



National  
Patient  
Experience  
Survey

National Patient  
Experience Survey  
2018

Royal College of  
Surgeons in Ireland  
(RCSI) Hospital  
Group

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## About the National Patient Experience Survey 2018

The National Patient Experience Survey is a nationwide survey that offers patients the opportunity to describe their experiences of public acute healthcare in Ireland. The survey is a partnership between the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health. The survey was conducted for the first time in 2017 and repeated in 2018.

Nationally, 26,752 people were invited to participate in the second National Patient Experience Survey. In total, 13,404 completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of over 50%. 1,931 patients from RCSI Hospital Group took part in the survey.

The aim of the survey is to find out about patients' experiences in public acute hospitals and to use their feedback to identify areas of good experience, and areas needing improvement. The HSE responded to the 2017 survey results by producing detailed quality improvement plans at national, hospital group and hospital levels. The implementation of these plans is coordinated by an oversight group, and a wide range of initiatives have already been introduced across Ireland's public acute hospitals. Some examples of these initiatives can be seen at <https://www.patientexperience.ie/improvements-in-care/>.

## What were the main findings for RCSI Hospital Group?

The majority of participants from RCSI Hospital Group reported positive experiences in hospital. 82% of participants said they had 'good' or 'very good' overall experiences, compared with 84% nationally. Some changes in patient experience ratings were identified, compared with the 2017 survey. The hospital group received significantly higher scores for care on the ward, examinations, diagnosis and treatment; and discharge or transfer. The findings of the 2018 survey helped inform quality improvement plans in hospitals of the RCSI Hospital Group.

## Hospital group profile

RCSI Hospital Group is one of seven hospital groups<sup>1</sup> in Ireland. Hospital groups were established in Ireland in 2013 with the aim of integrating hospital networks in order to provide safer, more effective care. The purpose of this report is to compare the results for this hospital group with other groups, and also to explore variation in

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<sup>1</sup> The Children's Hospital Group is the seventh hospital group in Ireland. Paediatric hospitals and children's services were not surveyed on this occasion.

results between the hospitals within the group. Specific reports on the results of the National Patient Experience Survey for each hospital, and associated quality improvement plans are available at [www.patientexperience.ie](http://www.patientexperience.ie).

The people who responded to the National Patient Experience Survey were admitted to a hospital in one of the six hospital groups listed below:

South/South West Hospital Group	
Ireland East Hospital Group	
RCSI Hospital Group	
UL Hospitals	
Saolta University Health Care Group	
Dublin Midlands Hospital Group	

There are 5 eligible hospitals in RCSI Hospital Group (Table 1). The hospitals in RCSI Hospital Group provide emergency as well as elective inpatient care. Participants were asked to answer questions across each stage of care. However, people who were not admitted through an emergency department did not answer the questions on admissions.

**Table 1. Profile of hospitals in RCSI Hospital Group**

Hospital Name	Number of inpatient beds*	Number of eligible discharges	Number of participants	Emergency department
Beaumont Hospital	673	1750	827	Yes
Cavan and Monaghan Hospital	242	592	278	Yes
Connolly Hospital	215	764	327	Yes
Louth County Hospital**	2	39	20	No
Our Lady of Lourdes**	365	1047	479	Yes

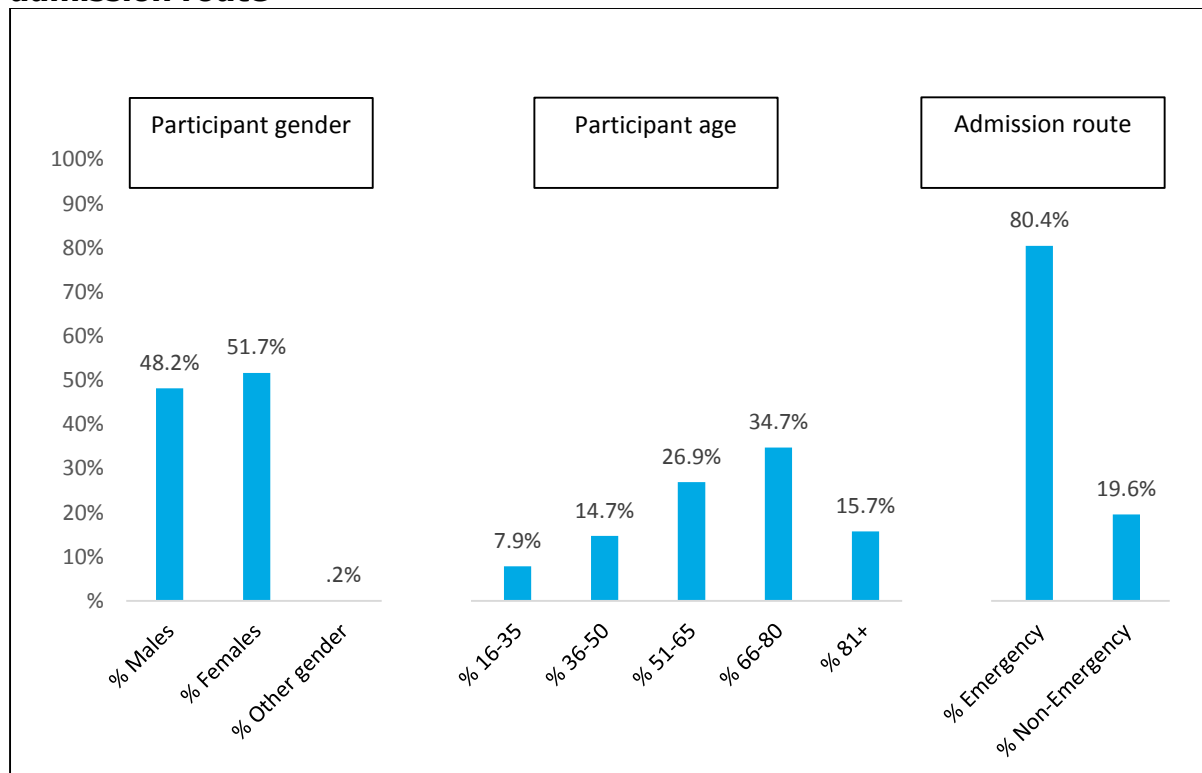
\* Refers to the number of inpatient beds in May 2018.

\*\* Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda and Louth County Hospital in Dundalk asked for their results to be merged to ensure a sufficient response rate was achieved.

## Who took part in the survey?

4,192 people discharged from a hospital in RCSI Hospital Group during the month of May 2018 were invited to participate in the survey. 1,931 people completed the survey, achieving a response rate of 46%. 48.2% of participants were male and 51.7% were female. 1,553 respondents (80.4%) said that their stay in hospital was an emergency. Figure 1. below provides information on the respondents who took part in the survey from RCSI Hospital Group.

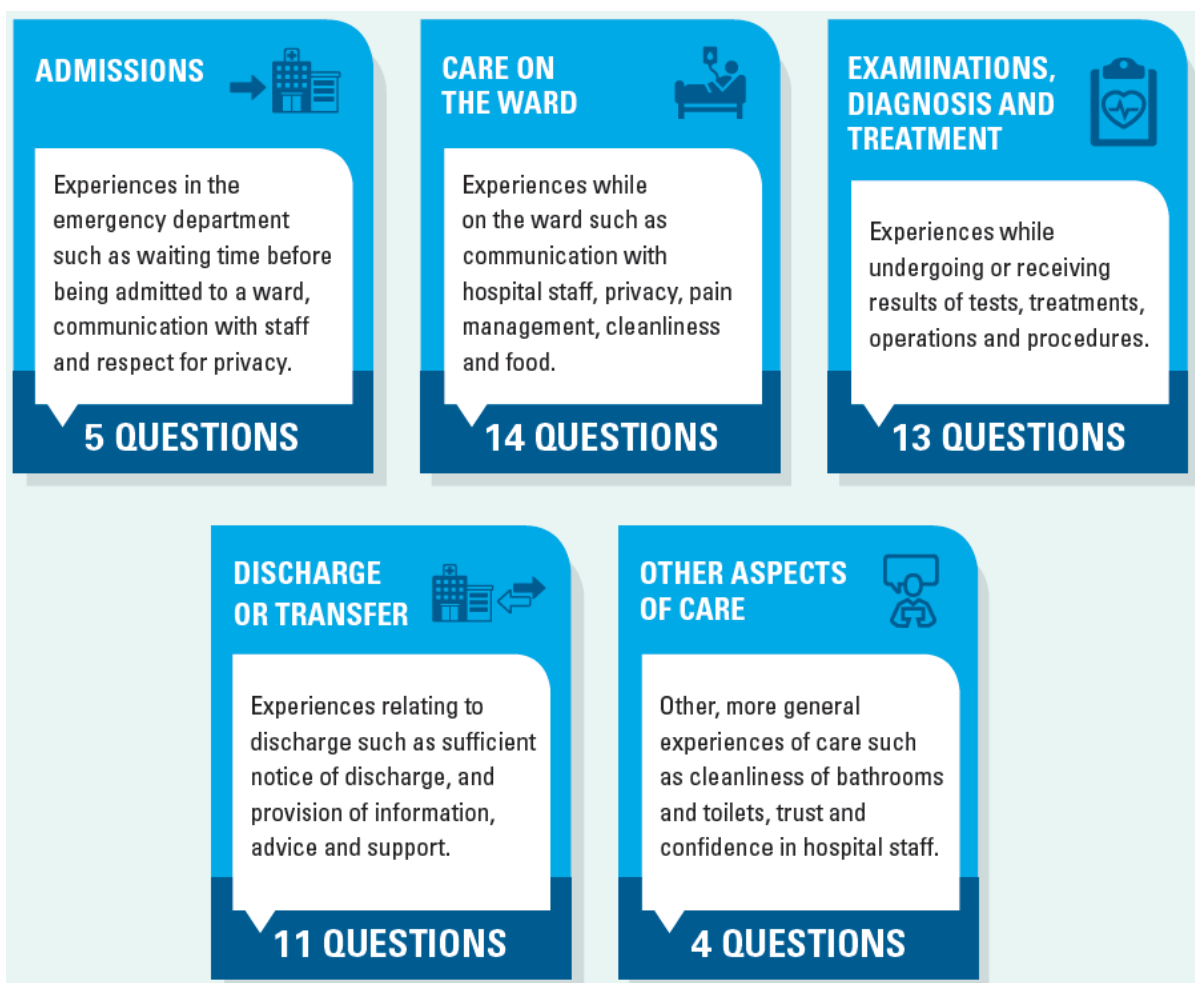
**Figure 1. Participants from RCSI Hospital Group by gender, age group and admission route**



## Survey results for the stages of care along the patient journey

The National Patient Experience Survey 2018 follows the patient journey through hospital from admission to discharge. The 2018 questionnaire is available to download from [www.patientexperience.ie](http://www.patientexperience.ie).

The survey questions were grouped into five stages along the patient journey:



### Interpreting the results for the stages of care

Scores out of 10 are given for each question belonging to a stage of care or a stage as whole. A score of 0 indicates a very negative experience and a score of 10 indicates a very positive experience. Sometimes questions are described as high or low ranking questions. These are questions with the highest or lowest score when compared to a set of questions.

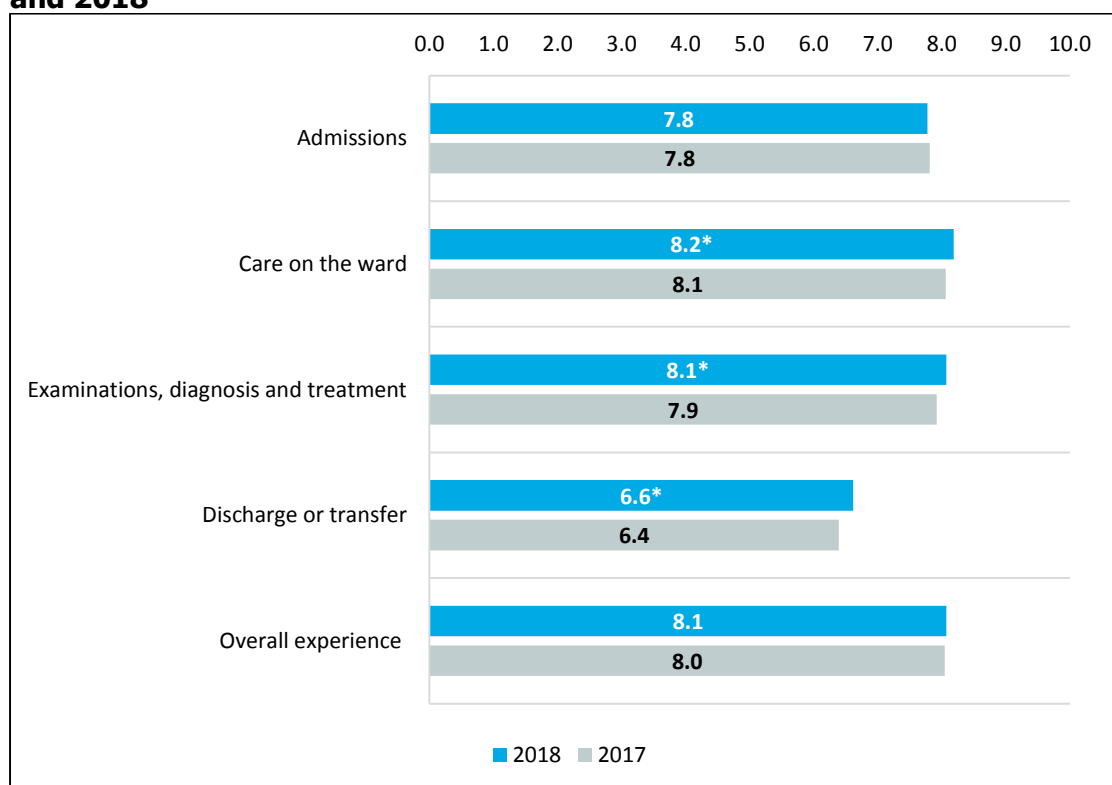
Statistical tests were carried out to examine if there were significant differences in patient experience between 2017 and 2018, between a hospital and its group or between a group and the national average. For further information on the analyses please consult Appendix 3 of the 2018 national report, available from [www.patientexperience.ie](http://www.patientexperience.ie).

## Changes in patient experience over time

Participants' average rating of their overall experience in a hospital of RCSI Hospital Group remained similar to what it was in 2017. While the admissions score remained unchanged from 2017, the RCSI Hospital Group significantly improved on care on the ward, examinations, diagnosis and treatment; and discharge or transfer. Figure 2. shows a comparison of scores for individual stages of care.

It is important that these changes are interpreted with caution as scores will naturally vary from year to year for a variety of reasons. Several rounds of survey data will be required before meaningful trends and changes in patient experience can be accurately identified.

**Figure 2. Comparison of stage of care scores<sup>2</sup> for RCSI Hospital Group for 2017 and 2018**



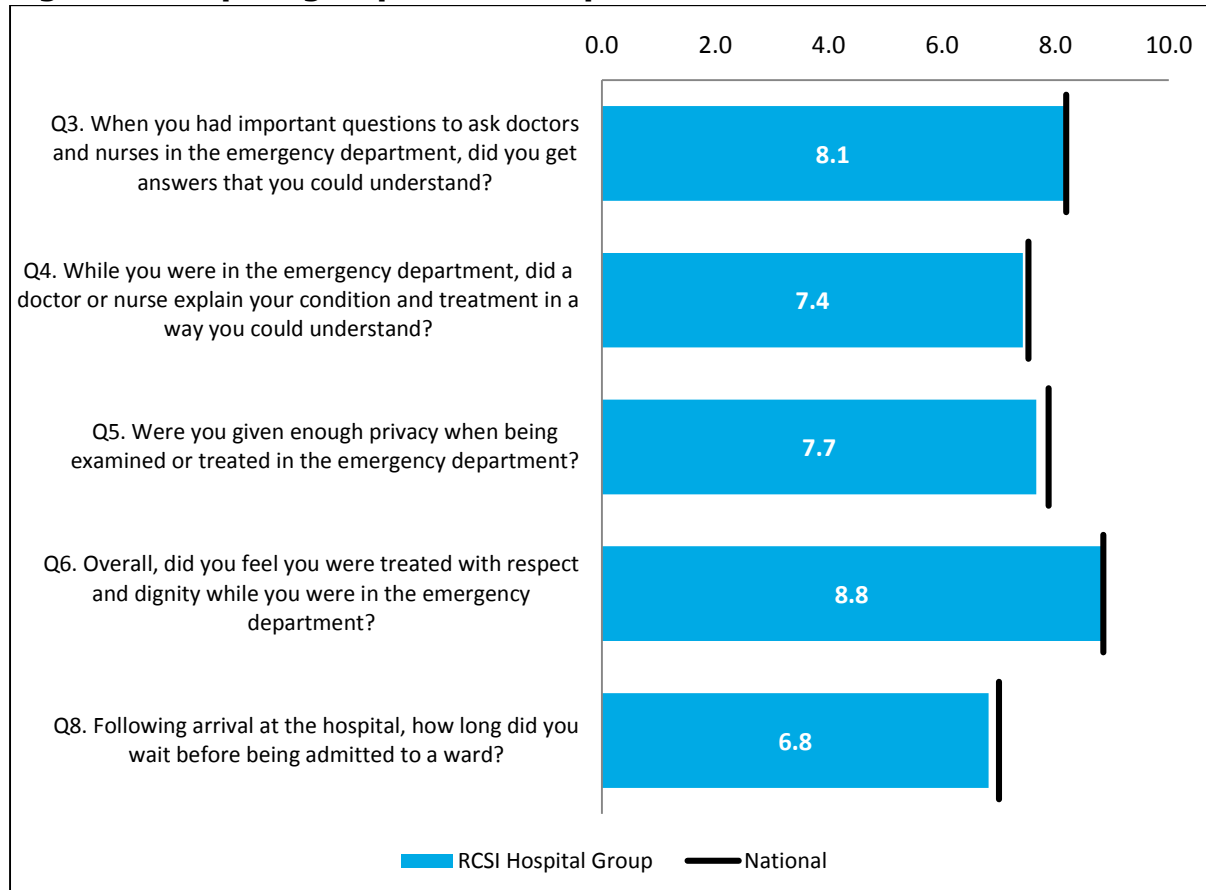
\* Denotes a statistically significant difference between 2017 and 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Scores for the stages of care were constructed by calculating the average scores for all the questions belonging to that stage.

