

National Maternity Experience Survey 2025

Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise

Improving care experiences together



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 Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise.
- The report focuses on experiences of care provided by Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise 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

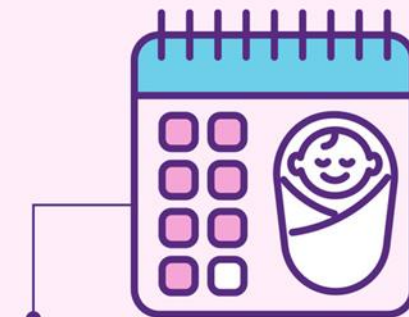
Experiences of support and advice from GPs, public health nurses and other healthcare professionals, while at home or in the community after birth.



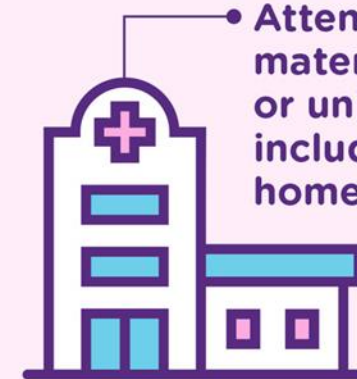
11 questions

Who was eligible to take part?

Aged 16
years or older



Gave birth in February
or March 2025



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



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

Who took part in the survey?

- 209 people who gave birth at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise were invited to participate in the survey.
- 96 took part. This is a response rate of 46% (compared to the national rate of 42%).

Age of participants	Number	%
Under 25 years	9	9.4
25 to 29 years	17	17.7
30 to 34 years	33	34.4
35 to 39 years	31	32.3
40 years or older	6	6.3
Previous births	Number	%
None	29	30.2
1 or 2	62	64.6
3 or more	5	5.2

Ethnicity of participants	Number	%
White Irish	64	66.7
Irish Traveller	1	1.0
Any other White background	13	13.5
Black or Black Irish- African	5	5.2
Asian or Asian Irish- Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi	6	6.3
Any other Asian background	2	2.1
Arab	2	2.1
Mixed	1	1.0
Other	2	2.1
Long-term condition or disability	Number	%
Any long-term condition	9	9.4
No long-term condition	87	90.6



Areas of good experience

There were no questions that scored significantly above national average for participants at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise. The highest and lowest-scoring questions for each stage of care are highlighted throughout this report.

A selection of comments highlighting areas of good experience is provided below.

Comments from participants

"I was very impressed with the treatment at Midlands hospital. Starting with my community midwife. The care and attention I received was next to none. I felt like she knew and cared about me and my pregnancy. She respected that it was my third pregnancy and I knew my body."

"I had a very hard time with breastfeeding. Without some of those midwives who helped me, along with lactation consultants in the hospital, I would not have continued."

"The consultant that delivered my baby was excellent. They explained everything to us and let me make my own decisions regarding my care. The midwives were fantastic, really listened to me and were there for me when I needed the support."

Areas for improvement

Support for mental health in pregnancy | Q12

33% of participants at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise who responded to this question (29 out of 88) said that they did not receive enough support for their mental health in pregnancy.

This question scored significantly below national average and is strongly related to overall care experience.

Comments from participants

"Having discussed with several midwives and doctors my history with poor mental health, I feel mental health supports could have been better. I was given the information on how to contact the mental health midwife at my initial appointment in the hospital and it was not discussed or offered again."

"Mental health support- Thankfully I didn't need any, but it's something that wasn't really offered or discussed enough in my opinion."

Care in pregnancy



- 58% of participants at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise said that they were offered a choice about the type of maternity care they would receive.
- 72% of participants said they were offered antenatal classes in pregnancy. 30% of participants said they did antenatal classes, while 42% did not do them. 28% said they were not offered any antenatal classes in pregnancy.
- 93% of participants had some of their regular check-ups in pregnancy with their GP.

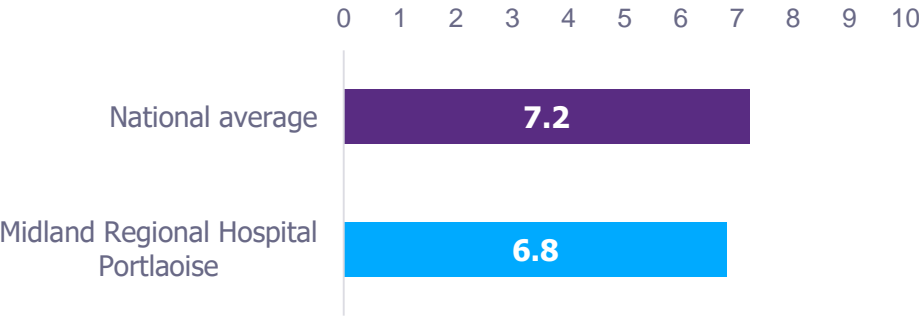
First healthcare professional seen when pregnant	Number	%
General Practitioner (GP) or family doctor	69	71.9
Midwife at maternity service	10	10.4
Obstetrician (doctor or consultant) at maternity service	9	9.4
Healthcare professional at private scan clinic	4	4.2
Other	4	4.2

