

# National Maternity Experience Survey 2025

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## University Maternity Hospital Limerick

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

- 544 people who gave birth at University Maternity Hospital Limerick were invited to participate in the survey.
- 197 took part. This is a response rate of 36% (compared to the national rate of 42%).

Age of participants	Number	%
Under 25 years	12	6.1
25 to 29 years	25	12.7
30 to 34 years	72	36.5
35 to 39 years	69	35.0
40 years or older	19	9.6
Previous births	Number	%
None	75	38.7
1 or 2	106	54.6
3 or more	13	6.7

Ethnicity of participants	Number	%
White Irish	143	73.7
Irish Traveller	3	1.5
Any other White background	13	6.7
Black or Black Irish- African	4	2.1
Black or Black Irish- Other Black background	1	0.5
Asian or Asian Irish- Chinese	1	0.5
Asian or Asian Irish- Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi	19	9.8
Asian or Asian Irish- Other Asian background	5	2.6
Arab	2	1.0
Mixed	1	0.5
Other	2	1.0
Long-term condition or disability	Number	%
Any long-term condition	22	11.2
No long-term condition	175	88.8



## Areas of good experience

*There were no questions that scored significantly above national average for participants at University Maternity Hospital Limerick. The highest and lowest-scoring questions for each stage of care are highlighted throughout this report.*

*A selection of comments highlighting areas of positive experience is provided below.*

## Comments from participants

"I met amazing midwives in the postnatal ward, they were like angels. They loved and cared for the baby and I like family. I was high-risk due to high blood pressure, the staff monitored and helped control my BP throughout. I had CS and they constantly checked if I had no pain or needed pain relief medications."

"I was referred to the perinatal [mental health] team and they were kind, compassionate and highly caring. This care has continued through to my postnatal phase."

"I really felt listened to in the clinic in the final week before pregnancy- about my options, delaying an induction and giving me every chance to go naturally (go into labour myself and have a vaginal birth). I felt I was really driving the decisions with their guidance and I was listened to."

## Areas for improvement

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

"During the antenatal appointments, I felt rushed a lot of the time. As a first timer, I had many questions that I felt I could not always ask."

"I had wanted to breastfeed but no lactation consultant around and was basically told not to by one of the midwives, and no-one ever tried to help me with it."

"Prohibitive hospital policies need to be changed to allow for better care. No partner support during labour outside visiting hours, no gas and air until in the labour ward and not being allowed into the labour ward until you're dilated to a certain degree. My labour progressed rapidly once I had partner support and gas and air. Being left screaming in pain in a ward full of other women is unfair on everyone."



# Care in pregnancy



- 62% of participants at University Maternity Hospital Limerick said that they were offered a choice about the type of maternity care they could receive.
- 79% of participants said they were offered antenatal classes in pregnancy. 43% of participants said they did the antenatal classes, while 36% did not do them. 18% said they were not offered any antenatal classes in pregnancy.
- 76% of participants had some of their regular check-ups in pregnancy with their GP.

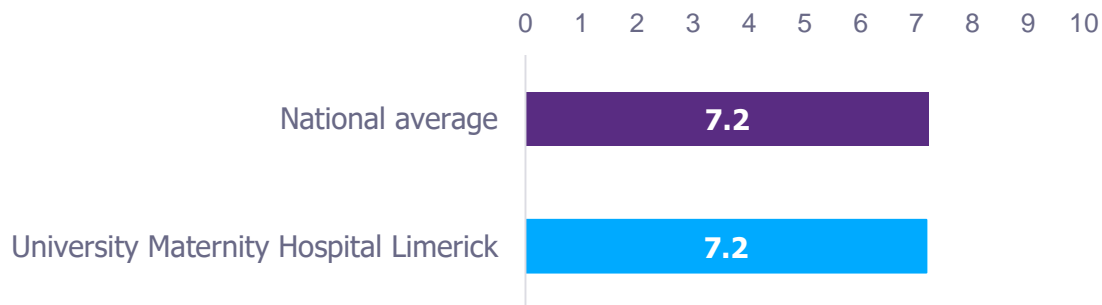
First healthcare professional seen when pregnant	Number	%
General Practitioner (GP) or family doctor	154	78.6
Midwife at maternity service	11	5.6
Obstetrician (doctor or consultant) at maternity service	15	7.7
Healthcare professional at private scan clinic	13	6.6
Other	3	1.5

Type of maternity care in pregnancy	Number	%
Obstetrician public clinic at the hospital	56	28.6
Midwife clinic at the hospital	57	29.1
'Domino Scheme': midwife-led care in community	2	1.0
Community midwife clinic	17	8.7
Midwifery-led unit	1	0.5
Obstetrician private clinic	61	31.1
Attended pregnancy check-ups at another service	2	1.0

