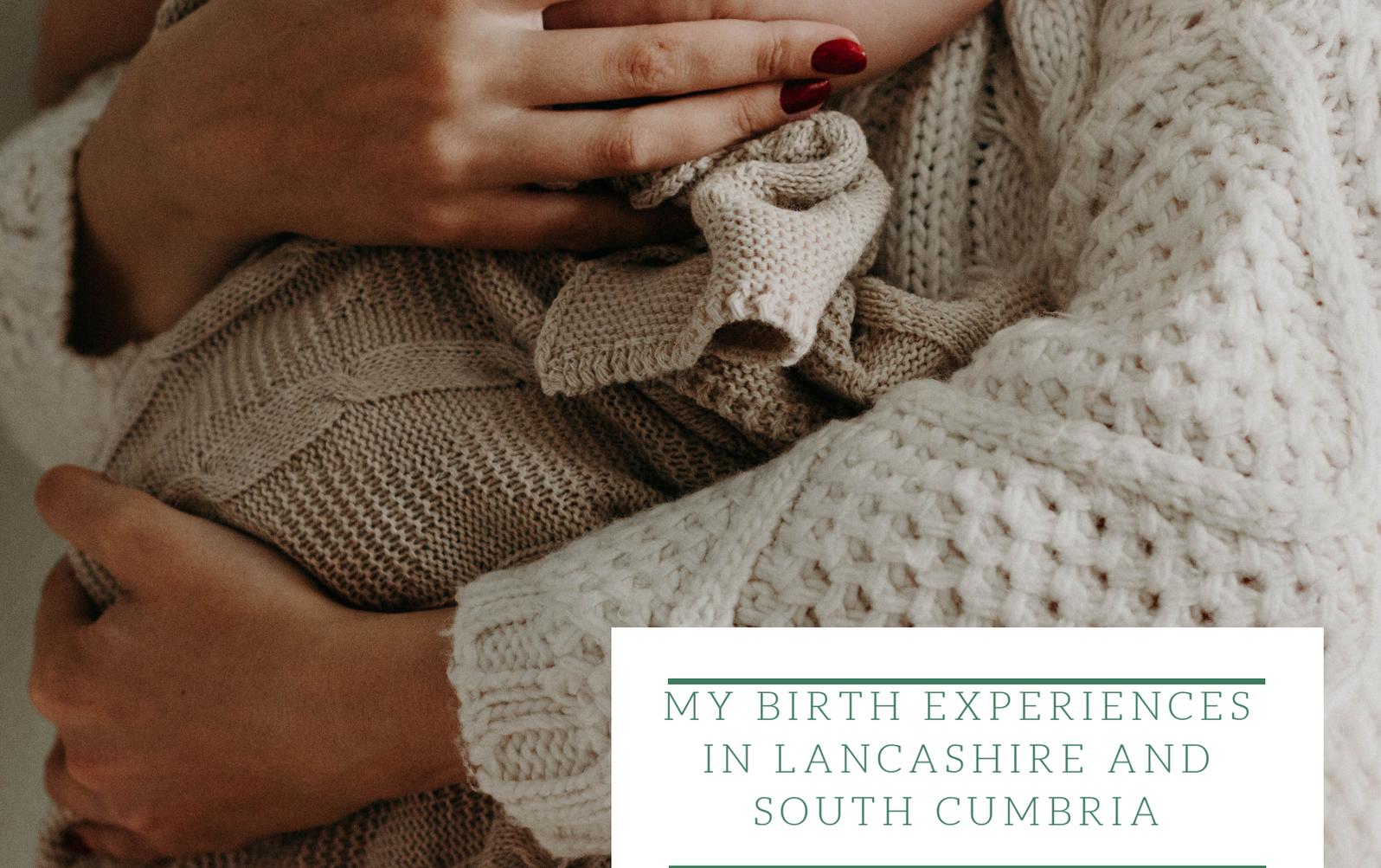




THE MATERNITY VOICES
PARTNERSHIPS FOR LANCASHIRE
AND SOUTH CUMBRIA

SURVEY
REPORT

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2020



MY BIRTH EXPERIENCES IN LANCASHIRE AND SOUTH CUMBRIA

Between August and September 2020, the collective Maternity Voices Partnerships for Fylde Coast, Central Lancashire, Pennine Lancashire and Morecambe Bay designed and distributed a survey to capture the experiences of families who had been pregnant or given birth through the COVID19 pandemic.

