SAFE WORKING PROCEDURE

Hybrid Working
(Home, Office, Hub's and other sites)

STATEMENT:

In order to comply with legislation and fulfil statutory responsibility, the Council must make sure that:

- Working practices and equipment meet specified minimum requirements set out in legislation.
- Risk assessments are carried out as applicable and employees are provided with information, instruction and training on the hazards and controls associated with the work they carry out.
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SCOPE:

This Safe Working Procedure (SWP) applies to:

- All managers including head teachers.
- All employees of Southampton City Council.
- All temporary workers.

Content

Forms

- Display Screen Equipment Risk Assessment
- Home Working Risk Assessment

Find the forms in Forms Library (SCC intranet) and (H&S for Schools)

1.   Responsibilities

Service Managers/Head Teachers are responsible for ensuring compliance with this SWP and must:

1.1.   Ensure working environment is suitable and sufficient subject to period of time working away from the office or other normal work location.
1.2.   Ensure a DSE Risk Assessment and Homeworking Risk Assessment is carried out where applicable, providing information, instruction and training on the hazards and controls associated with working away from the office.

Managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the SWP and must:

1.3.   Identify workers who classed as 'Home Workers' as opposed to workers who 'work from home'.

1.4. Ensure workers complete on-line DSE and Fire Safety e-learning modules (or receive suitable alternative training or information) as appropriate.

1.5. Ensure workers review the General H&S links available in the Essential Documents section on L&D intranet pages as appropriate.

1.6. Organise for DSE users to self-complete a DSE Risk Assessment and review completed form with them towards resolving any issues raised.

1.7. Organise for workers who 'work from home' to complete a Working from Home Risk Assessment and review completed form with them towards resolving any issues raised.

1.8. Discuss equipment needs outside of the office and where applicable confirm suitability for worker to work from home or need to attend the office either some or all of the time as appropriate, i.e. ensure employees working from home for consecutive days and/or long periods, have suitable equipment and space available at home and if not, ensure they attend the office some or all of the time.

1.9. Provide all 'users' with information, instruction and training on the hazards and controls associated with working with display screens (See DSE Microsite – SCC intranet and H&S for Schools).

1.10. Structure work activities to encourage workers to take regular breaks and to ensure an appropriate 'work life balance'.

1.11. Where appropriate, provide the minimum equipment required to allow someone to work safely from home using DSE (i.e. laptop, laptop riser and separate mouse and keyboard).

1.12. Consider manual handling and security risks for workers carrying equipment between workplaces.

1.13. Consider lone working risks for workers working without direct supervision or contact with other, either at home, in unoccupied offices or other locations.

1.14. Ensure workers are aware of the need to make themselves familiar with the emergency evacuation procedures for all locations they may work in.

1.15. Ensure workers are aware of the need to report accidents and incidents occurring at work when away from the office, including when working from home, the same as incidents occurring in the office or other work locations.

1.16. Ensure workers are aware of the need to report sickness absence when working away from the office the same as if they are working from the office or other work location.

1.17. Ensure workers have access to appropriate first aid when working away from the office or other locations as applicable.

1.18. Ensure workers are aware of and familiar with the Council's 'Flexible Working' policy.

1.19. Ensure they risk assess employees working from home using the 'Flexible Homeworking Working Risk Assessment and DSE Risk Assessment' (Schools 'Flexible Homeworking Risk Assessment' and DSE Risk Assessment) to ensure staff are not working at risk due to lack of suitable equipment or available space etc.

1.20. Monitor workers to identify any who may be struggling with isolation or lack of communication or other negative effect of hybrid working and offer support as appropriate, including referring to support available via the Council's Wellbeing and Occupational Health Employee Assistance Programme (Schools Managing Wellbeing at Work).

1.21. Retain records of DSE Risk Assessments and other risk assessments related to hybrid working for a minimum 3 years in-line with GDPR.

Employees must:

1.22. Undertake on-line 'e-learning' or suitable alternative training as identified by manager.

1.23. Complete a DSE Risk Assessment (Schools DSE Risk Assessment) (on joining and then annually thereafter or sooner in the event of issues arising or changes occurring). *Note, all workstations in Council offices should comply with DSE Regulations, therefore only one DSE Risk Assessment should need to be completed by users, unless workstations they use vary drastically, in which case more than one DSE Risk Assessment may be necessary. A separate DSE Risk Assessment should be completed for all other workplaces worked from for significant periods of time, i.e. the home, hubs or other locations where workers may be based at times.*

1.24. Complete a 'Flexible Homeworking Risk Assessment' (Schools 'Flexible Homeworking Risk Assessment') if working from home regularly for significant periods.

1.25. Discuss completed DSE Risk Assessment and General H&S risk assessment with manager towards resolving any issues identified.

1.26. Ensure DSE set up and equipment at home is suitable and sufficient subject to the period of time work is carried out at home. As a minimum this should include a laptop, laptop riser and separate keyboard and mouse. ***Note, where workers only work occasionally from home using DSE, no special equipment is required, however where workers choose to work regularly from home using DSE, i.e. 2 or 3 days a week or more, for several hours at a time, the equipment and work area should be suitable and sufficient to prevent work-related injuries, i.e. a suitable working area, dining table, desk or other suitable height hard surface and appropriate equipment. As a minimum this should be a laptop, laptop riser and separate keyboard and mouse, and a suitable chair, ideally a DSE compliant chair if being used for long periods, including consecutive days, several days a week. Where this is not possible, they should ensure they work from the office at least some or all of the time depending on the available space and equipment at home as determined by appropriate risk assessment.***

1.27. Complete a [DSE Risk Assessment](#) (Schools [DSE Risk Assessment](#)) specific to working from home.

1.28. Read and understand the information available on the [DSE Microsite](#) ([Schools DSE Microsite](#)).

1.29. Organise work activities to incorporate regular breaks away from DSE workstation and other work, such as prolonged tablet, telephone or mobile phone use, to avoid aches and pains and general fatigue.

1.30. Work breaks can consist of 'comfort breaks', making a drink, printing or other activity which takes you away from a prolonged task for a short period of time.

1.31. Where possible avoid several 'back to back' meetings across a day as this reduces the opportunity to get away from the desk/DSE or other activity for a short period as is necessary.

1.32. Ensure a 'healthy' work/life balance by separating working areas from living areas as much as possible and where this is not possible by clearing work related items and equipment away at the end of the working day.

1.33. Report any DSE related or other health concerns to the line manager for further assessment and advice.

1.34. Report any work supplied defective equipment to the line manager.

1.35. Advise their manager if they experience any ill health effects due to lack of appropriate equipment to work from home or other locations safely.

1.36. Report any absences from work the same as though they are working in the office or other work location.

1.37. Report any accidents or incidents, which occur through work, the same as though they were working in the office or other work location.

1.38. Ensure they are familiar with the Council's Flexible Working policy and are using it appropriately if applicable.

1.39. Employees much report to their manager's if they feel they may be struggling with isolation or lack of communication or other negative effects of hybrid working and seek support if appropriate via the Council's [Wellbeing](#) and [Occupational Health Employee Assistance Programme](#) (Schools [Managing Wellbeing at Work](#)).

1.40. Maintain contact towards safe lone working if applicable, as agreed with their manager.

Corporate Health and Safety Service must:

1.41. Provide assistance/advice on this SWP where requested to do so

2. Use of Display Screen Equipment Away from the Office

2.1. Who is a DSE User?

DSE users need to be identified, these are persons whom:

2.2.1. Normally use DSE for continuous or near-continuous spells of an hour or more at a time; and
2.2.2. Use DSE in this way more or less daily; and
2.2.3. Have to transfer information quickly to or from the DSE; and
2.2.4. Also need to apply high levels of attention concentration; or
2.2.5. Are highly dependent on DSE; or
2.2.6. Have little choice about using it; or
2.2.7. Need special training or skills to use DSE.

2.2. Using DSE Away from the Office

2.2.1. There is a difference between workers who work from home as their 'contracted place of work' and workers who 'occasionally work from home'.

2.2.2. Where an employee's contracted place of work is their home address, there is a requirement for the Council to provide certain equipment etc. for this work to be carried out. There is also a need for a 'Homeworker Assessment Checklist' to be completed.

2.2.3. Employees who are expected to work from home some of the time as part of Smart Ways of Working or Hybrid Working, should as a minimum be provided with a basic 'mobility' IT kit to allow them to do so without risk, this should consist of; a laptop, laptop riser and separate keyboard and mouse.

2.2.4. For employees who choose to work from home as part of 'Flexible Working', there is no obligation on the Council to provide any equipment etc. to allow them to do so. Instead the employee must ensure they have the appropriate work space and equipment at home to allow them to work safety and without risk of injury or ill-health. This includes access to a suitable hard surface desk or table, sufficiently large to work from and a suitable chair at an appropriate working height, ideally adjustable, to allow the worker to work comfortably. If the employee is unable to provide suitable working arrangements at home to allow them to carry their work out safely, they must consider working from the office, where there is suitable equipment available, some or all of the time subject.

2.2.5. The split between office and home (or other locations) should take into consideration: the equipment and facilities available, how much time the worker is using DSE, the intensity of the work being carried out, whether job rotation can allow other tasks to be carried out to 'break up' DSE use, any existing injuries or health conditions the worker may have. For clarification please refer to Using DSE out of the office (Schools Using DSE out of the office)

2.2.6. All DSE Users, including those who work from home some or all of the time, must receive information, instruction and training on minimising the risks associated with working with display screens. As a minimum Users should complete DSE e-learning available on the Council's L&D site.

2.2.7. All DSE Users, including those who work from home some or all of the time, must complete a DSE Risk Assessment and discuss the outcome with their line manager to agree actions to be completed.

2.2.8. Employees who use DSE (laptops, tablets etc.) regularly away from the office and home, i.e. in hubs, café's or other places to work, must ensure they set themselves up as best as possible to reduce the risks of working with DSE. For example, they should avoid hunching over low tables, on soft furniture or in vehicles for long periods.

2.3. Lone Working

2.3.1. Employees working at home or in hubs, café's or Council offices with low occupancy, should consider how their safety can be ensured in the event of illness, accident, injury or other event. Arrangements for maintaining an appropriate level of contact between them and their manager should be discussed and agreed so that the manager can raise an alarm if necessary, in the event they are unable to make contact with the employee as expected.

2.3.2. If appropriate a Lone Working Risk Assessment should be carried out.

2.4. Manual Handling

2.4.1. Employees travelling regularly between home, the office and other locations who need to carry their laptop and ancillary equipment, should consider the manual handling implications and discus with their manager how to reduce risks, perhaps by the use of a suitable laptop backpack or wheeled trolley bag.

2.5. Accident and Incident Reporting

2.5.1. Employees working from home or other locations away from the office are required to report all incidents or accidents occurring when they are working, including violence and abuse, the same as if they were working in the office. Incidents and accidents can be reported via this link Report and Accident at Work (Schools Incident Reporting)

2.6. Welfare

2.6.1. Employees working from home or other locations away from the office should ensure they have access to suitable welfare facilities, including a toilet with soap and hot water for hand washing (or

cleansing wipes), a comfortable working temperature, access to food and drink and clean drinking water as a minimum.

2.6.2.   It should also be ensured they have safe access and egress from their work location and that they are familiar with any emergency evacuation processes and procedures as applicable.

2.7.   Work/Life Balance

2.7.1.   Benefits of hybrid working can enable employees to strike a healthy work/life balance, however employees working from home should ensure they can 'switch off' from work at the end of their working period to achieve a respite from work.

