

KCC Health and Safety Standard

Display Screen Equipment



Introduction

The DSE regulations place a duty on Kent County Council (KCC) to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all staff with suitable and sufficient analysis of display screen equipment workstations to assess any risks to the health of the persons operating them. KCC must take steps to reduce the risks identified by the assessment to the lowest level, so far as reasonably practicable, by ensuring that workplaces and jobs are well designed and are compatible with a person's needs. Employees are also required to act on the training and information provided to them.

This standard provides help and guidance for the provision, management and use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and to enable the assessment and mitigation of the risk of harm from the use of DSE (desktop, laptop, tablet or smart phone,) in the work environment (e.g., on work purposes)

This standard aims to help managers and staff to;

- Understand the implications of DSE hazards,
- Prevent DSE work from adversely affecting employees who are already diagnosed with medical conditions,
- To the provision of information and training on KNet for users supported by Delta on-line training,
- The using of a self- assessment approach to assess each workstation with the support of H&S and others who may be required to give advice on DSE,
- Manage any reports from employees of ill health related to DSE work,
- Identify where adjustments or improvements can be made to DSE work for employees who are already diagnosed with medical conditions,
- Identify the correct procedure for referral to expert advice,
- Fulfil KCC legal obligations in the way it introduces, manages and directs the use of display screen equipment.

The standard also applies to those who are "hot-desking" or "working from home" along with "flexible/hybrid" working and working in the community.

Legal requirement

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 are designed to protect people – employees and those who are self-employed – who habitually use display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work. The requirements of the Regulations are: -

- To have a written risk assessment of each DSE workstation where a 'defined user' works and reassessed yearly.
- To act on any recommendations of that assessment to reduce health risks to the user,
- To ensure periodic work breaks.
- To provide eyesight tests when requested by defined users,

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- To provide corrective spectacles for defined users, if they are required solely for DSE work,
- To provide employees with adequate information on the health and safety risks, the risk assessment, eyesight testing and provision of spectacles etc,

The Regulations require specific areas of DSE work to be assessed and recorded and the information and forms included within this Health and Safety Standard will ensure these matters are addressed.

The regulations that cover the use of Display Screen Equipment:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002
- Equality Act 2010

Definitions

DSE – Display Screen Equipment

User - The definition of a user as provided by The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (1.d) and adopted by KCC is as follows:
means an employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work.

Accessibility – The duty to make reasonable adjustments, as far as reasonably practicable, to ensure that all staff (and others where KCC has a duty of care) with a disability to have equal access to everything they need to do a job as those without disability.

Who should follow this health and safety standard?

This policy applies to all employees who use DSE while carrying out work for KCC regardless of working pattern or nature of employment contract. It also applies to anyone working within the premises of and / or for KCC, where they would be using KCC equipment. The word employee(s) in the context of this policy should be taken to mean all such individuals, unless specifically referred to as being directly employed by KCC.

In most cases, it will be clear that use of display screen equipment is more or less continuous on most days and the individuals concerned should be regarded as users. Where use is less continuous or frequent, other factors connected with the job must be assessed. It will generally be appropriate to classify the person concerned as a user or operator if most or all the following criteria apply: -

- The individual depends on the use of display screen equipment to do the job, as any alternative means are not readily available for achieving the same results,

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- The individual has no discretion as to use or non-use of the display screen equipment,
- The individual needs significant training and/or particular skills in the use of display screen equipment to do the job,
- The individual normally uses display screen equipment for continuous spells of an hour or more at a time,
- The individual uses display screen equipment in this way more or less daily,
- Fast transfer of information between the user and screen is an important requirement of the job.

If a DSE user is employed to work from home or in a flexible/hybrid way the same regulations apply, whether or not the workstation is provided in whole or not by KCC.

This policy also applies to any agency workers employed insofar as workstations within the Council's control are concerned. The HSE (Health & Safety Executive) does not differentiate between an organisation's own employees and agency workers working for that organisation except that the provision of free eye tests and corrective appliances is not required.

As a responsible employer, KCC intends to protect the health and safety of all employees using DSE, whether they are defined users or not. As a result, this standard places a renewed emphasis to ensure compliance with the Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) 1992 Regulations.

