

Safety Management Standard

Display Screen Equipment

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Document Control

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1. Introduction

Incorrect use of DSE or poorly designed workstations or work environments can lead to pain in necks, shoulders, backs, arms, wrists and hands as well as fatigue and eye strain. The causes may not always be obvious.

2. Purpose and aim

This Standard Management Standard (SMS) supplements the Health and Safety Policy and outlines the arrangements for complying with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, as amended and for protecting the health and safety of display screen equipment users.

3. Definitions

‘Display Screen Equipment’ (DSE) - any alphanumeric or graphic display screen, laptop, VDU or CCTV monitor. The definition is not limited to office situations but also applies to DSE in a laboratory environment.

‘Workstation’ – refers to an assembly comprising the display screen, chair, work surface/desk, keyboard (and other input devices), telephone, document holder, printer etc. and the immediate work environment around the display screen equipment.

‘DSE User’ - it will be generally appropriate to classify any member of staff as a DSE user if they use DSE as a significant part of their normal work.

If further clarification is needed for specific cases the person concerned would be classed as a DSE user if they normally use DSE for continuous or near continuous periods of 1 hour or more at a time.

4. The Law

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 - require employers protect employees from any risks associated with Display Screen Equipment (DSE).

5. Standards

All users of DSE equipment will undergo a process of risk assessment as outlined in *appendix 1*, this process is described below.

5.1 DSE Assessments

Level 1 (DSE Workstation Assessment Checklist)

This level of assessment is a self-assessment undertaken by a DSE user using the DSE workstation assessment checklist located on the [staff Intranet site](#).

Formal training is not required to complete this assessment however support and advice is offered by the Health and Safety Team.

Once completed, the DSE user submits the relevant e-form located on the [staff Intranet site](#).

Once submitted the DSE user's line manager will be notified and issues discussed and associated risks reduced to the lowest level where reasonably practicable i.e. purchased or recommend standard DSE equipment.

A list of recommended standard DSE equipment is available on the [staff intranet site](#).

Level 2 (DSE Workstation Risk assessment)

This level of assessment undertaken by a trained DSE assessor and is suitable for an individual who has completed Level 1 however issues remain unresolved or it has been recognised the DSE user is experiencing musculoskeletal discomfort.

DSE assessors are trained in the principles and practice of workstation assessment and are able to:

- Identify hazards and assess risks;
- Draw valid and reliable conclusions from assessments and identify steps to reduce risks;
- Make a clear record of the assessment and communicate the findings to those who need to take the appropriate action and to the user concerned;
- Call on further expertise if necessary (assessors may seek advice from a DSE assessor Mentor).

The DSE assessor may recommend the purchase of DSE equipment as possible solutions for common DSE problems; these are to be funded by the DSE users department.

An assessment is arranged by the DSE user's Line Manager by directly contacting a trained DSE Assessor. A contact list of DSE assessors is available on the [staff intranet site](#).

Level 3 (Specialist Workplace Assessment)

This level of assessment is suitable for an individual who has be undergone a Level 2 assessment however signs of ill health arising from the use of DSE equipment remain to have an impact on their continued safe use of DSE.

Ill health may include:

- Persistent aches and pains in wrists, arms, shoulders and neck
- Numbness in the fingers or a tingling sensation
- Backache
- Persistently tired or sore eyes

DSE users are encouraged to report any issue to their line manager which they believe may be related to their DSE use.

Specialist Workplace Assessments are undertaken by either a medical professional with in-depth knowledge of musculoskeletal issues and ergonomics, or a Registered Health Professional with specialist knowledge in workstation issues.

An assessment can be arranged by submitting a management referral to the Occupational Health Team or alternatively the DSE users can self-refer.

NB: One-off or very occasional instances should not be taken as a sign of ill-health but any persistent or recurring issues should be reported.

5.2 Review of Assessments

Assessments will be reviewed in the following circumstances:

- a) When a major change has been made to the keyboard, screen or mouse.
- b) When a major change has been made to the desk, chair or immediate working environment, (including lighting, temperature, space, etc.).
- c) A substantial change is made to way in which the DSE is used. For example, an increase in the amount of time required by the user, a change in the required speed, etc.
- d) Recruitment of a new user.
- e) If a workstation is relocated (even if still using the same equipment).
- f) Following reports or diagnosis of ill-health arising from DSE users.

5.3 Minimum requirements for workstations

Minimum standards which apply to all elements of the workstation, including the keyboard, the mouse, the environment and the software are as follows:

1. The display screen should have well defined characters of adequate size, stable image, easily adjustable brightness and contrast.
2. The screen should be easily tilting and swivelling with no reflective glare.
3. The keyboard should be tiltable and separate from the screen; sufficient space in front of the keyboard; matt surface; easy to use; adequate and contrasting symbols on keys.

4. The mouse (or other non-keyboard device) should be suitable for the task.
5. The work surface should be sufficiently large and low reflecting, and allow a flexible arrangement of equipment and adequate space.
6. The work chair should be stable allowing the DSE user easy movement and comfortable position. It should have adjustable height (seat); adjustable height and tilt (seat back).
7. Footrests should be available on request.
8. There should be space necessary to allow the DSE user to change positions.
9. The lighting should be satisfactory with appropriate contrast between screen and background; prevention of glare through positioning of artificial lighting.
10. Positioning must prevent sources of light such as windows from causing distracting reflections on the screen.
11. Noise must not cause distraction of attention or disturbance of speech.
12. Heat must not be excessive such to cause discomfort and an adequate level of humidity should be established and maintained.
13. The software systems must be suitable for the task, easy to use, and adaptable to the level of the user's knowledge.

5.4 Laptop Computers & Portable Devices

Laptops must comply with the full regulations when they are used for continuous or near continuous periods of 1 hour or more at a time. Ideally the keyboard and screen should be separate and there are several options to achieve this:

- Use with a docking station (preferred)
- Connect to a desktop computer
- Use with a separate monitor
- Use with a separate keyboard and mouse

5.5 Eyesight testing and glasses for DSE users

The Trust will pay for eye testing for all employees who are identified as users. This payment is conditional on testing being carried out at the Trust's chosen optician, and on a voucher for payment being obtained in advance by submitting the relevant e-form on the [staff intranet site](#).

The Trust will not reimburse eye testing costs for employees who choose to use a different optician.

Retesting will usually be allowed every 2 years, except in exceptional circumstances.

The Trust will also pay for a pair of basic spectacles (frames and lenses) where these are required solely and specifically for DSE use however will not pay for glasses which are used for reading or driving as well as DSE work.

5.6 Rest Breaks

Breaking up long spells of DSE work helps prevent fatigue, eyestrain, upper limb disorders and backache. Most employees will have some control over their own working arrangements, and will be able to organise their work to take this into account.

The best way to break up work is to alternate sedentary work with more active tasks, such as filing, photocopying etc. where this is not possible, more formal breaks may be necessary.

Frequent mini breaks every 15-30 minutes are preferable to longer breaks, taken every couple of hours.

5.7 Home working

Where employees are contracted to work from home, a DSE self-assessment must be carried out in the home setting, and if required a DSE assessment by the Health and Safety Team during a home visit.

In most cases, staff are not required to work from home but may choose to take work home at the discretion of the line managers etc. In these cases, although not coming under the DSE regulations, the employee should ensure that their work area is set up in accordance with good DSE working practices.

5.8 New and Expectant Mothers

Although scientific studies haven't discovered any link amongst new and expectant mothers and DSE use, the layout and working arrangements should be routinely assessed over the pregnancy period.

Special considerations should be given to achieving a comfortable seating position and an increase in frequency and duration of rest breaks.

6. Responsibilities and Duties

6.1 Managers' Responsibilities

- Ensure all DSE assessments are carried out in your area of responsibility.
- Arrange for assessments to be undertaken by DSE assessors where appropriate.

- Support the DSE assessors in carrying out their duties.
- Ensure furniture and equipment provided for DSE users is a suitable and sufficient standard.
- Make referrals to Occupational Health where appropriate.
- Implement appropriate recommendations made by DSE Assessor and or Occupational Health.

6.2 Employees' duties

- Carry out DSE self-assessment, initially as part of the induction process.
- Make any necessary changes recommended by the DSE assessor.
- Repeat self-assessments as required e.g. if there are any significant changes to work equipment or the environment.
- Report any health problems to our line manager which may be related to DSE use.

6.3 DSE Assessors

- Undertake training to meet the needs of the role.
- Carry out DSE workstation risk assessments for individuals with work-related concerns (*maximum of 4 assessments per month, unless agreed otherwise by their manager*)
- Make recommendations to individuals and managers following assessments in a timely manner.

6.4 Occupational Health

- Carry out specialist workplace assessments for individuals with work related health problems.
- Make recommendations to individuals and managers following assessments in a timely manner.

7.0 Information, Instruction and Training

All DSE users must be provided with information to raise awareness of potential hazards and risks associated with DSE work, and instruction how to work safely with Display Screen Equipment. This should be provided on the first day a DSE user reports to the line manager or as soon as reasonably practicable after commencement of employment.

Information and instruction is available on the [staff intranet site](#).

Training is not required to complete the level 1 self-assessment checklist however support and advice is offered by the Health and Safety Team.

Appointed DSE assessors are required to have undertaken a DSE assessor training course and successfully achieved a certificate of training.

Specialist Workplace Assessments are undertaken by either a medical professional with in-depth knowledge of musculoskeletal issues and ergonomics, or a Registered Health Professional with specialist knowledge in workstation issues.

8.0 Monitoring & Review

This Safety Management Standard will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the Health and Safety Team to:

- Ensure it continues to comply with legislation
- Ensure that it is reasonably practicable to implement to all those concerned within the Trust

9.0 Further information

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has a range of information on risk management. General information is available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/> . For information on specific risks consult one of our other health & safety management standards or use the search function at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/>.

We hope you find this SMS useful; if you require further information please contact one of the health and safety team:



01332 789559 or 789530



dhft.healthandsafety@nhs.net

Appendix 1

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessment Process Flowchart

