

## Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Policy

<b>Name</b>	<b>DSE Policy</b>
<b>Summary</b>	<p>This policy covers safe and effective use of visual display units and mobile devices. It describes how The NHS Golden Jubilee (NHSGJ) complies with its legal obligations under the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (As amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002)</p> <p>By the means of this policy and arrangements, NHSGJ aims to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all Golden Jubilee Foundation staff who work with display screen equipment (DSE). NHSGJ has a duty to ensure that any risks to the health and safety of users of DSE are identified, assessed and suitably controlled to reduce their impact so far as is reasonably practicable.</p> <p>It also gives advice on how to avoid the health risks associated with screen-based work, which can include musculoskeletal disorders, visual fatigue and mental stress.</p>
<b>Associated Documents</b>	<p>Health and Safety Policy Adverse Event Policy Home Working Policy</p>
<b>Target Audience</b>	All staff of NHS Golden Jubilee
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## **NHS Golden Jubilee Values Statement**

What we do or deliver in our roles within NHS Golden Jubilee (NHSGJ) is important, but the way we behave is equally important to our patients, customers, visitors and colleagues. We know this from feedback we get from patients and customers, for example in “thank you” letters and the complaints we receive.

Recognising this, NHSGJ have worked with a range of staff, patient representatives and managers to discuss and promote our shared values which help us all to deliver the highest quality care and service across the organisation. These values are closely linked to our responsibilities around Equality.



**V**aluing dignity and respect

**A** can do attitude

**L**eading commitment to quality

**U**nderstanding our responsibilities

**E**ffectively working together

Our values are:

- Valuing dignity and respect.
- A ‘can do’ attitude.
- Leading commitment to quality.
- Understanding our responsibilities.
- Effectively working together.

Our policies are intended to support the delivery of these values which support employee experience.

## SAFE USE OF DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT POLICY (Health and Safety)

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## **1. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE**

- 1.1. NHS Golden Jubilee (NHSGJ) recognises its legal obligations under the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (As amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002). By the means of this policy and arrangements, NHSGJ aims to ensure the health and safety of all NHSGJ staff who work with display screen equipment (DSE). Under the Regulations, NHSGJ has a duty to ensure that any risks to the health and safety of users of DSE are assessed and suitably controlled. This policy and associated procedures have been developed to meet that duty and ensure that risks to health and safety associated with DSE work are identified and reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 1.2 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 employee musculoskeletal problems, eye strain, fatigue or mental stress. These problems can be overcome by good ergonomic design of equipment and furniture, a good working environment and careful planning of the tasks performed. It has been established that the following health problems may arise from the intensive use of display screen equipment:
- Work-related upper limb disorders and problems of backache, muscle fatigue, etc. influenced by sustained or repetitive poor working positions.
  - Temporary visual fatigue caused by factors such as poor lighting, glare, reflections, flickering screen, concentrated DSE work and poorly positioned DSE. There is no evidence of DSE work being associated with permanent damage to eyes.
  - Soreness of the eyes.
  - Fatigue and general stress related to such factors as unfavourable environmental conditions and task planning.
- 1.3 All these risks are related to the user's interaction with their working environment (ergonomics). Poor posture, workstation layout, environmental conditions and prolonged use have been linked to poor physical and psychological health. Musculoskeletal injuries known as Work Related Upper Limb Disorders, WRULD (formerly Repetitive Strain Injuries) have been associated with poor posture, workplace design and high use of DSE.
- 1.4 Other risks such as harmful radiations being emitted from the screen and eye damage have not been substantiated despite extensive studies and are not valid (see appendix 1).
- 1.5 There is no medical evidence to suggest any link between DSE work and miscarriage or birth defects; therefore, there is no reason for an individual who is pregnant, or seeking to become pregnant, to avoid working with such equipment (refer to appendix 1).

## **2. SCOPE & DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1. This policy is based upon the following relevant statutory provisions and guidance:
- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002
  - Revised 2003 doc L26 (Second Edition) Guidance on the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002
  - The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 as amended revised 2013
- 2.2 This policy applies to all Board -employed staff, full-time and part-time clinical and non-clinical

staff, staff directly employed and those who may be contracted-in.

This policy has been written taking into consideration the needs of all diversity groups via an Equality Impact Assessment.

## 2.3 Definitions

2.3.1 **Display Screen Equipment (DSE)** means any alphanumeric or graphic display screen regardless of the display process involved (including for example, conventional display screens, flat panel screens, touch screens). It is the legal term used for visual display equipment such as word processors, personal computers and microfiche readers. The definition is not limited to traditional office applications but includes the use of DSE in offices and with merging of information and communication technologies small screens are increasingly used, mobile phones and personal organisers that can be used to compose, edit, text, view images or connect to the internet for prolonged use for work purposes are subject to the DSE regulations (please note that mobile phones used only for spoken conversation are excluded). It does not include medical equipment e.g. cardiac monitors and oscilloscopes.

2.3.2 **User** means an employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work for the purpose of an employer's undertaking.

The HSE guidance states: It will generally be appropriate to classify the person concerned as a "User" or "Operator" if they:

- Use DSE for continuous or near continuous spells of one hour or more at a time.
- Use DSE in this way more or less daily
- Have to transfer information quickly to and from the DSE

2.3.3 **User Criteria** -In many cases it will be clear that the use of DSE is more or less continuous frequency, duration, intensity and pace on most days then the individuals concerned should be regarded as users. Where it is less continuous or frequent the following criteria should be considered; if most or all of the criteria apply the worker should be considered a user

- The worker depends on the DSE to do the job and an alternative is not available to achieve the same results.
- The worker has no discretion as to use or non-use of DSE.
- The worker requires significant training or particular skills in the use of DSE to do their job.
- The worker uses the DSE in this way more or less daily.
- Fast transfer of information between the worker and the DSE is an important requirement of the job.
- The DSE work requires high levels of attention and concentration by the user and the consequences of error could be critical.

2.3.4 **Workstation** means an assembly comprising:

- Display Screen Equipment (DSE), whether provided with software determining the interface between the equipment and its operator or user, a keyboard or any other input device.
- Any optional accessories to the DSE
- Any disk drive, telephone, modem, printer, document holder, work chair, work desk, work surface, or other item peripheral to the DSE, and
- The immediate work environment around the DSE

2.3.5 **Laptops.** A Laptop (portable computer) is a device which has a display screen and qwerty

keyboard not separate from each other, but hinged in a “clamshell” arrangement. A laptop commonly consists of a display screen with screen size of between 11 and 15 inches (measured across its diameter)

- 2.3.6 **Docking station.** A docking station is an arrangement of external equipment which could be connected up to the laptop to achieve a more ergonomic layout. It could consist of an external keyboard (alone), an external display screen (alone) or both; or a ‘full’ docking station where the user slides their portable into a special housing which connects the laptop directly to an external screen, keyboard and mouse.
- 2.3.7 **Handheld devices (notebook, tablets etc.)** is a device which has a display screen and keyboard not separate from each other, with a screen measuring between 2.5 and 10.9 inches (measured across the diagonal); a keyboard or keypad (which may be Qwerty or non-qwerty in layout); which may or may not have an additional input device. It can be operated with one or two hands, and is likely to be held in one hand while being operated with the other.
- 2.3.8 **Assessment:** A thorough and systematic identification of hazards and evaluation of risks. The regulations require all employers to make risk assessments for all staff and their workstations.
- 2.3.9 **Ergonomics** means a person-centred approach to the design of work systems that aims to match the demands of the job to the requirements and capacity of the individual.
- 2.3.10 **WRULD** - Work-related upper limb disorder

### 3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 **The Chief Executive** of NHS Golden Jubilee is responsible for ensuring the organisation complies with all relevant Health & Safety legislation of which working with display screens is a part. The Chief Executive will ensure that sufficient resources are provided to enable the policy to be implemented and to remain effective.
- 3.2 **The Health and Safety Manager will** through the Health & Safety Committee be responsible for monitoring compliance with the Display Screen Equipment Policy, generating status reports reporting any significant risks associated with the use of Display Screen Equipment
- 3.3 **Heads of Department/ Department Managers**
- 3.3.1 Managers are responsible for ensuring that day to day work activities under their control are carried out with full regard to good health and safety management and compliance with this policy. In particular line managers within their area of responsibility shall:
- Ensure the implementation of this policy
  - Identify which of their staff are Users and ensure that the DSE self-assessment is completed by them
  - Identify and implement any necessary remedial action arising from the DSE assessment within a reasonable timescale.
  - Support nominated DSE Assessors (where applicable) in carrying out their duties.
  - Any actions highlighted as a result of the DSE Risk assessment that cannot be resolved at line management level i.e. funding, provision of specialist equipment, environmental issues, etc. must be raised and addressed through the management chain via appropriate teams (Occupational Health Department and/or Health and Safety).
  - Ensure workstations meet the minimum requirements (see Appendix 2).
  - Plan display screen work so that there are periodic breaks or changes of activity.
  - Enable Users to have eye health and eye sight tests (see section 4 for further details)

- Undertake a review of the assessment if required (see section 4).
- All records to be kept for a minimum of three years

Managers can seek further advice and assistance from the Occupational Health/Occupational Health Physiotherapy/ Health and Safety Team/ Manual Handling Lead, with regards to DSE risk assessments and associated action plans.

3.4 **Employees “Users”** have a duty to take reasonable care of themselves and other staff who may be affected by their acts or omissions. In the context of working with DSE this requires employees who are users to:

- Undertake self-assessment of their Display Screen Equipment and work station (refer to section 4 and appendix 3)
- Make full and proper use of any equipment or system of work provided for their protection and wellbeing.
- Inform the line manager about any condition which may affect their ability to undertake work on DSE.
- Adhere to instructions, training and guidance provided by the employer in relation to DSE.
- Report any problems, concerns or potential hazards they encounter as soon as possible, in line with the Adverse Event Policy located on SharePoint.

3.5 **Nominated DSE Assessors** should:

- Attend in house training on becoming a competent DSE Risk Assessor.
- Consult with the ‘User’ to rectify any issues raised following completion of self-assessment).
- Advise existing Users to undergo training and assessment as required, and send reminders to this effect.
- Ensure all Users know where to seek help if they have difficulties with an issue which relates to DSE health and safety.

3.6 **Occupational Health Department**

3.6.1 Occupational Health will provide advice on specialised equipment for any health issues relating to DSE/VDU work. They will also monitor and provide advice on the working environment.

3.7 **Home workers-** Where employees are contracted to work from home, the full requirements of the DSE Regulations in terms of provision of equipment and suitable set up must be implemented. A DSE self-assessment must be carried out in the home setting, and exceptionally by a DSE Assessor during a home visit.

In most cases, staff members are not required to work from home but may choose to take work home at the discretion of line managers etc. In these cases, although not coming under the DSE Regulations, the employee should ensure that their work area is set up in accordance with good DSE working practices.

Please refer to the NHS/GJ Homeworking Policy for further details on homeworking.

3.8 **Shared Workstations Persons** who share a workstation with one or more people should each undertake their own individual assessment.