Type of maternity care in pregnancy	Number	%
Obstetrician public clinic at the hospital	49	51.0
Midwife clinic at the hospital	21	21.9
'Domino scheme': midwife-led care in community	5	5.2
Community midwife clinic	11	11.5
Midwifery-led unit	1	1.0
Home birth midwife	1	1.0
Obstetrician care at semi-private clinic	1	1.0
Obstetrician care at private clinic	5	5.2
Pregnancy check-ups in another country	1	1.0
Attended pregnancy check-ups at another service	1	1.0

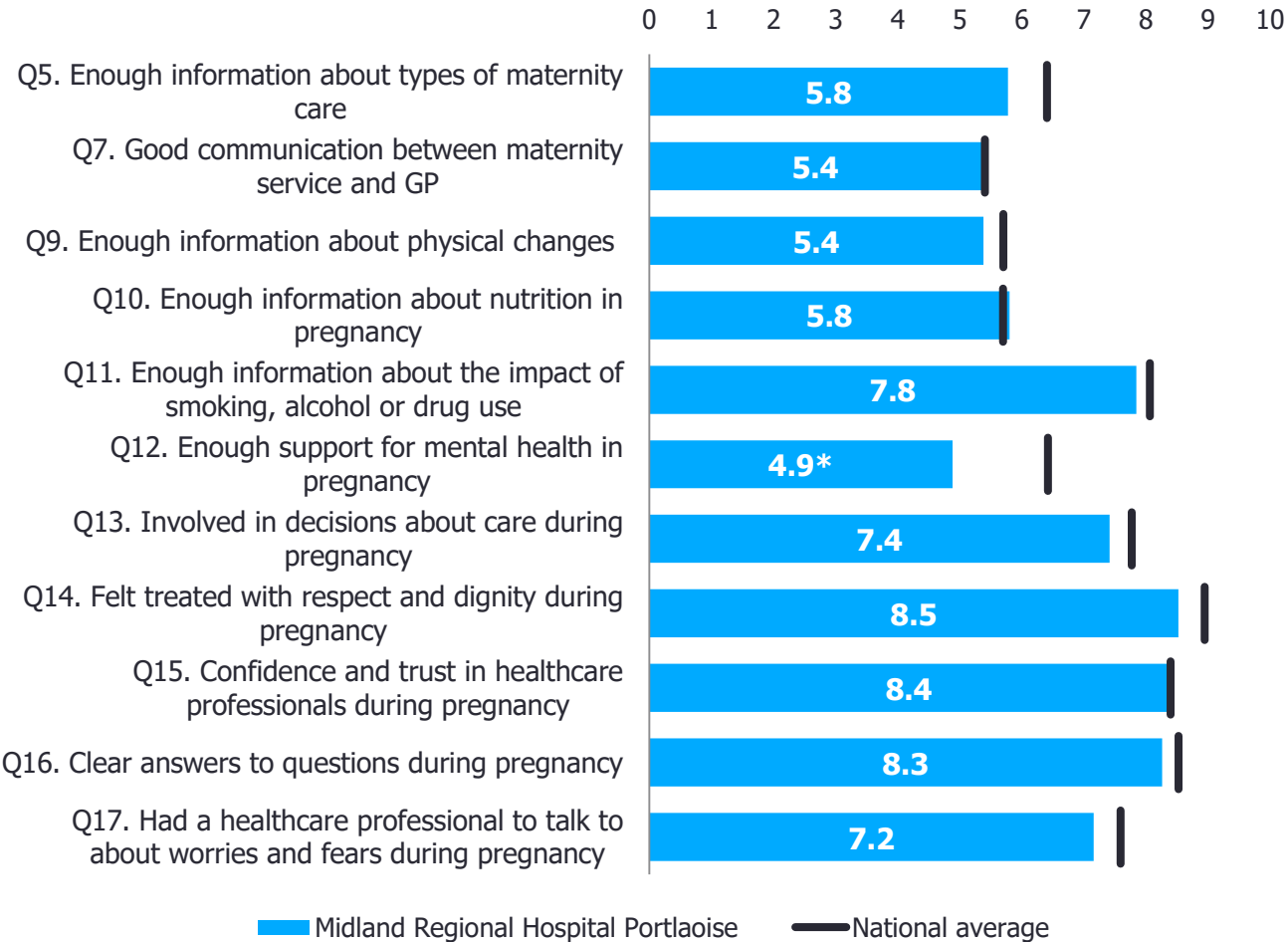
Scored questions for care in pregnancy

- **Highest-scoring question:** 75% of participants (71 of 95) felt they were always treated with respect and dignity in pregnancy.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 33% of participants (29 out of 88) said that they did not receive enough support for their mental health in 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

- 44% of survey participants at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise said their labour was induced.

