

Your introduction to estate optimisation and space utilisation





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What is estate optimisation and space utilisation?

In simple terms, space utilisation refers to how much a specific physical space is used at a particular moment or across a specified period. In contrast, optimisation looks more strategically at the space available versus the space required based on need and improved performance, efficiency, suitability, and sustainability. Optimisation solutions can be carried out at a building, group or portfolio level.



>6m

patients supported through our Healthy Place estate optimisation projects



£1.1m

saved for customers by reducing void space last year



>£500m

capital receipts generated and reinvested in the NHS from the release of surplus estate



3.58m

patient hours made available



9

infrastructure strategies co-authored with ICBs in 2023/4



£200m

in office costs saved for customers since 2019



c.70k sqm

of vacant space removed from the NHSPS estate in the last 2-3 years



Utilisation monitoring in
1,650 rooms
in the past 12 months



In 2024/5, we reduced vacant space by
27k sqm



Flexible booking available at
over 1,300
locations across England

Why is estate optimisation and space utilisation important for the NHS?

Optimising your estate and maximising the use of available space is critical to enhancing productivity, flexibility, and adaptability, managing costs, providing value for money, and delivering the best experience for colleagues and patients.

Post-COVID, with the move towards more hybrid working and the improvements made to digital support, estate optimisation and space utilisation have **moved up the agenda** for most organisations.

It's essential to optimise and utilise your estate so that you can effectively:



Increase productivity across the NHS



Improve customer and patient experience



Make the most of limited resources and capital in the system



Improve flexibility and adaptability of space – shared space for different service users



Provide cost efficiency and value for money for the patient and taxpayer



Understand current demand for space and how the estate (supply) can best meet this

As such, there is a clear case for estate optimisation and space utilisation. **So why aren't more customers making the most of their estate?** Based on our experience and conversations with customers, we know they face many challenges.



Macro challenges

- Many NHS leaders often don't know **how well their space is being used**.
- When they do know, space is often **inflexible and underutilised**.
- In many regions, there is often a **growing demand** for space.
- Estate running **costs are increasing**, and system-wide **pressure exists to reduce them**.
- Many NHS organisations **don't have the capability and capacity, or expertise and time** to undertake comprehensive estate optimisation and space utilisation.

Micro challenges

- Accurate space usage **data is scarce** and comes from multiple sources.
- NHS organisations often rely heavily on colleague feedback regarding space usage, which is **subjective**, often flawed, and therefore **open to challenge**.
- There's a **difference** between booked space and space being used.
- Managing space on a day-to-day basis is **complex and can be time-consuming**.

What makes us different?

We're ideally placed to work with customers across the NHS because of our unique position as part of the NHS with vast commercial experience.

We've **successfully delivered hundreds of projects** of varying sizes across the country and can **share our expertise and lessons learnt** along the way with you. Our broad and deep service offer means we can support customers from the start of an estate optimisation project to the end delivery, supporting as and where needed.



We'll help you to:



Review your estate to optimise/reduce space and costs



Plan, communicate, and deliver effective utilisation solutions



Identify and appraise options, benefits and challenges – and find solutions



Build the case for change and business case approvals



Develop a clear, consolidated view of your estate booking, utilisation and performance data



Reduce vacant/void space through repurposing or rationalisation



Deliver sustainable, practical, flexible estate solutions to optimise the estate and maximise space utilisation



Support the development of a communication and engagement plan for stakeholders

Why choose us?

Experts in the field:

Our experience isn't just academic; we've **extensive practical experience** in delivering projects of varying sizes for a range of customers across the entire country.

The low-down on your estate usage:

Through our **NHS Open Space service**, we can also provide a turnkey solution to help you understand your estate and how it's being used. We'll understand your problem, deliver a bespoke utilisation monitoring solution, and provide in-depth analysis and proposed solutions to help you make informed decisions about how to plan for now and future growth.

Building a flexible estate:

As **part of the NHS**, we know how to adapt space to support delivering multiple services. So, if podiatry uses a room one day and physio the next, we've got you covered.





Manage your space, your way:

We can help you get more out of your current space and reduce unused space with one system. NHS Open Space enables healthcare professionals to book space on a flexible, pay-as-you-go basis, delivering vital services to your local community and generating revenue for you. To date, we've generated **over 3.5m patient hours** by offering unused space to be used to deliver commissioned and private services.

Keeping costs to a minimum:

Nobody wants to pay for something they're not using. We'll help you reduce your vacant space (and your costs) so that it can be better used elsewhere. Last year, we helped you **save £1.1m** by reducing your void space.

Minimise your office footprint:

Office habits have changed post-COVID-19, so your office space might need to change too. Since 2019, we've helped the NHS **reduce office costs by £200m**.



How we're supporting you to **achieve the three strategic shifts**

We partner with ICBs, Trusts, GP practices and the wider health system so we can support you in achieving the three shifts set out by the government.

Analogue to digital

Taking a data-led approach to estate optimisation and space utilisation is **crucial**. That's why we can build NHS Open Space. An **award-winning space management solution** that enables you to understand your estate through utilisation monitoring and detailed analytics, while providing an intuitive booking solution to manage and drive optimisation daily.

Sickness to prevention

For many years, our long-term focus has been adapting the estate to support the prevention of common diseases like cancer and diabetes. We always aim to make the most valuable use of all space within our estate optimisation projects. However, where service delivery is problematic, we will always look for **opportunities to develop areas to improve user well-being**, such as over **100 Social Prescribing hubs and community gardens**.

Acute to community

Not every commissioner or occupier will have the expertise to work through estate optimisation and space utilisation. **That's where we can support**. We provide end-to-end strategic estate reviews to help you use space efficiently and reduce void space costs, enabling the shift from acute to community.

We can also help you increase the usage of your available space by making it available to **over 7,500+ verified healthcare providers** who are looking for available space to deliver vital services within your local community.

Case studies



Reducing costs and improving utilisation

Before working with us, Greater Manchester Mental Health Trust (GMMHT) faced challenges with room utilisation, visibility of usage, and cost efficiency, often booking spaces for longer than needed.

NHS Open Space provided **a centralised booking system, enhancing coordination and reducing unnecessary expenses**. As a result, GMMHT achieved better space utilisation, cost savings, improved operational efficiency, and its utilisation monitoring functionality to understand usage behaviours.



Site optimisation, redevelopment and ongoing management

We partnered with the North West London ICB to address inefficient land use at Chiswick Health Centre by rationalising and repurposing the estate to release latent value.

By carefully understanding local needs, we identified that the best action was to demolish the existing building and **develop a new 2,300 sqm health centre and 55 affordable homes for local NHS staff**.

Now open, we also provide flexible space, managed through NHS Open Space, to deliver vital patient care to the local community.



Office rationalisation

The NHS wanted to consolidate office space across four key sites - Oak House, 722 Parkway Plaza, Don Valley House, and Vulcan House—across South Yorkshire.

These facilities were deemed oversized for future needs due to shifts in working practices and structural changes within NHS organisations. We **led this complex project**, which involved relocating teams, exiting leases, and redeveloping more flexible and collaborative working spaces to support post-COVID needs. The consolidation released 5,620 sqm and is projected to save approximately £7M over five years.



Site rationalisation

At Mount Gould Hospital, we focused on optimising underutilised space and unlocking value through strategic estate management to release disposals for capital reinvestment.

For this project, we partnered with NHS England, Community Health Partnerships (CHP) and Livewell Southwest to transform the site, making it more efficient and better suited to the local community's needs. The project involved significant stakeholder input and was recognised for its **collaborative efforts, being shortlisted for several awards**. This strategic approach ensured the space was used effectively to support excellent patient care and align with the Trust's future plans.



Hospital redevelopment and reduced footprint

The work carried out at Whitby Hospital involved a significant redevelopment project to modernise and improve healthcare facilities.

We collaborated with local healthcare providers to deliver a new, state-of-the-art health and social care hub. This project looked to use some existing buildings but with a redesigned layout that would **support additional services** while the remaining buildings were demolished to make way for staff housing units.

Complementary solutions we offer

Comprehensive space management solutions

Managed in the right way, your estate can create **significant long-term value** - optimising all the demised, bookable, and vacant space you have available so that nothing is left sitting underused. That's where our **all-in-one space management solution** can help you to monitor and manage all your demised, bookable and vacant spaces by using our intuitive platform and identifying ways to **optimise the value of your estate**.

Creating demand for unused space

Suppose you have space within your estate that is not well-used but cannot be repurposed. In that case, we can also help you **increase the usage of your available space** by making it available to **over 7,500+ verified healthcare providers** who are looking for available space to deliver vital services within your local community.

Infrastructure strategies and estate delivery plans

We've **partnered with 9 ICBs** to write their infrastructure strategies – from gathering data on their estate and service needs, to engaging system partners and helping them present it to their Boards.

Moving forward, we're now actively helping some of those ICBs develop estate delivery plans to practically deliver against those strategies. We're always **keen to support other customers** in this area.

Options appraisal and funding solutions

We can **help you find the best option for any site**, such as using void and underused space or transforming a health centre to serve more patients.

With **over 400 completed** NHS optimisation/transformational projects in the last 5 years, we can help you find the **right choice for your site**. We can help you write a brief, gather requirements and data, investigate different funding sources, and develop practical next steps.



Business case development

We've supported more than our fair share of business cases to **get estate projects the go-ahead**. We'll help you write one that puts your case in the clearest, most compelling terms – even against rigorous, technical criteria.

Lease advisory

We help manage and negotiate lease events for the NHS – helping you identify and implement saving opportunities, increase rental income, and reduce void space.

Lease events can include rent reviews, leases ending, break clauses, and renewals. We can **partner with you to achieve the best outcomes** and support your long-term estate strategy.

Handing back properties

Although the costs of vacant space in the NHS are kept as low as possible, some costs are unavoidable due to remaining rent, business rates and some services charges. Therefore, handing back the empty space that is surplus to requirements means commissioners can avoid some of these costs. We can provide **advice on eligibility criteria and the application process** and then use our expertise to mitigate costs and seek best value alternatives for the space or building.

Property disposal strategy and implementation

The NHS needs to find new ways to free up capital and make the right investments for the future. And your patients need to know they're being treated in the best possible buildings. However, underused spaces can be harder to spot in large or complex estates and can increase your running costs.

We work with commissioners to identify void or underused spaces, then seek best value to raise capital for reinvestment. Like for example, the sale of Harrow Road land in London for £5.75m for DHSC or Fenwick Hospital for £0.8m for NHS England.

By repurposing underused spaces, we can consolidate more services in well-used buildings, making it easier for communities to access everything in one place. And if you don't have the right space to meet your patients' needs, we can help you find it and manage the acquisition. This means surplus buildings and sites can be sold, freeing up funds that can be reinvested into the NHS.



Want to know more?

If you'd like to know more about how we can help you with estate optimisation and space utilisation, please contact our Customer Service Centre on:



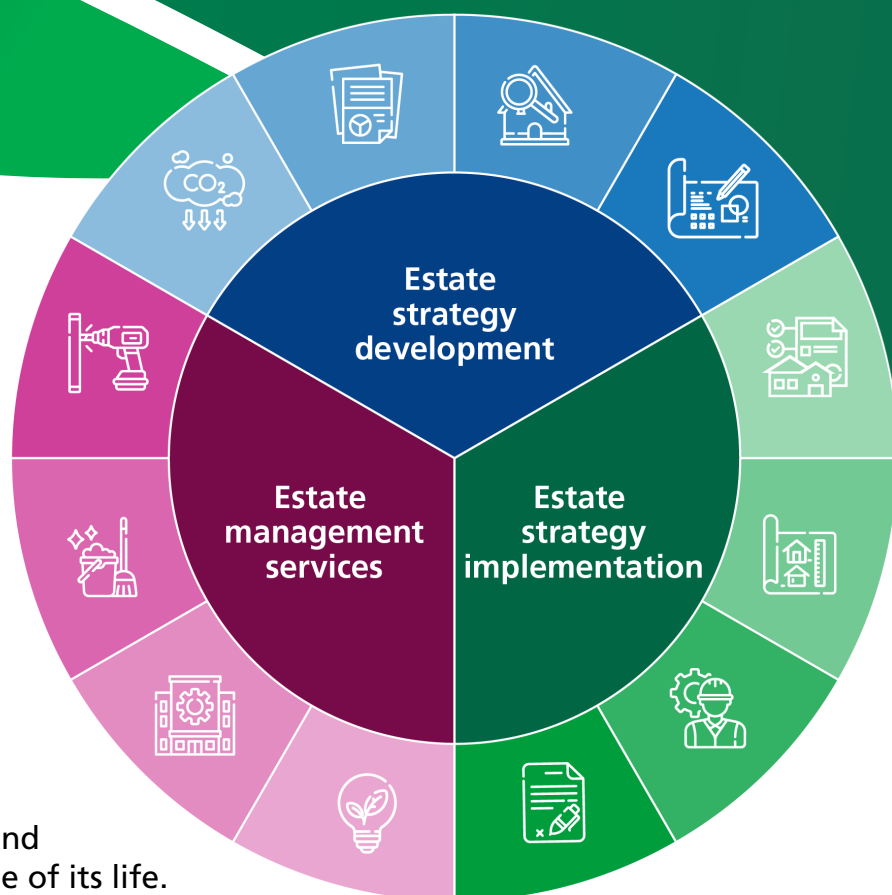
0808 196 2045



customer.service@property.nhs.uk

Our full service offer

Helping you better assess, adapt and maintain your estate at every stage of its life.



Estates strategy development

- Strategic estate planning
- Options appraisals and funding solutions
- ICB business case development
- Net zero strategy



Estates strategy implementation

- Estate optimisation and space utilisation
- Town planning
- Property development
- Lease advisory
- Property disposal and re-investment
- Capital project management



Estates management services

- Hard facilities management
- Soft facilities management
- Property management
- PFI management
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