

PERSONAL

Mr RICKETT

Gort Mach

22/12



REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

You may like to have advance warning of a submission by Sir Derek Rayner on this subject. I attach for this purpose a copy minute to him, with its accompanying documentation.

2. Needless to say, comments would be welcome, provided they are not too rude.

P

C PRIESTLEY

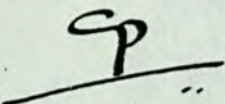
18 December 1981

Encs: As indicated

Sir Derek Rayner

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

1. I attach a letter to Lady Young, covering a minute to the Prime Minister introducing your summary and report and offering a draft minute from the PM to Ministers in charge of departments. These drafts are based heavily on work by Mrs Thoms.
2. Your own report is now virtually complete. We await only the comments of a few departments in response to Mr Cassels's recent letter to Permanent Secretaries. When all are in we shall produce a fair copy of the text for submission to the PM.
3. Mr Russell, Mr Grant, Mrs Thoms and I have discussed the central team's treatment of the volume and cost of forms in their report. Mr Grant and his colleagues are now working to substitute a number of costed examples for the present rather broadbrush discussion of the cost of handling completed forms once returned to the originating department. The central team's report therefore remains a step or two behind yours but this need not delay your own submission any further.
4. It would be good to get a letter to Lady Young on Monday with a view to a submission before Christmas if possible and by the end of the year if not.



C PRIESTLEY

18 December 1981

Encs: Letter to Lady Young
Minute to the Prime Minister
Draft Minute from the PM to Ministers in
charge of Departments
Summary of reports on the Review of Administrative
Forms
Review of Administrative Forms: a Report by
Sir Derek Rayner



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December 1981

The Rt Hon The Baroness Young

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

1. The Prime Minister asked me in January to review and report to herself and the then Lord President on administrative forms.
2. I attach a copy of what is very nearly the final version of my report. Mr Cassels has asked Principal Establishment Officers to check that references to their departments are correct; amendments are being taken on board now. He has also sent a summary of the report to Permanent Secretaries. I should like to get my report to the Prime Minister by the end of the year.
3. I also attach the minute I intend to send to the Prime Minister covering both the report and a summary of the exercise as a whole. Forms' quality is pretty patchy but there are some good stories to tell and I have stressed the importance of telling them well. A White Paper and an exhibition seem a good way of doing this, provided the press is well softened up first. I hope that you concur with my proposals, not least on MPO's role in leading and co-ordinating the drive for better forms.
4. Some hard work has been done on my behalf by the central team, both in co-ordinating the review and also in drawing up guidelines for managing and controlling forms. These should result in improvements right across Government. The team's members came from Management Development Division and were Malcolm Grant, Margaret Exley, Tim Lonsdale and Ian Goddard.
5. I am copying this letter to Robert Armstrong and John Cassels.

Derek Rayner

PRIME MINISTER

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

1. I submit herewith my report on the Review of Administrative Forms which you commissioned last January. The report is quite short, but you may find it helpful to look first at the separate summary which immediately follows this minute.

2. The review consisted of

- 8 scrutinies in departments; and
- the examination by a central team of the arrangements for managing and controlling forms.

3. I propose the following action to carry the review through to a conclusion. Lady Young has seen what follows and agrees.

Informing Ministers

4. Forms are a way of doing work. They are usually part of a bigger process; they rarely stand on their own. Typically, they bring information from the citizen or the firm to the desk of an official which he or she needs in order to assess them for taxation, pension or grant.

5. This review has tried to show, by example, what can be done to increase the intelligibility, accuracy and economy of forms and to reduce their number.

6. All departments use forms but only eight took part in the review. Therefore, I recommend that you circulate the report to all Ministers in charge of departments. This would provide the opportunity for you to encourage the Ministers who took part to get ahead with implementing the recommendations

Recn. 1

made to them where they had not yet done so and to ask all Ministers to take part in the drive for fewer and better forms. I attach a draft minute which you (or Mr Whitmore on your behalf) might send to them with a copy of the summary.

Informing Parliament and the Public

7. The picture painted by the review of control over and the fitness of forms for their purpose is not all that rosy but there are some good stories: notably DHSS and the Revenue Departments are doing some fine work. The report suggests (paras. 49 - 86) a strategy for making the good form the rule rather than the exception. The strategy is summarised in para. 25 of the summary. I recommend that this strategy should be set out in a White Paper. You will no doubt want to look to Lady Young for advice on the content and timing of the White Paper, but my own initial view is that it might sensibly consist of the attached summary; a statement of what the Government is going to do; and, perhaps as an annex, a note on the results of the Departmental reviews.

8. A White Paper on forms would of course get a lot of publicity. If the press were well-briefed beforehand, I think much of this could and should be to the Government's advantage. Here, too, you will want to look to Lady Young and Ministerial colleagues for advice. One thought you and they might like to consider is that publication should be accompanied by an exhibition, rather like the one you had in No 10 this time last year, showing practical examples of how forms can be made better in a way that can be well photographed for reproduction in the press.

Keeping up the pressure

9. Getting better and fewer forms calls for a new approach to working methods rather than the control of something which is finite and measurable in its own right. I recommend that the Management and Personnel Office should help departments to

Recn. 2

Recn. 3

implement the review's recommendations and also promote best practice. You might wish to call on MPO to report to you and Lady Young on progress in about a year.

Acknowledgements

10. I gladly acknowledge the work done by the central team from MPO (Mr M H Grant, Miss M Exley, Mr T L Lonsdale and Mr I F Goddard) and by Mrs E Thoms in my own office in co-ordinating the review on my behalf and developing guidelines for controlling and managing forms in departments.

11. I am also grateful to Ministers and their senior officials for their co-operation and to the members of the departmental teams.

12. I am copying this to Lady Young, Sir Robert Armstrong, Sir Douglas Wass and Mr John Cassels.

Derek Rayner
December 1981

Encs: Summary of reports on the review of Administrative
Forms
Review of Administrative Forms: Report by
Sir Derek Rayner

DRAFT PERSONAL MINUTE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO ALL MINISTERS
IN CHARGE OF DEPARTMENTS

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

1. Sir Derek Rayner has submitted his report on the review of administrative forms which I asked him to undertake last January. In enclose a summary of his conclusions and a copy of the report. Eight departments took part in the review and I am grateful to the Ministers concerned for their co-operation.
2. The departmental teams looked at a small number of forms, aiming to show by example what can be achieved across the board. The results were good. Of the [] forms examined, [] kinds were recommended for abolition and [] for redesign. This would mean [] fewer forms being issued by government. Ministers' responses to the teams' recommendations have so far been vigorous and I hope that it will continue to be so. Across central government as a whole, we should now move on to making all forms in all departments as good as they can be.
3. Because our forms affect every family and business in the country, I propose that we should publish our strategy for getting fewer and better forms as a White Paper. It would comprise Sir Derek Rayner's summary; a statement of what the Government intends to do; and a summary of the departmental exercises. Publication would be accompanied by an exhibition showing some of the very good work which departments are now doing.
4. I have invited the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to consult colleagues on the draft of a White Paper as soon as possible.
5. I am copying this minute to Sir Derek Rayner, the Joint Heads of the Civil Service and Mr Cassels.

SUMMARY OF REPORTS ON THE REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

What is an "administrative form"?

1. An administrative form is a means by which the citizen or the firm on the one hand and the Government on the other talk to each other over an immensely wide range of business. For example, a household will deal in the course of a year with forms like the Income Tax Return and the renewal of the TV Licence and Vehicle Excise Duty on a car.
2. An administrative form is not about statistics, therefore. It is usually a part of a scheme of administration, as various as collecting taxes or awarding grants. It is a mechanism which connects the Government and the citizen or the firm.
3. The Government form is a common feature of modern life. Some that I have seen are an admirable practical expression of a democratic Government's wish and duty to serve and inform the citizen well. Others, less praiseworthy, seem to be the practical expressions of a remote officialdom. All are a sign of the vastness of central government administration.
4. The growth of Government over the years, and its present scale, may be pertinently contrasted with the early days of the welfare state. Lord Salter recalls* the intimacy with which top officials in the new welfare administration were involved in ensuring that it made sense outside Whitehall; the steps taken to explain the National Health Insurance Act 1912 to the numerous Friendly Societies through which it would be administered included one "rather ingenious device". This was to choose an ordinary mortal as the editor of all circulars:

"It was his task to read them at the last stage before actual issue, and to refer them back to the branch of the office which was responsible for the draft if there was anything not immediately intelligible to him. It

* Memoirs of a Public Servant, Faber & Faber, 1961, pp 36 & 67

was a severe, but salutary, test for the specialised official."

5. Too few forms now in circulation seem to have been submitted to a similar test.

What was the review about?

6. The review aimed at identifying burdens imposed by administrative forms and at recommending how they should be reduced. The review could not cover every single form in use, so the method adopted was to scrutinise a sample in eight departments; to examine the existing arrangements for controlling the cost of producing and using forms and for making them more effective; and to build on the good work already being done, for example in HM Customs and Excise, the Department of Health and Social Security and the Inland Revenue.

7. The review therefore dealt with:

- (1) Forms which go chiefly to individual citizens (examined by departmental teams in the Home Office, Inland Revenue, Department of the Environment and Department of Health and Social Security).
- (2) Forms which go chiefly to businesses (examined by departmental teams in HM Customs and Excise, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Department of Transport and the Department of Employment).
- (3) Arrangements for controlling and managing form in all main user departments (examined by a team in the then CSD, now the Management and Personnel Office).

8. The sample examined included 86 kinds of form. The teams recommended that 32 of these should be merged with others or withdrawn and 35 more should be redesigned. The Central Office of Information and HM Stationery Office produced some first-class redesigned forms.

9. I summarise the review's conclusions and recommendations as follows.

How many forms are there?

10. Hard facts are difficult to come by. Departmental teams could not find out how many forms their own departments had in use or even the usage rates for those forms they examined. It is therefore a matter of best estimates.

