



# National Patient Experience Survey 2018

## University Hospital Limerick

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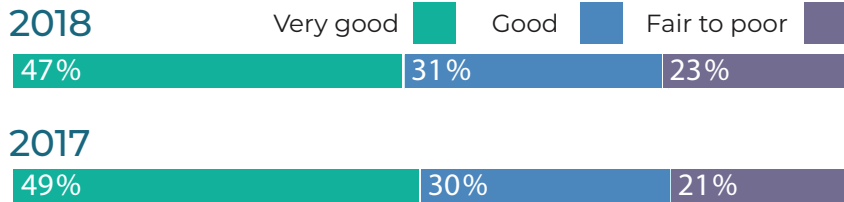
An Roinn Sláinte  
Department of Health



# University Hospital Limerick

## 2018 survey results

### Overall experience



response rate

Values in figures do not always add up to 100% due to rounding.

### Areas of good experience



Choice of food



Offer of a replacement meal

### Areas needing improvement



Respect and dignity



Confidence and trust in hospital staff



Clear answers from a doctor or nurse in the ED

### The patient voice

“Nurses were very pleasant, helpful and respectful, as were the doctors, front of house staff and the cleaners. They were all professional.”



“When talking to consultant/doctor in a ward behind curtains others in location could hear all. I also could hear all when other patients were with doctors.”

[www.patientexperience.ie](http://www.patientexperience.ie)

# Structure and content of this report

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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%. 828 patients from University Hospital Limerick 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 [www.patientexperience.ie/improvements-in-care](http://www.patientexperience.ie/improvements-in-care).

## What were the main findings for University Hospital Limerick?

The majority of participants from University Hospital Limerick reported positive experiences in hospital. 77% of participants said they had 'good' or 'very good' overall experiences, compared with 84% nationally. However, the hospital achieved lower scores than the national average across every stage of care.

Several areas of good experience were identified. These were areas where participants gave above-average ratings. For example, most patients said they were offered a choice of food. In addition, most patients said they were offered a replacement meal if they missed one.

There were also several areas needing improvement. A number of patients said that they did not always understand answers from staff in the emergency department. Some patients said that they did not always have confidence and trust in hospital staff, and were not always treated with respect and dignity while in the hospital.

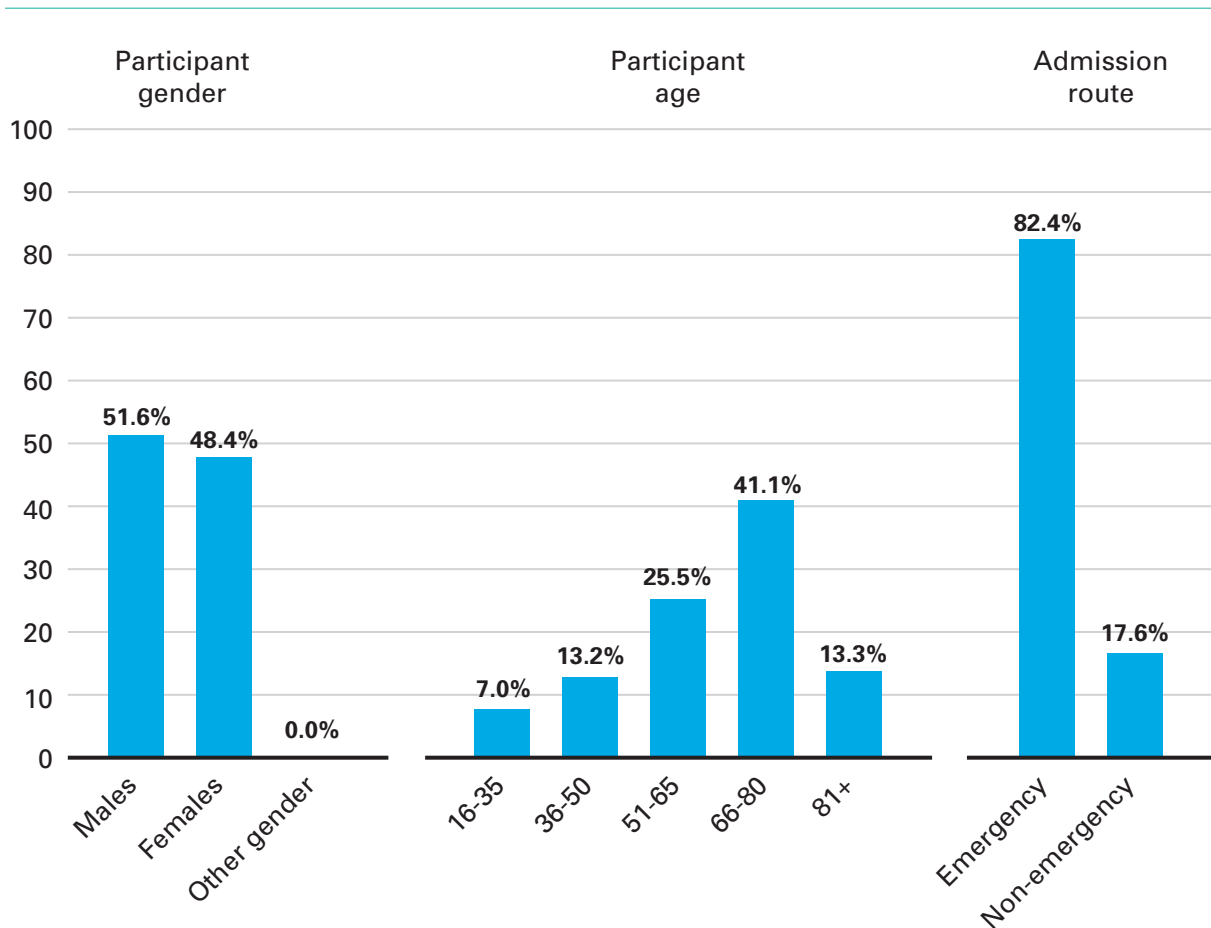
Some improvements in patient experience ratings were identified compared with the 2017 survey, particularly in relation to admissions. The findings of the 2018 survey will help University Hospital Limerick to improve patients' experiences of care in the hospital.

# Hospital and participant profile

University Hospital Limerick is a public acute hospital located in Dooradoyle, Co. Limerick. There were 445 inpatient beds available in the hospital during the survey period of May 2018.

1,696 people discharged from University Hospital Limerick during the month of May 2018 were invited to participate in the survey. 828 people completed the survey, achieving a response rate of 49%. 51.6% of participants were male and 48.4% were female. 682 respondents (82.4%) said that their stay in hospital was an emergency. Figure 1 below provides information on the respondents who took part in the survey from University Hospital Limerick.

**Figure 1 Participants from University Hospital Limerick by gender, age group and admission route**



# Areas of good experience and areas needing improvement

This section lists the areas where most patients had positive experiences, and those areas where there is the most room for improvement. Appendix 1 explains how these areas were identified.

## The areas of good experience in University Hospital Limerick are:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Care on the ward</b></p>                  | <p>716 (94%) of the 758 people who answered this question said that they were either always or sometimes offered a choice of food.</p>      |
| <p><b>Choice of food   Q16</b></p>              |   |
| <p><b>Care on the ward</b></p>                  | <p>212 (80% of those who answered this question) said that they were always or sometimes offered a replacement meal if they missed one.</p> |
| <p><b>Offer of a replacement meal   Q18</b></p> |   |

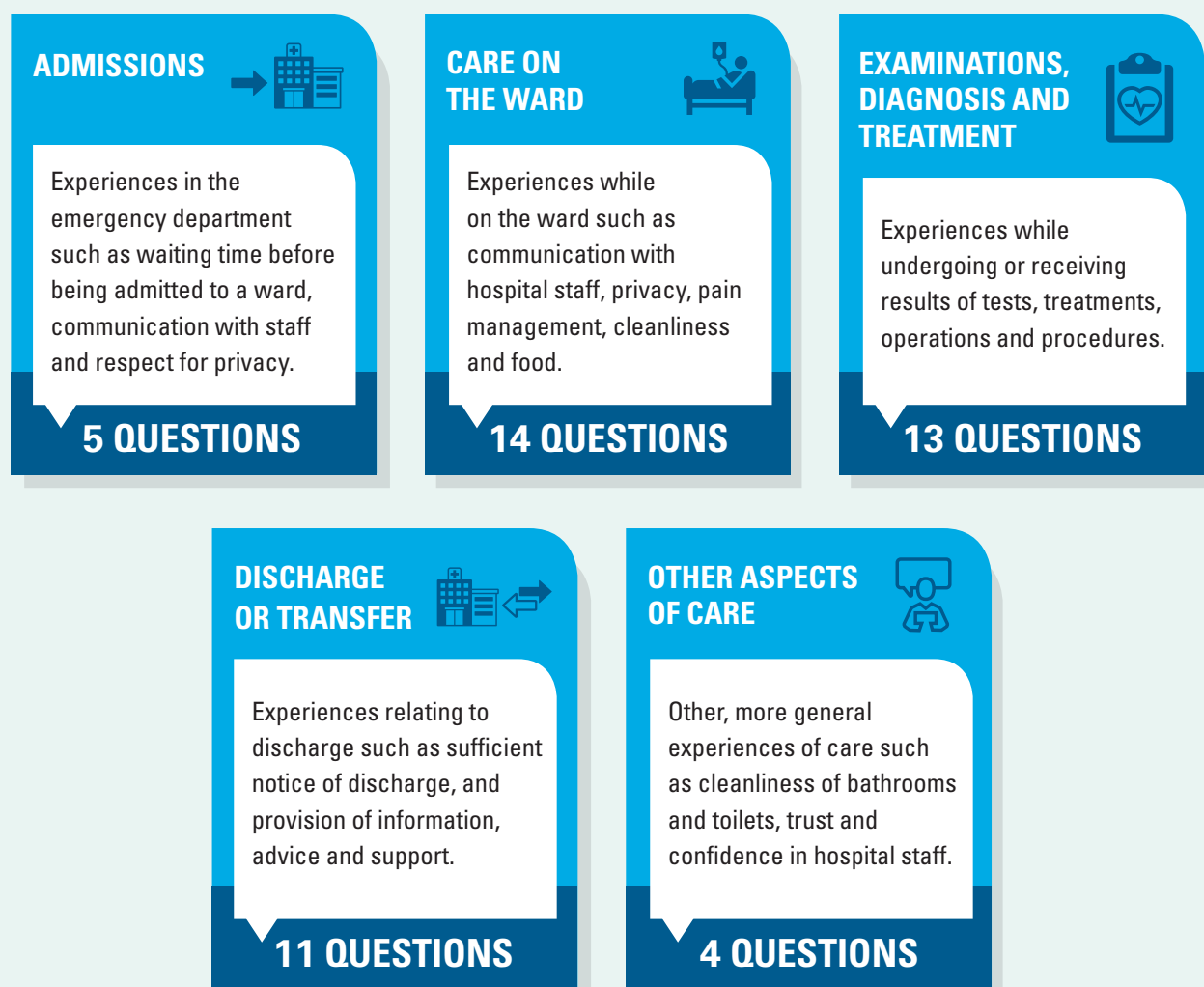
## The areas needing improvement in University Hospital Limerick are:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Admissions</b></p> <p><b>Clear answers from a doctor or nurse in the emergency department   Q3</b></p> | <p>Of the 541 people who answered this question, 190 (35%) said that did not get, or only sometimes got, answers they could understand from a doctor or nurse in the emergency department.</p> |
| <p><b>Other aspects of care</b></p> <p><b>Confidence and trust in hospital staff   Q29</b></p>               | <p>174 people (22% of those who answered Q29) said that they did not have, or only sometime had, confidence and trust in hospital staff.</p>   |
| <p><b>Other aspects of care</b></p> <p><b>Respect and dignity   Q51</b></p>                                  | <p>183 people (23% of those who answered this question) said that they were not, or were only sometimes, treated with respect and dignity in the hospital.</p>                                 |

# 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.

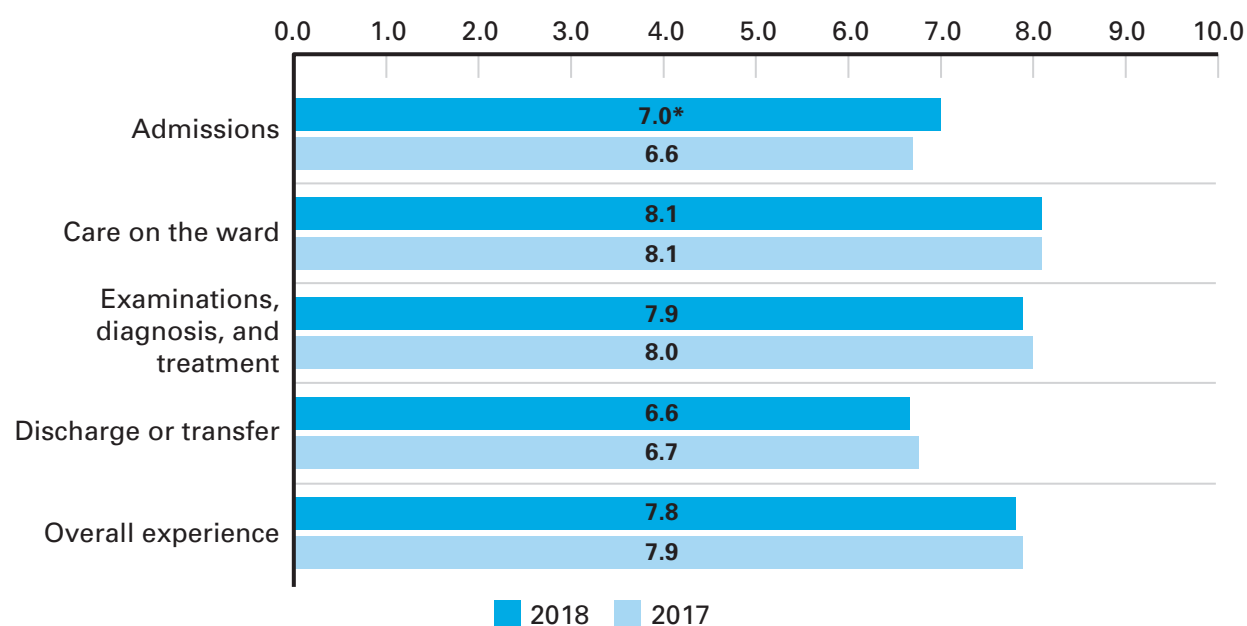
Statistical tests were carried out to examine if there were significant differences in patient experience between 2017 and 2018, as well as between a hospital and the national average. For further information on the analyses please consult Appendix 3 of the 2018 national report, available from [www.patientexperience.ie](http://www.patientexperience.ie).

## Changes in patient experience over time

Participants' average rating of their overall experience remained the same in 2018 as in 2017. The greatest improvement for University Hospital Limerick has been achieved in the area of admissions, which was significantly higher than 2017 score. There was no significant differences for the other stages of care. 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>1</sup> for University Hospital Limerick for 2017 and 2018**



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

1 Scores for the stages of care were constructed by calculating the average scores for all the questions belonging to that stage.

# Admissions

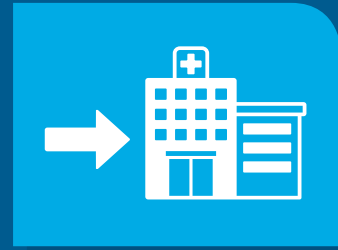
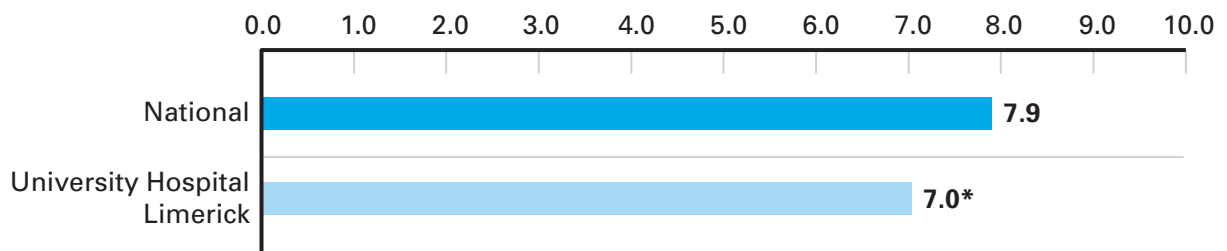


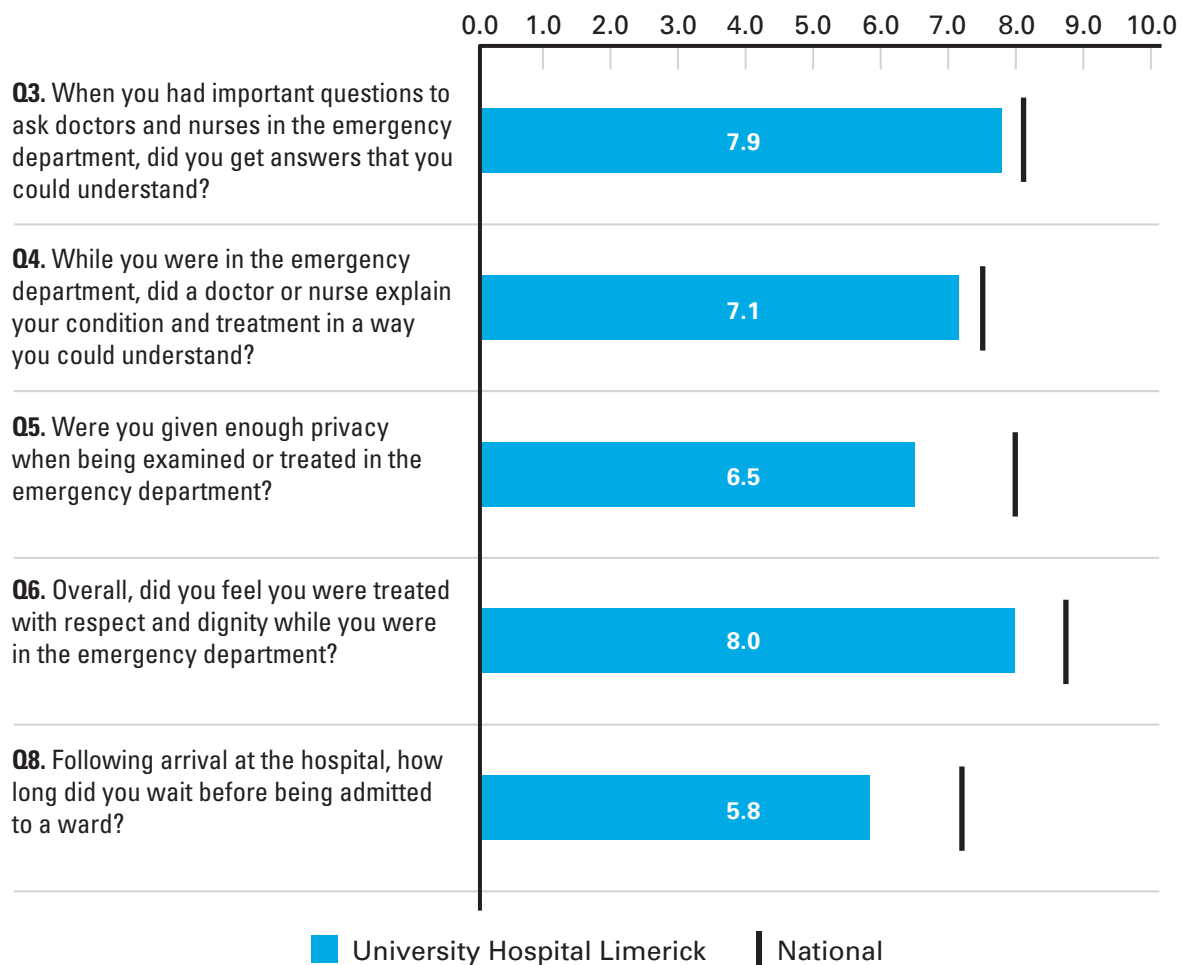
Figure 3 compares the hospital's overall score for admissions with the national average. Figure 4 shows the hospital's scores for questions related to this stage of care.

**Figure 3 Comparison of University Hospital Limerick with the national average score for admissions (out of a maximum of 10)**



\* Denotes a statistically significant difference between the national average.

**Figure 4 University Hospital Limerick scores for questions on admissions**



## Emergency department waiting times<sup>2</sup>

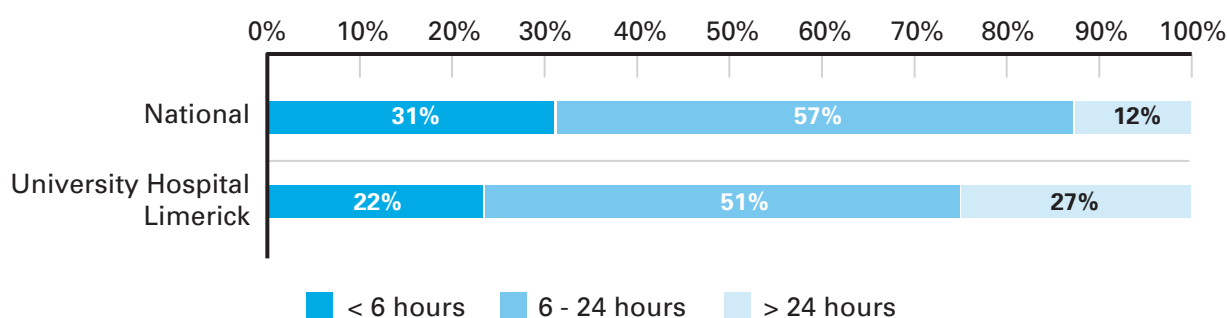
The HSE sets targets for the performance of acute hospitals, including targets on waiting times in emergency departments, such as:

- 75% of people attending the emergency department are discharged or admitted to a ward within six hours of registration and none should wait for longer than nine hours.
- 95% of people attending the emergency department aged 75 years or older are discharged or admitted to a ward within six hours of registration and none should wait for longer than nine hours.

In University Hospital Limerick, 128 respondents (22%) said they were admitted to a ward within six hours of arriving at the emergency department, while 296 respondents (51%) reported waiting between six and 24 hours. 157 respondents (27%) reported waiting 24 hours or more before being admitted to a ward in University Hospital Limerick, with 50 of these saying they waited more than 48 hours.

Figure 5 outlines the patient-reported waiting times in University Hospital Limerick, compared with the national average.

**Figure 5 Patient-reported emergency department waiting times for University Hospital Limerick and nationally**



2 The HSE measures emergency department waiting times differently to the survey, namely from the time a patient registers at the emergency department until they leave it. It is likely that there are some differences between survey findings and the official HSE figures. The HSE 2018 targets can be viewed at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/performance-reports/2018-acute-hospitals-metadata.pdf>.

## The patient voice: what patients said about admissions

"My experience from being in A+E this time was much improved from my previous experience. I feel the new A+E is much improved."

"A&E is a complete zoo. Not enough beds and way too much pressure on staff."

"No problem with staff considering the pressure they had to deal re numbers of people attending A&E."

"The emergency department was so busy. People on trolleys in corridors, where I stayed for 24hours, people being sick around me, hate to think of the germs floating around. The poor nurses were trying their best but just wasn't enough of them. I wasn't able to sleep at all with all the noise coming and goings."

### Admissions: what do these results mean?

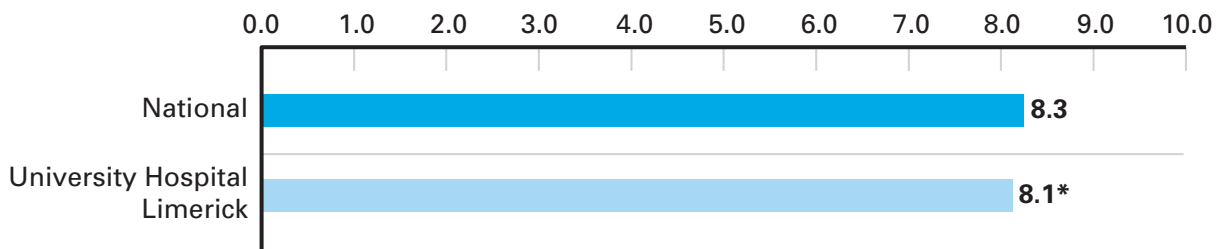
Patient ratings of admission to University Hospital Limerick were below the national average. However, ratings of this stage were significantly higher than in the 2017 survey. A number of patients said that they were not given enough privacy, and were not always able to understand answers and explanations from staff. The hospital also performed below the national average on emergency department waiting times. 22% of participants said that they were admitted to a ward within the recommended six hours. This is an important issue, as lengthy waiting times are associated with poor outcomes for patients.<sup>(1,2)</sup>

# Care on the ward



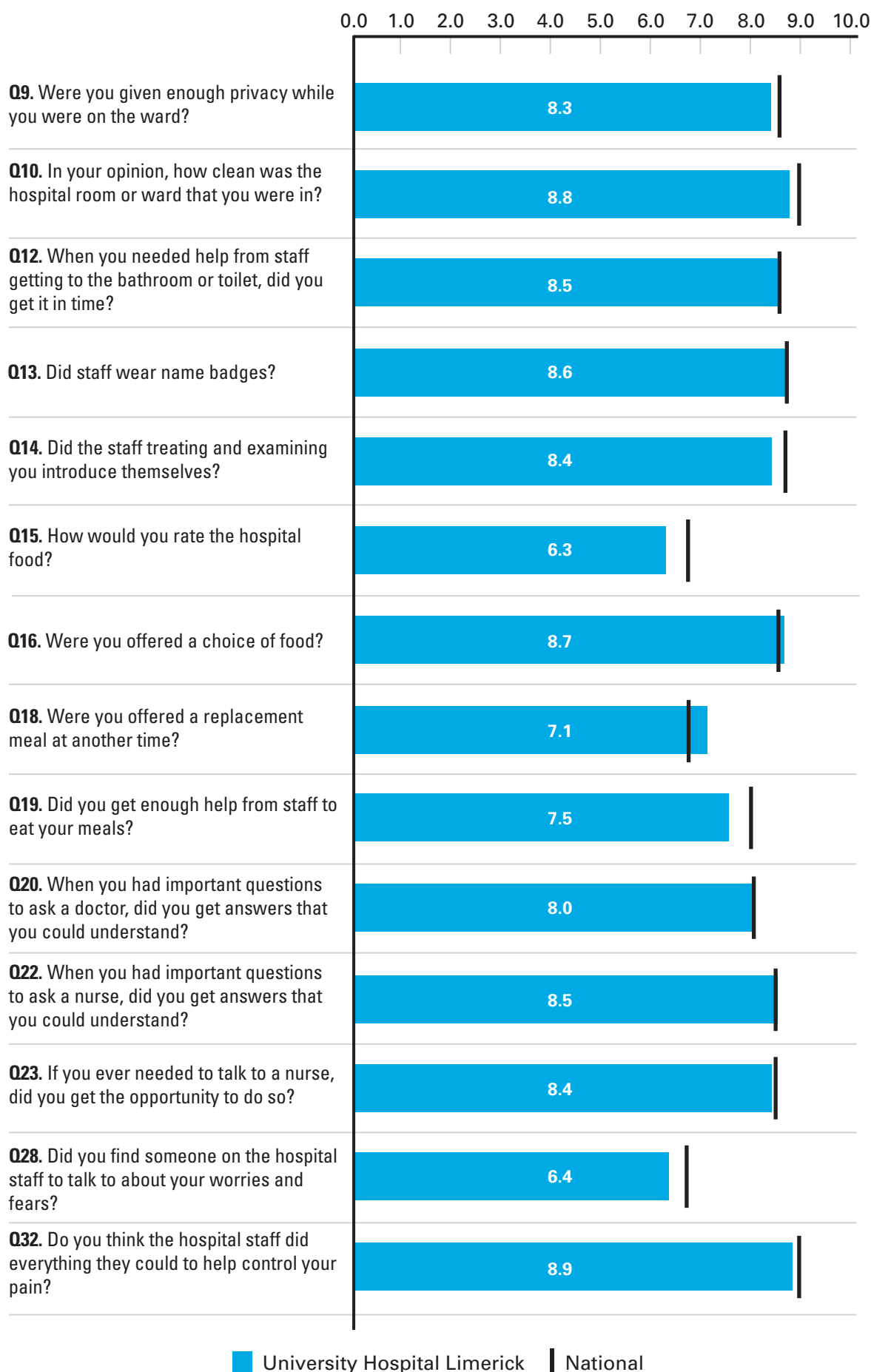
Figure 6 compares the hospital's overall score for care on the ward with the national average. Figure 7 shows the hospital's scores for questions related to this stage of care.

**Figure 6 Comparison of University Hospital Limerick with the national average score for care on the ward (out of a maximum of 10)**



\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the national average.

**Figure 7 University Hospital Limerick scores for questions on care on the ward**



## The patient voice: what patients said about care on the ward

"The nurses and ward staff worked really hard and were really caring. Catering staff were lovely and the food was good."

"The food could definitely be improved."

"The care and attention I received during my stay in UHL was exemplary. The doctors, nurses, catering staff and cleaning staff all working in a pressurised environment were top class."

"No one seems to be in charge. Lots of staff wearing different uniforms and no one seems to answer to anyone. Lack of co-ordination and co-operation between medical staff, nurses, cleaners and helpers."

### Care on the ward: what do these results mean?

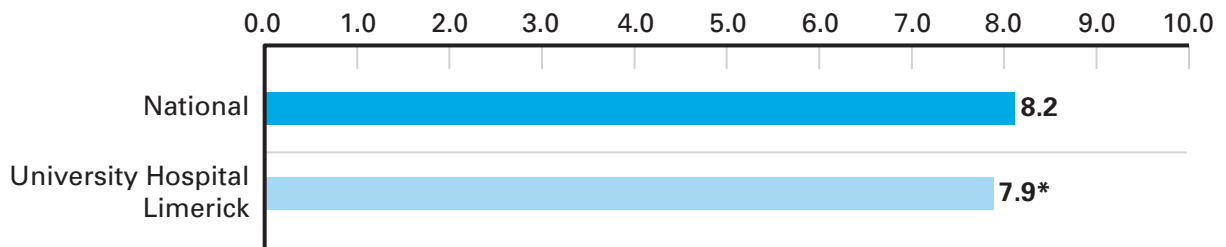
University Hospital Limerick received lower ratings of care on the ward than the national average, and similar ratings to last year. Most patients said that staff did everything they could to manage their pain, however the hospital scored below the national average for this question. However, a number of patients rated the food poorly, and said they could not always find someone to talk to when they needed to.

# Examinations, diagnosis and treatment



Figure 8 compares the hospital's overall score for examinations, diagnosis and treatment with the national average. Figure 9 shows the hospital's scores for questions related to this stage of care.

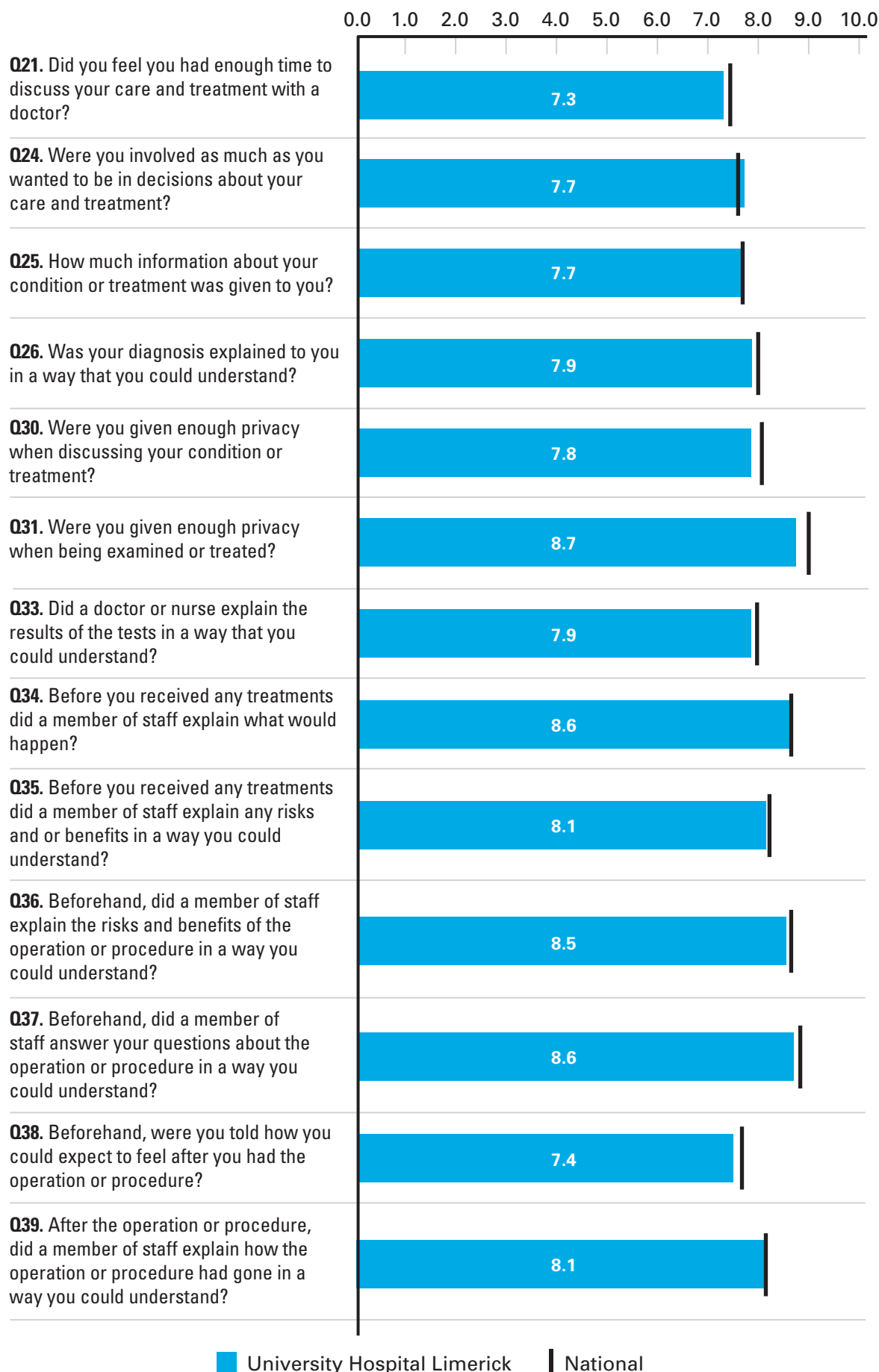
**Figure 8 Comparison of University Hospital Limerick with the national average score for examinations, diagnosis and treatment (out of a maximum of 10)**



\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the national average.



**Figure 9 University Hospital Limerick scores for questions on examinations, diagnosis and treatment**



## The patient voice: what patients said about examinations, diagnosis and treatment

“Everything explained clearly to me and my treatment was very good and everything problematic was dealt with in an efficient and courteous manner.”

“At the weekend there are no consultants or their team on, so if something happened a patient there was only the on call doctor. It was a bank holiday when I was in hospital and I did not see any of my doctors from Friday to the following Tuesday.”

“The medical and nursing staff were attentive and respectful. Even though they were busy, they still find time to interact to patients.”

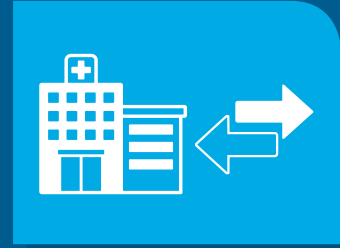
“When talking to consultant/doctor in a ward behind curtains others in location could hear all. I also could hear all when other patients were with doctors.”

### Examinations, diagnosis and treatment: what do these results mean?

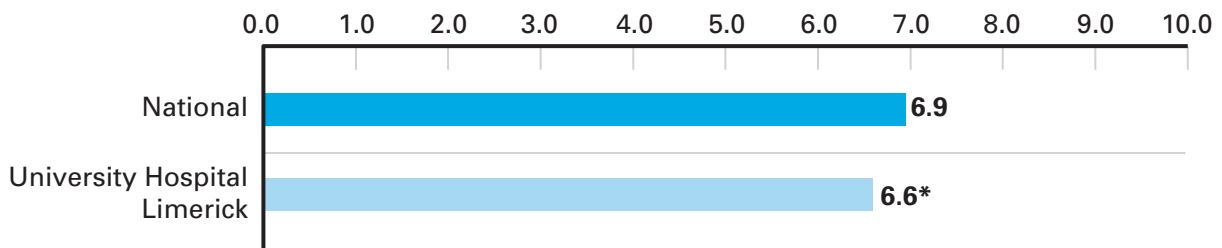
Ratings of examination, diagnosis and treatment were below the national average and similar to last year’s survey. Most patients said that they were given enough privacy while being examined or treated, however the hospital scored below the national average for this question. However, a number of patients said they did not have enough time to discuss their care and treatment with a doctor, and were not always told how they could expect to feel after an operation.

# Discharge or transfer

Figure 10 compares the hospital's overall score for discharge or transfer with the national average. Figure 11 shows the hospital's scores for questions related to this stage of care.

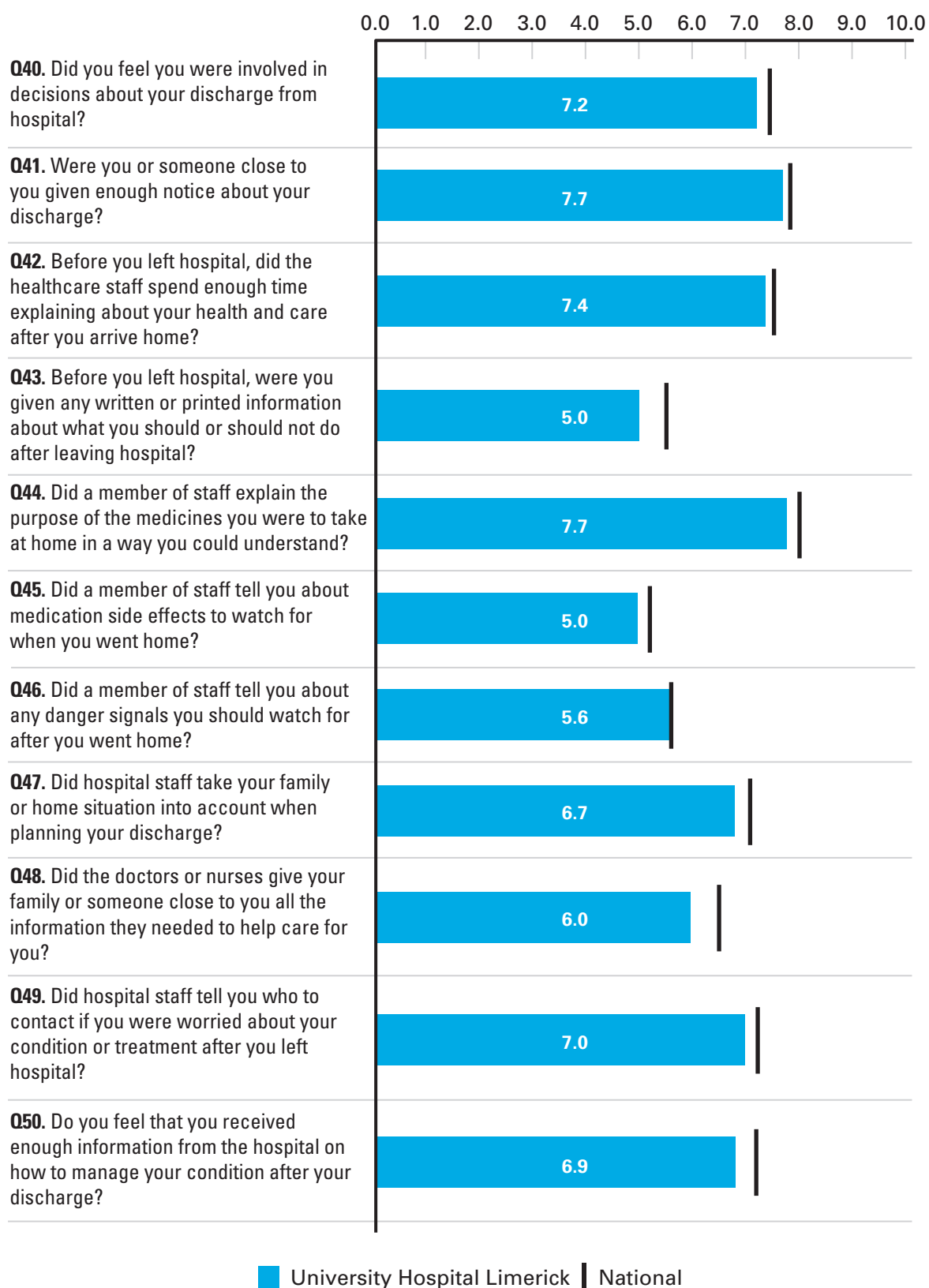


**Figure 10 Comparison of University Hospital Limerick with the national average score for discharge or transfer (out of a maximum of 10)**



\* Denotes a statistically significant difference from the national average.

**Figure 11 University Hospital Limerick scores for questions on discharge or transfer**



## The patient voice: what patients said about discharge or transfer

"My need for a speedy discharge was listened to and I got discharged when required this time."

"Communication of discharge. We got wrong information i.e. discharge nursing home destination. Patient and family thought going to destination A but transferred elsewhere."

"I could have done with more sedation; I went through a bad time. Got no information on what to do when I got home."

"I found my hospital care to be excellent. [doctor's name] and his team were so good. I can't believe it was all done so quickly. They even rang me at home two weeks ago to check that everything was ok. I had a really positive experience in the hospital and I don't have any complaints."

### Discharge or transfer: what do these results mean?

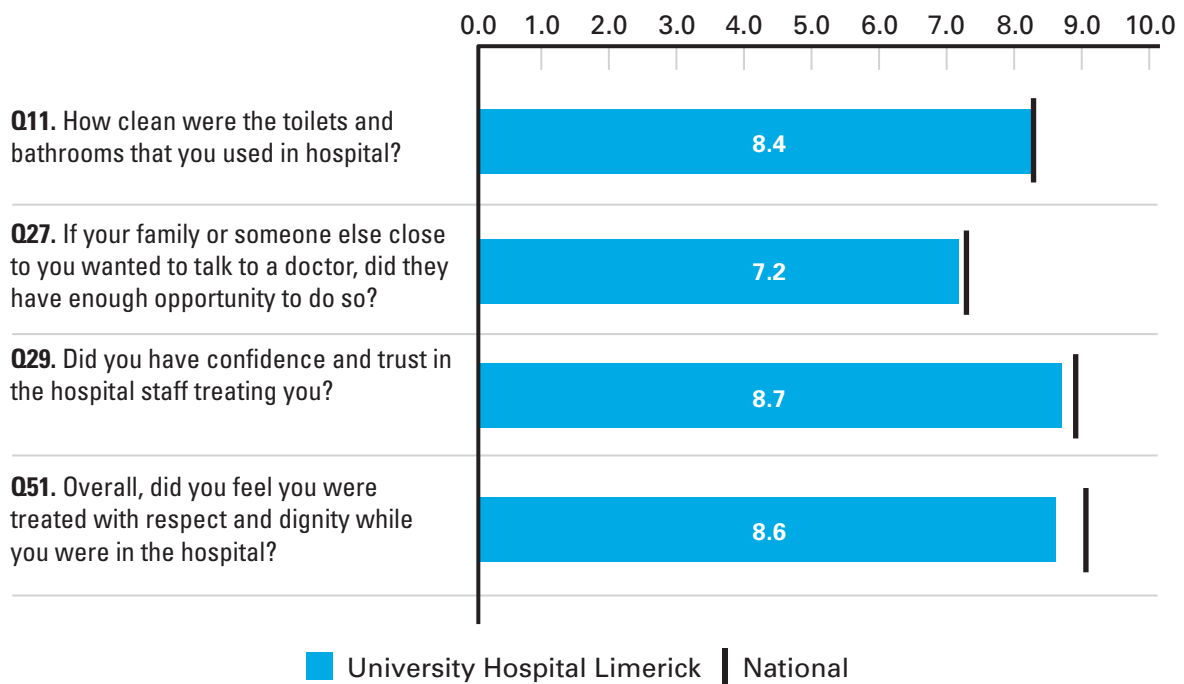
Participant ratings of this stage of care for University Hospital Limerick were below the national average and similar to the hospital's 2017 score. A number of patients said they did not receive enough information on caring for themselves at home, or the potential side effects of medications.

# Other aspects of care



Figure 12 shows the hospital's scores for questions related to other aspects of care.

**Figure 12 University Hospital Limerick scores for other aspects of care**



## The patient voice: what patients said about other aspects of care

"The nurses were always very attentive & went above & beyond in their care. Facilities were very clean."

"Nurses were very pleasant, helpful and respectful, as were the doctors, front of house staff and the cleaners. They were all professional."

"Privacy. I found at times it upset me. You would pull curtains for privacy. And they would be pulled back. I knew all the patients' medical histories."

"Being on a trolley with no room or privacy must be improved. Being on a trolley in a corridor and for over 3 days was appalling. Lack of privacy, no rest made me feel a lack of respect, and waiting for a doctor/nurse to do tests proved to take longer than it should have."

### Other aspects of care: what do these results mean?

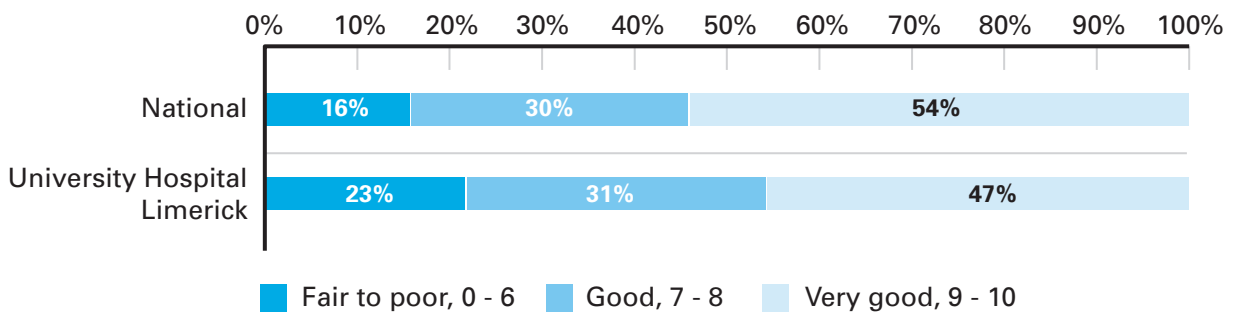
The ratings for the questions on other aspects of care were at, or below, the national average. For example, while most participants said they were treated with respect and dignity, a number did not give a positive rating in this area. In addition, a number of patients said that their families did have sufficient opportunities to talk to a doctor.

# 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. 47% of participants from University Hospital Limerick rated their care as very good, slightly below the national figure of 54%.

Figure 13 compares the average overall rating of hospital experience for University Hospital Limerick with the national average.

**Figure 13 Overall rating of hospital experience for University Hospital Limerick and nationally**





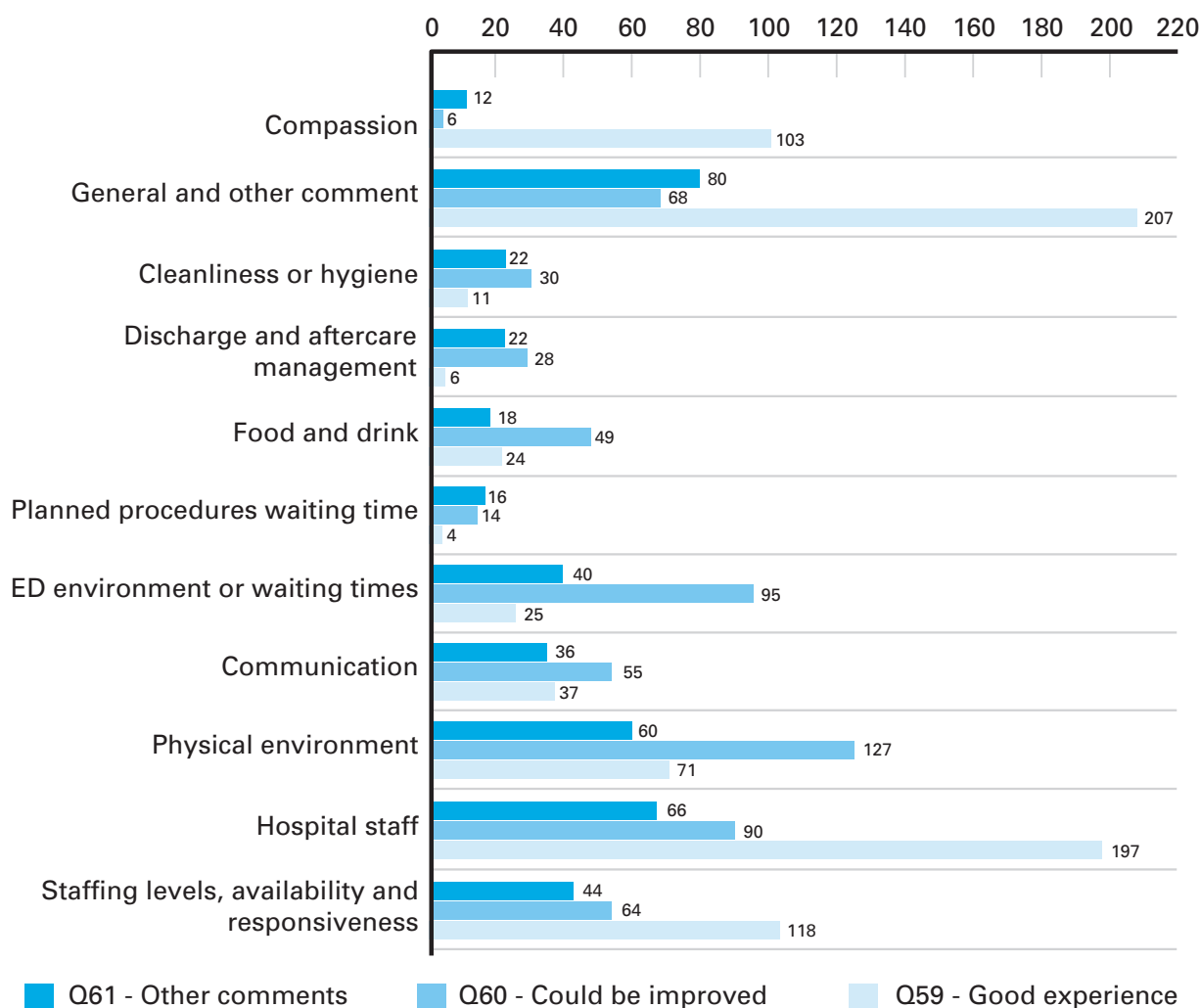
# In their own words: analysis of patients' comments

The last three questions (questions 59-61) of the survey asked patients to provide additional information, in their own words, on their experiences in hospitals. These free-text questions allowed people to give a more in-depth description of specific aspects of their care. It also allowed them to talk about various things (good or bad) that could not be captured by the structured questions. In total, 1,845 comments were received from patients of University Hospital Limerick in response to the free-text questions in the 2018 survey.

Figure 14 shows the breakdown of participant comments by theme for each of the three open-ended questions. Q59 asked participants what was particularly good about their hospital care, Q60 asked participants what could be improved, and Q61 asked participants for any other comments or suggestions.

For Q59, most of the comments related to the 'general and other comment' and 'hospital staff' themes. For Q60, most comments related to the 'physical environment'; and to 'ED environment or waiting times'.

**Figure 14 Participant comments by theme**



# Conclusion

## What were patients' experiences of hospital care in University Hospital Limerick in May 2018?

Most participants said they had a positive overall experience in University Hospital Limerick. 77% of patients in the hospital said they had a 'good' or 'very good' experience, compared with 84% nationally.

University Hospital Limerick received lower scores to the national average across every stage of care. Participant ratings of care were generally similar to those received in 2017 with the exception of admissions, which was significantly higher this year.

Some areas of good experience were apparent. Most patients said that they received a choice of food. In addition, the majority of patients said they were given a replacement meal if they needed it.

Several areas needing improvement were also identified. Some patients said that they did not always receive clear answers to questions while in the emergency department. In addition, a number of patients said that they did not have confidence and trust in hospital staff, and were not treated with respect and dignity while in the hospital.

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 felt that they were not treated with respect and dignity were less likely to give a positive rating of their overall experience.

The findings of the 2018 survey will be used to help University Hospital Limerick improve the experiences of patients in the hospital.

# Appendix 1: Areas of good experience and areas needing improvement

## Improvement map

The map below helps to identify areas of good experience and areas needing improvement in University Hospital Limerick. Questions that have a strong relationship with overall ratings of experience (Q52) are selected as areas of good experience or areas needing improvement respectively. Two areas of good experience (highlighted in blue) and three areas needing improvement (highlighted in purple) are identified on the map.

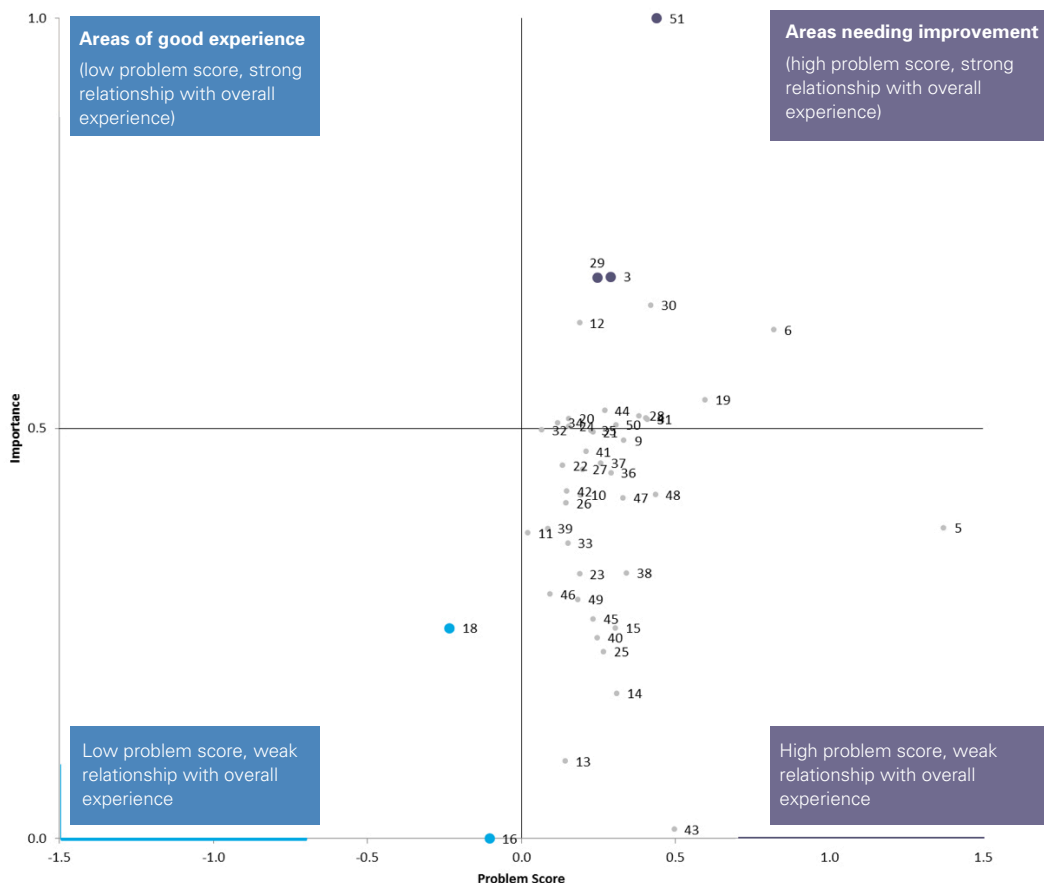
### Interpreting the improvement map

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.

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.



# References

1. Singer AJ, Thode Jr HC, Viccellio P, Pines JM. The Association Between Length of Emergency Department Boarding and Mortality. *Academic Emergency Medicine*. 2011;18(12):1324-9.
2. Plunkett PK, Byrne DG, Breslin T, Bennett K, Silke B. Increasing wait times predict increasing mortality for emergency medical admissions. *European Journal of Emergency Medicine*. 2011;18(4):192-6.