

3 CREATE A HOME OFFICE

BEFORE



OLD INTERIOR

Left The kitchen was a separate room, as was the dining room, and there was no dedicated space for a home office

WORK CORNER

Below The area where the kitchen used to be has been transformed into a home office as part of an open-plan extension

'A home office makes the most of the added space'

With a separate kitchen and dining room, plus an extension with utility room and a dated conservatory, the Bristol house Clare Elliott shares with her husband Rick and two daughters was in need of an update. The couple called in architects Dittrich Hudson Vasetti to re-imagine the space. 'The utility room and conservatory were demolished and the kitchen and dining room opened up into one, with a new, larger extension bolted on,' explains architect Federica Vasetti.

During the pre-planning stage, the idea of creating a 'study corner' emerged. 'Although it wasn't part of the brief, fitting in different functions – a home office, utility or snug – was suggested to make the most of the large final space,' says Federica.

The home office area was carved out where the original kitchen had been. The new extension has downstand beams where walls were removed so each functional area is a distinct space, but they also work together as one room. Fitted out on a budget, the study corner has an Ikea kitchen worktop fixed onto battens to create a desk, and white floating shelves on one side, partially concealed by a plasterboard wall.

Although not part of Clare's original plan, a home office was a worthwhile inclusion. 'It's the perfect solution to retain an open-plan space, yet avoid cluttering the living room with unsightly cables and printers,' says Federica.

How much did it cost? The extension cost around £75,000, including the kitchen.



Want to include a home office?

Space planning It isn't generally economical to build an extension to add a home office, because it's the number of bedrooms and the condition of kitchen and living areas that will influence a house's price, explains architect Federica Vasetti. 'However, when extending there is sometimes the opportunity to carve out a study corner. An alcove provides wall space and screening, but if home working is a daily occurrence, a separate room is recommended instead.'

Costs 'A mid-range extension with aluminium or timber windows, engineered timber floors and a decent ratio of glazing will cost from £2,000–£4,000 per square metre.'

Top tips To prevent glare, avoid unobstructed east- or west-facing windows in a home office or study area.

Make sure you plan in enough electric sockets: look at designs that include USB chargers as well as three power points for a neater finish.

Opt for dedicated task lighting that's operated on a separate circuit for a home office area.

Think about whether you want an office that's open to the rest of the room, or would prefer to conceal it behind a bi-fold door when it's not in use.

Cut holes in a worktop for cables or choose a desk designed to hide them so you don't spoil the look of your new space.