

National Maternity Experience Survey 2025

Portiuncula University 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 Portiuncula University Hospital.
- The report focuses on experiences of care provided by Portiuncula 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

<p>Care while you were pregnant (antenatal care)</p> <p>Experiences of the type of maternity care received, information provided and communication with healthcare professionals during pregnancy.</p>  <p>17 questions</p>	<p>Care during your labour and birth</p> <p>Experiences of interactions with healthcare professionals, pain management and involvement in decisions during labour and when giving birth.</p>  <p>10 questions</p>
<p>Care in hospital after the birth of your baby*</p> <p>Experiences in hospital, such as the support and assistance provided by staff, and information provided on care and recovery.</p>  <p>8 questions</p>	<p>Specialised care**</p> <p>Experiences of support in the neonatal unit, and overall ratings of the care received by the baby while in the unit.</p>  <p>3 questions</p>
<p>Feeding</p> <p>Experiences of receiving information and support for feeding the baby.</p>  <p>6 questions</p>	<p>Care at home and in the community after the birth</p> <p>Experiences of support and advice from GPs, public health nurses and other healthcare professionals, while at home or in the community after birth.</p>  <p>11 questions</p>

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?

- 202 people who gave birth in Portiuncula University Hospital were invited to participate in the survey.
- 99 took part. This is a response rate of 49% (compared to the national rate of 42%).

Age of participants	Number	%
Under 25 years	7	7.1
25 to 29 years	18	18.2
30 to 34 years	39	39.4
35 to 39 years	30	30.3
40 years or older	5	5.1
Previous births	Number	%
None	36	36.7
1 or 2	56	57.1
3 or more	6	6.1

Ethnicity of participants	Number	%
White Irish	75	76.5
Irish Traveller	2	2.0
Any Other White Background	11	11.2
Black or Black Irish- African	2	2.0
Any Other Black Background	1	1.0
Asian or Asian Irish- Indian/ Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	6	6.1
Asian or Asian Irish- Any Other Asian Background	1	1.0
Long-term condition or disability	Number	%
Any long-term condition	7	7.1
No long-term condition	92	92.9



Areas of good experience

Communication between maternity service and GP | Q7

55% of survey participants (47 out of 86 participants who responded to this question) said that there was definitely good communication about their care in pregnancy between the maternity service and their GP.

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

76% of participants (71 out of 93) said that during their pregnancy, they always had a healthcare professional to talk to about their worries and fears.

Emotional support from healthcare professionals in neonatal unit | Q37

77% of participants (10 out of 13) said that while their baby was in the neonatal unit, they always received enough emotional support from healthcare professionals.

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

Comments from participants

"Each midwife, doctor or consultant I encountered took their time to listen to me and done everything they could to help me when my BP was rising due to anxiousness and worry."

"Could not fault midwives during pregnancy, labour and birth in Portiuncula. Always felt listened to and respected...Loved the fact I had a number I could call or text anytime and get an answer to any questions or queries and I knew at any time I could go into maternity unit and be checked over."

"Staff in SCBU were excellent in caring for our baby and facilitating us in spending time with him, being present for his feeding times and supporting me to pump comfortably while there."

Areas for improvement

There were no questions that scored significantly below national average for participants at Portiuncula University 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

"Pain relief during labour- I was not offered an epidural in time even though I had filled out consent forms."

"Stronger communication between midwives and consultants, as found some of the opinions and decisions were mixed."

"I had an emergency C-section. I think more information should be given at antenatal classes. I attended many of the hospital classes and vaginal birth was the main topic even though many women now have C-sections. I would also have liked more information directly after birth about my immediate and long term care and recovery."

Care in pregnancy



- 54% of participants from Portiuncula University 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. 42% of participants said they did antenatal classes, while 50% did not do them. 7% said they were not offered any antenatal classes in pregnancy.
- 92% of participants had some of their regular check-ups in pregnancy with their GP.

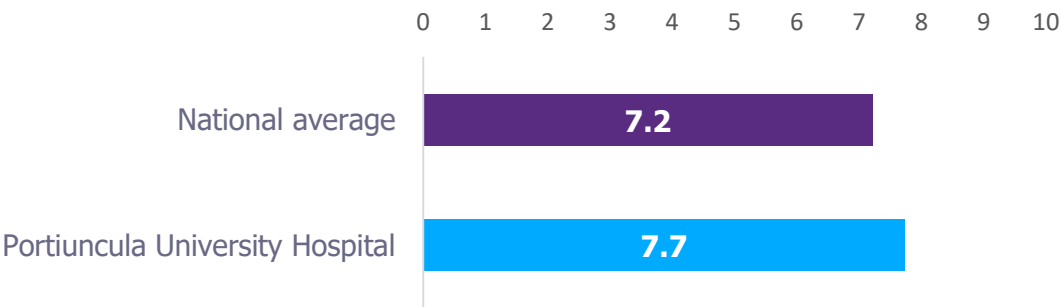
First healthcare professional seen when pregnant	Number	%
General Practitioner (GP) or family doctor	83	83.8
Healthcare professional at private scan clinic	8	8.1
Midwife at maternity service	5	5.1
Obstetrician (doctor or consultant) at maternity service	1	1
Other	2	2

Type of maternity care in pregnancy	Number	%
Obstetrician public clinic at the hospital	53	53.5
Midwife clinic at the hospital	29	29.3
Community midwife clinic	7	7.1
'Domino scheme': midwife-led care in community	4	4.0
Obstetrician private clinic	6	6.1

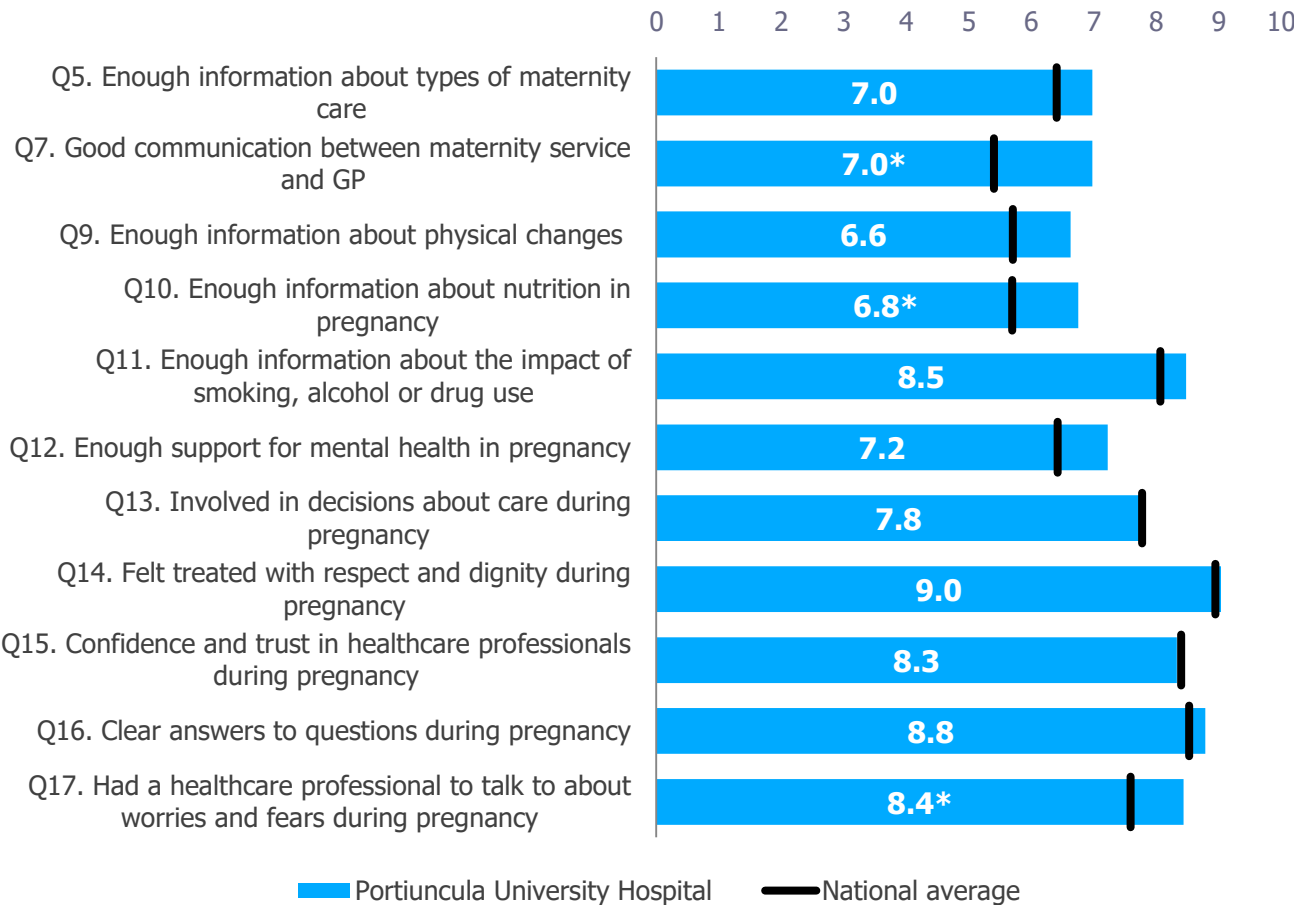
Scored questions for care in pregnancy

- **Highest-scoring question:** 84% of participants (83 of 99) said they always felt treated with respect and dignity in pregnancy.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 14% of participants (14 of 98) said they did not receive enough information about physical changes 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

- 41% of survey participants at Portiuncula University Hospital said their labour was induced.

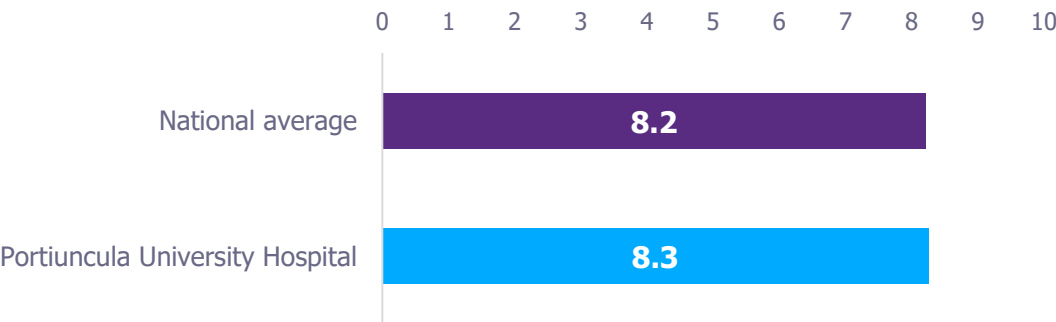
Type of birth for survey participants	Number	%
Vaginal birth (no forceps or ventouse suction cup)	36	36.7
Assisted vaginal birth (with forceps or ventouse suction cup)	13	13.3
Planned caesarean birth	21	21.4
Unplanned caesarean birth	28	28.6
Participant left alone by healthcare professionals at a time when it worried them	Number	%
Yes, during early labour	9	9.1
Yes, during the later stages of labour	5	5.1
Yes, during the birth	2	2
Yes, shortly after the birth	10	10.1
No	77	77.8



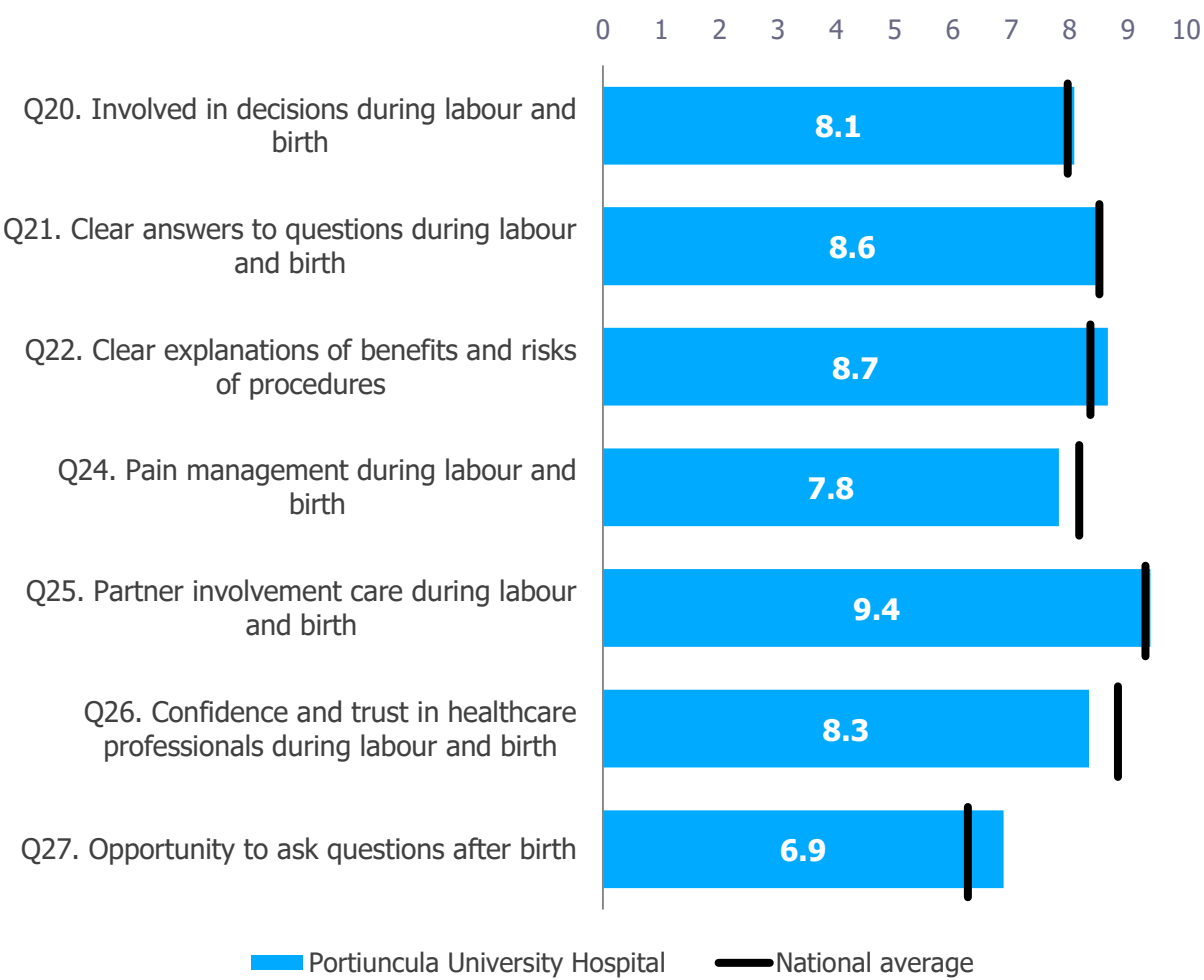
Scored questions for care during labour and birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 94% of participants (92 of 98) 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:** 18% of participants (16 of 91) 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

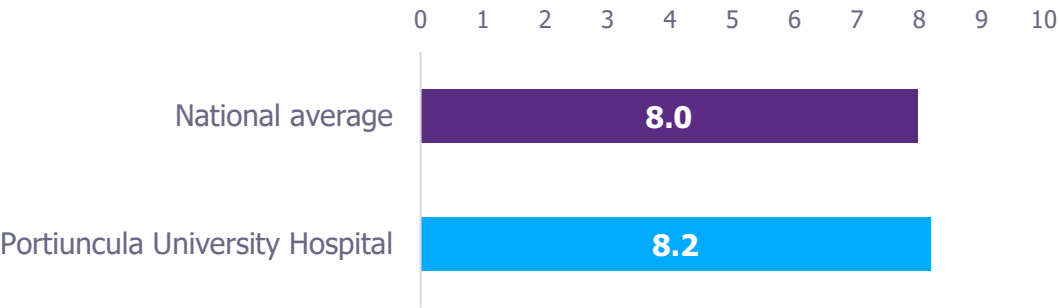




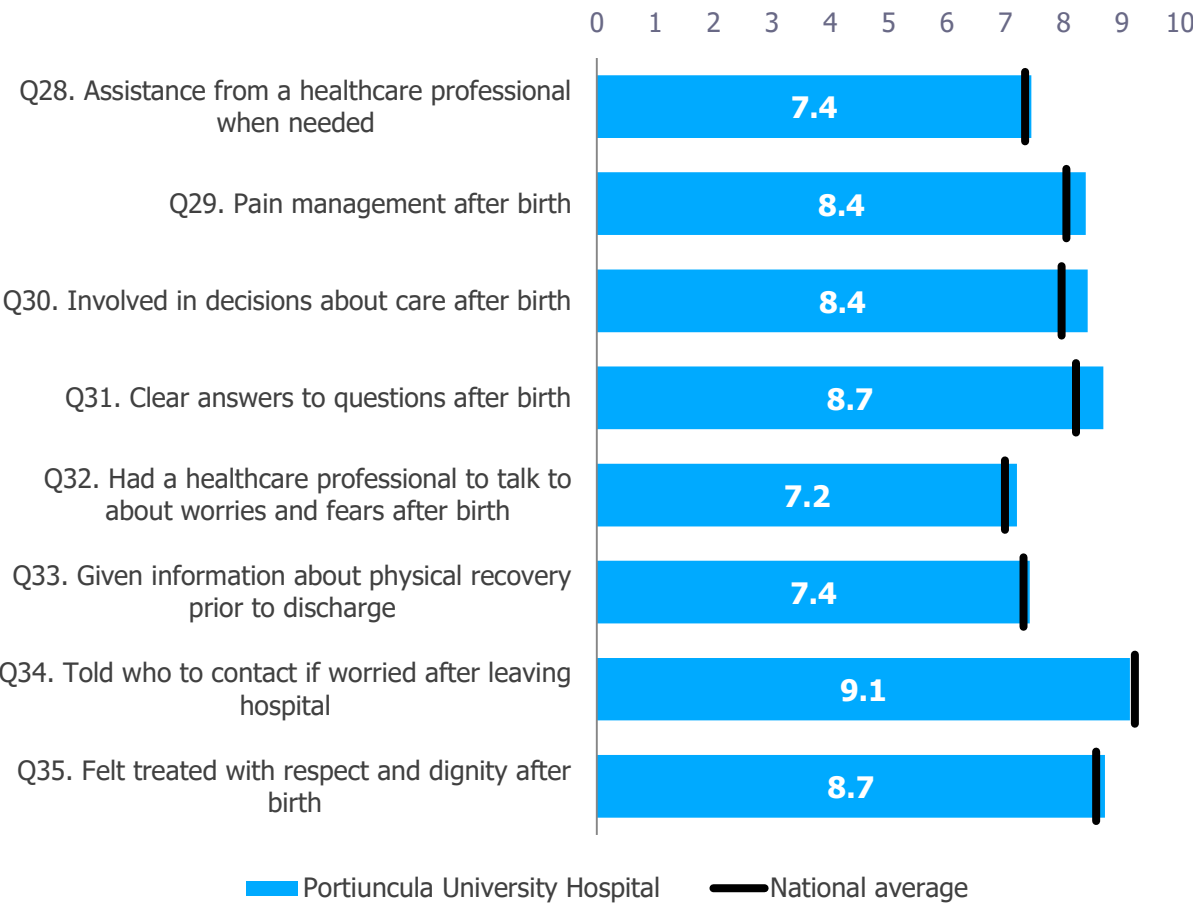
Scored questions for care in hospital after birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 91% of participants (85 of 93) 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:** 15% of participants (14 of 93) 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

