



**Scottish Ambulance Service - Directorate of Human Resources
and Organisational Development
Management of Health and Safety
HS 015 The Use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Policy**

**Scottish Ambulance Service
The Use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Policy and Procedure**

Recent Author: Graham Forman	Original Date of Document 23/08/04
Policy Manager: Head of Health and Safety	Other Key Stakeholders: Chief Executive, Director of Human Resources
This document replaces: H&S 015 Display Screen Equipment Policy and Guidance V4	Consultation & Approval: Health and Safety Committee, Policy Review Group, National Partnership Forum, Staff Governance Committee.
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Version: 5	

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Policy Statement

Scottish Ambulance Service recognises its legal and moral duty to comply with health and safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations, and its responsibilities to minimise risks involved with the continued use of DSE, so far as is reasonably practicable, i.e. musculoskeletal injuries, eyestrain, fatigue and stress. To assist with this the following criteria should be observed at all times:

- DSE workstations should meet minimum safety requirements
- The needs of DSE users should be regularly assessed
- DSE users should be provided with appropriate information, instruction and training

This policy is supported by an on-line training programme, and downloadable resources from @SAS Health and Safety, Ergonomics and DSE Pages, and the following Guidance Documents (Appendix A&B);

DSE Guidance for Project Managers and Facilitator

DSE Guidance for Line Managers

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Introduction

The Service's *Control of Musculo-Skeletal Disorders Strategy (HS007)* identifies general causes of physical injury associated with tasks undertaken by staff. In respect of the use of Display Screen equipment (DSE) related equipment the two primary risks come from;

- Adopting and maintaining awkward working postures,
- Completing rapid and repetitive tasks.

Use of computer equipment is also associated with issues of visual comfort and the organisational demands on the individual whilst working at a computer (example: working to deadlines) may cause mental fatigue and stress.

This document describes current control measures within the Service to allow staff to complete DSE related tasks without undue risk of discomfort or injury – or if symptoms are experienced what course of action can be taken.

Applicable Legislation

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Display Screen Equipment Regulations 2002
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

The Service's *Health & Safety Policy* identifies the legal framework designed to protect the health, safety and wellbeing at work of employees. Everyone is responsible for ensuring a safe workplace – the document identifies exactly how these responsibilities are allocated.

The primary legislation against which the Service will be measured in respect of DSE work is the *Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended 2002)*. These implement European Directive 90/270/EEC of 29 May 1990 on minimum health and safety requirements for work with DSE.

The Health and Safety Executive provide guidance on the Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 (henceforth referred to as DSER'92). This guidance will provide the framework for the Scottish Ambulance Service policy and procedures.

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The key considerations in respect of the use of display screen equipment are;

- Who and what is covered by the regulations?
- How are workstations, the environment and equipment risk assessed in respect of suitability for the task?
- What is the impact of the workstation on a particular individual – and how can any risk factors be controlled?

Who and what is covered by the legislation?

Who

For the purpose of this policy a “DSE user” will be anyone who habitually uses display screen equipment (laptops, desktops) as a *significant* part of their job

Some staff are clearly DSE users – for example staff working in ACC, members of senior management, administrative offices or officers who may be seconded to members of a project team. An Ambulance Care Assistant or Paramedic who uses the station’s computer to check emails are unlikely to be.

However groups of staff such as Area Service Managers or Leading Ambulance Care Assistants might – it will depend largely on the role they play in a particular station. Managers or staff members themselves can contact their Regional Health & Safety Officer (RSO) for guidance.

The Legislation also extends the employer’s duty of care to staff who may be termed a ‘home worker’. This includes the need to complete of risk assessments and the provision of suitable equipment (even if the Service has not provided the equipment). The risk assessment will need to cover the need for extra or special training and provision of information to compensate for the absence of direct day-to-day employer supervision and control of their working methods.

What

A DSE workstation is regarded as the whole of the work area involved in DSE work, comprising of:

- display-screen equipment (e.g. desktop computer, laptop), whether or not provided with software or keyboard, etc
- any optional accessories to the display-screen equipment

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- any disk drive, telephone, modem, printer, document holder, work chair, work desk, work surface or other item peripheral to the display-screen equipment
- The immediate work environment around the display-screen equipment.

Generally the use of handheld devices such as IT enabled mobile phones; vehicle data terminals (e.g Terrafix) are not included. It must be noted that equipment fitted in vehicles (including its location, for example dashboard mounting) will be subject to alternative Safety and Road Traffic legislation and assessed separately.

How are workstations, the environment and equipment risk assessed in respect of suitability for the task?

i) New Projects

The Project Lead responsible for designing or revising existing premises where DSE is to be used is obliged by law to ensure the chosen DSE, furniture and the environment (e.g. lighting) falls within the requirements of the DSER 92. Where there may be joint leads in a particular project, for example one concerned with commissioning IT equipment, the other with the general layout and furnishing of the premises – each must ascertain not only does their part of the project comply – but that their part comfortably dovetails with the other.

All projects must therefore involve a member of the Health & Safety department from the onset to ensure suitability and compatibility of the different components.

- A checklist for Project Managers is found in Appendix A.

ii) Existing premises and equipment

It is the responsibility of the manager to ensure each DSE workstation is assessed by a competent person for compliance. These assessments should be completed every two-three years or if there are significant changes to the workstation.

A Regional Health & Safety Auditor or Officer will complete an assessment of the location and advise the local manager of any corrective measures that must be taken.

It is the responsibility of the local manager, and ultimately the General

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Manager to ensure not only is the Regional Health & Safety team notified of the need to complete the assessments, but any resulting recommendations are implemented (or alternative but equally effective measures are taken).

- Special guidance for Line Managers is found in Appendix B
- Special guidance for Health & Safety Officers is provided on the Team site on @SAS (intranet).

iii) Replacing Existing Equipment (for example a damaged office chair)

Equipment and furniture [including works station and seating] must be maintained in good working order. Furniture should be assessed for the need for replacement early in the year and included in budget requests.

A list of preferred (DSER compliant) furniture and postural aids (e.g. footrests) which can be ordered directly on PECOS will continue to be maintained by the Ergonomics Advisor on the DSE section of @SAS. The reason for maintaining the list on the intranet is to ensure information is kept current.

iv) Job Design

Work Breaks

It is vital staff take proper breaks or variations in activities throughout the working day in order to reduce the repetitive nature of the job. This is to avoid the potential for Work Related Upper Limb Disorders, circulatory issues from extended sitting, visual fatigue or mental stress.

Wherever possible, jobs at display screens should be designed to consist of a mixture of screen-based and non screen-based work to prevent fatigue and to vary visual and mental demands. During most tasks natural breaks or pauses occur as a consequence of the organisation of the work.

Some control rooms traditionally work twelve hour shifts with two or three breaks – and the work/life balance afforded by this shift pattern is well liked by the majority of staff. Whilst they can usually afford to vary the physical tasks there are periods of intense operational activity when this is not possible. It is essential where work cannot be organised to include natural breaks from screen work, deliberate breaks or pauses are introduced.

It is essential staff are aware of such risks and are empowered to take corrective measures.

The purpose of the break is to:

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- allow users to vary their posture
- prevent the onset of fatigue; not in order to recuperate. The timing of the break is more important than the length.

Breaks should be taken frequently as several shorter breaks are more satisfactory than occasional longer breaks (eg a 5-10 minute break for every hour's work is better than a 15 minute break every two-three hours).

What is the impact of the workstation on a particular individual – and how can any risk factors be controlled?

Risk Assessment Process

Identifying whether a workstation is suitable or not will depend on two fundamental criteria;

- A) Does the workstation itself meet the criteria set down by legislation?
- B) Is the workstation suitable for the particular user(s)?

The Service have the following process to address the above two questions;

- Staff identified as 'DSE Users' will complete the self assessment questionnaire ahead of the site visit – these will then be collated by the local manager for reviewing by the Auditor/Officer/Ergonomics Adviser.
- The Auditor/Officer/Ergonomics Adviser will complete a formal DSE risk assessment of the workstation – and address any issues raised by individual staff who have completed the self assessment questionnaires.
- If the Auditor requires specialist support – for example a member of staff may suffer from a neurological or degenerative disease, or a number of design issues are identified they will contact their line manager, the Regional Officer for support. In turn they can contact the Service's Ergonomics Adviser directly.

The assessments should be reviewed every two-three years – or earlier if concerns are raised or modifications are made to the working environment/equipment.

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Training

All staff

Staff must receive training that is both suitable and sufficient for the tasks they undertake.

It is the responsibility of the line manager to ensure a member of staff is fully familiar with any software used in connection with the work – and sufficient protected time is allocated to allow for this training.

All staff who are new to the Service will attend corporate induction. Part of the process is for them to complete the DSE e-Learning package on 'Learnpro'.

IT staff

The IT department must ensure that any new workstation created complies with the DSER. To achieve this the department will organise for all its staff to attend an advanced 'office ergonomics' course with the Ergonomics Adviser.

Health and Safety Team (Officers and Auditors).

All Officers have recognised health & safety qualifications which allow them to conduct 'generic' and 'person-specific' risk assessments.

Additionally the Ergonomics Adviser will provide training for H&S Auditor to enable them to competently complete base-line workstation assessments.

Eye and Eyesight Tests

DSE *Users* are entitled to access eye and eyesight tests by first informing their manager of their intention to have a test. There have been changes to the funding of eyesight testing in Scotland (currently free) – but there is the potential for them to change again during the life of this document. For a copy of current arrangements, including information on when and how the Service will contribute to the cost of eyewear, please refer to @SAS Spectacle Re-imburement Policy, or contact Human Resources

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Additional support for staff who may experience discomfort, returning to work after injury or illness, or recently diagnosed with a medical condition.

In the first instance staff must contact their line manager. If appropriate the Line Manager can offer the individual the option of being referred for 'fast track' physiotherapy (at no cost to the individual).

Independently of this the regional Health & Safety Officer must be contacted to organise a workstation assessment. If additional input is required the Service's Ergonomics Adviser can be contacted. They will be able to authorise the purchase by the division of any assistive devices, postural aides or specialist seating.

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Appendix A

DSE GUIDANCE FOR PROJECT MANAGERS AND FACILITATORS

The introduction of new office areas is usually governed by the need to fit as many people as possible into a certain space – and provide them with the required IT equipment and telephony.

There is both legislation and guidance which must be adhered to if the resultant work area is to comply with health & safety legislation.

It is incumbent to ensure any project is signed –off as Health & Safety compliant. If for some reason it cannot be fully comply this too must be fully documented – with an explanation of the reasons why, and what control measures will be put I place.

This sign – off process must involve the Health & Safety team. To maximise the chance of the project complying it is imperative they are involved from the onset.

The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 (regulations and guidance)

Temperature

- shall be reasonable in indoor workplaces
- a sufficient number of thermometers shall be provided to allow determination of temperature in workplace
- heating or cooling appliances shall not give off injurious or offensive fumes.

Ventilation

- must be effective and suitable to ensure a sufficient quantity of fresh and purified air
- any plant provided to ensure sufficient ventilation shall include an effective device to give a visible or audible warning of failure where necessary for reasons of health and safety.

Lighting

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- every workplace shall have suitable and sufficient lighting
- where reasonably practicable the lighting shall be by natural light

Room Dimensions and space

- every room where persons work shall have sufficient floor area, height and unoccupied spaces for purposes of health, safety and welfare. The minimum space requirement is **11m³** per person (minimum floor space **3.7m²**)

Workstations and Seating

- suitable seating shall be provided for every person at work where work can or must be done sitting.
- every workstation shall be so arranged that it is suitable for any person at work in the work place who is likely to work at that workstation.

