



Isles of Scilly Hospital Discharge Survey

What the Isles of Scilly have said about their experience of leaving hospital during COVID-19

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Introduction

Introduction

Healthwatch Isles of Scilly is an independent, publicly-funded organisation. We have statutory duties and a remit to ensure health and social care services on the Isles of Scilly are the best they can be for people, now and in the future.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, health and social care services have had to dramatically change the way they provide care. Healthwatch Isles of Scilly has been asking the community to share their experience of hospital discharge during this time.

Listening to people's experiences during the pandemic, we will learn lessons for the future, inform local health and social care provision and provide feedback to Healthwatch England to inform national policy.

This report draws out some key results from a survey produced by Healthwatch England and run by Healthwatch Isles of Scilly. The survey ran for eight weeks in August and September 2020 and asked residents of the Isles of Scilly about their experiences of hospital discharge during the pandemic.

Who we worked with to set up the survey

The survey was produced by Healthwatch England and was run nationwide. We ran the survey through our own website in order to obtain results for the Isles of Scilly. As the Bi-Annual survey that we ran in 2019 highlighted hospital discharge as an area of concern, we felt that it was important to know the experiences of our community in this area.

Introduction

Where we advertised

The survey was hosted on the Healthwatch Isles of Scilly website and advertised on the social media network, Facebook.

Who took part

5 people from the Isles of Scilly completed the survey. Respondents were predominantly female, between the ages of 65-79 and white ethnicity.

Key Findings

80% didn't receive information about the new discharge process during their hospital stay.

100% felt they were ready to leave hospital

40% had to wait more than two hours between being told they were well enough to leave and actually leaving hospital.

80% had someone ask them where they were going to be discharged to.

Hospital Discharge Policy

On 19 March 2020, the Government issued national guidance on hospital discharge that all hospital trusts, community health services and social care providers in England have been required to adhere to from 20 March. Under the new guidance, acute and community hospitals are required to discharge all patients as soon as it is clinically safe to do so. Below we set out key aspects of the guidance issued in March, which was in place throughout the period of our research.

An update to the hospital discharge guidance issued in August maintained the same key principles.

Information on the new arrangements

The guidance states that information explaining the new hospital discharge process should be shared with all patients on admission to hospital.

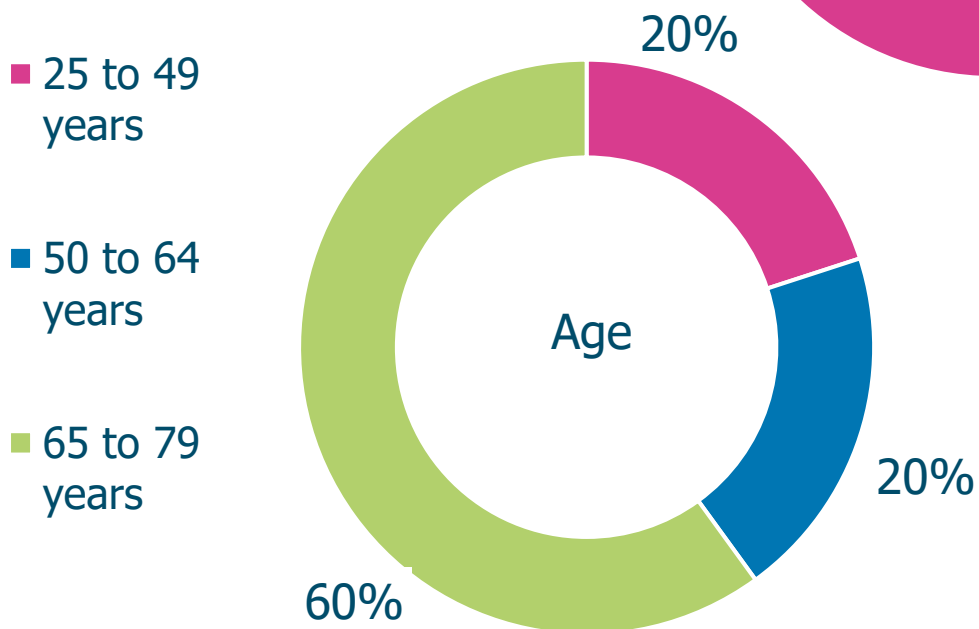
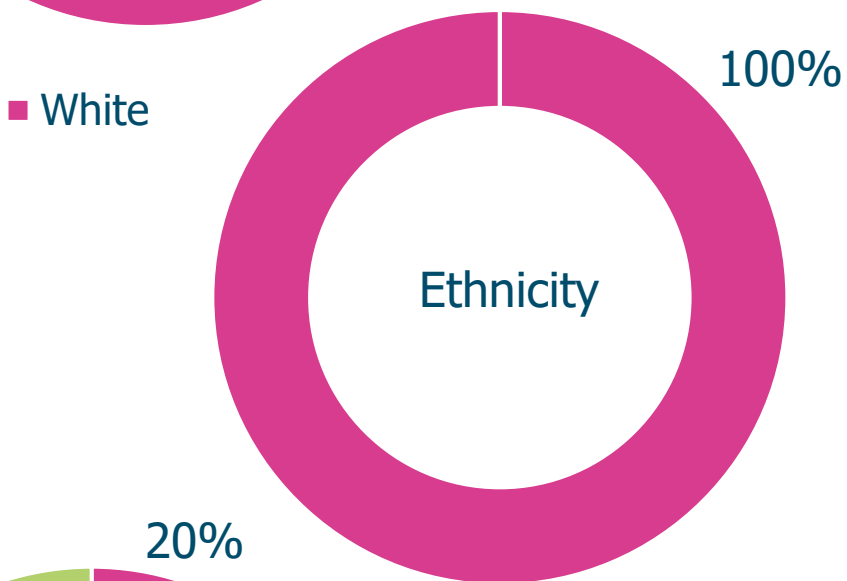
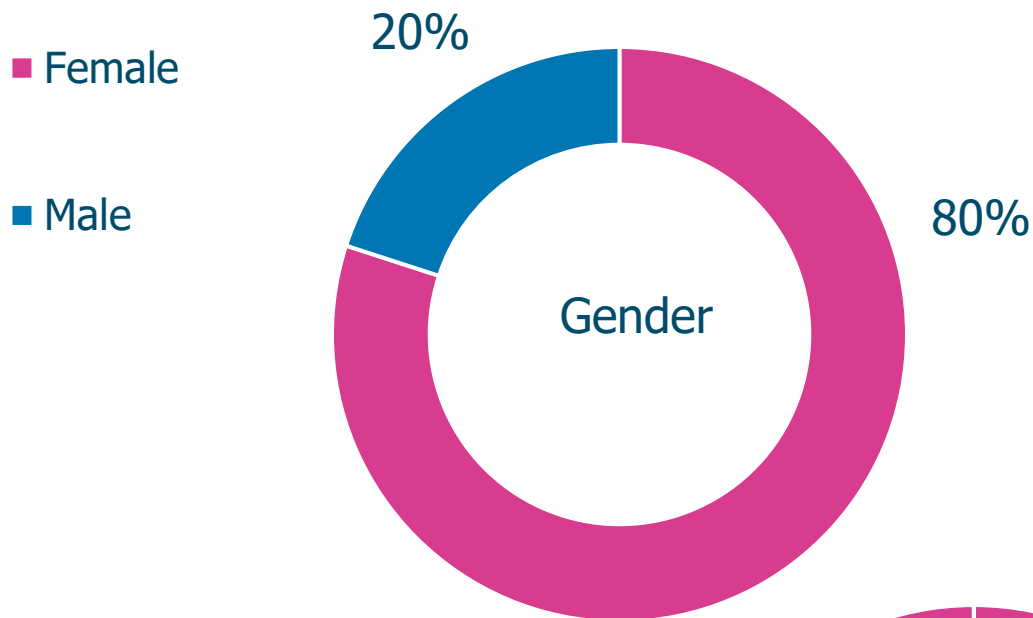
Discharge