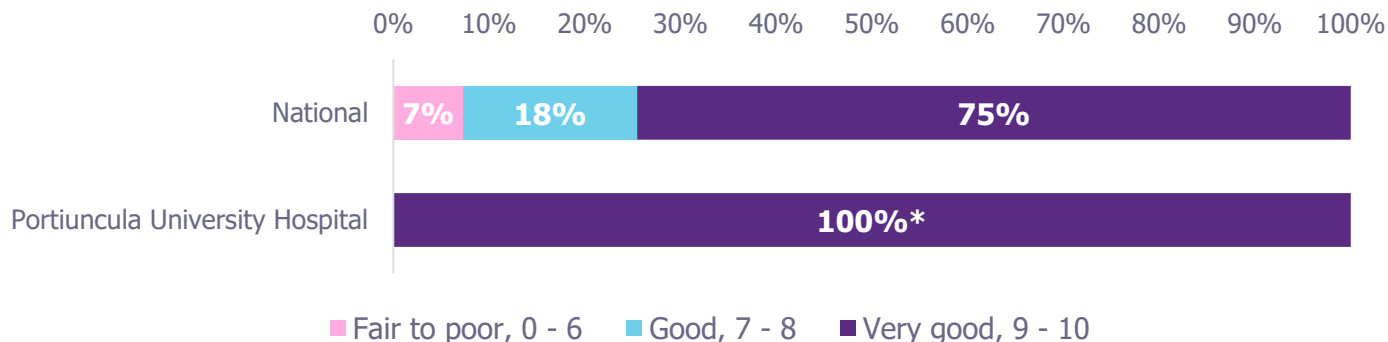




Specialist care in the neonatal unit

- 13 survey participants (13%) at Portiuncula University Hospital said that their baby spent time in the neonatal unit following the birth.
- Of these participants:
 - 77% said that they always received enough emotional support from healthcare professionals while their baby was in the neonatal unit.
 - 15% said that they sometimes received enough emotional support.
 - 8% said that they did not want or need 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:

- 30% of participants fed their baby with breast milk only.
- 39% fed their baby with formula milk only.
- 30% fed their baby with both breast and formula milk.

Healthcare professional discussed feeding options

	Number	%
Yes, during pregnancy	76	76.8
Yes, during labour or immediately after birth	21	21.2
Yes, after birth while in hospital	31	31.3
Yes, after birth while at home	16	16.2
No	5	5.1
Did not want or need discussion of different options	10	10.1

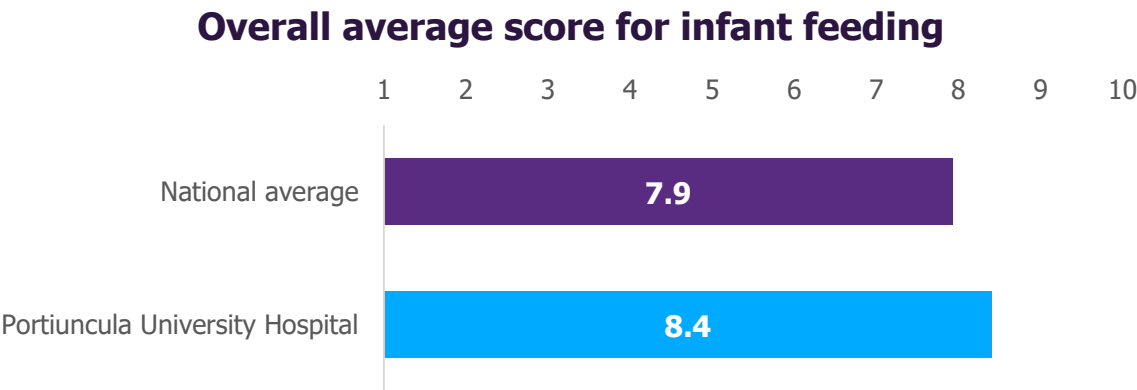
Sources of breastfeeding support

	Number	%
Midwife(s) in hospital	47	49.0
Hospital lactation consultant	15	15.6
Postnatal community midwives	7	7.3
Postnatal hub midwife	11	11.5
Public Health Nurse	32	33.3
GP	7	7.3
Practice nurse	3	3.1
Community breastfeeding support groups or volunteers	11	11.5
Private lactation consultant	4	4.2
Friends or family	18	18.8
Did not need support	9	9.4
Did not want to breastfeed	27	28.1

