

Workstation and Posture Support For Hybrid and Home Working.



What considerations and processes need to be implemented.

How to give the most up-to date and valuable support for employees.

Covers Hybrid, Hot Desking and Home Working set ups.



Obligations

The Health and Safety Executive state that: As an employer, you must protect your workers from the health risks of working with display screen equipment (DSE), such as PCs, laptops, tablets, and smartphones.

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) 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.**

In law, employers must:

- **do a DSE workstation assessment.**
- reduce risks, including making sure workers take breaks from DSE work or do something different.
- provide an eye test if a worker asks for one.
- **provide training and information for workers.**

Incorrect use of DSE or poorly designed workstations or work environments can lead to pain in necks, shoulders, backs, arms, wrists, and hands as well as fatigue and eye strain. The causes may not always be obvious.

The law applies if users are, for example:

- at a fixed workstation
- mobile workers
- home workers
- hot-desking (workers should carry out a **basic risk assessment** if they change desks regularly).

You may have no system in place, or you may have a whole team of DSE assessors, the important thing is to consider how to give real value to your people.

Once covered, that is where the 'obligation' ends from a DSE / Workstation point of view. For employee wellbeing, engagement, and productivity it is clear more needs to be done.

Hybrid and Home working has created new challenges, it is a positive time to look forward with new healthier, more lifestyle orientated working methods.

Next Steps

At what stage of this process are you? Do you have a system but its outdated, or would you like to create a new process.



Identify what budget you have or will have for equipment and advice.



What is your policy for equipment, do they need special circumstances to have certain equipment or is everyone entitled to the same kit?



Will you carry out the assessments / advice in the same way for new starters and current employees?



Produce a framework and campaign for completing assessments. How will it be framed it for internal communications?



Do you have a workstation / DSE checklist? Does it relate to home and hybrid working and is it specific to your organisation.

There has never been a better time to improve your workstation and posture advice process.



Questions to consider

Who in your Organisation takes DSE Assessments?

Are they passionate and will people listen to them and value the advice?

Can you collate all the wellbeing resources you have, to include with the assessment:

- Dates throughout the year for specific days or initiatives.
- Videos of exercise advice.
- Timetable of offerings e.g. Yoga, mindfulness
- Additional Benefits you offer e.g. Healthcare, physio

What assessment checklist will you use, and does it need to be updated?

When performing the sessions as part of Onboarding, it should be booked in once the user has the equipment and it set where they will work. This prevents having to repeat the process.

What part of the process works well for home and hybrid workstation advice?

Do you need to change or create a new process or can you bolt on additional services or actions to bring it in line with the desired level of support?

Are you going to offer 1:1 video advice and take people through their checklist?

If you have a hybrid and home working policy, does the Workstation checklist match the statements and processes in the policy?



It is possible to treat all employees as individuals, and keep a repeatable, trackable process.

Home Working Tips

The standard DSE Workstation checklist was designed a long time ago, and doesn't include some of the key factors associated with working from home.

Ideally people would create a home office environment, that replicates the sole purpose of an office working area. This just isn't the case for most people now working from home. They are using small spaces in a spare bedroom or kitchen, sometimes without a monitor or separate keyboard and mouse.

The following is areas of advice that should be included for home workers, with recommendations given and ways to make improvements given.

Area of focus – related to home working.	Solutions / advice to give.
Eye strain / Tension Headaches	20-20-20 Rule
Zoom fatigue – Difficulty in taking breaks	'Activity Breaks' - being intentional by scheduling into online calendar.
Neck pain / upper crossed syndrome	Specific exercises to lengthen tight muscles and strengthen weak muscles
Lack of movement and activity through the day.	'Fake commute' / dynamic and standing meetings.
Not much space available	Use other part of the home for different tasks, meetings using a headset and webcam on high shelf.

Avoid only sending out the standard DSE checklist for home workers, it is important you include additional advice and support on the different challenges that home working creates.

You may have to make some adjustments, but aligning these things early in the process makes the working life of an employee much more enjoyable and productive.

Make the workstation checklist more suited to home working and add specific advice where possible.

Hybrid Working / Hot Desking

If people are coming into the office and do not have a designated workstation, then use a best practice model. People need to be educated on the best ways to interact and use the workstations, to suit them. They are not required to fill in a DSE workstation checklist each time they come into the office environment.

Use a simple best practice document on an online internal collaboration hub, so people can access it. This shows you are providing the support and advice needed. It is also important to put other resources as a point of reference for example videos or images of exercises and best practice. This is an example:

Best practice – Hot desking

What to consider when using the ***Collaborative Spaces***.

	Key points to consider	How to make improvements
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only spend 45-50min at a time in Collaboration zones without taking a break.• Try to maintain a neutral sitting position, placing laptop on a hard surface.• If working with a colleague(s) try to sit/stand face on, avoid twisting and fixed unnatural positions.• Try to keep feet flat on the ground.• Change positions regularly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only book maximum of 1 hour long Collaborative meetings, take breaks between meetings.



Collaborative work is generally more dynamic, people will move more often.

What to consider when ***Sitting down*** using a workstation.

	Key points to consider	How to make improvements
Screen(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When seated at the desk, are your forearms horizontal and eyes at roughly the same height as the top 1/3 of the screen? • If using more than one screens, are they aligned so when sitting upright they are at the same height? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a big deep breath while sitting comfortably. This aligns your spine and shows the correct eye line for your screen(s) • Adjust chair height and screen height to suit your body position. • You may require a riser for a laptop to allow correct setup.
Chair/sitting position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are your feet flat on the floor? • Is space under the desk adequate? • Is the chair back support fixed and upright, approximately level with shoulder blades? • Are you sitting at the back of the seat pan? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try a footrest or rest your feet on something. • Clear the space under the desk. • Adjust the chair settings. • Try to keep arm rests at lowest setting.
Working surface – keyboard & Mouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the surface clear with just the necessary equipment? • Is the keyboard positioned correctly? • Is the mouse position level with the keyboard? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mouse to be positioned close to the keyboard. • Make sure the wrists and forearms can be rested on the desk in front of the keyboard.
Space & environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the space allow you to change position? • Is the screen free of glare? • Is the room temperature comfortable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The space around the desk should be kept clear and not used for storage. • You may need to use blinds or move position slightly. • Are the screen(s) brightness and/or contrast adjustable?
Body Positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the shoulders relaxed and not hunched? • Are the forearms and wrists in a neutral position? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to breathe deeply and aim to squeeze your shoulders back. • Relax your hands and fingers – use the desk and let your arms stay flat.

What to consider when **Standing up** using a workstation.

	Key points to consider	How to make improvements
Standing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially only stand for short periods of time, allow your body to adapt. Take regular breaks, sit down if needed. Make sure your laptop is set up correctly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand flat footed, maintain a neutral pelvis and spine position.
Laptop/Riser keyboard/Mouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If using a laptop, a riser, separate keyboard, and mouse should be considered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure eyes are level with top 3rd of the screen. Ensure forearms rest on the working surface in a neutral position.
Working surface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the surface clear with just the necessary equipment? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove all unnecessary equipment.
Body Positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the forearms and wrists in a neutral position, able to rest on the work surface? Stand square to the desk, evenly distribute your weight through both feet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relax your hands and fingers – use the desk and let your arms stay flat. Keep knees soft, with both feet planted evenly.

Final Thoughts

Workstation and Posture Support going forward still has the same minimum requirements. It is the relevant advice included into the process that makes it work for 2021 and beyond.

The process should be based around lifestyle, wellbeing and task management, rather than only ticking a box on an outdated checklist.

What if you have gaps in your process?

The information and guide should help you identify what areas you need to focus on and how to start the process.

This is how we help Organisations like yours, comply with their obligations then add value, making a real positive impact for their workforce.

Gap in Employee Support	PostureWorx Service
No-one in the organisation has the knowledge, skills, or confidence to answer questions relating to back and neck pain.	Level 2 DSE Assessment
The current DSE / Workstation process is outdated and does not align with wellbeing.	DSE and Posture Review Session.
Cannot advise fully on equipment people may need when working from home.	1:1 Advice Session
Not staying ahead of employee benefit trends.	Consultancy Service
The whole organisation needs home working advice.	Home working Webinar
Do not have a DSE process, so not meeting legal obligations.	Consultancy Service
Workstation advice for onboarding new starters is minimal.	DSE and Posture Review Session.
A musculoskeletal issue is flagged up on the DSE assessment checklist.	Level 2 DSE Assessment.

If you would like to discuss further, feel free to get in contact:

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