



Mental Health and Wellbeing in Care Homes

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Acknowledgements

Ealing would like to acknowledge the individuals and groups who contributed to this research study.

Thank you to Minster Care Group, who run Sycamore Lodge, Chestnut Lodge, Elm Lodge and Martin House Care Homes in Ealing, for hosting our visits. We would especially like to thank the 116 residents and staff who took the time to complete our survey and provide their feedback. We would also like to thank Care Home Managers for supporting and accommodating our visits.

Thank you to Ealing Council colleagues who supported the focus of this study, the formulation of survey questions and facilitated access to the Care Homes visited.

Thank you to Healthwatch staff and volunteers who contributed to all stages of production of this study and resulting report.



Introduction and background

About Us

Healthwatch Ealing (HWE) is an independent consumer champion for local health and social care services. We help local people to voice their views and opinions about the services they use in order to improve them and enable them to meet service users' needs.

At HWE, we:

- Collect feedback from the public.
- Produce reports that highlight good practice and make recommendations for improvement.
- Present these reports to those involved in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of health and social care services.
- Share the views of local people with Healthwatch England to help them carry out their work as the national champion.



Background

In September 2022, Healthwatch Ealing launched a new project looking at mental health among staff and residents in care homes.

By talking directly to stakeholders Healthwatch hoped to gain an understanding of the dynamics at play in the environment. Our intention was to understand the pressures of care home living and working, identify best practice and to enlist the aid of our partners to improve conditions for all involved.

Methodology: Participants

116 participants were recruited across 4 care homes in Ealing: Sycamore Lodge Care Home, Chestnut Lodge Care Home, Martin House Care Home and Elm Lodge Care Home.

Over the course of 4 weeks (September 2022), face-to-face interviews were held at each care home.

All of those who wished to engage and could complete the questionnaire, were given an opportunity to do so.

Respondents were asked to provide monitoring information, including age, gender and ethnicity. For more information see Appendix C.

Care home	Management	Staff	Residents	Total
Sycamore Lodge	3	14	11	28
Chestnut Lodge	2	17	9	28
Elm Lodge	2	17	11	30
Martin House	2	20	8	30
Total	9	68	39	116

Methodology: Data collection

- We conducted a series of surveys across 4 care homes in Ealing, containing both multiple choice options and space for free text.
- 3 surveys were carried out at each care home. Each survey was tailored for the representative groups – Management; Staff; Residents.
- Questions for residents were focussed on mental health and experiences in care. Questions for management and staff were focussed on stressors, challenges and positive practice within roles.
- Surveys were carried out one-to-one with Healthwatch staff supporting completion/discussion.
- Standardised descriptions of the nature of the survey, data uses, protection and the rights of respondents were provided in both written and verbal form to all potentially eligible respondents before obtaining verbal informed consent for participation in the survey.

Limitations

Disclaimer: This report reflects the individual experiences of staff and residents from four large Care Homes in Ealing. The information is to be considered and utilised to improve mental health and wellbeing across the Care Home sector in Ealing, whilst acknowledging that care homes come in all shapes and sizes and not all the issues highlighted in this report may be relevant in each care home setting.

Sample Selection: We saw 4 care large homes. They were identified in consultation with the CQC and Local Authority colleagues and gave permission for us to visit the premises.

Depth Limitation: The resident's survey was created with its respondents in mind. It is intentionally shorter than most of our questionnaires, acknowledging the cognitive challenges faced.

Staff Response: Our contact with staff took place during "office hours" and this presented problems relating to both individuals available time and focus. We also recognise that we were meeting staff for the first time and had no real opportunity to develop the relationship and trust.

How to read this report

Findings are presented under thematic headings. Under each heading, we have summarised the key findings and provided our recommendations.

We also provide additional findings and quotes from participants that highlight our findings.

We have provided a visual breakdown of responses to each question in the appendix.



Key Findings and recommendations

Summary Recommendations

Staffing and pay

Consideration of wage increases or cost of living bonuses

Implementation of reward and recognition and other additional incentive schemes, such as 'finders fees' to support recruitment and retention

Provision of clear information on career progression pathways

Provision of clear guidelines around bank holiday entitlements

Clear policy and processes around payment for covering shifts, which is reviewed annually

Better internal communications with staff about recruitment plans and progress, and results of workload reviews and actions

Training

Taking advantage of the many options for free training provided by the NHS

Utilising more 1-2-1 and face to face options

Sourcing specific training around Dementia that can help staff deal with and process the emotional and mental impact of caring for these residents/patients

Summary Recommendations

MH support for staff

Regular mental health check-ins and regularly scheduled supervision, where this is not already in place

MH support for residents

Reflection on the actions and activities that enable this positive environment to be experienced by residents. We recommend this is captured and shared across the care home sector in Ealing

More staff engagement time with residents in relation to care and more social contact time built into job roles and responsibilities

A review of processes and practices that support staff consistency, identifying actions that can go further, and improve what may already be focus of delivery

Activities

A full review of the activities on offer with a focus on social activities that connect residents together or with staff

Activity review could further extend to external links with schools, youth groups, neighborhood/community schemes

Information

With residents', jointly agree approaches, actions or tailor-made personal plans that improve the information flow, planning and preparedness for appointments

Staffing and Pay

Key finding: Staff have job satisfaction and report fantastic team and management support. However, they equally feel that they are overworked and underpaid and feel unable to fully cater to needs and deliver quality care to the residents.

Recommendations: We recommend that management address these concerns by:

- Consideration of wage increases or cost of living bonuses.
- Implementation of reward and recognition and other additional incentive schemes, such as 'finders fees' to support recruitment and retention.
- Provision of clear information on career progression pathways.
- Provision of clear guidelines around bank holiday entitlements.
- Clear policy and processes around payment for covering shifts, which is reviewed annually.
- Better internal communications with staff about recruitment plans and progress, and results of workload reviews and actions.

Detailed findings

- Whilst over 90% of staff believe they are a valued member of the team and have satisfaction and fulfilment from their work, less than 70% of staff believe they are well paid.
- In response to a broad question about job satisfaction, and another about what could improve the work environment and support better mental health and wellbeing, the specific matter of pay, career progression, and remuneration for unscheduled shift cover was raised repeatedly.
- Being 'short staffed' was one of the most highlighted themes, mentioned by staff and managers. One staff member said that due to a shortage of people they have to rush to complete their tasks which leads to stress. Others commented on workloads, stresses and pressures and this was echoed in residents' feedback, which sighted staff being too busy to engage and deliver care.
- On the positive side, over 95% say their workplace is welcoming and inclusive and many report a job satisfaction that motivates them more than the money. Over 90% have a good work/life balance, reporting doing things that bring them joy and pleasure outside of work.

Selected comments

"Employ more staff."

"More staff, increase salary."

"The team is brilliant but sometimes there is staff shortage."

"Lot of work, more staff needed to do this work. It's more comfortable and less stressful."

"It should be bit more, prices are rising up but our pay, it's good but I need more if possible. Sometimes if I cover someone it will be nice if they will pay for it."

"If some staff are not available, I need to cover them and I don't get extra pay for covering. It's a bit stressful and unfair."

"we all would like to be paid more and if I leave it will be to get better wages. I was very disappointed I did not get the queen's funeral off as a bank holiday."

"Less paper work and more time for residents. Better pay. Cover the staff shortages. They do not have bank holiday, so I would like that."

"Increase the salary for all home care employees in general."

"I would like to increase the flexibility of working hours and increase the overall pay of the nurses. Also appreciate and reward the good works done by the staff."

"It would be nice to be appreciated, flexible working hours, get bank holiday off and more annual leave. It would also be nice to be offered jobs to progress into"

"Encourage same pay for staff who do overtime. Have more incentives for overtime work."

"It would be better if it's a bit more, but I'm okay I don't want to change my job for more money. I'm very happy and satisfied here. I don't want to exhaust myself just the sake of money."

"I enjoy working here. I have been working here since 2008 and the reason why I haven't left is the environment."

"Satisfied with my pay comparing to other care houses. They give one lot of flexibility I can leave early when needed or work from home."

Training

Key finding: Staff really value training, and it has an intrinsic value, helping develop and improve upon existing skills and increasing confidence. Best practice is constantly evolving, and it is important to keep up to date. With staff reporting gaps and shortages, issues around wages and payment for covering shifts, diverse and enhanced training, over and above what is mandatory, can be promoted and utilised as an incentive, supporting job satisfaction and retention.

Recommendations:

- Taking advantage of the many options for free training provided by the NHS.
- Utilising more 1-2-1 and face to face options.
- Sourcing specific training around Dementia that can help staff deal with and process the emotional and mental impact of caring for these residents/patients.

Detailed findings

- Staff feel that they have been effectively trained and that their responsibilities fall well within their job description (over 90% on both occasions).
- They talk frequently and positively about the amount of training, guidance, and refreshers and how this supports them to do their role.
- Some staff felt leadership training was not as readily available as it might be.
- When asked about what changes they would make to their job, environment etc. training comes up repeatedly, with 1-2-1, face to face, leadership and Dementia specifically suggested.

Selected comments

"I have got trainings both face-face and online. They always provide a lot of trainings with the new equipment and how to operate them."

"They are really on top of training."

"When I first joined, I received moving and handling training which I found to be very helpful and important. They still have plenty of training available."

"We have trainings all the time and I feel like it equips me to do my job properly."

"Management cares a lot about mental wellbeing of staff, we are given mental health training."

"The only suggestion I will give is staff should be trained for leadership."

"After Covid-19 there has been no 1-1 training."

"More 1-1 training and more staffing so every resident can get proper care."

"More trainings in different topics."

"I think we could do with some additional training on how to deal with people with dementia for our own good. People with dementia can say things sometimes unintentionally that can be mentally draining."

"It would be nice to be appreciated... more training, would be good to improve current skills."

Mental Health Support for Staff

Key finding: Overall, staff report experiencing good mental health and wellbeing, and feed back positively around being listened to and supported by colleagues and management. They report low experience of depression, stress, anxiety and other aspects of mental health.

Whilst the overall picture is a positive one, some staff identified a lack of supervisions and others suggested that regular/annual mental health check ins could support them even further.

Regular check ins and routine supervision can create a more supportive and positive working environment and help provide outlets for pressures and stresses. Regular interaction with staff can more easily identify concerns and challenges in the workplace, offering the possibility of early identification of problems, and also and the chance to address them in a constructive way.

Recommendation: Regular mental health check-ins and regularly scheduled supervision, where this is not already in place.

Detailed findings

- Staff report feeling listened to, having team get together and supported in times of need. They talk warmly about their managers and colleagues with some suggestions around more get together, and team building activities.
- Over 90% of staff report good mental health.
- 8% report a decline in their mental health and wellbeing since starting their job.
- Between 90–98% report no experiences of stress, depression, nervousness, anxiety, burnout and nervousness in the past month.
- Over 85% of staff report that their work schedules allow them to access mental health services; that management prioritise employee mental health and wellbeing; and that they feel confident their work related concerns are heard and support is provided.
- Some staff shared that they have access to counselling at work and use the Health Assured service provided to them.

- Some staff also reported receiving good support when they have planned health appointments and when emergency personal appointments crop up. One staff member described being encouraged to eat lunch in order to take their medication.
- Some staff suggested regular/annual mental health check and counselling for staff, where it wasn't in place.
- Others referred to support to help deal with the mental and emotional impact of the work they do as suggestions that could help further improve and support their mental health at work. The full list of suggestions can be found on slide 38.

Selected comments

"I can openly speak to them if needed. "

"they always check on me."

"Manager always check on me about my health. He makes sure that I'm feeling well and happy working here. I was diagnosed with breast cancer, they referred me and supported me by all means."

"If I have any issues or problems, I just talk to my managers. They always come up with the quick solutions. Whenever I ask them for a break for myself and want to go for a seaside visit, my manager allowed me to go. He always cares for my mental health situation. "

"I lost my husband, passed away. They were very supportive, everyday they used to call and check on me and if I was feeling well, they visited personally."

"There is always someone to seek help from or talk to when in distress."

Mental Health Support for Residents

Key finding: Residents feel welcomed, safe and supported at the care homes and that staff care about their mental health.

Overall residents reported good mental health and wellbeing at the time of our visit. However, a significant number also reported being depressed in the last month and some highlighted they would like more connection time with staff (staff engagement, care and communication). Any time they do get with staff is highly valued.

Recommendation: We recommend:

- Reflection on the actions and activities of staff and management that enable this positive environment to be experienced by residents. We recommend this is captured and shared across the care home sector in Ealing.
- More staff engagement time with residents in relation to care and more social contact time built into job roles and responsibilities.
- A review of processes and practices that support staff consistency in relation to residents' care, identifying actions that can go further, and improve what may already be focus of delivery.

Detailed findings

- 82% of residents feel welcomed at their care home.
- 90% feel safe and supported at their care home.
- 82% of residents feel staff care about their mental health.
- 82% of residents report good or very good mental health status at the time of our visit.
- 41% of residents reported experiencing depression in the previous month.

Selected comments

"I was surprised with the welcome I received here. As soon as the ambulance door opened, I was greeted, and a lady was there to welcome me in. I was very pleased."

"they care for my mental health, there are good carers"

"I don't like it at all living here. I feel isolated and lonely."

"They don't have time to talk."

"they keep their eyes on me they always check if im feeling well or low. they sometimes sit and talk for a while to cherish me."

"The carers are very nice and the other staff is also excellent. They communicate very well. They keep on checking me everyday."

"Most of the staff here are overworked but always make time if you want them to. Very polite and easy-going."

"I don't get any support or care. They don't ask or talk to me they just do their regular jobs and left."

Activities

Key findings: Our survey did not ask a specific question about activities but during conversations with residents, activities were mentioned, both positively and as an area for improvement. Healthwatch staff and volunteers who talked with residents all highlighted activities as a key theme from their conversation, and area that can link strongly with mental health and wellbeing .

The onus falls to care home management to ensure residents have a range of health, mental health, wellbeing and entertaining activities on offer.

Recommendations:

- A full review of the activity offer with a focus on social activities that connect residents together or with staff.
- This review could further extend to external links with schools, youth groups, neighborhood/community schemes.

Detailed findings

- Some residents felt that their days could be better filled with more activities. Some residents highlighted a lack of activities.
- There was an interest expressed in the extended availability of tech devices.
- Mention was made encouraging the consideration of outside entertainers being invited into the home.

Selected comments

"There's no activities, we watch tv all day and read the newspaper."

"Boring."

"Need technological devices."

"I love this residence. carers keep me joyful and happy. the residents are my friends we do activities together. I love cooking whenever there is any cooking activity. I'll be the first one to go"

Staff has no communications, they need to communicate more. Not feeling happy. My health physically and mentally unstable. can't concentrate on anything. Don't like doing anything.

Information

Key finding: Some residents feel unaware of appointments and of their own schedules. The feeling of not being informed, in control, or rushed can be both stressful and upsetting and should be avoided.

Recommendation: We recommend that management discusses the issue with residents' and they jointly agree approaches, actions or tailor-made personal plans that improve the information flow, planning and preparedness for appointments.

Detailed findings

- The lack of advanced warning of impending medical appointments was highlighted by a small minority.
- 3 residents said they are stressed by knowing that they are quite likely to forget medical appointments however, 90% of residents expressed confidence that staff would get them to their external appointments in good time.

Selected comments

"I had missed many Podiatrist appointments due to delay in delivering letters. They just rush me out for appointments they don't inform me in advance."

For more information

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healthwatch



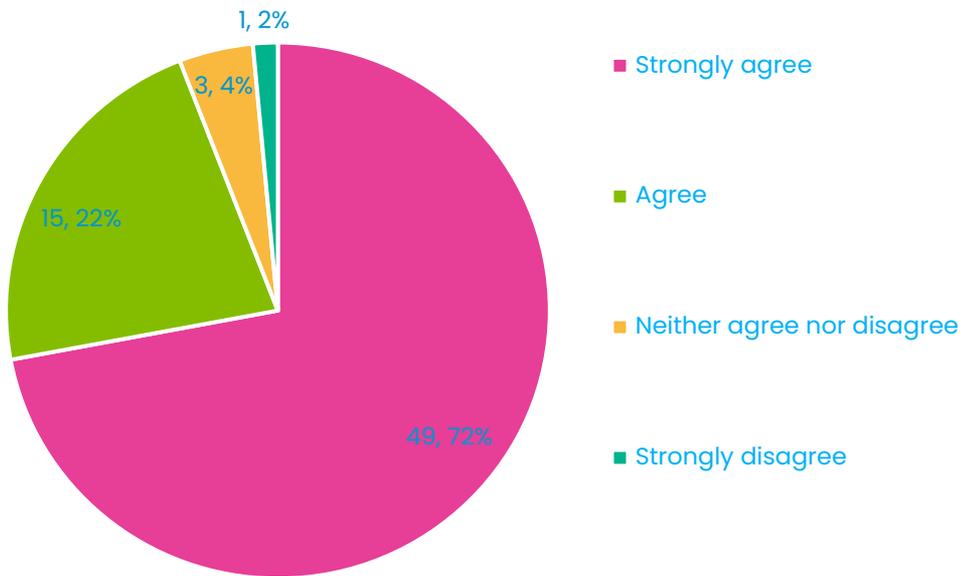
Appendices

Appendix A – Staff and Manager Survey results

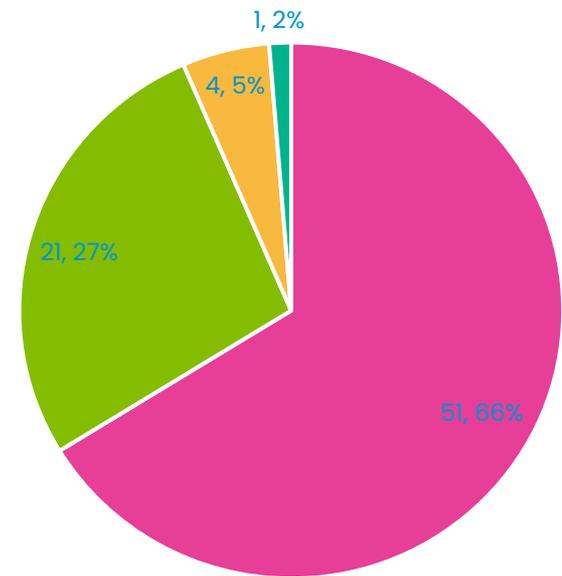


Ability to do the job

I have been effectively trained for my current job (staff only)

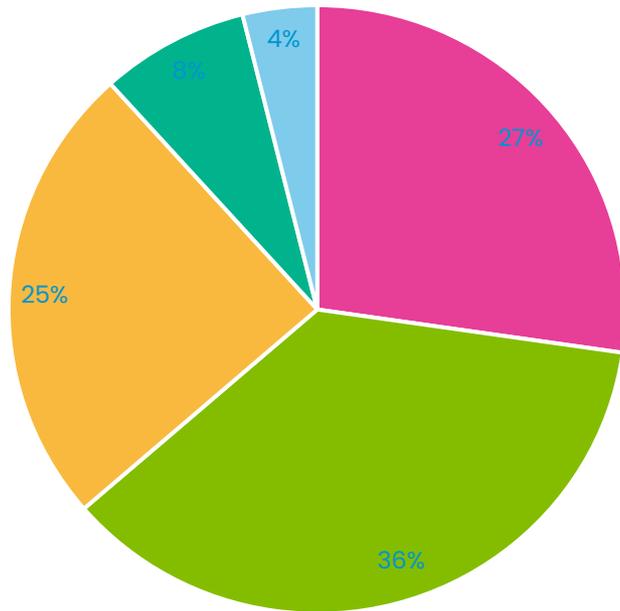


I feel my responsibilities are well within my job description (staff and managers)



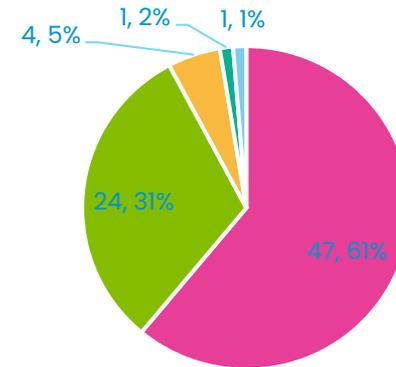
Sense of value and worth

I feel I am well paid for my duties and responsibilities (staff and managers)

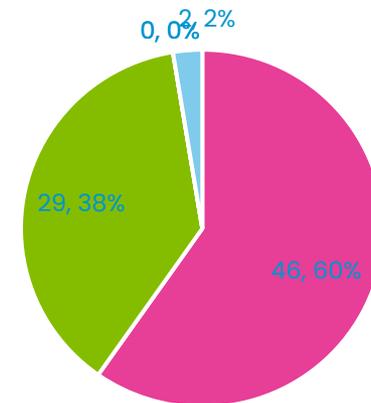


- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I feel I am a valued member of the team (staff and managers)

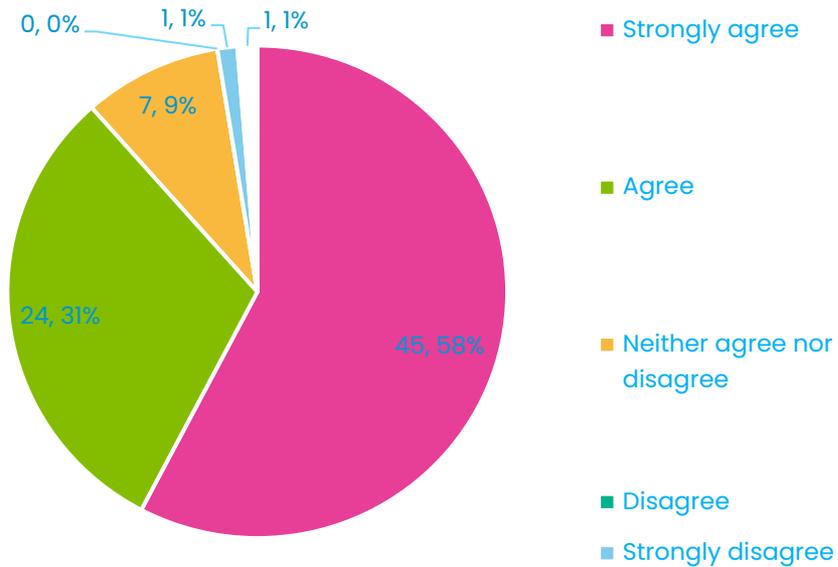


I feel my job gives me a sense of fulfilment and purpose (staff and managers)

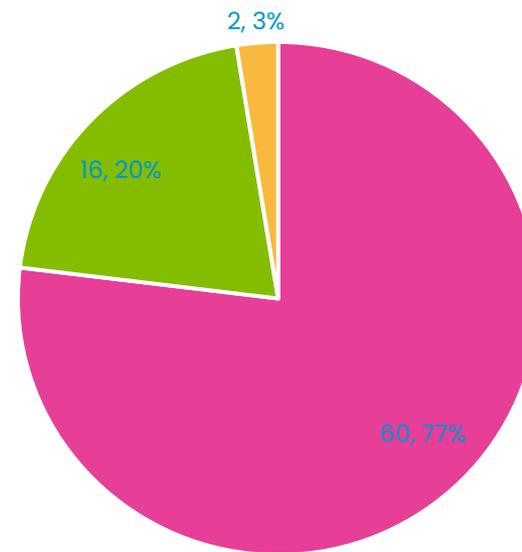


Work environment

I feel there is a healthy and positive work environment (staff and managers)

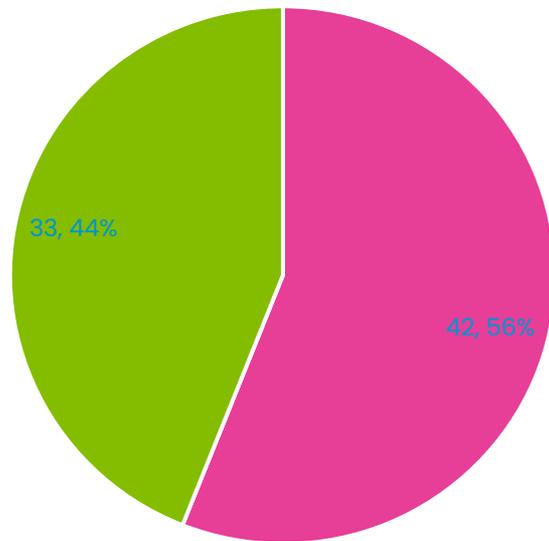


I feel my workplace is inclusive and welcoming (staff and managers)



Work environment

Would you make any changes to your job, environment and work policies to encourage a more positive mental health environment?
(staff and managers)



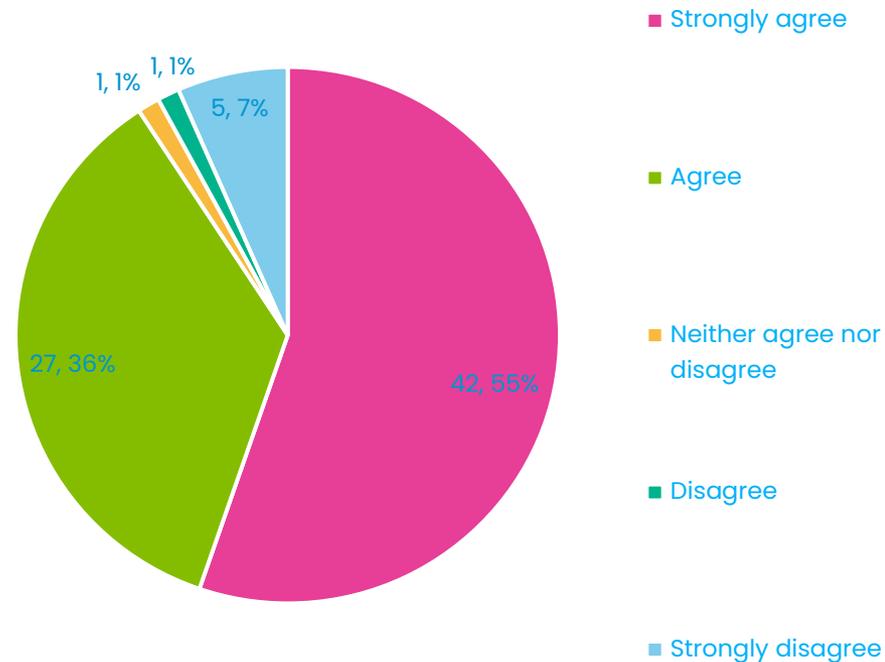
■ No ■ Yes

Suggestions for improvement...

- **Pay increase/annual increase/bonuses**
- **Pay overtime when this is worked**
- **Fill staff gaps/recruit more staff**
- Increase flexibility of working hours
- Reward and recognition of staff
- Job progression/promotion
- Recognise bank holidays
- Finish early on Christmas eve
- Annual staff MH checks
- Counsellors for staff
- Team building activities
- 1-2-1 training and more training on an array of topics
- Training on Dementia and emotional/mental impact on staff
- Reduce paperwork, more time with residents
- Install air con
- Upgrade equipment
- Resolve the kitchen bins area issue/stench
- Treat late staff in the same way, regardless of position
- Provision of winter and summer uniforms

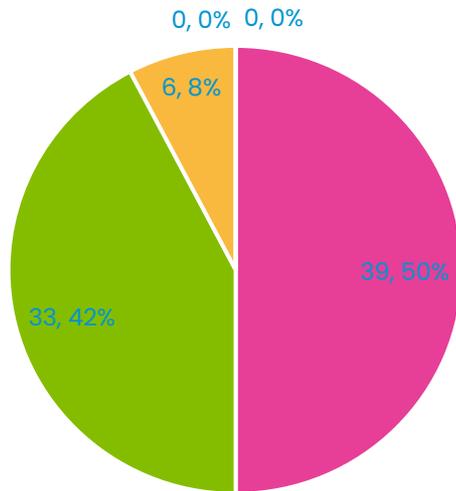
Work/life balance

I can do things that bring me joy and pleasure outside work (staff and managers)



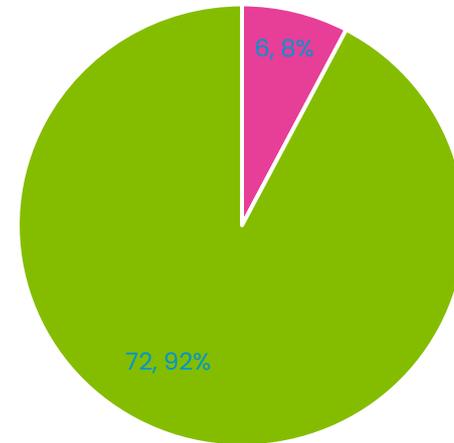
Mental Health Status

Overall mental health and wellbeing rating
(staff and managers)



■ Very good ■ Good ■ Average ■ Poor ■ Very poor

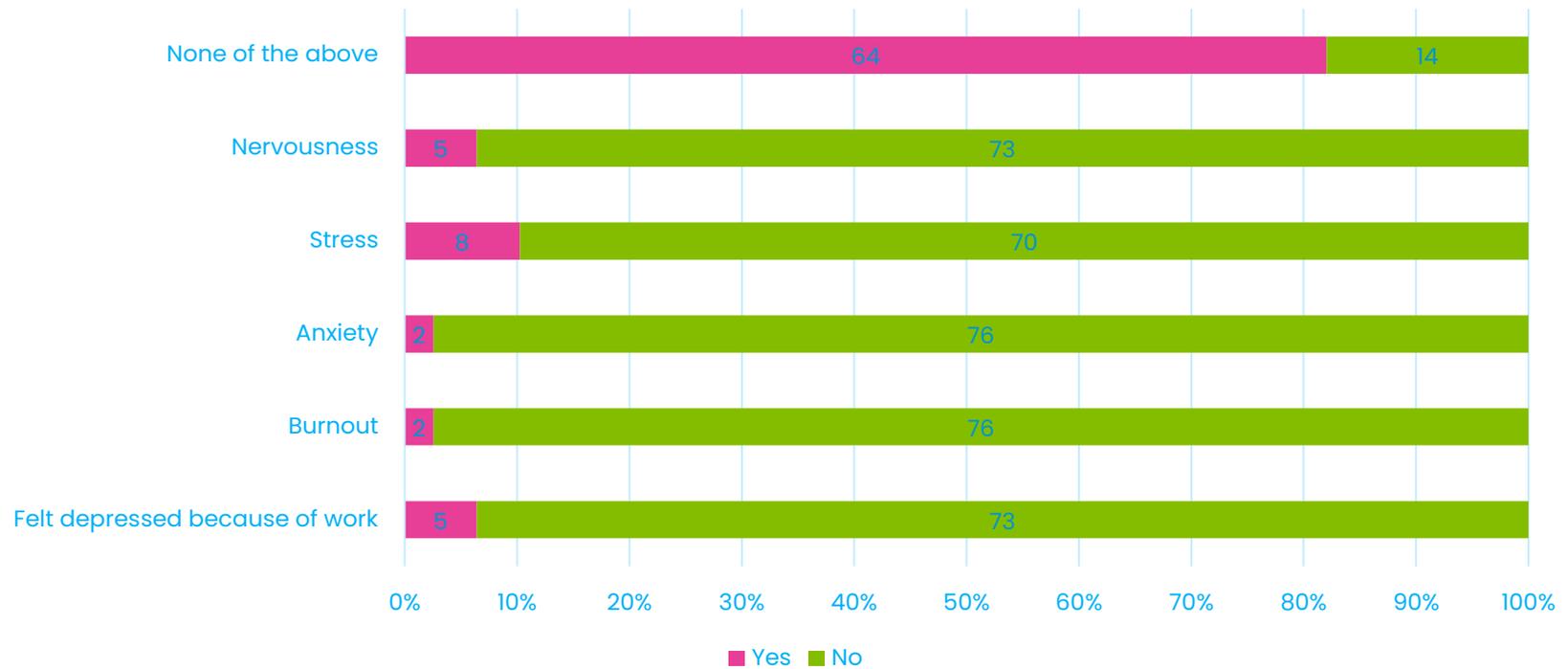
Since starting this job have you experienced a decline in your mental health and wellbeing? (staff and managers)



■ Yes ■ No

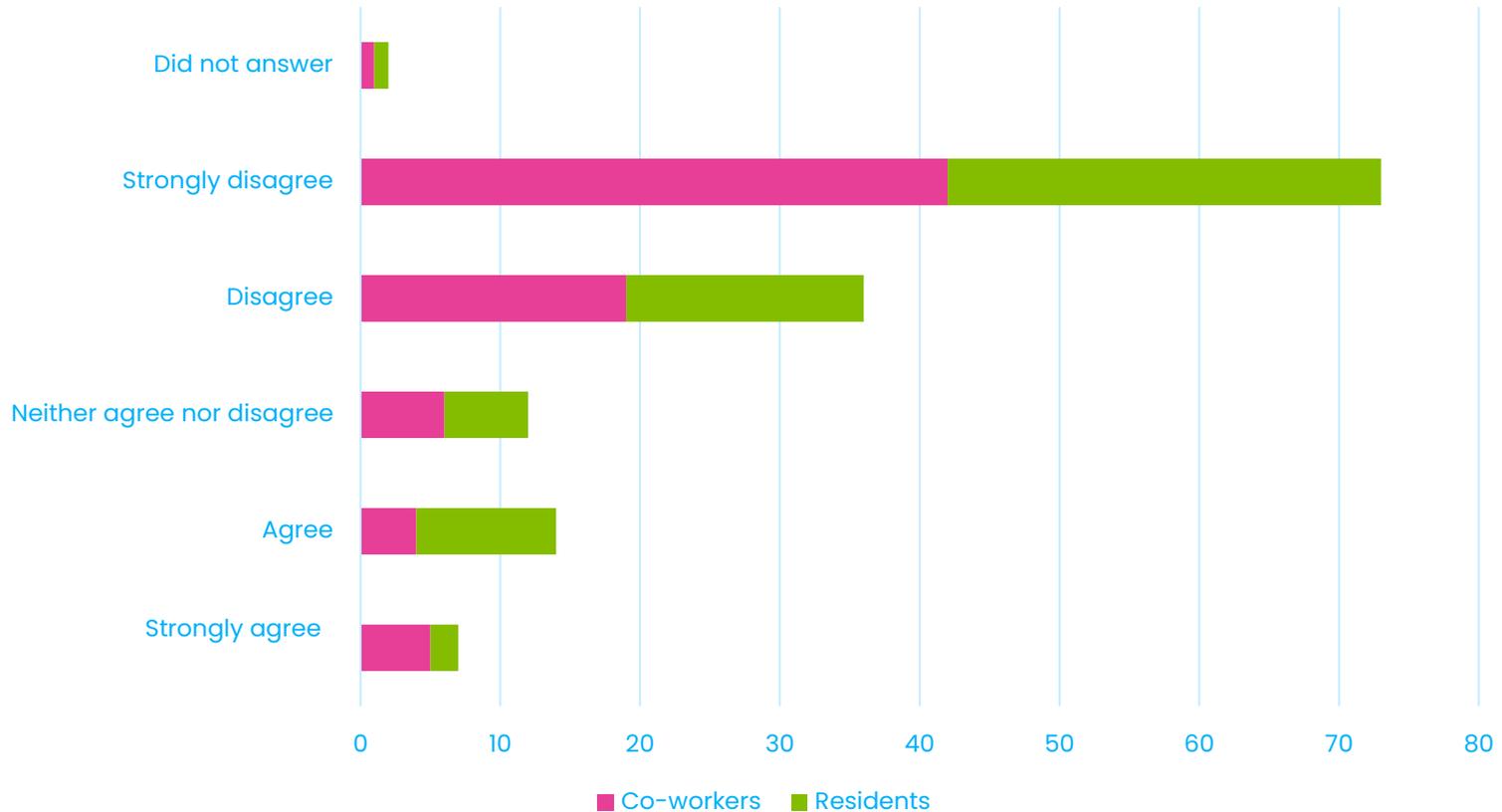
Mental Health Status

In the past few weeks/month have you experienced any of the following...? (staff and managers)



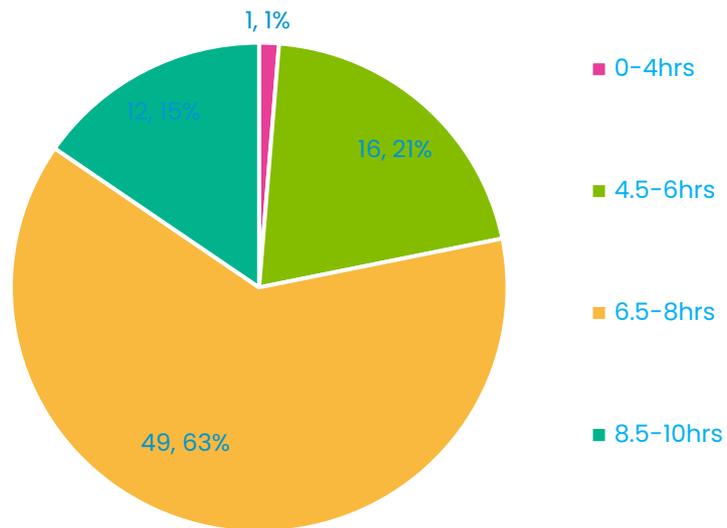
Treatment by staff/residents

I feel that my personal identity (gender, race, age etc) affects the way I am treated by co-workers/residents

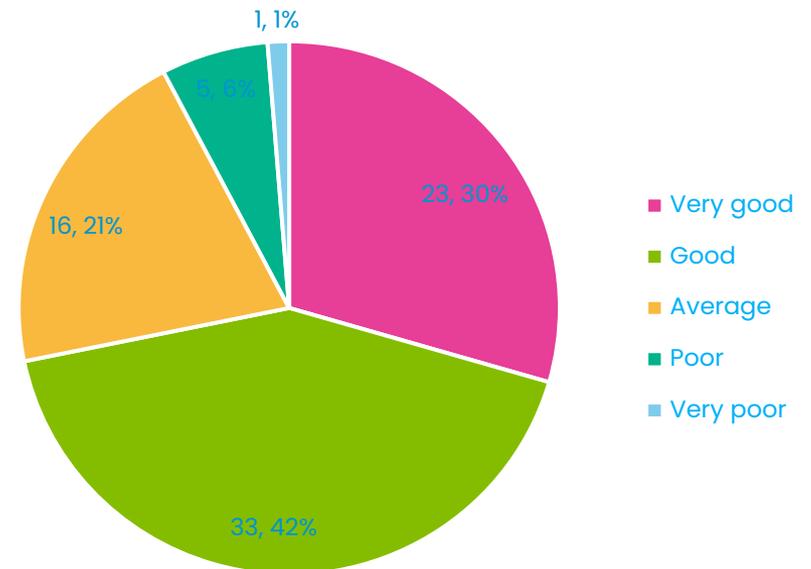


Sleep

On average how many hours do you sleep at night? (staff and managers)

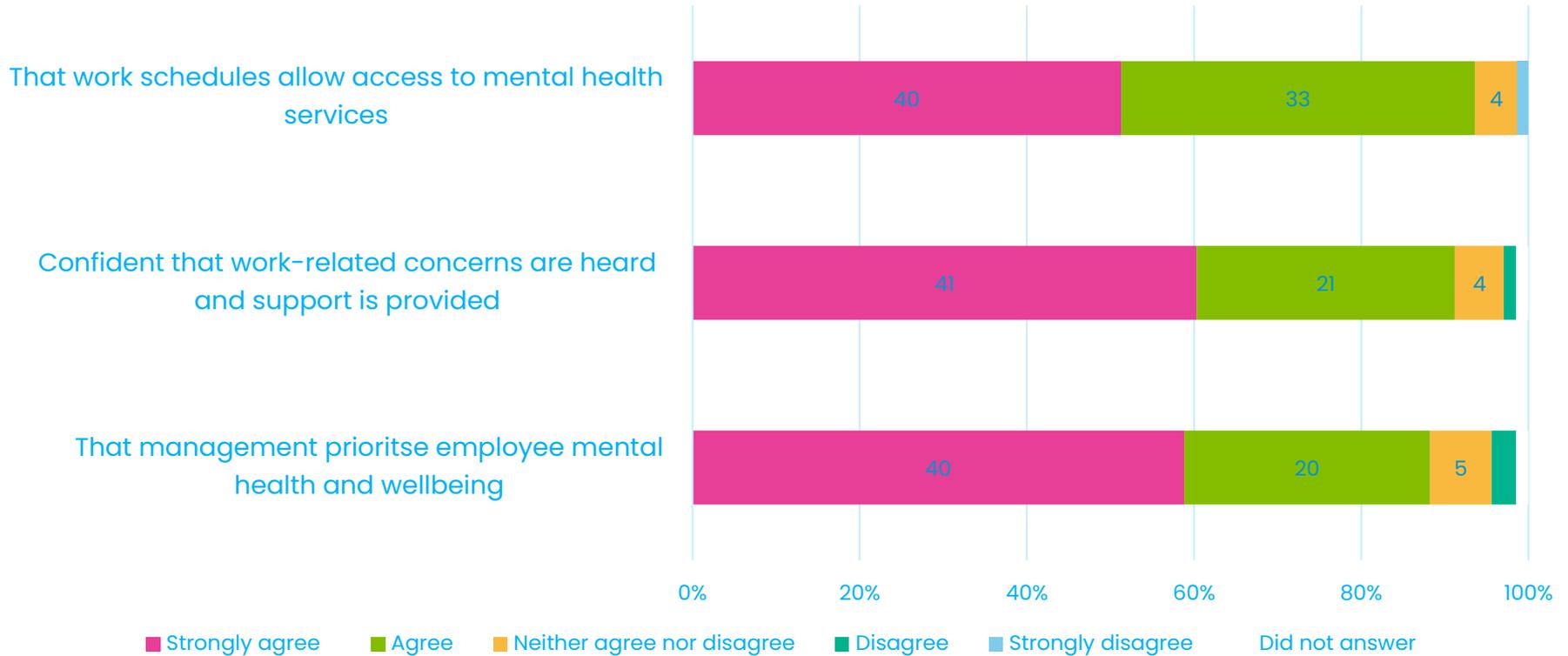


How is the quality of your sleep? (staff and managers)



Access to mental health support

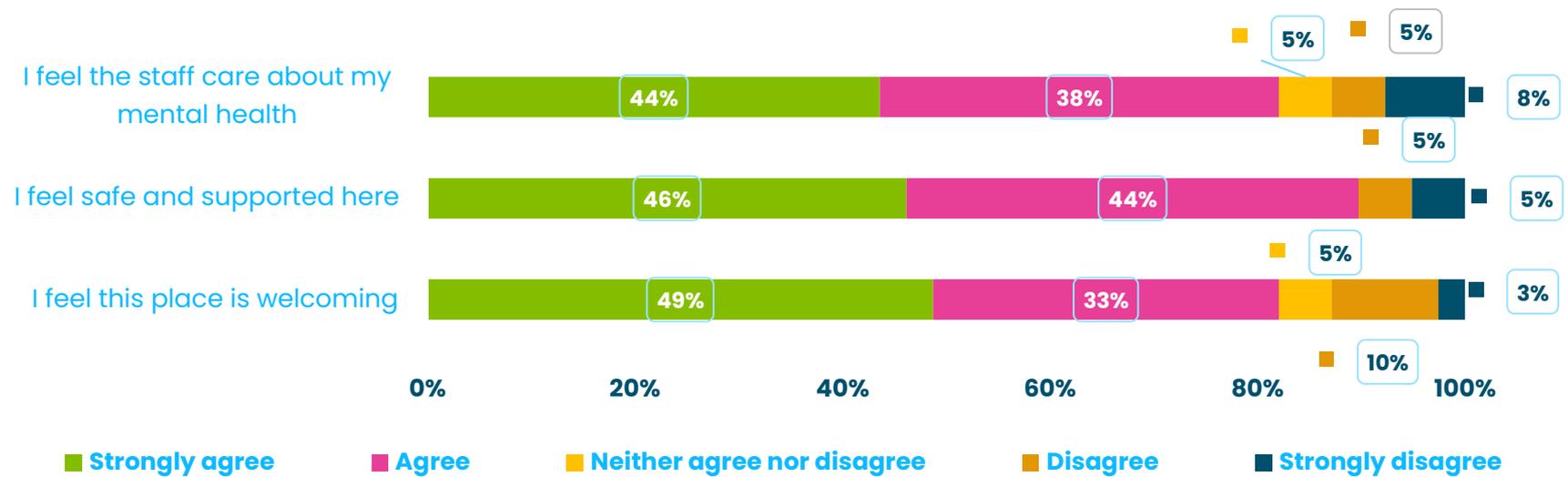
I feel...



Appendix B – Residents Survey results

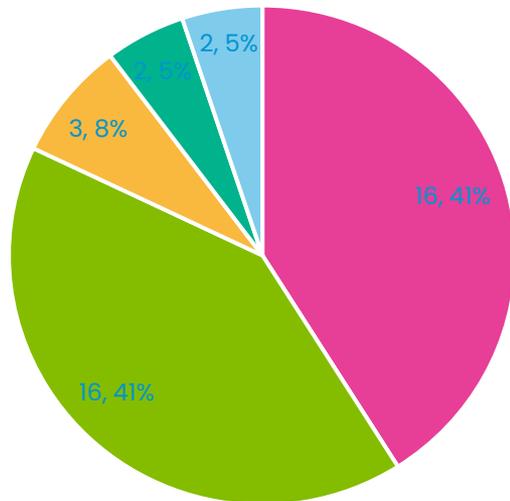


Residents environment



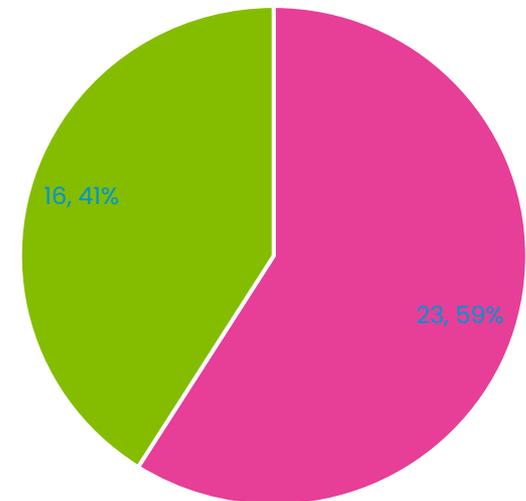
Mental health status

Overall mental health and wellbeing rating



■ Very good ■ Good ■ Average ■ Poor ■ Very poor

Have you felt depressed in the past month?



■ No ■ Yes

Supporting better mental health and wellbeing

In our conversations with residents we asked them whether there were any improvements the home could make to better support mental health and wellbeing.

