

Estates and Facilities Data in the Healthcare Sector: An asset or a liability?

Part-1

Background

The healthcare sector has a precarious balance to get right – providing care to patients that lives up to their expectations and experience as a consumer, while simultaneously ensuring careful control of budgets and finite resource, against a backdrop of a perfect storm of challenges.

- An aging population, a mismatch between demand, staffing and resources and COVID related patient backlogs are leading to long waiting lists for care^[1].
- Financial challenges from rising operating costs are putting more pressure on hospital finances. And for the NHS in particular an aging estate and a repairs backlog that has hit £10bn for the first time this year is bringing both risk and financial burden.
- Add to this the need to achieve Net Zero targets, which includes Net Zero by 2040 and 80% emissions reduction by 2032 for the NHS, not to mention deliver successful patient outcomes^[2].

At Sopra Steria, we believe that addressing these challenges, and getting the balance right, is possible if decision makers can truly understand the drivers of patient outcomes, which starts with the collation, management and application of data. Short-term tactical approaches to managing data, combined with a lack of focus on the use of buildings and the needs of patients and users, is holding many organisations back from managing their buildings and spaces effectively.

It starts with gaining clarity around how the healthcare estate is being used, understanding the needs of patients and those using the estate to identify where improvements are needed to optimise usage and prioritise funding in the most effective way.

This research paper uncovers the real reasons why many healthcare providers are struggling to achieve their objectives. We surveyed decision makers involved in their organisation's estate and facilities management.

Part One: [The data landscape](#)

Part Two: [Addressing data management challenges](#)

Part Three: [The future of data management transformation](#)

Let's take a look at the [results from the survey](#).

[1] <https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/news-item/qualitywatch-covid-19-not-solely-to-blame-for-scale-of-nhs-care-backlog>

[2] <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2020/10/nhs-becomes-the-worlds-national-health-system-to-commit-to-become-carbon-net-zero-backed-by-clear-deliverables-and-milestones/>



Key Findings

Healthcare organisations are collecting vast troves of data about their estates and facilities, but deriving value from this data often requires considerable manual effort

- 100% are collecting at least some form of data, with the most likely being health and safety data (71%), security incidents/management data (55%) and utilities data (54%)
- Almost half (47%) of respondents say that when creating reports within their role, the majority of their time is spent manually gathering and analysing the data

There are clear reasons for collecting estates and facilities data as well as widespread benefits of effective use of it

- The most likely uses for estates and facilities data are strategic planning (52%), to track productivity (49%) and for operational planning (48%)
- All (100%) respondents list at least one benefit of utilising this data, such as improved maintenance of estates and facilities (59%), improved sustainability (54%) and reduced costs (52%)

However, healthcare organisations must improve the way in which data is collected, collated, stored, managed, and presented for it to be fully utilised to make informed decisions

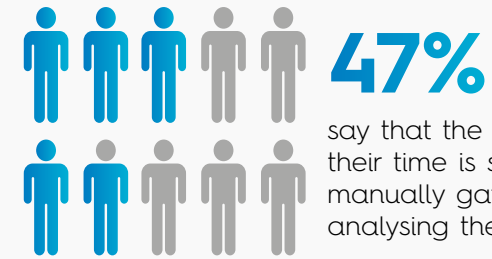
- 92% agree that estates and facilities data is held in different places across the organisation
- 94% agree that estates and facilities data is held in multiple/different formats

This may explain why health organisations are finding it hard to use this data in a way that allows them to understand and truly support healthcare users' needs and demands

- The majority note that their organisation could improve its understanding of the following users' needs and demands: Other agencies (law enforcement, councils, social workers etc) (96%), patients (94%), healthcare staff (92%), non-healthcare staff (91%) and visitors (86%)

To help with overcoming such challenges, most organisations are looking towards greater technology investments, but it is vital that they invest in the right technologies

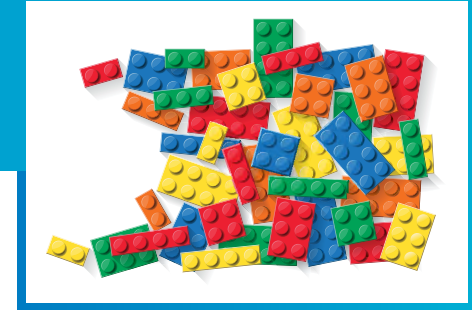
- 87% of respondents believe that their organisation's financial investments dedicated to digital transformation will increase in the next year



Uses for estates and facilities data:



1. Part One: The data landscape



The total volume of data that healthcare organisations are collecting and storing is nothing short of eye-watering. While this can present a considerable opportunity by enabling more data-driven and smarter decision-making, organisations must first be able to work with that data effectively.

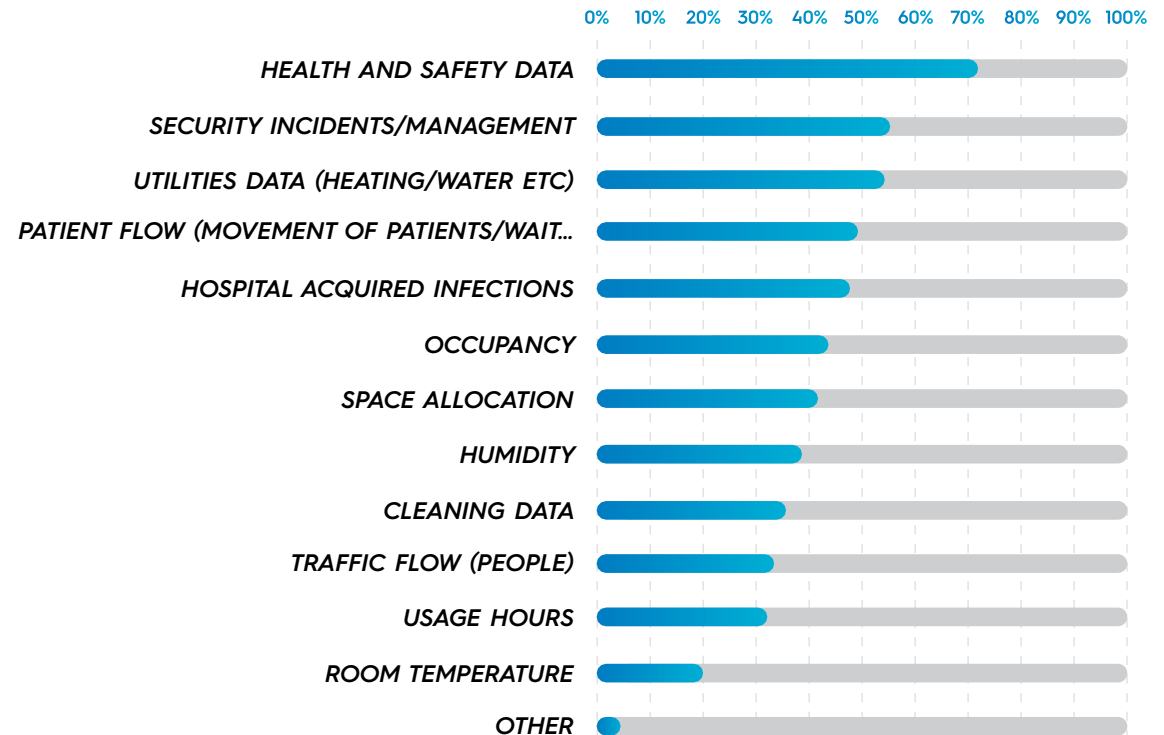
Unlocking estates and facilities data is key to enhancing the services they deliver to patients and other users. The most common uses for estates and facilities data are collation of health and safety data (71%), security incidents/management data (55%) and utilities data (e.g., heating, water) (54%), while close behind is patient flow data (49%).

The types of data being collected are hugely diverse and gathered for a variety of purposes. Unsurprisingly the most collected data “health and safety data” and “security incidents/management” will relate to statutory requirements for recording and reporting incidents. Others like utilities data and patient flow are likely to inform the organisations of the operational efficiency and use of space.

As you might expect organisations reported that the most likely uses of their estates and facilities data relate to overall operational efficiency, such as strategic planning, tracking productivity, and operational planning. What is surprising is the low percentage using the data to optimise patient outcomes or for predicting or forecasting.

On average, respondents report that their organisation is only using around half (six) of the (thirteen) estates and facilities data uses listed. This indicates that data is being notably underutilised across many organisations.

Types of data collected



Methods of collection and uses of data

The survey results show that data is being stored in many different formats and in legacy systems, with processes heavily reliant on human inputs, preventing many organisations from being able to effectively undertake estate management decisions. As well as many types of data being managed, healthcare organisations are also employing a variety of data collection methods, such as online systems (e.g., electronic staff records) (80%), finance systems (67%), and spreadsheets (57%).

In many cases, patient surveys are also being captured, both online (53%) and via paper (38%) and around one in five (21%) suggest that they still use paper data collection methods more generally. Patient surveys provide a highly valuable insight into the thoughts and feelings of those most important to healthcare services – the patients receiving care. It's therefore imperative that for healthcare bodies that do still capture this data via more traditional, paper-based approaches, the findings do not fall through the cracks and this data is still managed and monitored in an appropriate way.

Collecting so many disparate types of data creates challenges in identifying the data that really matters. The key questions to address are around how to manage so much data effectively, and more importantly, how to extract and utilise insight to inform decisions and better support patient care.

Uses of estates and facilities data

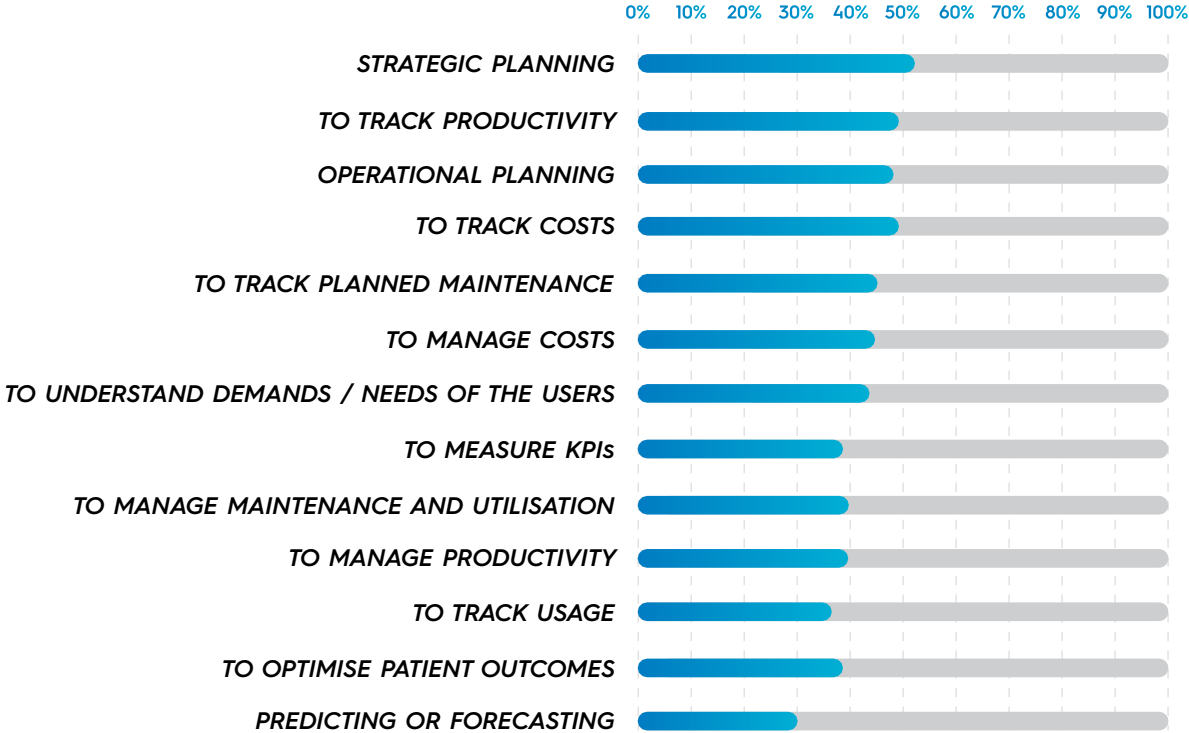


Figure 1: Currently, which of the following does your organisation use estates and facilities data for? [100] asked to all respondents



Metrics that matter

The repercussions of not collecting the right data are significant and shouldn't be underestimated. The same goes for data that isn't regularly updated. Before any updates to processes or the purchasing of new tools takes place, it is recommended all estate management teams first of all assess where their data is, how accessible it is and what actionable information and analytical insight they can take from it. Only by having the right data foundation in place can the rest of the estate management process start to be improved.

Managing patient flow in healthcare environments is crucial to delivering high quality and efficient care to patients, and collecting this data allows organisations to better evaluate the services being delivered and improve the overall patient experience. Using this data can also help healthcare organisations to have clearer insight into how buildings and spaces are being used and therefore plan and allocate their finite resources more effectively.

However, a worryingly low proportion (30%) are using estates and facilities data for predicting and forecasting. This is an area where healthcare organisations can be doing more with the potential to unlock data to plan maintenance and improve building use whilst providing clearer focus on the sustainable use of resources.

The impact of poor data is clear.



Around nine in ten (88%) respondents agree that ineffective maintenance plans result in increased financial costs, suggesting that budgetary issues are being accentuated by sub-par planning and strategy.



In addition, 93% acknowledge that, in an overall sense, their organisation could improve its management of estates and facilities data at least a little, with 19% suggesting that there is vast room for improvement.



Looking at compliance, half (51%) of respondents report that they find it a challenge to know how reliable their reporting is.



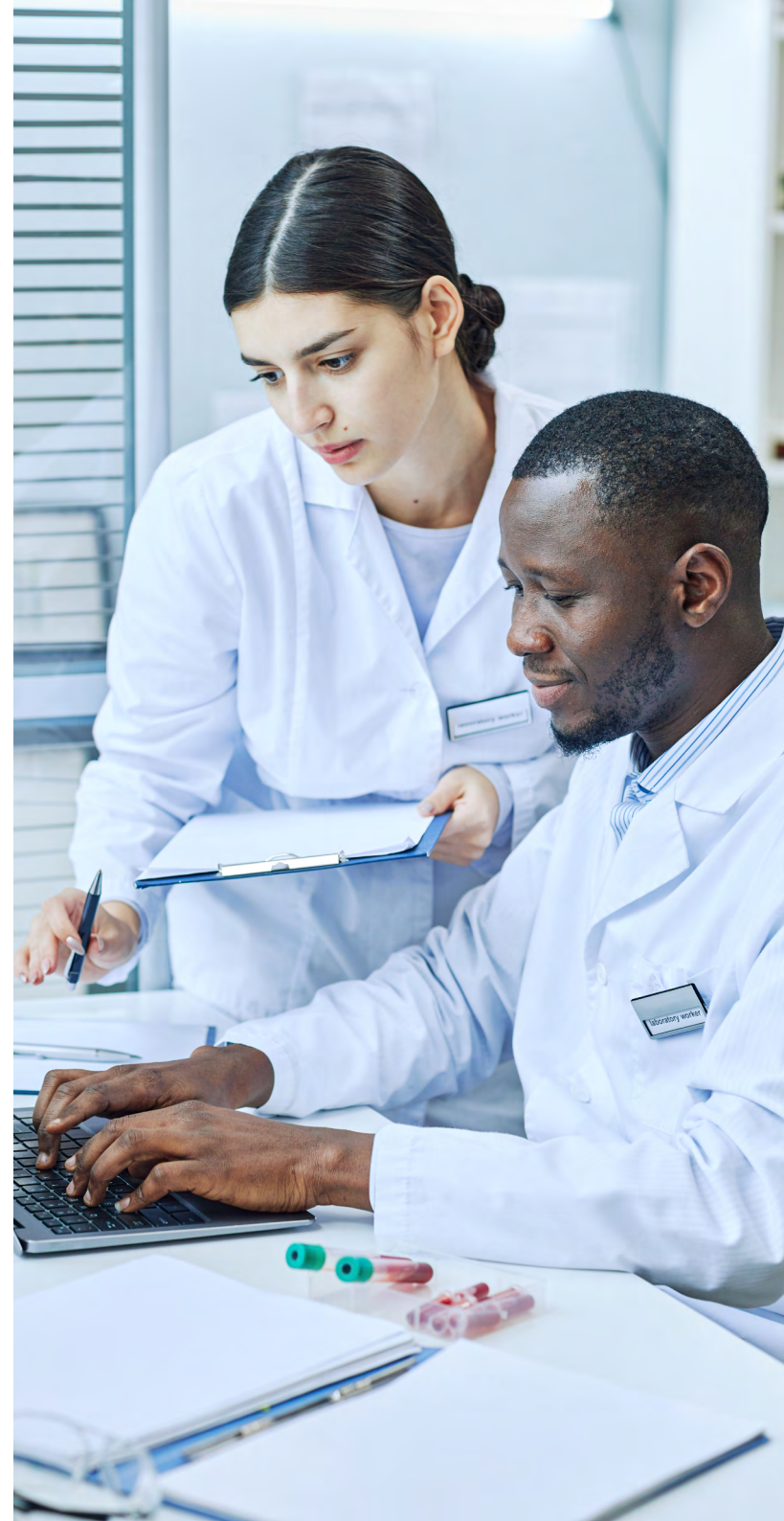
46% said there are issues with the quality and reliability of the data with concerns knowing how accurate the data is.



40% report that there is room for improvement in their data cleanliness and hygiene.



Better data which is higher quality, more accurate and available in closer to real-time will allow for more efficient data-driven decision making. Longer-term, this will mean that patients using healthcare services are able to receive a better overall service.



The Data Maturity Journey

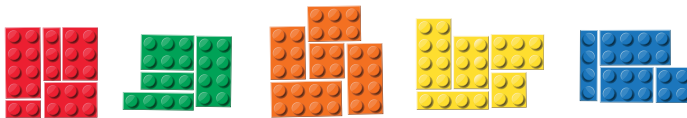
Data



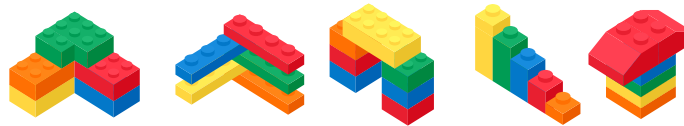
Sorted



Arranged



Presented visually



Explained with a story



Actionable (Useful)



“

Organisations need to revisit their Estates Management Strategy, to leverage digital opportunities to better manage their data to deliver better experiences, improved efficiencies and sustainable outcomes.

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More Information

Sopra Steria helps clients to optimise their physical estates through true digital transformation. We have over 35 years' experience in Estate Management digitalisation across the public and private sectors. Our proven approach to creating an Estate Management ecosystem helps clients to adopt new technologies and integrate existing processes and systems to streamline the complex and varied tasks involved in Estate Management, while maximising efficiency and sustainability.

For more information on the property services we provide to public and private sector organisations please email us at EstateManagement@soprasteria.com.

Or you can visit us at <https://www.soprasteria.co.uk/capabilities/business-services/estate-management>

We look forward to working with you.