



nccp National Cancer
Control Programme



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

Consultations with young people on skin cancer prevention behaviours

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Abbreviations

CNN	Comhairle na nÓg
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
HSE	Health Service Executive
NCCP	National Cancer Control Programme
YAG	Youth Advisory Group

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Executive Summary

Cancer prevention is a cornerstone of the National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026 (NCS) as it offers the most cost effective, long-term approach for cancer control¹. Just under 13,000 cases of skin cancer are diagnosed annually². This is twice the number compared to 10 years ago and is projected to more than double again by 2045³. Addressing this rising incidence of skin cancer, recommendation 3 of the NCS prioritises the need to develop and implement a National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022⁴.

Action Area 3.3 of the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan specifically outlines engaging children and young people in initiatives that affect them, stating 'Include children and young people in the development of resources and implementation of programmes in which they are key stakeholders'⁴.

The NCCP worked in partnership with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and the National Participation Office to design and implement consultations with young people. Online interactive consultations were held with young people aged 12-18 years between October-November 2021 to inform the development of initiatives to engage children and young people in skin cancer prevention behaviours. Additional face to face consultations were held with young people from the Traveller community as research with Irish Travellers has found significantly different views in relation to the use of sunbeds.

Common themes identified from the online consultation are outlined below.

What prompts young people to protect skin in the sun

- Family member advises young person to use sunscreen or to wear a hat
- Having fair skin and previous experience of sunburn
- Ageing effects of the sun on skin

Ways to encourage young people to follow 5 S's messages

- Simple messaging
- Information on different types of protection
- Promotion via social media (e.g., TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram)
- Credible sources (e.g., doctors/dermatologists)
- Have SPF in all moisturisers
- Have sunscreen available in the schools
- Make social media videos more fun – have someone going through the process of following the 5 S's
- Reminder from parents

Ways to encourage young people to wear protective clothing and seek shade

- More images that are clear and easy to understand
- More emphasis of consequence of not using protection (the negatives)
- Create a video on the consequences of sunburn
- Workshops with NCCP or HSE in schools
- Free or low-cost sunscreen

Best ways to get information to young people

- TikTok, Snapchat, Spotify, Instagram,
- Youtubers or Irish Social Media Influencers
- Forced social media adverts
- School (counsellors and SPHE, homework activities or links to videos, workshop for older pupils in secondary school e.g., transition year students)
- Cosmetic professionals talking about skincare
- Video on correct way to apply sunscreen
- Parent campaign

Common themes identified from the face to face consultation with young members of the Traveller community are outlined below

Who is the best person to get health information from?

- Parents (for younger age group)
- Health professionals

What is the best way to get information to young people?

- Word of mouth
- Facebook (mixed views, not trusted by all) Internet
- Social media (but only through reliable sources)
- Radio (for older age groups)
- Personal stories on social media

Reasons for using sunbeds

- To tan or colour
- To be attractive to opposite sex
- For positive self-image
- For self-confidence or self-esteem
- To feel happy
- Good for mental health
- Preparation for sun tanning or sun holiday

Reasons for not using sunbeds

- Skin damage (moles/burning/heat rash/skin peels/ dries out skin)
- Ageing effects
- Health risks (skin cancer)
- Cost
- Not allowed

Next steps

Further findings and details are provided in the detailed report.

This report will be used to inform the development of resources and programmes to engage young people in skin cancer prevention behaviours. It will inform how best to reach this population to increase the awareness of sun protection, the messages and the medium of messages.

The information from this report will also inform the development of more targeted health promotion for young people within the Traveller community. The report will be shared with organisations working in the area of skin cancer prevention to help to inform their work in skin cancer prevention projects and initiatives for young people.

1 Department of Health. National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026. Dublin: Department of Health; 2017

2 National Cancer Registry of Ireland Cork: updated 2021; Available from: www.ncri.ie

3 National Cancer Registry. Cancer incidence projections for Ireland 2020-2045. Cork: NCRI; 2019

4 Department of Health, 2019. Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022. Dublin: Department of Health. Available from: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4655d6-national-skin-cancer-prevention-plan-2019-2022/>

Section 1: Introduction and background

1.1 Background

Just under 13,000 cases of skin cancer are diagnosed annually in Ireland¹. This is twice the number compared to 10 years ago and is projected to more than double again by 2045¹. Yet most skin cancers could be prevented by protecting skin from ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun and not using sunbeds².

The Healthy Ireland National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan aims to tackle the rising incidence of skin cancer, increasing awareness and engaging people in UV protective behaviours such as protecting skin from the sun and not using sunbeds³. The plan promotes the simple Healthy Ireland 5 SunSmart steps (Figure 1).

Figure 1: SunSmart 5 S's



1. National Cancer Registry of Ireland Cork: updated 2021; Available from: www.ncri.ie

2. National Cancer Registry. Cancer incidence projections for Ireland 2020-2045. Cork: NCRI; 2019

3. Department of Health, 2019. Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022. Dublin: Department of Health. Available from: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4655d6-national-skin-cancer-prevention-plan-2019-2022/>

In addition to the 5 S's, it is important for people to be aware that:

- In Ireland, the UV radiation levels are high from April to September, even when it is cloudy. Stay safe by limiting time in the sun when UV is strongest, typically between the hours of 11:00am-3:00pm
- Do not deliberately try to get a suntan. Remember tanned skin is damaged skin.
- Avoid getting a sunburn.
- Never use a sunbed.

Exposure to UV radiation during childhood is particularly harmful. UV exposure during the first 10– 15 years of life makes a disproportionately large contribution to lifetime risk of skin cancer.⁴ Severe sunburn during childhood (3 or more instances before the age of 20) is associated with a 2-4 times higher risk of developing melanoma in later life.⁵ Yet it has been found nearly 90% of 10- to 17-year-olds said they have experienced sunburn in their lifetime.⁶

Skin cancer prevention initiatives are population-wide but there is a focus on high-risk groups, which includes children and young people.⁷ To minimise this risk of future skin cancers, sun protection during childhood is extremely important as well as not using artificial sources of UV such as sunbeds. Behaviours learned at a young age are more likely to be adopted for life. Action Area 3 of the National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan targets children and young people as their skin is very sensitive to UV from the sun and artificial sources i.e., sunbeds.⁷

The National Skin Cancer Prevention Plan (NCCP) specifically outlines engaging children and young people in initiatives with specific reference to the need to *'include children and young people in the development of resources and implementation of programmes in which they are key stakeholders'* (Dept. Health 2019 pg. 19). The NCCP plan to develop resources and tools that will engage young people and support the adoption of skin protective behaviours. As part of this work, the NCCP engaged with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) and National Participation Office to consult with a cross section of young people to gain insights into:

- How best to reach and engage this population to increase the awareness of sun protection.
- The medium to convey messages.
- The types of resources that impact upon their sun protection behaviours.

