



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

Simon Marks Court care 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 which both residents and relatives could complete, and 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 4 residents and 6 relatives/friends
- The satisfaction from relatives and residents was generally good with respondents 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 (33%) or very good (33%) or average (33%).
- The majority of relatives (83%) understood the role of essential care giver and most (67%) said the home was enabling this role. One person said they'd just recently received a letter explaining how a relative or friend could become an essential care giver.

- Around two thirds of relatives were aware that they could take their loved one out to low risk outdoor places. One person said they weren't allowed, another said they didn't know.
- There was mixed awareness about alternative visiting options (e.g. screened and outdoor visits) for people who weren't nominated visitors. One person said a family member had had a screened visit recently.
- Most people said they were able to have a visit once a week (4). One person said they were able to visit once a fortnight, and another said it varied depending on availability. There was a mix of responses as to how long they could stay for, with the most common response being 25-30 minutes (3 people).
- The majority of relatives were aware that visits could be booked during the day on weekdays but there was more confusion around weekends, with two people saying visits could be booked on a weekend during the day, one person saying they couldn't, and two people who weren't sure.
- Only two out of the six relatives said they'd seen a copy of the individualised risk assessment/visiting plan for their loved one.
- For residents who didn't have mental capacity to make decisions around visiting, 50% said their family member was involved in developing the risk assessment/visiting plan to express their wishes and needs on their behalf. The remaining 50% said they weren't involved in this process.
- The majority (70%) of residents and relatives responding to the survey, felt that the visiting options available met their needs. One respondent said it didn't meet their needs and the remaining two said they didn't know. One person talked about half an hour not being enough and that it was difficult to communicate with a mask on as their relative had sensory impairments.
- Respondents had lots of praise for the staff saying that they were helpful, kind and that visits were well organised. One person commented that it was good that they could now do their Covid test at home so that they didn't have to wait around for 30 minutes to get the result.

- One relative said that the care home was very good at communicating and keeping people informed. In contrast, one resident said there was a lack of communication.
- There were a couple of suggestions from relatives about how the visitors' room could be improved:

“[Have a] more homely environment, the room is more like a store cupboard with a lot of boxes.”

“Have a designated smoking area for staff. They seem to gather outside the visiting room which is distracting for myself and Dad.”

Our recommendations

1. Continue to 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 to families.

“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).

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

2. Remind relatives that they are able to take their relative on trips out of the home and about the precautions that you would like them to take when doing so.
3. 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.
4. Ensure that copies of residents’ individualised risk assessments/visiting plans are routinely shared with relatives.
5. 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.
6. If the visiting room is to be kept, consider introducing a smoking area away from it to reduce distractions and also ways in which can be made more homely.

Next Steps

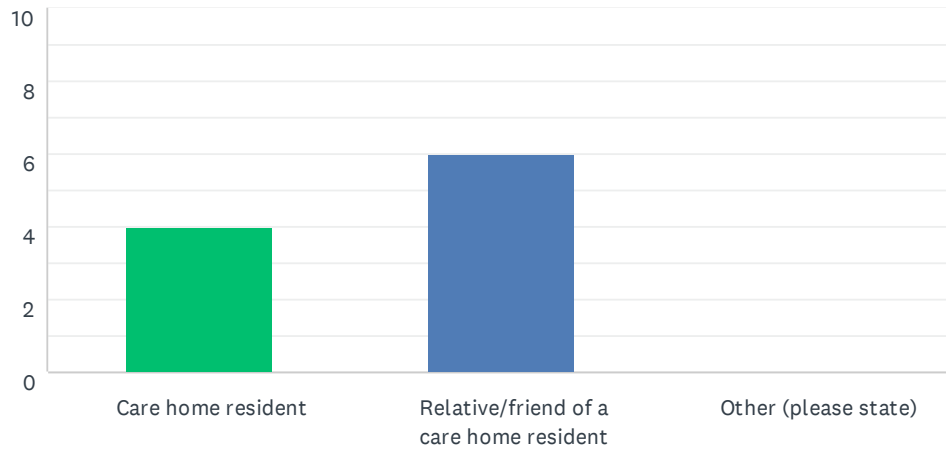
The report will be shared with Simon Marks Court Care Home, and we have asked them to share it with residents and their relatives or

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: 10 Skipped: 0

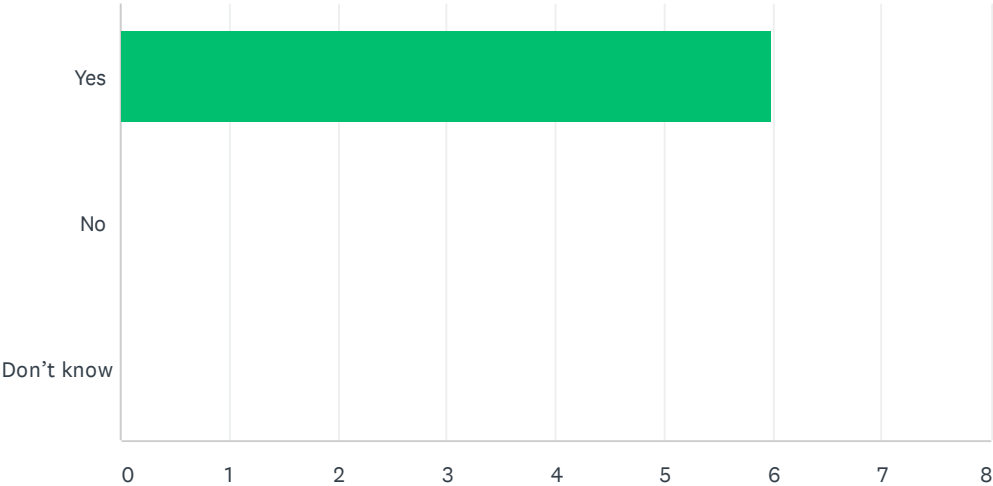


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Care home resident	40%	4
Relative/friend of a care home resident	60%	6
Other (please state)	0%	0
TOTAL		10

#	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?

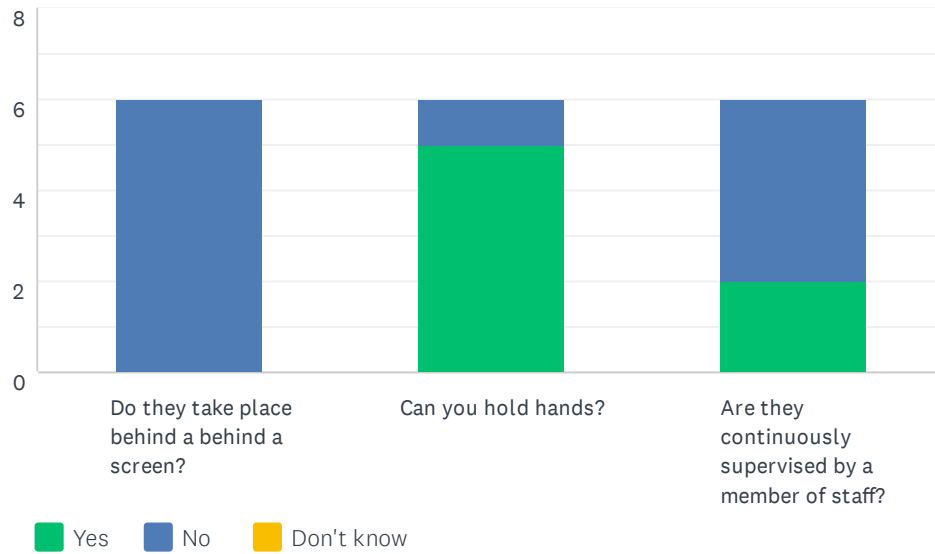
Answered: 6 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		100%	6
No		0%	0
Don't know		0%	0
TOTAL			6

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

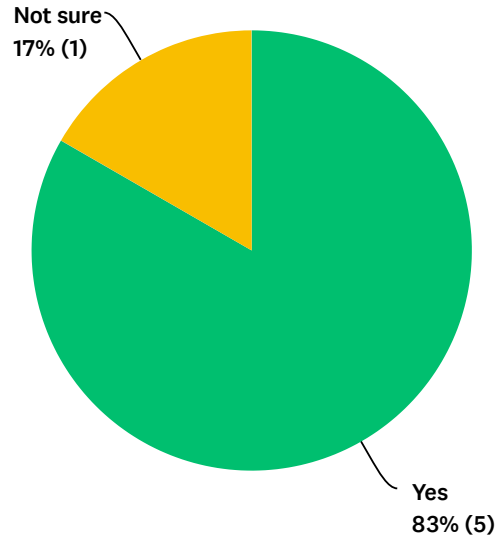
Answered: 6 Skipped: 4



	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Do they take place behind a behind a screen?	0% 0	100% 6	0% 0	6	2.00
Can you hold hands?	83% 5	17% 1	0% 0	6	1.17
Are they continuously supervised by a member of staff?	33% 2	67% 4	0% 0	6	1.67

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

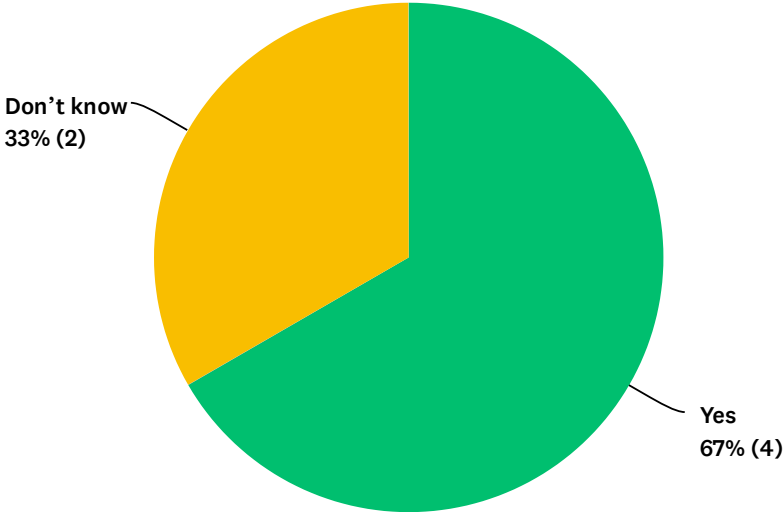
Answered: 6 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	83%	5
No	0%	0
Not sure	17%	1
TOTAL		6

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: 6 Skipped: 4

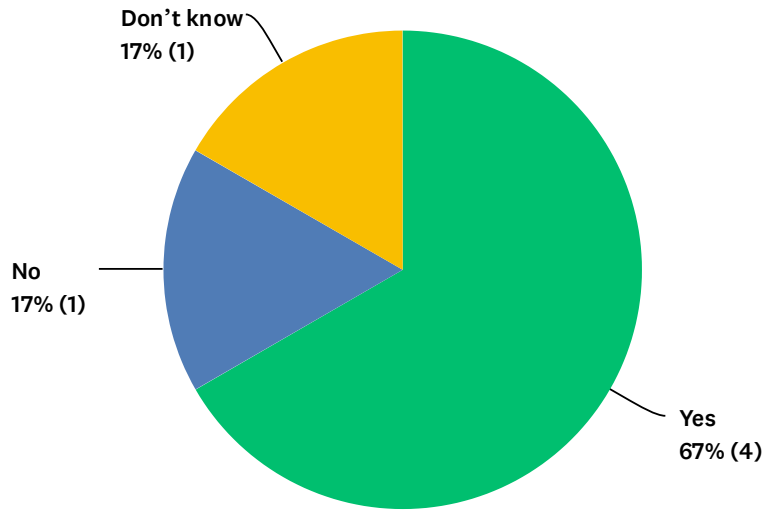


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	67%	4
No	0%	0
Don't know	33%	2
TOTAL		6

#	PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT HERE	DATE
1	Longer, more frequent visits for E.C.G	7/5/2021 12:22 PM
2	Just started at the care home and having my first visit as such on July 6th.	7/5/2021 11:14 AM
3	just written to us to explain that all residents can now have an essential care giver. i'm going to request to be one for my relative.	6/28/2021 12:52 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: 6 Skipped: 4

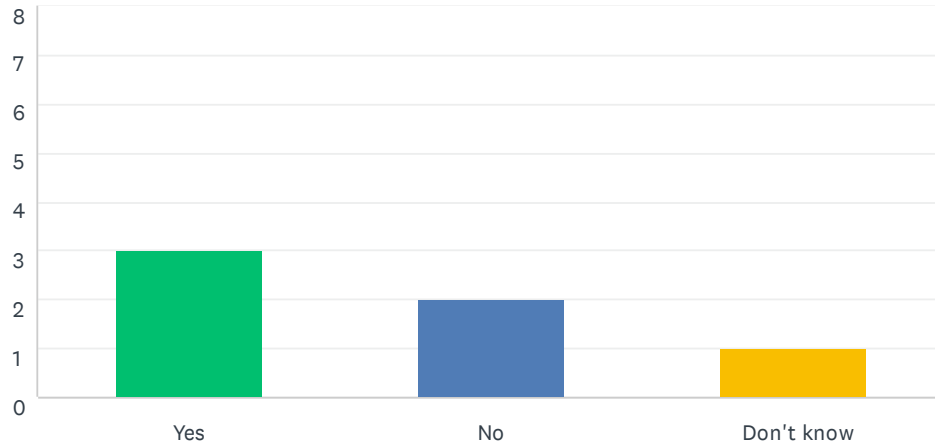


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	67%	4
No	17%	1
Don't know	17%	1
TOTAL		6

#	PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT HERE	DATE
	There are no responses.	

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

Answered: 6 Skipped: 4

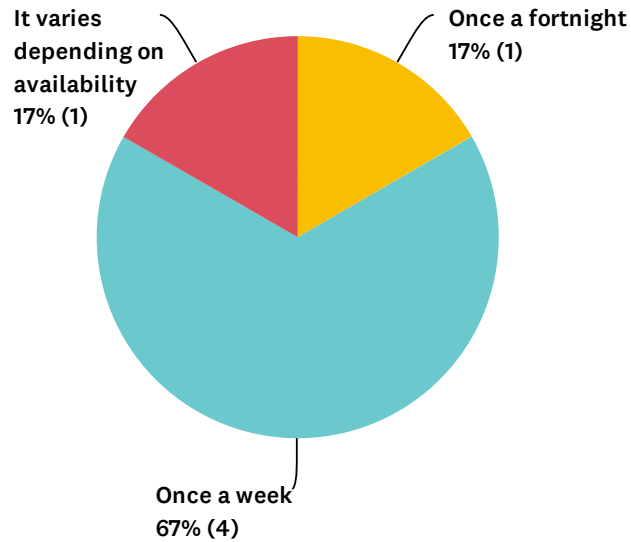


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	50%	3
No	33%	2
Don't know	17%	1
TOTAL		6

#	PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT HERE	DATE
1	I don't know. I am her only visitor	7/14/2021 4:17 PM
2	Five people can visit, (named.)	7/5/2021 12:22 PM
3	Up to the person permitted to visit our relative	7/5/2021 11:40 AM
4	screened visits 2 weeks ago for my sister	6/28/2021 12:52 PM

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

Answered: 6 Skipped: 4

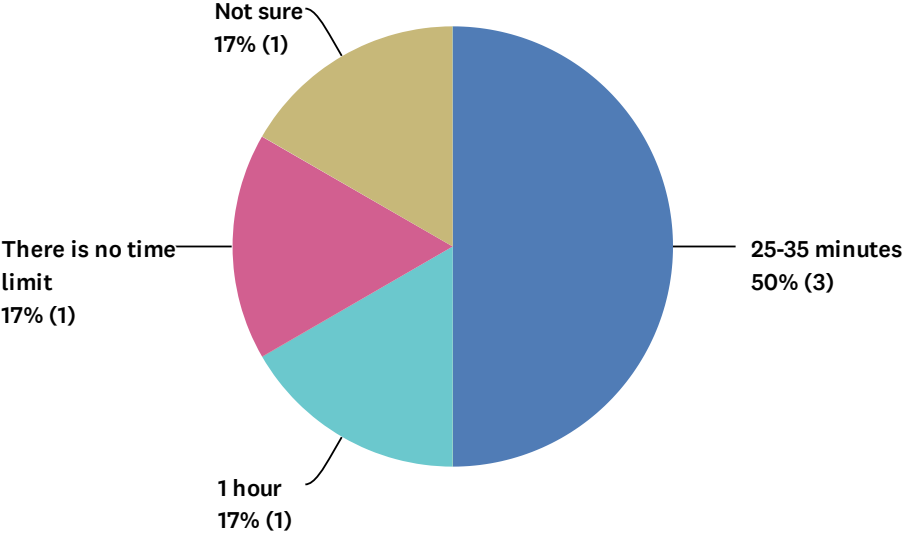


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Once a month	0%	0
Once every three weeks	0%	0
Once a fortnight	17%	1
Once a week	67%	4
Twice a week	0%	0
Three times a week	0%	0
Four times a week or more	0%	0
As many times as I want	0%	0
It varies depending on availability	17%	1
Not sure	0%	0
Not applicable	0%	0
Other (please specify)	0%	0
TOTAL		6

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

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

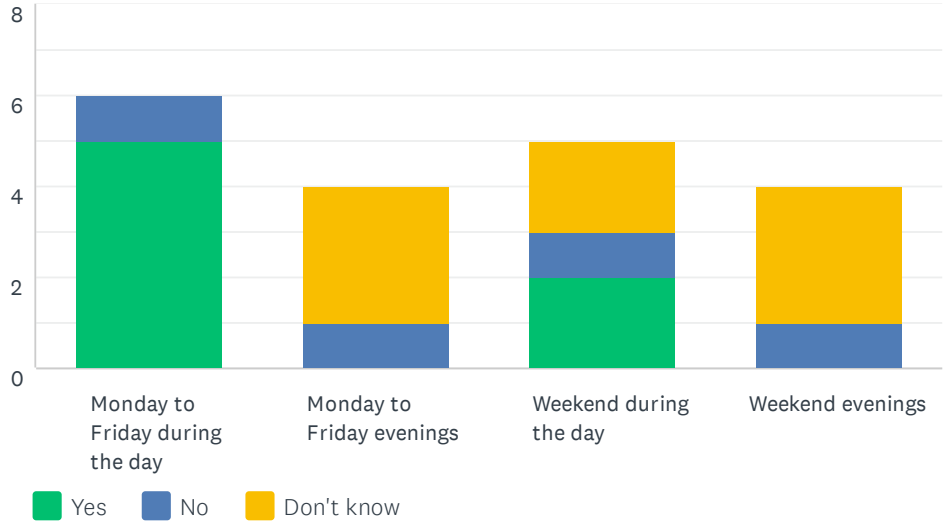
Answered: 6 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
15-20 minutes	0%	0
25-35 minutes	50%	3
40-50 minutes	0%	0
1 hour	17%	1
1.5-2 hours	0%	0
more than 2 hours	0%	0
There is no time limit	17%	1
Not sure	17%	1
TOTAL		6

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

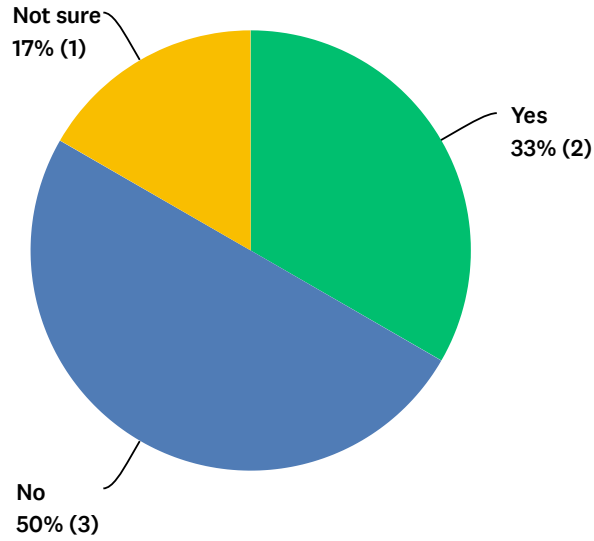
Answered: 6 Skipped: 4



	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Monday to Friday during the day	83% 5	17% 1	0% 0	6
Monday to Friday evenings	0% 0	25% 1	75% 3	4
Weekend during the day	40% 2	20% 1	40% 2	5
Weekend evenings	0% 0	25% 1	75% 3	4

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

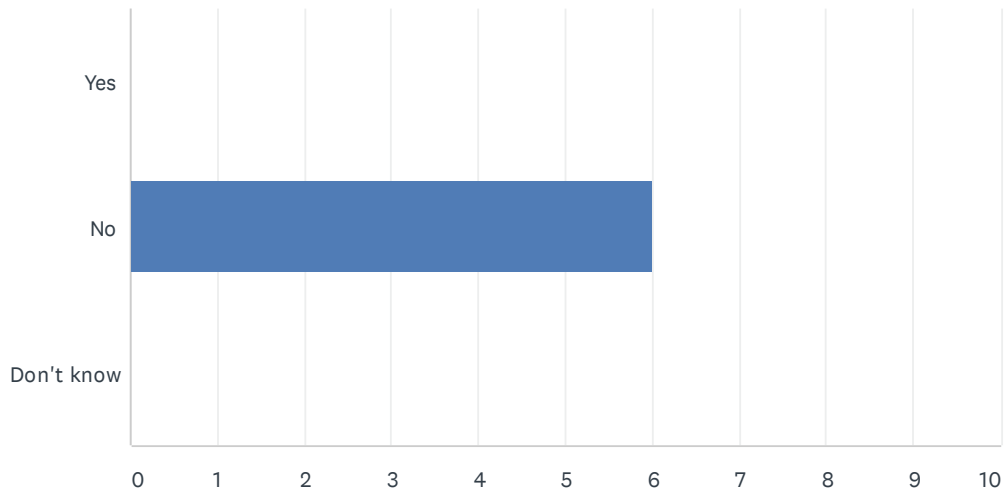
Answered: 6 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	33%	2
No	50%	3
Not sure	17%	1
TOTAL		6

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

Answered: 6 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	0% 0
No	100% 6
Don't know	0% 0
TOTAL	6

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?

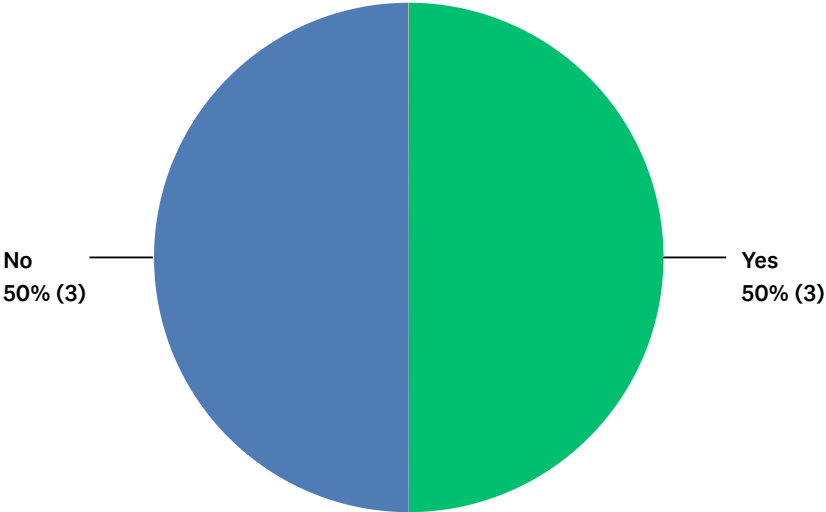
Answered: 0 Skipped: 10

 No matching responses.

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

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?

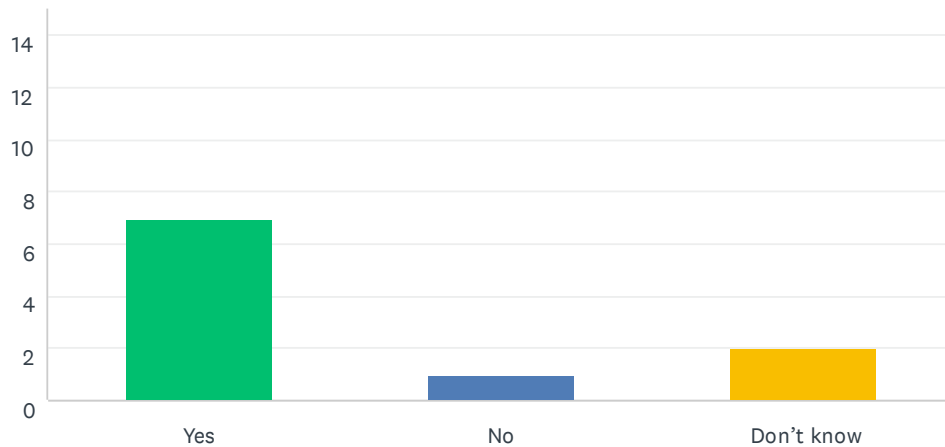
Answered: 6 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	50%	3
No	50%	3
Don't know	0%	0
TOTAL		6

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

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

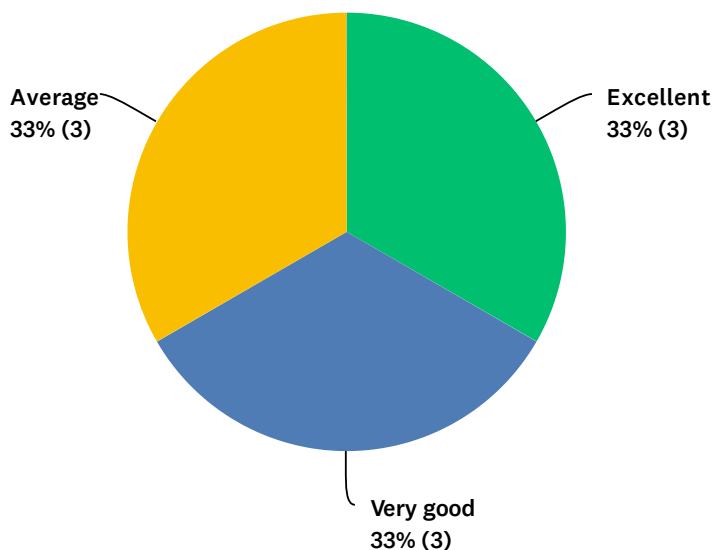


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	70% 7
No	10% 1
Don't know	20% 2
TOTAL	10

#	TELL US MORE ABOUT WHY YOU CHOSE YOUR ANSWER HERE	DATE
1	I am her only visitor. Once a week is the only time I have got with my own family needs.	7/14/2021 4:19 PM
2	difficult to judge as Dad has dementia	7/5/2021 12:18 PM
3	Provide a booking system for 1/2 hr visits to relative, most days of the week and weekends	7/5/2021 11:42 AM
4	I've had no problem visiting whether behind a screen or in a designated room. My aunt is very well catered for.	7/5/2021 11:17 AM
5	Said he thinks so, said got no term or reference.	7/5/2021 11:02 AM
6	Only half an hour, not enough time. By the time you've sat down, and she needs the toilet, time goes in a flash, and then time to go. She can't hear or see well, so it's difficult with mask on.	6/28/2021 1:10 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: 9 Skipped: 1



	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	VERY POOR	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	33% 3	33% 3	33% 3	0% 0	0% 0	9	2.00

#	COMMENTS	DATE
1	Not many come to visit	7/5/2021 11:02 AM

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: 6 Skipped: 4

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I am 79 yrs old. I don't know about doing covid tests so they give me one each time I go. They are helpful.	7/14/2021 4:19 PM
2	very organised punctual kind staff	7/5/2021 12:23 PM
3	Can now do a home test so don't have to wait 30 minutes.	7/5/2021 12:20 PM
4	Followed guidelines and kept my aunt safe and happy	7/5/2021 11:17 AM
5	Said nobody comes to visit	7/5/2021 11:02 AM
6	I can't knock them, they do a good job but i've got to follow their rules so it's frustrating because i can't go in like i used to. Staff have a difficult job so got to praise them.	6/28/2021 1:10 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: 4

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	at the moment the staff do all they can to make all visits pleasant	7/5/2021 12:23 PM
2	Very good at communicating and keeping informed etc	7/5/2021 12:20 PM
3	more homely environment, the room is more like a store cupboard with a lot of boxes	7/5/2021 12:18 PM
4	They have done all they could	7/5/2021 11:17 AM
5	said he can not compare, said there is a lack of communication	7/5/2021 11:02 AM
6	I;d like to be able to visit at the weekend and visit for longer than half an hour, and more often. I would like to visit my relative in their room. I've heard this should be allowed if i can become essential care giver.	6/28/2021 1:10 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: 5 Skipped: 5

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	we have only known the home since lockdown	7/5/2021 12:23 PM
2	Have a designated smoking area for staff. They seem to gather outside the visiting room which is distracting for myself and Dad.	7/5/2021 12:18 PM
3	I'm so pleased they are able to care for my aunt when she is in her anxious mode. Brilliant job.	7/5/2021 11:17 AM
4	He says he does not know, he can not compare. He also said he gets a place to sleep, has food and water.	7/5/2021 11:02 AM
5	Would like to be able to take in a newspaper for my relative but it's not allowed. My mum used to love to read the paper.	6/28/2021 1:10 PM