunteering to take on the position of a Support Advisor and the RNZRSA appreciates the time and energy required of the role. It is a personally rewarding position, as it directly helps veterans and their families - delivering tangible benefits to them.

Important Contacts

Reading this you might be the only Support Advisor in your RSA, however there are a number of people you can approach for help if you have any questions, whether about your role overall, or how you can best help on an individual client. Firstly, your District Support Manager (DSM)/District Support Advisor (DSA) is your first point of contact for all things RSA support.

Secondly, when building your local contacts to help support veterans some good places to start are:

- Known stakeholder agencies in this book (pages 13-18)
- the online and local phone directories (www.whitepages.co.nz)
- the RSA's website for other DSM and helplines for clients (<https://www.rsa.org.nz/support/team>)

Pre-requisite Requirements for Support Advisors

In order to protect our client's confidentiality, the RSA organisation and individual Support Advisors reputation, there are a number of pre-requisite requirements that you must do to be registered support Advisor and qualify for further training. These are;

- ☒ Read and understand the information in this book
- ☒ Understand and sign the code of ethics at the back of this book and send to your District Support Manager (DSM/DSA) (see pages 36-37)
- ☒ Complete the Privacy commissioners e-learning material 'Privacy ABC' and send the certification of Completion your DSM (see page 24)
- ☒ Fill out a police vetting form and send it to the Support Services Operational Manager for Police background checks (see page 19)

Strategy, Principles and the RSA Structure



As part of the overall understanding of delivering Support Services you must have an understanding of the intent of what support services is trying to achieve (the strategic pillar), the principles it promotes in delivering support, and the structure that supports it.

Strategic Pillar of Support

The RSA Strategic Support Pillar states that “Veterans, their families and whanau are supported to live full and rewarding lives. Support connects us with Government Agencies and NGOs to maximize available assistance.”¹ What this means is “ensuring that we (all the RSA community) are resourced, capable and there when veterans and their families need support. Tailoring our services to

¹ RNZRSA Strategy 2021 - 2024

veteran support with a “hands on” approach in service delivery and navigating support available. Ensuring our values of comradeship and compassion are experienced by veterans and their families when they get our support.”²

RSA Support Services Principles³

These are the enduring principles that we use every day to guide our thoughts and actions, when planning and delivering support; all working to achieve our vision:

People Centric	The needs of People are at the heart of everything we do - providing material and moral support with a benevolent approach that treats all concerned fairly and equitably
Trusted providers	We conduct ourselves in a professional manner at all times. We provide timely, relevant accurate advice, advocacy and support.
Multilateral approach	We work together as a connected Support Services Network. We work with other non-RSA stakeholders for the benefit of those we care for. We are not afraid to accept advice from others, and we have the courage to lead on issues when we see opportunity.
Solution focused	We understand the nature of our business and adapt rapidly to changing needs, never assuming that one solution helps everyone. We actively seek new knowledge and skills.

Our structure

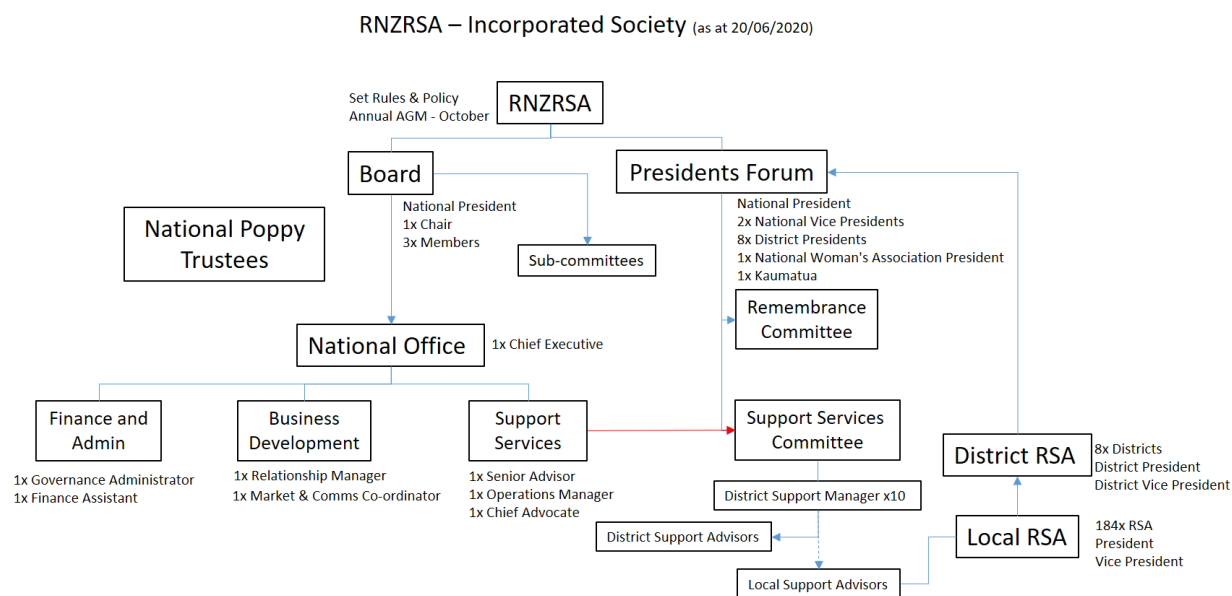
While the RSA movement consists of independent Incorporated Societies, RSA Support Services is viewed as a single network that works collectively with each

² RNZRSA Strategy 2021 - 2024

³ Support Services Strategy 2020-2023

other across the country. Below is a picture of how the RSA is organized and the hierarchy of support services.