Cleanliness and Waste Materials

- every workplace and the furniture, furnishings and fittings shall be kept sufficiently clean
- surfaces of the floor, wall, ceiling of all workplaces inside buildings shall be capable of being kept sufficiently clean
- waste materials shall not be allowed to accumulate in a workplace except in suitable receptacles

Floors and Traffic Routes

- every floor and traffic route in a workplace shall be of a construction which is suitable for the purpose for which it is used
- safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles must be wide enough and marked where necessary.

The Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 (and HSE guidance) require the following compliance:

1. Equipment

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(a) **General comment** - The use of the equipment must not be a source of risk for workers.

(b) **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/or the contrast between the characters and the background shall be easily adjustable by the operator, and also be easily adjustable to ambient conditions.

The screen must swivel and tilt easily and freely to suit the needs of the operator.

It shall be possible to use a separate base for the screen or an adjustable table.

The screen shall be free of reflective glare and reflections liable to cause discomfort to the user.

(c) **Keyboard** - the keyboard shall have tilt option and separate from the screen so as to allow the worker to find a comfortable working position avoiding fatigue in the arms or hands.

The space in front of the keyboard shall be sufficient to provide support for the hands and arms of the operator.

The keyboard shall have a matt surface to avoid reflective glare.

The arrangement of the keyboard and the characteristics of the keys shall be such as to facilitate the use of the keyboard.

The symbols on the keys shall be adequately contrasted and legible from the design working position.

(d) **Work desk or work surface** - The work desk or work surface shall have a sufficiently large low-reflectance surface and allow a flexible arrangement of the screen, keyboard, documents and related equipment.

The document holder shall be stable and adjustable and shall be positioned so as minimise the need for uncomfortable head and eye movements.

There shall be adequate space for workers to find a comfortable position. Depth should be at least 800mm front to back. There must be sufficient leg room beneath the desk to allow variation of leg and foot position.

(e) **Work chair** - The work chair shall be stable and allow the operator easy

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freedom of movement and a comfortable position. The seat shall be adjustable in height. The seat back shall be adjustable in both height and tilt (nb. though not necessarily separately to the seat squab)

A footrest shall be made available to anyone who requires one.

2. Environment

(a) **Space requirements** - The workstation shall be dimensioned and designed so as to provide sufficient space for the user to change position and vary movements. There should be sufficient space between workstations to allow staff reasonable access.

(b) **Lighting** - Room lighting and/or spot lighting (desk lamps) 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 user's vision requirements.

Possible disturbing glare and reflections on the screen or other equipment shall be prevented by co-ordinating workplace and workstation layout with the positioning and technical characteristics of the artificial light sources.

Display Screens should be placed at right angles to windows or in such position that do not reflect sunlight directly onto the screen.

(c) **Reflections or glare** - Workstation's shall be so designed that sources of light, such as windows and other openings, transparent or translucent walls, and brightly coloured fixtures or walls, cause no direct glare and no distracting reflections on the screen.

Windows shall be fitted with a suitable system of adjustable covering to attenuate the daylight that falls on the workstation.

(d) **Noise** - Noise emitted by equipment belonging to workstations shall be taken into account when a workstation is being equipped, in particular so as not to distract attention or disturb speech.

(e) **Heat** - Equipment belonging to workstations shall not produce excess heat which could cause discomfort to workers.

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(f) **Radiation** - All radiation with the exception of the visible part of the electromagnetic spectrum shall be reduced to negligible levels from the point of view of the protection of workers' health and safety

(g) **Humidity** - An adequate level of humidity shall be established and maintained.

3. Operator/Computer Interface

In designing, selecting, commissioning and modifying software, and in designing tasks using display screen equipment, the employer shall take into account the following principles:

- (a) Software must be suitable for the task
- (b) Software must be easy to use, where appropriate, adaptable to the operators level of knowledge, no qualitative or quantitative checking facility input to be used without the workers knowledge.
- (c) The principles of software ergonomics must be applied

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Appendix B

DSE GUIDANCE FOR LINE MANAGER

Defining who is a User.

You will need to identify who is a 'DSE User'. The definition in the Regulation is anyone who habitually uses DSE as a significant part of their normal work.

Criteria includes:

- normally use DSE for continuous or near-continuous spells of an hour or more at a time.
- use DSE in this way on most days
- have to transfer information quickly to or from the DSE
- need to apply high levels of attention and concentration
- are highly dependent on DSE to do the job
- have little choice about using DSE
- need special training or skills to use the equipment.

Normally it is quite clear who falls within the category, and it is prudent to err on the side of caution by including any marginal posts. If you are unsure you are invited to contact either your regional Health & Safety Officer or the Ergonomics Advisor.

The Audit Process

Approximately every two-three years your station/ office area requires assessing to ensure it complies with DSE related Health & Safety law and best practice. You must make contact with your Health & Safety Officer or the Ergonomics Adviser

All staff in your area must complete the on-line learn-Pro Office Ergonomics package

If the findings are relatively complex then you may call in the Service's Ergonomics Advisor for an expert report.

At the end of the process you may be given a list of required changes. In many cases you will be provided with a description of the item, cost and PECOS code to facilitate ordering..

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You may also be required to contact the Estates department and or IT. You may also be required to seek authorisation from senior management to begin the process.

The need to complete regular checks

It is not possible to rely on the 2-3 year checks to ensure your staff are provided with safe working conditions. Checks must be ongoing. To help you identify whether there is a particular issue with a workstation here is a brief checklist:

	ISSUE	Action
Monitor & Glare	Is the size of the text comfortable to read and the image free of flicker?	-Ensure the monitor is not too far away from the member of staff. -Consider using the zoom option. -If the image is distorted or flickers contact IT.
	Is the screen suitable for the task and can brightness/contrast be adjusted?	-If the screen size is too small for the task (e.g. 14" screens for spreadsheets) contact IT to identify if a more suitable screen is available..
	Does the screen swivel and tilt and is the screen free from glare and reflections?	Unless working on a laptop the screen should be fully moveable to avoid glare and reflection. If not contact IT for Advice.
Keyboard	Can staff find a comfortable keying position?	-Refer to the advice in the 'Advice for staff' section. -Contact your regional H&S Officer for further advice.
	Are the keyboard characters clear?	If not contact IT for a replacement.
	Are the key sticking?	If so then contact IT for a replacement.
Pointing Device (mouse)	Are staff holding the mouse too far away to the side of them when working at this particular workstation?	-Refer to the advice in the 'Advice for staff' section. -Contact your Divisional H&S Lead.
	Is the mouse in good condition?	-If not contact IT for a replacement.
Software	Is the software suitable for the task, or staff unclear about some of the functions?	- Contact IT or the relevant project team to organise staff training, or software updates.

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Telephone	Any issues about using the phone (e.g. is a head set required)?	- Discuss with IT or the relevant project team.
Audio and Copy Work	Are there issues about using an audio pedal?	- Discuss with IT or the relevant project team.
	Do staff require a copy holder?	- These can be ordered on PECOS.
	ISSUE	Action
Desk	Is the height of the desk appropriate and the front edge a reasonable thickness?	- If the desk is unsuitable (e.g. there is a desk drawer between the User's thighs and elbows) then a new /replacement one might be required.
	Is its surface area large enough to allow staff to use IT, complete paperwork whilst being able to adopt a good posture at work and rest.	Try and source another desk – but if so make sure it's not too big for the office.
	Is there sufficient space for the person's legs?	Clear clutter from under desk.
	Is the desk free from reflection?	Unlikely to be a problem but if so, either fit a large blotter or replace desk.
	Are there 'cable' issues?	Seek advice from IT about cable tidies – or whether a longer cable might allow the computer to be better positioned on the desk.
Chair	Is gas lift working and safe?	- If you feel the chair is dangerous then immediately stop staff using it. Arrange for a new chair or contact Procurement to establish whether it is economically viable to repair.
	Is the base in good working order?	As above
	Is the foam and fabric in reasonable condition?	As above
	Is the chair the correct size for larger staff?	As above. If the member of staff weighs more than 18 stone please contact your regional H&S Officer for further advice.
	Is the backrest in safe working order?	- First of all ensure staff know how to adjust the chair, the majority of call outs to fix chair backs are the result of staff being unfamiliar how to adjust them. - If you feel the chair is dangerous stop using it and follow same procedure as for faulty gas lift.

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	If there are arms on the chair are they in good order?	Wherever possible avoid chairs with fixed arms – and new chairs should either be bought with adjustable arms, or no arms at all.
	Do staff require a footrest in order to support their legs in sitting?	Please refer to advice for all staff. If someone requires one please refer to equipment sheet on @SAS (ergonomics section) for details of preferred models (including price and PECOS code)
Physical Position of Monitor	Is the screen a comfortable distance away from the User?	Please refer to text above. If you cannot come up with a suitable fix please contact your Regional Health & Safety Officer to arrange a site visit.
	Do they have to adopt a twisted posture in order to view the screen?	As above.

	ISSUE	Action
	Is the height of monitor reasonable?	As Above. One quick measure is to use reams of (bundled) paper to build up a temporary riser to see if this helps. If you are buying a riser please refer to equipment sheet on @SAS (ergonomics section) for details of preferred models (including price and PECOS code)
Vision	Do staff wear varifocals / bifocals?	Wearing traditional bifocals can lead to neck and shoulder pain. Please contact your regional health & safety officer or the Service's ergonomist for advice.
	Have your staff (Users only) had eyesight tests in the last two years?	In Scotland this available free at the point of access.
Environment	Is there sufficient space around the desk?	If general house keeping cannot solve the problem please contact your regional H&S Officer
	Is the heat, air quality or overall noise acceptable?	As above.
	Is the floor level?	Please contact Estates for advice.

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Staff requiring additional

Support.

Short Term

If staff sustain an injury, or develop discomfort they may be eligible for the Service's fast track Physiotherapy service. Please contact the Divisional Human Resources department for further advice (unless local arrangements differ).

Long Term

The Service is fully committed to its role as an equal opportunities employer. Staff with impaired physical ability may require additional support. The nature of this support is liable to require specialist intervention.

The same applies to staff who may sustain an injury or suffer long term illness.

In some cases, in particular if the disability falls within the definitions of the Equalities Act, then outside financial assistance may be available to the Service to undertake progressive adaptations to the workstation (including access etc).

In such cases please make direct contact with the Ergonomics Adviser.

Staff Training

All staff who defined as being a 'User' must complete the Display Screen Equipment e-learning programme on *Learn pro*

If new staff have difficulty logging on please contact your divisional training team for advice.

If questions arise on completing the programme please direct them in the first instance to the ergonomics resource centre on @SAS.

If the questions/concerns remain unanswered please contact either the Regional Health & Safety Officer, or the Ergonomics Adviser.

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Review History

Issue No	Reason for review and brief description of changes made	Effective Date
1	Initial Issue	23/08/04
2	Review and addition of additional guidance	09/09/08
3	Review and addition of additional guidance	10/11/10
4	Review. No changes to text except removal of Appendix C (info now separate staff handout available on @SAS, and also integrated into Skillport e-learning)	14 /01/13
5	Review. No changes except for dates, period of review should now 2-3 years (rather than mandatory every 2 yrs) , and visits at the behest of local manager /staff rather than occurring automatically	25/01/16

Owner: T.Wigram	Version No: 5	Doc & page: DSE Pollicy	Review arrangements: 3 yearly
Date of Release: tbc	Date Intranet Posting: tbc	Implementation: tbc	Approved by: Health safety and welfare comm
PFPI Checklist (available from W Mason): Assessed as meeting the National Standards for Community Engagement checklist (Communities Scotland)			
Risk and Equality & Diversity Impact Assessment (available from A Tobin and Risk Manager): No adverse impact has been detected - but under continuous review.			
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