



+ Skin Tears

Improving outcomes for patients in care homes: The impact of the skin tear initiative in City Health Care Partnership (CHCP)

Skin tears project data courtesy of
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Smith+Nephew

ALLEVYN[◇]
GENTLE BORDER
Foam Dressing

Introduction

The World Health Organisation estimates that from 2015 to 2050, the world's population aged 60 and above will nearly double, rising from 12% to 22%, which is expected to affect healthcare systems.¹ Skin tears are already the most common wound among the elderly² and are a significant problem for patients and healthcare practitioners who treat them. They can be painful, affecting quality of life and often occur in individuals who require assistance with personal care, moving, or handling. This places residents in care homes and those receiving at-home care at higher risk³ and increases the likelihood of hospital admission. Nurses, healthcare assistants, and carers play a crucial role in preventing skin tears and assessing and managing them when they occur.³

The International Skin Tear Advisory Panel (ISTAP) is a global collaboration focused on improving outcomes for individuals at risk of skin tears by raising awareness, promoting education, and supporting prevention, assessment, and management efforts across all care settings.⁴ They define skin tears as: 'A traumatic wound caused by mechanical forces, including removal of adhesives. Severity may vary by depth', and classify skin tears into three types.⁵ It has been Jackie Stephen-Haynes concluded that care home staff and family members require appropriate education on caring for the skin of older adults and preventing skin tears.³

Due to the unwarranted variations in the care and management of skin tears across individual care homes and within the Community Nursing teams, Key opinion leaders from CHCP, in partnership with Smith+Nephew, introduced a change to the first aid care provision and management of skin tears sustained by residents within residential care settings. The initiative focused on training care home staff to support healthcare professionals in helping prevent, assess and manage skin tears effectively. By ensuring access to high-quality, evidence-based care and appropriate dressings (skin tear box), it aimed to improve healing rates and patient outcomes. Additionally, it intended to help alleviate the growing pressures on community nursing staff, reducing the strain on healthcare services. The skin tear box included ALLEVYN GENTLE BORDER Dressings and the CHCP Skin Tears Pathway.



Methods leading to the skin tear initiative role out

This project has undergone significant development over time, with extensive preparation before its official launch. Initial discussions began in 2021, focusing on critical aspects such as outlining the project, understanding service user (customer language) needs, setting expectations, establishing timelines, and developing comprehensive training and educational content. Careful consideration was also given to dressing requirements and assembling the project team, both internally and externally. Additionally, current practices and care pathways were reviewed to ensure the project effectively addressed gaps and enhanced patient care.

In 2022, 11 sites were initially recruited for a pilot, and the outcomes were measured by pre-and post-audit, including feedback from care homes and nursing teams; the data collected were analysed using SNAP survey software community.

Clinicians were surveyed with two key questions: 'Before you had the skin tear box, on average, how long did you have to wait for a nurse to apply the first dressing for a skin tear (hours)?' and 'now that you have access to a skin tear box, on average how long does it take for a dressing to be applied (hours)' A total of seven responses were collected (Image 1).

