





















HSC Western Health and Social Care Trust

Fermanagh and West Tyrone

Health and Care Futures programme

The Vision we develop must be informed by the people who use, deliver and depend on these services every day.

Your voice matters. | **Your future matters.** | **Let's shape it together.**

Have Your say and be part of the conversation.

Health & Care Futures
Fermanagh • West Tyrone

Chief Executive Message

Karen Hargan, Chief Executive

Every household receiving this leaflet has an important opportunity to help shape the future of health and social care across Fermanagh and West Tyrone.

Through our Health and Care Futures programme, we are developing a long-term Vision for services that are safe, sustainable and responsive to the changing needs of our population. This includes the future role of South West Acute Hospital and Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex, as well as primary care, community services, mental health services and social care.

Fermanagh and West Tyrone has an ageing population, increasing levels of frailty and more complex health and care needs. We also face the particular challenges of delivering services across a large rural area. This means we must look at the whole health and care system and consider how services can work together to provide the right care, in the right place and as close to home as is safely possible.

It is also important that people understand the continuing investment in local services. Millions of pounds have been invested in services at South West Acute Hospital and Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex, supporting additional consultants, outpatient and operating lists, diagnostic services and increased theatre capacity. We are continuing to build on this investment, including developing South West Acute Hospital as an Elective Overnight Stay Centre and making the fullest possible use of its theatres to provide more planned care for patients.

I recognise that much of the public discussion about health services in recent years has focused on the temporary change to inpatient Emergency General Surgery at South West Acute Hospital. It is important to be clear that South West Acute Hospital remains a vital acute hospital and that its Emergency Department remains open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The change introduced in December 2022 relates specifically to inpatient Emergency General Surgery.

Since the change was introduced, we have continued to review and improve the Emergency General Surgery pathway, including focusing on delivering the recommendations made by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA). This work is delivering better outcomes for the local population, while the significant majority of patients presenting with Emergency General Surgery-related conditions continue to receive their assessment and



"I was delighted recently to welcome new Health Minister Robbie Butler MLA to South West Acute Hospital and to update him on the Health and Care Futures programme and the extensive engagement underway."



Minister Butler meets with Karen Hargan, Chief Executive; Brian Telford, Chair; together with Mark Gillespie, Director of Surgery, Paediatrics and Women's Health; Dr Anand Gidwani, Consultant Surgeon; and Professor Monica Monaghan, Consultant Cardiologist and Clinical Lead for SWAH and Omagh.

Fermanagh and West Tyrone
Health and Care Futures

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treatment at South West Acute Hospital. Where inpatient surgery is required, arrangements are in place for patients to transfer directly to an inpatient surgical bed at Altnagelvin Hospital.

The Health and Care Futures programme is, however, much wider than any one service or hospital. Throughout this leaflet, you can find out more about the significant investment being made in elective services at South West Acute Hospital and Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex, the work undertaken to stabilise local GP services, and the continuing development of community and mental health services. We have also included clear information about the improvements made to the Emergency General Surgery pathway and the better outcomes being delivered for local patients as well as the challenges we need to plan for together.

Most importantly, we want the future Vision to be informed by you, the people who use, deliver and depend on these services. Over the past year, we have been listening to staff, patients and service users, carers, local communities, elected representatives, community and voluntary organisations and many other partners. The formal engagement period has been extended until the end of October 2026 so that more people can contribute.

No final Vision has been agreed. What we hear through this engagement, together with evidence about population needs, future demand, workforce, quality and safety, will help shape the next stage of the work.

Across all of this work, our greatest strength remains our people. I am immensely proud of our staff, who provide compassionate, skilled and high-quality care every day across our hospitals, GP practices, community services, people's homes and support services. Their professionalism, expertise and commitment are the foundation of everything we do.

I would encourage you to read this leaflet and use the QR code to complete the questionnaire. Please tell us about your experiences, what matters most to you and what you believe health and care services should look like in the future.

There will be difficult choices ahead, but we are committed to approaching them openly, transparently and on the basis of evidence. Above all, we want to do this work with our staff and communities. Your voice matters. Your future matters. Let's shape it together.

Karen Hargan,
Chief Executive

Health and Care Futures programme – Significant Engagement Campaign

Fermanagh and West Tyrone formal Engagement is extended until the end of October 2026

Our formal engagement programme continues until the end of October 2026, giving people across Fermanagh and West Tyrone further opportunities to have their say and help shape the future of services.