## Admissions

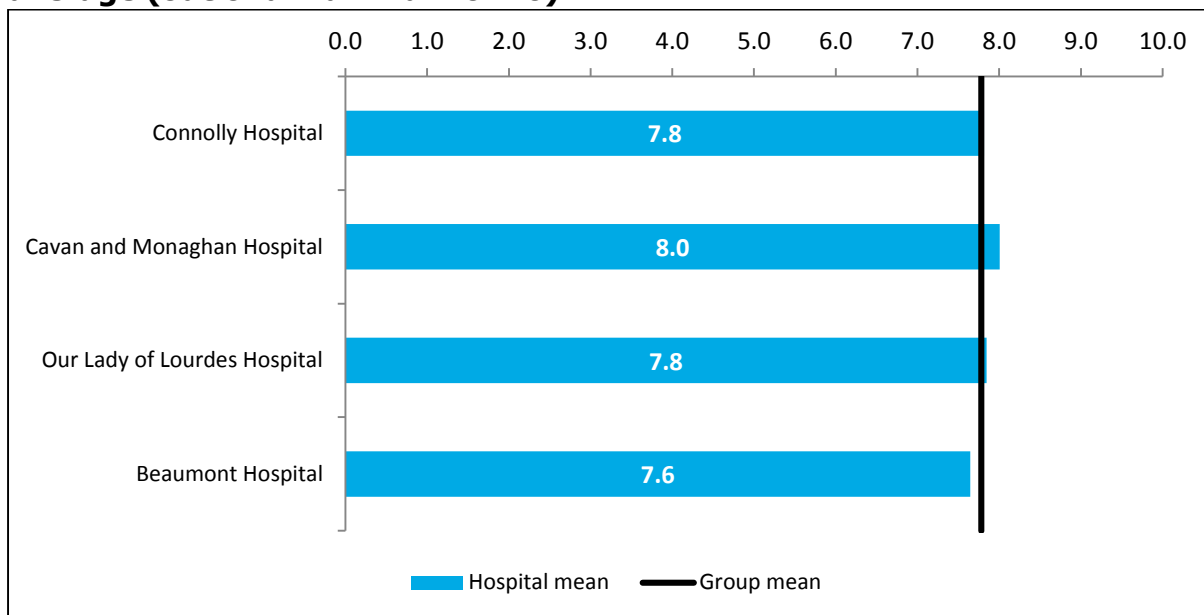
Figure 3. shows the hospital group scores for questions on this stage of care. Figure 4. compares admissions scores for the hospitals of RCSI Hospital Group with the group average. Figure 5. compares the six hospital group admissions scores with the national average.

**Figure 3. Hospital group scores for questions on admissions**

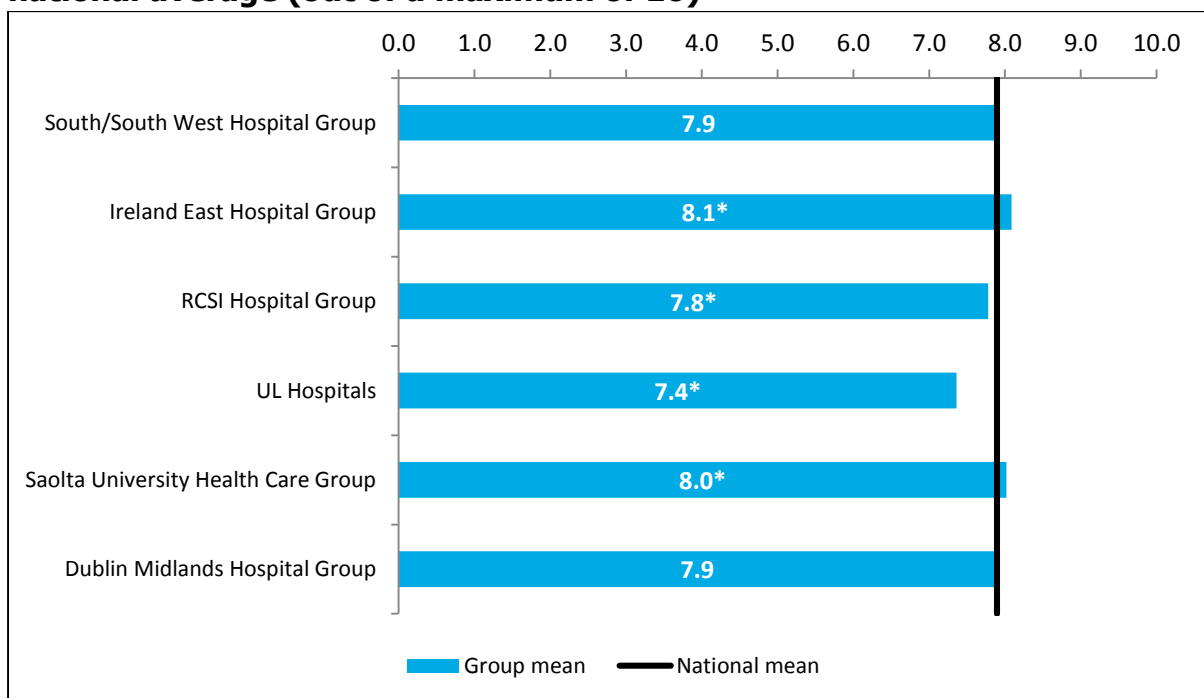




**Figure 4. Comparison of hospital scores for admissions with the group average (out of a maximum of 10)**



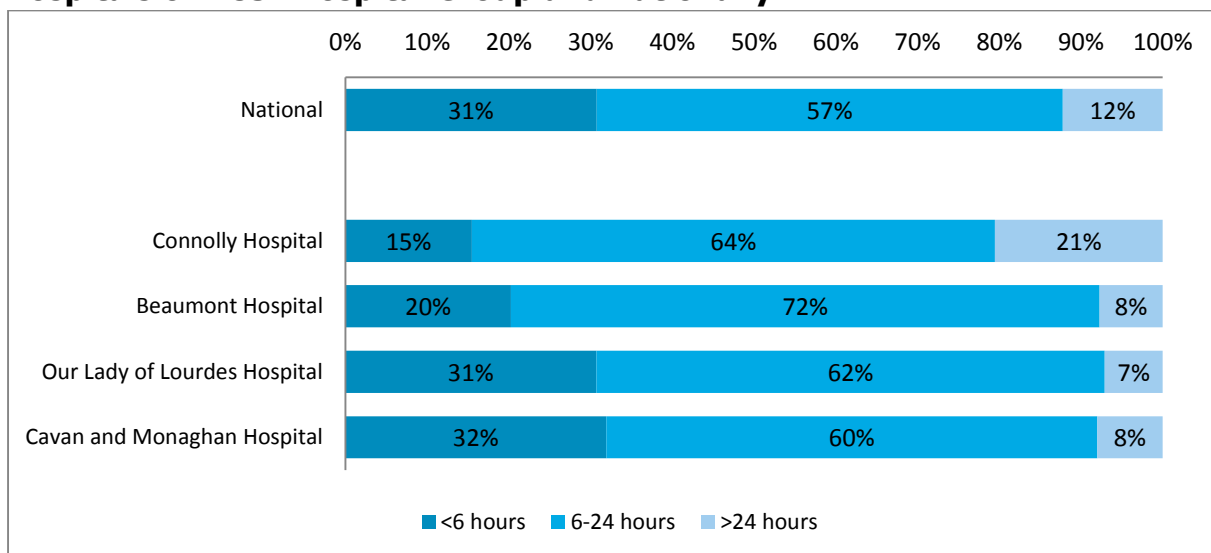
**Figure 5. Comparison of hospital group scores for admissions with the national average (out of a maximum of 10)**



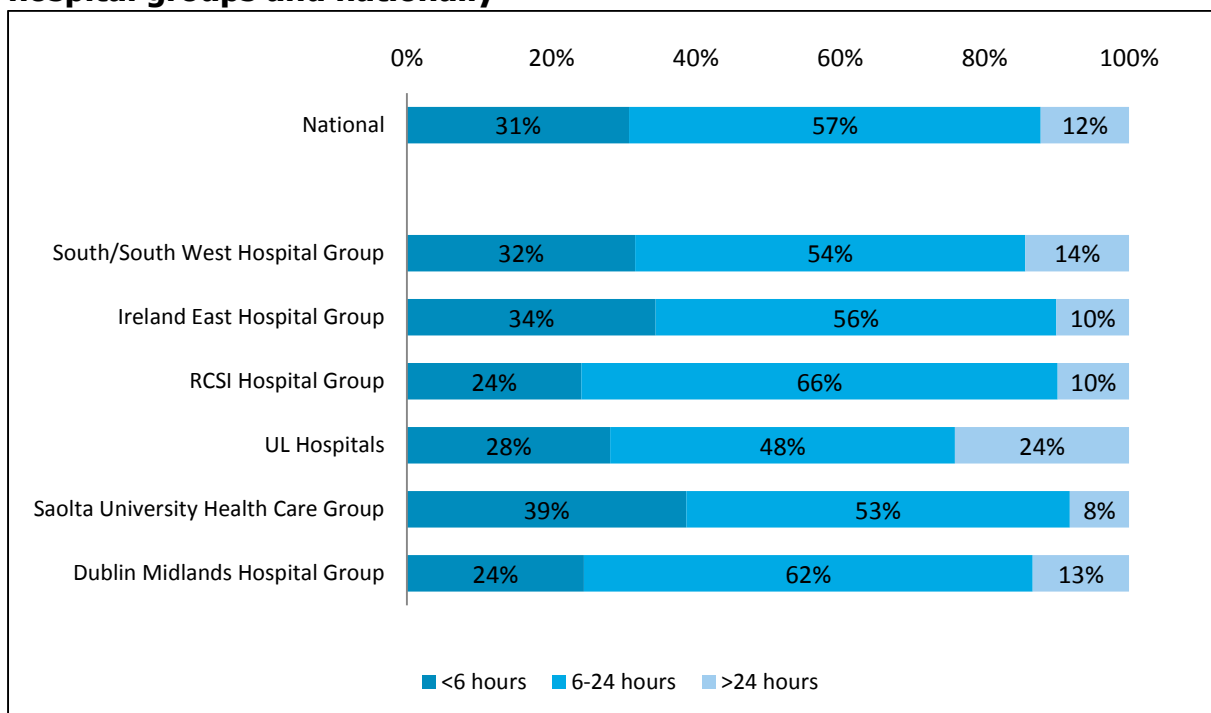
\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the national average

Figure 6. shows patient-reported emergency department waiting times nationally and for the constituent hospitals of RCSI Hospital Group. Figure 7. compares the waiting times for the different hospital groups. Note: Numbers in graphs do not always add up to 100% due to rounding.

**Figure 6. Patient-reported emergency department waiting times for hospitals of RCSI Hospital Group and nationally**



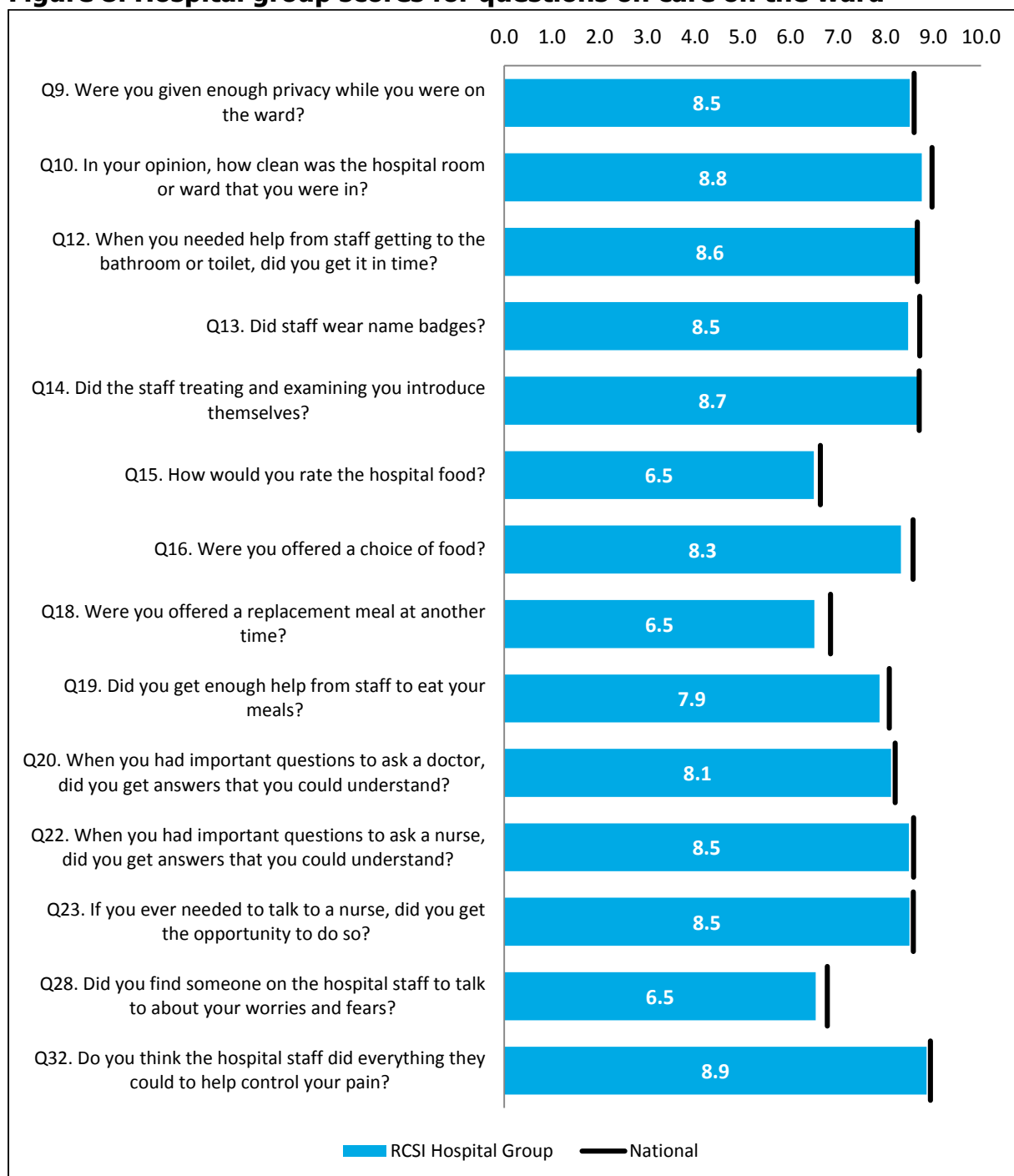
**Figure 7. Patient-reported emergency department waiting times for hospital groups and nationally**



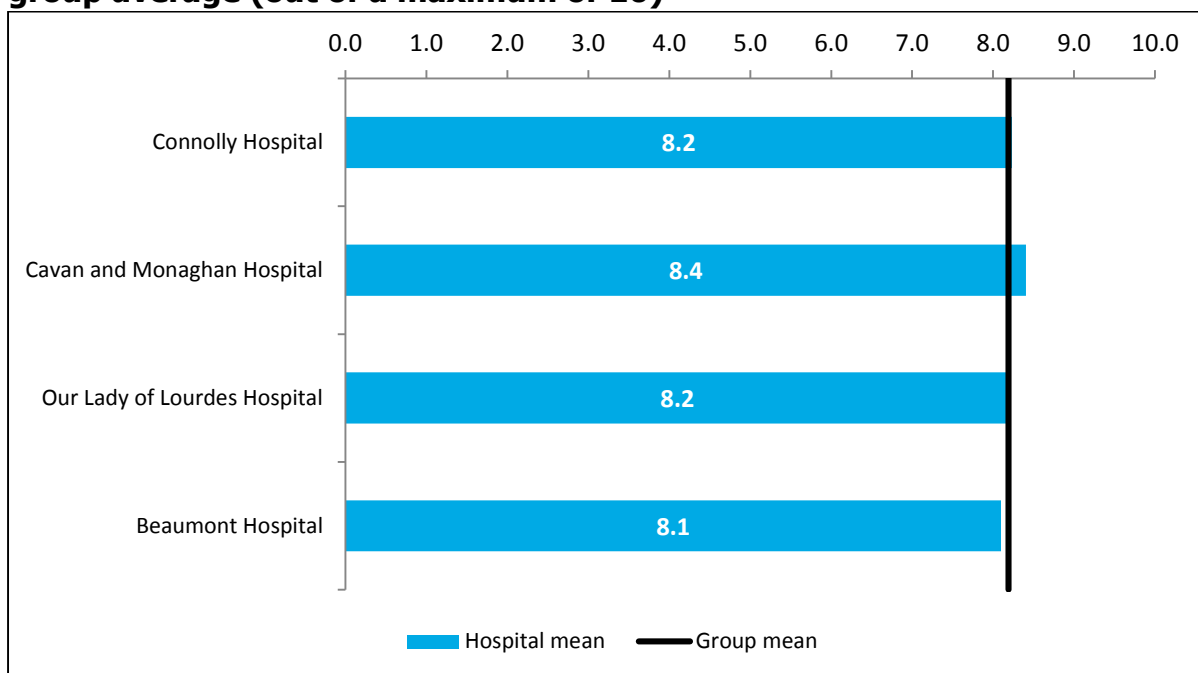
## Care on the ward

Figure 8. shows the hospital group scores for questions on care on the ward. Figure 9. compares the care on the ward scores for the hospitals of RCSI Hospital Group with the group average. Figure 10. compares the six hospital group scores for this stage with the national average.

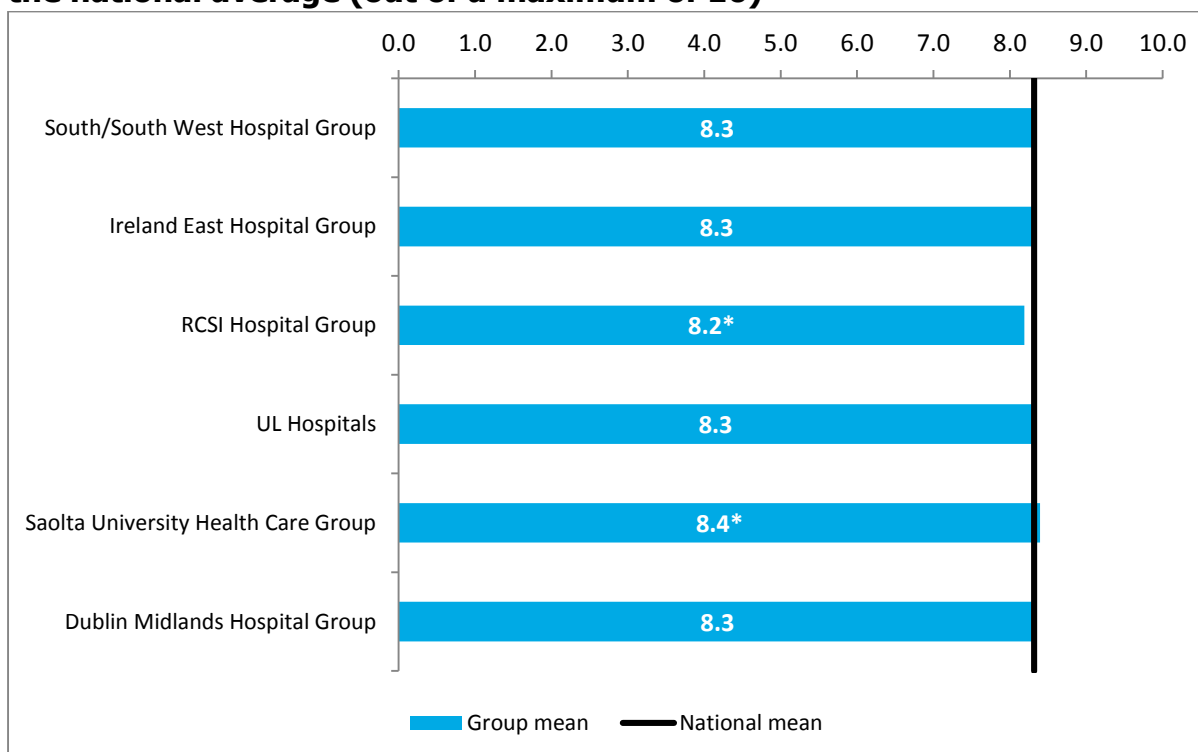
**Figure 8. Hospital group scores for questions on care on the ward**



**Figure 9. Comparison of hospital scores for care on the ward with the group average (out of a maximum of 10)**



**Figure 10. Comparison of hospital group scores for care on the ward with the national average (out of a maximum of 10)**

