

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Meeting with Cabinet Member, Health and Communities**

**21<sup>st</sup> January 2014**

**Report of the Strategic Director, Health and Communities**

**SUNBED SAFETY SURVEY**

**1. Purpose of the report:**

To inform the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities about a recent joint Trading Standards and Environmental Health survey into the safety of local tanning facilities.

**2. Information and analysis:**

- 2.1 According to the World Health Organisation, the main cause of skin cancer is over-exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays. This may be from natural sunlight or artificial rays from the use of sunbeds and sunlamps. Skin cancer typically takes decades to develop, so may not become apparent until years after the damaging exposure. Each year there are around 100,000 new cases of non-melanoma skin cancer in the UK. In the UK in 2006 there were over 84,500 non-melanoma incidences, but the majority would have been treatable. Malignant melanoma, however, is the most dangerous form of skin cancer as it can spread to other organs and is responsible for the most deaths from skin cancer. In 2006 there were over 10,670 incidences of malignant melanoma in the UK. Significantly, malignant melanoma is the second most common cancer in 15–24-year-olds in the UK.
- 2.2 Growing concerns about the association between skin cancer and sunbeds became evident in 2003 when the World Health Organization (WHO) issued Artificial Tanning Sunbeds: Risks and Guidance to assist governments in developing public health policy on sunbeds. This highlighted the increasing evidence which showed that cumulative exposure to UV radiation increases the risk of skin cancers, so sunbed exposure added to natural sun exposure would increase the skin cancer risk. The guide also recognised the particular vulnerability of young skin and recommended that young people under 18 should not use sunbeds. In June 2006 the Scientific Committee on Consumer Products (SCCP) to the European Commission issued an opinion warning of the risks to health of using sunbeds. It noted that the risk of melanoma seemed particularly high when sunbeds were used at a young age. The SCCP also recommended that those under 18 years should not use sunbeds. In 2009 the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) accentuated its conclusions about the hazards of UV radiation and artificial tanning, concluding that “the risk of cutaneous melanoma is increased by 75% when use of tanning

devices starts before 30 years of age”, while classifying UV radiation from indoor tanning devices as “carcinogenic to humans”.

2.3 This led to legislation - the Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010 which came into force in April 2011 and which restricts the use of tanning facilities to people aged 18 or over. The responsible authority for enforcing this legislation is the relevant district council environmental health department. In addition to this legislation a European Standard relating to UV tanning equipment was published in 2010 and the corresponding British Standard was published in June 2011. The standard introduces requirements that tanning salons should provide:

- safety information relating to tanning and warnings for safe use of the equipment.
- clear information about the hazards of UV radiation
- UV protecting goggles for eye protection

2.4 As far as the tanning equipment is concerned, the standard further stipulates that the relevant (erythemally weighted) UV radiation emitted is restricted to  $0.3\text{W/m}^2$ , or 11 standard erythema doses (SED) per hour. This is said to be the equivalent of an hour's exposure to the midday summer sun in Darwin, Australia and Colombo, Sri Lanka. Safeguards for sunbed users are provided by the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 (GPSRs) for which the  $0.3\text{W/m}^2$  UV restriction provided by the Standard sets an irradiation limit against which the safety of sunbeds for consumer tanning use can be assessed. In other words, tanning salons using equipment having UV emissions in excess of the  $0.3\text{W/m}^2$  limit could be considered to be unsafe consumer products under these regulations.

2.5 During 2013 the Trading Standards Division invited district council environmental health colleagues to participate in a joint survey of local tanning facilities to assess compliance with both the Sunbed Safety legislation and the General Product Safety legislation. Three districts; Chesterfield, Erewash and High Peak participated and a total of 32 premises identified. During the visits operators were provided with advice on compliance with respect to customer information and access to tanning facilities by under-18s. Trading Standards officers carried out screening tests on tanning equipment to determine whether the equipment in use was operating within the maximum  $0.3\text{W/m}^2$  safety level. Where more than one tanning unit of the same type and specification were present, emission levels were assumed to be the same as those found on the equipment tested. Tanning units fully fitted with 0.3 rated tubes were recorded as compliant after initial checks confirmed this assumption to be justified.

2.6 75 sunbeds were identified; 44 of which were tested and the remaining 31 examined with the following results:

- 31 failed and 13 passed
- 14 of the sunbeds examined were deemed to have failed and 17 to have passed based on the stated UV output
- 20 of the 45 that failed (or were presumed to have failed) were found to have emission ratings of between 0.3 W/m<sup>2</sup> UV to 0.6 W/m<sup>2</sup> UV
- 25 had emission ratings in excess of 0.6 W/m<sup>2</sup> UV
- 4 had emission ratings in excess of 0.8 W/m<sup>2</sup> UV the highest being 0.94 W/m<sup>2</sup>

2.7 The results of the survey are similar to other surveys conducted elsewhere in the UK. All business operators have been issued with guidance and written notification of the results of any testing and examination of equipment. Operators with tanning units found to be emitting UV above the safe limit have been informed of their responsibility to take immediate steps to ensure their equipment is brought into compliance.

### **3. Other considerations:**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered; legal, financial, prevention of crime and disorder, equality of opportunity; and environmental, health, human resources, property and transport considerations.

### **4. Background papers:**

None

### **5. Key Decision:**

No

### **6. Call-in:**

Is it required that call-in be waived for any decision on this report?

No

### **7. Strategic Director's Recommendation:**

That the Cabinet Member, Health and Communities notes the report.

**David Lowe**  
**Strategic Director**  
**Health and Communities**