



# News Release

**Under strict embargo until 00.01 hours Monday 16 June**

## **ONE IN FOUR DO NOT SURVIVE MELANOMA BEYOND FIVE YEARS**

### **Pilot campaign urges people in the area to recognise key signs of skin cancer**

A new campaign launches in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset<sup>†</sup> today to raise awareness of skin cancer and emphasise that a change to a mole isn't the only sign of the disease.

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<sup>†.1,2</sup> In addition, latest figures reveal that of those in the area diagnosed with melanoma, the most serious form of the disease, one in four (25%) do not survive beyond five years.<sup>3</sup>

The campaign, from Public Health England, is the latest to launch under the Be Clear on Cancer banner. Local GPs appear in the adverts.

There were over 800 new cases of melanoma diagnosed in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset in 2012,<sup>1</sup> with over 100 people dying from the disease.<sup>4</sup> Early diagnosis is crucial and means treatment is more likely to be successful.

### **Professor Debra Lapthorne, Centre Director of the Devon, Cornwall and Somerset PHE Centre, commented:**

“Statistics show that those living in the Devon, Cornwall and Somerset area are at an increased risk of developing skin cancer compared to the rest of England. There could be any number of reasons for this but it's likely to be due to a high number of outdoor jobs and leisure pursuits as well as an older population. We are committed to

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\* 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).

<sup>†</sup> The directly standardised incidence (new cases) rate per 100,000 for Devon, Cornwall and Somerset was compared to the England rate

raising awareness of the key signs of the disease, to encourage earlier diagnosis, when treatment is more likely to be successful.

“The campaign message is clear, if you notice any unusual or persistent changes to your skin, you should visit your doctor.”

Certain people are more at risk of getting skin cancer but knowledge of some of these risks is low. Only one in three (38%) in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset know that people with lots of moles and freckles are more likely to get skin cancer and similarly only 32% are aware that a family history of skin cancer increases risk.<sup>5</sup>

Of those diagnosed with melanoma in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, four in five are over the age of 50,<sup>1</sup> making this the target age group for the campaign. The campaign also focuses on men in the area, who are more likely to die from the disease than women.<sup>4</sup> Disturbingly, men are much less worried about developing the disease, with only one in three (34%) saying they are worried compared with over half of women (56%).<sup>5</sup>

**Dr Adrian Burt, a GP in Somerset who appears in the campaign adverts, commented:**

“The earlier skin cancer is diagnosed, the more successful treatment is likely to be. Your doctor will be aware of the signs, and will be able to assess whether further investigation is needed. So if you’re aware of any unusual or persistent changes to your skin, go to your GP.”

**Morwenna Banks, British comedy actress who was born in Cornwall, commented:**

"Growing up in Cornwall, I learned that the sun could burn your skin. I later learned that childhood sunburn could become adult skin damage. And now we know that you become increasingly vulnerable to skin cancer with age. I would urge everyone to learn what to look for. Know the warning signs - a change to a mole isn't the only one. Any unusual changes to your skin should be noted – and if in doubt take swift action. See your GP. Be Clear on Cancer."

**Dr Sarah Jarvis, TV and radio doctor who grew up in Somerset, commented:**

“People are often reluctant to bother their doctor for things they consider minor ailments, but changes to your skin could be a sign of a more serious problem. The most common sign of skin cancer is a change to a mole, freckle or normal patch of

skin. It's important to get to know what your skin looks like normally, so that you notice any unusual or persistent changes. If you do, tell your doctor.”

The six-week campaign, which starts today, will see adverts running on radio and in the press in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset. There will also be face-to-face events taking place in shopping centres in the area.

For more information on the signs of skin cancer, visit [www.nhs.uk/skincancer](http://www.nhs.uk/skincancer).

**-ENDS-**

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#### **Notes to Editors**

1. Public Health England's mission is to protect and improve the nation's health and to address inequalities through working with national and local government, the NHS, industry and the voluntary and community sector. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health. Follow us on Twitter @PHE\_uk
2. Be Clear on Cancer campaigns are run by Public Health England, in partnership with the Department of Health and NHS England.
3. Be Clear on Cancer campaigns are part of the National Awareness and Early Diagnosis Initiative, run in partnership with Cancer Research UK, to improve England's cancer survival rates.
4. The Government's priorities for cancer as set out in *Improving Outcomes: A Strategy for Cancer* (January 2011) include the ambition to save an additional 5,000 lives per year by 2014/2015.
5. The pilot skin cancer campaign is running at a local level to test messaging and impact on NHS services. The findings of this local pilot campaign will be used to inform a decision on whether to roll it out further.
6. A change in the size, shape or colour of a mole could be a sign of skin cancer.