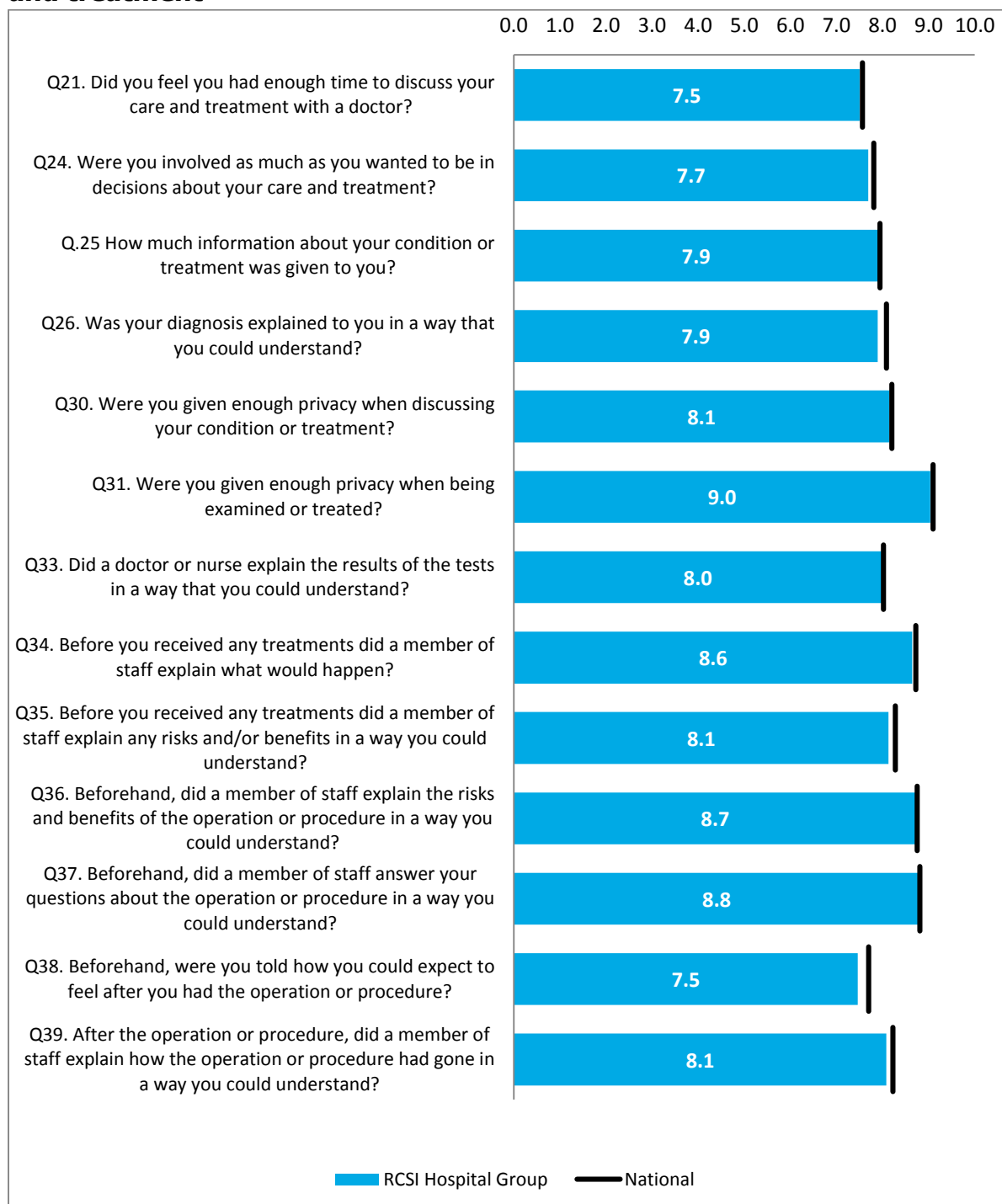


\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the national average

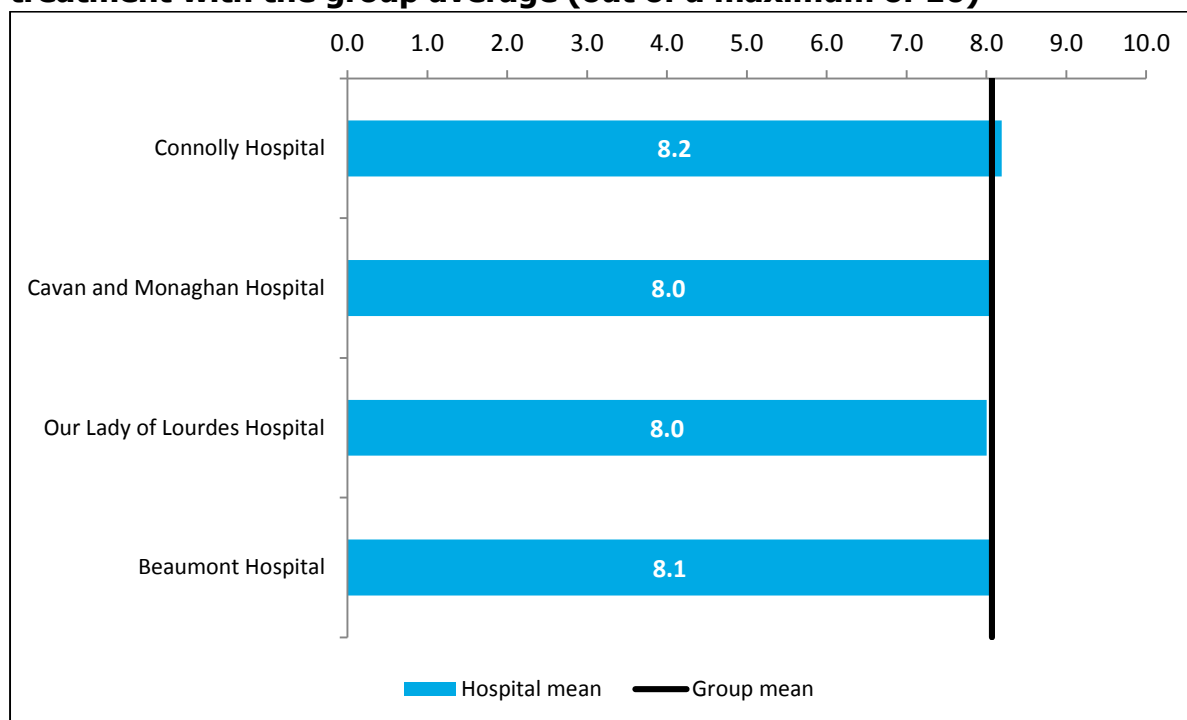
## Examinations, diagnosis and treatment

Figure 11. shows the hospital group scores for questions on examinations, diagnosis and treatment. Figure 12. compares the examinations, diagnosis and treatment scores for the hospitals of RCSI Hospital Group with the group average. Figure 13. compares the six hospital group scores for this stage with the national average.

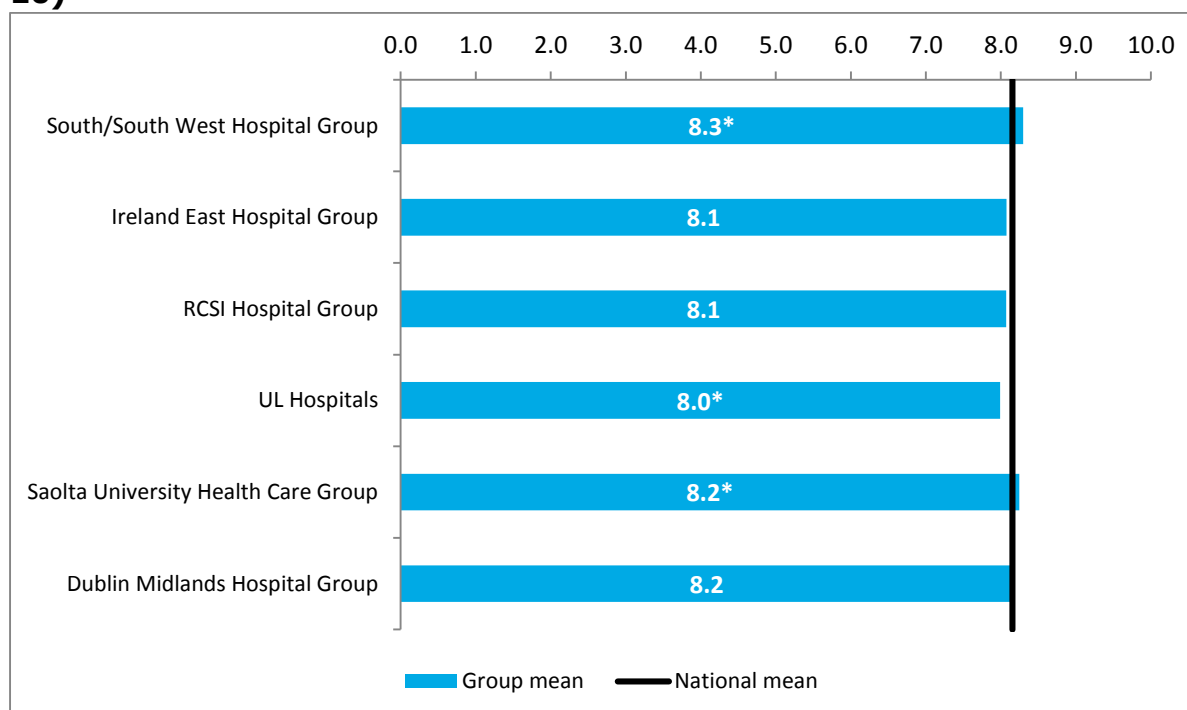
**Figure 11. Hospital group scores for questions on examinations, diagnosis and treatment**



**Figure 12. Comparison of hospital scores for examinations, diagnosis and treatment with the group average (out of a maximum of 10)**



**Figure 13. Comparison of hospital group scores for examinations, diagnosis and treatment with the national average (out of a maximum of 10)**

