

Hand on Heart demo to take place outside Leinster House

UHW cath lab to close for upgrading of equipment

A cardiac care campaign group is calling for support for a one hour demo outside the gates of Leinster House this Thursday 28th November between 1pm and 2pm. Posing the question 'Is your heart in the right place?', the Hand on Heart group suggests that those who would like to support the event but can't should ask a Dublin based friend or family member to support in their place. The group behind Hand on Heart (Health Equality for the South East) has been active over the past months collecting signed voting declarations which they will be giving into Leinster House for the attention of the Taoiseach.

Sinead O'Neill, speaking for the group, said the message is simple and easily understood: "Despite years of promises, cardiac access and care for people in the South East remains as it was 5 years ago - 39 hours per week. The planning announced will see this remain the case for another 2 years at least. We believe that is unacceptable to many people in the South East and we hope that anyone in the vicinity of Leinster House this Thursday between 1pm and 2 pm will drop by to show support to our case."

A second cath lab at University Hospital Waterford (UHW) is awaiting planning approval but its delivery timeframe, possibly within the next two years, comes with a proposal to consider looking at a maximum 60hr per week service window subject to additional staff recruitment and resourcing at the hospital once the facility opens.



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Cath lab closure

Meanwhile, there are plans to close the lab at UHW for up to 12 weeks to facilitate the upgrading of equipment. However, Deputy David Cullinane (SF) says there will not be any loss of PPCI services while the upgrading works are being carried out. Waterford Oireachtas members met with hospital management and representatives from the South/South West Hospital Group last week. Deputy David Cullinane says more than €800,000 has been made available for the refit.

"The problem was that for the refit to happen there was a fear that the PPCI services would have to stop or cease in Waterford for a period of 12 weeks," he said. "We're being told that won't be the case. We still don't have the details of what exactly will be put in place in terms of a plan but, what we are being told is that there won't be any loss of PPCI services in Waterford while the upgrading works are being done." He added: "We're also being told that it's full steam ahead in terms of building the second cath lab."