

National Maternity Experience Survey 2025

The National Maternity Hospital

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 The National Maternity Hospital.
- The report focuses on experiences of care provided by The National Maternity 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?

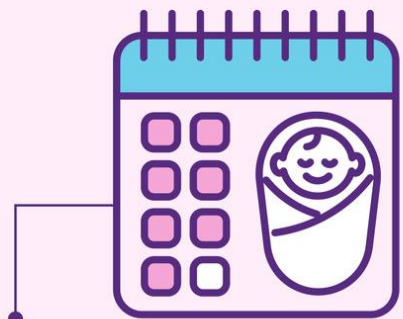
Aged 16
years or older



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?

- 1,067 people who gave birth at The National Maternity Hospital were invited to participate in the survey.
- 440 took part. This is a response rate of 41% (compared to the national rate of 42%).

Age of participants	Number	%
Under 25 years	7	1.6
25 to 29 years	41	9.3
30 to 34 years	178	40.5
35 to 39 years	170	38.6
40 years or older	44	10.0
Previous births	Number	%
None	220	50.0
1 or 2	204	46.4
3 or more	16	3.6

Ethnicity of participants	Number	%
White Irish	299	68.1
Roma	1	0.2
Any Other White Background	73	16.6
Black or Black Irish- African	8	1.8
Any Other Black Background	1	0.2
Asian or Asian Irish- Chinese	2	0.5
Asian or Asian Irish- Indian/ Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	23	5.2
Asian or Asian Irish- Any Other Asian Background	8	1.8
Arab	5	1.1
Mixed	9	2.1
Other	10	2.3
Long-term condition or disability	Number	%
Any long-term condition	37	8.4
No long-term condition	403	91.6



Areas of good experience

Confidence and trust in healthcare professionals during pregnancy | Q15

81% of survey participants at The National Maternity Hospital (355 out of 439) said that they always had confidence and trust in the healthcare professionals caring for them during pregnancy.

Healthcare professional to talk to about worries and fears during pregnancy | Q17

69% of survey participants (275 of 398) said they always had a healthcare professional they could talk to about their worries and fears during pregnancy.

Decisions about maternity care respected by healthcare staff | Q56

81% of survey participants (356 of 438) said their decisions about their maternity care were always respected by healthcare staff.

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

Comments from participants

"I had good antenatal care, the doctors were helpful. I felt respected and was confident in the decision-making process."

"I am very lucky a midwife spotted how much anxiety I had about the birth at my first check-up, as she referred me to the birth reflection programme."

"Midwives at labour/birth were absolutely fantastic. They completely respected my birth preferences, were helpful and encouraging, and helped me have a really positive birth experience."

Areas for improvement

Help and advice from the Public Health Nurse | Q48

3% of survey participants at The National Maternity Hospital (11 of 429) said that they did not receive help and advice from the Public Health Nurse about their baby's health and progress.

This question scored significantly below the national average.

Comments from participants

"Care in the community poor. Public health nurse and GP appointments very tick-the-box. Any questions or issues raised weren't properly addressed."

"Public health nurses do not have the time to give that you would like. I felt my home visit was rushed and a tick-the-box exercise. The nurse was a lovely person but it was obvious she was busy and under pressure to get the boxes ticked."

"My GP did not have access to any of the information from the hospital so each appointment was me telling the GP what happened at each hospital appointment. He also did not seem to be aware of how to refer back to the hospital for postnatal care such as the Poppy Clinic or the mental health clinic."

Care in pregnancy



- 74% of participants from The National Maternity Hospital said that they were offered a choice about the type of maternity care they could receive.
- 92% of participants said that they were offered antenatal classes in pregnancy. 64% of participants said they did antenatal classes, while 28% did not do them. 8% of participants said they were not offered any antenatal classes in pregnancy.
- 75% of participants had some of their regular check-ups in pregnancy with their GP.

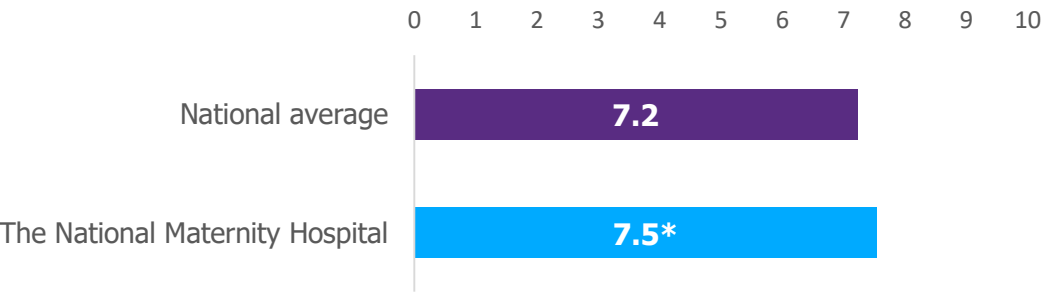
First healthcare professional seen when pregnant	Number	%
General Practitioner (GP) or family doctor	299	68.0
Midwife at maternity service	30	6.8
Obstetrician (doctor or consultant) at maternity service	42	9.5
Healthcare professional at private scan clinic	51	11.6
Other	18	4.1