Management expectations within KCC – responsibilities:

This standard requires that all line managers and employees or operators who use display screen equipment must:

1. Conduct a HS214 - DSE self-assessment for their work environments, as part of their induction process to avoid poorly designed workstations. The DSE self-assessment has also been modified to include all the relevant factors relating to home working.
2. Ensure that the HS214 - DSE self-assessments completed by staff are reviewed at least annually with their Line manager and keep a record on file.

Assessments should also be reviewed whenever there has been some significant change to the user or workstation such as: -

- A major change to software used,
- A major change to the hardware (screen, keyboard, input devices etc),
- A major change in workstation furniture,
- 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),
- If specific dedicated workstation is re-located,
- If the lighting is significantly modified,

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- If the 'user has recently been diagnosed with a medical condition/issue or short-term injury which will affect the way in which they work or which may require workplace adaptations

Ensure that line managers are aware of their duties under the standard

3. Ensure accessibility in the workplace including working from home
4. Reduce the risk to staff wherever possible and ensure staff are provided with and take adequate breaks.
5. Provide eye tests when requested by staff members to avoid eye strain.

Step 1 (User):

- The employee or "user" must complete the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) e-training on Delta, to enable them to set up their workstation and assist them in completing the initial workstation assessment. [DSE presentation.ppt \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- The DSE user then completes the HS214 DSE self-assessment form. Working down through the HS214 DSE assessment form, marking against either the 'Yes' or 'No' column against each risk factor, if you are selecting 'No', attempt to take action by noting the advice given in the recommended guidance to follow to reduce risk factor and then re-assess: add notes in the empty text box on the right hand side of the form and also add any further comments in the large text box at the end of the assessment form.

Step 2 (User):

The form once completed, the "User" informs their line manager that the assessment is complete and what findings or recommendations, if any, were highlighted to the user. The HS214 DSE assessment form should

- Be emailed to your line manager, and then be reviewed along with your line manager, as they have the responsibility to ensure that this happens and that any necessary remedial action is taken, these can be written up in the action plan at the end of the assessment,
- Highlight any defect in equipment or personal changes that may require further assessment,
- Be completed at least once per year per person, which should be generally sufficient,
- Be repeated if there are any significant changes to work equipment or environment or personal changes or new medical issues that require further assessment to be carried out,

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- Help the “user” then organises their tasks and workstations so that risks are reduced to a minimum. ([DSE - Q and A factsheet.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)) ([Your Musculoskeletal Health \(sharepoint.com\)](#))

Step 3 (Line Manager):

The Line Manager

- Will identify DSE users, especially those with disabilities and those who use DSE infrequently ([User Classification Form.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)) ([Managers Display Screen Equipment Protocol.pdf \(sharepoint.com\)](#)) ([Flexible working FAQs for managers.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#))
- Should encourage staff to report any problems that they feel are related to their DSE work, as soon as possible, and take reasonable steps to resolve them. If they are unable to resolve a problem, they should request advice from Occupational Health or contact their Directorate Health and Safety Lead or the Health and Safety Advice Line.
- Should contact the Directorate Health and Safety Lead or Health and Safety advice line, if it is known that an employee has a medical condition or would be likely to have a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act 2010 and require further assistance with the self-assessment.
- Should ensure that all users know where to seek help if they have difficulties with an issue that relates to DSE/WSA health and safety.
- Will review the self-assessment form with employee and develop an action plan with the staff member to control any risks.

Step 4: (Line manager & user)

Following completion of the ‘self-assessment’, the ‘user’ and line manager must address any issues highlighted from it. It is the responsibility of the user's line manager to monitor that the agreed recommendations are implemented, it is the users responsibility to ensure they comply with all instructions relating to their workstation and work practices.

When reviewing the completed DSE self-assessment, there are several potential outcomes as outlined below, this assessment along with the guidance that is provided for each, should help on deciding with any remedial actions needed to remediate issues:

- **‘Yes’** answers, If employee can answer ‘Yes’ in the first column against all the questions, having taken account of the ‘Recommended guidance to follow to reduce the risk factor’, they are compliant. DSE to be kept for reference.
- **‘No’** answers will require investigation and/or remedial action. You should record the decisions/findings in the ‘Action to take’ column. If the issues are for non-specialist equipment (keyboard/mouse) replacements or required if new staff, as the line manager will order.

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- Should the assessment findings indicate that further investigation/health issues highlighted, or specialist assessment is required, this will be undertaken with the assistance, in the first instance, of your Directorate Health and Safety Advisor, who can also advise on any next steps or further assessments.
- Pregnancy – if issues highlighted, this should then incorporate the DSE self-assessment with a separate pregnancy risk assessment and updated as appropriate as pregnancy progresses.

It is important to note that the action plan will be a working document which will need to be managed. A follow up meeting should check that the actions have been taken and that any issues are resolved. Any issues that cannot be resolved should be passed on in the first instance to the Directorate Health and Safety Advisor. The action plan should

- Incorporate any special requirements for staff into hybrid working e.g. different type of mouse or keyboard, specialist chair into any hybrid working to ensure that their workstation is suitable and sufficient for the individual.
- Show where recommendations have significant impact on working patterns, and these should be discussed and agreed with the employee and HR.
- Allow the DSE User the opportunity to discuss with their line manager if they disagree with any recommendations.
- Should be saved to the individual employee's folder on the shared drive and any risks identified are recorded on the risk register.

If the DSE assessments suggests a referral to a Health and Safety, Occupational Health or a health specialist, the line manager must discuss this with the 'user' and monitor the process to completion.

The Health and Safety team can be contacted for advice once the assessment has been undertaken, before they become involved it is important that the employee and manager can confirm that:

- The DSE Policy and guidance below has been followed,
- A HS214 – DSE self-assessment has been completed,
- That the line manager has addressed the issues raised by the employee as far as they are able,
- And all issues relating to eyesight request and notification of health problems have been addressed.

Exceptional assessments

If at any time a DSE user states that they are suffering from neck, back or limb pain which they attribute to the use of DSE or believe is being exacerbated by the use of DSE, they must be referred by their line manager in the first instance to the Directorate Health and Safety advisor, to arrange this, steps 1 to 3 of the self-

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assessment process for DSE assessments should be followed and then contact made to arrange a meeting.

Where a DSE user has a pre-existing health condition or injury which may require a major adjustment to their workstation or duties, they should advise their line manager as soon as possible. The line manager must monitor the process to completion, as in step 4 of the assessment process outlined above.

Minimum requirements for workstations

The Display screen should have well defined characters of adequate size, a stable image, and easily adjustable brightness and contrast. The screen should be easy to tilt and swivel with no reflective glare.

The keyboard should be adjustable (with legs to raise the rear slightly from the desk), separate from the screen, and have a matt surface with adequate and contrasting symbols on keys. There should be sufficient space in front of the keyboard and it should be easy to use.

The mouse (or other non-keyboard device) should be suitable for the task.

The work surface should be sufficiently large and allow a flexible arrangement of equipment and adequate space.

The work chair should be stable allowing the User easy movement and the ability to adjust the chair to the correct ergonomic positioning. It should have an adjustable height seat, and an adjustable seat back (height and tilt). Footrests should be available on request.

There should be space necessary to allow the User to change positions.

The lighting should be satisfactory with appropriate contrast between screen and background, and prevention of glare through positioning of artificial lighting.

Positioning must prevent sources of light, such as windows, from causing distracting reflections on the screen.

Noise must not be excessive as to cause distraction of attention or disturbance of speech.

Heat must not be excessive such to cause discomfort, and an adequate level of humidity should be established and maintained.

The software systems must be suitable for the task, easy to use, and adaptable to the level of the User's knowledge.

All hybrid workers must have a valid assessment either relating to their home workstation or equipment that they might use or a desk that they may use. This would highlight any non-standard equipment that they require, for example a special mouse or software. Appropriate adjustments will need to be made on an individual basis. More detailed information is given below.

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Mobile Employees

Mobile employees are those personnel who spend a great deal of time travelling from site to site or client to client and use their home as a base rather than checking in and out of the office at the start and end of the working day. They will need to follow the guidance given as appropriate.

Portable DSE such as laptops and handheld devices (tablets and mobile phones) are also subject to the Regulations if in prolonged use for work purposes. People who habitually use portable DSE should be trained in how to minimise risks, for example by sitting comfortably, angling the screen so it is easy to read and taking frequent breaks.

Due to the nature of the work being carried out, it may not be realistic to assess all possible situations, but it is important to consider any types of situations where significant, regular use is likely. Wherever possible, portable DSE should be placed on a firm surface at a comfortable height. Where portables are in prolonged use at the user's main place of work, additional steps can be taken to reduce risks, e.g. by using a docking station.

Stand alone laptops along with tablets and mobile phones are not designed for prolonged use. Compromises are made in their construction because of the need for portability i.e. smaller keyboard, a lack of keyboard/screen separation, integral mouse/trackball/track pad or touch screen navigation. This makes it more difficult to achieve an ergonomic working posture. Due to the size and likely arrangement of the equipment, staff will tend to work with their head and shoulders bent forward leading to excessive and sustained neck flexion (awkward neck posture) and awkward hand, wrist and arm (including shoulder and elbow) positions may be adopted.

Shorter periods of work or work where typing volume is not intensive, should not cause any undue difficulty. However, wherever possible and for lengthy or repeated use in the same location the laptop or tablet should be "docked" or supplied with separate keyboard, mouse and monitor riser/racking system, which will assist in reduction of repetitive strain injuries.

The use of laptop or tablet without a proper workstation set up should be kept to a minimum.

Staff that use laptops and or tablets should try to adopt a sitting posture as close as possible to that recommended for the use of desktop machines. It is also important to ensure that ergonomic working positions are varied and frequent breaks are taken from the computer work. It is recommended that staff do not use laptops or tablets for more than half an hour at a time when not docked to a larger screen and where possible, adapt the working arrangement to make it safer and more ergonomic to use, e.g. use of a laptop stand, separate mouse and keyboard.

The following practical points should also be considered when selecting portable computers:

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- Low weight (less than 3kg if possible). Keep accessories as few and as light as possible.
- Largest screen possible. If possible, choose a detachable or height-adjustable screen.
- Purchase or be provided a lightweight carrying case with handle and shoulder straps. To reduce risk of theft or assault, avoid manufacturer labelled cases.
- Choose portables capable of being used with a docking station or at least a separate keyboard and mouse.

Portable DSE devices like a 'Smart' phone, also now allow you to undertake familiar desktop applications whilst on the move, but these often have even smaller screens and keyboards, which can lead to further discomfort and postural problems. Work on these devices should be kept to a minimum, with the use of a Bluetooth keyboard considered if the device is to be used for a prolonged period. The device should be placed on an appropriate stand and tilted when using like this.

Home working

Employees who work at home on a temporary basis are not required to undertake a risk assessment under the DSE regulations, however advice and guidance on how to work safely at home should be given/made available by their line manager/KCC.

[DSE -Tips for working from home at short notice.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

[DSE - Reasonable adjustments when working from home.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Homeworkers may encounter both the normal risks associated with DSE work and some potentially increased risks that may arise from social isolation, stress, lack of supervision, lack of employer commitment and difficulties in undertaking risk assessments. There are some easy steps that should be taken to reduce these risks.

DSE risks for permanent home/hybrid workers must be controlled. A good solution is for the employer to train such workers to undertake their own risk assessments. This can be done by training workers to use an ergonomic checklist. Workers should be trained to mentally run through key points from the checklist and take appropriate steps to ensure they are comfortable and can minimise the risks wherever and whenever they carry out DSE work.

Your Responsibilities

To co-operate and comply with the requirements of this standard you should:

- Undertake a DSE assessment - at least every year,
- Plan your work activities so that they include breaks or changes of activity,
- Undertake relevant training and comply with DSE procedures for health, welfare and eyesight testing.

Special Issues

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, require employers to consider those employees with special needs. The aim should be to avoid employee discomfort and to promote well-being.

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The Equality Act 2010 also places a duty on employers to make reasonable adjustments to the workplace or employment arrangements so that a disabled person is not at any substantial disadvantage compared with a non-disabled person [KNet - Disability Confident - Managers guide.pdf \(sharepoint.com\)](#) [\(Workplace adjustments \(sharepoint.com\)\)](#) [\(Digital Accessibility \(sharepoint.com\)\)](#), [Access to Work factsheet for employers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

As a result of their DSE Self-Assessment some employees with particular conditions may require specialist equipment (for example, voice-activated software, a raised desk or an ergonomic keyboard/mouse), fully adjustable furniture & chairs should be made available to accommodate individual needs. [\(Access to work guidance.docx \(sharepoint.com\)\)](#), [Access to Work: staff guide - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Access to Work cannot pay for reasonable adjustments which should be provided by KCC, However, if specialist chairs or equipment are needed to allow flexible working to take place this may prove beneficial in reducing the costs. Information can be found [Workplace adjustments \(sharepoint.com\)](#) and by contacting the [KCC Digital Accessibility Team](#)

Whilst hybrid working may be fine with the majority of employees, it may not be possible or suitable for all employees with a disability, as it will likely be harder depending on particular requirements for disabled employees to make necessary adjustments to desks and chairs or have access to sit/stand desks every time they visit an office.

