



Report:	Understanding Maternity Experiences Surveys
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Understanding Maternity Experiences Survey and Clinic Interviews

Purpose of Report

This report provides insight into the experiences of maternity services shared by women via digital survey and clinic interview. These surveys were shared with people shared through Social Media, Badgernet and community networks alongside feedback with clinic interviews carried out at each of the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) Maternity sites. Alongside presenting findings this report highlights emerging themes for further consideration and action by NHSGGC.

Background

The survey was developed by NHSGGC's Patient Experience Public Involvement (PEPI) team in discussion with the Director of Midwifery and service leads. Its purpose was to gain deeper understanding of recent Maternity experiences across NHSGGC and inform the development of the new Maternity and Neonatal Strategy. The engagement was driven by a desire to listen and learn from the recent lived experience of women and to understand what is working well with maternity services and what people would like to see from the service in the future.

A mixture of closed and open questions were posed during both the survey and the clinic interviews. This captured the views and feedback of **447** people with a range of experiences. We saw **381** people share their experiences and awareness via the digital survey, with **66** people taking part in the clinic interview survey across each of our maternity sites.

The survey was shared with the public via NHSGGC's Social Media accounts, through community networks and via the Badgernet maternity app with responses collated and analysed by the PEPI team.

Report structure

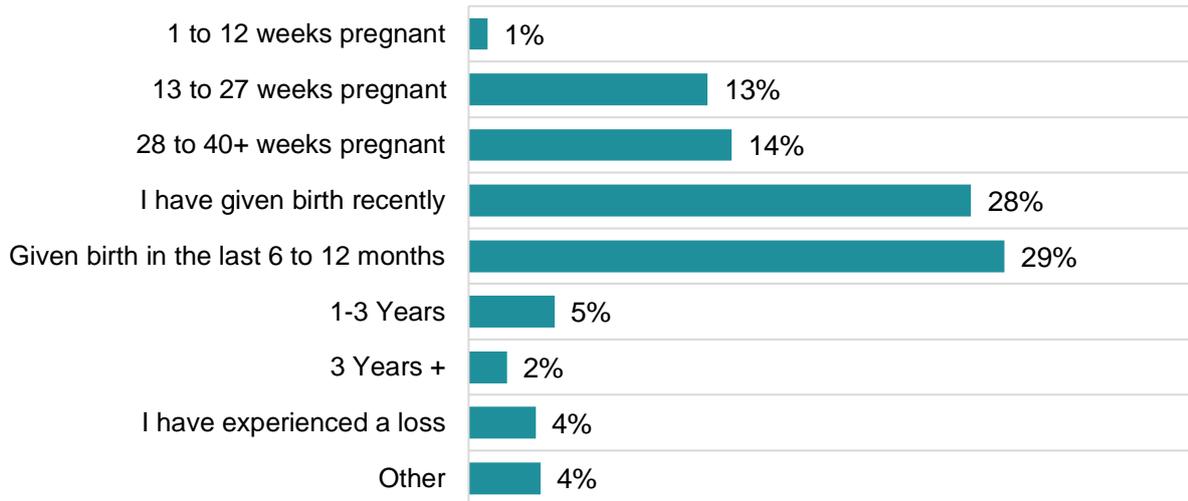
Due to the mixed methods used to capture the experiences of women using NHSGGC Maternity services this report is split into the following sections;

- Summary of Social Media and Badgernet Survey
- Summary of Maternity Clinic Interview Surveys
- Emerging themes and findings from across both surveys, highlighting similarities and any differences between data sets.

Summary of Social Media and Badgernet Survey Responses by Question (including a cross-section of comments)

To compliment the conversations had with women in a clinic setting and ensure we reached the wider population the PEPI team facilitated the sharing of a digital survey through community networks, the Badgernet maternity app and over Social Media. We received **381** responses to this survey, with the following providing a summary of these responses. All comments have been shared with maternity leads for more in-depth analysis and learning.

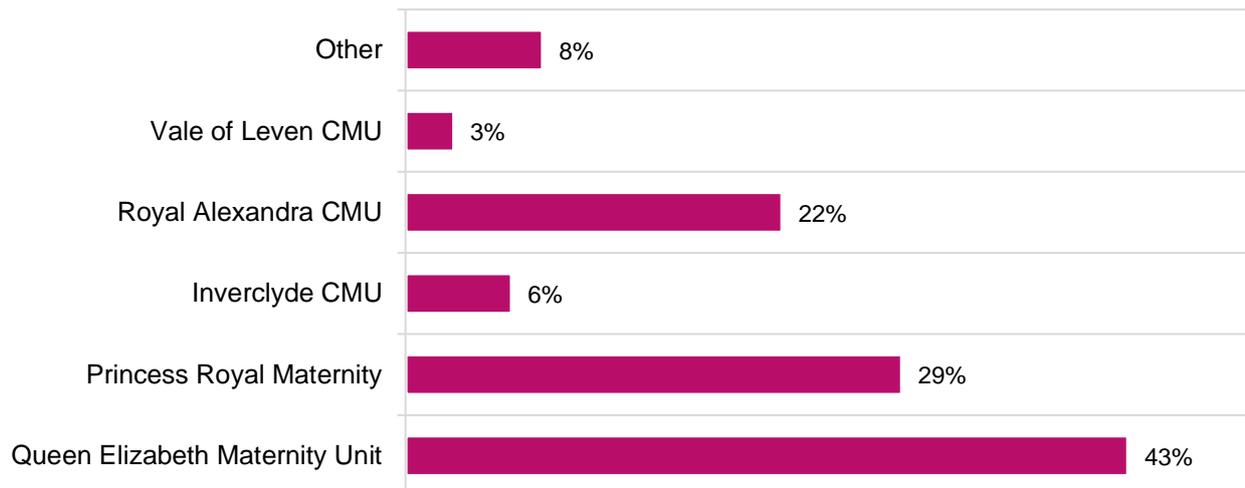
What stage of your pregnancy were responders at?



The majority of those completing this survey had given birth recently or in the last 12 months (**57%**), with the next largest group of responders currently being pregnant (**28%**).

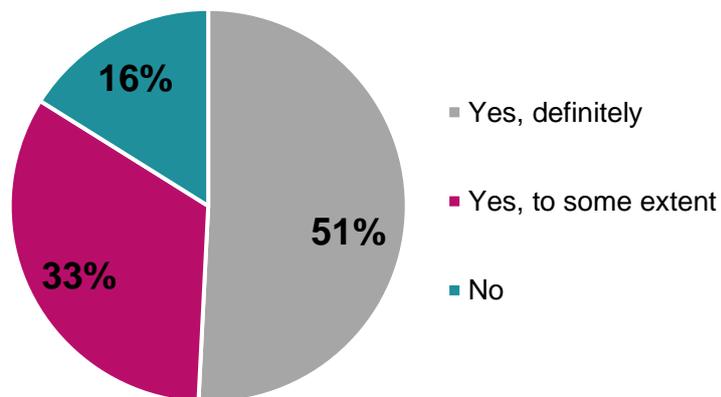
14 people that have experienced a loss completed the survey sharing insights into their experiences of loss and how we could improve the support we provide to mothers experiencing this. They were asked an additional question about the bereavement support they received, with 11 women providing additional information. Eight shared that they did not receive bereavement support, with some comments shared suggesting further training of staff could be helpful. We heard from 3 women that stated they did receive support, but two felt it came too late or only consisted of bereavement counselling.

What maternity services did women visit most often?



We saw the majority of women completing this survey share that they most often visited the Queen Elizabeth site, followed by the Princes Royal. Other sites commonly visited were outside the NHSGGC area by women living in Lanarkshire area, or women who had visited the West Glasgow Ambulatory Care Hospital for support.

At the start of their pregnancy care, did women feel they were given enough information?



We asked women what additional information they would have liked to receive?

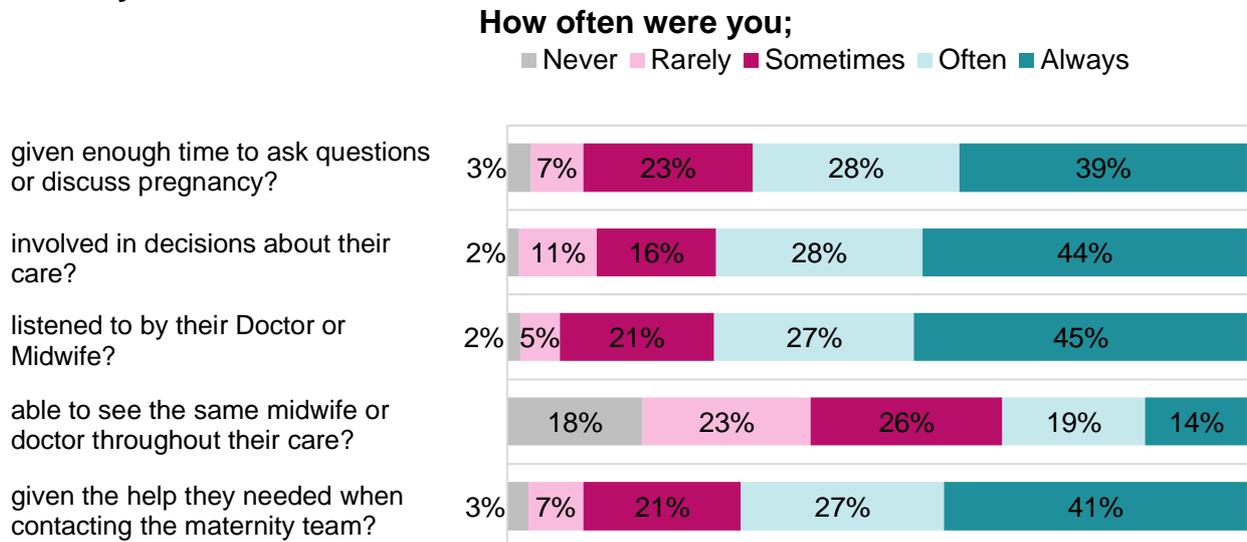
The majority of answers focused on the need for greater clarity around appointment times, locations of clinics and what to expect when attending a maternity unit. Greater knowledge of birthing options and the different options available to women earlier in their pregnancy was also raised as important along with a desire to see more information shared about how pregnancy impacts the mother's health and wellbeing.

Example Comments:

- Information on what appointments would be scheduled and how/ when I'd find out about them
- Antenatal classes that included basics like changing nappies etc
- Information about birthing choices without bias to allow an informed decision
- More information on risks of a caesarean and that a baby might end in neonatal. This wasn't shared until after the birth which was not helpful getting this info at that stage

- Information on home birth, information on hypnobirthing and information on each intervention and the reason it may be offered and the risks attached
- There should have been thorough counselling about what would happen during labour and delivery. The clinic was oversubscribed and too busy so doctors didn't have time to do proper counselling
- Options about my care, e.g. which hospital, birth plan etc
- Info on postpartum visits and what to expect at hospitals. Differences between sites and types of birth etc
- Clear information on appointments well ahead of time, when they are expected to be and whether I can bring my partner.
- Choice in days of appointments too, I can only attend the consultant in one half day and my other child isn't meant to come - difficult when I have no other childcare options on that day
- Honest support about breast feeding and how if difficulties arise, maternal shame and guilt acknowledged and supported rather than encouraged to persist when distressed
- Would have been good to see someone when I first found out I was pregnant to discuss the dos and do nots then I would have worried less. Also to confirm the pregnancy.

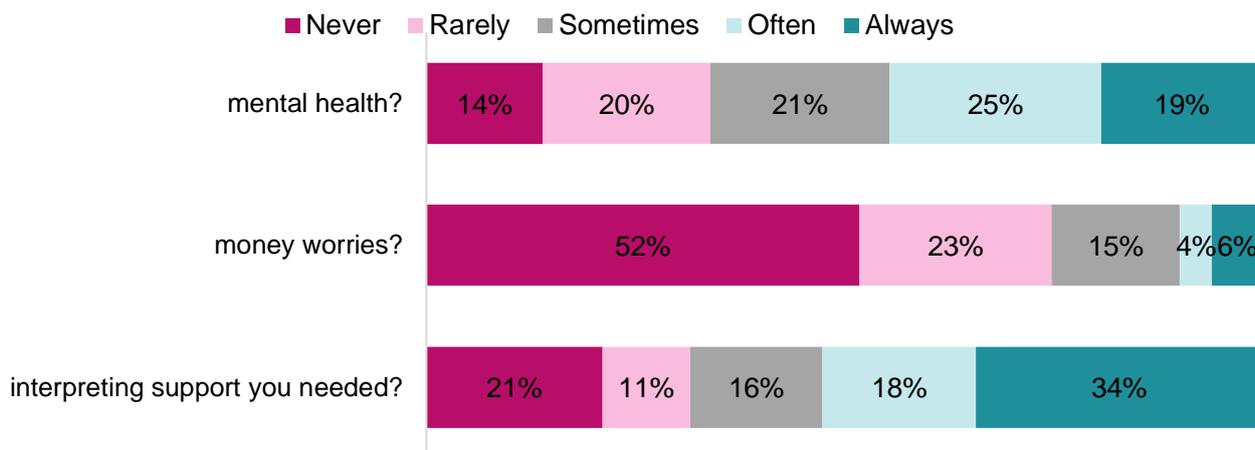
Women were asked how often they felt they experienced the following during their maternity care



Women generally shared they experienced the above always or often, with their ability to see the same midwife or doctor throughout their care seeing the largest deviation from the norm. When looking at this question we saw only **14%** of women share they always saw the same staff member, with this also presenting the highest number of respondents indicating 'never' or 'rarely' (**41%**).

We would like to know if you received any additional support during your appointments.

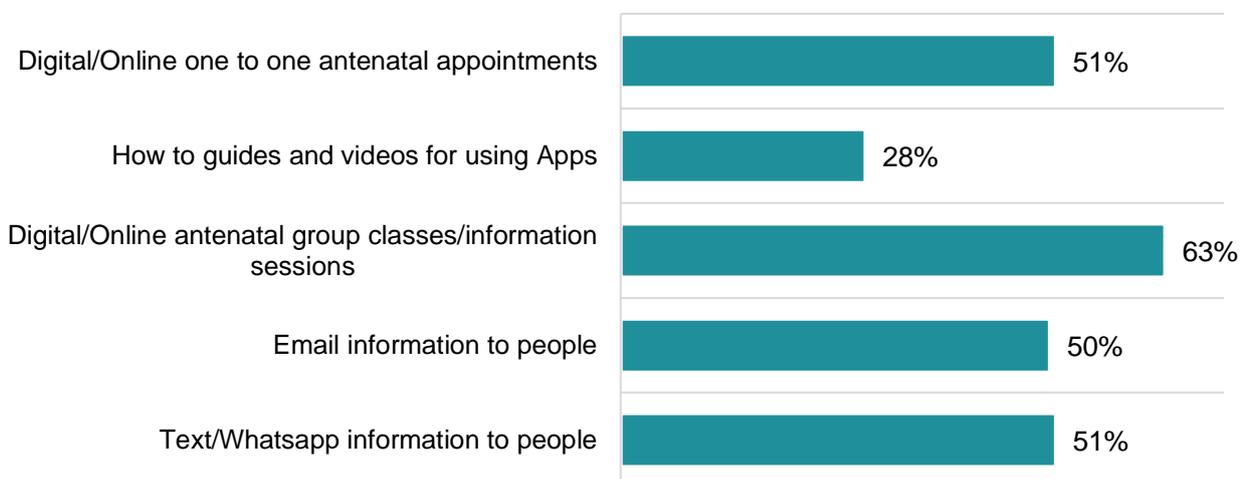
How often were you asked about;



When looking at equalities outcome in maternity services we broadly even split amongst those asked about their mental health, with over **65%** sharing it had been discussed sometimes, often or always. With regards to money worries we saw **52%** of women share they had not been asked about money worries, only **6%** shared they had always been asked about these.

We also asked women about interpreting support needs with **38** women sharing their insights into interpreting support. We saw over **50%** indicated they often or always had the support they needed, with over **30%** of respondents stating they never or rarely had support needed.

Would you find it helpful if NHSGGC providing the following digital options to access advice and support?



Alongside gaining a greater understanding of women’s experiences of maternity services we also asked about how women would like to receive advice and support digitally. This question was asked to help inform future service delivery and understand what would be most useful to women. We saw **63%** of people show interest in digital antenatal groups or information sessions, with **51%** of women interested in one to one antenatal appointments.

Women also expressed interest in the use of email and text messaging to access advice and support alongside digital groups and more traditional methods. How to guides and videos shared via apps were selected the least often at **28%**.

Were there any parts of your maternity journey that were particularly good and that you think should be seen more often?

Answers to this question generally focused on the caring compassionate nature of our staff and the importance of listening caring approach to those going through pregnancy. We also saw women call out examples of particularly excellent care, such as antenatal services, text messages from midwife teams and being given the time to raise concerns.

Example Comments:

- Maternity triage was excellent when I had to attend a number of times between 20 and 30 weeks
- Midwives were all lovely and supportive. Majority of appointments had plenty of time to ask questions. Sonographers very friendly and knowledgeable.
- The midwives on the pre natal, postnatal and labour wards have each time been exceptional. Midwives at maternity assessment are majority of the time lovely but ridiculously busy and spread thin.
- As an older mother and with IVF I found that the RAH listened to my concerns and didn't pressurise me into any decisions I wasn't comfortable with. The RAH provides a very calm, thorough, and respectful service.
- My experience in the 3 times I attended maternity assessment/triage at the QEUH was excellent, I felt listened to and not fobbed off like I had been in another part of the maternity care at the Victoria. Also, the actions the midwife and doctor team took when my little boy was in distress at the end of my labour was amazing and I'll forever be grateful they got him out safely.
- I had a fabulous experience of the perinatal mental health team who gave me invaluable support during my pregnancy and afterwards.
- The midwives and doctors in the QEUH recovery wards are amazing, I was there for a week and the care was excellent however it was obvious to me they were at times understaffed and under resourced and so under pressure as staff.
- I asked to see the same midwife that helped a lot with anxiety around my pregnancy. I elected to have a c section and this wasn't questioned
- The new introduction of health visitor during pregnancy is very beneficial.

Are there any parts of your maternity journey that could have been better, or that you would like to see changed?

When analysing comments relating to what could have been better, we saw a number of women sharing a desire for more information at the start of pregnancy, though it needs to be delivered in a digestible way and not given all at once. We also saw a desire for a change in how women contact the early pregnancy assessment service, with the current telephone and answer machine system feeling frustrating to access. There was also a desire to see more connected services, easier cross referral to support and easier access to a person's information and test results through Badgernet.

Example Comments:

- I'd like to see test results uploaded to badger app faster. It can increase anxiety not knowing if everything is okay.
- slow down, advise on how and what to read, help to navigate and get right information at correct time
- Not given correct info regarding how the clinics are run by receptionist (obstetrics dept) at QEUH. I wish it would be made clear at the beginning how the clinics are run.
- My badger app was not regularly updated.
- As a second time mum it was presumed that I knew what I was doing which in general was true however I didn't know about the differences between first and second time. In particular I didn't know that the labour could be much quicker second time and I ended up having an unplanned delivery at home. I would have liked to have had more conversations about this as part of my birth plan
- I think being given more Awareness to things that can go wrong, and their symptoms. Like HELLP syndrome, I had a lot of symptoms but never heard of this so dismissed signs, such as swelling, nausea, heartburn as common side effects. I ended up going to triage at 3am, thinking I had bad heartburn but was seriously ill
- Knowing what to expect at the appointment following a scan to confirm loss of baby. I would have been able to better mentally prepare if I knew what sort of things would be discussed.
- Lack of support with gestational diabetes. The advice given from Dietician and diabetic nurse on diet could have been better. More training needed with that. Got better help from online resource
- I would like to see the antenatal care changed, to make the woman more empowered and involved in decision making process. In addition more information / support in preparation for the birth.

Summary of Clinic Interview Surveys

Staff from the PEPI team worked with Maternity service leads across NHSGGC to arrange clinic visits at the; Queen Elizabeth Maternity Unit, Princes Royal Maternity, Royal Alexandria Maternity Unit, Inverclyde Community Maternity Unit, Royal Alexandra Community Maternity Unit and the Vale of Leven Maternity Unit.

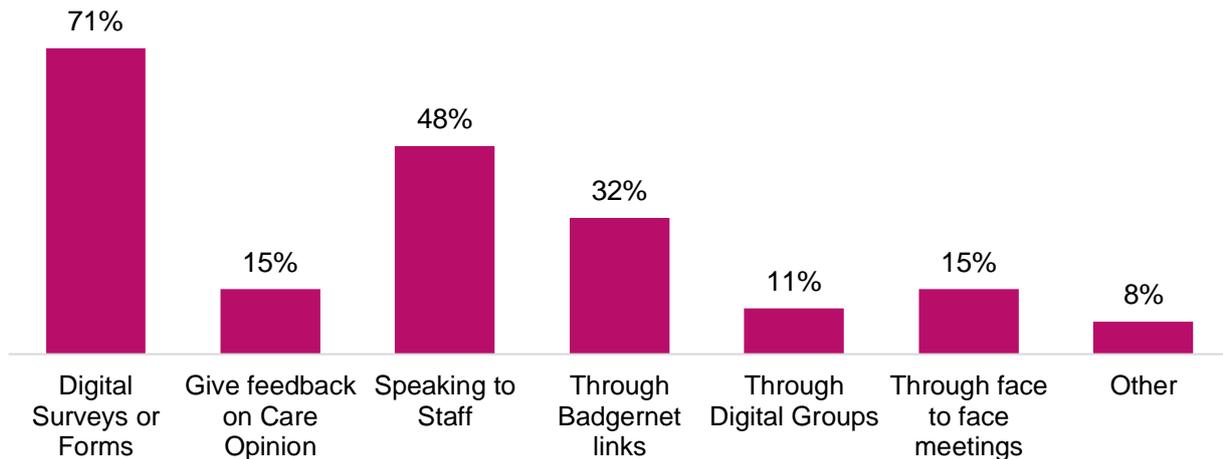
Questions asked during these visits were developed to better understand the needs of women, their experiences of current services and their hopes for future maternity service developments.

Sixty Six Women provided feedback on the questions listed below with summary findings provided in the order that women were asked the questions.

What matters most to you during your pregnancy?

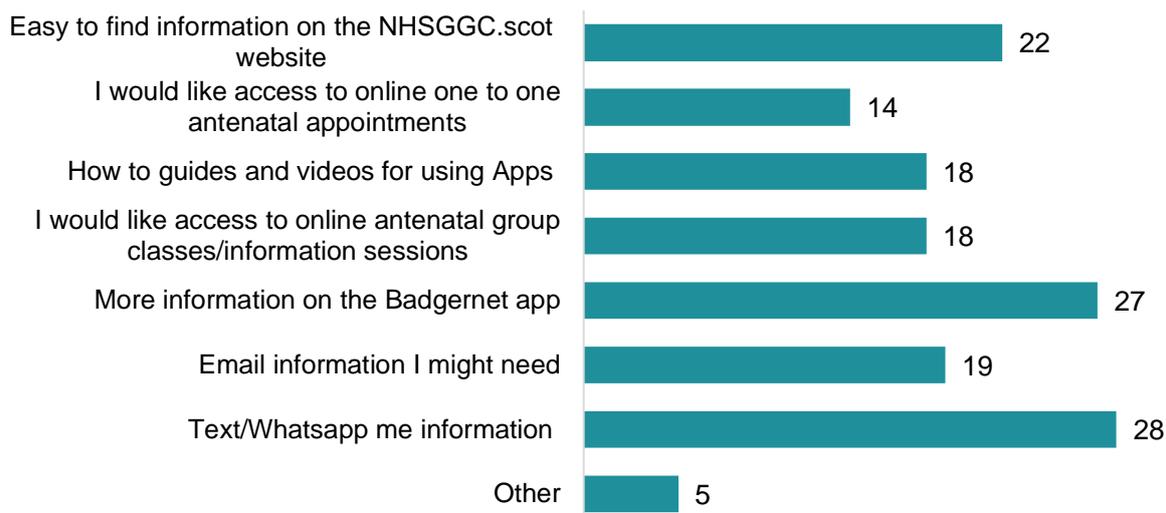
We asked women what mattered most to them during their pregnancy, the majority of women shared that a safe birth and healthy baby were most important to them. We also saw a number of women share how they valued reassurance from staff alongside easy to access information, and the involvement of their partner in their maternity journey.

How would you like to give feedback or get involved in maternity services in the future?



We asked how women would like to feedback about their care over time, and how they might like to get involved in services. Women could provide multiple answers to this and we saw the majority indicated the use of Digital Surveys, with staff conversations being the next most common method. Other methods suggested were focused on the use of comment cards and boxes in clinic spaces that could be filled out and returned to staff.

How could we make it easier for people to access digital maternity services?



When asked about their digital access to maternity services we saw a spread of interest across all suggested areas, with the provision of more information on Whatsapp or text services being the most popular option selected alongside increased information being available on Badgernet. Again other options shared focused on women sharing the importance of all of these options and a desire to see improved access across all the areas listed above.

How important do you feel the following support is to make sure you have a positive pregnancy?



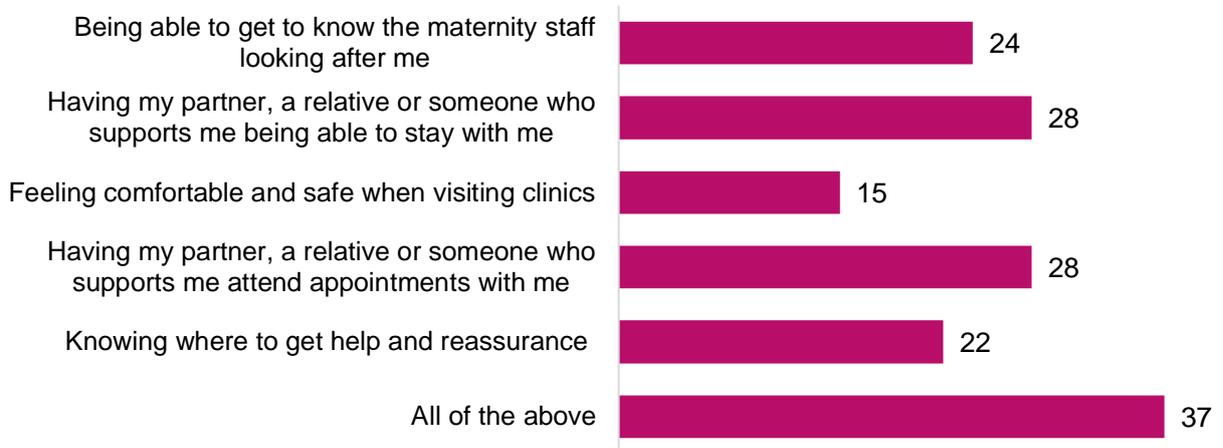
A key part of the clinic interview process was to better understand what was important to women during their maternity journey. We saw being involved in decision making and being listened to by staff during appointments as generally very important to women.

When asking about the importance of having the same midwife through labour and birth, 49 out of 65 respondents (75%) indicated they felt this was important.

When looking at the importance of conversations about mental health and wellbeing, 50 out of 65 respondents (77%) found this to be important to some degree.

In relation to conversations on financial issues or money worries 26 out of 65 respondents (40%) found this to be of importance with 24 out of 65 (37%) providing a neutral response to this.

