Resource Management System

Evaluation Report

February 2006

Contents

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to brief the HSE Board on the outcomes from the RMS pilots.

Purpose of RMS

2. The purpose of RMS is to provide key management information that will contribute to improved resource management across HSE in relation to:
   - Planning
   - Prioritising
   - Providing value for money

3. **Planning**: RMS will provide staff hours and costs against HSE key business streams. This includes programmes for PSA delivery as well as other areas of work important to HSE. By accurately capturing the time and costs, it will allow HSE to build the data to baseline work. This will allow more accurate allocation of resources and budgets to work streams for future planning.

4. **Prioritising:** When the staff effort and costs from RMS is used in conjunction with outputs and outcomes it will:

   - Enable HSE's resources to be better aligned with the priorities set out in the Strategy;
   - Enable HSE to determine more accurately the relative costs of programmes and activities, to inform a judgement on whether the balance of effort is right, and to maximise the prospect of meeting the Public Service Agreement targets;
   - Allow corrective actions to be taken when assessing progress of outputs and costs against that planned.

5. **Providing value for money:** RMS provides costs for the work streams and activities. It also provides performance indicators (**utilisation** (resources going into delivery of key HSE areas as a percentage of the total resource), and allow calculation for **unit costs** of key interventions to be worked out. This will:

   - Enable HSE to determine more accurately what it is getting for the money going into the specific work areas.
   - Provide the means for more effective measurement of efficiency gains, for example, by providing unit costing. The HSE Board has set a target of £50m efficiency gains during the SR2004 period;
   - Maximise the proportion of resources applied to HSEs key business areas, by:
     Providing utilisation across HSE;
     Measuring more accurately across HSE;

Enable comparisons to be drawn about the relative effort expended across the organisation; and
- Facilitate important cultural shift in understanding what we are doing, what it's costing, and how this could be used for better planning, and efficiency gains in the organisation.

Purpose of Pilots

6. Pilots were conducted across a representative sample of HSE covering its main functions of front line inspectors, management (including SCS), S&T, policy, and admin.

7. Objectives were set for each of the pilots. (See Appendix 2 for details)

8. The purpose of the pilots were:
    - To test whether the objectives set out could be achieved;
    - To determine the costs of capturing the data and reports and compare it with the costs set out in the business case;
    - To review other ways of capturing the information;
    - Evaluate a suitable IT platform on which RMS could be implemented;
    - To capture any learning points that could be used if RMS was to be introduced across HSE.

Summary analysis

9. Following conclusions are based on the analysis of results from the questionnaires (appendix 7), results from focus groups discussions with managers and staff (appendix 8), the reports issued by HID (appendix 5) and FOD (appendix 4) and evaluation of a suitable IT platform. The questionnaires and focus group discussions were only used for CoSAS, Policy Group, and RPD. HID and FOD managed and evaluated their own pilots.

Aims and objectives of the pilots

10. Most managers who responded to the questionnaires said it achieved the objectives set out fully or in part. A third reported they had been fully achieved, and two thirds that they had been partly achieved. Those that said the objectives had only partly been achieved said that they would have been fully achieved if:

    - The pilots had run for longer so that baselines could be properly established; and
    - That in some cases the information may not be truly representative of whole of the Directorate, which would be the case if the pilots had been applied more widely.

11. Both the FOD and the HID report states '…*the data was informative and if collected nationally, would provide a much richer picture of where the effort of key members of our staff is addressed'.* Further the FOD report states that, '*the pilot data itself can be used in the indicative allocation of resources for 2006/07, in our operational productivity (frontline) calculations for Operations group and in future reports on utilisation.'* FOD and HID report also concluded the '*the impressive proportion of total divisional office (admin) staff resource that is addressed to frontline work.'*

12. The discussions from focus groups have concluded:
    - Raised awareness of how time was spent by individuals and managers, 'made you think',
    - Helped managers to see how people spent their time and a realisation where the majority of effort went,
    - Help HSE to understand the importance of management by seeing how much time it takes,
    - Useful for high level decisions especially how much time is spent on programmes.

13. All the managers who responded to the questionnaires said they could use the information for future planning. Most stated that they would like to continue. FOD has said that the pilot data itself could be used for indicative allocations.

14. Half of the managers who responded to the questionnaires said they found the utilisation useful and would use it. One manager said it would be dangerous to use, if it was used to make comparisons between units.

15. Although the pilots did not set out to provide information to individual staff, the on line spreadsheets that were used (for CoSAS, Policy Group, and RPD) provided summated information of the time individual staff recorded against. 28% of the staff found the summated information helpful in their own planning, and 71% did not use it.

Time taken to record and costs

16. 68% of the staff replying to the questionnaires found the activities clear to understand, and the discussions in the focus groups found the system easy to use.

17. The time taken by CoSAS, RPD and Policy group (staff and managers) who used an EXCEL spreadsheet, varied with the number of activities recorded, with an average of 14 minutes per person per week. (Appendix 7 gives the times against the number of activities recorded). (Note this could drop as staff became familiar with the system). The time taken by managers in quality

checking the information has varied from minimal to less than 1 hour per week.

18. The incremental additional time taken by front line inspectors who already work record has been so small, that it has not been possible to accurately measure it. HID pilot used front line inspectors in their pilot.

19. The time taken by staff in FOD who does not currently work record has been estimated at 30 minutes per week per person. They used a manual system, and it was stated that if an electronic system was used it would be 30 minutes but could drop further with experience.

20. The time taken by staff in HID that does not currently work record was found on average to be a little less than 30 minutes per week per person.

21. The original business case estimated 12 minutes per week per person for those that were new to work recording, and an additional 8 minutes per person per week for those who already work recorded.

22. The total staff costs are compared with the original business case in paragraphs 49-55 later in the report. It shows that overall staff costs are broadly within the original business case.

23. It has not yet been possible to work out costs of an IT platform.

Other ways of capturing the data

24. In the questionnaires all except for one manager stated that information could not be captured accurately by other means with two explicitly stating that sampling would not lead to any confidence as the work patterns in their command were continually changing. Of the one manager that stated other means could be used, this was said in the context of specific areas of work patterns that were largely fixed and not changing. Information in these areas, it was stated, could be estimated.

25. Focus groups discussions concluded that information could not be collected from any other source. However, whilst most agreed that some form of work recording was necessary, some felt that this was more the case for operational jobs and that policy and admin jobs were not suitable. However, it is important to note that HID and FOD were not represented at these focus group discussions as they managed and evaluated their own pilots.

26. The FOD pilot concluded for their admin staff only,..'*it is very likely that equally valuable data could be gathered by representative and timely sampling.* This was discussed in detail with FOD, and

particularly how sampling would work in practice. Issues for baselining data for FOD as a whole, managing a rolling programme of sampling across FOD, what frequency to use, and the need to train and retrain staff as individual groups were introduced to work recording for a period of time were discussed in detail. It was concluded that it was not clear what the actual quantified benefits would be when such issues are considered, against a system that is relatively easy to use.

27. The HID pilot which was run for a range of staff including front line staff have concluded for their admin staff only. '*Whilst in support of effective resource management, the small variation in recorded information against planned norms indicates there would be no benefit in extending work recording to all staff in HID, particularly admin grades. The time taken by the central planning team using current methods based on frontline inspector work recording is far less than the amount that would be expended by all staff in the directorate work recording. HID would support the continued work recording by frontline operational inspectors using RMS through COIN'.*

Choice of IT platform

28. EXCEL has been evaluated by REFIT and ruled out on capability. Introducing RMS to ops groups on COIN, who already work record should not require any further additions to its hardware or network, and should not have any serious detrimental impact on its current performance, but this is yet to be tested.

29. The impact on COIN of introducing additional staff from COSAS, Policy group and RPD and possibly other directorates has not yet been possible to evaluate. We understand COIN is planned for roll out to Policy Group and CoSAS in the near future for recording stakeholder information, which will require an evaluation of its performance and cost. It is recommended that requirements of RMS are included as part of this evaluation. If COIN is not considered suitable when evaluated (either because of performance or cost) then alternative cost effective options will need to be considered. We will seek Board endorsement once the cost/performance of COIN or alternatives are known.

Issues and learning points for possible implementation

30. Specific issues, problems, and learning points were discussed in detail in the focus groups. FOD also provided valuable data from their pilot through feedback from the participants. Detailed information is included in appendix 4 (FOD report), and appendix 8 (focus groups report). The main points arising were:

- Put greater effort to ensure that the categories and activities are right for HSE business needs. Balance needing to be struck between few and many categories.
- Managers (particularly those at SCS) found it difficult and time consuming to allocate their work to the existing categories and activities. This may need to be reviewed.
- Provide greater degree of guidance with examples for use of the categories and rules for its application to achieve a greater degree of consistency.
- Confirmation for the need of an IT-based and effective data entry system with automatic totalling and ability to be personalised (as was the case with the EXCEL spreadsheet).
- Provide controls for monitoring and reviewing data to ensure quality.
- Provide a clear purpose for how the system would be used. **(Note: The HSE Board and SCS need to give a clear, and united message about the benefits, and how they intend to use the information. This has not yet been done)**

Introduction

31. The RDG identified the need for better information on which to plan, prioritise and get best value from HSE resources. They invited the HSE Board to consider the introduction of a system to introduce universal work recording across HSE.

