

# National Maternity Experience Survey 2025

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## University Hospital Galway

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



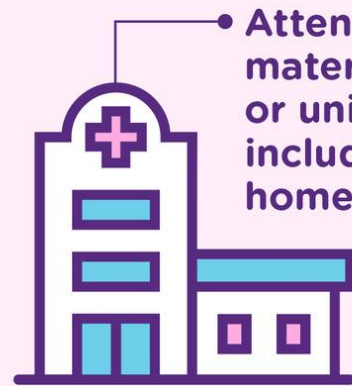
11 questions

## 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?

- 408 people who gave birth in University Hospital Galway were invited to participate in the survey.
- 170 took part. This is a response rate of 42% (equal to the national rate of 42%).

Age of participants	Number	%
Under 25 years	9	5.3
25 to 29 years	14	8.2
30 to 34 years	62	36.5
35 to 39 years	59	34.7
40 years or older	26	15.3
Previous births	Number	%
None	68	40.0
1 or 2	88	51.8
3 or more	14	8.2

Ethnicity of participants	Number	%
White Irish	131	77.1
Any other White background	14	8.2
Black or Black Irish- African	4	2.4
Asian or Asian Irish- Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi	14	8.2
Any other Asian background	1	0.6
Mixed	2	1.2
Other	4	2.4
Long-term condition or disability	Number	%
Any long-term condition	9	5.3
No long-term condition	161	94.7



## Areas of good experience

### **Overall experience with care in neonatal unit | Q38**

88% of survey participants who experienced care for their baby in the neonatal unit rated the care from the neonatal unit as “very good” (9 or 10 out of 10).

### **Support and encouragement with feeding at home | Q43**

69% of participants (105 of 153) who wanted support with feeding their baby at home, said that they always got adequate support from healthcare professionals.

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

## Comments from participants

“I felt really supported and respected by everyone involved in my care.”

“Our public health nurse was exceptional. So helpful and supportive, especially with breastfeeding.”

“The neonatal unit in Galway is superb. Attention to detail and the level of care for both infant and mother were top notch. I never felt put out or questioned. What we wanted done with our child was respected and implemented if they were able to.”

## Areas for improvement

### **Respect and dignity during pregnancy | Q14**

4% of survey participants at University Hospital Galway (6 out of 167 participants) who responded to this question did not feel they were treated with respect and dignity during their pregnancy.

### **Healthcare professional to talk to about worries and fears after birth | Q32**

20% of participants (31 out of 156) who responded to this question said that they did not have a healthcare professional to talk to about worries and fears in hospital after birth.

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

4% of participants (6 out of 170) who responded to this question 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

"I felt silly to be asking questions. Some doctors and midwives were very helpful, while others made you feel small and unimportant."

"If a woman says she's traumatised and doesn't want a natural birth again, then she means it! I was made feel like my feelings on what happened previously were not valid and I really had to argue why I wasn't going through it again."



## Care in pregnancy



- 55% of participants from University Hospital Galway said that they were offered a choice about the type of maternity care they would receive.
- 92% of participants said that they were offered antenatal classes in pregnancy. 51% said they did antenatal classes, while 41% did not do them. 8% of participants said they were not offered any antenatal classes in pregnancy.
- 94% of participants had some of their regular check-ups in pregnancy with their GP.

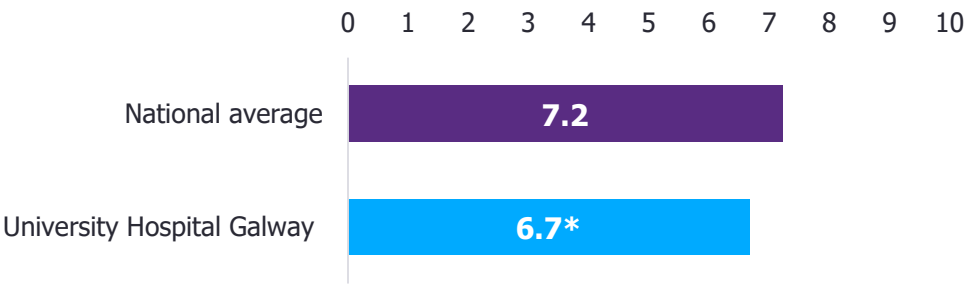
First healthcare professional seen when pregnant	Number	%
General Practitioner (GP) or family doctor	151	88.8
Midwife at maternity service	5	2.9
Obstetrician (doctor or consultant) at maternity service	5	2.9
Healthcare professional at private scan clinic	7	4.1
Other	2	1.2

Type of maternity care in pregnancy	Number	%
Obstetrician public clinic at the hospital	77	45.3
Midwife clinic at the hospital	31	18.2
'Domino scheme': midwife-led care in community	7	4.1
Community midwife clinic	31	18.2
Midwife clinic at midwifery-led unit	1	0.6
Home birth midwife	2	1.2
Obstetrician care at private clinic	18	10.6
Pregnancy check-ups in another country	2	1.2
Attended pregnancy check-ups at another service	1	0.6

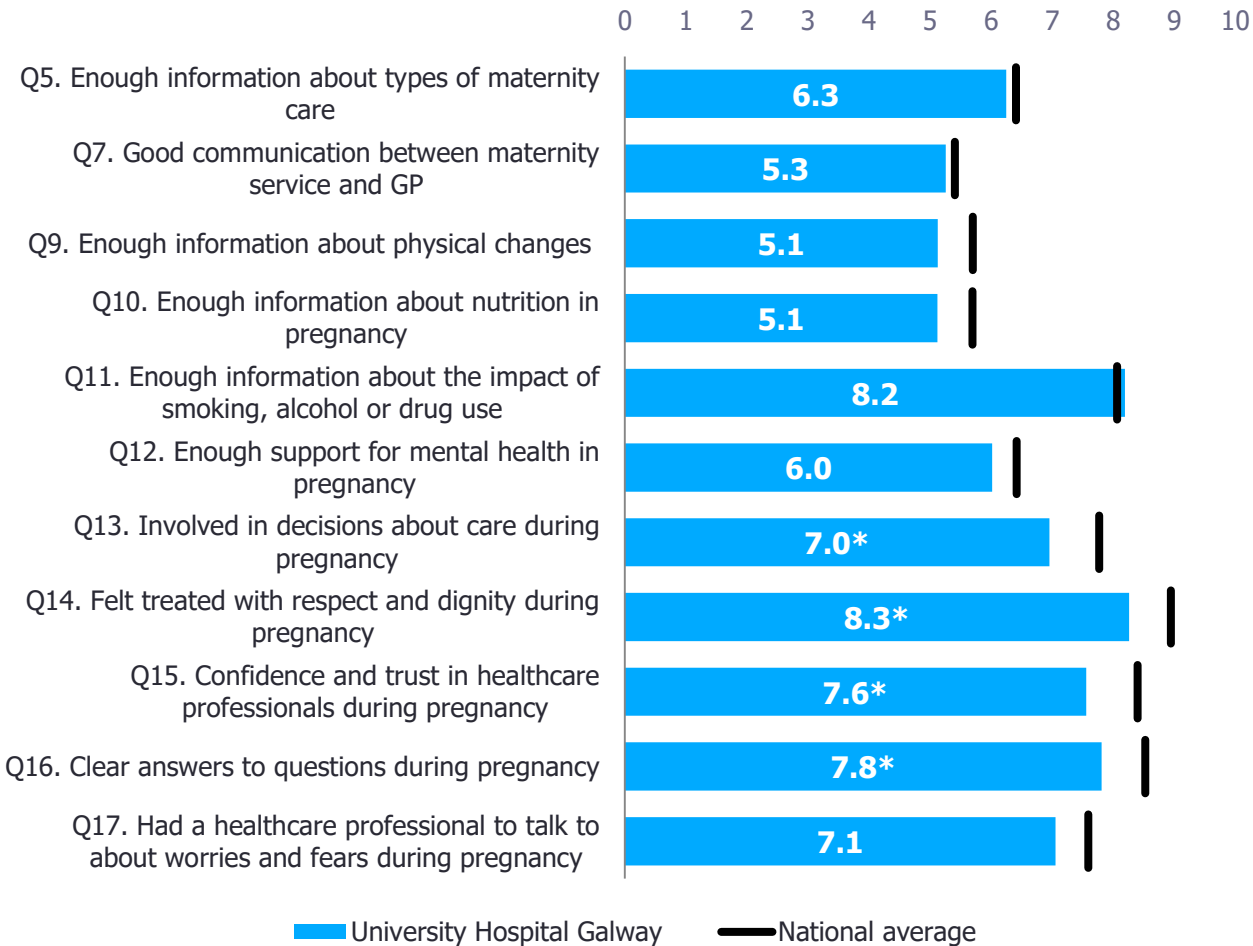
# Scored questions for care in pregnancy

- **Highest-scoring question:** 69% of participants (115 of 167) said they always felt treated with respect and dignity in pregnancy; though this question scored significantly below national average.
- **Lowest-scoring questions:**
  - 30% of participants (47 of 158) said they did not receive enough information about physical changes in their body during pregnancy.
  - 29% (47 of 162) 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 differences from the national average.



## Care during labour and birth

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

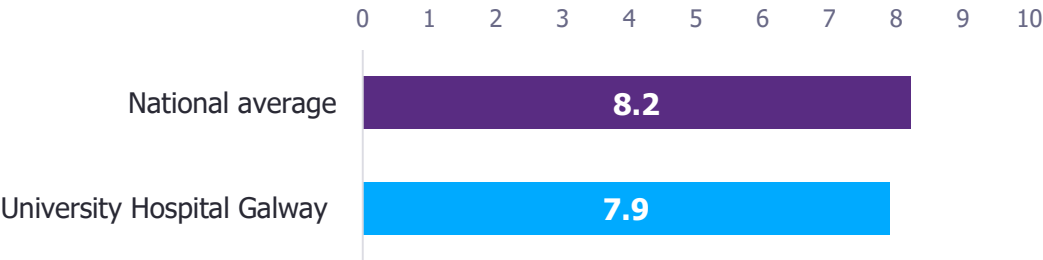
Type of birth for survey participants	Number	%
Vaginal birth (no forceps or ventouse suction cup)	73	43.5
Assisted vaginal birth (with forceps or ventouse suction cup)	19	11.3
Planned caesarean birth	52	31.0
Unplanned caesarean birth	24	14.3
Participant left alone by healthcare professionals at a time when it worried them	Number	%
Yes, during early labour	15	8.8
Yes, during the later stages of labour	7	4.1
Yes, during the birth	3	1.8
Yes, shortly after the birth	16	9.4
No	138	81.2



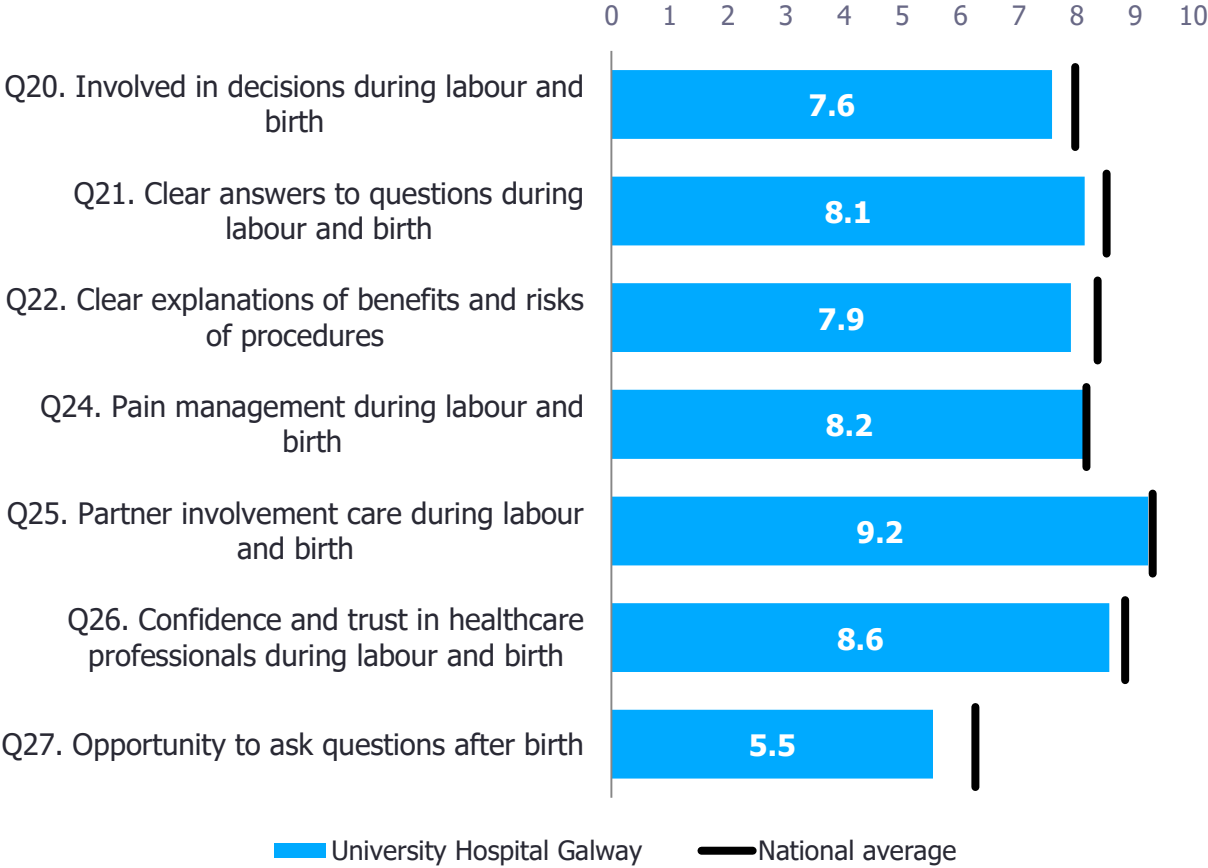
# Scored questions for care during labour and birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 92% of participants (155 of 168) 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:** 32% of participants (48 of 152) 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

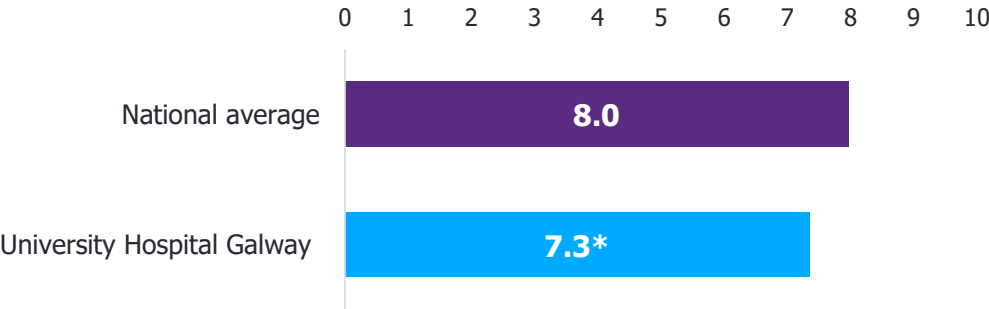




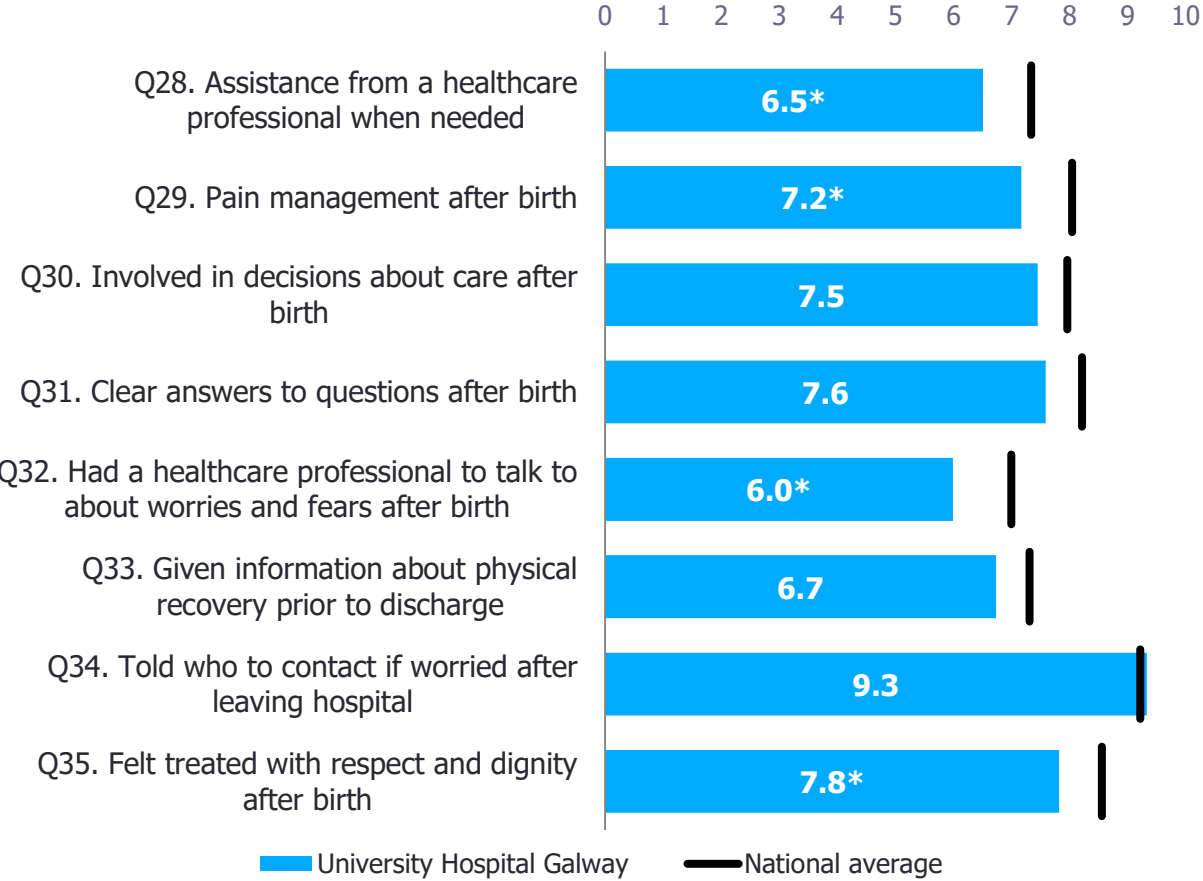
# Scored questions for care in hospital after birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 93% of participants (154 of 165) 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.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 20% of participants (31 of 156) 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



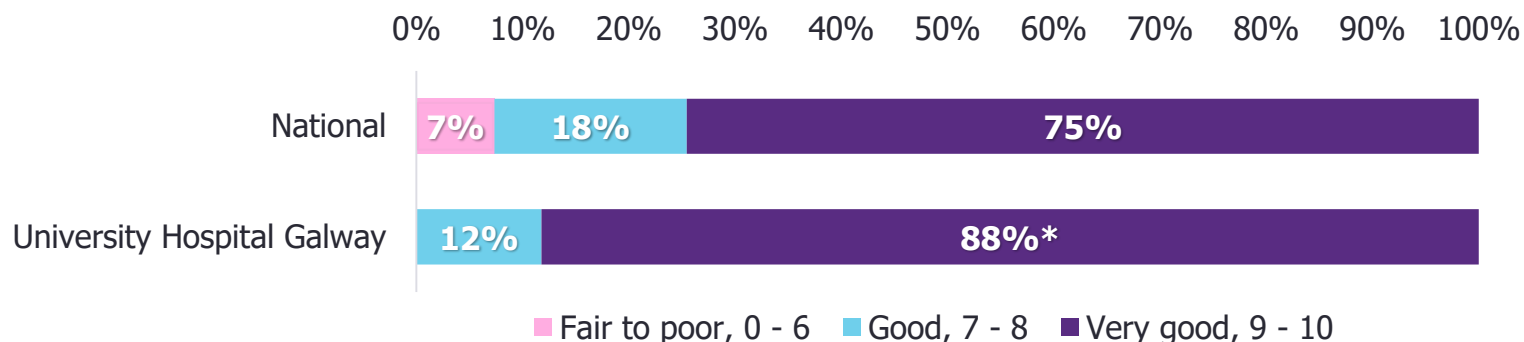
\* Indicates statistically significant differences from the national average.



## Specialist care in the neonatal unit

- 18 survey participants (11%) at University Hospital Galway said that their baby spent time in the neonatal unit following the birth.
- Of these participants:
  - 50% said that they always received enough emotional support from healthcare professionals in the neonatal unit
  - 28% said that they sometimes received enough emotional support
  - 11% said that they did not receive enough emotional support
  - 6% did not want or need emotional support
  - 6% could not remember if they received 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:

- 44% of participants fed their baby with breast milk only.
- 22% fed their baby with formula milk only.
- 34% fed their baby with both breast and formula milk.

Healthcare professional discussed feeding options		
	Number	%
Yes, during pregnancy	123	72.4
Yes, during labour or immediately after birth	44	25.9
Yes, after birth while in hospital	58	34.1
Yes, after birth while at home	33	19.4
No	17	10.0
Did not want or need discussion of different options	16	9.4

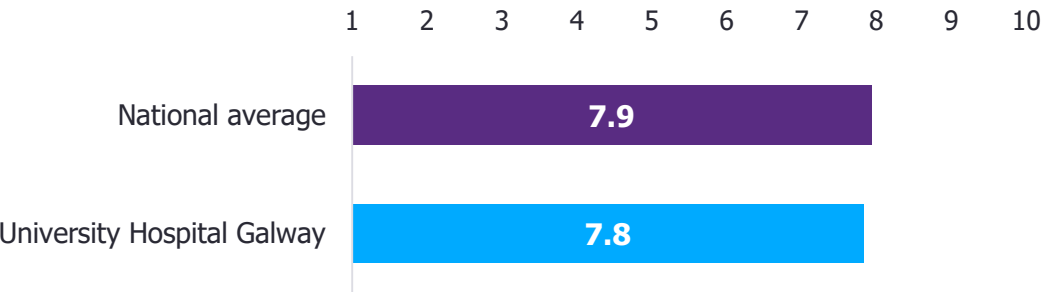
Sources of breastfeeding support		
	Number	%
Midwife(s) in hospital	95	58.3
Hospital lactation consultant	63	38.7
Home birth midwife	4	2.5
Postnatal community midwives	20	12.3
Postnatal hub midwife	2	1.2
Public Health Nurse	74	45.4
GP	19	11.7
Practice nurse	3	1.8
Community breastfeeding support groups or volunteers	16	9.8
Private lactation consultant	14	8.6
Friends or family	37	22.7
Did not need support	8	4.9
Did not want to breastfeed	29	17.8

# Scored questions for infant feeding

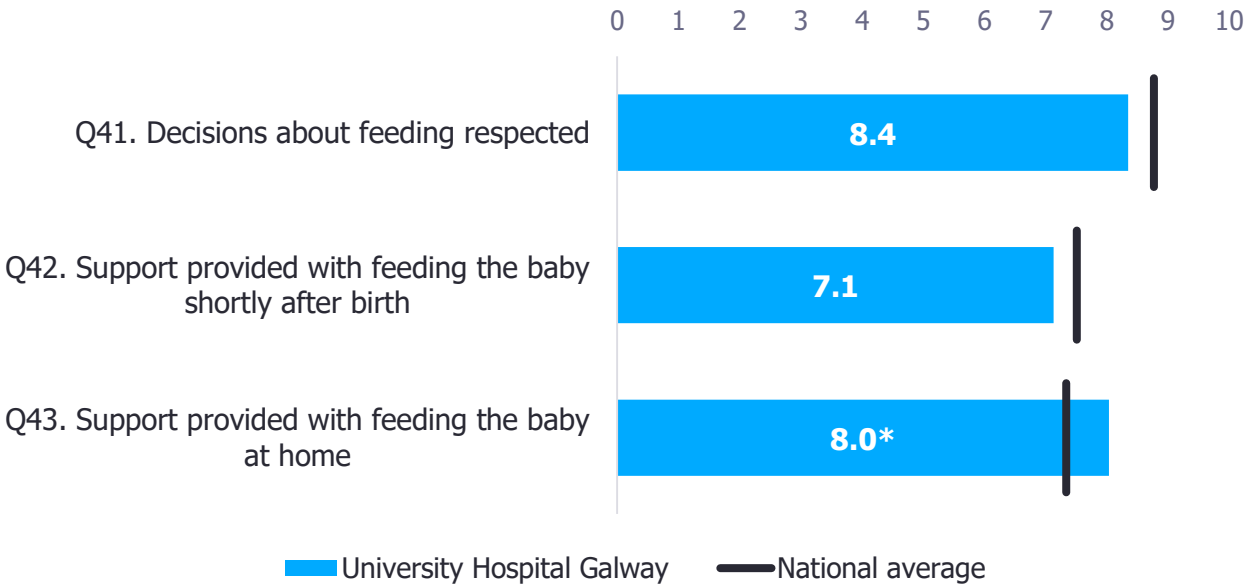


- **Highest-scoring question:** 72% of participants (123 of 170) said their decisions about how they wanted to feed their baby were always respected by healthcare professionals.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 14% of participants (22 of 157) said that healthcare professionals did not give them adequate support with feeding their baby in hospital shortly after birth.

Overall average score for infant feeding



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	30	17.6
Postnatal community midwife at a community clinic	4	2.4
Public Health Nurse at home	158	92.9
Public Health Nurse at a community clinic	42	24.7
GP	126	74.1
Obstetrician at hospital clinic	28	16.5
Midwives or paediatricians at hospital baby clinic	19	11.2
Other professionals	12	7.1

Healthcare professionals who provided mental health support during pregnancy or after birth		
	Number	%
GP	63	38.0
Public Health Nurse	65	39.2
Midwife	30	18.1
Obstetrician	7	4.2
Perinatal mental health midwife	4	2.4
Perinatal mental health nurse	8	4.8
Psychiatrist	1	0.6
Mental health social worker	2	1.2
Other professionals	2	1.2
None of the above	69	41.6

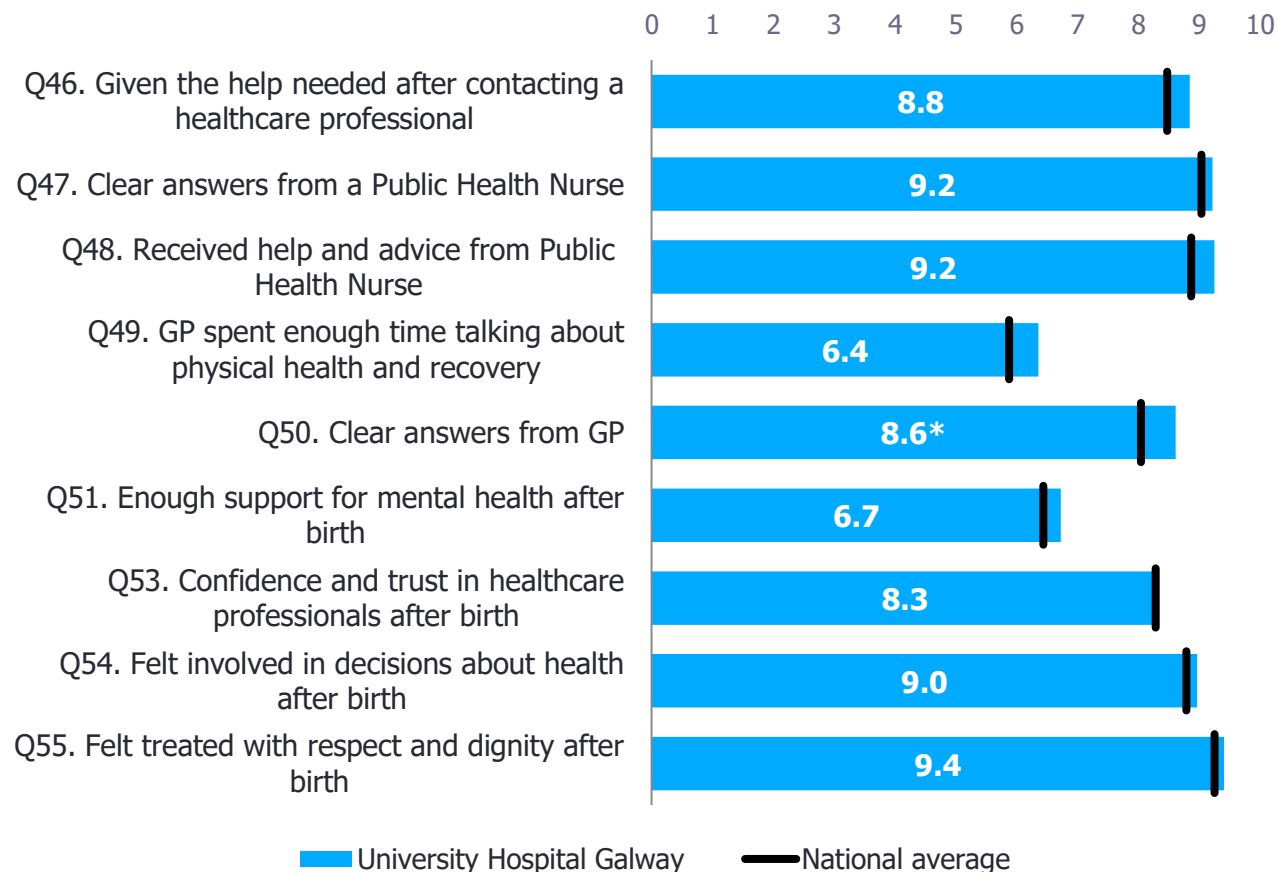
# Scored questions for care at home after birth



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:** 88% of participants (148 of 168) 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:** 25% of participants (41 of 166) 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

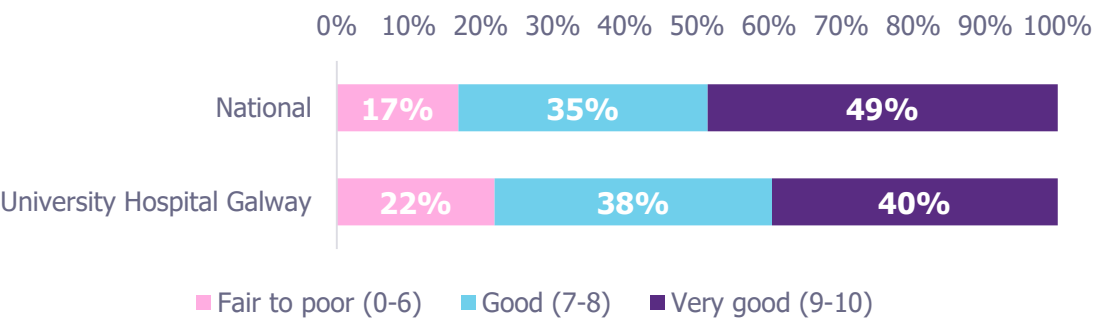


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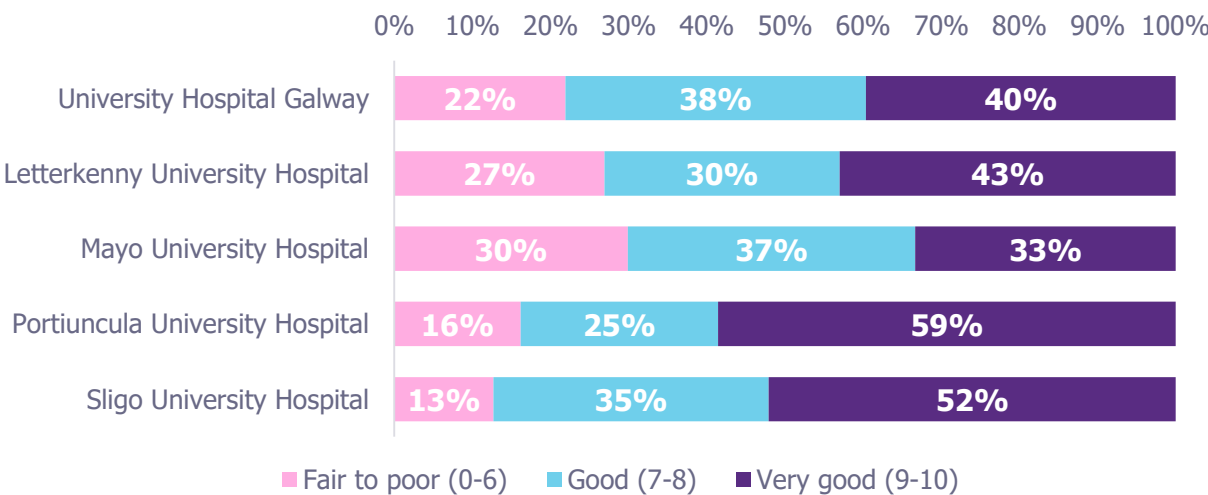
# Overall experience of maternity care

- 65% of survey participants who gave birth at University Hospital Galway said that their decisions about their maternity care were always respected by healthcare staff. 32% said their decisions were sometimes respected, while 4% said their decisions about their maternity care were not respected.
- 38% of participants said that if they wanted to give feedback or make a complaint they knew how and where to do so, while 42% said they did not know. 19% said they did not wish to give feedback or make a complaint.
- 78% of participants who gave birth at University Hospital Galway said they had a good or very good overall experience (overall rating between 7 and 10), compared to 83% nationally. 22% 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 University Hospital Galway.
- There were no significant increases in the scores for any survey questions between 2020 and 2025.
- Between 2020 and 2025, there was a significant decrease in score for information about physical changes in pregnancy.

## Comments from survey participants

- When survey participants at University Hospital Galway 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.

"All of the care I received was good. My experience during labour was excellent. The midwives were so kind, caring and attentive."

"Midwives clinic - midwives were so lovely and compassionate. Could answer any question I had. Great service away from the hospital. Every appointment was on time and no stress looking for hospital parking. Appointments never felt rushed. Loved the midwives clinic."

- When survey participants were asked what could be improved with care at University Hospital Galway, they most commonly referred to the waiting times for hospital appointments, and the information and explanations about care from healthcare staff.

"The wait time in the clinic in the hospital is insane. You are left sitting for hours on end waiting to see midwife / doctor. Hungry, tired and uncomfortable to sit for hours."

"I was not told how to care for my baby at all or for my C-section incision in the hospital. I was also not told I haemorrhaged during my C-section and was just brought in for an iron infusion without any explanation."

## Conclusion

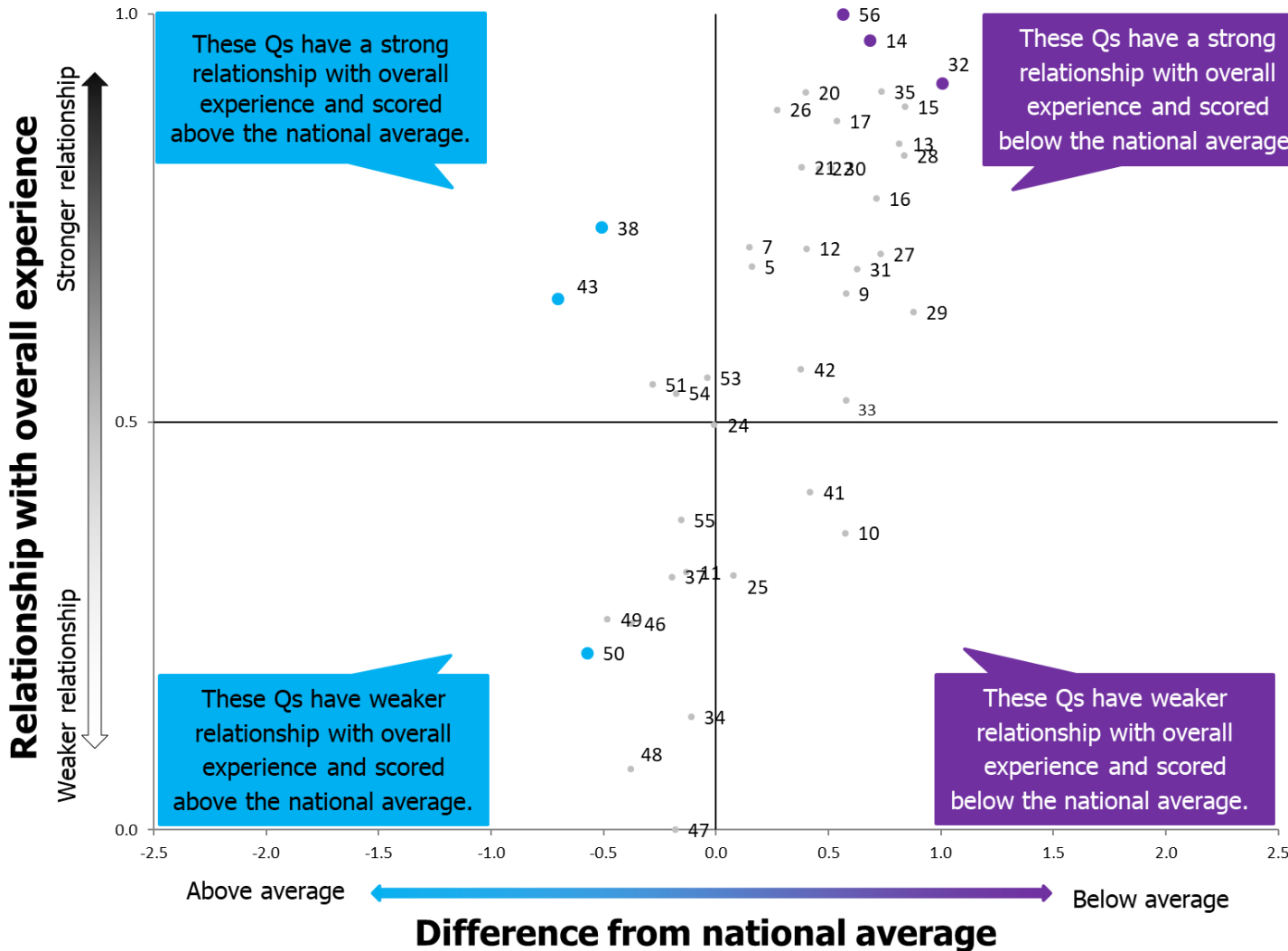
- Areas of good experience at University Hospital Galway included overall experience of care in the neonatal unit and feeding support at home or in the community.
- Areas for improvement included respect and dignity during pregnancy, respect for participants' decisions about maternity care and having a healthcare professional to talk to about worries and fears after birth.
- Three questions for participants at University Hospital Galway scored significantly above the national average and nine questions scored significantly below the national average.
- 78% of participants who gave birth at University Hospital Galway said they had a good or very good overall experience; this is lower than the national figure (83%).
- Between 2020 and 2025, there was a significant decrease in score for information about physical changes in pregnancy.



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

Improvement map University Hospital Galway





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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## Improving care experiences together



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