

Influence • Inspire • Empower

Using experiences of wound care to inform clinical practice

Background

Embedding the views and experiences of patients and service users into service improvements is essential.

Patient experience has been shown to be positively associated with patient safety and clinical effectiveness (Doyle et al, 2013*), and therefore understanding and improving experiences of care is critical for positive health outcomes.

This is particularly important in wound care, where treatment adherence, self-management and quality of life play an important role in outcomes.

Reflecting Flen Health's vision of creating a world where wounds and skin disorders do not stop patients from living the life they love, this project aimed to explore the emotional, practical, and clinical realities of wound care to inform the development of a shared care guide or leaflet shaped by patients' lived experiences and needs.

Flen Health partnered with Picker, drawing on its expertise in patient experience and wound care research, to ensure the patient voice was central to the guide's development.

* Doyle C, Lennox L, Bell D (2013) A systematic review of evidence on the links between patient experience and clinical safety and effectiveness. BMJ Open 3(1): 001570





Approach

We aimed for a genuine partnership between patients, Flen Health and Picker to ensure we engaged people in a meaningful way and produced an output that was accessible and useful.

Two structured online patient panel sessions explored the lived experiences and perceptions of individuals managing wound care. Sessions focused on both the emotional and practical dimensions of wound care, including:

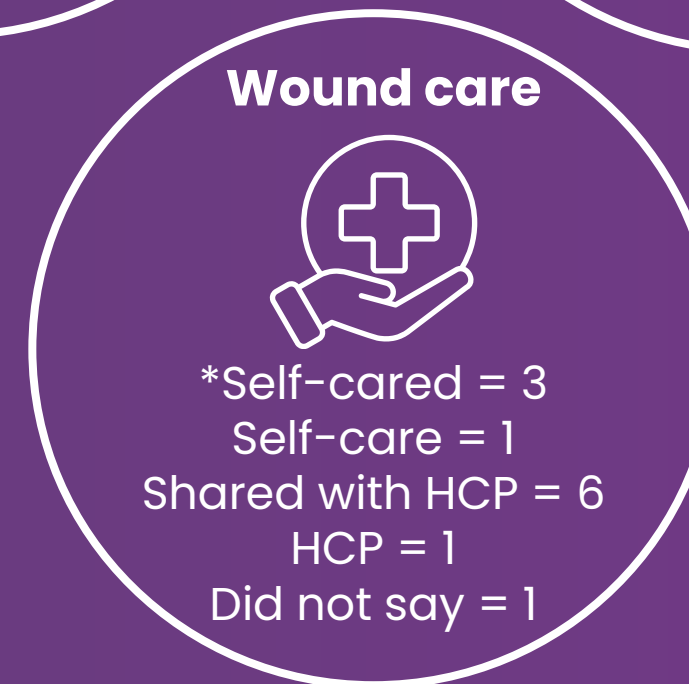
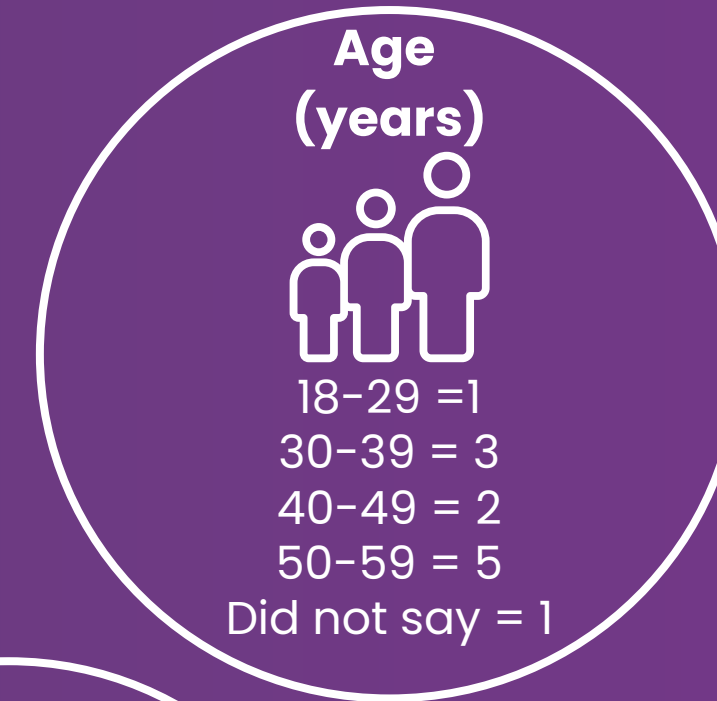
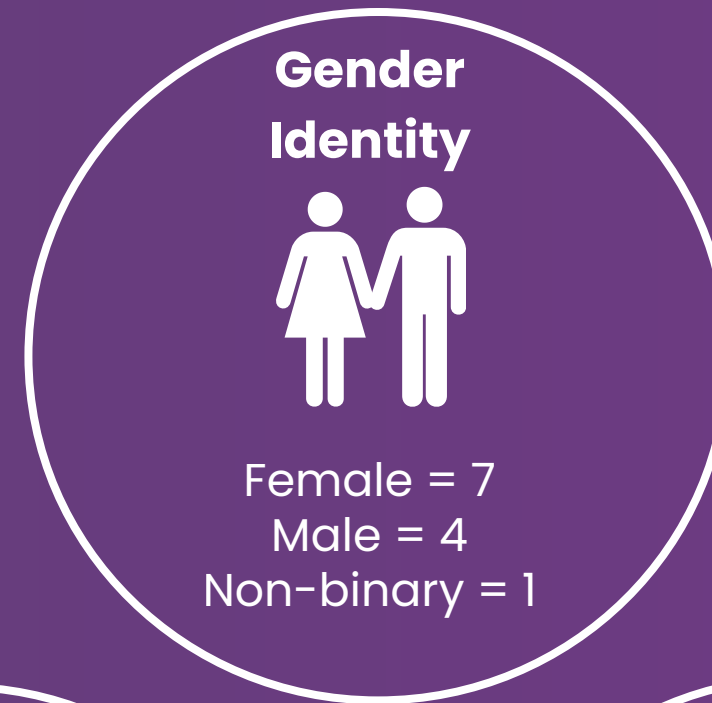
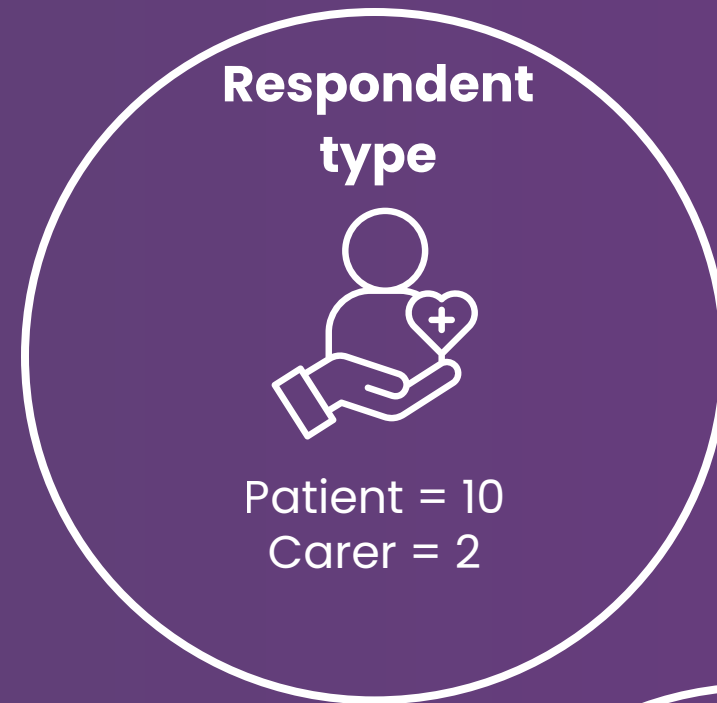
- Shared care
- Information needs
- What elements of wound care matter most

People were recruited into the panels via social media platforms, patient communities, and existing contacts.

Twelve adults with current or recent (last two years) direct experience of wound care, including patients and carers, took part across the two sessions.

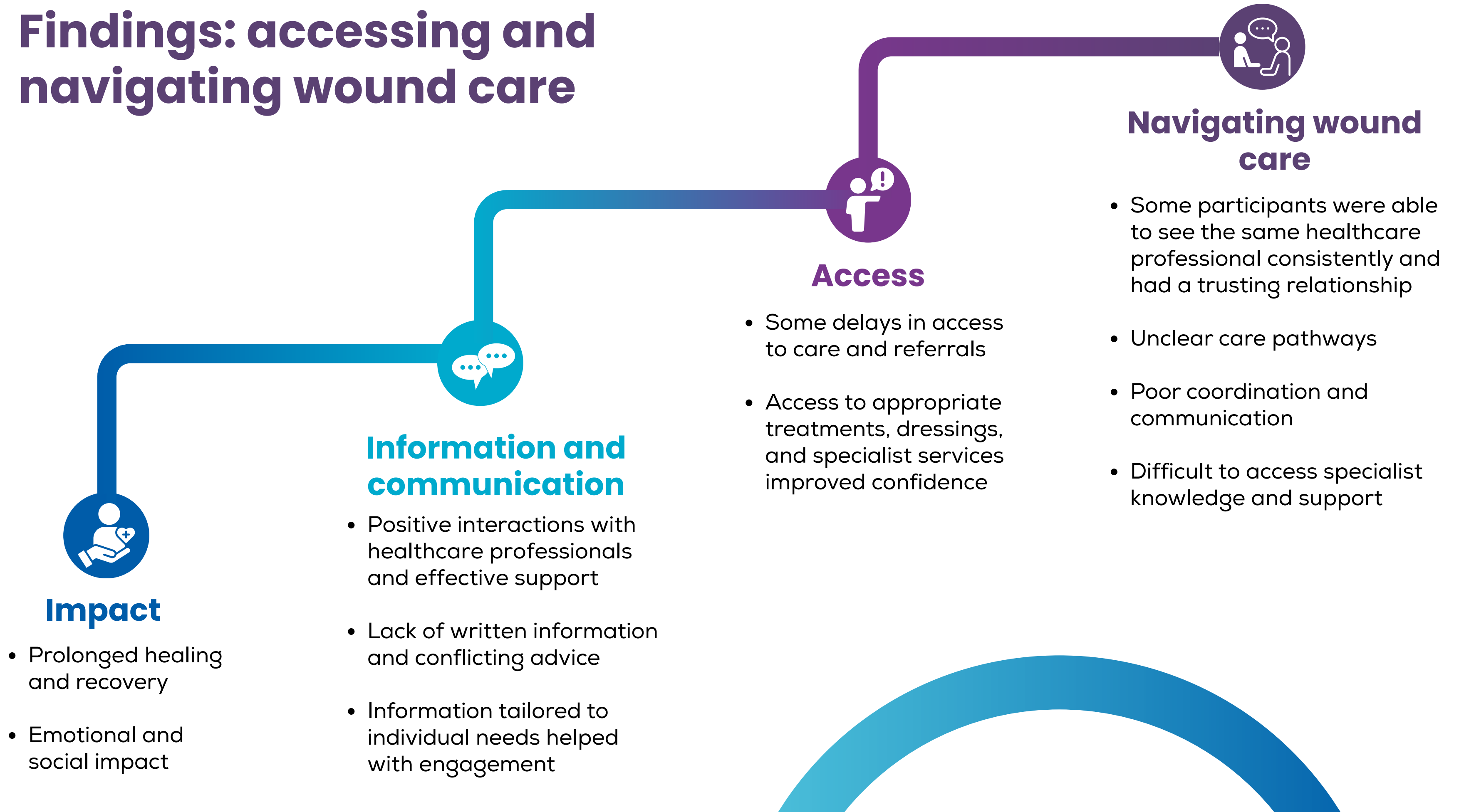
Thematic analysis was used to identify key themes and topics arising from discussions. A report was generated with key actions for industry and for healthcare professionals.

