



INDUSTRY

Public Sector

CHALLENGE

Improve control and access to vital information

SOLUTION

Secure outsourced physical document storage with scanning service for legacy medical files and event packs for patients visiting hospital

VALUE

- Easier tracking of medical notes, reducing the risk of disruption to patient appointments and surgeries
- Digital records viewed simultaneously and remotely, saving travel for clinicians and multidisciplinary teams
- More than 10,000 square feet of space released

CASE STUDY

NORTH WEST ANGLIA NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

DIGITAL RECORDS IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY AND PATIENT CARE

PUTTING PATIENT CARE FIRST

North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust runs five busy hospitals and serves a growing community of 700,000 residents, supported by 6,550 staff and volunteers at six sites.

The Trust is focused on providing safe, effective and high-quality care while enabling closer-to-home patient treatment. Meeting these daily challenges relies on the efficient management of information.

“When a patient visits hospital we create an event pack, which moves between various specialists and departments,” explains Deborah Dearden, Assistant General Manager of Health Records and Outpatient Administration. “We’re also required to retain legacy medical files and corporate material, such as financial and pharmacy-related documents.”

LEAVING NOTHING TO CHANCE

To begin the move from physical to digital records, the Trust introduced a scanning solution.

“We needed a supplier who understands our processes and what’s involved in managing case notes,” Deborah said. “Previously one in every ten images was lost due to software error. We had no option

but to go back to manually retrieving paper files, putting massive pressure on already overstretched resources.”

The Trust consulted Iron Mountain®. “We got a detailed schedule setting out how Iron Mountain would work with us to redesign, test and relaunch digital scanning,” Deborah adds. “That was reassuring and exactly what we needed.”

SOLID FOUNDATION FOR DIGITAL HEALTHCARE

Developed with the Trust stakeholders and end users, the Iron Mountain solution combines secure offsite records storage with efficient scanning. Now, every time a patient visits hospital, an event pack is created at the hospital and sent to Iron Mountain. The documents are scanned and returned as digital images usually within 24 hours. Legacy patient files are scanned on-demand. The service is delivered by a dedicated Iron Mountain team, backed by weekly update calls and monthly meetings to review service levels.

Before, keeping up with an ever-growing paper records library used to be tough. The Trust’s staff could spend several days hunting for a specific file or chasing down departments. There was a risk that records could get mislaid or lost, resulting in a patient’s appointment or operation having to be cancelled. Thankfully, those days are long gone.



“WE GET A FAST TURNAROUND FROM IRON MOUNTAIN. THEY RETRIEVE LEGACY FILES AND EVENT PACK RECORDS AND RETURN THEM AS DIGITAL IMAGES THAT CAN BE UPLOADED TO OUR VIEWING PLATFORM.”

Diane Quinn
Health Records Manager
North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust

“It’s very rare that we can’t locate notes,” says Diane Quinn, Health Records Manager. “We get a fast turnaround from Iron Mountain. We provide a list of patients, normally a couple of weeks before they’re due to attend hospital. They retrieve legacy files and event pack records and return them as digital images that can be uploaded to our viewing platform.”

CLEAR CLINICAL AND PATIENT BENEFITS

Moving to digital records has improved access to patient information, especially for multidisciplinary teams. Often, they’d have to physically travel to site to share paper files and case notes, generating unnecessary work involved in calculating internal cost transfers. Now, they’re able to view documents together - simultaneously and remotely, from different sites - saving clinicians and admin staff valuable time.

Control has also improved. For example, if doctors need to make notes they write on bar-coded paper. The note is immediately recognised by the system and incorporated within the patient’s legacy record when they’re discharged, thereby reducing potential misfiling.

Outsourcing records management has also allowed the Trust to release more than 10,000 square feet of storage space.

Deborah Dearden concludes: “Productivity has risen, while staffing levels and costs have reduced. More importantly, it’s much easier to access medical information, which ultimately helps us link episodes and improve patient care. We’re already looking to replicate success and onboard other sites.”

“IT’S MUCH EASIER TO ACCESS MEDICAL INFORMATION, WHICH ULTIMATELY HELPS US LINK EPISODES AND IMPROVE PATIENT CARE.”

Deborah Dearden
Assistant General Manager, Health Records
and Outpatient Administration
North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust

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