

# HARLOW COUNCIL

## Addendum to Health and Safety Policy

### Display Screen Equipment

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### **Introduction**

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places specific duties on employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees as well as the health and safety of other persons who may be affected by their work activities.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 employers must assess significant risks to the health and safety of both employees and other persons who may be affected by their work activities.

Additionally the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations require employers to carry out an analysis of workstations for the purpose of assessing risks, and in particular the problems of musculoskeletal (upper limb) disorders.

### **Policy Statement**

Harlow Council will take all reasonable steps to secure the health and safety of employees who work with display screen equipment (DSE) and, wherever possible, reduce risks to a minimum from any hazards identified.

Whilst it is generally recognised that the use of DSE can be undertaken without undue risks to health, it is appreciated that some employees may have general reservations and concerns.

Although it is perfectly acceptable to include DSE within general workplace risk assessments it may, however, be more appropriate to undertake a more specific assessment.

In order to achieve this, the Health and Safety Team has developed a Display Screen Equipment Minimum Requirements Self Assessment Checklist. The purpose of this is that any member of staff who use DSE can complete the self- assessment checklist in order to ascertain whether their workstation is meeting the minimum requirements set out in the regulations.

The self-assessment checklist, and a guidance document, can be accessed through the Health and Safety section of the Kaonet. All staff that use DSE are strongly encouraged to complete a self-assessment.

A copy of the self-assessment should be given to the individual employee's line manager and a copy sent to the Health and Safety Team. Issues identified, as part of the self-assessment that cannot be resolved with your line manager should be referred to the Health and Safety Team for comment and possible action.

### **Eyesight Tests and Glasses**

The regulations make provision for DSE users to have an eyesight test prior to employment with display screen equipment and at periodic intervals thereafter. Harlow Council normally arranges for staff to have, eye screening and those that then require a full eyesight test are referred accordingly. Human Resources make arrangements for eye screening and eyesight tests. All Services should therefore inform Human Resources of the names of the members of staff that use DSE.

Harlow Council is required to provide the basic cost of corrective lenses and frames where an eyesight test indicates that a member of staff requires corrective lenses specifically for DSE work.

### Using DSE

It is general good practice that people should not, as a matter of course, use DSE for periods of more than approximately one hour at a time. The occasional long period of DSE usage will not be a problem. Normal arrangements should be that daily work patterns include tasks that take staff away from the need to constantly use a computer.

### Radiation and Pregnancy

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have advised there is no evidence that employees using DSE are at risk from radiation. There is no reason, therefore, for a person who is pregnant or is seeking to become pregnant to avoid working with DSE.

Harlow Council acknowledges, however, that some employees may not be fully convinced by these assurances and recognises that where an employee has genuine concern this could contribute to stress and possible ill health. Any member of staff having such concerns should either raise these with their Line Manager, Human Resources or the Health and Safety Team.

### Repetitive Disorders

Some DSE users can experience upper limb discomfort (wrists, lower arms, shoulders, neck and back) following continuous use of the keyboard. Occurrences of this nature, that are more than an isolated incident, should be referred to the Health & Safety Team.

### Summary

Display screen equipment has made a significant contribution to working life and can be used completely safely when a few basic measures are introduced.

Badly adjusted furniture or equipment can result in discomfort and, in extreme circumstances, can lead to ill health. Unnecessary discomfort can be avoided by adopting the following measures:

- Ensure all staff that use DSE complete the self-assessment document
- Report any furniture and equipment that is not functioning correctly
- Adjust furniture and equipment to suit your needs – do not adjust your own posture to suit the workstation
- Break up long periods of DSE work by varying the work activities
- Use your entitlement to eye screening – speak to Human Resources
- Report symptoms of DSE associated discomfort or ill health to the Health and Safety Team, as soon as you are aware of them
- Inform your line manager of any training needs

Individual Services are responsible for the implementation of this policy. The Health and Safety Team should be consulted if there are any difficulties in doing this.

Since the Covid 19 pandemic, (lockdown/working from home - March 2020 onwards), the majority of staff have carried out home working arrangements. All staff should have regular communication with their Manager and have completed the home working DSE Assessment, available on the Kaonet.

Any specific issues or concerns should be discussed in liaison with your Line Manager/Team Leader in consultation with the H&S Team, who may follow up with a zoom/online/home assessment as required. General equipment/stationery and furniture can be acquired for individual home working environments, as appropriate, through your Line Manager.

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### Revision History

Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
	None	Original Draft document	
		Updates from Draft. Inserted Revision History. Logo changed	No
1/2014	None	Reviewed and updated	No
April 2020		Reviewed and updated	No
Nov 2021	April 2020	Inclusion of Covid working from home statement	No
Nov 2023			