



Review of Processes 2020





## 1. For information

The National Maternity Experience Survey offers women the opportunity to share their experiences of Ireland's maternity services. The survey is part of the National Care Experience Programme — a joint initiative by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health. The National Care Experience Programme seeks to improve the quality of health and social care services in Ireland by asking people about their experiences of care and acting on their feedback. The National Maternity Experience Survey reflects a commitment made in The National Maternity Strategy 2016-2026 to evaluate maternity care services from the perspectives of the women who use them<sup>1</sup>. In addition, a number of survey questions reflected the key themes from The National Maternity Strategy 2016-2026, such as choice, promoting health and wellbeing, involvement in decision-making and being treated with respect and dignity.

### Why do we conduct a review of processes?

The National Care Experience Programme is committed to continuous quality improvement and carries out a review of processes after each survey cycle. This involves asking key stakeholders, through a targeted public consultation, which processes worked well and what can be improved. The findings of the public consultation are then used to inform and improve the next survey cycle.

Conducting a review of processes allows the National Care Experience Programme to improve the planning and implementation of the National Maternity Experience Survey, by replicating processes that work well and addressing areas that need improvement. Stakeholder feedback in previous reviews of National Care Experience Programme surveys, such as the National Inpatient Experience Survey, have informed how that survey is promoted to staff and patients, how the results of the survey are reported on and what training may be required for stakeholders involved in implementing the survey.

### Response rate

213 stakeholders were invited to participate in the public consultation. The consultation, which consisted of an online evaluation, was conducted through the survey platform Crowd Signal and had a response rate of 14% with 29 responses.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Health. Creating a better future together: national maternity strategy 2016-2026. 2016.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the feedback received from the public consultation on the planning, implementation and outputs of the National Maternity Experience Survey 2020. This document gives an overview of the public consultation process and recommendations for the future administration of the survey.

## 3. Scope

This review will discuss respondents' feedback on:

- the survey questionnaire
- promotion of the survey
- training and development
- reporting the results of the survey.

A number of challenges raised by respondents are beyond the scope of this review, namely the duration of the survey sample period, the method of distributing the survey, and resourcing within the HSE. The findings also suggest that further training is required for frontline staff in addressing perinatal mental health and breast and bottle feeding. This feedback will be progressed to the HSE.

## 4. The consultation process

A public consultation was conducted from 13 November to 4 December 2020. A link to an evaluation was distributed by email to stakeholders who had direct experience of National Maternity Experience Survey processes.

Stakeholders included:

- general managers of participating maternity units and hospitals
- Chief Executive Officers of participating hospital groups
- midwifery management
- National Maternity Experience Survey leads in participating maternity units, hospitals and the National Home Births Service
- PAS (Patient Administration System) staff in participating hospitals

- National Maternity Experience Survey governance group members
- people with access to the National Maternity Experience Survey dashboard, a password-protected, online reporting tool.

The evaluation consisted of the following seven open-ended questions:

### Evaluation

1. In relation to the National Maternity Experience Survey, what area do you work in?
  - Midwife in a maternity unit
  - Public health nurse
  - Governance group member
  - PAS/Admin
  - Patient safety and quality
  - Other – please specify
2. Was there anything particularly good about the implementation of the survey?
3. What could be improved about the implementation of the survey?
4. Would you recommend any changes to the survey questionnaire?
5. What do you think of the current reports and online reporting tools?
6. How can we increase response rates to the survey?
7. Are there any areas or topics that you would like us to develop training on? What format would work best?

## 5. Overview of the responses received

### 5.1 Communication and engagement

The National Maternity Experience Survey promotes the survey to eligible survey participants using a wide variety of tools to ensure a high response rate. This includes:

- a dedicated website and helpline
- targeted national media campaigns
- promotional materials for hospitals, including frequently asked questions (FAQ), posters and napkins that carry the survey's branding
- staff information and training sessions
- visits to participating hospitals by representatives of the survey, to promote the survey to staff
- weekly updates for hospitals on their response rates, during the survey cycle
- presenting on the survey at conferences.

Respondents to the evaluation recognised the value of the National Maternity Experience Survey, as it provides the opportunity for healthcare professionals and service providers to hear the voices of the people using their services, which can be used to inform quality improvements.

#### Recommendations on communications

- Respondents to the evaluation expressed satisfaction with the communication and promotion of the survey. Staff involved in the survey received clear information on timelines, roles and responsibilities. This approach should be repeated in future versions of the survey.
- Respondents felt that further methods could be used to promote the survey and increase response rates. It was suggested that advertisements on television may improve the response rates.

### 5.2 Questionnaire

The National Maternity Experience Survey includes 68 structured, tick-box questions and three open-ended (free-flow) questions. The survey covers the full pathway of maternity care — from antenatal care, through labour and birth, to postnatal care in the community.

The National Maternity Experience Survey includes questions taken or adapted from a library of questions developed by the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) in collaboration with the National Care Experience Programme.

Over 250 people, including women who had used maternity services, women's representatives, midwives, public health nurses, general practitioners, obstetricians, policymakers, data analysts and academics were involved in selecting the questions most relevant to the Irish context.

#### Recommendations on the questionnaire

- The questionnaire should contain more specific questions on specialised care, such as the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and infant feeding.
- Questions on mental health should be reviewed to reflect the entire spectrum of care.

### 5.3 Training and development

The National Care Experience Programme provides training and guidance for hospital staff on how to extract and submit data to conduct the survey, how to promote the survey and how to interpret survey responses. Question 7 of the evaluation asked stakeholders if they felt that the National Care Experience Programme could provide further training.

#### Recommendations on training and development

- Respondents felt that additional training should be provided on how to use the results of the survey to develop quality improvement initiatives.

### 5.4 Reporting

Respondents to the public consultation have access to the findings through interactive reports and standard reports on [www.yourexperience.ie](http://www.yourexperience.ie). Nominated hospital staff also have access to the data through a dashboard, which brings live anonymised data, from survey participants to healthcare professionals in real time.

Respondents stated that reporting was informative, accessible, easy to use and clear.

### Recommendations on reporting

- Reporting should reflect the entire spectrum of care choices available, such as care delivered by Registered Advanced Midwife Practitioners (RAMPs).

## 6. Overview of recommendations

- The approach to communications in this version of the survey should be employed in future iterations of the survey. Further methods of promoting the survey should be examined.
- The questionnaire should be reviewed to ascertain if any changes to questions are needed.
- Training should be provided on developing quality improvement initiatives.
- Reporting should be reviewed to ensure that it covers the entire spectrum of care.

## 7. Next steps.

The recommendations outlined in this document will be reviewed by the National Maternity Surveys Programme Board and will be used to inform and improve the future planning and delivery of the National Maternity Experience Survey. The Review of Processes for the National Maternity Experience Survey 2020 will be published on [www.yourexperience.ie](http://www.yourexperience.ie).



National  
Maternity  
Experience  
Survey

