

---

## Safe Use of Display Screen Equipment and Mobile Devices Policy

---

*Solent NHS Trust policies can only be considered to be valid and up-to-date if viewed on the intranet. Please visit the intranet for the latest version.*

Purpose of Agreement	This policy details Solent NHS Trust's commitment to managing the use of Display Screen Equipment and the arrangements in place for assessments and remedial actions
Document Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy
Reference Number	Solent NHST/Policy/ HS07
Version	Version 6
Name of Approving Committees/Groups	Policy Steering Group, Management Meeting
Operational Date	October 2020
Document Review Date	October 2023
Document Sponsor (Job Title)	Chief Finance Officer and Deputy CEO
Document Manager (Job Title)	Health Safety Manager
Document developed in consultation with	Policy Steering Group Occupational Health and wellbeing Team, Learning and development Team, Solent NHS Health and safety sub committee
Intranet Location	Business Zone > Policies, SOPs and Clinical Guidelines
Website Location	Publication Scheme/ Policies and Procedures
Keywords (for website/intranet uploading)	Display, Screen, User, Eye sight test, workstation, DSE, Laptop, Mobile Devices, Home working, Policy, HS07

### Amendments Summary:

Amend No	Issued	Page(s)	Subject	Action Date
1	31/10/2009		Minor Changes	31/10/2009
2	22/01/2010		Minor Changes	22/01/2010
3	20/01/2010		Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment and inclusion of Appendix 3	12/02/2010
4	01/09/2015		changed work station self assessment form and reflected H&S legislation up dates , included guidance on safe use of mobile devices. Eye sight	01/09/2015
5	01/03/2019	Various	Eye sight test section changed to reflect current procedure. Additional roles and responsibilities added, various minor changes throughout to reflect current process adopted by Solent	01/04/2019
6	01/09/2020	Various	Home working guidance and support changed as part of the reset and recovery phase from Covid with employees working more frequently from home using IT equipment and accessories	29/10/2020

### Review Log

Include details of when the document was last reviewed:

Version Number	Review Date	Lead Name	Ratification Process	Notes
1	31/10/2009	MH		Review of policy
2	22/01/2010	MH		Review of policy
3	Oct 2012	DK		Review of policy
4	01/09/2016	DK		Review of Policy
5	01/03/2019	DK		Review of Policy
6	01/09/2020	DK		Review of Policy

### **Executive Summary of Policy**

This policy gives comprehensive guidance on work with visual display units and is inclusive of the use of mobile devices.

By the means of this policy and arrangements, Solent NHS Trust aims to ensure the health, safety and Welfare of all Solent NHS staff who work with display screen equipment (DSE). Solent NHS Trust 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 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. The policy sets out a process for designated users to follow in regards to educating them on how to self-manage their working environments and provides suitable assessments that can support staff and managers in ensuring all users are not put at any additional risk when using display screen equipment whether at a place of work or working from a home environment

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.

## Table of Contents

Item	Contents	Page
1	Introduction & Purpose	5
2	Scope & Definitions	5
3	Process/Requirements	6
4	Roles & Responsibilities	8
5	Training	10
6	Equality & Diversity and Mental Capacity Act	10
7	Success Criteria/Monitoring Compliance	10
8	Review	10
9	References and links to other documents	10
10	Glossary and Definitions	11
	<b><u>Appendices</u></b>	
	Appendix A: DSE use and its effects on health	13
	Appendix B: Minimum requirements for display screen work stations and equipment	14
	Appendix C: General Questions and Answers regarding the use of display screen equipment	15
	Appendix D: Equality impact assessment	18
	Appendix E: How the Eye Examination Scheme Works	21
	Appendix F: DSE Work Station Checklist (paper copy)	23
	Appendix G: Ideal Seating Position for DSE Work	33
	Appendix H: Guidance for Staff Using Electronic Devices for Mobile Working	34
	Appendix I: Home Working Self-Checklist	37

# Safe Use of Display Screen Equipment and Mobile Devices Policy

## 1. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

- 1.1. Solent NHS Trust recognises the 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, Solent NHS Trust aims to ensure the health and safety of all Solent NHS staff who work with display screen equipment (DSE). Under the Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (As amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002), Solent NHS Trust 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 procedure has 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 muscular skeletal problems, eye strain when using display screen equipment particularly when wearing contact lenses, 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 caused by poor posture.
  - 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 A).
- 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 A).

## 2. SCOPE & DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 This policy applies to bank, locum, permanent and fixed term contract employees (including apprentices) who hold a contract of employment or engagement with the Trust, and secondees (including students), volunteers (including Associate Hospital Managers), Non-Executive Directors, and those undertaking research working within Solent NHS Trust, in line with Solent NHS Trust's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy. It also applies to

external contractors, Agency workers, and other workers who are assigned to Solent NHS Trust.

**DEFINITIONS are found in Section 10 Glossary and Definition**

### **3. PROCESS/REQUIREMENTS**

#### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 3.1 An 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 before a person becomes a User or as soon as possible thereafter. They will be reviewed after significant changes in the work, workstation, environment, or user (e.g. diagnosis of WRULD, pregnancy etc.) and when returning from long term sickness or maternity leave.
- 3.2 The initial assessment will be carried out by the User, completing the DSE Workstation assessment checklist (Refer to Appendix F DSE Work Station Checklist) and / or Appendix I home working Self checklist
- 3.3 Once completed it will be passed to the line manager. The line manager will check the completed self-assessment and ensure that actions / recommendations are reasonable and are followed up.
- 3.4 **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, muscular-skeletal 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
  - Change of work base

#### **DAILY WORK ROUTINE**

- 3.5 Prolonged DSE use could include periodic breaks or changes in activity. The timing of the break is more important than the length of the break. 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.
- 3.6 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.

#### **Staff who work from home**

- 3.7 Where a DSE user works from home the working the arrangement in this policy apply. Solent NHS Trust should meet the needs where possible in regard to some equipment with users taking equipment home such as keyboards, mouse, riser. For larger items (e.g. ergonomic

chairs, desks) Solent are encouraging users to try other ways of creating a comfortable working environment (refer to Appendix I home working Self checklist)

It is acknowledged that for some DSE users working at home may not be ideal, but due to the pandemic it has been necessary as part of the stay at home advice.

This has occurred quickly for many it is a very new way of working and for some DSE users<sup>i</sup> home working has not caused an issue but others might be finding it challenging for a number of reasons and it is important that we recognise these, assess them and reduce their impact as much as possible.

It may take a little time to adjust, we are all different as people, our personal fitness, shape and size, underlying physical and mental health problems, how we work, and our home circumstances such as our environment, space for an office or a dining room table and other family members, pets and caring responsibilities at home.

The self-checklist (Refer to Appendix I home working checklist) is intended to help assess DSE users own situation and to facilitate a discussion between DSE users and your manager so that you can work together to look at your home working situation and what steps can be practically and reasonably taken to reduce risk where this is indicated. Further guidance is provided in the link below

[http://intranet.solent.nhs.uk/EmergencyZone/ Health and Wellbeing Support/TeamDocument/A Guide to Working from Home - COVID 19.pdf](http://intranet.solent.nhs.uk/EmergencyZone/Health%20and%20Wellbeing%20Support/TeamDocument/A%20Guide%20to%20Working%20from%20Home%20-%20COVID%2019.pdf)

### **SHARED WORKSTATION**

- 3.8 Where one workstation is used by more than one DSE user whether simultaneously or in shifts, each DSE user should visually check and analyse prior to use that all equipment has enough range of adjustments to accommodate the DSE user as covered within the workstation set ups described within the policy

### **USE OF PORTABLE SYSTEMS (LAPTOPS AND TOUGHBOOK'S)**

- 3.9 Portable computers are subject to the same regulations. Difficulties associated with DSE work can be exacerbated when portable equipment is involved as laptops tend to have smaller keyboards and screens that cannot be separated from the screen. This can make it difficult for a comfortable working posture to be achieved. 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 portable systems is known to lead to a range of muscular-skeletal (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 portable 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 H: Guidance for Staff Using Electronic Devices for Mobile Working)

## EYE & EYESIGHT TEST

- 3.10 Solent NHS Trust are required to provide recognised Users of DSE, who so request it, with an appropriate eye and eyesight test. Tests will be provided on request to:
- Employees who become users.
  - All employees at regular intervals following the initial test (providing employees are still users).
- 3.11 There is no reliable long term occupational evidence that DSE work damages eyesight but it may make Users more aware of pre-existing visual defects (refer to Appendix A DSE use and its effects on health).
- 3.12 An appropriate Keystone eye test can be carried out by a competent person. Employees can be offered an eye test through Solent NHS Trust's Corporate Eye Care scheme ONLY. No other opticians can be used in this scheme. Solent NHS Trust has an arrangement using a Corporate voucher scheme. This voucher must be obtained via the Occupational Health Department prior to any examination commencing, the voucher covers the cost of the sight test and for the cost to enable employee's to select a pair of glasses from a range of glasses frames and lenses, where these are recommended solely for DSE work. Employees will be required to pay any additional costs should they wish to choose more expensive frames or require prescription lenses attracting a higher charge than would be payable for lenses required solely for DSE work. (Refer to Appendix E How the Eye Examination Scheme Works)

Employees who experience *health problems* which may be related to using a VDU screen can

- The individual may either make an appointment with Occupational Health and Wellbeing Department for Keystone sight test, which includes a sight test for middle distance vision (the distance used to read a Visual Display Screen (VDU)). Staff who choose to attend OH will benefit from a general discussion about any workstation problems or general health/wellbeing problems
- decide not to have a sight test in Occupational Health and Wellbeing department by requesting through Occupational Health a Specsavers voucher either by contacting them on 0300123 3392 or email [snhs.ohservices@solent.nhs.uk](mailto:snhs.ohservices@solent.nhs.uk). Once contact has been made a voucher will be sent to their Solent email address
- Eye sight test/examination is recommended every 2 years or sooner if clinically indicated.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- 3.13 Guidance for Staff refer to Appendix C General Questions and Answers regarding the use of display screen equipment and Appendix G Ideal Seating Position for DSE Work and Appendix H; Guidance for Staff Using Electronic Devices for Mobile Working.

## 4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 **The Chief Executive Officer** for Solent NHS Trust is responsible for ensuring the organisation complies with all relevant Health & Safety legislation of which working with display screens is a part and will be responsible for ensuring that individual staff are identified and given responsibility for the development, implementation and subsequent monitoring of display screen. The Chief Executive Officer will ensure that sufficient resources are provided to enable the policy to be implemented and to remain effective.

4.2 **Managers (Facility Managers, Support Services Managers, Premises Managers and responsible persons both clinical and non-clinical)** 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:

- Identify which of their staff are Users and support the completion of the DSE self-assessment form
- Identify and implement any necessary remedial action arising from the DSE assessment / checklist (section 3) within a reasonable timescale.
- Any actions highlighted as a result of the DSE Risk assessment / checklist 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, Health and safety Manager, and/or Estates teams).
- Ensure workstations meet the minimum requirements (Refer to Appendix B: Minimum requirements for display screen work stations and equipment).
- Enable Users to have eye and eyesight tests
- The assessment will be reassessed if required the assessment undertaken to be made available to the user and upon request to others (H&S/ Occupational Health Department or other internal/ external auditors). All records to be kept for a minimum of three years

4.2.1 Managers can seek further advice and assistance from the Occupational Health Department/ Health and Safety Manager, with regard to DSE assessments and associated action plans.

4.3 **Employees** 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 Appendix F: DSE Work Station Checklist and or Appendix I home working Self checklist and section 3.2)
- Make full and proper use of any equipment or system of work provided for their protection and wellbeing.
- When working employees are to ensure their set-up is as ergonomically compliant as possible, e.g. suitable work surface, adjustable chair, effective positioning of keyboard and pointing device and reasonable working environment. Report any problems, concerns or potential hazards they encounter as soon as possible, in line with the Reporting of Adverse Incident Policy Inform the employer 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.

4.4 **Occupational Health and Wellbeing Department** will provide

- eye and eyesight tests, on request, for all staff defined as users of DSE, provide support and assistance and refer employees for eye examination/sight tests through the Trust's Corporate Specsavers scheme, as appropriate.

4.4.1

- will advise on preventative and rehabilitative measures, including purchase and installation of any specialist equipment, fitness to work, phased returns and/ or redeployment.

- 4.5 **Estates and Facilities** will comply with the Estates Design Guide Section D Interiors which has been developed in consultation with Solent NHS Trust nominated stakeholders, in regards to office space: Standard equipment for all project builds, renovations and / or service moves. The application of the guidance will be on project by project bases in conjunction with statutory regulations together with any other project specific parameters arising from the location of the project/ specific clinical requirements.
- 4.6 **Information Communication Technology (ICT)** will support ICT kit for new starters and service requests for IT equipment and accessories.
- 4.6 **Agency Workers, Staff not directly employed by Solent NHS and Self Employed Personnel**  
Solent NHS Trust has a statutory duty of care and are responsible for providing a safe place, 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.

## 5. TRAINING

- 5.1 All staff within the workplace will receive an appropriate level of information, instruction on Induction including being made aware of DSE set up procedures and posture.

## 6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MENTAL CAPACITY

- 6.1 A thorough and systematic assessment of this policy has been undertaken in accordance with the Trust's Policy on Equality and Human Rights.
- 6.2. The assessment found that the implementation of and compliance with this policy has no impact on any Trust employee on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, faith, or sexual orientation. (refer to Appendix D: Equality impact assessment)

## 7. SUCCESS CRITERIA / MONITORING EFFECTIVENESS

- 7.1 The Occupational Health and Wellbeing Department will monitor the implementation of this policy on an annual basis by providing a report detailing the number of claims made by Solent NHS Trust staff by service for eye examination and Occupational referrals attributed to computer usage inclusive of how these requests are resolved. This will enable the Health & Safety manager to assess the spread of awareness of the policy and target any further work.

## 8. REVIEW

- 8.1 This document may be reviewed at any time at the request of either staff side or management but will automatically be reviewed 3 years from initial approval and thereafter on a triennial basis unless organisational changes, legislation, guidance or non-compliance prompt an earlier review.

## 9. REFERENCES AND LINKS TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

- 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
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Health and Safety Policy
- Reporting of Adverse Events Policy
- Hot Desk/ Shared Desk Policy
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations

## 10. GLOSSARY and DEFINITIONS

Display Screen Equipment **DSE**

Work-related upper limb disorder **WRULD**

Muscular-Skeletal **MSK**

Repetitive strain injury (**RSI**)

Information Communication Technology **ICT**

### Definitions

**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**

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

**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 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.

**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

**Portable computer, (Laptops).** A 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 portable computer commonly consists of a display screen with screen size of between 11 and 15 inches (measured across its diameter)

**Docking station.** A docking station is an arrangement of external equipment which could be connected to the portable 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 portable computer directly to an external screen, keyboard and mouse.

**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.

**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.

**Ergonomics** the study of the design of furniture and the way this effects people’s ability to work effectively

## **APPENDIX A**

### **DSE USE AND IT'S EFFECTS ON HEALTH**

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

Upper limb pains and discomfort, may present a variety of symptoms including pain, swollen soft tissue, restricted joint movement, loss of function and permanent disability. Sitting in a fixed position for long periods or awkward or rapid repetitive movement of the head, body or arms can cause pain or discomfort in the neck, shoulders or arms.

These symptoms usually disappear 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 staff 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

## **APPENDIX B**

### **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, or use of track ball (no mat needed) 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 muscular-skeletal 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.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **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?**

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 Trust 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 Trust employees. Agency staff should discuss any queries about this with their agency manager.

#### **What does 'vision screening' mean?**

This is a simple and useful way of assessing whether a full eye and eyesight test is advisable so that glasses may be prescribed. The screening assesses vision at 'DSE distance' and also near and distant vision.

#### **What are the Trust arrangements for eye and eye sight tests?**

If the need for eye and eyesight tests is identified by routine vision screening the Occupational Health Department refers the employee to the Trust Optometrist (optician).

In addition, staff who would like to exercise their rights for eye and eyesight tests under the DSE regulations can also ask their manager for an Occupational Health referral so that an appointment can be made with the Optometrist.

### **When does the Trust 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 Trust 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 musculoskeletal aches and pains be prevented?**

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 Trust 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 Trust Pregnancy Risk Assessment. The Trust 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, often referred to as 'teno'.

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 on an IR1 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. The Trust is acting to prevent work-related stress including preventing fatigue and frustration associated with DSE work and a question on this has been included in the DSE assessment.

**Does RSI still exist?**

It is said that RSI (the condition is not a strain and not an injury as such) never did exist, but the term is still used to describe the 'aches and pains' experienced by many people, especially when 'VDUs' first became commonplace.

The HSE now uses the term Work-related upper limb disorders (WRULDs) as a collective term for a range of disorders of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder and neck. It covers conditions with specific medical diagnoses (e.g. carpal tunnel) and other conditions often called repetitive strain injuries (RSI) used within the NHS

## Equality Analysis and Equality Impact Assessment

**Equality Analysis** is a way of considering the potential impact on different groups protected from discrimination by the Equality Act 2010. It is a legal requirement that places a duty on public sector organisations (The Public Sector Equality Duty) to integrate consideration of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion into their day-to-day business. The Equality Duty has 3 aims, it requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act of 2010;
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not;
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)** is a tool for examining the main functions and policies of an organisation to see whether they have the potential to affect people differently. Their purpose is to identify and address existing or potential inequalities, resulting from policy and practice development. Ideally, EIAs should cover all the strands of diversity and Inclusion. It will help us better understand its functions and the way decisions are made by:

- **considering the current situation**
- **deciding the aims and intended outcomes of a function or policy**
- **considering what evidence there is to support the decision and identifying any gaps**
- **ensuring it is an informed decision**

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

### Step 1: Scoping and Identifying the Aims

Service Line / Department	All Employees, Volunteers,	
Title of Change:		
What are you completing this EIA for? (Please select):	Policy	<i>(If other please specify here)</i>
What are the main aims / objectives of the changes	To Provide Guidance to Managers and Employees over the Management of all issues relating to working with display screen equipment whilst at work	

### Step 2: Assessing the Impact

Please use the drop-down feature to detail any positive or negative impacts of this document /policy on patients in the drop-down box below:

Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)	Action to address negative impact: <i>(e.g. adjustment to the policy)</i>
Sex			This Policy does not have Negative or positive impact on any protected characteristic such as Sex
Gender reassignment			This Policy does not have Negative or

			positive impact on any protected characteristic such as Gender Reassignment
Disability			This Policy does not have Negative or positive impact on any protected characteristic such as Disability
Age			This Policy does not have Negative or positive impact on any protected characteristic such as Age
Sexual Orientation			This Policy does not have Negative or positive impact on any protected characteristic such as Sexual Orientation
Pregnancy and maternity			This Policy does not have Negative or positive impact on any protected characteristic such as Pregnancy and Maternity
Marriage and civil partnership			This Policy does not have Negative or positive impact on any protected characteristic such as Marriage and Civil Partnership
Religion or belief			This Policy does not have Negative or positive impact on any protected characteristic such as Religion or Belief
Race			This Policy does not have Negative or positive impact on any protected characteristic such as Race

*If you answer yes to any of the following, you MUST complete the evidence column explaining what information you have considered which has led you to reach this decision.*

Assessment Questions	Yes / No	Please document evidence / any mitigations
In consideration of your document development, did you consult with others, for example, external organisations, service users, carers or other voluntary sector groups?)	Yes	There has been regular consultation with occupational health and wellbeing team, and the health and safety sub committee
Have you taken into consideration any regulations, professional standards?	Yes	Health and safety executive regulation working with display screen equipment Doc L26
In drafting your document have you identified any discrimination issues, and if so how have they been mitigated?	No	No this policy has no effect on the diversity of people it relates to and also does not discriminate against any one person or organisation based on the protected characteristics.

### Step 3: Review, Risk and Action Plans

How would you rate the overall level of impact / risk to the organisation?	Low	Medium	High
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What action needs to be taken to reduce or eliminate the negative impact?	N/A no negative impact identified
Who will be responsible for monitoring and regular review of the document / policy?	The Review of this policy and EIA will be conducted by the ASMS or H&S manager

**Step 4: Authorisation and sign off**

*I am satisfied that all available evidence has been accurately assessed for any potential impact on patients and groups with protected characteristics in the scope of this project / change / policy / procedure / practice / activity. Mitigation, where appropriate has been identified and dealt with accordingly.*

Equality Assessor:		Date:	
--------------------	--	-------	--

*This section is to be agreed and signed by the Head of Diversity and Inclusion in agreement with the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Lead:*

Diversity and Inclusion authoriser name:	
Date:	

## **APPENDIX E**

Solent NHS Trust 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. Employee must contact Occupational Health before going to Specsavers.
2. Keystone sight test is offered (this includes sight test for middle distance vision) which is the distance use to read VDU.
3. When sight problems related to **middle distance vision** are detected the employee will be given a Specsavers Voucher and asked to 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 Specsavers voucher will allow the individual to make an appointment at any Specsavers and receive an 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 use as an upgrade to other frame Ranges Specsavers can advise 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 trust 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 Specsaver

# **Intentionally left Blank**

**Due to DSE Workstation  
Assessment Checklist  
Printing layout below**

APPENDIX F

## DSE Workstation Assessment Checklist

<b>Service/ Department</b>	
<b>Workstation location (building name, floor number, room number etc)</b>	
<b>User name and Job Title:</b>	
<b>Checklist completed by:</b>	
<b>Assessment checked by:</b>	
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	
<b>Any further action needed? Please summarise details</b>	
<b>Follow-up action completed on:</b>	

This checklist should be given to individual DSE Users to complete.

Completed forms should then be reviewed by their Manager to identify any problems that require further attention. You should record your recommendations in the 'Action to take column'. Managers are to refer to Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service for unresolved health issues or where a particular medical condition has been notified.

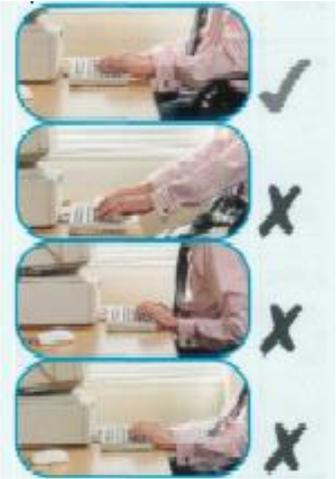
**DSE User:**

Please work through the checklist, ticking either the 'yes' or 'no' column against each risk factor

- 'Yes' answers require no further action
- 'No' answers will require investigation and/or remedial action by their Manager.



<p>Are the forearms horizontal and eyes at roughly the same height as the top of the DSE screen?</p>  <p>Can the chair be moved close in to the desk so that when the user is seated with arms parallel to the floor, the fingers rest comfortably on the 2<sup>nd</sup> row of keys?</p>			<p>You should have a straight back, supported by the chair, with relaxed shoulders.</p> <p>Adjust the chair height to get your arms in the right position, then adjust the screen height if necessary.</p> <p>The arms of chairs can stop you getting close enough to use the equipment comfortably. If necessary, remove the chair arms.</p>	
<p>Are the feet flat on the floor, without too much pressure from the seat on the backs of the legs?</p> <p>Is there sufficient clearance between the knees and the underside of the desk?</p>			<p>If not a foot rest may be needed.</p> <p>If your knees are higher than your hips in order to get your thighs under the desk, you may need to raise the desk.</p>	

Are adjustable window coverings provided and in adequate condition?			Check that the blinds work. Blinds with vertical slats can be more suitable than horizontal ones. Only consider anti-glare filters as a last resort.	
<b>Risk factor</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Things to consider</b>	<b>Action to take</b>
<p><b>3. Keyboards</b></p> <p>Is the keyboard separate from the screen?</p> <p>Does the keyboard tilt?</p> <p>Is it possible to find a comfortable keying position?</p> <p>Does the user have good keyboard technique?</p> 			<p>This is a requirement, unless the task makes it impracticable (e.g. where there is a need to use a portable).</p> <p>Tilt need not be built in.</p> <p>Good keyboard technique implies able to touch type without looking at the keys and using appropriate fingers to type. Not just two finger typing.</p> <p>It may encourage good keyboard technique to place the keyboard flat, to avoid excessive bending of the wrists.</p> <p>Try pushing the display screen further back to create more room for the keyboard, hands and wrists.</p> <p>You may require further training to prevent::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hands bent up at wrist;</li> <li>• Hitting the keys too hard;</li> <li>• Overstretching the fingers.</li> </ul>	

Are the characters on the keys easily readable?			Keyboards should be kept clean. If characters still cannot be read, the keyboard may need to be replaced.  Use a keyboard with a matt finish to reduce glare and/or reflection.	
<b>4. Mouse, trackball etc</b> Is the device suitable for tasks it is used for?			If you are having problems, try a different device. There are a variety of shapes and sizes available. Alternative devices like touch screens may be better for some tasks.	
<b>Risk factor</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Things to consider</b>	<b>Action to take</b>
<p>Is the device positioned close enough to the user?</p>  <p>Is there support for the device user's wrist and forearm?</p> <p>Does the device work smoothly at a speed that suits the user?</p>			<p>Most devices are best placed as close as possible e.g. right beside the keyboard.</p> <p>Make sure you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not overreach;</li> <li>• Leave hand on the device when it is not being used;</li> <li>• Keep a relaxed arm and a straight wrist;</li> <li>• Don't grip the mouse too tightly;</li> <li>• Use the whole arm to move the mouse rather than moving it just with the wrist; a device such as a Mousebean may help;</li> <li>• Learn to use keyboard shortcuts instead of the mouse.</li> </ul> <p>Support can be gained from, for example, the desk surface or arm of a chair. If not, a separate supporting device may help.</p> <p>Cleaning may be required e.g. mouse ball and rollers.</p> <p>Check the work surface is suitable. A mouse mat may be needed.</p>	

Can the user easily adjust software settings for speed and accuracy of pointer?			You may need training in how to adjust device settings.	
<b>Risk factor</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Things to consider</b>	<b>Action to take</b>
<b>5. Display Screen</b>  Are the characters clear and readable?  Is the text size comfortable to read?  Is the image stable, ie free of flicker and jitter?  Are the brightness and/or contrast adjustable?  Does the screen swivel and tilt?			<p>Make sure the screen is clean and cleaning materials are available</p> <p>Check that the text and background colours work well together.</p> <p>Software settings may need adjusting to change text size.</p> <p>Try using different screen colours to reduce flicker, eg darker background and lighter text. If there are still problems, get the set-up checked, eg by the equipment supplier.</p> <p>Separate adjustment controls are not essential, provided the user can read the screen easily at all times.</p> <p>Swivel and tilt need not be built in; you can add a swivel and tilt mechanism. However, you may need to replace the screen if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• swivel/tilt is absent or unsatisfactory;</li> <li>• work is intensive; and/or</li> <li>• the user has problems getting the screen to a comfortable position.</li> </ul>	

<p>Can the screen monitor height be adjustable?</p> <p>Is the screen free from glare and reflections?</p> <p>Are adjustable window coverings provided and in adequate condition?</p>			<p>The users forehead must aligned with the top 1/3 of the monitor</p> <p>Use a mirror placed in front of the screen to check where reflections are coming from.</p> <p>You might need to move the screen or even the desk and/or shield the screen from the source of the reflections.</p> <p>Screens that use dark characters on a light background are less prone to glare and reflections.</p> <p>Check that blinds work. Blinds with vertical slats can be more suitable than horizontal ones.</p> <p>If these measures do not work, consider anti-glare screen filters as a last resort and seek specialist help.</p>	
<p><b>6. Furniture</b></p> <p>Is the work surface large enough for all the necessary equipment, papers etc?</p> <p>Can the user comfortably reach all the equipment and papers they need to use?</p> <p>Are surfaces free from glare and reflection?</p>			<p>Create more room by moving printers, reference materials etc elsewhere.</p> <p>Rearrange equipment, papers etc to bring frequently used things within easy reach.</p> <p>A document holder may be needed for copy typing, positioned to minimise uncomfortable head and eye movements.</p> <p>Consider mats or blotters to reduce reflections and glare.</p>	

<b>Risk factor</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Things to consider</b>	<b>Action to take</b>
<p><b>7. Software</b></p> <p>Is the software suitable for the task?</p>			<p>Software should help you to carry out the task, minimise stress and be user-friendly.</p> <p>Check that you have had appropriate training in using the software. If not, ask for training to be provided.</p>	
<p><b>8. Environment</b></p> <p>Is there enough room to change position and vary movement?</p> <p>Is the lighting suitable e.g. not too bright or too dim to work comfortably?</p> <p>Does the air feel comfortable?</p>			<p>Space is needed to move, stretch and fidget.</p> <p>Consider reorganising the office layout and check for obstructions.</p> <p>Cables should be tidy and not a trip or snag hazard.</p> <p>You should be able to control the light levels, e.g. by adjusting window blinds or light switches.</p> <p>Consider shading or repositioning light sources or providing local lighting e.g. desk lamps (ensure lights do not cause glare by reflecting off walls or other surfaces).</p> <p>DSE and other equipment can dry the air. Circulate fresh air if possible.</p> <p>Plants may help. Consider a humidifier if discomfort is severe.</p> <p>Contact lens wearers may experience discomfort due to dry eyes. Try to blink more often, or use tear-substitute drops.</p>	
<b>Risk factor</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Things to consider</b>	<b>Action to take</b>
<p>Are levels of heat comfortable?</p>			<p>Can heating be better controlled? More ventilation or air-conditioning may be required if there is a lot of electronic equipment</p>	

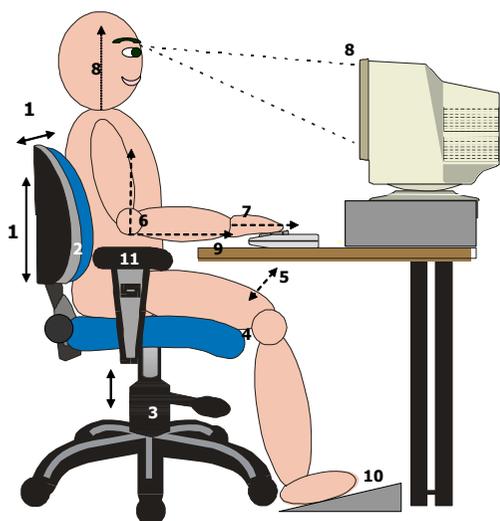
<p>Are the levels of noise comfortable?</p>			<p>in the room. Or can you move away from the heat source?</p> <p>Consider moving sources of noise e.g. printers away from user. If not, consider soundproofing.</p>	
<p><b>9. Work routine</b> Do you design your work to get regular breaks?</p>			<p>Be aware that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tired muscles will ache and need to be stretched;</li> <li>• Lengthy periods of intense work must be avoided;</li> <li>• You need to take a break from the screen at least every hour, <u>before</u> you get tired;</li> <li>• Many short breaks are better than longer, less frequent ones;</li> <li>• You should do other work, away from the screen;</li> <li>• Positioning the printer away from your desk will encourage you to get up and move;</li> <li>• You should not sit in the same position for long periods;</li> <li>• You should change your posture as often as practicable.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>10. General</b> Has the checklist covered all the problems you may have working with DSE?</p> <p>Can you confirm that you do not experience discomfort or other symptoms which you attribute to working with DSE?</p> <p>Have you been advised of your entitlement to eye and eyesight testing?</p>				

<p>Do you take regular breaks working away from DSE?</p> <p>Please write details of any additional problems .</p>				
---	--	--	--	--

## APPENDIX G

### Ideal seated position for DSE work

1. The seat back rest should be adjusted so you are sitting upright
2. Good lumbar support should be achieved (i.e. the lower back should be supported)
3. Seat height should be adjusted to achieve 4 – 7 below
4. There should be no excess pressure on the underside of your thighs and back of knees.
5. There should be room under the desk to allow changes in posture (no obstacles)
6. Forearms should be horizontal and elbows approximately at right angles
7. There should be minimal bending of the wrists and hands, they should be horizontal
8. Screen should be at arms length and height and angle should be adjusted to allow a comfortable head position with the neck and head straight
9. Ensure there is space in front of the keyboard to support your hands/wrists during pauses in keying. Place mouse close to keyboard
10. A foot support should be provided if your feet do not now touch the ground
11. If seat arm-rests are provided these should not prevent you from pushing your chair under the desk or should be adjustable in height



## APPENDIX H

### 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.

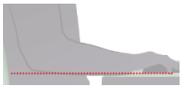
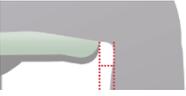
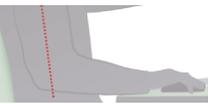
Where a member of staff is provided with a laptop computer, the user must use the laptop as much as possible on a desk or workstation surface and attach it to either a docking station and/or external monitor

#### 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>Try</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 mins.

**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.
- Do not work with the laptop on your lap.
- Do not use a laptop when lying on the bed. This causes strain to the neck and back.
- Use a suitable non-reflective work surface if possible.

**Working in Patients Homes**

- Use an appropriate chair that gives posture support avoid using a laptop whilst sitting on a sofa or easy chair Do not work with the laptop on your lap use a table or suitable heighted solid top
- Do not use a laptop when sitting on patients bed. This causes strain to the neck and back.
- Use a suitable non-reflective work surface if possible.

**Staff are encouraged to work from work bases or cars if not safe/unable to in patient home**

**Working with a Laptop in Cars**

Laptops should not be used in cars. However, on occasions this may be unavoidable in which case:

- Never use your laptop/tablet/mobile device when driving.
- Do not use a laptop whilst sitting in the driver’s seat with it on your lap or sited on the passenger seat.
- Sit in the passenger seat if you have to use the laptop. Adjust the seat to provide plenty of legroom, and if you have a briefcase put it under the laptop to raise it slightly. This will improve posture for your neck and wrists.
- Limit the time you use the laptop to a maximum of 30 minutes.

**Working with a Laptop on Planes & Trains**

- Avoid using a laptop on a plane. Reclining seats limit space and will therefore inhibit a beneficial posture.
- If you do need to use your laptop on a plane, request a bulkhead (compartment wall) seat with additional space that will provide a little more room to achieve a comfortable working position.

- When on a train, avoid working in seats with tables attached to the rear of seats in front of you.
- Try to use the more spacious communal tables. Place the laptop away from the edge of the table in order to allow you to rest your arms.

Screen privacy/PID?

### **Personal Safety**

Always be conscious of your personal safety when carrying or using your **Laptop, Notepad, or Handhelds etc.** Take sensible precautions such as:- Plan your tasks to avoid situations where you are likely to be a lone worker in circumstances where theft is likely. Take extra care in public places, or in other situations (or at times) where the risk of theft may be greater. Always be conscious of vehicle security when transporting your laptop between venues e.g. never leave it on view in an unattended vehicle; never leave it overnight in an unattended vehicle.

**Manual Handling** Always try to reduce the amount of weight in your laptop case. Do not carry equipment or papers unless they are likely to be needed or consider using use wheeled bag option.

## APPENDIX I

# Home Working Self-Checklist

*Informed by the HSE DSE Workstation Assessment guidance in response to the need for increased home working*

- It is acknowledged that for some people working at home may not be ideal, but due to the pandemic it has been necessary as part of the stay at home advice.
- This has occurred quickly for many of us and it is a very new way of working. For some people home working has not caused an issue but others might be finding it challenging for a number of reasons and it is important that we recognise these, assess them and reduce their impact as much as possible. It may take a little time to adjust.
- We are all different as people, our personal fitness, shape and size, underlying physical and mental health problems, how we work, and our home circumstances such as our environment, space for an office or a dining room table and other family members, pets and caring responsibilities at home.
- So there is a lot to consider and this self-checklist is intended to help you assess your own situation and to facilitate a discussion between you and your manager so that you can work together to look at your home working situation and what steps can be practically and reasonably taken to reduce risk where this is indicated.

Staff members name:	
Job title:	
Service /Department:	
Checklist complete by:	Date:
Managers name:	Date discussed with line manager:
How often do you work at home on a regular basis e.g. each week (full hours, part of my hours, occasionally):	
Summary of assessment details and action required following discussion with manager:	

--

<b>Potential hazards</b> The risk factors	<b>Yes:</b> no action <b>No:</b> needs action		<b>Things to consider</b> Will any of these things help improve your home working set up?	<b>Controls Measures</b> Actions to discuss with your manager to help improve home working safety and wellbeing <b>SET ACTION DATES</b>
<b>Homeworking environment</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>		
• Do you have a dedicated area you can use to work at home?			• It is important to get the environmental set up as good as you can. Remember your discomfort may come from your body adapting to fit the environment or your body becoming fatigued.	
• Is there enough room to change position and vary your movement regularly?			• Rearrangement of equipment can create space and ensure the things you use most are within easy reach.	
• Is the area free of loose cables / clutter?			• Tidy cables and remove obstacles to avoid trip hazards.	
• Is the lighting suitable e.g. not too bright or too dim to work comfortably?			• Adequate lighting is very important to avoid eye strain. Natural daylight is vastly preferable to artificial light.	
• Are adjustable window coverings present?			• Blinds and curtains can be useful in adjusting lights levels to suit you	
• Does the air feel comfortable e.g. humidity/ventilation?			• Keep room well ventilated. Plants can help with humidity.	
• Are levels of heat comfortable?			• Heat control - Consider ventilation or moving away from heat sources.	

• Are the levels of noise comfortable? How does noise impact on concentration?			• Environmental and background noise is often an issue. Other members of the family may be at home while you are working, so music and loud conversation are possibilities.	
• Do you know how to report an incident?			• Discuss incident/accident reporting with your manager	

<b>Potential hazards</b> The risk factors	<b>Yes:</b> no action <b>No:</b> needs action	<b>Things to consider</b> Will any of these things help improve your home working set up?	<b>Controls Measures</b> Actions to discuss with your manager to help improve home working safety and wellbeing <b>SET ACTION DATES</b>
<b>Display Screen Equipment (DSE)</b>			
<b>Furniture and positioning</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
• Is the work surface large enough for all the necessary equipment, papers?			<p><b><u>Work surface</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are fortunate enough to have a desk and an office chair at home obviously adjust these as you would have done at work. If you are working off another work surface you may need to consider the surface you are using, is it stable and a good height? Approximately elbows at right angles.</li> <li>• Consider lighting particularly sun light glare. Workstations should be positioned side-on to the main source of natural light. Facing a window will expose the user to glare and put the keyboard and monitor in shadow, while sitting with a window behind will cause glare on the screen.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Chair</u></b> - <i>You should be as comfortable as possible</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you don't have an office chair a dining room chair is</li> </ul>
• Can you comfortably reach the equipment you need without twisting or over stretching?			
• Is the surface free from glare and reflection?			
• Is your chair comfortable?			

			<p>good. The chair should have a back to it, so avoid stools; it should be high enough, so your elbows are at right angles and your eyes level with the top of the screen. You can use a cushion or blanket to raise your seat height. It should not be so high your feet can't touch the ground. If this is the case, consider supporting your feet on a robust box or asking for a foot rest. Make sure it doesn't push your hips up too much.</p>	
<b>Computer</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the keyboard separate from the screen?</li> </ul>			<p><b><u>Computer equipment</u></b> - Your equipment should be kept clean.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your keyboard will need replacing if you can't read the characters.</li> <li>• Experiment with the positioning of your screen to create more room for the keyboard, mouse, hands and wrists.</li> <li>• A tilt keyboard can provide options for position but avoid excessive bending of the wrist.</li> <li>• Your chair should be able to tuck into your desk space. If it can't you may be forced to overreach with your arms and neck.</li> <li>• Keep the mouse close to your keyboard to avoid overreaching.</li> <li>• A mouse mat can help smooth mouse movement.</li> <li>• A document holder may minimise uncomfortable eye and head movement.</li> <li>• If you have limited space and working from a laptop use a stable surface, avoid using it on your lap. The best scenario is your laptop on a laptop riser so the screen is higher and then a separate key board and mouse. This makes it as near as a desk top as possible.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the keyboard tilt?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it possible to find a comfortable position?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the characters on the keys easily readable?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have a mouse or trackball?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the device positioned close enough for you to use?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there support for your wrist and forearm?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the device work smoothly at a speed that suits you?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you easily adjust software settings for speed and accuracy of pointer?</li> </ul>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have access to software suitable for the tasks you need to do?</li> </ul>				

See the simple visual checks opposite:



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

- 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 use**  
When using a laptop as a ‘stand-alone’ piece of equipment, some points to remember in order to achieve best practice refer to diagram and reminders on final page.

Wellbeing and safety factors	Yes	No	Actions - to discuss with your manager to help improve home working wellbeing SET ACTION DATES
Managing remote working			
• Mental wellbeing concerns?			
• Feelings of isolation?			
• Do you find it difficult to separate work and home life whilst working from home?			

• Do you feel safe at home?			
• Are there other people in your household that you have safeguarding concerns about?			
• Secondary trauma; Have you experienced a distressing event recently in the course of your work that you require support with?			
• Interruptions?			
• Carer responsibilities?			
• Musculoskeletal problems (MSK)?			
• Eye strain?			
• Long term health conditions/disability?			
• Other?			

**Organising your work to ensure you maintain a balance and separation between work and home**

Sometimes it is difficult to separate work and home when both take place in your home environment. Taking steps to try and separate the two might be helpful. For example:

- Taking a short walk at the beginning or end of your day or planning in an activity / routine that marks the end of your working day
- If you can designate a space for work that you can walk away from this provides a boundary to separate the two. It is acknowledged this may not be possible for everyone.
  - Establish a routine if this is practical
  - Design your work to get regular breaks
  - Vary your work tasks where possible e.g. try to build in short breaks between video / telephones calls if you are need used to working in this way
  - Plan to take annual leave either as long weekends or a week at a time to ensure you have some uninterrupted time away from work
  - Agree a work plan/hrs/leave with your manager that allows maximum flexibility and ensure arrangements are discussed regularly to help minimise stress of juggling responsibilities. See: Parenting guidance and information [SolNet](#)

**Feeling safe and supported**

- Guidance and support resources links can be found on the SolNet: [Safeguarding page](#)
- COVID-19: Domestic Abuse / [Rapid Read](#)
- Domestic Abuse [Policy](#)

You can also seek support from your manager, occupational health, safeguarding team or Employee Assistance Programme [EAP](#) (Login: Solent and password: employee)

### **Distressing events**

- SolNet COVID-19 *wellbeing page*
- Request a Welfare call: [snhs.OWeLS@solent.nhs.uk](mailto:snhs.OWeLS@solent.nhs.uk)

You can also seek support from your manager, occupational health or Employee Assistance Programme *EAP* (Login: Solent and password: employee)

### **Keep in touch**

- Agree with your manager the mechanisms for regular contact with them and your colleagues. If you are working at home alone agree arrangements for more frequent contact e.g. daily.
- Familiarize yourself with the SolNet wellbeing self-help resource suite and wellbeing Zoom sessions focused on wellbeing and keeping in contact with others
- You can request a Welfare call [snhs.OWeLS@solent.nhs.uk](mailto:snhs.OWeLS@solent.nhs.uk)
- You or your manager can refer to Occupational Health  
[SolNet OH page](#)

### **Privacy**

- Can you make practical changes to your work area so it is more private if working whilst other household members are at home?

### **Care of your sight**

- Contact lens wearers may experience discomfort due to dry eyes with computer work. Try to blink more often or consider use of tear-substitution drops.
- You can obtain an eyesight testing voucher requesting this via email [snsh.ohservices@solent.nhs.uk](mailto:snsh.ohservices@solent.nhs.uk)

### **Keep moving** (musculoskeletal health)

You could be experiencing some new aches and pains. Remember much has changed in our lives at home and work. These are likely to be a cumulative effect of perhaps being less active at home and work, sitting more, not being able to do as much exercise or hobbies and activities that gave us pleasure and movement. On the whole there is no need to worry you may be struggling but there is a lot you can do to help yourselves and Solent is here to advise and support you. So how can we spot what maybe influencing our discomfort? Here are some tips for some common causes we may be able to address. The solutions aren't a matter of striving for unrealistically good ergonomics – rather it's a matter of improving comfort and wellbeing. So the trick is to spot your own “hot spots” and assess the most common ones.

#### **Try our symptom checker below:**

Neck pain: consider using a desk top or modified laptop with riser and separate keyboard, screen height, too low or too high, peering at screen, consider glasses particularly varifocals, sunlight on screen, shadows, font size, over reaching to the desk due to clutter or unable to get knees under the working surface.

Shoulder pain: consider screen height, desk height, mouse position, no upper back support either not present OR you are not using the back of the chair ever to off load upper back and arms.

Low back pain considers chair height, chair support, foot position

Lower limb pain: consider chair height, access to get under working surface, foot rest.

All of the above are influenced by time in one position. Small frequent breaks are better than one long one 5 minutes every 40 minutes. Move before discomfort. The best posture is the next posture. Try some of the exercises recommended on the intranet. Working from home it is so easy to let your day spread over the entire day. Monitor your hours of work, set good boundaries.

Adjusting your workstation to suit you

Prevention discomfort

SolNet MSK self-help resource suite

### **Technology**

- See ICT SolNet facilities and support to make the best use of the software and resources to help you
- Contact CGI Helpdesk if problem occurs and let your manager know if you have persistent IT problems

**\*\*Please write down any additional problems not covered previously on the checklist. Whilst it may not be possible to resolve all problems, you can discuss these with your manager to see how risks can be reduced where possible.**

### **Further support**

- Check out the guidance and advice to familiar yourself with the ideal seated position for DSE work and how to look after your wellbeing: See diagram on final page
- For further advice you can contact Solent Health and Safety Team or Occupational Health and Wellbeing services [snhs.ohservices@solent.nhs.uk](mailto:snhs.ohservices@solent.nhs.uk)
- You can request a Welfare Call [snhs.OWLeS@solent.nhs.uk](mailto:snhs.OWLeS@solent.nhs.uk)

### **Relevant document links:**

Safe use of Display Screen Equipment and Mobile Devices

Flexible working SOP

Date actions complete:	Review date agreed:	Employee signature:	Manager's signature:
------------------------	---------------------	---------------------	----------------------