

FITWEL

What is the Fitwel Building Standard?

Fitwel is a certification aimed at supporting healthier workplaces and improving occupant health and wellbeing.

Fitwel was created in 2017 by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and US General Services Administration. The Center for Active Design is now the licensed global operator, updating the standard many times to reflect changes to wellbeing science, current theories and best practice.

The link between wellbeing and carbon

At first sight, **wellbeing** and its impact on carbon emissions are very separate issues. However, the reality is that a building which supports the physical and mental wellbeing of its occupiers is likely to be well used and have a longer life. Buildings that are hostile to their users' wellbeing are fundamentally unsustainable and may end up being demolished and rebuilt. As this has an extremely negative eventuality for carbon emissions, environmental certification schemes such as Fitwel ensure a strong focus on wellbeing within their agenda.



How can Fitwel be used?

A Fitwel evaluation can be undertaken at any time. It doesn't have to be during a fit out as the focus is on the running of the office and a company's policies.

Fitwel suggests that simple changes to a building's design and operation can make a big difference to people's health, wellbeing and productivity; and potentially result in savings on recruitment and lost work days due to sickness absence.



Fitwel scorecards

The Fitwel system provides a range of scorecards which are applied to different types of building assessment:

—> **Multi-tenant base build** – commercial buildings whose floors and common areas are occupied by multiple tenants (impacts spaces that are under the control of the building owner/manager).

—> **Multi-tenant whole building** – commercial buildings whose floors and common areas are occupied by multiple tenants (impacts all spaces).

—> **Single tenant building** – commercial buildings whose floors and common areas are occupied by a single tenant (impacts all spaces).

—> **Commercial interior space** – impacts spaces within a commercial building that are occupied or controlled by a single tenant.

—> **Retail** – retail complexes whose floors and common areas are occupied by multiple tenants, or contiguous spaces within a building that are occupied or controlled by a single tenant.

—> **Multi-family residential building** – residential buildings that contain multiple dwelling units (impacts all spaces within the building).

Fitwel assessment and certification

The scorecards include 55+ evidence-based design and operational strategies that enhance buildings by addressing a broad range of health behaviours and risks. Each strategy is linked by scientific evidence to at least one of Fitwel's seven 'Health Impact Categories'.

Research has found that if improved, Fitwel's seven health impact categories are the main areas that can enhance an occupant's health and wellbeing.

- 1. Community health:** to broaden the impact of the project past the health of on site occupants.
 - 2. Morbidity and absenteeism:** strategies to promote decreased rates of chronic disease and mental health conditions, reductions in disease transmission and fewer missed days of work.
 - 3. Social equity for vulnerable populations:** strategies that ensure that a range of vulnerable people have increased access to health-promoting opportunities.
 - 4. Instills feelings of wellbeing:** strategies that promote inclusion, relaxation and perceptions of safety.
 - 5. Enhances access to healthy foods:** to provide occupants with greater availability of fruits, vegetables, and other nutritious food options.
 - 6. Promotes occupant safety:** strategies that decrease the risk of crime and injury, protect cyclists and pedestrians from vehicular traffic and increase stair safety.
 - 7. Increases physical activity:** strategies that incorporate opportunities for movement into everyday life.
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Based on scientific data, each strategy is assigned points to arrive at its score. More points are given to the strategies that are proved to have greater impact on people's health and wellbeing. For example, providing a lactation room results in the highest possible 4.75 points. A building's 'Walk Score' (a metric to calculate the 'walkability' of your building and local area) and the building's proximity to local transport routes are two of the highest weighted strategies.

All strategies are voluntary which means any project is eligible to attempt certification. This also creates flexibility to focus on areas considered most important for the space.

The strategies are categorised into 12 sections:

- 1. Location**
- 2. Building access**
- 3. Outdoor spaces**
- 4. Entrances and ground floor**
- 5. Stairwells**
- 6. Indoor environments**
- 7. Workspaces**
- 8. Shared spaces**
- 9. Water supply**
- 10. Prepared food areas**
- 11. Vending machines and snack bars**
- 12. Emergency preparedness**



Fitwel ratings

Fitwel projects are rated as follows:

- > One star (90-104 points)
- > Two star (105-124 points)
- > Three star (125-144 points)

Fitwel ambassadors

The online ambassador programme provides training and professional recognition. It explains the reasoning behind the Fitwel assessment, details on the strategies and how the assessment is conducted. Fitwel ambassadors guide clients through the certification process, using the online tool.

Viral response module

In response to COVID-19, Fitwel has released a 'Viral Response Module'. This builds on - and actions - the global scientific evidence around managing risks from

viral epidemics. It establishes data-driven strategies that mitigate viral transmission, build trust, and create healthy environments for all occupants.

The module's strategies aim to minimise the spread of other infectious respiratory diseases, including influenza and legionnaires' disease.

Fitwel costs

The one-time registration fee is \$500 for each project. The certification costs are then based on the size of the building or space and start at around \$6K. Certification is valid for three years and re-certification can be initiated at any time for \$500 within these three years.

The viral response module has a one time registration fee of \$500 and an annual certification fee of \$4,500. Once a first space is verified, additional spaces can be registered for \$200 per space as long as they fully align to the module requirements.

About Overbury

At Overbury, we fit out and refurbish outstanding offices and higher education facilities across the UK. Every project is carried out by passionate people who thrive on delivering an exceptional result, precisely as promised.

Our company-wide commitment to low carbon and sustainability means we have reduced our own emissions by 64 percent since 2010, as we continue to work towards our net zero target by 2030. On every project, we work closely with our clients, consultants and supply chains to help them achieve their own low carbon goals.

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