



National  
Patient  
Experience  
Survey

National Patient  
Experience Survey  
2018

UL Hospitals

## Contents

About the National Patient Experience Survey 2018 .....	3
What were the main findings for UL Hospitals? .....	3
Hospital group profile .....	3
Who took part in the survey? .....	5
Survey results for the stages of care along the patient journey .....	6
Interpreting the results for the stages of care.....	6
Changes in patient experience over time.....	7
Admissions .....	8
Care on the ward .....	11
Examinations, diagnosis and treatment.....	13
Discharge or transfer.....	15
Other aspects of care .....	17
Overall experience .....	18
Areas of good experience and areas needing improvement.....	19
Conclusion.....	21

## 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%. 1,155 patients from UL Hospitals 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 UL Hospitals?

The majority of participants from UL Hospitals 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. Specifically, the hospital group received significantly higher scores for the admissions stage of care. The findings of the 2018 survey helped inform quality improvement plans in hospitals of UL Hospitals.

## Hospital group profile

UL Hospitals 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 results between the hospitals within the group. Specific reports on the results of the

---

<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.

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 UL Hospitals (Table 1). The hospitals in UL Hospitals 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 UL Hospitals**

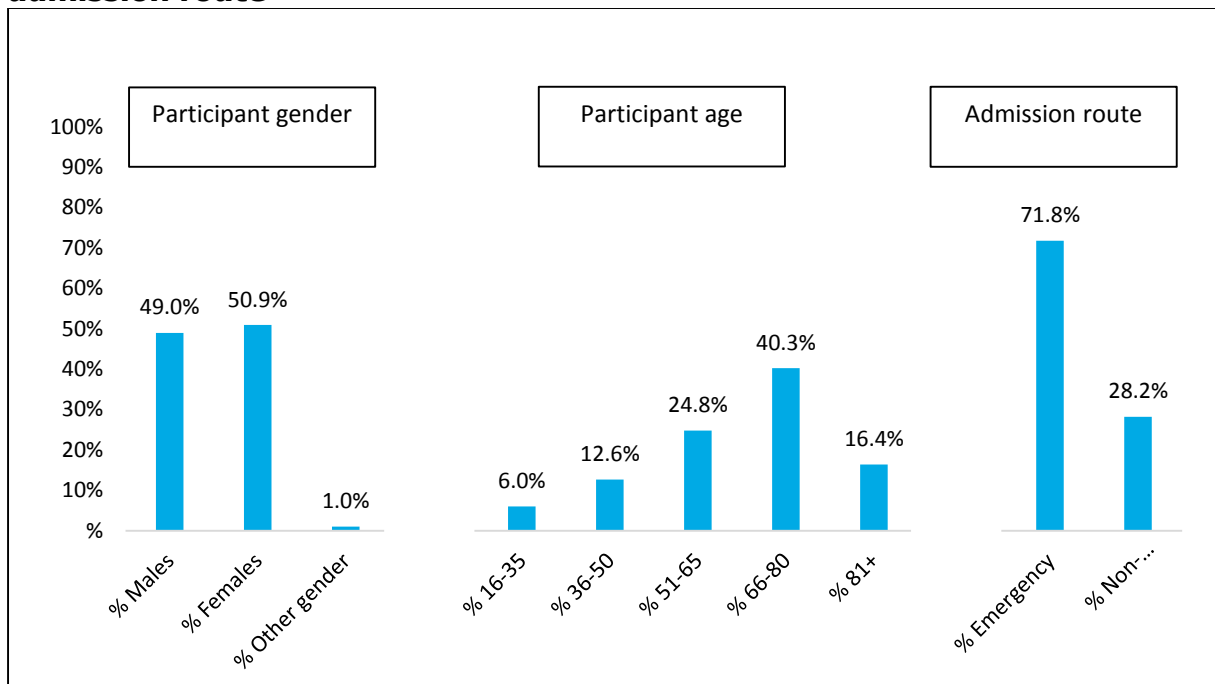
Hospital Name	Number of inpatient beds*	Number of eligible discharges	Number of participants	Emergency department
Croom Orthopaedic Hospital	43	132	80	No
Ennis Hospital	50	126	59	No
University Hospital Limerick	445	1,696	828	Yes
St. John's Hospital	88	254	131	No
Nenagh Hospital	48	113	57	No

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

## Who took part in the survey?

2,321 people discharged from a hospital in UL Hospitals during the month of May 2018 were invited to participate in the survey. 1,155 people completed the survey, achieving a response rate of 50%. 49% of participants were male and 50.9% were female. 829 respondents (71.8%) said that their stay in hospital was an emergency. Figure 1. below provides information on the respondents who took part in the survey from UL Hospitals.

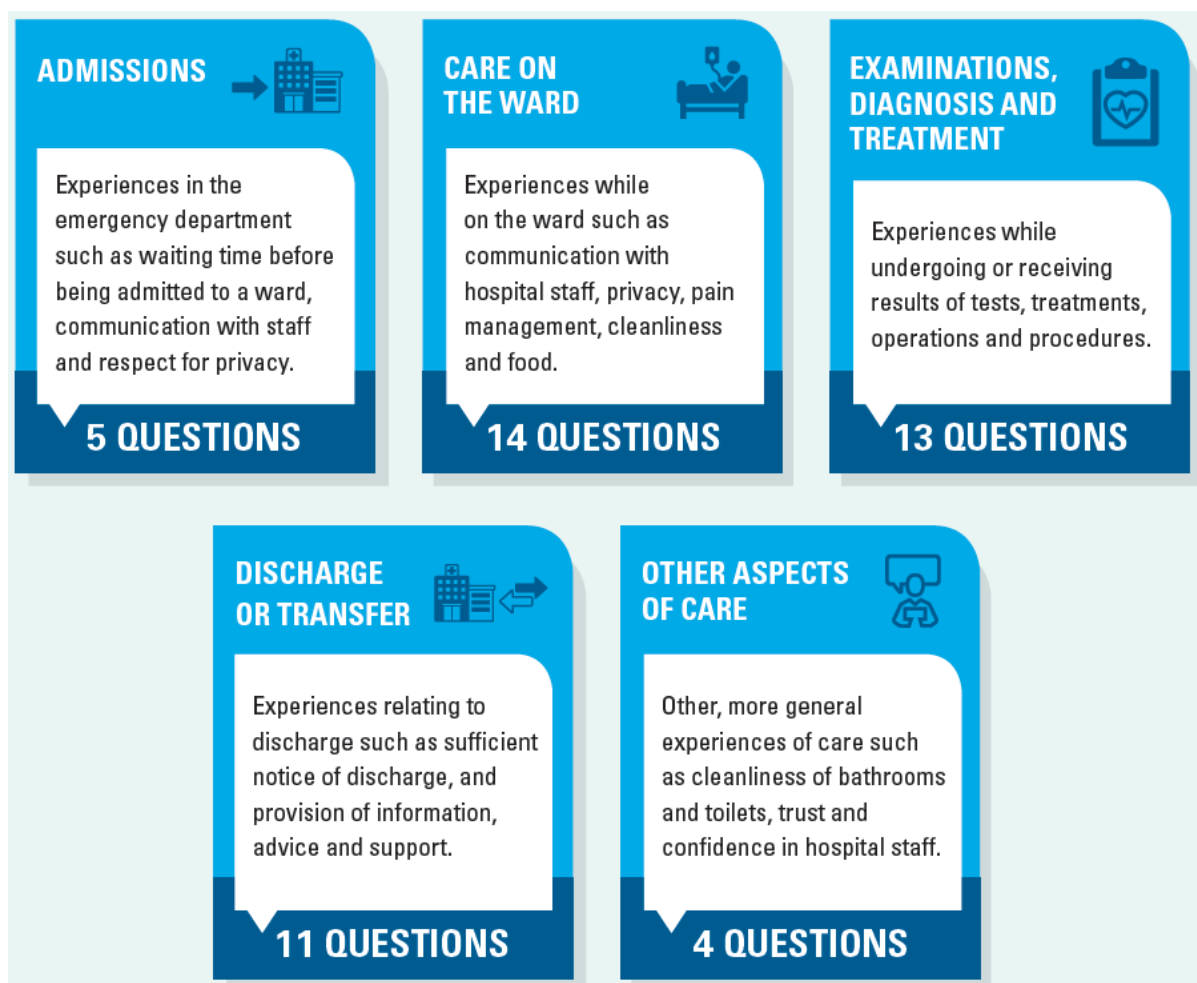
**Figure 1. Participants from UL Hospitals by gender, age group and admission route**



