



Facilities Management

Community ownership of assets can help transform communities by protecting and developing key local services, creating jobs and opportunities and building resilience. Irrespective of the size of your facility, a key element of successful community ownership is effective facilities management.

✓ What is Facilities Management?

Facilities Management (FM) is one of the fastest growing professions in the UK. At the core of the FM function is the requirement to manage and FM staff can be expected to be responsible for managing a wide range of areas including property, services, contractors, staff, standards, compliance, projects, finance, risk and quality. It is a profession that is integrated within every single sector, from offices, schools, charities, retail, leisure, factories, warehouses etc. and is a vital strategic discipline because it 'translates' the ongoing change required by organisations into day-to-day reality for people in their work space. Excellent facilities management can, amongst other things deliver the following benefits:

1. Deliver effective management of an organisation's asset
2. Facilitate working practices, services and the needs of those using the services
3. Enable new working styles and enhance the flexibility around processes – vital in this technology-driven age
4. Help the integration processes associated with change in an ever-changing environment
5. Deliver service / business continuity and workforce protection
6. Enhance and project an organisation's profile and what it delivers
7. Enhance the skills of people within the FM sector and provide identifiable and meaningful career options

✓ Understanding Buildings

There are many different roles within Facilities Management and although many of them don't require technical qualifications, it is extremely useful for anyone working within a Facilities Management team to have a basic understanding of how buildings work, how they are structured and what it takes to keep them functioning. FM like most other professions uses a lot of acronyms and terms which whilst understood by experienced practitioners, can confuse those who are newer to the profession. Two of the most commonly used terms are 'Soft FM' and 'Hard FM' and whilst there are many different definitions, it is widely understood that 'Soft FM' relates to building services that are heavily reliant upon people to deliver them, such as reception, cleaning and catering. 'Hard FM' relates to the more technical services that are reliant upon plant and equipment such as heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and maintenance. Learning some of the basics around building structure and operation and the common terms associated with them can be hugely beneficial to FM teams managing a safe and healthy building.

✓ Property Management

Property cost is one of the largest areas of expenditure for any organisation. Whether buildings are owned or leased it's an area that anyone working in FM should have an understanding of. The level of responsibility in this area will vary for each FM professional, from keeping track of the condition of buildings, having knowledge of leases to writing a comprehensive property management plan. FM teams may have to manage the balance of trying to meet the organisation's current property needs; ensuring that it is efficient and fit for purpose at a time when budgets are limited. It's also important for FM teams to keep abreast of the ever-changing property market locally, as they may be involved in helping to shape the organisations asset development strategy or in finding new premises.



✓ **Workspace Management**

Understanding how best to utilise the space within a building is a key FM responsibility. In order to do this effectively, it's essential to understand the different types of workspace and what it can be used for as not all the space within a building is suitable for occupation. When looking at workspace, the FM team have to consider the activities taking place in the building, the number of people and the type of space and ensure that they are making the best use of the space available. Planning for future expansion or changes is also a fundamental element to successful workspace management and FM teams are expected to be aware of changes in trends and technology.

✓ **Maintenance Management**

Every FM team has a responsibility for ensuring buildings, plant and equipment are maintained, not only in accordance with manufacturer's specifications, but also to meet any statutory requirements. To do this effectively, FM teams need to first understand what requires maintenance and then to schedule how and when it should take place. There are different types of maintenance ranging from 'reactive' to 'scheduled' and 'statutory' and the FM team is expected to identify and plan for every element within the building, to ensure the maintenance is carried out not only at the right time, but by a competent person.

✓ **Health and Safety (H&S)**

Management of Health & Safety is a large part of every FM professional's daily responsibilities and it is essential that FM teams are competent to deal with all foreseeable risks. Whilst every employee has a responsibility when at work to conduct themselves in a way that doesn't put others at risk, the 'responsible person's' role required in most pieces of legislation often sits with the Facilities Manager. Responsibilities in H & S range from carrying out risk assessments, to training, ensuring a safe workplace with safe work equipment and providing information to the enforcing authorities. Ignorance of the law is not an accepted excuse if something goes wrong so FM teams must make sure they are aware of what they need to be doing, of any relevant legislative requirements in place and also to ensure that they keep abreast of any upcoming changes.

✓ **Energy and Environment**

Whilst the management of Health and Safety has long been the responsibility of Facilities Managers, being responsible for environmental management in areas such as energy and sustainability is much newer. FM teams need to ensure they keep up to date with the changes surrounding air, land, water and energy legislation which is a challenge in what is a fast moving area. In organisations which have not yet prioritised environmental matters, FM teams are often responsible for championing the benefits of improved environmental practices whilst keeping up to date with best practice and ensuring compliance with legislation.

✓ **Contract Management**

Every organisation will, from time to time, have a requirement that they cannot deliver and will need to bring in, or outsource the work to an external contractor. Whilst a small number of organisations choose to self-deliver most of their activities and only outsource very specialist services, many organisations choose to outsource a wide range of services. Whatever model an organisation prefers, it is often the FM team who are responsible for specifying the requirement, finding the contractor and then overseeing the work. To do this, the FM team will need to have an understanding of the procurement options available to them, any recognised procurement requirements, such as those within the public sector and also know the correct steps to follow in a formal tender process. They must understand how to get the best value from the contractor whilst ensuring compliance with any health and safety or legislative requirements.

✓ **Customer Service in Facilities Management**

Customer service is all about being able to connect, to listen, understand and even anticipate the customer/service user's needs and wants. It is an area that organisations realise they must get right not only to retain customers and service users, but to meet the strategic objectives of the organisation. FM teams have a range of different customers and need to ensure that they can assess which communication methods are appropriate for each interaction, from face to face, telephone and email, to notices, signs and reports. There are lots of different skills that are needed to have a successful career in FM and customer service and communication skills are the most important as FM teams must be able to interact and communicate successfully.

✓ **Professional Development in Facilities Management what's possible?**

There are an increasing number of ways for FM professionals to develop their skills and expertise, many of which are now certified and accredited. There are now numerous organisations offering training and development in a range of FM skills with delivery options including face-to-face, online and distance learning. Professional development is not limited to training and qualifications, it's also important for FM professionals to ensure they keep themselves up to date with industry best practice through membership of professional organisations such as the British Institute of Facilities Management (BIFM), Rics and CIBSE and through reading trade magazines SHP and The Environmentalist.

**If interested in Facilities Management
Training contact The Community Ownership
Support Service on 0131 225 2080**