



National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019

Technical Report

About the National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019

The National Inpatient Experience Survey¹ 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 partners have committed to using the data collected from the survey to shape future healthcare policy and ensure improvements in patient experience. The survey took place for the first time in 2017 and is repeated annually.

Patients aged 16 years or older who spent at least 24 hours in a public acute hospital and who were discharged from hospital during the month of May 2019 were eligible to participate in the survey. Maternity, day cases, paediatric, psychiatric and some other specialist hospital services (requiring a stay of less than 24 hours), as well as private hospitals, were not part of the survey on this occasion.

During the month of May 2019, 26,897 people were invited to participate in the third National Inpatient Experience Survey. In total, 12,343 people took part in this survey, resulting in a response rate of 46%.

This survey is part of a broader programme to improve the quality and safety of healthcare services provided to patients in Ireland. The HSE responded to the 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.yourexperience.ie/inpatient/hospital-initiatives/.

The National Inpatient Experience Survey is part of the National Care Experience Programme (NCEP). The National Care Experience Programme is a joint initiative by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health.

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

National Inpatient Experience Survey

Technical Report 2019: Purpose and content

Purpose of the report

This report provides a comprehensive technical description of the model, methodology, methods and procedures implemented during the National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019. This report has been designed to provide sufficient detail for repetition, replication and review. This document does not report in detail on the survey results. The reports on the survey findings can be downloaded from www.yourexperience.ie/.

Contents

About the National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019	1
National Inpatient Experience Survey	2
Technical Report 2019: Purpose and content	2
Purpose of the report.....	2
1. Overview	5
1.1 The National Inpatient Experience Survey	5
1.2. Management of the National Inpatient Experience Survey	5
1.3 Survey design.....	6
1.3.1 Survey methodology	6
1.3.2 Sample	7
1.3.3 The questionnaire.....	8
1.3.4 Ethical approval.....	9
1.3.5 Privacy Impact Assessment	9
1.3.6 Information governance.....	9
2. Survey fieldwork	10
2.1 Data extraction of patient information	10
2.2 Survey administration.....	10
2.3 Sampling and operational outcomes	11
2.4. Response rates.....	11
2.5 Survey operations	15
2.6. Data retention and destruction.....	16
3. Data processing, analysis and reporting.....	17
3.1 Data processing steps	17
3.2 Mapping of survey questions to the stages of care.....	18
3.3 Quantitative methodology.....	19
3.3.1 Demographic adjustment weights	19
3.3.2 Question scores.....	21
3.3.3 Stage of care scores	23
3.3.4 Comparisons of groups	23
3.3.5 Comparisons between 2017, 2018 and 2019	23
3.3.6. Reporting caveats.....	24
3.3.7 Quality assurance of quantitative data.....	24
3.4 Qualitative methodologies	25
3.4.1 Anonymisation of qualitative data	25
3.4.2 Developing thematic codes for the qualitative data.....	26

3.5 Treatment of duplicates.....	27
3.6 Quality assurance of qualitative data	27
3.7. Publication of national, hospital group and hospital results	28
3.8 Survey findings, quality improvement and next steps.....	28
4. International comparisons	29
4.1 Comparisons with international data	29
Appendix 1	33
2019 question wording, response options, corresponding scores and mapping to stages of care	33
Appendix 2	38
2019 operational outcomes by hospital group and individual hospitals	38
Appendix 3	41
2019 guidelines for the redaction of qualitative comments	41
Appendix 4	44
Data Quality Statement – National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019	44
References	48

1. Overview

1.1 The National Inpatient Experience Survey

The National Inpatient Experience Survey asks patients 61 questions about their journey through hospital, 58 of which are structured and three of which are free-text questions. The survey questions originate from a library of internationally validated questions developed by the Picker Institute in the United States.⁽¹⁾ The complete question set is included in Appendix 1. A description of the questionnaire development can be found on our website, www.yourexperience.ie, where you can also download a copy of the questionnaire.

The last surveys were accepted on 26 July 2019. 90.3% of respondents returned the survey questionnaire by post, while 9.7% of respondents filled in the survey online. The results of the survey were published in November 2019. The national, six hospital group and 39 hospital reports² are available to download from www.yourexperience.ie.

1.2. Management of the National Inpatient Experience Survey

HIQA, as the lead partner, contracted a managed service to administer the 2019 survey and to process the responses received. In 2019, the managed service was responsible for:

- receiving and quality assuring the lists of sampled persons from participating hospitals
- printing and distributing the questionnaire
- logging returns, opt-outs and ineligible respondents
- providing information to respondents on a dedicated survey helpline
- data processing and quality assuring survey responses
- designing and managing the National Inpatient Experience Survey website
- hosting a secure back-end database to allow hospitals to view their survey results on an online reporting platform prior to the publication of the results.

²Although 40 hospitals participated in the 2019 survey, only 39 hospital reports were produced. Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda and Louth County Hospital in Dundalk asked for their results to be merged to ensure a sufficient response rate was achieved.


1.3 Survey design

1.3.1 Survey methodology

The National Inpatient Experience Survey is based on a concurrent mixed-mode response design, which allows participants to complete the survey online or by returning a hard copy questionnaire in the post. The mode of contact, however, is via post only. Participants receive a survey pack in the post two weeks after their discharge from hospital. The invitation letter provides recipients with the choice of completing the survey online or on paper.

The administration of two reminder letters is built into the survey design. One or two reminder letters are sent to people who have not yet returned a survey. Internationally, the second reminder has been shown to increase response rates significantly.⁽²⁾

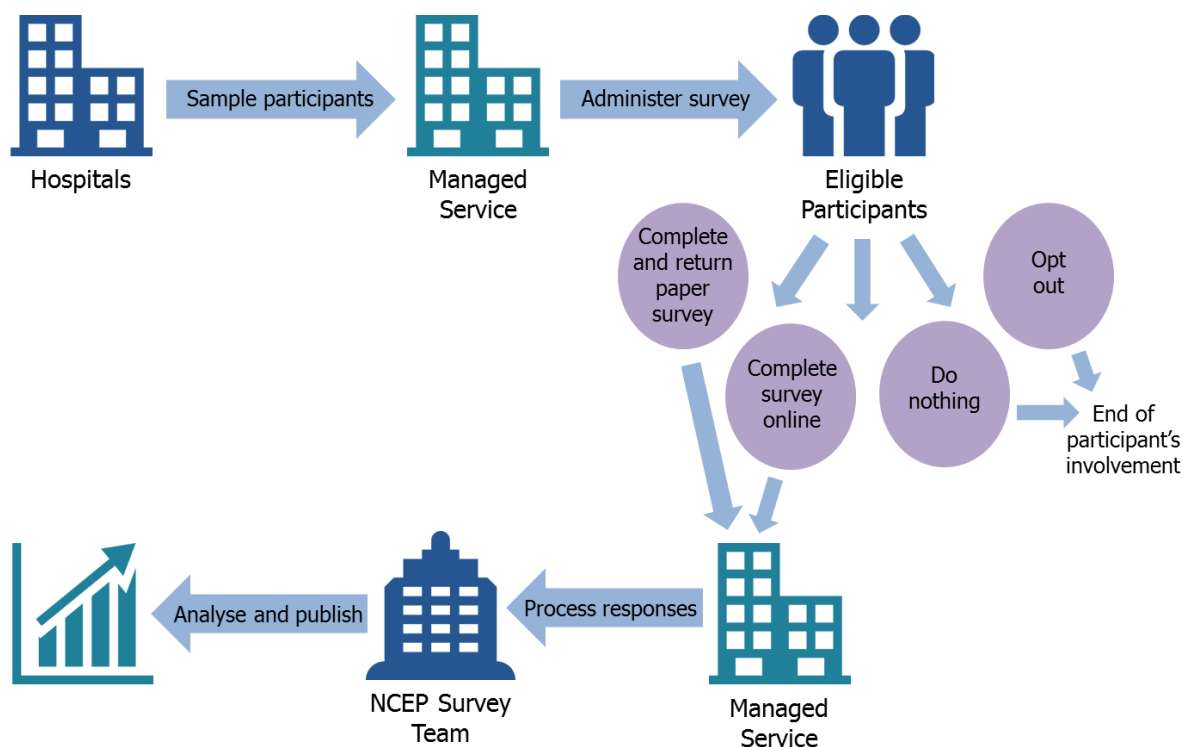
Participants can opt out of the survey. Five opt-out methods are provided; one in the hospital and four after discharge:

- 
- 1** Opt-out at discharge while still in hospital
 - 2** Opt-out by calling the Freephone number
 - 3** Opt-out by emailing info@yourexperience.ie
 - 4** Opt-out online on www.yourexperience.ie
 - 5** Return a blank questionnaire

The managed service processes the returned questionnaires. The data are subsequently analysed by researchers in HIQA who report on the survey findings (see Chapter 3).

