

**GUIDANCE ON WORKING FROM HOME**

**WITH DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE)**

(Issue 1, June 2021)

**INTRODUCTION**

When working with display screen equipment (DSE) in an office setting, employees will be working in a suitable environment and be provided with an appropriate workstation and all necessary DSE and associated furniture, and with the necessary information, guidance and training, so as to ensure compliance with the *Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002* . As part of this compliance process, line managers will undertake DSE user and workstation assessments for each employee.

However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent restrictions imposed by the UK and Welsh governments, many Council employees were required to work from home.

Although the work situation has improved, it is likely that many more people will continue to work from home than was the case before the pandemic, even if in some instances this is only on a partial basis. Furthermore, there is, the possibility that a similar situation could occur again in the future where employees would once more be required to work from home.

Due to the increased numbers of employees working from home, managers will not be able to visit each employee’s home to carry out a DSE workstation assessment, as would usually be the case.

The guidance in this document, together with that contained in other referenced sources, aims to provide employees working from home with guidance and information about the health and safety risks arising from their use of working with DSE, how to properly set up their DSE workstations at home, and how to carry out a self-assessment of their home DSE workstation to minimise the risks.

Employees should read the guidance set out below and the referenced sources, follow the self-assessment procedure set out in Appendix A and complete the self-assessment checklist in Appendix B and, where applicable, the corrective action form in Appendix C. Employees should email the completed self-assessment checklist and, where applicable, corrective action form, to their manager.

**GUIDANCE**

The Council will provide all necessary and suitable DSE workstation equipment and furniture to those employees who work from home, as is deemed appropriate in each individual’s circumstances.

Should any employee feel that they need additional equipment and / or furniture for their home workstation, they should contact their manager regarding the provision of any such equipment / furniture.

All DSE provided by the Council to employees for working from home, whether new or pre-used, will meet the required standards.

All employees who work with DSE should read and familiarise themselves with the Council’s *Policy HS11 – Display Screen Equipment* and the associated *Scheme HS11A – Eye and Eyesight Tests and Special Corrective Appliances*. This will enable them to understand, for example, such issues as:

* definitions of what is meant by DSE and associated terms, such as ‘workstation’, ‘user’, and ‘special corrective appliances’;
* their entitlement under the Regulations in respect of eye and eyesight tests and special corrective appliances;
* the main hazards associated with working with DSE (which relate to musculoskeletal, eye and eyesight effects and fatigue and stress);
* the importance of taking breaks or changes of activity; and
* other DSE-related issues.

In order to minimise the risks associated with working with DSE, all employees should also:

* read and familiarise themselves with the Council’s document *Employees’ guide to Setting up your Workstation and Using Portable Devices*;
* follow the advice and set up their workstations as close as possible to the examples shown in the aforementioned document;
* read and familiarise themselves with the Council’s document *RCT Working from Home Guide*;
* complete the self-assessment checklist in Appendix B of this document, and email it to their manager;
* where applicable, complete the corrective action form in Appendix C of this document and take the appropriate corrective actions to implement practical improvements, and email the form to their manager;
* remember to try to take 5-10 minute breaks away from DSE use every hour;
* notify their manager if they develop any health issues they feel have likely been caused by their use of DSE, or if they feel that their use of DSE has likely exacerbated any existing health issues, and despite taking corrective actions to implement practical improvements the health issues persist; and
* read and familiarise themselves with the Council’s document *Working from home – Electrical Safety*.

If employees have the space at home to set aside to use exclusively as a DSE workstation, such as a spare room, for example, then it is recommended that they do so following the guidance set out in the Council’s document *Employees’ guide to Setting up your Workstation and Using Portable Devices*.

If they do not have such a space, then they should choose the most suitable area to utilise to set up and take down their workstation each day, again following the guidance set out in the aforementioned document.

Whichever the case, they should ensure that:

* they have enough room to change position, vary movement and work comfortably;
* the lighting is adequate – not too bright or too dim to work comfortably;
* the ventilation is adequate;
* the heating is adequate;
* the area is generally safe, for example, free from tripping hazards such as trailing cables;
* if they develop health issues that they feel have likely been caused by their use of DSE, or that their use of DSE has likely exacerbated existing health issues, they take corrective actions to implement practical improvements in the way they use their DSE and / or the way they have set up their DSE workstation with a view to addressing the problems causing / exacerbating those health issues;
* if, despite taking corrective actions to implement any practical improvements the health issues persist, they inform their manager of the situation (who may then refer them to the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit for assessment).

There may be situations where, due to their personal circumstances, employees may not be able to set up a suitable DSE workstation at home. Where this occurs, all options will be explored between the manager, the employee and HR which may include an employee being required to attend the office on a more frequent or indeed a full-time basis.



**APPENDIX A** (Issue 1, June 2021)

**HOMEWORKING DSE WORKSTATION**

**SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE**

The procedure to be followed by employees / managers in respect of homeworking DSE workstation self-assessments is as follows:

* The initial assessment of an employee’s home DSE workstation is to be carried out by the employee themselves.

Advice and guidance on how a workstation should be set up is provided in the *Guidance* section of this document and in the Council’s documents *Health and Safety Policy HS11 – Display Screen Equipment* and *Employees’ guide to* *Setting up Your Workstation and Using Portable Devices.*

The advice and guidance given in the aforementioned documentsshould be sufficient to enable employees to undertake the homeworking DSE workstation self-assessment checklist in Appendix B of this document.

Employees should email completed checklists to their manager;

* Should any problems be identified in the assessment, appropriate corrective actions should be taken to implement practical improvements to address those problems, following the advice and guidance given in the aforementioned documents. In this instance, employees should complete the corrective action form in Appendix C of this document.

Employees should email completed forms to their manager. If more than one corrective action is identified as being necessary, but they can’t all be taken at the same time, employees should email completed forms to their manager as and when each corrective action is taken.

* In most instances, this assessment by the employee, followed by any corrective actions identified as necessary, will be sufficient and no further action will be required, other than to review the assessment should there be any changes to their home DSE workstation / workload / duties or to their health that could be related to or exacerbated by DSE use, for example pain in the back, neck, shoulders or wrist;
* If during an employee’s self-assessment they identify that they are suffering from a health complaint that they feel likely could be related to or exacerbated by DSE use, then if there is any obvious problem with their workstation / environment / posture they should address it immediately by taking corrective actions to implement practical improvements, as referred to above, and monitor themselves to see if there is any improvement in that health complaint;
* Should the employee not be able to identify any obvious problem, or should the employee’s health complaint not improve after any obvious problem has been addressed, then the employee should report the matter to their manager, preferably via email;
* The manager should then refer the employee to the Council’s Occupational Health and Wellbeing Unit (OHWU) for assessment of their health complaint (forwarding to the OHWU details provided by the employee, including copies of any completed checklists and corrective action forms, as and when they are received);
* If the OHWU then determines that a more detailed / specialised ‘ergonomic’ assessment of the employee’s home workstation is necessary, specialist consultants will need to be employed to visit the employee’s home. In this instance, the employee’s manager must arrange for the consultant to visit the employee’s home;
* Should it be the case that the particular circumstances in the employee’s home render it impractical to implement any improvements to their home workstation that would address the DSE-related health complaint, then the only solution may be that, after consultation with their manager, the employee will have to return to work where a suitable DSE workstation is available for their use;
* Copies of completed homeworking DSE workstation self-assessment checklists and, where applicable, corrective action forms, should be forwarded by employees to their manager who, in turn, should forward them to Human Resources in Ty Elai for placing on the employee’s personal file, as and when they are received.



**APPENDIX B** (Issue 1, June 2021)

**HOMEWORKING DSE WORKSTATION**

**SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name** |  |
| **Address** |  |
| **Telephone Number** |  |
| **Email Address** |  |
| **Job Title** |  |
| **Group / Division** |  |
| **Staff Number (if known)** |  |
| **Manager** |  |
| **Date of Assessment** |  |

| **Element** | **Delete as Appropriate** |
| --- | --- |
| **Element 1 – the Environment** |  |
| 1.1 | Do you have enough space at home to set aside a suitable area that can be used exclusively as a DSE workstation, such as a spare room, for example? | Yes / No |
| 1.2 | If the answer to 1.1 above is no, do you instead have a suitable area you can utilise to set up and take down your DSE workstation each day?  | Yes / No |
| 1.3 | Is the area large enough to allow you enough room to change position, vary movement and work comfortably?  | Yes / No |
| 1.4 | Is the lighting to the area adequate – not too bright or too dim to work comfortably: | Yes / No |
| 1.5 | Is there adequate ventilation to the area? | Yes / No |
| 1.6 | Is there suitable heating to the area? | Yes / No |
| 1.7 | Is the area generally safe, for example, free from tripping hazards such as trailing cables? | Yes / No |
| **Element 2 – Information, Guidance and Training** |  |
| 2.1 | Have you been provided with or do you have access to a copy of the Council’s:* Policy HS11 – Display Screen Equipment?
* Scheme HS11A – Eye and Eyesight Tests and Special Corrective Appliances?
* Employees’ guide to Setting up your Workstation and Using Portable Devices?
* RCT Working from Home Guide?
* Working from home – Electrical Safety?
 | Yes / NoYes / NoYes / NoYes / NoYes / No |
| 2.2 | Have you read and familiarised yourself with the documents referred to in 2.1 above so as to enable you to understand the risks to your health and safety arising from working with DSE, and have you followed the advice contained in those documents so as to minimise those risks, as appropriate to your individual circumstances? | Yes / No |
| **Element 3 – DSE and Associated Furniture** |  |
| 3.1 | Have you been provided with all necessary DSE and associated furniture, as appropriate to your individual circumstances?  | Yes / No |
| 3.2 | If you feel that you need additional equipment to that which you’ve already been provided with, are you aware that you need to contact your manager to arrange the provision of any such additional equipment? | Yes / No |
| 3.3 | Have you set up your workstation as close as possible to the examples shown in the document ‘Employees’ guide to Setting up your Workstation and Using Portable Devices’? | Yes / No |
| **Element 3 – DSE and Associated Furniture (continued)**  |  |
| 3.4 | Have you taken corrective actions to implement any practical improvements to the way your DSE workstation is set up as a result of reading the aforementioned guide and completing this self-assessment checklist? | Yes / No |
| **Element 4 – Health** |  |
| 4.1 | Are you aware of your entitlements under Scheme HS11A – Eye and Eyesight Tests and Special Corrective Appliances? | Yes / No |
| 4.2 | Are you aware of the importance of taking a 5-10 minute break away from DSE use every hour?  | Yes / No |
| 4.3 | Are you aware of the need to notify your manager if you develop any health issues you feel have likely been caused by your use of DSE, or if you feel that your use of DSE has likely exacerbated any existing health issues, and despite taking corrective actions to implement any practical improvements the health issues persist? | Yes / No |

If the answer to every question is **YES**, then no corrective action should be necessary and there is no need for you to complete the corrective action form in Appendix C. You should just email this self-assessment checklist to your manager.

If the answer to any question is **NO**, then corrective action should be taken where necessary, and in consultation with your manager where appropriate. You should complete the corrective action form in Appendix C and email both this self-assessment checklist and the form to your manager. If more than one corrective action is identified as being necessary, but they can’t all be taken at the same time, you should email completed forms to your manager as and when each corrective action is taken.

It may be that, due to your particular circumstances, you may not be able to set up a suitable DSE workstation at home.

 Or it may be the situation that it has been assessed that due a particular medical condition you need a special chair to use whilst working at a DSE workstation, but you do not have the space to accommodate the use of that chair at home.

 Alternatively, it may be that after setting up your DSE workstation at home and using it for some time you develop health issues that you feel have likely been caused by your use of DSE, or that your use of DSE has likely exacerbated existing health issues, and despite taking corrective actions to implement practical improvements the health issues persist.

In any of these, and perhaps other alternative situations, the only solution may be that, after consultation with your manager, you will have to return to work to an office where a suitable DSE workstation is available for your use.



**APPENDIX C** (Issue 1, June 2021)

**HOMEWORKING DSE WORKSTATION**

**SELF-ASSESSMENT CORRECTIVE ACTION FORM**

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| **Name** |  |
| **Address** |  |
| **Telephone Number** |  |
| **Email Address** |  |
| **Job Title** |  |
| **Group / Division** |  |
| **Staff Number (if known)** |  |
| **Manager** |  |
| **Date of Assessment** |  |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Question****Number** | **Problem Identified** | **Corrective Action** | **Date****Action****Taken** |
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**Remember**,if after setting up your DSE workstation at home and using it for some time you develop health issues that you feel have likely been caused by your use of DSE, or that your use of DSE has likely exacerbated existing health issues, and despite taking corrective actions to implement practical improvements the health issues persist, **you must inform your manager**.