4. Cancer Institute New South Wales. NSW Skin Cancer Prevention Strategy 2012-15. New South Wales; 2012

5. Markovic SN, Erickson LA, Rao RD, Malignant Melanoma in the 21st Century, Part 1: Epidemiology, Risk Factors, Screening, Prevention, and Diagnosis. Mayo Clin Proc. 2007; 82 (3) 364-380.

6. Institute of Public Health (2020). Children's exposure to ultraviolet radiation - a risk profile for future skin cancers in Ireland. [Cited 22nd February 2021]. Available from: www.publichealth.ie

7. Department of Health,(2019). Skin Cancer Prevention Plan 2019-2022. Dublin: Department of Health. Available from: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4655d6-national-skin-cancer-prevention-plan-2019-2022/>

Research with Irish Travellers has found significantly different views in relation to cancer, skin care and specifically in relation to the use of sunbeds.⁸ For example, findings from their study of Irish Travellers and English Romany Gypsies⁸, found that while there was an acknowledgement that sunbeds were linked to skin cancer, the participants planned their continued use as it was more important to *'look beautiful'*. This finding was echoed in Rattigan's study⁹ who found low levels of awareness of the risks of sunbeds among Irish Traveller communities compared to the majority population. The women in the study linked tanned skin with health, beauty, and happiness, with some believing sunbed use was good for health, having a positive effect on conditions such as arthritis and psoriasis. For men, the use of sunscreen was regarded as a sign of weakness, and tanned skin was associated with health and well-being.

Rattigan's study also explored how best to promote health messages to members of the Traveller community. Targeted messages on skin cancer and sunbed usage were considered important. Some suggested that a social media challenge which saw women from the community challenging others to go without sunbeds and videoing themselves with natural skin could be useful. Others suggested providing information on the negative effects of sunbeds on health and including pictures of the effect of sun damage.

With such background knowledge, the NCCP felt it was important to facilitate a separate consultation with young people from the Irish Traveller community to gain a greater understanding of their attitudes and behaviours in relation to three areas of interest: skin care in the sun; the use of sunbeds; and the promotion of health messages. This information will inform the development of more targeted health promotion for the Traveller community.

8 Berlin, J., Smith, D., & Newton, P. (2018). "It's because it's cancer, not because you're a Traveller"-exploring lay understanding of cancer in English Romany Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities. *European Journal of Oncology Nursing*, 34, 49-54. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ejon.2018.02.010>

9 Rattigan, S (2019) Sunbed use and skin care in Gypsy and Traveller communities. Friends Families and Travellers <https://www.gypsy-traveller.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Sunbed-use-and-skin-care-in-Gypsy-and-Traveller-communities-FINAL.docx>

Section 2: Methodology

To design and implement the online consultation, the NCCP worked in partnership with the DCEDIY and the National Participation Office¹⁰ (see Appendix 1 for membership of the Project Group who designed and or facilitated the consultation). The team from the DCEDIY and the National Participation Office follow best practice in consulting with young people and are guided by the principles of Lundy's Model (see Figure 2) and the Participation Framework.¹¹ The Participation Team's approach takes measures to maximise the voice of the child and young person, ensuring they are fully informed on the reason for the consultation, and how the findings will be used.

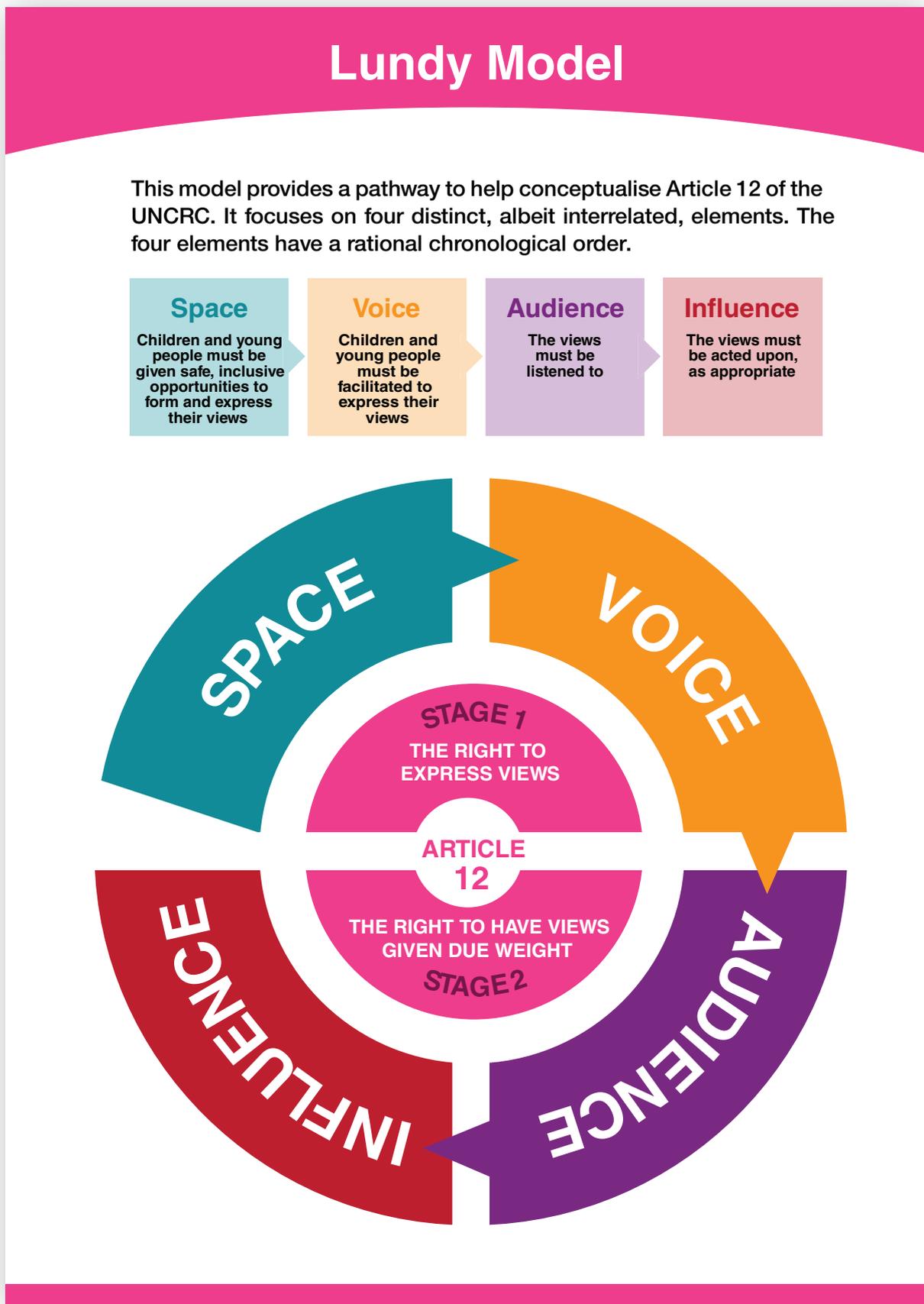
The starting point was the establishment of a Youth Advisory Group (YAG) of young people who helped co-design the consultation. The Covid-19 public health restrictions meant it was not possible to convene an in-person consultation with the YAG at a central location, therefore the Participation Team drafted an online interactive consultation methodology. The methodology was piloted with the YAG, who provided feedback on the online process and questions and suggested ways of refining the activities. Online and face to face consultations were conducted following the pilot.

To ensure the views of young people were accurately recorded and presented, two independent consultants were commissioned to record both the online process and face to face processes, and to prepare a report describing the young people's deliberations and opinions on the topic of skin cancer prevention.

¹⁰ Foróige and Youth Work Ireland are contracted by DCEDIY to provide participation support services to support the work of Comhairle na nÓg, national consultations and other participation initiatives.

¹¹ National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making (2021) <https://hubnanog.ie/participation-framework/>

Figure 1: Lundy Model



2.1 Online consultation

As the consultation was undertaken during the Covid-19 public health restrictions, the consultation with the young people was conducted virtually using the Zoom platform with breakout rooms and Padlet Software. Prior to the session, young people from the local Comhairle na nÓg received invitations to participate together with information sheets about the nature and purpose of the consultation, as well as the details of when and how the consultations were taking place.

To capture a broad geographic spread, the Comhairle na nÓg Participation Co-ordinator extended invitations to members from local Comhairle na nÓg. As part of the recruitment process, the local Comhairle Coordinators were asked to ensure a gender mix when selecting participants and to ensure the inclusion of seldom-heard voices.

2.2 In-person consultation with young people from the Traveller community

To capture the views and experiences of young people from the Traveller community, four in-person sessions were arranged with young people from two traveller projects (one in an urban setting and one in a rural setting). These consultations took place in November 2021 in line with public health restrictions. They were conducted in small single sex groups. The findings from this consultation are reported separately in Section 4 of this report.

Section 3: Online consultation

3.1 Who was consulted?

A total of 29 young people from across the country took part in one of three online sessions (1 with the Youth Advisory Group in July and 2 online sessions in October 2021). The young people stemmed from 15 local Comhairlí: Cork City (x1), Cavan (x2) Clare (x1) Dun Laoghaire and Rathdown (x2) Donegal (x3) Kerry (x1) Laois (x2), Leitrim (x2) Longford (x4) Mayo (x4), Monaghan (x2), Roscommon (x1) South Dublin (x1) Sligo (x1) Wexford (x2).

- YAG session (7 females aged between 13 and 17 years)
- Zoom consultation 5th October (13 young people, 12 females, 1 male, aged between 14 and 18 years)
- Zoom consultation 6th October (9 young people, 8 females, 1 male, aged between 13 and 17 years)

Four in-person consultations were undertaken with young people from the Travellers Community

- Dublin: Nov 4th – One in-person session – (**Session 1:** 4 females aged 17-18)
- Limerick: Nov 5th – Three in-person sessions – (**Session 2:** 4 males aged 12-14; **Session 3:** 4 males aged 15-17; **Session 4:** 3 females aged 16-18)

3.2 Online sessions introduction (5th and 6th October)

The Participation Coordinator welcomed the participants to the session and introduced the other adults in attendance: one of NCCP Cancer Prevention Officers to outline why the consultation was taking place and how the information will be used, two of National Youth Participation Officers to facilitate the discussions, and two report writers (one for each breakout room).

Before commencing each session, to place the young people at their ease, a short icebreaker was used after the initial introductions. At this point one of the facilitators explained and shared the Safeguarding Statement. The facilitator asked the young people not to share very personal experiences, to be respectful, share opinions in the chat box if not comfortable speaking and reminded that the group that participation is voluntary.

The facilitators provided an overview of the purpose of the consultation, how young people's opinions will be sought and recorded, and the audience for these views (e.g., the NCCP). At both online sessions a representative from the NCCP provided a short overview of the work of the NCCP. They reminded the group that the findings from these sessions will be used to inform development of skin cancer prevention resources and inform updates to the next skin cancer prevention plan. Both the report of the consultations and the resources will be available on NCCP's website (www.hse.ie/sunsmart).

3.3 Online consultation questions and activities

The consultation was spilt into four activities conducted in break-out rooms.

1. **Online Activity 1: Visualisation exercise to explore young people's approaches to protecting skin in the sun**
2. **Online Activity 2: Session on the SunSmart 5 S's**
3. **Online Activity 3: Session on sunbeds**
4. **Online Activity 4: Session on sources of health information**

Some of the questions and discussion points had overlapping questions and responses (e.g., sources of information, ways to promote messages, barriers to protecting skin). To avoid duplication where possible, findings from the deliberations have been combined into the most relevant discussion point.

Online Activity 1: Visualisation exercise to explore skin care in the sun

Online Activity 2: Session on the SunSmart 5 S's

Online Activity 3: Session on sunbeds

Online Activity 4: Session on sources of health information

3.4 Online Activity 1: visualisation exercise to explore care in the sun

Summary findings – Visualisation Exercise

Protection from the sun (from visualisations)

- Sunscreen (and moisturiser with SPF)
- Sitting in the shade
- Wearing clothes that cover skin (e.g., wetsuit, long sleeves, hat)
- Sunglasses

What prompts young people to protect your skin in the sun

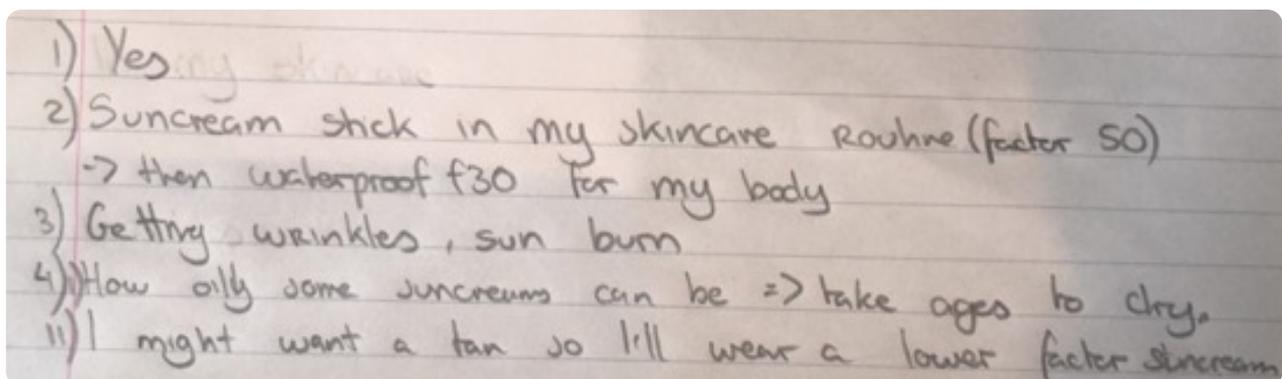
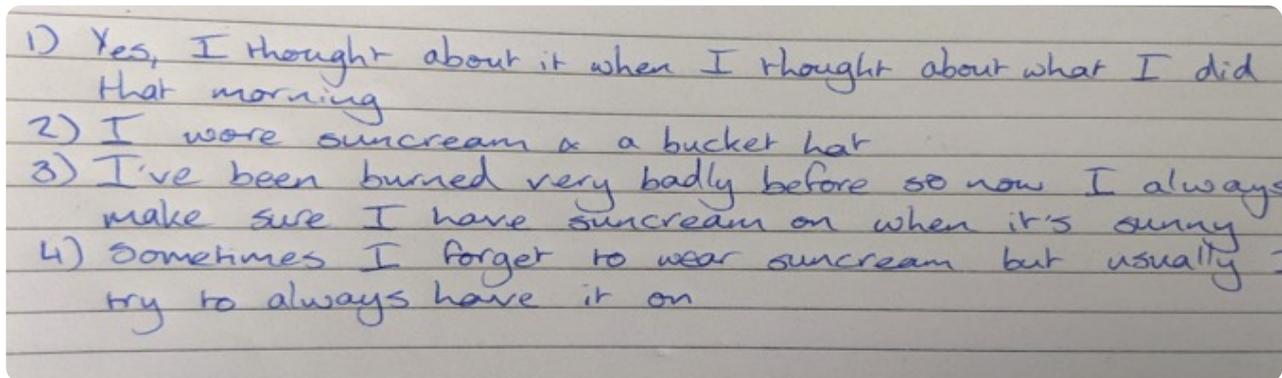
- Family member advises young person to use sunscreen or to wear a hat
- Having fair skin and previous experience of sunburn
- Ageing effects of the sun on skin

The young people were asked to close their eyes and to imagine waking up to a really hot sunny day, with a blistering sun, a day when they planned to spend a lot of time outdoors. They were asked to imagine how the day started for them, and to visualise their preparations for the day ahead.

Once the group opens their eyes again, they are invited to write or draw what they thought about. This was shared by sending (email or by phone) a picture to the co-ordinator or by speaking about it in the group (see Figure 3 for examples of pictures). In discussions the facilitators asked the participants about their visualisation focusing on four questions:

- In your visualisation did you do anything to protect your skin from the sun?
- How did you protect your skin from the sun?
- What would encourage you to protect your skin from the sun? Why would you protect your skin?
- If you didn't or even if you did, what would prevent you from protecting your skin? Why wouldn't you protect your skin?

Figure 3: Examples of young people's notes on visualisation exercise



Protecting skin from the sun

In response to this question four types of protection were identified in the visualisation

- Sunscreen (and moisturiser with SPF)
- Sitting in the shade
- Wearing clothes that cover skin (e.g., wetsuit, long sleeves, hat)
- Sunglasses

In some of their descriptions the young people made some reference to either wearing sunscreen or having some with them on sunny days. For example, the participants said as they burn easily on hot days, they use sunscreen and routinely wear moisturiser with SPF. A number said they had not thought about putting sunscreen on in their visualisation. Notably, apart from the daily moisturiser, many of the descriptions of using sun protection referred to 'really hot days' to avoid getting burned with little reference to everyday protection from the sun.

Other precautions taken included wearing a hat to cover the face; wearing a t-shirt or hat to protect their shoulders when swimming; wearing long sleeves or covering up to protect parts of the skin that are especially sensitive; and sitting in the shade. A small number mentioned wearing sunglasses. One young person described wearing a wetsuit when swimming and generally sitting in the shade.

What prompts young people to protect your skin? And why protect your skin?

Three main themes emerged in response to this question.

- Family member advises young person to use sunscreen or to wear a hat
- Having fair skin and previous experience of sun burn
- Ageing effects of the sun on skin

Across all the four breakout rooms and the YAG session, mothers featured as the main prompt to use protection, particularly sunscreen. For example, one young person said she visualised being abroad with her family. Since she is fair skinned and red haired her mother always *'forces her to put on sunscreen'*. This message was echoed by one of the young women in the second breakout room, where one young woman mentioned the role of her mother in prompting her to bring sunscreen and to wear a hat in the water.

Having fair skin and previous experiences of getting sunburn was also identified as a prompt to protect their skin.

'Once you get burnt you don't want it to happen again'

One young person described even though he had worn a wetsuit he had forgotten to put on sunscreen and had fallen asleep in the sun resulting in his face and shins becoming badly burnt. Since this experience he always wears sunscreen and sits in the shade when not in the water.

In one of the groups, the young people discussed the difference between skin that was fair, sensitive, and likely to burn, with skin that was sallow or tanned, with the former perceived as needing more protection compared to the latter. One young woman talked about how she did not fully appreciate the potential risks she was taking:

'I'm tanner but I didn't think I needed to put sun screen on. In school the teacher pointed out that you still need to protect your skin even if you are tanned.'

In one of the groups the young people mentioned the ageing effect of the sun.

'I think if you know the harmful aspects of not doing it, it would push you to protect your skin'

3.5 Online Activity 2: Care in the sun

Focus: The SunSmart 5 S's video

Summary findings – The SunSmart 5 S's video

Views on 5 S's video

- Smart way to remind people or help understand
- Clever way to get message across
- Not detailed enough – simplicity might forget
- No mention of negatives or consequences of not protecting skin
- Tune/music not memorable

Reasons for not following 5 S's messages

- Forgetting to use it
- Not liking using sunscreen
- Cost of sunscreen
- Not having hat or glasses
- Enjoying being in sun – not thinking about consequences

Ways to encourage young people to follow 5 S's messages

- Simple messaging
- Information on different types of protection
- Promotion via social media (e.g., TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram)
- Credible sources (e.g., doctors/dermatologists)
- Have SPF in all moisturisers
- Have sunscreen available in the schools
- Make the video more fun – have someone going through the process of following the 5 S's
- Reminder from parents

Ways to encourage young people to wear protective clothing/seek shade

- More images that are clear and easy to understand
- More emphasis of consequence of not using protection (the negatives)
- Add another video with consequences of sunburn

Other suggestions

- Workshops with NCCP or HSE in schools
- Free or low-cost sunscreen

For the second session, the facilitator shared the Seek, Slip, Slap, Slop and Slide video from NCCP SunSmart webpage. In two of the consultations this activity used Padlet software¹² to capture responses to five questions about the video. Where Padlet was not used, the report writers took detailed notes on each response.

1. **What do you think about the SunSmart 5 S's?**
2. **What would lead you to follow the SunSmart 5 S's?**
3. **What would stop you from following the SunSmart 5 S's?**
4. **What would influence young people to wear protective clothing or to seek shade?**
5. **Is there anything else you can think of that would encourage young people protect their skin from the sun?**

Where the Padlet screen was shared, young people were invited to write their responses to the five questions. The report writers took detailed notes of the discussion.

After the activity, the facilitator shared the Padlet screen and talked through the responses (See Figure 4 for example of Padlet output). Where Padlet was not used, the facilitator asked the questions directly of the young people with the report writers recording the discussion. Table 1 (below) provides an overview of the findings under each question.

