

FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH



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Our Ref: CORR-1904-2021

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Dear *Eddie/Peter,*

Thank you for your letter of 27 May 2021 and reminder dated 16 June 2021 in which you raise concerns regarding the capacity of staff in both the Chief Dental Officers office and the Department of Health. I apologise for the delay in replying to you.

You will be aware that my Department has recently appointed Ms Caroline Lappin to the post of Chief Dental Officer. I am confident that this substantive appointment, effective from 8 November 2021 will provide continuity for oral and dental matters within the Department. I would echo your comments and wish to put on record my thanks to Michael Donaldson for providing expert advice and leadership in the position of acting Chief Dental Officer.

I am aware of very good working relationships between the Chief Dental Officers across the UK, and this helps to ensure that the CDO in Northern Ireland is kept up to date with the most pressing issues across the UK.

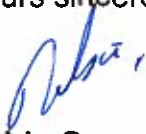
The Chief Dental Officer works closely with colleagues in General Dental and Ophthalmic Services (GDOS) within General Healthcare Policy. I am pleased to report that there will be additional staff members within GDOS in the coming weeks and they will provide additional support, at this time, to the office of the Chief Dental Officer.

As the new CDO settles into their role, I expect that a business case for additional staffing will be developed.

On 31st March 2022, the Health and Social Care Board in Northern Ireland will be dissolved, and the Dental staff will be transferred to the Business Services Organisation. The closure of the HSCB is an important first step in the wider transformation journey. Former HSCB staff will be fully supported as they transition to the new model and the new group which will be created within the departmental structure.

I trust you find this response helpful.

Yours sincerely



Robin Swann
Minister of Health