

H2O

HOME TO OFFICE

BLUEPRINT: OFFICE OF THE FUTURE
AN INSIGHT REPORT FROM BRITA VIVREAU

 BRITA®

DESIGNED FOR SUCCESS

While 82% of workers have said they want to return to workplaces for at least some of the working week¹, the idea of once again commuting to work instead of staying within the comfort of homes may be a shock to the system.

¹Research by 3GEM on behalf of BRITA VIVREAU, 2020

Businesses are now considering how they can ensure that a return to the office is an attractive option for employees, as they recognise the need to maintain the same levels of engagement and productivity within their team wherever they choose to work.

As leading psychologists warn that the demand for mental health support services has never been higher², what can businesses do to ensure their workplace supports positive mental wellbeing?

In this report from BRITA VIVREAU, we combine expert insight into psychology, architecture and design, with market research to deliver top tips for businesses looking to make their office the best it can be, in order to support their staff.

Office design has a clear role to play, not only in influencing how happy employees are at work, but also how well they perform. From engagement and motivation to recruitment, staff retention and overall productivity, studies have demonstrated the business impact of well-designed office spaces. In fact, research commissioned by BRITA VIVREAU found that

79%
of office workers agree that a well-designed office would motivate them to accept a job³.

“At BRITA VIVREAU, our goal is to help support our customers to achieve their ambitions. Whether that’s reaching sustainability targets, or boosting staff morale, we believe that small changes can make a big difference. By offering high-quality amenities like a BRITA VIVREAU water dispenser, organisations can keep their employees happy and healthy.”

Rebecca Fairfield,
Head of Key Accounts
at BRITA VIVREAU

THIS REPORT CONTAINS
EXPERT INSIGHT FROM:



Ben Channon
Director
Ekkist
A Design for
Well-being
Consultancy



Louise Hattam
Senior Project
Manager
Work.Life
Co-working spaces
designed for
happiness



DaeWha Kang
Lead Designer
DaeWha Kang
Design
Award-winning
architecture and
design studio

²The Guardian, 2020
³Research on 1,000 UK office workers by 3GEM on behalf of BRITA VIVREAU, March 2021

THE BUSINESS BENEFIT

“There is an assumption that if we work hard and make lots of money, then we’ll become happy. But what if we flipped that on its head? Research shows that happy staff, really are better staff. If businesses ensure they are creating a positive environment for their staff they’ll reap the benefits when it comes to their productivity, and we might all be better off as a result.”

Ben Channon
Director
Ekkist

Research has shown that poor mental health costs UK employers up to £45 billion per year, and for every £1 spent on supporting their employee’s mental health, businesses get £5 back on their investment due to reduced absenteeism and a lower staff turnover⁴.

⁴Deloitte, 2020

Many businesses are already taking operational steps to support their staff, such as offering flexible working hours, shared parental leave or access to counselling services. However, there is also an opportunity for businesses to enhance their work environments which has also been shown to greatly improve businesses bottom line.

In a recent case study from the International WELL Building Institute, a company found that by redesigning **a healthier office space it reduced staff turnover by 27% and absenteeism was 50% lower than the previous year⁵.**

While there is always a cost attached to improving office facilities, **DaeWha Kang, a designer, artist, and architect who has spent the last twenty years studying and building architecture around the world**, argues that this pales in comparison to that of replacing and retraining staff.

“Now that we move into multi-modal working, it is much easier for people to imagine changing companies when they spend less time with their colleagues. Anything that businesses can do to anchor people so that they feel taken care of is really going to benefit your bottom line.”

Some studies, like the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), predict that every time a business replaces a salaried employee, it costs 6 to 9 months' salary on average⁶.

Recent research from BRITA VIVREAU has revealed that 73% of office workers would be more likely to leave their job if their office wasn't designed with positive mental health in mind, clearly demonstrating the impact workspaces have on staff retention⁷.

A HUMAN-CENTRED APPROACH

“There used to be a focus on space-centric design, which centred around processes and work requirements in an attempt to drive employee performance. We have seen a shift to a people-first approach, where employees' quality of life is the focus and businesses listen to their employees to understand what they need from a workplace.”

Louise Hattam
Senior Project Manager
Work.Life

While there is no one-size-fits-all solution for promoting employee happiness, by taking a people-first approach, businesses can understand and cater to their employees' needs.

Ekkist, which consults on how the design of a building can support human health and wellbeing, echoes this human-centred approach within its seven Design for Well-being® principles which help their clients to create healthy buildings.

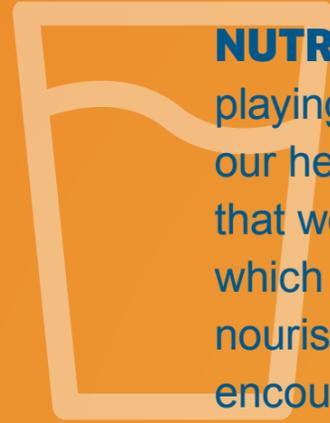
Turn the page to find out what they are.

EKKIST'S DESIGN FOR WELL-BEING® FRAMEWORK

REST: Well-designed buildings can support healthy circadian rhythms (the natural process which regulates the sleep-wake cycle) and support sleep and rest.



NUTRITION: With diet playing such a key role in our health, it is important that we create places which provide access to nourishing food and encourage hydration.



COMFORT: From temperature, acoustics, lighting and ergonomics, to privacy and our sense of control over our environment, comfort impacts stress levels and heart health.



FITNESS: If designed and managed properly, buildings can encourage more active lifestyles and make it easier for people to integrate movement and exercise into their daily lives.

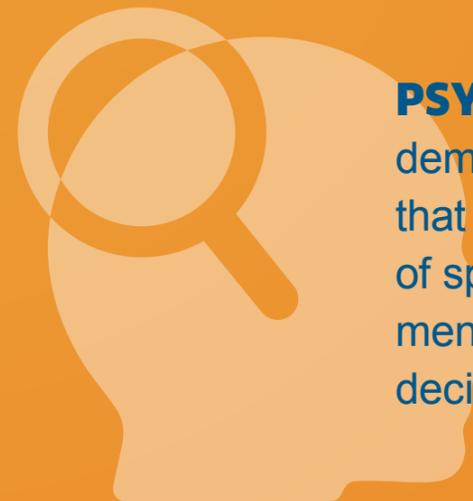


TOXICOLOGY: Toxicity can arise from a range of sources such as outdoor air quality, building materials and furnishings, incoming water supply and chemical products we use in our daily lives.

SOCIAL: Data shows that loneliness can be as harmless to us as smoking or obesity. Designing buildings with an awareness of social interaction can combat feelings of isolation.



PSYCHOLOGY: Neuroscientists can demonstrate with clear scientific data that the design, appearance and layout of spaces has a significant impact on our mental well-being, happiness and even decision-making.



TAKING INSPIRATION FROM NATURE

“Everyone has a different idea of what makes them feel good, but one thing that’s universal is everyone feels good when they are being heard and have a say. Get people to tell you how they feel about their environment. There are a lot of tweaks that can be made, without needing a new fit out.”

DaeWha Kang
Lead Designer
DaeWha Kang Design

As workers return to the office after a long period of working from home, it will be key for businesses to ensure they can clearly demonstrate the benefit for employees in coming into the office.

By creating an open environment where staff can voice any concerns and feedback on their environment, employees will feel more anchored and supported by their workplace.

“It’s also important to ensure that it’s not just the facilities management and HR teams who are interested in workplace design. If the leadership team is also bought into a project then they can ensure workplace culture matches positive design,” says DaeWha Kang.

As well as being more conscious of the cleaning and hygiene protocols of their office, there will be a greater focus on air quality and ventilation than ever before. Introducing plants within the office can be a great way to boost oxygen levels and create a pleasant environment, but research has also shown that we have a much deeper connection to nature than one might think.

CASE STUDY: **THE SHARD LIVING LAB**

Biophilic design is an approach in architecture that seeks to connect building occupants more closely to nature.

DaeWha Kang Design researched the impact of biophilia on staff wellbeing, when it was tasked with an office redesign project for Mitie HQ at The Shard. They created an immersive Living Lab, using beautifully designed bamboo materials and lighting that reflected the body's natural circadian rhythms.

A study conducted with the office workers using the building found that 81% felt greater satisfaction with their indoor environment than compared with the control space. Their productivity and focus was greatly increased and their negative feelings of stress and anxiety reduced in the Living Lab, as opposed to their regular office space which was mainly constructed from glass and metal.

CATERING FOR DIFFERENT STYLES OF WORKING

“By providing an agile office environment, businesses can provide flexibility to their employees and boost their productivity. It’s important to reflect not only people’s differing roles but also their working styles. Some may be collaborative, but others will highly value quiet working spaces.”

Louise Hattam
Senior Project Manager
Work.Life

We’ve seen an exponential rise in the use of technology, with virtual calls taking place of face-to-face meetings. While we may be seeing a return to office working, it does not necessarily mean the same appetite for business travel will exist. It’s important for businesses to recognise what their employees have missed about the office, and what they might not have!

While open-plan offices may suit some workers, others may find it hard to concentrate in busy environments. In Savills recent 'What Workers Want' report, **83% of workers said that noise levels are the most important factor in an ideal workplace but 80% of workers do enjoy working in open-plan spaces, demonstrating the need for break-out rooms and flexibility⁸.**

Organisations could focus on creating a range of spaces within their office that include private phone booths, collaboration spaces and more informal lounge areas which provide a 'home away from home' feel.

As well as physical environment, businesses

could also consider how they support the physical health of their staff. We all know that staying healthy makes us feel good, and after having access to their own kitchen facilities for so long, workers will be looking for high quality amenities within their offices to match their home environments.

Businesses can encourage healthy lifestyles by making it easy for their employees to stay hydrated with easy access to filtered water throughout their workspace. Not only is staying hydrated important for concentration, providing filtered water and hot beverage facilities encourages workers to take a break, catch up with colleagues and have a bit of time away from their screen.



56%
of workers named socialising with colleagues as the thing they missed most about the office

1 IN 5
workers also missed having access to high-quality amenities, such as tea and coffee and filtered water



40%
of workers say they were looking forward to having a dedicated workspace again⁹

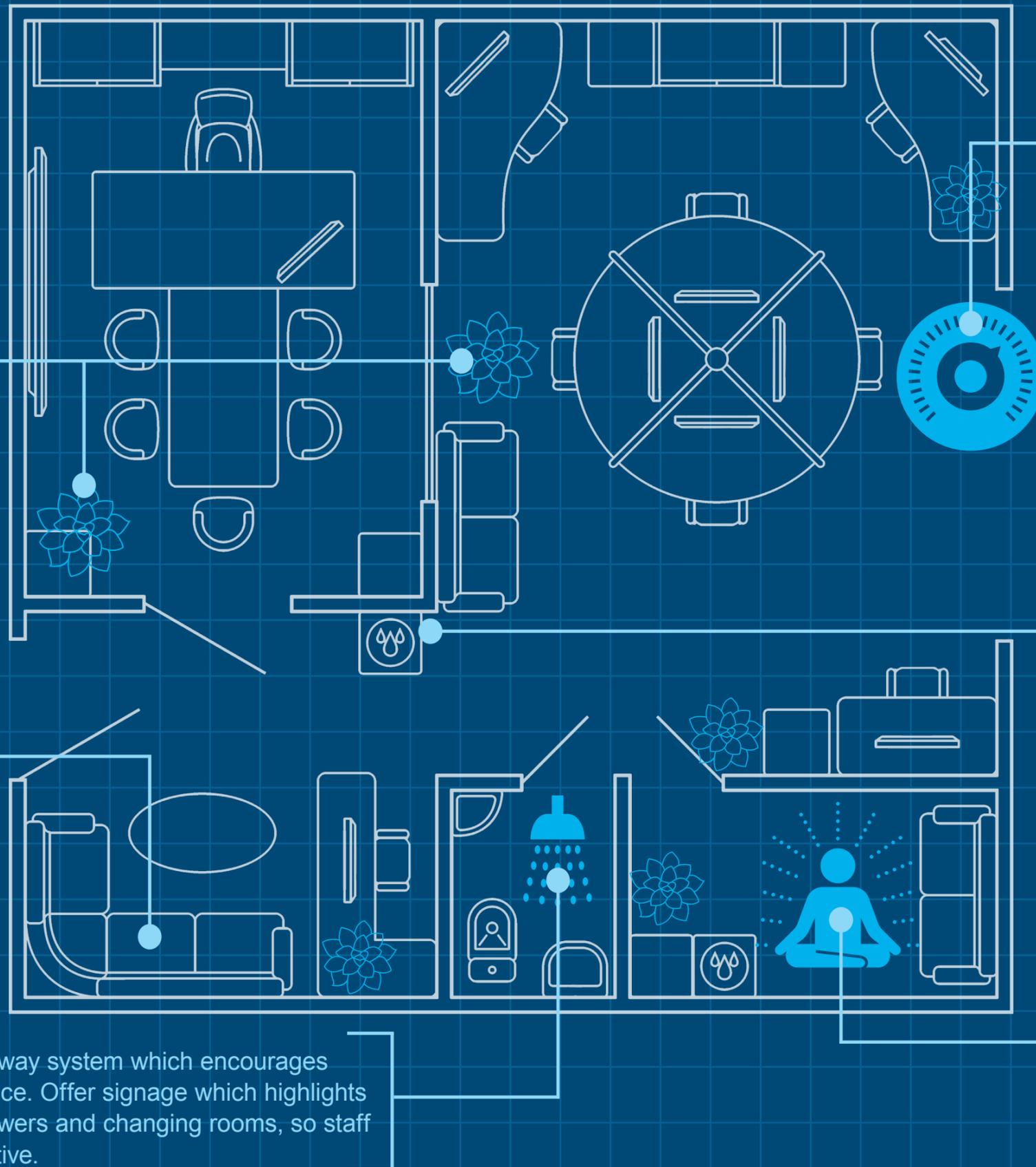
⁸What Workers Want, Savills, 2019
⁹Research by 3GEM on behalf of BRITA VIVREAU on 1000 professional workers, December 2020¹⁰BACP, October 2020

THE MINDFUL OFFICE: A BLUEPRINT FOR POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

NATURE Boost oxygen levels in the office by introducing plants. Choose natural furnishings instead of synthetic and allow the light to match circadian rhythms.

SOCIAL Create areas that encourage collaboration and social interaction, such as break out rooms or lounge areas that remind people of home.

FITNESS Consider creating a one-way system which encourages staff to walk further to get around the office. Offer signage which highlights local walks and cycle paths. Provide showers and changing rooms, so staff can use their commute to work to get active.



COMFORT Give staff control over their surroundings with temperature controls on desks. Offer natural ventilation, not just air conditioning. Create a sense of privacy and security, by allowing people private spaces to store belongings and take personal calls.

HYDRATION Boost hydration by offering great-tasting filtered water in multiple areas of the office. Make sure everyone can enjoy filtered water by offering solutions such as the BRITA VIVREAU Easy Access Panel, which caters for all accessibility needs. Reduce waste by eliminating single-use plastics within the office environment.

REST Private booths allow people to enter a state of deep focus to allow for greater concentration on work. Create areas to promote rest and relaxation, or even encourage meditation and mindfulness.

HEALTHY BUILDINGS, HEALTHY PLANET

“There are clear synergies between healthy buildings and sustainable buildings. Improving biodiversity, encouraging natural ventilation and using renewable energy all have a benefit to both the planet and human health.”

Ben Channon
Director
Ekkist

In a world where we are constantly reminded of our impact on our environment and the climate crisis we now face, it can be easy to become despondent. A recent survey by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy found that **55% of people feel that climate change has impacted their wellbeing¹⁰**, with some branding the phenomenon 'eco-anxiety'.

By making positive changes which benefit the planet, people can feel they are doing their bit to make a difference. There are lots of small changes that can be made within an office environment to reduce waste and lower carbon emissions, including using natural light and ventilation, offering staff thermal controls so heating or air conditioning can be reduced and providing a filtered water dispenser to discourage the use of single-use plastics.

By choosing a BRITA VIVREAU water dispenser, offices can drastically reduce the amount of plastic waste they produce. It can also help businesses to lower their carbon footprints, as they remove the need for transporting, storing and cooling bottled water in power hungry refrigerators. The natural coolant technology used within BRITA VIVREAU water dispensers is carbon neutral and means workers can enjoy chilled, ambient, sparkling or hot water at the touch of a button.

82%
of workers said sustainability topped their agenda of what is important in a return to the office, more important now than pre-pandemic¹¹.

¹⁰BACP, October 2020

¹¹Research by 3GEM on behalf of BRITA VIVREAU on 1000 professional workers, December 2020

MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Creating a functional, flexible and beautiful space to work in can significantly enhance the mental wellbeing of employees. Not only does this support staff, but also boosts their motivation, productivity and reduces absenteeism and staff turnover.

But while the physical space in which we work is important, a business must also ensure its operational processes are designed to support employee needs. By developing a culture of listening to staff and responding to their needs, businesses can define what is right for their workplace.

As business across the UK continue to allow, and encourage, mixed-mode working, there are fewer touchpoints with staff and organisations need to make more effort to build strong relationships with their teams to ensure retention and compete for top talent.

Providing high quality amenities within offices shows employees that their physical and mental well-being is highly valued and, in turn, can boost productivity and enthusiasm from your teams. Water dispensers are one of the many factors which play an important role in the level of comfort and positivity people feel within their workplace. By choosing a sustainable supplier like BRITA VIVREAU, not only are you offering your staff top quality facilities which will help to encourage them to come and work within the office, it can help your organisation make a positive choice for the planet as well.



**BRITA IS ONE OF THE LEADING EXPERTS IN
THE FIELD OF WATER FILTRATION,
TRANSFORMING WATER IN THE WORKPLACE**

BRITA VIVREAU offers sustainable, mains-fed water dispensing solutions for modern offices.

For more information about installing BRITA VIVREAU water dispensers for your workplace, please get in touch on:

034567 496 555 or **service@brita.co.uk**

brita.co.uk/water-dispensers

