

National Maternity Experience Survey 2025

University Hospital Kerry

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

- 157 people who gave birth at University Hospital Kerry were invited to participate in the survey.
- 63 took part. This is a response rate of 40% (compared to the national rate of 42%).

| Age of participants | Number | % |
|---------------------|--------|------|
| Under 25 years | 1 | 1.6 |
| 25 to 29 years | 11 | 17.5 |
| 30 to 34 years | 23 | 36.5 |
| 35 to 39 years | 25 | 39.7 |
| 40 years or older | 3 | 4.8 |
| Previous births | Number | % |
| None | 30 | 49.2 |
| 1 or 2 | 25 | 41.0 |
| 3 or more | 6 | 9.8 |

| Ethnicity of participants | Number | % |
|--|--------|------|
| White Irish | 46 | 74.2 |
| Roma | 1 | 1.6 |
| Any other White background | 11 | 17.7 |
| Asian or Asian Irish- Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi | 4 | 6.5 |
| Long-term condition or disability | Number | % |
| Any long-term condition | 2 | 3.2 |
| No long-term condition | 61 | 96.8 |



Areas of good experience

Feeding support and encouragement in hospital | Q42

84% of survey participants at University Hospital Kerry (53 out of 63 who responded to this question) said that healthcare professionals always gave them enough support and encouragement with feeding their baby while in hospital after birth.

Given help needed at home or in community after birth | Q46

93% of survey participants (49 of 53) said if they contacted a healthcare professional after the birth of their baby they were always given the help they needed.

Clear answers from GP after birth | Q50

82% of survey participants (49 of 60) said that their questions at the postnatal check-up were always answered by the GP in a way that they could understand.

These questions scored significantly above national average and were strongly related to participants' overall care experience.

Comments from participants

"Lactation consultant was wonderful, so informative and helpful and welcoming and made me feel like no question was silly or a waste of time."

"Postnatal hub was brilliant. Birth choices clinic was brilliant. Public health nurse excellent."

"My GP was fantastic. She was always so supportive if I had a query. I felt very comfortable discussing everything with her."

Areas for improvement

There were no questions that scored significantly below national average for participants at University Hospital Kerry. 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

"Not one staff member was aware of my birth preferences, which I had communicated in a previous antenatal appointment, having given it much thought. I went through this in detail at my last check up at 39 weeks. This proved pointless as I had to re-convey all of these preferences and wishes throughout my labour, birth and postnatal care in hospital."

"I was repeatedly asking for pain relief, but the midwife told me first doctor needs to do vaginal examination and it took 3 hours and I was in agony."

"Would be good if the midwives could spend a bit more time with mothers without having to ask, for example to go through how to breastfeed, change nappy, swaddle baby, etc. Especially for first time moms when everything is so new."

Care in pregnancy

- 57% of participants at University Hospital Kerry said that they were offered a choice about the type of maternity care they would receive.
- 94% of participants said they were offered antenatal classes in pregnancy. 55% of participants said they did the antenatal classes, while 39% did not do them. 7% said they were not offered any antenatal classes in pregnancy.
- 98% of participants had some of their regular check-ups in pregnancy with their GP.



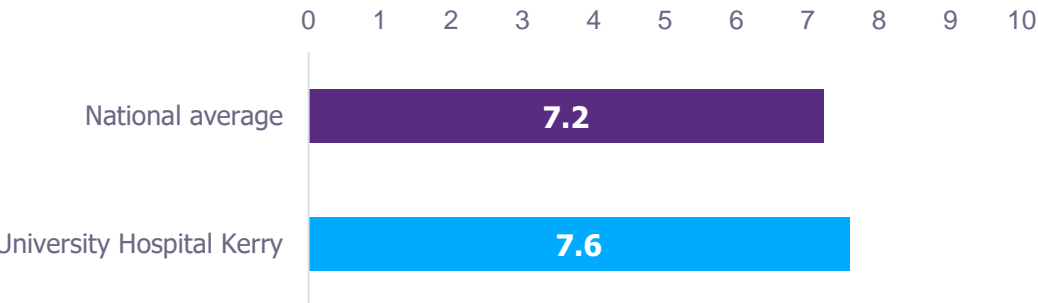
| First healthcare professional seen when pregnant | Number | % |
|--|--------|------|
| General Practitioner (GP) or family doctor | 53 | 84.1 |
| Midwife at maternity service | 4 | 6.3 |
| Obstetrician (doctor or consultant) at maternity service | 1 | 1.6 |
| Healthcare professional at private scan clinic | 3 | 4.8 |
| Other | 2 | 3.2 |

| Type of maternity care in pregnancy | Number | % |
|--|--------|------|
| Obstetrician public clinic at the hospital | 34 | 54.0 |
| Midwife clinic at the hospital | 17 | 27.0 |
| 'Domino Scheme': midwife-led care in community | 3 | 4.8 |
| Community midwife clinic | 4 | 6.3 |
| Obstetrician semi-private clinic | 1 | 1.6 |
| Obstetrician private clinic | 4 | 6.3 |

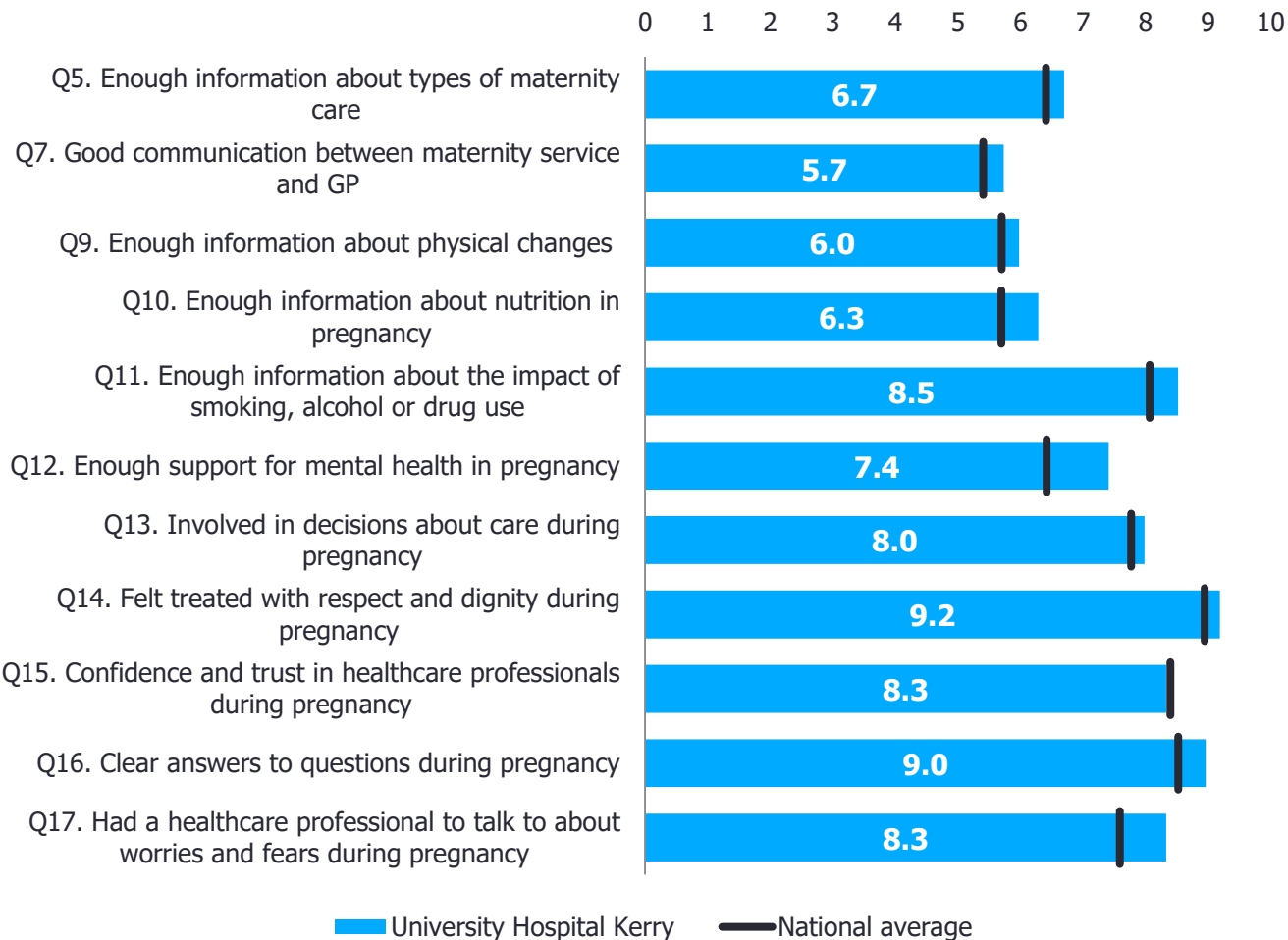
Scored questions for care in pregnancy

- **Highest-scoring question:** 84% of participants (52 out of 62) said that they always felt treated with respect and dignity in pregnancy.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 28% of participants (17 out of 61) did not feel that 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



Care during labour and birth

- 44% of survey participants at University Hospital Kerry said their labour was induced.

| Type of birth for survey participants | Number | % |
|---|--------|------|
| Vaginal birth (no forceps or ventouse suction cup) | 24 | 38.7 |
| Assisted vaginal birth (with forceps or ventouse suction cup) | 17 | 27.4 |
| Planned caesarean birth | 12 | 19.4 |
| Unplanned caesarean birth | 9 | 14.5 |

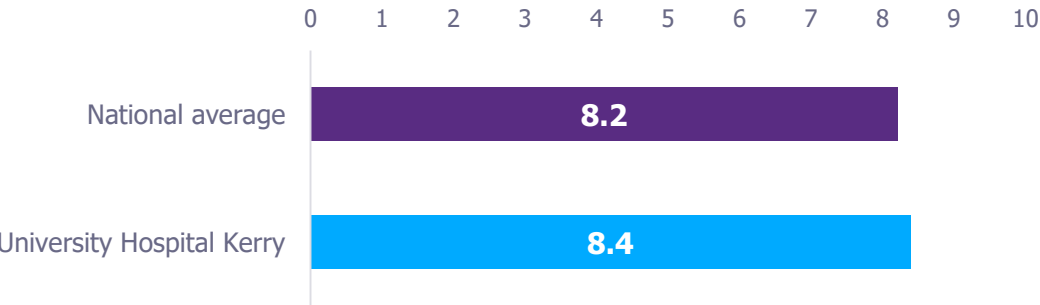
| Participant left alone by healthcare professionals at a time when it worried them | Number | % |
|---|--------|------|
| Yes, during early labour | 10 | 15.9 |
| Yes, during the later stages of labour | 2 | 3.2 |
| Yes, during the birth | 0 | 0.0 |
| Yes, shortly after the birth | 3 | 4.8 |
| No | 51 | 81.0 |



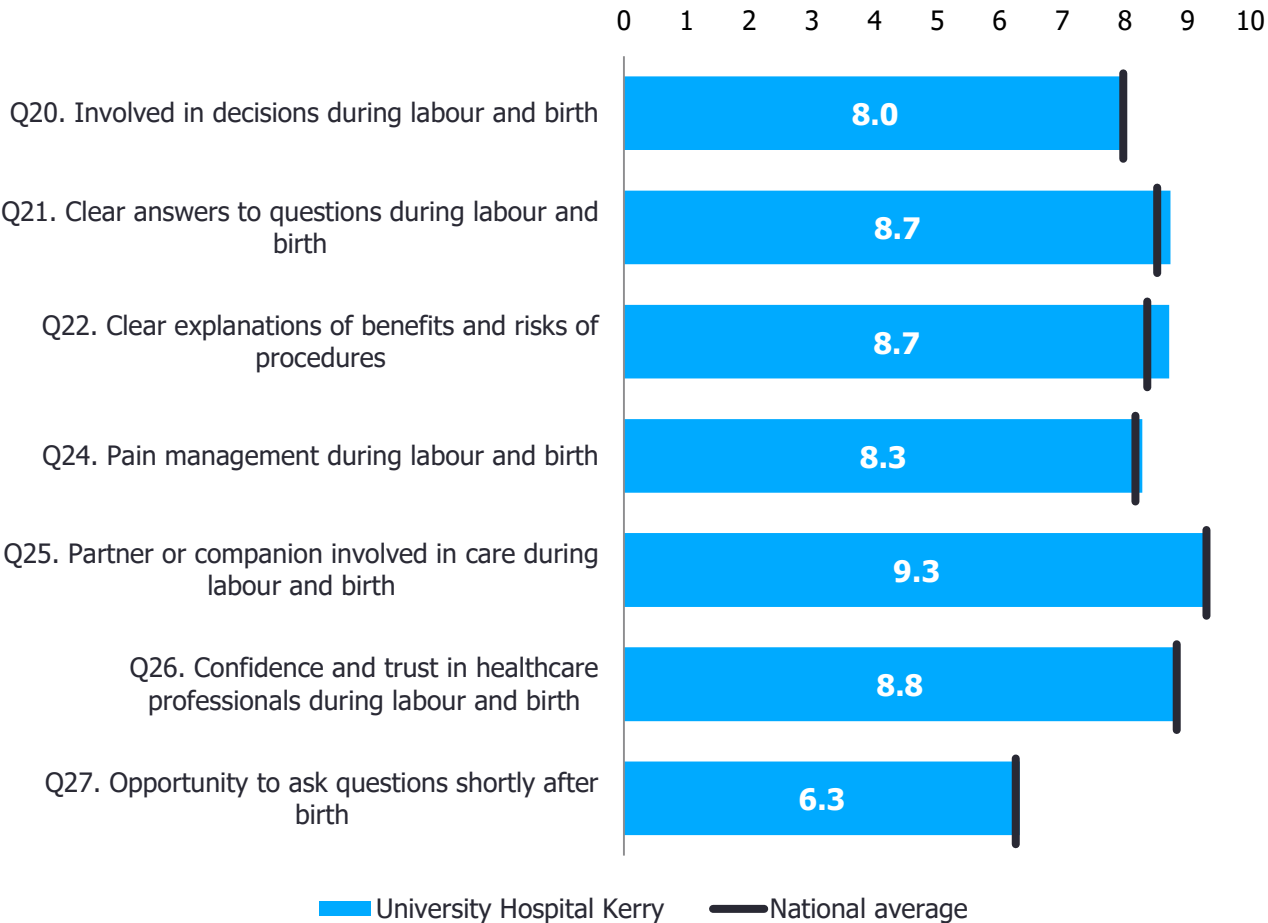
Scored questions for care during labour and birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 93% of participants (57 of 61) 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:** 25% of participants (13 of 53) said that they did not have the opportunity to ask questions about their labour and birth, shortly after their baby was born.

Overall average score for care during labour and birth



Average scores out of 10 for individual questions

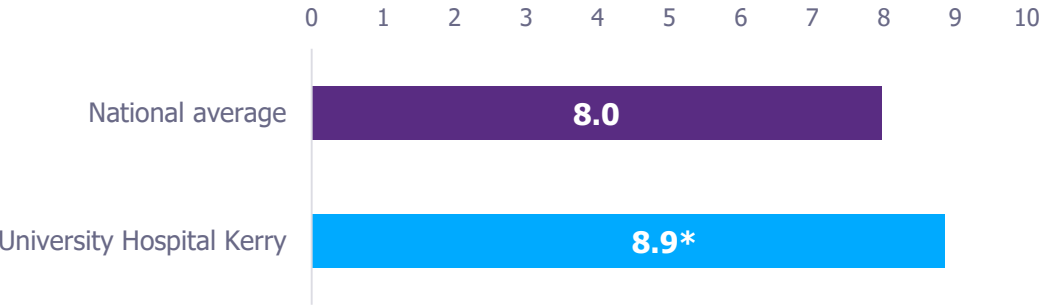




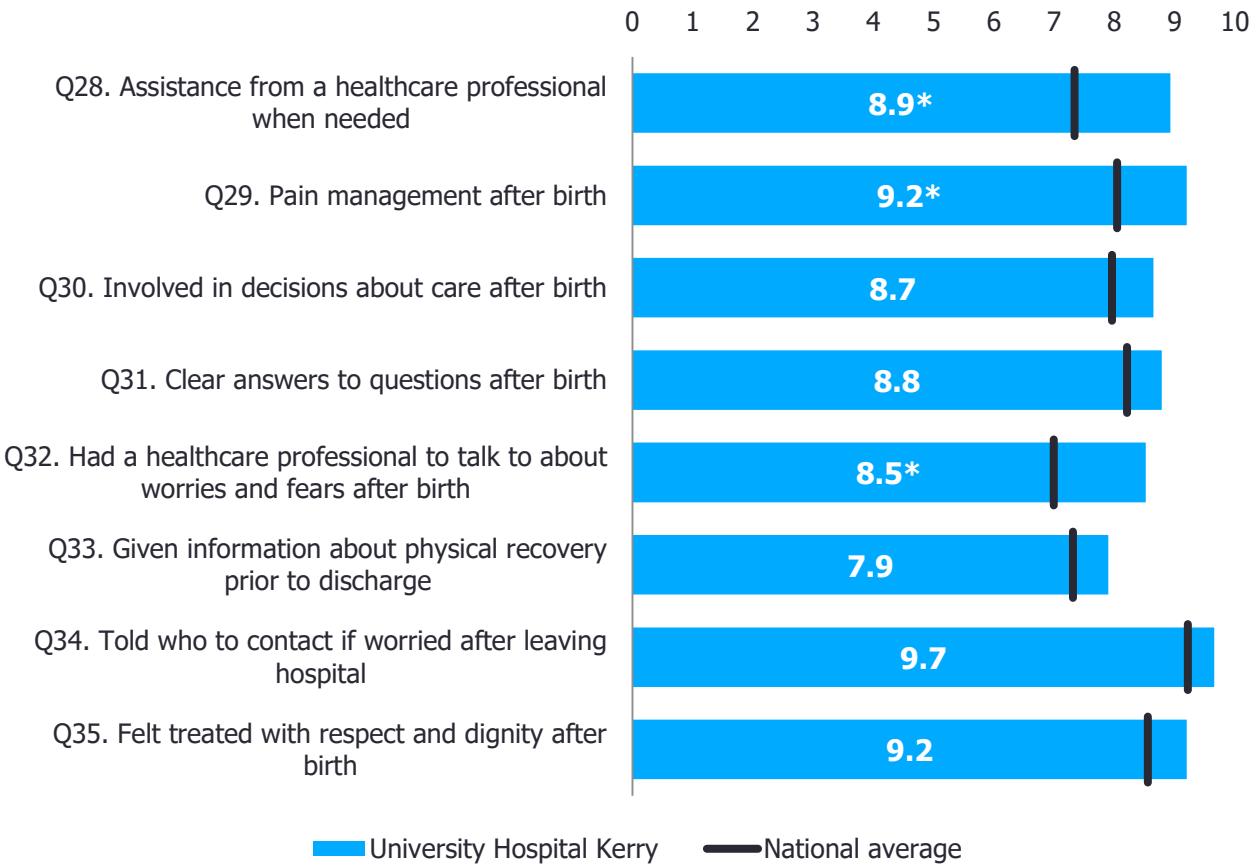
Scored questions for care in hospital after birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 97% of participants (57 of 59) 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:** 8% of participants (5 of 62) said that before they were discharged from hospital they were not given information about their physical recovery.

Overall average score for care in hospital after birth



Average scores out of 10 for individual questions



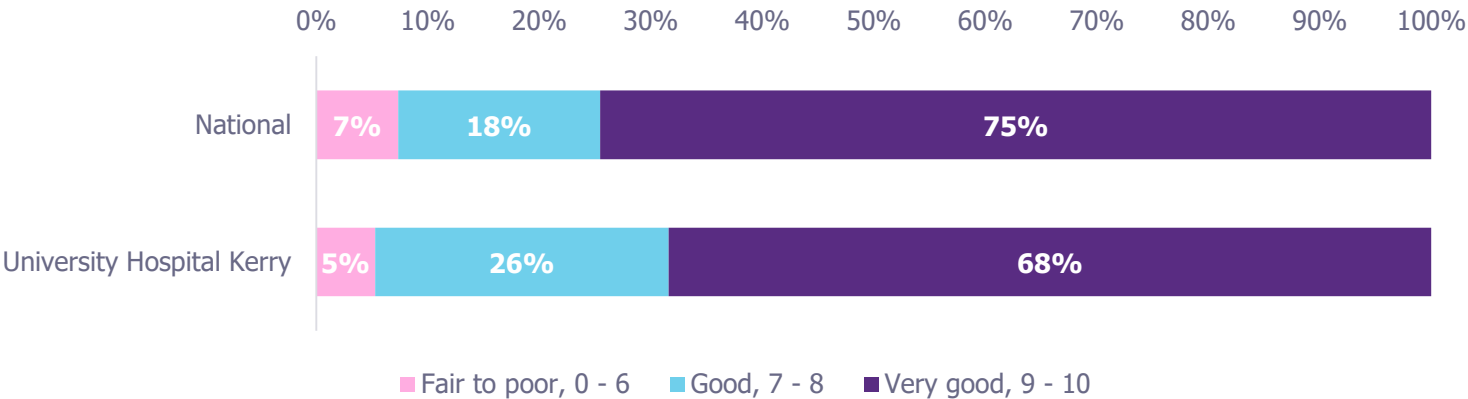
* Indicates statistically significant difference from the national average.



Specialist care in the neonatal unit

- 19 survey participants (31%) at University Hospital Kerry 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.
 - 32% said that they sometimes received enough emotional support.
 - 5% said they did not receive enough emotional support.
 - 5% said they did not know or could not remember.

Overall rating of experience of care for baby in neonatal unit



Infant feeding

In the first few days after birth:

- 44% of participants fed their baby with breast milk only.
- 29% fed their baby with formula milk only.
- 27% fed their baby with both breast and formula milk.

| Healthcare professional discussed feeding options | | |
|--|--------|------|
| | Number | % |
| Yes, during pregnancy | 53 | 84.1 |
| Yes, during labour or immediately after birth | 18 | 28.6 |
| Yes, after birth while in hospital | 19 | 30.2 |
| Yes, after birth while at home | 13 | 20.6 |
| No | 2 | 3.2 |
| Did not want or need discussion of different options | 3 | 4.8 |

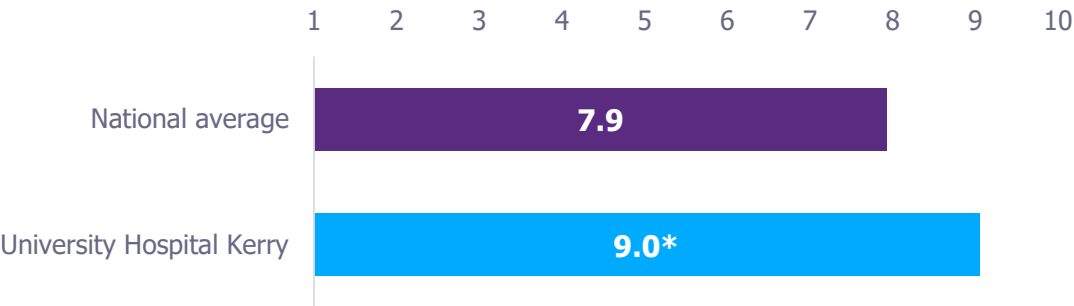
| Sources of breastfeeding support | | |
|--|--------|------|
| | Number | % |
| Midwife(s) in hospital | 39 | 61.9 |
| Hospital lactation consultant | 26 | 41.3 |
| Home birth midwife | 3 | 4.8 |
| Postnatal community midwives | 14 | 22.2 |
| Postnatal hub midwife | 10 | 15.9 |
| Public health nurse | 29 | 46.0 |
| GP | 10 | 15.9 |
| Practice nurse | 5 | 7.9 |
| Community breastfeeding support groups or volunteers | 8 | 12.7 |
| Private lactation consultant | 3 | 4.8 |
| Friends or family | 14 | 22.2 |
| Did not need support | 3 | 4.8 |
| Did not want to breastfeed | 16 | 25.4 |

Scored questions for infant feeding

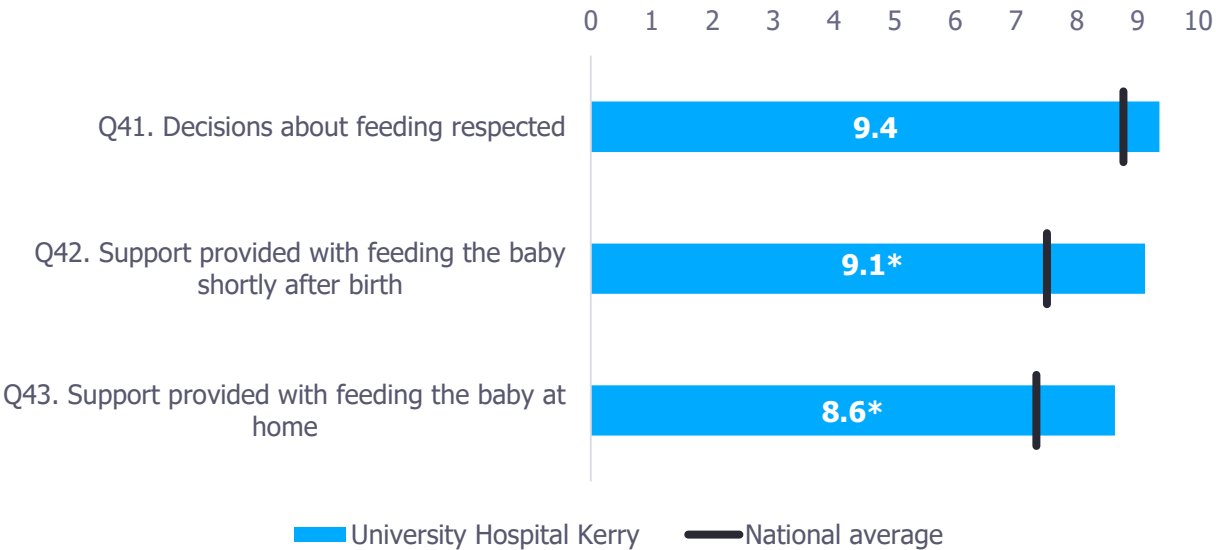


- **Highest-scoring question:** 91% of participants (57 of 63) said that their decisions about how they wanted to feed their baby were always respected by healthcare professionals.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 7% of participants (4 of 62) said that they did not get adequate support and encouragement from healthcare professionals with feeding their baby at home or in the community, though this question scored above the national average.

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 | 16 | 25.4 |
| Postnatal community midwife at community clinic (including Postnatal Hub) | 31 | 49.2 |
| Public Health Nurse at home | 60 | 95.2 |
| Public Health Nurse at a community clinic | 13 | 20.6 |
| GP | 49 | 77.8 |
| Obstetrician at hospital clinic | 13 | 20.6 |
| Midwives or paediatricians at hospital baby clinic | 8 | 12.7 |
| Other professionals | 5 | 7.9 |

| Healthcare professionals who provided mental health support during pregnancy or after birth | | |
|---|--------|------|
| | Number | % |
| GP | 24 | 39.3 |
| Public health nurse | 24 | 39.3 |
| Midwife | 12 | 19.7 |
| Obstetrician | 2 | 3.3 |
| Perinatal mental health midwife | 6 | 9.8 |
| Perinatal mental health nurse | 5 | 8.2 |
| Psychiatrist | 1 | 1.6 |
| Psychologist | 1 | 1.6 |
| Mental health social worker | 2 | 3.3 |
| Other professionals | 5 | 8.2 |
| None of the above | 21 | 34.4 |

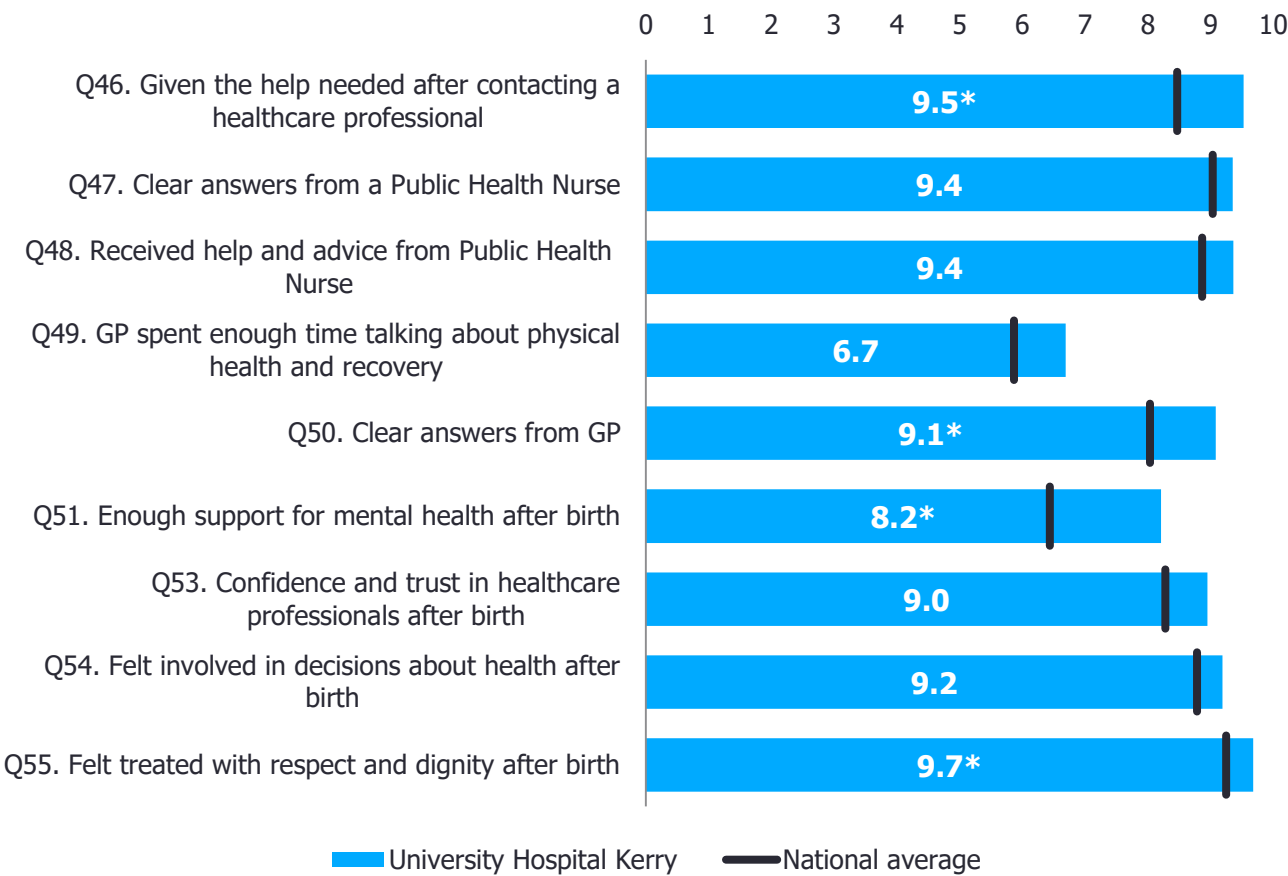
Scored questions for care at home after birth



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:** 94% of participants (59 of 63) 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:** 19% of participants (12 of 62) said that their GP did not spend enough time talking about physical health and recovery at the postnatal check-up, six weeks after birth.

Average scores out of 10 for individual questions

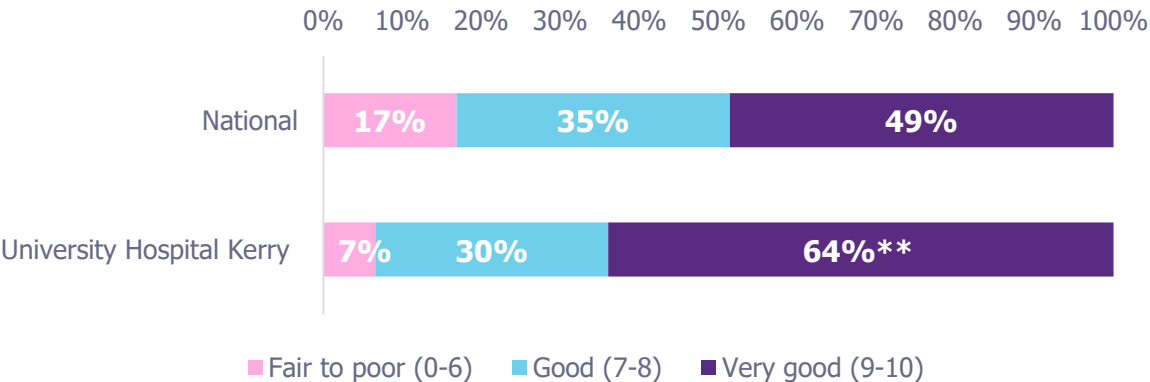


* Indicates statistically significant difference from the national average.

Overall experience of maternity care

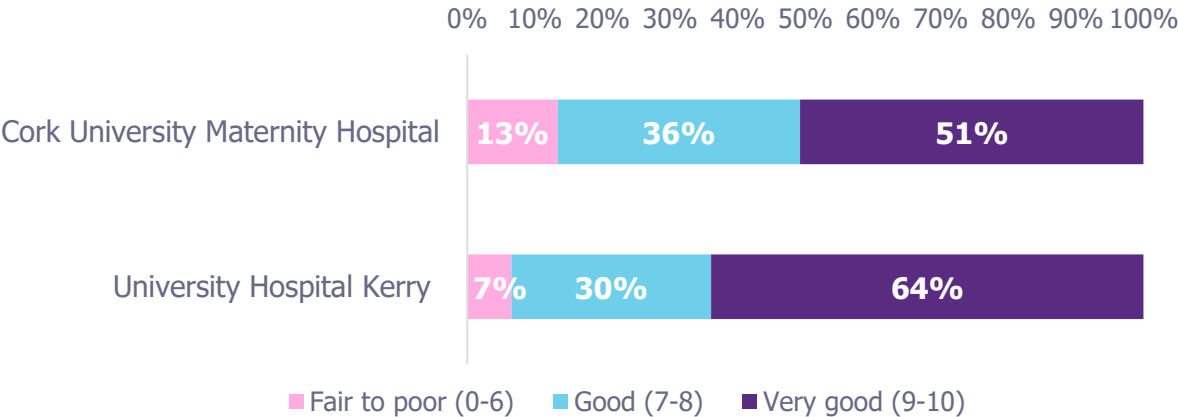
- 86% of survey participants who gave birth at University Hospital Kerry said that their decisions about their maternity care were always respected by healthcare staff. 11% said their decisions were sometimes respected, while 3% said their decisions about their maternity care were not respected.
- 40% of participants said that if they wanted to give feedback or make a complaint they knew how and where to do so, while 35% said they did not know. 25% said they did not wish to give feedback or make a complaint.
- 93% of participants who gave birth at University Hospital Kerry said they had a good or very good overall experience of maternity care (overall rating between 7 and 10). This is significantly higher than the national figure (83%). 7% of participants said they had a fair to poor experience of care.

Overall experience of care rating*



* Figures may exceed 100% due to rounding.
** Indicates statistically significant difference from the national average.

Overall experience of care - HSE South West



Changes since 2020 survey

- Survey findings from 2025 were compared with survey findings from 2020, to see whether there were any statistically significant increases or decreases in question scores for participants who gave birth at University Hospital Kerry.
- Between 2020 and 2025, there were significant increases in scores for three areas of postnatal care at University Hospital Kerry:
 - Assistance from healthcare professionals when needed in hospital after birth.
 - A healthcare professional to talk to about worries and fears in hospital after birth.
 - Support from healthcare professionals with feeding in hospital after birth.
- Between 2020 and 2025, there were no significant decreases in scores for any questions.

