LOCAL NEWS PARTNERSHIPS

Hospitals in disrepair

Strictly embargoed: 00:01, Wednesday February 21st 2024

BBC Shared Data Unit, BBC Local News partnerships shared.dataunit@bbc.co.uk

Please note this pack and accompanying dataset may be subject to edit

What's the story?

The scale of disruption to patient care caused by outdated NHS buildings and equipment can be revealed following a BBC investigation.

Sewage leaks, floods and partially collapsed ceilings were among thousands of potentially harmful incidents recorded by hospital bosses last year.

As part of a wide-ranging study into the state of English hospitals we asked every acute hospital trust in the country to provide details of when estates and infrastructure failures had caused so-called "clinical service incidents".

We have also analysed the cost of the repair backlog at every acute hospital trust in England using the Estates Returns Information Collection (ERIC) data released by NHS England.

We are sharing our findings from both of these today.

Clinical service incidents

Clinical service incidents are when the ability to deliver care has been affected by failures in the hospital environment.

A total of 86 trusts provided a response, revealing there had been at least 1,385 reports of infrastructure problems, impacting the care of at least 1,055 patients.

We are providing you with details of those incidents in the spreadsheet below. The first tab "Trust response" shows whether the trust you are interested in responded to the FOI

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1VWCysIpaq0H3xh8XxbEMo73EmeIJbdzfcaCg-koqJw0/edit?usp=sharing

Examples of some of the incidents include:

- Patients awaiting kidney dialysis being sent home because of ventilation issues
- Sewage leaking into a waiting area for Ophthalmology
- Parts of ceiling collapsing in clinical areas
- Air conditioning failing in operating theatres
- Green algae growth in a hydrotherapy pool
- Power lost in an operating theatre

Amendment:

Please note, a previous version of this pack referred to an incident involving babies who developed hypothermia on a cold ward. Following conversations with the trust, we are satisfied this situation arose from a door being left open and was not down to estate or equipment failure.

The cost of repairs backlog

The second part of this investigation looks at the amount of money it would cost each hospital trust in England to fix all of the known issues related to their infrastructure. The Methodology section explains this in more detail.

We found the bill to complete so-called ‘high-risk’ repairs needed at NHS acute hospitals has swollen to £2bn - up by more than a third compared to the previous year.

The cost to repair all infrastructure issues reached more than £9.5bn in 2022-23. There has been a rise of £867m over five years, adjusting for inflation.

You can find information about the backlog at your individual trust using our specially made website. Simply select the trust you are interested in from the dropdown menus at the top of the page. Trusts are listed alphabetically.

The website is here: https://hospitalbuildings.github.io/

Trusts with some of the largest repairs backlogs highlighted the age of their buildings.

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust in London told the BBC some of its buildings were older than the NHS itself - “nearly 180 years old”.

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust said large parts of its sites spanned “as far back as Victorian times”.

Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust said it was “delivering 21st century healthcare in 20th century buildings”. It faces a £2m annual bill to maintain the tower at Wycombe Hospital, which contains its intensive care unit and operating theatres.

Others highlighted the discovery of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) at their hospital sites as being a major factor in their overall repair bill. RAAC featured prominently in the news last September when Schools Minister Nick Gibb revealed a RAAC beam at a school had collapsed despite being considered safe. It prompted the closure of more than 100 schools. Some 42 hospitals are believed to have buildings constructed using RAAC.

Health think tank, The King’s Fund said: The terrible state of some NHS buildings and equipment should be a wake-up call for the government.”

A series of rights of replies from NHS trusts can be found at the end of this document. The summary panel on the left-hand side allows you to skip to the individual right of reply you are interested in.

How big is the repair bill?

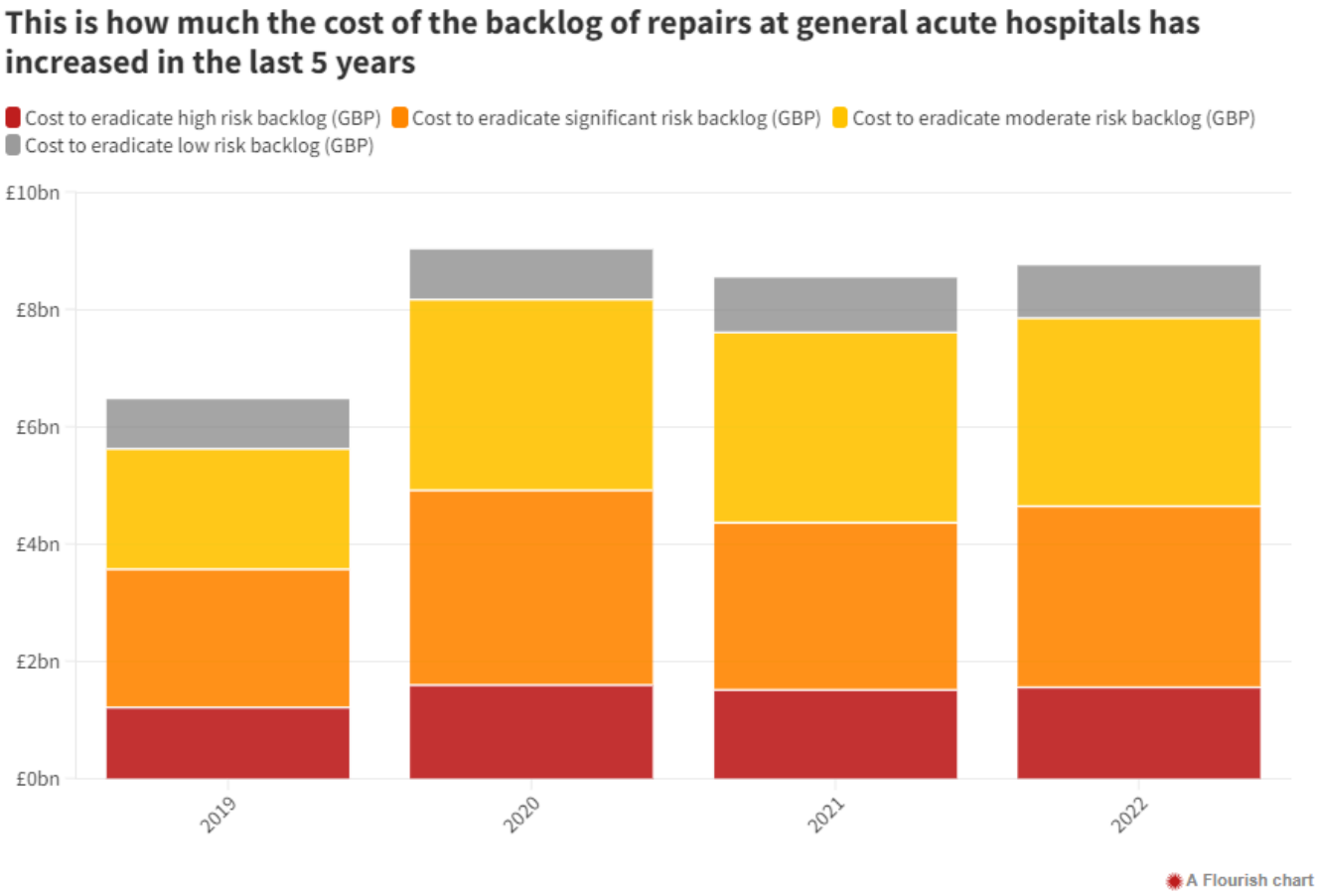
We analysed data from the last five years of the Estates Returns Information Collection (ERIC) to look at the cost of the backlog of repairs facing hospitals in the NHS.

These repairs are grouped into four risk areas: “low”, “moderate”, “significant”, and “high risk”.

We found that high risk repairs - ***repairs which must be urgently addressed to prevent catastrophic failure or major disruption to clinical services*** - rose by more than a third between 21-22 and 22-23. Data is collected by financial year.

This means, according to our analysis, the total high-risk repair bill for acute hospitals in England now stands at **£2bn**, up by 34% when compared to the previous year.

The overall repair bill, which includes all types of repairs, for all acute hospitals in 2022-23 was **£9bn.**



Which trusts have the largest repair costs?

- While nationally, the cost of the high-risk repair backlog stands at £2bn - one trust alone makes up 20% of that total - Imperial College. High-risk repairs are ***repairs which must be urgently addressed to prevent catastrophic failure or major disruption to clinical services.***

- Below the table shows the English trusts with the largest **high-risk** repair backlogs as of 2022-23.

English trusts with the largest high-risk repairs backlog (general acute hospitals only)

Most Recent Trust Name	Commissioning Region	2022-23
IMPERIAL COLLEGE HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST	LONDON COMMISSIONING REGION	£392,903,901
AIREDALE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	NORTH EAST AND YORKSHIRE COMMISSIONING REGION	£335,202,292
CROYDON HEALTH SERVICES NHS TRUST	LONDON COMMISSIONING REGION	£105,738,250
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST	SOUTH EAST COMMISSIONING REGION	£100,800,283
HOMERTON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	LONDON COMMISSIONING REGION	£82,232,500
THE QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL KING'S LYNN NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	EAST OF ENGLAND COMMISSIONING REGION	£74,175,015
WEST SUFFOLK NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	EAST OF ENGLAND COMMISSIONING REGION	£65,683,727
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	EAST OF ENGLAND COMMISSIONING REGION	£62,370,318
LONDON NORTH WEST HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST	LONDON COMMISSIONING REGION	£55,457,489
THE HILLINGDON HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	LONDON COMMISSIONING REGION	£53,159,420

