



Chartered
Institute of
Environmental
Health



Policy briefing note – sunbeds

There is strong evidence that the use of sunbeds contributes to the incidence of skin cancer.

Sunbeds emit harmful UV rays which damage the DNA in our skin cells. Cancer Research UK (CRUK) estimate that sunbeds cause around 100 deaths from melanoma every year in the UK.

The more you use a sunbed the greater your risk of skin cancer. Using a sunbed once a month or more can increase your risk of skin cancer by more than half. Sunbeds also cause premature skin ageing, which means that your skin becomes coarse, leathery and wrinkled at a younger age.

The CIEH believes that as leaders in public health it is wrong for local authorities to provide sunbeds in their leisure centres.

The CIEH has long campaigned for stricter controls on the use of artificial tanning equipment, because of the risks to health. We were represented on the **Committee on the Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE)** working group, providing advice to the government on the need for additional controls.

It was this group which called for tougher regulation of the sunbed industry, including prohibiting the use of sunbeds by under-18s, the prohibition of unsupervised facilities and the licensing of all other commercial outlets.

Research carried out by the CIEH in Wales in 2008 found that more than half of tanning salons surveyed, both supervised and unsupervised, would allow children under 16 to use a sunbed and a staggering 88 percent of premises would allow a customer to have a tanning session every day despite the risk of skin cancer

Working with CRUK, we successfully supported the passing by parliament of the **Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010**, which prohibits sunbed businesses allowing under-18s use of sunbeds and provides for further regulation in the future.

We have also worked with the HSE on the revision of its **guidance note** on controlling health risks from the use of UV tanning equipment. Currently we are working with partners to address concerns about levels of UV irradiance emitted by sunbeds

The CIEH continues to lobby and work with government and partners to ensure that the Sunbeds (Regulation) Act, its subsidiary Regulations and the recommendations of the COMARE report are fully implemented.