

'AR' Missing Records – Investigation Report

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the three records pertaining to 'AR' which were identified as missing during the learning review process undertaken by Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust following the events in Southport. This report should be read in conjunction with Alder Hey's Internal Learning Review Document (see paragraph 587+).

Several actions have been taken in an attempt to locate the missing data including a review of physical and electronic records. Given the time that has elapsed, the searches undertaken, and inability to locate the records, the Trust has concluded that these records are permanently missing/lost without any clear audit trail of where they may be.

Whilst the loss of any patient records is regrettable, the obvious context of the records being lost prior to and during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic should not be overlooked. Otherwise, all patient records relating to AR have been properly retained and stored; the missing data is an outlier in respect of the records relating to AR.

Background

As part of the process to support the learning review, it was identified that three external paper documents received by Sefton CAMHS from external sources had not been uploaded into the patient's electronic patient record, are unavailable, and therefore deemed as missing. The Trust has not been able to fully determine what the content of the documents was.

There is limited corporate memory of legacy health records processes from the time of the records being deemed as missing between February and May 2020 with various changes in leadership structure.

At the time of the missing records being sent for scanning between February and May 2020, a process was in place to ensure individual tracking of records on to scanning control sheets which were broadly categorised by specific document type i.e. inpatient, outpatient, emergency department, buff case notes, internal correspondence, external correspondence.

Various searches to locate the missing records have been undertaken including a review of physical storage locations and digital systems, but without success.

A Learning from Patient Safety Event (LFPSE) incident was recorded on the Trust's risk management incident reporting system under reference #20849 on 24th April 2025. Consideration of a data loss report to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) was assessed and deemed not required as the missing data pertaining to the individual was not assessed as having a significant risk of harm or detriment to the individual in line with data protection legislation.

Given the timeframe which has passed, the searches undertaken, and inability to locate the records, the Trust has deemed these records as permanently missing/lost.

In line with the Inquiry's requirements, a 'stop notice' was issued specifically to the CAMHS service and to all employees and departments generally within Alder Hey to instruct no deletion

of data or documents potentially relevant to the inquiry and preserve any records which may be required.

Current State

Three external documents relating to the patient were received by Sefton CAMHS from external sources and are unable to be located. It is unclear what the records contain, however based on the categorisation and detail on the scanning control sheets these documents are believed to be:

- External report (1 page) dated 25 February 2020
- External correspondence (2 pages) dated 13 May 2020
- External report (4 pages) dated 26 May 2020

A copy of the scanning control sheets provided by Sefton CAMHS pertaining to this individual patient were reviewed in detail by the Trust's Health Records Manager in April 2025.

The Health Records Manager affirms that if the three missing records had been received by the health records service they would have been returned to the CAMHS service as the data had not been prepared correctly in line with the agreed process at the time, therefore would have been rejected from the scanning process. This is because a mix of internal and external documents had been received which were required to be divided into separate workflows and scanning control sheets.

The Health Records Manager advises that these records should have been returned to Sefton CAMHS for correct scanning preparation, however there is no audit trail of these records being received back to Sefton CAMHS and no evidence of a courier returning the documents to the service.

There is data pertaining to the patient which has been uploaded successfully from May 2021 onwards. The Health Records Manager confirms these records had been prepared correctly with the correct indexing and appropriate scanning control sheets used. A community Dietetics GP letter relating to AR dated 13 May 2023 was located and is now uploaded to Image Now, however, it does not relate to the 'missing documents' flagged as the concern.

A review of legacy tracking data has also been undertaken. The Health Records Manager confirms that there is no trace of the missing documents relating to the patient being received into Health Records to be tracked to the off-site scanning contractor at the time.

The following actions have been undertaken in an attempt to locate the three missing documents:

- A thorough review of physical office and storage locations have been undertaken including:
 - Sefton CAMHS Offices (Clinical Lead Sefton CAMHS).
 - Medical Records Department (Health Records Leadership Team).
 - East Lancs Off Site Storage facility - legacy archive boxes identified as belonging to CAMHS and Community services have been checked (Health Records Leadership Team).
- Review undertaken by Health Records Manager and Health Records Supervisor:
 - Review of scanning control sheets to establish which documents pertaining to AR had been received and tracked for external scanning.
 - A review of ImageNow (EDMS where scanned images are uploaded) confirmed the 3 external documents are not uploaded or available.

- Confirmation that the incorrectly prepared scanning control sheets would have been rejected and returned to Sefton CAHMS. This is because the documents would have been rejected by the off-site scanning provider and the fact the records had not been tracked out from health records.
- Confirmation that no health records which remain untracked are held in the Health Records Department.
- Further intermittent searches undertaken on ImageNow EDMS for all documents identified as not scanned on the control sheets.
- All rooms checked at East Lancs Off Site Storage facility and no documentation relating to AR located.

Since August 2022, several actions have been progressed to support improvements with the Trust's scanning processes:

- Review of scanning processes within Community Services including Sefton CAMHS to ensure adequate scanning methods and establish scanning requirements across community services.
- Change in medical records scanning provider with a focus on quality and timeliness of data upload of Inpatient and Outpatient end of visit scanning.
- Uplift and move of all archived legacy documentation from East Lancs off site storage facility under a managed service contract to support efficient retrieval processes of legacy documentation and enhance the security and confidentiality of data.
- Implementation of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to support automation of loose correspondence documentation upload into ImageNow (EDMS).
- Failed scanning exceptions process from external scanning provider to ensure notification, manual review, indexing and timely upload of documentation into ImageNow (EDMS).
- In house scanning processes established to ensure any legacy documentation identified or any urgent day forward scanning can be completed in a timely manner.
- Paper Light Transformation Project established to seek opportunities to reduce paper output and reduce associated risks with manual records and scanning processes.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The Executive Team is requested to note the content of the report including the steps taken in an attempt to locate the missing data. Given the time that has elapsed, the searches undertaken, and inability to locate the records, the Trust has concluded that these records are permanently missing/lost without any clear audit trail of where they may be.

Wyn Taylor, Head of Information Governance & DPO
Jackie Renshall, Health Records Manager