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Date: 27 May 2015

Dear Ms Ruane

In his response to AQO 7965/11-15 regarding sleep clinics, my predecessor undertook to write to you to provide further detail on this service including the link to Edinburgh and the 555 patients waiting for a diagnostic sleep study.

The Health and Social Care Board has advised that the arrangement with Edinburgh did not proceed due to staffing difficulties within that service. As a result, Belfast Health and Social Care (HSC) Trust reviewed the position and secured a locum Respiratory Clinical Physiologist to carry out the testing and reporting of limited polysomnography.

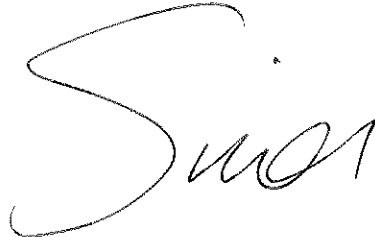
A breakdown of waiting times by HSC Trust at February 2015 is shown in the following table:

Respiratory Physiology : Sleep Studies	0-3 Weeks (0-21 days)	>3 to 6 weeks (22 - 42 days)	>6 to 9 weeks (43 - 63 days)	> 9 to 13 weeks (64 - 91 days)	> 13 to 21 weeks (92 - 147 days)	>21 to 26 weeks (148 - 182 days)	>26 (183 days and over)	Total waiters	Waits > 9 weeks
Belfast HSC Trust	70	66	21	68	59	0	0	284	127
Northern HSC Trust	36	18	1	0	0	0	0	55	0
South Eastern HSC Trust	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	1
Southern HSC Trust	61	60	9	0	0	0	0	130	0
Western HSC Trust	59	21	3	0	0	0	0	83	0
Total	227	167	35	69	59	0	0	555	128

Patients are waiting for a range of tests, including overnight oximetry and limited sleep studies that reflect the differing levels of complexity and stages of diagnosis that may be required along the patient pathway. Work is underway to develop

information systems that will capture the whole patient journey across the obstructive sleep apnoea pathway.

I have sent a copy of this letter to Mitchell McLaughlin MLA, Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, and should be grateful if his office would place a copy in the Assembly's Library for the information of Members.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Hamilton', written in a cursive style.

Simon Hamilton MLA
Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety