

be-kin

The Rebirth of the Workspace

Workspaces: A Story of Rapid Transformation

Workspace. What is it, really? The term 'workspace' is widely used, in many ways, which makes its meaning hard to grasp. Pre-COVID, it was often used to relate to a traditional office or co-working space, where employees worked 5 days a week. Post-COVID, the whole definition of a workspace has been thrown up in the air.

CEOs have found themselves navigating muddy waters, trialing and testing out what kind of workspace best supports their business functions and appeal to their workforce. This has required the development of new policies and procedures for flexible and hybrid working, co-working, working from the office on set or flexible days, hot desking, and fixed desks. In addition to this, HR find themselves perplexed about how to create an environment that supports their team's wellbeing, is aligned with the firm's diversity,

inclusion, and sustainability goals, and encourages everyone in the company to want to come back to the office.

And hiring talent has never been harder. The post-pandemic era ushered in what UCL School of Management Professor Anthony Klotz has called, 'The Great Resignation,' with employees quitting their jobs on mass (Ref 1). Attracting and retaining talent is a top priority for HR. Research suggests that most employees want their company to have an office—and a beautifully designed facility will help employers stand out in this competitive hiring market (Ref 2 and 3).

These factors are influencing workspace design trends. In 2024, we enter a new era of workspace design, which we call the Rebirth of the Workspace.

Mindset Shift & Maximising ROI

“A workspace is not a passive container, it actively shapes a teams wellbeing, productivity and creativity.”

– Wren Loucks

A workspace actively participates in stimulating the productivity and creativity of a team. Wren Loucks, CEO & Creative Director of Be-kin believes that “interior spaces are not passive containers that we exist within, they actively shape our wellbeing, productivity and opportunities in life.” When refurbishing a space, businesses need to think strategically about how the design itself can maximise their return on investment (ROI).

A design with a high ROI is not a generic, cookie-cutter fit-out. It's a tailored solution that aligns the workspace design with the employee and business needs.

The Way Ahead: Strategic Workspace Design

As we enter 2024, it's time for CEOs to redefine what the term workspace means and looks like for their business. We recommend using Be-kin's Workspace Design Ecosystem tool, to begin mapping out your unique business needs:



1. Individual Employee Needs:

What do your employees need to work productively?

- E.g., consider the diversity of your staff, taking into consideration different cognitive, neurodiversity and physical abilities. You may notice that a high percentage of your workforce requires quiet, focused spaces to work at their best, or perhaps they need a mix.

2. Collaborative & Group Work Needs:

How do your employees need to interact with each other, to produce the best outcomes?

- E.g., do your employees need to come together to creatively brainstorm? If so, a room with break-out spaces and tables to gather and sketch out ideas might be beneficial.

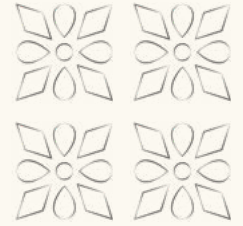
3. Business Operation Needs:

What does your business require to perform its functions in the workspace?

- E.g., do you require a large meeting room to pitch and present to clients, printing stations and/or video conferencing facility?

By answering these questions, you will form a strategic brief of what your workspace needs to support your team and business. This will help you maximise ROI on your workspace design. From here, you can begin to consider other key design drivers, like how the design can support your diversity, inclusion, and sustainability goals.

Workspace Design Trends for 2024



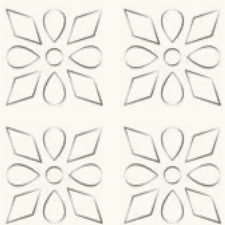
After reviewing the market, we have identified 5 key drivers motivating workspace design trends:

1. Social & Cultural
2. Mental Health & Wellbeing
3. Economic
4. Environmental Health & Sustainability
5. Technology

The largest driver is Social & Cultural.

On the pages to follow we have outlined how these key drivers are setting trends in the workspace design market.

Please note: At Be-kin, we do not necessarily consider all these trends to be positive or suitable to every company. When we work with workspace clients, we begin by reviewing what they need from a workspace using Be-kin's Workspace Design Ecosystem Tool, and then help them to prioritise these needs across a variety of factors including budget and timeline.



Social & Cultural Trends

Work Culture & Values Alignment

There is an increased demand for designs that align with the client's mission, vision, and purpose of the organisation. Employers are diverting away from workspace designs that look like a shared office co-working space and don't have any brand alignment with the business. Businesses want an office space that looks as unique as their brand.

Need for Relaxation & Creative Spaces

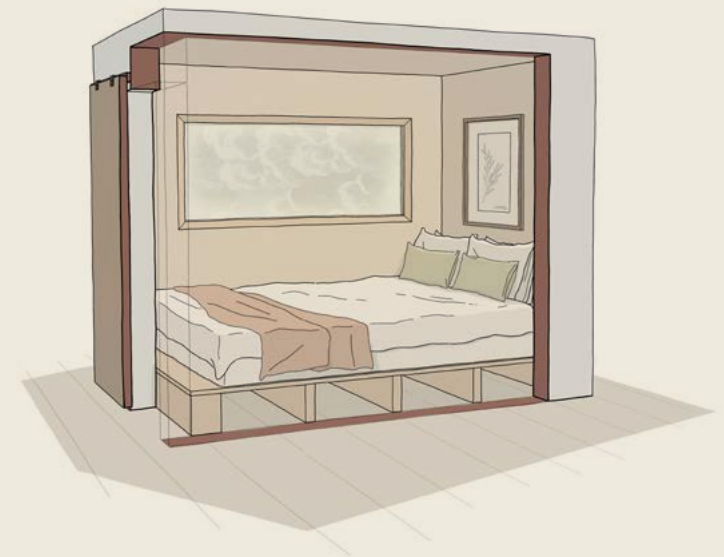
During the COVID work from home office setup, many employees were able to pursue their hobbies, such as painting, gaming, reading, etc., because of the reduced office travel. As a result, more workspaces are designing in spaces for relaxation like yoga & meditation rooms, sleeping pods and creative break-out spaces to pursue hobbies during breaks.

Diversity & Inclusion across Cultures

Diversity & inclusion is high on the agenda for many companies. Companies are retrofitting existing spaces to ensure they are accessible for a range of cognitive, physical, and sensory abilities that meet and exceed building regulations. This includes inclusive design features such as gender-neutral bathrooms, changing spaces facilities, nursing rooms, prayer rooms and family-friendly spaces.

Hotelification of the Workspace

The hotelification of the workspace is a new office-space design trend, where companies add in cafes, lounge areas, gyms, sleep stations and other features that were previously reserved for hotel design. This trend gained popularity post-pandemic, after individuals got used to working from a variety of spaces during the week including their homes, cafes and co-working environments.



A Be-kin SleepPod design, to allow members of staff to rest during breaks.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Trends

Focus on Mental Health & Wellness

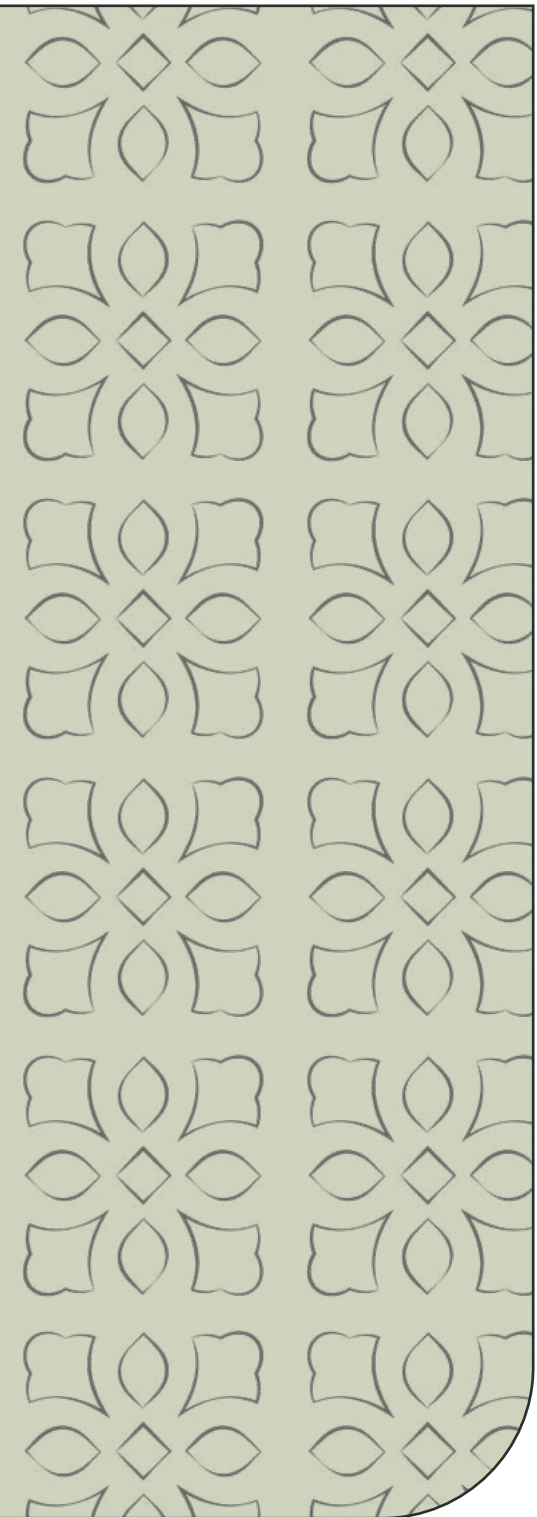
With mental health issues on the rise in the UK, HR departments are focusing more resources on how to support their team's mental wellbeing. This includes designing in designated spaces for respite, medical rooms, and health & wellness spaces.

Introverted spaces

Corporate clients realise that employees need their own personal way to work efficiently and effectively. While some prefer the common open layout areas and group work, others require a more focused, introverted space to work productively.

Design for Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is a term used to describe the fact that everyone's brain works and responds to the environment differently. Businesses are tuning into how they can support a neurodiverse workforce, and new guidance from British Standards Institute known as PAS 6463:2022 has been published on how to design sensory inclusive spaces in the built environment.



Economic Trends

Places of Productivity

A well-designed workspace will increase productivity among employees and enhance business growth. Good acoustics, access to natural light, ergonomic furniture and incorporating biophilic design are a few examples of design element that will enhance a team's productivity.

The Workspace as a Marketing Tool

Google is known for its quirky office spaces, like it's King Cross location with a basketball court, massage rooms and a rooftop running track—and we see more employers investing in brand marketing and their employees through unique workspace designs.



A Be-kin WorkPod design, for focused teamwork.

Environmental Health & Sustainability Trends

Spacious & Well-Ventilated Layouts

Social distancing protocols during COVID-19 continue to have an impact on how people congregate. There has been an increased demand for offices that are spacious and well-ventilated. Gone are the days of expecting people to squeeze into a small, overcrowded office space without fresh air.

Green Spaces & Biophilic Design

Incorporating green spaces and biophilic design considerations like indoor plants, access to natural light and circadian lighting systems and designing outdoor workpods and sensory walking trails will continue to be a strong trend in 2024.

Alignment with Sustainability Goals 2050

Pressure is increasing to meet the UN Sustainability 2050 Goals. This includes SDG 3: Good Health & Wellbeing and SDG 9: Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, thereby making the workspace design an important factor to consider in relation to ESG reporting.



Technology Trends

Smart Offices

Smart office fit outs include designing in video conferencing facilities, installing digital display boards and smart walls, and enabling personalisation of spaces through lighting, temperature control and voice automation. Companies incorporating these new technologies need to be mindful to do it in a way that is easy to use and can adapted as the technology changes in the future.

Ergonomic & Smart Furnishings

Advances in technology and manufacturing methods, have enabled furniture suppliers to make ergonomic furniture like sit-stand desks, affordable to a wider segment of the market. This means that employees will expect companies to be investing in comfortable furniture that supports their physical health.



A Be-kin workspace design which has functional, acoustic artwork, to help offset reverberation.

Concluding Analysis

In this report, we have outlined the key drivers and trends disrupting and innovating the design of workspaces in the UK. In 2024 and into 2025, businesses and employees will increasingly seek a stable place to work, outside the home. We call this new era the 'Rebirth of the Workspace.'

The UK market is competitive, with increasing pressure on businesses to make careful and smart investments. CEOs should be aware of the trends, and then work with a design professional to prioritise their unique business needs and plan the design of their workspace strategically, to support their workforce and business objectives. Businesses should not just adopt the latest design trends for the 'sake of it' or accept a cookie-cutter design fit-out.

The design of a workspace should be as unique as the business itself.

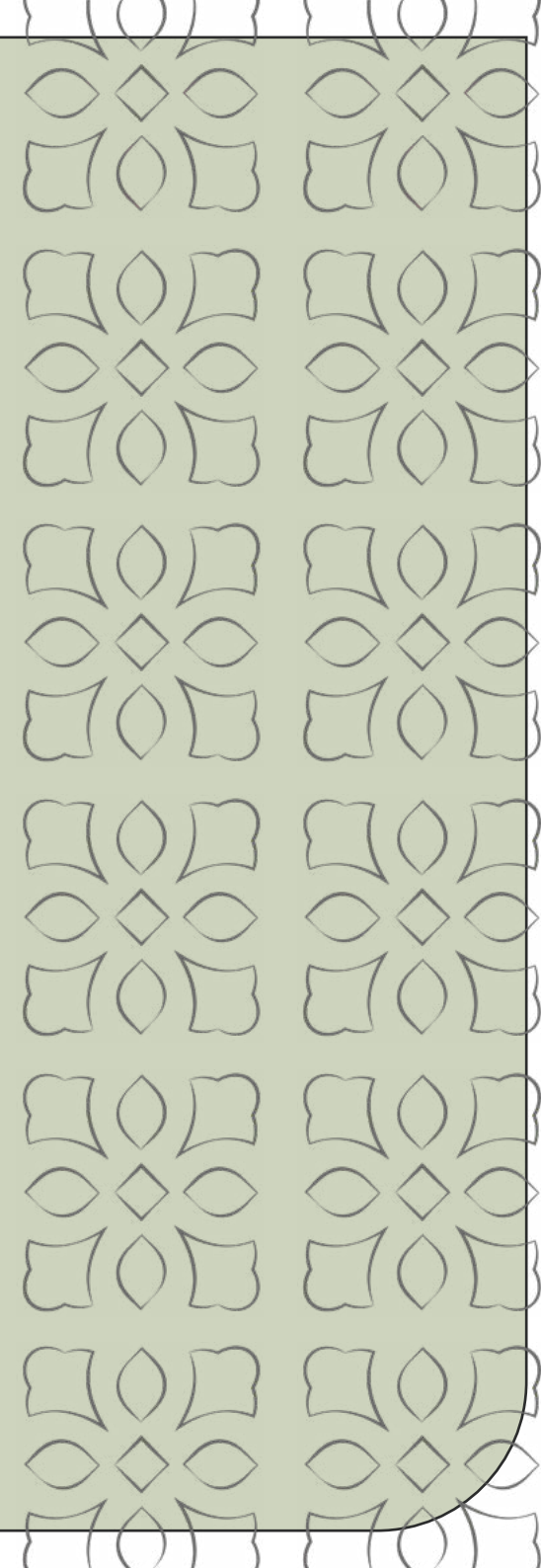
Are you interested?

In refurbishing a new or existing workspace?

Start by identifying your needs using Be-kin's Workspace Design Ecosystem Tool.

Contact us for a design consultation:

hello@be-kin.com | 0203 435 9322



Be-kin's Workspace Design Ecosystem Tool



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By answering these questions, you will form a strategic brief of what your workspace needs to support your team and business. This will help you maximise ROI on your workspace design. From here, you can begin to consider other key design drivers, like how the design can support your diversity, inclusion, and sustainability goals.

Wren Loucks

Our CEO and Creative Director, Wren, founded Be-kin in 2020 to design spaces that stimulate well-being and purpose. Now an award-winning London-based interior design studio, we create spaces in which people want to spend time.

Wren has a long-standing and award-winning background in mental health advocacy, inclusive design, and interior design. She studied Fine Art & Art History at Queen's University, Canada, followed by a Post Graduate Diploma in Architectural Interior Design at the Inchbald School of Design in London, UK. She has worked for some of the top interior design studios in London and is a registered member of the British Institute of Interior Design (BIID). Wren is an MBA Candidate at University College London, where she is focusing on entrepreneurial leadership, data-driven design, and sustainability.

Fuelled by research in wellness, biophillic and sensory design, Be-kin creates life enhancing interior designs.

For commercial clients, Be-kin creates spaces that support social sustainability; designing for a range of cognitive, physical, and sensorial differences.



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www.be-kin.com | Hello@be-kin.com

110 Gloucester Avenue,
Primrose Hill, London, NW1 8HX
0203 435 9322

Be-kin is an award-winning interior design studio, based London UK. We work with commercial and private clients to create spaces that simulate wellbeing and purpose.