

pay parity The same pay for the same job across different employers/workplaces

pay relativity the relationship between pay rates for various roles/work

Gap between the average earnings of women compared with men
gender pay gap

Same pay for the same job (no differential based on gender) **equal pay**

pay equity The same pay for work of equal value

The same rights and opportunities **gender equality**

Pay and employment equity Pay, conditions, experiences in the workplace and access to jobs at all levels are not affected by gender



June 2020

Comparator interviews well underway after Covid

Interviews with participants in male-dominated or historically male-dominated occupations have been happening even during the Covid lockdown, but not without difficulty. Some had to be conducted by Zoom or similar technology.

An issue during Covid was that many of the potential male comparators are also in essential services, so they were pre-occupied with the Covid response. However, over the past month organisations have been committing to interviews and these are now underway with nine different occupational groups being used as midwifery comparators so far.

As with the data from the midwives' interviews, data from the completed comparator interviews has been collated into summary profiles which are being validated as we go.

Assessment of the work performed by the male comparators and the work performed by midwives has been scheduled to start at the end of July, by which time most of the comparator interviews will have been completed.

The work assessment involves scoring gender neutral factors such as emotional demands, interpersonal skills, services to people, and working conditions to establish the undervaluation of midwives' work as a result of gender discrimination.

We have looked for comparators in occupations that are of a reasonable size, and where we can access information about their remuneration so they are preferably unionised with a Collective Agreement. They need to have similar skills and qualifications, including entry requirements and number of years to be fully qualified.

At each step of the process we have been careful to avoid the perception of bias and role-holder advocacy. We have worked with the DHBS team to

come up with a robust assessment process based on evidence. The assessment process was approved by the Pay Equity Oversight Group, which met on 5 June and includes workplace representatives and midwifery leaders on the respective teams.

The College of Midwives has been providing valuable advice on our pay equity claim, and has supplied expert evidence the College collected for the 2015 High Court case and subsequent fair remuneration processes for LMC or community midwives.

Who are the male comparators?

We cannot say who the male comparators are, at least at this stage. This is because those in the comparator groups and their employers need to agree to participate in interviews and sharing of information. This has proven to be more difficult than anticipated in previous pay equity processes and is therefore being handled with sensitivity.

Quite apart from convincing employers to co-operate, we cannot assume that those in male-dominated occupations, who have arguably enjoyed better pay and conditions because their work was historically considered "men's work", will support those in occupations historically considered "women's work" in our quest for equity.

The final phase in the process is to negotiate and conclude the settlement of the claim. At this stage we will consider the evidence we have gathered to determine whether there is undervaluation of midwives, and whether this was due to gender discrimination. If so, new rates of pay will be negotiated and backdated to 31 December 2019.

For more information, check out:

<https://meras.midwife.org.nz/campaigns/pay-equity/>

Jill Ovens, Co-leader (Industrial)

Caroline Conroy Co-leader (Midwifery)