

# Management of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and Eyesight Testing Policy

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## NHS Shetland Document Development Coversheet\*

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Please record details of any changes made to the document in the table below

Date	Record of changes made to document
June 2022	Introduce new policy document.
January 2025	Changes to Section 9 regarding employer's contributions for 'Special' Corrective Appliances. Add Appendix 1 – Adjusting DSE Chairs, A guide for Managers and Staff.

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## 1. Introduction

In NHS Shetland we recognise the risk of musculoskeletal injury faced by staff from the extensive use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE). This policy has been developed in accordance with the relevant legislation, in particular:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

Although an organisation-wide approach has been established, detailed arrangements for controlling Display Screen Equipment related risks remain the responsibility of Directors, Heads of Service and operational managers. All departmental health and safety control books should deal with any DSE risks arising in the course of the work of the department.

This policy and its procedures have been developed and agreed through the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee, Area Partnership Forum and the Staff Governance Committee.

## 2. Principles

Shetland NHS Board is committed to applying a safe system of work to all staff that require them within the normal course of their duties to be deemed as a display screen equipment 'user' as defined in the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, which is:

- normally use DSE for continuous or near continuous spells of an hour or more at a time; and
- use DSE in this way more or less daily; and
- have to transfer information quickly to and from the DSE; and
- also need to apply high levels of attention and concentration; or are highly dependent on DSE; or have little choice about using it; or need special training or skills to use the DSE

Other relevant definitions are:

**Non DSE User:** Employees who only use DSE occasionally or for short periods of time.

**Workstation:** An assembly comprising of desk, chair, monitor, keyboard, mouse and all other parts of the computer and accessories and the immediate work environment.

**Shared Workstation/ Hot desk:** Fully equipped and adaptable workstation available for use by any employee who needs to use it.

**Display Screen Equipment:** Alphanumeric or graphic display screen, includes liquid crystal or plasma display screens, laptops, notebooks, tablets, touchscreens and other emerging technologies. Most types of display are covered by the Regulations including CCTV screens and clinical monitors.

The Board recognises that for many workplace tasks, the use of computers is an unavoidable necessity to effectively and efficiently manage information, appointments and other administrative related duties. Therefore, whilst the Board is committed to eliminating workplace hazards, so far as is reasonably practicable, it is a reality of the modern workplace that the elimination of DSE use at work is an unrealistic option. However, DSE use must always be evaluated to consider elimination in the

first instance where practicable. But failing this option, risks that arise from DSE use are to be managed to ensure risks are reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable. To facilitate this the Board are committed to providing:

- DSE risk assessment
- Adequate DSE user training
- Appropriate ergonomic equipment
- Information, instruction and appropriate supervision on site

This policy will be reviewed every three years, and registered holders of the Health and Safety Control Book will be notified of amendments.

### **3. Policy aims**

This policy aims to:

- meet the general commitments to the health and safety of staff described in the Risk Management Strategy and Health and Safety Policy
- eliminate poor ergonomic conditions which could cause injury, wherever this is possible, and reduce risks to the lowest level reasonably practicable
- reduce unnecessary risks by making sure that DSE risk assessments are carried out and that appropriate equipment is identified and used
- make suitable arrangements for putting this policy into practice and ensure we make improvements in controlling the risks created by DSE
- contribute to helping staff who have musculoskeletal symptoms; reinforce the responsibilities of managers and heads of departments for DSE activities within their areas of responsibility
- work within the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992) and all other legislative and professional guidance (see Appendix 1)

### **4. General strategy**

Our strategy for the management of display screen equipment reflects the potential scale of the problems in this respect. Responsibility for DSE risk assessments and implementing control measures rests with line managers with advisory input from the Health & Safety Lead and Occupational Health, as appropriate.

The strategy for reducing DSE risks is as follows:

- The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee will review and oversee how this policy is put into practice. The Health and Safety Lead will advise the Committee on corporate DSE management strategies. A competent DSE assessor (Health & Safety Lead) is available to assist in the development of strategies, to provide appropriate staff training and expert advice on display screen equipment related issues. Scoping of DSE activities to identify 'users' through the risk assessment processes must be carried out by line managers and heads of

department. Specific DSE Assessments for individual 'users' must be conducted to identify any significant risk of injury, and if appropriate, action plans created to manage the implementation of any further controls. The action plan will aim to reduce the risk of injury within DSE by:

- identifying priority risk areas
- helping staff use DSE equipment correctly
- encouraging safe and ergonomic postures and practices
- adapting the working environment or reorganising work practices
- collecting data to monitor the policy's implementation and effectiveness, and to potentially inform future procurement decisions

## 5. DSE workstation assessment and risk identification

To assist line managers meet their obligations in relation to the management of display screen equipment, a suite of DSE assessment resources has been produced within the Health & Safety Control Book system. This suite consists of:

- [Generic Risk Assessment \(Control Book 4C\)](#)
- [DSE Self-Assessment Form \(Control Book 3C1\)](#)
- [Detailed DSE Assessment \(Control Book 3C2\)](#)
- [Non DSE User Workstation Assessment \(Control Book 3C3\)](#)
- [Shared Workstation & Hot Desk Checklist \(Control Book 3C4\)](#)
- [Hybrid/Home working Detailed DSE Assessment \(Control Book 3C5\)](#)

These assessments enable staff members who use this type of equipment and managers to evaluate DSE usage and workstation ergonomics, which in turn enables the implementation of appropriate control measures to reduce risk in relation to this type of work activity.

Where the results of assessments identify outcomes above 'Low Risk', a more specific and detailed DSE assessment is available to further evaluate the task and consider potential enhanced control measures to eliminate or reduce the risks. When identified, such detailed assessments need to be carried out by a competent person who can work with Control Book owners, and staff who carry out the task.

## 6. Responsibilities

**The Chief Executive** will include a review of progress in controlling the risks from display screen equipment, and aims for the coming year, in the annual health and safety report for the organisation's Board.

**The Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee**, chaired by the Director of Human Resources and Support Services will oversee the implementation and review of this Policy and its associated documentation.

**The Health and Safety Lead** is part of the Human Resources and Support Services Directorate, and is responsible for advising managers and staff about their legal obligations and for providing specialist advice and support in relation to the management of DSE. The Health and Safety Lead will advise on strategic developments necessary to reduce musculoskeletal disorders to meet legislation and best practice related to the use of DSE.

**The members of the Executive Management Team, Chief Nurses and all Heads of Departments** are responsible for:

- Noting the initial risk assessments carried out and any amendments or additions made, putting the recommendations for eliminating or reducing risk into practice as far as is reasonably practicable, following the initial assessment or annual review
- recording details in their departmental health and safety control books of their arrangements for DSE related risks, outlining appropriate responsibilities, channels of communication and monitoring
- making sure that appropriate measurements of fitness criteria are set for new staff and that these are used effectively by Occupational Health Service (OHS) when carrying out pre-employment screening
- taking account of risks created by DSE use in the design of new facilities, buying of equipment or new work practices and take advice from the Health & Safety Lead
- maintaining monthly statistics on all DSE incidents and the extent of any sickness absence, which may be caused as a result.

**Line managers** are responsible for:

- identifying DSE risks within their department and, as appropriate, working with the Health & Safety Lead to identify measures to reduce risk
- making sure that Datix incident reports are completed for all injuries, ill-health or near misses involving DSE, and keep up-to-date details of all DSE related incidents which occur in their area of responsibility, particularly during periods of absence
- making sure that the appropriate DSE risk assessments are carried out, updated as necessary, reviewed every year, and details kept
- being fully aware of the issues highlighted within current DSE risk assessments carried out for their areas; putting into practice, as far as reasonably practicable, with the resources available, any control measures identified through risk assessments or required under this policy
- recording details of action plans for reducing risk and ensuring they prioritise risk control measures
- taking account of the risks created by DSE in the design of new facilities, work practices, permanent/hybrid home working arrangements and taking advice when necessary
- to make sure that all staff receive the relevant information, instruction and training within the induction process and appropriate refresher training to ensure staff are updated regularly

- maintaining local records of staff who receive training, both at induction and for update sessions
- recommending referral to the Occupational Health Service when appropriate, and taking advice on changing tasks or a phased return to work when necessary
- ensuring that new members of staff in their ward or department have been passed by the OHS as fit for the job

**All staff** are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care for their own safety and that of colleagues and patients
- making full and proper use of DSE equipment provided
- following the precautions and procedures set up for avoiding or reducing the risk of musculoskeletal injury created by DSE work and following the relevant safe systems of work shown in the individual DSE risk assessment
- undergoing the Display Screen Equipment course (TURAS) provided by the Staff Development department at induction and further updates
- Following safe working practices for DSE use and asking for extra information or instruction if they feel that they need it
- assessing the workstation before carrying out any DSE related activity to make sure enough precautions are taken
- reporting to their Head of Department any risks which they think have not been handled effectively
- making sure that Datix incident reports are promptly reported and completed by following the procedure for all adverse events involving DSE Workstations and reporting any problems or shortcomings in the risk assessment or safe system to their line manager

**The Occupational Health Department** is responsible for carrying out pre-employment screening and making sure that new staff are fit for the duties involved in their post.

They will discuss with the appropriate Line Manager and/or the Health & Safety Lead any DSE risk which they consider to be significant and work in collaboration with Opticians, Physicians and GPs as applicable.

All staff can consult the service, confidentially, on any aspect of health and safety while at work.

## 7. Training

The best way of reducing the risk of musculoskeletal injury from DSE is by putting measures in place which reduce:

- the amount of DSE related work performed
- the risk factors in the DSE tasks that remain

Shetland NHS Board will provide training which teaches the principles of:

- legislation and local policy
- ergonomics
- risk assessment
- back care
- details of injuries
- fitness
- using DSE equipment and correct Workstation set-up

All staff will receive initial induction training on safe use of DSE equipment via the Turas system as soon as is reasonably possible, following commencement of their employment with NHS Shetland. All staff will also receive refresher training every 2 years for DSE equipment unless the risk assessment dictates otherwise.

Line managers will identify further training needs and appropriate training will be provided in consultation with the Health & Safety Lead.

Monitoring and reporting of induction training is provided through Turas and the NHSS Learning & Development Team.

## **8. Hybrid / Home working**

NHS Shetland employees who are contracted to work either within a Hybrid or Homeworking arrangement and are deemed as a DSE 'User' under the previous definitions contained within this Policy, will be subject to the same level of workstation/ergonomic/environmental assessment afforded office based staff.

A specific assessment form is available in the [Health & Safety Control Book \(3C5\)](#), which provides a template for this type of detailed assessment to take place in a systematic fashion. Assessments that are conducted in an employee's own home, are to be undertaken by a competent person who has the training, experience and objectivity to evaluate the environment and apply health and safety legislation to an extensively domestic setting. Where short comings are identified with personal workstations, associated equipment and the working environment, NHS Shetland will provide the correct level of equipment to ensure home/hybrid working is not detrimental to the health and safety of the staff member concerned. However, where concerns are unable to be resolved or an unreasonable financial outlay would be required to bring the working area or equipment up to standard, hybrid/home working may not be authorised, depending upon the circumstances and always dictated by the relevant DSE workstation assessment. The NHS Shetland Home / Hybrid Working Guidance document provides further advice on the subject matter and should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Temporary or non-contracted home working by a staff member who would be considered a DSE 'User' are not subject to the same level of independent scrutiny. However, where possible, the principles of correct ergonomic DSE workstation set-up should be followed as far as is reasonably practicable. The DSE self-assessment form is still required to be completed for temporary or non-contracted home working by the individual employee and retained by their line manager for audit

purposes once completed. Follow-up assessments may be required by a competent DSE assessor, where problems with the workstation or environment have been highlighted by the individual to their line manager.

## 9. Eyesight testing

In Scotland, eye tests are provided free of charge normally every 2 years. However, NHS Shetland will meet the costs of an eyesight test for all employees who are required to use Display Screen Equipment (DSE) as follows:

- normally use DSE for **continuous or near continuous** spells of an hour or more at a time; and
- use DSE in this way more or less daily; and
- have to transfer information quickly to and from the DSE; and
- also need to apply high levels of attention and concentration; or are highly dependent on DSE; or have little choice about using it; or need special training or skills to use the DSE; and
- the employee is suffering poor vision and/or frequent headaches etc. before the normal 2-year period for a free eye test has been reached.

The frequency of the tests will depend upon the recommendations of the employee's optician. However, unless there are specific medical reasons, this would normally be once every two years.

Employees are to arrange their own eye tests at a time suitable to them and the needs of the department in consultation with their Line Manager.

Eyesight tests are arranged by the individual, but only with the prior consent of their Line Manager who once satisfied the employee is entitled to an eyesight test under the provisions of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 and this policy, will provide authorisation for the employee to attend a 'Specsavers' optician. A receipt must be obtained from the optician and submitted with an appropriate NHS Shetland expenses claim form for reimbursement of the cost of the eye test, if appropriate. Where the optician identifies that 'Special' corrective eyewear (spectacles) are required **specifically and solely for VDU use**, NHS Shetland will fund the provision of a basic, single computer use pair of spectacles free of charge from any of the choice of frame ranges up to a value of £30 offered by Specsavers. NHS Shetland will meet the cost of these spectacles **from the £30 range or below only**. Any difference in cost between the standard Specsavers range (up to £30) and employee's enhancements to their spectacle choice (for example 'designer' frames/extra tinting or coatings) must be met by the individual employee. Employees who claim the NHS Shetland contribution (dependent upon frame choice up to a maximum of £30) for computer single use spectacles must provide a receipt and copy of the prescription from the optician stating the spectacles are "single use, specifically for computer/DSE only" and submit this documentation along with their expenses claim form for reimbursement.

**Under no circumstances are employees to pay for tests/spectacles up front and attempt to claim the money back** without first obtaining authorisation from their Line Manager. Should this occur, NHS Shetland may not refund money already paid out. The employee, under this policy can

use another optician if they choose. However, the maximum NHS Shetland contribution for single use 'special' corrective eyewear (spectacles) of £30 will still apply.

Any employees, who are working within their official notice period for termination of employment, are not entitled to receive any payment for eye tests or 'Special' corrective eyewear under this scheme.

The use of bifocal or varifocal lens' for DSE use is to be treated with extreme caution as the inherent design of such lens may cause side effects associated with the use of multi-focal prescriptions for DSE work. The smaller size of each lens section can lead to the user having to make repeated adjustments to their neck/head position or adopting an awkward position in order to look through the appropriate part of the lens. Following extensive research, the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) considers that these disadvantages could prove to be more problematic than the need to regularly swap spectacles for differing focal lengths, for instance by inducing increased neck pain. It is therefore NHS Shetland's policy (except in **exceptional circumstances** such as Reasonable Adjustments under the Equality Act) not to provide bifocal or varifocal spectacles under this policy and employees will only be able to obtain a 'standard' **single use** pair of glasses specifically for DSE under the scheme as previously detailed.

Where there are exceptional circumstances as to why multi-focal prescriptions for DSE work are considered appropriate, the decision on which is the most suitable solution is best taken in discussion with the optometrist. This will require information being provided about the individual staff member's nature of the work, the workstation and workplace layout. Multi-focal lens for DSE use will only be funded where it is deemed the **only** appropriate solution to that individual's DSE work practices. This must be approved by the individual's Line Manager in consultation with the Health & Safety Lead and the Senior Occupational Health Nurse and also taking into account the optician's recommendations, prior to any order for multi-focal lenses being placed. Where an order for multi-focal prescriptions for DSE work is placed without this prior authorisation from the Line Manager, the cost of such an order may potentially not be met by NHS Shetland as there has not been a suitable and sufficient risk assessment undertaken to establish what reasonable adjustments are required and are multi-focal lens for DSE work the best solution to accommodate the individual's exceptional needs.

NHS Shetland's liability for the cost of multi-focal prescriptions for DSE use is restricted to payment of the cost of a basic appliance, ie of a type and quality adequate for the user's work. Where bifocal or varifocal spectacles are prescribed as special corrective appliances following detailed assessment as described above, NHS Shetland will meet the costs associated with providing a basic frame (maximum £30) and the prescribed lenses only. 'Designer' frames, extra lens tinting or coatings will not be funded by NHS Shetland and if ordered, the cost of these must be met by the individual staff member.

## 10. Rehabilitation and assessment

Managers, with the staff member's permission, will refer to the Occupational Health Service any staff member who suffers musculoskeletal pains or injury and who may need temporary changes made to their normal duties following an assessment.

Assessments of staff member's fitness in relation to the demands of their job will be undertaken and recommendations submitted to the relevant manager. They, in turn, will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate these recommendations.

If the relevant manager judges the recommendations to be impractical, they must discuss the recommendations with their Head of Department, which may also require input from the OHS and Health & Safety Lead.

## **11. Monitoring and reviewing**

Outcome and indicators which may be used to evaluate this policy include:

- Is the policy effectively and widely communicated?
- Are staff aware of the policy and its implications?
- Is the policy addressed in local and organisational induction programmes?

This policy will be reviewed three years from its effective date by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee, reporting to Shetland NHS Board.

## **12. Dissemination and communication**

The policy is made available via the Health & Safety Department Intranet page to ensure ease of access for all staff. Paper copies of the policy are also available in some departments, which may form part of the Health & Safety Control Book package.

## **13. Legislative and professional guidance documents**

[Health & Safety at Work etc Act \(1974\)](#)

[Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations \(1999\)](#)

[Health and Safety \(Display Screen Equipment\) Regulations \(1992\)](#)



# **Adjusting Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Chairs**

## **A guide for Managers and Staff**

## Introduction

Staff who are sitting in badly set-up Display Screen Equipment (DSE) chairs and adopting poor seated postures run the risk of developing problems such as general discomfort or aches and pains in the wrists, arms, shoulders, neck, back or legs.

If working at a computer workstation, whether at a fixed desk location or 'hot desking', make sure the equipment supplied is being used correctly and adjusted to meet your individual needs from an ergonomic perspective. In particular, pay attention to how the workstation chair is being used - whether this is a standard DSE chair or specialist chair.

In the absence of any user instructions and/or demonstration, the following brief guidance should help you correctly set up your chair and feel confident to make minor adjustments as necessary. However, please contact the Health & Safety Team if you are unsure regarding any aspect of correct workstation set-up at [shet.h-s@nhs.scot](mailto:shet.h-s@nhs.scot).

If you are using a computer, it is important that you have a suitable DSE chair to sit on, and are able to adjust it, so it is comfortable. The following sections provide guidance on how to adjust a computer operators chair to achieve a good ergonomic position to meet your individual needs:

### a. Chair height

- You should be able to adjust the height of your chair so that your forearms are approximately parallel to the floor and your feet are on the floor (or on a footrest).
- If your feet don't reach the floor when your arms are in the correct position, use a footrest.
- Hips should be slightly higher than your knees, to help blood flow up your legs.

### b. Back and pelvis support

- The chair should offer adequate support for your back and for your lumbar region (lower back).
- On some chairs you may also be able to adjust the tilt of the seat base in relation to the back support. This will help provide a comfortable angle for your pelvis and hips in relation to your torso.
- On some chairs you will be able to move the seat base backwards and forwards so the depth of the seat can be adjusted to suit you.

### c. Arms

- Chairs do not need to have arms fitted to be safe to use.
- Where arms are fitted, they should be adjustable.
- Chair arms in a fixed position tend to restrict your ability to sit close enough to the desk, leading to poor seated postures and discomfort. If this is the case, it is advisable to remove the chair arms.

#### d. How to make adjustments

If in doubt, it is a good idea to do a full set-up of your chair, to make sure you don't miss anything important. This is especially important if you are frequently using different chairs, for example if you are 'hot desking.'

First of all look at the chair and explore all the possible adjustments and see what they do, and then, by using the tips below, set up the chair correctly to suit you.

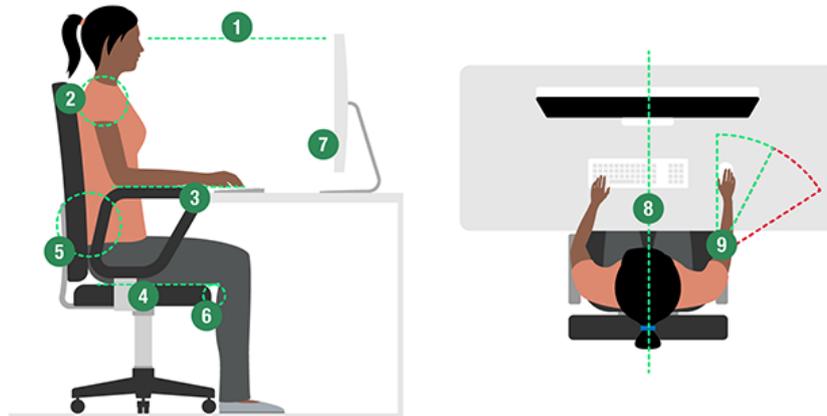
- Sit in the chair away from your desk - ensuring your back is against the chair back.
- Set the height of the chair so your hips are slightly higher than your knees. (This helps the blood flow back up the legs.) Your feet should still be on the floor.
- Set the angle of the chair back so it is upright, or slightly leaning backwards to no more than 10 degrees. (This encourages the user to relax into the chair.)
- Adjust the height of the chair back so the lumbar section (lower, thicker cushioned section) of the chair back is in the lumbar region of your back (just above the hip line).
- If the chair has an adjustable lumbar cushion, set the angle and height of the chair back first, then inflate or deflate the lumbar cushion to suit.
- Where possible, adjust the depth of the seat pan, either by moving the seat pan or moving the chair back forward or back. To find the correct position, when sitting, your thighs should feel supported, but the front of the seat cushion should not rub or touch the back of your knees. There should be a small gap between the back of the knees and the front of seat base.
- Now move the chair to the desk.
- Check that when you are seated, your forearms are approximately parallel to the floor. It is important that your arms are in the correct position. If you need to raise the chair, and your feet no longer touch the floor, then use a foot rest.
- If the chair is fitted with arms, **don't** rest your forearms on them while you are typing as this puts stress on your wrist joints.
- Make sure the position of the chair arms allows you to sit close enough to the desk without having to reach or sit forward from the back support, if this is not possible it would be better to remove the arms.

You may need to continue to make minor adjustments to the chair until it feels comfortable.

Remember, this alone will not necessarily prevent problems occurring with prolonged computer use. It is recommended that staff should also take a 'break' from computer work on a regular basis. A 30 second stretch and walk around every 20 minutes to get the blood flowing through the body again is far better than a 10 minute break every 2 hours. Try to build into the day regular natural 'breaks' from the computer, such as getting up to collect printing or filing tasks etc, rather than saving these tasks up for the end of the shift.

The following pages will help managers and staff to understand what good posture looks like when using display screen equipment at home or in the workplace:

## Standard workstation setup

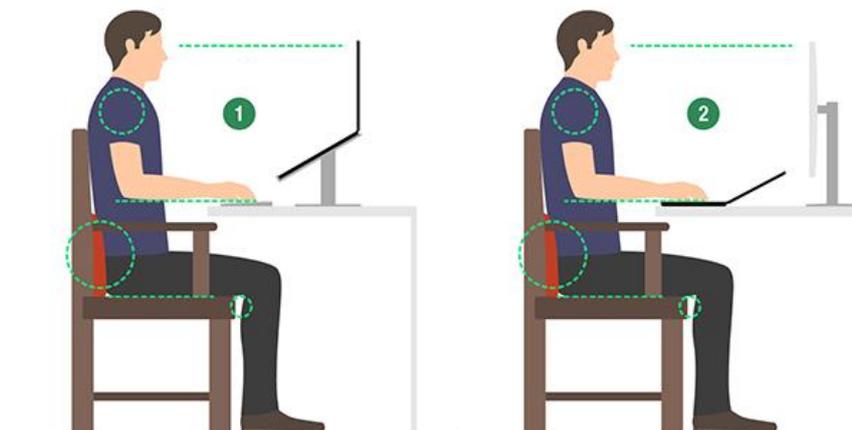


Work in this way to maintain good posture

1. Top of screen level with eyes, about an arm's length away
2. Relax your shoulders - try to position yourself high enough so you don't need to shrug your shoulders
3. Keyboard just below elbow height
4. Seat height equally supports front and back of thighs (or use cushion to raise seated position)
5. Back of the seat provides good lower back support (or use cushion, to provide additional back support)
6. Gap of 2-3 cm between front of seat bottom and back of knee
7. Computer and screen directly in front of you on desk or other surface
8. Screen and keyboard central - don't twist your back
9. Mouse in line with elbow

## Laptop setup

Consider these additional points when setting up your laptop for prolonged use.



## Good posture for laptop use

1. Keyboard and mouse separate from the laptop so screen can be elevated on a laptop riser or similar
2. Display screen separate from the laptop

If you have concerns regarding their workstation or working arrangements, please report them to your line manager in the first instance. Additional advice and support is available from the Health & Safety Team by e-mailing [shet.hs@nhs.scot](mailto:shet.hs@nhs.scot).