BBC

- Below the table shows the English hospital trusts with the highest percentage rise in the cost of their high-risk repairs backlog. **We would exercise some caution here as some of the percentage rises are in the thousands. As you can see some of the large rises can be attributed to coming from a low starting number, such as Ashford and St Peter's. In these cases we would urge you to report the rise in terms of whole numbers as well as the percentage.**

- However, at some trusts the rise is significant. Oxford University Hospital's high-risk backlog rose from £1.4m in 21-22 to nearly £51m in 22-23.

High-risk repairs: acute hospitals backlog percentage increase from 2021-22 to 2022-23

Most Recent Trust Name	2021-22 (£)	2022-23 (£)	YoY change (£)	YoY change (%)
OXFORD UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	1,441,171	50,688,733	49,247,562	3417
HOMERTON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	2,627,713	82,232,500	79,604,787	3029
ASHFORD AND ST. PETER'S HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	21,108	270,354	249,246	1181
UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS OF DERBY AND BURTON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	914,763	8,942,261	8,027,498	878
AIREDALE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	35,499,829	335,202,292	299,702,463	844
LEEDS TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS TRUST	156,491	827,070	670,579	429
CROYDON HEALTH SERVICES NHS TRUST	28,216,069	105,738,250	77,522,181	275
CHELSEA AND WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	2,038,993	5,564,914	3,525,921	173
BEDFORDSHIRE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	7,927,886	20,683,645	12,755,759	161
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	24,774,377	62,370,318	37,595,941	152

BBC

- When looking at the **overall cost of repairs** - that is trusts with the largest overall bill for repairs including all types of risk, (low, moderate, significant and high-risk) Imperial College London has the highest overall repair bill.

Acute English trusts with the highest overall repairs backlog (all types of repair)

NHS Trust	2022-23
IMPERIAL COLLEGE HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST	£734,727,698
GUY'S AND ST THOMAS' NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	£452,218,054
NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS TRUST	£437,058,781
AIREDALE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	£358,310,468
THE MID CHESHIRE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	£337,172,814
LONDON NORTH WEST HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST	£298,823,238
BARTS HEALTH NHS TRUST	£263,470,676
MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	£254,403,063
OXFORD UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	£237,393,569
UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS BIRMINGHAM NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	£193,298,568

BBC

- **The table below shows the trusts with the largest percentage rise in the cost of their overall repair backlog.**

English trusts with the largest percentage rise in all repairs backlog (general acute hospitals only)

Trust	2021-22 backlog (£)	2022-23 backlog (£)	YOY change (£)	YOY change (%)
HOMERTON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	14,026,666	141,773,350	127,746,684	911
HARROGATE AND DISTRICT NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	10,326,531	53,138,499	42,811,968	415
SOUTH WARWICKSHIRE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	15,580,471	40,653,862	25,073,391	161
CROYDON HEALTH SERVICES NHS TRUST	64,106,493	165,752,650	101,646,157	159
BOLTON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	33,984,147	79,571,118	45,586,971	134
ROYAL DEVON AND EXETER NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	68,481,918	145,775,514	77,293,596	113
CHELSEA AND WESTMINSTER HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	3,880,950	8,100,264	4,219,314	109
SOUTH TEES HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	19,376,011	39,901,000	20,524,989	106
SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST	70,641,307	140,160,937	69,519,630	98
WHITTINGTON HEALTH NHS TRUST	30,055,192	56,024,395	25,969,203	86

BBC

Methodology

We analysed data from the last five years of the Estates Returns Information Collection (ERIC) to look at the cost of the backlog of repairs facing hospitals in the NHS. These repairs are grouped into four risk areas: “low”, “moderate”, “significant”, and “high risk”. To ensure that comparisons were accurate, historical costs were adjusted for inflation using the Construction output price indices on all construction (new work and repair and maintenance).

In some cases, trusts have merged to create new trusts. Where possible we have used old trusts' figures to provide historical context to the new trust's repair costs, using NHS data on successor organisations.

Data on clinical incidents was taken from the same dataset. These are defined as those leading to "services being delayed, cancelled or otherwise interfered with owing to problems or failures related to the estates and infrastructure failure." Incidents include problems with electrical, water or ventilation systems, internal fabric and fixtures, roofs and structures, or lifts and hoists.

