

SUN BEDS
(Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Services Delivery and Resources))

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to acquaint the Cabinet with the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) following its study on the use of sun beds.

2. EVIDENCE

- 2.1 At its meeting held on 6th April 2004 the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) took evidence from a number of sources on the use of sun beds, which is summarised below

(a) Director of Public Health

- 2.2 The Huntingdonshire Director of Public Health, Dr Christine McCleod, addressed the Panel. She drew extensively on a publication by the Health Development Agency (HDA) entitled "Cancer Prevention: A Resource to Support Local Action in Delivering the NHS Cancer Plan" a chapter of which is devoted to the prevention of skin cancer. The advice contained in that chapter was that local authorities should consider diversifying away from providing sun beds. This advice was endorsed by Dr McCleod.

- 2.3 Dr McCleod reported that the incidence of malignant melanoma is rising and that there is evidence that exposure to sunlight has a cumulative effect on the skin.

- 2.4 To put the issue into context Dr McCleod reported that smoking represents a far greater threat to public health and that local authorities should consider prohibiting smoking from their premises. She also recommended that where they are used providers of sun beds should adhere to the relevant health and safety guidance.

(b) Leisure Centres Health and Safety Co-ordinator

- 2.5 Mr P Corley, the Leisure Centres Health and Safety Co-ordinator, outlined the Council's procedures relating to the use of sun beds. He covered the criteria against which the leisure centres judge individuals' suitability to use their sun beds. He also outlined the induction procedure, the measures taken to inform customers of health and safety guidance and the emergency procedures. Finally, he described the measures taken to discourage individuals from using the sun beds more often than is recommended.

- 2.6 Dr McCleod expressed the opinion that the policies and procedures relating to sun beds adopted by the Council are satisfactory and appear to comply with national health and safety guidance.

(c) Executive Councillor

- 2.7 The Executive Councillor with responsibility for leisure, Councillor Mrs J Chandler, informed the Panel that the use of sun beds has been discussed by the Leisure Centre Management Committees and, whilst they acknowledge the concern associated with the health risks, all have concluded that they are minimised at the leisure centres owing to the modern high quality of equipment and the high levels of supervision.

(d) Head of Community Services

- 2.8 The Panel reviewed a report by Mr P Jones, the Head of Community Services. A copy of the report is attached as an appendix.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Members of the Panel made the following observations

- ◆ they noted recent public concern at the adverse health effects of sun beds;
- ◆ they acknowledged the perceived psychological benefits of having a suntan;
- ◆ they recognised importance of not fettering personal choice;
- ◆ they reiterated the Council's role in providing modern, high quality sun bed facilities in an environment where health and safety are highly important, and
- ◆ they expressed concern at the Council's inability to enforce standards of operation at other facilities where sun beds are provided.

4. REVIEWING THE EVIDENCE

- 4.1 Members reviewed the evidence presented and concluded

- ◆ they are satisfied with the sun beds health and safety policy and procedures in place at the leisure centres;
- ◆ that, on balance, in order to provide the public with high quality facilities, they do not consider that sun beds should be withdrawn from the leisure centres;
- ◆ that, in the light of the increasing public awareness of the dangers of sunbeds and the associated decline in their usage, in advance of them ceasing to be financially viable, consideration should be given to replacing the sunbeds with other uses, and
- ◆ that consideration should be given to prohibiting smoking in all Council owned or operated public premises.

5. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is

RECOMMENDED

- i) to endorse the continued provision of sun beds at the Council's leisure centres in an environment where national guidance and health and safety are strictly adhered to;
- ii) to request the Leisure Centre Management Committees to consider, as they cease to be financially viable, providing alternative facilities to sun beds, and
- iii) to consider prohibiting smoking in all Council owned or operated public premises.

Background documents

Reports of Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) – 6th April 2004

Cancer Prevention: A Resource to Support Local Action in Delivering the NHS Cancer Plan

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**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
(SERVICE DELIVERY & RESOURCES)**

6 APRIL 2004

**THE USE OF ULTRA VIOLET (UV) TANNING EQUIPMENT
IN DISTRICT COUNCIL LEISURE CENTRES
(Report by Head of Community Services)**

1 SUMMARY

This report outlines procedures regarding the operation of UV Tanning Equipment in four of the Leisure Centres operated by the District Council.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Council owns and operates UV tanning equipment in four of the Leisure Centres it operates. Plans are advanced to install equipment in its fifth Centre early in the new financial year. During 2003, 2,785 members of the Leisure Centres made 18,572 visits to use the tanning equipment. This is 18% down on 2002, but the exceptionally fine weather last year will have had a significant impact on use.

3 HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

3.1 The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) issue guidance in controlling risks arising from the use of UV tanning equipment. The guidance covers both operators of equipment and customers of it. The Council adheres strictly to the HSE guidance, which includes ensuring that:

- customers are aware of the potential risks;
- operators carry out pre-screening health questionnaires to screen out those groups of people who are at greatest risk;
- customers use sunbeds in the correct way;
- records are kept of each and every sunbed exposure; and
- after 20 sessions customers are advised by a competent member of staff of the situation, reminded of the risks and provided with the industry guidance on the risks of exceeding the number of sessions.

3.2 As with all situations in Leisure Centres where there is a health and safety risk, the requirements outlined above and more specific operational issues are embodied in documented operating procedures. In addition, the Council is a member of the Sunbed Association which operates an additional Sunbed Code of Practice. The Code covers:

- the installation and maintenance of the equipment to the prescribed levels of performance and safety;
- the training of staff in operational and safety matters;
- the requirement to inform customers of the necessary steps to ensure their comfort and safety; and
- the need to submit to regular independent monitoring.

3.3 Through the Council's membership of the association, the Centres are thus inspected annually and monitored regularly to ensure that they comply with the Code.

3.4 In addition to all of the normal procedures to control risk, the Council's membership system enables it to track the usage of all of its equipment by all of its members.

4 CONCLUSION

The Council operates its UV tanning equipment within well established and strict health and safety guidelines.

5 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 That the Panel notes the contents of this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Leisure Centre Operating procedures held in all Leisure Centres.

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