Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Policy

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Consultation Groups	Health and safety Leads Learning and Development
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Services	Applicable
Trustwide	x
Mental Health and LD	
Community Health Services	

Version Control Summary

Version	Date	Author	Status	Comment
1.0	October 2010	Glenis Roberts	Final	New policy
2.0	October 2012	Glenis Roberts	Final	Review
3.0	October 2015	Glenis Roberts	Final	New policy to reflect changes including introduction of e-learning and self-assessment.
4.0	June 2016	Richard Harwin	Final	Reflecting changes in personnel
5.0	May 2019	Richard Harwin	Final	Review

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (amended 2002) requires employers to ensure that staff using display screen do so in a safe and healthy way.

1.2 Poor DSE practices including inadequately setup workstations may lead to a range of acute or chronic conditions such as:

- Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), such as back ache and neck, shoulder and wrists pain, commonly referred to as upper limb disorders (ULD);

- Visual fatigue, which can result in headaches; and

- Stress, mental anxiety associated with, for example, difficult to use software or inadequate interruptions from screen work.

1.3 The Trust is committed to ensuring that workstations are set up to suit individual staff members and not staff members having to adapt themselves to poorly designed workstations.

1.4 Proactive assessment of workstations help to identify possible problems associated with workstation setup and ensures that remedial actions are taken to manage identified risks.

2. Purpose

2.1 The aim of this policy is to facilitate a systematic approach to DSE management by ensuring that systems and processes are in place to control the risks to staff. This includes provision of information, instruction and training of associated hazards and eye care provision.

2.2 This policy is applicable to all staff designated display screen equipment (DSE) 'users ' and, operators at all levels within the organisation; both permanent and temporary staff on Trust business.

3. Objectives

3.1 To ensure that all staff who regularly use DSE are identified and trained.

3.2 To ensure that display screen equipment risks are adequately risk assessed and controlled.

3.3 To ensure that staff with existing health conditions have a suitable and safe workstations.

3.4 To ensure that staff receives appropriate training in the risks associated with DSE and apply good ergonomic practice.

3.5 To ensure that following assessments, suitable equipment are made available and used correctly as per training and instruction.

4. Definitions

4.1 Display screen equipment

Refers to any work equipment with an alphanumeric Screen.

4.2 User

An employee who uses a DSE for at least two hours daily, with at least one hour continuous usage or prolonged spells of intensive work or data input.

4.3 Operator

'Operator' refers to self-employed person who uses a DSE for at least two hours daily over the course of a week, with at least one hour continuous usage.

4.4 Musculoskeletal Disorders

Collective term used to refer to a range of ill-health conditions which typically affect, for example, muscles, joints and tendons.

4.5 Workstation

This is an assembly comprising of computer/display screen and associated peripheral equipment such as printers, telephones etc. and the immediate environment around the display screen.

5. Policy

5.1
Line managers should identify staff who are DSE users or operators to ensure risk assessments are undertaken.

5.2 Shared workstations

Where more than one person uses the same workstation, separate assessments should be made.

5.3 Portable device users (such as laptops)

Employees who undertake Trust work using a laptop for more than two hours at any one time should ensure that modifications are made to achieve a setup similar to desk top computers. Such modifications include a separate keyboard and mouse; and docking station.

Staff who undertake significant (more than a few hours) private work (non-NHS) using a laptop are encouraged to adopt this setup.

5.4   Daily Work routine

Continuous work (greater than 1 hour) at the display screen is known to be associated with fatigue, both muscular and visual.

Managers should ensure that activities of users are planned so that daily work on DSE is periodically interrupted by 'breaks' or changes in activity (time spent not viewing the screen (e.g. on other tasks). Regular short breaks should also be undertaken to reduce the mental demands. If possible, changes of activity should be taken away from the screen and before the onset of fatigue. Recommendation is that 5 minutes is taken every 30 minutes, however, this cannot be accumulated to allow an early finish.

5.5   New and expectant mothers

Work with computers in pregnancy may give rise to postural issue, particularly in the latter stage with the increased abdominal size contributing to discomfort while sitting. It is important that the member of staff can regularly change position to minimise potential for developing postural problems.

Risk assessments should be carried out for expectant mothers as soon management becomes aware of the pregnancy by the staff member and routinely re-assessed over the pregnancy period for the expectant mother to make working arrangements more comfortable. The New and Expectant Mothers Risk Assessment Form can be downloaded from the Trust Intranet.

