



Incontinence Stage 3

EE E 1303 I3

Client: Essity

Date: 14th to 21st March 2025

Sample: 500

Demographic: UK medical professionals who look after patients with incontinence

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Method

Quantitative online survey

Samples:

1. Online research was conducted on behalf of *Essity* by OnePoll between 14th to 21st March 2025
2. 500 UK medical professionals who look after patients with incontinence were interviewed
3. Data splits were provided based on:
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Region
 - Place of Employment
 - Job Role
 - Personal income
4. Where relevant, comparisons are made from data collected on the same demographic:
 - **2023** (13th to 20th September 2023)
 - **2024** (26th to 30th January 2024)



Summary

- 54% of respondents felt that the **quality of continence products** at their workplace is of **good or the highest quality**, in **2024 this was 43%** (the rise in 2025 seems to be as less respondents said their products were average, and moved into the “good” category).
- In 2025, those who **personally assist in changing patients** say they do an **average of 4.6 changes per day (4.7 in 2024)**.
 - If they do not think the products they use are of good / the highest quality, on average they think that **better quality products** could **save them doing 2.12 changes per day (this was 1.87 in 2024)**
- In 2025, those who personally assist in changing patients say it **takes them 15 minutes and 59 seconds per change (this was 15 minutes and 2 seconds in 2024)**
 - If they do not think the products they use are of good / the highest quality, on average they **think it would take them 11 minutes and 11 seconds** to do each change if the products were better quality (**this was 10 minutes and 41 seconds in 2024**)
- Among those who personally assist in changing patients, 41% think **other patients might end up not receiving the broader care they need**, because they are too **busy providing wrap around care** to patients with incontinence – **this was 47% in 2024**
- In 2023 57% felt that **hospitals and care homes** spend **more time caring for patients** due to **procurement of poor-quality products**, which dropped to 46% in 2025

Summary

- 27% felt they **often or always** have to **give patients incontinence pads** which are **unsuitable** for their individual needs. Only 11% feel they **never** have to do this
- 48% **agree** there is a '**one size fits all approach**' to continence care – **down from 53% in 2024**
- If they do not think the products they use are of good / the highest quality, 54% **agree** that they are **not fulfilling the needs of patients** because **too long is spent trying to work with unsuitable products** (**this was 49% in 2024**)
- **In 2023, 78%** felt they were sometimes **treating patients** who **would self-manage better** with a little more **education** and information – this dropped to 70% in 2025
- 76% have **patients in their care** wearing **continence products “just in case”**, with the main reason for this being a **lack of workforce/ staff** (34%)
- There has been a **decrease** in the number of respondents **frustrated with the procurement of incontinence pads via the NHS** over time – **in 2023 this was 59%, dropping to 53% in 2024, and 48% in 2025**
 - Of those who are frustrated, in 2025 83% felt this was an **issue across the whole of the NHS**, not just in the area of continence care
- 29% think that some patients are **unwittingly ‘bed blocking’**, which was **slightly down** from **32% in 2024**.
- Just under a third (32%) were **previously aware that the government announced a policy change** in the way the NHS procures its medical supplies. 54% think this change will **enable patients to live a more dignified life**

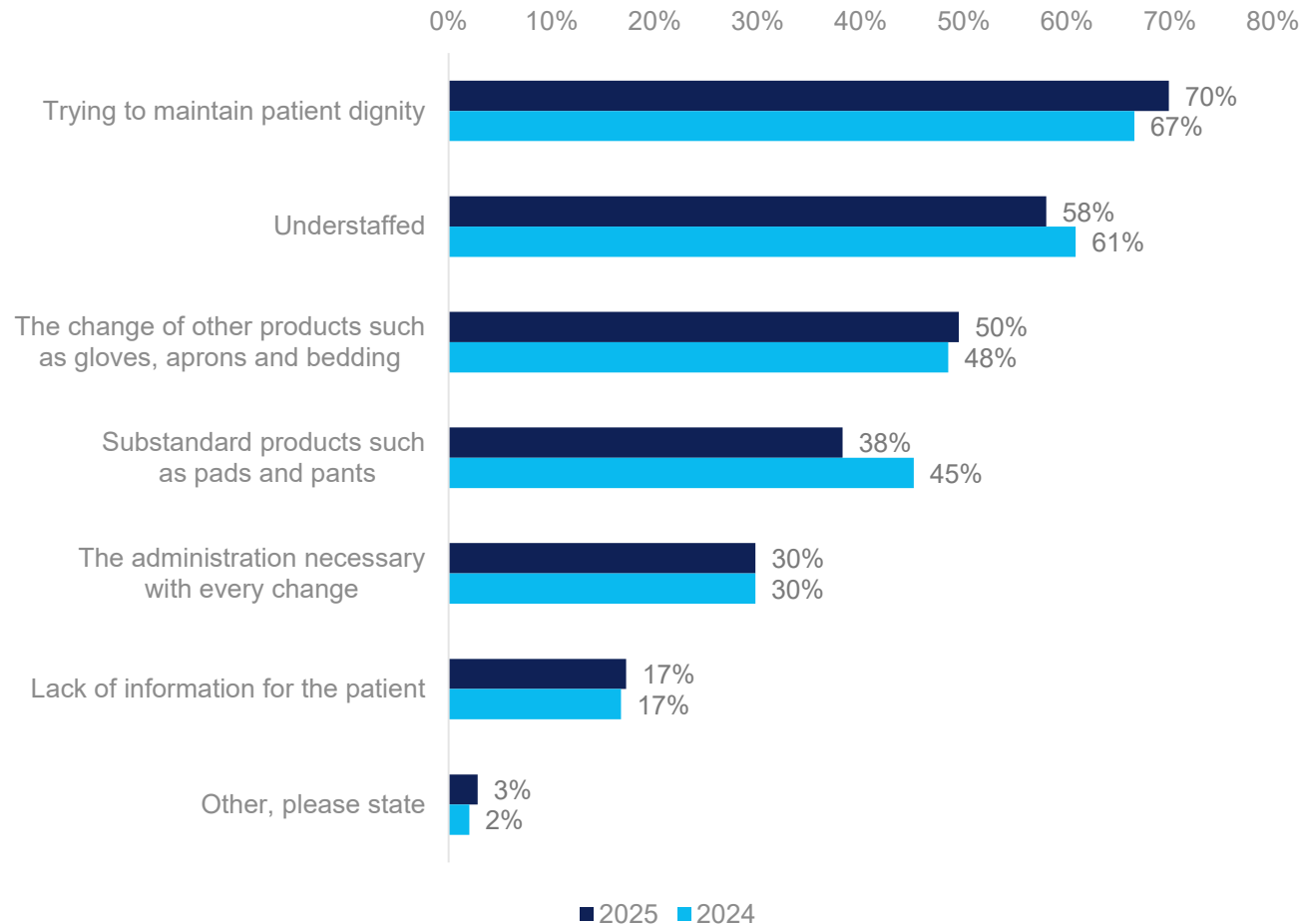
Quality of products

- 89% of those polled **personally assist** in **changing patients** with incontinence. In 2024 this was 85% of the sample, and 93% in 2023.
- 54% of respondents say the **quality of continence products at their workplace is of good quality**. In 2024, only 43% felt that they were of good quality. The main difference across these years is that there were less respondents saying they were average.
 - 9% say it is of the **highest** quality
- 8% feel these products are of **poor** quality. This was also 8% in 2024.
- 64% **agree** that due to factors beyond their control, they are **spending longer than necessary tending to patients with incontinence**. In 2024, 60% agreed with this statement.
 - 21% **strongly agreed** here
- 17% **disagree** this is the case



Question:

If you agree you are spending longer than necessary tending to patients with incontinence, why might this be?



Insight

Of those who agree they are spending longer than necessary tending to patients with incontinence (2025 n=319, 2024 n=299):

- The order of answers was the same across both waves, with trying to **maintain patient dignity** coming out top – 70% in 2025 compared to 67% in 2024.
 - In 2024, 45% mentioned **substandard products**, but this **dropped** to 38% in 2025

Number of changes



Of those who personally assist in changing patients (2025 n=444, 2024 n=425):

- Respondents do an average of **4.6 changes per day** for patients who are unable to manage their own continence and pad changes. **In 2024 this was 4.7**
 - 14% do 2 changes or less
 - 44% do 3 to 4 changes. **This was 39% in 2024**
 - And 41% do 5 or more changes

Of those who personally assist in changing patients & do not think that the products they use are of good / highest quality (2025 n=201, 2024 n=227):

- On average, they think **better quality products** would save them doing **2.12 changes** per day. **In 2024, the average was 1.87**
 - 29% think this would save them doing 2 changes per day. **In 2024, 41% of respondents said 2.**
 - 40% think this would save them doing 3 or more changes per day
- 16% **don't think better quality products would save them doing any changes.** **This was 20% in 2024.**

Time spent

Of those who personally assist in changing patients (2025 n=444, 2024 n=425):

- On average, **respondents are spending 15 minutes and 59 seconds** on each change they are doing. **In 2024 this was 15 minutes and 2 seconds**
 - 22% spend 10 minutes or less. **In 2024 this was 24%**
 - 30% spend 11 to 15 minutes. **This was 36% in 2024**
 - 25% spend 16 to 20 minutes. **This was 21% in 2024**
 - 21% spend 21 minutes or more on each change. **This was 19% in 2024**

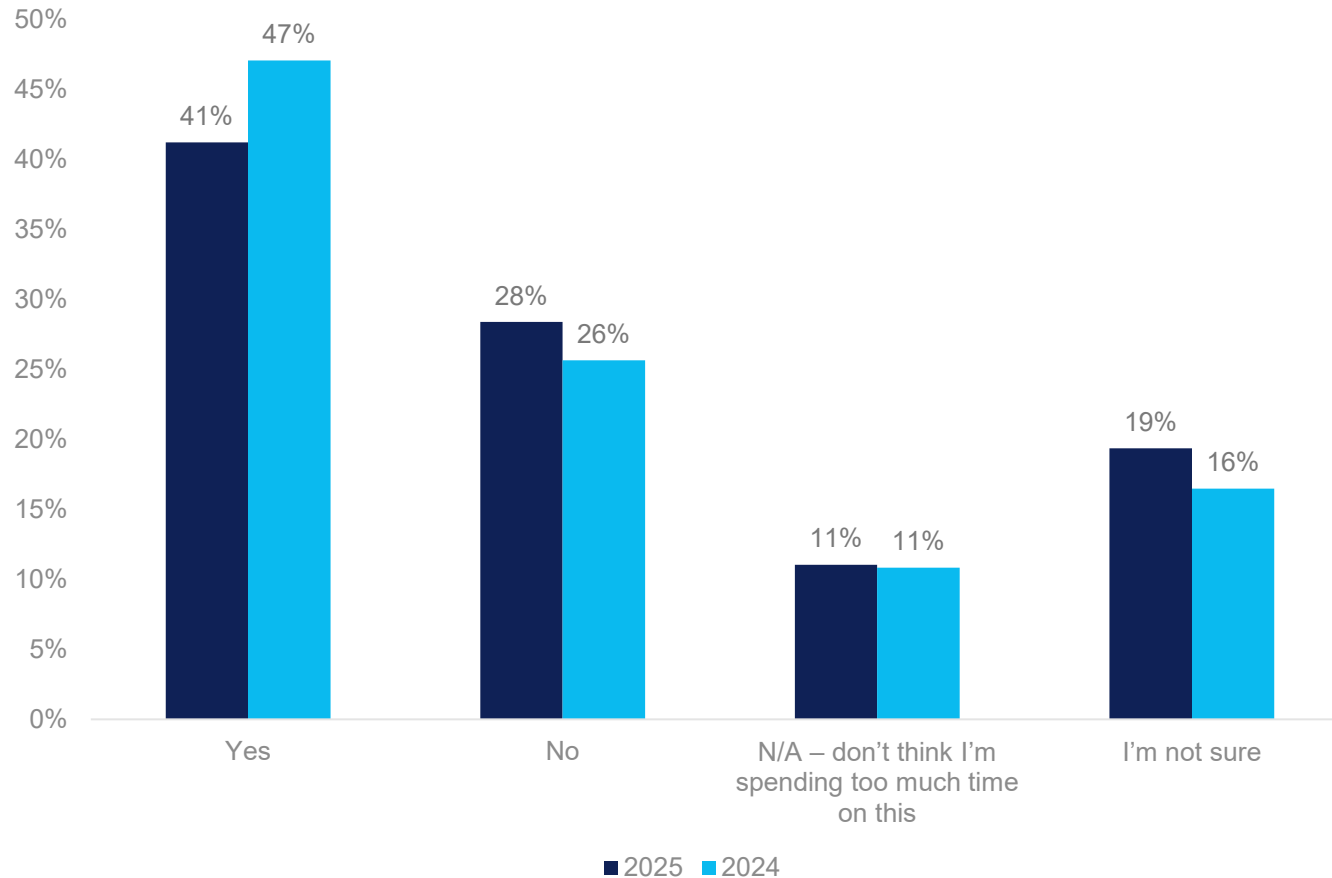
Of those who personally assist in changing patients & do not think that the products they use are of good / highest quality (2025 n=201, 2024 n=227):

- On average, they think it would take them **11 minutes and 11 seconds** to do each change if the products were **better quality**. **In 2024 this average was 10 minutes and 41 seconds**.
 - 54% think it would take them 10 minutes or less
 - 22% that it would take 11 to 15 minutes
 - And 19% that it would take them 16 minutes or more per change



Question:

Do you think other patients might end up not receiving the broader care they need, because you are spending too much time providing wrap around care to patients with incontinence?



Insight

Of those who personally assist in changing patients (2025 n=444, 2024 n=425):

- In 2024, nearly half (47%) felt that other patients may end up not receiving the broader care they need, because they are spending too much time providing wrap around care to patients with incontinence. This dropped to 41% in 2025.

Procurement



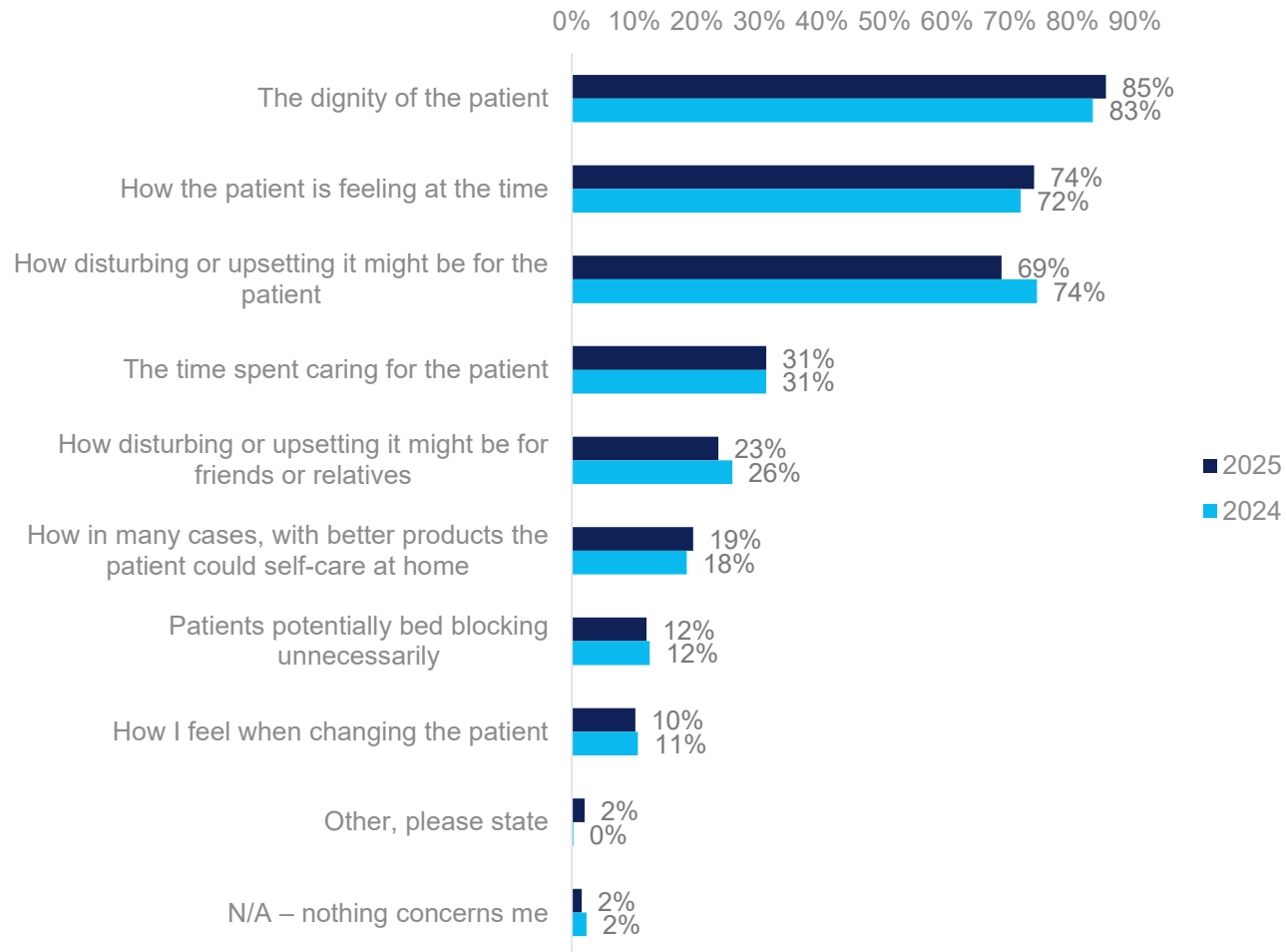
- 21% say their workplace has any **kind of cap or limit imposed** on the number of pads a patient should be provided with in a 24 hour timespan
- 46% think hospitals and care homes **spend more time caring for patients** due to the **procurement of poor-quality incontinence** products, than if they were to procure higher quality products. In 2023 this was 57%
 - 40% think this does not impact the time spent. This was 31% in 2023.

Of those who think higher quality products would reduce time spent (2025 n=228, 2023 n=283):

- 86% think the **better procurement** of high-quality incontinence products would lead to **improved skin health**. 68% thought this in 2023
 - 82% think it would improve well-being
 - 78% that it would lead to a better quality of life
 - And 70% that it would lead to shorter change times. 58% selected this in 2023

Question:

When it comes to changing a patient, what concerns you the most?



Insight

Of those who personally assist in changing patients (2025 n=444, 2024 n=425):

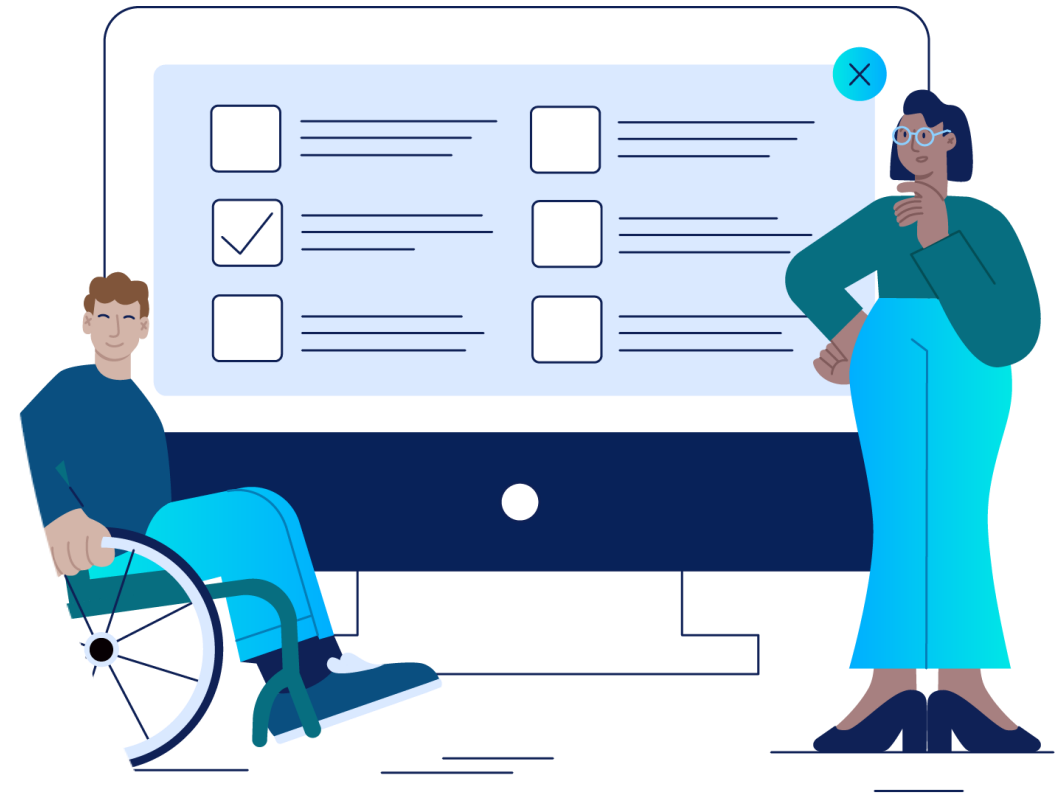
- 85% are most concerned about the dignity of the patient
 - 74% are concerned about how the patient is feeling at the time
 - And 69% are most concerned about how disturbing or upsetting it might be for the patient (down from 74% in 2024)

Suitability

- 5% say they **always have to give patients incontinence pads** which are **unsuitable** for their individual needs
 - 22% say they do this often
 - And 35% sometimes
- Only 11% feel like they **never** have to give patients unsuitable products
- 48% **agree** there is generally a **‘one size fits all approach’** to continence care. **Over half (53%) agreed in 2024**
 - 17% strongly agree this is the case
- 38% disagree that there is a one size fits all approach. **This was 36% in 2024**

Of those who don't think the products they use are of good / the highest quality (2025 n=232, 2024 n=283):

- 54% **agree** that they are **not fulfilling the needs of patients** because too long is spent trying to work with unsuitable products. **In 2024, agreement was 49%**
 - 9% strongly agreed
- While 19% disagree here. **This was 21% in 2024**



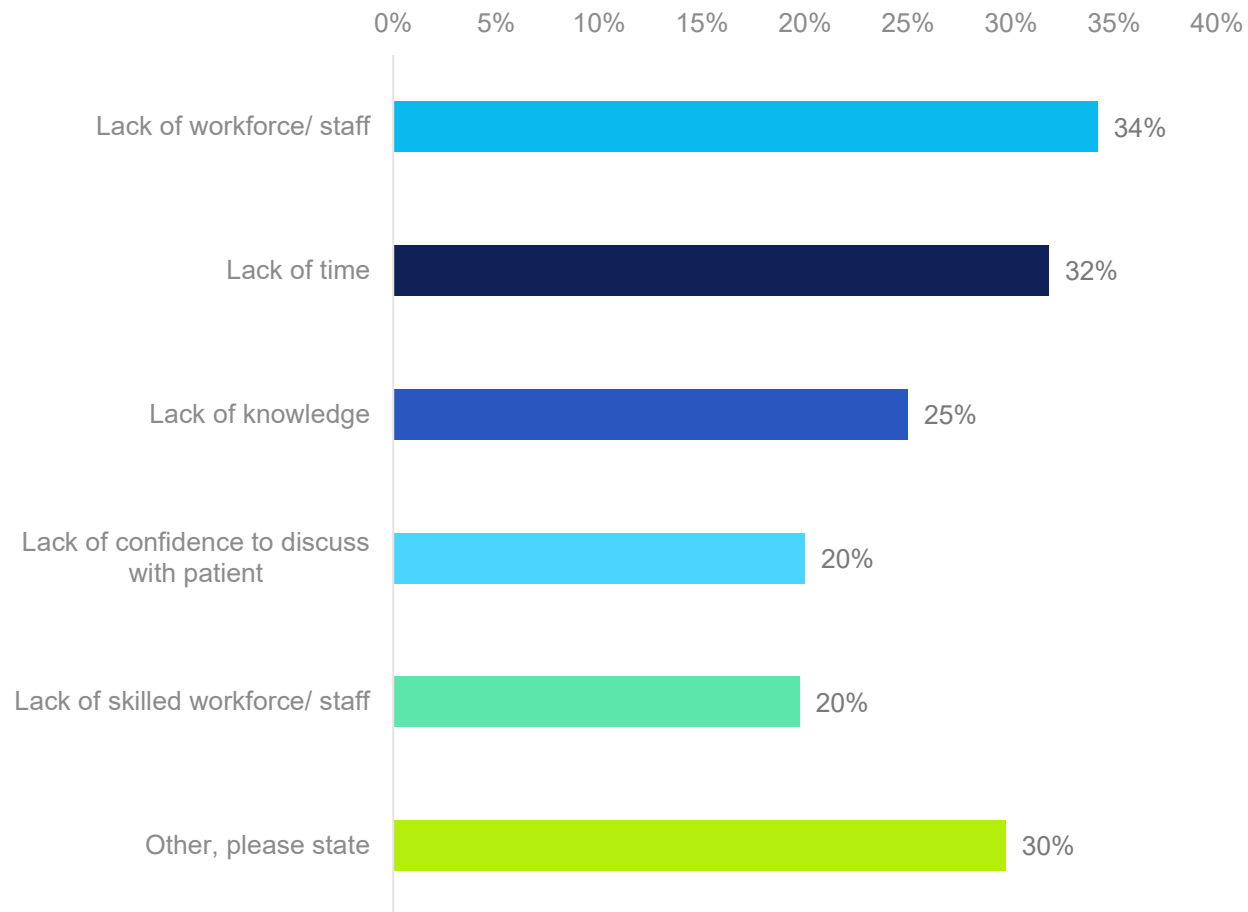
Self-management



- 70% find they are **sometimes treating patients** who would **self-manage better** with a little more **education** and information. In 2023, 78% said this was the case
- On **average** respondents think that **22.64% of patients** could **self manage** their incontinence care if better products, education, and information more readily available. In 2024 this average was **23.89%**
 - A third (33%) think 10% or less of patients could self manage in this case
 - 18% think 11 to 20% of patients could
 - 13% that 21 to 30% of patients could
 - And 26% of respondents think that 31% or more of patients could self manage if better products, education, and information more readily available
- Just over three quarters (76%) say they have **patients in their care** wearing **continence products “just in case”**
 - 21% do not

Question:

If you have any patients in your care wearing continence products “just in case”, what are the reasons for this?



Insight

Of those with patients in their care wearing continence products “just in case” (n=380):

- The most common reason for this was a **lack of workforce/ staff** (34%)
- **This was followed by:**
 - Lack of time (32%)
 - Lack of knowledge (25%)
 - Lack of confidence to discuss with patient (20%)
 - Lack of skilled workforce/ staff

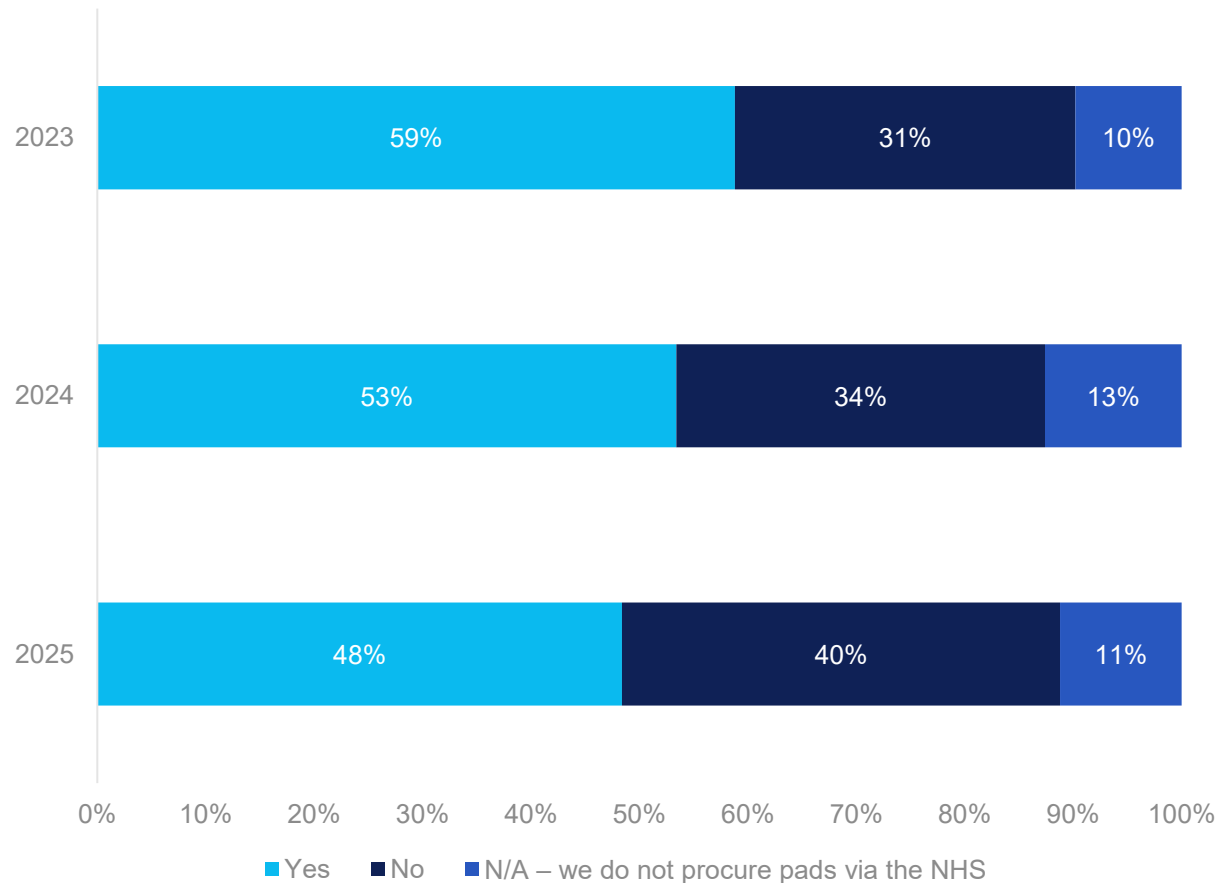
Patient understanding

- Almost half (49%) find their **duties are hampered by patients** who have **not been provided with enough information** about their condition, and how to care for themselves. **In 2024, this was 48%**
 - While 30% do not think this is the case. **This was slightly lower at 27% in 2024**
 - 21% feel that patients have been given the right information
- Over half (53%) think **patients are missing some personal assessment** which might aid them to better care for themselves / understand more about their condition. **56% in 2024 felt this way**
 - 32% don't think patients are missing this. **27% in 2024 selected "no" to this question**



Question:

Do you have any frustrations specifically with the procurement of incontinence pads via the NHS (perhaps you think they are too cheap, poor quality, not absorbent enough, there is a lack of choice of style/design etc)?



Insight

- Whilst it remains high, we can see a **decrease in the number of respondents who are frustrated with procurement of incontinence pads via the NHS** over the years:
 - 2023 = 59%
 - 2024 = 53%
 - 2025 = 48%

Frustrations

Of those who are frustrated with the procurement of incontinence pads via the NHS (2025 n=242, 2024 n=267):

- 82% agree the **procurement of substandard products** via the NHS is **causing a real problem** when it comes to patient care. In 2024 this was at 81%
 - 26% strongly agree this is the case. 29% strongly agreed in 2024
- 83% think the **procurement of unsatisfactory products** is a problem **across the whole of the NHS**, not just in the area of continence care. This was 85% in 2024
 - Only 7% think this is just related to continence care

