Improving the health of your patient information

Saving money and space, unlocking funding, and improving patient outcomes

Restore Information Management

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> Restore Information Management has saved us money and vital space for clinical care. We now have **quicker access to patient information** providing the patient with a better experience.

Mark Herkes, Head of Health Records,

County Durham & Darlington NHS Foundation Trust[1]

1 - CDDF Case Study

Executive Summary

The Challenge

Managing patient records represents a challenge to NHS Trusts: organising, storing, retrieving, updating and distributing records costs significant money and resources.

The prospect of digitising these records is fraught with risk, but it need not put patients at risk too.

The Solution

Better information management delivers benefits today and tomorrow.

Its systems and processes save NHS Trusts time, money, and space:

+ Freeing up clinical space through capital projects while keeping patient information within easy reach.

+ Maintaining clear audit trails and making it easy to locate files.

+ Document classification and intelligent data capture prevents time wasted on locating patient care details.

These same systems and processes are needed for a digital transformation project, meaning your digital transition is based on tried and tested foundations, safeguarding patient care and saving even more time and money.

The Value

One Trust has saved over 2,000m^2 space for patient care, and redeployed the staff previously tied up dealing with more than 1,500 daily file retrievals.

One prestigious London eye hospital is saving money by using Restore's automated record-ordering system to avoid retrieving notes for cancelled appointments, removing the overheads of the previously very manual process.

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"No funding without reform."

Introduction

In the wake of Lord Darzi's report on the NHS, Health Secretary Wes Streeting promised to reject any proposals "that suggest sticking with the status quo, or bids for more money without reform".[2]

Rightly or wrongly, much-needed funding is locked behind reform. But this gate also represents an opportunity for improving patient outcomes via better information management.

From the NHS National Programme for IT (NPfIT) to NHSX, the long line of NHS digitisation schemes has been, in the words of the National Audit Office, "both expensive and largely unsuccessful"[3]. 75% of NHS Trusts are still using paper patient records. In fact, Barking, Havering, and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust estimates it generates 25 million pages of A4 each year[4].

The space needed to store that much paper could be used for 382 hospital beds. Every year.

And now there is a new scheme, with digitisation playing a key part in the Government's 10-year plan for the NHS. It's a plan that aims to improve outcomes by updating the NHS's technology and changing the way it operates. By March 2025, the majority of health and social care services should have digital foundations, such as electronic records.

Implementing better information management demonstrates the reform the Government demands. It also helps pave the way to the digitisation everyone wants. Meaning better information management delivers the dual benefits of unlocking further funding and delivering better patient outcomes.

With a career in information management spanning over 20 years, Stefan's worked to help NHS Trusts across the UK improve patient outcomes and save time, money, and space.

Stefan Chetty

Digital Director
Information Management

2 - hsj.co.uk
3 - nao.org.uk
4 - bmj.com

Off-site,
within reach

Saving money with Information Management

It seems like common sense to put the paper medical record as physically close to the clinician as possible. But the sheer size of modern patient record libraries is a growing burden on Trust resources. And it's costing more than just money.

Better space, better care

In 2015, NHS England was estimating the annual cost of paper storage at anywhere between £500,000 and £1 million per Trust[5]. That's a staggering figure which will have increased significantly over the last decade. And that paper takes up space. Under pressure to treat more and more patients, Trusts have a choice: move their caregiving facilities into bigger, more expensive buildings, or unlock space in their existing premises by moving their paper records off-site.

North West NHS Trust used off-site information management to free up real estate which has been repurposed for more productive frontline patient care services.[6]

Our research has revealed that paper records are currently taking up an average of 1,667 square metres per Trust (and up to 6,500 sqm for the biggest hospitals). That's enough space for at least 10,000 beds across the entire NHS. Those numbers are based on one-bed rooms. Meaning there's potential for even more beds. And moving records off-site doesn't mean they're out of reach.

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"The biggest challenges at Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust are sharing paper records across our sites to support patient care, space constraints, resourcing needs to manage records safely and effectively, and the time taken to retrieve paperwork from storage."

Caroline Holmes, Deputy Director of Patient Data and Records,
Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust
& **Peter King, Director of Digital Services and Deputy Chief Information Officer,**
Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

5 - england.nhs.uk
6 - hsj.co.uk

Off-site, in hand

On-site storage creates hidden administration and hidden costs.

Your on-site file management team is trying to keep track of a growing number of records, locations, and requests, often without a tracking system that's up to the task.

And when a patient's notes go missing, perhaps accidentally locked in a drawer or entirely misplaced, that team needs to spend time finding them or creating a replacement record. If the original shows up, the patient history gets split over multiple records.

Better information management makes it easier and cheaper to access, retrieve, and distribute patient records.

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"Our new Brunel building is a large, modern hospital facility that opened in 2014, but it wasn't designed to accommodate storing a large number of paper records in an increasingly digitised healthcare environment. This has required us to utilise some spaces in clinical services and offices to securely store paper records which has made it more challenging to locate records easily and effectively."

Spokesperson

North Bristol NHS Trust

Saving time through easy access

For example, barcode tracking creates a live audit trail that reveals where a patient record is. Metadata management means records can be found and identified with ease. Restore Information Management's bespoke automatic ordering system for the NHS saves the time spent on manual record requests while patient notes are delivered in time for a patient's appointment without extra effort.

One specialist London eye hospital is saving significant sums by using Restore Information Management's automated record-ordering system to avoid retrieving notes for cancelled appointments.[7]

Better information management unlocks your staff, who no longer need to waste time retrieving records, hunting them down, or recreating them when they get lost. You're free to unlock those staff members and redeploy them elsewhere within your Trust.

Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust used Restore to save 2092.7m^2 and staff no longer needed to process the 1,500 daily file retrievals.[8]

Simply embedding quality information management can replace the status quo with something better. It saves space. It saves time. It demonstrates the reform the Government wants to see, unlocking funding for your Trust.

But is it better to wait to tackle your paper records when you're ready to go digital?

Digital tomorrow, benefits today

Paper preps for pixels

In 2013, Jeremy Hunt promised a fully digital health service by 2018. Obviously, things haven't quite gone to plan. Because transitioning the entirety of our National Health Service to digital ways of working is a complex proposal.

What does digitisation need?

Implementing processes and systems to capture clinical information while providing uninterrupted care is no small feat. And while 70% of commercial digital transformations fail[9], there's no margin for error in the NHS. If digitisation goes wrong, it puts patients at risk. Not to mention that digitisation needs to work as well for clinics as it does for hospitals, as smoothly for scheduled appointments as it does for emergency treatment. It needs to be secure, it needs to integrate with your existing processes and systems.

+ It needs to just work. Which means that digitisation is more than scanning existing paper records.

+ It's about understanding what you should and shouldn't digitise so you don't waste money.

+ It's creating a data architecture that's clear, logical, and easy to use.

+ It's creating archiving and retrieval processes. It's standardised metadata policies.

+ It's processes for non-standard data capture that cover everything from Post-It notes to ECGs.

+ It's establishing an Electronic Document Management System and how the records will enter said system (and exit, when they're no longer needed).

+ It's using the latest data capture and Natural Language Processing (NLP) to help clinicians find the information they need without trawling through a multi-page PDF.

+ It's ensuring clinicians have access to both analogue and digital data at the point of care.

+ And it's ensuring the privacy and security of your patients' information at all times.

This is a lot of work, which is why so many digital transformation projects fail. But better information management today can ensure your transformation doesn't just succeed, but it costs less too.

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"As storing records is an inefficient use of our hospitals' facilities and a huge cost for our Trust, a scanning solution was put in place for our hospitals, enabling us to scan health records and make them available electronically in our healthcare systems. This has significantly reduced the need for storage and administrative burden of recalling health records which can create a delay to care."

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Caroline Holmes, Deputy Director of Patient Data and Records,
Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust
&
Peter King, Director of Digital Services and Deputy Chief Information Officer,
Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

Information management paves the way for digital

Better information management for your paper records establishes a lot of the systems and processes that tomorrow's digital transformation requires. And it delivers benefits today. Data architectures. Archiving retrieval processes. Metadata policies. Non-standard data capture processes. Management systems and secure destruction policies. And ensuring the privacy and security of your patients' information at all times. All of which saves time, money, and space today. Better information security. Less time on administration. More time for improving patient outcomes.
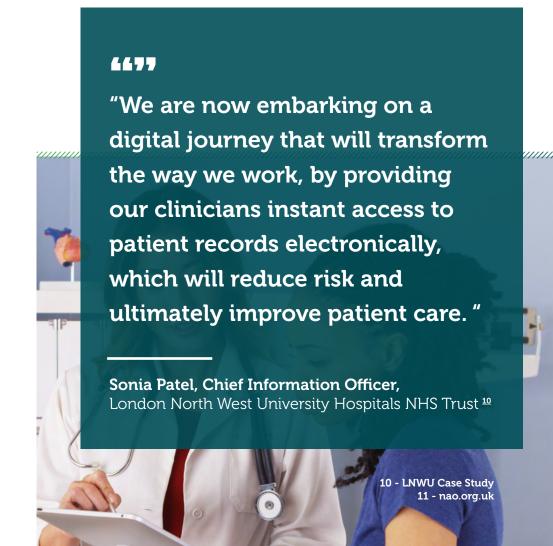
> **"Trusts and other stakeholders told us it was difficult to recruit and retain staff with specialist information/ digital skills because there are few people with these skills and a lot of demand for them."**

Digital Transformation in the NHS (15 May 2020), National Audit Office [11]

A successful digital transformation needs expertise and experience. A team that already knows what works and what doesn't. Hiring that team isn't cheap. Nor is developing that team in-house. And your digital transformation is a fixed project. Once it's complete, you won't need most of your digitisation experts. You may be able to redeploy a few of them elsewhere. But what do you do with the rest of them?

The better option is to work with an external provider. The best partners will be able to demonstrate proven expertise in working with the NHS. And that proven expertise will ensure the success of your digital transformation.

> **"We are now embarking on a digital journey that will transform the way we work, by providing our clinicians instant access to patient records electronically, which will reduce risk and ultimately improve patient care. "**
>
> **Sonia Patel, Chief Information Officer,**
> London North West University Hospitals NHS Trust [10]

Proven expertise

NASA doesn't use untested, cutting-edge technology because proven technology is reliable technology, and patient safety is too important to risk on untested technology and unproven partners.

The best information management system is either ready to work with your existing systems and processes, or it's ready to adapt to them. It knows what works and what doesn't, because it's done it a thousand times before. This will make your transformation safer and more cost-effective.

It will further save costs by analysing usage and digitising only what's needed. For example, digitising records that will be destroyed in a year isn't worth the cost. Better to just store those records until they're ready for secure destruction. And if any of those records are needed, a Scan on Demand service can quickly create a digital version for your clinician.

Better information management also allows for limited projects that stress test your processes and systems while limiting your risk; it's something we've done with many customers to great success.

County Durham and Darlington NHS Trust moved 779,412 patient records into off-site storage and developed a "scan on demand" digitisation strategy, ultimately allowing them to end the lease on their storage building and save money.

The benefits of digitisation through quality information management can save NHS Trusts time, money, and space, but there is another consideration: controlled access to records, and the safety and integrity of patient data.

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> "Restore has been the Trust's Medical Records archive provider for many years but in the past four years have worked in partnership with the Trust to digitise records and close the medical record libraries across Central Middlesex and St. Mark's Hospitals, which has saved us huge amounts of cost and space of storing paper records."
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> **Mary Cahill | Associate Director – Digital Services,**
> London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust

Protecting the NHS

Compliance is a constant headache. Information management is the pain relief.

New regulations and legislation helps to protect people's privacy, but falling foul of those regulations can have severe repercussions both for the NHS and for patients.

Identifying the real risks

The fear of big data breaches will always loom large in our minds. The value of health records, filled with patient data, makes them attractive targets. Indeed, one NHS Trust was issued a reprimand in November 2023 after an unauthorised individual was able to walk onto a ward and access personal information for 14 patients[12].

But theft isn't the only potential risk. The infamous WannaCry cyberattack in 2017 caused the cancellation of 19,000 appointments and cost the NHS an estimated £92 million[13]. Rigid and robust security is needed to keep ahead of thieves and mayhem lovers alike.
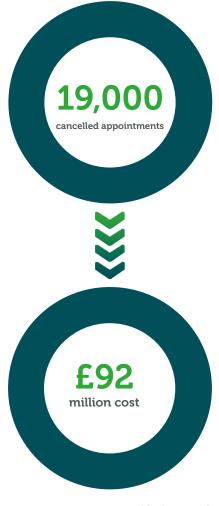
But the less obvious holes in data integrity can also have a significant impact on patients.

152,532 data breaches

43% via external agent	57% by staff

Of the 152,532 data breaches reported to the ICO between 2019 and 2024, only 43.05% were caused by an external agent[14]. The rest were a result of mistakes made by staff who either lacked training or weren't properly supported by processes and systems.[15]

19,000
cancelled appointments

£92
million cost

12 - ico.org.uk
13 - nao.org.uk
14 - ico.org.uk
15 - ico.org.uk

Such as the NHS Trust that was reprimanded by the ICO in March 2023 after its attempt to download files from an old Electronic Document Viewing System didn't work, meaning a number of patient records were permanently lost. Or the Trust who was reprimanded after patients suffered delays of up to two years[16] because it wasn't processing outpatient appointments in a timely manner. Loss, destruction, and delays are the bigger risks in the eyes of the legislators and regulators who decide the fate of the NHS. Not to mention the patients whose trust we rely on.

Maintaining trust in Trusts

Public engagement and trust is vital for NHS digitisation to succeed. A lack of public trust is cited as a primary driver behind the failure of the care data programme[17]. If the public have as little faith in your Trust's digitisation, they may not seek the care they need when they need it.

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust worked with Restore to establish an in-house scanning facility that achieved BS 10008 certification in just 5 months, with zero non-conformities in two BSI certification audits.[18]

The accreditations behind a solid information management provider offer instant peace of mind to patients. Holding Cyber Essentials Plus or BS 10008 is proof that someone has checked and approved your data integrity. But securing these accreditations are no small task. It requires the expertise, staff, and resource to implement everything from barcode tracking to file encryption, access controls to clear audit trails. Secure storage, encrypted backups and redundancy systems to reduce the risk of loss or destruction. Destruction facilities to comply with privacy regulations that prohibit the storage of data you no longer need. The challenge of creating that resource is a headache. An information management partner like Restore, with decades of experience working with the NHS, can keep you compliant even after the patient's information is no longer in your care.

"We have been long term partners with Restore, due to their quality of service; strong Account Management; and agility to their service to our needs. They helped us achieve key strategic aims, and provided a complete chain of custody of records, as they didn't need to outsource storage or secure destruction."[19]

Ian Purdy | Head of Operational – Services Informatics
Sheffield Teaching Hospital NHS Trust

16 - ico.org.uk
17 - nao.org.uk
18 - LNWU NHS Case Study
19 - Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Case Study

How to implement better information management

How to save time, money, and space for your trust

The NHS deserves information management that knows what works, what doesn't, and knows how to save it time, money, and space. As the largest UK-owned information management company, we've been working with the NHS for over 30 years to help them do just that. Core to our success with the NHS is our flexible approach. Rather than prescribing off-the-shelf solutions, we prefer to listen to the unique needs of each NHS trust and then design intelligent solutions based on our decades of expertise. The result is better information management systems and processes that fit into how a trust works and does exactly what it needs to do, while saving trusts time, money, and space.

Trust foundations

85% of NHS trusts already benefit from the same foundational services we offer, on top of the tried and tested services we've designed for them:

+ **UK-wide network of secure storage facilities** - your paper records are never more than two hours from your front door

+ **Access on your terms** - our local facilities mean you can enjoy same-day delivery of your records, potentially less for emergency cases

+ **Auto-ordering software** - frees up staff from manual retrievals and delivers the records on time and doctor-ready

+ **Bulk patient record scanning** - we have the scale and capacity to scan as many of your existing legacy patient files as you need to digitise

+ **Day forward scanning** – we'll capture any new paper generated from outpatient appointments, either off-site or by setting up a facility within the Trust

+ **Digital mailrooms** - keeping your information digital by scanning all inbound post and allocating it to the right department

+ **Highly accredited** - from ISO 9001 to NHS Data Security & Protection Toolkit accreditation, we keep your Information management compliant with the most rigorous regulatory requirements

+ **Clear audit trails** - from barcode tracking to access controls and logs, we help you build a clear picture for the regulators

+ **Saving money** – by re-allocating staff into more patient facing roles to reduce property costs.

Designing systems for the NHS

We designed an auto-ordering system specifically for the NHS, which schedules delivery of a patient's notes every time an appointment is made. This requires no extra work or effort from any NHS staff member; the appointment is simply booked as normal, and our logic systems work in the background to deliver the record when it's needed, where it's needed.

The government's demand for reform in exchange for funding means change isn't just desirable: it's a necessity to get the funding NHS Trusts desperately need. Engaging Restore Information Management offers an opportunity to get change today, unlock funding tomorrow, and smooth the path to digital in the future.

Put us to the test. Let us show you how we can help you save time, save money, and save space.

And, hopefully, that will help you save lives.

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For one NHS Trust, we facilitated the termination of a property lease by providing off-site storage, resulting in substantial savings to their capital budget.

Restore

Information Management