

 Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte Health Service Executive	<h1 style="margin: 0;">SAFETY ALERT</h1>				
Ref: SA:008:04		RE: Use of Display Screen Equipment			
Issue date:	April 2017	Revised date:	October 2020	Review date:	October 2022
Author(s):	National Health and Safety Function, Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit, Human Resources Directorate.				
Distribution:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Member of the Directorate and National Director HSE Each Assistant National Director, HR Each Hospital Group CEO and Community Health Organisation CO Senior Managers Service Managers /Local Managers <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Please ensure that this Safety Alert is brought to the attention of all relevant persons in the workplace.</p>				
S	SITUATION: There is evidence ¹ of non-compliance in the area of Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment as required by current legislation. The purpose of this Safety Alert is to highlight the importance of ensuring all workstations are assessed.				
B	BACKGROUND: A variety of ill-health symptoms have been associated with work at DSE including musculoskeletal disorders; mental stress; and visual fatigue. A survey by the Health and Safety Executive UK (Melrose A.S., et al., 2007) found: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A high prevalence in DSE users of self reported symptoms, e.g. headaches (52%), eye discomfort (58%), and neck pain (47%); other symptoms such as back (37%) and shoulder (39%) pain were also frequently reported. The report notes that these findings are broadly consistent with other studies in the literature The prevalence of symptoms was higher among those who spent more time at their computer at work and among those who worked for longer without a break. All symptoms were more common among respondents who had indications of stress, anxiety and/or depression. These findings are again consistent with the published literature The report noted that whilst many studies have examined possible causal factors, methodological differences make it hard to draw any firm conclusions about causation of symptoms <p>Legislation places duties on the Organisation to manage the potential risks. That is, Regulation 72(1)(b) of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 (as amended) requires the employer/manager to²:</p>				

¹ Completion data for HSElanD DSE module; HSA correspondence; NHSF internal audit findings

- Perform an analysis of workstations used by employees, and
- Take appropriate measures to remedy any risks found

Within the HSE the current system for ensuring compliance with Regulation 72(1)(b) is as follows:

- **Line Managers** must identify “Employees” to whom the regulations apply (commonly known as DSE Users³)
- All managers and identified Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Employees **must** undertake the e-learning programme on [HSE LanD](#), which provides them with the necessary understanding in terms of the requirements that will assist in the risk assessment process.
- Following the completion of this module, managers **must** complete individual DSE risk assessments **in conjunction with** their employees. When conducting the risk assessment ensure that you;
 - a. Observe the employee working at their workstation having regard to the employee’s posture and nature of work completed;
 - b. Take into account the individual characteristics including body height;
 - c. Observe the general environment at the workstation;
 - d. Talk to the employee in order to understand the nature of his/her work, to raise issues, as well as to seek feedback on other issues in the context of display screen equipment that they may have
 - e. Identify and document any actions that need to be taken to remedy risks (e.g. use a monitor stand to raise height of monitor, etc.) and ensure that the actions are closed out
- This places the user at the centre of the assessment and allows appropriate risk control measures to be identified and implemented where necessary
- The [National Health and Safety Risk Assessment Form – Display Screen Equipment](#) must be used for this purpose
- The [Office safety and display screen equipment webpage](#) is available to provide more information and guidance in this regard