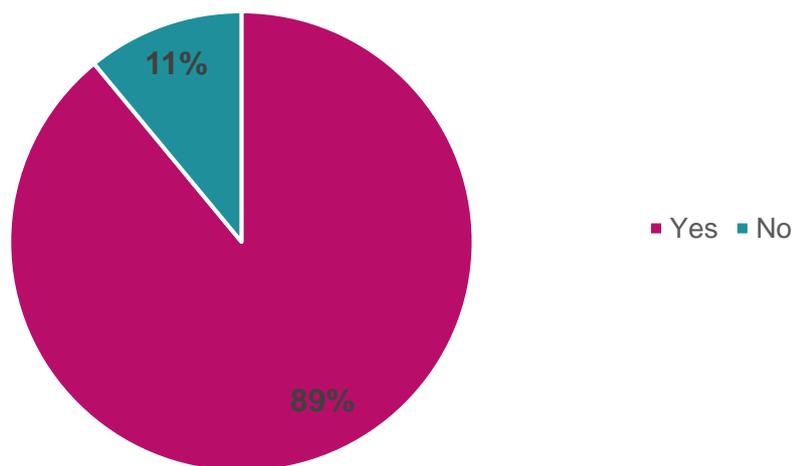
Thinking of the future, what do you feel would be important in ensuring a positive pregnancy experience?



To help understand what a positive pregnancy looks like we asked women to share which of the above statement they felt was most important to them. The majority sharing they felt all of the options were equally important. This was followed by having their partner able to be more involved in their maternity journey, attending appointments and staying with women following birth.

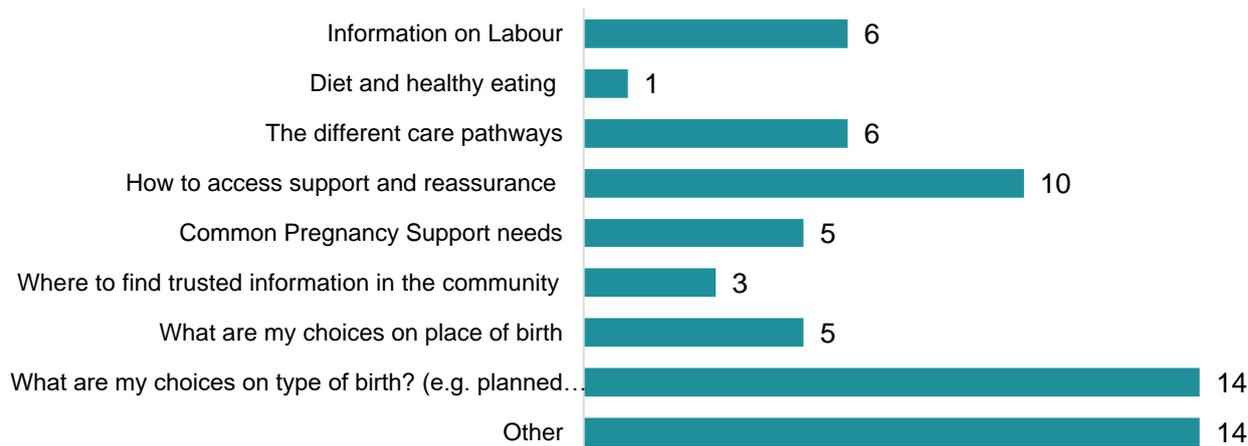
We also saw a desire to get to know the maternity staff looking after them, with women also keen to have more knowledge about where to get help and reassurance with pregnancy related issues and questions.

Are you aware you may be assisted by a doctor during birth in addition to a midwife if things are more complicated?



While the majority of women were aware that a doctor may assist their birth (89%) we did see 11% share a lack of awareness of this possibility.

What type of information is most important to you during your pregnancy?



We asked women to focus in on the singular piece of information they felt was most important to them. When answering this question we saw a number of women select the “other” option and share that they felt all of these information types were important to them and something they would like to see more of.

Choice of birth type and how to access support and reassurance were the next most common answers, with diet, and healthy eating support being the least shared answer, followed by where to find information in the community.

What does a positive birth environment look like to you?

We asked women about a positive birth environment, and received a number of responses, a selection of which have been extracted below. The majority focused on having a safe comfortable environment with people that they knew around them, be that staff, partners or relatives.

Example Comments:

- Hospital environment preferred, same staff throughout my pregnancy would also be preferred and having my partner with me all the way.
- Visiting times should be longer to allow relatives to stay and help with the baby, especially after having a c-section.
- Somewhere I can have my husband with me that’s private and comfortable
- A place where support and care is available when needed.
- My husband being there, along with familiar faces and a friendly environment.
- Open and warm staff throughout for reassurance and confidence empathetic care ready to provide any advice needed.
- Comfortable, and as calming as possible. Somewhere for my partner to rest while nearby.
- Being listened to when I need pain relief and not dismissing my pain during birth.
- Happy to be in hospital environment as long as partner can be involved.
- Calming space caring down to earth staff, with all the information I need shared and ready to hand
- Quiet and calm environment. Helpful and knowledgeable staff/care providers. Being informed on what is going on and what stage of labour I'm at, and how long it may take.
- Midwife led units where I can choose to dim lights and have easy access to a birth ball and pool.

What support would you like to see NHSGGC provide to help women and their partners adapt to parenthood in the first weeks after the birth?

When asking what support women would like to see for themselves and partners in the first weeks after birth we saw a desire for localised information and strong links with their community midwife. Mental health support and easier access to advice and reassurance lines via text or phone-call were also raised as important. We also saw suggestions for partner focused check-ins to make sure they have the information they need.

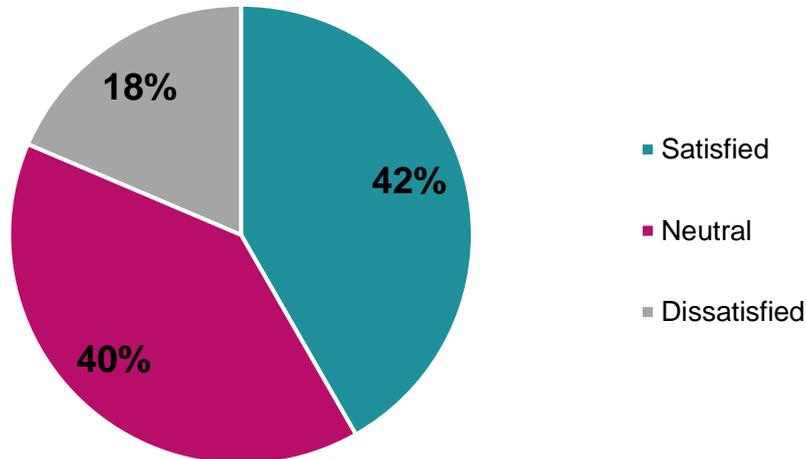
Example Comments:

- Feeling comfortable to link with midwife and health visiting if I need advice. Maybe a check in for partners, how they are coping, and siblings if not the first child.
- Health visiting and midwife follow up is important, also breastfeeding advice if needed.
- Guides, and support groups to help figure things out.
- Any advice and support at all is helpful, not making assumptions about peoples knowledge and covering the very basics can be important
- It would be helpful to offer some structured support visits around the early weeks after birth
- Being able to call for advice from the same team who know you and know your history
- More emphasis on healing/ symptoms after labour and birth for mum
- A 24 hour service where I could have questions answered. Either digitally or through phoning.
- realistic expectations on what to expect in the early days after getting home
- All home visits with an appointment instead of a 'time window'
- Advice in the hospital prior to being discharged, e.g. breastfeeding support or what to do when the baby is ill, how best to wash them and dress them etc
- Mental health support if complicated birth or when having an extended stay in hospital post birth

Badgernet Related Feedback

The following section provides a summary of questions asked about the Badgernet app, and women's experiences using the platform. All women answering both the digital survey and face to face clinic conversations were offered this question with the majority offering answers.

How satisfied were women with the Badgernet app and information contained within it?



When looking at satisfaction with the Badgernet app we can see a large number of women sharing their experiences through the social media and Badgernet survey share neutral satisfaction, pointing to opportunity to improve their experience and shift more experiences toward satisfaction.

Do you use the Badgernet app?

Of those spoken to during clinic visits, fifty-seven (86%) of the women answered this question, sharing that they had made use of Badgernet. The remainder sharing they did not make use of it. When asked how they would rate the app on a one to five scale the average response returned was a relatively neutral figure of 3.21.

How could we make it easier to use or access the Badgernet app?:

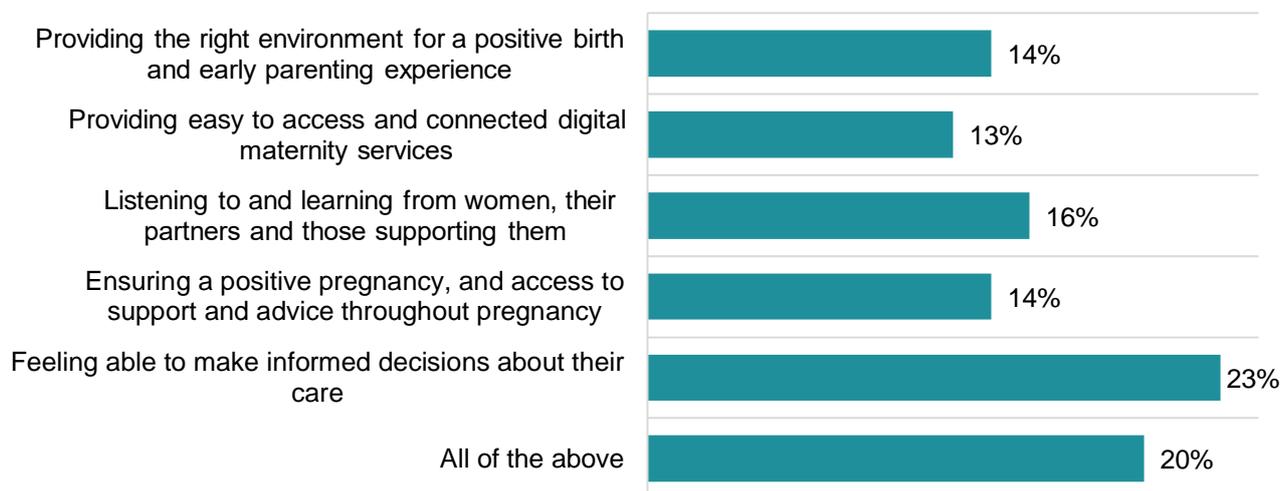
When asked how we could improve the Badgernet app 39 women shared the following insights and issues they would like to see addressed:

- We saw a number of women raise issues with the apps speed, particularly loading times when trying to navigate it or find information that led to a frustrating experience.
- We also heard from a number of women that they found it difficult to find the section they needed, and that they felt information was missing or hard to find when they navigated there. Examples:
 - “blood results aren’t published to view so therefore unable to view results”
 - “to check the results of an ultrasound you have to scroll through all the ultrasounds ever taken.”
- Women also shared issues with appointment information either not being available or disappearing from the app causing them to use it less and rely on other ways to track or follow up appointments.

How can we Improve Maternity Services across NHSGGC?

Alongside questions aimed at understanding current service provision we also asked women about areas where they would like to see NHSGGC make the most improvement in over the coming years. The following section outlines the answers provided first by those reached when attending a clinic, followed by those who completed the digital survey.

Clinic attendees were asked which of the following areas they would like to see NHSGGC make the most improvement in.



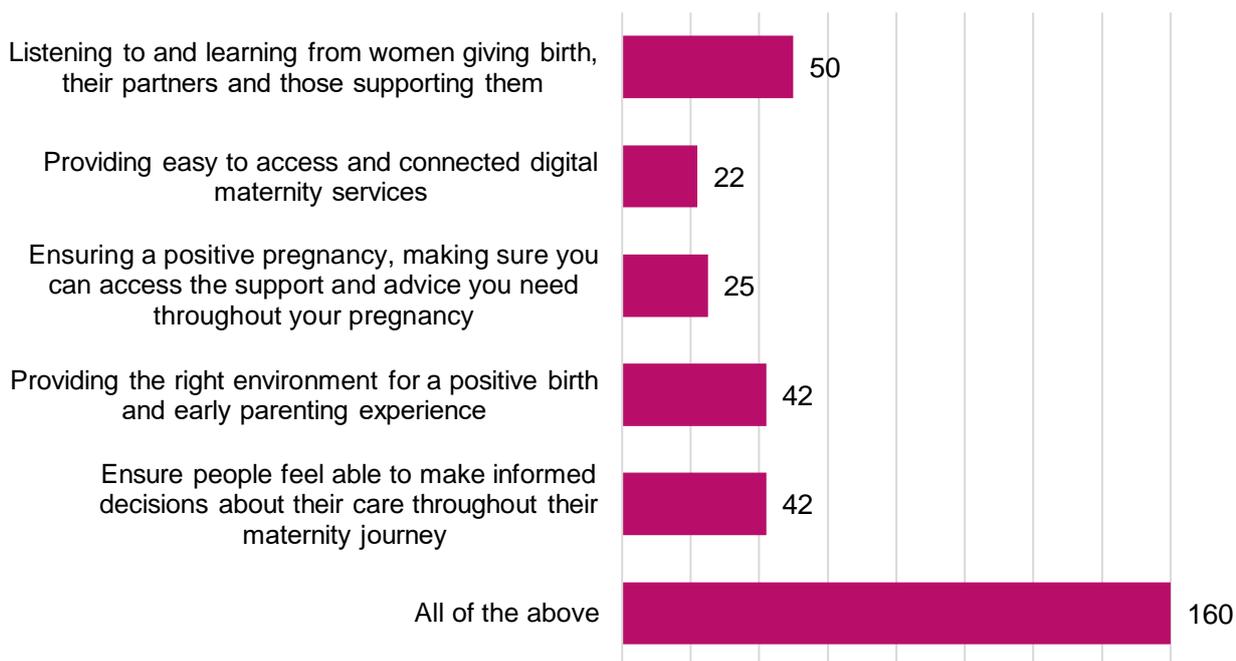
During conversation with women on this topic anecdotal feedback provided around this question was generally positive in relation to the maternity service. We saw a desire for improvement across each of the options presented to women, with feeling able to make informed decisions the most commonly selected option, followed by a desire to see improvement in all of these areas.

We also offered women the opportunity to tell us about anything they felt was missing from the above. Twenty three women shared thoughts on areas for further improvement that we could explore.

Other areas to improve on:

- How we care for first time parents, and offer extra reassurance and guidance where necessary alongside support for new mothers with a focus on what to expect through pregnancy and post birth.
- Waiting times at clinic appointments was raised by several people, with them sharing a desire for more transparency on expected wait and what to expect at an appointment.
- Better communication and information sharing on post birth issues, particularly breastfeeding challenges, how to find information, help and reassurance.
- Badgernet was specifically mentioned as an area for improvement, with the in app appointment information not always being correct when checked with a service.

Those answering the digital survey were asked which of the following areas would you like to see NHSGGC make the most improvement in?



Mirroring the question asked to women attending clinics with NHSGGC we asked women to share what they felt were the areas they would like to see NHSGGC make the most improvement in. The majority (**160**) felt all of these areas were important to see improvement in, followed by listening and learning from women giving birth, their partners and those supporting. It was also important that we provide a positive birth environment to women and to ensure that women feel able to make informed decisions about their maternity journey.

We also offered women the opportunity to tell us about anything they felt was missing from the above. Two hundred and one women shared thoughts on areas for further improvement that we could explore.

Other areas to improve on:

- A focus on the person, and treating each pregnancy as individual rather than grouping them and treating them the same. Tailor the care and information to what is needed by each women by listening to their questions and needs.
- Women shared a desire to see more staff on wards, and around clinic areas. This was linked at times to a desire to see more clarity on realistic wait times when attending clinics.
- Peer linkages with other mothers, a chance to speak to and reflect with others who have recently given birth to identify what could be changed and improved.
- Similar to the clinic based conversations we saw better communication and information sharing on post birth issues, particularly breastfeeding challenges, how to find information, help and reassurance raised by women.
- We saw a desire to move away from a more medical birth, and empower staff to talk about alternative, alongside mental health and other support topics to provide a more holistic maternity experience to women.
- Greater information sharing between community midwives and health visitors, especially if they are spread across a geographical area.

Emerging Themes for Consideration

Across each of the engagement approaches we heard from **447** women about their current and past experiences of maternity care. Across both approaches we saw general agreement that the following areas were ones for NHSGGC Maternity to focus on improving in the coming years;

- Listening to and learning from women giving birth, their partners and those supporting them
- Providing easy to access and connected digital maternity services
- Ensuring a positive pregnancy, making sure you can access the support and advice you need throughout your pregnancy
- Providing the right environment for a positive birth and early parenting experience
- Ensure people feel able to make informed decisions about their care throughout their maternity journey

Alongside these areas of improvement we saw additional themes emerging that while linked to those outlined above are still distinct. The main focus of these themes were around the use of technology, and how we could improve access to tests, appointments and other information through Badgernet .

We also saw women praise the human element and how they appreciated the time spent with them by maternity staff, the compassion they were shown and care given. From this we saw women share that they would like the opportunity to spend more time speaking with midwives about their pregnancy journey without feeling as time pressured.

Another important topic shared was the chance to learn from other women's experiences of maternity through their stories and from speaking with them. This was focused mainly on new mothers learning from past experiences, but we also heard from women interested in more peer learning/support models that could help them navigate being new parent.

ENDS