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Display Screen Equipment Policy

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DOCUMENT CONTROL	
POLICY NAME	**Display Screen Equipment Policy**
Department	Human Resources
Telephone Number	01443 425536
Initial Policy Launch Date	September 1996
Reviewing Officer	Mike Murphy
Review Date	December 2010
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	2008

REVISION HISTORY	
Date	Revised By
September 1996	Gerwyn Hogben
March 2005	Gerwyn Hogben
July 2010	Mike Murphy

DOCUMENT APPROVAL	
This document has received approval from:	Date of Approval
HR Senior Management Team	
Corporate Management Team	
Cabinet	

CONTENTS

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

    1.1   This policy has been produced in response to the Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended, which requires the Council as an employer to ensure the health and safety of staff and others who use display screen equipment (DSE).

2.   **POLICY STATEMENT**

    2.1   All reasonable steps will be taken by the Council to ensure the health and safety of staff (whether full or part time) and others (e.g. agency workers working for the Council) who work with DSE.

    2.2   The Council acknowledges that health and safety hazards may arise from the use of the DSE equipment. It is the intention of the Council to ensure that any risks are reduced to a minimum.

    2.3   Whilst it is generally recognised that the use of DSE can be undertaken without risks, it is appreciated that some members of staff may have genuine reservations and concerns. The Council will seek to give information and training to enable a further understanding of these issues.

    2.4   Specific guidance on managing working with DSE is attached to this policy statement.

        The responsibility for implementing the requirements of this policy and for the preparation of an implementation strategy rests with each Director or Head of Service.

GUIDANCE ABOUT WORK WITH DSE

DEFINITIONS

1.1   'Display screen equipment' means any alphanumeric or graphic display screen, regardless of the display process involved. It also includes screens used in work with television or film pictures e.g. CCTV.

1.2   'Workstation' means an assembly comprising:

- display screen equipment (whether provided with software determining the interface between the equipment and its operator or 'user', a keyboard or any other input device)

- any optional accessories to the display screen equipment

- any disk drive, telephone, modem, printer, document holder, work chair, work desk, work surface, or other item peripheral to the display screen equipment

- the immediate work environment around the display screen equipment.

1.3   'User' means an employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of his/her normal work. It will generally be appropriate to classify the person as a user if they:

- normally use DSE for **continuous or near continuous spells of an hour or more** at a time and use DSE in this way **more or less daily**

- have to **transfer information quickly** to or from the DSE

- They **also** need to apply a high level of **attention and concentration**; or are **highly dependant on DSE or have little choice** about using it; or need **special training or skills** to use the DSE.

Note: It is essential that all 'users' be identified in order to determine those members of staff that are covered by this Policy. Where the use of a workstation does not fall within the scope of this Policy (i.e. the member of staff is not a user), then the health and safety of those engaged in such activities will be covered by other general duties of the Council, e.g. a risk assessment is required to be carried out under regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Please refer to policy HS6 - Management of Health and Safety at Work.

2. ASSESSMENT OF WORKSTATIONS

2.1 A 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessment of the workstation to identify any hazards and to evaluate risks and their extent must be carried out.

2.2 The risks identified by the assessment must be reduced to the lowest extent 'reasonably practicable'. This means there must be a balance struck between the cost of preventing health risks and the consequences of not preventing these risks. It does not mean that improvements need not be made just because they cannot be afforded. Some of the health effects of display screen work can cause pain and permanent disability and cannot be ignored. The main hazards associated with DSE working relate to:-

Physical (musculoskeletal):

Such as work related upper limb disorders, often referred to as RSI (repetitive strain injuries)

Eye and Eyesight Effects:

Working with DSE is not considered to cause permanent damage to eye or eyesight, nor does it make existing defects worse, but it can make anyone with an existing visual defect more aware of it. Some members of staff may however experience temporary visual fatigue leading to a range of symptoms such as impaired visual performance (for example blurred vision), red or sore eyes and/or headaches.

Fatigue and Stress:

Arising from poorly designed tasks or working environment.

2.3 Participation of the user is essential to a successful workstation assessment, and can best be achieved, for example, by means of completing a checklist. Involvement of the individual worker is important because some of the required criteria are subjective, for example in ascertaining the comfort of a chair. The user should have suitable information and training to enable constructive participation.

2.4 If a DSE user is required to work at home, whether or not the workstation is provided whole or in part, the risks must be assessed.

2.5 The risk assessment or relevant parts of it should be reviewed if there are reports of health problems, different users, changes in individual capability, or where there has been some significant change to the workstation such as:

- a major change to software

- a major change to any of the equipment (screen, keyboard, input devices etc)

- a major change in workstation furniture

- a substantial increase in the amount of time being spent using DSE
- a substantial change in other task requirements (for example greater speed or accuracy)
- if the workstation is relocated (even if all equipment and furniture stays the same
- if major features of the work environment, such as lighting, are significantly modified.

2.6 Reassessments should be carried out in the same way as the original assessment, consulting members of staff and safety representatives, and should be done as soon as reasonably practicable after the need has been identified.

2.7 Where a workstation is used by more than one member of staff, whether simultaneously or in shifts (a shared workstation), it should be risk assessed in relation to all those covered by the DSE Regulations. For example, if tall and short members of staff are sharing a workstation, the person carrying out the assessment should check the chair has a wide range of adjustments to accommodate both of them, and that a footrest is available when required.

3. <u>BREAKS OR CHANGES OF ACTIVITY</u>

3.1 It is not appropriate to lay down specific requirements for breaks, which apply to all types of work, as it is the nature and mix of demands of the job, which determine the length of break necessary to prevent fatigue. However some general guidance can be given:

- breaks should be taken when performance and productivity is at a maximum, before the user starts getting tired. This is better than taking a break to recover from fatigue. The timing of the break is more important than its length

- breaks or changes of activity should be included in working time. They should reduce the workload at the screen, i.e. they should not result in a higher pace or intensity of work on account of their introduction

- short frequent breaks are more satisfactory than occasional, longer breaks: for example a 5-10 minute break after 50-60 minutes continuous screen and/or keyboard work is likely to be better than a 15 minute break every 2 hours

- if possible, breaks should be taken away from the DSE workstation, and allow the user to stand up, move about and/or change posture

- informal breaks, that is time spent not viewing the screen but, for example, engaged on other tasks, appear from study evidence to be more effective in relieving visual fatigue than formal rest breaks

- wherever practicable, 'users' should be allowed some discretion as to how they carry out the task; individual control over the nature and pace of work allows optimal distribution of effort over the working day.

4. EYE AND EYESIGHT TEST

4.1 Eye and eyesight tests must be provided, as follows:

- where an existing user requests a test for the first time, the manager must arrange for a test to be carried out as soon as practicable.

- where the test is requested by a member of staff who is not yet a user but is to become one, the manager should arrange for a test to be carried out before s/he becomes a use.r

- on request to any person being recruited as a user. This duty arise only when it is certain that any such person is to become both a user and a member of staff. Where such a test is requested, if the test is not provided before the person takes up the job, it must be provided before s/he undertakes sufficient work to make them a user.

4.2 The Council may not refuse to provide a test on the grounds that a new recruit has recently had one provided in any previous period of employment. However, it may not be of practical benefit to such a user to request a test, if their new tasks and work environment are to be similar to those before the change of job.

4.3 All eye and eyesight tests must be carried out by a competent person. This will either be an optometrist or a doctor with ophthalmic qualifications.

4.4 Reference must also be made to Policy HS11A - "Scheme for the Provision and Payment of Eye and Eyesight Tests and the Provision of Special Corrective Appliances''.

5. WORK WITH PORTABLE DSE

5.1 Portable DSE, such as laptop and notebook computers are also subject to the DSE regulations if it is in prolonged use. Detailed below are recommendations for managers to consider for those members of staff who use portable DSE.

Because of the impracticability to use an independent assessor to carry out a risk assessment at each location, particularly where work may take place as a user travels around with their portable DSE, sufficient

training and information should be given to portable DSE users to enable s/he to carry out their own risk assessment. Reference should be made to the Section 6 on 'Homeworkers'.

Use of portable DSE should be kept to a minimum, as far as is reasonable, as the inherent design of the equipment increases many of the risks, for example, smaller keyboard, screen and keyboard attached etc. Where laptops have to be used for extended periods of time suitable 'docking stations' must be provided and used.

As well as the common risks to both portable and desktop DSE work, the following additional risks may be associated specifically with portable DSE work and need to be taken into account by managers:

- manual handling risks when moving between locations (bearing in mind that other equipment such as spare batteries, printers, or papers may add to the burden of the portable DSE itself.)

- risks of theft possibly involving an assault.

6.   **AGENCY WORKERS**

6.1   Many temporary workers supplied by employment agencies will use DSE sufficiently to become users (employees) or operators (self-employed people) and hence be subject to the DSE Regulations.

6.2   Where a DSE worker supplied by an agency becomes a staff member of the host employer, the duties under the DSE Regulations will fall to the host employer. In other situations where the worker is a member of staff of the agency or is self-employed, both the employment agency and the Council will have duties under the DSE Regulations. The following list clarifies these responsibilities.

(a)   **The Council, as host employer, should**:

- assess risks to agency workers (whether users or operators) using their workstations

- ensure all workstations in their undertaking comply with minimum requirements

- ensure activities are planned so that agency worker users can have breaks from DSE work

- provide training to agency worker users when their workstation is being modified

- provide information to agency workers (both users and operators) about risks, risk assessment and risk reduction measures; and additionally to users about breaks, and training when their workstation modified.

(b)   **Agencies should**:

- on request, provide eye tests (and special corrective appliances, if required) to agency worker users who are their employees

- provide health and safety training for such workers

- provide information to such workers about eye tests and training

- check that host employers carry out their duties (as described above) to:

- conduct risk assessments of the workstations to be used

- ensure their workstations comply with the minimum requirements

- plan for breaks or changes of activity for users; and

- provide information to agency workers, as specified above.

7.   EFFECTS ON PREGNANT WOMEN

7.1   In light of current scientific evidence, pregnant women do not need to stop working with DSE. Many scientific studies have been carried out, but as a whole their results do not show a link between miscarriages or birth defects and working with DSE. Research and reviews of scientific evidence will continue to be undertaken.

7.2   However, to avoid stress and anxiety, women who are pregnant, are planning children, or are worried about working with DSE should discuss the matter with their GP or the Council's Occupational Health Unit.

8.   WORK WITH MOUSE, TRACKBALL OR OTHER POINTING DEVICES

8.1   The majority of desktop computers are supplied with a computer mouse. In most situations the mouse will be an appropriate pointing device to use. However, there will be cases where an alternative device is more suitable or is preferred by the user. The mouse depends on having a suitable surface with enough space on which to use it. So, for example, where space is very limited or where an individual has limited mobility in their arm, an alternative such as the trackball or touchpad may be more suitable. These alternative devices are frequently found on portable computers.

8.2   In choosing a pointing device there are a number of factors to consider:

The environment in which it will be used. Will the user be able to

easily use the device at the workstation? Is there enough space? Can the user adopt a safe, comfortable working posture? Is there a suitable surface on which to use the device? Will other factors such as a dirty working environment or vibration affect its use?

Individual characteristics. Is the device the right size and shape for the user? Will right and left-handed users be able to use it? Will the device be usable if the individual has any physical limitations (for example an existing upper limb disorder?)?

Task characteristics. Does the task demand a lot of use to be made of the pointing device? Is a lot of fast and accurate positioning of the cursor required? Some devices are better than others in terms of speed and accuracy, for example, the mouse tends to be more accurate but slightly slower than the trackball for fast, lone cursor movements.

9.   SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR USERS

The following information must be provided for users:

- risks from display screen equipment and workstations
- risk assessment and measures to reduce the risks
- breaks and activity changes
- eye and eyesight tests
- initial training
- training when workstation is modified.

10.   TRAINING

10.1   Adequate health and safety training in the use of a workstation must be provided for users and for those who are to become users.

10.2   Health and safety training must also be provided when a workstation is substantially modified. This training will be in addition to general training, for example, keyboard skills or use of a particular computer programme or word processing package.

Training should, for example, cover:

- recognition of hazards and risks, e.g. screen reflections and glare
- explanation of health risks and causes, e.g. poor posture and lack of breaks

- describing what 'users' can do to minimise these risks, e.g. changing position, adjusting furniture and equipment, regular cleaning of screens, taking breaks and changing activity

- reporting of problems or shortcomings in work patterns or workstations

- giving information about eye and eyesight tests, rest pauses and standards for workstations

- explaining how the user can contribute to assessments of workstations.

11. RECORD KEEPING

Records should be kept of the following:

- the results of workstation assessments

- actions taken as a result of workstation assessments

- eye and eyesight tests

- the supply of corrective appliances

- the provision of training

- information given to employees

- complaints of alleged or actual DSE-related ill health

- action taken in respect of such complaints.

12. ADVICE

Advice on the implementation of the policy can be obtained from the Health & Safety Team, Human Resources Division, Telephone: (01443) 425536.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS OF A WORKSTATION

INTRODUCTION

Set out below are the minimum requirements for "workstations". Managers will realise the term "workstation" has many characteristics.

The Display Screen:

- well defined characters of adequate size and spacing.
- the image must be stable and flicker free.
- brightness and contrast between the characters must be easily adjustable.
- the screen must swivel and tilt freely to suit employees needs.
- it must be possible to use a separate base for the screen or an adjustable table.
- the screen must be free of reflections and glare that may cause discomfort.

The Keyboard:

- it must be separate from the screen and must be tiltable, to enable a comfortable position to be found during use.
- the space in front of the keyboard must be sufficient to provide hand/arm support.
- the surface must be matt finish to avoid reflective glare.
- the arrangements of the keyboard and the function of the keys must facilitate its use.
- key symbols must be adequately contrasted and visible during normal use.

The Work desk and Work surface:

- low reflectance, large enough for the task and to accommodate a flexible arrangement of all necessary equipment.
- the document holder must be stable and adjustable so as to minimise the need for awkward eye/hand movements.
- the space must be sufficient to allow a comfortable working position to be achieved.

The Workchair:

- stable and allow easy freedom of movement and a comfortable position.
- the seat must be adjustable in height.
- the back rest must be adjustable in height and angle of tilt.
- a footrest should be provided if required.

The Environment:

- there must be sufficient space for workers to change position and to vary movements.
- lighting must ensure satisfactory conditions and appropriate contrast, taking into account the type of work and the needs of the worker (lighting level at the work surface should be between 300-500 lux for a combination of screen work and non-screen tasks).
- glare and reflections on the screen or other equipment that may cause disturbance must be prevented. Prevention must be achieved by co-ordinating the layout of the workstation with that of the lighting.
- noise emitted by workstation equipment must be considered when the workstation is being equipped.
- workstation equipment must not produce excess heat liable to cause discomfort.
- an adequate level of humidity must be maintained (40% - 60% RH).

DSE GUIDANCE 2

USER ASSESSMENT FOR DSE WORK

Name of Site:	
Person/Post Assessed:	
Location:	

		Please delete as appropriate
1	Is the person highly dependent on DSE to do their job?	YES/NO
2	Is there little choice about using DSE?	YES/NO
3	Are special training or skills required to use the DSE?	YES/NO
4	Is the DSE normally used for continuous or near continuous spells of one hour or more at a time and used more or less daily?	YES/NO
5	Is the fast transfer of information to and from the DSE an important requirement of the job?	YES/NO
6	Are high levels of concentration required by the user?	YES/NO

If most of the answers are **YES**, then the person **WILL** be classified as a **User**, and a detailed assessment must be completed using DSE Guidance 3.

If most of the answers are **NO**, then the person would **NOT** be classified as a **User**.

I conclude that the person who is the subject of this User assessment IS / IS NOT (please delete) classified as a 'User' of Display Screen Equipment.

Name of Assessor: _____   Date: _____

DSE GUIDANCE 3

DETAILED ASSESSMENT OF DISPLAY SCREEN WORK

Name of Site:	
Person/Post Assessed:	
Location:	

Element 1 – The Display Screen		*Please Delete as appropriate*
1.1	Are screen characters clear and readable and the text size comfortable to read?	YES/NO
1.2	Are screen images free of flicker and jitter?	YES/NO
1.3	Can screen brightness and/or contrast be adjusted?	YES/NO
1.4	Is the screen free from glare and reflection?	YES/NO
1.5	Is the screen positioned correctly to enable comfortable use?	YES/NO
1.6	Is a screen cleaning kit provided?	YES/NO
1.7	Does the screen swivel and tilt?	YES/NO
Element 2 – The Keyboard		
2.1	Can the keyboard be tilted?	YES/NO
2.2	Is the keyboard separate from the screen?	YES/NO
2.3	Are the keyboard characters easily readable?	YES/NO
2.4	Is it possible to find a comfortable keying position?	YES/NO
2.5	Does the user have a good keyboard technique?	YES/NO

Element 3 – The Work Desk		*Please Delete as appropriate*
3.1	Is the work desk large enough for all the equipment, papers, etc?	YES/NO
3.2	Are surfaces free from reflection and glare?	YES/NO
3.3	Is there a document holder available, if required by the user?	YES/NO
3.4	Can the user comfortably reach all the equipment and papers they need to use?	YES/NO

	Element 4 – The Work Chair	*Please Delete as appropriate*
4.1	Is the chair suitable	YES/NO
4.2	Is the work chair stable?	YES/NO
4.3	Can the chair be height-adjusted?	YES/NO
4.4	Can the backrest be adjusted for height and tilt independently of the seat height?	YES/NO
4.5	Can both feet be placed on the floor when in a comfortable working position?	YES/NO
4.6	Is a footrest available if required by the user?	YES/NO
4.7	Are forearms horizontal and eyes at roughly the same height as the top of the VDU?	YES/NO
4.8	Is the small of the back supported by the chair's backrest?	YES/NO
	Element 5 – The Environment	
5.1	Is there enough room to change position and vary movement?	YES/NO
5.2	Are the workstation and the lighting adequate– not too bright or too dim to work comfortably?	YES/NO
5.3	Is the general lighting adequate to prevent excess lighting contrast when the user looks away from the screen?	YES/NO
5.4	Are heat levels comfortable?	YES/NO
5.5	Are noise levels comfortable?	YES/NO
5.6	Does the air feel comfortable?	YES/NO

	Element 6 – Mouse, Trackball, etc	*Please Delete as appropriate*
6.1	Is the device suitable for the tasks for which it is used?	YES/NO
6.2	Is the device positioned close to the user?	YES/NO
6.3	Is there support for the user's wrist and forearm?	YES/NO
6.4	Does the device work smoothly at a speed that suits the user?	YES/NO
6.5	Can the user easily adjust software settings for speed and accuracy of pointer?	YES/NO

Element 7 – Health		
7.1	Is the user free of eyesight problems?	YES/NO
7.2	Has the user requested or been advised of their entitlement to eye and eyesight testing?	YES/NO
7.3	Is the user free of aches, pains or sensory loss (tingling or pins and needles) in the neck, shoulder or upper limbs?	YES/NO
7.4	Is the user free of restricted joint movement, impaired finger movements or grip or other disability?	YES/NO
7.5	Is the user free of fatigue or stress?	YES/NO
7.6	Is the user taking regular breaks away from the VDU?	YES/NO
Element 8 – Training, Information and Work Planning		
8.1	Has the user received training in the use of DSE?	YES/NO
8.2	Has the user received training in identifying and correcting workstation hazards, including equipment adjustments?	YES/NO
8.3	Is there a written record of the identified users training and is it up to date?	YES/NO
8.4	Has the work been planned to include breaks and changes in activity to avoid excessive exposure to DSE work?	YES/NO

If the answer to any questions is NO then corrective action should be taken and recorded on DSE Guidance 4.

Considering the answers, what is your overall assessment of the risk of injury?

Insignificant ☐   **Low** ☐   **Medium** ☐   **High** ☐ **(Please tick)**

Name of Assessor: _____   Date: _____

DSE GUIDANCE 4

DSE CORRECTIVE ACTION FORM

Name of Site:	
Person/Post Assessed:	
Location:	

Question No.	Comments and Corrective Action	Action By	Completed (Date)

This form must be returned to the Manager for confirmation that all necessary corrective action has been taken.

Signed: _____   Date: _____

DSE GUIDANCE 5

RECORD OF WORKSTATIONS ASSESSMENT FOR DSE WORK

Following completion of DSE Guidance 3, managers must ensure that a copy is kept by the Group/Division and a copy on the individual's personal file.

Name of Individual: _____

Job Title: _____

Group/Division: _____

Staff Number: _____

Date of Assessment: _____

Location of Workstation: _____

Assessment Carried out by: _____

MANAGERS CHECKLIST

	✓ As Appropriate		
	N/A	Yes	No
Has an assessment been carried out to determine whether an individual is regarded as a display screen 'user'?			
Has a workstation risk assessment been carried out to identify the hazards and risks present?			
Has action been taken as a result of the assessment?			
Are regular 'work breaks' being taken?			
Is appropriate training being given to all 'users'?			
Are appropriate records kept?			
Are monitoring procedures in place to ensure that the requirements of the Policy are being met?			

Completed by: _____   Confirmed by: _____

Name: _____   Name: _____

Designation: _____   Designation: _____

Date: _____   Date: _____