Your first point of call in any matter related to Support Services that you or your local Association cannot manage is your District Support Manager (DSM).



National Support Services

The National Support Services team performs tasks aim at the strategic level of organizational engagement. Key responsibilities include:

- ☑ Working with District Support Managers to provide consistent and updated training and support to our national network of Support Advisors through the Support Services Committee.
- ☑ Ensuring adequate advocacy and representation of all serving and ex-service members of the NZDF and their families views to Government (e.g. education of mental health workforce on military health matters, transition into civilian life etc.)
- ☑ Being the advocate for all serving and ex-service members of the NZDF and their families with cases that are required to appear before the Appeals Board
- ☑ Direct support to all serving and ex-service members of the NZDF and their families via processing of applications for grants from national trusts and funds

- ☑ Engaging in research and projects investigating treatments, rehabilitation, transition and risks to all serving and ex-service members of the NZDF and their families for their long term health and wellbeing.
- ☑ Delivering strategy, plans and business cases to the support services network
- ☑ Implementing national level agency and NGO engagement
- ☑ Being the point of contact for overseas residents

The role of the District Support Managers (DSM)

The District Support Managers are the link between the Local and District Support Advisors (LSA and DSA respectively) and RNZRSA Support Services. They help the LSA and DSA with:

- ☑ Coordination of training and delivery of support
- ☑ Advice on matters relating to government entitlements and support
- ☑ Advising of national level changes in process or information relevant to the Support Advisors
- ☑ Liaising with Veterans' Affairs (VANZ), the Veteran's Pensions Centre (MSD), and other relevant agencies and organisations connected with the welfare of veterans (for example, District Health Boards, Age Concern, Primary Health Organisations)
- ☑ Collating and checking applications for grant applications to national trusts
- ☑ Coordinating district level support for all serving and ex-service members of the NZDF and their families
- ☑ Coordinating and collating local and district individual activity reports and approving monthly claims to national office
- ☑ Maintaining a contact list of all LSAs and DSAs in their district

The role of the District Support Advisors (DSA)

The District Support Advisors report to their respective DSM and are not linked to any one RSA directly, but serve the District as a whole or a particular region of it. They help bridge the gap between LSA and DSM with:

- ☑ Delivery of training to LSA or associated stakeholders
- ☑ Advice on matters relating to government entitlements and support
- ☑ Liaise with other support and welfare agencies to deliver support or initiate beneficial processes or projects, such as WINZ, local GPs, lawn services, etc.
- ☑ Applying for grants from national trusts on behalf of clients
- ☑ Delivering district level support for serving and ex-service members of the NZDF and their families
- ☑ Co-ordinate with other RSA volunteers providing support services
- ☑ Communicate with the DSM to maintain situational awareness
- ☑ Keep records relevant to the role, including individual activity sheets

Welfare Officers

Welfare Officers may be part of a Local RSA in place of or alongside Local Support Advisors. They are not formally part of the Support Services structure, being used primarily as hospital and retirement home visitors of usually older ex-service people, their widows and dependents. They can act as the eyes and ears of Local Support Advisors by finding people during their visits who need the help of the Local Support Advisor to get entitlements or further support.

The Role of a Local Support Advisor (LSA)

Support Services is focused on providing support to veterans and their families. The Local Support Advisors play a critical role in living our support motto "People Helping People". As part of being a Local Support Advisor, you will:

- ☑ Advise people about services and entitlements they may be eligible for.
- ☑ Assist with the filing out of application forms and gathering supporting evidence to do with assistance, funding and government entitlements
- ☑ Assess the support needs of veterans, ex-service people, and their families
- ☑ Liaise with other support and welfare agencies to deliver support to a client, such as WINZ, local GPs, lawn services, etc.
- ☑ Advocate for veterans, ex-service and currently serving people and their families
- ☑ Keep secure records relevant to the role, including individual activity sheets
- ☑ Report on Support Services activities to your local RSA and DSM/DSA.

Where to get advice in the Support Advisor role

Advice will come from your District Support Manager/District Support Advisor in terms of your role and the support to service and ex-service people - they are experienced and can offer advice and solutions to any questions. Reference material is also available in basecamp.

To get to basecamp the website is: www.rsa.org.nz/Basecamp. It requires a logon and password to access it.

An Overview of Support

RSA offers assistance to the service and ex-service community in a number of ways, with membership of an RSA club or association **not** necessary to access our advice and services.

Advice and advocacy

Support Advisors assist service and ex-service people maintain



their physical and mental performance and resilience, to enhance their quality of life by advocating on their behalf with government agencies and NGO health providers and facilitators.

Veterans' entitlements

Service and ex-service people may be entitled to pensions, entitlements and allowances from the New Zealand Government. As Support Advisors, we offer help at every stage of an application process to ensure that people receive the entitlements for which they, or their dependents, are eligible.

Veterans Support Act 2014 (VSA14)

The main Act that pensions, entitlements, and allowances is governed by is the Veterans Support Act 2014 (VSA14). The VSA14 is further divided into scheme 1 and scheme 2, with scheme one dealing with veterans before 1 April 1974 (including all Vietnam Veterans) and scheme two after that date. The main differences between the schemes is the depth of entitlements available and that scheme two can involve both ACC and VANZ. Scheme two personnel with qualifying operational service may also access VANZ assistance. A working knowledge of the Act is needed to work effectively as a Support Advisor.

