
ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL POLICY - DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 specify minimum requirements for work with display screen equipment (DSE). In addition, the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999, The Provisions and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998, the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 also stipulate general duties which apply. In order to comply with the many statutory obligations and associated codes of practice and guidance, the Isle of Wight Council has formally adopted this policy.

1. ARRANGEMENTS FOR SECURING THE HEALTH & SAFETY OF DSE USERS

The Isle of Wight Council will endeavour, so far as is reasonably practicable, to secure the health and safety of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) users. To achieve this, the following measures will be adopted:

- (a) Every manager will be responsible for identifying users in accordance with the DSE guidance and for ensuring that an assessment of the workstations within their area of responsibility is undertaken, taking into account the display screen equipment, the furniture, the working environment and the operator/user. This assessment must be reviewed if significant changes are made to the workstation or work tasks.
- (b) A competent, trained assessor must complete assessment forms (where appropriate), who will be the manager or person to whom that task has been assigned. The assessor will be responsible for maintaining up to date workstation records, for issuing individual user checklists and for the secure storage and retrieval of all DSE documents.
- (c) Where, as a result of the assessment risks are identified, necessary measures must be taken by managers to remedy the problems identified.
- (d) Work activities must be planned so as to incorporate changes of task within the working day in order to prevent excessive periods of display screen equipment use and to provide rest periods before the onset of fatigue where natural breaks do not occur.
- (e) Software will be reviewed and selected to ensure that it is suitable for the task and not unnecessarily complicated. Following appropriate training, users should be able to use the system without it creating stress and impeding efficiency.
- (f) Arrangements must be made at the request of an employee, who has been identified as a DSE user for an appropriate eye/eyesight test. If corrective appliances are required for DSE work the Isle of Wight Council will meet the basic cost. For staff employed through an employment agency, it is the responsibility of the agency to arrange and meet the cost of eye/eyesight tests.
- (g) In accordance with the opticians report, to provide re-examination within the time scale subject to the refusal of the display screen equipment user, in writing, not to do so.
- (h) To provide employees, temporary workers and other DSE users with details of workstation assessments and measures to be taken to avoid risk.
- (i) In the case of adverse health or medical conditions being identified for managers to report details to the Health, Safety & Welfare Assistance Section and Human Resources in order that health surveillance measures can be affected. Users should be redeployed until such time as a medical practitioner grants permission for them to continue using display screen equipment or it becomes necessary to review the case.

- (j) Consult trade union safety Representatives about risk assessment measures and action taken. Inform them of work changes and assist them by providing relevant information about training, health and safety measures and work planning which may affect their members.

2. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

Where an employee raises a matter relating to health and safety in the use of display screen equipment, managers will:

- (a) Take steps to investigate the circumstances and where necessary seek advice from their Health and Safety Liaison officer or the Health and Safety Section.
- (b) Action any corrective measures within a reasonable timescale informing the relevant employees of steps taken. Where it is necessary to spread costs, risks should be prioritised and an action plan formulated and recorded.

3. EMPLOYEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

- (a) An employee is responsible for informing his or her immediate manager of any health problems arising from DSE use, as soon as they become aware of such a problem.
- (b) All employees must comply with any advice, procedures or systems introduced in order to reduce or eliminate the health problem or risks identified in the assessment.
- (c) All DSE users will be required to co-operate with DSE workstation assessments. This will include those persons authorised to work from home regardless of whether or not the workstation is provided in whole or part by the Isle of Wight Council.

4. INFORMATION AND TRAINING

The Isle of Wight Council in compliance with the Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 and the Authority's Health and Safety Training Policy will:

- (a) Provide information, instruction and training, as considered necessary, to ensure the health and safety of persons engaged in the use of DSE.
- (b) Ensure that managers and other persons assigned the task of carrying out workstation assessments have received appropriate training.
- (c) Newly appointed staff should receive appropriate training prior to their starting work on DSE. Where this is not practicable this training should be provided as soon as possible after commencing employment.

5. EQUIPMENT STANDARDS

- (a) All furniture and display screen equipment must meet the minimum standards laid down in the Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 and Provision and Use Work Equipment Regulations 1998.
- (b) Disposal of IT equipment and furniture must be in accordance with Council Policy.
- (c) Preventative maintenance checks and electrical testing of portable equipment should be carried out at regular intervals and in accordance with Section 2.09.

The ergonomic approach to workstation and job design incorporated into this policy coupled with information and training will ensure compliance with legislation and reduce the many potential risks associated with such work.

DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE) - GUIDANCE

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 require employers to take steps to protect the health of workers by reducing the risks associated with display screen equipment. Some of the areas where they are required to take action in order to meet the requirements of the regulations include:

1. **Identifying those employees and workstations which are covered by the regulations**

Guidance is included on page 7 of this policy that will enable managers to identify staff who are covered by the regulations; these members of staff are referred to as DSE users.

2. **Training DSE Users and staff who are to carry out workstation assessments**

The regulations require employers to train users in detecting hazard and risk and to provide information on health problems associated with the use of DSE, the steps they can take to reduce the risk of health problems occurring and the benefits that the regulations confer on them.

In order to enable staff to undertake workstation assessments training will also be required. Both DSE user and assessors courses are facilitated by the Learning Centre run by Safety Matters. It is recommended that assessors obtain a copy of the HSE document "The Law on VDUs-An Easy Guide (HSG 90)".

3. **Assessing Workstations and Reducing Risks**

The regulations require employers to carry out assessments of DSE work stations to identify hazards and introduce remedial action as appropriate. There is a standard laid down in the regulations, which all workstations should meet. A copy of the standard form to be used by assessors is available via the Health, Safety and Welfare Assistance web page.

In establishments where there are several workstations it is recommended that DSE workstation assessors are appointed and trained to carry out audits. Health and Safety staff will provide back up support and carry out audits for you, should you have 2 or less workstations - subject to users having attended a training course.

In order to carry out effective assessments the views of the workstation user must be taken into consideration, to this end before any assessment is undertaken the user should complete a self-assessment checklist, which should be forwarded to the workstation assessor.

Additional supplies of self-assessment checklists and workstation assessment checklists can be obtained from the intranet or your Health and Safety Liaison Officer.

4. **Planning Changes of Activity of Breaks for Users**

Managers are required to monitor staff work patterns to ensure DSE users do not spend long spells working with DSE as this is known to cause fatigue and upper limb problems. Where possible DSE work should be organised to include spells of other work such as filing, photocopying otherwise plan work for users to take breaks away from the display screen.

5. Providing Eye and Eyesight Testing & Any Necessary Correction for DSE work

Those members of staff who have been identified as DSE “users” are entitled on request, to an eye and eyesight test which the council must pay. If the test shows that they need special corrective appliances for DSE work the council will pay for the cost of the lenses and a basic frame (i.e. of a type and quality adequate for its function) to the maximum detailed on the DSE form. If after subsequent eye tests a change in lens is required, where practical, users should utilise existing frames. If a user chooses spectacles to correct eye or vision defects for purposes which include display screen work but go wider than that, the Council will only contribute to the cost attributable to the display screen work involved. Examples of this are more expensive frames or optional lenses and coatings.

a) Special corrective appliances

“Special” corrective appliances (normally spectacles or contact lenses) provided to meet the requirements of the Regulations will be those appliances prescribed to correct vision defects at the viewing distances or distances used specifically for the display screen work concerned.

b) Normal Corrective appliances

“Normal” corrective appliances are spectacles prescribed for any other purpose and are not subject to assistance under this scheme. The cost of these is to be borne by the user.

It should be noted that experience has shown that in most working populations only a minority (usually less than 10%) will need special corrective appliances for display screen work. Those who need special corrective appliances may include users who already wear spectacles or contact lenses

Eye tests

Eye tests will be provided at regular intervals for users after the first test. The council will be guided by the clinical judgement of the optometrist on the frequency of repeat testing. The frequency needed for repeat testing will vary between individuals, according to factors such as age.

The council is not responsible for any correction for vision defects or examination of eye complaints which are not related to display screen work. These are the responsibility of the individual concerned. For users experiencing visual difficulties which may reasonably be related to display screen work the council will provide an eye sight test.

Where an eye test by an optometrist identifies that the user is suffering from eye injury or disease, the user will be referred to their medical practitioner for further examination. This exam would be free of charge under National Health Service guidelines.

Requesting an eye sight test

A copy of the form 2.08c will be issued to the user requesting eye and eye sight testing. Managers must ensure that the “DSE user” is fully aware of the cash limit identified on the form for the cost of special corrective appliances (i.e. of a type and quality adequate for its function of DSE) for which they are authorised to place an order and explain the remaining procedure as detailed in the VDU eye examination flowchart.

6. Making sure that workstations comply with the Schedule to the Regulations

Included in the Regulations is a schedule setting out a number of ergonomic features that should be present at all workstations. The Schedule covers broad design factors for furniture, the computer hardware, software and accessories and the workstation environment. It applies to both new and second-hand equipment.

7. Inform DSE users about what has been done

Employers are required to give DSE users information relating to:

- (a) The Health and Safety relating to their workstations.
- (b) Risk assessments and steps taken to reduce risk.
- (c) Breaks and changes in activity.
- (d) Eye and eyesight tests.
- (e) The users obligation is to make full and proper use of special corrective appliances.

8. Employees working from home

The use of VDUs is covered by the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002. Employers have a duty to make sure that the display screen equipment used by home workers is safe and does not affect the user's health.

Where employees are required to work at home, management must ensure that the requirements of the DSE Regulations in terms of provision of equipment and suitable set-up are implemented. An assessment should be carried out in the home setting; this should be carried out by the user using the self-assessment checklist. Exceptionally it might be necessary for a home visit by a DSE Assessor.

In most cases, staff are not required to work at home but may choose to take work home. Where home-working is at the discretion of the employee, the Isle of Wight Council is not required to ensure the workstation is compliant with the DSE regulations; but it is recommended that employees are advised to ensure that their set-up is as ergonomic as possible, e.g. suitable work surface, adjustable chair, good positioning of keyboard and pointing device and reasonable working environment.

When working with VDUs it is important for home workers to adjust their work station to a comfortable position and take breaks from work. This will help prevent undue tiredness. Remembering to stretch and change position regularly can help to reduce tiredness and prevent pains in the hands, wrists, arms, neck, shoulders or back. VDUs need to be placed in a position where lighting will not cause reflections or glare on the screen.

It is also important for home workers to view the screen comfortably. They may need different spectacles for this. Home workers should consult their GP or an optician if in doubt.

9. Use of portable equipment (Lap top computers)

This equipment is subject to the DSE Regulations if it is in prolonged use. The problems associated with DSE work can be exacerbated when portable equipment is involved because it generally has a smaller-than-normal keyboard and/or lack of keyboard/screen separation, which can make it difficult for a comfortable working posture to be achieved. The nature of the equipment allows it to be used in a wide range of environments, not all of which are conducive to a good working posture. Extensive use of portable IT equipment has been associated with the development of work related upper limb disorders mentioned in the previous section, e.g. neck/shoulder/back stiffness; as well as wrist and arm problems related to the use of fixed and/or relatively small keyboards, and headaches arising from looking at low, fixed screens.

It is not necessary to assess the user of such equipment in every location, but to concentrate mainly on the locations where portable equipment is used for prolonged periods. Where portable IT equipment is set up for prolonged use, The Council should be prepared to provide equipment such as docking stations, separate keyboards, separate pointing devices and/or separate monitors if deemed necessary.

Users must be provided with guidance regarding suitable locations for the equipment and must avoid prolonged periods of use when good posture is difficult, e.g. in a vehicle. The importance of using docking stations and/or external equipment must be highlighted as well as the need to break up the DSE work with other activities.

Laptop use advice:

- Use a separate keyboard and mouse so that the laptop can be put on a stand and the screen opened at eye level.
- Use a laptop on a stable base where there is support for arms, and not on the lap.
- Take regular breaks. As movement decreases the amount of stress placed on muscles and joints.
- Adopt a good sitting posture with lower back support, and ensure that other desk equipment is within reach.
- Get into good habits before the aching starts. Neck, shoulder and back problems gradually build up over time.

Appendix 3 (Work with portable DSE) of the DSE Regulations gives practical advice when selecting portable computers. The key points are:

- Select as large and clear a screen as is practicable.
- Favour low-weight equipment.
- Select a tilt-adjustable keyboard.
- Choose detachable or height adjustable screens, or ascertain the availability of a docking station prior to use.
- Give preference to models that are compatible with docking stations and/or have the facility to attach a separate mouse and keyboard.
- Opt for models that have available wrist pad space.

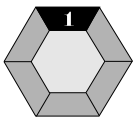
It should also be noted that beside the DSE risks, other hazards associated specifically with portable equipment include personal safety (robbery/violence) and manual handling issues, which can arise from regularly carrying heavy equipment over long distances. In order to reduce the associated risks, consider implementing the following measures:

- Design tasks in such a way that lone users are not expected to carry or use portable equipment in circumstances where theft is likely.
- Advise users to take sensible precautions such as not carrying portables in luggage with a computer manufacturer's branding; not leaving or using a portable in a parked car; and taking extra care in public places, or in other situations (or at times) where the risk of theft may be greater.
- Do not carry equipment or papers unless they are really likely to be needed.
- Consider using a backpack to cut down strain on arms and distribute loads evenly across the body (or use wheeled luggage).
- Remember you may be able to avoid carrying heavy papers by sending them in advance, by post or e-mail, to your destination, or by storing them electronically on the portable or on a disk.

Identifying DSE Users

Guidance Notes

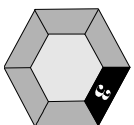
If most or all of the following apply to a member of staff they should be designated as a DSE User under the regulations;



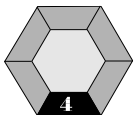
The individual depends on the use of DSE to do their job.



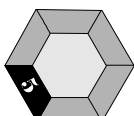
The individual has no discretion as to use or non-use of DSE.



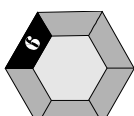
The individual normally uses DSE for continuous spells of an hour or more at a time.



The individual uses DSE in the above way more or less daily.



Fast transfer of information between user and screen is important.



High levels of attention and concentration are required of the user, and mistakes may prove critical.