3.9 **Use of Laptops** - Laptops are subject to the same regulations. Difficulties associated with DSE work can be exacerbated when laptops are involved as it can be difficult to achieve a comfortable

working posture. By the nature of the equipment, it can be used in a wide range of environments, not all suited to allowing a suitable working posture. Prolonged use of laptops is known to contribute to a range of musculoskeletal (MSK) disorders including spinal pain and upper limb disorders. It is not necessary to assess the user of such equipment in every location but to concentrate on the locations where the risks are greatest, i.e. those where the user uses the equipment for prolonged periods. In particular, where laptop equipment is set up for prolonged use, line managers should support the provision of equipment such as docking stations, separate keyboards, separate pointing devices and / or separate monitors. Users must be provided with information and training on using suitable locations for the equipment and to avoid prolonged periods of use when good posture is difficult, e.g. in transport. 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. (Refer to Appendix 6)

- 3.10 **Agency Workers and Staff not directly employed by NHS Golden Jubilee**, NHS Golden Jubilee has a statutory duty of care and is responsible for providing a safe place of work, plant and equipment for all staff. This policy applies to this group of staff with the exception of the provision of eye tests and training in the safe use of DSE which is the responsibility of their employer.

#### **4. PROCESS/REQUIREMENTS**

##### **4.1 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 4.1.1 An initial assessment of the work undertaken, the workstation, the working environment, work routines and posture of the User will be carried out by the users. This should occur as soon as possible following employment or change to user status as defined above. They will be reviewed after significant changes in the work, workstation, environment, or user (e.g. diagnosis of WRULD, pregnancy etc.).
- 4.1.2 The initial assessment will be carried out by the User, using the DSE Workstation assessment checklist (Refer to Appendix 3)
- 4.1.3 Once completed it will be passed to the line manager who will check the completed self-assessment and ensure that actions / recommendations are reasonable and are followed up. It may be necessary for the line manager to carry out further assessment and make additional recommendations. Operationally, this function can be delegated to a nominated and suitably competent DSE risk assessor.

A referral to Occupational Health for a Workstation Assessment (WSA) will be made by the DSE Assessor if issues are of a more complex nature and cannot be resolved by the DSE Assessor alone. All referrals should in the first instance be forwarded to the Users line manager.

- 4.1.4 Review of assessments- The assessment is relevant to each user, not the workstation, if significant changes to the workstation, environment, task or individual occur a new assessment will be carried out to identify any new hazards which may arise. The assessment may also be reviewed if the user has individual cause for concern, for example, musculoskeletal disorder. Examples of significant changes are:
- a major change in workstation furniture and equipment
  - a substantial increase in the amount of time required to be spent using display screen equipment
  - a substantial change in other task requirements (e.g. more speed or accuracy)
  - a major change to software used
  - if environmental conditions such as the lighting are significantly modified

- or a combination of the above

## **4.2 DAILY WORK ROUTINE**

- 4.2.1 Prolonged DSE use to include periodic breaks or changes in activity. The timing of the break is more important than the length of the break.
- 4.2.2 Short frequent breaks are more beneficial than occasional longer breaks e.g. a 5 - 10-minute break after every 50-60 minutes is likely to be better than a 15-minute break after every 2 hours.
- 4.2.3 Breaks should be taken away from the screen. Informal breaks i.e. times spent on other tasks appear to be more effective in relieving vision fatigue. Tasks carried out during breaks should preferably not involve the continued use of the small muscles of the forearms and hands.

## **4.3 EYESIGHT TEST**

- 4.3.1 There is no reliable evidence that DSE work damages eyesight but it may make Users more aware of pre-existing visual defects (refer to Appendix 1).
- 4.3.2 In Scotland, you have access to free eyesight tests which are carried out by an Ophthalmic Optician or a Registered Medical Practitioner with suitable qualifications – please note that specific DSE/VDU eye examination is a test that currently falls out with the NHS eye examination as noted within the National Health Service (General Ophthalmic Services) (Scotland) Regulations Annexe B.
- 4.3.3 For A DSE/VDU eye examination, employees can be offered an eye test through NHS Golden Jubilee's Corporate Eye Care scheme with Specsavers Opticians. No other opticians participate in this scheme.
- 4.3.5 The Corporate Specsavers Eye Care Scheme- NHS Golden Jubilee has an arrangement with Specsavers opticians, using their Corporate Specsavers voucher scheme. This allows employees to select a pair of glasses to the value of £45. The voucher must be obtained prior to any examination and is only valid when glasses are recommended solely for DSE work. Employees can use the voucher towards the cost of more expensive frames or lenses. (Refer to Appendix 5).

