

Reference Number: IMS-10-10-CAV UHB 088	Date of Next Review: 10/03/2029 Previous UHB Reference Number: 261
Version Number: 4	
Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and Eye Test Procedure	
Introduction and Aim The widespread use of computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones introduces several health and safety considerations. Key risks associated with Display Screen Equipment (DSE) include musculoskeletal disorders (e.g. back or neck pain and Repetitive Sprain Injury), visual fatigue, and mental stress. These issues are preventable when good ergonomic practices are followed. There is no evidence that visual display units pose hidden health risks, including for pregnant users. While overall risk from DSE use is low, it can increase if safe working practices are not maintained. The Display Screen Equipment Regulations, enforced by the Health and Safety Executive, place clear duties on employers. The 2002 update strengthened the requirement to provide eyesight tests on request. Cardiff and Vale University Health Board does not provide internal eye screening, as it is unnecessary and resource intensive. Staff should instead obtain their eyesight test from their own optician, ensuring consistency and avoiding confusion caused by differing internal processes.	
Objectives To take proactive measures to minimise health risks for staff who use display screen equipment, and to ensure full compliance with the Health Board’s legal duties under the Display Screen Equipment Regulations (2002).	
Scope This procedure applies to all staff in all locations, including those with honorary contracts.	
Equality and Health Impact Assessment	An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed. This is because the procedure has been written to support implementation of the Health and Safety Policy. The Equality Impact Assessment completed for the Policy found there to be no impact.
Documents to read alongside this Procedure	IMS-01-01-CAV Health and Safety Policy (UHB021) IMS-12-01-CAV Manual Handling Policy (UHB036) IMS-07-02-CAV Risk Assessment Procedure – Health & Safety (UHB467) The Display Screen Equipment Regulations 2002
Approved by	Operational Health and Safety Group
Accountable Executive or Clinical Board Director	Executive Director of People and Culture
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Disclaimer If the review date of this document has passed, please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by contacting the document author or the Governance Directorate	

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Summary of reviews/amendments			
Version Number	Date of Review	Date Published	Summary of Amendments
1	01/12/11	16/12/2011	Document revised Supersedes previous Trust document reference no: 266
2	19/08/15	02/10/2015	Document revised – minor amendments made
3	26/07/19		Document reviewed and updated – minor amendments made to reflect small procedural changes. Flow chart added.
4	10/03/2026	17/03/2026	Document reviewed and updates – minor amendments made

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1. Definitions

Display Screen Equipment

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) refers to any device with an alphanumeric or graphic display, regardless of the technology used. This includes cathode ray tube monitors, liquid crystal and plasma screens, touchscreens, flat-panel displays, and other emerging technologies. It also covers non-electronic display systems such as microfiche.

The regulations apply to anyone who habitually uses DSE as a significant part of their normal work. According to the guidance, an individual is considered a DSE “user” if most or all the following criteria apply:

1.2 Display Screen User

- a) The employee uses display screen equipment as part of their daily work.
- b) The employee typically works at a display screen for continuous periods of one hour or more.
- c) The employee relies on display screen equipment to carry out their job duties.
- d) The work requires a high level of concentration, where errors in input could have significant consequences.

Portable Laptops/Notebooks

Portable laptops and notebooks are exempt from the regulations when they are not used for prolonged periods. These devices should not be used for more than one continuous hour in a day. However, if portable equipment is used habitually by a DSE “user” as a significant part of their normal work, it should be treated as being fully covered by the regulations.

Laptop and notebook users may face additional risks due to factors such as limited working space, unsuitable seating or desk arrangements, and poor lighting. These risks can be reduced through appropriate risk assessments and the use of proper training and ergonomic techniques.

Further guidance is available in Appendix 1. Regular users of portable devices should be encouraged to use office-based display screen equipment or a laptop stand with an appropriate ergonomic setup while at work.

Working at Home

The regulations also apply to workers who:

- Work at home on a permanent or long-term basis
- routinely split their time between their workplace and home (sometimes called hybrid working)

2. Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities	
Chief Executive	Ultimate responsibility for legal compliance rests with the Chief Executive, while day-to-day implementation of the Procedure is delegated to the Executive Director of People and Culture.
Executive Directors	The Executive Director of People and Culture is responsible for overseeing health and safety management across the UHB, including arrangements for DSE and the provision of eye tests where required.

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Directorate / locality managers	Will, so far as is reasonably practicable, reduce risks associated with display screen equipment by complying with this procedure and all relevant legislation. Will ensure managers and supervisors assess workstation risks, record significant findings, share these with DSE users, and analyse, action, and implement any recommendations arising from the risk assessment process.
Managers and staff with supervisory responsibility	- Identify employees who meet the criteria for DSE “habitual users” and complete workstation risk assessments with them, recording and sharing all significant findings. - Notify Directorate Managers/Heads of Department of any significant risks identified and make appropriate recommendations. - Ensure suitable equipment, workstation furniture, and working environments are provided, and organise work patterns so users can take appropriate breaks from DSE use. - Refer users to Occupational Health, using the standard referral form, if they report DSE-related symptoms such as musculoskeletal disorders, visual fatigue, eye strain, headaches, or stress. - Provide users with adequate training and information on DSE risks, reporting procedures, and risk-control measures. - Seek specialist advice from Health and Safety, Occupational Health, or Occupational Health Physiotherapy where necessary. - Authorise and facilitate payment arrangements for eye tests when requested by a user.
Employees classified as ‘Users’	- Complete the DSE e-learning training and a DSE risk assessment on appointment or when significant changes occur. - Follow all agreed procedures and instructions relating to safe DSE use. - Inform their manager or supervisor of any work-related changes or health issues that may increase the risk of injury, ill health, or affect their ability to undertake DSE tasks.
Health & Safety Team	Provide users and managers with adequate training and information on: - the risks associated with display screen equipment, - how to report risks and ill health, - the measures required to control those risks. Provide advice on DSE-related risk assessments and ensure assessment forms are available. Monitor compliance with this procedure.
Occupational Health Department	Provide an occupational health opinion when informed that a user is experiencing DSE-related symptoms such as: - musculoskeletal disorders (e.g., arm, neck, or back pain), - visual fatigue or temporary eye strain, - headaches, - stress. Advise on the design and suitability of DSE workstations in response to health-related concerns, in collaboration with Occupational Health Physiotherapy.
Information Technology Department	Ensure that all new and replacement DSE hardware and software meet regulatory requirements.

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3 PROCEDURE

This procedure incorporates the process to be followed in ensuring the above and clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities in relation to fulfilling these requirements.

The Health Board will comply with the regulations and seek to protect the health and safety of DSE users.

The Health Board will adhere to the DSE Regulations in accordance with the following requirements.

3.1 Risk Assessment

A risk assessment must be completed for all DSE, associated workstations, and working environments. Significant findings must be recorded and made available to employees who may need to review them. Managers are responsible for carrying out the assessment, with users expected to assist in the process.

Risk assessments should be reviewed and repeated whenever significant changes occur, including:

- changes to software or hardware,
- changes to workstation furniture,
- changes to task requirements,
- relocation of the workstation,
- significant modifications to lighting,
- any other factors that invalidate the existing assessment.

They should also be reviewed routinely every 24 months.

A formal risk assessment may not be required in the following situations:

- when the user is at the workstation only for a short period.
- when a previous risk assessment exists and the equipment is being used only as a temporary replacement.

The risk assessment will also determine who meets the criteria for being a DSE user.

Where risks are identified, action must be taken to eliminate or minimise them. This may include simple adjustments such as repositioning the workstation or furniture, providing additional equipment (e.g. footrests), adjusting screen height or position, using blinds, or modifying lighting. If these measures do not resolve the issue, further advice should be sought from Occupational Health Physiotherapy or the Health and Safety team.

3.2 Nature and Organisation of Work

Jobs should, where possible, be designed to include tasks that give staff relief from prolonged screen-based work and, where practical, take them away from the workstation.

Staff should take short, frequent breaks from DSE work – for example, five minutes every hour.

3.3 Eyesight Tests

Line Managers will authorise the required documentation and ensure that DSE users are entitled to an appropriate eyesight test, as defined in the Opticians Act, at intervals recommended by the employee's optometrist or doctor.

The purpose of the eyesight test is to determine whether the user has any vision defect requiring correction for display screen work or the working environment. The employee's optometrist will confirm whether corrective spectacles are needed specifically for DSE use and when re-examination is required.

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The Health Board will cover the cost of eyesight tests at the current NHS rate (£24.13) and specialist corrective spectacles (£55.00). Employees must submit a receipt to their Line Manager for reimbursement.

‘Special’ corrective appliances required specifically for DSE work will be funded by the Health Board, subject to written confirmation from the optometrist. Where such appliances are prescribed, the Health Board will cover the cost of a basic pair of spectacles suitable for DSE use. If the employee chooses a more expensive option, the Health Board will either:

- provide a basic appliance, or
- contribute the equivalent value of a basic NHS appliance.

Anti-glare screens do not constitute special corrective appliances.

4.0 TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Managers must ensure that all operators understand the nature of their work, are aware of potential hazards, and know the measures required to reduce risks to their health.

Statutory DSE training for defined users will be delivered through the ESR e-learning package and associated risk assessment documentation

The Health Board has a legal duty to ensure suitable and sufficient analysis of workstations used by designated DSE users.

A personal DSE risk assessment is available (Appendix 3), however all DSE users are advised to complete the training before undertaking the assessment.

5.0 MONITORING AND MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Senior Managers, supported by Health and Safety Representatives, will monitor compliance with this procedure annually. An assessment will also be undertaken to establish a current baseline.

The effectiveness of the procedure will be measured through:

- reductions in DSE-related referrals to Occupational Health,
- adequate completion of risk assessments and implementation of risk-reduction measures,
- increased numbers of staff trained to the required standard.

DSE arrangements in each area will also be reviewed as part of the Health Board’s Joint Health and Safety Workplace Inspection Schedule.

The Operational Health and Safety Group will monitor performance outcomes in line with the Health Board’s Health and Safety Policy, reviewing them regularly. It is essential that DSE management arrangements are discussed at Clinical/Service Board Health and Safety Meetings.

6.0 REVIEWING THE PROCEDURE

This Procedure shall be subject to review every 3 years or within the three-year period if there are significant changes in legislation and/or an incident occurs that requires improvement in practices.

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Appendix 1 – Defining a User

	Column 1	Column 2
Do you normally use DSE for continuous spells of an hour or more at a time?	Yes	No
Do you depend on the use of DSE to do your job because alternative means are not readily available for achieving the same results?	Yes	No
Do you have discretion on whether to use DSE or not?	No	Yes
Does the use of the DSE need significant training or skills to do the job?	Yes	No
Is fast transfer of information between you and screen an important requirement of the job?	Yes	No
Are you required to exhibit high levels of attention and concentration?	Yes	No

How long in an average working day do you spend operating DSE?	Hours
Comments/remarks:	

If all 5 boxes in column 1 have been ticked, you are a user (complete DSE e-learning package and risk assessment).

If 3 or 4 boxes in column 1 have been ticked, you are probably a user (complete DSE e-learning package and risk assessment)

If less than 3 boxes in column 1 have been ticked, you are probably not a user

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Appendix 2

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and Eye Test Guidance for Users

The following guidance explains the requirements relating to the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Procedure and the Eye Test provisions available to staff.

Definition of a DSE User

“User” means an employee who habitually uses DSE as a significant part of their normal work.

Procedure

1. Identifying DSE Users

To determine whether an employee is classified as a DSE User, Appendix 1 of the DSE Procedure must be completed.

2. Training and Risk Assessment

On starting employment, or following any significant change to the workstation, defined users and probable users must:

- Complete the DSE e-learning training package, and
- Complete a DSE Risk Assessment form

If an employee is *not* defined as a user, the completed forms must be retained by the line manager and kept in the employee's personal file.

3. Managing Identified Risks

- After completing the training and risk assessment, employees must raise any outstanding issues with their line manager.
- The line manager is responsible for implementing appropriate control measures to reduce any identified risks.
- If an employee reports any signs of ill health related to DSE use, the line manager should seek guidance from Occupational Health.
- Any high-risk issues must also be escalated to the relevant Health & Safety Advisor for further review or discussion at safety meetings.

4. Eye Tests for DSE Users

- Defined DSE Users are entitled to claim £24.13 towards the cost of an eye test.
- A valid receipt from the optician is required, and reimbursement must be authorised by the departmental budget holder.

5. “Special” Corrective Appliances

- Special corrective appliances are usually spectacles prescribed specifically for the viewing distance required for DSE tasks.
- Only a small proportion of staff (typically less than 10%) require these specialist spectacles.
- The optician must state on the receipt that the spectacles are for DSE use only.
- The Health Board will currently contribute £55 towards the cost of specialist corrective spectacles.

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Appendix 3 - Display Screen Equipment (DSE) - Risk Assessment Form

Hazard: Anything with the potential to cause harm or damage.

Risk: The likelihood that harm will occur, combined with how severe the consequences could be

Purpose of the DSE Assessment: This form is used to assess the potential risks associated with DSE work. The aim of risk management is to reduce the likelihood of incidents that could result in significant harm or damage to staff, students or the Health Board.

While incidents cannot be predicted with absolute certainty, effective risk assessment, appropriate control measures, and training help minimise the risk of injury or ill health.

Completing and storing the DSE form:

The form guides the DSE User through a structured assessment and all sections must be completed. Completed forms must be:

- Kept in the Directorate Health and Safety file, and
- A copy retained at the workstation location.
- The assessment must always be accessible.
- Each DSE User must have their own individual assessment.

Before completing the form, answer the questions in Table 1. Use the guidance provided beneath the table to determine whether you are a DSE user.

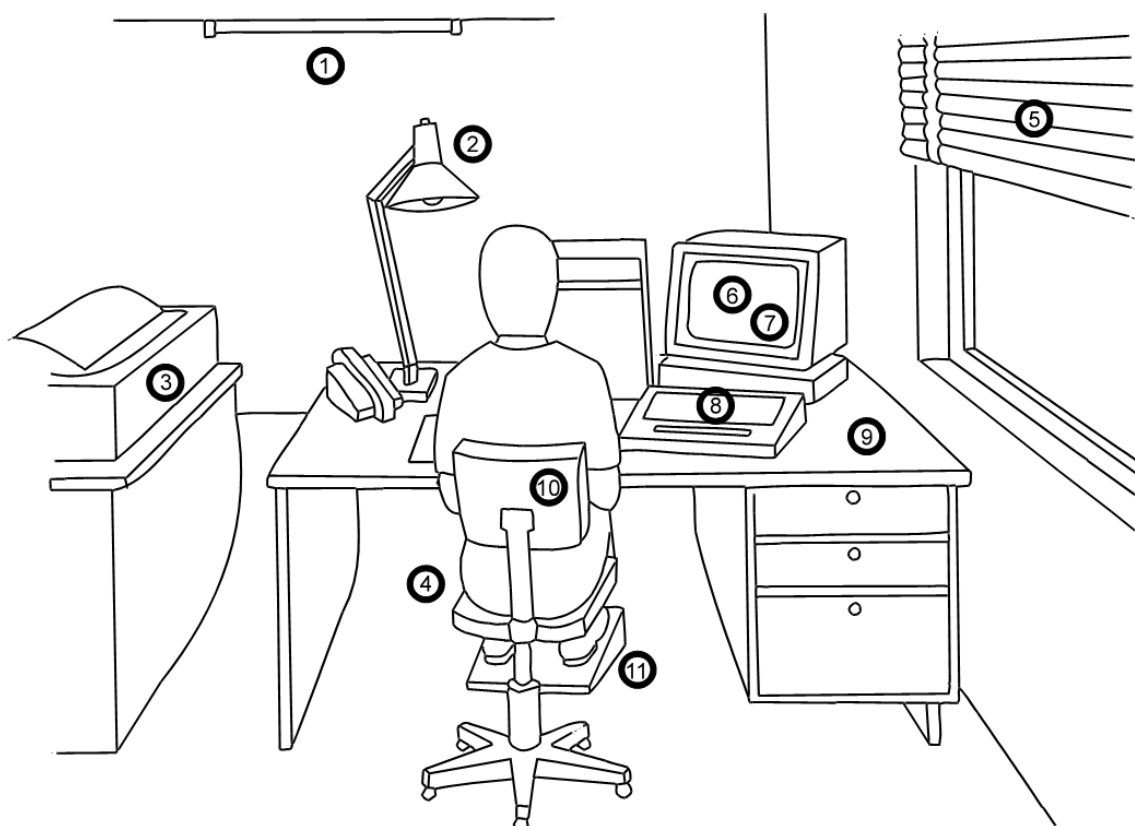
- If you are not a user, only complete the administration details section of the form.
- If you are a user, you must complete all sections of the form.

Risk Factors (Refer to Figures 1 and 2):

1. *Display screen image - check that the screen image is clear and easy to view.*
2. *Keyboard comfort - your hands and wrists should remain in a neutral position without bending or overstretching. The keyboard should be separate from the screen.*
3. *Workstation and furniture fit - ensure you can work comfortably without repeated or awkward stretching. You should be able to rearrange equipment or documents to avoid discomfort and reduce glare. The chair must be comfortable, fully adjustable, and safe on the floor surface.*
4. *Workstation environment - you should have enough space to move and adjust position. Lighting must be suitable, not too bright or too dim. If noise or heat from equipment is a problem, consider distance, sound-proofing or improved ventilation.*
5. *The software should be easy to use and appropriate for the task. Ensure you have received adequate training.*

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FIGURE 1 – Workstation layout – points to look for:

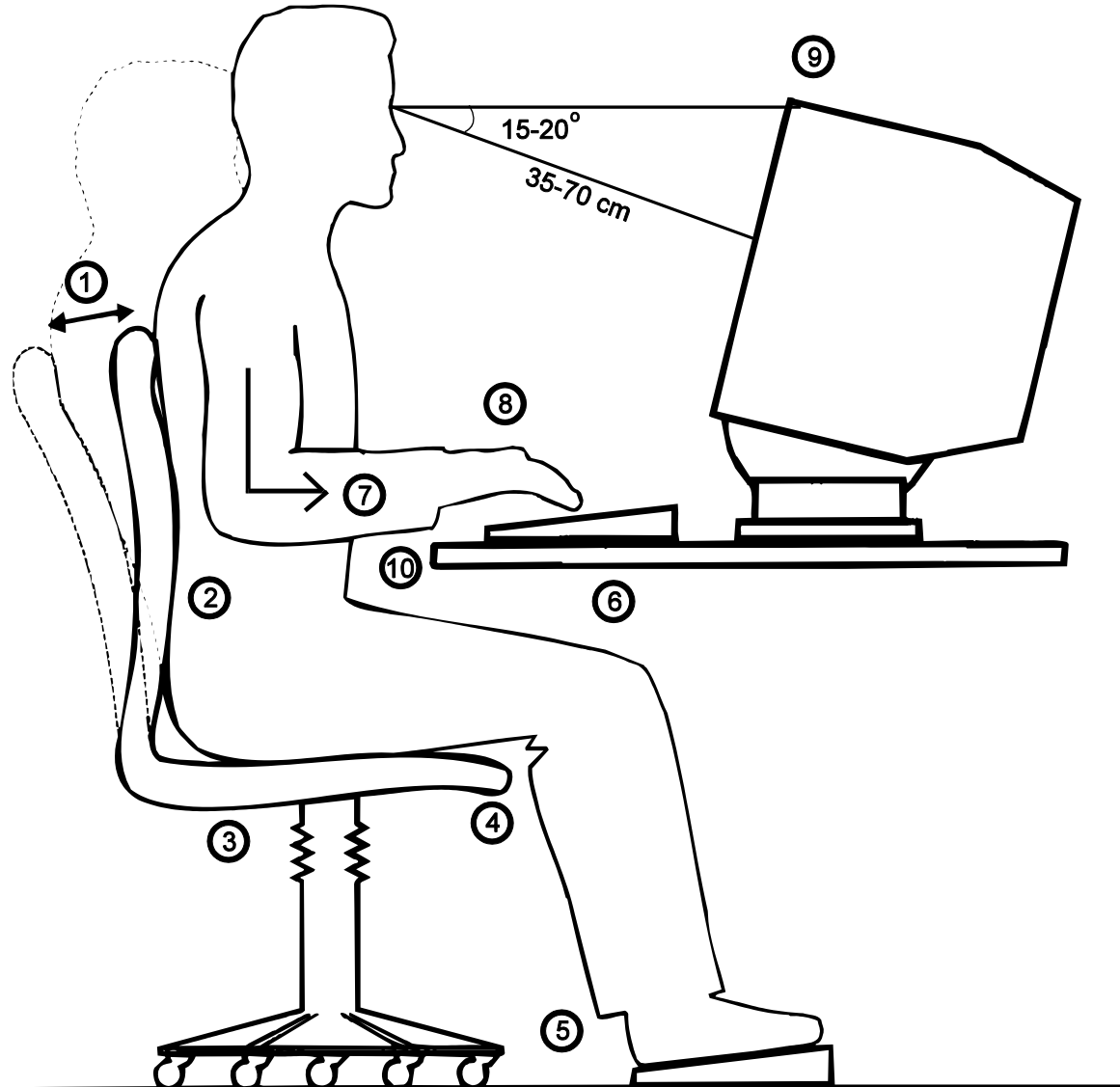


1. Adequate lighting
2. Adequate contrast, no glare or distracting reflections
3. Distracting noise minimised
4. Leg room and clearances to allow postural changes
5. Window covering
6. Software: appropriate to task, adapted to user, provides feedback on system status, no undisclosed monitoring
7. Screen: stable image, adjustable, readable, glare/reflection free
8. Keyboard: usable, adjustable, detachable, legible
9. Work Surface: allow flexible arrangements, spacious, glare free
10. Work chair: adjustable
11. Footrest

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FIGURE 2 - Seating and posture

Note particularly the position of the arms and hands, footrest and the movement of the back of the chair. This is the optimum position and should reduce the risk of injury.



1. Seat back adjustability
2. Good lumbar support
3. Seat height adjustability
4. No excess pressure on underside of thighs and backs of knees
5. Foot support if needed
6. Space for postural change, no obstacles under desk
7. Forearms approximately horizontal
8. Minimal extension, flexion or deviation of wrists
9. Screen height and angle to allow comfortable head position
10. Space in front of keyboard to support hands/wrists during pauses in keying

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Table 1 - Defining a User		
	Column 1	Column 2
Do you normally use DSE for continuous spells of an hour or more at a time?	Yes	No
Do you depend on the use of DSE to do your job because alternative means are not readily available for achieving the same results?	Yes	No
Do you have discretion on whether to use DSE or not?	No	Yes
Does the use of the DSE need significant training or skills to do the job?	Yes	No
Is fast transfer of information between you and screen an important requirement of the job?	Yes	No
Are you required to exhibit high levels of attention and concentration?	Yes	No

How long in an average working day do you spend operating a DSE?	Hours
Comments/remarks:	

If all 5 boxes in column 1 have been ticked, you are a user (complete DSE e-learning package and risk assessment).

If 3 or 4 boxes in column 1 have been ticked, you are probably a user (complete DSE e-learning package and risk assessment)

If less than 3 boxes in column 1 have been ticked, you are probably not a user*

*Please complete the 'Administration Box' only and return form to your department safety coordinator.

DSE user checklist – DSE risk assessment form

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ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

Division		Dept.		Location	
Workstation is used by:					
Assessment Date:				Review on or by:	
Job Title/Description:					

RISK FACTORS	Tick Answer		Comment
	Yes	No	
1. Is the display screen image clear?			
Are the characters readable?			
Is the image free from flicker and movement?			
Are the brightness and/or contrast adjustable?			
Does the screen swivel and tilt?			
Is the screen free from glare and reflections?			
2. Is the keyboard comfortable?			
Is the keyboard tiltable?			
Can you find a comfortable keying position i.e. wrist level?			
Is there enough space to rest hands in front of keyboard while not typing?			
Is the keyboard glare free?			
Are the characters on the keys easily readable?			
3. Does the furniture 'fit' the work and user?			
The seat is adjustable in height			
The seat back is adjustable in both height and tilt			
Is the chair stable?			
Do the adjustment mechanisms work?			
Is a footrest available for those who require it?			
Is the work surface large enough for documents, monitor, keyboard, etc?			
Is the surface free of glare reflections?			

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Are you comfortable? Try adjusting the chair			
- are forearms horizontal and eyes at roughly the same height as the top of the VDU casing?			
- are feet flat on the floor?			
- is the small of the back supported by the chair?			
- is the back straight, but supported and shoulders relaxed?			
- are arms of chair (if any) preventing you getting close enough to key comfortably?			
- are there obstructions under the desk that need to be moved?			
4. Is the environment around the workstation risk-free?			
Is there enough room to change position and vary movement?			
Are there appropriate levels of light?			
Are there comfortable levels of heat?			
Is the environment too noisy?			
If there are windows are the blinds adjustable?			
Does the air feel comfortable?			
Are there any tripping hazards or other safety risks			
5. Is the software user-friendly?			
Can you comfortably use the software?			
Has this checklist covered all the comfort problems you might have working with your DSE?			
6. Additional Information (Where relevant)			

Signed _____ Manager Date : ____/____/____

Action taken by manager

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Appendix 4 Additional guidance for users

POSTURE

- Shoulders and arms comfortable and relaxed
- Back upright and lumbar curve (small of back) supported by chair backrest
- Avoid twisting or moving head, neck, shoulders excessively prop up documents, adjust seat height
- Do not lift heavy items when seated
- Change position, take short breaks, gentle stretches
- Use a footrest if feet are unable to reach floor
- Use slight forward tilt on chair to improve posture

EQUIPMENT

- Place things you use most close to you i.e. telephone on dominant side
- Move items out of way when not using i.e. keyboard
- When keying fingertips should be comfortable and lightly placed on keys
- Place mouse within close reach keep arm level horizontally and wrists straight, support forearms on desk, move with arm not wrist, do not grip tightly
- Avoid light directly shining onto screen, position at right angles to avoid glare
- If unsure where glare is coming from place mirror on screen
- Keep copy stand as close to screen as possible to avoid changes in focus

EXERCISES

Should be performed gently and slowly stop immediately if any discomfort felt.

- A change in posture is important to reduce tiredness
- Link hands and push palms towards screen, stretching arms
- Raise shoulders to ears and release 2-3 times
- Take hand off mouse and relax arm by your side
- Look away from screen to vary focus during the day
- Spend 5 minutes every hour on non-screen activities
- At breaks rest your eyes, do not spend all lunch break reading

LAPTOP COMPUTERS

- Employ the same procedures when using laptops