



Estates & Facilities Toolkit

How to prioritise maintenance in your school or trust

Picture the scene: it's 8am on Monday morning, and one of your sites has gutters overflowing with water thanks to the mound of leaves and earth that has built up after a particularly blustery weekend. The same weather has caused a leak in the roof of the mobile unit acting as temporary classrooms whilst part of your site is extended. You've also got an email marked 'urgent' about a problem with a boiler at one of the seven sites you manage. Sound familiar?

We know that Facilities Managers and **Estates Teams** are up against what seems to be a never-ending to-do list of maintenance, especially in the lead-up to the Christmas holidays. The question is, how do you ever clear it? And how far does having genuine insight over what to prioritise, and when, help to lessen the number of items on your list? Read on to find out!

Make use of good estate management from the DfE

The DfE offers tools and checklists focussed on **good estate management** to help you manage your school buildings and land. These resources are invaluable when it comes to streamlining your maintenance processes and, crucially, in helping you prioritise the most pressing tasks. Whether it's guidance on how to design or complete a risk assessment to best practice for resource allocations, the DfE's advice provides a structured framework to help you make informed decisions about where to direct your maintenance efforts – and ensure that the most critical issues take priority.

Go digital

In our survey of Facilities and Estates teams, **53%** of respondents said they thought their jobs had become more challenging in the last few years. **4 out of 5** respondents told us they use a mix of digital and manual systems, with just 20% relying on digital alone.

However, a digital system is one of the core tools that could help you to better prioritise your maintenance tasks and take some of that challenge away. With a growing number of sites to manage, more staff and students to keep safe, and ageing buildings that bring about complex maintenance issues, it's important to get all your ducks in a row.

So, how can a digital system help you?

1. RAG ratings

RAG (**red, amber, green**) systems make it easy for you to grasp information from a quick glance and are often used in **risk management** activities. In daily life, we often associate **red** with high risk, while **green** is linked to low risk. So, there's already an understanding that if you see red next to a particular risk, you need to act to avoid any potential negative outcomes! It's the definition of simple but effective, and RAG-ratings also support you to rank pending tasks like repairs and compliance in order so you can focus on the most critical issues first.

2. Automatic alerts

Automatic alerts inform you of tasks that need actioning in real time and help to ensure none are missed. They help you differentiate between tasks that need immediate attention and those that can be postponed. For tasks with important deadlines, automatic alerts can help you allocate your time wisely.

Imagine this: you manage five different sites, each with its unique set of challenges. One stormy night, a powerful gale damages the roof of site A, and an incident report is logged. Thanks to the automatic alert system, you're instantly notified about this incident, despite working from site B which is 20 miles down the road. You're able to get a head start on promptly assessing the extent of the damage at the first site, allocating the necessary resources for inspections and repairs across all sites. With automated alerts in place across various areas of facilities management, you can be confident that critical maintenance issues won't slip through the cracks.

3. Asset renewal notifications

Are you still having to rifle through piles of asset paperwork to find out when a service

is due? There's an area where time could be better spent! By using a digital system, you can set up automatic notifications for all-things **assets!** This means you'll receive timely alerts about when contracts are nearing their renewal or completion dates, as well as when equipment or facilities require maintenance or replacement. This proactive approach promotes preventative maintenance, helps your organisation get the most out of its assets, and reduces the need for costly emergency repairs.

Wider benefits of a robust plan

Coming up with a robust maintenance plan has several far-reaching benefits. It's not just about fixing what's broken - it's about creating a more efficient and effective learning environment for the students and staff at your sites!

- ✓ **A safer environment:** Regular maintenance ensures that safety hazards are promptly addressed, and mitigating actions taken, making the school a safer place for everyone.
- ✓ **Better investment decisions:** With a well-managed estate, you can prioritise investments and get more value for money when it comes to deciding where to allocate your funding.
- ✓ **Reduced costs:** By addressing issues before they become major problems, you can avoid expensive emergency repairs.

Your next steps

Effectively prioritising maintenance can make a huge difference to your daily FM tasks and work life. A digital system is one of the ways you can take control of your school's maintenance and create a more efficient and cost-effective learning environment. So, why not start streamlining your maintenance processes now and enjoy the benefits of a well-maintained school facility ready for the spring term?

See how we can help!

[Get in touch](#)