During this period 314 people participated in the survey. Out of these people:

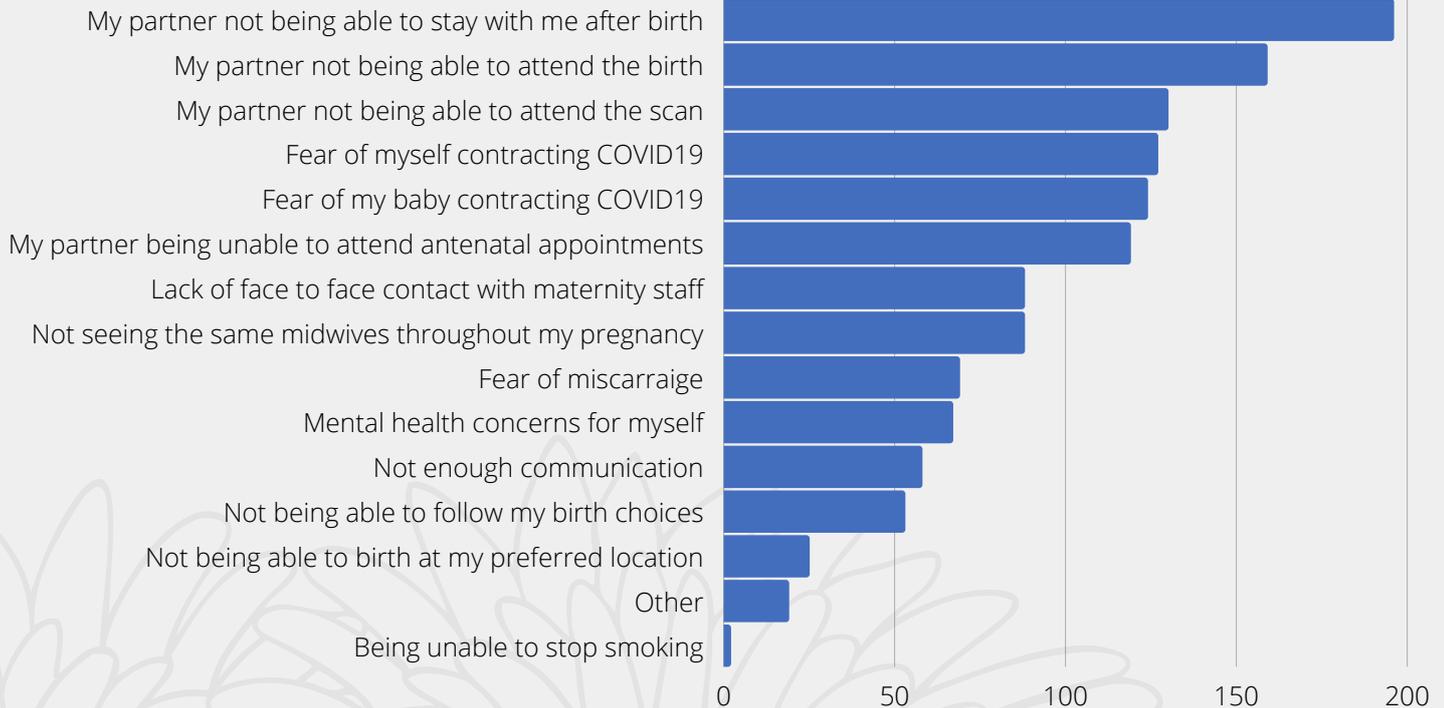
- 312 were women
- 1 respondent was a man
- 1 respondent was non-binary

- No respondents were under 18
- 123 respondents were aged between 19-29
- 177 respondents were aged between 30-39
- 14 were aged 40 or over

- 98% of respondents were white British
- There was also a small representation of people who identified as Eastern European, White (other), Mixed white/black African, mixed white/Asian, Asian British- Indian and Black British-African.



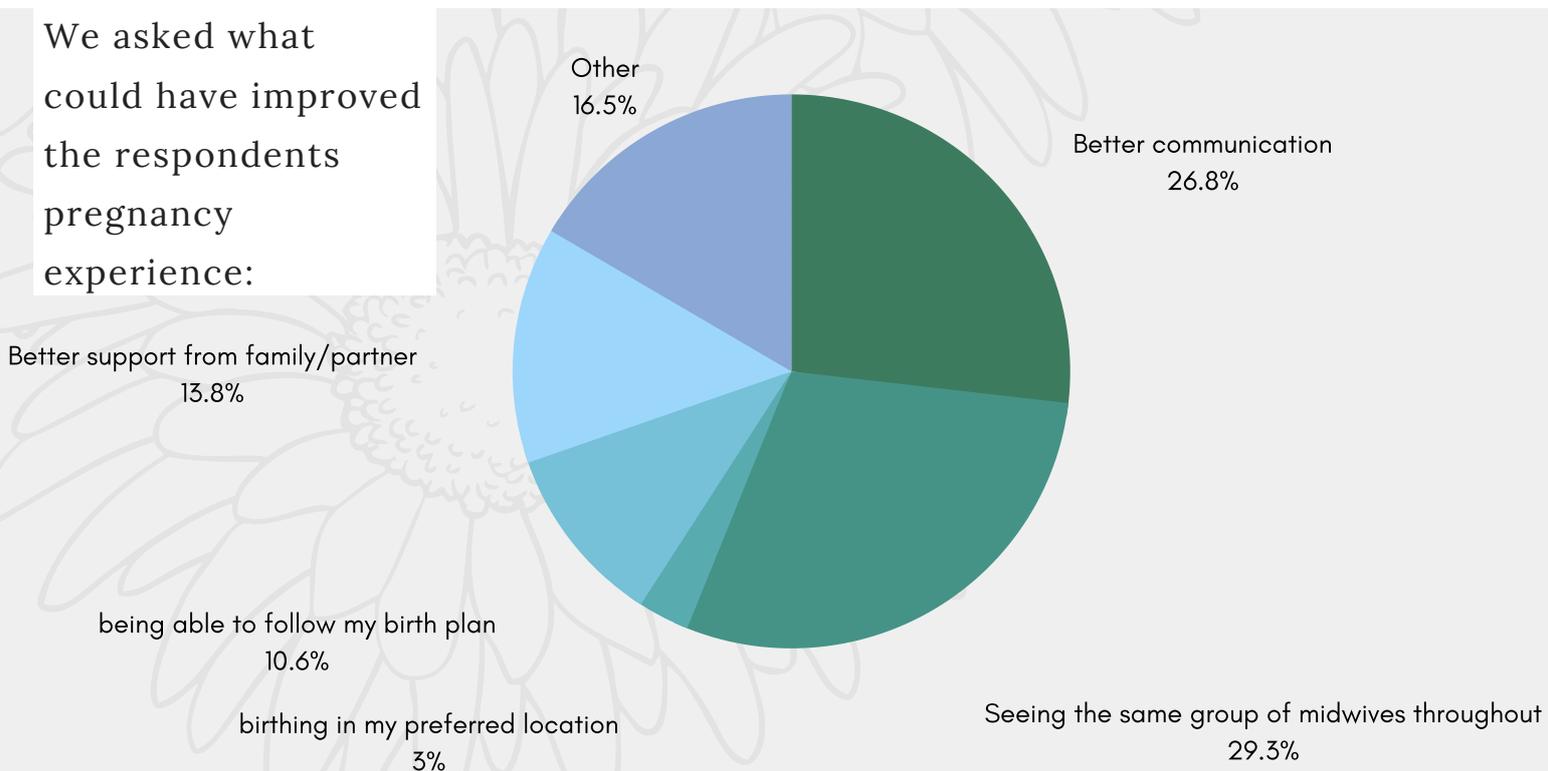
We asked the respondents if they feel excessively worried about any themes during their pregnancy, here are their responses:



For those who selected 'Other' some of the answers given were:

- Excessive worries about fetal movements.
- Partner not being allowed to stay for my induction
- Lack of postnatal support at home
- Poor communication for Consultant care high risk mothers.
- Partner needing to wear a mask through labour
- My mum not being able to attend the birth
- Antenatal appointments being cancelled

We asked what could have improved the respondents pregnancy experience:

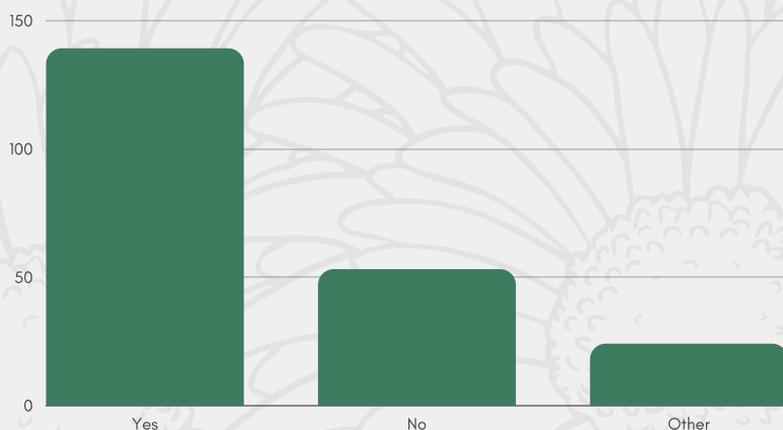


Did your partner feel involved in your pregnancy?



BIRTH

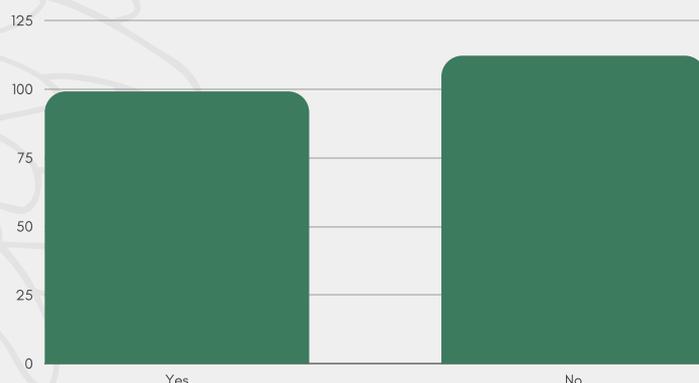
Were your birth choices upheld throughout the birth?



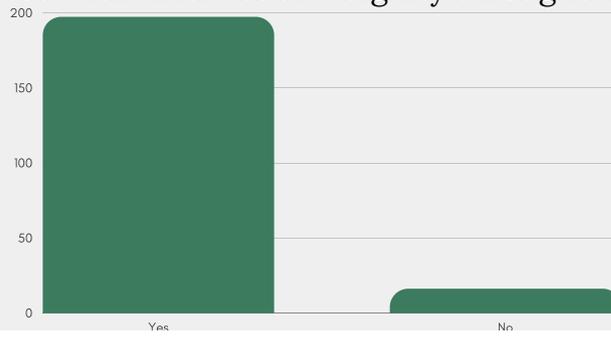
Those who answered 'other' told us:
'I hadn't made many choices in advance'
'I couldn't have a water birth due to COVID, this was only told to me during labour'
'The midwives were amazing and did everything they could to make us feel calm and supported'
'I was able to have delayed cord clamping as requested'

'I wish I could have had a water birth'
'I wish my husband could have attended from the beginning'
'Wish I could have had two birth partners'
'The midwives presumed I would need C-section without support for vaginal birth'
'Would have liked to have seen the same Consultant more than once.'
'I wish I hadn't been discharged so early, so I could have got breastfeeding established'
'The midwife kept leaving me and returning smelling of cigarettes'

Was there any part of your treatment during the birth that you wish would have been different?



Were you treated with kindness and dignity throughout the birth?



'I kept asking for pain relief, but didn't get it'

'Excellent theatre team, a very positive section experience'

'The midwives were amazing'

'The midwife made a very distressing experience very positive'

'I had the midwife I had seen through pregnancy for my birth, which was brilliant'

'Staff were lovely, but they couldn't replace my partner, I was lonely through my induction.'

'Nobody would carry my bags, I had to carry them upstairs by myself during active labour'

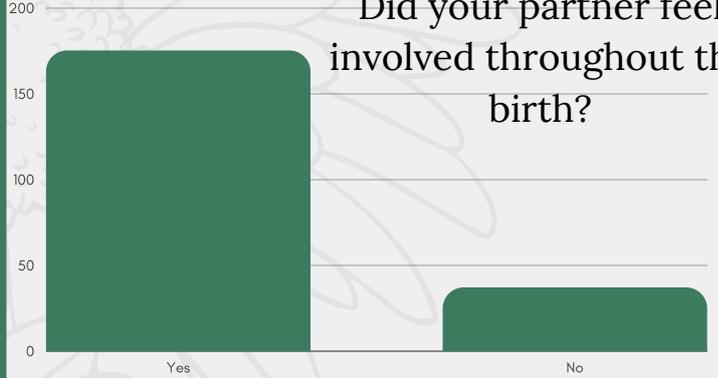
'My partner missed the birth as I wasn't believed that I was in labour'

'The staff were incredible'

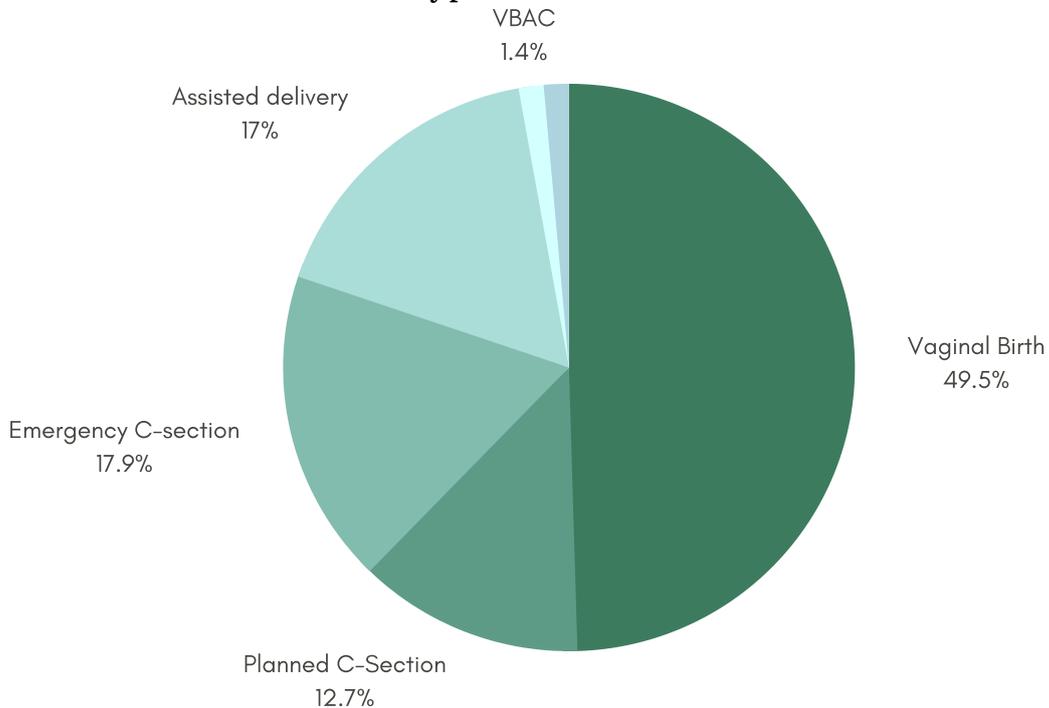
Were you induced?



Did your partner feel involved throughout the birth?



Type of birth?



How would you rate the care you received postnatally from.....

- The midwife on the ward= 7/10
- The midwife at home = 6/10
- The Health Visitor = 6/10
- Your GP = 4/10

(These scores are the averages of the responses given)

'Health visitor fabulous but only able to do a few visits due to COVID, however is still helping me via text. GP- a quick ask how I was physically but not much else despite ending up on antidepressants during pregnancy. Midwife - brief appt mainly for baby. No one checked my section wound/scar postnatally'

'The midwives and health visitors were fab at my 6 weeks check my GP didn't fill my red book and seemed like he wanted to rush the appointment'

'Before I gave birth I didn't know what was going on, like the mid wife appointments were an over the place, I was seeing different midwives every time so no one really knew me properly. When myself and the baby came home the midwives were useless! They just kept turning up to my house without letting me know beforehand, sometimes I would have visitors round or I wasn't in then it wasn't re arranged. They then just discharged me over the phone. They kept forgetting about me 'forgetting to put me in the diary' multiple times for checks on myself and the baby. Not happy at all with the care especially with it being my first baby and me only being 19'

'There was no home service from the midwives after the birth, or 8 week checks at the GP. The health visitor came out once, but when i raised concerns at 6 weeks post-natal, i was told to contact GP who wasn't seeing anyone. My daughter ended up losing weight because no one would see her and sort her tongue tie out which finally got resulted at 12 weeks, even though i raised these issues at 5 weeks old'

When thinking about feeding you baby, what did you plan to do?

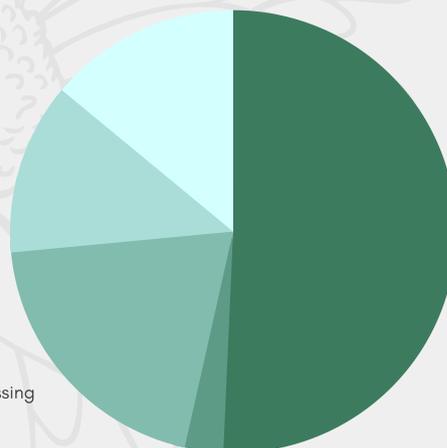
Formula feed with breastfeeding or expressing
14%