Financial Support

Our Support Services aim to ensure that no ex-serviceperson suffers undue hardship. The Poppy Trust funds collected on Poppy Appeal week alleviate financial, medical and educational hardship for service, ex-service and their dependents.



Explaining your role

When building rapport with people or explaining your role as a Support Advisor you can talk about:

- the RSA is all about – “People helping people”
- how long you’ve been involved in the RSA, and what got you into it in the first place
- how, as an RSA Support Advisor, you are part of a greater network of welfare support (at local, district and national level)
- the help you can offer them in terms of accessing information about pensions and other allowances and help with applying for these, as well as practical help with day-to-day things like transport to medical appointments, and advocating for people with other organisations and agencies when necessary
- that all conversations and information shared with you is treated with utmost confidentiality
- that you operate within RNZRSA’s Code of Ethics and Privacy Act.
- that they have certain rights under the Health and Disability Service Consumers’ Code of Rights, and what these are
- that if they ever have any concerns or issues, RNZRSA has a complaints process that will make sure their concerns are heard and taken seriously.

Handling a client's complaint

Try and resolve the complaint yourself first – listen to what the person has to say, explore with them what they would like to see done, and see if you can find a satisfactory solution. If you can't find a solution, escalate the issue up to your DSM.

Commonwealth and allied service and ex-service personnel

Ex-serving members of commonwealth and allied countries are entitled to support from the RSA. They should be referred on to their appropriate veteran association or government agency depending if they need advocacy support or government services. Most western countries have a Ministry of Veterans Affairs equivalent which can be found online. The Royal Commonwealth Ex-services League (RCEL) is also available to help those who have served in the commonwealth forces, and is linked to other UK based charities to help former British service people in need in New Zealand. If you are unsure about Ex-serving members of commonwealth and allied countries entitlements or eligibility contact your DSA if you need help in determining what is required when dealing with commonwealth or allied ex-service personnel.

Recording Individual Activity

Recording individual activity is a means of quantifying all the work that goes into being a Support Advisor. Filling out the activity and claiming for expenses shows the time that Support Advisors dedicate to their role, distances travelled to meet clients or stakeholders, and the type of good works support advisors do. The records of activity are retained at the local level, which acts as a summary of the Support provided. This is changing to an online JotForm. Support Advisors work interactions will be recorded and sent via JotForm to RNZRSA Support Services to add to the national database. The DSM has access to this information also.

The activity data is a means of showing the relevancy of the RSA and gives recognition to the amount of effort that our volunteers commit to being support advisors. The national database combines the activity information of all support advisors and can calculate the data into a dollar value, showing the work and time that support advisors put into their role to the RSA Board, the Presidents forum, VANZ, NZDF and to the Minister of Veteran Affairs. This recognition of relevancy is reflected in the government grant, which in turn helps the RSA develop and maintain a professional support function to returned and service people and their families. The data also informs where future development or recognition is needed. For example, some districts have a wide geographical area that is reflected in the data the Support Advisors submit for how far they have to travel between events or clients. This may necessitate a need to in the future to look at the structure or resources for that district.

Veteran Support Act 2014 Schemes

The reason this is captured is to understand the different clients in very broad terms that we engage with when dealing with ex-service or service members. This is to understand how many older veterans (scheme 1) who are seen as our traditional clients and decreasing in number versus the younger generation (scheme 2) who are increasing in number and are the heirs to the RSA legacy. This crudely measures how relevant we are to our younger veteran cohort, and if our message is getting out to the new generation of service people. This is

important because if we are not engaging with the new generation it raises questions as to our approach to modern service people, our messaging and ultimately the existence of the RSA. So when recording an activity involving a Vietnam or earlier conflict veteran or service person a 1 is put into the column to show a scheme 1 who is pre April 1974 service. A 2 is for scheme 2 for veterans or service people whose service starts is after April 1974. If you are dealing with someone who hasn't served (for example family member of a veteran) or an organisation then just put N/A for not applicable.

Initial Referral

The initial referral is used to gauge again how relevant are we in getting our message out there to the ex-service community, both young and old, as well as other government agencies in seeking or referring clients to our services. For example, if it is mostly RSA initiated then it can be seen as us being pro-active in identifying and helping people or organisations, but may indicate that people are not self-referring or other NGOs or agencies are the first go to for people and not the RSA. This raises questions of our relevancy and how we can get the RSA out into the wider community.

Overall recording activity is important as it gives an understanding of the support needs and environment we face. It informs government about the relevancy of the RSA organisation and internal strategies as to how we engage with the veteran community. It behooves all support advisors to make sure that their activity is recorded and sent on to be collated and added to the national database, as it effects the future of the RSA and veteran community.

Stakeholder Agencies

Acting as Advocate for a client

As part of the role you may need to act as an advocate or liaison for your client with an agency. Some basics you should be aware of in this role is:

- Listen carefully to what they are telling you – find out what has happened, which agency is involved and what the client has already done.
- Check for a specific complaints process of the relevant agency.
- In reference to health and disability there is a Nationwide Health & Disability Advocacy Service, which can be contacted on 0800 555 050.
- If appropriate, and the client gives permission, make direct contact with the relevant agency and initiate the conversation or complaints process on their behalf. Often it's a case of getting the right person on the phone and discussing the situation to get a full understanding of both sides of the issue.
- Keep in touch with them regularly if the resolution process is a lengthy one – they are likely to need (and appreciate) your ongoing support.

