



Chartered  
Institute of  
Environmental  
Health

## CIEH Briefing Note

To: Committee for Health, Social  
Services and Public Safety

## 1 Introduction

1.1 The Chartered Institute of environmental health would like to thank the committee for their invitation to comment on this important bill

1.2 We are aware of and would support the detailed submission that has been made by the Chief Environmental Health Officers Group. Colleagues with the local authority service have considerable experience in this matter and we commend their submission to the committee.

1.3 We would take this opportunity to add the following comments and reinforcements.

## 2 Detail

2.1 We strongly support the provisions within this bill to ban under 18s from using sunbeds. CIEH research undertaken in Wales in 2008 found that half of the tanning salons surveyed allowed children under 16 to use a sunbed and 88% allowed a customer to use a sunbed everyday. We believe that this evidence would suggest, as other experience does, that self regulation is not in itself sufficient. As such we strongly support this bill.

2.2 Whilst those under 18 represent a specific at risk group, all users are potentially at risk. We welcome therefore this bill, not only for its provisions to ban under 18s from using sunbeds (section 1), and the prohibition on the sale or hire of sunbeds to persons under 18 (section 2), but also, and of particular importance, is the duty to provide information to sunbed users. In our opinion it will be vital that the Department works closely with other relevant agencies to provide a high standard of information, to users which should be targeted particularly at the demographic described above.

2.3 The enforcement of section 1 may prove to be challenging and we would like to stress the importance of local councils in the successful enforcement of this section and indeed the bill itself. We also fully support the use of "test purchases," as a methodology that could potentially be utilized by councils using persons under 18, providing of course that the minor does not use the sunbed.

2.4 The prohibition on allowing unsupervised use of sunbeds under section 4 is another fundamental part of this bill and one which we believe is necessary in light of incidents in other parts of the UK. Our only concern is that the penalty for offence under this section is too low: "not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale." Our view is that this penalty should be raised in accordance with the seriousness of the offence. We believe that a low penalty is not likely to act as a sufficient deterrent to potential offenders. It is also our opinion that the fixed penalties detailed under section 13, for offenses committed under sections 1 and 2 and 5 through to 10, must be set at a suitable level to prevent re-offense.

2.5 We fully support the provisions for protective eyewear under section 8. The reason for this is clear, as the damage caused by UV radiation to the eyes of the user can be mitigated by the use of protective eyewear. There is no good reason for not using protective eyewear. Therefore in our opinion the duty must lie with the operator to ensure the user is fully protected.

2.6 We welcome and strongly support the requirements in relation to training (section 9). We believe that the training of operators may be vital to the success of this bill. The department should work closely with local authorities and operators, to establish and inform what training is necessary. The committee may be interested to note that CIEH is currently looking at this area in detail and will keep them informed of developments.

### 3 Conclusion

3.1 This bill is very welcome step and we are very pleased that the recommendations of the COMARE report have been acted on. The enactment of this bill will we trust be accompanied by publicity and information dissemination, to help raise awareness of skin cancer in Northern Ireland.

Gary McFarlane,

Director

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Northern Ireland