

PART TWO

CONFIDENTIAL FILING

Review of Administrative forms

GOVERNMENT
MACHINERY

PT 1: SEPTEMBER 1980

PT 2: NOVEMBER 1986

(IN ATTACHED FOLDER REPORT ON
FORMS REVIEW)

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
	3-11-86						
	30-9-87						
	1-12-87						
	29-12-87						
	20-10-89						
	8-11-89						
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From the Minister for the Arts

C89/5620

Price Minister 2

John Gieve Esq
PS/Chancellor of the Exchequer
HM Treasury
Parliament Street
London SW1P 3AG

PRCC
m/c

19 December 1989

Dear John

... The Chancellor may like to see the attached copy of 'On Top of the Form' which is being issued to the press today. It summarises the main points of the 5th progress report on government forms which was circulated last month to Ministers whose departments contributed to the report.

I am copying this letter, with the summary, to Private Secretaries of all Ministers.

Yours

A P BREWSTER
Assistant Private Secretary



ON TOP OF THE FORM

A progress report from the OMCS on the initiative to improve government forms

Each year practically every adult in the country will fill in a government form of one sort or another. There are some 87,000 different forms in use nationwide. It is important that numbers are kept to the minimum and that essential forms are easy to understand and simple to complete.

This report, which is the fifth since the Government's initiative began in 1982, highlights the good results of the last two years' work on forms review. Good forms mean good service to the customer, whether that's a member of the public, a businessman or woman, or someone working in a government department. Good forms make sense to everyone. The Government is determined to stay on top of the form.



RICHARD LUCE MP
MINISTER OF STATE,
PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

December 1989

CUTTING DOWN ON FORMS

Government forms are constantly being reviewed.

Over the last two years:

- 44,809 forms reviewed
- 9,004 forms scrapped
- 16,785 forms redesigned
- Over £1 million saved by departments.

Since 1982, when review began:

- 171,309 forms reviewed
- 36,004 forms scrapped
- 57,785 forms redesigned
- About £15 million saved.

EVEN BETTER DESIGN AND LANGUAGE

New forms will always be necessary, but with rigorous attention to better design and writing, government forms and leaflets are becoming easier to understand and complete.

The independent watchdog, the Plain English Campaign (PEC), agrees. Government departments have won awards from the PEC every year since the Campaign began ten years ago – a total of 24 awards. The winners this year were the Department of Employment, Inland Revenue, the Department of Social Security and the Department of Trade and Industry.

ENCOURAGING ENTERPRISE

Paperwork – including government forms – can put a particular burden on small businesses and firms trying to expand. Departments are continuing to look at ways of easing this burden.

In the last two years:

- 3,770 forms sent to businesses were redesigned
- 1,443 business forms were scrapped.

LEGAL LANGUAGE

Legal language can be difficult for anyone but a trained lawyer to understand. But progress has been made in removing legal jargon from government documents:

- tax return forms and their accompanying guidance notes no longer contain any statutory references

- the Department of Trade and Industry turned the legal language of 42 patents forms into plain English

- Inland Revenue published a booklet *Is it Legal?* in 1988 to advise on the use of plain English.

FUTURE WORK

Over the next two years efforts will be concentrated on:

- removing complex legal language from forms
- reducing the burden of forms sent to business and industry
- 'troubleshooting' forms which are most frequently used and the most complex, and finding out where there would be the greatest cost benefits from simplifying them
- standardising forms required by the European Community in the run-up to 1992 in an effort to avoid a 'forms forest' created by EC Regulations.

**FIFTH PROGRESS
REPORT ON
FORMS TO THE
PRIME MINISTER
1987-1989**


CABINET OFFICE
OFFICE of the MINISTER
for the CIVIL SERVICE

November 1989

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SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the last two years

- 44,809 forms reviewed.
- 9,004 forms scrapped.
- 16,785 forms redesigned.
- over £1 million saved by departments.

Since 1982 when review began

- 171,309 forms reviewed.
- 36,004 forms scrapped.
- 57,785 forms redesigned.

Better design and language

- 5 Plain English Campaign Awards over last two years.
- Making it Plain** published 1988 and reprinted 1989. 8,791 copies sold since March 1988.
- Increasing awareness of problems associated with legalese. Inland Revenue published **Is it Legal?** in 1988 to advise on use of plain language.
- New forms - careful thought over need and design.

Service to the customer

- 3,644 public forms redesigned.
- 1,342 public forms abolished.
- Plain language and good design mean good service to the public.

Encouraging Enterprise

- ❑ 3,770 forms sent to businesses redesigned.
- ❑ 1,443 forms sent to businesses scrapped.
- ❑ Deregulation review of the forms Government sends to business carried out. Report makes 11 recommendations to reduce the burdens on business.

Technology

- ❑ computer-aided design equipment and desk top publishing units produce good quality forms for internal use and camera-ready copy for forms with wider circulation.
- ❑ storage space saved because 'demand printing' means forms can be printed when needed and therefore stored in smaller quantities.
- ❑ Inland Revenue accepts computer produced substitute forms in place of official tax return forms.

INTRODUCTION

1. This report is the latest in a series which began in 1982 with the White Paper 'Administrative Forms in Government' (Cmnd 8504) which was the Government's response to the findings of the Rayner scrutiny. Since 1982, there have been four progress reports, each tracing the improvement made in government documents in terms of efficiency as well as design. The 1982 Rayner review recognised that forms are essential to the effective conduct of government business. It aimed to ensure that unnecessary forms were withdrawn and that those remaining were made as clear and simple as possible. The basic aim of the government in this area remains the same as stated in the 1982 White Paper:

'to improve efficiency in the Civil Service. This is about much more than cutting out waste. It is about ensuring that the citizen receives good service, that the public understand their rights and duties, and that administration gives the best value for money.'

Structure of the report

2. This report is based on statements by departments of their achievements between April 1987 and March 1989. These reports are reproduced in full at Annex B.
3. Chapter One of the Report reviews the progress made in departments since the last report in 1987. In particular it looks at efficiency savings, the impact of new technology, developments in service to the customer, language and design and progress in removing legal language from government forms and leaflets.
4. Chapter Two reports on the recent Deregulation Review of the Forms Government Sends to Business. The recommendations of that Review are presented at Annex A.
5. Chapter Three looks to the future of the forms review and the direction that forms work should now take.
6. The Report also presents statistical information showing the volume of forms (Tables 1 and 2) and achievements in terms of forms abolished, reviewed, redesigned (Tables 3 and 4).

CHAPTER ONE

PROGRESS SINCE 1987

Number of forms

7. Since the forms review began the total number of forms in the main departments has come down from approximately 99,000 in 1982 to 86,982 in 1989. The continuing vigilance of forms units has brought to light 4,325 existing forms which had not previously been notified. These are included in the 1989 total and are now being reviewed. There has not, in practice, been a 5% net increase since 1987 in the total number of forms in use as the raw figures at Annex B might suggest. After correction to deduct these 4,325, the figures show a small net decrease.

8. Forms designated by the European Community, especially in the area of meat and livestock, account for the largest increase in new forms and show up in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foods (MAFF) statistics (see Table 2). The forms are necessary to meet import and export regulations (eg phytosanitary certificates, animal health certificates) and are unavoidable. However, requirements and conditions vary from one country to another within the EC. This means that what is basically a single form has to be varied slightly for each country and thus inflates the number of new forms created. The Animal Health Division of MAFF is trying to negotiate standard forms with other countries. Further detail is provided in Chapter Two.

9. The creation of new forms is not in itself a problem. There will always be a need for new forms. As Sir Derek Rayner said

'a good form can be a cost effective way of gathering information'.

New forms are introduced only after careful consideration of the need. Close attention is paid to language and design. The procedures being followed in departments ensure that when new forms are introduced they are user friendly.

Efficiency savings

10. 9,004 forms have been scrapped since the 4th Progress Report was published in 1987, bringing the total number of forms abolished since 1982 to 36,004. These achievements are set out in full in Table 1.

11. Financial savings from scrapping obsolete forms and improving the design of existing forms include:

- Inland Revenue - £419,000 from abolishing obsolete forms over the last two years.
- Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) - £23,000 pa by redesigning their Monthly Statements form (PC205).
- The Lord Chancellor's Department - £51,000 in the production costs of forms through the redesign and use of revised specifications.
- HM Customs and Excise - £2,500 by weeding out 125 obsolete national forms; £25,000 by reducing the number of local forms.
- The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) revised their Import Licensing Application form in 1987 with the aim of reducing error rates. By 1988, although the annual usage had gone up, the error rate was down by 10%. This has meant an annual saving of £9,000 for the department.

New Technology

12. Electronic technology is increasingly used to analyse, store, transmit and print text and graphics automatically. Most forms units in the larger departments are now equipped with desk top publishing and other computer-aided design equipment. These allow work which would previously have gone outside departments to be dealt with economically and professionally within forms units. For example, desk top publishers can be used to create simple internal forms; while camera-ready artwork can be produced on laser printers, eliminating the need for typesetting services.

13. Computers have also produced savings in storage space. The ability to use computers for 'on demand printing' means that storage space can be used for important forms and others can be printed when needed, at short notice. Thus when a form needs updating, it can be done more quickly without wasting stocks of old forms or waiting for them to be used up.

14. A number of departments have reported savings from increased use of technology:

- The Department of National Savings (DNS) saved over £10,000 in 1988-89 by using their in-house phototypesetting equipment.
- The Business Statistics Office (formerly DTI but now part of the Central Statistical Office (CSO)) are saving £18,000 pa by printing most of their forms on a laser printer.
- The Department of Employment reports a reduction in the cost of producing its forms by using a laser printer. The cost to the department is 2p per page instead of £1 per typeset page.

15. Computers are not just used for design and printing. In many departments, computerised record keeping systems have been introduced. Microcomputers are used to assist in the efficient review and stock control of forms.

16. For some time, the Inland Revenue has accepted computer produced substitute forms in place of official tax return forms. The Inland Revenue are consulting professional bodies to see if there are other areas where computer produced forms can replace official forms.

Improving service to the customer

17. In the 1982 White Paper, Lord Rayner suggested that an organisation's paperwork can be an indication of the way it treats its customers. He said that forms were

'a window into the policy and procedures behind them. Too many confusing forms suggest a sloppy administration'.

18. A number of changes over the last two years have improved service to the customer.

- On 1 January 1988, changes in international trade documentation affecting all UK imports and exports meant that over 100 forms could be abolished (27 of them UK forms) and replaced by the Single Administrative Document (SAD).
- HM Customs and Excise also simplified their VAT 100 form (the VAT return). About 7 million forms are completed each year.
- The Employment Department are introducing a qualitative appraisal of their work, moving away from numerical output targets, and have designed two client satisfaction questionnaires which will come into use in 1989/90 (a copy is attached to their report).

Language and design

19. Improving government forms and leaflets is not just a matter of efficiency savings. The key to any forms improvement programme is the use of plain English. The OMCS and the Prime Minister endorsed this view with the publication of **Making it Plain: a plea for plain English in the Civil Service** in February 1988 (reprinted 1989). In her foreword to the booklet, the Prime Minister confirmed that

'It is no exaggeration to describe plain English as a fundamental tool of good government'

This booklet has been widely circulated within the Civil Service and to many foreign governments on request.

20. Since 1982, government departments have worked closely with the Plain English Campaign (PEC). This is an independent organisation and has proved a valuable source of informed opinion and advice. Each year, the PEC awards prizes for the best use of plain English practice. Since 1982, government departments have won 14 awards for forms and leaflets. The last two years have been particularly successful:

- 1987**
- Inland Revenue - award for Employer's Guide to PAYE (P7) for good use of colour (graphic design provided by HMSO);
 - Department of Employment - award for a series of factsheets and leaflets on employment law, which included detailed illustrations;
- 1988**
- HM Customs and Excise - award for Notice 226 'Beer Duty' (and a revised VAT leaflet shortlisted);
 - Department for National Savings - award for DNS49 'Report of a lost or stolen bank book' (and one other document shortlisted);
 - Employment Service (Employment Department) - award for a series of leaflets and booklets about employing people with disabilities;
 - Department of Social Security (DSS) - three documents shortlisted for awards.

21. The DSS B1 postal claims form was displayed at an exhibition of 'Public Graphics' at the Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris in February 1988 - an exhibition with a world wide perspective. There was also an entry in the exhibition catalogue.

22. It is important that even documents which are used only internally in departments are produced with plain language and clear design in mind. In 1987, the Plain English Campaign ran the 'Inside Write' competition in conjunction with the Cabinet Office to promote these aims. Among the prizewinners were the Departments of the Environment and Transport for a series of internal training forms.

23. These improvements have not gone unnoticed by the media. **The Sunday Times** commented that

'you rarely see a badly written government report, and the general improvement in forms is staggering'

[**Sunday Times**, 30 July 1989].

24. It is difficult to monitor public approval of individual forms. More often, it is the complaints that come to the attention of departments, through parliamentary questions or watchdogs like the PEC. However, **the Financial Times** published the letter of one satisfied customer, praising the thought which had gone into the layout and language of the application form for a state pension [**Financial Times**, 1 August 1989].

Training

25. Progress in forms design reflects the benefits of effective training. This was recognised by the Plain English Campaign at the 1988 awards ceremony, where Chrissie Maher commented that

'the Civil Service College does excellent work in staging forms design and legal drafting courses.'

As well as centrally run courses at the College, individual departments, notably the MOD and DH/DSS, also organise courses which are open to other departments. The MOD's design studio is used to demonstrate techniques in forms design. It has demonstrated its expertise to overseas officials.

Legal language

26. It is particularly important that the language in forms, notices and information booklets which deal with the law should be precise and unambiguous. However, the jargon of legal language can be difficult for all but a trained lawyer to understand. The 1987 Progress Report focused attention on simplifying legal language in government documents. Departments are now working with lawyers to simplify legal language so that 'legalese' will also become plain English.

27. There have been some strides forward.

- In 1988, the Inland Revenue published a booklet called **Is it legal?** encouraging the use of plain language within their department.
- The Lord Chancellor's Department's (LCD) Civil Justice Review (announced by the Lord Chancellor 6 April 1989) recommended a programme to standardise forms, make greater use of plain English and effect more general improvements in the quality of information available to the public, over the next five years.
- The LCD is considering replacing their booklet '**Small Claims in the County Court - how to sue and defend actions without a solicitor**' with a series of leaflets.
- Plain English should be introduced into Crown and County Court forms within the next two years.
- With the help of the departmental solicitor, the Training Agency has simplified a number of forms including the Enterprise Allowance Scheme agreement between participants and departments, and Youth Training Scheme (YTS) contracts.
- The Department of Trade and Industry has redesigned 42 patents forms written in legal English, which had not been reviewed since 1977. The new forms have been considerably simplified.
- Neither the tax return forms nor the accompanying guidance notes contain any statutory references - even though the notes provide guidance on a mass of complex legislation.

28. Government departments are well aware of the problems associated with legal language. The 4th Progress Report reported that, with the personal support of the Treasury Solicitor, the Civil Service College had introduced a 'Plain Language for Lawyers' course in 1986, specifically aimed at departmental legal advisors. Sadly, this course has been discontinued because of a lack of applicants.

29. There have been other disappointments. HM Customs and Excise report that although legalese has been removed from the broad range of departmental regulations, there are still areas of difficulty: forms which are designated by the European community and those which may have to be used in court. The Customs and Excise forms unit is working with HQ policy divisions in London to produce improvements.

30. The 1987 Report announced that the then Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) had agreed a new declaration statement with departmental solicitors. All benefit applicants have to sign a declaration confirming that the information they have given is complete and accurate. A single, plain English, version was used on all forms revised after April 1987. This year, however, the department is considering altering this declaration again because users of the form found the 'plain' language intimidating and were tending to qualify it in manuscript.

31. Legal language must be precise and the use of Plain English should aid clarity. This is an important area where much more improvement is needed. Some organisations have made advances. In Australia, for example, the Faculty of Law at Sydney University has agreed to include a drafting segment in its post graduate programme; and the Banking Law Association has appointed a team of plain language advisors.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEREGULATION REVIEW OF THE FORMS GOVERNMENT SENDS TO BUSINESS

32. As part of the Government's initiative to ease the regulatory burdens on business, the DTI Enterprise and Deregulation Unit have a rolling programme of deregulation reviews. Last year, the OMCS carried out a review of the forms Government sends to business as part of that programme.

Background to the Review

33. The potential benefits of better designed and better targeted forms are considerable. For example, if the total time each business spends on form-filling could be cut by one hour per year, it is estimated that the saving to business as a whole would be in the region of £70 million.

34. Since 1982, all the forms government sends to business have been reviewed and over half have been redesigned or abolished. Over the past two years, departmental forms units have continued to improve relations with business and industry.

- The DSS Document Design Unit helped the department's Deregulation Unit put together a report on 'Enquiries of Business' and an associated action plan;
- In February 1989, DSS prepared the 'Employer's Package' of material sent to all employers. This included a wall chart to help employers deal with statutory sick pay along with National Insurance and sick pay tables.

35. Despite a reduction in the number of forms overall since 1982, statistics showed an increase in the number of forms sent to businesses. After an 8% drop in the number of different forms sent to business up to 1985, there was a 3% increase between 1985 and 1987. Since the last progress report there has been a 9% increase in the number of forms the main departments send to business from 12,562 in 1987 to 13,668 in 1989. Not all of these were new forms. Some were forms which had not been notified to forms units. The discovery of these 'forgotten' forms, however, reflects the increased interest in minimising the burdens on businesses and these forms too are now being reviewed.

36. There will always be a need for new forms. Policy changes or new initiatives may give rise to the need for new forms. The creation of new forms and leaflets helps to bring changes in policy or practice to the attention of customers. For example, in MAFF the main increase has occurred in Animal Health Certificates as a response to the growth of the UK's export trade in livestock and meat products. Of the 2,073 forms which the Animal Health Division send to business and industry, about 1,800 are export certificates. In the Meat Hygiene Division 502 of their 582 business forms are export certificates. In the EC, some import conditions are covered by a Europe-wide directive in which case a single form will be used in all countries. However, for imports not covered by a directive, requirements may vary from country to country with a different form needed for each. This practice gives a false impression of the numbers of such forms and consequently the burden. Many of the forms are essentially the same with only slight modifications. The Animal Health Division is trying to negotiate standard forms with other countries.

37. The Plain English Campaign also drew attention to the burden of paperwork on businesses as well as individuals, calling for new regulations to be kept as simple as possible so that forms and leaflets could be made shorter and more comprehensible. The time was therefore ripe to carry out a further study to look at the reasons for this increase and to make proposals to carry forms review work forward.

The Review

38. The main aims of the review were:

- to assess the impact existing forms review work has had on business; and
- to identify means of minimising the burden of government forms on business, and make recommendations.

Findings of the Review

39. Feedback from business about the design of Government forms has been largely favourable. A number of the businessmen and accountants visited as part of the review commented on the improved clarity of the forms sent out by Government departments over the past few years. However, businesses emphasised the need for consultation before major forms are redesigned, since corresponding changes often have to be made to a company's own systems to generate the information required.

40. The burden of statistical forms sent to business has been dealt with in the recent report 'Statistical Burdens on Business' produced by the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Corporate Affairs. In particular, the proposal to set up a central register of companies to be used for collecting statistics should lead to a fairer distribution of statistical forms, whilst the new arrangement for increased Ministerial control, strengthened in 1987 and described in the CSO's report in Annex B, should ensure that only essential forms are issued at all. The reorganisation of the Government Statistical Service which was announced in April 1989, should also help by eliminating duplication. (See Annex B)

41. Although businesses acknowledged an improvement in Government forms in general, some areas of difficulty remain. Comments and complaints about specific forms have been referred to the departments concerned. More general points included:

- insufficient information about the purpose of some Government forms;
- much higher relative burden for smaller businesses;
- government forms and procedures a particular problem for very small businesses wishing to expand;
- better use could be made of new technology to reduce the forms burden;
- forms should indicate more clearly the level of detail/degree of accuracy required. This should be the minimum needed.

Recommendations

42. The report was published in July 1989 and made a number of recommendations to improve procedures and the design of forms, to simplify them and make them more effective. This also involves measures relating to administration and training, with special regard to the needs of small businesses. A list of the report's recommendations, which are being considered by departments, is at Annex A.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FUTURE

43. When Sir Derek (now Lord) Rayner carried out his Review of Administrative Forms in 1982, the general standard of Government forms was low. Many of the forms then in use were over-complicated, poorly worded and, all too often, simply not needed. The major task facing forms units then was therefore to review all their existing forms, weed out those that were no longer needed, and redesign those that remained if they were unclear.

44. This review has now largely been completed. Almost all Government forms have been reviewed at least once - the more important ones several times. To secure further success in reducing the burden of Government forms, the resources put into forms review work now need to be better targetted. It is important that the greatest effort is spent where it will produce the greatest benefits to Government, business and the public.

45. At present, the main measures of progress and performance in forms review work are:

- numbers of forms reviewed, redesigned and abolished;
- numbers of new forms created;
- and total numbers of form-types in use (eg business, public, internal).

This type of accounting is still appropriate for the more general review described above and should therefore continue.

Easing the burden of forms

46. However, new measures are needed to ensure that forms review work focuses on areas where real improvements can be made. Quality not just quantity should be measured (as it is already in the Employment Department). It is necessary to guard against encouraging reviews just to improve the statistics. Departmental Forms Units should be spending an increasing amount of their time 'troubleshooting' forms which they have identified as placing a particularly heavy burden on their recipients (or on particular kinds of recipients like small businesses). In order to establish which forms can be classified as 'burdensome', departments will have to assess forms in terms of, for example:

-
- the costs and benefits to the recipient completing the form;
 - the circulation of the form (how many forms and to whom they are distributed);
 - complexity of the form (availability of information requested);
 - whether the form is compulsory or voluntary.

47. One measure which the Plain English Campaign have sought is the inclusion of a box at the end of each form where the recipient can note the length of time it has taken to complete the form. This would further help departments to assess the burden of their forms and to monitor savings.

48. To make progress in improving the more burdensome Government forms, the review process needs to go beyond the form itself to the policies and procedures behind it. It is important that there is full consultation with the recipients of forms, and with those in the department responsible for processing completed forms. To achieve this, the primary responsibility for forms review work should lie with the policy division which uses the information requested on the form. This was one of the recommendations of the Deregulation review of Forms.

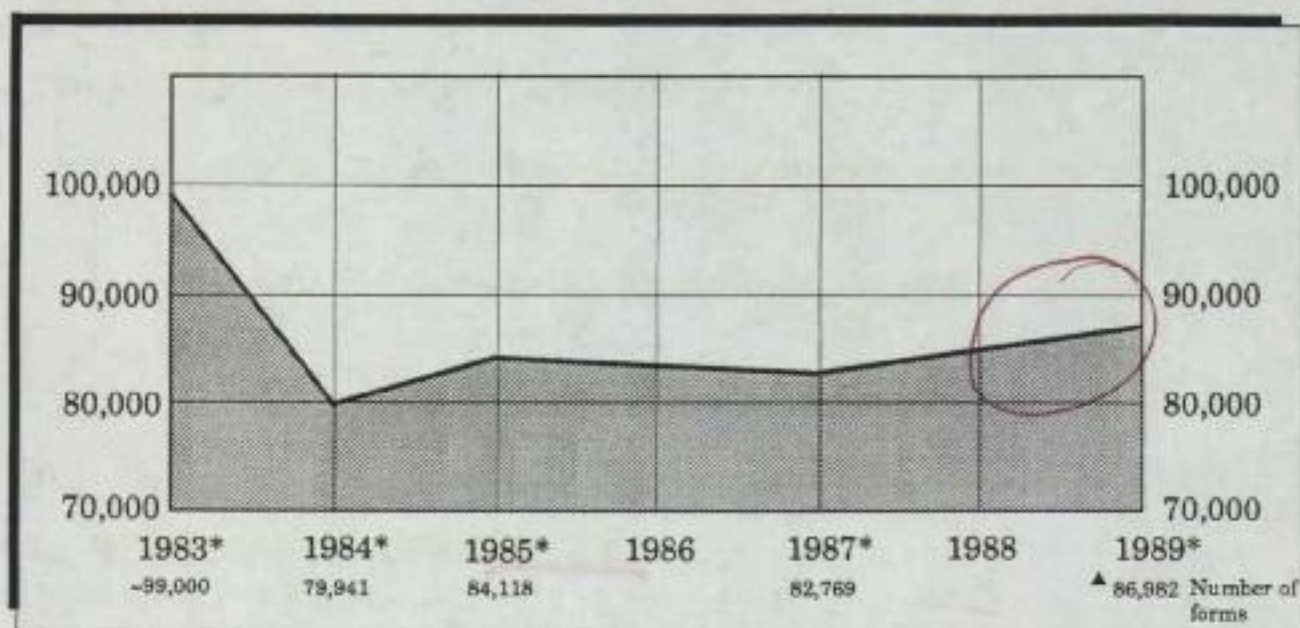
Legal language

49. Legal language has been highlighted as a particularly important area for improvement in government documents. Greater use of plain language in future would be a major step forward.

50. The Deregulation Review of Forms pointed to a number of areas where improvements could be made and recommended new procedures for handling forms. Departments are considering these recommendations and the OMCS will be providing advice and guidance as necessary. To give added impetus it will be important that forms review work continues to receive the active support of Ministers and senior management.

51. Progress on the implementation of the Deregulation Report, as well as on more general improvements with forms review work, will feature in future Reports to the Prime Minister.

Table 1
VOLUME OF FORMS (1983 -1989)
MAIN DEPARTMENTS (not including DHSS)



* Year of progress report to the Prime Minister

▲ Includes 4,325 forms that were in use in 1987 but not previously notified. Net total after correction to deduct these is 82,657

Table 2
VOLUME OF FORMS 1987-1989

	Total forms in use 1987 as stated in 4th Progress Report	Abolished		Additional existing forms notified 87-89	Balance	New forms	TOTAL forms in use 1989
		87-88	88-89				
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries & Food	3861	221	294	924	4270	1332	5602
Cabinet Office	2006	44	56		1906	25	1931
HM Customs & Excise	1757	124	132		1501	353	1854
Ministry of Defence	9880	110	361	250	9659	391	10050
Driver & Vehicle Licensing Centre	2722	162	624		1936	485	2421
Dept of Education & Science	1450	111	197		1142	284	1426
Dept Employment	2340	8	3	126	2455	27	2482
Dept of Environment	1523	4	5		1514	95	1609
Foreign & Commonwealth Office	2767		(405)	636	2998	341	3339
HM Stationery Office	1851	392	220	348	1587	306	1893
Home Office	5338	433	246	935	5594	360	5954
Inland Revenue	8349	551	293		7505	71	8222
Land Registry	1108	20	12		1076	135	1211
Lord Chancellor's Dept	9018	25	20		8973	65	9038
Dept National Savings	5807	589	403	320	5135	822	5957
Office of Population Censuses & Surveys	1098	20	362		716	626	1342
Property Services Agency	2629	25	20		2584	160	2744
Scottish Office	4649	4	399	100	4346	428	4774
Dept of Trade & Industry	9759	406	631	686	9408	1202	10610
Training Agency	2265	479	398		1388	531	1919
Dept of Transport	1285	1	21		1263	71	1334
HM Treasury	1307		(173)		1134	136	1270
TOTAL	82,769		9,004	4,325	78,090	8,892	86,982*

Does not include DH/DSS (previously DHSS)

* Includes 4,325 forms that were in use in 1987 but not previously notified. Net total after correction to deduct these is 82,657.

Table 3
SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS 1987 - 1989

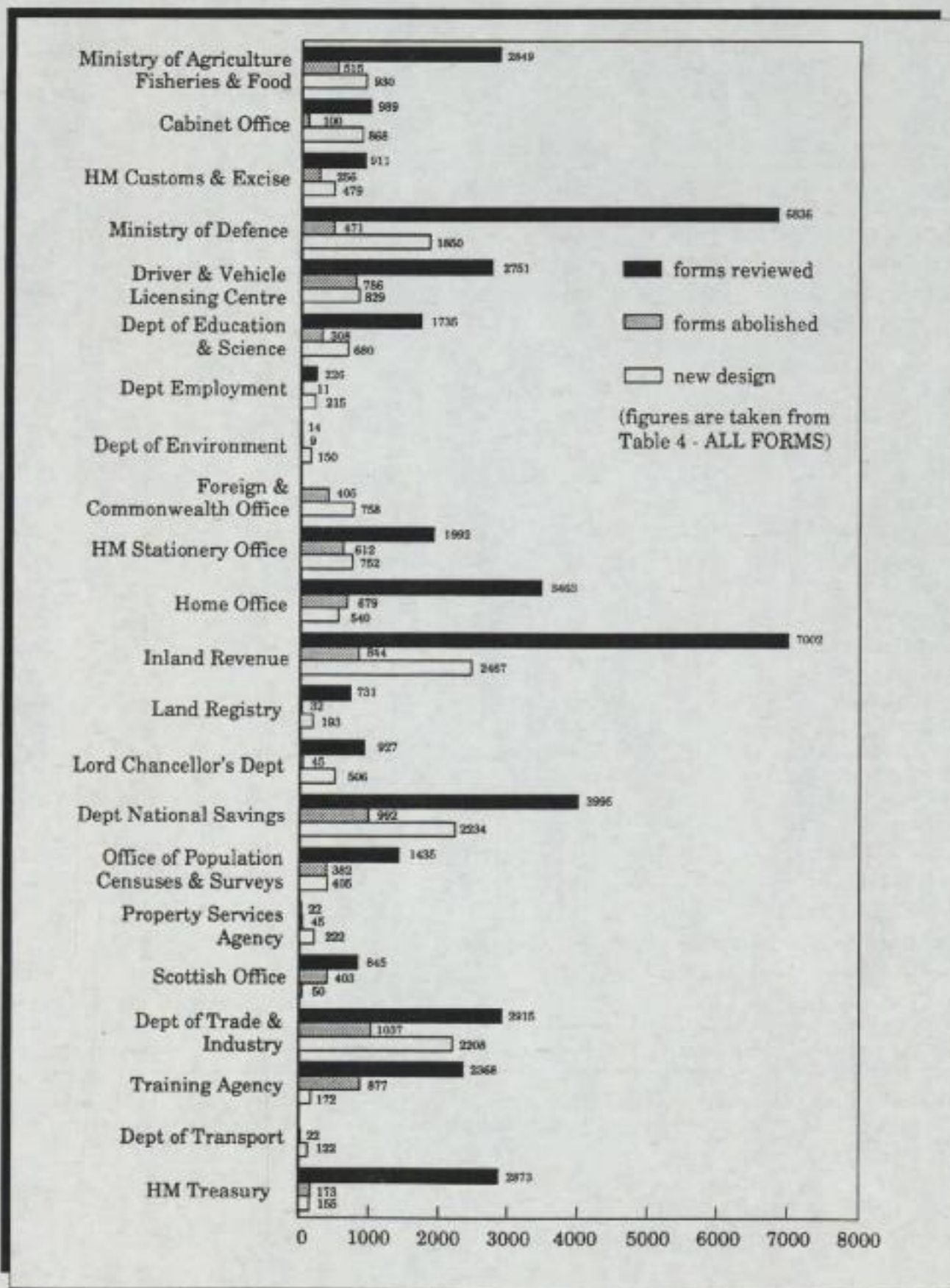


Table 4
SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS 1987 - 1989

	ALL FORMS			IMPORTANT FORMS		
	Review completed	Abolished	New Design	Review completed	Abolished	New Design
Public	8190	1342	3644	832	66	411
Business & Industry	8019	1443	3770	938	96	265
Internal to Dept	21757	5736	7438	528	123	254
Others*	6843	483	1933	85	4	27
TOTAL	44809	9004	16785	2383	289	957
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food	2849	515	930	583	78	190
Cabinet Office	989	100	868			
HM Customs & Excise	911	256	479	57	5	30
Ministry of Defence	6836	471	1850			
Driver & Vehicle Licencing Centre	2751	786	829	64		38
Dept of Education & Science	1735	308	680	85	16	43
Employment Dept	226	11	215	60		60
Dept of Environment	14	9	150	1	3	25
Foreign & Commonwealth Office		405	758		12	72
HM Stationery Office	1922	612	752	28		16
Home Office	3463	679	540	118	5	51
Inland Revenue	7002	844	2467	147	18	72
Land Registry	731	32	193	46	1	15
Lord Chancellor's Dept	927	45	506	84		28
Dept of National Savings	3995	992	2234	175	15	127
Office of Population Censuses & Surveys	1435	382	405	183		67
Property Services Agency	22	45	222	3		2
Scottish Office	845	403	50	61	15	10
Dept of Trade & Industry	2915	1037	2208	19	2	9
Training Agency	2368	877	172	395	90	68
Dept of Transport		22	122			13
HM Treasury	2873	173	155	274	29	21
TOTAL	44,809	9,004	16,785	2,383	289	957

*Includes DOE, PSA, DTp and HMT who had an Other category, and MOD where the total could not be divided into categories.

ANNEX A

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DEREGULATION REVIEW OF THE FORMS GOVERNMENT SENDS TO BUSINESS

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.** Short explanatory leaflets should be produced to accompany statistical forms.
- 2.** Small businesses should be exempted from receiving/ completing all but the most essential forms.
- 3.** Forms review and administration should be delegated to Forms Review Officers located in policy divisions.
- 4.** A short training course should be devised for Forms Review Officers.
- 5.** A general information/publicity leaflet on forms review work should be produced.
- 6.** Information held by departments on computer should be pre-printed onto forms (for correction as necessary) rather than requested afresh.
- 7.** Departments should consider allowing alternatives to pre-printed forms.
- 8.** Departments should consult business before redesigning major forms.
- 9.** Departments should consider ways of sharing information obtained from business.
- 10.** All forms should conform to standard A4 or A5 paper sizes.
- 11.** Forms should indicate the degree of accuracy/level of detail required.

ANNEX B

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

This annex shows individual progress reports from the following departments:

Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF)
Cabinet Office
HM Customs and Excise (C&E)
Ministry of Defence (MOD)
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre (DVLC)
Department of Education and Science (DES)
Department of Employment (DE)
Department of the Environment (DOE)
Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)
Departments of Health and Social Security (DH and DSS)
HM Stationery Office (HMSO)
Home Office (HO)
Inland Revenue (IR)
Land Registry (LR)
Lord Chancellor's Department (LCD)
Department for National Savings (DNS)
Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys (OPCS)
Property Services Agency (PSA)
Scottish Office (SO)
Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)
Training Agency
Department of Transport (DTp)
HM Treasury (HMT)

Central Office of Information (COI)
Central Statistical Office (CSO)
Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
Paymaster General's Office (PGO)

House styles

In the 4th Progress Report we noted that 'house styles' were a popular development, often giving departments what might be called a corporate image. This year many departmental reports are presented in the department's own 'house style' - that is in the typeface and colours which they might use for one of their departmental forms.



**Review of Administrative
Forms in MAFF**

Progress since 1987

Forms Review 1987/89

Department	I. All forms				II. Important forms (included in I)			
	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food								
1 Forms in use on 31/3/87 – as stated in 4th progress report	263	2084	1514	3861	10	980	58	1048
2 Additional existing forms – notified to forms unit during 1987/88	– 63	906	81	924	20	– 468	100	– 348
3 Progress 1/4/87 – 31/3/89								
a. No. of forms planned for review as reported in 4th progress report	71	320	423	814	8	108	16	132
b. No. of forms reviewed	55	501	345	901	4	345	45	394
c. No. of forms abolished – each form to be counted only once e.g. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	15	118	88	221	2	41	2	45
d. No. of forms retained unchanged	8	190	125	323	0	217	22	239
e. No. of forms redesigned	32	193	132	357	2	87	21	110
4 Progress 1/4/88 – 31/3/89								
a. No. of forms reviewed	70	1494	384	1948	9	112	68	189
b. No. of forms abolished – each form to be counted only once e.g. amalgamation of two form = 1 abolished, 1 revised	8	193	93	294	3	10	20	33
c. No. of forms retained unchanged	22	906	153	1081	0	55	21	76
d. No. of forms redesigned	40	395	138	573	6	47	27	80
5 New forms produced during 1/4/87 – 31/3/89	22	1005	305	1332	4	535	67	606
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/89 – i.e. items 1+2+5, less items 3c and 4b	199	3684	1719	5602	29	996	203	1228
7 No. of forms planned for review 1/4/89 – 31/3/90	40	554	311	905	4	119	33	156

Review of Administrative Forms in MAFF

Progress since 1987

General

1. The Forms Design Unit (FDU) continued to give advice and guidance on design, content and text of forms to sponsors. The FDU also provided drafts of new and redesigned forms and camera ready copy.
2. To assist MAFF staff, the FDU prepared a booklet entitled "Good Forms Make Sense". The booklet briefly describes the role of the FDU and the Forms Liaison Officers (FLO) and advises upon good forms management and procedures for producing new and revised forms. The booklet was widely circulated throughout the Ministry and was well received.
3. In 1988 the FDU set up a computerised work recording database. Details of forms received by the FDU are entered onto the database by form title, form number, sponsor division, contact name, the date the work was received, paper size, number of pages, and details of whether the form is for internal or external use and for computer entry. The database enables the FDU to monitor the progress of the form from the date it is received, through the initial draft stage until the final production of camera ready copy. It also gives an overall picture of the current workload within the Unit.
4. Forms Liaison Officers continue to co-ordinate the collection of statistics for the annual report. Their role extends to planning and co-ordinating forms review in their Division and arranging for staff to carry out review action.

Statistics

5. The number of forms in use in MAFF at 31/3/89 was 5602. There were 1332 new forms produced since the 4th progress report and 515 forms abolished. The main increase in MAFF forms has occurred in Animal Health forms and this reflects particularly the extent of the UK's export trade in livestock and meat products. Animal Health Division continue to attempt to negotiate standard forms with other countries. However, there are great difficulties as different importing countries require varying information from exporting countries. Also, the method of presentation required by the importing country differs. Ultimately, if the exports are to take place, the information has to be provided in the format required by the importing country and, no matter how small the variation from previous documentation, a new form results.

6. Various new policy initiatives have given rise to the need for forms. These were in particular:
- Set-aside scheme
 - Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme
 - Farm Woodland Scheme
 - Farm Diversification Grant Scheme
 - Extensions to the Environmentally Sensitive Area Scheme
 - Plant Health Propagation Scheme
 - Export Nursery Approval Scheme
 - Disposal of Waste (Control of Beet Rhizomania Disease) Order 1988
 - Commercialisation of services provided by the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service
 - Computerised debt recovery system - Legal Department
7. There were also 924 additional, but not new, forms notified to the FDU now included in the total of 5602. The bulk of these were supplementary export health certificates and their guidance notes. Most of these documents are completed by local veterinary inspectors. They are then handed to the exporter for forwarding to the importing country with the consignment. The supplementary export health certificates are used when the importing country stipulates additional conditions at short notice. Previously these documents were not classified as forms by the FLO concerned but have recently been so classified. The FDU has validated the new judgement.
8. The number of business and industry forms in the "important forms" category has been reduced on re-assessment. It was felt that because certain export certificates for livestock are not completed by exporters themselves, the forms should not be shown in the "important forms" category.

Costs of the FDU

9. The staff complement of the FDU during the two year period under report was one HEO, one EO and one AO. The HEO post was vacant for the first 6 months of the 1987/88 but was covered by the EO on temporary promotion. During 1988/89 the AO post was vacant for 4 months. The FDU reports to an SEO in Branch B of the Information Technology Directorate - Planning Division.

10. The full operational costs including accommodation of the FDU for the two year period was £146,736. Some overtime was necessary during the time of staff shortages.

Equipment

11. In March 1987 one of the IBM Magnetic Card Composers used by the FDU for the creation of camera ready copy for forms was replaced by an Apple Macintosh microcomputer with A3 screen and laser printer. It was intended to be used for the production of quick drafts for consultation purposes, the creation of camera ready copy mainly for internal forms and, where suitable, for some external forms. It was found that the camera ready copy from the laser printer was of high quality and suitable to be used for all external forms. Consequently in November 1987 a second Apple Macintosh microcomputer with an A3 screen was purchased to replace the remaining IBM Magnetic Card Composer in use in the Unit.
12. The installation of the microcomputers has led to an increasing demand for the FDU's services. The Apple Macintosh systems allow the FDU to take a more active role in the production of forms at a much earlier stage. Drafts can be accessed and amended with ease, hence the FDU are able to provide a faster and more efficient service for the clients. Consultation with form sponsors is always included in the design or revision process and sponsors are frequently invited to the FDU where they are able to see and participate in their forms being created.
13. Additionally, the Unit is often asked to assist MAFF Divisions with the preparation of flow charts, report covers, recruitment advertisements etc.

Legal Language

14. In 1986, a Departmental solicitor was appointed to advise generally on legal language on forms and to be available to give advice on specific problems. Divisions are encouraged to simplify the language of their forms at the time of creation/review.

Plain English Campaign

15. In 1987 the Ministry submitted forms designed for the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme and in 1988 the FDU booklet "Good Forms Make Sense". Unfortunately neither of these submissions was short-listed for an award

Performance Indicators

16. A sample survey was conducted by the FDU to ascertain the effectiveness of a number of new forms. Sponsors were asked to comment briefly on the following points:
- error rates on completed forms
 - the need for telephone enquiry points or other requests for help from users
 - difficulties experienced by staff processing the completed forms

The response to the survey was encouraging. The majority of sponsors confirmed that the forms were effective and met the needs of the recipients and the Ministry.

17. The FDU coped with an increase of 100% in the number of forms processed during 1987/89 compared with 1985/87. This increase in productivity was assisted considerably by the introduction of the Apple Macintosh systems.

The Future

18. Over the next two years, the main objectives are:
- to maintain and improve productivity levels;
 - to continue to publicise the need for economy in forms and the service offered by the FDU, to maintain the impetus established by the booklet "Good Forms Make Sense";
 - to examine new initiatives in forms review and control, including the effectiveness of the current FLO arrangements;
 - to retain responsiveness and flexibility in approach in the light of "Next Steps" and other changes;
 - to consider and implement mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of forms;
 - to continue to collaborate with colleagues in other Management Services groups and to participate in efficiency reviews wherever appropriate.



CABINET OFFICE

The Forms Review 1989 Progress Report

Cabinet Office Forms Unit
Government Offices
Great George Street
LONDON SW1P 3AL

June 1989

THE CABINET OFFICE FIFTH PROGRESS REPORT ON FORMS (1989)

The Cabinet Office Forms Unit is part of the Establishment Division Information Technology & Methods Branch. As part of the department's Consultancy Inspection and Review services the Unit provides help and guidance to those wishing to create or amend forms.

Staffing

An Executive Officer spends 85% of his time on the review and production of forms and on the maintenance of standards. An Administrative Assistant spends about 15% of his effort on monitoring the use of forms and on liaison with the Central Reprographic Unit to prevent over-ordering and wastage.

New Technology

From 1982 until November 1987, the Forms Unit was using an Xenotron XVC2 terminal. The 1987 report highlighted problems in producing drafts and final copies of forms because the Cabinet Office was dependant upon the DHSS to produce hard copy.

About £14,000 has been invested in Desk-Top Publishing equipment which has allowed the Forms Unit to operate independently. The change also improved turnaround times and has allowed the incorporation economically of final last minute alterations.

The new equipment was incompatible with the Xenotron equipment and before existing forms could be amended they had to be completely re-keyed. This created a back-log of work during 1988. It also provided an opportunity to look again at a number of forms as they became due for amendment.

Achievements to date

The initial phase of the Cabinet Office Forms Unit review is now complete. The Unit has conducted over 4,000 reviews on forms. Some required little effort, while others involved lengthy consultation with users. The majority of recommendations and revisions have been accepted by authors, although

some, most notably the travel and subsistence form, have not been.

More recently, the Forms Unit, in consultation with Personnel Services Branch, reviewed departmental application forms in tandem with a more general review of recruitment procedures. This has led to a one-third reduction in printing costs and makes the job of filling in the form less daunting for prospective applicants.

The 4th report to the Prime Minister forecast that the Forms Unit would review some 669 forms during the financial year 1987-1988, but the transfer from Xenotron to the new Desk-Top Publishing system, mentioned above, led to slippage. During 1987-88 only 483 (72% of target) forms were reviewed. In 1988-89 506 forms were reviewed, 12% ahead of target.

Responsibility for eleven forms moved to the Treasury Forms Unit with the transfer of some functions to the Treasury during 1987.

The first phase of the review eliminated forms no longer in use. The majority of forms withdrawn during the last two years have been amalgamated with others. Of the 100 forms withdrawn during 1987-89 only 21 were abolished completely. In 1987-88 form numbers fell by 1% and 1988-89 by 3% across the department.

A number of temporary forms were produced during the two years. These were often one-off questionnaires and have not been included in the summary below.

Forms in the Cabinet Office - a summary

	Destination of form ...			Total
	Public	Business	Internal	
Forms in use on 31 March 1987	802	41	1,163	2,006
Forms planned for review 1987-88	267	14	388	669
Forms reviewed 1987-88	204	12	267	483
Forms abolished 1987-88	12	0	32	44
Forms re-designed 1987-88	188	12	218	418
Forms retained unchanged 1987-88	4	0	13	17
New forms notified during 1987-88	0	0	19	19
Forms in use on 31 March 1988	790	41	1,150	1,981
Forms planned for review 1988-89	200	0	250	450
Forms reviewed 1988-89	214	0	292	506
Forms abolished 1988-89	13	0	43	56
Forms re-designed 1988-89	201	0	249	450
Forms retained unchanged 1988-89	0	0	0	0
Forms transferred to Treasury 1988-89	4	0	7	11
New forms notified during 1988-89	0	0	6	6
Forms in use on 31 March 1989	773	41	1,106	1,920
Forms planned for review 1989-90	250	41	250	541

Looking to the future

The Next Steps initiative led to a reshaping of the department. The Cabinet Office (OMCS) agencies might need greater support.

Separately, we would like to merge the Forms Unit with other units to provide a Cabinet Office Publications Unit.

Now that the majority of the department's forms have been transferred to the new Desk-Top Publishing equipment, the Forms Unit is confident that reviews and amendments to forms will be completed more quickly. We are planning a cyclical re-review of every form in the department at least once every three years from April 1990.

Cabinet Office Forms Unit

June 1989

Forms Review 1987/89

Department:

C&E

I. All Forms

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/87 - as stated in 3rd progress report	44	550	1163	1757
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	-	-	-	-
3 Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/88				
a. No. of forms planned for review - as reported in 4th progress report	10	150	300	460
b. No. of forms reviewed	10	148	295	453
c. No. of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	2	23	99	124
d. No. of forms retained unchanged	2	45	46	93
e. No. of forms redesigned	6	80	150	236
4 Progress 1/4/88 - 31/3/89				
a. No. of forms reviewed	12	145	301	458
b. No. of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	1	25	106	132
c. No. of forms retained unchanged	5	41	37	83
d. No. of forms redesigned	6	79	158	243
5 New forms produced during 1/4/87 - 31/3/89	2	53	298	353
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/89 - ie. items 1 + 2 + 5, less items 3c + 4b	43	555	1256	1854
7 No. of forms planned for review 1/4/89 - 31/3/90	10	150	315	475

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
	1	44	48	93
	-	-	-	-
	1	10	18	29
	-	10	19	29
	-	5	-	5
	-	2	8	10
	-	3	11	14
	-	11	17	28
	-	-	-	-
	-	5	7	12
	-	6	10	16
	-	2	2	4
	1	41	50	92
	1	10	20	31

H M CUSTOMS & EXCISE

Progress since 1987

1. Since 31 March 1987, the number of types of forms (national and local) in use has been cut by 15%. The only category to show a significant increase is National/Internal forms. Here the largest single reason was the growing demand within the Department for management information, for example, data required for operational planning.

Types of Forms in use	
Number in use 31 March 1989	Net change for the 2 years ending 31 March 1989
	National / internal
	1256 +8%
	National / external
	598 No change
	Local Collection / internal
1900	-21%
	Local Collection / external
1300	-19%
	Local Headquarters / Internal
	1200 -9%
	Local Headquarters / external
	480 -4%
Overall reduction = 15%	

2. In April 1987, a new Customs duty-free allowances *card (passport size) was introduced for travellers and over 1M have been taken up. It was especially welcomed by travel firms and airport authorities.

3. Radical changes in international trade documentation affecting all UK imports and exports were made on January 1 1988. Over 100 Customs import, export and transit forms used in the European Community were abolished. 27 of these were UK Customs forms. One all-purpose form was introduced - the *Single Administrative Document (SAD). This change was the culmination of years of detailed negotiation between governments.

4. In 1988, the Department won a Plain English Award with *'Beer Duty' - a booklet explaining the workings of this duty to the brewing trade. The revised VAT leaflet "Should I cancel my registration?" was short-listed.

5. The unit improved its control over national forms by shortening from 3 to 2 1/2 years its challenge of forms which do not come forward for reprinting.

Savings

6. As indicated at 3. above the high point of forms simplification during the report period was the introduction of SAD at 1.1.88. The alignment of descriptions of goods, codes and data in all member states gave scope for greater computerisation in international trade. Statistical data is now available on a common base, allowing more accurate interpretation by commercial organisations as they plan their corporate strategy for 1992. It is not possible to quantify these commercial benefits in straight financial terms, but they certainly amount to several million pounds.

7. In other areas savings and improvements were achieved by:

- a. reducing local forms by a net 1180, (£25K saved).
- b. combing out 125 obsolete national forms, (£2.5K saved).
- c. improving the readability of 115 notices and leaflets, and
- d. making marginal improvements to 450 national forms.

Future Savings

8. Ground work has been done in two important areas.

a. The VAT return (VAT100). About 7M of these are completed annually by businesses. The form has been radically overhauled by cutting the number of boxes from 9 to 5 and improving the explanatory notes and visual presentation. Making a simplistic assumption that 1 to 2 minutes business completion time (costed at 20p) will be saved on every return, the annual saving would be in excess of £1M. Precise quantification would however require an elaborate and costly sampling exercise.

b. Storage of Forms. Stocks are being moved from HMSO Chadderton to H M Customs Stores Branch Woolwich. Annual savings on storage, staff costs, and distribution are expected to be £184K.

Value for money

9. The unit monitors its performance by:

- a. measuring up to aims, objectives and targets (eg meeting design deadlines);
- b. relating output to costs (eg masters produced per staff day);
- c. relating control functions (eg monitoring local forms returns) to costs, and
- d. comparing value added by redesign to resources employed

(this is done for a small number of important forms).

All these measures have shown improvements. In respect of VAT notices, surveys of selected trade groups by local staff showed that more than 50% of traders were satisfied with the content whilst 33% found them easier to understand than earlier versions.

Internal Forms

10. In line with OMCS's recommendation, the unit paid particular attention to the language and layout of internal forms. An example of progress is given below.

The Departments *travel and subsistence claim form (C&E 223) enables the payment of over £15M expenses. About 150,000 claims are processed annually. In 1988 the form and some of the procedures associated with it were reviewed. To test the effectiveness of revision, 600 forms were trialled live in 6 Collections and several Headquarters Divisions. Compared with the original form, the revision has the following features:

- 2 sides instead of 4,
- uses colour, with white spaces for completion areas,
- needs 25% less information from claimants,
- on average, saves each claimant 4 minutes in completing,
- does not require duplicate information, thus saving processing and storage costs, and
- has a completion error rate of less than 10% (the previous edition had 30%).

Overall the revised form, due to be introduced in mid 1989, is expected to produce savings (mainly in staff time) equivalent to £165K a year.

Legal Language

11. Legalese has been removed from the broad range of Departmental publications. There are however two areas of difficulty; forms designated by the European Community and those which may have to be presented in Court. The unit has drawn the attention of forms sponsors to these types of forms and asked for improvements where practicable.

New Development

12. The Department's study of drugs and revenue goods seizure documentation at Heathrow is likely to have far-reaching implications for the completion and processing of forms. With the objective of reducing the amount of non-productive staff time spent on completing seizure documents, the study recommends that data should be captured only once on computer data base and then printed out on forms tailored to a variety of manual systems (eg prosecution, stock control, intelligence). Savings could be in the region of 10 staff years.

Organisation and Staffing

13. In 1988, the unit's Senior Management Steering Committee enlarged its brief to span all Departmental written Communications. The unit was placed with the procurement and in-house printing sections.

14. The unit is staffed by 10% 1 Grade 7; 80% 1 SEO; 3 HEOs; 3 EOs and 4 AOs. Its responsibilities are the direct control and design of national forms and non-VAT notices and the indirect control and design of local forms. About 10% of the unit's output is now non-forms graphics eg diagrams for reports.

15. The VAT Communications Unit was staffed by 25% 1 Grade 7; 1 HEO; 60% 1 EO.

Equipment

16. During the report period the Desktop Publishing System was enhanced by replacing the small screen VDUs with larger ones, adding an A3 laser printer, and upgrading the A4 laser printer (from 300 DPI to 600 DPI). These changes improved the quality of camera-ready print masters.

The Future

17. Continuing with the broad aim of 'fewer and better forms', specific objectives include:

- to reduce by at least 10% the costs of printing, procuring, storing and distributing forms;
- to prompt and assist Collections with the poorest records to review and reduce their local forms;
- to ensure that all national forms not examined in any 2 year period are reviewed for need and standard;
- to pilot trial a Plain English computer program to assess its value for improving the Department's written communications;
- to liaise with Management Services to identify any 'Families of Forms' which would benefit from systems examination; and
- to pay special attention to the current growth area in forms ie national/internal, challenging need, content, language and layout.

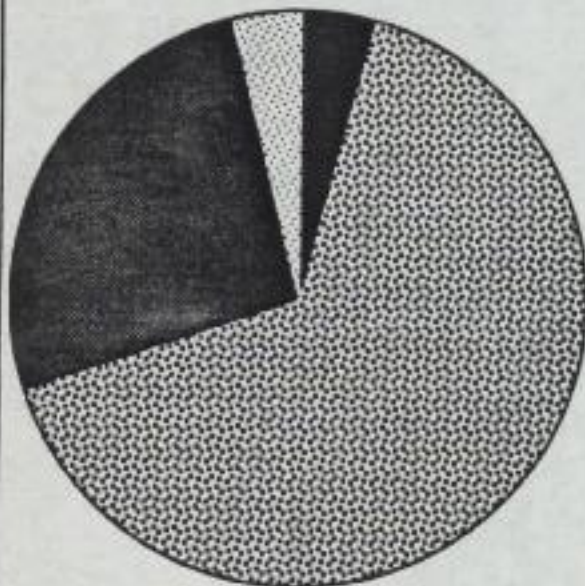
18. There are two forms control problems which need continuing attention. First, the proliferation of forms by those remote from Headquarters, and secondly sustaining management's interest in achieving fewer, better and more cost effective forms and notices.

*copy attached

MOD Forms Review 1987/88

■ Total forms in use as at 31/3/87 (as stated in previous progress report)				9,880
■ Additional Existing Forms (discovered by or notified to the forms unit between 1/4/87 and 31/3/88)	+			175
■ New Forms (Introduced between 1/4/87 and 31/3/88)		120	+	120
■ Total forms Reprinted Unrevised between 1/4/87 and 31/3/88	+	1,876		
■ Total forms Redesigned between 1/4/87 and 31/3/88	+	758		
■ Total forms Abolished between 1/4/87 and 31/3/88	+	110	-	110
■ Total forms Reviewed between 1/4/87 and 31/3/88	=	2,864		
■ Total forms Planned for Review between 1/4/87 and 31/3/88 (as stated in previous progress report)		3,500		
■ Total forms in use as at 31/3/88			=	10,065
■ Total forms Planned for Review between 1/4/88 and 31/3/89		3,600		

Pie Chart Representation Showing the Percentages of Forms Reviewed 1987/88

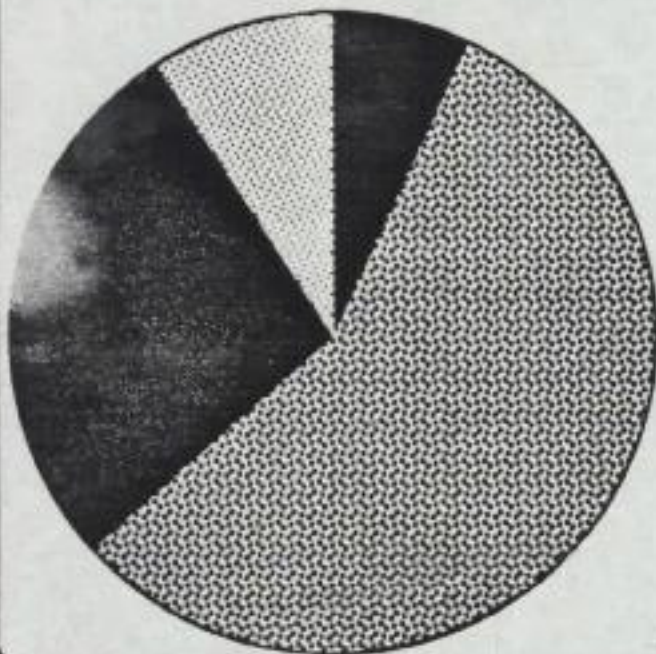


■ New Forms	4.2%
▨ Total Reprint Unrevised	65.5%
■ Total Reprints Redesigned	26.5%
▨ Total Forms Cancelled	3.8%

MOD Forms Review 1988/89

■ Total forms in use as at 31/3/88 (as stated in MOD forms review 1987/88)		10,065	
■ Additional Existing Forms (discovered by or notified to the forms unit between 1/4/88 and 31/3/89)	+	75	
■ New Forms (Introduced between 1/4/88 and 31/3/89)	271	+	271
■ Total forms Reprinted Unrevised between 1/4/88 and 31/3/89	+	2,248	
■ Total forms Redesigned between 1/4/88 and 31/3/89	+	1,092	
■ Total forms Abolished between 1/4/88 and 31/3/89	+	361	- 361
■ Total forms Reviewed between 1/4/88 and 31/3/89	=	3,972	
■ Total forms Planned for Review between 1/4/88 and 31/3/89 (as stated in MOD forms review 1987/88)		3,600	
■ Total forms in use as at 31/3/89			= 10,050
■ Total forms Planned for Review between 1/4/89 and 31/3/90		3,700	

Pie Chart Representation Showing the Percentages of Forms Reviewed 1988/89



- New Forms 6.8%
- ▨ Reprinted Unrevised 56.6%
- Reprinted Redesigned 27.5%
- ▨ Forms Cancelled 9.1%



Ministry of Defence Forms Unit

Progress since
April 1987

The Ministry of Defence Forms Unit continues to ensure that the number of different forms is the minimum necessary for the efficient conduct of business and that all forms are effective and economic in use.

In order to maintain a tight control on forms in use, all requests for the initiation of new forms and the revision / reprint of existing forms are scrutinised and, if approved, are authorised by the Forms Unit.

The request for the introduction of a new form starts with the sponsor, forwarded to the appropriate forms store for registering via the sponsors Local Forms Control Officer (LFCO) and then on to the Forms Unit.

A reprint request is set in train by the forms store notifying the sponsor who, in consultation with users, decides whether a reprint is really necessary and, if so, in what quantity and whether a revision of the form is needed.

