



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

**Ghyll Royd Nursing Home**

**August 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 9 relatives/friends. No residents completed the survey.
- The satisfaction from relatives and residents was generally very 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 (2 responses), very good (5 responses), and only one respondent rating it as poor.

- Over half (56%) relatives said they understood the role of essential care giver. The majority (67%) said that they were aware that the home was enabling this role with the remaining 33% saying that they didn't know.
- The majority (67%) relatives said that they were aware that they could take their loved one out to low risk outdoor places with the remaining 33% saying that they weren't sure whether or not this was possible.
- Over half of respondents (56%) were aware that there were alternative visiting options, mentioning screened visits in a pod and window visits.
- There was variation in terms of how often relatives said they were able to visit, varying from once a week to 'as many times as I want' or 'it varies depending on availability'. People said they could either stay for 25-35 minutes (3 responses) or 1 hour (6 responses).
- Most relatives who responded were aware that visits could be booked during the day in the week and at the weekend. Most said that visits either couldn't be booked on evenings, or that they didn't know.
- The majority of relatives (67%) said they hadn't seen a copy of the individualised risk assessment/visiting plan for their loved one.
- Of the 9 respondents said that their loved one didn't have mental capacity to make decisions around visiting, only one said that a family member had been involved in developing the risk assessment/visiting plan to express their wishes and needs on their behalf.
- The majority of relatives (67%) responding to the survey, felt that the visiting options available met their needs.

*"Options are appropriate for my mother's and my own health conditions, and I can phone staff any time."*

The two people who said they didn't feel that visiting options met their and their loved ones' needs said that this was because

they thought their resident would benefit from touch without gloves or being able to visit without a mask.

*“My relative has advanced Dementia and relies on touch and close contact... Having to wear a mask and gloves means I cannot have close contact. This has gone on for 18 months now. Their dementia is much worse now since the start of lockdown, I believe due to lack of stimulation, communication and reassurance.”*

- In terms of what people said was working well, people said being able to do lateral flow tests at home was good as it saved time. A couple of people also spoke positively about the range of visiting options (indoor, outdoor, pod etc) and that the telephone booking system worked well. Several people also commented about the good communication between the care home and relatives both about visiting and updates they received about their loved one.

*“I feel they have gone above and beyond to keep visitors 'in the loop' with weekly emails and updates. They always call me with any changes to my relative's treatment, so I am always aware of what is going on. I know I can call any time if I'm concerned.”*

- Suggestions for improvements included:
  - More opportunities to see grandchildren
  - Enabling early evening visits
  - Clarity around whether evening and weekend visits were possible
  - Clearer communication around visiting rules in general
  - Essential care givers *“not to have to wear PPE so they can see smiles and have kisses and handholding”*.

## 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 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 now nominate an essential care giver. 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. Send a reminder to make sure that all relatives are aware of the different visiting/visits out options and the times that they can visit.
6. Consider anything that could be put in place to aid communication and quality of experience for residents with advanced dementia such as;
  - Introducing see-through masks to aid communication

- Taking advice from the Leeds Community Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control nurses about risk assessing the possibility of replacing gloves with good hand hygiene to enable essential care givers to have skin to skin contact with residents who would benefit from this.

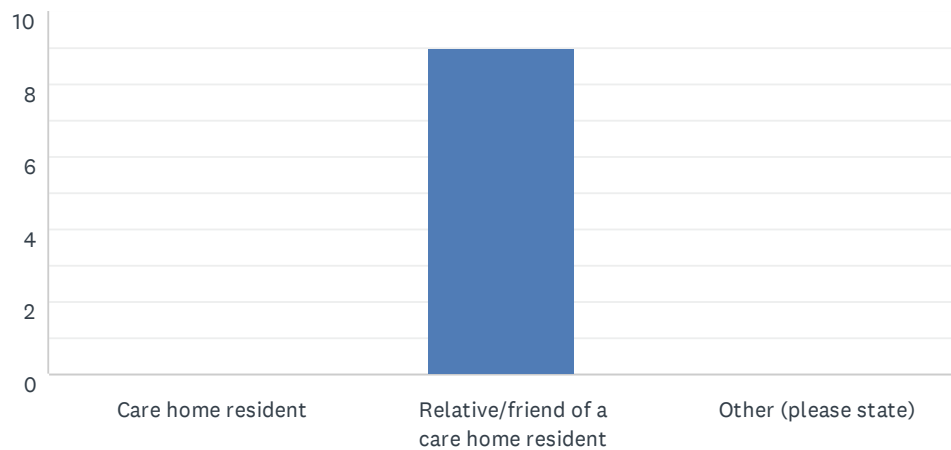
## Next Steps

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: 9    Skipped: 0

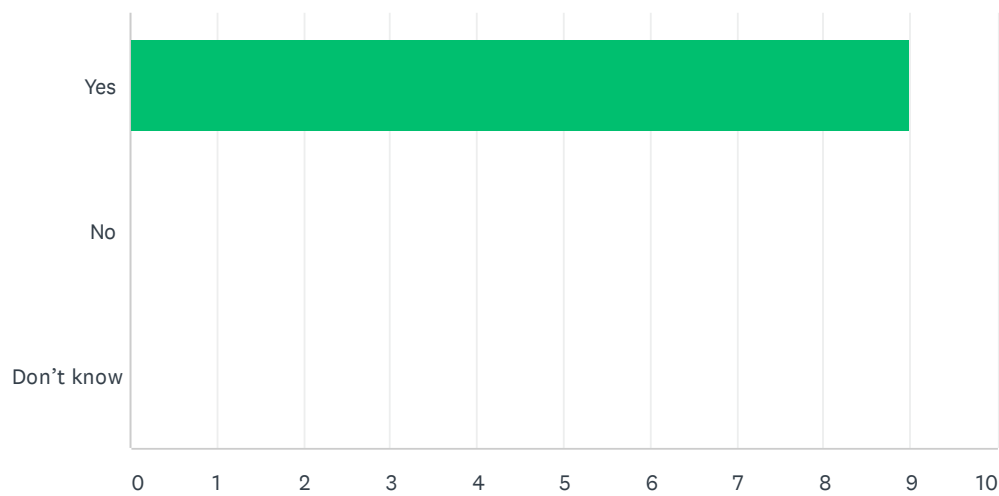


| ANSWER CHOICES                          |  | RESPONSES |   |
|-----------------------------------------|--|-----------|---|
| Care home resident                      |  | 0%        | 0 |
| Relative/friend of a care home resident |  | 100%      | 9 |
| Other (please state)                    |  | 0%        | 0 |
| TOTAL                                   |  |           | 9 |

| # | 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?

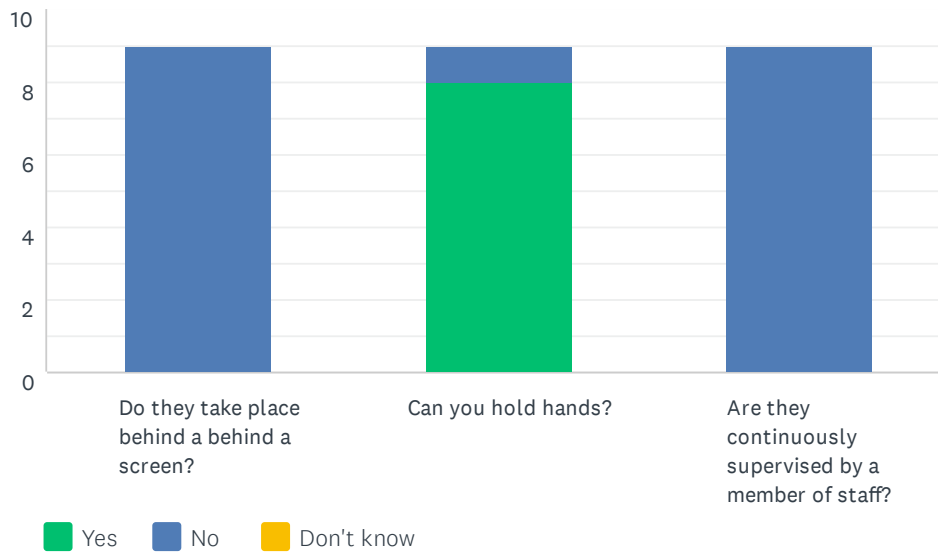
Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |   |
|----------------|-----------|---|
| Yes            | 100%      | 9 |
| No             | 0%        | 0 |
| Don't know     | 0%        | 0 |
| TOTAL          |           | 9 |

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

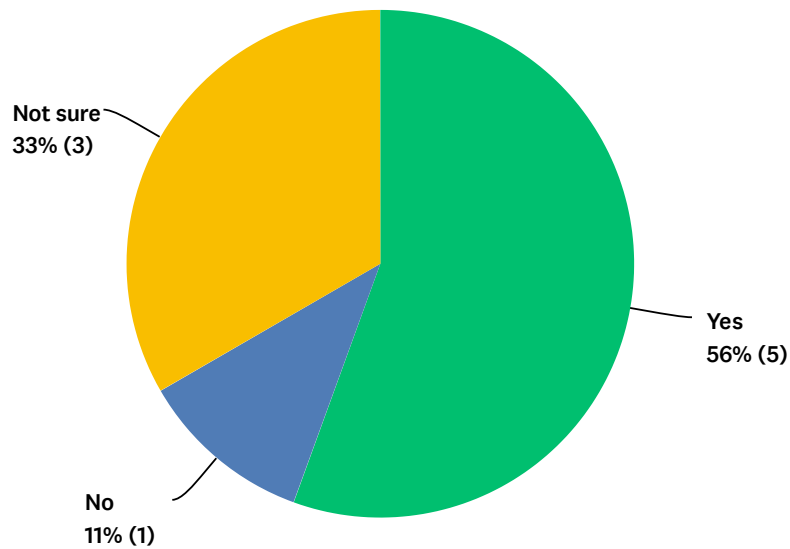
Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



|                                                        | YES      | NO        | DON'T KNOW | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------|------------|-------|------------------|
| Do they take place behind a screen?                    | 0%<br>0  | 100%<br>9 | 0%<br>0    | 9     | 2.00             |
| Can you hold hands?                                    | 89%<br>8 | 11%<br>1  | 0%<br>0    | 9     | 1.11             |
| Are they continuously supervised by a member of staff? | 0%<br>0  | 100%<br>9 | 0%<br>0    | 9     | 2.00             |

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

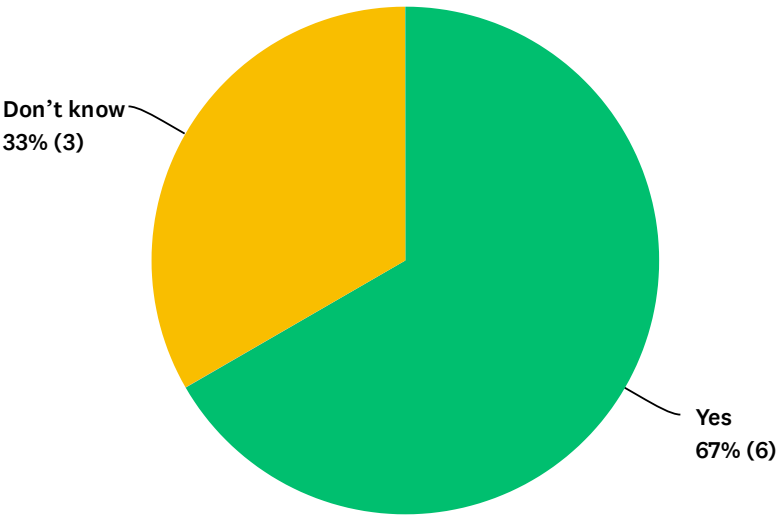
Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |   |
|----------------|-----------|---|
| Yes            | 56%       | 5 |
| No             | 11%       | 1 |
| Not sure       | 33%       | 3 |
| TOTAL          |           | 9 |

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: 9   Skipped: 0

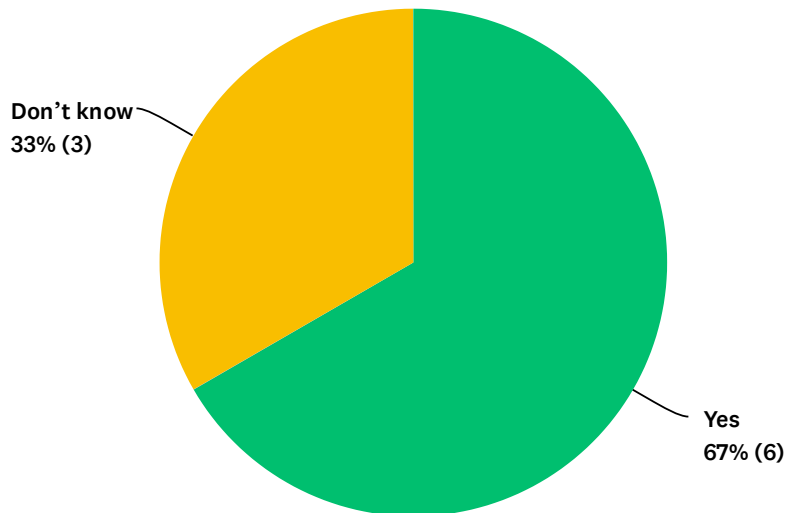


| ANSWER CHOICES |  | RESPONSES |   |
|----------------|--|-----------|---|
| Yes            |  | 67%       | 6 |
| No             |  | 0%        | 0 |
| Don't know     |  | 33%       | 3 |
| TOTAL          |  |           | 9 |

| # | 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: 9 Skipped: 0

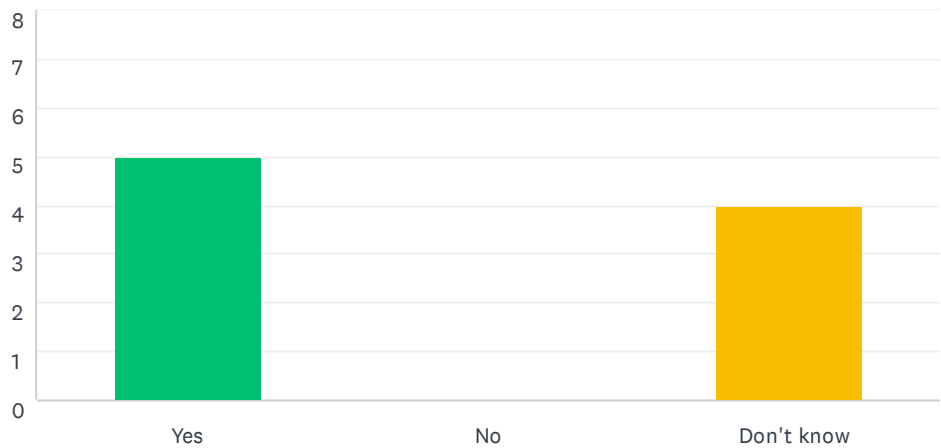


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |   |
|----------------|-----------|---|
| Yes            | 67%       | 6 |
| No             | 0%        | 0 |
| Don't know     | 33%       | 3 |
| TOTAL          |           | 9 |

| # | PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT HERE                                     | DATE               |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | not relevant for my mother                                              | 9/21/2021 11:46 AM |
| 2 | This is not relevant as my relative is bedridden with advanced dementia | 9/21/2021 9:24 AM  |
| 3 | Began this week.                                                        | 9/8/2021 11:38 AM  |

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

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0

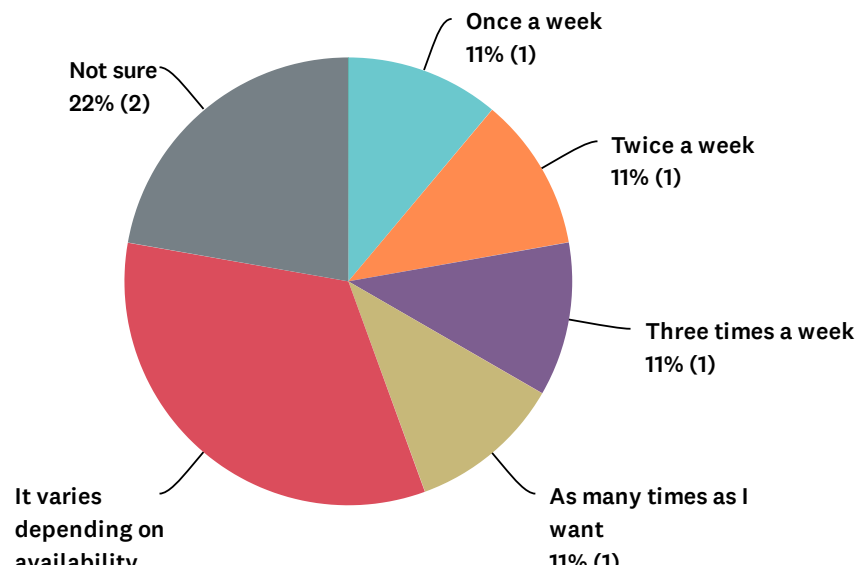


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |   |
|----------------|-----------|---|
| Yes            | 56%       | 5 |
| No             | 0%        | 0 |
| Don't know     | 44%       | 4 |
| TOTAL          |           | 9 |

| # | PLEASE TELL US MORE ABOUT THAT HERE                          | DATE               |
|---|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Window visits Pod unit (behind screen)                       | 9/21/2021 11:46 AM |
| 2 | Visits in purpose built pod or outdoors. Also window visits. | 9/8/2021 11:47 AM  |
| 3 | Separate pod in grounds with perspex screen Window visits    | 6/24/2021 1:06 PM  |

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

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0

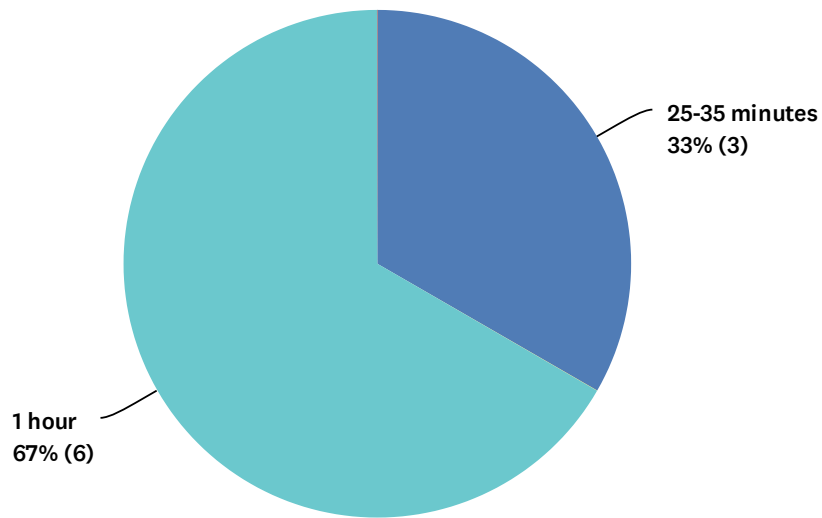


| ANSWER CHOICES                      | RESPONSES |   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---|
| Once a month                        | 0%        | 0 |
| Once every three weeks              | 0%        | 0 |
| Once a fortnight                    | 0%        | 0 |
| Once a week                         | 11%       | 1 |
| Twice a week                        | 11%       | 1 |
| Three times a week                  | 11%       | 1 |
| Four times a week or more           | 0%        | 0 |
| As many times as I want             | 11%       | 1 |
| It varies depending on availability | 33%       | 3 |
| Not sure                            | 22%       | 2 |
| Not applicable                      | 0%        | 0 |
| Other (please specify)              | 0%        | 0 |
| TOTAL                               |           | 9 |

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

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

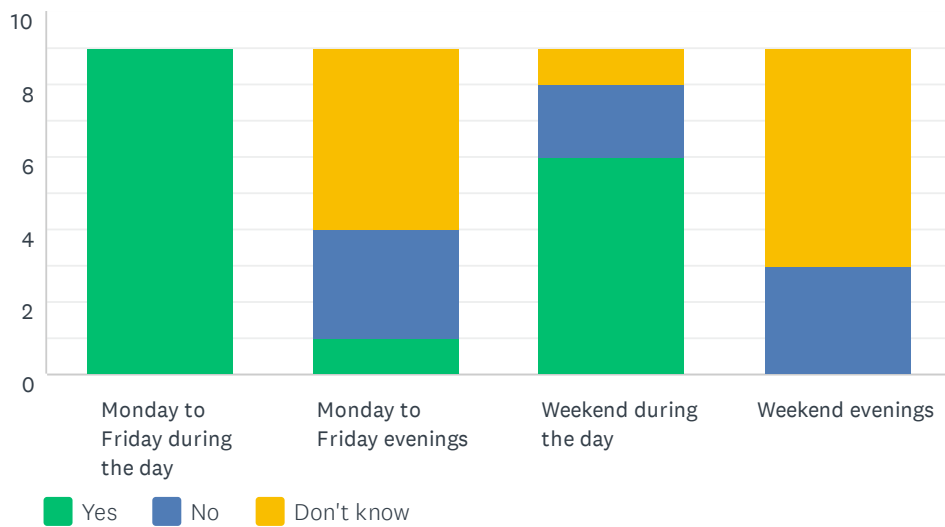
Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES         | RESPONSES |          |
|------------------------|-----------|----------|
| 15-20 minutes          | 0%        | 0        |
| 25-35 minutes          | 33%       | 3        |
| 40-50 minutes          | 0%        | 0        |
| 1 hour                 | 67%       | 6        |
| 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>9</b> |

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

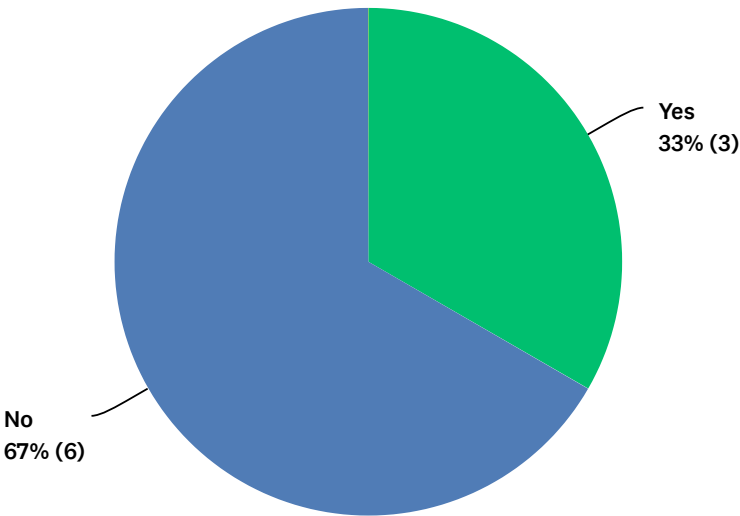
Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



|                                 | YES       | NO       | DON'T KNOW | TOTAL |
|---------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------|-------|
| Monday to Friday during the day | 100%<br>9 | 0%<br>0  | 0%<br>0    | 9     |
| Monday to Friday evenings       | 11%<br>1  | 33%<br>3 | 56%<br>5   | 9     |
| Weekend during the day          | 67%<br>6  | 22%<br>2 | 11%<br>1   | 9     |
| Weekend evenings                | 0%<br>0   | 33%<br>3 | 67%<br>6   | 9     |

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

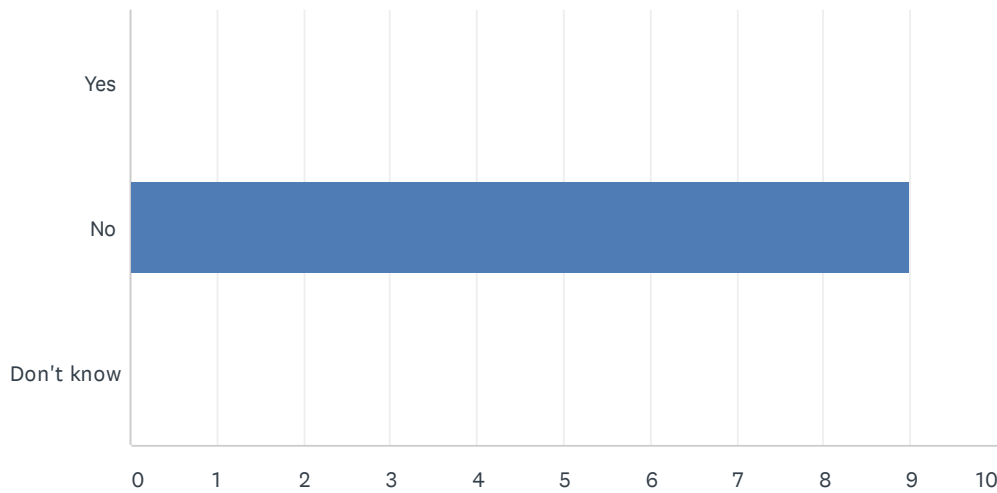
Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES |  | RESPONSES |   |
|----------------|--|-----------|---|
| Yes            |  | 33%       | 3 |
| No             |  | 67%       | 6 |
| Not sure       |  | 0%        | 0 |
| TOTAL          |  |           | 9 |

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

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |   |
|----------------|-----------|---|
| Yes            | 0%        | 0 |
| No             | 100%      | 9 |
| Don't know     | 0%        | 0 |
| TOTAL          |           | 9 |

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?

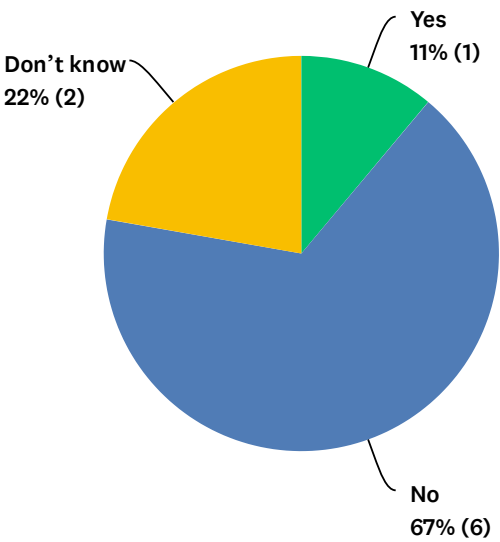
Answered: 0   Skipped: 9

 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?

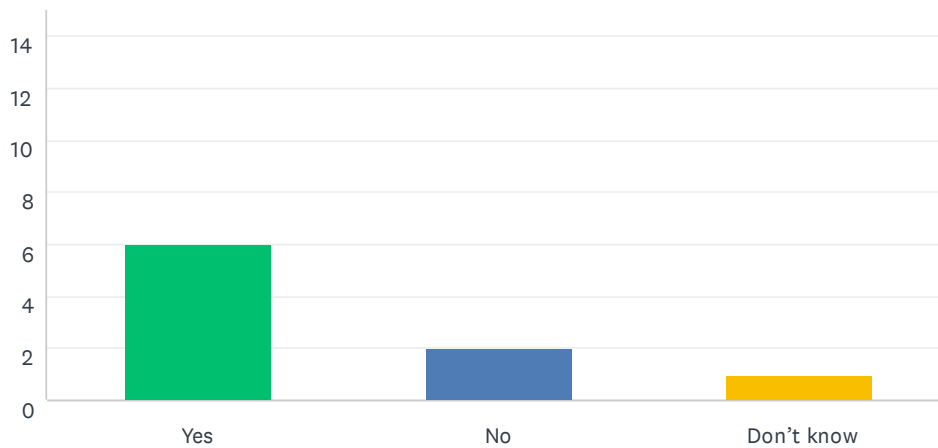
Answered: 9    Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |   |
|----------------|-----------|---|
| Yes            | 11%       | 1 |
| No             | 67%       | 6 |
| Don't know     | 22%       | 2 |
| TOTAL          |           | 9 |

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

Answered: 9 Skipped: 0

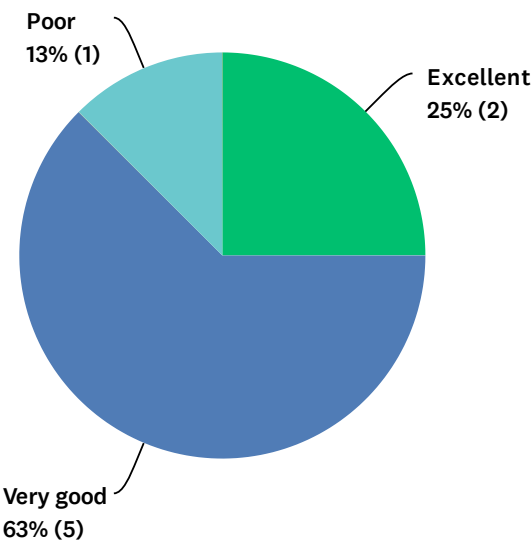


| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |   |
|----------------|-----------|---|
| Yes            | 67%       | 6 |
| No             | 22%       | 2 |
| Don't know     | 11%       | 1 |
| TOTAL          |           | 9 |

| # | TELL US MORE ABOUT WHY YOU CHOSE YOUR ANSWER HERE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | DATE               |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | The best thing for my mother is that we should be in the room with her and able to touch her hands. This is the type of contact we had prior to COVID. Mums needs would be enhanced if we did not need to wear masks, but this cannot happen yet.                                                                                                     | 9/21/2021 11:46 AM |
| 2 | My relative has advanced Dementia and relies on touch and close contact for communication and reassurance. Having to wear a mask and gloves means i cannot have close contact. This has gone on for 18 months now. Their dementia is much worse now since the start of lockdown, I believe due to lack of stimulation, communication and reassurance. | 9/21/2021 11:40 AM |
| 3 | Yes, however when my relative first went to Ghyll Royd visits were limited to 9:30 - 3:30. Meaning my relatives who were working 9-5 could not attend.                                                                                                                                                                                                | 9/21/2021 11:38 AM |
| 4 | We have always visited our relative in general once a week. That frequency has been continued with window visits through lockdown and now with indoor visits in PPE in a safe environment. We have been pleased with the communication from Ghyll Royd throughout the period of the pandemic.                                                         | 9/21/2021 11:36 AM |
| 5 | My relative has advanced dementia and poor sight and hearing. They are bedridden and sleep most of the time.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 9/21/2021 9:25 AM  |
| 6 | Would love to be able to pop in whenever.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 9/8/2021 11:53 AM  |
| 7 | We are currently unsure as to how many times a week we can visit but feel it is more than once a week and find the home now very helpful.                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 9/8/2021 11:44 AM  |
| 8 | I know I can phone the home to see how my relative is and then book either and indoor or outdoor visit. There is an 'outdoor pod' but this isn't good for my relative.                                                                                                                                                                                | 9/6/2021 8:48 AM   |
| 9 | Options are appropriate for my mother's and my own health conditions and I can phone staff any time                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 6/24/2021 1:18 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: 8    Skipped: 1



|            | EXCELLENT | VERY GOOD | AVERAGE | POOR     | VERY POOR | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|------------|-----------|-----------|---------|----------|-----------|-------|------------------|
| (no label) | 25%<br>2  | 63%<br>5  | 0%<br>0 | 13%<br>1 | 0%<br>0   | 8     | 2.00             |

## 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: 8 Skipped: 1

| # | RESPONSES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | DATE               |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Enabling us to take tests at home. Enter immediately saves us waiting for test results. We have the opportunity to speak with staff there about how mum is doing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 9/21/2021 11:46 AM |
| 2 | Care staff to try their best to enable visits.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 9/21/2021 11:40 AM |
| 3 | Separate entrance/ being able to do COVID testing at home.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 9/21/2021 11:38 AM |
| 4 | The overall communication throughout the pandemic via email and messages plus a monthly zoom meeting has been very good. The telephone booking system works well as does the limiting of visits to enable all residents to receive visits on a fair basis. The entry system initially with supervised Lateral Flow tests and more recently with self administered tests has also worked well. | 9/21/2021 11:36 AM |
| 5 | Been great at communicating changes.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 9/8/2021 11:53 AM  |
| 6 | To begin with it is very difficult to get appointments but now that the new management is getting to grips with matters, visiting has improved and we are made to feel very welcome. However, now that we have been asked the question, neither i nor my father actually know if we can visit in the evening or at the weekends - there are no staff at reception at the weekend.             | 9/8/2021 11:44 AM  |
| 7 | We can choose indoor or outdoor (or pod which doesn't work for us). Weather permitting we sit outside in the garden with my dogs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | 9/6/2021 8:48 AM   |
| 8 | outdoor visits last summer window visits in the autumn pod visits over winter indoor visits and self testing currently i.e. adapting to situation /guidance and enabling visits as much as possible                                                                                                                                                                                           | 6/24/2021 1:18 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: 7 Skipped: 2

| # | RESPONSES                                                                                     | DATE               |
|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | More opportunities for residents to see great grandchildren.                                  | 9/21/2021 11:46 AM |
| 2 | Clearer updates on how Visiting rules are changing - they seem to evolve and no one tells us. | 9/21/2021 11:40 AM |
| 3 | Early evening visits would be nice and beneficial for my mum.                                 | 9/21/2021 11:38 AM |
| 4 | I am satisfied with the procedures that have been put in place.                               | 9/21/2021 11:36 AM |
| 5 | Send out a message stating exactly when visiting times are permitted.                         | 9/8/2021 11:44 AM  |
| 6 | I'm happy with their arrangements.                                                            | 9/6/2021 8:48 AM   |
| 7 | I think they are doing the best they can in the circumstances                                 | 6/24/2021 1:18 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: 4

| # | RESPONSES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | DATE               |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | I can only hold hands with my relative wearing gloves. Care home very hard to access or phone, it's even difficult to get into the building even if you have booked an appointment. Residents with severe dementia need to have better provision e.g. essential caregivers not to have to wear PPE so they can see smiles and have kisses and handholding. | 9/21/2021 11:40 AM |
| 2 | Communication is very good.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 9/21/2021 11:36 AM |
| 3 | The home has been very helpful in organising visits for sight and hearing tests in my relative's room.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | 9/21/2021 9:25 AM  |
| 4 | I feel they have gone above and beyond to keep visitors 'in the loop' with weekly emails and updates. They always call me with any changes to my relatives treatment so I am always aware of what is going on. I know I can call any time if I'm concerned.                                                                                                | 9/6/2021 8:48 AM   |
| 5 | I have been confident that residents have been kept safe and continuing to receive a good standard of care                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 6/24/2021 1:18 PM  |