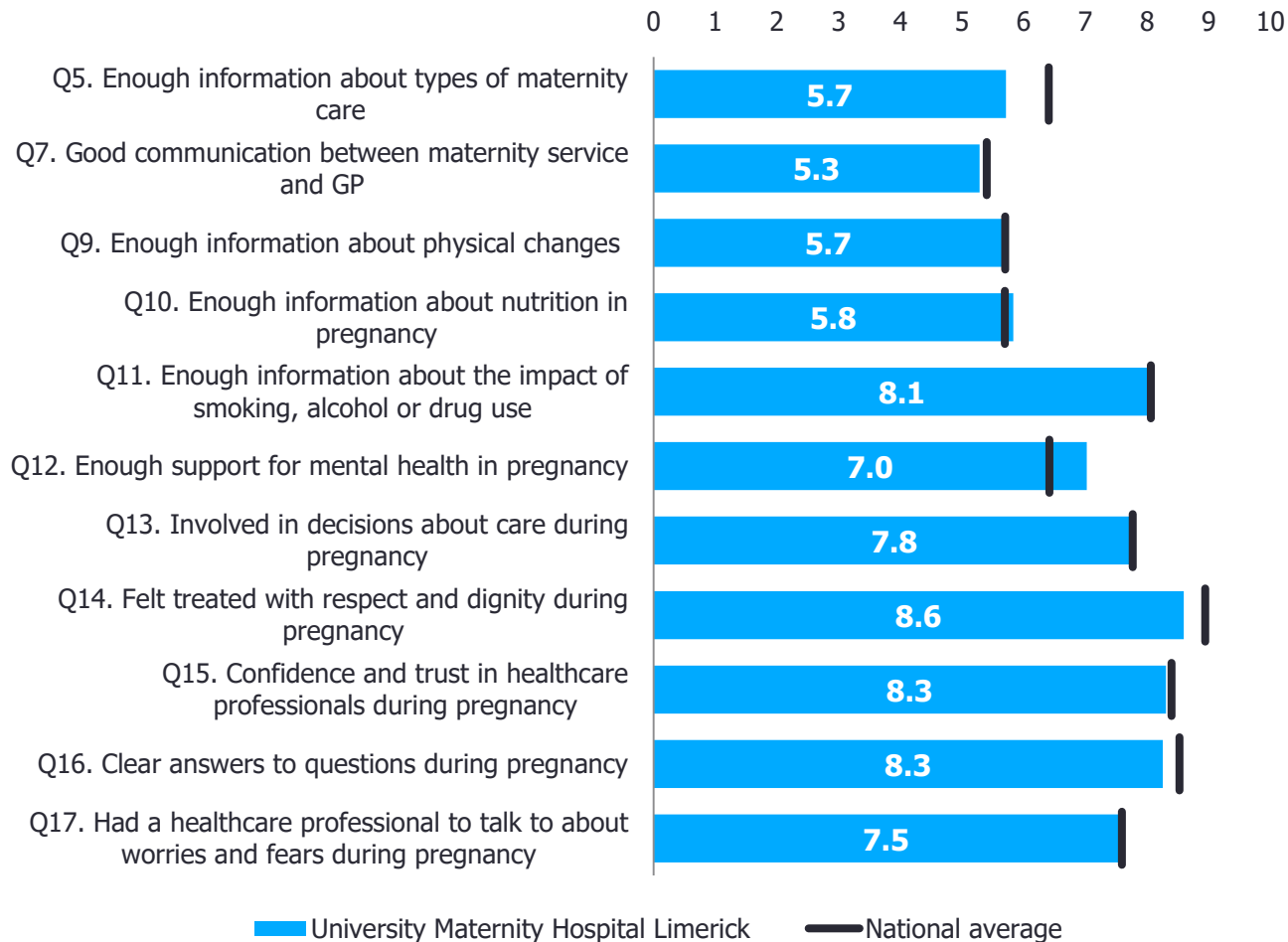
## Scored questions for care in pregnancy

- **Highest-scoring question:** 76% of participants (148 of 196) said that they always felt treated with respect and dignity in pregnancy.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 31% of participants (43 out of 140) 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

- 42% of survey participants at University Maternity Hospital Limerick said their labour was induced.

Type of birth for survey participants	Number	%
Vaginal birth (no forceps or ventouse suction cup)	73	37.4
Assisted vaginal birth (with forceps or ventouse suction cup)	37	19.0
Planned caesarean birth	63	32.3
Unplanned caesarean birth	22	11.3

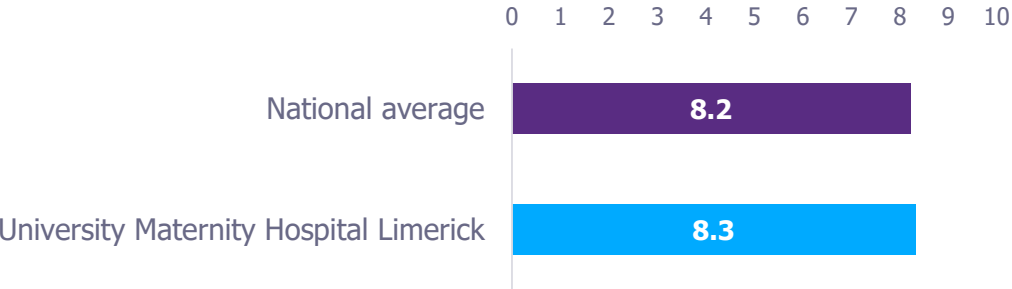
Participant left alone by healthcare professionals at a time when it worried them	Number	%
Yes, during early labour	17	8.8
Yes, during the later stages of labour	12	6.2
Yes, during the birth	3	1.5
Yes, shortly after the birth	11	5.7
No	159	82.0



