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More protection needed on 'electric beach'

Tanning salons in Northern Ireland are not doing enough to protect sunbed users from serious long-term eye damage, says a national safety campaigning group.

As the Northern Ireland Assembly passes a Bill which will ban under-18s from using sunbeds, not-for-profit organisation APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) has called for all tanning salons to provide customers with protective eyewear free of charge.

"When tanners visit the electric beach they can buy protective eyewear, but it's really only an optional extra. If every customer were given the eyewear then people would hopefully understand that it's important to wear it," said Peter Jack, APIL co-ordinator for Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Assembly has made strategic plans to reduce instances of UV related cancers through public awareness campaigns, but APIL says not enough emphasis is placed on the potential damage to eyes.

"Not enough sunbed users are wise to the risk of conjunctivitis, cataracts and uveal melanoma which can, in extreme cases, result in the sufferer having her eyes removed completely," said Peter.

He added: "Obviously it's good that we have messages about the risks of skin cancer drilled into us, but more people need to be making a noise about UV eye damage too. Eyesight is too precious to mess about with."

Notes to editors:

APIL responded to the DHSSPS consultation paper on Skin Cancer Prevention and Action Plan Strategy 2010-2020. To read the full response, visit the APIL website at www.apil.org.uk.

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. APIL also provides an industry recognised kitemark to lawyers who reach a required standard of competence and specialist expertise in personal injury law.

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