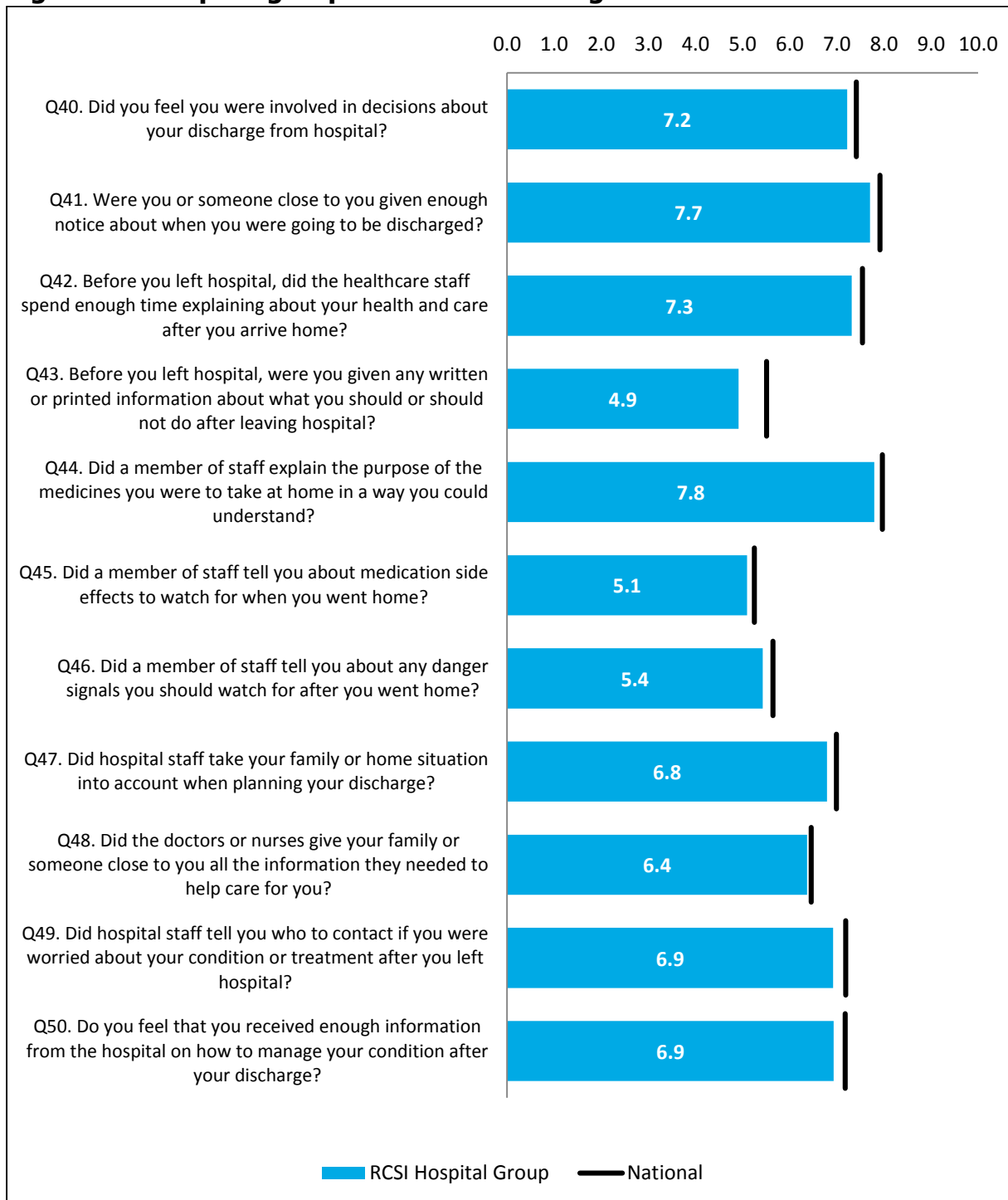


\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the national average

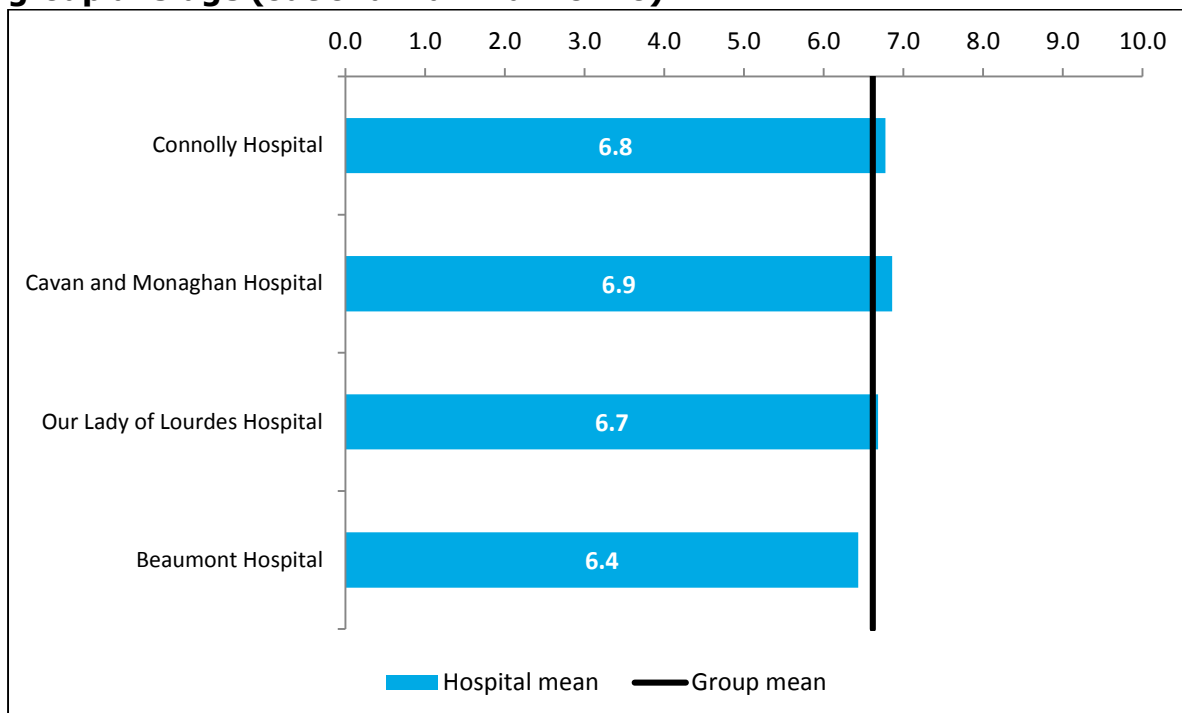
## Discharge or transfer

Figure 14. shows the hospital group scores for questions on discharge or transfer. Figure 15. compares the discharge or transfer scores for the hospitals of RCSI Hospital Group with the group average. Figure 16. compares the six hospital group scores for this stage with the national average.

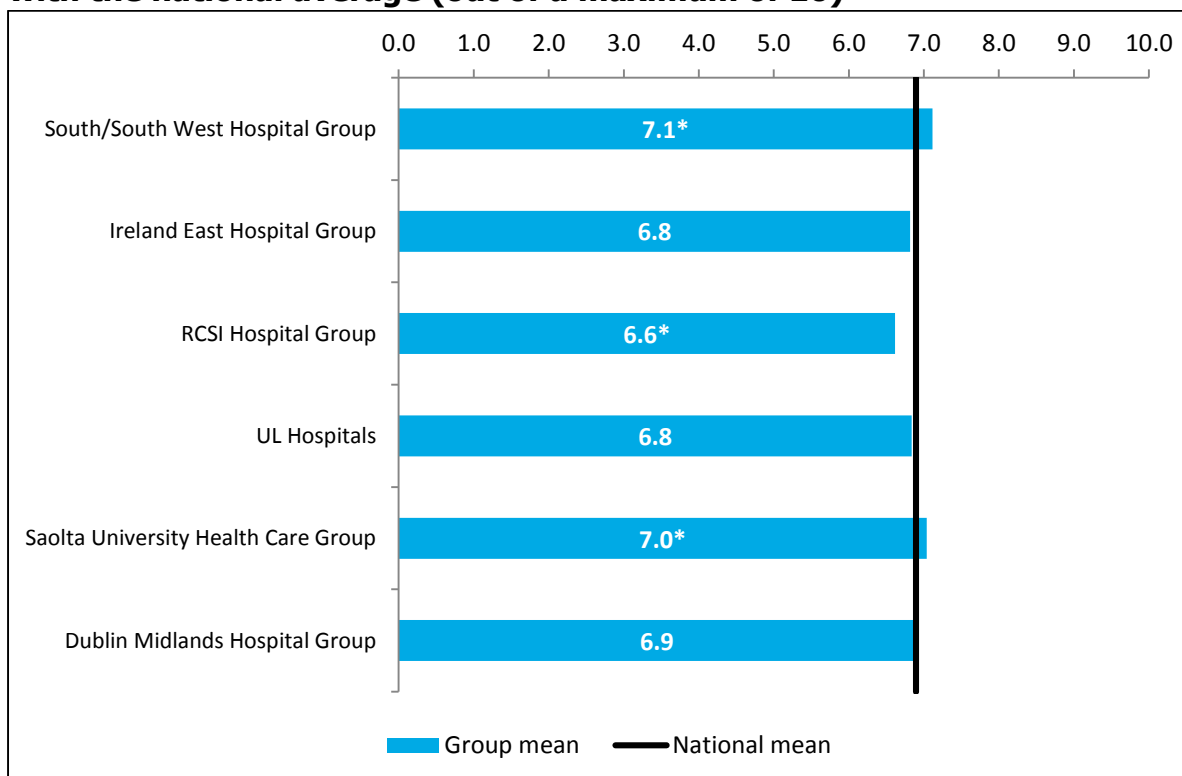
**Figure 14. Hospital group scores for discharge or transfer**



