THE HIGHLAND & WESTERN ISLES VALUATION JOINT BOARD

Policy & Guidance on the use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

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Introduction

The Board recognises the importance of employee health, safety and wellbeing when carrying out tasks using Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and that risk assessments are an important part of that process.

The objectives of this guidance are:

- to provide and maintain a safe working environment
- for all activities involving DSE to be conducted so as to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all users.

This will be achieved through the application of an effective risk management system for all DSE users, to ensure all significant risks are identified and controlled as far as is reasonably practicable.

Legislation/Board Guidance

This guidance has been developed in line with the requirements of the Health and Safety Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Regulations 1992 and should be read in conjunction with:

- Health, safety and wellbeing policy
- Guidance on risk assessment
- Homeworking Policy
- ICT Security Policy for mobile and flexible working

Definitions

DSE stands for display screen equipment. It is also sometimes referred to as **VDU** – visual display unit.

A workstation is an assembly comprising:

- display screen equipment, including computer, screen, laptops and any input device e.g. keyboard, mouse;
- any optional accessories to the display screen equipment;
- desk, work surface or other item peripheral to the display screen equipment; and
- the immediate work environment around the display screen equipment / workstation

This includes the use of laptops, tablet computers, smart phones, etc.

A "**User**" is an employee who is required to use display screen equipment, habitually, as a significant part of their normal work or working day, e.g. for continuous periods of at least an hour or more at any one time. All employees who use display screen equipment daily will be considered to be a DSE User.

Responsibilities

General health, safety and wellbeing responsibilities are set out in the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy. In addition, specific responsibilities in relation to DSE are set out below.

The Management Team must ensure that:

- Adequate arrangements are made so that, so far as is reasonably practicable, employees can use DSE equipment without risks to their health.
- There is budget provision to address actions arising from DSE Assessments.
- Monitoring arrangements have been made, are effective and being complied with.

Line Managers/Supervisors are responsible for:

- Identifying DSE Users.
- Identifying the employee work style and ensure they are fully informed of the arrangements and their responsibilities associated with the work style.
- Ensuring all employees have received awareness training on DSE work.
- Ensuring that suitable and sufficient DSE risk assessments have been carried out (including new starts on induction) and these assessments are reviewed at regular intervals or when a specific need arises.
- Management of the workload of staff to ensure that they get sufficient pause and rest breaks from the DSE.
- Encouraging staff to have eye and eyesight tests on commencement of being a DSE user and to be retested on a 2 yearly basis.
- Ensuring actions following risk assessment and eye tests are carried out.
- Addressing any health concerns raised by an employee associated with their DSE use and, where appropriate, instigating an occupational health referral or referral to the current provider of specialist equipment.

Employees have a responsibility to:

- Use DSE in accordance with any instructions and training given, including the DSE self-assessments and adjusting hot desking work stations before use.
- Report to management any faults relating to DSE equipment, furniture or working environment.
- Take appropriate frequent breaks away or changes in activity from the DSE. This is to break up long periods of sitting in one position or lengthy periods of repetitive data inputting; varying movement will prevent physical and visual fatigue.
- Adjust furniture or equipment so as to reduce unnecessary discomfort.
- Report any concerns about workload to their line manager.
- Report to management any discomfort or symptoms associated with use of DSE.
- Ensure that, when home working, similar adjustments are made to their home workstation.
- Disclose, when requested, activities outside of work that potentially may be exacerbating their ill health or injury (e.g. the level of computer use at home, time spent computer gaming, etc.) where ill health or injury, associated with DSE use, is reported.

- Cooperate with their manager to address the factors linked to DSE use related ill health or injury.

Risk Assessment

All Users must complete a DSE self- assessment form and discuss the findings with their line manager. DSE information can be found in the electronic library.

The Line Manager should address any issues arising from the assessment. If specialist equipment or ergonomic advice is required a referral to an ergonomic specialist is recommended. Referral requests should be made to the Central Admin Team.

Laptops

Laptops are designed to provide portability and mobility; however they can lead to additional problems.

Laptop computers should not be used solely and in their entirety as permanent workstations and must comply with the minimum standard if they are in prolonged use, i.e. a docking station, external keyboard and external mouse should all be provided if it is to be used for more than an hour.

Where two screens (e.g. laptop screen and separate monitor) are required, a riser should be used to ensure that the laptop screen is at the correct height and that both screens are at the same height.

Other safety guidelines when using laptops are:

- When connecting the equipment to the mains ensure that cables are not in the path of other users.
- Never walk around a building whilst using your laptop, or carry the equipment in its open position.
- Always place your laptop on a desk, never balance on your knee or on piles of books, papers etc. This will ensure there is sufficient ventilation to stop it from overheating and prevent heat- related injuries to the user.
- Carry out a visual inspection: after disconnection from the power, examine the equipment, cable and plug for signs of damage i.e. cuts, abrasions (excluding light scuffing) to the cable covering, plug, etc. Ensure that there are no loose wires; or burn marks/staining which can indicate overheating.
- Consider manual handling issues: use a rucksack bag that can be carried with the weight distributed on both shoulders or, by ensuring that shoulder straps are long enough to allow the load to be carried across the body rather than on one shoulder.
- Do not leave equipment where it is visible in a parked car, taking extra care in public places or in other situations (or at times) where the risk of theft may be greater.

Hand held devices

The frequent use of mobile phones etc. can cause irritation of the muscles and tendons at the base of the thumb. Although this is treatable, the following good practice is recommended:

- Avoid constant thumb-typing by switching to use other fingers.
- Only use hand held devices to send short messages.
- Leave non-urgent emails to when you are back at your computer.

- Use shortcuts – the task will be done more quickly and it reduces the need to scroll.
- Use the Auto Text feature - this automatically corrects common spelling mistakes and allows for shortcut words.

If an employee reports musculoskeletal problems relating to use of Smartphones then the use of a Bluetooth-enabled keyboard should be considered.

Information and training

An e-learning course on safe working with computers is available via the health and safety section of My Online Learning (https://tracking.brightwave.co.uk/LNT/Highland/Login.aspx).

Line managers should ensure that this is completed as part of the induction process and ensure that all other users have completed the course, and their self- assessment, as part of their ERD. The assessment should be redone each time the setup is changed.

Users should be provided with a copy of the HSE's leaflet Working with VDUs which is available to download from their website (http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.htm).

Eye sight testing

DSE users are entitled to eye and eyesight tests and the Board encourages users to arrange an eye and eyesight test following induction and re-testing every 2 years, or sooner if recommended by an Optometrist.

The Board will also contribute a fixed amount towards the cost of glasses **if:**

- They are **specifically** and **solely** for DSE use or;
- The normal glasses or contact lenses include a **special (intermediate)** prescription for the distance at which the screen is viewed

When arranging an eye and eyesight test the employee must fill out section A of the Eye and Eyesight Testing form (available from the Central Admin Team), and inform their manager that they are planning to attend an eye and eyesight test. The manager must fill in the section B of the form and then Section C must be filled out by Optometrist.

Once completed, the manager must arrange for the employee to be refunded/Optometrist paid depending on the agreement between employee and Optometrist.

Record Keeping

Managers must keep records of:

- DSE Users.
- Dates of completed DSE Assessments.
- Details of refunds prescription of glasses, and
- Referrals to current specialist furniture supplier for additional/specialist needs.

These records should be retained for the length of the employee's employment.

Monitoring and Review

This guidance will be reviewed regularly.

22 November 2019