



Department
for Education

Capital Advisers Programme

Pilot evaluation

June 2022

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1. The Capital Advisers Programme (CAP) pilot

1.1 Introduction

The Capital Advisers Programme (CAP) pilot is part of the department's aim to deliver world-class outcomes for children through excellent estate management. A school building is more than just a building. It is a system that supports teaching and learning, helping to build the future of our next generation.

CAP is designed to help academy trusts increase their estate management capability and improve practice by offering bespoke best practice recommendations from experienced capital advisers, in line with [Good estate management for schools](#) (GEMS) guidance. This will help trusts to make more efficient spending decisions, improve building safety and better manage their accountability and statutory responsibilities for their school estate.

1.2 Pilot aims

The pilot ran from March to July 2021 and evaluated whether, and in what circumstance, an assessment by capital advisers, using the [school resource management advisers](#) (SRMA) programme model, could improve how multi-academy trusts (MATs) strategically manage their estates and make the best use of their [school condition allocations](#) (SCA).

Estate management capability and practice varies across MATs, as well as access to support and capability to make strategic and effective decisions on how to best use SCA. The pilot considered the effectiveness of estate management processes and practices in place across the participating MATs. It explored the need for tailored advice on strategic estate management and capital spending and whether involvement with CAP resulted in MATs improving their processes. The outcome of the pilot generated learning about how capital advisers could be deployed more widely.

1.3 Evaluation methodology

Each of the 20 trusts that participated in the pilot were invited to complete a pre-engagement questionnaire of 36 questions about how they managed their estate. Following the pilot, they were asked corresponding questions to gauge whether the recommendations given by capital advisers would be implemented in these areas. The questions can be found in annex 5.1.

Qualitative and quantitative data was used by capital advisers to produce a report for each participating trust about their estate management. As part of this, the advisers assessed trusts in 30 areas, allotting a value of “Yes”, “In-part”, or “No” if the trust was adhering to GEMS good practice, partially adhering to GEMS good practice, or not adhering to GEMS good practice respectively.

All responses and assessments are coded as 100%, 50% or 0% for “Yes”, “In-part” or “No” respectively.

The mean of their scored pre-engagement responses was used to identify the current capability and practice of the participating trusts, while the mean of their score post-engagement responses was used to assess the potential improvement in capability and practice from the pilot.

Trusts were asked to provide some short, written feedback to assess their response to the pilot.

The important methodological considerations were:

- 1) 20 trusts were randomly selected from those who receive SCA. Consideration was taken to ensure a geographical spread, and that trusts of different sizes were all represented.

There was some self-selection as 44 trusts were invited to participate. The 24 not in the pilot either did not respond, turned down the opportunity to participate, or dropped out after initially agreeing to participate. With almost half the invited trusts not participating, there is potential for selection bias. Participation could be dependent on factors not related to estate management. For example, 20 trusts were contacted in-term either during the Covid lockdown, or in the post-lockdown period, when resources were stretched.

- 2) To receive SCA, trusts must have 5 or more open schools and more than 3,000 pupils (weighted for special and alternative provision places). This means trusts that are receiving SCA for the first time tend to be smaller, while growing and established trusts that have received SCA for several years tend to be larger. We observe this in the participant sample, as the number of schools in a trust and the year it first received SCA is strongly negatively correlated, $r(18) = -0.60$, $p = 0.005$. Combined with the small sample size, this means that the pilot will not be able to draw firm conclusions about the relationships between estate management and these characteristics of trusts, but may provide useful indications to explore further.

Table 1: MATs that are newly eligible for SCA tend to be smaller

Number of schools in trust	First year of SCA funding		
	2018	2019	2020
5-10	1	3	5
11-20	4	3	1
21-30	0	0	0
31-40	2	0	0
41+	1	0	0

- 3) Long-term outcomes could not be measured within the pilot time frame. Post engagement questions were designed to measure the potential long-term outcome, based on whether trusts thought they would implement the recommendations.
- 4) The adviser assessment scores provided an independent assessment of the trust's capability and practice, which we use to validate the self-assessment provided by the pre-engagement questionnaires. A trust's pre-engagement score is the mean pre-engagement score and their report score is the mean adviser assessment score. The pre-engagement scores and report scores are strongly positively correlated, $r(18) = 0.87$, $p < 0.001$, so the trusts' pre-engagement responses are a good assessment of their current processes.

1.4 Accreditation

Capital advisers deployed in the pilot hold relevant qualifications or equivalent relevant experience, and have demonstrable experience of working within the school or education sector for at least 2 years, as well as notable estate management experience.

Capital advisers deployed needed to hold one of the following qualifications, or be able to evidence equal relevant experience:

- Associate Member of [Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors](#) (RICS) (As-socRICS) or Member of RICS (MRICS)
- [Institute of Workplace and Facilities Management](#) (IWFM) Level 6 or above
- Associate Member of the [Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers](#) (CIBSE) (ACIBSE) or Member of CIBSE (MCIBSE)
- Chartered Engineer (CEng)

1.5 Executive summary findings

Participating trusts were not fully aligned with the recommended good practice for estate management as set out in GEMS. Pilot participant alignment with best practice was around 61%.

Capital advisers can potentially improve estate management in trusts. Trusts would consider implementing recommendations in 85% of the assessed areas where there was scope for improvement. This would increase alignment with best practice to around 92%.

The pilot was well received by participating trusts, with 16 of the 20 providing positive written feedback. There was no negative written feedback.

Feedback from the trusts involved in the pilot indicated that it helped with estates strategy planning, providing assurance and was beneficial for new/growing trusts and estates directors new to role. This is evidenced by the following comments:

“...informative and supportive and will allow our trust to grow our estates strategy effectively”

“reassuring that our [trust] is working in the right direction with its estates strategy and vision”

“...very satisfied with the adviser allocated to our trust...was professional, helpful and appreciative of the challenges I face as a newly appointed estates director”

Future schemes should be designed to investigate the potential characteristics of trusts that may benefit more from capital advisers.

CAP will be expanded in the 2022/23 academic year as the pilot demonstrated significant potential to support schools. The department is continually improving its offer to schools, including industry-leading practice and tools in GEMS. This will help schools achieve safe, well-maintained buildings, helping to support world-class teaching and learning.

2. Pilot background

One of the department's priorities is ensuring that schools are safe, well maintained and fit for a world-class education. A well-managed estate will ensure schools have the facilities and environment they need to keep children safe, sheltered and support teachers to deliver world-class education.

The department has allocated over £13 billion since 2015 for improving the condition of school buildings, including £1.8 billion committed for financial year 2022-23, and continues to fund projects through the [School Rebuilding Programme](#) to replace the poorest condition buildings. The department also supports schools through advice, tools, and resources such as GEMS and [managing asbestos guidance for schools](#). Effective estate management allows schools to build their resilience, capability and flexibility for any future challenges.

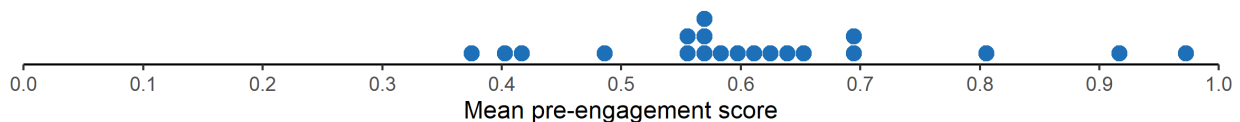
Many trusts, as they grow and expand, are new to managing their own estates and receiving and managing capital funding such as SCA. The pilot focused on how the department could help and support these types of trusts to improve their estate management capability and practice and enable them to make the most efficient use of their funding.

The CAP pilot was launched following the success of the SRMA pilot where 94% said their experience was good or very good. SRMA promoted peer-learning, sharing best practice, and building financial capability. CAP has focused on the support and capability building pillars of the SRMA programme.

3. Key findings

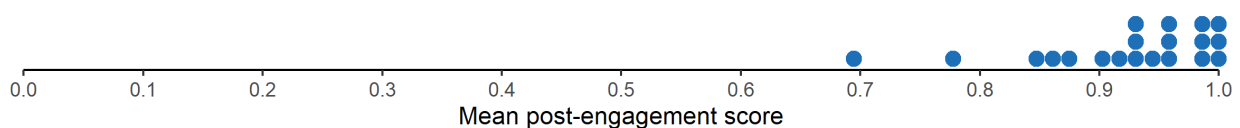
Trusts are only partially implementing good practice in estates management. On average, alignment with good practice across the participating trusts is 61.5%. Only 3 trusts were at least partially in alignment with good practice in all areas.

Figure 1: Mean pre-engagement scores for participating trusts



If trusts implement the recommended practice as they have indicated in their post-engagement questionnaires, alignment with good practice will rise to 92.2%, an increase of 30.7 percentage points. No trusts indicated that they would implement less good practice after the pilot, and even the best performing trust (with a pre-engagement score of 97.2%) showed an increase to 98.6%.

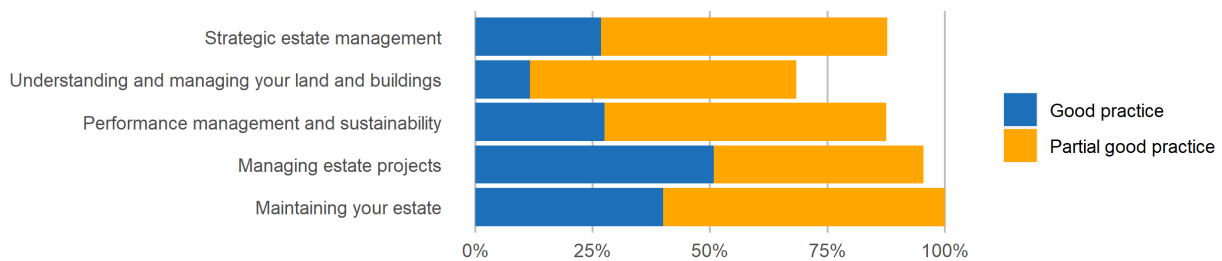
Figure 2: Mean post-engagement scores for participating trusts



Across the whole pilot, there were 445 pre-engagement responses that indicated areas where trusts were not applying full good practice. Of the corresponding post-engagement responses, 377 (84.7%) showed that trusts were now intending to fully adhere to the recommended good practice.

In general, trusts were using less good practice in understanding and managing their land and buildings compared to other aspects of estate management. Only 68.3% of the advisers' assessments in this area were full or partial adherence. A more detailed breakdown of the advisers' assessment across the 5 sections and 30 areas can be found in annex 5.2.

Figure 3: Advisers’ assessment of practice in all participating MATs across the five key areas of estate management



We found that the pilot was well received by participating trusts. Of the 17 MATs who provided a written comment during their pilot debrief, 16 (94%) explicitly stated that they found the pilot “useful”, “helpful”, “positive” or some variation. For example:

“We would recommend the pilot to any academy at any stage of their estates planning as feedback is really constructive and supportive.”

and

“Even being part of the pilot program highlighted areas that needed improvement for us as a trust, certainly new and growing trusts/academies would benefit from adviser input.”

One smaller MAT that started receiving SCA in 2020 was very positive about the pilot, but their post-engagement comments suggest that there may be a shortage of capacity in some MATs when it comes to implementing best practice.

“A very worthwhile process highlighting the effectiveness and efficiencies obtained from good estate management. However, there needs to be an understanding of the cost and time restraints for implementing such processes.”

Four trusts suggested that a follow up meeting would be beneficial, while one commented that:

“sharing practices would be an advantage for smaller trusts/academies”.

Smaller trusts may also benefit just from the notion that they are supported - as one reported:

“I think just having someone who understands capital projects/ buildings management to bounce ideas off was the most benefit. It’s a lonely job sometimes and you just get such a lot of reassurance from discussions about what you are actually doing right.”

Although no definitive conclusions can be drawn due to the small sample size, there is some suggestion that smaller MATs are finding it harder to maintain good practice - here indicated how many of the 30 areas assessed by advisers were deemed as not good practice.

Table 2: Average number of assessments of practice per MAT across all 30 assessed areas

	Not good practice	Partial good practice	Good practice
Small MATs (5 schools)	5.2	14.8	10
Medium MATs (6 – 19 schools)	2.9	17.9	9.2
Large MATs (20+ schools)	1	13	16

4. Conclusion

Findings from the CAP pilot suggest that wider rollout of the programme, which promotes best practice in line with Good Estate Management for Schools (GEMS), could be beneficial for trusts.

Due to the pilot's small sample size, which included 20 MATs, findings are limited however evidence suggests that CAP enabled MATs to better manage their estate, reducing the risks associated with poor school conditions and safety issues which would in turn help to prevent harm to building users, school closures, and significant additional costs to schools. Any further rollout of CAP will also look to collect more evidence on the benefits of good estate management, developing capability and practice, and improving outcomes for trusts.

4.1 Next steps

The next phase of CAP will expand the programme in the 2022/23 academic year by deploying capital advisers to more MATs and SATs based on condition need, challenges, and school characteristics.

Prioritisation of estate management practice will broadly follow these principles:

- a. Safety and compliance – helping schools to address potential risk of harm or death;
- b. Poor condition and/or practice – helping schools to address poor building condition and/or inefficient/ineffective expenditure; and
- c. Good to great practice – helping schools improve further in their estate management and spend.

The expanded programme will be rolled out in stepped phases, starting small and growing, and improving with each step. This will support ongoing development of our learning in the early stages and enable continuous improvement of CAP to ramp up its reach and impact in latter phases. Follow up visits will be arranged for the 20 trusts that took part in the pilot to monitor progress against our recommendations.

Capital advisers will continue to maintain a high level trust and customer engagement to participating trusts. This reflects the coaching and supportive nature of CAP. The programme will work in partnership with schools for their benefit as it grows and develops its offer going forward.

5. Annex

5.1 Pre- and post-engagement questions

Participating MATs were asked 36 questions prior to engagement with their assigned adviser. At the end of the Capital Adviser Pilot they were asked 36 corresponding questions to gauge the impact of the pilot. These are the 36 paired questions.

Section 1 – Strategic estates management	
Section 1.1 – Estate vision	
Is your MAT aware of the Good Estate Management for Schools (GEMS) organisational self-assessment tool?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, are the trust now aware of the Good Estate Management for Schools (GEMS) organisation self-assessment tool?
Does your MAT used the Good Estate Management for Schools (GEMS) organisational self-assessment tool?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, are the trust seeking to use the Good Estate Management for Schools (GEMS) organisation self-assessment tool?
Does your MAT have an estate vision?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, are the trust seeking to finalise and implement an estate vision as per recommendations?
Has your MAT estate vision been developed, reviewed, and approved by your board/ governing body?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to ensure that the estate vision is developed, reviewed approved by your board/ governing body?
Does your MAT regularly review and update your estate vision alongside your education vision?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to update the estate vision alongside the education vision?
Section 1.2 – Estate strategy	
Does your MAT have an estates strategy that aligns with your estate vision?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to finalise and implement an estate strategy that aligns with the trust education vision?
Has your MAT estate strategy been reviewed and approved by your board/ governing body?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to finalise and implement an estate strategy that aligns with the trust education vision?
Is your MAT estate strategy reviewed and updated on an annual basis?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to review and update the estate strategy on an annual basis?

Section 1.3 – Asset management plan	
Does your MAT have an asset management plan?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to update and/or implement as asset management plan as per recommendations?
Has the MAT asset management plan been reviewed and approved by your board/ governing body?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking ensure that the asset management plan is developed, reviewed approved by your board/ governing body?
Is your MAT asset management plan reviewed and updated alongside your estate strategy on an annual basis?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to review and update the asset management plan alongside the estate strategy on an annual basis?
Does your MAT have a prioritised estate maintenance and investment plan that covers all your school estate by category and priority?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to update and implement a prioritised estate and maintenance investment plan covering the entire estate?
Section 1.4 – Planning and organising estate resources	
Is your MAT aware of the good estate governance guide?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, is the trust now fully aware of the good estate governance guide?
Does your MAT use the good estate governance guide or have similar processes in place to ensure that key areas are complied with?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to use the good estate governance guide or adopt similar processes to ensure key areas are complied with?
Does your MAT have a clear operational, management and senior leadership structure which clearly outlines the roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities across your organisation?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, does the trust plan to update and implement a clear operational, management and senior leadership structure which clearly outlines the roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities across your organisation?
Does your MAT have a 3 to 5-year budget plan for your estate?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to update and implement a 3-to-5-year budget plan for your estate?
Has your MAT implemented clear governance procedures that set out all guidelines that must be adhered to when undertaking any building or maintenance related works?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to update and implement a set of clear governance procedures that set out all guidelines that must be adhered to when undertaking any building or maintenance related works?

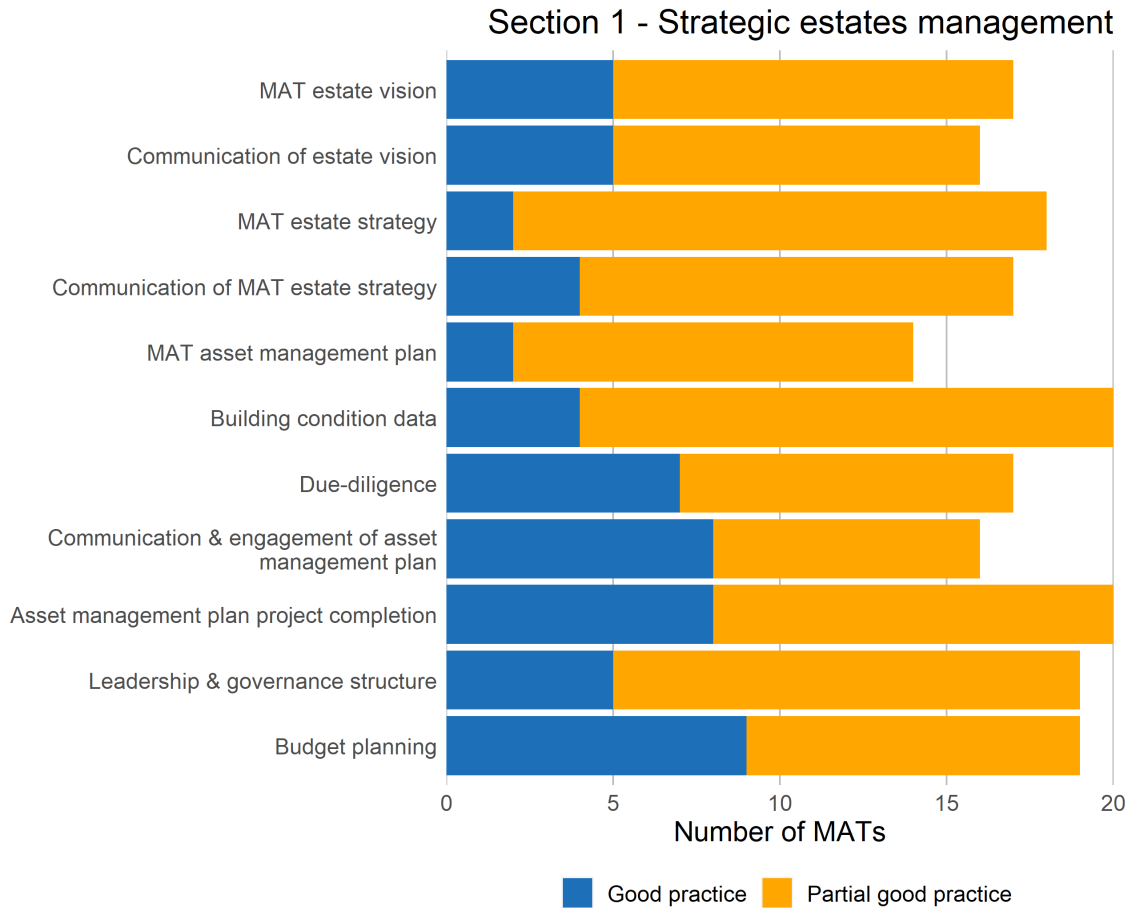
Section 2 – Understanding and managing your land and buildings	
Does your MAT have a centralised database system where all property, compliance and estates data is accessible to all schools and the wider estates teams?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to update and implement a centralised database system where all property, compliance and estate data is accessible to all schools and the wider estate teams?
Does your MAT have all records of legal interests regarding the estates land and buildings such as: •the nature of legal ownership, whether freehold or leasehold •other controlling interests such as charitable restrictions •the legal interests can affect how you can use the land and buildings such as third-party ownership etc.	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to obtain, update and store all records of legal interests, building, compliance and other information relating to the estate and share this as applicable?
Does your MAT have an up to date (within previous 5 years) condition survey for each school?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to obtain, update and implement up to date building and M&E condition surveys across the estate?
Does your MAT have an up-to-date suitability and sufficiency assessment with a list of any recommendations and requirements for each school?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to obtain, update and implement up to date suitability and sufficiency assessments across the estate?
Section 3 – Performance management and sustainability	Questions not included within the pre- and post- engagement questionnaires
Section 4 – Managing estate projects	
Section 4.1 – Identifying, planning and prioritising projects	
Is your MAT aware of the Good Estates Management for Schools Estate Projects Checklist?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, is the trust now fully aware of the Good Estates Management for Schools estate projects checklist?
Does your MAT use the Good Estates Management for Schools Estate Project Checklist or have similar processes in place to ensure that key areas are complied with?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, does the trust intend on using the good estates management for schools estate projects checklist?

Does your MAT allocate building projects funding to schools based on your existing estates strategy, asset management plan and condition investment programme needs?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to allocate all building project funding to schools based on your existing estate strategy, asset management plan and condition investment programme needs?
Does your MAT centrally manage all building projects across your schools?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust be seeking to centrally manage all building projects across your schools?
Section 4.2 – Effective project planning	
When undertaking building projects does your MAT appoint a professional adviser to support with the development of feasibility, design, and specifications?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, does the trust intend on ensuring that a professional adviser and/ or competent and experienced person is appointed to support with the development of feasibility, design and specifications?
When undertaking building projects, does you MAT employ the services of a specialist adviser/ consultant to support with Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, does the trust intend on ensuring that a professional adviser and/ or competent and experienced person is appointed to support with Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015?
Section 4.3 – Tendering and procurement of capital project works	
When undertaking building projects, does your MAT undertake any pre-qualification or other assessments to help ensure that only appropriately qualified, competent, and experienced contractors are being invited to tender and deliver works?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, does the trust intend on ensuring that a pre-qualification process is implemented to help ensure that only appropriately qualified, competent and experienced contractors are being invited to tender and deliver works?
When undertaking building projects, does your MAT implement measures to ensure value for money is being achieved?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will the trust seek to ensure that a robust method of achieving value for money is being implemented across the estate?
Section 4.4 – Project delivery	
When undertaking building projects, does your MAT implement cost control and contract management measures to help ensure the project is delivered on time and on budget?	Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, do you intend on ensuring cost control and contract management measures (such as appointing a dedicated contract administrator etc. are now implemented to help ensure all projects are delivered on time and on budget?

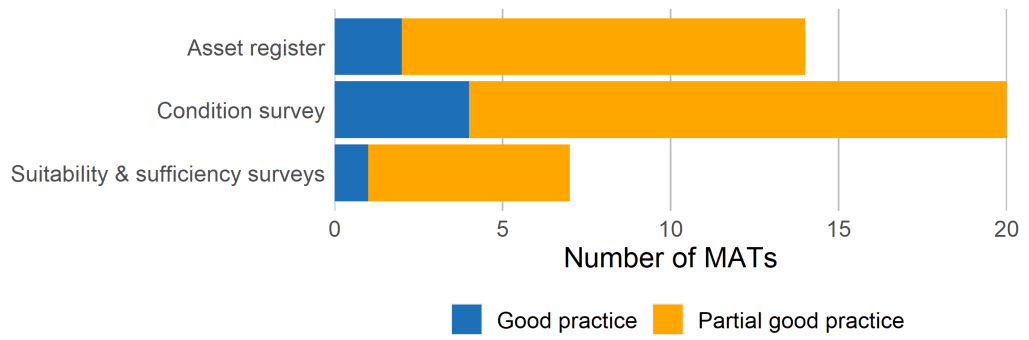
<p>When undertaking building projects, do you implement quality control measures to help ensure the scheme is delivered to the correct standards and in line with specified requirements?</p>	<p>Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussions, will you seek to implement quality control measures (such as a dedicated competent person to monitor the quality of the works) across all of their projects that will help ensure the correct standards and in line with specified requirements and expectations?</p>
<p>Section 4.5 – Project handover and review</p>	
<p>When undertaking building projects, do you undertake a pre-planned handover which involves all the project team, estates/ school team, end users (such as teachers working in that area for example) and any facilities management or maintenance providers that will be responsible for operating and managing the area?</p>	<p>Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussion, will you be seeking to ensure that a pre-planned handovers are undertaken on each project that involve the project team, estate/ school staff and any facilities management or maintenance providers?</p>
<p>Following on from completion of your capital projects, do you undertake any assessments or reviews to capture how well the project went, what did not go well and what changes you would implement in future projects to improve?</p>	<p>Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussion, does you intend to implement assessments and reviews for each project capture how well the project went, what did not go well and what changes you would implement in future projects to improve?</p>
<p>Section 5 – Maintaining your estate</p>	
<p>Following on from completion of your SCA capital projects do you review and update your fire safety plan and or other statutory testing/inspection schedules?</p>	<p>Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussion, do you intend to ensure that all fire safety plans and or other statutory testing/inspection schedules are reviewed and updated following on from the completion of all building projects?</p>
<p>Does your MAT have a detailed health and safety, facilities management, planned and reactive maintenance and statutory compliance inspection programme in place for each school?</p>	<p>Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussion, do you intend to update and implementing a detailed health and safety, facilities management, planned and reactive maintenance and statutory compliance inspection programme in place for each school?</p>
<p>Does your MAT have access to, and implement regular reviews of health and safety, facilities management, planned and reactive maintenance and statutory compliance inspection services for each school?</p>	<p>Following on from the capital adviser meeting discussion, do you intend on ensuring that regular reviews of health and safety, facilities management, planned and reactive maintenance and statutory compliance inspection services are undertaken for each school?</p>

5.2 Adviser assessments results

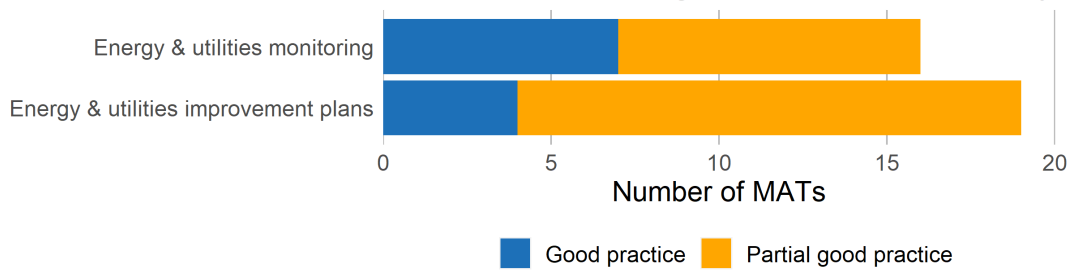
The practice of participating MATs was assessed over 30 areas of estate management. The following figures show the number of MATs assessed as using good practice in full or in part for all areas, grouped into 5 sections.



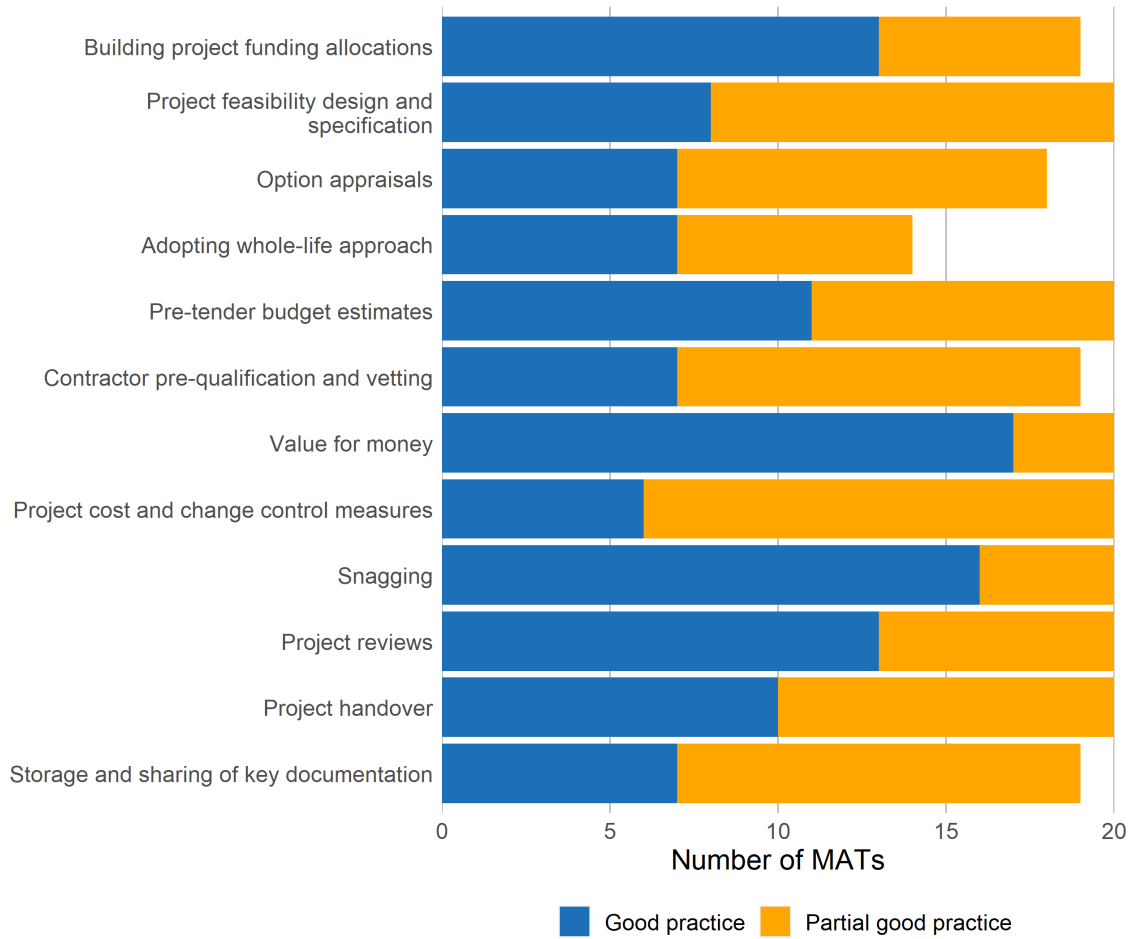
Section 2 - Understanding and managing your land and buildings



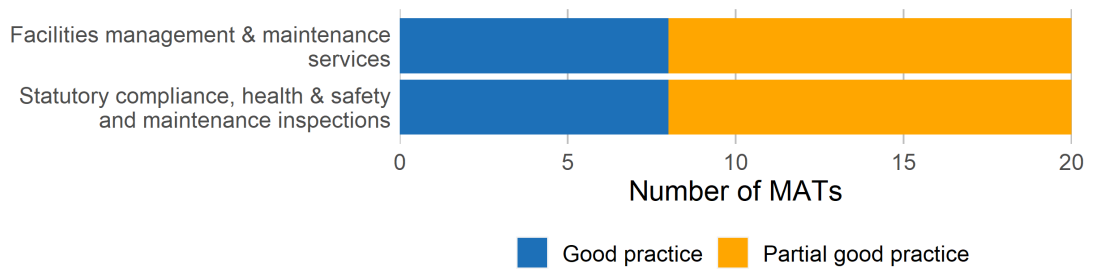
Section 3 - Performance management and sustainability



Section 4 - Managing estate projects



Section 5 - Maintaining your estate





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