

GUIDE FOR OFFICES

Returning to the Workplace **Part One**

Your Covid Strategy

OFFICE



Solve

officesolve.co.uk

June 2020

Your Premises, Our Services



- We look at your current lease terms and those anticipated at renewal.
- We estimate your operational and capital costs (OpEx / CapEx).
- We compare your total costs to alternative desk rates in your location.
- We help you examine how you use your office space and look to improve this.
- We guide you through the alternative solutions and costs.
- We help you make an informed choice for your spaces.

Change and Challenge



As we emerge from a Covid pandemic, businesses are now compelled to look carefully at how they use and pay for their office space. There are two reasons for this:

1. Health, Safety and staff Wellbeing requirements
2. Operating costs and economic uncertainty

1. Health, Safety and Staff Wellbeing

Employers now have to consider changes to working practices and professional engagement in the physical environment.

These changes are being driven by evolving legislation and professional guidance. These focus on 3 key elements for spaces:

1. Airborne Viral Load
2. Contact Viral Load
3. Behavioural Viral Load

Before the Covid pandemic, Health and Wellbeing spaces were regarded as 'a nice to have'.

Many people will now be apprehensive about travelling to the office and working in high density environments.



Spaces will need to be Covid-Secure and the above 3 elements for space will force us to embrace new health and safety working practices. Health and Wellbeing spaces are now regarded as 'a must have'.

2. Operating Costs and Economic Uncertainty

Advancements in technology have been a driving force for change in how we design and operate spaces. As homeworking has become obligatory, new technologies have shown that businesses can continue to function effectively. This is especially the case for knowledge-based industries.



As we emerge from a pandemic, many businesses will continue to adopt remote working practices. They will innovate to meet the challenges for managing their spaces.

You cannot afford to ignore the operating costs of having an office. These costs need to be uncovered and reviewed.

The increased burden of managing your space may be distracting you from your core business activities.

Switching to 'space as a service' might be an option that could save you time and resources spent on managing spaces with new obligations.

One option would be to let a service provider manage your space requirements for you so you can focus on your business.

Covid-Secure and return to the workplace

Many of us are now facing the return to a new normal as the restrictions are lifted on our movements and we adapt to changes in the workplace.

There is emerging guidance for workplaces to help ensure that these spaces are safe for people to visit and work.



There are two stages to this process which involve the short and long term:

1. **Immediate low-cost solutions** – Use alternate desks (checkerboard) desk areas. Reduce capacity by removing desks and furniture within working spaces. Decommission and repurpose large gathering spaces.

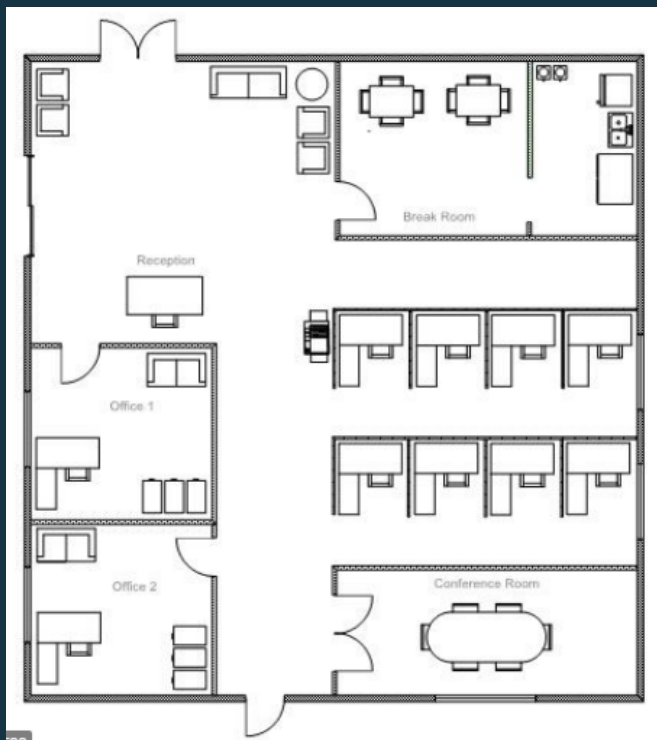
Circulation routes may be redesigned to allow for one-way directional movement. Way finder and distancing signage can be used to guide people safely around spaces.

