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CASE STUDY

National Oceanography Centre

Project: To procure a software solution to perform the critical role of controlling maintenance and asset reliability across the site.

Objectives: To control Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) and ensure the smooth running of the complex equipment that the building houses.

Results: Improved efficiency, asset reliability, utilisation of staff and an informed decision making process, resulting in measurable cost savings.

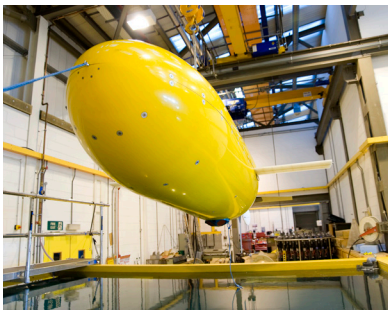
QFM Software - Supporting a Leading Research Facility

The National Oceanography Centre (NOC) is one of the world's top oceanographic institutions, working with government, business and scientists to provide essential knowledge and resources. The Centre operates on two sites, one located in Southampton and the other in Liverpool. The Southampton site is operated by the NOC but is shared with the University of Southampton. Approximately 1,700 persons are based at the Southampton site, a mixture of scientists, engineers, support staff and students.

NOC additionally welcomes several thousand visitors from the wider science and research community through an extensive programme of seminars and conferences which are held at the centre each year.

Due to the nature of the activities which take place in the building, NOC houses a broad range of complex technology and equipment, from sea floor survey systems to pressure testing facilities, laboratories, clean rooms, workshops, lecture theatres and classrooms.

Covering in excess of 50,000 square metres, on a site of nearly 13 acres, NOC has two oceangoing vessels and accommodates a range of intricate equipment. NOC's estates department is responsible for all the building services on the site, including mechanical, electrical and fabric maintenance. In addition, they are responsible for the soft FM services, such as cleaning and security, as well as the management of meeting and conference rooms, reception, mail and porterage services.



"QFM allows us to improve efficiency and utilisation of staff, which result in measurable cost savings."

Since the building's inception, all building services have been controlled using QFM, the award winning computer aided facilities management (CAFM) software from Service Works Global. The software was originally run via a third party FM service provider, who controlled facilities operations at the site until 2000, when the contract was subsequently brought in-house. NOC's own estates department assumed responsibility for facilities management at the site, and considered it vital to retain QFM to perform the critical role of controlling maintenance across the site.

Lewis Rennison, Head of Estates at NOC, explains: "QFM had performed extremely effectively since the Centre opened and we therefore viewed it as an important tool to retain when we took over the responsibility for the building's estates management ourselves."

Due to the vast array of complex equipment that is housed at NOC, it is important to have a reliable CAFM system in place to control planned preventative maintenance (PPM) and ensure the smooth running of the equipment that the building houses. "

NOC's estates team comprises over 40 staff including helpdesk staff, plumbers, electricians, cleaners, security and reception staff, who use QFM to control both planned maintenance routines and also to enable a quick response to job requests from building users. All reactive maintenance requests are logged in QFM, prioritised and subsequently assigned to the most appropriate engineer.

NOC's team of inhouse contractors have "contractor level" access to the QFM system, enabling them to update details of current jobs from notification through to completion. Full details of each job are recorded and can be fully audited and reported upon. NOC's Deputy Head of Estates, Simon Stone adds: "QFM tracks labour and efficiency. It allows us to improve efficiency and utilisation of staff, and enables us to make informed decisions, which result in measurable cost savings."

Optimising Service Delivery

Because of the nature of activities and study undertaken at NOC, a significant portion of staff and students' time is dedicated to practical work, involving the use of specialist equipment. For the estates team, this means that ensuring the reliability of assets is critical.

Rennison explains, "One of the most important routines is the need to control the calibration of certain pieces of apparatus. We log this requirement on QFM as a PPM and run preventative maintenance schedules weekly through the software which is completely integrated with our unique needs. It delivers complete control and accuracy within such a key area."

A key benefit of QFM for Rennison is the reporting facilities that the system provides. "The reporting offered by QFM is comprehensive, accurate and informative. We run regular performance reports through QFM, from which we are able to identify at a quick glance where there are repetitive problems onsite."

He continues:

Should a particular piece of equipment encounter multiple failures, we can investigate the underlying cause and address the issue promptly. QFM allows us to maintain control, not just from a cost perspective, but also environmentally."

World-Class Conference Facilities

Throughout the year, the building plays host to a range of events and conferences (such as the biennial Ocean Business exhibition) in addition to educational days for schools and open days for the public. NOC's estates team is responsible for coordinating the management of meeting and conference rooms across the site, and this process is largely controlled using QFM.

Rennison explains: "Because of the busy educational and research programme that we support, we cannot afford to encounter potential scheduling problems or double-booked rooms. QFM helps us to avoid these pitfalls by providing a centralised facility from which all bookings are controlled."

NOC uses the web-based QFM Room Bookings application, which has enabled it to provide all building users with view-only system access, allowing them to view meeting room availability at a glance. Rennison states: "QFM has brought consistency to the room booking process. It has increased meeting room utilisation and enabled us to deliver a professional experience for visitors."

Supporting Sustainability

As one of the leading centers of its kind in the world, NOC is committed to minimising environmental impact and has been awarded ISO 14001 accreditation. This accreditation has been maintained for several years. Rennison says, "QFM supports us in managing our environmental risks and reducing environmental impact by ensuring the reliability of our assets and equipment. The QFM app further allows us to reduce notification and rectification times for maintenance work. It not only helps us improve efficiency but also eliminates the unnecessary paper trail and support the sustainability strategies to which we are committed."

As cost and energy efficiency concerns continue to be top of the agenda for facilities managers, Rennison firmly believes that in QFM, NOC has invested in a system that will fully support their functional and environmental objectives and reaffirm the Oceanography Centre's position as a leading research institute for years to come.

"Our mission is to maintain our position as the national focus for oceanography in the UK, and remain within the top five centres for Ocean and Earth Sciences and Marine Technology globally. We are committed to delivering world class education and research facilities and QFM allows the facilities team to demonstrate to our own staff, students, and the wider community, the first rate educational and research facilities for which NOC is renowned."

Managing Safety

The site also went on to achieve the ISO 45001 accreditation for occupational health and safety management, which represents NOC's ongoing commitment to eliminating workplace hazards and supporting employee wellness.

Stone comments: "QFM has given us great support in achieving this important certification, and also confidence in retaining it. We can now easily provide records that show our annual servicing plans for each asset and when the PPM took place. That level of auditability is really making a difference."

Future Focus

As an organisation striving for continuous improvement, NOC seek user feedback around its estates' services. This previously took the format of an annual survey, but QFM's Dynamic Forms are being introduced to improve this process. Those who request a service are now automatically emailed a short survey after the work is completed, allowing them to provide feedback on aspects like service and communication quality.

"Regular feedback helps us monitor and improve performance across the estates team. These surveys are a more targeted approach to our communications and we expect to see a greater response due to their timeliness," says Stone. "The team at SWG were happy to help us set up the initial forms, and provided training so we can continue to collect information we need as our services evolve."

Dynamic Forms can also be attached to PPMs on the mobile app, which NOC is looking into for the future. The form will show a checklist of items that require completion to finish the job, helping standardise service across the team and also make completion easier as all information is at hand.