## **4.4 FURTHER INFORMATION**

- 4.4.1 For further advice and assistance in the implementation of this procedure, contact Health & Safety on telephone extension 5015.
- 4.4.2 Guidance for Staff: refer to Appendix 5 General Questions and Answers regarding the use of display screen equipment and Appendix 7 for flowchart.

## **5. TRAINING**

- 5.1 An e-learning module is available via learn-pro for any staff members that require information on DSE.

An additional e-learning module is available for designated DSE/VDU risk assessors. Although these courses are not mandatory, they are strongly recommended in order to ensure a high level of competency for such assessors.

## **6. SUCCESS CRITERIA/MONITORING COMPLIANCE**

- 6.1 The Occupational Health Department will monitor the implementation of this policy on an annual basis by providing a report detailing the number of claims made by NHS Golden Jubilee staff by service for eye examination and Occupational referrals attributed to computer usage. This will enable the Health & Safety manager to assess the spread of awareness of the policy and target any further work. Further monitoring will be undertaken at local level via the quarterly health and safety audit inspection process.

## **7. REVIEW**

- 7.1 This document may be reviewed at any time at the request of either staff side or management, but will automatically be reviewed on a tri-annual basis unless organisational changes, legislation, guidance or non-compliance prompt an earlier review.

## **8. REFERENCES**

- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002
- L29 Guidance on the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment Regulations) as amended
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 as amended
- Health and Safety Policy

## **DSE USE AND ITS EFFECTS ON HEALTH**

### **Work Related Upper Limb Disorders**

Work related upper limb disorders may present via a variety of symptoms including pain, swollen soft tissue and restricted joint movement, leading to loss of function and disability. Sitting in a fixed position for long periods or awkward or repetitive movement of the head, body or arms can contribute to pain or discomfort in the neck, shoulders or arms.

These symptoms usually reduce when work stops but poor job design or, inappropriate keying techniques may put some keyboard users at risk of chronic work-related upper limb disorders (WRULD).

### **Eye and eyesight effects**

There is strong evidence that using DSE is not associated with damage to eyes or eyesight or makes existing defects worse. However, some Users experience temporary visual fatigue, leading to a range of symptoms such as impaired visual performance, red or sore eyes or headaches. These symptoms can be caused by:

- a) Long periods of postural immobility and concentration.
- b) Poor positioning of DSE.
- c) Poor legibility of the screen or source documents.
- d) Poor lighting including glare and reflections.
- e) A drifting, flickering or jittering image on the screen.

### **Fatigue and stress**

Many symptoms described by DSE users reflect stresses arising from the User's task. Although they may reflect upper limb or visual problems they are more likely to be caused by poor job design or work organisation. Lack of control of the work by the User, under utilisation of skills, high speed repetitive working or social isolation all contribute

The risk of Users experiencing physical fatigue and stress can be minimised by careful design, selection and position of display screen equipment, good design of the Users workplace, environment and task; and finally, consultation and training.

### **Other effects**

Reports of epilepsy and facial dermatitis are extremely rare and the association with DSE work has not been established. If staffs have concerns, they should contact the Occupational Health Department. With regard to electro-magnetic radiation emissions from the screen and harmful effects on pregnant woman; no evidence of these has been found despite extensive studies. The risks to pregnant woman may arise from stress and anxiety as well as postural discomfort. These should be discussed with the User and included in any risk assessments reviewed to take account of the pregnancy, including the DSE assessment.

## **MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR DISPLAY SCREEN WORK STATIONS & EQUIPMENT**

An assessment of any workstation and User should consider these minimum requirements.

### **EQUIPMENT**

1. **Display screen:** To be clear, legible, stable, free from reflection and glare, tilt & swivel adjustment. Top edge level with operator's eyes. Position relative to user depends on type of work i.e. copy typing, dictation, report writing, data entry. Screens should be cleaned regularly and maintained in good working order.
2. **Keyboard:** Detachable, tilt able, clear letters, space in front, wrist-rest if necessary.
3. **Mouse:** Within comfortable (not extended) arms reach, on mat, grip gently.
4. **Document holder:** If required, level with screen. Free standing, desk or screen mounted.
5. **Laptops:** If laptop computers are used for significant periods of time a docking station may be required with alternative keyboard, mouse etc.
6. **Work desk:** Sufficiently large, non-reflective, sufficient leg room.
7. **Work chair:** Back and height adjustable. Good posture support, stable, five castors.
8. **Footrest:** If required.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

1. **Space requirements:** Minimum floor area of per User is 4.6 m<sup>2</sup> if recognised as a DSE user. Avoid storage under desks and on floor where movement may be impeded and risk of slips and trips increases
2. **Lighting:** By natural means where possible diffuse, lighting with no reflection or glare preferred. Windows, lights etc to be shaded/covered if source of glare or reflection.
3. **Noise:** Noisy equipment e.g. printers to be moved away from workstation.
4. **Heat:** Excessive heat-producing equipment to be moved away from workstation.
5. **Humidity:** Adequate and comfortable humidity levels to be maintained.
6. **Ventilation:** Fresh or purified air but avoid draughts

### **INTERFACE BETWEEN COMPUTER AND USER.**

1. **Software:** Must be suitable for the task, easy to read and use.

### **PERSONNEL**

1. **Health:** Previous and new musculoskeletal injuries, pains or discomfort to be identified and assessed.
2. **Rest breaks:** Encouraged to take short micro frequent breaks that are more beneficial than occasional longer breaks regular
3. **Eye & Eyesight:** Staff to have vision screening at start of user status and eyesight tests thereafter at agreed intervals. Full eye examinations available to all Users on request.

**User's Display Screen Equipment (DSE)  
Workstation Self-Assessment**

The Workstation Self-Assessment can be accessed via HR Connect – see link below:

<https://www.nhsnational-hr.scot.nhs.uk/2.NATIONAL%20BOARDS/GJNH/OCC%20HEALTH%20SAFETY%20AND%20WELLBEING/Health%20and%20Safety/Display%20Screen%20Equipment%20DSE/Display%20Screen%20Equipment%20Workstation%20Checklist%20Golden%20Jubilee.pdf>

## Corporate Eye Care Scheme

NHS Golden Jubilee has contracted with Specsavers and operates a voucher scheme for their employees who are considered VDU *users* under the Visual Display Regulations. This scheme does not offer voucher/glasses for employees who have other sight problems and need corrective glasses for close work or distance.

### How the scheme operates:

1. In the first instance, the Department Manager must ensure that the DSE Self-Assessment has been undertaken to ascertain whether the employee is defined as a DSE 'User'.
2. If suitable, the employee should submit an NCMR to Materials/Procurement Department (signed off by their Department Manager). Please write on NCMR: *Description – 'Corporate eyewear VDU Voucher'; Supplier: Specsavers; Value: £17.*
3. Procurement will then issue a Specsavers Voucher and the employee shall then contact their nearest Specsavers for eye examination/sight test.

No other Opticians participate in this scheme; the voucher is purely for Specsavers.

- 3.1 The employee will be required to sign for the Specsavers Voucher for audit purposes.
4. The Specsaver voucher will allow the individual to make an appointment at any Specsavers and receive a VDU eye examination/eye sight test. If the Optometrist advises that glasses are solely and specifically required for visual display use, the employee will be able to select a pair of glasses from the £45 range, which are fitted with Pentax CR39 single vision lenses plus scratch-resistant treatment as standard.
  - 4.1 Alternately the £45 contribution can be used as an upgrade to other frame Ranges - Specsavers can advise on the options.
  - 4.2 In addition, the voucher includes a £20 contribution when glasses are selected from the £99 range or above; please be aware this is solely for the purchase of VDU glasses. Employees are advised to check with Specsavers before purchasing glasses.
5. The Specsavers scheme does not include provision for purchase of varifocal or bifocal glasses, unless the client wishes to pay the additional costs.
6. Employees should be aware that the Board will not contribute towards the costs of eye examination/sight test and glasses if the individual chooses to go straight to Specsavers *without a voucher* or if they choose to go to another Optician other than Specsavers

## **General Questions and Answers regarding the use of display screen equipment**

### **How does the job affect the DSE assessment?**

Work should be planned with regular breaks from the DSE. When the job involves intensive DSE work this should be broken up by less intensive work, and in all cases where the work itself does not allow for pauses, breaks should be introduced.

### **Do 'breaks' mean stopping work altogether?**

Unfortunately, no! These 'breaks' refer to breaks in continuous working with DSE. Other jobs away from the screen count as 'breaks'. (Some newer systems have on-screen breaks built in and some can even switch themselves off after a period of time.) Any Board staff whose jobs involves demonstrably intensive DSE work, should, and without waiting to get tired, preferably chose when to take a 'break': the HSE suggests about 5-10 minutes away from working at DSE after about an hour's intensive work.

### **What effect does DSE work have on the eyes?**

Working with DSE does not damage the eyes or sight; however, it can cause visual fatigue and headaches. Tired eyes can become red and sore and water eyes can cause temporary blurred vision. Eye discomfort can often be prevented by ensuring that: The screen doesn't drift, flicker or jump; Lighting and environmental conditions are up to standard Work is well planned and includes 'breaks'; Looking around to give the eyes a rest.

### **What do 'eye and eye sight tests' mean?**

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff identified as 'users' or who will become 'users' are informed of their entitlement to the appropriate eye and eye sight tests by a doctor or optician as defined in the Opticians Act. Staff only have to take up this offer if they wish. New employees who are to be users and present staff about to become users should be offered the test. For present users requesting a test for the first time it should be done as soon as practicable.

### **Does this entitlement apply to agency staff?**

No! While all the other measures under the DSE Regulations to protect the health of users apply to agency staff, the requirement to provide eye and eyesight tests and prescribed specific glasses only applies to Board employees. Agency staff should discuss any queries about this with their agency manager.

### **When does the Board provide special glasses for users?**

If the Optometrist's eye and eyesight tests identify the need for special glasses they will prescribe them. In practice less than one in ten people are unable to work with DSE without glasses or with their own glasses they have for everyday use and so most users do not need 'special or VDU' glasses. It is very rare for bifocal or multifocal lenses to be needed to work with DSE.

### **Who pays for these glasses if they're needed?**

The Board pays for glasses prescribed specifically for DSE work and which have been prescribed by its Optometrist. Only in exceptional circumstances will it pay for glasses prescribed and/or obtained elsewhere and if this is a possibility the employee should first discuss it with Occupational Health Department Staff.

### **How can the risk of musculoskeletal aches and pains be reduced?**

Aches and pains affecting the arm, hand, shoulder and neck are often associated with DSE work and even sitting in the same position for long periods can make existing back pain worse. Using the Board DSE assessment checklist, the first thing is to do a thorough ergonomic workstation assessment and then put right any deficiencies and check that the equipment is matched to the user(s). For this reason, the

assessment includes not only the equipment itself, but also seating and the desk and working environment.

### **Does work with DSE cause any other health problems?**

Work at display screens does not cause permanent ill health, in particular:

It does not cause or bring on epileptic seizures even in those very rare people who have photosensitive epilepsy (brought on by flickering lights and patterns).

It can cause temporary reddening and itching of the face and neck sometimes referred to as facial dermatitis

When consulted by the HSE about possible radiation levels, the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) confirmed that radiation levels are well below international recommendations and are not a significant risk to health.

The NRPB also advised that fears of adverse effects on pregnancy were unfounded. The main effects on a pregnant woman are ergonomic and associated with long periods of sitting and, in later pregnancy, of increasing girth. This may also be identified through the Board Pregnancy Risk Assessment. The Occupational Health Department can be asked to advise on any concerns.

### **What other main hazards are associated with DSE equipment and work?**

Moving heavy DSE and workstation equipment is likely to need a manual handling assessment. As with all electric equipment DSE equipment should be regularly checked and maintained.

### **What conditions associated with DSE are reportable?**

While the HSE has coined the term 'WRULD' this condition and 'RSI' are not reportable. Reporting to the HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) is required for the following conditions often associated with DSE:

'Cramp of the hand or forearm due to repetitive movements' (writers' cramp) linked to prolonged periods of typing

'Traumatic inflammation of the tendons of the hand or forearm or of the associated tendon sheaths' (tenosynovitis) associated with repeated movements, poor hand or wrist positions and poor posture.

Carpal tunnel syndrome in a user is not reportable (it is only reportable if associated with hand-held vibrating tools), however it is known that this and 'RSI' and even 'tennis elbow' can be related to DSE work and a doctor's diagnosis of any of these conditions should lead reporting via Datix and review of the DSE assessment: this should include not only the workstation but also observations on the user's work practice and also the workload itself if it is thought to be a contributory factor.

### **How does the work load itself affect my health?**

The need for 'breaks' has already been mentioned. Occasionally it is necessary to take on extra work to meet deadlines; however, this should not become a habit! Any member of staff concerned about their workload should discuss this with their manager sooner rather than later.

Appendix 6

**Guidance for Staff using electronic devices for mobile working.  
(Laptops, Notepads, Handhelds etc.)**

Laptops, electronic notepads for mobile use and other portable handheld devices are designed for short periods of use. If precautions are not taken to use them appropriately you may be putting yourself at risk of eye strain, headaches, fatigue or musculoskeletal injury. You should avoid using the device continually for more than 45 minutes (Compliance with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) – 1 hr. guidance) This guidance has been developed in further support of our Working with Display Screen Equipment Policy to help minimise the risks for staff that may use mobile devices in the course of their work.

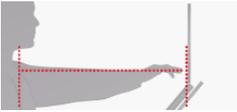
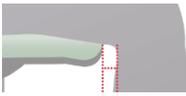
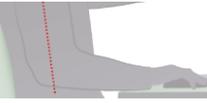
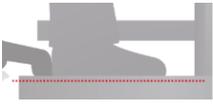
Where a member of staff is provided with a laptop computer, the user must use the laptop as much as possible on a desk or workstation surface and attach it to either a docking station and/or external monitor

**Temporary/Transient Office Use**

When using a laptop as a ‘stand-alone’ piece of equipment, some points to remember in order to achieve best practice in the office include:

**Sitting**

- Use a five-castor DSE chair.

<p>Balanced head, not leaning forward</p> 	<p>Forearms parallel to desk</p> 	<p>Screen approximately arm's length from you</p> 	<p>Space behind knee</p> 	<p> Try not to slouch. Do not sit forward and crouch over the laptop</p>
<p>Arms relaxed by your side</p> 	<p>Sit back in chair ensuring good back support</p> 	<p>Top of screen about eye level</p> 	<p>Feet flat on floor or on a footrest</p> 	<p></p>

- Angle the laptop screen so you can easily view the images with the least amount of neck deviation
- Avoid using the device for more than 45 minutes at a time. Take a few minutes break from the screen, change your task or position after 20 -30 minutes.

**Working with. (Laptops, Notepads, Handhelds etc.) away from the Office (home, cars, trains and hotels)**

Many hotels now provide suitable designated areas for laptop use. These will include conference rooms, public area laptop points, and facilities within bedroom accommodation. Always use these facilities where possible

- If these facilities are not available, try to compromise by using an appropriate chair that gives posture support.
- Do not use a laptop whilst sitting on a sofa or easy chair.
- When using laptops for prolonged periods of time, consider separate keyboard and mouse.

Appendix 7

DSE Assessment Procedure (Flowchart)