We want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to take part. The Trust are holding dedicated information sessions with the support of community and voluntary organisations to speak to Older People, younger people, people living with disabilities and our ethnic minority community. We are also working directly with Community Planning partners, to help people find out more, share their views and complete the questionnaire.

Information stands are also available at South West Acute Hospital and Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex, where you can find out more about the programme and how to have your say.



Minister visits Information Stand SWAH



Unscheduled Care Staff Engagement



Staff Engagement Sessions SWAH



Fermanagh Business Stakeholders Group



Council at Omagh Hospital



Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

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Health and Care Futures programme – Development of a new Vision

Fermanagh and West Tyrone formal Engagement is extended until the end of October 2026

The Western Health and Social Care Trust is encouraging people across Fermanagh and West Tyrone to take part in its ongoing Vision Engagement Programme and help shape a future Vision for health and care services in the area, including South West Acute Hospital.

The formal engagement programme was launched on 16 June 2026 and is gathering views, experiences and ideas from local communities, staff, carers, service users and stakeholders to inform the development of a forward-looking Vision for future health and care services. The programme is not a consultation on service change, but an opportunity for people to have their voices heard and help inform future planning.

More than 100 engagement meetings and sessions have taken place with a



Engagement Launch at Carers Event in Omagh in June 2026

wide range of stakeholders, generating significant feedback from staff, community organisations, voluntary groups and local residents. In recognition of the continued interest and participation in the programme, the Trust Board has extended the formal engagement period until the end of October 2026.

The Trust also welcomed the new Health Minister to South West Acute Hospital in September. During the visit, the Minister commended the work undertaken to date and welcomed the extension of the formal engagement phase to provide further opportunities for staff and the public to contribute.

Shane Breen, Assistant Director of Integrated Care Systems, Western Trust, said "We are currently in a period of formal public engagement and I would encourage everyone to get involved.



Engagement Launch at Carers Event in Enniskillen in June 2026

Whether you are a patient, service user, carer, family member, member of staff or local resident, your views matter. We want to hear your experiences, ideas, concerns and aspirations for future health and care services.

"Together with what we hear through our engagement, we will also consider population health needs, future demand for services, workforce challenges, research evidence, policy developments and the wider factors that influence health and wellbeing.

"Once the engagement process concludes, all feedback will be carefully considered and will help shape the future Vision and inform the next steps for health and care services in the area.

"This is one of the most important conversations about the future of health and care services in Fermanagh and West Tyrone in many years. The Vision we develop must be informed by the people who use, deliver and depend on these services every day. Your voice matters. Your future matters. Let's shape it together."

Your views, experiences and ideas are



The Western Trust Staff Engagement & Advisory Group meet regularly

important in helping us plan services that meet the needs of local people and communities. Have your say and be part of the conversation.

Identification of Population Health Needs and Future Projections

The population of Fermanagh and West Tyrone has a profile of an ageing population and increasing levels of multi-morbidity, requiring services which work to prevent and treat the diseases of old age, and support people to live at home and well in their communities for longer. The NI Multi-deprivation Measures (2017) shows Fermanagh and Omagh having 6 out of the top 10 most deprived areas for being able to physically or digitally access services. Poor roads and digital infrastructure is a contributory factor.

Teresa Molloy, Director of Planning Performance and Corporate Services, said:

" Improving access to health and care services and supporting an older population to live well for longer needs collaborative action with statutory partners and communities on the wider determinants of health. Working together, we can shape services for the future which put people and place at the centre of an integrated system"

The wider social determinants of health; our health behaviours, socioeconomic conditions and the physical environment all influence our health and wellbeing. For this reason, understanding the current and future health needs of the population, in order to shape services to meet those needs, is fundamental to the development of the Vision.

The Trust is working with a range of partners, including local government, the Public Health Agency, community and voluntary organisations, and rural representative bodies to build a comprehensive picture of population need and projected future demand for services.

Fermanagh and West Tyrone
Health and Care Futures

Did You Know? There has been significant additional Investment...

Fermanagh and West Tyrone - Planning to deliver: More care - More capacity - More specialist services.

Recent investment and service development are strengthening care at South West Acute Hospital and across Fermanagh and West Tyrone.

Millions invested in planned care

Since April 2025, Elective Care Framework investments of more than £8.4 million have supported orthopaedics, urology, endoscopy, diagnostic imaging and cancer services across the Western Trust. SWAH and Omagh continue to benefit from investment in consultants, additional outpatient and operating lists, diagnostics and theatre capacity.