5.6   Eye care

Eye and eyesight tests will be offered to a 'user' who has requested an eye examination or where identified by a workstation assessment. The cost of the test and corrective appliance (where identified by the optometrist to the value of £55 following an eye examination) will be borne by the Trust. The Display Screen Equipment user eye care process and form can be downloaded from the Trust Intranet.

6.   Roles and Responsibilities

6.1   Responsibilities for Health and Safety and the implementation of the Display Screen Equipment Policy will be in line with those responsibilities laid out in the Health and Safety Policy.

6.2   The following two groups of staff have additional responsibilities as outlined below.

6.2.1   Managers

- Identify their staff members who are DSE users/operators and ensure that they undertake the DSE e-learning training and self-assessment every two years.

- Ensure that all workstations in their areas of responsibility comply with the minimum requirements (see Appendix 1);

- Ensure that DSE risk assessments recommendations are implemented and risk assessments are monitored and reviewed;

- Ensure that users take adequate breaks or change of activity and receive suitable information and training;

- Arrange for a review of each DSE assessment when there has been a significant change of the workstation or the staff health condition.

6.2.2 Users/operators

- Report to their line manager any problems or issues that they may be experiencing associated with the use of their workstation;

- Undertake regular changes of activity away from DSE;

- Complete the DSE e-learning training and self-assessment of their work station using the DSE self-assessment form as soon as possible after starting work and comply with any recommendations from a DSE assessment.

7. Training & Information

7.1 Line managers are responsible for ensuring that staff are encouraged to undertake the DSE e-learning training via OLM on initial identification as a DSE user and every two years thereafter. This should be reviewed every two years or when there have been significant changes to the workstation or report of any DSE medical related condition.

7.2 All staff, including temporary and agency staff are required to complete the above training, make necessary adjustments and/or escalate matters to line managers and/or Health and Safety.

7.3 Training will cover:

- Correct layout of equipment on the work surface;

- Correct adjustment of the chair;

- The importance of undertaking changes of activity;

- Problems that may be encountered, such as glare and reflections on the screen;

- Eye and eyesight testing and corrective spectacles; and

- Reporting of problems associated with use of display screen equipment.

8. Risk Assessment

8.1 All workstations are required to be assessed for compliance with the regulations using self-assessment pro-forma (Appendix 2).

8.2 Completed assessments should be shared with line managers.

8.3 The manager should seek Health and Safety support if significant risks have been identified, such as health issues or deficient equipment.

8.4 The Health, Safety & Security team should be provided with a copy of all assessments where ill-health conditions have been identified.

8.5 Managers should keep a record of all assessments.

8.6 Assessments should be reviewed two-yearly, or sooner if there have been changes in circumstances, such as:

- Staff reported DSE related ill-health/conditions
- Significant changes in the work environment – re-location
- Change in legislations.

8.7 It is the responsibility of the manager to ensure that actions identified are implemented, monitored (e.g. checking to see that users are using foot rest) and remain effective.

9. Health Problems

9.1 Users or operators with symptoms that can be reasonably attributed to DSE usage should have their workstation assessment reviewed or one undertaken.

9.2 Following the risk assessment, a copy of the assessment should be sent to the Trust's Health and Safety team by the manager for further advice and or support.

10. Occupation Health (OH) Referral

10.1 Staff should only be referred to occupational health after a DSE assessment has been undertaken, or if there have been no improvement in health problems associated with DSE usage following workstation changes.

11. Equipment Procurement

11.1 Where equipment does not meet the minimum standard it should be replaced.

11.2 Where specialist equipment may be required, e.g. due to a pre-existing medical condition, further advice should be sought from the Health and Safety team.

11.3 All new equipment purchased for DSE use must meet the minimum requirements of the Display Screen Equipment Regulations (refer to Appendix 1).

11.4 Routine/common equipment can be purchased via Oracle.

12.   Monitoring and Review

12.1   This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if there have been significant changes in Trust arrangements or legislations.

12.2   Managers are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policy locally by ensuring that all workstations are assessed and all relevant staff undertakes training.

13.   References

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE): Guidance and regulations
http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/guidance.htm

Working with VDUs.   Revision 3: http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf

HSE: VDU workstation checklist: http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/guidance.htm

Workstation minimum requirements

All workstations need to meet the minimum standards as summarised below:

1.   Workstation including equipment

1.2   Display screen

The display screen should be flicker free (as perceived by 90% of the users). Characters must be well defined.   Brightness and contrast controls must be adjustable.   The screen should be adjustable to facilitate swivelling and tilting to the person's comfort. There should be some means of adjusting screen height where this is necessary.

1.3   Keyboard

The keyboard design should allow workers to locate and activate keys quickly and accurately without discomfort. The keyboard should be tiltable if required. Keyboards need to be of such design that they do not cause discomfort when used. Where a user/operator is experiencing discomfort whilst typing, they may in certain circumstances benefit from ergonomic or split keyboards.

Methods of supporting the arm/hand/wrist, which the *user* finds comfortable, may need to be considered. This may be by use of armrests on the chair or by resting the arms on the table, some people may find wrist supports of benefit but this does not apply to all.   There should be a space of about 5cm between edge of the work surface and the keyboard to enable person to rest their hands.

1.4   Work desk/surface

Work surface should be large enough for the activities being performed and for all of the equipment that is to fit on it. This is normally longer than desks without DSE.

Document holders are useful for work with copy typing, particularly for workers who have to repeatedly look from the screen to a document and back, and for anyone who finds difficulty in refocusing. Where a holder is used, working documents should be positioned at a height and viewing distance similar to the screen. The holder should be of a low reflectance; stable; and not reduce the readability of source documents. Users who have to look at the keyboard to type may find it better to place documents close to the keyboard, for example between the keyboard and the screen.

Frequently used items should be within easy reach whilst those used less often may be further away.

Documents that may be referred to should ideally be at the same level as the screen so as to minimise head movements and re-focusing of the eyes.

1.5   Chair

The chair should allow the user to achieve a comfortable position. The ideal position should be of having a right angle at the knees and the elbows. Seat height adjustments should be able to accommodate the needs of users for the tasks performed; seat height, back height and tilt of back support should be adjustable.

The height/back support does not need to adjust separately from the seat.

Automatic backrests are acceptable provided they give adequate support.

Chairs with arms should not interfere with freedom of movement, for example by stopping the user getting the chair under the work surface to sit comfortably at the keyboard.

The chair must have a 5 star base with castors suitable for the type of floor surface, normally either hard floor or carpet as appropriate.

Foot rests are only necessary for individual users who are unable to rest their feet flat on the floor whilst sitting in a good working posture and should not be used under any other circumstances.

2.   Environment

2.1   Space requirements

Prolonged sitting in a static position can be harmful. There should be adequate space (on desk and around person) to enable postural changes of the thighs, knees, lower legs and feet under the work surface and between furniture components.

There should be sufficient space for the worker to sit down and get up without difficulty. The height of the work surface should allow a comfortable position for the arms and wrists, if a keyboard, mouse or other input device is used.

2.2   Lighting

There should be sufficient lighting without generating glare. There should not be a large contrast between the screen and the surroundings. Where documents are referred to, there should be sufficient illumination to read the text without causing eye strain.

Reflections and glare can cause visual fatigue and stress as can an imbalance between brightly and dimly lit areas. The screen should be positioned so as not to cause reflections on the screen or other parts of the workstation. Avoid having the screen or the user directly facing windows or bright lights. Adjust curtains or blinds to prevent unwanted light.

Anti-glare screen filters should only be considered as a last resort if other measures fail to solve the problem.

2.3   Noise

Noise from printers and other machinery etc. should not be great enough to impair the user's concentration or prevent conversation. Noise can be reduced by replacement, soundproofing or repositioning of the equipment.

2.4   <u>Heat and humidity</u>

Heat must not be excessive so as to cause discomfort and adequate ventilation and humidity should be maintained at levels which prevent discomfort and problems of sore eyes.

3.   Task design and software

Inappropriate <u>task design</u> is amongst the causes of stress at work. Stress impacts on staff motivation, effectiveness and efficiency and in some cases it can lead to significant health problems. Tasks should take allow for variety, realistic workload, regular breaks, and user discretion.

Poor <u>software</u> design will lead to increased mistakes and decreased output.   The software system must be suitable for the task, easy to use and adaptable to the level of the user's knowledge.

East London **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Self-Assessment

Name:		Manager:	
Office location:		Assessment Date:	

Role & DSE activities:	Approximately daily DSE use (%):

Introduction and Instruction:

All staff are required to carry out a self-assessment of their workstation(s) by completing the below form. This assessment can only be completed after the on-line training has been undertaken.

For any negative response, corrective actions taken or required should be recorded in the 'Comments' column. Please also refer to Appendix 1 'Workstation minimum requirements' (Display Screen Equipment Policy) for guidance on possible solutions.

A copy of the completed form should be sent to your manager who is responsible for ensuring that minimum workstation requirements are met. Health and Safety can be contacted for advice and support regarding suitable equipment or undertake a more formal assessment for example in cases where health issues are identified. Guidance on suitable equipment can be obtained from the Health and Safety Team.

If there are health or disability issues, the manager should seek support from Health and Safety in the first instance.

	Risk Factors	**Yes**	**No**	**Comments e.g. Actions taken/required**
1.	**CHAIR:** click here to find out how to adjust the chair			
1.1	Is the chair height adjusted so that the knees are slightly lower than the hips or roughly at right angle?			
1.2	Is the chair back height and tilt adjusted to support the spine?			
1.3	Are your feet flat on the floor?			
1.4	Is the seat depth adequate to avoid pressure on the back of the thighs and knees when seated?			
1.5	If your chair has arms, does it prevent you from getting close to the desk?			
1.6	Is your back supported when working on the computer?			
1.7	Can the chair swivel?			

Risk Factors	Yes	No	Comments e.g. Actions taken/required
2.	**WORK SURFACE**		
2.1	Is the work surface at a suitable height to prevent awkward postures, e.g. sitting too low, un-relaxed shoulders and arms?		
2.2	Are frequently used items positioned close by?		
2.3	Is there sufficient space to accommodate needed accessories?		
2.4	Is the desk largely 'clutter free'?		
2.5	Is there adequate space under the desk to enable you to stretch your legs and change position regularly?		
3.	**SCREEN/MONITOR**		
3.1	Is the screen adjustable?		
3.2	Is the monitor position at the correct height and distance?		
3.3	Does the screen swivel and tilt?		
3.4	Are the brightness and contrast adequate?		
3.5	Are the onscreen characters readable and images stable?		
4	**KEYBOARD**		
4.1	Is the keyboard directly in front of you, aligned with the monitor (to prevent awkward posture/twisting)?		
4.2	Is there at least a 10cm space in front of the keyboard to rest hands in between keying in?		
4.2	Are the keys non-sticky (prevent forceful keying in)?		
4.4	Is the keyboard tiltable?		
4.5	Are the characters on the keys easily readable?		
5	**MOUSE**		
5.1	Is the mouse positioned close to you?		
5.2	Are you able to use the mouse with your wrists flat and fingers in a neutral position (without excessive gripping action)?		
5.3	Does the mouse work smoothly?		
5.4	Is the hand left on the mouse when the mouse is not being used?		
5.6	Is there a mouse mat?		
5.7	Do you periodically clean the mouse?		
6	**ENVIRONMENT**		
6.1	Is there sufficient surrounding room to manoeuvre in and out of the chair?		
6.2	Is there glare and reflection from light sources affecting on-screen viewing?		
6.3	Is there adequate lighting?		
6.4	Is the office temperature reasonable (between 16 and 30 degrees?		
6.5	Is there adequate ventilation?		
6.6	Are you affected by excessive noise, causing disruption to concentration?		
6.7	Is the flooring supportive of the chair e.g. lockable castors for chairs operating on non-carpeted floor surface?		

	Risk Factors	Yes	No	Comments e.g. Actions taken/required
7	**LAPTOP**			
7.1	Do you use a laptop continually for two or more hours daily?			
8.	**WORK ORGANISATION**			
8.1	Do you work at the computer for prolonged periods of time without taking a break in activity or from the screen?			
8.2	Do you (frequently) to cradle the receiver on y our shoulder because you have to use the telephone whilst keying in or using the mouse?			
8.3	Do you regularly undertake copy typing/data entry?			
9	**HEALTH**			
9.1	Do you experience any headache, blurred vision, watery or tired eyes whilst working at the computer?			
9.2	Do you require glasses to view the DSE?			
9.3	Have you had an eye test within the last two years?			
9.4	Do you wear varifocals or bifocals? These require the monitor to be flat on the desk to prevent excessive head and neck movement.			
9.5	Do you have any existing musculo-skeletal disorders? If yes, please explain in column three.			
9.6	Is there a recognised disability, e.g. partially sighted, long term conditions?			

Signature of Staff:	Manager signature
Date:	Date: