

Maternity & You

Experiences of using Maternity Services
In Bolton

May 2024



Introduction

Healthwatch Bolton is the independent voice of the public in Bolton for health and social care services. We listen to the experiences of our community when using health and social care services. We then share that feedback with commissioners and providers of services to help improve service and experiences, where necessary.

This report details the experiences of people who have used the maternity services in Bolton in the past 18 months. It focuses on ante-natal care through to post-natal care.

Background

Healthwatch Bolton embarked on this project after receiving feedback from the community about experiences of maternity care in Bolton. Feedback received was predominantly negative, with some birthing people reporting their dissatisfaction with their experiences. Maternity services have been a focus of national policy in recent years with investigations into quality and safety which include: The Report of the Morecambe Bay Investigation 2015¹, the Ockenden Review of Maternity Services at the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust 2022², and the report into Maternity and Neonatal services In East Kent 2022³

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) undertook a maternity survey in 2023. At a national level the 2023 maternity survey shows that people's experiences of care have deteriorated in the last five years.⁴ The CQC inspection

into the Royal Bolton Hospital in 202⁵ rated the maternity services as **requiring improvement**, with specific challenges including staffing, compliance of mandatory training in key skills, management of incidents and consistency in completing checks on some equipment. However, it should also be noted that the CQC also recognised areas of **outstanding practice**, including a “highly skilled staff team”, effective coordination and planning of people’s care on the

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f3d7240f0b62305b85efb/47487_MBI_Accessible_v0.1.pdf

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/final-report-of-the-ockenden-review/ockenden-review-summary-of-findings-conclusions-and-essential-actions>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maternity-and-neonatal-services-in-east-kent-reading-the-signals-report>

⁴ <https://www.cqc.org.uk/publications/surveys/maternity-survey>

⁵ <https://www.cqc.org.uk/location/RMC01?referrer=widget3>

antenatal ward, and commented on how the design, layout and staffing of the triage ward supported excellent patient flow while reducing the risk of overcrowding.

The report also praised leaders and staff for actively and openly engaging with women and birthing people, staff, equality groups, the public and local organisations to help plan and manage the services the Trust provides.

Disparities In Maternal Health Between Ethnic Groups

Concerns have also been raised about disparities in maternal health between ethnic groups, with Black women having particularly poor outcomes. For example, the 2022 MBRRACE-UK report⁶ demonstrated that Black women were at almost four times greater risk of maternal mortality than White women. The reasons for this are not fully understood, but deprivation, pre-existing conditions and co-morbidities seem to play a role.

The Black Maternity Experiences Survey 2022⁷, also reported concerns from respondents about the standard of care they received during labour and how concerns were addressed by professionals. There are concerns that Black and minority ethnic women's experience of maternity services may be [negatively affected by implicit or explicit racism](#) and [negative perceptions of religious and cultural practices](#) within maternity services.

The Vision for Maternity Services

The National Maternity Review - Better Births⁸ sets out a vision for maternity services across England - for them to become safer, more personalised, kinder, professional and more family friendly; where every birthing person has access to information to enable them to make decisions about their care; and where they and their baby can access support that is centred around their individual needs and circumstances. And for all staff to be supported to deliver care which is birthing person centred, working in high performing teams, in organisations which are well led and in cultures which promote innovation, continuous learning, and break down organisational and professional boundaries.

⁶ https://www.npeu.ox.ac.uk/assets/downloads/mbrpace-uk/reports/maternal-report-2023/MBRRACE-UK_Maternal_Compiled_Report_2023.pdf

⁷ <https://www.nhsbmnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/TheBlackMaternityExperienceReport.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/national-maternity-review-report.pdf>

Methodology

We developed a questionnaire exploring experiences of maternity care in Bolton, from ante-natal to post-natal care. We discussed the project with the Bolton Integrated Care Partnership including representatives from The Royal Bolton Hospital executive team, midwifery teams, and the Bolton Maternity Voices Partnership group⁹. We invited them to comment on questions they would like included in the project. We launched an online survey and undertook community engagement with groups and individuals in Bolton. We also obtained two case studies which are included in this report. The online survey was launched in mid-December 2023 and closed on 10th May 2024. We received 65 responses to the survey. There is a list of groups and organisations where the survey was shared at page 50.

It should be noted that all comments from respondents are included in this report and are presented verbatim. Any real names included in the feedback (including staff members), have been removed to preserve anonymity.

⁹ <http://www.maternityvoicesgmec.org.uk/>

Summary of Findings

Ante-natal – for respondents who answered the questions, the majority did attend ante-natal appointments and said they were given the opportunity to discuss what was important to them. Regarding the booking of appointments, there were mixed responses to this question, with some people having no issues at all, to some having a few struggles getting through by telephone and finding a suitable appointment date. Regarding the quality of information from health professionals, again, there were mixed responses with some people feeling they did not have enough information.

The majority of respondents felt it was important to see the same midwife throughout their pregnancy. Respondents also reported how important the role of the midwife was when they needed help and information about their pregnancy. Most people were able to get the information they needed easily, and navigation of the website was easy. Some used the 24-hour maternity triage line which seemed to work well mostly, however other people reported struggles getting through on the phone. Some people reported issues with contacting the community midwives by phone and there not being an answer service for this. Comments were also made about staff being overworked and 'pregnancy' leaflets not being accessible and some information not being accessible. There was also a request for more information being made available online.

Other comments about ante-natal experience include – there should be more consistency of midwives, some people reported they did not see the same midwife. Some people reported long waiting times to have tests and procedures done with some people being very unhappy with the service, to those having an excellent experience.

Labour and Birth – When asked how comfortable and reassured they felt during labour – people had mixed responses to this question. Some reported on positive experiences with feeling well looked after and supported. Some responded negatively saying they were left for long periods on their own, some without being given any pain relief and one birthing person on the verge of giving birth on her own without any midwives present, to one birthing person giving birth in a corridor. People also commented that the staff were rushing and were over-worked, and the unit was very busy.

During labour and birth the majority of respondents said they could get a member of staff to attend to them when they needed it. 34% of respondents said they were left alone during labour and birth which concerned them, with

66% saying they had no concerns. Some of the comments are negative and relate to being left alone without adequate pain relief.

Regarding raising concerns, the majority of respondents felt they could do this and that it was taken seriously. The majority of respondents were communicated to in a language they could understand, however there were also a couple of negative comments. The majority of respondents did feel they were involved in decisions about their care. Some commented that they felt all decisions were made with their consent, however some people felt they were not being listened to and decisions were being made for them.

The majority of people said they had confidence in the staff looking after them, but some reported differences in care between the labour ward and post-natal ward.

Induction of Labour – the majority of respondents felt they had enough information about what was happening when their labour was induced. However, some did comment that they did not have enough information or communication as to what was happening and when they might give birth.

When asked to share any other experiences about labour and birth – many respondents shared negative experiences. Some were associated with long waits from being induced to giving birth and then some being rushed in as an emergency after being left so long.

Post-natal - People reported the post-natal ward being cramped and unwelcoming, with some people reporting negative attitudes from midwives. Many people said there was a shortage of staff and midwives seemed overworked. People also reported not receiving pain relief when they needed it, and not receiving any support or advice. Many people praised the midwives and clinical staff; however some did say that their experiences would have been better if they had seen the same midwife throughout their pregnancy.

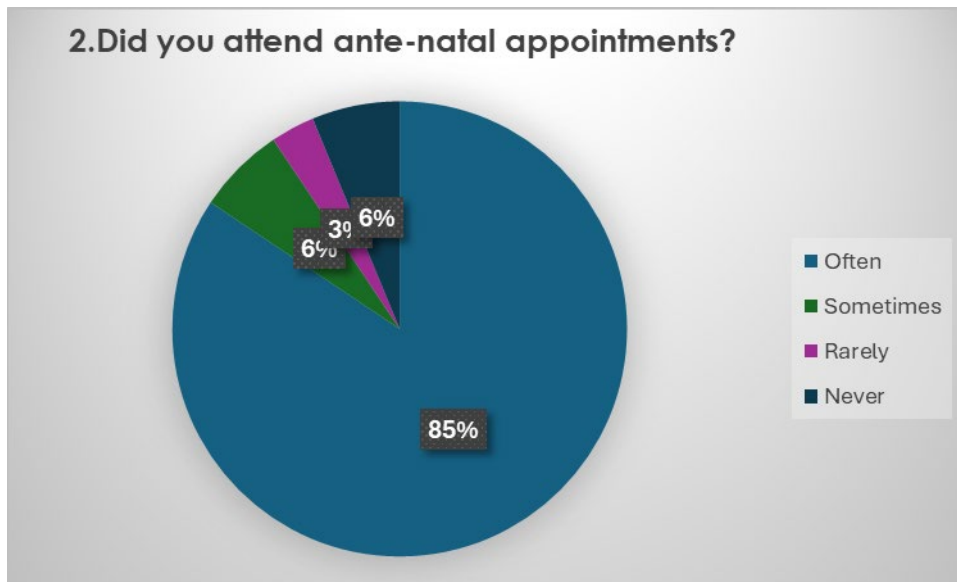
Findings

1. For the question –

Have you used maternity services in Bolton in the last 18 months?

63 respondents said YES, One said No.

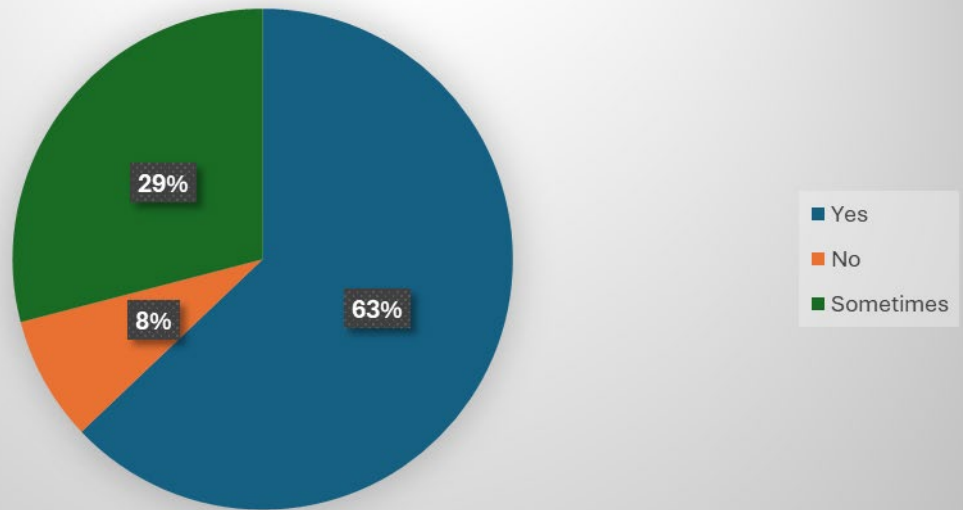
Ante-Natal Care



3. If you did not attend ante-natal appointments, can you tell us why?

- Always cancelled
- Second child so wasn't offered
- Did not feel I needed to attend
- Once when had no childcare for older children
- I left Bolton and moved to Chorley after my booking appointment which was completely pointless
- Wokeness and anti-white racism
- N/a
- Second baby
- I was at the hospital often (every 2 weeks) so was watched like a Hawk.
- always try to attend

4. At these appointments, were you given the opportunity to discuss what is/was important to you?



5. Can you tell us more about your experience when booking your first ante-natal appointment? What worked well? Did you experience any difficulties doing this, were you able to book a time and a date?

It would be easier to be able to book it online

Struggled to get through on the phone lines was difficult but everything was fine after the first meeting

Appointment was booked for me

They gave me time and dates which was always ok, the midwives at these appointments were also great

All was ok

I booked all of my appointments according to my convenience. No difficulty of date and time.

All was fine with booking in.

I was told that I had called too early (I've never done this before!) so had to call back in a few weeks which made me feel a bit silly.

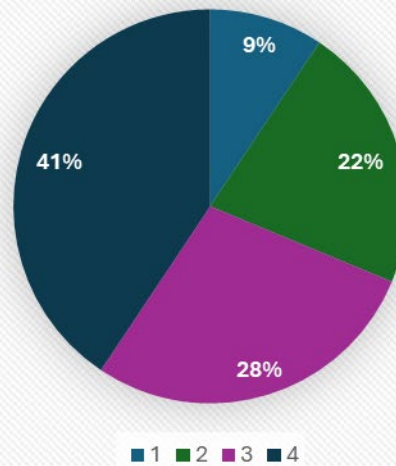
I only knew what to do because I had a baby 12 weeks prior to falling pregnant again. It isn't simple to do

Never saw the same midwife. Always cancelling

Had no problems with this. The process was easy
NA
It took quite a few tries at ringing before I was able to get through to someone
Was initially unsure who to call to book appointment but my GP receptionist was very helpful. Once in touch with Bolton FT I was easily able to make an appointment.
No issues, all was pretty easy
No issues
Often felt very rushed and worries overlooked and brushed off with no further queries
Nothing worked well. I've had several miscarriages prior to this pregnancy and had to really jump through hoops to get my first appointment
Yes the system worked fine and I had an appointment that suited me
I feel as though my midwife has been doing her job a long time and it's just the norm to her now- I'm pregnant with my first child and I'd expect a bit more compassion from a nursing midwife I'm also a nurse myself and to me I feel as though them appointments I have had with my midwife are just throwing a bunch of basic baby things at me. What works well is the fact the appointments are on time
It was difficult to make initial contact with the team however once I'd received an appointment, I never had any further issues
Amazing XX (my community midwife) couldn't do enough she was brilliant; the booking appointment was booked quickly
Had to wait a while for booking in appointment I was 10 weeks when I first got an appointment
Can't remember
Getting my initial appt was extremely difficult and I was then seen later than usual which caused a knock-on effect going forward
Yes. Finding a suitable date to attend was easy. The wait and delays on the day were ridiculous sometimes
Not able to book a time and date. Appointment was split in 2 so the 1st part I had to go to park up in Daub Hill to go to Bolton One which was not ideal but the health care assistant who saw me was helpful and informative. For my actual booking appointment with my midwife, it was v difficult to get a suitable apt which I had to cancel as I had covid. I arranged a telephone appointment with my midwife to which she didn't turn up for when I chased up I was only able to leave messages. I didn't receive any further contact from my midwife with any apology or to rearrange the appointment. Then a student midwife called me to say she needed to go through a

checklist with me. My midwife didn't have time
There were no issues when booking the first appointment. I spoke to the doctors first who told me to contact the clinic and then an appointment was booked from there.
Really easy and straightforward
Phoned and was given an appointment
The appointment booking system didn't match my work schedule they didn't have any other appointments
Nothing, I no longer trust the woke NHS
Was difficult to get through to the community midwife office at times, but otherwise a good service
All worked well and was booked in straight away when I called
All went smoothly, no issues at all. We were given our appointments straight from the 12-week scan so we had plenty of notice which was excellent
I found it easy to book I just phoned, and they gave me an appointment
Booking was ok but contacting to change appointment or any other concerns via community midwife was very difficult
Didn't seem to have many and large wait/gaps between
yes, very good
I rang the Drs who told me to ring the maternity team. Making the appointment was ok but I had to be around 10 weeks pregnant before I could see the midwife. During that time I wasn't given any info regarding pregnancy so I had to do all my own research in the meantime.
I rang up community midwife was offered appointment straight away
Tired many times to get through, didn't get my first appointment till after 13 weeks pregnant
Experience was good, Staff were very attentive
I called and was asked to call back when less busy (I was only 7 weeks pregnant)
No, it was fine without any problem.
no difficulty at all, it was a very nice experience.
Was very to do so, helped with any questions I had
yes, I was at the hospital all the time due to the less movements.

6. How Many Midwives Did You See During Your Pregnancy?



7. Do you feel you received enough information from health professionals about what to expect during pregnancy? If not, please tell us what you would like to have received.
24 respondents answered Yes to this question. The rest made the following comments

- No. Bare minimum was done

- No, my pregnancy had a few complex issues, and I felt the professionals I met with were lacking with info

- XXX was fantastic and so very helpful

- No, more information on emergency c sections and after care as non was provided

- No

- I received very little in regard to the actual birth such as pain relief options.

- Yes, I did but I found it difficult when speaking to the drs about whether to have a planned C-Section as I got told I could birth naturally and then a few weeks later told I can't because my previous emergency C-section and then a few weeks later I was told I could go naturally but then after checking again I couldn't. It was hard to track down my previous notes of my first pregnancy and it caused a lot of confusion.

- First appointment felt very rushed but my on-going community midwife appointments were useful.

- Not always

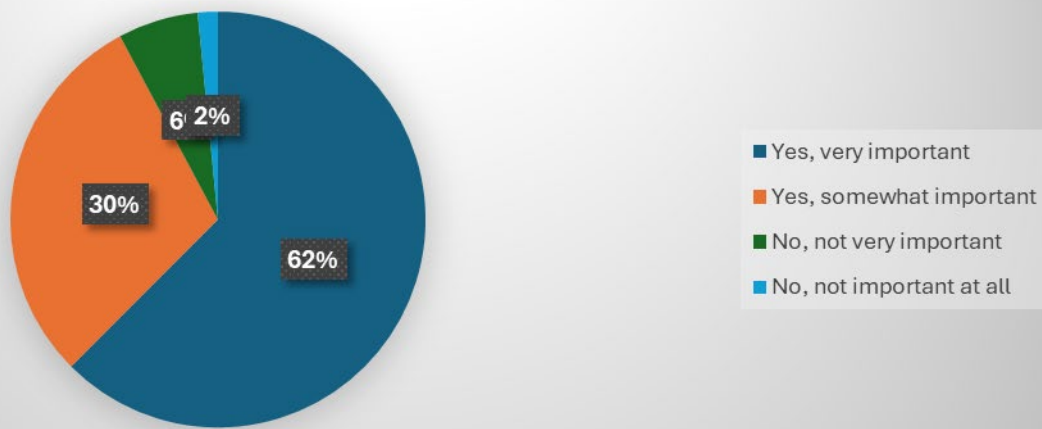
- No, lack of compassion throughout the whole team

- No- not enough at all I ended up going into active pre-term labour had no clue of the signs of symptoms or that kidney infections can bring this on

- From my community midwife yes, she as brilliant the midwives at the hospital were brilliant I cannot fault the midwives. the consultants on the other hand are a different matter all together

Would to have known more about recovery, and also what happens straight after birth i.e., going to the ward without partner if during the night etc
Scans were uncompassionate at times. No was sent a letter with random information on that panicked us
I didn't. Many were too rushed off their feet and, on occasions I was at ANDU didn't discuss things with me, would just take my stats and then walk off etc and come back with a decision of what's happening next, I felt very out of the loop sometimes
No
I had gestational diabetes and I had to advise the midwives and health care professionals (including GPs) as to what the NICE guidelines say for women in their second pregnancy that had GD in the first
Mostly, but didn't finish my birth plan as my son was born in between my appointments
More about the birth and what would happen with complications
Yes but the hospital tour needs to return, it is extremely important and helps mum's understand and feel reassured/comfortable
No - I am a first-time mum, so everything is new to me. I was given a few leaflets but that was due to finding out my blood type and having gestational diabetes. The community midwife did go through stuff with me, but she said my appts will decrease as I will be seen by the diabetes midwife. However, the diabetes midwives didn't go through anything with me and when i did see them they just took my blood pressure and then i would see a dr. The only way i was given 1-1 info/support was through my community midwife.
No.
Yes I was at the hospital every 2 weeks so any questions I could ask and I also rang up any time i needed to also.
I am very happy with all every time I got all information I need.
I definitely received enough info on what to expect during pregnancy.

8. Was It Important To See The Same Midwife Throughout Your Pregnancy?



9.If you needed help or advice about your pregnancy, please tell us what you found useful or anything you had difficulty with? eg. language, telephone advice, information on the hospital website?

Not always getting through on the phones

Had some issues with discussing planned section and reasons why, felt like I was judged even though it was medical reasons

You can always ring them, and they were happy to talk to me no problem

Same midwife throughout appointment in community

Midwife and hospital supportive but long waits and difficulty parking

Google!

Most of the help was seeked through Internet

Was not advised about maternity exemption and have since been fined.

N/A

Asking midwives

I used a private midwife

Found the website for the hospital easy to navigate. It was accessible to which was important as I am visually impaired. It's a shame that pregnancy leaflets weren't accessible. It would be good if more material was available online or in Braille

Some staff did not listen to concerns

I had reduced movements a couple of times and high blood pressure, and they were all very helpful when I did have to go in for monitoring and would always have been in throughout the same week to check.

N/A

Phoned the midwife but wasn't needed

Triage phone line

Staff not listening and brushing off illness and mental health

Very I'm caring staff. Dreadful service

My midwife just advices me to ring triage also asked questions about heart burn she said she's not sure and just to book an appt with my GP

Triage were very helpful and reassuring

Seeing a doctor was useful and the Health Care Assistants (HCAs)

Non
My midwife was amazing and was always there for any questions that I had.
NHS website
Good that I was able to phone my midwife if I needed advice
Mum & female friends, provided the best advice
I was told if I experienced bleeding to go straight to hospital, I did experience bleeding and my twins came 2 days later, I followed the advice, and they were delivered safely in hospital
Just phoning speaking to midwife
It would have been more reassuring seeing the same midwife but wasn't possible
Always had contact numbers on front of notes
Telephone advice / student midwife
the 24/7 maternity triage line was really helpful although it could sometimes be hard to get through
Just ringing midwife or hospital
Telephone line and email for the midwife.
Seeing my midwife often and being able to call the hospital in later pregnancy.
Midwife was always available via text. Sometimes replies weren't same day however if I needed urgent advice I would call.
Information was fine but I will feel more confident if I will have the same midwife throughout pregnancy
Yes
I was given leaflets and also a tour of where I would be giving birth.
I found not to eat certain things.

10.If you have struggled to get advice and information regarding any worries you have had regarding your pregnancy, please tell us:

No all ok
None
Staff overworked and not enough of them.

I was in dilemma about the delivery Doctors advised me to go for c section due to the weight of baby there no other option for second opinion.
Now facing a significant fine but lack of advice/action certificate
N/A
After C-Section information
I had a bad pregnancy with lots of bleeds. I ended up using a private midwife for advice.
No
Mentioned above
N/A
None
Information after scan about complications
Doctors, consultants and midwives refuse to listen to patients
Took me till I was 28 weeks to speak to a consultant regarding my platelets yet again when I had asked my midwife throughout my appointments, she said she's not sure what to do or what it means. Being a mental health nurse myself and if one of my patients had high platelets this would be a concern and something we would look in to straight away
Contacting Community midwives is awful. No message system and never answered
Unable to get through community midwife phone line
Mum & female friends, provided the best advice
N/a
Didn't have same midwife didn't help, very small ward at hospital for any worries
Due to have gestational diabetes, I wasn't sure what my birthing options would be as i had read a lot of women needed an induction. No one spoke to me about my birthing options, I had to bring my 35-week appt forward a week as I was stressed and worried about birthing.
No
Yes. Not taking my pain seriously throughout my pregnancy was told to look at YouTube for yoga.
No I did not struggle
I was worried about less movements.

11. Please use this space to tell us anything else about your experience of ante-natal services

it's not as obvious how stretched services are ante natally, but the midwives seemed pretty exhausted by their workload. Due to an admin error I'd been double booked, so one midwife agreed to see me over her lunch break. I was horrified, I took her something to eat

It was a great experience, very happy with the care I received

I had a placenta abruption internal bleeding and had a cat 1 section. The midwife before and after care was fantastic, the wards and Neo natal where faultless and saved mine and the babies life. 100% amazeballs. The whole system worked together as it should do

The ward are very under staffed following birth. I had to ask several times for pain relief. I was also not given my IV antibiotics despite asking for them numerous times resulting in them being given at 3am when I was already sleep deprived then having to wait for several doctors to try and get the needle into me.

Long wait was the only bad experience. Even after being there on time have to face waiting time of 2 to 3 hrs either for scan or for the obstetrics appointment.

My overall experience was excellent. The change of personnel couldn't be helped, and everyone was really nice.

