NFER

National Foundation for Educational Research

Display Screen Equipment Policy

2019

Contents

1   Introduction

The NFER is committed to ensuring that all staff using Display Screen Equipment (DSE) are adequately informed, trained and supervised in accordance with the DSE Regulations so as to prevent injury or ill health arising from the use of this equipment. Poor health conditions which could be attributed to regular use of DSE can be avoided if sensible advice is followed.

2   Legislation

The *Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment Regulations) 1992, as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendment) Regulations 2002 (*DSE Regulations) apply to employers whose workers regularly use computer equipment, or other display screen equipment, as a significant part of their normal daily work.

The DSE regulations provide a framework to ensure that staff are provided with equipment, facilities and information which will prevent the development of the poor health conditions.

The regulations cover permanent, temporary and agency staff where the use of DSE equipment forms a significant part of their work.

Guidance on how to comply with the regulations is available from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

3   Equipment

NFER will provide all facilities and equipment to meet the needs of the DSE Regulations.

3.1 The workstation

3.1.1   Desk
The desk should be large enough to provide space for movement of screen and keyboard units and sufficient space for documents to be read and handled comfortably.

3.1.2   Chair
The chair should have an adjustable seat height and a five castor star base, with or without arms. Back support should be provided which can be adjusted in height and angle. All NFER chairs used in DSE work meet or exceed this basic specification

3.1.3   Screen
The screen must be stable, free of flicker and the brightness of the screen must be adjustable to allow the user to see clearly without haziness or glare. Screen height and angle should be adjustable so that eye level is correct when seated properly.

3.1.4   Keyboard
The keyboard should be able to tilt with space on the desk to allow support for hands and arms. It should have a matt surface and the symbols on the keys must be legible. The keyboard should be movable within a reasonable distance of the screen to enable the operator to position the keyboard at a range and angle preferable to them.

3.1.5   Environment
Appliances must be plugged into the nearest socket box. Wires should not trail across the floor and should not be trapped by chairs, filing cabinets, etc. The desk and screen should be positioned to minimise reflection and glare, preferably at 90 degrees to a window.

Ventilation/heating/cooling must be adequate. The lighting of the room should be even and sufficient to read documents easily without being too bright. Non-reflective blinds should be available to control excessive daylight. A range of accessories such as task lights, foot rests, wrist rests and document holders will be provided as required.

3.2 Use of laptops

Portable DSE such as laptops are subject to the regulations if in prolonged use. The compact nature of a laptop – fixed keyboard and screen position, smaller keyboard, integral mouse pad – can make it more difficult to achieve a comfortable working posture. A laptop should therefore usually be used via a docking station which will render the laptop as a desktop PC, allowing full adjustability to ensure safe and comfortable working.

Where a docking station is not in use, regular breaks or changes of activity are particularly important. It is recommended to restrict laptop use to periods of no more than an hour at a time.

There may be additional hazards associated with laptop use such as trailing leads and manual handling which need to be considered by the user when preparing to set up or transport their laptop.

The 'Laptop user SHE guide' contains further guidance and can be found on the SHE pages of NFERnet.

4 Workstation DSE assessment

4.1 Identifying who needs to be assessed

The regulations apply to staff who 'habitually use display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work'. Most staff at NFER rely on computer use for the majority of their daily work and so are covered by the regulations.

For further advice please contact the DSE Assessor.

4.2 The DSE Assessor

The DSE Assessor is the person trained to carry out DSE Assessments. The DSE Assessor will usually be a member of the Facilities team – details of the current post holders of all SHE roles can be found in SHE Roles and Responsibilities, available on the SHE pages of NFERnet.

4.3 Initial assessment on joining NFER for Employees

A one-to-one assessment will be carried out by a DSE Assessor when an employee joins NFER. The assessment will be conducted usually within the first three months of employment with the Foundation. This assessment is designed to ensure that the workstation is suitable for the employee and to provide the employee with information which will prevent poor health conditions. The outcome will be documented and stored confidentially. A copy of the assessment will be provided to the individual and, if appropriate, to their line manager.

Where the assessment highlights issues or concerns, steps will be agreed to address these. This may include the provision of new or replacement equipment or furniture.

The DSE Assessor is made aware of new permanent employees via HR processes and the provision of workstation guidance is included in the induction checklist for new starters. The

DSE Assessor will usually make contact with the new employees to arrange the assessment, but in some cases the line manager or employee may make the request.

See Section 5 Regional offices

4.4 Assessments for temporary Workers and Assoicates

The line manager is responsible for ensuring appropriate workstation arrangements are in place for any temporary worker reporting to them. A one-to-one assessment will not routinely be provided for temporary worker. However, it is necessary to ensure that the workstation allocated to the temporary person is set up appropriately and workstation set up guidance should be provided. A request for a one-to-one assessment can be made to the DSE Assessor by either the line manager or the worker.

The DSE Assessor is not made aware of new temporary worker through any formal process. The line manager should ensure that the 'Workstation set up guidance' is issued to each temporary worker and that the acknowledgement form is signed and forwarded to the DSE Assessor. The provision of workstation guidance is included in the induction checklist for temporary worker.

See Section 8.1 'Workstation set up guidance'.

4.5 Self-assessments

Because circumstances change over time it is a requirement of the regulations that assessments are reviewed periodically. Periodic reassessment will usually be every two years, but should be completed whenever there is a significant change to working arrangements.

In order to complete these reviews NFER has devised a simple checklist which will identify any circumstances which might give cause for concern. The checklist is self-explanatory and is to be completed by each member of staff considering their own workstation. Where an member of staff regularly uses more than one workstation they need to complete a self-assessment for each workstation they use.

The self-assessment is available on the SHE pages of NFERnet as an online survey. The DSE Assessor reminds all staff to undertake the assessment when these become due and tracks the completion across the Foundation.

For ease of reference, the self-assessment questions are shown in Appendix 1

4.6 Other assessments

Occasionally, it is necessary for a detailed observational assessment to be made either by the in-house DSE Assessor or by external occupational health professionals. This may be because of a disability or a medical problem. The aim of these assessments is to identify appropriate working methods and/or to assist in specifying the correct equipment.

All staff may contact the DSE Assessor to request advice or an assessment at any time. The staff member should make sure their line manager is aware of any issues they are experiencing.

5 Regional offices

Because of the practicalities of conducting a face-to-face assessment with staff at NFER

regional offices, the initial assessment will usually be conducted by telephone. Apart from the way the assessment is conducted, the content and structure of the initial assessment will be the same as for staff based at Slough head office.

Where the assessment highlights issues, steps will be agreed to address these. This may include the provision of new or replacement equipment or furniture.

6 Screen breaks and changes of activity

To avoid fatigue, managers should ensure that tasks are designed to prevent continuous computer work. The regulations recommend that a ten-minute change of activities is taken every hour to reduce the risk of strain or discomfort. Screen breaks (looking away from the screen) may be more frequent than this. Short frequent changes of activity are more effective than long infrequent ones. Any task or activity which does not involve computer use counts as a screen break or change in activity. Incorporating such changes on a regular frequent basis, as well as taking opportunities to be physically active during the working day, can help prevent long-term discomfort issues from developing.

7 Health

All staff are asked to report any health issues associated with DSE immediately to their line manager and the manager must inform the SHE Competent Person. An investigation will be conducted and, where appropriate, actions will be taken to address the causes of the ill health.

7.1 Eye tests

All staff are entitled to be reimbursed for the cost of eye tests specifically for Display Screen work. NFER will also subsidise the cost of spectacles in certain circumstances. See the Eyecare Policy, available on NFERnet, for full details.

7.2 Pregnancy

Using a computer is not harmful to a pregnant woman or her unborn child. Any female member of staff who is concerned about working with a computer during pregnancy should speak to the SHE Competent Person for advice.

During pregnancy it may be helpful to make adjustments to workstation set up – the DSE Assessor can be contacted for advice if required.

8 Training and information

The NFER recognises the need to provide instruction for all (i.e. permanent and temporary) staff using computer equipment, to maintain the health of staff by preventing the onset of eyesight problems and work-related upper limb disorders. User training will be carried out by the DSE Assessor during DSE assessments and includes:

- Familiarisation with the DSE regulations and principles on which they are based;
- The use and arrangement of workstation components to facilitate good posture and prevent over-reaching;
- The importance of regular breaks from computer work.

An e-Learning module providing a more detailed overview of the regulations is also available via the Learning and Development pages of NFERnet.

8.1 Workstation set up guidance

The NFER 'Workstation set up guidance' can be found on the SHE pages of NFERnet. The guidance is based on advice found in the HSE publication, "Working with display screen equipment (DSE)" (http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf).

This workstation set up guidance should be issued to all staff, permanent and temporary, by their line manager (this may be delegated to the departmental administrator), at the commencement of their employment. This action is included within the new starter checklist and the temporary staff checklist, both provided by HR. The acknowledgement of advice page should be signed by the staff and returned to the DSE Assessor.

9 Self-employed persons

Self-employed persons (e.g. consultants) do not fall fully within the responsibility of the host organisation under these regulations. Self-employed or externally employed persons will usually spend only limited time within NFER offices and will usually bring with them whatever computer equipment they need.

However, if a workstation is allocated, the regulations require that it should meet minimum requirements and that appropriate information regarding safe use of equipment is provided. All standard NFER workstations (i.e. all desks which are set up as workstations) meet minimum requirements and the Workstation set up guidance can be provided to the individual for reference. The line manager (the person to whom the individual reports) is responsible for providing the guidance and may contact the DSE Assessor for advice.

10 Other relevant information

Further information and relevant documents produced by NFER include:

- [Eyecare policy](#)
- Laptop user (SHE) guide
- Workstation set up guidance
- New starter checklist
- DSE self-assessment form (see Appendix 1)
- DSE workstation assessment (available on request)

Guidance from the Health and Safety Executive includes:

- Work with display screen equipment: http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l26.pdf
- Working with VDUs: http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf

Appendix 1   Display Screen Equipment Self-Assessment checklist

Introduction

This assessment is available as an online survey. This form should only be used in cases where the survey is not accessible.

It is a requirement of the Display Screen Regulations that all computer workstations are regularly assessed so as to prevent injury or ill health to users. By completing the self-assessment you will highlight any problems with your station.

Completed assessments are classified as 'confidential' and should be stored appropriately.

Instructions

In order to complete this assessment simply tick either Yes or No in response to each question. If you have answered "Yes" to questions 1-39 and "No" to question 40, your workstation is suitable for continued use. If you have answered "No" to any question please discuss this with the NFER DSE Assessor to determine whether any action is required.

When completed please forward a signed copy to the NFER DSE Assessor.

Full Details of DSE requirements can be found on the SHE page of NFERnet.

Name	
Department	
Tel/Extension	
Line Manager	
Work pattern (e.g. if part-time state hours/days)	
Date of assessment	
Signature	

Display Screen Equipment Workstation Self-Assessment			Yes	No
Display screens	1	Are the characters clear and readable?	☐	☐
	2	Is the text size comfortable to read?	☐	☐
	3	Is the image stable, i.e. free of flicker and jitter?	☐	☐
	4	Are the brightness and/or contrast adjustable?	☐	☐
	5	Does the screen swivel and tilt?	☐	☐
	6	Is the screen free from glare and reflections?	☐	☐
Keyboards	7	Is the keyboard separate from the screen?	☐	☐
	8	Does the keyboard tilt?	☐	☐
	9	Is it possible to find a comfortable keying position?	☐	☐
	10	Are the characters on the keys easily readable?	☐	☐
Mouse, trackball etc.	11	Is the mouse (or other device) suitable for the tasks it is used for?	☐	☐
	12	Is the device positioned close to the user?	☐	☐
	13	Is there support for the device user's wrist and forearm?	☐	☐
	14	Does the device work smoothly at a speed that suits the user?	☐	☐
	15	Can the user easily adjust software settings for speed and accuracy of pointer?	☐	☐
Software	16	Is the software suitable for the task?	☐	☐
	17	Have you had sufficient training/experience with the software provided?	☐	☐
Furniture	18	Is the work surface large enough for all the necessary equipment, papers etc.?	☐	☐
	19	Can the user comfortably reach all the equipment and papers they need to use?	☐	☐
	20	Are surfaces free from glare and reflection?	☐	☐
	21	Is the chair suitable?	☐	☐
	22	Is the chair stable?	☐	☐
	23	Does the chair have a working: Seat back height and tilt adjustment?	☐	☐
	24	Seat height adjustment?	☐	☐
	25	Swivel mechanism?	☐	☐
	26	Castors or glides?	☐	☐
	27	Is the chair adjusted correctly?	☐	☐
	28	Is the small of the back supported by the chair's backrest?	☐	☐
	29	Are forearms horizontal and eyes at roughly the same height as the top of the VDU?	☐	☐
	30	Are feet flat on the floor, without too much pressure from the seat on the backs of the legs?	☐	☐
Environment	31	Is there enough room to change position and vary movement?	☐	☐
	32	Is the lighting suitable? (e.g. not too bright or too dim to work comfortably)	☐	☐
	33	Does the air feel comfortable?	☐	☐
	34	Are levels of heat comfortable?	☐	☐
	35	Are levels of noise comfortable?	☐	☐
Final questions	36	Do you take regular breaks working away from the monitor screen?	☐	☐
	37	Does this checklist cover all the problems which may be associated with working with your computer workstation?	☐	☐
	38	Are you aware of the procedure for reporting any DSE concerns?	☐	☐
	39	Are you aware of your entitlement to eye testing?	☐	☐
	40	Have you experienced any discomfort or other symptoms which you attribute to working with your computer workstation? (Please use the comments box below to provide details)	☐	☐

Comments				