eWIN

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY

NHS
North West

LANCASHIRE CARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

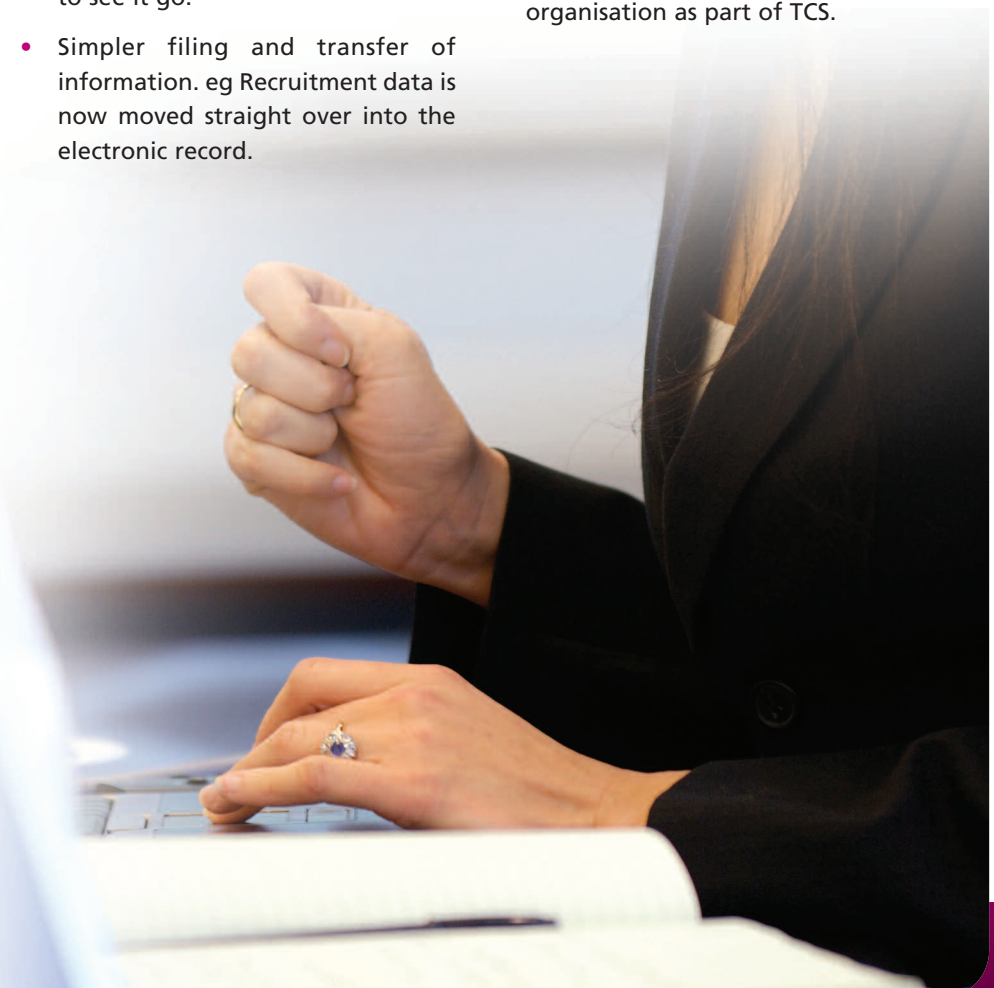# PROJECT 'OSCER' TOWARDS A PAPERLESS HR DEPARTMENT

SUMMARY

Lancashire Care employs around 3800 staff, providing mental health services to the whole of Lancashire with 110 sites. The personal files for those staff were held centrally in the HR Department in Preston headquarters. Storage was a continual problem due to the physical size of the records. Access was also difficult when files were needed by managers working in remote locations. The creation of electronic records in 2010, which can be accessed from any location has now solved these problems and makes significant progress towards a greener, and paperless HR office. In 2011 the Transfer of Community Services will result in almost 4000 community staff transferring into the Trust and plans are being developed to convert their files and add them to the new system.

Benefits include improved access, savings on storage, paper, files, filing time and conveying files to sites away from the headquarters. This is in addition to the benefit of more efficient and greener working.

KEY OUTCOMES

- Access to electronic staff files (records) in any geographical location, covering all sites within Lancashire, wherever HR Business Partners are working.

- Removes the need for paper records so meets the Trusts aims to be cleaner, greener and paperless

- Freed up space in the HR Department making it a better work environment. The storage requirements for the paper records had resulted in a "Berlin Wall" of files and the staff were so pleased to see it go.

- Simpler filing and transfer of information. eg Recruitment data is now moved straight over into the electronic record.

- More intelligent working with immediate access to information

- Minimal running costs for the system. Initial licence cost £2495 with ongoing support at 15% per annum.

- No further storage challenges associated with the large numbers of staff transferring into the organisation as part of TCS.

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BACKGROUND

Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust was established in April 2002 and authorised as a Foundation Trust on 1st December 2007. The Trust provides mental health and substance misuse services for a population of around 1.4 million people across Lancashire.

Clinical services are delivered through four networks:

Adult Mental Health

Older Adult Mental Health

Secure Services, which also take admissions from South Cumbria

Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS), Substance Misuse and Early Intervention Services

The project, named "OSCER" set out to replace the existing paper personal staff files by establishing electronic records. This would help alleviate two main problems, storage in the main HR Department and access to the records across the geographical locations in Lancashire.

The Trust's experience of using winDIP applications for their patient records led to the development of the new electronic staff records and provided the confidence to move forward to this paperless system.

PURPOSE

- Utilising technology to create a robust staff records system

- To establish a system that complies with legislation and is secure – meeting information governance requirements including confidentiality and data protection

- Remove the need for 1.5 tons of paper records and the storage solutions associated with 4000 paper files

- Provide a section in the records that have restricted access, including disciplinary and grievance records

- Allows access to staff files wherever they might be working across the whole of Lancashire.

- Create the minimum of disruption whilst the files were scanned and the system set up.

- As an HR Department work towards a greener and paperless office
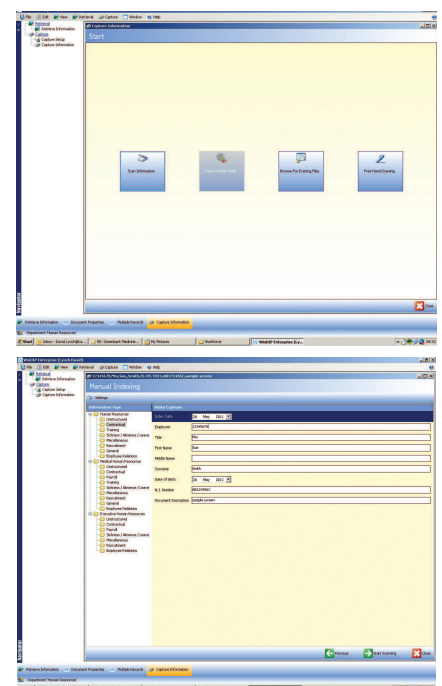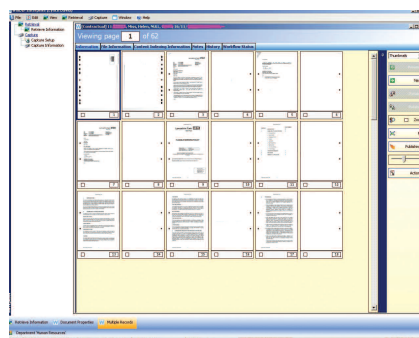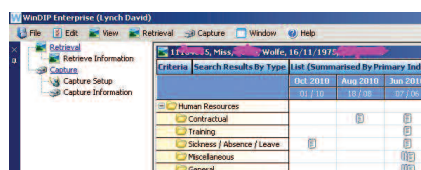
KEY STAGES OF SET-UP

- The Trust had already introduced electronic patient records using the e-winDIP Enterprise document management system and decided in early 2010 to utilise this application for electronic staff records to replace personal files

- HR staff visited the medical records department to see the system in use for patient records

- The Trust's IT department worked with winDIP Enterprise to customise the system to meet HR requirements

- Presentation of the new system to all HR staff

- Gateway Computing were commissioned to scan the staff personal files onto the system. This required the files to be boxed up alphabetically and records kept of the boxes so that if necessary files could be retrieved at short notice during the scanning process. Scanning took approximately 4 months with files being taken away in two batches. One member of the HR department was tasked with overseeing the process for this period. Following quality checks the paper records were destroyed

- Awareness training for all HR staff with a more intensive half day training session for all HR administrative staff

- Purchased 2 scanners to accommodate the transfer of documents to the new system in the early stages of the project. Eventually it is expected that most information will be electronically transferred without the need for scanners

- Initially only current establishment staff files were scanned and entered onto the new system. Since then the bank staff files have been added.

HOW IT WORKS

All staff personal files are now electronic and can be accessed by HR staff via their own computer wherever they are working. Immediate access to personal information on staff has created more efficient working for managers and the HR team. Electronic transfer of information into files reduces the need for hard copy filing and staff time associated with this. The Electronic Staff Record System (ESR) is in place in the Trust which provides integration between HR and payroll, managing the establishment and structural hierarchy across the organisation and enabling workforce reporting. This is now complimented by an electronic personnel filing system, Oscer.

Following staff appointments the recruitment data is transferred straight into the personal staff record by a paperless process. Further information will be added directly onto the electronic file or scanned in to be placed on the record.

The winDIP application offers secure archiving and email capture. Indexing of sections in the record allows enhanced retrieval and analysis of documents. An efficient and cost effective way of storing data and accessing it.

RESOURCES

- The project required the existing 4000 personal files (paper records) to be scanned onto the new system. It was estimated that if the scanning was done in-house it would take 2 full time staff 2 years. It was therefore decided to use Gateway Computing who charged £30,000 to scan the 4000 files.

- The HR licence to use the application cost a one off £2495 with ongoing support costing 15% annually

- The project management costs of setting up the system and training was £893

The total set up costs of £33,388, the cost of 2 scanners and an annual £374 licence support cost was funded by the HR Department in order to realise the benefits of the new system.

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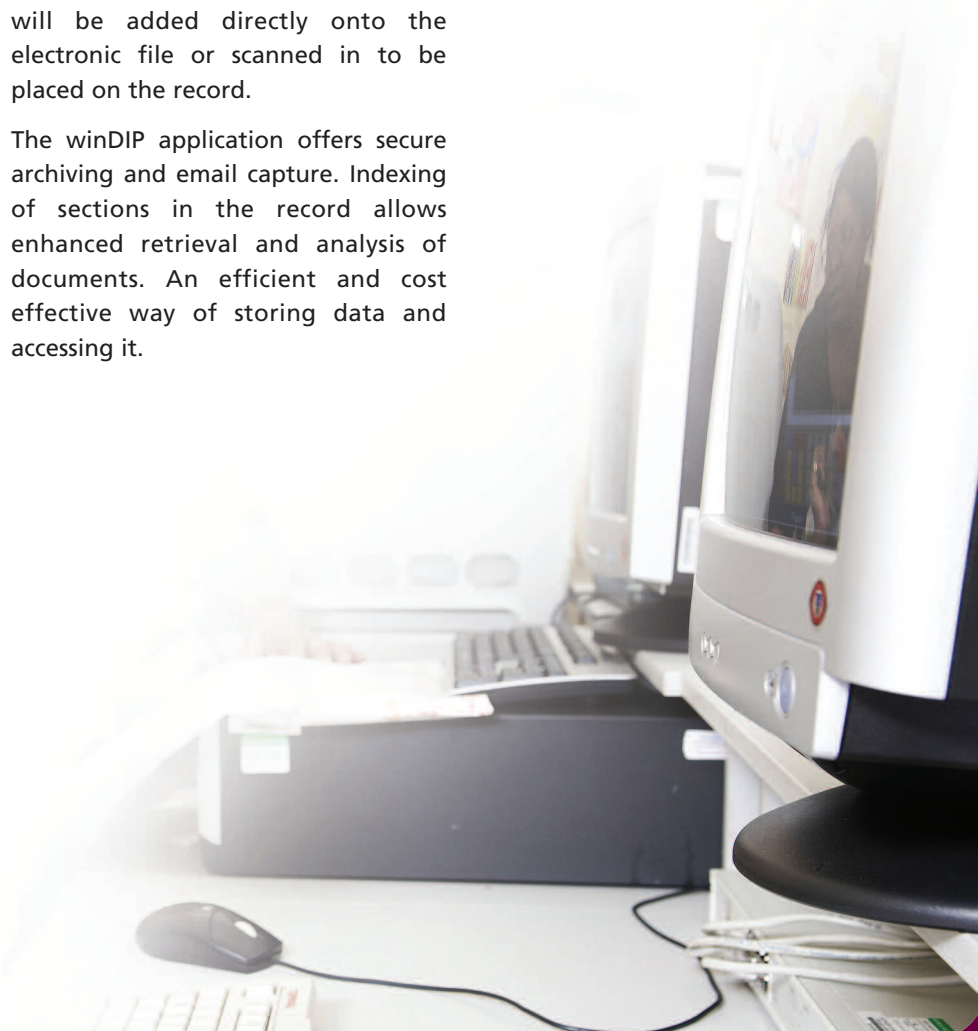
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KEY CHALLENGES

- Packing and storing files for collection prior to scanning took 6 weeks and had to be carefully planned and implemented to ensure files could be accessed and retrieved quickly if needed. Files were packed alphabetically and the boxes marked up and records kept.

- At first some staff were not in favour of the new system as they liked paper files so there had to be a period of winning over hearts and minds in the department. The fact that the medical records project had been successful and those records were robust, as well as the benefits of storage and electronic filing, all contributed to their confidence building in the new way of working

- Staff were used to existing practices and the recruitment team continued to set up recruitment files which they then scanned into the system. Using Lean methodology it was identified as wasteful and resulted in duplication of effort. With reassurance and support the team have now adopted paperless processes

- If files were sectioned then they were entered into sections in the electronic record and future records will be set up this way. However many files were set up only in chronological order and this was not rectified in the scanning process.

KEY LEARNING

- Winning over the staff to support the electronic records is a really important factor. Although all staff utilise HR computer systems such as Personnel files, the Electronic Staff Record (ESR) and NHS on-line recruitment, there can be initial fear in losing the paper personal files. Once training has been provided and the benefits of the

new system are recognised, this is soon overcome

- Due to time and resource constraints the files were not 'stripped' prior to scanning. This would have removed any unnecessary or out of date documents and reduced the volume of scanned material

- The new system is set up to organise information into sections in each record. As many of the paper files were filed chronologically the scanned documents were transferred over in date order. Ideally files should be sectioned prior to scanning

- The project required all personal files to be available for scanning by Gateway Computing over the 4 month period. Some files were out of the system and had to be returned and a small number were missing and had to be traced. Late returns then had to be scanned manually

- Quality assurance checks need to be carried out to ensure the transfer has been accurate. Approximately 200 files were randomly selected and the contents compared with the new records after scanning.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project successfully transferred all the staff personal records to the new electronic system over a 4 month period and the old paper files were destroyed. The filing cabinets have been removed creating more office space and light which was welcomed by the HR team.

There are now no paper HR processes and the HR Department is proud of its more efficient and responsive record keeping.

Lesley made the following comment about the new way of working

"The project has been a tremendous success and has enabled staff within the HR Team to work more intelligently and meet the geographical challenges as access to personnel files is now available from home or any location within the Trust. The system has supported our LEAN journey within the recruitment process and has resulted in more streamlined and efficient ways of working".

NEXT STEPS

- OSCER stage 2 will see the transfer of almost 4000 community staff into the Trust in 2011 and the associated personal files which will need to be scanned into the new system.

- Currently it is only HR managers who can access the files, however as the Trust moves to self-service this will be changed to allow managers to access the files with appropriate security systems in place.

SUPPORTING MATERIAL

The following resources are available as an appendix to this case study

- Example of screens used for entering personal data in the new system

- Details of sections available within the electronic staff record

FURTHER LINKS

Relevant Websites
http://www.windip.co.uk

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