



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

**Willow Bank 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 1 resident and 5 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 (1 response), very good (3 responses), or average (1 response).

- The majority of relatives (80%) understood the role of essential care giver, yet the majority (80%) also didn't know whether the home was enabling this role.
- Only two out of a total of five relatives said that they were aware that they could take their loved one out to low risk outdoor places. Two relatives said the care home wasn't enabling this and one said they didn't know what the situation was.
- There was low awareness of the different visiting options available, with only one out of the five respondents aware that it was possible to visit outdoors.
- There was a mix of responses in terms of how often people said they were enabled to visit. This varied from once or twice a week to one person saying it "varied depending on availability". The majority of relatives (4 out of 5) said that they could visit for an hour.
- There seemed to be good flexibility in terms of when visits could be booked with visits available during both the week and at weekends. However, not everyone seemed to be aware that visits could be booked during the evening.
- Only two out of the five relatives said they'd 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, said that they didn't know whether 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, only one out of three relatives said that a family member was involved in developing the risk assessment/visiting plan to express their wishes and needs on their behalf.
- All of the residents and relatives responding to the survey, felt that the visiting options available met their needs.
- People said that the visiting system was well organised and efficient, that staff were approachable and that they were kept up to date by email. visits and testing were very well organised with the option to either do the test at home or at the care

home. Another person commented that it was good that they were kept informed by email.

*“Efficient booking system with wide variety of times during the day. Comfortable and private space for visitors. Staff available and approachable for enquiries.”*

- One person commented that grandchildren were currently only able to visit outdoors.

## Our recommendations

1. Communicate a reminder 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. Consider using the above messaging around essential care giver on your website. We couldn’t find any up-to-date information

about how relatives can become essential care givers on the Maria Mallaband 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. If the home's visiting policy currently enables residents to go on trips and visits out of the home in line with current national visiting guidance, make sure that all relatives are reminded of this, as awareness is currently low. If visits out are not yet included in the visiting policy, make sure that this is enabled in line with national guidance and that any changes are communicated to relatives.
6. If not already in place, introduce indoor visits for visits with accompanying children in line with the national visiting guidance.

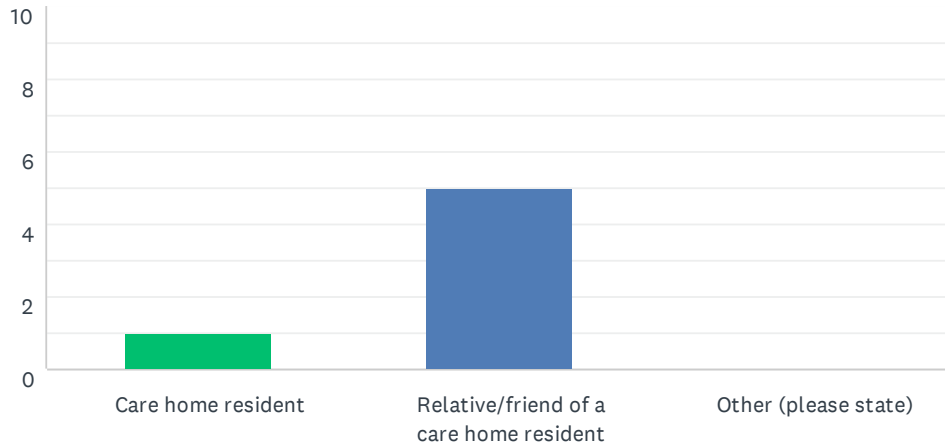
### Next Steps

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: 6 Skipped: 0

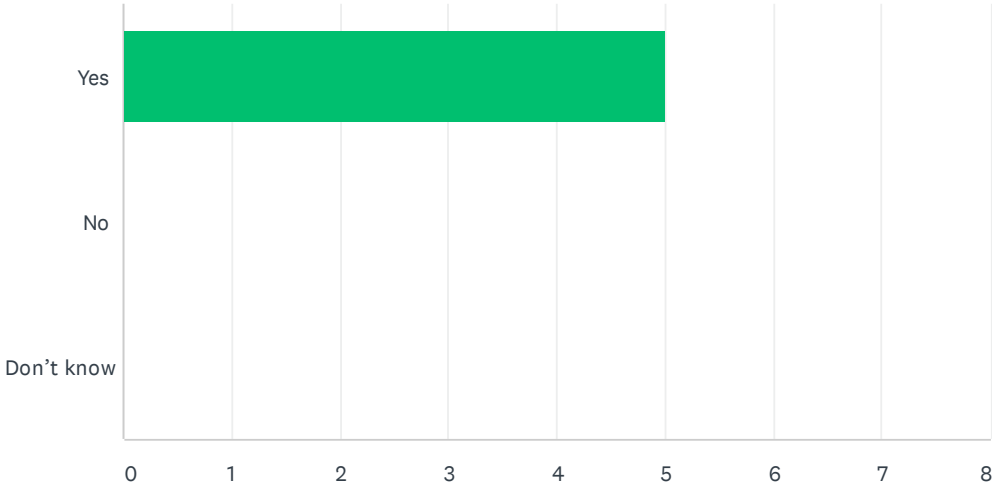


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Care home resident	17%	1
Relative/friend of a care home resident	83%	5
Other (please state)	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>

#	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?

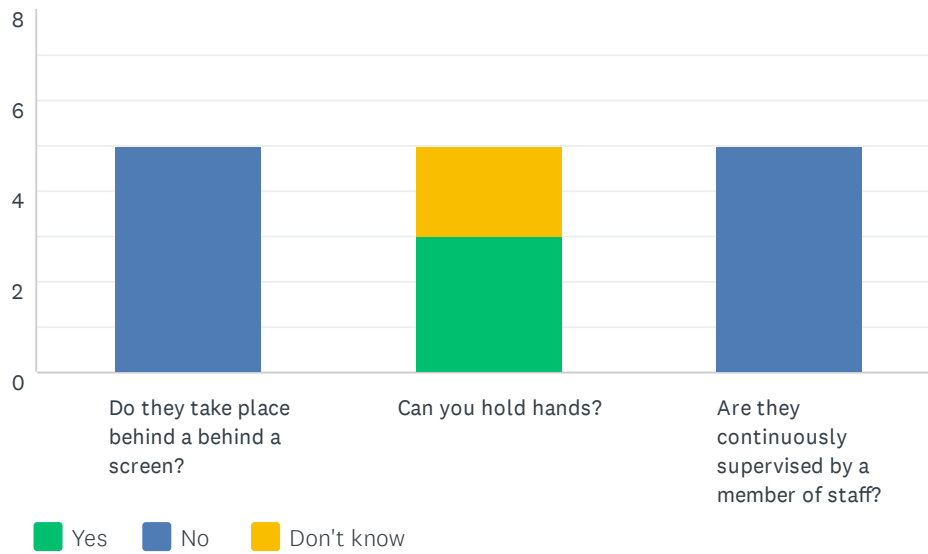
Answered: 5 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100%	5
No	0%	0
Don't know	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>5</b>

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

Answered: 5 Skipped: 1

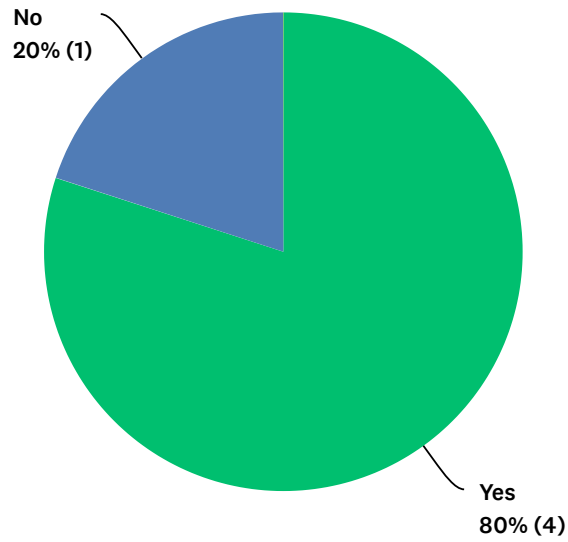


	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Do they take place behind a behind a screen?	0% 0	100% 5	0% 0	5	2.00
Can you hold hands?	60% 3	0% 0	40% 2	5	1.80
Are they continuously supervised by a member of staff?	0% 0	100% 5	0% 0	5	2.00



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

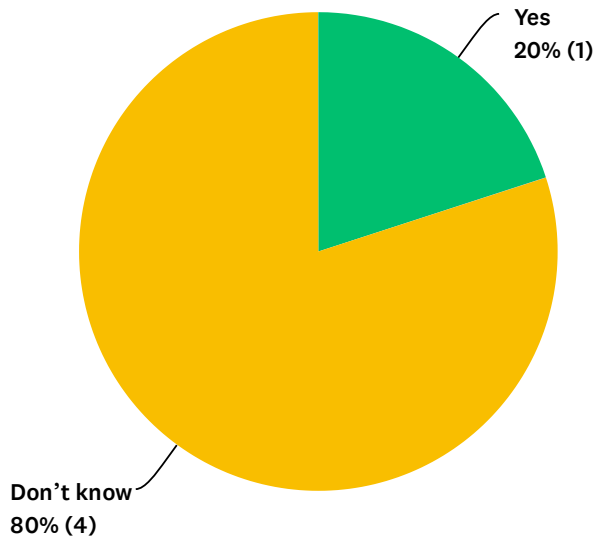
Answered: 5 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	80%	4
No	20%	1
Not sure	0%	0
TOTAL		5

**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: 5 Skipped: 1

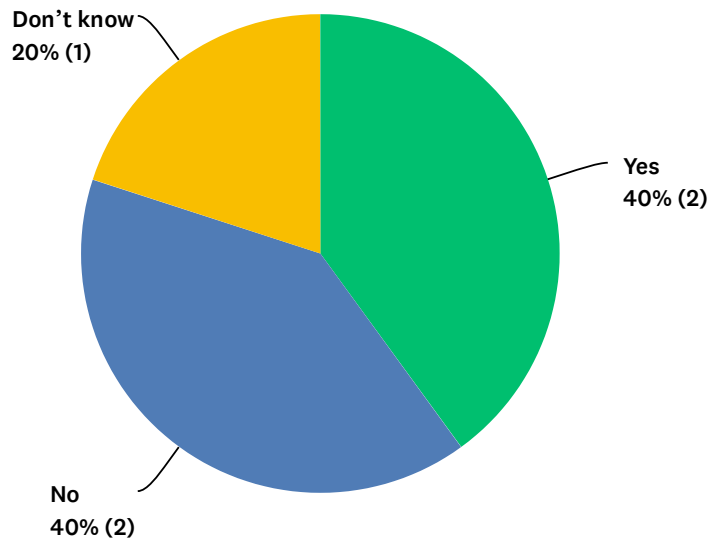


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	20% 1
No	0% 0
Don't know	80% 4
TOTAL	5

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

## 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: 5 Skipped: 1

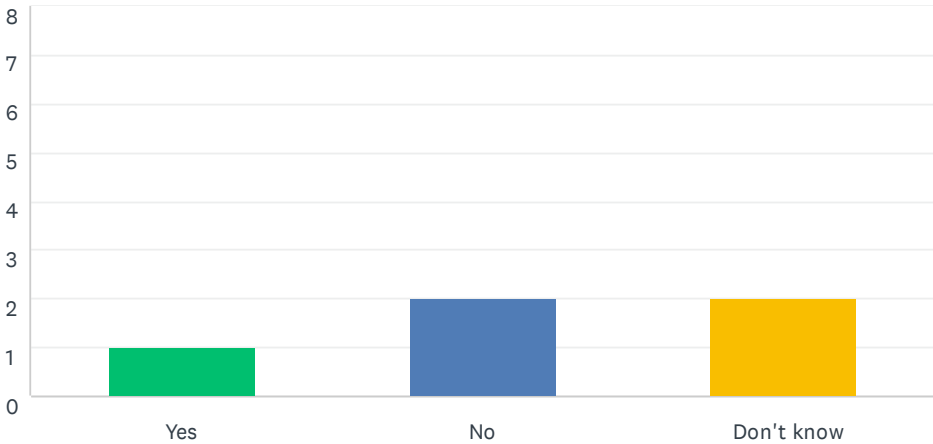


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	40%	2
No	40%	2
Don't know	20%	1
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>5</b>

#	PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT HERE	DATE
1	They allow it but it's not appropriate in our case.	8/16/2021 11:42 AM

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

Answered: 5 Skipped: 1

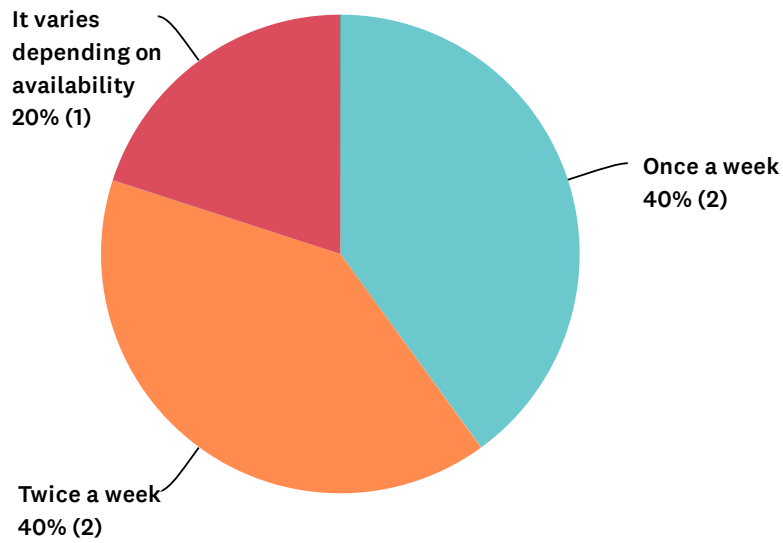


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	20% 1
No	40% 2
Don't know	40% 2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>

#	PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT HERE	DATE
1	Outdoor visits can be arranged for non-nominated visits.	8/16/2021 11:42 AM
2	Haven't asked	7/21/2021 1:46 PM

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

Answered: 5 Skipped: 1

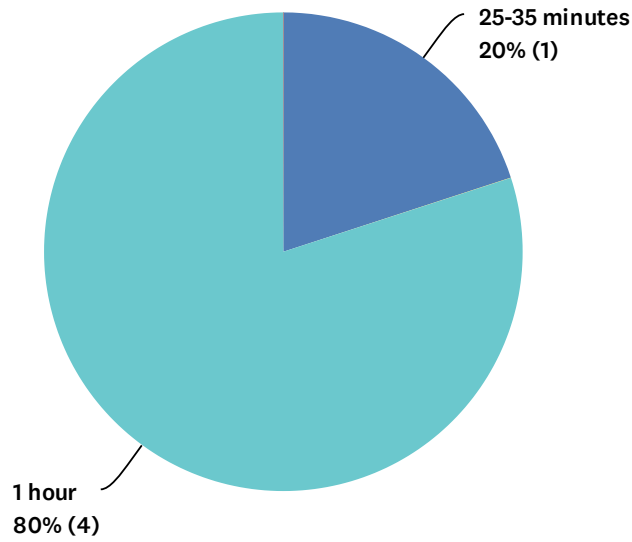


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Once a month	0%	0
Once every three weeks	0%	0
Once a fortnight	0%	0
Once a week	40%	2
Twice a week	40%	2
Three times a week	0%	0
Four times a week or more	0%	0
As many times as I want	0%	0
It varies depending on availability	20%	1
Not sure	0%	0
Not applicable	0%	0
Other (please specify)	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>5</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?

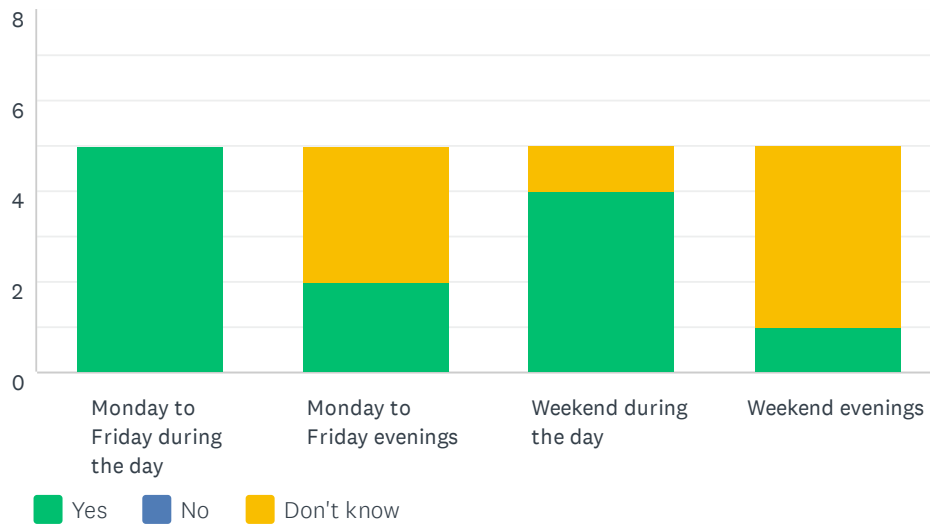
Answered: 5 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
15-20 minutes	0%	0
25-35 minutes	20%	1
40-50 minutes	0%	0
1 hour	80%	4
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>5</b>

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

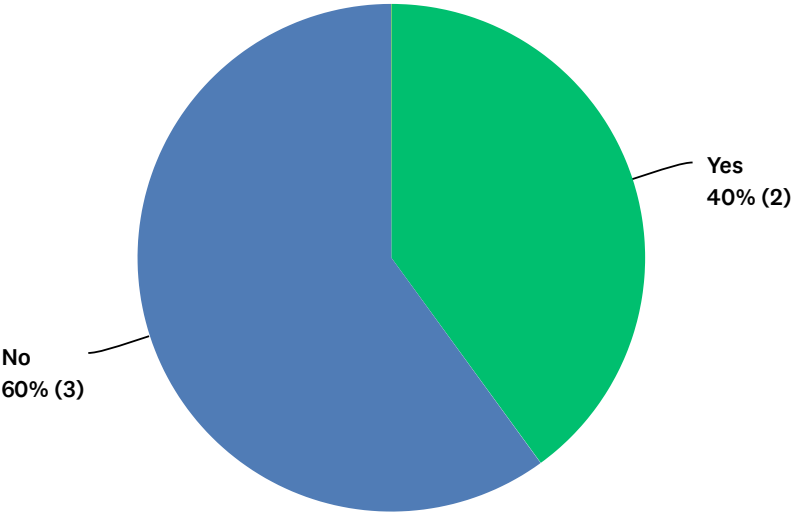
Answered: 5 Skipped: 1



	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
Monday to Friday during the day	100% 5	0% 0	0% 0	5
Monday to Friday evenings	40% 2	0% 0	60% 3	5
Weekend during the day	80% 4	0% 0	20% 1	5
Weekend evenings	20% 1	0% 0	80% 4	5

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

Answered: 5 Skipped: 1

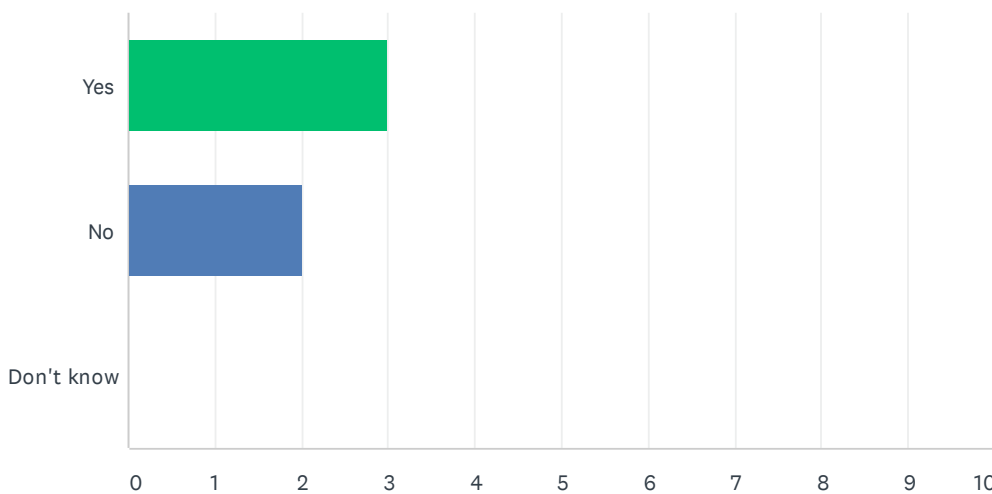


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	40%	2
No	60%	3
Not sure	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>5</b>



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

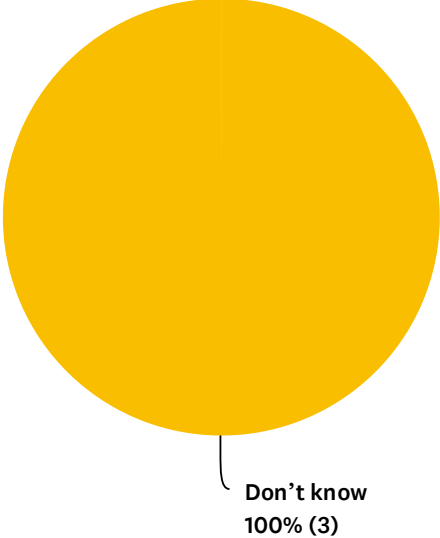
Answered: 5 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	60%	3
No	40%	2
Don't know	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>5</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?**

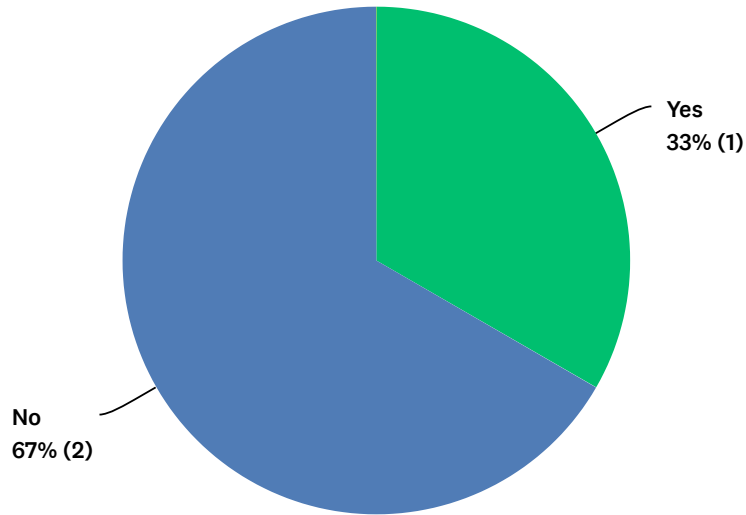
Answered: 3 Skipped: 3



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?

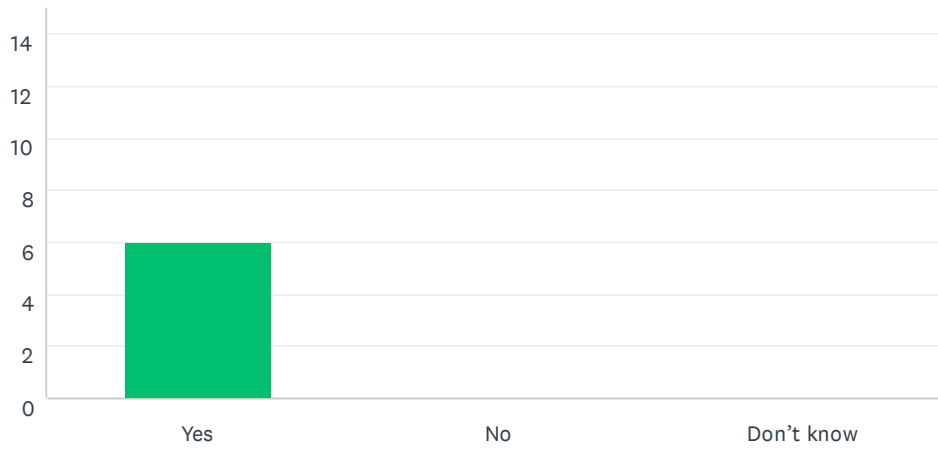
Answered: 3 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	33%	1
No	67%	2
Don't know	0%	0
TOTAL		3

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

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0

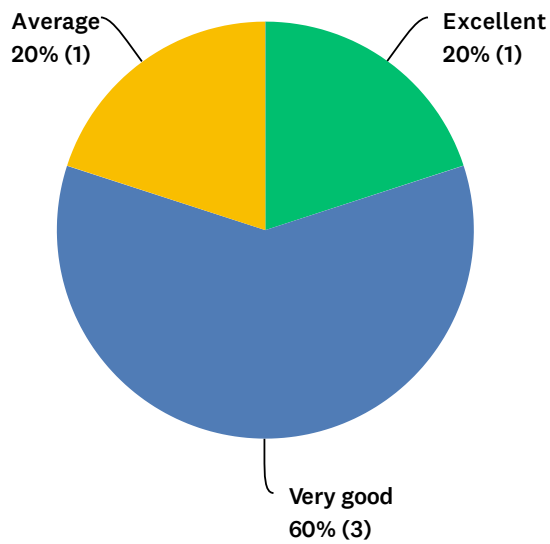


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	100%	6
No	0%	0
Don't know	0%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>6</b>

#	TELL US MORE ABOUT WHY YOU CHOSE YOUR ANSWER HERE	DATE
1	Within the constraints of the guidelines. Grandchildren only allowed outdoor visits at present. We have a very large and very close family and this means that some family members are excluded from indoor visits.	8/16/2021 11:46 AM
2	When I ring they are very helpful	7/21/2021 1:49 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: 5 Skipped: 1



	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR	VERY POOR	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	20%	60%	20%	0%	0%	5	2.00
	1	3	1	0	0		

## 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: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	they seem organised and have plenty of test kits available	8/22/2021 2:59 PM
2	Efficient booking system with wide variety of times during the day. comfortable and private space for visitors. staff available and approachable for enquiries.	8/16/2021 11:46 AM
3	Kept up to date by email.	8/9/2021 12:45 PM
4	Don't know	7/22/2021 2:24 PM
5	They are very organised and know what to do	7/21/2021 1:49 PM
6	Always someone to talk to	6/24/2021 4:00 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: 0

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	could allow more people in at the same time and not have to book a space if they are nominated visitors	8/22/2021 2:59 PM
2	Extend the number of nominated visitors allowed. Have more evening slots for relatives who work full-time. Currently last visit is 5.30-6.30pm. Have indoor visits for grandchildren.	8/16/2021 11:46 AM
3	Happy with all the arrangements.	8/9/2021 12:45 PM
4	They Can't improve if they follow government guidance	7/22/2021 2:24 PM
5	If they follow government guidelines there is no room for improvement	7/21/2021 1:49 PM
6	Can't improve the system they have in place	6/24/2021 4:00 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: 2

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	all staff seem friendly, but there is no consistency of management or staff and things that were previously agreed about my Dad's care, get overlooked after a while	8/22/2021 2:59 PM
2	The care home manages visiting well within guidelines and act with fairness and compassion. They do what they can to facilitate visiting and are very flexible with good choice of slots (7 days per week).	8/16/2021 11:46 AM
3	Answer the phone	7/22/2021 2:24 PM
4	The one most important improvement is to answer the phone if no one is in the office, divert it elsewhere.	7/21/2021 1:49 PM