Views on the SunSmart 5 S's

Overall, the young people felt the clip was an easy and accessible way of getting the message across

'Simple and effective way of remembering the best ways to protect your skin'

'It's not scientific. It manages to compact the message'

'It's easily remembered, people might automatically associate it with the sun: similar to how everyone always has the road safety song stuck in their head'

Some felt the acronyms were important.

'Because they all begin with S – it makes it easier to remember'

'It is an easy way to remember especially for children'

'It's catchy. It's casual. It's colourful. It uses words anyone would say'

One young person considered it to be a good approach to teach about the different approaches to skin protection.

'I think that it is teaching people that there are more than one way to protect your skin because most people just think of sun cream'

¹² Padlet is an online collaborative tool that acts as a virtual noticeboard for sharing a variety of content <https://padlet.com/>

Figure 4: Screenshot of Padlet Screen with Young People’s responses



Suggested improvements

Some young people felt messages were good but the pace of it was too fast.

'It {the video} moved too quickly, I was focusing but I might have been a slow reader'

'Moving awfully fast. I was skim reading rather than taking it all in'

'It was quick and catchy, but I agree it was like skim reading'

Some young people felt it would be useful to provide some further advice and guidance.

'There are so many products for sun protection, it would be good to have a guide, to help choose the good ones.'

As well as promoting the SunSmart 5 5's, some of the participants felt it was important to highlight the consequences of not protecting the skin.

'Greater emphasis on the consequences of not being sun safe.'

'More emphasis on the negatives of not wearing sun protection, more information in general'

'Maybe add on to the video or make a new one about the effects of not protecting your skin from the sun that would be easy to remember and understand'

'In the 5 S's video, there is no mention of any negatives to not wearing sun protection. It's easy to forget that over exposure can cause cancer, especially when your main focus is having a good time outside etc.'

Including the benefits of taking care of your skin in the video was another suggestion for improvement, although, there was a recognition that this might make the video too long.

'It would be nice if they added the benefits of taking care of your skin.'

Providing more information and ideas on what types of clothing to wear was also suggested to help people follow the 5S's.

'A picture of 'light and airy' clothes in the video might help.'

What would lead young people to follow the advice on the SunSmart 5 S's?

In one of the groups the young people focused on features of the video clip describing its simplicity, ease of understanding, and 'short but to the point' approach. Others talked about other reasons for taking the messages on board, such as the consequences of skin burn, reducing their risk of skin cancer and knowing they will be protected.

In one of the groups, the young people mentioned the importance of the source of the information i.e., certified professionals.

Others felt the information should be promoted in primary schools.

'Maybe if it were to be pushed and taught about more in primary schools'

'Workshops in schools, someone from HSE or NCCP could visit a school and do a short interactive workshop with them so they will understand why and how they are taking care of their skin.'

'I think something like that should be brought into schools. I didn't know until I got older, until I taught myself, (about skin protection). Children are just expected to know these things.'

Keeping with what could be done in schools to help young people follow the SunSmart 5 S's, one young person suggested having free or low-cost access to sunscreen in schools. One described how her father had free access to sunscreen when he worked on a building site.

What would stop young people from following the SunSmart 5 S's?

Again, in one of the groups the discussion focused mainly on the video clip. Some felt that the simplicity of the message may not provide sufficient information to bring about change. Children may not understand what is meant by the words or it might be easily forgotten as it was not memorable enough.

In the other groups in response to this question and from the discussions that followed the visualisation exercise, several suggestions were offered for not protecting skin including:

- Low awareness of the risk of tanning
- Low awareness of the risk of sun on dull days
- Low awareness of the dangers of skin cancer
- Not wanting to wear sunscreen and cost of sunscreen
- Cost of sunglasses
- Not wanting to wear layers on sunny days
- Lack of shade
- Forgetfulness

Low awareness of the risks of tanning

Having a low awareness of the need to wear sunscreen was raised in all the groups. This low awareness, combined with 'tanning easily' was identified as a barrier to using protection.

'I don't think people know. People say, 'I just tan,' people don't see it as UV rays they see it as tan or burn. People know about skin cancer, but they don't think you get it from the sun, that's 'just tan.'

'People want to get a tan, so they don't wear sun screen'

According to these young people, having a tan or having skin that is more likely to tan than burn is regarded by some young people as safe, posing no or less risk of skin cancer.

'If you're on the tanner side, people think it's a protection, but you can still get skin cancer'.

Low awareness of the risk of sun on dull days

The lack of information or misinformation also reduces the likelihood of protecting skin on the cooler and duller days, or in Ireland compared to when abroad:

'I think the seasons, people only think of sun protection in the summer even though in winter, through the windows, you still need to protect your skin.'

'In Ireland we don't get as much sun, so we don't think we need as much protection.'

Low awareness of the risks of sun cancer

Another misconception discussed was the notion that skin cancer was less serious than other cancers:

'It's common knowledge that sun and skin cancer are linked but we don't view it as such an aggressive cancer, like lung cancer. If we had more information on what you go through if you get it. You hear about people going to a dermatologist, it doesn't sink into my brain that it's so serious.'

Not wanting to wear sunscreen and cost of sunscreen

A small number of young people mentioned how they did not like wearing sunscreen, one described how her skin reacted to most brands. One young person suggested that discomfort of applying sunscreen or sand sticking to the cream could be a deterrent.

The cost of sunscreen and moisturisers with added SPF was also raised as a barrier to using them. In addition, the need for accurate information on the effectiveness of different products and whether they worked as claimed by the make-up companies was something young people highlighted. One young person noted that products with SPF added tend to be more expensive and are promoted by make-up companies. One young person wondered if schools could make low cost or free sunscreen available in the schools (similar to some workplaces who provide free sunscreen for staff working on building sites).

Cost of sunglasses

For young people who wore prescription glasses, wearing sunglasses was a problem. The cost of prescription sunglasses was too high. This led to a discussion on the cost of ordinary sunglasses and knowing whether a cheap pair provided any protection or were safe to wear:

*'Sunglasses are quite expensive; it would help if they were more affordable.
I get a pair from Penney's, but I do wonder what protection they have.
Sometimes they have a label and sometimes they don't'*

According to these young people, associating sunglasses with health and eye protection was not an obvious link for young people in general, with one suggesting that

*'No one wears sunglasses'
'I don't think people would think to wear sunglasses to look after themselves.'*

Not wanting to wear layers on sunny days

The poor weather in Ireland was viewed by some as a major barrier to taking action to protect the skin during the good days. The rarity of the sunny days means that many young people want to make the most of good days.

'You want to get as much sun as possible – getting burnt is just a side effect'

Using layers of clothing as protection was only discussed by one of the groups. While several young people described wearing long sleeves or wetsuits, one young person felt young people in Ireland are unlikely to wear layers on hot days. Slipping on more clothing to protect the skin on hot days was considered a difficult message to sell, and not viewed as a 'cool' look in more ways than one.

