

SAFETY SERVICES

April 2020

Covid-19 Briefing

Homeworking with Laptop/Computer

Purpose:	Provide guidance on safety for homeworkers using laptop/computer
Who should read this?	ALL STAFF USING DSE AT HOME
Author:	Andy Lucas MSc CMIOSH MIIRSM, Head of Safety Services

BACKGROUND

With the current 'lockdown', staff have been offered the opportunity to continue to work from home. Some staff maybe familiar with homeworking, but others may not be.

This Briefing deals with how the working environment can be set up to make your life easier and working at home more comfortable.

ADVICE

Under normal circumstances, any workstation should be subject to an assessment carried out under the [Health and Safety \(Display Screen Equipment\) Regulations 1992](#). However, HSE have clarified that temporary DSE work at home presents no greater risk and therefore an assessment is not necessary. However, it is still important to ensure you maintain a good posture, the working environment is safe, you have adequate room at your chosen work station and you take regular breaks.

If you have any specific health issues that may impact on your ability to work from home, please refer any concerns to your line manager in the first instance, it may be that you require specific guidance and support.

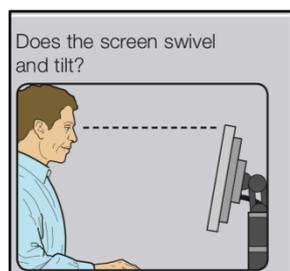
Setting Up Your Working Environment

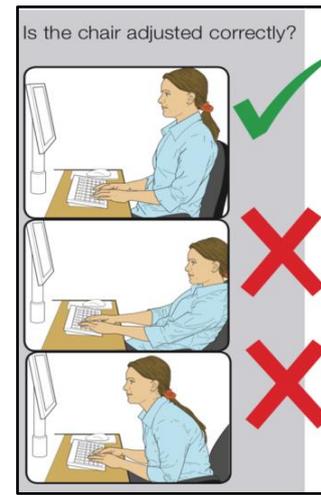
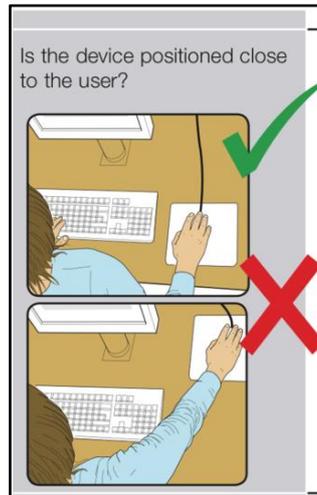
Although a workstation assessment is not necessary, it is still important to remember how to set up your working environment so that it is comfortable. As a guide to help you consider your working arrangements, it is recommended that you run through the [HSE Checklist](#). This is to assist you, rather than to generate a formal assessment.

Generally, please remember:

- Choose your best workspace thinking about lighting, ventilation, space, quiet and comfort
- Always try to rely on natural light – if it feels comfortable, it is likely to be ok
- Set up is really important and you should aim to achieve the following...

PC and Monitor





Laptop

Laptops are slightly different as you may not have a keyboard or separate monitor, however prolonged use of a laptop can increase the risk of long-term neck and shoulder injuries. Prolonged use of a laptop will be subject to the regulations in the same way that desktop equipment is. There is no particular definition of prolonged use, but if it is the only equipment that you have to use at home and it is being used for the majority of the time, then this will be considered 'prolonged'.

If the laptop is your only option and you are using it for the majority of your work at home, you should use your laptop with a docking station, monitor, keyboard and mouse. Contact your line manager to discuss the possibility of providing this. If this is not possible, use of a laptop should be restricted to short term temporary use and should not be used for prolonged times.

Using Your Laptop

- i. Set the laptop down on a level solid surface – a desk, table top or similar
- ii. Tilt the screen to avoid reflections and to allow your head to remain level and not leaning forward
- iii. Ideally your forearms should rest on the surface
- iv. Try to sit back to provide good back support in your chair
- v. The following might be useful



Further guidance when using laptops can be found here:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xUzi9k9d0EI>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUHjRFxWygA>

If you don't have 'all the kit', be creative...

- A biscuit tin or small box can be a footrest
- Cushions can adjust your height in the chair
- Rolled up towels or a cushion can provide lumbar support
- Books can raise the screen height
- An ironing board can double up as a standing desk

- If you feel you need specialist equipment, please refer to your line manager
- Don't forget to take regular breaks (5-10mins every hour), change position, get up and walk around, have a stretch, have a chat to someone just to have some connection.

You may find further advice available from HSE

- [Setting up your homebased workstation](#)
- [Homeworking](#)
- [General HSE advice re Covid-19](#)

General Guidance – Getting Through the Next few Months

People working at home can experience difficulties, especially if they are not used to homeworking. It's common to feel a little isolated, overwhelmed and frustrated. Don't worry – this is not a normal situation and it is not permanent. There are lots of things that you can do:

- Get up in the morning at your usual time and 'pretend' you are going to work.. dress for the part if you like.. (not compulsory)
- Try to keep a routine, start and finish at your usual times
- Start by making a list of things you want to do and try to stick to it
- Take a break away from your work for lunch
- Keep in touch with your line manager and colleagues. If you can, try to video conference using Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams etc. and of course social media
- Refer to the [HR guidance on working from home](#)

You should expect regular contact with your line manager, and this should be discussed in the early stages of these new working arrangements

You may find the following helpful

- [Working at Home](#)
- [University of Worcester IT Remote Working](#)
- [Microsoft Teams](#)
- [HR Working at Home](#)

If you need further help with your arrangements at home, please speak to your line manager in the first instance. If you have any health concerns about working at home please speak to HR as you may require additional Occupational Health Support. If you have general health and safety concerns please refer to [Safety Services](#).

Stay Safe