



IOBAC The future of
flooring, today.

in partnership with

**LOUGHTON
CONTRACTS**
We know flooring



The need for flexible flooring in the modern workplace

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Making flooring as flexible as the workplace

No longer is the workplace just a bland cubicle and a desk to be working at from 9-5.

Shifting dynamics of the workforce mean that traditional office environments are morphing into more agile spaces, with legacy space re-purposed into serviced offices, shared or co-working spaces and start-up hubs, and a marked increase in flexible new-build spaces.

To keep up, office design, and the fixtures and fittings within it, must be more agile than ever before.

Flooring has always been an important component of workplace design, with many stunning examples of installations. Modular flooring has been well adopted in this sector due to its design agility, simplicity and speed of installation.

However, the ever-changing workplace demands that the design bar is raised even higher, with the impetus on sustainable, contemporary designs that incorporate a variety of different materials to enhance multi-functional spaces. Solutions which promote easier design implementation are therefore very much in demand.

This guide developed in partnership between Loughton Contracts, the UK's leading flooring contractor, and IOBAC, innovative flooring installation solutions provider, demonstrates how through careful selection and installation, flooring can become an important, flexible and sustainable design element, perfectly enhancing today's workspaces for the architect, client and employee alike.



The rise of the flexible workplace

There's no doubt that the flexible workplace is here to stay.

Research from global surveyors, JLL, predicts that flexible office space will account for over 8.5% of total UK office stock by 2023 – that's an increase of around 5% from 2020 and represents one of the highest penetration rates globally.⁽¹⁾

Driven by shifting worker demographics, changing work-styles, and enabled by technology advancements, the demand for flexible, diverse working environments has rocketed as organisations seek to attract and retain talent.

A global survey of commercial real estate executives concluded that nearly two-thirds of companies use co-working in some form, with many respondents expecting to double their commitment to co-working over the next five years.⁽²⁾

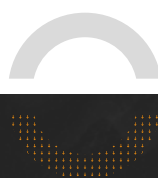
Total
flexible space
in the UK =
86m sq ft⁽³⁾

A co-working
space opens
**every five days
in London**

in comparison to every
seven-and-a-half
days in New York⁽¹⁾

An individual is
**less than
20 miles**
from a flexible office
in any market
in the UK⁽³⁾

This rising demand for new flexible spaces cannot be satisfied by new build alone – refurbishment and re-purposing of existing stock is helping to keep up with demand with fit-out contractors busier than ever.





But what is a flexible workplace?

There's lots of different terminology in this area, which is often used interchangeably.

Not be confused with “flexible working”, which describes more generally the concept of being able to work from a variety of locations with a choice of work patterns, flexible workplaces refer to physical spaces and are often described as co-working, serviced offices and shared spaces.

But what's the difference? Here's a simple guide:



Co-working

Fixed monthly fee for unlimited access on a first come, first served basis

More limited access on a pay as you go basis

Includes internet access, refreshments, meeting rooms (may be chargeable) and a curated calendar of events⁽⁴⁾



Serviced Offices

Fixed price per desk/per office for an 'all inclusive' offer

Includes reception services, internet access, refreshments, meeting rooms (may be chargeable)

Other services may be provided for an additional charge⁽⁴⁾



Managed Offices

A hybrid offer for customers who want their own space but don't want the commitment associated with managing it

The fit-out and other services can be offered by the landlord or third party provider⁽⁴⁾



So how does flooring fit in?

We believe that contemporary flooring needs to be just as flexible as the workplaces into which it's being installed, whether that's for a new-build or refurbishment project.

This guide gives examples of how flooring installed by Loughton Contracts using IOBAC technology enables:



A healthy, sustainable flooring choice



Design agility



Fast, hassle-free installation



Easy access and maintenance

What is IOBAC flooring installation technology?

IOBAC technology is one of the fastest and most flexible flooring installation methods available – in fact, installation time can be reduced by up to three times.

No adhesives are needed, so a clean installation process is guaranteed.

The technology works through three simple steps:

1. Ensure the base is down and sound

- Minimal preparation is required – no sealants, primers or plywood bases needed
- Often possible to go straight over existing flooring with no uplift required



2. Select a magnetically receptive base

Use either:

- Ezy-Install™: a dry-laid acoustic underlay
- The existing metal raised access floor
- IOBAC Express Cure or High Grab Resin



3. Install your choice of top surface tile

- Fit standard tiles including carpet and Luxury Vinyl Tile (LVT) using IOBAC MagTabs™
- Install magnetic tiles such as magnetic timber, ceramic and LVT direct





Healthy, sustainable workspace

Health and wellbeing is a crucial consideration in building design today, with a multitude of research confirming that a healthy space is a happy, productive space.