*'As everyone wants to wear shorts and tee shirts. I think it's hard to understand
the clothing that would be the hardest to follow'
'People thinking that wearing a covering doesn't look good'*

A couple of young people described the difficulty in getting hats that fit.

Lack of shade

One young person admitted she would only take shade if it was too hot to be in the sun.

Taking shade was difficult in the summer in public places where according to one young woman most benches or seats are in sunny areas.

'It's hard to go out during the summer, there's no such thing as a bench in a shaded area. 'There's nowhere to go other than sit on the ground.'

Forgetfulness and not wanting to adopt the messages

Some of the young people acknowledged that one of the main barriers to adopting the messages is forgetfulness or unplanned nature of activities. Young people felt that they might be less inclined to follow the SunSmart guidelines if they had spent time getting ready to go out, doing their hair etc.

One young person felt that protecting your skin can require effort.

'They take a bit of effort. If I'm tired...thinking about getting sunscreen and wearing a hat, they're small steps but I just might not bother.'

What would influence young people to wear protective clothing or to seek shade?

Participants listed several ways that young people might be encouraged to wear protective clothing or seek shade

- Making it the norm
- Making it trendy – Influencers promoting the message by wearing coverings (rather than bikinis/swimsuits)
 - Caring for their appearance
 - Personal experiences of getting sunburn
- Ageing effects of the sun

One young woman suggested campaigns should also include the benefits to using skin protection, highlighting such benefits of, for example, the use of SPF creams would encourage their use.

'Skin looks better, feels better, looks younger'

Ageing Skin OR Risk of Cancer Messages

At the end of one of the discussions, the young people were asked how young people might respond to the use of the term 'cancer'. Most of the young people in the group felt it was important to use the term 'cancer'.

*'It would give them a reality check that getting the burn is not the only risk'
'Personally, for me it would make me think, as I don't know anyone suffering from cancer'*

However, one young person cautioned that it might trigger some young people if they have had personal experiences in the family.

When probed on what might have the biggest influence on young people's behaviour – messages about the ageing effects of the sun or messages about the risk of cancer - the young people in the group felt their age group are not as concerned about ageing skin. One young person felt there is a greater focus on skin cancer, and more beauty products now have SPF protection.

Platform for the SunSmart 5 S's

The young people were also probed on their views on the best platform to promote the video. Some felt that the YouTube platform worked well but the clip could also be promoted via social media, mainly Instagram, Snapchat or TikTok, but not Facebook.

Other suggestions

Other suggestions for the promotion of the message included a yearlong health promotion campaign as opposed to health messages that only appeared in the summer.

'I think if we advertised it all year long. We hear about it from June but if it was all year, it would drive the message home.'

One young person suggested that future campaigns should adopt the same approach as the tobacco control and risk of smoking messages i.e., give graphic hard hitting details about skin cancer.

'On cigarette packets they show pictures of what the side effects are. People don't know about skin cancer, if we showed people why we are doing it (the 5 S's) advertising this is what happens, or what can happen, let people know the implications.'

Table 1: Summary of Padlet/Discussion (5 S's)

Views on 5 S's	What would lead you to follow 5 S's messages	What would stop you following 5 S's messages?	What would influence people to wear protective clothing/seek shade?	Anything else to encourage young people to protect skin from sun?
Smart way to remind people/help understand	Simplicity	Forget	More images that are clear and easy to understand	Yearlong campaign not just summer
Clever way to get message across	Information on different types of protection	Not liking using Sunscreen	More emphasis of consequence of not using protection (the negatives)	Posters for schools
Not detailed enough – simplicity might forget	Promotion via social media (e.g., Tiktok, Snapchat, Instagram)	Cost of sunscreen	Add another video with consequences of sunburn	Have it as a billboard message
No mention of negatives or consequences of not protecting skin	Reminder from parents	Not having hat or glasses	Taught in primary school	Hard hitting ads – e.g., road safety/ smoking
Tune/music not memorable	Credible sources (e.g., doctors/ dermatologists)	Enjoying being in sun – not thinking about consequences	Workshops with NCCP or HSE in schools	Free/low-cost sunscreen
Make it more fun – have someone going through the process	Have SPF in all moisturisers			
	Have sunscreen available in the schools			
	Promote via schools			

3.6 Online Activity 3: Sunbeds

Focus: Irish Skin Foundation video on sunbeds

Summary findings: Sunbeds (online consultation)

Views on the video

- More informative than 5 S's video
- Accessible – easier to absorb the messages
- Not too flashy – kept your attention
- Increased awareness of the risk of sunbeds
- Animations and visuals are effective (e.g., memorable)

Possible additions to video

- Add real life story at the end of video
- Have hyperlink for more information

Ways to discourage young people from using sunbeds

- Informing them on the risks of sunbeds
- Promote the safer alternatives e.g., fake tans and cheaper alternatives
- Educate young people on the reason it is illegal for under 18s to use sunbeds

Promotion of health message

- More information in schools
- Mass media messages on risks of sunbeds and UV light
- Use of graphic messages like those on cigarette packages to deter use

The third online consultation activity focused on the Irish Skin Foundation video on the harms of sunbeds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHS1H8INzgc>. The session focused on two questions.

1. What do you think of this video?
2. What would discourage young people from using sunbeds?

Feedback on video

Overall, the young people were positive in their assessment of this video clip. They found the information easy to access in a format they described as 'easy.' The visuals, 'tune' and graphics worked for them, making the message more memorable. The use of graphics and animation to deliver the health message was regarded as being more effective than 'people talking.'

Accessible Format

The young people regarded the information in the video as easy to follow, to read and to absorb:

'It's easy to follow'
'It's catchy and easy to read'
'It got to the point quickly'

Memorable/Impactful Visuals

The visuals and animations used in the video were positively evaluated and regarded as central to the success of the video and its message:

'I liked the animation at the end of the sunbed closing with a bang, it's harsher, it stays with you more.'
'I liked the visual picture of the skin ageing'
'Seeing what happens rather than people talking was good'

Informative

In their feedback the young people talked about the messages they received, the things they learnt from the video. They confirmed that a lot of the information in the video was new to them. For example, the information that tanning is skin damage was new to all the young people in one group:

'I didn't realise that all tan is skin damage, I thought tan was normal'

Similarly young people were surprised to learn that sunbeds give out UV rays, and that these are just as harmful as the sun's rays with respect to skin cancer:

'That any amount of UV ray is not safe, it is all dangerous'
'I didn't know sunbeds omitted UV rays, I didn't think they were UV rays.'
'The sun is dangerous, but it is just as dangerous when it is artificial.'

The association with skin ageing and UV rays, from sunbeds or the sun, was also new for some:

'I didn't know about ageing the skin'

Overall, the video was rated as 'very informative' and led one young person to conclude:

'I learnt not to go in a sunbed'

What would discourage young people from using sunbeds?

Not many of the participants used or knew people who used sunbeds.

