

Ref: PQ 12736/22

4th April, 2022.

**Deputy David Cullinane,
Dail Eireann,
Dublin 2**

Dear Deputy Cullinane,

I refer to your recent PQ which has been forwarded to me for my attention.

To ask the Minister for Health the funded and available MRI capacity for Paediatric Orthopaedics up to the year end 2021.

The in-house capacity for Children's Health Ireland (CHI) MRI in 2021 was ~5,100 exams. This was the same in 2019. This figure is an approximation because the capacity for exams varies according to a number of factors:

- If General Anaesthetic (GA) or sedation is required to undertake the scan, which reduces the number of exams per hour;
- If the patient requires more than 1 examination during the scan, which increases the number of exams per hour;
- If the patient keeps still during the scan, movement increases scan time and reduces exams per hour; and
- If the patient requires additional sequences or a contrast agent, which increases scan time.

With one exception (Cardiac MRI in Crumlin) MRI capacity is not carved into specialty based silos. Cardiac MRI requires scheduled capacity as the scans require a Cardiologist, Radiologist and Anaesthesiologist to be present during the scans.

Capacity is allocated to the most clinically appropriate requests based on the clinical urgency of the request and meeting the needs of surveillance scan repeat periods (e.g. for Oncology). There are fixed sessions for GA/Sedation scans in order to co-ordinate Anaesthesiologists availability, but the actual type of scan undertaken will vary according to the same criteria of clinical necessity as non-GA/Sedation scans.

In addition, CHI at Temple Street had a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place with the National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh (NOHC) to undertake 320 exams in 2021. This capacity was reserved for Orthopaedic examinations, but not necessarily for Orthopaedic referrals, i.e. Rheumatology, ED etc. also refer for MSK imaging. The scans were reported by the specialist Orthopaedic Radiologists in NOHC.



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CHI at Crumlin and Temple Street also had an agreement with Alliance Medical for 1,000 exams and with the Beacon Hospital for 200 exams. This capacity was available for a variety of routine scan types (non-GA or Sedation; no contrast; over 8's only). These scans were reported by Paediatric and General Radiologists. The total Orthopaedic referred CHI MRI activity for 2021 was 288 exams.

In 2022 the NOHC SLA is being expanded to CHI sites with an increased capacity of 400 exams per annum. The Alliance SLA has been extended to 2022 with a capacity of 432 per annum. The Beacon Hospital has reduced capacity to 96 per annum for 2022.

Yours sincerely,

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