

The FM Manager's "Human Maintenance" Checklist

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Based on Mental Health UK's [2026 Burnout Report](#) we covered recently, and the unique high-pressure environment of Facilities Management, the FM Business Daily team has put together a practical checklist for FM leaders. This is designed to help managers move from 'reactive firefighting' to 'proactive people-maintenance'.

Spotting the Subtle Red Flags

In FM, burnout often looks like a performance issue before it's recognised as a health issue. Look for these early warning signs in your technicians and site teams:

1. The "Reactive" Shift: A proactive team member who usually anticipates issues starts waiting to be told what to do.
2. Unusual Errors: A sudden increase in minor compliance mistakes or missed "routine" checks.
3. Social Withdrawal: Skipping the morning "toolbox talk" banter or lunch with the team.
4. The "Always-On" Signal: Seeing emails or logs from a staff member at 11 PM or during their scheduled days off.

The "Weekly Check-In" Ritual

The report found that 75% of staff don't feel supported. Use these specific prompts in your 1-on-1s to break the silence:

1. The 1-to-10 Score: Start every 1-on-1 by asking: "On a scale of 1-10, how is your energy—not just your workload, but your battery level?"
2. The "Capacity" Question: Instead of asking "Are you busy?", ask: "What is one thing on your plate right now that feels 'too much' or unnecessarily stressful?"
3. The "Obstacle" Check: "Is there a process or technical issue (like a laggy CAFM system) that's making your job harder than it needs to be?"

Workload & Boundary Management

FM is a 24/7 industry, but your staff shouldn't be.

1. Audit the "On-Call" Fatigue: Review your on-call rotas. Are the same 2-3 people bearing the brunt of emergency call outs?
2. The "Digital Sunset": Model the behaviour. Do not send non-urgent emails to site teams after hours. If you must write them, use "Schedule Send" for the next morning.
3. Mandatory "Deep Work" Blocks: Encourage engineers and coordinators to block 60 minutes a day for "admin catch-up" where they aren't expected to answer the radio or phone.

Psychological Safety & Culture

1. Admit Your Own Stress: Normalise the conversation by sharing a moment where you felt under pressure. It gives the team "permission" to be honest.
2. Signpost Clearly: Ensure the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) number is not just in a handbook, but on the wall in the breakroom and at the top of the digital team channel.
3. Reward Effort, Not Just Completion: In FM, sometimes a repair takes 5 hours because of an old building, not a slow worker. Acknowledge the grind, not just the tick-box.

The "Immediate Action" Protocol

If an employee admits they are struggling right now:

1. Stop the Work: If they are in a safety-critical role (electrical, heights), remove them from the site immediately but compassionately.
2. Listen, Don't Fix: You aren't a therapist. Just listen and validate: "I can see you're under a lot of pressure, and I'm glad you told me."
3. Adjust the Load: Can their site visits for tomorrow be reallocated?
4. Signpost: Direct them to your company's mental health first aider or professional support line.