



# Health

## Elective Surgery Commitment

### Proposal

National will institute an elective surgery commitment. That means that every Kiwi that needs elective surgery will have it done within four months of the decision to treat.

An elective surgery is one which is planned in advance rather than done in an emergency situation. This includes vitally important operations like hip replacements and cataract surgery. The guidelines for maximum waiting times is meant to be four months, and National will ensure this is met.

Too many Kiwis are left languishing on long waiting list for months or even years, and the Covid-19 lockdown has made the wait lists even longer. This has a serious effect on quality of life. National can do better for these people, and we will do better.

The commitment will mean that everyone that meets the clinical threshold for publicly funded elective surgery, will have that surgery funded by the Crown within the promised four months of the decision to treat.

If their local DHB cannot do it within four months, they will have to source and fund an alternative provider. Either through another DHB or a private provider.

In order to hold DHBs to account National will set clear elective surgery targets for each DHB to meet. When setting targets, we'll take into account the relative complexity of the surgeries being carried out as well as numbers of procedures. National will also ensure this is publicly reported on so that Kiwis can hold their DHBs to account.

National believes that every New Zealander deserves the best treatment from the health service. However, there are significant regional disparities in the delivery of elective surgeries.

Currently, each DHB is allowed to set its own criteria to decide which patients are eligible for elective surgeries.

National will address this and establish a common points system for elective surgeries. That way whether you live in Kaitaia, Bluff or any place in-between, your address will not determine whether your treatment.

### Details

National will institute an elective surgery commitment. That means that every Kiwi that needs elective surgery will have it done within four months of the decision to treat. This will entail:

- Ensuring everyone requiring elective surgery will have that surgery funded by the Crown within four months.
- Sooner elective surgery so that if you are promised treatment in the standard four months then you will be operated on in four months.
- If the DHB is unable to provide the treatment within four months, DHBs will be required to source another provider to meet that need. This could be either another DHB or a private provider.
- Ensure equitable access to elective surgery by replacing the post code lottery with standard treatment levels across the country.

### Q&A

#### How many people will this help?

In the year to September 2019 7,312 elective surgeries were delayed beyond the guideline four month maximum waiting time. commitment National's elective surgery commitment will ensure these people are treated in a more timely way.



### How much will this cost?

The cost is unchanged from the cost that would accrue if the surgery was done in the public system. There is an expectation that if surgery is done outside of DHBs that there will be a funding transfer at similar rates to the external provider. Under this policy there are no new costs from what the DHB would already need to budget when they made a commitment to treat in the public system.

This will provide a strong incentive for DHBs to get surgeries done within the four month time frame.

### Where will we find enough surgery capacity to get all elective surgeries done in four months?

We will find the capacity by having DHBs cooperate to help smooth out peaks and troughs in demand, and by utilising the private sector when DHBs do not have capacity.

### How can you ensure that the private sector will be able to meet the demand?

The private sector is demand-led and will ramp up its capability in response to increased demand.

### Are we changing the criteria to get elective surgery?

We are standardising the thresholds across the country. Currently there are significant regional disparities in the delivery of elective surgeries and each DHB is allowed to set its own criteria to decide which patients are eligible for elective surgeries.

We will address this and establish a common points system for elective surgeries. That way whether you live in Kaitaia, Bluff or any place in-between, your postcode will not determine whether you are treated.