2.7.2.   This should include clearing away any work-related papers or equipment if a separate working area is not available, i.e. if using the dining table as a work surface, clear this at the end of the working period so that it returns to family use.

2.7.3.   Turn off work mobile phones and close down laptops to avoid being disturbed outside of working periods and avoid being tempted to 'just check'.

2.7.4.   If there is difficulty in achieving an appropriate level of 'work/life' balance when working from home, options should be discussed with the manager to agree how best to ensure this, i.e. work from the office more or find a way to separate work and home environments if possible.

2.7.5.   Make the most of the Council's 'Flexible Working' scheme to achieve the best 'work/life' balance possible to accommodate a healthy mix between work and family and other commitments outside of work.

2.7.6.   For some the benefits of working from home or other alternative locations can have a positive effect on their mental health and wellbeing, such as being able to take time out during the day (in-line with the Flexible Working policy) for personal or family commitments or activities, or being able to participate in outdoor pursuits during the day. However, for others there are negatives, such as isolation and lack of communication within teams and if this is an issue, employees should raise this with their manager at the earliest opportunity and if appropriate should seek support through the Council's Wellbeing and Occupational Health Employee Assistance Programme.(Schools Managing Wellbeing)

2.8.   Security

2.8.1.   Employees working away from the office should ensure they keep any Council equipment and data safe and secure at all times.

2.8.2.   Carrying around expensive equipment, such as laptops etc. or sensitive data outside of the workplace may make you a target to thieves. Therefore, try to avoid making it obvious that you have expensive equipment or sensitive data with you by carrying it in an unmarked bag or backpack etc.

2.8.3.   When transporting equipment or data to and from work etc. make sure it is stored in the boot of the car so as not to be visible to others or if travelling on public transport kept with you at all times, never leave it unattended.

2.8.4.   Laptops with access to sensitive data should be 'locked' at all times you are away from it and papers containing sensitive information should be kept locked away when not in use. Avoid allowing others to view your laptop or mobile phone screen at home or in café's etc.

3.   E-Learning Platform

The Council has an e-learning platform currently available on the My Learning tab of the Learning and Development Website. The platform provides a variety of e-learning modules for employees to complete, including DSE, Fire Safety and General H&S.

4.   Safe Working Procedures Relevant to This Document

3.1.   Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare
3.2.   Display Screen Equipment (DSE)
3.3.   Manual Handling
3.4.   Accident and Incident Reporting and Investigation
3.5.   First Aid
3.6.   Health and Safety Training
3.7.   Working Alone in Safety
3.8.   Driving Vehicles While Working

3.9.   Workplace Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Note: Other safe working procedures may apply, available on the Council's Health and Safety Intranet. For schools, please refer to Health and Safety for Schools.

5.   Main Legislation Relevant to This Document

4.1.   Health and Safety at Work etc Act
4.2.   The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations
4.3.   Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations
4.4.   The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

6.   Contact Addresses and Guidance Links

6.1.   Health and Safety Executive
        www.hse.gov.uk

6.2.   Corporate Health and Safety Service

        Health and Safety Intranet

                6.2.1.   DSE Microsite
                6.2.2.   Lone Working Microsite
                6.2.3.   Manual Handling Microsite

        Health and Safety for Schools

                6.2.4   DSE Microsite
                6.2.5.   Lone Working Microsite
                6.2.6.   Manual Handling Microsite

6.3.   Corporate H&S Forms (Schools Forms)

                6.3.1   DSE Risk Assessment
                6.3.2   Flexible Homeworking Risk Assessment

Note: Other forms may apply, available on the Council's Health and Safety Intranet. For schools, please refer to Health and Safety for Schools.

6.4.   Other Corporate Guidance

        6.4.1.   Using DSE out of office (including home working)
        6.4.2.   Schools Using DSE out of office