## 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.

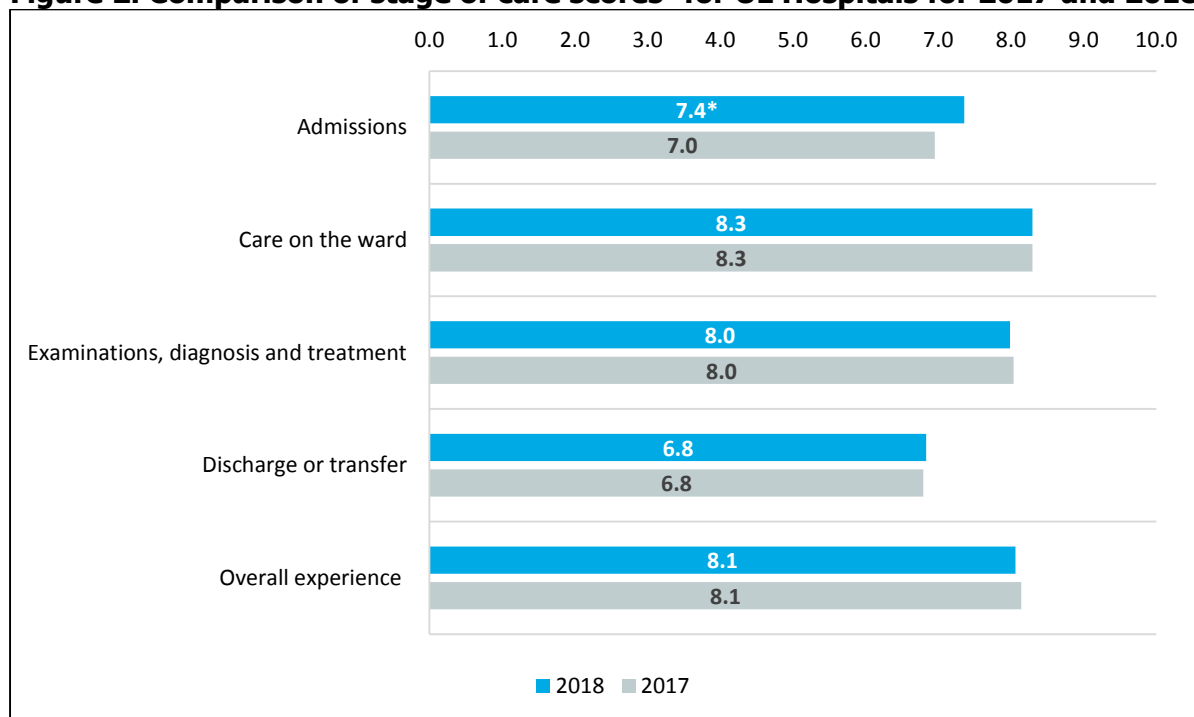
Statistical tests were carried out to examine if there were significant differences in patient experience between 2017 and 2018, between a hospital and its group or between a group and the national average. For further information on the analyses please consult Appendix 3 of the 2018 national report, 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 UL Hospitals was unchanged from 2017. The UL Hospitals significantly improved on the admissions stage of care. The ratings for the other stages of care remained the same as in 2017. 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 UL Hospitals for 2017 and 2018**



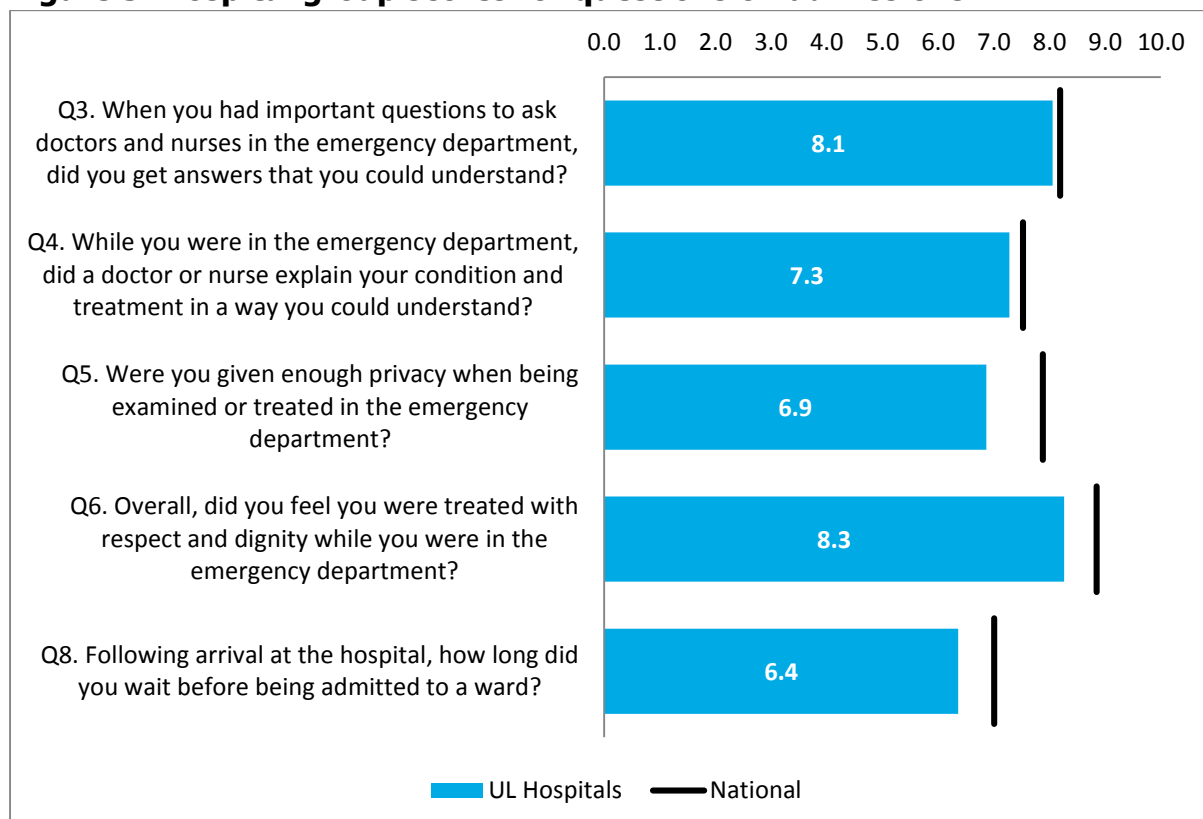
\* Denotes a statistically significant difference between 2017 and 2018.

<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

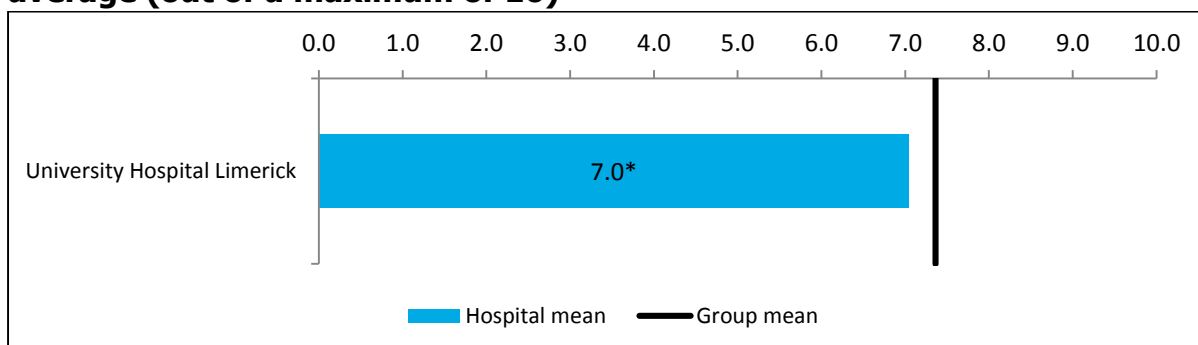
Figure 3. shows the hospital group scores for questions on this stage of care. Figure 4. compares admissions scores for the hospitals of UL Hospitals with the group average. Figure 5. compares the six hospital group admissions scores with the national average.

