



# Training for Display Screen Equipment Assessors

Safety Services

# Objectives

- Understand the hazards
- Recognise hazards in practice
- Apply suitable adjustments to reduce risk
- Complete DSE assessment forms
- Know how to follow up problems
- Know what is in the Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 as amended
- Decide whether someone is a “User”

# Workstations

- Where someone uses their PC or laptop
- Includes desk, chair and other necessary furniture
- Minimum requirements have to be met for EVERYONE who uses DSE at work, even students (see schedule to Regulations)

**All DSE Workstations have to be assessed**

# Additions

- Health and Safety at Work (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002 extend the cover of DSE Regulations to Air Traffic Controllers, CCTV monitoring stations and similar jobs.

# Hazards of DSE working

- Poor posture
- Poor working practices when using DSE
- Deficiencies in working environment
- Inadequate pauses and changes of activity
- Pressure, heavy workloads, poor task design, poor equipment

# Risks

- Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), (strain injuries, back pain, stiff shoulder, neck etc.) including Hand/arm pains (sometimes called RSI)
- Eye strain, headaches
- Strain injuries, overuse of some muscles
- Stress

# Risk Factors

- Duration of work
- Intensity of work
- Poor workstation design
- Lack of variation in work
- Oppressive working environment
- Predisposing medical conditions
- Ignorance of potential damage

# Who is at risk?

- The Regs. are mainly designed to protect workers who have to work intensively at DSE, who have little freedom to vary their work activities or organise their own work, and who are often under pressure or do critical tasks. (*e.g call centres*)
- Few jobs in the University are like that, but people sometimes drive themselves to get things finished, or work long hours.



# Are the Injuries real?

- YES - MSDs can be debilitating, painful and chronic. They disrupt daily living.
- AND statistics from large office based companies indicate about 1% of users get significant problems. (TUC estimates 2%)

***The good news is that most of these conditions can be put right if they are detected and treated early enough***

# Getting posture right

- The chair needs to have:
  - a stable base of 5 or more castors
  - full swivel action
  - adjustable height of seat
  - back rest, with adjustable in height and tilt
- Armrests are optional

# Posture

- Correct seat height for desk
- Back supported by back rest
- Feet resting flat on floor - footrest if short
- Thighs parallel to floor, or tilted slightly down towards the knees
- Elbows just above desk top height
- The top of the screen should be about level with the eyes. Do not look up at the screen

# Desk heights

- The correct posture can be obtained by most people using standard sizes of desk.
- Problems can arise for people who are very tall or long in the legs. Occasionally a higher desk surface is needed, especially if the user's thighs are touching the underside of the desk. Desks may be raised by attaching stable wooden blocks to the legs

# Equipment

- Screens must:
  - be adjustable in tilt and swivel
  - be separate from the keyboard (laptops aren't)
  - have adjustable brightness and contrast controls
  - have clear images free from flicker
  - be large enough for the type of work (*Large spreadsheets on 14" screens are not suitable*)

# Equipment

- Keyboards need:
  - clear marking of keys
  - ability to tilt slightly
  - enough space on desk in front of them to rest wrists/forearms or heels of hands
- Document holders at side of screen are helpful when copy typing
- A telephone headset may be needed if there is a lot of phone work

# Laptops

- Encourage poor posture and habits
- Don't comply with the Schedule to the Regs
- Can be improved by using a docking station or an accessory pack of riser blocks and separate keyboard and mouse (c.£69)
- Should not be used for more than about 1 hour at a time
- Should not be used when a desktop PC is available

# Layout

- The user must be able to sit “square on” to the screen and keyboard
- The mouse should be close at one side so that the elbow can be kept near the body
- Other frequently used equipment must be within easy reach
- Enough desk space for the necessary work
- No clutter under the desk restricting legs



# Working Environment

- Avoid glare or reflections on screens by tilting/angling, using diffusers on strip lights, siting PCs at right angles to windows, using window blinds in bright weather.
- Trying to achieve a quiet, adequately spacious environment with suitable heating and ventilation

# Why is our DSE Assessment Form so long?

- Because we have itemised just about everything you need to look at to identify and specify any problems
- If there is a problem in future, our diligence in getting things right may be judged by those forms
- That is why we need to keep them for many years

# Adjustments and gizmos

- Most potential problems can be resolved by adjustment of equipment, posture or work design - and this costs very little.
- Sometimes special accessories help. E.g. footrests, document holders, trackerball mouse for some conditions
- Disabilities have to be accommodated wherever possible - sometimes specialised equipment can help

# Common problems and cures

- Hitting keys too hard, often done by former typists - rest wrists on desk and key gently.
- Bending hands up or down at the wrists when keying - adjust seat height and keyboard tilt, try a wrist rest.
- Gripping mouse too tightly and moving it with hand muscles. Treat it gently, and move whole arm from the shoulder keeping arm close to body.

# Predisposing medical conditions

- Previous back injuries may need additional support in the chair, or may need greater freedom to get up and move around
- Rheumatic and arthritic conditions will need shorter spells of this activity
- Neck/shoulder stiffness/trapped nerve sufferers may need to get up and exercise more often, and need to vary their position

## Contd.

- History of repetitive strain, tenosynovitis, tendonitis, etc. need to take a break or change of activity before they notice symptoms
- Where there is a health problem not sorted by the adjustments outlined, refer the employee to Occupational Health as soon as possible.

# Self help for users

- DSE work is sedentary. Muscles that are not used get weak. Get some exercise when not at your desk! Half an hour's walking at lunchtime will do fine, something more strenuous if you prefer. Have some non-sedentary hobbies.
- Take mini breaks from the screen every 10 minutes or so - refocus eyes on the distance, stretch, shrug shoulders, relax and shake hands to release tension. Change activities for a bit!

# The DSE Regulations 1992

*(We've already covered most of it!)*

- Reg. 1 - Defines “User” and other terms
- Reg .2 - Requires workstation assessments
- Reg. 3 - Refers to workstation requirements in the Schedule (from EC Directive 90/270)
- Reg 4 - Breaks and changes of activity
- Reg. 5 - Eyes and eyesight
- Reg. 6 &7 - Training and information



# DSE Users

- “Users” are a special category of staff who work at PCs
- “Users” are identified by the quantity of DSE work they have to do, the pressure of that work, criticality of work and the limited freedom they have to organise their own work.
- “Users” are entitled to free eye tests and glasses specifically for DSE if needed

**Name of employee**

**Job Title**

**Department/Unit**

<b>Factors in the assessed person's job</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Guide No.</b>
Continuous keyboard work for spells of an hour or more			1
Accuracy is critical, work requires high attention and concentration			2
Copy typing or transferring data from paper to screen more than 4 hours a day			3
Pressure to deal with DSE work given by others			4
Very limited discretion to use PC at chosen times			5
DSE workload largely generated by others			6

Do you think this person fits the legal definition of "User"?

Assessor's name and phone number

# Eye and Eyesight Tests

- All “Users” can have them, free, in work time
- Dundee University uses Duncan and Todd, who have shops or agents in Dundee and local towns.
- If a prescription is needed *solely* due to use of DSE, (not for reading as well), employer pays for a basic pair. We provide either:
  - Todd and Duncan’s single vision glasses in their own range of frames. OR
  - a contribution towards the glasses of your choice

# How the scheme works

- Employee asks DSE assessor to complete “User” Definition Form and sends it to Safety Services
- Safety Services sends out Eye Test form to employee with list of opticians
- Employee makes appointment with listed optician
- Gets eyes tested, leaves form with optician

## Contd.....

- IF prescription needed specifically for DSE work, chooses frames.
  - If standard frames and single vision lenses, employee pays nothing
  - If other frames or lenses chosen, pays the optician the full cost minus £55
- Returns to optician for dispensing and fitting
- Repeat eye tests, as recommended by the optician, reminder sent to Safety Services.

# Variofocals?

- The amendment of Regulations allows an optician to prescribe variofocals where it is his/her professional opinion that these are optically necessary for the patient. This is not the same as “I’ll give you variofocals for your new glasses and put in a special prescription for the DSE”. Think about the economics of running an opticians business!

# Our new scheme

- Provision is solely on the basis of need for a specific DSE prescription.
- Duncan and Todd will police this to ensure that people are not being provided with glasses where not needed
- If you need a DSE prescription and you **choose** varifocals the University gives you the same contribution as if you took single vision glasses

# Your Tasks

- Assess DSE workstations in your area, training people in safe use, and record.
- Check that workstations provided for operators and students meet standards
- Ensure that staff have read Staff Handbook section on DSE
- Define “Users”
- Refer on problems you cannot solve