Article reviews

Public Health England
The impact of physical environments on employee wellbeing – topic overview

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/454175/20150318_-_Physical_Environments_-_V3.0_FINAL.pdf

This report titled 'Physical Environments and Employee Wellbeing' was commissioned by Public Health England' in 2015, with the aim of exploring issues around health, work and unemployment. This report will provide the reader with a concise overview of the impact of poorly designed physical work environments on the employee. It also defines the economic case for incorporating better design for the work environment.

The core content of this report was developed by Robertson Cooper Ltd using a search of relevant published and grey literature, and unstructured interviews with key informants. It consolidates research findings completed by many experts in the field over the last decade and will provide the reader with an excellent one-stop technical resource of how to improve the design of workplace environments.

This report provides an overview of the literature around the impact of particular elements of the physical work environment on employee wellbeing, specifically the office layout, office furniture, workplace lighting and temperature and employee control over their work environment. The report provides easy to follow guidance and solutions that can be adopted by designers and architects at the early stages of planning. There are plenty of tips that could also benefit existing working environments or where improvements are being sought retrospectively.

The findings in this document compliment Ocee Ergonomics' approach in relation to adopting a task-based approach to designing workplaces, with a shift away from the blanket implementation of open-plan offices. It confirms the need to providing employees with a workplace that allows concentration, which has been the missing link for improving Wellbeing and productivity in the workplace for several years.

The report doesn't dive deep into the reasons for why simple ergonomics principles are not implemented from the outset in office design and workspace planning.

Overall this is a really good resource and can be used as a quick reference guide, but may require further reading of the specific research studies mentioned.

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