

**Independent survey on  
Carewatch domiciliary  
care provision in  
RBWM – update 2020**



# Reasons for undertaking the survey

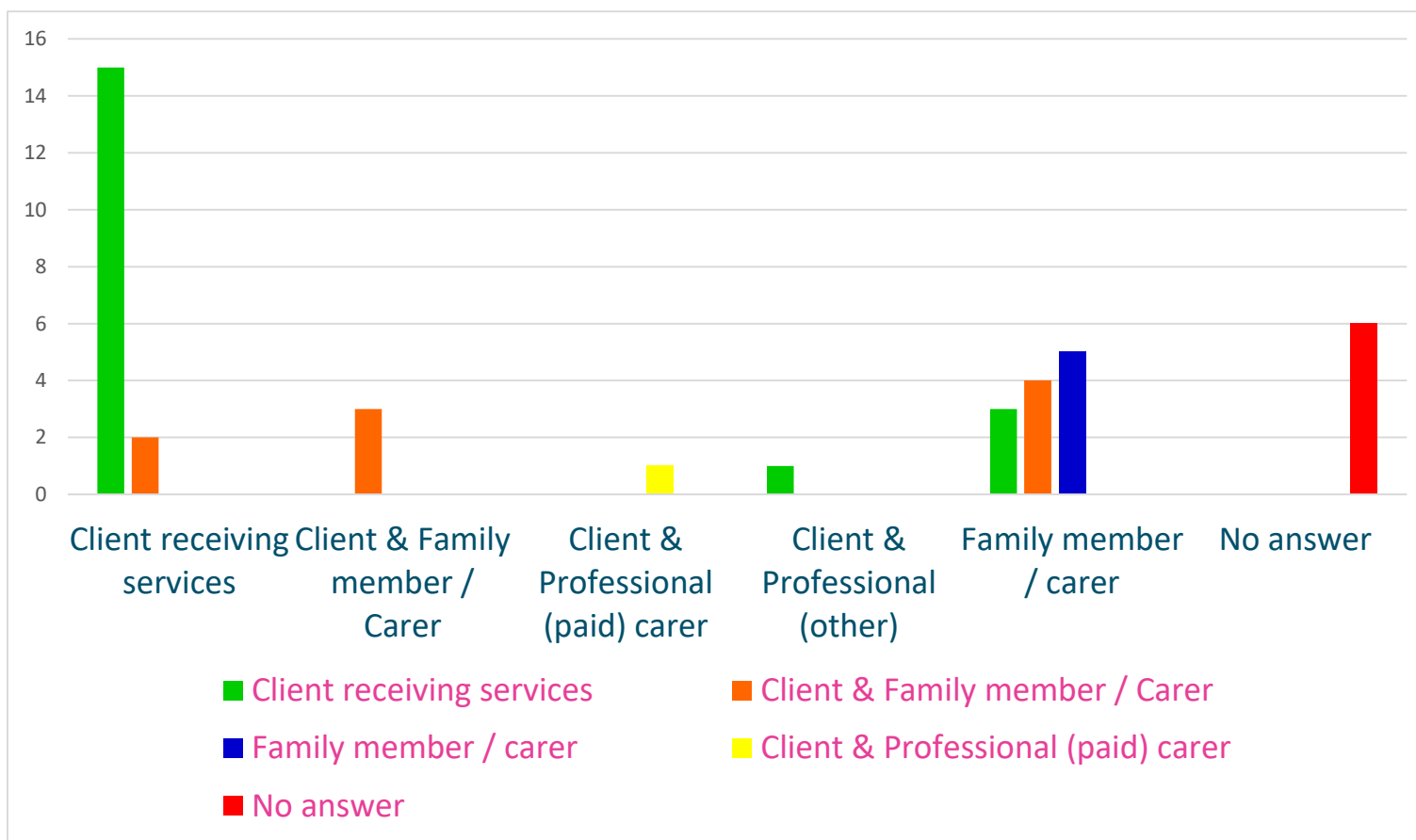
Healthwatch Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead (WAM) is the local independent consumer champion of health and social care services. One of its functions is to collect feedback on local services. Since November 2017 Healthwatch WAM has been a part of the local authority's Care Governance Board. This board, which comprises senior local authority officers, Optalis staff and representation from the East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group, monitors the quality of the social care provision commissioned by the local authority. The board can enforce action on providers to improve quality, prevent further placements at underperforming providers and liaises with other agencies, such as the Care Quality Commission, to ensure social care provision is safe and effective. Healthwatch WAM brings independent evidence and a different insight into these discussions and decisions.

