
	<h1>Guideline Document</h1>					
Ref: GD:011:01	Guidelines on Temporary Home Working					
Issue date:	April 2020	Revised Date:	May 2022	Version No:	2	
Authors(s):	National Health & Safety Function					
Consultation With:						
Responsibility for Implementation:	All HSE Line Managers and employees					
Note:	<p>The Transitional Protocol - Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19, published 31st January 2022 reflects the most recent public health advice for the safe return and continued safe operating of workplaces. The requirement to work from home unless it was necessary to attend the workplace in person ended with effect from 24th January 2022.</p> <p>In line with government guidance, HSE HR Circular 5/2022, advises that the phased return includes a resumption of temporary blended working arrangements (i.e. a combination of on-site and remote working) where appropriate and subject to service requirements.</p> <p>All managers must check HSE.ie and Gov.ie regularly to keep informed of up to date information and advice.</p> <p>Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (Act, 2005) employers have a duty to ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees. These duties extend to when employees are working from home.</p> <p>Employees also have reciprocal duties under the Act, 2005. These are summarised in Section 4.0.</p>					

Key Amendments	
Section	Amendments
Title	Updated to include word "Temporary"
Note	Updated to reflect the Transitional Protocol - Good Practice Guidance for Continuing to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 ,
1.0 Introduction	Deleted "During this phase of COVID 19 pandemic many employees have been asked to work from home on a temporary basis" and replaced with "Some HSE employees may be currently working from home on a temporary basis"
2.0 Purpose	Deleted "during this COVID 19 pandemic" and inserted "on a temporary basis"
3.0 Scope	Deleted "during this COVID 19 pandemic" and inserted "on a temporary basis"
6.0 Risk Assessment	Re-worded in line the GD07 Guideline Document re: Display Screen Equipment
7.0 Support and Guidance (pg. 5)	National Health and Safety Function Helpdesk Number updated
Appendix I	Removed and replaced with Display Screen Equipment Workstation Risk Assessment Form
Appendix III Signposting Infographic (pg. 11)	Removed



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1.0 Introduction:

Some HSE employees may be currently working from home on a temporary basis. Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 the HSE has a duty to ensure the safety health and welfare of our employees.

2.0 Purpose:

This guideline has been developed to support managers and employees to comply with their legal obligations in relation to staff working from home on a temporary basis.

3.0 Scope:

This guideline applies to:

- All managers in the HSE who have staff working from home and
- All employees working from home on a temporary basis.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities:

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 places specific duties on both managers and employees. In the context of home working these duties are summarised below:

Managers Responsibilities include:

- managing and conducting all work activities to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees
- providing safe systems of work that are planned, organised, and maintained, assessing risks and implementing appropriate control measures
- providing information, instruction, training and supervision regarding safety and health to employees, and
- having plans in place for emergencies.

Employee Responsibilities include:

- cooperating with their manager and following their instructions
- protecting themselves and others from harm during the course of their work, e.g. taking care of any work equipment provided and reporting any defects immediately to their manager
- reporting any injury arising from work activity to their manager in line with [HSE Incident Management Framework, 2020](#) and
- following procedures that have been put in place by their manager.

5.0 Risk Factors associated with Home Working

The main risk factors which need to be considered when staff are working from home include:

- work environment
- work equipment
- staff wellbeing
- incident management

In addition, consideration may need to be given to the security of data.

5.1 Work Environment

As a minimum, there should be enough room for work to be carried out, including space for the workstation, other equipment (e.g. printers) and storage of materials. Ideally the staff member should identify a dedicated area which keeps domestic interruptions to a minimum and reduces risks to other people at home (e.g. young children), has safe access, adequate lighting, is free from trailing leads/cables and good standards of housekeeping are maintained.

5.2 Work Equipment (to include use of Display Screen Equipment)

Staff working from home must be provided with the necessary equipment to carry out work activities. This may include the use of laptops, monitors, keyboard, telephone headsets etc.

Staff working with display screen equipment (i.e. laptop / pc) must ensure they have completed the HSE LanD DSE User Awareness Module and be provided with information on how to set up their workstation safely at home (Refer to [GD:007 Guideline Document re: Display Screen Equipment](#)). Ensuring the work desk/work station is set-up correctly will facilitate good posture and reduce the likelihood of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDS) and Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (WRULDs) and Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSIs).

Staff should be encouraged to stand up and stretch and take regular breaks away from their laptops / PCs and do other work related duties e.g. teleconferencing / standing up while taking phone calls.

Staff should be provided with details on how to access support in dealing with information technology systems failures, software problems and equipment failures.

5.3 Staff Wellbeing

5.3.1 Communication

Risks associated with home working extend beyond the physical work environment, staff may feel isolated, fatigued and or stressed. It is therefore important to have a formal, agreed and scheduled communication system in place e.g. use of scheduled teleconferences which encourages and allows staff to raise any concerns they may have.

Staff should also be encouraged to keep in regular contact with other colleagues and know that support is available for them.

5.3.2 Supervision

When staff are working from home, it is important that they have clear role clarification and know what is expected of them. Having an agreed check in with staff will provide an opportunity for updates on work related information and feedback.

5.3.3 Work life Balance

Taking regular breaks and exercise and practising good self-care can help with maintaining a healthy work life balance. Staff should be encouraged to set scheduled breaks and eat away from their workstation, exercise and eat healthily during this period. (Ref Good Practice Psychosocial wellbeing tips)

5.4 Incident Management

Staff working from home should be advised of what to do in the event an incident or become unwell while working from home. All incidents must be reported and managed in line with the [HSE Incident Management Framework, 2020](#).

5.5 Data Security

In line with HSE policy all data must be processed and controlled in line with the principles of the GDPR and relevant Irish legislation, for further information please refer to [HSE Data Protection Policy, 2019](#).

6.0 Risk Assessment:

Section 19, of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 requires the employer to identify the hazards at the place of work and to assess the risk presented by those hazards.

For Managers/DSE Workstation Assessors the following training/HSEIreland modules are a statutory requirement (mandatory):

- Managing Health and Safety in the Healthcare Setting
- DSE User Awareness module
- DSE Assessor module

It is also recommended that managers (assessors) attend a risk assessment workshop, to help reinforce competency around the risk assessment process.

The assessment should take account the specific work environment and needs of each employee.

To assist in assessing the temporary home working arrangements the Display Screen Equipment Workstation Risk Assessment must be completed in consultation with each employee (See Appendix 1, Display Screen Equipment Workstation Risk Assessment, also available at:

<https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-services/health-and-safety/office-safety-and-display-screen-equipment.html>).

7.0 Support and guidance:

GD:07 Guideline Document re Display Screen Equipment <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-services/health-and-safety/office-safety-and-display-screen-equipment.html>

CF:008 Display Screen Equipment Workstation Risk Assessment Form, available at <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-services/health-and-safety/office-safety-and-display-screen-equipment.html>

Minding your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak, available at <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/minding-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

For further advice or support, please contact the HSE Health and Safety helpdesk by visiting <https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-services/health-and-safety/health-and-safety-helpdesk.html> or alternatively phone 1800 420 420



8.0 References:

Guidance on Working from Home for Employers and Employees available at: https://www.hsa.ie/eng/publications_and_forms/publications/safety_and_health_management/guidance_on_working_from_home_for_employers_and_employees.html

Health and Safety Executive (2020) Protect home workers available at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm>

IOSH (Dec 2014) Home Office, Mobile Office Managing Remote Working: <https://www.iosh.com/media/1507/iosh-home-office-mobile-office-full-report-2014.pdf>

Appendix 1 Display Screen Equipment Workstation Risk Assessment Form

		<h2>Health & Safety Risk Assessment Form</h2>			
Ref: CF:008:07		RE: Display Screen Equipment Workstation Risk Assessment Form			
Issue date:		September 2018	Revised Date:		May 2022
Author(s):		National Health & Safety Function			
Part A DSE Workstation Risk Assessment Form					
Division:			Source of Risk:		
HG/CHO/NAS/Function:			Primary Impact Category:		
Hospital Site/Service:			Risk Type:		
Dept/Service Site:			Name of Risk Owner (BLOCKS):		
Date of Assessment:			Signature of Risk Owner:		
Unique ID No:			Risk Co-Ordinator:		
			*DSE Workstation Assessor(s):		
DSE Users name:					
Name of DSE Users Line Manager:					
Note:		<p>Please note exposure to COVID-19 may present a health risk to staff and others at our places of work. It is essential that the latest public health advice is followed and suitable control measures identified and implemented to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection.</p> <p>When conducting DSE risk assessments consideration should be paid to the risk presented and the means of avoiding and mitigating any such risk so far as is reasonably practicable.</p> <p>The Line Manager / DSE Workstation Assessor, in consultation with the employee must carry out the risk assessment/analysis of the Employee's workstation.</p> <p><i>Please ensure the following:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure the DSE User has completed the DSE User Awareness module on HSElanD prior to assessment 2. You use the comment section to document where adjustments to the user workstation have been implemented. 3. Actions that cannot be resolved during the assessment are documented on Part C of risk assessment form 4. Provide the DSE User with a copy of this DSE risk assessment once completed <p>It the responsibility of the Line Manager to ensure any remedial actions identified are implemented</p>			

Workstation Location, e.g. room number, specific work area (payroll, accounts etc):		Typing Skills:	
Tasks Undertaken:			
Dominant Hand:	R () L () Both ()		
Requires glasses:	Y () N ()		
Approximate length of time spent at DSE:	1 to 2 Hours ()	3-5 Hours ()	>5 Hours ()
Other relevant information e.g. discomfort or symptoms or any concerns relating to DSE use raised by the user?			

Sample picture of workstation

Using DSE Safely

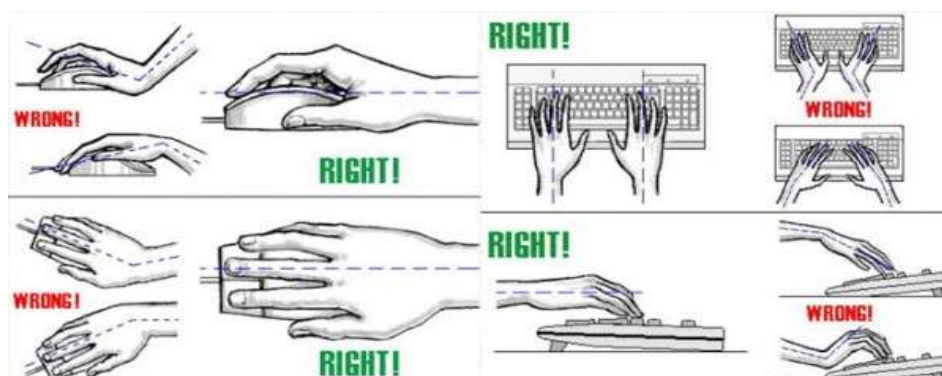


While seated ensure the following:

- ① Your back is straight and the lower back is supported by the backrest.
- ② Your thighs are parallel to the floor in a slightly downward position.
- ③ Your feet are resting comfortably on the floor (if not possible, a footrest may be required).
- ④ Your forearms and wrists are in a straight line while typing, your shoulders are relaxed.
- ⑤ Eyes are level with top of screen or slightly below eye level.
- ⑥ The screen is approximately at arm's length and is positioned to avoid reflective glare.
- ⑦ Keyboard is directly in front of you with enough space to rest forearms on the desk between keyboard and desk edge.

Part B		Equipment		
Chair		Yes	No	Comments
1	Is the work chair stable i.e. has a five star base and stable when weight is placed on it?			
2	Is the seat height adjustable?			
3	Does the chair allow freedom of movement (in and out of the workspace easily and turn from side to side while seated) and allow for seating in a comfortable position?			
4	Is the backrest adjustable in height and tilt to provide lower back support?			
5	If arm rests are present, are they adjustable/removable?			
6	Has the chair been adjusted to ensure while seated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The back is in an upright or slightly reclined position? ➤ Shoulders are relaxed? ➤ Small of the back is supported? ➤ There is a 90 degree angle at knees and elbow? ➤ Thighs horizontal or positioned slightly downward? ➤ Upper arms are vertical and close to the sides of the body while typing? ➤ Forearms horizontal with the desk? 			
7	Are the feet resting comfortably on the floor? If not, is a footrest provided?			
8	Is the User aware of how to adjust the chair in order to find the best posture in accordance with their work?			
Screen				
		Yes	No	Comments
9	Is the screen positioned directly in front of the User?			
10	Is the screen an adequate distance (approximately arm's length) from the User?			
11	Is the screen adjustable in height and swivel/tilt?			
12	Is the Users' eye-line in the upper third of the screen?			
13	Are the characters on the screen well defined, clearly formed and of adequate size and spacing to ensure letters and numerals are clearly distinguishable?			
14	Are the images on the screen stable and free from flickering?			
15	Is the screen clean with brightness and contrast adjustable?			

Keyboard and Mouse



		Yes	No	Comments
16	Is the keyboard positioned directly in front of the User to avoid twisting while typing?			
17	Are characters clearly defined on the keyboard?			
18	Is the keyboard tiltable and separate from the screen?			
19	Is there sufficient space on the desk in front of the keyboard to support the forearms and hands to avoid fatigue?			
20	Does the User have good keyboard technique e.g. are the wrists in line with forearms in a neutral position while typing? Note: wrist rests are only to be used to rest the wrist in between typing			
21	Does the keyboard have a matt surface so as to avoid glare?			
22	Is the mouse close to the keyboard when in use so that the User's forearm is relaxed and the wrist is straight?			
23	Is a mouse mat required?			

Desk



		Yes	No	Comments
24	Is the work surface sufficiently large to allow for flexible arrangement of the screen, keyboard, documents and related equipment?			
25	Does the work surface have a low reflective surface i.e. matt or semi matt?			
26	Is commonly used equipment such as the phone or mouse arranged within easy reach to prevent overstretching and twisting?			
27	Is there sufficient unobstructed legroom underneath the desk?			
Environment				
	Space	Yes	No	Comments
28	Is there sufficient space (minimum 4.65m ²) to allow for easy access and egress to and from the workstation?			
29	Are cables and equipment placed in such a way to prevent a slip/trip hazard?			
	Lighting	Yes	No	Comments
30	Is the lighting level suitable (general rule 300-500 lux) for the tasks and comfortable for the User?			
	Glare and reflections	Yes	No	Comments
31	Is the workstation designed to ensure sources of light (e.g. windows, transparent and translucent walls, brightly coloured fixtures) cause no direct glare and/or distracting reflections on the screen?			
32	Are windows fitted with suitable adjustable blinds etc. to reduce light and glare?			
	Noise	Yes	No	Comments
33	Is the work area free from excessive noise from equipment?			
	Heat	Yes	No	Comments
34	Is the work area well ventilated?			
35	Is the work area free of draughts?			
36	Is heat produced by equipment at a level that is comfortable for the User?			

37	Is the ambient temperature (for sedentary work in the range of 18 -24°C) comfortable for the DSE User?			
	Humidity			
38	Are adequate levels of humidity (minimum of 30 % winter and 40-60% in summer) maintained?			
User/ Computer Interface				
		Yes	No	Comments
39	Is the User familiar with the computer software programmes they are required to use to perform their tasks?			
40	Does the User consider the software suitable to the task undertaken?			
41	Has the User been provided with training and instruction on the software, as appropriate, in order to perform tasks?			
42	Has consideration been given to the use of a document holder?			
43	If present, is the document holder and the monitor at the same height and angle to minimise head and neck movement?			
44	Is work planned to allow for periodic task breaks or changes of routine away from the DSE?			
45	Has consideration been given to the psychosocial risk factors that may be present e.g. control over pace and nature of tasks, monotonous work, high levels of attention and concentration required, frequent tight deadlines?			
46	Is the User aware of their entitlement to eye and eye sight testing and where appropriate, provision of free corrective lenses?			
47	Is the User aware of how to report any issues relating to the use of DSE?			



Part C DSE Workstation Risk Assessment Form					
**HAZARD & RISK DESCRIPTION		EXISTING CONTROL MEASURES	ADDITIONAL CONTROLS REQUIRED	ACTION OWNER (i.e. the Person responsible for the action)	DUE DATE
INITIAL RISK			RISK STATUS		
Likelihood	Impact	Initial Risk Rating	Open	Monitor	Closed

*Risk Assessor to be recorded for OSH risks only.

**Where the risk being assessed relates to an OSH risk please ensure that the HAZARD and associated risk are recorded on the form. All other risk assessments require a risk description only.

Appendix 2 Summary of Key Tips for Home Working

