HUNDLEBY PARISH COUNCIL

DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT (DSE)

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION ……1
2. WHAT IS DSE……..……..1
3. HEALTH RISKS WITH DSE ……..1
4. CONSULTING EMPLOYEES ON DSE……....1
5. HOW TO CONTROL RISK……..2
6. DSE USER TRAINING……3
7. PROVIDING EYE TEST AND ENCESSARY SPECTACLES FOR DSE WORK ……..3
8. REVIEW ……..3

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As an employer, the Council must comply with the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 which protects employees from any risks associated with DSE i.e. computers and laptops.

1.2 The Regulations only apply when employees regularly use DSE as a significant part of their normal work (daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more.)

1.3 As an employer of DSE users, it must:-

a) Analyse workstations to assess and reduce risks;
b) Make sure controls are in place;
c) Provide information and training;
d) Provide eye and eyesight tests on request, and special spectacles if needed;
e) Review the assessment when the user or DSE changes.

2 WHAT IS DSE

2.1 DSE are devices or equipment that have an alphanumeric or graphic display screen and includes display screens, laptops, touch screens and other similar devices.

3 HEALTH RISKS WITH DSE

3.1 Some DSE users may experience fatigue, eye strain, upper limb problems and backache from overuse or improper use of DSE. These problems can also be experienced from poorly designed workstations or work environments. The causes may not always be obvious and can be due to a combination of factors.

4 CONSULTING EMPLOYEES ON DSE

4.1 The Council has a legal duty to consult employees, in good time, on health and safety matters. Consultation involves employers not only giving information to employees, but also listening to them and taking account of what they say before making health and safety decisions.

5 HOW TO CONTROL RISK

5.1 The Council needs to assess the risks associated with using DSE equipment and any special needs of individual staff. The assessment will be used to decide what needs to be done and check that action is taken. The assessment should be reviewed on a regular basis.

5.2 The following controls can be used:

i Getting comfortable
ii Forearms should be approximately horizontal and the user's eyes should be the same height as the top of the screen.
Iii Make sure there is enough work space to accommodate all documents or other equipment. A document holder may help avoid awkward neck and eye movements.
iv Arrange the desk and screen to avoid glare, or bright reflections.
v Make sure there is space under the desk to move legs
vi Avoid excess pressure from the edge of seats on the backs of legs and knees.

5.3 Well-designed workstations

i A space in front for the keyboard can help you rest your hands and wrists when not keying;
Ii Try to keep wrists straight when keying;
Iii Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with a straight wrist;
Iv Sit upright and close to the desk to reduce working with the mouse arm stretched;
v Support the forearm on the desk when using a mouse and don't grip the mouse too tightly;
vi Make sure individual characters on the screen are sharp, in focus and don't flicker or move. If they do, the DSE may need servicing or adjustment;
vii Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit lighting conditions in the room;
viii Make sure the screen surface is clean;
viiii When setting up software, choose text that is large enough to read easily on screen when sitting in a normal comfortable working position;
ix Select colours that are easy on the eye (avoid red text on a blue background of vice versa.)

5.4 Changes in activity

i Breaking up long spells of DSE work helps prevent fatigue, eye strain, upper limb problems and backache. The Council, as employer, need to plan so that users can interrupt prolonged use of DSE with changes of activity. Organised or scheduled rest breaks may be a solution.
ii It is suggested that users stretch and change position
iii Look into the distance from time to time and blink often
iv Change activity before the user is tired, rather than to recover;
v Short, frequent breaks are better than longer, infrequent ones.
vi Timing and length of changes in activity or breaks for DSE users is not set down in law and arrangements will vary depending on a particular situation.

5.5 Portable computers

i Consider potential risks from manual handling if users have to carry heavy equipment and papers;
Ii The height and position of the portable computer screen should be angled so that the user is sitting comfortably and reflection is minimised. Riser blocks are commonly used to help with screen height.
Iii More changes in activity may be needed if the user cannot minimise the risks of prolonged use and awkward postures to suitable levels.

6 DSE USER TRAINING

6.1 The Council must provide information, instruction and health and safety training to users to help them identify risks and safe work practices.

6.2 The following information should be provided to users:-

i The risks from DSE work and the controls the Council have put in place;
Ii How to adjust furniture;
Iii How to organise the workplace to avoid awkward or frequently repeated stretching movements;
Iv How to clean the screen and mouse;
v How to use the DSE workstation checklist;
vi Who to contact for help and to report problems or symptoms.

7 PROVIDING EYE TESTS AND ANY NECESSARY SPECTACLES FOR DSE WORK

7.1 There is no evidence to suggest that DSE work will cause permanent damage to eyes or eyesight. Eye tests are provided to ensure users can comfortably see the screen and work effectively without visual fatigue.

7.2 If a user requests an eye test, the Council is required to provide one. If the test shows that the user needs glasses specifically for DSE work, the Council must pay for a basic pair of frames and lenses.

7.3 Users are entitled to further tests if DSE work is considered to cause them visual fatigue and at regular intervals after the first test.

8 REVIEW

8.1 DSE assessments need to be reviewed when:-

i Major changes are made to the equipment, furniture, work environment or software;
ii Users change workstations;
iii The nature of work tasks change considerably;
iv It is thought that the controls in place may be causing other problems.