

The Right Time, the Right Team: Why Water Risk Has Moved Up the FM Agenda

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After more than two decades in facilities management recruitment, Chris Poole has seen the sector evolve in waves. New regulations. New technologies. New pressures landing on already stretched FM teams.

His recent move to [SOS Leak Detection](#) feels timely for exactly that reason.

“I’ve spent 23 years building relationships and understanding how FM really works,” Chris says. “When I looked at SOS, I saw a business that already does the hard part brilliantly. It responds quickly, it does what it says it will do, and it brings order to situations that quickly become messy. That’s exactly what the market needs right now.”

Chris joined SOS in November 2025 as Business Development Manager, bringing deep sector knowledge and a clear view of where FM pressures are heading next.

His role is not about reinventing SOS’s service, but about guiding it into the places where it matters most.

Why Water Has Become an FM Problem Again

Facilities teams are under constant pressure to reduce downtime, control costs, and prove compliance. Energy has dominated that conversation for years, but water is now catching up fast.

“What’s changing is the level of scrutiny,” Chris explains. “Energy management has been measured and managed for a long time. Water hasn’t. Historically, it’s just been there. Moving forward, organisations are going to be expected to understand their usage, justify it, and demonstrate control.”

That shift matters because water problems rarely announce themselves loudly. Hidden leaks quietly erode budgets, damage assets, and create claims nobody wants to manage. They also create reputational risk, particularly in environments where compliance, reporting, and ESG commitments are under the microscope.

SOS's role, Chris says, is to step into that pressure and remove uncertainty.

"We understand the cost and disruption leaks create, whether that's for FM teams, landlords, or insurers. Our job is to restore control quickly and professionally."

A Simple Plan for a Complicated Problem

At the heart of SOS's approach is a deliberately simple three-step plan: Detect, Resolve, Report.

Detection comes first, and it is often misunderstood.

"When people think of leaks, they imagine gushing water and obvious failures," Chris says. "In reality, many leaks are small, hidden, and persistent. Water goes straight back down the drain, so nobody notices. But you're still paying for it."

Using non-destructive technology, SOS can pinpoint leaks precisely without unnecessary disruption. That accuracy matters, because it prevents over excavation, protects building fabric, and reduces secondary damage.

Resolution follows quickly. Repairs are coordinated efficiently, with the aim of restoring normal operations rather than prolonging disruption.

Finally, reporting closes the loop.

"We provide board- and insurer-ready documentation within 48 hours," Chris explains. "That gives FM teams clarity, evidence, and confidence. It turns a problem into a resolved incident, not an ongoing concern."

Moving from Reactive to Preventative

While emergency response remains critical, SOS is increasingly focused on helping clients prevent issues before they escalate.

Condition surveys are one example.

"We're asking organisations to look at their water usage before something goes wrong," Chris says. "A building might have hundreds of taps. If half of them are dripping every 20 seconds, the cost adds up quickly. Most people never see it, but the bill certainly does."

These surveys assess internal systems, plant, roofing, gutters, and specialist assets such as swimming pools. The outcome is practical and measurable: lower bills, less downtime, improved efficiency, and restored confidence.

For FM teams, that shift from reaction to foresight can make a significant operational difference.

Clearing Up a Common Misconception

One of Chris's priorities is education, particularly around first response.

"A lot of people assume the first call should always be a plumber," he says. "Plumbers do vital work, but not all leaks are plumbing problems. Not all plumbers have the equipment or methodology to locate leaks non-destructively."

SOS's role is complementary rather than competitive. The focus is on diagnosis first, so repairs are targeted, proportionate, and effective.

"We can locate a leak and leave a building exactly as we found it," Chris says. "Often, clients don't even realise we've been there until they see the report."

Proof, Not Promises

Precision is where SOS quietly sets itself apart.

"We can pinpoint a leak to a two-inch square," Chris explains. "On roofs, we can use electrical current to track where water is travelling and identify the source, not just the symptom."

That capability is backed by performance data. SOS delivers thousands of jobs nationwide each year, maintains a 4.9-star Trustpilot rating, meets 98 per cent of SLAs, and achieves a 99 per cent first-visit success rate.

"Our statistics show we locate the vast majority of leaks we're instructed to find," Chris says. "That consistency matters in FM environments, where uncertainty is the real cost."

Calm, Control, and Confidence

Commercial and FM settings bring additional operational and reputational considerations. Downtime affects people, processes, and perception.

"In those environments, clients don't want noise or drama," Chris says. "They want a partner who brings calm, control, and confidence, even when the situation itself isn't calm."

That partnership mindset shapes how SOS works, from first contact to final report.

Innovation Where It Makes Sense

Looking ahead, Chris is clear-eyed about technology. IoT and preventative detection tools are becoming more relevant, particularly in high-risk environments such as data centres.

"They're not right for everyone," he says. "But where they are appropriate, they can prevent catastrophic damage and save serious money." The emphasis, again, is judgement rather than novelty.

Practical Advice for FM Leaders

Chris's advice to FM directors dealing with water risk is straightforward.

“Work with people who understand the problem, have the right tools, and know when to act and when not to,” he says.

SOS’s ambition is to support clients from first detection through to full recovery, leaving buildings and operations exactly where they were before an issue emerged.

“Ultimately, we’re a savings investment,” Chris adds. “Get ahead of the problem, and the long-term cost is always lower.”

For an initial conversation about water risk, compliance, or preventative leak management, Chris Poole is happy to talk through the options and pressures you are facing. Contact him on 01480 225533 or at chris.poole@sos-ld.com.