

The cost effective implementation of a Wound Management Digital System (WMDS) to achieve service improvements, outcome benefits and cost savings in South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust.

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INTRODUCTION

The NHS generates significant amounts of data, yet connecting this data across the system remains challenging especially when it comes to consent concerns and system inter-operability. The implementation of data-driven strategies would deliver enormous benefits for patients and achieve true integration of care. The Tissue Viability Team at South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust (SWFT) conducted an audit to address wound care related incidents which revealed significant gaps in wound assessments practices. The project aimed to standardise care, improve patient outcomes, and achieve efficiency savings through data-driven strategies.

METHOD

SWFT launched a six-month pilot project implementing the eKare inSight Wound Management Digital System (WMDS) within two community nursing teams. The project began with an audit to establish baseline wound care practices, which highlighted significant gaps, particularly in wound assessment and documentation. The WMDS was used to standardise care, provide specialist oversight, and identify areas for optimisation to achieve efficiency savings. Key metrics evaluated during the pilot included the time required for documentation, cost savings, wound healing rates, and staff feedback on the new system's effectiveness.



RESULTS

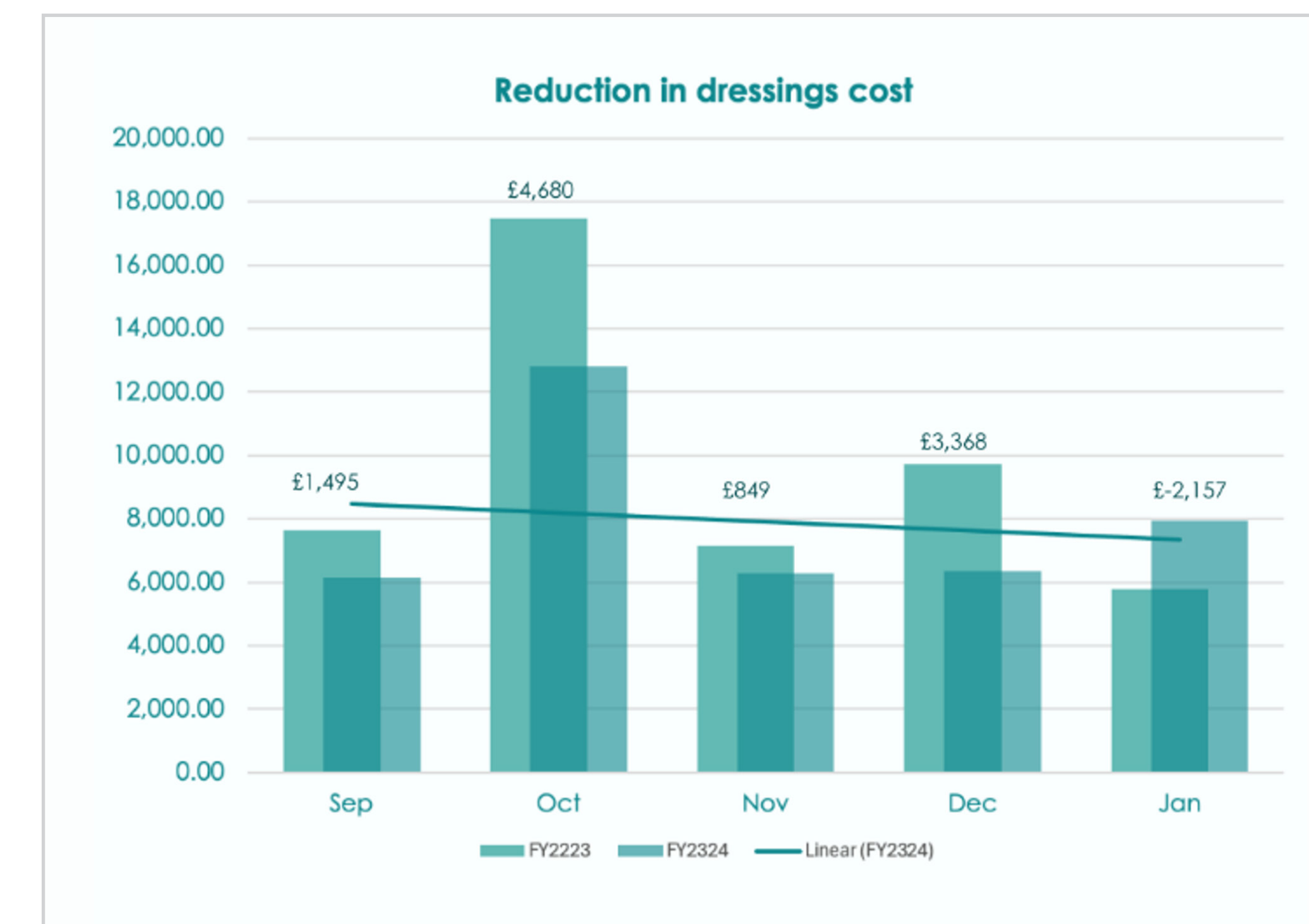
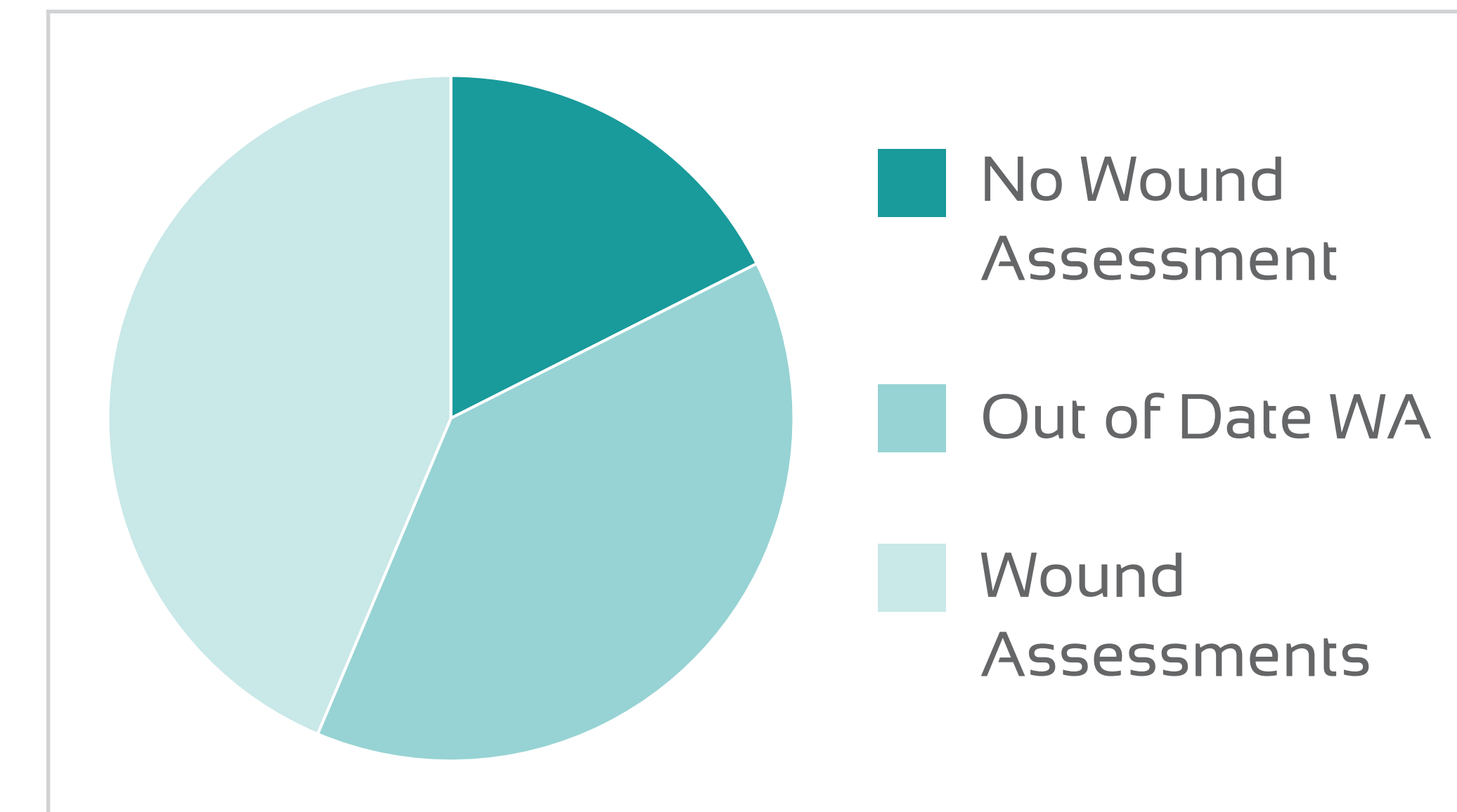
The audit revealed that out of 1,070 patient records audited, 17.55% did not have a wound assessment and of those that had a wound assessment, 38.8% were not up to date.