Cannot fault my midwifery team. Baby December 2021 and baby December 2022 and the team were amazing!

I never saw the same midwife twice. Every time I rang to speak, they didn't answer or call back. Every appointment I had was either cancelled or re arranged

Everyone was very helpful and made me feel comfortable

On one occasion towards end of my pregnancy a scan appointment was booked but I was never informed of the appointment so obviously missed it. It was only when they rung me to ask while I didn't attend did they realise they had not actually told me about the appointment and then apologised.

No issues was quick, got seen when I needed they were flexible with times due to working so was able to have a late afternoon appointment.

Dreadful service, Un caring, Un compassionate, don't listen to patients and damn right rude. I would not recommend this hospital and maternity to anyone

My midwife XXX was fantastic. She supported me in all decisions and gave me kind and useful information to help inform my choices.

I can't believe the wait I've gone through at the hospital ante natal clinic 2 hours just

for a nine min appointment that's basically told me to repeat my bloods

I would have preferred to see less midwives throughout my pregnancy and have more consistency

Ante-natal was brilliant

All the midwives were lovely, but it would of been nice to have a consistent midwife

Having continuous midwives would help the continuity of care received. On more than one occasion I saw diff midwives that measured me different leading to further growth scans etc as charts were up and down.

There was a point in hospital where they tested me for gestational diabetes. I spoke to a woman who was awful and put the fear of God in me. I didn't end up having it, but she was basically saying that if I did have it and didn't treat it the baby would die.

The wait times can be long, and you always saw a different midwife which means opening up your file again to read through it, I feel this causes gaps with your appointments and a lot of time waste

Woke, anti-white racist, nonsense

I had had a previous pregnancy which unfortunately couldn't go to term, and I was constantly reassured during scans for my second pregnancy

The student midwife was fantastic, great for advice and support. Mental health team where fantastic very helpful

i think certain topics should be spoken about before others e.g. the midwife went through safe sleep with me before she went through birthing. i also feel topics should not be left too late (birth and birth plan) at 35 weeks.

The antenatal services have been very positive. HC adviser was very helpful in the first 6 months when I felt most vulnerable. the local community groups for help and advice with newborns and mums have also been extremely helpful.

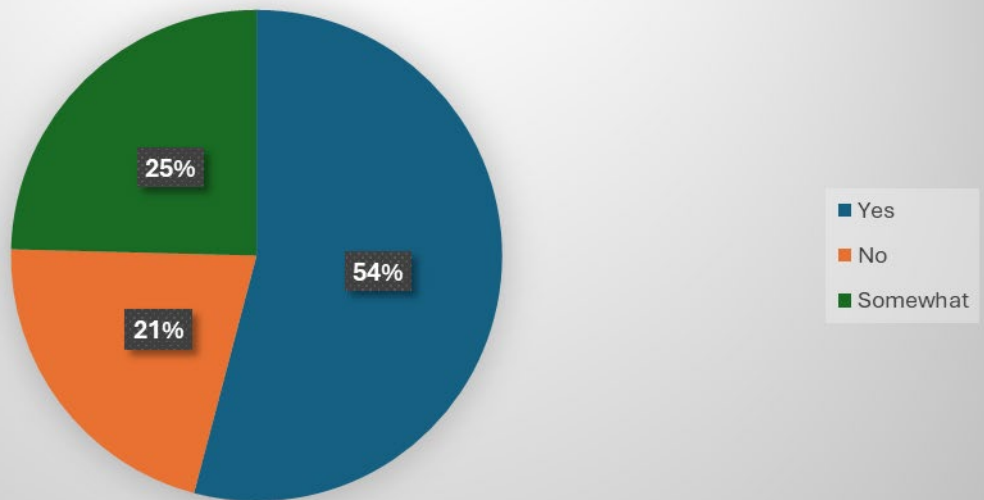
i had a good experience but however I wished to have a same midwife. All the midwives were brilliant and really helpful.

I really had a good experience. I had a C-Section delivery and I was very much worried about Drs. Especially hospital provide me female Dr and all staff and they help me a lot

They were monitoring my baby because of the less movements.

Labour and Birth

12. Thinking about labour and the birth, did you feel you were given appropriate advice and support, when you contacted the midwife and/or the hospital?



13. During your labour did you feel comfortable and reassured about what was happening?

10 respondents answered yes and the rest made the following comments

Only because it wasn't my first

Yes they were great at informing me

I felt comfortable with the theatre midwife before my section

I'm was unconscious but them people on delivery midwife's doctors, the guy that knocked me out, to the ones cutting me open and to the girl that took the call when I first rang up to say something wasn't right was amazing. I got in the hospital at 7:50 after the midwife said get here, the baby was born through snatch and grab at 8:09 saved my life. My blood pressure was stupidly high after all this and a doctor and midwife stayed with me all night, Bolton maternity was fantastic there was about 20 people all in all involved from start to finish and they were all faultless

No. I was left for hours without any professional seeing me despite asking for pain relief multiple times. I wasn't assessed appropriately.

No
No! Left in room by myself while being induced due to me having covid, felt as though midwives only looked at my notes last minute. Had to buzz them to let them know that the baby's head was crowning all whilst being on my own in a room.
No. They said I wasn't going into labour next minute I could feel him coming and gave birth in the corridor !!!!!
No. Even after asking many times to call my birth partner they ignored. They didn't let me know what was happening I delivered my baby in the absence of my partner.
I had a horrible experience giving birth at Bolton. I will use an alternative hospital for subsequent births.
Yes, all the way through
Somewhat but the unit was so understaffed they could only do so much so you felt like a burden
I was u see general anaesthetic
Yes, having a planned C-Section is a much better experience than an emergency one.
Yes although I wish I'd been given more space without a midwife hovering over me. I had a home birth
Initially, yes but felt very abandoned for the last 6 hours of my 30-hour labour. I was induced and it was felt I would have a lengthy labour as this was my first baby. Staff were extremely busy on the ward the day I gave birth, and because there was a queue for the delivery suite it meant that I was left without any pain relief (as what I needed could only be administered in the delivery suite) for the last four hours of my labour. I was repeatedly told I wouldn't be that far along, and it was only when my husband insisted, I be checked (as I was no longer able to speak due to the pain) that midwives realised I was extremely close and rushed me into the delivery suite. Staff afterwards said that I was so close that I nearly gave birth in the lift to the delivery suite! As a result, the last part of my labour was extremely painful and very stressful.
Yes, Bolton hospital supported me well before and during my C-Section
No. Staff not believing what my body was feeling, procedures weren't explained to me, and I was left not knowing what was happening when in premature labour
Initially, under community midwives at home, yes. When I went to hospital on the labour ward, absolutely not.
Not given birth as of yet

I had a planned C-Section. All of the staff were amazing throughout the birth.
No absolutely not pushed from pillar to post doctors were often out of sight for hours after they told you they'd be right back
Yes had a wonderful student midwife that delivered my baby
Not at all. They lost the heartbeat. There was no staff to open theatres up and I ended up being an emergency as I was 7cm
Cat 2 emergency section. I have 0 complaints about how this was handled, it was very calm and relaxed given the circumstances
Not initially when on the ward after being induced. I only felt comfortable with XXX the midwife, but when she went on her break it all went wrong and the replacement midwife was useless and rude
I was induced using a gel but then went into labour spontaneously whilst waiting (5 days) for a bed on L&D. I asked for pain relief but was not given any and I asked again after 45minutes to be told I was 10cm and rushed to L&D
Yes.
Yes, they were great
Mostly. I asked them to check me as I was in pain and was being give paracetamol, when they did eventually check again I was 7cm dilated.
No
Yes extremely
Nope
No
Yes, although had to go off birth plan with emergency forceps in theatre with epidural, it was all a rush and very scary, had no prior knowledge of what to expect in this scenario, but all staff were amazing and very caring and told me what they could within the rush
Yes the midwife XXX and the student midwife were amazing. XXX was really encouraging and friendly throughout.
Yes, I was rushed into delivery for an emergency C-Section but felt that everyone was there to do their job and they made me feel calm
Somewhat, didn't seem enough staff to check on me or to collect me for delivery ward nurses took me down
To start yes, triage was good and phone advice was great. the birthing suite began ok but the midwife spent a lot of time on computer
C section
to a certain extent as i was really out of it on pain relief and was in and out of sleep.

No health care assistants ever rude and did not understand my needs. Was not given any support during whilst in ante natal ward before going to the delivery suite.

I had a section. They asked if I wanted any particular songs on, explained the whole process after a very traumatic experience before having my little boy.

Yes even though I was in a lot of pain and the issues during my labour, staff kept me informed.

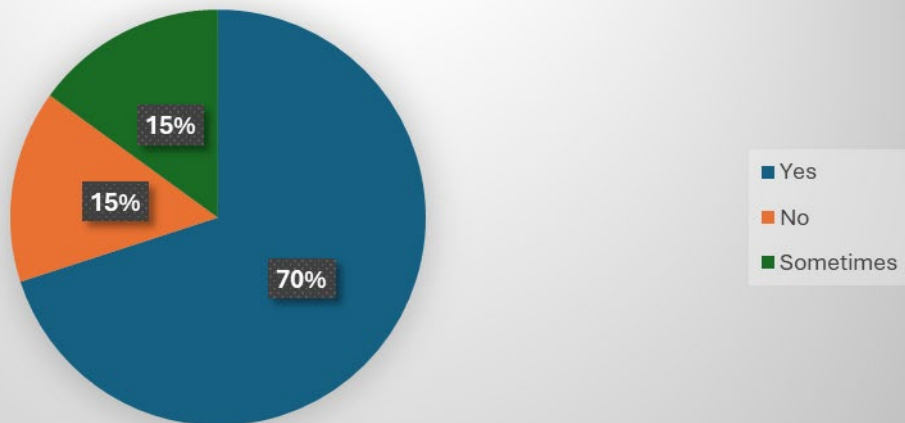
N/A - had my baby in Manchester

Yes I did but preferred to be at position as I felt more comfortable

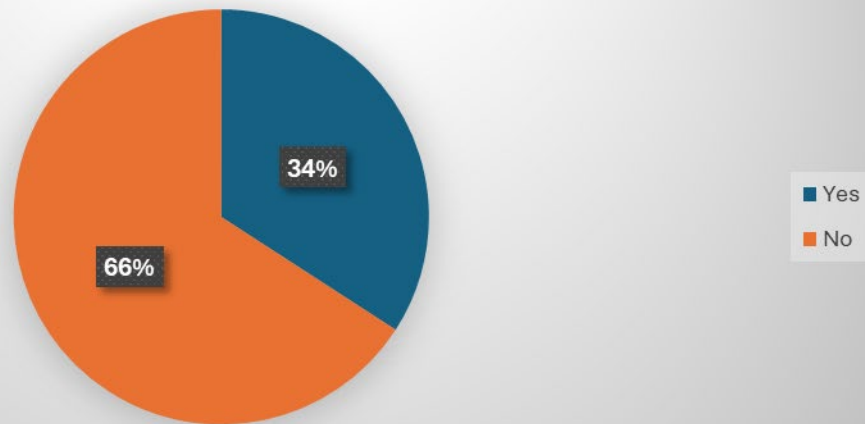
I felt very safe and comfortable during my labour and was talked and guided through everything as it was happening.

Yes, sort of.

14. During labour and birth, could you get a member of staff to help you when you needed it?



15. Were you ever left alone during labour and birth which concerned you?



15. Comments

Was left with student midwife and was scared as pain was increased

Yes. Screaming in pain and no staff member came to check on me.

Yes I was left in an end ward by myself due to induction. I had to keep asking for pain relief as I had not had any.

I caught covid 2nd day of being induced and due to staff being severely understaffed it was hard to get some support at times as they were constantly rushing around

I preferred to be left alone

As mentioned above, staff were very busy and my husband towards the end of my labour really struggled to find staff to check/help me. He didn't wish to wander around too much as this was in late 2021 and there were covid and non covid wards.

After birth- the night staff there wasn't any. Very hard but morning staff were brilliant

Yes, when on the ward after being induced

No. We were left once but my husband was with me, and I wasn't concerned

Yes, I was left alone when on the ward when I was induced and only checked when I needed to be given more medication.