When helping a client access services

- Do not to leap straight in - Build rapport. Take your time to earn the persons trust and understand the issue and what they want to happen.
- Ensure the relevant agency/ organisation has full information so it can do a proper and full assessment of someone's entitlements.
- Agencies and organisations need to have the correct information for the application to be done accurately.
- The application forms and statutory declarations are legal documents. You sign them to confirm the information is full, accurate and truthful.
- Entitlements can be revoked if they are based on incomplete, inaccurate or untruthful information.

Supporting Agencies

A Support Advisor needs to be familiar with other relevant support agencies, and refer veterans, ex-service people and their families to those services as appropriate. Below are the main ones that the Support Services engage with.



Agency name	Veterans' Affairs New Zealand (VANZ) Te Tira Ahu Ika A Whiro
Key purpose	<p>VANZ is an operational unit within the New Zealand Defence Force. VANZ is headed by a General Manager, a statutory position responsible for the administration of the Veterans Support Act 2014.</p> <p>The work of VANZ covers four main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of policy advice on, and administration of, a wide range of issues relating to veterans' entitlements, care and recognition (including a case management service) • The coordination of commemorative activities • The management of the government's relationship with veterans and their representative organisations • The provision of ex-service memorials and maintenance of 183 Services Cemeteries throughout New Zealand. <p>Note: Scheme 1 Veterans and qualifying Scheme 2 Veterans come under VANZ</p>
Physical contact details	<p>Veterans' Affairs</p> <p>PO Box 5146</p> <p>Wellington 6140</p>
Phone	0800 483 8372 (0800 4 VETERAN)
Fax	N/A
Email	veterans@nzdf.mil.nz
Website	www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz



Agency name	Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) - Te Kaporeihana Āwhina Hunga Whara
Key purpose	Is responsible for administering the country's universal no-fault accidental injury scheme. The scheme provides financial compensation and support to citizens, residents, and temporary visitors who have suffered personal injuries. Note: Scheme 2 Service and ex-service people come under ACC.
Physical contact details	ACC PO Box 242 Wellington 6140
Phone	0800 101 966 (Claims) 0800 222 070 (Providers) 04 816 7400 (General enquires)
Email	information@acc.govt.nz
Website	http://www.acc.co.nz



Agency name	Veteran's Pension Centre, Work and Income, Ministry of Social Development – Te Hiranga Tangata
Key purpose	Administration of the Veteran's Pension, and any associated extra help such as Disability Allowance and Accommodation Supplement. Note: Work and Income NZ also administers requests for Community Services Cards, High Health User Cards, and SuperGold Cards.
Physical contact details	Veteran's Pension Centre PO Box 5515, Lambton Quay Wellington 6145
Phone	0800 650 656
Fax	0800 999 996
Email	veteranspension@msd.govt.nz
Website	https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/veterans-pension.html



Agency name	Kāinga Ora (Homes and Communities)
Key purpose	<p>Kāinga Ora is the new name for Housing New Zealand. It works with government, charitable and private sector organisations providing social housing and housing support throughout New Zealand.</p> <p>Basically, they provide subsidised rental homes to people who have no other housing options.</p>
Physical contact details	<i>Look online for your local branch and write them in here</i>
Phone	0800 801 601
Fax	0800 201 202
Email	enquiries1@kaingaora.govt.nz
Website	https://kaingaora.govt.nz/



Agency name	Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
Key purpose	Providing knowledge and information about people's rights and obligations in New Zealand.
Physical contact details	<i>Look online for your local CAB details and write them in here</i>
Phone	0800 367 222
Fax	<i>Look online for your local CAB details and write them in here</i>
Email	<i>Look online for your local CAB details and write them in here</i>
Website	www.cab.org.nz



Te Ope Whakaora

Agency name	The Salvation Army – Te Ope Whakaora
Key purpose	<p>Provides accommodation and care for senior people in the community, through their residential care chaplaincy, independent living units and community based care.</p> <p>The Salvation Army runs a Friendship Programme, offering companionship, and practical support such as food, clothing and budgeting advice.</p> <p>They also provide specialist support around addiction treatment.</p>
Physical contact details	<p>Territorial Headquarters</p> <p>PO Box 6015, Marion Square</p> <p>Wellington 6141</p>
Phone	(04) 384 5649
Fax	(04) 802 6259
Email	web.master@salvationarmy.org.nz
Website	www.salvationarmy.org.nz



Serving the needs of older people

Agency name	<p>Age Concern</p> <p>He Manaakitanga Kaumātua Aotearoa</p>
Key purpose	To serve the needs of older people by offering nationally contracted services, education, resources and to advocate nationally and internationally on policy and issues relevant to older people and ageing.
Postal Address	PO Box 10-688, Wellington 6143
Phone	0800 652 105
Fax	(04) 801 9336
Email	national.office@ageconcern.org.nz
Website	www.ageconcern.org.nz



Agency name	Mental Health Crisis Team (CATT)
Key purpose	<p>A crisis assessment and treatment team (CATT) provides immediate help during a mental health crisis.</p> <p>CATT responds to urgent requests to help people in mental health crisis 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A mental health crisis can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a psychotic episode • self-harm • feeling suicidal, and • feeling out of control. <p>If a client is not in Crisis but need to talk to a trained counsellor: Free call or text 1737 any time</p>
Physical contact details	Various regional DHB locations (see Website)
Phone	111 or by DHB (see Website). Healthline 0800 611 116 connects to the CATT Team
Website	http://www.health.govt.nz/your-health/services-and-support/health-care-services/mental-health-services/crisis-assessment-teams



Agency name	No Duff
Key purpose	Provide immediate support to veterans in need. To work with partner agencies to provide longer term care if required.
Physical contact details	They have various volunteers throughout New Zealand and overseas.
Phone	022 307 1557
Facebook	Facebook.com/No-Duff-NZ-Veteran-support-NGO
Email	Noduff.ngo@gmail.com
Website	https://www.noduff.org/

Conducting yourself ethically

As an RSA Support Advisor, you have a responsibility to maintain a high standard of ethics in order to:

- Safeguard your own integrity
- Protect the interests of veterans, ex-service people and their families.

The guiding document for support services business practices is the RNZRSA Code of Ethics.

There is a copy of this document in the appendices of this booklet.

Support Advisors need to read, understand and sign off on the code of ethics and send the signed original to their District Support Manager to sign off. The DSM will send a copy of the completed signed document to RNZRSA Support Services to register them on the Support Advisor Register as having completed it.



The reputation of Support Services and individual Support Advisors relies on the perception of people who have interacted with them. An ethically and diligent approach to the role of support ensures the good reputation of the RSA endures, guaranteeing the future support of service, ex-service and their families.

Ensuring your personnel integrity

- All support advisors are police vetted to ensure that they have nothing adverse or criminal in their background that would be a risk to clients. Police vetting forms can be found at <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/businesses-and-organisations/vetting/forms-and-guides>
- Consult original sources of information before giving it out to clients – to make sure it is current and complete.

- Read emails and material sent by the DSM and National Support Services to make sure you have situational awareness of higher level direction, policy and intent.
- Check VANZ, ACC and Work and Income NZ websites regularly in terms of changes that may affect advice for clients.
- Don't quote from memory, always check information, Acts, Regulations and policies.
- When in doubt explain to your client that you'll need to find out or talk with someone else to get that answer, and tell them when you're likely to be able to get back to them with more information. Talk with your DSM to get help with the area you're unsure about.

When agreeing on action or advocating

- Keep a record of the discussion – date, who was present, what was agreed. If it's not possible to write these things down during the conversation, make sure you record them as soon after as possible, while events are fresh in your mind – the key thing is to keep an accurate record so if there's any disagreement afterwards you have something concrete to go back to.
- If possible, get confirmation from the relevant person or a witness that your record of events is true and accurate.
- If you're not dealing with instructions from the person directly, always check that whoever is giving the instructions has the authority to do so, ie. have they got an Medical or Financial Power of Attorney – you should sight and take a copy of this.

Processing or filling out applications

- Keep a separate file for each application.
- Make a checklist of documentation that needs to go with each different application, and check things off as you are about to send them. **Note:** some applications come with such a checklist as part of their instructions for completion.
- Keep copies of all documents sent with an application, in case something gets mislaid.

When acting in the official capacity of a Support Advisor

- Introduce yourself and explain the capacity you're working in for the RSA
- Dress tidily and appropriately for the situation
- Use language appropriate for the people you're communicating with
- Try to find some common ground.
- "Sell" yourself, then "sell" the organisation (RSA) and then "sell" the service.

To be an effective Support Advisor

- To know your local veterans, ex-service people and their families and understand their needs, concerns, and experiences
- Communicate openly and honestly with Veterans' Affairs New Zealand, your DSM and other NGOs and agencies (remember an individual's right to privacy however)
- Comply promptly with official requests for information by clients that involves their private information as they have a right to know and see all information held on them by a third party (based on expressed consent)
- Identify and encourage your local RSAs in doing support initiatives such as home and hospital visits
- Keep accurate records of support activities in your local RSA, providing reports as necessary, so that as an organisation we have a sound picture of what's happening and to enhance the professionalism of the RSA movement
- Be proactive regarding support issues – where you see something within RSA that could be changed to help us do things better, share your ideas with your DSM.

The Privacy Act Principles

The Privacy act governs the use, dissemination and holding of your client's personnel information, which you will collect as part of your role as a support advisor. Below is the crux of each of the principles within the act.⁴

- **Principle 1: Purpose of collection of personal information.** An agency may only collect personal information where it is needed to perform a function or activity of the agency, i.e. to provide support to our clients.
- **Principle 2: Source of personal information.** The agency must collect the information directly from the person concerned. There are exceptions: for example, where the person agrees otherwise, or where the information is publicly available. This is where the Permission to Act form allows us to gather information from other agencies as long as it aligns with Principle 1.
- **Principle 3: Collection of information from subject.** The agency must take all reasonable efforts to ensure the person is aware that the information is being collected, what it will be used for, the recipients of the information, whether the supply of the information is voluntary or mandatory, the consequences of not providing the information and the person's rights of access to and correction of the information. For us this is explained to a client as to what we need to progress an application to a trust or to an agency like Veterans Affairs.
- **Principle 4: Manner of collection of personal information.** Personal information must not be collected in an unlawful, unfair or intrusive fashion. Support Advisors collect it from the client themselves or by agency enquiry.
- **Principle 5: Storage and security of personal information.** The agency must ensure the information is protected against loss, misuse, or unauthorised disclosure. This means hard copy files are protected under lock and key in a cabinet, files are not left unattended in shared spaces and electronic documents on computers are password protected.

⁴ From Consumer Magazine. https://www.consumer.org.nz/articles/privacy-law?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI6vf7a_W5AIV14RwCh0rIQ03EAAAYASAAEgIH3vD_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds

- **Principle 6: Access to personal information.** Where the information can be readily retrieved, the individual is entitled to confirmation of whether the information is held, and to have access to it. There are exceptions, for example, where disclosure would prevent detection of a criminal offence, or would involve a breach of someone else's privacy. For support advisors acting as an agent for the person they can apply direct to their advisor for questions on their information.
- **Principle 7: Correction of personal information.** Individuals may request correction of information held. Where this is not agreed to by the agency, the individual may request that the information is tagged with a statement that the correction was sought and was refused.
- **Principle 8: Accuracy of personal information to be checked before use.** The agency must not use the information without taking reasonable steps to ensure it is accurate, up-to-date, complete, relevant and not misleading. Be aware to ask for the most recent documents but since the majority of our information is sourced directly from the client or another agency this shouldn't be an issue.
- **Principle 9: Agency not to keep personal information for longer than necessary.** The agency must not keep the information for any longer than it is needed for the purposes for which it was collected. As a rule of thumb, based on health related support, records can be kept for up to 10 years from last health related interaction.
- **Principle 10: Limits on use of personal information.** Information collected for one purpose must not be used for any other purpose. There are exceptions: for example, where the agency reasonably believes the individual has authorised the further use, or that the information was from a publicly available publication.
- **Principle 11: Limits on disclosure of personal information.** The information must not be disclosed except in certain situations. These include where the disclosure is directly related to the purpose for which the information was collected, where the source of the information is a publicly available publication, and where the disclosure is authorised by the individual concerned. The permission to act from is authorisation from the client to be able to do this, again under the intent of Principle 1.

- **Principle 12: Unique identifiers.** An agency must not assign a unique identifier to an individual unless doing so is necessary for the agency to carry out its functions efficiently. Where doing so is necessary, agencies must not use a unique identifier that has been assigned to that individual by another agency (the only exception is for certain taxation purposes).

Confidentiality of personal and organisational information

- All Support Advisors complete the 'Privacy ABC' online learning module at <https://elearning.privacy.org.nz/> and send the certificate of completion to the DSM.
- Be aware that permission must be obtained from an individual to talk about their situation or issue to any third person or party (use the Permission to Act form – see appendices page 39)
- On having permission to disclose information about a client's issue only involve people or agencies on a need to know basis.
- Secure any hard copy documentation of an individual's private information in a locked cabinet when they are not in use.
- Always double-check before leaving a site (eg. a place where you have met a client) that you have all your records with you.
- Any breaches can be reported to the RSA Privacy Officer via email to privacyofficer@rsa.org.nz.

For details of the Privacy Act 1993 see;

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0028/latest/DLM296639.html>

Protecting the consumer rights

Our Code of Ethics is a key document guiding our practice as Support Advisors. But there's a piece of central legislation which also places certain expectations on all providers of welfare services – the Health and Disability Service Consumers' Code of Rights, which became law in New Zealand in 1996.

It's important you know about this Code of Rights for two reasons:

- all the veterans you are in touch with and provide support to will be users of health and/or disability services – as their advocate, it's important you can explain their rights to them, and help them make a complaint through the appropriate channel if they are worried about or unhappy with the service they have had
- you may also be a consumer of these services at some point in your life (if you haven't already been so)

While, as a Support Advisor you are not strictly speaking considered to be a 'provider' of services under the Health and Disability Commissioners Act 1994, the rights covered in this Code are very much in line with RNZRSA's view of how we should be acting, as is expressed in our own Code of Ethics.

The Health and Disability Service Consumers' Code of Rights

The Health and Disability Service Consumers' Code of Rights guarantees certain things to users of all health and disability services, whether they pay for those services or not. They also provide a free, independent and confidential service to help people resolve issues with or complaints about a health and disability service provider, called the Nationwide Health & Disability Advocacy Service.

An excellent brochure outlining the Health and Disability Service Consumers' Code of Rights is available from National Health & Disability Advocacy Services website:
<https://www.hdc.org.nz/your-rights/the-code-and-your-rights/>

Being culturally responsive

The way RSA works with veterans should be culturally responsive to all parties.

Military Culture

The vast majority of clients will be serving or ex-serving military personnel or their spouses, so an understanding of military culture is essential. This culture incorporates unity, a sense of purpose and direction, and values that drives service people to complete tasks towards a common goal.

Being task orientated means service people tend to be direct, blunt and to the point in their communications. They appreciate and trust those that respond in the same manner and who talk in terms of tangible and achievable objectives and goals.

Service people value their self-reliance, being reluctant to come across as needing help, and have a tendency to down play injuries or issues. To fully engage they need to trust the person they are talking to, either by mutual experience (talking with another ex-service person) or by having confidence in the person they are talking to.

Having the spouse present may be of advantage as they can clarify issues affecting the client, where the client is reluctant or minimizes issues or injuries.

The Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The articles of the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi place duties on the Crown and its agencies in relation to Māori. While the RSA, as a Non-Governmental Organisation, does not have such duties and responsibilities to the Treaty, we still need to conduct our business by:

- ☑ forming partnerships with Māori
- ☑ recognising and providing for Māori interests
- ☑ being responsive to Māori needs
- ☑ ensuring equality of opportunity for Māori.

Check out a simple summary of the Treaty of Waitangi/ Te Tiriti o Waitangi:
www.nzhistory.net.nz/politics/treaty/the-treaty-in-brief

Other ethnic groups

When working with veterans from Pacific Island cultures and other ethnic groups it is important to recognise and give appropriate priority to their interests, and be responsive to their needs and concerns by establishing interactive and collaborative relationships with them. In some cases, this may involve establishing relationships with key people from within the veteran's community.

Cultural identification

The culture with which a veteran identifies, and the extent to which a veteran is familiar with (or disconnected from) their culture is important to ensure that interviews are conducted in a culturally appropriate manner to reduce the risk of alienating a veteran by matching the veteran's level of cultural awareness and understanding.

Factors to be aware of

Cultural awareness should aim for clear outcomes. Be aware of, and sensitive to, the following areas:

- Meeting, greeting and developing a rapport with veterans
- Using sensitive ways to ask veterans about their ethnicity and cultural identity
- Having an awareness of your own skill level (and limits) in working with veterans across cultures
- Finding ways to identify and establish close relationships with key people in the local community who are Māori, Pasifika people, and from other ethnic groups, so you can ask for advice as needed.

How to be culturally responsive

- Don't make assumptions – just because I know something about the customs and practices that a particular cultural group might place importance on, every person is an individual.

- Acknowledge the beliefs and practices of people who differ from me.
- Appreciate what's important to me. Explore with others what is important to them. These may be different, but that doesn't mean I can't provide support to those people – I just need to keep an open mind and be flexible in my approach to this support work.
- Acknowledge the power relationship between me (as the provider of a service, a representative of the RSA, and a holder of relevant information) and the clients who I am supporting.
- You could approach a local elder/kuia/kaumata, local Māori wardens, or the local Māori Women's League and ask them for advice on the best way to make connections with the local iwi and hapū.
- Keep an eye/ear out for news and events relating to different cultural groups within your community – head along and talk to people and make connections.

Requests for service records and medals

While it's not related directly to support services, you will find you often get requests from veterans or their families for information on how they can get service records and/or medals.

Requesting NZDF service records

The NZDF Archives Section of the New Zealand Defence Force is located at Trentham Camp, Upper Hutt. The Archives Section maintains and holds personal files for discharged Navy, Army and Air Force personnel who have served with the New Zealand Armed Forces since 1921 to the present day.

NZDF Archives

Email: personnel.archives@nzdf.mil.nz

Personnel Enquiries

Tel: (04) 527 5280

Trentham Military Camp

Fax: (04) 527 5275

Private Bag 905

Upper Hutt 5140

New Zealand

The three pieces of legislation that govern access to personnel information held by NZDF Archives are:

- The Official Information Act 1982
- The Privacy Act 1993
- The Health Information Privacy Code 1994

Go to the homepage of the New Zealand Defence Force website: www.nzdf.mil.nz

Click on the link to 'Personnel records' in the top navigation bar.

Then click the link to 'NZDF Archives' in the left hand navigation bar.

Almost all of the files of those who served in the South African War and the First World War have been transferred to Archives New Zealand in Wellington. Many of these files have been digitised and are easily available as downloads from the

Archives New Zealand website. It's possible to make those veterans' records publicly available in this way, as none of them are still alive.

Go to the Archives New Zealand website for more information about these files:

www.archway.archives.govt.nz

Type the required name into the search box and click the search button.

Information on Medals

You're not expected to know everything about medals, but it's helpful to know what sort of information is available on the NZDF medals website, so you can direct veterans and their families to it as needed. Other useful information on this website you may want to access or refer people to includes:

- ☒ A guide to the correct order of wear for medals in New Zealand
- ☒ Information about the wearing of medals by family members and civilians
- ☒ How to apply for miniatures, and the rules around these
- ☒ How to nominate others for medals
- ☒ A full index of information about and images of New Zealand medals and ribbons.

Who awards and distributes medals?

The award and distribution of medals is the responsibility of the New Zealand Defence Force. Veterans who have not claimed their medals, or who have lost or had their medals stolen, need to apply to the New Zealand Defence Force. Families can also make applications for medals awarded to a deceased family member who was a veteran.

How are medals applied for?

Medals can be applied from the NZDF medals site via an application form

Take a look at the medals section of the New Zealand Defence Force website:

<http://medals.nzdf.mil.nz/info/forms.html#forms>



What about medals for service people from overseas?

As well as requests from New Zealand veterans and ex-service people or their families for information about medals, you may also get requests from people who served in overseas forces (especially British or Australian forces).

In most cases, because of time zone differences, it's best to communicate with overseas defence force contacts via email or fax. Provide the contact detail of the relevant force to the person making the enquiry and if they ask you to act on their behalf, then by all means make the initial contact yourself to see what needs to be done from there.