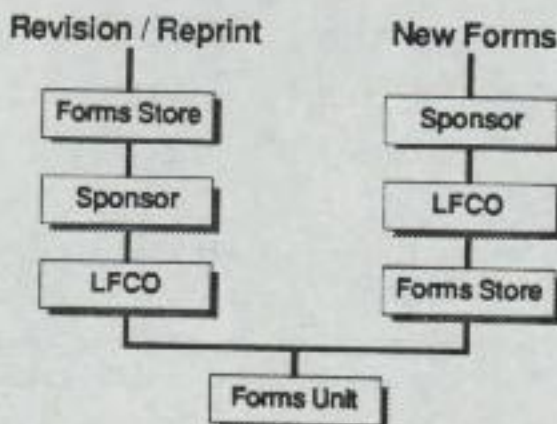
The request for a straight reprint, or the request for and draft of the revised edition, is then passed to the Forms Unit through the sponsor's LFCO.

The number of forms closely scrutinized by the Forms Unit is 570 per month. An average monthly increase of 195 since the last report.

The flow chart below displays routes taken.

◆ Course of action followed when revision / reprint or a new form is required:

□ Each sponsor has a nominated officer responsible for all the forms under his/her control.



The Local Forms Control Officer has proved to be an important link in the forms control chain. The LFCO network was established nearly 3 years ago and the officers were tasked (in addition to their normal duties) to monitor, co-ordinate and provide advice on all forms sponsored or originated in their areas. The duties of the LFCOs are laid down in MOD Manuals. A set of guidelines was produced for the LFCOs; these same guidelines are implemented by the Forms Unit. Some examples can be found at Annex A. The LFCOs are nominated by their various establishments / divisions throughout MOD with the total number approaching 280.

As a further aid for the LFCO or his representative, a one day in-house course on Control of Forms in the MOD is held monthly. This course, established in conjunction with the Civil Service College, is divided into aspects of forms theory and costing in the morning and a 'hands on' session with the Computer Assisted Design (CAD) equipment in the afternoon. The feedback from the students' assessment sheets suggests that the course is well received and useful. Due to the awareness created there has been an increase in the number of LFCOs who have, or would like to obtain similar CAD equipment. The co-operation between the Forms Unit and LFCOs assists in both the speed and efficiency of the review.

In the last report, certain targets were planned for the future; amongst those accomplished are:

- ◆ The establishment of a design studio. LFCOs with and without their own CAD equipment now have the opportunity, through an appointment system, to improve their design capabilities, using either the equipment and/or expertise afforded by the Forms Unit.

- ◆ Liaison with Other Government Departments' forms units and Universities. The Studio has proved to be an excellent environment for demonstrating techniques in form design and for passing on our experiences. Overseas personnel have also visited, and been shown our methods of operation.

One such enquiry came from Robert D Eagleson Associate Professor from the Department of English, University of Sydney who is investigating developments in Plain English and in the teaching of legal drafting. The Forms Unit were able to supply information in the form of guidance to good forms design and a selection of 'form' before and after cases, as a result of our efforts he has promised to include a visit to our Studio the next time he visits this country.

- ◆ Training of staff in the use of Computer Assisted Design equipment.

- ◆ A further issue of an LFCO's newsletter (see Annex B)

Value for Money

The compilation of a data base for the Ministry wide catalogue of forms has been completed with an input of over 10,000 forms. This data base is updated on a daily basis. The data base contains information for each form within 33 fields of information e.g. size, type, sponsor, finishing etc. and the costing - from receipt of the file, through to despatch - this includes all administrative action as well as design work.

Entries are coded accordingly on input and although broken down into a range of functions, the main categories are:

- ◆ New
- ◆ Straight reprints
- ◆ Redesign/Revision
- ◆ Cancellations

Information can be printed out to give data in any form required. This then provides a sound measure of efficiency and effectiveness of the form review and for a more efficient forms unit in the MOD.

During the period 1st April 1987 to 31 March 1989, 6836 forms were reviewed. As shown in tabular form and as a pie chart on the following 2 pages.

Equipment

Along with the successful completion of the Forms Unit design studio, was the introduction of further equipment. The equipment now available in the Studio is listed below:

- ◆ MAC II 40mb Mono system ~ 5 in number
- ◆ MAC Plus system ~ 4 in number
- ◆ Laser Writer plus - printer ~ 2 in number
- ◆ DEST scanner ~ 1 in number
- ◆ LQ Imagewriter - printer ~ 1 in number
- ◆ Mega Screen ~ 2 in number

There is a wide range of software including such packages as; Ready Set Go 4, Pagemaker and MacWrite.

Whilst referring to the equipment it is important to mention how 'user friendly' the system is from an operating point of view. Not only is it a versatile system but it gives the operator confidence at an early stage and thereby shortens the learning curve, which is essential for the beginner and crucial for productivity and efficiency. This 'ease of use' operation has been commented on so many times by those officers attending the LFCO course.

The main attributes leading to the increased quality of forms within the MOD are as follows:

- ◆ The extended range of equipment.
- ◆ The increasing experience of the Forms Unit.
- ◆ The increasing awareness in all areas of the Ministry of Defence.
- ◆ Investigations carried out by both the LFCOs and sponsors as to the actual requirement of the forms by the user groups.
- ◆ The use of information from outside sources ie. Reading University.
- ◆ Support from higher management.

The facilities and expertise offered by the Forms Unit has brought forward many enquiries concerning form design from establishments/divisions within the MOD and as a consequence representatives have been received from:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| ◆ Procurement Executive | ◆ Aircraft Engineering |
| ◆ Civilian Management (Specialists) | ◆ Headquarters Royal Observer Corps |
| ◆ Ministry of Defence Police | ◆ Civilian Management (Industrial Relations) |
| ◆ Defence Communication Centre | ◆ Flag Officer Submarines |
| ◆ Royal Fleet Auxiliary | ◆ Paymaster in Chief |
| ◆ Headquarters Provost Marshal (Army) | ◆ Director General of Defence Accounts |
| ◆ HMS Centurion | ◆ Maintenance Analysis and Computing Establishment |

Examples of other work designed by sponsors using the Forms Unit facilities are:

- ◆ House style newsletters.
- ◆ A Navigation Guide, essential to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, 100 pages in size and incorporating some very complex graphics. The officer who designed this book had very little knowledge of CAD equipment but, with general guidance from the Forms Unit staff, was able to complete the task; a copy of the book is enclosed at Annex C.
- ◆ A Noise Insulation Grant Scheme pamphlet (refer Annex D). This pamphlet is a general guide to the noise insulation grant scheme introduced administratively by the Ministry of Defence at military airfields in the United kingdom and was produced for the benefit of the public to determine the amount of assistance available to them.
- ◆ Outside of MOD, enquiries have been received from other government departments seeking help and advice, those that have attended are:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| ◆ DVLC | ◆ DHSS |
| ◆ D of E | ◆ Inland Revenue |
| ◆ Charity Commissioners | ◆ Agriculture, Fisheries & Food |
| ◆ Home Office | ◆ Intervention Board for Agricultural Produce |
| ◆ Civil Service College | |

At the recommendation of the Royal Institute of Public Administration (RIPA), two overseas personnel have made independent visits, representing their government's interest;

- ◆ Mr E O Dougan O.R., Commissioner for Oaths, Government Printer, Government Printing Department, Sierra Leone.
- ◆ Mr H Quershi, Manager of Government Printing & Stationery, Baluchistan, Pakistan.

Use of Coloured Ink

Most forms are produced in black ink on white paper, however, where justification is provided one or more colours of ink can be authorised. The example at Annex E 1/2 shows comparisons of the before and after stages of an enrolment form used by the Royal Marines. The result is a much improved form, providing greater efficiency at little cost; further examples of MOD forms used by the public are also provided to give support to this statement.

- ◆ Example cost of use of colour:

A4 size

Single sided

One colour

80 gm²

□ Cost per 1000 = £9.56 or approx. 1p per form.

Local Forms

Plans for a full review of the vast range of non-registered forms are still to be finalized. The intention is to inspect each and every one. This will be a monumental task as our research indicates that there are well in excess of 100,000 non-registered forms. This review:

- ◆ Will reduce the multiplicity of forms serving identical purposes.
- ◆ Will facilitate greater control on all forms used within MOD (both stock and printing)
- ◆ Will encourage better design of those forms not yet controlled by the Forms Unit.

The above measures will lead to further improved efficiency.

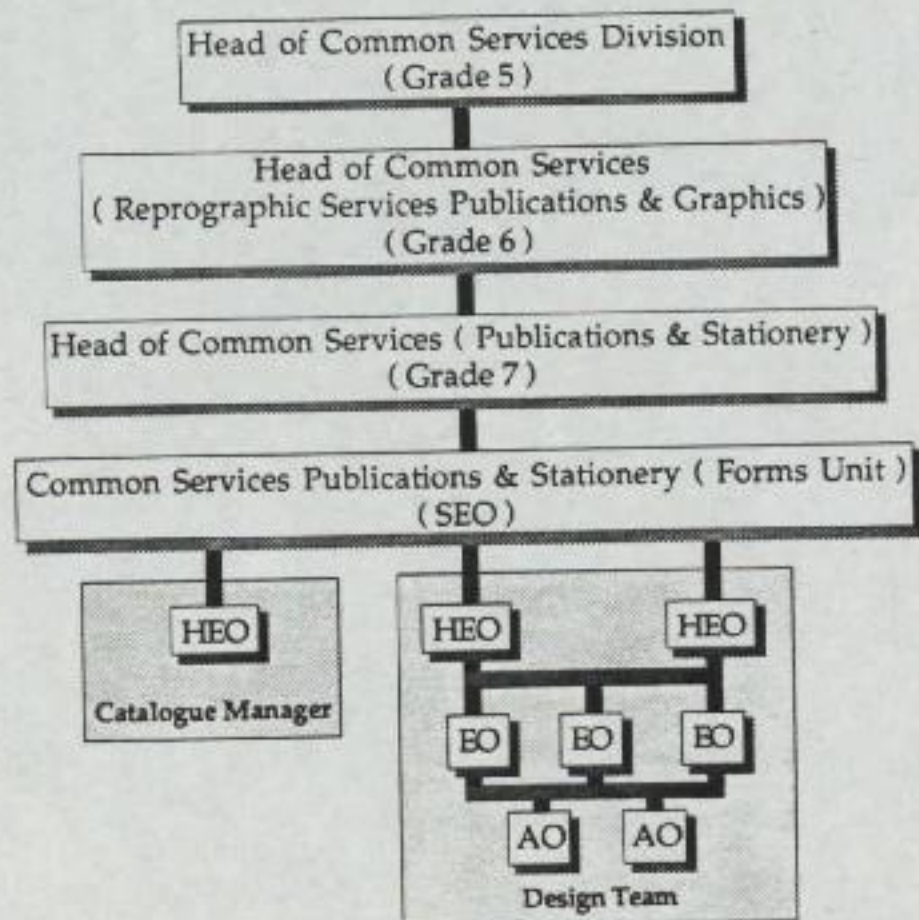
It should be noted that local forms (when known) are also included in the general rationalization programme for registered forms currently in hand. The full review, as mentioned already, will improve this process.

Legal Language

The Forms Unit remains determined to amend forms containing legal language in accordance with the requirements of Plain English. The Unit also ensures that the Data Protection Act requirement is met where applicable.

Staffing

Responsibility for control and design aspects rests with the Head of Common services Division (Grade 5) to whom the Forms Unit reports. The MOD Forms Unit has a complement of 1 SEO, 3 HEOs, 3 EOs and 2 AOs although the unit has been under strength since 1st October 1988.



The Future

The Forms Unit's programme will continue to:

- ◆ Monitor all forms in service to ensure economy and efficiency in use.
- ◆ Identify groups of forms that should be subjected to detailed design / rationalization investigation.
- ◆ Maintain training of Forms Unit staff on CAD equipment.
- ◆ Continue LFCO training courses to maintain the awareness of forms control.
- ◆ Continue to produce and issue a Newsletter to LFCO's.
- ◆ Continue liaison with OGD forms units and Universities.
- ◆ Continue improving efficiency of the Forms Unit in order to reduce costs of forms.
- ◆ Complete a full review of all non-registered forms.
- ◆ **Relocation.** Action is in hand to centralise the storage and distribution of service forms and publications, part of which the Forms Unit has a major role. The implementation of such a move means the amalgamation of the three major stores at Woolwich, Portsmouth and Donnington. The new base will be at Llangennech, South Wales (previously RNSD Llangennech) and will be in full operation by late 1991.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre



OM (FDU)
DVLC
SWANSEA

**Report
on the review
of administrative *forms*
for the years
1987/88 & 1988/89**

Forms Review 1987/88

All forms

*Important forms

DVLC	All forms				*Important forms			
	Public	Business	Internal	Total	Public	Business	Internal	Total
1. Forms in use on 31.3.87	1140	69	1513	2722	39	17	3	59
2. Additional existing forms (notified to Forms Design Unit during 1987/88)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Progress 1.4.87 - 31.3.88								
a. No. of forms planned for review	550	30	420	1000	20	5		25
b. No of forms reviewed	880	40	500	1420	20	5	-	25
c. No of forms abolished each form is counted only once eg. amalgamation of two forms - 1 abolished, 1 redesigned	59	4	99	162	-	-	-	-
d. No of forms retained unchanged	486	28	380	894	15	5		20
e. No of forms redesigned	86	8	270	364	5			5
4. New forms produced 1.4.87-31.3.88	53	5	188	246	-		-	-
5. Total forms in use on 31.3.88	1134	70	1602	2806	39	17	3	59
6. No of forms planned for review 1.4.88 - 31.3.89	580	20	400	1000	10	17	3	30

*Numbers included in 'All Forms'

Forms Review 1988/89

DVLC

All forms

Public Business Internal Total

Important forms
(included in 'All forms')

Public Business Internal Total

1. Forms in use on 31.3.88	1134	70	1602	2806	39	17	3	59
2. Additional existing forms (notified to Forms Design Unit during 1988/89)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Progress 1.4.88 - 31.3.89								
a. No. of forms planned for review	580	20	400	1000	20	5	-	25
b. No of forms reviewed	441	69	821	1331	32	7	-	39
c. No of forms abolished (each form is counted only once eg. amalgamation of two forms - 1 abolished, 1 redesigned)	16	5	603	624	-	-	-	-
d. No of forms retained unchanged	124	20	98	242	4	2	-	6
e. No of forms redesigned	301	44	120	465	28	5	-	33
4. New forms produced 1.4.88-31.3.89	56	36	147	239	-	-	-	-
5. Total forms in use on 31.3.89	1174	101	1146	2421	39	17	3	59
6. No of forms planned for review 1.4.89 - 31.3.90	800	20	180	1000	30	15	3	48

Introduction

The years dealt with in this report (1987/88 and 1988/89) have seen the Forms Design Unit (FDU) of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre cope with changing work demands within the requirement to achieve continuing improvements in cost efficiency.

Although the Branch relies increasingly on technological aids, the graphic skills of the staff are pre-eminent. The existence of these skills has been central to FDU's ability to cope with changing requirements. Staff have shown a facility to confront any task with confidence and equanimity.

Statistics for the years 1987/88 and 1988/89 are attached.

Continuing resource has been allocated to 'Housekeeping.' Many old forms have been reviewed by the Unit in conjunction with DVLC's procurement and user branches. As a result, 624 old forms have been abolished.

Work Highlights

Good management-staff communications have been augmented by the publication of an in-house monthly newspaper, aptly titled "Licence". This has required staff allocation from FDU of 1 AO, whose contribution, apart from the design work, has included membership of the editorial board. "Licence" includes management communications about Agency developments, staffing and personnel matters, news from the far flung reaches of the Directorate, good health advice, and items of general interest.

Application for a Vehicle Licence form V10 (annual issue 8.3m): five years have elapsed since this form was designed in conjunction with Reading University as the standard bearer of DVLC's vehicles system. The development of the new version was detailed in the DVLC contribution to the second progress report on forms issued by the Cabinet Office in 1984. The original concept has been eroded by organisational and legal requirements, and a complete redesign is now being worked on. This form has brought to attention the need to carry out fundamental reviews of all high profile forms which have been subject to change. Plans have been made to redesign all major forms as part of a new cycle of review.

Application for a Driving Licence form D1 (annual issue 1.2m): modifications have been made to this form over a number of years. The design and layout were originally tackled by students in the Typographics Department of Reading University. More recently the text has been reviewed in conjunction with the Informatics Education Unit of Southampton University. Introduction of a new form was delayed because of the forthcoming harmonisation of European driving licences. The effect on the design of the new EC requirements have now been assessed and the final draft is nearing completion.

British Driving Licences with Full Driving Entitlement (annual issue 1m): under the harmonisation of European driving licences, British licences will eventually include full ordinary, heavy goods and public service driving entitlements. The design onus is restrictive. The requirements arising from national legislation have to be fitted within the limited areas specified on the 'model' European licence. The new designs must be finalised by July 1989 to meet the start date required by the EC Directive.

Sale of Vehicle Registration Marks

Planning for the sale of vehicle registration marks is at an advanced stage, and FDU advice is now being sought on the design of the forms to implement the scheme. Initially, a draft design for the prime document, the Certificate of Entitlement, has been produced and comments thereon are awaited.

Forms for Vehicle Inspectorate Executive Agency

FDU has prepared designs for certain high security documents for the VIEA. The Unit has now been asked by the Agency to act in an advisory and consultative role in the printing of these documents. This is an encouraging approach for staff in FDU, and may be a glimpse of the wider involvement which may be possible if Executive Agency status is approved for DVLD.

Staffing and Methods of work

Staffing levels in FDU are presently:

- 1 HEO
- 2 EOs
- 5 AOs
- 1 Specialist Typist
- 2 AAs

Support and advice is given by the SEO Branch Head who also has responsibility for OM and OWM (Office Work Management).

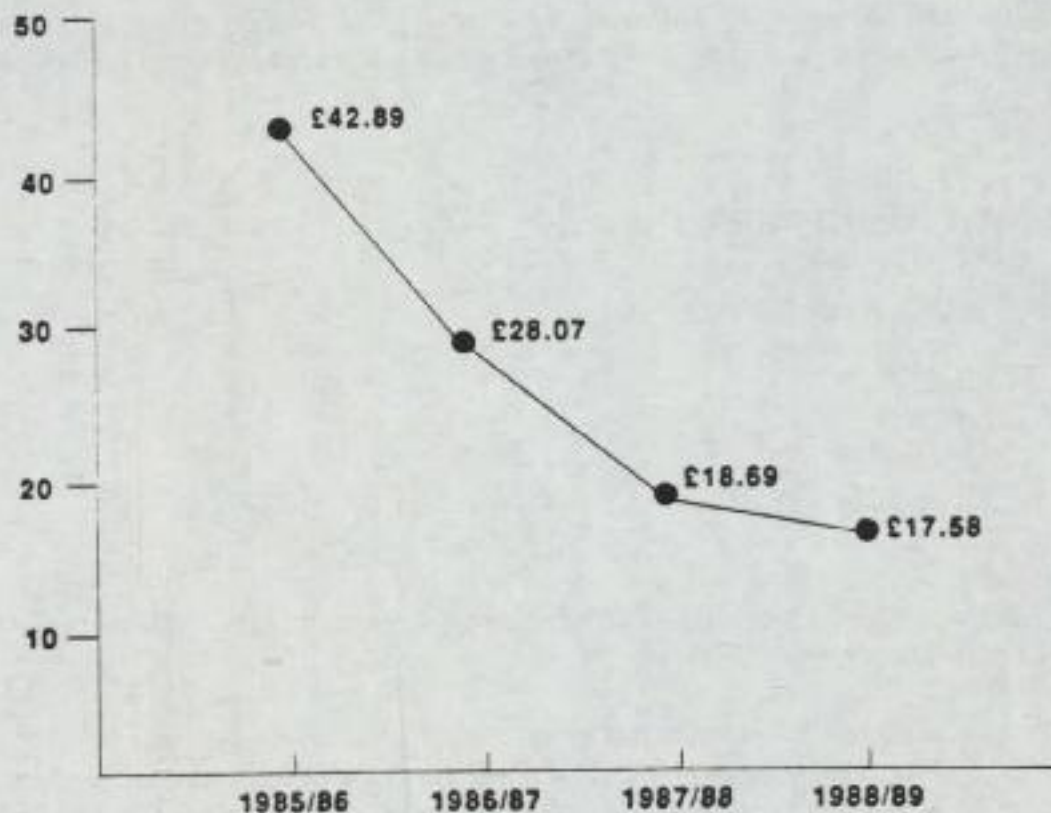
The various tasks within the Branch are not as divergent as they may appear to be at first sight. FDU apply OM criteria to their work, particularly on major projects, and assistance and guidance from their OM/OWM (Office Work Measurement) colleagues is made readily available. FDU experience in design and print procurement, both in-house and out-house, is called on by their colleagues on relevant assignments.

Career moves for executive staff from FDU, after training, to OM/OWM have already taken place, and are seen as of mutual benefit, both for the branch and for the individuals.

Microcomputers are now almost entirely the tools of the job in FDU. An aging Apple Macintosh system is due for replacement, and a two station IBM system is being trialled.

The Cost of a Form

FDU had planned to issue, during the year, a table of its charges for various services as a guide for clients, ready for the implementation of charging. Events overtook this plan. Historically, FDU has calculated the cost of a form by dividing its annual cost by the numbers of forms worked on in that year. Over the past four years this method of calculation has shown an annual reduction in the cost of producing a form. However, the time taken, and resources required to design each form varies and it is therefore apparent that this method of calculation does not reflect the true cost of designing any form. To overcome this a system of weighted work units was established. These are recorded for FDU by a new computer based branch at DVLC. This system is still in its infancy but early results are encouraging. The graph below shows how, using the base workload units for the current year, the unit cost for FDU has been reduced by more than 59% over a four year period 1985 - 89.



Legal Language

DVLC's legal communications with the public and business are as free of excess officialese as can be achieved in cases other than those where content is prescribed in statute.

Going Ahead

Computer technology can facilitate the electronic transfer of demands and responses between FDU and clients, and between FDU and the procurement and in-house print branches. These factors are being taken into account in the selection of the next generation of graphics micros.

Active steps are being taken to establish a Printing on Demand service. This will provide savings in storage costs of large numbers of printed forms, and reduce wastage of forms when unexpected changes are required. As an additional benefit, FDU will be able to schedule a review cycle for all forms, independent of procurement demands. A more balanced annual work flow will thus be possible.

An OM review will soon be undertaken into the possibility of printing in-house additional forms which are presently the subject of high cost contract printing. This has already taken place on one form, and a balance between cost and quality of product will continue to be sought.

Paper costs continue to escalate. The varieties of paper types used for high volume public forms are being investigated to see if the cost/quality balance is correct.

The proliferation of microcomputers, their ease of use and the availability of design/word processing packages, facilitate production within branches of internal forms. It is, however, normal practice for branches to ask FDU to produce final versions from these drafts.

The dangers in the use of 'uncontrolled' forms are recognised. Present control procedures (OMCS Guidelines on Forms Control) provide good protection against unauthorised production and use of 'public' forms, but when printing on demand is established, the opportunity will be taken to issue guidelines within the Directorate to cover this matter.

FORMS REVIEW 1987/89

I. ALL FORMS

II. IMPORTANT FORMS
(Numbers included in I.)

DEPARTMENT:

DES	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/87 - as stated in 4th progress report	-	683	767	1450	-	42	35	77
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1987/89	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3 Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/88 a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 4th progress report	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
b. No of forms reviewed	-	430	328	758	-	29	12	41
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	-	35	76	111	-	13	3	16
d. No of forms retained unchanged	-	263	131	394	-	10	5	15
e. No of forms redesigned	-	132	121	253	-	6	4	10
4 Progress 1/4/88 - 31/3/89 a. No of forms reviewed	-	547	430	977	-	28	16	44
b. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	-	30	167	197	-	-	-	-
c. No of forms retained unchanged	-	212	141	353	-	8	3	11
d. No of forms redesigned	-	305	122	427	-	20	13	33
5 New forms produced during 1/4/87 - 31/3/89	-	99	185	284	-	11	7	18
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/89 - ie items 1 + 2 + 5, less items 3c + 4b	-	717	709	1426	-	40	39	79
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/89 - 31/3/90	-	456	177	633	-	28	16	44

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Progress since 1987

1. The main activity on forms control and design has again taken place in our Pensions Branch in Darlington which is the major user of administrative forms in the Department. Of the 1735 forms reviewed, 1359 (78%) were reviewed in Pensions Branch. As a result, 99 forms were abolished and 639 were redesigned. 136 new forms were produced and this was mainly as a result of new legislation in connection with the teachers' superannuation scheme. Pensions Branch continue systematically to review their forms each year.
2. A thorough review of the record of forms used by other Branches has been carried out in consultation with Branches and as a result 209 forms were found to be obsolete. 148 new forms were produced and again they mainly related to new legislation (ie teachers regulations and the National Voluntary Youth Organisations grant applications). A number of forms have also been redesigned. For example, the typing requisition form has been redesigned to make it simpler for the author to complete and it also assists the typists in following instructions. A revised immediate 'by hand' messenger slip has recently been introduced which will enable management to charge Branches for the service when Cost Centres are set up.

Savings

3. The savings which have been achieved relate, in the main, to printing cost savings. For the forms which have been abolished in London savings of some £17,000 have been estimated. These savings must be offset by the additional cost of printing new forms (estimated at £4,800).
4. In Pensions Branch, Darlington, savings of some £15,800 have been achieved as a result of the introduction within the Branch Cost Centre of a printing budget on 1 April 1987. For orders in excess of 1000 copies it was found to be cheaper to use an external printer than to produce the document internally. For example, an order which would

have cost £3000 internally was produced by a local printer at a cost of £1200, resulting in a saving of £1800.

5. The overall savings have therefore been estimated at £27,000.

Value for Money

6. The Department believes that the Forms Units in London and Darlington provide value for money. The Units offer advice to Branches on design, content and text and continue to liaise with Branches where it is considered that the size of the print run is excessive. The cost to the Department of forms control and design is about £16,800 (1989 DES Ready Reckoner Basic Staff cost). As mentioned in paragraph 5 above savings of some £27,000 have been achieved.

Local Forms

7. About 30% of the Department's forms are local forms (ie internal use by individual Branches). A further 18% are Establishment and Organisation Branch forms used throughout the Department. A number of these forms have been reviewed since the last Progress Report but there is still a great deal of work to be undertaken in this area.

Legal Language

(Nothing further to add to the last Progress Report.)

Deregulation

(Not applicable in the Department.)

Staffing

8. The staffing allocation within the Central Forms Unit in London, which comes under Management Services, amounts to 10% SEO and 10% HEO. This represents a decrease from the last Report. The reason is that the staff involved are primarily O&M assignment officers and they have also been actively involved over the last year on the work undertaken by the Department in connection with the central initiative on Location of Government Work. An EO has recently joined Management Services and he will spend 10% of his time maintaining and updating the information held on the micro-computer.

9. In Darlington, an HEO spends 40% and an EO spends 20% of their time on forms control and design for Pensions Branch.

Equipment

10. The Forms Unit's records are stored on an Apricot Xi micro-computer using Delta software. The equipment was acquired in September 1986. The equipment is far from satisfactory as it is slow to run and it does not have any forms design capabilities. The Forms Unit is considering the benefits to be obtained from an enhanced system (ie Apple Macintosh 2, laser printer and graphics software)

The Future

11. The work programme over the next 2 years will depend on the level of staffing resources and the location of the work. It is proposed to undertake a review of our work on forms, in both locations, in order to evaluate existing systems, the equipment needs and the most effective organisation.

Forms review 1987/89

1. All forms

2. Important forms
(Numbers included in 1)

Department:

Department of Employment

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/87 - as stated in 4th progress report	213	156	1970	2339	81	20	57	158
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1987/89	-	126*	-	126	-	11*	-	11
3 Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/88								
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 4th progress report	16	6	75	97	6	2	10	18
b. No of forms reviewed	20	13	79	112	18	2	10	30
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	-	2	6	8	-	-	-	-
d. No of forms retained unchanged	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
e. No of forms redesigned	20	11	73	104	18	2	10	30
4 Progress 1/4/88 - 31/3/89								
a. No of forms reviewed	23	7	84	114	11	4	15	30
b. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	-
c. No of forms retained unchanged	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
d. No of forms redesigned	23	4	84	111	11	4	15	30
5 New forms produced during 1/4/87 - 31/3/89	15	-	12	27	-	-	-	-
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/89 - ie items 1 + 2 + 5 less items 3c + 4b	228	277	1976	2481	81	31	57	169
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/89 - 31/3/91	50	40	50	140	10	10	20	40

* see paragraph 14 of DE report

Department of Employment

Progress since 1987

1. The Forms Design Unit (FDU) continued to have a heavy demand for its services throughout 1987/89. The high level of demand - sparked off by FDU's performance during the early stages of the forms review during which we demonstrated our abilities to a wide range of DE customers - has left little scope for the proactive role demanded by the review. It has also meant that editing/simplification is carried out to tight deadlines and - as the jobs are demanded - there is little scope to abolish forms.

2. The SEO head of section has nevertheless taken on a pioneering editing role, using editing and design techniques that go beyond mere plain language writing to simplify and improve DE forms. Many of the forms which have been quite dramatically improved in this way were subject to earlier scrutiny under the forms review. Most fact-finding, negotiation for the changes made, FDU management and control, as well as equipment procurement were also undertaken by the SEO. It became clear towards the end of the period that he needed more support in this task in grades higher than the AO grade which for many years had formed the backbone of FDU.

Savings/value for money

3. FDU wishes to move away from its existing numerical output targets and introduce a qualitative appraisal of its work. We have produced two client satisfaction questionnaires (copies attached as Annex 1) for this purpose and these will come into play near the start of 1989/90. We are convinced that the value of savings from our work - particularly the time it takes users to understand and fill in forms, the reduced number of errors and the resultant savings in processing time - by far outweigh our costs. Early evidence suggests that we might meet our annual costs from one major edit of one form. However, firm evidence of the 'before' and 'after' performance of a form is extremely hard to get and we do not underestimate the difficulties that might lie ahead in the adoption of the new approach.

Important forms/local forms

4. Important forms are:

- all external or internal forms with an annual usage of 50,000 or more;

local forms are:

- all those that are not produced by FDU.

5. These definitions have remained the same throughout the forms review. A review of forms generated by DE local offices (Unemployment Benefit Offices) was mooted during 1988/89 but it was decided not to pursue it until after the conclusion of a much wider review of the newly created Employment Service (which brings together in one organisation the Jobcentre network and the UBOs). The outcome of this merger, for example, might be that DE's Forms Design Unit will no longer be responsible for UBO forms, or that we take on responsibility for Jobcentre forms which are currently dealt with by another forms unit.

Legal language

6. Legal language is not a major problem. When it does appear in drafts submitted by client sections, FDU provides an alternative in plain language. DE's Solicitor's Office have commented in the past that FDU-edited work accurately represent the law but that it is better presented and is easier to understand.

Staffing

7. As indicated earlier, we are reviewing the needs of a new-style FDU, one that can fully take on the proactive role demanded by the forms review and one which the workload and the need for improved quality control demands.

8. By the end of 1988/89 an additional HEO post had been created mainly to help the SEO with editing duties. Early in 1989/90 we are moving towards staffing of:

1 x SEO, 1 x HEO, 3 x EO, 3 x AO.

9. It seems unlikely that this will go far enough. A business case is being prepared which will cover this ground more thoroughly, not least the trade-offs in the time it will take to proactively review all DE business forms (see para 14) given existing or increased resources.

Equipment

10. Over the period, a small network of four Rank Xerox Documenters has been introduced. The laser printer included in this package provides a print quality good enough for the majority of forms work produced by FDU (for example, internal forms). This has led to a significant reduction in the cost of materials. Each print costs about 2p or less, compared with £1 or so for a typeset page.

11. Our Compugraphic typesetting equipment (two workstations) is still in use for work demanding higher quality output (for example, forms aimed at businesses) but is coming to the end of its life. It is due to be replaced in 1990/91. As a result, we have begun to evaluate other available publishing software/hardware.

12. One potentially attractive software package is Aldus Pagemaker. Though this is also available for Apple Mac computers, the DE has a preference for IBM-compatibility where possible. Early impressions of the package's suitability for our work are favourable. It has provision for laser print or typeset output and can run on non-dedicated (and therefore less expensive) hardware. Copies up to the final copy can be laser printed, so saving on expensive typesetting consumables and further reducing costs. There is provision for up to 4-colour separations, though it is unlikely that we would use more than two. Inexpensive (c. £1,000) 4-colour ink jet printers are available which, though slow in operation, would provide a fairly good full colour representation to the client of how the final form would look. All these and other equipment ideas will be pursued during 1989/90, not least at industry exhibitions.

The future

13. FDU has wanted to take on a proactive role for some years but its limited resources have not allowed it. It has proved what can be achieved. Not only internally, but also by contributing directly to three awards from the Plain English Campaign since 1986, among a clutch of others awarded to the DE and the DE Group during the same period, in a record-breaking run of such awards. But we see no room for complacency. Far from it. We see a massive task ahead to bring the rest of the work up to those standards.

14. Following increased OMCS/EDU interest in forms aimed at businesses, we conducted a census of such forms among our clients (most of DE and all ACAS), the first to be held since the start of the forms review. The results, shown in the attached statistics for 1989/90, revealed over 100 more forms than we knew existed. Many of these were standard letters produced without reference to FDU, but also included were a considerable number of forms which had remained unchanged for many years, unattractively written and poorly designed. We see our main task as getting those put right in the shortest possible time.

15. Thereafter - though possibly some years ahead - we hope to review forms aimed at the public in a similar way. In some respects, it is this group (which for us includes unemployment benefit claimants) who are most in need of plain language material. Last, we are aware of the need to review our internal forms. This is the largest group of forms and many are needlessly wasteful of staff time.

Forms Design Unit: client questionnaire 1

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out if you were satisfied with the work that we did for you recently.

The Forms Design Unit (FDU) deals with forms, notes for guidance connected with forms and certain standard letters. Our main objective is to:

- ensure that essential items are as simple as possible both to understand and fill in;
- eliminate items that are unnecessary.

To achieve this we take a critical look at the need for these documents, then try to improve their effectiveness by plain language editing, as well as design and layout techniques.

We want to improve our service by identifying and responding better to your needs.

To help us please answer the questions below, giving comments and marks out of 10 (1 = poor, 10 = excellent) for our work on form / document

Item.	Marks out of ten	Comments
<p>Editing/simplification (we aim to make the document as simple as possible to understand, fill in and process)</p>		
<p>Design and layout (we aim for a practical design which is attractive to the user and which helps the structure of the document)</p>		
<p>Our conduct in discussions with you (we aim to be effective, constructive, polite and helpful when discussing the job with you)</p>		
<p>Speed of service/meeting your deadline (we aim to meet all reasonable deadlines or to notify you as soon as possible if we are unable to produce the work in the time requested)</p>		
<p>Overall quality of service (in the light of the above, please give your overall views of the service we provided)</p>		

Roughly how many copies of this form are used each year?

As a result of the work we have done, is there likely to be a saving in the time it takes to:

(tick the boxes that apply)

- understand the form? Yes No
- fill in the form? Yes No
- follow-up errors on the form (because less errors are expected)? Yes No
- process the form after completion? Yes No
- deal with enquiries about the form (because there should be fewer enquiries, or they should be less complicated)? Yes No
- train staff on these procedures? Yes No

and/or

- will printing costs be reduced (for example, if the form is now shorter than before or it has been combined with other documents)? Yes No
- are other savings expected? Yes No
- If yes, please say below what they are:

Other savings are:

Any other comments:

Signed _____

Date _____

Name (CAPITALS please) _____

Telephone _____

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.
Please return it with a copy of the printed form to:

Mr J H Barrett
Head of Forms Design Unit
Room 4.09
Steel House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NF

Forms Design Unit: client questionnaire 2

This questionnaire aims to evaluate any savings made as a result of work done by the Forms Design Unit. The information will be treated in confidence and not used for any other purpose.

Details of the form

Form / document	<input type="text"/>	
How long has the new version been in use?	about	months
How many copies of the form are used each year?	about	months

Details of savings

Type of saving	Estimate of savings per (please tick one box only)			Comments	
	Time		Money		
	Man hours	Grade(s)			
Staff time (completion of form)	week	<input type="checkbox"/>	month	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	year	<input type="checkbox"/>	form	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Staff time (dealing with enquiries, resolving queries, correcting errors, processing forms)					
Public time (completion of form)					
Production and printing (for example, savings as a result of fewer documents or pages)	Internal printing				
	External printing				
Total					

Other comments

Please give details of any other comments or feedback you have received (from the public, business, staff or other users of the form):

[Empty box for comments]

Signed _____

Date _____

Name (CAPITALS please) _____

Telephone _____

Thank you for your help in completing this questionnaire.
Please return it to:

Mr J H Barrett
Head of Forms Design Unit
Room 4.09
Steel House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NF

Forms Review

1987/89

Department of the Environment

1. All Forms

2. Important Forms

(numbers included in 1.)

	Public	Business & Industry	Internal	Other	Total	Public	Business & Industry	Internal	Other	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/87 - as stated in 4th progress report	241	351	931	0	1523	8	40	7	0	55
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1987/89	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/88										
a. No. of forms planned for review	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
b. No. of forms reviewed	1	0	6	6	13	1	0	0	0	1
c. No. of forms abolished	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	3	3
d. No. of forms retained unchanged	11	4	92	34	141	0	0	0	0	0
e. No. of forms redesigned	11	6	36	50	103	0	1	2	21	24
4. Progress 1/4/88 - 31/3/89										
a. No. of forms reviewed	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
b. No. of forms abolished	0	0	3	2	5	0	0	0	0	0
c. No. of forms retained unchanged	3	2	11	4	20	0	0	1	0	1
d. No. of forms redesigned	6	2	30	9	47	0	1	0	0	1
5. New forms produced during 1987/89	25	10	22	38	95	0	0	0	0	0
6. Total forms in use on 31/3/89	266	361	950	32	1609	8	40	7	0	55
7. No. of forms planned for review during 1989-1990	Figures not yet available					Figures not yet available				

5th Progress Report on Forms 1989

Department of the Environment

Progress Since 1987

Since the last report there have been many changes within the Forms Efficiency Unit which have hampered progress. There was a severe lack of resources and also the split of the Departments of the Environment and Transport (whom the Forms Efficiency Unit previously served along with the Property Services Agency as a common service). This report will, therefore, mainly deal with plans for the future.

The split of the two Departments was completed on 1 April 1989 although forms design work stopped for DOE and PSA in December because of staff shortages. At present DOE are setting up a forms unit within the Cartographic Section which will also serve PSA.

Between 1987/89 150 forms were redesigned. Although many were improved in appearance there was no formal reviewing of performance or appraisal of cost. Because of limited resources many forms had to be sent to outside contractors for phototypesetting in order to meet sponsors' demand.

Between 1987/89 95 new forms were produced. These were largely as a result of new legislation.

Between 1987/89 9 forms which had not been printed for over 5 years were abolished.

Savings

Because resources were so stretched, the unit was unable to conduct formal reviews into the performance of any forms or to make any appraisals of associated costs.

In future the new unit will set targets for numbers of forms to be reviewed each year in order to identify problem areas and savings which could be made from thorough testing and review procedures.

Value for Money

Performance indicators were introduced with set targets which provided line managers with useful data covering a range of activities for each quarter. A monthly time recharging system with individual performance targets was also kept. The charges made covered all aspects of the internal design procedure.

In future, so that sponsor divisions are more aware of the cost of producing forms it is planned to send monthly statements to each sponsor showing how much time has been spent on their form and the total "cost" of the job to date. This costing data will also help to answer some of the queries from potential clients.

Local Forms

Following the last report, Departments were asked to send copies of any locally used forms and their annual usage rates. The returns showed the extent to which forms which are sent out to the public and businesses are supplemented by local forms. Some had usage rates as high as 16,000 per year. Again, unfortunately, limited resources meant that this exercise could not be pursued.

Legal Language

Although there are some clients who are reluctant to make improvements to the language in their forms, the awareness of the need for plain English has continued to make good progress in the Departments generally. In 1987 this was helped still further when DOE and DTP won an award in the Plain English Campaign's "Inside Write Trophy" for a series of internal training forms. Wording for forms, leaflets and guides is now much more straightforward and needs less input from the forms unit in order to bring it to an acceptable standard.

Deregulation

There has been no formal contact with the Department of the Environment deregulation unit.

Housing Act Forms

Much work was done on a series of new forms for the Housing Act. Plain English was used as much as possible and colour was

brought in, in order to make the forms attractive and easy to complete. Work had also recently started on a series of internal equal opportunities forms and leaflets and the language was in the process of being made more straightforward.

Staffing

Following the split of the Departments, one HMCO has been nominated as a forms design officer but no staff have been allocated as yet to the DOE forms unit.

Equipment

In September 1987 a case was put forward for a replacement system for the old Compugraphic workstations. Unfortunately the implementation of this was delayed by lack of funds and uncertainty about how the unit's position would be affected by the split of the Departments. Following the split, the Department of Transport made a separate bid for a new Apple Macintosh desktop publishing system which has recently been installed. DOE are currently reviewing the equipment specification in the light of their needs for forms, typesetting and electronic publishing work.

The Future

Objectives for the next two year period are therefore to establish a new forms unit for DOE and PSA and integrate it within a unit capable of undertaking additional typesetting and electronic publishing functions.

FORMS CENSUS 1987/89
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

**ALL FCO FORMS WERE
 REVIEWED DURING
 1/4/87 - 31/3/89**

I. ALL FORMS

Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
599	238	1930	2767
164		472	636
63	56	286	405
453	115	1672	2240
247	67	444	758
65	41	235	341
765	223	2351	3339

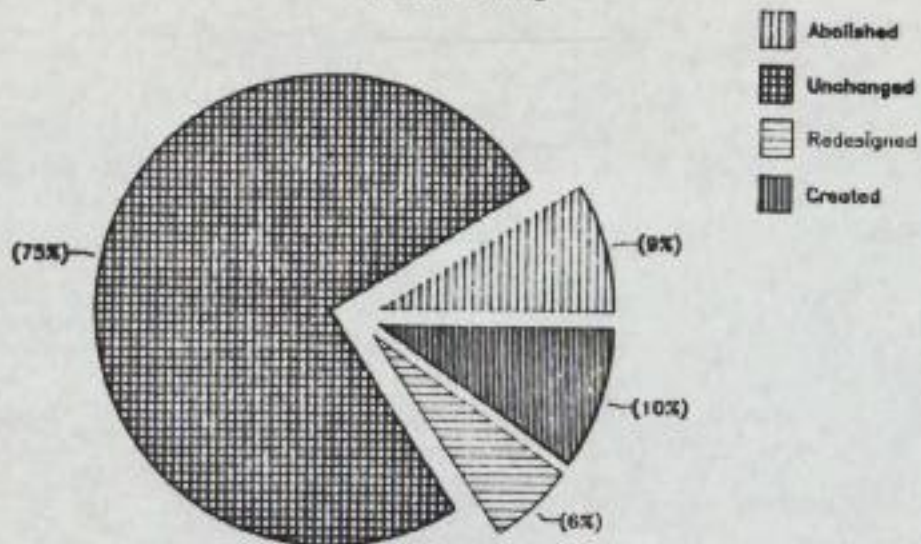
**II. IMPORTANT FORMS
 (Numbers included in I)**

Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
41	19	27	87
60	<i>(16 forms downgraded)</i>	7	67
3	1	8	12
44		10	54
54	2	16	72
6		9	15
104	2	35	141

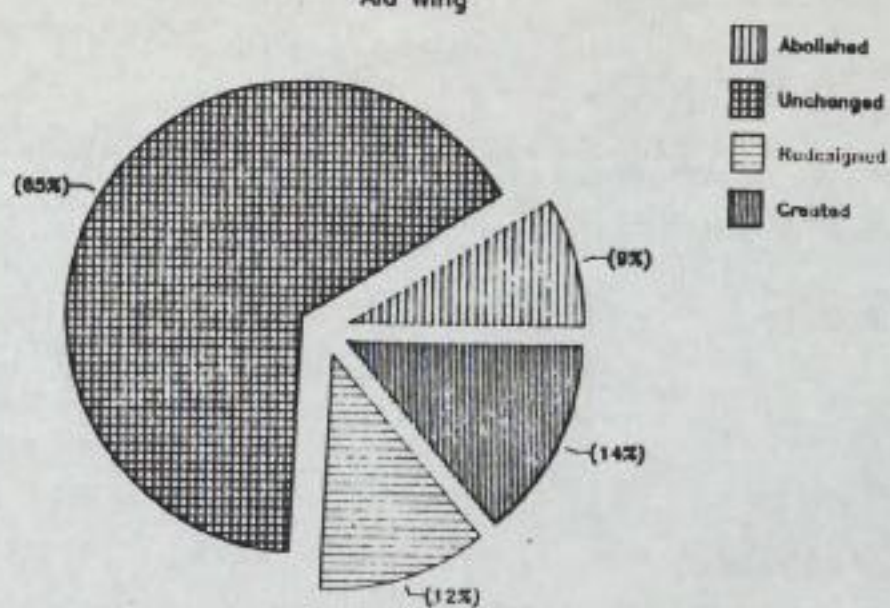
1. Total number of forms notified as being use at 31/3/87
2. Additional existing forms notified to forms unit during 1/4/87 - 31/3/89
3. Number of forms abolished during 1/4/87 - 31/3/89
4. Number of forms retained unchanged during 1/4/87 - 31/3/89
5. Number of forms redesigned during 1/4/87 - 31/3/89
6. New forms produced during 1/4/87 - 31/3/89
7. Total number of forms in use as at 31/3/89

COMPARISON OF FORMS WORK
1987 AND 1989

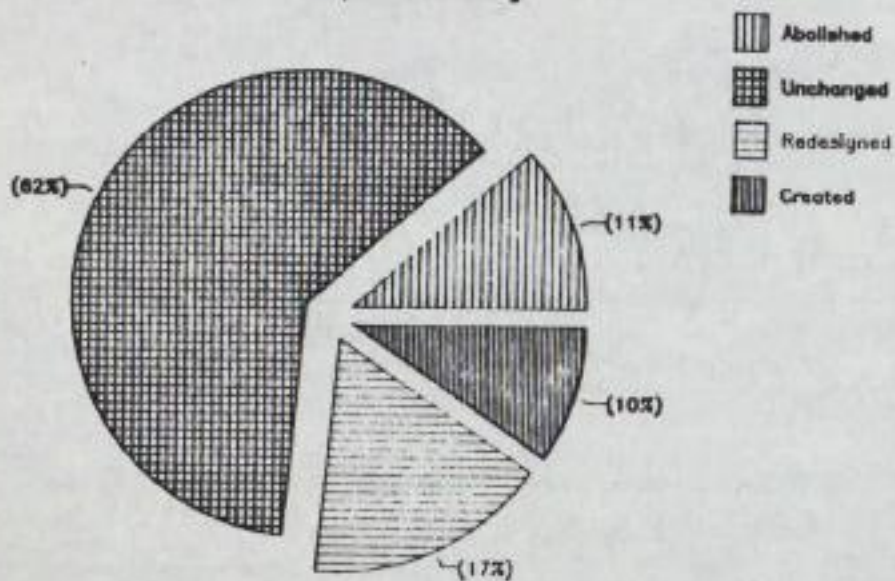
1987
Diplomatic Wing



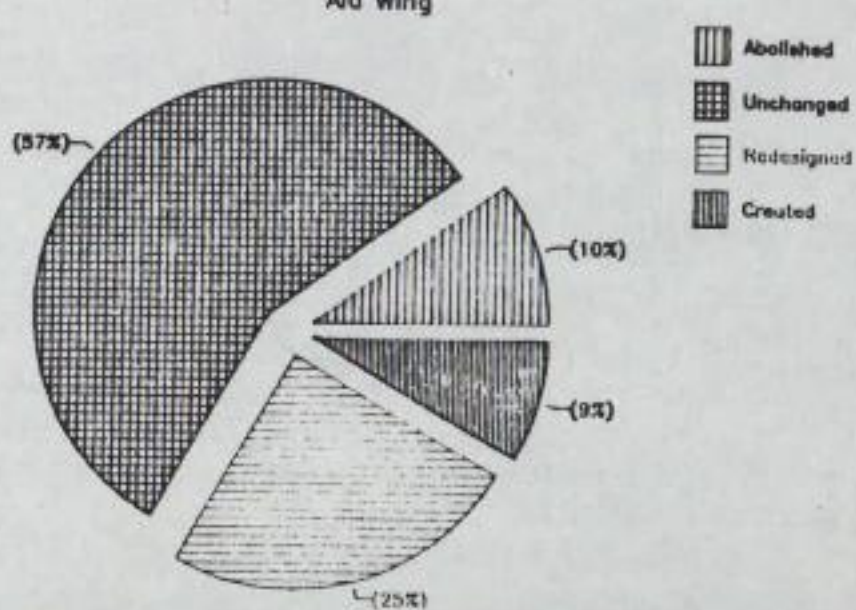
1987
Aid Wing



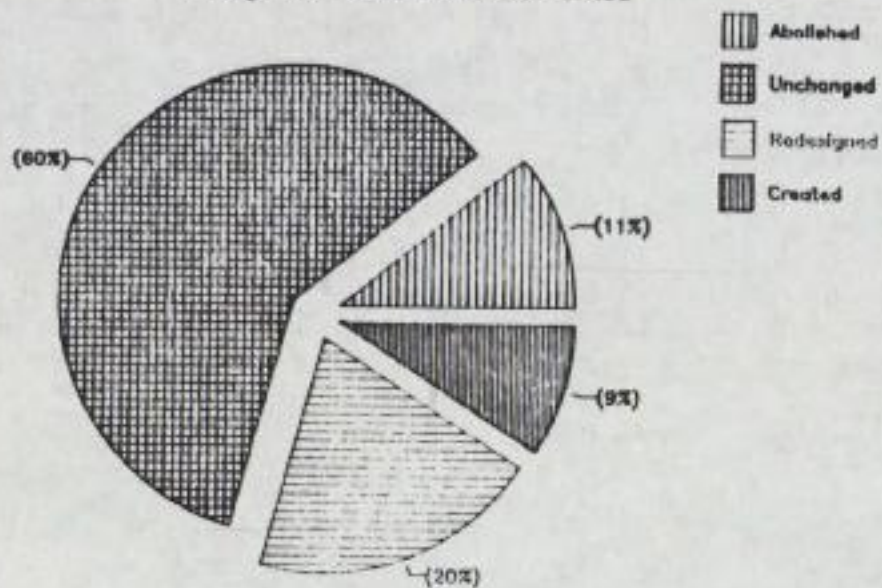
1989
Diplomatic Wing



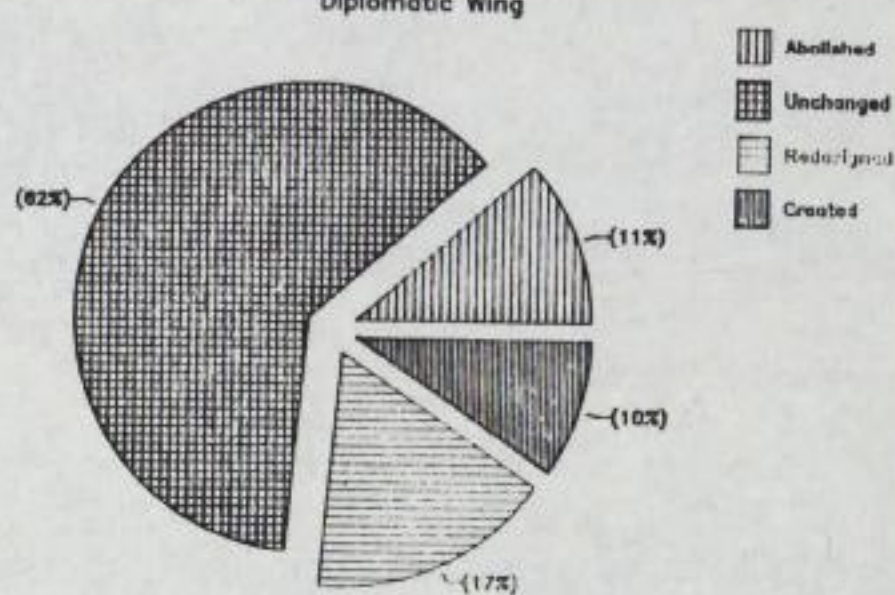
1989
Aid Wing



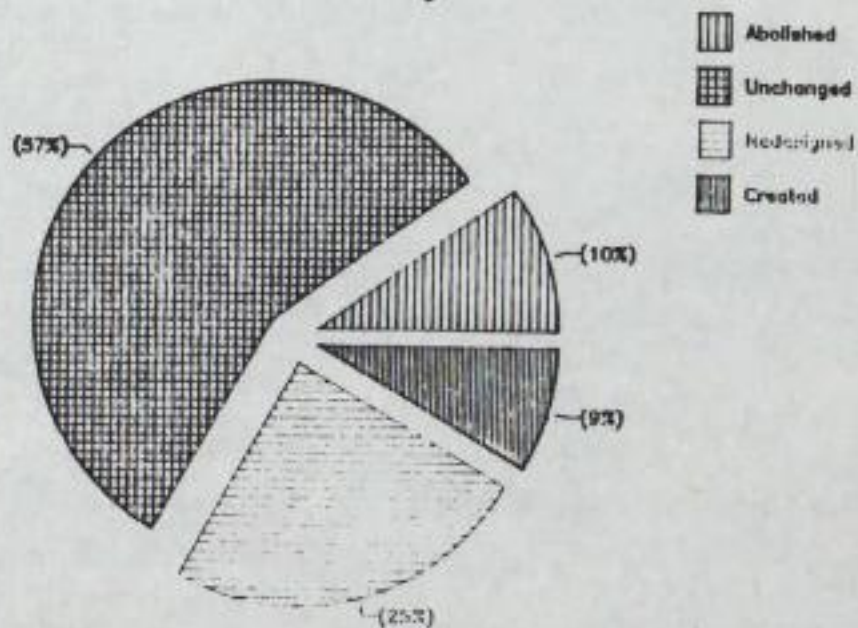
FORMS CENSUS 1987/89
Foreign and Commonwealth Office



BREAKDOWN
Diplomatic Wing



Aid Wing



FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE (FCO)

PROGRESS REPORT ON FORMS

1/4/87 - 31/3/89

BACKGROUND

1. Departmental Forms Officers in the Aid and Diplomatic Wings of the FCO are responsible for reviewing forms in use in their departments. The Forms Unit in the Management Review Staff (MRS) is the liaison point providing advice on design, layout and content of forms and preparing camera-ready copy. As departments become more aware of what constitutes a good form and the need for plain English the workload of the Forms Unit has increased. It has been decided that in future the unit will initiate reviews which the Departmental Forms Officers will carry out. Leading from the centre in this way will ensure that all forms are examined on a regular basis.

PROGRESS

2. All FCO forms have been reviewed during the period 1 April '87 to 31 March '89; 405 were abolished and 758 redesigned. This is more than a 100% increase in productivity over the last reporting period. However, 636 additional forms were added to the total following the merger of the Crown Agents Pensions Department with the ODA, the creation of a new Medical Welfare Unit in the Diplomatic Wing and the identification of existing forms not previously notified. Work will now begin to examine these also.

GOOD EXAMPLES

3. Work in conjunction with FCO Personnel departments has resulted in revised Staff Report Forms which, in addition to standard performance data, encourages the setting of Objectives and Targets and the formulation of a Forward Job Plan to be reviewed at various points during the reporting period. Introduction of this new system is expected to improve motivation and personnel management across the FCO as a whole. Design of a user-friendly form was crucial to this process.

4. For many years the Diplomatic Wing has relied on Country Assessment Papers to provide Ministers and other Whitehall Departments with an overview of UK objectives in over 160 countries world wide. Production and updating was a major drain on resources both at home and in 207 Posts overseas. Following a review of other information being gathered (which involved market testing of a number of Whitehall Departments and Posts overseas), the Country Assessment Papers have been abolished and information requirements met by other means. This will result in considerable savings in staff time.

COMPUTERISATION

5. All new forms are being stored on computer disc. In addition a computerised audit is being developed detailing form type and latest revision date; this will improve monitoring. Work has been speeded up by the purchase of a Laserwriter printer and a mega screen (for use with our Apple Macintosh Computer); the latter is able to display more than one page of the form under review and has reduced the scope for errors and consequent corrections. In all £6,500 has been invested in computer equipment during the period of this report.

SAVINGS

6. The Forms Unit have not been able to develop a cost effective means of identifying savings brought about by improved forms design. However feedback from users is encouraging. We know that time is being saved. For example, photocopying is being reduced by the introduction of self carbonating paper. In other cases, information for dissemination contained in multi-page forms has been reorganised and brought together so that photocopying of only one page is required.

7. Forms are also being used to target savings in other areas of work. The "Annual Information Report" was introduced last year. Very broadly this asks what information is received from whom, what use the information is and what would happen if it was no longer available. Data is collected and used to ensure that value for money is obtained and information is not paid for unnecessarily.

STAFFING

8. The MRS Forms Unit consists of one full time DS10 officer (AO) at an annual cost of approximately £19,500 (including accommodation and superannuation). MRS Review Officers are trained in forms design and forms are looked at as a matter of course when departmental reviews are undertaken.

THE FUTURE

9. The purpose of the Forms Unit will continue to be the abolition or simplification of forms in use in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. With increased interest among Departmental Forms Officers and a more active MRS role in initiating reviews it is hoped that the rate of revision will be improved still further.



Achievements

Since 1987, the Document Design Unit (DDU) has continued to concentrate on the language and design of forms that can stand as models of good practice. 3 sets of documents were shortlisted for a Plain English award in the 1988 competition.

The B1 postal claim forms were displayed at an exhibition held in the Pompidou Centre in Paris in February 1988. The theme of the exhibition was Public Graphics and comprised forms, leaflets, posters, stamps and other documents. The perspective was worldwide. DDU wrote an article explaining the development of the postal claim form for the catalogue which went with the exhibition.

At the end of 1988, a significant proportion of the Department's communications with the public had been brought into line with the housestyle recommended by the 1986 consultancy study.

In addition, the DDU has designed a set of basic layouts for letter-type forms. These can be used by non-professional staff, for example typists, to produce clear, well laid-out forms quickly and efficiently in the Department's housestyle.

DDU has continued to give training to other forms producers in the Department: staff who are new to forms work are given training in the systems analysis approach to forms production and in the general principles of writing Plain English and design. All forms producers are trained to use standard layouts that DDU has designed.

DDU is currently looking at ways of extending the housestyle to communications made with businesses.

DDU has worked closely with LOP (Local Office Project) to make sure that the standard of letters that the system sends to the public is as high as for preprinted forms. LOP started to send its first letters to the public in April 1989. Similarly, we have a responsibility to work with Operational Strategy branches to ensure that they implement the Communications Strategy and that any new system introduced can produce quality output in the housestyle. This will ensure that most communications issued by the Department in 1990 and beyond will reflect the developed housestyle.

Staffing

Document Design Unit

DDU continues to be staffed by professional writers and designers and an administrative team. The Unit has traditionally used staff in administrative grades as writers, but increasing use is being made of professional staff. One administrator has become a professional writer in her own right, and several administrative posts have been converted to professional ones to maintain the Unit's strength.

The complement of the Unit is 1 SEO (Manager), currently the Unit's remaining HEO on temporary promotion. The SEO is supported by an EO who manages the electronic office equipment and supervises the general office with 1 AA as clerical support.

The professional team comprises 3 full-time and 1 part-time writer at Higher Professional and Technical Officer (HPTO) grade. One of the full-time writers is on temporary promotion from the Professional and Technical Officer (PTO) grade. Of the 3 full-time designers, 2 are in the Higher Graphics Office (HGO) grade and the other is a casual Graphics Officer (GO). There is a part-time TDII who acts as the Systems Manager, and a part-time designer in the GO grade.