I was glad when I was left alone

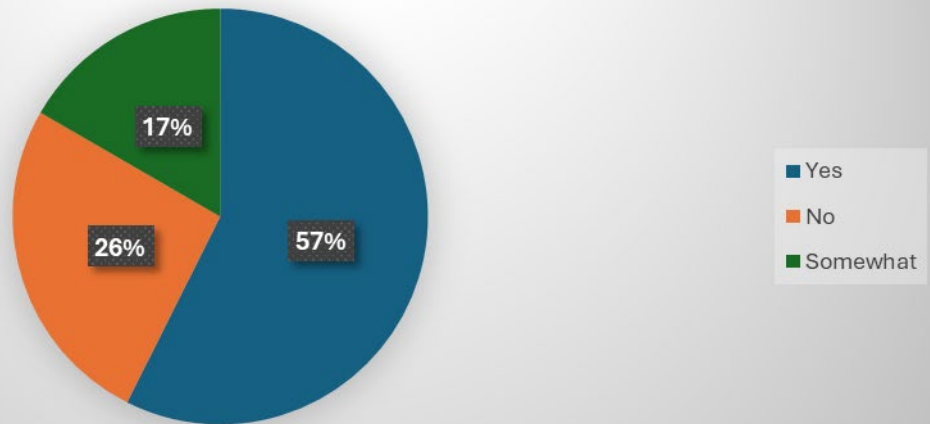
Just at first as waters went took a few minutes a good few for someone to come to me and I was scared

Yes- I was left alone in huge pain and needed the toilet but was also on a drip

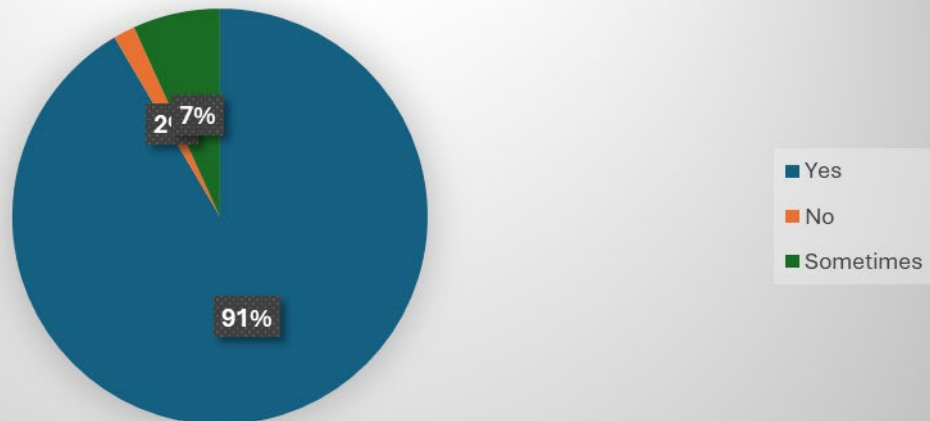
Yes. I was in pain told the healthcare assistants said she can't do anything coz I can't have more pain killers but told me go on the exercise ball or have a bath but that was impossible coz I was in too much pain. As I was induced, I told her can you ask the midi wife to check how many cm am I coz I'm in server pain she said you are not due for one as I was coz the last time she checked was 4pm and now it was 10:30pm

never as I was high risk.

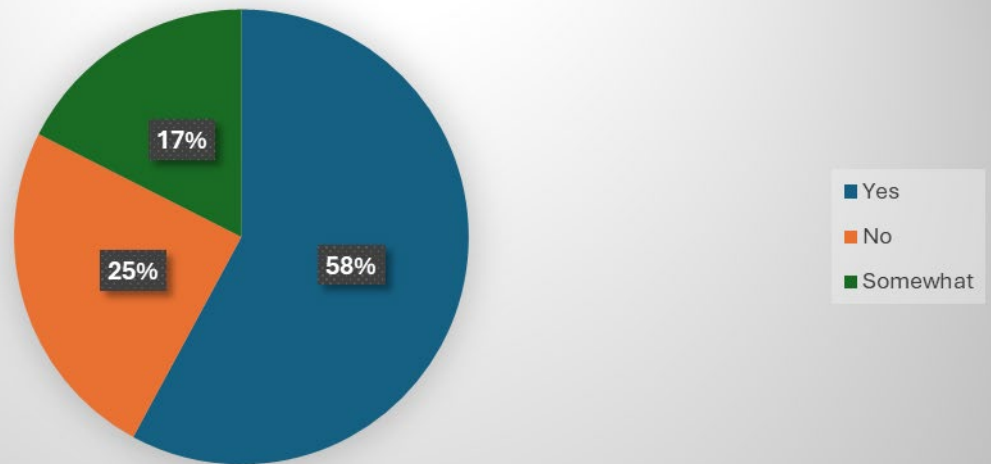
16.If you raised a concern during labour and birth, do you feel this was taken seriously?



17.Were you communicated with in a language that you could understand?



18. Did you feel involved about decisions about your care?



18. Comments

Yes but even though I was involved I was still told 'no'

Throughout my pregnancy and for most of my labour - yes. The staff in the delivery suite were fantastic!

No, I was told I was not able to make choices and they were made for me while my own decisions were derided.

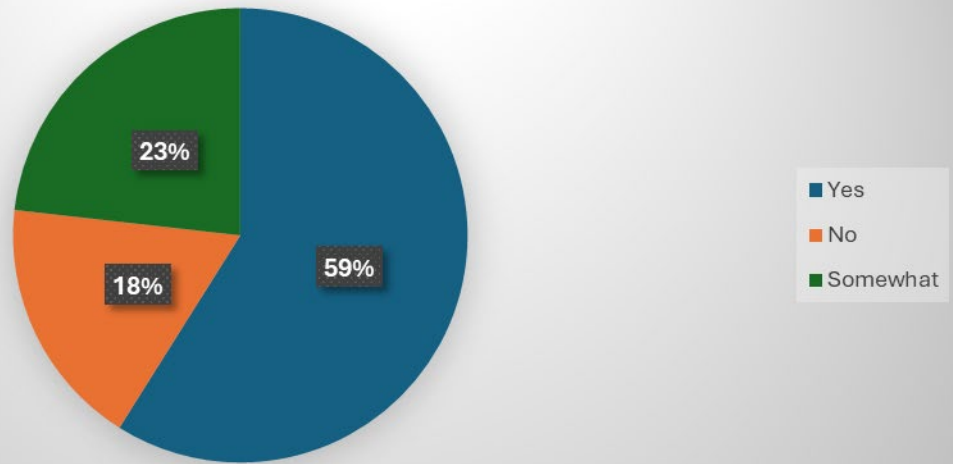
Yes. The professionals were very explicit about asking my permission before they did anything

No, I was pressured into an epidural. it was constant how they wouldn't listen even though it was on my notes that I didn't want an epidural. I wasn't listened to when I felt I was dilated which I was. I wasn't listened to when I needed to push, the midwife wouldn't examine me because my waters went over 10 hours before,

Somewhat, my ex-partner took most decisions as I was too poorly.

Yes, everything was explained beforehand and I always had a choice.

19. Did you have confidence in the staff looking after you?



19. Comments

In active labour and operating room but after care absolutely not

Not on the ward but yes in delivery

Morning staff yes, night staff no

Some (mainly midwife's and health carers who took my blood pressure and did hours obvs on the induction ward yes)... Doctors and most no

Only one of the midwives, the other was awful

N/a not all staff only some

Yes with my second birth no with my first

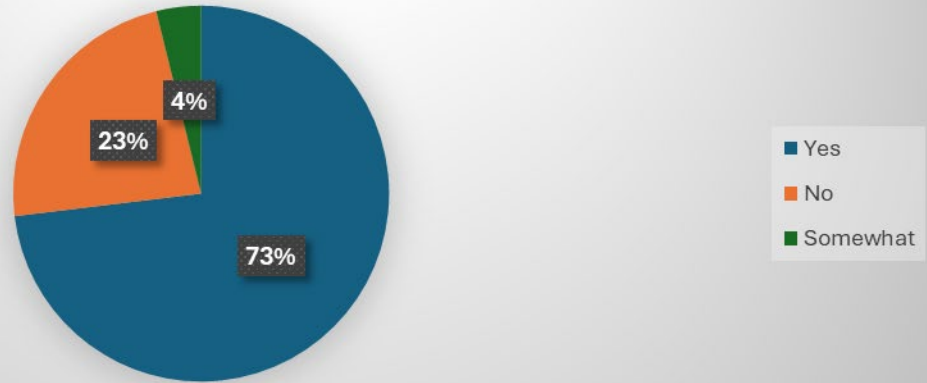
Yes until labour they didn't listen when I needed to push

No not in ante natal but in delivery suite yes,

yes my staff during labour were lovely and so supportive.

Sometimes

20.If your labour was induced, do you feel you had enough information about what was to happen? Were you kept informed if the induction was to be delayed?



20.If your labour was induced, do you feel you had enough information about what was to happen? Were you kept informed if the induction would be delayed?

No, it was a case of there are a number of people in front of you to go down, felt midwives probably had no idea who they had on the ward to care for. Staff complacent.

Yes, even though December 2022 baby was a traumatic, lengthy induction

No absolutely not enough information at all, induction failed due to timing fails. I was in for 7 days before being taken to deliver after being told it was an emergency induction and absolutely urgent!

No, weren't kept informed. Induction was awful!! The ward was filthy too

No, I got placed on a drip and wasn't told how it worked.

I feel like I wasn't given enough information at all, it was more of a brief chat with the dr going through it.

No, I felt left on the ward for almost a week.

I didn't know I was in labour

21. Please use this space to tell us anything else about your experience during labour and birth

It's just obvious how stretched services are. the building is outdated, the waiting times are long for everything, from induction to discharge, the waiting rooms are uncomfortable. Shared bays are just awful places to try and rest after birth. Everyone seems to be doing their best but it's not a pleasant experience

4th baby and the best care I received during labour and hospital midwives were great

I nearly died if it wasn't for the midwife's doctors nurses the guy that gassed me then me and my baby would of died. Absolutely amazing people. Extremely clever, the midwife afterwards etc all amazing

I am a professional that works for Bolton NHS and I wouldn't place anyone under the care I receive when I was in labour. I still have PTSD from it.

Staff during birth were excellent to both me and my husband

I don't want to disclose too much due to ongoing investigations however I feel if you a straightforward pregnancy and labour you will be fine however any issues and you truly see where the failings are within this service.

Was and absolute joke from beginning to the end. Knew my baby was coming and they said he wasn't, had no pain relief as they said he wasn't on his way yet. Wouldn't listen to me where they sent my partner home and I have birth in the corridors

I was not informed about the complications I faced during the birth.

My midwife at the labour stage was absolutely outstanding. I went into labour before my planned c section and the locum on duty (it was a Sunday evening) didn't want to honour my wishes of a c section. XXX fought for my rights and was supportive and kind. I couldn't have done it without her and owe my positive experience almost entirely to her.

I wasn't happy with my birth at Bolton and have been left quite traumatised by it. I still cry when I talk about it.

Staff are pushed to their limits but are all fantastic

I was dumped in a room with no communication, the head midwife could be heard outside my room not happy I was on her ward and didn't want her staff catching anything so had minimal contact

. I'd had a traumatic birth and could hardly move and was exhausted found it difficult to breath feed and because I pressed the buzzer every time I needed help with my son they took him away from me to go to the night station with staff. I was treated appallingly and left early because I wasn't looked after and the support staff and trainee midwives even admitted my treatment was poor and asked if I felt I'd been

dumped and that's telling if they're asking me.

I had an emergency C-Section due to a placental abruption. I had been in the day before to complain of problems and ignored

Emergency Caesarean section due to baby in distress - Tachycardia

My midwife XXX was very helpful and was very calming through my C-Section as I was very nervous and kept updating me through the process and checking I was okay.

I had a home birth and the gas and air and oxygen never arrived until hours after birth. I managed without the gas and it thankfully but it could have been catastrophic if my son has needed oxygen and there was none.

The staff in the delivery suite were fantastic. They realised I was in a great deal of pain and really struggling to keep going, and they were so kind, compassionate and while I was injured in the birth, helped me deliver my son safely which I can't say how much I appreciate that!

The staff on the labour ward were mostly unkind and coerced consent from me for procedures I did not want while ignoring my own requests for my care.

NA

The staff in theatre were amazing, they were so reassuring and couldn't do enough. They really felt myself and my partner feel at ease.

Told I was to be induced urgently because of my kidneys failing- no doctor has seen me, no one's told me my blood results

High blood pressure - asked about medication, never received any for high blood pressure even though risk of preeclampsia

Gel pessary - had the 1st at 5:20 pm Saturday after being admitted at 10 am waited all day to be seen

2nd gel pessary was put in at 9:30am Sunday after contractions stopped at 5:30am - seen no one all day other than porters and health workers who can't do anything other than "tell the midwife" - told them at 3pm I'd stopped contracting. At 5 pm I still hadn't been seen by any one.

At 4:40pm received a text telling me I am an 'outpatient' and to rate how I feel about the hospital

Ended up with a C-section. No it wasn't an emergency, however would have been if I didn't elect to.

Went to hospital after a midwife app on the 2nd November for a BP profile as my BP was high suspected preeclampsia, it was fine had bloods done my kidneys weren't ok and not function correctly, turns out from the growth scan I had on Friday, baby was sat on my kidneys.

So Friday after my growth scan they made me see a consultant who booked in into induction for Saturday. I was to wait on a phone call with a time etc. from there

downhill 7 days on induction ward and everything else was just awful. Baby was born on XXX November

Would of loved to have given birth on the birthing suite but unfortunately due to staffing issues it was closed. I managed a pool birth which I wanted but was unable to have any visitors after I had given birth, so my children and family had to wait till I was discharged to see our new arrival

I have waited for a debrief for over 17 months until I escalated it through PALS. It was not a good experience from start to finish and I made a complaint. Improvements are needed and staffing to be at safer levels

On the unit, after labour, there was no help and support apart from Health Care Assistants. No reassurance for a new mum etc

I had an horrendous experience at Bolton Hospital after being induced. Various failures by the replacement midwife lead to a very traumatic forceps delivery, with baby struggling and needing extra help and oxygen when born.

Being on the induction ward for 5 days seeing people come and go and you still being sat there had an immense effect on my mental health. This never seemed to be taken into consideration when day after day I was told I was top of the list due to my high risk and medical complication but then always being told someone else had to go before me, but I was definitely next.

All staff were great given they were understaffed

Myself and partner voiced concerns about my new born daughter's appearance and her breathing. Her oxygen levels were low. We was told she was fine and "just needed a good cry" five hours later my daughter was rushed to NICCU (Newborn & infant Critical Care Unit), and vented as she had a pneumothorax . I was left to recover on the maternity ward without my daughter for 3 days surrounded my new mums and babies. I requested to move areas as I found this very distressing. This was refused due to bed capacity.

No members of staff were available to take me to visit my daughter.

The fact my husband couldn't stay with me during my induction past 9pm was hard as I could move much and found it difficult.

Also after giving birth, they gave me a broken bed to sleep on and didn't have any more beds available for me after I complained.

Woke, anti-white racism

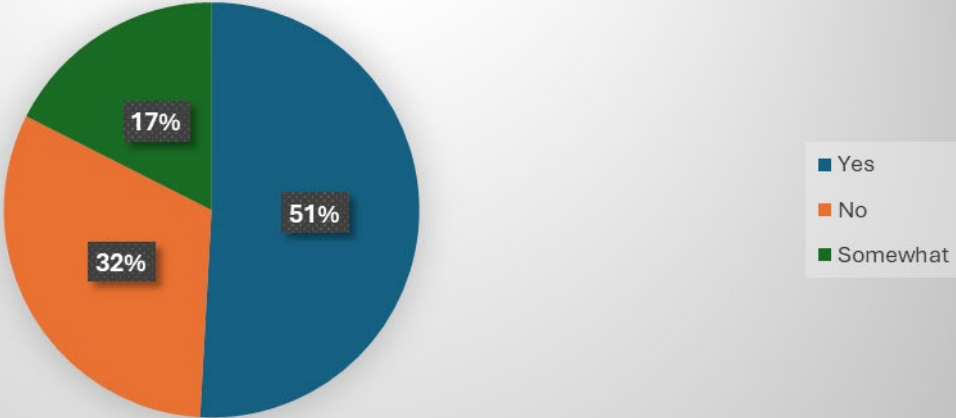
Induced labour takes too much time to go to delivery for waters to be broken. Staff levels too low. After being added to the list to go to delivery, it took 3 days of waiting around on the ward, this is too much, ward is noisy, and sleep is difficult meaning you're already exhausted before labour

The whole experience was on time and really smooth. I was very apprehensive, but I

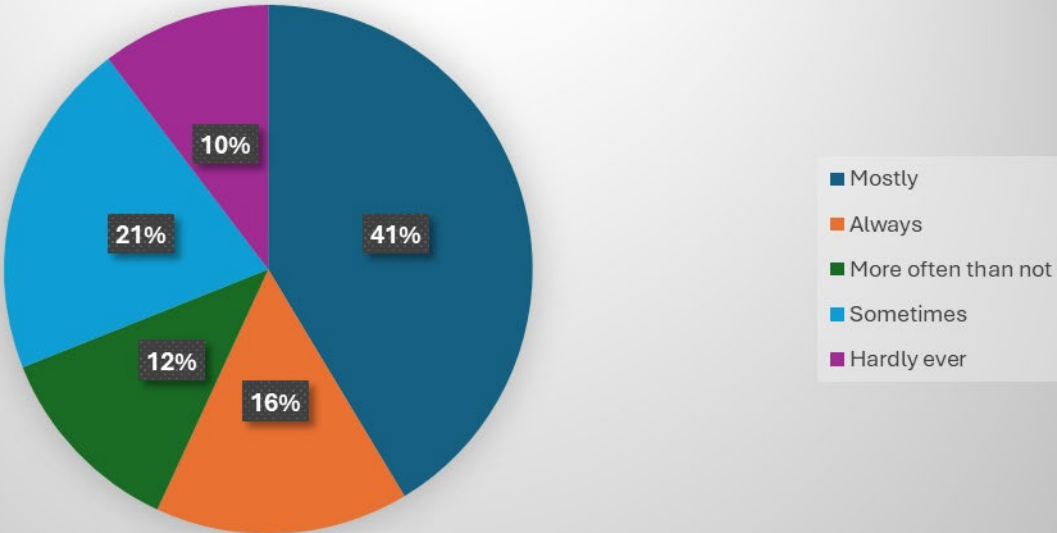
<p>am truly grateful to have given birth at Bolton Hospital with the amazing staff.</p>
<p>It could have been a very traumatic labour as I was only 27 weeks pregnant, the staff saved my babies lives and were excellent - I could not be more grateful</p>
<p>I felt uncomfortable at first as unsure what was happening, and staff didn't check until I used buzzer. #Perfect once in delivery suite staff amazing. Wasn't staff's fault just very overcrowded and understaffed on M2, even went back on their after birth due to no space on delivery suite/after suite.</p>
<p>My mental health was listened to and taken seriously. I felt that my partner wasn't included enough. It should be 50/50 in decisions and care</p>
<p>Elective C-Section. I was booked in, taken to theatre to start then I was lay on the table and cancelled, had to come back the next day.</p>
<p>Yes</p>
<p>My bed side light was not working couldn't see when feeding my baby at night told the midwife she said she couldn't do anything.</p> <p>My baby was on antibiotic 2 days and midwife came to give another dose when she was not due for one. I had a very bad experience in royal Bolton hospital did not expect this low level of care.</p>
<p>Need to have more classes for anti-natal, people need more education on what to expect.</p>
<p>The labour was long and ending with forceps. The doctor was amazing.</p>
<p>My labour was okay until the very end, they had to put a complaint in.</p>

Post-Natal

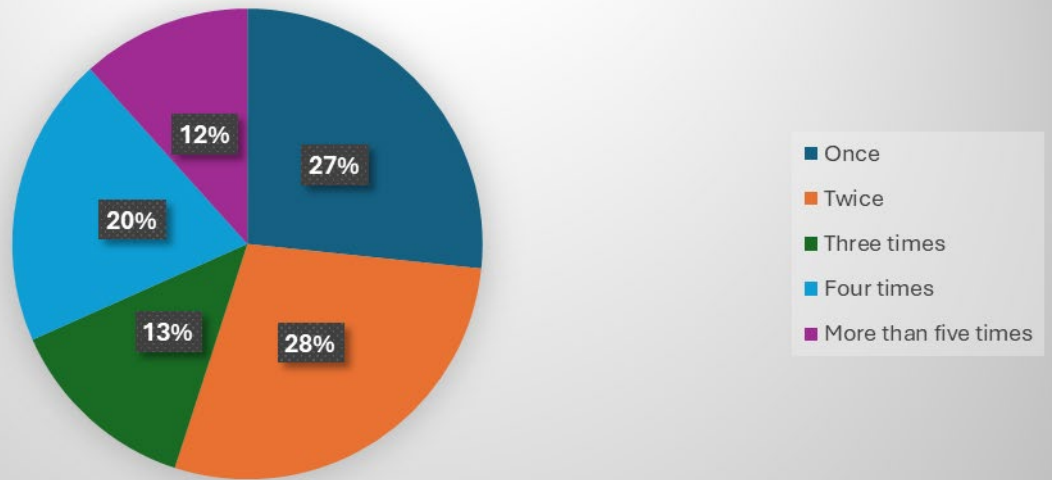
22. After the birth, did you have the opportunity to ask questions and get the information you needed?



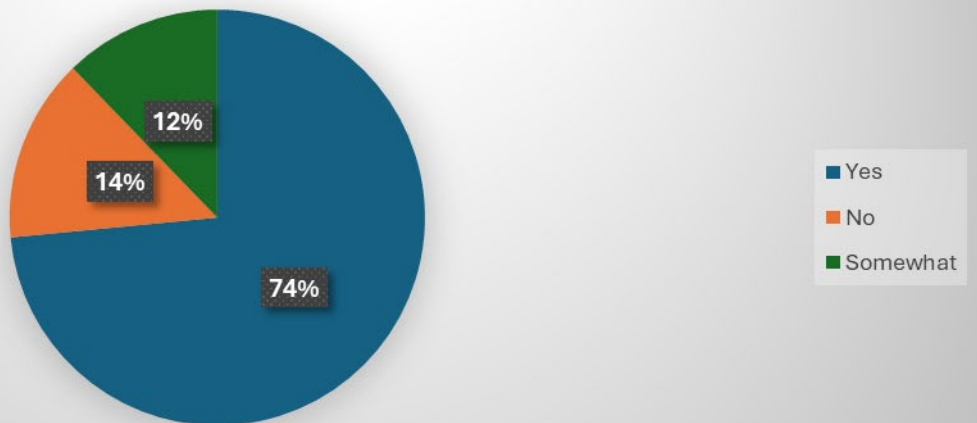
23. Thinking about your stay in hospital, was your partner or someone close to you, allowed to stay with you when you needed them to?



24. When you left hospital in the first 10 days, how many times did you see a midwife?



25. Do you feel you had enough support with feeding and looking after your baby?



25. Comments

none really but it's not my first

I feel breast feeding was pushed on me and not given the opportunity to discuss formula

Yes, even though she was my second baby it was my first time breastfeeding, and I had a lot of support throughout to help me continue to breastfeed and have only recently stopped as she no longer was interested (16 months old)

I was experienced from breastfeeding my first. I spotted my son had tongue tie which the midwife had missed

Staff on post-natal ward were very helpful in helping me with breastfeeding. However, because of covid rules I (along with all the other mums) were largely left to it overnight which was extremely difficult. Appreciate how busy the staff are, but I found the 2 nights in hospital without my husband's support physically very challenging.

Was kind of just left too it

No. I had to stop breastfeeding because I couldn't get any support on the post-natal ward that I was on for an extended amount of time due to premature baby and illness

Yes although as this was baby number 2 it was considerably less than with my eldest

Yes but from family

Yes but I required minimal

No I got no breast feeding advice at all

From mum & friends

Yes - we were still under the care of the outreach team so lots of support

2nd time yes 1st time no

the midwives XXX and XXX in the high care unit were amazing and helped me a lot whilst i was recovering and needed support.

Yes. They were helpful in terms of breastfeeding.

i struggled with breast feeding, I got support 3/4 weeks after my birth - this time needs shortening.

I felt like advice about feeding and looking after baby was quickly forgotten due to lack of sleep. Support was always there though on the end of a call.

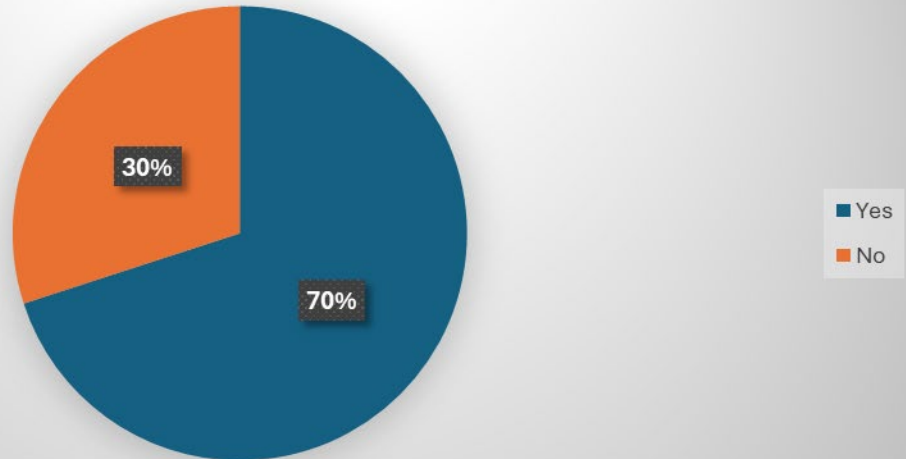
Yes I did have enough support

Yes... They always ask me and give suggestions to increase milk supply.

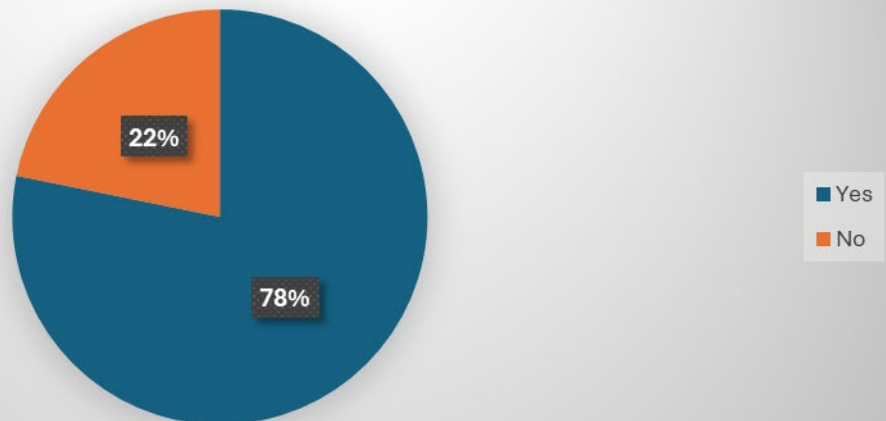
Yes all my questions were answered and explained.

I had help.

26. Did you see a health visitor in the first 10 days after birth?



27. Were you treated with dignity and respect at all times during your pregnancy?



27. Comments

Sometimes

Not always. Some hospital staff were less than helpful and unprofessional

Definitely

Only in the beginning and during labour after no

In the main.

Apart from during my labour and delivery, yes.

Yes until Labour/birth

With my first pregnancy HV weren't informed that I had had my baby, second time yes

No not in ante natal

I think that nurses at the hospital could be more helpful. Hospitals seem to be very short staffed.

Most of the time, after my birth on the ward midwives were always rushing around and never had time to help or advise.

Yes everyone was lovely and reassuring

28. Please use this space to tell us anything else about your experience after the birth of your child and in the first 10 days.

We were in Neonatal for 8 days but again all faultless, amazing people. The care was fantastic from start to finish. The donkey that did my scan 5 days previous should have seen the placenta wasn't working as she said the baby hadn't grown. The placenta was knackered that's why. That was the Friday- I had him Wednesday, my legs hands had swollen immensely which she said was fine I had migraines bad . That's the only part of the system that was a bit shite

still never received a medical debrief. which I was told I'd get

I got an infection therefore was readmitted for a few days. I self-discharged as the care was boarding on neglect.

Health visitor was very condescending and patronising, and on an occasion didn't even turn up!

After birth I was left in the delivery desk with my baby and partner without any idea why I was not shifted in the ward for nearly 4 hours.

My baby was cannulated in front of me by staff without me even being told why. I could not see a qualified member of staff on the ward post birth, only support workers. I wet myself on the ward floor as I needed help to the toilet, but nobody was around.

Team were all amazing when we discovered tongue ties in both December 2021 and December 2022 babies. Supportive and reassuring

The foot prick test had to be done twice as it was not done properly and had to be done again which I wasn't happy about

AMAZING. Baby born with ambiguous genitalia and diagnosed with Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia. Admitted for 9 days, allocated a side room and allowed my partner to stay over with me. Visited daily by neonatal team on the ward and kept informed every step of the way. Midwives extremely kind and supportive. Follow up in the community, home visits daily for heel prick tests. Liaised with Manchester Children's Hospital with blood results. Emergency Section experience couldn't have been better, nothing negative to say.

I spend a lot of time in and out of hospital with breathing concerns with my son which was a shame after a home birth. He was pumped with antibiotics and in the end, they said he had transient tachypnoea of the newborn.

My main suggestion based on my experience is to please have someone on the ward overnight who just goes round checking in on the mums. Doesn't need to be a clinician, just someone who could have a quick chat, get mum a cup of tea if needed, help hold her baby while she nips to the loo etc. I really struggled to be able to go to the loo etc. since my son didn't want to stay in his cot so when my husband had to leave the ward, I really struggled at times.

You just left it to it. So not really supported in how often to feed the baby or change the baby etc. Simple honest support would of massively support myself and partner in those first 10 days.

The ward on the hospital was busy so there were delays. It is my understanding this is due to lack of government funding and felt the staff did their absolute best. They were kind to me and helped when I needed it.

Not given birth so ignore the labour answers sorry

I struggled to mobilise initially after the birth due to having a C-section. There was a health care assistant who helped me out of bed for the first time and she was amazing. The only thing I found frustrating was that pain relief was offered as a drug round at specific times. I was given pain relief quite late on one occasion and I was in agony.

After the birth I was told I could go home the day after by 3pm the bay had been discharged. I was still waiting on a doctor signing a form to say I could go home. The midwives did everything they could but had to wait on doctors that hadn't even seen me to sign a piece of paper to say I was ok to go even though the midwives had

cleared me. At 9pm I was told I can self-discharge after getting very annoyed at a health care assistant. So I did exactly that and left.

As it was my fourth baby, I was pretty confident in what I was doing but I feel if I was a first time mum I would want to see the same midwife

The midwives were great and the breastfeeding support too

Was visited by NICCU outreach team. I was discharged home with an infection in my section wound. I could not get a GP appointment in necessary time. My wound was open. The NICCU outreach team refused to look or advise me on my wound

Thank God for mum & female friends

Q26 - it was day 12 when I saw the HV.

I felt like there was a lot of support available straight after birth and a lot of midwife calls/visits and HV and I felt really supported.

Our twins had to stay in neonatal, my partner would visit them in the night and was made to feel very welcome. The staff could not do more for us or for our twins

1st time my documents were lost so nobody (midwives, HV, doctors) knew she had been born so we received no support

The hospital aftercare was fantastic my Healthplan was listened to, and I had my own room. The midwives really looked after us and the breastfeeding specialist gave us so much advice support and help.

I had to stay in hospital for 5 days, with sepsis (I had an infection and they didn't know what it was so they said it was sepsis) and dehydrated kidneys. the midwives and health visitor that came when I was home were good and helpful.

I had severe right side pain just like labour pain so I called in at the hospital they said they can't do anything so next day I called my GP told me to do a urine sample and I had UTI this was 6 days or so after I gave birth.

My little boy had jaundice and we were seen frequently after he was born to make sure he was fine and his levels were fine.
We also got a lot of support on breastfeeding.

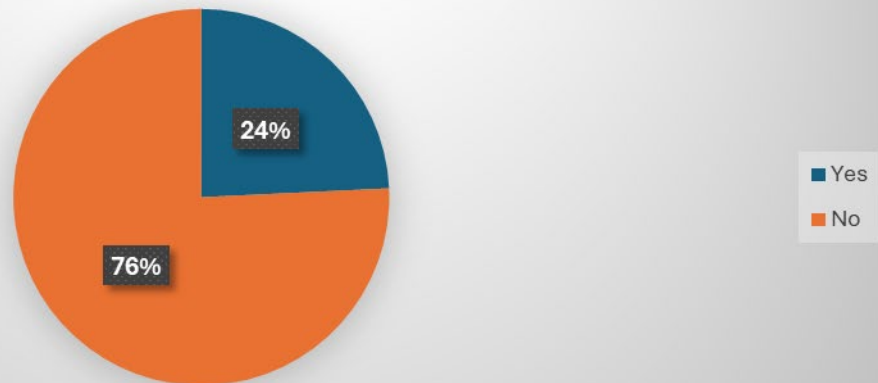
Looking back, I wish they left me in a view days after as I had to go two days to get him checked for jaundice.

it was hard time and also the best time ever. I really enjoy it as I am still enjoying to be with my baby.
the hardest part was breast feeding in the begin but the midwives were really helpful.

I am new in the UK. I was very much worried, but they made me very much comfortable. I am very happy.

It was ok but tiring

29. Thinking about your maternity experience (from ante-natal to post-natal), is there anything that would affect your decision to have further children?



29. Comments

If I didn't have to be on a shared bay

Yeah not having that happen again. Hated being pregnant so that's the main reason. Only want this one

Yes the care received at Bolton hospital makes me question having another baby

I wouldn't go to Bolton

The stay in hospital with my baby. I was exhausted and needed support overnight but people were busy and I needed my husband

I won't have further children

The care and service are not satisfactory compared to previous experience in the same hospital compared to before covid.

I would not have another baby at Bolton hospital despite living in Bolton.

No, I'd have more but my December 2022 is a naughty one haha

Yes, go private or insist on certain things. I felt I couldn't speak up for myself at the time

I'd go private

Yes, I wouldn't go to Bolton hospital

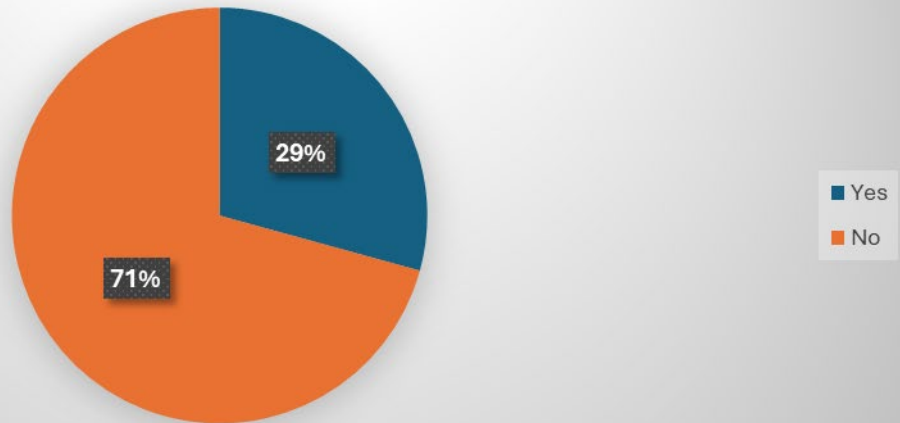
No but I wish Ingleside would re open which is where I had my first it's wonderful
Due to my experience of being induced, I am now scared about having a second child. If we do decide to have a second, I simply cannot go through being induced again!
I wouldn't use Bolton Royal Hospital
Yes I don't want those people to deliver another baby so I will try not to have any more.
I'd probably be ask for a different midwife/ clinic
Yes. The experience from being told I need an induction from that moment on put me off having any more children for quite a while
No. Although I would hate to be induced again
It has put my partner off due to it feeling so unsafe for him
No, however I wouldn't return to Bolton Hospital for maternity care ever again
This has massively impacted myself and partner's mental health. I am currently on medication for this
Only the fact I had to have a second C-Section which means I am likely to have three children instead of four now.
I don't know if I would go through natural and I feel Bolton hospital didn't give me the best of care after birth
I do not trust the NHS anymore. Part time female GP's & immigration are destroying primary healthcare
Length of time in hospital for induction
The birth was amazing compared to my covid labour. I would consider more children now due to how well it went.
No further children wanted
The postnatal ward was awful, it's so cramped. the midwives would talk so loud at night and would disturb myself and my baby once I managed to settle her, I then couldn't rest due to them talking. One of the postnatal midwives shouted at my baby to keep her legs still (I could tell by her tone of voice) I put it on my hospital feedback form. Due to having a C-Section and being unwell it made me feel really down as I couldn't take care of my baby properly/myself and had to rely a lot on others. I also was not able to hold my baby straight after birth due to being so out of it and I missed the opportunity of doing skin to skin. it has somewhat put me off having another child but not 100%.

Wouldn't like to give birth again at Bolton hospital

Yes, The fear of pre-eclampsia

No I will wish to have another

30. Do you currently access any support in your local community, such as Family Hub, Start Well Centre or other local venue?



30. Comments

Access groups at local Start Well Centre where my child can play.

Yes we attended the Happy healthy baby course and the busy babies class at Oxford grove

I visit the HV sometimes for baby clinic

No, none in Westhoughton

not yet however have been looking into it once my partner goes back to work.

Case Study – First Time Mother

1. Have you used maternity services in Bolton in the last 18 months?

Yes

2. Do you want to share anything regarding your antenatal experiences?

Yes, at the start I feel that I wasn't given enough information as a first-time mum. I did a lot of research myself and learnt a lot from support groups on Facebook. During my midwife appointments they went through safe sleep with me many weeks before my due date, which seemed not as useful at the time and my birth/birth plan was spoken about towards the end of my pregnancy which left me on edge as I didn't know what to expect.

My community midwife was really nice, and we got on well, I was able to ask whatever was on my mind and she was able to answer any questions I had. However, she stated my appointments with her will reduce as I was seeing a diabetes midwife, however they never went through anything she went through and whenever I saw them I would see them for a few minutes to check my urine sample and blood pressure and then I would be seen by the doctor.

When booking my induction, it was originally planned for a 40w+6d however was brought forward to 39w as my partner mentioned I have had high blood pressure. The Dr told my partner whilst I went to the bathroom that if my original appt had stood there would have been serious consequences for my baby. The Dr was unaware of my blood pressure although it was recorded on my notes on multiple occasions.

I was not given much information on inductions and did a lot of my own research. During the early stages of my pregnancy, I had two bleeds which I went to the hospital for, on the first occasion it was really hard getting through to the team, the waiting time was really long, and the waiting room was uncomfortable and depressing especially as everyone there was there due to having a concern with their pregnancy. When I arrived at the hospital for my induction, the midwives were really helpful, when I moved onto the labour ward I was 'out of it' in and out of sleep and really drowsy due to pain relief as my induction had failed from the very start. Luckily, I had my birthing partner/s with me to support me. When the alarm was rung to take me to theatre, a swarm of Drs came in and one went through the risks with me, but it was so fast I just signed it as I wanted to be able to have my baby asap as it was an emergency.

I wasn't able to hold my baby once they were born and I missed out on skin to skin as I was so drowsy/out of it. After recovery I was placed in the high care unit,

the midwives were really nice and helped me a lot. The postnatal ward was horrible it was cramped, and the midwives generally weren't very welcoming which put me off calling for help when I needed it and I struggled instead of calling them for support.

3.If you needed help or advice about your pregnancy, please tell us what you found useful or anything you had difficulty with? e.g. language, telephone advice, information on the hospital website?

The triage line was really helpful, although sometimes it would be hard to get through to them. I struggled getting through to the early pregnancy team when I had a bleed and tried ringing so many times then got through by ringing another team. I feel like I got more information and support through Facebook support groups and videos on TikTok's by other mums and midwives.

4.Regarding your labour, did you feel well cared for and well supported? Did anything give you cause for concern?

The midwives I had during my labour were good and looked after me well. I felt really comfortable with them. I arrived at 12pm and was given the first pessary at 3pm to start my induction process however it failed, I had to have two injections to slow my contractions at 11:30pm I went onto the labour ward as I needed 1-1 care, I then had lots of different pain relief which made me drowsy and in and out of sleep. I wasn't fully understanding what was being said to me as I just agreed to whatever options they give me as I was in so much pain. I feel as though I was left for too long given the circumstances and state I was in before a Dr came to see me and decided I needed an emergency C- section.

5.Were you ever left alone for long periods of time which concerned you?

No.

6.Did a staff member/midwife always attend to you when you needed them?

Yes, during my labour and birth stages. However, the postnatal period, I did not feel comfortable calling a midwife over as most of them did not make me feel welcomed or comfortable to call for help.

7.Did you feel involved in decisions about your care?

Not really, I feel as though I went along with whatever was said as I didn't know any different and thought they would be giving me the best options on what to do as they are the professionals. I feel like I was set up to fail since my appt with the Dr to book my induction and the negligence shown from the start.

8. After birth, did you receive appropriate advice and information and the opportunity to ask any questions?

I can't really remember much in terms of advice and information as I would ask as I went along. I do remember the anaesthetist saying to me whilst in recovery that if they had left it any longer my baby wouldn't have made it which was really worrying to hear and then I was told I have sepsis which also worrying, not only for me but for my partner also as we had already gone through a traumatic labour. The high care midwives really helped me a lot with breast feeding and supporting me through my recovery after my section by providing me on information on how to manoeuvre after my section to reduce the amount of pain.

9. Did you have enough support about feeding and looking after your baby?

Feeding I feel I got enough support with as I spoke to the breast-feeding team when I was on the postnatal ward, however in terms of looking after my baby, I feel like I wasn't really given any information apart from safe sleep.

10. Were you treated with dignity and respect by all health professionals during all aspects of your pregnancy and birth?

Overall yes

11. Is there anything that would affect your decision to have other children?

The awful experience on the postnatal ward - I do not wish to spend another night on there in the future.

12. Do you know about support in your community such as family hubs?

Yes, my health visitor told me what services are near me and online.

13. Do you feel confident about using maternity services in Bolton again?

Yes, it was generally okay, but I feel next time around I will be a lot more knowledgeable and feel a lot more confident standing up for myself and making more informed decisions.

14. Are there any changes or choices would you like to see implemented in maternity and post-natal care services?

Yes, the post-natal ward to be brighter, more nurturing and welcoming, and staff to be mindful during the early hours of night/morning as I heard loud personal conversations by midwives. Better staff training on dealing with babies that are crying as a midwife shouted at my baby and it put me off asking for further help when I needed it, as I had an emergency C-section, and a first-time

mum this really upset me. As a result, in future I will refuse to stay overnight on the post-natal ward as it was a very depressing environment.

15. Do you feel maternity services met your needs?

Mostly, however the diabetes team never read my green notes and only my orange ones which could have been dangerous for my baby if my partner had not mentioned information which should have been picked up on by reading my green notes. Also when going for a scan and requesting a female due to religious reasons and not feeling comfortable with a man seeing and touching me (unless an emergency) I was then moved to the back of the queue had to wait almost 2hrs once, this definitely put me off and I was very close to walking out and going home, this was also for a scan that none of the healthcare professionals knew the reasoning for.

Case Study – Experience of Birthing Partner of First-Time Mother

My daughter went in hospital for her labour induction with her first child. I was present in the delivery suite as a birthing partner and second decision maker.

During her pregnancy she had developed gestational diabetes, and high blood pressure. Therefore, a decision was made by the maternity team to start her off a few days earlier than her due date.

The induction did not go according to plan, as the medication administered to start her labour gave my daughter too many contractions in a small period of time, and she was then given an injection to slow the contractions down. This method did not work. Various midwives came to see her on and off their shifts and we were told don't worry, need to leave her a bit longer to dilate.

Whist this treatment was going on, my daughter was also on liquid morphine, paracetamol, and codeine. The midwives were struggling to capture baby's heartbeat and it kept getting lost with my daughter's heartbeat. It took the team 6 hours to insert a wire on baby's head to monitor baby's heartbeat.

My daughter was dilating at a very slow pace, midwives kept telling us baby's taking a bit longer- we need to wait don't worry etc. At that stage my daughter's husband had nipped home to collect items as we thought delivery will take some time.

However, in a short space of time, I noticed my daughter's health declining very rapidly - she was shaking and feeling very cold, her heartbeat and temperature went high. I was feeling very concerned, but I put my faith in the health professionals and as it was her first baby, was expecting the process to take longer and not be as straight forward as a natural labour.

The last midwife my daughter had in delivery suite looked senior and more experienced than some of the others, she called the doctor who gave my daughter some antibiotics. I noticed the midwife becoming quite concerned as baby's heartbeat went high, the doctor was called back again, I saw an intense discussion between midwife and doctor. I was told to call my daughters husband to come back to delivery suite as soon as possible. I could sense some panic and concern from the midwife.

I wasn't informed about what was happening, except baby needs to be delivered ASAP. The room was filled with medics rushing around preparing for surgery, I was in complete shock. My daughter was whisked away so quickly I was left waiting the hardest half an hour of my life, wondering if they were going to make it or not from what I had witnessed...

I paced the room, listened, looking at all my daughter and baby's personal items she had brought in with great hopes and expectations. I kept looking out for a nurse to ask, I did manage to see a midwife who reassured me that she hadn't heard any bad news, so that was a good sign apart from that nobody came to see me or tell me anything. I was extremely worried, fearful and anxious. After about 30 mins my daughter's husband sent me a picture of baby and my heart was relieved... I was still worried about my daughter who was in a bad state due to her infection.

I was told to wait in a room and would be able to see my daughter in recovery, this did not happen, and I waited over 3 hours in a room on my own, and then was told that I could not see her, so I had to go home.

