

# National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019

## University Hospital Waterford

## 2019 survey results

### Respondents



**445**

Number of respondents



**64.8**

Average age



**46%**

Participation rate

### Overall experience

#### 2019

Very Good  
**46%**

Good  
**32%**

Fair to Poor  
**23%**

#### 2018

Very Good  
**44%**

Good  
**35%**

Fair to Poor  
**21%**

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

### Stages of care

**7.7**  
out of 10

#### Admission to hospital

Patient ratings of admission to the hospital were similar to the national average, and to the hospital's 2018 score.



**8**  
out of 10

#### Care on the ward

Patients' ratings of 'care on the ward' in the hospital were below the national average, but similar to the hospitals' rating in last year's survey.



**8**  
out of 10

#### Examination, diagnosis and treatment

Ratings of 'examination, diagnosis and treatment' were similar to the national average and to last year's survey.



**6.5**  
out of 10

#### Discharge or transfer

Participant ratings of 'discharge or transfer' were below the national average and have not improved since last year's survey.



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## About the National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019

The National Inpatient Experience Survey<sup>1</sup> 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. It was conducted for the first time in 2017 and repeated in 2018 and 2019.

Nationally, 26,897 people were invited to participate in the third National Inpatient Experience Survey. In total, 12,343 people responded, resulting in a response rate of 46%. 445 patients from University Hospital Waterford took part.

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 and 2018 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://yourexperience.ie/inpatient/hospital-initiatives/>.

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

The majority of participants from University Hospital Waterford reported positive experiences in hospital. 78% of participants said they had 'good' or 'very good' overall experiences, compared with 84% nationally. The hospital scored about the same as the national average for the 'admissions' and 'examination, diagnosis and treatment' stages of care.<sup>2</sup> However, the hospital scored below the national average for the 'care on the ward', 'discharge or transfer' stages and for overall experience.

In terms of areas of good experience, the majority of patients said that they were always offered a choice of food, and the hospital received above-average ratings for this question.

<sup>1</sup> The survey was previously entitled the 'National Patient Experience Survey'. The name was updated in 2019 to more accurately reflect the target population.

<sup>2</sup> When there is no statistically significant difference between the hospital's score and the national average, it is described as 'about the same'.

However, there were also several areas needing improvement. While the majority of patients felt that they were treated with respect and dignity, and had confidence and trust in hospital staff, the hospital scored below the national average for the two questions covering these areas. In addition, some patients were not as involved in decisions about their care as much as they wanted to be.

There were no significant differences in patients' ratings of care compared with the 2018 survey.

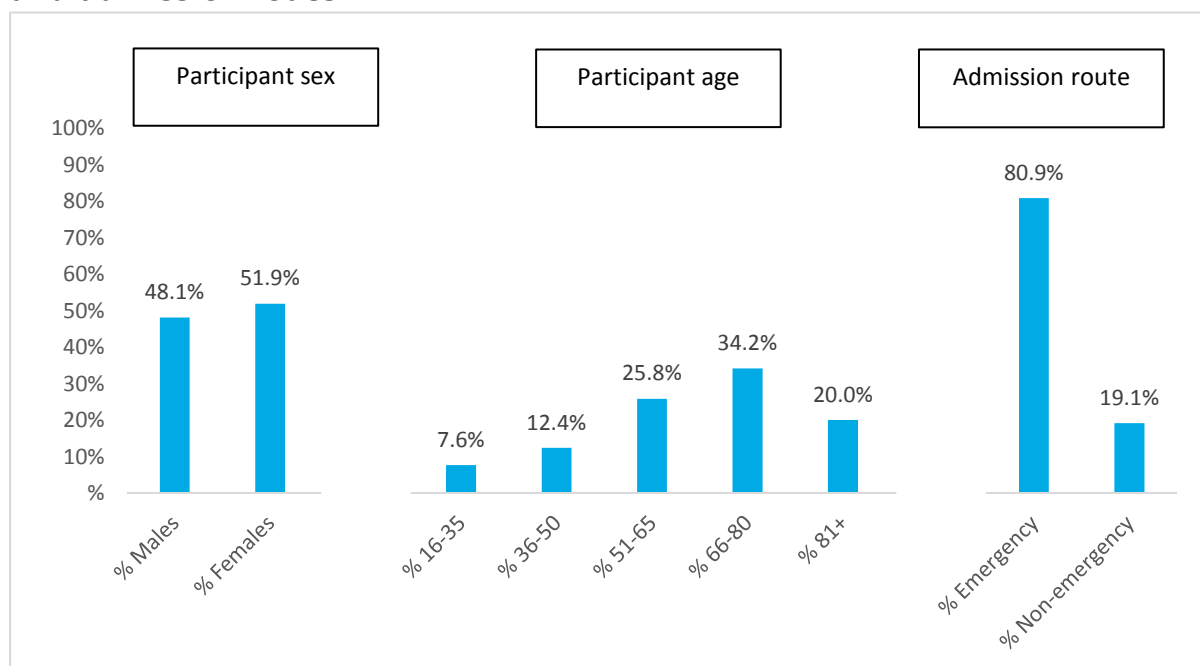
The findings of the 2019 survey will help University Hospital Waterford to improve patients' experiences of care in hospital.

## Hospital and participant profile

University Hospital Waterford is located in Co. Waterford. There were 406 inpatient beds available in the hospital during the survey period of May 2019.

979 people discharged from University Hospital Waterford during the month of May 2019 were invited to participate in the survey. 445 people completed the survey, achieving a response rate of 46%. 48.1% of participants were male and 51.9% were female. 360 respondents (80.9%) said that their stay in hospital was due to an emergency. Figure 1 below provides information on the respondents who took part in the survey from University Hospital Waterford.

**Figure 1 Participants from University Hospital Waterford by sex, age group and admission route**



# Areas of good experience and areas needing improvement

This section lists the areas where most patients had particularly positive experiences, and those areas where there is the most room for improvement. The list includes the relevant stage of care and question number for each area. Appendix 1 explains how these areas were identified.

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

### Care on the ward

#### Choice of food | Q16

347 (83%) of the 416 people who answered this question said that were always given a choice of food.

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

### Examinations, diagnosis and treatment

#### Involvement in decisions about care and treatment | Q24

Of the 419 people who answered this question, 240 (57%) said that they were definitely involved as much as they wanted to be in decisions about their care. The hospital scored below the national average on this question.

### Other aspects of care

#### Confidence and trust in hospital staff | Q29

Of the 426 people who answered this question, 317 (74%) said that they always had confidence and trust in hospital staff. This is below the national average for this question.

### Other aspects of care

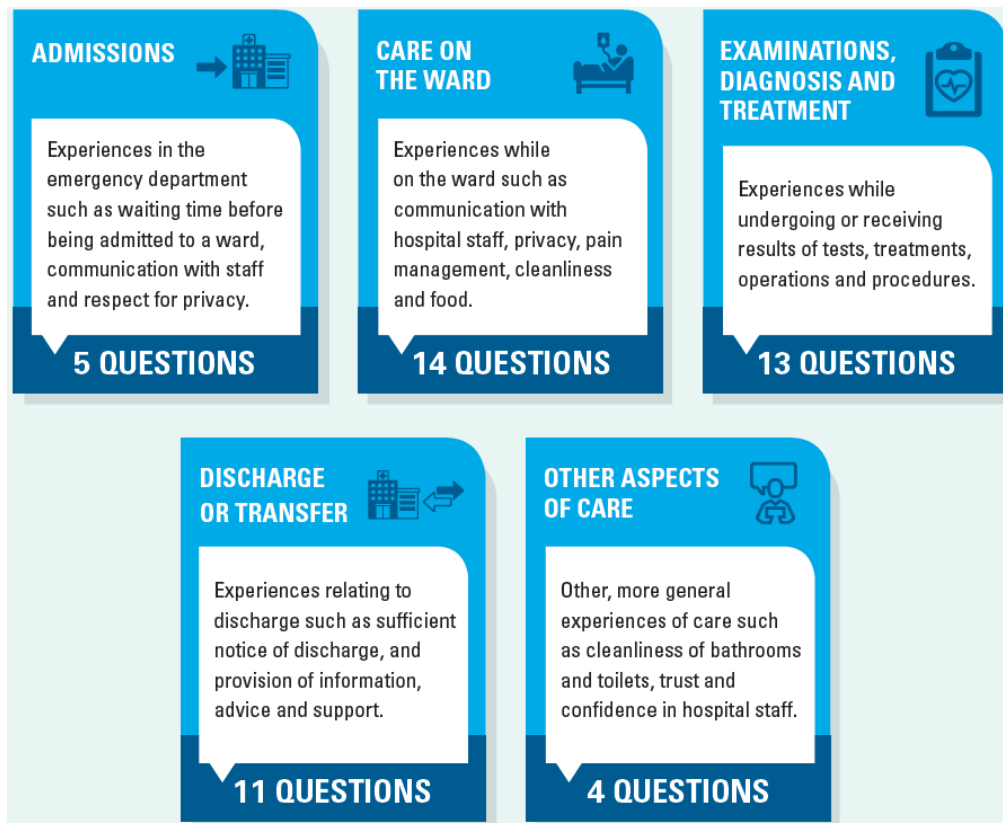
#### Respect and dignity | Q51

331 people (78%) said that they were always treated with respect and dignity. The hospital scored below the national average on this question.

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

The National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019 follows the patient journey through hospital from admission to discharge. The 2019 questionnaire is available to download from [www.yourexperience.ie](http://www.yourexperience.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 to a stage as a 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 2018 and 2019, as well as between a hospital and the national average. Throughout this report, when the hospital scored significantly above the national average, this is described as 'higher'. When a hospital scored significantly below the national average, it is described as 'lower'. When there is no

statistically significant difference between the hospital's score and the national average, it is described as 'about the same'.

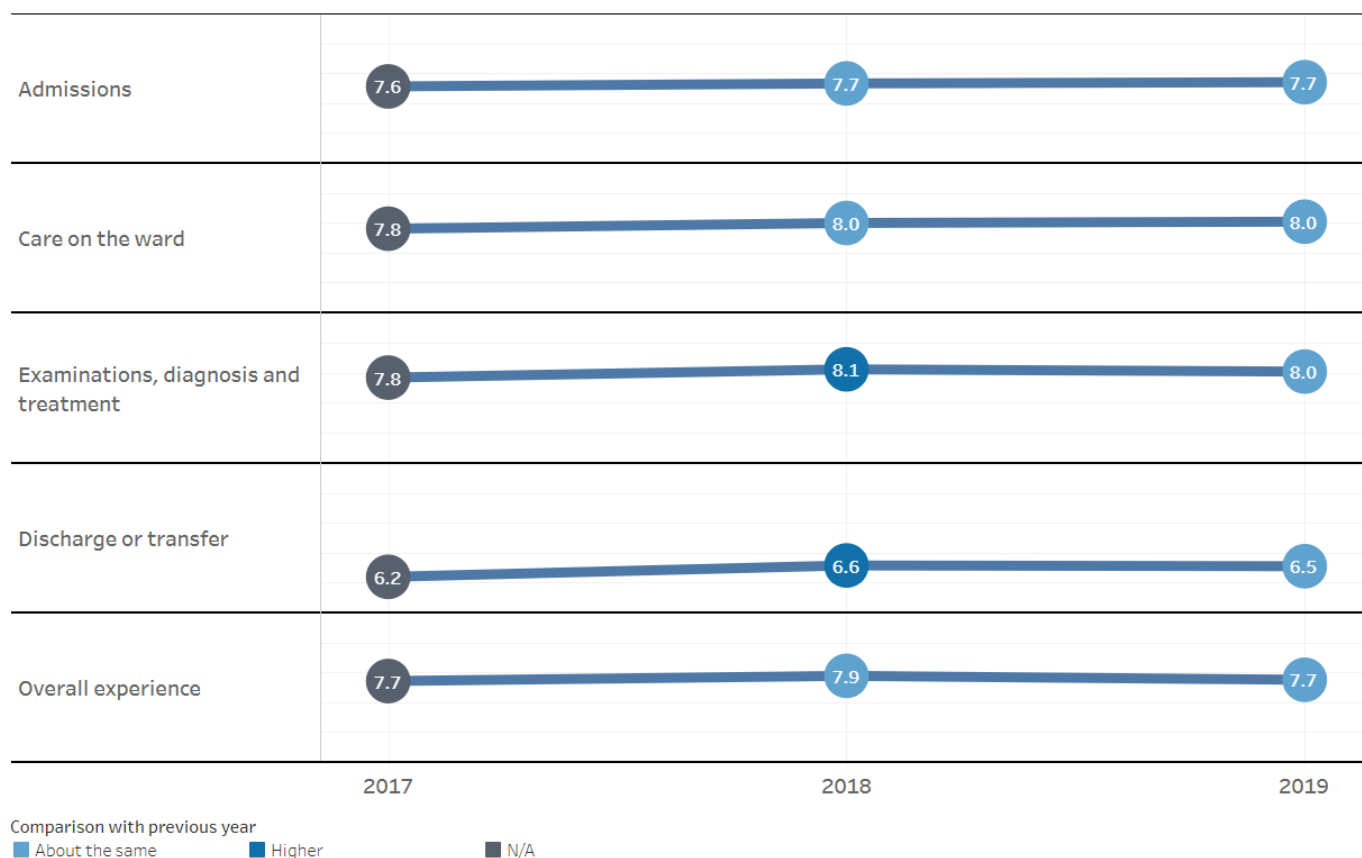
For further information on the analyses please consult Appendix 3 of the 2019 national report, available from [www.yourexperience.ie](http://www.yourexperience.ie).

## Changes in patient experience over time

There were no significant changes in patient experience since the 2018 survey. Figure 2 shows a comparison of scores for individual stages of care.

It is important that any 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 Annual comparison of stage of care scores<sup>3</sup> for University Hospital Waterford**



<sup>3</sup> Scores for the stages of care were constructed by calculating the average scores for all the questions belonging to that stage.

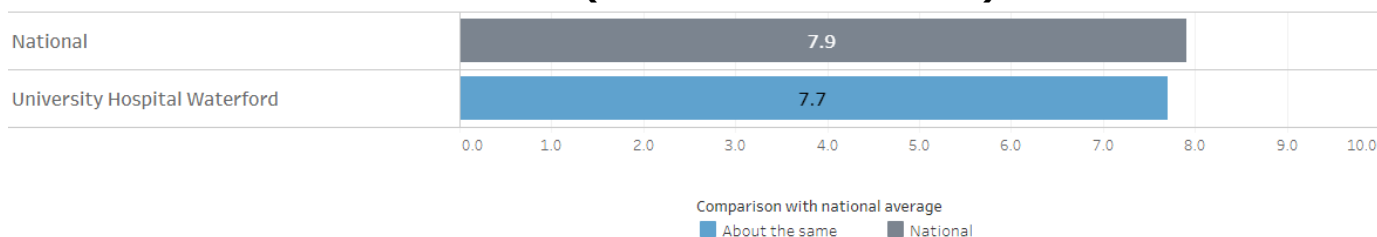




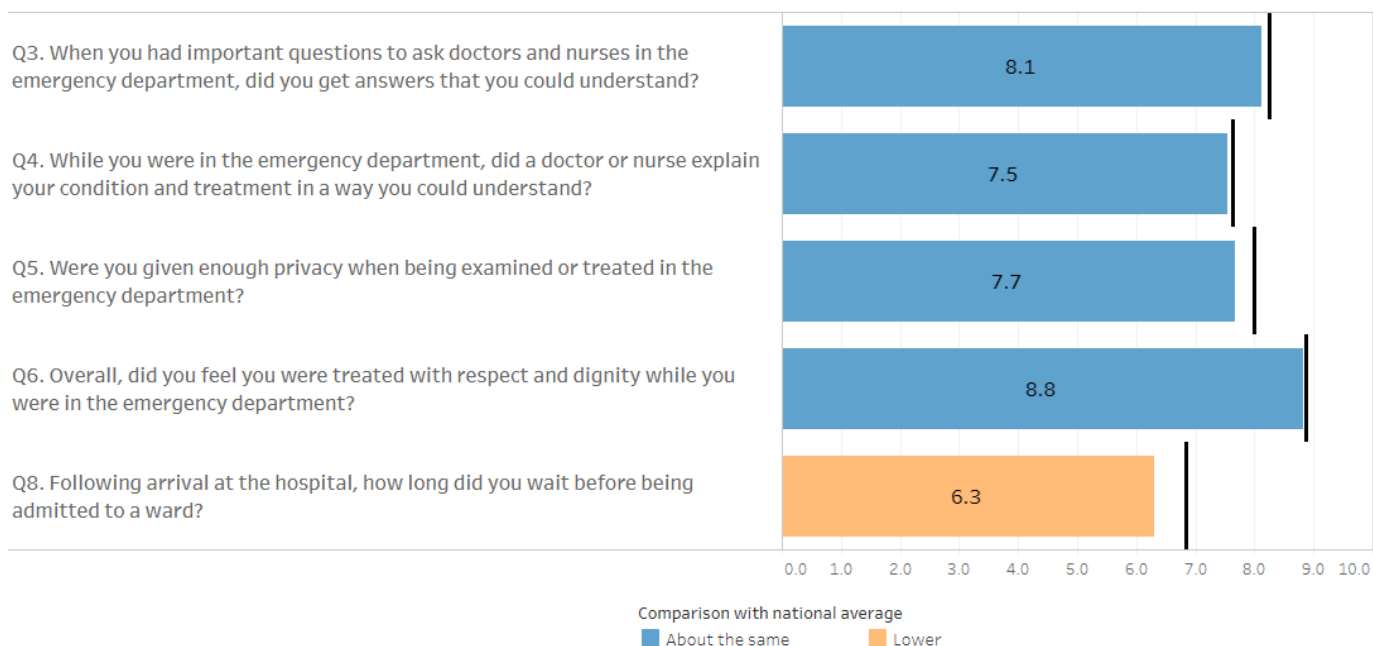
## Admissions

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

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



**Figure 4 University Hospital Waterford scores for questions on 'admissions'\***



\*The black line represents the national average

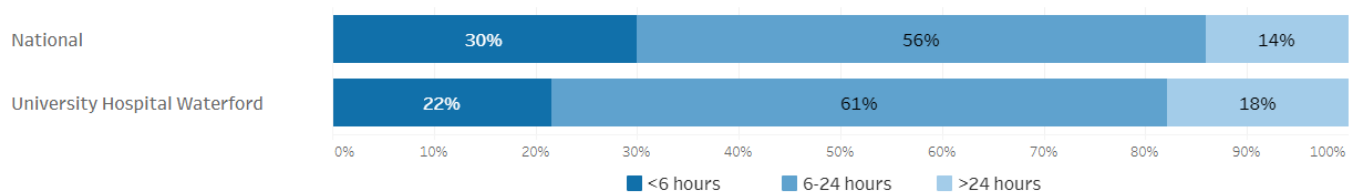
## Emergency department waiting times<sup>4</sup>

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 Waterford, 69 respondents (22%) said they were admitted to a ward within six hours of arriving at the emergency department, while 194 respondents (61%) reported waiting between six and 24 hours. 57 respondents (18%) said that they waited 24 hours or more before being admitted to a ward in University Hospital Waterford, with eight of these saying they waited more than 48 hours. As outlined in Appendix 1, the relationship between waiting times and overall experience was relatively weak. This means that patients who had long waiting times did not always say they had a negative overall experience. Figure 5 outlines the emergency department waiting times, as reported by patients in University Hospital Waterford, compared with the national average.

**Figure 5 Emergency department waiting times, as reported by patients for University Hospital Waterford and nationally**



### Admissions: what do these results mean?

Patient ratings of admission to University Hospital Waterford were similar to the national average, and to the hospital's 2018 score. In addition, most patients said they were treated with respect and dignity in the emergency department. However, the hospital scored below the national average for emergency department waiting times and this was the lowest scoring question for this stage.

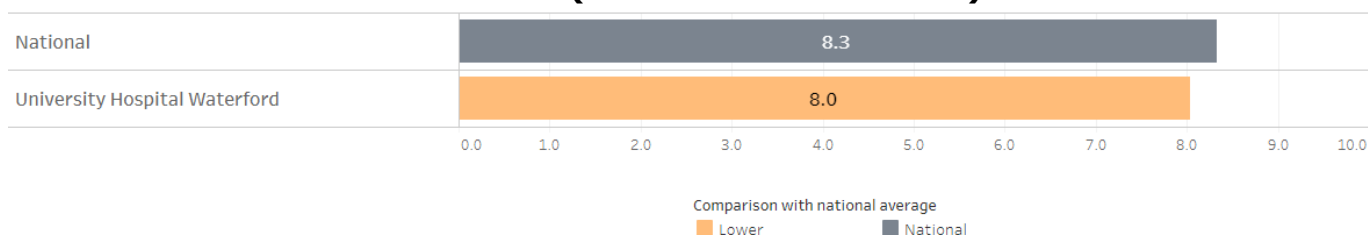
<sup>4</sup> The HSE measures emergency department waiting times differently to the survey, namely from the time a patient registers at the emergency department until they leave it. It is likely that there are some differences between survey findings and the official HSE figures. The HSE 2019 targets can be viewed at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/kpis/acute-hospitals-metadata-2019.pdf>



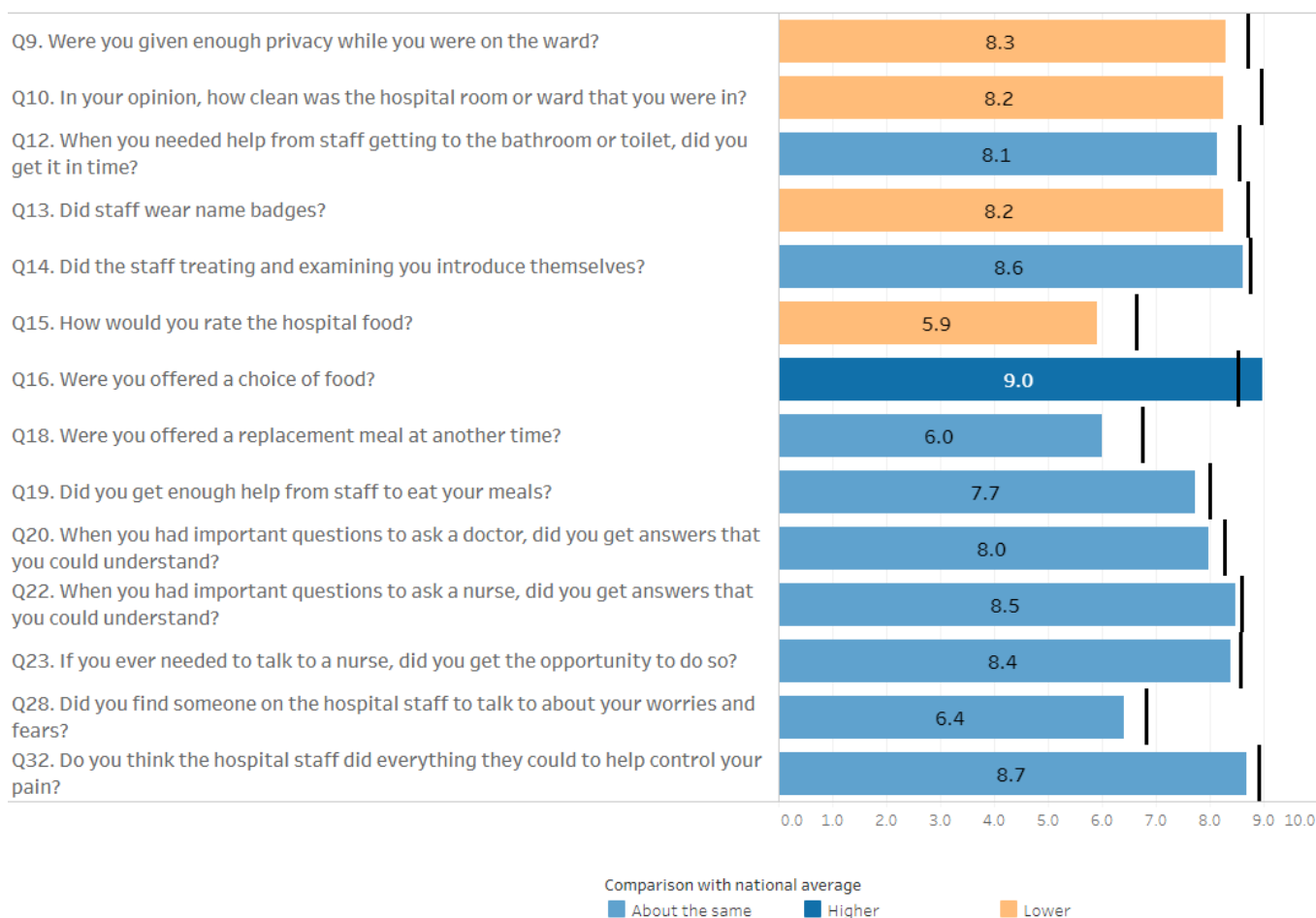
## Care on the ward

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 on this stage of care.

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



**Figure 7 University Hospital Waterford scores for questions on 'care on the ward'**\*



\*The black line represents the national average

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

Patients' ratings of 'care on the ward' in University Hospital Waterford were below the national average, but similar to the hospitals' rating in last year's survey. Most patients said they were always offered a choice of food. The lowest scoring question related to patients' ratings of the food, with the hospital scoring below the national average for this question.

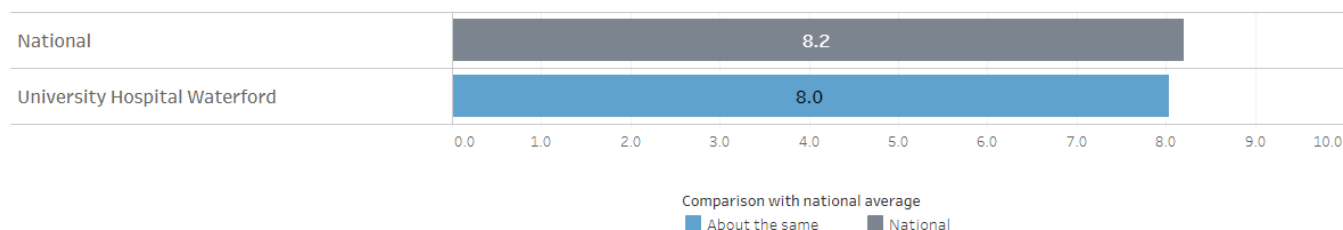


## Examinations, diagnosis and treatment

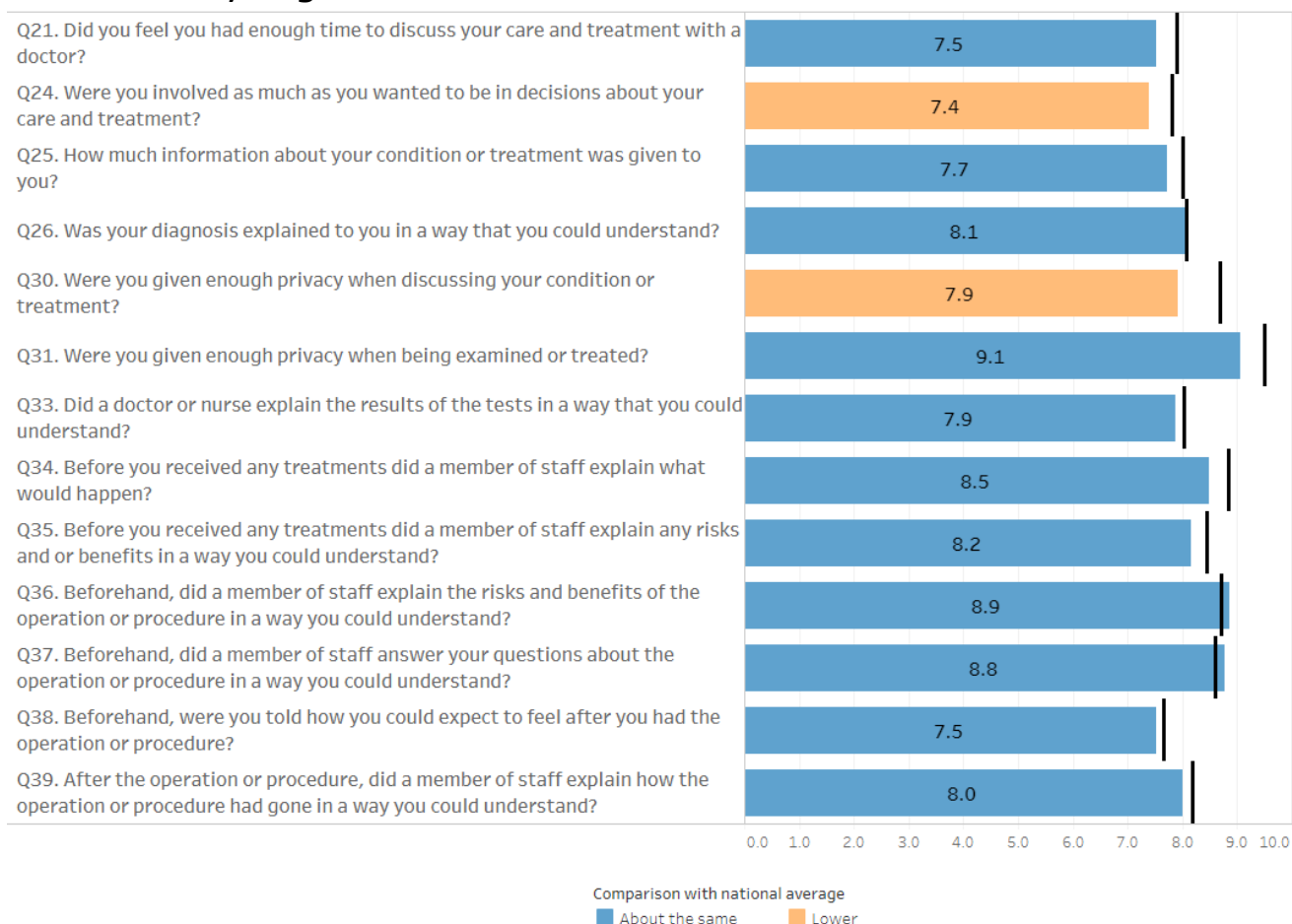
Figure 8 compares the hospital's overall score for 'examinations, diagnosis and treatment' with the national average. Figure 9 shows the hospital's scores for questions on this stage of care.

**Figure 8 Comparison of University Hospital Waterford with the national average score for 'examinations, diagnosis and treatment' (out of a**

**maximum of 10).**



**Figure 9 University Hospital Waterford scores for questions on 'examinations, diagnosis and treatment'\***



\*The black line represents the national average

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

Ratings of 'examination, diagnosis and treatment' were similar to the national average and to last year's survey. Most patients said that they were given enough privacy while being examined or treated. The lowest scoring question for this stage related to whether patients were as involved as they wanted to be in decisions about their care and treatment.

### DISCHARGE OR TRANSFER



Experiences relating to discharge such as sufficient notice of discharge, and provision of information, advice and support.

11 QUESTIONS

## Discharge or transfer

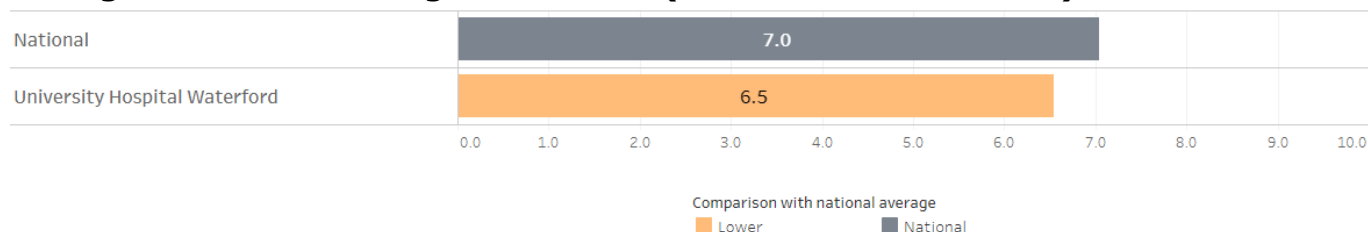
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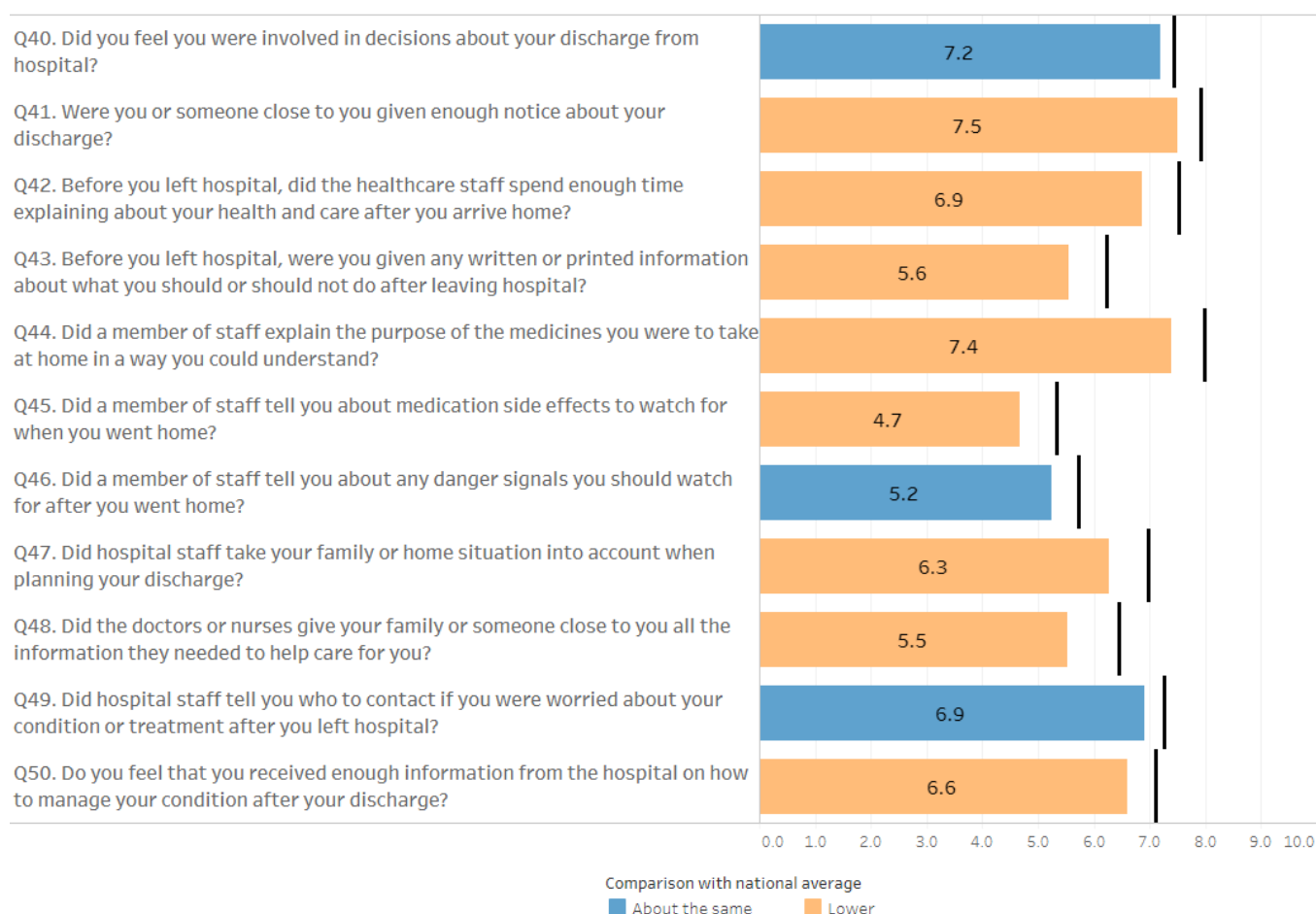


Figure 10 compares the hospital's overall score for 'discharge or transfer' with the national average. Figure 11 shows the hospital's scores for questions on this stage of care.

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



**Figure 11 University Hospital Waterford scores for questions on 'discharge or transfer'\***



\*The black line represents the national average

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

Participant ratings for this stage of care were below the national average and did not improve since last year's survey. Most patients said that they (or someone close to them) were given sufficient notice of their discharge. Nevertheless, the hospital scored below the national average for this question. The lowest scoring question for this stage related to whether the potential side effects of medication were explained to patients.



**OTHER ASPECTS  
OF CARE**

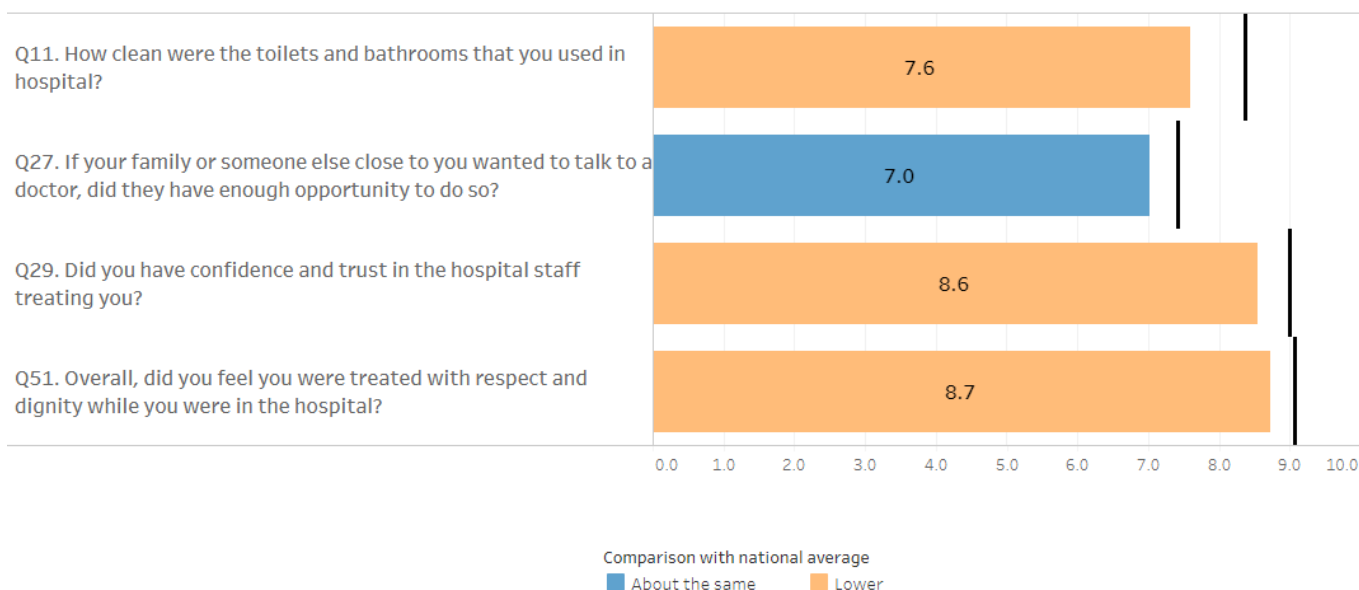
Other, more general  
experiences of care such  
as cleanliness of bathrooms  
and toilets, trust and  
confidence in hospital staff.

**4 QUESTIONS**

## Other aspects of care

Figure 12 shows the hospital's scores for questions on this stage of care.

**Figure 12 University Hospital Waterford scores for 'other aspects of care'\***



\*The black line represents the national average

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

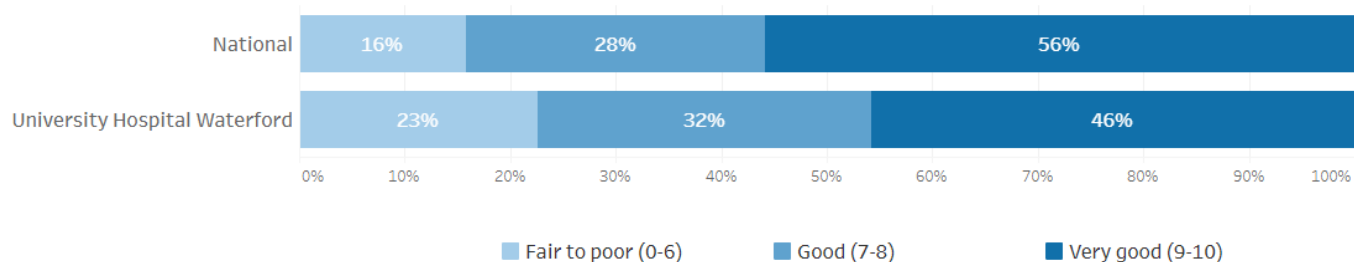
Most participants said they were treated with respect and dignity, and had confidence and trust in the staff that treated them, yet the hospital scored below the national average for both of these questions. In addition, a number of patients said that there were insufficient opportunities for their families 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. 46% of participants from University Hospital Waterford rated their care as very good, below the national figure of 56%.

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

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



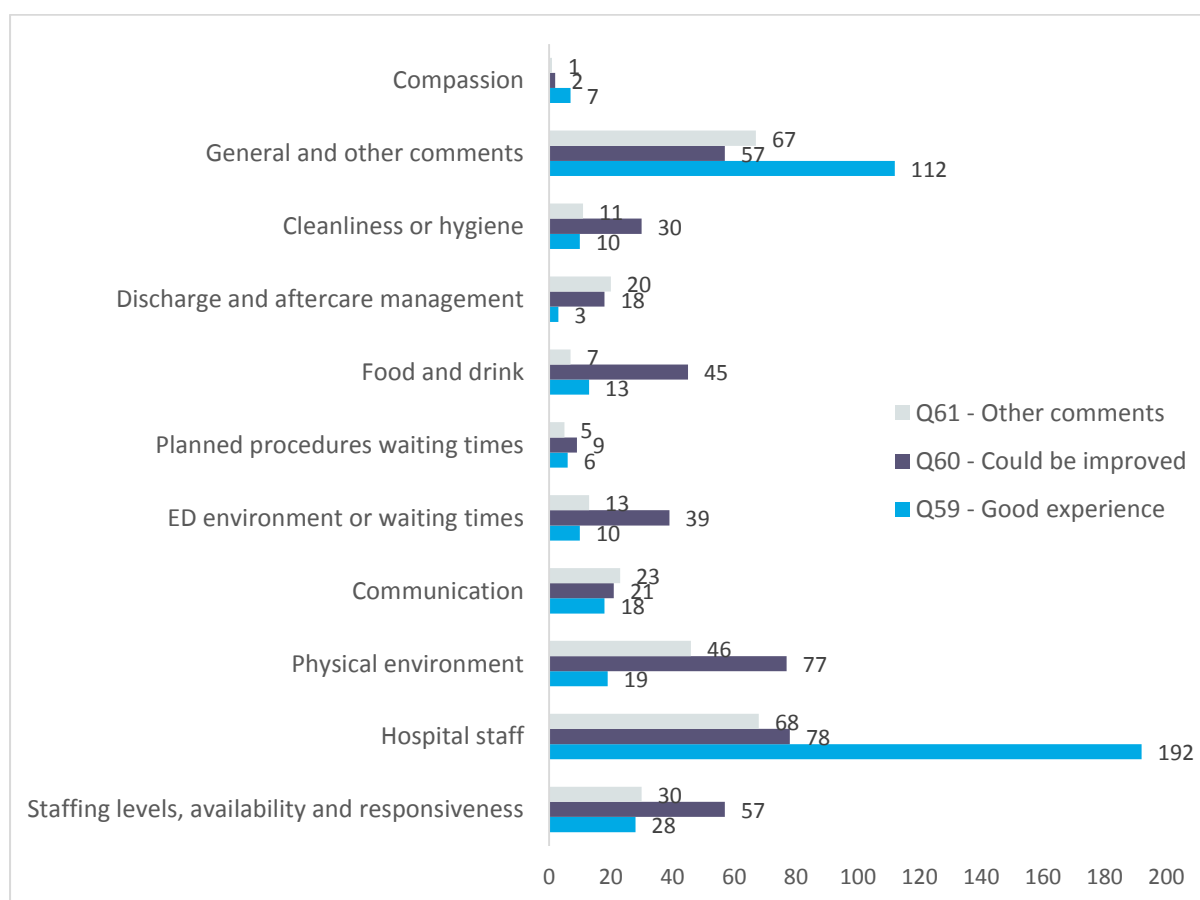
## In their own words: analysis of patients' comments

The last three questions (questions 59-61) of the survey asked patients to provide additional information, in their own words, on their experiences in hospital. 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, 698 comments were received from patients of University Hospital Waterford in response to the free-text questions in the 2019 survey.

Figure 14 shows the breakdown of 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.

In relation to good aspects of care, most of the comments related to the 'hospital staff', 'general and other comments' and 'staffing levels' themes. Most patient suggestions for improvement related to the 'hospital staff'; 'physical environment', and 'staffing levels' themes. Responses to Q61 covered various themes. A selection of relevant comments from these themes is provided in Figure 15.

**Figure 14 Participant comments by theme**



**Figure 15. Example comments**

**Positive comments**

"The doctors did enough investigations to find out the root of my health problem instead of just discharging me home."	"Yes, everything was good, I was looked after very well. The staff were very good and kind even though they were very busy, they looked after me very well. Thank you."
"All the nurses and cleaning and catering staff were 'fantastic.'"	"The care and attention I received was excellent. Food was always good too."
"The nurses were fantastic and they never once came in with a frown — always had smiles and made all of us laugh."	"I found staff warm, welcoming and very comforting in my time at Waterford Regional hospital. During my stay, I was treated very kindly and with the utmost attention to my comfort and care."

**Suggestions for improvement**

"When patients are being discharged more information should be given to them or their carers."
"Poor communication from medical staff, particularly with patient's plan of care. Delayed allocation of bed, overcrowding of wards. Patient was 3 times on corridor and we felt this had adverse effect on his wellbeing. Especially his sleep."
"Food choices for people with food allergies. Dairy free food in hospital equates to horrendous, plain no flavour meat/fish/potato dishes."

## Conclusion

### What were patients' experiences of hospital care in University Hospital Waterford in May 2019?

The majority of patients said that they had positive overall experiences in University Hospital Waterford. 78% of patients said they had a 'good' or 'very good' experience, which is nonetheless lower than the 84% national score.

University Hospital Waterford received below-average scores for 'care on the ward', 'discharge or transfer', and overall experience, but scored close to the national average for 'admissions' and 'examination, diagnosis and treatment'. The ratings of care were generally similar to those received in 2018.

One area of particularly good experience was identified, with the majority of patients saying that they were always offered a choice of food. The hospital received above-average ratings for this question.

There were several areas needing improvement. While the majority of patients felt that they were treated with respect and dignity, and had confidence and trust in hospital staff, the hospital scored below the national average on these two questions. A number of patients also said that they weren't as involved in decisions about their care as much they wanted to be.

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 in hospital.

The findings of the 2019 survey will be used to help University Hospital Waterford improve the experiences of patients in hospital.

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

### Improvement map

It is important for hospitals to know if they scored above or below the national average for each question, and this is shown in the improvement map in Figure 16. The improvement map also shows which questions are related to patients' overall experience in hospital. Some questions had a stronger relationship with overall experience than others.

For example, Question 51 which asked patients if they were treated with respect and dignity had a strong relationship with overall experience. This means that patients who said they were treated with respect and dignity were very likely to give a positive rating of their overall experience. Patients who felt they were not treated with respect and dignity tended to give more negative ratings of their overall experience.

Other questions had a weaker relationship with overall experience – this means that patients' experiences in these areas had little bearing on how they rated their overall experience. An example is Question 8 which asked patients how long they waited before admission to a ward. The relationship between waiting time and patients' ratings of their overall experience was weak. This means that even if patients waited for a short time to be admitted, they may have given negative ratings of their overall experience, or if they waited for a long time, they may still have given positive ratings of their overall experience.

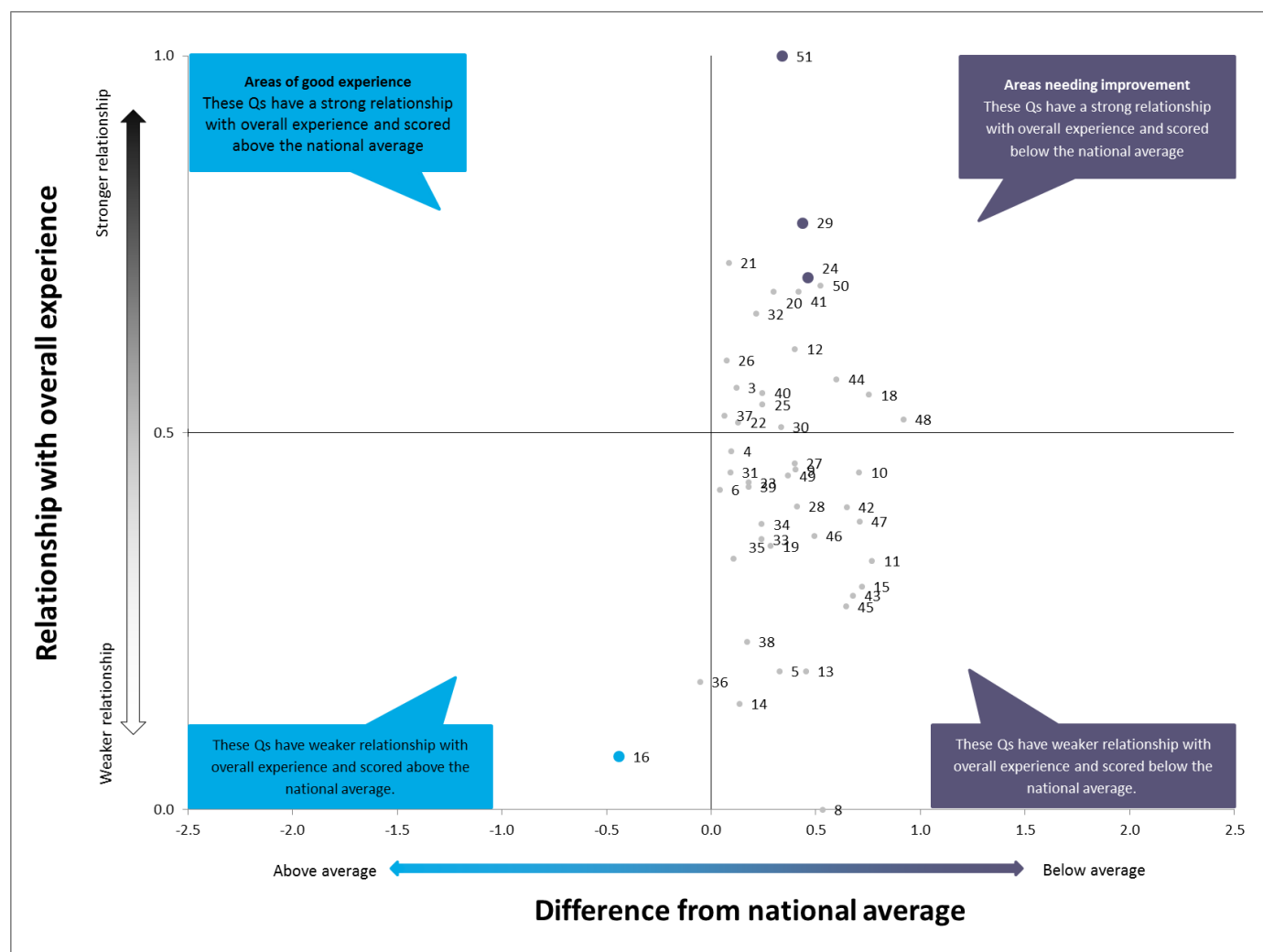
It is useful for hospitals to know which questions strongly relate to their patients' overall experiences as these are the areas on which they should focus their improvement efforts.

In Figure 16, each dot shows a specific survey question for University Hospital Waterford. Questions at the top of the graph are strongly related to overall experience, while those at the bottom have a weaker relationship. Questions to the right of the graph scored below the national average, while those on the left scored above it.

Questions that scored significantly above average and had a stronger relationship with overall experience are areas of good experience. Questions that scored significantly below average and had a stronger relationship with overall experience are areas needing improvement.

The improvement map for each hospital is unique and gives specific information on where a hospital is doing well, and areas where improvements are needed. More information on the science behind the improvement map is available below. An interactive version of the improvement map is also available at <http://www.yourexperience.ie/>, along with instructions on how to interpret it.

**Figure 16 Improvement Map for University Hospital Waterford**





## How the improvement map is constructed

The improvement map is constructed by charting the normalised correlation between each question and overall experience on the vertical axis, against the difference between the hospital average and national average for each question on the horizontal axis.

### What is correlation?

Correlation is a measure of the relationship between two variables. For example, in general there is a strong correlation between patients saying they were treated with respect and dignity, and patients giving a positive rating of their overall experience in hospital. It can thus be said that there is a strong correlation between respect and dignity, and overall experience. A 'correlation coefficient' is a number between 0 and 1 that represents the strength of a relationship, with 1 being the strongest possible relationship and 0 indicating that there is no relationship. Correlation does not tell us if a change in one variable is caused by a change in the other.

### How do we calculate the correlation coefficient?

The first step in calculating the correlation coefficient between two variables is to calculate their 'covariance'. Covariance is a simple measure of the relationship between two variables and is calculated using the formula below:

$$\text{COV}_{xy} = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{n - 1}$$

While covariance does measure the relationship between variables, it does so in an unstandardised way, depending on the scale of measurement used. This makes comparing covariances measured on different scales problematic. In order to get around this issue, 'standardisation' must be carried out. In order to do this, the covariance for both variables must be divided by the product of the standard deviations for each variable. The formula below shows how standardisation is carried out, resulting in  $r$ , known as the 'Pearson correlation coefficient'.

$$r = \frac{\text{COV}_{xy}}{s_x s_y} = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{(N - 1)s_x s_y}$$

The final step in the analysis is to normalise the correlation coefficients between 0 and 1 using the below formula:

$$r = \frac{r - r_{\min}}{r_{\max} - r_{\min}}$$

In Figure 16, we plot the correlation coefficients between each question and overall experience on the vertical axis. Each question's difference from the national average is plotted on the horizontal axis.

### How do we calculate difference from the national average?

Statistical tests were carried out to examine if there were significant differences between a hospital's score for each question and the national average for that question. A z-test was used to compare question scores at the 99% confidence level. A z-test is a statistical test used to examine whether two population mean scores are different. A statistically significant difference means it is very unlikely that results were obtained by chance alone if there was no real difference. Therefore, when a score is significantly 'higher than' or 'lower than' the national average, this is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance.