

# Display Screen Equipment policy

## 1 Purpose

1.1 The overall aim of this policy is to ensure compliance with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended). The policy applies to all employees who work with computers and/or other display screen equipment. Where volunteers are carrying out office based duties, eg Business Support, they are included.

1.2 Healthwatch Worcestershire will fulfil its obligations by ensuring

- i) assessment of workstations;
- ii) provision of suitable Display Screen Equipment (DSE);
- iii) funding eye tests for users and a financial contribution towards basic spectacles where these are required solely and specifically for DSE work;
- iv) ensuring staff take regular breaks from DSE work.

## 2 Definitions

2.1 The following definitions will apply:

- **Display Screen Equipment (DSE):** any alphanumeric or graphic display screen, eg desktop computer, laptop, etc, regardless of the display process involved
- **Workstation:** the desk and immediate work environment including display screen equipment, keyboard, mouse, printer
- **User:** an employee who regularly uses DSE as a significant part of his or her normal work; someone who uses DSE for an hour or more at a time, on most days would generally be considered a user
- **Hot-desking:** where a number of people use the same workstation

## 3 Workstation Assessment

3.1 A workstation self-assessment must be carried out each time there is:

- a new appointment;
- replacement of equipment (desk, chair, computer);
- an office move;
- any other occasion when an employee or manager identifies that there may be a problem;
- at least once every 2 years.

- 3.2 Risks (physical/musculoskeletal problems, visual fatigue, mental stress) will be identified and reported to Healthwatch Worcestershire management. Healthwatch are able to call upon the services of a trained workplace assessor from Wychavon Council to work with management will ensure that identified risks are reduced to the lowest extent reasonably practicable.
- 3.3 Where employees 'hot-desk', the workstation must be assessed by all those who use it for an hour or more at a time. It is particularly important that equipment such as chairs and docking stations are adjustable to meet the particular needs of specific users.

NB Where there is a great height/size difference between the individuals sharing a workstation, 'hot-desking' may not be suitable.

- 3.4 Homeworkers, either designated or occasional, should also carry out a workstation self-assessment and seek advice as to how to set up and adjust their workstation to protect against physical/musculoskeletal problems.

#### **4 Provision of Display Screen Equipment (DSE)**

- 4.1 The DSE regulations require that all DSE workstations meet the 'Schedule of minimum requirements'. This includes:

- Adequate lighting
- Adequate contrast, no glare or distracting reflections
- Distracting noise minimised
- Leg room and clearances to allow postural changes
- Window covering, if needed to minimise glare
- Software - appropriate to task and adapted to user
- Screen - stable image, adjustable, readable, glare/reflection-free
- Keyboard - usable, adjustable, detachable, legible
- Chair - stable and adjustable
- Footrest if user needs one

- 4.2 Where laptops are used for prolonged periods (an hour or more and on most days) they must be used with a separate keyboard and mouse with the screen at the correct height (achieved by using a suitable docking station).

- 4.3 Healthwatch Worcestershire will ensure that equipment is provided/adjusted in line with the workstation assessor's recommendations and that users are shown how to arrange the workstation safely, told what to do if they develop any work-related health problems and informed of the process for eye sight tests.

NB Where bespoke equipment is required to meet the needs of an employee with a disability, support (including financial assistance) may be available from Government organisations such as Access to Work.

## **5 Eye tests and corrective appliances**

- 5.1 DSE work can make existing eye problems seem worse. This may cause symptoms such as headaches, blurred vision and sore eyes.
- 5.2 New employees (or employees changing to being regular DSE users) should be offered a free of charge basic eyesight test upon appointment.
- 5.3 Other users are entitled to a free of charge basic eyesight test upon request, routinely once every 2 years, or more frequently where
- it is recommended by an optometrist;
  - the individual experiences visual difficulties in the course of their work.
- 5.4 Where reasonable, Healthwatch Worcestershire will allow individual employees to choose the optometrist who carries out their eyesight test. However, at its discretion, the organisation may nominate a local optometrist based on financial and other considerations.
- 5.5 The full cost of the basic eyesight test, currently around £20 will be reimbursed upon production of receipt.
- 5.6 Where the test shows the need for "special" corrective appliances (spectacles), Healthwatch Worcestershire will refund the basic cost. The intention of the Regulations is not the free supply of spectacles to all DSE users and "special" corrective appliance is defined as spectacles for "viewing a screen at an appropriate distance" and not "normal" corrective appliance required for day-to-day use.
- 5.7 The employee will be able to use a dispensing optician of their choice.
- 5.8 The refundable cost of "special" corrective appliances will be reviewed from time to time, but currently is set at £65. Where preferred, the individual may use this set amount as a contribution towards more expensive spectacles of their choice. Again, refund will be dependent upon production of a receipt.
- 5.9 In line with the Healthwatch Worcestershire Leave policy, employees are expected to attend optician's appointments in their own time. Where this is not possible, appointments should be made at the start or finish of the working day (wherever possible) and the employee will be expected to make up the hours.

## **6 Breaks**

- 6.1 It is essential that DSE users take regular breaks - or changes of activity - away from their screen to avoid risks of postural fatigue or eye strain. Where possible, short breaks are better than longer less-frequent breaks and it is better for users to be able to take breaks as they feel they need rather than having a set pattern.

## **7 Confidentiality**

- 7.1 All health issues will be conducted with respect for confidentiality and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 (as amended).

## **8 Audit and Review**

- 8.1 A review of this policy will take place annually unless legal, contractual, specific business requirements, operational changes or events necessitate an earlier review.
- 8.2 This policy will be subject to Equality Impact Assessment under the Public Sector Equality Duty Act 2010.