

### MANAGING MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS (MSDs) - KEEPING HEALTHY

Musculoskeletal disorders are preventable and manageable. It is the aim of the HSE to reduce the risks associated with certain activities such as manual handling and people handling, display screen equipment and other work practices which may pose a risk of MSDs. Taking an integrated approach based on risk assessment and promoting a preventative culture involving both management and employees is key to managing these risks. The first stage is to identify those work practices that may cause MSDs. Then you must use the risk assessment process to ensure that the risks are reduced to a reasonable level. Completion and communication of your risk assessments is fundamental to the adequate management of MSDs and the prevention of injuries to your staff.



Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2020-22  
**LIGHTEN THE LOAD**  
Prevention and management of work-related musculoskeletal disorders



### DO YOU KNOW WHAT RISK ASSESSMENTS ARE AVAILABLE?



**Overall Generic/Department Risk Assessments:** This is an assessment of the general situation in the ward/department and takes account of the work environment and work activities. It will identify the range and complexity of manual handling activities. It will consider type and frequency of moving and handling tasks, overall equipment needs, staffing, environment and training needs.

**Task Specific Risk Assessment:** Following completion of the Generic/Department Risk Assessment, where it has identified that a manual handling activity presents a risk of injury, the activity must be assessed in greater detail to determine what additional controls are required.

**People Handling Risk Assessment:** This is an individual risk assessment which must be completed for each service user. The aim is to clarify safe methods of handling each service user, develop a handling care plan so that injury to staff may be avoided and service user care enhanced.

**Dynamic Risk Assessment:** This is an informal on-the-spot undocumented risk assessment which is required to be undertaken by the employee prior to undertaking any manual or people handling task. This will assist the employee to determine if the task is within their capability. Employees need to consider the service users written risk assessment and implement the learning from their Manual Handling training. For more information on manual handling and [risk assessments](#), please visit the [Manual Handling in Healthcare](#) webpage.

**Display Screen Equipment (DSE) risk assessment:** These risk assessments should be carried out for those employees who are deemed as DSE Users which are defined as employees who have no choice but to use the DSE to complete their work, normally use the DSE for continuous periods of more than one hour per day or an employee who generally uses DSE on a daily basis.

The NHSF have developed the following training modules for DSE assessors (Grade 5/clinical grade equivalent or above) which are available on [HSELand](#):

1. The **DSE User Awareness** module
2. The **DSE Assessor** module
3. The **Managing Health and Safety in the Healthcare Setting** module. All DSE users must complete the DSE user awareness module. For further information please refer to the webpage [Office Safety and Display Screen Equipment](#).

## SUPPORTS FOR THE PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF MSDs

### SPECIALIST ERGONOMIC SUPPORTS:

**For DSE Assessment/Support** following completion of DSE risk assessments by the DSE Assessor which identifies ergonomic issues that cannot be addressed, you can seek the advice/assessment of an ergonomist. For DSE assessments **only** contact **Quadra Ltd. phone: 01-8321493, email@: info@quadraconsulting.com**. The cost will be bore by the engaging service.

### For complex ergonomic, clinical and bariatric assessments:

A contract is in the final stages of completion, please contact the [NHSF helpdesk](#) or call 1800 420 420 for further details. We will issue communication once the contract has been awarded.

### MANUAL HANDLING TRAINING:

Manual handling training will be provided locally in services that have Manual Handling Instructors or through the contract by booking directly with **Usafety** on **091-485580** or **training@usafety.ie**.

All manual handling training will be funded locally, with the exception of Instructor Training which will be funded by the National Health and Safety Function and booked through the [Health and Safety Helpdesk](#)



### YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH — STAY ACTIVE/STAY HEALTHY:



Physical activity is important for many of us as we spend a lot of our time sitting in our daily jobs. This overtime has harmful effects on our health. The good news is this can be alleviated by putting physical activity back into our daily routines. The recommended guideline of physical activity for adults in Ireland is at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity, 5 days a week. It is also beneficial to our health to include activities that promote strength and flexibility on 1 or 2 days. Our colleagues in Health Promotion and Improvement have a wealth of information to support your physical fitness and is available [here](#).

### REMINDERS FOR MANAGERS!

- All employees to be familiar and work in accordance with the [HSE Manual Handling & People handling policy 2018](#) and Guidance on Managing the Manual Handling issues of service users with [bariatric needs](#).
- Ensure that an operational plan is developed to support the implementation of this policy
- Risk assessments must be completed and reviewed whenever there is a significant change. Control measures identified require to be implemented
- Actively manage risk through departmental meetings and escalate as required



- Ensure employees have the appropriate equipment/aids based on risk assessment and that they are trained on their use
- Ensure employees are up to date with [manual handling training](#) and that records are kept
- Ensure employees are adequately supervised in the performance of their manual and people handling tasks
- All accidents, incidents, near misses must be reported and managed in accordance with the [HSE Incident management framework, 2020](#)
- Utilise the audit tool in the Manual Handling and People Handling Policy to identify corrective actions