

How to Set Up Your Display Screen Equipment (DSE) For Temporary Home Working

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Purpose: The guidance detailed below sets out how to set up your equipment when working from home on a temporary basis.

The HSE are advising that Display Screen Equipment (DSE) worker assessments are not required for temporary home workers.

What Good Looks like when working from home

When working with DSE at home we need to try and replicate the set-up we use in the workplace.

You may be lucky enough to already have a small home office set-up, if not then these notes should help you to achieve a comfortable working position.

Firstly, work at a desk, kitchen or dining table rather than the sofa or bed, which although pleasant initially is likely to lead to musculoskeletal aches and pains if maintained for any length of time.

Choose a supportive chair with a backrest and use the back rest for support. You can add a soft cushion in your lower back if you want to, to increase lumbar support.

Make sure the chair is of the correct height to allow you to work comfortably - if not, add cushions until you are at the right height.

You can see from the diagram below that your arms should be at a comfortable 90-degree angle in a nice, neutral resting position, at the same level as the work surface.

Ideally raise the screen so that the top is just below your eye line. It's easy to achieve this with books or boxes if you don't have a screen raiser, but you will need to use a separate keyboard and mouse in this case.

If not, then use your laptop on the desk/table but make sure you take more regular posture breaks and there is more info below about this.

The screen should be at about arms distance from you, too far away and you will crane forward to view the screen and end up with a stiff neck.



The most important thing when using any display screen equipment is regular change of posture.

We should be aiming to break up our work into chunks so that we are not locked into the DSE for longer than 40-60 minutes at any one time.

Sometimes, we need to take posture breaks more often than this, if we have a chronic musculoskeletal condition.

Set yourself some form of alarm as a reminder to move. Think about breaking up screen work with standing to make a call, standing and walking to read a document, or just standing and doing some stretches if your work has no natural breaks like this i.e. is all screen based.

Schedule a lunchbreak and use this time to get away from the desk and perhaps get into the garden, or out for a short walk.

If you are self-isolating at home and you feel well enough, think about doing a short online exercise class (there are plenty on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtSPnLR_Gks) or just go up and downstairs a few times, or do a few squats or wall presses while waiting for the kettle to boil!

Keep hydrated. Every hour, stand and go to fetch a drink, rather than keeping a large bottle close to hand.

Use this as another opportunity to move your body. If you drink often, you will also need to pee more too! Another good reason to stand and move!

And lastly - eye care. We know that our blink mechanism changes when we use computer screens for long periods, and this can result in dry, uncomfortable eyes.

General advice is that for every 20 minutes spent looking at a screen, a person should look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Following the rule is a great way to remember to take frequent breaks. This should help keep your eyes comfortable.

Getting the ergonomics right at your new temporary workspace should help to keep you comfortable and productive.

If you have any concerns or worries or have more complex needs, then please talk to your manager in the first instance.