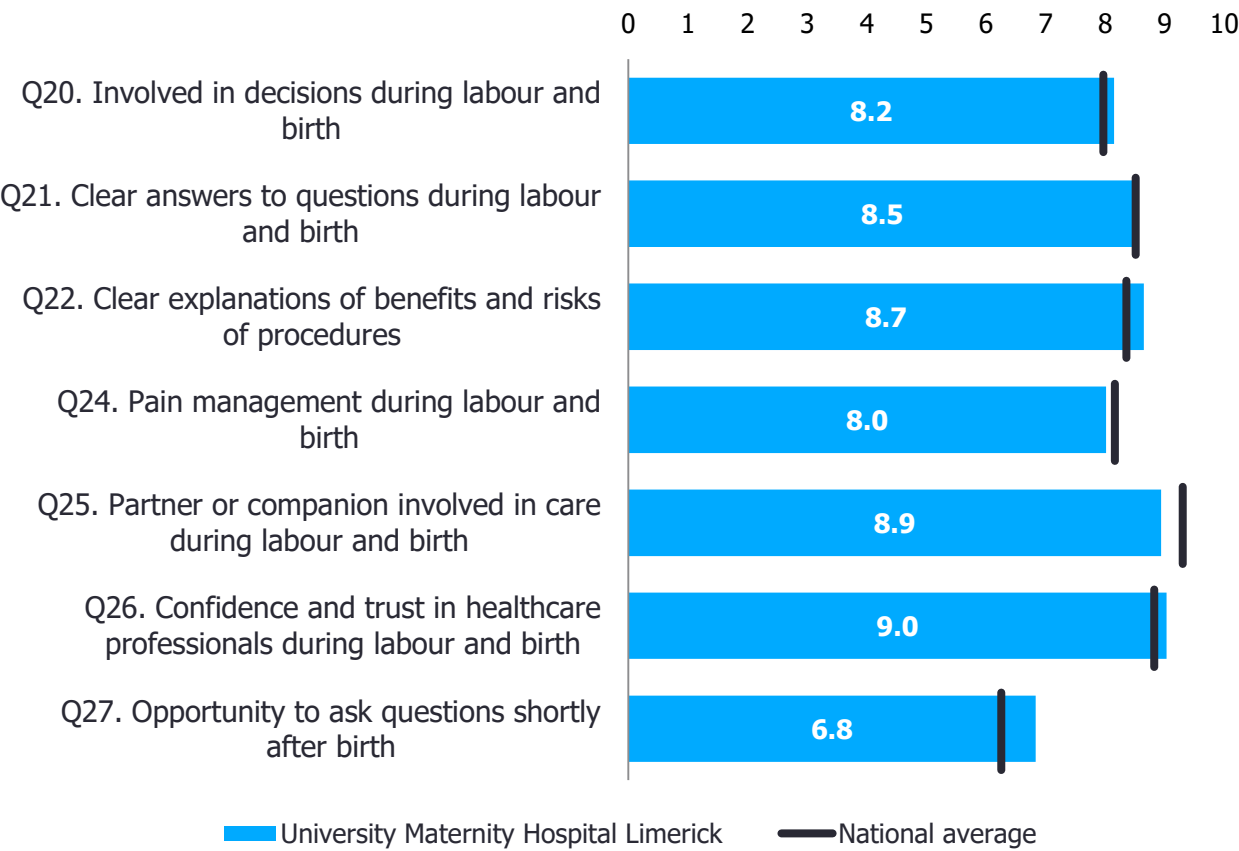
# Scored questions for care during labour and birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 84% of participants (161 of 192) said they always had confidence and trust in the healthcare professionals caring for them during labour and birth.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 22% of participants (38 of 174) said 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

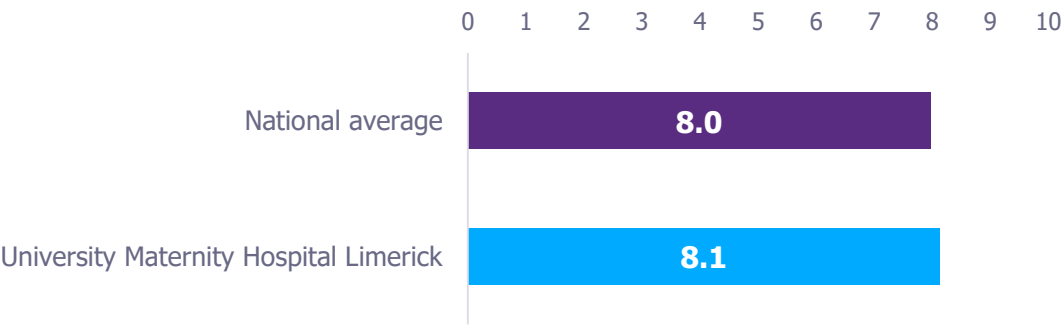




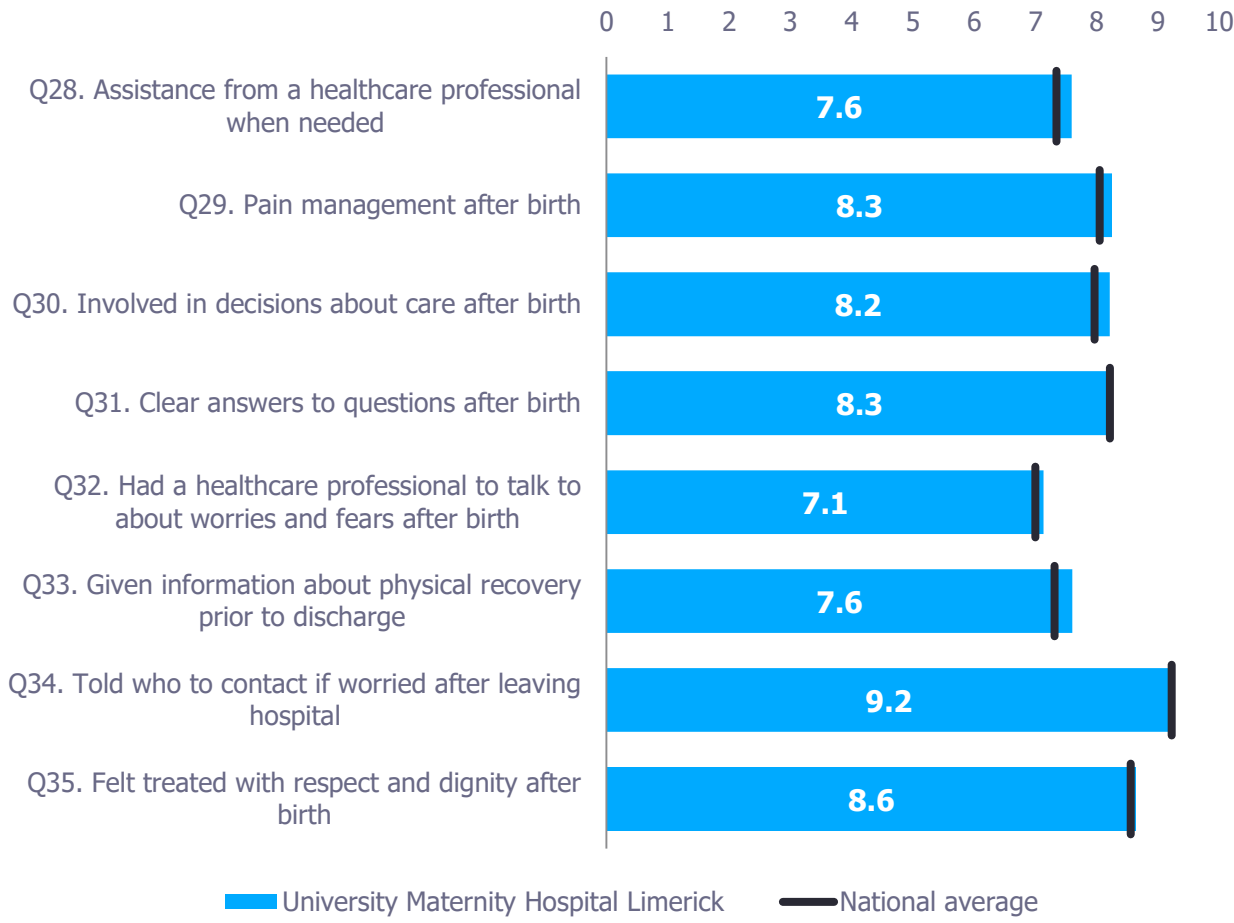
# Scored questions for care in hospital after birth

- **Highest-scoring question:** 92% of participants (176 of 191) 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:** 14% of participants (25 of 185) 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

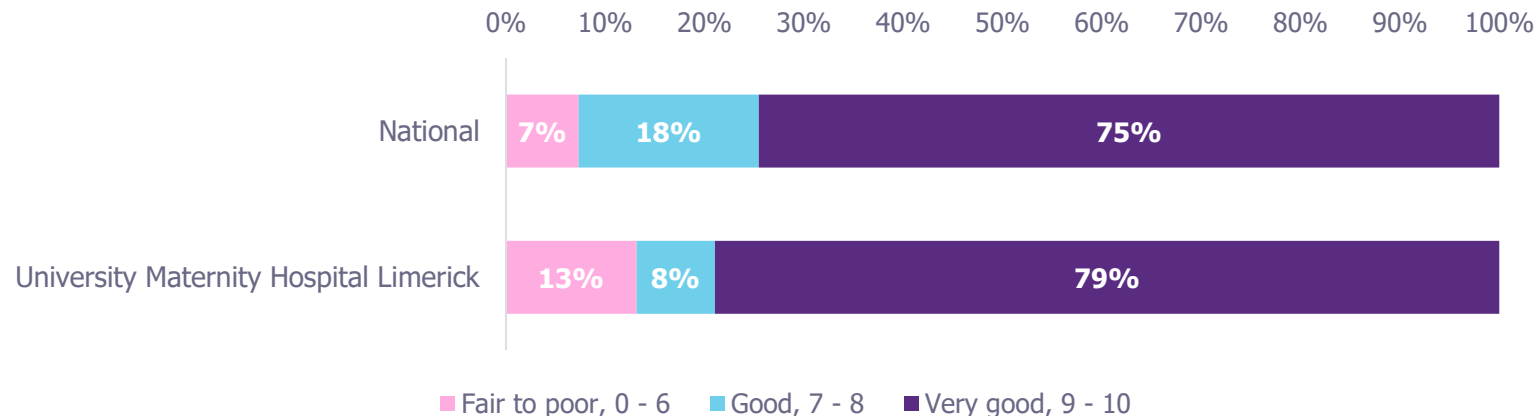




## Specialist care in the neonatal unit

- 38 survey participants (20%) at University Maternity Hospital Limerick said that their baby spent time in the neonatal unit following the birth.
- Of these participants:
  - 56% said that they always received enough emotional support from healthcare professionals while their baby was in the neonatal unit.
  - 23% said that they sometimes received enough emotional support.
  - 15% said they did not receive enough emotional support.
  - 5% said they did not want or need any emotional support.

### Overall rating of experience of care for baby in neonatal unit



# Infant feeding

In the first few days after birth:

- 34% of participants fed their baby with breast milk only.
- 37% 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	102	52.0
Yes, during labour or immediately after birth	53	27.0
Yes, after birth while in hospital	70	35.7
Yes, after birth while at home	26	13.3
No	24	12.2
Did not want or need discussion of different options	22	11.2
Don't know or can't remember	2	1.0

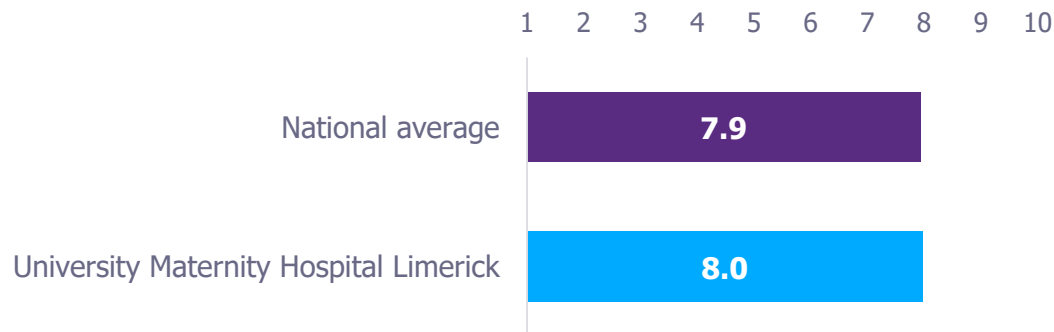
Sources of breastfeeding support		
	Number	%
Midwife(s) in hospital	90	47.1
Hospital lactation consultant	89	46.6
Home birth midwife	2	1.0
Postnatal community midwives	26	13.6
Public health nurse	85	44.5
GP	13	6.8
Practice nurse	4	2.1
Community breastfeeding support groups or volunteers	30	15.7
Private lactation consultant	13	6.8
Friends or family	38	19.9
Did not need support	8	4.2
Did not want to breastfeed	48	25.1

## Scored questions for infant feeding

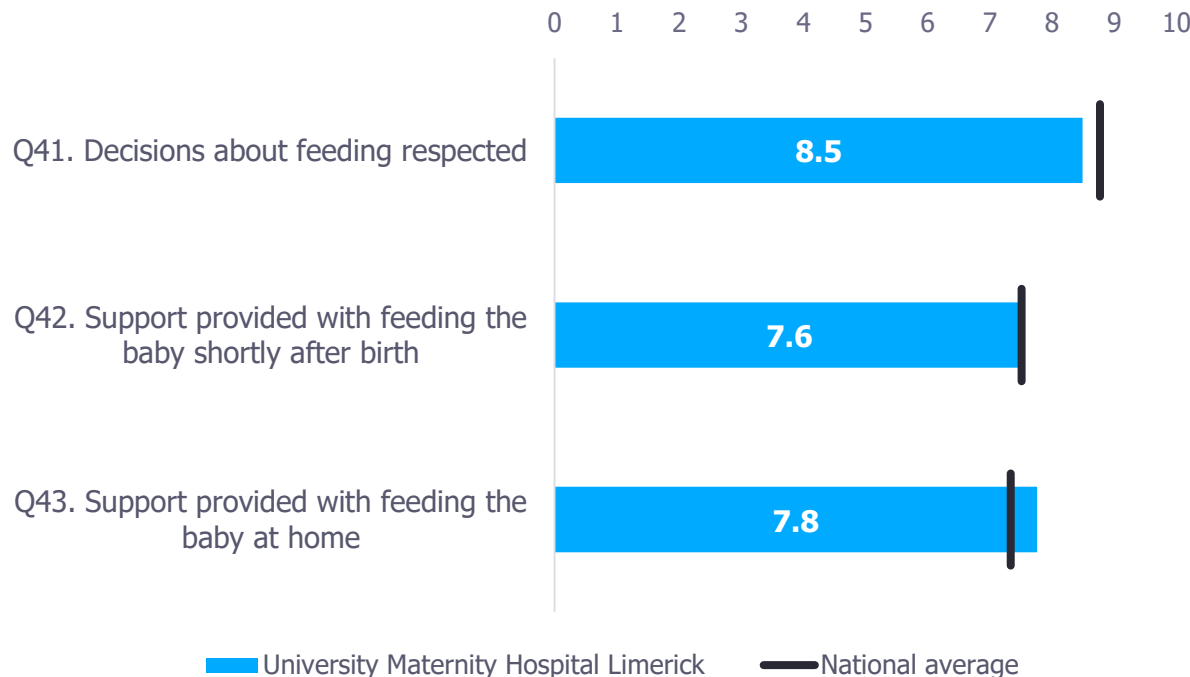
- **Highest-scoring question:** 76% of participants (148 of 196) said that their decisions about how they wanted to feed their baby were always respected by healthcare professionals.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 13% of participants (25 of 188) said that their healthcare professionals did not give them adequate support and encouragement with feeding their baby in hospital shortly after birth.



### 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	15	7.7
Postnatal community midwife at community clinic	3	1.5
Public Health Nurse at home	181	92.8
Public Health Nurse at a community clinic	35	17.9
GP	128	65.6
Obstetrician at hospital clinic	42	21.5
Midwives or paediatricians at hospital baby clinic	14	7.2
Other professionals	17	8.7
None of the above	1	0.5

## Healthcare professionals who provided mental health support during pregnancy or after birth

	Number	%
GP	52	27.7
Public health nurse	61	32.4
Midwife	27	14.4
Obstetrician	18	9.6
Perinatal mental health midwife	11	5.9
Perinatal mental health nurse	13	6.9
Psychiatrist	5	2.7
Psychologist	4	2.1
Mental health social worker	2	1.1
Other professionals	7	3.7
None of the above	94	50.0

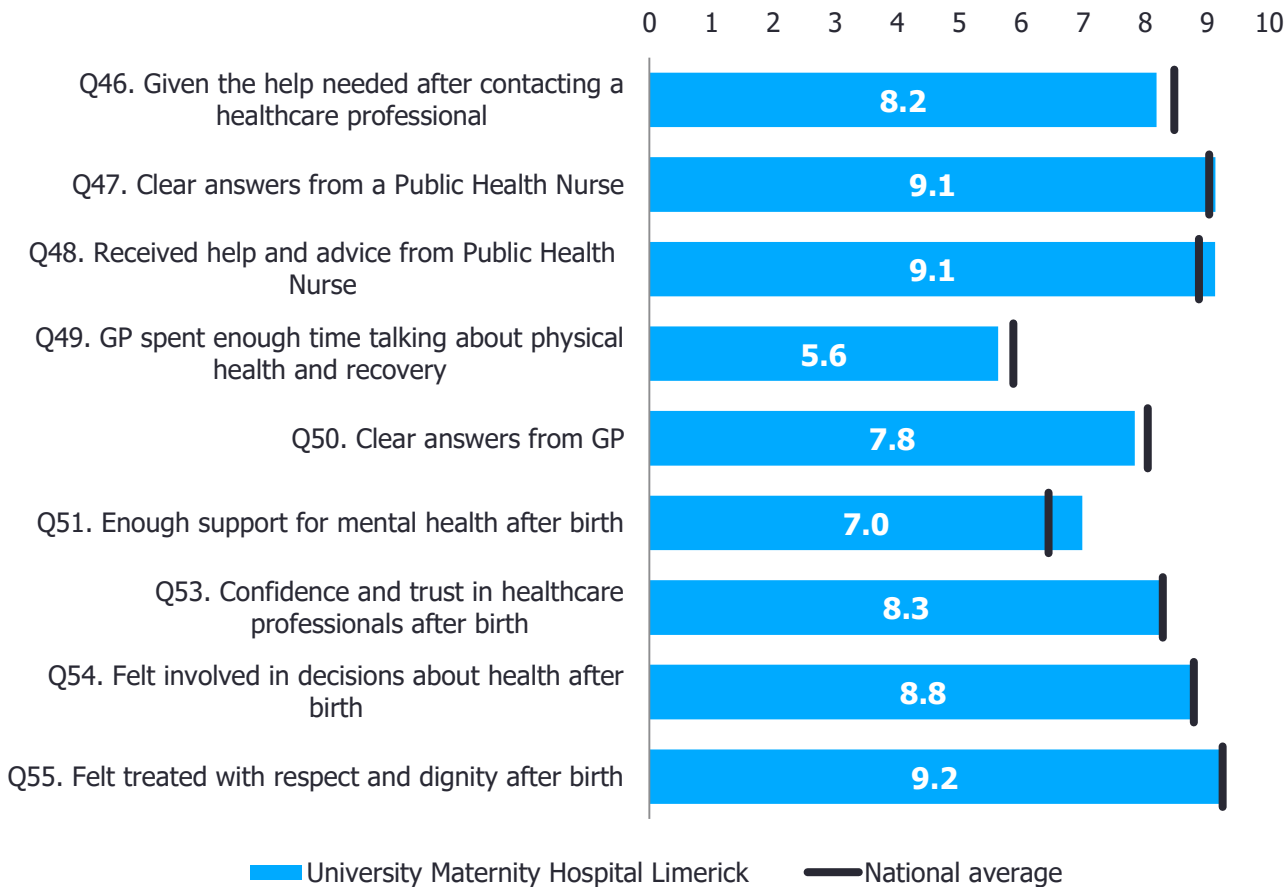
# Scored questions for care at home after birth



