Public Health England (PHE) will launch a local pilot campaign in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset to raise awareness of the signs of skin cancer. We need your help to make it a success.

What is Be Clear on Cancer?
Be Clear on Cancer aims to improve early diagnosis of cancer by raising awareness of signs and symptoms - encouraging people to see their GP without delay.

Why run a campaign on skin cancer?
Skin cancer is very common in England and it is on the increase. Around 2,300 people die from the disease each year (around 1,800 from malignant melanoma and around 500 from non-melanoma). However, if cancer survival for melanoma in England matched the best in Europe, it is estimated that 190 deaths could be avoided each year.

What is the main message of this campaign?
A change to a mole isn’t the only sign of skin cancer – if you notice any unusual or persistent changes to your skin, go to your doctor.

Findings from recent qualitative research commissioned by PHE suggest that for those living in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, awareness of non-mole signs is relatively low.

Who is the campaign aimed at?
Three quarters of people diagnosed with melanoma in England in 2012 were aged 50 and over. The risk of getting melanoma is similar for men and women, although men are more likely to die of the disease. Therefore, the campaign will target men and women, from all socio-economic groups, over the age of 50. It will also target their key influencers, such as friends and family.

What sort of activity will the campaign include?
There will be a range of advertising used across Cornwall, Devon and Somerset including:
- radio adverts
- a mailing direct to around 110,000 people in the target audience
- press adverts
- posters in places like changing rooms
- face to face events in community settings
- there will be digital elements too, including a video clip of a case study and a short animation that explains how melanoma can spread – highlighting the importance of early diagnosis

Why have these areas been chosen to pilot the campaign?
The number of new cases of skin cancer diagnosed in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, given the size of the population, is double the England average. In addition to the higher incidence, we wanted to build on previous skin cancer activity that has run in the area.

““The results of the first national lung cancer campaign gave us clear evidence that a stage shift can be achieved. We must continue to push forward with our Be Clear on Cancer activities if we are to improve cancer outcomes in England. The skin cancer pilot is an important next step in our programme of work and we need your help to make it a success.”
Mr Sean Duffy, National Clinical Director
What is the likely impact on NHS services?
This is a pilot campaign and the first Be Clear on Cancer to focus on skin cancer. Therefore, there are no previous evaluation results for this specific campaign. However, we can learn from the results of other Be Clear on Cancer campaigns. Two evaluation summaries have been produced to date, which show the results of previous campaigns in more detail.

Examples of increases in the demand for services:

**GP attendances:** we know that the campaigns increase the numbers of people visiting their GP with the symptoms promoted. The greatest increase we have seen to date is the national lung cancer campaign which included TV advertising. We saw around 2.99 additional visits per practice per week when comparing with the same time in the previous year.

**Requests for diagnostics:** we have seen variation according to the type of diagnostic test, for example; the first national lung cancer campaign saw a 20% increase in GP requested chest x-rays, whilst the regional blood in pee campaign saw a 3% rise in cystoscopy.

**Urgent referrals for suspected cancer (two week wait):** most of the previous campaigns have seen increases in two week wait referrals, with percentage changes ranging from 8% (for local ovarian) through to 40% (for national bowel). If this pilot leads to an increase of around 10% in GP requested two week wait referrals, depending on the trust, this would equate to an additional 1 to 7 patients per trust per week. Please note, this is an estimate and provided as a guide.

**Treatment:** we are unable to monitor all the conditions diagnosed following Be Clear on Cancer activity and the types of treatment that may follow an urgent referral for suspected cancer. But we do know more cancers are being diagnosed and more surgeries performed. For example, the first national lung cancer campaign saw the proportion of lung cancer patients receiving surgical resection as a first definitive treatment increase – equating to around 300 more patients during the campaign period compared to the previous year.

This skin cancer pilot has been designed to provide a benchmark for future campaigns and there are a number of metrics along the patient pathway that will be monitored as part of the evaluation.

**Why do we need your help?**
We need a wide range of health care professionals to support the campaign and help make it a success. Tell your colleagues about the activities, be prepared to answer questions from the public and your patients, prompt discussions with those in high risk groups and expect extra demand on your services.

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**Key information for GPs**
It is difficult to predict the exact increase this campaign will create, but it is likely that you will see more people coming to your practice. Resources that may help you during the campaign include:

- NICE guidelines for suspected cancer which details the 7-point check list for melanoma
- NICE Guidance on Cancer Services: Improving Outcomes for People with Skin Tumours including Melanoma (2010 update)
- The GP skin cancer toolkit, developed by CRUK and the British Association of Dermatologists available at doctors.net
- Your CCG may have a GP cancer lead who can give you further information relating to your area

**Key information for pharmacy teams**
Pharmacists and their teams have a crucial role to play in this local pilot campaign. It may prompt people to come and ask for your advice. We know many in our target audience can delay going to see their GP and may seek permission to make an appointment. So, where relevant, encourage customers/patients to visit their GP if they have an unusual or persistent change to a mole or patch of skin.

- The British Oncology Pharmacy Association (BOPA) has produced an e-learning tool which includes a module on skin cancer

**Additional resources:**
- You may find it useful to review the summary of the DH funded CRUK pilot for skin cancer that ran in the South West area in 2013
- Order campaign materials to act as a prompt in your conversations with the public. They are available free of charge via the Health and Social Care Publications orderline: 0300 123 1002
- More detailed information for health professionals can be found on www.naedi.org/beclearoncancer/skin
- The public-facing website for Be Clear on Cancer is nhs.uk/skincancer

Please note that ‘Devon, Somerset and Cornwall’ refers to the area covered by the Devon, Somerset and Cornwall PHE Centre. It covers these three counties as a whole (excluding North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset).

Skin cancer statistics provided by Public Health England Knowledge and Intelligence Team (South West), May 2014. For references to data included in this briefing www.naedi.org/beclearoncancer/skin/resources-and-tools