**Figure 15. Comparison of hospital scores for discharge or transfer with the group average (out of a maximum of 10)**



**Figure 16. Comparison of hospital group scores for discharge or transfer with the national average (out of a maximum of 10)**



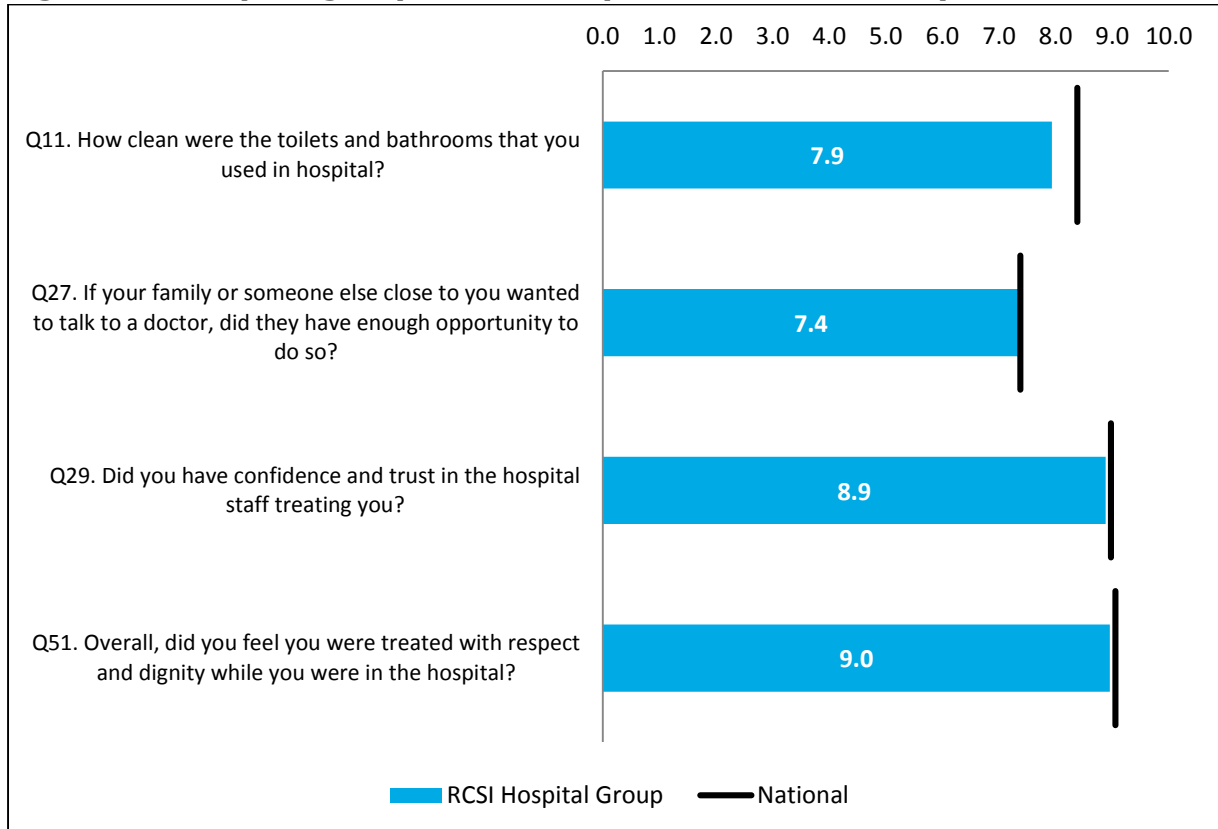
\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the national average



## Other aspects of care

Figure 17. shows the hospital group scores for questions on other aspects of care.

**Figure 17. Hospital group scores for questions on other aspects of care**

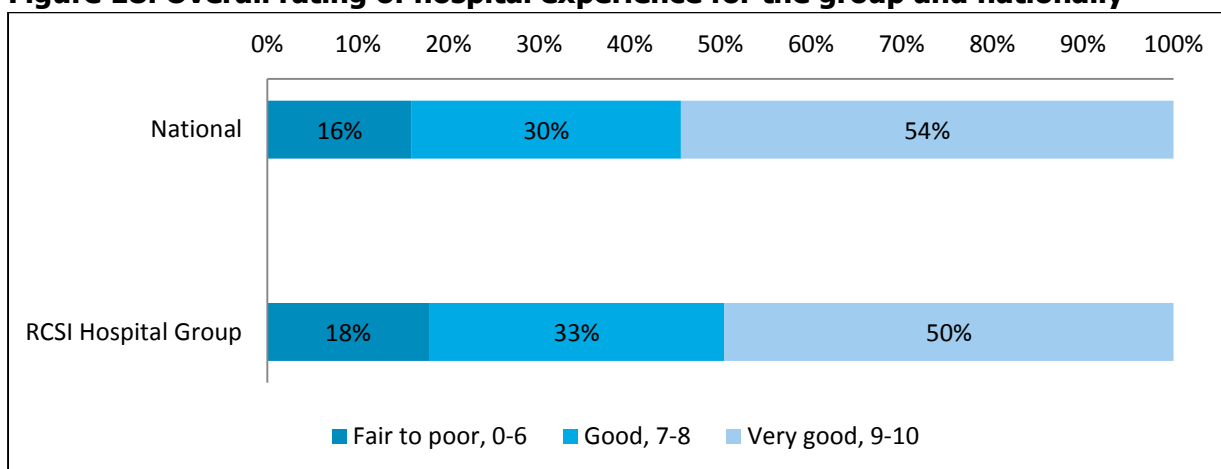


## Overall experience

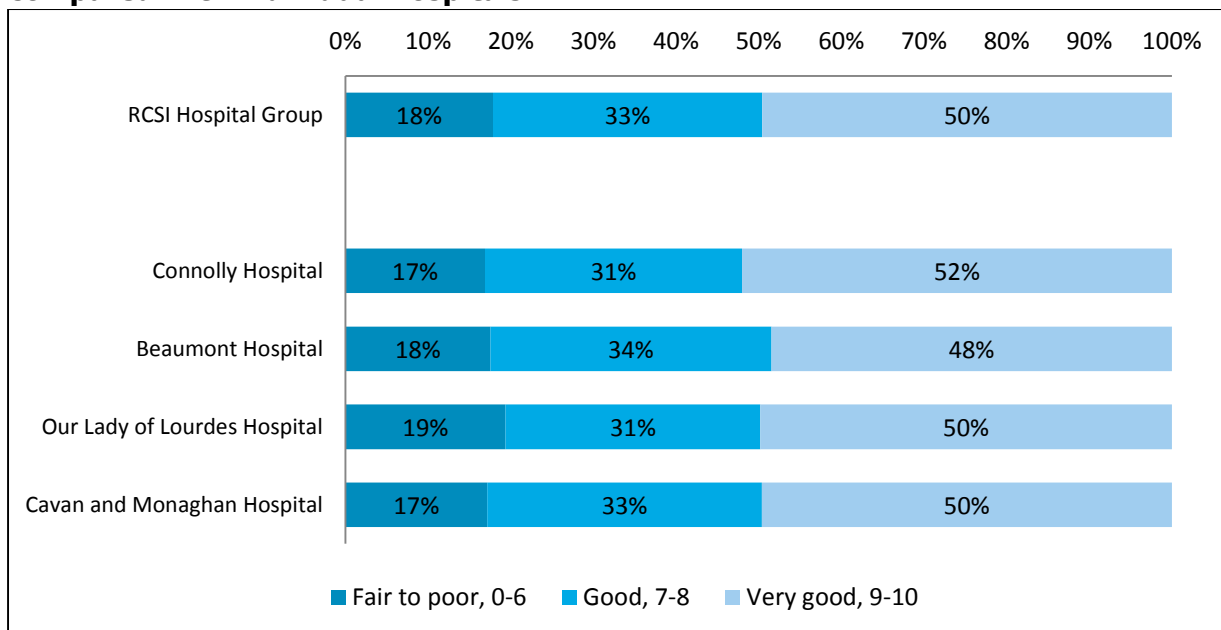
Respondents were asked to rate their overall hospital experience on a scale from 0 to 10, with 10 being the most positive experience, and 0 the most negative experience. 50% of participants from the RCSI Hospital Group rated their care as very good which is below the national figure of 54%.

Figure 18. compares the overall ratings of hospital experience for RCSI Hospital Group with the national average. Figure 19. compares the overall ratings for the group with that of individual hospitals.

**Figure 18. Overall rating of hospital experience for the group and nationally**



**Figure 19. Overall rating of hospital experience for RCSI Hospital Group compared with individual hospitals**



## Areas of good experience and areas needing improvement

The map below (Figure 20.) helps to identify areas of good experience and areas needing improvement in RCSI Hospital Group. Questions that have a strong relationship with overall ratings of experience (Q52) are selected as areas of good experience or areas needing improvement respectively.

For example, Q51— 'Overall, did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity while you were in the hospital?' has a problem score greater than 0 and a significant relationship with overall experience. This suggests it is an area where the group should focus quality improvement efforts. The group scored above the national average on Q14 – 'Did the staff treating and examining you introduce themselves?'. The group scored above the national average for this question.

