

SPACE  
SOLUTIONS

# 01. BACKGROUND

## INTRODUCTION

Is the future workplace going to be holograms and virtual reality, with coffee ordered by swiping your chipped arm over the top of the coffee maker? Unlikely.

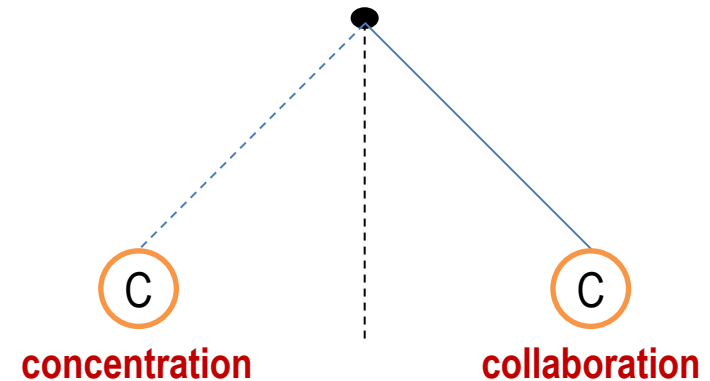
The future workplace is going to be quite a lot of what we already know. If you want to know more about the future, look at the present day from the perspective of the recent past.

Does a workplace in 2015 look so different from one in 2020? The answer is no. Therefore the future workplace will not be a quantum leap from where we are now. It might be subtly different but will essentially be following the same trajectory we were on pre-Covid.

Our thinking of what constitutes a good workplace is no different now; we're just using more information to tweak around the edges.

So what has changed? The answer is us. We've built up a whole new body of experience over the past few months and our expectations and aspirations have changed.

"We knew we could, now we know we can".



## THE BATTLE FOR THE HEART OF THE WORKPLACE

The pendulum is always moving – especially for the individual – and the workplace has to respond. For a while it looked as if there was a drive to foster collaboration within the workplace, with space given over to settings for planned and impromptu gatherings. Then there was a push to have focus booths so that you could escape the noise and disturbance.

A body of data gathered by Leesman indicates that an 'catalyst' workplace requires to support both. However, with working from home seen by some as being the solution to the quest for a disturbance free zone (it most certainly isn't!) is the workplace again being proposed as a place where people come predominantly to interact?

## 02. NEW THINKING OR THE SAME THINKING REBADGED?

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*“Of all the descriptions of how the office should evolve, my favourite is to liken it to a private members club. Spacious, work-lounge, inspiration areas, dining and quiet workspaces.”*

Ben Capper, Workplace Insight, August 18, 2020

In some respects, Ben is correct in that the workplace will have to evolve (or continue to evolve really) to offer more variety and choice as well as be more comfortable. However, the phrase ‘private members club’ is one that will most likely worry Directors of Finance.

Given that all the signs are that we’re in a recession, there might have to be a reality check for most organisations.

Again, the solution is likely to be ‘part what we have, part where we were heading anyway’.

Is the future workplace solution just a better acoustically-designed and more ergonomically fitted out version of a Citizen-M workspace. Working with a client recently, when asked what type of new environment they were looking for, that was what they envisaged.

### WORKPLACE REQUIREMENTS

If we were to write down the three main physical components of the workplace, they would most likely be:

Quiet workspaces – unallocated, bookable, technology-enabled (same as pre-Covid-19)

Collaboration spaces – a range of formal / informal, customisable, technology enabled (same as pre-Covid-19)

