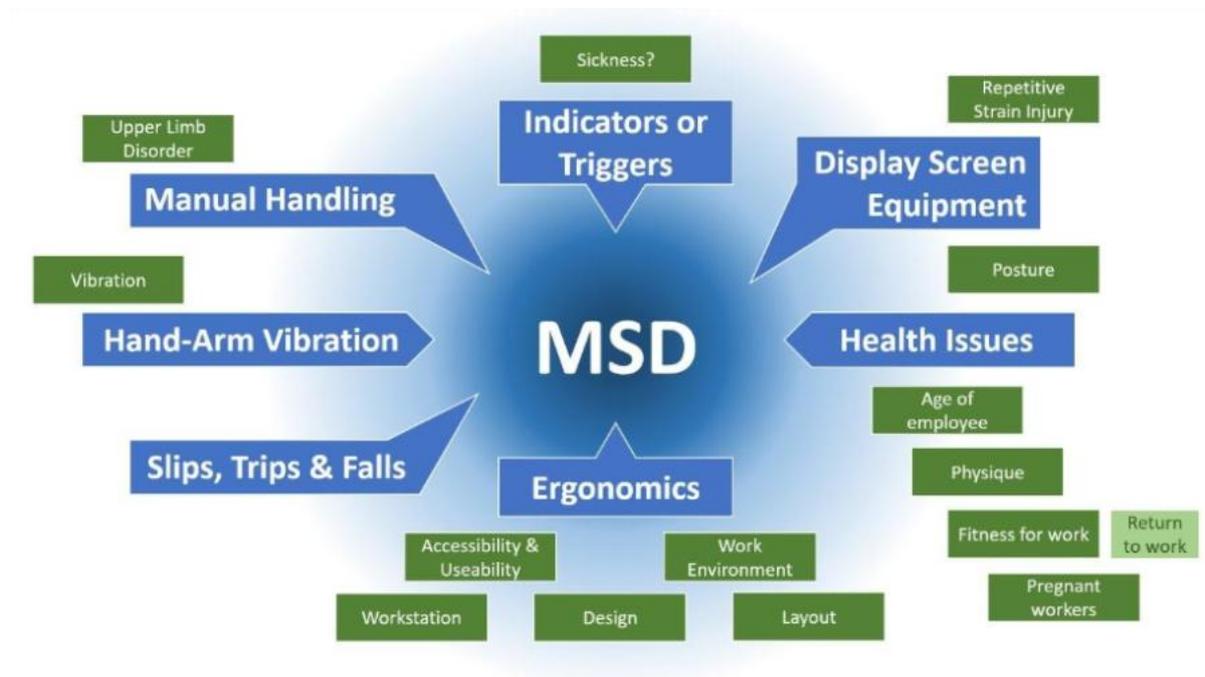


CDOIF: Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD's) – Display Screen Equipment: A guide to recognising and managing Display Screen Equipment issues, associated with MSD's within the workplace.



What is it?

Display Screen Equipment or DSE as it is often commonly referred to, covers fixed and portable devices, which includes laptops, personal tablet computers, mobile phones and other handheld equipment etc, in use by staff for work purposes only.

Why should an employer be concerned about it?

Most employees will at some stage interact with DSE, be that via a control panel for operating machinery through to computers and mobile devices such as laptops, tablets and smart phones.

Employers have a duty to manage the use of such devices to prevent prolonged or improper use, and avoid poorly designed workstations and work environments, which can lead to common types of ill health or injury. Examples of these are: musculoskeletal disorders like back pain or upper limb disorders (often referred to as Repetitive Strain Injury or RSI), mental stress, and eye strain leading to visual fatigue. Visual fatigue is a muscular condition resulting from prolonged or excessive eye strain.

Poor or inadequate management of DSE can lead to ill health or injury over time. These can develop into chronic medical conditions that can affect an employee's health, both mentally and physically, as well as their productivity.

How do I know if I may have a problem?

Employees may begin to show symptoms that could reveal themselves in any of the following ways.

- Repetitive or unnatural movements
- Staff feedback or complaints regarding early signs of acute muscular discomfort / eye strain
- Fatigue

- Sickness / increased absence. Employee(s) suddenly show a greater frequency of absence.
- Employee not performing as expected.
- Increased use of an employer's employee assistance (EAP) or occupational health programme, if in place.
- Becoming aware of ill health from DSE use that impacts on a person's physical and/or mental health where they have pre-existing conditions, such as 'carrying' chronic physical discomfort or pain.

What should I be doing?

- Identify activities where employees or contractors need to interact with display screen devices regularly throughout their working day.
- Undertake a risk assessment based on the identified activities to understand the nature of the DSE risk posed to your business and end-users.
- Train and educate users on the risks associated with display screen equipment.
- Conduct DSE assessments.
 - either internally via trained assessors
 - using an external assessor
 - Or via an approved online assessment tool, supported by trained assessors.
- Provide support to resolve any identified issues, this may be financial support or specialist equipment (e.g eye test, bespoke chair, lighting etc)
- Implement an assessment review cycle (maximum 2-yearly), or whenever equipment or tasks change, or if an end-user has a change in their health or physical condition.

How can I do it?

Guidance and advice are freely available online, with the HSE website being a valuable source of information, on both the duties and responsibilities of the employer and employee, and with references to further information.

Train staff to become an onsite DSE assessor, to both conduct and review DSE assessments, but also to provide advice for new starters, and act as a support when purchasing new equipment or designing/changing workstations.

Consider packages that provide training and guidance to support your employees to conduct a DSE assessment.

Monitor existing sickness/absence data to identify trends associated with DSE related injuries or illnesses.

Further Information

Working safely with display screen equipment - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/>

Disclaimer

This briefing note is shared in order to promote learning and improve safety. You should seek appropriate guidance regarding the relevance, accuracy, and completeness of this information to your circumstances prior to implementation.