



National Cancer Control Programme

Review of the Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022



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Foreword

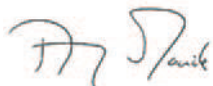
I am pleased to introduce a 'Review of the Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022'. The National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022 was a landmark commitment, arising from our National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026 and aimed at tackling the most common type of cancer in Ireland. The plan focused on the fact that most skin cancers can be prevented. It addressed awareness of skin cancer prevention and identified the priority groups as children and young people, outdoor workers, those who participate in outdoor leisure activities and sunbed users.

This report highlights the excellent work carried out in the implementation of the plan by the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP), Healthy Ireland and key stakeholders including various Government Departments, HSE partners, national organisations representing priority groups, and Irish Cancer Prevention Network members - the Irish Cancer Society, Marie Keating Foundation, Irish Skin Foundation and Breakthrough Cancer Research.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the many members of the Skin Cancer Prevention Implementation Group, whose commitment and dedication have driven the work described here and led to the successful implementation of Ireland's first National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan (2019-2022).



Professor Risteárd Ó Laoide

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Laoide'.

National Director

National Cancer Programme

Introduction

In May 2019, the Department of Health and Healthy Ireland published a 3-year plan on the prevention of skin cancer in Ireland which was part of a suite of policies under the Healthy Ireland Framework. The National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022 was a landmark commitment arising from our National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026¹.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in Ireland. With almost 13,000 cases diagnosed each year it accounts for over one-third of all cancers diagnosed annually².

The number of people being diagnosed with skin cancer in Ireland is rising rapidly. It is generally classified into two groups: melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC). Between 2015 and 2045, it is predicted that the number of cases of melanoma per year among males and females will increase by 67% and NMSC to increase by 110%³. Yet, skin cancer is largely preventable by protecting skin from ultraviolet (UV) radiation. UV is emitted naturally from the sun and also comes from artificial sources such as sunbeds. Following the Healthy Ireland SunSmart 5 S's can protect against skin cancer (Figure 1).

Follow the SunSmart 5 S's to reduce your risk of skin cancer



Slip on clothing that covers your skin



Slop on sunscreen on exposed areas using factor 30+ for adults and 50+ for children



Slap on a wide-brimmed hat



Seek shade – especially if outdoors between 11am and 3pm



Slide on sunglasses

Do not deliberately try to get a suntan. Avoid getting a sunburn.
Never use a sunbed.

Be SunSmart
www.hse.ie/sunsmart



National Cancer
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Figure 1: Healthy Ireland SunSmart messaging

¹ Department of Health. (2017). National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026. www.gov.ie

² National Cancer Registry of Ireland. (2022). Cancer in Ireland 1994-2020: Annual statistical report 2022. www.ncri.ie

³ National Cancer Registry of Ireland. (2019). Cancer incidence projections for Ireland 2020- 2045. www.ncri.ie

Implementation of the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019 – 2022

The aim of the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022 was to develop and implement evidence based strategies, to increase awareness and adoption of skin cancer prevention behaviours through cross-sectoral collaboration.

In May 2019, the NCCP was appointed as the lead organisation to implement the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022 in support of Healthy Ireland and created and established an implementation group. An overarching cross-sectoral advisory group has guided and implemented the plan. The Skin Cancer Prevention Implementation Group was established in October 2019 in order to:

- Implement the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022
- Increase awareness and adoption of skin cancer preventive behaviours
- Monitor change and evaluate skin cancer prevention plan effectiveness
- Target identified high risk priority groups: children and young people, outdoor workers, those who pursue outdoor leisure and sunbed users.

This group included representation from HSE's NCCP, Healthy Ireland, healthcare professionals, public patient representative and the voluntary sector. Subgroups were set up under some of the action areas. These groups also meet regularly and reported progress of action areas to the wider implementation group quarterly. While there is some crossover, not all of the members of the subgroups are members of the main implementation group.

Skin Cancer Prevention Implementation Group Membership

The NCCP would like to acknowledge the implementation groups expertise and advice in implementing the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022.

- Triona McCarthy, Consultant in Public Health Medicine, NCCP (Chair Oct 2019 – Jan 2022, Sept 2022 – present)
- Katharine Harkin, Specialist in Public Health Medicine, NCCP (Chair Jan – Sept 2022)
- Áine Lyng, Cancer Prevention Officer, NCCP (Oct 2019 – Sept 2022)
- Anne-Marie Tobin, Clinical Lead, HSE Dermatology Programme (Oct 2019 – present)
- Barbara McGrogan, Medical Scientist, NCCP (Oct 2019 – present)
- Bernadette Rice, Public Representative and Melanoma Trust (Oct 2019 – present)
- Bernie Carter, Assistant Director of Nursing, Marie Keating Foundation (Oct 2019 – present)
- Carmel Blake, Dermatology ANP, Tallaght University Hospital (Oct 2019 – 2022)
- Colin O’Hehir, Head of Climate Change Unit, Department of Health (May 2022 – 2022)
- David McMahon, CEO, Irish Skin Foundation (Oct 2019 – present)
- Fergal Moloney, Consultant Dermatologist, The Mater Hospital (Oct 2019 – present)
- Frances Drummond, Research Manager, Breakthrough Cancer Research (Jan 2020 – present)
- Frances Plunkett, HSE Digital Communications (July 2020 – September 2021)
- Garret O’Connell, Registrar, Tallaght University Hospital (Sept 2021 – Sept 2022)
- Helen Forristal, Director of Nursing Services, Marie Keating Foundation (Oct 2019 – Dec 2020)
- Kevin O Hagan, Cancer Prevention Manager, Irish Cancer Society (Oct 2019 – present)
- Killian O’Donnell, GP, Donegal (May 2022 – present)
- Lisa Roche, Consultant Dermatologist, SIVUH (Jan 2023 – present)
- Lynn Swinburne, Senior Health Promotion Officer, National Screening Service (Oct 2019 – present)
- Maria McEnery, Cancer Prevention Officer, NCCP (Dec 2020 – present)
- Mary Ryan, Health and Wellbeing, Department of Health (Oct 2019 – present)
- Michelle Dolan, Health Promotion Manager, Irish Skin Foundation (Oct 2019 – present)
- Michelle Greenwood, Health Promotion Manager, Irish Skin Foundation (Oct 2019 – present)
- Michelle Murphy, Consultant Dermatologist, SIVUH (Sept 2021 – Dec 2022)
- Muiriosa Ryan, Social Media Manager, HSE Digital Communications (Dec 2021 – present)
- Niamh Bambury, Aspire Fellow, Cancer Intelligence, NCRI/NCCP (Dec 2022 – May 2023)
- Noreen Turley, HSE Communications (Health and Wellbeing) (Oct 2019 – April 2020)
- Orla Dolan, CEO, Breakthrough Cancer Research (Oct 2019 – Jan 2020)
- Paula Beatty, Registrar, Tallaght University Hospital (Sept 2022 – May 2023)
- Selene Daly, Dermatology CNS, Sligo University Hospital (Oct 2019 – present)

The plan sets out areas that are distinct yet complementary building blocks to reverse the rising incidence of skin cancer in Ireland. Seven thematic areas are outlined in the plan with specific actions. By employing a combination of targeted strategies including education, media campaigns, environmental measures and policy changes across multiple settings, the plan aims to:

- Increase awareness of skin cancer prevention
- Improve adoption of skin cancer preventative behaviours
- Monitor change and evaluate plan effectiveness

This document provides a review on implementation of each of the thematic areas from 2019-2022.

Priority groups:

While prevention initiatives have been population-wide, there has been a focus upon targeting high risk groups which are:

- Children and young people
- Outdoor workers
- Those who pursue outdoor leisure activities i.e. sport and tourism
- Sunbed users

Context for review of Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022

There have been a number of developments and research findings since the publication of the Skin Cancer Prevention Plan in May 2019. Reference will be made to a number of these below:

Healthy Ireland Survey Findings 2019⁴ and 2022⁵

The Healthy Ireland Survey is an annual survey conducted with a representative sample of the population aged 15 and older living in Ireland. The sample size is typically in the region of over 7,500 people. Questions on sun protection were included in the 2019 survey (sample size 4,294) and were repeated in the 2022 survey.

The 2019 survey was completed using face-to-face interviews, and the most recent survey (2022) was completed using telephone to ensure optimal infection control during the COVID-19 pandemic. Questions on sun protection included in the 2019 survey were adapted in the 2022 survey due to the change in survey methodology from face-to-face to telephone. Therefore it is difficult to directly compare the findings of 2019 vs. 2022.

In summary, results from the skin cancer prevention module in 2019 revealed that:

- 92% report using a form of sun protection when in the sun for more than 30 minutes at a time.
- The most commonly used forms of sun protection are sunscreen of factor 30 or higher (68%). There is a large difference between men and women in reported use of sunscreen of factor 30 or higher. 79% of women report using this when in the sun for more than 30 minutes at a time, however only 57% of men report doing so.
- 60% wear sunglasses. 42% reported wearing a hat. 31% report that they limit the time they spend in hot sun and 28% report that they stay in the shade when outdoors. 20% reported keeping their skin covered.
- 3% use sunbeds either regularly or from time-to-time. Usage among women is higher than among men (4% and 1% respectively).
- Usage is highest among women aged 25 to 34 (7%). 5% of women aged 15 to 24 and the same proportion of women aged 35 to 44 use sunbeds.

⁴ Ipsos MRBI. (2019). Healthy Ireland Summary Report 2019. Department of Health <https://assets.gov.ie/41141/e5d6fea3a59a4720b081893e11fe299e.pdf>

⁵ Ipsos MRBI. (2022). Healthy Ireland Summary Report 2022. Department of Health <https://assets.gov.ie/241111/e31b2aaa-a8d7-411d-8b62-02cca079c741.pdf>

In summary, results from the skin cancer prevention module in 2022 revealed that:

- 86% of people frequently use at least one method of sun protection during the summer while in Ireland.
- Those aged under 35 are less likely to use at least one method of sun protection than those older than this (83% and 88% respectively).
- Using sunscreen of at least factor 30 (62%) is the most common method of sun protection during the summer in Ireland. Three-quarters (75%) of women report using this regularly during the summer, compared to 49% of men.
- 60% reported wearing long sleeves, a hat, or sunglasses.
- 40% limit time spent in the sun.
- 18% have used a sunbed at some point during their life, with 3% overall reporting that they use sunbeds either regularly or from time to time.
- Current sunbed use is highest among women aged under 45 (6%). 3% of men and women use sunbeds currently.
- 4% report they are likely to try sunbeds in the future. This includes 4% of women and 3% of men.
- Those aged 15 to 34 are most likely to say they would try sunbeds, with 7% of this age group stating future usage is likely. There is no significant difference between genders in this age group with 8% of women and 6% of men saying that they are likely to use a sunbed in the future.

Children's exposures to ultraviolet radiation - a risk profile for future skin cancers in Ireland⁶

Levels of self-reported childhood sunburn in Ireland were high.

- Nine out of 10 (88%) school children aged 10 to 17 reported at least one experience of sunburn.
- Around three quarters (74%) reported sunburn at least once during the past year
- 83% of school children reported sometimes and always using sunscreen. There were significant gender differences. Girls more frequently reported using sunscreen.
- 72% of schoolchildren reported that they wear sunglasses on a sunny day.
- Boys (50%) more frequently reported wearing hats than girls (44%).
- 50% of schoolchildren reported wearing protective clothing to cover arms and legs when in the sun.
- 3% of 10 to 17 year olds reported using a sunbed. It is not clear whether this represents use in commercial or domestic environments. Providing a sunbed service to anyone under the age of 18 is a breach of the Public Health (Sunbeds) Act 2014.

⁶ McAvoy, H., Rodriguez, L., Költő, A and NicGabhainn, S. (2020). Children's exposures to ultraviolet radiation - a risk profile for future skin cancers in Ireland. Institute of Public Health in Ireland. <https://publichealth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/20200616-Childrensexposure-to-UV-report-final.pdf>

National Survey on Cancer Awareness and Attitudes⁷

The research survey investigated cancer awareness and attitudes among adults aged 18 and over living in Ireland. One of the aims was to measure awareness of cancer risk factors which included sun protection. A total sample size of 2,874 was achieved, with interviews conducted by telephone.

- 95% report using at least one form of sun protection.
- The most commonly used form of sun protection is wearing long sleeves, a hat or sunglasses, with 79% reporting that they do so.
- This is followed by using sunscreen of at least factor 30 (75%)
- Limiting the amount of time spent in the sun (63%) the least commonly used form of sun protection.
- Over 65s are less likely than younger respondents to use sunscreen of at least sun protection factor (SPF) 30, but more likely to report limiting the time spent in the sun.
- Almost all parents/guardians (99%) report that they use at least one form of sun protection method for their child, including 97% who say that they use sunscreen of at least factor 50.

Climate Action Plan 2021⁸

The Climate Action Plan 2021 includes an action (Action 483) to *"Assess implementation of the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan with focus on actions relevant to climate change"*. (Action 485) *"Review the current and emerging building infrastructure and its potential associations with climate-sensitive UV health impacts in the indoor and outdoor architectural environment"*.

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan 2022⁹

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan plans to *"explore measures to prevent exposure to ultraviolet radiation including from sunbeds"* (Action 18). Efforts will be made to ensure that within the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan we are in alignment with any progression at a European Union level on sunbeds.

⁷ IPSOS. (2022). National Survey on Cancer Awareness and Attitudes. National Cancer Control Programme. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/cancer/prevention/nccpnational-survey-on-cancer-awareness-and-attitudes-report.pdf>

⁸ Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. (2021). Climate Action Plan 2021: Securing our future. www.gov.ie

⁹ European Commission. (2021) Europe's beating cancer plan: Communication from the commission to the European Parliament and the Council. <https://health.ec.europa.eu/>

Review of Skin Cancer Prevention Action Areas

The thematic areas detailed below elaborate on specific actions to be undertaken to implement the plan and how priority populations have been engaged.

- **Action Area 1: Establish oversight for implementation of skin cancer prevention plan**
- **Action Area 2: Increase national awareness of skin cancer prevention and improve adoption of skin cancer preventative behaviours**
- **Action Area 3: Children and Young People**
- **Action Area 4: Outdoor Workers**
- **Action Area 5: Outdoor Leisure**
- **Action Area 6: Sunbeds and other artificial UV sources**
- **Action Area 7: Monitoring, research and evaluation**

Action Area 1: Establish oversight for implementation of skin cancer prevention plan

1.1 Establish governance and reporting structure aligned with the National Cancer Strategy

Responsibility - DoH, NCCP

- Cross-sectoral advisory group established, governance and terms of reference agreed.

1.2 Assign skin cancer prevention plan coordinator

Responsibility - NCCP

- Cancer Prevention Co-ordinator commenced role in December 2020 through funding from the Sláintecare Integration Fund.

1.3 Establish a cross-sectoral advisory group to guide and implement plan

Responsibility - DoH, NCCP Implementation group

- Sub-groups for target areas Children & Young People, Outdoor Workers, Outdoor Leisure, Sunbed Users and Awareness Raising were established. The purpose of the subgroups were to contribute to the implementation of action areas within the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan.

1.4 Identify and build relationships with stakeholders to implement plan

Responsibility - DoH, NCCP Implementation group

- Building relationships with stakeholders is ongoing.

1.5 Undertake annual review of implementation of plan

Responsibility - NCCP

- Annual review completed in 2020, 2021 and this overall report written in 2022.

Action Area 2: Increase national awareness of skin cancer prevention and improve adoption of skin cancer preventative behaviours

2.1 Agree evidence based key messages for skin cancer prevention in Ireland

Responsibility - DoH, NCCP Implementation group

- Evidence based key messages agreed and published.
- Vitamin D evidence review completed.

2.2 Develop skin cancer prevention resources to increase awareness and support behavioural interventions for use by all stakeholders

Responsibility - DoH, NCCP/ HSE Implementation group

- SunSmart branding agreed and published.



Figure 2: Healthy Ireland SunSmart branding

- Pathway for organisations to apply to use SunSmart branding agreed and publicised.
- Translation of children's resources to Irish and shared with Tuismitheoirí na Gaeltachta.
- UV information included on Met Éireann website and social media.
- SunSmart webpage developed and published – www.hse.ie/sunsmart
- Wide range of skin cancer prevention resources developed and available on www.hse.ie/sunsmart. Resources also available on www.healthpromotion.ie for public to order hard copies of resources.

2.3 Develop an annual communications plan

Responsibility - DoH, NCCP Implementation group

- Social media assets developed for target populations incorporating SunSmart branding annually as part of the SunSmart campaign.
- Patient story videos developed and publicised as part of campaign in 2020, 2021 and 2022.



News > Health News

SPOT CHECK I thought a freckle was harmless but it became my worst nightmare, says primary school teacher

Figure 3: patient advocate Kate Moloney's interview on the sun.ie in 2022

Her mother Bernie said Sharon had been planning to start a family. 'She was a young, bright, intelligent woman,' she said. 'She was looking forward to married life and having a family. Her dreams never materialised.'

Bernie's eldest daughter was 31 when she was diagnosed.



Mother Bernie Rice, SunSmart

She spotted a mole on her leg had changed, which a doctor told her was malignant melanoma, a type of skin cancer that can spread to other organs.

Bernie said her daughter had surgery to remove the melanoma and 'made a good recovery'.

Sharon got married in June 2007, ran a mini-marathon for the Irish Cancer Society, but just as she was preparing to move house in November that year, she became 'quite ill' again.

She went for a check-up at St James's Hospital in Dublin, and found cancer had spread to her thigh's lymph nodes.

Figure 4: SunSmart article Bernie Rice Extra.ie 23 August 2021



Figure 5: Virgin Media News with Ken Leahy, patient advocate

- SunSmart branding and resources promoted at the National Ploughing Championships in 2019 and in 2022.



Figure 6: Barbara McGrogan, NCCP and Evelyn Cusack, Met Éireann at the Ploughing Championships 2019.

- Partner packs including resources for general population and target populations shared nationally and stakeholders annually as part of SunSmart campaign.
- Communications plan delivered from April to September between 2019 to 2022 which has grown year on year including radio campaign added in 2021 and 2022, digital audio ads in 2022, and social media 2019-2022 as well as media coverage both in press and TV.

SunSmart 2022 – press



Figure 7: illustrates an overview of the press activity as part of the SunSmart campaign 2022

- Evaluation of 2021 SunSmart campaign completed through pre and post campaign survey. Evaluation of 2022 SunSmart campaign completed through post campaign survey as part of national omnibus survey. .

2.4 Integrate skin cancer prevention education into existing educational and training avenues

Responsibility - Implementation group

- SunSmart education embedded within Healthy Ireland SmartStart programme, National Childhood Network education for staff and Construction Industry Federation CPD.
- Sun protection education delivered by RTE School at home.
- Lesson plans for primary schools in CHO2 piloted in May-June 2021, consultation with teachers completed in October 2021 to inform update of lesson plans for future roll out.
- SunSmart lesson plans and corresponding activity sheets were updated for Junior Infants to Second Class and Third to Sixth Class. Letter was sent to schools to promote the lesson plans and activity sheets available to order hard copies or for download from Scoilnet.ie in 2022.
- SunSmart lesson plans and activity sheets available on Curriculumonline.ie
- SPHE lesson plans for second year students developed and will be rolled out in the 2023/2024 curriculum.
- FAQ document developed and shared with Public Health Nurses (PHN's) on sun protection for babies and children.
- Reducing Cancer Risk eLearning programme developed and launched a module on Skin Protection in September 2022. The programme is for health and social care professionals which consists of 11 short modules on 'modifiable cancer risk reduction factors' and is available on HSEland.ie.
- Skin cancer prevention information updated on HSE website on non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC) and melanoma.
- Educational session ran with third year RCSI pharmacy students on skin cancer prevention in 2022.
- Messaging added to Be Summer Ready booklet on sun protection in 2021 and 2022.
- Article on prevention and early diagnosis of melanoma skin cancer in the Medical Independent.
- Provided input on skin cancer prevention into HSE Climate Action and Sustainability Strategy 2022 – 2050.
- Provided input into and included messaging on skin cancer prevention in HSE correspondence during heatwaves and high temperature weather periods in 2021 and 2022.

2.5 Provide access to support for organisations and communities to implement skin cancer prevention interventions

Responsibility - Implementation group

- Supported Marie Keating and GAA, commissioned design of social assets to be displayed at football quarterfinal.
- Irish Skin Foundation Melanoma Leaflet developed in collaboration with NCCP.
- In 2019, supported Breakthrough Cancer Research's 'Man Tan' skin cancer awareness campaign which was part of Breakthrough's overall national awareness campaign 'Let's get to 100% Together', which warns about the importance of protecting skin from UV damage 100% of the time and the need for new treatment options in a strive to achieve 100% survival from the disease.
- Five animated videos with the theme of 'Everyone Under the Sun' were developed with Irish Skin Foundation and UL Hospitals Group (UHLG). The videos played on visual display units throughout ULHG hospitals and hospital social media channels throughout the summer, as part of a research initiative to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach in raising awareness of sun protective behaviours amongst staff.

2.6 Explore feasibility of evidence-based fiscal measures in support of skin cancer prevention behaviours

Responsibility - DoH

- A review was undertaken in 2021 to explore the feasibility of evidence-based fiscal measures in support of skin cancer prevention behaviours amongst outdoor workers. The review found that unlike Australia and New Zealand, there is no provision for personal tax relief on personal protective equipment (PPE) equipment in Ireland. Additionally, photo protective PPE may not be claimed as a health-related tax deduction. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Regulations 2007 obliges employers to provide PPE. Tax relief on PPE is available for employers in Ireland but does not make direct reference to photo protection PPE.

Action Area 3: Children and Young People

3.1 Develop a comprehensive profile of school-children's risk and protective behaviours relating to UV exposure to inform the implementation of the plan

Responsibility - IPH NUIG

- *"Children's exposure to ultraviolet radiation - a risk profile for future skin cancers in Ireland"* was published June 2020. The report was developed by the Institute of Public Health IPH and worked closely with researchers at the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) to configure questions for inclusion in the 2018 Health Behaviour and School-Age Children Survey. An overview report showed that:
 - o 9 in 10 children reported that they had ever been sunburnt in their lifetime;
 - o 3 in 4 children reported having been sunburnt at least once during the summer (2018);
 - o 3% of children reported using a sunbed in their lifetime;
 - o 4 in 5 children use sunscreen on a sunny day, always or sometimes;
 - o 3 in 4 children wear sunglasses on a sunny day, always or sometimes;
 - o 1 in 3 children avoid the sun during peak hours, always or sometimes;
 - o 1 in 2 children wear clothing to cover arms and legs when in the sun, always or sometimes;
 - o 1 in 2 children wear a hat on a sunny day, always or sometimes.
- An easy-read format of the *'Children's exposure to ultraviolet radiation - a risk profile for future skin cancers in Ireland'* report was published and available by [clicking here](#).
- An academic journal article was published by the International Journal of Public Health in 2021 based on the research findings from the *'Children's exposure to ultraviolet radiation - a risk profile for future skin cancers in Ireland'* report. Available by [clicking here](#).

3.2 Develop skin protection resources for use by school, Early Learning and Care (ELC) and School-Age Children (SAC) settings

Responsibility - NCCP, Implementation Group

- Education material for early childcare organisations included in Healthy Ireland SmartStart programme, National Childhood Network and available on SunSmart hub on HSE website.
- SunSmart messaging included on mychild website, Early Childhood Ireland, Parents Centre and Nutrition Reference Pack for infants 0-12 months 7th edition.

3.3 Include children and young people in the development of resources and implementation of programmes in which they are key stakeholders

Responsibility - DoH

- Worked in partnership with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and the National Participation Office to design and implement consultations with young people. Online interactive consultations were held with young people aged 12-18 years in 2021 to inform the development of initiatives to engage children and young people in skin cancer prevention behaviours. Additional face to face consultations were held with young people from the Traveller community as research with Irish Travellers has found significantly different views in relation to the use of sunbeds [clicking here](#).
- Social media assets developed and tested by young people from the local Comhairle na nÓg for feedback before used for SunSmart campaign 2022.
- Two Youth Friendly Summary reports were developed with young people from Comhairle na nÓg on the design and layout highlighting a summary of the consultation before published.
 - o [Consultations with young people on skin cancer prevention behaviours summary](#)
 - o [Consultations with young people from the Traveller community on skin cancer prevention behaviours summary](#)

3.4 In line with the updating of the Quality and Regulatory Framework/s for ELC settings, include current messages and advice about skin cancer prevention for young children

Responsibility - NCCP, Implementation Group

- Linked with DCEDIY in relation to their Quality and Regulatory Framework's for ELC setting, to discuss SunSmart inclusion when updating in 2023.
- Development of a SunSmart policy on outdoor play for ELC and made available to Tusla for circulation.

3.5 Communicate up to date messages and advice about skin cancer prevention for young children in Tusla communications with ELC and SAC settings including periodic newsletters, with a particular focus on how ELC and SAC settings can incorporate this into their work

Responsibility - Tusla/DCEDIY

- SunSmart campaign resources and messaging shared in Tusla communication via website and social media channels from 2020-2022.

3.6 Identify opportunities to include messages about skin cancer prevention for babies, children and young people in communications with parents, including through initiatives identified in First 5 Strategy

Responsibility - DCEDIY, DoH, HSE

- SunSmart text submitted for Public Health Nurses Manual developed by mychild.
- SunSmart partner packs disseminated to key children and young people stakeholders as part of the SunSmart campaign from 2019-2022.
- FAQ document developed for PHN's on sun protection for babies and children. [Click here to view.](#)
- Provided Let's Go Summer Camps with SunSmart games packs and Healthy Ireland SunSmart long sleeve tops with UPF 40+ for pilot locations in 2021 and 2022 in 20 locations with over 2,700 children aged between 5 to 13 years. The aim was to teach children about the importance of protecting their skin, how to protect skin from the sun and to provide them with a sun protection resource.



Figure 8: Children wearing their Healthy Ireland SunSmart long sleeve tops at Let's Go Summer Camp



Figure 9: Let's Go Summer Camps Games Manual cards for relay races

- In 2022, Healthy Ireland SunSmart wide-brimmed adult hats provided to coaches in Let's Go Summer camp pilot locations (90 hats), Sport Ireland campus coaches (40 hats) and North East Inner City of Dublin summer camp coaches (20 hats).
- Healthy Ireland SunSmart wide-brimmed children's hats provided to children attending the North East Inner City of Dublin summer camps in 2022.

- North East Inner City of Dublin were provided with SunSmart games pack, 500 SunSmart wide-brimmed hats for children attending the camps and 20 wide-brimmed hats for the camp coaches.
- Coaches in all camps received pre-recorded 10 minute education session to increase their knowledge about skin cancer prevention and increase their sun protection behaviour and feelings of self-efficacy about sun protection.
- Baby box evidence review completed and submission for inclusion of SunSmart item sent to DCEDIY. A SunSmart sun-hat along with a leaflet for parents was included for new-borns in a 'Little Baby Bundle Scheme' pilot programme underway in 2022/2023. An evaluation on the impact of the pilot will be undertaken in 2023.



Figure 10: A SunSmart sun-hat along with a leaflet for parents was included for new-borns in a 'Little Baby Bundle Scheme' pilot programme underway in 2022/2023.

- Linked with AgriKids as part of Irish Farmers Association on SunSmart messaging.
- Children's Hospital Group play SunSmart videos on digital screens in hospitals and urgent care centre.

3.7 Develop resources to increase awareness of UV risk and protection among young children attending ELC settings, in line with the roll-out of Aistear, the National Curriculum for Early Childhood

Responsibility - DES, DCEDIY

- SunSmart article included in Early Childhood Ireland newsletter.
- Submitted skin cancer prevention to be included in Aistear as part of the open consultation on the update Aistear in 2021.
- Healthy Ireland 'Get SunSmart Children's Art competition' rolled out in May and June 2022 to encourage creativity and learn how to enjoy the sun safely among primary school children. Over 500 entrants were received with prizes awarded which included a SunSmart long sleeve top and wide-brimmed hat.

3.8 Ensure the provision of shade is prioritised in the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings

Responsibility - DCEDIY

- Provision of shade included in the Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Settings in 2019.

3.9 Disseminate and promote resources to support the curriculum in relation to skin protection for use in primary and post primary schools, including through the official Scoilnet portal

Responsibility - DES

- Piloted SunSmart education programme in Primary Schools in CHO2 followed by evaluation and consultation with teachers to future inform the lesson plans update and roll out.
- SPHE lesson plans for second year students developed and will be rolled out in the 2023/2024 curriculum.
- SunSmart lesson plans and corresponding activity sheets were updated for Junior Infants to Second Class and Third to Sixth Class. Letter was sent to schools to promote the lesson plans and activity sheets available to order hard copies or for download from Scoilnet.ie in 2022.
- Dissemination and promotion of resources to support the curriculum in relation to skin protection for use in primary and post primary schools, including through the official Scoilnet portal.
- The SunSmart lesson plans are available on the Primary Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) / Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) toolkit on www.curriculumonline.ie

Action Area 4: Outdoor Workers

4.1 Identify and pursue opportunities to raise awareness of UV risk and protection among outdoor workers through employer bodies and employee groups and fora

Responsibility - Implementation group

- Pilot conducted with Cork City Council (CCC) which included survey of workers, audit and support CCC implementation group. CCC awarded SunSmart workplace by Healthy Ireland.
- Webinar event held with Teagasc for Farm Advisers and families of farmers.
- Webinars and meetings held with key outdoor worker stakeholders from 30+ organisations on skin cancer prevention quarterly with guest speakers including dermatologists and international specialists on skin cancer prevention.
- Podcast with Farming community recorded.
- Sun protection information and resources available for outdoor workers added to Health and Safety Authority website.
- SunSmart partner packs disseminated to key outdoor worker stakeholders as part of the SunSmart campaign from 2019-2022.
- Communications activity was undertaken collaboration with Health & Safety Authority and Irish Farmers Association as part of the SunSmart campaign.
- Newsletter piece developed for Health & Safety Authority, Today's Farm, Health and Safety Review magazine promoting SunSmart Campaign.
- Presentations given on 'Preventing Skin Cancer: Sun Protection for Outdoor Workers' with employers and employees at the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) webinar, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Cork City Council, Construction Industry Federation (CIF), Postal Workers Communications Union, Monaghan County Council, ESB, and Teagasc farm advisors.
- UV radiation for outdoor workers information included in the CIF Safe Pass Course.

4.2 Develop resources to support employers to adopt policies for UV protection for outdoor workers

Responsibility - Implementation Group

- Development of an online repository of resources: Outdoor Workers SunSmart Framework, Audit and Monitoring Tool, Evaluation Survey, Terms of Reference for outdoor worker employers and examples of international tools and resources.
- Outdoor worker animation video developed with Met Éireann and other key stakeholders to highlight UV risk among those who work outdoors. The project was recognised in the 2020 Spark Ignite Innovation Competition in collaboration with the Health Innovation Hub Ireland (HIHI).
- Ongoing work with outdoor worker stakeholders on developing initiatives and resources on UV risk among outdoor workers including ongoing meetings, sharing of resources and showcasing best practice.

- Solar UV Exposure Risk Assessment for groups of outdoor workers resource developed and piloted.
- Personal Solar UV Exposure Risk Assessment for outdoor workers resource developed and piloted.
- Development of a sample UV protection policy and checklist for outdoor workers.
- Pilot on wide brimmed hats for outdoor workers completed with 500 staff from outdoor worker organisations.
- Pilot on sunscreen dispensers with UV index dial rolled out in 60 locations nationally.



Figure 11: Michael Fahey, lifeguard at Old Head beach with the sunscreen dispenser board

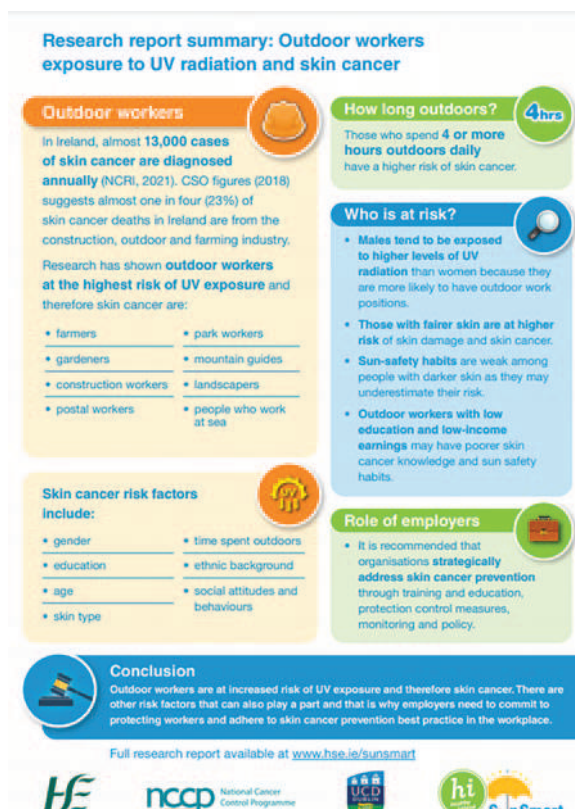


Figure 12: Summary report of literature review to identify the outdoor occupations with the greatest exposure to solar UV radiation

- Infographic on skin cancer prevention for outdoor workers developed.
- A SunSmart Toolbox Talk for outdoor workers under development in 2022/2023 to educate outdoor workers on how to reduce the risk of skin cancer when working outdoors. It will also cover the safe work methods associated with sun protection and skin cancer prevention.
- Commissioned UCD to conduct a literature review to identify the outdoor occupations with the greatest exposure to solar UV radiation in 2022.

4.3 Incorporate skin cancer prevention messaging and behaviours into healthy workplaces initiatives

Responsibility - DoH

- Sun protection resources on display and made available at Healthy Workplace events.
- Outdoor workers skin protection resources to be made available on Healthy Workplace website (www.healthyworkplace.ie) which is under development in 2022/2023.

Action Area 5: Outdoor Leisure

5.1 Promote evidence informed messages for those who participate in, or spectate at, outdoor sport, physical activity or leisure activities through the governing bodies, local sports partnerships and relevant sports

Responsibility - Implementation group, Sport Ireland

- SunSmart partner packs disseminated to outdoor leisure stakeholders as part of the SunSmart campaign from 2019-2022.
- SunSmart social media videos created in conjunction with the [GAA, Get Ireland Walking and Federation of Irish Sport](#) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vrK8SYy49XQ>
- Educational session held for Tennis Ireland, Sport Ireland Campus, North East Inner City of Dublin and Let's Go Summer Camp coaches to advise of risks of skin cancer while working outdoors.
- Communications activity was undertaken in collaboration with Sport Ireland Campus as part of the SunSmart campaign

5.2 Develop resources for use by organisations responsible for outdoor leisure to support adoption of policies for UV protection

Responsibility - Implementation Group

- A framework and sample UV protection policy for outdoor leisure developed and shared with Sport Ireland.
- Key message resources developed for various outdoor leisure settings.
- Provided Let's Go Summer Camps with SunSmart games pack and Healthy Ireland SunSmart long sleeve tops with UPF 40+ for pilot locations in 2021 and 2022 in 20 locations with over 2,700 children aged between 5 to 13 years.



Figure 13: Let's Go Summer Camp coaches with SunSmart activity plans manuals and Healthy Ireland long sleeve tops

- Healthy Ireland SunSmart wide-brimmed adult hats provided to coaches in Let's Go Summer camp pilot locations, Sport Ireland campus coaches and North East Inner City of Dublin summer camp coaches.



Figure 14: Let's Go Summer Camp coaches wearing Healthy Ireland SunSmart hats provided to them



Figure 15: Sport Ireland Campus Coaches wearing their SunSmart wide-brimmed hats

- North East Inner City of Dublin were provided with SunSmart games pack, 500 SunSmart wide-brimmed hats for children attending the camps and 20 wide-brimmed hats for the camp coaches.
- Coaches in all camps received pre-recorded 10 minute education session to increase their knowledge about skin cancer prevention and increase their sun protection behaviour and feelings of self-efficacy about sun protection.
- Linkages made with Dublin Airport Authority to promote SunSmart messaging in airport for visitors coming into the airport and leaving to go overseas.
- Dublin Zoo shared SunSmart resources in their shop and Discovery and Learning for use with kids that come on tours.
- Sunscreen dispenser pilot rolled out in five Wexford Healthy County locations including a Heritage Park, golf club, and tidy towns group, community centres which include GAA pitches, playground and walking track.

5.3 Work with groups responsible for management of outdoor recreation areas to identify means of maximising UV protection Implementation group

Responsibility - Implementation group

- Survey conducted with Tennis Ireland on awareness, knowledge and attitudes on sun protection and education piece delivered for coaches.
- Key messages developed in collaboration with various sporting organisations on walking, playing golf, playing tennis and for playing sports in general.
- Work ongoing with Sport Ireland Campus to build and develop a SunSmart framework and policy in campuses.

Action Area 6: Sunbeds and other artificial UV sources

6.1 Increase awareness of risk of sunbed use delivering consistent messages in line with Schedule 1 of the Public Health (Sunbeds) (Health Information) Regulations 2015

Responsibility - Implementation group

- Leaflet and educational event held with Pavee Point Primary Health Care for Travellers team via train the trainer format. The Primary Health team then delivered the training to the Traveller community to highlight sunbed risk with the Traveller community in the Fingal and Blanchardstown area.



Figure 16: Mary Collins, member of Pavee Point Primary Health Care for Travellers team distributing 'Be SunSmart – Health Warning on Sunbeds' leaflet to members of the Travelling community in the Fingal and Blanchardstown area

- Social media assets highlighting the dangers of sunbed use were developed and shared as part of the SunSmart campaign 2022 along with press activity, radio and TV interviews.

6.2 Monitor and review implementation and enforcement by the HSE Environmental Health Service of the Public Health Sunbeds Legislation.

Responsibility - DoH

- In 2022, 373 sunbed establishments were notified to the Health Service Executive (HSE) and a total of 447 inspections were carried out by the HSE Environmental Health Service. There were 14 Fixed Penalty Notices served, and one prosecution taken under the Public Health (Sunbeds) Act 2014.

6.3 Examine the feasibility of eliminating sunbed use

Responsibility - Implementation Group

- Report written up on the feasibility of eliminating sunbed use in Ireland and sent to Environmental Health Unit, DoH.

6.4 Identify other emerging artificial sources of UV

Responsibility - Implementation Group

- Evidence review completed on emerging artificial sources of UV and reviewed bi-annually.

Action Area 7: Monitoring, research and evaluation

7.1 Agree outcome measures and develop a monitoring framework

Responsibility - NCCP, DoH

- Outcome measures and monitoring framework developed. The Plan set out a number of long, medium and short term outcome measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan. Impacts on skin cancer rates will not be measurable in the short-term. Evaluations on this Plan examined changes in sun protection awareness and behaviour and whether they are sustained over time. Key medium-term outcomes are increases in individual's knowledge, awareness and behaviour change for sun protection. Ongoing monitoring and annual evaluation reports provide the opportunity to learn from and improve on existing interventions and messaging and adjust if necessary.
 - o The engagement of the SunSmart campaign via social media from 2020 was over 120,000 compared to the 2022 campaign which had over 300,000.
 - o Improvements in sun protective behaviours have been measured in the Healthy Ireland survey which showed an increase in people limiting time spent in the sun (31% in 2019 to 40% in 2022).

7.2 Collate and conduct research to monitor changes in skin cancer prevention awareness and behaviours

Responsibility - NCCP, DoH

- Omnibus survey of Irish population conducted by NCCP and published in 2019. Available by clicking [here](#)
- Healthy Ireland survey in 2019 and in 2022 include skin protection questions, providing behaviour and awareness data among the Irish population.
- Sun Protection questions to be included in 2022 HBSC survey

7.3 Identify and pursue research needs to support and monitor implementation of plan

Responsibility - NCCP, DoH

- Research on economic cost of skin cancer in Ireland completed, submitted to the Journal of Public Health and approved in November 2022¹⁰. Study found:
 - o The rising incidence of melanoma and high cost of new novel therapies presents an immediate challenge to cancer control and public health globally.
 - o The cost of managing a case of melanoma diagnosed at stage IV (€122,985) is more than 25 times more expensive than managing a case diagnosed at stage IA (€4,269).
 - o This study highlights the cost difference between early and late detection and the potential return on investment for prevention versus high-cost treatment.

¹⁰ Crealey, G., Hackett, C., Harkin, K., Heckmann, P., Kelleher, F., Lyng, A., McCarthy, T., McEnery, M., Meaney, C., Roche, D., Tobin, AM. (2022). Melanoma-related costs by disease stage and phase of management in Ireland. Journal of Public Health, Volume 45, Issue 3, September 2023, Pages 714–722, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdac154>

- Literature review on risk profiling outdoor workers and UV exposure commissioned to UCD. Report published. Study found:
 - o Outdoor workers at the highest risk of UV exposure and therefore skin cancer are Farmers; Gardeners; Construction workers; Postal workers; Park workers; Mountain guides; Landscapers and People who work at sea.
 - o Skin cancer risk factors include: Gender; Time spent outdoors; Education; Ethnic background; Age; Social attitudes and behaviours; Skin type.
 - o Those who spend 4 or more hours outdoors daily have higher skin cancer risks.
 - o Males tend to be exposed to higher levels of UV radiation than women because they are more likely to have outdoor work positions.
 - o Fair-skinned outdoor workers present higher cases of skin damage and skin cancer.
 - o Sun-safety habits are weak among people with darker skin as they may underestimate their risk.
 - o Outdoor workers with low education and low-income earnings may have poorer skin cancer knowledge and sun safety habits.
 - o Melanoma skin cancer, non-melanoma skin cancer (such as basal cell carcinoma) and actinic keratosis lesions were commonly reported in outdoor work studies.

7.4 Produce an annual update on progress

Responsibility - NCCP, DoH

- Annual update in 2020 and 2021 complete and has been used by advisory group to inform direction for the new plan

7.5 Review plan implementation to inform future direction

Responsibility - NCCP, DoH

- Evaluation of SunSmart 2021 and 2022 campaign completed to help inform future direction of the SunSmart campaign

Summary

The implementation of the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022 has been overseen by the NCCP and Healthy Ireland, working with a cross-sectoral Implementation Group chaired by the NCCP. This provides a foundation and opportunity for a genuine systems-wide approach to:

- Implement the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022;
- Increase awareness and adoption of skin cancer preventive behaviours;
- Monitor change and evaluate skin cancer prevention plan effectiveness;
- Target identified high risk priority groups: children and young people, outdoor workers, those who pursue outdoor leisure and sunbed users.

In the preceding sections of this report, we have presented our findings in respect of the progress and impact of the plan.

- The majority of the 35 actions under 7 action areas have been completed, and of those assessed as partially completed, there is evidence of progress towards the stated goals;
- A small number of actions have not been completed, or have had the original task changed –this requires reflective review by stakeholder bodies in order to gain clarity for the next National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2023-2026;
- The cross-sectoral Implementation group has helped progress the implementation of the plan and provided expert guidance;
- An increase in awareness of SunSmart messaging and skin cancer prevention increased significantly from the launch of Skin Cancer Prevention Plan through to the end of 2022;
- The SunSmart campaign has grown each year from 2020 to 2022 with stakeholder partner's support growing year on year. The radio campaign has had a massive reach for the campaign in 2021 and 2022.
- The stakeholder engagement process proved to be slow and difficult to progress among some at risk groups but grew strong among at risk groups such as the outdoor worker organisations;
- Research year on year has consistently found that there is still too great a reliance on sunscreen for skin cancer prevention. There is still a need for more awareness of other prevention measures e.g. sun hats, shade, clothing and sunglasses;
- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the HSE cyber-attack cannot be underestimated, and there are many examples of programmes and initiatives adapting to the restrictions, in order to provide support to the population;
- It is important to provide a focus on tourism, outdoor leisure and sunbed users in the next Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2023-2026 as Covid-19 resulted in limited work being carried out to improve awareness of skin cancer prevention among these at risk groups.

- Further exploration should be considered as part of the new Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2023-2026 to gain an understanding of people who use sunbeds in Ireland and what motivates them to take part in this risky behaviour. The evidence from this research will inform policy measures in relation to adults who use sunbeds.
- The sunbed legislation was enacted almost 10 years ago in 2014. A review of the legislation should be looked at as part of the new Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2023-2026, in light of new marketing strategies which downplay health risks, emphasise physical attractiveness and target subgroups including young women.^{11 12}

¹¹ Adekunle, L., Chen, R., Morrison, L., Halley, M., Eng, V., Hendlin, Y., et al. (2020). Association between financial links to indoor tanning industry and conclusions of published studies on indoor tanning: systematic review. *BMJ*, 368.

¹² Greenman, J., Jones, D.A. (2010). Comparison of advertising strategies between the indoor tanning and tobacco industries. *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*, 62(4):685.e1-.e18.

Conclusion

The National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022 has provided an important focus to increase awareness and adoption of skin cancer preventative behaviours and help move towards the ultimate aim of reversing the rising incidence of skin cancer in Ireland. The Plan set out areas that are distinct yet complementary building blocks to reverse the rising incidence of skin cancer in Ireland. By employing a combination of targeted strategies including education, media campaigns, environmental measures and policy changes across multiple settings to raise awareness and promote adoption of skin cancer preventative behaviours among the Irish population.

Seven action areas are set out in the plan, which are individually distinct but derived from complementary themes. Within the seven action areas are 35 specific actions addressing preventative initiatives population-wide, with a focus upon targeting high risk groups. The implementation of the plan required a collaborative and supportive effort. Cross governmental agencies, statutory bodies, healthcare professionals, non-governmental organisations, patients, private sector organisations, and the wider public were required to work together to encourage and support people to take steps to protect skin from the sun and reduce the risk of skin cancer in Ireland. Enhanced cooperation at the national, local and community level has been identified as a key to ensure action areas have progressed.

The new National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2023-2026 will continue to build momentum and for consistency continue with the same aims. Learnings from this plan will assist in resolving the barriers that have impeded the progress of the actions that have not been fully achieved, as well as identifying new and creative areas of focus. It is important to continue to monitor and evaluate the progress of the plan annually to measure the plans effectiveness. Continuing to have subgroups working on each action area will facilitate greater responsibility and accountability. As the restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic recede, greater opportunities will arise to engage with all levels of the population including sunbed users and those who pursue outdoor leisure activities including tourism. The new plan will need to strengthen existing partnerships and to further collaborate with organisations including developing new partnerships with key stakeholders such as cross governmental agencies, statutory bodies, healthcare professionals, community and voluntary organisations, patients, private sector organisations, and the wider public.

Abbreviations

CCC	Cork City Council
CHO	Community Healthcare Organisation
CIF	Construction Industry Federation
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DOH	Department of Health
ELC	Early Learning and Care
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
HBSC	Health Behaviour in School- Aged Children
HIHI	Health Innovation Hub Ireland
HSE	Health Service Executive
IOSH	Institution of Occupational Safety and Health
IPH	Institute of Public Health
NCCP	National Cancer Control Programme
NMSC	Non-Melanoma Skin Cancer
NUIG	National University of Ireland, Galway
PHN	Public Health Nurse
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
SAC	School-Age Children
SPF	Sun Protection Factor
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
UCD	University College Dublin
ULHG	University of Limerick Hospitals Group
UP	Ultraviolet Protection Factor
UV	Ultraviolet

