

# National Maternity Experience Survey 2025

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## Letterkenny University Hospital

**Improving care experiences together**

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## 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 Letterkenny University Hospital.
- The report focuses on experiences of care provided by Letterkenny University 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?

- 205 people who gave birth at Letterkenny University Hospital were invited to participate in the survey.
- 95 took part. This is a response rate of 46% (compared to the national rate of 42%).

Age of participants	Number	%
Under 25 years	12	12.6
25 to 29 years	18	18.9
30 to 34 years	25	26.3
35 to 39 years	36	37.9
40 years or older	4	4.2
Previous births	Number	%
None	31	32.6
1 or 2	54	56.8
3 or more	10	10.5

Ethnicity of participants	Number	%
White Irish	84	88.4
Any other White background	5	5.3
Black or Black Irish- African	3	3.2
Asian or Asian Irish- Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi	1	1.1
Asian or Asian Irish- Any Other Asian Background	1	1.1
Other	1	1.1
Long-term condition or disability	Number	%
Any long-term condition	8	8.4
No long-term condition	87	91.6



## Areas of good experience

### Overall rating of care in the neonatal unit | Q38

81% of survey participants at Letterkenny University Hospital who experienced care for their baby in the neonatal unit rated the care as "very good" (9 or 10 out of 10).

*This question scored significantly above national average.*

### Comments from participants

"Neonatal staff were excellent. So reassuring and comforting at the time when the mother needs it most. I can't praise them enough."

"The nurses in the neonatal unit were very good."

"Baby was very well taken care of immediately after birth by neonatal. Neonatal nurses really helped me with latching and looked out for me, very kind to me."

## Areas for improvement

### **Confidence and trust in healthcare professionals during pregnancy | Q15**

10% of survey participants (9 out of 94 participants who responded to this question) said that they did not have confidence and trust in the healthcare professionals caring for them during their pregnancy.

### **Clear answers to questions during labour and birth | Q21**

17% of participants (16 out of 95) said that during their labour and birth, their questions were not answered in a way that they could understand.

### **Decisions respected by healthcare staff | Q56**

6% of participants (6 out of 95) said that their decisions about their maternity care were not respected by healthcare staff.

*These questions scored significantly below national average and have a strong relationship with overall care experience.*

## Comments from participants

"The fact that each week it was a different doctor meant that each week you heard different opinions and advice, or the plan would change based on their personal preferences."

"I was left in the dark about a few things. I had induced false labour pains, nobody was able to tell me what was happening until the evening shift change."

"The decision to induce felt forced upon me, so more choice and options would be beneficial."



## Care in pregnancy



- 48% of participants from Letterkenny University Hospital said that they were offered a choice about the type of maternity care they could receive.
- 85% of participants said that they were offered antenatal classes in pregnancy. 43% of participants said they did antenatal classes and 43% did not do them. 14% said they were not offered any antenatal classes in pregnancy.
- 88% of participants had some of their regular check-ups in pregnancy with their GP.

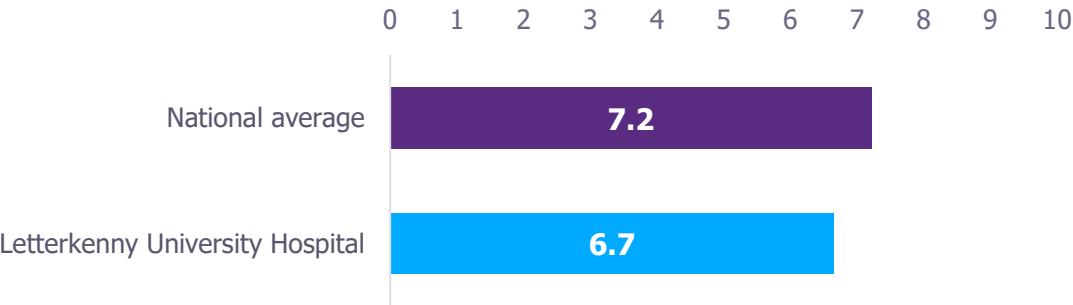
First healthcare professional seen when pregnant	Number	%
General Practitioner (GP) or family doctor	83	87.4
Midwife at maternity service	3	3.2
Obstetrician (doctor or consultant doctor) at maternity service	5	5.3
Healthcare professional at private scan clinic	3	3.2
Other	1	1.1

Type of maternity care in pregnancy	Number	%
Obstetrician public clinic at the hospital	54	56.8
Midwife clinic at the hospital	24	25.3
'Domino scheme': midwife-led care in community	4	4.2
Community midwife clinic	7	7.4
Obstetrician care at semi-private clinic	1	1.1
Obstetrician care at private clinic	2	2.1
Did not have any check-ups in pregnancy	1	1.1
Attended pregnancy check-ups at another service	2	2.1

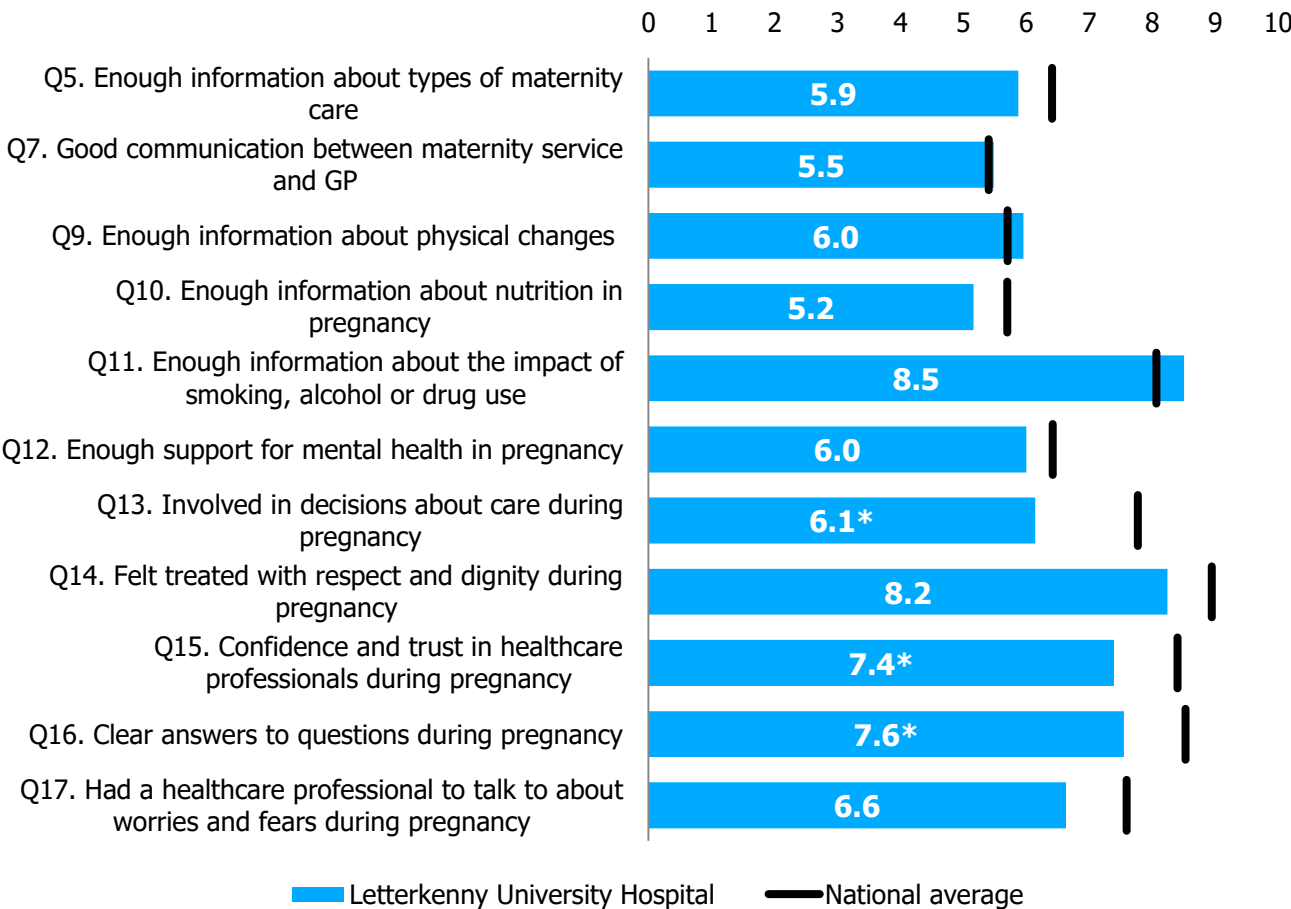
# Scored questions for care in pregnancy

- **Highest-scoring question:** 77% of participants (67 of 87) said they definitely received enough information about the impact of smoking, alcohol or drug use on them and their baby.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 28% of participants (26 of 92) said they did not receive enough information about nutrition during pregnancy.

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

- 46% of survey participants at Letterkenny University Hospital said their labour was induced.

Type of birth for survey participants	Number	%
Vaginal birth (no forceps or ventouse suction cup)	44	46.3
Assisted vaginal birth (with forceps or ventouse suction cup)	8	8.4
Planned caesarean birth	20	21.1
Unplanned caesarean birth	23	24.2

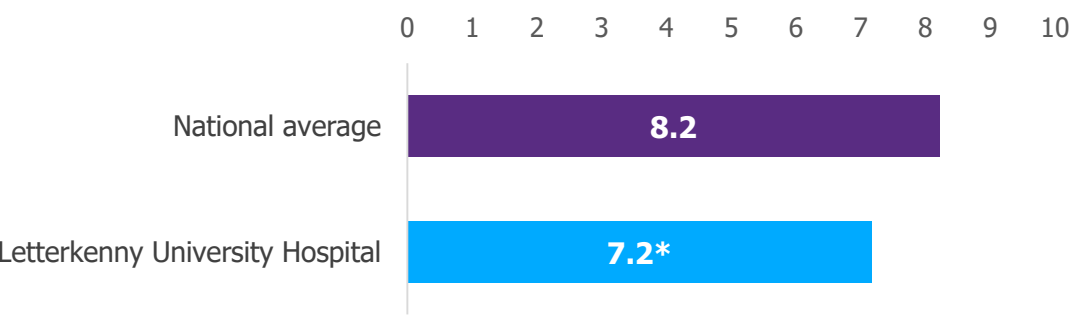
Participant left alone by healthcare professionals at a time when it worried them	Number	%
Yes, during early labour	17	17.9
Yes, during the later stages of labour	5	5.3
Yes, during the birth	2	2.1
Yes, shortly after the birth	9	9.5
No	67	70.5



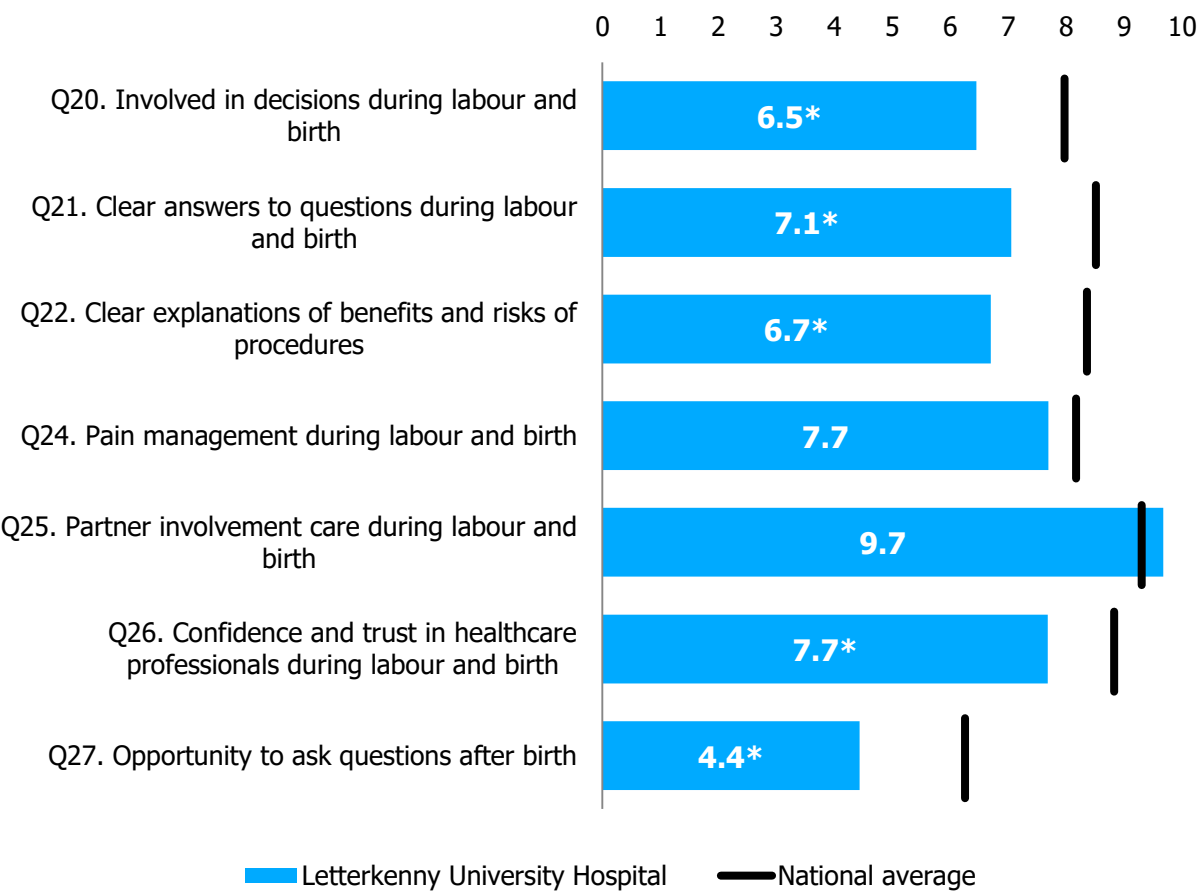
# Scored questions for care during labour and birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 97% of participants (89 of 92) 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:** 40% of participants (32 of 80) said they did not have the opportunity to ask questions about their labour and birth shortly after the baby was born.

Overall average score for care during labour and birth



Average scores out of 10 for individual questions



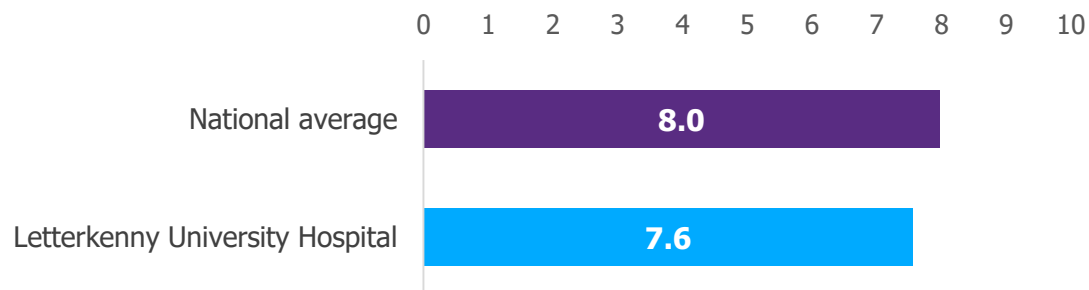
\* Indicates statistically significant difference from the national average.