You can find:

- UK medals information on the Veterans UK website:
www.veterans-uk.info/recordsmedalsbadges.htm
- Australian medals information on the Australian Department of Defence website:
www.defence.gov.au/medals/



Appendices



Role Description – RSA Support Advisor

Title	Local Support Adviser (DSA)
Direct Report to	District Support Advisor (DSA)
Secondary Reporting lines	District Support Manager (DSM)
Purpose of Position	To deliver support services to clients within their area. The LSA will provide direct support to clients; advise local RSA executive, and welfare officers on support best practice; and collaborate with local stakeholders in advocacy and delivering support. Support is one of the strategic priorities of the RSA to remember and care for all those impacted by military service for New Zealand.
Functional Relationships	<p><u>Internal:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Support Advisers (DSA)/ Welfare officers • Local RSA President • Local Association Poppy Trust and other Welfare Funds • District Support Manager (DSM) <p><u>External:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local NZDF units • Local Government Agencies (e.g. VA, MSD, DHB, ACC etc) • Local Non-Governmental Organisations and Charities (e.g. No Duff, GP Clinics, Salvation Army etc.)
Responsibilities and Duties	<p>Manage cases involving welfare, benefits and entitlements for serving and ex-service members of the NZDF and their families they are eligible for by advising, advocating and facilitating the delivery of support to them via RSA or third party means.</p> <p>Manage and co-ordinate the delivery of support in partnership with local NGOs and government agencies and other organisations to resolve complex cases and acute issues.</p> <p>Advise and report to the DSA on local level support situations, issues and developments that come to their attention to keep them situationally aware.</p> <p>Maintain and keep detailed documentation relevant to the role, including case files, individual activity sheets and claim forms to build knowledge and capacity.</p> <p>Network and foster relationships with service providers, and third party stakeholders to help facilitate support and increase the awareness and understanding of the RSA role and support among the community.</p>

	<p>Maintain an individual's confidentiality and abide by the RSA 'Code of Ethics'. Fulfil all legal obligations relative to premises, property, equipment inventories and vehicles, and ensure all security, health and safety requirements are met.</p> <p>Represent the RSA at meetings and other activities relevant to promote RSA support services and the welfare of service and ex-service personal and their families.</p> <p>Advise their local RSA executive on support matters to keep them situationally aware, legally compliant and keeping with best practice.</p>
Qualifications and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding of military service and its impacts on military personnel and their families, RSA Support Services and the general RSA is advantageous. • Understanding of mental, physical and social health effects on people and services that can help or be engaged to alleviate those effects is advantageous. • Understanding of the VSA 14, the public health system and the ACC Act and how these impact of the services provided is advantageous. • Understanding of the Privacy act and how it affects the use, storage and handling of sensitive personal and organisation information. • Flexible thinking and ability to see the 'bigger picture' to be able to influence, organise, plan and manage people, internally and externally. • Able to communication in a clear and confident way, with effective written and verbal communication skills • Ability to build and maintain rapport across a diverse range of people • Able to travel around their area, and to attend district training when required. • To be able to use Computer and cell phones confidently to communicate and report. • Current and valid full class 1 driver licence. • Clean Police Record.

Code of Ethics

RSA Support Advisors, Lay Advocates and others who assist the veteran and ex-service community have a responsibility to maintain a high standard of ethics in order to safeguard their own integrity and to protect the interests of veterans, ex-service people and their families.

In addition to complying with the Code of Conduct, RSA Support Advisors will:

- ☑ Give full, accurate and truthful information to veterans, ex-service persons and their families in relation to pensions, benefits and services.
- ☑ Act only on the veteran's, ex-service person's or dependent's instructions in relation to action to be taken in respect of an application for pensions, benefits or access to services.
- ☑ Have regard for the privacy of the veterans and ex-service persons, their families by keeping their personal information secure and not disclosing such information to others without express consent.
- ☑ Ensure that all contact with members of the veteran and ex-service communities, staff of government agencies, providers of services and the general public is conducted in a respectful and professional manner.
- ☑ Encourage veterans and ex-service persons, their families and others to give full, accurate, truthful and relevant information when applying for pensions, entitlements and support services.
- ☑ Ensure that all available relevant details and documents are submitted with applications for entitlements and services.
- ☑ Promote the interests of the veterans and ex-service communities by communicating openly and honestly with Veterans' Affairs New Zealand, and other service providers, and by complying with requests for information.
- ☑ Only undertake work to the level of their knowledge and expertise.

- ☒ Maintain and expand their knowledge base by attending training and information seminars and by seeking advice from relevant persons and organizations, for example, RSA District Support Advisor, RNZRSA National Manager Support Services, Veterans' Affairs New Zealand or Work and Income New Zealand.

By signing this document, I acknowledge that I understand the RSA code of ethics, and how it affects my role as a Support Advisor for the RSA. I will abide by this code of ethics in my position as a RSA Support Advisor in the day to day conduct of my role and agree to its statutes.

Name of RSA:

Support Advisor Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

Signature of RSA
Support Advisor:

Date:

Name of
District Support Manager:

Signature of
District Support Manager:

Date:



Permission to act on my behalf

I authorise my RSA representative to act on my behalf in the execution of their duty in support of me. I understand that my RSA representative may contact a third party on my behalf, in accordance with my instructions.

I understand and agree that my RSA representative may contact, request, receive, store, copy and verify my personal information held by a third party person, organisation or agency.

I understand that they may share my personal information with any third party person, organisation or agency in the execution of their duty to assist me, in accordance with the Privacy Act 1993.

I understand I may withdraw my permission at any time by writing to my representative.

Name of Client:	DOB:
Address of Client:	
Signature of Client:	Date:
Name of RSA Representative:	
Signature of RSA Representative:	Date:
Name of Witness:	
Signature of Witness:	Date: