

National Maternity Experience Survey 2025

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

Who was eligible to take part?

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

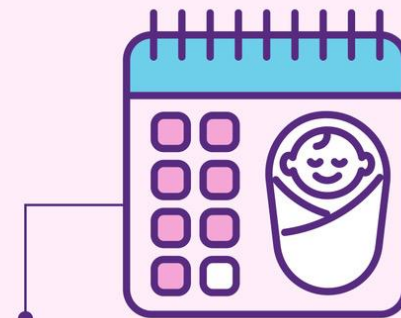
Care at home and in the community after the birth

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

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?

- 167 people who gave birth in Sligo University Hospital were invited to participate in the survey.
- 72 took part. This is a response rate of 43% (compared to the national rate of 42%).

Age of participants	Number	%
Under 25 years	6	8.3
25 to 29 years	15	20.8
30 to 34 years	25	34.7
35 to 39 years	23	31.9
40 years or older	3	4.2
Previous births	Number	%
None	30	41.7
1 or 2	35	48.6
3 or more	7	9.7

Ethnicity of participants	Number	%
White Irish	59	83.1
Any Other White Background	3	4.2
Black or Black Irish- African	2	2.8
Asian or Asian Irish- Indian/ Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	3	4.2
Arab	1	1.4
Mixed	2	2.8
Other	1	1.4
Long-term condition or disability	Number	%
Any long-term condition	5	6.9
No long-term condition	67	93.1

Areas of good experience



Decisions about feeding respected | Q41

92% of survey participants (65 out of 71 participants) said that their decisions about how they wanted to feed their baby were always respected by healthcare professionals.

Support provided with feeding the baby at home | Q43

86% of participants (54 out of 63) who wanted or needed support from healthcare professionals with feeding their baby at home, said they always received adequate support and encouragement.

Confidence and trust in healthcare professionals at home after the birth | Q53

79% of participants (57 out of 72) said that they always had confidence and trust in the healthcare professionals caring for them at home or in the community after the birth.

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

Comments from participants

"My PHN was fantastic... She really helped with my anxiety about the weight loss and also was very realistic when it came to breast feeding. She made me feel so calm and confident in those first few days and weeks at home."

"Lactation consultant provided so much help and resources and a number of midwives who supported me during and after birth."

"This was my third baby and there was clearly huge improvements since my first. The dedicated midwives assigned to certain patients worked really well. The lactation consultant was a godsend. Even after we were discharged she was of huge assistance for weeks afterwards."

Areas for improvement

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

"Decision around epidural not supported by midwife, stated to try and hold off having epidural. At this stage was then too late to have epidural. Midwife staff should respect pain relief choice when made by patient."

"I had to wait almost 2 hours post delivery for my sutures to be done. It was harrowing as I had little to no pain relief and the experience really left a horrible taste in my mouth after the elation I had felt prior from giving birth with no pain relief or interventions."

"The care during the late stages of labour (midwife kept leaving the room). After birth, the midwives left the room again and could have been nicer to me and my partner and more supportive."

Care in pregnancy

- 43% of participants from Sligo University Hospital said that they were offered a choice about the type of maternity care they would receive.
- 97% of participants said that they were offered antenatal classes in pregnancy. 49% of participants said they did antenatal classes, while 48% did not do them. 3% said they were not offered any antenatal classes in pregnancy.
- 90% of participants had some of their regular check-ups in pregnancy with their GP.



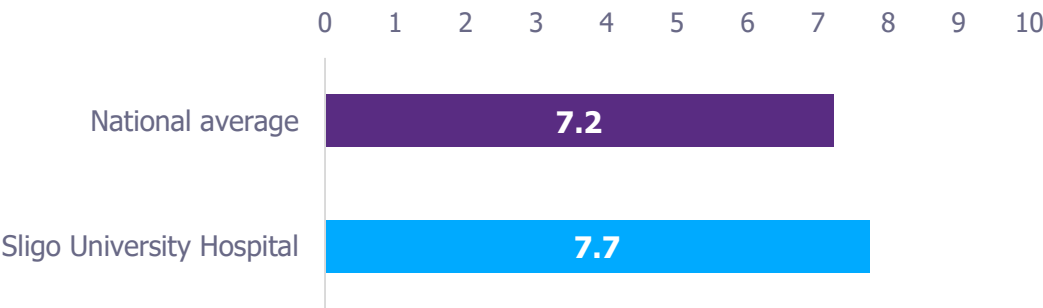
First healthcare professional seen when pregnant	Number	%
General Practitioner (GP) or family doctor	59	81.9
Midwife at maternity service	5	6.9
Obstetrician (doctor or consultant) at maternity service	4	5.6
Healthcare professional at private scan clinic	2	2.8
Other	2	2.8

Type of maternity care in pregnancy	Number	%
Obstetrician public clinic at the hospital	26	36.1
Midwife clinic at the hospital	24	33.3
'Domino scheme': midwife-led care in community	2	2.8
Community midwife clinic	8	11.1
Obstetrician private clinic	11	15.3
Did not have any check-ups in pregnancy	1	1.4