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.

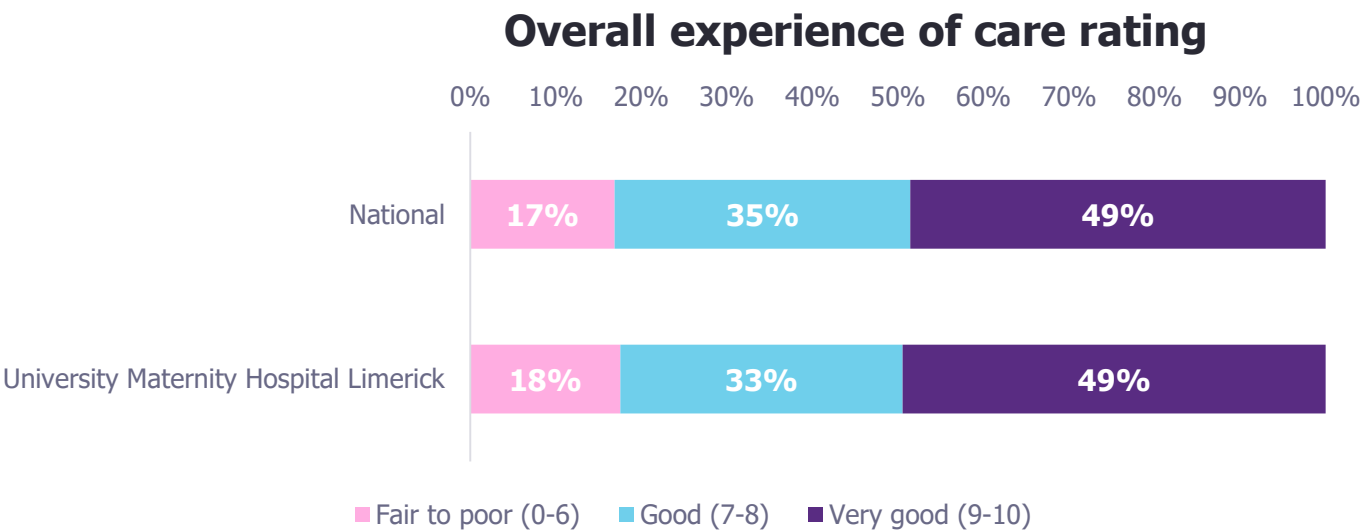
- **Highest-scoring question:** 86% of participants (166 of 194) said they always felt treated with respect and dignity when they received care at home or in their community after birth.
- **Lowest-scoring question:** 31% of participants (60 of 191) said that their GP did not spend enough time talking about 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

- 74% of survey participants who gave birth at University Maternity Hospital Limerick said that their decisions about their maternity care were always respected by healthcare staff. 23% said their decisions were sometimes respected, while 3% said their decisions about their maternity care were not respected.
- 32% of participants said that if they wanted to give feedback or make a complaint they knew how and where to do so, while 43% said they did not know. 25% said they did not wish to give feedback or make a complaint.
- 82% of participants who gave birth at University Maternity Hospital Limerick said they had a good or very good overall experience of maternity care (overall rating between 7 and 10), compared to 83% nationally. 18% of participants said they had a fair to poor experience of care.



## 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 University Maternity Hospital Limerick.
- Between 2020 and 2025, there were significant increases in scores for five areas of care experience at University Maternity Hospital Limerick:
  - Involvement in decisions about care during labour and birth.
  - Opportunity to ask questions shortly after birth.
  - Assistance from healthcare professionals when needed in hospital after birth.
  - Involvement in decisions about care after birth.
  - Support and encouragement with feeding in hospital shortly after birth.
- Between 2020 and 2025, there were no significant decreases in scores for survey questions.

