

## **Question:**

I am requesting records of all correspondence, notes of meetings, phone calls etc which informed the following statements by Minister Mike Nesbitt MLA.

1. Debate in the Assembly on 22 September 2025 when the Minister said: “Mr McGuigan asked a question: the answer that I have is it would take the Republic longer to increase its CAR-T cell capacity than it would take us to develop and replace Ward 10 north at Belfast City Hospital .”

2. Joint Committee on The Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement on 12 December 2025 when the Minister said: “ I have spoken about this with officials in the HSE- it does not have the capacity. It does not have any further capacity to deal with people from Northern Ireland. If you start today, we will get there quicker with the new haematology ward than you will down here. “

3. Ministerial Statement: North:South Council on Health and Food Safety on 27 January 2026 :

“Their current capacity is maxed out from dealing with their own patients in the jurisdiction. Even if their capacity were to expand, we would get there with our new ward before they would be able to service us.”

And on the same day he again said ; “ — and increasing capacity there to service us will take longer than it will take us to open our new haematology ward and deliver CAR-T in Belfast , according to our current schedule.”

There is no record of any discussion about the timescale for increasing CAR-T capacity in the Republic of Ireland in the information which was released to me earlier.

There also is no records of any bilateral meetings , phone calls or correspondence between the respective Ministers of Health , based in Belfast and Dublin.

I am requesting those records to be sent to me now.

## **Response:**

Please find attached response to your request below made under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) on 10 March 2026.

Please refer to the attached index of documents and letter of response for further information, in addition to the released documents themselves.

I would be grateful if you would please confirm receipt of this email.

\*For a copy of the attachments please contact [Elective.Care@health-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Elective.Care@health-ni.gov.uk)

<b>INDEX OF PAPERS FOR FOI REQUEST DOH/2026-0054 NO</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>DATE RELEASED</b>	<b>DECISION RELEASE/ WITHHOLD</b>
1	DOH/2026-0054-001 - Official Lines Update - COR-1214-2025- Car-T Emails sent 26 August 2025 and 28 August 2025	APRIL 2026	Released with redactions – s40(2)
2	DOH/2026-0054-002 - COR-1214-2025 - Draft Response to NMDDC	APRIL 2026	Released with redactions – s40(2)
3	DOH/2026-0054-003 - Ministerial Briefing for CAR T Motion	APRIL 2026	Released with redactions – out of scope of request and s40(2)
4	DOH/2026-0054-004 - Annex A Minister's Draft Speech for CAR T motion	APRIL 2026	Released in full – no redactions
5	DOH/2026-0054-005 - Cancer Input provided to NSMC for Meeting December 2025	APRIL 2026	Released with redactions – out of scope of request
6	DOH/2026-0054-006 - Cancer Input provided to NSMC for Health and Food Safety Meeting January 2026	APRIL 2026	Released with redactions – out of scope of request

There is no further information on these asks held by the Department of Health.

Date response issued:  
9 April 2026 (further response issued 20 May 2026)  
Reference Number: DOH/2026-0054