



National
Maternity
Experience
Survey

National Maternity Experience Survey 2025

Cavan General Hospital

Improving care experiences together



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health



About this report

- The National Maternity Experience Survey offers people who have recently given birth the opportunity to share their experiences of Ireland's maternity services.
- The second National Maternity Experience Survey took place in 2025. This report contains findings from the 2025 survey for participants who gave birth at Cavan General Hospital.
- The report focuses on experiences of care provided by Cavan General Hospital during pregnancy, labour and birth, and after birth. The report also includes findings on experiences of care provided by GPs and public health nurses based in the community.
- This report presents scores out of 10 for survey questions, which were calculated based on participants' responses. Scores were also calculated for each of the stages of maternity care.
- More information on the National Maternity Experience Survey 2025 is available from <https://yourexperience.ie/maternity/about-the-survey/>

Survey overview

Survey questions

Care while you were pregnant (antenatal care)

Experiences of the type of maternity care received, information provided and communication with healthcare professionals during pregnancy.



17 questions

Care during your labour and birth

Experiences of interactions with healthcare professionals, pain management and involvement in decisions during labour and when giving birth.



10 questions

Care in hospital after the birth of your baby*

Experiences in hospital, such as the support and assistance provided by staff, and information provided on care and recovery.



8 questions

Specialised care**

Experiences of support in the neonatal unit, and overall ratings of the care received by the baby while in the unit.



3 questions

Feeding

Experiences of receiving information and support for feeding the baby.



6 questions

Care at home and in the community after the birth

Experiences of support and advice from GPs, public health nurses and other healthcare professionals, while at home or in the community after birth.



11 questions

Who was eligible to take part?

Aged 16 years or older



- Attended a maternity hospital or unit in Ireland, including for a home birth



Gave birth in February or March 2025



- Had a mobile telephone number registered with the maternity hospital or unit

Who took part in the survey?

- 183 people who gave birth at Cavan General Hospital were invited to participate in the survey.
- 79 took part. This is a response rate of 43% (compared to the national rate of 42%).

Age of participants	Number	%
Under 25 years	5	6.3
25 to 29 years	12	15.2
30 to 34 years	30	38.0
35 to 39 years	27	34.2
40 years or older	5	6.3
Previous births	Number	%
None	28	35.4
1 or 2	41	51.9
3 or more	10	12.7

Ethnicity of participants	Number	%
White Irish	59	74.7
Irish Traveller	1	1.3
Any other White background	9	11.4
Black or Black Irish- African	2	2.5
Any other Black background	2	2.5
Asian or Asian Irish- Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi	4	5.1
Arab	1	1.3
Other	1	1.3
Long-term condition or disability	Number	%
Any long-term condition	2	2.5
No long-term condition	77	97.5

Areas of good experience



Information about types of maternity care | Q5

58% of participants (43 out of the 74 who responded to this question) said that they definitely received enough information about the types of maternity care available to them.

Respect and dignity while pregnant | Q14

91% of participants (69 out of 76) said that they were always treated with respect and dignity while they were pregnant.

These questions scored significantly above national average.

Comments from participants

“The MLU service in Cavan General Hospital, again for my second birth, was an unbelievable service and we are so lucky to have it in our county.”

“Approachable friendly and helpful staff who were really respectful and caring in a way that was not condescending.”

“Caring and experienced midwives, full of knowledge. They put me at ease throughout the whole pregnancy. Lovely calming experience in hospital during labour and after!”

Areas for improvement

There were no questions that scored significantly below national average for participants at Cavan General Hospital. The highest and lowest-scoring questions for each stage of care are highlighted throughout this report. A selection of comments highlighting areas of care that participants suggested could be improved is provided below.

Comments from participants

“Felt very unsupported during the labour process. I had a midwife that did not communicate very well at a time when I needed encouragement and support. I felt she kept pushing me to have an epidural even though I was managing, offered epidural numerous times when I was not looking or asking for pain relief.”

“I had an episiotomy which was only checked once, the evening after the baby was born. It was not checked prior to being released from hospital. No info about the episiotomy was given to me (e.g. degree, what's a normal pain level, no one confirmed the stitches were dissolvable). At my 6-week check with GP, she also said there was no detail of degree of cut etc. available to her.”

“Breastfeeding support - formula was pushed on me & it delayed my milk coming in as baby was too full. Also a proper outline of what is done at the 6week check, I was told by GP it wasn't about me and to book my own appointment, and the baby had a quick glance, not really examined.”

Care in pregnancy

- 63% of participants at Cavan General Hospital said that they were offered a choice about the type of maternity care they would receive.
- 80% of participants said that they were offered antenatal classes in pregnancy. 36% of participants said they did antenatal classes, while 45% did not do them. 17% said they were not offered any antenatal classes in pregnancy.
- 95% of participants had some of their regular check-ups in pregnancy with their GP.

First healthcare professional seen when pregnant	Number	%
General Practitioner (GP) or family doctor	67	84.8
Midwife at maternity service	5	6.3
Obstetrician (doctor or consultant) at maternity service	3	3.8
Healthcare professional at private scan clinic	3	3.8
Other	1	1.3

Type of maternity care in pregnancy	Number	%
Obstetrician public clinic at the hospital	32	40.5
Midwife clinic at the hospital	17	21.5
'Domino scheme': midwife-led care in community	2	2.5
Community midwife clinic	1	1.3
Midwifery-led unit	20	25.3
Obstetrician semi-private clinic	1	1.3
Obstetrician private clinic	3	3.8
Pregnancy check-ups in another country	1	1.3
Did not have check-ups in pregnancy	2	2.5



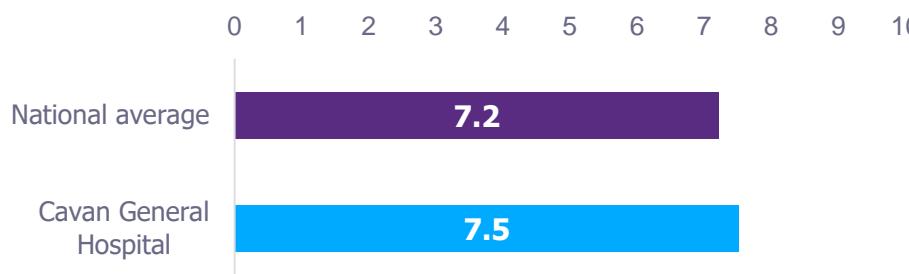
Scored questions for care in pregnancy

- Highest-scoring question:** 91% of participants (69 of 76) said they always felt treated with respect and dignity in pregnancy.

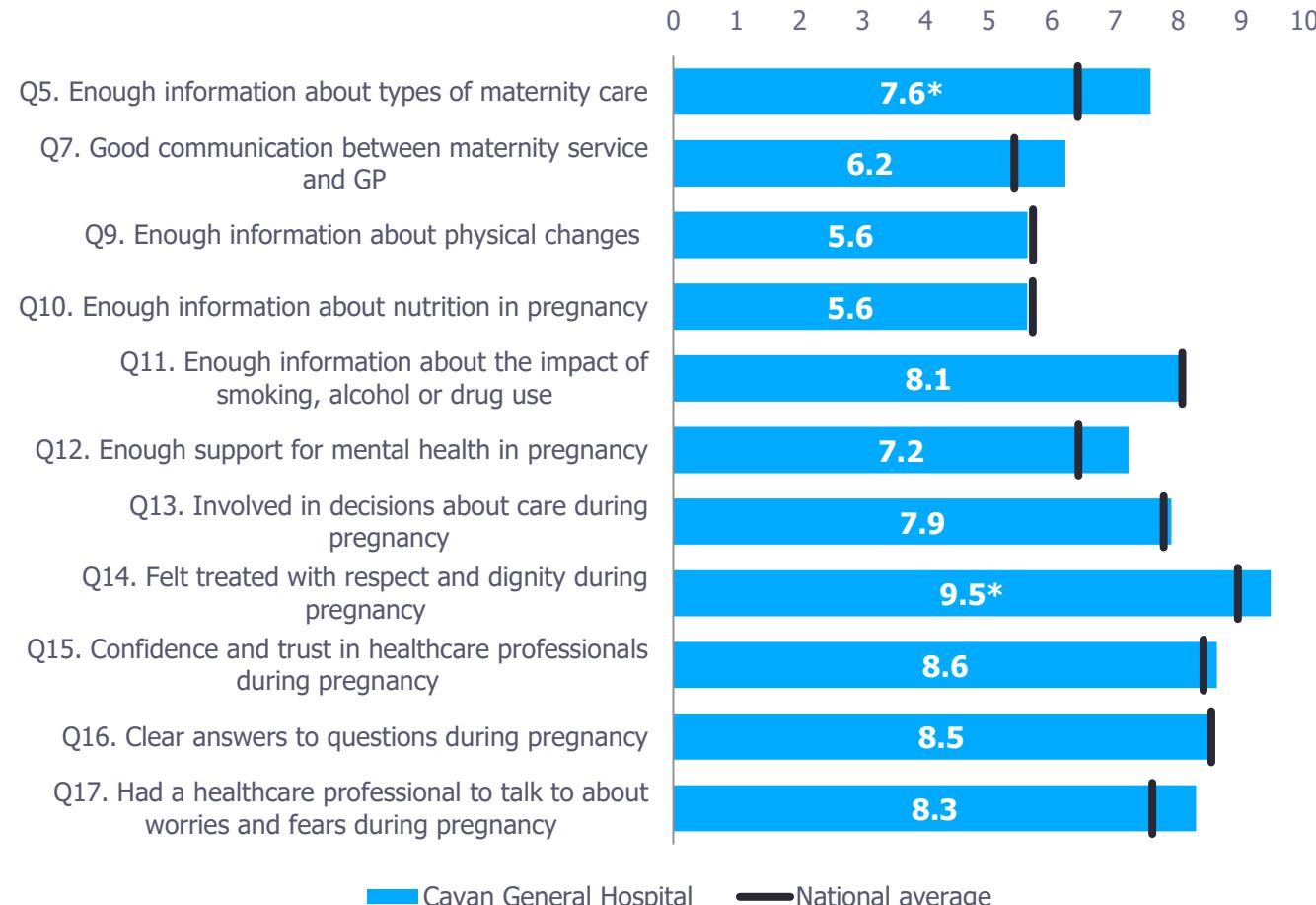
- Lowest-scoring questions:**

- 29% of participants (21 of 73) said they did not receive enough information about physical changes in their body during pregnancy.
- 30% of participants (22 out of 74) said they did not receive enough information about nutrition.

Overall average score for care in pregnancy



Average scores out of 10 for individual questions



* Indicates statistically significant difference from the national average.

Care during labour and birth

- 42% of survey participants at Cavan General Hospital said their labour was induced.

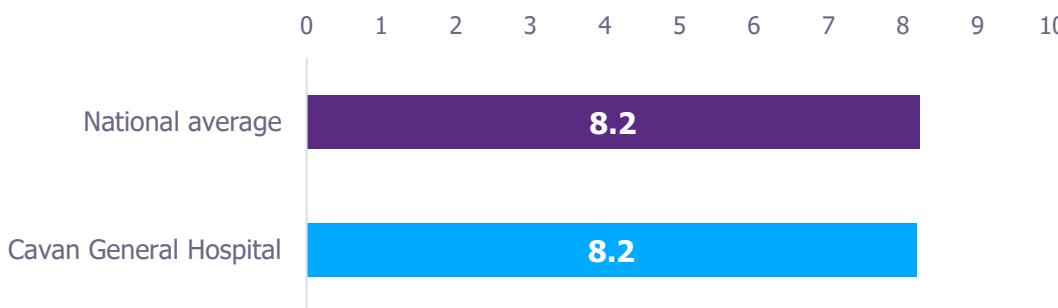
Type of birth for survey participants	Number	%
Vaginal birth (no forceps or ventouse suction cup)	40	50.6
Assisted vaginal birth (with forceps or ventouse suction cup)	9	11.4
Planned caesarean birth	17	21.5
Unplanned caesarean birth	13	16.5
Participant left alone by healthcare professionals at a time when it worried them	Number	%
Yes, during early labour	10	12.7
Yes, during the later stages of labour	7	8.9
Yes, during the birth	1	1.3
Yes, shortly after the birth	10	12.7
No	56	70.9



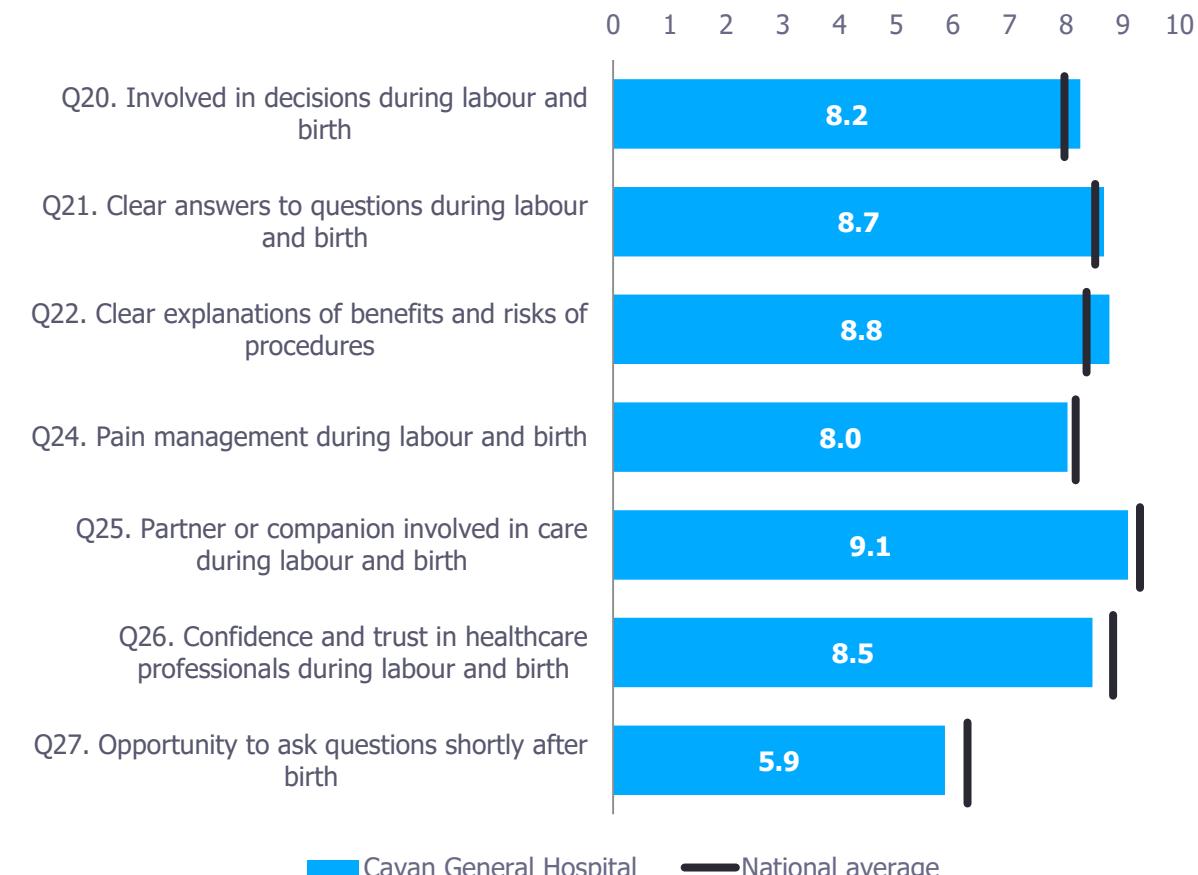
Scored questions for care during labour and birth

- Highest-scoring question:** 91% of participants (70 of 77) said that their partner or companion was involved in their care during labour and birth as much as they wanted them to be.
- Lowest-scoring question:** 24% of participants (17 of 70) said they did not have the opportunity to ask questions about their labour and the birth shortly after the baby was born.