Type of maternity care in pregnancy	Number	%
Obstetrician public clinic at the hospital	103	23.5
Midwife clinic at the hospital	71	16.2
'Domino scheme': midwife-led care in community	27	6.2
Community midwife clinic	28	6.4
Midwifery-led unit	1	0.2
Obstetrician care at semi-private clinic	88	20.1
Obstetrician care at private clinic	119	27.2
Pregnancy check-ups in another country	1	0.2

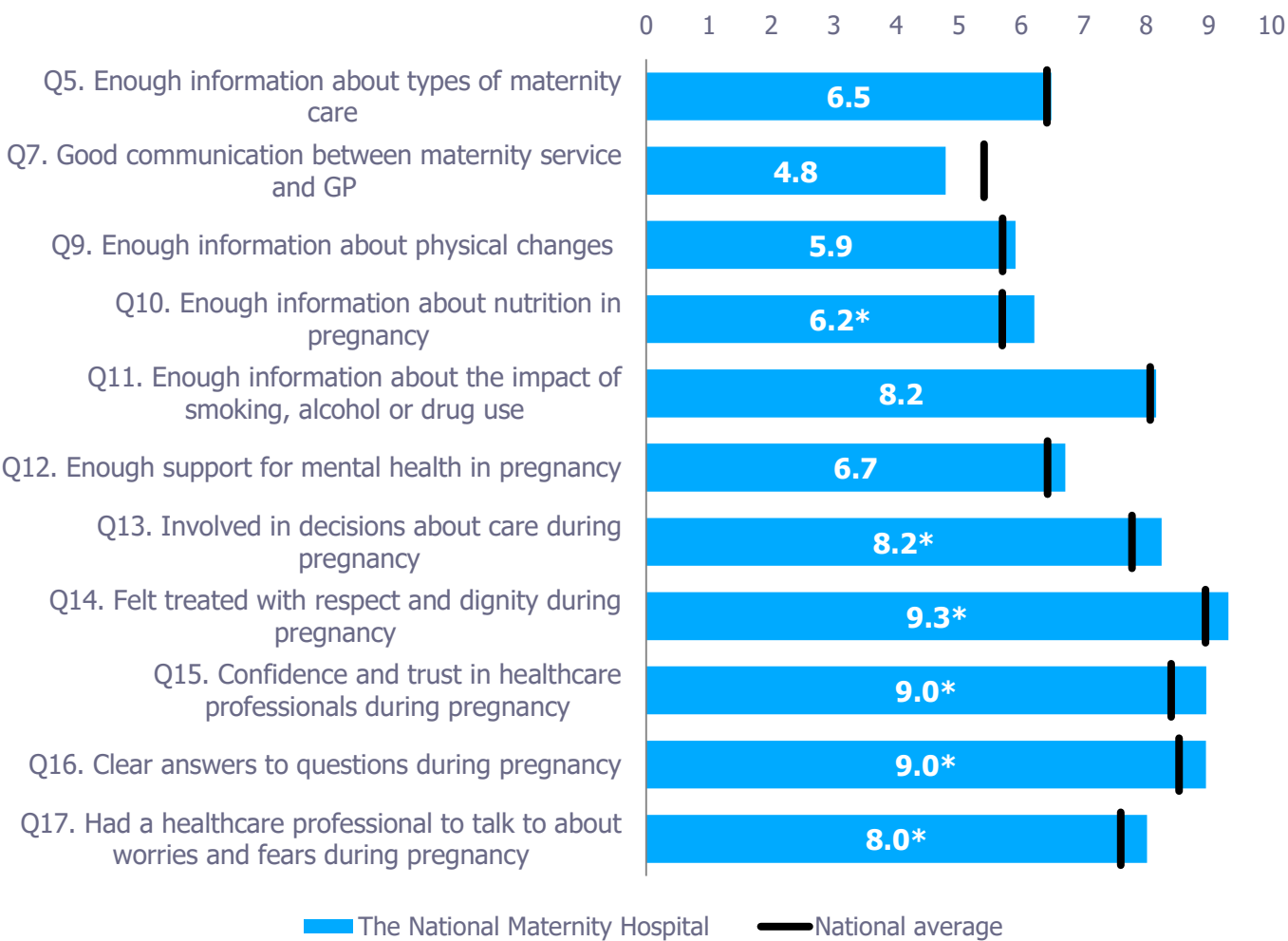
Scored questions for care in pregnancy

- **Highest-scoring question:** 88% of participants (385 of 439) said they always felt treated with respect and dignity in pregnancy.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 39% of participants (119 of 309) did not feel there was good communication about their care in pregnancy between the maternity service and their GP.

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 The National Maternity Hospital said their labour was induced.

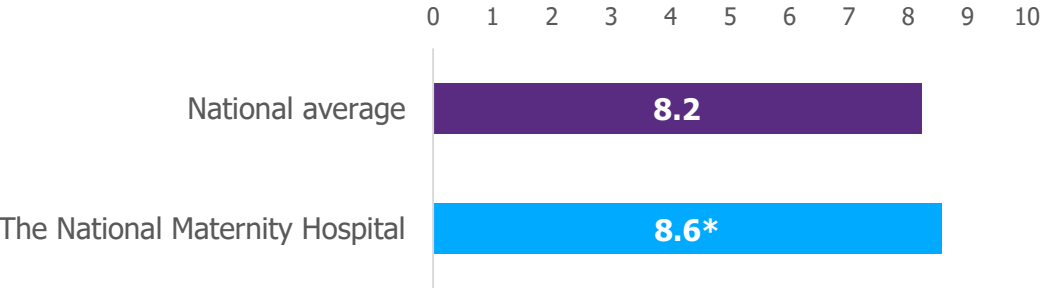
Type of birth for survey participants	Number	%
Vaginal birth (no forceps or ventouse suction cup)	208	47.3
Assisted vaginal birth (with forceps or ventouse suction cup)	51	11.6
Planned caesarean birth	97	22.0
Unplanned caesarean birth	84	19.1
Participant left alone by healthcare professionals at a time when it worried them	Number	%
Yes, during early labour	48	10.9
Yes, during the later stages of labour	23	5.2
Yes, during the birth	6	1.4
Yes, shortly after the birth	38	8.7
No	343	78.1



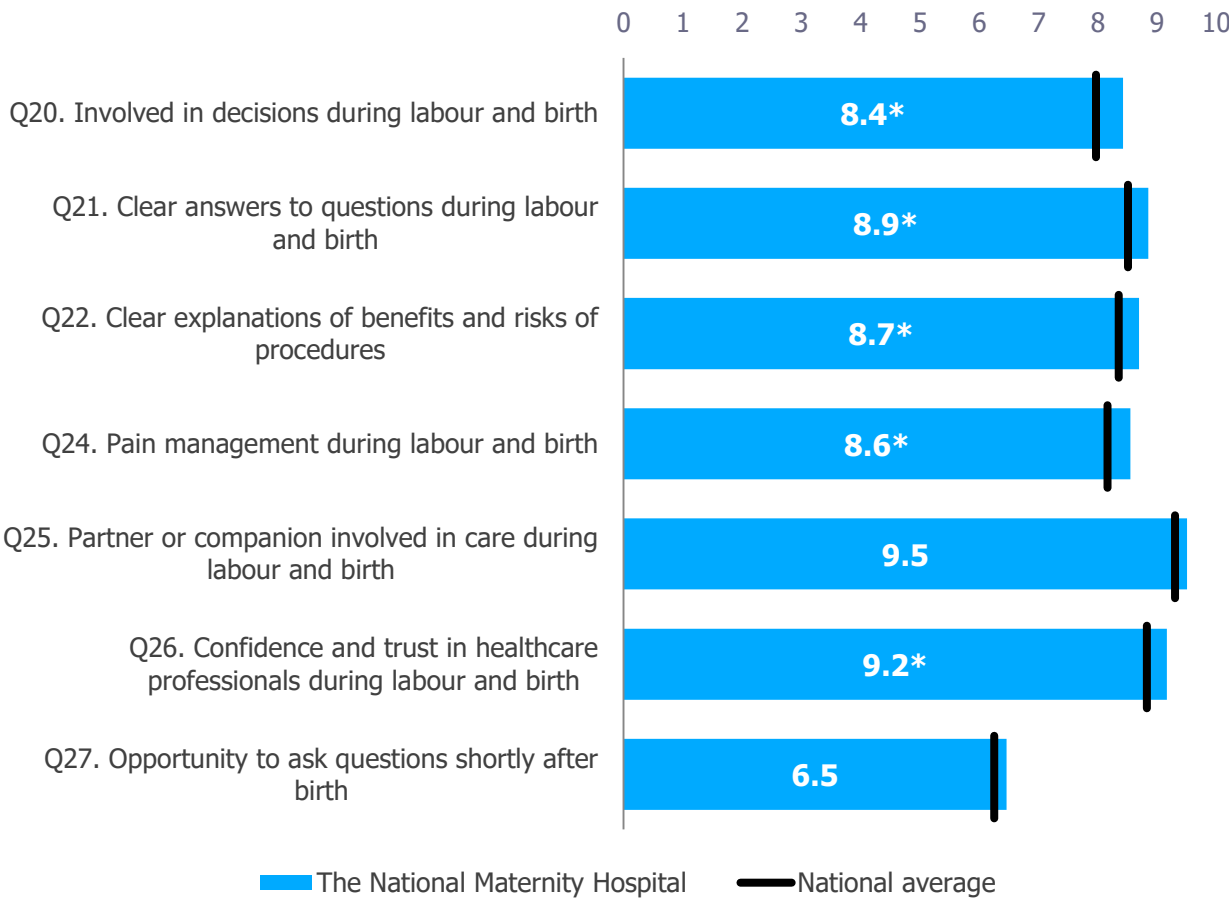
Scored questions for care during labour and birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 95% of participants (409 of 430) 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:** 23% of participants (91 of 389) 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