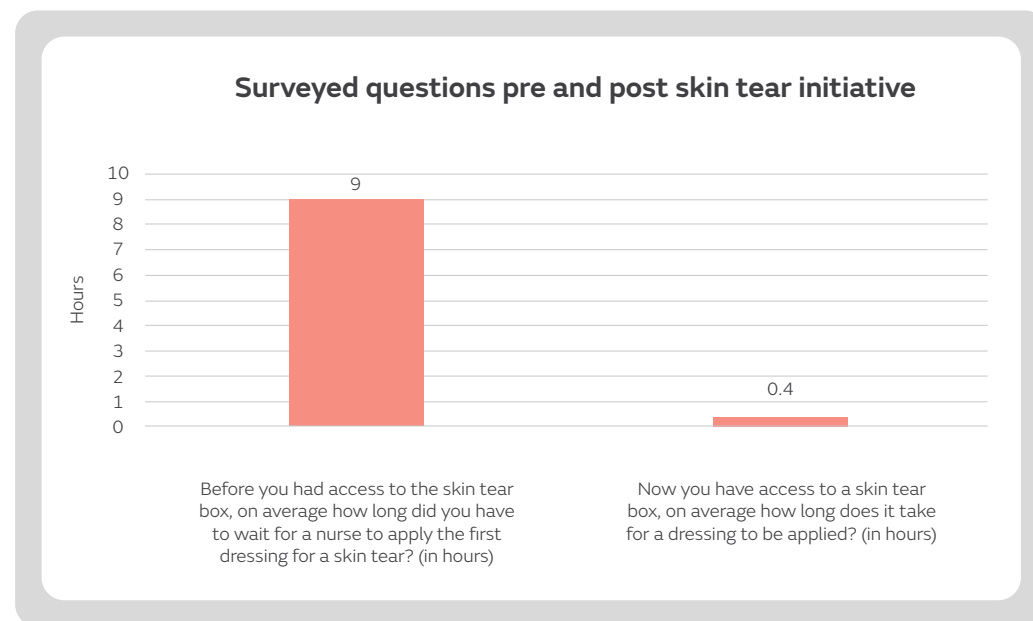


Image 1

Feedback from the pilot also highlighted

- **Pre-skin tear boxes:** There was reluctance to dress skin tears, often due to a lack of available or appropriate dressings, though many skin tears were managed well with basic first aid.
- **Post-community team feedback:** Homes have successfully managed skin tears independently with no referrals needed and are satisfied with the care provided.
- **Care home pilot feedback:** Training was highly praised, staff felt well-supported, and the initiative is seen as a brilliant and necessary standard. The pilot improved staff confidence and efficiency in managing skin tears, reducing the pressure on community nurses.

Role out of the project pilot phase and feedback, the skin tear initiative was expanded into the 'Skin Tear project' with the following steps:

- Skin tear pathway development (Image 2)
- Introductory letter to all care homes
- Care Home Managers and staff were invited to a virtual information session
- New guidance documents were provided, updating existing skin tear boxes
- Dates were scheduled for Care Home Managers and staff to attend virtual training and education and additional training was provided for community nursing staff
- Each care home was asked to designate a 'Skin Tear Champion' to check the skin tear box weekly
- Launch date and audit to measure the success of the project
- Skin tear box including ALLEVYN GENTLE BORDER Dressing (Image 3)

ALLEVYN GENTLE BORDER Dressings are breathable, absorbent, gentle silicone adhesive dressings⁶ that are clinically proven in the management of skin tears are known to minimise the stripping of epidermal cells⁷⁻⁹ and were selected as the most suitable dressing for the pathway.

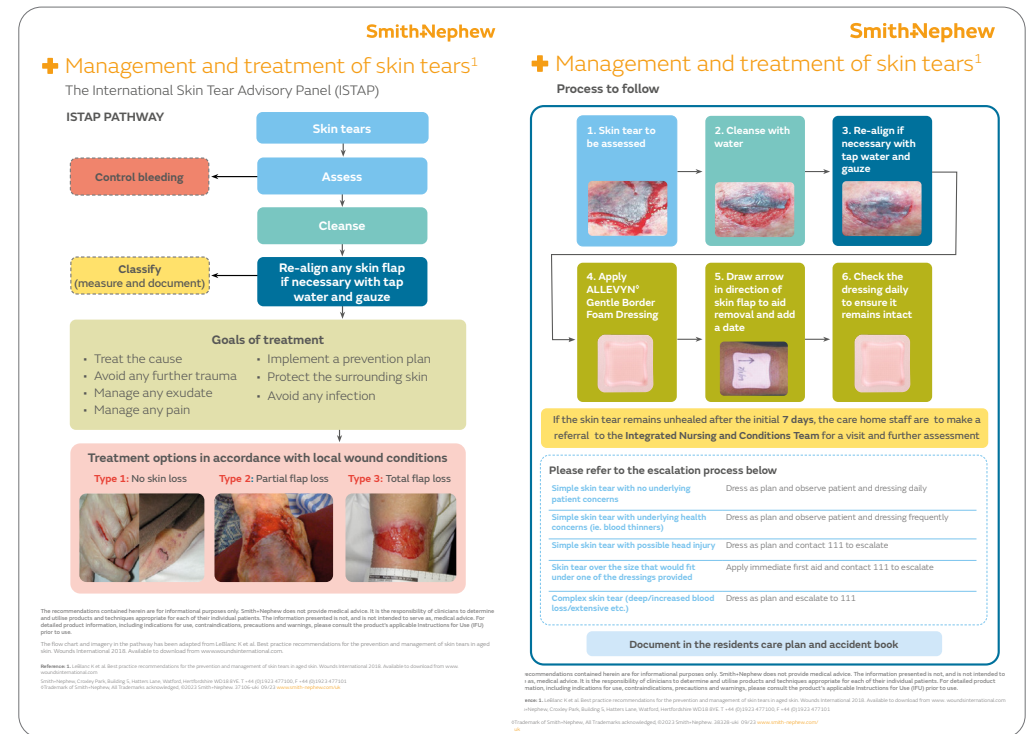


Image 2



Image 3

Results

Hull, East Riding and Bee at Home (Domiciliary care agency) were enrolled in the skin tears project. Once the care homes were identified, they were asked to complete a pre-survey to understand their role confidence and how often they manage skin tears within their facilities.

Pre-survey results

Participants were asked to describe their roles within the care home, and a total of 87 responses were received in total (Bee at home n=32 and Hull & East Riding n=55). Of these, 48 (56%) were home managers, 35 (41%) were senior carers, and 3 (3%) were carers.

When asked how often they dealt with skin tears (1 didn't reply), 69 respondents indicated they managed them occasionally to frequently, while 17 said they never encountered skin tears.

In terms of confidence in managing skin tears, 30% (n=26) felt very confident, 58% were quite confident (n=50), and 12% reported not feeling confident at all (n=10) (Image 4).

In addition to the above, those completing the survey said they had to wait on average 2.2 days for a nurse to assess skin tears and apply the appropriate dressings. Furthermore, the 81 nurses who responded to the question "Could you prevent a referral to the community nursing team if you had appropriate training and availability of dressings to effectively manage skin tears?" all answered yes (100%). This data highlighted the need for training to enhance confidence in managing skin tears and potentially reduce the burden on community nursing teams.

Post-survey results

Following the training and education sessions, 47 responses were collected, fewer than in the pre-survey. Of these, 22 (47%) were home managers, 16 (34%) were senior carers, and 9 (19%) were carers.

Following the training, confidence in managing skin tears improved. The number of those who did not feel confident dropped by 90%, with only one person reporting a lack of confidence (2%). Meanwhile, 45% participants felt very confident (n=21), and 53% reported feeling quite confident (n=25).

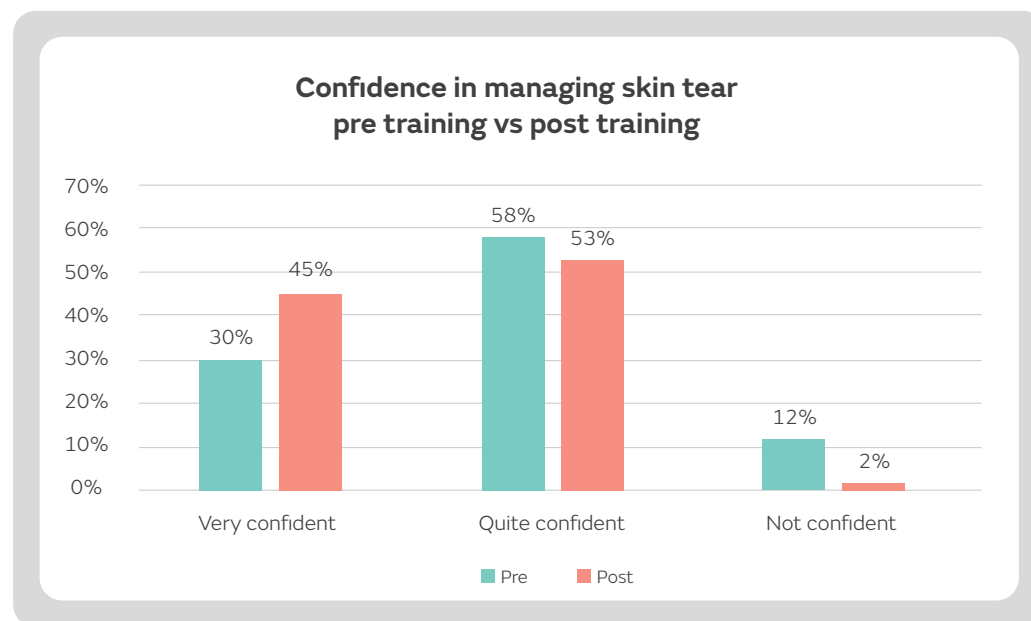


Image 4

Post-survey results (continued)

The training and education improved confidence levels among participants. The proportion of those feeling “very confident” increased from 30% to 45%, and there was a notable decrease in those lacking confidence, from 12% to 2%. These results highlight the positive impact of the training program on empowering care home staff to manage skin tears more effectively.

In addition to boosting confidence, the survey revealed the practical benefits of the skin tear initiatives. When asked whether the skin tear box and pathway had prevented delays caused by waiting for a community nurse to assess and dress skin tears, 91% (n=43) said yes, while only 6% (n=3) said no. This highlights how the initiative helped streamline care delivery and minimize delays in treatment.

Furthermore, 89% (42 respondents) felt that the skin tear box allowed them to take ownership of and manage skin tears appropriately and effectively. Nearly all respondents (97%, or 46 individuals) found the training helpful and believed it provided enough information to support the skin tear initiatives. Additionally, 85% (40 respondents) said the skin tear box gave them easy access to the appropriate dressings needed for managing skin tears.

Overall, these results demonstrate the significant impact of the training and resources provided. By improving confidence levels, empowering staff to take ownership of care, and ensuring quick access to necessary tools, the program enhanced the ability of care home staff to deliver timely and effective care for skin tears. These outcomes are a testament to the success of the initiative in improving both the quality of care and the autonomy of care providers.



ALLEVYN GENTLE BORDER Dressing evaluation

As part of the project, carers from care homes were surveyed about their experiences with ALLEVYN GENTLE BORDER Dressing, with 13 responses collected (Image 5 and 6).

The Hull F.I.R.S.T. (Falls Intervention Response Safety Team) delivered through a partnership between Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) and City Health Care Partnership (CHCP), were also identified as a valuable setting to promote the benefits of the skin tear initiative. The service operates 24/7, supporting patients who have experienced falls resulting in no or low-level injuries. With an average response time of one hour, the team responds to individuals registered with Hull-based GPs and those living within designated postcodes in the East Riding area.

Recognising the opportunity to improve patient health and wellbeing, HFRS agreed to undergo training for responders on managing skin tears associated with falls. This initiative has proven to be highly effective, enabling timely and appropriate care. In response, the training was delivered to the fire service team, and a follow-up survey was conducted to assess their experience.

The survey results were really positive, reflecting the effectiveness and impact of the program:

- Were the expectations you had about the training/workshop met?
100% answered yes
- Overall, how satisfied are you with the training/workshop?
100% said very satisfied
- How likely are you to attend another one of our training/workshops in the future?
100% answered very likely
- How likely are you to recommend this training/workshop to a friend or colleague?
100% responded very likely
- Have you attended skin tear training before? **100% answered no**
- What impact will the availability of ALLEVYN GENTLE BORDER Dressing and Pathway have on your patients? **100% responded very positive**
- What impact will the availability of ALLEVYN GENTLE BORDER Dressing and Pathway have on your service? **100% responded very positive**

These results highlight that this training has equipped Hull F.I.R.S.T. responders with the knowledge and confidence to manage skin tears on scene. This enhanced capability ensures that patients receive prompt, high-quality care during falls-related callouts.

On average, the Hull F.I.R.S.T. team attends to 125 patients each month who have fallen in their own homes, many of whom are at risk of skin tears. By delivering early, skilled intervention, the team helps reduce complications and supports better outcomes for vulnerable patients.

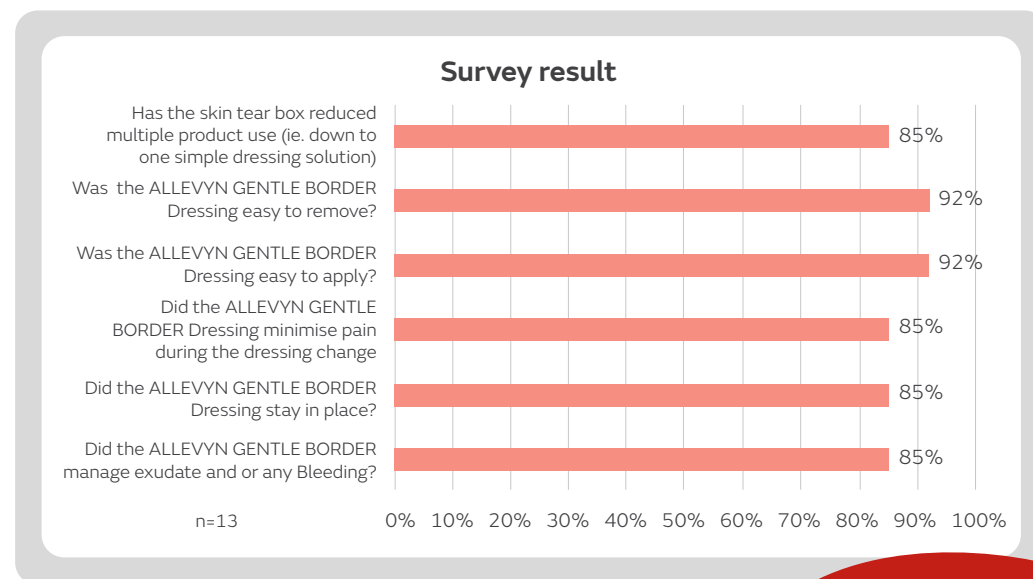


Image 5

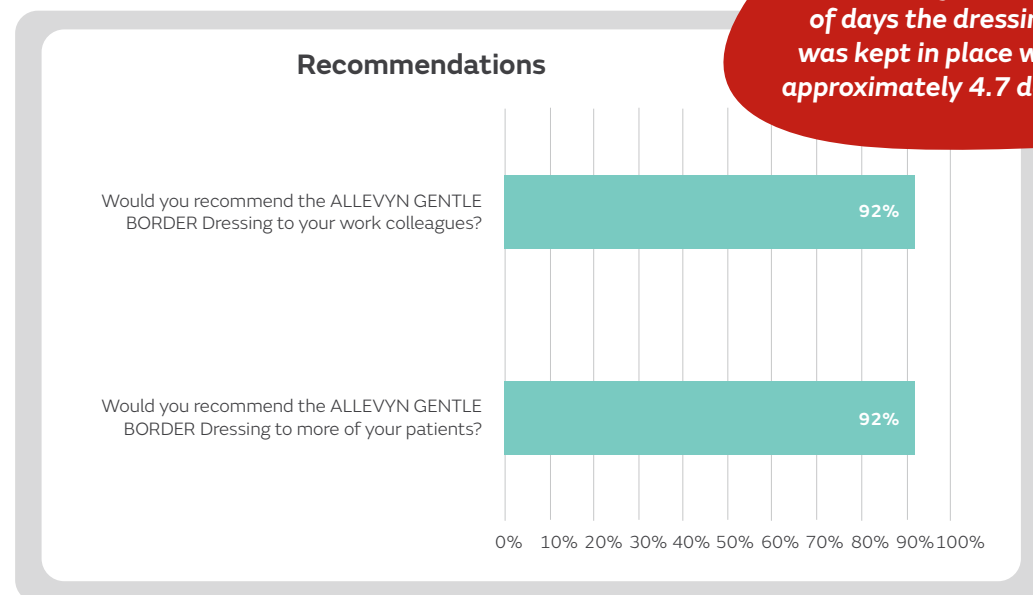


Image 6

"The average number of days the dressing was kept in place was approximately 4.7 days"

Conclusion

The initiative improved skin tear management by equipping care home staff with the knowledge, confidence, and tools for timely care. Training boosted confidence, reducing those who felt not confident by 90%, while the skin tear box and pathway streamlined care and reduced reliance on community nursing.

Strong engagement and positive feedback, including from the fire service, highlight the program's value and potential for wider use.

The project demonstrated the effectiveness of ALLEVYN GENTLE BORDER Dressing and its ease of use for healthcare professionals. Building on this further, Smith+Nephew are developing a skin tear package to support care homes across the Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, improving access to effective skin tear management.

This case is provided for informational and educational purposes only. This case may not represent typical outcomes. Every procedure and each patient undergoing wound treatment represents unique sets of circumstances and, therefore, results may vary. Smith+Nephew does not provide medical advice. The information presented is not, and is not intended to serve as, medical advice. It is the responsibility of the treating physician to determine and utilise the appropriate products and techniques according to their own clinical judgment for each of their patients.

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