32. On 15 October 2004 the HSE Board agreed in principle that work recording should be introduced across HSE. It directed that a costed implementation path be determined.

33. The HSE Board discussed an outline business case on 2 March 2005, and decided to run and evaluate pilots before any decision on implementation.

34. A project team developed an outline design with representatives from all the Directorates in HSE. (RMS system design rev5). The Board endorsed the structure, categories and the reports (Appendix 1) on 6 July 2005 at which they also agreed to proceed with pilots to test the design.

35. HID, FOD, CoSAS, RPD, and Policy Group, ran pilots, which tested both the design and considered different ways of capturing the information in addition to work recording. Over 200 staff/managers took part in the pilots.

Design

36. A cross directorate working group representing all the directorates carried out the design.

37. Experience from others in the public sector was used and two case studies developed from Environment Agency and HSL.

38. The RMS structure is based around current HSE main businesses given in the HSE business plan, and future needs, recognising matrix-working arrangements. Account was taken of existing Functional Work Recording (FWR) categories, common process map, and EDRM. Appendix 1 gives a summary of the structure, categories and reports.

39. The key design principles are:

- *Hierarchy*. Information is structured into two hierarchical layers. The top layer called categories is aimed at strategic decisions at Board level. The lower layer called activities is aimed at business decisions at Directorate level;
- *Proportionality*. The data recording requirements are proportionate to achieve business objectives, and kept to a minimum;
- *Flexibility*. The system is flexible in its application for different needs across HSE and not a 'one size fits all';
- *Ease of use*. The system is easy to use, and must not introduce a further IT application tool;

Pilot Implementation

40. Pilots were phased over a period from October 2005 to end of December 2005 and each ran for approximately an 8 week period. A total of 17 pilots were run with a total of 201 staff ranging from SCS to B6 including front line operational inspectors, S&T, policy, management and admin functions.

41. Managers from each of the pilots developed their aims and objectives and worked out a list of activities for the key information they required at Directorate level within the overall design structure. These activities were linked to the top-level categories. The reports were issued to the managers in the respective directorates and to HSE Board so that an assessment could be made whether the pilots achieved the objectives.

42. The details of where the pilots were run and the staff in each pilot is given in Appendix 2

Evaluation process

43. HSE Internal Audit and HSE Chief Economist did the evaluation independently of the project team for the pilots in RPD, Policy Group and CoSAS. The evaluation assessed whether the objectives were achieved, the average time it took to work record, the perceived benefits of the information to the managers, and the examination of alternative ways of capturing the information other

than work recording. This was done by questionnaires to participants that took part. Staff questionnaires were aimed at assessing the times taken to record and any issues for staff during the pilots. Management questionnaires were aimed at assessing the benefits of the management information in the reports that were issued to them. The templates for the questionnaires are given in Appendix 3. The completed questionnaires were sent directly to Internal Audit.

44. In addition to the questionnaires the Chief economist conducted focus groups of selected staff and managers to discuss particular issues and problems in more depth and supplement the data from the questionnaires.

45. FOD ran, managed and evaluated a pilot for their admin staff only, because of practical issues relating to their FOCUS recording system, which front line staff uses. FOCUS was unsuitable for RMS structure and it was felt that to introduce another work recording system for front line staff for the pilots would not get their support. FOD used a manual recording system for the pilots and issued a separate evaluation report given in Appendix 4.

46. HID ran, managed and evaluated pilots for a range of their staff. Their current work recording systems were suitable for RMS structure, and it was felt that this system would be most appropriate as the staff were already familiar with it. A cross section of staff across HID were selected which included SCS, front line inspectors, managers and admin staff. HID also issued a separate evaluation report for their pilot which is included in Appendix 5.

47. For CoSAS, RPD and Policy Group who do not have work recording system, an EXCEL spreadsheet was used.

Management Reports

48. Management information from the pilots was issued to the HSE Board on 4 January 2006, and more detailed regular reports to managers. The report issued to the HSE Board is included in Appendix 6.

Costs

49. Staff costs dominate in the original business case, based on everyone in HSE work recording. 12 minutes per week per person was estimated for new users (2400) and an additional 8 minutes per week per person for existing users (1600).

50. The pilots have confirmed that for existing staff that work record there will be minimal additional time required as no further activities are introduced. (See Appendix 5-HID report). The existing activities

are preconfigured to the HSE wide categories. Thus the costs for this group are considerably lower than allowed for. HID has estimated there to be no difference. In the HID pilot where front line staff were included, the report states '*There was no perceptible difference in time taken to work record, with the additional RMS categories, than before for the inspectors who already work recorded.'*

51. For new staff in CoSAS, PG, and RPD, the time taken to record is proportional to the number of activities recorded, but the average time is 14 minutes (see appendix 7). This could drop as more experience is gained.

52. Ops group generally took longer to record (FOD estimates an average of 3 min per activity per week per person, with an average of 30 minutes per week per person) than was estimated. This was due to a number of reasons. In HID the need to record, across a range of activities (in excess of 20) to within 6 mins for cost recovery, and for both HID and FOD the general culture that already exists for those that work record.

53. Overall, however, the costs for staff time are within the estimates in the business case. This is because the incremental additional time is 'minimal' for ops group staff that already work record.

54. The table below summarises the staff costs in the business case and from the outcome of the pilots.

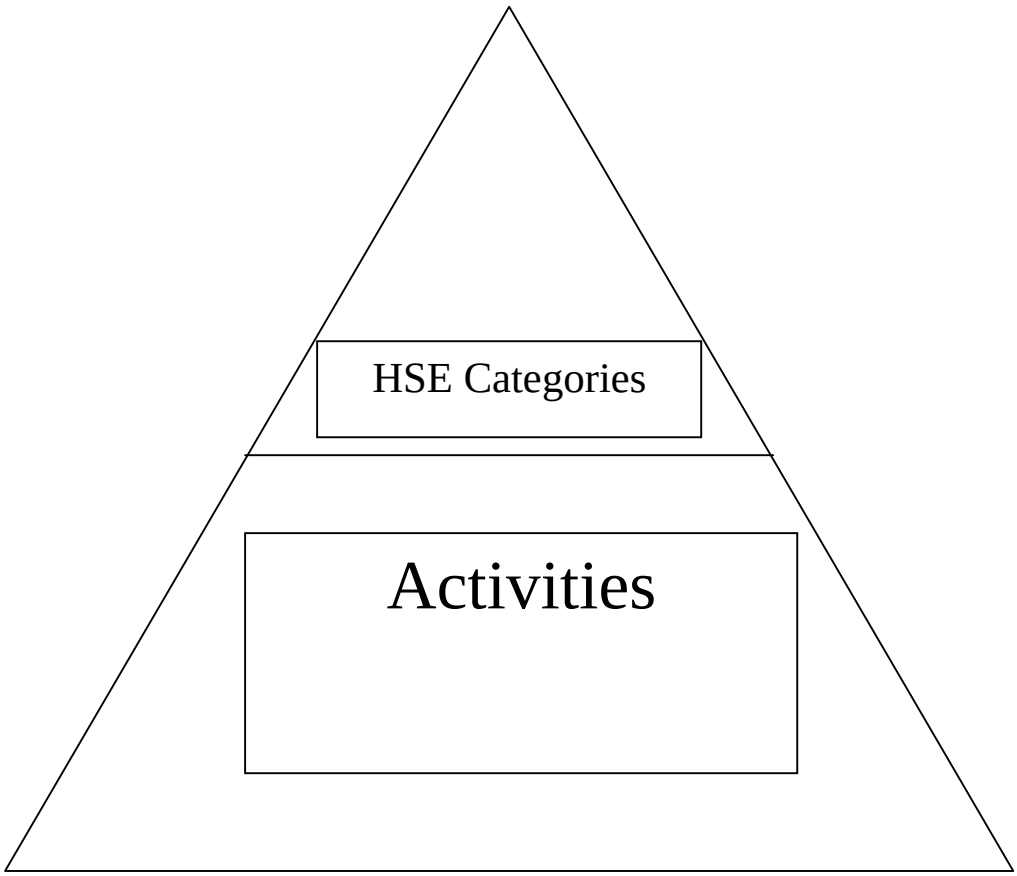
	Estimates in business case	Estimates from the pilots
Front line Operational staff that already work record	1600*8 mins=213 hrs/wk	1600*0=0
Staff new to work recording	2400*12 mins=480 hrs/wk	400*30 mins=200 hrs/wk. 2000*14mins=466 hrs/wk
Total	693 hrs/wk	666 hrs/wk

Note: An assumption is made about 400 additional staff in Operational groups who will work record. If this increases, there is proportional increase in costs.

55. It is not yet possible to confirm costs for COIN, (for the additional users), the most likely IT platform (hardware, network, configuration and testing) allowed for in the business case.

Appendix 1

Structure of RMS



Note 1. HSE categories. These are derived from the HSE business plan, and programmes and are those needed to manage at HSE Board level.

Note 2. Activities. This is the work that staff carries out.

1. The data is structured into categories as defined in the HSE business plan 2005/06-2007/08. The management reports to the HSE Board provide resources (staff hours and costs) against these categories. This is intended to aid strategic decisions on resources at the Board level.
2. The RMS also allows activities to be recorded to a lower level with more detail. These are optional at the discretion of Directorates, and are intended to be used for performance management at directorate level.

Data Structure for Categories

Programmes

Major Hazards	Fit3	STEP
Nuclear	*Injury Reduction*	
Offshore	Slips and Trips	Business Involvement
Specialised Industries	Falls	Worker Involvement
Cross Cutting Issues	Construction	LA/HSE Partnership
	Workplace transport	Enforcement
	Sector stakeholder engagement	Effic & Prod
	Days lost reduction	
	Public Services	
	Absence Management	
	Rehabilitation	
	Ill Health reduction	
	Stress	
	MSD	
	Disease reduction	
	Noise and vibration	
	Workplace health direct	

Non-Programmes

Other front line/Regulatory	Business enablers	Corporate
Hampton/Better Regulation	Horizon scanning	Finance
International Work	Standards	Personnel
Policy Maintenance	Research	Administration
Public Safety	Business Improvement	Management
Civil Contingency	Statistical services	etc
Approvals and Licensing	Social Science	
Other Operational Work	Risk Policy	

Appendix 2

Details of Pilots

Total of 201 Staff were involved in the pilots ranging from SCS to B6 in FOD, RPD, CoSAS, Policy Group and HID.

Objectives
Common to all pilots:

- Inform resources being spent on activities against those planned
- Base line data and use as a benchmark for future planning
- Demonstrating allocation of resources against HSE plans.
- Test out cross cutting programme requirements.

Additional to Specific pilots

- Test out the most effective (in terms of accuracy and burdens) ways of capturing information for support staff by comparing with existing methods of collecting such information. (HID pilot only).
- Resources being spent against specific projects (One Policy Group pilot only).

Arrangements

1. **FOD**

Run for Admin staff only in Midlands HQ. 30 Staff involved ranging from B3 to B6 using a manual recording system.

2. **RPD**

Three pilots were run using EXCEL with total staff of 68.

PEFD
26 staff ranging from SCS to B6 using an EXCEL spreadsheet.

BEU
35 staff ranging from B1 to B6 using EXCEL spreadsheet.

IMU
7 staff ranging from B3 to B6 using EXCEL spreadsheet.

3. **CoSAS**

Five pilots were run using EXCEL with a total staff of 18

CSKU
3 staff ranging from B1 to B3 using EXCEL spreadsheet.

DSU
4 staff ranging from B3 to B6 using EXCEL spreadsheet

EAU
2 staff ranging from B2 to B3

SCU

2 staff ranging from B2 to B5

SESU
7 staff ranging from B2 to B5

4. **Policy Group**
Five pilots were run using EXCEL with a total staff of 52

DR2
7 staff ranging from B2 to B6

DRP Cancer Project
11 staff ranging from B2 to B4

Enforcement Policy unit
8 staff ranging from B2 to B5

IRP
19 staff ranging from SCS to B5

Utility Interventions Policy Electricity and Gas
7 staff ranging from B2 to B6

5. **HID**
4 pilots were run (HQ, CI2, OSD2, SI2) using HIDs own systems (CIS and ORION) with 33 staff ranging from B0 to B6.

Appendix 3
Templates for Questionnaires

Pilot Evaluation
Management questionnaire

Thank you for taking part in the pilots. As you will recall they will be evaluated to assess both the cost/benefits and the issues. The evaluation will be done independently of the project team, and the results of the evaluation will inform the decision for any future roll out.

We would like to ask you about the benefits of the management information provided, and if appropriate about your experience of using the work recording system, and would be grateful if you could answer the questions below. This information will be supplemented by focus group discussions, which are being set up. We would be grateful if you could support these discussions if asked to do so.

The questionnaire should take about 15 minutes to complete, and the discussion group will be scheduled for one and half hours.

The information will be summarised and presented as statistics in an evaluation report and will be anonymised.

We will also be discussing the costs and issues with staff that took part in a similar way.

The information you provide will be treated as confidential unless you explicitly allow us to quote you. In this case please tick the box at the end of the questionnaire

Division/Unit:

Band:

1. Please review the objectives that were set out against the reports that you received. Did the management information in the reports achieve the aims and objectives? A copy of these is included with the questionnaire.

2. If not, which objectives were not achieved and what in your opinion was the reason?

3. Could the information provided in the reports be used in planning future resource deployment? Managing budgets? Or in other ways?

4. If not, what cost/resource information do you require to enable you to do this? Please note that RMS is not intended to measure progress of outputs /outcomes. This needs to be done separately. If you believe you do not require any resource information please say so.

5. Could the information have been captured by other means than work recording. If so please state which and how this would work?

6. How useful did you find the utilisation ratio? This ratio gives the proportion of time spent on core work and contributes to the measure of productivity.

7. Would having resource costs be helpful in managing budgets?

8. Average costs (based on ready reckoner) were used in the reports. Do you believe these are adequate for your purposes?

9. On average how much effort did you put in (hours) per week in managing any issues arising from work recording?

10. Please include any comments that your staff provided to you during the pilots.

11. Please provide any other information that you think would be useful for evaluation purposes.

I am happy for you to disclose the information I provide. ☐

Thank you for providing this information.

Resource Management System
Pilot Evaluation
Staff questionnaire

Thank you for taking part in the pilots. As you will recall the pilots will be evaluated to assess both the benefits and the costs/issues. The evaluation will be done independently of the project team, and the results of the evaluation will inform the decision for any future roll out.

We would like to ask you about your experience of using the system during the pilots, and would be grateful if you could answer the questions in this questionnaire. This will be supplemented by focus group discussions, which are being set up. We would be grateful if you could support this discussion if asked to do so.

The questionnaire should take about 15 minutes to complete, and the discussion group will be scheduled for one and half hours.

The information will not be attributable to any person replying. It will be summarised and presented as statistics in an evaluation report. There is no need to give your name but please give your job band Division/unit.

We will also be discussing the benefits with managers in a similar way.

Division/Unit:

Band:

1. Did you receive training on how to use your work recording system and background to the project?

2. How useful was the training in using the spreadsheet and explaining the background to the project?

3. How many activities did you record on average on your work recording spreadsheet?

4. At what period did you record? For example did you record daily, weekly (record the whole week on one occasion), or some other period (record several weeks on one occasion)?

5. On average how long did it take you to record the information per day/week/other time period?

6. Were any of the activities unclear? Please state how many required interpreting? Were these resolved with your line manager and if not did you report these to the project manager as an issue? Please add any relevant information to explain your answer, and what could have been done to make it easier.

7. Was there any work that you wanted to record, but did not have an appropriate activity to record against?

8. Were there any specific issues that you found demanding/inconvenient?

    a) What were they?

    b) Why do you think this was?

    c) How could this have been avoided?

    d) Could the information be recorded in a different less demanding/inconvenient/unwieldy form?

9. Did your line managers answer queries that you had?

10. Was the (a) summarised information, and (b) recording itself helpful in your own personal planning or in some other way? If yes please give details, otherwise answer No.

11. Please provide any other information that you think could be useful in evaluating the pilot.

Thank you for providing this information.

Appendix 4

FOD Pilot report

Pilot within FOD Midlands Division:
A report by Mike Sebastian, FOD NWHQ Planning

Background and aims

1 As part of the exploratory work for the introduction of an improved resource management system across HSE, FOD agreed to take part in a pilot aiming to (i) assess the value of the information that could be gathered; (ii) evaluate the resource implications of gathering specified information, and (iii) gain an indication of the reactions of staff to working with such a scheme.

Organisation of pilot

2 We decided that the pilot should be restricted to admin staff in one divisional office (Birmingham office was selected). This was on the basis that the majority of FOD frontline operational staff already work recorded (along with others, eg many staff in CHSD). Thus any move towards full work recording would have only an incremental affect on those staff, while admin staff (apart from HSAOs, complaints officers and a few others) did not, and had not previously, work recorded.

3 Using information on the main types of work carried out by the admin staff concerned, we selected from the high level categories proposed by PEFD those that were appropriate to use for the staff involved. Within those categories, we had specific management needs for detail on some sub-categories (eg time spent on FOI or health and safety issues). In all, we collected data on 26 categories/sub-categories of data, in addition to the time spent on leave, travel, training, recording the data collected for the pilot, 'other' and total time worked in the week. The form at appendix 1 shows the categories of data collected.

4 It proved impossible within the time constraints to devise an electronic data collection tool. Therefore we devised a colour coded form (WRF – see annex 1) for the pilot staff, together with detailed guidance on the purpose, background and categories used and examples of the categories into which various pieces of work fitted. We organised and presented two briefing sessions for the staff taking part.

5 The pilot ran for six weeks from 17 October 2005, with one B3, one B4, six B5 and 22 B6 staff recording their work. Each person completed a WRF for each week, and submitted them to team leaders for initial review. Team leaders then anonymised the forms and sent them to us for processing. The forms were anonymised in order to build confidence in the pilot and thus gain data accuracy, completeness and precision.