Enhanced cleaning regimes to ensure that contact points, multi-functional devices and utilities are regularly sanitised. Removal of shared devices, conference phones and handsets will help to reduce mediums for viral transmission.

Introduce sanitation points with hand gel stations. PPE equipment for staff can be supplied and provided with regimes for waste disposal and waste management points.

Working from home can continue with vulnerable and long-distance staff being prioritised for home working. This can help reduce exposure through public transport environments. Longer journey times causing stress and fatigue can be avoided as a consequence of overloaded transport systems. Congested travel routes are now more likely as more people move away from public services. A rota system can be adopted for staff returning to offices with a reduced desk capacity following social distancing measures.

2. **Permanent considerations and design** – De-densify spaces through larger workstations for core office functions that reflect social distancing standards (no more battery desks !). Installation of partitioning, desk dividers and panel screens. Investment in remote working strategies and technologies to reflect a new dynamic and a shift in working practices. This could be home working or operating from third spaces or combination of both elements.



Reduce the number of touch points and switch to contactless devices. Introduce sensory technology to doors, lights, entry-devices and security systems, lifts, taps, flushing mechanisms and soap dispensers.

Increase the use of sensory devices for data gathering on how space is used to optimise the function of the office environment.

Increase fresh air-intake and install modified and enhanced air circulation and filtration systems.

Reduce the number of meeting rooms, communal spaces, large gathering areas and look to outsource these functions through flexible arrangements.

Home Working and Why Return to the Office ?

The genie is out of the bottle and many employers and employees now realise the practicalities and benefits of homeworking made possible by technology.

Consequently, the way we perceive and use our traditional offices is changing. The office design, layout and function need to be reimagined to ensure safe environments that deliver cost effectiveness and productivity. It is likely that many offices will evolve into a 'Hub' for knowledge based working and essential business activity.



These activities involve functions that cannot be done effectively from home. Therefore, we will continue to work from the office in order to fulfil part of our business function. A combination of working practices will become the new normal with the office remaining central for a healthy and successful business. The role of the office will continue for the following reasons:

To be productive:

- To get away from distractions experienced in the home environment.
- Interaction between peers to foster innovation and creative thinking.
- Enhanced engagement for informed decision making.
- Better communication and expression through body language and self-expression.
- Nurturing relationships through person to person engagement.

Tools in the workplace

- Access to equipment for data and secure closed systems.
- To avoid security risks to data and technology from homeworking.
- Access to commercial grade technology and hardware, including PC's, printers and copiers.

Essential presence and experiential benefits

- Work-related tasking: some leadership functions, mentoring and training.
- Social interaction, company culture, belonging and shared purpose.
- Serendipity and chance encounters.
- Change of scenery.

Estimating operating costs and comparisons

When taking a new lease or renewing terms, a business must consider **all costs for that space.**

There are many other costs associated with your space that go beyond the usual rent, business rates and service charges. Some of these 'occupier' costs are obvious; others are less so.

We can help reveal the true cost for your business.

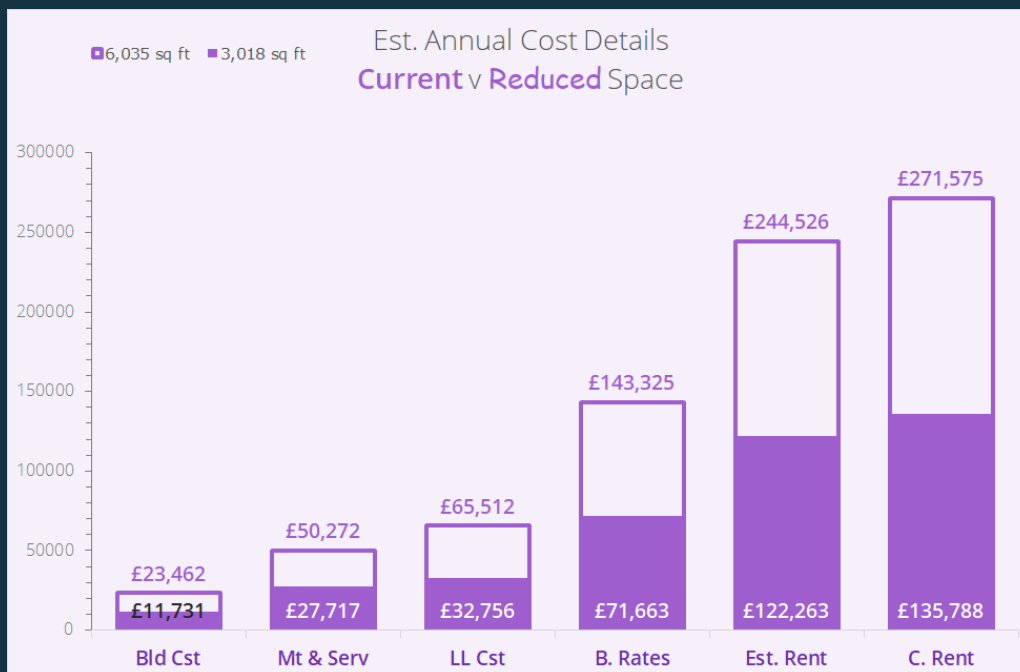
We can look at the efficiency of leasing compared with flexible spaces. However, this can be like comparing apples with pears. Moreover, some businesses have privacy, branding and cultural requirements to consider when contemplating alternative arrangements.