Before 2021, this was only provided at trust level, so we have limited our analysis to the two latest years during which data has been provided at site level. In the most recent data, hospitals also provide (where incidents have been recorded) data on the first, second, and third most clinically impactful incident type, and so we have included this too.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wVUgjH1YpWRKX2Tthkbf0i0XoI9p6giUbI-emnzhDsE/edit?usp=sharing

The Python code used to fetch and clean the ERIC data can be found in this document along with further details around data quality and information about using time series data where a hospital trust has changed name.

Meanwhile, we sent a request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) to all England'S NHS trusts requesting information on infrastructure and estates incidents in the 2022-23 financial year. The request had a response rate of 41%, with 86 out of 210 trusts providing information.

Incidents relating to staff shortages, including porters and cleaners, were excluded from the results in order to ensure that all incidents related to infrastructure issues only.

Once the responses had been combined, we carried out some analysis to determine some of the most common types of incidents recorded.

Due to the low response rate, comparisons should not be made between trusts or regions. These data are intended to provide an overall national picture and detail on individual trusts.

Here is what we asked:

Under the FOI Act please provide me with the information below. Please confirm receipt of this request as soon as possible.

Please provide additional details of clinical service incidents caused by estates and infrastructure failures which resulted in clinical services being delayed, cancelled or otherwise interfered with owing to problems or failures related to the estates and infrastructure failure, as measured in the ERIC return, in the 2022-23 financial year. This information could be collected from incident reporting systems.

For each incident, please provide:

1. *A summary of the incident.*
2. *The number of patients affected.*
3. *The service affected.*
4. *How long the service was delayed/if it was cancelled.*

Norfolk Hospital has incomplete data so we have removed it from the website.

Expert comment

Siva Anandaciva, chief analyst at The King's Fund

The King's Fund is an independent charitable organisation working to improve health and care in England.

Siva Anandaciva (he/him) said: “The terrible state of some NHS buildings and equipment should be a wake-up call for the government. Despite pledges to build and refurbish NHS hospitals, the data clearly shows how some NHS facilities are simply not fit for the purpose of delivering modern health care.

“But as shocking as the data is, it will not be news to senior leaders in the NHS and to government ministers. Repeated warnings have been sounded over the repeated failure to prioritise long-term investment in the upkeep and development of NHS facilities. The consequences of the government's earlier decisions to put off dealing with long-term problems are now being realised. The deteriorating state of NHS buildings and equipment is a shaky foundation that could undermine the chancellor’s productivity drive.

“The data will sadly not be a surprise to the public, who all too often see run-down NHS hospitals and primary care facilities, including some facilities that pre-date the birth of the NHS. The human cost of this underinvestment is all too obvious. Patients have appointments cancelled due to malfunctioning and unreliable equipment, and the poor condition of parts of the NHS estate pose daily risks to both NHS staff and patients. Recent increases in the number of hospital staff have not yet translated into increased hospital activity, and outdated tech and dilapidated buildings are likely to be factors limiting progress.

“To get the NHS back on track in the coming years, the NHS needs a long-term funded plan to boost capital investment to maintain and improve buildings and equipment in hospital and primary care settings. The NHS will be trapped in a doom loop of chronic underinvestment without this longer-term thinking and stewardship by the government, and it will be NHS staff and patients who ultimately pay the price.”

Sir Julian Hartley, chief executive of NHS Providers

Sir Julian Hartley said: "The eye-watering cost of trying to patch up creaking buildings and out-of-date facilities is rocketing. The £11billion-plus bill for a long 'to do' list of essential repairs across the NHS keeps growing at an alarming rate.

"Safety of patients and staff is at stake. More than half of the repairs backlog is of 'high or significant risk'.

"Far too many NHS buildings and equipment are in a very bad way. To provide first-class care trusts - mental health, community and ambulance services as well as hospitals - need major capital investment from government to give patients and staff safe, efficient and reliable buildings, facilities and equipment."

Rights-of-replies from NHS trusts

IMPERIAL COLLEGE HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST had the largest high-risk repairs backlog in 2022-23 (filtered to general acute hospitals only) according to the most recent figures.

Eric Munro, director of estates and facilities at the trust, said: “Much of our estate pre-dates the NHS – some of our buildings are nearly 180 years old. We spend around £25 million a year just to deal with the highest risk maintenance issues so that we can stay operational and keep everyone safe.

“The only realistic way of properly addressing the maintenance backlog is through the redevelopment of our sites, with a full rebuild of St Mary’s Hospital in Paddington our most pressing need. All three of our main hospitals are included in the Government’s New Hospital Programme and we are doing all we can to accelerate our schemes.”

Additional background information for editors:

- We have not identified any issues related to reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC).

- Examples of high risk backlog: replacing and updating heating, ventilation and power systems, lifts and building fabric (such as roof, walls and floors etc) and upgrading electrical supplies. Much of this infrastructure is past its recommended life span but is required to meet growing demand and new technologies.

- For more details about our redevelopment plans, including the need: St Mary’s https://www.imperial.nhs.uk/st-marys-development; our three main sites https://www.imperial.nhs.uk/about-us/building-better-hospitals

THE QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL KING'S LYNN NHS FOUNDATION TRUST was among the 10 trusts with the largest high-risk repairs backlog in 2022-23 (filtered to general acute hospitals only) according to the most recent, published figures.

Paul Brooks, Director of Estates and Facilities at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHS Foundation Trust, said: "The QEH is a Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) hospital, and we continue to invest national capital funding to maximise the safety the Trust's current building. Working with a skilled engineering team, we have implemented an intense installation programme over the past two years to create a steel and support structure to maintain the safety of the roof, for our patients, visitors and staff.

"We appreciate it can be disconcerting for our patients and visitors when they see building work taking place - teams across the Trust are doing their utmost to keep disruption to a minimum. In May 2023 the Government announced that the QEH had been added to New Hospital Programme so as a Trust we are working at pace with enabling work to bring a new hospital to King's Lynn and West Norfolk by 2030."

In response to Rebecca's experience, Paul Brooks, Director of Estates and Facilities at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHS Foundation Trust, said:

"We continue our rolling Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) programme of installing steel and timber support props across the hospital to maximise the safety of our buildings for our patients and staff. We currently have 3,397 steel and timber support props across the Trust. We appreciate these props and the work around the site can be unsettling for patients. These measures are proactive steps to maximise safety at our hospital. We are working with the national New Hospital Programme team who are supporting us to find a long term solution.

“In January [2023] the Trust suffered a blockage in a drainage system near to the West Wing area of the hospital. Our Estates team responded immediately to clear the blockage and clean down the area. Monitoring of the drainage system is carried out by the Estates team on a daily basis, to prevent sewage leaks. Our hospital is in a semi-rural location, with several sides surrounded by woodland. We have a local provider responsible for our pest control which performs regular visits to audit the site and responds on the same day to any reports to take immediate action.”

LEEDS TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS TRUST was among the 10 trusts with the highest percentage increase in the cost of high-risk repairs from 2021-22 to 2022-23, according to the most recent, published figures.

Craige Richardson, Director of Estates and Facilities, Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, said:

“The Trust, like many organisations across the NHS, has a significant maintenance backlog, with large parts of our sites spanning as far back as Victorian times. It's not unusual to see movement when compared year on year, especially across such a large/diverse estate.

“We have recently carried out a full, comprehensive survey of our buildings across all sites, and as a result some elements were re-graded. A large proportion of this increase was expected, and we have plans in place to address it, either through investing in ‘greener solutions’ or imminent building disposal.

“The safety of our patients, visitors and staff remains a priority of the Trust.

“We have plans to halve the overall backlog maintenance at Leeds Teaching Hospitals, through a new state-of-the-art hospital on the Leeds General Infirmary site . The project is fully funded by the Government, and we are currently awaiting the go ahead from the New Hospital Programme to start construction. It will provide a new home for Leeds Children’s Hospital, a new adults' hospital and one of the largest single-site maternity centres.”

BEDFORDSHIRE HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST was among the 10 trusts with the highest percentage increase in the cost of high-risk repairs from 2021-22 to 2022-23, according to the most recent, published figures.

A spokesperson for Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust answered our questions.

Q: Referring to your trust, can you tell me how this high-risk repair bill has accumulated?
A: “Our Trust estate is ageing with a number of high and significant risks that can no longer proactively be managed. This is due to changes in building regulations and compliance requirements, hyper-inflation within the construction market, pressure on specialist resourcing in terms of skill and capacity, as well as our estates being pushed to the limit to support clinical activity, priorities and risk.”

Q: Can your trust afford to complete these repairs? Have you asked for help with these repairs? If so, from whom (eg government) and what was the response?
A: “Our Trust’s backlog stands at £193m and is growing, which we are unable to afford to address. These risks are regularly reported via local forums and the annual ERIC return. There is national recognition that capital funding is inadequate, with limited funding opportunities available to address high and significant risk.”

Q: Should patients be concerned to see these figures? What would you say to them?
A: The figures shown are concerning, however a schedule of high risk backlog maintenance is rolled out on an annual basis, focusing on the highest risks to clinical service provision.

Q: What has caused the repair bill to increase by the percentage it has at your trust from 2021-22 to 2022-23 – was that down to a survey of your buildings in that time period for example? Has the discovery of RAAC concrete played a role in the size of this repair bill at your trust?

