INDUSTRY

Public Sector

CHALLENGE

Create a single archive for legacy patient files following transfer of ownership of Queen Mary's Hospital

SOLUTION

Patient files indexation and uplift for off-site storage, with secure destruction and scan-on-demand options

VALUE

> Consolidated files and standard processes have sped-up file retrieval

> Storage costs have reduced by a third

> Outsourced archiving has freed-up space for frontline clinical care

CASE STUDY

OXLEAS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

TRUST RELEASES VALUABLE SPACE AND SAVES £1.3 MILLION

RAPID GROWTH

Offering healthcare to over 800,000 people across the London Boroughs of Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich, Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust once specialised in mental health. Today it's grown to include community health services, along with ownership of Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup.

Oxleas is not the only service provider at the Queen Mary's Hospital site, which now involves five NHS trusts (including Oxleas) plus the Clinical Commissioning Group and the local authority working together.

Julie Lucas, Information Governance Manager at Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, explains: "With our strong track record of well-managed finances, we were chosen as landlord for the estate. That includes central services like maintaining the patient medical records archive."

EFFICIENT RECORD SHARING

Although Queen Mary's Hospital had stored patients' medical history files on site there was no purpose-built archive. Records were stored on open shelves in various locations. Each would now need to be available to any one of several organisations delivering clinical services. So, the records would mostly need to remain on site as a central resource.

Says Julie: "We needed to move the archive off site, improve indexation to assure records integrity, and simplify the retrieval process." Consolidating the Queen Mary's Hospital patient files with other existing medical records would also help standardise processes and provide economies of scale.

COMPLIANT RECORD SHARING

Oxleas already used Iron Mountain® and another principal service provider for off-site records management. Julie Lucas continues: "We needed a vendor that could cope with a consolidation project of this scale and for us that meant Iron Mountain."

The project involved the collection, audit and indexation of around 675,000 individual patient files which were packed into around 30,000 storage boxes. Iron Mountain appointed a project manager and employed Prince 2 project management methodology.

As the records were transferred the Iron Mountain team created an inventory. This used existing bar codes with patient details entered via the IM Connect™ online portal. Each file was assigned a retention date in line with the Department of Health mandate. Another need was to ensure all files were available during the transition; a challenge Iron Mountain met.

> **"IRON MOUNTAIN COPED ADMIRABLY WITH THE SCALE AND SPEED OF THE PROJECT."**

Julie Lucas
Information Governance Manager
Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust

EASY-TO-LOCATE FILES

The relocation of files from Queen Mary's Hospital was completed on schedule in a challenging timeframe. With that project complete the next task was to transfer patient files from previous Oxleas off-site storage vendors. Individual patient files, or even a whole box of files, can now be ordered for retrieval via the Iron Mountain ConnectTM online portal, against next-day or emergency same-day service levels.

"I find the Iron Mountain ConnectTM online portal really efficient," says Julie Lucas. "The other day we needed a patient record that wasn't where we thought it was. Just entering the patient's name revealed its true location. Panic over."

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS AND SAVINGS

Consolidating patient medical records with Iron Mountain has enabled Oxleas to standardise processes, improve the quality of its records catalogue and speed-up file retrieval to improve business efficiency.

Storage costs have reduced. "We saved around 33 per cent across our legacy archive," says Julie Lucas. "We've been able to redeploy our archive staff and by moving files off site we've freed up space to be redeveloped for clinical purposes." Overall savings are around £1.3 million per annum.

BETTER FINANCIAL CONTROL

Iron Mountain now has in excess of 40,000 boxes of records under management and provides a regular service to a variety of locations with around 800 files retrieved and returned every day. To assist with budgetary control Iron Mountain created different divisions within the single account. This provides the data needed for Oxleas to allocate storage and retrieval costs to appropriate cost centres.

The next phase of the project will centre on secure destruction of files passing retention dates. Discussions are also underway to launch a scan-on-demand service to minimise the need for physical file movement and further accelerate record retrieval.

Julie Lucas sums up: "Iron Mountain coped admirably with the scale and speed of the project. Their Business Development Manager is brilliant, invariably providing a same-day response. That's so refreshing."

> **"WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO REDEPLOY OUR ARCHIVE STAFF AND BY MOVING FILES OFF SITE WE'VE FREED-UP SPACE TO BE REDEVELOPED FOR CLINICAL PURPOSES."**

Julie Lucas
Information Governance Manager
Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust

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