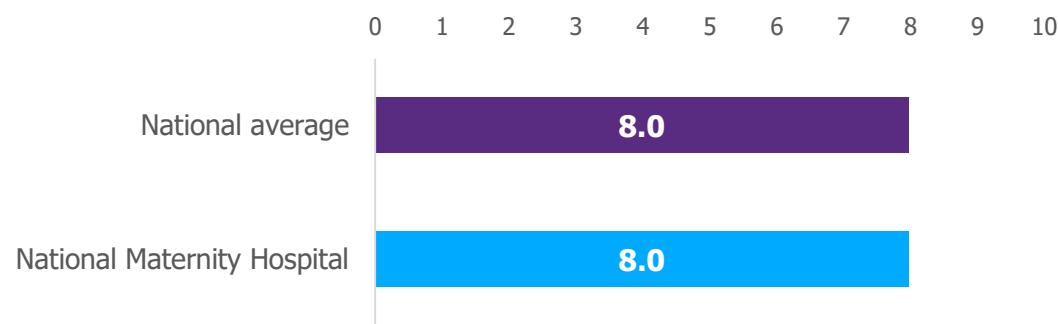
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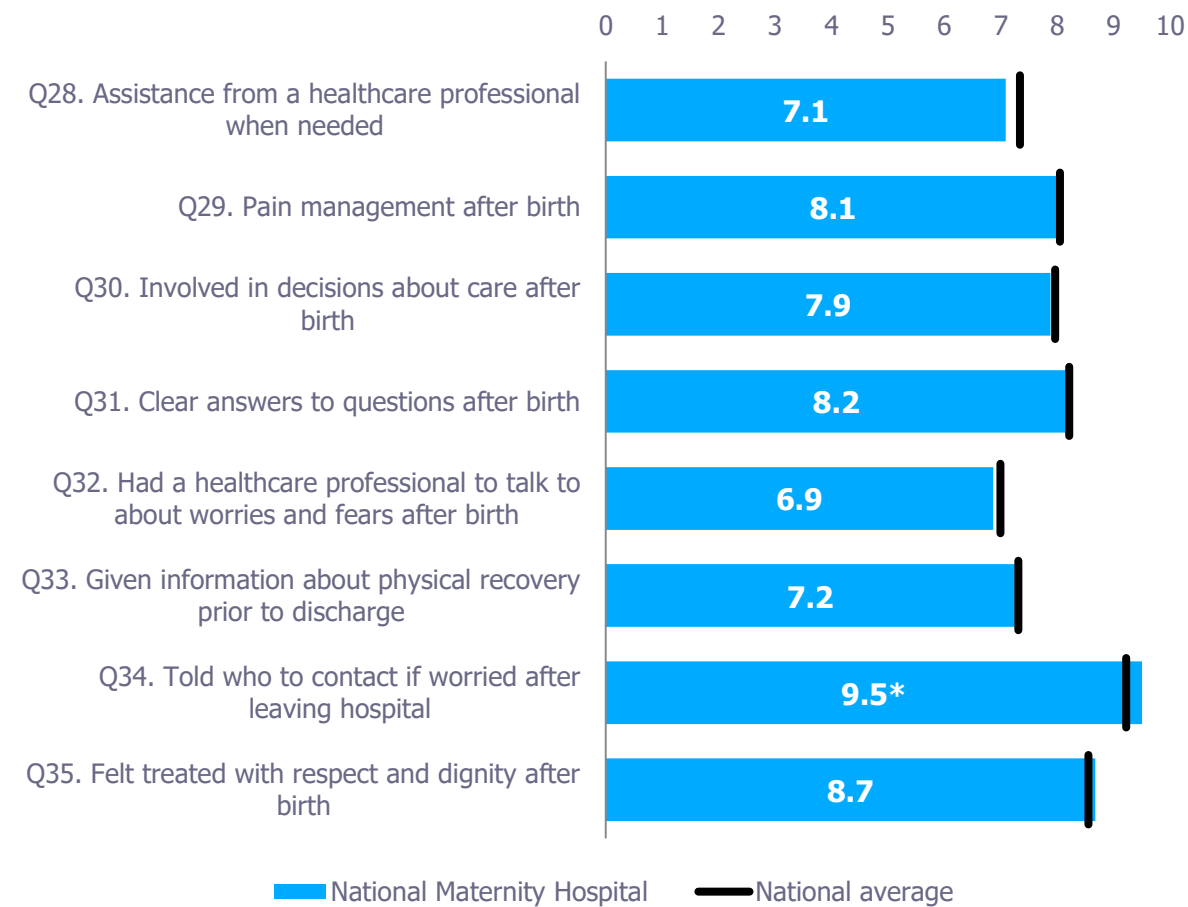
Scored questions for care in hospital after birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 95% of participants (403 of 424) 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:** 18% of participants (68 of 388) said 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



