

Beccles Town Council

Workstation Assessment (DSE) Policy

Relevant Legislation	Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
	The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1666
	The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1662
	The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1662
	The Health and Safety (First-Aid) Regulations 1681
	The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

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Version History and Approval			
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Link to Government Guidance	https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/
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1. Introduction

Beccles Town Council is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of its employees, so far as is reasonably practicable. We also fully accept our responsibility for other persons who may be affected by our activities. We will take steps to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory provisions.

The main risks that may arise from working with Display Screen Equipment (DSE) are musculoskeletal disorders such as back pain or upper limb disorders (sometimes known as repetitive strain injury or RSI), visual fatigue, and mental stress.

While the risks to individual users are often low, they can still be significant if good practice is not followed. DSE workers are also so numerous that the amount of ill health associated with work such is significant and tackling it is important.

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 requires an analysis of workstations for the purpose of assessing risks. In particular, the risks of musculoskeletal discomfort, visual disturbance and mental stress should be assessed. Any risks highlighted must be rectified as far as is reasonably practicable at the earliest opportunity.

Many employees use Display Screen Equipment (DSE) as part of their work. In order to comply with current Health and Safety Law, Beccles Town Council have compiled a policy to ensure that staff are not subjected to unacceptable levels of risk to their health or safety when using DSE

2. Purpose

This document outlines the Beccles Town Council's Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Policy.

Employees who use DSE may be at risk of developing adverse health effects if their workstation is not set up correctly, and if they are unaware of how adverse health effects are caused. The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 place duties on employers to ensure that risks to health and safety from DSE use are controlled, and that employees are aware of the potential risks to their health and safety from DSE use, together with the actions they can take to reduce these risks.

All employees have the right not to be harmed by their work activities. This extends to the use of DSE. Beccles Town Council will therefore act to prevent adverse health risks to any employee using DSE as part of their work, and to inform and train them as appropriate

3. Legal Duties

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA)

This Act requires employers to ensure the health and safety of all employees and anyone who may be affected by their work. Employees must not endanger themselves or others and must use any safety equipment provided.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

These Regulations build on HSWA and includes duties on employers to assess risks and where necessary act to safeguard health and safety.

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

These Regulations apply to workers who use DSE daily, for an hour or more at a time. We describe these workers as 'DSE users'. The regulations don't apply to workers who use DSE infrequently or only use it for a short time.

Beccles Town Council will assess and record any general risk(s) that may be present in the workplace for employees covered by this policy. Where significant risk(s) are identified, we will take all reasonable steps to eliminate the risk(s) or reduce them to the lowest practicable level, then inform you (and others if appropriate) who may be affected by the risk assessment.

When you have formally told us that you are a new or expectant mother we will, in conjunction with you, review the risk assessment and determine if any personal factors need to be assessed.

Where significant risk cannot be removed or adequately controlled, we will, in conjunction with the relevant teams to make suitable changes in the working conditions, tasks, hours of employment or redeploy you to avoid the risk.

4. Workstation Assessment Procedure

Line managers are responsible for ensuring a suitable and sufficient assessment of each workstation is carried out by all their staff considering all aspects of the working environment.

The first stage of the display screen equipment training requires any employee who uses DSE to complete the risk assessment. This requires any employee who uses DSE as part of their work, to complete the workstation assessment form.

This should be completed within the first week of joining the company for new employees. All employees should review their self assessment annually, or when there are significant changes to their workstation.

Workstation DSE Assessments should be repeated/reviewed where there is:

- A change in the display screen worker population
- A change in the individual's capabilities
- A major change to the display screen equipment or furniture, including remedial work
- A change in workstation location
- A substantial increase in the amount of time required to be spent using display screen equipment
- A modification to the lighting
- If requested by the user

The findings should be recorded in the DSE form. If employees are permanent members of staff. Any temporary workers who use DSE will need to ensure a written record is kept or in some other retrievable manner. All necessary steps will be taken to remedy any risks highlighted as a result of the risk assessment.

A workstation DSE assessment should also be undertaken for all DSE users using laptops and for homeworkers. Guidance on the minimum requirements for workstations can be found at Appendixes.

5. Regular Breaks

General Guidance on breaks

The key purpose of a break from working with DSE is to prevent the onset of fatigue. To achieve this Beccles Town Council will endeavor to incorporate changes of activity into the working day. There is no prescribed frequency or duration of breaks from DSE work. Where possible, users will be given discretion to decide the timing and extent of off-screen tasks.

Any employee who believes that their DSE workload does not permit adequate breaks should bring this to the attention of their line manager. The work break in the context of DSE means a break in the DSE work routine; for example, sorting paperwork, going to a printer, etc. Users of DSE are encouraged, and will be expected, to take opportunities for breaks in their work routine.

- Breaks should be taken before the onset of fatigue when performance is at a maximum and before productivity suffers. The timing of the break is more important than its length.
- Breaks or changes of activity should be included in working time. They should reduce the workload at the screen; that is, having been introduced they should not result in a higher pace or intensity of work to compensate for the time taken for the break.
- Short, frequent breaks of routine are more satisfactory than occasional, longer breaks; for example, a 5–10-minute break after 50–60 minutes continuous screen and/or keyboard work is likely to be more beneficial than a 15-minute break every 2 hours.
- If possible, work routine and rest breaks should be taken away from the screen/workstation.
- It appears, from research evidence, that informal breaks, that is time spent not viewing the screen (for example, on other tasks), are more effective in relieving visual fatigue than formal rest breaks.
- Wherever practicable, users should be allowed some discretion as to how they carry out tasks; individual control over the nature and pace of work allows optimal distribution of effort over the working day.

6. Information and Training

Beccles Town Council will provide information and training for all employees that use DSE. This shall include statutory requirements, the employee's role in the recognition of hazard and risks, the need to take regular breaks, employees' contribution to assessments.

Further information, including guidance leaflets, and advice on the scope of training can be obtained from the HSE website <https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/>

7. Laptop Usage

As in many organisations, the use of laptops is increasing, with employees working in variety of locations, including at home, few of which may have been designed and planned for display screen work. If a laptop is used for long periods of time, it will be

classed as an item of DSE. If a laptop is used for prolonged periods, an attempt should be made to find a sensible compromise that retains the benefits of mobile working but removes the risk of causing harm to staff.

For prolonged use of a laptop in a fixed location, such as, an office where the user is constantly present and using the laptop, the provision of 'docking stations' or laptop risers should be considered because these enable full size, good quality display screens and full size keyboards and mouse to be used.

Such an arrangement allows the laptop to be used as a portable in the normal way; but, when in the office, the laptop user has access to a full-size keyboard and screen, using only the laptop's processor and disc drive, and effectively turning the laptop into a fixed workstation. This will offer the user the flexibility inherent in using a laptop but remove problems that can occur such as back, shoulder, neck and wrist pains.

8. Radiation and Pregnancy

Employees using DSE are not at risk from radiation. Thus, there is no reason for an expectant mother to avoid working with such equipment. It is recognised that, where an employee has a genuine concern, this can contribute to stress and ill health.

The policy is therefore that any expectant mother may request a temporary transfer or a reduction in the volume of DSE work that she undertakes, such requests will be given full consideration and an assessment carried out, and where possible and viable, changes will be made.

6. DSE Procedure

1. Employees must complete a workstation self-assessment form. This form evaluates the workstation set up, including screen height, chair adjustability and equipment placement.
2. The self-assessment form is available in Beccles Town Council's shared folder.
3. Employees will receive information on ergonomics and best practices for DSE use upon form submission.
4. After completing the workstation self-assessment form, employees should submit the form to their manager within 5 days.

5. Managers should review the forms to identify any immediate concerns or required adjustments.

10. Dealing with Health & Safety Issues

- Where an issue is raised by an employee on the use of DSE, the Manager will investigate the circumstances, take any necessary corrective action and inform the employee of the action taken.
- Employees will be advised to inform their manager where a problem arises in the use of DSE. In the case of adverse health conditions, the Manager should refer the employee to an external Occupational Health Department for advice.

11. Maintaining and recording records

Recording Records

It is important to maintain a record of all DSE assessments undertaken at Beccles Town Council. All assessments are undertaken by employees on a template available on the shared drive.

Maintaining records

They are useful for mitigation (i.e. audit trail of Health & Safety compliance) if questioned/investigated by the enforcement authorities (HSE).

12. Supporting Documents

Links to other documents

New C Expectant Mothers Policy C Risk Assessment Form (template)

Workstation Assessment (DSE) Form (template and guidance)