

Case study: Engaging and enabling staff to increase uptake of Wound Management Digital System

Background

Livewell Southwest is a provider of integrated Health and Social Care services operating across South Hams, West Devon, and Plymouth, with additional responsibilities for delivering specialist services to people living in certain parts of Cornwall and Devon. Livewell CIC is integrating into the forming Devon ICS and serves a practice population of 330 thousand with 7 Primary Care Networks.

Livewell Southwest is a National Wound Care Strategy Programme (NWCSP) First Tranche Implementation Site (FlmpS) for improving lower limb wound care. As part of the programme, it was decided to implement a Wound Management Digital System (WMDS).

The Need

People with wounds typically present to several health care services. In Livewell Southwest, this includes community/district nursing, podiatry services, the leg ulcer service and tissue viability services. Like many areas, the absence of good quality wound management clinical documentation and data meant that it was difficult to quantify the local burden of wound care or understand the current quality of care being provided.

It was recognised that high quality data and information was required to provide insight into the population need, service planning and quality improvement. The ability to improve this became an important part of Livewell Southwest's digital improvement plan.

Wound Management Digital Systems (WMDS) were explored as a possible solution to address the factors affecting the collection of high-quality information and the ability to draw insights from it. In partnership with a WMDS provider, Livewell Southwest agreed to undertake a 6-month trial of a WMDS, primarily focusing on capturing wound images and basic wound care information (e.g. wound dimensions).

Solution

As part of a commitment to engage staff in the WMDS project and build momentum, the following approaches were taken:

- A survey was sent to all staff in wound care services to understand their use of the WMDS to gain insights into the key barriers and enablers for its use.
- Both virtual and face-to-face training was provided to staff by senior leaders, such as the District Nurse Quality Manager and Tissue Viability Project Lead.

Impact and Outcomes

The impact of the engagement with clinical colleagues to date has been:

- 91.2% of staff either agreeing or agreeing strongly that the WMDS is a useful tool in their everyday practice.
- Improved WMDS functionality based on staff feedback.

This engagement has led to more staff being able to take advantage of the functionality within the WMDS to:

- Improve the quality of lower limb wound clinical documentation.
- Improve ability to identify deterioration or stagnation of wounds, via an online portal, resulting in a timely senior or specialist review.
- Share wound progress with patients (86% of staff reported that they routinely do this).

"I found that the photo says far more than words can. It wasn't long into my use of the app that I found it especially useful when visiting an ongoing patient I had not seen before. I could see from the ulcer that that it had deteriorated but to refer to a previous photo, I knew I was right in what I was seeing."

Community Nurse

Challenges

Ongoing challenges include:

- Interoperability - integration between the WMDS and the EPR has been slow to achieve, which impeded the use of the WMDS as the single application to manage wounds.
- Licencing - the WMDS is licenced on a per organisation basis which can prevent adoption of the WMDS across pathways.

Lessons

Lessons learnt during this process and key enablers include:

- Visible clinical leadership and clinical champions in each area – as they will either 'push' staff to use or 'pull' by setting an example.
- Considering the burden of data collection - clinicians should not collect data for data's sake - the data used must be relevant to them, otherwise they will not use it".

Next steps

Following a successful 6-month trial of the WMDS by the clinical team and demonstration of the benefits that can be achieved through its use, Livewell Southwest have successfully developed a business case that has been agreed by their Board to continue the use of the WMDS and widen the user base.



A programme commissioned by NHS England.

