



Appliance of Science

The Central Science Laboratory houses some of the country's finest scientists who conduct vital research for the government and other major organisations.



From a base at Sand Hutton on the outskirts of York, the CSL plays a front line role in the UK's agriculture, food safety and environmental science - and provides contingency capabilities for handling national emergencies such as Foot and Mouth outbreaks.

Over 700 members of staff help generate an annual turnover of over £40 million. Not surprisingly, staff welfare is high on the agenda, particularly when "a world class, state of the art facility run on efficient and competitive business lines" is one of many aims and missions.

Efficiency and attention to detail are some of the hallmarks for success. It's an environment where doing things right really matter. This ethos is emphasised by a vision to become a centre of excellence for science, underpinning sustainable agriculture, safe food and a healthy environment.

To reflect such high aspirations, each member of staff has been issued with a personalised cashless card which has been combined with access control functionality.



Staff build up an 'electronic purse' to make purchases at a vending or coffee machine or the till in a staff restaurant. No cash purchases take place on site and CSL offers the choice of cash top-up or payroll deduction for staff to load onto their cards. In January 2002, CSL introduced their latest system from VMC - a leading provider of reliable, efficient and forward thinking cashless payment solutions - to upgrade a more limited catering card cashless operation from a different manufacturer.

Adding Access Control to the cashless facility has brought some unexpected benefits. If a card has been left behind Photo ID ensures that other people know immediately who it belongs to.

CSL enjoy a wide range of benefits such as:

- Higher turnover due to reduced queuing times as part of a smooth running and flexible catering and vending operation
- Much more accurate auditing
- Reduced opportunity for on-site theft due to no requirement for cash
- A significant reduction in missing cards thanks to Photo ID
- Improved reliability - reduced machine downtime due to coin mechanism problems



"Cashless came in from the start when the building was initially constructed in 1996 but only in a limited form," explained CSL Procurement Manager Sally Frear. "The philosophy was to move away from traditional problems associated with cash such as hygiene, queuing times, audit inaccuracies and general security."

About 60% of staff now utilise the payroll deduction system and numbers continue to grow as new workers are employed. Individuals can put anything from £1 to £40 on at any one time and they can view all top-up transactions via CSL's secure intranet site. Guest cards are available for visitors whilst a cash loader provides electronic credit for those not on the payroll system. CSL also has dedicated departmental cards for specific circumstances.

"The old system had reached the end of its life so we had to choose a brand new system. We specifically wanted to combine cashless with access control and reviewed many different systems but felt the VMC Metro solution was the best fit for us. The management information it provides is particularly useful," explained Sally. "At the same time there was a fundamental review of our vending facilities to maximise performance and costs, and we were able to build a deli bar as part of this process."

The VMC system comprises six vending machine card readers, a note and coin loader, two PIN wall mounted loaders for payroll deduction, a guest card terminal and three touchscreen catering tills with card readers. All transactions are logged by the Metro Manager software application and collected using a handheld terminal.



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