11. Before the review, the best estimate of the number of types of forms in use by government departments was 100,000. But the departmental teams have shown that their eight departments alone have at least that number themselves.

12. The central team's best estimate of the number of forms issued by the Government each year is very high - 2,000 million, or 36 for every man, woman and child in the country.

How do the costs and benefits of forms compare?

13. Here too the facts are in short supply.

14. The benefit of forms is easy to surmise. The review shows that certain forms can be abolished, but there is no doubt about the value of a good form. It allows information to be conveyed and obtained more accurately and concisely than could be done without it. This helps administration to work efficiently and fairly.

15. Forms require expenditure by both Government and the form-filler. The cost of forms to Government is plainly sizeable. If there are indeed 2,000 million forms in circulation each year, and if each costs only ten pence just to issue this alone would cost the Government £200 million. Forms **are** indeed big business.

16. Within Government, forms have a "production cost", for designing, printing, storing and distributing forms to their point of use. They also have a "cost in use", ie staff time spent in issuing the form and checking on its return that it

had been correctly completed. For example, the MAFF report estimated that each capital grant from costs just 2.37 pence, whereas sending it out, checking it and following up queries costs £4.07.

17. The cost to the form-filler is especially intractable to calculate and I myself would not presume to value people's private time too nicely. Large firms can count the cost in cash terms fairly readily. For small firms and the individual, it may often be a case of "time means money" but more commonly perhaps of the exasperation and frustration will follow on the heels of an initial distaste and reluctance combined with an inability to understand.

18. I would not claim too much for calculations in this area, but the DHSS team produced a most interesting illustration. They suggested that forms in use in their Department, which have an annual production cost of about £10 million, represent a true cost to the community of over £200 million a year. This means that an overall improvement of only one percent in the effectiveness of DHSS forms would save the community over £2 million a year.

19. In sum, bad forms cost money. Staff must spot wrongly completed forms and send them back. They must spend time dealing with queries where people do not understand. The form-filler also wastes time and money struggling to understand and complete the form.

Where do forms come from?

20. The law rarely specifies forms in detail. It is the policy and operational branches in departments which have the main voice in whether a form should be produced, what its content should be and how the information it contains or the questions it asks should be presented.

21. Branches are anxious, naturally and rightly, that their Minister, their Department and they themselves should not be adversely criticised for failing to inform the public or business of their rights and responsibilities. But this tends to make self-protection one of the commonest characteristics of the Government form.

22. Some departments have recently put increasing effort into improving forms but forms design, and indeed forms work generally, remains a low status activity in most departments.

How do forms go wrong?

23. I believe that there is a mismatch between the good intentions of officials and the performance of their forms. Officials would be horrified to be thought careless or discourteous, but the teams' findings suggest that all too often forms do not put the form-filler first. The main points seem to be these:

- (1) To a large degree, the way forms work in practice is taken by departments on trust. There is little "pilot testing" of new forms. Generally, forms are a tract of administration which is submerged from the view of Ministers and higher management.
- (2) Many officials, particularly those in lower and middle management levels, see forms as unimportant or trivial. Some doubt whether it is right or necessary to communicate with the public in simple language. Work on forms design and improvement lacks prestige.
- (3) The direct and indirect costs of forms are not considered when they are introduced.
- (4) The language used in forms can be legalistic, lengthy and intimidating.
- (5) Forms are too often hard to understand. Sometimes officials themselves do not understand the forms they send out or the procedural instructions associated with them. The computer may have a

bad influence in this respect. And there are too few pointers to the form-filler of where he might get help.

- (6) Error rates of over 30%, either by staff or the public, are common.

What should be done now?

24. The Government's general aim is that each department should have a policy for excellence in administration. The principal objectives of such a policy should include having as few forms and as successful forms as possible.

25. In practice, this means:

- (1) Recognising that a form is only part of a piece of administration. It does not exist in its own right and should not be managed or controlled as though it did. But forms are both the face and voice of Government for many and they do deserve special attention.
- (2) Seeing the policy for forms as part and parcel of the Government's wider policies for economical and effective administration, including the delegation of increased responsibility to line managers. Indeed, the forms policy will be progressively supported and assisted by other work already in hand, notably on the identification and control of running costs.
- (3) Recognising that getting good forms is a practical job. It means, for example, policy and operational staff getting away from their desks and finding out what form-fillers make of the paper Government puts out. It calls for determination, knowledge and

imagination by the senior management, line management and the Principal Establishment Officer in each department and, at the centre, from the Management and Personnel Office.

- (4) In general terms, the most important thing is that the Permanent Secretary in each department lays on his policy and operational branches the responsibility for good administration, including forms, and that he checks regularly that his policy is in fact being implemented.
- (5) In more specific terms, it includes:
 - (a) Looking first at the largest-issue forms or at the most heavily forms-based procedures of the department, since it may be impossible to do everything at once and it is wise to begin with forms and procedures of a substantial kind.
 - (b) Making branches responsible for forms also responsible for establishing and justifying the cost of new forms and appraising existing forms. The costs of forms to the form-filler should, equally, be assessed and justified wherever it is possible to do so.
 - (c) Calling for an annual report to the Permanent Secretary from the Principal Establishment Officer on the state of forms in the department. The PEO, on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, should arrange a progressive review of particular forms and procedures with line branches.

- (d) Ensuring that, progressively, forms meet basic requirements of clarity, intelligibility and comprehensiveness. This is a responsibility to be shared between branches, design units in the department and others, notably the Central Office of Information and HM Stationery Office.
 - (e) Providing, according to the scale of the department, an official or team of officials to help the PEO and advise and encourage branches on forms control and design.
- (6) The Management and Personnel Office should designate an officer as responsible for keeping up with the pressure for getting better, fewer forms; helping departments and encouraging them to learn from each other; and improving attitudes to forms through training.

Is that enough?

26. An occasional ruthlessness will be salutary. As a result of seeing for themselves, top managers should tear up some forms in the interest of better administration. But the main need will be for a steady and sustained determination to have as few forms as absolutely necessary and to make them excellent for their purpose. This will not be achieved over night. So the example shown by Ministers and by top managers in getting the work going and in sticking at it will be critical to the success of the policy.

Derek Rayner
December 1981

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

REPORT TO THE PRIME MINISTER

PREFACE

1. You agreed in January that the then Lord President should commission a Government-wide review of forms and that I should co-ordinate it. This report is to inform you of the outcome of the review and to make recommendations for getting fewer and better forms in the future.

2. Eight teams of officials examined the forms issued by their departments. Their names are listed in Annex A.

3. The review was co-ordinated on my behalf by a central team of officials from the then Civil Service Department. They were Mr M H Grant, Miss M Exley, Mr I F Goddard and Mr T L Lonsdale who are now members of the Management and Personnel Office (MPO). I was greatly assisted by Mrs E Thoms, a staff officer in my own unit.

4. As well as advising and guiding the departmental teams, the central team have examined the arrangements for controlling and managing forms in all the main user departments.

This report draws heavily on their conclusions and recommendations. I am grateful to them for all their hard work.

5. I would also like to thank the design staff of the Central Office of Information and HMSO for their valuable contribution in providing some very good redesigned forms, often at very short notice.

6. The total cost of the review is £[].

REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE FORMS

REPORT TO THE PRIME MINISTER

INTRODUCTION

1. Departments issue forms on a vast scale - the eight departments in this review : some 150,000 different types. Getting good forms takes time - not just because of numbers - but also because the job is about much more than simple words and good design. It usually means looking at the procedures which surround the form.

2. Even when these things are as good as they can be, there is no guarantee that the form will be well received. Business colleagues have passed to me more complaints about forms than about any other topic, but it is often not the form which is the real source of irritation. For example, complaints about VAT returns can stem from a reluctance to pay VAT at all. On the other hand, people getting money from the government (for example farmers claiming grants for capital investments) may be more prepared to fill in long, complicated forms and make little complaint.

3. Irrespective of whether people choose to complain, every form represents a burden to the person who has to fill it in. Many departments have devoted a lot of time and effort to easing this burden. For example -

- In 1977, the Inland Revenue set up a Communications Unit which, amongst other things, provides a "plain English" editing and design service for publications, using the knowledge it gains from experts in the field. Through informal contacts with schools, the unit has drawn up a list of words which people often have trouble in understanding and which it seeks to avoid. The Unit has also produced a range of clear and helpful guides. One which I found particularly good is about income tax and school leavers. (a copy is at Annex B).

- In 1978, DHSS commissioned research from the Salford Forms Market (SFM) a welfare advisory group, on supplementary benefits forms. SFM produced a number of redesigned forms which sho^wed the advantages of good presentation and simple language. DHSS has also put in a lot of effort on its own account and last year one of its leaflets [] won an award from the National Consumer Council and the Plain English Campaign, a voluntary body which aims at improving official language inside and outside government.
- HM Customs and Excise have also worked hard to improve their forms. One of their most important projects was the radical review of the VAT return in 1978 which reduced the form to a straight forward set of boxes showing how much VAT is due and how much is deductible. Many businesses visited as part of this review said that the new form had made life much easier for them. This year, one of their leaflets, "Filling in Your VAT return", won first prize in the Plain English Awards.

4. The aim of this review was to find out more about the kinds of burden which forms present and to see how they could be reduced.

THE DEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS

5. Four teams looked at forms which are sent to individuals. They were from -
- Department of the Environment (DOE)
 - Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS)
 - Home Office (HO)
 - Board of Inland Revenue (IR)

The four other teams looked at forms which are sent to businesses. They were from -

- Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF)
- HM Customs and Excise
- Department of Employment (DE)
- Department of Transport (DTp)

6. To avoid spreading their efforts too thinly, each departmental team chose a small number of forms for detailed study to show by example what could be achieved across the board.

In all, they studied 86 kinds of form. They recommended that 32 of these should be amalgamated with others or withdrawn and that 35 more should be redesigned. Seven redesigned forms were produced. An example of what can be achieved in a short time is the proposed new Criminal Injuries Compensation form which, with a copy of the existing version, is at Annex C.

7. The teams collected evidence by talking to the divisions which initiated forms; to the staff who process them; and to the people who have to fill them in. Some teams conducted personal interviews with form fillers (eg DE, Customs, DTp). Others employed outside consultants to take on this work (eg DHSS, DOE).

8. The teams found that individuals often find forms troublesome because they are hard to understand whereas businesses - at least the larger ones - usually know their forms (having accountants and other staff to support them), but find the sheer volume costly and irritating. Initially the teams looking at forms which go mainly to individuals concentrated on simplifying forms and the "business" teams on getting rid of them. But it soon emerged that effective review depended on both points being covered everywhere.

9. The teams also found that although there are some general rules which all forms should obey (on layout, language and sentence construction), there is no universal template which can be used to get good forms. Forms must be targeted at the people who will fill them in. They need individual attention.

10. If implemented, these recommendations would save departments at least £[] which includes 100 posts. There would also be additional savings which the teams were unable to quantify arising from fewer enquiries from recipients and fewer incorrect forms. In all about [] separate forms will be abolished.

11. Savings to businesses, where quantified, would total £8 million. But the reduction of burden on individuals (and on some small businesses) cannot be properly measured in money terms. The savings to them would be in personal time and in less irritation.

12. A list of the forms examined, together with a summary of each of the reports and a short account of progress on implementation, is at Annex D.

13. This review has shown by example how forms can be improved. In the sections of the report which follow I have set down my general conclusions and recommendations for getting wide and long-lasting improvements.

WHY FORMS ARE IMPORTANT

14. Forms are the means of putting many policies into practice. Most are connected with money - collecting it (eg the VAT return and the tax return), distributing it (eg supplementary benefit and MAFF subsidy forms) and making sure it goes to the right place (eg national insurance number forms). Others are about regulation (eg nationality applications and vehicle licensing).

15. Forms show the face of government. Bad forms can damage its reputation and leave people unsure about their rights and responsibilities. Forms are also a window onto the policy and procedures behind them. Too many confusing forms suggest sloppy administration.

16. A good form can be a cost-effective way of gathering information. But ^eonly which is often completed wrongly is a burden on the form filler and on the department. Information must be sought a second time and more staff are needed to check and send back forms; postage cost rise and operations are delayed.

17. For example, the MAFF team reported that half of the 300 Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowance forms which the Taunton District Office receives each year are filled in wrongly. Some can be dealt with by telephone (which means the price of a call and the time of farmers and staff). About 30 need personal visits by an Executive Office (whose time costs nearly £7.00 an hour plus travelling). In the year ending March 1980, there were 9,975 such applications in England. If the 50 per cent error rate applies everywhere, this would mean nearly 1,000 visits each year.

THE STATE OF HEALTH OF FORMS

18. This review has shown that the standard of forms in the areas reviewed is not high. Departments use too much official jargon, too many legal terms and long, complicated sentences.

19. The Inland Revenue's old and new Capital Gains Tax leaflets show what can go wrong and how it can be put right. On business use of homes, the old leaflet said:

"Where a dwelling house is used partly as living accommodation and partly for business purposes, the exemption applies only to that part of the dwelling house which is used as a private residence, that is to say, to the living accommodation. It is therefore necessary to apportion the gain which accrues when mixed premises of this kind are disposed."

20. The new leaflet prepared by the Inland Revenue Communications Unit says:

"Do I lose any of the exemption if I use part of my home for business?
Yes: you will not be exempt on the gain from the part used only for business purposes."

21. Notes may be separated from questions and put in a different order. The form filler is led into a maze of references. For example, the Inland Revenue report said of the 25 notes on the P70C (an assessment notice) -

"The sequence in which the notes would need to be referred to ...
is: 8, 1 and 2, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 3 and 23, 3, 24 and 25, 26,
4, 4, 5, 6 and finally 7. As the notes are printed on the reverse ...
comparison involves an effort of memory."

22. People may not be told what a form is for and so an important form may be ignored. Things then go wrong - either for the department (which may have to put in extra work to chase up lost information or lost revenue - or may lose revenue altogether) or for the form filler. For example, the National Insurance Contribution Statement is issued in some cases when contributions paid in a year are not sufficient to count towards a pension (a copy is at Annex E). But the DHSS team reported that few people know what it is for. As a result, they can lose entitlement to benefits, but not find out until they want to claim.

23. Two forms with different purposes may appear to duplicate each other - again because the recipient is not told what the forms are for. An example of this is the Notification of Redundancy form and the Notification of Intention to Claim from the Redundancy Payments Fund. The first is aimed at alerting Government so that all possible measures can be taken to avert the redundancy. The second is to help the employer avoid making payments which he cannot claim back. But employers see the initial notification as wasteful bureaucracy.

24. The apparent reluctance to explain and inform can also extend to not telling the form filler where he can get help if he needs it. It is assumed that the recipient will understand. No sympathy is shown to the person who does not.

25. The design and layout of most of the forms which the teams looked at was faulty in some respect. The typeface on some was too small (for example, the MAFF capital grants application and explanatory booklet - extract at Annex F) and others were cluttered with too little space to write in answers. Many forms look, and are, unbusinesslike.

WHY FORMS GO WRONG

26. The teams showed that the most common cause of bad forms is that no one looks at them from the point of view of the recipient or thinks what will happen if they are misunderstood.

Sometimes there are practical difficulties -

- Hard-pressed divisions working on new legislation may be reluctant to take time to think about forms.
- The initiator may be trying to protect his Minister from accusations of maladministration and references to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (although the DHSS team reported that - in the view of their Second Permanent Secretary who deals with such cases - the PCA took a robust and common sense line on the need for simple forms).
- More than one group of staff may have an interest in the form. For example, in the Inland Revenue, the policy division which sets up a new tax or allowance is separated from the management division which works out how to operate it. Both are separate from the technical division which advises on where it fits into the tax

structure, and from the local offices which are issuing and processing the forms. Their Communications Unit has been successful in lifting forms out of the gaps, but other departments do not have a unit of this kind to rely on.

- The initiator may simply be trying to give the citizen the fullest possible account of his rights and responsibilities.

27. Whatever the cause, the result is usually to err on the side of caution. So the form ends up with slabs of original legislation, declarations and threats of penalties and much more detail than the average person either wants or needs.

28. Another very important cause of complicated or unnecessary forms is that the procedures behind them are cumbersome. Even if the scheme is good to start with, as new problems arise or in trying to get more refinement, new rules are laid down and new questions added to the form. Every recipient is confronted with every question even though many questions do not apply.

29. The DE report points up a very telling example of how efforts to be consistent between the different pieces of legislation can lead to complications. The Redundancy Payments Scheme is operated on the basis of a 52 week rather than a calendar year because this was the basis of the earlier Contracts of Employment Act. As a result employers must use a special calendar (form RPL4 which shows the dates of the first and last days of every week since 1961) to work out what some of their employees are entitled to. An extract from the notes on use shows how forbidding the RPL4 is:

"(1) Find the relevant date, (ie the date up to which service is reckonable) in the left hand column. This will be the Saturday following the date of termination, or the actual date of termination if that is a Saturday.

(2) Round up the number of years' service (ie either for total service or for service since the employee's 22nd or 41st birthday) and select the column headed by that number.

(3) Read across horizontally from the relevant date in the left hand column to the corresponding date in the column selected in (2) above.

(4) (a) Test for total service - If service began on or before the date in (3), the figure at the head of the column shows total years of service. If service began after that date, reduce the figure at the head of the column by 1 year to get total years of service."

30. The team recommended (and the Secretary of State has accepted) that the calculations should in future be based on a calendar year. As soon as the legislation is introduced, the RPL4 will be abolished.

31. Unnecessary forms may also arise where the same information is already collected by some other means. For example the Customs report showed that VAT certificates of posting overlap with the Post Office Customs declaration. The departmental team have recommended that the VAT forms should be withdrawn. This will save 1.5 million pieces of paper a year.

32. All the problems described above are made worse where departments have too few design experts and do not provide clear advice to initiators drawing up a form ^r or reviewing existing ones.

33. The "family history" of the National Insurance Account Notice (at Annex G) shows some of the problems which can arise in trying to get a new form out. It is surprising, but not untypical, that at no point did anyone ask the consumer - the likely recipient of the form - whether it was comprehensible.

34. The stumbling block to putting forms right is a combination of attitudes and lack of information. The DHSS team reported as typical the views of some officials that -

- complicated forms are an unavoidable consequence of administering the government machine;
- form are unimportant;
- simple English is inappropriate coming from a government department;
- simple English means talking down to people.

35. Initiators of forms rarely seek the views of the people (particularly in local offices) who will process them - even though they have first hand experience of the problems. This is a waste of a valuable information about forms and even more important, about how policies work in practice. It is also unfair on operational staff since it is usually they, not the divisions back in HQ, who have the job of dealing with complaints and queries from people who do not understand what is being asked of them.

36. The teams also noted that divisions responsible for forms rarely knew about the number filled in wrongly, the costs of processing and reprocessing forms, the cost of sending them out, the numbers sent out, or whether whether people understood them.

37. The result is a vicious circle. If divisions had information about the consequences of bad forms, it would jog them into making their forms better. But without an interest in getting better forms, they don't seek the information. The only way to get big and lasting improvements is to break the circle.

PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

38. Complicated forms which try to cover every eventuality and which contain a lot of official jargon and legal terms are the easy way out. If systems and procedures are good, they can be made comprehensible. It is not right, and it should not be necessary, for Government to protect itself at the expense of clarity: it is idle to pretend that swamping the form-filler with things he does not understand really helps him, to protect his rights.

39. All Departments are different. Some are further down the road than others. There is much to do and the central team's report provides a good basis for improving forms. The Management and Personnel Office has devised a programme for helping Departments help themselves in the way that suits them best. I have set out below what I believe to be the essential task in ensuring that forms are well managed.

40. A form is only one part of a large scheme of administration. Even though it is more on show than the rest, it does not exist in its own right and should not be managed or controlled as though it did. This principle underlies all my recommendations.

41. The first task, whose importance cannot be overstated, belongs to the Permanent Secretary and his senior staff. The Permanent Secretary is responsible for how his Department as a whole goes about its work. This must include forms and the way in which the Department deals with its "customers". If top managers show that they care about the reputation of the Department and continually question the way it works with and the burden which it imposes on the outside world, staff down the line will do the same.

42. Secondly, because there is too much administration and there are too many forms for the Permanent Secretary to supervise all of it himself, the practical responsibility for getting good forms, like responsibility for procedures, is delegated from the Minister to the Permanent Secretary and then down to the policy, management and operations divisions which draw up the forms. It is these divisions - the line divisions - who have, and must accept that they have, the responsibility for making sure that every type of form which they initiate is necessary and as good as it can be.

43. Thirdly, there is, within each Department, a central staff function. On hand to help the line divisions and check on behalf of the Permanent Secretary that the Department is running well is the Principal Establishment Officer and the management services and other specialist staff brigaded under him.

44. Finally, the Management and Personnel Office has the task of developing and promoting best practice in the use of forms right across the Service. I welcome what I understand to be the MPO's policy in this matter, namely to advise and support Departments but not to second-guess them or attempt to do their work for them.

THE JOB OF TOP MANAGEMENT

45. My recommendations are as follows.

46. Top management in Departments, from the Permanent Secretary downwards, should take a personal responsibility for forms as part of their responsibility for procedures as a whole. They should require line divisions to give forms the attention they need and, by questioning any examples of bad forms which they

come across, check that this work is being done properly. They should destroy forms wherever they can. They should make sure that certain fundamental questions are asked of each of their Department's most important forms: "What is it for? What does it cost, not just me, but also the form-filler? What value does it add?"

47. The Permanent Secretary should nominate his Principal Establishment Officer (or one of his senior colleagues) as responsible for reporting to him and to the Minister annually on the state of forms in the department. The report should be collated by the PEO's "forms unit" (see below) and say how many kinds of form there are and how many issued; it should show the numbers of forms which have been improved or abolished, the number of new forms, as summary of complaints and suggestions from the public and from staff and plans for further work. The report might usefully be copied to the MPO's Management Development Division (see paragraph below). Where this material can be present as part of any wider management reporting system which the department may have, this should be done.

48. I believe that it is particularly important that in Departments which operate through local office networks, top management should find out what their local office staff have to say about forms, and, more important, about the procedures of which they are part. In my own experience, there is no substitute for going to the local office and listening and talking to the staff there. Top management should "adopt" at least two offices each of which they should visit regularly, in addition to their other normal visiting. At a lower level, Principals and others who are responsible for administering a scheme should go regularly to local offices to see for themselves what is happening in practice. These visits should cover all procedures relating to the programme and, in particular, to those parts of the process which are not well understood or which cause problems.

49. It might also be helpful to get a sample of officers who deal with forms in a cross-section of local offices to write to HQ regularly (perhaps every 3 months) about experience with forms and procedures. These reports should include any reservations which they or their colleagues have about particular forms or procedures, complaints made by the public and details of forms which are often filled in wrongly. The forms unit (see below) might collate these reports as a service to the Principal Establishment Officer and to the line. The sample of offices and officers should be changed every year or 18 months to keep reporting fresh. But I should make it clear that my own preference is very much for going out from HQ and for looking, talking and listening rather than for additional paperwork.

THE JOB OF THE LINE DIVISIONS

50. My recommendations are as follows.

51. Each Permanent Secretary should give specific responsibility for improving the quality of administration generally, including getting fewer and better forms, to the line divisions which are responsible for administration and for initiating forms.

52. In the Departments which produce most forms, it would probably be unnecessary and certainly too much to expect line divisions to review every single form thoroughly say every 3 or 4 years. The reports show that getting better forms is not a quick and easy job. Ploughing through the whole lot would kill enthusiasm off even before the first round was completed. Divisions should therefore identify the forms which are most important to them and which are in most need of review.

53 A good line division in a well-managed Department will know the cost of administering the tax, grant, service, benefit etc for which it is responsible. Included in this are costs directly attributable to forms.

These include:

- printing and procurement;
- storage;
- distribution;
- costs of issuing (including postage);
- costs of extracting information from completed forms;
- costs of sending back and reprocessing wrongly completed forms.

54 Line divisions should identify the potential costs attributable to all new forms; the actual costs of the forms which are in greatest current use; and the costs of other forms as they come up for reprinting.

55 Costing to a fine level of detail will not always be possible, but a best guess is often better than nothing at all.

56 Line divisions should find out how long it takes recipients to complete their forms. When the recipient is a business, line divisions should try to put a cost to the time.

57. Line divisions should keep a record of the numbers of forms they issue themselves or cause to be issued by others; of the numbers and kinds of complaints the forms cause; and the numbers filled in wrongly.

58

I recommend that, taking account of the results of this review and of the data available to him on cost and effectiveness, the Principal Establishment Officer should settle with line divisions a programme of forms review. Such reviews may be of forms alone where that makes sense. Otherwise they should be of administration and procedures, including the forms associated with them. Line divisions, or groups of divisions which

deal with related forms or which all have an interest in one form, should nominate for this purpose someone at Principal level or above to have as one of his/her responsibilities the overall health of their forms.

59. The Management and Personnel Office central team have produced guidelines which will help divisions to choose the forms most needing improvement and put them right. Included in their advice is that:

- forms should say what they are for;
- forms should say where help can be obtained;
- line divisions should consider and cost alternatives to forms (eg a telephone call);
- line divisions should try to imagine the recipient's reaction when asked to complete the form and recognise that forms should inform and enquire in the briefest, clearest way possible.

60. The MPO will shortly be putting these and the team's other guidelines on firms management and control to departments. I believe that their implementation will be an essential part of the drive to improve government forms.

THE JOB OF THE PRINCIPAL ESTABLISHMENT OFFICER AND MANAGEMENT AUDIT

61. My recommendations are as follows.

62. To help line divisions and the PEO with the programme of forms reviews, each Department in whose work with the public or with business forms play a substantial part should have a "forms unit" if it does not do so already. According to the scale on which forms are used, this should be an official

or team of officials in its Management Services Division. It should assist line divisions examine their forms thoroughly; advise divisions on design and technical issues; and do redesign work where this is needed. The MPO should help Departments which are too small to have their own unit.

63. The ways in which forms units are set up and used need not be defined with overnice precision here. I myself think that the functions they could undertake on behalf of the Permanent Secretary in respect of existing forms include these:

- (1) Keeping a central record, based on divisional records, of the kinds and numbers of forms issued and of the error rate of the main usage forms. The unit should, of course, know what work line divisions are doing on the form and what they intend to do.
- (2) Helping the Permanent Secretary and the PEO ensure that forms are getting the attention they need. But it should be the line divisions which get on with the work of review.
- (3) Getting to know and consult the organisations which experience the Department's forms (eg trade associations, Citizens' Advice Bureaux, neighbourhood centres, social services departments, etc).
- (4) Receiving copies of letters from MPs and the public complaining about major forms (as agreed with line divisions) so that it can help divisions in replying and note the things which give rise to the most common causes of concern.
- (5) Working with other sections of the Department's management audit staffs and with the line where the problems brought to notice look to be rooted in procedures rather than in the design or wording of forms.

64. I recommend that line divisions should consult the unit on proposed new forms. The unit should check that projected total costs have been established (including the likely burden on the form-filler), that all the information is essential and that alternatives to a form have been considered. The forms unit should have the right of objecting to a new form to the Permanent Secretary via the PEO.

65. As a general rule, line divisions should test the reaction of the public and staff to a form before it is introduced, with the help of the forms unit. Where such a test is not possible, only 6 months supply of the form should be printed and tests should be carried out during this time.

66. It should also be a general rule that line divisions should discuss requests for reprinting major forms with the forms unit to establish whether it would be timely to review the form before further stocks were produced.

THE JOB OF THE MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL OFFICE

67 My recommendations are as follows.

68. The Management and Personnel Office should be responsible on your behalf, and on behalf of the Chancellor of Lancaster and the Joint Heads of the Civil Service, for keeping up the pressure to reduce and simplify forms across the Government service as a whole. This function might best be discharged by designating a particular officer for the purpose.

69. His/her jobs should include:

- identifying any problems experienced by Departments and commissioning work to solve them
- keeping in touch with research and other new developments on forms design and usage;
- keeping in touch with outside interests (including the Plain English Campaign) which cross more than one Department;
- helping Departments to implement their arrangements for forms management and control; and
- making sure that Departments know about the technical forms expertise available from HM Stationery Office and the Central Office of Information
- reporting to the Chancellor of the Duchy from time to time on progress with implementing the review's recommendations across the service.

70. The MPO should also take the lead in improving attitudes towards forms and improving expertise through training. It should work out training with Departments and the College. This should include, among other things, sessions for Administration Trainees on the importance of forms and how to get good ones.

CONCLUSION

71. The essential tools for doing these jobs are determination, knowledge and imagination: determination that administration shall be excellent, that it shall serve the citizen well and that in achieving these ends radical

questions must be posed and answered in respect of both existing practice and proposals for the future; knowledge of the whole purpose of a scheme for administration, of the place within it of forms and of their cost and effectiveness; and imagination to put oneself in the place of the recipient.

7 . A certain ruthlessness will be necessary from time to time. It is in the nature of any large organisation with which I am familiar for paper to grow over the years, unseen by higher management because they have not regarded it as part of their job to look to the quality of administration in terms of simplicity or cost-effectiveness. This is especially so in Government, where all the pressures of legislation and the Civil Service's honourable pre-occupations with accuracy and with attention to detail place the biggest premium on comprehensiveness. But administration is now a massive and costly industry. Keeping it within the bounds of what the nation needs and can afford means that some forms will have to be torn up.

7 . Tearing things up from time to time is salutary. But there is no real substitute for a policy of excellence in administration. The citizen pays for and is entitled to good government. In practical terms, this means deliberate and sustained measures to improve and reform the quality of administration.

DEREK RAYNER

December 1981

DEPARTMENTAL REVIEWS - STUDY OFFICERS

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

Alan Bennett
Carolyn Morgan

HM Customs and Excise

Denis Edwards
Arthur Wells
David Parr
Sidney Gordon
Alan Robinson

Department of Employment

Maurice Grubby
Kathy Hegarty
Stuart Low

Department of Environment

George Back
Ian Milton

Department of Health and Social Security

John Moyes
John Orr
Tony Bennett
Eamonn Kelly

Home Office

Alan Norbury
Fred Offler
Jeff Black
Angela Underhill

Inland Revenue

Brian Rennie
Teddy Sampson
Robin Green
Eric Bianchi

Department of Transport

George Back
Ian Milton
Chris Westwood
Peter Openshaw
Noel Brock

normally tax your pay under a special arrangement, using what is called an emergency code.

If you do not have another job and you are out of work for more than a month you may be able to claim a tax refund. Follow the instructions on the P45.

**I am going to college –
do I pay more tax on money I earn
during the holidays?**



If the amount you are likely to earn during the whole of the tax year is less than the amount of the single person's allowance, tell your employer when you start work. He may be able to arrange with the tax office to pay you without taking any tax. If you pay tax before the arrangement can be made your employer will refund it to you.

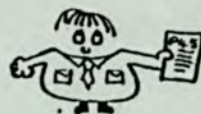
**How do I know I haven't
paid too much tax?**



At the end of each tax year your employer tells the tax office how much you have earned and how much tax you have paid. The tax office will check these figures with your PAYE code to see that the tax is right.

If your personal circumstances change at any time, your code will need changing. For instance you may get married, or you may receive extra income, such as interest from a bank account. Tell the tax office at once. Otherwise you may pay too much tax, or be faced with a bill for tax you have not paid.

Remember



1 Make sure you get a form P45 when you leave a job and hand it to your new employer. Otherwise you may pay more tax than you need to.



2 If you do not have form P45 when you start a job, send a coding claim form to the tax office as soon as you can.



3 You will only pay the right amount of tax if your PAYE code is right.



4 If there is any change in your personal circumstances tell your tax office straight away.

If you visit, telephone or write to your tax office always give your reference number and employer's name and address, as this saves time finding your file. In Scotland give your National Insurance Number as well.

If you want any help or advice do ask your tax office or any PAYE enquiry office. You will find the address in the telephone book under 'Inland Revenue – Taxes, HM Inspector of'.

If you decide to become self-employed and to start working for yourself tell your tax office straight away.

Issued by the Inland Revenue, February 1981.

Designed by Angela Stingsby while a student in the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication at the University of Reading.

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Income tax & school leavers



This leaflet is to help you to understand something about the income tax system and how it will affect you when you start work. It includes some changes which start on 6 April 1981.



What is income tax?

Income tax is an amount of money which is taken from your earnings each time you are paid. Everyone who earns or receives income over a certain amount in the tax year will pay income tax. The tax year does not follow the ordinary calendar year from January to December. It begins on 6 April of one year and ends on 5 April of the next year. Our tax system is designed so that as you start to earn more money you will also pay more tax.



What happens to the money I pay?

You pay income tax to help towards the cost of services we all receive in this country. A few examples are the National Health Service, the Civil Service, defence and Social Security benefits. The Chancellor of the Exchequer announces his Budget at the beginning of each tax year. He says how much money he wants and how it is going to be spent. Some of his proposals will affect the tax you pay.



What do I pay tax on?

You will normally pay tax on all kinds of earnings including tips, bonuses and part-time work. If you have invested any savings you will also pay tax on any interest you receive. Some Savings Bank interest is tax-free, and tax on any interest from a Building Society is paid by the Society before you receive it. Some Social Security benefits are taxed but sickness benefit is not. At present unemployment benefit is also tax-free but this may be changed in April 1982.



Does this mean I pay tax on everything I earn?

Everyone can earn or receive a certain amount of income without paying tax. This is called the single person's allowance and you are allowed the full amount even if you only work for

part of the tax year. A married man can claim a larger allowance, and if his wife works an allowance is given against her earnings. There are also extra allowances for single parents, the blind and people who support a dependent relative. The total of your personal allowances is the amount you can earn in the tax year without paying tax. It is your tax-free pay.



Can I claim expenses?

The cost of tools or special clothing which you need at work can sometimes be claimed if they are not provided by your employer. You can also claim a reduction for your mortgage interest payments if you are buying a house. But you cannot claim for National Insurance Contributions or for the cost of travelling to and from work.



When do I start to pay income tax?

You will probably start to pay tax when you get your first job. Your employer will give you a simple form which you can sign to say that this is your first regular job since leaving school. He will send the form to the tax office and tell them that you have started work.

Your employer will also give you a coding claim form. This may seem more difficult because it has to be used by other people, some of them with more complicated tax affairs than yours. If you have other income as well as the earnings from your new job, use this form to tell the tax office. Also use it if you can claim extra allowances. This time you can send the form yourself. Your employer will give you an addressed envelope to use. But if you do not mind him seeing your completed claim he will send it for you. If you do not need to use the coding claim form, keep it because it gives information which you may find useful later.



How is my tax worked out?

When you first start work your employer will give you a PAYE code. This code will be based on the single person's

allowance and represents your tax-free pay for the year. Your employer will use this code with 'tax tables' which spread your tax-free pay between the number of pay days in the tax year, 52 if you are paid weekly or 12 if paid monthly. On each pay day the tables show the right amount of tax-free pay to be subtracted from your earnings and you only pay tax on what is left.

If for any reason you are not paid for a while, the tax-free pay for those weeks builds up until it can be subtracted from your earnings on a later pay day. If your earnings are less than your tax-free pay at any time then of course you do not pay any tax.

If you use the coding claim form, your PAYE code may have to be changed. The tax office will work out what extra allowances or income to take into account. They will send you a new code and show you how it was worked out. They will also send your new code to your employer who will use it to tax your pay.



What is this PAYE?

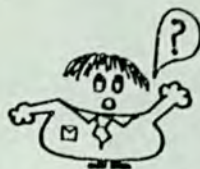
PAYE stands for Pay As You Earn. This means just what it says, you pay your tax as you go along. Each time you are paid, the right amount of tax will be taken from your pay, as long as you have the right PAYE code.



What happens if I change my job?

It is very important to get a form P45 from your employer when you leave a job. This is a leaving certificate which shows your PAYE code, your total earnings and how much tax you have paid since the start of the tax year. Remember to keep this form and give it to your new employer so that he can take the right amount of tax. Without a P45, you may well pay more tax than you should.

It is up to you to do something about this by filling in a coding claim form. Your new employer will give you one because you have not given him a P45. The sooner you send your claim to the tax office, the sooner your new employer will be able to take the right amount of tax from your pay. Until then he will



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ANNEX C

Existing and Revised versions of the Criminal Injuries
Compensation Form.



EXISTING VERSION

APPLICATION FORM (INJURY CASE)

Please complete all sections of this form — read the Notes carefully and give all the information requested. This will help avoid delay. Please use black ink. Where necessary please provide your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. PARTICULARS OF APPLICANT

See
Notes

- a. SURNAME Mr/Mrs/Miss
BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE
- b. First Names
- c. Date of birth d. Single/Married/Widow/Widower (delete as appropriate)
- e. Address
.....
.....
..... Telephone No. (Day time)
- f. Occupation immediately before the incident

2. PARTICULARS OF CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN YOU WERE INJURED

See
Notes

- a. Give the date (including year) and time of incident. 19..... at.....a.m./p.m.
- b. Where did it take place?
- c. Give the name of the offender(s) (if known)
- d. Were you and the offender living together as members of the same family at the time of the incident?.....

YES/NO

- e. Give a *full* description of the incident in your own words:-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
- f. Who saw the incident or can give the Board any other information about it? Give names and addresses:-
-
-
-
-

3. PARTICULARS OF THE REPORT TO POLICE

See
Notes

- a. Were the circumstance of the injury reported to the police? YES/NO
- b. If YES i. give the date reported and by whom.....
ii. state where and to whom it was reported (give name of police station and/or officer concerned if known)
.....
.....
- c. If NO give reasons
.....

4.

PARTICULARS OF PERSONAL INJURY RESULTING FROM THE INCIDENT

See
Notes

- a. What injury did you suffer?
- b. Did you receive hospital treatment? ☐ YES/NO If YES:
 - i. give the name and address of hospital
 - ii. state how long you were under treatment:
In-patient treatment from to
Out-patient treatment from to
 - iii. give hospital reference number.....
- c. Did you consult your own doctor? ☐ YES/NO If YES give his full name and full address:
- d. Have you received treatment from any hospital or doctor other than those mentioned at b. & c. above?
☐ YES/NO If YES give name and address of hospital or doctor concerned.
- e. Did you receive dental treatment? ☐ YES/NO If YES give the name and full address of dentist.
- f. Have you fully recovered? ☐ YES/NO If NO describe symptoms:
- g. Are you receiving treatment for the symptoms? ☐ YES/NO If YES say from whom:
- h. Has the injury left any permanent scarring or deformity? ☐ YES/NO
- i. What was the period of absence from work? From to

5.

PARTICULARS OF ANY EARNINGS LOST

See
Notes

- a. Have you lost earnings as a result of your injury? ☐ YES/NO
- b. If YES and you are *self-employed* state your loss. (See Part 5(v) of Notes)
- c. If YES and you are an *employed person*:
 - i. what was your average take-home pay including overtime/bonuses, etc., immediately before you were injured?
 - ii. what payments (if any) have you received from your employers for your time off work as a result of the incident?
 - iii. give the name and address of your employer(s) and your work or clock No:

6. PARTICULARS OF ANY OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES

See
Notes

- a. Did you have any extra travelling expenses as a result of your injury? ☐ YES/NO
If YES give details and amount.
- b. Did you have any costs for repairing or cleaning clothing? ☐ YES/NO
If YES give details and amount.
- c. Was any clothing damaged which you did not have repaired or cleaned? ☐ YES/NO
If YES give the following details:
- | i. Item | ii. Date of purchase and original cost | iii. Reason for not repairing and/or cleaning |
|---------|--|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
- d. Did you have any other expenses? ☐ YES/NO If YES give details:
.....
.....

7. PARTICULARS OF ANY SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS RECEIVED

See
Notes

- a. What is your National Insurance Number?
- b. (i) Have you applied to the Department of Health and Social Security for Sickness or Industrial Injury Benefit as a result of your injury? ☐ YES/NO If NO please say why not:
.....
- (ii) If your injury was sustained in the course of your employment and you are not self-employed have you or do you intend to apply to the Dept. of Health and Social Security for disablement benefit? ☐ YES/NO
- c. If YES to either of the above give the address of the local office of the Department of Health and Social Security:
.....
- d. Have you received Supplementary Benefit since the incident? ☐ YES/NO If YES give the address of Supplementary Benefit Commission's Office:
- e. Have you received Unemployment Benefit since the incident? ☐ YES/NO If YES give the address of Unemployment Benefit Office:

8. PARTICULARS OF ANY PENSION GRATUITY OR INSURANCE PAYMENTS

See
Notes

- a. Have you received any pension or gratuity from your employer(s) as a result of your injury? ☐ YES/NO
If YES give details:-
.....
.....
.....
- b. Have you received any insurance payments as a result of your Injury? ☐ YES/NO
If YES give details:.....
.....
.....

PLEASE DO NOT FORGET TO DATE AND SIGN THE APPLICATION OVERLEAF

9. COMPENSATION PAYMENTS

See Have you received compensation for your injuries from any other sources

Notes e.g. courts, foreign compensation schemes, etc?

YES/NO

If YES give particulars:

10. PARTICULARS OF PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

Have you already applied to the Board before for compensation in respect of any incident?

YES/NO

If YES give:

- i. Date of Incident..... ii. Date of application
- iii. Board's reference.....

11. CERTIFICATE AND AUTHORITY

See Please complete the following certificate and authority. If you are applying on behalf of a person under
Notes 18 years of age or a person incapable of signing, you should sign in the space provided.

- a. The statements in Parts 1 - 10 are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. I undertake to notify the Board of any change of circumstances which may affect the Board's decision as to my entitlement to or the assessment of compensation.
- b. I agree to give the Board all reasonable assistance, particularly in relation to any medical reports they may require.
- c. I authorise:
1. The doctor(s), the dentist(s), any other person who treated me for my injuries and the hospital(s) I attend(ed) to send the Board at their request a report as to my injuries and treatment.
 2. The police to give to the Board all information relevant to my application including a copy of any statement(s) I have made to them and a list of any convictions which may be recorded against me.
 3. Any public departments, authorities or agencies in Great Britain or elsewhere from which I receive(d) Social Security Benefits or any other payments whatsoever, to give the Board information relevant to my application.
 4. My employer(s) to give the Board information as to my earnings, pension rights and other matters relevant to my application.
 5. Any government sponsored training or rehabilitation unit which I have attended to give the Board any information relevant to my application.
 6. The Board, immediately prior to consideration of my application for decision or final assessment of compensation, to give notice to any court responsible for enforcing a compensation order in my favour that any outstanding monies received or to be received by the court pursuant to the order should be held by the court until such Court is notified by the Board that I have accepted or rejected the Board's decision or final assessment of compensation.
- d. I understand that the Board may notify the authorities and persons mentioned above that I have submitted an application and may inform them of the Board's decision.

Date:..... 19.....

If applicant is under 18 years of age, give name of parent or guardian:

Address:

Applicant's own signature:.....

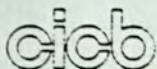
Signature of person applying on behalf of a person under 18 years of age, or on behalf of a person incapable of signing:

Give relationship to applicant

Address

Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme

Criminal Injuries Compensation Board
10-12 Russell Square, London WC1B 5EN
Telephone: 01-636 2812 and 4201



Please do not write in this space

Reference No.

Application Form

REVISED VERSION

- Please fill in all the sections of this form. Read the questions carefully and give all the information asked for. Where necessary, please write *Don't know* or *Doesn't apply* or something suitable, rather than leave a blank.
- Please use black or very dark ink because it may be necessary to photocopy your application. If you need more space, write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.
- Please remember to sign and date the form at the end. If you are filling in the form for someone who cannot

do it himself or herself, or who is under 18, you may sign it for them, but please give your full name and address and say what your relationship is to the injured person (for example, parent or friend).

- If you are under 18 and you complete and sign the form yourself, you must also ask your parent or guardian to sign and give full name and address.
- Please inform the Board immediately if you change your address.

Experience has shown that these are all points which can cause delay to your application.

1 Your full name

Please say whether Mr, Mrs, Miss, etc., and give your family name first. Please write in BLOCK CAPITALS.

Your date of birth

If the injured person is under 18, his or her birth certificate should be sent with the form. It will be returned as soon as possible.

Please say whether you are single, married, separated, divorced, widow or widower

Your address

Telephone number during the day.

2 When did the incident in which you were injured happen? Give day, month and year, and time

Where did it happen?

What is the name of the person who injured you?

Please give this if you know it. If you don't know it, the Board may still be able to deal with your application.

Were you and the person who injured you living together as members of the same family at the time of the incident?

As clearly as you can, please describe the incident in which you were injured

If you need more space, use a separate sheet of paper.

Were there any witnesses?

Please give the names and addresses of any people who saw the incident, or who could give any information about it.

3 Did you or anyone else report the incident to the police?

So, please give the name of the person who reported it. If not, say why it was not reported.

If it was reported, on what date was this done?

Who was it reported to?

Please give the name of the police station and the name of the police officer, if you know it.

4 What injuries did you receive?

Please note that under the authority you sign at the end of the form, the Board may obtain medical reports from any hospitals, doctors or dentists who treated you. After your application has been considered, and a final award has been made, you can then ask for copies of any medical reports obtained. If you or your representative provide a medical report, the Board will not normally refund its cost; this will only be done in exceptional circumstances and with the Board's prior written agreement.

If you received hospital treatment for your injuries, please give the name and address of the hospital and, if possible, your hospital reference number

How long were you under treatment?

Please give dates for beginning and end of treatment:

As in-patient

As out-patient

If you saw your own doctor, please give his or her name and address

If you received treatment from any other hospital or doctor, please give names and addresses

If you received dental treatment, please give the name and address of the dentist

Have you fully recovered from your injuries? If not, please describe your symptoms

If you have not fully recovered, and it is not known what the outcome of the injuries will be, the Board may award part of the compensation before the final decision can be made, as long as your application is otherwise within the scope of the scheme.

If you are still receiving treatment, please give the name and address of the hospital, doctor or dentist, etc.

It is important that the Board should know if you receive further treatment after you send in this application form, especially if you have to stay away from work or go into hospital. Please write and give details.

Have the injuries left any permanent scarring or deformity?

If the answer is yes, you may be asked later to send photographs, in which case the Board will contribute towards the cost. Please do not send any photographs unless asked.

5 What was your occupation at the time of the incident?

Please say what your job was, or whether you were at school, college, etc., or were a housewife, pensioner, etc.

How long were you away from work, or from school or college, as a result of your injuries? Please give dates.

Have you lost any earnings as a result of the incident?

If you are employed, please give your take-home pay at the date of your injury

This should include overtime, bonuses, etc., but after deducting tax and National Insurance.

What payments have you received from your employers for the time you were off work because of your injuries?

If you continued to lose earnings when you went back to work, because of your injuries, please give details

Please note that there is a limit to the amount of compensation the Scheme can provide for this.

Please give the name and address of your employers and your work or clock number

If you had just started or were due to start a new job when you were injured, please give the names and addresses of both the new and previous employers. The Board will have to check your earnings with your employers.

If you are self-employed, or your earnings are in the form of fees or a share of profits, please state the total loss

In addition, please provide a separate detailed account with this form. You should be prepared, if required, to produce documents to support your claim, such as certified accounts and notices of assessments to income tax.

If you are a student, please give the name and address of your school or college

6 Please give details, including amounts, of any out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of your injuries

Extra fares

For example, to hospital for treatment.

Repairs or replacement of damaged dentures, spectacles, etc.

If this expense has not already been met in full by the National Health Service or the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS).

Repairs or cleaning of clothing

List each item. If possible, please send receipts.

If any clothing was damaged which you did not have repaired or cleaned, please give full details

List each item with the date you bought it and its original cost, and say why you did not have it repaired or cleaned. If possible, please send receipts.

Compensation for clothing is based on the depreciated value after cleaning or repair or, if it was not repairable or was destroyed, on its value at the time of the incident.

Any other expenses

Please note that the compensation scheme does not cover lost, stolen or damaged property (apart from clothing, etc.) or stolen money.

7 What is your National Insurance Number?

Have you applied to the DHSS for Sickness or Industrial Injury Benefit as a result of your injuries? If not, please say why not

If you are not self-employed, and the injuries happened in the course of your work, have you applied or do you intend to apply to the DHSS for Disablement Benefit? If not, please say why not

If you have been awarded a Disablement Pension or Gratuity under the Industrial Injuries Scheme, please send the Medical Board's decision with this form. It will be returned as soon as possible.

If you answered yes to either of the last two questions, please give the address of the DHSS office to which you applied for benefit

Have you received Supplementary Benefit since the incident?

If so, please give the address of your Supplementary Benefit Commission office.

Have you received Unemployment Benefit since the incident?

If so, please give the address of your Unemployment Benefit office.

Please note that benefits are deducted in full from any loss of earnings. If you are entitled to claim benefits but do not do so, the Board may still reduce compensation by the full value of those benefits. The Board may refuse to make an award until you have taken reasonable steps to claim benefits for which you are eligible.

8 Please give details of any pension or gratuity from your employers, or payments from an insurance company or similar body, which you have received as a result of your injuries

9 If you have received compensation for your injuries from any other sources, please give details

Compensation payments include compensation orders made by criminal courts, damages received through civil claims, or similar payments from any other source, including foreign compensation schemes. The Board will deduct any amount received in this way from the award they make. The undertaking you sign at the end of this application form will enable you to receive the full benefit of any compensation order made by a criminal court.

10 If you have previously applied to the Board for compensation for injuries received in any other incident, please give:

The date of the incident

The date of your application

The Board's reference number

11 I certify that all the statements I have made in this application form are true to the best of my knowledge, and that this is my only application to the Board in connection with this incident.

I undertake to tell the Board of any changes that might affect their decision on whether I am entitled to compensation and, if I am, to what amount.

I agree to give the Board all reasonable assistance, particularly in obtaining medical reports, if they are needed.

I authorise the following to assist the Board in considering my application:

The police, to give any relevant information, including copies of any statements I made to them and a list of any convictions which may be recorded against me.

The hospitals I attended, and the doctors, dentists and others who treated me, to give a report on my injuries and treatment.

My employers, to give information about my earnings, pension rights and other relevant matters.

Any Government Departments, local authorities or other public agencies in Great Britain or elsewhere from which I received social security benefits or any other payments, to give any relevant information.

Any Government-sponsored training or rehabilitation unit that I have attended, to give any relevant information.

I authorise the Board to ask any court responsible for enforcing a compensation order in my favour to hold any outstanding money received as a result of the order until the Board informs it that I have accepted or rejected their decision or final assessment for compensation.

I understand that the board may inform the authorities and person mentioned above that I have made this application, and tell them their decision.

Signature of applicant

Date

If you are under 18 you must also ask your parent or guardian to sign below and give the information requested.

If you have completed and signed the form for someone who is incapable or too young to do so, please sign below and give the information requested.

Signature

Full name

Relationship to applicant or status

Address

SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

1. The team looked at forms from two areas -

- the Investment Grant leaflet (AHS2) and claim form (AHS3). They identified a 30 per cent error rate in claims received at one regional office. HMS0 produced redrafts of the forms.
- the Hill Livestock Compensatory Allowance Form (HCA9). The team found an error rate of 50 per cent on this form and made alternative sets of recommendations for either simplifying it or collecting information in another way.

2. If implemented these recommendations would save MAFF an estimated £[] and [] hours of formers time.

Progress on Implementation

3. Ministers have accepted the need to reduce the error rates of these forms and work is in hand to do this. This will build on the recommendations in the report.

Customs and Excise

4. The team looked at a wide range of forms taken from the following areas -

- Customs imports. The team examined the C10/C10A, C10X, C91, C105A, C109A, C130, C513, C578, C1204 and the C15. They recommended extensive changes (and shortening) to the C10 which, because this form is a base for the rest of the 'family', would result in improvements to the others as well. Redrafts of some forms were produced. If implemented the proposals would save the department £30,000 pa and businesses £1m - £1.5m.

- personal exports and tax-free car sales schemes (VAT 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 417). The team recommended merging the two categories of tax-free car export (and the VAT 410 and 411) and that VAT 412 and 415 should be simplified and merged.
- VAT Forms. The team recommended that 3 VAT assessment letters (151R, 152R, 152(A)R) should be reduced to one; that two notices of assessment (189 and 191) should be merged; that the main VAT return (100) should be shortened and simplified; that 3 certificates of posting forms (442, 443, 445) be abolished.
- other forms. The team recommended that a duty form (BD106) should be abolished and the CAP export levy schedule (C1226) simplified and possibly merged with other forms.

5. In all, the team examined [] forms. They made recommendations for redesigning [] kinds and abolishing [] kinds. Their proposals would result in approximately [] fewer forms being issued each year and would save the department an estimated £[] and businesses an estimated [].

Progress on Implementation

6. Ministers have accepted all but two of the report's recommendations (for merging the two categories of car export and merging the three VAT assessment letters). The team's proposals will therefore save [] kinds of forms and will mean [] fewer issued each year. This will save the department £[] and businesses £[].

Department of Employment

7. The team concentrated their efforts on three forms associated with the Redundancy Payments Scheme (RP1, RP2 and RP4) and the Notification of Proposed Redundancies (HRI). They made recommendations for combining the RP1 and RP2 and proposed that the basis of calculating redundancy payments should be changed from a 52 week year to a calendar year (thus doing away with the need for the special calendar-RPL4).

8. The team estimate that abolishing the RPL4 would save the department nearly £79,000 pa and employers about £180,000 in processing costs. It would also mean 25,000 fewer forms being issued each year. In addition, combining the RP1 and RP2 forms would result in 150,000 fewer years being issued, completed and processed each year.

9. The report shows clearly that attempts to achieve consistency and equity can often produce complicated procedures and complicated forms. It recommends that greater attention should be paid to the operational implications of legislation at the drafting stage.

Progress on Implementation

10. The Secretary of State for Employment has accepted the recommendation for moving from a 52 week to a calendar year and most of the other recommendations in the report. I am in correspondence with the Secretary of State for Employment on ways of further simplifying the redundancy payments calculation.

Department of the Environment

11. The department commissioned a study from the Salford Forms Market (SFM) aimed at simplifying a small number of forms. SFM decided to concentrate on three forms - the Application for Registration of Fair Rent (RRI) and two letters associated with

it (RR2 and RR2S). The^y recommended that all three should be simplified and produced re-designed forms. They also looked briefly at a number of ^{other} DOE forms (in particular the Right to Buy Claim Form (RTB1) and guidance notes) and indicated ways in which they could be improved.

Progress on Implementation

12. The report on the SFM study suggested that it would not be appropriate to issue the redesigned rent assessment forms as they stand. I am in correspondence with the Secretary of State^{for Environment} on the best way of taking the work forward.

Department of Health and Social Security

13. The team looked at the following social security forms -

- Applications for a National Insurance (NI) Number. The team recommended that one form (CF8) should be simplified and another (CF8A for people under 18) abolished.
- NI contribution rates for women. The team recommended that two forms - one for widows and one for wives (CF9A and CF9) - should be simplified and merged and that the new form should also serve where necessary as a NI application (reducing the issue of CF8s by 50,000 p.a.).
- NI Contribution Statement and Leaflet. The team recommended that the RD20 and RD20A should be simplified and not issued automatically (which would save [] forms a year).
- NI Contributions Direct Debit Form (CF351). The team found a 33 per cent error rate and recommended that a standard format should be used.
- Contribution Deferrment Forms. The team recommended that procedures should be changed so that deferment was granted for three years rather than one, thus reducing the number of forms (CF359 and CF379) and leaflets (NP18 and NP28) issued and processed.

- Contribution Refund Forms. The team examined the CF28E, CF28F, CF28(NP) forms (for refunds dealt with by local offices) and the RD505 series (for refunds from DHSS Newcastle). They found design faults, too much jargon and overlap between the forms and recommended a thorough overhaul linked to procedural improvements.

14. In all [] forms were examined. The team proposed that [] should be redesigned and [] kinds abolished. If implemented the report would save the department an estimated [], as well as the time of form fillers. It would result in the issue of [] fewer forms each year.

15. The team also made detailed recommendations for improving the control and quality of forms in DHSS and proposed a two year review of major forms followed by a programme for improving forms as they are reprinted.

16. Research commissioned from Social and Community Planning Research explored public attitudes to DHSS forms and showed that the public generally found them hard to understand. The report looks at why forms go wrong and makes proposals for putting the problems right.

Progress on Implementation

17. The Secretary of State has accepted all the core recommendations in the report. A forms unit is being set up and a programme for reviewing all major DHSS forms put in hand. Recommendations so far accepted should save [] kinds of forms and result in [] fewer forms being issued each year.

Home Office

18. The team looked at a wide range of forms in five separate areas -

- Immigration. The team examined 8 standard letters and recommended that they should be replaced by a single application form. They also proposed that a guide explaining the rules should be issued instead of individual letters about particular queries.

- Nationality. The team recommended reducing the 15 application forms to 7 or 8.
- Broadcasting. The team recommended shortening and simplifying the TV licence.
- Criminal Injuries Compensation. The team with the help of COI made proposals for simplifying the application and leaflet.
- Probation Sponsorship. The team proposed that the 40 forms in this area be reduced to less than 20.

19. In all, the team examined 66 forms and leaflets. If accepted their proposals would result in about 35 fewer kinds of form.

20. An important theme in the report is that forms associated with complicated statutory schemes tend to contain a mass of legal jargon. It shows that this confuses, rather than protects the rights of the applicant and can result in extra costs to the department from wrongly completed forms.

Progress on implementation

21. The Home Secretary has accepted all the team's recommendations. The new draft of the television licence is now being discussed with the Post Office and the new Criminal Injuries Compensation forms with the CIC Board (who have proved very receptive to the suggested improvements).

Inland Revenue

22. The team looked at the following forms -

- The P1 tax return. The team made recommendations for shortening the form and making it easier to understand.

- The 11P tax return (for people with more complex tax affairs). The team again made recommendations for cutting back the information requested, partly by using other Revenue sources.
- The R40 and R249 forms for claiming refunds where allowances exceed income. The team questioned whether all the questions were necessary and recommended improvements.
- The P70 Notice of Assessment. The team put forward a new design prepared by Reading University and proposed procedural improvements which would cut down the number of P70s issued and processed by as many as 1.35 million p.a.

23. The team also made recommendations for strengthening the control of forms in the department.

Progress on Implementation

24. All the team's recommendations have been accepted.

Department of Transport

25. The team looked at the 31 types of forms used for goods vehicle operator licensing. They identified underlying complexities in the way the system was administered. They were not able to come to firm conclusions in the time available but suggested ways (including making licensing discs not specific to vehicles) which might simplify the system for both licensing authorities and operators.

Implementation

26. I am in correspondence with the Secretary of State for Transport on ways of taking these ideas forward.

NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY****1. Statement of National Insurance Contributions recorded as paid for the year**

- (a) Class 1. As an employed person (i) amount at the standard rate
(ii) amount at the reduced rate
- (b) Class 2. As a self-employed person Number of contributions
- (c) Class 3. (voluntary) contributions Number

2. Earnings factor derived from these contributions including credits where available (note 1)

£	£	£
£	£	£
£	£	£

3. Contributions needed to raise the record for the year ending 5th April to the qualifying level for pension (note 2)

£

SPECIMEN**N.I. NUMBER (note 3)**

Please keep this for reference. If after reading the enclosed leaflet and the notes on the reverse of this form you think any entries are wrong or have any queries please contact your local Social Security Office.

RD20

ISSUED

EXPLANATORY NOTES

- NOTE 1.** Your earnings factor is derived from contributions paid or credited and is expressed as a whole number of pounds. Credits are not awarded if the earnings factor derived from your paid contributions alone equals or exceeds the prescribed level (see the enclosed leaflet) required to count towards retirement and widows pensions. Contributions are only payable on earnings within certain limits and because of this and the possible inclusion of credits your earnings factor may differ from your gross earnings for the year. Class 1 reduced rate contributions do not give entitlement to National Insurance benefits and therefore have no earnings factor.
- NOTE 2.** If you wish to pay this amount you should contact your local Social Security Office and produce this statement. If you wish to pay by cheque it should be crossed, made payable to the Department of Health and Social Security and sent to your local Social Security Office together with this statement (which will be returned to you). A married woman or widow who has chosen to pay reduced rate Class 1 and not to pay Class 2 contributions in respect of the tax year is not entitled to pay voluntary contributions.
- NOTE 3.** The number shown is your National Insurance number. It is important that you quote it correctly in all correspondence with the Department and that you give it to your new employer when you change jobs so that he may show it on your deduction card. Failure to do so could result in your contributions not being posted to your account and may affect your entitlement to benefit.
- NOTE 4.** If you change your address or your name, e.g. on marriage, it is important that you notify your local Social Security Office.

For further explanation of the entries overleaf please read the enclosed leaflet.

RD20 Reverse

EXTRACT FROM CAPITAL GRANTS BOOKLET

business and there are limits to eligible expenditure on pig farms. These limits as they are at the time of going to press (September 1980) are set out in Appendix 9.

Maximum per Labour Unit

A Labour Unit is 2,200 hours (see Appendix 3). The maximum limit per Labour Unit applies to the total of grant-worthy expenditure in the 2-year period ending on the day you make a claim under the new scheme. It takes into account expenditure on which you are claiming grant under this scheme, together with expenditure on which grant was paid under the previous schemes, the Farm Capital Grant Scheme (FCGS), the Horticulture Capital Grant Scheme (HCGS) and the Farm and Horticulture Development Scheme (FHDS) and under the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Scheme. For example, if your claim is received in the Divisional Office on 30 June 1981 the limit will be assessed on that claim and on expenditure on which grant was paid on claims received since 1 July 1979.

Maximum per Business

The present maximum limit per business is in addition to the maximum limit per Labour Unit and applies to the total of grant-worthy expenditure within a 6-year period. For instance, if you successfully claim grant in 1981 on expenditure which reaches the maximum limit, no further claims will be eligible before 1987.

The limit applies to applications made on or after 1 February 1980. It takes into account expenditure on which you are claiming grant under this scheme together with:-

- a. grant under the Farm Capital Grant Scheme (FCGS) and the Horticulture Capital Grant Scheme (HCGS) if your application for approval (form FCG2 or HCGS2) was received by your Divisional Office on or after 1 February 1980;
- b. grant under the Farm and Horticulture Development Scheme (FHDS) if the initial application (form FHD2) was received by your Divisional Office on or after 1 February 1980;
- c. grant under the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Scheme.

Limits to Expenditure on Pig Farms

Intensive pig enterprises are not eligible for grant. To qualify, a pig farm must be capable of producing at least 35% of the feedingstuffs required for its pigs. The farm does not actually have to produce 35% of its feedingstuffs but it must have enough land to be able to do so. When you claim grant you will have to give details about the pigs the business has and the area of usable land. To work out whether you can pass this test please see Appendix 5.

As well as the Labour Unit and the business maximum limits, pig farms are subject to upper and lower limits on expenditure. These limits also apply to the total of grant-worthy expenditure in the 2-year period ending on the day you make a claim under the new scheme. They take into account expenditure on which you are claiming under the new scheme together with expenditure on which grant was paid under the other schemes.

HISTORY AND LIFE CYCLE OF A DHSS FORM

THE NATIONAL INSURANCE ACCOUNT NOTICE AND EXPLANATORY LEAFLET

Introduction

1. We were asked to include within our report a history of the development of a DHSS form and a summary of its life cycle. We selected the National Insurance Statement of Account (the form RD20) and its associated explanatory leaflet (Leaflet RD20A). The design and content of these two forms were considered in detail in Chapter 8 of the main Report. We selected the form for consideration here for these main reasons:

- a. The form has a high use rate. Nearly a million are sent out annually. Taking into account the forms, computer time, staff time, envelopes and postage, the total cost is in the region of £140,000 excluding follow-up action.
- b. Issue in most cases is automatic. Few contributors understand or want the forms and so we thought it useful to try to establish the considerations which led to it being introduced.
- c. The form is issued by computer process. It seemed worthwhile to consider the extent to which computer requirements placed a limitation on forms design. DHSS is a high user of computer produced forms and therefore there might be general lessons to be applied.

2. National Insurance arrangements were successively considered by different Governments from the late 1960s and consideration of a computer-produced Statement of Account began as early as 1971. Proposals changed slightly with different schemes.

Design history

3. i. Mid 1971-1972 - preparation of first draft

The first draft was prepared by the Graduated Pensions Branch at Newcastle who had experience of statements relating to that scheme. The first draft of the RD20 statement took some account of what was existing administrative practice at the time and was not an entirely new design.

ii. July 1972 - circulation of first draft

The draft copy (specimen at Annex 1) was circulated widely in DHSS. This was a particularly important circulation. It largely set the pattern for the form which was eventually issued in 1977. Design and content changes made afterwards were minor, with one exception.

iii. February/March 1973 - second draft prepared and circulated

Comments on the first draft were almost all concerned with technical accuracy and comprehensiveness of the information. About 50 different people received copies, and many others would also have considered it. The named recipients would have circulated the material further. No single request was found for material to be removed although there were often pleas for simpler language, but made in terms that comprehensiveness could not be sacrificed one jot. Only the Department's Information Division questioned whether the form could be understood. They said:

"It is essential that statements, explanations, notes and leaflets should be as clear and as straightforward as we can possibly make them. We cannot assume that the reader will know anything about the system..... We appreciate that this [the version circulated] is only a draft, but we feel that some improvement must and could be made in the design. HMSO has a special Unit concerned with the design of forms. We have seen examples of their work and it is impressive. Certainly there would be nothing to lose and probably much benefit in seeking their advice."

They were ignored. The form was never considered by professional design staff at any stage.

iv. April 1973 - apparently final version

The next version was a compromise. It did not fully satisfy everyone but the scheme had reached the stage at which it was imperative that the form should be finalised. Objections were therefore put aside. The version produced is at Annex 2.

The new Government elected in 1974 proposed a different scheme and the form had to be reconsidered again.

v. 1974/1975

The process was much as before. The form which had been prepared was used as a basis for a new one.

vi. 1976 - design crisis

The form produced in 1975 was held back from printing until Parliamentary approval of the pensions scheme was given. It was discovered at a late stage that the form could not be used with a new style window envelope. It was vital that it should. The alternative was to have the form in a plain envelope which would then require individual addressing at very large cost in terms of time and manpower. The design solution was to fit in the address space in the middle of the form and re-position the textual material around it.

The form was then printed and issued to the public in 1977.

Comments on design process

4. Policy consideration and design were not separate processes. There was in fact no distinct design stage and no professional design expertise was used. The content of the form was laid down by policy and operational requirements rooted in the belief that, whatever else, the statement must be comprehensive and accurate.

5. We do not want to give any impression that consideration of the form was cursory. Nothing could be further from the truth. A great deal of time and consideration was given to the form, often by very senior officials. Drafts were circulated and considered by Assistant Secretaries and above and very seldom to an individual below Principal level. A vast array of expert technical knowledge about national insurance was applied to the form.

THE EXPLANATORY LEAFLET - RD20A

6. Work on the leaflet went on alongside the form but its preparation was greater. Information Division were asked to put the leaflet in simpler language on the basis of a draft supplied by policy branches.

7. The various stages of preparation were very similar to those relating to the form. Stages of consultation, drafting, re-consultation, re-drafting and eventually agreement on a final version were gone through. Greatest attention was given to comprehensiveness and accuracy.

8. Although Information Division were involved they were not able to get a simple text agreed. Their drafts were subject to much adverse comment because they failed to meet administrative requirements regarding accuracy and comprehensiveness. The basic argument is summed up in this extract from a minute written by an administrator.

"In Information Division's version, not only has the substance of our draft been diluted and over-simplified, but the change of style has introduced many inaccuracies..... I do not deny Information Division's right to present the finished version in the style they choose or their undoubted prerogative to edit. However, I do not consider without technical expertise they can be allowed to question the inclusion of certain material or to expect an originating Policy Branch to comment favourably on a draft that is so dissimilar to the original..... I am as concerned as the next man that the finished product should be readable by the general public, but not to the extent of sacrificing the comprehensive though technical nature of our draft."

PRODUCTION OF THE FORM

9. The form RD20 is pre-printed computer stationery. The computer prints on it the details relevant to the individual contributor. The diagram which follows indicates the stages of production. The form was tested only in the sense of a "dry-run" being made through the computer to see that positioning and layout were correct for the computer's requirements. There was no testing of either the form or leaflet with the general public before issue.