Deputy Robert Troy
Dáil Eireann,
Leinster House,
Dublin 2.

1st March 2023

PQ 4562/23 -To ask the Minister for Health the reason that under-16s cannot currently be referred for a free MRI through the HSE; and if he plans to rectify this anomaly with immediate action.

Dear Deputy Troy,

I refer to your parliamentary question referenced above, GP Access to Community Diagnostics is an integral component of the Enhanced Community Care programme. The GP Access to Community Diagnostics initiative enables direct access to Diagnostics (X-ray, CT, MRI and DEXA) for all GPs nationally. The scheme builds on pathways already in place for GP direct access to Community Ultrasound. The scheme commenced in January 2021 delivering 139,000 scans in 2021 and 253,172 scans in 2022.

Regarding your query, the current pathway for GP Access to Community Diagnostics is designed to meet the clinical requirements of adult patients. The examination of children presents different considerations to adult patients (e.g. sedation may be required) which may not be feasible in community settings/locations. Although a paediatric service is not within the scope of the scheme at present, the scope is reviewed on an ongoing basis by a clinical group and will be further explored in the future.

Guidance for referrers available here:

https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/primarycare/community-healthcare-networks/gp-diagnostics/

I trust this is of assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Geraldine Crowley,
Assistant National Director,
Enhanced Community Care Programme &
Primary Care Contracts