

National Patient Experience Survey 2017

Saolta University Health Care Group

Background to the National Patient Experience Survey

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 aim of the National Patient Experience Survey Programme is to engage with and understand the experiences of patients, and use this feedback to inform the future development, planning, design and delivery of improved patient-centred care in Irish hospitals.

The survey took place, for the first time, in May 2017. All adult patients discharged between 1 and 31 May 2017, who spent 24 hours or more in a public acute hospital and who held an address in the Republic of Ireland were eligible to take part in the National Patient Experience Survey. In total, 40 public acute hospitals participated.

Maternity, cancer, paediatric, psychiatric and day (less than 24 hours stay) hospital services, as well as private hospitals, were not part of the survey on this occasion.

Further information on the management of the survey is available at www.patientexperience.ie.

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Executive summary

Overall, patients' ratings of their experience at a hospital in the Saolta University Health Care Group were higher than the national average. 86% of patients who attended a Saolta hospital said they had a 'very good' or 'good' experience, compared with 84% nationally.

Patients were more likely to be admitted to a ward within six hours of arriving at the hospital, compared with patients nationally. However, the Saolta University Health Care Group fell short of the HSE waiting times target, with only 32% of its patients reporting waiting times of less than six hours in the emergency department. Not every hospital in the group contains an emergency departments, nevertheless this information provides useful insights into access to acute hospital services within the group.

The hospital group performed above the national average for all the stages of care of the patient journey.

These findings served to inform quality improvement initiatives in the Saolta University Health Care Group.

Profile of Saolta University Health Care Group

Saolta University Health Care Group is one of seven hospital groups in Ireland¹. 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 National Patient Experience Survey for each hospital, and associated quality improvement plans are available at 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

Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) Hospital Group

University of Limerick (UL) Hospital Group

Saolta Hospital Group

Dublin Midlands Hospital Group



There are six eligible hospitals in the Saolta University Health Care Group (Table 1). 4,649 eligible patients were discharged from a hospital in the Saolta University Health Care Group during the survey period of 1 – 31 May 2017. Saolta University Health Care Group provides emergency as well as elective inpatient care. Patients were asked to answer questions across each stage of care. However, people who were not admitted to hospital through an emergency department did not answer the questions on admissions.

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

Table 1. Profile of hospitals in Saolta University Health Care Group

Hospital Name	Number of inpatient beds*	Number of eligible discharges	Number of participants	Emergency department
Galway University Hospitals	654	1,743	907	Yes
Letterkenny University Hospital	331	865	434	Yes
Mayo University Hospital	277	793	382	Yes
Portiuncula University Hospital	169	432	204	Yes
Roscommon University Hospital	63	97	53	No
Sligo University Hospital	298	809	432	Yes

*Refers to the number of inpatient beds in May 2017.

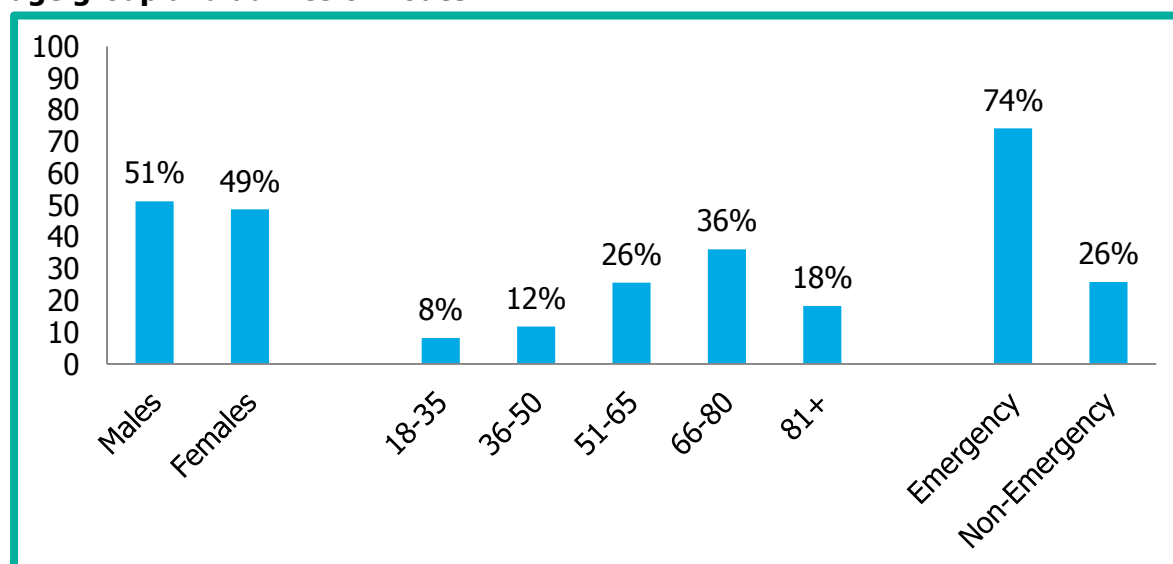
Who took part in the survey?

Description of the respondents who took part in the survey

4,649 people discharged from a hospital in Saolta University Health Care Group during the month of May 2017 were invited to participate in the survey. 2,415 people completed the survey, achieving a group response rate of 52%.

51% of people who responded to the survey were male and 49% were female. 74% of respondents entered the hospital through the emergency department. Figure 1. below provides information on the patients from Saolta University Health Care Group who took part in the survey.

Figure 1. Survey participants from Saolta University Health Care Group by sex, age group and admission route



Findings of the 2017 survey

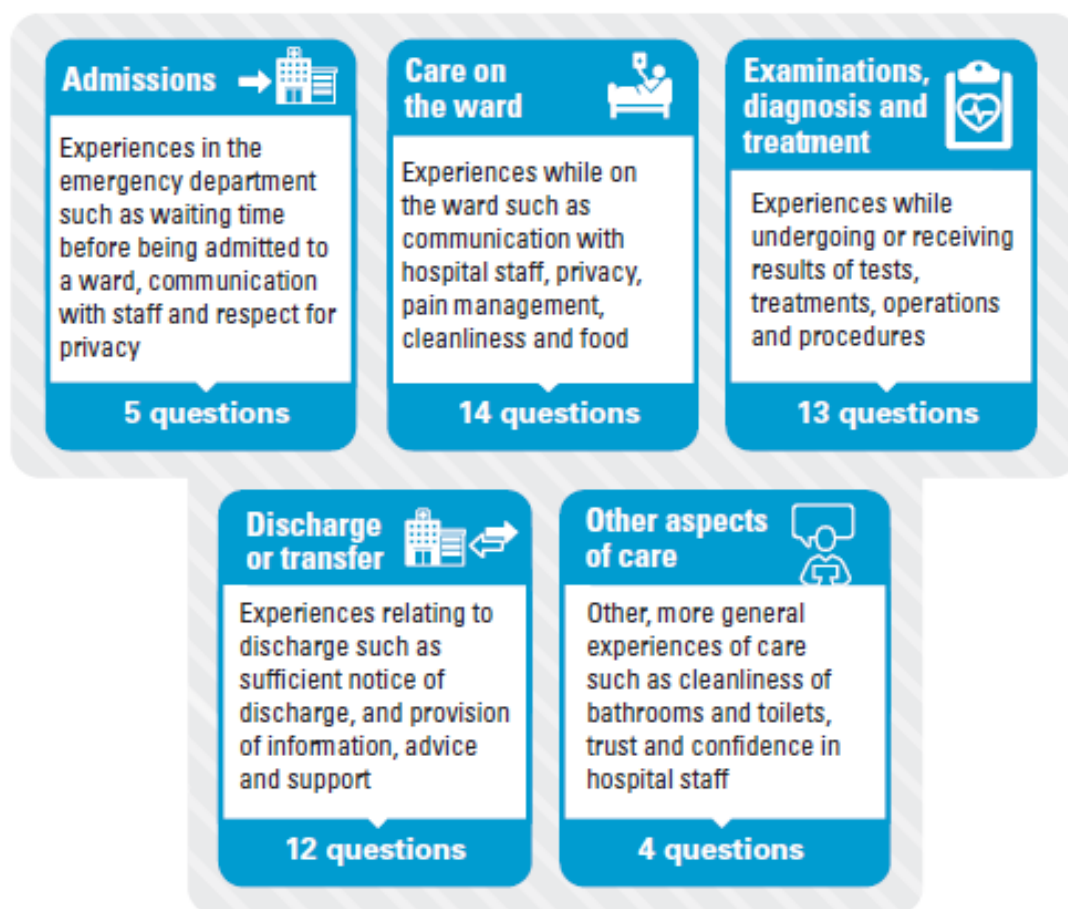
The stages of care along the patient journey

The National Patient Experience Survey 2017 followed the patient on their journey through hospital, from admission to discharge. The survey questions were grouped into five stages along the patient journey:

- admissions
- care on the ward
- examinations, diagnosis and treatment
- discharge or transfer
- other aspects of care.

Figure 2. gives a short description of the stages along the patient journey. It also indicates how many questions in the survey relate to each stage.

Figure 2. Description of stages of care along the patient journey



Appendix 1 includes a list of all questions in the 2017 survey.

Appendix 2 provides a brief technical note on analyses and interpretation.

The findings of the National Patient Experience Survey 2017 were officially launched on 11 December 2017. The national, individual hospital and hospital group reports, as well as the HSE's response to the findings, can be downloaded from www.patientexperience.ie.

The patient journey



Admissions

309 people (19%) had a 'fair to poor' experience of admission to a hospital in the Saolta University Health Care Group. However, on the other hand 957 (58%) people rated their experience as 'very good'. Only patients who said they had entered hospital on an emergency basis were asked to answer questions on this stage of care. The findings are summarised in Figure 3. Emergency department waiting times are a key element of patients' experiences of admission to hospital and findings for the group and its constituent hospitals are reported in Figures 7 and 8.

Figure 3. Experience ratings for admissions

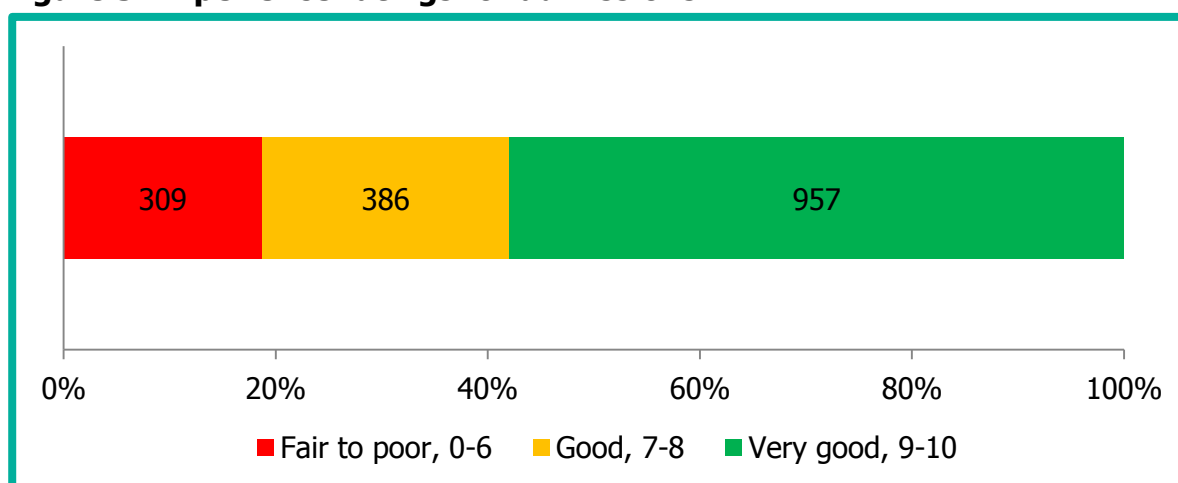


Figure 4. Saolta University Health Care Group scores for questions on admissions²

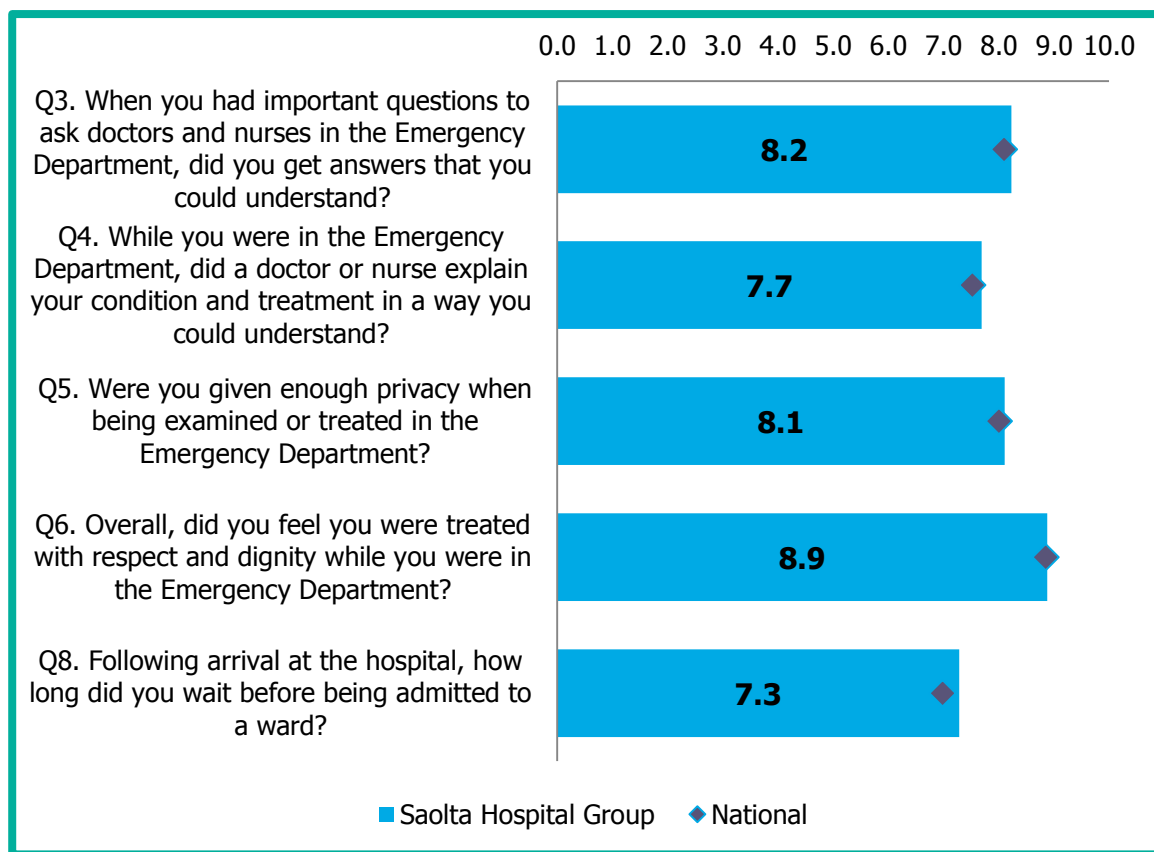
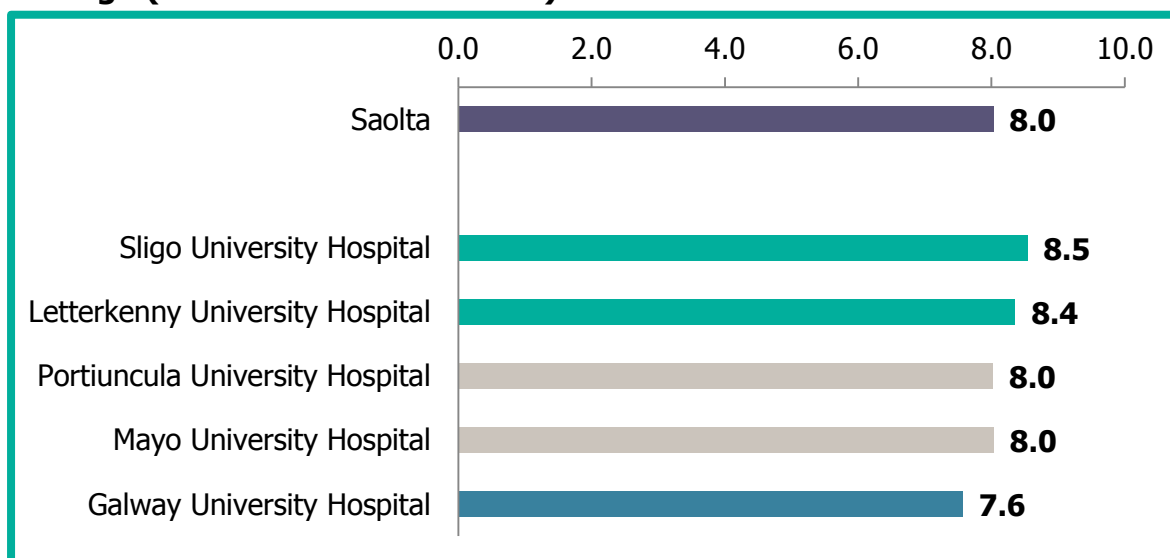


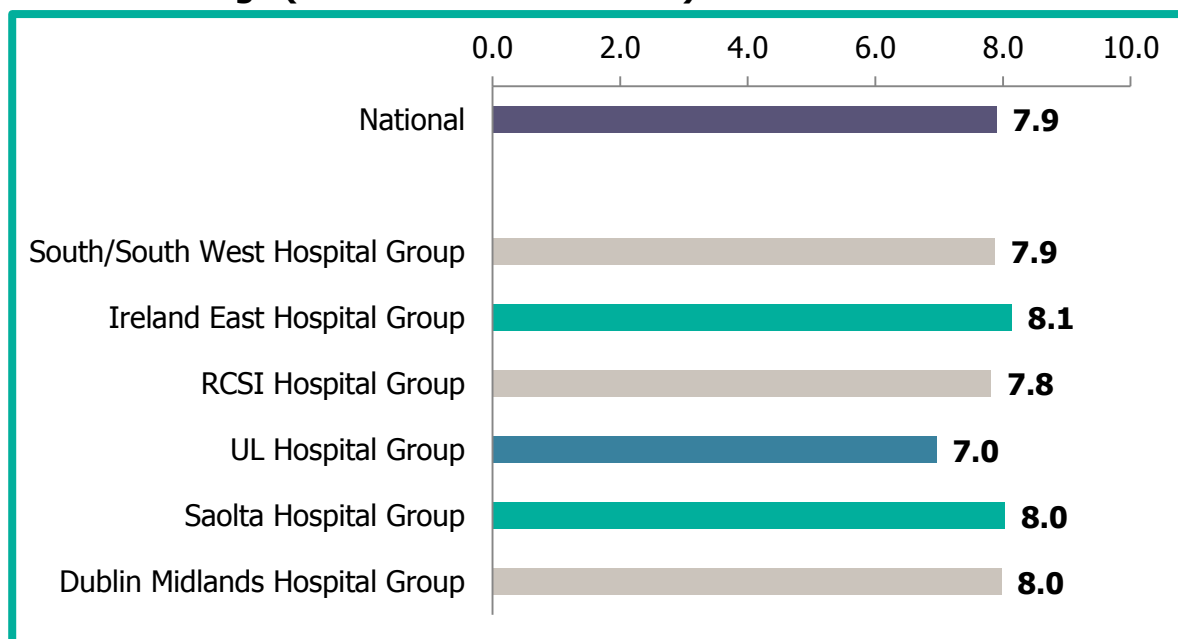
Figure 5. Comparison of hospital scores for admissions with the group average (out of a maximum of 10)



Key: Higher than group score ■ Same as group score ■ Lower than group score ■

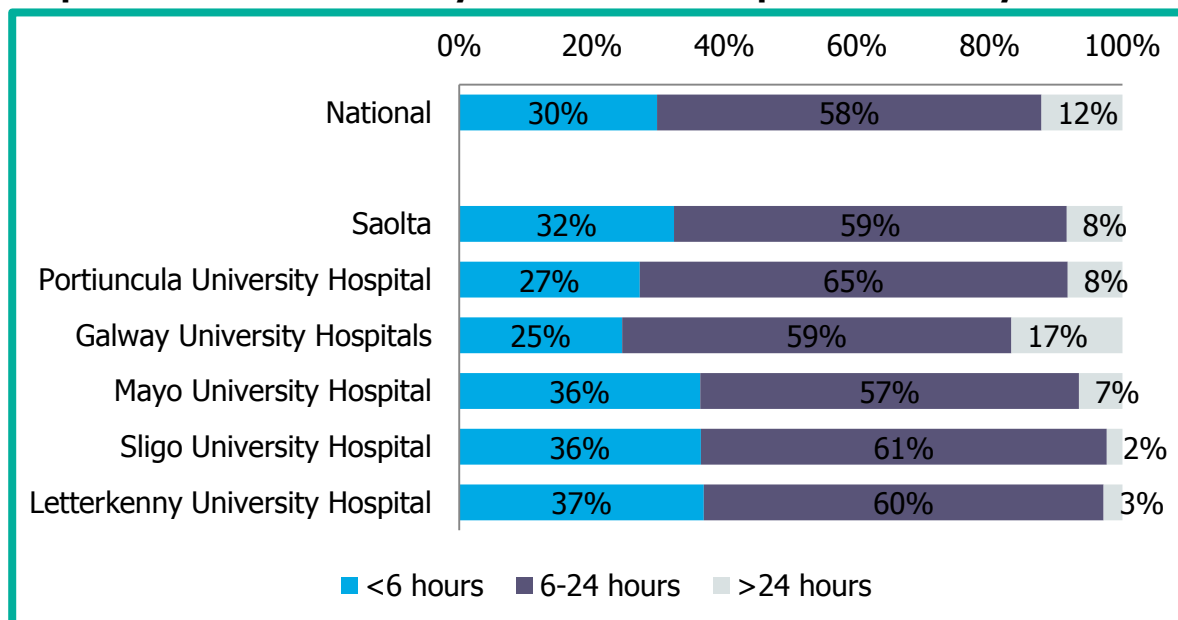
² Appendix 2 explains how the survey questions were scored.

Figure 6. Comparison of hospital group scores for admissions with the national average (out of a maximum of 10)³



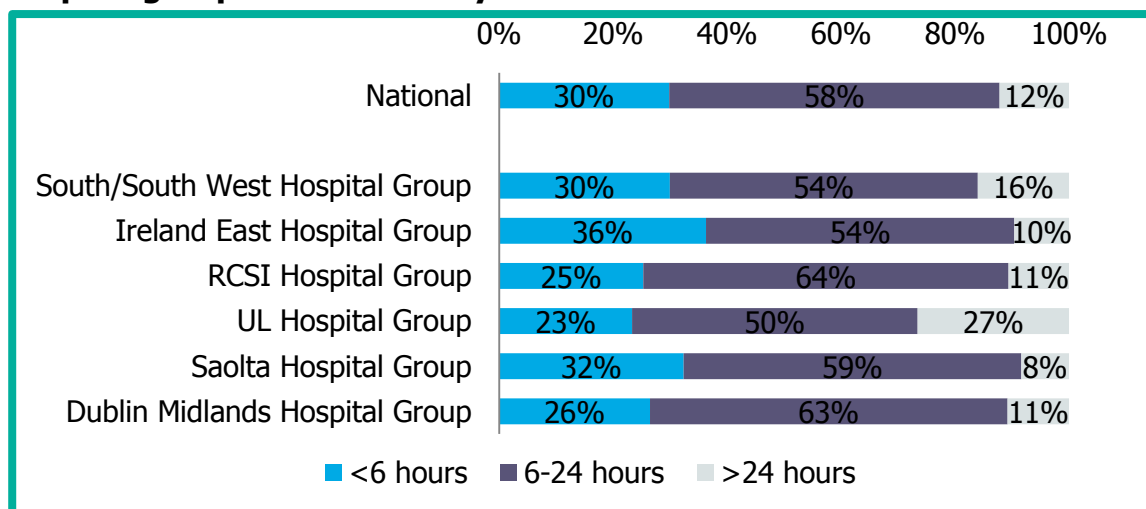
Key: Higher than national score (teal) Same as national score (green) Lower than national score (grey)

Figure 7. Patient-reported emergency department waiting times for hospitals in Saolta University Health Care Group and nationally



³ The shading on the graphs shows whether a difference exists between two scores and whether this difference is statistically significant. Sometimes, the grey shading suggests that two scores are the same even though they have different values. In such cases the difference is not statistically significant. For further information, see Appendix 2.

Figure 8. Patient-reported emergency department waiting times for all hospital groups and nationally



Care on the ward

288 respondents (12%) said that their experience of care on the ward in a hospital in the Saolta University Health Care Group was 'fair to poor'. However, 1,379 respondents (58%) reported having a 'very good' experience. Figure 9. summarises patients' experiences of care on the ward.

Figure 9. Experience ratings for care on the ward

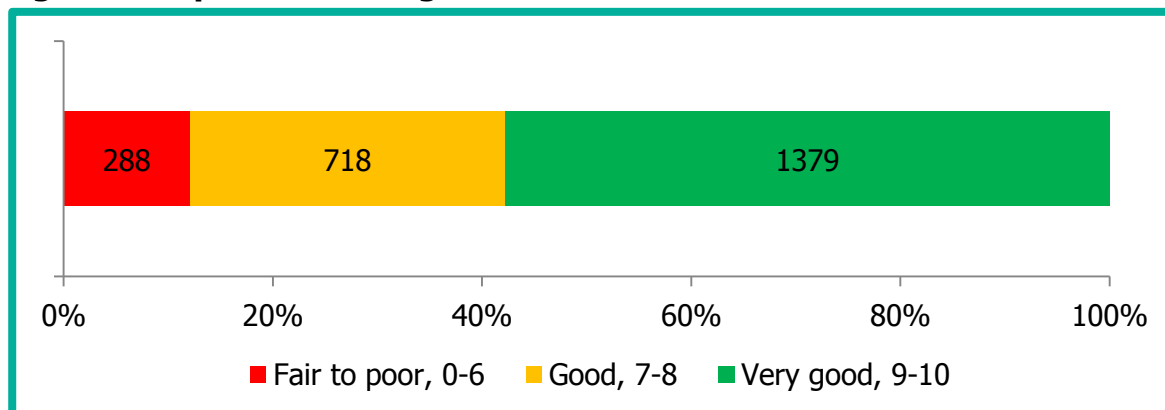


Figure 10. Saolta University Health Care Group scores for questions on care on the ward

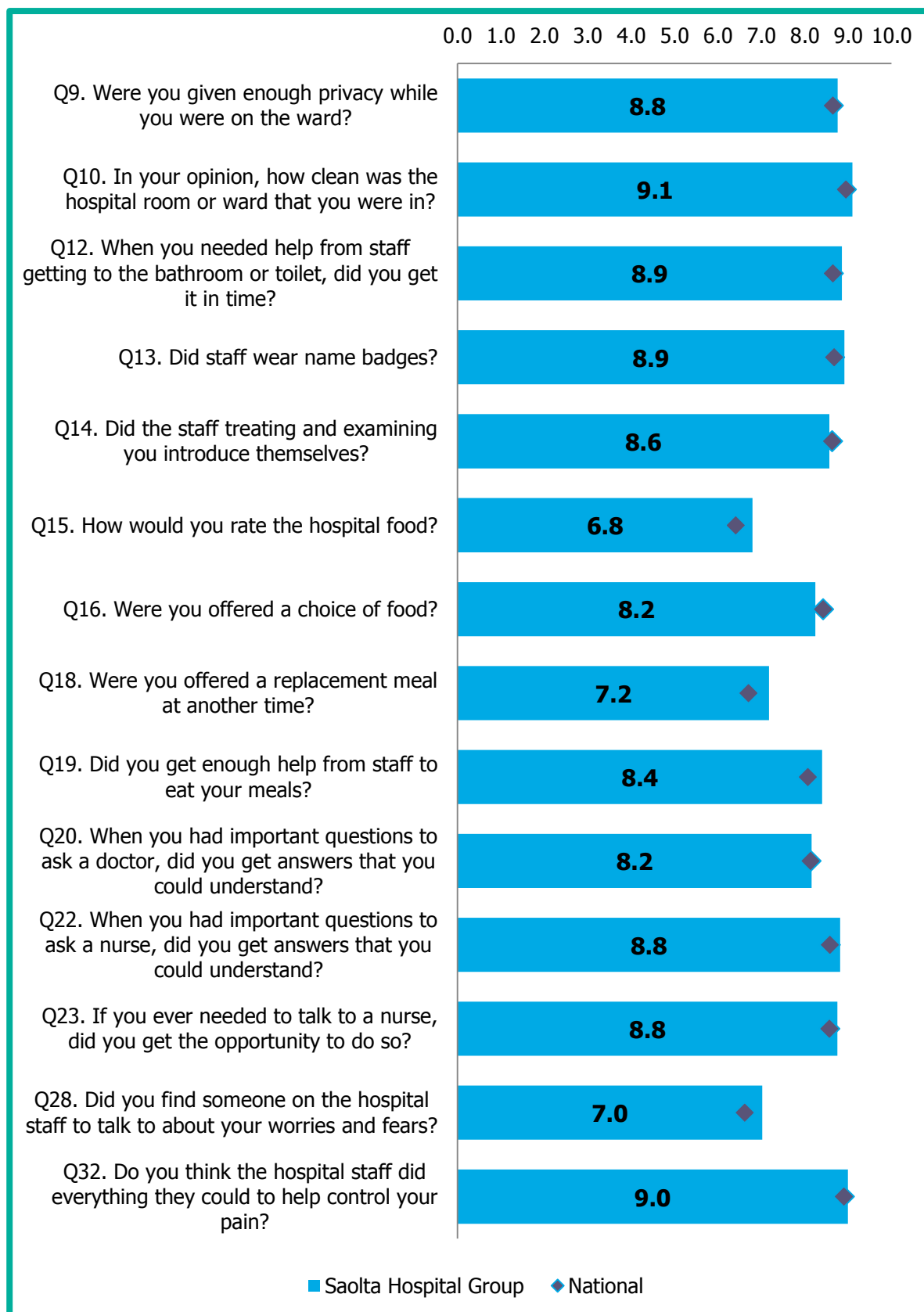
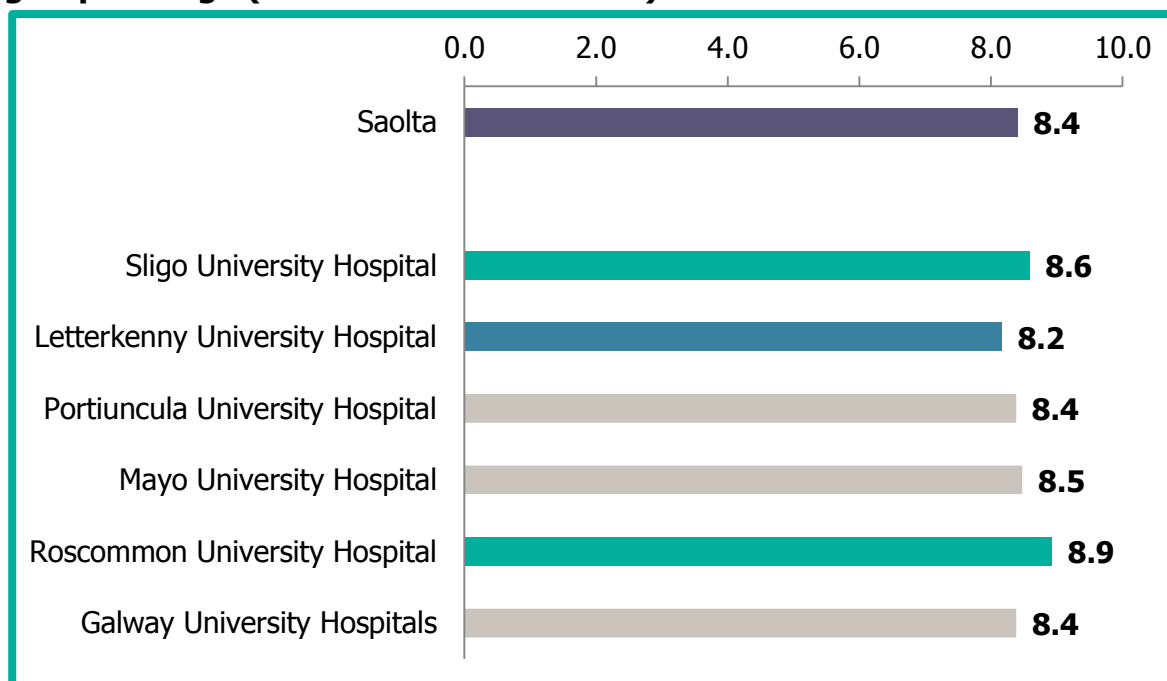
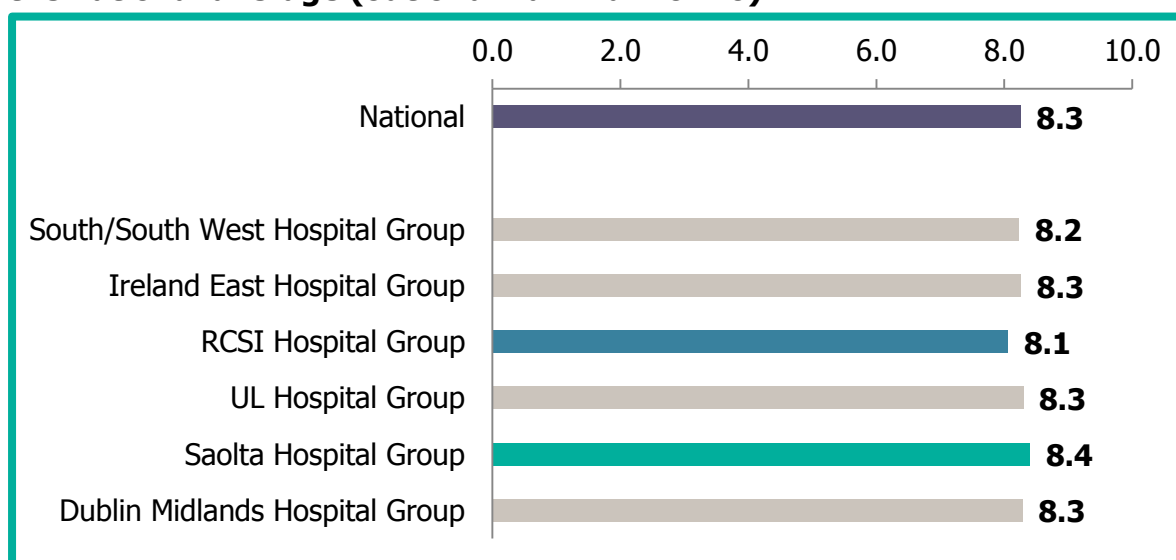


Figure 11. Comparison of hospital scores for care on the ward with the group average (out of a maximum of 10)⁴



Key: Higher than group score (teal) Same as group score (grey) Lower than group score (blue)

Figure 12. Comparison of hospital group scores for care on the ward with the national average (out of a maximum of 10)



Key: Higher than national score (teal) Same as national score (grey) Lower than national score (blue)

⁴ The shading on the graphs shows whether a difference exists between two scores and whether this difference is statistically significant. Sometimes, the grey shading suggests that two scores are the same even though they have different values. In such cases the difference is not statistically significant. For further information, see Appendix 2.

Examinations, diagnosis and treatment

470 respondents (20%) said that their experience of examinations, diagnosis and treatment in Saolta University Health Care Group was 'fair to poor'. However, 1,392 respondents (58%) reported having a 'very good' experience in this regard. Figure 13. summarises patients' experiences of examinations, diagnosis and treatment.

Figure 13. Experience ratings for examinations, diagnosis and treatment

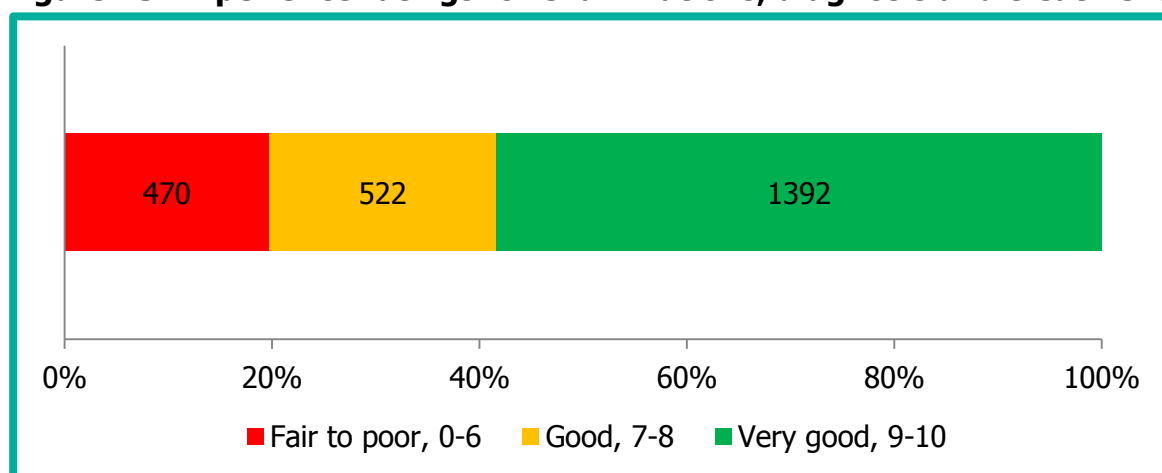


Figure 14. Saolta University Health Care Group scores for questions on examinations, diagnosis and treatment

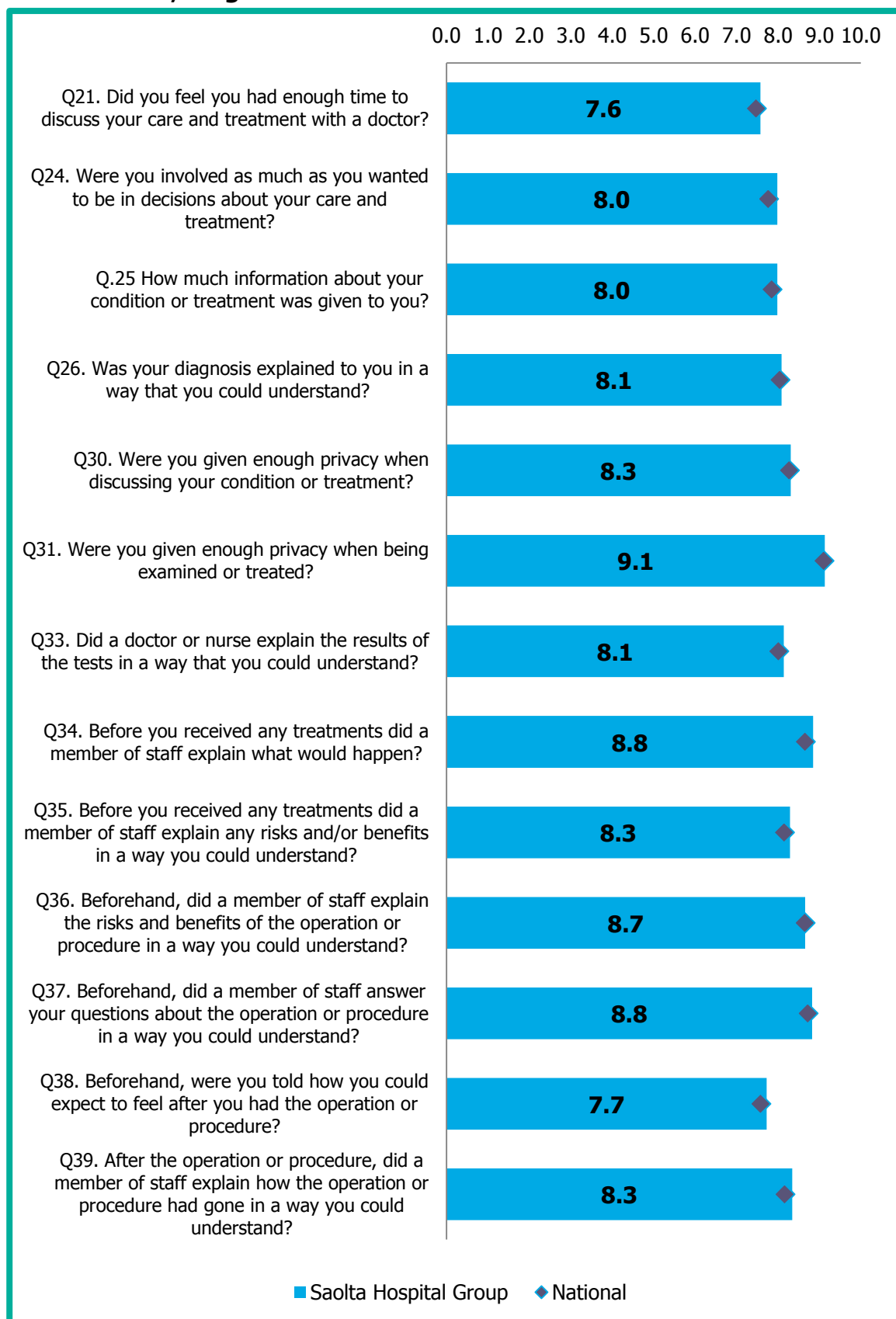
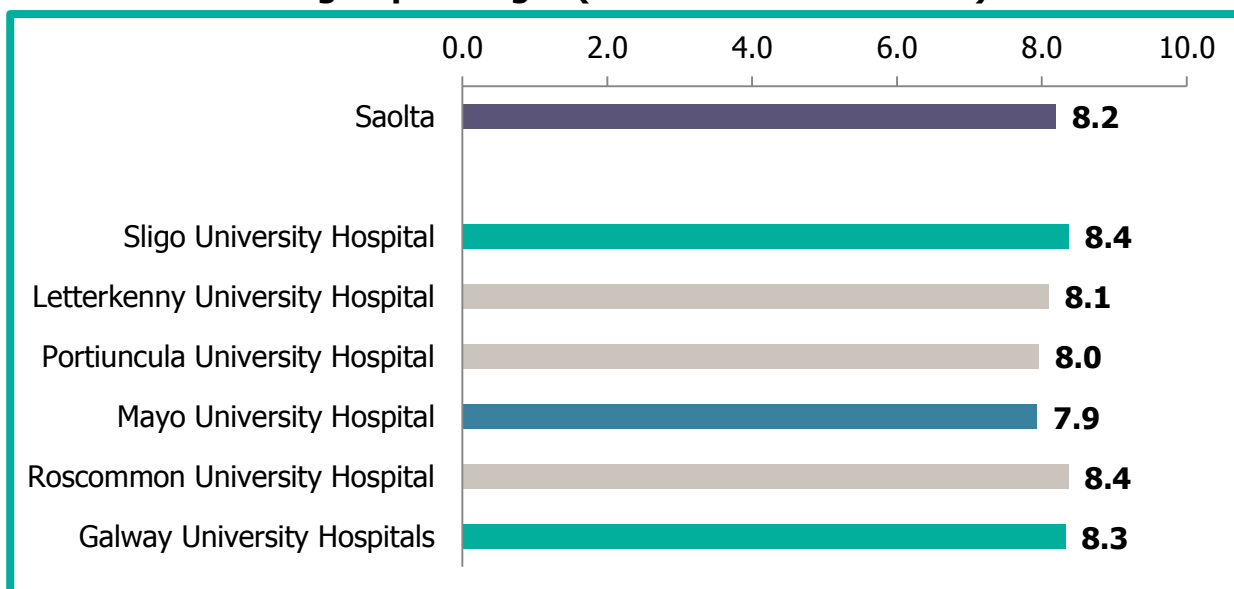
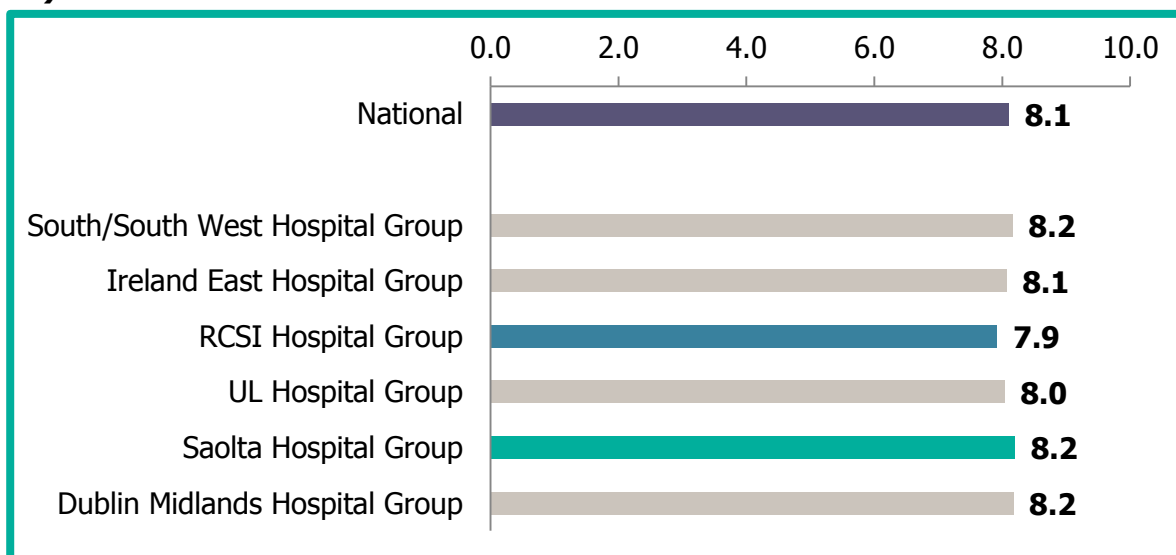


Figure 15. Comparison of hospital scores for examinations, diagnosis and treatment with the group averages (out of a maximum of 10)⁵



Key: Higher than group score (teal) Same as group score (grey) Lower than group score (blue)

Figure 16. Comparison of hospital group scores for examinations, diagnosis and treatment with the national average (out of a maximum of 10)



Key: Higher than national score (teal) Same as national score (grey) Lower than national score (blue)

⁵ The shading on the graphs shows whether a difference exists between two scores and whether this difference is statistically significant. Sometimes, the grey shading suggests that two scores are the same even though they have different values. In such cases the difference is not statistically significant. For further information, see Appendix 2.

Discharge or transfer

880 people (37%) said that their experience of discharge or transfer from a hospital in Saolta University Health Care Group was 'fair to poor'. However, 976 (41%) reported having a 'very good' experience of this stage of care. Figure 17. below summarises these experience ratings.

Figure 17. Experience ratings for discharge or transfer

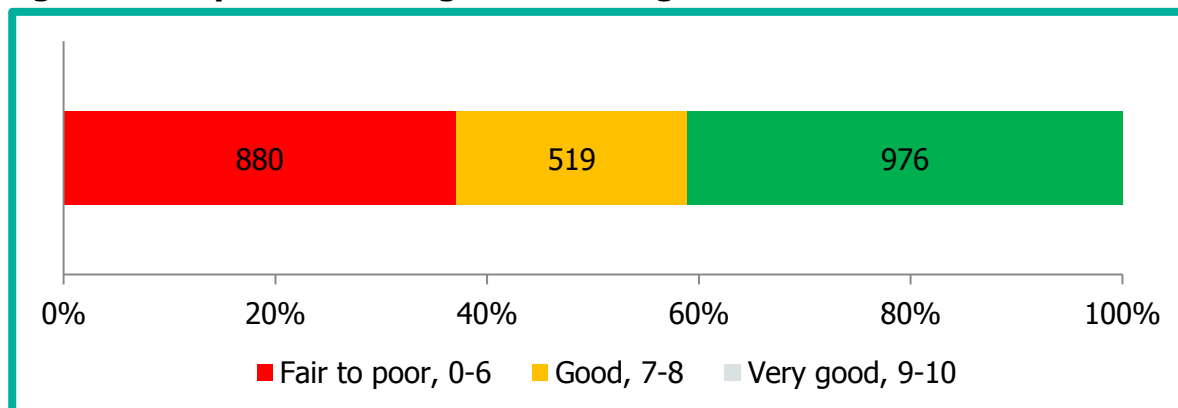


Figure 18. Saolta University Health Care Group scores for questions on discharge or transfer

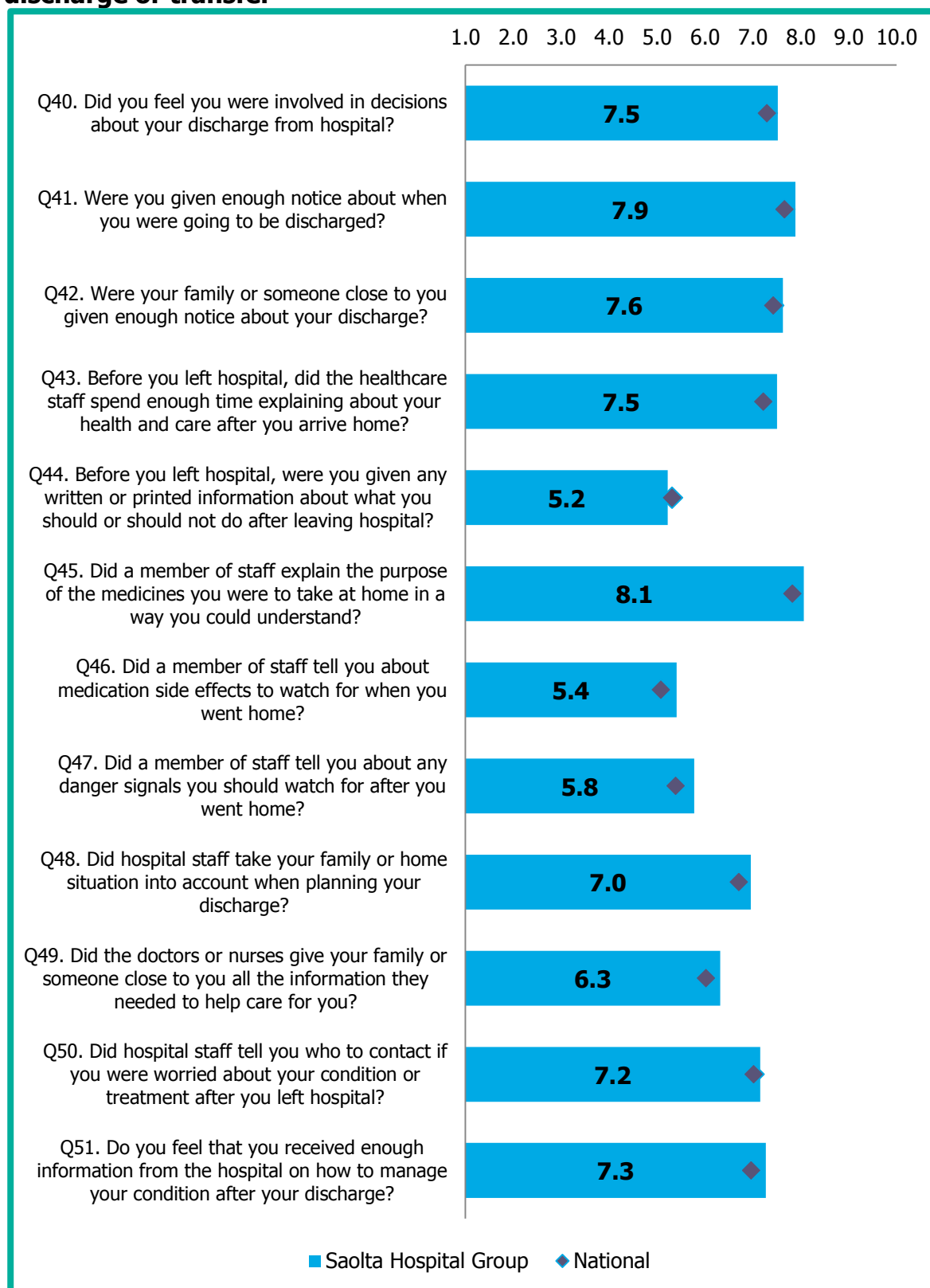
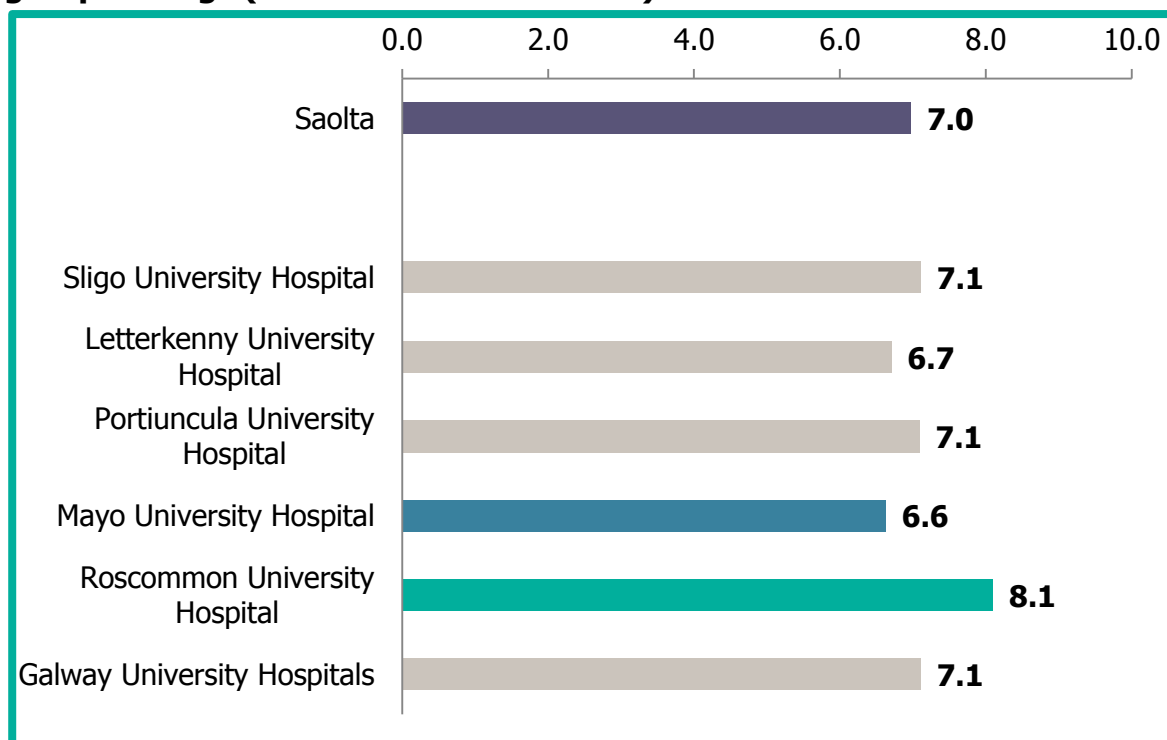
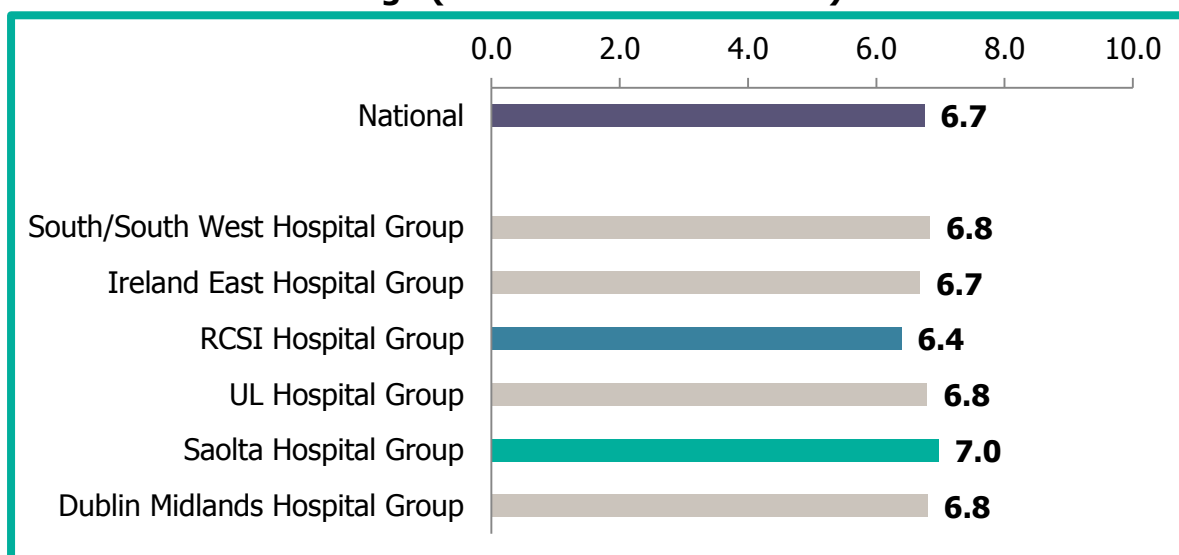


Figure 19. Comparison of hospital scores for discharge or transfer with the group average (out of a maximum of 10)⁶



Key: Higher than group score (teal) Same as group score (dark blue) Lower than group score (grey)

Figure 20. Comparison of hospital group scores for discharge or transfer with the national average (out of a maximum of 10)



Key: Higher than national score (teal) Same as national score (dark blue) Lower than national score (grey)

⁶ The shading on the graphs shows whether a difference exists between two scores and whether this difference is statistically significant. Sometimes, the grey shading suggests that two scores are the same even though they have different values. In such cases the difference is not statistically significant. For further information, see Appendix 2.

Other aspects of care

Figure 21. Saolta University Health Care Group scores for questions on other aspects of care

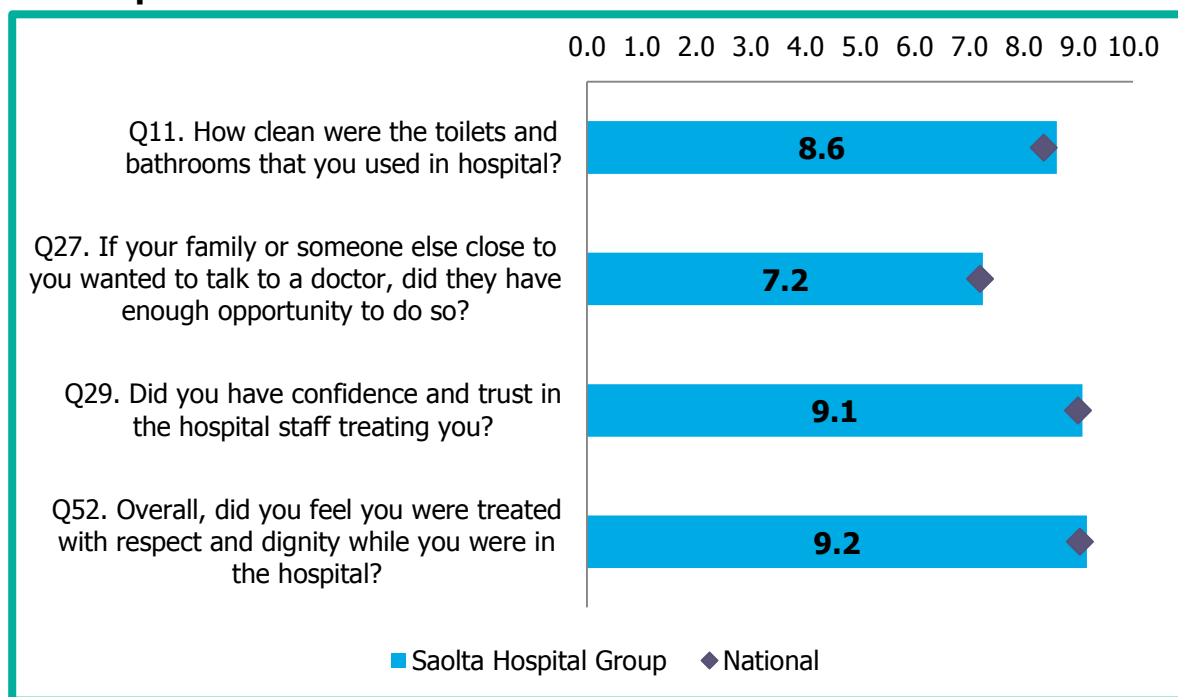
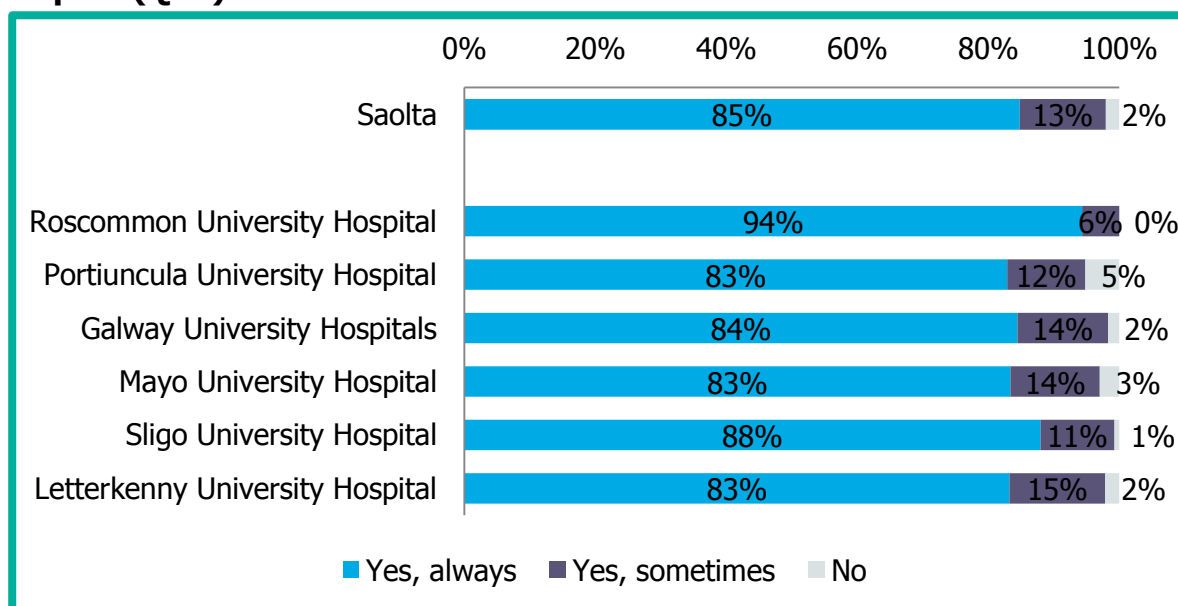


Figure 22. Saolta University Health Care Group ratings for dignity and respect (Q52)



Overall experience

The 2017 National Patient Experience Survey asked people to rate their overall hospital experience on a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 indicating a very negative and 10 indicating a very positive experience. In Saolta University Health Care Group, 56% of patients said that they had a 'very good' experience in hospital, compared with 54% nationally.

Figure 23. Overall rating of hospital experience for Saolta University Health Care Group and nationally

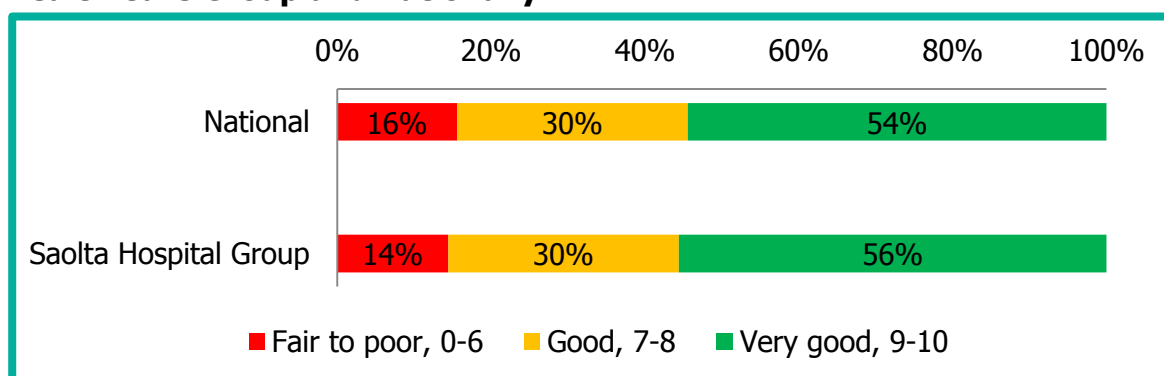
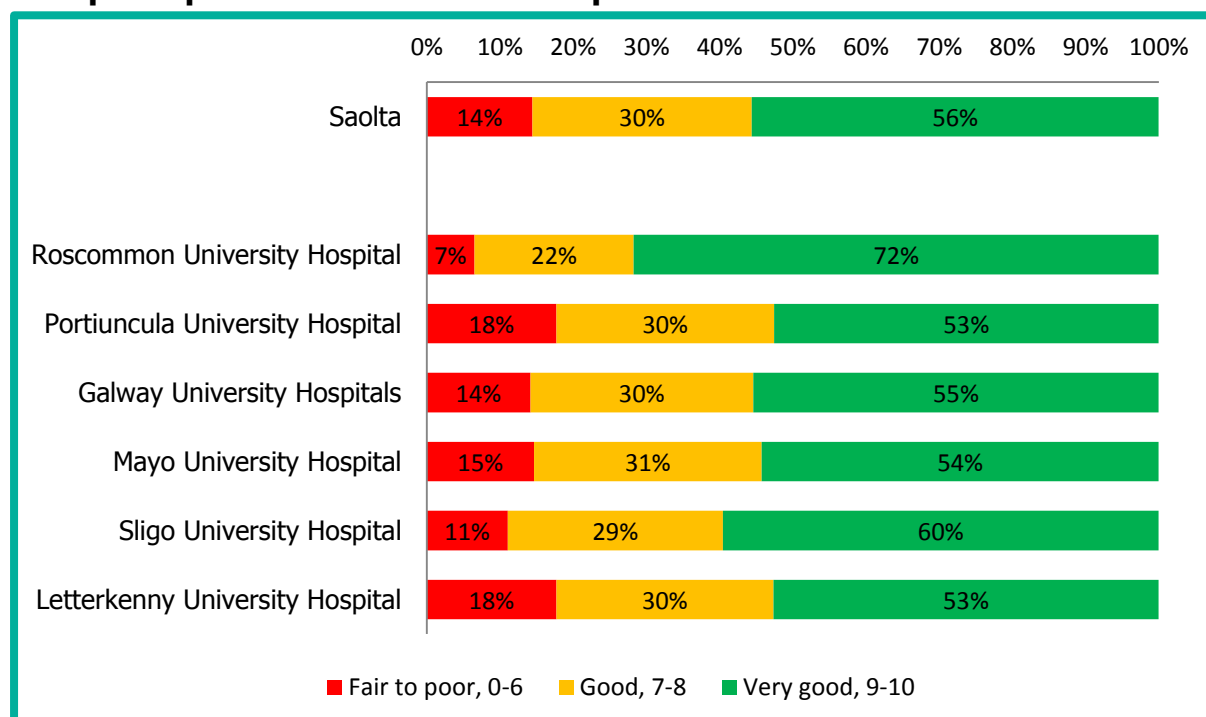


Figure 24. Overall rating of hospital experience for Saolta Health Care Group compared with individual hospitals



Areas needing improvement

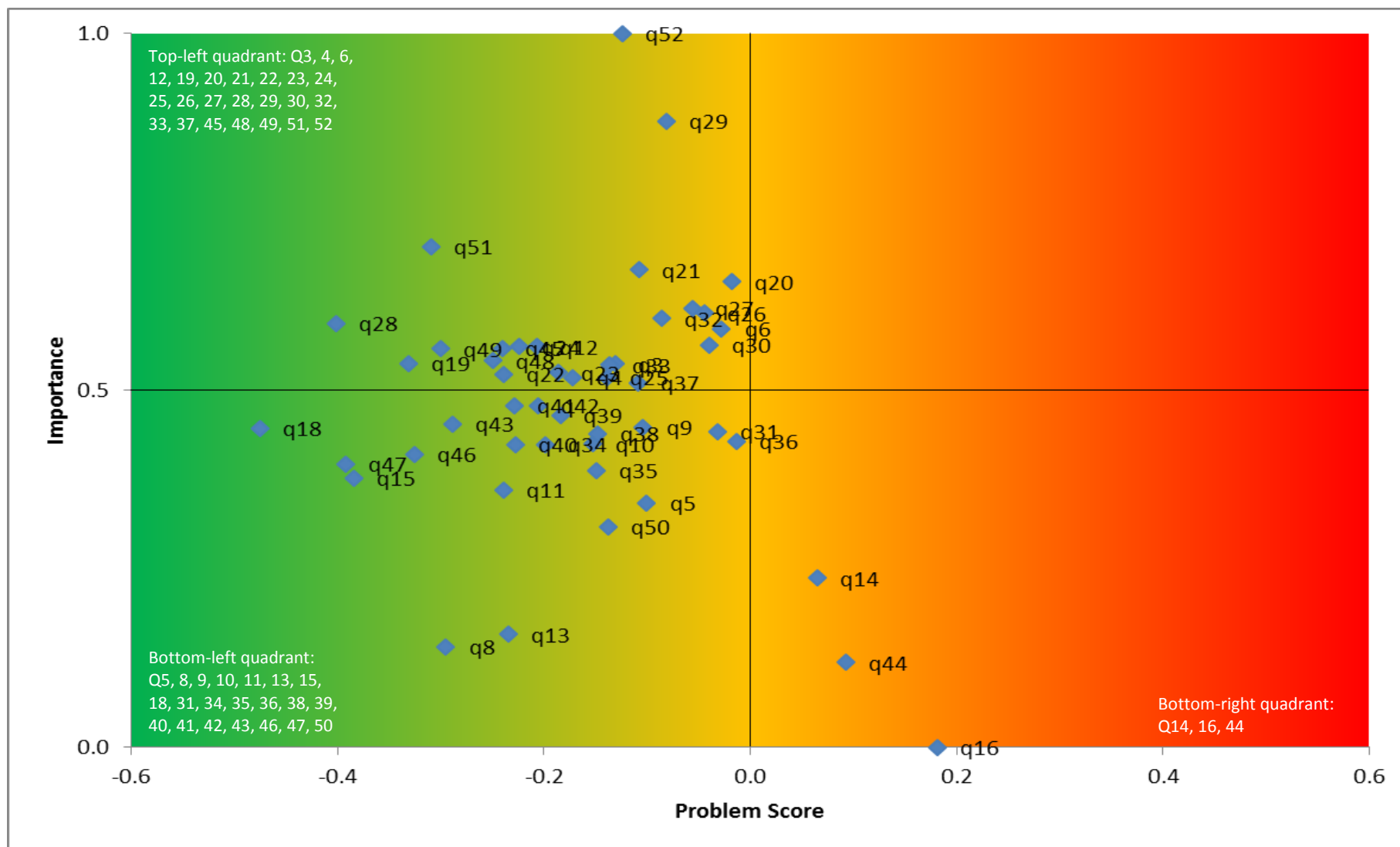
This section outlines areas where Saolta University Health Care Group performed well, and areas needing improvement.

The importance of the relationship between each question and overall experience is given in Figure 25 on the vertical axis as a number between 0 and 1, with 1 being the most important possible relationship. The difference between question scores for Saolta University Health Care Group and national scores is described as a 'problem score', shown on the horizontal axis. If a question has a problem score with a value greater than zero, it means that Saolta University Health Care Group has scored lower than the national average for that question. For example, if a hospital group scored 8.8 for Q52, which is lower than the national average of 9.0, this would mean that it had a problem score of 0.2 for this question. Questions that have high problem scores and a strong relationship with overall experience appear in the top-right quadrant of the map — these are areas needing improvement in Saolta University Health Care Group. The list of questions in each quadrant are listed on Figure 25. For reference, the full list of survey questions can be found in Appendix 1.

Saolta University Health Care Group did not have any questions in the top-right quadrant of Figure 25. However, it did score below the national average on several questions. For example, Q16 — 'Were you offered a choice of food' has a problem score greater than 0. Though this question does not have a strong relationship with overall experience, there is clear room for improvement.

The group scored above the national average on a number of questions that were important to patients' rating of their overall experience. For example, Q28 — 'Did you find someone on the hospital staff to talk to about your worries and fears?' has a problem score of less than 0 and a significant relationship with overall experience. This is a positive result for the group.

Figure 25. Overall patient experience map for Saolta University Health Care Group



Conclusion

Overall, patients' ratings of their experiences at a hospital in Saolta University Health Care Group were higher than the national average. 86% of patients in this group said they had a 'very good' or 'good' experience, compared with 84% nationally.

Patients at Roscommon University Hospital and Sligo University Hospital were most likely to rate their hospital experience as 'very good', compared with other hospitals in the group.

In terms of areas that require improvement in this group, patients said that staff did not always introduce themselves and also noted a lack of food choices. Many patients also said they did not receive written or printed information about how to care for themselves after discharge.

Overall, the Saolta University Health Care Group scored higher than the national average for every stage of care along the patient journey.

As regards admissions, patients of the Saolta University Health Care Group were more likely to be admitted to a ward within six hours of arriving at the hospital, compared to patients nationally. The group scored above the national average in this area, however, the group fell short of the waiting time targets set by the HSE⁷.

As regards their care on the ward, patients' responses to questions on the cleanliness of the ward and pain management were the most positive. Many patients of the Saolta University Health Care Group reported positive experiences of being able to find someone to talk to if they were experiencing worries or fears. The hospital group scored above the national average for this question.

Patients of the Saolta University Health Care Group reported high levels of privacy during the examinations, diagnosis and treatment stage of care, similar to the national average. The lowest scoring question for this stage of care asked patients if they felt they had enough time to discuss their care and treatment with a doctor. While many patients said that they did not have, or only to an extent had enough time, the group performed slightly above the national average on this particular question.

⁷ The HSE 2017 targets can be viewed at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/KPIs/Acute-Hospitals-KPI-Metadata-2017.pdf>

In relation to the discharge or transfer stage of care, the group recorded the highest score for Q45 which asked if patients received clear explanations on the purpose of the medicines they were to take at home. The majority responded that they were completely informed, with this question scoring higher than the national average. Patients of the Saolta University Health Care Group were more likely than the national average to receive sufficient information about medication side effects and danger signals, despite the corresponding questions featuring among the lowest scoring questions of the discharge or transfer stage of care.

Many patients said that they were treated with respect and dignity in hospital and that they had trust and confidence in the staff treating them.

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 Saolta University Health Care Group, intended to address the issues identified by patients.

Appendix 1

National Patient Experience Survey 2017 questions

No.	Question
1.	Was your most recent hospital stay planned in advance or an emergency?
2.	When you arrived at the hospital, did you go to the Emergency Department (also known as the A&E Department or Casualty)?
3.	When you had important questions to ask doctors and nurses in the Emergency Department, did you get answers that you could understand?
4.	While you were in the Emergency Department, did a doctor or nurse explain your condition and treatment in a way you could understand?
5.	Were you given enough privacy when being examined or treated in the Emergency Department?
6.	Overall, did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity while you were in the Emergency Department?
7.	Did you remain in the Emergency Department for the entire time of your stay?
8.	Following arrival at the hospital, how long did you wait before being admitted to a ward?
9.	Were you given enough privacy while you were on the ward?
10.	In your opinion, how clean was the hospital room or ward that you were in?
11.	How clean were the toilets and bathrooms that you used in hospital?
12.	When you needed help from staff getting to the bathroom or toilet, did you get it in time?
13.	Did staff wear name badges?
14.	Did the staff treating and examining you introduce themselves?

15.	How would you rate the hospital food?
16.	Were you offered a choice of food?
17.	Were you ever unable to eat during mealtimes (e.g. because you were away from the ward, recovery from surgery etc.)?
18.	Were you offered a replacement meal at another time?
19.	Did you get enough help from staff to eat your meals?
20.	When you had important questions to ask a doctor, did you get answers that you could understand?
21.	Did you feel you had enough time to discuss your care and treatment with a doctor?
22.	When you had important questions to ask a nurse, did you get answers that you could understand?
23.	If you ever needed to talk to a nurse, did you get the opportunity to do so?
24.	Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?
25.	How much information about your condition or treatment was given to you?
26.	Was your diagnosis explained to you in a way that you could understand?
27.	If your family or someone else close to you wanted to talk to a doctor, did they have enough opportunity to do so?
28.	Did you find someone on the hospital staff to talk to about your worries and fears?
29.	Did you have confidence and trust in the hospital staff treating you?
30.	Were you given enough privacy when discussing your condition or treatment?
31.	Were you given enough privacy when being examined or treated?
32.	Do you think the hospital staff did everything they could to help control your pain?
33.	Did a doctor or nurse explain the results of the tests in a way that you could understand?

34.	Before you received any treatments did a member of staff explain what would happen?
35.	Before you received any treatments did a member of staff explain any risks and/or benefits in a way you could understand?
36.	Beforehand, did a member of staff explain the risks and benefits of the operation or procedure in a way you could understand?
37.	Beforehand, did a member of staff answer your questions about the operation or procedure in a way you could understand?
38.	Beforehand, were you told how you could expect to feel after you had the operation or procedure?
39.	After the operation or procedure, did a member of staff explain how the operation or procedure had gone in a way you could understand?
40.	Did you feel you were involved in decisions about your discharge from hospital?
41.	Were you given enough notice about when you were going to be discharged?
42.	Were your family or someone close to you given enough notice about your discharge?
43.	Before you left hospital, did the healthcare staff spend enough time explaining about your health and care after you arrive home?
44.	Before you left hospital, were you given any written or printed information about what you should or should not do after leaving hospital?
45.	Did a member of staff explain the purpose of the medicines you were to take at home in a way you could understand?
46.	Did a member of staff tell you about medication side effects to watch for when you went home?
47.	Did a member of staff tell you about any danger signals you should watch for after you went home?
48.	Did hospital staff take your family or home situation into account when planning your discharge?
49.	Did the doctors or nurses give your family or someone close to you all the information they needed to help care for you?
50.	Did hospital staff tell you who to contact if you were worried about your condition or treatment after you left hospital?
51.	Do you feel that you received enough information from the hospital on how to manage your condition after your discharge?
52.	Overall, did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity while you were in the hospital?

53.	Overall... (please circle a number from 0 to 10 that summarises your experience. 0 represents a very poor experience, 10 represents a very good experience.)
54.	Who was the main person or people that filled in this questionnaire?
55.	Are you male or female?
56.	What is your month and year of birth?
57.	What is your ethnic or cultural background?
58.	Do you currently have: A medical card; Private health insurance; Both medical card and private health insurance; Neither medical card nor private health insurance
59.	Was there anything particularly good about your hospital care?
60.	Was there anything that could be improved?
61.	Any other comments or suggestions?

Appendix 2

A technical note on analyses and interpretation

Preliminary note

Please note that values in figures do not always add up to 100% exactly. This is due to rounding.

Scoring methodology

The National Patient Experience Survey scoring methodology is based on the methodology adopted by the Care Quality Commission on behalf of the National Health Service (NHS) in England.

The scores for the patient journey were calculated by grouping survey questions into five stages of care⁸: admissions; care on the ward; examinations, diagnosis and treatment; discharge or transfer; and other stages of care. Scores are presented for individual questions making up a stage of care. The responses to questions in each stage were also summarised to form overall scales ranging from 0-10.

Figure A. is an example of how response options were converted into scores in the 2017 survey. It should be noted that only evaluative questions could be scored, that is, questions which assess an actual experience of care. Routing or demographic questions were not scored. More 'positive' answers were assigned higher scores than more negative response options. In the example 'No' was given a score of 0, 'Yes, sometimes' was given a score of 5 and 'Yes, always' was given a score of 10. The

⁸ There are 48 questions relating to the patient journey stages of care. Filter questions, that is, questions whose main purpose it was to route respondents to the next applicable question, were excluded from this categorisation.

last response option 'I had no need to ask/I was too unwell to ask any questions' was not scored, as it cannot be evaluated in terms of best practice.

Figure A. Example of a scored question in the 2017 survey

The Emergency Department	
Q3.	When you had important questions to ask doctors and nurses in the Emergency Department, did you get answers that you could understand?
10	Yes, always
5	Yes, sometimes
0	No
M	I had no need to ask / I was too unwell to ask any questions

The table below shows how scores are calculated for a specific question. In this example, the scores of five respondents are presented. The score for Q3 is calculated by adding the scores in the right-hand column (10+10+5+0+5), before dividing them by the number of people who responded to this question (30/5=6). The average score for Q3 is 6 out of 10.

Q3. When you had important questions to ask doctors and nurses in the Emergency Department, did you get answers that you could understand?	
Respondent	Score
1	10
2	10
3	5
4	0
5	5
Sum of scores	30

Comparing groups

When is a difference a 'real' difference?

Statistical tests were carried out to examine if there were significant differences in patient experience across patient groups (that is men and women, and different age groups).

A 'z-test' was used to compare patient experience data at the 99% confidence level. A z-test is a statistical test used to examine whether two population mean scores are different, when the variances are known and the sample size is large. A statistically significant difference means it is very unlikely that results were obtained by chance alone. Therefore, when a score is significantly 'higher than' or 'lower than' the national average, this is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance.

To protect the anonymity of people who took part in the survey, and to allow for strong comparisons, sample sizes of less than 30 were not reported.

The National Patient Experience Survey 2017 technical report, available in 2018 at www.patientexperience.ie, provides details on all aspects of the analyses, including response rates, mapping of questions to reporting themes, computation of patient journey scores, statistical comparisons, and application of adjustment weights.