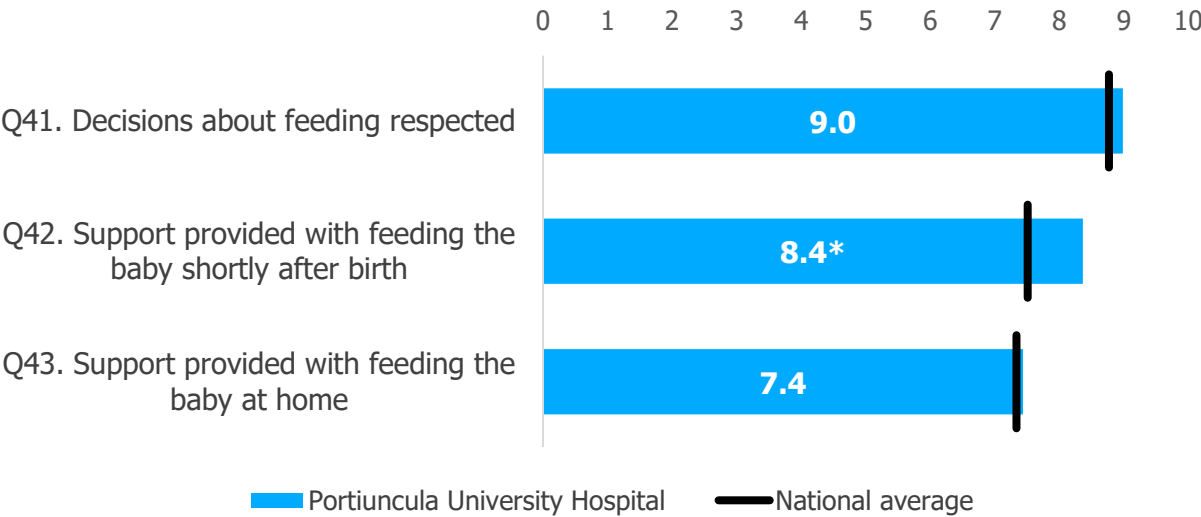
Scored questions for infant feeding



- **Highest-scoring question:** 85% of participants (84 of 99) said their decisions about how they wanted to feed their baby were always respected.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 14% of participants (12 of 86) said that healthcare professionals did not give them adequate support with feeding their baby at home.



Average scores out of 10 for individual questions



** Indicates statistically significant difference from the national average.*

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	10.1
Postnatal community midwife at a community clinic	39	39.4
Public Health Nurse at home	92	92.9
Public Health Nurse at a community clinic	38	38.4
GP	72	72.7
Obstetrician at hospital clinic	15	15.2
Midwives and or paediatricians at hospital baby clinic	13	13.1
Other professionals	2	2.0

Healthcare professionals who provided mental health support during pregnancy or after birth		
	Number	%
GP	37	39.4
Public Health Nurse	27	28.7
Midwife	18	19.1
Obstetrician	2	2.1
Perinatal mental health midwife	1	1.1
Perinatal mental health nurse	1	1.1
Psychiatrist	2	2.1
Psychologist	2	2.1
Mental health social worker	2	2.1
Other professionals	3	3.2
None of the above	43	45.7

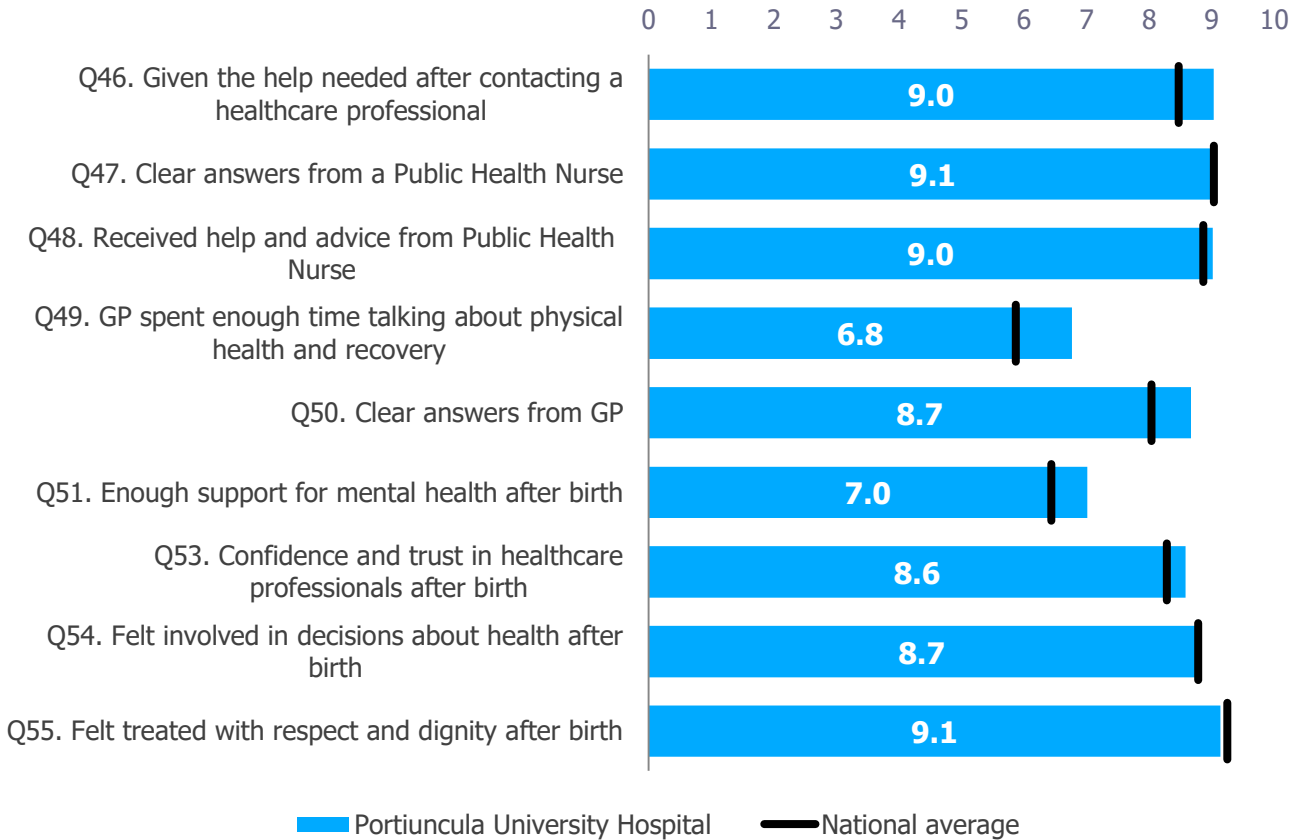
Scored questions for care at home after birth



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 questions:**
 - 83% of participants (81 of 98) said their questions were always answered by the Public Health Nurse in a way they could understand.
 - 86% of participants (85 of 99) 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:** 17% of participants (17 of 99) 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.

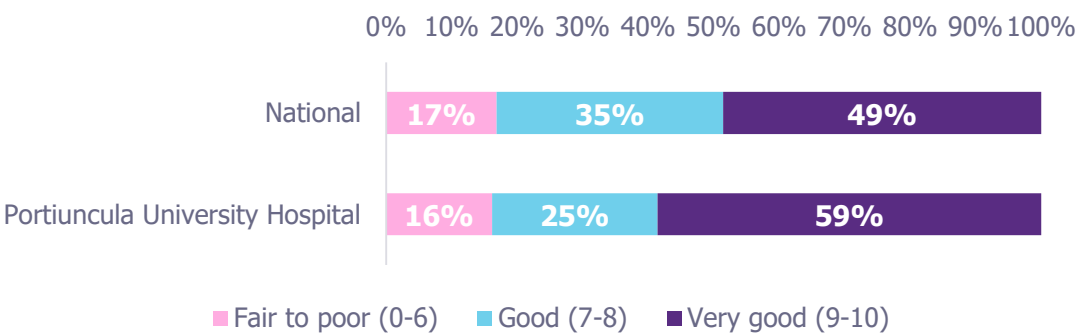
Average scores out of 10 for individual questions



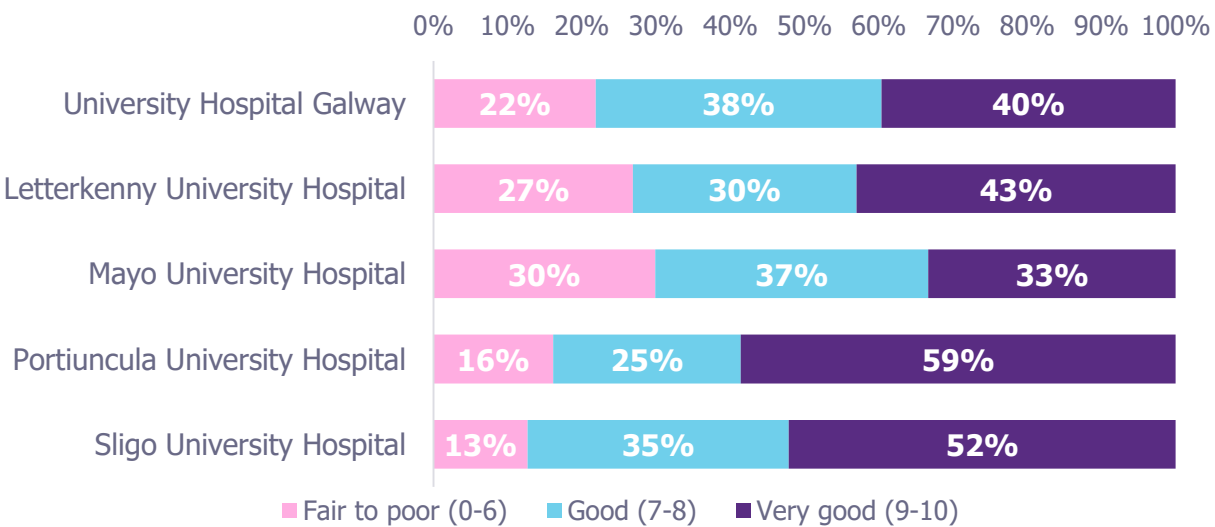
Overall experience of maternity care

- 77% of survey participants who gave birth at Portiuncula University Hospital said that their decisions about their maternity care were always respected by healthcare staff. 17% said their decisions were sometimes respected, while 6% said their decisions about their maternity care were not respected.
- 48% of participants said that they knew how and where to give feedback or make a complaint if they wanted to do so, while 36% said they did not know. 16% said they did not wish to give feedback or make a complaint.
- 84% of participants who gave birth at Portiuncula University Hospital said they had a good or very good overall experience (overall rating between 7 and 10), compared to 83% nationally. 16% 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 Portiuncula University Hospital.
- There were no significant increases or decreases in scores for any survey questions between 2020 and 2025 at Portiuncula University Hospital.

Comments from survey participants

- When survey participants at Portiuncula University Hospital were asked what was good about their care and what could be improved, they frequently referred to the interpersonal interactions they had with healthcare 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 Portiuncula University Hospital, they most commonly referred to support with feeding.

"My interactions with everyone was great- I felt very comfortable and safe. Everyone was very friendly and I felt listened to."

"The doctors and midwives were diligent with my care prior to birth and involved me with all decision making. Clearly explaining my options and the benefits/risks of each."

