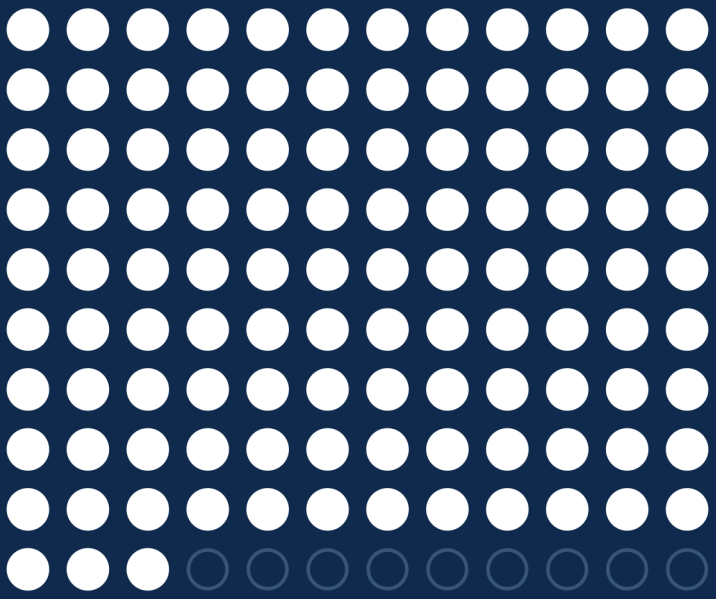
FishTank



Each dot is one respondent. Filled: uses AI on a personal account for work.

Your frontline already *runs on AI.*

93% of FM staff we surveyed use personal AI accounts for work. 75% of their leaders say no AI guidance exists.

UK FM and Building Services
N = 8 organisations, 120 respondents

FishTank Group Ltd
Company number 16670060

00 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The risk is already on site

Margin pressure meets shadow AI. Nobody owns it, and the hours it could save are still being spent.

93%
use AI on personal accounts for work
111 of 120. Only 6% use work-approved tools alone.

75%
of leaders say no AI guidance exists
12 of 16. 15 of 16 are not confident AI is used safely.

71%
report an AI near-miss
85 of 120. 38% describe alarm codes or tenant details going into AI.

5.9 hrs
per person, per week spent on two admin tasks
About 709 hours a week across 120 people. Midpoint estimate.

UK FM firms are bidding against rivals who can show smarter reporting, on margins that leave no room for admin waste. Their teams have already found AI.

93% of the 120 people we surveyed use it on personal accounts for work, often on their phone and 22% pay for it themselves. None of the 16 leaders reports formal ownership of AI, and 75% say no guidance exists.

The result is risk without return. 71% report a near-miss, from alarm codes pasted into ChatGPT to an AI-written RAMS that missed a site hazard. Each person still spends an estimated 5.9 hours a week on two admin tasks - such as job sheets, CAFM updates or compliance chasing.

The fix is to find your two biggest drains, design the answer with your team, and build it inside 90 days.

> "I pay £20 a month out of my own pocket for ChatGPT to turn van notes into client emails. Nobody's given us a work login or told us where the line is."
>
> Engineer, UK FM firm

THE FINDING

AI use is universal, unmanaged and mostly on personal accounts. Client data is already leaving the business.

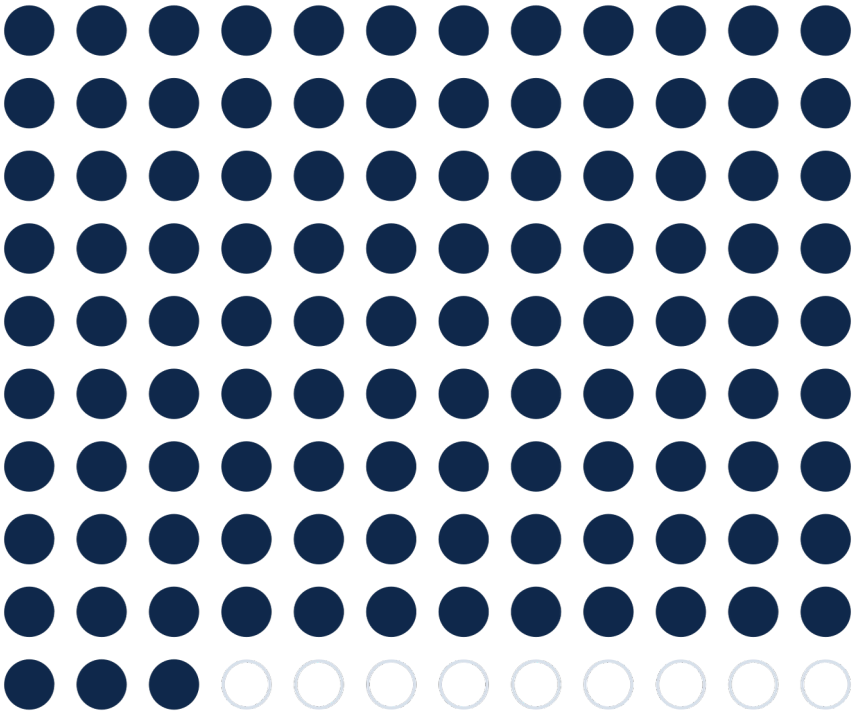
THE FIX

Map your two heaviest workflows with the people who run them. Build tools around them, with clear rules from day one.

THE TARGET

Zero client data in personal tools. Hours back from your two biggest drains, measured by day 90.

01 IN ONE NUMBER



111 of 120

people across eight UK FM firms use AI on a personal account for work. Only 7 use work-approved tools alone.

02 METHODOLOGY

Eight firms. *120 voices.*

16 Leaders

32 Managers

72 Operators

Firms A to H span hard and soft FM, from 31 to 300 staff and £2m to £100m revenue.

Structured diagnostic, collected in Q3 2026, with three question paths by role. Firms contributed between 5 and 32 respondents. Across the sample: 16 leaders, 32 managers and 72 operators. Results are pooled, so larger firms carry more weight. Firms A and H make up 58 of 120 responses (48%).

All responses are anonymised. Percentages are rounded. Hours were captured in bands and estimated at band midpoints, with "4+ hours" counted as 5.

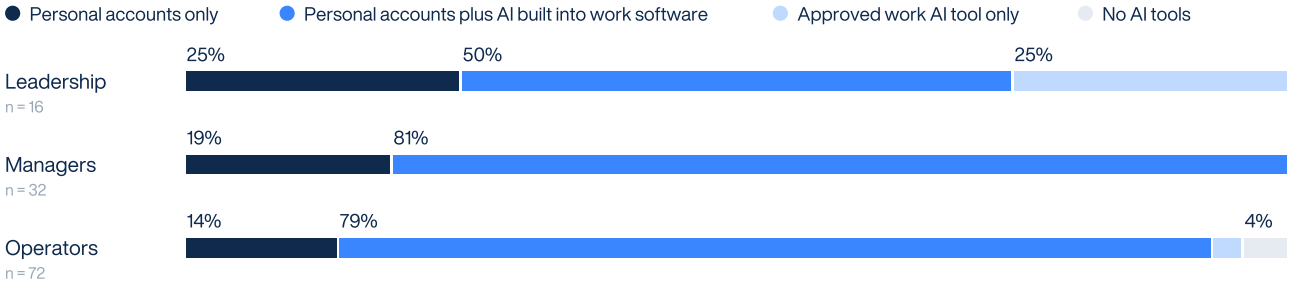
FIRM	SUBSECTOR	HEADCOUNT	REVENUE	N
Firm A	Integrated FM Hard and soft FM for commercial clients.	76 to 150	£10m to £100m	32
Firm B	Cleaning Commercial cleaning contractor.	76 to 150	£2m to £10m	8
Firm C	M&E Planned and reactive M&E maintenance.	31 to 75	£2m to £10m	9
Firm D	Security Security and front of house services.	151 to 300	£10m to £100m	13
Firm E	Grounds Grounds maintenance contractor.	31 to 75	£2m to £10m	5
Firm F	Property maintenance Multi-trade repairs and maintenance.	76 to 150	£10m to £100m	15
Firm G	Fire and compliance Fire safety and statutory compliance services.	31 to 75	£2m to £10m	12
Firm H	Soft FM Soft FM for public and private sector clients.	151 to 300	£10m to £100m	26

Source: FishTank AI Readiness Diagnostic, Q3 2026, n=120.

Everyone uses AI. *Nobody owns it.*

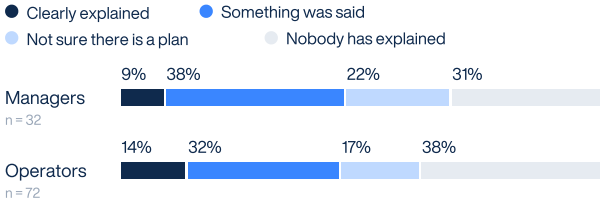
93% use personal AI accounts for work. None of the 16 leaders reports formal ownership of AI.

Every manager uses AI on a personal account



AI tool account type by tier (C2). "AI built into work software" means AI features inside tools such as Outlook or the CAFM, not an approved AI assistant. Source: FishTank AI Readiness Diagnostic, Q3 2026, n=120.

Only 12% of the frontline have had AI direction explained



Managers and operators (B1). All 16 leaders answered "actively discussing". Source: FishTank AI Readiness Diagnostic, Q3 2026, n=120.

38% pay for a consumer AI tier such as ChatGPT Plus or Claude Pro. 22% say they fund it themselves.

43% use AI on their phone for work.

43% of managers and operators are not sure what they are allowed to do.

LEADERSHIP, 16 RESPONDENTS

12/16 say staff have been given no AI guidance (E4)

14/16 have no AI policy in place. 9 say one is planned (E5)

15/16 are not confident AI is being used safely (E6)

0/16 report a named, formal AI owner. 9 say nobody owns it (B2)

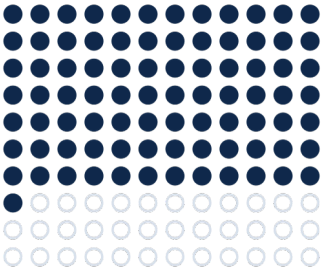
"One of the lads pasted a site handover sheet – key-safe codes, out-of-hours alarm resets, the lot – into ChatGPT just to tidy it up for weekend cover."

Operations Manager, UK FM firm

Alarm codes are going into ChatGPT

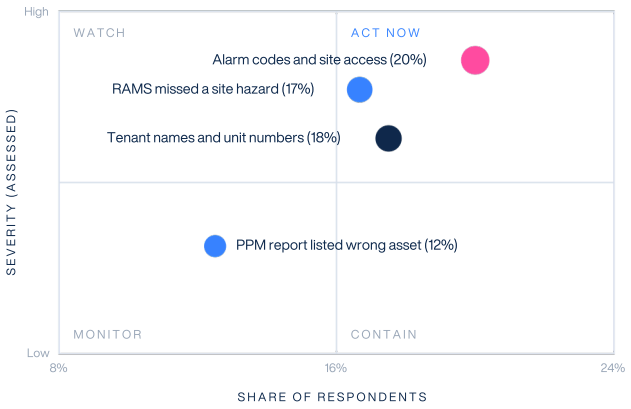
71% report an AI near-miss. 65% skim, skip or cannot check what AI produces.

7 in 10 report a near-miss



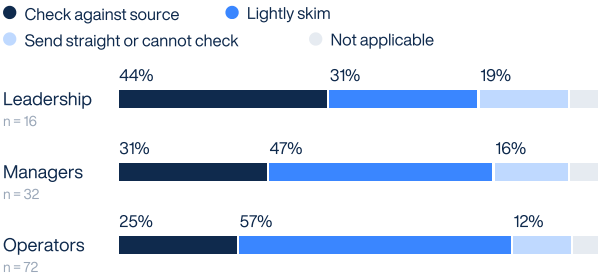
Each dot is one respondent (G5). Source: FishTank AI Readiness Diagnostic, Q3 2026, n=120.

Data leaks score highest on frequency and severity



Frequency: share of respondents describing each incident (G5_text). Severity: FishTank assessment. Source: FishTank AI Readiness Diagnostic, Q3 2026, n=120.

Operators are least likely to check AI output



How respondents check AI output before use (C4). Source: FishTank AI Readiness Diagnostic, Q3 2026, n=120.

WHAT WENT WRONG

20%	pasted client site access procedures and alarm codes into AI
18%	put tenant complaints with names and unit numbers into AI
17%	had an AI-written RAMS miss a site hazard, caught at pre-start
12%	sent an unchecked PPM report listing an asset they do not maintain

0% vs 67%

Leaders who say client data goes into AI, compared with the managers and operators who say it does (E1).

LEADERS DO NOT SEE THE EXPOSURE

When asked directly, 0% of leaders believed client-specific information goes into AI (compared to 67% of managers and operators). Yet in their own incident descriptions, 44% of leaders (7 of 16) described pasting alarm codes or tenant details into AI tools.

Checking is the second weak point. 14% send AI output straight on or cannot check it, and 25% of operators sometimes send it to a client without review.

> "Nobody has told us what to use or what to avoid, especially with client site details."
>
> Operator, UK FM firm

38%
describe a client or tenant data incident

29%
describe a safety or quality failure in an AI-written RAMS or PPM report

18%
sometimes send AI output to clients without review (E2)

WHY THIS MATTERS IN FM

Site security. Alarm codes in a personal account sit outside your control and your client's.

UK GDPR. Tenant names and unit numbers are personal data. In a consumer tool, you cannot control where they go.

Health and safety. A RAMS that misses a site hazard is a duty-holder failure, whoever drafted it.

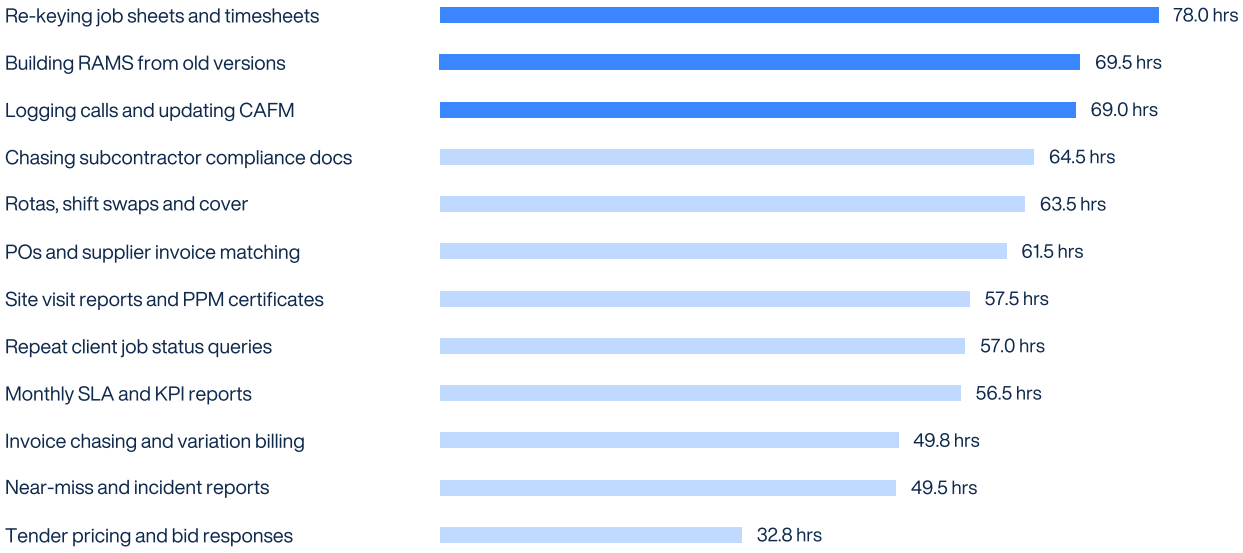
Re-tender. One wrong asset on a PPM report is the error a client remembers at review.

Figures from C4, E1, E2, E3 and G5_text. 24 respondents described an incident without answering "yes" to G5; the 71% headline uses G5 only. Source: FishTank AI Readiness Diagnostic, Q3 2026, n=120.

Six hours a week on paperwork

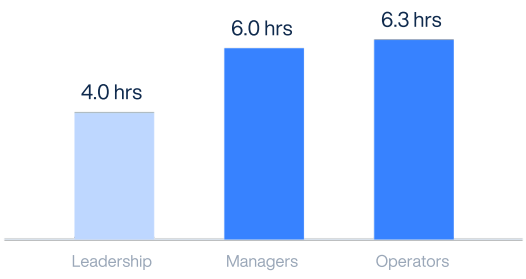
Each person spends an estimated 5.9 hours a week on two admin tasks. Job sheet re-keying costs the most.

Re-keying, RAMS and CAFM updates drain the most hours



Estimated weekly hours across all 120 respondents. Each person named two high-friction tasks (G1, G3) and the time each takes (G1_hours, G4), at band midpoints. Source: FishTank AI Readiness Diagnostic, Q3 2026, n=120.

Frontline staff carry the heaviest load



Mean estimated hours per week, two tasks combined. Source: FishTank AI Readiness Diagnostic, Q3 2026, n=120.

THE COMMERCIAL PRESSURE

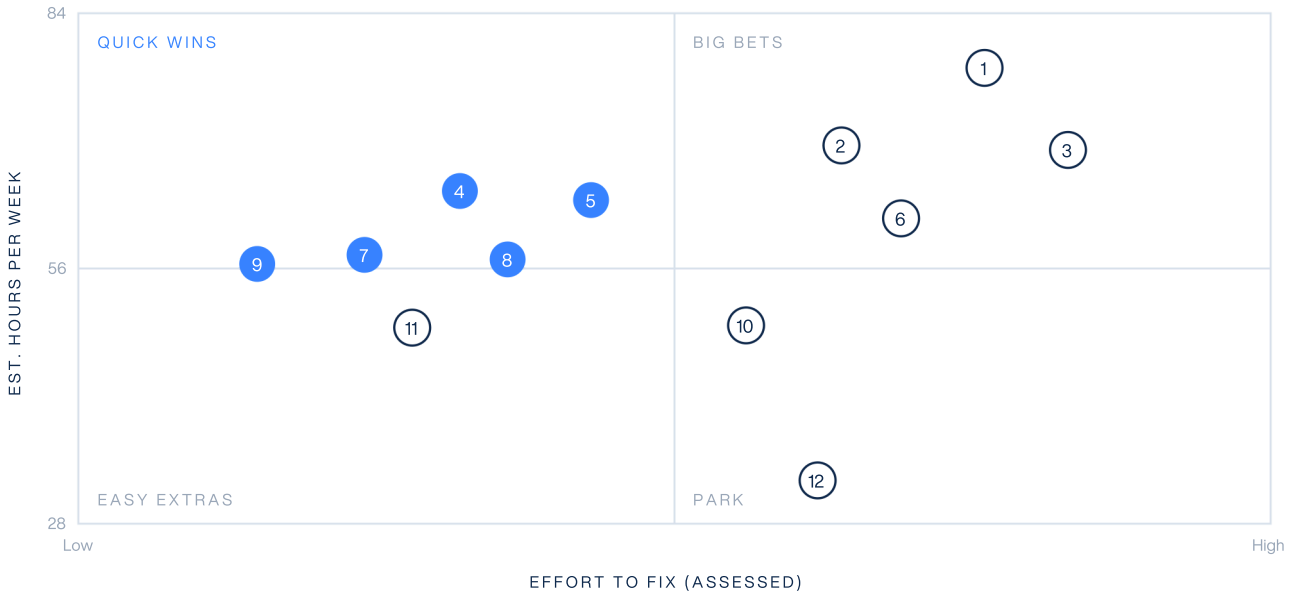
11/16 leaders say competitors moving on AI is their main driver (B3)

6/16 define success as not losing contracts at re-tender to firms with smarter reporting (B5)

5/16 want supervisors and engineers spending less time on job sheets and compliance admin

8/16 want to act this quarter. The rest within 6 to 12 months (F4)

Five workflows are quick wins worth starting now



1	Re-keying job sheets and timesheets	78.0	2	Building RAMS from old versions	69.5	3	Logging calls and updating CAFM	69.0
4	Chasing subcontractor compliance docs	64.5	5	Rotas, shift swaps and cover	63.5	6	POs and supplier invoice matching	61.5
7	Site visit reports and PPM certificates	57.5	8	Repeat client job status queries	57.0	9	Monthly SLA and KPI reports	56.5
10	Invoice chasing and variation billing	49.8	11	Near-miss and incident reports	49.5	12	Tender pricing and bid responses	32.8

Hours: estimated weekly total, ranked 1 to 12. Effort: FishTank assessment of build complexity, system integration and safety-critical review. Source: FishTank AI Readiness Diagnostic, Q3 2026, n=120.

START HERE

Monthly SLA and KPI reports. Same structure each month. Clients notice the quality.

Site visit and PPM write-ups. Voice note to draft report. A person signs it off.

Subcontractor compliance chasing. Expiry tracking and reminders for insurance and accreditations.

Repeat client status queries. Drafted from CAFM job status, sent by a person.

Rotas and cover. Draft rotas from availability. The supervisor approves.

PLAN FOR LATER

Re-keying and CAFM updates cost the most hours, but they touch your core systems. Map them properly in Design before you build. Start with a quick win while you do.

Design first. *Then build.*

A 90-day plan built around your two heaviest workflows. Designed with your team, inside the systems you already use.

DAYS 1 TO 21	DAYS 22 TO 75	DAYS 76 TO 90
map your two biggest drains	tools shaped by your team	go live and prove it

PHASE	ACTIONS	FIXES	YOU GET
Days 1 to 21	• Name one AI owner at leadership level. • Move staff onto one approved work AI tool now. Close personal and self-funded use. • The diagnostic picks your two heaviest workflows. • Deep-dive sessions with the people who do the work, from site to office. • Map each workflow as it runs today, then as it would run with AI. • A live prototype on your real jobs, so you see it work before you commit. • Agree safe use rules.	93% use personal AI accounts. 0 of 16 leaders have a formal AI owner. Re-keying and CAFM updates cost an estimated 147 hours a week.	Both workflows mapped. ROI baseline. Fixed-price build proposal.
Days 22 to 75	• Build tools for both workflows inside your CAFM, Excel, email and phones. • Design with the team who will use them, with weekly check-ins. • Test on live jobs with a small group first. • Work accounts replace personal AI tools. • A person signs off every client-facing output.	93% use personal AI accounts. 65% skim or skip checks. 5.9 hrs a week lost per person.	Working tools, tested on real jobs. Team trained.
Days 76 to 90	• Roll out to every site and tier, with a 45-minute toolbox talk. • Measure hours saved against the Design baseline. • Fix what the team flags. We support it after go-live. • Re-run the diagnostic to show the change.	5.9 hrs a week lost per person. 11 of 16 leaders say competitors are moving.	Hours back, proven. A re-tender story backed by numbers.

WHERE AI IS NOT THE ANSWER

Final sign-off on RAMS, statutory test certificates and anything a duty holder relies on stays with a competent person. AI drafts. People decide.

"The admin is what burns people out here. Rotas, job sheets, compliance chasing, all of it. It's also very boring."

Operator, UK FM firm

07 NEXT STEPS

Start with your two biggest drains.

Run the diagnostic. We find the two workflows costing you the most hours, map them with your team and show you a working prototype.

01 Run the diagnostic. Leaders, managers and operators answer the same questions used in this report.

02 See your two biggest drains. Your hours and risks, benchmarked against Firms A to H.

03 Design it with us. Deep-dive sessions, current and AI-enabled maps, a live prototype and a fixed-price build proposal. About 3 weeks.

04 Build it, then run it. We build inside the systems you already use, train your team and support it after go-live. Each stage stands alone. No obligation to continue.

THE FISHTANK BLUEPRINT

What you get from Design

01 Your workflows as they run today

02 The same workflows with AI built in

03 An opportunity register, ranked by hours and risk

04 An ROI baseline to measure against

05 A live prototype and walkthrough video

06 Safe use rules for your team

07 A fixed-price build proposal

The Design fee is credited against your build if you go ahead.

More business. Same team.
Powered by AI.

FishTank is an AI transformation consultancy for growing businesses. We design, build and run AI inside the systems you already use, from the first workflow map to ongoing support after go-live.

We're not tied to any platform or vendor. So you get what works for your business, not what we're paid to sell. And where AI isn't the answer, we'll tell you.

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