Health Improvement Scotland published their 13th Health Technology Assessment (HTA 13) in December 2015 entitled, Antimicrobial Wound Dressings (AWDs) for Chronic Wounds. This report found that the evidence to support the use of AWDs was insufficient in terms of quality and quantity. This identified the need for a nationally agreed management algorithm to guide the use of AWDs in NHS Scotland. The Effective Prescribing and Therapeutics Branch, of Scottish Government supported the formation of a multidisciplinary short life working group (SLWG) consisting of wound specialists, podiatrists and Prescribing Advisors from across Scottish Health Boards. The group developed the following resources using best practice and expert consensus.

These resources are provided for Boards to review, as necessary, to fit with their local guidance, e.g. sepsis screening tool, local formularies for dressings and antibiotics. These resources aim to standardise a clinician’s approach to wound care, reduce variance in practice, and reduce any inappropriate use of antimicrobial dressings.

Appendices:  
1. Algorithm for Assessment and Management of Chronic Wounds  
2. Scottish Ropper Ladder for Infected Wounds  
3. AWD considerations to support best practice  
4. PIL: Understanding your Chronic Wound

Algorithm for Assessment and Management of Chronic Wounds signposts to current guidance on the management of different wound types and gives advice on important considerations to be made when providing wound care. This algorithm should be used alongside any local guidance.

Scottish Ropper Ladder for Infected Wounds should be used when wound infection is suspected. The key points from HTA 13 and the SLWG are:

- Antimicrobial dressings are indicated for the short term treatment of localised infection; and in combination with systemic antibiotics for the treatment of spreading or systemic infection
- Antimicrobial dressings should not be used to heal wounds or where symptoms of infection are not present
- Where antimicrobial dressings are used, they should be reviewed after two weeks and should not normally be used longer than recommended by local policies or product information.

AWD considerations to support best practice has been developed as a decision making tool. All AWD on Scottish formularies have been included, and it is intended that NHS Boards will complete the blank template in line with their local formulary. The table should guide users to the most appropriate AWD based on the characteristics of the wound they are treating. Cost should be considered alongside patient and wound-specific factors to ensure a cost effective treatment course is selected.

Understanding Your Chronic Wound Patient Information Leaflet has been developed to provide information to patients about how they can expect their wound to be managed and information about wound infection.