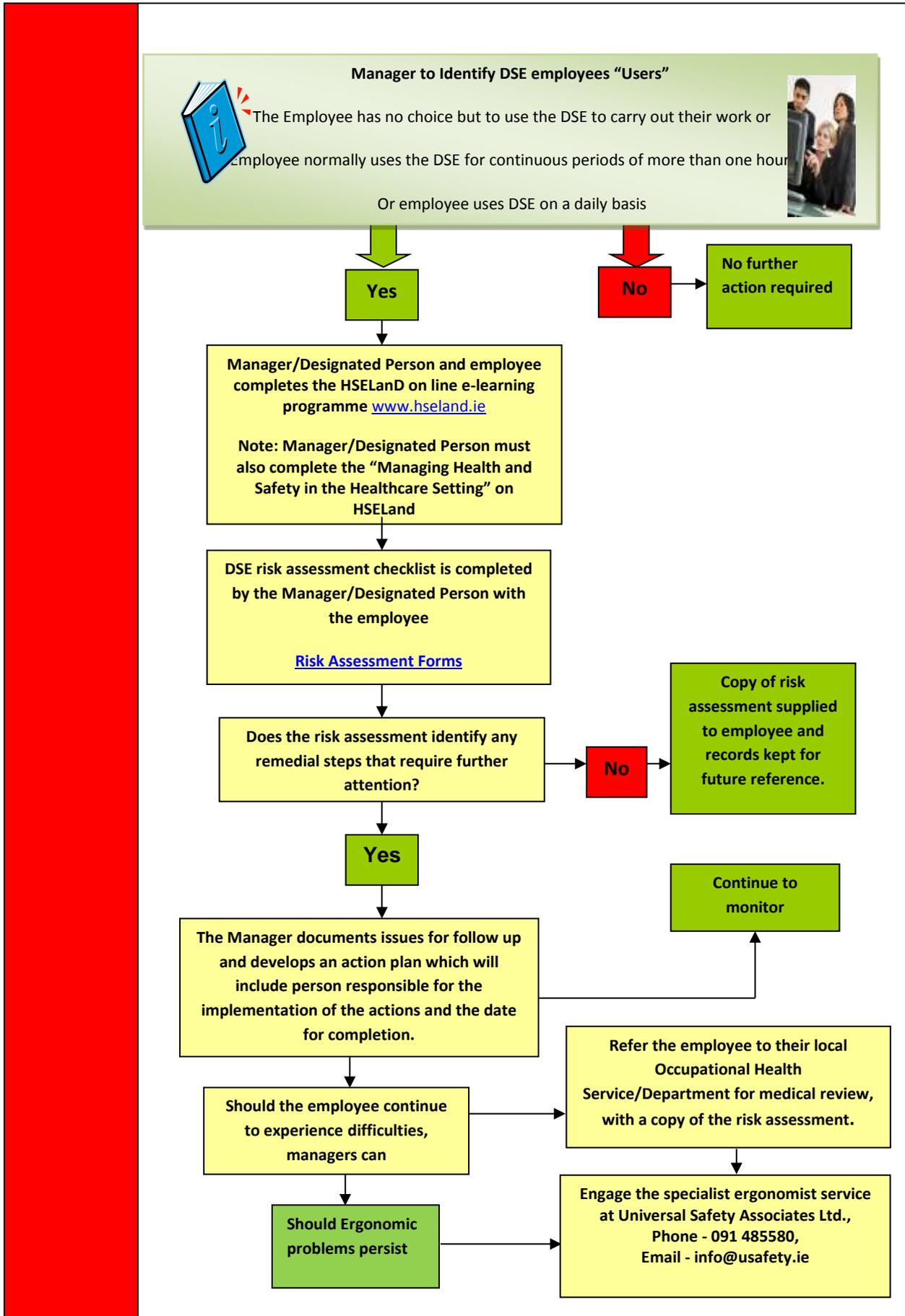
Please note that it is implicit in the above that the manager **MUST** undertake the HSE LanD DSE module. The purpose of both the Manager and the employee undertaking this module is to ensure competence when completing the risk assessment.

Should the manager/employee/“DSE User” need to discuss any aspect of the risk assessment with a health and safety specialist contact the Health and Safety Helpdesk.

² This is a non-exhaustive summary - please refer to SI 299: 2007 Part 2 (Workplace and Work Equipment), Chapter 5 (Display Screen Equipment) for full legal requirements

³ “Employee” in this context: “means an employee who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of his or her normal work” SI 299:2007, Regulation 70

	<p style="text-align: center;">Log your health & safety request on the</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">  <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Health and Safety Helpdesk or go to: http://pndchssdweb02.healthirl.net/Health.Web Access/ss</p> <p>Alternatively contact the National Health & Safety Helpdesk on 1850 420 420, Monday to Friday.</p> </div> </div> <p>It is acknowledged that there may be situations where more in-depth/specialist advice/expertise is required. The National Health and Safety Function can be contacted through the Health and Safety Helpdesk for further information on specialist ergonomists.</p>
A	<p>ASSESSMENT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on the uptake of training on DSE, the findings of audits undertaken nationally and Health and Safety Authority correspondence would indicate that the HSE’s compliance strategy is not being fully implemented in all areas • This may result in individual and organisational exposure to risk • Managers and staff must take immediate action as outlined below in order to ensure compliance • Failure to comply may lead to enforcement action by the Health and Safety Authority up to and including prosecution at manager level and above
R	<p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all line managers within your area of responsibility are aware of and have acknowledged and implemented the recommendations in this Safety Alert • Display this Safety Alert in a prominent location within each workplace • Undertake and ensure all line managers within your area of responsibility have undertaken the HSElanD DSE module (all persons completing the module should print and file a copy of their completion certificate for future reference) • Identify any “Employees/Users” within your area of responsibility and ensure that they have completed the HSElanD module • Undertake a risk assessment (manager and identified employee/user) of the DSE workstation using the national DSE Risk Assessment form • Implement controls to remedy any deficiencies found • Should further information or support be required please contact the National Health and Safety Function through the Helpdesk or go to https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/benefits-services/health-and-safety/ • See flowchart below for more details



References:	Melrose A.S., et al., 2007. RR561, " <i>Better Display Screen Equipment (DSE) - work related ill health data</i> ". Institute of Occupational Medicine Research, Edinburgh, HSE Books
Addendum to Safety Alert:	<p>The Safety Alert clearly places responsibility on the relevant line manager to undertake the DSE analysis/risk assessment as the Manager is best placed to determine and agree any necessary controls. In order for the manager to undertake this assessment it is essential that they achieve the necessary level of competence by way of undertaking the HSE Land programme on <i>Display Screen Equipment (DSE)</i> and <i>Managing Health and Safety in the Healthcare Setting</i> programme.</p> <p>However, there may be situations where the line manager is not in a position to undertake these assessments and it may be considered acceptable in such cases for a competent person to undertake these assessments on their behalf. In all instances the line manager retains full responsibility for the appropriate implementation of any control measures identified.</p>