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



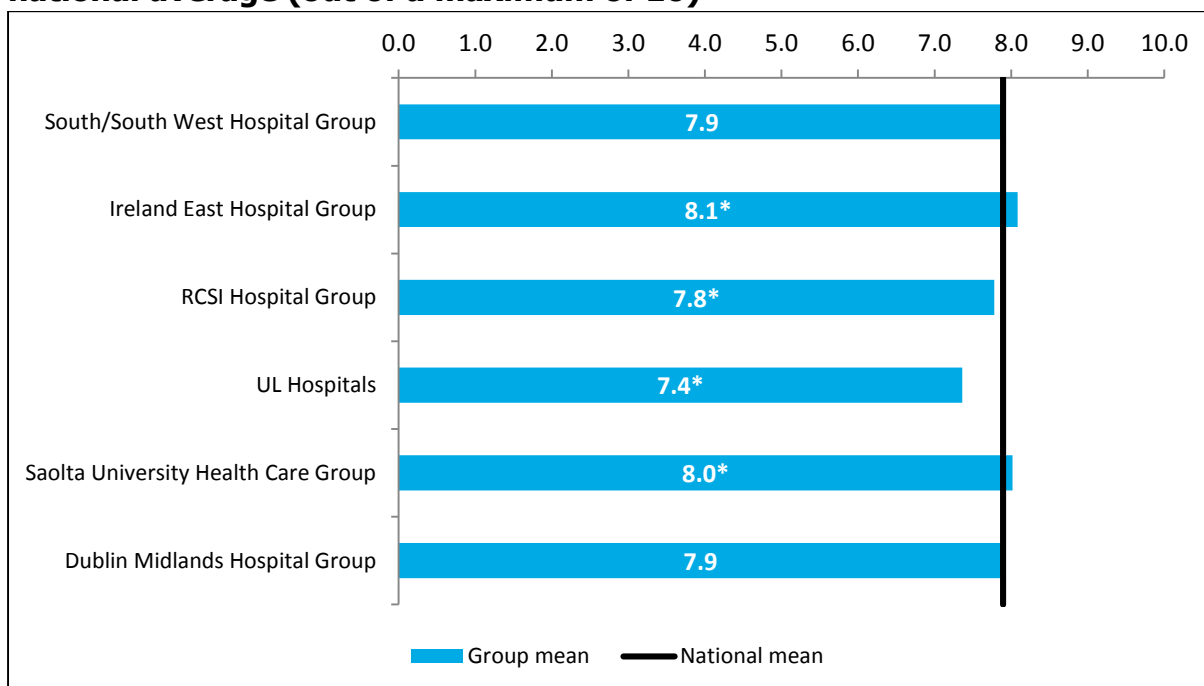


**Figure 4. Comparison of hospital scores for admissions<sup>3</sup> with the group average (out of a maximum of 10)**



\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the group average

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

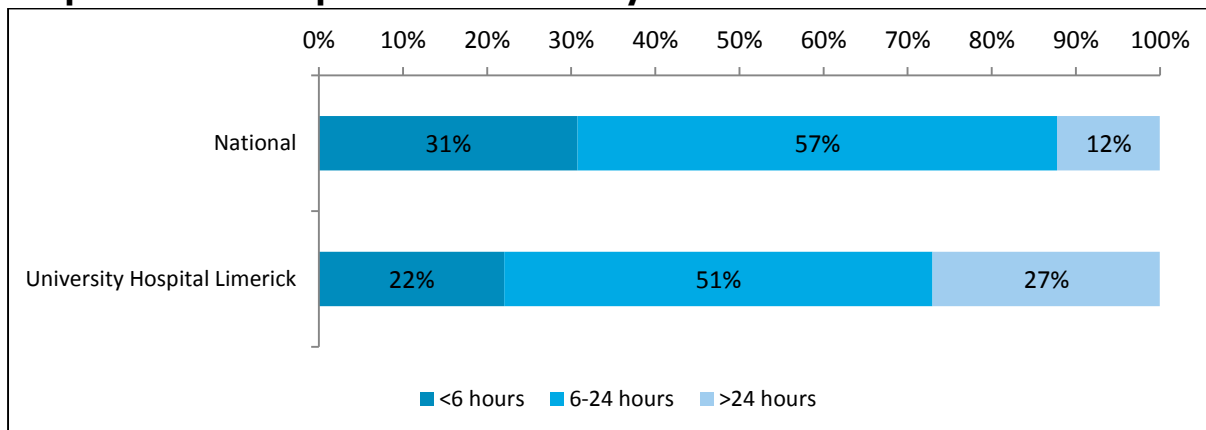


\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the national average

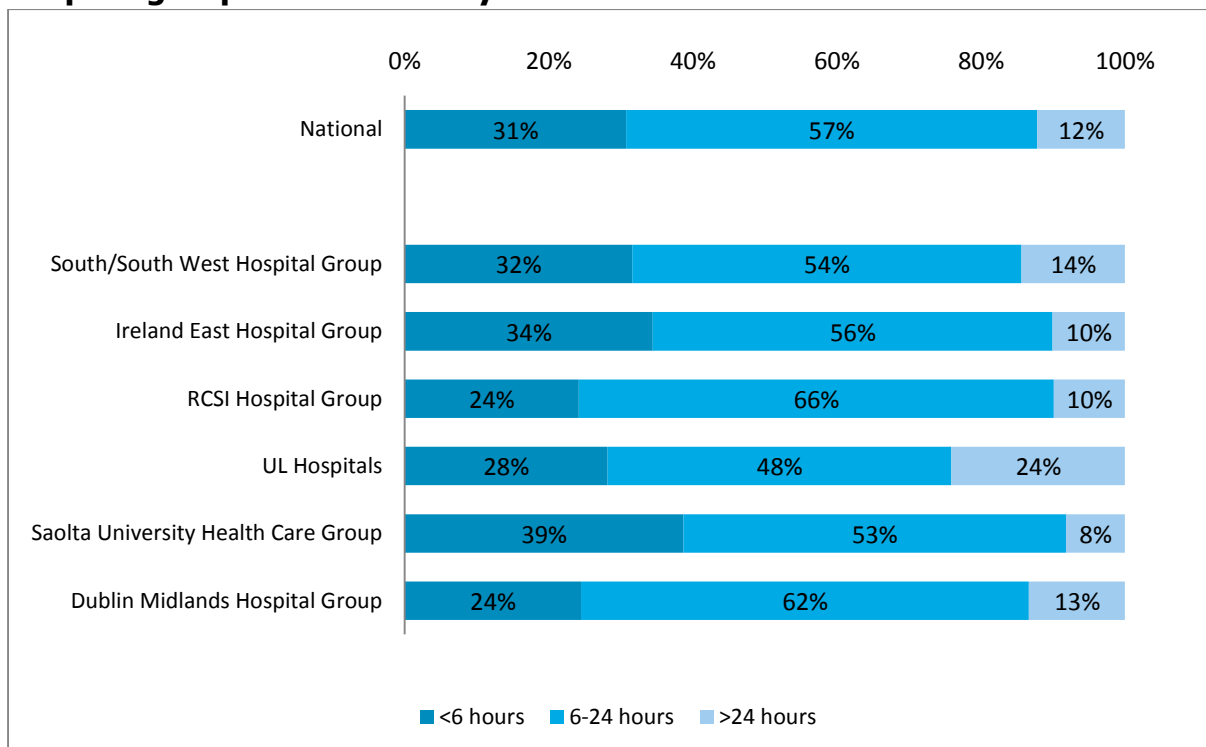
<sup>3</sup> University Hospital Limerick is the only hospital with an emergency department in UL Hospital Group. However, patients discharged from other hospitals within the group also answered these questions if they originally entered hospital on an emergency basis. This explains why the scores for UL Hospital Group and University Hospital Limerick are different.

Figure 6. shows patient-reported emergency department waiting times nationally and for the constituent hospitals of UL Hospitals. Figure 7. compares the waiting times for the different hospital groups.

**Figure 6. Patient-reported emergency department waiting times for hospitals of UL Hospitals and nationally**



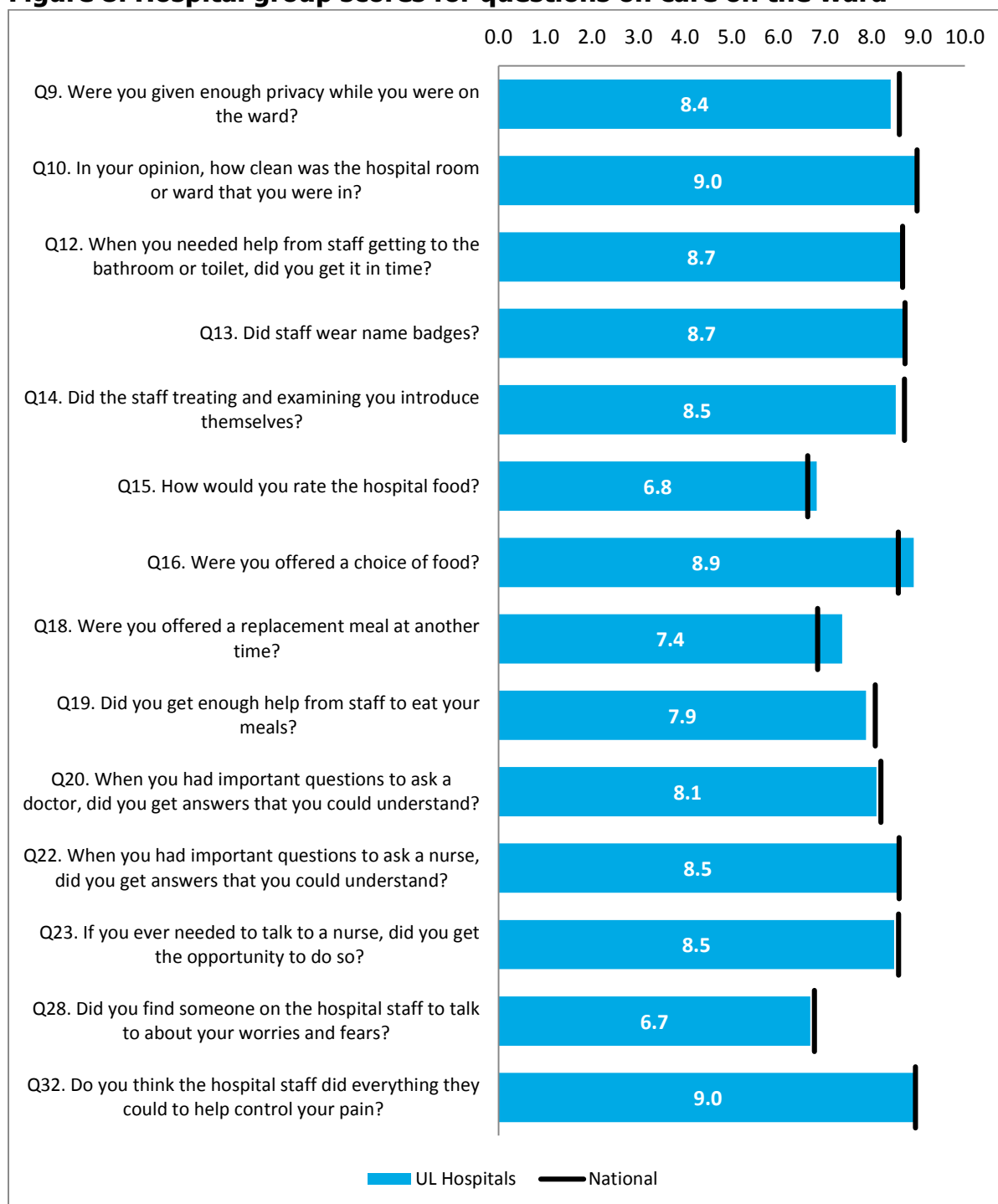
**Figure 7. Patient-reported emergency department waiting times for hospital groups and nationally**



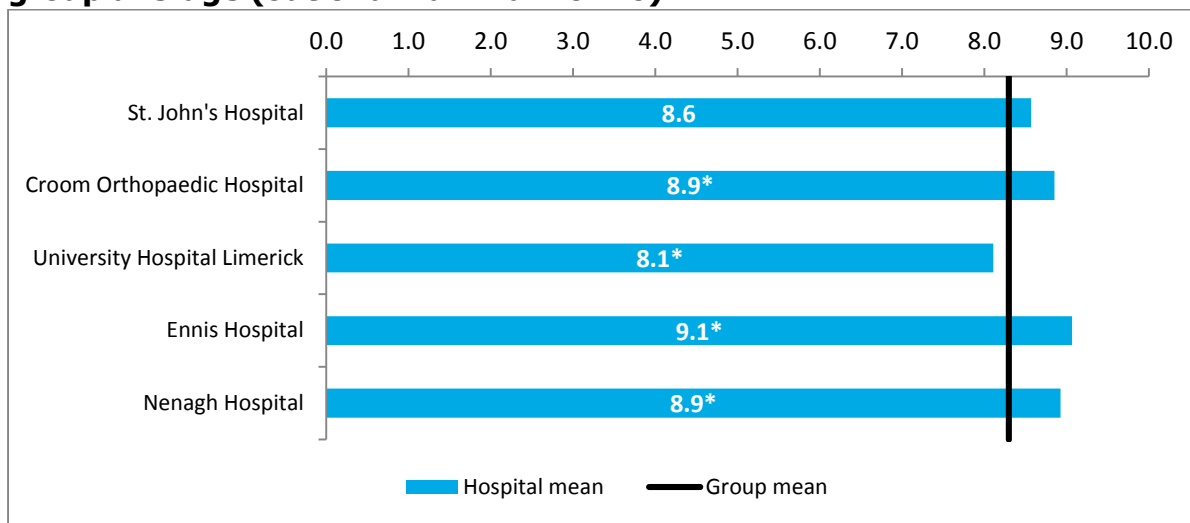
## Care on the ward

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 UL Hospitals 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**

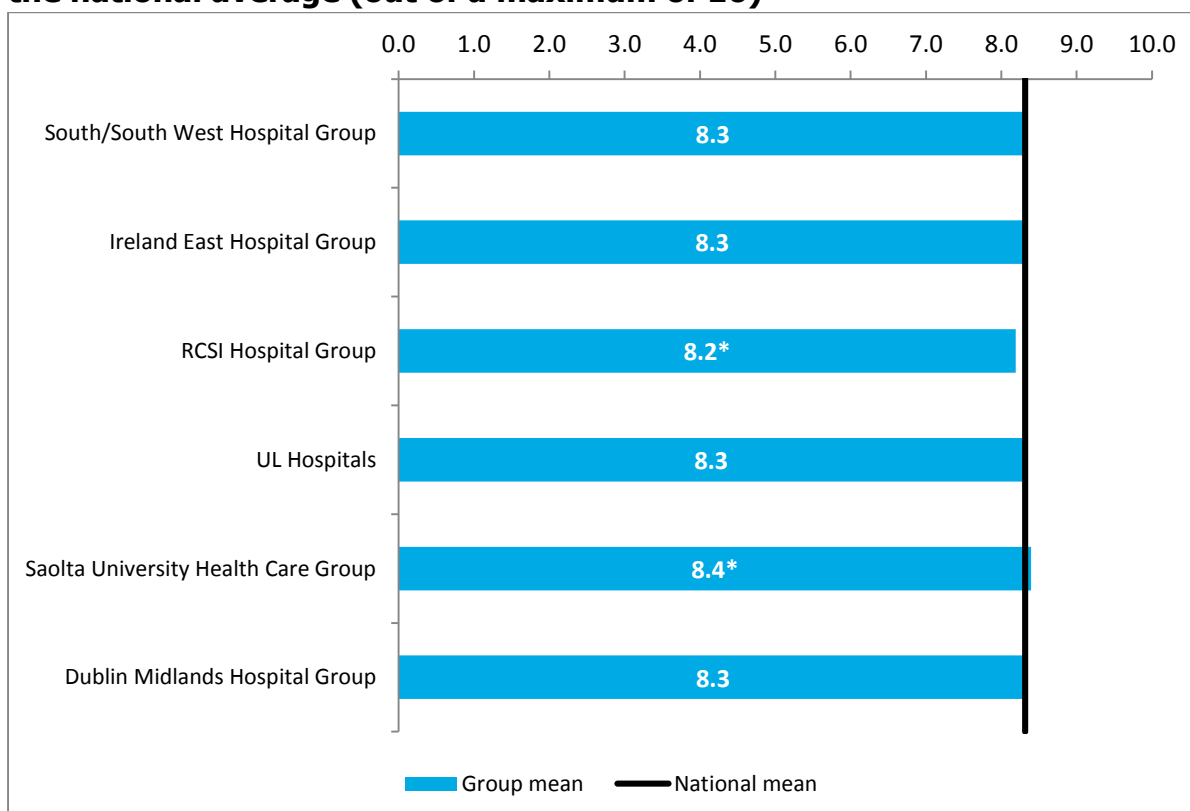


**Figure 9. Comparison of hospital scores for care on the ward with the group average (out of a maximum of 10)**



\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the group average

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

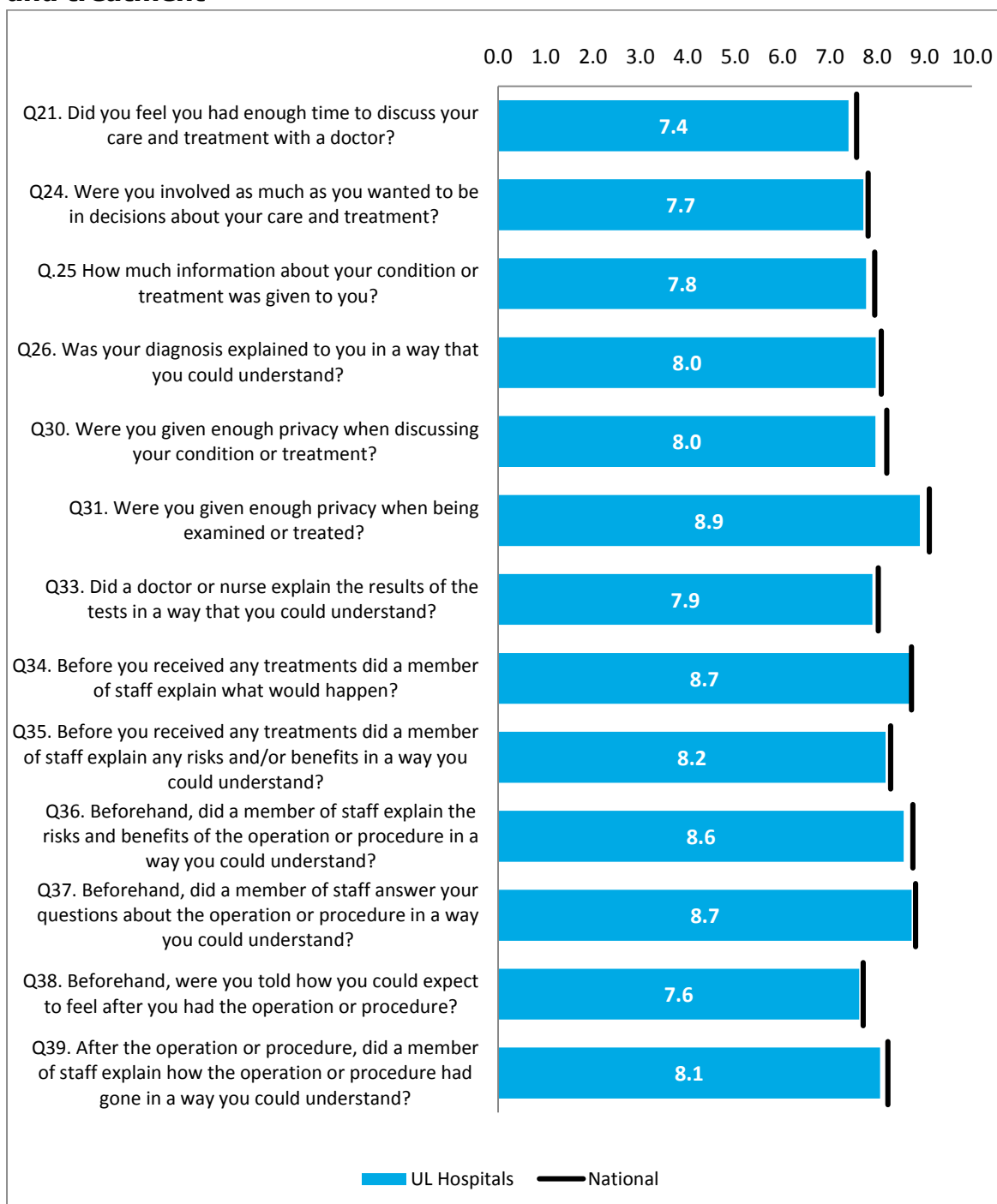


\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the national average

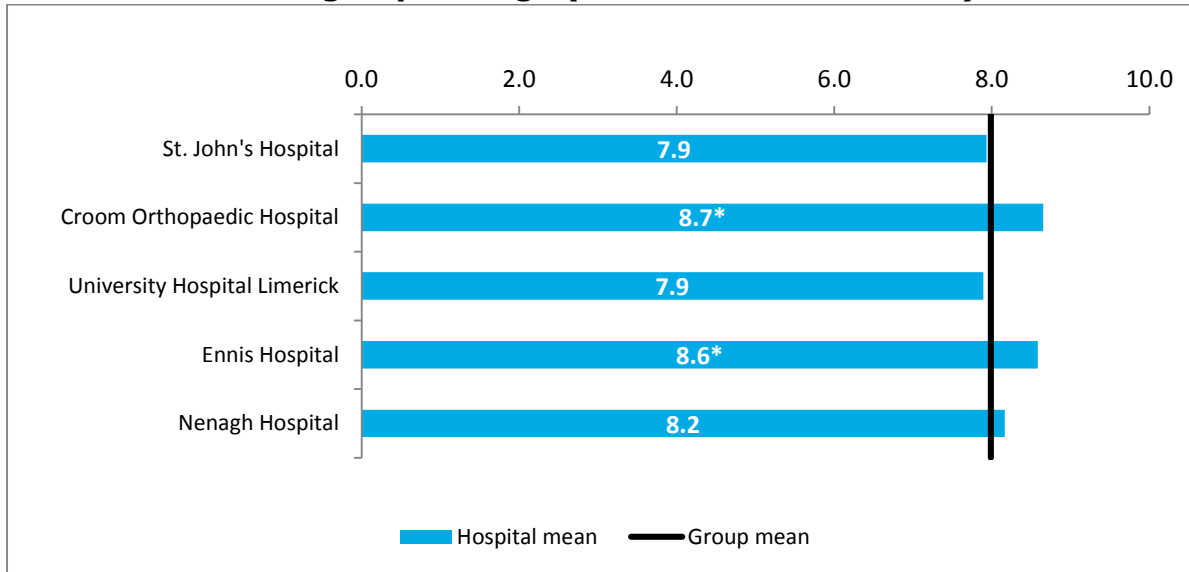
## Examinations, diagnosis and treatment

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 UL Hospitals 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**

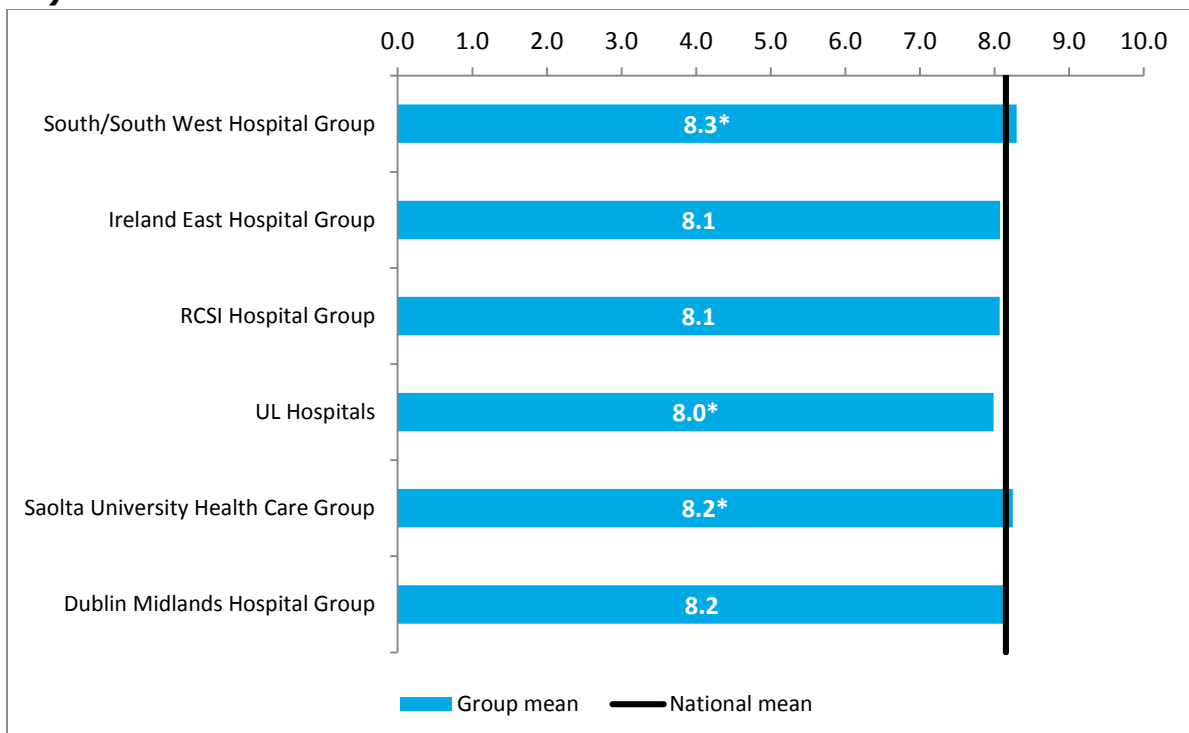


**Figure 12. Comparison of hospital scores for examinations, diagnosis and treatment with the group average (out of a maximum of 10)**



\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the group average

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

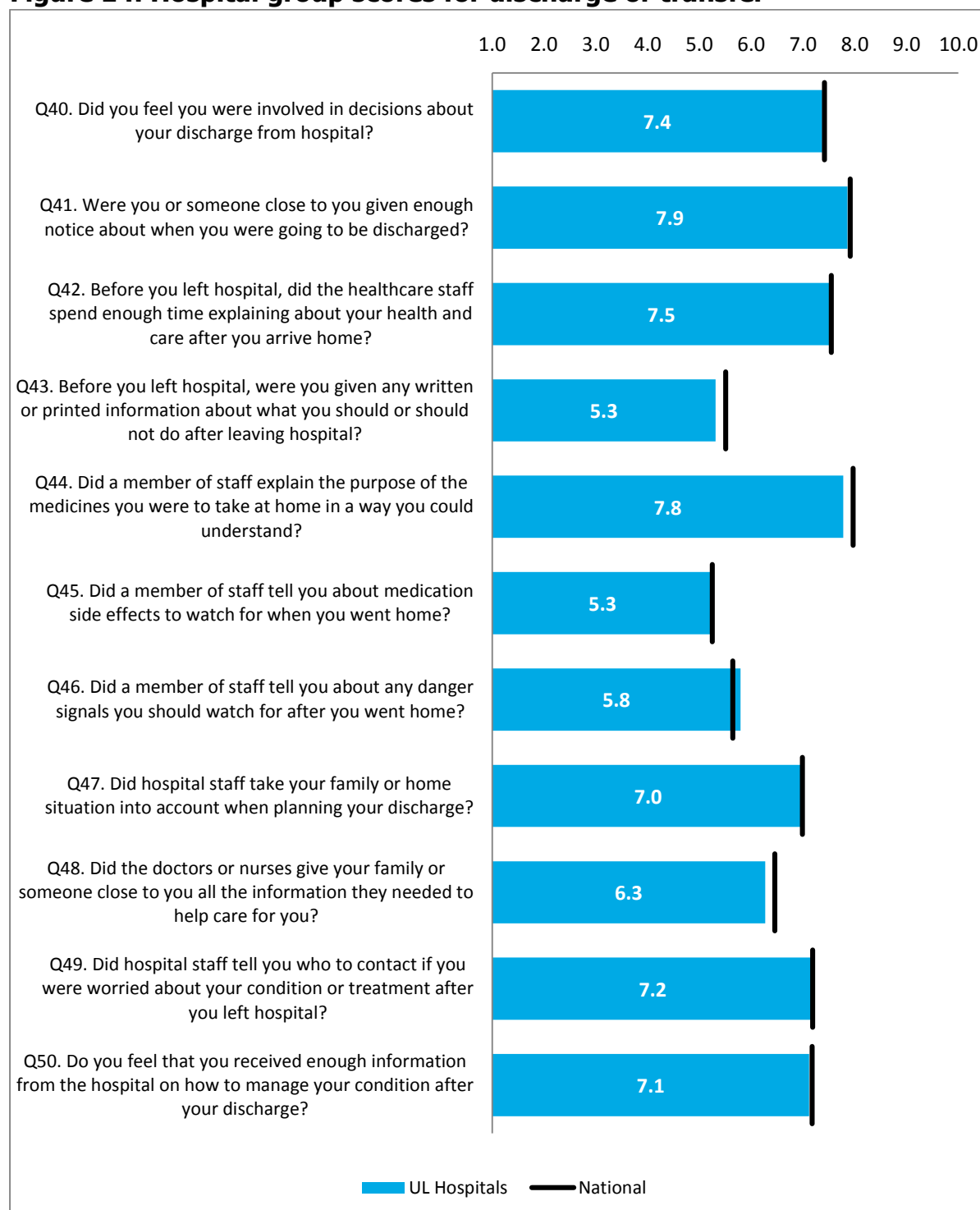


\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the national average

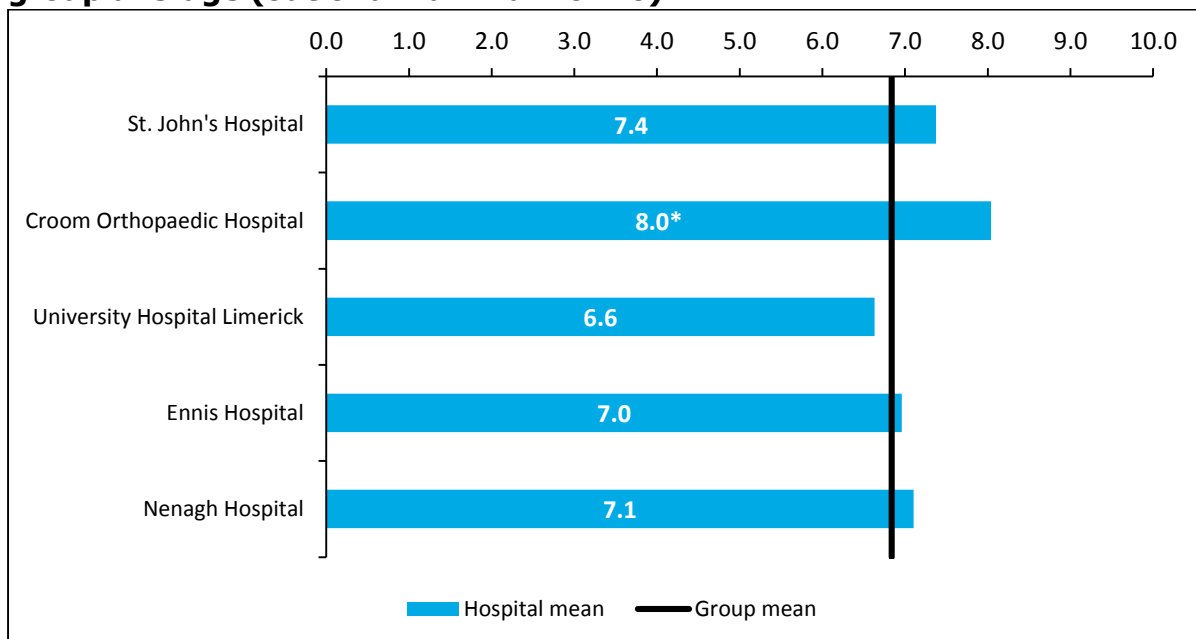
## Discharge or transfer

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 UL Hospitals with the group average. Figure 16. compares the six hospital group scores for this stage with the national average.

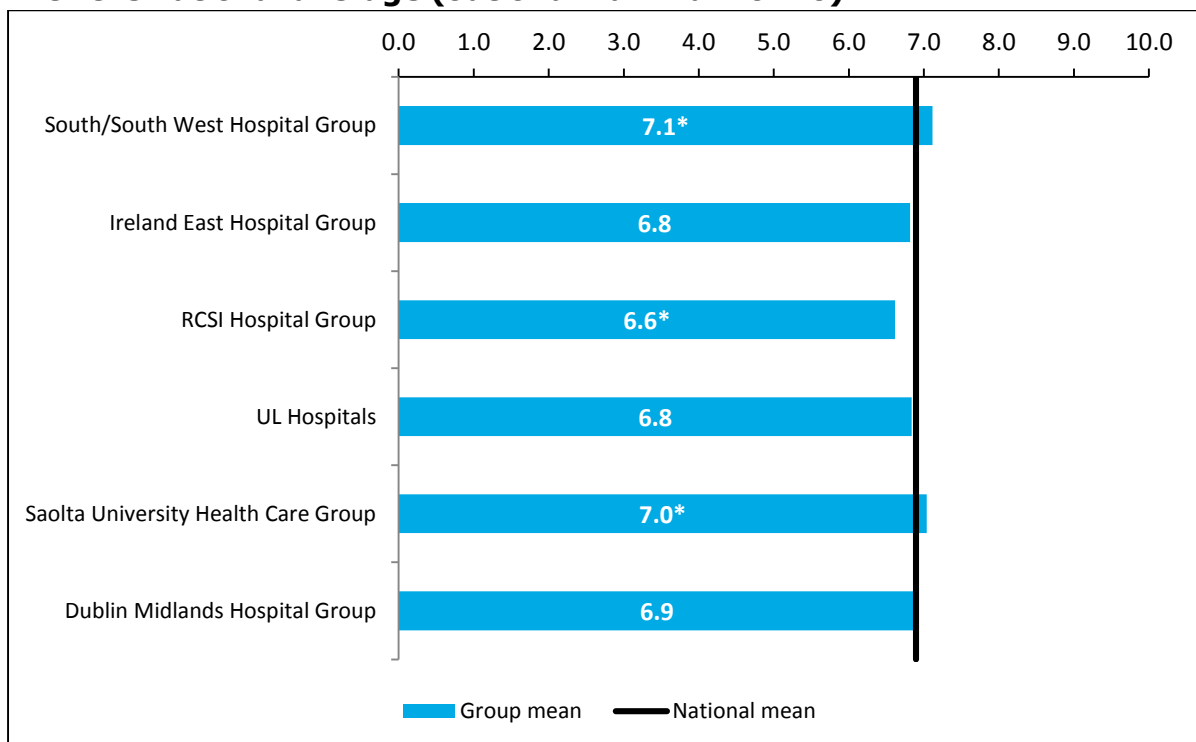
**Figure 14. Hospital group scores for discharge or transfer**



**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)**



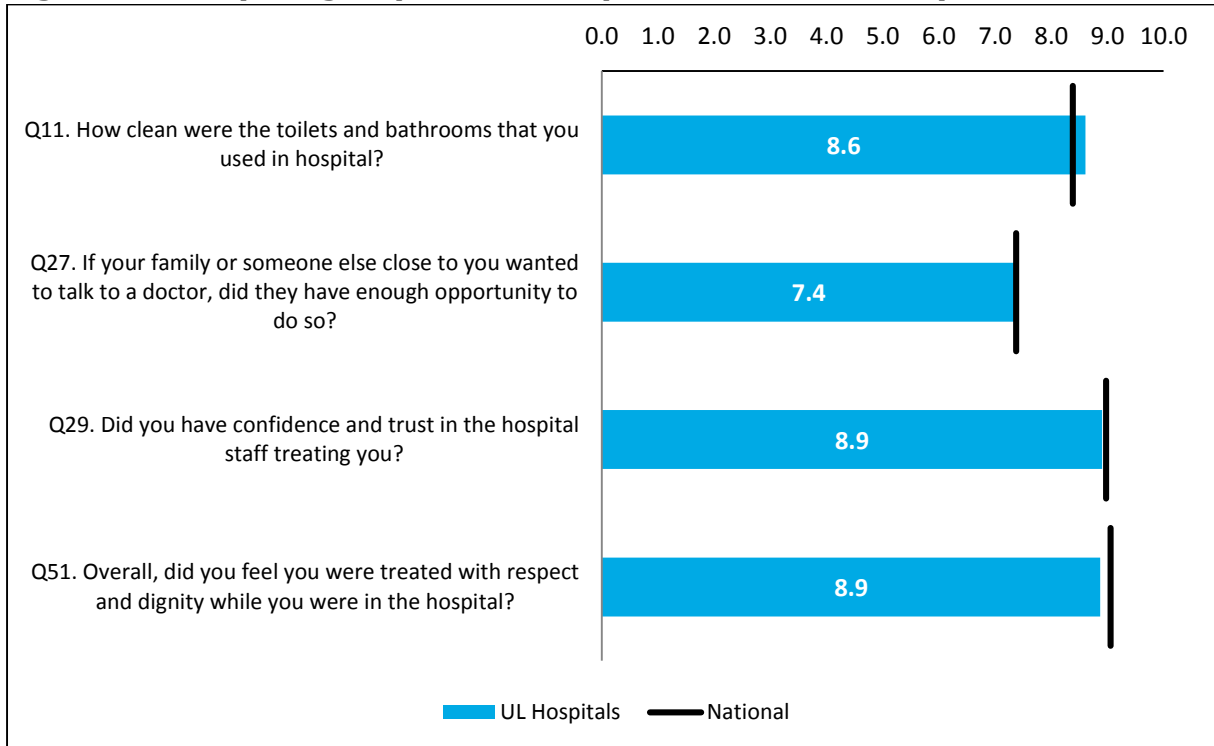
\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the national average



## 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**

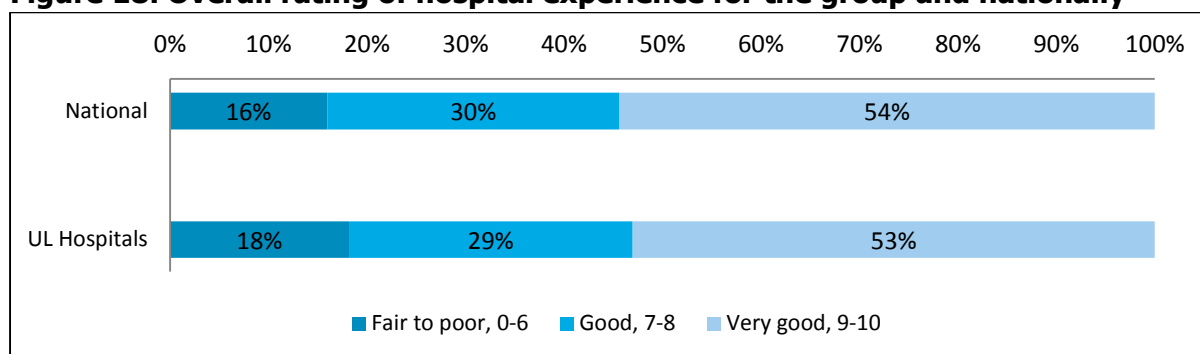


## Overall experience

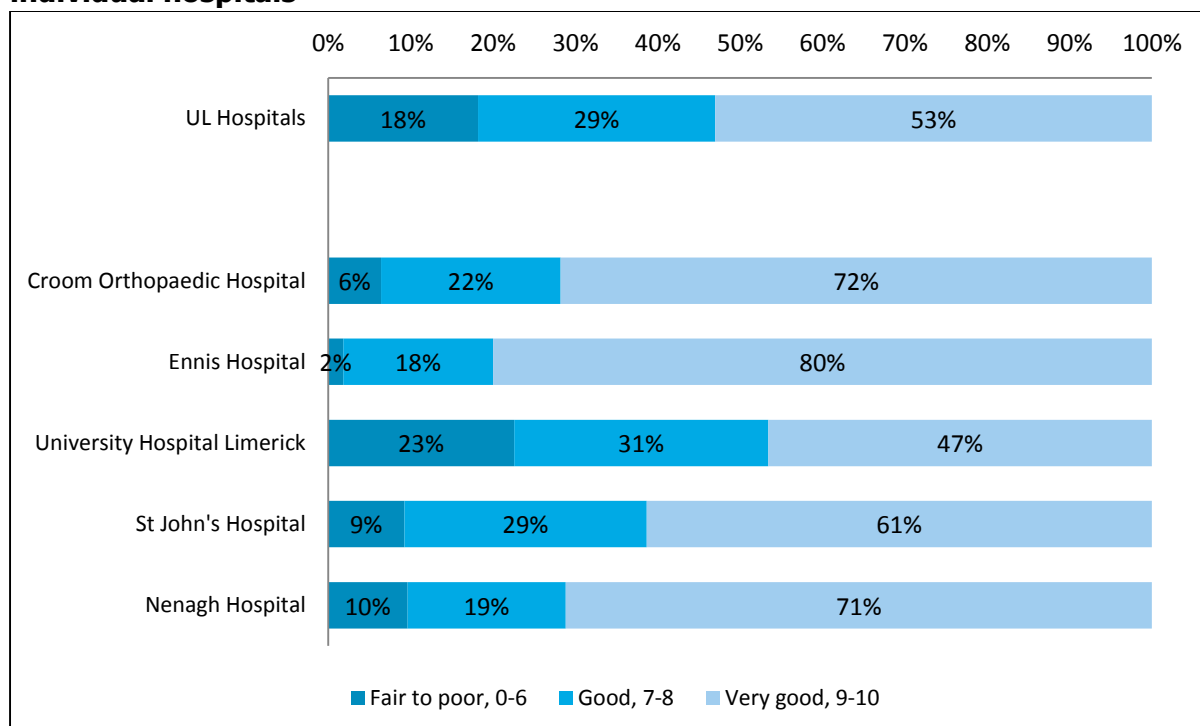
Respondents were asked to rate their overall hospital experience on a scale from 0 to 10, with 10 being the most positive experience, and 0 the most negative experience. 53% of participants from the UL Hospitals rated their care as very good which is below the national figure of 54%.

Figure 18. compares the overall ratings of hospital experience for UL Hospitals 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 UL Hospitals 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 UL Hospitals. Questions that have a strong relationship with overall ratings of experience (Q52) are selected as areas of good experience or areas needing improvement respectively. Three areas of good experience (highlighted in blue) and three areas needing improvement (highlighted in purple) are identified on the map.

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 a number of questions that were important to patients’ rating of their overall experience. For example, Q12 — ‘When you needed help from staff getting to the bathroom or toilet, did you get it in time?’ has a problem score of less than 0 and a significant relationship with overall experience. This is a positive result for the group.

### Interpreting the improvement map

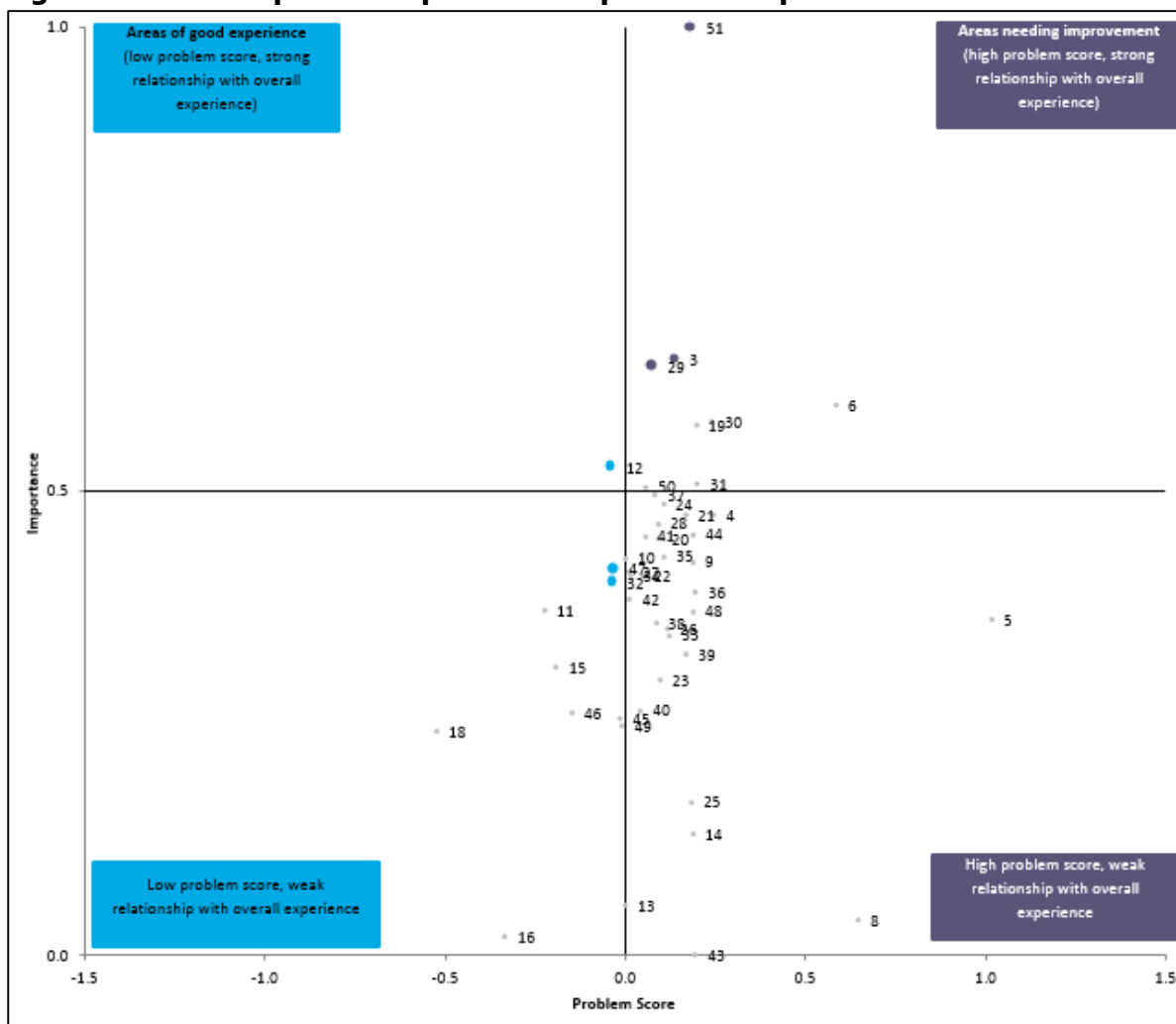
The **importance** of the relationship between each question and overall experience is given on the vertical axis as a number between 0 and 1, with 1 being the strongest possible relationship.

**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 UL Hospitals



## Conclusion

### What were patients' experiences of hospital care UL Hospitals in May 2018?

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

UL Hospitals received improved ratings for the admissions stage of care. Scores for the remaining stages of care were similar to what they were in the 2017 survey. Patients' average ratings of their overall care 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. Nevertheless, the group scored below the national average on this question. The lowest ranking question for the admissions stage pertains to waiting times in the emergency department; with the group scoring below-average in this area.

Patients were generally satisfied with the cleanliness of the wards and with how staff managed their pain. These were the highest scoring questions on care on the ward. The lowest-rated question for this stage of care related to emotional support from staff when required.

Patients generally gave high ratings for the privacy they were shown when being examined or treated. The lowest scoring question for this stage of care related to the time patients had to discuss their care and treatment with a doctor. The group scored lower than the national average for both questions.

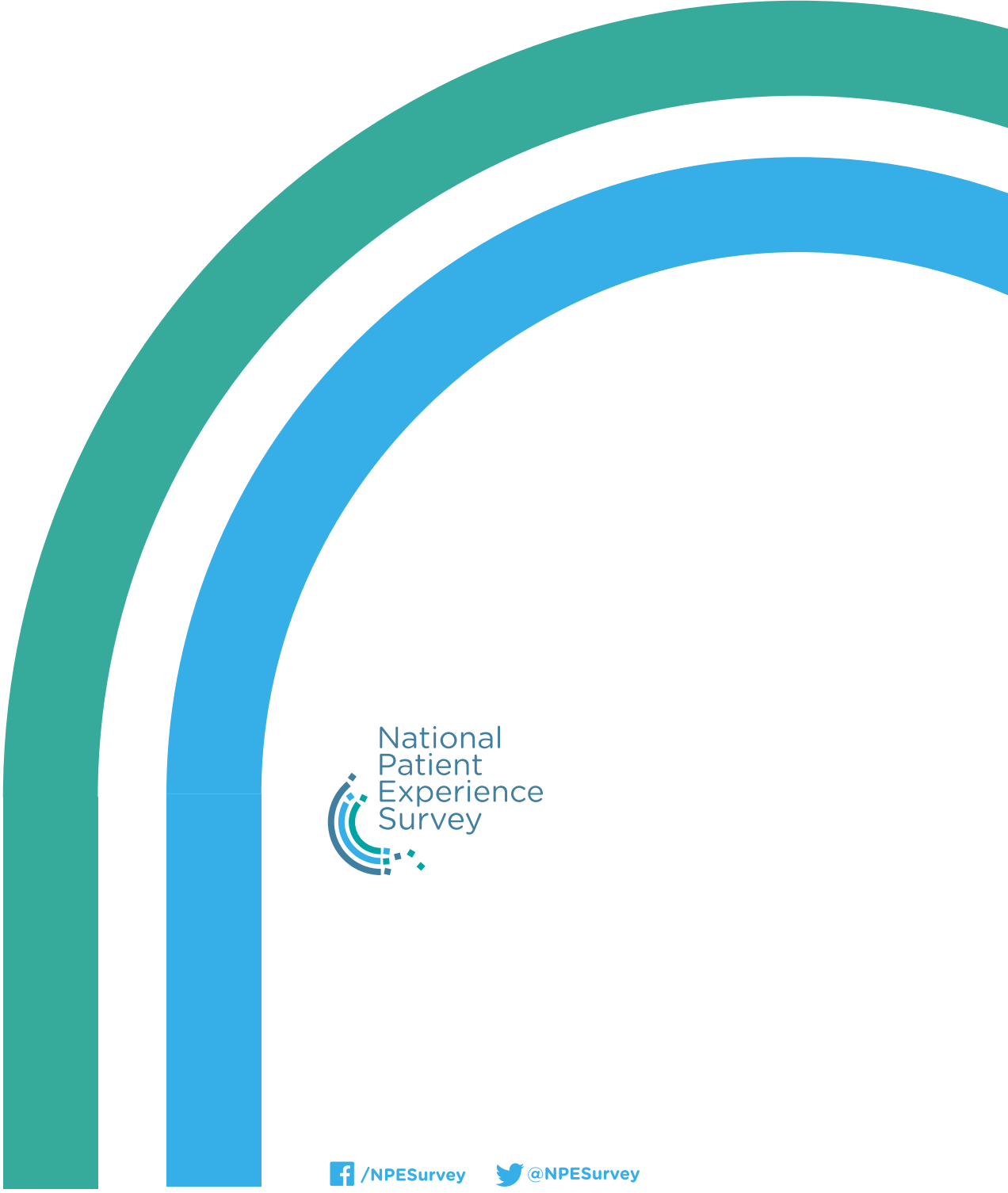
Discharge or transfer was the lowest scoring stage or care, both nationally and for UL Hospitals. The highest scoring question for this stage shows that patients were generally given sufficient notice about when they were going to be discharged. The lowest scoring question relates to the provision of information during the discharge process; a number of patients said that they were not given any written or printed information about what they should or should not do after leaving hospital. In addition, some patients said they were not told about medication side effects to watch out for.

In terms of areas of good experience, patients gave positive ratings of the helpfulness of staff in getting them to the bathroom or toilet (Q12). Patients also gave high ratings for pain management (Q32) and for staff consideration of their family or home situation when planning their discharge (Q47).

Patients identified several areas needing improvement across the UL Hospitals. A number of patients said that they did not always get answers from staff that they could understand in the emergency department (Q3). In addition, some patients said that they did not have confidence and trust in the staff treating them (Q29) and were not always treated with dignity and respect (Q51). The group performed below the national average in these areas.

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 experienced a lack of dignity and respect 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 UL Hospitals, intended to address the issues identified by patients.



 /NPESurvey

 @NPESurvey