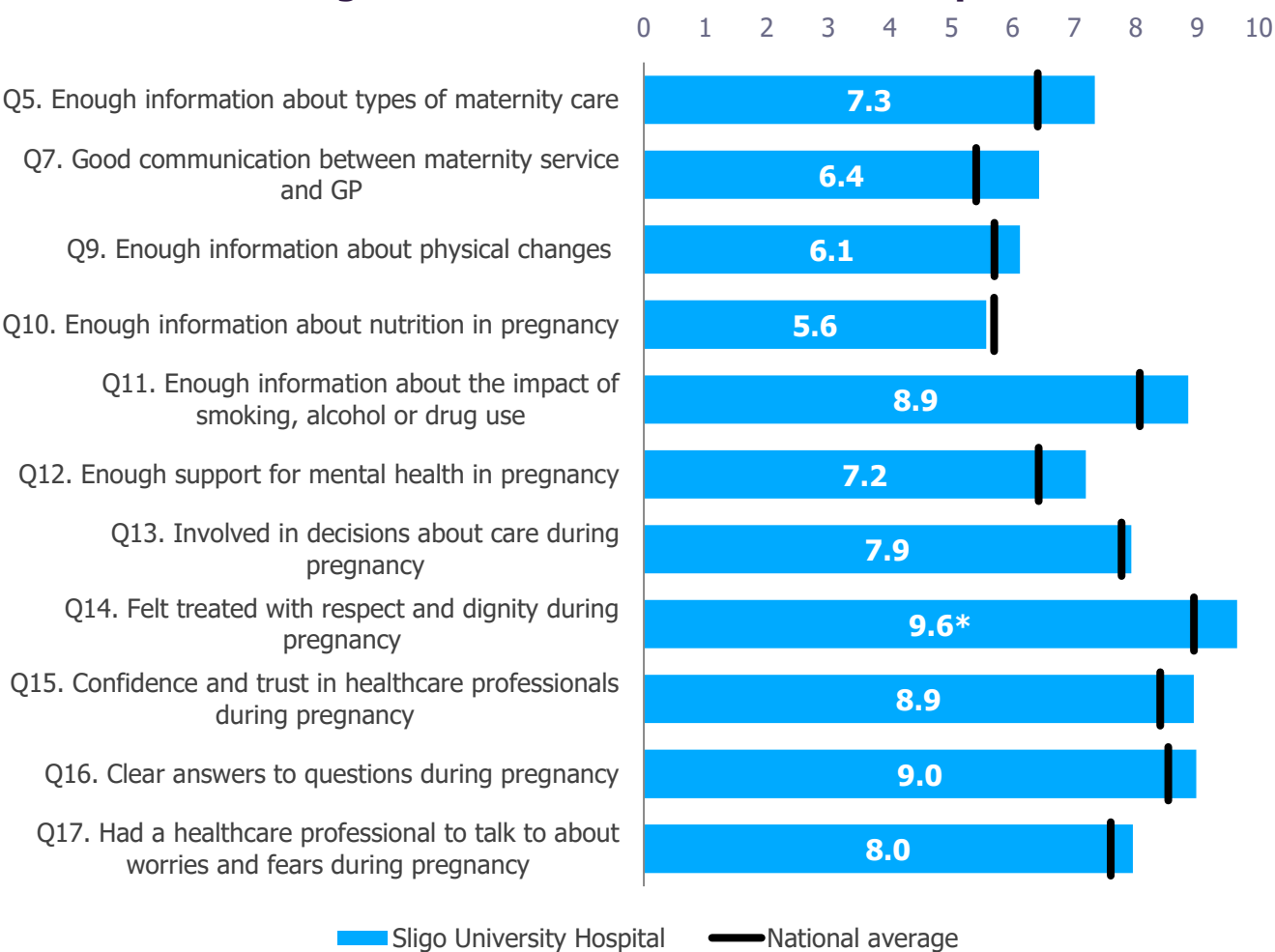
Scored questions for care in pregnancy

- **Highest-scoring question:** 93% of participants (66 of 71) said they always felt treated with respect and dignity in pregnancy.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 20% of participants (14 of 70) said they did not receive enough information about nutrition 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

- 39% of survey participants at Sligo University Hospital said their labour was induced.

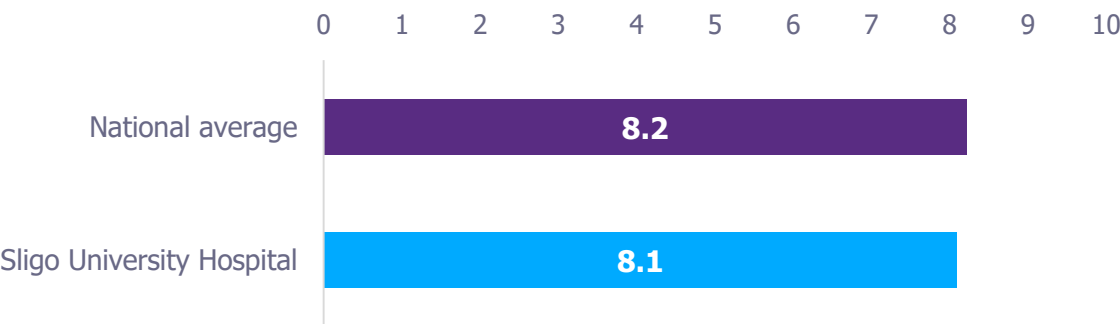
Type of birth for survey participants	Number	%
Vaginal birth (no forceps or ventouse suction cup)	31	43.1
Assisted vaginal birth (with forceps or ventouse suction cup)	5	6.9
Planned caesarean birth	15	20.8
Unplanned caesarean birth	21	29.2
Participant left alone by healthcare professionals at a time when it worried them	Number	%
Yes, during early labour	8	11.1
Yes, during the later stages of labour	3	4.2
Yes, during the birth	1	1.4
Yes, shortly after the birth	6	8.3
No	57	79.2



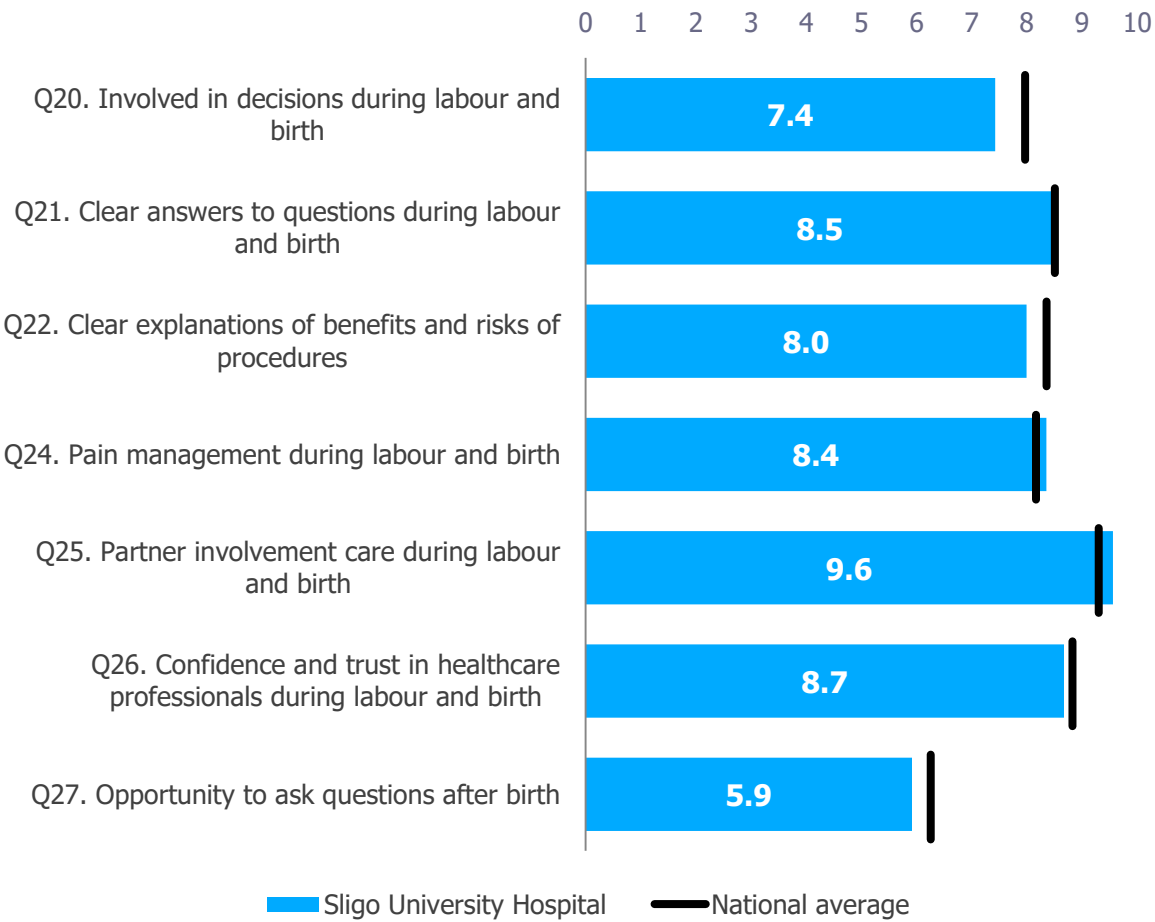
Scored questions for care during labour and birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 96% of participants (66 of 69) 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:** 29% of participants (19 of 65) 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

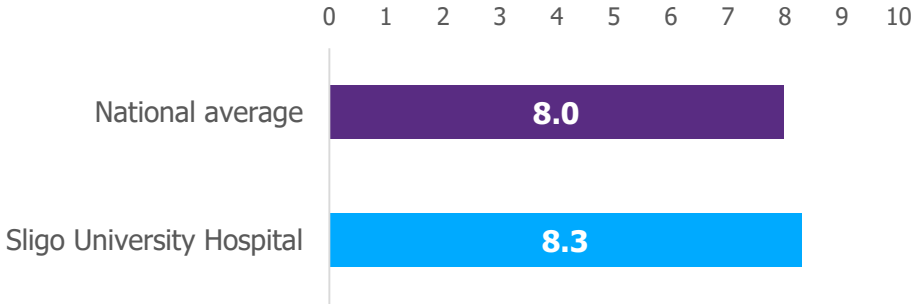




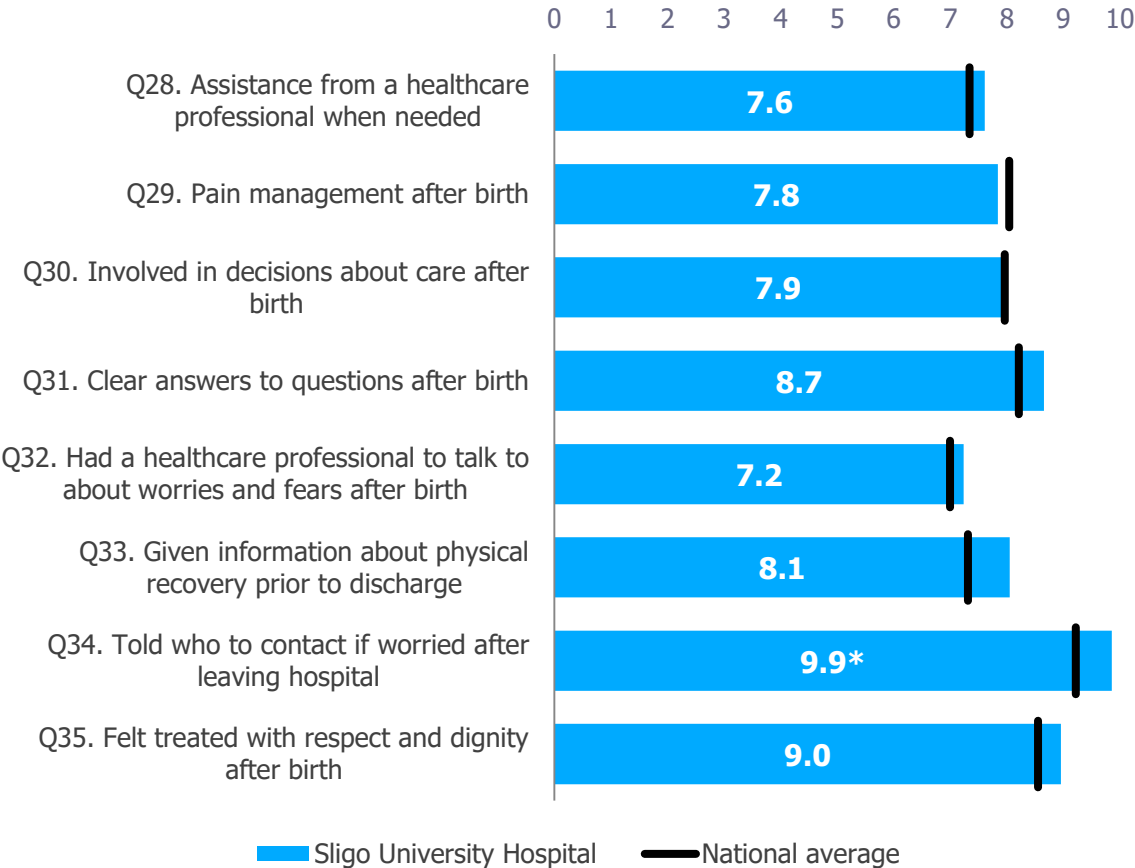
Scored questions for care in hospital after birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 99% of participants (70 of 71) 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 (10 of 67) 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



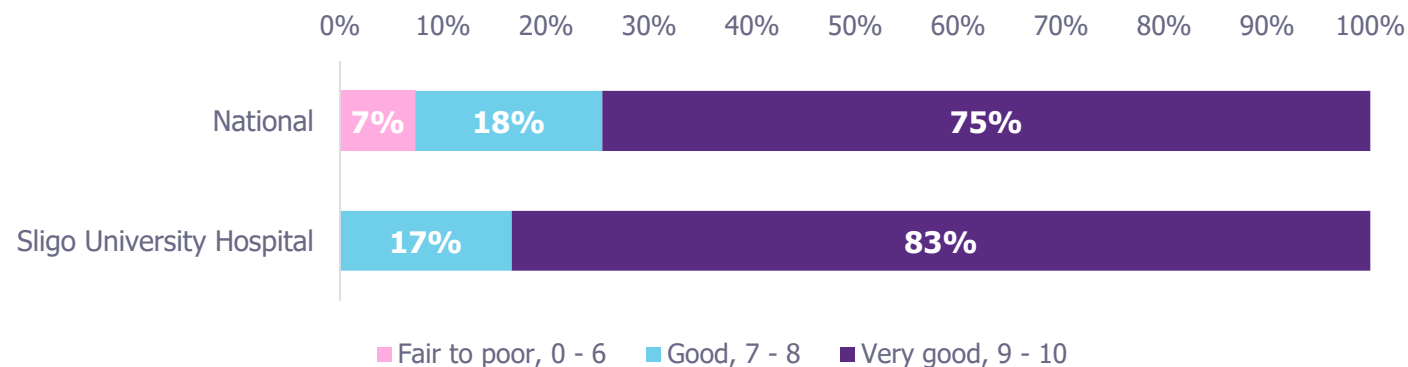
* Indicates statistically significant difference from the national average.



Specialist care in the neonatal unit

- 13 survey participants (18%) at Sligo 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.
 - 31% 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



Infant feeding

In the first few days after birth:

- 43% of participants fed their baby with breast milk only.
- 35% fed their baby with formula milk only.
- 22% fed their baby with both breast and formula milk.

Healthcare professional discussed feeding options		
	Number	%
Yes, during pregnancy	50	69.4
Yes, during labour or immediately after birth	14	19.4
Yes, after birth while in hospital	24	33.3
Yes, after birth while at home	7	9.7
No	5	6.9
Did not want or need discussion of different options	5	6.9

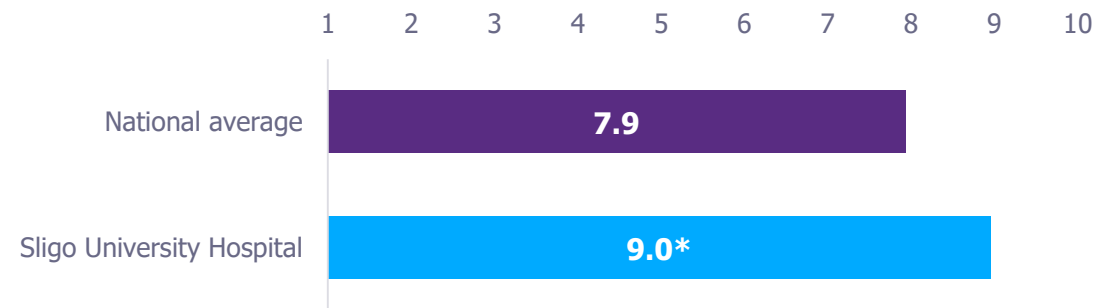
Sources of breastfeeding support		
	Number	%
Midwife(s) in hospital	37	52.1
Hospital lactation consultant	27	38.0
Postnatal community midwives	5	7.0
Postnatal hub midwife	6	8.5
Public Health Nurse	28	39.4
GP	5	7.0
Practice nurse	1	1.4
Community breastfeeding support groups or volunteers	1	1.4
Private lactation consultant	2	2.8
Friends or family	15	21.1
Did not need support	4	5.6
Did not want to breastfeed	19	26.8

Scored questions for infant feeding

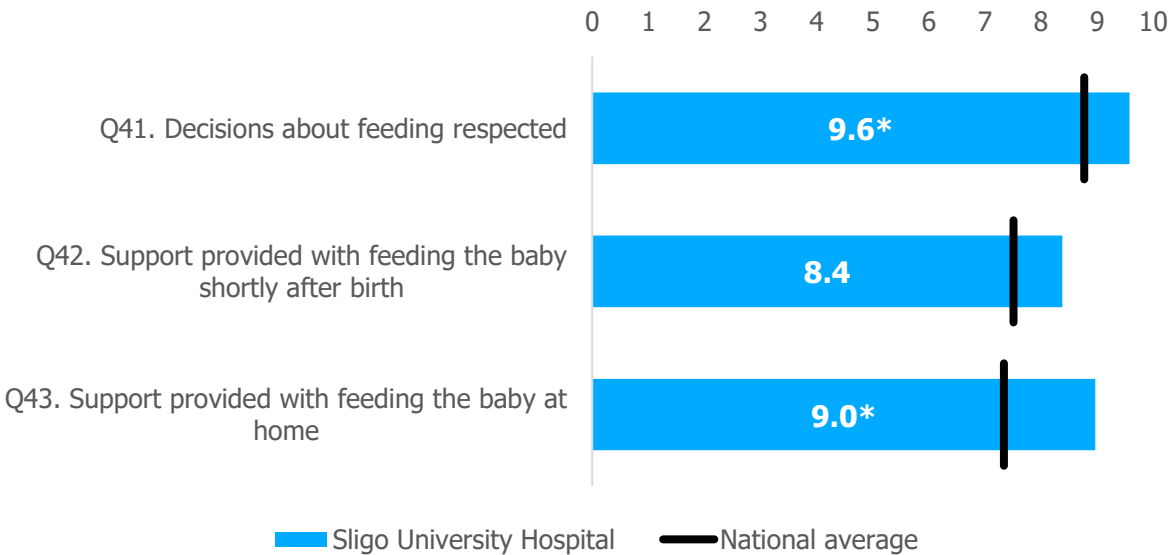


- **Highest-scoring question:** 92% of participants (65 of 71) said their decisions about how they wanted to feed their baby were always respected.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 9% of participants (6 of 71) said that they did not get adequate support and encouragement from healthcare professionals with feeding their baby in hospital shortly after the birth.

Overall average score for infant feeding



Average scores out of 10 for individual questions



* Indicates statistically significant differences from the national average.

Care at home and in the community after birth



Healthcare professionals met after the birth of the baby		
	Number	%
Public Health Nurse at home	67	93.1
GP	52	72.2
Postnatal community midwife at a community clinic (including a Postnatal Hub)	32	44.4
Public Health Nurse at a community clinic	11	15.3
Obstetrician at hospital clinic	11	15.3
Postnatal community midwife at home	8	11.1
Midwives or paediatricians at hospital baby clinic	8	11.1
Other professionals	6	8.3

Healthcare professionals who provided mental health support during pregnancy or after birth		
	Number	%
Public Health Nurse	27	38.0
GP	22	31.0
Midwife	9	12.7
Obstetrician	7	9.9
Perinatal mental health midwife	4	5.6
Psychiatrist	2	2.8
Perinatal mental health nurse	2	2.8
None of the above	32	45.1

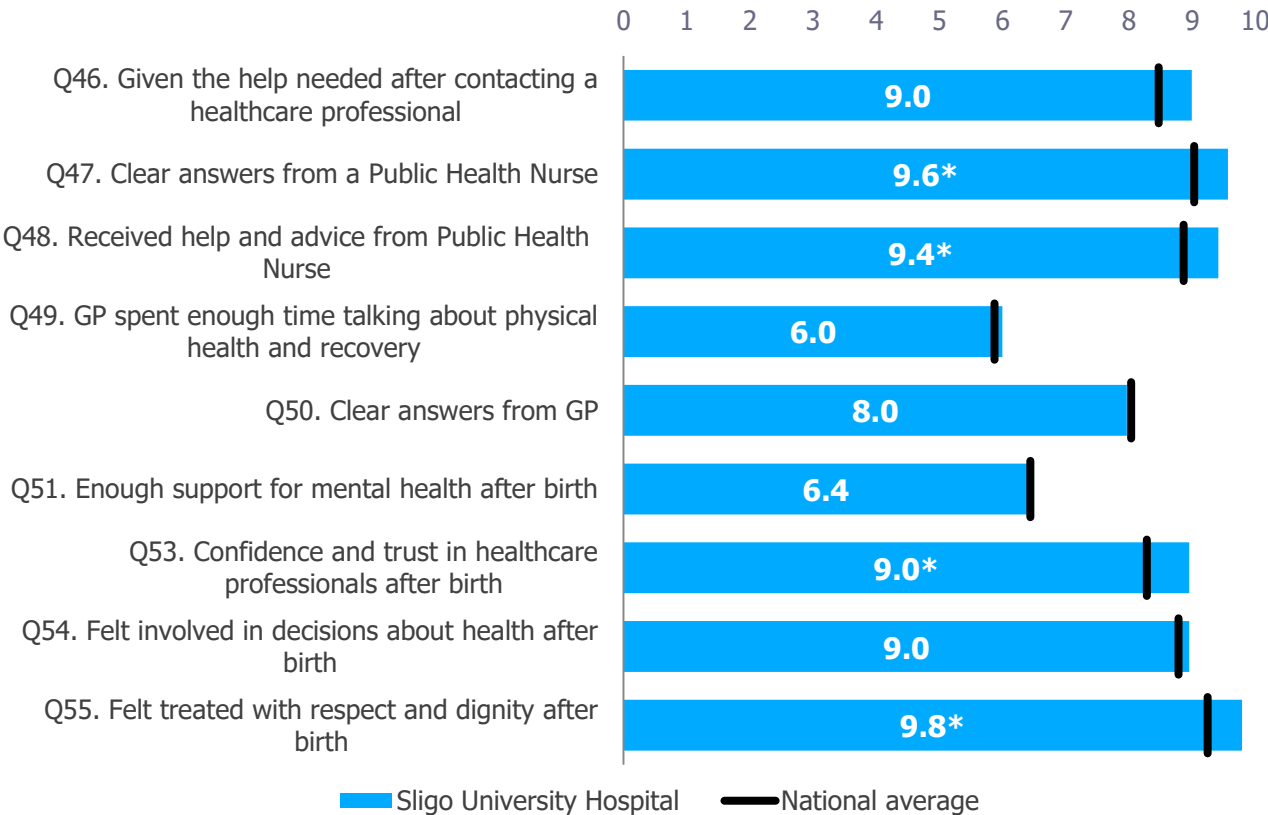
Scored questions for care at home after birth



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.

Average scores out of 10 for individual questions

- **Highest-scoring question:** 97% of participants (70 of 72) 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:** 27% of participants (19 of 70) 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.

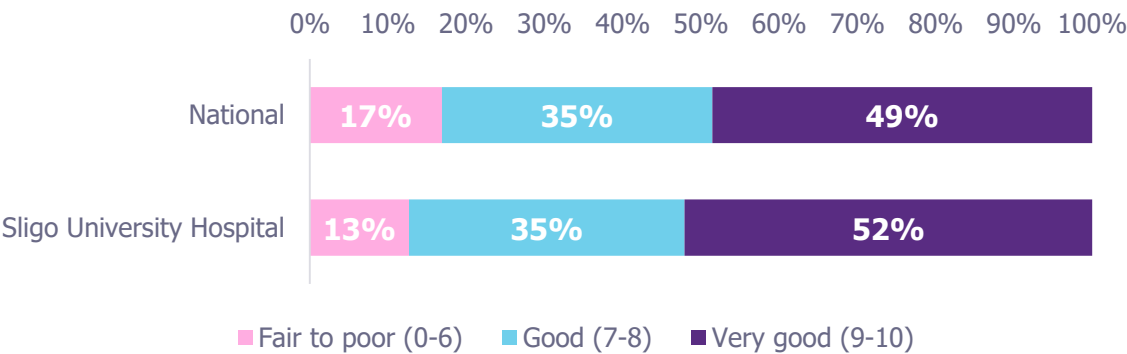


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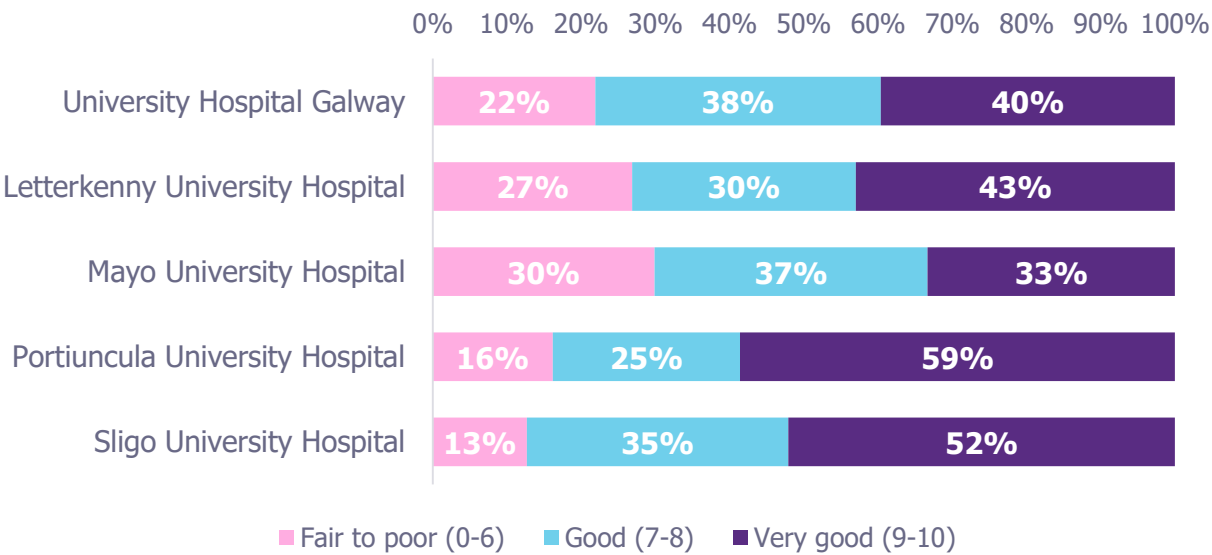
Overall experience of maternity care

- 81% of survey participants who gave birth at Sligo University Hospital said that their decisions about their maternity care were always respected by healthcare staff. 18% said their decisions were sometimes respected, while 1% said their decisions about their maternity care were not respected.
- 46% of participants said that if they wanted to give feedback or make a complaint they knew how and where to do so, while 29% said they did not know. 25% said they did not wish to give feedback or make a complaint.
- 87% of participants who gave birth at Sligo University Hospital said they had a good or very good overall experience (overall rating between 7 and 10), compared to 83% nationally. 13% 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 Sligo University Hospital.
- Between 2020 and 2025, there were significant increases in scores for two areas of care at Sligo University Hospital:
 - Respect for decisions about feeding.
 - Support and encouragement from healthcare professionals with feeding in hospital, shortly after the birth.
- Between 2020 and 2025, there were no significant decreases in scores for survey questions at Sligo University Hospital.

Comments from survey participants

- When survey participants at Sligo University Hospital were asked what was good about their care, they most commonly referred to the interactions they had with healthcare staff, and the information and explanations they received about their care.

"Everyone who we spoke to at Sligo Hospital and the antenatal clinic was incredible. They cared about me and my baby, and every aspect of our health. Especially the mental health midwife, she was amazingly supportive and kind."

"The delivery was well organised and I was informed of every step. Every detail was explained to me beforehand and while it was happening. I was very nervous before the birth in the theatre and all the staff were excellent at keeping me calm."

- When survey participants were asked what could be improved with care at Sligo University Hospital, they most commonly referred to staffing levels and staff responsiveness.

"The staffing on the maternity ward did slow down getting pain medication and BP meds on schedule. It delayed my discharge."

"Lack of support at night time after birth in the hospital, when my husband had gone home, with lifting and feeding my baby while I was in pain after a tear and haemorrhoids. I found the nights on my own extremely difficult."

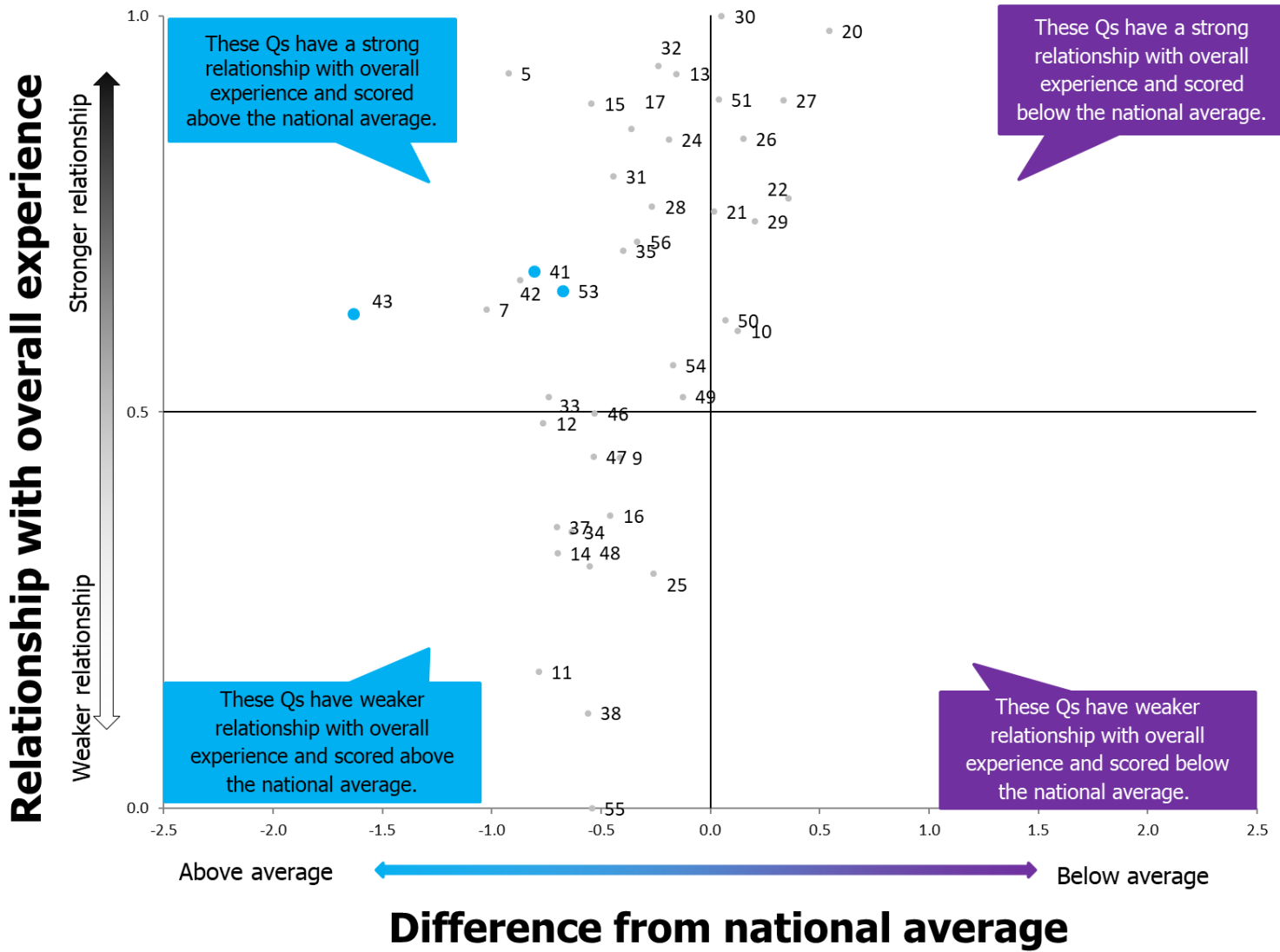
Conclusion

- Areas of good experience at Sligo University Hospital included respect for decisions about feeding, support from healthcare professionals with feeding the baby at home, and confidence and trust in healthcare professionals at home or in the community after birth.
- Eight questions for participants at Sligo University Hospital scored significantly above the national average and no questions scored significantly below national average.
- 87% of participants who gave birth at Sligo University Hospital said they had a good or very good overall experience; this is higher than the national figure (83%).
- Between 2020 and 2025, there were significant increases in scores for two questions about experience of feeding support at Sligo University Hospital.

Appendix 1

Improvement map Sligo 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.youreexperience.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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