Outcomes

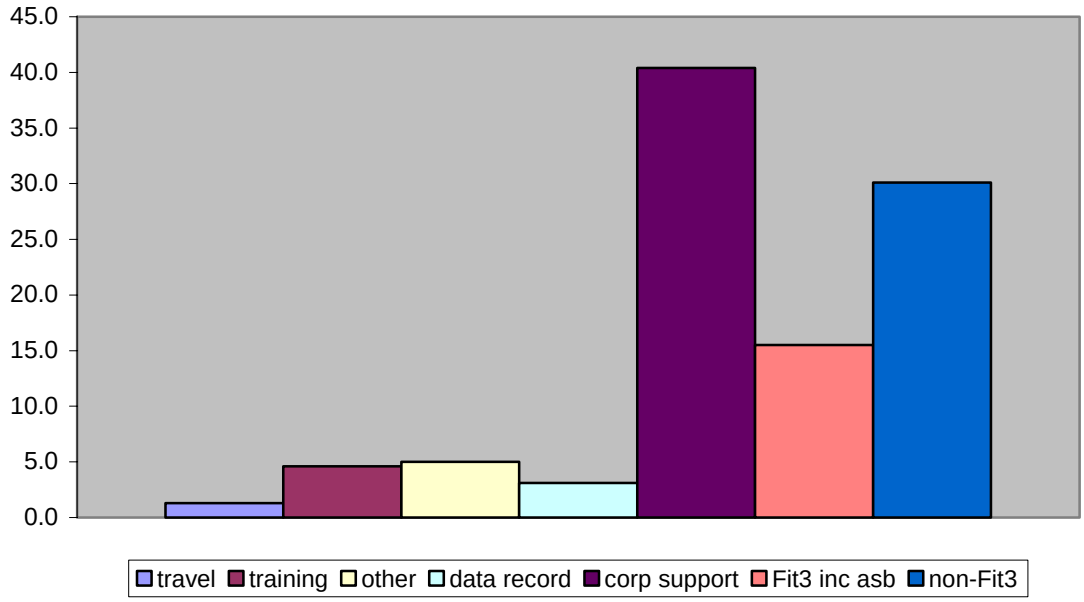
6 A range of both hard data and impressions were gathered. It was no surprise to us that the data was informative and, if collected nationally, would provide a much richer picture of where the effort of key members of our staff is addressed. The pilot data itself can be used to review some of our current assumptions on our work, e.g. those used in the indicative allocation of resources for 2006/07, in our operational productivity (frontline) calculations for Operations Group and in future reports on utilisation (see para 7). Specific outcomes and impressions are:

- the positive way in which staff dealt with the pilot and the possibility of an expansion of current work recording activity (we were at pains to clarify the HSE position that no decision on roll-out had been made, and that any decision would be informed by the pilot);
- the suspicion, voiced clearly but constructively, that the work could be used to cut posts (balanced by the view that more accurate data on the resources needed, e.g. to manage health and safety or FOI issues, could be used to confirm the need for current levels, or increased levels, of resource);
- the impressive proportion of the total divisional office resource[1] that is addressed to frontline work – almost 50% of the total (both Fit3 and other frontline regulatory work (OFL - non-Fit3 work), in the ratio of 1:2 – although OFL work will include the majority of complaints dealt with);
- the pleasingly low proportion of resource spent on 'corporate support' – 40% of the total, dealing with divisional management, business services, personnel, health and safety and FOI. This is particularly impressive given Birmingham's position as the main divisional office, with one SCS member, one B1 Head of Operations (although he had just moved offices, there was a residue of work associated with his role), staff from other directorates (PG and RI), members of the Specialist Group and staff from another FOD division (construction).

7 A more detailed breakdown of the resource usage is at table 1.

[1] all figures exclude leave

Table 1: breakdown of pilot work recording data from Midlands
(figures percentages of total time recorded, excluding leave)



8 Table 2 shows the 'utilisation' of the time recorded in the pilot in a slightly different way. 'Utilisation' gives a direct measure of the percentage of resources going to HSE's key business areas, i.e. programmes and other frontline/regulatory work (and thus may be regarded as a pejorative term in regard to the essential corporate work carried out by pilot staff). In the case of the staff involved in the pilot, utilisation was 53%.

Table 2: utilisation of resource measured in pilot

	Hours	%
Fit3	905	18
Other frontline/regulatory	1754	35
Corporate	2358	47
Total	5017	100

9 We made great efforts to convince staff of the non-threatening nature of this work, and we believe that they were, by and large, successful: opportunities are at least as great as threats. However, there was a degree of scepticism, especially over the nature of the pilot, and whether 'universal work recording' (UWR) would be introduced, whatever the conclusions of the pilots.

10 We have taken feedback from Birmingham office staff at every point in the process, including a specific feedback session at the end of the pilot. The views expressed centred around:

- more guidance on very clearly defined categories needed – to the extent of an indicative list of all activities within any class of roles;
- an IT-based and effective data entry system essential, with automatic totalling and the ability to be personalised;
- balance needing to be struck between few and many categories;
- benefits to managers in workload planning;
- need for monitoring and reviewing data entered;
- (possible further areas following session in Birmingham on 22/12/05).

Costs

11 It is possible to assess the direct costs to FOD of the pilot quite accurately. Staff taking part in the pilot recorded the time that they spent recording the data: the direct (ready reckoner) costs to Midlands Division of recording the data are estimated to be just over £19k. We can assess accurately the time FOD HQ spent planning the pilot, producing guidance, giving briefing, entering data and analysing the results. Using the same format and daily costs as in HSE Board paper HSE/05/038, the costs to FOD total £23000, made up as follows:

Table 3: the costs of the FOD Midlands pilot

	FOD HQ (days)	Midlands Div (days)	Total resource (days)	Costs at £200 per day (except *)
Pilot design	2		2	400
Training material	1	15 (30*0.5)	16	3200
Training delivery	1		1	200
Running pilots (data entry)		183	183	19295*
Evaluation	2.5	1	3.5	700
Total costs	6.5	199	205.5	23795

* using RR costs for the staff involved

Conclusions

12 The aims of the pilot were met, and some useful pointers for future development of a UWR system confirmed. In particular:

- similar data collected across FOD will be of use in planning and reviewing our work, and will provide to senior managers a much richer picture of what FOD do;
- the resource implications are potentially quite large. However, this was a pilot system with an ad hoc data collection system. A few months into any IT-based rolled-out system (if introduced) would see much greater efficiency and effectiveness. We believe that the resource needs of a rolled-out system could be half of those in this pilot, i.e. around half an hour per week per member of staff;

- handled sensitively, with appropriate communications and full participation by all staff within HSE, UWR can be introduced;
- the value of true UWR (i.e. 100% recording of time by all staff) has not been demonstrated in this pilot. It is very likely that equally valuable data could be gathered by representative and timely sampling.

Contact: Mike Sebastian, FOD Planning, vpn 523 4091, 14 December 20

Annex 1: work recording categories used in Midlands pilot (on form provided)

Name		**Total hours worked in week**		**Leave (hrs)**		**Training (days)**	
Week beginning (Monday)		**other**		**Travel (hrs)**		**Time spent recording data for pilot (hrs)**	

	Corporate support					**Fit3**									**Other frontline/regulatory**						**non-Fit3**					
	Divisional management	Business services	Personnel	FOI	Health and safety	Falls from height	Workplace transport	Slips and trips	MSD	Stress	Noise/HAVS	Disease reduction	Construction	Public services	Asbestos licensing	Migrant labour	Pesticides	Fairgrounds	Civil contingency	RDAs	Inspection	Enforcement	RIDDOR investigation	Complaint	Advice etc	Other
Monday																										
Tuesday																										
Wednesday																										
Thursday																										
Friday																										

Appendix 5
HID Pilots report

Pilot within HID HQ, OSD3, CI2, SI2: a report by Jean Pownall HID HQ1A Finance & Planning

Background and aims

1 As part of the exploratory work for the introduction of an improved resource management system across HSE, HID agreed to take part in a pilot aiming to (i) assess the value of the information that could be gathered; (ii) evaluate the resource implications of gathering specified information, and (iii) gain an indication of the reactions of staff to working with such a scheme. HID particularly wanted to compare 'support staff' actuals against estimates prepared in the normal way (percentaging across activities used by inspectors).

Organisation of pilot

2 To enable us to compare actuals with estimates we decided that HID's pilot should cover a cross section of HQ, as well as frontline admin support for 3 differently organised field units. This was on the basis that the majority of HID frontline operational staff already work record, the others (CTGs) will work record once COIN is successfully rolled out. Admin staff within operational units did not previously work record, nor did any HQ staff.

3 Using information on the main types of work carried out by the admin staff concerned, we selected from the high level categories proposed by PEFD those that were appropriate to use for the staff involved. Within those categories, we had specific needs for detail on certain activities (e.g. time spent on civil contingency work or emergency planning) to better allow a true comparison of data. We also wanted to keep within the categories/activities already agreed upon for COIN. In all, we collected data on 33 activities, including time spent on leave, travel and training. (If we count the need to record assessment, inspection, investigation and enforcement separately under each of the charging regimes that figure rises to 41). The list at appendix 1 shows the categories/activities we used to capture data.

