



National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2023-2026

Implementation Review 2023

Background

The second [National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2023-2026](#)¹ will continue to raise awareness of the actions we can all take to reduce risk, and it builds on the work already done with the first National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022 in key action areas including education, media campaigns, environmental measures and policy changes across multiple settings.

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in Ireland. With over 11,000 cases diagnosed each year it accounts for over one-third of all cancers diagnosed annually². Skin cancer can be classified into two groups: non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC) and melanoma skin cancer.

The number of people being diagnosed with skin cancer in Ireland is rising rapidly. The National Cancer Registry of Ireland (NCRI) projections suggest that the average number of cases diagnosed each year may double between 2015 and 2045³. However, skin cancer is largely preventable by protecting skin from ultraviolet (UV) radiation. UV radiation is emitted naturally from the sun and also comes from artificial sources such as sunbeds. Following the Healthy Ireland SunSmart code can protect against skin cancer (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Healthy Ireland SunSmart Code (5 S's)

¹ Department of Health and HSE National Cancer Control Programme (2023). National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2023-2026. Dublin: Department of Health.

² National Cancer Registry Ireland (2023) Cancer in Ireland 1994-2021: Annual statistical report of the National Cancer Registry. NCRI, Cork, Ireland.

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

National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan Implementation

Consistent with the previous plan, the vision of the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2023-2026 is to increase awareness and adoption of skin cancer prevention behaviours, in order to reverse the rising incidence of skin cancer in Ireland.

An overarching cross-sectoral advisory group guides and implements the plan. The plan uses a multi-strategy approach which includes education, public awareness and behavioural change campaigns, environmental measures, and policy changes. The plan aims to:

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

This document provides a review on the implementation of each of the thematic areas for 2023. Of note, this plan launched in March of this year so implementation of the plan to date has been over nine months.

National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan Implementation Review 2023

Status	Ref.	Action	Lead	Summary Update
Action Area 1: Improve skin cancer prevention awareness and behaviours				
Ongoing	1.1	Ensure that skin cancer prevention messaging is evidence based and in line with best practice.	NCCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence review of skin cancer prevention messaging in people of colour under development.
Ongoing	1.2	Develop resources to increase awareness of skin cancer prevention	NCCP, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poster explaining sunscreen and damaging effects of UVA and UVB developed Posters and leaflets developed for sunbed users, including adolescent and young people target group Sun protection information reviewed and included in HSE Be Summer Ready booklet.
Started	1.3	Provide avenues to support and work with stakeholders to implement skin cancer prevention awareness raising activities	NCCP, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SunSmart campaign assets circulated to stakeholders to raise awareness of skin cancer prevention Healthy Campuses contacted to reach out to their networks and play SunSmart videos in universities and colleges across the country. Maynooth University played videos on social media platforms Occupational health nurse organisations contacted to inform of Toolbox talk and encourage them to link with outdoor workers to use the resource Sunscreen dispenser boards and information resources included on community promotional information stands across CHO Dublin North City and County (DNCC) Community SunSmart Information Sessions held in CHO DNCC
Ongoing	1.4	Develop and deliver an annual SunSmart communications plan to raise awareness of skin cancer prevention behaviours.	NCCP, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media assets developed for target populations incorporating SunSmart branding Partner pack for SunSmart campaign developed for general population, children, adolescents and young people, outdoor workers, sport recreation and tourism as well as sunbed users Patient story videos developed SunSmart advert from 2022 re-used and also recorded in Irish for 2023 campaign

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications plan 2023 delivered including radio and digital audio campaign, social media as well as media coverage both in press and TV • Evaluation of 2023 SunSmart campaign completed through post campaign survey
Started	1.5	Integrate skin cancer prevention education into existing educational and training avenues for health and social care professionals.	NCCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education delivered to RCSI - 3rd year pharmacy on skin cancer prevention • NCCP Skin Protection module on HSEland promoted • Presentation delivered to skin cancer nurses at the Irish Melanoma Forum in May on the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan. • SunSmart lanyards provided to skin cancer nurses, used to promote skin cancer prevention e-learning module as part of awareness days planned in hospitals • NCCP provided updated text on sun safety for the PHNs Child Health Assessment Manual • Tallaght nursing education included info on skin cancer prevention • Skin cancer prevention discussed on the HSE Talking Health and Wellbeing podcast • SunSmart posters and information videos highlighted in Kilbarrack Primary Care Centre and in common waiting areas
Ongoing	1.6	Identify opportunities to include primary prevention messages in work to improve early diagnosis of skin cancer, and vice versa.	NCCP, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESB: Cancer Prevention and Early Detection Webinar Series Brief developed which includes a session on skin cancer prevention & early detection held in July • SunSmart Toolbox Talk for Outdoor Workers developed and promoted
To commence	1.7	Continue engagement with Met Éireann to provide accurate and location specific UV Index readings through the Met Éireann website and app.	Met Éireann	
Started	1.8	Continue to collaborate with Met Éireann to deliver ongoing UV protection messaging to the public.	NCCP, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met Éireann Podcast on SunSmart campaign discussing UV Index and UV radiation • Press release sent out in collaboration with Met Éireann
Action Area 2: Children (0-12 years)				
Started	2.1	Involve parents/guardians and parent groups in the development and promotion of skin protection resources for babies and children.	NCCP, Implementation group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar held for parents and teachers in primary schools in CHO 9 for parents on protecting their child's skin, Scoping commenced for consultation with parents and guardians to understand what the gaps in

				knowledge, where they get their health information from and what kind of resources they would use and avail of.
To commence	2.2	Engage ELC's to communicate up to date messages and advice about skin protection.	NCCP, Implementation group	
Ongoing	2.3	Identify opportunities to include messages about skin protection for children and parents.	Implementation group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHNs Child Health Assessment Manual - SunSmart content included and available now on HSE website • SunSmart partner packs disseminated to key stakeholders working with children Little Baby Bundle scheme pilot completed and evaluated which included a SunSmart sunhat.
Started	2.4	Continue to develop and disseminate resources in relation to skin protection for use in primary schools.	NCCP, Implementation group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter sent to all schools in CHO 9 and CHO 5 ahead of sports day on being SunSmart, promoting the art competition and SunSmart lesson plans. • Webinar held for parents and teachers in primary schools in CHO 9 for parents on protecting their child's skin, to encourage them to be SunSmart. • Developed recommendation for inclusion of a wide-brimmed hat in primary school uniform guidance doc with Department of Education. • Primary school SunSmart lesson plan resources were emailed to 485 schools in CHO2. Each school offered a hard copy of resources with 79 schools are taking up on offer (25 x Roscommon, 25 x mayo, 29 x Galway). Resource posted to 79 schools.
Started	2.5	Scale up a SunSmart competition to promote messages and advice about skin protection for children	NCCP, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get SunSmart Children's art competition ran mid-April to 31st May 2023. Included 1068 entrants, overall winners and runner's up received SunSmart kits
Started	2.6	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.	Implementation group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full revision of the Quality Regulatory Framework for ELC setting has been delayed. Tusla are making some minor amendments this year and will include the skin cancer prevention elements when the full revision commences
Status	Ref.	Action	Lead	Summary Update
Action Area 3: Adolescents and Young Adults (13-24 years)				
Ongoing	3.1	Develop resources to increase awareness of UV risk and skin protection for adolescents and young adults using findings from previous research.	Implementation group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters and leaflets developed for sunbed users, adolescent and young people target groups • Videographer commissioned to develop SunSmart Video on UV risk and skin protection for adolescents and young adults

