DSE Working from Home

Many people work flexibly, including remotely at offsite locations and at home. Working at home, either on a laptop, desktop PC or carrying out paper-based work is a low risk activity. This type of working pattern can offer a range of potential benefits, but there are also associated hazards that you should be aware of.

When working from home using a computer (this is defined as a laptop or a desk top PC) you need to ensure you keep yourself safe by making sure your computer is set up correctly. Setting up your workstation correctly at home is equally as important as when you are in the office, and the same principles apply.

Never use faulty equipment, report all faulty equipment to your line manager immediately and must not be used.

When setting up your computer always make sure, you never overload electrical sockets and leave power cables as trip hazards.

It is recommend that you rest the computer on a hard surface e.g. dining room table or desk so you can rest your legs underneath. Where possible use an adjustable chair, if you do not have access to an adjustable chair use a dining room chair or a chair that allows you to position your back as straight as possible with your forearms lightly supported by the work surface and your feet are firmly on the floor.

The height and position of the portable's screen is important, the ideal position is when the screen is at an angle so that the user is sitting comfortably with a straight back and there is no glare on the screen from windows or lights. To help get the correct position a laptop stand may be required to tilt or raise the screen to an acceptable height and viewing distance.

Correct positions ✓ ✓   Incorrect position ✗

A separate mouse and keyboard will make a significant improvement to layout flexibility for those who are working for long periods and using a laptop.

Regular breaks away from the computer are important, you should plan to move around for five or ten minutes every hour, aiming for frequent, short breaks.

Consider taking micro breaks to stretch, move around, change activity by taking a phone call, do some reading or get a drink to avoid prolonged static postures.

Avoid:
- using phones or tablets for a long time,
- sitting on unsupportive seating such as a sofa,
- static postures,
- leaving your computer on overnight or when it is not being used for long periods.

Whilst it may seem easier to simply open the laptop and start working without making any adjustments, this can lead to poor posture, which can cause pain and discomfort over time. It is well worth taking a couple of minutes to set up your workstation correctly each time you sit down to work.

If you need further advice then contact the Health & Safety team.