Formula feed only
12.6%

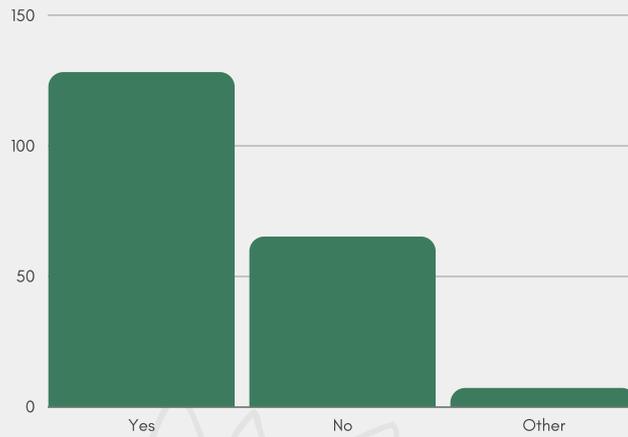
Combine breastfeed and expressing
20%

Express milk and bottle feed
2.8%

Breastfeed only
50.7%



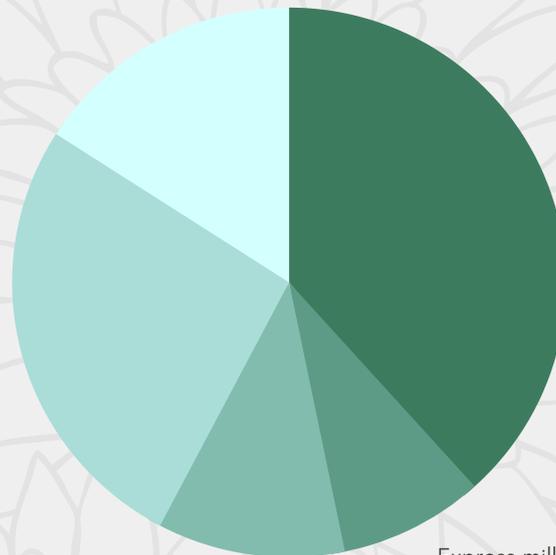
In the early weeks, did you feed baby as planned?



Over the first six weeks, what was your main method of feeding?

Formula feed with breastfeeding or expressing
15.9%

Formula feed only
26.4%



Breastfeed only
38.3%

Express milk and bottle feed
8.5%

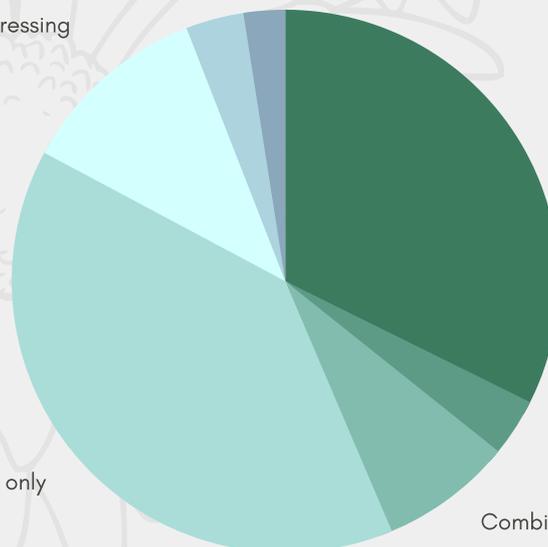
Combine breastfeed and expressing
10.9%

How are you feeding your baby now?

Solid food alongside breastfeeding
3.4%

Formula feed with breastfeeding or expressing
11.3%

Formula feed only
39.2%



Breastfeed only
32.4%

Express milk and bottle feed
3.4%

Combine breastfeed and expressing
7.8%

What could have been better with your infant feeding support?

'Pre natal advice re breastfeeding in preparation'

'I think there should be more information about what to expect for first time mums as I got mastitis due to not knowing it even existed, and not knowing how to express'

'More support on post natal ward I asked for help and was told I was doing well but then another midwife came on duty and said baby wasn't feed well and was dehydrated so bottle was given. Nipples also cracked and bleeding on day 1 and was told baby was in a good position.'

'NICU nurses tried to support me but not specialised in that area, constant conflicting advice and feeding plans changed every shift hard to keep track of. Once home, again conflicting advice no consistency of support, when babt kept gaining then losing weight took a long time to identify possible cows milk allergy and get help for it'

What infant feeding support worked well?

