

Home Working Checklist

1. Introduction

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.

2. Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

Setting up your workstation correctly at home is equally as important as when you are in the office, and the same principles apply. Your workstation includes your desk or table, chair, and PC or laptop. Health and Safety has a range of online information and guidance available on the Staff Intranet –

<https://intranet.westlothian.gov.uk/article/29163/DSE---Users-Procedures>

3. Tips for working on a PC or laptop remotely:

- Raise your screen:**
Make sure your screen is raised so that the top of the screen is at eye level. This can be done using an adjustable laptop stand, a box or some books if necessary.
- Use a separate keyboard and mouse**
This enables the laptop screen to be positioned correctly.
- Report pain or discomfort**
If you feel discomfort, report it to your line manager as soon as you notice it. In some circumstances, a referral to the Occupational Health Service may be appropriate.
- Adjust your chair height**
Your arms should be at right angles, with forearms lightly supported by the work surface. You may need a footrest if your feet are not firmly on the floor.
- Make sure the lower back is well supported**
Support for your lower back will help encourage good posture. You can use a folded towel to give you more support or consider a back-support cushion if needed.
- Take regular, short breaks:**

Move around for five or ten minutes every hour, aiming for frequent, short breaks.

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

Take more frequent breaks if your DSE setup is not optimal or if you are experiencing discomfort. Whilst it may be slightly more challenging to alternate work tasks in the home environment you should ensure you take regular breaks away from your PC (HSE recommend at least 5 mins every hour) to prevent fatigue. This could include making a work phone call, preparing a drink, anything simple that will take you away from the screen and area you are working in.

Try to avoid:

- using phones or tablets for a long time,
- sitting on unsupportive seating such as a sofa,
- static postures.

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.

4. Safe Working Environment

Use the home working checklist at the end of this guidance to assess your home working environment. It covers items such as:

- the working environment
- display screen equipment (DSE)
- emergencies
- electrical safety

5. Reporting

Accidents, near misses and incidents of ill health should all be reported in the usual way using our [online incident reporting system](#).

Home working checklist

Use this checklist to identify any possible hazards in your home working area. Once completed the checklist must be discussed your line manager.

Employee:	
Home Address:	

	✓ or X	Comments
A: Working environment		
1. Is there adequate space in the area you are working in to work safely?		
2. Is your working area free from tripping hazards (eg, trailing cables)?		
3. Are objects like equipment, bags, paper, files and books stored safely?		
4. Is there an adequate working temperature (Minimum 16 °C)?		
5. Is there adequate lighting?		
6. Is there a problem with reflection/glare on you screen from windows or light?		
B: Display screen equipment		
1. Are you aware of the Council's procedures for managing DSE?		
2. Have you completed the e-learning module for DSE?		
3. Are you using a separate keyboard and mouse with your laptop?		
4. Is your back well supported when using your computer?		
5. Is the top of the screen at eye level?		
6. Are you taking short but frequent breaks away from your work (eg, a change of activity, such as taking a phone call)?		
C: Emergency actions		
1. Do you have access to basic first aid provisions?		

2. Do you know what to do in an emergency, and have you worked out a fire drill so you and anyone else in the house knows what to do and where to go in case of a fire?		
3. Are smoke detector/s fitted?		
4. Are you familiar with the Council's procedures for accident and incident reporting?		
D: Electrical safety		
1. Are Council-owned portable electrical appliances PAT tested with a sticker applied?		
2. Do you carry out frequent visual checks on plugs, wiring and casings of electrical equipment?		
3. Is there adequate number of electrical sockets available to prevent overloading of sockets?		

Employee signature		Date:
Line Manger / Supervisor's signature		Date: