

Hot Desk/Shared Desk 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 is to ensure we are utilising our desk space to its full capacity. We need to reduce our estate over the next three years.
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7	July 2021	Chair's action taken to extend policy review date to December 2021	To allow sufficient time to significantly update policy

Associated Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Solent NHS Trust policies and procedures:

- Safe Use of Display Screen Equipment & Mobile Devices Policy HS07
- Information Governance Policy IG01
- Supporting Learning in Practice Policy LD03
- Safe Use of Display Screen Equipment and Mobile Devices Policy HS07

SUMMARY

This policy gives comprehensive guidance on the use of hot desks and shared desks within the Trust. The main driver for the implementation of this approach within our occupied areas is to enable the Trust to operate more efficiently and cost effectively and to meet the requirements of the utilisation targets for our occupied space as set out by Department of Health.

This approach has been implemented at some locations and will be rolled out to further locations as part of the estate rationalisation schemes being delivered.

By means of this policy and guidance, Solent NHS Trust aims to ensure the health, safety and Welfare of all Solent NHS staff who use hot desks/shared desks.

This policy and guidance have been developed to meet our duty of care to staff and ensure that any potential risks to health and safety associated with the use of hot desks/shared desks are identified and reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.

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Hot desk/shared desk policy

1. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

- 1.1 In line with good practice Solent NHS Trust has introduced a 'hot-desking' or flexible use of space in each of its locations. Introduction of this approach to the use of space started with Solent Headquarters (HQ) in the Highpoint Venue following the move from Adelaide Health Centre, and it is intended to implement this policy on a wider basis in other buildings as the organisation implements its estates utilisation strategy and opportunity arises. The driver for this change is the imperative for the Trust to operate its buildings more efficiently and cost effectively in order to reduce its overheads and to be able to put more money into patient care, through the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Sustainability Transformation Partnership (STP) the target for utilisation of our properties is 85% and aligns with the target set by Department of Health.
- 1.2 It is intended that Solent NHS Trust's way of working and organisational culture will be shaped and developed to provide corporate identity and social cohesion. The majority of its office space will be designed to support team rather than individual activity, using both hot-desk and shared desk principles rather than conventional workspaces.
- 1.3 The Trust will assess and evaluate space utilisation and workforce needs in order to consider objectively its accommodation requirements on a regular basis to ensure that adequate space is available to provide appropriate patient care and employee facilities.
- 1.4 Given the dynamic and frequent change culture now inherent within the Trust the adoption of hot-desking initiatives is appropriate and relevant. The flexibility is provided by alternate ways of working, including hot-desking, mobile working and shared desks.
- 1.5 The term 'hot-desking' has many definitions but generally refers to an arrangement at work where staff do not have a desk specifically allocated to them or where staff have their own workstation; either on Trust premises or on an official home working arrangement, but requires a desk at other sites. This policy is intended to highlight the issues surrounding hot-desking and to provide solutions that will work to the benefit of all.
- 1.6 Desk sharing between individuals is limited to departmental teams and locations and will apply to a set number of people organising and planning their desk work with each other in accordance with the specific needs of their service. This will also take into consideration the needs of staff that require special adjustments to a workstation in order to maintain a safe working environment. Desks will be allocated to each service depending on their full time/part time employee ratio and any special requirements.
- 1.7 Hot-desking and sharing desks cannot be implemented in isolation. The potential popularity and success of implementing this policy will be underpinned by adoption of a wider flexible working strategy which includes part time work, mobile working, home working, teleworking, etc. Every member of staff should be eligible to use a hot-desk or share a desk regardless of their profession or post to facilitate the most resourceful way of working. All workstations offered by Solent NHS Trust are the property of

Solent NHS Trust and staff are required to work flexibly in order to ensure space is utilised to its maximum capacity.

2. SCOPE & DEFINITIONS

SCOPE

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, governors 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.

2.2 Solent NHS Trust will ensure that relevant Health & Safety Legislative Requirements are met as follows:

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Section 7

"It shall be the duty of every employee whilst at work to take reasonable care of the health and safety of themselves and others, who may be affected by their acts and omissions whilst at work".

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992, Regulation 12

"Employees should make use of appropriate equipment provided for them".

Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992,

"Employees responsibilities include attending any training provided, to complete the DSE initial checklist (risk assessment) and report any issues to their line manager. All employees should use equipment provided correctly and adjusted to suit the individual. Any problems or ill health that may be work related should be reported. The Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 require the organisation to:-

Identify "Users".

Perform risk assessments on all workstations and provide ergonomic control measures as appropriate.

Provide "users" with eyesight tests if requested and to provide help with the cost of corrective spectacles if required

Provide information to "users" regarding the hazards, risks and control measures associated with work on display screen equipment

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations (1992)

Require general precautionary measures to be taken within all workplace environments including offices. The Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 are concerned with specific precautions to be taken in respect of the use of display screen equipment, the main hazards of which are Musculo-skeletal disorders, visual fatigue and stress.

DEFINITIONS

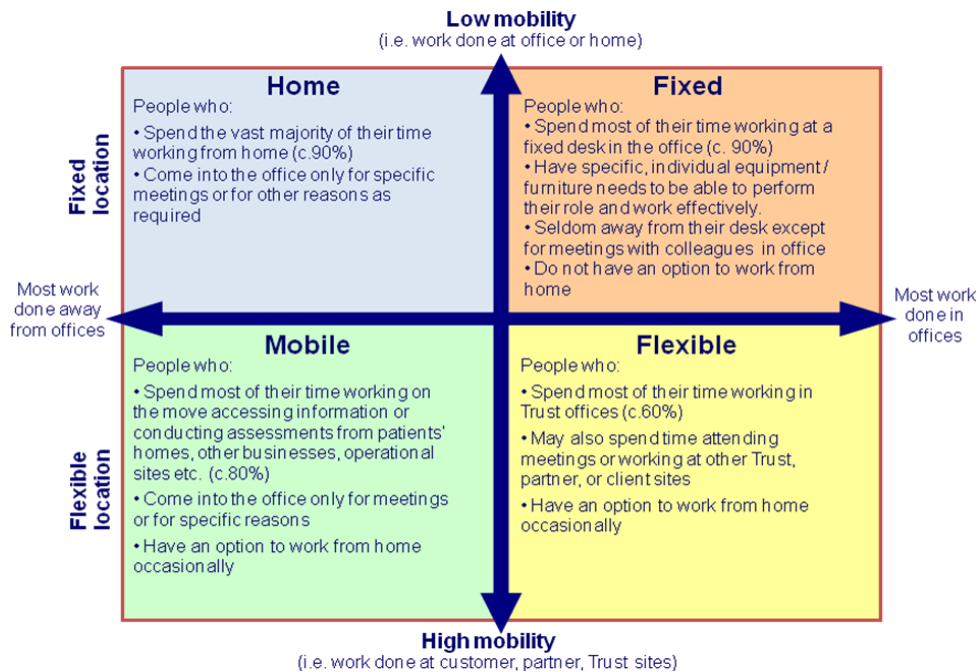
2.3 The definitions which apply to this policy are:

Ref	Term	Definition
a	Flexible working	Flexible use of space, time and location
b	Flexible worker	A mobile worker, routinely away from their work place or office to a greater or lesser degree.
c	Sedentary worker	An office-based worker, at their desk the majority of their time.
d	Designated desk	A work station allocated to a specific individual
e	'Hot desk'	A work station available to any member of a mobile team or work group.
f	'Shared desk'	A work station shared by two or more individuals by agreement.
g	Designated office	An office allocated to a specific individual
h	Shared office	An individual office available on a bookable basis
i	Touch-down work station	Smaller work station available to visitors or for overflow space
j	Desk ratio	Staff to work station ratio determined by group or departmental work patterns
k	Multiple occupancy	Space used on a team or shared basis rather than individually allocated.

3. PROCESS/REQUIREMENTS

- 3.1 In order to support flexible working and maximising use of office space, all desks and office space are deemed usable by any team member (exceptions to this will be those staff who require specific workstations adjustments for health reasons) or by any member of the Trust, the adoption of a clear desk policy is essential to this approach being successful. The successful introduction of this policy will require a change in culture and behaviours.
- 3.2 The number of workstations allocated to each group or department is based on their optimum need for space rather than simply on a one to one basis, enabling the overall space available within a building to be used to better effect. Associate Directors, Heads of Department and Managers will need to review where necessary, staff who work part time and the days of the week they work to support business continuity and optimum space utilisation.
- 3.3 Work patterns and the time people spend in the office vary, with some departments being largely static while others are highly mobile. A number of generic work-style profiles have been identified: staff whose jobs result in them generally being either always in, in and out or mostly out. An additional category is that of visitor i.e. people working in a location but not based there.

3.4 The matrix below defines the 4 work styles for Trust staff, as defined under Agile Working Principles to clarify the concept of Agile Working.



3.5 The following table shows how the generic profiles could relate to staff to desk sharing ratios, work station types and provision of storage and technology

Description	Work style	Work station	Space	Storage
Always in. e.g. admin, secretarial, finance	Negligible mobility. At work station majority of the time	Allocated work station	1 to 1 staff to desk ratio	1 under-desk lockable pedestal plus departmental storage
In and out e.g. managers, etc.	Mobile within and out of the office. Away from base work station more than 50%	Group-address/team work station	4 to 3 staff to desk ratio	Individual lockable drawer or locker plus departmental storage.
Mostly out e.g. community-based workers	Work at client sites or in the community. Out of office more than 70%	Group-address/team work station or team table	2 to 1 staff to desk ratio	Individual lockable drawer or locker plus departmental storage.
Visitors e.g. business partners, staff working in other locations.	Based at another site or working from home. In the office 20% or less	Pre-booked office or use of touchdown work station or free group-address/-team work station	Not applicable.	Individual lockable drawer or locker.

3.6 To ascertain the appropriate number of work stations to be allocated to each group a space utilisation survey will be conducted to look at the hourly, daily and weekly

occupancy patterns by group/department. The table below shows how this could be applied in practice.

Group	No. of staff	Ave. occupancy	Description	Staff to desk ratio	No. of Work stations
'x'	30	80%	Always in	1:1	30
'y'	30	60%	In and out	4:3	22
'z'	30	30%	Mostly out	2:1	15
Total	90				67

3.7 Organisational benefits:

For those staff for which working across a variety of sites applies, hot desks support them to have the opportunity to find a work space easily to enable them to work effectively wherever they need to work.

In addition this supports the organisation to maximise its estate space by better desk utilisation as well as:

- Support employees to work in areas that best suit the task in hand
- Support improved productivity
- Reduce space costs
- Improved communications as staff can hot desk with transient team colleagues
- Increase employee satisfaction that they can move around the organisations venues and work effectively

Employee Benefits of hot desking include:

- Ability to organise working day around meetings and pre commitments
- Traffic/commuting considerations – freedom from travelling during the working day
- Relaxation of time parameters in which to work
- Ability of employees to better balance work and home life

3.8 Hot desk/shared desk principles

3.8.1 Hot-desking principles are applicable where there are fewer desks than employees, and can take a number of forms depending on the responsibilities and procedures adopted for allocation of space and work stations on a daily basis.

3.8.2 The basic premise behind the 'hot-desking' or flexible use of space is that office resources are no longer individually allocated, but are available to all within a group or function on the basis of practical, day to day need. Each service will be allocated a number of desks. Most full time static staff will remain at the same desk but opportunity for part time staff to share desks is proposed. The number of workstations provided is based on optimum rather than maximum requirements, and are a reflection of the day to day work patterns within an organisation and the approach set out in the table at 3.6 will be adopted to determine the number of workstations. Personal association with an individual workplace is replaced by an increased sense of team or group identity. It should be noted that while team

working/shared workspace reduces the overall demand for space, it is not about reducing space standards.

- 3.8.3 Due to the different nature and requirements of different members of staff it is likely that some roles and responsibilities will require a dedicated work station which will be agreed on an individual role basis. However all desks will adhere to the clear desk working and DSE Regulations to meet minimum standards for workstations in order to eliminate or reduce risk to users. Team areas can be labelled with the name of the team to help external people locate teams easily.
- 3.8.4 If the role does not have a dedicated desk option then desk sharing or hot desking will be implemented in accordance with Display Screen Equipment (DSE) minimum standards for workstations.
- 3.8.5 There will not be a disadvantage for staff starting work later than others as the desk will be identified in your own areas. Desks will be agreed with line managers.
- 3.8.6 Staff who have been clinically assessed by Occupational Health may require individual workstations adjustments to safeguard against hazards such as Musculo-skeletal disorders, visual fatigue and stress. These needs will be taken into account as part of planning desk allocation.
- 3.8.7 The following changes and technologies will be adopted, further options may be included as new technology solutions become available:
- Increased shared space and shared services (hot-desks, meeting rooms, quiet areas) enabled by the savings offered from a reduction in individually allocated space.
 - Intranets and the use of intranet to share information.
 - IT infrastructure to support flexible working and the ability to access the system remotely from home if permitted.
 - Ability to login on to these desktops with access to existing emails and documents
 - All designated hot desks to have the highest technology spec to ensure that working from them exceeds expectations in terms of swiftness and ease of use.
 - Computer-telephony integration, smart phones and tablets.
 - Everyone will be expected to keep their workstation clean if they are on a shared or hot desk and detergent or cleaning wipes will be provided to facilitate this.
 - Hot desk space will be identified with a 'spec' so that people understand the resources available to them at that location.
 - People will need to shut the PC down and adopt a clear desk policy by clearing their papers and anything else they used once they have finished using the hot desk.
 - People will need to reduce the amount of papers they hold.
 - Robust workstation equipment which can accommodate usage by multiple staff.
- 3.8.8 It is important to consider the following key factors when determining the suitability of hot-desking or sharing desks to individual posts:
- Risk factors to individual's health.

- Whether or not the individuals need to travel frequently
- Whether or not the type of work is process based or information data inputting and whether it needs to be carried out confidentially
- Whether or not the work is location dependent – a limited requirement to be in specific or fixed places at predictable times
- Whether there is a defined output or need to be supervised
- A clear definition of what is expected from the flexible worker
- If the individual is away from their desk often even when working in the same building

It is usual to have a section on roles and responsibilities and this may be very useful in terms of this policy as it can clearly set out employer and employee responsibilities and expectations. In addition to the responsibilities of the organisation, manager and employee there are teams to help support:

Occupational Health & Wellbeing Department (OH) shall:

Support employees with work-related health problems and advise management on any work adjustments.

Work in close co-operation with Health & Safety, People Services (Human Resources), Health and Safety Representatives and Managers to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the prevention of work related ill-health.

Provide vouchers for eye sight tests.

Health and Safety (H&S) Team shall:

Provide advice and guidance on DSE issues to employees in consultation with the OH and H&S representatives as appropriate.

Undertake ad-hoc visual and formal planned audits to ensure Display Screen Initial Checklists are completed and processed appropriately.

3.9 ICT Systems

This policy will be aligned with the Trusts ICT strategy given that the use of technology is an enabler to mobile and flexible working.

3.10 Designated hot desk area

These desks can be booked by staff visiting from other sites. These will be bookable on outlook calendars, the MiCAD system or via reception staff, training guidance on the use of MiCAD will be available. These desks will be in designated areas. Designated hot desks will not be within each team's allocation but a separate pod. These will not be for staff based at each site.

3.11 Workstation Equipment

In accordance with Display Screen Equipment (DSE) standards each designated hot desk workstation will include the following:

- desk
- desktop pc or thin client with adjustable screen
- network access
- adjustable tilt keyboard

- mouse
- fully adjustable chair with adjustable footrest
- access to a telephone
- document stand
- access to a fax machine
- access to a photocopier/printer/scanner
- adequate space, heating and lighting
- access to kitchen/washroom facilities
- contact details for the Site Premises Manager
- access to information relating to risk assessment, set up and safe working techniques to assist with the safe adjustment of the workstation to suit individual needs

These items will need to remain at each individual workstation. If anything is missing please contact the premises manager for the site you are working in.

3.12 At designated hot desk areas please note that:

- There will be limited storage facilities for both work documents and personal effects.
- Access will be based upon an electronic booking diary system on a first come first served basis.
- You are responsible for ensuring the security of your own belongings and for the equipment associated with the work station. Each site cannot be held responsible for any personal belongings going missing.

3.13 Health and Safety

3.13.1 Employees will be required to carry out an on-line workstation assessment (DSE assessment) and to take any necessary corrective actions. An employee needs to use the information checklist when setting up at a new workstation to remain mindful of the need to observe safe working practices, e.g. adjust the chair and height of the display screen to a comfortable level, whenever sitting at a hot-desk. We would only expect employees to complete the DSE assessment if they are going to be present at the hot desk for more than one hour.

3.13.2 The regulations require employers to carry out a risk assessment of users' workstations, which should consider the entire workstation, including equipment and furniture, as well as the work environment, e.g. lighting, temperature and leg room. The tasks that are being performed at the work station should be considered as should any special needs of individual staff.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) risk assessments should also consider those factors that may contribute to repetitive strain injuries such as:

- sitting in the same position for a long period
- awkward positioning of the wrist and hand in relation to the keyboard
- high workload for a prolonged period of time

Employers are obliged to provide information and training on the health and safety aspects of working with computers. This should cover:

- the importance of good posture, changing position and good keyboard technique
- how to avoid glare or bright reflections in the screen
- cleaning and adjusting the screen
- the importance of frequent short breaks
- using a mouse
- health risks
- who to report symptoms to or to contact for help
- information about the right to eyesight tests.

3.14 Booking procedure for booking designated hot desk areas

- 3.14.1 Booking will be either electronic via outlook or MiCAD or via reception staff with the work stations numbered and posted on public folders so that staff can book on an individual basis as and when required.
- 3.14.2 Normal site specific signing in arrangements at reception/ or entrance will also apply.
- 3.14.3 A manual register will be attached to each hot-desk station and users must sign in and out on every occasion, our future expectation as part of our rationalisation programme for the estate is that a smart card option will be provided.
- 3.14.4 The signing in process will incorporate an Agreement form which will state that the user agrees:
- To use the hot desk facility for normal office use (no loud noise etc.)
 - To arrange storage of any data
 - Not to leave data on the hot-desk computer
 - To act in a reasonable manner at all times and comply with Health and Safety, Data Protection, Computer policy etc.
 - To notify the Site Premises Manager for any Health and Safety issues, breakages, faults etc.

4. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The Associate Director of Estates & Facilities has overall responsibility for hot desk/shared desk working within the organisation. The Estates, Asset Management and Facilities team will support and promote the policy throughout the organisation. The Site Premises Management Team will be responsible for the implementation of the policy, producing and monitoring action plans aimed at reducing the Trust's estate.
- 4.2 The Estates, Facilities & Sustainability Sub-Group will be responsible for:
- Designing and implementing the estates rationalisation strategy for the Trust.
 - Identifying improvement opportunities for the hot/shared desk plans.
 - Managing and the implementation of the infrastructure changes required to implement this policy.
 - Promoting awareness and engagement throughout the Trust.
 - Reviewing the progress of the estate rationalisation projects.
 - Ensuring cost improvement plans are in line with the estate rationalisation.
 - Reporting on the performance of delivery of this policy to the Head of Estates and Associate Director of Estates & Facilities.

- 4.3 All site premises and estates staff will ensure space usage is kept to a minimum by employing “good housekeeping” methods to all moves and relocations.

5. TRAINING

- 5.1 Solent NHS Trust recognises the importance of appropriate training for staff. For training requirements relating to this policy subject matter, please refer to the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) guidance available in the Supporting Learning in Practice Policy LD03, available on Solnet.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MENTAL CAPACITY

- 6.1 An Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment (EDIA) has been carried out on this document using the Trust approved Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). No adverse impact was identified and therefore a full EDIA was deemed not necessary.

7. SUCCESS CRITERIA / MONITORING EFFECTIVENESS

- 7.1 This policy has previously been widely circulated with comments and feedback obtained from a broad range of staff. Audits will be carried out by the Premises Manager to review the effectiveness of the implementation of this policy and feedback is encouraged from staff groups and individuals to ensure successful working environments. These audits will involve the premise manager reviewing occupancy data from the Occupeye system, where installed, and by walking around the site and monitoring empty desks and rooms. The information will then be collated onto the MICAD system and reports produced as and when required. Any subsequent issues/findings resulting from the review will be reported to the Estates, Facilities & Sustainability Sub Group and incorporated in a revised version of the document.

8. REVIEW

- 8.1 This document may be reviewed at any time at the request of either at 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

- 9.1 Safe use of display screen equipment & mobile devices
9.2 Information Governance Policy IG01
9.3 Supporting Learning in Practice Policy LD03
9.4 Safe Use of Display Screen Equipment and Mobile Devices Policy HS07

APPENDIX 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

Step 1 – Scoping; identify the policies aims	Answer
1. What are the main aims and objectives of the document?	Estate utilisation
2. Who will be affected by it?	Most staff groups will be affected by this policy
3. What are the existing performance indicators/measures for this? What are the outcomes you want to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low occupancy levels and poor quality working environments ▪ Improved occupancy levels and high quality working environments
4. What information do you already have on the equality impact of this document?	This policy will improve working conditions
5. Are there demographic changes or trends locally to be considered?	No
6. What other information do you need?	None

Step 2 - Assessing the Impact; consider the data and research	Yes	No	Answer (Evidence)
1. Could the document impact unlawfully against any group?		x	
2. Can any group benefit or be excluded?		x	
3. Can any group be denied fair & equal access to or treatment as a result of this document?		x	
4. Can this actively promote good relations with and between different groups?	x		Consideration given to those who have a disability or are pregnant and support to integrated working
5. Have you carried out any consultation internally/externally with relevant individual groups?	x		Various Trust committees
6. Have you used a variety of different methods of consultation/involvement	x		Informal and formal
<u>Mental Capacity Act implications</u>			
7. Will this document require a decision to be made by or about a service user? (Refer to the Mental Capacity Act document for further information)		x	There is no evidence of this requirement
<u>External Considerations</u>			
8. What external factors have been considered in the development of this policy?		x	
9. Are there any external implications in relation to this policy?		x	
10. Which external groups may be affected positively or adversely as a consequence of this policy being implemented?		x	

If there is no negative impact – end the Impact Assessment here.

****Retain a copy and also include as an appendix to the document****

APPENDIX 2 – Hot Desk Guidance

Hot desk guidance for managers and staff from Occupational Health & Wellbeing

1. Shared workstations need to be capable of being modified for use by all staff needing access to computers in accordance with;
(Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992)
2. You need to ensure that both the tallest and shortest member of staff can modify the same workstation for use. As a rule of thumb staff less than 5'3 and over 6'1 may need a more in-depth assessment.
3. Height and back adjustable chairs should be available for each workstation, as well as monitor raisers and adjustable armrests.
4. For laptops using a docking station, separate keyboard, screen and mouse will make a significant difference.
5. Ensure that your staff know how to set up their workstation correctly. In particular, make sure they are able to adjust their chairs and to use raisers to place their computer monitors at the correct height and to report problems early on. (Advice can be sought from Occupational Health/Staff Physio or H&S Team)
6. The lack of personal ownership of desk space could lead to a decline in hygiene standards and poor cable management. So instruct all staff to keep their area clean and tidy and to avoid trailing cables etc.
7. Encourage frequent breaks from workstation ideally every hr. for example; move position by standing, stretching, take a quick walk e.g. encourage staff to do something else for a few minutes.

Guidance for Staff

1. **Change your desk setup** – when you first sit down ensure the desk layout is the correct layout for **you**, including the chair height and monitor height.
2. Do you need any special equipment to ensure healthy working? E.g. a lumbar cushion you can use on each chair in the office, wrist saver pads or a document holder etc.
3. Familiarise yourself with the operation of your chair, if you don't know how to adjust it then ask for help
4. Report faulty equipment
5. If you use a computer for prolonged periods you should complete a D.S.E assessment form (can be obtained from Occupational Health & Wellbeing or Health & Safety Team)

Help protect your health by following these tips:

- ✓ Have everything to hand to avoid over reaching.
- ✓ Neck neutral; head tilted slightly forward. The ideal position is for the eyes to focus towards the top of the computer monitor.
- ✓ Regularly look over or away from the screen to avoid eye muscle fatigue
- ✓ Shoulders relaxed. Upper arms in line with upper body.
- ✓ Elbows stay close to the body. Approximately 90° angle at elbow/forearm.
- ✓ Hands, wrists and forearms are neutral, and approximately parallel to the floor.
- ✓ Underside of the elbow is about the same height as the top of the desk – forearms supported and resting comfortably. * *Adjust your seat height to achieve this.*
- ✓ Sit to the back of the seat, with backrest angle at about 90° to the seat.
- ✓ Back is fully supported; aim for maximum contact with the seat backrest.
- ✓ Feet are fully supported / firmly planted on the floor, or a footrest.
- ✓ Change posture regularly by stretching, standing, walking & gently mobilising your body and ensure regular fluids to avoid dehydration.

NOTE: Display screen users should read the HS07 Safe Use of Display Screen Equipment & Mobile Devices Policy and apply the principles set out in the policy to protect users

whether they are employed to work at their own employers and/ or hot-desking workstation, at a workstation at home or at another employer's workstation.
For further information go to the HSE website: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/guidance.htm>

APPENDIX 3 – Mobile Working Guidance

Mobile working guidance for managers and staff from Occupational Health.

Guidance for Staff using electronic devices for mobile working, (e.g. 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 or musculoskeletal injury. You should not be 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 Safe Use of Display Screen Equipment and Mobile Devices Policy HS07 to help minimise the risks for staff that may use mobile devices in the course of their work.


1. Try to find a place to sit comfortably.
2. Wherever possible; place the device on a firm surface at a comfortable height.
3. Angle the screen so it is easy to read.
4. Avoid using the device for more than 45 minutes at a time. Take a few minutes break from the screen, change your task or position after 20 -30 minutes.
5. Be cautious of using the device in small cramped spaces including your car. If you do need to access/record key clinical information whilst in your car then you should sit upright in the passenger seat with the seat pushed well back. Try to raise the position of the device on top of a flat surface e.g. a briefcase / similar item.
6. If you use your device on a regular basis as part of your day to day activities you should be offered eye tests etc. in the same way as for desktop users. This can be accessed via the Occupational Health department.
7. If you are using the device at your main base for a prolonged period, you should be supplied with an additional monitor, mouse and key board or have access to an alternative PC.
8. If you are using the device at home for short periods, you can plug into a home monitor to improve screen visibility, use a separate keyboard and raise the laptop screen to a suitable height. Points 1-5 above still apply.



APPENDIX 4 - Risk checklist – Mobile Working Devices

Complete the self-risk assessment checklist below to ensure you are safely using your device.

Do you have any existing health problems which might be exacerbated by using / transporting this equipment?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Musculoskeletal problems 	NO	YES 	Reduce weight where possible, consider use of a wheeled carry case or backpack. Consider making more than one journey if multiple items to transport.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impaired sight 	NO	YES 	Use device for short periods only. Where possible adjust font size. Raise concern with line manager and seek Occ. Health eye test
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prone to headaches when using computer screens 	NO	YES 	Raise concern with line manager and seek Occ. Health advice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allergies to device materials e.g. rubber casing may affect those with latex allergies 	NO	YES 	Don't use device if uncertain Raise concern with line manager and seek Occ. Health advice

Are you using the device in an office type environment?			
If using for short periods; less than 45mins	NO	YES 	Sit in a comfortable position with device on a solid surface and at the correct height. Tilt monitor to aid screen visibility. Where possible adjust font size.
If using device at office base for prolonged period (more than 1hr at a time)	NO	YES 	You will need a separate monitor, keyboard & mouse to use with your device.

Are you using your device in your car? Avoid using for more than very short periods of time (less than 20mins)			
Is it necessary to access the device from your car (When parked)	NO	YES 	Sit in passenger seat, seat pushed well back, use briefcase or other solid surface to place laptop on.

Are you using device in a patient's home?			
Is the environment cramped / cluttered / restricted?	NO	YES 	Avoid using the device, seek alternatives wherever possible. If vital to use device to access key clinical information, find a surface which minimises the need to place you in an awkward position and keep the use of the device to a minimum. Change position very frequently.
Is there adequate space and a suitable solid surface to place the device and a chair to sit on?	NO	YES 	Sit in a comfortable position with device on the solid surface. Minimise time spent using device to a minimum and take time to change position e.g. stand and have a gentle stretch

This guidance has been designed to assist you to keep yourself safe and wherever possible minimise risks associated with the use of mobile working devices. However, it is your

responsibility to follow the guidance or to raise concerns through your Line Manager, Occupational Health or Risk Management Team and the Incident Reporting Process.