## Scored questions for care in hospital after birth

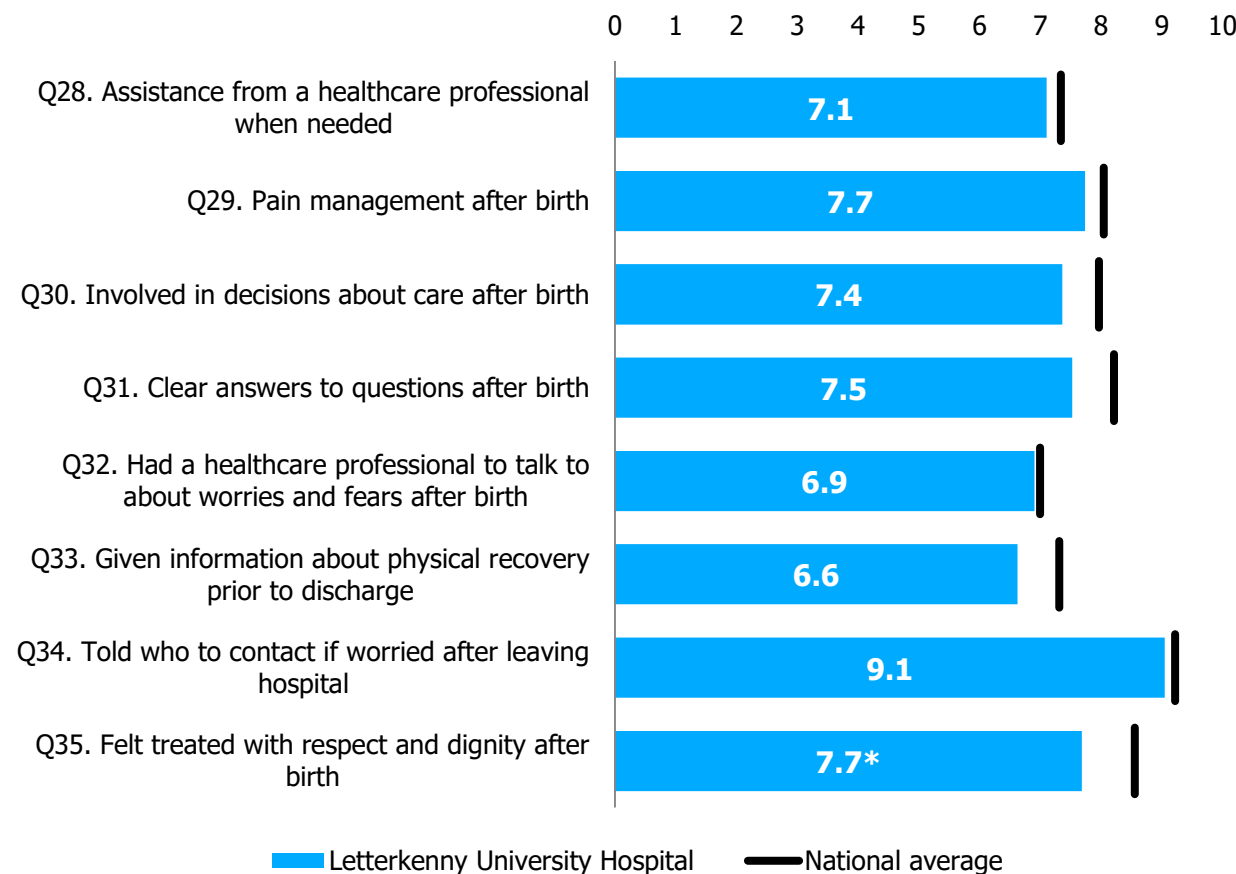


- **Highest-scoring question:** 91% of participants (86 of 95) said that before they were discharged, they were told who to contact if they were worried about their own health or their baby's health after leaving hospital.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 16% of participants (15 of 92) said that they were not given information about their physical recovery prior to discharge.

### Overall average score for care in hospital after birth



### Average scores out of 10 for individual questions



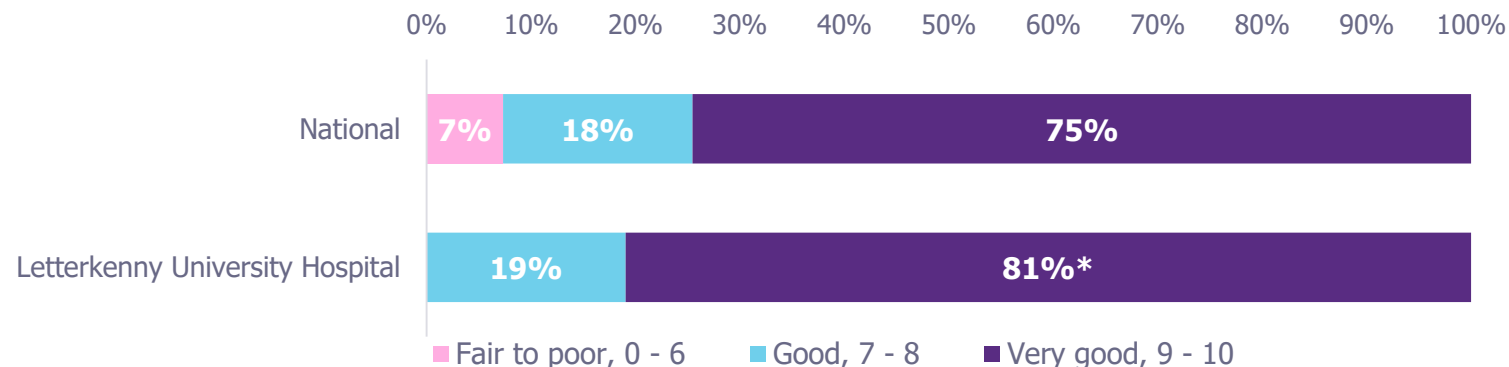
\* Indicates statistically significant difference from the national average.



## Specialist care in the neonatal unit

- 21 survey participants (23%) at Letterkenny University Hospital said that their baby spent time in the neonatal unit following the birth.
- Of these participants:
  - 62% said that they always received enough emotional support from healthcare professionals while their baby was in the neonatal unit.
  - 19% said that they sometimes received enough emotional support.
  - 19% said that they did not receive enough emotional support.

### Overall rating of experience of care in the neonatal unit



\* Indicates statistically significant difference from the national average.

# Infant feeding

In the first few days after birth:

- 41% of participants fed their baby with breast milk only.
- 35% fed their baby with formula milk only.
- 24% fed their baby with both breast and formula milk.

## Healthcare professional discussed feeding options

	Number	%
Yes, during pregnancy	79	83.2
Yes, during labour or immediately after birth	25	26.3
Yes, after birth while in hospital	29	30.5
Yes, after birth while at home	16	16.8
No	4	4.2
Did not want or need discussion of different options	4	4.2
Don't know or can't remember	2	2.1

## Sources of breastfeeding support

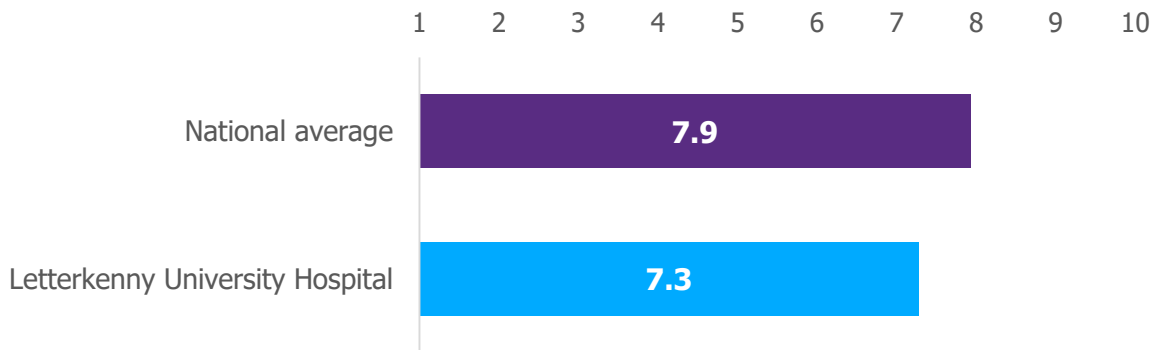
	Number	%
Midwife(s) in hospital	37	40.7
Hospital lactation consultant	29	31.9
Postnatal community midwives	7	7.7
Public Health Nurse	30	33.0
GP	3	3.3
Practice nurse	1	1.1
Community breastfeeding support groups or volunteers	7	7.7
Private lactation consultant	4	4.4
Friends or family	15	16.5
Did not need support	11	12.1
Did not want to breastfeed	23	25.3

# Scored questions for infant feeding

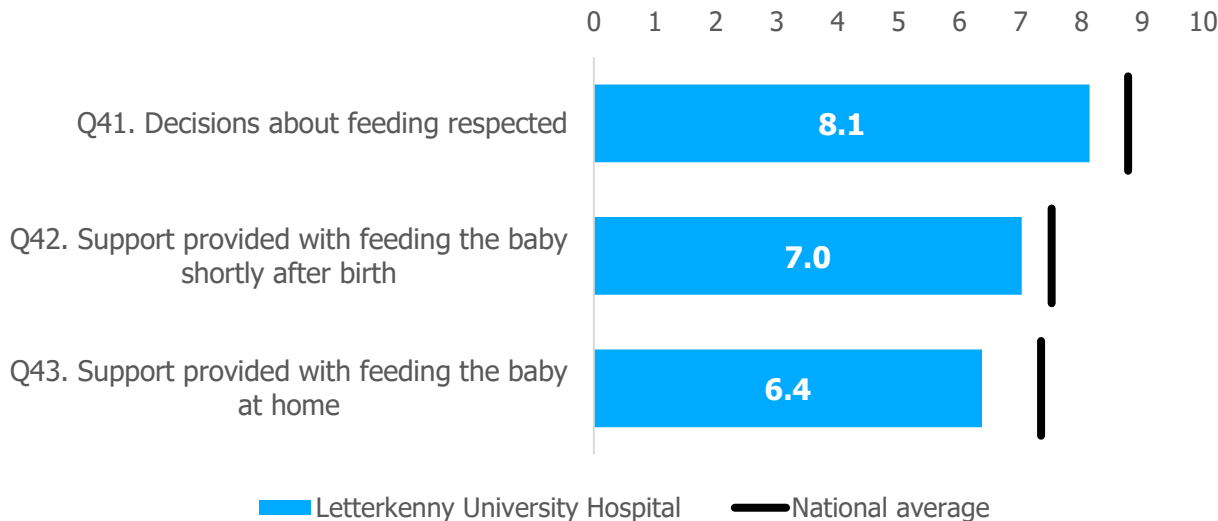


- **Highest-scoring question:** 68% of participants (64 of 94) said their decisions about how they wanted to feed their baby were always respected.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 24% of participants (20 of 84) said that they did not get adequate support from healthcare professionals with feeding their baby at home.

## Overall average score for infant feeding



## 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	7	7.4
Postnatal community midwife at a community clinic (including a Postnatal Hub)	3	3.2
Public Health Nurse at home	86	90.5
Public Health Nurse at a community clinic	13	13.7
GP	61	64.2
Obstetrician at hospital clinic	6	6.3
Midwives and or paediatricians at hospital baby clinic	4	4.2
Other professionals	7	7.4

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

	Number	%
GP	32	34.8
Public Health Nurse	29	31.5
Midwife	10	10.9
Perinatal mental health midwife	2	2.2
None of the above	49	53.3

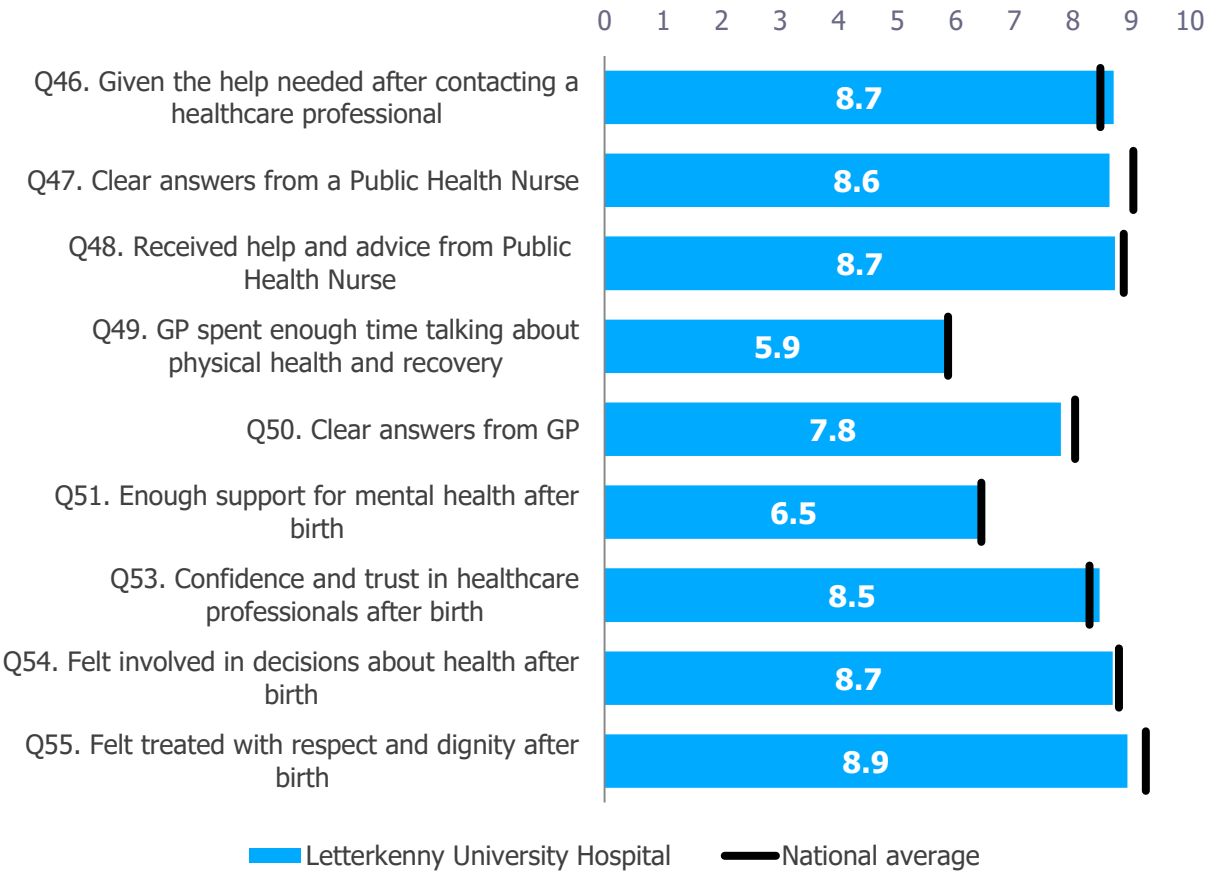
# Care at home and in the community after birth



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:** 81% of participants (76 of 94) 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:** 28% of participants (25 of 88) 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.

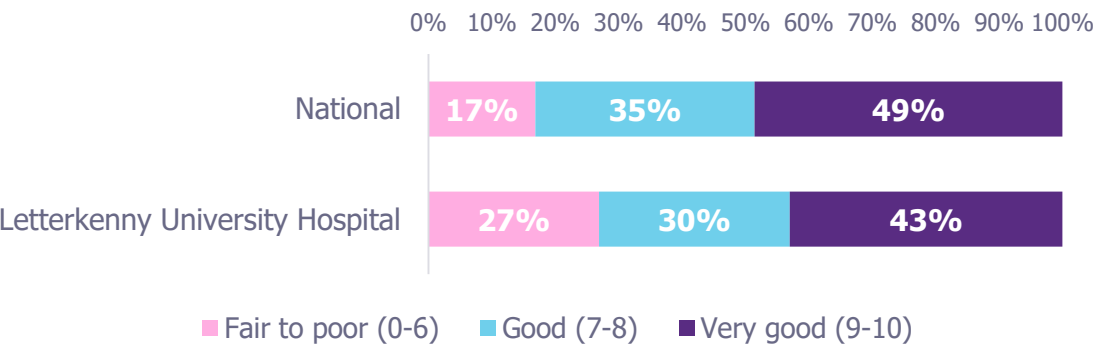
Average scores out of 10 for individual questions



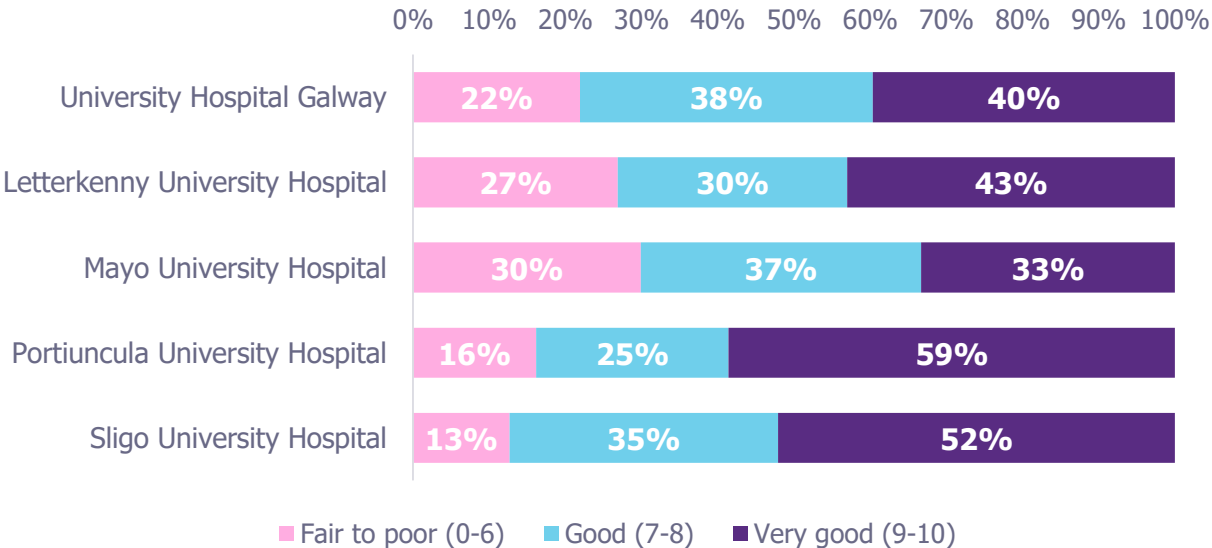
# Overall experience of maternity care

- 53% of survey participants who gave birth at Letterkenny University Hospital said that their decisions about their maternity care were always respected by healthcare staff. 41% said their decisions were sometimes respected, while 6% said their decisions about their maternity care were not respected.
- 27% of participants said that they knew how and where to give feedback or make a complaint if they wanted to do so, while 46% said they did not know. 28% said they did not wish to give feedback or make a complaint.
- 73% of participants who gave birth at Letterkenny University Hospital said they had a good or very good overall experience (overall rating between 7 and 10), compared to 83% nationally. 27% of participants said they had a fair to poor experience of care.

Overall experience of care



Overall experience of care - HSE West and North West health region



## 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 Letterkenny University Hospital.
- There were no significant increases in scores for any survey questions between 2020 and 2025 at Letterkenny University Hospital.
- Between 2020 and 2025, there were significant decreases in scores for four areas of care experiences at Letterkenny University Hospital:
  - Information about nutrition in pregnancy.
  - Explanations about risks and benefits of procedures during labour and birth.
  - Confidence and trust in healthcare professionals during labour and birth.
  - Support from healthcare professionals with feeding the baby at home in the days and weeks after birth.

## Comments from survey participants

- When survey participants at Letterkenny University Hospital were asked what was good about their care and what could be improved, they most commonly referred to the interpersonal interactions they had with healthcare staff.
- The theme of information and explanations from healthcare staff, and involvement in decision-making, was also raised in participants' comments about both positive and negative aspects of their care.

"All the midwives on the ward and the public health nurses I dealt with were incredibly helpful and kind. Nothing was too much trouble and they always took time to answer any questions fully."

"My experience in delivery was awful. I felt the two midwives I had didn't have any personality for the job, it was simply work to them. A midwife with a little caring nature would have made my experience completely different."

"I was in the hospital for a period of 5 days. During this time there were a load of talks and information about care for yourself and your baby, mental health and the signs, demonstrations on how to clean bottles and sterilise, the lactation specialist came around."

"I felt the communication from the consultants on decisions made could have been much better... Midwives postpartum in general did not offer any advice, help or guidance to new mother."

## Conclusion

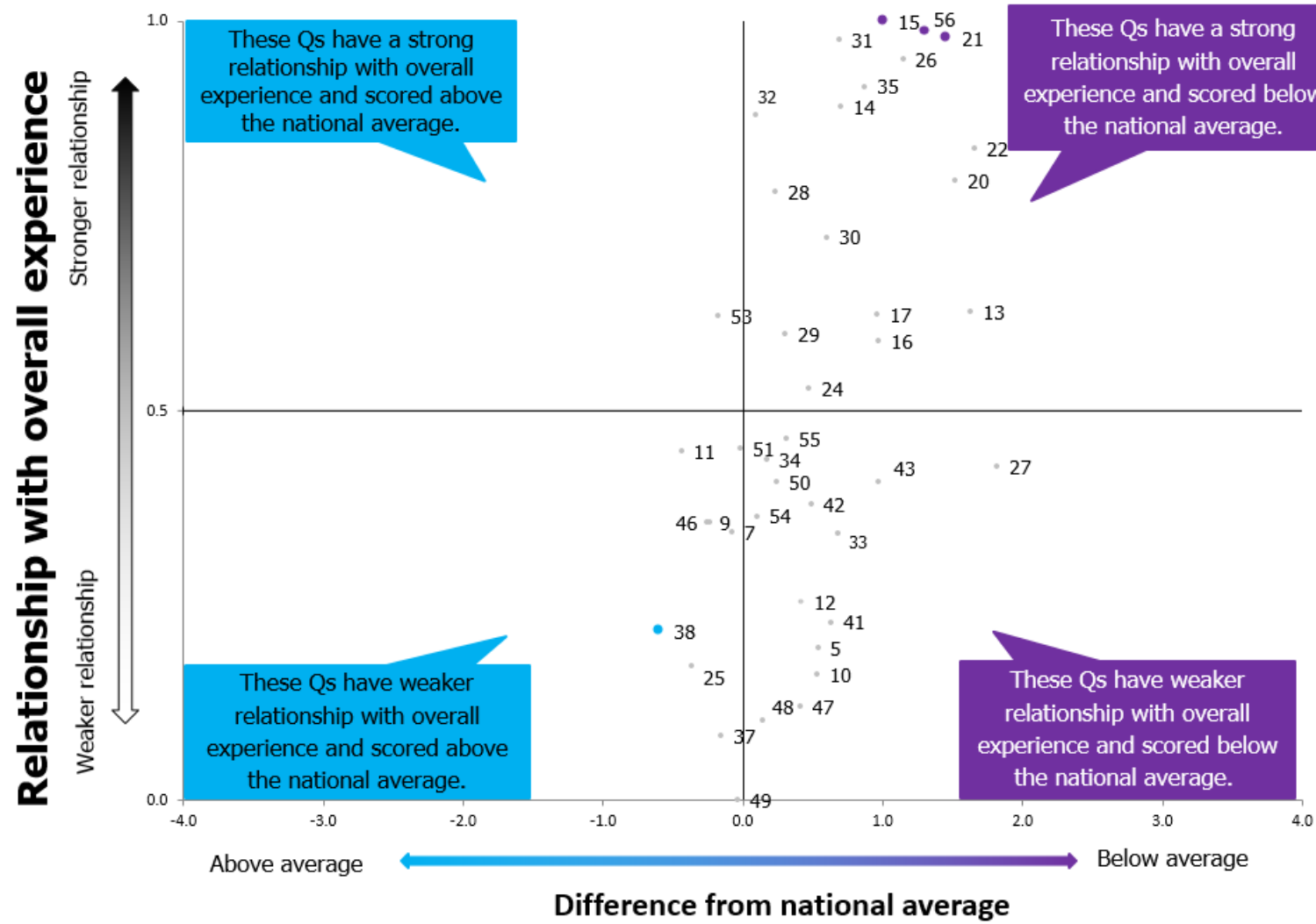
- Areas of good experience at Letterkenny University Hospital included overall experience of care in the neonatal unit.
- Areas for improvement included confidence and trust in healthcare professionals during pregnancy, clear answers to questions during labour and birth, and respect for participants' decisions about their maternity care.
- One question for participants at Letterkenny University Hospital scored significantly above the national average and 10 questions scored significantly below the national average.
- 73% of participants who gave birth at Letterkenny University Hospital said they had a good or very good overall experience; this is lower than the national figure (83%).
- Between 2020 and 2025, there were significant decreases in scores for four areas of care experience at Letterkenny University Hospital.



# Appendix 1

Improvement map Letterkenny University Hospital

- 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.yourexperience.ie](http://www.yourexperience.ie)





More information on the National Maternity Experience Survey 2025 is available from [www.yourexperience.ie](http://www.yourexperience.ie):

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

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