

**29 November 2022**

## **FACT CHECK – South West Acute Hospital, Emergency General Surgery**

### **What is emergency general surgery?**

Emergency general surgery relates to the treatment of patients presenting with acute abdominal pain, infections, bleeding, and trauma. In children, the most frequently performed emergency surgeries are appendectomy, testicular conditions.

### **Why has the decision been made to temporary suspend emergency general surgery at South West Acute Hospital?**

Despite our previous and ongoing efforts to recruit, we have not been successful to date in securing the necessary consultant workforce. The Trust is now unable to maintain a rota to sustain and deliver a safe emergency (unplanned) general surgical service to our population from SWAH.

Trust Board met and approved on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022, a recommendation for an unplanned temporary suspension of Emergency General Surgery at the SWAH, Enniskillen.

The current rota for emergency general surgery will be maintained up until 4 December 2022. Planned elective surgery at the hospital will continue.

### **What services are NOT affected?**

- SWAH status as an Acute Hospital WILL NOT change
- Obstetrics and gynaecology service are not affected.
- Acute Medical / Care of Elderly specialties / services are not affected
- Outpatient services including general surgery Outpatients are not affected
- Non-complex elective surgery is not affected
- Critical Care / ICU are not affected
- Emergency Department will continue to receive and treat more than 90% of current attendances
- Paediatrics and Cardiology services will continue.

### **What services are affected?**

- Emergency General Surgery will be provided in Altnagelvin.
- Complex elective surgery requiring overnight stay will be consolidated on the Altnagelvin site – example bowel cancer surgery.

## **Will planned and emergency caesarean sections still take place in SWAH?**

YES, maternity services have not been affected. Pregnant mothers WILL still have their planned or emergency C-section in South West Acute Hospital.

## **What will happen to people who need emergency surgery?**

Patients who attend South West Acute Emergency Department who require admission for emergency surgical treatment will be transferred to the most appropriate hospital to meet their surgical needs. This will be based on the assessment of their presenting complaint.

## **What will happen to surgical patients for example who have a road traffic accident or need an ambulance?**

999 should be called in the usual way. The South West Acute Hospital Emergency Department will continue as part of the Regional Trauma Network. Therefore trauma patients will still be treated at the SWAH Emergency Department. There are some exceptions, such as penetrating trauma which may be bypassed.

## **What surgery will continue at South West Acute Hospital?**

Planned and emergency c-sections and gynae surgery will continue on the SWAH site. Elective (planned) surgery will continue from South West Acute Hospital, Altnagelvin and Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex. It is hoped through the longer term plans that we will be able to enhance our surgical capacity across the Trust through the creation of a regional overnight stay centre in line with the regional review of General Surgery.

## **What does this mean for SWAH Emergency Department?**

SWAH's Emergency Department will continue to operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. SWAH will also remain as receiving trauma ED as part of the regional trauma network.

South West Acute Hospital's ED remains absolutely essential in meeting the unscheduled care needs of our local population.

## **What does this mean for the rest of the hospital?**

South West Acute Hospital is and will remain an acute hospital. Its acute status is NOT in question due to the temporary suspension of emergency general surgery. South West Acute Hospital is a very busy state-of-the-art hospital and an essential part of the Western Trust acute hospital network. It has a wide range of acute specialist services including paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology which are needed to serve our population of approximately 300,000 across the Western Trust area. We want to develop and enhance our Trust wide surgical service to offer the same safety, quality and care for all patients attending – South West Acute, Altnagelvin and Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex.