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## **HP5 - Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Policy**

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| **Approved by:** | Head of Centre | **Date:** 06.02.2023 |
| **Last reviewed on:** | 06.02.2023 | |
| **Next review due by:** | 06.02.2024 or in response to any changes in legislation | |

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the requirements of both the employer and employees (including self-employed working on Centurions behalf), for ensuring display screen equipment (DSE) is used safely to prevent adverse health effects to employees, themselves and others.

**The Law**

The law relating to the safe use of display screen equipment is contained within the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992. The law applies to all employees and self-employed people who use or operate DSE. In relation to self-employed, this relates to people who use The Trust’s workstation and use DSE as though they were an employee.

**Definition**

‘Display screen equipment’ is any alphanumeric or graphic display screen, regardless of the display process involved. Although it is most commonly used to refer to computer screens, it also includes both conventional display screens and those used in emerging technologies such as laptops, touchscreens and other similar devices. There will also be other monitors that are also covered by this policy.

Employees covered by this policy are those who regularly and habitually use or operate DSE to do their job. Employees who make occasional use of display screens are not covered by this policy.

**Risk Assessments**

Centurion is required to carry out a risk assessment of the workstations of all employees who regularly and habitually use or operate DSE. This is carried out by a competent assessor and reviewed on an annual basis. The employee should participate in, and contribute to, the risk assessment. This risk assessment must consider:

* the layout of the workstation (including the DSE, furniture, software, and environment).
* the nature of the job being carried out (including work demands, workload, working patterns, provision of breaks).
* any special needs of the individual users or operators.

**Addressing the Risk Assessment Outcomes**

After the risk assessment has been completed the assessor and employee should discuss any identified risks. The overriding objective is to eliminate the risk altogether, however in relation to DSE and Centurions work it is unlikely this will be achievable. In which case, the objective should be to reduce the level of risk to as low as reasonably practicable. The following will also be considered: Rest breaks, Posture, Eye tests, Training, Pregnancy, Epilepsy. Further guidance on these areas is provided below:

**Rest breaks**

Employees using DSE should take regular short rest breaks. The timing of the breaks will be agreed with the line manager. If an employee’s work involves a variety of tasks, they should be encouraged to split up their DSE-based activity into a few blocks of work and complete other tasks in between.

Employees should be encouraged to stand up and move away from the DSE when taking a break, so they do not sit in the same position for lengthy periods of time.

**Posture – Using a Mouse**

It is important that employees sit in a way that will not cause any pain or long-term harm to themselves. The computer mouse should be located close to the employee so that it can be used with a relaxed arm and a straight wrist. It is helpful to support the arm, either on the desk or the arm of a chair.

**Posture – Sitting at DSE**

It is important to ensure the employee’s chair is adjusted so that s/he is comfortable when sitting at the workstation. Forearms should be approximately horizontal, and eyes should be about level with the top of the screen or monitor. It is important to ensure there is no glare coming from the screen – this is easiest if the screen is not facing any bright lights or windows. Employees should use curtains and blinds as required to reduce any glare.

There should be room for employees to move their legs freely under the desk. Legs should be bent at ninety-degree angle, with support for feet if required by means of a footrest. It is important to avoid excess pressure from the edge of the seat on the back of legs or knees.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that the DSE is kept clean, as any dirt might blur the material being displayed which could adversely affect their vision. Employees should use a size of font they find most comfortable to work with.

**Posture – Using a Keyboard**

Employees should adjust the position of the keyboard to ensure it is comfortable. It might be helpful to have a space in front of the keyboard to rest hands and wrists when not actually using the keyboard. Wrists should be kept straight when typing. Employees should avoid over-stretching fingers. If necessary, employees should be given additional training in keyboard techniques.

**Eye Tests**

Any employee who is covered by this policy (i.e., an employee who regularly and habitually uses display screen equipment) can ask the employer to provide and pay for an eyesight test. The eye test will be carried out by an optometrist or doctor. The employer will also pay for any additional tests as recommended by the optometrist or doctor.

The employer will only pay for a basic pair of spectacles if special ones need to be prescribed for display screen equipment use (e.g. special spectacles that are appropriate for the distances involved in display screen equipment use) and normal spectacles cannot be used. If the employee wishes to purchase more expensive spectacles, then the employer will only contribute an amount of money equal to the price of a basic pair and the employee will pay for the remaining amount. Proof of purchase must be provided for prescribed spectacles.

The employee must provide the employer with evidence as a result of the eye test, showing that prescription spectacles are needed for display screen equipment work.

**Training**

It is important all employees understand how to use DSE safely. The Trust provides training to employees in relation to the safe use of DSE. Therefore, all employees should ensure they undertake this training.

**DSE and Pregnancy**

There is no evidence that the use of DSE equipment has any adverse impact in pregnancy. However, if a pregnant employee has any concerns, she should seek advice from a medical practitioner. Employers are required by law to undertake a risk assessment for pregnant employees, so it is expected the use of DSE would be assessed accordingly for pregnant workers who are users / operators of DSE.

**DSE and Epilepsy**

Using DSE should not aggravate epilepsy. Some people with photo-sensitive epilepsy might have difficulties with flickering lights or striped patterns. Any employee who has epilepsy and is concerned about the use of display screen equipment should seek advice from a medical practitioner.