Comments from survey participants

- When survey participants at University Hospital Kerry were asked what was good about their care, they most commonly referred to the 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 University Hospital Kerry, they referred to communication between the hospital and GPs.

"The exceptional treatment of the midwives, especially during the labour and at the postnatal hub. They were kind, respectful and professional. They made me feel confident, calm and safe during my time at the hospital and after the birth at the post natal hub."

"The midwives in the ward were absolutely amazing. Always on hand to answer questions and give advice and support."

"When deciding or considering interventions like inductions, I think there needs to be more information provided on what, why, the risks and any alternatives and to make it clear that it's a choice and not obliged to go through with it."

"Communication between the hospital and my GP was very poor. I had to get involved myself to relay important information between both about blood test results and medications I was told to take."

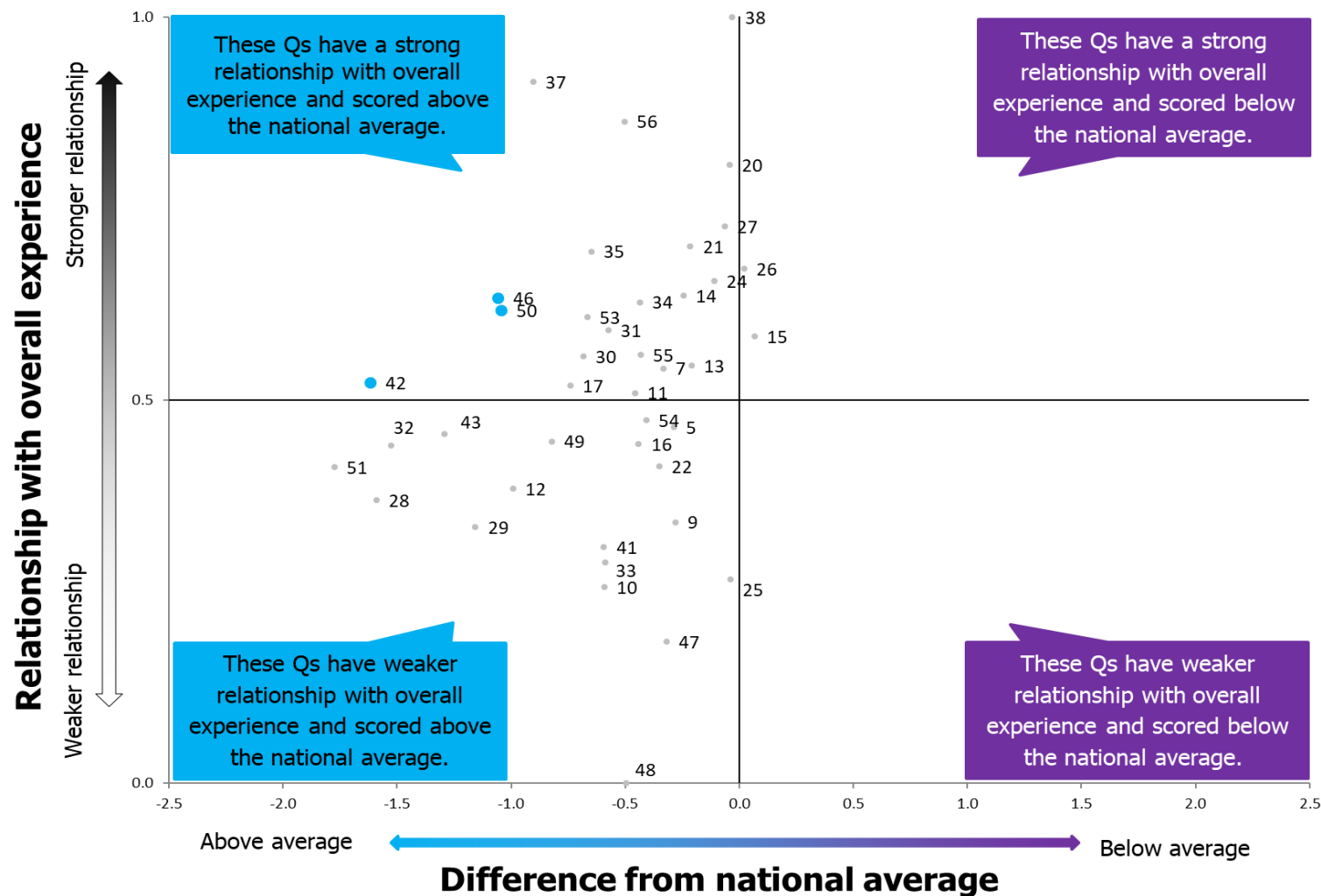
Conclusion

- Areas of good experience at University Hospital Kerry included feeding support in hospital, help from healthcare professionals at home and in the community after birth, and clear answers from GPs to questions after birth.
- Ten questions scored significantly above national average for participants who gave birth at University Hospital Kerry. No questions scored significantly below national average.
- 93% of survey participants who gave birth at University Hospital Kerry said they had a good or very good overall experience; this was significantly higher than the national figure of 83%.
- Between 2020 and 2025, there were significant increases in scores for three areas of care experience at University Hospital Kerry.

Appendix 1

Improvement map for University Hospital Kerry

- 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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