Type of birth for survey participants	Number	%
Vaginal birth (no forceps or ventouse suction cup)	43	44.8
Assisted vaginal birth (with forceps or ventouse suction cup)	15	15.6
Planned caesarean birth	19	19.8
Unplanned caesarean birth	19	19.8

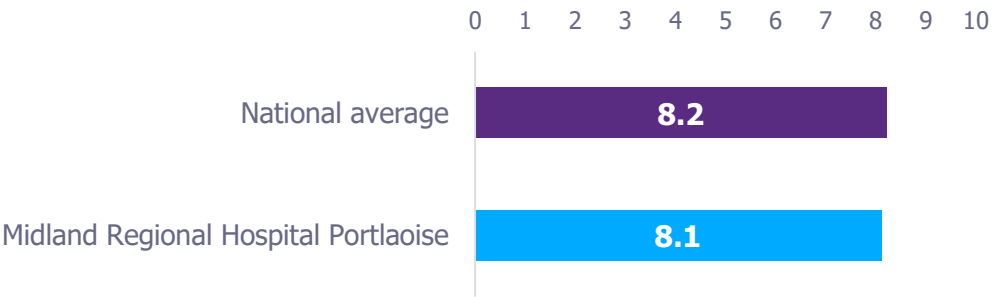
Participant left alone by healthcare professionals at a time when it worried them	Number	%
Yes, during early labour	8	8.3
Yes, during the later stages of labour	3	3.1
Yes, during the birth	1	1.0
Yes, shortly after the birth	9	9.4
No	78	81.3



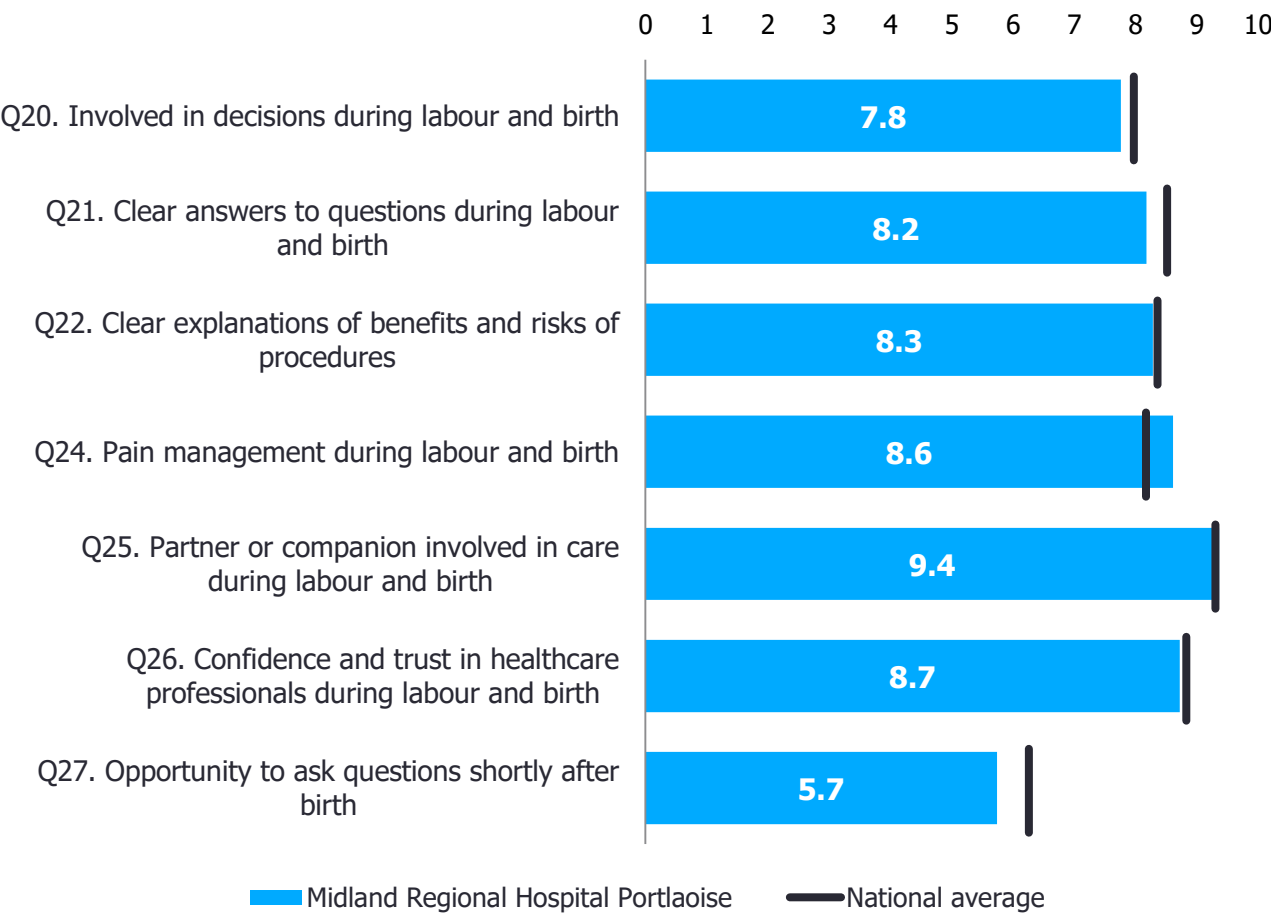
Scored questions for care during labour and birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 94% of participants (88 of 94) 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:** 26% of participants (23 of 88) 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

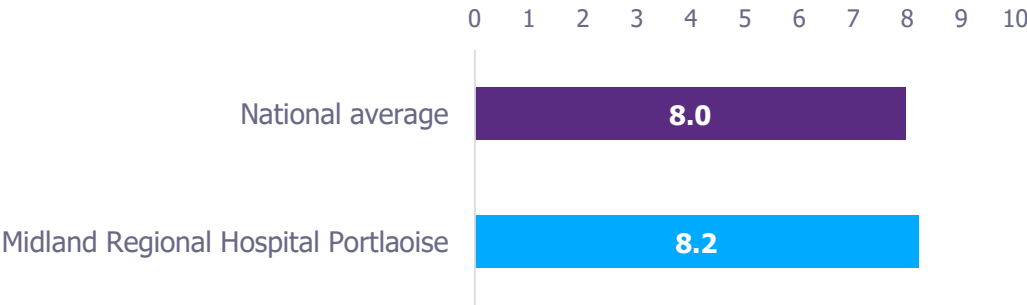




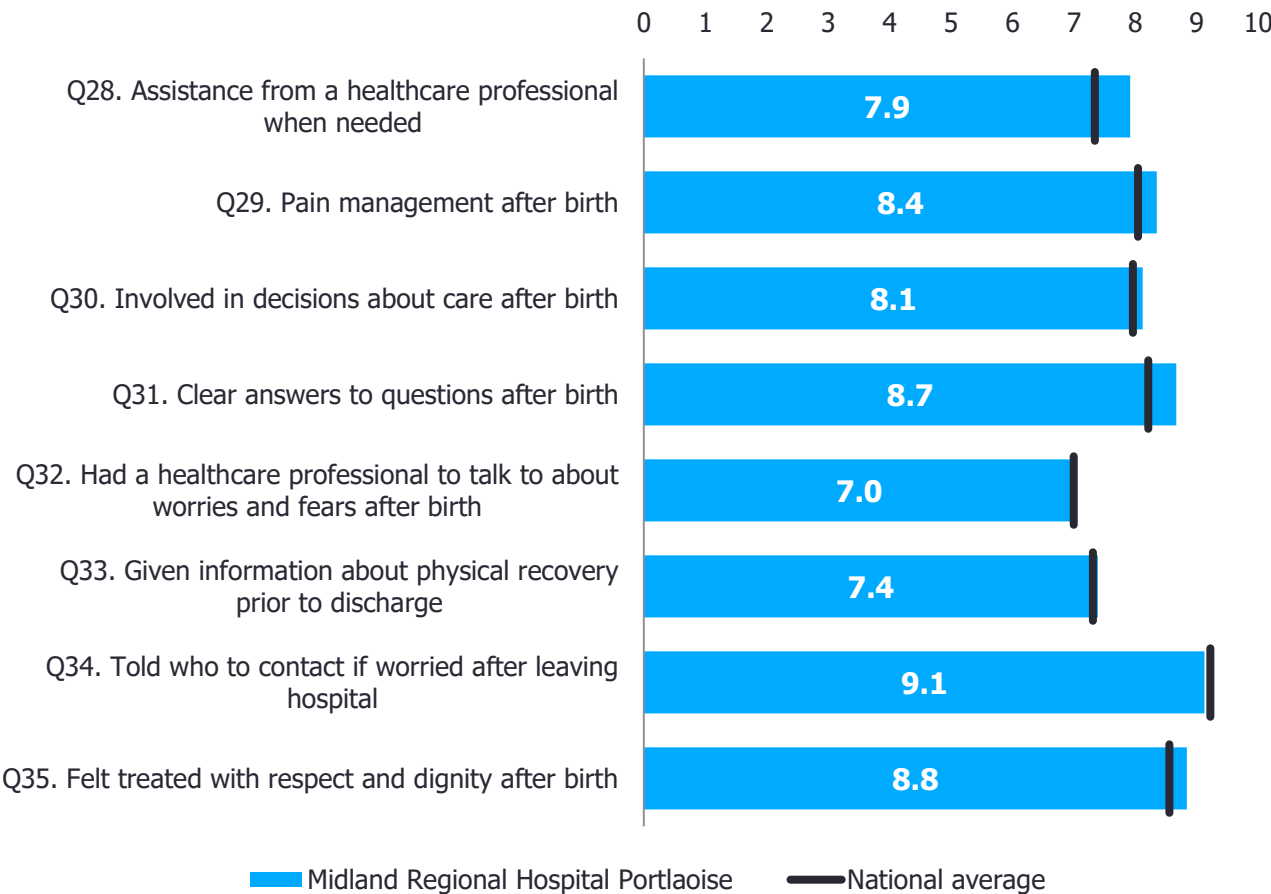
Scored questions for care in hospital after birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 91% of participants (84 of 92) 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:** 12% of participants (10 of 87) said that they did not have a healthcare professional that they could talk to about their worries and fears in hospital after the birth.

Overall average score for care in hospital after birth



Average scores out of 10 for individual questions

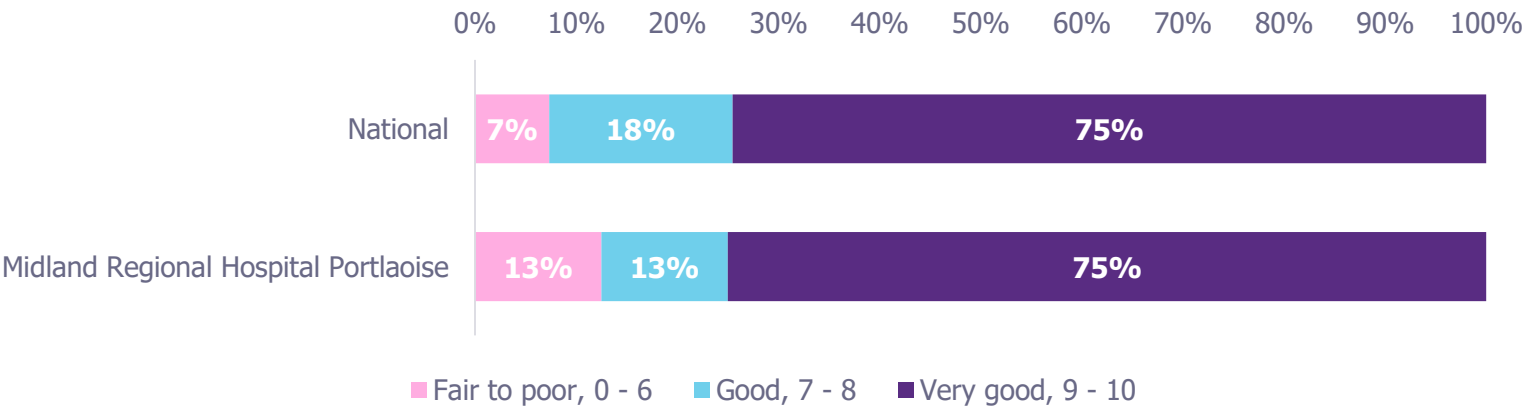




Specialist care in the neonatal unit

- 16 survey participants (17%) at Midlands Regional Hospital Portlaoise said that their baby spent time in the neonatal unit following the birth.
- Of these participants:
 - 63% said that they always received enough emotional support from healthcare professionals while their baby was in the neonatal unit.
 - 13% said that they sometimes received enough emotional support.
 - 25% said that they did not receive enough emotional support.

Overall rating of experience of care in the neonatal unit



Infant feeding

In the first few days after birth:

- 37% of participants fed their baby with breast milk only.
- 41% fed their baby with formula milk only.
- 23% fed their baby with both breast and formula milk.

Healthcare professional discussed feeding options

	Number	%
Yes, during pregnancy	51	53.1
Yes, during labour or immediately after birth	26	27.1
Yes, after birth while in hospital	29	30.2
Yes, after birth while at home	6	6.3
No	12	12.5
Did not want or need discussion of different options	8	8.3
Don't know or can't remember	1	1.0

Sources of breastfeeding support

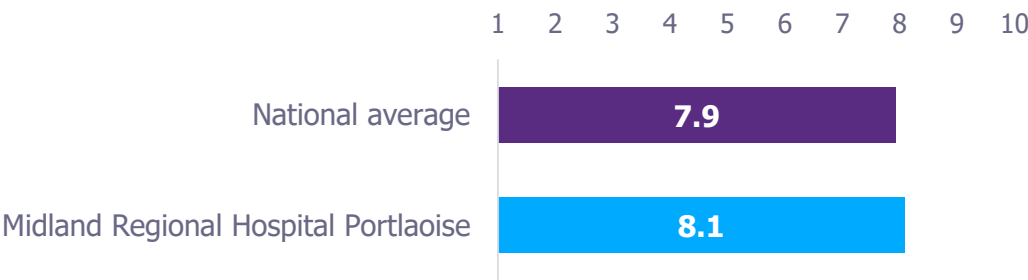
	Number	%
Midwife(s) in hospital	40	43.0
Hospital lactation consultant	22	23.7
Postnatal community midwives	8	8.6
Public health nurse	27	29.0
GP	5	5.4
Practice nurse	3	3.2
Community breastfeeding support groups or volunteers	2	2.2
Private lactation consultant	5	5.4
Friends or family	19	20.4
Did not need support	1	1.1
Did not want to breastfeed	34	36.6

Scored questions for infant feeding

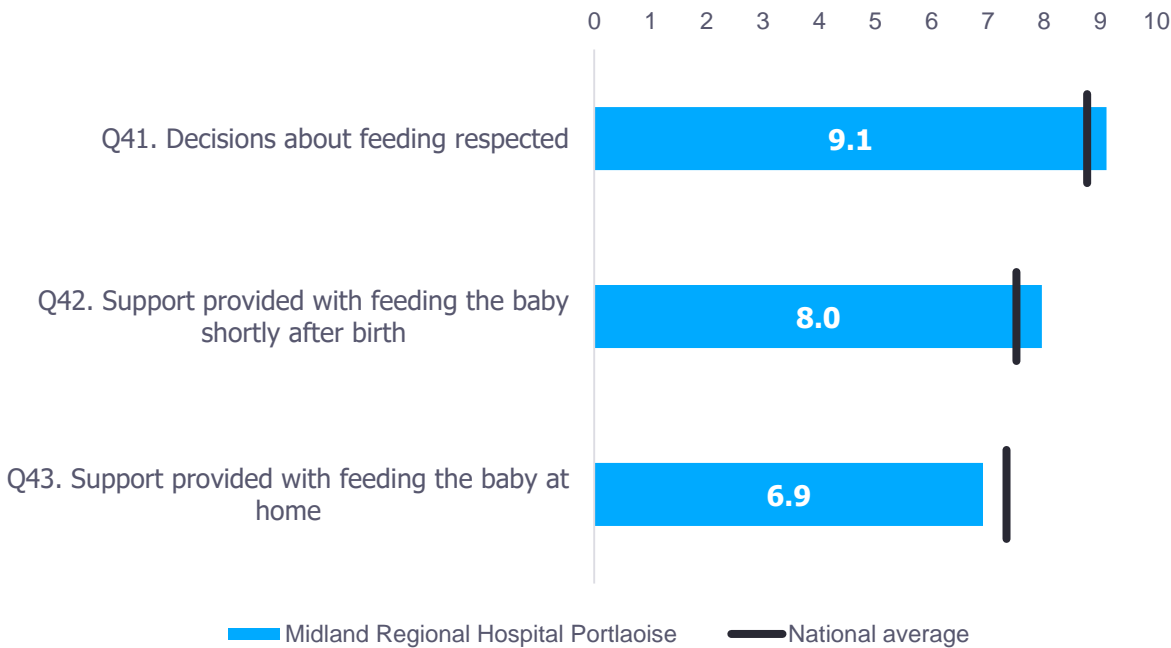


- **Highest-scoring question:** 84% of participants (81 of 96) said that their decisions about how they wanted to feed their baby were always respected.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 20% of participants (17 of 86) said that they did not get adequate support from healthcare professionals with feeding their baby at home in the days or weeks after the birth.

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	11	11.5
Public Health Nurse at home	82	85.4
Public Health Nurse at a community clinic	23	24.0
GP	63	65.6
Obstetrician at hospital clinic	13	13.5
Midwives or paediatricians at hospital baby clinic	8	8.3
Other professionals	4	4.2

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

	Number	%
GP	29	30.9
Public health nurse	29	30.9
Midwife	18	19.1
Obstetrician	3	3.2
Perinatal mental health midwife	2	2.1
Perinatal mental health nurse	2	2.1
Psychiatrist	3	3.2
Psychologist	2	2.1
Mental health social worker	1	1.1
None of the above	44	46.8

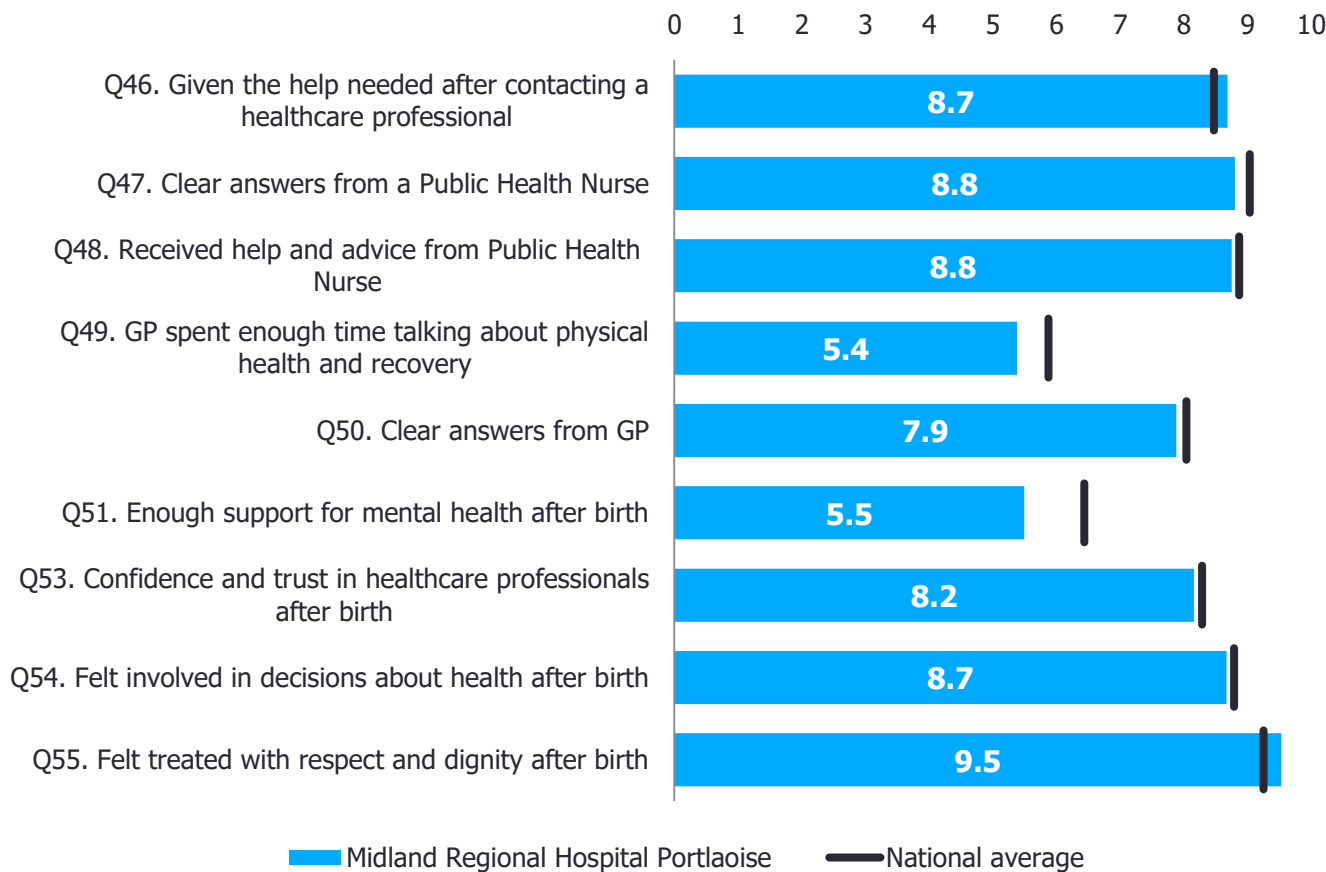
Scored questions for care at home after birth



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.** 92% of participants (88 of 96) 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.** 30% of participants (28 of 92) 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.

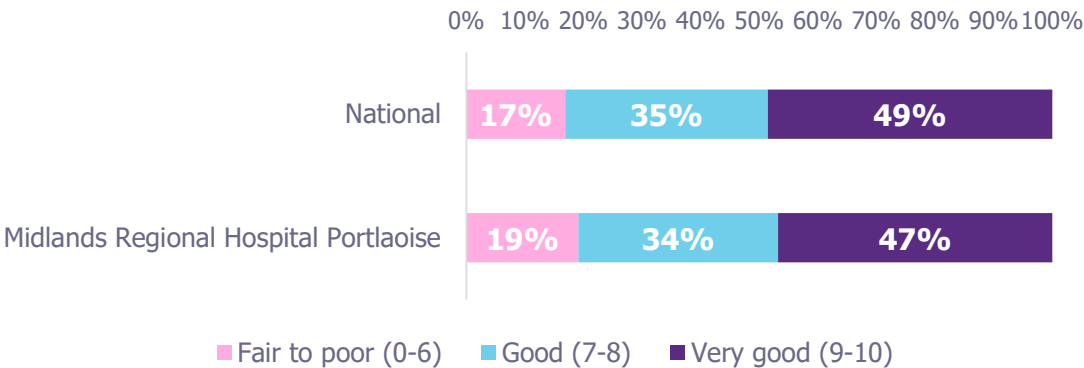
Average scores out of 10 for individual questions



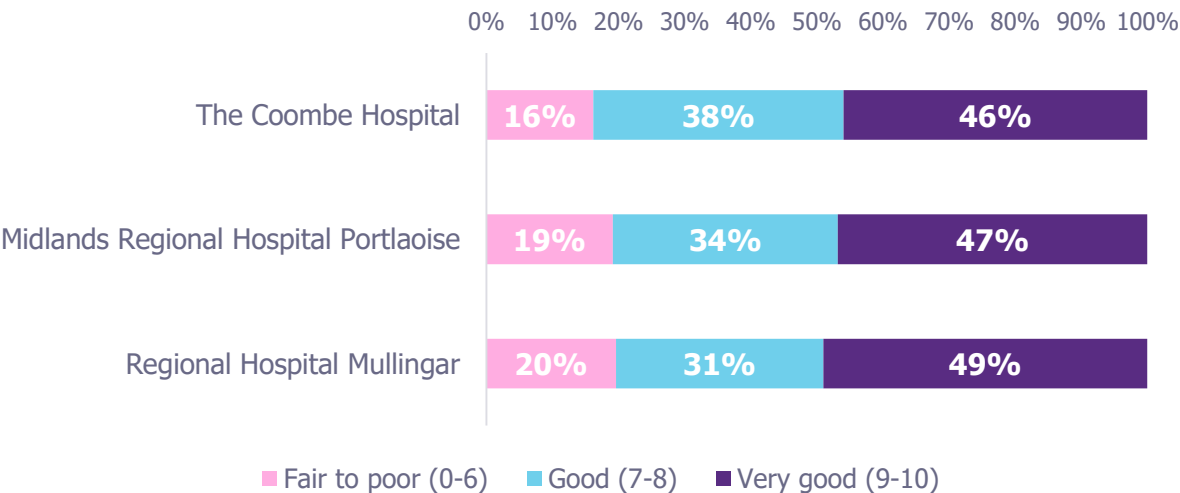
Overall experience of maternity care

- 75% of survey participants who gave birth at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise said that their decisions about their maternity care were always respected by healthcare staff. 21% said their decisions were sometimes respected, while 4% said their decisions about their maternity care were not respected.
- 38% of participants said they knew how and where to give feedback or make a complaint if they wanted to do so, while 38% said they did not know. 24% said they did not wish to give feedback or make a complaint.
- 81% of participants who gave birth at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise said they had a good or very good overall experience of maternity care (overall rating between 7 and 10), compared to 83% nationally. 19% of participants said they had a fair to poor experience of care.

Overall experience of care



Overall experience of care - HSE Dublin and Midlands



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 question scores at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise.
- There were no significant increases or decreases in scores for any survey questions between 2020 and 2025 at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise.

Comments from survey participants

- When survey participants at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise were asked what was good about their care, they most commonly referred to the interpersonal aspects of the care they received from hospital staff.
- 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 Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise, they most commonly referred to support for women's preferences and greater involvement in decision-making.

"The midwives in Portlaoise provided a really personal level of care in the clinic. I felt as though they really cared about me during a vulnerable time. I think having the same midwives at every appointment really builds up a relationship where you feel safe to ask any questions and respected."

"The amount of information, clearly delivered, both written and spoken about, was very helpful."

"As a patient I was not listened to at all and told that I didn't know my own body, I felt demoralised in the situation."

"The male doctor wouldn't answer my questions about having more time and instead just kept asking for my consent (*to C-section*). Eventually I gave up asking for more time as I clearly wasn't being heard."

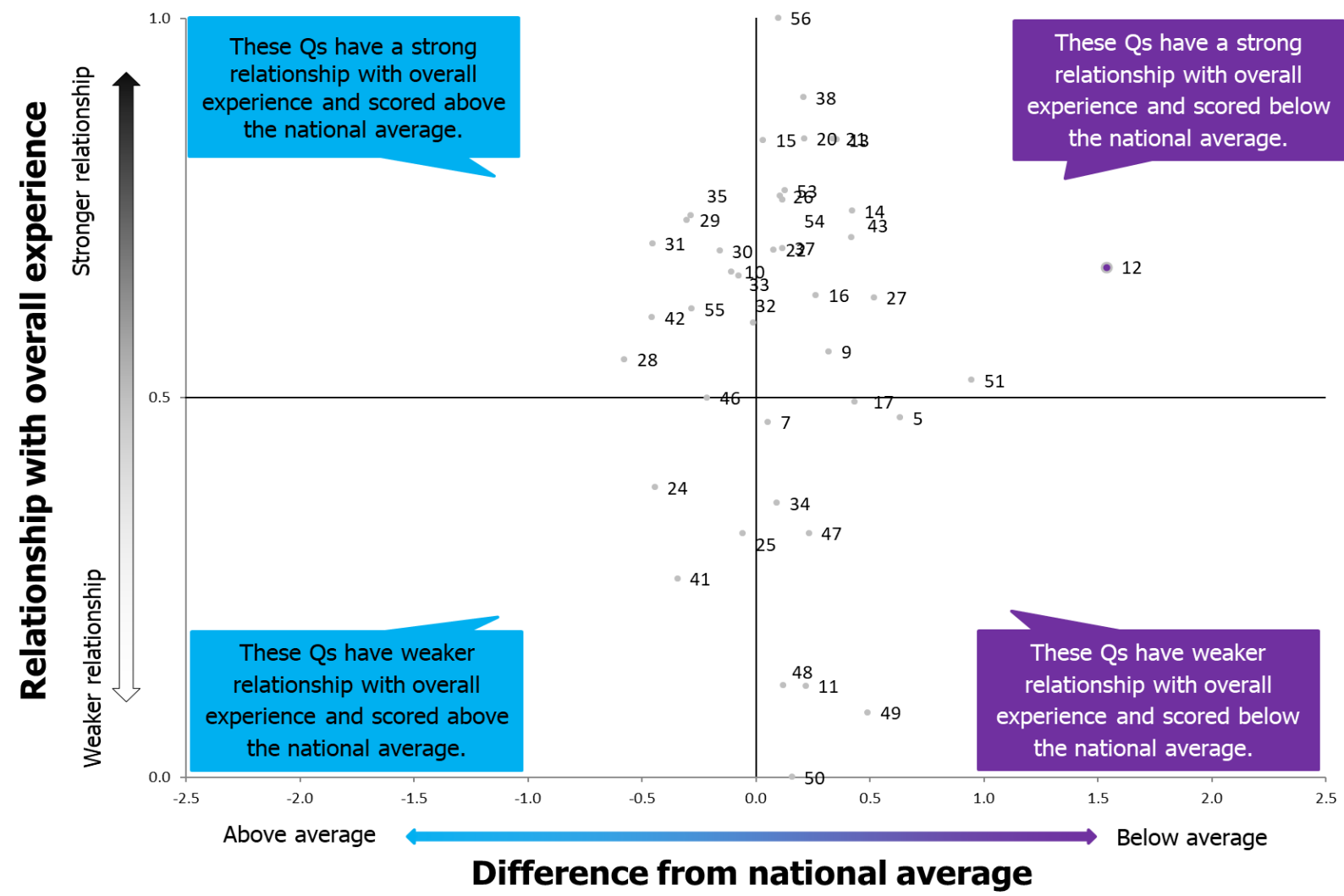
Conclusion

- There were no questions that scored significantly above national average for participants at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise.
- One question scored significantly below national average for participants at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise. This area for improvement related to support for mental health in pregnancy.
- 81% of survey participants who gave birth at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise said they had a good or very good overall experience; which is lower than the national figure (83%).
- Between 2020 and 2025, there were no significant increases or decreases in scores for survey questions at Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise.

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.yourexperience.ie.

Improvement map for Midland Regional Hospital Portlaoise





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

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

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