



Special Inquiry into Unsafe Discharge - Frail & Elderly
Cumbria

August 2014



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Introduction

In June 2014, Healthwatch England launched a Special Inquiry into perceived unsafe discharge of patients from hospital, care and mental health settings. The purpose of the inquiry was to establish a deeper understanding of consumer experiences of a discharge from a hospital, nursing or care home, or secure mental health setting in England with a view to using Healthwatch England's informational and advisory powers to ensure the consumer voice is heard and action is taken by system players. The specific consumer focus was on the frail and elderly, people with mental health conditions and people who are homeless.

In order to inform the Inquiry, Healthwatch England asked local Healthwatch to gather patient experience regarding discharge. As a result, Healthwatch Cumbria sought to engage with the local frail and elderly population, to capture their experiences of discharge across all health and care settings.

Intelligence gathered by Healthwatch Cumbria in response to the special inquiry has been shared with Healthwatch England. This intelligence contributes to our wider evidence base and will assist us in identifying good practice and where necessary making recommendation for service improvement.

This report summarises the key findings from the experiences shared with Healthwatch Cumbria.

Methodology

A 20 question survey was designed by Healthwatch England and made available locally through an on-line survey via the Healthwatch Cumbria website. Hard copies were circulated through existing contacts and networks.

Responses to the survey were collated and analysed, and findings were shared with Healthwatch England.

A total of 35 responses were received prior to the Healthwatch England deadline of 28th July 2014. A summary of results are presented through tables and graphs as follows.

Findings

The survey questions used have been included in each section along with a summary and analysis of findings.

Question 1. Who are you completing this survey on behalf of?

Table 1 and Chart 1, below, illustrate the results of question 1, relating to who you are completing the survey on behalf of.

70 % of respondents were completing the survey on behalf of a family member.

Table 1 - table showing results from question 1

Are you completing this survey on behalf of:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yourself	12.1%	4
Family member	69.7%	23
Friend	18.2%	6
<i>answered question</i>		33
<i>skipped question</i>		2

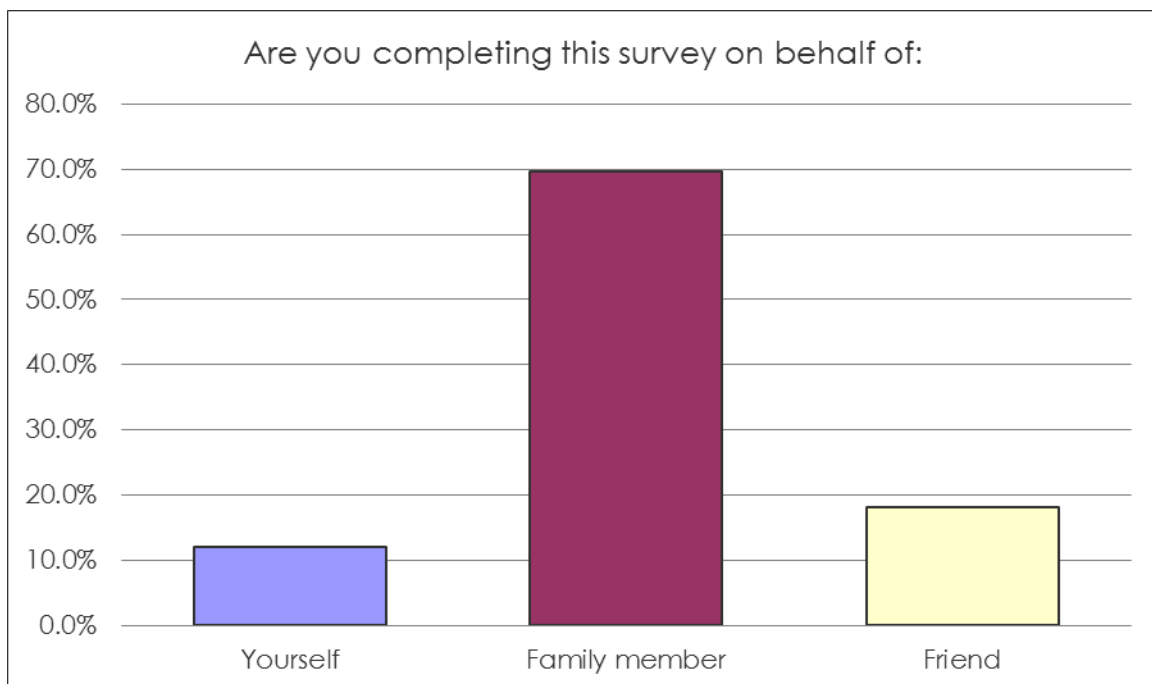


Chart 1 - Graphical display of results from question 1

Question 2. How many times have you/the patient been discharged from a hospital/care home setting in the last 18 months?

Table 2 and Chart 2, below, illustrate the results of question 2, asking how many times the patient had been discharged from any setting within the last 18 months.

29 % of respondents had been discharged from a setting three or more times within the last 18 months, with 71 % having been discharged once or twice within the last 18 months.

Table 2 - table showing results from question 2

How many times have you/the patient been discharged from a hospital/care home setting in the last 18 months?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1	32.4%	11
2	38.2%	13
3	8.8%	3
more than 3	20.6%	7
<i>answered question</i>		34
<i>skipped question</i>		1

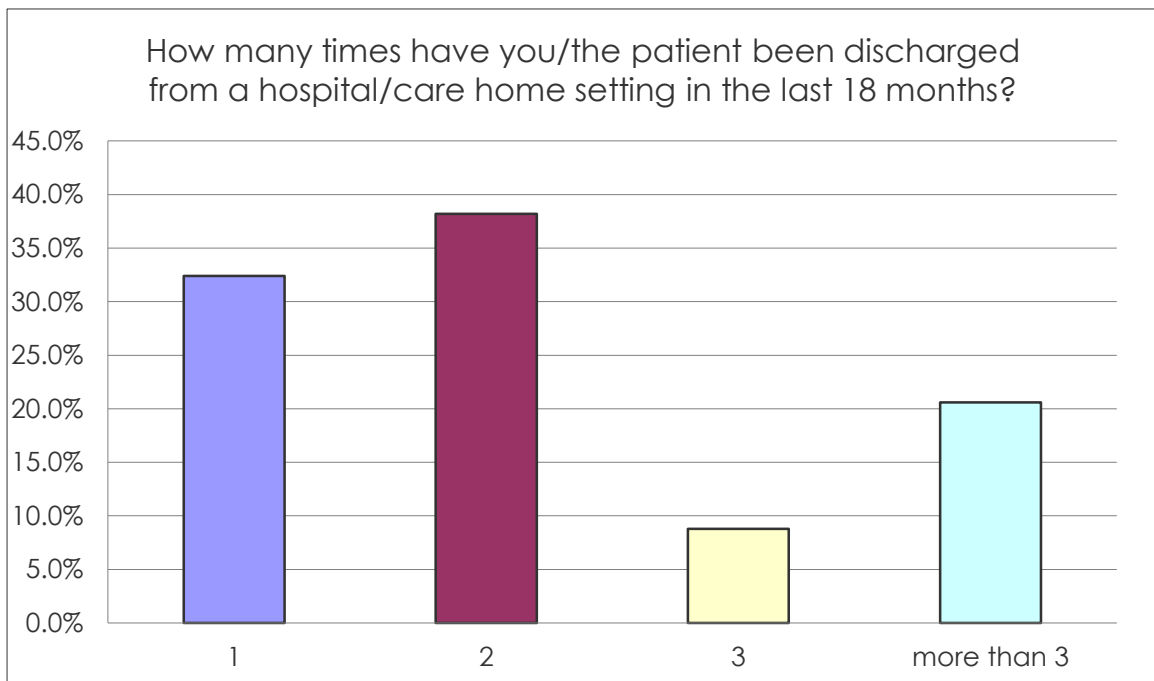


Chart 2 - Graphical display of results from question 2

Question 3. What kind of ward did you/the patient stay in?

Table 3 and Chart 3, below, illustrate the results of question 3, dealing with the type of setting the patient was discharged from.

Respondents shared experiences from discharge from a wide variety of Health and Social Care settings, with 44 % being discharged from a “General Hospital Ward”.

