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More eye protection needed on 'electric beach'

Tanning salon operators in Wales must do more to protect sunbed users from serious long-term eye damage, says a national safety campaigning group.

As a new law comes into force on Friday (8 April) which bans under-18s from using sunbeds, not-for-profit APIL (Association of Personal Injury Lawyers) has called for all tanning salons to provide customers with protective eyewear free of charge.

"As it stands now, tanning salons have to make protective eyewear available but it's really only an optional extra. If every customer were handed the eyewear every time they visited the 'electric beach' it's would be very clear that it's necessary to wear it," said Brian Dawson, APIL co-ordinator for Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government now has powers to make regulations and impose further conditions on commercial sunbed use. APIL says it should also make provisions to teach sunbed users about the risk of permanent eye damage.

"Too many sunbed users are unaware of the risk of conjunctivitis, cataracts and uveal melanoma which can, in extreme cases, result in the sufferer having her eyes removed completely," said Brian.

He added: "The risks of skin cancer are becoming more well known, and measures to educate the public about this should of course continue, but more needs to be done to make tanners aware of the damage they could be doing to their eyes."

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Notes to editors:

- The Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010, which originated as a Private Members' Bill introduced by Julie Morgan MP, was largely supported by APIL. Act comes into force on 8 April 2011 and creates a duty



on sunbed businesses to prevent the use of sunbeds by under-18s, and provides for local authority enforcement of this duty. It provides Welsh Ministers with powers to make regulations imposing further conditions on commercial sunbed use. To read APIL's paper, visit www.apil.org.uk/consultations-and-apil-responses.

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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