

Northern Ireland surgeon to lead waiting list drive

Date published: 28 July 2025

Health Minister Mike Nesbitt has announced that Professor Mark Taylor will be Northern Ireland's first Regional Clinical Director for Elective Care.



Pictured (L-R) Professor Mark Taylor and Health Minister Mike Nesbitt

Professor Taylor is a senior Northern Ireland surgeon and has held a number of key clinical leadership roles.

He will have a central role in overseeing, leading and supporting the Department of Health's drive to reduce waiting lists.

Reflecting a Programme for Government priority, up to £215m has been earmarked for elective care initiatives in this current financial year.

The Health Minister commented: "I am delighted that Mark has agreed to take on this role with my Department and I am looking forward to working closely with him.

"There are many vital facets to the ongoing drive for elective care recovery in Northern Ireland – including reform, investment, improved productivity and reducing clinical variance. The overriding goal, of course, has to be to get many more people off waiting lists."

Professor Taylor commented: “I am honoured to be chosen by the Minister for this vitally important post.

“Our hospital waiting lists are nothing short of a national shame and I intend to work relentlessly with Department and HSC colleagues to help turn things around.

“This is a long-term challenge – the Minister has spoken previously about being at the foothills of it. I will be devoting all my energies to it and I know colleagues will be doing the same.”

The Regional Clinical Director for Elective Care will provide overarching specialist clinical leadership and advice to the Minister and Department. This will include leadership and advice on the transformation of services for patients and on ensuring collaboration and dissemination of best practice.

In May, the Department published an Elective Care Implementation and Funding Plan setting out a range of initiatives to tackle hospital waiting lists. <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/elective-care-framework-restart-recovery-and-redesign>(external link opens in a new window / tab)

The earmarked funding of up to £215m for 2025-26 covers three categories: £85m for red flag and time critical care; £80m for building up capacity to address the long-standing mismatch with demand; and up to £50m to start tackling the backlog in care.

Professor Taylor is a Consultant HPB (Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary) surgeon at the Mater Hospital in Belfast and a Visiting Professor at Ulster University. He is the Past President of GBI Hepato-pancreatobiliary Association (GBIHPBA); Past President of the Pancreatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (PSGBI); Past Lead for Education, Research and Training for the Association of Upper Gastro- Intestinal Surgeons (AUGIS); and is on the Medical Advisory Board of Bowel Cancer UK.

He was a member of the Bengoa panel – the five-person panel headed by Professor Rafael Bengoa which produced the 2016 health reform report Systems, Not Structures.