Regional Directorate Forms Design Unit (RDFU)

The RDFU is managed by an HEO, currently an EO on temporary promotion. The unit is staffed by 7 EOs who are wholly engaged on forms improvement work. The support staff consists of 2 AOs. There is also a designer/typesetter in the GO grade.

Simpler forms for employers

The DDU has helped the DSS Deregulation Unit to put together its report on 'Enquiries of Business' and the associated action plan. This has now been accepted by Ministers and will be implemented over the next year or so. DDU will play its part in implementing the proposals for which it has a direct responsibility.

The Unit was involved in the preparation of the material that was sent out to all employers in February 1989. The package comprised

- a 'key' document — an employer's guide to National Insurance Contributions and Statutory Sick Pay
- 'manuals' — dealing with National Insurance Contributions and Statutory Sick Pay in more detail
- National Insurance Contribution and Statutory Sick Pay tables
- a wallchart to help employers deal with Statutory Sick Pay.

The Unit will be involved in the preparation of material to complete the employer's package during the 1989/90 financial year. This will comprise corresponding material on Statutory Maternity Pay. There will be a manual covering miscellaneous areas such as Family Credit, Retirement Pension and Income Support. The package will be completed with material to assist those employers who submit their National Insurance Contribution returns on magnetic tape.

DDU has rewritten and designed some of the more commonly used SSP forms, including the replacement of forms SSP1(E) and SSP1(T) with a single form — the SSP1 Changeover Form. The new forms have been in use since April 1989. Further work is being carried out on a range of SSP forms and letters. A review of form SC1 'Self Certificate for Sickness' is currently being undertaken.

Savings

It is not possible to give an overall figure for savings attributable to forms work. There are several reasons for this, one of the most important being the fact that the Department does not keep a record of 'before' and 'after' error rates on 'improved' forms. In addition, much of the work that has been undertaken since 1987 has been on forms which were required for the Social Security reforms, and had no previous versions.

Special exercises will always be necessary to test the effectiveness and savings of either a new or improved form. It is difficult to gain access to local offices to carry out such work. In addition, the limited resources of DDU have ruled out this kind of activity in the past.

However, one measure of the success of a form is the number of staff suggestions it generates. Generally speaking, very few suggestions are made on forms produced by DDU, which could indicate an acceptable measure of effectiveness.

The future

As from 1 May 1989, the DDU and the Forms Design Unit have been part of DSS Information Division. In the near future a physical merger of the 2 units is proposed which should result in closer co-operation between the units.

Since the split of the former DHSS into separate Departments from 1 April 1989, the 2 forms units have concentrated on Social Security material.

Decisions have yet to be taken to formally establish a DH forms unit and in the meantime Information Division (Health) are the contact point for health work.

The revised arrangements should allow the DDU to return more to its original function in areas such as research and development, where the pressure of implementing the Communications Strategy over the last 2 years has prevented us from making as great a contribution as we would have liked.

Work still needs to be undertaken in major areas such as Child Benefit forms and Disability forms.

There are several Communications Strategy projects to be completed. Foremost among them is the production of a Housestyle Manual. This will be for people who produce forms and will provide comprehensive instructions on how to write and design forms in the housestyle. The volume will be a summary of the 6 years' experience gained by the Document Design Unit.

North Fylde Forms Unit (NFFU)

The NFFU is managed by an HEO. The support staff of 2 EOs are engaged on forms improvement work relating to forms issued by North Fylde Central Office.

Newcastle Central Office

At Newcastle Central Office there is no centralised forms unit. Most of the branches located at Newcastle have an allocation of staff for forms improvement work, either on a full or part-time basis.

Equipment

As the result of an initiative arising from the Communications Strategy, forms production equipment across the Department is being rationalised. DDU has ensured that all equipment purchased by the Department since June 1988 is compatible with a common technical standard. This will eventually allow a complete integration between all forms production sites. This standard has become known by the acronym SOFT (Standardisation of Forms production Technology).

The DDU laser phototypesetter is now running upgraded software. The machine itself is nearing the end of its useful life and will shortly need to be replaced, as will the photoprocessor for the same reason. Two new Apple Macintosh input terminals are being trialed with a view to assessing their compatibility with Departmental forms production standards. The forthcoming merger with the RDFU, mentioned later in this report, may necessitate further Apple terminals being purchased.

Commercial typesetting facilities continue to be used as required.

Legal Language

In 1987, DDU reported that agreement had been reached with solicitors for a single version of the warning and declaration to be used in Departmental forms. The new version came into use in April 1987 and reads

'I understand that if I give information that is incorrect or incomplete, action may be taken against me. I declare that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete.'

DDU has recently been made aware of the fact that some people are finding this format intimidating. There have even been examples where people have altered the declaration on a claim form to state that as far as they are aware the information they have supplied is correct.

DDU has raised the matter with solicitors and as a result, may return to an earlier form of wording for the declaration

'I declare that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.'

DDU still regards the area of legal language as a highly important one. We would still like to become more involved with the Office of the Chief Adjudication Officer to agree plainer language for Adjudication Officer decisions.

Complexity of Regulations

DDU is becoming increasingly concerned about criticism of the length, and therefore perceived complexity, of postal claim forms. The concern is that people tend to focus their criticism on the form rather than the system the form is produced to deal with.

Chrissie Maher, co-founder of the Plain English Campaign, drew attention to this problem at the 1988 Plain English Awards ceremony. She said 'At last year's Awards ceremony I called for government Ministers to simplify new regulations and keep them as brief as possible so that forms and leaflets could be made shorter and more comprehensible. I see little sign that this has happened.'

DDU supports simpler claim forms but is concerned that this should not be achieved by simply cutting out questions on the initial form. This was done recently to reduce the length of the Family Credit claim form but will mean sending a follow-up enquiry instead. So the price of a shorter claim form is a second form with the inevitable delay in processing that this causes for both staff and public.

**Forms Review 1987/89****I. All Forms**

	Members of the public	Business and industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/87 – as stated in 3rd progress report	324	239	1288	1851
2 Additional existing forms – notified to forms units during 1987/89	2		346	348
3 Progress 1/4/87 – 31/3/88				
a. No. of forms planned for review as reported in 4th Progress Report	162	119	644	925
b. No. of forms reviewed	146	127	805	1078
c. No. of forms abolished – each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	32	31	329	392
d. No. of forms retained unchanged	48	24	174	246
e. No. of forms redesigned	66	72	302	440
4 Progress 1/4/88 – 31/3/89				
a. No. of forms reviewed	116	111	617	844
b. No. of forms abolished – each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	29	29	162	220
c. No. of forms retained unchanged	54	22	236	312
d. No. of forms redesigned	33	60	219	312
5 New forms produced during 1/4/87 – 31/3/89	45	61	200	306
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/89 – ie. items 1 + 2 + 5, less items 3c + 4b	310	240	1343	1893
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/89 – 31/3/90	155	120	671	946

**II. Important Forms
(Numbers included in I.)**

	Members of the public	Business and industry	Internal	Total
	28	10		38
	14	5		19
	12	1		13
	6			6
	6	1		7
	11	4		15
	3	3		6
	8	1		9
	28	6		34
	14	3		17



Forms Control in HMSO

Progress since 1987

- 1 Every form in use has been reviewed in the past two years. The investment by HMSO in new and enhanced computer systems has increased temporarily the number of forms in use. Obsolescent forms remain in use for a time whilst their replacements are run in parallel, to prove each new computer system.

Value for Money

- 2 Forms are designed for simplicity in use and clarity of appearance, to improve service and efficiency and to produce savings. Two important examples in this period won praise from the public and booksellers.
 - a The computer-generated Publications Invoice (Form PC100) used to be two parts folded into a self-adhesive transparent pocket, which then was attached to a parcel of books to expose the address only. This is a device common in mail order businesses, but customers complained that the invoice could be damaged when removing it from the pocket, or that it was lost when discarding wrappings. The new version includes a peel-off address-label, which is used on the parcel, but the address prints through also onto the invoice. This is now a single sheet, allowing clearer instructions to the customer on the reverse. The invoice is tucked in the publications where the customer will see it, the books are wrapped by machinery, and the label attached.
 - b Redesign of the Monthly Statements (Form PC205) is saving £23,000 a year. These are prepared by HMSO computers but were sent to a specialist firm for collation, enveloping and despatch to customers. The form was redesigned, for folding and inserting by HMSO machinery already installed for other tasks. Moreover, customers receive statements sooner, prompting earlier settlement and improved cash flow.

Local Forms

- 3 Local forms and variants previously escaped formal control procedures. Some of these have been adopted and brought up to the house standard, others merged with established forms, whilst many were dispensed with altogether.

Legal Language

- 4 Conditions of contract for purchasing (a) goods and (b) services are being rewritten in plain English, incorporating in each booklet those elements of GC Stores/1 (Standard conditions for Government contracts) relevant to the class of business done.

Staffing and Resources

- 5 Forms control centrally employs 50% of an HEO and 10% of an SEO's time, costing only £10,000 a year. This does not include the network of Forms Control Liaison Officers in divisions and units, who spend relatively little time on forms duties.

Equipment Available

- 6 Advances in desk-top publishing allow simple internal forms to be set on an Apple Macintosh SE microcomputer and Laserwriter II in a Norwich typing pool.
- 7 Important and complex forms are designed for HMSO and customer departments by our Graphic Design studio. Recent examples include:
 - a 1989 OPCS census test in England, Wales and Scotland
 - b passport application forms for a new Passport Office Computer System
 - c application forms, certificates and permits for the new firearms and shotgun legislation
 - d Registration of Electors and Proxy Voting forms
 - e standard design pack on offer to local authorities in England and Wales for Community Charge registration forms and notes.
- 8 The Graphic Design studio employs Apple Macintosh desk-top publishing and Xenotron computer-aided design equipment to ensure its standard of excellence in design of Government forms.

The Future

- 9 Desk-top publishing in untutored hands can produce unacceptable results: and the Department's Marketing Services Division are developing advice and training for customers contemplating cost-effective in-house forms design and/or production.
- 10 The status of HMSO as one of the first Executive Agencies prompted a review of its corporate identity. Priority will be given to adoption of any new house style in forms used by the public, industry and commerce in the next review cycle.

Forms Review 1987/89

I. All Forms

1.1. Important Forms
(Numbers included in 1.)

Division

HOME OFFICE

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1. Forms in use on 31/3/87 - as stated in 4th progress report	1751	809	2778	5338	60	0	1	61
2. Additional existing forms - notified during 1987/89	185	(84)	834	935	83	52	241	376
3. Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/88								
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 4th progress report.	544	84	719	1347	18	0	0	18
b. No of forms reviewed	493	390	864	1747	47	9	4	60
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg amalgamation of two forms - 1 abolished, 1 revised.	86	75	272	433	0	0	2	2
d. No of forms retained unchanged	318	301	521	1140	39	8	2	49
e. No of forms redesigned	89	14	71	174	8	1	0	9
4. Progress 1/4/88 - 31/3/89								
a. No of forms reviewed	510	216	990	1716	45	5	8	58
b. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg amalgamation of two forms - 1 abolished, 1 revised.	71	20	155	246	3	0	0	3
c. No of forms retained unchanged	279	151	674	1104	11	0	2	13
d. No of forms redesigned	160	45	161	366	31	5	6	42
5. New forms produced during 1/4/87 - 31.3.89	111	79	170	360	7	0	1	8
6. Total forms in use on 31/3/89 - ie items 1+2+5, less items 3c +4b	1890	709	3355	5954	147	52	241	440
7. No of forms planned for review 1/4/89 - 31/3/90	411	173	756	1340	53	5	171	229

HOME OFFICE

Progress since 1987

1. The formal review of administrative forms has continued to be undertaken by sponsor divisions throughout the report period. (Due to the lack of statistical information no interim report to OMCS was made covering the year 1987/88.)
2. The high figures in row 2 of the statistical return are due to the reconciliation between the brought forward figure from the previous report and the same figure as reported by divisions.
3. During 1987-88 a total of 1747 forms were reviewed, this represents 29% above the target set for the period. In 1988/89 a total of 1716 forms were reviewed, exceeding the set target by 56%. The later figure also represents the impact which the OMCS Review of Business Forms had in refocusing divisional attention to forms control.
4. During 1987/88 25% of the forms reviewed were either abolished entirely or amalgamated. During the same period 10% of reviewed forms were considered in need of redesign. 14% of reviewed forms were abolished during 1988/89 with a further 21% being redesigned. The Immigration Service undertook a full review of all its forms during the period resulting in a proposal to reduce the number of forms in use by 73% from 456 to 122. (Those figures are included in the overall total.)
5. Forms staff have been brought into the discussions on new policies and legislation changes at a much earlier stage than before, and the impact of forms has been considered at policy drafting stage. During the period major work was undertaken on forms relating to the Representation of the People Act and the Firearms Act.
6. A complete review of the present Home Office forms control and design procedures was undertaken during the report period. The major recommendation of the resulting report (June 1989) was to establish a dedicated Forms Unit within the Home Office. The report is at present being considered by senior staff.

Savings & Value for Money

7. Pressure of work and limited staff resources have held back development of an accurate forms costing system to identify savings throughout the department. Developing such a costing system from the existing position would be a very expensive and laborious exercise, which we judge would not be cost-effective. It is not possible to give an overall figure for savings attributable to the improvement of forms design. There are several reasons for this, one of the most important being the fact that the department does not yet keep a record of 'before' and 'after' error rates.

Local Forms

8. The Home Office makes no distinction between local forms and any other type of form, all forms following the same procedures in respect of design and control.

Legal Language

9. The legal language on forms is discussed by the form's sponsor, the Departmental Legal Advisers, and the Forms Officer, consultation taking place at the earliest possible stage of the design procedure.

Deregulation

10. There is close liaison between the Forms Officer and the departmental deregulation officer. All Home Office business forms have been reviewed and although none were abolished a number have been redesigned to ease the burden of completion.

Staffing

11. The responsibility for the co-ordination of forms work within the Home Office lies with the Organisation and Methods Branch of M Division. The distribution of forms work within this branch was reviewed during the period. The system whereby forms work consisted of a small percentage of each of six HEOs' time was changed to that of a single HEO being responsible for all forms work, reporting to the grade 7 head of O&M Branch. Forms work represents 60% of the HEO's time. The reorganisation is designed to eliminate a fragmented system of working and to bring a standardised approach to the work. It has produced a quicker response to sponsor divisions' demands, which in turn has led to greater use of the forms design facilities available in M Division.

Equipment

12. There has been no change in the equipment within the forms monitoring system since the last report. (Since the equipment is a divisional facility it is not dedicated solely to forms work.)

The future

13. It is planned to review 1340 forms during the year April 1989 - March 1990, this figure is not unrealistic given past performance.

14. As part of the review of Forms Control within the Home Office a request for dedicated computerised design and control equipment and additional staff to enable the forms officer to function more efficiently is under consideration.

Forms Review 1987/89

Department

Inland Revenue

1 Forms in use on 31/3/87

- as stated in 4th progress report

2 Additional existing forms

- notified to forms units during 1987/89

3 Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/88

a. No of forms planned for review

- as reported in 4th progress report

b. No of forms reviewed

c. No of forms abolished

- each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised

d. No of forms retained unchanged

e. No of forms redesigned

4 Progress 1/4/88 - 31/3/89

a. No of forms reviewed

b. No of forms abolished

- each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised

c. No of forms retained unchanged

d. No of forms redesigned

5 New forms produced during 1/4/87 - 31/3/89

6 Total forms in use on 31/3/89

- ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b

7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/89 - 31/3/90

I. All Forms

Members
of the
public

Business
and
Industry

Internal

Total

2387

210

5752

8349

-

-

-

-

800

70

2000

2870

831

360

2125

3316

48

135

368

551

376

69

1073

1518

407

156

684

1247

841

424

2421

3686

77

22

194

293

434

211

1528

2173

330

191

699

1220

104

67

546

717

2366

120

5736

8222

800

50

2000

2850

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I)

Members
of the
public

Business
and
Industry

Internal

Total

152

37

10

199

-

-

-

-

50

6

4

60

53

3

11

67

4

-

3

7

30

1

4

35

19

2

4

25

63

5

12

80

8

2

1

11

19

1

2

22

36

2

9

47

4

2

-

6

144

37

6

187

50

10

5

65

INLAND REVENUE

FIFTH PROGRESS REPORT TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Progress since 1987

1. We have successfully continued the process of constantly reviewing all our forms with the object of abolishing those which are no longer needed and of improving those which we need to retain. We have set ourselves the target of reviewing all our forms every three years with one third being reviewed in each year of the three year cycle. We comfortably exceeded these targets in the two years to March 1989 with 7,002 reviews completed against a target of 5,740.

2. The review work in the Department is controlled by the Forms Review Group which meets twice every year. All members of the Forms Review Group and other Forms Liaison Officers in the Department make quarterly reports of the progress of the forms review. The Forms Review Group aims to discuss best practice, to consider improvements in technology, to find solutions to day to day problems, and to maintain the impetus towards the production of clear, simple and attractive forms which are easy to use.

3. During the two years to March 1989 717 new forms have been introduced and 844 have been abolished. Over the two year period we have reduced the number of forms in use by 127. It is increasingly difficult as time goes on to identify forms for abolition since all those forms which it was relatively easy to cancel were abolished in the early years of the forms review cycle. 2,467 forms have been redesigned in the two years to March 1989.

4. In January 1988 the Department's Management Services Division which runs the Forms Review Group produced the

booklet "Is it Legal?" which has been widely distributed throughout the Department. This booklet reaffirmed our commitment to the use of plain English and the avoidance of jargon and gobbledegook. The foreword was written by the Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue and is an indication of the commitment of the senior management in the Inland Revenue to the forms simplification work which we undertake.

5. In late 1987 we were pleased to receive the Plain English Campaign's prize for the rewritten booklet entitled "The Employers Guide to PAYE". The basic text for this booklet was improved by Central Forms Unit staff after comment by technical specialists. Graphic design was provided by HMSO. A pilot version of the new booklet was produced and we had the reactions of users tested by independent consultants. The information gained in this test proved to be very useful when the definitive version was produced and the booklet which has now been in use for some time has been very well received.

6. In our last report we looked ahead to the work involved in the Department's major moves to computerise its main operational systems. Both Pay As You Earn and the assessing of the self employed have now been fully computerised. There was a great deal of work done to design and produce the forms needed for these two major changes and the forms are now in operational use. Design improvements are constantly being made as a result of our review processes and the new style forms which make optimum use of the new technology provided by computer controlled laser printers have met with a favourable response.

Savings

7. In our efforts to achieve value for money generally

we have continued to seek economies in the designing, ordering and stock holding of our forms. Large orders, as before, are individually authorised at a senior level and phased deliveries are still used to reduce storage costs where this is appropriate.

8. We have in place a procedure which permits us to monitor and investigate increases in the prices which we are charged.

9. We have also recently introduced a quality performance monitoring system. This has helped us to tighten up our checking. Where forms fall short of our full specification but are nevertheless usable we seek price abatements as a matter of course.

10. It was possible recently to achieve a £34,000 saving in printing costs on a single order for a high usage form as a result of a design innovation.

11. We estimate that taking account of the size and type of forms which have been abolished together with the relevant print runs we have achieved savings as a result of abolishing forms amounting to £419,000.

Legal Language

12. There has been no relaxation of our efforts to use plain English rather than legal and technical jargon in our forms. The need to communicate in plain English is widely publicised throughout the Department by means such as the publication of the booklet "Is it Legal?" mentioned above.

13. Over the years we have progressively removed statutory references from our forms wherever it has been possible to do so. Our experience is that most forms

function perfectly well without any statutory references. Our main tax returns forms for instance do not contain any statutory references, and the tax return completion guidance notes are remarkably free of them even though these notes give authoritative guidance on a large number of matters covered by a mass of complex legislation.

14. We are committed to continuing this work.

Deregulation

15. We have for some time been prepared to accept computer produced substitute forms in the place of the official tax return forms which we issue to the public, and as a further relaxation it is proposed next year to accept one substitute in place of the two major official forms. A design feature has been incorporated into the official return forms to make them more compatible with the needs of the substitute tax return industry.

16. A decision has recently been taken to permit substitute versions of some of our repayment claim forms to be used instead of the officially produced forms which would normally need to be manually completed. This decision which is soon to be widely publicised has been very well received by those who advanced a case for its implementation.

17. We are also involved in consultations to detect any demand for further computer produced forms to be accepted in place of our official forms. For operational reasons it will not always be possible to accede to any such demand but we shall where we can do so.

18. We have just started the major simplification of one of our most important publications which gives guidance about the taxation of benefits in kind. It is hoped that

the eventual outcome will be a more attractive and easier to use guide.

Staffing

19. The Central Forms Design Unit is part of the Management Services Division and is staffed by:

One Principal grade at its head

One SEO grade as the head of continuous stationery and computer form design

Eight HEO grade forms designers and editors

One EO and one AO working on copy preparation

Two EOs on continuous stationery design

Two AOs on proof reading and clerical support

We also have access to a small pool of three specialist typist phototypesetter operators

Staff costs amount to approximately £384,000 per annum.

Equipment

20. We continue to typeset most of our cut forms in-house. We have recently taken delivery of a new Linotronic 300 typesetter and a laser printer for supplying proofs together with four new Apple MacIntosh design computers as aids to design, proofing and typesetting.

The Future

21. There are several major initiatives underway in the

Department which have produced a challenge for the Forms Design Unit.

22. Firstly, we have had to prepare for the introduction of Independent Taxation of husbands and wives from 6 April 1990. This is arguably the biggest change in the structure of Income Tax as it affects ordinary taxpayers since Income Tax itself was introduced.

In the past the income of a married woman has in general been taxed as if it were the income of her husband. From 6 April 1990 a married woman will be taxed on her own income in her own right and will be responsible for completing her own income tax forms. We have needed to review all our forms to take account of the substantial design changes required.

23. Major changes have been made to the design of the tax returns which will be issued in April 1990 and we have arranged for the production of a new return form (the 11W) which will be issued to some married women for the one year 1990/91 only. Further changes will be made to the tax returns which will be issued in April 1991.

24. In the fourth progress report to the Prime Minister the Inland Revenue referred to the "comprehensive on-line tax collection system" (known as BROCS) which the Department is to set up. Development work on the various phases of this project continues and some stages will be operational in April 1990. Work also continues on forms for the Corporation Tax "Pay and File" system which is to be implemented in the early 1990s.

25. Since the summer of 1988 we have been working on a project to computerise the Department's procedures for making tax repayments. This is a major undertaking with a considerable effect on the Forms Design Unit. New procedures will be introduced and our forms will need to

change in response to those new procedures. The new forms will mainly be computer produced rather than the manual cut forms presently in use. This should be one of the last major areas where a completely new range of forms will need to be introduced because of computerisation projects.

FORMS REVIEW 1987/88

I. ALL FORMS

II. IMPORTANT FORMS
(Numbers Included In I.)

Department:

HM LAND REGISTRY

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/87 - as stated in 4th progress report	61	304	743	1108	32	27	-	59
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1987/88	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3 No. of forms planned for review in 1987/88 - as reported on 4th progress report	15	100	240	355	7	10	-	17
4 Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/88								
a. No. of forms reviewed	19	117	220	356	8	10	-	18
b. No. of forms abolished	-	2	18	20	-	1	-	1
- each form to be counted only once, eg, amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised								
c. No. of forms retained unchanged	13	92	148	253	1	2	-	3
d. No. of forms redesigned	6	23	54	83	7	7	-	14
5 New forms produced during 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	8	30	76	114	-	2	-	2
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/88 - ie. items 1 + 2 + 5 less item 4b	69	332	801	1202	32	28	-	60
7 No. of forms planned for review 1/4/88 - 31/3/89	20	100	250	370	10	10	-	20

HM LAND REGISTRY
FORMS REVIEW 1988/89

I. ALL FORMS

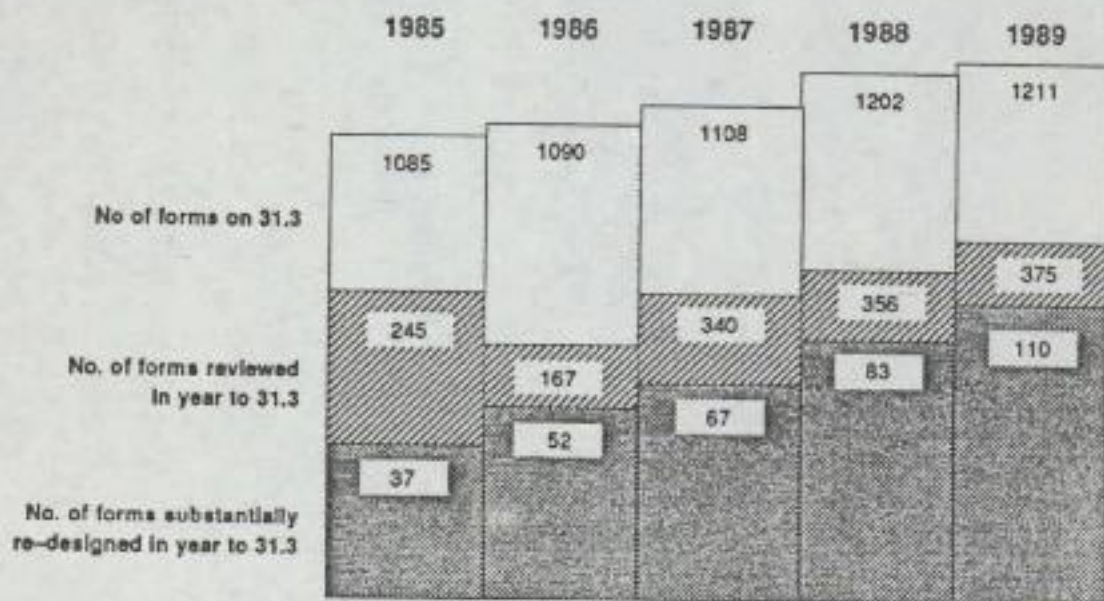
II. IMPORTANT FORMS
(Numbers included in I.)

	Members of the public	buisness and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	buisness and Industry	Internal	Total
1. Forms in use on 31/3/89	69	332	801	1202	32	28	-	60
2. Additional existing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. No. of forms planned for review 1988/89	20	100	250	370	10	10	-	20
4. a) No. of forms reviewed 1-4-88 - 31-3-89	16	128	231	375	16	12	-	28
b) No. of forms abolished	0	2	10	12	-	-	-	0
c) No. of forms unchanged	4	87	162	253	12	8	-	20
d) No. of forms redesigned	12	39	59	110	4	4	-	8
5. New forms produced 1-4-89 - 31-3-89	1	2	18	21	1	2	-	3
6 Total forms in use on 31-3-89	70	332	809	1211	33	30	-	63
7. No. of forms planned for review 1-4-89 - 31-3-90	25	100	250	375	10	10	-	20

Forms review – 1987 to 1989

1. Forms Review

The routine review of forms, whereby approximately one third of the Department's forms are brought forward for consideration each year continues as will be seen from the accompanying diagram. The steady growth in the number of forms which have been substantially re-designed reflects increasing changes in departmental practice, but has been enhanced by the increase in equipment and skills within the Graphic Design Unit.



2. New technology

Many of the Registry's more important public forms are printed and published by commercial stationery firms for sale to conveyancing practitioners. The Registry has come under increasing pressure both from individual firms of practitioners and from representative bodies such as the Law Society to accept forms produced by applicants themselves using new technology. In practice this means forms produced by word processors or with the aid of computer software.

Although the Registry has welcomed the use of deeds and documents produced on word processors, additional considerations apply to most application forms. Those which are to be processed within 24 or 48 hours (*some 23,000 each working day*), have to be identified and separated from other application forms and papers which are frequently received in the same packet or parcel. To this end colour and an instantly recognisable layout are important. Some of these forms are also printed with perforations, either to allow the easy separation of duplicate from originals or to provide a tear-off return address label. It is these features – colour, layout, and perforation, which the new technology currently being used by conveyancing practitioners is unable to emulate.

The Registry is at present considering the way in which Land Registry forms might be produced and reproduced in future and also the effect that the use of such forms might have on the Registry's work systems.

3. Local forms

Emphasis continues to be put on the systematic review of the local forms produced by the District Land Registries. A "Forms Guide" containing guidelines for the design and control of forms has been issued to those staff concerned with the production and monitoring of local forms.

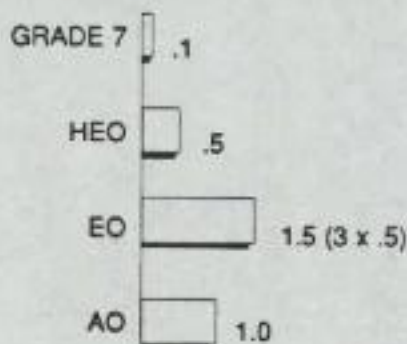
The first survey of local forms which was carried out in 1984 at a time when there were 13 district land registries showed that these offices had created approximately 3350 local forms, – an average of 254 per office. There are now 16 district land registries, and the annual returns from the local forms liaison officers reveal a total of 2965 forms. This shows the average to have been reduced to 185 per office, the majority of offices falling within a band of 150 – 230.

A programme of regular visits to district registries to discuss local forms is now under way. These are made by the EOs from the Legal Practice Division who discuss local office practices relating to the production and monitoring of local forms. Visits are also made by Office Services staff with a view to advising on the ordering, storage, and usage of departmental and local forms and stationery.

4. Staffing

The Registry does not have a forms unit as such, but the staff complements of the Office Services and Legal Practice Divisions provide for the following to be committed to forms review work:

Staff complement levels



5. Equipment

The Department has an Itek Digitek 3000 system and Macintosh PCs with various software. The Itek is used primarily for the production and storage of practice and training material. The Apple Macintosh is also used for general desk-top publishing as well as for forms work. A third Apple Macintosh PC is about to be acquired. This has been made necessary by the increasing demands made of the Graphic Design Unit. Work which would have previously gone outside the Department is now dealt with economically and professionally within the unit.

Forms Review 1987 / 1988

Lord Chancellor's Department

	All Forms				Important Forms			
	Members of the public	Business and industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and industry	Internal	Total
Forms in use 31 / 3 / 87	662	66	412	1140 (+ 7878*)	83	3	24	110
No of forms reviewed	290	8	70	368	21			21
No of forms abolished	23		2	25				
No of retained unchanged	57	6	10	73				
No of forms redesigned	210	2	58	270	23			23
No of new forms 1 / 4 / 87 - 31 / 3 / 88	20	4	4	28				
Total forms in use on 31 / 3 / 88	659	70	414	1143 (+ 7878*)	83	3	24	110
No of forms planned for review					61	2		63

* RCL Forms

Forms Review 1988 /1989

Lord Chancellor' Department

All Forms

Important Forms

	All Forms				Important Forms			
	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
Forms in use 31/3/88	659	70	414	1143 (RCJ 1250 Local 5800)	83	3	24	110
No of forms reviewed	348	9	202	622	61	2		63
No of forms abolished	12		8	20				
No of forms retained unchanged	538	70	289	897	58	1	24	83
No of forms redesigned	109		127	161	3	2		5
No of new forms on 1/4/88 - 31/3/89	22		15	37		2		2
Total forms in use on 31/3/89	669	70	421	1160	83	5	24	112
No of forms planned for review 31/3/89 - 1/4/90	150			150*	45			45

* These are currently under review, other forms will be reviewed on request for reprint.

Lord Chancellor's Department

Forms Review - Fifth Progress Report to the Prime Minister

Progress Since 1987

- 1) During 1988 the Forms Unit became part of the Best Practice Branch within the Court Service Management Group. The reorganisation has proved a useful one, since form requirements are a major consideration in the evolution of best practice and the two parts of the Branch are better able to work closely together.
- 2) The Unit has been successful in underlining the importance of forms in the minds of those charged with developing initiatives. This has been demonstrated by the Unit's early involvement in major projects and the fact that a representative from the Unit is often invited to sit on working parties and steering committees to ensure that forms are given the necessary priority in the project's development.
- 3) This process has been helped by the introduction in 1987 of a forms control manual which explained Departmental forms policy and provided guidance to all offices on stock control. This is to be reviewed in 1989 with particular reference to how the use of the manual can further improve stock control.
- 4) Over the last year the majority of the Unit's effort has been directed to the development of major Departmental initiatives :-
 - (i) Suitors Cash Project - which will remove most of the cash handling responsibilities from County Courts and has resulted in the need to amend and re-design 150/170 forms during 1988/9;
 - (ii) Summons Production Centre - which will allow the production and issue of County Court summonses by magnetic tape and which has required the development in 1989 of new stationery for use with high capacity laser printers;
 - (iii) Civil Justice Review - which recommended a programme to standardise forms, make greater use of plain English and effect more general improvements in the quality of information available to the public over the next five years;

- (iv) Crest - A three year programme to introduce a computerised system into Crown Court Centres throughout the country to maintain records and produce forms. This project is allowing the Unit an opportunity to review 70/80 Crown Court forms to introduce plain English, standardise layout and improve presentation generally. Unlike other computer projects pre-printed stationery is not to be used. The forms will be entirely contained within the database itself thus ensuring the production of professional documents in every case.
- 5) A two year review of 100 important forms (those with an annual usage over 400,000 or £4,000 annual cost) started in 1988 with the aim of :-
- i) simplifying procedures;
 - ii) reducing the burden of forms;
 - iii) increasing efficiency by improving language and presentation.

The review has proved a major source of information and lessons learned are being applied to many other forms currently undergoing redesign. Originally the review was to analyse information received from the users and publish the findings for consultation. However initiatives moved at such a pace that this procedure was no longer practicable. The review recommendations are now being incorporated into the designs required by the various initiatives and consultation takes place as part of those initiatives.

Savings

- 6) Savings in the production costs of forms through the re-design and the use of revised specifications have been achieved and include :-
- i) £15,000 on County Court record cards;
 - ii) £15,000 on ledgers;
 - iii) £21,000 on the Judge's notebook.

Value for Money

- 7) In the last two years costs have been reduced while the same service to courts has been maintained. These costs (of production, storage and the stockholding value of forms) are monitored by performance indicators. The reduction of costs was as follows :-

- (i) Storage - HMSO warehouse charges :-

1987/88 = £61,000

1988/89 = £48,500

- (ii) Stockholding - Value of forms held in store :-

1987/88 = £241,000

1988/89 = £145,500

- (iii) Procurement - The forms budget for the last financial year was £952,000 and with the use of a stock control computer the Unit produced an underspend of £10,000 (0.9% of total).

Local Forms

- 8) The spread of local forms remains a major problem within the Department. In 1987 a working party was formed whose terms of reference were to :-

- (i) conduct a review of local forms and amend existing departmental forms where they were found to be deficient;
- (ii) develop instructions for the control of local forms.

The working party is due to produce its final report this year.

Legal Language

- 9) The principle of using plain English is now generally accepted within the Department, although staff do find old habits difficult to break. Some progress however is being made. In particular there is a growing awareness of the importance of considering the target audience and the effect the form or publication has on that audience. Consultation on forms now includes the views of a number of consumer organisations.

- 10) The use of explanatory leaflets is an area the Unit is beginning to move into, triggered by current reforms and the recommendation of the Civil Justice Review for more guidance to unrepresented litigants. It is intended to develop the idea to cover other areas of County Court business. For example, the Unit is considering producing a series of leaflets to replace the "Small Claims in the County Court" booklet which has been criticised for its lack of plain English. Such an exercise would entail the Department developing a corporate style to make each leaflet easily recognisable and offers the opportunity of a display, similar to those used in banks for example, within each County Court office from which litigants might help themselves.

Staffing

- 11) The complement of the Unit has remained at one Higher Executive Officer, two Executive Officers and two Administrative Officers. All the staff have been replaced since the last report. No further changes are expected in the next two years, which should lead to stability and allow the Unit's expertise to develop.
- 12) New skills have had to be learned to keep pace with technical developments in the production of computer generated and laser printed forms. To meet this need the Civil Service College arranged a specially tailored course in February this year to cover these areas, which included a talk by a consultant from the well-known printers, Kenrick & Jefferson Ltd, about the commercial production of forms by laser printers.

Equipment

- 13) In order to meet increased demands an additional Rank Xerox Documenter was installed in February 1989 and networked with the existing equipment to provide a shared printing service and memory storage facility.
- 14) New software has been purchased which allows the input of text from floppy discs prepared on word processors by typists. This is intended to improve productivity in design by eliminating the need to key in text, thus allowing the designer to concentrate on typesetting and layout.

The Future

- 15) An exercise is to be undertaken to compare costs of using NCR (non carbon reproduction) paper to produce documents in courts as an alternative to photocopying. Although more expensive than photocopying, the cost may be more than offset by a saving in staff time.

16) During 1989 HMSO propose to introduce a computerised stock control system. If the expected benefits are realised the Unit will examine the cost effectiveness of a direct computer link-up between HMSO and the Unit with the potential to :-

- i) improve ordering procedures;
- ii) allow improved stock control;
- iii) monitor local orders;
- iv) reduce storage costs.

17) The review of forms will continue with particular emphasis being placed on implementing the recommendations of the local forms review working party and the Civil Justice Review.

J STACEY
Forms Unit Manager

Forms Unit
Lord Chancellors Department
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SW1
210 8716

18 May 1989

Forms Review 1987/89

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers Included in I.)

Department:

NATIONAL SAVINGS

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/87 - as stated in 3rd progress report	1553	260	3994	5807	152	7	57	216
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1987/89	45	-	275	320	-	-	-	-
3 Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/88								
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	787	214	1436	2437	103	7	28	138
b. No of forms reviewed	967	111	1240	2318	61	-	18	79
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	310	21	258	589	2	-	-	2
d. No of forms retained unchanged	137	19	1744	1900	21	7	34	62
e. No of forms redesigned	655	148	501	1304	53	-	4	57
4 Progress 1/4/88 - 31/3/89								
a. No of forms reviewed	522	120	1035	1677	67	7	22	96
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	182	6	215	403	10	-	3	13
c. No of forms retained unchanged	124	22	1628	1774	-	-	17	17
d. No of forms redesigned	306	92	532	930	61	7	2	70
5 New forms produced during 1/4/87 - 31/3/89	218	5	599	822	8	1	-	9
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/89 - ie. items 1 + 2 + 5, less items 3c + 4b	1324	238	4395	5957	148	8	54	210
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/89 - 31/3/90	383	66	2821	3270	38	-	35	73

FORMS REVIEW: 5TH PROGRESS REPORT ON FORMS 1989

THE WORK OF THE UNIT

Statistics

1. Since 1987 National Savings has introduced one new product and withdrawn another with a corresponding variation in numbers of forms. With the completion of the exercise to corporately identify important customer forms emphasis is now shifting to internal forms. Greater effort has gone into establishing the total number of internal forms in use in National Savings.

Progress Since 1987

2. In 1987 a firm of design consultants, Wolff Olins, were employed to provide a new corporate identity for National Savings. Since then our Forms Units have been heavily involved in implementing the new identity across the complete range of National Savings forms with special emphasis being placed on important customer forms. The majority of our important customer forms were reviewed by December 1988.

3. All our stock letters to customers and agents have been reviewed. Work has now started on our internal forms with the intention of completing the review no later than December 1990. Work is almost finished on the corporate identification of all our investment certificates. These certificates are issued to our customers as proof of purchase of our products and so naturally they must be produced to a very high design standard. Samples of the proposed new designs for the certificates are attached.

4. Design standards for all categories of forms, both internal and external, have been drawn up and will form part of the revised Forms Guide. In these standards National Savings has continued to promote the aims of good forms design;

4.1 Clarity of procedure and lack of uncertainty for the user.

4.2 Plain English.

4.3 Customer friendliness.

It was therefore gratifying that one of our forms entered for the Plain English Campaign Awards won a first prize in the government form category and that the second form we entered was shortlisted for an award.

Savings

5. We have continued to optimise the use of our 'in house' phototype-setting equipment. In the financial year 1986-87 £11,468 was spent on having work set by commercial typesetting companies. By the end of the financial year 1988-89 there had been a dramatic drop in our outside charges with only £787 being spent with commercial setters. We have decided to standardise on two papers to be used for the printing of all forms and letters. The two papers chosen are a 100 gsm cartridge and an 80 gsm

copier/litho paper. By ordering in bulk it is estimated that a saving of £34,000 can be made.

Value for Money

6. The Forms Units ensure that departmental standards and good forms practice are applied at all times. Well designed and attractive forms help to promote National Savings in the very competitive personal savings market and so our forms must be of at least an equal standard to those of our competitors. The performance of individual forms is monitored and any necessary amendments to improve efficiency are made at the next reprint stage. The performance of the Forms Units is judged and measured against the targets set for various reviews and also against the deadlines for the introduction of new forms in response to changes in policy and products.

PARTICULAR AREAS OF INTEREST

Internal Forms

7. These forms are reviewed as part of our two year cyclical review program. However, work has recently started on applying corporate identity standards to these forms and as part of this exercise the need for each form will be challenged, with the intention of achieving a reduction in the total number of forms used.

Legal Language

8. While every attempt is made to promote the use of Plain English in our forms there are instances when, for the sake of total accuracy, 'legal language' supplied by the Treasury Solicitor must be used. While the results can sometimes look intimidating, eg the terms of a prospectus, our experience has been that no major difficulties have arisen from this aspect of our forms.

RESOURCES

Staffing

9. There are Forms Units situated in our Headquarters Unit and in our three product divisions. The total staffing figures are as follows:-

SEO	1
HEO	4
EO	5
AO	3

Equipment

10. Each of the divisional Forms Units use Apple MacIntosh Desk Top Publishing systems. Linotronic phototypesetters are used in two product divisions while a Xenotron phototypesetter is used in the Headquarters Unit. Microcomputers are used in the Office Services areas to assist in the efficient review and stock control of forms.

The Future

11. In the immediate future the main area of concentration will be internal forms. The same design standards will be applied to forms which will be completed by our staff as to those forms which are completed by our customers. This will help to demonstrate to staff by practical example that corporate identity is not just for outside consumption, it is also about how we communicate with each other and how the organisation looks to us all from inside. A display for staff, showing the progress made to date on corporate identity, is planned in the near future.

12. Standards for internal and external forms have been prepared and these will form part of the revised 'Forms Guide' which will be issued later this year.

Premium Bond

**NATIONAL
SAVINGS**



Bond value

Number of Units

Purchased in

Holder's number

Holder's name

Bond numbers

From

to

This Premium Savings Bond is issued under section 12 of the National Loans Act 1968 by the Director of Savings on behalf of the Treasury and subject to the terms of the Series B Prospectus and the Premium Savings Bond Regulations

J. Patterson

Income Bond

**NATIONAL
SAVINGS**



For

Purchase date

Registered in the name(s) of

Register number

This Income Bond is issued by the Treasury subject to the terms of the applicable Prospectus and the regulations relating to the National Savings Stock Register

J. Patterson

Director of Savings

OFFICE OF POPULATION CENSUSES AND SURVEYS

TABLE A SUMMARY 1987-8	ALL FORMS				IMPORTANT FORMS			
	REVIEW COMPLETED	ABOLISHED	DESIGN RETAINED	NEW DESIGN	REVIEW COMPLETED	ABOLISHED	DESIGN RETAINED	NEW DESIGN
PUBLIC	136	-	135	1	69	-	69	-
INTERNAL	305	20	105	180	16	-	-	16
TOTAL	441 ⁽¹⁾	20	240	181	85	-	69	16

Footnote (1)

OPCS Divisions Review forms whenever a reprint is requested. This can and does occur more than once a year. It is not possible to distinguish forms which have been reviewed for this reason from those reviewed purely because of the 'Review of Administrative Forms'.

1. Registration Division is the major user of administrative forms covering the work of registering births deaths and marriages. The majority of these forms are supplied to the local registration service throughout England and Wales and include forms completed by both public and local registration officers. Supplies of these forms are ordered at approximately yearly intervals and therefore subject annually to a form of review.
2. The Social Survey Division are the second largest user of forms for public use. Their work involves running both regular and ad hoc surveys collecting data from the public. The forms used in regular surveys are revised in the light of experience and are therefore critically appraised quarterly or annually. The experience gained in surveys enables Social Survey Division to constantly raise the standard of their forms.
3. This financial year saw the merging of the London and Titchfield Forms Design Units. The central unit is based at Titchfield. Each Division remains responsible for the initiation and review of its own forms.
4. During the next financial year it is intended to carry out a major review of the 'older' forms currently held by OPCS, it is expected that many will be abolished.

TABLE B PROGRESS & PLANS	ALL FORMS AT MARCH 1988			IMPORTANT FORMS AT MARCH 1988		
	TOTAL FOR DEPARTMENT (1)	REVIEWED 1986-1987 1987-1988	PLANNED FOR REVIEW IN 1988/89	TOTAL FOR DEPARTMENT (1)	REVIEWED 1986-1987 1987-1988	PLANNED FOR REVIEW IN 1988-1989
PUBLIC	137	218	125	69	76	25
INTERNAL TO DEPARTMENTS	674	655	750	38	17	35
TOTAL	811	873	875	107	93	60

Footnote (1)

Please see footnote to Table A. For the reasons stated there the sum of columns 2 and 3 does not equal the figure in column 1 nor does the sum of columns 5 and 6 equal column 4.

5. OPCS will continue to foster awareness of the forms review and the need for good communications in the interest of efficiency by:
 - a. Ensuring that Divisions are aware of the cost of forms production (see 5 above);
 - b. Ensuring all relevant staff attend the appropriate forms design courses, both internally and externally;
 - c. Ensuring that all relevant staff receive copies of this report and are made aware of the continuing importance of the review.

OFFICE OF POPULATION CENSUSES AND SURVEYS

TABLE A SUMMARY 1988-9	ALL FORMS				IMPORTANT FORMS			
	REVIEW COMPLETED	ABOLISHED	DESIGN RETAINED	NEW DESIGN	REVIEW COMPLETED	ABOLISHED	DESIGN RETAINED	NEW DESIGN
PUBLIC	137	2	114	19	58	-	47	11
INTERNAL	857	360	292	205	40	-	-	40
TOTAL	994 ⁽¹⁾	362	406	224	98	-	47	51

Footnote (1)

OPCS Divisions review forms whenever a reprint is requested. This can and does occur more than once a year. It is not possible to distinguish forms which have been reviewed for this reason from those reviewed purely because of the 'Review of Administrative Forms'.

1. The main division of OPCS involved in the use of administrative forms is Registration Division. Most of the forms are used either by Registration Officers to discharge the legal requirements relating to the registration of births, deaths and marriages (or Authorised Persons, for marriages only) in England and Wales.
2. During this year legislative changes have caused 3 forms to be redesigned. Work of the local registration service is being computerised to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the service offered to the public. 13 forms have been redesigned to ensure the highest standard of legibility when printed by the computerised systems.
3. Two forms used in the Public Search Rooms have been redesigned, one relates to information on the issue of Birth, Death and Marriage certificates, the other is a summary of registers and records in the custody of the Registrar General. These forms were updated to provide additional information to the public.
4. Social Survey Division, the second largest user of forms for public use constantly review schedules used by interviewers who obtain information from the public, this ensures that information is collected by the most efficient method possible.

5. OPCS has installed a reprographics charging system which counts each form printed by the Department. Printing and design costs are forwarded to each Division on a monthly basis. As accurate figures of costs and volumes are produced, each Division is informed of the cost of the provision of forms and will be better placed to both assess value for money and to exercise control over expenditure. A greater realisation of the costs incurred should lead to a better management of the use of forms. It is hoped that the system will lead to savings of at least 5%.

TABLE B PROGRESS & PLANS	ALL FORMS AT MARCH 1989			IMPORTANT FORMS AT MARCH 1989		
	TOTAL FOR DEPARTMENT (1)	REVIEWED 1987-1988 1988-1989	PLANNED FOR REVIEW IN 1989/90	TOTAL FOR DEPARTMENT (1)	REVIEWED 1987-1988 1988-1989	PLANNED FOR REVIEW IN 1989-1990
PUBLIC	137	273	125	58	127	25
INTERNAL TO DEPARTMENTS	1,205	1,162	500	70	56	40
TOTAL	1,342	1,435	625	128	183	65

Footnote (1)

Please see footnote to Table A. For the reasons stated there the sum of columns 2 and 3 does not equal the figure in column 1 nor does the sum of columns 5 and 6 equal column 4.

6. OPCS will continue to foster awareness of the forms review and the need for good communications in the interest of efficiency by:
- a. Ensuring that Divisions are aware of the cost of forms production (see 5 above);
 - b. Ensuring all relevant staff attend the appropriate forms design courses, both internally and externally;
 - c. Ensuring that all relevant staff receive copies of this report and are made aware of the continuing importance of the review

Forms Review

1987/89

Property Services Agency

1. All Forms

2. Important Forms (numbers included in 1.)

	Public	Business & Industry	Internal	Other	Total	Public	Business & Industry	Internal	Other	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/87 - as stated in 4th progress report	131	421	2077	0	2629	2	1	13	0	16
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1987/89	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/88										
a. No. of forms planned for review	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
b. No. of forms reviewed	0	1	19	0	20	0	0	3	0	3
c. No. of forms abolished	0	1	23	1	25	0	0	0	0	0
d. No. of forms retained unchanged	4	62	365	10	441	0	0	2	0	2
e. No. of forms redesigned	5	36	107	6	154	0	0	1	0	1
4. Progress 1/4/88 - 31/3/89										
a. No. of forms reviewed	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0
b. No. of forms abolished	1	0	19	0	20	0	0	0	0	0
c. No. of forms retained unchanged	4	10	148	5	167	0	0	1	0	1
d. No. of forms redesigned	1	16	47	4	68	0	0	1	0	1
5. New forms produced during 1987/89	4	35	111	10	160	0	0	0	0	0
6. Total forms in use on 31/3/89	134	455	2146	9	2744	2	1	13	0	16
7. No. of forms planned for review during 1989-1990	Figures not yet available					Figures not yet available				

5th Progress Report on Forms 1989 Property Services Agency

Progress Since 1987

Since the last report there have been many changes within the Forms Efficiency Unit which have hampered progress. There was a severe lack of resources and also the split of the Departments of the Environment and Transport (whom the Forms Efficiency Unit previously served along with the Property Services Agency as a common service). This report will, therefore, mainly deal with plans for the future.

The split of the two Departments was completed on 1 April 1989 although forms design work stopped for DOE and PSA in December because of staff shortages. At present DOE are setting up a forms unit within the Cartographic Section which will also serve PSA.

Between 1987/89 222 forms were redesigned. Although many were improved in appearance there was no formal reviewing of performance or appraisal of cost. Because of limited resources many forms had to be sent to outside contractors for phototypesetting in order to meet sponsors' demand.

Between 1987/89 160 new forms were produced. These were largely as a result of new legislation.

Between 1987/89 45 forms which had not been printed for over 5 years were abolished.

Savings

Because resources were so stretched, the unit was unable to conduct formal reviews into the performance of any forms or to make any appraisals of associated costs.

In future the new unit will set targets for numbers of forms to be reviewed each year in order to identify problem areas and savings which could be made from thorough testing and review procedures.

Value for Money

Performance indicators were introduced with set targets which provided line managers with useful data covering a range of activities for each quarter. A monthly time recharging system with individual performance targets was also kept. The charges made covered all aspects of the internal design procedure.

In future, so that sponsor divisions are more aware of the cost of producing forms it is planned to send monthly statements to each sponsor showing how much time has been spent on their form and the total "cost" of the job to date. This costing data will also help to answer some of the queries from potential clients.

Local Forms

Following the last report, Departments were asked to send copies of any locally used forms and their annual usage rates. The returns showed the extent to which forms which are sent out to the public and businesses are supplemented by local forms. Some had usage rates as high as 16,000 per year. Again, unfortunately, limited resources meant that this exercise could not be pursued.

Legal Language

Although there are still some clients who are reluctant to make improvements to the language in their forms, the awareness of the need for plain English has continued to make good progress in the Departments generally. In 1987 this was helped still further when DOE and DTp won an award in the Plain English Campaign's "Inside Write Trophy" for a series of internal training forms. Wording for many PSA forms, leaflets and guides is now more straightforward but many still need input from the forms unit in order to bring the language up to an acceptable standard.

Staffing

Following the split of the Departments no staff have been allocated as yet to the Property Services Agency forms unit.

Equipment

In September 1987 a case was put forward for a replacement system for the old Compugraphic workstations. Unfortunately the implementation of this was delayed by lack of funds and uncertainty about how the unit's position would be affected by the split of the Departments. Following the split, the Department of Transport made a separate bid for a new Apple Macintosh desktop publishing system which has recently been installed. DOE are currently reviewing the equipment specification in the light of their needs for forms, typesetting and electronic publishing work.

The Future

Objectives for the next two year period are therefore to establish a new forms unit for DOE and PSA and integrate it within a unit capable of undertaking additional typesetting and electronic publishing functions.

Forms Review 1987/89

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

Department:

50

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/87 - as stated in 4th progress report	2275	529	1688	4492	198	31	-	229
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1987/89	75	8	17	100	-	-	-	-
3 Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/88								
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 4th progress report	596	628	557	1781				
b. No of forms reviewed	17	6	10	33	2	-	-	2
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	2	2	-	4	-	-	-	-
d. No of forms retained unchanged	5	-	6	11	-	-	-	-
e. No of forms redesigned	10	4	4	18	2	-	-	2
4 Progress 1/4/88 - 31/3/89								
a. No of forms reviewed	429	71	312	812	43	16	-	59
b. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	175	28	196	399	14	1	-	15
c. No of forms retained unchanged	246	34	101	381	27	9	-	36
d. No of forms redesigned	8	9	15	32	2	6	-	8
5 New forms produced during 1/4/87 - 31/3/89	99	7	322	428	1	-	-	1
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/89 - ie items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b	2272	514	1831	4617	185	30	-	215
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/89 - 31/3/90	894	246	684	1824	92	4	-	96

SCOTTISH OFFICE

Progress since 1987

1. Central responsibility for the review and administration of forms lies with the Scottish Office Efficiency Unit.
2. In September 1987 the Unit issued guidance outlining a rolling programme of review of Scottish Office administrative forms to determine which forms remained necessary and, if so, whether their design might be improved.
3. During 1987/88 forms review work was limited to those few forms submitted to the Unit on an ad hoc basis. The start of the review was delayed until 31 January 1989 by the loss of experienced staff and a protracted vacancy in a key post. Difficulties also arose over releasing staff for training. However in the period from 31 January to 31 March 1989, 812 forms were reviewed. Of these 399 were abolished and 32 redesigned.
4. The figures shown in line 1 of the statistical table do not accord with those stated in the 4th progress report. During the current review a degree of duplication of records was identified and steps have been taken to rectify this. The figures at line 6 are an accurate reflection of the current position.

SAVINGS

5. Given the problems encountered and outlined above and the part-time nature of the forms effort, resources have not been available to assess the total savings and figures could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. We are optimistic, however, that benefits will accrue from the continued monitoring of forms.

VALUE FOR MONEY

6. During 1988/89, 48.5 man days went into review activity at a total cost to the Efficiency Unit of £3,706 (including a proportion of overhead costs etc). The main performance measures derived from this are the cost per form reviewed by the Efficiency Unit and the average number of forms reviewed per man day. The cost per form fell from around £12 in 1986/87 to £9 in 1988/89 and the throughput of forms reviewed per man day rose from 6.6 to 8.5.

LOCAL FORMS

7. There are approximately 1530 local or internal forms in the Scottish Office. These include travel and subsistence forms, typing, photocopying and stationery requisition forms etc which are in use across all Departments. These are reviewed as and when required in the light of user experience.

LEGAL LANGUAGE

8. Responsibility for liaising with the Department's Solicitor's Office rests with sponsoring divisions where a legal contribution is appropriate to the proposed form.

STAFFING

9. Forms review work within the Efficiency Unit is undertaken on a part-time basis by one HEO (10%) and one AO (15%) who co-ordinate the rolling programme and advise divisions on design and layout of new forms. The Computer Graphics Unit has responsibility for the drawing up of forms to customer specifications.

EQUIPMENT

10. There has been no change in equipment since the last report.

THE FUTURE

11. After the hiatus in 1987/88 and early 1988/89 arrangements are now in hand to ensure that forms are reviewed on a cyclical basis. With an annual review rate of around 1200 forms, it is our objective that every form should be reviewed at least once every 5 years.

12. It is planned to review 1824 forms during the period 1 April 1989 to 31 March 1990. Renewed efforts will be made to remind sponsoring divisions of their responsibility to the forms review exercise. The success of the review programme will continue to depend on good liaison between the Unit and sponsoring divisions.

13. The register of Divisional Forms Officers is under review and is being updated.

Forms Review 1987/89

1. All Forms

2. Important Forms

(Numbers Included in 1.)

DTI	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/87 - as stated in 4th progress report		4732	5027	9759 *		26	16	42
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1987/89		686	0	686		1	1	2
3 Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/88		438	420	858		5	2	7
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 4th progress report								
b. No of forms reviewed		753	509	1262		11	1	12
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised		172	234	406		1	0	1
d. No of forms retained unchanged		140	112	252		4	1	5
No of forms redesigned		613	397	1010		7	0	7
4 Progress 1/4/88-31/3/89		1076	577	1653		5	2	7
a. No of forms reviewed								
b. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms - 1 abolished 1 revised		333	298	631		1	0	1
c. No of forms retained unchanged		262	193	455		3	2	5
d. No of forms redesigned		814	384	1198		2	0	2
5 New forms produced during 1/4/87 - 31/3/89		616	586	1202		3	0	3
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/89 - ie. items 1+2+5. less items 3c+4b		4333	4732	9065		28	17	45
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/89 - 31/3/90		500	300	800		3	3	6



the department for Enterprise

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY

REPORT BY THE DTI FORMS UNIT : MAY 1989

Progress since 1987

1 During the past two years DTI has experienced much change and as a result the Departmental Forms Unit has dealt with a significant rise in demand for its expertise. Increasingly, line managers are looking to it for advice on the design, layout and language of guidance material of all kinds.

2 In 1988, DTI introduced Consistent Presentation guidelines aimed at improving the presentation of all its documents. Although this increased the work load for the Unit, it has led to a more attractive portfolio of forms and an overall improvement in their effectiveness.

3 A thorough review of the Departmental Forms Unit's aims, its working practices, and of its customers' needs has recently been completed. We hope that this will lead to better resource management. Work is almost finished on a substantial work programme to improve effectiveness in design, control and awareness. Its aim has been, in part, to enable the Unit to deal with the challenges posed by the creation of a number of Departmental Agencies and the increasing devolution of responsibility to line management. The Forms Unit is now ready to provide an advice and design service in a competitive environment. It is also encouraging more active participation of line management in the design and control process.

4 We have recently decided to delegate the design of local internal forms to line management. At the same time, we have work in hand to strengthen the community of divisional forms co-ordinators by providing them with a range of guidance

notes on the design and control of forms. The figures in the statistical table cover work undertaken by the Companies House Executive Agency and the Business Statistics Office as well as the Departmental Forms Unit.

Savings

5 The pressing claims of design work have recently prevented the Forms Unit from undertaking as much work to identify savings as they would have wished. However, in 1987, a sampling exercise was completed on the Import Licensing Application Form to check for error rates. The annual usage of the form was 180,000 and it was estimated that errors were approximately 34% per year. The form was revised at the end of 1987 and was reviewed after it had been in operation for 6 months. The Forms Unit found that it was working well with low error rates. Annual usage has now increased to 300,000 but the error rate is now less than 10% with a consequent saving of £9,000 per annum.

6 BSO have saved 50% of an HEO's time on forms design by combining posts and by printing the majority of their forms on a laser printer. This has saved £18,000 in printing costs a year.

7 The Export Licensing Unit have saved £8,500 a year in storage costs by transferring the storage of the main Export Licence Application Form (which has an estimated annual usage of approximately 300,000) to HMSO at Chaverton.

Value for Money

8 We are developing a computerised management information system which we hope to integrate into a wider divisional management information system providing cost detail information. An analysis of the data currently available is being used to help streamline design and processing procedures so as to reduce costs and increase turn - round times.



the department for Enterprise

9 The Departmental Unit has improved output by delegating appropriate design work to clerical support staff and by rationalising its quality assurance procedures.

10 The improved computer facilities have provided enhanced design capability with greater flexibility and is providing a service which can be more responsive to customer need.

11 Historically, the Forms Unit has been demand led. Although there is an increasing demand on the design facilities, the enhanced equipment will allow resources to be deployed to focus greater attention on forms control, in particular on analysis of the effectiveness of the Department's important external forms.

12 At BSO a Rank Xerox 9700 laser printer enables the forms unit to print supplies of forms quickly on demand. This has removed the need for a forms store for forms.

Local Forms

13 A review of local forms in the Department's Regional Offices was completed in 1987/88 and each Regional Office was visited. Following this review we have decided to delegate responsibility for design of all local forms to local line managers. But, before implementing this change, the Forms Unit is preparing guidance material to issue to line managers through the network of local forms co-ordinators. The Forms Unit will continue to give advice and contribute to design when asked.

14 A central computerised inventory of local forms has been established and will be monitored to ensure that improved standards are maintained.

Legal Language

15 The Forms Unit has been involved in the review and redesign of 42 Patents forms. These forms have not been looked at since 1977 when the last Patents Act was passed. The current forms, written in legal language, are not easy for members of the public to complete. The new forms have been considerably simplified and it is now much more obvious who is responsible for filling in which part of the form. The Patent Office processes are being computerised and the new forms are being designed to be compatible with computer input screens.

16 The BSO commissioned the Plain English Campaign (PEC) to comment on a number of their forms. The PEC redesigned completely one form sent out under the annual census of production. The impact of the redesign on contributors to that enquiry has yet to be assessed.

Deregulation

17 The Patent Office forms mentioned above have been discussed with Patent Agents. The Agents wanted a form which was suitable for word processor completion and which they could easily identify for filing purposes. The design of new forms takes account of these needs. The Patent Agents were initially reluctant to change the forms with which they are familiar, but they are now surprisingly happy with the revised forms.

Staffing

18 The Departmental Forms Unit has 7 staff, 50% of an SEO, 1 HEO, 3 EOs, 1 AO, 1 AA. Although design is primarily done at AO/EO level, all Unit staff undertake design work. The day to day management of the Unit is the responsibility of the HEO. The SEO has been responsible for undertaking, with the HEO, the fundamental review of the Forms Unit, preparing a work programme and organising the production of guidance material



the department for Enterprise

on forms design and control for forms co-ordinators and line managers.

19 All executive staff are trained in O&M techniques and will increasingly be using these skills to analyse the need for information and the related procedures currently supported by the Department's major suites of external and national forms.

20 A closer relationship is being built with line divisions so that when responsibility for local forms is delegated to line divisions Forms Unit staff have:

- * a good feel for how the process is developing
- * a good relationship with forms co-ordinators and sponsors.

The job profiles in the Forms Unit are being changed to include a greater element of analysis and consultancy.

21 BSO's forms unit, which deals with statistical and administrative forms for the Statistics Branches, has 3.5 staff, an HEO, 1 EO and 2 AOs, with the HEO responsible for identifying reviews and major editing and the EO design. The unit is located in the Management Services Section, and the staff have O&M expertise. BSO will of course become part of the Central Statistical Office in July. The Companies House forms unit has 3.5 staff, 35% HEO, 1 EO and 1 AO and 1 AA, and is located in the Support Services section.

Equipment

22 In February 1989 the Departmental Forms Unit upgraded its existing equipment of 2 Apple Lisas and acquired 3 Apple Macintosh II Graphic terminals with a 19 inch display screen



the department for Enterprise

and a 300 dpi laser printer. The software used is:

1. Microsoft Word
2. PageMaker
3. Formation
4. Forms Machine
5. Cricketdraw

The Unit has also ordered the Stylewriter software, after having used Inland Revenue's Stylewriter package successfully on our forms.

23 The quality of design and output now offered to the customer is greatly improved as the machines are much more versatile. The Microsoft Word and PageMaker software enables the designers to produce guidance notes which they were unable to do before. The service provided is increasingly fast and efficient.

24 BSO's forms unit has also introduced DTP equipment enabling on-screen design and the Companies House Unit is currently considering re-equipping their unit.

The Future

25 DTI have very few large volume, external, administrative forms but its administrative forms cover a wide variety of activities. The Department has recently gone through a period of change which has had a impact on the style and content of its forms. The number of forms is continuing to increase and regular amendments are required. It is unlikely that external and national forms will have a high redundancy rate but the Forms Unit will need the capacity to respond to a high level of design and redesign work, much of which will be required quickly.



the department for Enterprise

26 The Unit will put more of its resources into forms control so as to ensure that important national and external forms are as effective as possible. This will be made possible by increasing the computer design capability, delegating responsibility for the design of local forms and continuing to streamline internal procedures.

27 It is planned to make Departmental line managers more conscious of the importance of good forms through a new awareness campaign which will emphasise their personal responsibility for using effective, well designed.

28 The Unit will continue to use consultants such as the Plain English Campaign and the Forms Information Centre, Reading, in its pursuit of excellence and best practice.

29 In the next year some of the Department's most important forms will be redesigned. This is the suite of forms for The Queen's Award Schemes which will have a particularly high profile in 1990 which marks the 25th Anniversary of the Scheme.



the department for Enterprise

FORMS REVIEW 1987/89 : dti

NOTES

- * The figure supplied in 1987 contained an estimate of the number of local forms in use. A review of local forms used in DTI's regional offices during the past year, coupled with better management information being supplied by local offices proves out 1987 estimate to be inaccurate. The 1989 figure although still an estimate is, we believe, far more accurate.

BSO's activity on statistical survey forms is included in DTI's return for the first time. These forms account for most of the external forms entered in Section 2.

DTI
MAY 1989

FORMS REVIEW 1987/89

Department:

Employment Department Group: The Training Agency including The Employment Service Agency Work.

i All Forms

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31.3.87 - as stated in 4 th. progress report	326	181	1758	2265
2 Additional existing forms - notified to Forms Unit during 1987/89				
3 Progress 1.4.87 - 31.3.88				
a No. of forms planned for review - as reported in 4 th. progress report	82	116	511	709
b No. of forms reviewed	197	260	943	1400
c No. of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, (eg amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised)	26	30	423	479
d No. of forms retained unchanged	152	206	472	830
e No. of forms redesigned	19	24	48	91
4 Progress 1.4.88 - 31.3.89				
a No. of forms reviewed	163	158	647	968
b No. of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, (eg amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised)	74	27	297	398
c No. of forms retained unchanged	71	108	290	469
d No. of forms redesigned	18	23	40	81
5 New forms produced during 1.4.87 - 31.3.89	125	127	279	531
6 Total forms in use on 31.3.89 - ie items 1 + 2 + 5, less items 3c + 4b	351	251	1317	1919
7 No forms planned for review 1.4.89 - 31.3.90	207	209	665	1081

ii Important Forms (Numbers Included in i)

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1	76	68	53	197
2				
3				
a	19	39	29	87
b	48	100	56	204
c	5	8	36	49
d	39	78	10	127
e	4	14	10	28
4				
a	44	67	80	191
b	12	6	23	41
c	24	44	42	100
d	8	17	15	40
5	17	35	51	103
6	76	89	45	210
7	56	80	119	265

EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT GROUP: The Training Agency

Progress since 1987

- 1 This has been an exciting and hectic two years in which the Manpower Services Commission was reorganised and Employment Training was introduced. In late 1987, The Employment and Enterprise Group of the MSC together with the relevant parts of Corporate Services and Resources Divisions became part of the new Employment Service and Central Staff Unit part of Employment Department. The remaining training elements of MSC, in Head Office and field locations, were subsequently renamed The Training Agency remaining within Employment Department Group. The Training Agency operates an agency service for forms design for The Employment Service (excluding the former Unemployment Benefit Service). Employment Training was introduced in September 1988. These events resulted in a massive increase in the number of forms reviewed.
- 2 Overall, we reviewed 2,368 forms in the period against a planned total of 1,282, an increase of 85%. Although 531 new forms were created, due mainly to new schemes which are also reflected in support systems, 877 forms were abolished resulting in an overall drop of 346 in the forms in use, a reduction of 15%. As the emphasis is now on business and industry taking a more active part in training, this has greatly contributed to a 39% increase in this category of forms from 181 to 251. The number of internal forms has fallen by 25% from 1,758 to 1,317.
- 3
 - a The creation of a value for money indicator's return now enables us to measure the value for money obtained from providers of Restart Courses and to show how cost effective the courses are.
 - b Following the creation of the Employment Service, unifying the two planning and resourcing systems led to 43 forms being abolished.
 - c With the revision of the report form used by local offices to notify race/sex discrimination to Head Office, the standard of reports has improved. They now show clearly the decision made and further action required as well as providing further information in case the issue has to be referred to Equal Opportunities Commission.
 - d Skills Training Agency introduced a yearly review system of all their forms and increased their planned reviews for the period by 41%.
 - e 67 Community Programme forms were reviewed with 26 abolished. Those remaining are mainly finance related which will still be used beyond the end of Community Programme contracts with Agents and Sponsors.
 - f The devolution of work to the regions, following the transfer of Central Staff Unit to Department of Employment, has led to 199 forms being abolished.
 - g A total of 5 new standardised forms have been produced for the requisition and purchase of goods and services by the Training Agency.
 - h A new action plan form has been developed aimed at helping Disablement Resettlement Officers and their clients, who are partially sighted. Disablement Resettlement Officers are now able to agree in writing with their clients on a form, which is adaptable and easy to follow, action needed at various stages to help the clients into work.
- 4 In addition to the 199 staff forms abolished, 90 Adult Training, 89 Skills Training Agency, 187 computer and 96 finance and accounts forms were also included in the number of forms abolished.

- 5 New schemes are introduced as a result of the launch of New Initiatives and these frequently require a new series of forms. Sometimes old schemes overlap with new schemes, for example Community Programme and Adult Training with Employment Training, and the old and new forms continue side by side for a period.

Savings

- 6 The benefits of good well designed forms are obvious and we have, in the past, been able to reasonably quantify savings. During the current review period, it has been almost impractical to do because of the greatly increased number of forms reviewed. However, we have been able to quantify some small savings totalling 3,600 hours to the public and 5,400 hours to the Department.

Value for Money

- 7 The Forms Unit is assessed by the number of forms reviewed, the number of forms abolished and the number of final A4 sides produced. From the latter, the number produced for each staff unit of the Forms Unit and the cost of each A4 proof (which are separated into the figures for forms work and for other work) are calculated. Also taken into account is the Forms Unit's ability to satisfy the needs of its customers in relation to advice, the quality and effectiveness of the forms and the Unit's ability to meet target dates.

Local Forms

- 8 Due to the amount of work generated by the reorganisation of the Department and the introduction of Employment Training, no action has been taken on local forms. This will be remedied over the next period of report.

Legal Language

- 9 Our overall aim is to keep legal language to a minimum and to use plain English so long as our interests are safeguarded. In this there is full co-operation between policy sections and Departmental Solicitors. Because of the wide and varied educational standard of participants, Solicitors' advice on the Enterprise Allowance Scheme agreement between the participant and Department led to a further simplification of the form. The Solicitors helped to simplify the language in equal opportunity forms for Skills Training Agency and also the Youth Training Scheme contracts. They were also involved in the new system for purchasing goods and services in The Training Agency. In particular, the three individual forms which give the the Training Agency's specific terms and conditions of business. Because these forms are more specific, the wording is more relevant to the goods or services required and should be easier to understand than the previous general terms and conditions.

Staffing

- 10 Following the reorganisation of Manpower Services Commission in late 1987, Forms Unit was later officially transferred to Information and Management Services Branch. Staffing levels are 8½ staff made up of ¼ SEO, 1 HEO, 1 EO, 4 AOs, 1AA and 1 Typist.

Equipment

- 11 The re-equipping of our Reprographics Unit means that we can increase the amount and type of printing done in-house, for example, multi-colour work. To take full advantage of the improved facilities, our current design system will have to be replaced by one which can produce high quality camera ready art work. We

would then also be able to do a proportion of other typesetting which is now done outwith the Department. These planned improvements to our in-house facilities should result in quite substantial savings being made once they are installed.

The Future

12 Over the next two years, we will

- issue suitable guidance on reviewing local forms.
- audit national forms.
- look into replacing our current computer system.
- review current instructions.

13 In the coming year, 1,081 forms will be reviewed including

- 43 Restart forms, now in 6 different series of forms, which are to be brought into one series with its own distinctive style.
- 33 Voluntary Projects Programme forms which are to be abolished.
- 42 Community Programme forms so as to abolish as many as possible and convert those remaining to Employment Training forms.
- 22 Jobstart forms to see if they can be made more comprehensive and more easily understood.

Forms Review

1987/89

Department of Transport

1 Forms in use on 31/3/87

- as stated in 4th progress report

2 Additional existing forms

- notified to forms units during 1987/89

3 Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/88

a. No. of forms planned for review

b. No. of forms reviewed

c. No. of forms abolished

d. No. of forms retained unchanged

e. No. of forms redesigned

4. Progress 1/4/88 - 31/3/89

a. No. of forms reviewed

b. No. of forms abolished

c. No. of forms retained unchanged

d. No. of forms redesigned

5. New forms produced during 1987/89

6. Total forms in use on 31/3/89

7. No. of forms planned for review during 1989-1990

1. All Forms

2. Important Forms (numbers included in 1.)

	Public	Business & Industry	Internal	Other	Total	Public	Business & Industry	Internal	Other	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/87 - as stated in 4th progress report	138	444	703	-	1285	11	25	29	-	65
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1987/89	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/88 a. No. of forms planned for review	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
b. No. of forms reviewed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
c. No. of forms abolished	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
d. No. of forms retained unchanged	17	48	113	19	197	1	5	5	0	11
e. No. of forms redesigned	6	28	26	10	70	0	4	4	3	11
4. Progress 1/4/88 - 31/3/89 a. No. of forms reviewed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
b. No. of forms abolished	0	7	9	5	21	0	0	0	0	0
c. No. of forms retained unchanged	0	1	3	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
d. No. of forms redesigned	4	11	33	4	52	0	1	1	0	2
5. New forms produced during 1987/89	17	17	18	19	71	9	0	0	0	9
6. Total forms in use on 31/3/89	155	454	711	14	1334	20	25	29	0	74
7. No. of forms planned for review during 1989-1990	Figures not yet available					Figures not yet available				

5th Progress Report on Forms 1989 Department of Transport

Progress since 1987

Since the last report many changes have been made in the Department. Amongst them, the first Executive Agency, the Vehicle Inspectorate, has been formed and now controls the majority of its own forms.

Also, the forms efficiency unit was affected by the split of the Common Service directorates of the Departments of the Environment and Transport (whom we previously served along with the Property Services Agency). This caused some problems for us but we deal with these later. The split was completed on 1 April 1989 although we stopped designing forms for DOE and PSA in December because of staff shortages. At present DOE are setting up a forms unit within the Cartographic Section (which I believe will also serve PSA).

Nevertheless, between 1987 and 1989, 122 forms were redesigned by us. Many were improved in language and appearance but there was no formal reviewing of performance or appraisal of cost. Because of limited staff and equipment resources many forms had to be sent to outside contractors for typesetting in order to meet sponsors' demand.

Between 1987 and 1989, 71 new forms were produced. These were largely as a result of new legislation. The Merchant Shipping Act 1988 for example meant that a series of 18 forms had to be produced in-house within very short timescales.

Between 1987 and 1989 we abolished 22 forms which had not been printed for over 5 years.

Savings

Because of the split there was uncertainty about the future which led to staff losses and a lack of capital investment in new equipment. These limited resources meant we were unable to conduct formal reviews into the performance of any forms or to make any appraisals of associated costs.

In the next year, now we have our new equipment, we plan to set targets for numbers of forms to be reviewed each year in order to identify problem areas and savings which could be made from thorough testing and review procedures. A structured review plan will also help us develop an accurate forms costing system.

Value for Money

We introduced performance indicators with set targets which provided line managers with useful data covering a range of activities for each quarter. This information helped a great deal in supporting our case for new equipment. In future, we will be working to similar targets in order to show how our performance has improved with better resources.

We also operated a monthly time recharging system with individual performance targets. The charges made covered all aspects of the internal design procedure. In future, so that sponsor divisions are more aware of the cost of producing forms we plan to send monthly statements to each sponsor showing the time spent on their form and the total cost of the job to date. Records of these costs will help us answer some of the queries we get from potential clients.

Local Forms

Following the last report, we asked the Departments to send us copies of any locally used forms and their annual usage rates. The return from the Traffic Area Offices showed the extent to which forms which are sent out to the public and businesses are supplemented by local forms. Some had usage rates as high as 16,000 per year. Again, unfortunately, our limited resources meant that we could not pursue this exercise further.

Legal Language

Although we still occasionally come across clients who are reluctant to make improvements to their forms, the awareness of the need for plain English has continued to make good progress in the Departments generally. In 1987 this was helped still further when DOE & DTp won an award in the Plain English Campaign's "inside Write Trophy" for a series of internal training forms. Wording for forms, leaflets and guides is now much more straightforward and needs less input from the forms unit in order to bring it to an acceptable standard.

Deregulation

There has been no formal contact with the Department of Transport deregulation unit.

DL 26: Application for a Driving Test Appointment

Since the last report, DL26 has had the changes resulting from the trials incorporated and, since January 1988 has been in general use. The Traffic Area Offices are now fully computerised and the form will need to be redesigned. This will no doubt lead to the necessity for a further review once the redesigned version has been in use for some months.

Staffing

Following the split of the Departments, the staff allocated to Department of Transport forms unit currently consists of:

% Time	Grade	Function
10%	SEO	Line Manager
100%	HEO	FEU Manager
100%	EO	Forms Designer
100%	AO	Admin. support

Equipment

In September 1987 a case was put forward for a replacement system for our Compugraphic workstations. Unfortunately the implementation of this was delayed by lack of funds and uncertainty about how our position would be affected by the split of the Departments. Recently we have had a comprehensive Apple Macintosh desk top publishing system installed, consisting of 2 x 80MB large screen Apple Iix, 1 Apple SE and various other items including a scanner and laserprinter. This new equipment will enable us to increase our flexibility and output and improve efficiency. We hope that the extra capacity these benefits will give will allow us to have time to get involved in reviews and costing / testing exercises.

The Future

Our objectives for the next two year period are therefore to:

- establish a forms costing / testing programme to identify savings;
- identify and improve local forms; and
- continue to encourage the use of plain English in all Departmental forms and guides.

FORMS REVIEW 1987/89

I. ALL FORMS

Department:

HM TREASURY

	Public	Business	Internal	Total
1. Progress 1/4/87 - 31/3/89				
a. No of forms Reviewed	81	167	2625	2873
b. No of Reviewed - left unchanged	75	149	2321	2545
c. No of forms Abolished - each form to be counted only once. eg amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished 1 revised	3	6	164	173
d. No of forms redesigned	3	12	140	155
e. No of new forms	1	10	125	136
2. Total number of forms in use 31/3/89 ie items a+e-c	79	171	2586	2836

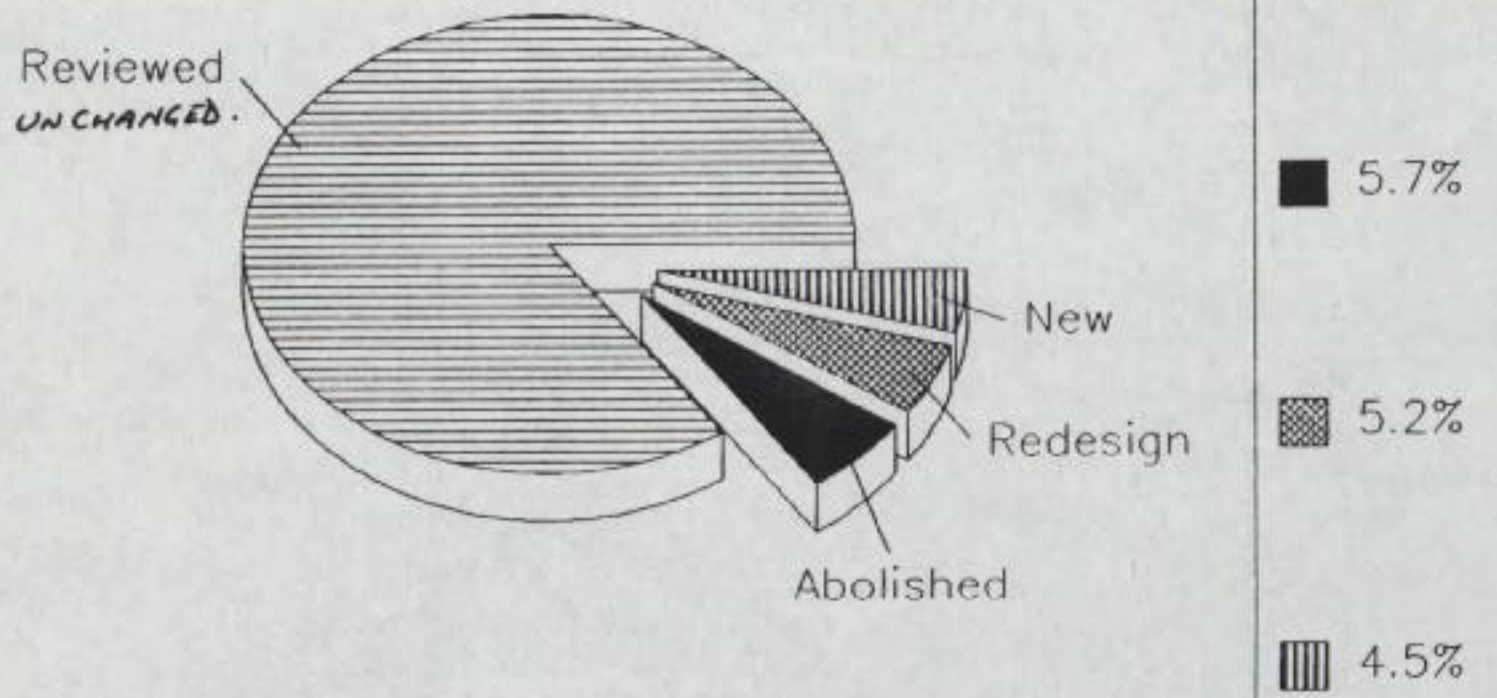
II. IMPORTANT FORMS (Numbers included in I.)

Public	Business	Internal ex- GS	General Service *	Total
8	128	53	89	278
7	117	19	85	228
0	6	22	1	29
1	5	12	3	21
0	8	22	2	32
8	130	53	90	281

The total number of forms in use includes the total number of forms reviewed over 2 years period since we did not get the separate figure for 1987/88. So the total number of forms are high in value.

* This category was not included in the past Forms Review.

Review of the Administrative Forms
1987-89
All Forms



H M TREASURY

Progress since 1987

1. The Forms Unit has over the last two years successfully completed two reviews of forms, promoted good forms practice and reduced the overall number of forms.

Savings

2. Since April 1987, we have abolished 173 forms with a consequent saving in paper, production and processing costs. We are still seeking ways to improve the monitoring and control of costs of our forms which will require close working with our Stationery Store. Savings have been made through the installation of a desk top computer system which provides us with immediate camera-ready copy at marginal cost leading to an increase in the proportion of forms produced in-house thus reducing the need to go to outside typesetters.

3. In order to secure value for money and to assess the benefits of reviews, we are continuing to ask sponsors to provide us with information on the performance of new or redesigned forms.

Local Forms

4. The departmental survey which was conducted two years successfully reduced the number of local forms, ie a form created and used within a division. However we are continuing to monitor whether the remaining forms are justified.

Staffing

5. The forms unit is part of the Information Technology Policy Unit (ITPU), a branch of the Information Technology Support Division (EOG5). It is now staffed by an EO, with some AO support. The responsibilities of the EO post have recently been reviewed and it is estimated that he will spend approximately 30% of his time on managing the unit's work; including some forms design; handling most of the day-to-day contact with divisions; advising sponsors; and contacting others involved in reviews. The AO spends 30% of his time assisting the EO on the all the above items.

6. Because of the staffing position, forms work must fit in with other responsibilities. Consequently, we need to be realistic about the nature of the service we offer. We aim to provide a full design service for some of the new and important forms. To supplement this, we have taken steps to promote good forms practice throughout the department generally. We continue to circulate a guidance leaflet for sponsors which summarises the most important issues for them to consider when creating or reviewing a form. Where specific guidance or advice is required, sponsors are encouraged to contact us at an early stage.

Equipment

7. For the last two years we have operated Ventura Publishers software which has been upgraded with the Professional Extension and for our forms database, we use the Smart Software System widely used in the Treasury. To run the software, we use an IBM-PC AT compatible microcomputer with 40 megabytes storage, extra memory, a 'mouse' and a high-resolution screen. Camera-ready paper output is produced via a postscript printer.

The Future

8. Consideration is currently being given to whether the Forms Unit should be placed under the responsibility of the Treasury Publications Unit which should create savings through the pooling of staff and equipment. This issue should be resolved within the next year.

9. The aim over the next two years, should be to continue to integrate the work of forms design and control into the overall aims and objectives of sponsor divisions. The design effort should be concentrated on improving General Service forms. Specifically, over the next two years the Forms Unit should:

- review all General Service Forms;
- establish procedures to monitor and control costs of forms;
- encourage sponsors responsible for large numbers of forms to have a member of staff trained in forms design.

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Summary of achievements

Review completed:	Public	0
	Business and industry	0
	Internal	179

Abolished	149
Retained	30
New design	4

Volume of forms

Total forms in use 1987	571
Abolished 1988/89	149
Balance	422
New forms created	20

TOTAL FORMS IN USE 1989	442
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Manpower Unit
Central Office of Information

CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

1. The control of statistical forms is part of the survey control process instituted by a series of Prime Ministerial directives, the most recent in October 1987. All new statistical surveys of businesses conducted by any department or agency, are required to be reported to the Survey Control Unit (SCU) in the Central Statistical Office and then submitted for approval to the responsible departmental minister; the ministerial submission has to include any comments made by the SCU about the justification for or design of the survey. All existing regular statistical surveys of businesses are required to be reviewed at least once every five years, the review report being monitored by the SCU for completeness and coverage and then submitted for ministerial approval.
2. The process of scrutinising proposed new surveys (mostly ad hoc surveys) by the SCU involves a series of questions about the need for a survey to collect the information, the size of the sample of businesses to be approached, the design of the questionnaire and any associated forms and the ease with which the respondent can supply the required information. The process of scrutiny will often produce proposals for improvement of the questionnaire or other modifications to reduce the burden on businesses.
3. In the course of the years 1987-1989, 673 new surveys directed to businesses were scrutinised in this way. In addition, 133 new surveys directed to local authorities were dealt with in a similar way, though with modifications to the procedure to take account of existing consultative machinery. There is also a simpler reporting procedure for surveys directed to households or individuals, under which 630 surveys were dealt with over the same period.

Central Statistical Office
30 August 1989



CROWN
PROSECUTION
SERVICE

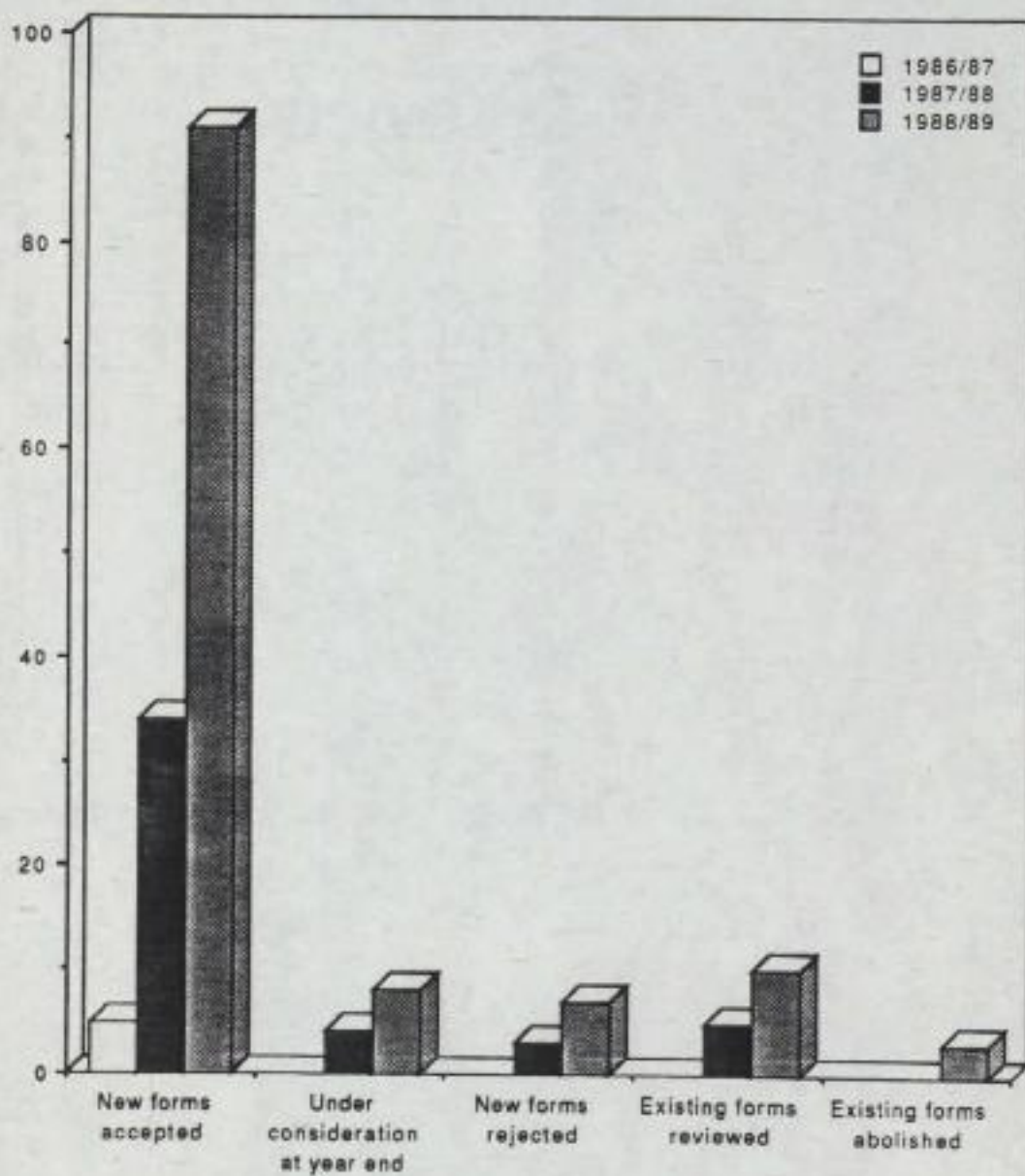
CPS perFORMance
the role of the Forms Unit.

Report
for the period 1 October 1986 to 31 March 1989

Management Services Division
4 - 12 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1H 9AZ

Statistical Summary

	New forms designed	Accepted	Still under consideration at year end	Rejected (or not taken up)	Existing forms reviewed	Forms abolished
1986/87	5	5	-	-	-	-
1987/88	41	34	4	3	5	-
1988/89	106	91	8	7	10	3



Introduction

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is a new government department, which was established under the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985. It was formed in 1986 and was introduced in two stages. Metropolitan Areas came into being in April and Shire Areas followed in October. Prior to 1986 virtually all prosecutions were conducted by the Police or the appropriate Local Authority Prosecuting Solicitors Department. The principal objectives for forming a national service were to establish a measure of independence from the Police of the prosecution function and to achieve greater consistency of prosecution work and standards across the country.

The CPS is headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions and operates on a regional basis throughout England and Wales. There are 4 Regions, divided into 31 Areas headed by a Chief Crown Prosecutor, each Area being further divided into Branches where cases are prosecuted at the local Magistrates' Court. Some cases are then committed to the Crown Court where the CPS has responsibility, as Instructing Solicitor, for appointing and briefing Counsel.

Organisation

The Forms Unit in the CPS is part of Management Services Division and is staffed on a part-time basis by 1 SEO and 1 HEO assignment officer who are also responsible for O&M and other consultancy reviews in the Department. The SEO post has been filled since August 1986, but the HEO post was vacant for much of 1987 and 1988. The Unit has an Apple Macintosh Desk Top Publishing system which is used for drafting and amending forms and for producing camera ready copy through a laser printer. This process is used extensively for producing internal and low volume usage forms. The Unit also provides, when resources allow a design service for ad-hoc material, such as report covers, organisation charts, notices and other miscellaneous design formats.

Work Programme

Since its formation the Forms Unit has, of necessity, maintained a low profile and has spent much of the time finding its feet and providing a service mainly to other HQ Divisions to support new national procedures for administrative support functions. The

Unit is now starting to provide a service to Area and national prosecution procedures. There will be a significant input by the Unit to the development of a national computerised standard case operational procedure (SCOPE).

The SCOPE project, as well as computerising case-tracking systems, will examine many of the clerical procedures surrounding prosecution activity and the documentation used. The Forms Unit is heavily involved in this work and is contracted to design standard letters and stock forms to be output by the system.

Having been formed from many smaller, discrete units operating at a local level the CPS inherited several different procedural systems as well as the documents which go with them. Most of our forms and standard letters are sent to other parties in the Criminal Justice System - the Police, the Courts (Magistrate & Crown) and the defence - conveying information relating to a court hearing or requesting additional information relevant to a particular case. We are therefore limited, to some extent, in controlling the number of forms in use.

One of the first tasks which the Forms Unit carried out in late 1986, early 1987, was an inventory of existing forms used at Area level. Over 700 forms were received, many of which were different Area versions of forms designed to carry out the same or similar tasks. Rather than impose change twice, it has been considered more cost-effective that rationalisation of these forms should take place in the context of the SCOPE project.

Under these circumstances it is impractical for this report to give accurate statistical information on the number of forms in use throughout the Department, or a breakdown between important and internal or external usage. The Unit will continue responding to requests for new forms or revisions from HQ Divisions, reviewing the use of that form at the time and putting forward suggestions for improvements. In respect of Area or prosecution procedure forms, the CPS will use the opportunity of the SCOPE project to introduce new national forms to replace current individual Area forms. Requests from Areas will be handled in the same way as HQ Divisions, but additionally looking at the wider national implications of adopting those forms as locally based. This policy will form the basis of a new statistical record of forms in use in the Department.

Forms Unit Activity

In spite of these problems we have been active in our support to HQ divisions and the forms which they promulgate throughout the Field. We have also been responsible for reviewing 3 major forms which are used by people outside the Department.

Oct 1986 - March 1987

In preparation for the commencement of CPS activities, HMSO had produced several forms for use in the financial systems of the Department. These forms were in use from day 1 of the service.

During this period, before the unit acquired its computer system, all forms were drafted by hand and typeset by outside organisations. Five forms were produced, 2 for use by outside clients (the Notification of Fees to Counsel and Crown Court Brief Backsheets) and 3 for internal usage.

April 1987 - March 1988

In its first full year of operation the Forms Unit was responsible for designing 41 new forms. Of these 34 were adopted and 4 were still under consideration at the end of the year. Three designs were either rejected or not taken up by the sponsor division. In addition 5 existing forms were subjected to review before reprinting. A major review of forms sent to witnesses to enable them to claim expenses for their attendance at court was started.

Several ad-hoc design jobs were carried out, including a design for the Annual Report of the CPS, a departmental organisation chart and staff directory and various miscellaneous notices and covers. A major task was the formatting of a questionnaire for consultants involved in a review of communications throughout the Department.

April 1988 - March 1989

The review of witness expense claim forms was completed during this year, resulting in the introduction of revised forms during November. These forms are completed by members of the public and by witnesses called in a professional or expert capacity, to enable them to claim expenses incurred in attending court as witnesses for the prosecution. With an annual national usage volume in the region of 200,000 copies this is the first, major external form to be reviewed by the Department. As a result of this review 3 internal forms were abolished.

The Unit has also prepared a Recruitment Application Form for Administration & Support Band grade staff, which closely follows a design submitted to the Civil Service Commission for recruitment of Crown Prosecutors.

During the year the Unit has produced designs for 10 revised forms and created 106 new designs, of which 91 were adopted and 8 were still under consideration at the end of the year. Seven designs, were either rejected or not taken up by the sponsor division.

The Unit has again provided a wide range of ad-hoc designs for use within the Department, including flow charts and procedural charts and handouts for Training Branch, bulletin designs, information leaflets and Fire & Bomb Alert notices.

Future Work Programme

The complement of Management Support Branch has been increased by one EO post for 1989/90 and it is intended that much of this post will be allocated to forms work, giving the equivalent of one full time post. About a third of the forms design work will be connected with SCOPE support and a proposed study for a "model office" to be undertaken by the Branch. Another third will be taken up with other CPS operational forms (as used by Areas) and HQ requests. We plan to use the remaining capacity to meet some of the non-forms publishing requirements of the CPS.

All new designs created by the Forms Unit will follow a house-style, intended to promote a consistent corporate identity throughout the Department. Wherever possible forms follow a common layout and are printed in a standard type-face; multi-part sets are colour coded to identify the recipient of a particular copy. This house-style, although well developed at present, is an evolutionary process which will continue in association with other parts of the organisation working on a departmental logo and identity programme.

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE

REPORT ON THE WORK OF FORMS UNIT 1987 - 1988
1988 - 1989

1 INTRODUCTION

HSE is a comparatively small organisation with a very small forms control unit: 1 EO (part-time) + 1 AO. Forms Unit has been part of Resources and Planning Division B4 since Sept 1985. During the period April 1987 to March 1988 and April 1988 to March 1989 the Unit has continued to meet the demand for forms design.

2 WORK ACCOMPLISHED

APRIL 1987 - MARCH 1988

New forms designed	29
Forms redesigned	50
Forms reviewed	171
Forms destroyed	81,489
(89 made obsolete)	

APRIL 1988 - MARCH 1989

New forms designed	59
Forms redesigned	74
Forms reviewed	314
Forms destroyed	199,877
(29 made obsolete)	

As a result of abolishing the 29 forms 199,877 items were scrapped. These items were stored at either HSE's Cherry Lane Warehouse or at HMSO. The savings, made as a result of this work will come from greater efficiency in sponsor's sections, savings in storage costs and eventually, lower HMSO costs.

3 REVIEW

The total number of forms in use at present is 566, 92 of which are priced and available through HMSO. All forms are reviewed regularly and may be conducted in several ways. Much of the work is reactive. When the form comes up for reprint the Forms Unit contacts the sponsor

branch via the Forms Liaison Officer to check whether changes are required and, if necessary, point out areas where improvements could be made. This starts the consultation process that ends in a revised design being introduced. However, if no problems are identified the design is retained and new stocks are printed. All form details are held on computer and amended when necessary. The system provides an automatic B/F facility enabling regular reviews of each form.

4 NEW FORMS

When a section has identified the need for a new form the Unit is notified accordingly. The Unit will decide whether or not a new form is necessary and investigate if a similar form already exists. The sponsor may come to the Unit with a clear idea as to what the form should contain and its layout or may have only a general outline of their requirements. The Unit works closely with sponsoring sections advising as to the content, wording (plain English), layout and may question the need for the creation of new forms or recommend the amalgamation of existing forms. The Unit has contact with both Administration and Professional grades throughout HSE.

5 CONTROL

At regular intervals (usually 3 months) a dormant stock report is produced by the warehouse which provides details of low usage forms. From this the Unit identifies those forms of low usage, contacts the sponsor and questions the amount in stock, whether the form is still required, and if needed, whether stock should be reduced. From this action many forms are identified as no longer being required and are therefore made obsolete.

6 PUBLICITY

Various advisory minutes are produced on a regular basis for all staff to see. These guidelines/instructions set down procedures for the production and control of forms and include topics such as:

Definition of a form, responsibilities for forms, when new forms should be introduced and the review process of existing forms.

7 TRAINING

On joining Forms Unit a new member of staff will receive in house/on the job training and will attend a one week course

- FORMS DESIGN COURSE
CIVIL SERVICE COLLEGE

8 WORK PLAN 1989 - 1990

- a Forms Liaison Officers' Seminar 1989 - 1990
In order to remind Forms Liaison Officers' of the importance of their role within each division, a seminar will be held in Bootle during this financial year. Obviously with staff changes over the past 2 years our register now includes staff who are new to the post. This seminar will be an ideal opportunity to discuss the importance of Forms Liaison Officers' and the role they play.
- b With the introduction of a micro-computer to this section in 1988 all forms details are now held on database. This system now enables the Unit to review every form on a yearly or 2 yearly basis.

FORMS PRODUCTION

1 Once the content of a form has been finalised, it passes to a forms liaison officer (AO) in the publications section of HSE's Directorate of Information and Advisory Services, who arranges for preparation of artwork.

2 Artwork is produced either in-house, by our own general design staff (IO grades), or by contract typesetters, according to workload.

3 Our studio staff are qualified in design, but have had no specific training for forms work.

PAYMASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE - FORMS SURVEY 1987/89

APPENDIX

	Members of the public	Internal forms	Total forms
1 FORMS IN EXISTENCE 31.3.87	377	1077	1454
2 Number of forms introduced	47	88	135
3 Number of forms abolished	23	67	90
4 Number of forms re-designed	133	85	218
5 FORMS IN EXISTENCE 31.3.89 (1 + 2 - 3)	401	1098	1499

As can be seen, a total of 218 forms were re-designed over the 2-year period mostly to take account of revised procedures. Forms are reviewed mainly when there are changes in procedures, but there was a specific review of one small family of forms, and the results of this review were as follows:

	Members of the public	Internal forms	Total forms
Number of forms reviewed	5	7	12
Number of forms abolished	0	1	1
Number of forms re-designed	4	6	10
Number of forms retained unchanged	1	0	1

A further review of certain other forms has not been completed. However, I am hopeful that of the 14 forms, all of which are used in similar cases, 4 can be abolished and 5 others amended.

Number of forms planned for review

	Members of the public	Internal forms	Total forms
1989/90	48	60	108
1990/91	91	30	121



PAYMASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE

FORMS REVIEW 1987-89

INTRODUCTION

The Paymaster General's Office does not have a Forms Unit as such. Responsibility for the control of forms lies with the Assistant to the Principal Pensions Manager, but is only a part of his overall responsibilities which include heavy involvement in cost-cutting initiatives.

PROGRESS

Because I have been so heavily involved with other matters, it has not been possible to carry out my predecessor Bob Weddell's Work Plan for the period. This was (a) to review all Departmental action sheets with the object of improving their clarity for staff and thus improving the accuracy of completion and (b) to review all 'turn-round' forms sent to Other Government Departments with the object of improving their clarity and thus standard of completion by OGDs. In each area, however, improvements have been made to a number of forms as a result of changes or reviews of procedures.

Unfortunately, at present I cannot see the situation changing. However I do hope to start a review of forms connected with our pension procedures, and my targets for the next two years are stated in the Work Plan at the end of this Report.

STATISTICS

The statistics for this Report cover the full 2-year period, and are not broken down into separate years. I had not appreciated that you required the return to show each year's progress until it was far too late to do anything for 1987/88. The next Report (1989/91) will include the information you require.

The figures are accurate so far as the information I hold is concerned. Before compiling them I asked various areas in the Department to check forms lists relevant to those areas and was concerned at the responses. These showed that the records kept were not up-to-date, for the simple reason that the areas had not kept me informed of all changes to their forms; indeed there was a whole batch of Personnel forms that had not been recorded at all. After receiving the responses and updating the lists, I made a count of the numbers of forms in existence at 31 March 1989, and worked back to obtain start figures as at 1 April 1987. My understanding is that previously the end figures for one report were taken as the start figures for the next one. This has not been possible this time, as the figures are so different to those given in the last Report.

So far as Forms reviews are concerned, I should point out that many of our forms do get reviewed whenever there are changes or reviews of procedures. Only 2 relatively small reviews outside of procedure reviews have been done, and the results of one of those have yet to be analysed. have yet to be analysed.

The Statistics are attached as an Appendix to this Report.

RESOURCES

In his 1987 Report, Mr Weddell stated that he had access to a microcomputer - an ICL Quattro. This has been replaced recently by hardware provided by Future Computers, on which I am able to access WordPerfect and Excel. I intend to investigate the possibility of transferring the current forms lists (held on Wordstar 5) on to a database on Excel. I also intend to investigate the possibility of a proper forms design package such as Ventura.

WORKPLAN

I plan to review 2 families of forms in each year. For 1989/90, this will mean a total of 108 forms - 60 Internal and 48 External. For 1990/91, a total of 121 forms would be reviewed. The aim here is to question the need for each form, and to improve those forms that are retained.

These reviews would have to be fitted round my other duties, and I cannot say for certain that the full reviews will be made within the time-scale. I hope that they will be.

PETER HEAD

Forms Co-ordination Officer



MS
a. LaJeune

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

10 November 1989

FIFTH PROGRESS REPORT ON FORMS

The Prime Minister was grateful for Mr Luce's minute of 6 November covering the "Fifth Progress Report on Forms to the Prime Minister 1987-89".

She is impressed by how much has been achieved to date and endorses the approach for future work outlined in Mr Luce's minute and in chapter 3 of the report. In particular she notes that Departments are considering the recommendations of the Mountfield Report for minimising the burden of forms on business; and the need to keep EC forms to the minimum. She also agrees that it makes sense to target resources on the forms which are most frequently used and the most complex, and where there would be the greatest cost benefits from simplifying them. She also notes that another area of concern is the continuing complexity of legal language used for forms.

The Prime Minister looks forward to a further report in 1991.

Caroline Slocock

Martin Le Jeune Esq
Privy Council Office.

LS

①
PRIME MINISTER

PROGRESS REPORT ON FORMS

I attach a minute from Mr Luce which covers the "Fifth Progress Report on Forms to the Prime Minister 1987-1989." This is not as long as it looks but I do not suggest that you plough through it. You may find it worth glancing at the summary of achievements and at the proposals for the future, both of which I have flagged.

The report gives an impressive account of the progress which has been made in reducing the number of forms produced by Departments; and also underlines improvements in quality. Government forms have been particularly successful in winning Plain English Awards in recent years. The Sunday Times recently commented that "you rarely see a badly written Government report, and the general improvement in forms is staggering."

Mr Luce asks whether you would like a further report in 1991. Areas on which the Cabinet Office intend to concentrate are on the reduction of the burden of forms on business and on keeping EC forms to the minimum. Overall they are seeking to target their work on the forms which are the most frequently used and the most complex, and where there would be the greatest cost benefits from simplifying them. Another area of concern is the continuing complexity of legal language used in forms. I note that a "Plain Language for Lawyers Course" set up by the Civil Service College had to be discontinued because of lack of applicants!

Do you agree that Cabinet Office should be asked to submit to you another progress report next year? *Yes*

Do you wish to acknowledge warmly how much has been achieved to date and endorse the approach for future work outlined above?

CBS
Caroline Slocock
8 November 1989

Yes



C.P.V.
(minutes only)

MINISTER OF STATE, PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE

[Handwritten mark]

PRIME MINISTER

I am pleased to forward the 5th Progress Report on Forms. It is based on statements by departments of their achievements between April 1987 and March 1989, prefaced by a summary report from my Office. The Report fulfils your request following the publication of the 4th Progress Report in 1987 for a further report in 1989.

The Report shows that departments have continued to review forms, abolishing and redesigning them as necessary. They have made progress in removing legal language from forms and have won five awards from the Plain English Campaign.

Most departments have also reduced the number of forms in use: from about 99,000 when the review began in 1982 to 86,982 in 1989. This latter figure includes some 4,000 forms which should have been included in the 1982 total but have only recently come to light and are now being reviewed. Because of this, statistics prepared on the same base as previous years appear to indicate a net increase of 5% in the number of forms in use since 1987. But in practice there has been a small net decrease.

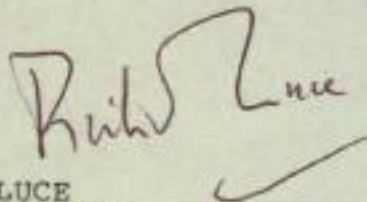
The creation of new forms is not in itself a problem. As Sir Derek Rayner said, 'a good form can be a cost effective way of gathering information'. But I am concerned that a large part of the increase stems from forms designated by the European Community, especially in the area of agricultural exports.

Requirements often vary from one country to another within the EC so that slightly different versions are needed for each country. The latest example is the German Government's attempt to insist that exports of beef carry a certificate. This all adds to the number of new forms created and departments will be working as we move to the Single Market to reduce the need for so many variations. As you know we have already implemented the Single Administrative Document in the customs area.

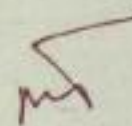
My Office was recently commissioned by the Enterprise and Deregulation Unit of the Department of Trade and Industry to carry out a review of the forms which Government sends to business (the Mountfield Report). This noted that the increase in EC related forms has led to an increase in the number of business forms. The Report made a number of recommendations to minimise the burden of forms on business and these are now being considered by departments.

However, we should not lose sight of the fact that since 1982 the number of forms has been considerably reduced. Whilst we shall continue to monitor this work I envisage greater emphasis on the quality of those forms that are needed. We shall also be urging departments to pay attention to the recommendations of the Mountfield Report when we send them copies of this Progress Report.

You may wish to call for a further report in 1991 where we can report on progress generally and on the implementation of the deregulation recommendations.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Richard Luce". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "R".

RICHARD LUCE
6 November 1989

A small, handwritten mark or signature in dark ink, possibly initials, consisting of a few connected strokes.

010 ●

cc BG
(letter only)
RJB
4/3


CABINET OFFICE
OFFICE of the MINISTER
for the CIVIL SERVICE

The Minister of State
Privy Council Office
The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce MP

Horse Guards Road
London SW1P 3AL
Telephone: 01-270 5929

C88/1270

The Rt Hon John MacGregor OBE MP
Minister of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Food
Whitehall Place West
LONDON
SW1A 2HH

8 March 1988

Dear John,

'MAKING IT PLAIN': A PLEA FOR PLAIN ENGLISH IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

... You may like to see the enclosed copy of a booklet about the use of plain English which my department will be publishing tomorrow.

It is a straightforward appeal for simpler language in official writing. This message is not new, but it is one which needs to be proclaimed afresh from time to time in order to retain its impact. As you know, the Prime Minister attaches considerable importance to simplifying communications between Government and the public and she had demonstrated her support for this initiative by writing a foreword to the booklet.

The publication is aimed at all civil servants but particularly at those with responsibility for training, official forms, communications and management efficiency. Some outside organisations such as local authorities and public sector bodies, as well as other English-speaking public services abroad may also be interested. A press release will be issued tomorrow which is likely to attract some media attention.

The booklet is being offered to departments on repayment terms through the normal official channels but, as with all initiatives of this kind, the support of Ministers and top management is essential to ensure commitment from staff at all levels. I hope you will feel able to give the booklet the encouragement it deserves.

A copy of this letter goes to all Ministers in charge of departments, and to Sir Robin Butler and Nigel Wicks.

Richard
RICHARD LUCE



CABINET OFFICE
OFFICE of the MINISTER
for the CIVIL SERVICE



*It is no exaggeration to describe
plain English as a fundamental
tool of good government*
- Margaret Thatcher

MAKING
IT
PLAIN

A plea for plain English
in the Civil Service

Foreword by the Prime Minister



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

Roman relationships depend on communication. Bad writing is a barrier to communication. When a large organisation such as the Government tries to communicate with the man and woman in the street the scope for misunderstanding is enormous. Too often clarity and simplicity are overwhelmed by pompous words, long sentences and endless paragraphs.

If we all wrote in plain English now much easier - and efficient - life would be. It is no exaggeration to describe plain English as a fundamental tool of good Government.

Some people think that flowery and complicated writing is a sign of intellectual strength. They are wrong. Some of our greatest communicators were - and are - passionate believers in the simplicity of the written word. As Winston Churchill described a particularly tortured piece of 'officialese': "This is the sort of English up with which I will not put".

The Civil Service and public administration generally have made great strides in the use of plain English in recent years. Jargon and 'officialese', while far from extinct, are dying out. I would like to see them banished forever. Plain English must be the aim of all who work in Government. That's what this booklet is all about.

Angus Watson

February 1968

Making it plain

You probably spend much of your working day either writing yourself or reading what other civil servants write.

The written word is your main currency. Stop reading now if yours is in mint condition. Read on if you have doubts.

Guilty or not guilty?

'Officialese' is writing that is full of verbiage. "The futile drivelling of mere quill-driving", the Duke of Wellington called it. It clogs the thoughts of reluctant readers. It creates barriers to understanding. The Civil Service probably is no more guilty than businesses, local authorities and many other organisations. But read this example from the Civil Service Pay and Conditions of Service Code:

Under Article 5 of the Civil Service Order in Council 1969, the Minister for the Civil Service is empowered to make regulations for controlling the conduct of Her Majesty's Home Civil Service. Instructions given in the exercise of this power are communicated to departments by the Civil Service Department as part of a consolidated Code. Such instructions stem mainly from two sources, legislation which binds the Crown or which, although not binding the Crown, Ministers have undertaken to apply as though it were so binding; and agreements reached in negotiation with the national Staff Side or with Staff Associations in accordance with custom and practice extending back over more than 50 years. Rules and guidance so issued are mandatory on employing departments. In some instances, the method of application of the rules is precisely defined, in others, the principles to be observed are defined and the method of application is left to departments.

Not exactly easy to understand, is it?

Perhaps you've never written anything quite like that. But how often have you puzzled over what someone else has written?

Are you really certain that someone, somewhere, isn't looking at something you have written and wondering "What exactly does it mean?"

Apollonius to Zeno, greeting. You did right to send the chickpeas to Memphis. Farewell

- note from Minister in ancient Egypt to senior civil servant

Can I say exactly what I mean in plain English?

Of course you can. More to the point, will your reader understand exactly what you mean if you don't use plain English?

The reason for most of your writing is to transmit information or ideas from *your* mind clearly, convincingly and politely to your *reader's* mind. Of course, you may have to use technical terms. But then it is even *more* important to use plain English to explain your ideas.

There's no need to sacrifice accuracy for clarity. Follow Einstein – "I like to make things as simple as possible, but not simpler".

But don't plain words mean more words?

Sometimes, but not often. The real aim is to make your writing quicker to read and easier to understand.

Generally you will find that plain English is shorter. One local authority put its instructions for drawing up contracts into plain English. The old instructions had 3,679 words. The new ones said the same in 1,850 words. What's more, loopholes which had been obscured by jargon in the old instructions were exposed – and closed.

And isn't plain English ugly?

No! The example of tortured officialese on page 1 is hardly beautiful! It's exhausting. You have to unravel the language to find the meaning.

*Let thy speech be short, comprehending
much in few words*

– Ecclesiasticus 32:8

One of the strengths of English is the way you can use it to express complex thoughts simply and attractively. Plain English is the way to show your mastery of the language and of your ideas.

How *can* I make it plainer?

Clarity doesn't come naturally to most people – it has to be learnt. Sir Ernest Gowers's classic *The Complete Plain Words* is the bible of clear writing. Here are some important ideas he and others put forward. Bear in mind they are suggestions not rules.

- The first important thing is your state of mind. Your writing will be much easier to understand if you put yourself in your readers' shoes. The official who wrote *In consequence of the non-payment of the above-noted account, an officer of the Board will attend your premises to disconnect your electricity supply facilities* had the *wrong* attitude. He wasn't treating his reader as a human being.
- Use shorter words. Write *try* for *attempt*, *about* for *concerning*, *more* for *additional*. Long words are often a sign of a stodgy style that sends readers to sleep.
- Use short sentences. Aim at an average of 15-20 words – even shorter if you can manage it. You can still be polite and, if need be, formal or forceful.
- Use sentences with active verbs. Write *The department decided that employees should work from 9 to 5* instead of *The decision of the department was that employees should work between 9 and 5*.

*If language is not correct, then what is said is not
what is meant; if what is said is not what is meant,
then what ought to be done remains undone*

– Confucius

- Use verbs instead of nouns created from verbs. For example, write *use* instead of *the utilisation of*. Too many reports are full of these grand-sounding noun phrases.
- Sometimes it's a good idea to address your readers as *you* and refer to yourself or the department as *I* or *we*.
- Use jargon and abbreviations only when you're sure the reader knows what they mean. Otherwise explain them.
- Use a simple style. *You* may know just the right word. Be sure your *readers* will.
- Organise your writing to help your readers. For example, it sometimes helps to put your main point at the beginning. This saves your readers from skipping to the end to find out what you're telling them. Remember: readers are in a hurry to get to the point. They don't want to be stuck in a verbal traffic jam.

More help

Most departmental libraries have some books on plain English. Some useful ones are:

- *The Complete Plain Words*, E Gowers
- *Usage and Abusage*, E Partridge
- *Modern English Usage*, H W Fowler
- *The Plain English Story*, M Cutts & C Maher
- *Daily Mirror Style*, K Waterhouse

The Civil Service College can put you in touch with experts in plain English. There are College courses which deal with various aspects of written communication, such as forms. The current prospectus gives details. Many departments also run courses that can help you. Ask your training officer what is available.

Long words bother me

– Winnie-the-Pooh

Proper words in proper places make the true definition of style

– Swift

*Prefer the familiar word to the far-fetched.
Prefer the concrete word to the abstract.
Prefer the single word to the circumlocution.
Prefer the short word to the long*

– H W Fowler

If any man were to ask me what I would suppose to be a perfect style of language, I would answer, that in which a man speaking to five hundred people, of all common and various capacities, idiots or lunatics excepted, should be understood by them all, and in the same sense which the speaker intended to be understood

– Defoe

I am ordered to acquaint you that if you hereafter continue that affected and schoolboy way of writing, and to murder the language in such a manner, you will be discharged for a fool

– Commissioners of Excise to Supervisor of Pontefract,
18th Century

*The efficiency of government,
central and local, depends to an ever-
increasing extent on the ability of a
large number of officials to express
themselves clearly... The fact is not
that officials do uniquely badly but
that they are uniquely vulnerable*
- Sir Ernest Gowen in *Plain Words*



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

29 December 1987

"MAKING IT PLAIN"

Your letter of 23 December to Mark Addison refers. I confirm that we are content with the "mock-up" which you enclosed. There will inevitably be those who use this as a basis of attack but the Prime Minister's philosophy is always to lead from the front. This sometimes means that one is shot at.....

(P. A. BEARPARK)

Miss E. M. Goodison,
Office of Arts and Libraries.



10 DOWNING STREET

R. Latham.

Do you see any problems
with this ?

psj
29/12

The BEARPARK

I don't see any problem in the PM leading the drive for Plain English from the front. I think it is entirely commendable.

But I do see endless inconseques as political opponents accuse the gov't of using plain English but instead of education etc.

RTO

It would be safer all to have
the name Churo's photograph
on the front, but I do not
feel strongly about this.
After all, if she is associated
with it, however remotely,
her political opponents will
use it as they think fit as
a stick to beat her with.

