

Under Cover – promotion of Sun Safe behaviour

Tool Kit to raise awareness of safe behaviour in the sun in occupationally exposed workers

Contents:

Chapter 1 [Purpose statement –aims and objectives of the Initiative](#)

Chapter 2 [Pre-considerations to running the Initiative](#)

Chapter 3 [Running ‘ Under Cover’](#)

Appendix 1 [‘Under Cover’ radio advert](#)

Appendix 2 [Useful web links](#)

Chapter 1

Under Cover – Promotion of Sun Safe behaviour in outdoor workers

Introduction – aims and objectives of the Initiative

Health Challenge Wales

1. The key themes of Health Challenge Wales have been selected because they are considered to be those issues that constitute a significant proportion of the ill health that could be avoided. They are however neither exclusive nor exhaustive, and the challenge extends to include other health based interventions that promote and improve health. Whilst reducing the incidence of skin cancer is not specifically listed as a key theme, given the rising incidence of the disease it is an important issue that should be addressed.
2. This initiative seeks to reduce the risk of developing malignant melanoma in occupationally exposed workers. It does so by using the general public, who are asked to contact a central telephone number, being in the pilot project a local radio station to report locations where outdoor workers appear to be working and taking little or no preventative measures against over exposure to the sun. The reported location is then visited and advice and various sun related items, such as sunscreen, drinks and 'T' shirts are given to the workers.
3. Most people know the sun safety message, however the evidence suggests that despite knowing the risks and the relatively simple steps that can be taken to reduce them many people take little or no preventative action. A survey carried out by Cancer Research UK into attitudes to sun safety amongst 16-24 year old who know the sun safety message and the preventative steps that could be taken to reduce risk showed that 70% of those questioned still wanted a tan. Of those questioned only 7% suggested 'don't burn' as a way of reducing the risk of skin cancer, and only 6% regularly checked moles for signs of changeⁱ.
4. A report by Cancer Research UK in 2003 underlines the failure by those living in the UK to take adequate steps to protect themselves from the sun. Notwithstanding the difference in the climate of the UK and Australia 8,100 people dies in the UK from malignant melanoma in 2002, compared to 4,900 in Australia. Further, the evidence suggests that incidents of malignant melanoma are falling amongst Australians born after 1950, but continue to rise in UK citizens born after that date, being the date when the risks of skin cancer for over exposure to the sun were recognised and publicisedⁱⁱ.
5. Whilst risk taking behaviour is evident in those actively seeking to acquire a sun tan it is also evident in other groups, who are exposed to the sun in the course of their employment. Table 1 demonstrates the attitudes of two groups of occupationally exposed workers to the use of sunscreen during the hottest part of the dayⁱⁱⁱ.

Table 1:
Frequency of use of sunscreen on all exposed skin when working outdoors between 11 am and 3 pm on sunny days in summer for two groups of respondents

	<i>How often do you wear sunscreen (SPF15/30+) on all exposed skin?</i>	
	Farmers N (%)	Outdoor workers N (%)
Never/rarely	47 (47.5%)	23 (39.7%)
Sometimes	21 (21.2%)	22 (37.9%)
Half the time	9 (9.1%)	3 (5.2%)
Usually	17 (17.2%)	5 (8.6%)
Always	5 (5.1%)	5 (8.6%)
Total	99 (100.0%)	58 (100.0%)

6. 23%, the highest reporting group, of outdoor workers reported never using sunscreen during the hottest part of the day whilst only 5% reported always using sunscreen. It is worth noting however that even in those who report that they always apply sunscreen that application rates are not consistent, and evidence shows that application rates are rarely sufficient to provide full protection to the user. Research in New Zealand showed that users regularly used up to 60% too little sunscreen to achieve the full SPF benefit advertised on the product^{iv}.
- 7 This intervention is targeted at a known risk group, being occupationally exposed workers. It provides them with information about the consequences of their risk taking behaviour, supplemented by resources to reduce the risk taking behaviour. By using members of the public as ‘informants’ it also builds on the knowledge of general public of the issue of skin cancer and creates an informal and fluid partnership between the general public and the health promotion team in addressing the issue of over exposure to sun by occupationally exposed workers. It is in line with the Health Challenge Wales aspiration to reduce preventable ill health, and can be delivered by local authorities with partner organisations.

ⁱ Attitudes to Skin Cancer in 16-24 year olds, Cancer Research UK – March 2004.

ⁱⁱ Cancer Research UK – Sun Smart – March 2003.

ⁱⁱⁱ Farmers’ and Outdoor Workers’ beliefs about skin cancer and protection from summer sun: a brief report. Dobbinson S, Doyle C, Wakefield M. CBRC Research paper No. 18 Nov 2005

^{iv} ‘SunSmart plus: The more informed use of sunscreens’ Stephen RD Taylor. MJA 2004;180:36-7

Chapter 2

Under Cover – Promotion of Sun Safe behaviour in outdoor workers

Running an Initiative

1. Initial considerations

Initial considerations for this project have to be addressed, including;

- What is the target group?
- Will the initiative have the desired outcome,
- How can the target group be reached?
- Who are the key partners in the initiative?
- How will the initiative be evaluated?
- Will the initiative deliver value for money?

2. Target Group

The target group for this initiative are outdoor workers who are exposed to the sun during the course of their working day. Generally the group is further limited by the fact that it has to be readily visible to the general public, therefore is likely to exclude lone workers and those workers in isolated areas such as farmers. It is likely that the target group will be self identifying and will be builders, maintenance workers and groups employed on large outdoor projects such as highways works or similar, in position where they are visible to the general public and in locations to which the general public have access.

3. Achieving the desired outcome

The purpose of this initiative is to reduce the unprotected exposure to the sun. This is done by providing the exposed workers with the means to reduce their exposure, such as sun screen, hats and 'T' shirts. At the same time as providing the resources general advice and leaflets can be provided to reinforce oral messages. It is essential that the resources provided are used by those to whom they have been provided, this can be monitored by further visits to the site, and by relying on the members of the general public, and specifically those who reported the site as part of the initiative to continue to look out for and report incidents of unprotected exposure.

4. Reaching the Target Group

The target group is reached through a two stage process. The first element of the project is to engage with the public and ask them to effectively become the eyes and ears of the scheme. This was done in the pilot project by use of a radio advert on local radio. It could also be achieved using adverts in locally circulating newspapers and by using the local authority website, as well as posters in locations such as shopping centres, community and council facilities and doctors surgeries.

The radio advertisement in the pilot project asked members of the public to contact the station to nominate allocation where a group of outdoor workers had been identified taking few or no measures to protect themselves from over exposure to the sun, e.g. working whilst not wearing shirts etc. An outside broadcast team then visited the site and did a live link to the studio, interviewing the workers and providing them with 'T' shirts bearing a message relevant to the initiative. In the pilot project the 'T' shirt had carried the words 'Under Cover'. Cold drinks and sunscreen were also distributed. Photographs of the visit were taken and put on the Council and the local radio station web site, and could be used as part of press releases highlighting and underlining the campaign.

5. Who are the key partners in the initiative?

The key partners in the pilot of this initiative were the two authorities, Anglesey and Gwynedd, both of which are covered by the same Radio Station, being Champion 103. The radio station was also a partner, in carrying the advertisement and in responding to calls from members of the public. The Welsh Assembly Government, through its Health Challenge Wales Promotional Grants Scheme was also a partner.

6. How will the initiative be evaluated?

Whilst it is not possible to measure the direct impact of this initiative in reducing rates of skin cancer within the target group there are a number of useful indicators of message penetration. The local radio station or newspaper, which ever is used, will be able to provide circulation details which will enable those carrying out the initiative to determine how many listeners will hear the messages, or how many homes will receive the advertisements carried in the newspapers. Further where posters are used the number of locations in which they posters are displayed can be counted.

The second indicator of success will be the number of calls received from members of the public in consequence of hearing or reading the message in which ever medium is used. For member of the public to identify a site and to call in about it requires a level of engagement above mere noting of the initiative, and can therefore be taken to demonstrate understanding of and engagement with the project by the first target group.

It is harder to determine the success that can be achieved with the second target group, the occupationally exposed workers themselves, being the third indicator. It is reasonable to expect that they will be receptive to being provided with 'T' shirt, sun screen and drinks etc when visited by the radio crew or health promotion team, however it is harder to determine whether they will continue to wear the 'T' shirts or use the sunscreen after the crew have left, and particularly after the resources left have been used. Where repeated calls are received about the same site after it has received a visit it is reasonable to assume that the message has not be taken up and acted on, however it is not necessarily the case that where no further calls are received about a site which has received a visit that the workers on the site are continuing to protect themselves. Further, unscheduled visits would be required to ascertain whether this is the case. This will be particularly important on the return of

good weather after a period of bad weather, when less or no protection has been required.

Taking all of the indicators together a fair reflection of the success or otherwise of the initiative can be gained. As noted, it is not possible to measure reductions in the rates of malignant melanoma amongst the target group, but given the level of knowledge that exists about reductions in consequence of covering up exposed skin and using other protective mechanisms success can be imputed from the three indicators above.

7. Will the initiative deliver value for money?

The pilot initiative cost £4,000. It ran for a period of 6 weeks. During that time a total of 15 sites were visited, and over 150 outdoor workers received 'Under Cover' 'T' shirts, sun screen and HSE advice leaflets. Estimates from the radio station are that the advertisement reached 56,000 adults (over the age of 15 years) in Anglesey/Gwynedd, amounting to 47% of the adult population. It was further estimated that each of the 56,000 people would hear the advertisement on average 17 times. This equates to 986,000 invitations to members of the public to participate. Given the level of penetration of the message and the number of site visits made, reinforced by detail of visits published on the radio station website it is suggested that the initiative does deliver good value for money.

Chapter 3

Under Cover – Promotion of Sun Safe behaviour in outdoor workers

The Campaign

Occupationally exposed workers are encouraged to protect themselves from over exposure to the sun.

