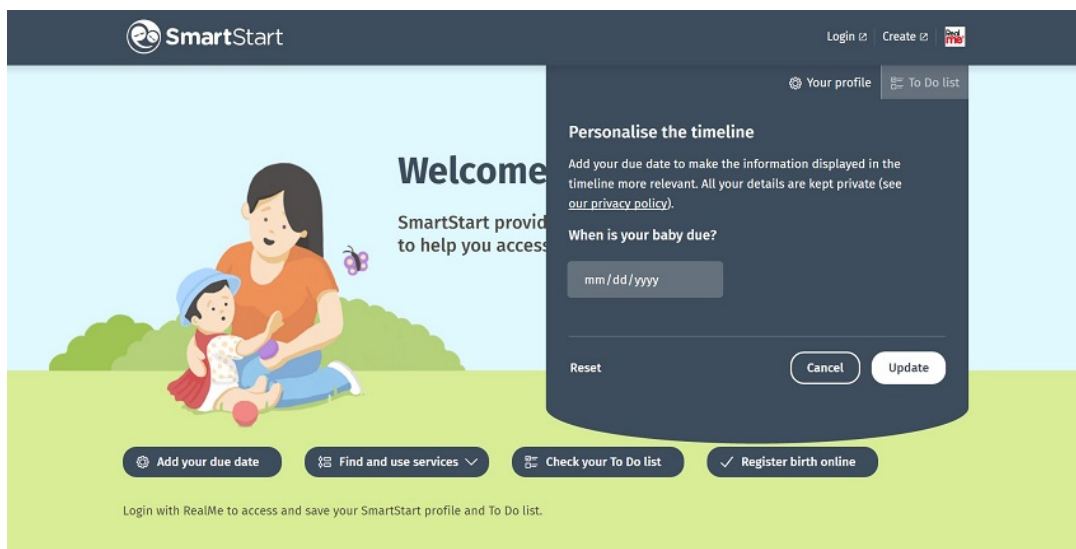


## New Zealand launches predictive service for new parents

SmartStart helps parents plan each step of pregnancy journey, including plans after birth.

New Zealand has launched a digital service for new and expectant parents this week, guiding them on what to do at each stage of their pregnancy.

The service, called SmartStart, pools all relevant government services for new and expectant parents. It informs them of the necessary transactions to do with government, helps them find their eligibility for financial assistance, and allows parents to register the birth of their child online.



For instance, at the early stage of pregnancy, citizens are guided to choose their 'lead maternity carer', who will "provide care throughout your pregnancy", the website states.

Parents with newborns can update their records with the Ministry of Social Development, enabling them to claim benefits.

The service also includes advice for coping with prenatal depression, help to find parenting classes, child immunisation services, and applications for child passport.

The government started research for SmartStart a year ago to understand how to engage its citizens better. "People liked the idea of it being based around their lives, rather than it being based around government", Colin MacDonald – New Zealand Government's Chief Information Officer – told GovInsider.

Governments are increasingly working towards delivering predictive services to citizens, anticipating their needs before they need it.

In Estonia, the government has planned for a similar service for new parents, prompting them for a name and bank account to send state benefits once their child is born. The country's elderly will also receive predictive services for pension transfers once they hit the age of 63.

*Now read: Exclusive: New Zealand's plans for digital government*

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