### Interpreting the improvement map

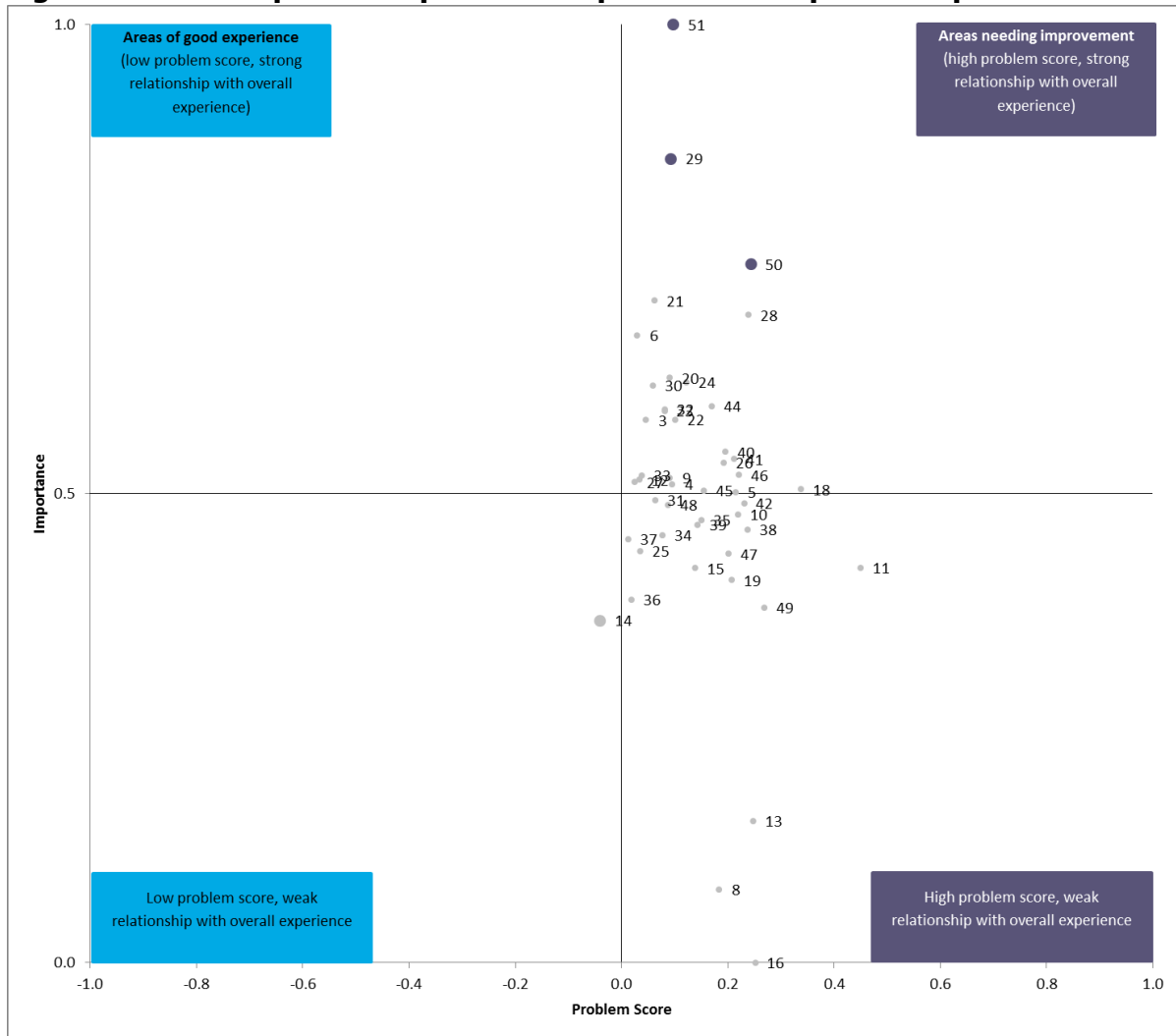
The **importance** of the relationship between each question and overall experience is given on the vertical axis as a number between 0 and 1, with 1 being the strongest possible relationship.

**Problem scores** show the difference (positive or negative) between the national average and a question score (out of 10). These are given on the horizontal axis.

Questions that have high problem scores and are important to patients' overall experiences appear in the **top right section** of the map — these are **areas needing improvement** in this hospital group.

Questions that have low problem scores and are important to patients' overall experiences can be found in the **top left section** of the map — these are **areas of good experience** in this hospital group.

**Figure 20. Overall patient experience map for RCSI Hospital Group**



## Conclusion

### What were patients' experiences of hospital care RCSI Hospital Group in May 2018?

The majority of participants said they had a positive overall experience in a hospital of the RCSI Hospital Group. 82% of patients said they had a 'good' or 'very good' experience, compared with 84% nationally. Patients at Connolly Hospital were most likely to rate their hospital experience as very good, compared with other hospitals in the group.

RCSI Hospital Group's received improved ratings across all of the stages of care in 2018, with the exception of admissions where it scored the same as in the previous year. Patients' average ratings of their overall experience were also unchanged from 2017.

The highest ranking question on admission showed that the majority of patients were treated with respect and dignity in the emergency department. The lowest ranking question for this stage pertains to waiting times in the emergency department; the RCSI Hospital Group scored below-average in this area.

Patients were generally satisfied with how staff managed their pain. However, this question scored below the national average. A number of patients gave negative ratings for the food they ate in hospital, with many also saying that they were not offered a replacement meal when they missed out at mealtimes. In addition, some participants said they were not always able to access emotional support when they needed it.

Patients generally gave high ratings for the privacy they were shown when being examined or treated. However, a number of patients said that they did not have enough time to discuss their care and treatment with a doctor. In addition, some participants said that they were not told how they could expect to feel before an operation or procedure. The RCSI Hospital Group scored below-average in both areas.

Discharge or transfer was the lowest scoring stage of care, both nationally and for the RCSI Hospital Group. The group performed below the national average on every question related to this stage of care. Even though the majority of patients were told about the purpose of the medicines they were to take at home, some patients said

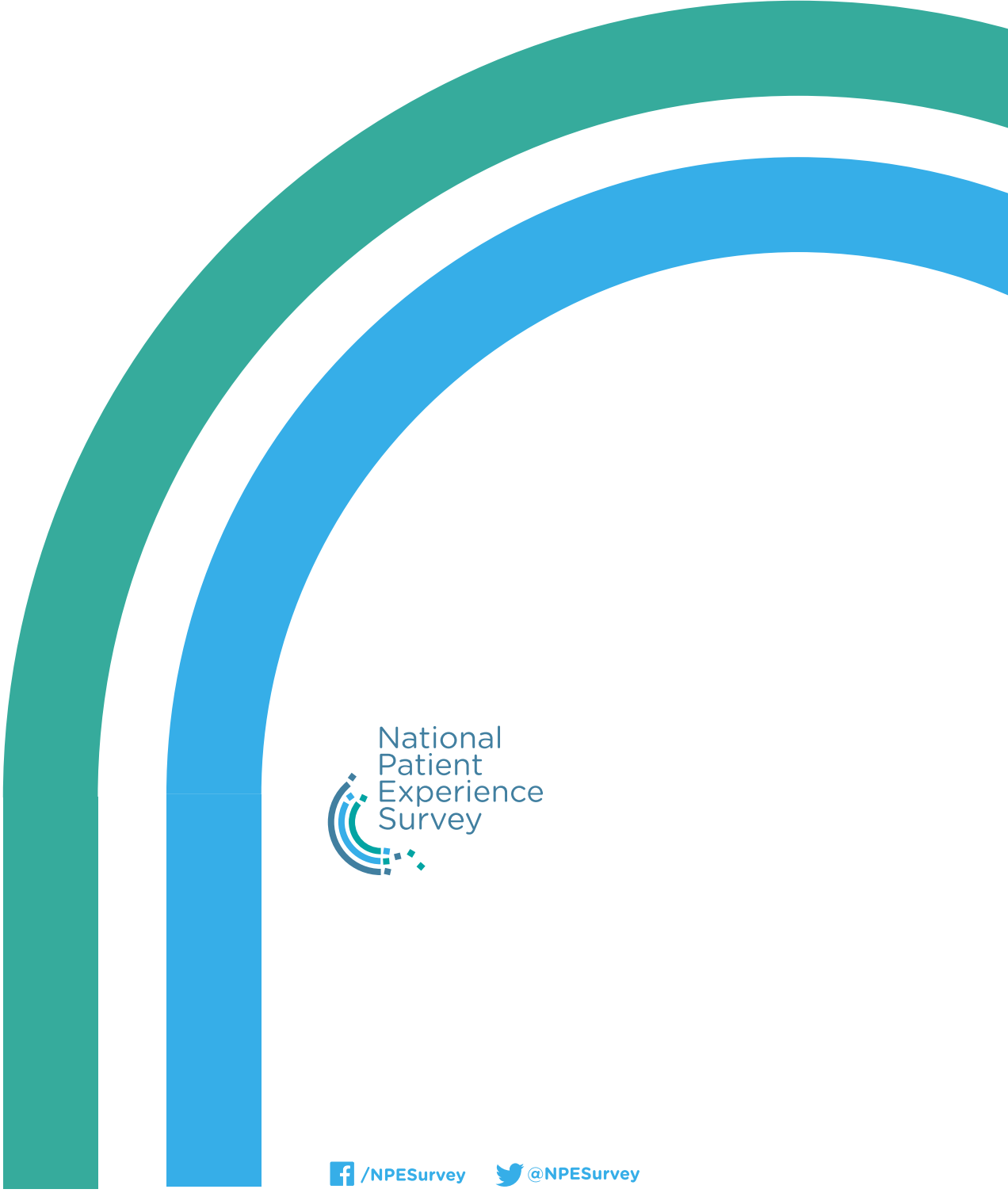
that they received insufficient information in this regard. The lowest ranking question shows that one in every two patients did not get any written or printed information about what they should or should not do after leaving hospital.

In terms of areas of good experience, patients gave positive ratings for the consistency with which staff treating and examining them introduced themselves (Q14).

Patients identified several areas needing improvement across the RCSI Hospital Group. Some patients said that they were not always treated with respect and dignity (Q51). In addition, some did not have complete confidence and trust in the hospital staff treating them (Q29). A number of patients also highlighted that they had not been sufficiently informed about how to manage their condition at home (Q50).

These three areas for improvement are of particular importance as they are strongly related to patients' ratings of their overall experience. For example, patients who were not treated with respect and dignity were less likely to give a positive rating of their overall experience.

The survey has provided valuable information on patients' experiences in acute hospitals at national, hospital group and hospital levels. The findings have been used to develop and implement quality improvement initiatives in RCSI Hospital Group, intended to address the issues identified by patients.



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