Table 3 - table showing results from question 3

What kind of ward did you/the patient stay in?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Acute Medical Unit	29.4%	10
Coronary Care Unit	11.8%	4
Dementia Unit	8.8%	3
High Dependency Unit	17.6%	6
Medical Assessment Unit	20.6%	7
Oncology Unit	2.9%	1
Renal Unit	2.9%	1
General Hospital Ward	44.1%	15
Mental Health Unit	0.0%	0
Care Home	8.8%	3
Other (please specify)	23.5%	8
answered question		34
skipped question		1

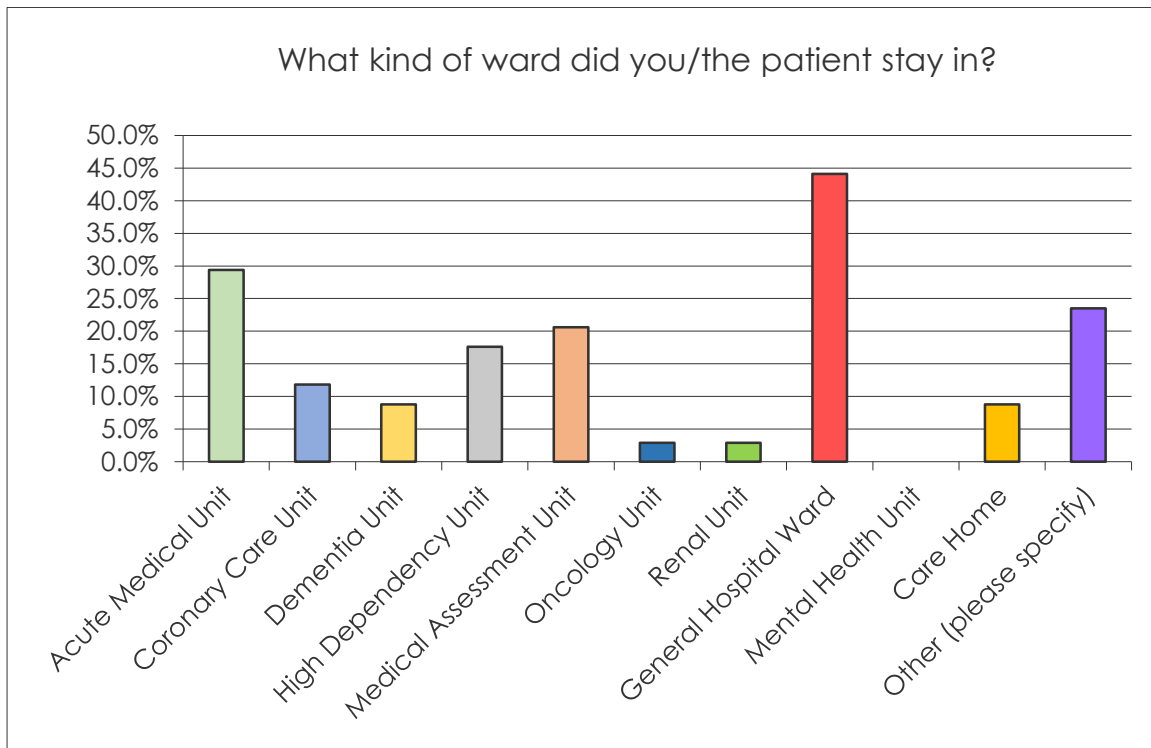


Chart 3 - Graphical display of results from question 3

Question 4. How long was the stay in hospital?

Table 4 and Chart 4, below, illustrate the results of question 4, asking about the amount of time the patient stayed in hospital.

62 % of respondents were in the setting for less than three weeks prior to discharge.

Table 4 - table showing results from question 4

How long was the stay in hospital?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
less than 1 week	32.4%	11
1-2 weeks	29.4%	10
3-4 weeks	17.6%	6
over 4 weeks - please specify length of stay	20.6%	7
<i>answered question</i>		34
<i>skipped question</i>		1

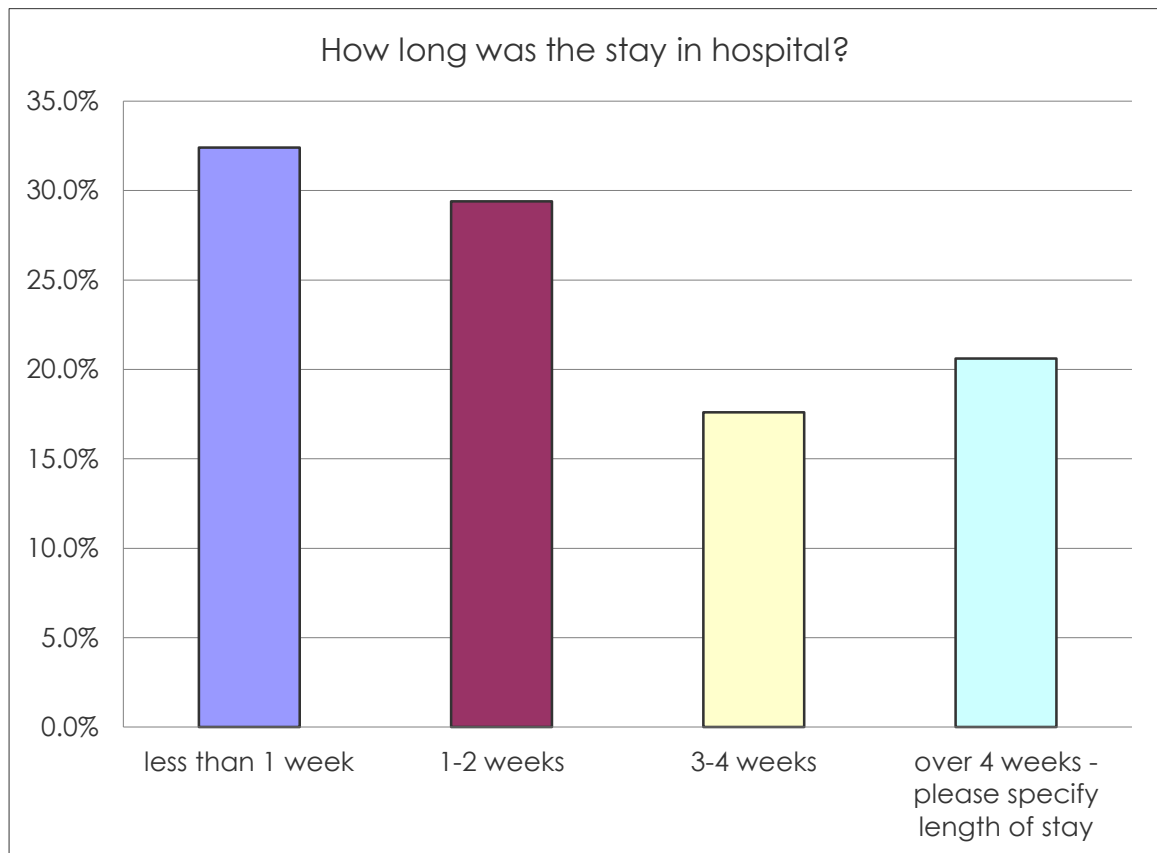


Chart 4 - Graphical display of results from question 4

Question 5. How satisfied were you/the patient with the treatment received by the healthcare staff?

Table 5 and Chart 5, below, illustrate the results of question 5, enquiring about patient satisfaction with the treatment received from the healthcare staff.

57 % of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the clinical treatment they received whilst within the setting. 31% were dissatisfied and a further 11.4% were very dissatisfied.

Table 5 - table showing results from question 5

How satisfied were you/the patient with the treatment received by the healthcare staff?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very satisfied	28.6%	10
Satisfied	28.6%	10
Dissatisfied	31.4%	11
Very dissatisfied	11.4%	4
<i>answered question</i>		35
<i>skipped question</i>		0

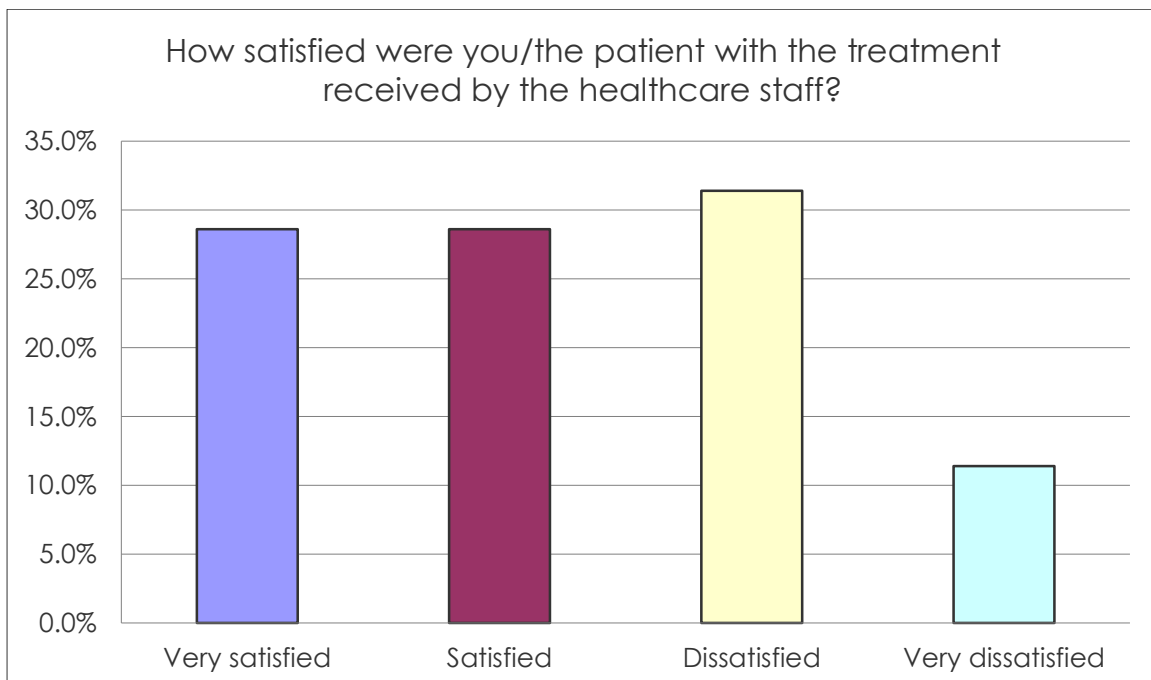


Chart 5 - Graphical display of results from question 5

Question 6. If you/the patient had more than one health issue - do you think all issues were considered when planning the discharge?

Table 6 and Chart 6, below, illustrate the results of question 6, dealing with the number of conditions that the patient was receiving treatment for prior to discharge.

59 % of respondents felt that all of their health issues were not considered when discharge was planned.

Table 6 - table showing results from question 6

If you/the patient had more than one health issue, do you think all issues were considered when planning the discharge?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.6%	13
No	59.4%	19
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

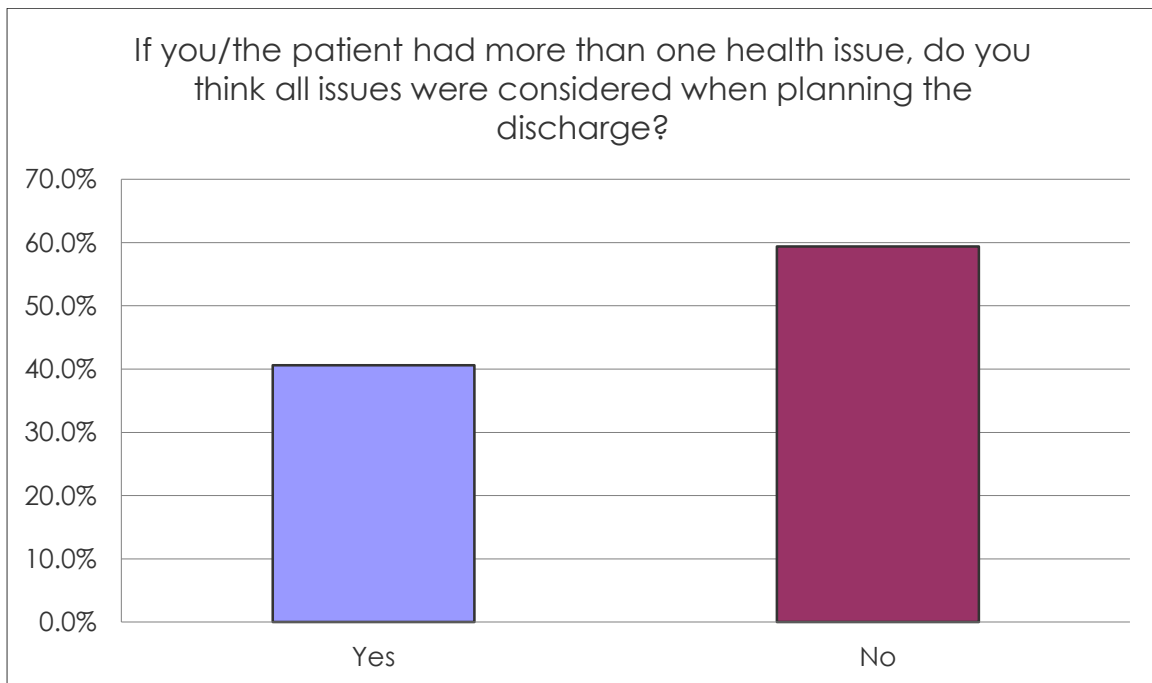


Chart 6 - Graphical display of results from question 6

Question 7. Did the staff ask you/the patient about the support that would be in place on discharge (home/family/community support)?

Table 7 and Chart 7, below, illustrate the results of question 7, concerning whether the patient was asked what support was made available to them post-discharge.

56 % of respondents were asked about available support at home for post-discharge.

Table 7 - table showing results from question 7

Did the staff ask you/the patient about the support that would be in place on discharge (home/family/community support)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	56.3%	18
No	43.8%	14
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

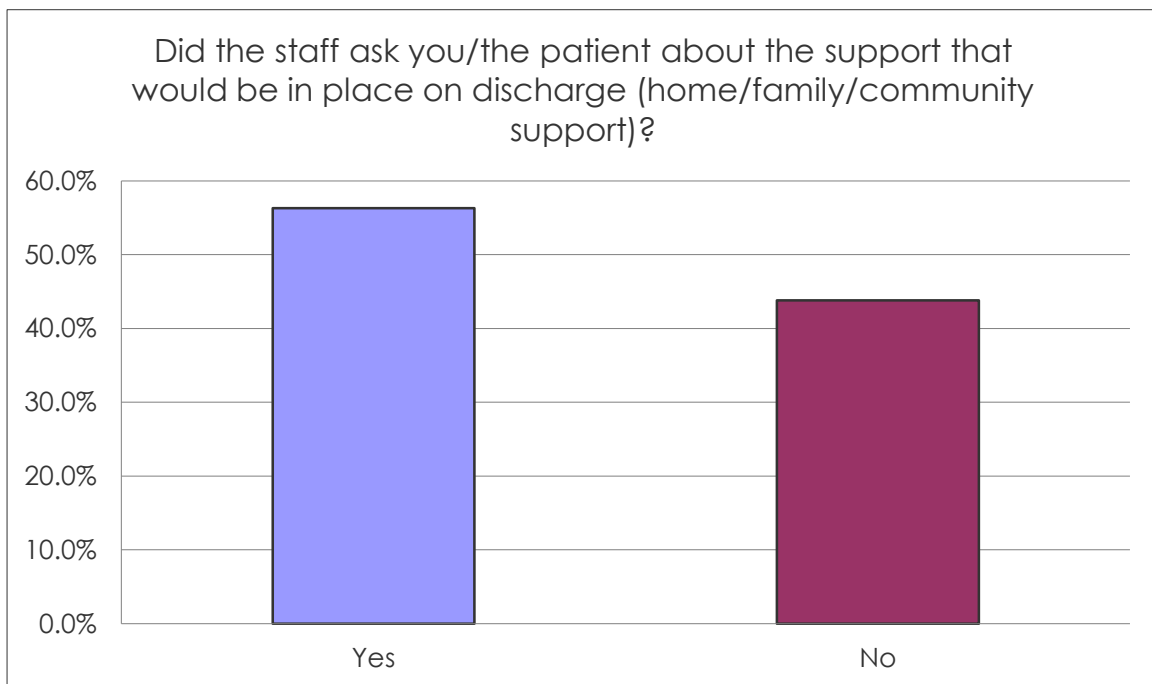


Chart 7 - Graphical display of results from question 7

Question 8. Did you/the patient feel ready to be discharged from hospital?

Table 8 and Chart 8, below, illustrate the results of question 8, concerning whether the patient felt that they were ready for discharge. Half of the respondents felt they were not ready to be discharged from hospital.

Table 8 - table showing results from question 8

Did you/the patient feel ready to be discharged from hospital?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	50.0%	16
No	50.0%	16
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

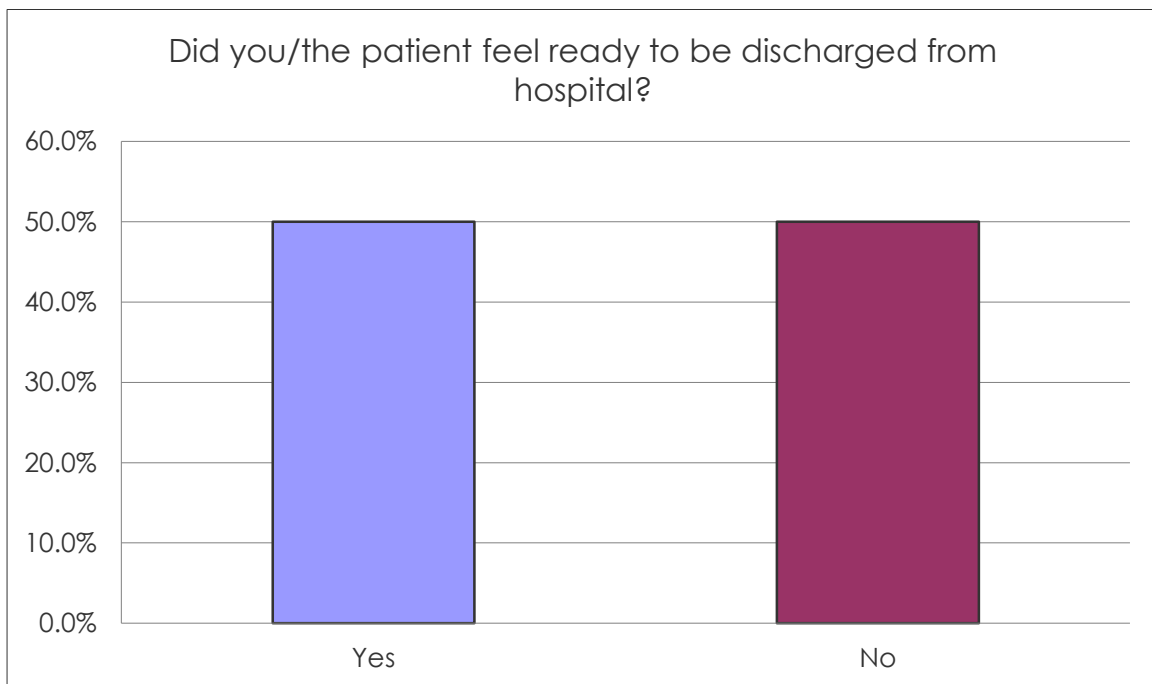


Chart 8 - Graphical display of results from question 8

Question 9. Did you/the patient feel involved in the decision making process regarding discharge?

Table 9 and Chart 9, below, show the results of question 9, asking whether the patient felt that they were sufficiently involved in the discharge decision making process.

60 % of respondents felt the patient was not involved in discharge decision making.

Table 9 - table showing results from question 9

Did you/the patient feel involved in the decision making process regarding discharge?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.0%	12
No	60.0%	18
<i>answered question</i>		30
<i>skipped question</i>		5

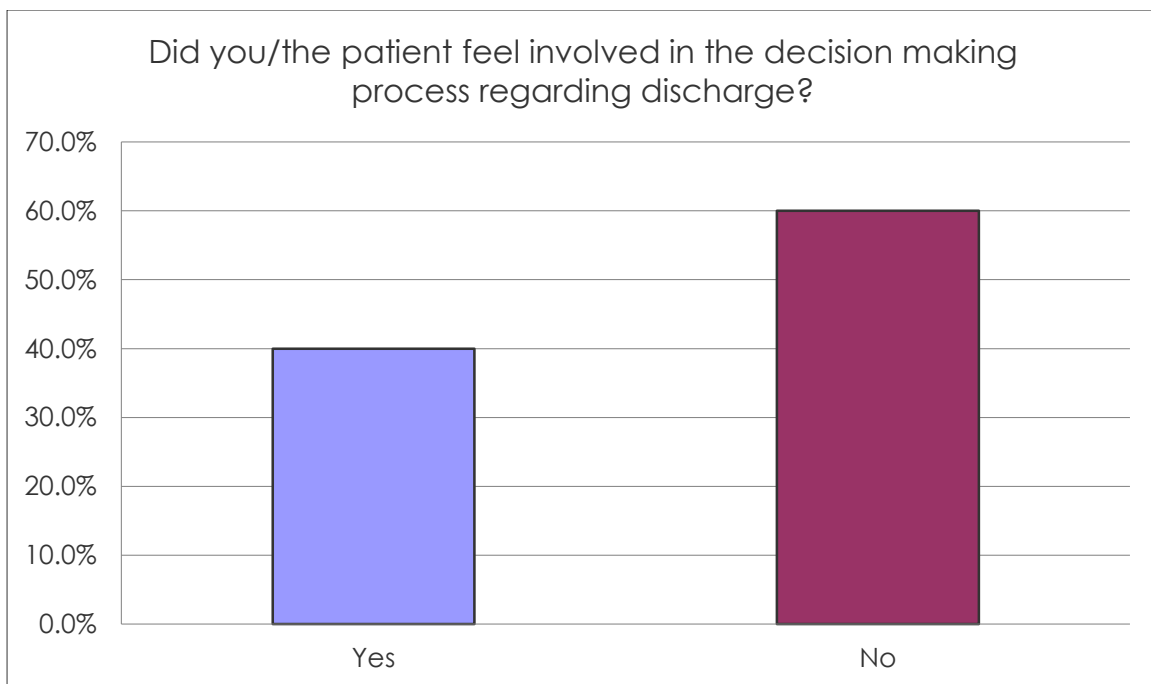


Chart 9 - Graphical display of results from question 9

Question 10. Did you/the patient feel the discharge was made?

Table 10 and Chart 10, below, show the outcome from question 10, concerning whether the patient felt that the timing of the discharge was correct.

47 % of respondents felt that the discharge was too early and 41 % felt it was at the right time, with 13 % feeling discharge was too late.

Table 10 - table showing results from question 10

Did you/the patient feel the discharge was made:		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Too soon	46.9%	15
Right time	40.6%	13
Too late	12.5%	4
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

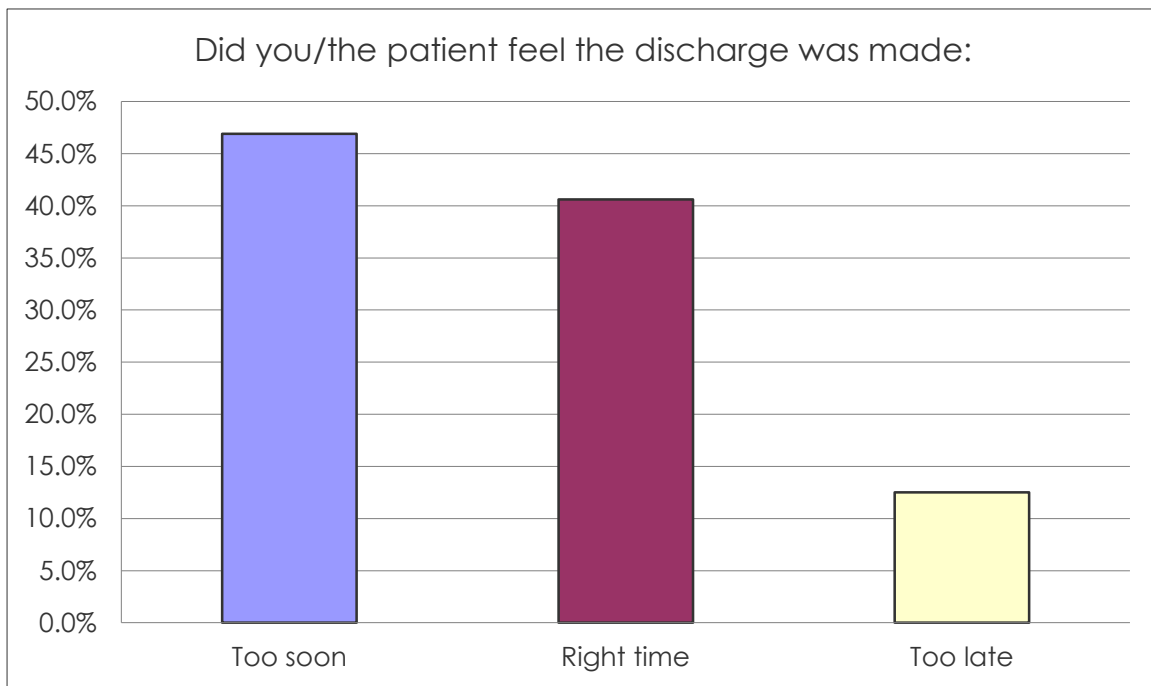


Chart 10 - Graphical display of results from question 10

Question 11. On discharge - were you/the patient given a treatment plan?

Table 11 and Chart 11, below, show the result from question 11, concerning whether there was given a post-discharge treatment plan.

56 3% of respondents were not given a care plan on discharge.

Table 11 - table showing results from question 11

On discharge - were you/the patient given a treatment plan?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	18.8%	6
No	56.3%	18
Don't know	25.0%	8
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

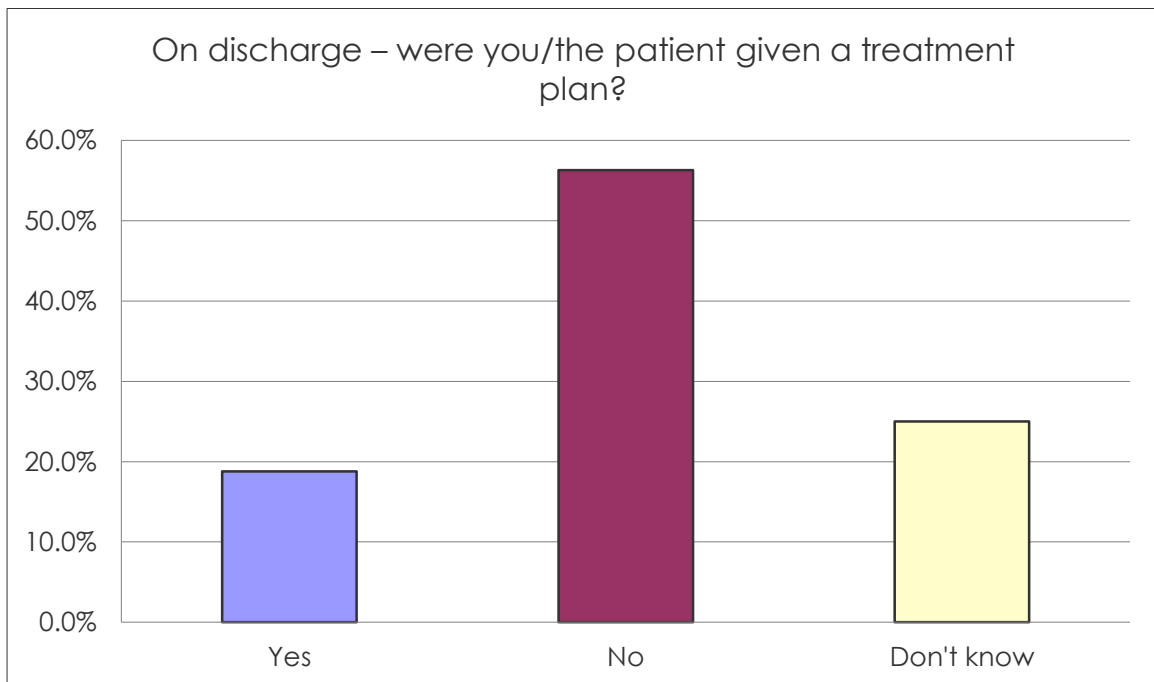


Chart 11 - Graphical display of results from question 11

Question 12. Where were you/the patient discharged to?

Table 12 and Chart 12, below, show the result from question 12, which asks where the patient was discharged to.

Three quarters of respondents reported that the patient was discharged to their home.

Table 12 - table showing results from question 12

Where were you/the patient discharged to?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Home	75.0%	24
Care Home	15.6%	5
Other hospital setting i.e. community hospital	6.3%	2
Other (please specify)	3.1%	1
answered question		32
skipped question		3

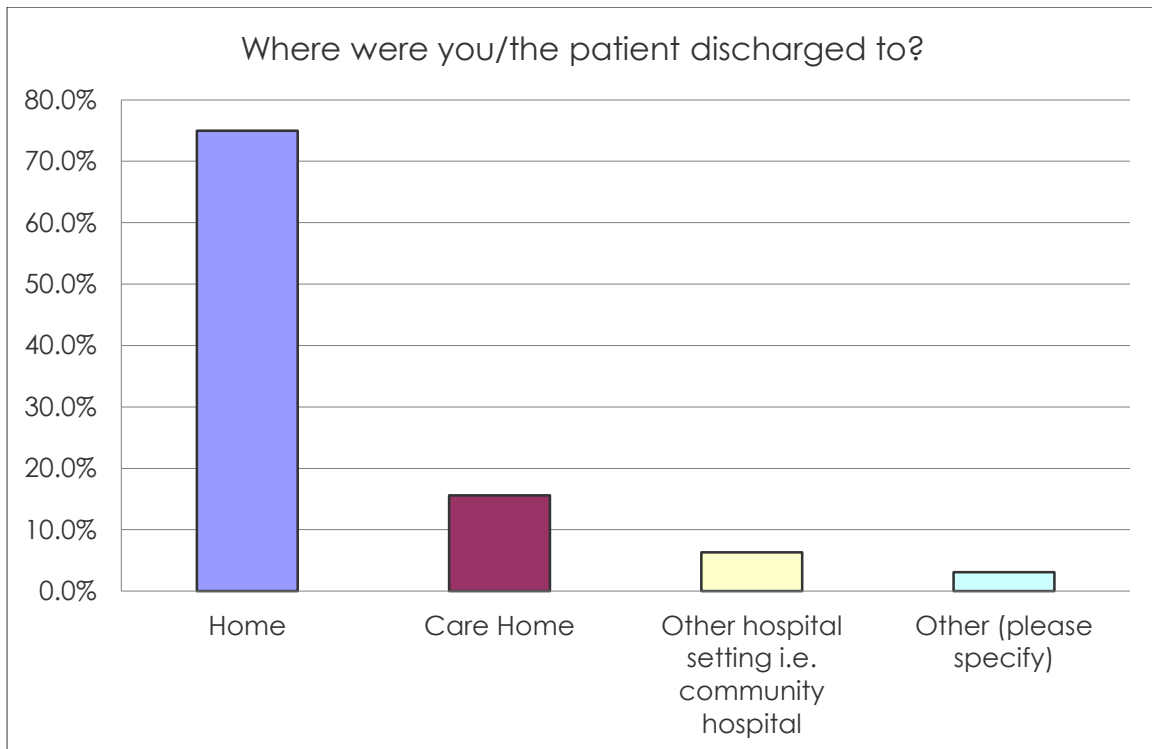


Chart 12 - Graphical display of results from question 12

Question 13. What time of the day did the discharge take place?

Table 13 and Chart 13, below, show the result from question 13, enquiring about the time of day the patient was discharged.

38 % of respondents said that discharge occurred between 4pm and 7pm and 19 % between 7 pm and 7 am.

Table 13 - table showing results from question 13

What time of the day did the discharge take place?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Between 7am - 10am	3.1%	1
Between 10am - 1pm	18.8%	6
Between 1pm - 4pm	21.9%	7
Between 4pm - 7pm	37.5%	12
Overnight between 7pm - 7am	18.8%	6
answered question		32
skipped question		3

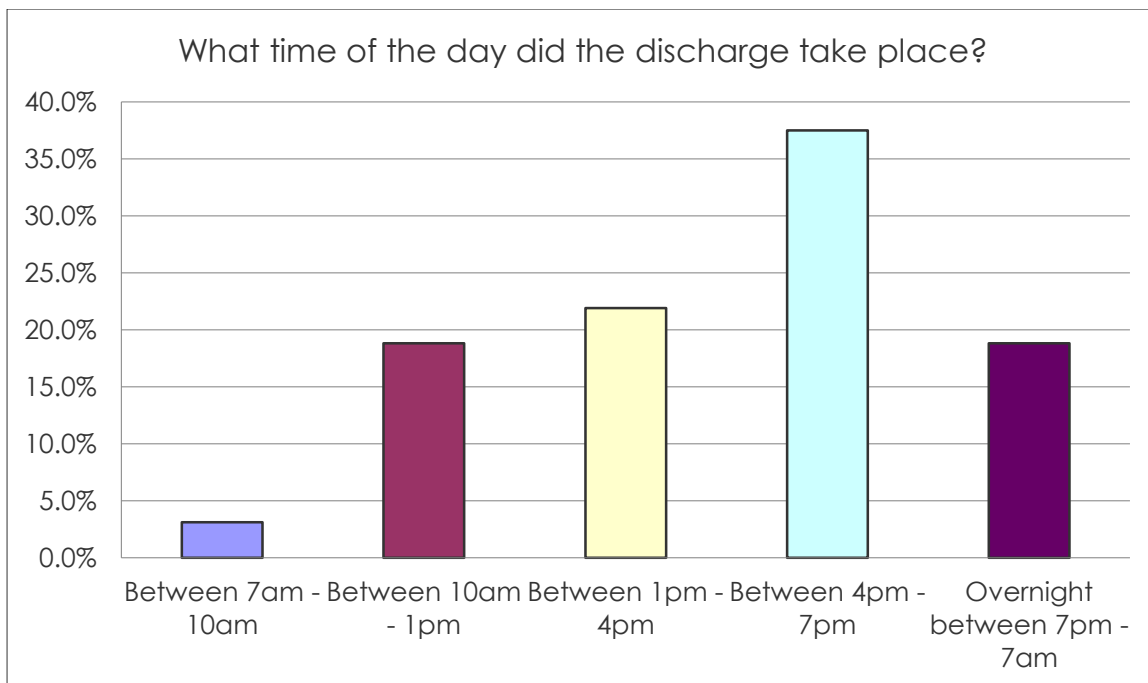


Chart 13 - Graphical display of results from question 13

Question 14. Was transport arranged on discharge?

Table 14 and Chart 14, below, show the result from question 14, concerned hospital organised for discharge.

56 % of respondents had no transport arranged for them on discharge.

Table 14 - table showing results from question 14

Was transport arranged on discharge?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	43.8%	14
No	56.3%	18
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

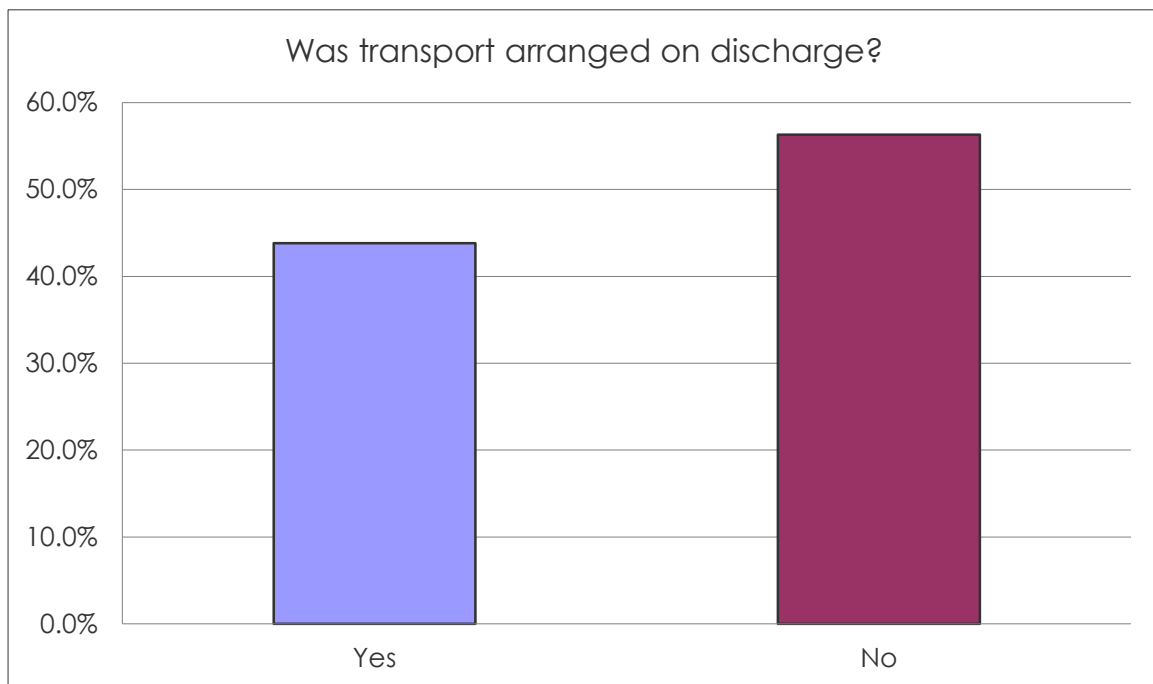


Chart 14 - Graphical display of results from question 14

Question 15. Did healthcare staff check the patient fully understood any instructions regarding follow up care/medication etc.?

Table 15 and Chart 15, below, show the result from question 15, asking whether the healthcare staff ensured that the patient fully understood instructions regarding follow up care.

59 % of respondents reported that healthcare staff did not check that the patient fully understood follow up care and medication requirements.

Table 15 - table showing results from question 15

Did healthcare staff check the patient fully understood any instructions regarding follow up care/medication etc?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.6%	13
No	59.4%	19
<i>answered question</i>		32
<i>skipped question</i>		3

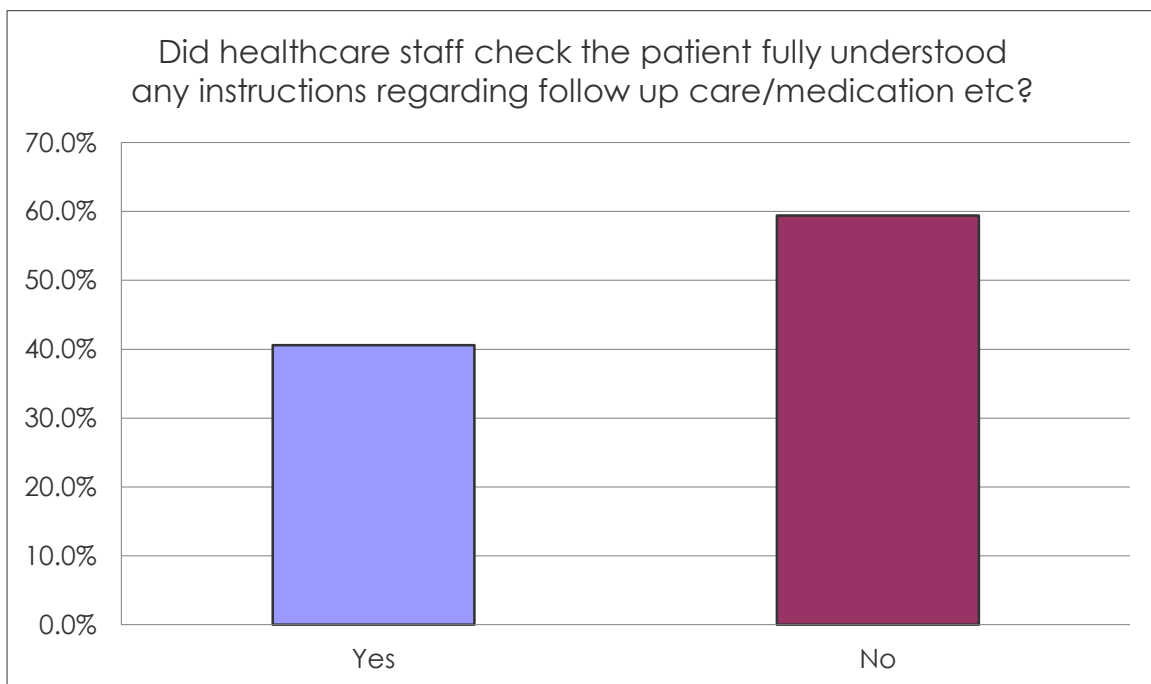


Chart 15 - Graphical display of results from question 15

Question 16. Were you/the patient readmitted to hospital within 28 days?

Table 16 and Chart 16, below, show the result from question 16, covering whether the patient had been readmitted to hospital within 28 days of discharge.

60 % of respondents were readmitted to hospital within 28 days, and of those, 59% were readmitted for the same condition (see question 17, below).

Table 16 - table showing results from question 16

Were you/the patient readmitted to hospital within 28 days?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.0%	12
No	60.0%	18
<i>answered question</i>		30
<i>skipped question</i>		5

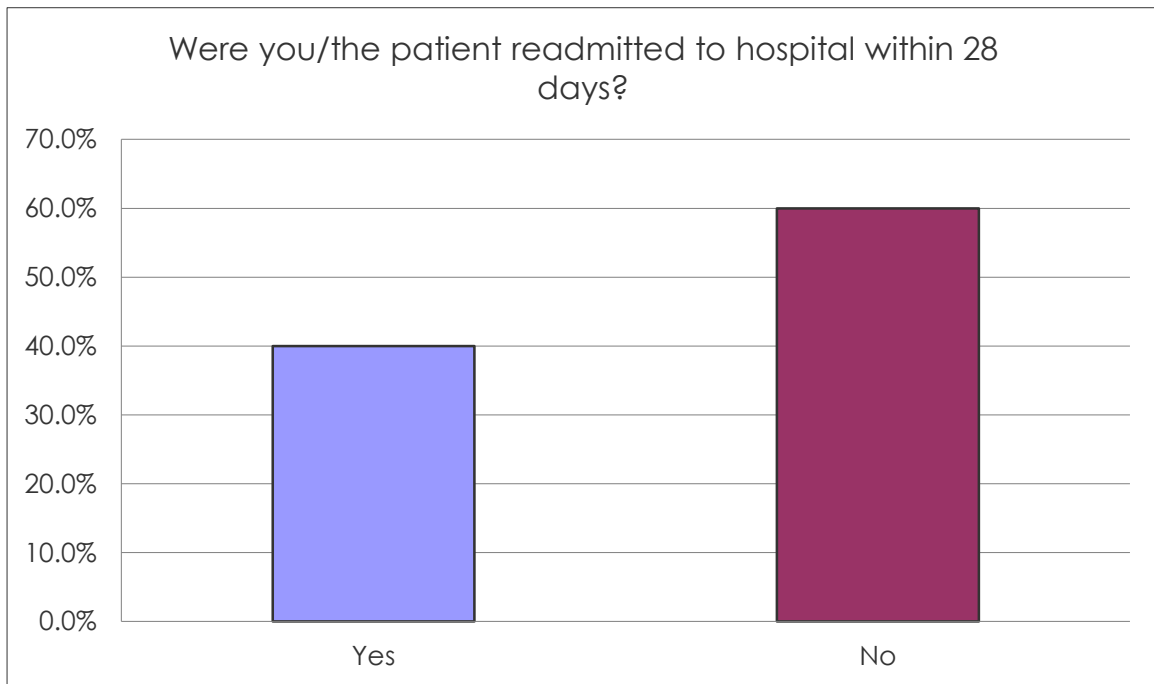


Chart 16 - Graphical display of results from question 16

Question 17. If answer to 18 was 'Yes', was this for the same condition?

Table 17 and Chart 17, below, show the result from question 17, asking whether, if the patient had been readmitted to hospital within 28 days of discharge, whether that readmission was for the same condition.

Of the 60 % of patients who were readmitted to hospital within 28 days of discharge, 59% were readmitted for the same condition.

Table 17 - table showing results from question 17

If yes to question 16 above, was this for the same condition?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	58.3%	7
No - please specify if possible	41.7%	5
	<i>answered question</i>	12
	<i>skipped question</i>	23

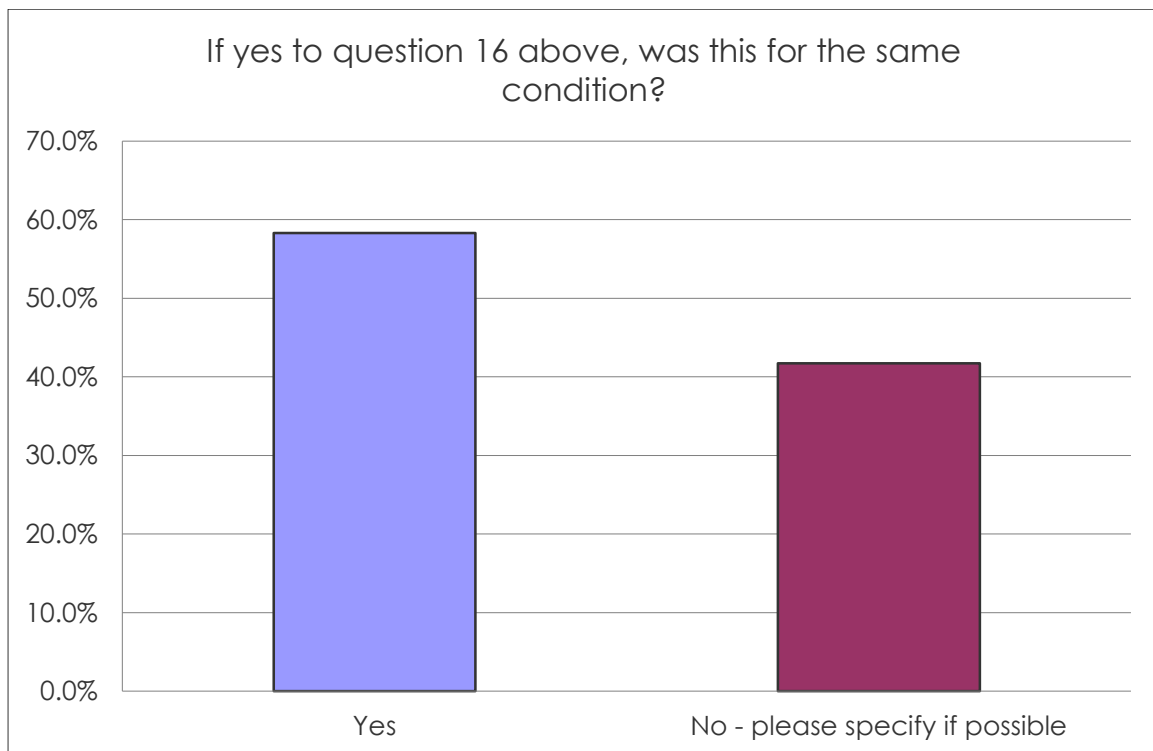


Chart 17 - Graphical display of results from question 17

Question 18. How easy did was it to access/obtain support following discharge?

Table 18 and Chart 18, below, show the result from question 18, enquiring how easy it was for the patient to access support after discharge.

50 % of respondents found it either difficult or very difficult to access / obtain support following discharge, with 7 % unable to access support at all.

Table 18 - table showing results from question 18

How easy did was it to access/obtain support following discharge?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very easy	23.3%	7
Easy	20.0%	6
Difficult	40.0%	12
Very difficult	10.0%	3
Unable to access support (please give reasons)	6.7%	2
Reasons unable to access support		5
<i>answered question</i>		30
<i>skipped question</i>		5

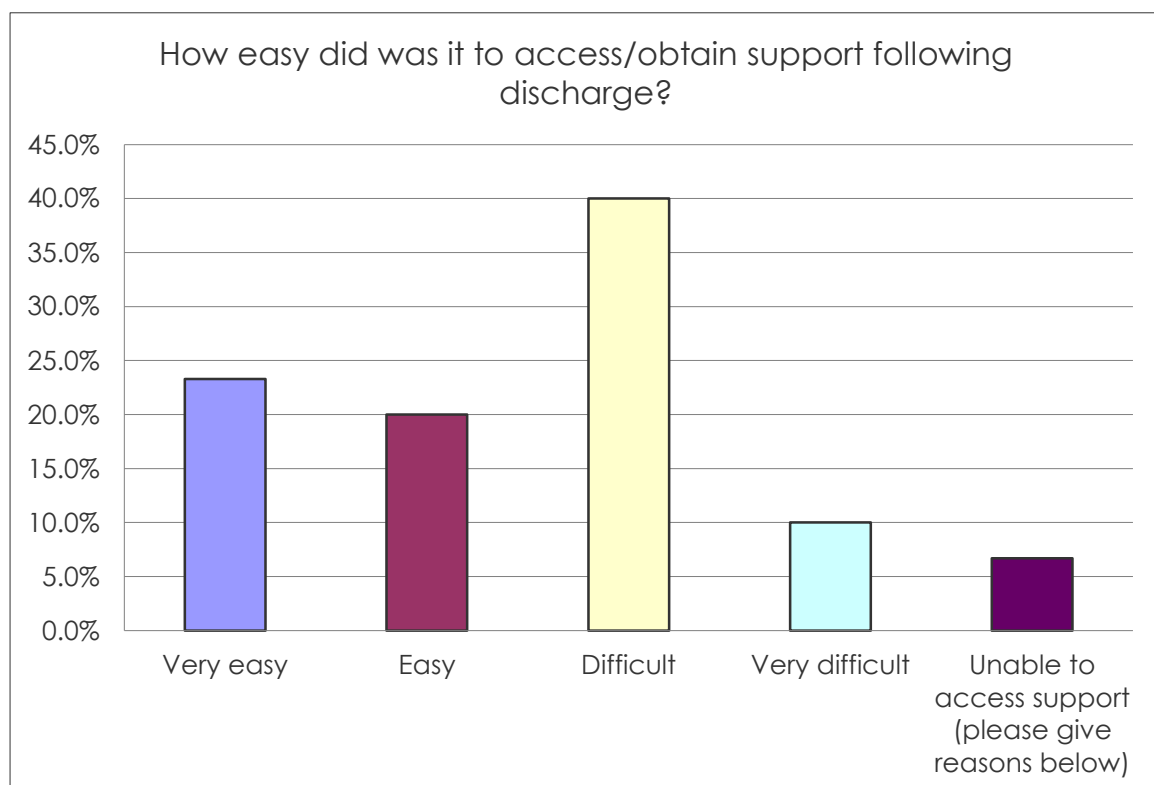


Chart 18 - Graphical display of results from question 18

Question 19. Did you/the patient visit their GP following discharge?

Table 19 and Chart 19, below, show the result from question 19, which asks whether the patient visited the GP after being discharged.

52 % of respondents visited their GP post-discharge

Table 19 - table showing results from question 19

Did you/the patient visit their GP following discharge?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	51.6%	16
No	48.4%	15
<i>answered question</i>		31
<i>skipped question</i>		4

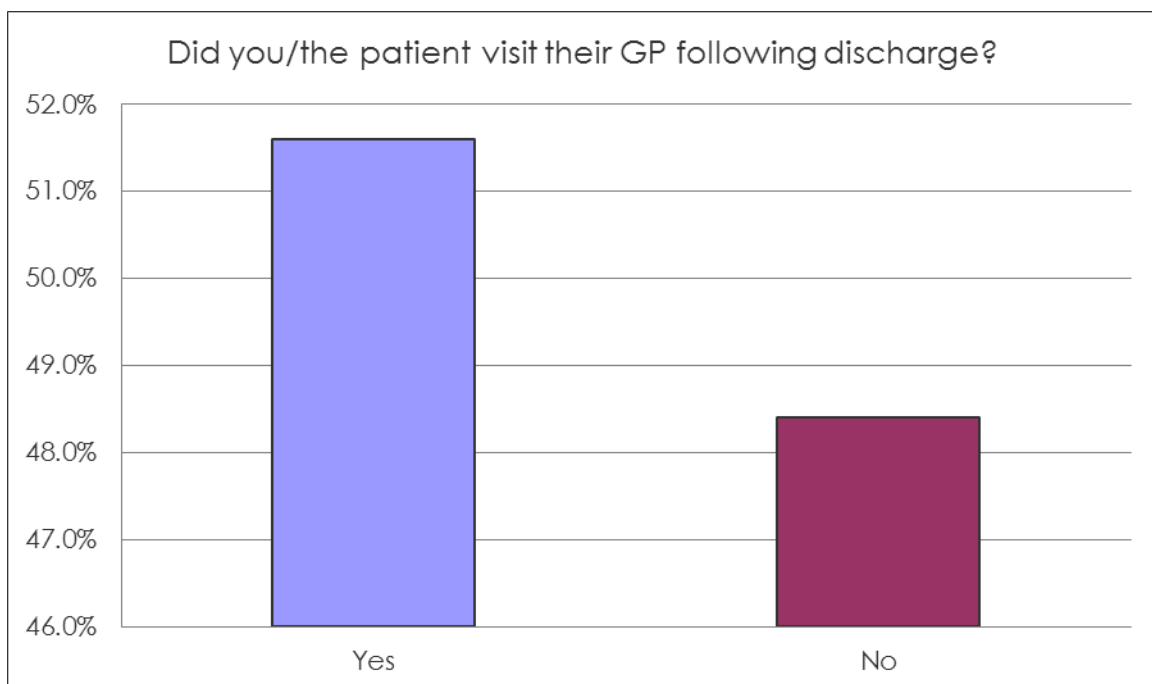


Chart 19 - Graphical display of results from question 19

Question 20. Did anyone from the healthcare service make contact to find out how you/the patient was getting along following discharge?

Table 20 and Chart 20, below, show the result from question 20. When asked whether the patient had contact from the relevant healthcare service,

70 % of respondents reported that there was no contact from the relevant healthcare service following discharge.

Table 20 - table showing results from question 20

Did anyone from the healthcare service make contact to find out how you/the patient was getting along following discharge?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	30.0%	9
No	70.0%	21
<i>answered question</i>		30
<i>skipped question</i>		5

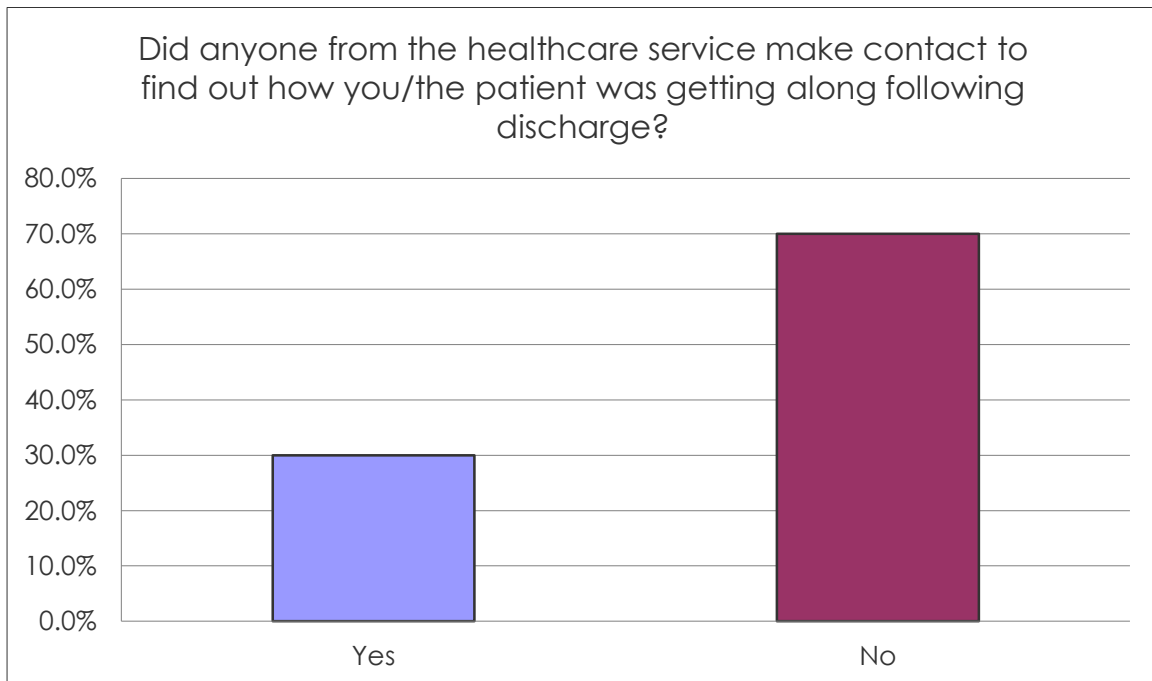


Chart 20 - Graphical display of results from question 20

Question 21. Demographics of Respondents:

All respondents, 15 of whom completed the demographics section of the survey, described their ethnicity as either *British* or *White-British*.

Table 21, below, illustrates that of the 14 respondents that answered the question, 79 % regarded themselves as having a disability.

Table 21 - table showing results from question on disability of respondents

Are you registered as having a disability?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	21.4%	3
No	78.6%	11
	<i>answered question</i>	14
	<i>skipped question</i>	21

Conclusions

Although the survey sample size is relatively small one several trends can be identified with discharge of frail and elderly patients from Cumbrian health and care settings.

The majority (44%) of respondents related to being discharged from a general hospital ward and 57% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the care received during their stay. 56% were asked, by clinical/medical staff, about available support at home post discharge.

However, more than half of the respondents felt unready for discharge and 60% were not involved in the decision to discharge. 47% felt their discharge was too early and 41% felt it was at the right time for them. 13% felt their discharge was too late.

56% were not provided with a care plan or information prior to discharge and where discharge information was provided, 59% of respondents stated that healthcare staff did not check that they fully understood follow up care and medication requirements.

70 % of respondents reported that there was no contact from the relevant healthcare service following discharge and 50 % of respondents found it either difficult or very difficult to access / obtain support following discharge, with 7 % unable to access support at all

52 % of respondents visited their GP post-discharge.

60 % of respondents were readmitted to hospital within 28 days (of those 59% were readmitted for the same condition).

In relation to discharge transport 56% of respondents had no transport arranged. 38% of respondents reported that discharge took place between 4pm and 7pm and a further 19% were transported post discharge between the hours of 7pm and 7am.

Overall whilst the level of care provided is considered by service users to be at least satisfactory there are concerns relating to the discharge process.

From the evidence presented there is a clear need for service providers to review their discharge policies and to ensure that staff responsible for patient interface are carrying out discharge procedures effectively.

This will ensure that patients receive the correct information at the correct time to ensure their onward recovery and to enable other services such as pharmacies and community carers to carry out their role for the patient.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations are made by Healthwatch Cumbria to all health and Social Care Service Providers and Commissioners to improve patient and carer discharge experience.

1. Ensure healthcare professionals discuss the discharge process with patients and families/carers and ensure that patients are involved in the decision making process.
2. Ensure that ALL patients are provided with comprehensive discharge information.
3. Ensure that patients, families and or carers fully understand discharge information.
4. Ensure that discharges for the frail and elderly do not take place between the hours of 7pm and 7am.
5. Ensure that where necessary follow-up contact is made as detailed in patient care plans and discharge information.