

## CITY BASED LEGAL FIRM IN LONDON REDUCES ONSITE FILING LEVELS BY 75%

As has been the case for all UK professional services firms, the majority of law firms' staff have been working remotely from home since March 2020. A year later, firms are now planning carefully for their return to head office.

Based in the City of London, our client is top 30 Law Firm with over 1,000 employees in the UK and provide legal services across multiple industry sectors. They have undertaken proactive measures to free up office space and reduce overheads by disposing of unnecessary paper documents and filing cabinets.

### THE CHALLENGE

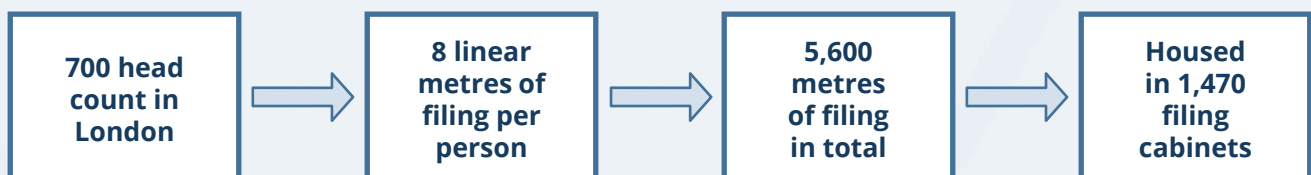
While partners, legal teams and administrators were successful in adjusting to working away from their office space, firms continue to face a number of challenges relating to the documents they use, share and store.

They had invested in a case management IT system, but this had not been fully adopted. To illustrate this, during the pandemic paper files were still being couriered between home-based partners and their teams.

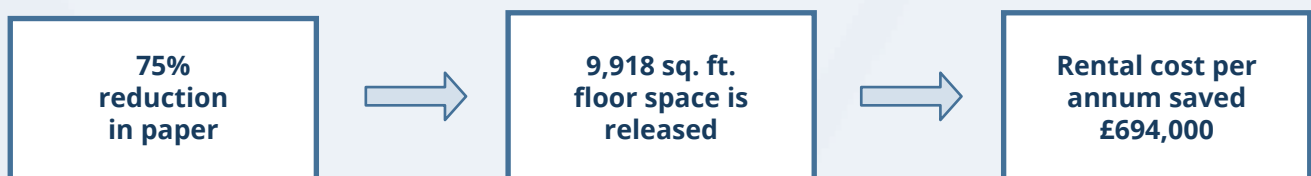
Filing cabinets also took up a huge amount of the firm's expensive office space. The majority of papers held in the cabinets and boxes were printouts of documents already held on the firm's IT systems, and a large proportion were related to closed cases.

And with employees likely to continue working from home two to three days a week, there was a perfect opportunity to consolidate their office space and change ingrained manual processes around the use of paper.

### COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS FOR TOP 30 LEGAL FIRM



### COST BENEFIT OUTCOME



## THE APPROACH

The ClearSpace team proposed a solution to significantly reduce the paper files held by the firm. Since nobody had been in the offices for a year, many folders were left on desks or in drawers used by individual lawyers.

ClearSpace carried out an audit of all files within the building, determining which paperwork related to which case, and whether cases were still live, closed or required a quick action to conclude them, such as a signature from a partner or the resolution of a dispute over fees charged.

The ClearSpace team's experience working with law firms meant they understood how to navigate often sensitive information, and how to quickly cross-reference hard-copy documents with matter numbers on the case management system.

Files relating to closed cases were catalogued, boxed and moved to an off-site archive. ClearSpace established an exceptions process to deal with any queries on matters to be closed, and resolution was achieved through virtual or face-to-face interviews with senior secretarial staff.

ClearSpace then reviewed live matter documentation, scanned relevant documents and added them to the case management system. Exceptions were identified by senior partners on a case-by-case basis but these were a minority of documents.

## THE IMPACT

An initial audit covered papers relating to 36,000 cases, stored in over 60,000 lever arch files and spanning 5.6 kilometres of filing held in storage units across several floors. Nearly 10,000 sq. ft of floor space was freed-up as a result of this process allowing the firm to reduce the number of floors leased in one of its buildings.

It also enabled a more creative use of the floorspace with increased collaboration and meeting spaces. This supported the agile working environment adopted by the firm ensuring employees could work remotely for 2 or 3 days per week.

This wouldn't be possible without the ability to access electronic documents, wherever they are working, via the case management solution. All new cases are now subject to a revised process where matters are created and held electronically. The new process reduces the risks of non-compliance with the GDPR as well as lost documentation, and meets the expectations of clients for a faster, more seamless service from their law firm.

The firm has now created a future proofed solution based on a digital first basis, meaning that hard copy storage should be very limited in the future.



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