Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust

Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Protocols

Document Details	
Title	Display Screen Equipment Policy
Trust Ref No	691-69812
Local Ref (optional)	
Main points the document covers	Gives guidance on assessing computer work stations, the provision of equipment and eye sight testing.
Who is the document aimed at?	All staff who regularly use display screen equipment as part of their job.
Author	Alison Macphee, Health & Safety Manager
Approval process	
Approved by (Committee/Director)	Trust Board
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Initial Equality Impact Screening	
Full Equality Impact Assessment	
Lead Director	Director of People and Culture
Category	Health & Safety
Sub Category	Display Screen Equipment
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Distribution	
Who the policy will be distributed to	All managers who have staff using computers and portable DSE equipment
Method	Safety Alert Policy distribution.
Document Links	
Required by CQC	No
Other	Display Screen Equipment Regulations

Amendments History		
No	Date	Amendment
1	Aug 2014	Format of policy and responsibilities changed to reflect current Trust arrangements
2	June 2015	Section added relating to Tablets
3	August 2017	Changes to reimbursement costs, some formatting changes
4	October 2021	General policy review. Information added about DSE E-learning package, self-assessment and agile working. Workstation Assessment Form updated.
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Display Screen Equipment Policy

1) Introduction

This Policy applies the requirements of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that the organisation has a safe working environment for Display Screen Equipment Users.

2) Purpose

To provide information to users of DSE equipment to enable DSE to be used in a safe manner, and to reduce the likelihood of any user being affected by upper limb disorders and eyestrain. The incidence of these conditions is thought to be low, but the number of 'users' is high, thus making it a significant risk.

3) Definitions

DSE	Display Screen Equipment including desk computers, laptops, tablets.
User	An employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of his/her normal work. 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. In current work situations, more and more employees will be classed as DSE users.
Workstation	A workstation exists wherever there is DSE (including portable DSE) in prolonged use. The workstation is the assembly including the screen, keyboard, other parts of the computer and its accessories (such as the mouse or other input device), the desk, chair and the immediate work environment.
PCD	The DSE regulations apply to portable computer devices, PCD, in prolonged use, and where used for a significant part of the person's normal work.

4) Duties

Director of People and Culture

- The Director delegated by the Board to be the lead director with responsibility for ensuring health and safety matters are identified and addressed.

Executive Directors

- All Executive Directors are responsible for the implementation of this DSE policy within their respective directorates

Head of Health and Safety

- The primary role of the Health & Safety Manager is to provide advise the Directors and Managers on all safety, health and welfare matters to ensure the Trust complies with its statutory obligations

Departmental managers must make sure that:-

- all DSE users are provided with information and training
- all DSE workstations within the working environment are assessed
- assessments are reviewed if there is reason to believe that they are no longer valid (for example when working practices change),
- eye-sight tests are supplied to operators on their request
- corrective appliances are provided where identified as a requirement by an optician
- breaks in activity are taken on a regular basis to enable a change in posture

Department Managers are required to plan activity so that work on display screen equipment is periodically interrupted by breaks and changes in activity. It is recommended that this should be in the region of 5 to 10 minutes per hour. An example of this would be where a member of staff enters data and files records rather than have continuous periods of both, they alternate the work between the two. If possible breaks should be taken away from the DSE workstation, and allow the user to stand up, move about and/or change posture.

Individual

- Should follow the best practice demonstrated through the DSE training
- Stand up, move about, and/or change posture while using DSE for periods of time.
- Should notify their manager of any injury or illness thought to be caused by, or that could be affected by the work they are carrying out.
- Should report any shortcoming in the health and safety arrangements for their work or workstation to their line manager.

5) Information and Training

All staff identified as DSE Users are required to complete the ESR on line learning package entitled 000 Display Screen Equipment Information and Training.

6) Risk Assessment

On completion of the ESR on-line learning package, DSE users are able to complete their own work-station assessments, using the form available on the Staff zone document library, and to discuss any required actions with their Line Manager who reviews and agrees the assessment.

The workstation assessment needs to be reviewed on a periodic basis, if there is a significant change like workstation relocation or a significant increase in the number of hours use per day, and following any report by the user of ill health due to DSE workstation use.

Where there are a reasonable amount of DSE workstations in use, departments may choose to train a local user to assist with queries and assessments. The Risk Team can support this local user in their training, and with any queries.