£2.88m Orthopaedics	**£1.86m Urology**
£1m Endoscopy	**£1.88m Diagnostic Imaging**

SWAH: a vital Acute Hospital

South West Acute Hospital remains an important acute hospital within the Northern Ireland hospital network, providing a 24/7 Type 1 Emergency Department, maternity and gynaecology services, full resuscitation facilities and an Intensive Care Unit. Area 3 provides Minor Injuries and Ambulatory Care services. The **SWAH Minor Injuries Service** is available from 8.00am to 8.00pm, with 5 treatment spaces and a separate waiting area for patients. As the annual 2025/26 figure below shows, there continues to be significant and increasing demand on the SWAH ED and Minor Injuries Unit.

Emergency Department and Minor Injuries Unit Attendances 2025/26	**42,038**

Same Day Emergency Care expands

Geraldine McKay, Director of Unscheduled Care, Medicine, Cancer and Clinical Services, has overseen further development in SWAH's Same Day Emergency Care service which has now added four ambulatory spaces, increasing capacity to eight. The service gives adult patients rapid access to specialist assessment and investigation, helping avoid unnecessary Emergency Department attendance or hospital admission where appropriate.

More endoscopy capacity

Recurrent investment is increasing endoscopy activity at SWAH from 13.5 to 20 sessions each week. The investment supports additional gastroenterology expertise and faster access to diagnostic procedures, including for patients on red-flag pathways.

Stroke pathway development

A Clinical Lead has been appointed for Stroke Services in the Fermanagh & Omagh area. The Trust is developing a multi-professional 'Patient Direct to CT' proposal with Stroke, Radiology and NIAS teams to reduce diagnostic time and support earlier treatment.



Director of Surgery, Paediatrics and Women's Health, Mark Gillespie, hosted Minister Butler with Chief Executive, Karen Hargan, Chair, Brian Telford, Senior Team and staff at Theatres in SWAH.

Women's and children's services strengthened

A seventh Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist at SWAH is supporting two additional outpatient clinics, two inpatient theatre sessions and one day-case session each week. A new Endometriosis Clinical Nurse Specialist is also in post. Two Consultant Paediatricians have been recruited, removing reliance on agency consultants and strengthening the paediatric workforce.

A more comfortable ICU for families

Four relatives' areas in the SWAH Intensive Care Unit have been renovated with new flooring, decoration, furniture and artwork. The improvements were inspired by discussions about making the environment more comfortable for families spending time with loved ones receiving intensive care.



Launch of the new-look SWAH ICU Relatives Room "Everything was all done by the relatives of previous patients of intensive care here"



SWAH Cardiology Service is led by Consultant Cardiologist Prof Monica Monaghan, pictured with some members of the team and the NI Assembly Health Committee in SWAH

Regional Cardiology Expertise at South West Acute Hospital

SWAH is one of only three centres in Northern Ireland providing cardiac MRI, with patients travelling from across the region for this specialist service.

The Cardiology team treats acute conditions including heart attacks, abnormal heart rhythms, heart failure and valve disease as part of a regional hub-and-spoke model and is led by Consultant Cardiologist **Professor Monica Monaghan**, who presented the service to the NI Assembly Health Committee.

"A significant proportion of patients attending the Emergency Department require admission to medical specialties such as cardiology, respiratory medicine and gastroenterology. The cardiac team treats a wide range of acute conditions, including heart attacks, abnormal heart rhythms, heart failure and valve disease." Prof Monaghan has emphasised the importance of treating patients holistically, working with nurses, pharmacists and other specialists to achieve best outcomes.

Did You Know? Care closer to home...

Community, Primary Care & Mental Health Services helping people access the right care in the right place

Three GP practices stabilised

Dr Maura O'Neill, Director of Community & Older People's Services, has led on the Trust's intervention to take over the management of 3 GP practices in Fermanagh and West Tyrone, following request from SPPG. This has helped to stabilise primary care provision across the area. Taking on these practices prevented their potential collapse and the dispersal of patients to neighbouring practices, which could have further destabilised primary care services across Fermanagh and West Tyrone. The Trust has successfully assumed management of the Dromore & Trillick, Fintona, and Brookeborough & Tempo GP practices. New initiatives include a Women's Health Clinic, Frailty Clinics and the CVRM Diabetes Project, linking primary and secondary care to improve cardiovascular, renal and metabolic risk management.



