

1. Introduction

Aberystwyth University recognises its responsibility to ensure a safe and healthy working environment for all its employees. This policy sets out the University's commitment with regard to musculoskeletal disorders within the workplace.

Musculoskeletal disorders continue to be a major cause of sickness absence in the UK. Many problems can be prevented or greatly reduced by complying with existing health and safety laws (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/legislation/>) and following guidance on good practice.

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are conditions that affect the nerves, tendons, muscles and supporting structures, such as the discs in the back. They result from one or more of these tissues having to work harder than they are designed to.

By assessing employees' work tasks, putting in place preventative measures, and checking that these control measures stay effective, the University is able to ensure its employees are supported and guided to manage any muscular related disorder.

The University aims to:

- Provide a healthy working environment for all employees.
- Help prevent musculoskeletal disorders and provide ongoing support to staff who have issues with musculoskeletal disorders.
- To ensure staff are aware of the support available for the prevention and treatment of musculoskeletal disorders.

2. Responsibility of the employer

- To inform existing and new employees of the support and guidance available as part of the induction process eg as part of the Display Screen Equipment assessment.
- To provide support through Occupational Health if an employee has concerns regarding issues relating to a musculoskeletal disorder.
- To ensure nominated Departmental DSE Assessor undertakes work place assessments on commencement of a role and as appropriate thereafter.
- If specialist equipment is required the University will take all reasonable steps to ensure this is provided.

3. Responsibility of Employees

- To advise Line Manager/Human Resources of any musculoskeletal disorders or concerns they have in this respect.

- To attend regular training as required preventing such injury e.g. manual handling training.
- Ensure they take appropriate rest breaks from computer work by varying their activity
- Where musculoskeletal disorders are diagnosed by a GP or consultant, to ensure their line manager and Human Resources are made aware so appropriate support is provided via Occupational Health.

4. Responsibility of Occupational Health Advisor

- Provide health advice and facilitate referral for treatment to other bodies.
- Monitor progress and provide support and advice to employees and line managers.
- Provide recommendations to assist employees remain in their role via reasonable adjustments or recommend redeployment.
- To review and recommend University programmes to support staff.

5. Additional support

A specialised session looking at rehabilitation of chronic back pain through evidence based exercise. Drop in session or one-to-one training available with qualified staff at the Sports Centre.

Also there are additional providers and organisations were further information, support and resources are available for MSD and how to prevent and manage such conditions.

Manual Handling

<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hse/proc-prac/manual-handling/>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/manualhandling.htm>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf>

Back Pain

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Back-pain/Pages/Symptoms.aspx>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/workplacehealth/Pages/Backpainatwork.aspx>

Musculoskeletal Disorders

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/workplacehealth/Pages/rsi.aspx>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/>

https://osha.europa.eu/en/topics/msds/legislation_html