



Eye Test Policy and Procedure

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1. INTRODUCTION

Council (as delegated by the Elected members, through the Senior Leadership Team and Line Managers) is committed to the provision of safe and healthy workplaces. It is the policy of the Council that all staff have a safe and healthy place of work. This also includes work activities involving the use of a desktop computer (PC), laptop, or a tablet, otherwise known as Display Screen Equipment (DSE), as a substantial part of their work.

The Council will fulfil its obligations under the DSE (NI) Regulations 1992 as amended by:

- Assessing all workstations used by staff using a self-assessment approach supported by online training and associated guidance
- Referring staff to occupational health when there is any doubt that there may be health issues due to DSE use
- Provision of suitable work equipment
- Provision of information, instruction, supervision and training for DSE users through line management and online training
- Provision of eye examination and testing for all users and the provision of an allowance towards corrective spectacles where they are required solely and specifically for DSE use
- Provision of prescription safety spectacles where staff are required to carry out fine work in an adverse environment which may require safety spectacles

2. POLICY STATEMENT

Scope

This policy applies to all DSE Users within Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

Equality

Consideration is given to the protected characteristics of all people groups identified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The protected characteristics are gender, age, race, disability, marital status or sexual orientation, religious belief and political opinion, and persons with dependants.

The Council recognises the need for measures to ensure the health and safety of each of these groups. This policy and all other associated Health and Safety related policies take this into account.

(The policy statement should be signed and dated as follows by relevant Council representatives and Trade Union representatives)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Mayor
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chief Executive
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 User means someone who habitually uses DSE as a significant part of his/her normal work, i.e.

- a) normally use DSE for continuous or near-continuous spells of an hour or more at a time; and
- b) use DSE in this way more or less daily; and
- c) Have to transfer information quickly to or 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.

3.2 Workstation means display screen equipment (whether provided with software determining the interface between the equipment and its operator or user, a keyboard or any other input device), any optional accessories to the display screen equipment, any disk drive, telephone, modem, printer, document holder, work chair, work desk, work surface or other item peripheral to the display screen equipment, and the immediate work environment around the display screen equipment

4. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Line Managers shall ensure that workstation equipment is of a suitable standard, assessments are carried out in their area of responsibility, and that appropriate recommendations are carried out.

4.2 Users shall ensure that they carry out training and assessment as required as above, report any health issues associated with the use of DSE to their Line Manager and review the assessment regularly as above.

It has been established that the following conditions may arise following intensive DSE use;

- Work related upper limb disorders (WRULDs) and other muscle disorders including back pain and muscle fatigue caused by poor posture or alignment
- Temporary visual fatigue caused by poor lighting, screen glare or flicker, reflection, or poorly positioned DSE. There is no evidence at present supporting the assertion that DSE causes permanent damage to eyes
- Soreness to the eyes related to poor humidity
- Fatigue and general stress relating to environmental conditions and work planning

Other conditions sometimes associated with DSE use include epilepsy, facial dermatitis, electromagnetic radiation and effects on pregnant women. There is no medical evidence to suggest that any of these conditions are affected or caused by DSE work.

Concerns over health conditions should be reported to your Line Manager who may refer you to Occupational Health.

5. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS (OR ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES)

5.1 Workstation Assessment

In the first instance workstation assessment will be carried out by the user following the use of an online training package and a short knowledge test. The software system will automatically generate an e-mail notification to the Line Manager informing him/her of any concerns raised during the assessment. It will be the responsibility of the Line Manager to address the concerns and take any necessary remedial action.

If the Line Manager has specific concerns which he or she cannot remedy, advice should be sought from the Health and Safety Unit.

Managers with particular concerns over health effects suspected to be caused by DSE use should refer staff to occupational health if they cannot resolve the issue themselves.

The workstation assessment should be repeated if major changes are made to the furniture, layout, accessories, job role or tasks, or if the health of the staff member changes.

Otherwise, the assessment should be reviewed annually by the staff member to ensure that they are reminded of good practice regularly.

5.2 Minimum Requirements for Workstations

- **Display screen:** The characters on the screen shall be well-defined and clearly formed, of adequate size and with adequate spacing between the characters and lines. The image on the screen should be stable, with no flickering or other forms of instability. The brightness and the contrast between the characters and the background shall be easily adjustable by the operator or user, and also be easily adjustable to ambient conditions. The screen must swivel and tilt easily and freely to suit the needs of the

user and have no reflective glare. User's eyes should be the same height as the top of the screen.

- **Keyboard**; the keyboard shall be tiltable and separate from the screen (desktop), shall have adequate space in front to support the arms, have a matt surface, be easy to use with contrasting characters on keys.
- **Work desk/surface**; shall be sufficiently large and non-reflecting surface, allow space for flexible arrangement of the screen, keyboard, documents and associated peripherals. Space must allow a comfortable position for operators.
- **Work chair**; must be stable, comfortable, allow the used easy movement. The chair must have an adjustable seat height. The back of the chair must adjust in both height and tilt, and footrests made available where required. The chair shall have castors.
- **Lighting**; shall ensure satisfactory lighting conditions and an appropriate contrast between the screen and the background environment, taking into account the type of work and the vision requirements of the operator or user
- **Reflections and glare**; workstations shall be so designed that there shall be no direct glare or reflections on the screens. Windows shall be fitted with an adequate adjustable covering to attenuate daylight
- **Noise**; emitted by equipment shall not distract the user or disturb speech
- **Heat**; equipment shall not emit heat which may cause discomfort to the user
- **Humidity**; Adequate levels of humidity shall be maintained

The software systems must be suitable for the task, easy to use, and adaptable to the level of the User's knowledge. No quantitative or qualitative checking facility may be used without the User's knowledge.

Laptop Computers & Portable Devices Laptops must comply with the full regulations when they are used for continuous periods of more than one hour per day, on most days. Ideally the keyboard and screen should be separate, and there are several options to achieve this:

- Use with a docking station (preferred)
- Connect to a remote desktop computer
- Use with a separate monitor
- Use with a separate keyboard and mouse

All laptops and their accessories should be as light as possible. A carrier will be provided if a laptop is to be carried frequently. Avoid branded laptop cases for security.

5.3 Eye Examination and Testing

All DSE users will be entitled to an eye test, by a qualified optician, every two years. This interval may be reduced on the advice of the optician (evidence to be provided).

Staff shall arrange their own eye test with their chosen optician. The Council will cover the cost of the test up to the value of £25. The staff member will ask the optician to sign/stamp the required form and return to their immediate line manager for authorisation. Once authorised, the line manager will forward the required information to payroll for reimbursement to the staff member.

The Council will meet the cost of any basic 'special' corrective appliances (normally spectacles) where the Optometrist deems that these are needed solely for display screen work i.e. glasses specifically worn for display screen work when their normal/everyday glasses cannot be used for that purpose. A basic frame up to the value of £40 will be reimbursed, and DSE Lenses up to the value £65. (Please see the completed ET1 form- see Appendix 1)

Where staff members require safety glasses specifically for their work for Council, the line manager must carry out a risk assessment to determine if this is an appropriate health and safety requirement. If it is determined that the safety glasses are required, the Council cover the cost of the safety glasses, up to the value of £75. The staff member will ask the optician to sign/stamp the ET1 form and return along with the receipt to their immediate line manager for authorisation. Once authorised the line manager will forward the required information to payroll for reimbursement to the staff member.

5.4 Rest Breaks

Breaking up long spells of DSE use helps to prevent fatigue, eyestrain, upper limb disorders and backache. Most employees will have some control over their own working arrangements, and will be able to organise their work to take this into account. The best way to break up work is to alternate sedentary work with more active tasks, such as filing, photocopying etc. Where this is not possible, more formal breaks may be necessary. Frequent mini breaks every 15-30 minutes are preferable to longer breaks, taken every couple of hours.

5.5 Home Working

Where Council staff are contracted or permitted to work from home, the full requirements of the DSE Regulations in terms of provision of equipment and

suitable set up must be implemented. A DSE self-assessment must be carried out in the home setting, and will be forwarded to the Line Manager for review and to address any concerns that have arisen.

5.6 Pregnant Workers

Although scientific studies have not discovered any link amongst new and expectant Mothers and DSE use, the layout and working arrangements should be routinely assessed over the pregnancy period. This should be carried out at the same time as the Council Pregnancy Risk Assessment process. Special consideration should be given to achieving a comfortable seating position and an increase in the frequency and duration of rest breaks.

6. DSE Assessment Review

The user will carry out training followed by an assessment on commencement of their employment and every 24 months thereafter, unless there are significant changes. Training should be renewed every 3 years. It will be the responsibility of the Line Manager to ensure that these reviews are carried out in a timely manner.

If the user moves to another location, or there is a significant change in circumstances or workstation, the assessment should be carried out again without delay.

7. Evaluation And Review of the Policy

This policy will be kept under review, and if necessary, revised in consultation with recognised Trade Unions.

8. SECTION 75 EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is fully committed to meeting its obligations in relation to Equality and Good Relations under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act. In this regard this policy will be screened using Section 75 guidelines and will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment if found necessary as a result of the screening process.

9. CONTACT DETAILS

Any issues or queries relating to this policy should be addressed to:

Peter Kerr
Health Safety and Insurance Manager
peter.kerr@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

10. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Health and Safety Policy

Appendix 1 - DSE Eye Test Form (ET1)

DRAFT



Appendix 1 – Eye Test Examination and Testing Form

Dear Sir/Madam

Acting on behalf of his/her employer, we require this employee (insert name below)

To undergo an eye and eyesight examination relating to his/her work as a **Display Screen Equipment User**.

Please complete this form and give it to the patient, with your itemised account and note of the prescription if required. The patient will pay the fee incurred.

She/he must present all the above information to his/her Line Manager for reimbursement.

The above patient requires spectacles specifically for DSE use.

Correction **specifically** for DSE use?

(appliances prescribed to correct vision defects at the viewing distance or distances used specifically for the display screen work concerned)

Signed

GOC Number

Date

Council will reimburse the following;

- Basic frame – Up to £40
- Basic lenses – Up to £65
- Eye test – Up to £25

Prescription safety glasses (where the risk assessment has shown a need)
Up to £75