



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

**Springfield 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 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 10 relatives/friends. No residents completed the survey.
- The majority of relatives were satisfied with their visiting experience with 70% 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 very good. Two relatives rated it as average and one as poor. Those who rated it lower said it was because there were no weekend visits, not enough visits available and outdoor visits weren't available.

- The majority (70%) of relatives responding weren't clear about the role of essential care giver with three saying they didn't understand the role and four who weren't sure. Only three relatives (30%) said that the care home were enabling this role, the remaining 70% respondents said they didn't know about this (5 responses) or that the home weren't enabling the role (2 responses). The comments confirmed lack of communication and clarity about the role.

“My mother has dementia, so would be unable to nominate someone.”

“It had to be asked about and didn't seem to be welcomed.”

“There hasn't been any proactive comms on this.”

- Over half of relatives who responded (60%) were aware that they could take their loved one out to low risk outdoor places. However, the comments indicated that this was limited to 30 minutes, so it wasn't really practical to go far.
- Less than half of the respondents (40%) were aware of alternative visiting options (e.g. screened and outdoor visits) for people who weren't nominated visitors. One person said window visits could be booked in advance.
- The majority of relatives said they were only able to visit for 25-35 minutes at a time with people saying the frequency they were able to visit varying from between once a fortnight to once a month. Comments indicated the reason for such a low frequency of visiting was that the care home was only enabling visiting three days a week (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) with a total of 12 visiting slots between 60 residents. One person said that there were four visiting slots available on a Saturday every fortnight.
- Only 2 relatives (20%) said they had seen a copy of the individualised risk assessment/visiting plan for their loved one.
- All three of the relatives who said their loved one had mental capacity to make decisions around visiting, didn't know whether or not the resident had had their needs and wishes considered in the development of a risk assessment or visiting plan. For

residents who didn't have capacity, four said that a family member hadn't been involved in developing the risk assessment/visiting plan to express their wishes and needs on their behalf and three didn't know whether or not this had happened.

- Only 30% relatives responding to the survey, felt that the visiting options available met their needs. This was mainly due to the low number of visiting appointments available, meaning that people had to wait several weeks between each visit, and also due to the fact that people were only available to visit for half an hour at a time. One relative said:

*“I would like to visit more frequently/ for longer or to have a meal with her as we did pre-covid. I would like to be able to go into mum's room to sort out clothing, toiletries etc. I have not had access for 16 months and previously always tended to her belongings with her on a weekly basis, to keep them tidy and renew items as needed.”*

- One relative said that the booking system for visits worked well, and the care home communicated well with them. There were also several comments praising the wellbeing team.

*“The well-being team have been great at managing this difficult situation. Always very welcoming.”*

- In terms of suggestions for improvement, the main points were around increasing the number of visiting slots so that people could visit more often and for longer. People also wanted to be able to visit in the garden and in the residents' own rooms.

## 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 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. In Leeds, there is generally a low awareness amongst relatives that ALL care home residents can nominate an essential care giver. Please consider helping to raise awareness of the role by including information about it on your website.
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. Increase the number of days and times that family and friends can visit so that people can visit more often.
6. Send a reminder to all residents about all of the visiting options available including indoor visits, ‘essential care giver’, and any other alternative visiting options such as window visits, pod or garden visits.

7. Remove the half an hour time limit for friends and relatives taking their loved one for a visit out of the care home. Visits out of the care home should be individually risk assessed and not subject to a blanket rule.
8. Consider ways of enabling residents to have indoor visits that are longer than half an hour. 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.
  - Are you allowing visitors to take tests at home and bring proof of negativity on their visit (as permitted now in the Government guidance)? This would reduce your admin burden for 'processing' visitors on arrival.

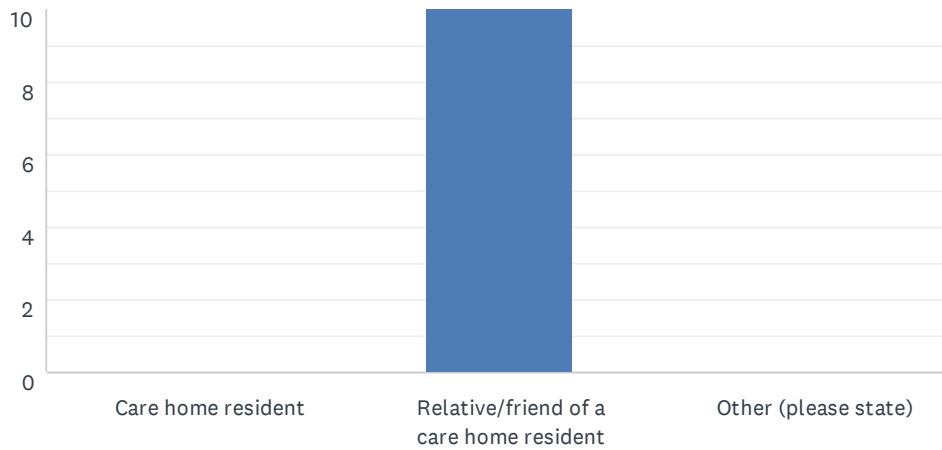
## Next Steps

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: 10 Skipped: 0

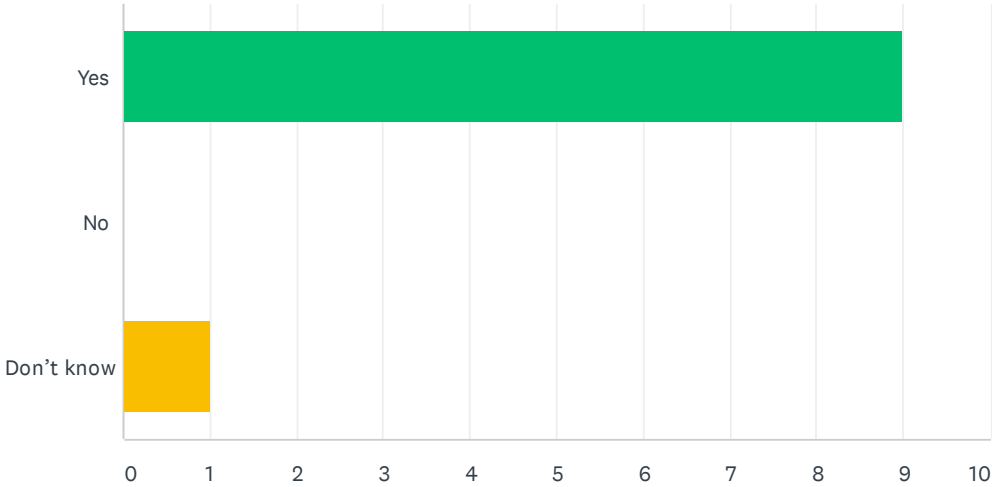


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Care home resident	0%	0
Relative/friend of a care home resident	100%	10
Other (please state)	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10</b>

#	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: 10 Skipped: 0

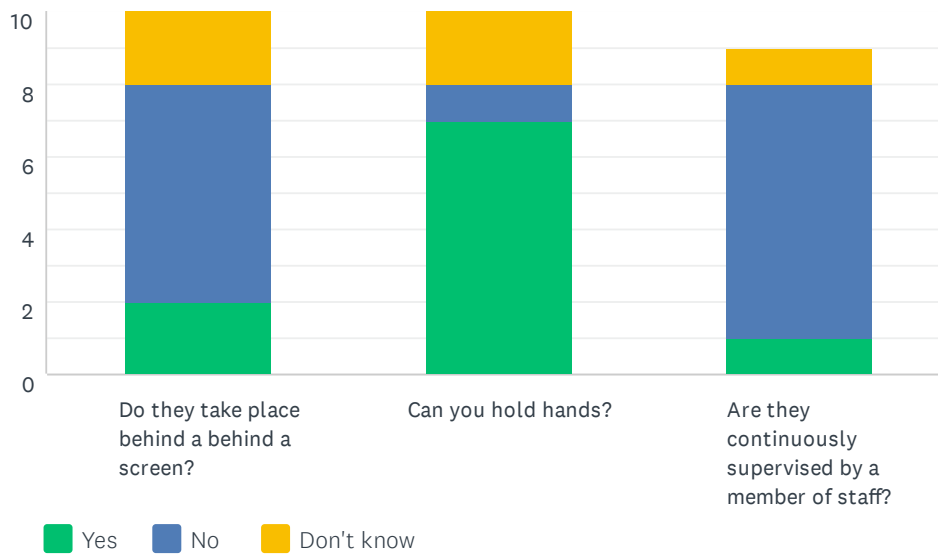


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	90%	9
No	0%	0
Don't know	10%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10</b>



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

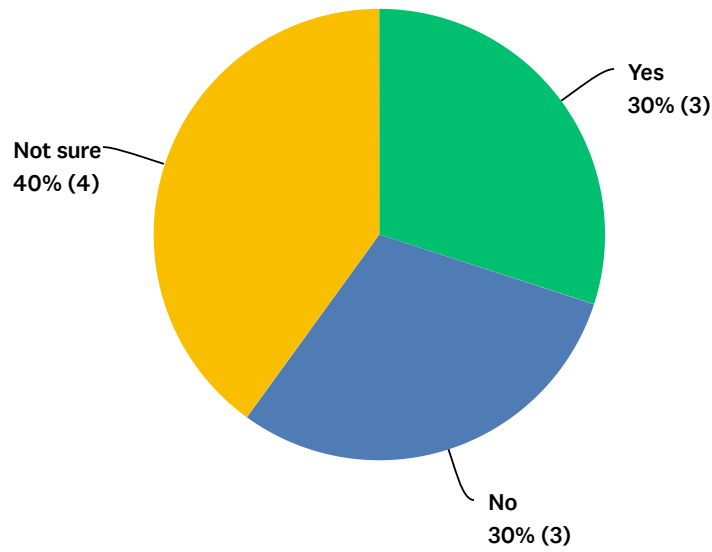
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Do they take place behind a screen?	20% 2	60% 6	20% 2	10	2.00
Can you hold hands?	70% 7	10% 1	20% 2	10	1.50
Are they continuously supervised by a member of staff?	11% 1	78% 7	11% 1	9	2.00

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

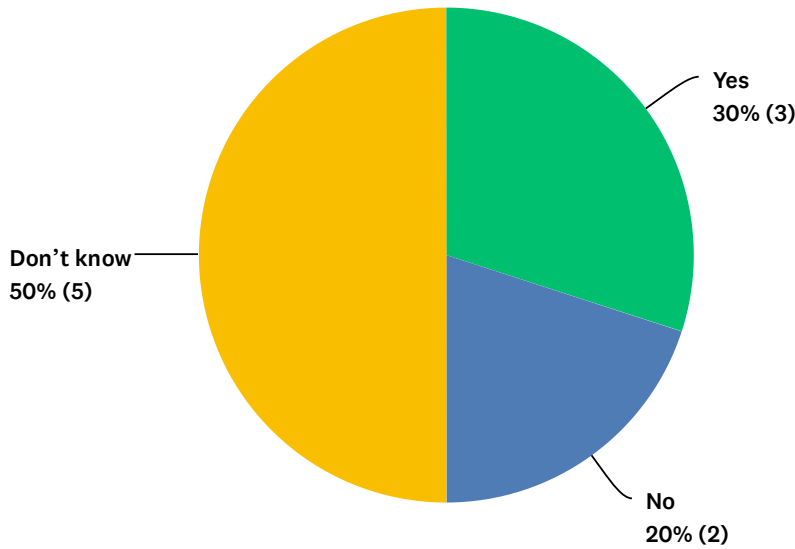
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	30% 3
No	30% 3
Not sure	40% 4
TOTAL	10

## 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: 10 Skipped: 0

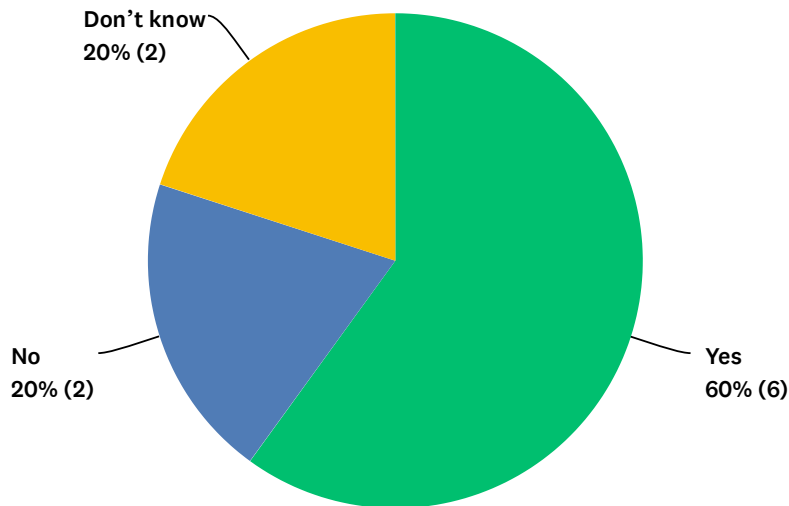


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	30%	3
No	20%	2
Don't know	50%	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10</b>

#	PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT HERE	DATE
1	Haven't heard about it but its normally the sons who arrange visits	8/17/2021 12:57 PM
2	I was the nominated visitor at first then they allowed two people to visit, now it's open to other family.	8/16/2021 12:17 PM
3	My mother has dementia, so would be unable to nominate someone.	8/9/2021 1:41 PM
4	It had to be asked about and didn't seem to be welcomed. We were told you will need to be here on Mondays for PCR tests. We work so that's not practical	7/20/2021 1:21 PM
5	There hasn't been any proactive comms on this. I have requested to be one. This is being followed up with management and I am waiting to hear what the outcome is.	7/20/2021 12:51 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: 10 Skipped: 0

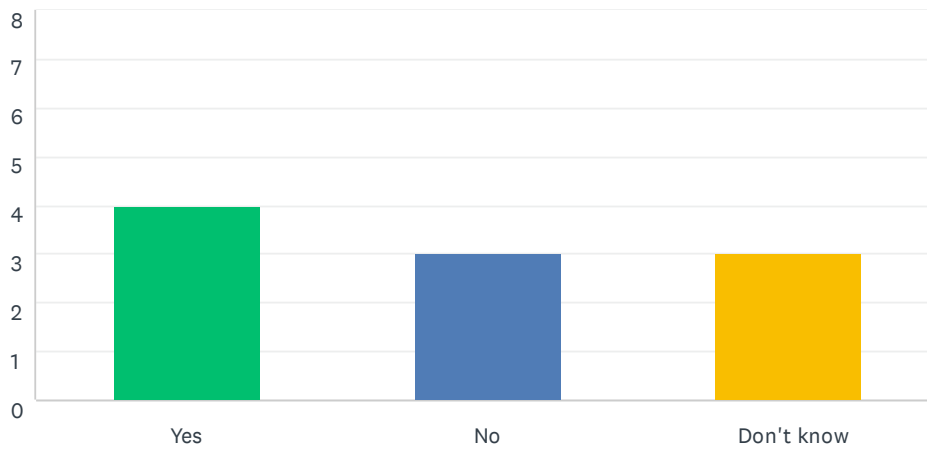


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	60% 6
No	20% 2
Don't know	20% 2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>

#	PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT HERE	DATE
1	When it was my wife's birthday we had a little party in the garden	8/17/2021 12:57 PM
2	Yes but visits are only 30 minutes so it is not possible to do this.	8/9/2021 1:41 PM
3	Still limited to half an hour and 2 people of the named people. But the limit of 5 named people has been lifted as of 29 July	7/20/2021 1:21 PM
4	This has recently been introduced. I can now have a 30 mins walk out with my family member.	7/20/2021 12:51 PM

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

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

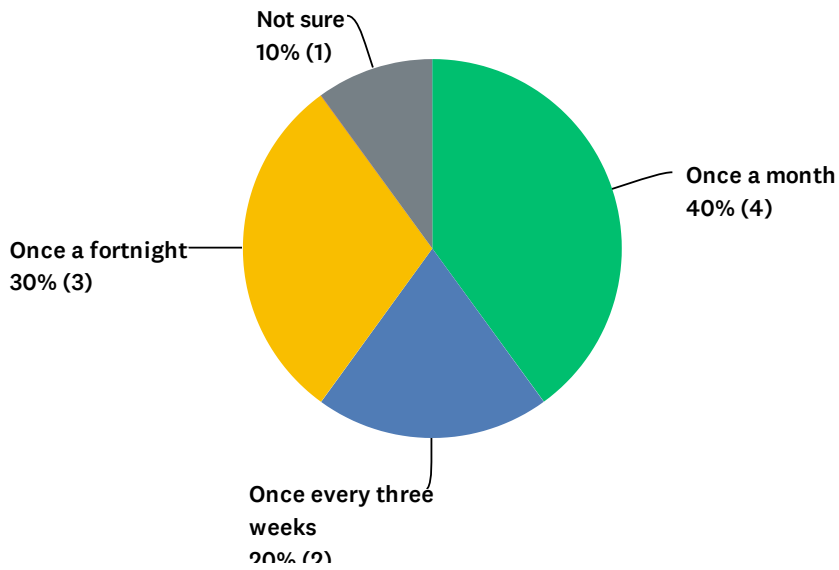


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	40% 4
No	30% 3
Don't know	30% 3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>

#	PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT HERE	DATE
1	Doesn't get any other visitors other than self and sons	8/17/2021 12:57 PM
2	This began on the 19th July - lateral flow test and PPE still in place and you cannot visit in their room - nominated visiting room only.	8/16/2021 12:17 PM
3	Never asked.	7/26/2021 8:33 AM
4	Visits are only on Tuesdays Wednesdays and Thursdays so very limited	7/20/2021 1:21 PM
5	Window visits can be booked in advance.	7/20/2021 12:51 PM

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

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

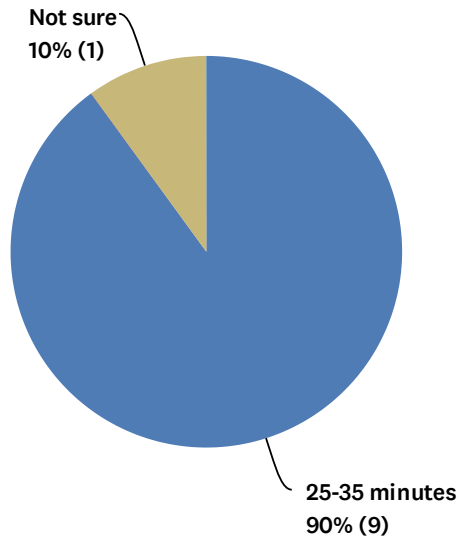


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Once a month	40%	4
Once every three weeks	20%	2
Once a fortnight	30%	3
Once a week	0%	0
Twice a week	0%	0
Three times a week	0%	0
Four times a week or more	0%	0
As many times as I want	0%	0
It varies depending on availability	0%	0
Not sure	10%	1
Not applicable	0%	0
Other (please specify)	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10</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?

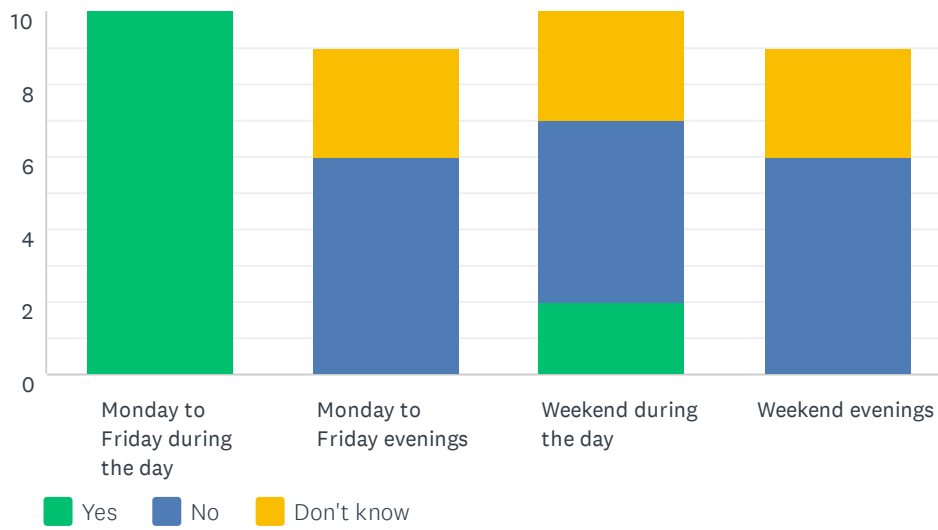
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
15-20 minutes	0%	0
25-35 minutes	90%	9
40-50 minutes	0%	0
1 hour	0%	0
1.5-2 hours	0%	0
more than 2 hours	0%	0
There is no time limit	0%	0
Not sure	10%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10</b>

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

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

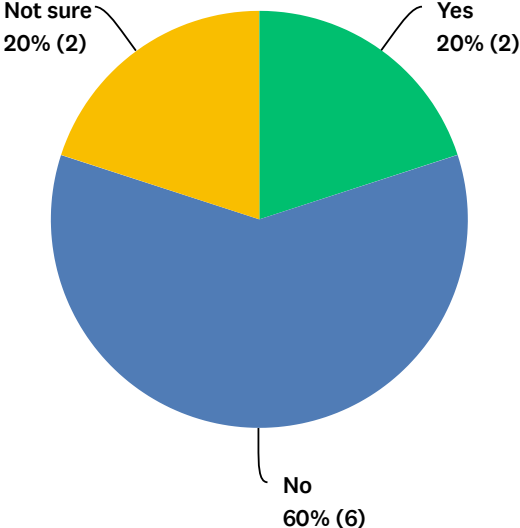


	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Monday to Friday during the day	100% 10	0% 0	0% 0	10
Monday to Friday evenings	0% 0	67% 6	33% 3	9
Weekend during the day	20% 2	50% 5	30% 3	10
Weekend evenings	0% 0	67% 6	33% 3	9



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

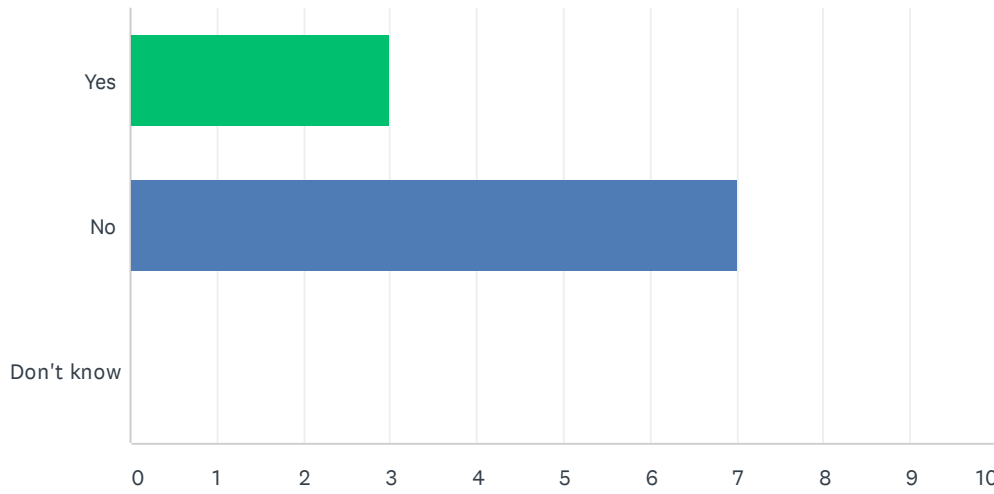
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	20%	2
No	60%	6
Not sure	20%	2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10</b>

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

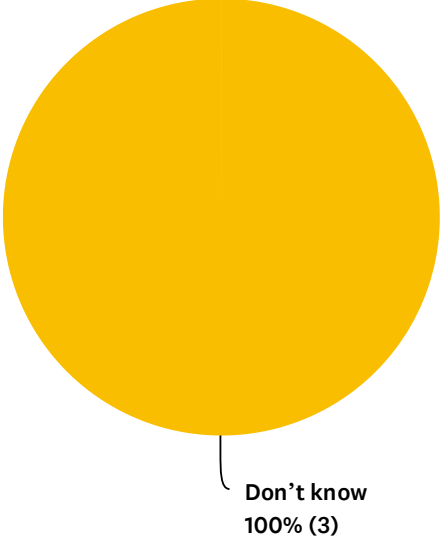
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	30%	3
No	70%	7
Don't know	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10</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?**

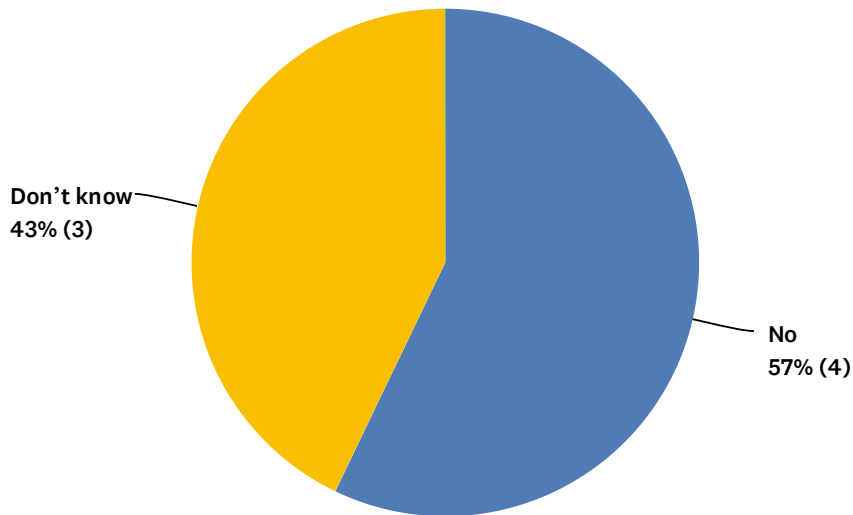
Answered: 3 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0%	0
No	0%	0
Don't know	100%	3
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3</b>

**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?**

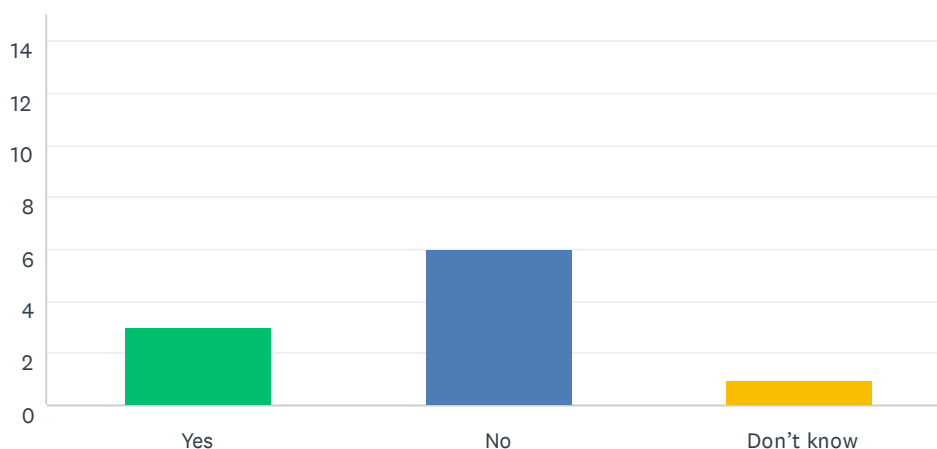
Answered: 7 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0%	0
No	57%	4
Don't know	43%	3
TOTAL		7

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

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

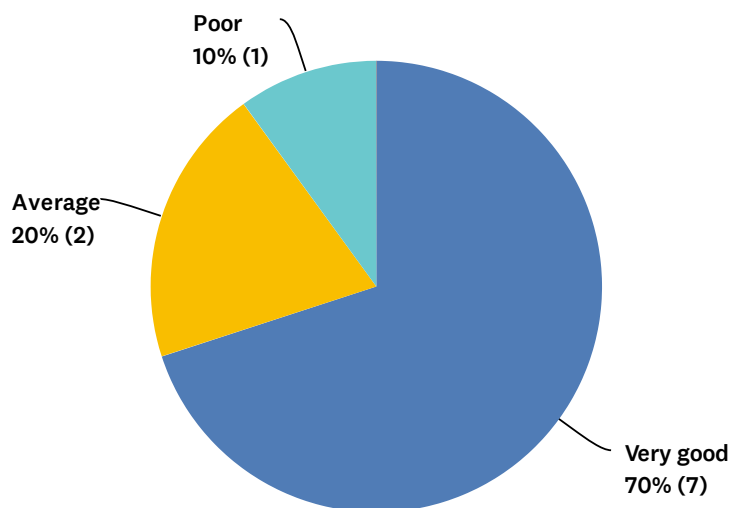


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	30%	3
No	60%	6
Don't know	10%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>10</b>

#	TELL US MORE ABOUT WHY YOU CHOSE YOUR ANSWER HERE	DATE
1	It depends on sons taking us. I'd like to see my wife more but it is a matter of what times are available.	8/17/2021 12:57 PM
2	I have put 'yes' due to my relative having dementia. Doesn't really remember if we have visited or not.	8/16/2021 12:21 PM
3	We can visit every 2-3 weeks but there are 3 children and 2 grandchildren. If my brothers and children visited I would only see my mum every 6 weeks so all my mum's children and grandchildren do not visit so that I can.	8/9/2021 1:47 PM
4	If visiting appointments are not available, then the staff ensure we can have a video / phone call to talk to our sister.	8/9/2021 11:13 AM
5	I would like to visit more frequently/ for longer or or to have a meal with her as we did pre-covid. I would like to be able to go into mum's room to sort out clothing, toiletries etc. I have not had access for 16 months and previously always tended to her belongings with her on a weekly basis, to keep them tidy and renew items as needed.	7/21/2021 12:17 PM
6	Too long a time between visits. I think they only have visits on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.	7/21/2021 10:57 AM
7	My mum is struggling not seeing her family and has just lost her husband	7/20/2021 1:25 PM
8	There are only 4 visiting slots available each day on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. This limits visits to once a fortnight. Need to have more slots available, need to be everyday and evenings and also longer please.	7/20/2021 12:51 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: 10 Skipped: 0



	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	VERY POOR	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0%	70%	20%	10%	0%	10	2.40
	0	7	2	1	0		

#	COMMENTS	DATE
1	Due to restrictions	8/16/2021 12:21 PM
2	Not enough days available and no weeken visits. Not enough people available for outdoor visits. And if they are overseeing visits they are not running activities. There should be an additional person/people just for visits.	7/20/2021 1:25 PM
3	So pleased to be able to visit under the circumstances.	7/20/2021 12:51 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: 9 Skipped: 1

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Being able to see her in the room downstairs as we go in. We get about 30 minutes. I think they have gotten an alexa for her but I can't see her using it. She could use it for pop music. I visit with my son so she can have both of us visit at one time.	8/17/2021 12:57 PM
2	The visits work well - we take proof of test and they provide the PPE. We wait in the room and they bring relative down.	8/16/2021 12:21 PM
3	The appointment system works well and visits are well organised but they are not frequent enough.	8/9/2021 1:47 PM
4	Very clear instructions given when having a visit. Explanation of lateral flow tests.	8/9/2021 11:13 AM
5	Clear precise instructions, diarised visits.	7/26/2021 8:34 AM
6	WhatsApp	7/21/2021 3:59 PM
7	The booking system is reliable, they communicate well with me. They supervise from just outside an open door to give us a little privacy. They make it a happy occasion and are very positive about the importance of visits to the wellbeing of residents.	7/21/2021 12:17 PM
8	Great well being staff and look after my mum.	7/20/2021 1:25 PM
9	The well-being team have been great at managing this difficult situation. Always very welcoming.	7/20/2021 12:51 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: 9 Skipped: 1

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	More visits but that depends how many people want visits and the time allotted to the visits.	8/17/2021 12:57 PM
2	I just think an average of 12 visiting slots a week for 60 residents is poor but they don't have the staff. Because I and my sibling work full time we only get to see our relative once a month as they only have visits available on one saturday a fortnight when the Wellbeing Team work. During the week they only have 12 visiting slots over 3 days (Tues, weds, thurs). They need to have more staff to facilitate more visits.	8/16/2021 12:21 PM
3	I would like to be able to visit my mum more often and in her environment, ie her room with no fixed time limit.	8/9/2021 1:47 PM
4	Not sure, as from the 19th July everything may change again, as all restrictions may be lifted?	8/9/2021 11:13 AM
5	Open a second visiting room.	7/26/2021 8:34 AM
6	Visits being conducted in the residents own room.	7/21/2021 12:17 PM
7	Increasing number of visits available	7/21/2021 10:57 AM
8	More slots and not using visiting rooms for meetings. Employ more staff for visits.	7/20/2021 1:25 PM
9	Set up an online booking system so that we can plan ahead and update arrangements as personal circumstances change. For instance due to an appointment or bad weather. Can a visiting pod be set up outside? Can garden visits be arranged?	7/20/2021 12:51 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: 7 Skipped: 3

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	There isn't a lot of garden space and it doesn't get used much apart from her birthday party in the garden. The staff are good. When we go in they tell us then how she is getting on. It would be nice to extend that.	8/17/2021 12:57 PM
2	This is difficult because I have not observed the care my mother receives for 18 months. The wellbeing team needs to be expanded to allow for more visiting and better resident support.	8/9/2021 1:47 PM
3	They always inform us with everything we need to know about our relative (very quickly) also they have done their best through the pandemic in every possible way.	8/9/2021 11:13 AM
4	Keeping me updated when there are problems with my relative's health, otherwise excellent.	7/26/2021 8:34 AM
5	Excellent communication about any changes to mum's health or needs. Mum knows she is loved by her carers (it is clear to me too) and so she feels very much that she is at home and in a happy secure environment.	7/21/2021 12:17 PM
6	Keeping their residents safe	7/20/2021 1:25 PM
7	Really good interaction with wellbeing team. Hope this can continue now that staff have left.	7/20/2021 12:51 PM