Overall average score for care during labour and birth



Average scores out of 10 for individual questions

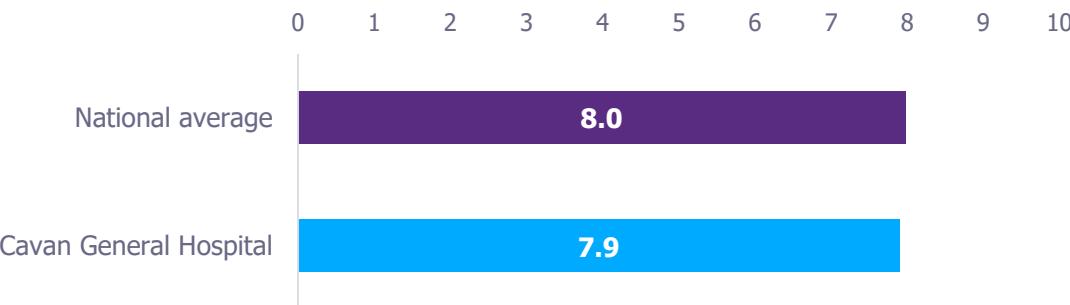


Scored questions for care in hospital after birth

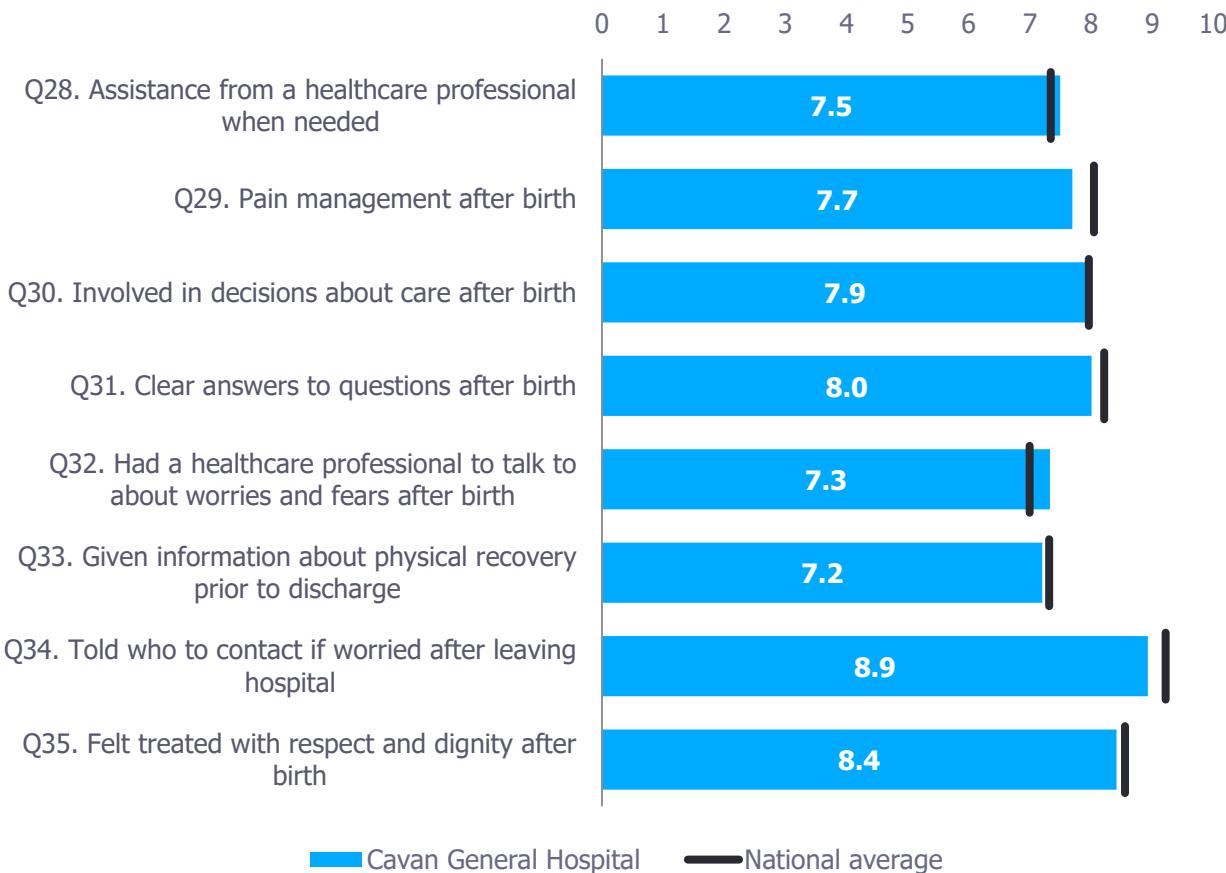


- Highest-scoring question:** 89% of participants (67 of 75) said that before they were discharged, they were told who to contact if they were worried about their own health or their baby's health.
- Lowest-scoring question:** 10% of participants (8 of 77) said that they were not given information about their own physical recovery before they were discharged from hospital.

