



Children's Health Ireland

Sláinte Leanaí Éireann (SLÉ), Herberton, Siúlán San Séamas, Rialto, D08 HP97, Éire
Children's Health Ireland (CHI), Herberton, St James's Walk, Rialto, D08 HP97, Ireland

9th December 2020

Deputy Alan Dillon,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 40531/20

"To ask the Minister for Health his plans to alleviate the waiting list of 4 to 8 months for urgent paediatric scans; and if he will make a statement on the matter".

Dear Deputy Dillon,

I refer to your parliamentary question above to which I have been asked to provide a response.

Children's Health Ireland (CHI) sincerely regret that children and their families are experiencing long waiting times for their appointments. We recognise that too many are waiting too long for their appointments and we are making every effort to reducing these waiting times.

The Radiology Departments in Crumlin, Tallaght and Temple Street in Children's Health Ireland (CHI) have lengthy waiting times for access to scans, in particular the waiting list for MRI under General Anaesthetic (GA).

MRI imaging is a major diagnostic and therapeutic service and relied on more and more within the paediatric specialities, such as, cardiology, oncology, neurology, rheumatology, orthopaedics and spinal surgery. Uniquely to Paediatrics, younger children and children up to 18 years old with special needs are unable to remain still in a MRI for the lengthy periods required to complete the scan, meaning they have to receive a General Anaesthetic (GA) by a Paediatric Anaesthetist. This means these patients have to be observed through a recovery period post the scan. Paediatric MRI services, therefore, also need to have a recovery facility with beds or access to recovery beds in the Theatre Suite. This lengthens the investigation slot as the child is anaesthetised and needs time and space to recover after the scan.

The waiting times for access to MRI scans under GA have been a long standing challenge as demands for this investigation far outstrips the current MRI capacity in CHI. There currently are 2 MRI scanners in CHI (Temple Street and Crumlin) both CHI scanners are beyond their lifetime, with additional / replacement scanners due to be installed in Q4 2020. We also have access to an adult MRI in Tallaght University for 1 session a week.

Mission – To promote and provide child-centered, research-led and learning informed healthcare, to the highest standards of safety and excellence. We do this in partnership with each other, with children, young people and their families through a network of children's services in Ireland.

CRA Registered Charity Number (RCN): 20202295 Revenue Charitable Status CHY: 22235

Board Members: Prof James Browne (Chairman), Prof Niamh Brennan, Mr Con Cronin, Ms Mary Cryan, Mr Liam Dowdall, Prof Martin Elliott, Ms Catherine Guy, Dr Anne Kilgallen, Dr Gavin Lavery, Ms Brigid McManus, Mr Turlough O'Sullivan, Mr Sean Sheehan



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Due to COVID-19 and the required social distancing, MRI scans throughput has significantly reduced. The Radiology Departments in Temple Street and Crumlin have worked with management to identify investments needed to increase MRI capacity both within CHI and with external providers.

CHI is currently working on plans in the short, medium and long term to increase imaging capacity to our patients and reduce time on a wait list. In the short term, CHI is currently looking at increasing access to MRI slots in the private sector. This will assist in shortening waitlists and with meeting the increasing demand on the MRI service. CHI is also reviewing investment in MRI infrastructure into the future which will include additional MRI machines at CHI at Crumlin and Temple Street.

Should you have an additional question regarding the waiting list for a particular scan in a particular hospital we will be pleased to follow up on your behalf.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Gannon
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