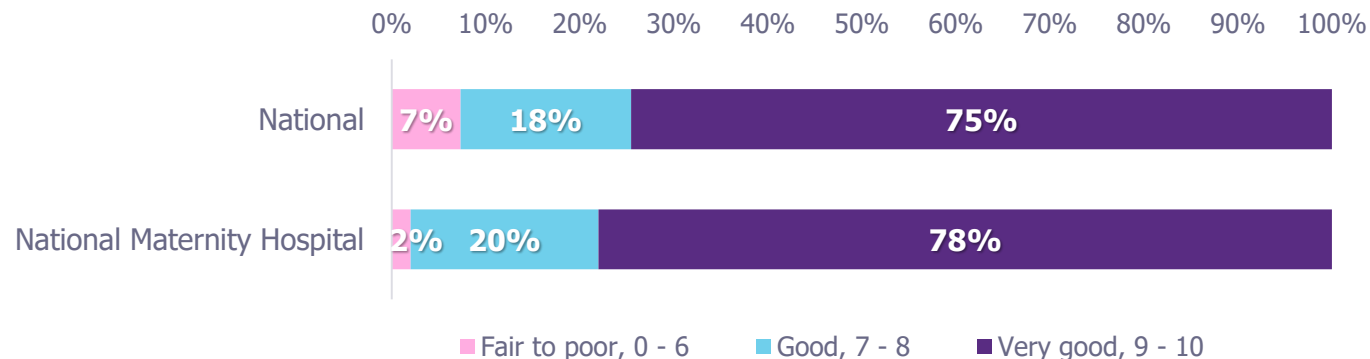
* Indicates statistically significant difference from the national average.



Specialist care in the neonatal unit

- 50 survey participants (11%) at The National Maternity Hospital said that their baby spent time in the neonatal unit following the birth.
- Of these participants:
 - 59% said that they always received enough emotional support from healthcare professionals while their baby was in the neonatal unit.
 - 26% said that they sometimes received enough emotional support.
 - 14% said that they did not receive enough emotional support.
 - 2% said they did not want or need any emotional support.

Overall rating of experience of care in the neonatal unit



Infant feeding

In the first few days after birth:

- 46% of participants fed their baby with breast milk only.
- 18% fed their baby with formula milk only.
- 36% fed their baby with both breast and formula milk.

Healthcare professional discussed feeding options		
	Number	%
Yes, during pregnancy	191	43.5
Yes, during labour or immediately after birth	130	29.6
Yes, after birth while in hospital	197	44.9
Yes, after birth while at home	82	18.7
No	57	13.0
Did not want or need discussion of different options	58	13.2
Don't know or can't remember	10	2.3

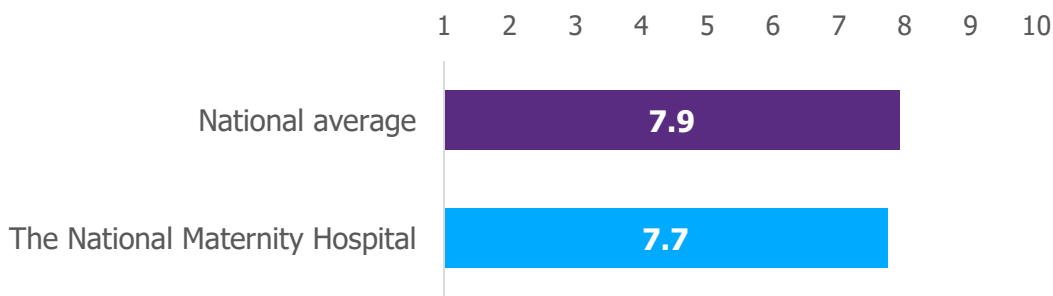
Sources of breastfeeding support		
	Number	%
Midwife(s) in hospital	253	58.2
Hospital lactation consultant	178	40.9
Home birth midwife	8	1.8
Postnatal community midwives	87	20.0
Postnatal hub midwife	5	1.1
Public Health Nurse	186	42.8
GP	41	9.4
Practice nurse	13	3.0
Community breastfeeding support groups or volunteers	71	16.3
Private lactation consultant	64	14.7
Friends or family	123	28.3
Did not need support	23	5.3
Did not want to breastfeed	62	14.3

Scored questions for infant feeding

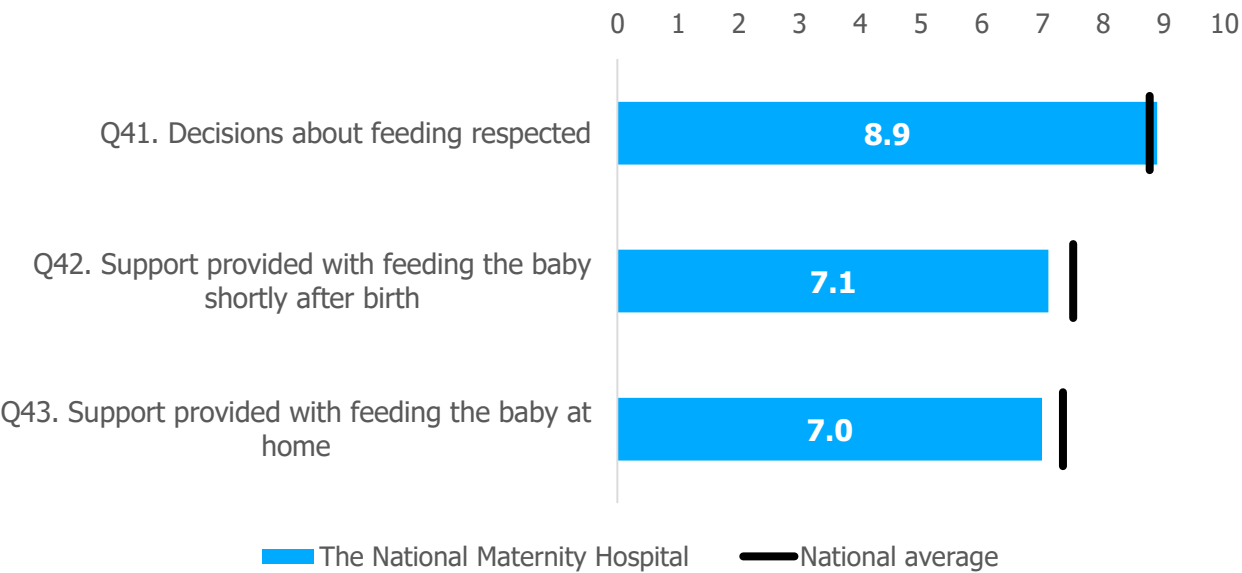


- **Highest-scoring question:** 81% of participants (356 of 438) said their decisions about how they wanted to feed their baby were always respected.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 19% of participants (74 of 399) said that their healthcare professionals did not give them adequate support with feeding 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	105	23.9
Postnatal community midwife at a community clinic (including a Postnatal Hub)	13	3.0
Public Health Nurse at home	401	91.1
Public Health Nurse at a community clinic	68	15.5
GP	321	73.0
Obstetrician at hospital clinic	106	24.1
Midwives and or paediatricians at hospital baby clinic	57	13.0
Other professionals	41	9.3
None of the above	1	0.2

Healthcare professionals who provided mental health support during pregnancy or after birth		
	Number	%
GP	137	32.0
Public Health Nurse	128	29.9
Midwife	62	14.5
Obstetrician	32	7.5
Perinatal mental health midwife	7	1.6
Perinatal mental health nurse	14	3.3
Psychiatrist	10	2.3
Psychologist	9	2.1
Mental health social worker	10	2.3
Other professionals	18	4.2
None of the above	213	49.8

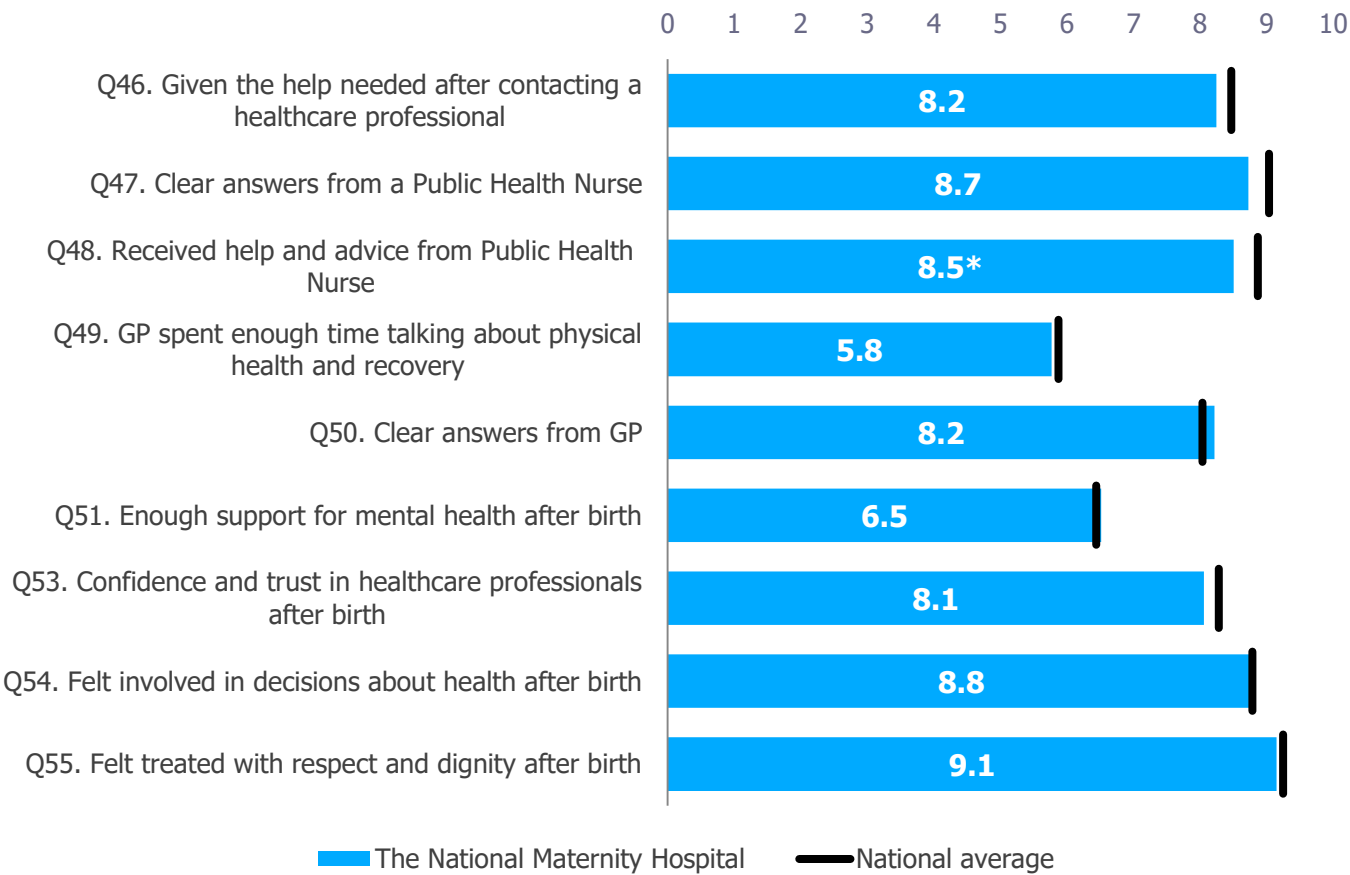
Scored questions for care at home after birth



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:** 85% of participants (371 of 435) said that 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 (116 of 409) 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

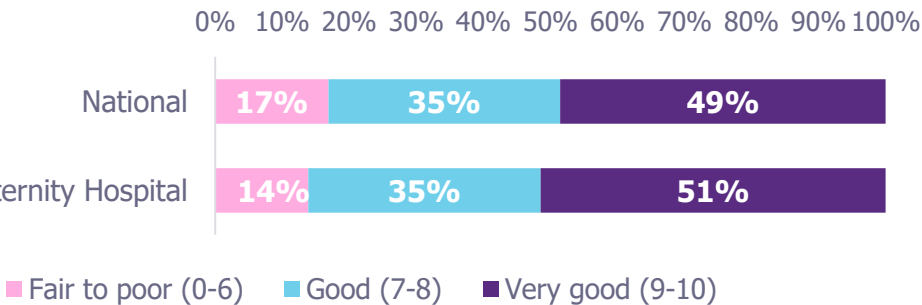


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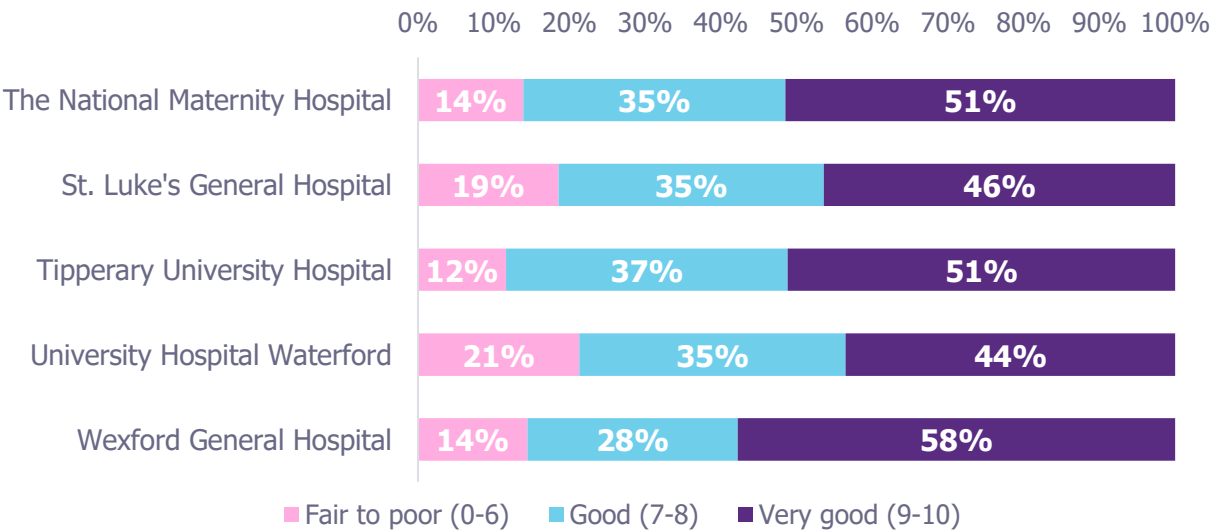
Overall experience of maternity care

- 81% of survey participants who gave birth at The National Maternity Hospital said that their decisions about their maternity care were always respected by healthcare staff. 17% said their decisions were sometimes respected, while 1% said their decisions about their maternity care were not respected.
- 47% of participants said that they knew how and where to give feedback or make a complaint if they wanted to do so, while 30% said they did not know. 24% said they did not wish to give feedback or make a complaint.
- 86% of participants who gave birth at The National Maternity Hospital said they had a good or very good overall experience (overall rating between 7 and 10), compared to 83% nationally. 14% of participants said they had a fair to poor experience of care.

Overall experience of care



Overall experience of care - HSE Dublin and South East 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 question scores at The National Maternity Hospital.
- Between 2020 and 2025, scores for five areas of care showed a significant increase:
 - Having a healthcare professional to talk to about worries and fears in pregnancy.
 - Involvement in decisions during labour and birth.
 - Emotional support in the neonatal unit.
 - Decisions about feeding respected.
 - Information before discharge about who to contact if worried after leaving hospital.
- There were no significant decreases in scores for any survey questions between 2020 and 2025 at the National Maternity Hospital.

Comments from survey participants

- When survey participants at The National Maternity Hospital were asked what was good about their care, they most commonly referred to the interactions they had with healthcare staff. Survey participants also frequently mentioned the specific type of maternity care they received and the positive aspects of that type of care.

"The Domino midwives were amazing and made the experience great. They are so well educated and help you with everything. Also they have never-ending patience and kindness."

"Private consultant was excellent and always available to answer any questions. Great continuity of care from him."

- When survey participants were asked what could be improved with care at The National Maternity Hospital, they most commonly referred to information sharing and explanations from staff, and support with feeding their baby.

"I found there could have been more information given just after giving birth. I was unaware of what they were testing my baby for, and some medicines I was receiving. I was also given an injection that I didn't know what it was- turns out it was a blood thinner, but I didn't know at the time."

"After I gave birth I was left there in the ward not knowing how to breastfeed and struggling, and felt like I wasn't supported properly."

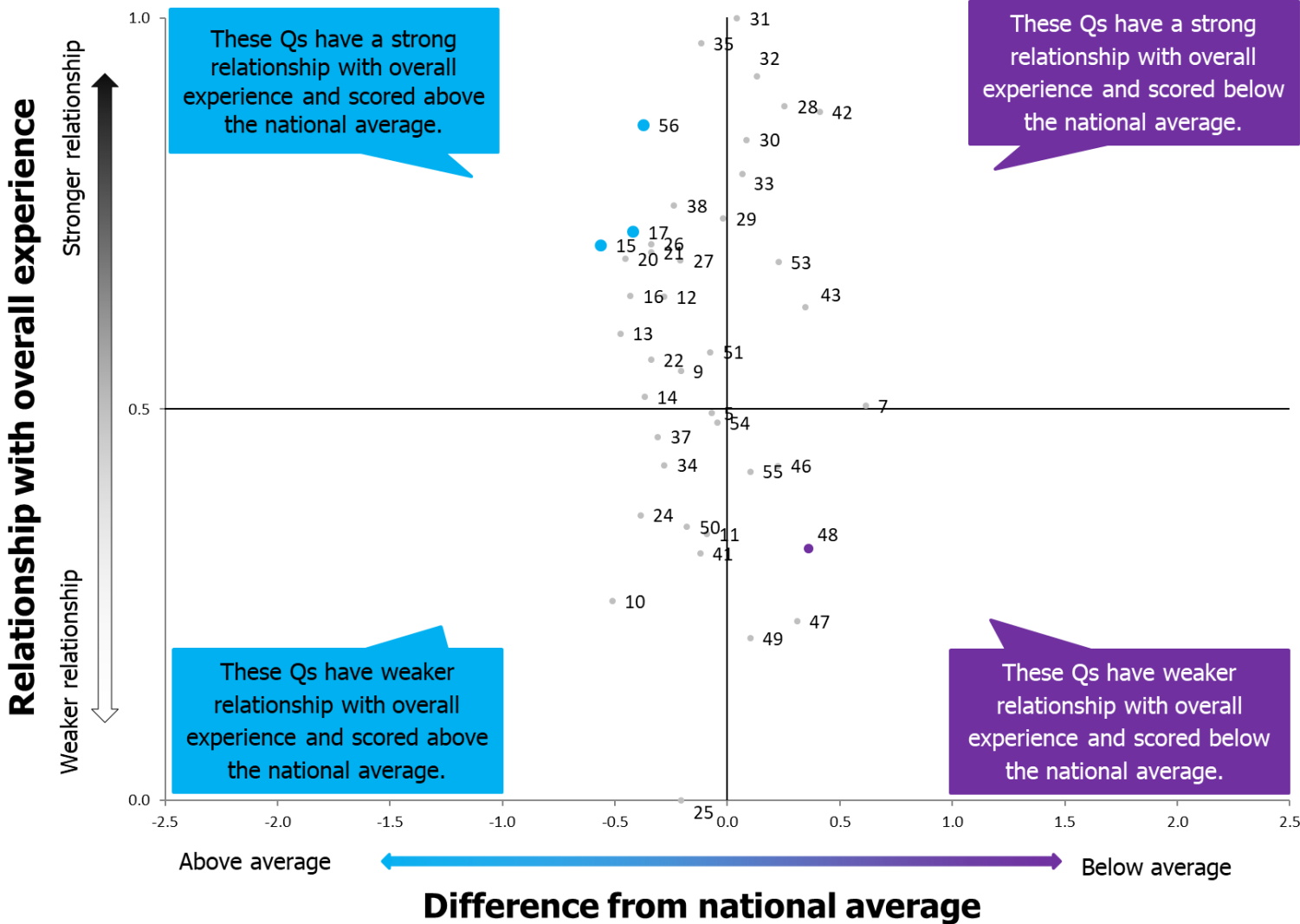
Conclusion

- Areas of good experience at The National Maternity Hospital included confidence and trust in healthcare professionals during pregnancy, having a healthcare professional to talk to about worries and fears during pregnancy, and decisions about maternity care respected by healthcare staff.
- Thirteen questions scored significantly above the national average for participants at The National Maternity Hospital and one question scored significantly below the national average.
- 86% of participants who gave birth at The National Maternity Hospital said they had a good or very good overall experience; this is higher than the national figure (83%).
- Between 2020 and 2025, there was a significant increase in the scores for five areas of care experience at The National Maternity Hospital.

Appendix 1

Improvement map The National Maternity 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.





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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