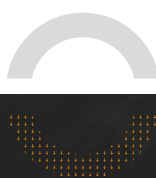
And with the UK the first major economy to commit to net zero emissions by 2050, we will start to see brand new carbon neutral buildings being designed and built in the not too distant future.

The World and UK Green Building Councils have stated that all new buildings will need to be net zero by 2030 and all existing buildings by 2050.

The flooring waste problem

Traditional floor coverings are notoriously difficult materials to recycle. And even 100% recyclable products can run into difficulties when they are installed using adhesive-based methods.

This is because on uplift, the floor tile is more likely to be contaminated by not only the adhesive but also the subfloor to which it was adhered, meaning it's not suitable for recovery and reuse and can't be recycled.



A recent report by Changing Markets Foundation estimates that an **area the size of the city of Birmingham, UK** is thrown away in carpet every year.

Around **400,000 tonnes of waste carpet** arise each year in the UK – over half of this currently goes into landfill*
*Carpet Recycling UK

Rethink Flooring

But it doesn't have to be this way.

Single use flooring that is adhered to a base is a thing of the past.

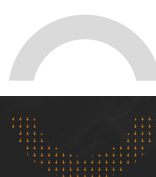
We all try, where possible, to re-use our previously single-use plastic shopping bags.

Why should flooring be any different?

With IOBAC, there's no residue left on either the tile or the floor. The metal floor remains uncontaminated and ready for installation of new tiles straight away, with no preparation required, and the flooring that's been uplifted is perfectly safe and fine to be reused elsewhere or more easily recycled.



Comparison of uplifting a tile installed with adhesive (above) vs IOBAC



Recycle

IOBAC is diligent in ensuring that its technologies include recycled materials and are recyclable wherever possible, with examples including:

- Ezy-Install Underlay made from recycled rubber tyres
 - High Grab resin coating manufactured from plant-based renewable castor oil
 - Metal additives made from recycled scrap iron
 - MagTabs which can be re-used or recycled after use
-

Loughton Contracts

As the UK's leading flooring contractor, Loughton Contracts work closely with both clients and suppliers to ensure that their practices as installers cause minimum impact on the environment.

Offering advice and information on choosing the most sustainable products for projects without compromising design, they work with suppliers daily to minimise delivery packaging and promote the use of environmentally friendly installation techniques wherever possible.

Top priorities are the reduction of waste to landfill and overall carbon footprint.

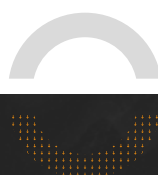
Key activities include:

- **Planning for the end of product life – which can be prolonged with tailor-made aftercare and maintenance programmes**
- **Working with contractors to ensure the responsible waste segregation and disposal**
- **Provision of information supporting BREEAM, LEED or SKA assessments**
- **Sourcing of materials, which ensure enhanced air quality, Zero or low VOC's, good thermal insulation, enhanced acoustic performance and minimal waste**
- **Use of state of the art digitising software to plan the most efficient and cost effective use of materials for installation allowing precise quantities to be calculated and waste material to be reduced to a minimum**

Loughton Contracts:

- **Are BSI ISO14001 compliant**
- **Hold FSC, PEFC accreditation**
- **Are founder members of Carpet Recycling UK**

Loughton Contracts' company culture is to reduce, recycle and reuse wherever we can. We love it whenever we can find a good second home for used carpet tiles that cannot be recycled by issuing to local schools or charities like Barnardo's and Home Start.





Acoustics

In a busy office, there are likely to be phones ringing, co-workers talking, printers, coffee machines running and more, all contributing to the noise levels. Studies have shown that chronic noise in the workplace can cause an increase in blood pressure and heart rate. Plus, excessive noise can affect the emotional wellbeing of employees and can even cause increased stress and depression.

Productivity levels can also be affected if an environment becomes too noisy. Constant interruptions can lead to an inability to focus and if levels of background noise are too high, telephone calls to clients may be difficult.

WELL Building Standards and BREEAM both consider noise levels when grading buildings too.

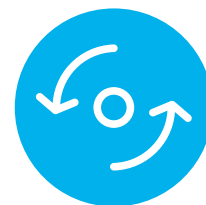
Product Spotlight:

Ezy-Install Underlay

The unique rubber crumb construction of Ezy-Install Underlay provides great acoustic performance and underfoot comfort, ideal for the office environment.

This enhanced performance means that it can be used in combination with standard carpet tiles to give increased acoustic and anti-fatigue performance. The underlay takes the footfall pressure, rather than crushing the pile of the carpet.





Design agility

Today's workplaces need to be as versatile as possible.

Agile or activity-based working styles demand a mix of functional spaces, ranging from traditional desks and meeting rooms to break-out areas and collaboration zones, with even less conventional areas such as yoga studios and sleeping pods becoming more common.

Mixing the formal with the informal, creating multi-purpose space, and utilising “dead” or “third” space are just a few of the considerations on an architect's mind in order to create a workplace where people want to spend time.

In some cases, facilities such as gyms, cinemas and spas have been introduced in order to support well-being and create that “home-from-home” feel. Introducing features such as these enable the work experience to be enhanced, creating productive and creative communities where collaboration and face to face engagement is key.

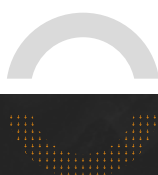
Being able to flex existing space is important too – why have a meeting room sitting empty for some of the time if it can be quickly reconfigured into hot-desking space when not in use? The ability to change an area from a breakout area to a refreshment area to a meeting room as and when required will be increasingly in demand.

“The highest performance workplaces we see are the ones where you've got a whole range of choices in terms of the types of environment provided in the office, such as informal space, formal space, relaxing areas, concentration areas, quiet areas, collaborative areas and so on.”

Chris Moriarty, Director, Leesman⁽⁵⁾

Shorter leases mean that spaces are refreshed more frequently requiring further design changes. From a commercial perspective, it makes sense for developers to maximise return on investment by creating spaces with maximum flexibility – future-proof, adaptable buildings that can be reconfigured to suit organisations' changing needs.

For customisable spaces, modular has to be the way forward, for everything from furniture to flooring.



Flexible floors

Interior design elements such as flooring are crucial in branding and demarcating all these different areas, with different properties needed for different zones. Selection of the right flooring for each area is crucial – flooring that works in an open plan area might not be suitable for the refreshment area, for example. And those different flooring elements need to work seamlessly alongside each other.

[» View our Selection Guide](#)

The options for floor coverings are varied – whilst carpet tile is still a very popular choice, materials such as LVT, ceramic and timber are commonly used, with timber increasingly popular due to its sustainability credentials.

But it's important to remember that the installation method used is just as important as the floor covering itself.

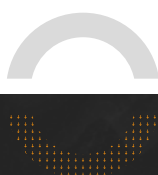
Traditionally, modular carpet tiles were adhered using adhesives or tackifiers, with the objective of ensuring that the carpet tiles remained well adhered to the base. However, flooring that has been glued or permanently fixed down is very labour-intensive, messy and costly to remove, especially as redesigns become more frequent.

