

Display Screen Equipment

This information sheet is intended to provide everyone with an overview of the actions needed to help ensure Display Screen Equipment (DSE) use is, so far as reasonably practicable, safe. DSE means any alphanumeric or graphic display screen, commonly referred to as VDU, monitor, word processor etc.

The area around a DSE device is often referred to as the workstation and it is the safety of the whole workstation that is important when addressing any safety responsibilities. The workstation means an assembly comprising:



- DSE, with or without a keyboard, software or input device
- optional accessories
- disk drives, telephone, modem, printer, work holder
- work desk, work chair, work surface
- the immediate work environment.

It is important to define the range of people that are covered by the regulations and to help with this the following definitions are useful.

User - means an employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of his / her normal work.

Regular User - An employee whose work activity involves the continuous operation of display screen equipment on a daily basis for more than an hour but who throughout the normal 8 hour working day regularly performs other tasks.

Occasional User - An employee whose work activity involves the occasional operation of display screen equipment for less than one hour possibly on a daily basis but whose main activity is not the operation of display screen equipment.

Persons considered not to be at work would generally fall outwith the scope of the regulations however good practice should be applied as much as possible to their activities and as much information/instruction as possible made available to them (e.g. pupils or library users etc.).

Safe Use

Increased use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) has been associated with a range of symptoms linked to workstation set-up and posture. This information sheet is designed to provide you with advice and information to avoid potentially adverse health effects such as musculoskeletal disorders and fatigue.

Sitting

- ❖ When you are sitting, adjust your backrest so that its curve supports your lower back. Sit upright or recline slightly.
- ❖ As a general guide your eyes should be the same height as the top of your monitor. Think about moving your base unit if the screen is too high, or too low for you.
- ❖ Avoid leaning to one side when copying from written work. If you regularly do copy typing, a document holder may be appropriate.
- ❖ If the height of your armrests means you can't get close enough to the desk, think about removing them.
- ❖ If you can't put your feet flat on the floor after adjusting your chair to the right height you probably need a footrest.

Hands, Arms and Shoulders

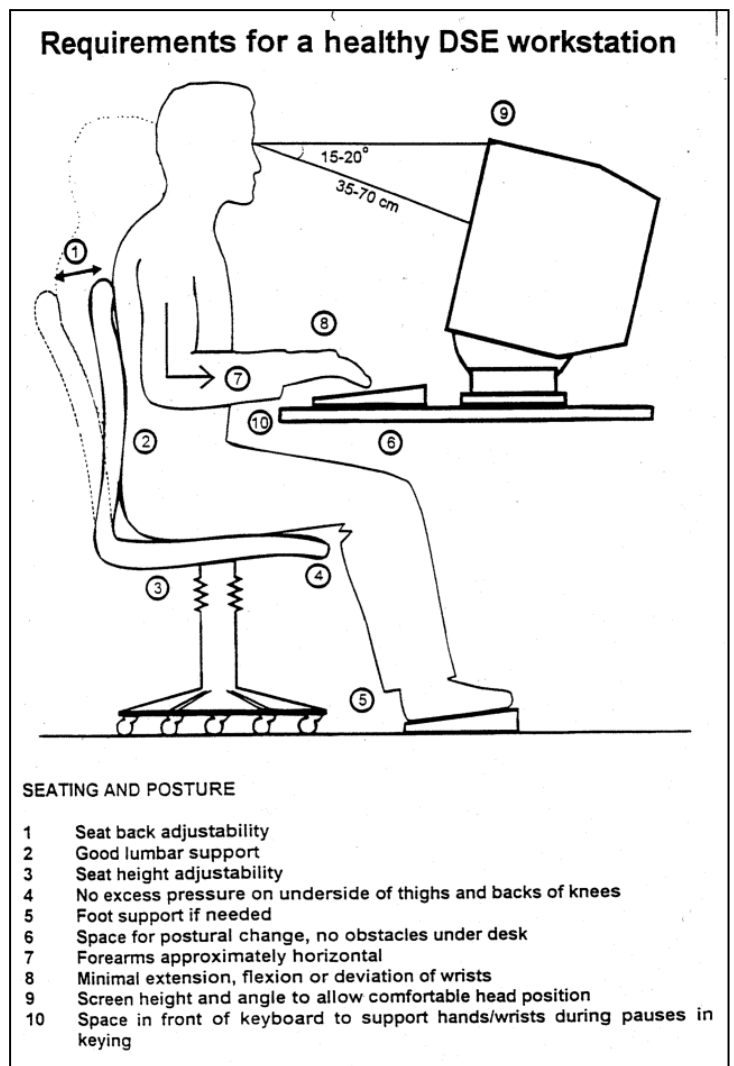
- ❖ Ensure that your forearms are roughly horizontal and elbows close to your body. Avoid typing with your wrists up or down, e.g. resting them on the desk when typing.
- ❖ Position the mouse close to the keyboard so that you don't have to stretch your arm out to reach it.
- ❖ Flattening a tilted keyboard can straighten your wrists.
- ❖ Use the keyboard shortcuts instead of the mouse (look at Microsoft Help file, select Contents and Index then search for **shortcut keys**).

General Information

- ❖ Try to organise your day to avoid long uninterrupted periods of DSE use and ensure you move around. Writing and using the telephone provide natural breaks.
- ❖ If you have long uninterrupted periods of DSE use ensure you take a 1 – 2 minute break to do other work for every 15 – 20 minutes of keyboard work.

YOUR HEALTH

Display Screen Equipment has been blamed, often incorrectly, for a wide range of health problems. Only a small percentage of "Users" actually suffer problems as a result of their work. Problems are generally caused by the way DSE is used, or the way a workstation has been set up, rather than the equipment itself.



Are aches and pains in arms, hands and shoulders caused by using visual display units?

Some people may experience temporary discomfort in their upper body, especially after long periods of uninterrupted display screen work. In a very few cases aches and pains may become more persistent. Good workstation layout and good working practices can prevent most problems of this kind.

What can be done to combat tiredness, pain and headaches?

Repetitive head and trunk movement is a major cause of pain. If you regularly copy type use a document holder to reduce the repetitive head movement that causes pain in the neck and shoulders. Many things can be put right once the cause has been found. This might include poor screen image, poor posture, screen glare, a change in the pace of work or a combination of these.

Common Problems	Common Solutions
Tingling, pain or numbness in fingers of thumbs?	Are you working with your wrists bent? You might be sitting too high or too low.
Stiff or aching neck	Check the height of your monitor. Your eyes should be roughly level with the top of the casing.
Pain, swelling, tenderness and redness of hand, wrist and or forearm	Are you carrying out repetitive tasks for long, uninterrupted periods? Take short and frequent breaks form repetitive tasks to do different work.

Are pregnant women at risk from display screens?

Although this is a frequently expressed fear, there is no risk of miscarriage or foetal damage as the radiation levels from display screens are so small as to be totally harmless. However, since anxiety can represent a danger in itself, pregnant women should discuss their concerns with their manager in the first instance.

Entitlement to Eye Tests

If you are identified as a DSE 'User' then you are entitled to an eye test and, where prescribed, spectacles. North Lanarkshire Council operates a vision screening programme via local opticians. Your team manager will be able to give you access to the scheme.

DSE 'User' Training

For further details of the online training courses available for DSE 'Users' check out the health and safety pages of Connect.

Further Information and Reporting

If you experience any ill-health symptoms (aches, pains) please report them to your team manager. Persistent symptoms should be recorded on an Internal Incident Report Form (HSF1).

Other documents available:

AS10 – Display Screen Equipment