NICE National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

NICE

Experience: Maternity

NICE indicator
Published: 31 December 2023

www.nice.org.uk/indicators/ind292

Indicator

Women's experience of maternity services.

Indicator type

Network / system level indicator. The indicator would be appropriate to understand and report on the performance of networks or systems of providers.

This document does not represent formal NICE guidance. For a full list of NICE indicators, see our menu of indicators.

To find out how to use indicators and how we develop them, see our NICE indicator process guide.

Rationale

Patients' experience of the care and service they receive from healthcare services is

© NICE 2026. All rights reserved. Subject to Notice of rights (https://www.nice.org.uk/terms-and-conditions#notice-of-rights).

recognised internationally as a key measure of healthcare quality. This is an overarching indicator which focuses on measuring experience of maternity services, using questions that take into account all stages of the maternity care pathway: antenatal services, intrapartum (labour and delivery), and postnatal services. The questions used to assess quality of care are consistent with NICE's guideline on patient experience in adult NHS services and NICE's quality standard on patient experience. Aspects of care covered by the indicator are also supported by NICE's guidance on pregnancy and childbirth covering antenatal, intrapartum and postnatal care.

Source guidance

- Patient experience in adult NHS services: improving the experience of care for people using adult NHS services NICE guideline CG138 (2012, last updated 2021)
- NICE's guidance on pregnancy and childbirth covering antenatal, intrapartum and postnatal care

Specification

Numerator and denominator: not applicable. This is a composite indicator based on weighted average score of questions from the Care Quality Commission's maternity services survey.

Methodology: Composite indicator based on the weighted average scores (between 0 and 100) to 6 patient experience questions. The survey is weighted by parity (whether the respondent has given birth) and age. To provide a balanced snapshot of the maternity care pathway, equal weighting is given to antenatal, intrapartum and postnatal services.

The 6 questions, as worded in the 2023 survey, are:

- Antenatal: Did you get enough information from ether a midwife or doctor to help you decide where to have your baby? (Worded as 'from either a midwife or doctor'.)
- Antenatal: Thinking about your antenatal care, were you involved enough in decisions about your care? (Previously the word 'enough' was included after 'involved'.)
- Labour and birth: Were you (and/or your partner or a companion) left alone by midwives or doctors at a time when it worried you?

© NICE 2026. All rights reserved. Subject to Notice of rights (https://www.nice.org.uk/terms-and-conditions#notice-of-rights).

- Labour and birth (C16): Thinking about your care during labour and birth, were you involved in decisions about your care? (Previously the word 'enough' was included after 'involved'.)
- Postnatal: Thinking about the care you received in hospital after the birth of your baby, were you treated with kindness and understanding?
- Feeding your baby (previously in postnatal section): Did you feel that midwives and other healthcare professionals gave you active support and encouragement about feeding your baby? (When the NHSOF indicator was developed, this referred to 'midwives and other carers'.)

Exclusions: survey excludes those:

- under 16 at the time of delivery
- who died during or since delivery
- whose babies died (including multiple births)
- who were in hospital or whose baby was in hospital at the time the sample was drawn
- who had a concealed pregnancy
- whose baby was fostered or adopted
- who gave birth in a maternity unit managed by another provider or in a private maternity unit or wing.

Data source: Maternity services survey.

Expected population size:

An estimated population size cannot be calculated because there is no denominator for this indicator.

The number of respondents is consistently above 17,000 nationally. The response rate of this survey continues to exceed that of the other surveys in the national patient survey programme.

ISBN: 978-1-4731-6866-4

© NICE 2026. All rights reserved. Subject to Notice of rights (https://www.nice.org.uk/terms-and-conditions#notice-of-rights).