



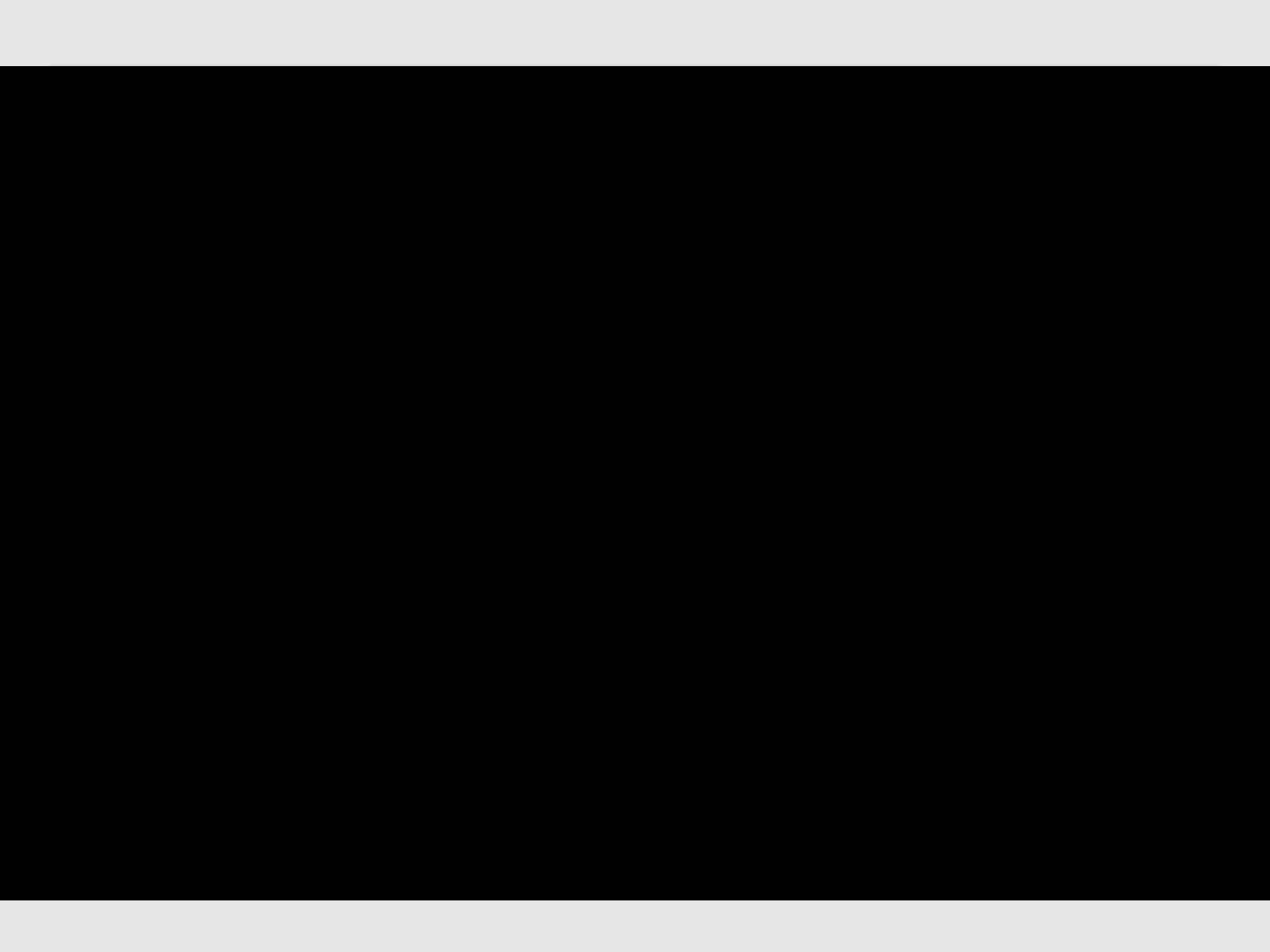
National  
**Suicide Prevention**  
Alliance

# Self-Harm During COVID-19

**Penny Fosten:** Executive Lead, NSPA

**Keith Waters:** Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and  
Multicentre Study of Self-harm

**Claire Dixon:** Training Service Manager (Sales) and Specialist Trainer,  
Harmless





# Self harm during a time of national crisis (COVID-19)

Claire Dixon  
Training Service Manager and Specialist Trainer

# What have we seen at Harmless since lockdown in March?



200% increase in service demand

On average, 13% increase in clients requiring more support between appointments

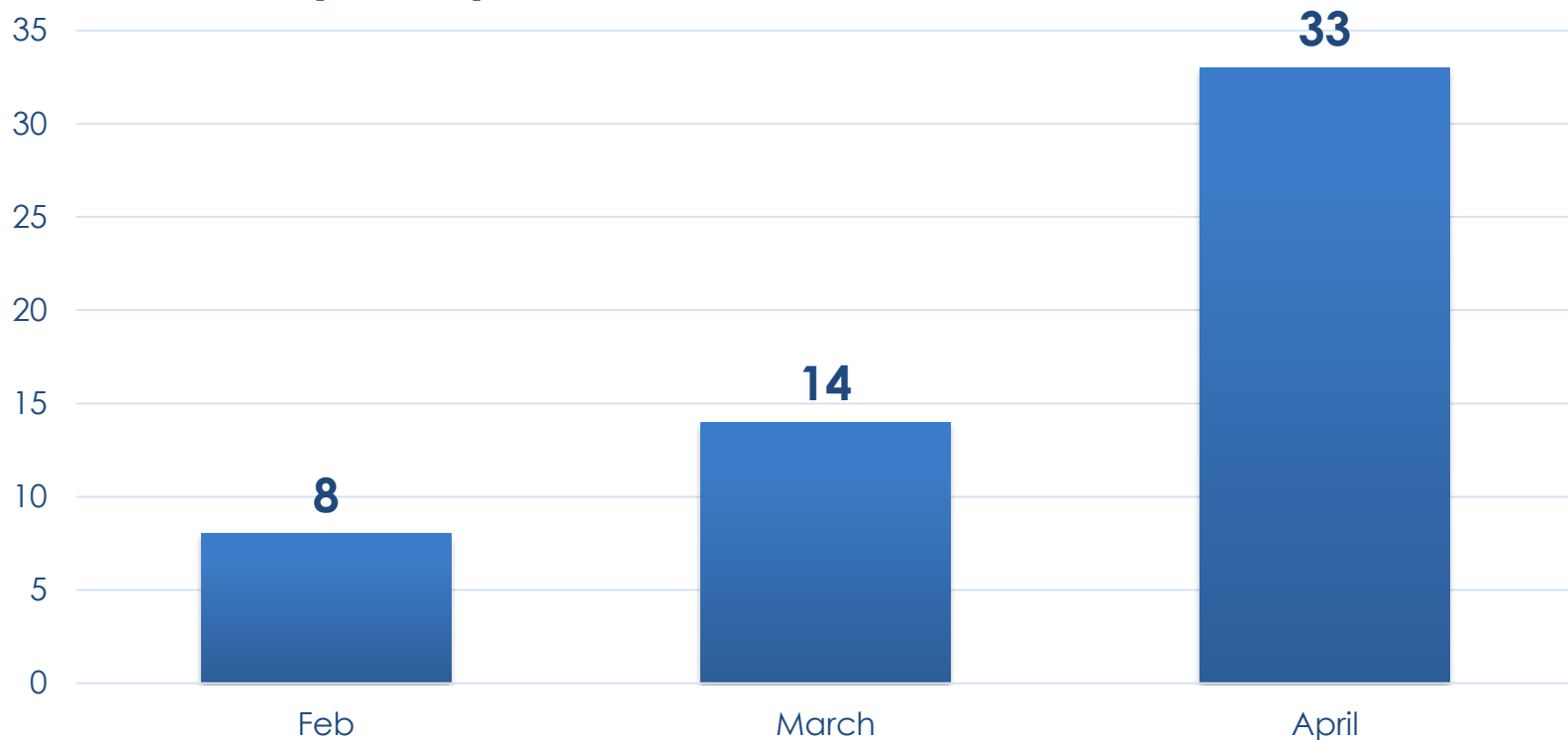
# What did we do?

- Self harm, crisis and bereavement pathways remained open
- Crisis pathway: implemented a text service for current clients
- Developed a public self harm survey (July 2020)
- 141 respondents

# Our self harm pathway

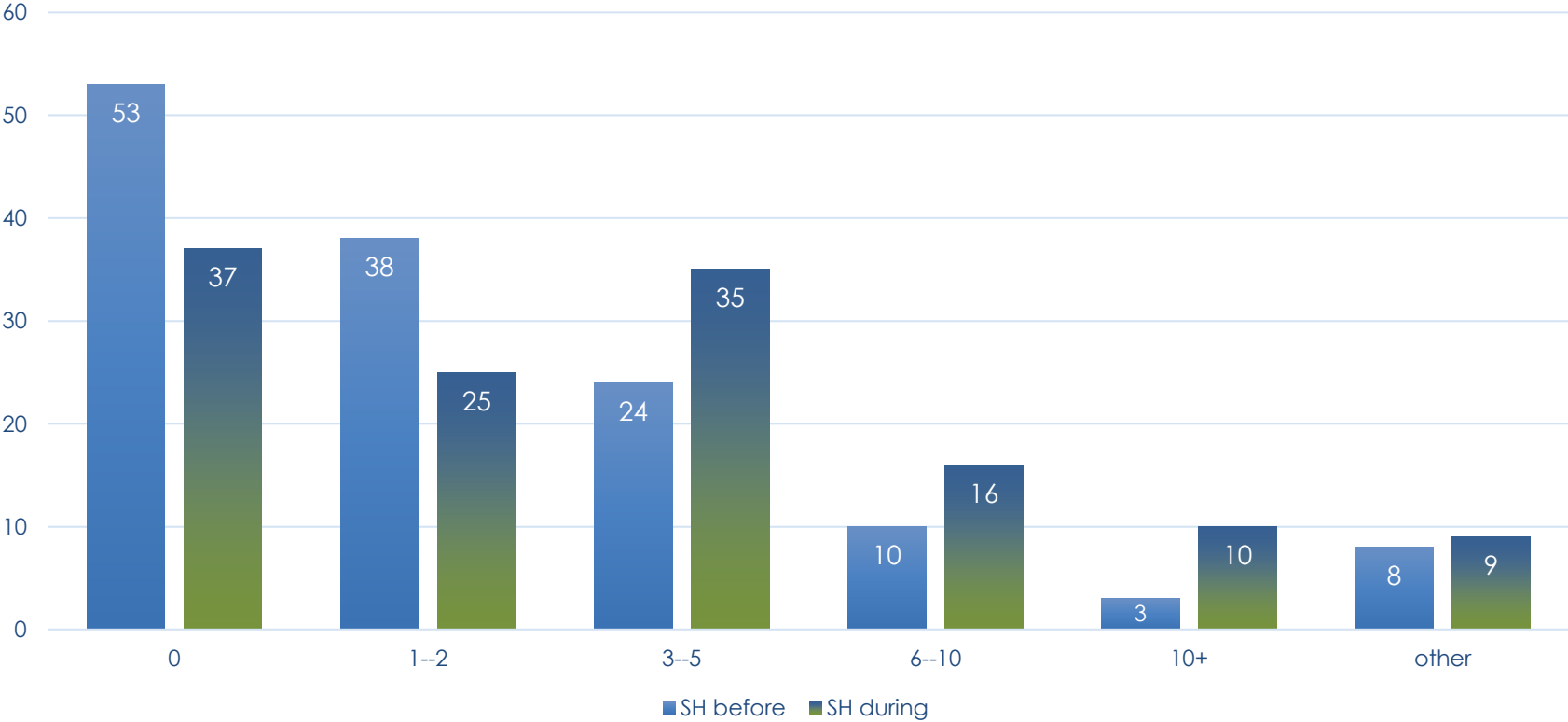