Dr Maura O'Neill meets staff in Fintona Health Centre, one of 3 GP Practices the Trust have stabilised in the area

Multidisciplinary Teams in GP practices

Working with the South West GP Federation, Multidisciplinary Teams are being rolled out in primary care, bringing additional expertise closer to patients and supporting earlier intervention in local communities.

Hospital care, closer to home

The Hospital at Home service in Fermanagh provides hospital-level care for patients who are clinically suitable to be safely assessed and treated in their own home, helping to avoid unnecessary attendance or admission to hospital. The team support people with a range of acute illnesses, including chest infections, urinary tract infections, cellulitis, dehydration and heart failure. This can be particularly beneficial for older and frail patients, allowing them to receive appropriate clinical care while remaining in familiar surroundings, close to family and their support network



Director, Geraldine McKay, hosted Council for a visit to the Renal Service in Omagh Hospital & Primary Care Complex

Community Nursing Home Hub Service

District Nursing and Rapid Response teams have been integrated to form a single Community Nursing Home and Hub Service. The service includes two Community Nursing Hubs, located at Enniskillen Health Centre and Omagh Hospital & Primary Care Complex, operating daily from 8.00am to midnight. This enhanced model strengthens continuity of care, improves responsiveness across the geographical area, and provides extended evening support for patients known to the service, ensuring timely assessment and intervention closer to home.

Homecare on the move



Launching Trust vehicles for Homecare teams which includes 14 across the Fermanagh and Omagh area

Twenty Trust vehicles have been introduced for Homecare teams, including 14 across the Fermanagh and Omagh area. The vehicles will help staff reach rural and hard-to-access communities, improve service responsiveness and support more people to receive care safely in their own homes.

Specialist community palliative care

The Trust's first Advanced Nurse Practitioner in Palliative Care is supporting people with palliative and end-of-life care needs across Fermanagh and Omagh, with a strong focus on care in the community. The role supports assessment, prescribing and specialist treatment closer to home.

Omagh Hospital: major activity

Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex delivers a wide range of hospital and community services. Its nurse-led Cardiac Assessment Unit reviews more than 9,000 patients annually, the Urgent Care and Treatment Centre manages more than 22,000 attendances, and more than 50,000 outpatient appointments are delivered on site each year.

Care homes: safer use of medicines

A specialist pharmacist now supports care homes across Fermanagh and Omagh working with GPs, nursing, social care and community pharmacy to review medicines, reduce avoidable harm and help residents remain well in care homes



Karen O'Brien, Director of Adult Mental Health & Disability Services with key community stakeholders at the Western Area Mental Health Collaborative Engagement Event, in Enniskillen

Mental health support in one online hub

Karen O'Brien, Director of Adult Mental Health & Disability Services, has launched a new Mental Health Support Online Hub. If you or someone you care for is going through a difficult time, the Western Trust Adult Mental Health Services online hub brings together information on services, support and resources, including crisis and recovery services. Visit the Adult Mental Health Services online hub at ***www.westerntrust.hscni.net***

Emergency dental service planned

Planning is in its final stages for an out-of-hours emergency dental service at Omagh Hospital at weekends and public holidays. The regionally triaged service is planned to provide up to 22 emergency appointments each day it operates.

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Did You Know? Support, improvement and better patient pathways.

Fermanagh and West Tyrone - Planning to deliver: More care - More capacity - More specialist services.

Emergency General Surgery: Independent evidence of service improvements

The temporary change to inpatient Emergency General Surgery (EGS) at South West Acute Hospital (SWAH) was introduced in December 2022 as an emergency patient-safety measure and remains in place. The Western Trust continues to provide an EGS pathway in line with Department of Health standards.

In their most recent report (15 September 2026) RQIA has highlighted the positive outcome that 97% of patients requiring transfer from SWAH to Altnagelvin are admitted directly to an inpatient bed, with no ED-to-ED transfers reported since the end of January 2026. This is important evidence of the progress made in improving the patient pathway.

These findings are consistent with the independent CHKS review, which found significant improvements in patient outcomes following the service changes, including a 24% reduction in mortality, a 28.5% reduction in complications and a 22.5% reduction in readmissions.

Independent data analysis

CHKS analysis has stated that the data demonstrated "a clear and statistically significant reduction in mortality for emergency general surgery patients."

The Trust has continued to invest in the Emergency Surgical Ambulatory Assessment Unit (ESAAU) at SWAH, enabling more patients with emergency general surgical conditions to be assessed and treated locally and reducing the need for transfer to Altnagelvin. On average, 5.8 patients per day remain at SWAH, where they are assessed, treated and discharged through the ambulatory pathway.