4 HID continued to use the current OG core systems (CIS and ORION for the pilot) but introduced new activities for both admin support staff and HQ staff. Staff who had not work recorded recently were given a refresher training session which incorporated any new activities. Staff who had never work recorded were given one to one training.

5 The pilot ran for eight weeks from 5 September 2005, with 1xB0, 3xB1, 6xB2, 14xB3, 1xB5 and 8xB6 staff recording their work. The B0 – B3 being inspectors with the exception of 1xB3 admin. Each person completed timelines on the relevant OG Core system for each week, to be quality checked by line managers.

Outcomes

6 Both hard data and impressions were gathered. The data for field units' admin support was found to be informative and, if collected nationally, would provide a more accurate picture of where the effort of key members of our staff is addressed. However, the 'inspector percentages' normally applied to support staff varied by less than +/- 10% from the actual work recording. In fact

- CI2 - all variances were less than +/– 5%
- SI2 - with the exception of travel and regulatory communications (still less than +/- 10%) the variances were less than +/- 5%.
- OSD3 – with the exception of assessment other, inspection, leave, and travel (still less than +/- 10%) – the variances were less than +/- 5%.
- The data for HQ corporate support staff was compared with the average unit %age. The results were not surprising in that, for example, the activities recorded were within 5% variance with the exception of Resource management and Operational internal policy standards which were above 20% variance. HQ is, in the main, considered an overhead and all time would be recorded as such negates the need for each member if staff to record their work separately.
- Supporting evidence can be seen at Table 2.

Other general outcomes and impressions are:

- the impressive proportion of units' resource that is addressed to frontline work – almost 88.45% of the total
- the pleasingly low proportion of resource spent on 'corporate support' – 10.3% of the total, the largest proportion of which covers divisional management, and smaller amounts on activities such as local H&S plans and FOI. 75% of the total corporate support within the pilot was unsurprisingly attributable to HQ.
- Some staff, previously unfamiliar with work recording, were pleasantly surprised that it took a little less than 30 minutes per week to enter their timelines onto the work recording systems. This might improve in the long term when all those work recording become used to the new work recording system (COIN). However, these are the people who are less likely to continue work recording under RMS. There was no perceptible difference in time taken to work record, with the additional RMS categories, than before for the inspectors who already work recorded.

7. Whilst in support of effective resource management, the small variation in recorded information against planned norms indicates there would be no benefit in extending work recording to all staff in HID, particularly admin grades. The time taken by the central planning team using current methods based on frontline inspector work recording is far less than the amount that would be expended by all staff in the directorate work recording. HID would support the continued work recording by frontline operational inspectors using RMS through COIN.

8. A more detailed breakdown of the resource usage is at table 1, with the unit breakdown at tables 1a onwards.

Table 1 HID Pilot

	Hours	Percentage of total
Major Hazards	2825	38.47
Fit 3	246	3.34
STEP	0	0
Other front line/Regulatory	3425	46.64
Business enablers	92	1.25
Corporate	756	10.3
Sub total	**7344**	**100**
Overhead	4838	
Total	**15841**	

Table 1a HQ

	Hours	Percentage of total
Major Hazards	55	3.2
Fit 3	5	0.28
STEP	0	0
Other front line/Regulatory	1073	62.63
Business enablers	12	0.7
Corporate	569	33.19
Sub total	**1714**	**100**
Overhead	804	
Total	**2517**	

Table 1b CI2

	Hours	Percentage of total
Major Hazards	853	58.92
Fit 3	74	5.12
STEP	0	0
Other front line/Regulatory	406	28.05
Business enablers	0	0
Corporate	115	7.91
Sub total	**1448**	**100**
Overhead	1010	
Total	**2458**	

Table 1c OSD2

	Hours	Percentage of total
Major Hazards	775	42.31
Fit 3	67	3.68
STEP	0	0
Other front line/Regulatory	917	50.05
Business enablers	69	3.77
Corporate	4	0.19
Sub total	**1832**	**100**
Overhead	1151	
Total	**2983**	

Table 1d SI2

	Hours	Percentage of total
Major Hazards	1135	51.79
Fit 3	99	4.5
STEP	0	0
Other front line/Regulatory	907	41.4
Business enablers	0	0
Corporate	51	2.31
Sub total	**2192**	**100**
Overhead	1612	
Total	**3804**	

TABLE 2	Admin (o)	Assessment - Other (n/c)	Assessment COMAH © & OS & approvals	BI Info & Qual mangmnt	Delivery of Training/Local H&S Plans (n/c)	Enforce - Other (n/c)	Enforcement COMAH & Offshore (c)	Explosives Classification (ex-c)	Explosives Licensing (ex-c)	External Technical Guidance /Support(n/c)	Front Line Support	Front Line /Ext Policy & Standards (n/c)	General Communications (n/c)	Insp - Other (n/c)	Inspection COMAH & Offshore (c)
CI2															
CIS UNIT	180.68	14.54	28.78		9.81	24.22	2.12			3.7	1.8	6.62	13.58	253.19	117.82
	13.13%	1.06%	2.09%	0.00%	0.71%	1.76%	0.15%	0.00%	0.00%	0.27%	0.13%	0.48%	0.99%	18.40%	8.56%
CIS PILOT	344.9	6.8	13.2		22	87	8.5				223.9	17	10.5	388.5	269.3
	14.08%	0.28%	0.54%	0.00%	0.90%	3.55%	0.35%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	9.14%	0.69%	0.43%	15.86%	10.99%
% Variance	**0.95%**	**-0.78%**	**-1.55%**	**0.00%**	**0.18%**	**1.79%**	**0.19%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**-0.27%**	**9.01%**	**0.21%**	**-0.56%**	**-2.55%**	**2.43%**
ALLARS	3				7.2					3			9	8	
	0.71%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.71%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.71%	0.00%	0.00%	2.13%	1.90%	0.00%
% Variance	**-12.42%**	**-1.06%**	**-2.09%**	**0.00%**	**0.99%**	**-1.76%**	**-0.15%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**0.44%**	**-0.13%**	**-0.48%**	**1.15%**	**-16.51%**	**-8.56%**
SI2															
CIS UNIT	28.16	3.14	2.86		0.88	8.09	1.22	19.65	19.38	20.76		13.96	2.31	39.96	6.41
	6.81%	0.76%	0.69%	0.00%	0.21%	1.96%	0.30%	4.75%	4.69%	5.02%	0.00%	3.38%	0.56%	9.66%	1.55%
CIS PILOT	358	101.1			12	43.2	9	267.3	235.4	37		57	21.9	244.9	27.2
	9.37%	2.65%	0.00%	0.00%	0.31%	1.13%	0.24%	7.00%	6.16%	0.97%	0.00%	1.49%	0.57%	6.41%	0.71%
% Variance	**2.56%**	**1.89%**	**-0.69%**	**0.00%**	**0.10%**	**-0.83%**	**-0.06%**	**2.24%**	**1.47%**	**-4.05%**	**0.00%**	**-1.88%**	**0.01%**	**-3.25%**	**-0.84%**
OSD3															
orion UNIT	72.01	105.88	15.4		3.7	3.92	5.07			24.27		7.76	45.32	85.38	98.01
	6.79%	9.98%	1.45%	0.00%	0.35%	0.37%	0.48%	0.00%	0.00%	2.29%	0.00%	0.73%	4.27%	8.05%	9.24%
orion PILOT	240.6	116.5	217.1	69	3.5	1.5	5			39.5	209.2		253.5	101.3	233.5
	2.41%	3.55%	0.52%	0.00%	0.12%	0.13%	0.17%	0.00%	0.00%	0.81%	0.00%	0.26%	1.52%	2.86%	3.29%
% Variance	**-4.38%**	**-6.44%**	**-0.94%**	**0.00%**	**-0.22%**	**-0.24%**	**-0.31%**	**0.00%**	**0.00%**	**-1.48%**	**0.00%**	**-0.47%**	**-2.75%**	**-5.19%**	**-5.96%**
HQ															
Unit %	6.86%	2.95%	1.06%	0.00%	0.75%	1.02%	0.23%	1.19%	1.17%	2.07%	0.03%	1.15%	1.99%	9.50%	4.84%
	118.3	2		9	10	9				36.2	4.5	48.8	52.2	48.5	
	4.70%	0.08%	0.00%	0.36%	0.40%	0.36%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.44%	0.18%	1.94%	2.07%	1.93%	0.00%
% Variance	**-2.16%**	**-2.87%**	**-1.06%**	**0.36%**	**-0.35%**	**-0.66%**	**-0.23%**	**-1.19%**	**-1.17%**	**-0.63%**	**0.15%**	**0.79%**	**0.09%**	**-7.58%**	**-4.84%**

	Internal Guidance and Procedures (o)	Inv - Other (n/c)	Investigation COMAH & Offshore (c)	Leave (o)	Management (o)	Op/Internal Policy and Standards (n/c)	Permissioning (n/c)	Regulatory Communications (n/c)	Research & Tech (n/c)	Resource Management	Stakeholder Engagement (n/c)	Training (o)	Travel (o)	Op support	Totals
CI2															
CIS UNIT	12.03	65.88	7.97	190.23	88.23	6.04	7.57	25.38	2.15	1.62	28.78	164.24	118.74		1375.72
	0.87%	4.79%	0.58%	13.83%	6.41%	0.44%	0.55%	1.84%	0.16%	0.12%	2.09%	11.94%	8.63%	0.00%	1
CIS PILOT		119.1	27	188.4	79.3	19.5	8	56.8		92.5	78.6	236.2	152.8		2449.8
	0.00%	4.86%	1.10%	7.69%	3.24%	0.80%	0.33%	2.32%	0.00%	3.78%	3.21%	9.64%	6.24%	0.00%	1
% Variance	**-0.87%**	**0.07%**	**0.52%**	**-6.14%**	**-3.18%**	**0.36%**	**-0.22%**	**0.47%**	**-0.16%**	**3.66%**	**1.12%**	**-2.30%**	**-2.39%**	**0.00%**	
ALLARS	23.5			15	155.3	61.5		4		23	21.5	32	56		422
	5.57%	0.00%	0.00%	3.55%	36.80%	14.57%	0.00%	0.95%	0.00%	5.45%	5.09%	7.58%	13.27%	0.00%	1
% Variance	**4.69%**	**-4.79%**	**-0.58%**	**-10.27%**	**30.39%**	**14.13%**	**-0.55%**	**-0.90%**	**-0.16%**	**5.33%**	**3.00%**	**-4.36%**	**4.64%**		
SI2															
CIS UNIT	4.16	31.16	0.68	64.68	14.3	21.55	3.74	23.46	1.51		11.89	16.43	53.15		413.49
	1.01%	7.54%	0.16%	15.64%	3.46%	5.21%	0.90%	5.67%	0.37%	0.00%	2.88%	3.97%	12.85%	0.00%	1
CIS PILOT	12.3	145.7	17	678.2	216.5	180	142.5	592.7	11	45.4	6	151.1	208		3820.40
	0.32%	3.81%	0.44%	17.75%	5.67%	4.71%	3.73%	15.51%	0.29%	1.19%	0.16%	3.96%	5.44%	0.00%	1.00
% Variance	**-0.68%**	**-3.72%**	**0.28%**	**2.11%**	**2.21%**	**-0.50%**	**2.83%**	**9.84%**	**-0.08%**	**1.19%**	**-2.72%**	**-0.02%**	**-7.41%**	**0.00%**	
OSD3															
orion UNIT	29.24	28.04	31.43	177.07	51.59	4.31		14.28	77		22.14	53.08	101.55	3.99	1060.44
	2.76%	2.64%	2.96%	16.70%	4.86%	0.41%	0.00%	1.35%	7.26%	0.00%	2.09%	5.01%	9.58%	0.38%	1.00
orion PILOT	4	36	131.6	493.7	236.5			54.5			9	115.7	64.6	347.2	2983.00
	0.98%	0.94%	1.05%	5.94%	1.73%	0.14%	0.00%	0.48%	2.58%	0.00%	0.74%	1.78%	3.40%	0.13%	0.36
% Variance	**-1.78%**	**-1.70%**	**-1.91%**	**-10.76%**	**-3.14%**	**-0.26%**	**0.00%**	**-0.87%**	**-4.68%**	**0.00%**	**-1.35%**	**-3.23%**	**-6.17%**	**-0.24%**	
HQ															
Unit %	2.55%	3.74%	0.93%	12.43%	12.88%	5.16%	0.36%	2.45%	1.95%	1.39%	3.04%	7.13%	11.08%	0.09%	
	144.7			345.7	182.6	680.3		101.1	3	558.5	5	32.9	124.8		**2517**
	5.75%	0.00%	0.00%	13.73%	7.25%	27.03%	0.00%	4.02%	0.12%	22.19%	0.20%	1.31%	4.96%	0.00%	
% Variance	**3.20%**	**-3.74%**	**-0.93%**	**1.30%**	**-5.63%**	**21.87%**	**-0.36%**	**1.56%**	**-1.83%**	**20.80%**	**-2.84%**	**-5.82%**	**-6.12%**	**-0.09%**	

Appendix 6
HSE wide management reports

1. The reports cover a period of 3 October to 25 November, although not everyone started at the same time.

2. These reports are examples of what could be generated. Further reports from the base data could be generated to suit more specific needs.

3. These reports should be used with the planned resource estimates and delivery of progress against key deliverables.

4. The hours can be attributed to individual staff. This detail has been provided to the managers in the individual directorate reports.

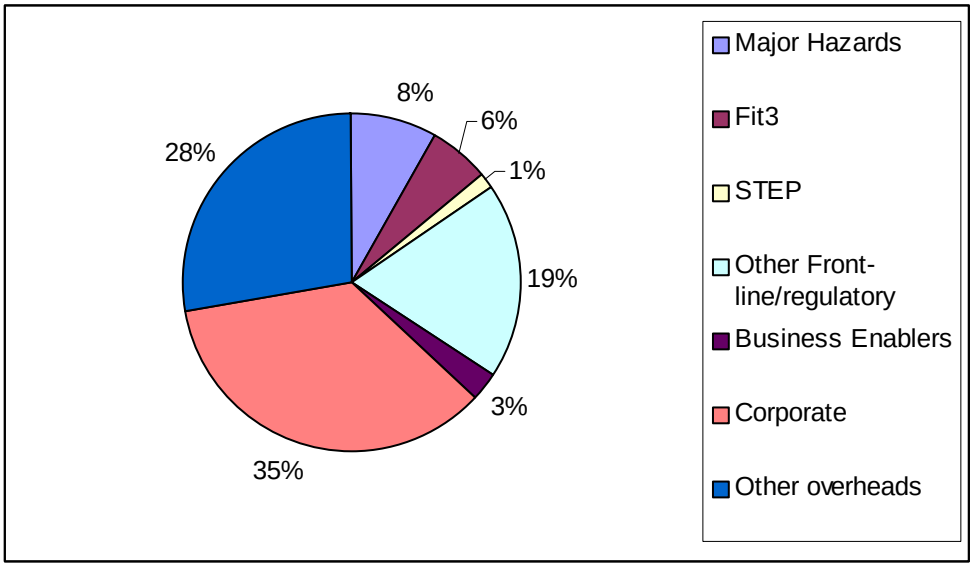
5. **It is important to note that the data is limited to the staff involved in the pilots and is not necessarily representative of HSE as a whole.**

HSE wide Reports

Overall HSE Hours 03/10/2005 - 25/11/2005						
	COSAS	Policy Group	RPD	FOD	HID	Total
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	
X1 Major Hazards	22		188		3733	3943
X2 Fit3	260	1234	9	905	325	2733
X3 STEP	85	28	469			582
X4 Other Front-line/regulatory	11	1602		1754	5399	8766
X5 Business Enablers	1097	85			92	1274
X6 Corporate	2058	1249	9419	2358	1458	16542
X7 Other overheads	1585	3085	3584	N/A	4838	13092
X8 Total	5118	7283	13669	5017	15845	46932
HSE Utilization: Sum (X1+X2+X3+X4)/(X8)= 16376/46932=35%						
Note: Other overheads includes leave, training, sickness, travel						

Of all the staff involved in the pilot over the period 3/10/2005 to 25/11/2005, 35% of the time was spent on HSE key business areas (major hazards, Fit3, STEP, Other front line/regulatory).

Distribution of resources expressed as percentages on a pie chart

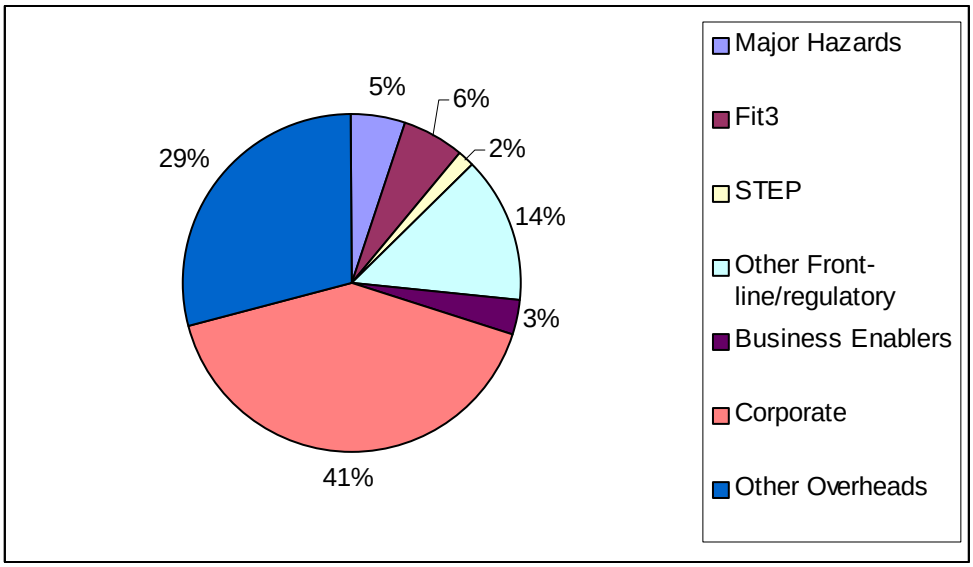


Overall HSE Costs 03/10/2005 - 25/11/2005

	COSAS	Policy Group	RPD	FOD	HID	Total
	Costs	Costs	Costs	Costs	Costs	Costs
Major Hazards	509		3772		37330	41611
Fit3	4447	27376	209	9050	3250	44332
STEP	2644	700	10643			13987
Other Front-line/regulatory	202	34506		17540	53990	106238
Business Enablers	23880	2244			920	27044
Corporate	43162	28446	206977	23580	14580	316745
Other Overheads	33577	66075	78752	N/A	48380	226784
Total	108421	159347	300353	50170	158450	776741

Costs were calculated based on averages for bands using ready reckoner

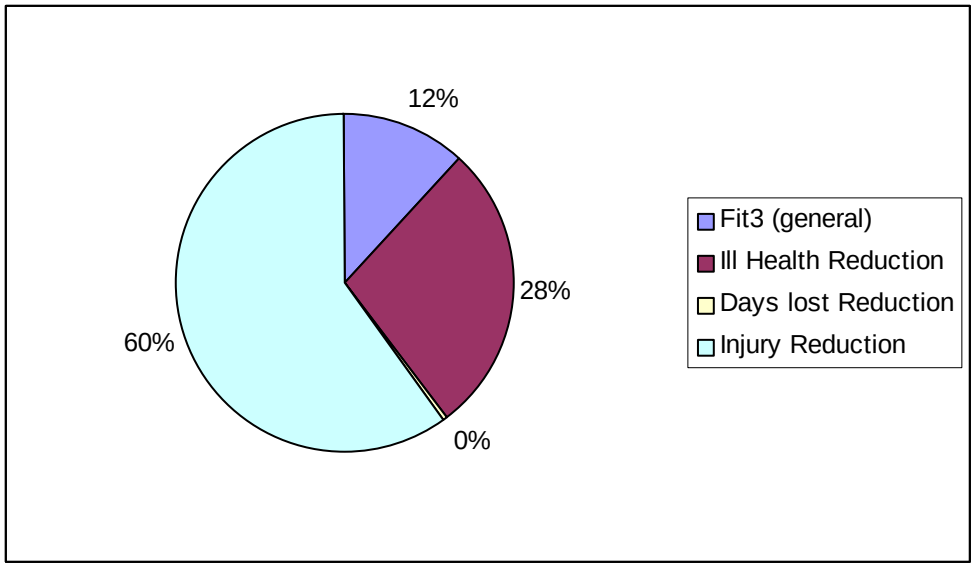
Distribution of costs expressed as percentages on a pie chart



Fit3 Reports

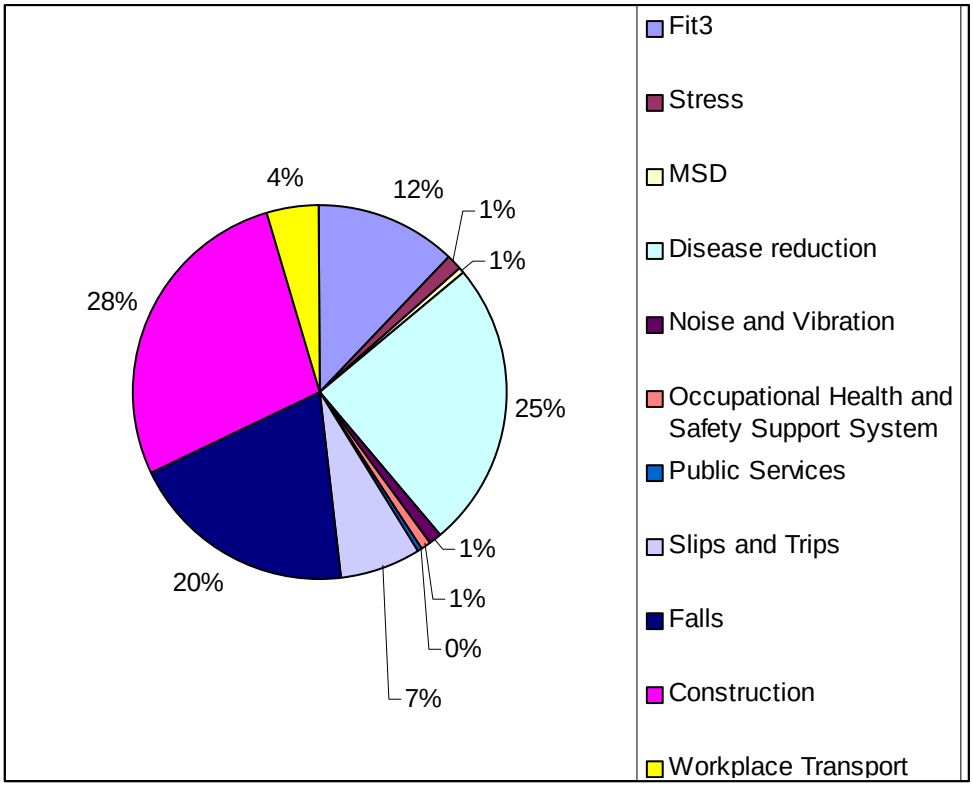
Fit3 hours 03/10/2005 - 25/11/2005

	COSAS	Policy Group	RPD	FOD	HID	Total Fit3
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
Fit3 (general)					325	325
Ill Health Reduction	36	677	5	39		757
Days lost Reduction	9					9
Injury Reduction	215	557	4	866		1642
Total Fit3 hours	260	1234	9	905	325	2733



Fit3 Hours 03/10/2005 - 25/11/2005

	COSAS	Policy Group	RPD	FOD	HID	Total
	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours	Hours
Fit3					325	325
Ill Health reduction						
Stress			1	32		33
MSD	15		1	5		21
Disease reduction		653		76		729
Noise and Vibration	4	24	1	2		31
Occupational Health and Safety Support System	17		2			19
Days Lost Reduction						
Public Services	9			8		17
Injuries Reduction						
Slips and Trips	21	128	1	36		186
Falls	119	395	1	4		519
Construction	2		1	733		736
Workplace Transport	73	34	1	10		118
Total Fit3 Hours	260	1234	9	905	325	2733



Appendix 7

Analysis of questionnaires

A. Staff Questionnaires

Staff were asked a number of specific questions to determine the issues and time taken to work record.

Of the questionnaires sent out to (CoSAS, RPD, PG) staff, 72 (75%) replied.

Training

2 hour training was given which included the background to the project, how the system worked and use of the EXCEL spreadsheet.

9 persons that replied did not receive training. 2 stated that it was not very useful and 1 that it was OK. The remaining 95% said it was useful to excellent and it met their needs.

Number of activities recorded and time taken to record

The project did not explicitly state how many activities should be recorded (a maximum limit of 20 were set on the spreadsheet) other than that it should meet the business needs and that it should be kept to an absolute minimum consistent with those needs.

The following table gives the number of activities recorded and the time taken to record.

Number of activities	1-5 Activities	6-10 Activities	11-20 Activities	Total
No of staff	26 staff	24 staff	22 staff	72 staff
Time taken to record per week (minutes)				
1-5 mins	17 staff	1 staff	0	18 staff
6-10 mins	2 staff	8 staff	9 staff	19 staff
11-15 mins	0	1 staff	2 staff	3 staff
16-20 mins	2 staff	5 staff	1 staff	8 staff
21-30 mins	4 staff	7 staff	7 staff	18 staff
30< t<60 mins	1 staff	2 staff	3 staff	6 staff

There is a general trend that the time taken is proportional to the number of activities recorded.

The average time to record is:

(2*18+8*19+13*3+18*8+25*18+45*6)/72=1091/76 = 14 mins per week per person.

Mid point has been taken for each time segment (e.g. for 1-5 minutes, 2 minutes has been used for the calculation.

Note: The FOD pilot for admin staff has estimated 30 minutes per week if an electronic version of their manual recording system was used, but recognised that this may come down as staff became familiar with the system. It was difficult for HID to work out an average but said that an average of 30 minutes per week seemed reasonable.

Ease of Use

49 staff (68% of those that replied) found the activities clear to understand and 22 (30%) said they were unclear and required further interpretation. 2% of those replied did not give an answer. The focus group discussions concluded the system was easy to use.

Value of the information to staff

The system was not primarily aimed at providing information to staff. No reports were issued to staff during the pilots. However, the system did provide an on line summated information on the spreadsheet for their own activities.

20 staff (28%) found the summated information helpful in their own planning, and 51 staff (71%) did not use it.

Other comments

Staff were asked to provide other information they felt was relevant to the evaluation.

Of the staff that made comments, the main one was asking for more guidance on the use of the activities, which would help in interpretation and lead to greater degree of consistency.

A number of staff felt it would have been helpful to send reminders to complete the timesheet.

B. Management questionnaires.

Value of management information provided in reports

Managers were asked specific questions to evaluate the value of the information provided in the management reports issued to them.

Out of 12 managers sent questionnaires 6 (50%) replied. Two were from CoSAS, two from RPD and two from Policy Group.

The main findings from the Management questionnaires were:

All managers that replied said that the objectives had either been fully met (50% of those replied) or partially met.

Of those that said that objectives had only been partially met, they stated that they would have been fully met had the pilots:

- ran for longer (e.g. for example to use the information for baselining for future planning)
- and that in some cases the information may not be truly representative of whole of the Directorate which would be the case if the pilots were rolled out fully.

All the managers stated that they would use the information for future planning with one manager saying that s/he would like to have more detail and one having some reservations.

50% found the utilisation ratio helpful in managing and 50% stated that they either do not need it or would have to think about how to use it. One stated that it would be dangerous to use, if this was used to make comparisons between units.

A third found costs information valuable, third said they did not need it and staff hours were sufficient, and third did not have an opinion. Of those that said costs were helpful they stated use of ready reckoner adequate for the purpose.

Other ways of capturing Information

Managers were asked about how the information could be captured by other means other than work recording.

All except one manager stated that the information could not be captured accurately by other means with two explicitly stating that sampling would not lead to any confidence as the work patterns in their command were continually changing.

Of the one manager that stated that other means could be used, this was said in the context of specific areas where work patterns were largely fixed. Information in these areas, it was stated, could be estimated.

Note: The FOD pilot, which was not subject to these questionnaires but conducted by FOD themselves have concluded that for admin staff sampling could be used. Further discussions with FOD on how sampling would work in practise have highlighted cost savings of sampling over full work recording may not be as great as first thought.

Effort in checking and managing

Questions were asked about the time it took the managers to oversee, and check the quality of the information.

A third said it was minimal
A third said it was minutes per week
A third said it was less than 1 hour per week.

Other comments

Managers were asked to provide other information they felt was relevant to the evaluation.

Most stated that they would like to continue and acknowledged the value of the information

One said that experience from the Food standards agency should be looked at before roll out.

Nearly everyone said that they found some activities difficult to allocate to their own work, and that this needs to be looked at in greater depth.

Appendix 8
Results of Focus Groups
Report by Ulrike Hotopp, HSE Chief Economist

This report summarises the main comments made during the focus groups. It also contains a section with detailed points made and comments to provide the background and ensure that the reader can access the breadth and depth of the arguments made. These details also show that the discussions were not free from contradictions. The final section includes proposals to improve the system.

Focus groups held:

2 staff groups

20 December, Bootle, 3 participants
13 January, Rosecourt, 5 participants

2 managers group (some have also used RMS)

23 January, Rosecourt, 6 participants, 1 observer
30 January, Bootle, 4 participants, 1 observer (mix of staff and management)

Recording practice

- Daily and weekly recording most prevalent.
- One case of twice daily recording onto a paper sheet and then transfer in evening.

Time taken

- Depending on recording practice
- Between 10 minutes per week to 5 to 10 minutes a day (max 50 minutes a week)

Summary

- Overall the picture is very mixed. While most agreed that some form of time recording was necessary, some felt that this was more the case for operational jobs and that policy and admin jobs were not suitable.
- During the pilot the system had not been used for team or performance management. When prompted most participants said it could be useful in this use but had no experience.
- Some felt the system was very flexible while others felt it was too restrictive.
- A main problem appears to be the lack of consistency in the use of categories and their definition. Participants said that they had problems remembering where they had previously recorded a similar task. It was suggested to prepare vignettes (short examples of the more difficult to allocate tasks)
- There appeared to be some differences in the categories available. Some had a general management category, others didn't.
- Participants did not feel that RMS led to a "Big Brother" atmosphere (but this may have been caused by the fact that RMS was not used for management purposes)

- Many felt that the overall purpose of RMS was not clear. It was not explained to them, and even some managers said that it seemed to have a different purpose for different people. To optimise design and usefulness the objective has to be clear to all and simple to avoid confusion. Related to this is the necessity to avoid the parallel use of different recording systems.

Detail

Positive aspects of RMS

Practical issues

- System easy to use
- Flexibility of categories
- Control over the definition of categories. Some participants felt that the categories could be changed if they didn't appear right.
- The information cannot be collected from any other source. (Flexisheet only record beginning and end of working time)

Direct impact

- Raised awareness of how time was spend by individuals and managers (incl travel time), "made you think"
- Help managers to see how people spent their time and a realisation where the majority of effort went.

Wider effects

- Help HSE to understand the importance of management by seeing how much time it takes.
- Prior to the start of the pilot the team discussed the categories which was a useful discussion.
- General time recording will equalise FOD staff with others.
- Useful for high level decisions esp how much time is spent on programmes
- One participant made clear that HSE needs a time recording system very urgently to measure performance and productivity.
- The information will feed into the fundamental review.

Negative aspects of RMS

Practical issues

- There appeared to have been some problems with the execution of the pilot. People joined at different times and had different information.
- At times it did not add up to the contractual working time of 7.5 hours. Had to invent tasks to fill it up.
- One has to be very organised to use it and record all activities
- Difficult to classify ad hoc meetings. Mostly used a general management category.
- The general cross cutting categories different between participants. One had "General Management" but no "Other", while for others it was the other way round. No category for bank holiday.
- There are flexi-sheets, inspectors use COIN: How many recording systems do we need?
- A spreadsheet will not be able to cope with the aggregated data.

Data quality

- Confusion around some categories e.g. travelling time or Performance Agreement. Esp for part-timers.
- More detail on “own” categories would have been useful for individual time planning (could be aggregated for management information)
- Difficult to differentiate between categories and to be consistent. I.e. the same activity was not recorded under the same category every day (forgotten where it was filled in last time). Example: e-mails: are they programme management or communication. Some serve more than one purpose (same with telephone). This can lead to low quality data.

Impact on staff

- Some staff appeared to have only one category available reflecting their work. This may have a negative impact on their self esteem.
- It was not clear to some of the participants why they were using the RMS and what the objective of the pilot was. Resulting from this some participants could not see what the overall benefit was to them or the organisation. This was reflected in managers and staff groups. If the results are used to shift resources we need to carefully consider what the consequences of these shifts are. RMS will not tell us this. It can give some feeling for effectiveness.
- RMS may not be useful for setting targets to reduce time spend on certain tasks. Because for example training needs etc of staff who are new to a task and therefore take longer are not recognised. Others felt that additional needs and objectives were invented during the pilot increasing inconsistencies.
- It was felt that e.g. some band 6 who would only fill in all their time in one category every day would not feel valued. In many cases it would not make sense to break some of the categories down.
- “Big brother”: If a manager feels their staff are not putting in the hours this recording system would not help them. Who ensures it is reflecting the truth? Will there be disciplinary implications if recording is not correct (as with flexi-sheet? Policy teams are small and managers have other evidence to use.
- The culture in policy group is not used to time recording as e.g. inspectors
- Incentives: What you record becomes more important that what you do.” The performance management system will determine what people do. Objective should be how to improve H&S and the culture in HSE is currently focused on that.

Proposals for improvements

Practical proposals

- The guidance and training could be improved by providing examples of activity allocation which are done by all members of staff such as travel, performance agreement to improve consistency.
- To enable individuals to include more of their “own” categories to help them with their work planning. They didn’t feel this would add to the burden as not all categories had to be active at the same point in time.

The more detailed split would make it easier to allocate activities and therefore less burdensome.

- The “admin” category was felt to be useful for example when after leave going through the e-mails veering a lot of topics in short time, or for reading circulars. There could be some guidance to ensure this was not used as a dumping ground.
- “Networking” could be another category for all the communication going on in general esp in the new open plan environment. This could raise staff awareness as to how much time they spend doing it and management awareness that this is an important activity.
- Ensure there are categories for “Management” (as management tasks do not get enough recognition in HSE).
- Make clear how this relates to the flexi sheet. Is the same information collected? Do they serve completely different purposes?
- Introduce categories for bank holiday, dentist visits, privilege days.
- The shortest category of 15 minutes is for some things too long.
- Include a narrative to allow comments to help management.

Management

- Make clear what the system is for and only use it for that purpose. E.g. to improve team working, to measure productivity etc.
- Show staff the reports for the units, divisions etc.
- Show managers how this information can be useful and increase demand for the information
- Need a challenge so that the board defines what it wants and shows people how they can use the information provided.
- Need to show people the benefits the system has for each individual if used honestly and sensibly.
- At board level management needs to articulate clearly the business case for RMS to deliver the strategic plan.
- The system has to be credible with staff.
- Could there be a way of incentivising people, i.e. if they have not filled this in properly they will not get paid. In the charging area there is evidence that not everybody is fully recording hours. This adds to the risk for incoming finance. How would the RMS deal with a similar risk?

Quality of data

- Introducing some kind of quality test.
- Improve the definition of tasks and consistency of their use.
- To help consistency clarify some categories and add some. If new categories were included they should be opened to all users to ensure if they came across this kind of work they could use the same category.
- Categories below the corporate level to allow teams their own recording within the RMS framework
- Discussion about what is included in general management tasks