

**Trauma Management** | all non-major accidents will continue to present to SWAH. Patients who are critically unwell or have major trauma will not be taken to SWAH Emergency Department by ambulance and will be transported to the most appropriate hospital for treatment of their injuries.

**Post-Operative Complications** (14 days or less) | these patients should ideally attend the hospital where their original surgery was undertaken.

### **Temporary Patient Pathways (Other):**

**Children with Head Injuries** | children who sustain a minor head injury and require admission for a short period of time, will be admitted to SWAH under the care of the paediatric team as is the practice in other District General Hospitals.

**Colorectal Surgery** | All patients requiring colorectal surgery during the period of the temporary change to service will have their surgery in Altnagelvin Hospital.

**Obstetrics and Gynaecology** | will remain at SWAH. All patients who are under the care of the Obs & Gynae Team will have early assessment for possible complications during pregnancy. This will ensure that patients are cared for in the most appropriate clinical setting.

### **Consultation**

It is important we hear from you regarding this unplanned temporary change and regarding the future direction of Emergency General Services in the area. The Western Trust will be undertaking a public consultation on this in 2023 and we would welcome your views.

### **Further Information**

For further information visit the Western Trust's website or follow on social media.

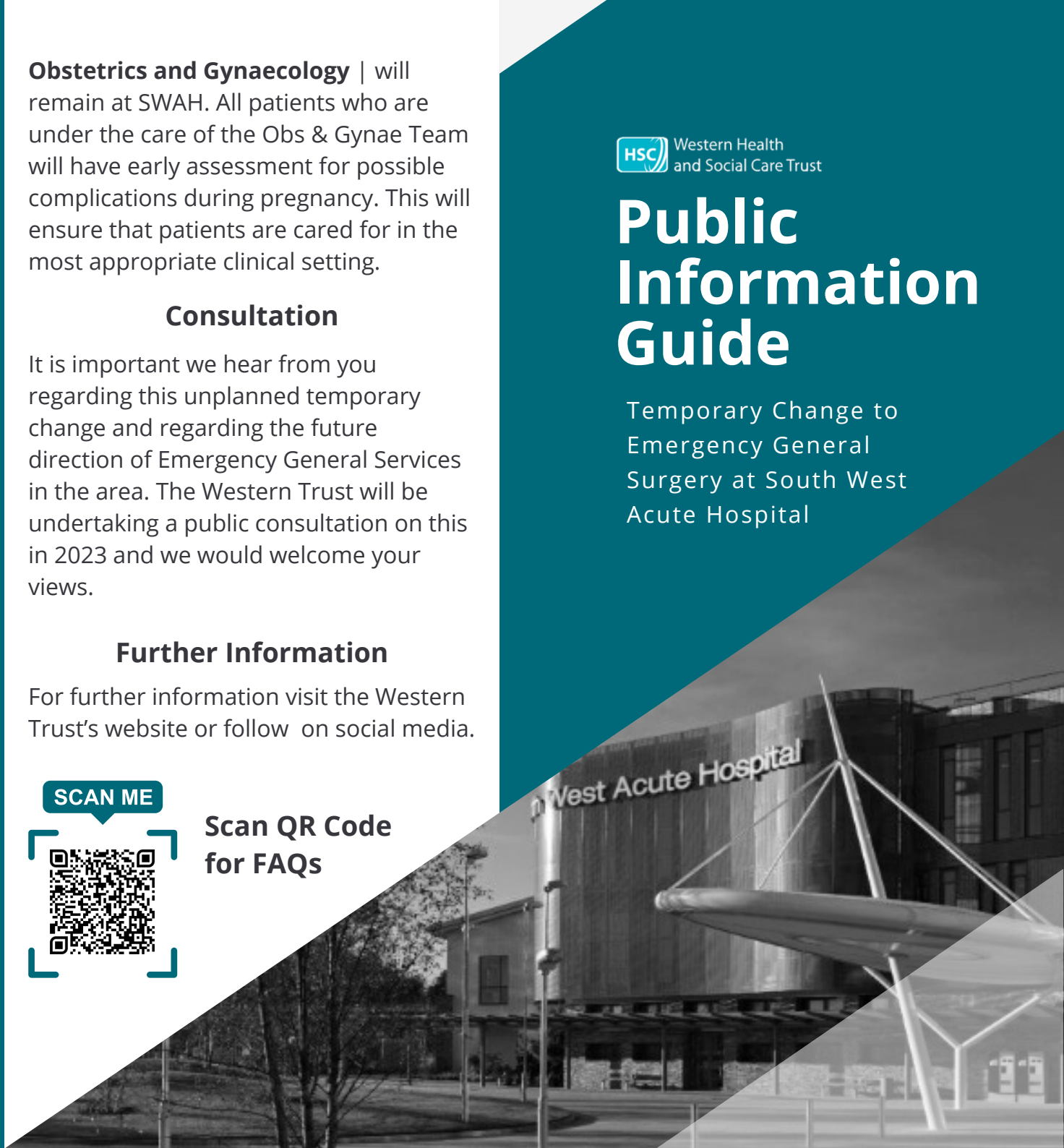


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# **Public Information Guide**

Temporary Change to  
Emergency General  
Surgery at South West  
Acute Hospital





## Background

The Western Health and Social Care Trust (Western Trust) will temporarily withdraw Emergency General Surgery Services at South West Acute Hospital (SWAH) from 18 December 2022. The Western Trust has faced challenges recruiting general surgeons to cover the emergency general surgical rota. This unplanned change is necessary to protect the health and safety of patients in the area who require access to Emergency General Surgery. The Western Trust is working to establish an overnight elective centre at the hospital in the near future.

## What is General Surgery and Emergency General Surgery?

**General Surgery** is a wide-ranging surgical specialty that focuses on diseases of the alimentary (digestive) tract. Over the years more sub-specialisms have been developed across general surgery for example:

colorectal surgery, upper and lower gastrointestinal surgery.

**Emergency General Surgery** is the treatment of patients presenting with acute abdominal pain, infections, bleeding and trauma. In children, the most frequently performed emergency surgeries are appendectomy and testicular conditions.

**Elective General Surgery** is surgery that is planned in advance.

## What Services are Not Affected?

SWAH Emergency Department (ED) will continue to operate as normal. It is also important to note that this unplanned temporary change will not affect the acute status of the hospital and many of the services at the hospital will remain unchanged. This includes:

- Obstetric and Gynaecology Services including all Maternity Services
- Acute Medicine and Care of Elderly
- Outpatient services including General Surgery
- Elective Surgery
- Critical Care / ICU
- ED will continue to receive and treat >90% of current attendances
- Paediatrics and Cardiology services will continue.

## Temporary Patient Pathways NI Ambulance Service (NIAS):

### Upper Gastrointestinal (GI) Bleeding

(this refers to bleeding from the oesophagus, stomach or duodenum) | patients with upper GI bleeding will be taken to Altnagelvin Hospital or Craigavon Hospital based on paramedic assessment and location they are in).

**Acute Scrotal or Hernia Pain** | Patients will bypass SWAH and be taken to Altnagelvin Hospital or Craigavon Hospital based on Paramedic assessment and the location they are in – with the exception of those under the age of 5, who will be transferred to Sick Children's at Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast.

**Abdominal Pain** | Patients who self-present at the Emergency Department will continue to be assessed and managed with inter hospital transfer as required. Any patient over 55 years of age complaining of abdominal pain will be taken to Altnagelvin Hospital or Craigavon Hospital based on paramedic assessment and location they are in.

