

## FAQs Communication to people waiting over 4 months for surgical treatment

### Q. Why have I received this letter/ email?

A. We are sending out this letter/email to people who have been accepted onto a hospital wait list for surgical treatment who have been waiting longer than four months for that treatment. We acknowledge the frustration and anxiety waiting for treatment has on people and we want to improve our communication with you.

People who have been waiting longer than three years are being contacted through a separate initiative that is already underway.

### Q. Does this letter mean I am going to wait a lot longer?

A. No, the letter/email is to reassure you that you are still on the wait list, and we are working to schedule you based on the clinical urgency of your treatment. It is also to let you know that if your health condition has changed, and you are concerned, you should make an appointment with your general practice or health provider as you normally would. You could also contact the 0800 number on the letter you have received for further information.


### Q. Why am I waiting so long when I was told I would have surgery within four months once I was accepted onto the wait list?

- Wait times for planned care treatment are longer than we want and are due to a range of issues including workforce shortages, sickness, along with the impacts from COVID-19 when a lot of planned care treatment was unable to go ahead, and those delays have added to the wait lists.
- We are working hard to improve wait times for people. This includes focusing on treating those people who have been waiting the longest. Every person who has waited over 3 years will have their record reviewed clinically and a treatment plan confirmed by 31 May and treatment provided by 30 June.

### Q. When should I ring the 0800/contact number?

A. The 0800 number takes you to a local booking team or a national call centre team (Whakarongorau Aotearoa) and a person will be able to update your address changes or any other information that is important to help us contact you in the future. Only people who have received the letter should call the national 0800 number.

### Q. Will my updated details go back to the local hospital or my general practice if I contact the national 0800 number?



A. Yes, if you update your details through the national 0800 number that information is shared electronically back to your local hospital team and your general practice or health provider.

**Q. I understand work is happening but when will people and staff see a difference?**

A. Implementing improvements will take time but we are working hard across the country to reduce waiting times.

**Q. Why is it taking so long to see progress?**

Wait times were already long before the pandemic but were impacted further by COVID-19. Staff sickness and international workforce shortages have added to the difficulty in reducing wait times.

**Q Is this just happening in New Zealand?**

No. These challenges are not unique to New Zealand, with comparable countries experiencing similar pressures.