A DSE checklist for the hospitality office

A shared reception or booking desk should be adjustable for the person using it. Allow time at handover to set the chair, screen, keyboard and frequently used items. Explain how to reduce reflections and how the work is varied through the shift. A colleague who uses the desk comfortably may need a different setup from the next person.

GB display-screen awareness; individual workstation assessment and employer arrangements apply.

The practical principles

Set up for the task

Arrange the chair, desk, screen and input devices so you can work comfortably with supported posture. Place frequently used items within easy reach and avoid twisting to see the screen. Reduce glare and adjust brightness and text size for comfortable reading. Use the employer's workstation checklist to identify adjustments and ask for help where equipment does not fit.

Vary the work

Long periods in one posture can be uncomfortable. Build changes of activity or breaks into screen work under the employer's arrangements. Short, regular changes are generally useful. For prolonged laptop use, suitable separate input devices and screen positioning may help. A standing desk also needs adjustment and variation; standing continuously is not a universal solution.

Report and review

Report persistent discomfort, vision difficulties or equipment problems promptly. Ask about the workstation assessment and applicable eye-test arrangements. A move, new equipment or changed working needs can trigger reassessment. Keep shared workstations adjustable so each user can set them up. This introductory course helps staff recognise issues and request adjustments; an assessment considers the person, task and equipment together.

Work through a shift scenario

Fictional exercise: a reservations assistant starts using a low laptop screen for long periods and reports neck discomfort. They raise the issue through the workstation assessment process and discuss the equipment and task changes needed. A temporary adjustment may help, but the employer should also consider the complete work pattern, available space and sustained use. The employee should know how to request help and any applicable eye-test arrangements.

Avoid the common failure

A photograph of a tidy desk does not show whether it works for its user. Ask about the actual tasks, discomfort and reach to equipment. Staff should use the provided adjustments and report unresolved issues. Avoid treating a generic posture diagram as an individual assessment or clinical advice.

A second situation to discuss

Fictional scenario: A receptionist twists towards a booking screen while using a keyboard facing the customer. Their shoulder aches after each shift.

Review the layout using the workstation checklist, bring the main screen and keyboard into a more suitable relationship and seek the employer's assessment support. Report persistent discomfort and arrange activity variation.

Use a working record

Record the specific arrangements below before the briefing. Keep the wording short enough for a colleague to use during the shift. Where a field does not apply, explain why; where information is missing, assign a person to resolve it. Store personal or sensitive details in the business's approved system.

- User/task
- chair and desk setup
- screen position
- reach/glare
- task variation
- discomfort reported
- action owner

At the next handover, ask what changed, which action remains open and who now owns it. Close the record only when the agreed follow-up is complete. A recurring problem should inform the next briefing and the relevant operational procedure.

Check understanding

A workstation assessment considers:

Person, task and equipment The whole work arrangement affects comfort.

Frequently used items should be:

Within comfortable reach Placement can reduce repeated awkward movement.

Shared reception desk: the screen works for one shift but not the next

A shorter colleague takes over a desk that was comfortable for the previous user. They lean forward to read the screen and their feet no longer rest comfortably. Which adjustments should come first?

Compare your decision

Give the colleague time to set up for their own task. Review chair support, foot support, screen position and the location of frequently used controls. Check the setup while they actually use the booking system. Escalate equipment limitations through the workplace assessment process.

Ask what still causes reaching or discomfort after the adjustments. Record the setting or equipment request so the next rota change does not reset the problem.

Sources and scope

- Source: https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/training-information.htm

Original workplace examples and suggested record. Prepared 19 October 2026. Use the current linked guidance and the venue's procedures for operational decisions.

Use this on shift

Resource page and fillable working record · Read the online guide · Course details