

EYE CARE VOUCHER AND EYE TEST PROCEDURE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Council aims to optimise the use and application of display screen equipment within the organisation, whilst safeguarding the health, welfare and job satisfaction of those involved in using such equipment.

The Council, its managers and staff who use or supervise staff who use Display Screen Equipment (sometimes called Visual Display Units or VDU's) are responsible for ensuring that no ill-health effects arise from its use. Compliance with the Regulations on Display Screen Equipment and provision of eye tests to staff deemed to be VDU users will ensure the safety and comfort of staff using such equipment. This guidance outlines the Council's policy on the provision of eye tests for staff classified as designated users under Regulation 5 of the 1992 Display Screen Equipment regulations, which came into effect on 1/1/93.

2. APPLICATIONS OF THE DSE REGULATIONS

The Regulations apply to staff deemed to be designated VDU users. Any manager of staff who use Display Screen Equipment must in the first instance decide which of their staff are considered to be designated 'users' within the terms of the Regulations. Guidance for assessing this is set out at Appendix A and Appendix B.

3. EYE AND EYESIGHT TESTS

All staff classified as designated users of display screen equipment are entitled to eyesight tests and a contribution to the costs of corrective spectacles where necessary. For the purposes of this guidance note, users working on lap-tops and working from home on Council business are also covered. The procedure for obtaining eyesight tests is described at Appendix D and must be followed in all cases.

Circumstances in which an employee is entitled to a test paid for by the Council

- Where employees are recruited, transferred, promoted or otherwise move into a job involving the use of display screen equipment, they will be entitled (but are not obliged) to undergo an eyesight test. Ideally the test should be carried out before the commencement of work on the VDU.
- Where display screen equipment has become a significant part of the work for an employee not previously considered a regular user.
- Where a designated user experiences visual difficulties such as eyestrain or focusing difficulties, and has good reason to believe that these may be caused by working on a display screen.

Frequency of testing

Unless otherwise suggested by the optician, users will be entitled to an eyesight test paid for by the Council at two-yearly intervals. All tests must be arranged with the approval of the Council and are specifically for designated users of display screen equipment.

4. COSTS OF TESTING AND SPECTACLES

All agreed costs of an eyesight test (currently £19.95) will be met by providing the employee with an eye care voucher. Where an employee obtains a test, which has not been agreed beforehand, then the Council will not necessarily meet the charges incurred by the employee.

Where it is found that eyesight correction is needed to carry out work on a VDU, the Council will contribute to the special corrective spectacles required. The VDU Certificate of Recommendation Form completed by the optician must state that spectacles are necessary for sole use of display screen equipment, or for general use incorporating a special prescription for VDU use.

In such circumstances, the Council will supply a spectacle voucher (currently £55.00) towards the cost of basic spectacles. Should the employee wish to purchase a more expensive pair of spectacles, have tinted lenses etc. added they are at liberty to do so, however, the maximum contribution from the Council will not exceed £55.00. It should be noted that the Council will not bear the cost of spectacles required for general use only.

The cost of the voucher will be recharged to the relevant section's cost centre.

5. PAID TIME OFF

The provision of vouchers now facilitates staff attending their own family optician at weekends if they so wish. However, employees retain the right to be tested during work time. The employee should seek agreement with their line manager on a suitable test appointment during work time. Where time off is required during working hours it is agreed this should be with pay.

6. DETAILS OF PARTICIPATING OPTICIANS

Human Resources know of local opticians who accept eye care vouchers. In addition, by contacting the Accor help line 0845 330 4433 eye care vouchers staff will give the employee access to their local participating opticians.

7. MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

Managers are responsible for deciding which of their staff are display screen users. The manager will be responsible for completion of the Eye Test Record Sheet (Appendix C) and submission to Human Resources. This will be dependent upon local arrangements.

8. VOUCHERS

- 8.1. The employee will be required to sign for receipt of their Eye Care and Spectacle Vouchers. In the event of loss the Council is under no obligation to provide the employee with replacement vouchers.
- 8.2. The expiry date is printed on each voucher.