

In May 2017 the Ministry of Health (Ministry) and the New Zealand College of Midwives (the College) reached an agreement to settle the College's application for judicial review alleging discrimination against midwives based on gender.

As part of the agreement reached in May 2017, the Ministry and the College agreed to a process for the co-design of a new model for the funding and contracting of community Lead Maternity Carer midwives. The Ministry also agreed to prepare a bid for the 2018 Budget that reflected the findings of the Co-design report and job evaluation process.

While the Co-design process proceeded as agreed, the Ministry did not prepare a Budget bid that reflected the findings of the Co-design process. Accordingly, the Ministry acknowledges that it breached the May 2017 agreement that it had reached with the College.

Representatives of the Ministry and the College met in mediation on 14 December 2018. As a result of that mediation, the Ministry and the College have reached further agreement. Some, but not all, of the matters agreed are recorded in this statement.

The Ministry apologises to the College and its members for breaching the May 2017 Settlement Agreement. Having expressly and formally agreed to do so, the Ministry did not prepare a Budget bid reflecting Co-design. The Ministry acknowledges that its breach was through no fault of the College.

The Ministry has reaffirmed its commitment to the Co-design principles, including a Blended Payment Model for LMC midwives. The Ministry has also reiterated its support for the continuity of midwifery model of care as central to maternity services in New Zealand.

The Ministry has agreed to a process to ensure a 'fair and reasonable' service price for LMC midwives. The College and the Ministry will work on this together throughout 2019.

The Ministry and the College have agreed to work together in early 2019 on structural changes to the way LMC midwives are funded and contracted.

The Director-General of Health, Dr Ashley Bloomfield, reiterates that strengthening and stabilising maternity services is a priority for the Ministry. The Ministry and the College have renewed their commitment to work together in good faith.