Preliminary Work

1. There are a number of decisions to be made about the nature and extent of the campaign. The amount of resource available will be a limiting factor. The pilot project cost £4,000. The funding streams used were Health Alliance funding from the two Health Alliances in the participating areas, as well as a grant of £400 from Health Challenge Wales which was put to the purchase of 'T' shirts carrying the promotional message. All sources of funding should be considered including commercial sponsorship for items such as sunscreen and hats. Local businesses may be willing to sponsor all or part of the promotion, such as the provision of drinks etc. Where a particular logo or design is to be used this will need to be designed for use on all material pertaining to the campaign, such as 'T' shirts, posters, press releases etc.
2. The amount of funding available will determine the nature of the advertising to be used. In the pilot project a bilingual radio advertisement was made ([Appendix 1](#)) which lasted for 30 seconds. The radio advertisement cost £3,725, and was used for a 6 week period. The advertisement was scripted by the radio station by their advertising staff, and then agreed with key stakeholders. If funding does not permit a radio advertisement to be made advertisements can be placed in locally circulating newspapers, or a poster campaign based around the general idea of members of the public telephoning their 'intelligence' to a central phone line can be considered. If posters are to be used the posting will need to be at strategic locations where they are highly visible to members of the public. The pilot project was supported by a £400 grant from Health Challenge Wales, which was used to purchase 100 'Undercover' T shirts with the Health Challenge Wales logo on the back. Gwynedd County Council paid for a further 50 T shirts. Champion FM financed the high factor sunscreen, drinks and distributed SunSmart literature.
3. Members of the public are invited to contact the campaign, whether through the radio station or by telephoning the team running the intervention. In such cases it is usual to use a free phone number, to encourage participation. The costs of such as service as well as the availability of a number and the staff to respond to it will also have to be considered.

4. It is necessary to decide when and over what period the campaign will run. Resources are likely to be a limiting factor. It is essential that the campaign is run when there is the best chance of good weather, to ensure the likelihood of occupationally exposed workers exhibiting risk behaviour in the sun being identified by members of the public. Relying as it does on the involvement of members of the public it is suggested that the initiative should not run for too long a period, since the public will become bored with or used to it, and the novelty value of the project will be lost. Equally however it is important to ensure that the project runs for a long enough period for members of the public to become familiar with the idea behind it, to look out for and identify occupationally exposed workers and to telephone about them. In the pilot project a period of 6 weeks was chosen, since this period could be supported by the resources available, and the initiative was timed to run from the end of June and through July to coincide with the hottest months of the year.

Conducting the Intervention

5. The campaign will start when the radio advertisement, newspaper advertisements or poster campaign goes live. The weather will be critical to the success of the initiative, since poor weather will cause outdoor workers to cover up. It is suggested that maximum publicity should be gained from attending at the first few sites in response to members of the public calling in, to encourage others to participate. There may be merit in 'staging' the first call, to promote the project and to take local news reporters and local television news crews out on a response call to see what happens. Such coverage will help to raise the profile of the project, and encourage members of the public to participate.
6. As the campaign proceeds details and photographs of visits made should be posted on the local authority website, and those of any partners who also have web sites. Sun safety messages can also be posted on the site, to reinforce the message being promoted. Information can be taken from a number of web sites, including the web site of the Health and Safety Executive where information specifically relating to occupationally exposed workers is available. ([Appendix 2](#)). Numbers of telephone calls received and numbers of visits made should be recorded, as should the amount of material distributed, as these can be used as indicators of success, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Following up the Initiative

7. Once the initiative has finished it is useful to determine how successful the campaign was. This can be done by using the indicators of success discussed in Chapter 2, as well as considering the amount of media coverage the campaign attracted, since this can also be a useful way of promoting the sun awareness messages. Measuring the success of the initiative in the long terms is difficult. It may be possible to re-run the event the summer following the first running, to establish whether information has been retained by the groups involved in the first year, however since manually exposed workers may not remain in the area the chances of interfacing with the same groups over a 2 year period may be limited.

'Under Cover'

Appendix 1.

Radio Advert © Champion 103

Music : Theme from Mission Impossible (Adam Clayton/Larry Mullen Jnr. remix)

Voice Over : (in the style of American boss on Mission Impossible, throughout) : Your mission, should you chose to accept it is to keep your identity hidden. It's a cover up.

Voice Over : If you're working outdoors , make sure you never burn, cover up/use 15+ sun cream and keep your shirt on!

Voice Over : Champion 103's Black Thunder crew want you to Beat the Burn – whenever it gets too hot in Anglesey & Gwynedd, look out for Champion 103 Black Thunder. We'll protect you from the heat – with a Beat the Burn T-shirt – the perfect cover up!

Voice Over : Beat the burn with Anglesey and Gwynedd Health Alliances.



'Under Cover'

Appendix 2.

Useful web addresses.

<http://cieh.org/knowledge/publichealth/skincancer>

<http://cancerresearchuk.org/sunsmart/>

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/radiation/understand/ataglance/index.htm>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/issuesandrisk/uvexposure.htm>

Advice for employers of outdoor workers.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg337.pdf>

Health risks from working in the sun.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg147.pdf>