I will make a virtue of
necessity and say the name
Churo believes in leading
from the front; that sometimes
means you are shot at.

Bob
29
12

CF?

R2512



OFFICE OF ARTS AND LIBRARIES
Horse Guards Road
London SW1P 3AL
Telephone 01-270 5929

From the Minister for the Arts

C87/5768

M Addison Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street
LONDON SW1A 2AA

23 December 1987

Dear Mark,

"MAKING IT PLAIN"

lets at 11.48

The Prime Minister has already approved the text of "Making It Plain", a booklet on the use of plain English in government which we hope to issue to the Civil Service next month. Nevertheless, since the design incorporates a picture of the Prime Minister on the front cover, together with a quotation from her message, you may wish to see the enclosed "mock-up" for final approval. We believe this is particularly important given the nature of the subject and the critical scrutiny which the booklet is likely to receive from the press. They may be keen to catch the Prime Minister endorsing some examples of "unplain" English!

Yours ever,

Eleanor

MISS E M GOODISON
Private Secretary

(A) K/1-M-

cc The
H.P.
Goldworthy
Wright

'MAKING IT PLAIN'

The P-M— has already approved the text of 'Making it plain', a booklet on the use of plain English in government which we hope to issue to the Civil Service next month.

2 However, since the design incorporates a picture of the P-M— on the front cover, together with a "quote" from her message, you may wish to give the attached "note of" your formal approval. My Minister believes it is especially important given the nature of the subject and the critical scrutiny which the booklet will receive from the press. No doubt they will be keen to catch the P-M— endorsing some example of unplain English!

GROUT MACH: Admin forms pt 2


CABINET OFFICE
OFFICE of the MINISTER
for the CIVIL SERVICE

BLUE



*It is no exaggeration to describe
plain English as a fundamental
tool of good government*
- Margaret Thatcher

MAKING
IT
PLAIN

A plea for plain English
in the Civil Service

Foreword by the Prime Minister



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

Human relationships depend on communication. Bad writing is a barrier to communication. When a large organisation such as the Government tries to communicate with the man and woman in the street the scope for misunderstanding is enormous. Too often clarity and simplicity are overwhelmed by pompous words, long sentences and endless paragraphs.

If we all wrote in plain English how much easier - and efficient - life would be. It is no exaggeration to describe plain English as a fundamental tool of good Government.

Some people think that flowery and complicated writing is a sign of intellectual strength. They are wrong. Some of our greatest communicators were - and are - passionate believers in the simplicity of the written word. As Winston Churchill described a particularly tortured piece of 'officialese': "This is the sort of English up with which I will not put".

The Civil Service and public administration generally have made great strides in the use of plain English in recent years. Jargon and 'officialese', while far from extinct, are dying out. I would like to see them banished forever. Plain English must be the aim of all who work in Government. That's what this booklet is all about.

Roger Mather

January 1988

OK inside
back
cover

This booklet is based on the 1983 publication 'The word is - Plain English' designed for Cabinet Office (Management and Personnel Office) by the Plain English Campaign.

Making it plain

You probably spend much of your working day either writing yourself or reading what other civil servants write.

The written word is your main currency. Stop reading now if yours is in mint condition. Read on if you have doubts.

Guilty or not guilty?

'Officialese' is writing that is full of verbiage. "The futile drivelling of mere quill-driving", the Duke of Wellington called it. It clogs the thoughts of reluctant readers. It creates barriers to understanding. The Civil Service probably is no more guilty than businesses, local authorities and many other organisations. But read this example from the Civil Service Pay and Conditions of Service Code:

Under Article 5 of the Civil Service Order in Council 1969, the Minister for the Civil Service is empowered to make regulations for controlling the conduct of Her Majesty's Home Civil Service. Instructions given in the exercise of this power are communicated to departments by the Civil Service Department as part of a consolidated Code. Such instructions stem mainly from two sources, legislation which binds the Crown or which, although not binding the Crown, Ministers have undertaken to apply as though it were so binding; and agreements reached in negotiation with the national Staff Side or with Staff Associations in accordance with custom and practice extending back over more than 50 years. Rules and guidance so issued are mandatory on employing departments. In some instances, the method of application of the rules is precisely defined, in others, the principles to be observed are defined and the method of application is left to departments.

Not exactly easy to understand, is it?

Perhaps you've never written anything quite like that. But how often have you puzzled over what someone else has written?

Are you really certain that someone, somewhere, isn't looking at something you have written and wondering "What exactly does it mean?"

← MORE
SPACE HERE

Apollonius to Zeno, greeting. You did right to send the chickpeas to Memphis. Farewell

- note from Minister in ancient Egypt to senior civil servant

Can I say exactly what I mean in plain English?

Of course you can. More to the point, will your reader understand exactly what you mean if you don't use plain English?

The reason for most of your writing is to transmit information or ideas from *your* mind clearly, convincingly and politely to your *reader's* mind. Of course, you may have to use technical terms. But then it is even *more* important to use plain English to explain your ideas.

There's no need to sacrifice accuracy for clarity. Follow Einstein - "I like to make things as simple as possible, but not simpler".

But don't plain words mean more words?

Sometimes but not often. The real aim is to make your writing quicker to read and easier to understand.

Generally you will find that plain English is shorter. One local authority put its instructions for drawing up contracts into plain English. The old instructions had 3,679 words. The new ones said the same in 1,850 words. What's more, loopholes which had been obscured by jargon in the old instructions were exposed - and closed.

*Let thy speech be short, comprehending
much in few words*

- Ecclesiasticus 32:8

And isn't plain English ugly?

No! The example of tortured officialese on page 1 is hardly beautiful! It's exhausting. You have to unravel the language to find the meaning.

One of the strengths of English is the way you can use it to express complex thoughts simply and attractively. Plain English is the way to show your mastery of the language and of your ideas.

How *can* I make it plainer?

Clarity doesn't come naturally to most people - it has to be learnt. Sir Ernest Gowers's classic *The Complete Plain Words* is the bible of clear writing. Here are some important ideas he and others put forward. Bear in mind they are suggestions not rules.

- The first important thing is your state of mind. Your writing will be much easier to understand if you put yourself in your readers' shoes. The official who wrote *In consequence of the non-payment of the above-noted account, an officer of the Board will attend your premises to disconnect your electricity* had the *wrong* attitude. He wasn't treating his reader as a human being.
- Use shorter words. Write *try* for *attempt*, *about* for *concerning*, *more* for *additional*. Long words are often a sign of a stodgy style that sends readers to sleep.
- Use short sentences. Aim at an average of 15-20 words - even shorter if you can manage it. You can still be polite and, if need be, formal or forceful.
- Use sentences with active verbs. Write *The department decided that employees should work from 9 to 5* instead of *The decision of the department was that employees should work between 9 and 5*.

Long words bother me

- Winnie-the-Pooh

- Use verbs instead of nouns created from verbs. For example, write *use* instead of *the utilisation of*. Too many reports are full of these grand-sounding noun phrases.
- Sometimes it's a good idea to address your readers as *you* and refer to yourself or the department as *I* or *we*.
- Use jargon and abbreviations only when you're sure the reader knows what they mean. Otherwise explain them.
- Use a simple style. *You* may know just the right word. Be sure your *readers* will.
- Organise your writing to help your readers. For example, it sometimes helps to put your main point at the beginning to save your readers skipping to the end to find out what you're telling them. Remember: readers are in a hurry to get to the point. They don't want to be stuck in a verbal traffic jam.

More help

Most departmental libraries have some books on plain English. Some useful ones are:

- *The Complete Plain Words*, E Gowers
- *Usage and Abusage*, E Partridge
- *Modern English Usage*, H W Fowler
- *The Plain English Story*, M Cutts & C Maher
- *Daily Mirror Style*, K Waterhouse

The Civil Service College can put you in touch with experts in plain English. There are College courses which deal with various aspects of written communication, such as forms. The current prospectus gives details. Many departments also run courses that can help you. Ask your training officer what is available.

If language is not correct, then what is said is not what is meant; if what is said is not what is meant, then what ought to be done remains undone

– Confucius

Proper words in proper places make the true definition of style

– Swift

*Prefer the familiar word to the far-fetched.
Prefer the concrete word to the abstract.
Prefer the single word to the circumlocution.
Prefer the short word to the long.
Prefer the Saxon word to the Romance*

– H W Fowler

If any man were to ask me what I would suppose to be a perfect style of language, I would answer, that in which a man speaking to five hundred people, of all common and various capacities, idiots or lunatics excepted, should be understood by them all, and in the same sense which the speaker intended to be understood

– Defoe

I am ordered to acquaint you that if you hereafter continue that affected and schoolboy way of writing, and to murder the language in such a manner, you will be discharged for a fool

– Commissioners of Excise to Supervisor of Pontefract,
18th Century

*The efficiency of government,
central and local, depends to an ever-
increasing extent on the ability of a
large number of officials to express
themselves clearly... The fact is not
that officials do uniquely badly but
that they are uniquely vulnerable.*

— Sir Ernest Gowers in *Plain Words*.

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FILE
VA

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

1 October 1987

The Prime Minister has seen your Minister's letter of 25 September, with its attached report on the Forms Review. She very much welcomes the progress that has been made and hopes that Departments will continue to build on this. The report is very detailed, and obviously requires a good deal of work in its preparation. She has therefore asked that a further progress report be prepared in two years' time from now.

The Prime Minister was also pleased to sign the foreword for the booklet on plain English. This is enclosed.

May we now leave it to you to arrange the circulation of the progress report.

(P.A. BEARPARK)

Miss Eleanor Goodison,
Office of Arts & Libraries.

8/21


CABINET OFFICE
MANAGEMENT AND
PERSONNEL OFFICE

FORMS REVIEW

Fourth Progress Report to the
Prime Minister

September 1987

ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS: 4TH PROGRESS REPORT TO THE PRIME MINISTER

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SUMMARY

Good Results

Results in the last two years show that departments are still making good progress. Since 1985:

57,500 forms have been reviewed

11,000 forms have been scrapped

20,000 forms have been redesigned

8,000 new forms have been created

Around £5 million has been saved

Forms units' work has cost around £2 million.

This means that since the forms review began in 1982:

126,500 forms have been reviewed

Only 27,000 forms have been scrapped

41,000 forms have been redesigned

Around £14 million has been saved.

Accurate information

More accurate record-keeping is giving a better picture of what is going on. The latest estimate is that Government departments nationally use around 101,600 forms.

Better design

Government forms are easier to understand, simpler to complete and more attractive to look at than ever before. That is the verdict of independent organisations like the Plain English Campaign which has presented 6 awards to Government departments in the last two years.

Legal language

Forms units and departmental lawyers are making slow but steady progress in getting rid of unnecessary legal jargon. For example all DHSS forms designed after April this year will carry a single, simplified declaration:

"I understand that if I give information that is incorrect or incomplete action may be taken against me. I declare that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete."

Encouraging enterprise

Departments helped to reduce the burden of Government on business and industry by cutting more than 1,300 of the forms aimed at business people and improving the design of 2,500 others.

The benefits of technology

Government departments are using some of the most up-to-date technology on the market. Computer-aided design equipment produces good quality forms very quickly; and computerised record-keeping is giving better control over the number of forms in use.

The future: getting on with the job

There is a full programme of forms reviews in hand for the current (1987/88) financial year and for the foreseeable future. But some areas of the work will need special attention. Some of these include:

- devising better ways of showing how well forms perform in use;
- putting more effort into controlling the forms that the public never see - those produced and used locally within departments;
- building permanent forms review arrangements into departments' ongoing efficiency programmes.

Departments are handling their responsibilities for Government forms competently and conscientiously. They nevertheless look to the Cabinet Office (Management and Personnel Office) to provide a focal point for the work and, through the Civil Service College, to offer guidance and training on forms design and control. MPO will continue to exercise this role and to oversee the forms activity across all departments by annually monitoring departments' results.

MAIN REPORT

Progress since 1985

1. The 3rd progress report to the Prime Minister in 1985 concluded that best practice in forms design and forms control had taken root in departments and that the Government could expect lasting improvements across the Service. This report is about whether that prediction was justified and what steps, if any, are needed to sustain progress in the future. The report is based on statements by departments about their activities and achievements between April 1985 and March 1987. These are reproduced in full in Annex A.
2. Most departments have completed the initial review of all their forms called for by the Rayner scrutiny in 1982 and have set up rolling programmes to keep forms under permanent review. The results are encouraging. 11,043 forms have been scrapped since the 3rd progress report was published in 1985, bringing the total number of forms abolished since the forms review began in 1982 to 26,778. The number of forms redesigned each year has increased steadily since 1985 when 8,911 forms were revised. In 1986 the figure was 9,760 and in 1987 it jumped again to 10,054. These achievements are set out in full in table 1 on the following page.
3. Government forms in 1987 are generally easier to understand, simpler to complete and more attractive to look at than those produced before 1982. Instead of being a byword for obscure language and poor presentation, they are more likely these days to be held up as examples of clarity and good design. This is recognised by, for example, the Plain English Campaign who selected six Government forms for awards during the last two years. Some examples of award-winning forms are included at Annex B, as well as one National Savings form described by Professor Crystal in his forthcoming book "Companion to the English language" as "An example of one of the new generation of official letters, written as plainly as it is possible to imagine".
4. Departments have now got rid of most of their obsolete forms so that, increasingly, forms are only abolished as a result of systems or policy changes. During the past two years almost 60,000 forms were reviewed, of which 19% were abolished and 34% were redesigned. Departments are getting down to the very worthwhile business of making good practice in design and control a standard procedure.

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS
1965-87

	ALL FORMS			IMPORTANT FORMS		
	Review completed	Abolished	New design	Review completed	Abolished	New design
Public	10097	1807	3594	622	49	328
Business and Industry	7555	1326	2521	800	156	341
Internal to department	34157	5943	9976	740	72	314
TOTAL	51809 *	9076 *	16091 *	2162	277	983
Agriculture, Fisheries & Food	624	334	291	180	77	71
Customs & Excise	857	216	410	34	0	29
Defence	6379	1355	1833	242	10	100
Driver & Vehicle Licensing Centre	2278	144	1052	68	0	36
Education & Science	1178	197	240	72	16	17
Employment	961	70	824	64	0	64
Environment	775	10	315	65	0	46
Foreign & Commonwealth	3030	263	235	92	5	6
Health & Social Security	5690	1967	3723	15	0	15
HM Stationery Office	1730	1017	323	52	14	15
Home Office	2915	633	689	17	0	17
Inland Revenue	6539	719	2190	240	10	146
Land Registry	507	40	119	33	13	11
Lord Chancellor's Department	559	86	447	32	3	19
Management & Personal Office	1769	177	756	26	0	21
Manpower Services Commission	1965	460	511	244	47	71
National Savings	4394	1102	1214	134	12	97
Population Censuses & Surveys	881	54	138	20	3	3
Property Services Agency	1544	95	606	11	0	6
Scottish Office	2176	478	286	41	2	12
Trade & Industry	2923	236	1955	24	0	20
Transport	955	14	390	41	0	18
Treasury	1915	448	269	193	33	24
Other departments	4955	928	998	222	32	119
TOTAL	57499	11043	19814	2162	277	983

*DHS figures are not included in these totals as they were unable to provide a breakdown.

5. A consistent difficulty in charting progress during the initial three year review period was the lack of comprehensive information about how many forms there are in Government departments. The last two years have seen great improvements in departmental record systems. This means that for the first time it has been possible to establish a reasonably accurate baseline against which progress can be charted.
6. The results can be seen in table 2 which summarises reports from departments. It shows that the 105,692 forms in use in 1985, were cut to 94,649 by abolishing 11,043 existing forms. New forms bring the number of forms in use in 1987 up to 102,653, a net decrease over the two years of 3039.

New forms

7. New forms arise from a new need. New schemes are constantly being introduced as a result of fresh policy initiatives and these frequently call for a completely new set of forms. In the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the increasing number of certificates and licences required for the export of animals and animal products to overseas markets led to 419 new forms being required. Sometimes schemes overlap, as in the case of the 2-year YTS scheme which replaced the original 1-year scheme, and the old and new forms must continue side by side for a period. Sometimes new forms are 'one-offs' with a limited life span, but legislation or other statutory changes are likely to require new permanent forms. The Rayner scrutiny report acknowledged that "a good form can be a cost-effective way of gathering information". In 1987 there is every likelihood that a new form will also be a good form.

TABLE 2

VOLUME OF FORMS 1985-87

	Total forms in use 1985**	Abolished		Balance	New forms created	Total forms in use 1987
		1985/86	1986/87			
Agriculture, Fisheries & Food	3369	129	205	3035	826	3861
Customs & Excise	1793	65	151	1577	180	1757
Defence	10795	118	1237	9440	440	9880
Driver & Vehicle Licensing Centre	2593	74	70	2449	273	2722
Education	1510	74	123	1313	137	1450
Employment	2163	59	11	2093	247	2340
Environment	1392	7	3	1382	141	1523
Foreign & Commonwealth	2691		263	2428	339	2767
Health & Social Security	12508	826	1141	10541	517	11058
HM Stationery Office	2847	560	457	1830	21	1851
Home Office	5480	339	300	4847	491	5338
Inland Revenue	8480	351	368	7761	588	8349
Land Registry	1066	27	13	1048	60	1108
Lord Chancellor's Dept	9090	7	79	9004	14	9018
Management & Personal Office	1818	88	89	1641	365	2006
Manpower Services Commission	2150	251	209	1690	575	2265
National Savings	5938	422	680	4836	971	5807
Population Censuses & Surveys	1125	34	20	1071	27	1098
Property Services Agency	2656	57	38	2561	68	2629
Scottish Office	5011	287	191	4533	116	4649
Trade & Industry	9319	120	116	9083	676	9759
Transport	1162	6	8	1148	137	1285
Treasury	1648	140	308	1200	107	1307
Other departments	9066	220	708	8138	688	8826
TOTAL	105692	4255	6788	94649	8004	102653

**Includes an additional 7,582 forms brought to account by improved information systems since publication of the 3rd report in 1985.

Savings

8. Many departments report substantial cash savings from their work since 1985. The figure for savings (calculated on the same basis as those presented in previous reports) is £5 million across the Service. More streamlined production systems and improved equipment have made a significant contribution to reducing costs.

Customs and Excise estimate savings of £668,000 a year from lower production and printing costs. For example the revised form VAT1 (Application for registration) has produced a saving of £17,000 over 12 months.

New equipment at the Department of National Savings has significantly reduced the cost of in-house typesetting. In the first six months of the financial year 1985/86, DNS spent £13,700 externally on typesetting; the figure for the same period in 1986/87 was reduced by almost half to £7,500 for a similar amount of work.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has saved £1,000 a year by producing its 'post account' form in-house. This has also speeded up supply by six weeks.

The Lord Chancellor's Department is saving £20,000 a year by using a standard material and simplified printing requirements for the County Court record card.

Department of Transport expects to save £200,000 a year in printing costs from a review of Vehicle Test Inspection Cards.

9. Improved design can also lead to financial savings

LCD changed the design of a file cover and saved £25,000 a year. By introducing a forms purchasing strategy they expect a one-off saving of £70,000 in 1987/88 with further annual savings resulting from reduced stock levels.

Department of Trade and Industry redesigned a file transit slip at a cost of £100 and saved £19,000 a year. And DTI's Export Licensing Branch have saved £38,000 a year by abolishing 20 standard letters and internal forms.

10. Better designed forms can save time too, both staff time and the time taken by the form filler to complete a form. The Manpower Services Commission has quantified these savings in respect of the two application forms for a place on the Community Programme. Improvements to the design means they are easier to fill in and to check, resulting in fewer errors and fewer queries. This has saved an estimated 18,200 hours of public time and 21,000 hours of staff time based on an annual consumption of 1.1 million forms.
11. Some departments have been trying to achieve economies by reducing their stockholding of forms.

In Inland Revenue orders exceeding one million copies are authorised at senior level and phased deliveries of some orders should result in lower stocks at the HMSO warehouse.

By redesigning the printing requisition form, Department of Education and Science has ensured that all demands for reprinting are routed through the forms unit for scrutiny on their way to the reprographic unit. The forms unit can recommend a reduction if the print run is excessive.

The DES pensions branch holds all stocks of forms at a single location which should allow lower reserve stock levels to be set; and greater control over the issue of forms.

Value for money

12. As the initial three year review period recommended by Rayner drew to its close, departments needed to evaluate the continuing effort being devoted to the work. In 1986 MPO issued guidelines to help establish performance indicators for the work of forms units. Nearly all the large departments and some smaller ones now measure performance against objectives and targets which are set on a monthly or yearly basis. These may include the number of forms reviewed, the number abolished and the number of A4 proofs produced.

The Ministry of Defence measures output by means of monthly workload returns detailing the number of completed revisions and the number of requests for reprints. In the coming year they intend to expand this to relate output to costs based on the redesign of an A4 page.

In the Department of Environment/Department of Transport forms unit each forms designer works to an individual monthly operational target. The forms unit operates on repayment: charges are calculated on a hourly basis and include design time, materials and internal phototypesetting work. Clients are given monthly statements which itemise charges for staff time and printing costs separately.

The Department of Trade and Industry uses a computer-based scheme which allocates staff time to assignments. The system also records the cost of printing a form, its design cost and historical print quantities which helps to prevent over-ordering. The unit includes two examples of cost saving calculations in its quarterly report to senior management.

In the Scottish Office performance indicators have revealed that the staff cost for each form reviewed fell from almost £17 in 1985/86 to just over £12 in 1986/87, while the number of forms reviewed rose by almost three per man day.

13. Almost all departments were able to meet their planned forms review targets for 1986/87 and most have increased the number of forms reviewed over previous years. This is partly because forms units staff are becoming increasingly expert but also because of the introduction of computer-aided design equipment during the last two years which has reduced turn-round times. So far departments have concentrated on measuring the volume of output. They should now turn their attention to devising measures which demonstrate how well forms perform in use.
14. One department that has done work in this area is the Department of National Savings which tested its new forms on members of the public before introducing them generally. DNS operates in a competitive commercial personal savings market where effective forms are essential to promote the product and give a good service to the public. Testing forms before their introduction has helped to ensure they are efficient and effective as well as attractive. Similarly Inland Revenue pilot-tested the form P7 (Employers Guide to PAYE) before they issued the final version

Legal language

15. Departments have focused particular attention on simplifying legal language in forms over the last two years. The wording of forms that are legally unambiguous can be incomprehensible to the formfiller who does not have relevant legal knowledge. Prescribed forms are difficult to change: amending legislation may be needed.
16. In a joint survey with departments in March 1986 MPO discovered that there are at least 6,000 forms in use in the Service which contain some kind of legal language. The exercise also revealed that much can be achieved when there is a good working relationship between forms units and departmental lawyers. In Inland Revenue the Plain English Campaign ran a seminar on legal language for forms units to which a member of the Treasury Solicitor's Office was also invited. Customs and Excise have appointed a departmental solicitor as an advisor to their Forms and Notices Control Committee. With the personal cooperation and encouragement of the Treasury Solicitor, the Civil Service College introduced a 'Plain Language for Lawyers' course in 1986 specifically aimed at departmental legal advisors. These are now regular items in the College prospectus.
17. Many departments have succeeded in simplifying the language used for warnings and declarations. Customs & Excise have revised the wording of declarations on a wide range of forms. In DHSS departmental solicitors have agreed to a single version for declarations on all forms revised after April 1987, as follows:

"I understand that if I give information that is incorrect or incomplete action may be taken against me. I declare that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete."

We hope other departments will be able to introduce something equally straightforward.

18. The need for simpler language must be balanced against the dangers of imprecision. In some cases errors of interpretation could have serious implications for the safety of the public or the freedom of the individual.

Land Registry has got round the problem by providing an explanation in everyday language of legal terms which are unavoidably included in notices most likely to be read by the public.

In Lord Chancellor's Department close liaison between the forms unit and operations branches has led to the redesign of the County Court summons and warrant form which meets the requirements of the court administration but has been structured for easy reading by the public. For example terms such as 'warrant of execution' have been removed from the debtor's section. The National Consumer Council and the Plain English Campaign were consulted during the review.

Department of Trade and Industry's simplification of its 70 year old bankruptcy and companies' liquidation forms has met with widespread approval from users.

House styles

19. House styles have been a popular development in the last few years. Some departments have introduced common colours and layouts for groups or series of forms which deal with a common theme. Others have gone much further and are adopting an entirely new corporate image.

For example, DHSS has developed a communications strategy which includes a house style for all written communications with the public. The new style has been adopted for a small number of forms and will be extended by a rolling review of all forms relating to particular subject areas.

The Department of National Savings engaged a firm of consultants to devise a new corporate identity which was introduced in December 1986. The forms unit is currently revising the entire range of National Savings forms to reflect the new identity.

Deregulation

20. From its inception the forms review focused special attention on the need to cut down the form-filling burden for business people. Table 1 on page 2 shows that momentum has been kept up in the last 2 years; of the forms aimed directly at business and industry, 1326 were abolished and 2521 were redesigned. In 1985 the Government introduced wider policies aimed at reducing the regulatory barriers to creating and sustaining business, and at encouraging enterprise. Fewer and better forms can make an important contribution to this initiative and forms units are working with the staff spearheading the enterprise and deregulation initiative to produce some good results.

The 1985 Consolidated Companies Act calls for only 102 statutory forms as opposed to the 139 required by the previous legislation.

In a joint project with the central Enterprise and Deregulation Unit (EDU) the Department of Employment forms unit has produced a guide to employment legislation for small businesses which won an award in 1986 from the Plain English Campaign for plain language and clear design.

In Department of Health and Social Security the enterprise and deregulation unit sees all new and amended forms which are sent to businesses, and a small advisory panel comprising businesses of widely differing sizes has been set up to give feedback.

The Customs and Excise VAT communications unit has worked closely with the departmental deregulation unit to produce a series of easy to read guides to various aspects of VAT one of which won a Plain English award in 1985.

Equipment

21. Computer-aided design equipment has become increasingly sophisticated in the last few years and most departments have invested in new machinery. Desk top publishing systems are revolutionising forms work by increasing the quality of output as well as capacity: laborious "cut and paste" techniques are a thing of the past. In MSC

staff were quickly trained to use the new equipment: within six months they were fully operational and able to release a typist for other work.

22. Computerised record-keeping systems have also helped to improve forms control. In DES a micro-computer holds details of all departmental forms. The initial inputting of information was time-consuming but this is outweighed by the rewards in stricter control of forms and quicker access to information. It will also enable cost comparisons to be printed. In LCD a micro-computer has been used to record ordering and billing information which has increased awareness of costs and the ability to control budgets.

Local Forms

23. The Government's forms review was set up to deal with national forms, particularly those which impinged on the public. But many forms are produced and used exclusively within a branch, division or local office. Some departments have included local forms in the review as internal forms, but in departments where they have not so far been examined there is likely to be scope for improvement. This report looks at local forms for the first time. Departments found it difficult to estimate how many forms they have, but ten departments provided figures:

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
H M Customs & Excise
Ministry of Defence
Department of Health & Social Security
H M Land Registry
Lord Chancellor's Department
Manpower Services Commission
Office of Population Censuses and Surveys
Department of Trade and Industry
H M Treasury

In these departments alone, there are some 107,000 local forms, more than the total number of national forms across thirty-three departments. Although this is very much an estimated figure it gives some idea of the scale of the problem still to be tackled.

24. Departments are now considering how to control local forms. The first problem is to find out how many there are. DHSS estimated in 1986 that they had more than 50,000 local forms, but improved statistics from local offices have provided a more precise figure of 36,900 for 1987. Even tighter control at local level

is planned in future. DTI has an inventory of 1,700 local forms which local offices will be asked to update annually. The forms unit intends to examine the scope for introducing common forms across a number of offices.

25. The DOE/DTP forms unit plans to ask divisions for examples of local forms together with annual usage rates in order to examine forms which have a similar purpose, or a high usage. MSC intends to monitor local forms through regional forms liaison officers who will be responsible for reviewing each local form at least once every three years.
26. Clearly this is an area where considerable progress has still to be made, and MPO will continue to monitor departments' efforts and results.

The future role of departmental forms units

27. Now that the three-year review period recommended by Rayner is complete, departments are considering the future role of their forms units, their relationship with line divisions and the resources to be devoted to them. The two main areas of work in forms units to be examined are design and control.

Design

28. Departments' expertise in forms design has greatly increased over the last five years. Sponsors in policy and operational divisions now readily accept the importance of good forms and acknowledge the role of forms units in achieving them. In many instances forms units are finding that their workload is increasing as sponsors become aware of the range and quality of the work that can be produced. For example, recent work in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has included designing posters which promote office services and producing graphical material for reports.
29. In other departments sponsors themselves are taking on more responsibility for forms design. This is in line with current policies for devolving responsibility and authority to line managers wherever possible and we endorse it, as long as managers are able to obtain help when necessary. Good examples are:

HM Treasury forms staff provide a full design service only for new and important forms but to supplement this the forms unit has produced a guidance leaflet to help sponsors to design and revise forms themselves.

The Ministry of Defence, with its large volume of forms, has set up a network of forms control officers responsible for monitoring, co-ordinating and advising on all forms originating in their own area. The central forms unit runs a series of one day seminars in conjunction with the Civil Service College, which deal with forms theory and costing, and give practice with computer-aided design equipment. Each forms control officer has been issued with a comprehensive guide to good forms design.

Efficiency and effectiveness

30. The forms review was not only about improved design. The Rayner scrutiny described forms as "a window onto the policy and procedures behind them" and a major aim of the initiative was to probe the efficiency and effectiveness of forms as a means of putting policies into practice. The starting-point for this is straightforward monitoring and a full review programme is underway in this financial year: departments aim to examine at least 22,600 forms by April 1988. Nor is there any reason to expect a significant reduction in the programme in future years. But some departments are developing strategies which link forms units more closely with information services and some managers interpret these developments as a signal that the task of challenging the need for and the effectiveness and efficiency of forms is complete.
31. This is unacceptable. Unless there are persistent efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of forms as a means of putting policies into practice, there is a real risk that the gains of recent years will be eroded and opportunities for further beneficial change will be lost. The responsibility rests with the sponsors of the forms. But there is evidence that some are slow to embrace the task. For example forms testing is not yet established as a normal management practice. Thus departments need to take two actions. First to press line managers to undertake their responsibilities. Second, when considering the future role and programme of work of forms units to give particular weight to their adopting a more pro-active role in making managers more aware of the benefits of testing the effectiveness and efficiency of forms.
32. Forms units are more easily able to adopt a challenging role when they can examine forms as part of a wider investigation into the systems to which the forms relate. This suggests that the work should become an element in the overall efficiency programme, and that

forms unit staff should be linked to departments' CIR forces. MPO favours this approach because it gives precedence to the control of forms and on efforts to devolve responsibility to line managers for efficiency and effectiveness. It is ultimately for departments to decide which arrangements best suit their own circumstances - and to justify the results of their decision.

MPO's role

33. In 1985 the third progress report envisaged that MPO's continuing role would be limited to disseminating expertise on the design and control of forms, co-ordinating the forms community and fostering the exchange of information between departments and other organisations. Outside this there was a minimal task to monitor and report on departmental progress. In the event MPO has also:
- provided a focal point of contact for outside organisations (such as the Plain English Campaign) who concern themselves with Civil Service forms and related issues within the Service;
 - accounted to Parliament for progress in improving forms across the Civil Service;
 - taken the lead in encouraging departments to tackle certain Service-wide issues (such as local forms and legal language) and co-ordinated the results of their work.
34. Less tangibly, departmental forms units claim that MPO's continued involvement has been an important - some would say crucial - factor in generating support for the forms initiative at top level without which progress would have been difficult to sustain. The personal involvement of Ministers, the Permanent Secretary and senior managers was identified by Rayner as crucial to the process of improvement. It remains so. Some staff who are closely concerned with the forms initiative fear that lack of overt support by MPO will be seen as a sign that the subject is no longer a priority for the Civil Service and that it will be treated accordingly by top management in departments.
35. We believe that because of these factors and the special nature of forms work - penetrating nearly every area of departmental activity; crucial to effectiveness; yet particularly hard to control - it should be treated

differently from reviews of some other subjects. We believe the usual three-year implementation period, already extended to five years by this report, should be extended again. The MPO will continue to take a lead in raising and maintaining awareness of the need for good forms and plain English throughout the Civil Service and will provide a focal point for the work. It will call upon departments from time to time to tackle specific issues on a Service-wide basis and will foster the forms community. The Civil Service College will go on offering a range of courses on all aspects of forms design and control.

36. On the other hand there may be a case for less detailed monitoring of departments' performance by the centre. In the five years since the forms initiative began most departments have developed management information systems that give them an accurate record of all their forms. Many of these records are computer-based and can be used to trigger a rolling review programme. Moreover the increasingly sophisticated and more devolved budgetary mechanisms that are now being installed ought to ensure that line managers are called to account for their stewardship of the forms they sponsor, thereby encouraging them to seek better value for money in their arrangements for designing, producing, storing and using forms.
37. Previous reports divided all forms (for statistical purposes) into 'public', 'business and industry' and 'internal', but this has proved unsatisfactory with the passage of time. The wide variety of Civil Service 'clients' makes such categorisations meaningless. For example, many of DOE's forms are aimed at local authorities which do not fall under any of the three headings. There is little value in asking departments to continue to collect information in this way.
38. But there is still a need to account for what is happening in the Service as a whole, in order to demonstrate that the high standards of design and control that have been established in recent years are being maintained. MPO will continue to collect information about progress annually from departments but this will be limited to the statistics that are necessary to provide Service-wide figures for:
- the number of existing forms reviewed, abolished and redesigned;
 - the number of new forms created;
 - the total number of forms in use.

Looking ahead

39. This report is a record of past achievement, but during the course of compiling it a number of issues have emerged which seem likely to have a major impact on departments' approach to forms work over the next few years. It may be helpful to mention them briefly here: we expect to return to them more fully in future reports.

a) Communication and information management. Forms work is closely related to the business of communications and of information management and it seems probable that forms units' activities will extend into these areas in the future. Departments are putting a great deal of effort into improving the effectiveness of all their written communications, both internal and external; and through developments in information management they are able to look more critically at the way they collect and use information of all kinds. Forms units' specialist expertise in design together with their forms control role, will enable them to make a valuable contribution to this work.

b) Impact of technology. Technology is advancing very rapidly in this field. Increasingly sophisticated text design and publishing facilities will enable forms unit staff to extend their activities more widely into other areas of communication. At the same time, the proliferation of this technology will call for technical staff to become more proficient in the use of words and non-technical staff in the use of technology.

c) Production processes. More advanced printing techniques are likely to increase the cost-effectiveness of 'demand printing' which could reduce and in some cases eliminate the need to store forms.

Postscript

40. Finally, this report offers the opportunity to pay tribute to forms unit staff throughout the Service whose skill and effort has done so much to improve one of the most important interfaces of Government with the public. It also provides the occasion to call for renewed commitment to this work from top management, in order that the good work can be sustained.

ANNEX A: PROGRESS REPORTS FROM DEPARTMENTS

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE FISHERIES AND FOOD

Progress since 1985

1. All Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food forms have now been reviewed. Form sponsors remain responsible for a regular review of their forms and for the effectiveness of the forms they originate. The Forms Unit remains the liaison point and gives advice on design, content and text as well as providing camera ready copy.
2. It has been encouraging to note that sponsors are much more aware of what constitutes a good, well designed form. Many of the drafts received by the unit have been well thought out in advance and it is particularly pleasing to see sponsors adopting the use of Plain English and a more informal approach.
3. The unit is currently drafting a booklet which will be widely circulated throughout Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food. It is intended to be used as a quick and easy reference guide and will give step-by-step instructions on how to get a new form produced, who to contact and consult etc.
4. The statistics provided on the attached form show that a total of 826 new forms were introduced between 1/4/85 and 31/3/87. 418 of these are attributable to Animal Health Import and Export work. The forms were necessary to meet the increasing number of certificates/licences required for the export of animals and animal products to an ever increasing number of overseas markets. Forms created for the export of animals/animal products are retained and reviewed periodically, those forms necessary for the export of livestock are frequently "one-offs" with a limited life span. Under the MPO's definition of a form (a document which imparts or asks for information, or requires a response from the recipient) all certificates/licences must be included in the Review.
5. The majority of the remaining forms are a result of the introduction of new charging schemes for the Agricultural Development Advisory Service, Plant Health, Animal Health Schemes, Sheep Compensation Scheme (Chernobyl), Live Monitoring of Sheep (Chernobyl), Diseases of Fish Act, Milk Quotas and the introduction of the new Agriculture Improvement and the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Schemes.
6. The 3rd Progress Report gave an overall total of 3,757 forms in use in Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food on 31/3/85 and included a number of statistical forms which should have been excluded and local forms (under the internal forms category) which are now quoted in the body of the Report as a separate item.

7. Additionally, the Forms Unit does not have currently an up-to-date central record of forms, and data collected during the forms reviews have had to be stockpiled pending clerical assistance to key it into a computer database. A recent staff inspection recommended the addition of a CA post to enable this to be done. The forms unit currently relies on information provided by Forms Liaison Officers (FLOs) appointed in each Division. They have responsibility for keeping records of their forms and providing statistical information. For this Progress Report FLOs were asked to provide statistics in the format given by MPO. This has proved to be a useful exercise in that it highlighted areas of weakness (ie records kept by FLOs) which will be more strictly controlled in the future.

8. The current annual cost of the forms unit using the 1986/87 Edition of the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food Ready Reckoner for Staff Costs is as follows:

AO (Inner London including accommodation)	£18,539
EO " " " "	£22,405
HEO " " " "	£27,099
SEO (2%) " " " "	Total £68,678

Savings

9. In 1984 it was estimated the correction of errors in MAFF forms cost £6 per form and the redesign/amendment reduces the number of forms that are corrected by 10% of the average annual usage thus affecting savings. Since 1984, the cost of correction has risen by approximately 5% thus increasing the cost of correction of errors to £6.3 per form. The average annual saving in staff time in Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food in each of the two years in the period 1/4/85 to 31/3/87, through forms being re-designed/amended, is estimated at £66,800. This may be an under estimate as to maintain comparability with previous returns no saving has been claimed for years subsequent to that in which a form was re-designed/amended.

10. A recent example involves a review of one of Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food's key forms - an application under the Agriculture Improvement Scheme. The form was subject to a high error rate. The Scheme is relatively new to respondents, and even though the form was designed in what was thought to be the most simplified format possible, it is still a lengthy and complex document. It is believed that familiarity with the use of the form will result in a lower error rate, but in light of the review we will be proposing certain improvements to the form which should make completion and subsequent processing easier and this will result in an annual saving (based on a minimum 10% reduction of errors) of £1,906 to Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food.

Value for Money

11. Ministry target for review of 248 forms in the period 1/4/85 to 31/3/86 was more than met with 578 being dealt with. A further increase in forms reviewed, to 717 was achieved from 1/4/86 to 31/3/87. The number of forms dealt with by the forms unit increased by 30% during the period 1/4/85 - 31/3/86 compared with the previous year and by 42% during the period 1/4/86 - 31/3/87 again compared with the previous year underlining a continuing need for the services of the unit.

Local Forms

12. The Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food definition of a local form is "a form created by, and used exclusively within, a particular division". The total number of local forms within Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food is 724. There has been a considerable increase since 31/3/86 as a result of the greater responsibilities assigned to local managers under the Financial Management Initiative. The forms unit is available for consultation and advice but due to lack of resources within the unit it is not proposed to initiate a formal system of control/review.

Legal Language

13. In July 1986 a member of Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food's Legal Department was designated as forms liaison officer to advice on this aspect. Present policy is to try to persuade divisions to simplify the language of their forms at the time of creation/review.

Staffing

14. The forms unit is located in Information Technology and Procedures Division, Branch B and consists of one AO, one EO and one HEO. A summary of their responsibilities follows:

15. AO - after consultation with the EO, prepares drafts/camera ready copy using an IBM Magnetic Card Composer and an Apple Macintosh microcomputer. Duties also include dealing with enquiries on form content and implementation.

16. EO - responsible for the management of the Design Unit, deciding the order of priority and forward planning, liaising/attending meetings with divisions to give guidance on wording, design etc. Prepares drafts/camera ready copy using an IBM Magnetic Card Composer and an Apple Macintosh microcomputer.

17. HEO - responsible for the ongoing review of Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food forms, attending meetings and liaising with Forms Liaison Officers. The post is vacant at present.

Equipment

18. In March 1987, an Apple Macintosh microcomputer and Laserwriter printer were installed in the Forms Design Unit in addition to the 2 existing IBM Magnetic Card Composers which have been in use since 1980. It is too early to be specific on the effects of the new equipment on volume and quantity of work, but it will be used to assist in the preparation of quick drafts for consultation purposes (up until now these were prepared on the IBM's - a time consuming task), the preparation of camera ready copy mainly for internal forms and also, where possible, for some external forms. All of this is expected to save staff time.

The Future

19. The review process will be continued. Special attention being paid to badly designed or legalistic forms, so that recommendations for improvement can be made. Evaluation of new technology equipment that could improve productivity in the forms unit will continue. Work on and issue of the reference guide will be completed.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms

(Numbers included in I.)

Department:

MAFF

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	214	1474	1424	3112
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	24	179	54	257
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86				
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	13	72	163	248
b. No of forms reviewed	18	329	231	578
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	5	60	64	129
d. No of forms retained unchanged	2	180	84	266
e. No of forms redesigned	11	89	83	183
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87				
a. No of forms reviewed	24	270	423	717
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	19	145	41	205
c. No of forms retained unchanged	5	75	324	404
d. No of forms redesigned	-	50	58	108
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	49	636	141	826
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b	263	2084	1514	3861
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	71	320	423	814

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
	4	415	46	465
	4	169	-	173
	-	14	11	25
	8	27	11	46
	5	4	2	11
	3	3	-	6
	-	20	9	29
	5	112	17	134
	5	57	4	66
	-	21	5	26
	-	34	8	42
	12	457	18	487
	10	980	58	1048
	8	108	16	132

HM CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

Progress since 1985

1. By mid-1986, the four-year review cycle (commenced 1982) of all national forms and the great majority of notices had been completed for need, content, language and layout.
2. Forms were pruned in all areas of work. In VAT, for example, 750 national and local forms were examined, with the result that 25% were withdrawn, 60% revised and only 15% remained unchanged. An overall reduction of 12% in our national forms and notices during the period was unfortunately almost negated by a 10% increase in new forms arising from fresh or amended regulations. By early 1987, all local forms had been reviewed by the regions (Collections). Working to new guidelines and aided, where required, by the unit, the Collections were asked to reduce the number of types of local forms in use by 25%, but subsequently achieved a commendable 40% (see paragraph on Local Forms).
3. In late 1985, the Department won a Plain English Award with "Visits by VAT Officers" - an example of continued high quality of output from the VAT communications unit.

Savings

4. It is Departmental practice to estimate savings over the 12 months following implementation of any change in forms or notices. These estimates, covering savings and improvements resulting from the review, redesign and better controls, are assessed (with the savings element to trade and public in brackets) by:
 - a) Quantification - eg lower production and processing costs:-
£668,000 (£424,000)
 - b) Guesstimation - eg less time spent completing forms:-
£336,000 (£303,000); and
 - c) Visible improvements to material - eg improved readability, where it was not economic or feasible to assign monetary savings. 630 forms and 105 notices were improved under this heading.

5. The combined total for a) and b) is £1,004,000 (£727,000) covering the 12 months after implementation. If this were extrapolated to cover from implementation date (after 1.4.85) to 31.3.87, the savings amount to £1,777,000 (£1,341,000). As an example of quantified savings, the revised VAT1 (Application for Registration) produced a saving of £17,000 over 12 months.

6. A feature of the report period is that about half of the total savings came from assignment work which studied whole systems and their associated forms.

Value for money

7. The unit gauges its performance in four ways; by:
- a) measuring up to pre-set aims, objectives and targets (eg meeting design deadlines)
 - b) relating output to costs (eg master produced per manday)
 - c) relating functions (eg monitoring local forms) to costs; and
 - d) adding value to resources employed (feasible only for the most important forms).

With Management Services Division, the unit devised and introduced methodologies for sponsors to calculate the "throughlife" costs of their forms and to determine form-completion error rates.

8. In terms of overall value, the total benefits derived are substantially more than the savings quoted above. New/redesigned forms and notices facilitate the collection of revenue (measured in £ billions) and trade statistics (eg import/export). They also provide management information for the Department and up-to-date guidance for both business and public sectors.

Local forms

9. Local forms are sponsored either by an HQ Division or by a Collection, for use only within that Division or Collection. Forms are defined as any formally set out printed matter with space for insertion of information which is to be conveyed and stored or whose processing it will ease. Exceptions to this definition are: typist drafts, circulation slips, aides memoire and forms used solely within one office or work unit eg typing requests.

10. It was a Departmental objective for 1986/7 that Collection local forms should be rationalized to revised guidelines and numbers cut by 25%. After making an allowance for changes to the definition of a local form for census purposes, the types of forms dropped from 9560 to 5730 - an overall reduction of 40%.

11. The quality of design is controlled by the issue of design guidelines to Collections and HQ Divisions, together with instructions to ensure the unit vets new local external forms before use and inspects new internal forms annually for general standard of design.

Legal language

12. In 1986, a Departmental solicitor was appointed to the Forms and Notices Control Committee to advise generally on clarifying legal language on forms and to be available to give advice on specific problems. Work to date has consisted of reviewing the wording of declarations on a wide range of forms and simplifying a number of bond and contract forms.

Deregulation

13. The VAT communications unit has continued to produce "easy-to-read" guides to various aspects of VAT. It worked closely with the deregulation unit. The material for the "Sailaway boats" and the "DIY Housebuilders" schemes are good examples of major simplifications achieved during 1987.

14. In the non-VAT areas, the forms unit contributed advice which led to 45 revised notices showing substantial improvement compared with the editions they replaced. The improvements included the use of simpler words, sentences and paragraphs; lists and tables for easy reference; and a question and answer format for lively presentation.

Staffing

15. In November 1986 the FNU was transferred from Management Services Division to Personnel Division, to emphasise the "communications" rather than the "systems" approach to forms and notices work. The unit is now within the span of command of the Departmental Communications Officer.

16. The unit is staffed by 1 SEO, 3 NEOs, 3 EOs and 5 AOs (including 1 AO Registry). Its responsibilities are the direct control and design of national forms and non-VAT notices and the indirect control and design of local forms. Some non-forms graphic work is undertaken.

The unit operates (with a few minor exceptions) all the Control and Design Guidelines published by the MPO in 1985. Additionally, it staffs the form file/print procurement registry and manages, at HEO level, the HQ reprographic unit.

17. VAT notices and leaflets are designed by the VAT communications unit, located in the VAT Administration Directorate. The resources devoted to VAT notice design and control functions are 25% 1 SEO 25% 2 HEOs and 25% 1 EO.

Equipment

18. A DMS 816 microcomputer was installed in August 1985 and details of all national forms were put on file. This database provides faster recall of information on each form and census statistics.

19. In May 1986, a Desktop Publishing System was installed, thereby introducing computer graphic techniques to drawing form masters. A 20% increase in productivity (reduction of one AO post) was achieved by March 1987.

The Future

20. Under the broad aim of 'fewer and better forms', specific objectives include:

- to prompt and assist HQ Divisions to review and reduce their local forms;
- to ensure that all national forms not examined since January 1985 are reviewed for need and standard;
- to review design style, with particular reference to the Department's corporate image;
- with sponsors' co-operation, to revise the small number of notices that have not been reworked since 1980;
- to examine the viability of undertaking more non-forms graphic work; and
- to prompt a minimum of 10 sponsors of important forms to revise them so as to achieve at least a halving of completion of error rates
- to liaise with the information management team to reduce and eventually eliminate the duplication of information requested on departmental forms.

Main problems to be addressed are to sustain and improve management's (all levels) interest in, and action for, fewer and better forms and notices, and to curb unnecessary proliferation of forms produced by locally purchased computer publishing systems.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms

(Numbers included in I.)

Department:

C&E

	Members of the public	Business and industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	47	560	1186	1793
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	-	-	-	-
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86				
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	12	143	263	418
b. No of forms reviewed	10	139	253	402
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	2	20	43	65
d. No of forms retained unchanged	3	39	63	105
e. No of forms redesigned	5	80	147	232
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87				
a. No of forms reviewed	11	142	302	455
b. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	3	44	104	151
c. No of forms retained unchanged	5	48	73	126
d. No of forms redesigned	3	50	125	178
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	2	54	124	180
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b	44	550	1163	1757
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	10	150	300	460

	Members of the public	Business and industry	Internal	Total
	1	44	48	93
		5	5	10
		5	5	10
		-		
		2	3	5
		3	2	5
		6	18	24
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		6	18	24
	1	44	48	93
	1	10	18	29

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Progress since April 1985

1. The Ministry of Defence forms unit continues to ensure that the number of different forms is the minimum necessary for the efficient conduct of business and that all forms are effective and economic in use.
2. To facilitate the task the forms unit established a Local Forms Control Officers network of, to date, some 250 officers which was activated on 1st June 1986. Local Forms Control Officers (LFCOs), in addition to their normal duties, are responsible for monitoring, coordinating and providing advice on all forms sponsored or originated in their areas. The duties of the LFCOs were laid down by the forms unit (FU) and are included in MOD Manuals.
3. In order to ensure an across the board application of standards, a series of one day, in house, courses on Control of Forms in the Ministry of Defence has been established in conjunction with the Civil Service College. Part of the course, half a day, deals with aspects of forms theory and costing and the remainder on practical computer aided design (CAD). Since 15th July 1986, ten courses have been held and 70 officers, or their representatives, have attended. It is planned that the courses will continue at about two per month until all LFCOs have attended.
4. Approximately ten of the LFCOs are in the process of obtaining CAD equipment in order to interact with the FU and assist in increasing the speed and efficiency of the review.
5. A comprehensive guide to good forms design, comprising a number of worksheets covering individual design topics, has been prepared by the FU and every LFCO has been issued with a set. These have been well received.
6. The activation of the LFCO network system necessitated a major revision of MOD's Standard Operating Procedures for forms control. The relevant part of the MOD Manual was re-written during the period and its publication is imminent.
7. Compilation of a data base for the Ministry wide catalogue of forms has been completed with an input of 3,000 forms to the data base to date. The input of the remaining 6,000 forms continues.
8. Since 2nd June 1986 all requests for new forms, revisions and reprints have been routed from the Sponsor to LFCO to FU. This new arrangement has resulted in approximately 375 forms per month being closely scrutinized by the FU and affords a much tighter control on forms in use.

9. During the period 1st April 85 to 31st March 87 6,379 forms were reviewed, which represents a dramatic increase in productivity. This has led to the abolition of 1,355 forms and the redesign of 1,833 forms. The majority of forms abolished were the result of a further critical review of forms catalogues. The increase in redesigns were due to the effectiveness of the newly established LFCO/FU network.

10. The work of the FU is currently assessed by the analysis of monthly 'work load' returns compiled individually by the EO and HEO design staff. While this method gives a detailed breakdown of work achieved into important categories (ie complete revisions, referrals back to user/sponsor, straight reprints etc) it is wholly subjective in terms of a measure of efficiency and effectiveness of the forms review.

11. As from the financial year 1987/88 we will be applying a range of performance indicators reflecting the full costs of the unit against the output of standard work units based on the redesign of an A4 page. It is envisaged that this new improved system will provide a more efficient forms unit in the MOD.

Local Forms

12. A 10% sample trawl of registries throughout MOD was carried out during the past year. From the trawl the FU received approximately 4,000 non-registered local forms by specimen or report. An inspection of these forms showed that many of them were similar in style and purpose and in some instances duplicated registered forms. The trawl also indicated that many registries are holding excessive stocks of registered forms, and that this is an important area requiring further examination by the FU in conjunction with the LFCOs.

Legal Language

13. Although the Legal Language used in General Conditions of Stores Contract (GC Stores1) is being examined in the course of the periodic review by the Treasury's Policy Procurement Committee, we have had little opportunity to systematically tackle the use of legal language in MOD. However, when forms containing legal language are presented they are amended in accordance with the requirements of Plain English.

14. The Civil Service College has arranged a course, "Plain Language for Lawyers", for Legal Advisers of all Government Departments in order to assist in the simplification of wording in legal forms. When the Legal Advisers for MOD have attended this course, and the MPO has issued guidelines, the FU will formulate a programme to review legal forms systematically.

Deregulation

15. The forms unit is in direct contact with the division concerned with the privatisation of the Royal Dockyards, which is actively engaged in identifying forms that will be required by the Contractor after Vesting Day. This exercise will include the deregulation of many Ship and Dockyard forms.

Staffing

16. Responsibility for control and design aspects rests with the Head of Common Services Division (Grade 5) to whom the forms unit reports through the Head of Common Services (Printing and Stationery) (Grade 7).

17. The Ministry of Defence forms unit has a complement of 1 SEO, 3 NEOs, 3 EOs and 1 AO. Although under complement at various periods during the year, the FU will be at full strength on 1st May 1987.

Equipment

18. Since the submission of the last report the FU has received the following design equipment:

4 Apple Macintosh Plus 1mb microcomputers (with additional external 800K disk drives)

1 Apple Laser Writer Plus 300dpi laser printer

1 Apple 20mb Hard disk

This equipment was originally requested to supplement the existing Compugraphic Advantage 5000/MCS 8400 design & phototypesetting system. However, because the Apple system is easier to use, has far greater graphics capability and flexibility and a number of other significant benefits, it has now superseded the Compugraphic equipment as the main design facility.

19. The Apple system outputting at 300dpi covers 75% of all the Ministry of Defence's forms design needs. However, a higher resolution is required in the remaining 25% of work and as a result the unit is in the process of obtaining a link up system between the Macintosh microcomputers and the Compugraphic MCS 8400 typesetter which also incorporates A3 interactive design screens as opposed to the 9" screens currently used. This will mean that the single design system will have both medium and high quality output modes and provide a cost effective increase to the units design flexibility by utilising existing equipment.

The Future

20. - to maintain a continuous programme to monitor all forms in service to ensure economy and efficiency in use.
 - to identify groups of forms that should be subjected to detailed design/rationalization investigation.
 - to complete data base of registered forms.
 - to finalize production of catalogue of forms.
 - to maintain training of 2 HEOs and 3EOs on CAD equipment.
 - to continue training courses for approximately 120 LFCOs.
 - to produce and issue a News Letter to LFCOs on a quarterly basis.
 - to continue liaison with OGD forms units and Universities.
 - to establish a design studio to improve design capability of LFCOs who have obtained CAD equipment and to provide a venue for LFCOs whose numbers of forms do not justify individual CAD equipment.
 - to improve efficiency of the FU in order to reduce costs of forms.
 - to commence a statistical evaluation of all non-registered forms in preparation for a full review.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms

(Numbers included in I.)

Department:

MOD

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	100	500	9600	10200
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	-	5	590	595
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86				
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report		60	1000	1060
b. No of forms reviewed	2	4	1317	1323
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	0	0	118	118
d. No of forms retained unchanged	0	0	459	459
e. No of forms redesigned	2	4	740	746
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87				
a. No of forms reviewed	0	0	5056	5056
b. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	0	0	1237	1237
c. No of forms retained unchanged	0	0	2732	2732
d. No of forms redesigned	0	0	1087	1087
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	0	0	440	440
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1 + 2 + 5, less items 3c + 4b	100	505	9275	9880
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	0	50	3450	3500

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
	4	85	150	239
	2	10	48	60
	2	4	54	60
	0	0	5	5
	0	0	19	19
	2	4	30	36
	0	15	167	182
	0	0	5	5
	0	0	113	113
	0	15	49	64
	0	0	8	8
	4	85	148	237
	0	10	60	70

DRIVER AND VEHICLE LICENSING CENTRE

Progress since 1985

1. These years have been a period of consolidation during which many major forms, already redesigned under the principles set out in the Rayner Review, have been examined again in depth. Improvements have been progressive as branches have become accustomed to higher design standards and simpler language. Features which have proved successful on particular forms have been developed for incorporation on other suitable forms.

2. Advice and expertise from outside consultants has been used whenever appropriate to improve the forms. In particular, HMSO, The Plain English Campaign organisers, members of the Department of Typography and Graphic Communication of Reading University and the Informatics Education Unit at Southampton University have been consulted.

3. The following are some of the projects undertaken in this period

- Community Driving Licence

The designs of the English and Welsh/English versions of the Community Driving Licence and associated leaflets received final approval. Once again work is starting on the Community Driving Licence, as the first step in a project to harmonise GB driver licensing with European driver licensing. This work will involve a substantial part of the Unit's resources over the next three years.

- DVLC Check on Stolen Vehicles

A new computer issued letter was designed to be sent following receipt of a new application for a vehicle registration document from someone claiming to be the new keeper of a vehicle. This helps to identify those cases where thieves are trying to obtain registration documents for vehicles they have stolen or have earmarked to steal. About 880,000 of these computer generated letters are being issued each year.

The Plain English Campaign carried out a public testing exercise and made a number of recommendations. These have been implemented and the new version of the letter has been introduced. The number of unnecessary calls from the public has reduced by about 10%.

- Certificates for Taking Motor Vehicles Abroad

A new high security form was produced for issue to vehicle keepers who are exporting their vehicles from Great Britain. The security features will help to foil car thieves who send stolen cars to the Continent. The lessons learned are being incorporated in the form used by travellers temporarily abroad to prove keepership of motor vehicles.

- Northern Ireland Vehicle Licensing Forms

In association with the Vehicle Licensing Central Office in Northern Ireland, the unit has continued the task of simplifying and modernising the NI vehicle licensing forms as an integral part of the computerisation of the VLCO system. A major challenge has been the modification of the old style log book to make it suitable for use as a computer input document whilst retaining its appearance as an important official document.

Savings/value for money

4. Hitherto, the unit has concentrated on the development of good forms, and resources have been directed to this end. For this reason, no specific cost savings have been calculated during the period. However, an assessment of the role of the unit and its relation to OM work is being undertaken. Part of this assessment will include the establishment of valid performance indicators and a base upon which true costs can be established.

Local forms

5. A local form is a form printed on an individual's demand without being recorded by the unit as a numbered form. The unit is satisfied that no forms in this category are despatched to the public. Any such forms are extremely small in numbers, and it has become practice for users to ask the unit to prepare the artwork for the form. The unit is satisfied that the control arrangements within the unit and within the forms procurement branch guarantee the continuance of proper controls.

Legal language

6. An earlier change in letters with a legally based content had been the transfer of reference to statutory instruments from the body of the text to the margin. This measure had been the essential foundation for the continuing improvement to Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre standard letters. There has been no progress with forms and notices prescribed by Statute although within these restrictions, the Legal Department continues to be helpful and receptive to suggestions.

Staffing

7. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre forms unit is part of the Organisation and Methods Branch. At the beginning of the report period, staff levels were 1 SEO, 1 HEO, 4 EOs, 4 AOs, 2 AAs and 1 Specialist Typist. A recent re-organisation has

resulted in the SEO taking responsibility for the whole of OM Branch but he continues to take a close interest in the work of the unit. One EO post has been transferred to strengthen the OM capability of the branch.

8. At the beginning of the period under review, the bulk of artworks were built up on drawing boards by the pen, paste and stick method. However, microcomputers and a laser printer have enabled the design team to produce quality artworks with greater facility. New software packages are regularly evaluated. The ability to produce artworks quickly on graphics micros has made the unit more cost effective. Staff resources are available to deal with the increasing requirement for fast turn-round special jobs, the demand for which has been stimulated by the facility to modify artworks easily and quickly to customer specifications. The resultant enhancement of the image of the unit has in turn fuelled more demand.

9. Other special equipment available in the unit includes an Omnicrom colour printing unit to produce colour visuals. The client sees a more realistic impression of the final appearance of the artwork and can be given a selection of colour combinations to choose from.

10. The Apricot statistics microcomputer has proved very effective in controlling the progress of the Forms Review. Additional requirements were identified and the statistics programme has been enhanced to incorporate these items, thereby increasing the effectiveness of this facility.

The future

11. The unit's work programme for the next two years involves (apart from the continuing improvement of general forms) the following main line projects:-

- Redesign of GB driving licences (mentioned earlier) to comply with EEC policy of driving licence harmonisation - this project will also include the redesign of many public and computer forms used to maintain the new system.

- Redesign of the Driving Licence Application Form (about 2.8 million of these forms are received from the public each year) to comply with a new system whereby clerks key details directly into mainframe computers. Southampton University will be consulted during this project.

- Redesign of the Vehicle Registration Document (public testing exercises will be carried out).

- Redesign of the forms used - primarily by the motor trade but also by the public - for the first licensing and registration of motor vehicles.

12. The years devoted to the Rayner Review have been demanding and interesting. Much has been learned and good progress at Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre is certain to continue. There are clear signs that staff at all levels are committed to the concept of helpful forms and standard letters expressed in modern English. This is now the norm and progress will continue in this way.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

Department:

DVLC

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	1074	47	1455	2576	39	17	3	59
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	17			17				
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86								
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	52	21	7	80				
b. No of forms reviewed	541	26	375	942	29	7		36
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	45	-	29	74	-	-	-	-
d. No of forms retained unchanged	225	16	254	495	8	5	-	13
e. No of forms redesigned	271	10	92	373	21	2		23
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87								
a. No of forms reviewed	500	36	800	1336	23	9	-	32
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	24	-	46	70	-	-	-	-
c. No of forms retained unchanged	308	20	259	587	15	4	-	19
d. No of forms redesigned	168	16	495	679	8	5	-	13
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	118	22	133	273	-	-	-	-
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1 + 2 + 5, less items 3c + 4b	1140	69	1513	2722	39	17	3	59
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	550	30	420	1000	20	5	0	25

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

Progress since 1985

1. The main activity on forms control and design over the past two years has taken place in our Pensions Branch which is the major user of administrative forms in the Department. All its forms have been reviewed systematically and redesigned as necessary. Priority was given to the redesign of those forms needed for the introduction, on 1 April 1986, of a new system for interchanging data between the Department and teachers' employers. In addition, HMSO assisted with the redesign of one of the more important superannuation application forms and this was used as a model for related forms. The initial review of these branch forms was completed by 31.3.86. All Pensions Branch forms are now systematically reviewed each year.

2. Within other branches changes in procedures have led to the review of a number of forms and several new forms have been introduced. The Department's printing requisition, used by all branches, has been redesigned and simplified. It now provides for forms work to be routed via the forms unit on its way to the Central Reprographic Unit. The sixteen page form used for the distribution of publications is in the process of being redesigned. Many staff have found this form difficult to understand in the past and wide consultation is taking place on its redesign.

3. In 1985/86 100 forms were 'discovered' after the previous years' report. Unfortunately, the forms unit has not yet been able to consult branches about forms which are used in very small numbers to ascertain whether any can be made obsolete.

4. Many more forms (over 600) were discovered in 1986/87. This was due, mainly, to a redefinition of "forms" to include standard letters. We have now asked branches to let us know of any printed standard letters they use. We anticipate that more may come to light during 1987/88.

Savings

5. The only savings it has been possible to identify in London are the printing costs of forms which have now been abolished, (£11,300 for 1986/87). However these savings must be offset by the additional costs of printing new forms (£2,300) and any increased usage of other forms (impossible to calculate as no accurate statistics are available for previous years). In Pensions Branch stocks are now held in one location making it easier to set more realistic and practical reserve levels resulting in better control over the issue of forms. As a

consequence, over 40 forms and pre-printed letters have been identified as obsolete, in addition to those made obsolete as a result of the introduction of the new system referred to above. With the introduction within Pension Branch Cost Centre of a printing budget on 1 April 1987 savings will now be identifiable.

Value for Money

6. Performance indicators have not yet been introduced for the forms unit as it is still demand led. It is, therefore, difficult to assess whether it provides value for money. It is left to the officers in the unit to decide, in the light of competing priorities, the amount of effort to put into the design of a form depending on its readership, ie whether it is to be issued outside the Department and on its annual usage. The unit has, however, been instrumental on a number of occasions in reducing the size of print runs where the number originally requisitioned was considered to be excessive.

Local Forms

7. About 35% of Department of Education and Science forms could be described as local forms in that they are for internal use by individual branches. A further 20% are Establishment and Organisation Branch forms used throughout the department. The intention is to review these forms when time permits but priority will be given to those forms issued to members of the public (ie forms related to teachers' pensions), local education authorities, schools and colleges.

Legal language

8. Some of the Pensions Branch documents which were substantially amended were leaflets which amongst other reasons eg procedural changes due to changes in legislation, were redesigned in order to simplify language - it cannot, however, be said that these leaflets were ever couched in strict legal terms.

Staffing

9. The staffing allocation within the central forms unit, which comes under management services, amounts to 20% SEO and 40% HEO. In addition, an HEO in Pensions Branch spends 40% of his time on forms control for the Branch which is the only one in the Department where the majority of forms are issued to members of the public ie teachers. During the first three months of the Pensions Branch forms review two EOs devoted 25% of their time on the redesign of forms. There is also support from one CO and one CA, and since 1.4.86 one EO who spends 20% of her time on forms control. Leaving aside the staff costs arising from the Pensions Branch review the continuing cost to the Department of Forms control is about £11,500, (1986 Treasury Ready Reckoner Basic Staff Cost).

Equipment

10. The forms unit acquired a micro-computer for the control of forms, in September 1986. Without extra staff resources the input of information has been very time-consuming but it has now been completed. The software has still to be refined but in future years it should save time in compiling the statistical information required for these annual reports and in providing other useful returns for both forms controllers and forms officers in the branches. Printing cost comparisons will also be facilitated:- this feature is of particular interest to Pensions Branch, who as a separate Cost Centre, became responsible for their first printing budget from 1.4.87.

11. For use in conjunction with the micro system, Pensions Branch bought in a sensitive weighing/counting machine. This will help control stock in particular, and also improve speed, efficiency and accuracy in checking the numbers of forms issued and received.

The Future

12. The work programme over the next two years will depend on available resources. If, as is hoped, EO support is provided to maintain and update the information held on micro-computer, the forms unit should be able to take the initiative to introduce a rolling programme to review areas of forms over a period of time. Failing this, the forms unit will continue to be demand led and dependent on the branches themselves initiating changes.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

Department:

DES

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report		291	514	805
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87		426	279	705
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86				
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report				
b. No of forms reviewed		114	199	313
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised		29	45	74
d. No of forms retained unchanged		51	78	129
e. No of forms redesigned		34	76	110
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87				
a. No of forms reviewed		508	357	865
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised		62	61	123
c. No of forms retained unchanged		389	223	612
d. No of forms redesigned		57	73	130
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87		57	80	137
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1 + 2 + 5, less items 3c + 4b		683	767	1450
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88				

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
		15	10	25
		25	30	55
		9	8	17
		7	5	12
			1	1
		2	2	4
		35	20	55
		1	3	4
		26	12	38
		8	5	13
		10	3	13
		42	35	77

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT

Progress since 1985

1. The output of the unit in 1985/86 increased by 79% over 1983/84, and by 38% over 1984/85. Following the end of the three year review, resource considerations caused us to reduce the level of contact with HQ branches below that established during the review. The reduction in level of contact has, however, meant that forms abolished are no longer being notified and we are able to count only those which the unit directly influences. However the level of review activity is reflected in the continuing increase in demand for the unit's services. This is thought to be a direct result of the quality of service provided by the unit during the review. Recent demand has included new or revised forms as a result of change in unemployment benefit rules or procedures, and for schemes under the "Action for Jobs" campaign.

2. A review of forms used in connection with the licensing of employment agencies resulted in the abolition of four forms. In addition, a preliminary review was made by the unit of over 200 internal forms used by the Department's Central Pay Office. A Management Services survey report has since recommended that a working group undertake a fuller review and seeks the help of the unit as necessary.

Savings

3. It is difficult to pin down the level of savings, primarily because we do not have reliable data about the performance of the replaced forms. Nevertheless we are currently developing a methodology which will enable us to agree with clients a reasonable estimate of the savings that flow from redesigned forms.

4. Additionally, Departmental auditors are about to begin a review of Stationery and Stores which will include an examination of the usage, storage and disposal of forms and an appraisal of the procedures for their design and review. The main purpose is to assess the effectiveness of internal controls.

Value for money

5. The unit has long maintained statistics of its output but a new exercise designed to give management better information on work loadings/targets is soon to be mounted. Each job undertaken over a three months period will be timed. Current indicators relate to: forms designed per AO, cost per A4 page and the number of forms abolished.

It is hoped that the installation of more computerised equipment will result in an increase in productivity and improved quality.

Important forms/local forms

6. Important forms are:

- all external or internal forms with an annual usage of 50,000 or more;

local forms are:

- all those that are not produced by the central forms design unit.

The unit has not been able to progress with the organisation of a review of local forms but produced guidance during 1985/86 on the design of local forms for distribution to local unemployment benefit offices.

Legal language

7. This Department has very few forms which contain local language but the need for declarations in plain language is now widely accepted by client sections.

8. During a recent review of standard letters for the Unemployment Benefit Service it was noted that many transcripts of adjudication officers' decisions were couched in legal terms. It was established from the DHSS forms unit that a first approach had been made to the Chief Adjudication Officer and to DHSS solicitors, about plain language revisions of some 3,000 such decisions.

Deregulation

9. The forms unit works in close co-operation with the Enterprise and Deregulation Unit (EDU) and frequent discussions take place on matters of common interest. Liaison and contacts are good.

10. The unit designed a guide to employment legislation for small businesses, drafted by EDU, which won one of two awards to the Department in 1986 by the Plain English Campaign for "plain language and clear design". Another joint project was the design of factsheets on employment legislation.

Staffing

11. The staffing level of the forms design unit, located in Management Services Division, has remained constant throughout the period as:

- 1 SEO, 1 EO, 4 AOs, 1 specialist typist.

The unit designs forms, notes for guidance on the completion of forms, and standard letters for client sections. It edits such material, advises on design/layout and negotiates with client sections for the changes suggested. The unit provides phototypeset masters of all the work it produces.

Equipment

12. There have been no improvements in equipment since the last report but we hope to introduce new equipment during 1987.

The Future

13. A development plan which seeks to define the future role of the unit has gone forward to senior management. Among other things, it recommends that the unit acquires two additional micro computers - it currently has two computers but five users - and an additional EO, mainly to assist with plain language editing duties. If approved, it is hoped that this will enable the unit to better cope with its current workload, increase productivity and, in the medium term, release some of the SEO's time to enable him to adopt a positive marketing role.

14. Specific objectives will be set once the outcome of the proposals in the development plan is known and following evaluation of the results of the timing exercise mentioned above.

15. Our main objective will continue to be "to ensure that essential forms are as simple as possible and to eliminate unnecessary forms".

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms

(Numbers included in I.)

Department:

D2mp

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	151	142	1,869*	2,162*
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	-	-	-	-
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86				
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	31	6	433*	470*
b. No of forms reviewed	78	41	467	586
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	-	-	59	59
d. No of forms retained unchanged	-	-	67	67
e. No of forms redesigned	78	41	341	460
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87				
a. No of forms reviewed	102	72	201	375
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	4	4	3	11
c. No of forms retained unchanged	-	-	-	-
d. No of forms redesigned	98	68	198	364
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	66	18	163	247
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b	213	156	1,970	2,339
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	32	12	150	194

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
	67	18	57	142
	-	-	-	-
	16	5	8	29
	16	5	8	29
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
	16	5	8	29
	18	6	11	35
	-	-	-	-
	18	6	11	35
	14	2	-	16
	81	20	57	158
	12	4	20	36

* adjusted figure as previous figures were estimated.

* adjusted figure as previous figures were estimated.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Progress since 1985

1. Since the last report, all of the unit's manual records have been transferred onto a micro-computer. This revealed a discrepancy in the total number of forms that was previously reported. The opportunity was therefore taken to make a thorough review of the records. The revised totals in line 1 of the attached statistics for 1985/6 reflect the results of the review.
2. During 1985/6, 233 forms (not including reprints) were reviewed compared with 123 in 1984/5 representing an increase of nearly 90%. In 1986/7 the total reviewed fell slightly to 226 which was partially due to a staff reduction within the unit. The number of forms reviewed in 1985/6 was significantly above the number it had been planned to review. The main reason for the increase in productivity was the introduction of computer aided design equipment in June 1985.
3. The recent re-instatement of an EO post will enable more forms to be produced in the unit. It will also allow the development of expertise in forms costing, testing, and in other areas.

Savings

4. Pressure of work and limited staff resources has held back development of an accurate forms costing system to identify savings. However estimated savings for 1985/6 and 1986/7 were £75,000 and £130,000 respectively. It is planned to issue a short questionnaire to forms sponsors so that more accurate figures can be provided in the future.

Value for money

5. Operation of a time recharging system has provided the unit's staff with monthly and yearly performance targets. Each forms designer works to an individual monthly operational target which provides useful information to line management. During the two years covered by this report the unit nearly always met or exceeded its operational targets. Forms sponsors receive monthly statements showing the unit's staff time charges and associated printing costs separately. The unit's charges are calculated on an hourly basis and they include design time, materials, costs and internal phototypesetting work.

Local forms

6. It is planned to ask all Departmental divisions for examples of local forms together with the annual usage rate. The unit plans to review forms with similar purposes, high usages, and those which have a high profile. The resulting forms design work will need careful programming to avoid overloading the unit's resources.

Legal language

7. Considerable general progress has been made in removing the legal language from Department of the Environment forms. All declarations on forms that have been reviewed have been brought into line with MPO guidelines. No specific formal liaison arrangements exist between the unit and departmental lawyers although there has been contact in specific forms cases. The unit sees a need to continue to pay close attention to this aspect of the work.

8. A particular problem has been encountered with 'prescribed' form especially those involving the Water Authorities. It is planned to contact other departmental forms units for advice on how to deal with this problem.

Application for a Derelict Land Grant

9. The old form performed poorly, it wasted resources through unnecessary correspondence and telephone calls. Problems were caused in paying grants to Local Authorities and other applicants.

10. Three new forms were created to replace the original form as there were three separate types of application. This has enabled more specific information to be included allowing quicker processing by both the applicant and the forms processors. Colour was used primarily to aid completion as well as for easy identification.

11. The new forms had tight design constraints as they were to be used as computer input documents. The number code in some of the tick boxes was designed to allow fast keying of the form. To ensure the new forms could be easily understood plain English was used throughout with notes incorporated within the text.

12. Since the new forms were introduced their performance has shown a definite improvement. However, due to the short time the forms have been in use, it has not been possible to properly evaluate any attributable savings. It is planned to carry out an evaluation review after the forms have been in use for six months.

Staffing

13. The combined forms unit handles work for DTp and PSA as well as for DOE. The allocation of staff time dedicated to DOE forms has generally consisted of:

% Time	No	Grade	Function
2.5%	1	7	Line Manager
25%	1	HEO	FEU Manager
100%	1	EO	Forms Designer
25%	1	AO	Admin support

Equipment

14. In March 1986, the micro-computer system holding all forms records was replaced. This was due to a risk that the available capacity on the old shared system would be exceeded and the data corrupted.

15. In December 1985, a second Compugraphic Advantage 5000 workstation was purchased at low cost. This increased flexibility and output. To improve efficiency further the unit is now considering replacement of the two Advantage 5000's with a more powerful and up-to-date Apple Mackintosh system. It is planned to keep the Compugraphic typesetter as it will soon be possible to successfully 'drive it' from the Apple system. We expect the new system to pay for itself within two years because of the high maintenance and consumable costs of the present Compugraphic system.

The future

16. The unit's objectives for the next two-year reporting period are to:

- establish a forms costing programme to identify savings;
- extend involvement in forms testing;
- identify and improve local forms;
- extend influence and expertise into 'prescribed' forms.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

Department:

DOE

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	210	325	857	1392
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	-	-	-	-
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86				
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	20	33	46	99
b. No of forms reviewed	63	130	188	381
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	-	7	-	7
d. No of forms retained unchanged	27	55	126	208
e. No of forms redesigned	36	68	62	166
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87				
a. No of forms reviewed	51	142	201	394
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	1	-	2	3
c. No of forms retained unchanged	22	91	129	242
d. No of forms redesigned	28	51	70	149
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	32	33	76	141
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b	241	351	931	1523
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	NOT	YET	AVAILABLE	

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
	3	34	5	42
	-	-	-	-
	-	9	4	13
	3	25	4	32
	-	-	-	-
	2	1	-	3
	1	24	4	29
	2	28	3	33
	-	-	-	-
	2	13	1	16
	-	15	2	17
	5	6	2	13
	8	40	7	55
	NOT	YET	AVAILABLE	

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Progress since 1985

1. All Foreign and Commonwealth Office forms (3,030) have been reviewed. 263 forms were abolished. 235 were redesigned. This represents a more than 100% increase in productivity over the previous reporting period. In 1984/85 one man year was spent on the redesign and abolition of 155 forms whereas for 1.5 man years between 1985-87 498 forms were either redesigned or abolished. There have also been improvements in the quality of work done. These results have been achieved as a result of better awareness of forms work throughout the Office, new computer equipment, and a well established system for monitoring forms within the Diplomatic Wing of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Leaving aside forms acquired as a result of reorganisation (notably with Overseas Estate Department taking on responsibilities from the PSA) there has been a small net decrease in the number of forms in use. In addition to the rolling-review programme, a "Forms Census" was undertaken in March 1987. This was the first comprehensive audit of all forms held in the FCO.

Savings

2. Higher quality forms design has enabled the FCO to produce more forms in-house. This has led to substantial savings in printing costs and improvement in speed of supply. For example in-house production of the "post account form" is saving £1,000 pa and has improved speed of supply by six weeks.

3. Better designed forms are also improving efficiency. A new Protocol Department form will replace four existing forms and will save one AO post (£11,000 pa). The new form incorporates a detachable Index Card which is completed by the customer. This eliminates the need for an AO to transfer the information from form to index card.

4. The forms unit provides support for management in other ways. Recent work has included the design of posters to promote the use of office services. For example, an insert in the Office Directory has been created to encourage the use of the Messenger Services (and to discourage the uneconomic use of junior staff as messengers).

Staffing

5. Forms unit staff cost £9,300 pa. The unit consists of three-quarters of a post: 25% of a DS9's time and 50% of an AO's time. The increasing demand for forms design work may make it necessary to increase time allocated to forms work temporarily over the next two years. The unit is a part of the Management Services Section, MRS.

Equipment

6. Computer equipment currently used for forms work and purchased during the period of this report has cost £2,000.

7. Desk top publishing equipment was purchased in October 1986. Forms design work in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been revolutionised by the acquisition of an Apple MacIntosh computer. Improved design capacity has however led to an increasing demand for the unit's services throughout the FCO.

The Future

8. In addition to its standing objectives of improving efficiency and eliminating unnecessarily bureaucratic procedures the unit's targets for the next years are:

- to pursue work on possible design improvements thrown up in the course of the census. Particular targets include forms in the immigration and personnel areas.
- to establish a monitoring system in the Aid Wing of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office similar to that now operating in the Diplomatic Wing.
- to review all forms containing legal language;
- to develop performance indicators for the unit's work
- to computerise all forms records using Cambase database.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms

(Numbers included in I.)

Department:

FCO

Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
133	42	1258	1433
429	177	652	1258
ALL	FCO	FORMS	
As FCO were unable to split their figures between 1985-87 both years have been included below.			
649	258	2123	3030
50	20	193	263
487	232	1813	2532
112	6	117	235
87	39	213	339
599	238	1930	2767
We will aim to review 40 per month			

Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
2	20	0	22
40	-1*	31	70
ALL	FCO	FORMS	
42	19	31	92
1	0	4	5
39	19	23	81
2	0	4	6
7	1	3	11
41	19	27	87
41	19	27	87

1 Forms in use on 31/3/85

- as stated in 3rd progress report

2 Additional existing forms

- notified to forms units during 1985/87

3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86

a. No of forms planned for review
- as reported in 3rd progress report

b. No of forms reviewed

c. No of forms abolished
- each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised

d. No of forms retained unchanged

e. No of forms redesigned

4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87

a. No of forms reviewed

b. No of forms abolished
- each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised

c. No of forms retained unchanged

d. No of forms redesigned

5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87

6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87

- ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b

7 No of forms planned for review

1/4/87 - 31/3/88

* Downgrading of important form.

* Downgrading of important form.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Progress since 1985

1. Since 1985, the Document Design Unit has continued to concentrate on the language and design of forms and documents that can stand as models of good practice. Included in this work have been items which won Plain English Awards in 1985 and 1986. Two Housing Benefits forms won in 1985, and the claim for help with the cost of glasses in 1986.
2. In 1986, Wolff Olins, consultants, were employed to develop a communications strategy and house-style for all written communications with the public. The developing house-style for forms has taken account of the work done by the document design unit since 1982 and the consultants, necessarily, have relied heavily on the expertise built up by the unit. The new house-style has been used for a small number of forms introduced in 1987 and will be extended by a rolling programme.
3. The various projects that form part of the Department's Operational Strategy are being included in the rolling programme. This will ensure that most communications to be sent to the public in the 1990s and beyond will reflect the developed house-style.
4. Under the new strategy, forms and leaflets will no longer be developed in isolation. All communications concerning particular subjects will be considered at the same time, and information will be given when it is most likely to be effective.

Savings

5. It is not possible to give an overall figure for savings attributable to forms improvement work. There are several reasons for this, one of the most important being the fact that the Department does not keep a record of 'before' and 'after' error rates on 'improved' forms. As a result, increased effectiveness and savings cannot be assessed when a new version of a form is introduced without special exercises. But it is always difficult to gain access to local offices in order to make accurate calculation of forms effectiveness or resulting savings. In addition, the limited resources of the document design unit rules out this kind of activity to the extent that useful results might be obtained.
6. In any assessment of the effectiveness of revised forms, savings to members of the public and businesses have to be taken into account. While we test important documents before issue wherever possible, we are not generally in favour of increasing the burden by testing after issue.

However, one measure of the success of a reviewed form is the number of staff suggestions it generates. Generally speaking, very few suggestions are made about these forms. This probably indicates an acceptable measure of effectiveness.

7. Fairly accurate estimates can be made in relation to some of the forms improved by the unit. In particular, the revised Dental Estimates Form - the form dentists use to claim payment for their NHS work - which came into use in October 1985 is expected to save £400,000 a year.

Value for money

8. Although we have promoted the use of performance indicators for use by the form production units throughout the Department, it is proving difficult to establish reliable measures in the document design unit. This is because most of the work is developmental and requires input to forms work placed with the unit throughout the year. Some progress should be possible when we move onto the rolling programme which will be needed to implement the Communications Strategy.

9. Because we cannot measure effectiveness as an integral part of the review programme, we commissioned research to try to find a way of measuring effectiveness without having to take field samples. The study did not provide the hoped-for result. Effectiveness measurement is therefore only likely to be available on the most important projects.

Local forms

10. Because of general concern at the high and apparently growing number of locally produced forms, a study of the reasons for their production and also methods of local control was commissioned in 1986.

For the purpose of the study, a local form was defined as -

one which has been specifically designed by an office for its own use

a draft letter or appendix to a circular which has been converted into a form

a national form which is being reproduced locally

The study reported in August 1986, and its main recommendation was that stricter control over the introduction of local forms was needed. Implementation has, however, been delayed pending the development of the Communications Strategy. When local office staff are given instructions on devising forms in accordance with the Strategy (which will, in effect be an update of the 'Good Forms Guide' we issued in 1983), the opportunity will be taken to introduce tighter control at local level.

11. Although the study was not directly concerned with the counting of local forms, the report indicates that earlier counts of locally produced forms were probably inaccurate. Further guidance was given to local offices on how to compile the statistics required for this year's exercise and we are reasonably confident that the figure of 36,904 forms accurately reflects the true position.

Legal language

12. Because of the increased interest in the simplifying of legal language, we have worked on a number of projects in this area since 1985.

13. We have agreed with solicitors a single version of the warning and declaration used in Departmental forms. The new version came into use in April 1987. As a result of work done for solicitors to improve the new Overpayments Regulations, it has been agreed that solicitors will promote aspects of plain English in all future regulations. But scope for improvement in this area is likely to be limited by the House of Commons 'Statutory Instrument Practice'.

14. We have helped to organise and run legal language courses at the Civil Service College, and Departmental solicitors have been encouraged to attend the 'Contemporary use of legal language in drafting' course.

15. We have worked with the Office of the Chief Adjudication Officer to make decisions on Social Security topics less legalistic.

16. We have recently gained approval to revise the highly legalistic medical consent form which is used throughout the NHS. Work will commence on this in the near future.

Deregulation

17. The Deregulation Unit now sees copies of all forms and leaflets that are directed to business, including new and amended versions.

18. Communication with business is an element of the broader Communications Strategy which is currently being developed. In addition to their involvement in the strategy, the deregulation unit has commissioned a comprehensive study within the Department into the many enquiries that are made of business.

19. The unit is also exploring the idea of 'action forms', designed to guide someone with limited knowledge through complicated subjects. An initial experiment has been introduced for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP). It will be reviewed after it has been in action for a few months, and the views of businesses will be sought.

20. The unit has set up a small advisory panel comprising businesses of widely differing sizes to give practical feedback on details such as forms and leaflets.

21. The unit is cooperating with the Department of Employment and the Inland Revenue to look at areas which cross Departmental boundaries. A start is being made on leaflets which are produced jointly by the Departments.

Staffing

22. The document design unit continues to be staffed by administrative civil servants and professional writers and designers. The current complement of the unit is 1 SEO (Manager) supported by 2 HEOs. The HEOs assist in forms improvement projects as well as fulfilling an administrative role. One EO mainly fulfills a writing role, while the other manages the electronic office equipment and supervises the clerical support staff (1 AO and 1AA).

23. The professional team comprises 1 full-time writer at Higher Professional and Technical Officer (HPTO) grade and 3 designers (1 Typographic Designer II and 2 Graphics Officer II (GOII), 2 part-time writers at HPTO grade have been recruited and will shortly join the unit. Approval has been given to recruit, on a temporary basis, 2 additional designers and 1 writer.

24. The Regional Directorate forms design unit is managed by 1 HEO and is mainly staffed by EOs on loan from the Regional Organisation. Currently, all 11 EOs are wholly engaged on forms improvement work. The support staff is 2 AOs and there is a designer/typesetter at GOIV grade. Further staff in the EO grade are to be recruited.

25. The North Fylde forms unit located at Blackpool is managed by 1 HEO. The support staff of 2 EOs are engaged on forms improvement work relating to work issued by North Fylde Central Office.

26. At Newcastle Central Office there is no centralised forms unit. Most of the branches located at Newcastle have an allocation of staff for forms improvement work, either on a full or part-time basis. Current figures are 8 EOs, 8 AOs and 4 AAs.

Equipment

27. The document design unit's computer aided composition system continues to be used intensively for generating both experimental and production documents. Early in 1987, the installation was assessed in the light of the unit's likely production needs. The report concluded that for optimal operation, the output side of the system needed a software upgrade and a minor hardware augmentation, while the input terminals were found to be in need of replacement.

28. Due to the greatly increased workload imposed by the Communications Strategy, it has been necessary to make use of the services of a commercial typesetting and make-up agency for some of the production work on major new forms.

29. Departmental forms production capabilities have been extended by the installation in 1985 of a complete phototypesetting system at the Printing and Stationery Branch of Newcastle's Establishment and Organisation Division. The Regional Directorate purchased two additional composition terminals during 1986.

The Future

30. The major activity over the next two years will be to carry forward the initiative generated by the Communications Strategy. As well as producing the forms required for the introduction of Income Support and Family Credit from April 1988, the unit will diversify into areas not dealt with by the consultants, for example computer output forms and letter heads.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

Department:

DHSS

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	5286	587	5873	11746	185	10	5	200
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87				762				
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86								
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	400	20	150	570	36	3	2	41
b. No of forms reviewed				3155	14	-	-	14
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised				826				-
d. No of forms retained unchanged				-				-
e. No of forms redesigned				2329	14	-	-	14
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87				2535	1	-	-	-
a. No of forms reviewed								
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised				1141	-	-	-	-
c. No of forms retained unchanged	-	-	-	-				-
d. No of forms redesigned				1394	1	-	-	1
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87				517	2	-	-	2
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b		326		11058	187	10	5	202
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88								

HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

Progress since 1985

1. Statistics in the required format are attached. The current totals are lower than would be expected, because forms used by establishments closed or vacated fell into disuse. Whilst included in the total of forms in lines 3c and 4b, they cannot be considered obsolete simply as a result of forms review action: rather, reorganisations in the Department are responsible. By far the greater number of such forms were internal.

2. Following consultation with MPO, criteria defining important forms were clarified. As a result, some 62 of these forms no longer qualify as important, and 14 more were rendered obsolete.

Savings

3. At the end of the two years covered by the report, an overall reduction of 859 forms in use saves some £14,250 per annum.

Value for Money

4. Forms control has maintained the high standard of design to be expected of HMSO. HMSO forms going out of the Department are all of a readily recognised style in the Department's house colour. Forms control has reduced the number of forms and has prevented the introduction of unnecessary variants.

5. The annual target to review 50% of all forms is the performance indicator used within the Department. The statistical table (compiled from reports submitted by the Divisional Forms Control Liaison Officers) shows an encouraging improvement. Reviews conducted in the second year represent over 40% of the total number of forms recorded at the beginning of that year; and the rate of reviewing is accelerating.

Local Forms

6. HMSO has very few forms used only within one office or location. All local variants are challenged and a common form introduced wherever practicable. Records Management surveys currently in train aim to bring under control any forms previously used without formal authority in smaller outstations.

Legal Language

7. The few HMSO forms which contain legal language are purchasing and contract documents. A major stumbling block to progress is that many depend on GC Stores/1, which is now being reviewed by central departments.

Staffing

8. Centrally 50% of one HEO and 10% of one SEO with some clerical support, costing £10,206 a year. The network of Forms Control Liaison Officers is excluded.

Equipment

9. HMSO forms are designed with the help of the forms design unit within the HMSO Graphic Design studio, utilising two Xenotron Formsmaster computers.

The Future

10. The rolling review programme sets a target of reviewing all forms every two years, equivalent to 50% of forms annually. During the next two years any backlog (mainly of internal forms) will be overhauled. All external forms and important forms have been reviewed at least once and are fully up to the standards expected of HMSO.

11. Forms containing legal language will be reviewed as soon as a revised GC/Stores/1 is available.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms

(Numbers included in I.)

Department:

HMSO

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	356	262	2092	2710	65	49	Nil	114
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	37	18	82	137	-	-	-	-
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86								
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	39	13	1000	1052	39	13		52
b. No of forms reviewed	69	59	572	700	39	13		52
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	42	33	485	560	11	3		14
d. No of forms retained unchanged	16	17	52	85	18	5		23
e. No of forms redesigned	11	9	35	55	10	5		15
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87								
a. No of forms reviewed	212	123	695	1030				
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	36	8	413	457				
c. No of forms retained unchanged	92	62	151	305				
d. No of forms redesigned	84	53	131	268				
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	9	Nil	12	21				
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1 + 2 + 5, less items 3c + 4b	324	239	1288	1851	28	10	Nil	38
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	162	119	644	925	28	10	Nil	38

HOME OFFICE

Progress since 1985

1. The formal Review of Forms was all but completed by March 1985 when the last full report on forms was presented. A short interim report, with statistics, was made to MPO about the final stages of the review covering progress from 1st April 1985 to 31 March 1986.
2. So far as the continuing programme of re-reviews is concerned, the last two years have presented a picture of success in progressing the movement towards better forms. 1601 forms were reviewed in 1985/86 and 1700 in 1986/87. Given that the forms had been so recently reviewed, it is not surprising that a fair proportion of them were retained in their existing form. Even so, 633 were abolished and 689 were redesigned; that is, over 40% were either redesigned or abolished. Although 257 forms are recorded as being notified to the unit during the period, this includes forms of a number of peripheral bodies that have now been drawn formally into the review, as well as those that have been discovered as being previously unrecorded by the forms unit. The 491 new forms include a number of newly created areas of the Office set up as a result of legislation or administrative changes, as well as new forms from existing areas.
3. The figures as shown in column 1 of the statistical table are not as stated in the 3rd progress report. The figures for the Passport Office which became the Passport Department of the Home Office in April 1984, have now been amalgamated with the rest of the Office and are not shown separately. Additionally four areas had made errors in designation of form type, and the opportunity of the introduction of the new statistical form has been taken to make corrections.
4. So far as the Prison Service is concerned 364 forms were reviewed. Of these, 135 were abolished, 99 revised and in 130 cases no revision was necessary. A further 44 forms were under review at the end of the period. Revised editions of the Catalogue of Official Prison Service books and forms were issued in July 1985 and June 1986 and June 1987. Placing the text of the catalogue on a word processor means that in future individual amended pages will be issued, obviating the need for complete reprints each year. Future work will continue to concentrate on the review of forms listed in the catalogue of which 252 remain to be scrutinised.

Savings

5. Given the practicalities and problems outlined in our Forms Control paper in the last report and the part-time nature of the central forms unit, resources have not been available to estimate the total savings in our 70 separate administrative areas and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. We remain confident, however, that considerable benefits continue to accrue from the continued monitoring of forms, in lower processing, production and distribution costs, and in better presentation of information, and to the public through making forms easier to understand and complete.

Value for money

6. Specific targets for the coming year are set for forms work in the Divisional Annual Performance Review and the success in the previous year is reported. Increased take up of our services and the provision of a better product that is more efficient in use and effective in conveying information remains the major means of assessing achievement.

Local Forms

7. Local forms are those used within divisions or between offices that form part of a division. All local forms are included in the total 5338 forms shown in the statistical return. They have been treated throughout the review as every other form; there has been no distinction and they are therefore covered by existing design and control arrangements.

Legal Language

8. The simplification of legal language has been tackled in the context of the general improvement of forms. Forms sponsors are responsible for liaising with Departmental Legal Advisers where a legal contribution is appropriate. It has to be recognised, however, that the need for simpler language must be balanced against the danger of error - and subsequent challenge to the legality of actions - that may result from over-simplification. In many areas of the Home Office such errors may have serious implications for the safety of the public or the freedom of the individual.

Deregulation

9. Arrangements exist whereby the forms unit will be informed by the deregulation officer where a form involving deregulation is being considered. Failing this, the forms control procedures should ensure that it is drawn to our attention. As yet no forms have been brought to our attention.

Staffing

10. Central responsibility for the review and control of forms lies with the Organisation and Methods Branch, which with Staff Inspection is located within the Management (M) Division of the Finance and Manpower Department of the Home Office. The Central Staff effort currently devoted to this work is one SEO (10%) and 6 HEOs (about 25% each) at an estimated cost of £43,000 a year. Nominated officers in each administrative area have overall responsibility for forms, O&M officers giving guidance and assistance on a consultancy basis as required. Under recently issued departmental control procedures, the central forms officers continue to examine the justification for new or redesigned forms, their costs, content, design and, as appropriate, performance.

Equipment

11. There has been a significant improvement in the equipment held by the central forms unit. In the Autumn of 1986 the Apple "Lisa" system was replaced by an "Apple" Mac Network system with two operational screens. Pressure to use the single "Lisa" screen and the cost benefits fully justified the change, and since installation both screens have been fully utilised. The quality of the forms produced has encouraged more divisions to consult us at an earlier stage in their review process and has enabled us to do more work within existing resources.

The Future

12. It is planned to review 1688 forms during the period 1 April 1987 to 31 March 1988. Given the progress in each of the previous two years this target, set by the individual sponsors themselves, appears to be realistic.

13. The Central Forms Unit will continue to assist sponsors in the design and development of their forms and to give advice where appropriate.

14. A full control system has now been implemented and arrangements are now in hand to ensure that all forms are reviewed on a cyclical basis (and that it is not the same forms being reviewed on a yearly basis over and over again). Apart from seeing all new and revised forms it is our aim that each O&M Forms Officer be charged with reviewing his segment of the Office at regular intervals to ensure that there are no forms whose continued usefulness - or usefulness in that form - appears to be in doubt. With an annual review rate of 1600 forms, and given the fact that some forms have to be reviewed every year because of their importance, it is our objective that every form, whatever its status, should be reviewed at least once every 5 years.

15. Both the Prison Department Efficiency Unit and the O&M Forms Unit are committed to making regular progress reports to Senior Management.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

Department:

HO

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	1842	751	2630	5223
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	205	47	5	257
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86				
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	708	45	848	1601
b. No of forms reviewed	577	78	560	1215
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	272	41	20	333
d. No of forms retained unchanged	126	36	480	642
e. No of forms redesigned	179	1	60	240
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87				
a. No of forms reviewed	828	176	696	1700
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	151	8	141	300
c. No of forms retained unchanged	456	116	379	951
d. No of forms redesigned	221	52	176	449
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	127	60	304	491
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b	1751	809	2778	5338
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	718	74	896	1688

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
	60	0	1	61
	0	0	0	0
	17	0	0	17
	17	0	0	17
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	17	0	0	17
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
	60	0	1	61
	18	0	0	18

INLAND REVENUE

Progress since 1985

1. Since the ending of the first phase of forms review on 31 March 1985 we embarked on a continuous process of monitoring forms design with the aim of further improving and simplifying our forms. We set ourselves the target of reviewing all our forms in equal instalments in the three years to 31 March 1988. These targets have been exceeded in both years to March 1986 and 1987.

2. Forms Review work in the department continues to be controlled by the Forms Review Group, chaired at Assistant Secretary level. The Group has continued to meet regularly. It seeks to maintain a consistent approach to forms design in the Department, to monitor performance and to disseminate information and to give guidance of good practice such as the use of plain English. Its membership is drawn from the larger units and was expanded during the period. The training available to forms unit staff has been publicised within the group.

3. In addition to design matters we have also striven for economy in the ordering and stock holding of forms. Orders exceeding one million copies are individually authorised at senior level. Computerisation has resulted in fewer but larger deliveries to Accounts Offices and computer centres, and phased deliveries have been arranged for some orders, resulting in lower stock holding at the HMSO warehouse.

4. Forms and Equipment Liaison Officers have been established on a Regional basis and Seminars have been held to promote economy in the ordering of forms and stationery and better stock control in local network offices.

Local Forms

5. A local form is defined as one designed, procured and stored locally by local office managers. A survey was undertaken before the period of this report to establish the types of local forms in use and it was apparent several thousand existed although the variations were often trivial. Since then standard versions of the commonest types have been prepared centrally and are ordered by local offices in the normal way, resulting in lower costs and better designed forms.

LEGAL LANGUAGE

6. We have continued the drive to substitute plain English for legal jargon in forms and have had much help from our Solicitors Office in this. We commissioned Plain English Campaign to stage a seminar for forms units which was attended by a senior member of the Solicitors Office who subsequently gave a lecture on legal language to these units and members of the Forms Review Group. This contact has been built on with continued reference to the Solicitor on an ad hoc basis.

Deregulation

7. Our efforts have included the complete redesign and rewriting of two major PAYE forms, and Employers End of Year Return (P35) and the Employers Guide to PAYE P7. Consultants arranged tests of a pilot version of the P7. Numbers of medium and small employers gave useful feedback before the definitive version was printed. Both new forms were very well received and each should make employers' tasks much easier.

Staffing

8. The Forms Design Unit is part of the Management Services Division. During the period covered by this report an SEO, HEO, and two EO equivalents joined the unit when responsibility for continuous stationery was transferred to it. It is now staffed with one Principal as its head, one SEO as the head of continuous stationery and computer forms design, eight HEO designers and editors, one Graphics Officer Grade 4 for copy preparation, two EO's on continuous stationery design, three AO's for proof reading and clerical support plus two specialist typist typesetter operators. Staff cost amounts to £291,000.

Equipment

9. We have continued to typeset nearly all our cut forms using APL and Composer 2 keyboards, and a Linotron 202W typesetter. Bromides are produced on an Agfa Gevaset 437N wet processor. In addition we have recently added three Apple Macintosh terminals and a printer, which were acquired as design aids and for quicker and cheaper proofing.

The Future

10. Development work continues on forms resulting from the change to a computerised operation from a manual system. The on-line system for PATE, COP, has resulted in separate versions of some forms including the tax returns and these will now become the standard issue with effect from April 1988. The computerised assessing of the self employed has similarly resulted in a new range of stationery. This is now undergoing a live pilot test and should be used nationwide by April 1988. These new assessments have continued the use of colour tints with different colours to distinguish income tax, capital gains, higher rate tax and so on. A comprehensive on-line tax collection system together with on-line corporation tax assessing are the next major projects to be tackled. When these are complete, in several years time, all the major functions connected with income tax, corporation tax and capital gains tax will have been computerised and the number of manual versions of the forms involved will have been much reduced or abolished.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms

(Numbers included in I.)

Department:

IR

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	2400	200	5880	8480
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	-	-	-	-
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86				
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	800	70	2000	2879
b. No of forms reviewed	844	122	2138	3104
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	56	6	289	351
d. No of forms retained unchanged	427	8	1304	1739
e. No of forms redesigned	361	108	545	1014
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87				
a. No of forms reviewed	954	141	2340	3435
b. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	50	10	308	368
c. No of forms retained unchanged	570	76	1245	1891
d. No of forms redesigned	334	55	787	1176
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	93	26	469	588
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1 + 2 + 5, less items 3c + 4b	2387	210	5752	8349
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	800	70	2000	2870

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
	150	40	10	200
	-	-	-	-
	50	6	4	60
	86	29	20	135
	3	6	1	10
	24	8	3	35
	59	15	16	90
	74	-	31	105
	-	-	-	-
	36	-	13	49
	38	-	18	56
	5	3	1	9
	152	37	10	199
	50	6	4	60

LAND REGISTRY

Progress since 1985

1. Overall steady progress has been maintained. The initial review has been completed but a considerable amount of work remains to be done on internal forms and on some of the less frequently used public forms. Many of these which were acceptable when reviewed initially can now be seen to be out of line with the general graphic and stylistic changes which have been introduced under the review.

2. The most important forms to have been published in the last two years are the new style land and charge certificates which have been introduced at the Plymouth District Land Registry following the introduction of computerisation at that office. The covers to these documents were last redrawn in 1925, but the opportunity has been taken while maintaining the traditional air of legal formality to introduce an open asymmetrical design which it is hoped will not be regarded as outdated until well into the next century. The general information and notes which formerly appeared as 'small print' inside the certificate covers, has been carefully rewritten, in order to give the information greater clarity and impact.

Savings and value for money

3. Costs related to printing, warehousing and distributing public forms are not borne by the Registry as these functions are carried out by private commercial printers and publishers. The cost in use of public forms cannot be ascertained. One area where considerable savings are being made is in the reprinting of internal forms and the control of stock and order levels. Stocks are now reviewed at six monthly intervals. This has led to shorter print runs, smaller stocks and a consequential saving in storage space. This also reduces wastage when an imperative change in design requires the destruction of existing stocks.

Local forms

4. Greater emphasis is now being given to the control of local forms. The Department has 13 regional offices (district land registries). An initial survey showed these offices to have created approximately 3350 local forms, many on which investigation proved to be local variations or 'improvements' on national forms.

5. The headquarter's control procedures show the extent to which district land registries use internal national forms. These procedures have been developed to indicate when a district land registry has introduced its own local variation of such forms. Thus changes of practice introduced locally can be considered for adoption nationally to the benefit of all offices. These procedures highlight and make use of the relationships between forms and practice.

6. A forms liaison officer (at SEO level) has been appointed at each district land registry. He is responsible for the control and design of local forms and he reports on the position annually to the departmental forms review officer. The reports provide a simple but effective means of control.

Legal language

7. We have some 20,000 customers (ie solicitors, building societies, local authorities etc.) who use our forms regularly and are very familiar with them, but we receive no more than two or three comments or suggestions relating to our forms each year. Members of the legal practice division who are primarily concerned with new legislation and the consequential introduction of new practice and forms have attended courses and seminars relating to the use of plain English and the avoidance of legal language. Every effort is now made to ensure that new forms are expressed clearly and that they remain free from 'legalese' and jargon.

8. In an earlier report we stated our intention to add explanations of unavoidable legal terms to notices which were most likely to be seen by the public. This is being done. An example is the notice sent to a joint owner following the severance of joint tenancy. This notice formerly did no more than set out verbatim the entry which was being made on the register as a consequence of the severance. It was found that this was not easily understood by those people who received it. The words of the entry have not been altered as these have been considered in the courts and been held to provide a succinct and unambiguous statement as to the legal position sought by the parties. However the notice now includes an assurance that the recipient and his/her partner remain the owners of the property and that they may sell or deal with it in the usual way. A further paragraph explains the legal terminology, the effect of this entry and the underlying purpose which is to protect those people who may have an interest in the property when a joint owner dies. This notice also gives advice on how to get further help or information if required.

9. Further examples of our improvements in this area are provided by those notices which are required by statute to contain a verbatim copy of the rule under which the time for objections is calculated. An explanation of the position in non-legal language now precedes the rule which is appended as a footnote.

Staffing

10. The registry does not have a forms unit as such, but the staff complement of the Office Services and Legal Practice Division provide for the following to be committed to forms review work:- grade 7 .1; HEO .5; EO 2 x .5; AO 1.0. The staff cost is approximately £22,400 per year.

Equipment

11. The acquisition of an Itek Digitek 3000 system and a Mackintosh PC with Apple software in 1986 has given a considerable boost to the design capacity of the Registry's graphic design unit, as well as providing welcome flexibility and sophistication to in-house design work.

The Future

12. Although the initial review has been completed the revision of forms remains as a continuing process. All forms will continue to be reviewed on a regular cyclical basis. In addition certain groups or series of forms which have already been modified to meet the more immediate requirements introduced as a result of the review, have been selected for further and more thorough revision during 1987/88.

Further work is also planned in the area of local forms. The general guidelines which were issued to the local forms liaison officers in 1983 will be replaced with an updated and expanded guide specifically aimed at the control and design of local forms in the Land Registry. Interest in local forms by headquarters was in the main confined to the control of the overall numbers and an attempt to contain and then reduce this. The interest will be extended to reviewing the usage rates of local forms, as this may identify those which could be used by other offices or adopted for national use.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

Department:

LR

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report.	55	308	721	1084
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87.	-	-	4	4
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86 a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	14	77	117	208
b. No of forms reviewed	10	65	92	167
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	-	11	16	27
d. No of forms retained unchanged	4	34	50	88
e. No of forms redesigned	6	20	26	52
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87 a. No of forms reviewed	11	102	227	340
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	-	3	10	13
c. No of forms retained unchanged	8	76	176	260
d. No of forms redesigned	3	23	41	67
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	6	10	44	60
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie: items 1 + 2 + 5, less items 3c + 4b	61	304	743	1108
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	15	100	240	355

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
	30	35	-	65
	-	-	-	-
	5	11	-	16
	5	14	-	19
	-	11	-	11
	2	-	-	2
	3	3	-	6
	4	10	-	14
	-	2	-	2
	2	5	-	7
	2	3	-	5
	2	5	-	7
	32	27	-	59
	7	10	-	17

LORD CHANCELLOR'S DEPARTMENT

Progress since 1985

1. The Forms Unit is now an established part of headquarters and is increasingly approached by the other branches for advice and assistance with the development and design of forms. There has been no formal programme to review the Department's main forms because of the major changes likely to arise from the Civil Justice Review over the next three years, but the full demand-led workload reflected in the table has given the unit the opportunity to develop a good understanding of forms design and control. A particularly important development has been in the unit's "housekeeping" where the use of a micro-computer has greatly assisted the control of expenditure on forms.
2. Plans to publish departmental statements of forms policy, and procedures for the design and control of forms were delayed because of a major headquarters re-organisation. A forms manual encompassing each of these aspects has now been drafted and should be introduced during 1987.

Savings

3. Significant savings have been achieved by improved control of purchasing and supply arrangements for forms. Notable examples are: a saving of £25,000 p.a. by changing the structure of a file cover; £20,000 p.a. by using a standard material with simplified printing requirements for the county court record card; and a one-off saving of £70,000 is due in 1987/8 through the introduction of a new ordering system.
4. While these figures provide a useful indication of the value for money achieved by the Unit, no formal machinery exists for testing forms and assessing the benefits of improved design. This is largely due to the absence of a formal programme, and because most of the department's important forms are prescribed, there are problems in testing them before they are introduced. However the unit plans to agree a list of important forms with operations branches and to obtain evidence of a form's performance before work starts on any major re-design.
5. The re-design of the county court summons following a Rule change, and the current re-design of the county court warrant of execution arising from an internal scrutiny, have provided valuable experience in the review of important forms. In both cases court completion and processing of documents will become simpler, but the greatest value should come through the use of plain English and clear presentation. Benefits should accrue from improved understanding of documents and court procedures, though they will be particularly difficult to measure.

Local Forms

6. In LCD there are other offices, apart from the court service, with separate responsibilities, each requiring its own forms. A recent survey showed that there are 1243 forms used by the Royal Courts of Justice, and it is now estimated that a further 650 forms are used in various associated offices. These offices control their forms, but they call on the forms unit for assistance with design. However the expression "local forms" refers to those forms originated by courts, dealing with local variations in practice or meeting a need where a departmental form is not available. In 1986 the unit completed an analysis of some 6000 local forms collected in 1983. The summary showed that (in 1983) the annual copy volume was 2.75 million (compared to 50 million of departmental forms) and that half of these were of a public nature. Of 1000 functions or subject areas, half involved pro-formas of a standard letter nature requiring the addition of limited detail, and nearly 200 were versions of notices or orders. A Circuit Administrator (Grade 3) is now considering the way forward.

Legal Language

7. Closer liaison between the forms unit and operations branches has produced several important examples of designs using Plain English, notably the county court summons and warrant forms referred to in 4 above. The draft warrant form includes a section to be given to the debtor containing detail duplicated from the bailiff's part of the form which is legally the warrant. The design not only meets the requirements of court completion, bailiffs usage and subsequent court filing, but has placed emphasis on structuring the document for easy reading by the public. Unnecessary detail has been omitted and while certain expressions have been left in the warrant so that it complies with the legislation, misleading terms such as "warrant of execution" have been removed from the debtor's section. Valuable comments were received from court staff, members of the Rule Committee, and user organisations such as the National Consumer Council and the Plain English Campaign, in consultation carried out by the sponsor branch.

Staffing

8. Since the spring of 1985 the forms unit has been staffed by 1 x HEO, 2 x EO and 2 x AO and has been responsible for the design, purchasing (as budget holder) and control of forms. In this period the unit has changed division three times and this has delayed implementation of forms policy initiatives. In consequence there has been an emphasis on making improvements in areas within the units own responsibilities, such as purchasing savings and improving design skills. The recent major re-organisation, in which the forms unit became part of a new Court Service Management Group, means that one Head of Division is responsible for the activities of operations branches and forms matters, and that these are in the same group as the bulk of the departments information technology staff. Policy and legislation, however, are dealt with by a separate group and so continued efforts will be required to ensure timely involvement.

Equipment

9. The forms unit has recently acquired a Xerox 'Documentator' desktop publishing system for forms design; it is expected that improvements in output will cover the purchase price within two years, and that the increased efficiency will enable the unit to respond to the work arising from the Civil Justice Review and computer projects.

10. Since 1.4.87 the unit has been using a separate micro-computer to hold records of all departmental forms and to record the ordering and billing information needed to control expenditure. This has produced marked improvements in the awareness of costs and the ability to control the budget.

The Future

11. The aim for 1987-8 is to institutionalise best practice in the development and design of forms before starting the considerable review programme which is expected to arise from the Civil Justice Review and plans for computerisation. To this end greater priority will be given to important forms and consideration will be given to establishing a suitable means of evaluating the effectiveness of court forms.

12. In addition to developments in design procedures, the unit will look for further economies in the areas of purchasing requisition systems and stock control.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

Department:

LCD

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	(No breakdown available)			Est 1362 (+1243 RCJ forms 5835 local forms)			-	
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	-	-	-	Est 650 Associated Offices	-	-	-	-
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86								
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	-	-	-	200	31	19	-	50
b. No of forms reviewed	185	10	64	259	The number of forms to be reviewed was reduced during the year as policy branches revised plans.			
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	2	-	5	7	-	-	-	-
d. No of forms retained unchanged	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
e. No of forms redesigned	183	10	59	252	-	-	-	-
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87								
a. No of forms reviewed	243	5	52	300	22	-	-	22
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	69	5	5	79	3	-	-	3
c. No of forms retained unchanged	26	-	-	26	-	-	-	-
d. No of forms redesigned	148	-	47	195	19	-	-	19
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	4	4	6	14	-	-	-	-
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b	662	66	412	Actual 1140 (+ 7876)	83	3	24	110
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	Demand-led. There is no formal programme pending the recommendation of the Civil Justice Review.				-	-	-	-

CABINET OFFICE

Progress since 1985

1. Only Management and Personnel Office (MPO) forms were included in the figures for the 1984-85 report. Forms for other areas of the merged department have been reviewed since then by the Cabinet Office Forms Unit.
2. Of those forms examined in 1985-86 and 1986-87, 9% and 12% respectively were found to be surplus to requirements and were withdrawn. Despite that reduction, the number of forms reviewed and approved has increased by 21% due mainly to the extra coverage.

Savings and Value for Money

3. The benefits of a well-designed and logical form are evident. Quantification of direct savings resulting from the introduction of such forms has proved difficult and often impractical. Limited resources and the difficulties involved, have made impossible detailed post implementation exercises but savings from economy in numbers and in printing have resulted from the use of the new forms and from the review procedures outlined below.
4. Strict guidelines exist within the department to regulate the number of copies produced of each form. Agreement has been reached between the Forms Unit and the departmental Reprographic Unit to prevent the large-scale production of unauthorised standard letters, forms, and other such documents.
5. When ordering a supply of forms, users are required to estimate the expected usage and normally are provided with a maximum of twelve months usage. This reduces the possibility of waste and gives the Forms Unit and the users the opportunity to assess the suitability of a form on a regular basis.

Local Forms

6. Every management command within the department has been asked to forward all forms in use to the Forms Unit. These have been reviewed systematically over the past four years. It is believed that some local forms have escaped these procedures. Plans are being formulated to bring them within the official system.

Staffing

7. The Cabinet Office Forms Unit comprises 0.55 of an Executive Officer and 0.2 of an Administrative Assistant. The EO has overall control of forms design; briefs users on the need for good forms; oversees recording, storing and review of forms by users; designs all forms with the aid of a video composer and liaises with the DHSS to provide camera-ready copies. The AA is responsible for the day-to-day scrutiny of user requests for additional copies of forms and provides general support.

8. The Forms Unit carries out the majority of its forms design on a Xenotron (XVC2) Video Composer. High quality camera ready output is created on a Lasercomp owned by the DHSS. Since 1985, the forms unit has introduced a micro computer to progress reviews and day to day work. Within the next few months it is hoped to replace the Xenotron system with one running on IBM PC compatible hardware. This will bring greater versatility and provide a complete in-house production capability.

The Future

9. The work programme for the next two years will focus on two main areas. First, to continue the regular monitoring of the usage of and requirement for existing forms. Second, by publicity and education, to gain control of the forms known or suspected as being outside the control of the Forms Unit.

10. A major problem to be overcome is the speed with which forms are reviewed and supplied. The introduction of the new in-house forms design equipment will improve turn-round time of all forms work.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

Department:

CO (MPO)

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	679	41	932	1652	93	0	38	131
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	44	0	122	166	0	0	0	0
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86								
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	120	0	111	231	11	0	14	25
b. No of forms reviewed	388	0	639	1027	4	0	14	18
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	26	0	62	88	0	0	0	0
d. No of forms retained unchanged	122	0	329	451	0	0	1	1
e. No of forms redesigned	240	0	248	488	4	0	13	17
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87								
a. No of forms reviewed	186	0	556	742	8	0	0	0
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	12	0	77	89	0	0	0	0
c. No of forms retained unchanged	124	0	261	385	4	0	0	4
d. No of forms redesigned	50	0	218	268	4	0	0	4
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	117	0	248	365	0	0	0	0
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b	802	41	1163	2006	93	0	38	131
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	267	14	388	669	31	0	13	44

MANPOWER SERVICES COMMISSION

Progress since 1985

1. This has been a good two years, in which we slightly exceeded our overall target and abolished 460 forms. There was a shortfall in internal forms reviewed, due mainly to other pressures preventing all the planned forms dealing with staff work and skillcentres being reviewed, and to enhanced software coming on line late. In other categories, we reviewed more forms than planned. Abolished forms included 88 for old Special Programmes, 129 out of 131 for 1 year YTS and 85 for Adult Training.
2. Two year YTS had 81 forms, of which 9 were abolished and 2 new forms created. This compares well with 131 for 1 year YTS. In all 100 more forms covering both schemes were reviewed than planned. An extra 33 forms dealing with accounts and staff transfers at public expense were reviewed. Adult Training exceeded their planned total by 96.
3. The recommendations of the research into the quota scheme for employers, under the Disabled Persons (Employment) Scheme, have been postponed until the scheme's future potential has been assessed. The results of this are not expected much before the end of 1987/88. Despite this set back, 80 forms dealing with disabled persons were reviewed including minor amendments to quota scheme forms.
4. In late February 1986, we took delivery of a Rank Xerox 8010/40 Document and Forms Creation System, which has helped us to improve our turn round and improve the quality of design.
5. To help spread the Plain English message, personal copies of a small booklet entitled "Plain English - A Conversion Kit", were issued to all staff down to HEO level with instructions to make them readily available to junior staff. A pilot system for recharging forms units costs was successful and recharging was introduced in 1986/87.

Savings

6. Identified savings are estimated at 18,200 hours to the public, 500 hours to business and 21,700 hours plus additional savings of £42,600 to Manpower Services Commission.

7. In Adult Training recruitment, two forms were abolished and replaced by one following a review of forms and procedures. Due to changes in application procedures, which cut out a second interview, it is difficult to compare the new form with the old ones. However, the new application form is easier to complete. As a result, the application forms are now filled in more accurately which saves staff time. Also, applicants are no longer required to attend a second and more lengthy interview to decide their suitability for the course they have chosen. The result is less inconvenience and savings to the public as well as savings in staff time. It is estimated that there will be a saving of 10 minutes to both the public and Manpower Services Commission on each application based on an estimated increased annual consumption of 350,000 forms.

8. Although there were no major complaints about the two application forms for a place on the Community Programme, both forms unit and the policy section were not completely happy with them. So when a change in procedure was proposed, changes in the layout and language were made. However, as the date for introducing the new procedure was postponed and the forms came up for reprint, it was decided to introduce as many of the changes as possible. The revised versions of the forms have made them easier to fill in and check and has led to less queries. As a result it is estimated that there will be savings of 18,200 hours to the public and 21,000 to the Manpower Services Commission based on an annual consumption of 1,100,000 forms.

Value for money

9. The forms unit is assessed by the number of forms reviewed, the number of forms abolished and the number of final A4 proofs produced. Also taken into account is its ability to satisfy its customers regarding advice on forms, the quality and effectiveness of the forms and its ability to meet target dates.

