

Frontline professionals are urging healthcare leaders to look again at daily incontinence management, as new research reveals how inefficient practices are impacting staff, patients and budgets.

The research, commissioned by TENA and released to mark the start of World Continence Week, highlights that:

- 82% of frontline professionals have raised concerns about current practices
- 95% of frontline professionals say it should be a bigger priority
- 49% of frontline professionals say that current practices result in unnecessary costs

New research by TENA has exposed frontline concerns that daily incontinence management, including toileting and containment routines, are quietly driving inefficiency, avoidable costs, staff absences and reduced quality of care for residents in healthcare settings.

As World Continence Week kicks off, frontline professionals across four global markets report feeling the knock-on consequences of inefficient practices, such as limiting access to the right type of products every day, with rising workloads placing significant demands on care settings. 79% report increased pressure in their daily roles, while 74% say staff and patient wellbeing is being negatively affected, with emotional strain, reduced dignity and burnout becoming increasingly common.

Nearly all – 95% of frontline professionals surveyed said better continence care should be prioritized by professional decision-makers.

Responding to the findings, healthcare experts called on professional decision-makers and managers to lead a shift in practices.

Linda Sheiban Taucar, Director of the Centre for Health Care Research & Innovation, Conestoga College, said: “Frontline staff are committed to supporting residents, and because of a lack of resources or training or the wrong products, they may be experiencing increased stress and burnout.”

Tracy Whitehouse, Nurse Specialist, Bladder & Bowel UK, said: “It’s about looking at the bigger picture and the wider cost. It’s skin breakdown, it’s hospital admissions, it’s prescriptions. It’s the knock-on effect for other costs.”

Veronique Boscart, Chief Scientific Officer, William Osler Health System, said: “Decision-makers have to do things differently. They’re stuck by the limitations of their perceptions.”

Budget decisions are being made without the full picture

The research calls for professional decision-makers to look again at unseen costs caused by inefficient continence care. It reveals policymakers and procurers are approaching continence care as a cost to minimise rather than a lever for unlocking value. It concludes that they don’t deprioritize continence care because they see it as unimportant, but because the resulting knock-on impact is invisible to them.

It warns that, without clarity on the consequences, spending decisions can create long-term inefficiencies and avoidable costs, including:

- Rising workloads, reducing time for other essential aspects of care, such as toileting

- Declining staff and patient wellbeing, including burnout and reduced dignity
- Limited access to the right absorbent hygiene products, with 96% saying better choice would improve outcomes
- False economies from cost-cutting, where lower-quality products increase long-term care time and complications
- Unnecessary environmental impact, including increased product use, laundry and energy consumption

Unlocking greater value in continence care

The research doesn't just spotlight a hidden problem; it reveals a missed opportunity. To deliver greater value and more positive outcomes, through better continence care. It also sets out five steps for professional decision-makers to unlock value through efficiencies, improved staff wellbeing, enhanced dignity and reduced waste.

1. Set budgets that better reflect the reality of meeting individual needs
2. Invest in the right types of quality products to reduce avoidable patient changes and waste
3. Strengthen training for care teams to close knowledge gaps and build confidence
4. Embed person-centred continence care by tailoring toileting routines and products
5. Improve communication and coordination across clinical and procurement teams

Patrick Miller, Vice President at Essity Health & Medical Canada, said: "This research shows that suboptimal continence care is largely driven by procurement and process shortcomings, compounded by the lack of a holistic, total cost of care perspective."

To help frontline professionals and decision-makers make better decisions that drive positive outcomes, TENA has worked with specialists in the field to develop education tools, training and guidance. The Care Needs Profiles based on a resident's mobility, cognition, hand dexterity and level of carer dependency can help staff allocate a resident to a specific profile enabling the right care plan and bundle of care products to be put in place.

The full Look Again report, outlining the changes needed to unlock greater value through better continence care, launches this Autumn. [Sign up here](#) for first access.

The research was conducted by Augur on behalf of TENA. A total of 164 frontline professionals were surveyed across UK, Italy, Canada and Australia together with four in-depth interviews with key opinion leaders. Fieldwork took place between February and March 2026.

About TENA

TENA is a brand of Essity, a leading global hygiene and health company. With over 65 years of experience TENA is the No 1 adult incontinence brand globally*. We offer a full range of absorbent products, skincare and digital health technology solutions that are tailored to the needs of individuals, their families and healthcare professionals.

With TENA, Essity is at the forefront of developing products and services that help improve dignity and the quality of people's lives. Our products reduce our carbon footprint, step by step, we're not just protecting people, but the planet too.

*Euromonitor International Limited; Retail Adult Incontinence, all channels, RSP value sales, Tissue & Hygiene, 2020 edition.