

Facilities Management in 2026: Trends and Predictions

2 months ago



2025 highlighted how firmly regulatory change has taken hold across the facilities management sector. The Fire Safety Act 2021, the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 continued to redefine responsibilities, sharpen accountability and raise expectations around building safety and compliance.

For facilities management professionals, these regulations have moved from implementation to enforcement, setting a clearer baseline that will shape priorities, investment and operational decision-making as the industry looks ahead to 2026.

Paul Bullard, Product and Professional Services Director at [SFG20](#), the industry standard for building maintenance, has shared his insights regarding how the facilities management industry will continue to evolve in 2026 and the changes he believes will be particularly impactful for those working in the industry.



1. Financial resilience becomes a core FM priority

Facilities management enters 2026 under sustained financial pressure. The SFG20 State of Facilities Management Report 2025 revealed that 75% of facility managers identified budget constraints as their biggest challenge in 2025, and 40% reported a budget decrease between 2024 and 2025. Financial strain is no longer a short-term issue but a defining feature of the operating landscape.

As a result, FM teams are increasingly required to demonstrate value beyond day-to-day delivery. Maintenance decisions are being scrutinised more closely, with greater emphasis on cost avoidance, asset life extension and risk reduction. In 2026, facilities management is less about how much is spent and more about how intelligently budgets are allocated.

This shift is driving a move toward whole-life costing, clearer prioritisation of statutory and high-risk assets, and more transparent reporting. Financial resilience is fast becoming a core FM skill, as organisations look to balance compliance, safety and performance within increasingly constrained budgets.

2. Compliance fatigue drives optimised maintenance strategies

Compliance and safety remain top priorities, with 23% of facilities managers planning to increase investment in compliance and safety measures, despite continued budget pressure, according to last year's 'The State of FM Report'. At the same time, the volume and complexity of regulatory requirements are contributing to growing pressure across the sector.

As a result, 2026 is likely to see a continued shift toward optimised maintenance strategies. Rather than applying uniform regimes across all assets, FM teams are increasingly adopting a dual focus: meeting statutory obligations while strategically prioritising the critical assets that keep facilities operational. This

optimised approach goes beyond pure compliance—it's about maintaining business continuity by directing maintenance spend toward the equipment and systems that are essential to day-to-day operations.

This allows organisations to make more proportionate and defensible decisions about resources, balancing safety and compliance with operational resilience and financial sustainability.

3. Digital transformation and AI move from objective to active application

Digital transformation remains a strategic priority across the FM industry, with half of organisations previously citing it as highly important. Over the past year, advances in artificial intelligence and data-led tools have accelerated this agenda, shifting the conversation from potential to practical application.

FM teams increasingly see AI as a decision-support tool, from predicting asset failure and prioritising maintenance activity, to identifying compliance risks before they escalate. Rather than replacing FM expertise, these tools can be used to support speed and productivity, helping teams make better use of limited time and resources.

However, challenges remain. Integration with existing systems continues to be a key barrier, with a fifth of FMs identifying it as a main obstacle to adoption. As 2026 unfolds, success in digital transformation will depend less on deploying new technology and more on ensuring systems work together, data is reliable, and teams have the skills to interpret and act on insights generated by AI.

4. Information governance and accountability under the spotlight

The concept of the 'golden thread' has been firmly established in recent years, but 2026 marks a turning point where information governance becomes a measurable compliance requirement, rather than an aspirational goal.

Asset owners, accountable persons and facilities managers are under increasing pressure to ensure building information is accurate, accessible and up to date throughout the asset lifecycle. Incomplete records, fragmented systems and unclear data ownership are emerging as material risks, particularly for higher-risk and complex buildings.

Last year's report revealed that 37% of FM teams have an asset register that is at most 50% accurate, with a further 6% admitting to not having any asset register, spotlighting the ongoing inconsistencies across the sector.

As enforcement of the Building Safety Act continues to mature, maintaining reliable maintenance records and audit trails is no longer optional. 2026 will see a stronger focus on structured data management, consistent documentation practices and clear accountability for information accuracy across FM teams and supply chains.

5. Organisations will strive to close FM skills gaps

Alongside technological and regulatory change, the FM workforce continues to face increasing pressure. An ageing workforce, recruitment challenges and growing role complexity are contributing to a widening skills gap across the sector.

Facilities managers are now expected to navigate compliance frameworks, interpret data outputs, understand digital systems and support sustainability objectives — often alongside traditional technical responsibilities. This expanding remit is placing greater emphasis on training, competence and knowledge retention.

In 2026, organisations that invest in upskilling their FM teams will be better placed to manage risk and adapt to change. Developing digital literacy and regulatory awareness across the workforce will be critical to meeting the industry's evolving demands.