



INDUSTRY

Public Sector

CHALLENGE

Centralise and standardise records management with a single provider while moving in-house items off-site

SOLUTION

Customised off-site archiving with dedicated service team standardising processes and delivering new efficiency gains

VALUE

- > Faster access to paper records
- > Cost savings of up to £460,000 yearly
- > Greater diligence and accountability for records management

CASE STUDY

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

HEALTH RECORDS BENEFIT FROM CLOSE COLLABORATION

SECURE STORAGE ESSENTIAL

Shaping and funding healthcare in England, the Department of Health (DoH) ensures people have the support, care and treatment they need with the compassion, respect and dignity they deserve. It generates an abundance of documentation that must be safely and securely stored yet readily available when needed.

Brendan Sheehy, Departmental Records Officer, says: "Although there's an increasing move to electronic files, paper records still play a vital role and will for many years to come." Iron Mountain® used to provide day-to-day archive management at a DoH building in Nelson, Lancashire, but that lease was set to expire. Other arrangements had to be made.

REALISING ECONOMIES OF SCALE

Whenever NHS organisational changes occur, DoH plays a key role. An example was the cessation of primary care trusts in favour of clinical commissioning groups. "That saw us as temporary custodian for thousands and thousands of patient records until the new organisations took responsibility," confirms Brendan.

Many of the patient records the Department took responsibility for were held with Iron Mountain under various commercial agreements. But some were held by other service providers. Brendan recalls: "We were presented with an ideal opportunity

to consolidate our archives with a single supplier to standardise processes and gain economies of scale."

The transition involved three work streams:

- Relocation of records at Nelson to Iron Mountain off-site storage
- Review, rationalisation and restructuring primary care trust records
- Onboarding files held by other service providers when commercial terms allowed

FASTER ACCESS TO RECORDS

Archive files that are less likely to be required regularly are placed in box storage, currently totalling 10,000 cubic feet. Files that may be required more frequently like patient medical records - of which there are currently 430,000 - are in open-shelf storage.

"Our records are predominantly with Iron Mountain as a single service provider, so we no longer have to search different systems to find what we want," says Brendan. "It's much simpler and more efficient."

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Brendan Sheehy
Departmental Records Officer
Department of Health

The Iron Mountain professionals who ran the transition now offer a bespoke managed service. Their tasks include being the first point of contact for use of the Iron Mountain Connect™ online portal, repair of damaged files and the preparation of records for admission to the National Archives.

“Iron Mountain does a fine job in managing day-to-day complexity,” Brendan adds. “It also has a great logistics service that gets things where they’re needed when they’re needed.”

SIX-FIGURE SAVINGS ALREADY

Consolidating off-site records management with Iron Mountain has standardised and simplified records management and is saving considerable sums. Moving the records stored in-house at Nelson to Iron Mountain was a key enabler for the subsequent closure of the building, releasing high-cost office accommodation.

Already, DoH records management costs have reduced by almost £250,000 a year and the savings are expected to grow to £460,000 per annum when the transition is complete.

FURTHER IMPROVING FILE SECURITY

The Iron Mountain service also includes comprehensive financial reporting to allow allocation of records management costs to departments. “Transfer charging NHS organisations for the records they have in central storage makes them more accountable,” says Brendan. “It helps focus minds to make sure we only retain those things we need or are required by legislation to keep.”

DoH and Iron Mountain are planning a trial of technology to further improve file security and tracking. Currently at the feasibility stage, this involves low-cost radio frequency identification (RFID) tags to aid traceability. With RFID scanners in DoH premises at entry and exit points – or even in individual offices – file locations will be visible at all times.

Brendan sums up: “Working with Iron Mountain is a joy. We work together as one, nothing is too much trouble and they’re invariably adaptable and responsive to our needs.”

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ABOUT IRON MOUNTAIN

Iron Mountain operates in major markets worldwide, serving thousands of customers throughout the UK, Europe, US, Canada, Asia Pacific and Latin America. For more information, visit our website at www.ironmountain.co.uk or at www.ironmountain.ie

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Iron Mountain UK:
Third Floor, Cottons Centre
Tooley Street, London, SE1 2TT
United Kingdom
+44 (0) 8445 60 70 80
www.ironmountain.co.uk

Iron Mountain Ireland:
Damastown Avenue,
Damastown Industrial Estate,
Dublin 15, Eire
+353 (0) 1861 3900
www.ironmountain.ie