1. **Scope**

1.1 This policy applies to all staff who are employed by Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire, whether on a temporary, permanent or fixed term contract. This policy also applies to volunteers (as per subsection 2.1). It does not apply to individuals who are employed by an agency, or who are self-employed and providing services to Citizens Advice on a freelance or consultancy basis.

2. **Eyesight testing**

2.1 As an employer, Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire is legally required to pay for any of its employees who habitually use display screen equipment (DSE) at work to receive regular eyesight tests, if they so request. DSE users should be advised of their right to free eyesight testing and the cost of basic corrective appliances when they receive their DSE assessment. As a propagator of best practice, Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire also offers free eyesight tests to volunteers who regularly use display screen equipment.

2.2 Since the vast majority of Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire employees (and volunteers) are DSE users to a greater or lesser extent, Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire will pay for all its employees and volunteers to have regular eyesight tests. It is recommended that these should be at the following intervals, unless otherwise recommended by an appropriate practitioner:

- every two years if aged under 40 and not already wearing glasses or contact lenses
- every year if already wearing glasses or contact lenses
- every year if aged 40 or over.

2.3 For these purposes, an eyesight test includes both a test of vision and an examination of the eye. It should also take account of your working environment, including the distance at which your screen is viewed.

2.4 The purpose of providing examinations for DSE users is to enhance comfort and efficiency by identifying and correcting vision defects, thereby helping to prevent temporary eyestrain and fatigue. There is currently no reliable evidence that work with display screens causes any permanent damage to eyes or eyesight, but if you have a pre-existing vision defect, it may make you more aware of it. Uncorrected vision defects can make working at display screens more tiring than it should be, and correcting defects can therefore improve your comfort.
Eye Sight Testing and Glasses Policy

For further eye care advice generally, and on DSE use in particular, you may wish to refer to www.eyecaretrust.org.uk

2.5 A new employee or volunteer may request reimbursement for a new eyesight test on starting employment at Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire, even if they have recently had one provided by a previous employer. However, this is unlikely to be of practical benefit if their new working environment is similar to that in their previous employment.

2.6 An existing employee may request an eyesight test sooner than recommended in para 2.2, if they are experiencing visual discomfort in relation to DSE work.

2.7 The results of an eyesight test can only be disclosed to Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire with your consent. However, Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire is entitled to ask you for confirmation that a test was performed, and whether you require:

- no spectacles
- your own spectacles
- special spectacles for DSE use.

3. Provision of corrective appliances (normally spectacles)

3.1 If, in the course of an examination, a sight defect is discovered which requires correction for purposes other than DSE use (but which might also include DSE use) Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire will not pay towards the cost of spectacles or contact lenses.

3.2 Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire will pay for spectacles only if:

- you require a different prescription for DSE use from that prescribed for your normal glasses; or
- you need glasses only for DSE use.

3.3 Only a small minority of DSE users (less than 10% of the working population) are likely to require specific DSE glasses, and they are usually people with higher reading additions who need a pair of intermediate range spectacles to accommodate a display screen which is outside the working range of their reading glasses. It is therefore unlikely that contact lenses would be suitable and Citizens Advice Mid
Staffordshire would not normally make a contribution towards the cost of contact lenses.
Eye Sight Testing and Glasses Policy

**Single lenses or bifocal/varifocal lenses**

3.4 It is good practice to bring objects that need to be viewed for your work into the same visual plane as the screen wherever possible, for example, by using a document holder. Hence in many cases, even if you do require special glasses to carry out your DSE work, a single lens prescription will be appropriate.

3.5 There may be some circumstances in which bifocal or varifocal lenses may be necessary – for example, if you are required to mix your DSE task with other tasks that require a different viewing distance and which would therefore mean you having to switch repeatedly from one pair of spectacles to another. However, there can be side effects associated with the use of multifocal prescriptions for DSE work. The smaller size of each lens section can lead to you having to make repeated adjustments to your head/neck position, or adopting an awkward position in order to look through the appropriate part of the lens. These could be more problematic than swapping spectacles, for example, by causing neck pain. In all cases, therefore, the decision on which is the most appropriate solution for you should be taken in discussion with the practitioner, taking into account the nature of your work and work environment. Part of the advice given by the practitioner may therefore be of an ergonomic nature.

4. **Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire’s liability for costs**

4.1 If you do not wear glasses for other purposes but the practitioner certifies that you require them for DSE use, Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire will pay for the cost of a basic frame/lenses (up to a maximum of £25).

4.2 If you wish to purchase more expensive spectacles, for example, designer frames, or lenses with optional treatments which are not required for DSE work, you will be responsible for paying the difference. (Please note that advice from the HSE is that anti-glare and other devices that purport to protect against radiation are not considered corrective appliances and Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire will not therefore pay for these).
Eye Sight Testing and Glasses Policy

4.3 If you already wear glasses but the practitioner certifies that these need to be adapted for DSE use, Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire will pay for the cheaper of the following:

- the cost of a basic frame/lenses up to a maximum of £25 for a separate pair of glasses to be worn only for DSE use; or
- where it is possible to do so, a maximum of £25 towards the cost of new lenses to be fitted to your existing frames.

5. Procedure for Claiming Free Eyesight Testing

5.1 You will need to pay for the eye test initially and then seek reimbursement via expenses procedure on production of a valid receipt of up to £25.00 for an eye test. You will need to pay the difference (if any) if the eye test exceeds this cost.

5.2 Please ask the optometrist to also give you a VDU certification form, which provides a record of the eye test, whether VDU glasses are needed and the date you need to return for your next eye test. If you require a different prescription for DSE use from that prescribed for your normal glasses, or you need glasses only for DSE use, you must present receipts for any purchases, the appropriate record and your expenses form to claim £25 reimbursement towards these costs. You should keep one copy of the VDU certification form for your own records, and return one copy to Citizens Advice Mid Staffordshire.

Policy Agreed by TB on 16th April 2008