Where a patient is assessed through ESAAU as requiring non-emergency surgery, arrangements are made for their elective surgery to take place at SWAH or Omagh Hospital, within the appropriate clinical timeframe.

On average, 2.5 patients per day require transfer to Altnagelvin for inpatient surgical care.

Emergency General Surgery (EGS) at SWAH

Safe care. Better outcomes. Most patients stay in SWAH.

What is Emergency General Surgery?

Emergency General Surgery (EGS) is the urgent assessment and treatment of general surgical conditions, such as acute abdominal pain, infection or bleeding. It is for emergency and urgent conditions – not for planned or elective surgery.

The temporary change to inpatient EGS at SWAH does not mean that SWAH has stopped being an acute hospital and it does not mean that its Emergency Department has closed.

SWAH remains an acute hospital with a 24/7 Type 1 Emergency Department, maternity services, full resuscitation facilities and an Intensive Care Unit.

Many patients remain in SWAH

A large number of those patients (5.8 patients per day) who present with emergency general surgical issues at SWAH are assessed, treated and discharged through the ambulatory pathway. A total of 2.5 patients per day require transfer for inpatient surgery at Altnagelvin.

Transfers: direct to a hospital bed

An average of **2.5 patients per day** require admission for inpatient surgical care at Altnagelvin.

Between 8 May 2025 and 12 July 2026, **97%** of transferred patients were admitted **directly** to an inpatient bed.

2.5 patients per day transferred for inpatient care

97% of transferred patients admitted directly to a bed

What does the Emergency Surgical Ambulatory Assessment Unit do?

The Emergency Surgical Ambulatory Assessment Unit (ESAAU) is a same-day surgical assessment service at SWAH. Patients with urgent general surgical problems can be assessed by the surgical team, have tests and investigations and receive treatment without automatically needing an overnight hospital admission or transfer.

Where it is clinically safe, patients are treated and discharged home from SWAH, sometimes with follow-up arranged. If a patient needs inpatient emergency general surgical care or an operation, the pathway ensures that they are admitted for the specialist care they require.

5.8 patients each day through ESAAU | Between 1 April and 30 June 2026

With 5.8 patients per day assessed, treated and discharged through the ambulatory pathway in SWAH and 2.5 patients requiring transfer to Altnagelvin for inpatient surgery, the established Emergency Surgical Ambulatory Assessment Unit is helping many patients remain in SWAH for the treatment and care.

Better outcomes for patients

Independent CHKS analysis found improved outcomes following the service change, including:

24% lower mortality | **28.5%** fewer complications | **22.5%** fewer readmissions

RQIA has also recognised progress in governance and operational arrangements.

Patients tell us about their experience

The Trust issued **1,171** patient experience surveys on the EGS pathway. Of those who responded, **76%** rated their experience as **Good** or **Excellent**.

1,171 surveys issued | **76%** Good or Excellent

To support patient transfers and help reduce pressure on the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS), the Trust has extended its independent ambulance provision from 30 March 2026. This provides non-paramedic ambulance cover, where clinically appropriate, from 6.00am until 2.30am each day, while NIAS continues to provide ambulance transport where this is clinically required.

The Western Trust remains committed to maintaining safe, effective and sustainable services for our population and will continue to work closely with RQIA, our staff, the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and partner organisations to implement the report's recommendations and further strengthen the quality and safety of care for patients across the Western Trust area.

To support openness and provide factual information for the public, the Trust has developed a dedicated online information hub setting out the Emergency General Surgery pathways, key milestones, timelines, independent reports and frequently asked questions.

"Everyone was so patient, kind and caring throughout my time on the ward. The staff always took the time to check in, explain things clearly and make sure I was comfortable. I would also like to thank everyone involved in arranging my transfer to Altnagelvin Hospital. The whole process was very smooth and well organised, which helped put my mind at ease. The staff are a real credit to SWAH and I am very grateful for the care I received."

Patient feedback, SWAH, Ward 3.



Some members of staff in the Emergency Surgical Ambulatory Assessment Unit, which continues to deliver a significant service for patients in SWAH.

Western Health and Social Care Trust

Want the full story?

Visit the Western Trust website for news, features, videos and service information.

www.westerntrust.hscni.net

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This newsletter is for everyone across Fermanagh and West Tyrone. Copies will be made available throughout the area, including across Trust facilities and through our community networks and partners, helping as many people as possible find out more about the Health and Care Futures programme and the opportunities to get involved and have their say.

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