

Notes: Latest Facts, Information and Data

The CHKS analysis confirms

24% Reduction in Mortality (December 2022 – April 2025)

- A sustained and statistically significant reduction in mortality
- Mortality reduced from **2.5% to 1.9%**
- A **24% reduction in mortality among admitted Emergency General Surgery patients**

Mortality refers to death within a population over a certain period of time. It is used as a measure to understand how many people die from certain conditions or overall health factors. It also highlights access to treatment, quality of services and wider environmental influences on health. By monitoring and responding to mortality trends, the Western Trust can make improvements to care and prevention.

The CHKS January 2026 report also found:

- **Risk Adjusted Mortality Index (RAMI)** reduced from 99 to 90, indicating general improvement in performance.
- **Average length of stay** reduced from 5.6 days to 4.9 days (12.5% reduction).
- **30-day readmissions** reduced from 10.2% to 7.9% (22.5% reduction).
- **Complication rates** reduced from 2.8% to 2.0% (28.5% reduction).

The full CHKS Report is available on the Western Trust website.

Emergency Surgical Ambulatory Assessment Unit

Since the establishment of the **Emergency Surgical Ambulatory Assessment Unit (ESAAU)** in SWAH (and Altnagelvin) following the temporary change to emergency general surgery, there has been a significant increase in the number of patients presenting at SWAH (with emergency general surgical issues) who remain in SWAH for same day or next day care. This means 5.6 patients remain in SWAH and that 2.5 patients per day are now admitted for inpatient care and treatment to Altnagelvin Hospital.

As at December 2025:

- over **5.6 patients per day** presenting at SWAH are now receiving same-day or next-day assessment and treatment in SWAH ESAAU.
- and **2.5 patients per day admitted** for inpatient care and treatment to Altnagelvin Hospital.

Period shown:	Daily averages per year
12 th Dec 2022 to 31 st March 2023	2.6 patients per day
1 st April 2023 to 31 st March 2024	3.1 patients per day
1 st April 2024 to 31 st March 2025	4.4 patients per day
1 st April 2025 to 30 November 2025	5.6 patients per day

Emergency Surgical Ambulatory Assessment Unit (ESAAU) – Update information:

- **3,034 Attendances** (Dec 2022 – Nov 2025). Activity continues to increase year on Year.
- **5.6 Patients Per Day** now receive same-day or next-day care and stay in SWAH
- **2.5 Patients Per Day** are now admitted in Altnagelvin
- Patients requiring inpatient admission are transferred to Altnagelvin Hospital, with 95% going directly to a ward bed. This equates to 2 patients per week who do not go Direct to a Bed.

There has been no evidence of any negative impact on Emergency Department pressures in Altnagelvin. Both SWAH and Altnagelvin Emergency Departments have been under significant ‘winter pressures’ with sustained escalated beds in operation across both sites in recent months. The vast majority of patients in both hospitals are medical patients and not surgical patients.

What is an Emergency Surgical Ambulatory Assessment Unit?

This is a service where patients with urgent surgical problems are assessed, tested and treated on the same day without needing to stay overnight in hospital, where it is safe to do so. If a patient needs further care or surgery, they are then admitted to a hospital ward for inpatient treatment.

Patient Experience

The Trust has carried out 555 surveys of patients and following all responses received, overall **77% of patients rated their experience of Emergency General Surgery as Good or Excellent**

Through **Care Opinion**, the Trust has received comments from patients who have gone through the emergency general surgery pathway, transferring from SWAH to Altnagelvin for treatment.

“My journey started in SWAH and ended in Altnagelvin and I have to acknowledge the care I received from everyone, nurses, nursing assistants, porters and medical and theatre staff, was outstanding and the communication was excellent. I just want to say a big thank you to all the staff I met on my journey. The work you all do is tough but keep going, I really appreciated it when I needed it.”

(EGS Patient, March 2025)

“A lot is said about surgery in the Western Trust currently, but our experience was second to none and it’s important that this gets recognised. Thanks again.”

(EGS Patient, March 2025)

Western Trust commitment to South West Acute Hospital

SWAH remains an important Acute Hospital within the Northern Ireland hospital network and its acute services provision has not changed. SWAH provides a 24/7 Type 1 Emergency Department, maternity services (Obstetrics and Gynaecology), full resuscitation facilities and Intensive Care Unit.

The Trust is also committed to contributing fully, where appropriate, to cross-border collaboration including, through partnership work already underway with Saolta and CAWT on cross-border issues.

We are committed to:

- Keeping SWAH a vital and sustainable acute hospital
- Open and transparent engagement with the public and stakeholders
- Developing a meaningful long-term vision for health and care in the area

The Western Trust current position and decision on the change to Emergency General Surgery (February 2026)

The temporary suspension of Emergency General Surgery at SWAH was implemented in December 2022 as an 'Emergency Measure' due to significant and ongoing difficulties in recruiting and retaining the required consultant workforce, which meant that there were no substantive Consultant General Surgeons available to work on the emergency rota at the hospital. The Trust was unable to maintain a safe and sustainable emergency general surgery rota at SWAH following the resignation of the only remaining substantive Consultant General Surgeon at the hospital.

In this context, the Trust Board met on 17 November 2022 and approved a recommendation for an unplanned temporary suspension of Emergency General Surgery at SWAH in order to ensure patient safety. This decision was taken in response to immediate operational risk and was not a decision on the permanent configuration of services.

This position was further influenced by the introduction of revised Emergency General Surgery Safety Standards by the Department of Health in June 2022.

Public Consultation for Temporary Change to Emergency General Surgery

In line with its statutory obligations and the Department of Health Guidance on *Change or Withdrawal of Services*, the Trust launched a 12-week public consultation on the temporary change to Emergency General Surgery at SWAH in the week **commencing 16 January 2023**.

The consultation process was carried out fully in accordance with:

- The Department of Health Circular on *Change or Withdrawal of Services*; and
- The Trust's approved Consultation Scheme.

An extensive and wide-ranging programme of engagement was undertaken, including:

- Seven face-to-face public consultation events;
- Two online consultation events;
- Dedicated staff engagement and information sessions.

As required under the guidance, the consultation explicitly sought to explore viable alternatives to the temporary service arrangements. The Trust is satisfied that this requirement was met and that the consultation process was robust, transparent, and comprehensive. The Findings Report from this consultation was formally presented to the Trust Board at its public meeting on 6 July 2023.

Trust Board approved the decision to proceed with a 'Public Consultation on a permanent change to Emergency General Surgery' in June 2025, but the Trust did not proceed with this in July 2025. This decision followed a request from the Health Minister to pause that consultation and begin the process of producing a vision plan, emphasising how the South West Acute Hospital will meet the health needs of its current and future population.

On 7 October 2025, the Trust Board formally agreed to close the Public Consultation and also approved the start of new work to design and develop a Vision Plan. This will be a forward-looking programme

that will focus on the people and places of Fermanagh and West Tyrone. As requested by so many people and partners, including elected Representatives, this plan will need a meaningful period of engagement and listening sessions and will include specific work relating to the South West Acute Hospital (SWAH).

Trust's position on the question of Re-instating Emergency General Surgery at South West Acute Hospital

The [DoH NI General Surgery Review \(2022-2024\)](#) established new standards for safe, sustainable, and high-quality elective and emergency care across Northern Ireland. The standards were published by the DoH in June 2022 and set out a range of requirements that Trusts providing emergency general surgery (EGS) **must** meet.

Returning EGS to the SWAH, in a form which meets the standards would require a number of new services to be commissioned. These additional services are linked to the clinical interdependencies which are required to be in place for the hospital to meet these standards and include:

- Renal,
- Interventional Radiology,
- Bleeding Rota (with substantial consultant numbers) and
- 24/7 Cardiology cover.

As SWAH cannot be clinically covered from Altnagelvin Hospital for the range of additional specialties required, this means that these additional services would have to be commissioned.

Under the existing legislation, it is the responsibility of Department of Health (DoH), delivered through the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG), to commission these services. It is our position that such an extensive expansion in services and hospital profile would require approval and resourcing from the DoH.

Therefore, delivering Emergency General Surgery at South West Acute Hospital would require full compliance with the Department of Health revised Emergency General Surgery standards. This means that the previous commissioned service '*could not be re-instated*' and means that a different service would now be required. This would necessitate significant additional investment for additional services such as those listed above. Such services have not been commissioned for SWAH.

Department of Health Official Statement:

"The [Review of General Surgery NI](#) sets out evidence-based standards for Emergency General Surgery (EGS) and hospitals delivering EGS must meet these standards.

In considering the future model for general surgery across the Western Health & Social Care Trust (WHST), the Trust must follow the Guidance on the Change and Withdrawal of Services. Any decision on a permanent change to the delivery of EGS at SWAH will require approval from the Department. SWAH remains an important Acute Hospital within the NI hospital network, and the Minister and Department share the Trust's commitment to the long-term sustainability and development of SWAH as a vital and successful hospital within the HSC regional network of hospitals."

Stakeholder Engagement underway:

The Western Trust has been engaging with a wide range of 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. This follows the Health Minister's request to begin the

process of producing a vision plan, emphasising how the South West Acute Hospital will meet the health needs of its current and future population in the area.

A comprehensive communications and engagement programme is being developed at present to ensure people have clear, factual information about services and future plans.

The Trust has already had a significant number of engagements with stakeholders since October 2025. This includes a staff engagement programme, communication and a range of engagements and meetings with MLAs, MPs, Council and Stakeholder Groups who contacted the Trust to voice their concerns, including the Fermanagh Business Leaders Group.

This stakeholder engagement phase also includes a Western Trust Executive meeting with the Save Our Acute Services Committee on Friday 6 February 2026, where the Trust provided a detailed response on the SOAS Roadmap Recommendations.

Details of engagements and updates on the ongoing work will be shared through the Western Trust website online hub: [Fermanagh and West Tyrone Future Health and Care Services | Western Health & Social Care Trust](#)