Should an employee be provided with specially adapted equipment and workstation that meets their particular set of needs, then it should be considered that the desk be excluded from being allowed to be booked out, so long as they are in agreement and not put them at a disadvantage from working with the rest of their team.

All digital equipment, software and hardware needs to be approved by the relevant department for use within KCC and on KCC electronic equipment i.e. laptops and mobile devices. These items should first be discussed with our ICT provider before purchasing, to ensure that it is compatible with and meets the business needs of all security requirements.

PEEPS (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan)

The DSE self-assessment regarding accessibility for the workstation can also be used, if necessary, in assisting the completion of a PEEP and be documented in any modifications or special requirements for enabling disabled employees to work from their place of work.

Reducing Risks

All users, when using a booked workstation, should set up the workstation to be comfortable and ergonomical for them and take all necessary breaks from using DSE as stated in work breaks below.

The self-assessment will highlight any areas which may give cause for concern, and these will require further evaluation and corrective action as appropriate. It is

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important to take a systematic approach to risk reduction and recognise the limitations of the basic assessment. Problems may reflect the interaction of more than one factor and may have causes that are not obvious. For example, backache may turn out to have been caused by the worker sitting in an abnormal position in order to minimise reflections on the screen.

Should you have any problems undertaking the assessment, or if simple remedial measures do not have the desired effect, please contact the Health and Safety Section for further advice.

The DSE Assessment applies equally to home working. (This not only ensures management maintain a safe working environment for staff) but ensures employees regularly declare they have no health problems like repetitive strain injuries which may be developing without the managers knowledge.

The line manager must ensure they are aware of the recommendations made in the report. The line manager must monitor the implementation of any recommendations made by a professional advisor. These may include provision of services such as physiotherapy, or the provision of alternative furniture or equipment. All recommendations must be implemented as quickly as possible. It is the user's responsibility to ensure they comply with all instructions relating to their workstation and work practices.

Where a DSE user has a pre-existing health condition or injury which may require a major adjustment to their workstation or duties, they should advise their line manager as soon as possible. The line manager should normally arrange for referral to

Principal health risks

Use of display screen equipment has been associated with a range of symptoms related to eyestrain and headaches, stress and with working posture and can often reflect as bodily fatigue. These can readily be prevented by applying good ergonomic principles to the design, selection and installation of display screen equipment, the design of the workplace and the organisation of the task.

Musculoskeletal Problems (work-related upper limb disorders - WRULDs) and Discomfort

Work-related upper limb disorders (WRULDs) cover a broad range of conditions, ranging from diffused pain affecting hands, wrists, elbows, arms, neck shoulder or back areas to more specific disorders with clearly defined clinical symptoms and physiological signs such as swellings and inflammation e.g. tenosynovitis or carpal tunnel syndrome.

Lower limb disorders (LLD's) affects the hips, legs, feet or toes. In severe cases, if no action is taken these disorders can become persistent or disabling.

They can be caused by a combination of factors including:

- prolonged static posture of the back, neck and head

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- awkward positioning of the hands and wrist as a result of poor working technique or inappropriate work height.
- the use of excessive and continual force
- poorly designed workstations
- repetition of a simple mechanical task.

Postural

- The workstation must be designed to fit the user. Set up equipment and workstations in the most ergonomic working position, making use of the adjustments and equipment available, such as adjustable chairs, wrist rests, footrests, docking stations, separate mice and keyboards. Intensive use of a mouse, trackball or similar pointing device may give rise to aches and pains in the fingers, hands, wrists, arms or shoulders. This can also happen with a keyboard, but mouse work concentrates activity on one or two fingers of one hand and this may make problems more likely.
- Make sure there is enough workspace to allow documents and other equipment to be placed in convenient positions.
- Users should avoid sitting in the same position for long periods, continually twisting the body or neck to one side, looking up/down repetitively or slouching.
- Ensure that staff are given suitable information and training on how to avoid health risks and encourage users to alert their manager if they get aches and pains.
- Check that the design of the workstation is appropriate and that the correct posture is being adopted.
- Pregnant employees can be particularly vulnerable and require special consideration when working with DSE, as they may be more susceptible to postural problems and pressures because of their physical condition. These will need to be addressed when a risk assessment is carried out on a worker who is pregnant.

Visual

- Ensure the screen is at the correct height and distance to avoid bending your neck to see the screen. Headaches may occur from several causes as a result of DSE work, this could be glare, poor image quality, poor lighting, the need for spectacles, poor posture, stress or anxiety, or a combination of these.
- Arrange the screen, desk and lighting to avoid glare or bright reflections on the screen, use blinds where required.
- Long spells of DSE work can lead to tired eyes and discomfort, take frequent breaks from the screen to give your eyes a rest and a different focal point throughout the day. Short frequent breaks are better than longer less frequent ones, it is advised to take a 60 – 90 second break after every half hour of DSE work.
- The heat generated by DSE can make the air seem drier, and some contact lens wearers find this uncomfortable. Contact wearers may consider blinking more often or using tear substitute drops. Practical steps may also be taken to increase the humidity.

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- People with bifocal/varifocal prescriptions may find them less than ideal for DSE work. It is important to be able to see the screen easily without having to raise or lower your head. If you can't work comfortably with either bifocal or varifocal prescription you may need to request a prescription specifically for DSE use. Consult an optician.
- Some people may suffer from photosensitive epilepsy and are susceptible to flickering lights and striped patterns may sometimes be affected when using DSE, but they can often work successfully with DSE without provoking an attack. If you have any concerns about this, please contact your Occupational Health or Directorate Health and Safety Adviser.
- Demanding screen tasks might make you aware of an eyesight problem that had not been noticed before therefore it is important to visit an optician if you have any concerns.
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA) When any employee requires personal protective equipment the principle under regulation 9 of HASAWA is that the employer pays for this protection. KCC takes this philosophy to cover the provision of spectacles when they are required for display screen work. This may include those not defined as users under the Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations See [Claiming for eye tests \(and glasses\) \(sharepoint.com\)](#) for further information and [Optometrists report form](#) along with information on how [Making a Claim \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

DSE and Pregnancy

To avoid any problems caused by undue stress and anxiety, those who are pregnant or planning children and who are worried about working with DSE should be given the opportunity to discuss their concerns and be given sympathetic consideration by management for transfer to other work not associated with DSE.

[New and expectant mothers risk assessment.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Special consideration should be given to achieving a comfortable seating position and increase the frequency and duration of work breaks into the working day.

Work breaks

This is one of the most important factors in reducing the serious health problems caused by Visual Display Workstations. Employers and employees must plan activities so that the daily work on DSE is periodically interrupted by breaks or changes of activity. To prevent fatigue and to vary visual and mental demands, the work, where possible, should consist of screen and non-screen-based work. Breaks must also allow users to vary their posture. Stretching blinking and focusing eyes on distant objects can be helpful in preventing visual fatigue.

General guidance is given as follows:

- Breaks should be taken before the onset of fatigue, not in order to recuperate.
- Breaks should be included in working time. They should reduce the workload at the screen i.e. they should not result in a higher pace or intensity of work.

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- Short frequent breaks are better than longer occasional breaks e.g. a 5–10 minute break after 50-60 minutes continuous screen and / or keyboard work is better than a 15 minute break every 2 hours.
- If possible, breaks should be taken away from the screen.
- Wherever practicable, users should be allowed some discretion as to how they carry out tasks; individual control over the nature and pace of work allows optimal distribution of effort over the working day.

Monitoring and review

Overall responsibility for policy implementation, monitoring and review lies with Managers, who should ensure that there are effective DSE arrangements in place and should ensure that DSE assessments have been completed in their areas of responsibility.

Existing DSE assessments should have a review of their validity on a regular basis, it is good practice to re-assess not exceeding annually.

If there are significant changes to a workstation, it must be re-assessed, and actions implemented to meet the requirements of the Regulations. Examples of significant changes are:

If the workstation is relocated

- A major change in workstation furniture
- If any environmental conditions such as lighting are significantly modified
- A substantial increase in the amount of time required to be spent using DSE
- A major change to software being used
- A major change to the hardware being used
- A substantial change in other task requirements (e.g. more speed or accuracy)

If the User needs a review

- As part of a New and Expectant Mothers (Pregnancy) Risk Assessment
- Following recovery from an injury or illness, where the User has been absent from the workstation for a substantial period of time (return from Maternity/Paternity leave)
- Change in role or working patterns.
- Following a request for new assessment due to a new DSE issue

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