Started	3.2	Engage with relevant partners to ensure sun safety is included in curricular resources for post-primary school students.	NCCP, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission submitted on the draft SPHE curriculum on behalf of the NCCP for inclusion of sun safety in the new Senior Cycle SPHE curriculum.
Started	3.3	Identify and engage with stakeholders who work with adolescents and young adults to develop initiatives for young adults.	NCCP, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SunSmart partner packs disseminated to key adolescent and young people stakeholders. Pilot SunSmart School commenced with transition year students in Castleisland Community College
Started	3.4	Develop and disseminate resources in relation to skin protection for use in post primary schools, colleges and universities.	Implementation group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SunSmart activity included in a new unit in the HSE Junior Cycle SPHE Resource - Making Healthy Choices 2 for junior cycle (1st-3rd year) Healthy Campuses contacted to reach out to their networks and play SunSmart videos in universities and colleges across the country. Maynooth University played videos on social media platforms
Status	Ref.	Action	Lead	Summary Update
Action Area 4: Outdoor Workers				
Started	4.1	Continue to identify and pursue opportunities to raise awareness of UV risk and skin cancer prevention among outdoor workers through the development of training and education.	Implementation group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations delivered to ESB, Health and Safety Authority staff and Office of Public Works building maintenance services on skin cancer prevention Sunscreen dispensers provided to Pavee Point for annual Men's Health Day which engages Traveller and Roma men nationally for a day of sport and health checks in the Phoenix Park. Email sent to occupational health nurse organisations to inform of Outdoor Workers Toolbox talk and encourage them to link with outdoor workers utilising resource.
Started	4.2	Promote resources to support employers to adopt policies for UV risk and skin cancer prevention for outdoor workers.	Implementation group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SunSmart Toolbox Talk for Outdoor Workers developed and promoted. 160 orders completed in 2023. Information leaflet produced at the request of and in collaboration with Health and Safety Authority construction team, aimed specifically at employees in the construction industry. Outdoor worker resources included in attendee bags at Occupational Health Nurses Conference.
Started	4.3	Incorporate skin cancer prevention messaging and behaviours into healthy workplaces initiatives.	HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information stand with SunSmart resources for outdoor workers available at Healthy Workplace Networking Seminar May 2023. www.healthyworkplace.ie webpage with all outdoor worker resources available

Started	4.4	Continue to partner with relevant stakeholders to develop skin cancer prevention best practice in the workplace	Implementation group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SunSmart partner packs disseminated to key outdoor worker stakeholders.
Action Area 5: Sport, Recreation and Tourism				
Started	5.1	Promote evidence informed messages on skin cancer prevention for those who participate in, or spectate at, outdoor sport, physical activity or leisure activities including tourism.	Sport Ireland, Implementation group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SunSmart partner packs disseminated to sport, recreation and tourism stakeholders SunSmart campaign partnered with GAA Cul Camps in 2023 to provide information on SunSmart to parents of children attending camps. Included press release announcing partnership with GAA Cul Camps and health and safety advice regarding sunny weather and UV protection for children on GAA Cul Camps website.
Started	5.2	Work with sports organisations to engage officials, coaches and sportspeople to champion UV protection behaviours and encourage skin protection among participants in recreation and community settings.	Implementation group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education presentation shared with GAA Cul Camp coaches on being SunSmart as part of their induction training
Started	5.3	Work with groups responsible for management of outdoor recreation areas to identify means of maximising skin protection including shade structures.	HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90 Sunscreen dispenser boards piloted in outdoor recreation locations nationally from June to August 2023. Evaluation of pilot completed.
Started	5.4	Engage with local authorities to increase opportunities for sun protection in outdoor settings.	Implementation group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with Local Authorities (Fingal County Council) to increase opportunities for sun protection in outdoor settings: SunSmart information stand with sunscreen dispenser boards used at Flavours of Fingal, Creative music event and Malahide Castle concerts
Status	Ref.	Action	Lead	Summary Update
Action Area 6: Sunbeds and other artificial UV sources				
Ongoing	6.1	Further raise awareness of the risk of sunbed use through education and communication channels	NCCP, HI, HSE Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Posters and leaflets developed for sunbed users, adolescent and young people target groups SunSmart partner packs disseminated to stakeholders who work with potential sunbed users

Started	6.2	Review the health information provided to sunbed users as set out in Public Health (Sunbeds) (Health Information) Regulations 2015 (S.I. No. 50 of 2015).	DOH (FEHU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of the health information given to sunbed users in commercial premises is being conducted by the NCCP. The NCCP review will be considered by DoH in terms of the applicable legislation.
Started	6.3	Develop, disseminate, and evaluate education and community outreach initiatives tailored to population groups where usage of sunbeds is highest.	Implementation Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train the trainer event planned, to be delivered to organisations and community groups working with sunbed users in 2024.
Started	6.4	Conduct research on sunbed use, characteristics, and motivations for tanning among the Irish population.	NCCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of baseline survey underway on sunbed use among patients attending dermatology clinic and will be rolled out in Tallaght Hospital, Dublin Scoping underway to undertake research in collaboration with Institute of Public Health on sunbeds.
Ongoing	6.5	Monitor and review implementation and enforcement by the HSE Environmental Health Service of the Public Health Sunbeds Legislation.	DOH (FEHU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2023, 373 sunbed establishments were notified to the Health Service Executive (HSE) and a total of 425 inspections were carried out by the HSE National Environmental Health Service. There were 18 Fixed Payment Notices served, and 2 prosecutions taken under the Public Health (Sunbeds) Act 2014.
To commence	6.6	Update review on other emerging artificial sources of UV	Implementation Group	
Ongoing	6.7	Explore feasibility of evidence-based fiscal measures on sunbeds in Ireland.	Implementation Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCCP submitted feedback to the European Commission's call for evidence for an initiative to support their development on measures regarding ultraviolet radiation, including sunbeds. NCCP representatives sit on Cancer Sub-Group of the Expert Group on Public Health relating to Action 18: Explore measures to prevent exposure to ultraviolet radiation including from sunbeds in the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. This action will be further reviewed by the Implementation Group when the proposed EU Recommendation is published in March 2024.
Action Area 7: Oversight, monitoring, research and evaluation				
Complete	7.1	Re-establish an implementation group with key stakeholders	NCCP, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-sectoral advisory group re-established, governance and terms of reference agreed

Started	7.2	Report on implementation of this plan through National Cancer Strategy (NCS) 2017-2026.	NCCP, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report submitted on skin cancer prevention work completed to date to NCS
Started	7.3	Identify, collate and conduct research to monitor changes in skin cancer prevention awareness and behaviours.	NCCP, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omnibus survey conducted on the 2023 SunSmart campaign • Wave 2 UV exposure variables in Health Behaviour in School Children survey released.
Started	7.4	Undertake annual review of implementation of plan and evaluate as appropriate the impact of targeted initiatives and interventions.	NCCP, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous national skin cancer prevention plan 2019-2022 review completed and published • Annual review of work completed in 2023 underway
Started	7.5	Assess the impact of an annual SunSmart communications campaign to ensure alignment with best practice, including tracking awareness, knowledge and behaviour change	NCCP, HI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of SunSmart 2023 campaign completed.
To commence	7.6	Conduct research and an evaluation to assess the use and effectiveness of shade in a range of settings in Ireland.	NCCP	

Implementation Group Members

Department of Health (Health and Wellbeing Unit)

Breakthrough Cancer Research

HSE Dermatology Clinical Programme

HSE Communications

HSE Health & Wellbeing

Institute of Public Health

Irish Cancer Society

Irish Dermatology Nurses Association

Irish Skin Foundation

Marie Keating Foundation

National Cancer Control Programme

NCCP Skin Cancer Leads group

National Screening Service

Patient Public Representative (Melanoma Trust)