Figure 1.1 below outlines the model and design of the National Inpatient Experience Survey. This model is closely aligned to that of the national inpatient survey in the United Kingdom.

Figure 1.1 The National Inpatient Experience Survey process



1.3.2 Sample

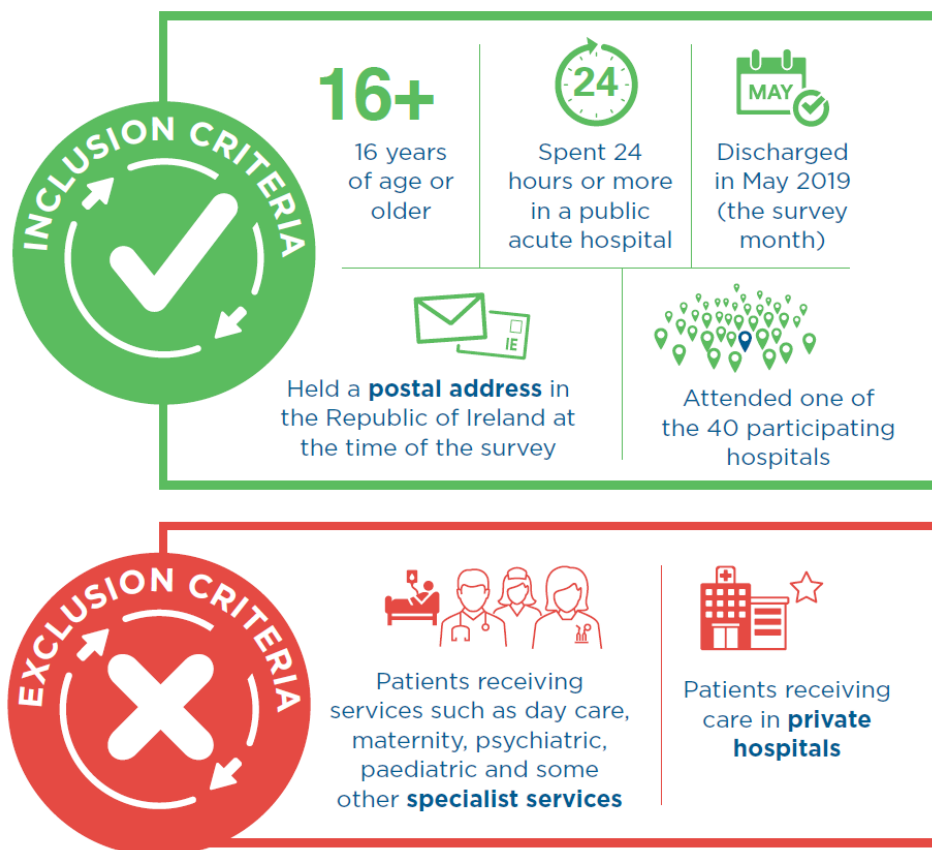
In total, 40 public acute hospitals, from six³ of Ireland's seven hospital groups, participated in the National Inpatient Experience Survey in 2019.

The sample for the National Inpatient Experience Survey comprised all patients aged 16 years or older, discharged between 1–31 May 2019, who had spent 24 hours or more in a public acute hospital and who held an address in the Republic of Ireland. Patients who received maternity, psychiatric, paediatric and other specialist services were not eligible to participate in the survey on this occasion. Eligible participants

³ The Children's Hospital Group is the seventh hospital group in Ireland.

were identified through each hospital's internal Patient Administration System (PAS). Figure 1.2 summarises the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the 2019 survey.

Figure 1.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria



1.3.3 The questionnaire

In 2019, some minor changes were made to the 2018 questionnaire. These included additional response options for two questions. For Q43, which asks if patients were given any written or printed information about what they should or should not do after leaving hospital, an additional response option of 'I did not want or need any written or printed information' was added. For Q54, which asks respondents about the main reason for their stay in hospital, two additional response options were added: 'orthopaedic condition (e.g. bone or joint issues)', and 'digestive system condition (including gallbladder and appendix issues)'. The changes to the survey have been documented in our report on the revision of the National Inpatient

Experience Survey questionnaire. This report is available from www.yourexperience.ie/inpatient/about-the-survey/survey-model/.

1.3.4 Ethical approval

The National Inpatient Experience Survey team submitted an application to the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland (RCPI) Research Ethics Committee on behalf of the National Inpatient Experience Survey Programme. Ethical approval for the survey was obtained in March 2018.

1.3.5 Privacy Impact Assessment

Given that the administration of the National Inpatient Experience Survey requires the processing of personally identifiable information (for example, patient contact details, dates of birth, etc.), the National Inpatient Experience Survey Programme Steering Group commissioned a privacy impact assessment (PIA) in 2016. The PIA was conducted by an independent third party. This PIA was updated in 2019 and published in summary at www.yourexperience.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/NPE_Survey_PIA_2019_Update.pdf.

1.3.6 Information governance

Information governance is a means of ensuring that all data, including personal information, is handled in line with all relevant legislation, guidance and evidence-based practices. The National Care Experience Programme has developed a comprehensive information governance framework to ensure that any information it collects is handled safely and securely.

The National Care Experience Programme information governance framework comprises policies, procedures and processes covering: data protection and confidentiality, data subject access requests, record retention and destruction, security, data breach management, data quality, access control, business continuity and record management. A statement of purpose and statement of information practices detailing the information-handling practices of the National Inpatient Experience Survey are available at www.yourexperience.ie/about/information-governance/.

2. Survey fieldwork

2.1 Data extraction of patient information

Data extraction of patient information refers to the sampling procedures undertaken to identify individuals eligible to participate in the survey. During the survey period, hospitals were required to extract patient information (such as names and addresses) for every eligible individual hospitalised during the month of May. Adhering to agreed protocols, hospitals securely shared this information with the managed service, who subsequently sent invitation letters and survey questionnaires via post to eligible participants. Hospitals were also required to quality assure the sample for a specified number of weeks, for example, hospitals were required to check that all relevant data fields were completed.⁴

Personnel responsible for data extraction and quality assurance of data extracts were required to follow data-extraction and quality-assurance procedures during every step of the process to ensure a standardised and consistent approach to the implementation of the survey across all participating hospitals.

2.2 Survey administration

The survey fieldwork was carried out from 1 May–26 July 2019. Survey invitations and questionnaires were sent to participants two weeks after their discharge. Two additional reminders were sent out at fortnightly intervals to eligible individuals who had not yet returned a survey. Participants could return their questionnaires until 26 July 2019.

Each participating hospital carried out five data extractions on the dates outlined in Table 2.1 below. The following patient information was collected: the patient's name, address, date of birth, sex, date of admission, source of admission, date of discharge, discharge destination, length of stay, provider hospital group and hospital name details.⁵

⁴ A detailed account of quality assurance procedures is available at: www.yourexperience.ie/inpatient/about-the-survey/resources-for-hospital/

⁵ The transfer of participant data between hospitals (data controllers) and the managed service (data processor on behalf of HIQA) was in all instances mandated by data sharing agreements.

Table 2.1 Schedule for data extraction

Extract coverage	Deadline for sharing with the managed service
1–3 May 2019	8 May 2019
4–10 May 2019	15 May 2019
11–17 May 2019	22 May 2019
18–24 May 2019	29 May 2019
25–31 May 2019	5 June 2019

Data transfers to the managed service occurred through a secure transfer mechanism, ensuring the safety of patient information while in transfer. Upon receipt of the data files, patient details were uploaded to a master file. A review of death notifications was carried out weekly by every participating hospital and the names of patients who had died since their discharge from hospital were subsequently removed from the master file. In order to check if patients had died, hospitals adopted a number of different approaches, including checking with the General Register Office, other healthcare providers, hospices, online death notification sites and other appropriate information sources.

2.3 Sampling and operational outcomes

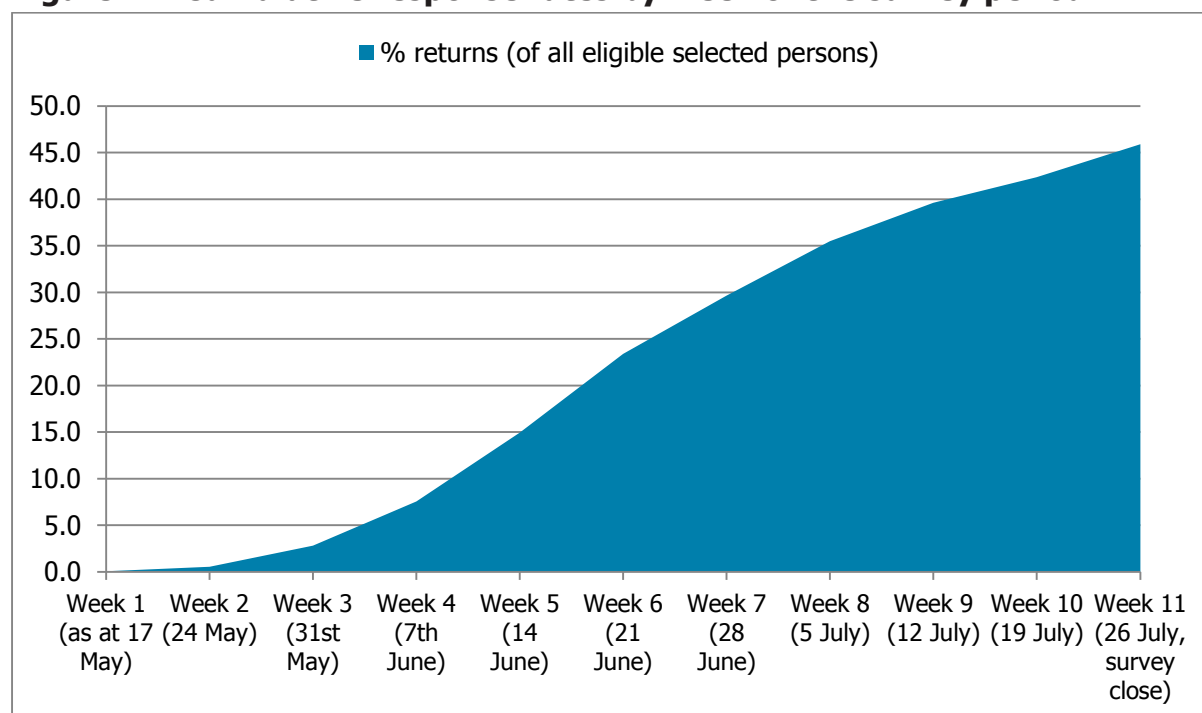
A total of 27,600 people were eligible to participate in the National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019. 513 individuals passed away during the survey period of 1 May–26 July 2019. 190 surveys could not be delivered to the intended recipient and were returned to the sender. A total of 26,897 people formed the final survey sample. Of those, 606 individuals actively opted out of the survey. A total of 23,195 first reminders and 18,512 second reminders were sent out during the survey period.

2.4. Response rates

Of the 26,897 people who were ultimately eligible to participate, 12,343 people returned a valid survey questionnaire prior to the survey closing date on 26 July 2019, resulting in a national response rate of 46% (Table 2.3). 11,145 individuals completed the survey on paper. Just under 10% (1,198) of surveys were filled in online (Table 2.4).

Response rates were calculated by dividing the number of valid surveys received by the number of initial invitations sent, minus questionnaires returned to the sender and minus the number of people who died during the survey month. Figure 2.1 shows the cumulative response rates by week during the survey period (1 May–26 July 2019). 2,259 surveys were returned during week seven – this was the highest number returned during any week.

Figure 2.1 Cumulative response rates by week of the survey period



Response rates at the hospital-group level were generally at or above 45%, with the exception of the RCSI Group, which had a response rate of 43%. Table 2.3 shows the number of people invited to take part, the number who took part, and the corresponding response rate for each hospital group.

Table 2.3 Number of people invited to participate, response numbers and response rate by hospital group for 2018

	Total eligible sample	Number who took part	Response rate
National	26,897	12,343	46%
By hospital group			
Dublin Midlands Hospital Group	4,730	2,106	45%
Ireland East Hospital Group	5,746	2,648	47%
RCSI Hospital Group	4,250	1,805	43%
Saolta University Health Care Group	4,883	2,305	48%
South/South West Hospital Group	5,042	2,442	49%
UL Hospitals	2,246	1,037	47%

As shown below in Table 2.4, the response rates for eligible male patients (45%) and eligible female patients (47%) were broadly similar. People aged 66–80 years had the highest response rate (53%) of any age group. People aged 35 or younger were least likely to respond to the survey, with only 31% of those invited returning a valid survey questionnaire. Patients who stayed in hospital between three and five days were most likely to return a survey compared with patients who had shorter or longer stays. People who were admitted to hospital as a result of an emergency were less likely to respond to the survey, compared with people whose stay had been planned in advance.

Appendix 2 includes a detailed breakdown of operational outcomes and response rates by hospital group and individual hospital.

Table 2.4 Response and non-response composition 2019

Group		Total discharged	Deceased	Return to sender	Opted out	No response	Completed (paper)	Completed (online)	Response rate
All respondents		27,600	513	190	606	14,358	11,145	1,198	46%
Sex	Males	13,906	297	116	321	7,330	5,454	621	45%
	Females	13,694	216	74	285	7,028	5,691	577	47%
Age	16-35 years	3,157	2	53	21	2,220	716	205	31%
	36-50 years	4,112	15	51	31	2,546	1,242	286	39%
	51-65 years	5,978	81	31	68	2,837	2,658	348	52%
	66-80 years	8,824	193	36	235	3,983	4,262	250	53%
	81+ years	5,529	222	19	251	2,772	2,267	109	45%
Length of stay	1-2 days	9,326	88	67	142	4,886	3,762	493	47%
	3-5 days	7,444	79	45	160	3,729	3,223	307	49%
	6-10 days	5,530	124	33	127	2,763	2,332	228	48%
	11+ days	5,300	222	45	177	2,980	1,828	170	40%
Admission	Elective	6,020	64	16	96	2,546	3,005	337	56%
	Emergency	21,540	445	174	509	11,790	8,127	861	43%
	Other	40	4	0	1	22	13	0	36%

2.5 Survey operations

During the survey period of 1 May–26 July 2019, 1,104 calls were recorded by helpline operators, compared to 981 in 2018. 188 (20%) of calls were received during week seven (17–21 June 2019).

The public most frequently called the Freephone helpline because callers were sent a reminder letter even though they had already completed the survey – a total of 418 queries (38%) were received in this regard. 230 calls (21%) received during the survey period were from individuals wanting to opt out of the survey. Table 2.6 details the most frequent query types received and logged by operators of the Freephone helpline.

Table 2.6 Summary of query types received by the Freephone helpline

Summary of call query	Number	%
This is the second letter I've gotten and I've already completed the questionnaire.	418	38%
Opt out	230	21%
Lost questionnaire/Resend me the survey	98	9%
General query about survey – why are you writing to me/who conducting/can I see the results	93	8%
Patient has passed away	79	7%
Haven't received a letter but heard about it. Can I participate?	48	4%
Received my reminder letter/survey pack but there is no questionnaire – What do I do?	43	4%
Comment or complaints about hospital/operation/staff	28	3%
Received my survey pack but lost Freepost envelope/there is no Freepost Envelope – What do I do?	22	2%
Unable to participate due to illness/relative or friend wants to do	16	1%
Hospital staff query	10	1%
Data protection query – who are you?/how did you get my details?	5	<1%
Complaints about the design or wording of questions	5	<1%
Completed the survey online or by post but wants to change the answers.	3	<1%
Want to speak to a member of the survey team	2	<1%
Online: Can't see where to log in on website	2	<1%
Duplicate – received two or more invitations with different codes	1	<1%
Serious or severe incident/complaint	1	<1%
Total	1,104	100%

Where callers provided a reason for opting out of the survey, 39% explained that they were too ill to complete the survey. Table 2.7 outlines the most frequent reasons for opting out during the National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019.

Table 2.7. Most frequent reasons for opting out

Reason for opt-out	Number	%
I am too ill	68	39%
I prefer not to say	28	16%
I don't have time	25	15%
Patient unable to communicate	17	10%
I have difficulty reading or completing the survey (for example sight difficulties)	10	6%
I feel it's not going to make a difference	9	5%
I never take part in surveys of any kind	8	5%
Can't remember hospital stay	3	2%
Only have bad things to say/don't want to express them or take part	3	2%
Other	1	<1%
Length or difficulty of survey	1	<1%
Total	173	100%

Bereavement letters were sent in the event that invitation or reminder letters were erroneously sent to individuals who had passed away following discharge from hospital. A total of 60 bereavement letters were sent to patients' families during the survey period.

2.6. Data retention and destruction

Patients' contact details were used to distribute the questionnaire to their home addresses. Information on date of birth, sex and other relevant variables was collected in order to describe the characteristics of the sample. Patients' names and addresses (with the exception of 'county name') were deleted at the close of the survey period. Hard copies of the survey questionnaire were destroyed once all answers had been coded and correctly uploaded to the response file.

3. Data processing, analysis and reporting

3.1 Data processing steps

Completed questionnaires were received both online and in paper form. The latter were uploaded and merged with the online surveys.

The processing of paper questionnaires concluded in August 2019. All completed questionnaires were returned by participants to the managed service where they were opened, date stamped, punched and coded. Data was entered into a customised data entry form developed in Askia software. The form was designed to quality assure the data upon entry. For example, data entry staff could not progress to the next field if an incorrect survey code (ID) was entered. Similarly, out-of-range values were not permitted for any of the numeric fields.

The National Inpatient Experience Survey website allowed patients to input their eight-digit code⁶ and complete the survey online. Similar to the paper-based survey, invalid survey codes (IDs) were not permitted on login (an error message appeared asking the user to enter their code again), and the routing in the questionnaire was programmed into the online survey design.

To prepare the data for analysis and reporting, scoring (see section 3.3.2) and a number of post-entry recodes were applied to the survey response file (using SPSS 24).

Demographic variables were also produced at this stage:

- age of respondents was taken as 2019 minus the year of birth where month of birth was January to June, otherwise it was taken as 2019 minus the year of birth minus 1. Age was then collapsed into five categories of age groups (16–35, 36–50, 51–65, 66–80, 81 or older).
- ethnic group was collapsed into 'White, Irish' and 'Other'.⁷
- admission type was coded as 'emergency' if the respondent had a code 1 to either Q1 (Was your most recent hospital stay planned in advance or an emergency? – Emergency or urgent) or Q2 (When you arrived at hospital, did you go to the Emergency Department? — Yes) or if they answered one or

⁶ Eligible participants received a unique eight-digit survey code, which was provided to them in the initial invitation and subsequent reminder letters.

⁷ It must be acknowledged that this 'other' group contains a range of ethnicities, but binary coding was used in this instance due to the low percentage overall classed as 'other'.

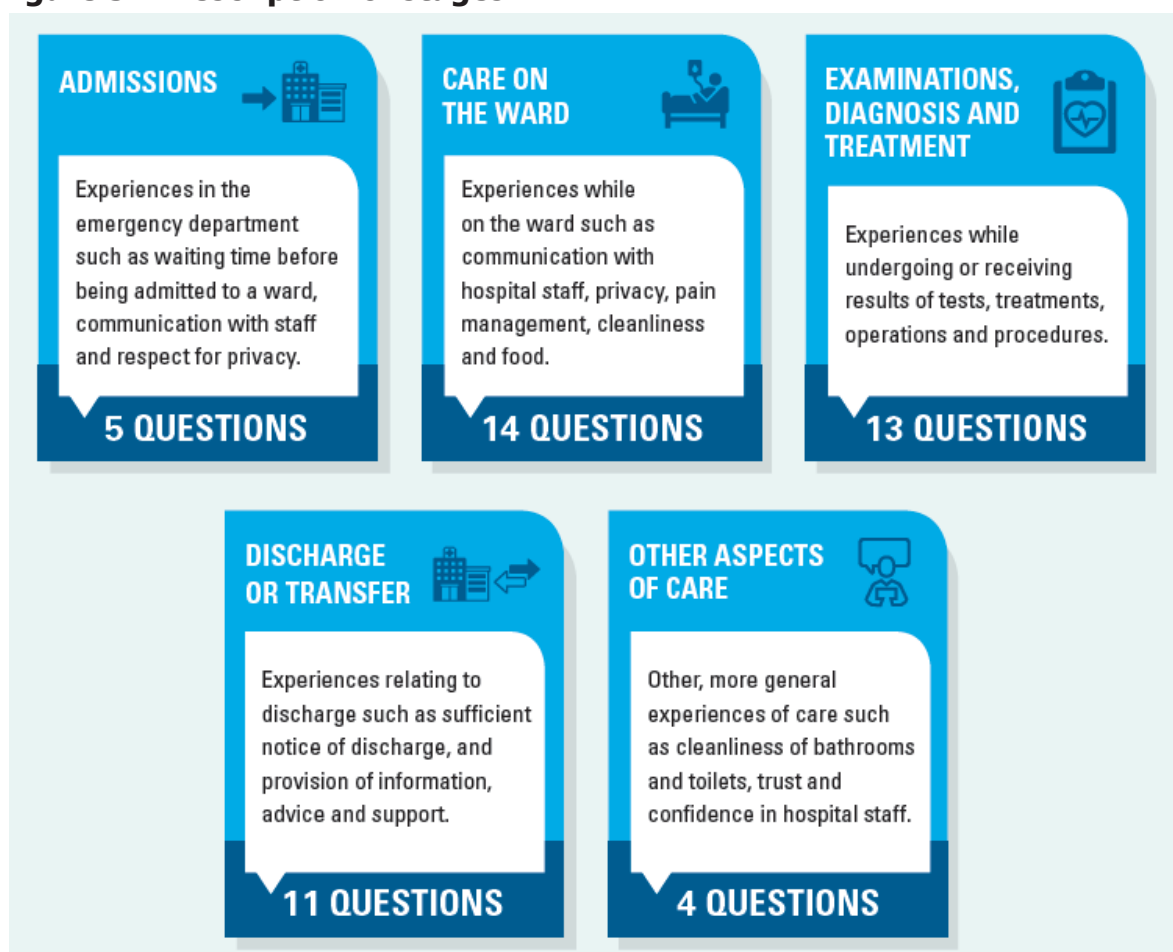
more of Q3-Q6. Otherwise, it was coded as 'non-emergency'.

The question on overall experience (Q52, rated 0–10) was collapsed into three groups: very good (score of 9–10), good (7–8), and fair to poor (0–6).

3.2 Mapping of survey questions to the stages of care

For analytic and reporting purposes, questions were grouped into 'stages of care' along the patient journey. Figure 3.1 provides a brief description of the stages of care and specifies the number of questions corresponding to each stage of care. Filter questions (that is, questions with the main purpose of routing respondents to the next applicable question) were excluded from this categorisation. Six questions on respondent demographics and the three open-ended questions were also excluded. Appendix 1 shows how individual questions map to the stages of care.

Figure 3.1 Description of stages



3.3 Quantitative methodology

This section describes the methods adopted to calculate and apply the weights used to adjust for demographic variations across hospitals and hospital groups. This section also explains how the stage-of-care scores were calculated and describes the quality assurance of the survey data.

3.3.1 Demographic adjustment weights

The results of the survey are based on standardised data, using a process that seeks to minimise potential bias in responses. Previous patient experience surveys conducted in Ireland and internationally have demonstrated that a respondent's characteristics, such as their age and type of admission (for example, emergency or elective) can influence survey responses.⁽³⁾ Older respondents, for example, tend to report more positive experiences than younger respondents, while those admitted to hospital on an emergency basis report more negative experiences than those admitted on a non-emergency basis.⁽⁴⁾ As there is considerable variation in the age and admission profile of patients across hospitals, there is potential for bias, with hospitals appearing better or worse than if they catered for patients with a different demographic profile. In order to address this issue and facilitate 'like for like' comparisons, the data are standardised. Standardising adjusts for the differences in respondent profiles in order to allow for fairer comparisons than could be made with non-standardised data.

In the analysis for the National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019, responses were standardised by age and type of admission. This approach was taken based on the analysis of responses and guidance from the Picker Institute Europe, which indicated that age and type of admission were the most significant sources of potential bias. The standardisation process involves applying a 'weight' to each respondent within a particular hospital, which adjusts the value of their responses in proportion to the profile of the national sample of respondents. The first step in developing weightings is to calculate the proportion of the national sample of respondents in each age/admission group. Table 3.1 shows the proportion of respondents within each age group, categorised by type of admission. For example, the proportion of the national sample aged 16–35 who had an emergency admission was 0.059, the proportion of the national sample aged 51–65 who had a non-emergency admission was 0.084, etc. These proportions were then calculated for each hospital using the same procedure.

Table 3.1 National proportions

Admission type	Age	National
Emergency	16–35	0.059
	36–50	0.092
	51–65	0.172
	66–80	0.271
	81+	0.147
Non-emergency	16–35	0.021
	36–50	0.039
	51–65	0.084
	66–80	0.091
	81+	0.023

The next step was to calculate the weighting for each individual. Age/admission type weightings for individuals were calculated for each respondent by dividing the national proportion of respondents in their age/admission type group by the corresponding hospital proportion.

This process identifies respondents within hospitals from groups that are over- or under-represented compared to the national profile of respondents. For example, if a lower proportion of people admitted as emergency patients and aged between 51 and 65 within Hospital A responded to the survey, in comparison with the national proportion, then this group would be under-represented in the final scores. Dividing the national proportion by the hospital proportion results in a weighting greater than 1 (1.103) for members of this group (Table 3.2). This increases the influence of responses made by respondents within that group in the final score, thus counteracting their low representation.

Likewise, if a considerably higher proportion of people admitted as non-emergency patients aged between 36 and 50 years from Hospital A responded to the survey, then this group would be over-represented within the sample, compared with the national representation of this group. Subsequently this group would have a greater influence over the final score. In order to counteract this, dividing the national proportion by the proportion for Hospital A results in a weighting of less than 1 (0.684) for this group.

To prevent the possibility of excessive weight being given to respondents in an extremely under-represented group, the maximum value for any weight was set at

5, in line with the approach taken in the UK. The minimum value for any weight was set at 0.2.⁽⁵⁾

Table 3.2 Proportion and weighting for Hospital A

Admission type	Age	National proportion	Hospital A proportion	Hospital A weight (national/hospital A)
Emergency	16–35	0.059	0.055	1.073
	36–50	0.092	0.088	1.046
	51–65	0.172	0.156	1.103
	66–80	0.271	0.251	1.080
	81+	0.147	0.136	1.081
Non-emergency	16–35	0.021	0.029	0.724
	36–50	0.039	0.057	0.684
	51–65	0.084	0.125	0.672
	66–80	0.091	0.090	1.011
	81+	0.023	0.015	1.533

3.3.2 Question scores

To calculate scores for the themes described in Section 3.2, the responses to the questions making up these stages of care were assigned a score using methods equivalent to those used in the UK by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).⁽⁶⁾ The scores applied to each of these questions are shown in Appendix 1.

Figure 3.2 is an example of how response options were converted into scores. It should be noted that only evaluative questions could be scored, that is, questions which assessed an actual experience of care. Routing or demographic questions were not scored. More positive answers were assigned higher scores than more negative ones. 47 questions in total were categorised into stages of care.

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

Figure 3.2 Example of a scored question in the 2019 survey

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

Table 3.3 below shows how scores were calculated for a specific question in the survey. 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). Thus, the average score for Q3 is 6 out of 10.

Table 3.3 Sum of scores for Q3 based on five respondents

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
Average score	6

3.3.3 Stage of care scores

A stage of care score was generated for each respondent with one or more 'scorable' responses on items making up a stage. Scores ranged from 0 to 10, with higher scores indicating a better experience.

Table 3.4 shows an example of the original and scored data for the admissions stage of care. See Appendix 1 for the wording and response options for the questions shown in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 Example of scored responses for the 'Admissions' stage of care

Original responses					Scored responses					Admissions stage score
Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q8	RQ3	RQ4	RQ5	RQ6	RQ8	
1	1				10	10				10
1	2	2	2	2	10	5	5	5	7.5	6.5
1	1	3	3		10	10	0	0		5
2	2	4		6	5	5				5
4	4	4		6						[Missing]

3.3.4 Comparisons of groups

Statistical tests were carried out to examine if there were significant differences in patient experience across groups of patients and hospital 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 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.

3.3.5 Comparisons between 2017, 2018 and 2019

Likewise, statistical tests were carried out to examine if there were significant differences in patient experience across the 2017, 2018 and 2019 cohorts. Scores for 2017 and 2018, and for 2018 and 2019, are compared using a 't-test' at the 99% confidence level. A t-test is a statistical test used to compare the average scores of

two groups. A statistically-significant difference means it is very unlikely that results were obtained by chance alone if there was no real difference.

Therefore, when one score is 'significantly different' compared to another score, this is highly unlikely to have occurred by chance.

3.3.6. Reporting caveats

To protect the anonymity of respondents, the results for hospitals with fewer than 30 respondents were not published.⁸ All of the participating hospitals exceeded the 30-respondent thresholds. It should be noted, however, that it was previously decided to merge the data for Louth County Hospital, Dundalk, with Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda. The former had only 29 eligible discharges in May 2019, and is a partner facility of the latter.

The second caveat relates to representativeness, whereby a hospital or hospital group with less than a 25% response rate would be flagged in reporting, with caution advised in interpreting the results. Again, however, this was not necessary, since all hospitals and hospital groups exceeded the 25% response rate (see Appendix 2).

3.3.7 Quality assurance of quantitative data

Insofar as possible, quality assurance was built into the design of the data capture for the paper-based survey responses. The managed service undertook to double enter 0.07% of all paper-based surveys received.

Frequency checks on the merged (paper-based and online) survey data also confirmed that the rate of 'missingness' on the individual survey questions was in the low range, that is, there was no substantial evidence of 'survey fatigue', whereby rates of missing responses would be higher for questions appearing later in the questionnaire. For example, missing responses averaged 4.2% for Q9–Q11 compared with 5.5% for the last three numeric (closed response) questions prior to the demographic section (Q50–Q52). The average rate of missingness for the demographic questions (Q55–Q58) was 2.7%.

⁸ This is the same criterion as used in the UK.

3.4 Qualitative methodologies

This section describes the processing of the qualitative data collected via the survey questionnaire, that is, responses to the last three (open-ended) questions:

- Q59 – Was there anything particularly good about your hospital care?
- Q60 – Was there anything that could be improved?
- Q61 – Any other comments or suggestions?

Table 3.5 shows the number of responses received for each question by sex, age group, route of admission and response mode (paper or online).

Table 3.5 Number of responses received for Q59, Q60 and Q61 overall and by sex, age group, and response mode

	Q59	Q60	Q61
Male	3,895	2,920	1,841
Female	4,155	3,440	2,146
Age 16–35	606	570	290
Age 36–50	1,020	909	572
Age 51–65	2,121	1,687	1,073
Age 66+	4,218	3,106	1,994
Emergency	6,029	4,921	3,101
Non-emergency	2,141	1,515	951
Paper	7,363	5,718	3,659
Online	807	718	393

3.4.1 Anonymisation of qualitative data

All qualitative responses were anonymised. Whether on paper or online, the same set of procedures was followed. The overarching principle guiding these procedures was the protection of the anonymity of individuals, including respondents and hospital staff.

The redaction guidelines can be found in Appendix 3.

3.4.2 Developing thematic codes for the qualitative data

The framework method was used to analyse patients' comments.⁽⁷⁾ An analytical framework consisting of 24 themes was developed – this framework helped organise and systematically reduce the thousands of patients' comments into manageable chunks of information. The coding frame is the same as that adopted in 2018, and is shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6 Detailed set of codes used for reporting

Dignity, respect and privacy	Nursing staff
Communication with the patient	Doctors or consultants
Emergency department management and environment	Waiting times for planned procedures
Emergency department waiting times	Discharge and aftercare management
Staffing levels	Staff in general
Staff availability and responsiveness	Communication with family and friends
Other healthcare staff	Physical comfort
Other staff	Hospital facilities
Food and drink	Parking facilities
Cleanliness and hygiene	Clinical information and history
Compassion	Private health insurance
General comment	Other comment

In the hospital reports, the categories were collapsed into a reduced set of 11 themes for ease of reporting.

3.5 Treatment of duplicates

Duplicates could occur within the National Inpatient Experience Survey data in two senses: the first sense was within the data extracts, and the second was within the survey responses, whereby a respondent may have opted to complete a survey online as well as on paper.

The vast majority of duplicates within the data extracts were identified and removed as part of the quality-assurance processes. Duplicate records were discounted from the weekly extracts for repeat admissions to the same hospital and internal transfers. However, individuals who were transferred between hospitals received a survey questionnaire for each hospital to which they were admitted. Similarly, individuals who were independently admitted to multiple hospitals during the survey month received a survey invitation for every hospital from which they were discharged.

Duplicates in the survey response file could not occur as the system did not permit entry of a record with a survey ID which was already in the online survey response set. In this sense, a duplicate is defined as a paper-based response that already appears in the online file, that is, the record in the duplicate set with the older time stamp was the one retained in the final dataset. In reality, there were very few duplicates (amounting to less than 0.1%).

3.6 Quality assurance of qualitative data

Three sets of processes assured the quality of these data:

- regular audits of paper-based responses against the data entered online confirmed high levels of accuracy in the transcription of the handwritten comments to the online system.
- secondly, the National Inpatient Experience Survey team at HIQA reviewed all comments to check that they had been anonymised in accordance with the agreed redaction protocols. Only then were the data released to the online reporting facility for hospitals to review (also refer to section 3.7).
- thirdly, 3% of responses were selected for blind double-coding. Responses were selected at a random starting point, followed by every ninth record, in order to achieve the set quota. Where necessary, codes were edited or additional codes added in order to ensure that the coding was as comprehensive as possible.

3.7. Publication of national, hospital group and hospital results

In November 2019, the National Inpatient Experience Survey team published one national report as well as 39 hospital reports. In addition, the team published six hospital group reports in January 2020. [Tableau data visualisation](#) was embedded on www.yourexperience.ie and allows site visitors to further examine the results. It should be noted that hospital personnel and other stakeholders had been granted access to a 'real-time' online reporting platform where they could view their performance in the survey as the data were being processed. Access to this information prior to the publication of reports allows hospitals to be proactive and to identify opportunities for improvement at an early stage.

Taken together, the national, hospital group and hospital reports were designed to:

- provide a clear description of the key features of inpatient experience at national and local levels, pointing to areas of good experience and areas needing improvement in the system at national, hospital group and hospital levels
- together with other data and information sources, provide a robust basis for the development of quality improvement plans at hospital group and hospital levels
- together with other data and information sources, enable the identification of policy priorities at the national level
- provide a basis for benchmarking progress over time following future surveys.

All published reports can be downloaded from www.yourexperience.ie/inpatient/national-results.

3.8 Survey findings, quality improvement and next steps

The implementation of quality improvement initiatives in response to the survey findings is a key objective of the National Inpatient Experience Survey, and is coordinated by the HSE. The development of a national quality improvement plan was initiated in June 2017. An update of this plan was launched in 2019 and coincided with the publication of the survey results.

A quality improvement oversight group was formed in August 2017. This group facilitated a series of planning workshops with hospital groups in 2017, 2018 and again in 2019, enabling discussion about the key quality improvement priorities both nationally and locally.

The national quality improvement plan sets out a roadmap for quality improvements at the national level, as well as across each of the participating hospitals. The HSE Acute Hospital Division has committed to monitoring the implementation of the quality improvement plans, which can be downloaded from www.youexperience.ie.

4. International comparisons

4.1 Comparisons with international data

Inpatient surveys are undertaken in a number of countries, using a wide variety of approaches and survey tools. This brief review compares results from the Irish National Inpatient Experience Survey with the findings of inpatient surveys conducted in England, Scotland and New Zealand. A summary of the approaches taken in each jurisdiction and how they compare with the National Inpatient Experience Survey approach is provided in Table 4.1.

A comparison of results across selected questions is provided in Table 4.2. Comparing patient experience across jurisdictions is challenging due to variations in health service provision, differences in survey instruments and methodology, as well as cultural differences in how encounters with the health service are perceived and reported.^(8, 9) Comparisons of survey results across jurisdictions should therefore be made with caution. Nevertheless, there are some common aspects in survey approaches across jurisdictions and comparisons of results on similar questions can be useful.

Comparisons are only made for questions with identical wording and response options across the various national surveys. In Table 4.2, questions are numbered and ordered according to where they appear in the National Inpatient Experience Survey. These questions may be numbered and categorised differently in other surveys.

Table 4.1 Overview of adult inpatient experience surveys in England, Scotland and New Zealand

Jurisdiction	Survey information	Differences from National Inpatient Experience Survey approach
Scotland	<p>Scottish Inpatient Experience Survey 2018.</p> <p>Survey results organised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> admission to hospital the hospital and ward care and treatment in hospital staff operations and procedures leaving hospital care and support services overall experience additional comments about you 	<p>Wider coverage of hospitals, that is, not just acute general but maternity services are excluded.</p> <p>Participants sampled between April and September 2017. Questionnaires were distributed in January 2018</p> <p>First Scottish Inpatient Experience organised in 2010. The survey currently runs every two years.</p>
England	<p>Adult inpatient survey 2018 (NHS data published via CQC).</p> <p>Survey results organised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> admission to hospital accident and emergency department planned admissions hospital and ward doctors and nurses care and treatment operations and procedures leaving hospital overall 	<p>Wider coverage of hospitals, that is, not just acute general, but maternity services are excluded.</p> <p>Survey fieldwork took place between January 2018 and July 2018.</p> <p>The survey has run annually since 2004.</p>
New Zealand	<p>HQSC adult inpatient survey 2019.</p> <p>Survey results organised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communication partnership coordination physical and emotional needs 	<p>Data collected four times annually. The most recent results are for patients treated in August 2019. This is the 21st statistical release for the survey.</p> <p>Online data collection primarily. Participants between 15 and 16 years of age included.</p>

Table 4.2 Comparison of question scores across jurisdictions

	Ireland	Scotland ⁹	England ¹⁰	New Zealand ¹¹
	2019	2018	2018	Aug 2019
Response rate	46%	40%	45%	22%
Sex (female %)	51%	56%	52%	60%
Admission route (based on Q1. Was your most recent hospital stay planned in advance or an emergency?) (% emergency or urgent)	71% ¹²	62%	69%	/
Age (>65 years)	53%	62%	64%	49%
Care on the ward (% endorsing 'best' response option)				
Q10. In your opinion, how clean was the hospital room or ward that you were in? (% very clean)	74%	/	69%	73%
Q20. When you had important questions to ask a doctor, did you get answers that you could understand? (% yes, always)	70%	/	66%	78%
Q32. Do you think the hospital staff did everything they could to help control your pain? (% yes, definitely)	82%	/	67%	83%

⁹ The national report on the results from the Scottish Inpatient Survey 2018 is available from: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/inpatient-experience-survey-2018-national-results/>

¹⁰ The results for the 2018 adult inpatient survey conducted in England can be downloaded in open data format from <https://www.cqc.org.uk/publications/surveys/adult-inpatient-survey-2018>

¹¹ The national results for the August 2019 adult inpatient survey in New Zealand are available as interactive charts from <https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/health-quality-evaluation/publications-and-resources/publication/3876/>

¹² The figure for emergency admissions reported in the National Inpatient Experience Survey Report is based on combined responses to Q1 and Q2, as described on page 18 of this report

Examinations, diagnosis and treatment (% endorsing 'best' response option)	Ireland	Scotland	England	New Zealand
Q24. Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment? (% yes, definitely)	65%	65%	54%	70%
Q30. Were you given enough privacy when discussing your condition or treatment? (% yes, always)	74%	/	75%	68%
Q36. Beforehand, did a member of staff explain the risks and benefits of the operation or procedure in a way you could understand? (% yes, completely)	80%	86%	/	/
Q37. Beforehand, did a member of staff answer your questions about the operation or procedure in a way you could understand? (% yes, completely)	81%	80%	80%	/
Q38. Beforehand, were you told how you could expect to feel after you had the operation or procedure? (% yes, completely)	65%	66%	61%	/
Q39. After the operation or procedure, did a member of staff explain how the operation or procedure had gone in a way you could understand? (% yes, completely)	72%	/	67%	/
Discharge or transfer (% endorsing 'best' response option)				
Q40. Did you feel you were involved in decisions about your discharge from hospital? (% yes, definitely)	63%	/	53%	77%
Q45. Did a member of staff tell you about medication side effects to watch for when you went home? (% yes, completely)	45%	/	37%	50%
Other aspects and overall				
Q51. Overall, did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity while you were in the hospital? (% yes, always)	84%	/	80%	88%
Q52. Overall rating of hospital experience (% who gave rating between 7 and 10)	84%	86%	83%	/

Appendix 1

2019 question wording, response options, corresponding scores and mapping to stages of care

Question	Wording	Response options with corresponding scores in parentheses	Stage of Care
Q03	When you had important questions to ask doctors and nurses in the Emergency Department, did you get answers that you could understand?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0); I had no need to ask/I was too unwell to ask questions (M)	Admissions
Q04	While you were in the Emergency Department, did a doctor or nurse explain your condition and treatment in a way you could understand?	Yes, completely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); I did not need an explanation (M)	Admissions
Q05	Were you given enough privacy when being examined or treated in the Emergency Department?	Yes, definitely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); Don't know/can't remember (M)	Admissions
Q06	Overall, did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity while you were in the Emergency Department?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0)	Admissions
Q08	Following arrival at the hospital, how long did you wait before being admitted to a ward?	Less than 6 hours (10); Between 6 and up to 12 hours (7.5); Between 12 and up to 24 hours (5); Between 24 and up to 48 hours (2.5); More than 48 hours (0); Don't know/can't remember (M); I was not admitted to a ward (M)	Admissions
Q09	Were you given enough privacy when you were on the ward?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0)	Care on the ward
Q10	In your opinion, how clean was the hospital room or ward that you were on?	Very clean (10); Fairly clean (6.67) ; Not very clean (3.33); Not at all clean (0)	Care on the ward
Q11	How clean were the toilets and bathrooms that you used in hospital?	Very clean (10); Fairly clean (6.67); Not very clean (3.33); Not at all clean (0); I did not use a toilet or bathroom (M)	Other
Q12	When you needed help from staff getting to the bathroom or toilet, did you get it in time?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0); I did not need help (M)	Care on the ward

Question	Wording	Response options with corresponding scores in parentheses	Stage of Care
Q13	Did staff wear name badges?	Yes, all of the staff wore name badges (10); Some of the staff wore name badges (5); Very few or none of the staff wore name badges (0); Don't know/can't remember (M)	Care on the ward
Q14	Did the staff treating and examining you introduce themselves?	Yes, all of the staff introduced themselves (10); Some of the staff introduced themselves (5); Very few or none of the staff introduced themselves (0); Don't know/can't remember (M)	Care on the ward
Q15	How would you rate the hospital food?	Very good (10); Good (6.67); Fair (3.33); Poor (0); I did not have any hospital food (M)	Care on the ward
Q16	Were you offered a choice of food?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0)	Care on the ward
Q18	Were you offered a replacement meal at another time?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0); I did not want a meal (M); I was not allowed a meal (e.g. because I was fasting) (M); Don't know/can't remember (M)	Care on the ward
Q19	Did you get enough help from staff to eat your meals?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0); I did not need help to eat meals (M)	Care on the ward
Q20	When you had important questions to ask a doctor, did you get answers that you could understand?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0); I had no need to ask (M)	Care on the ward
Q21	Did you feel you had enough time to discuss your care and treatment with a doctor?	Yes, definitely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0)	Examination/ diagnosis/ treatment
Q22	When you had important questions to ask a nurse, did you get answers that you could understand?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0); I had no need to ask (M)	Care on the ward
Q23	If you ever needed to talk to a nurse, did you get the opportunity to do so?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0); I had no need to talk to a nurse (M)	Care on the ward
Q24	Were you involved as much as you wanted to be in decisions about your care and treatment?	Yes, definitely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0)	Examination/ diagnosis/ treatment

Question	Wording	Response options with corresponding scores in parentheses	Stage of Care
Q25	How much information about your condition or treatment was given to you?	Not enough (0); The right amount (10); Too much (0)	Examination/ diagnosis/ treatment
Q26	Was your diagnosis explained to you in a way that you could understand?	Yes, completely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0)	Examination/ diagnosis/ treatment
Q27	If your family or someone else close to you wanted to talk to a doctor, did they have enough opportunity to do so?	Yes, definitely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); No family or friends were involved (M); My family did not want or need information (M); I did not want my family or friends to talk to a doctor (M)	Other
Q28	Did you find someone on the hospital staff to talk to about your worries and fears?	Yes, definitely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); I had no worries or fears (M)	Care on the ward
Q29	Did you have confidence and trust in the hospital staff treating you?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0)	Other
Q30	Were you given enough privacy when discussing your condition or treatment?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0)	Examination/ diagnosis/ treatment
Q31	Were you given enough privacy when being examined or treated?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0)	Examination/ diagnosis/ treatment
Q32	Do you think the hospital staff did everything they could to help control your pain?	Yes, definitely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No; I was never in any pain (0)	Care on the ward
Q33	Did a doctor or nurse explain the results of the tests in a way that you could understand?	Yes, definitely (1); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); Not sure/can't remember (M); I was told I would get the results at a later date (M); I was never told the results of tests (M); I did not have any tests (M)	Examination/ diagnosis/ treatment
Q34	Before you received any treatments did a member of staff explain what would happen?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0); I did not want an explanation (M); I did not have any treatments (M)	Examination/ diagnosis/ treatment
Q35	Before you received any treatments did a member of staff explain any risks and/or benefits in a way you could understand?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0); I did not want an explanation (M)	Examination/ diagnosis/ treatment

Question	Wording	Response options with corresponding scores in parentheses	Stage of Care
Q36	Beforehand, did a member of staff explain the risks and benefits of the operation or procedure in a way you could understand?	Yes, completely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); I did not want an explanation (M); I did not have an operation or procedure (M)	Examination/ diagnosis/ treatment
Q37	Beforehand, did a member of staff answer your questions about the operation or procedure in a way you could understand?	Yes, completely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); I did not have any questions (M)	Examination/ diagnosis/ treatment
Q38	Beforehand, were you told how you could expect to feel after you had the operation or procedure?	Yes, completely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0)	Examination/ diagnosis/ treatment
Q39	After the operation or procedure, did a member of staff explain how the operation or procedure had gone in a way you could understand?	Yes, completely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0)	Examination/ diagnosis/ treatment
Q40	Did you feel you were involved in decisions about your discharge from hospital?	Yes, definitely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); I did not want to be involved (M)	Discharge/ transfer
Q41	Were you or someone close to you given enough notice about your discharge?	Yes, definitely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); Don't know/can't remember (M)	Discharge/ transfer
Q42	Before you left hospital, did the hospital staff spend enough time explaining about your health and care after you arrive home?	Yes (10); No (0)	Discharge/ transfer
Q43	Before you left hospital, were you given any written or printed information about what you should or should not do after leaving hospital?	Yes (10); No (0); I did not want or need any written or printed information (M)	Discharge/ transfer
Q44	Did a member of staff explain the purpose of the medicines you were to take at home in a way you could understand?	Yes, completely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); I did not need an explanation (M); I had no medicines (M)	Discharge/ transfer
Q45	Did a member of staff tell you about medication side effects to watch for when you went home?	Yes, completely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); I did not need an explanation (M)	Discharge/ transfer

Question	Wording	Response options with corresponding scores in parentheses	Stage of Care
Q46	Did a member of staff tell you about any danger signals you should watch for after you went home?	Yes, completely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); It was not necessary (M)	Discharge/transfer
Q47	Did hospital staff take your family or home situation into account when planning your discharge?	Yes, completely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); It was not necessary (M); Don't know/can't remember (M)	Discharge/transfer
Q48	Did the doctors or nurses give your family or someone close to you all the information they needed to help care for you?	Yes, definitely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); No family or friends were involved (M); My family or friends did not want or need information (M)	Discharge/transfer
Q49	Did hospital staff tell you who to contact if you were worried about your condition or treatment after you left hospital?	Yes (10); No (0); Don't know/can't remember (M)	Discharge/transfer
Q50	Do you feel that you received enough information from the hospital on how to manage your condition after your discharge?	Yes, definitely (10); Yes, to some extent (5); No (0); I did not need help in managing my condition (M)	Discharge/transfer
Q51	Overall, did you feel you were treated with respect and dignity while you were in the hospital?	Yes, always (10); Yes, sometimes (5); No (0)	Other
Q52	Overall... (please circle a number)	I had a very poor experience (0) to I had a very good experience (10)	Overall

Appendix 2

May 2019 operational outcomes by hospital group and individual hospitals

Hospital	Total discharged	Deceased	Return to Sender	Opted out	No response	Completed (paper)	Completed (online)	Response rate
Dublin Midlands Hospital Group	4846	79	37	79	2609	1884	222	45%
Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise	394	14	4	6	204	156	15	46%
Midland Regional Hospital Tullamore	839	14	3	12	445	345	27	45%
Naas General Hospital	644	12	6	11	328	273	23	48%
St James's Hospital	1647	16	12	32	896	633	83	45%
Tallaght University Hospital	1322	23	12	18	736	477	74	43%
Ireland East Hospital Group	5888	90	52	126	3070	2419	229	47%
Cappagh National Orthopaedic Hospital	271	0	1	3	73	183	12	72%
Mater Misericordiae University Hospital	1356	10	17	27	781	493	53	42%
Midland Regional Hospital Mullingar	656	9	9	14	354	258	25	45%
Our Lady's Hospital, Navan	346	6	3	2	163	167	9	53%
Royal Victoria Eye and Ear Hospital	145	0	1	2	68	68	8	53%
St Colmcille's Hospital	137	2	0	3	76	53	4	42%
St Luke's General Hospital	663	11	4	22	350	269	22	45%
St Michael's Hospital	237	0	1	6	114	113	8	51%
St Vincent's University Hospital	1431	25	14	33	761	549	74	45%
Wexford General Hospital	646	27	2	14	330	266	14	46%

Hospital	Total discharged	Deceased	Return to Sender	Opted out	No response	Completed (paper)	Completed (online)	Response rate
RCSI Hospital Group	4343	57	36	90	2424	1615	190	43%
Beaumont Hospital	1756	29	18	42	988	636	83	43%
Cavan and Monaghan Hospital	614	8	2	13	328	251	17	45%
Connolly Hospital	881	13	9	15	518	299	40	40%
Louth County Hospital*	29	0	0	1	18	8	2	34%
Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital*	1063	7	7	19	572	421	48	45%
Saolta University Health Care Group	5016	105	28	120	2533	2097	208	48%
Galway University Hospitals	1913	36	13	35	932	825	97	50%
Letterkenny University Hospital	795	20	4	24	427	300	35	44%
Mayo University Hospital	868	18	4	21	442	369	27	47%
Portiuncula University Hospital	438	11	4	10	239	170	13	44%
Roscommon University Hospital	118	3	0	4	64	46	2	42%
Sligo University Hospital	884	17	3	26	429	387	34	49%
South/South West Hospital Group	5182	117	23	138	2536	2218	224	49%
Bantry General Hospital	190	6	1	12	85	81	11	51%
Cork University Hospital	1687	32	5	40	825	732	71	49%
Lourdes Orthopaedic Hospital Kilcreene	77	0	0	0	15	55	7	81%
Mallow General Hospital	148	11	0	4	57	75	2	56%
Mercy University Hospital	681	29	3	18	331	282	30	48%
South Infirmary Victoria University Hospital	366	1	2	5	132	206	23	63%
South Tipperary General Hospital	446	2	2	11	254	167	17	42%
University Hospital Kerry	579	11	6	29	310	216	22	43%
University Hospital Waterford	1008	25	4	19	527	404	41	46%

Hospital	Total discharged	Deceased	Return to Sender	Opted out	No response	Completed (paper)	Completed (online)	Response rate
UL Hospitals	2325	65	14	53	1186	912	125	47%
Croom Orthopaedic Hospital	125	0	0	1	43	74	7	65%
St John's Hospital	242	9	0	7	106	110	12	52%
Ennis Hospital	158	8	1	4	82	57	8	44%
Nenagh Hospital	108	6	1	5	52	44	3	47%
University Hospital Limerick	1692	42	12	36	903	627	95	44%

Appendix 3

2019 guidelines for the redaction of qualitative comments

Example	Recommended redaction
Names and titles Dr. Mr. James, Mary Nurse Pat, Nurse O'Brien	[Dr. Name] [Mr. Name] [First Name] [Nurse Name]
Gender Male (Nurse), Male Care Assistant Female (Nurse)	No redaction
Specialist healthcare professionals Senior Nurse, Renal Nurse Orthopaedic doctor	No redaction
General categories of healthcare specialists – in plural The Nurses, Doctors, Consultants	No redaction
Specific categories of healthcare specialists Anaesthetist, Physio, Dietician	No redaction
Specific grades of healthcare professional Junior doctor The intern	No redaction
Dates and days & times Monday, Tues etc. Weekend Bank holiday weekend Was waiting between 7 and 9.30 24 May	No redaction [Date]

Example	Recommended redaction
Departments & wards Emergency department Operating theatre Cancer ward Ward name (St James's Ward) Recovery Isolation AMAU (acute medical assessment unit)	No redaction
Religions, nationality Muslim doctor, Indian, Pakistani, etc. Generic use of term like foreign	[Rel] [Nat] [eth] No redaction
Hospital Names In the Mater, Vincent's etc. Location identifiers The consultant from Donegal	No redaction [County]
Procedures and operations Lumbar puncture Bypass Appendix operation Eye surgery Operation (generic)	[Proc. name] No redaction
Specific therapies Intravenous anti-biotic drip Fasting on iv fluids etc.	No redaction
Conditions Diabetes Type 1, Breast Cancer, Renal failure, colon cancer, Heart attack, High blood pressure Diabetes	[Cond. name] [Cond. type]
Medication Specific drug doses E.g. I was put on Xanax / 650mg of Tramadol daily for one week etc.	[Med.]

Example	Recommended redaction
Illegible text	[...] and continue to the next legible part of the comment. Aim to get a balance between capturing the maximum amount of information possible and time spent on deciphering handwriting.
Any bad, racist or derogatory remarks are typed as you see them	Redact in the normal way (that is, if nationality mentioned, redact etc.) but type in the precise remarks as you see them.
Correct spelling mistakes	Correction should be of minor and obvious spelling mistakes, for example: their/there. This is to facilitate understanding and 'readability' of the qualitative data, it should in no way impact on meaning.
Other Wheelchairs and other medical devices	[Assistive device]

Appendix 4

Data Quality Statement – National Inpatient Experience Survey 2019

1. Purpose

The National Inpatient Experience Survey is committed to ensuring that the data it processes and publishes adheres to the five dimensions of good quality data. The purpose of this statement is to provide transparency on the collection of National Inpatient Experience Survey data and provide data users with information about the quality of National Inpatient Experience Survey data. This will allow data users to make an informed decision about whether this data meets their needs.

2. Overview of data collection and remit

Data on patient experience is collected through eligible participants' responses to a survey. The survey asks about a person's journey through hospital and includes structured tick-box questions as well as open-ended questions for comments. The findings of the survey are used to inform quality improvements in hospital care.

3. Data source

People who respond to the survey are the data source for the data that is collected on patient experience.

4. Overview of quality of data under each of the dimensions of data quality

This section provides an overview of how data quality is ensured under each of the five dimensions of quality.

Relevance

The relevance of National Inpatient Experience Survey data is ensured in the following ways.

- To ensure that data meets the needs of data users, the development of the survey tool in 2017 involved a Delphi Study, focus groups and cognitive interviews with patient representatives and healthcare professionals.

Cognitive interviews were also carried out in 2018, to test and ensure the relevance of minor adaptations to the survey.

- The input of healthcare professionals and patient representatives is sought in the implementation and planning of the survey through their representation on governance groups (steering group and programme boards). This ensures that the needs of data-users are embedded into the design of surveys and the delivery of the survey results.
- The inclusion criteria of the survey were changed in 2018; 16 and 17 year olds are now invited to participate in the National Inpatient Experience Survey. The change to the inclusion criteria was requested by data-users, who identified a gap in patient experience data for this cohort who were previously not included in paediatric or adult surveys.
- A review of each survey is carried out, which involves a public consultation. Data-users provide feedback on all aspects of the survey, including the relevance of the survey data.

Accuracy and reliability

The accuracy and reliability of the data is ensured in the following ways:

- Survey responses, once uploaded onto the online reporting tool are quality assured against the hard copy originals. The coding, or categorisation, of survey responses is also quality assured, through spot check verification.
- The results of all data analyses are quality assured to ensure that they reflect the responses received from survey participants.

Timeliness and punctuality

Timeliness and punctuality is ensured in the following ways:

- Anonymised survey responses are uploaded to an online reporting platform once received by the data processor. Once 30 or more responses have been received, these are then disclosed to nominated hospital staff, who have access to this platform and can view the data as close as possible to its point of collection.
- The findings of the survey are published on www.patientexperience.ie within 4 months of the closure of the survey.

Coherence and comparability

The coherence and comparability of the data is ensured in the following ways:

- The National Inpatient Experience Survey uses questions from a validated, international question bank, which allows for comparability of patient experience at an international level, on a question by question basis.
- The National Inpatient Experience Survey uses one survey tool to measure patient experience across public acute hospitals.
- The survey is carried out at the same time every year, allowing for year on year comparison of the data.
- Anonymised survey responses are uploaded to a publically accessible, online reporting platform; www.yourexperience.ie, where the data can be contrasted and compared:
 - by question
 - by year
 - by hospital, hospital group and nationally.

Accessibility and clarity

The accessibility and clarity of the data is ensured in the following ways:

- The findings of the survey are presented in a traditional report format with graphs and textual explanations to appeal to different types of learners.
- Staff analysing the data and reporting the survey findings undergo data visualisation training to ensure that the findings of the survey are reported in an accessible and clear format.
- All outputs, such as the 2019 National Inpatient Experience Survey National Report, are quality assured to ensure that they adhere to NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency) Standards and are therefore reported in plain English.
- Survey findings are accessible through various platforms, such as an online reporting tool for nominated hospital staff and a public facing reporting tool on www.patientexperience.ie.
- A Data Access Request Policy and form are available for people who wish to access and use the data for research purposes.

5. Limitations of the survey

Comparability

The first National Inpatient Experience Survey took place in May 2017 and was repeated in May 2018 and May 2019. Each year, the survey tool was adapted. For example, a question on 'reason for admission' was added to the survey. Changes, while minor, may affect the year on year comparability of the survey.

- **Accessibility**

The findings of surveys are made publically available on www.yourexperience.ie. Reports are published at a local, regional and national level on a publically available, online reporting tool.

Data, relevant to the needs of specific data-users, is therefore accessible and easily obtainable. The possibility of making findings available at ward level, was also investigated, to allow for targeted, ward-specific quality improvements. It was decided against releasing data at a ward level, as this may

- not be feasible as a participants' care pathway may involve a number of wards
- allow for the identification of participants, staff and others and undermine the anonymity of survey responses.

Conclusion

The National Care Experience Programme is committed to high-quality data which is exemplified by meeting the five dimensions of data quality. The Programme Team will continually review these dimensions to provide assurance of the quality of the data for the National Inpatient Experience Survey.

References

1. Jenkinson C, Coulter A, Bruster S, Richards N, Chandola T. Patients' experiences and satisfaction with health care: results of a questionnaire study of specific aspects of care. *Quality and Safety in Health Care*. 2002;11(4):335-9.
2. Health Information and Quality Authority. International Review on Patient Experience Surveys. <https://www.patientexperience.ie/about-the-survey/survey-questionnaire/>; 2016.
3. Care Quality Commission. Technical Details – patient survey information 2016. 2016.
4. Foley C, Droog E, Boyce M, Healy O, Browne J. Patient experience of different regional models of urgent and emergency care: a cross-sectional survey study. *BMJ Open*. 2017;7(3).
5. Care Quality Commission. Technical details – patient survey information. 2015 Inpatient survey. 2016.
6. Care Quality Commission. NHS Patient Survey Programme: Survey Scoring Method 2015.
7. Gale NK, Heath G, Cameron E, Rashid S, Redwood S. Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research. *BMC medical research methodology*. 2013 Dec;13(1):117.
8. Coulter A, Cleary PD. Patients' Experiences With Hospital Care In Five Countries. *Health Affairs*. 2001;20(3):244-52.
9. Care Quality Commission. 2016 Adult inpatient survey: statistical release. 2017.