## Comments from survey participants

- When survey participants at University Maternity Hospital Limerick 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 Maternity Hospital Limerick, they most commonly referred to the conditions of the hospital or ward.

"The midwives in the clinic were always so warm, welcoming and supportive."

"Both community midwives I met throughout my pregnancy were brilliant in their care and ensuring all information and options were discussed."

"Post C-Section aftercare advice is shockingly poor. I completed my own research regarding scar management, scar tissue build up prevention massage, nutrition, etc."

"The facilities were disgusting. The labour ward only has one shared toilet and the aftercare ward toilet was infested with silverfish, disgusting."

## Conclusion

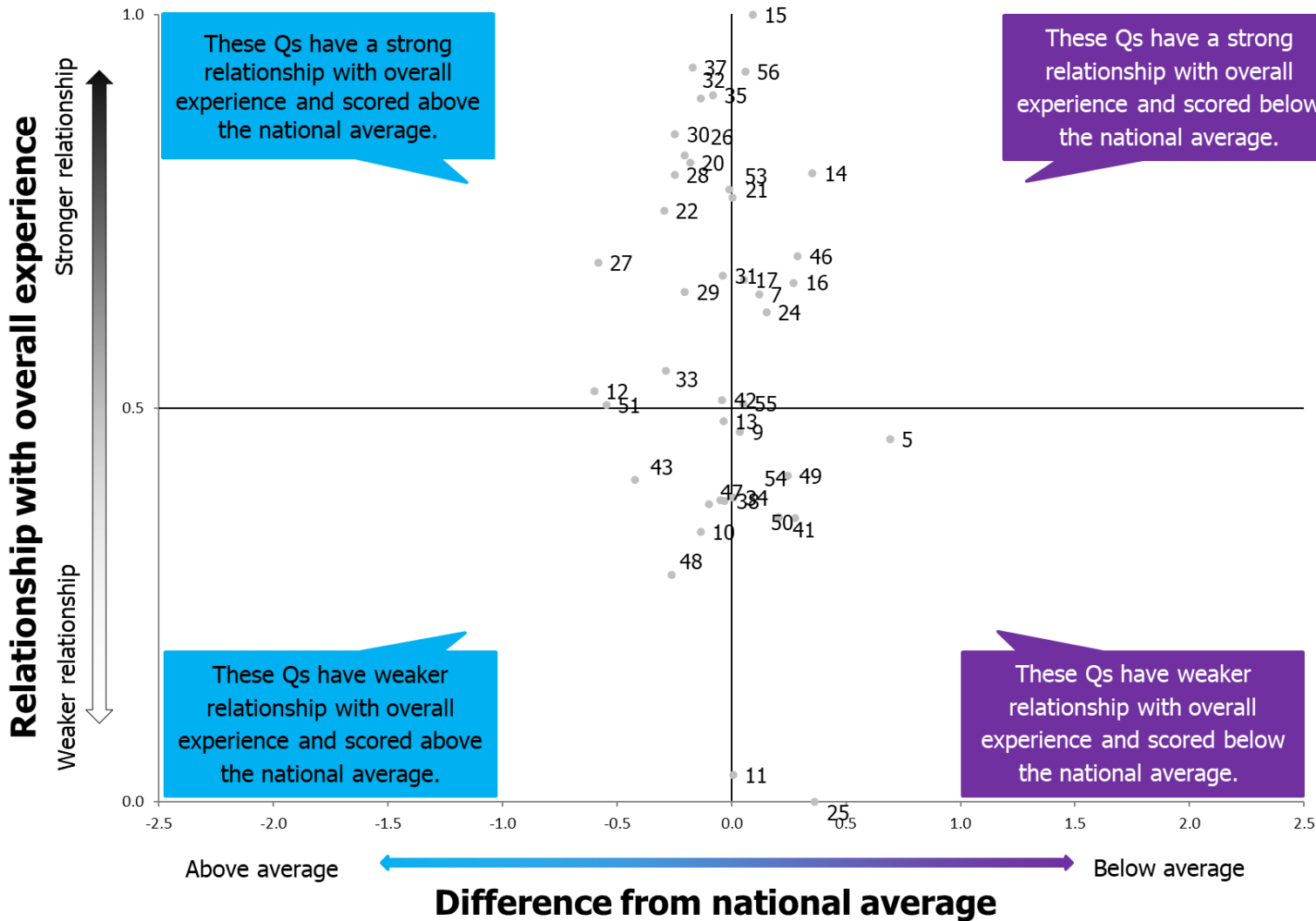
- There were no questions that scored significantly above or below national average for participants at University Maternity Hospital Limerick.
- 82% of survey participants who gave birth at University Maternity Hospital Limerick said they had a good or very good overall experience; this is lower than the national figure (83%).
- In 2025, there was a significant increase in scores for five areas of care experience at University Maternity Hospital Limerick, compared to 2020 survey findings. There was no significant decrease in scores for any question since 2020.



# Appendix 1

## Improvement map for University Maternity Hospital Limerick

- 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).





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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