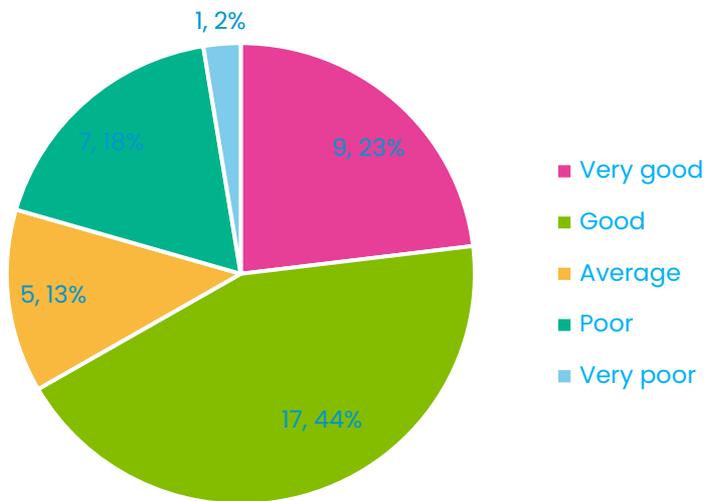
17 out of 25 people we spoke with around this topic were happy and could not identify any specific changes.

These were the response we got from those that had suggestions...

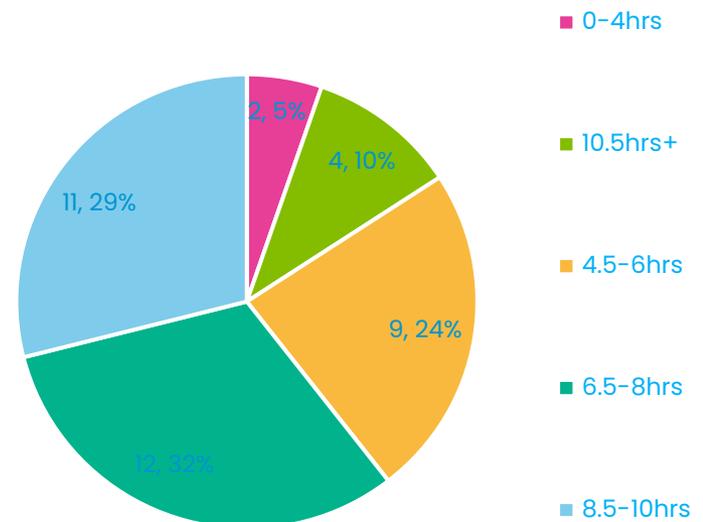
- **More staff engagement/ time with carers**
- More consistent staff
- More IT equipment to use to communicate with family/friends outside
- Quieter environment
- Ensure residents get their correct clothes
- Ensure residents gets their mail
- Better contact/communication from management
- Better notice and communication about external appointments

Sleep

How is your quality of sleep?



On average how many hours do you sleep each night?



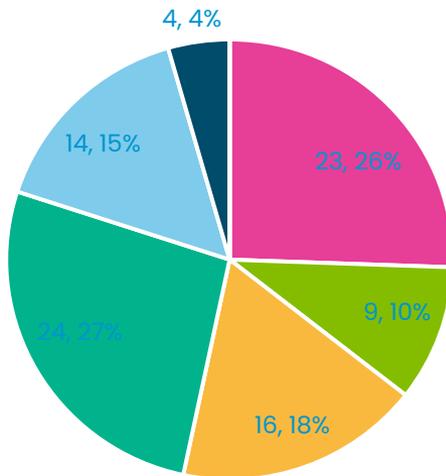
Appendix C – Equality monitoring data



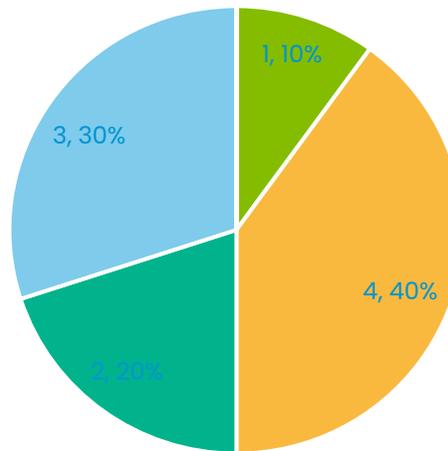
Age

■ 16-24 ■ 25-34 ■ 35-44 ■ 45-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65-74 ■ 75-84 ■ 85+ ■ Prefer not to say

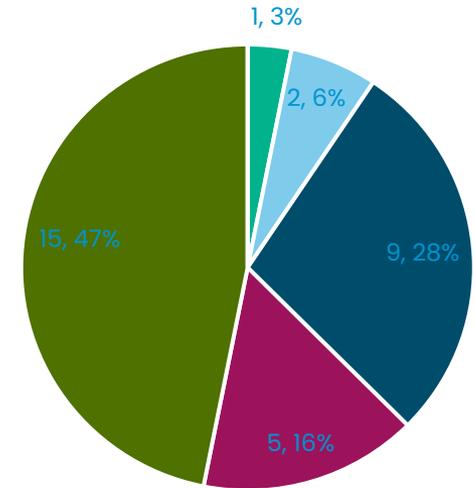
Staff



Management



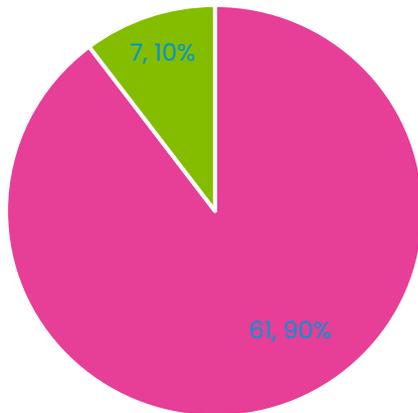
Residents



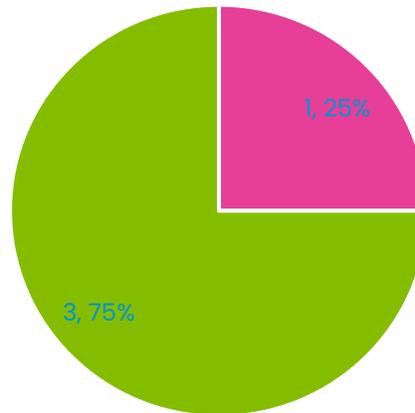
Gender

■ Female ■ Male

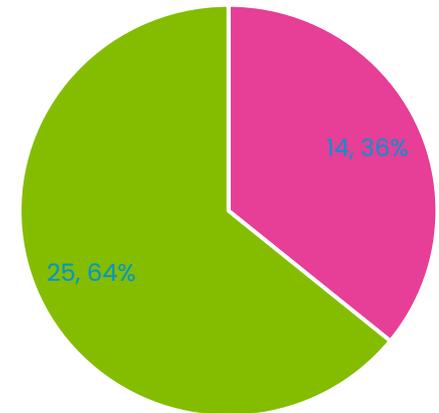
Staff



Management



Residents



Ethnicity

	Staff		Management		Residents	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Asian	36	53%	1	11%	5	13%
Black	9	13%	4	44%	2	5%
Mixed	5	7%	2	22%	2	5%
White	11	16%	2	22%	28	72%
Other	5	7%	0	0%	2	5%
Prefer not to say	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%
TOTALS	68	100%	9	100%	39	100%