Cost Considerations

We have developed a powerful and meaningful way of analysing and comparing alternative options for spaces. We can apply this method specifically to your situation and support your journey towards a desired outcome.

This approach helps the decision process and encourages judgment based on an informed reconnaissance of the options and choices available.



- Build Costs – Estimated capital expenditure (fit-out and dilapidations).
- Landlord Charges – LL professional fees, insurance & Service Charges.
- Maintenance & Services – Estimated operational & service costs for space.
- Business Rates – Local authority business rates for occupied space.
- Estimated Rent - An average for your postal location for refurbished grade space.
- Current rent – Rent charges for your lease before renewal.

Analysis

When contemplating a renewal of an existing agreement or new arrangements, the usual approach is for the occupier to consult the market and consider Landlord quoting rents or serviced office rates.

This can be a baffling if not a daunting task, requiring much time and commitment that takes you away from your core business activities.

Our approach is to do the heavy lifting for you and apply our analysis to market rates for your business needs. We compare the desk rates for both leasing and flexible spaces as well as examining the annual costs and potential savings from these comparisons.



This **helps you** to make an informed choice at renewal.

We use our unique cost estimate approach to analyse the market rent and compare with local rates in your area. We apply the results in an easy format involving comparison rates and information graphics. We compare apples with apples !

The number of workstations is estimated for your current space capacity. This estimate will vary between companies, depending on the different densities of occupation. We can adjust the number of workstations to reflect your staffing arrangements and office plan and optimise your space and layout.

The flexible office rate can adjust to match your capacity and even reduce if you have fewer personnel in the office at any one time through the adoption of remote working practices.

For a knowledge-based business, the staff costs are usually the highest, but your staff are the most valuable asset. Office costs are typically the second largest expense for a business. Businesses can save on costs whilst retaining essential talent by re-examining the way space is accessed and used.



Reimagine Your Space

Change How You Use Spaces !

You can avoid paying for excess floor space that is wasteful and expensive to run.

An abnormal and high desk rate for your space could be attributed to the way you use the space.

There are a number of ways in which we can reduce wastage and improve efficiency by optimising your space with a new layout. You can also maximise your R.O.I. by changing how you use your office.

You might consider reviewing surplus meeting rooms, lounges, and amenity areas that are underused. You could remove these areas entirely from your office plan and outsource these functions through flexible arrangements.



Keep your core office as a Hub for essential business activities !

There are many options available to improve efficiency and reduce costs for your business so that you can focus more of your resources on your primary asset, **your staff !**

The flexible market is evolving and adaptable, which means that we can look at **your criteria**, locate and develop the best option for your business.

We also help businesses switch from leasing to flexible arrangements, **at no direct cost to the occupier.**

Flexible Office Solutions

Change the way that you use your office and save money !

1. You could reduce your costs for leasing by changing your layout,
2. or, you could switch to flexible spaces. Remember, a flexible office space is a private space !
3. You can use a combination of options 1 & 2 and look at a hybrid solution !

What we do:

- Analyse and estimate potential savings for your business.
- Understand and help you review how you will use your office and your criteria for spaces.
- Identify your requirements for layout, scale and design.
- Analyse rents and desk rates and negotiate the best terms for your business.
- Offer additional professional services for your existing lease obligations.

For a specific detailed analysis contact: T: 07484 839 373
stephen.watson@officesolve.co.uk