About the 12 participants



*Self-cared (carried out themselves); Self-care (carried out by family member/ carer); Shared with HCP (Shared dressing care with a health care professional); HCP (care carried out by only health care professional).

Findings: accessing and navigating wound care



Findings: shared care

Experiences of shared care varied; some reported positive collaboration with healthcare professionals who provided consistent support, and others felt this was not the case.

Safe, shared care depended on three elements:

- Clarity about expectations and risks
- Demonstration of dressing techniques in real time
- Follow-up to ensure correct technique and to identify complications early.

When these elements were present, participants felt confident and engaged, when these elements were absent, anxiety and inconsistent care increased.

"...I was taught about pressure sores before I left hospital on the expectation that I would get one eventually. So I had sort of left rehabilitation quite knowledgeable in how to spot them and how to take care and what they can turn into if you let them go."



Findings: adherence to wound care



Adherence was shaped by clarity of instructions, available support and daily life demands



Barriers included pain, fatigue and competing responsibilities



Trust in staff, involvement and personalised communication were vital



Strong communication and involvement led people to feel more confident and engaged

"I think that the advice given needs to be tailored to the individual, so for example depending on where your wound is, because I find a lot of wound advice is quite generic for that specific type of wound, but not for the placement on the body and how that will affect you."



Patient guide

Feedback from the first workshop informed the development of a draft patient guide, which was reviewed and refined during the second workshop.

There was a preference for visual materials with graphics and colour. Patients wanted plain language, clear structure, step-by-step visuals, realistic home-based instructions, signs of infection and escalation thresholds, translations, accessible design, and contact details for healthcare professionals.

The workshops revealed variation in preferences for depth of information:

- some participants favoured a concise, high-level guide;
- others preferred a more detailed resource providing greater explanatory context.

Consequently, two complementary versions of the patient guide were developed: a short summary version and a more detailed version. These had input from healthcare professionals and reviewed by a Clinician Advisory Group to ensure clinical accuracy and usability.

Paper published in Wounds UK

This work has recently been published in Wounds UK. The article was co-authored by Flen Health and Picker as a follow-up project to maximise impact and reach.

Hutchinson, K., Atkinson, K., Tallett, A., Evans, R. (2026)
Using qualitative insights into experiences of wound care to inform clinical practice. *Wounds UK*, 22(2), 17 June.
Available at: <https://wounds-uk.com/journal-articles/using-qualitative-insights-into-experiences-of-wound-care-to-inform-clinical-practice/>.

Using qualitative insights into experiences of wound care to inform clinical practice

This article explores patient experiences of chronic wound care in the NHS. It highlights challenges with access, communication, and treatment adherence. Patients valued personalised support and continuity of care. Clearer and more engaging written information was also preferred. The study emphasises the need for more patient-centred wound care services.

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Clinical Science Liaison Manager, Flen Health; Honorary Vascular Nurse, NHS

Kelly Atkinson
Product Manager, Flen Health

Amy Tallett
Head of Research, Picker

Ruth Evans MBE
Founder, Picker Experience Network (PEN)

Client testimonial

"We had a positive experience working with the Picker team and valued their collaborative and well-organised approach. From the outset, they demonstrated a strong understanding of our objectives, asking the right questions and providing clear, practical advice. We received regular updates which ensured we felt informed and involved at every stage.

We were particularly impressed by the way Picker placed patients at the centre of the project. Their approach to designing and facilitating the patient panels ensured that participants' voices were genuinely heard and reflected in the outputs. The process itself was clear and well structured, with defined roles, timelines, and opportunities for input, which made collaboration straightforward and effective.

There were clearly defined roles and timelines that supported effective collaboration. Picker also showed flexibility and responsiveness, adapting quickly where refinements were needed and delivering outputs aligned with our requirements. We were excited to see the publication of our co-authored article in Wounds UK to ensure the work is shared widely, and we really benefited from the expertise within Picker on writing this type of article around patient voice.

The next steps are to work with the same patient panel to produce a complementary video asset that sits alongside the written guidance material.

Overall, it was a great experience working with Picker, and we would be very happy to collaborate again."



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