



Review of Processes 2024



1. For information

The National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey (NMBES) gave women, and their partners an opportunity to share their experiences of Ireland’s maternity bereavement care services. The survey was carried out by the National Care Experience Programme (NCEP), a joint initiative with the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health. The National Care Experience Programme creates surveys to gather feedback on people’s care experiences and acts on this feedback to improve the quality of health and social care services in Ireland. The National Maternity Bereavement 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.

Women and their partners who experienced a second trimester miscarriage – classified from 14 weeks of pregnancy, a stillbirth, or the early neonatal death of a baby in one of Ireland’s 19 maternity units or hospitals between 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2021 were invited to participate in the National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey.

Why do we conduct a review of processes?

The National Care Experience Programme is committed to providing continuous survey improvement and thus administers a review of processes after each survey cycle where, through a targeted consultation, key stakeholders identify which processes were satisfactory and which can be improved.

The National Care Experience Programme utilises the findings of the review process to improve on the planning and implementation of the National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey for the next survey cycle by replicating processes that received positive feedback and directing focus to areas identified as in need of improvement. Stakeholder feedback from reviews of processes of other National Care Experience Programme surveys, such as the National Inpatient Experience Survey, has been used to inform survey promotion strategies, result reporting, and potential stakeholder training for survey implementation.

Response rate

Invitations to participate in the consultation were sent out to approximately 160 stakeholders. The consultation was conducted through the online survey platform Qualtrics.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the feedback from the review of processes on the planning, implementation, and outputs of the National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey 2022. This document supplies an overview of the public consultation process and recommendations for the administration of the next survey cycle.

3. Scope

This document will review participants' feedback on:

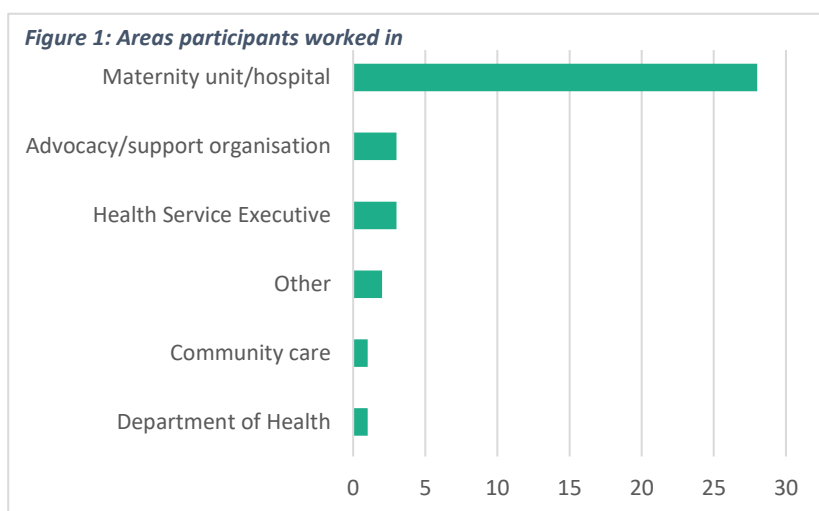
- Communication and engagement around the survey
- Survey design and methodology
- The survey questionnaire
- Reporting of survey results
- Uses of survey findings

4. The consultation process

The public consultation was conducted from 7 May to 4 June 2024. A link to the review process evaluation was distributed via email to stakeholders who had interacted with the National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey processes. The evaluation can be found in Appendix I.

Stakeholders who responded included employees in:

- Maternity unit/hospital (82%)
- Advocacy/support organisation (9%)
- Health Service Executive (9%)
- Other (6%)
- Community care (3%)
- Department of Health (3%)



Review of Processes

See Appendix I for the complete review of processes questionnaire.

5. Overview of the responses received

5.1 Acknowledgement and awareness

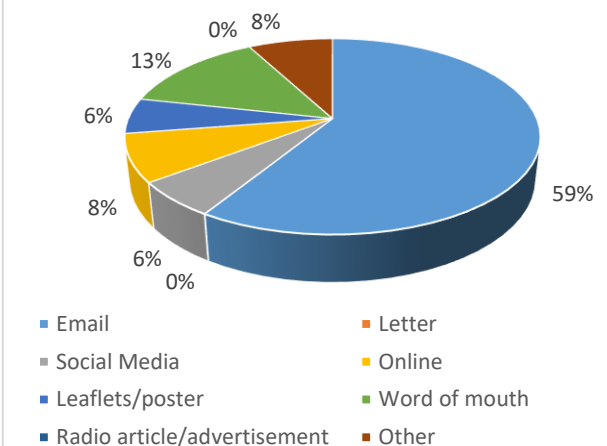
Participants in the public consultation recognised the value of the National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey and appreciated the opportunity for the voice of women’s lived experience to be acknowledged in identifying what worked well and where quality improvements are needed in maternity bereavement care.

Many expressed gratitude for providing this space in a sensitive, comprehensive survey and for creating awareness of the importance for bereaved parents to be able to share their experiences.

5.2 Communication and engagement

The National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey was promoted through a comprehensive public awareness and media campaign to invite women and their partners to participate in the survey due to its sensitive nature. The survey was promoted through advocacy groups for bereaved parents and through online, social media, radio advertisements as well traditional media campaigns. A survey helpline and an NCEP email address were provided to answer survey-related questions during the survey period.

Figure 2: How participants heard about the survey



59% of participants in the public consultation heard about the National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey through email communication, with other successful promotional methods including social media, leaflets/poster, word of mouth, and online platforms.

Recommendations on communication

- Most participants in the public consultation expressed overall satisfaction with the communication surrounding the survey implementation and stated that the survey was well distributed and accessible to potential participants and to staff.
- However, respondents recommended additional public awareness and communication at the time of the launch of the survey findings, along with clear information to where they can be found.

5.3 Methodology

The National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey used an online, self-selecting survey model. Respondents were asked to identify the year they had experienced a loss and the type of loss experienced (a second trimester miscarriage, a stillbirth, or an early neonatal death). Demographic information was also gathered. The sample period was from January 2019 to December 2021, allowing for comparison before, during and after the COVID19 pandemic.

Earlier pregnancy losses were not included in this first survey round, as women who experience early pregnancy losses in many cases are cared for in outpatient or general practice (GP) settings, many do not require admission to hospital for care. A survey with more specific and relevant questions would be required to accurately gather and analyse information on early pregnancy loss.

Recommendations on methodology

- A number of participants identified that the experience of additional cohorts should be captured by the National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey, namely the inclusion of women who experience early pregnancy loss and a separate survey for partners/support people.
- It was suggested that a continuous ongoing model might be of consideration using a survey platform such as survey monkey to keep the feedback current.
- It was suggested to identify specific survey findings relevant to different stakeholders and to develop action plans and quality improvements relevant to these findings.

5.4 Questionnaire

The National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey included a total of 99 questions, 90 of which were designed for women who experienced a loss, with the additional nine directed towards the experiences of their partners. Five survey questions were in free-response format. Questions covered the pathway of maternity bereavement care from communication and information at the time of antenatal diagnosis, through care provided in hospital and follow-up care in the community.

Over 180 people including bereaved parents, healthcare professionals in related fields, chaplains, social workers, support and advocacy representatives, policymakers, and academic experts collaborated to develop and select the questions most relevant to the Irish context.

Recommendations on the questionnaire

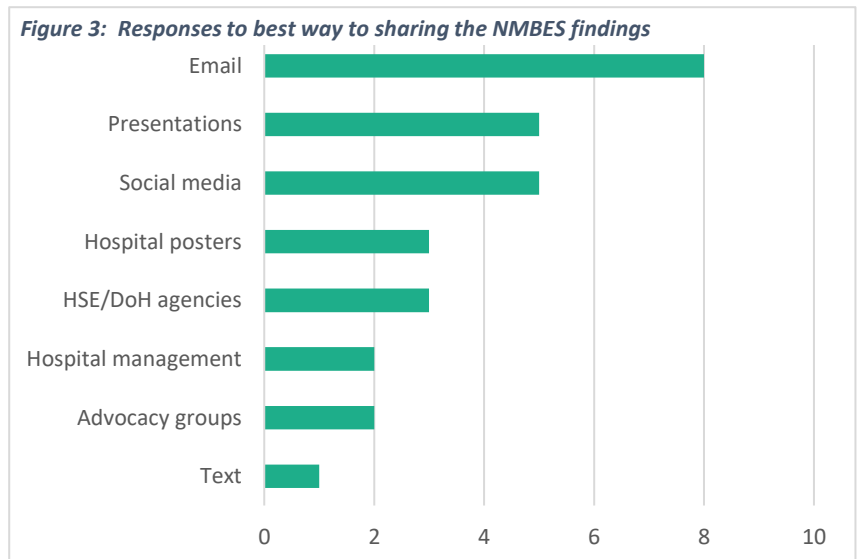
- Most participants in the public consultation reported overall satisfaction with the questionnaire. The language of the survey was clear, compassionate, and sensitive, and there was good question variety. Future survey rounds should continue to utilise this wording and question design.
- Several participants in the public consultation felt that the questionnaire could be shortened.

5.5 Reporting

The findings of the survey were published on www.yourexperience.ie. The results were reported at a national level in addition to three individual reports on each particular types of loss. These included reports on the experiences of second trimester miscarriage, stillbirth and the early neonatal death of a baby. An interactive report publicly available on NCEP website showcases the findings and allows for filtering, comparing and contrasting results. Nominated hospital staff also had access to the data via a dashboard, which translated live anonymised data from survey participants to healthcare professionals in real time.

Participants in the public consultation accessed the survey findings through the interactive dashboard platform and the reports available on www.yourexperience.ie.

Question 7 of the public consultation, asked what was the best way to share the National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey findings with stakeholders? Responses included, emailing stakeholders, presentations and social media as suggestions by participants. See Figure 3.



Recommendations on reporting

- An extensive and robust communications and stakeholder campaign was carried out to increase awareness of the survey and included many of the items below. However, respondents shared their opinions in how the survey findings could be disseminated :
 - reporting key messages from survey with plans of action
 - through advocacy and support groups
 - present at conferences

- involve all key clinical healthcare personnel
- directly email stakeholders
- hold zoom or in person meetings for individual units or hospitals
- through hospital management
- utilize posters and social media
- make an easily available summary report
- use of a QR code
- presentations in grand rounds¹
- consultant meetings
- present findings at university lectures
- through the Clinical Midwife/Nurse Specialist in Bereavement & Loss
- on various websites as well as the www.pregnancyandinfantloss.ie
- The survey report was clear and easy to follow. This should be maintained in future survey rounds.
- Some participants in the public consultation found the interpretation of results on the dashboard difficult to access and navigate and suggested additional training could be helpful to support stakeholders in this.

5.6 Use of findings

The National Care Experience Programme provides training and guidance for healthcare staff on, survey promotion, functionality of and engagement with the interactive dashboard and the interpretation of survey responses.

Recommendations on use of findings

- Many participants in the public consultation expressed that they would like more information and support around developing quality improvement plans based on survey findings.
- It was suggested that the findings could be incorporated into healthcare professional training.

6. Overview of recommendations

- Communication in the development and implementation of this survey was very effective.
- The NMBES survey report was well designed and clear.

¹ Grand rounds: Is a learning environment that fosters continuous education, through formal meetings and presentations by clinicians to disseminate knowledge and improve patient outcomes.

- The eligibility criteria of the survey should be reviewed to consider the inclusion of additional cohorts, such as women who experienced early pregnancy loss.
- The survey questionnaire was well written and clear, however consideration should be given to shortening future survey questionnaires.
- Suggestions were made by respondents for consideration to further enhance the dissemination of survey findings to stakeholders. See 5.5 on reporting recommendations.
- Some participants in the public consultation found the interpretation of results on the dashboard difficult to access and navigate and suggested additional training could be helpful to support stakeholders in this.
- Incorporate survey findings into professional healthcare training programmes.
- Healthcare staff would like more information and support around developing quality improvement plans based on survey findings.

7. Next steps

The National Care Experience Programme Steering Group will review the recommendations outlined in this document and will utilise the information to inform and improve the future planning and delivery of the National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey. The Review of Processes for the National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey 2022 will be published on www.yourexperience.ie.

Appendix I

The NMBES review of processes questionnaire consisted of the following seven open-ended questions:

1. What area do you work in? (Please select more than one if appropriate)
 - Advocacy/support organisation
 - Maternity unit/hospital
 - Public health
 - Primary care
 - Social work
 - Community care
 - National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey – Programme Board
 - Health Service Executive (HSE)
 - Department of Health
 - Health Information & Quality Authority (HIQA)
 - Academia
 - Professional body
 - Other (please specify)
2. What is your role? (e.g. Midwife, Director of Midwifery, Chaplain, etc.)
3. How did you hear about the survey? (Please select more than one if appropriate)
 - Email
 - Letter
 - Social media
 - Online
 - Leaflets/poster
 - Word of mouth
 - Radio article/advertisement
 - Other
4. Where did you access information about the survey? (Please select more than one if appropriate)
 - Webinars
 - FAQs/information flyers provided on site
 - Website (yourexperience.ie)
 - Social media
 - Podcast
 - Dashboard
 - Report (available at yourexperience.ie)
 - Interactive results (available at yourexperience.ie)
 - Communications (e.g. email or phone call)



- Other
5. What was good about the survey? (Please comment on e.g. questionnaire, distribution, dashboard, reports, communication of findings, etc.)
 6. What could be improved about the survey? (Please comment on e.g. questionnaire, distribution, dashboard, reports, communication of findings, etc.)
 7. How can we best share the National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey's findings with all stakeholders?



National
Maternity
Bereavement
Experience
Survey