"Part-time lactation consultants in a hospital makes no sense. There needs to be good support for mothers 7 days a week until they are comfortable with breastfeeding experience."

"Postnatal care in the maternity ward needs a complete overhaul. Midwives should have more empathy, be more helpful and not go around showing dissatisfaction that someone needs help- that's their job."

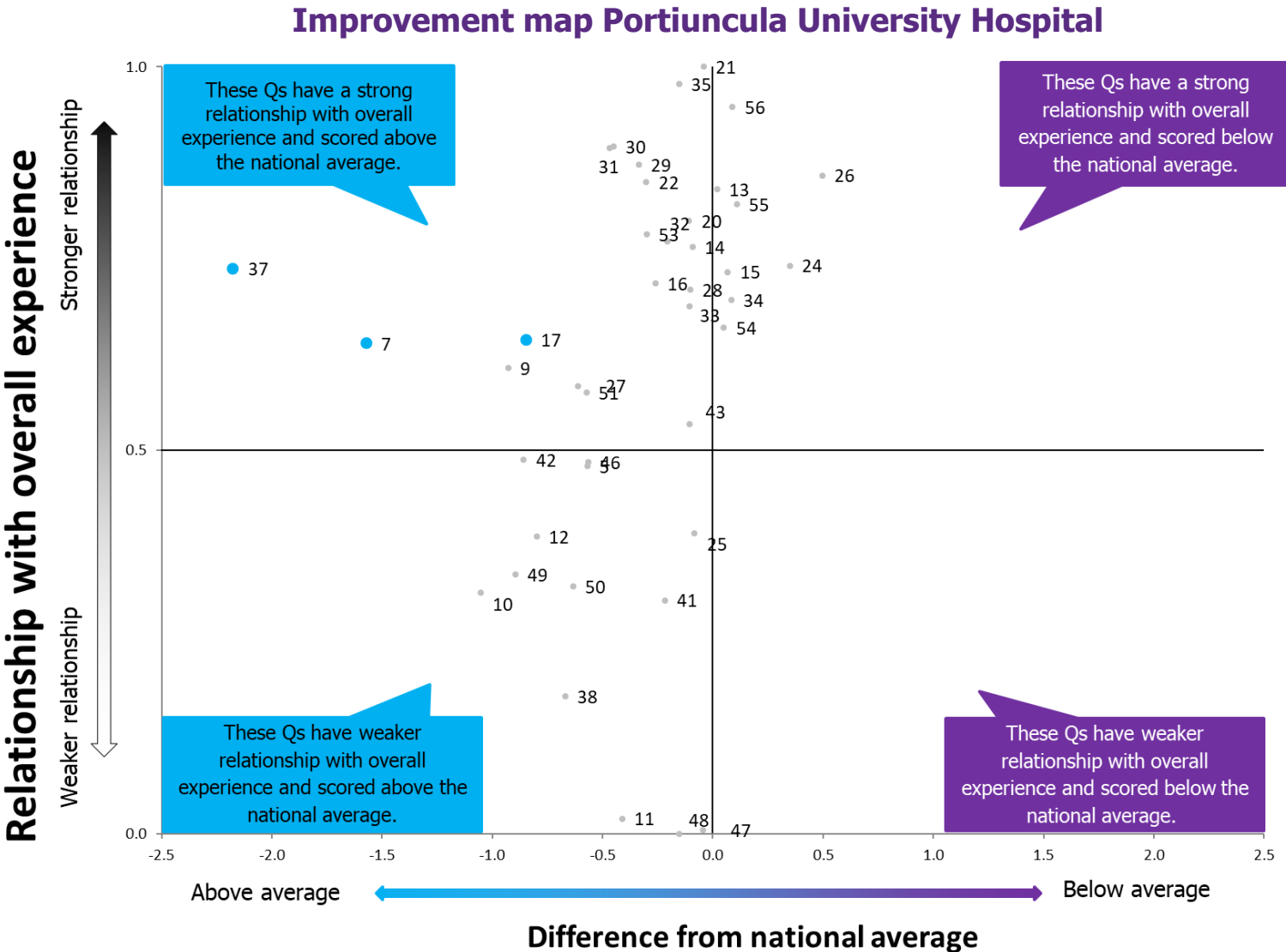
"How the VBAC options were presented needs to be addressed. I was quite stressed researching and finding out about VBACs, attending extra classes, only for the decision to be taken out of my hands at the end and booked for an 'elective' C-section. Elective is a very poor choice for this as I in no way felt I elected for a section. I felt all options were taken from me."

Conclusion

- Areas of good experience at Portiuncula University Hospital included communication about care in pregnancy between the maternity service and GPs, having a healthcare professional to talk to about worries and fears in pregnancy, and emotional support from healthcare professionals when the baby is in the neonatal unit.
- Nine questions scored significantly above the national average for participants at Portiuncula University Hospital and no questions scored significantly below the national average.
- 84% of participants who gave birth at Portiuncula University Hospital said they had a good or very good overall experience; this is higher than the national figure (83%).
- There were no significant increases or decreases in scores for any survey questions between 2020 and 2025 at Portiuncula University 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.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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