



# Protect home workers

As an employer, you have the same health and safety responsibilities for home workers as for any other workers.

When someone is working from home, permanently or temporarily, as an employer you should consider:

- How will you keep in touch with them?
- What work activity will they be doing (and for how long)?
- Can it be done safely?
- Do you need to put control measures in place to protect them?

## Lone working without supervision

There will always be greater risks for lone workers with no direct supervision or anyone to help them if things go wrong.

Keep in touch with lone workers, including those working from home, and ensure regular contact to make sure they are healthy and safe.

If contact is poor, workers may feel disconnected, isolated or abandoned. This can affect [stress levels and mental health](#).

- [Find out more on lone working](#)<sup>[1]</sup>

## Working with display screen equipment

For those people who are working at home on a long-term basis, the risks associated with [using display screen equipment \(DSE\)](#)<sup>[2]</sup> must be controlled. This includes doing home workstation assessments.

However, there is no increased risk from DSE work for those working at home temporarily. So in that situation employers do not need to do home workstation assessments.

You could provide workers with advice<sup>[1]</sup> on completing their own basic assessment at home. This practical [workstation checklist \(PDF\)](#)<sup>[3]</sup> may help them.

There are some simple steps you can take to reduce the risks from display screen work:

- breaking up long spells of DSE work with rest breaks (at least 5 minutes every hour) or changes in activity
- avoiding awkward, static postures by regularly changing position
- getting up and moving or doing stretching exercises
- avoiding eye fatigue by changing focus or blinking from time to time

## Specialised DSE equipment needs

Employers should try to meet those needs where possible.

For some equipment (eg keyboards, mouse, riser) this could mean allowing workers to take this equipment home.

For other larger items (eg ergonomic chairs, height-adjustable desks) encourage workers to try other ways of creating a comfortable working environment (eg supporting cushions).

Our [brief guide](#)<sup>[4]</sup> has more information.

# Stress and mental health

Home working can cause work-related stress and affect people's mental health.

Being away from managers and colleagues could make it difficult to get proper support.

## Keep in touch

Put procedures in place so you can keep in direct contact with home workers so you can [recognise signs of stress](#)<sup>[5]</sup> as early as possible.

It is also important to have an emergency point of contact and to share this so people know how to get help if they need it.

## Link URLs in this page

1. Find out more on lone working  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/lone-working/employer/manage-the-risks-of-working-alone.htm>
2. using display screen equipment (DSE)  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/index.htm>
3. workstation checklist (PDF) - Portable Document Format  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.pdf>
4. brief guide  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.htm>

5. recognise signs of stress

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/signs.htm>

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