

# A virtual formulary: A practical guide on why and how to create your own

Wound care formularies are essential tools for standardising treatment, ensuring cost-effective product selection and improving patient outcomes. With advances in digital technology, a virtual wound care formulary offers enhanced accessibility, ease of use, and streamlined clinical decision-making. This article outlines a step-by-step approach to creating a virtual wound care formulary using PowerPoint.

The process of developing a virtual formulary is straightforward. Using PowerPoint, wound care teams can easily organise products into categories, include essential product descriptions, and integrate hyperlinks for rapid navigation. This method requires minimal technical expertise, making it an efficient and scalable solution for healthcare organisations.

Implementing a virtual wound care formulary enhances workflow efficiency, promotes consistency in wound management, and supports cost-effective product utilisation. Regular updates and feedback mechanisms ensure the formulary remains current and aligned with best practices. This guide provides a practical framework for healthcare organisations looking to develop and maintain a virtual wound care formulary, with the aim of improving patient outcomes and clinical efficiency.

In an increasingly complex wound care landscape, the development of standardised formularies is essential to ensure safe, effective and evidence-based care. Variability in clinician preferences and product availability across the UK continues to create inconsistencies in treatment and outcomes. A well-structured wound care formulary addresses these challenges by providing clinicians with accessible, up to date guidance (Wounds UK, 2023).

As digital healthcare tools evolve, the opportunity to create a virtual wound care formulary has become both practical and impactful. This article outlines how to create your own virtual formulary and how this can support organisations to support clinical decision making, reduce unwarranted variation, and enhance efficiency. This guide offers a step-by-step approach to designing, implementing and maintaining a virtual formulary tailored to local needs. By integrating a user-friendly design, QR code access, real time updates and virtual format, the virtual format ensure practical usability in clinical practice, empowering staff and increasing standardisation.

## Understanding the need for a wound care formulary

As clinicians, we play a vital role in providing high-quality wound care to our patients. There is much variation across the UK on availability,

choice, and clinician preference regarding products and therapies in wound care (Gray et al, 2019). Modern formularies combine product information and clinical guidance in one single place easily accessible to all clinicians.

A standardised wound care formulary can help to promote evidence-based practice (EBP) and enhance clinical efficiency. This is crucial for ensuring consistency in treatment approaches, reducing variability, and improving patient outcomes (Gottrup, 2018). Furthermore, it can also help healthcare organisations optimise resource allocation, reduce waste, and improve cost efficiency and sustainability (Woo and Sibbald, 2018).

A best practice statement was developed by a multidisciplinary expert group in response to increasing complexity and variation in wound care across the UK. This provides guidance on developing, implementing, and maintaining an effective wound care formulary, with the aim of improving patient outcomes and standardising care using an evidence-based framework to help healthcare providers create sustainable high-quality wound care formularies that benefit both patients and health systems (Wounds UK 2023).

A wound care formulary is a specific list of evidence-based products, dressings and therapies that support clinical decision making and treatment. A well-structured formulary promotes safe, effective and cost-efficient care by reducing variation, enhancing staff

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## Key words

- Wound care
- Dressings
- Formulary
- Tissue viability
- Standardisation

confidence, and optimising resource use. It is vital that formularies should reflect national guidelines (e.g. NICE, NWCSP), while also being tailored to local patient populations.

Key elements of a high-quality formulary include:

- Use of clinical evidence to guide product selection
- Integration of clinical pathways
- Support for patient self-care, accessibility, and sustainability

Formulary decisions should be based on overall treatment value, not just unit cost. From experience, a broader view, considering healing time, staff workload, and patient outcomes, ensures long-term savings and improved care quality.

Formularies also fulfil important regulatory and organisational functions. Within healthcare systems, wound care must align with national standards, such as NICE guidelines in the UK. A formulary provides a transparent mechanism for demonstrating compliance with these standards. Institutionally, it aligns wound care practice with organisational priorities, such as product procurement policies, safety standards and clinical governance structures. Furthermore, the use of a standardised formulary facilitates audit, benchmarking, and quality improvement initiatives, all of which are central to delivering high-quality wound care services (Laver, 2024).

### Developing the digital infrastructure

Creating a virtual dressing formulary requires a robust digital infrastructure that supports seamless access, usability, and integration into daily clinical practice. The foundation begins with selecting the right platform tailored to the needs of healthcare professionals in your organisation. This will vary depending on your setting. You could position your formulary on a trust intranet page or a page that links to your online prescription service if the trust uses one.

### Choosing a platform

The ideal platform should be user-friendly, secure, and compatible with existing healthcare IT systems (Haleem et al, 2021). It must support multimedia content, such as images and guidelines and allow easy updates as new dressings or protocols emerge. Virtual solutions often offer scalability and remote access, which are critical for multidisciplinary teams working across different locations (NHS Digital, 2023).

### Ensuring accessibility

Accessibility is paramount. The formulary

should be optimised for various devices, including desktops, tablets and smartphones, to accommodate the diverse settings where care is delivered. Clear navigation, search functionality and offline availability improve usability in environments with limited connectivity. Additionally, adherence to accessibility standards ensures inclusivity for users with disabilities.

By thoughtfully developing the digital infrastructure, healthcare organisations can empower nurses and clinicians with an efficient, reliable, and accessible virtual dressing formulary, ultimately improving wound care outcomes and patient safety (Blake, 2025)

### Creating the formulary using PowerPoint

The first and most essential step in creating a virtual formulary is building the PowerPoint presentation that will serve as the foundation for your interactive digital resource. This step involves assembling all the necessary teaching materials, product information, and visual aids in a concise, logical, and user-friendly format. Ideas for inclusion are shown in [Figure 1](#).

Design a visually engaging title page for your formulary that captures attention and clearly represents the content [[Figure 2](#)]. Ensure the layout is clean, the typography is professional, and any graphics or branding elements are appropriately incorporated to create a strong first impression.

- Choose a basic, easy-to-read format with neutral colours.
- Create a title slide, section headers, and content layout slides.

After creating your virtual formulary and contents page, add a navigational object – such as an arrow or icon – next to each item on the contents page.

Right-click the object, select “Hyperlink”, then choose “Place in This Document” from the menu. From there, select the specific slide you want the object to link to. This creates an interactive button that allows users to jump directly to the corresponding section of your formulary [[Figure 3](#)].

To improve navigation and prevent clinicians from needing to scroll back through the document to access the contents page, insert a back button (e.g., a simple icon or image) on each slide.

Hyperlink this image to the slide containing the contents page, allowing users to return easily to the main menu from any section of the formulary.

Incorporating QR codes throughout your formulary is a valuable addition, as it enhances accessibility and supports clinical decision-

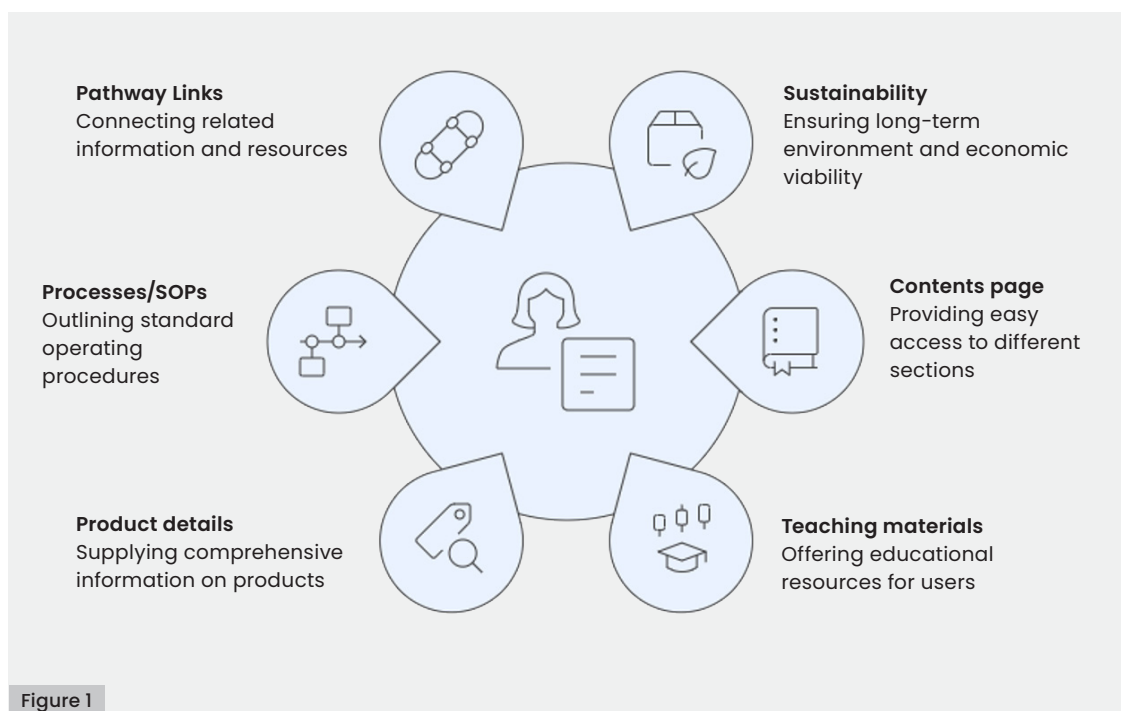


Figure 1

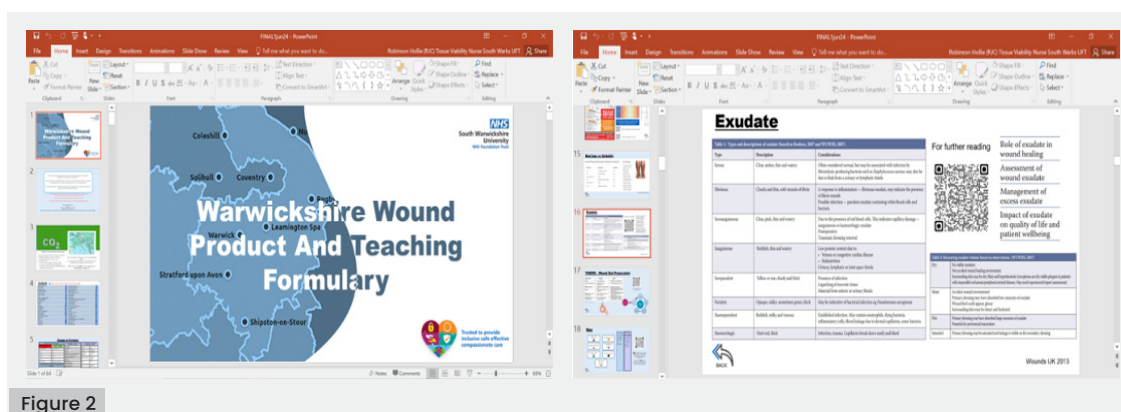


Figure 2

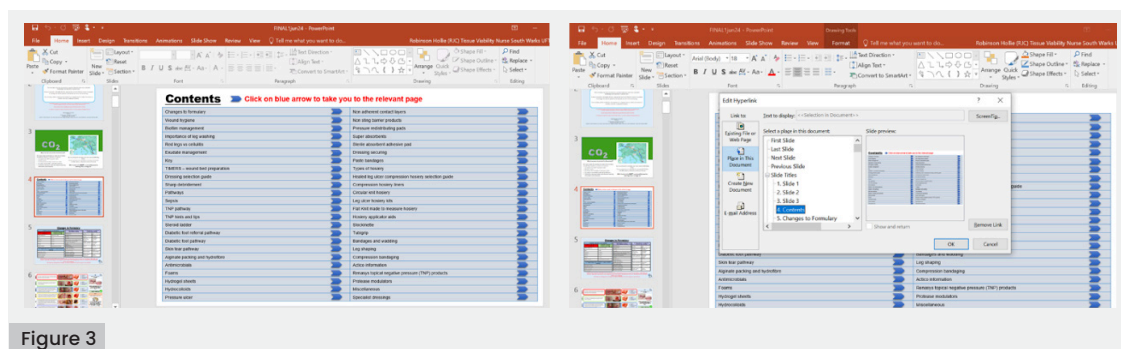


Figure 3

making.

QR codes can be used to link directly to measuring guides, official company YouTube channels, NICE guidelines, published evidence, or any other external resources you want to make readily available to clinicians. This approach allows users to access up-to-date, reliable information quickly, without leaving the presentation.

To create a QR code for any website, visit the site, right-click anywhere on the page, and select 'Create QR code for this page' [Figure 4].

Once you have fully completed your virtual formulary and are satisfied with the final content, select "Save As" and choose "PDF" from the "Save as type" dropdown menu. This will convert your PowerPoint presentation into an interactive PDF document, which can be easily uploaded to any website or NHS intranet.

### Implementing the virtual formulary

In the writer's experience, a key focus of implementation was ensuring that all staff felt confident using the virtual formulary from

**Figure 1.** Ideas for inclusion – enhancing virtual formulary usability

**Figure 2.** Example of a virtual formulary

**Figure 3.** Making an interactive contents page

**Figure 4.** Generation a QR code.

**Figure 5.** Staff cards

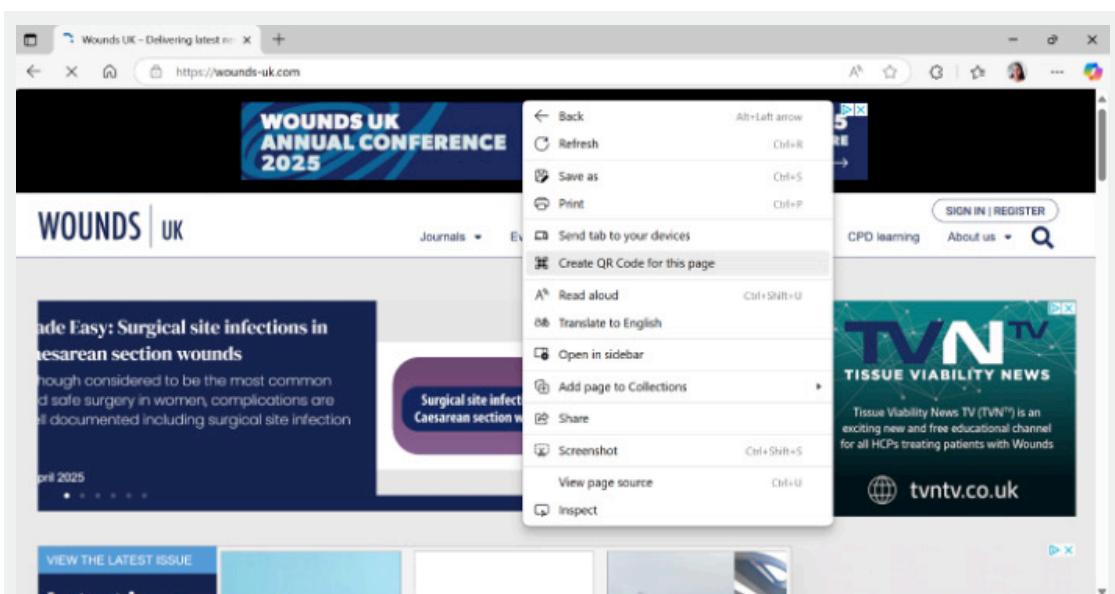


Figure 4

the outset. We held drop-in sessions across the county to allow teams to join at times convenient to them. These sessions covered platform navigation, how to search for wound care products, and how to follow formulary pathways to support evidence-based decision-making.

Staff were encouraged to cascade the information to their wider teams to maximise reach. Structured training was also embedded into our monthly wound care study days and weekly base visits to nursing teams.

To ensure quick and easy access, we distributed cards featuring a QR code linking directly to the formulary platform [Figure 5]. These were handed out during the formulary launch, at base visits, and during training sessions. Staff were encouraged to bookmark the site on their desktop, and some teams laminated and attached the QR codes to their laptops. These cards served as both a prompt and a practical tool to support ongoing engagement.

Potential barriers such as digital literacy and resistance to change were addressed proactively during the rollout phase. Ongoing support was made readily available, and we fostered an open environment for feedback to identify and resolve challenges in real time. Staff were reassured that the formulary is a supportive tool designed to enhance, not replace, clinical judgement. They were encouraged to use it flexibly, with all necessary information available at the touch of a button given its clear and interactive contents page.

The combination of practical training, accessible resources, and a staff-centred implementation approach has helped to embed the virtual formulary into everyday practice, supporting safe, consistent, and cost-effective wound care.

### Maintaining and updating the formulary

Maintaining and updating a virtual wound care formulary is essential to ensure optimal patient care through constant innovation and evidence-based practice. The dynamic nature of wound management necessitates the integration of emerging research findings and new wound care products and therapies; as well as updated clinical guidelines and pathways into the formulary (Edwards and Harding, 2004). By systematically incorporating new knowledge and advancements, healthcare professionals can improve treatment efficacy, healing rates and patient outcomes (Smith et al., 2019). Additionally, a virtual wound formulary allows for real-time modifications and accessibility, supporting frontline clinicians in making informed decisions (Jones and Brown, 2021). User feedback plays an essential role in this evolving process, as frontline



Figure 5



nurses and wound care specialists provide valuable insights regarding product efficacy, usability, and clinical relevance (Green and Taylor, 2018). Incorporating staff feedback therefore facilitates continuous improvements of this clinical tool and presents opportunity for improvements ensuring the formulary remains up to date, user friendly, practical, and relevant. Moreover, the virtual platform fosters interdisciplinary collaboration by enabling timely updates and dissemination across a variety of healthcare settings (Wilson, 2020). Ultimately, a well-maintained and regularly updated virtual wound formulary supports a culture of continual learning and quality improvement, actively encouraging adherence to best practices and facilitating the adoption of innovative wound management strategies. This approach not only improves individual patient care but also contributes to broader trust wide goals of safety, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness in wound treatment (Phillips, 2017).

## Conclusion

The creation of a virtual wound care formulary represents a practical, scalable solution for standardising wound management across healthcare settings. Built using PowerPoint and converted into an interactive PDF, it offers ease of access, intuitive navigation, and real-time links to essential clinical resources. When paired with structured training, staff engagement, and regular feedback mechanisms, the virtual format can significantly enhance confidence, consistency, and efficiency in wound care delivery.

Ongoing maintenance is vital to ensure the formulary evolves alongside emerging evidence, updated guidelines, and new product innovations. Integrating frontline feedback and adhering to national standards supports continuous improvement and clinical relevance.

Ultimately, a well-implemented virtual formulary not only promotes adherence to

evidence-based practice but also facilitates multidisciplinary collaboration, optimises resource use, and contributes to better healing outcomes for patients. As digital tools become increasingly integral to healthcare delivery, virtual formularies offer a forward-thinking approach to improving both care quality and sustainability within wound care services. ●

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