Other signs of skin cancer include:

- A new growth or sore that doesn't heal
- A spot, mole or sore that itches or hurts
- A mole or growth that bleeds, crusts or scabs
- A change in the size, shape or colour of a freckle or normal patch of skin

7. Anyone can develop skin cancer but you're more likely to get it if you have 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

8. All statistical references to Devon, Cornwall and Somerset relate to the area covered by the Devon, Cornwall and Somerset PHE Centre. They cover all three counties as a whole (excluding North Somerset and Bath and North East Somerset).

9. Key malignant melanoma statistics for Devon, Cornwall and Somerset:

- Over 800 new cases of malignant melanoma are diagnosed in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset each year (868 cases in 2012, 819 cases in 2011)<sup>1</sup>
- Over 100 people in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset die from malignant melanoma annually (108 deaths in 2012, 122 deaths in 2011)<sup>4</sup>
- Four in five people diagnosed with malignant melanoma in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset each year are aged over 50<sup>1</sup>
- For those in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, when melanoma is diagnosed at the earliest stage, 90% of people are likely to live beyond 5 years. This drops to just 50% when diagnosed at a late stage<sup>3</sup>
- The chances of being diagnosed with melanoma in your lifetime are higher for those living in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset compared to the rest of England<sup>1,2</sup>

10. Skin cancer statistics 2012

Statistics provided by Public Health England, South West Knowledge & Intelligence Team

Incidence: The table below shows the number of new malignant melanoma skin cancer cases registered in 2012

Area	Case registered		
	Males	Females	Persons
<b>ENGLAND</b>	5,547	5,769	11,316
<b>Devon, Cornwall, and Somerset PHE Centre</b>	441	427	868
East Devon	30	40	70
Exeter	14	23	37
Mendip	22	20	42
Mid Devon	16	15	31
North Devon	23	11	34
Plymouth	50	35	85
Sedgemoor	21	15	36
South Hams	22	19	41
South Somerset	30	31	61
Taunton Deane	22	21	43
Teignbridge	31	26	57
Torbay	24	33	57
Torridge	10	14	24
West Devon	11	18	29
West Somerset	7	7	14
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	108	99	207

*\*the above table shows the number of cases of malignant melanoma in 2012, This is not the same as the number of people diagnosed with malignant melanoma as one person may have more than one case of malignant melanoma*

Mortality: The table below shows the number of malignant melanoma skin cancer deaths registered in 2012

Area	Deaths registered		
	Males	Females	Persons
<b>ENGLAND</b>	1,030	751	1,781
<b>Devon, Cornwall, and Somerset PHE Centre</b>	64	44	108
East Devon	4	5	9
Exeter	3	0	3
Mendip	4	1	5
Mid Devon	2	0	2
North Devon	0	3	3
Plymouth	7	2	9
Sedgemoor	2	5	7
South Hams	2	3	5
South Somerset	4	2	6
Taunton Deane	1	2	3
Teignbridge	3	0	3
Torbay	4	6	10
Torrige	5	0	5
West Devon	2	1	3
West Somerset	1	1	2
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	20	13	33

## References

<sup>1</sup> Malignant melanoma of the skin (ICD-10 C43) incidence statistics for Devon, Cornwall and Somerset PHE Centre and for England. Statistics provided by Public Health England Knowledge and Intelligence Team (South West), May 2014. Data Source - National Cancer Registration Service.

<sup>2</sup> Non-melanoma skin cancer (ICD-10 C44) incidence statistics for Devon, Cornwall and Somerset PHE Centre and for England. Statistics provided by Public Health England Knowledge and Intelligence Team (South West), May 2014. Data Source - National Cancer Registration Service.

<sup>3</sup> Malignant melanoma (ICD-10 C43); 5 year survival based on 2004-2006 cohort, with 5 years follow up. Statistics provided by Public Health England Knowledge and Intelligence Team (South West), May 2014. Data Source - National Cancer Registration Service.

<sup>4</sup> Malignant melanoma of the skin (ICD-10 C43) mortality statistics for Devon, Cornwall and Somerset PHE Centre and for England. Statistics provided by Public Health England Knowledge and Intelligence Team (South West), May 2014. Data Source - Office for National Statistics

All above statistics are for 2012 unless specified otherwise.

<sup>5</sup> Online survey with a representative sample of 300 adults aged 16+ in the Devon, Somerset and Cornwall PHE Centre in April 2014, conducted by TNS BMRB