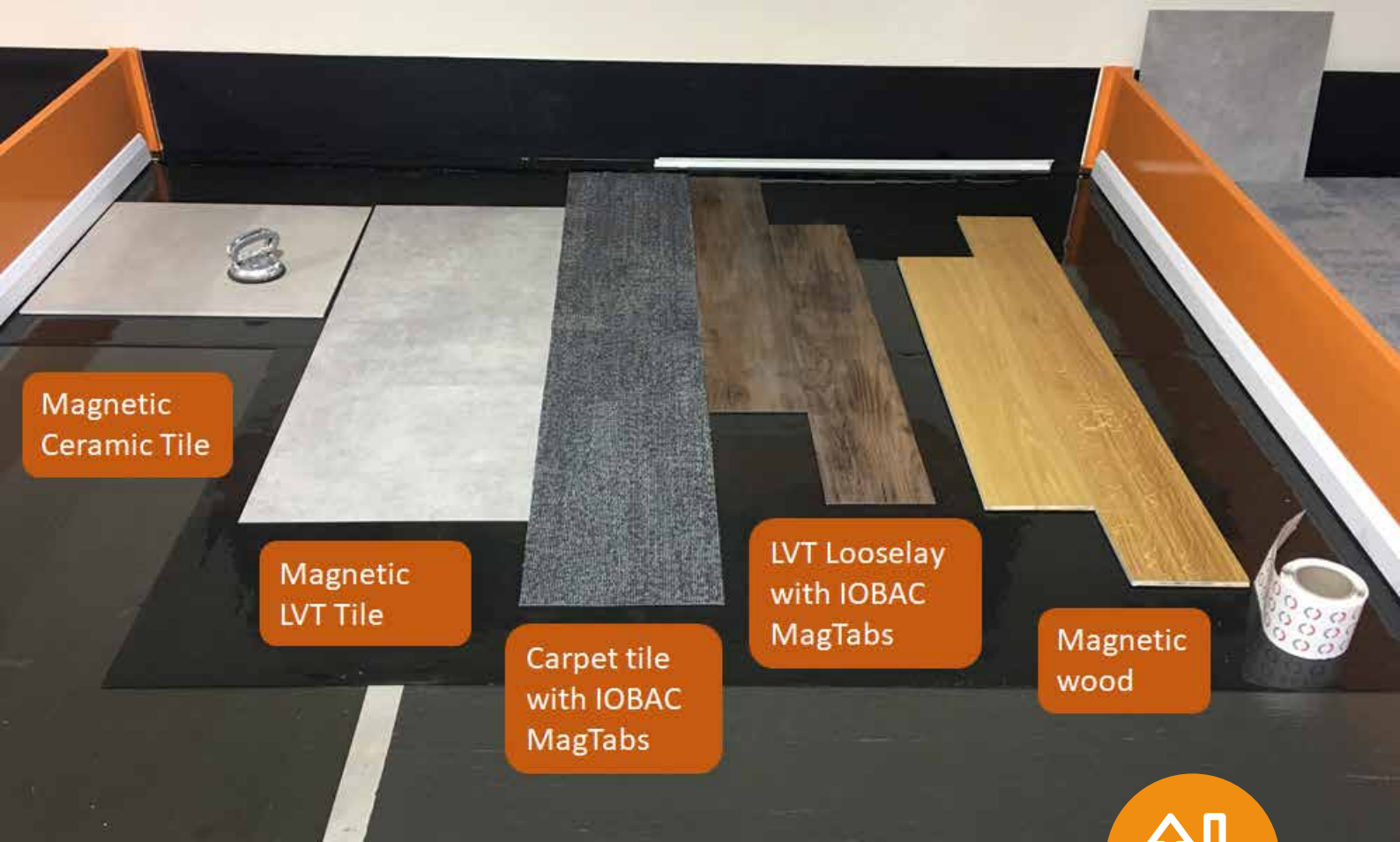
So, as times have moved on, various installation solutions have been developed which hold the carpet tile in place without the need for wet adhesives, meaning less mess and more flexibility. Adhesive-free installation methods using technologies such as IOBAC enable the floor to be easily changed to accommodate redesigns.



“We regularly welcome sponsors and partners to our headquarters and being able to change the floor surface with the theme of events was very attractive to us. IOBAC provides the flexibility to insert branded tiles as an additional welcome for our guests.”

Sahara Force India





Product Spotlight:

Ezy-Install

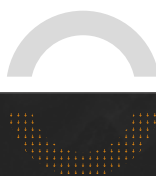
With IOBAC, design changes are quick and easy.

Once your IOBAC magnetic flooring is in place, the base stays permanently in position, enabling the top surface tile to be easily uplifted and replaced within seconds.

Flooring designs can be switched with ease.

Our Ezy-Install Underlay enables a diverse range of flooring types to be installed seamlessly alongside each other. Its unique Dual Grip technology combines adhesion and magnetism to provide a secure hold to LVT, carpet, ceramic and timber. These different flooring types can be mix and matched and interwoven to create stunning designs.

Its universal compatibility takes the guesswork out of flooring installation, giving greater peace of mind that the flooring is securely in place.



Loughton Contracts – Project Gallery





Fast, hassle-free installation

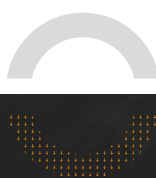
With the average lease for flexible workspaces around two to three years, and three year leases for traditional offices becoming more common, it is increasingly important for new-build and refurbishment projects to be carried out in as short a time as possible.

A new tenancy often comes with a change in design, so the changeover needs to be quick and clean. Any additional preparation of the sub-floor due to contamination from the previous floor covering adds time, money and hassle to the process.

And often new flooring needs to be installed whilst the office is in use, meaning that the installation needs to take place either over the weekend, or in the case of co-working spaces open 24-7, whilst the building is still occupied. So the project needs to be completed as quickly and cleanly as possible to minimise office disruption and eliminate dust, noise and odour.

“Over the next 12 months we anticipate seeing an increase in corporate clients seeking flex space as they choose this over leased space – providing greater flexibility and hassle free occupation for their team.”

Katie Whell, Managing Director, Pure Offices⁽³⁾





Product Spotlight:

IOBAC MagTabs

IOBAC offers a simplified, accelerated flooring installation.

Either use the existing metal raised access floor, or apply a magnetically receptive base direct to the existing sub-floor – minimal preparation is required, and in some cases, there is no need to uplift the existing flooring.

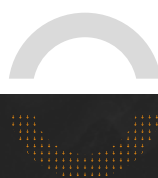
If you choose to use standard flooring tiles, these can then be simply fitted on top using innovation award-winning IOBAC MagTabs.

Magnetic on one side and self-adhesive on the other, these smart little tabs work by locking the top surface flooring tiles tightly together using a unique 2-dimensional grip.

Not only are tiles held together horizontally as per conventional floating floor solutions, but due to magnetic attraction, the IOBAC MagTabs also enable a strong grip in the vertical direction, ensuring tiles are secured well in place until the time comes to uplift them.

The super-quick loose lay method reduces installation time by up to 3x and eliminates the need for any messy tackifiers or wet adhesives, enabling a clean, odour free process. The floor can be walked on immediately after installation, meaning less upheaval to the organisation.

When installed on raised metal access floors, they enable easy direct access to the sub-floor, and remove cleanly with no residue or contamination, ready for the next tenant.





Product Spotlight:

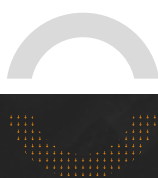
Ezy-Install Underlay

With Ezy-Install Underlay, the layer is simply rolled out over the metal raised access floor and the floor covering installed on top. The metal raised access floor remains clean and uncontaminated, and ease of access is maintained.

Compare this to a common preparation step of installing a plywood base over a metal raised access floor onto which floor coverings including Luxury Vinyl Tile, ceramic and timber are laid.

Typically a 6mm thick plywood board is glued and screwed to the access floor. A feather finish preparation is then needed to go over the joins and screws, before applying adhesive and installing the floor covering.

Not only is the process long, but a key disadvantage is that the metal raised access floor is damaged and effectively redundant as access to the sub-floor is severely hindered by the wood base.

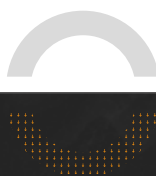


Furniture Lift from Loughton Contracts

Furniture Lift systems allow Loughton Contracts to supply and install a brand new floor with little to no disruption to the office. Clients experience the wow factor with staff leaving the office at the end of the day and returning the next morning to a brand new floor! Everything else will be just as they left it and they can get straight to work.

By vertically lifting the furniture no more than 5mm off the floor, Loughton Contracts are able to remove existing carpet tiles, replace them with new ones and lower the furniture back into position. This means no need to unplug IT systems and no need for technicians to be on site whilst we carry out the works.

>> See Furniture Lift in action



Easy access and maintenance



Flooring is a major investment. Like anything else, it needs to be well looked after to make sure you get the best possible return, and keep it looking its best for a long and productive life.

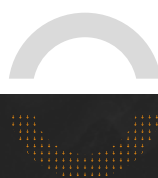
From general wear and tear, to damage, flood and spills, it's important floors can be easily repaired and kept clean and damage-free to avoid slips and trips.

HSE statistics show slipping and tripping to be the single most common cause of major injury in UK workplaces and they are often the initiators of accidents attributed to other causes, such as some machinery accidents, scalding and falls from height.

When disaster strikes and your floor is damaged, there's no drama with flooring installed using IOBAC technology. Simply lift up the damaged tile and put a new one in its place in a matter of seconds. Perfect if a high wear area such as a corridor needs replacing whilst other areas are still serviceable.

This quick and easy method doesn't need specialist labour and is incredibly cost-effective when compared with other methods.

A US supermarket had repeated instances of nail varnish spillages onto tiles. With IOBAC, replacement of the affected tiles is simple and costs about \$6 compared to \$4-500 per incident.





Loughton Contracts – Maintenance Service

Loughton Contracts' dedicated aftercare division will tailor a maintenance plan that's right for you in terms of budget, timing and priority for high traffic areas – either as a flexible contract or call off service. The type of maintenance offered is in addition to routine daily cleaning and being independent of any manufacturer, they're free to use the best and most cost-effective products on the market to get the best possible results. The in house maintenance teams cover all types of flooring such as carpet, vinyl and timber.

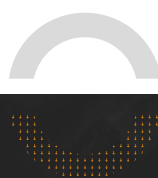
Timber flooring needs particular attention to make sure the protective wear layer on top of the timber is well maintained. Regular maintenance of the timber will reduce surface marks caused by general wear and tear and reduce the need for a full re-safe and finish of the flooring.

If the flooring does need a full sand and seal Loughton Contracts will restore it to its former glory, with clients finding it easier to clean. Scratches and marks are removed from oiled timber floors using quick-drying, water-based maintainers that reduce drying time, down time and odours on high wear areas like receptions and staircases. Expert restoration – in or out of hours – can keep your timber floor looking as good as new while still retaining the maximum wear layer.

Raised metal access floors

Widely used in modern office buildings and data centres, raised metal access floors create a hidden void for the huge passage of data, mechanical and/or electrical services required in today's working environments. Indeed, research suggests that a large corporation can have over 20,000 miles of cabling in a single facility.

So it's important that the floor covering aids easy access – see the project example overleaf.





Case Study:

100 Bishopsgate, City of London

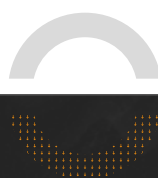
IOBAC MagTabs enable standard non-magnetic flooring tiles to be installed onto raised metal access floors, opening up a wide range of design options.

Uplift of the surface tile for temporary access to the metal floor and services below is quick and clean – simply pick up the existing tile and replace.

This was demonstrated at a recent installation on the fourth floor of 100 Bishopsgate, a 37-storey tower built in the heart of the City of London and consisting mainly of efficient and flexible office space.

Access to the sub-floor was required just hours after the new floor had been installed. The carpet tiles were simply removed, services were accessed and then the carpet was replaced again re-using the MagTabs.

Because the process is adhesive free, there's no residue or contamination of either the tile or the metal floor. The metal floor remains uncontaminated and ready for installation of new tiles straight away, no preparation required, and the flooring that's been uplifted is perfectly safe and fine to be reused elsewhere or be more easily recycled.

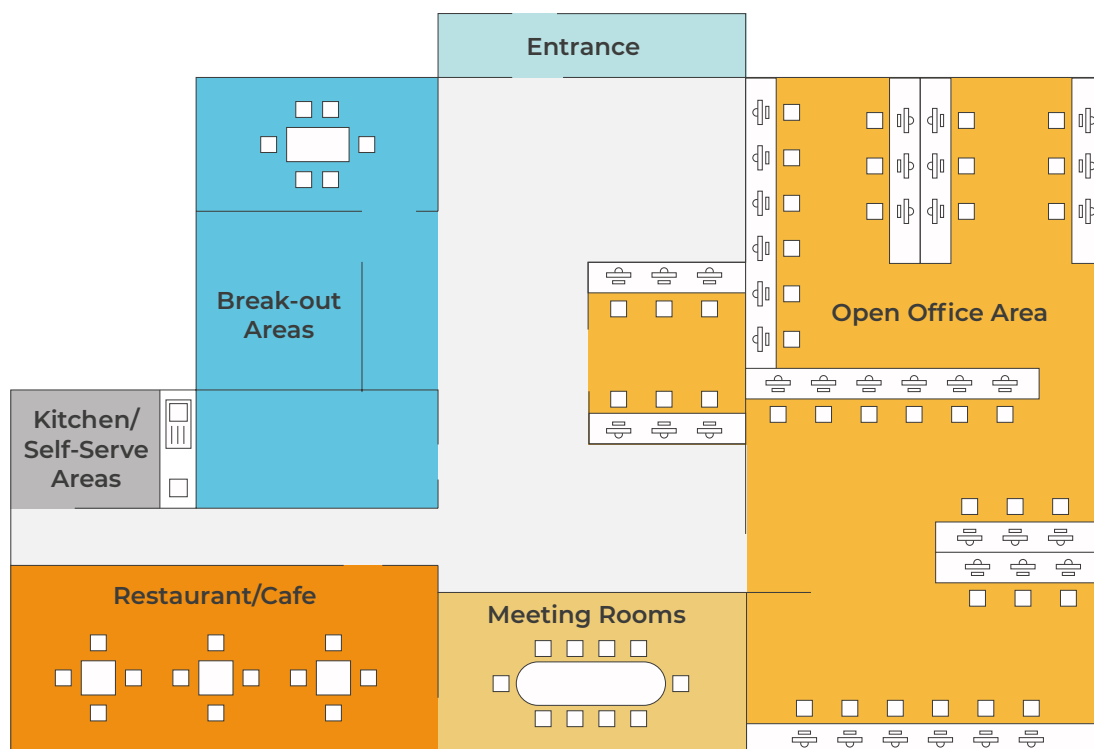


Selection Guide

There are now many different areas within a modern workspace, each with their distinct flooring requirements.

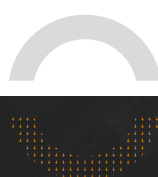
Considerations when specifying the appropriate flooring for an area include the level of foot traffic, noise levels and durability.

Every situation is different, however. Below shows the typical IOBAC solutions used per area within a commercial workplace.



Area	Considerations	Suggested Base	Top surface tile options with IOBAC
Entrance	Durability	Resin	Magnetic LVT Magnetic Timber Magnetic Ceramic MagTabs + carpet MagTabs + LVT
Open office area	Acoustic, aesthetics	Ezy-Install RMAF	
Meeting rooms	Access, aesthetics	RMAF	
Restaurant/cafe	Acoustics, maintenance	Ezy-Install RMAF	
Break-out areas	Durability, aesthetics, acoustics	Ezy-Install	
Kitchen/self-serve areas	Maintenance	Ezy-Install	

RMAF = Raised Metal Access Floor





The future is flexible!

It's exciting times for the workplace, with flexibility and agility being key design considerations.

Through the use of experienced flooring contractors and innovative installation techniques, flooring can become an integral part of helping to create inspirational, customisable spaces.

Fast installation, flexible products and sustainable processes can marry up to deliver not only outstanding workplace designs and user experiences, but a cost-effective choice over the life of the floor.

The future is flexible!



Speed of installation

- Simplified processes
- Hassle-free systems
- Minimal disruption to business or home



Flexibility

- Design agility
- Ease of repair and replacement
- Non-disruptive to infrastructure



Operational Effectiveness

- Reduced installation costs
- Ongoing repair and maintenance costs cut
- Improved business outcomes



Sustainability

- Energy efficiency
- Recycled materials
- Minimised waste
- Health benefits



Company profiles

Loughton Contracts

As the UK's number one flooring contractor we have proven track record of high quality installations. Flooring is all we do and we are very proud to have been trusted with most of the largest and prestigious flooring contracts in and around London over the past thirty years. We are the main UK account for all leading commercial flooring manufacturers, which gives us huge buying power and product knowledge. We are independent and privately owned.

Knowledge gained from these major projects equip our management with valuable experience of what it takes to perfectly deliver the largest projects. Our experience and lessons learnt define our procedures and management systems. This helps us to deliver perfection for our clients. We are BSI ISO9001, 14001, 45001 accredited and work to robust project specific quality, health and safety and environmental plans.

Our ethos is simple “Perfect, on time, every time”.
For more details, visit www.loughtoncontracts.com

IOBAC

IOBAC is a technology company dedicated to making traditional flooring and heating processes as simple, fast, cost-effective and sustainable as possible for designers, contractors and end-users alike.

We have registered a number of patents in the flooring, walling and heating industries, and offer a range of cutting-edge technologies including magnetic, sensor, conductive and heated flooring solutions

For more details, visit www.iobac.com

MagTabs is a trademark of IOBAC UK Ltd. Ezy-Install is a trademark of InstaFloor Ltd.

References

- (1) “The Rise of the Flexible Workplace in the Corporate Sector” – *BCO report, JLL*
- (2) “CRE Executive Perspectives on Coworking – How and Why the Flexible Workplace Matters” – *Cushman and Wakefield*
- (3) “UK Market Summary: Flex is Leading the Way” – *The Instant Group*
- (4) “Coworking 2019: The UK Flexible Evolution Continues” – *Cushman & Wakefield*
- (5) <https://www.shponline.co.uk/culture-and-behaviours/your-guide-to-flexible-working-examples-benefits-and-challenges/>