'The midwife took time to sit with me and help me'

'Fab team are doing the best they can in the current circumstance'

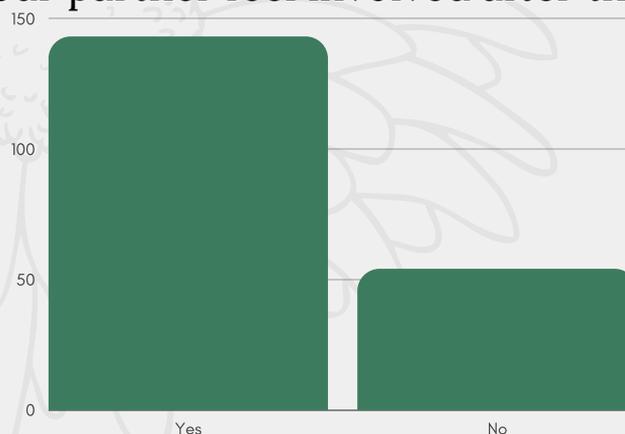
'My health visitor has always been very supportive of me continuing to breastfeed. The greatest help has been the Facebook FAB Lancashire support group; everything is covered, and the admins are knowledgeable and responsive'

'Amazing support via internet and phone'

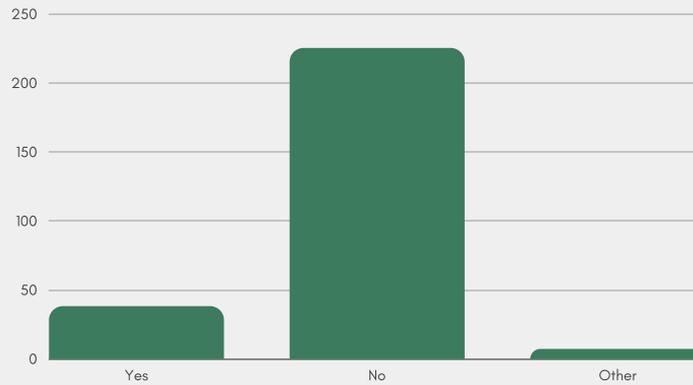
'The local support groups are amazing'

'Midwives were amazing!!! I cried loads in hospital as I was struggling to breastfeed. They wouldn't let me give up they were great!'

Did your partner feel involved after the birth?



Did you require support for your mental health during your pregnancy?



It enabled me to discuss my birth plan with a Consultant, but i wasn't deemed bad enough

'I self-referred to a perinatal counsellor in Minds Matter but it took 4 months to see someone'

'I probably did need support, but I didn't ask for it'

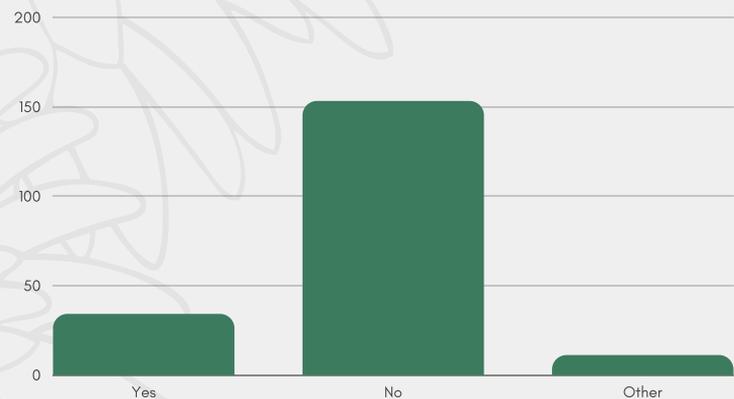
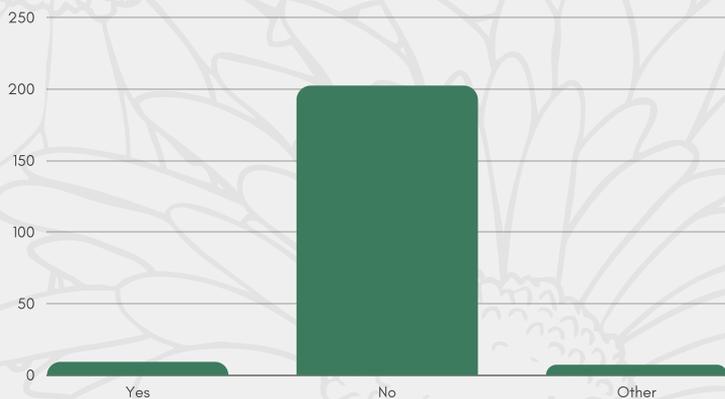
'A mental health midwife contacted me and offered counselling then went on to tell me she could only see women face to face, that are in worse situations than me.'

'I had private therapy, NHS routes and times are ridiculous'

"I tried to get CBT before my pregnancy, but they never got back

Did you require support for your mental health during your birth?

Did you require support for your mental health after your birth?



'The Health Visitor provided excellent care'

'I am waiting for an appointment with Minds Matter'

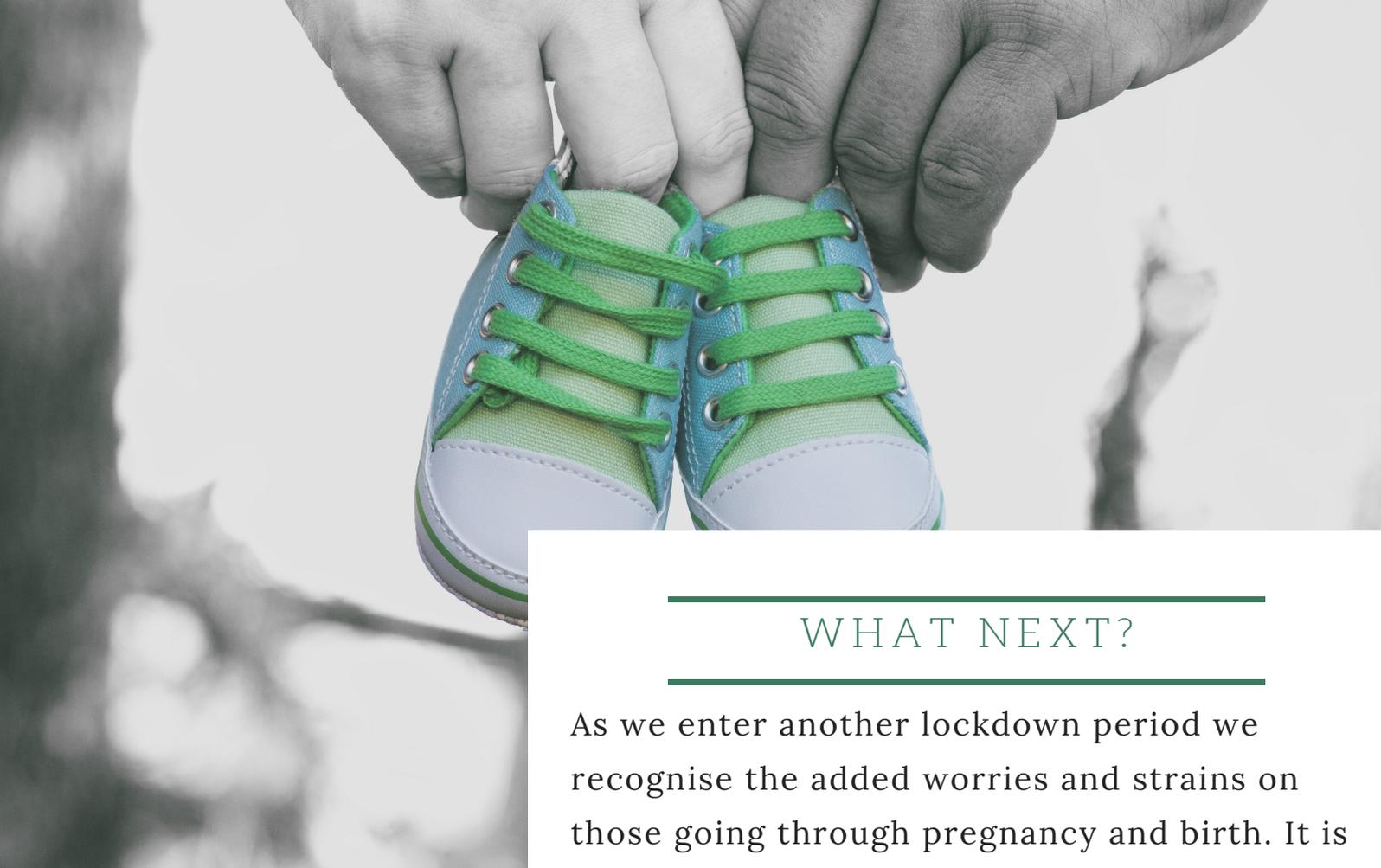
'I needed mental health support for feeding, but my Health Visitor wasn't approachable and I felt I wasn't able to contact her.'

'My GP provided great support'

'I received any help from friends and family'

'Good support from the midwives on the ward and neonatal staff'

'I haven't had any support because I don't feel comfortable to seek it.'



WHAT NEXT?

As we enter another lockdown period we recognise the added worries and strains on those going through pregnancy and birth. It is more important than ever to understand the experiences and feelings of those using the maternity services.

The survey is still open and can be completed at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/matvoices>

If you would like some more information about the Maternity Voices Partnership please contact us on the emails below:

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