



## **Residents' and relatives' experiences of returning to visiting Leeds Care homes**

**Pennington Court Nursing Home**

**June-July 2021**

## Introduction

Since July 2020, there has been a series of changes in [government guidance on care home visiting during the Covid-19 pandemic](#) which has meant that care homes have gradually been able to welcome families back in to visit their loved ones.

Healthwatch Leeds in partnership with Leeds City Council wanted to find out about residents' and relatives' experience of visiting in care homes as part of our work as a city to enable meaningful visiting across Leeds.

We contacted individual care homes and asked them to post out survey packs to named contacts of all residents. The packs contained surveys for both residents and relatives, and we asked relatives to help residents to complete the survey where appropriate. We provided a freepost envelope so that people could return the completed surveys directly to Healthwatch Leeds.

The survey was also available to complete online via a link that was shared widely with both individual care homes and with the general public via social media and various ebulletins and newsletters.

For each care home that took part, we have produced an individualised report from the surveys that were completed about their care home including a summary of the data for each question.

Since this was an anonymous survey, some of the answers to the questions may have been blanked out so as not to reveal any information that might identify the respondents.

## Our Findings

- The survey was completed by 19 residents and 1 relative.
- **It should be noted that all 18 the residents' surveys were completed by the Activity Co-ordinator employed by the home which may result in some bias.** The home said that they did it this way because many relatives don't come in to visit residents to help them complete the survey, and they were unable to complete it by themselves. The one response from a relative was submitted online.

- The satisfaction from residents was high with all saying that given that care homes have to follow government guidance on visiting, they would rate their experience of seeing their family or friends as excellent (39%) or very good (33%) or average (22%). The one relative rated it as poor, as they said they were only being allowed to visit one hour a week and not allowed into their relative's room. They felt that this was impacting on their loved one's mental health as they had prior to the pandemic visited most days.
- The one relative who responded didn't understand the role of essential care giver and said that they hadn't been informed that the care home was enabling this role.
- The relative was aware that they could take their loved one out to low risk outdoor places.
- The relative was aware that there were alternative visiting options (pod visits) for people who weren't nominated visitors.
- The relative was aware that visits could be booked during the day both in the week and at weekends. There was less clarity about whether visits could be booked on evenings, with the majority saying this wasn't possible or that they weren't sure.
- The relative said they hadn't seen a copy of the individualised risk assessment/visiting plan for their loved one.
- The relative said their loved one didn't have mental capacity to make decisions around visiting, and that they as a family member hadn't been involved in developing the risk assessment/visiting plan to express their wishes and needs on their behalf.
- The majority (65%) of residents and relatives responding to the survey, felt that the visiting options available met their needs. Three respondents felt that they didn't meet their needs and two said they didn't know. One resident said they felt there should be more visiting options and another said they'd like family to be able to visit on an evening, and suggested having one evening a week when this could happen. One resident said that visiting met their needs because they were bedbound and a relative had been able to visit them in their room. The relative who wasn't being allowed to visit their loved one in their room felt that visiting

was not meeting their needs because of this. They felt that it would be better for the resident's behaviour and anxiety to be in familiar surroundings for the visits.

- One person said that it was good that people could do their tests at home before they visited as it saved time.
- The relative said the care their loved one received and the communication around anything related to the care was excellent. However, they felt that the communication around changes in visiting could be more frequent and also that all staff should be made aware of changes so that they can communicate it to relatives verbally if they ask them questions about it.

## Our recommendations

1. Communicate to all relatives the message that all residents can nominate an 'essential care giver' and clearly explain what this is. We know that this term can be confusing for both relatives and staff. Because of this, we've created this simple wording to try and help clarify the role. Feel free to use it in your communications with families and staff.

*"All residents (or their families/POA if they don't have mental capacity to make that decision) can now choose one person to be included in their five named visitors as an 'essential care giver'. This key visitor should be someone who they feel is "key" to their wellbeing (physical or emotional), and who helps them feel "happier and well".*

*The key visitor will be able to visit them more often, flexibly and for longer periods, as well as being able to continue visiting even when there is an outbreak, or the resident is in isolation (e.g. following discharge from hospital).*

*In the government guidance, they call this key visitor an 'essential care giver' but this doesn't mean that they have to provide any type of personal or practical care (although this may be agreed in discussion with the care home).*

2. *Because more frequent and flexible visiting carries more risk, the key visitor will need to agree to have the same testing as care home staff (In Leeds, there is generally a low awareness*

amongst relatives that ALL care home residents can now nominate an essential care giver. Consider helping to raise awareness of the role by including information about it on your website.

*one PCR test and two lateral flow tests a week) and follow the same infection control procedures as them.”*

3. Ensure that all staff are regularly updated with any key changes in the government visiting guidance or care home visiting policy so that they can answer any queries from residents or relatives if asked.
4. Make sure that residents’ needs and wishes are routinely and consistently taken into consideration when drawing up individual risk assessments or visiting care plans. Where residents don’t have mental capacity to be involved in these decisions, make sure families are involved in these discussions.
5. Ensure that copies of residents’ individualised risk assessments/visiting plans are routinely shared with relatives.
6. Consider ways of enabling residents to have longer visits. Some questions to consider (from <https://www.relres.org/visiting-guide-providers/>) :
  - Is your policy based on individual risk assessments for the residents, that takes into account individual needs? individual assessments are needed to consider the impact of a 30-60-minute visit for each resident, including whether such timed visits are appropriate for them and meet their wellbeing needs.
  - If not being done already, have you considered enable visits to take place in residents’ own rooms? This would allow the visits to be as long as appropriate for each resident, to better meet their wellbeing needs. It would also create a more natural, relaxing environment for the visit which will be more beneficial for the resident.
7. Consider having one or two evenings a week when relatives could visit.

## Service Provider Response

“Pennington Court recognise that this has been a very difficult time for our residents and their families and loved ones, especially around visiting them at the home. We have worked very hard to provide meaningful visits under a fair process whilst meeting the local and government guidelines.

We have been able to facilitate an hour visit a week, sometimes more if needed or available, and a video call. We have had to ensure that this has been a fair process and that all visitors have the opportunity to visit their loved ones. Some residents have not been able to have a physical visit when they are in isolation having returned from a high-risk area or are awaiting Covid results, but they have had video call.

The home has published the visiting arrangements, and this has been shared with the staff however at times these have changed rapidly and so the more up to date information is held at home level and communicated to relatives and visitors when booking visits or through our website and newsletter. Pennington court provides testing for all visitors outside of the hour visit so that the precious time with their loved ones is not compromised.

We have strived to meet the visiting requirements of all our residents and their families, however due to maintaining a safe environment and restrictions/guidelines we have not met all expectations as currently visits have to be managed fairly and safely and PPE is still a requirement.

Our residents are tested every 28 days or more frequently if Covid is suspected, and staff are PCR tested weekly and have two Lateral flow tests to ensure they are safe to administer personal care.

Pennington is looking at providing evening visits, however before we can do that, we need to ensure we are staffed to do so as this is a busy time for the home with personal care and assisting residents to bed.

Our dedicated activity co-ordinator assisted those who wished to take part in this survey however it must be recognised that a large number of residents are unable to complete the survey without assistance, hence why the activity co-ordinator assisted residents to

complete the survey. I am sure that this would normally have been completed by an independent Healthwatch community project worker.”

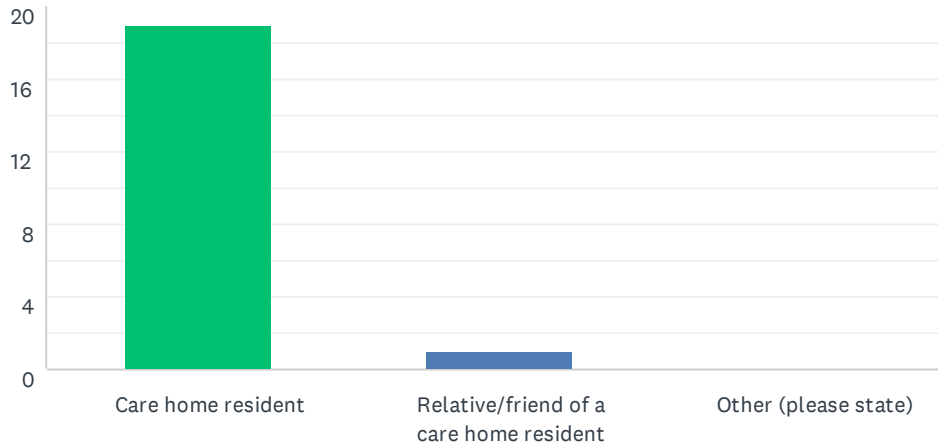
### Next Steps

The report will be shared with the care home, and we have asked them to share it with residents and their relatives or friends. It will also be shared with Leeds City Council and be publicly available on the Healthwatch Leeds website.

We will agree with the care home, the next steps to be taken in response to our recommendations and work with them to ensure any agreed actions are followed through and implemented. We will undertake any follow up work required to ensure there are real changes made to the service so that it is a good experience for everyone.

## Q2 Are you a...

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



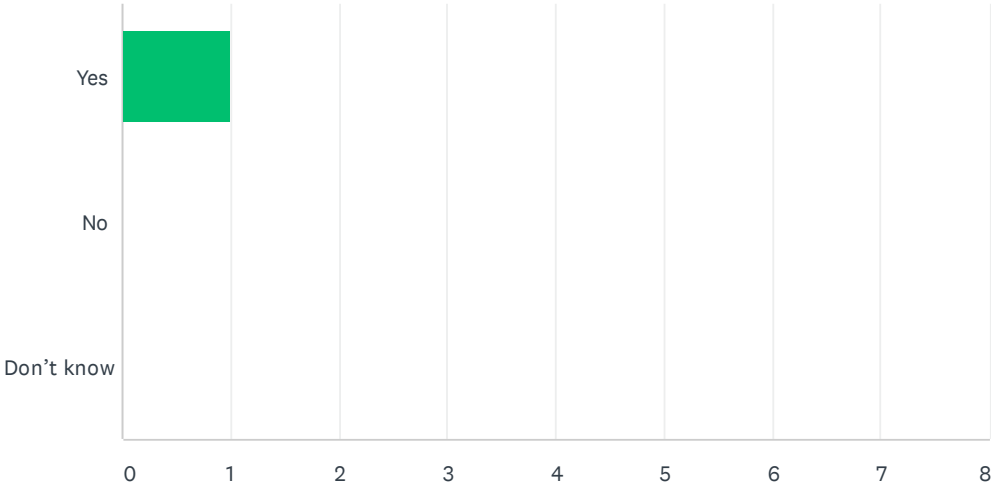
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Care home resident	95%	19
Relative/friend of a care home resident	5%	1
Other (please state)	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>20</b>

#	OTHER (PLEASE STATE)	DATE
	There are no responses.	



### Q3 Is your care home enabling your loved one to have nominated visitors who can visit indoors?

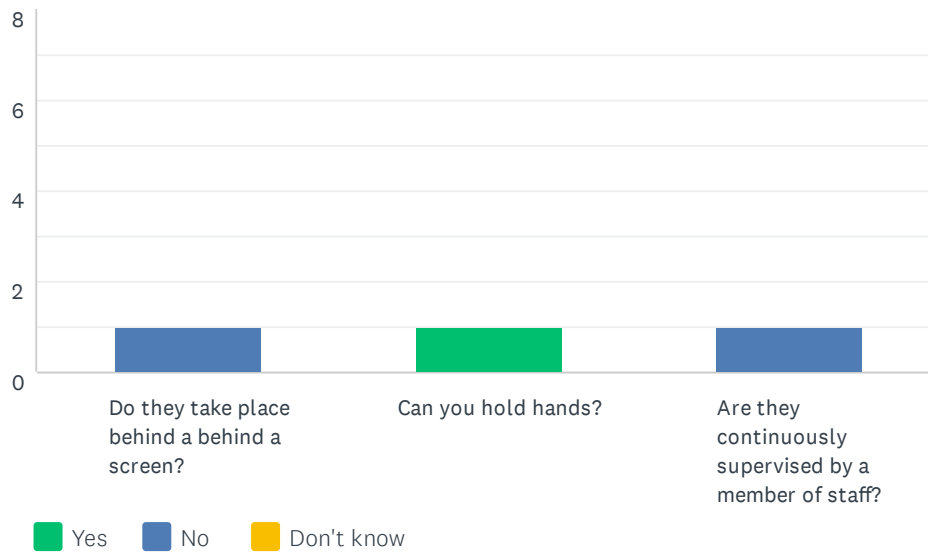
Answered: 1 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100%	1
No	0%	0
Don't know	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1</b>

## Q4 If yes to Q3, please tell us more about the indoor visits:

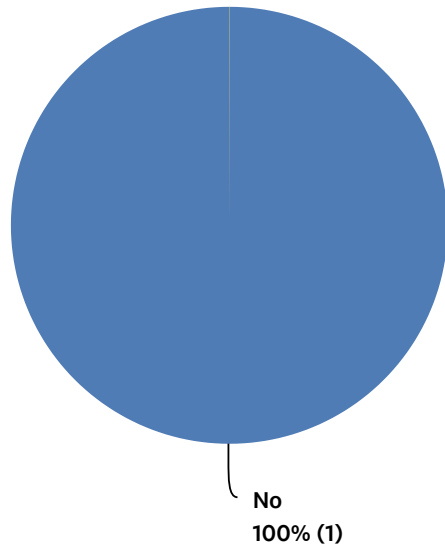
Answered: 1 Skipped: 19



	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Do they take place behind a behind a screen?	0% 0	100% 1	0% 0	1	2.00
Can you hold hands?	100% 1	0% 0	0% 0	1	1.00
Are they continuously supervised by a member of staff?	0% 0	100% 1	0% 0	1	2.00

# Q5 Do you understand the role of 'essential care giver' (as outlined in the government guidance on care home visiting)?

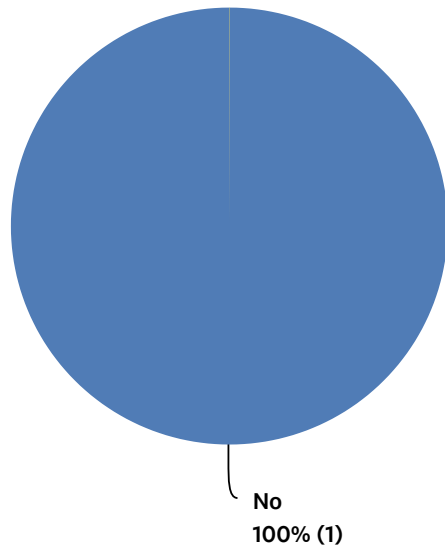
Answered: 1 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0%	0
No	100%	1
Not sure	0%	0
TOTAL		1

**Q6 Is your care home enabling the use of ‘essential care givers’, nominated by residents, where it is felt that their emotional and practical support is central to a resident’s health and wellbeing?**

Answered: 1 Skipped: 19

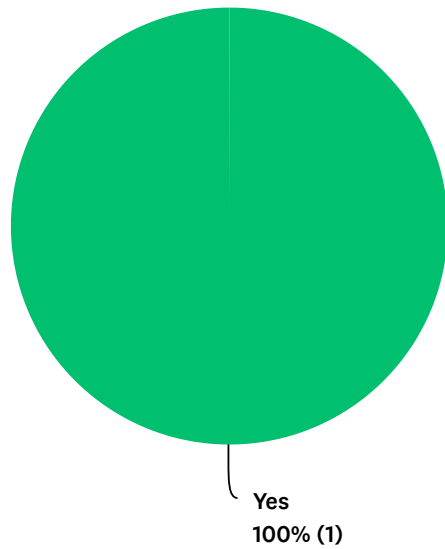


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	0% 0
No	100% 1
Don't know	0% 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>

#	PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT HERE	DATE
1	I have not been informed of this, I am allowed one 1hr visit per week Not inside my relative's room. Only in the allocated visiting area following a flow test and wearing PPE. I can take my parent out in wheelchair if it's fine.	7/16/2021 12:10 PM

## Q7 Does the care home enable nominated family members to take loved ones out of the care home to lower risk outdoor places e.g. your garden or a local park?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 19

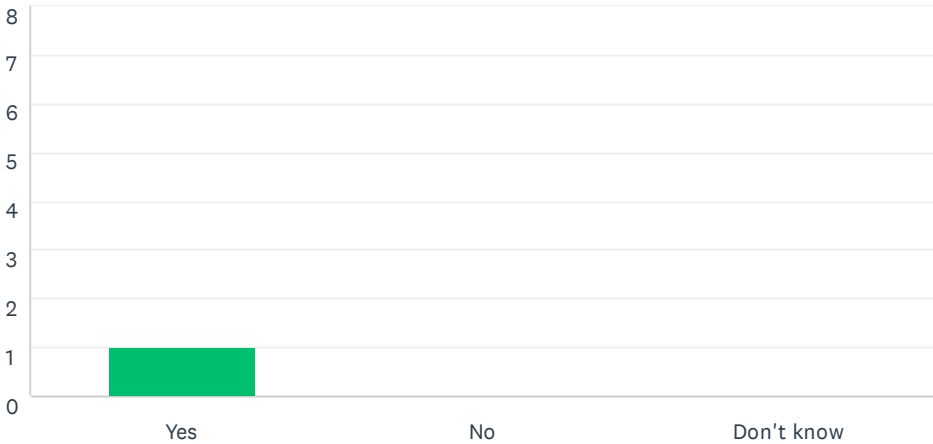


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100%	1
No	0%	0
Don't know	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1</b>

#	PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT HERE	DATE
1	Allowed to take my parent for a walk.	7/16/2021 12:10 PM

# Q8 Are other visiting options (eg. screened or outdoor visits) available for other friends and family members who aren't nominated visitors?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 19

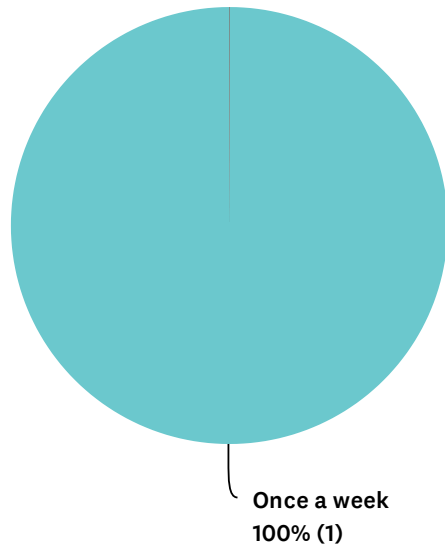


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100%	1
No	0%	0
Don't know	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1</b>

#	PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT HERE	DATE
1	One other person visits either in the pod or in the visiting area following a negative flow test.	7/16/2021 12:10 PM

## Q9 How often are you able to have an indoor visit?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 19

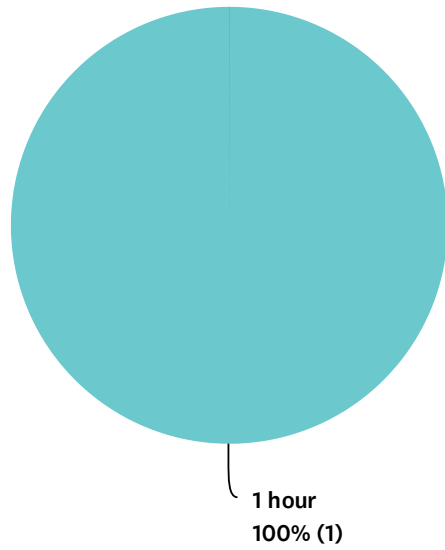


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Once a month	0%	0
Once every three weeks	0%	0
Once a fortnight	0%	0
Once a week	100%	1
Twice a week	0%	0
Three times a week	0%	0
Four times a week or more	0%	0
As many times as I want	0%	0
It varies depending on availability	0%	0
Not sure	0%	0
Not applicable	0%	0
Other (please specify)	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1</b>

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
	There are no responses.	

# Q10 If your care home is offering indoor visits, how long can you usually visit for?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 19

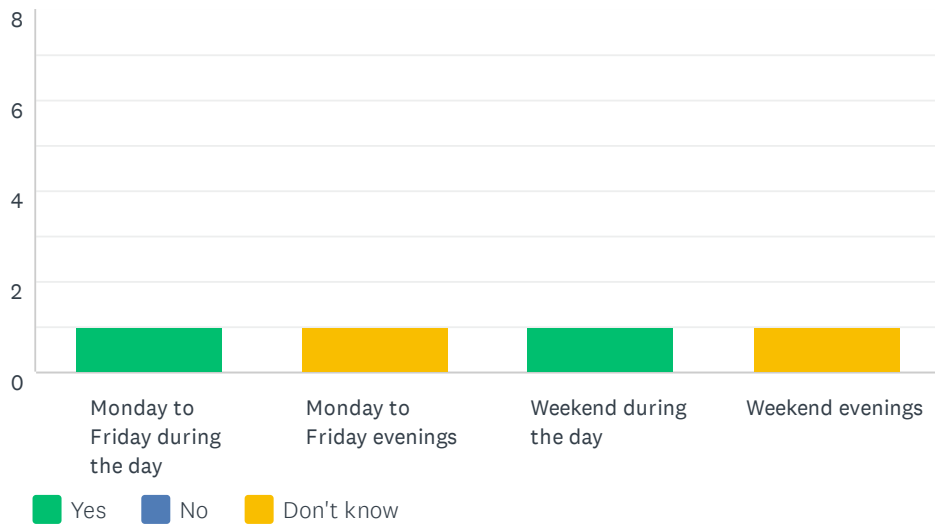


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
15-20 minutes	0%	0
25-35 minutes	0%	0
40-50 minutes	0%	0
1 hour	100%	1
1.5-2 hours	0%	0
more than 2 hours	0%	0
There is no time limit	0%	0
Not sure	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1</b>



# Q11 Is it possible to book visits at the following times?

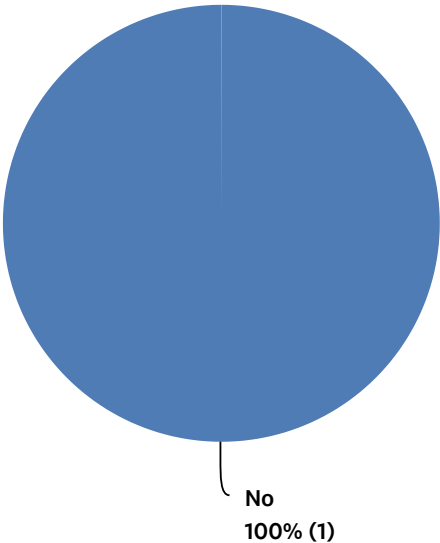
Answered: 1 Skipped: 19



	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Monday to Friday during the day	100% 1	0% 0	0% 0	1
Monday to Friday evenings	0% 0	0% 0	100% 1	1
Weekend during the day	100% 1	0% 0	0% 0	1
Weekend evenings	0% 0	0% 0	100% 1	1

# Q12 Have you seen a copy of the individualised risk assessment or visiting plan that the care home has done around visiting?

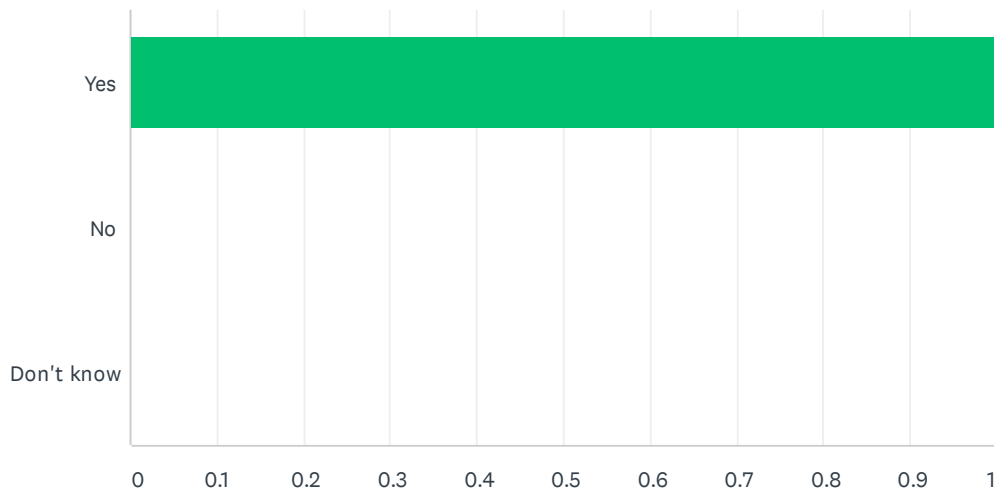
Answered: 1 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0%	0
No	100%	1
Not sure	0%	0
TOTAL		1

# Q13 Does your loved one have mental capacity to be involved in decisions around visiting?

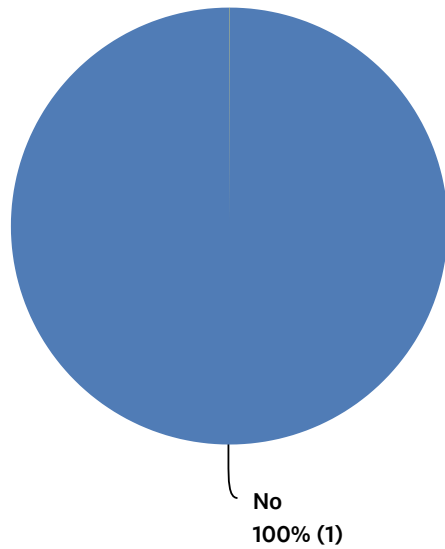
Answered: 1 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100%	1
No	0%	0
Don't know	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1</b>

# Q14 If they DO have capacity, was your loved one involved in the development of a risk assessment or visiting plan and their needs and wishes considered?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 19



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0%	0
No	100%	1
Don't know	0%	0
TOTAL		1

**Q15 If they DON'T have capacity, were you or another family member involved in developing the risk assessment/visiting plan to express their needs and wishes on their behalf?**

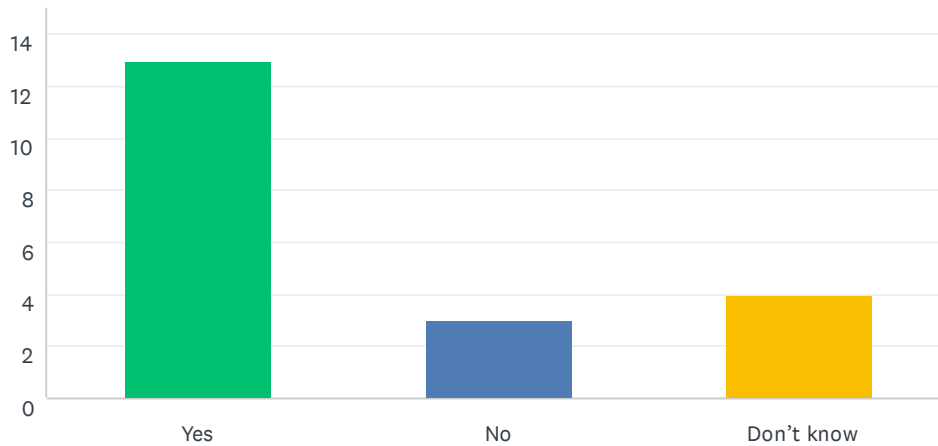
Answered: 0 Skipped: 20

 No matching responses.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0%	0
No	0%	0
Don't know	0%	0
TOTAL		0

## Q16 Do you feel that the current visiting options made available to you meet your / your loved one's needs?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0

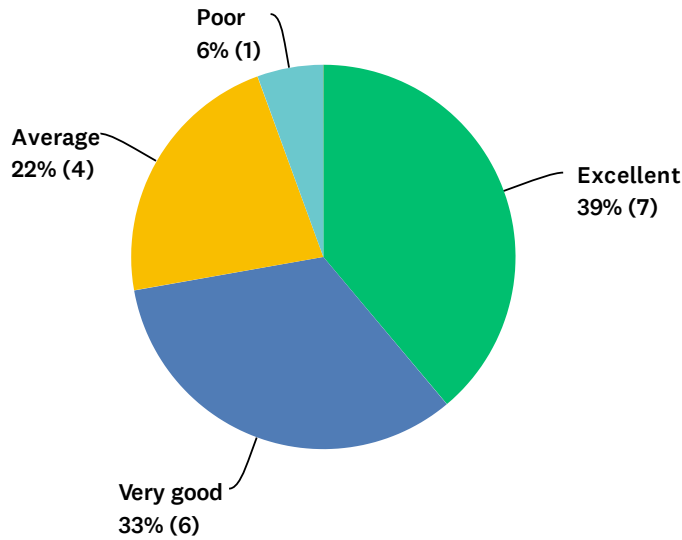


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	65% 13
No	15% 3
Don't know	20% 4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>

#	TELL US MORE ABOUT WHY YOU CHOSE YOUR ANSWER HERE	DATE
1	My relative would benefit from my being able to visit in their room each day. I am their only carer and only visitor. Their behaviour I'm sure would be more settled as would their anxiety. Their mental and emotional well-being would also improve drastically should I be allowed to visit them in their own room.	7/16/2021 12:11 PM
2	I go with my family on a weekend to different parks.	7/14/2021 4:02 PM
3	They do as my family are able to visit my room as I am bed bound.	7/14/2021 3:58 PM
4	There should be more options for family to come	7/14/2021 3:51 PM
5	I would like visitation on evening as my children work through the day	7/13/2021 3:54 PM
6	I can go out with my family in an outdoor place as much as I want	7/13/2021 3:52 PM

# Q17 Given that care homes have to follow government guidance on visiting, how would you rate your experience of seeing your family or friends in the care home?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 2



	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	VERY POOR	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	39% 7	33% 6	22% 4	6% 1	0% 0	18	1.94

#	COMMENTS	DATE
1	I feel that once myself and my relative had been vaccinated, indoor (in own room) visiting should have been allowed. We were both vaccinated by April it is now July. This type of visit would be beneficial for both mine and my relative's mental and emotional well-being. A flow test is done to show a negative result therefore if this is sufficient for staff working there to be up close giving personal care to my relative then why is it not good enough for me. They live their own lives outside the care home, just as I do; what is the difference? My relative is being denied the same rights as people who live in the community and are at just as much risk, their freedoms are being denied.	7/16/2021 12:11 PM

Q18 Please use this space to tell us what works well in relation to the way your care home has organised and enabled visits.

Answered: 4 Skipped: 16

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I suppose only that they do allow a visit at all albeit highly insubstantial to the needs of my relative and myself.	7/16/2021 12:11 PM
2	They have to stick to the government guidelines.	7/14/2021 3:58 PM
3	Its ok now and go outside now	7/14/2021 3:54 PM
4	The flow testing has been a god send	7/13/2021 3:54 PM



## Q19 Tell us about any ways that you feel the care home could improve visiting (whilst obviously still following the current government guidance).

Answered: 6 Skipped: 14

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Following government guidance would be a start, better communication about their decision making in a regular basis. A monthly news letter with an update on any visiting changes is not sufficient Make all staff members aware of any changes or considerations being made about changes so they can give accurate information when asked rather than "I don't know"	7/16/2021 12:11 PM
2	nothing	7/14/2021 4:00 PM
3	They have let family members do their test before coming so it doesn't take time away	7/14/2021 3:58 PM
4	If more of my family could visit	7/14/2021 3:51 PM
5	Maybe a night a week for evening visits	7/13/2021 3:54 PM
6	Don't know	7/13/2021 3:45 PM

## Q20 Finally, please tell us about anything else generally you think the care home does well or any suggestions or ideas for making improvements.

Answered: 4 Skipped: 16

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	The communication around my relative's care is second to none: excellent. Up to date, accurate and timely. They always take my concerns seriously and take time to discuss anything I wish to speak with them about. The care of my relative is also excellent and even more so in their endeavours to meet their needs under difficult circumstances. Overall, with the exception of visiting, I am very happy with the nursing home, it's staff and the care my relative is given.	7/16/2021 12:11 PM
2	nothing	7/14/2021 4:00 PM
3	There is nothing more than can do better	7/14/2021 3:58 PM
4	Don't know	7/13/2021 3:45 PM