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TOUGH NEW LAW TARGETS NORTHERN IRELAND TANNING SALONS

Safety campaigners in Northern Ireland have today welcomed plans for a tough new law which will clamp down on health and safety in tanning salons.

Measures announced today by the Northern Ireland Executive include banning under-18s from using sunbeds, and forcing all salon owners to display information on health risks associated with sunbed use.

Oonagh McClure, representing the Association of Personal Injury Lawyers (APIL) in Northern Ireland, praised the Executive for its commitment to protecting children from sunbed dangers, and for introducing measures to ensure adults are properly informed and better protected from health risks.

"These measures are much needed and most welcome," she said. "Tanning salon owners will have no choice but to act responsibly and put their customers' welfare before profits."

Under the new rules, salon owners will have to make sure premises are properly staffed as it will be an offence to allow people to use sunbeds unsupervised. They will be obliged to register the business with the local authority, and owners will have to request proof of age from any customer who may be under the age of 18. Customers must also be provided with proper protective eyewear, free of charge.

Oonagh McClure says the organisation will now continue its campaign for the introduction of wallet-sized cards for salon customers, which can be swiped or stamped at salons to monitor the number of tanning sessions held.

"The Executive has not imposed any rules about the number of times someone can use a sunbed, and we feel very strongly that this is a missed opportunity. While everyone has a personal responsibility to look after themselves, we do feel the introduction of a card could help to limit excessive use as it will help people to track their usage."

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Note to editors:

- The measures have been introduced following the consultation by the department of health, Social Services and Public Safety: Regulation of the Sunbed Industry in Northern Ireland
- For more information, contact Lisa Wardle, Press & PR Officer, APIL, t: 0115 9388715, or Jane Hartwell, Assistant press & PR Officer, t: 0115 9388702.
- APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) is a not-for-profit organisation, whose members are dedicated to campaigning for improvements in the law to help people who are injured or become ill through no fault of their own.
- Further information can also be found at the organisation's website - www.apil.org.uk.