In November 2018 Healthwatch WAM undertook an independent survey of Carewatch, with clients receiving their support and their family carers, due to intelligence received by itself, and other Care Governance Board members, about the quality of the provision.

In January 2020, this survey was repeated to see if the experience of service users had improved. This is the report of the results (which are presented alongside relevant results of the 2018 survey for comparison).

Due to data protection regulations, the local authority cannot identify or disclose personal information about clients of Carewatch directly to WAM. It was therefore agreed that the survey, a covering letter and a freepost return envelope would be sent out by Optalis.

# Information on who completed the survey



Who completed the survey

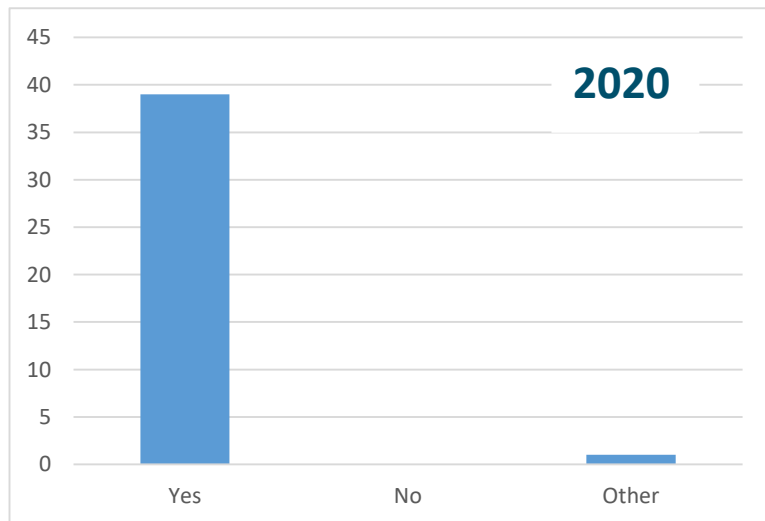
Reflecting the views of

# Survey questions and answers

108 surveys were sent out on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020. By the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020 40 surveys were returned. This is a response rate of 37%; the 2018 survey had a response rate of 20%

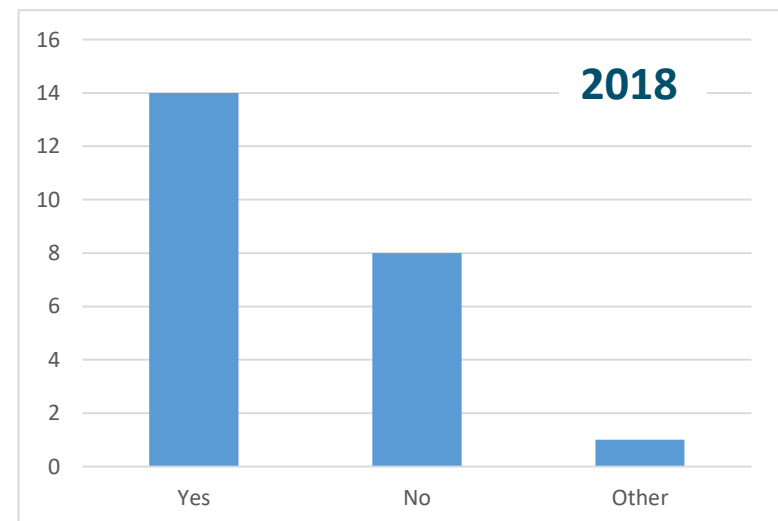
The survey comprised of eight statements which respondents were asked to agree, disagree or provide an 'other' response - with a text box for more information. There was also a box for additional comments about the care received at the end of the survey and a question about who completed the survey and who's views were represented. Below are details of the responses received.

1) The care is provided by the same staff most of the time.



#### Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)

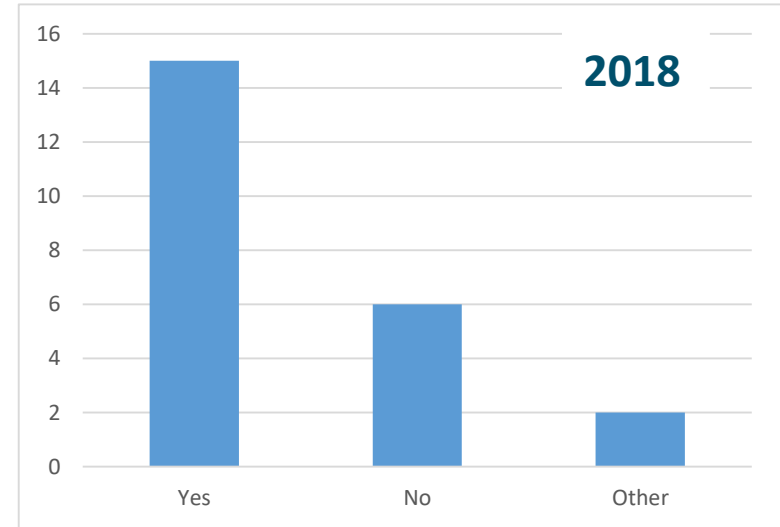
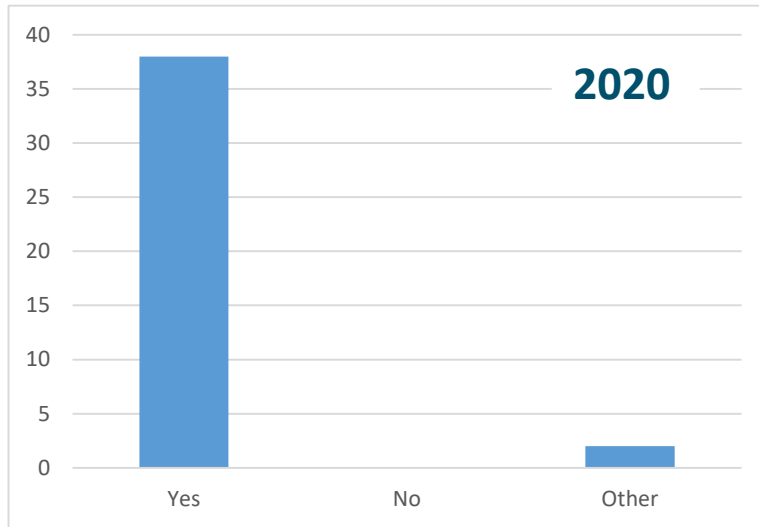
"Day time yes, evenings no"



#### Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)

"No, except mornings"

2) The care staff understand my/the person's past and present health and support needs and treat me/them as an individual.



**Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)**

"Most of them do"

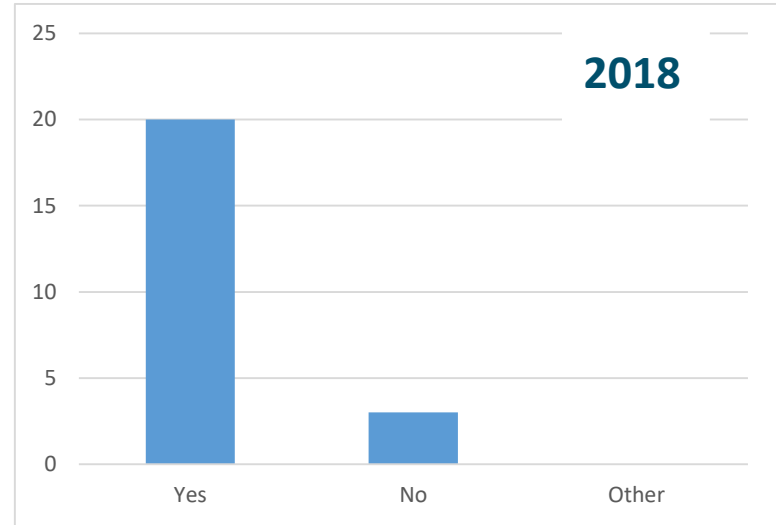
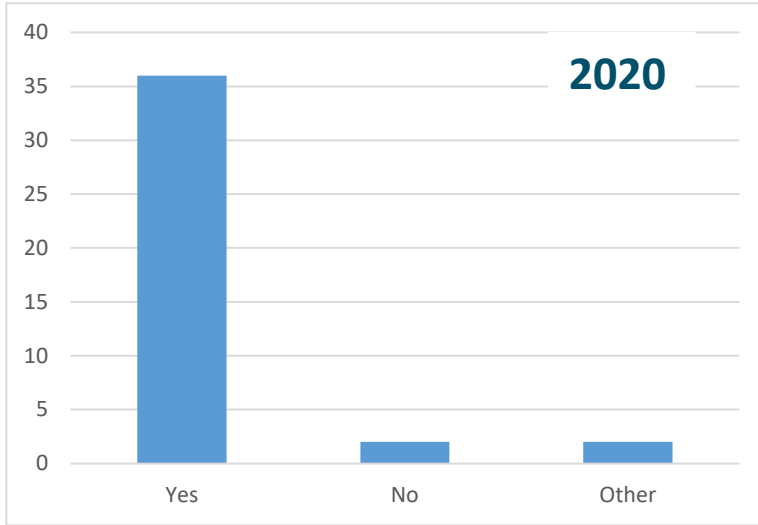
"Possibly"

**Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)**

"Yes to morning carers, no to the rest"

No details given

3) I know who to contact if I/they need additional help and support for my/their health and wellbeing.

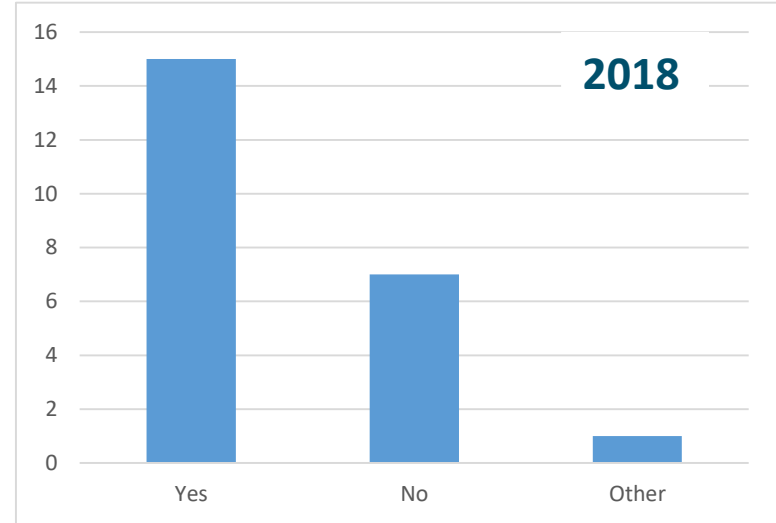
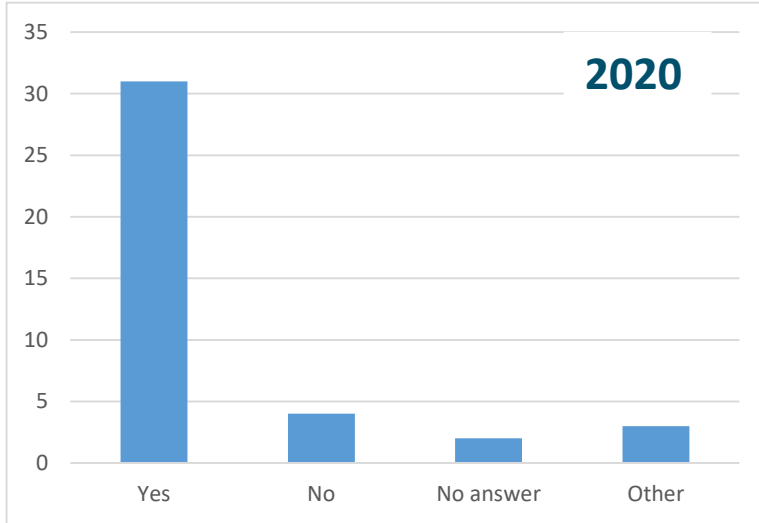


**Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)**

"I am profoundly deaf therefore I cannot use the phone only text"

"Mum doesn't call Carewatch, she calls Forestcare, me or my sister"

4) My unpaid carers and family members feel supported by my care team and know where to go to get independent support.



**Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)**

"Don't know"

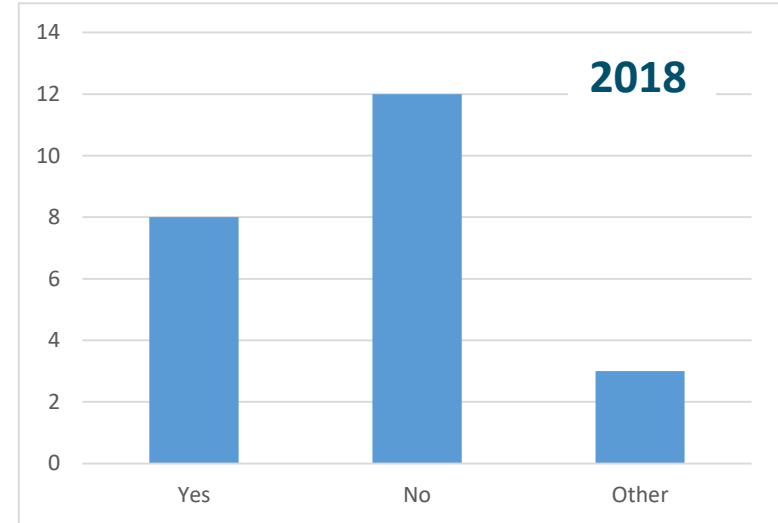
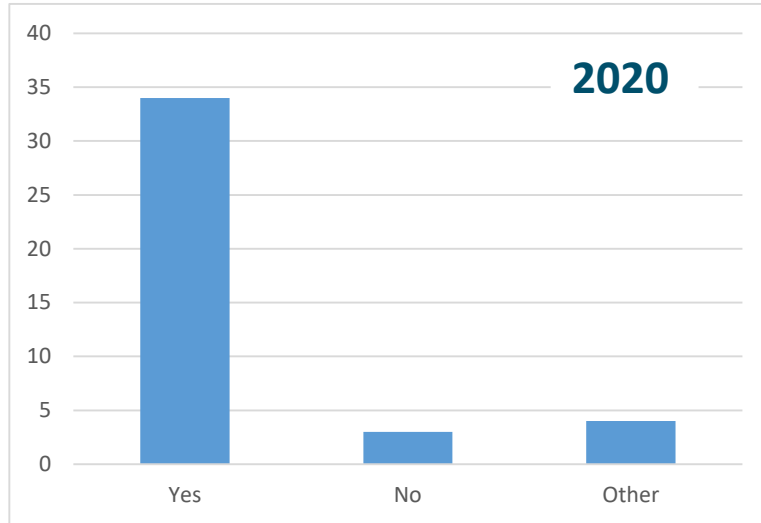
"No family"

"Only recently found out because of issues"

**Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)**

"Took time to find out who to contact"

5) The care turns up at the requested time but is flexible if I/the person needs to change the time.



**Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)**

"Times are liable to be irregular"

"Only certain carers come on time and as I am bed bound this is a problem"

"Usually"

"Sometimes late"

**Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)**

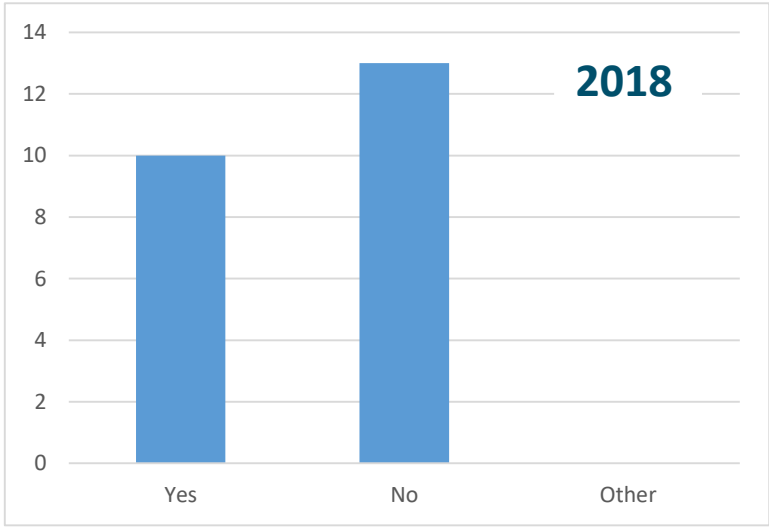
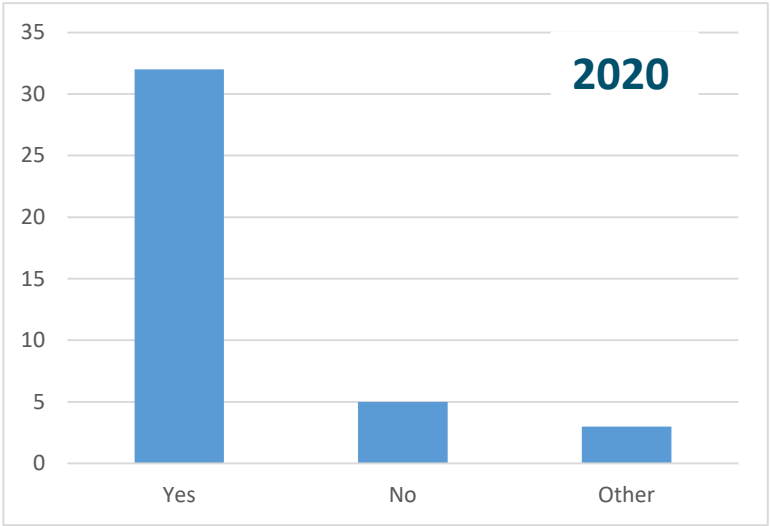
"Sometimes"

"Very flexible!!"

"Sometimes, usually late due to no allowance for travelling time"



6) I am happy with the way my care company communicates with me/the person and other people who may support me/them.



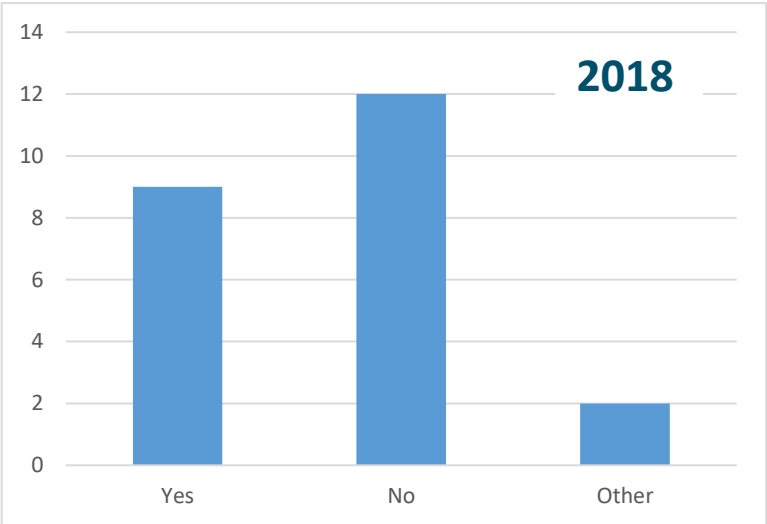
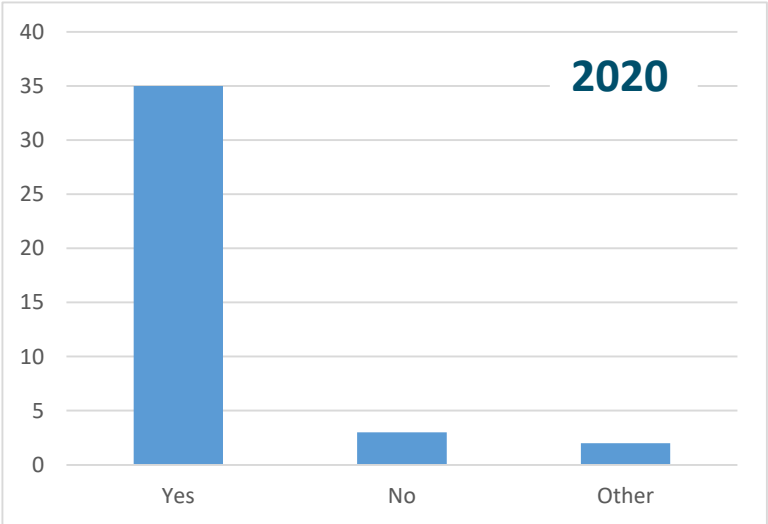
**Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)**

"Not especially"

"Now they do"

No details given

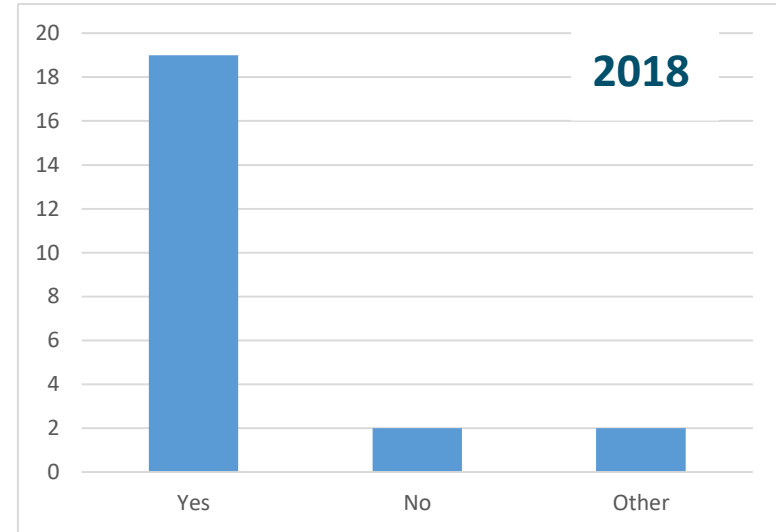
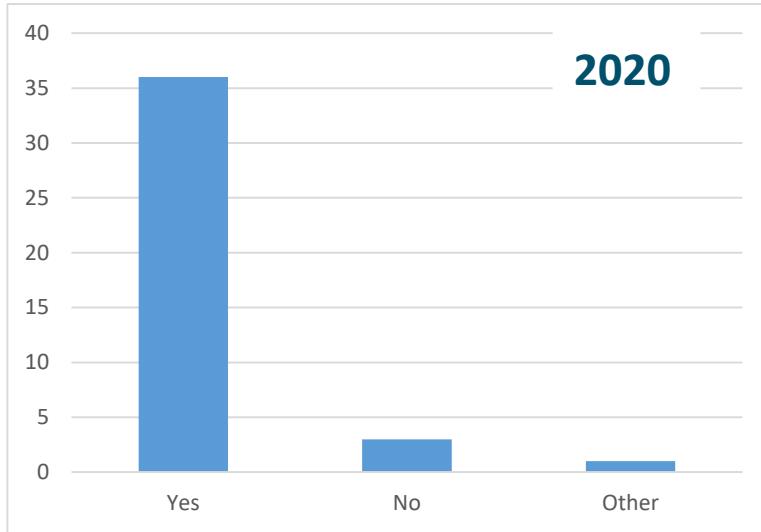
7) Overall I am happy with the company that currently provides my/the person's support.



**Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)**  
"Depends"  
"Currently acceptable"

**Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)**  
"With morning staff only"  
No answer given

8) I know who to contact if I/we have a concern, complaint or compliment to make.



**Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)**  
"See additional comments"

**Breakdown of 'Other' answer(s)**  
"Sort of"  
"I have often complained to the coordinators but without success"


**People were also provided with space to provide additional comments:**

*"I cannot express how much the carers have helped me. They always have the time to chat to me or do anything I need help with. They always try to find a few minutes to sit and chat with me and I find this so valuable. I honestly couldn't expect anything more and give thanks to all concerned. That I have actually managed to find this place as it has saved my life."*

*"I am really pleased with my carers they are very kind and helpful."*

*"I am very happy with the care workers I have."*

*"This is a new contract and the answers given are provided with little supporting evidence (less than 10 weeks) but they do reflect the situation at this time."*

*"Very happy."* 

*"We are happy with the way the carers support the clients but not with the company."*

*"Most carers are helpful and encouraging. Others it is just a job."*

*"Everything goes really well."*

*"From Carewatch I have been provided with a rota who, when and time care workers will attend my needs during the day from 06:15 to 20:45."*

*"The lady who does the rotas is the person I would refer to with problems."*

*“The carers are a great bunch, it is the management that gets me down. Phoning and leaving a message they never seem to comply. I wish they would sort themselves out. Asking for early carer visits because of hospital appointments in time to be ready for the ambulance can cause problems even if the management know early enough.”*

*“Family members do not know who to contact when required.”*

*“I am quite happy. I like the help and support they give. They work hard.”*

*“Office staff do not pass messages on (for example cancelling calls). I am not informed when carers are running late.”*

*“We had a problem with one of their carers but all resolved now.”*

*“Thank you I am happy with all the care.”*

*“Most of the time I get regular carers but on the rare occasion when I have new or different carers the service they provide is not always very good.”*

The majority of the 17 comments are positive. Where issues have been identified this seems to be with particular individuals or with communication with the office. This is very different to the comments received during the last survey; the majority of the 17 comments received then were negative where issues raised included communication with office, continuity of care, serious errors i.e. with medication or nutrition, carers' attitude and high use of agency staff.

# Conclusion and Recommendations

At the time of the last survey the Care Quality Commission (CQC) published a report (October 2018) rating the service as 'Requires Improvement'. A further visit to see if required improvements had been made resulted in an update published in March 2019 which, again, found the service 'Requires Improvement'.

In April 2019 the service came under a new provider; the service has not been inspected since this change.

Below are the main findings from the 2018 survey with updates from the 2020 survey.

*A significant proportion of the respondents (on average a third) are unhappy with the continuity of staff providing their care and support, staff's understanding of their health and support needs and being treated like an individual.* 2020 – almost everyone who responded (39 out of 40) said they had the same staff most of the time and again, almost everyone (38 out of 40) said the care staff understood the health and support needs of the person they provided care for and treated them as an individual. This was also shown by the fact that many people (34 out of 40) said that staff turned up at the requested time but were also flexible if the person needed to change the time.

Although the majority of people know who to contact if they additional support for their health and wellbeing, a third of unpaid carers/relatives do not feel supported by the care team or know where to go to get independent support. 2020 – almost everyone who responded (36 out of 40) knew who to contact for additional support for their health and wellbeing time and the majority of respondents who answered and had family / unpaid carers (31 out of 37) said that family / unpaid carers felt supported and knew where to go to get independent support.

The survey results (2018) and additional comments indicated serious problems with care and support visits including timings, lateness and inflexibility and serious problems with communication including response to complaints and concerns raised (although there was a high level of awareness about how to make a complaint or

raise a concern). 2020 – The majority of people (35 out of 40) are happy with the company that currently provides the support and where concerns have been highlighted these appear to be with particular individuals or with communication with the office. No serious concerns, such as missed medication, were mentioned in the 2020 responses.

The results and recommendations from the last Healthwatch survey shared with the Care Governance Board and CQC, and the subsequent actions taken by the Local Authority as contract holders and the CQC as regulators, appear to have resolved many of the issues people receiving support, and their family carers, were experiencing. Currently no one responding to the survey has highlighted a serious concern that would need referring to the Safeguarding Board or CQC.

However, there are still some recommendations for both provider and the local authority.

### **Recommendations:**

- The provider should ensure there are robust procedures in place to ensure effective and accessible communication with clients and their families; advising them of unavoidable delays of care visits, the timeframe to responding to telephone calls/emails, and that these are communicated to clients and relevant family members and monitored to ensure they are being met.
- All social care teams should continue to ensure people who receive support and their unpaid carers/relatives are given information about local independent support and sources of information such as Healthwatch WAM, the CQC and advocacy services.