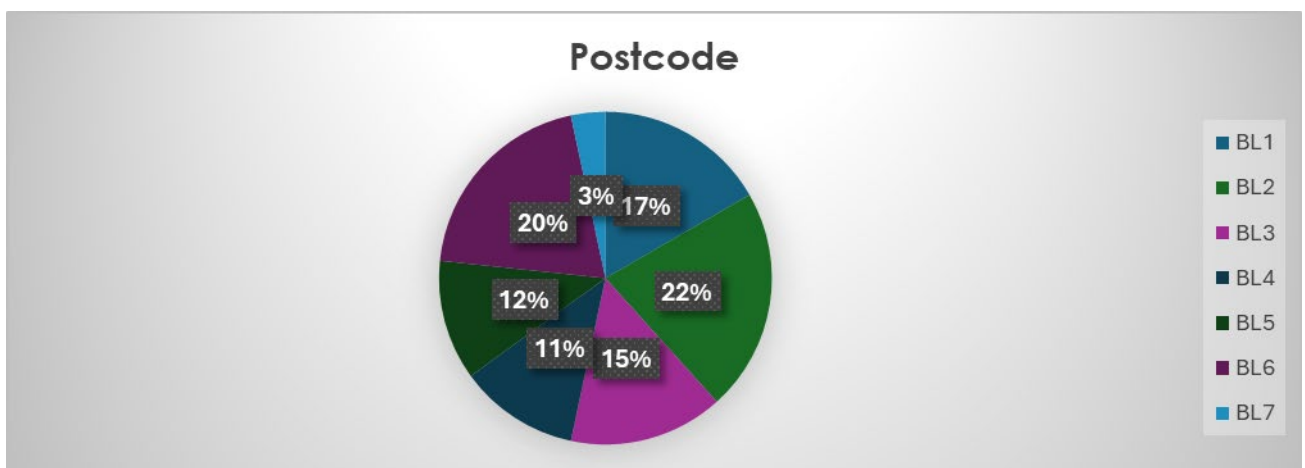
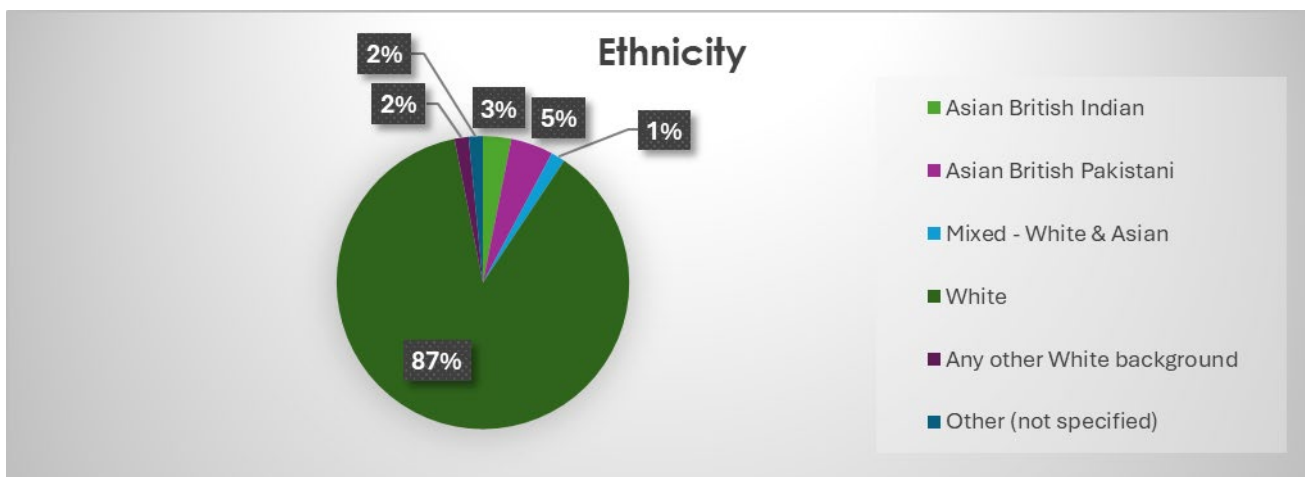
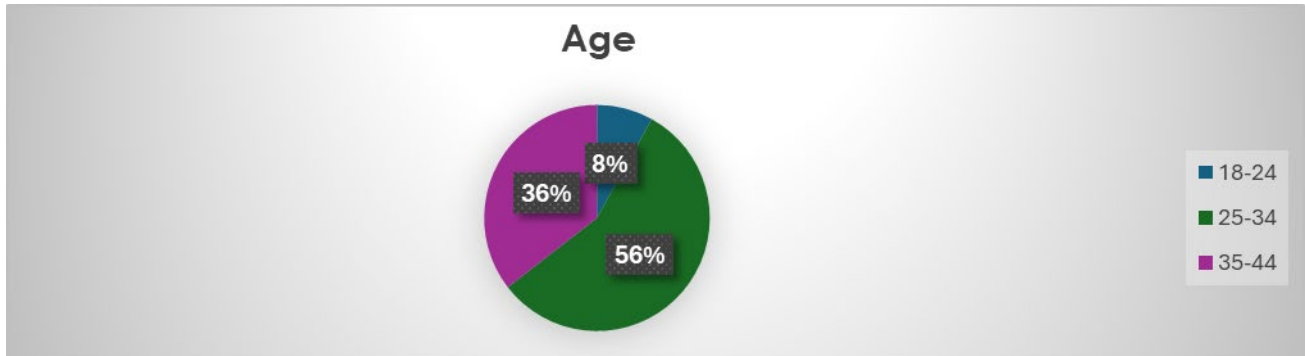
I feel my daughter was left too long waiting for her induction to start a decision for a C-section should have been made a lot earlier. She saw too many different midwives handing over information not really getting to know the patient.

My daughter and baby were very lucky to survive, I found out afterwards that the anaesthetist had told her that if she had have been left any longer, baby may not have made it. My daughter was treated for suspected sepsis.

I do feel extremely grateful to Bolton Hospital maternity and care team for saving their lives, however I feel that lessons need to be learned from this and I do feel my daughter was left waiting too long.

Demographics

All respondents were women and heterosexual. 61 identified as Straight, two were Bi-sexual and one was Asexual.



Recommendations for Bolton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Ante-natal

1. On booking appointments many respondents had a positive experience with communication and staff. However, some struggled with getting through on the telephone. The hospital should consider improving communication with midwives, clinicians and birthing people.
2. Although many people said they had good information from health professionals about what to expect on their pregnancy journey, some would have liked more. The hospital should consider ensuring that birthing people have information about what might happen if complications arise during pregnancy, labour and birth and what happens post-natally. And to ensure that the telephone line is answered promptly, with an option to leave a message and especially if a birthing person has a concern they wish to discuss, such as a bleed.

Labour and Birth

3. Whilst some respondents had a positive experience during labour and birth – some were left for long periods of time which caused concern. The hospital should consider increasing more checks during labour so the birthing person and their loved one(s) are reassured, and the necessary pain relief and other medication is provided when requested and not just on the timed 'drug/medication rounds'.
4. The hospital needs to ensure patient notes are read and noted and especially if someone is considered high-risk, and that any health conditions such as diabetes are prominent in the patient notes. Ensure that this information is properly communicated to all clinicians and staff involved in the care of the birthing person.
5. The hospital needs to ensure that birthing-partners or whoever is accompanying the birthing person, is kept informed of what is happening, especially if there is an emergency.

Post-natal

6. The hospital needs to improve the environment on the post-natal ward to make it more comfortable and welcoming.
7. The hospital needs to ensure that people who have given birth are given the attention and care that they require on the post-natal ward, especially those that may require more assistance due to birth trauma. It appears that the level of attention and support seems to diminish once people have been moved to the post-natal ward.
8. The hospital needs to ensure physical and mental health support is discussed with those who may have had a traumatic experience during their pregnancy and birth.
9. Whilst many people have a positive experience, some respondents report having a very negative experience when giving birth at Bolton NHS Foundation Trust, to the point where some consider they would not return to the hospital or even have more children. We would recommend the hospital do some further investigations into the experiences of people when they have given birth and ensure that any lessons for improvement are learned and acted upon. Also ensure that physical and mental health support is discussed and provided.
10. The hospital need to ensure birthing people are aware of how they and their loved ones can raise a complaint, concerns or compliments.

Response to Healthwatch

Maternity and you – Experiences of using Maternity Services in Bolton

First of all, thank you to everyone who took the time to talk about their experiences of using our maternity services.

We will never take for granted what a privilege it is to be part of over 5000 birthing journeys a year, and we are keen to do some work to understand why the experiences of our mothers and their families differ so greatly.

All feedback is a gift and our commitment to the 65 people who gave up their time, is to use what they have said to make improvements to our care.

As referenced in the report, our maternity services are operating against a backdrop of challenges faced across the whole of the NHS, including staffing pressures and issues with our estate.

In November 2023, we identified reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in our maternity unit and have taken the necessary action to make sure that our staff, patients and visitors remain safe in our buildings. Whilst we continue to do all that we can to minimise the impact this is having on our staff and our patients, we know that it has added additional pressure to an already busy department.

Our longer term ambition is to gain funding for a new maternity unit but in the meantime, we continue to prioritise the safety of our patients and staff, and deliver the best care we possibly can.

Prior to publication of the Healthwatch report our maternity service had commenced work to improve the postnatal and triage pathways of care, and had successfully improved staffing levels which we expect will positively impact on the future experiences of our families.

The full report and recommendations will be taken through our Health Inequalities Group for consideration and we will be working with the Maternity Voice Partnership to take the necessary action within our antenatal, labour and birth and postnatal clinical areas. We look forward to sharing regular updates publicly about the difference the feedback has made.

Once again, thank you for giving us an opportunity to make the changes that will matter most to our families.

Best wishes,

Fiona Noden
Chief Executive and Bolton Locality Place Based Lead

Appendices

Groups engaged with:

Home Start

Family Hubs

The Bolton Unity festival

Maternity Voices Partnership

Bolton Start Well family hub service.

Alexandra Children's Centre

Farnworth family Hub

Oxford Grove Family Hub

Women Together

Harvey Start Well centre

Sunning Hill Primary School

Let's Keep Bolton Moving

University of Bolton

Bolton Community College

Cherry Tree School event

Wellbeing Hub - Tough sheet Stadium

Zakariya Masjid Mosque

Breastfeeding Together

Harwood Methodist Superstars

Proud2bparents

Flowhesion Foundation

Retrain Your Brain – Event Bolton Hindu Forum

Caribbean and African Health Network (CAHN)

Talk Changes

Ladybridge High school Family, Fun, Food and Finance event

Pre-Ramadan Health and wellbeing event – Bolton Salvation Army

Appendix - Questionnaire

Experiences of Maternity Care

Share your experiences of using maternity care services in Bolton. Please take a few moments to complete the survey below. Thankyou

* Required

1. Have you used maternity care services in Bolton over the last 18 months? (this includes ante-natal and post-natal)

Yes

No

2. Did you attend ante-natal appointments?

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

3. If you did not attend ante-natal appointments, can you tell us why?

4. At these appointments, were you given the opportunity to discuss what is/was important to you?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

5. Can you tell us more about your experience when booking your first ante-natal appointment? What worked well? Did you experience any difficulties doing this, were you able to book a time and a date? please tell us:

6. How many midwives did you see during your pregnancy?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4+

7. Do you feel you received enough information from health professionals about what to expect during pregnancy? If not, please tell us what you would like to have received.

8. Was it important to see the same midwife throughout your pregnancy?

- Yes very important
- Yes, somewhat important
- No, not very important
- No, not important at all

9. If you needed help or advice about your pregnancy, please tell us what you found useful or anything you had difficulty with? eg. language, telephone advice, information on the hospital website?

10. If you have struggled to get advice and information regarding any worries you have had regarding your pregnancy, please tell us:

11. Please use this space to tell us anything else about your experience of ante-natal services

12. Thinking about labour and the birth, did you feel you were given appropriate advice and support when you contacted the midwife and/or the hospital?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

13. During your labour, did you feel comfortable and reassured about what was happening?
Please tell us:

14. During labour and birth, could you get a member of staff to help you when you needed it?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

15. Were you ever left alone without any staff during labour and birth which concerned you?

16. If you raised a concern during labour and birth, do you feel this was taken seriously?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

17. Were you communicated with in a language that you could understand?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

18. Did you feel you were involved in decisions about your care?

19. Did you have confidence in the staff looking after you?

20. If your labour was induced, do you feel you had enough information about what was to happen? Were you kept informed if the induction would be delayed?

21. Please use this space to tell us anything else about your experience during labour and birth

22. After the birth, did you have the opportunity to ask questions and get information you needed?

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

23. Thinking about your stay in hospital, was your partner or someone close to you allowed to stay with you when you needed them to?

- Mostly
- Always
- More often than not
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever

24. When you left hospital, in the first 10 days, how many times did you see a midwife?

- Once
- Twice
- Three times
- Four times
- More than five times

25. Do you feel you had enough support about feeding and looking after your baby?

26. Did you see a health visitor in the first 10 days after birth?

- No
- Yes

27. Were you treated with dignity and respect by health professionals at all times during your pregnancy? *

28. Please use this space to tell us anything else about your experience after the birth of your child and in the first 10 days.

29. Thinking about your maternity experience (antenatal, birth, post-natal), is there anything that would affect your decision to have further children? *

30. Do you currently access any support within the local community such as a Family Hub/Start Well Centre or other local venue? *

31. What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

32. What is your ethnicity? *

- Arab
- Asian/Asian British Indian
- Asian/Asian British Chinese
- Asian/Asian British Bangladeshi
- Asian/Asian British Pakistani
- Any other Asian background
- Black/Black British Caribbean
- Black/Black British African
- Any other Black/Black British or Caribbean
- Mixed - White & Black Caribbean
- Mixed - White and Black African
- Mixed - White and Asian
- Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background
- White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Roma
- Any other White background
- Other

33. What is your postcode? *

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