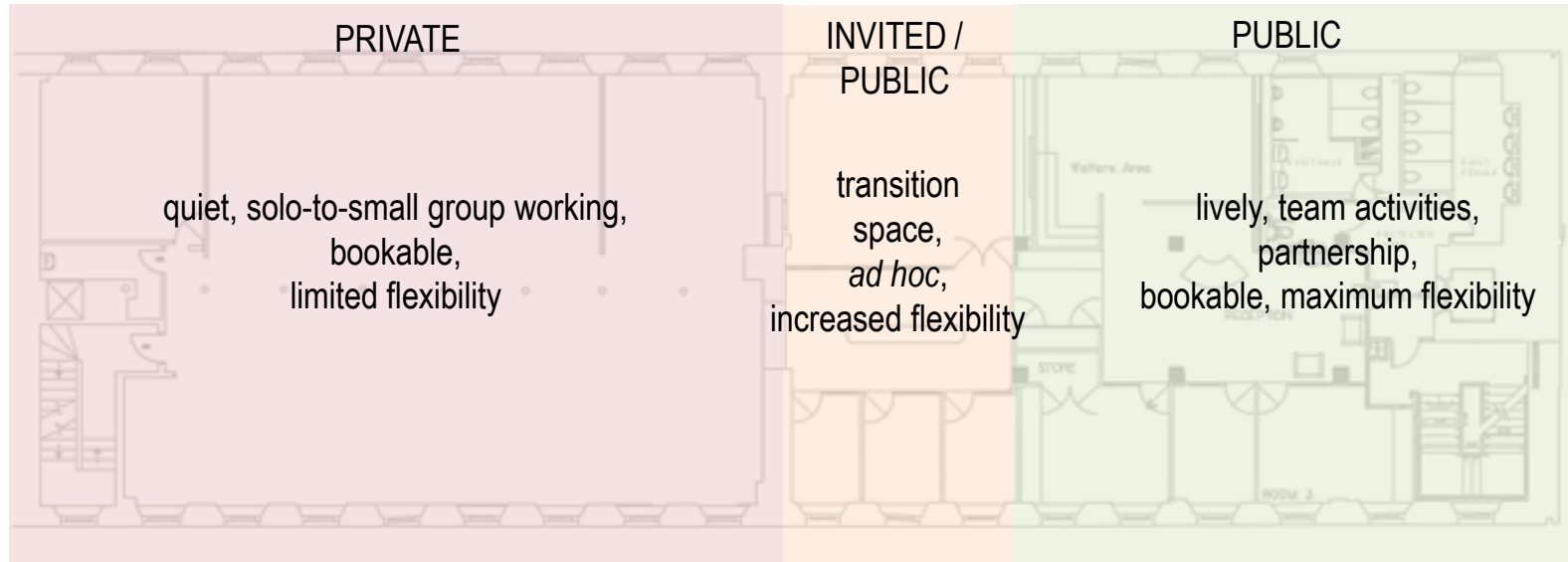
Social spaces – comfortable, spacious, catering to health and wellbeing (same as pre-Covid-19)

In developing space budgets over the years, we’ve noted that more agile environments tend to have a ratio of workspace to ‘other’ space that is close to 1-1.

If as all the numerous lockdown surveys report that there will be an uptake in regular working from home, we are possibly going to see the ‘other’ component start to dominate the total space requirement. Workspace will still be important as some staff will require to be based in the workplace due to their role or due to a poor home working environment.

# 03. PUBLIC, INVITED & PRIVATE

We have chosen to use the plan provided by the SFT.

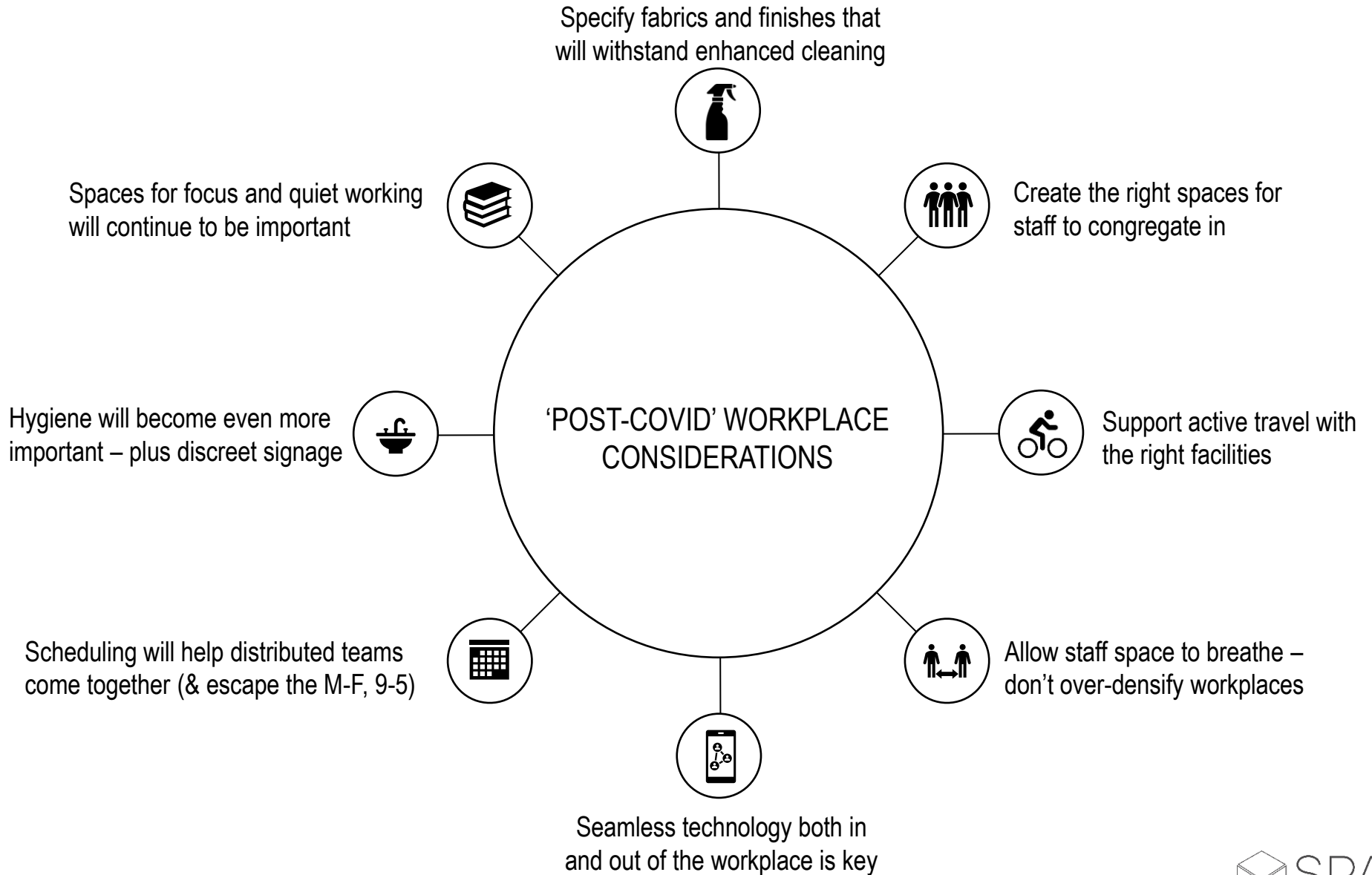


Storage & lockers / Fresh air / Access to daylight & controllable artificial light / Access to quieter spaces – enclosed and semi-enclosed / Ability to decompress in quiet rooms / Space for video calls / Space for focused work / Defined printer and collation space

Kitchen – essential white goods, recycling and waste – able to cope with large gatherings / Furniture to support both social and short periods of informal working / Feature lighting to create ambience / Biophilic design that doesn't overpower / Team table that serves many purposes – socialising, team problem solving, team meetings

Reception – informal (digital passport / sign-in for visitors) / More formal training & presentation area – can transition to workspace rapidly – controllable privacy, flexible furniture / Formal meeting room – technology enabled / Collaboration space – less formal, customisable / technology enabled / Feature lighting / Biophilic design

# 04. 'POST-COVID' CONSIDERATIONS



# 05. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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Some practical considerations when assessing the current or new workplaces;

## **TRAVEL & TIME**

Recent studies show that it is the commute that concerns people most about returning to the office. Once they arrive at their workplace, they are surrounded by people they know and trust and therefore are likely to feel more comfortable (this is a double-edged sword – they might be more willing to bend the rules when surrounded by people they know, but are also more likely to get pulled up by their colleagues for doing so). Encouraging active travel has implications in the workplace facilities that are required. Bike storage and repair facilities need to work in tandem with showers, lockers and drying rooms. The workplace also needs to support those who wish to work beyond the confines of MON-FRI & 9-5.

## **KITCHENS & TEA POINTS**

Again, the desire to reduce touch points has implications for design and product specification within shared kitchen areas. Clean, simple to use spaces where people can navigate easily are going to be essential and possibly more important than gimmicks in attracting people to use them.

## **TOILETS**

Workplaces need to think like hotels when it comes to supporting their staff and this applies to the everyday places like toilets. Provide a supply of personal hygiene and sanitary products. The design of toilets is going to be important now that we are hyper-aware of touchpoints and cleaning. Integrated, gender neutral cubicles might allow some space saved from not having separate male and female toilets to be redistributed to making the new provision more spacious and comfortable.

## **SPACE PLANNING**

Enhanced cleaning in the future will put more pressure on designers to choose fabrics and finishes more carefully. We also need to consider circulation and movement through spaces. Unintentional wear and tear can be reduced through appropriate space planning and slightly more generous circulation; this also makes the workplace more inclusive.

In the rush to make workplaces Covid-secure (whatever that means for the organisation) we cannot afford to jettison other important issues such as **SUSTAINABILITY**, **ACCESSIBILITY** and **NEURODIVERSITY**.

# 06. SPACE PLAN – PROPOSED



PRIVATE

INVITED /  
PUBLIC

PUBLIC

quiet, solo-to-small group working,  
bookable,  
limited flexibility

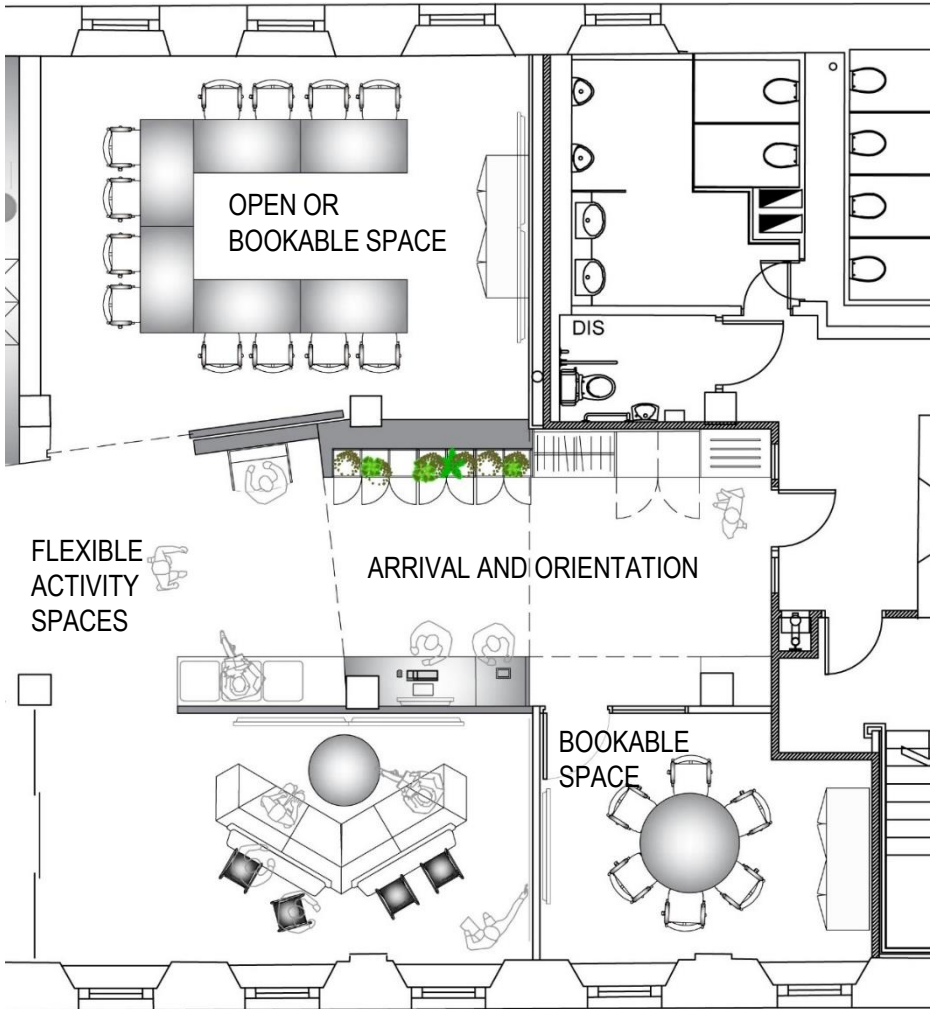
transition  
space,  
*ad hoc*,  
increased flexibility

lively, team activities,  
partnership,  
bookable, maximum flexibility

# 06. SPACE PLAN – PUBLIC



Create exciting spaces for staff to congregate, and break away



How do you get to work?



Support travel with the right facilities



Intuitive technology based 'check-in' / orientation



Mix of presentation options high and low tech. Moveable walls.



Appropriate settings for group team calls and on-site presentations

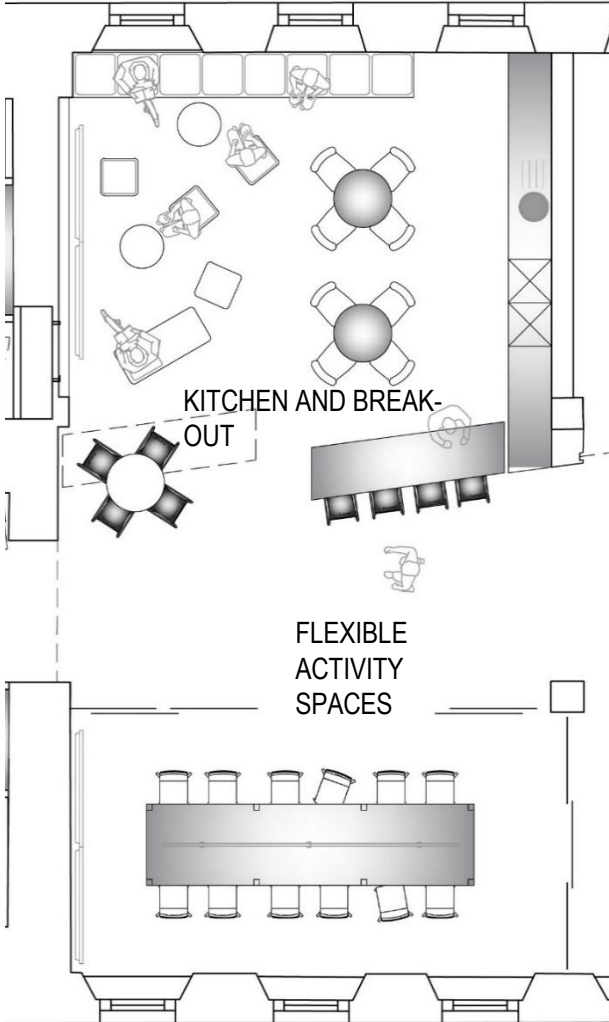




# 06. SPACE PLAN – INVITED / PUBLIC



Technology in break-out and flexible spaces for additional presentation or social events



High use areas, use materials that are inherently easy to clean, promote good hygiene and inspire confidence



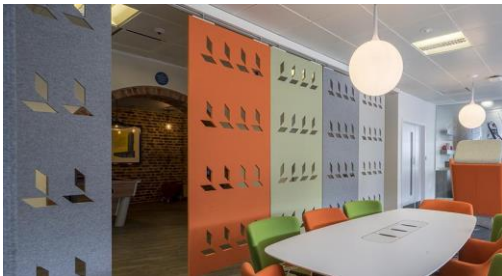
Relaxing spaces for work and break-out. Moveable furniture pieces



Mobile resources for multi-use areas, flexible 'walls'



Flexible spaces. To escape, or gather



# 06. SPACE PLAN – PRIVATE

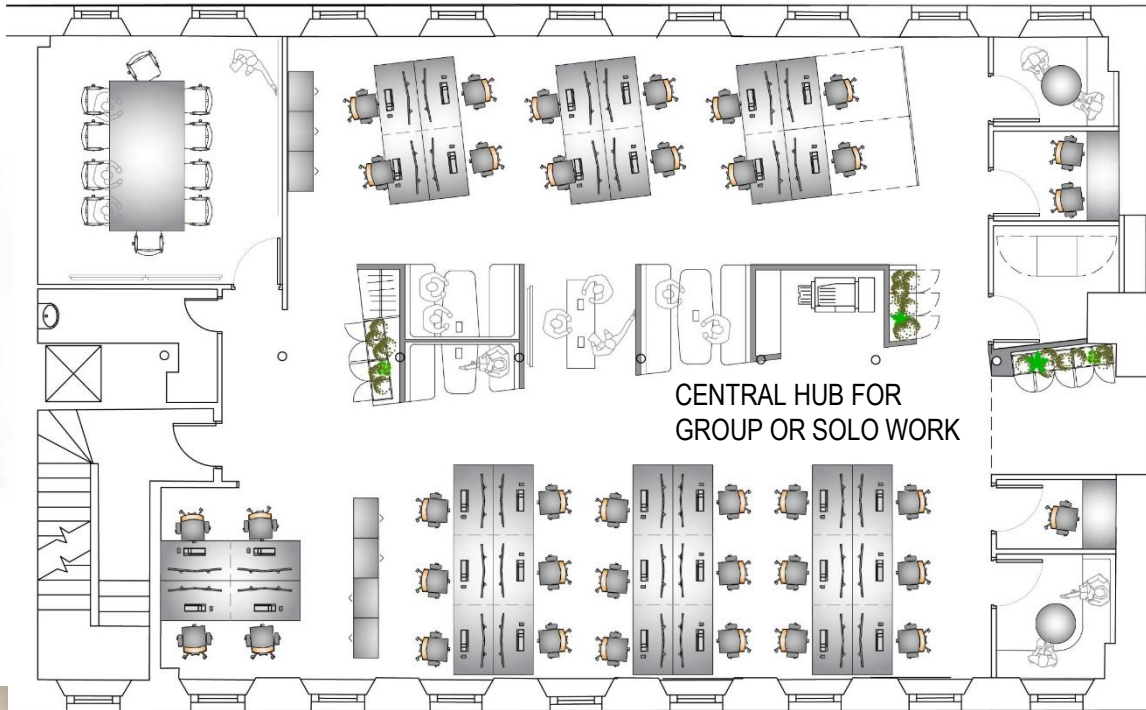


Open and semi-screened desk settings



Spaces for focused quiet working and project tasks

Support technology use in all work settings



Centrally located HUB to support team and solo working



Working environment with access to daylight, and locally controlled lighting where appropriate



Material and product choices influenced by sustainability and wellbeing at work

# 07. CONCLUSION

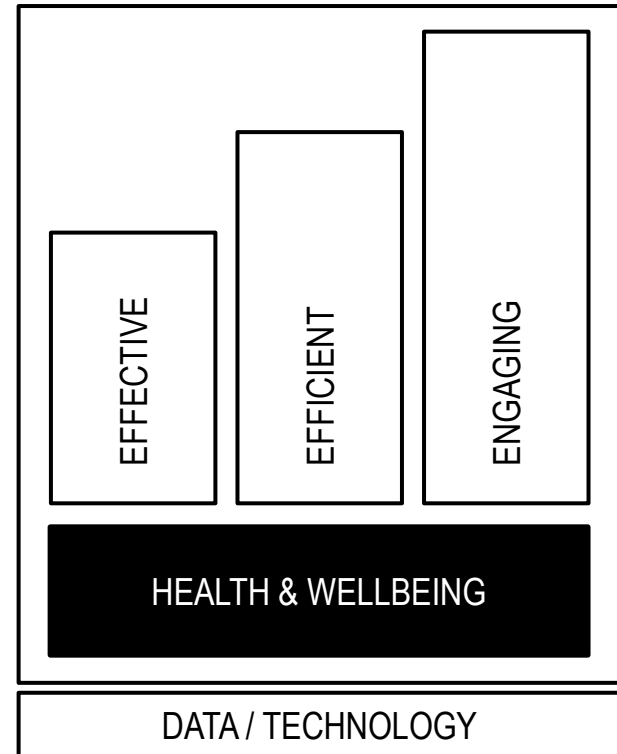
In 2017 research published by BCO proposed that the productive workplace was built on a platform of health and wellbeing and that it required to be:

- EFFECTIVE
- EFFICIENT, and
- ENGAGING

Covid-19 and our recent experience of working from home has not affected two out of the three components, in fact in order to entice staff back to the workplace it will probably have to be even more engaging in the future.

The drive for greater and greater density in the workplace has probably been halted (if not reversed) so efficiency, while still being valid, is perhaps going to be more carefully thought through.

Underpinning all of the above is DATA / TECHNOLOGY – so that we can adapt quicker based on our understanding of who, where and when.



## 08. CONTACT DETAILS

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