Should any specialist ergonomic equipment be requested, or if further information is required, then the Risk Team can support with a review of the local workstation assessment. The Risk Team may refer the DSE user to Occupational Health.

7) Eyesight testing and the provision of corrective appliances

DSE "users" can request an eyesight test by a qualified optician. Re-assessments are provided at the optician's prescribed interval.

The eyesight test should test vision, include an examination of the eye, and will take into account the nature of the users work, including the distance at which the screen is viewed.

Corrective appliances, normally glasses, are provided if the eye test shows this is necessary.

- DSE user requests eye test
- Manager fills in Appendix 1 form for the colleague to present to an Optician
- Employee arranges test either with their preferred Optician* or an alternative
- Test is carried out, corrective appliances are issued where appropriate. The form is updated by the optician to show the result of the eye exam.
- Employee attaches purchase receipt to form, and sends to Pay Services
- Pay Services reimburse the employee

* Preferred Optician - The Community Trust currently uses the pricing structure of Specsavers as the guideline for reimbursement. Local branch at 24 Claremont Street, Shrewsbury Tel: 01743 246 360. Any optician may be used for their eye test, however the Community Trust will only reimburse the employee to the value of £25.00 for the eye test and £19 towards the cost of corrective vision appliances. (Prices last updated February 2021)

8) Agile working – Home working

Employers have the same health and safety responsibilities for employees working from home as for any other employees.

Temporary home working

During any period of temporary home working, employers need to regularly discuss these arrangements with their employees to understand if such work is adversely affecting the health, safety and welfare of their employees.

Long-term home working

Where employers decide to make working from home arrangements permanent, the employee should complete a DSE home workstation assessment with their Line Manager. Workers may need appropriate equipment and advice on control measures.

There are some simple steps people can take to reduce the risks from display screen work:

- breaking up long spells of DSE work with rest breaks (at least 5 minutes every hour) or changes in activity
- avoiding awkward, static postures by regularly changing position
- getting up and moving or doing stretching exercises
- avoiding eye fatigue by changing focus or blinking from time to time

Further information is available at
CIEHF-Working-from-Home-Infographic.pdf (ergonomics.org.uk)

9) Further information

Further guidance can be sought from the Risk Management staff and the Occupational Health department.

The Health and Safety Executive website www.hse.gov.uk provides up to date information on current legislation, with approved codes of practice and guidance documents.

Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002

Guidance on Regulations, L26

Working with Display Screen Equipment, A brief guide INDG36

Authorisation Form: Vision Screening / Eyesight Test

NAME (User): _____

PERSONAL NO_____

SERVICE _____ **BASE** _____

(A) To be completed by Occupational Health Service (where appropriate).

To the Service Manager: I have examined the above member of your staff and I recommend that he / she should attend a full eyesight test, at the opticians mutually agreed by yourself and the 'User':

Signature..... (Occupational Health) Date.....

(B) To be completed by the Service Manager.

To the Optician *

I hereby authorise for a full eyesight test up to a maximum value of £25.00 and if necessary corrective appliances specifically for DSE Work up to the maximum value of £19.00. The maximum total claimed will therefore not exceed £44.00.

Signature..... (Service Manager) Date.....

(C) To be completed by the Optician.

To the Service Manager:

I have examined the above member of your staff and have undertaken a full eyesight test, considered the display screen work that they carry out, and do / do not (delete non applicable) recommend the need for special corrective appliances.

I confirm that your member of staff has paid £_____ (insert amount paid) for their eyesight test and if applicable for their special corrective appliances.

Signature.....(Optician) Date.....

NOTE:

The 'User' must forward this fully completed authorisation form, together with the receipt to the *Pay Services, 2 Douglas Court, Anchorage Avenue, Shrewsbury Business Park, Shrewsbury, SY2 6LG*. Reimbursement will be processed through the payroll.

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Portable Computer Devices - Guidance Leaflet for Safer Use

This guidance provides advice to those members of staff who use Portable Computer Devices (PCD) e.g. Laptops/Tablets as part of their work. Portable Computer Devices need to be given the same consideration as a DSE workstation, see Trust DSE Policy.

Laptops and tablet computers are designed to be portable, compact and lightweight in order to be easier to carry. This results in compromised design features like smaller keyboards, the lack of a separate numerical keypad, and touchpads. Prolonged use can lead to discomfort, pain in the neck, back and wrists etc. but steps can be taken to avoid problems from developing.

The ESR on line learning package entitled 000 Display Screen Equipment Information and Training provides best practice information for all DSE users.

Laptop Use

Many staff who work in multiple locations, or from home, may have a laptop as their primary computer. If you are using your laptop often, or for extended periods, then you should set it up so that it resembles that of a standard desktop user.

Options for Laptop users:-

- Creating a mobile workstation by using the laptop in conjunction with a laptop stand, and a separate keyboard and mouse. A wireless keyboard and mouse provides flexibility for the user, and mini keyboards can be a good solution for portability.
- On Office / Home based days, where you will be using the laptop for most of the day, the laptop is best used in conjunction with a docking station. When the laptop is docked the workstation has a separate keyboard, mouse and flat panel screen at the correct height and distance.

Example of mobile workstation	Example of typical workstation

Tablet Use

Tablets are designed to be lightweight and carried in one hand. They are thus easier to use and handle than a laptop which normally requires a surface to set the computer down while in use.

Where tablet devices are in use, users should be aware of similar issues after prolonged use. When using a tablet the user's posture and neck position should be comfortable and a stand or case that can hold the tablet at a suitable angle should be used with the tablet on a firm stable surface with routine breaks taken every 10 – 20 minutes.

The angle of the tablet will be dictated by the task being undertaken. Tablet computers should generally be set at an angle which is comfortable for the user, this may be more vertical for reading and flat when typing.

Tablets with a display screen of less than 15 inches (diagonally) should not be used for detailed graphical work (i.e. drawings, mapping), unless the software package allows for magnification.

General Hints and Tips

Sitting

- Adopt a good sitting position in order to avoid straining your arms and back
- Try not to slouch. Do not sit forward and crouch over the Tablet
- When reading from a hard copy, keep it as close to the Tablet as possible

Pen Usage

- Hold as for a normal pen applying light pressure
- Experiment with using the pen in different applications and take time to get used to how the pen works so that you are able to make the most of your Tablet PC and improve productivity
- Do not 'stab' at the screen as this may damage the screen (or if a screen protector is in use), will cause damage to the protector and may require its replacement

Reading the Screen

- Avoid glare. Glare and reflected light can affect screen clarity when using Tablets
- Position the screen directly in front of you
- Do not work with the screen at any angle other at right angles to your line of sight
- If glare occurs, adjust your screen to reduce reflections

- Do not sit with your back towards a window
- Regularly clean your screen protector, or replace it as necessary
- Adjust screen brightness to suit surrounding light levels

Personal Safety
Always be conscious of your personal safety when carrying or using your Laptop /Tablet. Take sensible precautions such as: -

- Plan your tasks to avoid situations where you are likely to be lone working in circumstances where theft is likely
- Take extra care in public places, or in other situations (or at times) where ether risk of theft may be greater
- If possible, do not carry the Laptop /Tablet in luggage with a computer manufacture's branding
- Always be conscious of vehicle security when transporting your Laptop /Tablet between venues e.g. never leave it on view in an unattended vehicle; and never leave it overnight in an unattended vehicle.

Working with a Laptop/Tablet while out in the Community

Working with a Laptop/Tablet in Cars
In general Laptops / Tablets should NOT be used in cars. If, on occasion, this is unavoidable then follow this advice:

- Never use your Laptop /Tablet when driving
- Do not use a Laptop /Tablet whilst sitting in the driver's seat with the device positioned on the passenger seat, as you'll be twisting your spine and sitting with a poor posture
- If you have to use the device then sit in the passenger seat, adjusting the seat to provide sufficient legroom and space
- Think about your Security. Remain aware of the immediate area around your car and lock the car doors.

Working with a Laptop/Tablet in a Clients Home

- When meeting clients in their own homes find a flat surface, where possible sit at a table
- Tablets can be used whilst standing but this must be avoided wherever possible. If held in the hand, work with the Tablet close to your body, with an upright posture to avoid neck strain. For longer periods of use whilst standing use a neck strap and holder
- If using a Tablet whilst sitting on a sofa or easy chair, place a cushion on your lap to act as a platform
- If handing to the client to gain their signature or show them relevant information, again use a cushion on their lap to protect their skin from any potential bruising.

Working with a Laptop/Tablet on Trains

- Avoid working in seats with tables attached to the rear of seats in front of you
- Try to book and use the more spacious communal tables when travelling
- Be aware of sensitive confidential information and safeguard it from prying eyes

Manual Handling Considerations when using Laptops / Tablets

Tablets vary in size and weight but are generally smaller than laptops – typically 2Kg. In many instances these are accompanied by the use of peripherals such as portable printers, spare batteries etc. Whilst the Tablet and any associated items will usually have a carrying case of some description, the overall weight and methods of transportation need to be considered.

	The use of a backpack is advantageous to cut down strain on your arms and distribute loads evenly across the body. This is also more effective for personal safety reasons.
	Depending on the amount of equipment or documents that you need to have with you, a wheeled case/bag may be more appropriate
	Carrying cases of the type with single shoulder straps are not advisable as they can put strain on the back and neck muscles if equipment is carried for any distance or for any long period of time. If a briefcase is also carried then the overall weight plus the awkwardness of the resulting load can be a problem, even though you appear to be balancing the load.

Always try to reduce the amount of weight you intend to carry by:

- Only taking the equipment you know you will need with you
- Taking electronic rather than paper documents. If you need a hard copy, can you send them in advance (by post or e-mail) to your destination?
- Regularly checking your batteries and following the recharging instructions in order to avoid carrying the weight of extra batteries

Further information

Further guidance can be sought from the Risk Management staff and the Occupational Health department.

The Health and Safety Executive website www.hse.gov.uk provides up to date information on current legislation, with approved codes of practice and guidance documents.

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Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Workstation Checklist

Workstation Location _____

Name of user _____

Assessment completed by _____ Date _____

Assessment checked and agreed by manager (sign and date) _____

Any further action needed? Yes / No

Follow up action completed on _____

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 the workstation assessor.

Record the decisions in the 'action to take' column. Managers should check later that the actions have been taken and have resolved the problem.

Risk Factors	Tick Answer		Things to consider	Action to Take
	Yes	No		
Keyboards				
Is the keyboard separate from the screen?			This is a requirement, unless the task makes it impracticable (e.g. where there is a need for a laptop)	
Does the keyboard tilt?			Tilt need not be built in	
Is it possible to find a comfortable keying position?			Try pushing the display screen further back to create more room for the keyboard, hands and wrists. Users of thick, raised keyboards, may need a wrist rest.	
Does the user have a good keyboard technique?			Training can be used to prevent: -Hands bent up at the wrists -Hitting the keys too hard -Overstretching the fingers	
Are the characters on the keyboard clear and readable?			Keyboards should be kept clean. If characters still can't be read the keyboard may need modifying or replacing. Use a keyboard with a matt finish to reduce glare and/or reflection.	

Risk Factors	Tick Answer		Things to consider	Action to Take
	Yes	No		
Mouse, Trackball etc.				
Is the device suitable for the tasks it is used for?			If the user is having problems, try a different device. The mouse and trackball are general purpose devices suitable for many tasks, and available in many shapes and sizes. Alternative devices such as touch screens may be better for some tasks, but worse for others.	
Is the device positioned close to the user?			Most devices are best placed as close as possible e.g. right beside the keyboard Training may be needed to: -prevent arms overreaching -encourage users not to leave their hand on the device when it is not being used - encourage a relaxed arm and straight wrist	
Is there support for the device user's wrist and forearm?			Support can be gained from the desk surface, or arm of a chair. If not, a separate supporting device may help. The user should be able to find a comfortable working position with the device	
Does the device work smoothly at a speed that suits the user?			See if cleaning is required (of the mouse ball and rollers) Check the work surface is suitable. A mouse mat may be needed.	
Can the user easily adjust software settings for speed and accuracy of the pointer?			Users may need training in how to adjust device settings	
Display Screens				
Are the characters clear and readable?			Make sure the screen is clean and cleaning materials are available. Check that the text and background colours work together.	
Is the text size comfortable to read?			Software settings may need adjusting to change the text size	
Is the image stable, so free of flicker and jitter?			Try using different screen colours to reduce flicker e.g. darker background with lighter text. If there are still problems get the set up checked e.g. by IT department	

Risk Factors	Tick Answer		Things to consider	Action to Take
	Yes	No		
Is the image stable, so free of flicker and jitter?			Try using different screen colours to reduce flicker e.g. darker background with lighter text. If there are still problems get the set up checked e.g. by IT department	
Is the screen's specification suitable for its intended use?			For example, intensive graphic work or work requiring fine attention to detail may require larger display screens	
Are the brightness, and/or contrast adjustable?			Separate adjustment controls are not essential, provided the user can read the screen easily at all times	
Does the screen swivel and tilt?			Swivel and tilt need not be built in, you can add a swivel and tilt mechanism. You may need to replace the screen if -the swivel/tilt is absent -work is intensive and/or the user has problems getting the screen to a comfortable position	
Is the screen free from glare and reflections?			You might need to move the screen or even the desk, and/or shield the screen from the source of reflections. Screens that use dark characters on a light background are prone to glare and reflections.	
Are adjustable window coverings provided and in adequate condition?			Check that blinds work. Blinds with vertical slats can be more suitable than horizontal ones. If these measures do not work consider anti-glare screen filters as a last resort and seek specialist help.	
Software				
Is the software suitable for the task?			Software should help the user carry out the task, minimize stress and be user friendly. Check users have had appropriate training in using the software Software should respond quickly and clearly to user input, with adequate feedback, such as clear help messages.	
Furniture				
Is the work surface large enough for all the necessary equipment, papers etc.			Create more room by moving printers, reference materials etc. elsewhere.	

			If necessary consider providing new power and telecoms sockets, so equipment can be moved. There should be some scope for flexible rearrangement.	
Risk Factors	**Tick Answer**		**Things to consider**	**Action to Take**
	Yes	**No**		
Can the user comfortably reach all the equipment and the papers they need to use?			Rearrange equipment, papers etc. to bring frequently used things within easy reach. A document holder may be needed, positioned to minimize uncomfortable head and eye movements.	
Are surfaces free from glare and reflection?			Considers mats or blotters to reduce reflections and glare.	
Is the chair suitable? Is the chair stable? Does the chair have a working -seat back height and tilt adjustment? -set height adjustment? -castors or glides?			The chair may need repairing or replacing if the user is uncomfortable, or cannot use the adjustment mechanisms.	
Is the chair adjusted correctly?			The user should be able to carry out their work sitting comfortably. Consider training the user in how to adopt suitable postures while working. The arms of chairs can stop the user getting close enough to use the equipment comfortably. Move any obstructions from under the desk.	
Is the small of the back supported by the chair's backrest?			The user should have a straight back, supported by the chair, with relaxed shoulders.	
Are forearms horizontal and eyes at roughly the same height as the top of the DSE?			Adjust the chair height to get the user's arms in the right position, and then adjust the DSE height, if necessary.	
Are feet flat on the floor, without too much pressure from the seat on the back of the legs?			If not, a footrest may be needed.	

Environment				
Is there enough room to change position and vary movement?			Space is needed to move, stretch and fidget	
Risk Factors	**Tick Answer**		**Things to consider**	**Action to Take**
	Yes	No		
Is the lighting suitable, e.g. not too bright or too dim to work comfortable?			Users should be able to control light levels e.g. by adjusting window blinds or light switches. Consider shading or repositioning light sources or providing local lighting e.g. desk lamps (but make sure that lights don't cause glare by reflecting off walls or other surfaces)	
Does the air feel comfortable?			DSE and other equipment may dry the air. Circulate fresh air if possible. Plants may help. Consider a humidifier if discomfort is severe.	
Are levels of heat comfortable?			Can the heating be better controlled? More ventilation or air conditioning may be required if there is a lot of electronic equipment in the room. Or, can users be moved away from the heat sources?	
Are levels of noise comfortable?			Consider moving sources of noise, e.g. printers away from the user. If not, consider soundproofing.	
Final Questions to Users				
Has the checklist covered all the problems that they may have working with their DSE?			For laptop / table users refer to Guidance Leaflet for Portable Computer Devices.	
Have they experienced any discomfort or other symptoms which they attribute to working with their DSE?			Consider whether Occupational Health need to be made aware. Are there actions above which address this?	
Has the user been advised of their entitlement to an eye test?			Refer to DSE Policy	
Does the user take regular breaks working away from DSE?			Standing up, changing position, being aware of poor body posture while using DSE. Refer to ESR online DSE information & training package	