Prior to the pilot study, documentation time for wound assessments was 17-28 minutes. With implementation of inSight, documentation time reduced to 3-7 minutes.

The inSight app provided the data to make necessary interventions and improve formulary adherence, enhancing clinical effectiveness and patient safety. inSight provided simple reports highlighting treatment and dressing choices. The pilot generated annual savings of £19,763 for two teams, with a potential of £100,000 savings organisation-wide.

The use of inSight supported the integration of prevention initiatives by enabling the Tissue Viability Service to have true oversight of the wound care population, assessments, treatments and outcomes. Over 12 weeks, the pilot achieved total savings of £8,295.02 across five patients by targeted review of wounds requiring daily dressing changes and investigating non-infected wounds unnecessarily receiving antimicrobial treatment.

“This has made our wound assessments so much quicker meaning we have more face to face and hands on interaction with patients, it also shows us on a graph how the wound is progressing which is really great to see.”
- User (Clinician) Feedback



5 patient sampling				
Visit/Review Type	Goal/Aim	Outcome	Cost Saving/week	Overall Saving
Daily	Reduced visits	Reduced to twice a week	£238.41	£7,629.12
Antimicrobial	Inappropriate dressings	Reduced cost over 9 weeks	£536.26 over 9 weeks	£536
Antimicrobial	Inappropriate dressings	Stop using silver	£20.22	£20.22
Antimicrobial	Inappropriate dressings	Changed dressing	£17.88	£107.25
Antimicrobial	Inappropriate dressings	Changed dressing	£2.17	£2.17
			£8,295.02	

DISCUSSION

The implementation of the eKare inSight system demonstrated that digital tools could significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of wound care management. The system's ability to provide real-time data and support remote monitoring was crucial in improving patient outcomes and reducing wound care costs. Additional benefits included enhanced data quality, improved staff morale, increased clinical activity, and a reduction in travel expenses. Before implementing eKare inSight, clinicians struggled to easily access wound care data and accurately track healing times. Now, with inSight, this data is readily available, providing clear evidence that wound healing times are decreasing under the team's care. The data offers continuous benchmarking for improvements across various areas, guiding future training, optimising treatment protocols, and driving efficiency and cost savings.

CONCLUSION

The success of the pilot project has led to the approval of a full roll-out of the eKare inSight system across the SWFT. This initiative aligns with the National Wound Care Strategy's goals and positions SWFT as a leader in innovative wound care practices. The continued use of digital tools like inSight is expected to drive further improvements in patient care and resource management across the organisation.

What's next:

- **Full roll-out:** implementation of the system across all community teams
- **Training initiatives:** address identified gaps in staff training, particularly in pressure ulcer categorisation
- **Further research:** monitor long-term impacts on wound healing rates and refine treatment strategies