



## How to prioritise maintenance - maintenance priority tools

To understand the principles of effective maintenance of the estate and the importance of maintenance planning, you should read the guidance on [maintenance](#) in good estate management for school (GEMS).

This document is a tool to help you identify what additional factors you may want to consider when prioritising maintenance works. This tool is most likely to be used by estate managers involved in planning and prioritising building maintenance works. The outcome of the exercise will inform maintenance and budget planning and strategic decision making.

You are likely to have a schedule of identified maintenance works that you may not have the resources to undertake in full, or which need to be undertaken over a period of time. You should prioritise your maintenance works to ensure you make best use of your resources, including available funding.

To do this, you will need to have an [assessment of the condition of your estate](#) along with risks and other factors that you consider important. You can then use this information to determine the maintenance priorities within your available budget, or to inform budget planning.

This document describes two approaches presented as matrices focused on risk and operational factors. These two matrices build on the details set out in GEMS to provide examples of how you can combine various risk factors and operational factors to identify priority works. You could use either or both types of approaches. You can use the supplemental '[Risk based matrix](#)' tool' to develop a risk-based approach in your organisation.

These are examples only and are not intended to provide prescriptive methodologies. You should adapt these methodologies to meet the needs of your school or organisation.

### Risk based tool

This matrix is based on an assessment of risk factors, their severity and the probability of failure.

You can use the tool to consider the risk factors and probability of failure of items if you don't undertake maintenance, and rank them in order of priority.

#### Risk factors

The risk factors in the tool cover:

- health and safety and statutory compliance
- the impact on the operation of the school
- the potential financial or reputational implications
- the impact on the ongoing condition of the building or elements within it.

You could consider other risk factors to reflect your organisation.

You should consider and assess the severity of the risk in terms of the consequences for your organisation.



### **Probability of failure**

The probability of failure in the tool is defined as:

- unlikely
- possible
- likely
- certain

You will need advice from your building professional or use your condition surveys to help identify the probability of failure.

**Outcome:** By applying a consistent methodology, you will be able to rank different maintenance works against each other and ensure that you focus and prioritise your resources to minimise risks.



### RISK BASED TOOL

		Risk Area				Probability of failure			
Severity		Health and safety /statutory compliance	Operational/ service interruption	Maintenance budget /business/ financial	Building or elemental condition/ deterioration	<b>1 - Unlikely</b> Operationally sound. Normal wear and tear. Estimated to fail in 5 to 10 years.	<b>2 - Possible</b> Minor deterioration/ damage. Estimated to fail in up to 5 years.	<b>3 - Likely</b> Significant deterioration and damage. Estimated to fail within a year.	<b>4 - Certain</b> Failure imminent or has already occurred.
<b>Severity of consequences</b>	<b>1 Insignificant</b>	No risk of injury or breach of procedures	Minimal or no impact on school operation	Minimal or no impact on reactive maintenance budget or reputation	Work can be delayed without affecting condition of building or services	1	2	3	4
	<b>2 Minor</b>	Minor injury, trivial breach of procedures or minimal breach of legal requirements	Localised impact, little disruption or impact on school operation	Possible impact on reactive maintenance budget, complaint or impact on reputation	Could develop into minor deterioration of building or services if delayed	2	4	6	8
	<b>3 Moderate</b>	Injury or illness resulting in absence, significant breach of procedures or legal requirements	Impact on large part of school, disruption to normal school operation	Significant impact on reactive maintenance budget, reputational impact, financial penalty	Will result in significant deterioration of building fabric or services if delayed	3	6	9	12
	<b>4 Major</b>	Major injury, notifiable breach of legal requirements or procedures, litigation likely	Major impact and disruption to whole school operation	Major impact on reactive maintenance budget, loss of reputation, financial penalty	Serious deterioration of building and services and drop in overall condition category if delayed	4	8	12	16
	<b>5 Catastrophic</b>	Fatality, prosecution from legal breach	Failure results in closure of whole school operation	Extensive impact on maintenance or capital budgets, reputational impact, significant financial penalties	Will result in complete building failure, unsuitable for occupation if delayed	5	10	15	20



## Operational factor tool

As well as a risk-based prioritisation, you may want to consider other factors to help you prioritise your maintenance works. This does not need to be complex. The level of detail will depend on the size of your estate and [how much you know about it](#).

This matrix is based on an assessment of other factors that may impact on the operation of the school. It is more specific than the risk tool and can be used to assess the priority of maintenance works at a very local level, for example by building, room or area within a building. This is an example only and is not intended to provide a prescriptive methodology. Each school or organisation should use a methodology to meet their respective needs.

You can use the tool to consider various operational factors to help you rank maintenance works in order of priority. The prioritisation assessment in this tool is more subjective, but using this type of approach will enable you to apply a consistent and transparent methodology.

### Factors to consider

The factors in the tool cover:

- The importance of the building, room or area within the building to the operation of the school – for example how important is it to the learning environment or the business reputation.
- The prioritisation assessment within the condition survey – how has the condition survey prioritised these works, and why.
- The suitability of the building, room or area for its current purpose – is it fit for purpose and does it meet the needs of users.
- The longevity of the building, room or area – is it likely to remain in the estate or is there potential for it to be used for another purpose (including internal changes), sold or leased.

You could consider other operational factors to reflect your particular priorities.

You should consider each building, room or area (whichever you use) and assess them against each of the operational factors you are using. Try and keep it simple to enable you to compare and prioritise. Record the decision so you have a reference and can ensure your assessments are consistent.

### Outcome

By applying a consistent methodology, you will be able to rank different maintenance works in different buildings, rooms or areas against each other and ensure that you focus and prioritise your resources to reflect your operational priorities.



### OPERATIONAL FACTOR TOOL (example only)

		Factors to consider (examples only)				Prioritise works decision (illustrative only)	
Building	Rooms or areas in each building (examples only)	Importance or priority of each area to the school (1 to 4)	Priority (from condition survey, 1 to 4)	Suitability	Longevity in school estate/for current use	Undertake work as priority	Reasoning for decision
Main school building	Reception	1	1	No	10 years	Yes	This is an important area, plus it is not suitable for its current purpose (the works would make it suitable), the works are assessed in the highest priority category and it is a long term asset.
	Classroom 1	1	4	Yes	10 years	No	Whilst this is an important room for the school and a long term asset, it is already suitable for its current purpose and the works are assessed in the lowest priority category.
	Classroom 2	1	2	Yes	10 years	Maybe (if budget permits)	Whilst this is an important room for the school and it is a long term asset, it is already suitable for its current purpose although the works are assessed in priority category 2.
	Classroom 3	4	2	No	10 years	No	Although same priority category as classroom 2 and is not suitable for use, this room is not currently needed for the school operation and so is of low importance.
	Staff room	2	2	No	10 years	Yes	This is not an important room but it is not suitable for its current purpose (the works would make it suitable), the works are assessed in priority category 2 and it is a long term asset.
Outbuilding	Storage room	3	1	No	1 year	No	Keep wind and watertight and safe only. Despite being priority category 1 and not suitable for use, it is not important to the school operation and it is a very short term asset and will soon be removed from the estate (such as for sale or demolition).