

# Sleaford Town Council

## CONSTITUTION Chapter 29 Display Screen Equipment Policy



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## 1. Introduction

Under the Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations, employers are required to provide a healthy and safe environment which includes minimising the risks associated with the use of display screen equipment (DSE).

The use of DSE is not generally a high-risk activity, but failure to meet the minimum requirements set out in the regulations can lead to musculoskeletal problems, eye strain, fatigue or mental stress. These problems can be overcome by good design of equipment and furniture, a good working environment and careful planning of the tasks performed.

## 2. Policy Statement

The Council acknowledges its responsibility for managing DSE in the workplace and has put in place measures as set out in this policy to protect the health and safety of DSE users.

The objectives of this policy are to ensure that:

- Suitable provision is made in terms of DSE work equipment;
- DSE workstations are assessed via the DSE self-assessment process;
- Appropriate information and training is provided to DSE users, primarily through e-learning training and guidance;
- DSE users have access to a free eye examination and corrective glasses, where these are required solely and specifically for DSE work;
- DSE users with specific health issues related to DSE work have access to advice and support from the Clerk and the Council's Occupational Health Service provider.

## 3. Application

If you use DSE for a significant part of your normal work, then you should follow this guidance.

## 4. Definitions

**Users:** is defined as someone who habitually uses DSE as part of their job for substantial periods of their working day – someone who cannot do their job without the use of DSE.

**Workstation:** includes the screen, keyboard (including portable DSE ie. laptops, in prolonged use), and other parts of the computer and its accessories (such as the mouse or other input device), the desk, chair, and the immediate working environment.

**Hot desk:** refers to an arrangement at work whereby employees do not have a specific fixed desk (workstation) allocated to them. A 'hot desk' is provided and possibly used by other members of staff.

## 5. The Clerk is responsible for ensuring:

- Employees who are 'users' of DSE, complete the DSE e-learning course.
- Employees complete the **Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Self-assessment** and any issues documented on the checklist are addressed;
- Generic DSE assessments are facilitated where 'hot desking' is carried out;
- Employees are informed of the policy regarding the provision of eye sight tests for designated DSE users;
- Employees are advised on their contracts regarding any issues/safety concerns around using their DSE and associated workstation/working environment;
- DSE assessments relating to their employees are held on file, maintained up to date (reviewed as necessary) and readily available.

## 6. Employees are responsible for ensuring:

- Compliance with this policy and the local arrangements when using DSE;
- Completion of the **DSE Self-assessment** in accordance with this policy and bringing any issues identified and documented on the workstation checklist to the attention of the Clerk, to be appropriately addressed within a reasonable timescale.
- The Clerk is advised as soon as possible of any known safety or health issues, including any disability or medical conditions, associated with their use.
- Their availability and attendance at any specialist assessments and/or Occupational Health appointment made for them.

## 7. Health effects

DSE workstations or equipment can be associated with neck, shoulder, back or arm pain, as well as with fatigue, stress and eyestrain. Most of these conditions do not indicate any serious ill health, but it makes sense to avoid them as far as possible.

## 8. Completing the DSE Self-Assessment (fixed, hot desk, laptops)

If DSE is in lengthy or repeated use in the same location eg. **fixed desks**, it would be appropriate for the user's risk assessment to be recorded on the **DSE self-assessment form** – the form is included at the back of this guidance.

Risk assessments for users of laptops and hot desks working from multiple locations can be a challenge, as it is clearly not practicable to complete a full DSE self-assessment to analyse each location where work may take place.

If **hot desks and laptops** are to be used as a variety of locations for short periods of time, the user should complete the DSE Self-Assessment as a generic assessment and be given sufficient training and information to enable them to undertake their own dynamic risk assessment. The users should take measures to control risks wherever they set up their hot desk or laptop (for example, setting up the seating and work surface to prevent awkward/poor posture).

## **9. Work Station Guidance**

Follow this simple advice when using DSE:

### **Laptops**

Laptops are not designed for intensive or prolonged use and should not be provided for such without assessing the risk (laptops are subject to the DSE Regulations if they are in prolonged use.) Additional equipment or accessories may be required to make them safe to use eg. separate mouse, keyboard, screen riser etc.

You should also consider manual handling issues and possible risk of theft.

### **Keyboard**

The keyboard should be about 4 inches (10cm) away from the edge of the desk. This should give you enough room to rest your hands and forearms when you're not typing. When using your keyboard, try not to bend your hands either up or down. Your hands, wrists and forearms should be roughly horizontal and your upper arms at 90° at the elbow. Move the keyboard to find a comfortable position that suits you.

### **Mouse**

If you use a mouse place it within easy reach, so you can use it with your wrist straight. Do not work with your mouse arm stretched forwards or sideways. Support your forearm on the desk. Do not grip the mouse tightly, rest your fingers lightly on the buttons and don't press them hard.

### **Screen**

Ideally the top of the screen should be level with your eyes. Adjust the height and angle of the screen for comfort and avoidance of glare. If there is no screen use a portable laptop riser.

### **Chair**

To avoid poor posture, users must adjust their chairs properly. This is vital when a number of users, with different needs and preferences, share a workstation.

Your spine is naturally curved and should be well supported by your chair. Check that the backrest is properly adjusted to give the support you need. Leaving a gap between the lower part of the backrest and the seat will help make sure you are sitting correctly.

Set the height of your chair. If your arms are horizontal when you use the keyboard, then the seat height is about right. Make sure you can place your feet flat on the floor.

### **Desk**

Arrange the keyboard, mouse and phone to suit you, so that arms, shoulders and wrists are under as little strain and stretch as possible. Don't crowd your knee space with personal belongings and leave room for move about.

## **10. Accessories and bags**

If having completed a DSE Workstation Self-Assessment Checklist you require accessories such as a wrist-rest, footstool, ergonomic keyboard or laptop screen riser then you should discuss these requirements with the Clerk.

Mobile and flexible workers need to consider the risk of manual handling. Generally, for people carrying a laptop the standard issue case will be sufficient.

However, if employees are required to carry additional items eg. case files, paper work and health risks are identified in terms of them carrying these items using the standard bag then the Clerk may agree to purchase a backpack/wheeled pilot bag/trolley.

## **11. Eye Care Vouchers**

If you are identified as 'DSE user' you can have the cost of a sight test met by the Council. Please note: eye test contributions can only be granted to employees who are identified as a 'user' of DSE (display screen equipment) during their DSE/VDU Risk Assessment.

If an employee requires spectacles for every day general use then the employee will not qualify for a contribution. Spectacle contributions should only be granted where the prescription form issued by the optician identifies that spectacles are required solely for VDU use.

## **12. Disabilities and medical conditions**

If following completion of the DSE Self-Assessment problems persist or the employee has a known medical condition that affects the use of DSE then the Clerk should refer the matter to the Council's Occupational Health provider.

## **13. E-learning**

DSE users should complete the **DSE and Workstation Health and Safety (eLearning course)**

## Workstation Self-Assessment Checklist

Name:		Service	
Main work location		Date	

Notes for Completion:

If **agile working** the user should **complete the DSE Self-Assessment** as a 'generic' assessment and then dynamically risk assess future workstation setups. This form must be completed in the first instance by the employee, giving relevant information, **and then forwarded to the Clerk.**

The Clerk should read through and discuss the information with the employee, including any problems that have been identified, and decide what action to take.

- The DSE risk assessment must be reviewed at least annually and when any significant changes occur that may affect the risk assessment;
- The Clerk must review any changes of the risk assessment and maintain a record to show each review.
- Ensure there is evidence that where required corrective action has been taken.

Display Screen	Yes	No
Can you easily adjust the brightness and contrast of the characters on screen?		
Can the screen be raised, tilted and swivelled?		
Is the screen image stable, free of flicker and other persistent instabilities and of unacceptable glare and reflections?		
Is the screen adjustable to a height that is comfortable for you?		
<b>Keyboard</b>		
Can you adjust the keyboard to a comfortable angle?		
Is the keyboard clean and can you easily see the symbols on the keys?		
Is there enough space to rest your hands in front of the keyboard?		
<b>Mouse</b>		
Is there a separate device suitable for the tasks you will use it for?		
Is there adequate space on the desk for the device to be close to you with sufficient support for wrist and forearms?		
Does the device work smoothly with adjustable settings for speed and accuracy?		
<b>Chair</b>		
Can you adjust the height and angle of the seat?		
Can you adjust the height and angle of the backrest?		
Is the chair comfortable?		
Is the chair in a good state of repair with properly working castors or glides?		

<b>Desk</b>		
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Is the desk surface large enough to allow you place all your equipment where you want it?		
Is the height of the desk suitable?		
<b>Footrest</b>		
If you cannot place your feet flat on the floor whilst keying, has a footrest been supplied?		
<b>Document Holder</b>		
If it would be of benefit to use a document holder, has one been supplied?		
If you have a document holder, is it adjustable to suit your needs?		
<b>Training/Information</b>		
Have you been informed about the risks associated with DSE and how to reduce the risk?		
Have you been informed about the arrangements to provide breaks and activity changes?		
Have you been informed about the arrangements for the provision of eye and eyesight tests?		
Do you know the procedures to follow if you have a problem relating to DSE?		
Have you been informed in the correct adjustment and positioning of workstation equipment?		
Have you been informed about the importance of good posture?		
Do you know how to adjust screen brightness and contrast?		
Do you know how to recognise visual or postural fatigue and the action to take?		
<b>Environment</b>		
Is lighting suitable, eg. not too bright nor too dim to work comfortably?		
Does the air feel comfortable?		
Are levels of heat comfortable?		
Are levels of noise comfortable?		
<b>Additional consideration for laptops</b>		
When using a laptop for short periods in different locations do you informally assess the risks each time and adjust your set up accordingly?		
Are you aware of the possible risks of theft when carrying your laptop?		
<b>Manual Handling</b>		
To reduce the risks from manual handling do you: Only carry equipment or papers if they are needed. Store documents electronically where possible? Use a bag / backpack / wheeled trolley / pilot case?		

If you would like more information about this Checklist, or if you have any specific concerns about your health and safety, please contact the Clerk