Overall average score for care in hospital after birth



Average scores out of 10 for individual questions

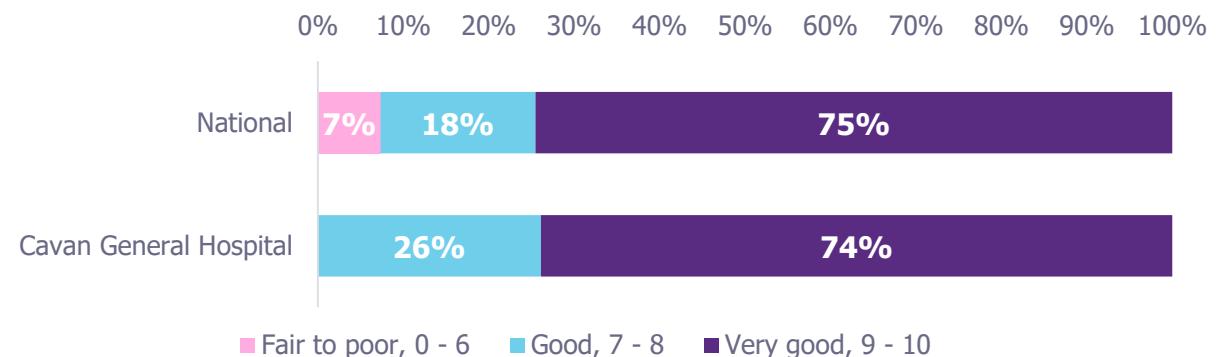


Specialist care in the neonatal unit



- 24 survey participants (30%) at Cavan General Hospital said that their baby spent time in the neonatal unit following the birth.
- Of these participants:
 - 58% said that they always received enough emotional support from healthcare professionals while their baby was in the neonatal unit
 - 21% said that they sometimes received enough emotional support
 - 13% said that they did not receive enough emotional support
 - 8% said they did not know or could not remember if they received enough emotional support.

Overall rating of experience of care in the neonatal unit



Infant feeding

In the first few days after birth:

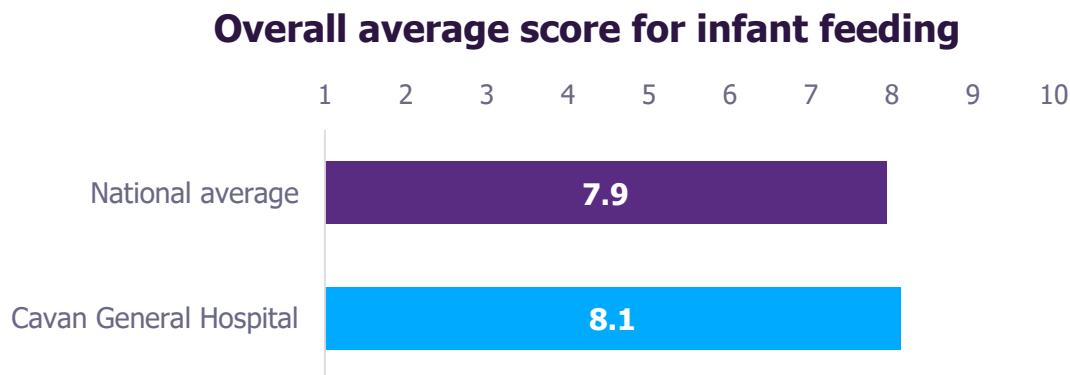
- 31% of participants fed their baby with breast milk only.
- 34% fed their baby with formula milk only.
- 35% fed their baby with both breast and formula milk.

Healthcare professional discussed feeding options		
	Number	%
Yes, during pregnancy	59	74.7
Yes, during labour or immediately after birth	16	20.3
Yes, after birth while in hospital	25	31.6
Yes, after birth while at home	11	13.9
No	5	6.3
Did not want or need discussion of different options	5	6.3

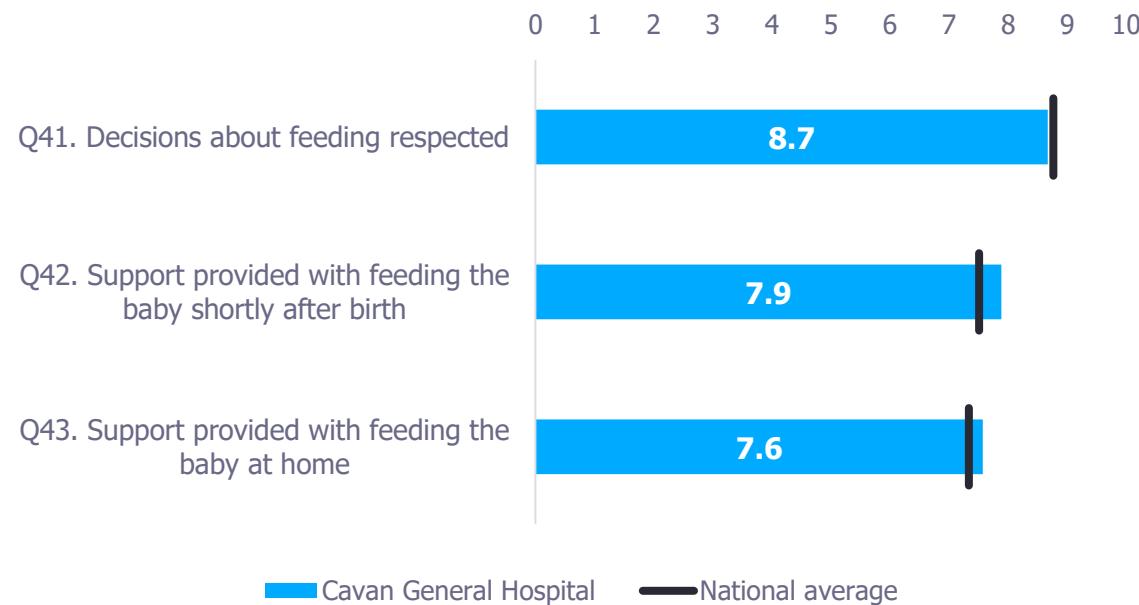
Sources of breastfeeding support		
	Number	%
Midwife(s) in hospital	44	56.4
Hospital lactation consultant	31	39.7
Home birth midwife	2	2.6
Postnatal community midwives	5	6.4
Postnatal hub midwife	2	2.6
Public Health Nurse	24	30.8
GP	7	9.0
Practice nurse	1	1.3
Community breastfeeding support groups or volunteers	7	9.0
Private lactation consultant	2	2.6
Friends or family	15	19.2
Did not need support	4	5.1
Did not want to breastfeed	15	19.2

Scored questions for infant feeding

- Highest-scoring question:** 77% of participants (61 of 79) said their decisions about how they wanted to feed their baby were always respected by healthcare professionals.
- Lowest-scoring question:** 13% of participants (9 of 68) said that they did not get adequate support from healthcare professionals with feeding their baby at home.



Average scores out of 10 for individual questions



Care at home and in the community after birth



Healthcare professionals met after the birth of the baby

	Number	%
Postnatal community midwife at home	10	12.7
Postnatal community midwife at a community clinic (including a Postnatal Hub)	4	5.1
Public Health Nurse at home	70	88.6
Public Health Nurse at a community clinic	27	34.2
GP	45	57.0
Obstetrician at hospital clinic	7	8.9
Midwives or paediatricians at hospital baby clinic	7	8.9
Other professionals	5	6.3
None of the above	2	2.5

Healthcare professionals who provided mental health support during pregnancy or after birth

	Number	%
GP	16	21.1
Public Health Nurse	27	35.5
Midwife	13	17.1
Perinatal mental health midwife	2	2.6
Perinatal mental health nurse	2	2.6
Psychiatrist	1	1.3
Other professionals	2	2.6
None of the above	41	53.9

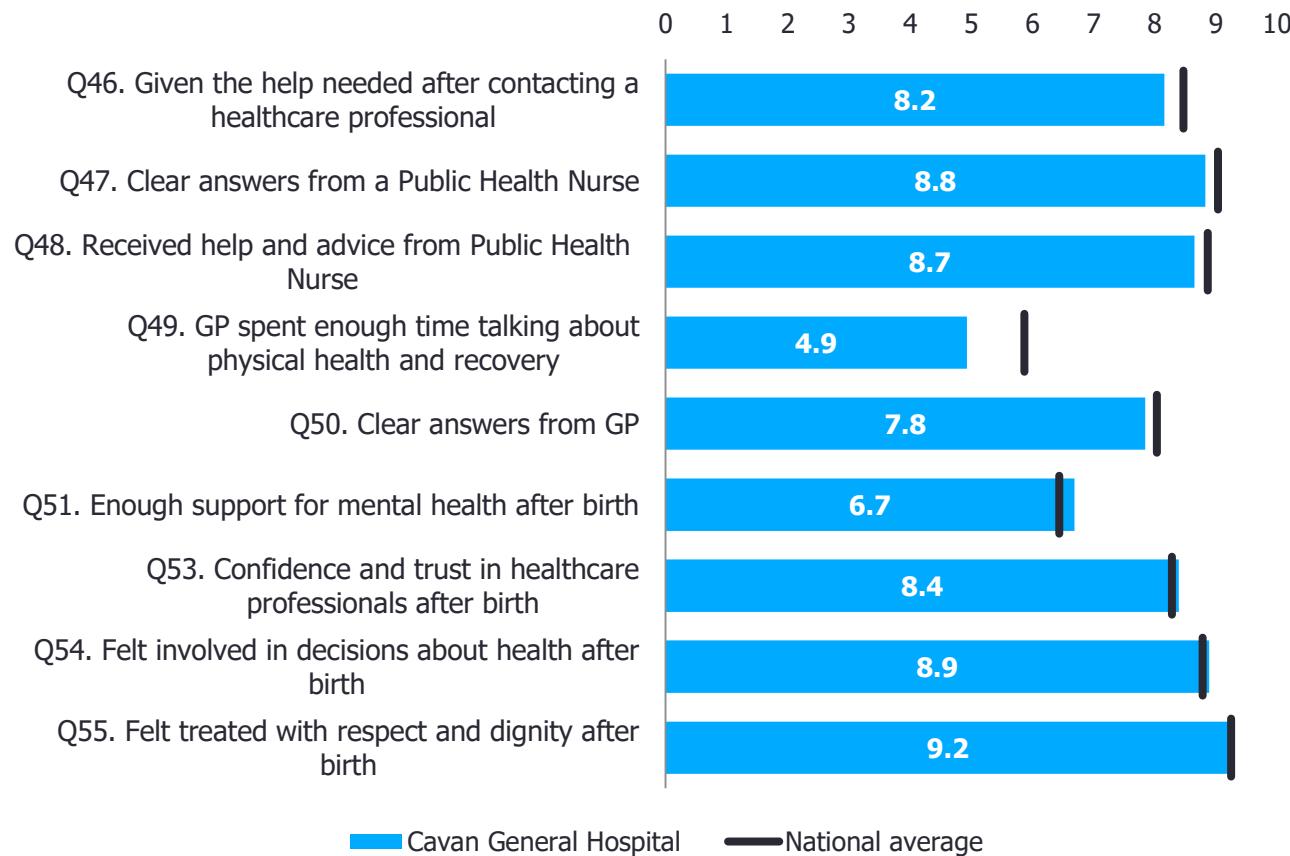
Scored questions for care at home after birth



Note: The questions for this stage of maternity care explored participants' experiences of postnatal care in the community, which included care from Public Health Nurses and GPs.

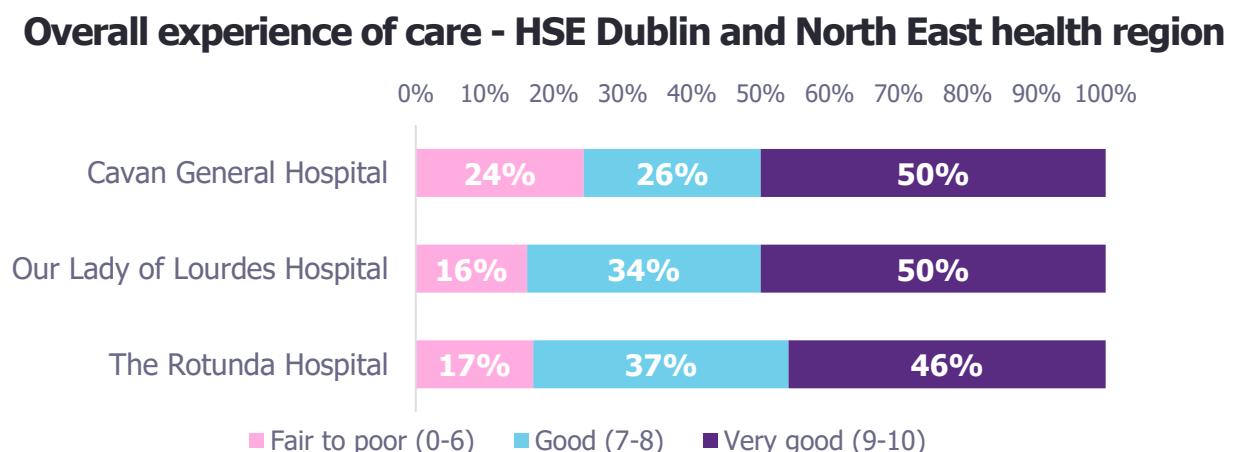
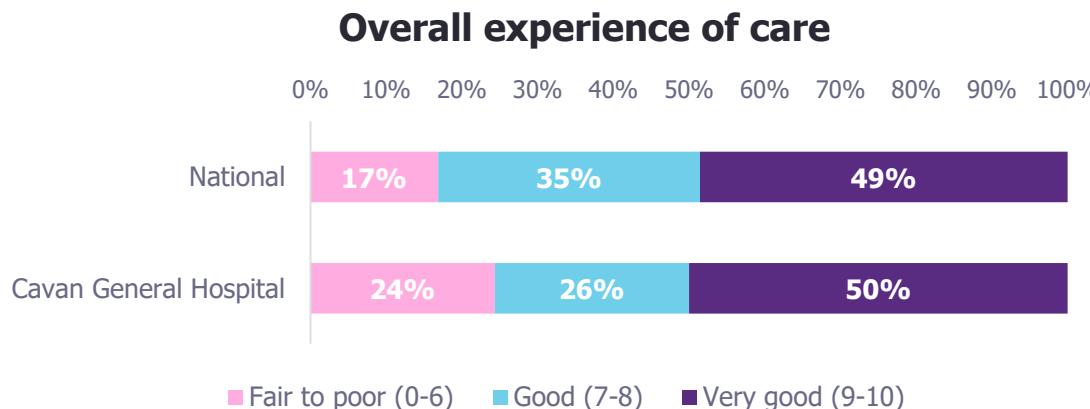
- Highest-scoring question:** 87% of participants (69 of 79) said they were always treated with respect and dignity when they received care at home or in the community after the birth of their baby.
- Lowest-scoring question:** 39% of participants (29 of 75) said that their GP did not spend enough time talking to them about their physical health and recovery at the postnatal check-up, six weeks after the birth.

Average scores out of 10 for individual questions



Overall experience of maternity care

- 76% of survey participants who gave birth at Cavan General Hospital said that their decisions about their maternity care were always respected by healthcare staff. 20% said their decisions were sometimes respected, while 4% said their decisions about their maternity care were not respected.
- 30% of participants said that if they wanted to give feedback or make a complaint they knew how and where to do so, while 43% said they did not know. 27% said they did not wish to give feedback or make a complaint.
- 76% of participants who gave birth at Cavan General Hospital said they had a good or very good overall experience (overall rating between 7 and 10), compared to 83% nationally. 24% of participants said they had a fair to poor experience of care.



Changes since 2020 survey

- Survey findings from 2025 were compared with survey findings from 2020 to see whether there were any significant increases or decreases in survey question scores at Cavan General Hospital.
- There was no significant increase in score for any survey question between 2020 and 2025.
- Between 2020 and 2025, there was a significant decrease in the score for information about nutrition in pregnancy at Cavan General Hospital.

Comments from survey participants

- When survey participants at Cavan General Hospital were asked what was good about their care, they most commonly referred to the interpersonal aspects of the care they received, and the type of maternity care they received from the midwifery-led unit.
- The theme of information sharing and explanations from healthcare staff was frequently raised in participants' comments on both positive and negative aspects of their care.
- When survey participants were asked what could be improved with care at Cavan General Hospital, they most commonly referred to staff responsiveness and attention to needs.

"I successfully birthed my baby using hypnobirthing with no pain relief due to the amazing care and support of the MLU. It's a tremendous environment with wonderful staff, I feel so lucky I got to have this experience."

"I always felt the midwives in Cavan hospital spent time with me and explained everything I needed to know."

"More information (needed) about how to care for your C-section scar, e.g., cleaning it and drying it."

"I was left in extreme pain and vomiting for the first few hours before having baby and I had to go look for a midwife eventually. I was not regularly checked up on that night. I was left to sit it out until I asked for pain relief."

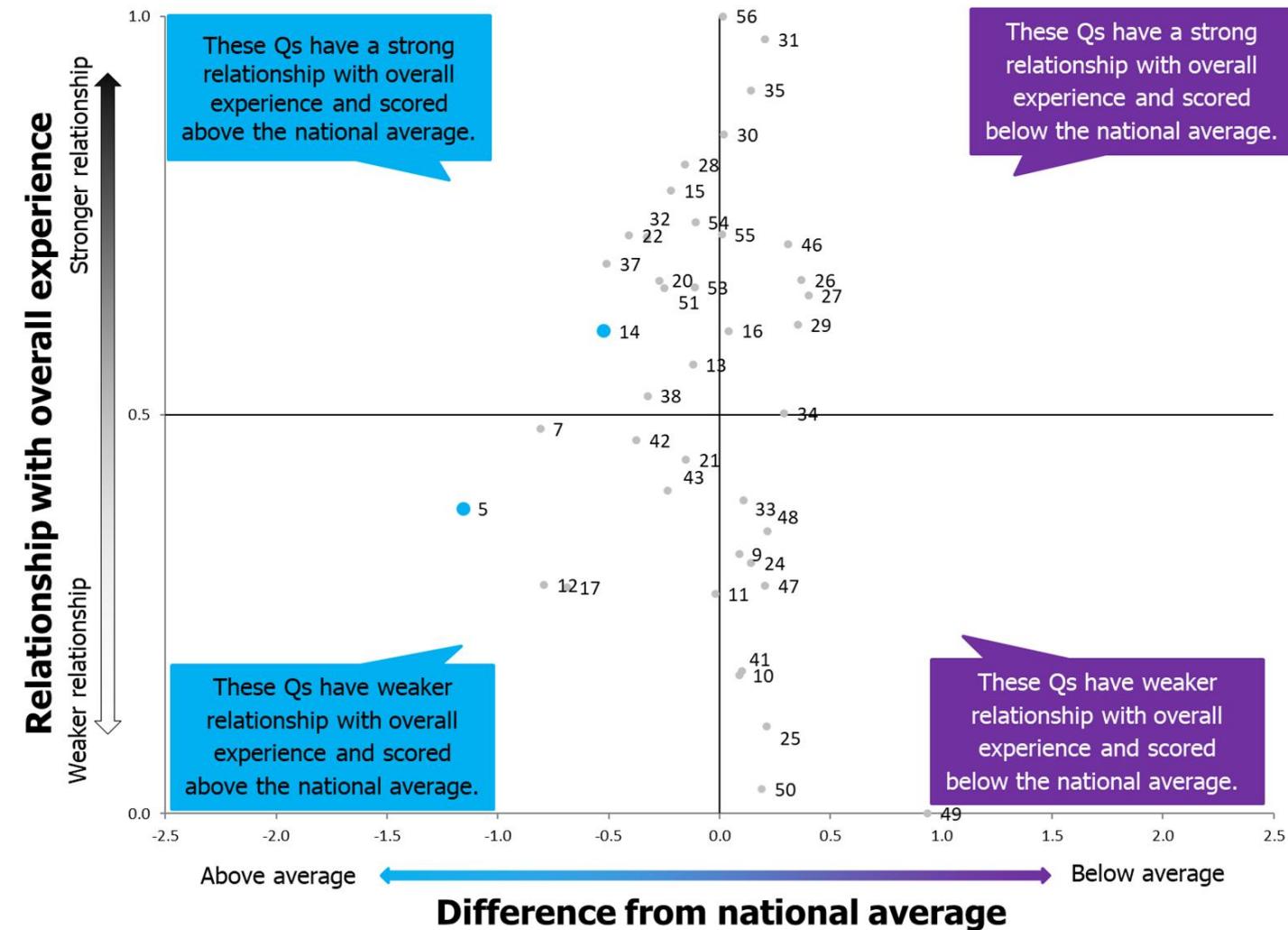
Conclusion

- Areas of good experience at Cavan General Hospital included information about the types of maternity care available and respect and dignity in the care provided during pregnancy.
- Two questions scored significantly above national average for participants at Cavan General Hospital and no questions scored significantly below national average.
- 76% of participants who gave birth at Cavan General Hospital said they had a good or very good overall experience; this is lower than the national figure (83%).
- Between 2020 and 2025, there was a significant decrease in score for information about nutrition in pregnancy at Cavan General Hospital.

Appendix 1

- The improvement map shows which questions scored above or below the national average, and which questions are related to participants' overall maternity care experience.
- Questions that scored significantly above average and had a stronger relationship with overall experience are areas of good experience, highlighted in blue.
- Questions that scored significantly below average and had a stronger relationship with overall experience are areas that may need improvement, highlighted in purple.
- More information on the science behind the improvement map can be found in the national report on www.youreexperience.ie.

Improvement map Cavan General Hospital





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More information on the National
Maternity Experience Survey 2025 is
available from www.youreexperience.ie:

- National results ([click here](#))
- Interactive results ([click here](#))

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