

Health campaigners deliver busload of responses ahead of hospitals reform consultation closing

A public consultation into the plans will close on Friday



Fermanagh residents meet with Peter Jacobsen (Director of Health Service Transformation) as they hand in petitions at Castle building on Thursday. PICTURE COLM LENAGHAN

By [Conor Coyle](#)

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Health campaigners have delivered a busload of responses to the Department of Health ahead of the closing of a consultation into a major change of the hospital network in the north.

The proposed plans would see services spread and shared across counties and patients expected to travel further for specialist treatment.

A public consultation into the plans will close on Friday.

Health Minister Mike Nesbitt says the public “needs to recognise that not every hospital will offer every procedure”.

However, health campaigners from some local hospitals say the new plans will lead to worse outcomes for patients, especially in rural areas.

Save Our Acute Services, a campaign group set up in response to the removal of emergency general surgery at the South West Acute Hospital in Enniskillen in 2022, delivered the bundles of responses to Stormont via bus on Thursday.

“The Department of Health hospital network consultation has not factored in the unique rural geography of the South West Acute Hospital and the 83,000 patient population who are currently placed at a unique risk,” SOAS spokesperson Helen Hamill said.

“Fermanagh people are not unreasonable; we simply want equal access to emergency surgery and emergency medical situations.”