

# Unlocking what's possible: Transforming patient records into a vital clinical advantage

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a major medical institution providing almost one million out-patient appointments, day case procedures and in-patient admissions every year.

## Transforming information into intelligence

In order to meet successive digitisation strategies across the NHS, the Trust had been running an EDRMS project for several years and had digitised the majority of their legacy records with a third-party provider. This also allowed them to access medical information more quickly and reduce the costs associated with storing and moving hard-copy records.

However, in order to manage their 1.25 million live records, the Trust was renting 9 units on an industrial site which was costing them millions of pounds a year. The Trust wanted to see this cost reduced while supporting the next stage of its move to digital working.

## Making the break

In September 2024, the Trust took advantage of a lease break, enabling them to reduce the financial obligations associated with their records. At the same time, the Trust decided to review their records management requirements and move their entire external digitisation contract to Iron Mountain. Iron Mountain applied its certified secure chain of custody and expert governance to ensure

the Trust's most valuable assets remained protected during the rapid lease exit.

Additionally, the Iron Mountain Account Manager, Andrew Hughes, says, 'To ensure success we made sure we had a very detailed statement of work before we went live with any of the services. We also have a team who bring extensive specialist experience of working with medical records who were also able to input on how to optimise the proposed processes.'

Iron Mountain began work to scan the 60,000 legacy records which hadn't been scanned as part of the main back-scan project, while also starting on reducing the flow of active paper records around the Trust.

The previous process had been that, when new information was created, the legacy record had to be retrieved and new material added, requiring files to be retrieved, updated and replaced - a time- and labour-intensive process. Retrieving records also required physical lists to be printed off from the PAS system which were then shared with the Records team.

## Industry

Healthcare

## Challenge

Exit from a lease to reduce costs and accelerate transition to fast digital access to critical medical information

## Solution

Iron Mountain® fully managed day-forward scanning service with upload to EDRMS

## Value

- Multi-million pound saving by early exit from a storage facility lease
- Day-forward solution for 1.4 million images per month
- Completion of back-scan of legacy records
- Visible, secure, and accessible medical records Acceleration of critical digital strategy in preparation for Electronic Patient Record implementation



## Fully removing paper and futureproofing

Now, out-patient and in-patient records are sent directly from the Trust to Iron Mountain's state-of-the-art Lutterworth facility for scanning and then uploaded to the Trust's EDRMS - Connecting and optimising 1.4 million assets monthly. Any clinical departments which choose to continue printing out lists from the PAS system now also have these scanned and the records-matching is carried out accordingly, creating a unified and future-ready process.

While the previous process wasn't highly error-prone, the current system has seen the mislaying of records and information almost completely disappear, while having all records promptly available on the EDRMS has significantly improved clinicians' ability to see and search comprehensive patient information in a timely manner.

By replacing the physical transit of files with a trusted data foundation, the Trust has bridged the gap between its remote clinics and main hub, making patient records visible, secure, and accessible to elevate the power of their work regardless of location.

## A smooth transition with committed support

Iron Mountain had worked with Mizaic, the Trust's EDRMS provider, before, which made setting up the appropriate processes very straightforward, with minimal technical challenges.

Following the initial transition, Iron Mountain continues to seamlessly manage the Trust's digital and physical assets. This consistent oversight keeps risk under control, resulting in a service so reliable that our weekly touchpoints are spent focusing on future opportunities rather than resolving past issues.

For urgent cases, the agreement does include a 4-hour response time for urgent requests. The Trust is pleased that, while they rarely use this option, it is straightforward and effective when they do. Tim Bourn, Health Records Information Manager at the Trust, says, 'We just send a message saying 'The records collection van has just left - when it arrives at Iron Mountain please scan these records as a priority' - it works very well and scans are provided promptly. It is a useful safeguard to be able to allow clinicians fast access to review and act from information.'

As well as digitising material, Iron Mountain does also store some hard-copy records for the Trust's Ophthalmology department and, while this is managed separately, Tim is not aware of any issues. 'In general, if there are issues with accessing information, the clinical staff are quick to notify us, so the fact that we never hear anything from them is a very good sign. Quick, reliable access to information is critical to providing excellent patient care and we are very pleased with how this service is supporting that. The service runs like clockwork.'

### The next stage

The Trust's next goals are to move towards a full electronic patient record. A product has been chosen but the go-live date is not yet confirmed. The fact that the effective Iron Mountain solution is in place should make the implementation of the electronic patient record system considerably more straightforward. By activating their data today, the Trust has transformed information into intelligence, ensuring their records are not just stored, but are visible, secure, and accessible to power better patient outcomes through the new EPR.

Tim says 'I would single out the day-forward scanning service as an example of a service that is so reliable we don't have to worry the clinical teams at all about it - we are just confident the SLAs will be met. The team we work with are approachable and responsive - we have very good interaction and feel very well supported.'