Local forms

10. A local form in the Manpower Services Commission is one which originates in a Division, Branch or Section and is used for either public, business or internal use, or originates in the field (eg in an Area or Local Office) and is used for either public, business or internal use. Forms unit wrote asking for estimates of the number of local forms currently in use and how these forms are monitored and controlled. There are an estimated 6,200 local forms and, in general, there is no systematic system to control and monitor them. Where there is one, by far the majority rely on line managers, instigators or users reviewing them on an on-going basis, eg when they need reprinting when there is a change in procedure etc. To improve this position, local forms will be brought into line with national forms in that each local form will be reviewed at least once every three years and more often if necessary. Regional Offices, through Regional Forms Liaison Officers, will become responsible for monitoring and controlling local forms in their own regions. Current instructions will be revised and suitable guidelines issued.

Legal language

11. Legal language is kept to a minimum and plain english is used wherever possible, so long as the Manpower Services Commission's interests are safeguarded. Declarations and warnings are kept simple. Forms unit has no direct contact with Departmental Solicitors but works with the policy sections who do have liaison arrangements. All contracts standards work is done in one policy section.

12. Contracts within the Manpower Services Commission evolved within the individual Divisions with Departmental Solicitors as the advice point. The Manpower Services Commission and the Departmental Solicitors are conscious of the need to keep legal language to an absolute minimum consistent with good contract practice. It is recognised that staff, who negotiate contracts, rarely have a legal background. Additionally, many of our contractors do not have legal departments. The use of plain english is clearly desirable in such circumstances. From the early days of the Manpower Services Commission's involvement in contracts, there has been a positive attitude to the use of plain english.

13. In 1982, a first attempt was made at codifying existing contracts' practice's, and in April 1983, the first Contracts Guide was issued. The Guide was revised in September 1985 and reissued as a formal instruction. Subsequent discussions with Departmental Solicitors have indicated the need for further revision of parts of the Guide and the policy section is now working on the draft received back from the Solicitors. Contract Seminars are held for Head Office and field staff.

Staffing

14. At the start of the period, there were 9 and a 1/3 staff, 1/3 SEO, 1 HEO, 1 EO, 3AO designers, 2 part time AOs, 1 AA and 2 Typists, but this was reduced by 1 Typist at the end of September 1986 following the full introduction of computerised design equipment. Before its introduction, the designers designed, prepared and marked up forms and drafts for the typists, proof read and marked up any amendments. They worked directly with the typists on difficult forms. Also, they had to complete forms by drawing boxes, lines etc, and putting on additional headings, usually with leterset. The SEO has overall responsibility for the forms unit, while the HEO manages it and is charged with providing an efficient and effective forms control and design service. The EO looks after the day to day running, and the designers use their interactive computer system to design forms. General administration records etc fall to the part-time AOs and AA. The typist inputs bulk text for the designers, inputs details and amendments to forms list and does text forms which have been previously marked up.

Equipment

15. Previously, typewriters, drawing boards and equipment and cut and paste techniques were used. In February 1986, a Rank Xerox 8010/40 Document and Forms Creation System with 3 workstations was acquired and staff were quickly trained to use it for forms design. By the end of September 1986, it was fully operational for forms design, resulting in the release of a typist. The new equipment has resulted in more work, an increase of 10% in final A4 proofs, quicker turn round and even earlier involvement in the design of forms. It has also improved the finished quality of masters. An extra workstation was acquired in March 1987.

The Future

16. Over the next two years, we will

- put as many records as possible on the computer;
- develop particular styles for different programmes and schemes;
- bring local forms into the review net and issue suitable guidance;
- review all current instructions, and
- investigate the feasibility of our typist inputting more text before the designers start work.

17. During the coming year, the Manpower Services Commission plans to review 709 forms which will include

- 112 data processing forms following the upgrading of software for the Financial and Management Accounting System which should lead to a reduction in the number of forms needed;
- 76 two year YTS forms;
- 67 skillcentre forms where the emphasis will be on those least used;
- 40 forms dealing with compulsory transfer and accounting, and
- 214 forms dealing with staff with the emphasis on further simplification of language

Special attention will be given to 7 forms including one which gives the conditions and rules for trainees in the Adult Training Programme and both application forms for a place on the Community Programme.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms

(Numbers included in I.)

Department:

MSC

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	271	203	1,676	2,150
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	-	-	-	-
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86				
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	141	99	539	779
b. No of forms reviewed	180	133	425	738
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	46	59	146	251
d. No of forms retained unchanged	87	63	207	357
e. No of forms redesigned	47	11	72	130
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87				
a. No of forms reviewed	233	259	735	1,227
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	17	86	106	209
c. No of forms retained unchanged	84	102	451	637
d. No of forms redesigned	132	71	178	381
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	118	123	334	575
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b	326	181	1758	2,265
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	82	116	511	709

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
	21	41	-	62
	-	-	-	-
	10	-	-	10
	10	17	3	30
	4	5	-	9
	5	10	3	18
	1	2	-	3
	53	88	73	214
	7	21	10	38
	33	41	34	108
	13	26	29	68
	66	53	63	182
	76	68	53	197
	38	57	54	149

DEPARTMENT FOR NATIONAL SAVINGS

Progress since 1985

1. Good progress in reviewing National Savings forms has been maintained. The remaining important forms are now under review and are expected to be completed by mid 1987. All other customer forms have been reviewed at least once with many having been reviewed for a second time under the 2-year cyclical review programme. Work has continued on the revision of external business forms and has met with support and approval from our agents.
2. As an example of the good general response to our forms initiatives: Professor Crystal, the author of the Companion to the English Language (which is to be published by Penguin Books next year), has selected one of our forms to use as an illustration of the "excellent levels of clarity that can be found in an official form". He proposed to use as a caption with the form - 'An example of one of the new generation of official letters, written as plainly as it is possible to imagine'.
3. Major systems and procedural changes have been prime contributory factors in the number of new forms introduced in the past two years. Enhancements and additions to the National Savings product range have added to the need for new forms and the December 1986 launch of a new Corporate Identify for National Savings has helped to sharpen the focus on the customer aspect of the forms coming up for review.

Savings

4. A significant reduction in the cost of producing typesetting has been obtained by the purchase of further in-house typesetting equipment. In the six month period April-September 1985 £13,700 was spent externally on typesetting; in the same period in 1986 the spend was £7,500 for a similar volume of traffic. In addition to the financial savings are the benefits of easier access and greater flexibility in having internally stored design data.

Value for Money

5. National Savings is in a very competitive personal savings market where well designed and attractive forms help to promote the product and to ensure a good service to the public. Significant work has been done in public testing of forms before introduction and in monitoring their performance in use. It is certain that we have avoided problems and saved staff resources by employing these methods but actual costs are impossible to quantify. We consider, therefore, that the resources provided for forms work continues to give good value in terms of customer service and operational efficiency. Indeed there has been an increased awareness throughout the Department of the value of good forms design and of the benefits of testing forms before they are introduced.

Local forms

6. Our definition of 'local forms' is those used in and between branches and sections within a Product Division of National Savings or passed between National Savings Product Divisions. The numbers of these forms are not significant and are reviewed on the same basis as the rest of our forms - they have all been reviewed at least once in the lifetime of this initiative.

Legal language

7. The bulk of our forms which fall into this category are our product prospectuses which are always written under advice from the Treasury Solicitor. Although these documents can appear quite 'heavy' we have few operational problems with them. Our main comment about 'legal language' concerns the advice given by the Treasury Solicitor - sometimes it is difficult to decide if his suggested wording is an absolute requirement for unambiguous communication or the stilted phraseology of legal convention. Here we find quite a variation between individual solicitors.

Staffing

8. The staffing for forms unit is as follows:

Principal	0.5
SEO	1
HEO	4
EO	5.5
GOIII	1
AO	2
AA	0.5

Equipment

9. As outlined above, additional photo-typesetting equipment has been obtained and has significantly reduced typesetting costs. The additional equipment has also enabled the forms units to experiment with design layouts and has saved time producing hand drawn drafts. Micro computers have been introduced to provide more efficient review and stock control mechanisms.

The future

10. The main future influence on the forms review programme will be the Corporate Identity exercise mentioned above. A firm of consultants - Wolff Olins - were engaged to look at National Savings' image and to consider whether a new corporate identity was desirable. Their task is now almost finished but the departmental forms unit will be heavily involved in implementing the new identity across the complete range of National Savings forms. However the principles and standards already established in the "Forms Guide" will prove to be of the greatest help in completing this exercise in a disciplined and informed manner. Implementation Plans have been drawn up to make the best use of Forms Design resources and to minimise the wastage of stocks. It is planned that the new corporate identity will be completely in place by the spring of 1988.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

Department:

DNS

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	1600	219	3680	5499	146	3	62	211
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	198	37	204	439	3	3	-	6
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86								
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	438	48	267	753	63	-	-	63
b. No of forms reviewed	527	33	1055	1615	36	-	19	55
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	248	6	168	422	6	-	3	9
d. No of forms retained unchanged	86	6	556	648	-	-	16	16
e. No of forms redesigned	193	21	331	545	30	-	-	30
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87								
a. No of forms reviewed	888	123	1768	2779	36	6	37	79
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	227	27	426	680	1	-	2	3
c. No of forms retained unchanged	403	41	986	1430	-	-	9	9
d. No of forms redesigned	258	55	356	669	35	6	26	67
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	230	37	704	971	9	1	-	10
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b	1553	260	3994	5807	151	7	57	215
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	787	214	1436	2437	103	7	28	138

OFFICE OF POPULATION CENSUSES AND SURVEYS

Progress since 1985

1. As in previous reports, the main division of OPCS involved in the forms review is Registration Division. The National Health Service Central Register also has a number of forms all of which fall into the internal category. Between 1 April 1985 and 31 March 1987 there has been a 2.4% reduction in the number of forms in use, also 81% of the forms planned for review in 1986/87 and 84% of the forms planned for review in 1985/86 were in fact reviewed.
2. The process of redesigning forms used by the public to apply by post for birth, death and marriage certificates has been continued. Attention was given in 1985/86 to the redesign of the forms used in respect of births, deaths and marriages registered overseas by HM Consuls, HM Forces registering officers and births and death registered by High Commissioners, The Registrar General of Shipping and Seamen, the Civil Aviation Authority, and the Department of Trade and Industry.
3. A redesigned form (ORS 120) used to apply for a birth certificate falling into these categories is now in use. Approximately 1,300 are applied for each year. Redesigned Marriage and Death Certificate equivalents of form ORS 120 will be introduced during 1986/7. The Forms Design Guidelines issued by MPO have proved useful in the redesign process.
4. Following on from this a redesigned form (ORS 122) application for a death certificate was produced. The aim was to simplify and to bring it into line with other forms within Registration Division.
5. Several forms have been abolished and replaced by a single, simpler new form. These are forms relating to marriages. Forms 48 and 49 are those in question.
6. These forms were changed with the review very much in mind and in consultation with the Society of Registration Officers, who are the sole users of the forms.

Savings

7. As a result of the changes outlined above the estimated material and labour costs are approximately £8000 to £9000 annually.
8. However, one new form produced in 1986 (344) Certificate of Registration/Notification of Death has offset this saving. Because of legislation and the abolition of the death grant, the form was revised mainly to gather information for DHSS.

9. The cost of this form was £28,750. The extra cost of the forms to OPCS would be approximately 50% of the whole. It should be borne in mind that changes in forms requirements because of legislation can often cause extra costs.

Value for money

10. This is not possible to quantify. There is not a central Forms controller in OPCS. The Forms co-ordinator spent about 1% of his time co-ordinating statistics received from the divisions involved in the review.

11. Assessment of whether a new or re-designed form is successful is measured by the reduction of the error rate in the completion of the forms. The sponsoring sections state there are fewer errors made and consider their implementation to be successful.

12. It has not been possible to cost the savings in clerical or administrative time owing to shortage of resources.

Local forms

13. Within OPCS apart from Registration Division, there are approximately 5000 local or internal forms. Internal forms range from a form for birth certificate completed in the public search room to a typing requisition. Each division is responsible for reviewing its own forms. Normally this is done when a re-print is done or a change is required because of statutory reasons.

Legal Language

14. This exercise is in its early stages and a number of forms have been amalgamated into 2 new simpler forms. The legal language is statutory and has not been changed. The new forms, are used by the Registration service who are of course familiar with the statutory contents.

15. Other forms are under constant review particularly those sent to the public. Close liaison exists between those responsible in this Office for the changes to or the introduction of new forms, particularly prescribed forms, and the legal section of the Department of Health and Social Security.

Staffing

16. There is not a Central Forms Unit Directory in OPCS. Forms unit staff consist of 20% of an HEO. Currently there are 2 main forms design units, 1 in London and 1 in Titchfield. However it is intended to centralise most of the forms work at Titchfield within the next year. This will not mean any central control of forms. Divisions will still be responsible for their own review and initiation of forms. The reprographic unit being responsible for the drawing up of forms to customer specifications.

Equipment

17. We have recently purchased a Desk Top Publishing (DTP) system. 3 Apple/MacIntoshes, 20K Disc plus laser printer. This is intended to augment and enhance our phototypesetting equipment which is an AM COMP EDIT (5810) and terminal (5816).

18. The DTP system is mainly for forms work and the typesetter for publications and large schedules. We hope to generate forms more quickly and produce statistical volumes via the mainframe computer to an Apple terminal.

The Future

19. Over the next two years we aim

- to continue to pursue the objectives of the review and the Plain English Language Campaign.
- to simplify the language and presentation of forms with economy uppermost in mind.
- to continue the educative programme contained in the MPO guidelines.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers Included in I.)

Department:

OPCS

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	193		750	943
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	2		180	182
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86				
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	129		400	529
b. No of forms reviewed	76		373	449
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	-		34	34
d. No of forms retained unchanged	64		260	324
e. No of forms redesigned	12		79	91
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87				
a. No of forms reviewed	82		350	432
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised			20	20
c. No of forms retained unchanged	68		297	365
d. No of forms redesigned	14		33	47
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	2		25	27
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b	197		901	1098
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	123		357	480

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
	14		6	20
	3		8	11
	7		5	12
			3	3
	6		1	7
	1		1	2
	7		1	8
	7			7
			1	1
	14		3	17
	6		2	8

PROPERTY SERVICES AGENCY

Progress since 1985

1. The PSA forms unit works in conjunction with the Department of the Environments forms design unit. Since the last report, the unit's manual records have been transferred onto micro-computer. As a result discrepancies were revealed in the total number of forms previously reported. This was due to duplication of records and inclusion of local forms in the totals held manually. The revised totals in line 1 of the attached statistics reflect the results of the exercise to transfer records.
2. During 1985/86 790 forms were reviewed. This included 512 forms where the design was retained unchanged. 296 new forms or revised forms were produced during this period. During 1986/87 754 forms were reviewed of which 470 were retained unchanged and 321 new or revised forms were produced.
3. Lack of resources has resulted in not as much work on forms being carried out as the department would have liked.
4. The Good Forms Guide which was in preparation at the time of the last report has been published in conjunction with DOE and DTp. A large amount of interest has been shown in the publication and directorates have begun to use the concepts in their forms and other documentation.
5. As a continuation from the work done on C1001 - Standard Conditions of Contract for building works costing under £25,000, work has been carried out on our behalf by Central Office of Information on the associated C1401 Daywork Term Contracts documentation.
6. A continuing function of the Unit is to produce user guides in Plain English in conjunction with Typing Services - eg Guide to using the Centralised Dictation System which has been distributed throughout offices with a CDS - these are generally well received and have improved the standard of work being sent to Typing Services.

Savings

7. Pressure of work and limited staff resources has held back development of an accurate forms costing system to identify savings. It is however known that savings as a result of simplified forms are achieved. We are planning the implementation of procedures which will quantify these savings.

Value for money

8. Operation of a time charging system has provided the forms unit's staff with monthly and yearly performance targets. Each forms designer works to an individual monthly operational target. During the two years covered by this report the unit nearly always met or exceeded its operational targets.

9. Forms sponsors receive monthly statements showing the unit's staff time charges and associated printing costs separately. The unit's charges are calculated on an hourly basis and they include design time, materials and internal phototypesetting work.

Local forms

10. The discrepancy between the figures collected in 1985 and now is in part due to the inclusion two years ago of forms that are generated within local offices for their own use. With over 150 districts, 32 areas and 10 regions in the UK, there are a substantial number of such forms, but we are looking to standardise wherever practicable.

Staffing

11. The combined forms unit handles work for DOE and DTp as well as for PSA. The allocation of staff time dedicated to PSA has generally consisted of:-

% Time	No	Grade	Function
2.5%	1	7	Line Manager
25%	1	HEO	FEU Manager
100%	1	EO	Forms Designer
25%	1	AO	Administrative Support

Equipment

12. In March 1986, the micro computer system holding all forms records was replaced. This was due to a risk that the available capacity on the old shared system would be exceeded and the data corrupted.

13. In December 1985, a second Compugraphic Advantage 5000 workstation was purchased to increase flexibility and output. To improve efficiency further the unit is now considering replacement of the two Advantage 5000's with a more powerful and up-to-date Apple Macintosh system. It is planned to keep the Compugraphic typesetter as it will soon be possible to successfully 'drive it' from the Apple system. We expect the new system to pay for itself within two years because of the high maintenance and consumable costs of the present Compugraphic system.

The Future

14. The Unit has the following objectives for the next two year period:

- to establish a forms costing programme to identify savings
- to extend its involvement in forms testing
- to identify and improve local forms

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms

(Numbers included in I.)

Department:

PSA

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	128	428	2100	2656
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	-	-	-	-
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86				
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	-	-	-	-
b. No of forms reviewed	25	105	660	790
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised		6	51	57
d. No of forms retained unchanged	8	48	392	448
e. No of forms redesigned	17	51	217	285
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87				
a. No of forms reviewed	29	111	614	754
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised		15	23	38
c. No of forms retained unchanged	10	34	351	395
d. No of forms redesigned	19	62	240	321
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	3	14	51	68
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b	131	421	2077	2629
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	NOT	YET AVAILABLE		

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
	2	1	13	16
	-	-	3	3
	-	-	-	-
	-	-	2	2
	-	-	1	1
	1	1	6	8
	-	-	-	-
	1	-	2	3
	-	1	4	5
	-	-	-	-
	2	1	13	16
	NOT	YET AVAILABLE		

SCOTTISH OFFICE

Progress since 1985

1. The review of forms is one of the responsibilities of the Scottish Office Efficiency Unit. During the past 2 years the Unit's primary objective in this area has been the completion of the initial review of all Scottish Office forms. The review of those forms in the public, business and industry category took priority. A sustained effort with strong support from top management resulted in the completion of the initial review of all forms including local forms by September 1986.

2. Review activity in the last 2 years has seen a significant increase in the proportion of forms abolished - some 22% of forms reviewed, against just under 10% in 1984/5 - and a slight increase in the proportion redesigned, 13% of those reviewed against 11% in 1984/5.

Savings

3. A large number of Scottish Office forms are of relatively low usage. As the review of important forms was substantially completed in 1984/85, review activity in the last 2 years has necessarily concentrated on the low usage forms. 66% of the forms abolished in this period had an estimated circulation of less than 200. The print savings have therefore been relatively low and are estimated at approximately £5,000.

Value for Money

4. Efficiency Unit staff effort on the forms review is recorded, and both inputs and outputs monitored. During the report period, 456 man days of effort went into review activity at a total cost of £34,500 (including a proportion of overhead costs etc). The main performance measures derived from this are the cost per form reviewed and the average number of forms reviewed per man day. The cost per form fell from just under £17 in 1985/6 to just over £12 in 1986/7, and the throughput of forms reviewed per man day rose from just over 4 to nearly 7.

Local forms

5. There are 1,431 Scottish Office internal or local forms in use at present. These are mainly forms used in the day to day running of the office, eg the travel and subsistence claim form, the typing, photocopying and stationery demand forms, etc. An estimated 5 million forms in this category are issued annually. Both their design and the need for them is kept under review and the opportunity taken when possible to improve their layout or to abolish or merge them. The travel and subsistence form was redesigned in 1985, and the typing/photocopying demand form in 1987.

Legal Language

6. The Unit consults the Department's Solicitors Office when necessary about legal language in forms. The opportunity will be taken in the course of the second cyclical review which is about to get underway to include a directed effort at the improvement of legal language in forms.

Staffing

7. An HEO supported by an AO, both on a part-time basis have day to day responsibility for co-ordinating the review of forms. Efficiency Unit assignment officers are also available to assist from time to time, but we aim to ensure as far as possible that sponsoring divisions subject their own forms to critical review.

Equipment

8. The equipment available to the unit has not altered since 1985 but better use is being made of that equipment. It includes an IBM Personal Computer, and access to IBM word processing and computerised typesetting facilities on a client basis. But the unit completed its computerisation of the forms register in 1985-86. The setting up of a microcomputer based system with details of every form in use and the name and location of the officer responsible, has led to improved record keeping and will significantly reduce the clerical effort required to monitor the second and subsequent cyclical reviews.

The Future

9. The Unit will shortly be issuing guidance outlining a rolling programme of review. Sponsoring Divisions will be reminded of their responsibility to ensure that forms are necessary and to keep their format and effectiveness under review. Guidance to staff on forms design is to be incorporated in the Staff Handbook and proposed publicity for consultancy, inspection and review services generally will also serve to remind a wider audience of the unit's specialist services in the area of forms review. Apart from the general review, the priority will be given to the scrutiny of forms issuing to the general public, business and industry. Meanwhile the unit will continue to exercise quality control by close scrutiny of proposed new forms.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

Department:

SO

	Members of the public	Business and industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	1737	1204	1823	4764
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	100	100	47	247
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86				
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	799	392	-	1191
b. No of forms reviewed	537	272	391	1200
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	176	36	75	287
d. No of forms retained unchanged	320	158	269	747
e. No of forms redesigned	41	78	47	166
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87				
a. No of forms reviewed	324	285	367	976
b. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	76	51	64	191
c. No of forms retained unchanged	197	193	275	665
d. No of forms redesigned	51	41	28	120
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	75	18	23	116
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b	1660	1235	1754	4649
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	596	628	557	1781

	Members of the public	Business and industry	Internal	Total
	144	80	2	226
	3	6	-	9
	19	13	-	32
	17	11		28
	2	-	-	2
	9	6	-	15
	6	5	-	11
	5	8	-	13
	-	-	-	-
	5	7	-	12
	-	1		1
	-	-	-	-
	145	86	2	233
	82	57	-	139

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Progress since 1985

1. Heavy demand for the expertise of the Departmental forms unit has continued. As well as working on forms, it helps with layout and advice on plain English for guidance notes, manuals and questionnaires. A sustained effort to preach clarity and simplification continues. During 1986 we mounted the Plain English Campaign's exhibition in our top visibility spot, the main HQ foyer at 1 Victoria Street.

2. We still have increasing numbers of forms being registered, partly as a result of tighter controls and the inclusion in the totals of standard letters held on word processors. However, we do not always discover quickly when forms cease to be used or become obsolete.

3. The figures in the statistical table cover work undertaken by the departmental forms unit, as well as the forms units located at Companies Registration Office (CRO) and the Business Statistics Office (BSO). BSO's activity on statistical forms is not included.

Savings

4. During 1985/87 illustrative costing exercises have identified £74,500 savings from forms redesign. For instance:

- the redesign of a file transit slip used by the Trade Marks Branch in the Patent Office saved £19,000 a year at a redesign cost of £100;
- the abolition of 20 standard letters and internal forms used by the Export Licensing Branch saved £38,000 a year.
- the introduction of a simple order form for non-stock stationery items saved £3,500 a year.
- the abolition of 18 forms in Default Section at CRO saved £14,000.

5. By printing forms by laser printer, BSO have saved a clerical post (£9,700 pa), a significant reduction in printing by HMSO, lower print preparation costs and quicker production times. Further savings have been achieved by transferring the printing, storage and distribution of various forms, mainly used in the regions, from London to Manchester.

Value for money

6. To monitor the value of the work, Departmental forms unit has been operating a system of performance measures for some time, using its computer based management information system, and logging work flow, number of forms reviewed and effectiveness. Each month this reports:

- number of reviews started
- number of reviews completed
- number of requests for new forms received
- number of new forms introduced
- number of forms abolished
- number of reprint orders placed
- number of outstanding jobs

and staff time is allocated against assignments. The system also records the cost of printing a form, its design cost, and historical print quantities which helps to prevent over-ordering. Developments and progress against targets are also reported to the Head of Section. Quarterly reports are seen up to Grade 3 level and also log the split of effort between the main reviews and other work, and include examples of cost saving calculations. The unit aims to produce two illustrative cost saving calculations each quarter, but they can divert a lot of staff effort.

Local forms

7. We define a "local form" as any form, accompanying guidance note or standard letter, produced by a local (non-HQ) office, for external or internal use, and only used by that particular office. In DTI about a fifth of forms are "local" ones.

8. All local offices have been asked to update their inventories last provided in 1982. Results so far suggest an increase of about a fifth in the number of forms in use which now amount to about 1700. Although local offices (other than CRO and BSO) are supposed to send all requests for forms printing through the forms unit, in practice offices usually arrange their own printing.

9. We intend to examine the inventories to see whether local forms are duplicating national forms, and whether there is scope for introducing common forms across a number of local offices. We plan to hold a seminar for Forms Coordinators and to update and reissue their instructions. Among other things in future they will be asked to carry out regular pruning exercises and to provide updated inventories annually. BSO plans to introduce a computerised register of its forms which will enable them to be reviewed more regularly and systematically.

Legal language

10. DTI has a large proportion of legally based forms, about half the total external forms in use. A programme of improvement is in progress and we use fully our contract with the Plain English Campaign for independent and expert advice. Recently we have done much work on the forms used in the administration of Bankruptcy and Companies' Liquidation, in close liaison with the Insolvency Service and the Lord Chancellor's Department. Many of the forms had not been revised for nearly 70 years, they were poorly laid out and were congested with antiquated legal language. The simplification of language and format, together with the inclusion of intelligible guidance notes has met with wide approval from practitioners and other users alike. A similar review of the Trade Marks statutory forms has also been completed, some had not been reviewed for 30 years.

11. Internal contract documentation has been revised and standardised in the light of the purchasing initiatives, and a new design is now being pilot tested. A start has been made on external contract documentation by examining the various purchase orders in use. The revised approach and housestyle being adopted has the Conditions of Contract now clearly set out on the reverse of the form.

12. BSO are currently testing a revised front page for statistical inquiry forms, which tones down legal language on compulsory forms. Initial indications are that there has been no reduction in the rate of response to inquiries.

Deregulation

13. The forms unit has been closely involved with DTI's deregulation unit in the work on improving the forms and notes for the Export Licensing system. A revised application form and guidance notes are shortly to be introduced. We are reviewing the main Import Licensing Application form, to reduce processing errors and to make the form more legible and easier to complete, in consultation with the British Importers Federation.

14. Over the past two years the forms unit has redesigned some 30 radio licence applications and guidance notes to make typewriter completion easier and the notes more helpful.

15. In January this year a simplified form for smaller applications for Regional Selective Assistance was introduced, to help small firms by halving the amount of information required, in particular simplifying the accounting information needed.

16. The consolidated Companies Act and revised statutory forms came into effect on 1 July 1985. The number of forms was reduced from 139 to 102. Many of the users now produce their own supplies of these forms either by traditional printing methods or by computer or word processing systems.

17. As part of the continuing drive to improve written communication with industry and commerce, the forms unit has circulated widely within DTI a booklet "All About Forms", which contains the message that forms are at the front line of daily communication with the world of business, and sets out a step by step approach to improving forms.

Staffing

18. The Departmental forms unit has 7 staff: 65% of an SEO, 1 HEO, 3 EOs, 1 AO and 1 AA. All staff undertake forms design, though the bulk of forms design is at EO level. The SEO and HEO are responsible for managing and planning the Unit's work programme, spearheading important reviews and novel designs, forms control measures, editing and quality assurance. The departmental forms unit is an integral part of the Organisation and Methods Unit, and all forms designers (down to and including EO level) receive training in O&M techniques. The aim is to approach forms design not merely as a graphics exercise, but through questioning the need for information and the related procedures.

19. BSO's forms unit, which deals with statistical and administrative forms, has 4 staff, 1 HEO, 1 EO and 2 AOs, with the HEO responsible for identifying reviews and major editing and the EO design. The unit is located in the Public Relations and Information Services Section, though staff have O&M expertise. CRO's forms unit has 4.5 staff, 40% HEO, 1 EO and 1 AO and 1 AA, and is located in the Support Services section.

Equipment

20. Since 1985 the Departmental forms unit has acquired 2 Apple Lisa Graphic Terminals which are linked into the Department's computerised phototypesetting system. These have increased

productivity and improved the standard of forms design, enabling a better and more flexible service to be offered. The unit is now in the process of converting paper masters onto the disk retrieval system. The main equipment used in BSO is a Rank Xerox 9700 laser printer. BSO's ICL 3900 mainframe computer, with terminal access by the forms unit, will be used to computerise the register of forms.

The future

21. During the coming year, the Departmental forms unit expects to be involved in a review of Departmental letterheads with the aim of rationalising them, to make them more efficient for word processing and typewriter completion and to improve the Department's corporate image; a review of Regional Development Grants documentation following a review of the scheme; a review of forms used under the Patents Act 1977 and a review of the Staff Report forms.

22. BSO forms unit's objective is to print all BSO forms by laser printer, and they will be heavily involved with implementing the likely changes stemming from the review of legal language on compulsory statistical inquiry forms. CRO forms unit expects to deal with the recommendations of the Reviews of Default and General sections, and then review (91) Liquidation and Mortgage section forms.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms

(Numbers included in I.)

Department:

DTI

1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86 a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report
b. No of forms reviewed
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised
d. No of forms retained unchanged
e. No of forms redesigned
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87 a. No of forms reviewed
b. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised
c. No of forms retained unchanged
d. No of forms redesigned
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88

Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
	3650	4539	8189
	673	457	1130
	411	284	695
	649	1002	1651
	53	67	120
	321	129	450
	275	806	1081
	590	682	1272
	61	55	116
	205	77	282
	324	550	874
	523	153	676
	4732	5027	9759
	288	420	708

Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
	17	10	27
	3	6	9
	3	0	3
	9	6	15
	0	0	0
	4	0	4
	5	6	11
	3	6	9
	0	0	0
	0	0	0
	3	6	9
	6	0	6
	26	16	42
	5	2	7

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

Progress since 1985

1. Since the last report, all of the Unit's manual records have been transferred onto a micro-computer. This revealed a discrepancy in the total number of forms that was previously reported. The opportunity was therefore taken to make a thorough review of the records. The revised totals in line 1 of the attached statistics for 1985/6 reflect the results of the review.
2. During 1984/5, 372 forms were reviewed. This included 299 forms where the design was retained. At that time manual design methods were largely being used and, as a result, a substantial proportion of the forms had only superficial changes made. In the two years covering the present report, use of computer aided design equipment has resulted in a larger proportion of forms receiving major revision.
3. In 1985/6, 295 new or revised forms were produced. However this figure fell in 1986/7 to 228. This was largely as a result of the complexity of the bus deregulation series of forms and guides together with the effects of a reduction in complement.
4. The recent re-instatement of an EO post will enable more forms to be produced in the unit. It will also allow the development of expertise in forms costing, testing, and other areas.

Savings

5. Pressure of work and limited staff resources has held back development of an accurate forms costing system to identify savings. However estimated savings for 1985/6 and 1986/7 are £65,000 and £55,000 respectively. A review on Vehicle Test Inspection Cards has just been completed which will result in ongoing yearly savings of £200,000 in printing costs. It is planned to issue a short questionnaire to forms sponsors so that more accurate figures can be provided in the future.

Value for money

6. Operation of a time recharging system has provided the Unit's staff with monthly and yearly performance targets. Each forms designer works to an individual monthly operational target which provides useful information to line management. During the two years covered by this report the unit nearly always met or exceeded its operational targets.

Forms sponsors receive monthly statements showing the unit's staff time charges and associated printing costs separately. The unit's charges are calculated on an hourly basis and they include design time, materials and internal phototypesetting work.

Local forms

7. It is planned to ask all Departmental divisions for examples of local forms together with the annual usage rate. The unit plans to review forms which have similar purposes, high usages, and those which have a high profile. The resulting forms design work will need careful programming to avoid overloading the unit's limited resources.

Legal language

8. Considerable general progress has been made over the past two years mainly in warnings, declarations and, more importantly, guides used by businesses. The 'Guide to Bus Service Registration' has received wide acclaim from the bus industry, especially through its Trade journal. There has been indirect contact with departmental lawyers who have largely supported our views.

Deregulation

9. There has been no formal contact with the Department of Transport deregulation unit. However during 1986/7 the unit spent approximately 50% of an EO's time on the Bus Deregulation series of forms and guides. This series introduced a complete change in bus licensing and registration procedures. The forms and guides were thoroughly reviewed to ensure that they would be understood by their prospective audience.

Application for a Driving Test Appointment: DL26

10. Since the last report, DL26 has undergone a research study by private consultants and a pilot trial in the Western Traffic Area. The research study was concerned with the problems arising from the current version of the form. Recommendations from the research report were incorporated into a redesigned version of the form. A three month pilot trial was introduced in the Western Traffic Area which covers most of the west and south-west of England. The results of the trial showed an error rate of 3-4% which was an improvement on the original form. As a result of this information further changes have been made to the form to try to reduce the error rate still further.

11. The new form is due to be introduced in September 1987. Estimated savings are not available at present but the new form is expected to generate fewer enquiries which should produce savings.

Staffing

12. The combined forms unit handles work for Department of Environment and Property Services Agency as well as for Department of Transport. The allocation of staff time dedicated to Department of Transport forms has generally consisted of:

% Time	No.	Grade	Function
5%	1	7	Line Manager
50%	1	HEO	FEU Manager
100%	1	EO	Forms Designer
50%	1	AO	Admin support

Equipment

13. In March 1986, the micro-computer system holding all forms records was replaced. This was due to a risk that the available capacity on the old shared system would be exceeded and the data corrupted.

14. In December 1985, a second Compugraphic Advantage 5000 workstation was purchased at low cost. This increased flexibility and output. To improve efficiency further the unit is now considering replacement of the two Advantage 5000's with a more powerful and up-to-date Apple Mackintosh system. It is planned to keep the Compugraphic typesetter as it will soon be possible to successfully 'drive it' from the Apple system. We expect the new system to pay for itself within two years because of the high maintenance and consumable costs of the present Compugraphic system.

The future

15. The unit's objectives for the new two year reporting period are to:

- establish a forms costing programme to identify savings;
- extend involvement in forms testing;
- identify and improve local forms;
- extend influence and expertise into 'prescribed' forms.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

Department:

DTp

1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report
b. No of forms reviewed
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised
d. No of forms retained unchanged
e. No of forms redesigned
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87
a. No of forms reviewed
b. No of forms abolished -each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised
c. No of forms retained unchanged
d. No of forms redesigned
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1+2+5, less items 3c+4b
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88

Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
117	380	665	1162
-	-	-	-
14	81	54	149
54	198	236	488
-	-	6	6
37	68	155	260
17	130	75	222
64	134	269	467
1	3	4	8
31	81	179	291
32	50	86	168
22	67	48	137
138	444	703	1285
NOT	YET AVAILABLE		

Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
10	19	13	42
-	-	-	-
10	4	5	19
1	8	10	19
-	-	-	-
-	5	6	11
1	3	4	8
-	8	14	22
-	-	-	-
-	5	7	12
-	3	7	10
1	6	16	23
11	25	29	65
NOT	YET AVAILABLE		

HM TREASURY

Progress since 1985

1. Since 1985, steady progress has been made in establishing the role of the forms unit. Steps have been taken to initiate review procedures; promote good forms practice; reduce the overall number of forms and review almost all the remainder. There have been significant moves towards an automatic annual review of all forms, and initiatives to raise design standards in some key areas. The unit is encouraging the use of standard typeface sizes and styles, headings and titles, and boxes and line-weights. So far, efforts have been directed mainly at developing common styles for groups or series of forms.

Savings

2. Since April 1985, we have abolished some 448 forms. This has saved some £8000 in production costs (including paper). The department has also saved the cost associated with processing these forms, although these are less quantifiable than production costs.

3. This year we aim to establish internal procedures enabling us to closely monitor and control the costs of many of our forms. Our Stationery Stores (who order and distribute many of these forms), will play an important part in this.

4. Further savings are anticipated from a new desk top computer system. At present, forms are typeset outside the department, which is both a lengthy and expensive process. Typesetting usually takes between 6 weeks to 3 months, costing an average £100 for an A4-sized form. The new system will provide us with immediate camera-ready copy at marginal cost. We will be able to increase the proportion of forms produced in-house, thereby lowering costs. Any savings resulting from lower costs-in-use of revised forms will also be achieved sooner.

Value for Money

5. We use some limited performance indicators based on the time taken to review or design a form. We estimate it takes an average of three working days, costing between £230 - £280, to design an A4-sized form. To assess the benefits of reviews, we are also asking sponsors to provide us with information on the performance of new forms, or forms that have been reviewed or redesigned.

Local forms

6. We have been concerned about the growth of local forms, ie a form created and used within a division. This year we asked for these to be included in our departmental survey. We discovered some 209 local forms were in use. We will be investigating how many of these forms are warranted, and examining the design standards of those that are justified.

Staffing

7. The forms unit is part of the Information Technology Policy Unit (ITPU), a branch of the Information Technology Support Division (EOG5). It is staffed by an HEO and an EO, with some AA support. The HEO heads the forms unit, and spends 30% of his time on managing the unit's work, including some forms design. He reports to the Grade 7 in charge of ITPU. (The remaining 70% of his time is largely spent developing small-scale computer systems). The EO spends 60% of her time assisting the HEO, and handling most of the day-to-day contact with divisions; advising sponsors; and contacting others involved in reviews.

8. Because of the staffing position, forms work must fit in with other responsibilities. Consequently, we need to be realistic about the nature of the service we offer. We aim to provide a full design service only for new and important forms. To supplement this, we have taken steps to promote good forms practice throughout the department generally. We have prepared a guidance leaflet for sponsors which summarises the most important issues for them to consider when creating or reviewing a form. The leaflet, professionally produced, takes the form of a quick reference guide. It is aimed at getting our message across in a direct and concise manner. Where specific guidance or advice is required, sponsors are encouraged to contact us at an early stage.

Equipment

9. For several years, we have used an Apple Lisa microcomputer for design work. A dot-matrix printer provided draft quality output, acceptable for some internal forms. The Lisa also held the forms database, although the facilities were somewhat limited.

10. During the year we were faced with the need to replace this equipment. It was relatively old and becoming increasingly prone to breakdown, often at important times. Furthermore, the manufacturers declined to provide maintenance support for the machine after March 1987.

11. After investigating a wide range of products suitable for forms work, we decided to purchase Ventura Publishers software. For the forms database, we opted for the Smart Software System widely used in the Treasury. These offer much better facilities than the Apple Lisa. To run the software, we use an IBM-PC AT compatible microcomputer with 40 megabytes storage, extra memory, a 'mouse' and a high-resolution screen. Camera-ready paper output is produced via a laser printer. By choosing products compatible with our other equipment, we were able to share a printer, rather than buy one for forms work alone. The total cost of the system (including an element for the laser printer) was under £8000.

The Future

12. Over the next two years, our main aim must be to integrate the work of forms design and control into the overall aims and objectives of sponsor divisions. We must also devote a large proportion of our design effort into improving General Service forms, and we should make an effort to establish standards for computer screen-based forms. Specifically, over the next two years we should:

- review at least 75% of the General Service Forms;
- establish procedures to monitor and control costs of forms;
- establish a forms unit consultancy service, providing advice and help to sponsors;
- encourage sponsors responsible for large numbers of forms to have a member of staff trained in forms design;
- develop the use of the new design equipment to provide a better service; and
- a Publications Unit is to be set up in the department. We hope to work closely with them.

Forms Review 1985/87

I. All Forms

II. Important Forms (Numbers included in I.)

Department:

HMT

	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total	Members of the public	Business and Industry	Internal	Total
1 Forms in use on 31/3/85 - as stated in 3rd progress report	55	157	1360	1572	12	60	109	181
2 Additional existing forms - notified to forms units during 1985/87	0	0	76	76	0	0	0	0
3 Progress 1/4/85 - 31/3/86								
a. No of forms planned for review - as reported in 3rd progress report	25	50	325	400	12	30	26	68
b. No of forms reviewed	30	70	437	537	2	9	29	40
c. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	5	32	103	140	0	5	13	18
d. No of forms retained unchanged	22	31	290	343	0	0	12	12
e. No of forms redesigned	3	7	44	54	2	4	4	10
4 Progress 1/4/86 - 31/3/87								
a. No of forms reviewed	47	118	1213	1378	10	51	92	153
b. No of forms abolished - each form to be counted only once, eg. amalgamation of two forms = 1 abolished, 1 revised	24	2	282	308	1	2	12	15
c. No of forms retained unchanged	3	106	746	855	9	49	66	124
d. No of forms redesigned	20	10	186	215	-	-	14	14
5 New forms produced during 1/4/85 - 31/3/87	-	5	102	107	-	5	-	5
6 Total forms in use on 31/3/87 - ie. items 1 + 2 + 5, less items 3c + 4b	26	128	1153	1307	11	58	84	153
7 No of forms planned for review 1/4/87 - 31/3/88	3	9	588	600	-	7	43	50

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

1. Separate statements have not been included for the smaller departments. Their reports are summarised here.

Savings achieved through more advanced equipment

2. The Lord Chancellor's Department, Northern Ireland Court Service now have the necessary equipment to create a functional desk top publishing unit. Until the early part of 1986 all forms were amended manually using a 'cut and paste' technique. This approach was slow and resulted in considerable delays between meetings of the Magistrates Courts Forms Review Committee. Forms are now able to be saved on disk for subsequent recall and amendment when necessary. They intend to supply each Petty Sessions Office with camera ready copies of low usage forms so that high quality photocopies can be obtained on sight when required. This should produce significant savings through substantially reducing printing, storage and distribution costs. It will also eliminate the waste through loss of forms when they become obsolete due to a change in legislation.

Control of forms

3. In Health and Safety Executive the forms unit will be installing a computer to record information which will aid the control of forms. After an initial effort inputting data they expect to make savings of 5/6 man weeks per year. Access to information on the database will enable targets for forms control work to be identified.

4. Paymaster General's Office now have access to an ICL microcomputer which is currently being used to list all forms for stricter control and review. The list shows all numbered office forms and relevant portions have been sent to various parts of the office with a request to confirm the accuracy. This list is not yet complete but already has revealed a number of forms not previously recorded.

Organisation of work

5. The Forms Liason Officer (FLO) system introduced two years ago in Exports Credit Guarantee Department needed reassessing as when it was initially set up, no literature or guidelines were given to those appointed as FLO's. Without back up or support the forms work was simply being routed through them and in many cases bypassing them altogether. The system is to receive a major revamp and relaunch which will include guidance notes outlining their duties with a checklist for their help. The role of the forms liason officer will be published in 'establishment news' and the new system will be monitored by the forms unit to ensure that it functions more efficiently than the former and leads to a better working relationship between liason officers and the forms unit.

6. Until November 1986 forms review in the Registry of Friendly Societies was carried out during a series of management studies of the methods and procedures of the different areas of registry work. Since then the area of consideration has widened with the project officer coordinating a review of all forms through Forms Controllers responsible for those forms within their own branch. The staff took on the task as part of their existing workload and all received training at the Civil Service College. Specialist input is provided by a Forms Consultant as the Registry is not large enough to have a forms unit. The consultant was initially asked to develop a house style for Registry and Building Societies Commission forms and letterheads thereby creating a framework into which other forms could be redesigned. Work on the review has involved identifying all the forms in use and allocating responsibility to a branch Forms Controller. In the process 770 forms were counted, three times as many as the original estimate. After an initial review 250 or one third were established as being no longer required. A more rigorous review programme is being set up to cover the forms still in use.

Co-operation between departments

7. Health and Safety Executive carried out a joint review, with staff from H M Agriculture Inspectorate of HMAI forms. As a result 10 forms were abolished, 5 new ones created and 2 were redesigned. This review was the first of it's kind in HS&E and as it was judged successful by the sponsors, the forms unit will be considering this as a way forward in forms control.

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS IN OTHER DEPARTMENTS 1965-67

	Review Completed			Total	Outcome		
	Public	Business and Industry	Internal		Abolished	Retained	New Design
Central Office of Information	0	0	34	34	31	0	3
Energy	0	1	91	92	21	55	16
Exports Credits Guarantee Dept	0	475	517	992	136	418	438
Health & Safety Executive	0	122	351	473	198	206	69
Northern Ireland Office	0	0	78	78	18	51	9
Northern Ireland Court Service	0	133	3	136	32	0	104
Paymaster General's Office	106	0	209	315	33	0	282
Registry of Friendly Societies	192	457	124	773	250	523	0
Royal Mint	0	191	1162	1353	8	1344	1
Welsh Office	163	247	299	709	201	432	76
TOTAL	461	1626	2868	4955	926	3029	998

VOLUME OF FORMS IN OTHER DEPARTMENTS 1985-87

	Total forms in use 1985	Abolished 1985/86 1986/87	Balance	New forms created	Total forms in use 1987	
Central Office of Information	601	26	5	570	1	571
Energy	418	10	11	397	0	397
Exports Credits Guarantee Dept	2047	90	46	1911	419	2330
Health & Safety Executive	687	8	190	489	80	569
Northern Ireland Office	78	0	18	60	7	67
Northern Ireland Court Service	420	24	8	388	23	411
Paymaster General's Office	1432	20	13	1399	32	1431
Registry of Friendly Societies	770	0	250	520	27	547
Royal Mint	1353	0	8	1345	13	1358
Welsh Office	1260	42	159	1059	86	1145
TOTAL	9066	220	708	8138	688	8826

ANNEX B: AWARD-WINNING FORMS



**NATIONAL
SAVINGS**

Your reference

Our reference

National Savings Bank
Boyclstone Road
GLASGOW
G58 1SB

Telephone 041-649 4555 ext

Date

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for telling us your bank book is missing.

If you have since found the book, please

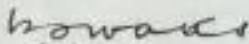
- ◆ complete question 1 overleaf and return this form to me.

If the book is still missing, please

- ◆ answer both questions overleaf
- ◆ sign the enclosed declaration
- ◆ return both forms to me.

I enclose a post free envelope for return of the form(s).

Yours faithfully



R S Watts
Controller

1

Is your bank book still missing?

Please tick

YES NO

If YES please answer question 2

2

Our records show that after the last transaction

a of £

on the balance in your account

was £

Do you agree with this balance?

Please tick

YES NO

Depositor's signature

Date



VISITS BY VAT OFFICERS



Once you are registered for VAT, you will be visited from time to time by an officer of Customs and Excise. This booklet explains why these visits are made and what happens.

Why are these visits made?

The main reason is to see that you understand VAT and are applying it correctly. The officer will examine your business records, methods and premises to check that your VAT returns are accurate. It is also a chance for you to ask about anything that you are unsure of.

How often are visits made?

You will probably be visited within 18 months of being registered. After that, the interval between visits will vary depending on the size and complexity of your business.

Traders who send in late, incorrect or seemingly inconsistent VAT returns are visited more frequently. This also happens in the case of traders who don't send in their VAT returns – even if they have paid any assessments issued.

How are visits arranged?

The officer will telephone or write to arrange a visit during normal office hours. You might need to talk to the officer before the visit so please make a note of his or her name and telephone number.

How long will the visit take?

For a small business it may take only a few hours – for a large or complex one it can last two or three days. Your co-operation will help the officer finish the job as quickly as possible but any claim on your or your staff's time will be kept to the minimum.

Who will the officer want to talk to?

When the officer first arrives he will need to talk to you, or the person in charge of your VAT affairs, about your business. After that, as long as there is a responsible person who can answer any questions and give any extra information needed, he will be able to get on with the job even if you are not there. At the end of the visit the officer will wish to discuss the outcome with you.

Should my accountant be there?

This is up to you. You may wish to have your accountant present if he is the person best able to explain your business records and accounts. It could also be helpful if you know you have a difficult problem to discuss with the officer.

Where will the visit take place?

Normally at your main place of business. The officer will then be able to examine and discuss your business activities and records at the same time. If your books are not normally kept there you should tell the officer when he makes the appointment so that he can tell you what records he will want to see during the visit.

What will the officer do?

The main things will be to:

- discuss with you various aspects of your business
- examine your business records and activities
- discuss any VAT problems
- point out any errors found and explain how to put them right.

Please have all your business records available. These include any balance sheets and profit and loss accounts, relevant bank statements and business correspondence as well as tax invoices, your VAT account and bookkeeping records. You will find full details in *The VAT guide*, Section VIII.

The officer will want to look at the way your business operates – including how you

record goods you receive and supply and how you deal with cash coming in and out. You must also give the officer any other information he asks for about imports and supplies of goods and services you have made or received.

If you have a gaming machine, you will have to open it if the officer asks you to do so.

The officer needs all this information to check that you are accounting for VAT correctly. You will probably be able to provide most of it during the visit. If you can't you will always be allowed a reasonable time to supply it.

If you keep all or part of your records on a computer there are special requirements. Your local VAT office will tell you what these are.

There are penalties for failing to produce records and information.

It is your responsibility to account for VAT correctly. The officer will not normally have time to look at all of your records or every aspect of your business. So you can't assume that you are accounting for VAT correctly on everything just because he doesn't find any errors. It is in your own interest to ask the officer about anything you are unsure of. This will probably save you time and expense later.

Can the officer enter and inspect my premises?

The officer can enter your business premises to make a VAT visit at any reasonable time. If your premises are used in connection with the supply and storage of goods, he can also inspect your premises and any goods on them. This helps him to understand the organisation of your business. It has nothing to do with the searches of premises by officers investigating suspected serious frauds. These are carried out only in exceptional cases and have to be authorised by a search warrant issued by a magistrate.

Can everything be settled on the spot?

The officer will always try to settle everything during the visit, but more information may be needed before a particular point can be resolved. In a few cases he may have to:

- take samples of some of your goods for examination or analysis because the VAT liability cannot be agreed. If this happens you will be offered a receipt and if the sample is not returned in a reasonable time or in good condition, you are entitled to compensation.
- examine your records at the VAT office. If

this happens you will be offered a receipt for the records that are taken away. Your records will normally be returned within one month. But if you need them for the immediate running of your business, the officer will arrange for you to be given copies. If any of your records are lost or damaged, you are entitled to compensation.

What if an error is found?

The reasons for the error and the amount of VAT involved will be discussed with you and you will be told how it must be corrected. If you have:

- underdeclared VAT, you will be sent a notice of assessment, telling you how much extra VAT is due, why, and how to pay it
- overdeclared VAT, you will be sent a notice of overdeclaration telling you how much VAT will be credited to you. This amount will either be offset against VAT due or be repaid to you.

There are penalties for deliberately underdeclaring or overclaiming VAT.

What if I disagree with a decision?

If you disagree with the officer's assessment or decision, you should first

discuss it with him. If you still disagree please write to your local VAT office asking them to reconsider. You should set out clearly the reasons why you disagree, giving any further information or facts which you think may not have been taken into account. You may also be able to appeal to an independent VAT Tribunal. You will find more about all of this – including the time limits that apply – in *The VAT guide*, Section XIII.

What if I have a complaint?

If you think that an officer has exceeded his authority or acted improperly, you can ask him for an explanation. If you are not satisfied and wish to complain, the most direct way is to write to the Collector in charge of your local VAT office. He will investigate your complaint and advise you of the result.

Is there anything else?

- You should have your VAT registration certificate available and, in the case of a company, the certificate of incorporation.
- To save time please make sure that your business records, VAT account, returns and payments are all up to date before the visit.
- If your business circumstances change

you must tell your local VAT office immediately – don't wait for the officer to visit you. You will find more about this in *The VAT guide*, Section XI.

- All officers carry an identification card and will show it to you if you ask to see it.
- Normally one officer will visit you, but occasionally he may be accompanied by a colleague.
- If you need to postpone the visit for any reason, please give the officer as much notice as possible.

Small booklets like this can only deal with things in a very general way. They can't tell you all that you may need to know about VAT.

There are a number of more detailed booklets to help you. The most important is *The VAT guide* (Notice 700). You can get a full list of Customs and Excise VAT publications from your local VAT office.

Remember, if you can't find the answer to your problem in our booklets, your local VAT office is always ready to help you. Addresses are in telephone directories under 'Customs and Excise'.

Please – always quote your VAT number when you contact us.






ACTION
FOR JOBS









Helping you to
help yourself

EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING
AND ENTERPRISE PROGRAMMES OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND
MANPOWER SERVICES COMMISSION

Employment

-  **Restart Programme** PAGE 7
Counselling, interviews and courses to help long-term unemployed people.
OPEN TO — people unemployed for six months or more.
CONTACT — your Jobcentre will contact you.
-  **Jobstart Allowance** PAGE 8
To help long-term unemployed people start work.
OPEN TO — long-term unemployed people 18 and over.
CONTACT — your local Jobcentre.
-  **Community Programme** PAGE 9
Community-based work and incidental training.
OPEN TO — long-term unemployed people 18 and over.
Any organisation or group may sponsor projects.
CONTACT — your local Jobcentre.
-  **New Workers Scheme** PAGE 10
Payments to employers who take on young people full-time in their first year of employment.
OPEN TO — employers taking on those under 20 at £55 a week or less or those aged 20 at £65 a week or less.
CONTACT — your nearest Careers Office, Jobcentre or Employment Measures Unit.
-  **Jobclubs** PAGE 11
Coaching in job-hunting techniques, facilities, support and motivation for people looking for work.
OPEN TO — people unemployed for six months or more.
CONTACT — your local Jobcentre.
-  **Community Industry** PAGE 12
Temporary employment for up to a year for disadvantaged young people, with opportunities for part-time study and training.
OPEN TO — people 16-19.
CONTACT — your local Careers Office or Jobcentre.
-  **Travel to Interview Scheme** PAGE 13
Financial help for those who need to travel to job interviews.
OPEN TO — unemployed jobseekers.
CONTACT — your local Jobcentre.
-  **Voluntary Projects Programme** PAGE 14
Opportunities for unemployed people to gain experience on a variety of voluntary projects.
OPEN TO — all unemployed people.
CONTACT — your local Jobcentre.
-  **Job Release** PAGE 15
Financial help for older workers to retire early and release their full-time job to an unemployed person.
OPEN TO — men and women approaching State pension age.
CONTACT — Employment Measures Units or Jobcentres.
-  **Jobshare** PAGE 16
Help for employers to provide more part-time opportunities for unemployed people or those leaving other schemes; offering more flexible working arrangements and ways for existing employees to change to full-time work.
OPEN TO — employers, employed and unemployed.
CONTACT — Employment Measures Units or Jobcentres.

Training

-  **YTS** PAGE 18
High-quality training and planned work experience for school leavers.
OPEN TO — 16 and 17-year-old school leavers, including those who are employees, with a higher age limit in certain cases. There are special arrangements for disabled young people and some others. Employers and other suitable groups can provide training or work experience.
CONTACT — Your local Careers Office, Jobcentre or (for employers) MSC Vocational Education and Training Group Area Office.
-  **New Job Training Scheme** PAGE 19
Training for adults who wish to add to or learn new skills.
OPEN TO — people who are 18 or over and have been out of work (receiving benefit) for more than six months.
CONTACT — your local Jobcentre.
-  **Other Training for Unemployed People** PAGE 20
A wide range of training to help adults get back into work.
OPEN TO — unemployed people and Community Programme participants.
CONTACT — your local Jobcentre.
-  **Training for Enterprise** PAGE 21
Full- or part-time training for the business owner or manager.
OPEN TO — suitable employed, self-employed or unemployed people over 18.
CONTACT — MSC Vocational Education and Training Group Area Offices.
-  **Training Grants for Employers** PAGE 22
A wide range of practical and financial help for training employees and new recruits.
OPEN TO — employers.
CONTACT — your local Jobcentre or MSC Vocational Education and Training Group Area Office.
-  **Access to Information Technology** PAGE 23
Evening or weekend training to provide an introduction to Information Technology.
OPEN TO — employed, self-employed or unemployed people.
CONTACT — your local Jobcentre.
-  **Open Learning** PAGE 24
Improved access to training, especially for those at technician and supervisory levels.
OPEN TO — employees, employed and unemployed.
CONTACT — Open Tech Directory available at your local Jobcentre, public library or MSC Vocational Education and Training Group Area Office.
-  **Career Development Loans** PAGE 25
Pilot scheme offering loans for training or vocational education courses in four areas.
OPEN TO — people over 18 either living in or intending to train in Aberdeen, Bristol/Bath, Greater Manchester or Reading/Slough.
CONTACT — Jobcentres in the pilot areas.

Enterprise

-  **Small Firms Service** PAGE 27
Free information service and counseling by experienced businessmen over a wide range of management and business matters.
OPEN TO — anyone planning or running a small business.
CONTACT — dial 100 and ask for FREEPHONE ENTERPRISE.
-  **Enterprise Allowance Scheme** PAGE 28
Financial help to support unemployed people who want to become self-employed or start their own business.
OPEN TO — unemployed adults who are in receipt of unemployment or supplementary benefit and have at least £1,000 available to invest in the business.
CONTACT — your local Jobcentre.
-  **Tourism** PAGE 29
Help and advice with projects.
OPEN TO — those seeking a business opportunity or a career in tourism.
CONTACT — Tourist Boards, Careers Offices or MSC Vocational Education and Training Group Area Offices.
-  **Loan Guarantee Scheme** PAGE 30
Government guarantees for bank loans made to businesses.
OPEN TO — owner/managers of most small businesses.
CONTACT — bank managers.
-  **Business Expansion Scheme** PAGE 31
Tax relief for investors in unquoted trading companies, extending the finance available to small firms.
OPEN TO — investors resident and paying tax in the UK and unquoted UK companies.
CONTACT — the Inland Revenue or an accountant.

Special Needs

-  **Disabled people** PAGES 32 and 33
For employees:
 - Special Aids to Employment.
 - Personal Reader Service.
 - Employment Rehabilitation.
 - Assistance with Fares to Work.
 - Sheltered employment.
 For the employer:
 - Adaptations to Premises and Equipment Scheme.
 - Job Introduction Scheme.**CONTACT** — the Disablement Resettlement Officer or Disablement Advisory Service through your local Jobcentre, or the Specialist Careers Officer at your nearest Careers Office.
-  **Ethnic Minorities** PAGE 34
Specific help available includes:
 - Skills-linked and Preparatory English as a Second Language courses.
 - Industrial Language Training Service.**CONTACT** — Jobcentres or MSC Vocational Education and Training Group Area Office.
-  **Help at Hand** PAGES 35-38
Where to go for counselling and advice, and check list.

When it comes to finding work, nobody needs to go it alone.

Young people and the long-term unemployed need particular help and encouragement, so schemes such as the New Workers Scheme, the Restart Programme and the Community Programme, have been designed specifically to meet their needs.

For employers too there are grants and support to help them develop new job opportunities... for instance, by taking on an unemployed person in place of someone who would like to retire early.



Restart Programme

Out of work for 6 months or more?

The Restart Programme offers positive help to put unemployed people back on the road to work.

From April 1987 interviews will be offered to everyone who has been out of work for six months or more. Jobcentre staff will discuss what job vacancies, training courses or other schemes mentioned in this booklet might be suitable.

