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he idea of moving with a young family can be the stuff of nightmares to some, but thankfully for the interior designer Anna Haines and her husband Vivian, it was a positive jump. The previous homeowners had maintained the home well, so all that was needed was a cosmetic overhaul to make the home feel like their own. "We fell in love with it immediately. It was an easy sell!" says Anna.

After setting eyes on her dream home, Anna quickly got to work creating mood boards for the project which allowed her to see how colour schemes and textures would work alongside one another.

The biggest, and almost only challenge, was that the kitchen floor was laid with flagstones, on a lower level to the adjoining living area. The flagstones were removed and the floor was raised on a screed. Reclaimed oak timber was fitted to match the rest of the house's timber and then, along with the existing flooring, was sanded

and waxed. The kitchen, now with timber flooring, is now unified with the living room which allows for flow.

One of Anna's top tips for decorating around kids (and even big kids!) is to incorporate plenty of storage. "It's not just about things looking nicer, even though it does, but it just makes life easier!" she explains. The inclusion of hidden storage in the kitchen and living room meant that Anna's children could tidy away their homework and hobby equipment and the space could function for cooking and entertaining. Accessibility is key in Anna's book, and even though the kids' things are out of sight, they're still easy to reach.

Along with the kitchen remodel, the six-month overhaul also saw the sanding-down of the walls throughout the house. Along with this, decorative mouldings were replaced.

"I always want to be sympathetic to the period and

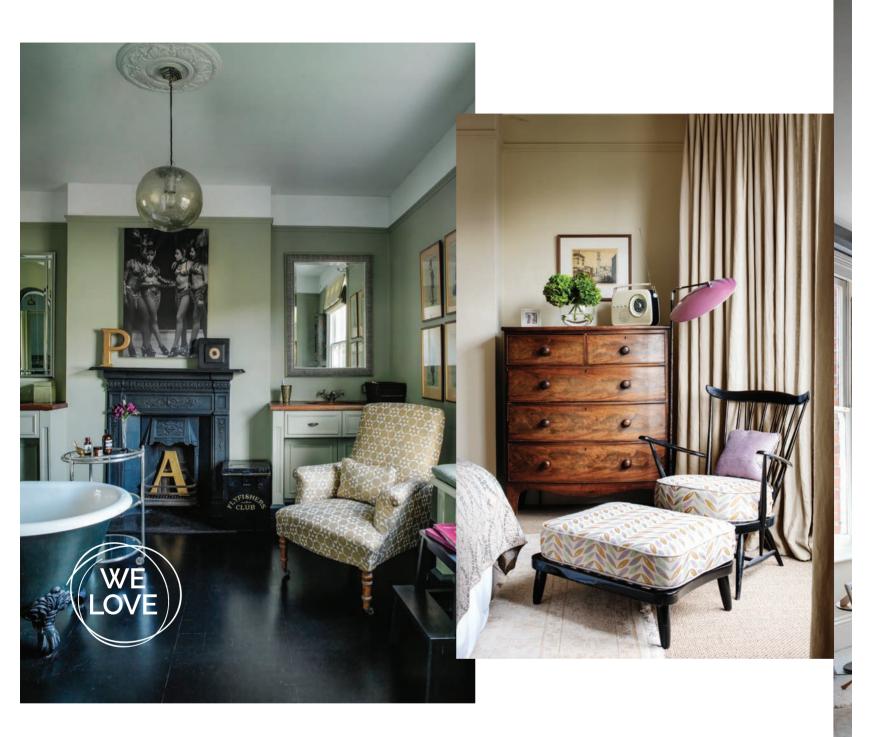
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comfortable space for reading, tucked away in the corner. So we set up an area with a good light and side table to set a cup of tea down on. And then we have a smarter room for entertaining in the evening."

"It's difficult to know how you'll use a space until you spend time in it. So instead of making rash decisions in terms of buying furniture and installing lighting, really take you time." She continued. Speaking from experience? Indeed Anna admits that she failed to take her own advice when she fell hopelessly in love with a 1920s sofa from France. "It was so uncomfortable, we ended up just sitting on the floor instead!". Could it be that early nineteenth century France didn't consider Netflix binges when they designed their seating?!

Anna accepted the fact that it was time to cut her losses and replaced the French beauty with a more practical option from Loaf.com. It's a company Anna says she likes to use often for clients and recommends it

for its quality and stylings, not to mention its reasonable pricing.

However, although praising online shopping for its user-friendliness, Anna claims that the overwhelming amount of online imagery can often blind homeowners. "People often hire me to rediscover the style that they've lost. They become so drowned by ideas that they forget which ones they actually like. It's so important to stick to your gut when decorating for your home, though magazines and websites can be a great way to see how your personal style can translate into interiors." **H**



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