



## Estates & Facilities Toolkit

# 5 things we learnt from our estates and facilities survey

In October 2023, we sent 14 questions to estates and facilities teams working in our schools and MATs up and down the country. The aim of the exercise was to find out what it's really like to be in their shoes on a daily basis, from the highs of the job to the types of challenges they face. The results are in and made for an insightful read – something we'd like to share with you!

We've pulled together the answers to five questions below, and we'll be following up with more results in the next few weeks – keep your eyes peeled for those. If you work in facilities management (FM), we believe you'll be able to relate to the responses of your peers, and also learn a thing or two – there were some fab responses to our question asking for your best tips and tricks of the trade! We also hope and encourage you to share these answers with your colleagues and leadership teams to help drive positive change in school FM.

Ready? Let's get going!

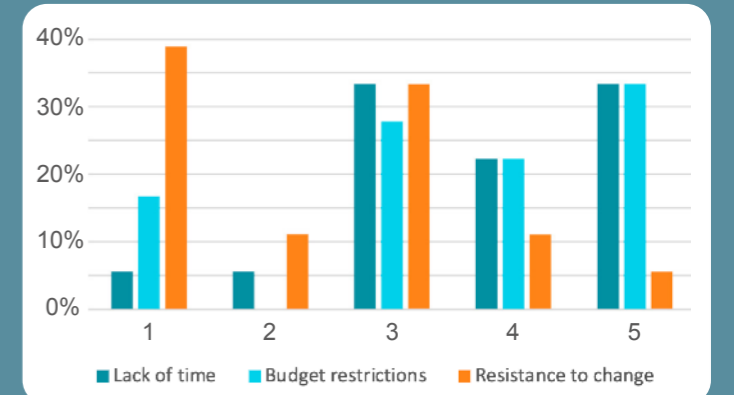
### 1. What three words best describe working in facilities management in education?

'Challenging' was the most common answer to this question, used by 35% of respondents to describe the work. It's positive to see that 'rewarding' came in close second, with 29% of respondents recognising that they do get to see and/or feel the benefit of their work. The third most popular response was 'stressful' or 'stressed' stated by 18% of respondents, and 'frustrating' came in at fourth, with a 12% share of responses.

The remaining responses all tied in popularity, and included positive, neutral, and negative sentiments. We've listed a selection of these below:

Positive	Neutral	Negative
Enjoyable	Puzzling	Underfunded
Interesting	Busy	Underpaid
Fun		Chaotic
		Undervalued
		Misunderstood

### 2. What's the biggest barrier to improving processes or making positive change in your school or trust?



Where 1 means 'not a barrier at all', and 5 means 'a huge barrier!'

Lack of time and budget restrictions were the joint biggest barriers to process improvement, which probably doesn't come as too much of a surprise. It's positive to see that resistance to change was the least, and will hopefully provide some confidence for estates and facilities teams planning a big change or in the middle of a change process that their colleagues are more than likely to be on board!

### 3. What's your best tip or trick of the trade?

They say sharing is caring, and we absolutely loved reading these valuable pieces of advice! What could you action to make your role easier?

#### Tricks for the workday

- "Always look objectively at large project requests, as the solid gold option is not always achievable."
- "Prioritise!"
- "Multi-tasking. If you don't do it, it doesn't get done."
- "Keep on top of your filing and paperwork!"
- "Have a good memory, keep records in order and be flexible."
- "Have a diary of regular services and compliance certifications. Always re-book at the same time every year."
- "Ensure you use the last few weeks of the summer holidays to get ahead of the game before September return."

#### Tips for self-care

- “Give yourself time away from the phones and radio.”
- “Working outside in the fresh air.”
- “For the sake of your mental and physical health don’t try to do everything that is asked of you, there is always tomorrow.”

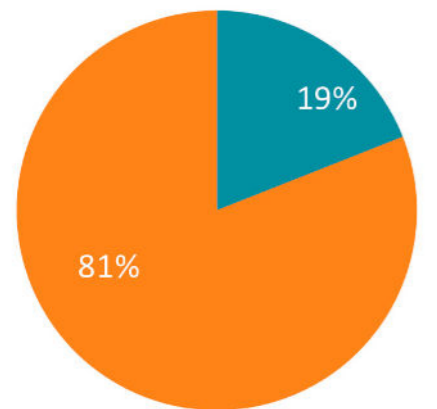
#### Advice for teamwork

- “Always take time to speak to the staff you support.”

#### Our favourite ‘handy’ tip!

- “Use an old mop in a bin bag to clear a blocked toilet.”

#### 4. What sort of system do you use to record your FM activities?



■ Digital ■ Digital and manual

19% of respondents exclusively use a digital system, with the remaining 81% using a mix of manual and digital. Nobody responded to say they solely rely on a manual system. Whilst these statistics show that school FM is embracing the broad range of modern technology now available, we found it interesting that there’s a large part of the sector that is yet to make those changes.

As a digital services provider to the education sector, supporting schools to digitise their manual processes is our bread and butter. But in a sector that continues to be transformed by digital systems that are promoting efficiency, better communication, and more accountability, FM is an area of school activity that still seems to take the longest to adopt technology. We saw above that it’s not necessarily change resistance – is it as straightforward as a lack of budget and time? Or perhaps because it’s a ‘background’ function of the organisation, it doesn’t have the attention of more forward-facing areas, like MIS or finance?

#### 5. List three areas where you think a digital system could make your daily responsibilities easier.

Following on from the question above, and it appears that FM staff do have a strong idea of where they think a digital system could support their role. Answers that mentioned ‘compliance’ were most popular, ranging from ‘compliance folders’ to ‘weekly compliance checks’. There was also a trend in answers relating to record keeping activities, like ‘uploading copies of inspection reports’ and ‘fire alarm

checks. We’ve listed some of the other most common answers below for your interest – is there any that you would add to the list?

- **Recording fire alarm checks**
- **Legionella control**
- **Digital stock control**
- **Weekly compliance checks**
- **Yearly certifications**
- **Buildings projects**
- **Staff training**
- **Record keeping**
- **Project management**
- **Checking compliance over multiple sites**

#### About Every Compliance

Every Compliance is a digital system that’s used by schools, academies, and trusts to manage a range of tasks. The system is split into different sections, from risk management and incident reporting to asset management. Users can pick and choose the modules they need to support their role, including all the areas above!

#### Find out more

To the person who responded to question 5 with “keeping on hand in a decent mobile all the paperwork, tasks requiring action and awareness of what’s going on in the school”, over 3.9 million issues are logged in Every Compliance every year! You can access the system on your desktop as well as a handy mobile app, meaning you can:

- Receive jobs directly to your phone when you’re out and about on site
- Prioritise tasks from your pocket, with all the supporting details about each task stored on the app

- ‘Complete’ tasks via your phone without having to return to the estates office each time
- Access a full audit trail of activities
- And more!

To the person that responded to question 5 with “a digital library of risk assessments would be great with automated reminders for when they are due to be reviewed”, we do that, too! Our Risk Management module uses RAG-ratings to display the severity of a risk on a central dashboard, helping you to make informed decisions about the risks that need most attention, now.

#### Learn more: Risk Management

There you have it, five things we learnt from our estates and facilities survey! We’ll be releasing more insight soon, so keep your eyes on your inbox for that announcement.

In the meantime, if you’re interested in learning more about how our Compliance Software can support daily estates and facilities tasks in your school or trust, get in touch with our friendly team.

#### Get in touch