

Harrietsham Parish Council

Visual Display Equipment Policy

Health & Safety for Users

Employer's duty to comply

An employer must analyse workstations and assess and reduce risks by carrying out a Risk Assessment. They must look at the whole workstation including equipment, furniture and the working environment. They must also consider the work being done and any special needs of individual staff (see Disability Discrimination Act 1995).

The Workstation

The employer should ensure that good features are in place ie:

- Adjustable and safely balanced chairs and appropriate desks.
- Good lighting.
- A good work environment, adequate computer equipment and appropriate software.

Breaks and Changes of Activity

The need for breaks depends on the nature and intensity of the work. The general principle to be followed is:

- Short frequent breaks are better than longer, less frequent ones.
- The person doing the work should have a large measure of control over when these breaks need to be taken.

Eye Tests and the Provision of Spectacles

Training must be provided to ensure that employees are aware of the regulations and can use their equipment safely to avoid health problems. The information booklet provided by the Health and Safety Executive should be provided either for each employee or identified to each employee at an accessible location in the workplace.

If you use the VDU as a principal part of your work then you are entitled to have eye sight tests paid for by your employer. In some cases spectacles will also have to be provided. You should check on this with your Optician.

Employees Responsibility

Comfort

The equipment should be adjusted to suit individual physical requirements:

Getting comfortable

- The chair and VDU should be adjusted so that, as a broad guide, forearms should be horizontal and eyes at the same height as the top of the VDU.
- There should be adequate space for documents to be managed on the top of the desk.
- A document holder can help the position of the head relative to the VDU and prevent neck discomfort.
- Sunlight or artificial light should not be allowed to bounce off the screen.
- There should be adequate space beneath the desk to allow free movement of legs.

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- Excess pressure on the back of the knees and legs should be avoided and a footrest used where necessary.

The Keyboard

- Adjust the keyboard and mouse to suit your hand movements. A wrist rest in front of the keyboard will help alleviate strain and the possibility of Repetitive Strain Injury. If you are not a trained keyboard operator it will be worthwhile taking training to improve your technique.
- Use the most up to date mouse that you can purchase. The preferred model operates without a roller-ball and has a central wheel for scrolling.

Do not sit in the same position for long periods. Take a break and move away from the desk to exercise your limbs by doing something else.

If there are no such natural breaks in your job then your employer should plan them with you and agree them into your working arrangements.

If you have a problem, talk to your employer or the local office of the Health and Safety Executive.