A: This is caused by our ageing estate and the number of risks that can no longer be proactively managed. As mentioned above, this is due to changes in building regulations and compliance requirements, hyper-inflation within the construction market, pressure on specialist resourcing in terms of skill and capacity, as well as our estates being pushed to the limit to support clinical activity, priorities and risk. To date, no RAAC has been found in the Trust estate.

Q: What solutions can you put in place before and in order for these high-risk repairs can be carried out? How soon can those repairs be carried out and what would the impact be on patients for those repairs to be carried out eg necessary part-closure of the hospital site? What impact would that have on patients? Is that something about which you have already made patients aware if and when repairs can be scheduled?
A: “An annual programme of high risk maintenance is proactively rolled out across the Trust Estate. Significant consideration is given to the operational estate to ensure minimal impact on patient services where possible. The estate would benefit from a substantial uplift in capital funding to address estate risks and allow for the proactive maintenance and upkeep.”

LONDON NORTH WEST HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST was among the 10 trusts with the largest high-risk repairs backlog in 2022-23 (filtered to general acute hospitals only) according to the most recent, published figures.

A spokesperson for London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust answered our questions.

Q: How has this high-risk repair bill accumulated?

A: “Northwick Park Hospital is now more than fifty years old, while Ealing Hospital is approaching fifty. Despite ongoing regular maintenance work, the ageing infrastructure on both sites presents a significant challenge. In addition, modern healthcare requires additional space, higher intensity of use, and a greater level of engineering systems, requiring considerably more

maintenance than would have been the case when the sites were built. We have already invested significantly to fix a number of these issues, including building a new energy centre at Northwick Park to move away from steam, improving our electricity generators for our secondary electricity supply, and replacing or upgrading a range of other systems such as fire alarms, water systems and medical gas supply mechanisms. However, other complex systems, such as ventilation and lifts, continue to need substantial work."

Q: Have you asked for help with these repairs? If so, from whom (eg government) and what was the response?

A: "We bid for funding support from various sources, including from capital funding from NHS England. Modernising and investing in new facilities remains one of the most effective ways to reduce this kind of backlog, and therefore this year we have already made some substantial improvements to critical aspects of our estate, including important refurbishment work to our maternity unit and birthing centre, and other crucial site developments including the development of the community diagnostic centre at Ealing and the acute medical unit at Northwick Park."

Q: Should patients be concerned to see these figures? What would you say to them?

A: "Our patients can be confident that we monitor any issues associated with our sites very closely, and that we anticipate and swiftly deal with any issue that could have an immediate impact on our ability to provide care. This includes rigorous risk management, governance and health and safety processes and reporting, which ultimately are overseen by our board of directors."

Q: Has the discovery of RAAC concrete played a role in the size of this repair bill at your trust?

A: No.

Q: What solutions can you put in place before and in order for these high-risk repairs can be carried out? How soon can those repairs be carried out and what would the impact be

on patients for those repairs to be carried out eg necessary part-closure of the hospital site? What impact would that have on patients?

A: “We have a long-term plan to address these repairs, but as with any older hospital site, maintenance is an ongoing activity that requires constant monitoring and updating. We work closely with our partner trusts in north west London to minimise any impact on our patients and communities and will always seek to minimise disruption to our services. This means completing work in a phased and coordinated way that allows healthcare to continue. Wherever possible, we align repairs with other important improvements to our sites, as we are currently doing with the community diagnostic centre at Ealing and hope to do by developing a new critical care unit at Northwick Park.”

AIREDALE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST was among the 10 trusts with the largest high-risk repairs backlog in 2022-23 (filtered to general acute hospitals only) as well as being among the 10 trusts with the highest percentage increase in the cost of high-risk repairs from 2021-22 to 2022-23, according to the most recent, published figures.

Foluke Ajayi, Chief Executive of Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, said: “Our RAAC risks are well-known, and this figure highlights the extent of the work being carried out to address the structural issues at Airedale.

“Being on the New Hospital Programme means that we can now look forward to a future in a RAAC-free hospital estate. But in the meantime, we continue to take every step possible to maintain safety within the building. This includes a comprehensive programme of rolling inspections and putting in structural supports and installing structural solutions where necessary.”

WEST SUFFOLK NHS FOUNDATION TRUST was among the 10 trusts with the largest high-risk repairs backlog in 2022-23 (filtered to general acute hospitals only) according to the most recent, published figures.

Craig Black, executive director of resources for the West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, said:

“The safety of patients, staff, and visitors is our priority and we have always followed expert, independent advice when it comes to the management of our buildings.

“Due to our ageing estate and the prevalence of RAAC across much of our West Suffolk Hospital site, we have undertaken a large programme of remedial works to support our RAAC infrastructure and made improvements in areas that include asbestos, ventilation and fire safety.

“As part of these works, which are well advanced and sit alongside general maintenance, we continually address areas of ongoing concern and do so as and when further risks are identified.

“In addition, we are a ‘priority site’ under the Government’s New Hospital Programme and are on track to deliver a new healthcare facility on Hardwick Manor in Bury St Edmunds by 2030.”

Background for editors:

- The Trust is well advanced in a programme of remedial works across its West Suffolk Hospital estate to mitigate the risks associated with RAAC (reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete), which has required significant investment. Several safety measures to help manage the site are in place including:

o Regular survey and monitoring programme, assessing the condition of RAAC planks. Increased surveillance is ongoing until the main hospital relocates to a new site.

o If an issue is found, remedial and mitigating work is undertaken immediately and short-term, temporary props installed to reinforce the plank.

- Substantial additional precautionary measures: as of December 2023, 88% of RAAC roof planks have precautionary supports in place, the majority of these are failsafe roof supports of steel and timber beams – a support system being implemented across the hospital

- A specific treatment scheme for wall panels is using zinc anode technology to prevent further deterioration; 100% of the RAAC wall panels have been treated.

- There have been no plank failures at the West Suffolk Hospital.

• To provide additional capacity and minimise disruption to patients while the RAAC estate maintenance programmes have been ongoing, the Trust designed and commissioned a decant ward.

• The vast majority of the £65.7m repairs backlog is associated with the remedial works undertaken to mitigate the risks associated with RAAC, for which the Trust has received significant funding from the government.

• Due to the ageing estate, the West Suffolk Hospital site's asbestos works have been ongoing for many years and will continue to be a core area of work now and in the future. A large amount of the asbestos works have come under the Trust's estates maintenance programme which mitigates the risks associated with RAAC.

• Continual remedial works and improvements have been made across the estate's fire safety requirements, which also sit alongside the estates maintenance programme which mitigates the risks associated with RAAC.

• Much of the current high and significant risk ventilation works are anticipated to be completed by summer 2024.

• To Trust carries out a whole estate review every five years (20% of the site assessed annually) to determine what it needs to do to maintain its land and property to an accessible standard in line with best practice. This annual review means the costs attributed to the backlog change as works for the following year are identified. Therefore, the size of the backlog can increase or decrease between years.

- West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is a ‘priority site’ under the Government’s New Hospital Programme and is on track to deliver a new healthcare facility on Hardwick Manor in Bury St Edmunds by 2030.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST was among the 10 trusts with the highest percentage increase in the cost of high-risk repairs from 2021-22 to 2022-23, according to the most recent, published figures.

Mark Holloway, Chief Officer for Estates and Facilities at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: “We are one of the largest Trusts in the country and have four hospital sites, as well as other satellite properties.

“The uplift at OUH is as a result of a newer, detailed and more targeted building condition survey. In terms of RAAC, a very small amount was identified at the Churchill Hospital site in Oxford. Whilst having established the level of risk, the identified RAAC is currently safe and inspected regularly, however the Trust has been successful in receiving national RAAC remedial funding and will be removing all identified RAAC material from the hospital this year.

“Patient safety is our number one priority at the Trust, and continual investments and improvements in our estate do not compromise or impact patient or staff safety. It is our ambition to improve and replace our oldest estate and make the best use possible of our more modern buildings for the benefit of our patients and staff.”

Background for editors:

- Our approach to capital investment to reduce backlog maintenance is prioritised on a risk-based approach, and we prioritise the areas in greatest need.

CROYDON HEALTH SERVICES NHS TRUST was among the 10 trusts with the largest high-risk repairs backlog in 2022-23 (filtered to general acute hospitals only) and among the 10 trusts with the highest percentage increase in the cost of high-risk repairs from 2021-22 to 2022-23, according to the most recent, published figures.

A spokesperson for Croydon Health Services said: "We are working hard to improve our estate to support the delivery of high quality care, and through a planned maintenance regime we continuously monitor our buildings and infrastructure to ensure these remain safe and compliant as possible with the required standards for healthcare settings.

"Our new Estates Strategy, which launched in December 2023, followed a deep dive audit that informed the latest NHS ERIC data, and established our priorities to tackle the backlog on maintenance and also identified how we can further optimise and future proof our estate."

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE HEALTHCARE NHS TRUST was among the 10 trusts with the largest high-risk repairs backlog in 2022-23 (filtered to general acute hospitals only) according to the most recent, published figures.

It referred us to background on its website, which related to the age of its buildings and the cost of the continual upkeep of the tower at Wycombe Hospital: https://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/our-organisation/where-your-care-is-delivered/

HOMERTON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST was among the 10 trusts with the largest high-risk repairs backlog in 2022-23 (filtered to general acute hospitals only) and the 10 trusts with the highest percentage increase in the cost of high-risk repairs from 2021-22 to 2022-23.

A spokesperson for Homerton Healthcare Foundation Trust said: “The vast majority of our hospital buildings and community sites are in a sound condition. The Trust has in place the appropriate health and safety mitigations to ensure we keep our patients and staff safe. Our estates team works very hard to limit interruptions to patient care resulting from estates maintenance. The Trust uses a risk-based approach to prioritising capital funding, and we are developing a comprehensive 10-year estates capital programme. In the short term, we are carrying out a number of fire compliance works in wards and departments. All maintenance requests are logged and prioritised in line with clinical need or risk.”

UNIVERSITY HOSPITALS OF DERBY AND BURTON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST, which was among the 10 trusts with the highest percentage increase in the cost of high-risk repairs from 2021-22 to 2022-23 in its acute hospitals, sent us the following background for editors, but not to be used as quotes.

Please find below some background information that we hope is helpful for factual accuracy in your reporting. Please treat this as background rather than for us as quotes from the Trust.

- University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust (UHDB) has five sites across two counties, with more than 14,500 staff. From analysis we have done, we understand that the figures shared by the BBC link to just one of our acute hospital sites, Queen's Hospital

Burton. As a whole Trust, our High-Risk backlog maintenance in 22/23 was £10,277,970, with £8,942,261 being for the Queen's Hospital Burton site.

- Circa £6m of this Queen's Hospital Burton backlog relates to work around orthopaedic theatres on the site, and a feasibility survey is underway to establish the full scope of these works. Patients who need orthopaedic care continue to be treated safely while this is underway.
- Throughout 23/24, work has already taken place to address nearly £1.5m of high-risk backlog maintenance.
- The year-on-year increase is due to a variety of factors, including a formal review by external advisors who have updated figures to reflect inflation and risk classification changes for some areas of work.
- We prioritise areas which directly support patient care and clinical activity, and conduct the work based on funds available within our annual capital allocation. All of our estate is monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure it is safe and appropriate for use by staff and patients.
- The Trust does not have RAAC in any of its sites. This has been additionally verified through an independent survey.

ASHFORD AND ST. PETER'S HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST, which was among the 10 trusts with the highest percentage increase in the cost of high-risk repairs from 2021-22 to 2022-23, according to the most recent, published figures.

Q: Referring to your trust, can you tell me how this high-risk repair bill has accumulated?

A: The % change is only sizable because of the very low starting point from the previous year, and this backlog category for the Trust is very low compared in a national perspective.

Q: Can your trust afford to complete these repairs? Yes

Q: Have you asked for help with these repairs? **N/A** If so, from whom (eg government) and what was the response? **N/A**

Q: Should patients be concerned to see these figures? What would you say to them?

A: The risks in this backlog category are all manageable and will be resolved.

Q: What has caused the repair bill to increase by the percentage it has at your trust from 2021-22 to 2022-23 – was that down to a survey of your buildings in that time period for example? Has the discovery of RAAC concrete played a role in the size of this repair bill at your trust?

A: The figures in this category have been updated following a conditions survey but still remain low. ASPH does not have a RAAC problem.

Q: What solutions can you put in place before and in order for these high-risk repairs can be carried out?

A: These repairs are being planned for as part of the capital prioritisation planning programme

Q: How soon can those repairs be carried out and what would the impact be on patients for those repairs to be carried out eg necessary part-closure of the hospital site? What impact would that have on patients? Is that something about which you have already made patients aware if and when repairs can be scheduled?

A: These repairs relate to Estates infrastructure projects that can be replaced without closing down critical patient services or affecting delivery of patient services.

Government response

A Department of Health and Social Care spokesperson said:

"We have invested significant sums to upgrade and modernise NHS buildings – including £4.2 billion this financial year – so staff have the facilities needed to provide world-class care for patients.

“Trusts are responsible for prioritising this funding to maintain and refurbish their premises, including the renewal and replacement of equipment.

“This is on top of the expected investment of over £20 billion for the New Hospital Programme, a further £1.7 billion for over 70 hospital upgrades across England, and a range of nationally funded infrastructure improvements in mental health, urgent and emergency care and diagnostic capacity.”

Background

- Individual NHS organisations are legally responsible for maintaining their estates.
- The government has been clear that it expects NHS organisations to use existing capital budgets and assets to maximum effect.