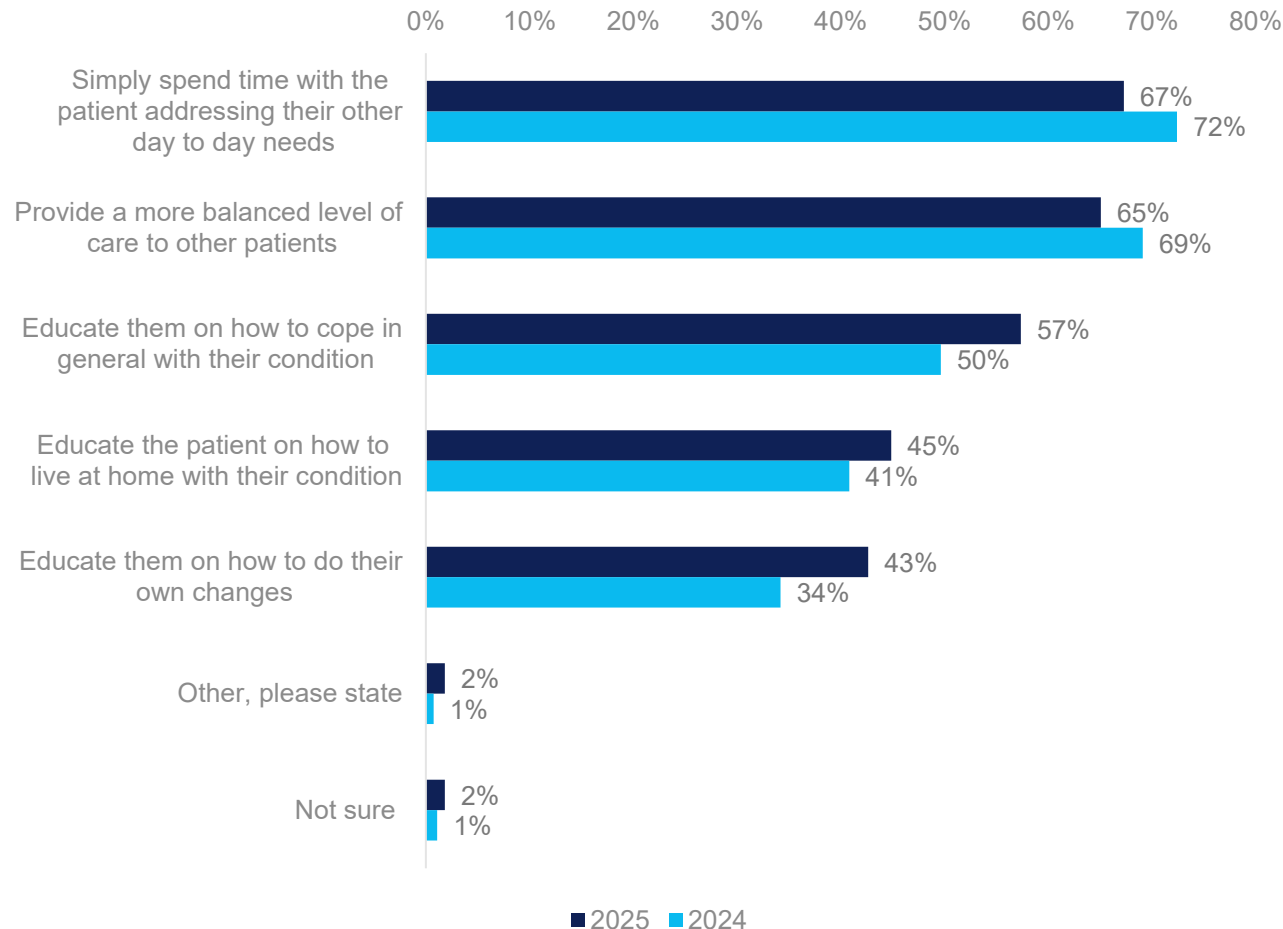
Of those who personally assist in changing patients (2025 n=444, 2024 n=425):

- 61% think **the time they spend caring for patients with incontinence** could be **better spent** helping them in ways other than changing them
 - This was 64% in 2024



Question:

What would you rather have time to do with incontinence patients, rather than tend to their changes?



Insight

Of those who think the time they spend caring for patients with incontinence could be better spent helping them in ways other than changing them (2025 n=272, 2024 n=272)

- 67% would rather spend time with the patient addressing their **day to day** needs. This was 72% in 2024
 - 65% would rather provide a **more balanced level of care** to other patients
 - And 57% would rather educate them on how to cope in general with their condition. This was up from 50% in 2024

Mismanagement



- 61% think some **patients who are admitted** to hospital or care facilities with incontinence related conditions, due to **previous mismanagement** of their incontinence
- 60% think **Urinary tract infections** could be **managed better**, to avoid either the admittance of patients in the first place, or delay in discharge, of incontinence patients
- **This was followed by:**
 - Education on living with incontinence (54%)
 - Social care (52%)
 - Pressure ulcers (52%)
 - Care in dealing with both mental and physical health (52%)
- 29% think that some **patients are unwittingly 'bed blocking'** (the long term occupation of hospital beds), due to the mismanagement of their incontinence. **In 2024, 32% felt that patients were unwittingly 'bed blocking'**

Of those who think patients are unwittingly 'bed blocking' (2025 n=143):

- On average, they thought that **24.06%** of patients may be 'bed blocking'

Policy change

- Just under a third (32%) were **previously aware that the government announced a policy change** in the way the NHS procures its medical supplies, to ensure an individual patient experience is considered over cost alone – due to take place Autumn 2025
- Thinking about how this policy change will **benefit incontinence patients** specifically, if at all, over half (54%) think it will **enable patients to live a more dignified life**
- **This was followed by:**
 - It will improve quality of care on offer from the NHS (53%)
 - It will improve long term management of incontinence outside a hospital or care home setting (52%)
 - It will aid better mental and physical health for patients (39%)
 - It will result in the earlier discharge of patients from a hospital or care home setting (35%)







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