

Chair
Dr Tom Frawley, CBE

Chief Executive
Mr Neil Guckian, OBE

6 November 2025

By Email – Helen Hamill
SOAS Press soas.swah@gmail.com

Dear Helen

Re: Proposed Meeting with SOAS - an open letter, dated 2 November 2025 and subsequent follow-up letter dated 4 November 2025.

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 2 November 2025 and your subsequent letter of 4 November 2025.

I now look forward to a first confirmed meeting with the SOAS Executive.

You have proposed an agenda for the meeting, and I have added to that the items the Trust wishes to raise. It is normal to have a mutually agreed agenda for a meeting such as this, and I trust these adjustments are therefore in order.

I agree that it will be important to provide information ahead of the meeting, and there is important context, clinical data and information which we will wish to issue to you before we meet.

The proposed agenda for our discussion is set out below:

Agenda

1. Population Health/Health inequalities for the Fermanagh and West Tyrone area - Trust
2. Trust Board's decision to move forward on a vision for "Fermanagh and West Tyrone Health and Care Futures", which includes SWAH as an integral part of this vision – Discussion.
3. RQIA Recommendations – Update by Trust
4. SWAH consultant Workforce - Update by Trust
5. Patient Outcomes – Evidence of patients outcomes following the temporary change to Emergency General Surgery in the Western Trust
6. Services at SWAH – "bed utilisation" Transformation of services - Discussion

We would also like to take this opportunity to provide the Trust's position on the "SOAS Roadmap" and its recommendations and would like to add this to the agenda if you are agreeable. We will also send that position to others, but feel that it would be important that there is an opportunity for us to step through that with you before we do so.

Meeting Format

Regarding SOAS's requests on the meeting format, the Trust believe it would not be appropriate to live stream this initial meeting between SOAS and the Trust, given that it is not a public meeting.

Attendance

Our Board chair will not attend the meeting, and this will be a meeting of executives

Chairing and Venue

In your initial response, SOAS suggested *"In the interests of fairness and accessibility, we do agree that an independent venue might be more appropriate. Considering the strategic implications for SWAH, we are also requesting that the meeting be independently chaired."*

In your subsequent letter of 4 November, SOAS have proposed that Chair of Fermanagh and Omagh Council, Cllr Barry McElduff, would act as the Independent Chair for the Meeting and also that Fermanagh and Omagh Council Chamber would host the Engagement Meeting.

The Trust are in agreement that an independent venue would be appropriate and we would welcome the Council's offer to host the engagement in the Council Chamber and thank the Council for the opportunity to do so.

Regarding SAOS' proposal that an independent chair should be considered for the engagement, we do not feel that is necessary for such a meeting but are content to that an independent chair be jointly agreed for the this first meeting. We hope that this would not be necessary for future meetings.

You have subsequently proposed that Chair of the Fermanagh and Omagh Council, Cllr Barry McElduff, should act as the Independent Chair for the Meeting. The Trust does not consider that Cllr McElduff could be considered independent. Therefore the Trust would propose an alternative Independent Chair as Martin Quinn, who is the Personal and Public Involvement and Engagement Lead for the PHA and an experienced and independent voice in the area of public involvement. In addition, the Trust would be open to inviting the Patient Client Council to the meeting as observers if you feel that would be supportive.

I would welcome your consideration of this suggested alternative as an independent chair. I am equally content to proceed without an independent chair if you wish to reconsider that.

Therefore we propose the following:-



Western Health
and Social Care Trust

Venue Fermanagh and Omagh Council Chambers
Chair Mr Martin Quinn, Public Health Agency

I want to reaffirm our strong and ongoing commitment to the long-term sustainability and development of SWAH as a vital and successful hospital within the Health and Social Care (HSC) regional network. This commitment has been clearly supported by the Department of Health and by the Minister. We will continue to work with all relevant partners and stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of local health and care needs, and to listen to the community on the future of healthcare in Fermanagh and West Tyrone. We intend to take a whole-system view - spanning hospital, community and primary care - with SWAH as an integral part of that vision.

As highlighted in your closing remarks, the Trust do welcome this engagement meeting and look forward to a discussion based on openness and transparency and believe that the arrangements proposed within this letter meet this intent for everyone involved.

We look forward to meeting with you on Friday 21 November in Fermanagh and Omagh Council Chamber, Enniskillen, at 2.30 pm.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Neil Guckian'.

NEIL GUCKIAN OBE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE