

Summer Refurb Planning Guide

Structured guidance for NHS Estates teams delivering refurbishment works during the summer window.

Overview

Summer provides the most favourable conditions for disruptive refurbishment works across NHS estates. Reduced clinical pressure, improved access, and more predictable staffing levels create a unique opportunity to deliver projects that would be difficult or unsafe during winter.

This guide outlines the essential steps Estates teams should follow to plan, sequence, and deliver summer refurbishment works safely, efficiently, and with minimal operational impact.

1. Understanding the Summer Window

Why Summer Works Matter

- Lower clinical activity in many departments
- Fewer winter-critical operational constraints
- Better contractor availability
- Reduced risk of weather-related delays
- Improved access to plant rooms, roof spaces, and external areas

Typical Summer Works

- Flooring replacements
- Ward refurbishments
- Theatre upgrades
- Plant resilience works
- Ventilation improvements
- Fire door and compartmentation remedials
- Backlog maintenance reduction

2. Pre-Planning Requirements

2.1 Early Stakeholder Engagement

Engage key stakeholders before sequencing begins:

- Clinical leads

- Infection control
- Capital projects
- Facilities management
- Fire safety
- Health & safety
- IT & medical equipment teams

2.2 Scope Definition

Ensure the scope is:

- Clear
- Measurable
- Clinically validated
- Supported by risk assessments
- Aligned with Trust priorities

2.3 Access & Decant Planning

Summer refurb often requires temporary decanting. Plan for:

- Alternative clinical spaces
- Temporary patient flows
- IT and equipment relocation
- Infection control routes
- Fire evacuation adjustments

3. Sequencing Principles

3.1 Risk-Based Sequencing

Prioritise areas based on:

- Clinical risk
- Compliance gaps
- Operational impact
- Contractor availability
- Dependencies (e.g., ventilation shutdowns)

3.2 Logical Workflows

A typical sequence:

1. Pre-start checks
2. Isolation of services
3. Strip-out

4. First fix
5. Second fix
6. Finishes
7. Commissioning
8. Clinical sign-off

3.3 Avoiding Bottlenecks

Common bottlenecks include:

- Late RAMS approval
- Delayed material deliveries
- Access restrictions
- Unplanned clinical pressures
- Contractor over-commitment

Mitigate early.

4. Contractor Coordination

4.1 Pre-Start Requirements

Ensure contractors provide:

- RAMS
- Insurance documentation
- Competence records
- Programme of works
- Daily reporting structure
- Named supervisor

4.2 Daily Coordination

Implement:

- Morning briefings
- Clear access routes
- Daily progress logs
- Issue escalation pathways
- Joint inspections

4.3 Safety & Compliance

Monitor:

- Fire safety

- Infection control
- Electrical isolation
- Hot works
- Asbestos controls
- Waste management

5. Infection Control Integration

Summer refurb must align with infection control requirements.

Key controls include:

- Dust containment
- Barrier systems
- Negative pressure zones
- Clean/dirty routes
- Daily cleaning
- Clinical sign-off before reopening

6. Communication & Operational Impact

6.1 Internal Communication

Provide clear updates to:

- Clinical teams
- Facilities
- Portering
- Security
- IT
- Senior management

6.2 External Communication

Where relevant:

- Patient signage
- Temporary access routes
- Car park adjustments

7. Commissioning & Handover

7.1 Commissioning Requirements

Ensure commissioning covers:

- Electrical testing
- Ventilation verification
- Water safety checks
- Fire safety checks
- Medical gas testing
- Equipment validation

7.2 Handover Documentation

Provide:

- As-built drawings
- O&M manuals
- Test certificates
- Updated risk register entries
- Photographic evidence
- Completion report

8. Post-Project Review

8.1 Lessons Learned

Capture:

- What worked well
- What caused delays
- Contractor performance
- Clinical feedback
- Compliance issues

8.2 Update Estates Strategy

Feed outcomes into:

- Backlog maintenance plans
- Lifecycle models
- Capital planning
- Risk registers