## Increase in contacts

Email enquires per month



# Increase in self harm frequency

# responses for each banding of self-harm frequency



# Increase in self harm frequency

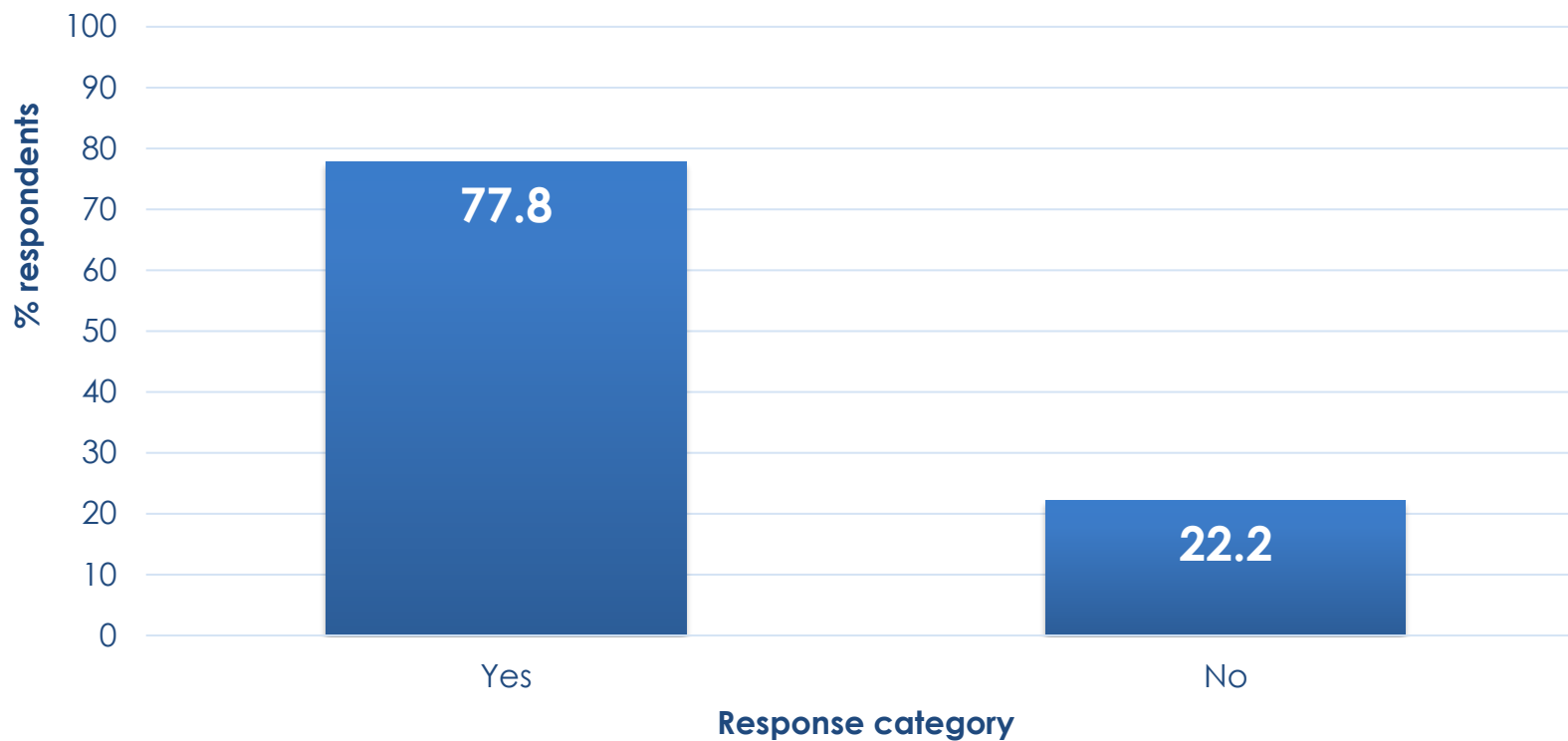
**47% respondents reported higher self-harm frequency in lockdown**

Key findings:

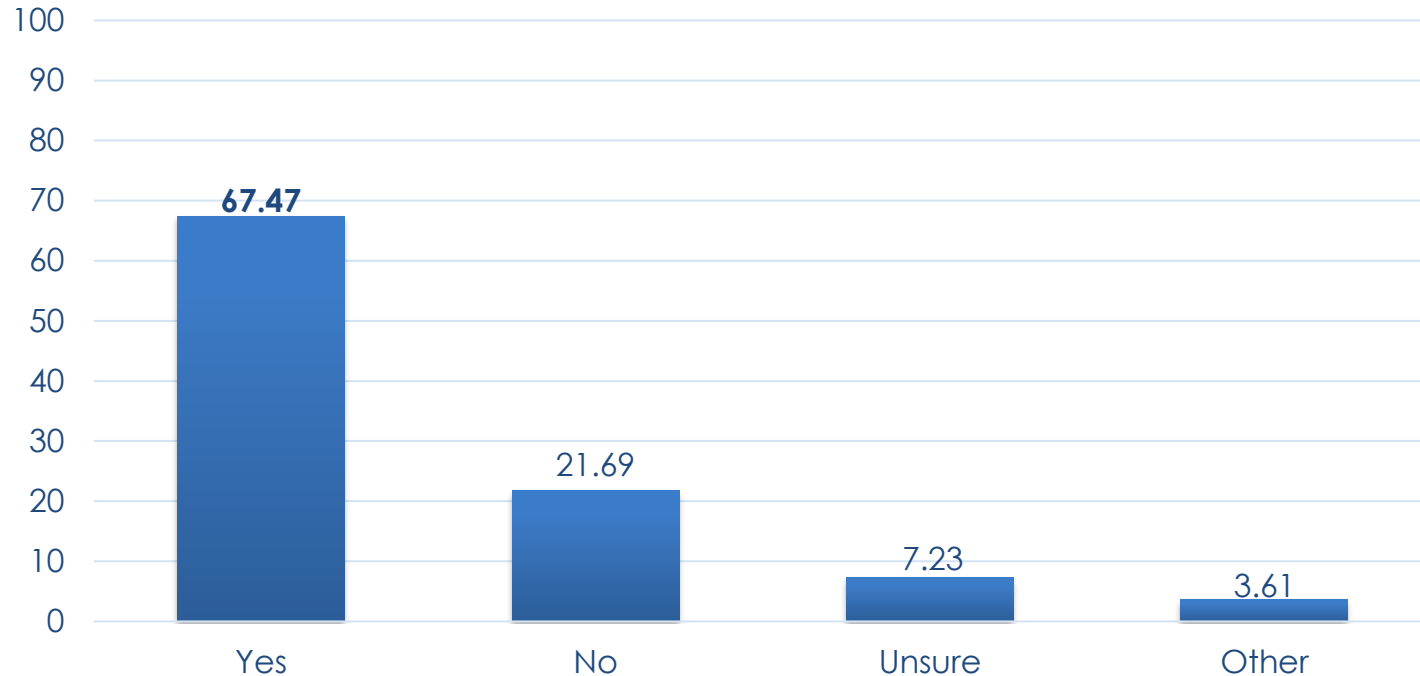
- 30% **decrease** in people **not** self-harming
- 34.2% **decrease** in people self-harming 1-2 times per week
- 45.8% **increase** in people self-harming 3-5 times per week
- 60% **increase** in people self-harming 6-10 times per week
- 233.3% **increase** in people **self-harming 10+ times per week**



## Avoidance of medical treatment during lockdown (any healthcare setting)

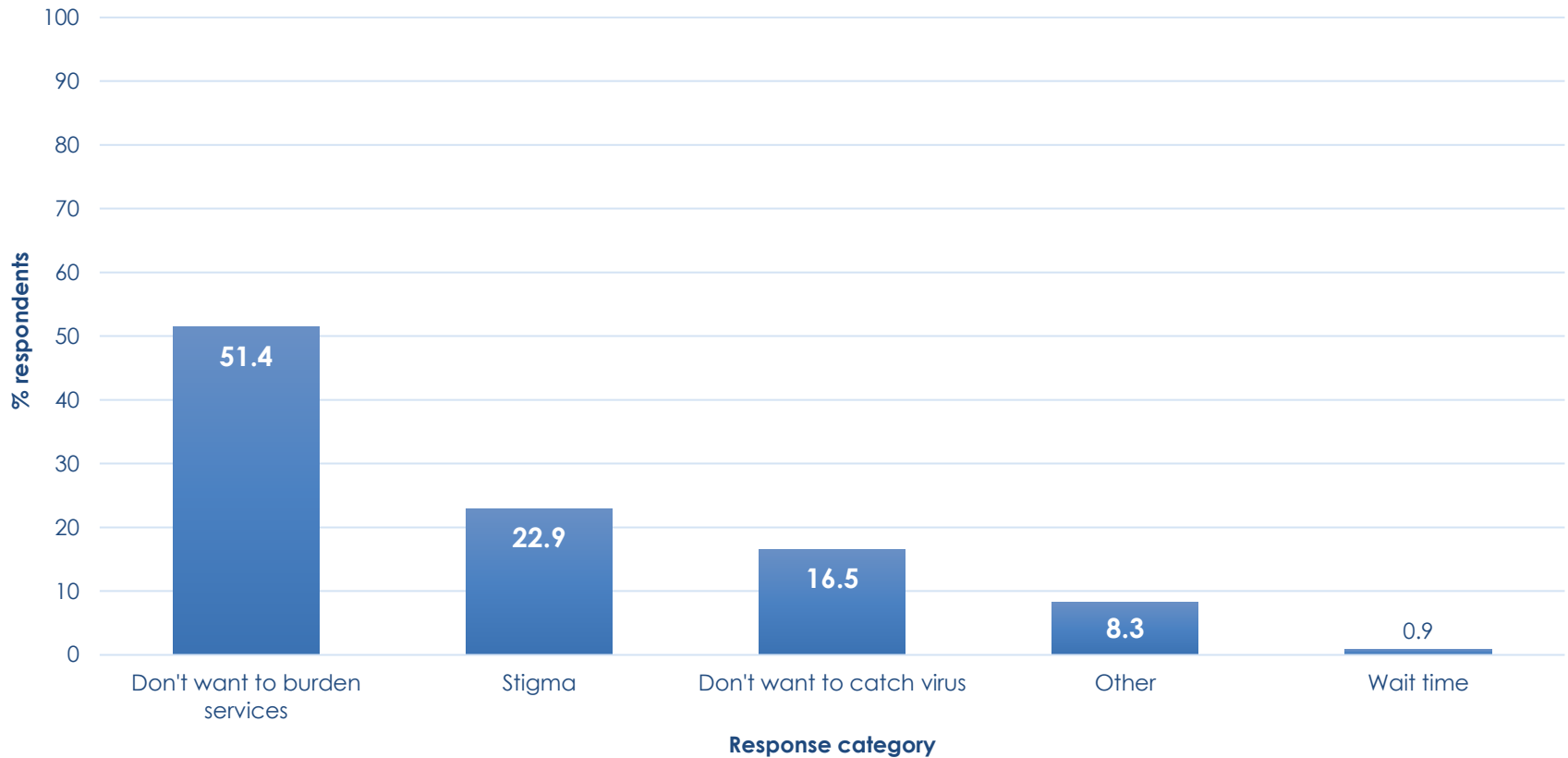


## GP/ED avoidance during lockdown



**Two-thirds (67.47%)** of respondents said they **would** avoid going to their GP or to a hospital for self-harm during lockdown, if they required help

## Reason for avoidance during lockdown



**3 out of 4** people did not attend services for medical treatment due to fear of burdening services or stigma

***Q. If you'd be worried about seeking medical treatment due to coronavirus, would this be because of:***

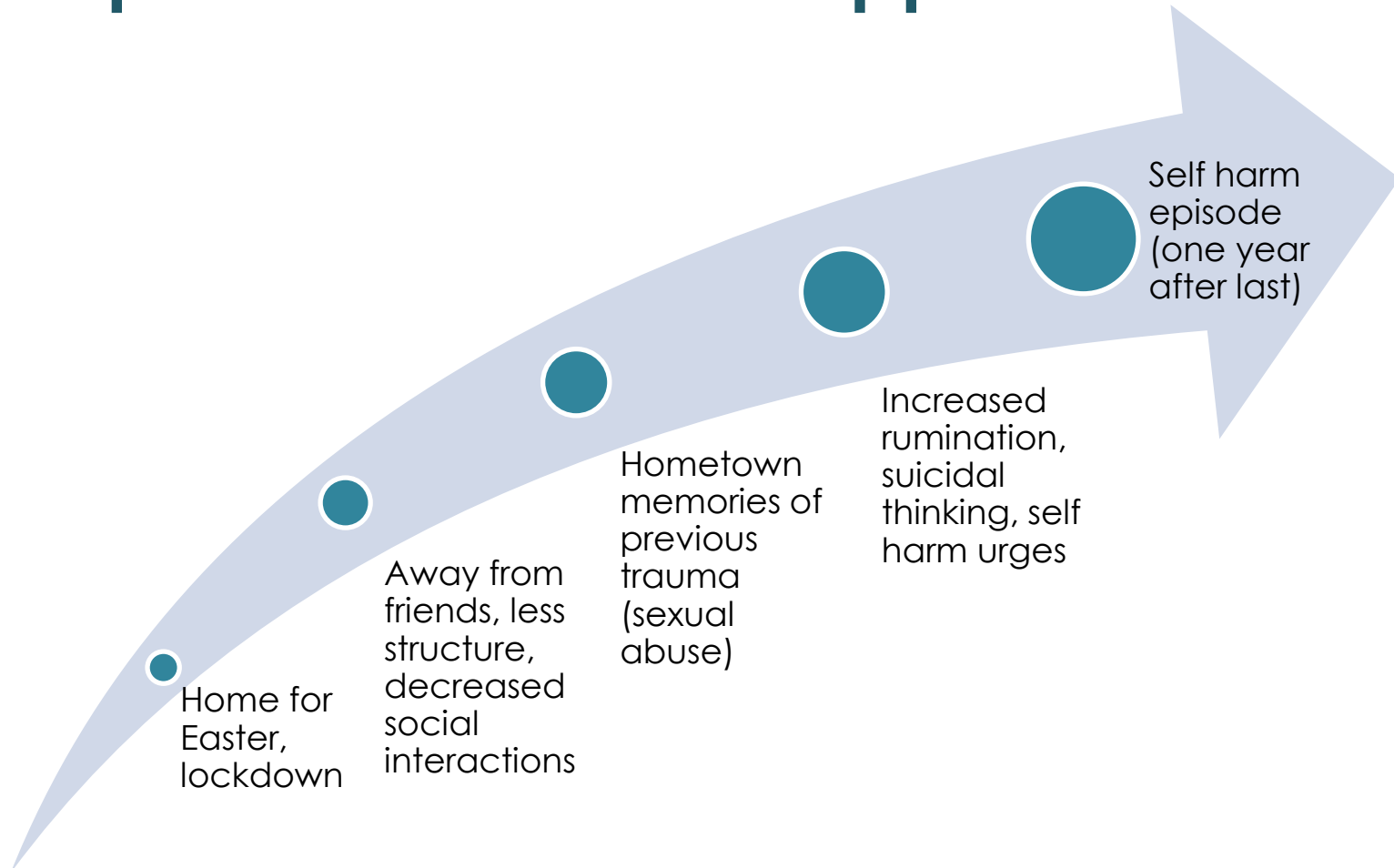
- Fear of getting the virus: 27%
- **Worry about overwhelming services: 57%**

“Depending on how serious, I’m certainly less likely to get help now”

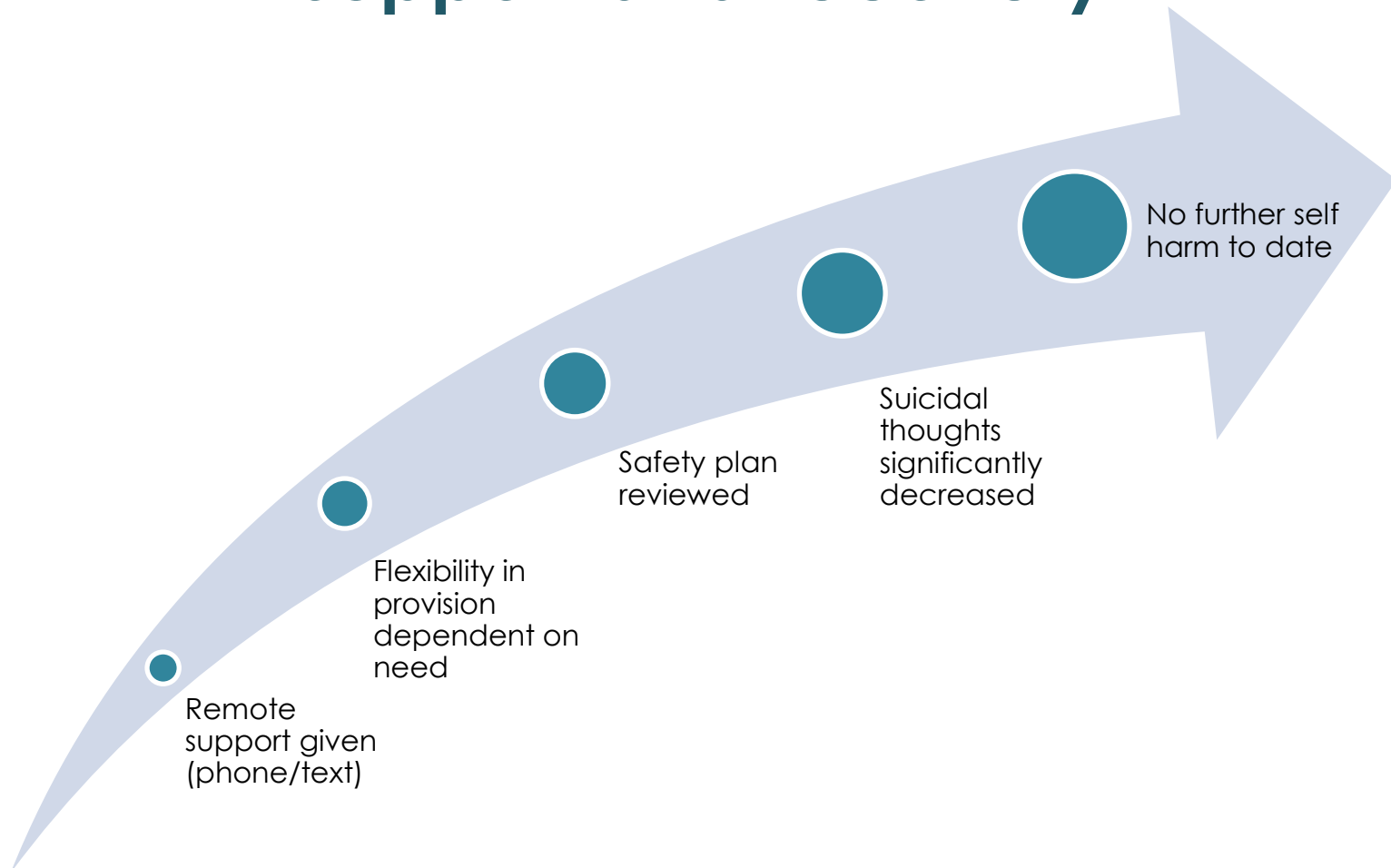
“Would feel bad using NHS services while already stretched”

“Scared of being called selfish by people, for taking up much needed NHS resources during covid-19”

# Client case study: presentation and support needs



# Client case study: support and recovery



# What next?

- Sustained support and funding for third sector services
- More broad investment in self harm prevention services to respond to rising need (esp. seen during COVID-19)
- Continue to engage with clients and ask what people want and need

# Where to find us

harmless.org.uk

Email: [info@harmless.org.uk](mailto:info@harmless.org.uk) or [training@harmless.org.uk](mailto:training@harmless.org.uk)



@harmlessUK

@lifevssuicide

@letstalknlearn





# Q&A



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Thank you



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