Everyone interviewed will be offered one or more of the following ways towards finding work:

- A suitable job.
- A temporary job on the Community Programme (see page 9).
- A place in a Jobclub with a high chance of finding work (see page 11).

Help with fares

Fares for travelling over three miles to the interview will be paid. However, if you are disabled your fares will be paid whatever the distance.

- The chance of self employment with the Enterprise Allowance Scheme (see page 28).
- A place on a training scheme which might include the new Job Training Scheme (see page 19).
- £20 a week Jobstart Allowance for anyone taking a job paying less than £80 a week (see page 8).
- Work on voluntary projects (see page 14).
- A one-week Restart course which will help people assess what they are good at and show them how to look for jobs more effectively. After this first week, people are encouraged to 'drop in' one day a week (for up to three months) to get further help and advice.

Contact

Expect an invitation from your Jobcentre (but do use Jobcentres meanwhile, see back cover).

Jobstart Allowance

Turning down jobs because the pay's too low?

The Jobstart Allowance offers £20 per week for long-term unemployed people to get back into the job market.

If you take a full-time job paying less than £80 a week you may qualify for the Jobstart Allowance. You must have been unemployed for at least 12 months and be in receipt of benefit immediately before starting the job.

Remember, you must apply for the allowance when you get the job or within 28 days of starting work.

Financial help

The Jobstart Allowance is a £20 a week top-up to your wage, paid for a maximum of six months. It will be paid direct to you. The allowance is taxable but will not affect Family Income Supplement, Housing Benefit or the National Insurance Contributions you make.

Who is eligible?

Anyone who has been out of work for at least 12 months, is in direct or indirect receipt of benefit immediately before starting work, is 18 or over and is more than six months from retirement age.

You might still qualify even if you have not been continuously unemployed for the last 12 months. Check with your Jobcentre.

What jobs are eligible?

The jobs must pay less than £80 a week, be full-time (at least 35 hours a week or more on average) and be expected to last at least three months. Check with your Jobcentre.

Contact

Your local Jobcentre.

Community Programme

Unemployed for some time? Looking for work?

The Community Programme provides work for long-term unemployed people as well as a chance to help the local community.

All over the country Community Programme projects are giving long-term unemployed people the chance to work either full-time or part-time for up to a year. It also gives the opportunity to make new contacts, improve job prospects and increase work experience.

The projects all benefit the local community and may involve, for example, clearing up derelict land and canals, gardening and decorating for elderly and disabled people, adapting buildings for community use, tourism and countryside projects, setting up crèches and adventure playgrounds, running city farms, insulating lofts, supporting crime prevention work, helping to encourage enterprise through conversions of disused buildings - and many other worthwhile activities. New projects are starting all the time.

Financial help

Participants are paid the local rate for the job and there may be opportunities for training. Project sponsors are paid an allowance for operating costs.

Who is eligible?

1. To work on projects

People receiving some State benefits (usually unemployment or supplementary benefit) who have been unemployed for the last two months and are 18 or over and under 63:

- if aged 18 to 24, have been out of work for at least six of the last nine months (or if disabled, unemployed for four of the last nine months);
- if aged 25 to 62, have been unemployed for at least 12 of the last 15 months (for the disabled, unemployed for eight of the last 15 months).

2. To sponsor projects

Any organisation or group of individuals (for example, local authorities, private companies, trade unions, voluntary bodies, charities and community groups).

Contact

Your local Jobcentre. Sponsors should contact their nearest Community Programme Area Office (see page 36).

New Workers Scheme

18-20 and finding your first job? Or want to give a young person a job opportunity?

The New Workers Scheme is designed to help young people setting out into the world of work and to encourage employers to create more job openings.

Employers are paid £15 a week if they provide a job for people aged 18-20 at rates of pay which reflect their age and relative inexperience.

The New Workers Scheme will help young people after YTS into their first year at work if they are employed at wages of £60 a week or less if they are under 20; or £65 a week or less at age 20.

The payment will enable employers to create more permanent and full-time work. Jobs should average at least 35 hours a week for a year.

Who is eligible?

Young people aged 18-20 who are in their first year of employment.

Contact

Your nearest Careers Office, Jobcentre or Employment Measures Unit (see page 37).

Financial help

Under the New Workers Scheme £15 a week is paid to employers for up to a year for each employee taken on, where the job and wage criteria are satisfied.

Jobclubs

Long-term unemployed? Need help with job-hunting?

Jobclubs aim to help long-term unemployed people get back to work.

Jobclubs give members advice on how to look for a job and the support and motivation to put what they learn into practice. They have the use of a desk, telephone, typewriter, newspapers, directories, stationery, postage and photocopying facilities — all free of charge.

Members are encouraged to follow up as many jobs as possible and can stay in the Jobclub for as long as it takes them to get a job.

Who is eligible?

People who have been out of work for six months or more.

Contact

Your local Jobcentre.

Community Industry

Aged 16-19 and unemployed?

The Community Industry scheme provides useful work experience for disadvantaged young people. Full-time temporary employment on community projects is provided by Community Industry Ltd, a registered charity. Participants work for up to a year on such projects as landscaping, gardening, horticulture, helping handicapped or elderly people, painting and decorating, social care - or in the scheme's own workshops where carpentry, metal-working, printing, sewing and dressmaking, catering and other activities are carried out. Those taking part can also do part-time study.

Financial help

Those on the scheme are employees and receive weekly wages (subject to tax and National Insurance deductions).

Who is eligible?

Unemployed people aged 16-19 with particular employment difficulties. There are 7,000 places on the scheme.

Contact
Your local Careers Office.

Travel to Interview Scheme

Unemployed and willing to consider a job beyond normal daily travelling distance?

The Travel to Interview Scheme helps unemployed people travel to job interviews beyond normal daily travelling distance.

The scheme pays the costs of travelling to attend a pre-arranged interview in Great Britain for most jobs away from home. Applications under the scheme should be made before the interview takes place.

Who is eligible?

People who have been unemployed for more than four weeks.

Contact
Your local Jobcentre.

Voluntary Projects Programme

Like to improve your job prospects by doing something constructive while brushing up existing skills or learning new ones?

VPP is designed to increase the self-confidence and motivation of unemployed people; to enhance their work skills and improve their prospects of moving into employment or formal education or training. Projects include adult education classes in social skills, literacy, numeracy and computing; others involve local community activities such as environmental work or furniture renovation; and some help people prepare for self-employment.

Financial help

Participation is voluntary and does not normally affect entitlement to unemployment or supplementary benefits, whether you work for a few hours or a full five-day week. Although participants are unpaid, those undertaking work of community benefit may receive travelling expenses up to £5 a week.

Financial help is given to sponsors up to a maximum of £75,000 for any single project to fund its employees and approved running costs.

Sponsors wishing to provide meals to VPP workers on community work projects may be reimbursed up to 50 per cent of the approved costs of providing the meals, up to 50p per meal.

Who is eligible?

1. To participate

Anyone unemployed aged 16 and over and under 63, whether receiving benefits or not, who is willing to give a number of hours or days a week.

2. To sponsor projects

Any organisation or group of individuals; for example, local authorities, private companies, voluntary bodies, charities.

Contact

Your local Jobcentre. Sponsors should contact their nearest Community Programme Area Office (see page 36).

Job Release

Like to retire early — with an allowance till your pension's due?

Job Release lets older workers retire early with an allowance — provided their employer agrees and replaces them with an unemployed person.

Many older workers would like to retire early and have the time to do the things they've always wanted to. This scheme enables them to do just that and so give an unemployed person a chance, if their employer agrees. The retiring worker gets an allowance until the State pension starts; the employer takes on an unemployed worker as a replacement.

Financial help

The allowance payable is between £53.90 and £74.50 a week, depending on the employee's circumstances.

Who is eligible?

Female employees aged 59, male employees aged 64, and disabled male employees of 60-64.

Contact

Apply through your employer, who should then contact the nearest Employment Measures Unit. The *Job Release* leaflet is available from your nearest Jobcentre or Employment Measures Unit (see page 37).

Jobshare

Interested in job sharing?

Jobshare creates more job opportunities both directly and by helping businesses become more flexible.

Through Jobshare employers gain from the extra flexibility and the opportunities for growth; as do existing employees who would like to work fewer hours; and unemployed people who may welcome a less-than-full-time job, perhaps as a first step.

There's a financial incentive for employers who create part-time jobs in one of these ways:

- take on into new part-time jobs two people from YTS, the Community Industry scheme, the Community Programme, the Job Training Scheme, or those on an allowance from an Employment Rehabilitation Centre;
- combine existing regular overtime hours into a new part-time job for an unemployed person;
- split an existing full-time job or vacancy into two part-time ones for people who are unemployed.

Part-timers normally work between 16 and 29 hours a week (averaged over a 13-week period) to suit the convenience of both the employer and the employee.

Financial help

Employees providing part-time jobs in one of these ways receive £1,000 towards administration and training.

Who is eligible?

Employed and unemployed people who want to or are prepared to work part-time, employers who are willing to create part-time jobs.

Contact

Your nearest Jobcentre or Employment Measures Unit (see page 37). Ask for the Jobshare leaflet.

Training

In a job? Or looking for one? Just left school or returning to work after a period away? Maybe you're already running a business or just thinking of setting one up. Whatever your circumstances, training can give you the kind of new skills you need ... skills which are increasingly in demand.

From YTS, which goes a long way towards equipping school leavers with skills for the future, to specialist courses in high technology or business management, there's something for everyone. Updating old skills can be as important as acquiring new ones. Check just how much is on offer in the following pages.

The MSC's own Skills Training Agency (STA) provides a wide range of training for unemployed people and for employers. Find out more about what is on offer by asking at the Jobcentre.



YTS

Leaving school at 16 or 17?

YTS provides training and planned work experience for up to two years to equip young people for working life.

YTS has been expanded and developed to give 16-year-old school leavers **two** years' of training and 17-year-old leavers one year, with special arrangements for disabled young people and some other groups.

The two-year programme involves at least 20 weeks off-the-job training (for example in a college or training centre) in addition to on-the-job training and planned work experience. Every trainee is given the opportunity to take or work towards a recognised vocational qualification.

Financial help

16-year-old entrants receive a basic tax-free allowance of £27.30 (£28.50 from 6 April 1987) a week in their first year, but this will increase to £35 in their second year. Those joining on a one-year entitlement will receive a basic £27.30 (£28.50 from 6 April 1987) for the first three months and £35 for the other nine months. In particular circumstances some non-employed trainees will receive help with travel costs and lodgings.

A range of grants is available to employers and organisations who become YTS providers.

Who is eligible?

1. To participate

All 16 and 17-year-old school leavers, with special arrangements for disabled young people and certain other groups.

2. To run a training scheme

Public and private employers, local authorities, voluntary bodies, training organisations, chambers of commerce and similar concerns who offer training of the required standard.

3. To provide work experience

There is wide scope for employers of all sizes in all industries to provide planned work experience for YTS trainees.

Contact

Your local Careers Office or Jobcentre. Employers should contact their nearest MSC Vocational Education and Training Group Area Office (see page 36).

New Job Training Scheme

Unemployed for some time?

The new Job Training Scheme could improve your chance of getting back to work.

Start by finding out what your interests are, what training will suit you best and what qualifications you might be able to get.

After that, a package of directed training and linked practical experience with a local employer will be drawn up specially for you.

The training will last from 3-12 months depending on your needs and the qualification that you are aiming for. It can help you to learn new skills or bring skills that you already have up to date. You will also have the chance to learn about new technology or working for yourself. Towards the end of the programme you get help in finding a job.

Who is eligible?

People who are 18 or over and have been out of work (receiving benefit or NI credits) for more than six months.

Contact

Your local Jobcentre has a leaflet called *The New Job Training Scheme*. This tells you more about the Scheme and where you can find out what is available locally.

Financial help

The training is free. You will get the same allowance as your benefit, plus traveling expenses.

Other Training for Unemployed People

Unemployed and looking for new skills or retraining?

A variety of other training is available for unemployed people.

A wide range of full and part-time courses offering training closely matched to local opportunities is available to help people get back to work. Some of these are open to people taking part in the Community Programme. The courses include work-related language training linked to instruction in occupational skills; training to update skills and provide better knowledge of the labour market; and help with the job-finding process for women wishing to return to work.

Occupational courses in a range of skills are also available. These can add to the skills you already have or - equally important - develop the new skills that local employers need. Opportunities in the technician and new technology fields are features of the training offered.

There is also special provision for disabled people - for example, individual training with an employer for between four weeks and a year, after which the disabled person is normally employed.

Financial help

An allowance is paid to trainees on most full-time courses.

Who is eligible?

Unemployed people aged 18 and over. For further details of eligibility ask at your local Jobcentre.

Contact

Your local Jobcentre.

Training for Enterprise

Planning to run your own business? Already self-employed? Looking for guidance?

Training for Enterprise provides training for the new or existing business owner or manager and those considering starting up a business.

For those 'starting-up' there is the Business Enterprise Programme. This provides an opportunity to learn what is involved in self-employment and, through short modules, obtain useful management skills.

For those already running a small business, the Private Enterprise Programme offers short modular courses in key subjects such as finance and marketing where groups of owners and managers discuss problems and, under guidance, learn from each other.

In addition, there is the Management Extension Programme which matches experienced unemployed managers, who have been specially trained in small business skills, to small firms which have ideas for growth but lack the resources to carry them through. An adaptation of the Management Extension Programme places graduates in small firms to work on growth projects.

Leaflets are available on each of these Schemes.

Who is eligible?

Suitable employed, self-employed, or unemployed people over 18.

Contact

MSC Vocational Education and Training Group Area Offices (see page 36), where the leaflets are obtainable. Trainers should also see Education and Training for Small Business by HM Inspectorate in Scotland, available from HMSO.

Training Grants for Employers

Need more facts about training grants?

A range of help is available to employers to identify and meet key training needs.

- Local grants towards the cost of retraining existing employees or training new recruits for hard-to-fill vacancies.
- Local consultancy grants to help firms analyse their retraining needs.
- National Priority Skills scheme — grants, through Industry Training Organisations, to help employers meet their key skill needs.

The full range of services is set out in a folder called *MSC Adult Training Support for Employers*.

Who is eligible?

Employers, with priority in some cases for small firms.

Contact

Your local Jobcentre or MSC Vocational Education and Training Group Area Office (see page 36), where the MSC folder is obtainable.

Access to Information Technology.

All at sea when it comes to I.T? Like to know more about it?

Modern business is changing fast. Anyone now working or planning to work with Information Technology needs to understand its potential and the skills needed to make the most of it.

This scheme is designed for the beginner and provides a sure grounding in the basics. It will be available until March 1988. Training is available in the evenings or at weekends.

Who is eligible?

Employed, self-employed or unemployed people.

Contact

Your local Jobcentre.

Open Learning

Want to improve skills by open learning and training?

Open Learning allows you to learn at your own pace, and at a time and place that suits you, whether at home or at work. It can help you to update your skills or to learn new skills e.g. in computer-based subjects.

There are now 30,000 hours of open learning materials produced under the Open Tech Programme. An increasing amount of open learning can be done with MSC help under the many training schemes described in this booklet.

Contact

Your local Jobcentre or MSC Vocational Education and Training Group Area Office (see page 36) can provide a leaflet *Time to Learn (GT26)* and they can also show you a copy of the Open Tech Directory which lists all Open Tech projects, materials and services available.

There is also a computerised information service about open learning materials and resources run by MARIS-NET (Materials and Resources Information Service).

And look out for:

- the Open College which will start broadcasting in September;
- Training Access Points (TAP) which can give you information about open learning and other training.

Who is eligible?

1. Employed or unemployed people who want to train through open learning.
2. Employers who want to use open learning to train their employees - see 'Training Grants for Employers'.

Career Development Loans

Want to invest in your future?

A Career Development Loan can help you take a training course of your choice if it is job-related and lasts for at least one week and no more than one year.

The Department of Employment is working with Barclays Bank, the Clydesdale Bank and the Co-operative Bank to introduce a new experimental scheme. Under this scheme the banks will consider lending you money so that you can get into vocational training to improve your career or employment prospects. When you have found the right course, you apply to one of these banks for a loan.

If your application is successful, you will not pay any interest on the loan during the training course and for up to three months afterwards.

Who is eligible?

Anyone over 18 either living in or intending to train in Aberdeen, Bristol/Bath, Greater Manchester or Reading/Slough. The pilot scheme runs from April 1986 for a three-year trial period.

Contact

A leaflet and information pack is available in the pilot areas from Jobcentres or one of the three banks taking part - Barclays Bank and the Clydesdale Bank in Aberdeen; Barclays Bank and the Co-operative Bank in the other areas.

As long as there are ideas, there will be enterprise. But the spirit of enterprise sometimes needs an injection of hard-headed business know-how.

The schemes described on the following pages offer ways to turn ideas into reality — with the help of practical advice, sound financial backing and a wide range of supporting services.

In its White Paper, *Lifting the Burden*, the Government listed 70 steps it is taking to remove unnecessary burdens on business. These include simplifying VAT returns, employment protection and planning procedures. Businesses can help by telling Government about problems they face in complying with regulations or the way they are enforced.

Contact your nearest Small Firms Centre to discuss a current problem; suggestions for deregulation may be addressed to the Enterprise and Deregulation Unit (see page 36 for address).

Enterprising efforts are already paying off. To take just one example, turnover from tourism is about £13 billion, sustains upwards of one million jobs and creates around 50,000 new ones every year. Tourism means jobs and everyone gains from enterprise.



Running your own firm or thinking of setting up in business?

Looking for sound advice and information?

The Small Firms Service provides free information on a wide variety of small business problems, whether you're already in business or just starting out.

Equally valuable is its business counselling service provided by experienced businessmen and women who can give sound practical, impartial and confidential advice on your project. Money, premises, production, marketing — all of these and many more important questions are within the scope of the Small Firms Service.

The Service can also give detailed advice on a number of Government schemes which encourage growth and expansion in small businesses. Some of these are described on the following pages.

In Scotland and Wales, the Small Firms Service can also link enquirers into the wide range of assistance offered by national and regional development agencies (see pages 36 and 37).

Who is eligible?

Anyone who is already running or thinking of starting up a small business.

Contact

Dial 100 and ask for FREEFONE ENTERPRISE.

Enterprise Allowance Scheme

Want to start a new business or work for yourself but can't afford to lose out on benefits until you get off the ground?

The Enterprise Allowance Scheme will provide financial help during the first 12 months that you are working for yourself.

Plenty of unemployed people would like to become self-employed or start their own business, and many thousands have already done so — thanks to the Enterprise Allowance Scheme. The scheme is intended to help unemployed people who have a business venture in mind but who may be put off from working for themselves because they would lose their entitlement to unemployment or supplementary benefit. EAS helps to overcome this problem by paying them a regular allowance for up to one year.

Many different businesses are being supported, from plumbers, mechanics, retailers and dressmakers to computer software designers. Successful businesses may well go on to create new jobs for other unemployed people.

Those interested first attend a self-employment awareness day to find out how EAS operates and to get advice on setting up a new business. Once they have joined the scheme, participants are entitled to further free advisory sessions.

Financial help

£40 a week for up to 52 weeks will be paid to supplement the receipts of the new business while it is being established. The business may also qualify for help under other Government and local authority schemes. The Small Firms Service can advise (see page 27).

Who is eligible?

People 18 and over, and under 65, receiving unemployment or supplementary benefit who have been out of work for at least eight weeks.

Applicants must also have at least £1,000 to invest in their business — or be able to raise it by loan or overdraft. It is not necessary to produce it at the application stage.

Contact

Your local Jobcentre before start-up. Ask for a Guide to the Enterprise Allowance Schemes.

Tourism

Want help with a tourism project? Or thinking of a career in tourism?

Help, advice and financial support for tourism projects can be had from the national tourist boards in England, Scotland and Wales as well as through the 12 regional tourist boards in England. In Scotland, the Highlands and Islands Development Board also assists tourism in its area.

Help can be considered towards the capital costs of projects such as hotel improvements, visitor attractions, leisure amenities, self-catering and other facilities for tourists.

In England, smaller tourism projects with capital costs of less than £100,000 are considered under special, simplified procedures.

The Wales Tourist Board has similar simplified procedures and also runs a scheme for capital projects costing less than £5,000 which is designed to raise the standard of resort accommodation.

The tourism industry offers a wide range of career opportunities particularly for young people. There are a large number of YTS places in the industry. The MSC is also funding adult training; this includes small business training specifically for the hotel and catering industry and occupational training in hotel and catering.

National tourist board addresses

English Tourist Board
Thames Tower, Black's Road, London W6 9EL, 'phone 01-846 9000.

Scottish Tourist Board
23 Ravelston Terrace, Edinburgh EH4 3EU, 'phone 031-332 2433

Wales Tourist Board
Brunel House, 2 Fitzalan Road, Cardiff CF2 1UY, 'phone (0222) 499909.

Also Highlands and Islands Development Board, Bridge House, 27 Bank Street, Inverness IV1 1OR, 'phone (0463) 234171.

Contact

National or regional tourist boards (or Highlands and Islands Development Board) for assistance with and advice on tourism projects. Your local Careers Office for careers advice, MSC Vocational Education and Training Group Area Office for training courses (see page 36).

Loan Guarantee Scheme

Need a loan for your business?

The Loan Guarantee Scheme makes it easier for you to get a loan quickly and without fuss.

Many a viable business proposition has failed to attract the necessary financial backing because the owner was unable to offer the security needed.

The Loan Guarantee Scheme was set up to encourage lending in just this situation — where a lack of established track record or inadequate security would otherwise make the loan unattractive to banks.

By guaranteeing 70 per cent of the loan, the Government encourages banks to lend money in support of viable business propositions. A premium of 2½ per cent on the guaranteed proportion of the loan is payable by the borrower. Once the bank has agreed to put forward an application the guarantee is usually issued quickly and with no fuss, (although some business sectors are excluded).

Guaranteed loans can form part of packages of loan finance for larger amounts of money, but as with any other approach to financial institutions, the case would need to be supported with detailed information and a business plan.

Financial help

Under the scheme, guarantees are provided for loans made by numerous banks and financial institutions and can cover up to £75,000 although many guarantees are issued for much smaller amounts.

Who is eligible?

Most new or existing small businesses.

Contact

Your bank manager

Business Expansion Scheme

Need investment income to start or expand your small firm? Or have you funds to invest yourself?

The Business Expansion Scheme provides two-way benefit, for the investor *and* for small businesses.

With the Business Expansion Scheme, independent investors and small businesses can help each other. By giving top-rate tax relief on equity investments in unquoted companies, BES extends the sources of finance available to small firms. Already in its first two years it has helped to raise £252 million of new investment for UK industry.

Who is eligible?

1. As an investor

Individuals resident and paying income tax in the UK are normally eligible for tax relief on investments in qualifying shares. An important condition is that the investment has to be maintained for a minimum of five years.

2. As a small firm

Unquoted new or existing companies incorporated in the UK, provided their main activities are carried out in the UK and are not in excluded categories such as financial services, property dealing or those with half their assets in land and buildings, etc.

Financial help

1. For the investor

Obviously this will depend on personal circumstances — and on the fact that while equity investments offer potentially higher rewards, they also carry higher risks. This is where the tax relief can make all the difference. Relief is at top rates of tax...so that for example, on an investment of £10,000, the benefit could be up to £6,000 (for a 60 per cent taxpayer). When you dispose of your shares you do not pay Capital Gains Tax.

2. For the small firm

Equity capital, which carries no repayment charge, is an essential part of company financing. If you are just starting up or expanding your business, and cash flow is tight, external investment could give your company a vital boost.

Contact

The Inland Revenue, an accountant or other adviser.
For detailed leaflets on the scheme dial 100 and ask for FREEPHONE ENTERPRISE for your nearest Small Firms Centre.

Help for Disabled People

Unemployed and disabled? Or do you have health problems or disabilities which affect the kind of work you can do?

Or thinking of taking on a disabled person?

There's special help available while you look for work and for both you *and* your employer once you've found a job.

Help and advice

Jobcentre and Careers Office staff will be pleased to give you their help and advice. There are also specialist services to help disabled people.

Disablement Resettlement Officers (DROs) provide a specialist service for disabled people whose health problems or disabilities pose a particular difficulty in getting a job. Specialist Careers Officers in the Local Authority Careers Service provide a similar service for disabled young people.

The Disablement Advisory Service (DAS) helps and encourages employers to improve job opportunities for disabled people. The service provides help and advice to disabled people at work and assists them in retaining their jobs and recovering their full potential.

In addition to the help available to other jobseekers there are a number of special schemes for disabled people to help them overcome the practical problems they may meet at work. There is also special provision for disabled people on a number of the schemes described in this booklet. The local DRO, Specialist Careers Officer or the DAS can give you full details.

For training information see 'YTS' on page 18 and 'Other Training for Unemployed People' on page 20.

For the disabled

- *Employment Rehabilitation*
Assessment and rehabilitation courses are available at a range of special centres across the country.
- *Special Aids to Employment*
Special tools or equipment can be lent to registered disabled people who need them to do their jobs. A special aid can be any equipment needed by a disabled person that an able-bodied person would not need to do the same job.
- *Assistance with Fares to Work*
Financial help can be given to registered disabled people who are unable to use public transport because of their disability, and so incur extra costs in getting to work. Assistance is given towards the cheapest, reliable alternative to public transport, up to a maximum grant of £64.25 a week.

Continued ...

Help for Disabled People

- *Personal Reader Service*
Financial aid for certain visually handicapped people towards the cost of employing a part-time, sighted reader to help them at work. The Royal National Institute for the Blind administers the scheme on the MSC's behalf.
- *Sheltered employment*
Sheltered employment for severely disabled people is available in special workshops and in some cases in sheltered placements with ordinary employers. Workshops are run by Remploy, local authorities and voluntary bodies.
Sheltered Placement Schemes enable severely disabled people to work in open employment alongside the rest of the workforce.

For the employer

- *Adaptations to Premises and Equipment Scheme*
Grants of up to £6,000 can be paid to employers who need to adapt their premises or equipment in order to employ a particular disabled person.
- *Job Introduction Scheme*
Grants of £45 per week can be paid to employers to take on a disabled person for a trial period giving them a chance to prove they can do the job.

Contact

The Disablement Resettlement Officer or Disablement Advisory Service through your local Jobcentre, or the Specialist Careers Officer at your nearest Careers Office.

Language Training for Ethnic Minorities

Employing or advising members of ethnic minorities?

Find out more about work preparation training and courses in communications skills

Before they can master occupational skills, some members of ethnic minorities have to overcome difficulties with language and communication — particularly in the more specialised job-related aspects of language. Special help available includes:

- *Skills-linked and Preparatory English as a Second Language (ESL) courses*
This is for speakers of English as a second language and provides language training that is linked to instruction in occupational skills (see page 20 for 'Other Training for Unemployed People').
- *Industrial Language Training Service*
The ILTS works to improve the language and communication skills in English of ethnic minority employees especially in ways relevant to their current employment.

It also provides supervisors, trade unionists and others with skills and information to improve communications with workers from ethnic minorities.

Funded by the MSC, the Industrial Language Training Service is provided by local education authorities through units in areas of special need.

Contact

Your local Jobcentre or MSC Vocational Education and Training Group Area Office (see page 36).

Help at hand... where to go for Counselling and Advice

Decisions about jobs, training and business are among the most important you're ever likely to take. But first you want to make sure you've got all the facts and are aware of all the opportunities. Advice and counselling services are now available right across the country.

On the following pages there are addresses and 'phone numbers for sources of help. For details about Jobcentres, see back cover.



Help at hand... where to go for Counselling and Advice

Careers Service

Local careers services provide advice on training and employment opportunities, particularly for younger people. The address of your local Careers Office is in the 'phone book under the local education authority or Careers Service.

Unemployment Benefit Offices

Unemployment benefit staff are always ready to help with benefit queries.

Race Relations Employment Advisory Service

RREAS is a nationwide, free and confidential service of the Department of Employment. It offers employers, and others, advice, information, guidance and training to promote racial equality in employment.

London (SE and SW England) 01-839 5600 Ext 2244

Birmingham (West Midlands and Wales) 021-643 4141 Ext 2890

Nottingham (East Midlands) (0602) 581224

Leeds (Yorkshire and Humberside, Northern Region) (0532) 438232 Ext 2344

Manchester (NW and Scotland) 061-832 9111 Ext 2226

Co-operatives

Local Co-operative Development Agencies advise on setting up and running co-operatives. For your nearest agency, contact the national Co-operative Development Agency, 'phone 01-839 2988.

Small Firms Service

See page 27 ('phone FREEPHONE ENTERPRISE).

Enterprise and Deregulation Unit

Suggestions for reducing the burden on businesses imposed by Government regulations should be sent to: EDU, Department of Employment, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NF.

Manpower Services Commission

A number of schemes in this booklet refer to the MSC Vocational Education and Training Group Area Offices or Community Programme Area Offices — you can find them in the 'phone book under Manpower Services Commission.

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

Industry Department for Scotland (IDS)

Welsh Office Industry Department

Help for businesses is also available through a number of schemes run by DTI, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET, 'phone 01-215 5544; by IDS, Alhambra House, 45 Waterloo Street, Glasgow G2 6AT, 'phone 041-248 2855; and by the Welsh Office Industry Department, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF1 3NQ, 'phone (0222) 825111.

Local Enterprise Agencies

Local Enterprise Agencies can offer a wide range of advice and support to small businesses and those setting up in business. For your nearest agency, contact Business in the Community, 'phone 01-253 3716; or, in Scotland, Scottish Business in the Community, 'phone 031-556 9761.

Highlands and Islands Development Board

Bridge House, 27 Bank Street, Inverness IV1 1QR, 'phone (0463) 234171.

Employment Measures Units

These offices will be pleased to give you advice and information on the New Workers Scheme, the Job Release Scheme and the Job Splitting Scheme.

Midlands

2 Duchess Place, Hagley Road, Birmingham B16 8NS, 'phone 021-456 1144

North East

Condercum House, 171 West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 6PL, 'phone 091-2722294

North West

Sunley Building, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester M60 7JS, 'phone 061-832 9111

Scottish Development Agency

120 Bothwell Street, Glasgow G2 7JP, 'phone 041-248 2700.

The SDA's small firms service provides advice on a variety of small business problems. They can also give financial help to young people with viable business propositions, and sponsor the Training and Employment Grants Scheme (TEGS) in certain areas of Scotland.

Welsh Development Agency

Pearl Building, Greyfriars Road, Cardiff CF1 3XX, 'phone (0222) 222666

South East

Unicorn House, 28 Elmfield Road, Bromley, Kent BR1 1LR, 'phone 01-464 6418

Scotland

Pentland House, 47 Robb's Loan, Edinburgh EH14 1UE, 'phone 031-443 8731

Wales and South West

1st Floor, Government Buildings, Block 4, St Agnes Road, Gabalfa, Cardiff CF4 4US, 'phone (0222) 693131

Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (COSIRA).

141 Castle Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 3TP, 'phone (0722) 336255.

COSIRA provides advice and training to small firms in rural areas and acts as a lender of last resort.

PAGE BY PAGE CHECKLIST

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	Skills-linked and Preparatory ESL courses	34	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Industrial Language Training Service	34	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	

Action Now



Choose

the schemes or programmes which sound right for **you**. There may be a whole package of opportunities you'll want to follow up — for example, if you're unemployed and thinking about starting your own business...



Check

the details on eligibility. Remember, this information is only an introduction to the help that is available. There will be other details about each scheme to guide you, your employer or your company, in making an application. That's why your first move is to...



Contact

one of the organisations listed for each scheme. For further details about addresses, see pages 35-37.



Jobcentres

Jobcentres are the first point of contact for many of the schemes described in this booklet. They can also help you in many other ways... Jobcentres bring together employers with vacancies and jobseekers looking for work, and they can give a great deal of useful advice. The vacancy displays in Jobcentres have a wide range of jobs, with new ones coming in every day. If you don't know the address of your local Jobcentre, look in the phone book under Manpower Services Commission.

Information and advice

Jobcentre staff know what is happening locally on the job scene and will be pleased to help. Whether you have just become unemployed or have been out of work for some time, Jobcentre staff can offer advice on job-hunting and special help in getting back to work — see also 'Jobclubs', on page 11.

If you need to travel to interviews, Jobcentre staff can advise about help which

may be available towards the cost. And if you're thinking about setting up in business you'll find a lot of useful information to steer you in the right direction (see also the Small Firms Service page 27).

Training

Seen something in this booklet that you want to follow up? Jobcentre staff can tell you more about adult and youth training.

Special needs

If you have a disability or health problem, the Jobcentre can offer extra help.

Professional and Executive Recruitment (PER)

If you are looking for managerial, scientific, executive or technical work, then you can find out about PER's services at a Jobcentre. Graduates should also ask about *Graduate Post*.

The Department of Employment and MSC seek to provide equal opportunities regardless of race or sex on all their programmes.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information given in this general guide is accurate, but no legal responsibility can be accepted for any errors, omissions or modifications to the schemes as described. Readers should always consult the appropriate office for up-to-date information.

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Help from the Council with your rent and rates

Date issued

CP No

Because you are getting Supplementary Benefit, you are entitled to help with your rent and rates. But the help will come from the Council rather than the DHSS.

Send this form to the Council so they can work out how much help you are entitled to. Their address is on the envelope that came with the form. Please ask the Council if you want to know more about this.

1 About you

Title

Surname

Other names

Address and Postcode

Phone number where we
can call you in the day

2 The place where you live

a What sort of
accommodation do
you pay rent for?

Please tick one box like this

Room in part of a house

Self-contained bedsit

Flat in part of a house

Flat in a block of flats or
over a shop

Maisonette

Hostel

House or bungalow

anything else -
please give details

b If you live in a room or a bedsit or a flat in part of a house please answer these five questions

How many floors are in the whole house?

How many rooms are in the whole house?

If you are not sure what the number is say 'about....'

How many rooms are on your floor?

Count every room except the hall and separate toilet.

Which rooms do you share with other people?

How many rooms are just for your use?

c When did you start living there?

/ /

d If you have lived there for less than 6 months, please tell us your last address

.....

e Is your home furnished at all by the landlord?

No
 Yes

f Do you use your home for any sort of business?

No
 Yes We will write to you later for details.

g Does anyone pay you rent for rooms that you let in your home?

No
 Yes Please fill in the other form (number A365) that we sent you as well.

3 Your rent

a How much is your rent?

If your rent also covers things like rates or heating, please give the total amount you pay.

£ every

b Do you have any free weeks when you do not pay rent?

Free weeks are given where people do not pay rent for every week of the year.

No
 Yes How many free weeks do you have?

c Has your rent gone up at all in the last 12 months?

No
 Yes Please send us proof of how much it has gone up

d Has your rent been registered as a fair rent by the Rent Officer?

The Rent Officer is someone who checks if people's rents are fair. Either you or your landlord can have your rent registered. Ask the Council for details.

No
 Yes
 Don't know

e Would it help you if we paid the money for your rent straight to your landlord?

If you are not sure, tick No. If you tick Yes, we will do it automatically.

No
 Yes

4 What your rent covers

a Does your rent include money for rates?

If you don't know, tick this box

No
 Yes How much of your rent is for rates?
 £ Tick here if you don't know how much

b Does your rent include money for water charges?

If you don't know, tick this box

No
 Yes How much of your rent is for water charges?
 £ don't know how much

c Does your rent include money for lighting?
 If you don't know, tick this box

No
 Yes How much of your rent is for lighting?
 £ don't know how much

d Does your rent include money for any heating?
 If you don't know, tick this box

No
 Yes How much of your rent is for heating?
 £ don't know how much

Do you have to pay for any other heating yourself?

No Yes please give details

.....

e Does your rent include money for hot water?
 If you don't know, tick this box

No
 Yes How much of your rent is for hot water?
 £ don't know how much

f Does your rent include money for cooking?
 If you don't know, tick this box

No
 Yes How much of your rent is for cooking?
 £ don't know how much

g Does your rent include money for meals?
 If you don't know, tick this box

No
 Yes How much of your rent is for meals?
 £ don't know how much

h Does your rent include money for a garage?
 If you don't know, tick this box

No
 Yes How much of your rent is for the garage?
 £ don't know how much

Does your landlord give you the choice of renting the garage?

No Yes

i Does your rent include money for cleaning or other services?
 If you don't know, tick this box

No
 Yes Please give details and say how much you pay.

.....

j Is there anything else that your rent covers?
 If you don't know, tick this box

No
 Yes Please give details and say how much you pay.

.....

5 Proof of your rent

The Council need to see something that proves how much rent you pay at the moment. You will get your papers back as soon as possible. If you cannot send proof, the Council will need to contact your landlord instead.

a What are you sending as proof of your rent? Please tick one box

Your rent book or your rent receipts

A letter from your landlord

A bank statement that shows regular payments for rent

Something else

Please say what it is

b What is the name of your landlord or landlady?

c What is their address?

6 Your signature

Please read the declaration and sign and date the form.

I declare that the information I have given on this form is about the place where I normally live and is true and complete.

Warning To give false information may result in prosecution.

Sign here

Date

/ /

7 What to do next

Please check that you have answered all the questions that apply to you.

Make sure that you send

- 1 Proof of your rent.
- 2 This form.
- 3 The green form (A365) if you were sent one.

Please use the envelope that is addressed to the Council.

You can use the white space below to give us any extra information.

8 What will happen next?

The Council will look at your claim as soon as they can. They will then write to you.

If you are worried about paying rent, get in touch with the Council. They are there to deal with rent and rates.

If you have any questions about your Supplementary Benefit, please get in touch with the DHSS.

Details about rent that other people pay to you

Date issued

CP No

When you claimed Supplementary Benefit, you said that someone pays you rent for rooms that you let in your home.

The Council need details before they can help you with your rent and rates.

Please fill in this form carefully and send it to them as soon as you can.

The sooner you send it, the sooner they can look at your claim.

Use the envelope that came with the form.

If you have any questions about the form, please ask the Council.

1 About you

Title

Surname

Other names

Address and Postcode

Phone number where we can call you in the day

- a Do you own your home? If it is on a mortgage or a loan, tick Yes. No Yes
- b Do you pay rent for your home? No Yes
- c Do you pay rent to the Council? No Yes

2 Your tenants - the people who pay you rent

- a Please give the full name of each tenant who pays you rent

If you have more than 6 tenants, please use the space at the end of the form.

 1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6

- b How many rooms are there in your home? Count every room except the hall or a separate toilet.
- c Which rooms do your tenants share with you?
- d How many rooms are just for your tenant to use?

3 Rent that your tenants pay you

a How much do you charge your tenants?

1	£	every
2	£	every
3	£	every
4	£	every
5	£	every
6	£	every

b Does their rent include any money for rates?
If you have more than one tenant, please give the amounts that each tenant pays at the end of the form.

No

Yes How much is for rates?
£ every

c Does their rent include any money for water charges?

No

Yes How much is for water charges?
£ every

d Does their rent include money for lighting?

No

Yes How much is for lighting?
£ every

e Does their rent include money for any heating?

No

Yes How much is for heating?
£ every

Do they have to pay for any other heating?
No Yes Please give details

f Does their rent include money for hot water?

No

Yes How much is for hot water?
£ every

g Does their rent include money for cooking?

No

Yes How much is for cooking?
£ every

h Does their rent include money for meals?

No

Yes How much is for meals?
£ every

i Does their rent include money for a garage?

No

Yes How much is for the garage?
£ every

j Does anyone else pay you rent for a garage? No

Yes How much do they pay?
£ every

k Does the rent your tenants pay you include money for cleaning or other services? No

Yes Please say how much they pay and what they pay for.
£ every for
£ every for

l Do you provide furniture for your tenants? No

Yes

m Is there anything else that their rent covers? No

Yes Please say how much they pay and what they pay for.
£ every for
£ every for

4 Proof of the rent that your tenants pay you

The Council need to see something that proves how much rent your tenants pay you.

a What are you sending as proof of the rent that they pay you? Please tick one box

rent receipts

their rent book

a paying in book or a bank statement that show regular payments from rent

something else Please say what it is

You will get your papers back as soon as possible

5 Your signature

Please read the declaration and sign and date the form

I declare that the information that I have given on this form is about the place where I normally live and is true and complete.

Warning to give false information may result in prosecution.

Sign here	Date
	/ /

6 What to do next

Please check that you have filled in all the questions that apply to you.

- Make sure that you send
- 1 Proof of your rent.
 - 2 Proof of how much your tenants pay you.
 - 3 The blue form (A367) if we sent you one.

Please use the envelope which is addressed to the Council.

If you want to give any extra information, you can use the white space on the next page.

7 Use this space for extra information

For official use

Help with the cost of glasses

Do any of these statements apply to you?

- I am under 16
I am under 19 and in full time education
I have been prescribed complex glasses

Are you or anyone who supports you getting any of these?

- Supplementary Benefit
Housing Benefit Supplement
This is a type of Supplementary Benefit. It is not the same as Housing Benefit.
Family Income Supplement (FIS)
Free milk and vitamins because of a low income
Free prescriptions because of a low income

If you can tick any of the boxes on this page

You can get help with the cost of glasses.
Do not fill in this form. Ask your optician for a voucher form. Just sign the declaration on page 1 of the voucher and hand it to the person who will be supplying the glasses.

If you cannot tick any of the boxes on this page and you do not have much money coming in

Use this form to claim help with the cost of glasses.

Can you get help?

- ▶ Each time you claim we will work out if your income is low enough for you to get help. What we count as low income depends on how many people there are in your family, how much money you have coming in and how much you have going out each week.
- ▶ You cannot get help if your savings are much more than £3000.
Savings are any money you have **plus** the value of any property you own apart from the place where you live **plus** the surrender values of your life insurance policies.
Surrender values of up to £1500 are not counted as part of the total savings.
- ▶ See the back page of this form to check whether you are able to claim help. If you are in doubt-claim help.

What sort of help could you get?

Your optician will give you a voucher form. This will be worth a given value. You may be able to get the full value of the voucher or you may only qualify for part of the value.

What to do now

Fill in this form and send it to your local Social Security office. The phone number and address are in the phone book under HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY DEPT OF (Scotland - SOCIAL SECURITY). You can get an envelope that does not need a stamp from your nearest post office. If you need any help with filling in this form please do not ask your optician - your local Social Security office will be pleased to help you.

What happens next

We will look at your claim and work out how much help you can get. We will then send you form F3(O) to let you know what we have decided.
Do not buy your glasses until you have received form F3(O).

1 About you

Your title

Your surname

Your other names

Your date of birth

Your address

If you live in more than one place, please give details about the place where you are living when you fill in this form

Are you registered blind? No
 Yes

2 About anyone who is living with you

If there are no children or adults living with you, tick here
 and go on to **3 Money coming in**

If you have a partner - we mean someone you are married to or someone you are living with as if you are married to them -

Your partner's title

Your partner's surname

Their other names

Their date of birth

If you have any children who you support and who live with you -

Their full names	Their dates of birth
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="/ /"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="/ /"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="/ /"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="/ /"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="/ /"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="/ /"/>

If anyone else is living in your home -

Their full names	Their relationship to you eg son, friend, lodger	What they do eg work, study	If 18 or under, their date of birth
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="/ /"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="/ /"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="/ /"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="/ /"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="/ /"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="/ /"/>

3 Money coming in

Are you or your partner working? No
 Yes

What is **your** average take home pay?

What is **your partner's** average take home pay?

Do you or your partner get any money from benefits pensions or allowances? No
 Yes

Which benefits pensions or allowances are they?

How much is paid?

Who is the money paid to?
 yourself your partner

Do you or your partner, or anyone you support, have any savings or cash? No
 Yes

How much do you have altogether?

Do you or your partner own any other property, apart from the place where you live? No
 Yes

Do you or your partner have any other money coming in? No
 Yes

eg maintenance, money from a court order, rent from lodgers or tenants, or anything else

What is the money for?

How much is it?

If you have any children who live with you and who are under 19 and who are in full-time education, do they have any money coming in? No
 Yes

What is the money for?

How much is it?

If you are 19 or over and in full-time education -

What is the name of your school, college or university?

Do you get a grant or award?

No

Yes

How much is your grant this academic year?

£

How much of your grant is meant to pay for books?

£

How much have your parents been asked to contribute towards the cost of your education?

£

If you are a postgraduate, what kind of grant do you get?

bursary

studentship

other Please describe the type of grant

How many weeks are there in your academic year?

What dates are your vacations this academic year?

from	/	/	to	/	/
from	/	/	to	/	/
from	/	/	to	/	/
from	/	/	to	/	/

4 Money you pay for where you live

If you are living at home with your parents, tick here and go on to **5 Any other expenses**

If you live at someone else's home and pay for board and lodging -

How much do you pay for board and lodging?

£ every

Does the amount you pay cover any meals?

No

Yes

How many meals each week does it cover?

breakfasts

lunches

evening meals

Are you related to the person whose home you live in?

No

Yes

How are you related?

Do you live in a nursing or residential home?

No

Yes

Who runs the home?

How much do you pay?

£ every

If you pay rent for your home -

Do you get help from the Council with your rent?

No

Yes

How much help do you get with your rent?

£ every

How much rent do you pay, after any help you get from the Council?

£ every

Does the amount you pay for rent cover rates too?

No

Yes

Does the amount you pay for rent cover ground rent (feu duty in Scotland)?

No

Yes

How much of your rent is for ground rent?

£

Does the amount you pay for rent cover water rates, sewerage and environmental charges too?

No

Yes

Does the amount you pay for rent cover lighting?

No

Yes

How much of your rent is for lighting?

£

Does the amount you pay for rent cover heating?

No

Yes

How much of your rent is for heating?

£

If you pay rates or water rates for your home -

Do you own the place where you live?

No

Yes

Do you get help from the Council for your rates?

No

Yes

How much help do you get with your rates?

£ every

How much do you pay for rates, after any help you get from the Council?

£ every

How much do you pay for water rates, sewerage and environmental charges?

£ every

How much do you pay for ground rent? (feu duty in Scotland)

£ every

Do you pay service charges?

No

Yes

How much do you pay?

£ every

Does the amount you pay include lighting?

No

Yes

If you have a mortgage or loan on your home -

How much are your mortgage or loan payments?

£ every

How you can work out if your income is low enough to claim help

Work through these 4 steps



1 Income

Work out your weekly income

Include

You and your partner's take-home pay.
Any other things like benefits or maintenance payments.

Do not include

Your children's income, any help you get with rent and rates, Attendance Allowance or Mobility Allowance.

Weekly income

£



2 Money going out each week

Work out how much you have going out each week

Include

Rent, Rates, Mortgage payments
Life insurance premiums
Fares to and from work
Trade union subscriptions
Childminding and other expenses

Now add

£4 of your earnings £4 of your partner's earnings
If you are a single parent -
half your earnings between £4 and £20

Money going out each week

£

3 Amount left each week

Take away the money you have going out from your weekly income

Amount left each week

£

4 Compare with these examples

Amount left each week



and claim if	You are a single householder and	under 18	£ 33.00
		18 to 60	£ 33.00
		over 60	£ 41.00



and claim if	You are single not a householder and	under 18	£ 25.00
		18 to 60	£ 31.00
		over 60	£ 37.00



and claim if	You have a partner and either of you is	under 60	£ 51.00
		over 60	£ 64.00
		over 65	£ 66.00



and claim if	You have a partner and have one child	under 5	£ 64.00
--------------	---------------------------------------	---------	---------



and claim if	You have a partner and have two children	one under 5 and one 5 to 11	£ 74.00
--------------	--	-----------------------------	---------

The more children you have got, and the older they are, the more money you can have coming in and still get help with the cost of your glasses.

This is only a rough guide. The amounts shown are correct at 28 July 1986.



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

Human relationships depend on communication. Bad writing is a barrier to communication. When a large organisation such as the Government tries to communicate with the man and woman in the street the scope for misunderstanding is enormous. Too often clarity and simplicity are overwhelmed by pompous words, long sentences and endless paragraphs.

If we all wrote in plain English how much easier - and efficient - life would be. It is no exaggeration to describe plain English as a fundamental tool of good Government.

Some people think that flowery and complicated writing is a sign of intellectual strength. They are wrong. Some of our greatest communicators were - and are - passionate believers in the simplicity of the written word. As Winston Churchill described a particularly tortured piece of 'officialese': "This is the sort of English up with which I will not put".

The Civil Service and public administration generally have made great strides in the use of plain English in recent years. Jargon and 'officialese', while far from extinct, are dying out. I would like to see them banished forever. Plain English must be the aim of all who work in Government. That's what this booklet is all about.

Margaret Thatcher

September 1987

PRIME MINISTER

The attached report on Government forms is very long, but it has a suitable short summary at the front which you may like to glance at. I suggest that you welcome the progress that has been made, exhort departments to continue the good work and ask for a further progress report in two years' time - it is hardly worth all this effort on an annual basis.

Agreed

Content?

Mr. Luce also asks if you would endorse the foreword to his booklet on Plain English.

Content to sign the message at Flag A?

Yes

105

ANDY BEARPARK

30 September 1987

VC4ARE



Cabinet Office

MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL OFFICE

From the Minister of State
Privy Council Office
The Rt. Hon. Richard Luce MP

Great George Street
London SW1P 3AL
Telephone 01-270 5929

C87/3983

The Rt Hon Mrs Thatcher MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1

25 September 1987

Dear Prime Minister

GOVERNMENT FORMS

... I enclose the fourth progress report on departments' work to improve Government forms, covering the financial years 1985/86 and 1986/87. Following the publication of the third progress report in 1985, you asked for a further, short report in 1987 and this is that report. The summary on pages i-iv is designed for publication.

The report shows that departments have made good progress over the last two years. There has been no falling off in the volume of reviews and substantial numbers of forms have been abolished. For the first time the report also covers new forms: these continue to be needed for new schemes such as the Manpower Services Commission's job Start, Restart and Job Training Schemes and to meet new demands like increased animal export work. But new forms are now good forms: well-designed and easy to understand.

Many departments have completed the initial examination of all their forms called for by the original Rayner scrutiny. Permanent review arrangements will now ensure that standards do not slip. Departments must also now give special attention to some of the more difficult issues: seeing how well forms work in practice and controlling the forms that the public never see. I suggest that you may wish to call for a further progress report in 1989.

The enthusiasm and skill of staff in departments has brought about the widely-recognized transformation in government forms since the scrutiny in 1982. I am delighted to commend their work. They will need the continued support of Ministers and top officials if they are to maintain its momentum.

The publication of the fourth progress report, shortly after our return to office, presents an ideal opportunity to reaffirm our support for plain English in government. I therefore intend to issue a new version of a booklet first published by Grey Gowrie (a draft is enclosed). The new booklet carries an emphatic message about the Government's commitment to plain language. A personal endorsement from you would greatly enhance that message and I hope you will agree to contribute a foreword to the booklet.

If you are content to approve the progress report, I will circulate it to colleagues, unless of course you prefer to do so yourself.

RICHARD LUCE

~
Paul J
—

EBG

Plain English booklet - suggested titles

MAKING IT PLAIN

A plea for plain English in the Civil Service

Foreword by the Prime Minister

14 September 1987

Plain English booklet - draft foreword by Prime Minister

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✓K4AR9

Plain English booklet - draft main text

Making it plain

You probably spend much of your working day writing - even more time reading what other civil servants write.

The written word is your main currency. Stop reading now if yours is in mint condition. Read on if you have doubts.

Guilty or not guilty?

'Officialese' is writing that is full of verbiage. "The futile drivelling of mere quill-driving", the Duke of Wellington called it. It clogs the thoughts of reluctant readers. It creates barriers to understanding. The Civil Service probably is no more guilty than businesses, local authorities and many other organisations. But read this example from the Civil Service Pay and Conditions of Service Code:

Under Article 5 of the Civil Service Order in Council 1969, the Minister for the Civil Service is empowered to make regulations for controlling the conduct of Her Majesty's Home Civil Service. Instructions given in the exercise of this power are communicated to departments by the Civil Service Department as part of a consolidated Code. Such instructions stem mainly from two sources, legislation which binds the Crown or which, although not binding the Crown, Ministers have undertaken to apply as though it were so binding; and agreements reached in negotiation with the national Staff Side or with Staff Associations in accordance with custom and practice extending back over more than 50 years. Rules and guidance so issued are mandatory on employing departments. In some instances, the method of application of the rules is precisely defined, in others, the principles to be observed are defined and the method of application is left to departments.

Not exactly easy to understand, is it?

Perhaps you've never written anything quite like this. But how often have you puzzled over what someone else has written?

Are you really certain that someone, somewhere, isn't looking at something **you** have written and wondering 'What exactly does it mean?'

But I can't say exactly what I mean in plain English

Are you sure? Will your reader understand exactly what you mean if you **don't** use plain English?

The reason for most of your writing is to transmit information or ideas from **your** mind clearly, convincingly and politely into your **reader's** mind. Of course, you may have to use technical terms. But then it is even **more** important to use plain English to explain your ideas.

There's no need to sacrifice accuracy for clarity. Follow Einstein - 'I like to make things as simple as possible, but not simpler'.

Plain words mean more words

Sometimes. But does it matter if your writing is easier to read and quicker to understand?

Generally you will find that plain English is shorter. One local authority put its instructions for drawing up contracts into plain English. The old instructions had 3,679 words. The new ones said the same in 1,850 words. What's more, loopholes obscured by jargon in the old instructions were exposed - and closed.

Plain English is ugly

Is it? The example on page [] is hardly beautiful! It's exhausting. You have to unravel the language to find the meaning.

One of the strengths of English is the way you can use it to express complex thoughts simply and attractively. Plain English is the way to show your mastery of the language and of your ideas.

How can I make it plainer?

Clarity doesn't come naturally to most people - it has to be learnt. Ernest Gowers's classic **The Complete Plain Words** is the bible of clear writing. Here are some important ideas he and others put forward. Bear in mind they are suggestions not rules.

- The first important thing is your state of mind. Your writing will be much easier to understand if you imagine your readers opposite you in the same room. The official who wrote

In consequence of the non-payment of the above-noted account, an officer of the Board will attend your premises to disconnect your electricity supply facilities

had the **wrong** attitude. He wasn't treating his reader as a human being.

- Use short sentences. Aim at an average of 15-20 words - even shorter if you can manage it. You can still be polite and, if need be, formal or forceful.

- Use sentences with active verbs. Write

The department decided that employees should work between 9 and 5

instead of

The decision of the department was that employees should work between 9 and 5.

The first phrase follows the normal English word order:

subject of the sentence...verb...object.

This gives your readers much less trouble than

object...verb...subject.

- Use verbs instead of nouns created from verbs. For example, write use instead of the utilisation of. Too many reports are full of these grand-sounding noun phrases.

- Use shorter words. Write try for attempt, about for concerning, more for additional. Long words are often a sign of a stodgy style that sends readers to sleep.
- Sometimes it's a good idea to address your readers as you and refer to yourself or the department as I or we.
- Use jargon only when you're sure the reader knows what it means. Otherwise explain technical terms.
- Use a simple style. **You** may know just the right word. Be sure your **readers** will.
- Organise your writing to help your readers. For example, it sometimes helps to put your recommendation or decision at the beginning to save your readers skipping to the end to find out what you're telling them. Remember: readers are in a hurry to get to the point. They don't want to be stuck in a verbal traffic jam.

More help

Most departmental libraries have some books on plain English. Some useful ones are:

- The Complete Plain Words, E Gowers
- Guidelines for Document Designers, D B Felker & others
- Usage and Abusage, E Partridge
- Modern English Usage, H W Fowler
- Writing Plain English, M Cutts & C Maher
- Daily Mirror Style, K Waterhouse

The Civil Service College can put you in touch with experts in plain English, and there are College courses which deal with various aspects of written communication, such as forms. The current prospectus gives details.

Remember, plain speaking has a respectable pedigree.

"Let thy speech be short, comprehending much in few words" - Ecclesiasticus 32:8

"Proper words in proper places make the true definition of style" - Swift

"Long words bother me" - Winnie the Pooh.



JA
cc Mr Wyblew
✓

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

3 November 1986

**MARKETING OF CSO DATA IN
COMPUTER READABLE FORM**

The Prime Minister has seen your minute of 28 October. She has confirmed that she is content for you to institute a new system whereby you supply tapes direct to customers.

I am copying this letter to Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

(P. A. BEARPARK)

J. Hibbert, Esq.,
Central Statistical Office.

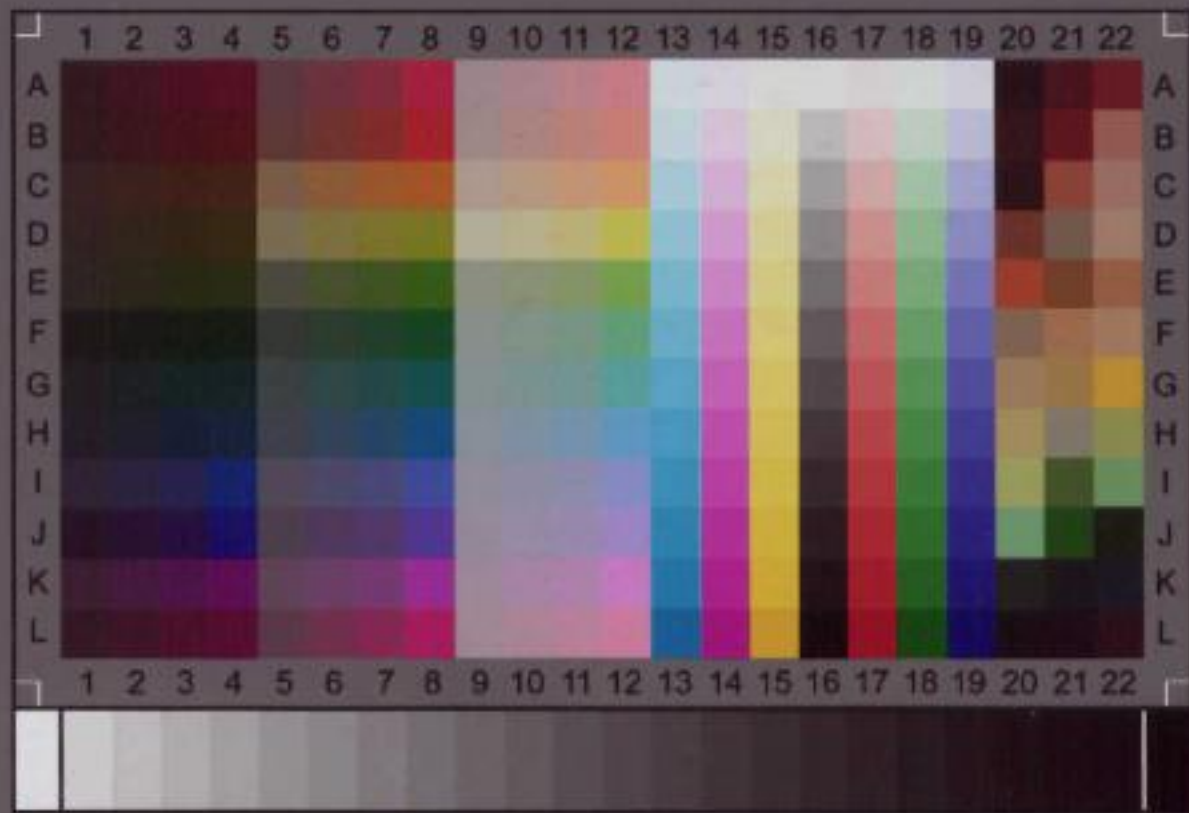
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PART 1 ends:-

PAB to PM. 31/10/86

PART 2 begins:-

PAB to J. HIBBERT 3/11/86



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