When a patient is ready to be discharged (following discussions with the patients, their family and any professionals involved in their care), patients should be escorted to the hospital discharge lounge within an hour.

Within two hours of arriving in the discharge lounge, discharge coordinators should arrange any voluntary sector support and immediate practical help for those who have no one else to do this, such as food shopping and turning the heating on.

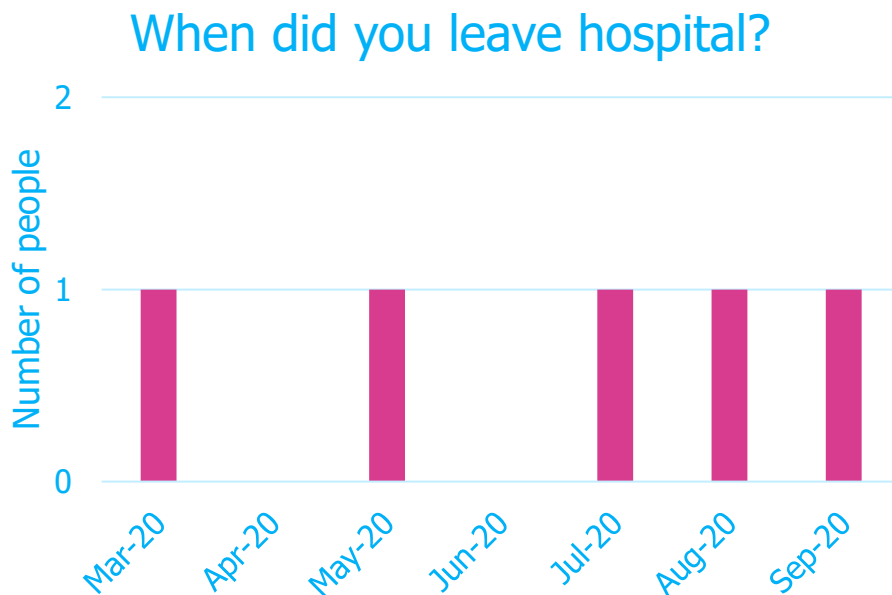
The patient should then be discharged. These time targets have been relaxed in the August update, with the expectation that all patients are discharged on the same day that a decision to discharge is made.

Respondent Demographics



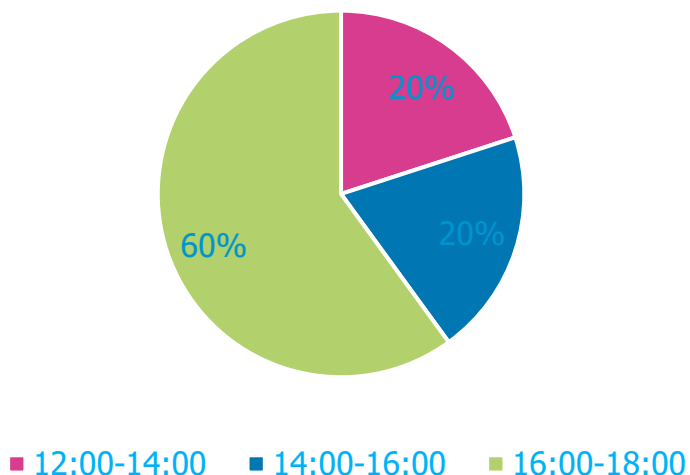
Results from the survey

Q1. Please tell us when you left hospital



Q2. Please tell us what time of day you left hospital

Time leaving hospital



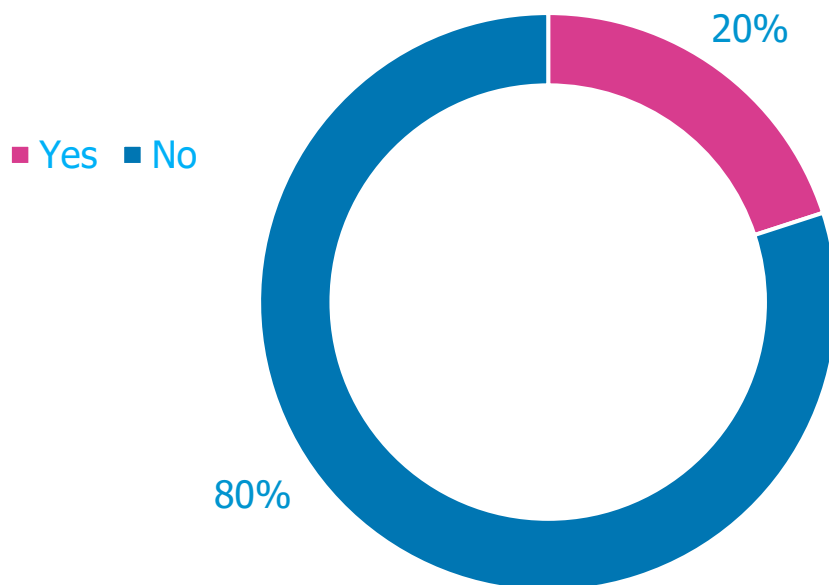
Results from the survey

Q3. What hospital were you treated and discharged from?

All respondents were treated and discharged from Treliske.

Q4. When you were in hospital, were you given information explaining that the process of leaving hospital has changed due to coronavirus?

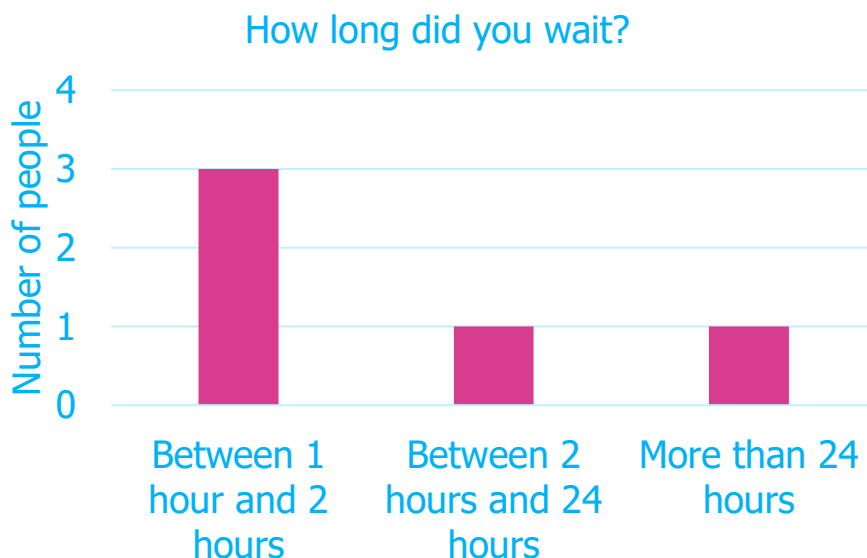
Were you given information explaining that the process of leaving hospital has changed due to coronavirus?



Only one person out of five, was given information about changes to the process of leaving hospital due to coronavirus.

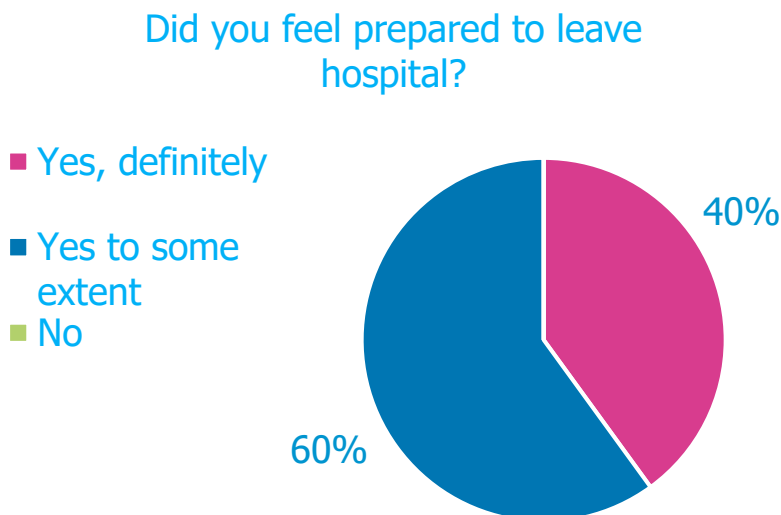
Results from the survey

Q5. How long did you wait between being told you were well enough to leave hospital and actually leaving the hospital?



60% of the respondents only had to wait between 1 and 2 hours after being told they were well enough to leave hospital and actually leaving the hospital.

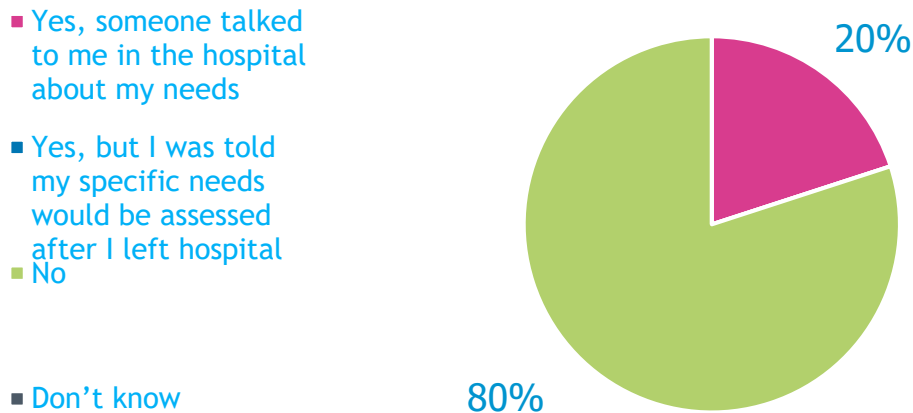
Q6. Did you feel prepared to leave hospital?



60% of the respondents felt definitely prepared to leave hospital. 40% felt prepared to leave to some extent.

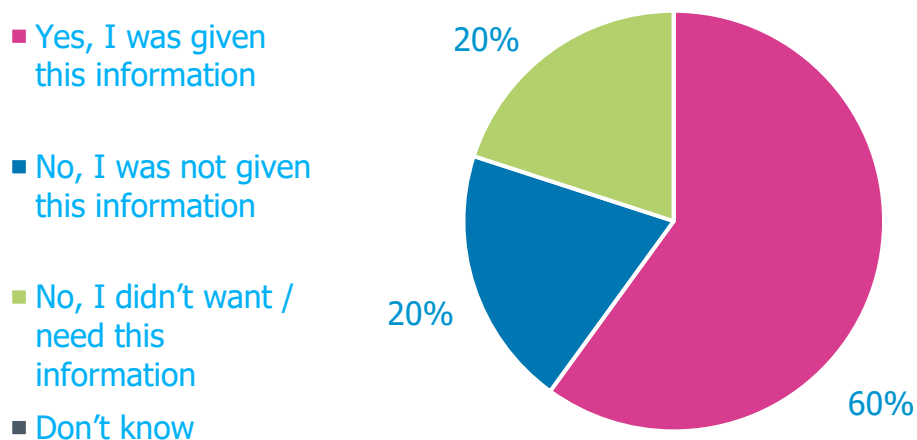
Results from the survey

Q7. Before you were discharged, were you told you would receive support from health and/or social care services after you left hospital (for example, home visits from a care worker)?



Only one person out of the five respondents were told that they would receive support after they left hospital.

Q8. Were you given information about who to contact if you needed further health advice or support after leaving hospital?

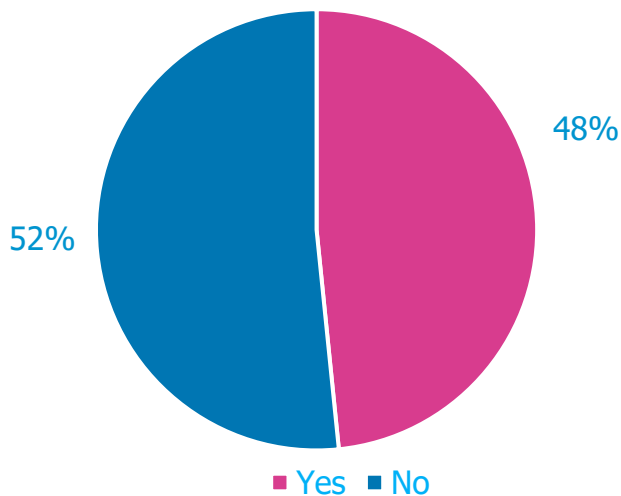


Three respondents were given this information, one respondent didn't want or need it and only one was not given it.

Results from the survey

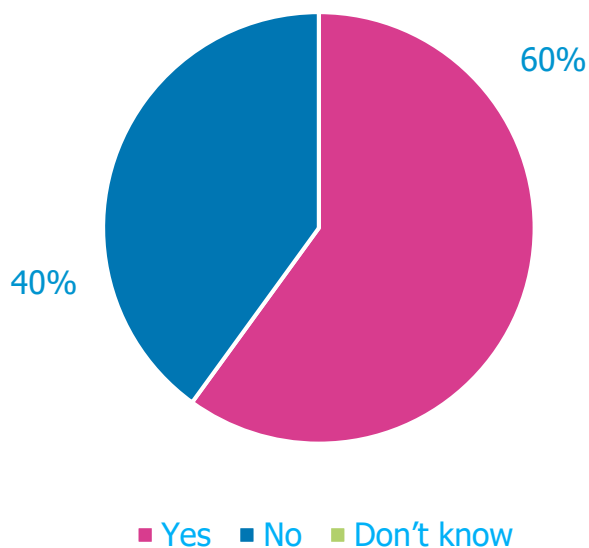
Q9. During the time you spent in hospital, were you tested for coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Tested in hospital for coronavirus



Approximately half of the respondents were tested for coronavirus.

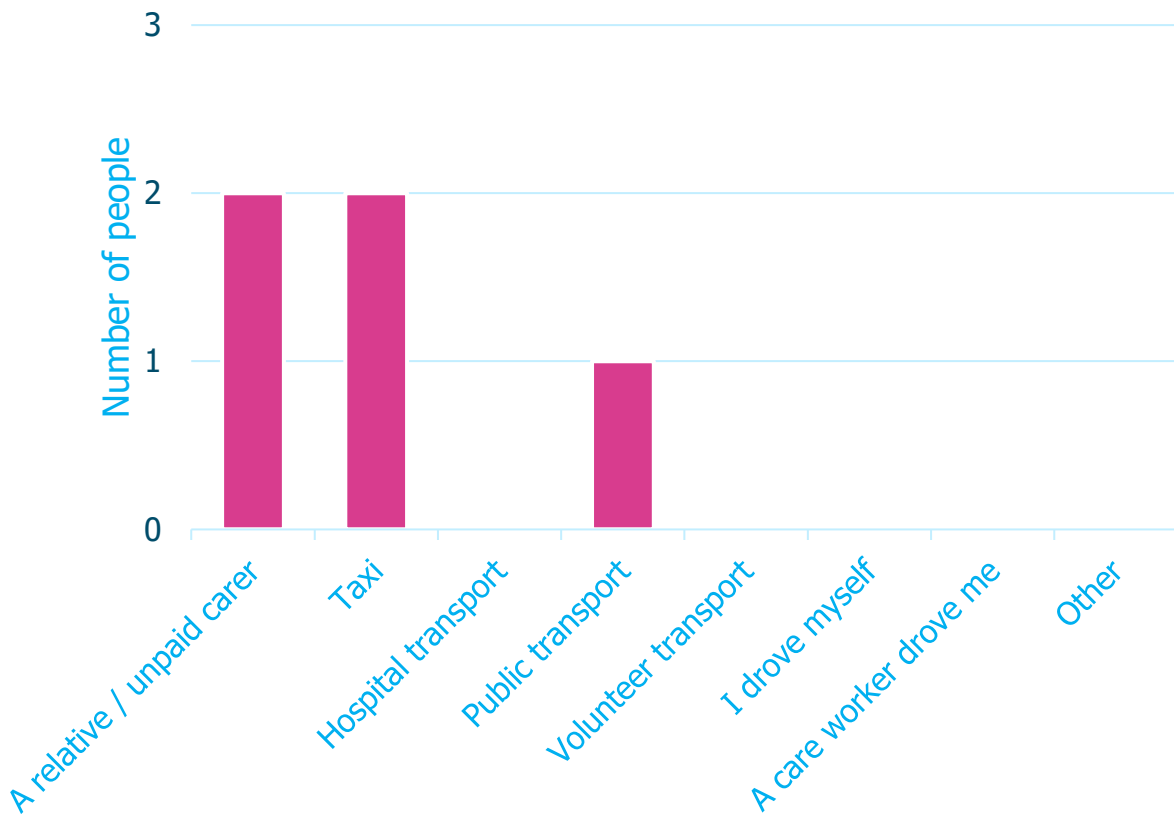
Q10. Before you left hospital, were you asked if you needed support in getting transport to the place you were discharged to?



Three out of the five respondents were asked this question.

Results from the survey

Q10. How did you travel to the place where you were discharged to?

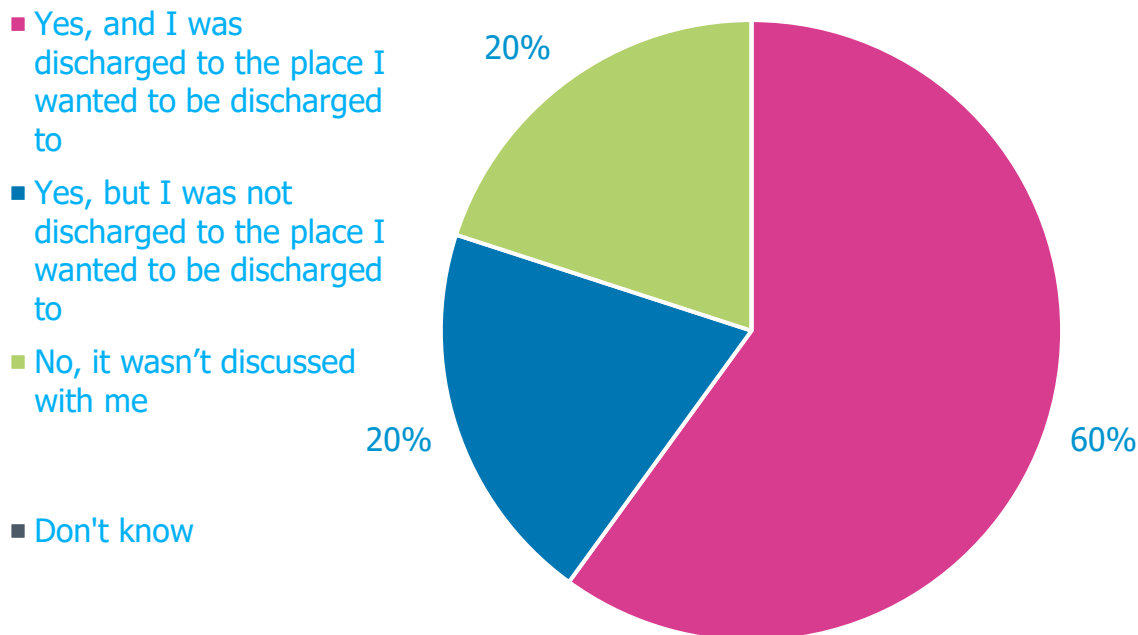


In all cases the patients sorted their own travel, either with a relative or friend, taxi or public transport.

Results from the survey

Q11. Did anyone discuss with you where you were going to be discharged to?

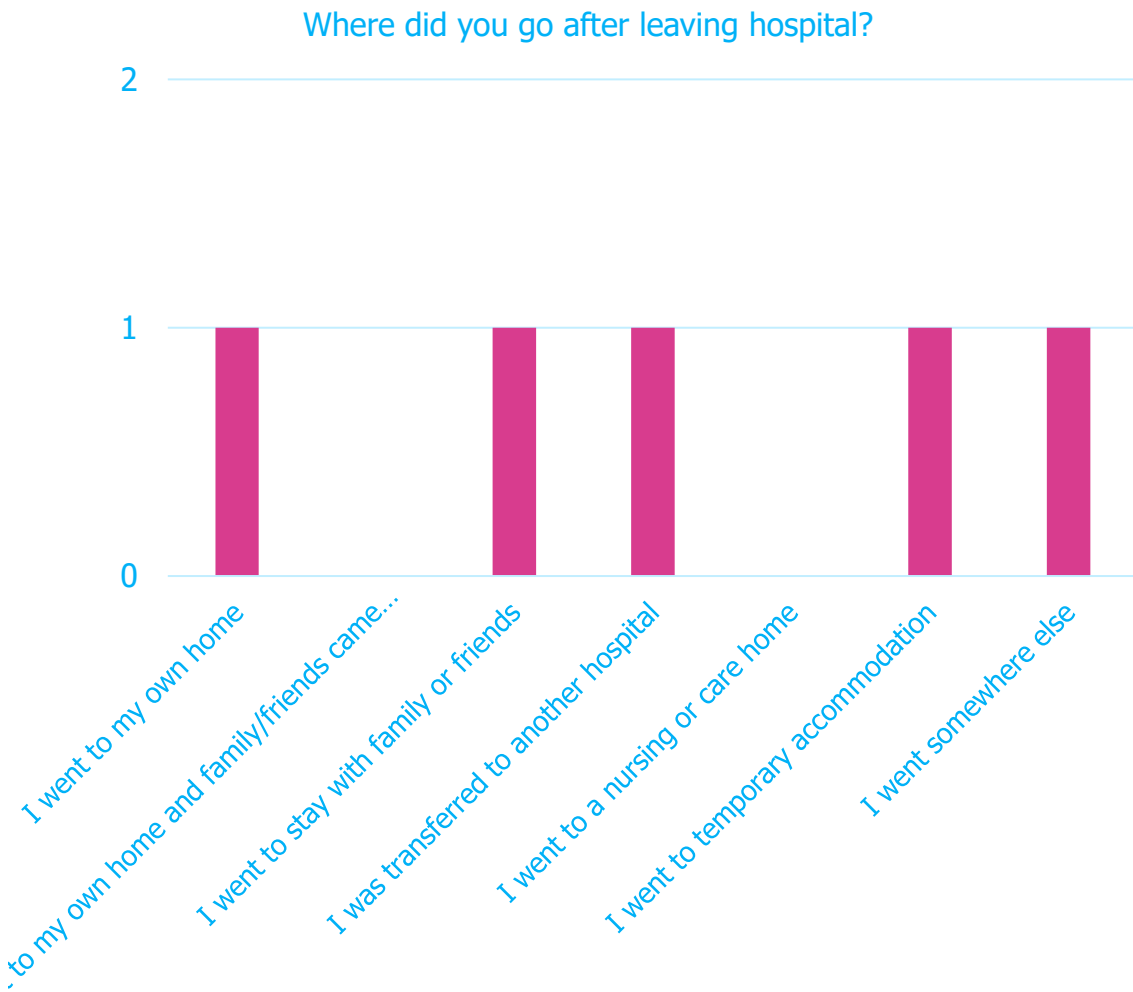
Did anyone discuss with you where you were going to be discharged to?



80% of the patients had someone discuss with them where they were going to be discharged to. 60% were actually discharged to the place they wanted to be discharged to.

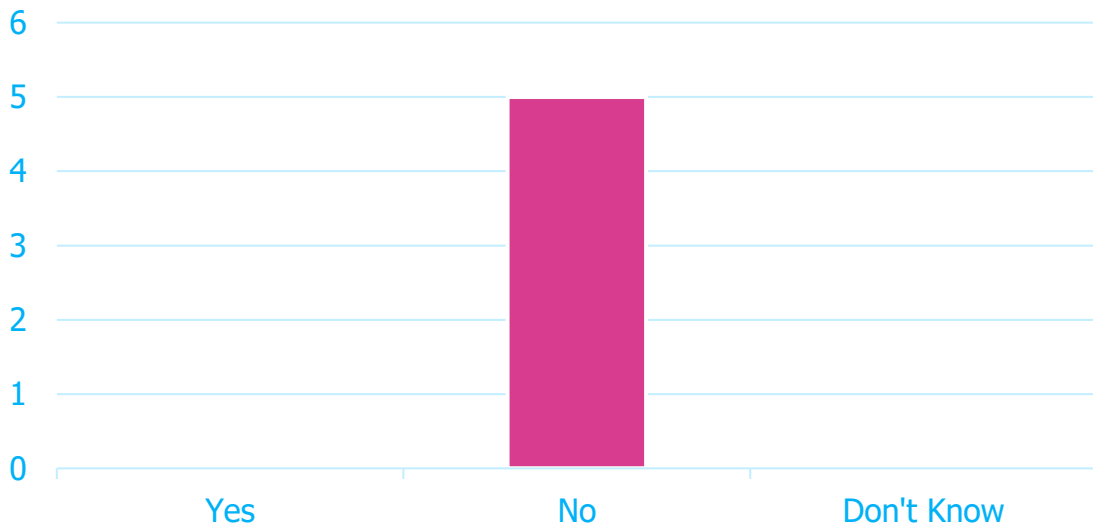
Results from the survey

Q12. Where did you go after leaving hospital?

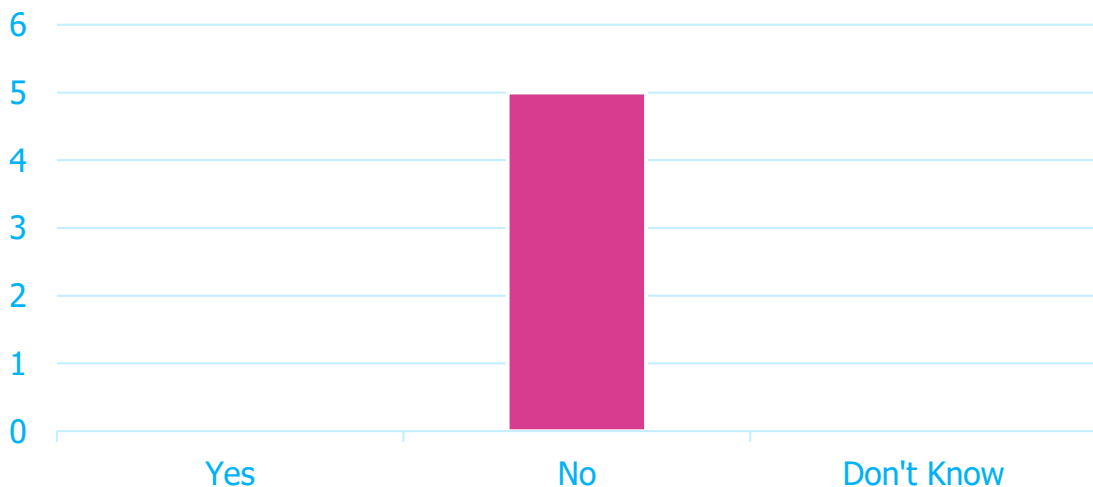


Results from the survey

Q13. After leaving hospital, were you visited by a health professional to assess your support needs (this is called a discharge assessment)?

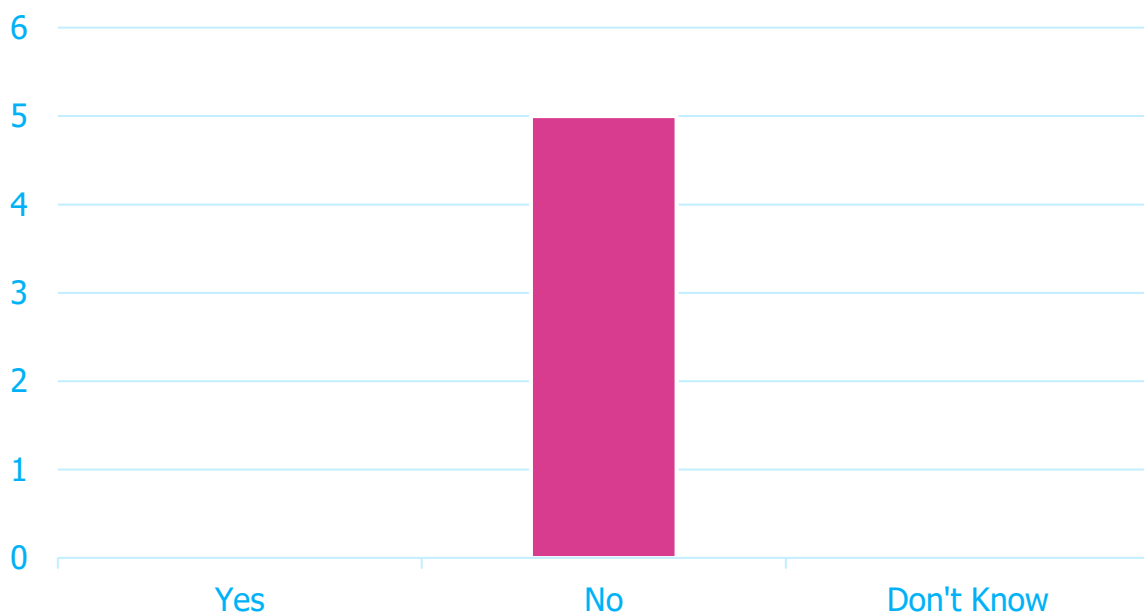


Q14. Do you have any support needs for which you don't have any help with at the moment?



Results from the survey

Q15. Was this your first experience of hospital discharge?



Stories

What went well and what could have been better?



Stories

Q16. In your own words, please describe your experience of leaving hospital.

What went well?

"I was appropriately greeted to the Cardiac Investigation Unit. I was kept well informed on process and the possibilities of earlier than expected discharge. The Procedure for which I was admitted to hospital went well and very professionally dealt with. All proper and necessary care with information was given to me. I was seen by someone who informed me would be responsible for arranging my discharge which is rather complex due to the needs of travel (by land and air); safe discharge; escort; actions to be taken if becoming unwell. Early discharge was achieved and I feel well."

Respondent 1

"I was not able to go home directly from hospital. The hospital staff were very kind in trying to help get me home but I had to stay in a B & B for a weekend before I got home. I had follow up treatment from my health centre once I got home."

Respondent 2

"I had a vitrectomy and had to travel 200 miles to stay with relatives as I was unable to go home as I wasn't allowed to fly . I live on the Isles of Scilly and had to stay on the mainland for just over 2 weeks. It was fortunate we had someone to stay with as it would have been prohibitively too expensive to pay for a b&b."

Respondent 3

"Before I was flown out from St. Mary's I was given a letter to give to the hospital staff at Treliske. I think this letter explained the added complications of living on the Islands and discharge requirements due to Covid.

When I was due to be discharged I asked them to refer to this letter which they eventually did and then worked really hard to find me a safe location to stay over the weekend. I was transferred to West Cornwall hospital where the care I received was absolutely wonderful."

Respondent 4

"It was a quick process."

Respondent 5

Stories

What could have been better?

"Nothing."

Respondent 1

"The weather - it prevented me from getting home directly from hospital."

Respondent 2

"Not sure that anything could have been improved perhaps some accommodation short term."

Respondent 3

"N/A"

Respondent 4

"I needed to book a flight home- patient transport wouldn't book this for me as I didn't have a discharge letter. Which isn't something that I was given at the hospital. Luckily I tried to book my flight when I was still in the ward otherwise I don't know how I would of gotten a flight booked to come home. I ended up speaking to a member of staff who stayed with me while I phoned them back and was on hand to speak to them and tell them I've been discharged."

Respondent 5

Conclusion



Conclusion

Only five members of the community completed the survey which was slightly disappointing and meant that it was difficult to draw any solid conclusions from the results.

All respondents were discharged from Treliske and all had experience of hospital discharge previous to this occasion.

The respondents left hospital between March 2020 and September 2020.

80% of respondents didn't receive information about the new discharge process during their hospital stay.

60% of respondents were discharged at the later time of 4pm-6pm.

It was encouraging to see that 60% of respondents only had to wait between 1 and 2 hours between being told they were well enough to leave hospital and actually leaving. One respondent in this survey had to wait more than 24hrs. The time it takes to actually leave hospital after being told they are well enough to leave was an area of concern raised by the community in our Bi-Annual survey.

Only one person did not receive information about who to contact if they needed further health advice or support after leaving hospital.

60% of the respondents were asked if they needed support in getting transport to the place they were being discharged to.

It was positive that 80% of patients had someone discuss where they were going to be discharged to and 60% were actually discharged to the place they wanted to be discharged to.

Conclusion

From the stories the main theme was that the patients felt well informed of all processes and procedures. Hospital staff were supportive in helping with the discharge process and understanding of the complications of travelling back to the Isles of Scilly.

The only comment about what could have been done better was regarding patient transport not booking the patients flight home, as they did not have a discharge letter. The staff at the hospital helped to rectify the situation, but had the patient actually left, they might have had problems booking their flight home.

Recommendations

From the survey the following recommendations have been made:

- *For patients to be discharged from hospital as early as possible in the day. This gives patients the time to arrange their travel back to the Isles of Scilly by boat or plane or to stay in overnight accommodation.
- *For patients to leave hospital between 1 and 2 hours after being told they are well enough to go home. Any booked travel arrangements / flights can then be made and kept to, allowing for a less stressful journey.
- *Information explaining the new hospital discharge process should be shared with all patients on admission to hospital.
- *That staff are aware of the difficulties faced in travelling back to the Isles of Scilly and the complexity of having to book flights and make arrangements to stay overnight somewhere if required.

Contact us

Address of local Healthwatch and contact details of any relevant Healthwatch subcontractors as of 31/03/2020.

Contact number
Email address
Social media
Website

Address and contact details of the organisation holding the local Healthwatch contract as of 31/03/2020.

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