

# Over Half of FM Teams Have Reported Understaffing

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According to a recent survey, 51% of organisations reported a shortage of FM staff, reinforcing that resourcing constraints continue to be a defining challenge for the sector.

Alongside headcount pressures, organisations are also reporting significant skills gaps across their teams. The survey reveals that while the industry faces high cost and compliance pressures, staff training and development was identified as a priority area for increased budget allocation over the next year, with 43% of respondents selecting it.

As part of their State of Facilities Management 2026 Report, [SFG20](#), the industry standard for building maintenance, surveyed nearly 200 professionals from various roles in the built environment sector to assess challenges and priorities regarding facility management.

## The FM industry's most important skills for the future

With fewer people available and significant talent gaps across organisations, FM teams are becoming overstretched, increasing the risk of a reactive 'fix-on-fail' style of working, reduced efficiency and greater exposure to operational disruption.

Alongside FM staff shortages, organisations also reported the following top three skills gaps:

1. Compliance and safety expertise (42%)

Reinforcing the priority placed on risk management and regulatory compliance, many organisations are struggling to secure professionals with the specialist knowledge needed to navigate increasingly complex legislation, maintain safe working environments and ensure ongoing compliance across estates and facilities.

## 2. Digital and IT skills (42%)

Aligned to the increasing role of technology in FM, organisations are seeing growing demand for skills linked to data management, smart buildings, and automation. As digital transformation speeds up, the ability to effectively manage and interpret technology-driven operations is becoming increasingly important.

## 3. Sustainability and energy management (32%)

As organisations continue to prioritise carbon reduction and energy performance objectives, demand is growing for expertise in sustainability strategies, energy optimisation and environmental reporting. However, many organisations are finding it difficult to access the specialist skills needed to meet evolving ESG targets and regulatory expectations.

Kirsty Cogan, Managing Director at SFG20, says:

“The skills challenge facing our profession is multidimensional. The FM professionals of 2030 will need to be equally comfortable discussing how buildings work, interpreting data dashboards, and explaining carbon reduction strategies. This evolution requires significant investment in training and development, but also a fundamental rethink of how we attract talent to the profession.

“Without a stronger focus on recruitment and retention — alongside targeted upskilling in compliance, digital capability and sustainability — the burden on already stretched teams will increase. In a context of tight budgets, this can create a reinforcing cycle: short-term financial pressures push organisations towards reactive maintenance, which makes it harder to implement longer-term solutions and contributes to escalating maintenance backlogs.”

The full report alongside SFG20’s complete list of recommendations for each covered challenge can be found here: <https://www.sfg20.co.uk/e-guide/state-of-fm-2026>