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 and encouraging people to see their GP without delay.

Why focus on skin cancer?

Skin cancer is on the increase in England. There are two main types of skin cancer, the more common but less serious “non-melanoma” and “malignant melanoma” the most serious form of the disease.

Findings from qualitative research commissioned by PHE highlighted the following:

- most people believed skin cancer was easy to treat and not particularly serious in terms of danger to life
- most were unaware of the prevalence of skin cancer or the fact that it can kill
- few claimed to take precautions against the sun in the UK, “foreign” sun was seen as more damaging
- people did not realise that skin cancer can occur a long time after the initial damage was done
- it was news that there are other signs of skin cancer to look out for apart from a mole

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.

Who is the campaign aimed at?

Men and women over the age of 50 and the people who influence them, such as friends and family.

What will the campaign look like?

As with other Be Clear on Cancer campaigns, the GP is a core element of the design. We want to reinforce that it is important for anyone with an unusual or persistent change to their skin, to go and see their GP.

“"My story is the perfect example of why you should report any unusual changes to your skin to your doctor as soon as possible. Early diagnosis not only means that treatment is less invasive, it could also save your life"

Bill Norton, aged 68, Supporter of Cancer Research UK

You can develop skin cancer at any age but those aged 50 or over are more likely to get it

In England, more than 6 people a day die from the disease

If cancer survival in England matched the best in Europe, it is estimated 190 deaths from melanoma could be avoided each year

naedi.org/beclearoncancer/skin
How does this campaign support local priorities?
Cancer is identified in many Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) as an area for improvement; often as part of reducing health inequalities or gaps in life expectancy.

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

Will the campaign promote lifestyle messages too?
The focus of the campaign is to promote the signs of skin cancer. The campaign leaflet does highlight those most at risk of skin cancer, especially those with any of the following:

- lots of moles or freckles
- fair skin that burns easily
- red or fair hair
- light-coloured eyes
- a history of sunburn
- a personal or family history of skin cancer

It also informs people how to avoid sunburn and reduce their chances of getting skin cancer.

Find out more
- Direct members of the public to the NHS Choices website to find out more about skin cancer: nhs.uk/skincancer
- If you work with individuals and groups within your community and want more information on the campaign visit www.naedi.org/beclearoncancer/skin

One in four (25%) of those in the area diagnosed with melanoma do not survive beyond five years

How can you support the campaign?
You know your communities better than anyone so your help to promote the campaign is vital. You don’t need a medical background or to give medical advice. You can:

1. **Encourage:**
   People can put off getting signs and symptoms checked out for lots of different reasons. They might worry about wasting the doctor’s time. Or, if they think it could be cancer, may be frightened of finding out or scared of treatment. But we know that people often take advice from friends, family, and others they trust – such as a social worker or community leader.

2. **Reassure:**
   Explain that it is best to get unusual or persistent changes to their skin checked out – the chances are it’s nothing serious, but it may still need treating. If it is skin cancer, finding it sooner and getting it treated early can make a real difference.

3. **Make skin cancer a priority:**
   Make every contact count. As part of their day to day role, many frontline workers can help by highlighting the campaign, spreading the important messages out in your community and encouraging people to act. Be mindful that some people, especially those who are older, have disabilities or live alone, may struggle to check some areas of their skin, for example their back. Direct them to someone who can help, or suggest that every now and then a family member or friend checks parts of their skin they can’t see.

   Make sure everyone in your organisation is aware of the campaign. Display posters in your offices and buildings, and encourage people to talk to their colleagues about the activity. Campaign materials are available free of charge via the Health and Social Care Publications orderline: 0300 123 1002.

   Take the campaign out into your communities. Through your community networks reach out to your local population, especially the target group of those aged over 50 years. Remember, skin cancer can develop over time so everyone, particularly those in the higher risk groups, should be aware of the signs.

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, view www.naedi.org/beclearoncancer/skin/resources-and-tools