'In my area young people are more likely to use fake tans'

One of the young people was aware of girls in her sister's class who had been using sunbeds since second class (after their first communication), but this was described as the exception.

Information on the risks of sunbeds and UV light

In response to a question on ways to discourage those who do use sunbeds from using them, the dominant message was more information on the risks associated with sunbeds and UV light. How this information was delivered and by whom was discussed. They felt that young people would be discouraged from using sunbeds if they were more aware that UV light from a sunbed was as dangerous as the UV rays from the sun. They said more information was needed on:

- the dangers of sunbeds and UV light
- the ageing effect of UV light and sunbeds
- the risk factors and side effects as given to users by the providers of sunbeds

'I think when you go to use the sunbed it should be the responsibility (of the owner) to tell you what the side effects are.'

Cost

Aside from the health risks, the cost of using sunbeds was raised as a deterrent and was something young people felt could be used to discourage their use, with cheaper alternatives such as fake tan promoted:

'The price of them (would discourage using them) whereas you could spend five euro on fake tan'

Regulation

Some queried the regulations for sunbed use in Ireland and advocated for stricter regulations and enforcement. One group discussed the illegality of sunbeds for those under 18, and how it is important to educate young people on the reasons why sunbeds are illegal.

'Give information on the reasons why it is illegal for under 18s to use sunbeds'

Possible additions to video

Adding real life stories at the end of the video was suggested as a possible useful addition, particularly for those who are unaware of the risks of sunbeds.

One young person also suggested adding a hyperlink at the end of the video, linking to more information:

'Maybe put references at the end, if people wanted to go to learn for themselves, (add) a hyperlink that they could click on'.

In one of the discussions young people queried whether other tanning products were safe, and if for example it is safe to use fake tan. Some thought the use of fake tan could be added to the video as a safe alternative.

'Maybe add alternatives to sunbeds, (ideas) on what you could do instead, you could say there is fake tan'

How to get the message to young people

Identifying the need for more information on the risks associated with sunbed use, young people considered how this information could be delivered and communicated. They highlighted the need for clear and full information that could be delivered through schools, or mass media with the use of graphic images:

- The provision of clear and full information on the risks
- More education in schools
- More mass media messages on the risk of sunbeds and UV light
- The use of graphic images like those used on cigarette packets to deter use

'Like on cigarette packets the images are gross. If they did something like that to go with them (sunbeds).'

Table 2: Summary of Feedback on Online Activity 3 Discussion on Sunbeds and UV rays video

What did you think of the UV video?	What would discourage you from using a sunbed?	Other
Accessible- catchy, easy Good animation and graphics Memorable – message stays with you Informative – learnt UV rays risk skin cancer and ageing	More information on risks Highlight alternatives The cost Regulations The use of graphic imagery in campaigns	Add hyperlink to video Have music to make it memorable Use real life stories More information in schools Posters and leaflets Promote to parent Mass media Graphic messages like cigarette packs Road safety ads

3.7 Online Consultation Activity 4: Sources of Health Information

Focus: Health Information

Summary findings – Sources of Health Information (online consultation)

Sources of health information

- Parents
- Schools (SPHE)
- GPs/Dermatologists
- Internet
- Social Media/Beauty Influencers

Best source of information

- Mum/Parents
- Credible health professionals e.g., dermatologists/doctors
- Irish Beauty influencers (e.g., Lauren Whelan)

Best ways to get information to young people

- TikTok, Snapchat, Spotify, Instagram,
- Youtubers/Irish Social Media Influencers (forced Ads)
- School (counsellors and SPHE, homework activities/links to videos, workshop for older pupils in secondary school e.g., Transition Year students)
- Cosmetic professionals talking about skincare
- Video on correct way to apply sunscreen
- Parent campaign

The final online session explored sources of health information. In two of the sessions (YAG and Online Session 1) a prepared Padlet screen was used. The session explored:

1. Where young people get information about taking care of your health?
2. Who is the best person/people to get information from on protecting your skin from the sun?
3. What's the best way to get information out to young people?
4. Any other suggestions?

Where do young people get information about taking care of their health?

The most frequently mentioned source of health information given by young people was social media, and internet sites. However, there was a consensus that not all information on such sites can be trusted and is therefore not always attended to.

Young people said they exercised a degree of caution or discretion in relation to the information communicated via social media and were particularly discriminating regarding information from social influencers. For example, those who promoted expensive skin care products, they did not apparently use themselves, were not always trusted (example given Kylie Jenner). The realisation (which young people said came with age) that social influencers were paid to promote certain products undermined their authority.

The specific social media sites mentioned by young people were TikTok, Spotify, Snapchat, and Instagram.

'I think TikTok is a good platform, the majority (of young people) are on it and spend hours on it'.

'Snap chat – if you're clicking through the stories and ads come up, you have to watch them for at least five seconds'.

'Spotify is good as well as you can't skip the ads if you don't have a premium'.

Parents, particularly mothers, were mentioned as sources of information. Schools, and information received via SPHE was also a mentioned source of health information. Friends also featured as a source of information, but this was not elaborated on during the discussions.

Who is the best person to provide health messages?

Influencers

The importance of having trusted information from trusted sources was highlighted by young people across all groups. As noted above, the young people acknowledged that information received via social media sites and online platforms could not automatically be trusted. One young person suggested that influencers might play an important role in reinforcing the message.

'Influencers would be a better reminder to protect skin'.

One young person cautioned against the use of influencers to promote the message of skin protection but also suggested they should post more pictures of them protecting their skin than wearing bikinis and swim suits.

Some felt that Irish Influencers mentioned might have some credibility. During the discussions the following Irish Influencers were mentioned.

- Keilidh MUA
- Keelin Moncrieff
- Lauren Whelan

Credible sources

Parents, especially mothers, were regarded as one such trusted source, although it was also noted that parents don't always have full and accurate information.

'HSE – parents have wrong information too'

The importance of having a strong skin care health campaign that would capture young people's attention was noted. Such a campaign would need to have trusted figures of authority (e.g. recognised health professionals such as GPs or dermatologists) to deliver the skin care message. The young people felt advice from verified sources is more likely to be listened to. However, some suggested that such a campaign would be more effective when delivered via TV or radio, or poster campaigns. This would have the added benefit of reaching both parents and pupils during car journeys to school etc.

'Most accurate would be HSE but most reachable would be through social media or parent'

School was suggested by a few, with some limitations. While SPHE was mentioned as a source of health information, it was noted that this part of the curriculum is not compulsory beyond second year which means some young people will miss out. Delivery of skin care interactive workshops were suggested one possible way to get the information to young people after second year.

'In our year everybody hated the workshop where you had to sit for two hours to listen to someone... you need something more interactive.'

The way in which a teacher or facilitator engages with and delivers the health information was raised as important, young people said this affected how the message was received:

'We have a wellbeing class. If a teacher engages with it well and talks through the importance of it (health topic) it goes through well.'

One of the young people suggested providing more information about the science behind sunburn and how it damages the skin. Another was interested in learning more about the short- and long-term effects of the sun.

Best way to get information

While young people highlighted the limitations and risks associated with social media as a vector of health information, they generally acknowledged it as a key platform to reach young people.

Using respected and trusted sources of information to deliver the information was key. Skin care health messages from the HSE, from doctors, dermatologists and from respected Irish social influencers were named as the best way to get information:

*'I think social media is the biggest...we can tell if its fake news.
Official accounts are more likely to be believed.'*

'Social media- but only if a verified source'

Some noted that all is not as it seems on social media, and young people need to be cautious when taking on messages from social influencers.

*'Highlight the fact that photos of celebrities are photo shopped.
Kyle Jenner does not use her own products.'*

Some felt it was advisable to use doctors to deliver messages rather than celebrities. School counsellors, engaging teachers and parents were also identified.

Young people suggested the messages which are more likely to be followed were those showing the consequences of not taking care of your skin. This might include the ageing effect, the risk of cancer, and removing the association between tanned skin and beauty.

'This content is usually in the form of videos which debunk myths about skin care and show the consequences and repercussions for those who are 'really careless' about their skin'.

During one of the sessions the facilitator asked how likely 18–24-year-olds were to follow official websites (e.g., HSE website), the young people felt that if it was sponsored and promoted to this age-group they would see it but not necessarily actively follow such websites.

'Not to follow, but just to see it. If information is sponsored young people will see it anyway'.

The power of subliminal messaging was highlighted, one young person described how she skips through material on TikTok.

'... if the message is concise, you hear it without even meaning to'.

Other suggestions of ways to promote the safe skin care message included putting health information pamphlets in chemists and make-up stores. When asked on the possible content of these, they suggested including the benefits of SPF products and why it is important to promote safe skin health and providing information on skin ageing.

'To highlight that everybody's skin isn't the same, and we all need to learn about our own skin and how to take care of it properly'.

One young person said that as everyone's skin is different people need to know that using certain products on some skin types can damage the skin barrier.

Table 3: Summary of Online Activity 4: Discussion on Health Information

Sources of health information?	Who is best source of information?	Best way to get information to young people?	Other
Social media/Internet	Mum/Parents	TikTok, Snapchat, Spotify, Instagram	Interactive workshops for young people from 3rd year if no SPHE in school
Parents	Credible health professionals e.g., dermatologists/doctors	Youtubers	
Beauty influencers	Irish Beauty influencers (e.g., Lauren Whelan)	Irish Social Media Influencers	Wellbeing week in schools – have home competitions and homework activities & links to videos
School SPHE		School (counsellors and SPHE before 3rd yr.)	
Posters		Workshop for older pupils in secondary school e.g., Transition Year students	Put more emphasis on the other ways to protect skin other than sunscreen
GPs			
Dermatologists			
		Have as topic as part of wellbeing class in school	Have cool people wearing covering in the sun
		Cosmetic people talking about skincare	
		Video on correct way to apply sunscreen	Forced ads to get to content (e.g., 1st Ads on TikTok/Spotify)
		Parent campaign	

Other messages

At the end of one of the sessions, young people discussed some messages that might be relayed from different sources:

- Reinforce the message that all tan damages the skin
 - Use an App that shows the sun damage on skin
- Adopt interactive approach to discussing the topic of skin protection (e.g., CPR training at school was activity based which reinforced messages)
- Promote the use of prompts to remind people to protect skin (e.g., GAA Cúl Camps had wrist bands that change colour when it gets hot)
- Promote skin protection in skin care routine – encourage the benefits of using sunscreen
 - Encourage the benefits rather than the damage (e.g., skin looks brighter etc.)
- Mention the non-sunscreen ways if protecting the skins e.g., UV protection in most moisturisers, clothes, shade, glasses, hat

Section 4: In-person consultations with young people from the Traveller community

The in-person sessions were designed by the Participation Team to be interactive and to promote discussion on the three topics:

- Care in the sun (Body map)
- The use of sunbeds (Open Space)
- The promotion of health messages (Moving debate)

Given the Covid 19 restrictions, the consultations were conducted with small groups of young people who were similar age and gender in a community centre. The sessions were facilitated by members of the Participation Team and the Hub na nÓg Senior Research Officer. The independent report writer was also in attendance.¹³

The young people were recruited from youth organisations working with young Travellers in two locations: one urban and one rural. The youth worker secured the informed consent from young people aged 18+ (and from parents if young person was aged under 18) and informed assent from young people aged under 18 years.

A total of four sessions were convened.

- Session 1: Urban Group – 4 females aged between 17 and 18 years
- Session 2: Rural Group 1 – 4 males aged between 12 and 14 years
- Session 3: Rural Group 2 – 4 males aged between 15 and 17 years
- Session 4: Rural Group 3 – 3 females aged between 16 and 18 years

For all sessions, the young people were welcomed to the session and introduced to the adults in the room. The facilitator provided the young people with an introduction to the consultation and why the NCCP would like their views on the best way to communicate with young people on protecting their skin. They explained why their views were important, and what will happen to them. They also informed them that the youth worker will be provided with a copy of the report when it is available, and that this report will be available on the NCCP website.

At the beginning of session, the facilitator explained and shared the Safeguarding Statement, which was posted on the wall in the room. The facilitator also asked the young people not to share very personal experiences, to be respectful, and reminded that the group that participation is voluntary.

¹³ To keep the numbers low (due to Covid 19 distancing) and to minimise the numbers of adults in attendance, it was not possible for the NCCP representatives to attend the in-person sessions.

To place the young people at their ease, a short icebreaker was used to ease the young people into the session.

There were three main activities to explore the three topics.

Activity 1: Body Map exercise to explore protection from the sun

Activity 2: Open Space discussion to explore young people views of sunbeds

Activity 3: Session on sources of health information

4.1 In-person consultation activity 1: Body Map (Protection of skin from sun)

Summary Findings – Body map (In-person consultation)

Ways to protect skin in the sun

- Sunscreen
- Clothing (long sleeves)
- Seeking shade
- Sunglasses
- Avoid midday sun
- Keeping cool and hydrated

Reasons for not protecting skin in sun

- Want a tan/colour
- Have good skin
- Show off bikini,
- Lack of knowledge
- Don't like sunscreen
- Too lazy
- Oils might not be good.

The Body Map exercise explored participants views on ways to protect the skin from the sun. For this exercise, a large drawing of a person (the body map) was pinned to the wall. To commence the activity, the facilitator asked for suggestions of a name for the body map, before asking the young people to suggest ways the person might protect their skin from the sun (see Figure 3 for examples of completed body map).

During the discussions, the facilitator prompted the young people for suggestions using the SunSmart Five S's (Hats, Sunglasses, Long Sleeves, Shade, and Sunscreen). For the second part of this activity, the facilitator explored with the group if there would be any reason why the person might not take steps (e.g., hat, glasses etc.) to protect their skin. Table 4 provides a summary of the messages from each of the sessions.

Figure 3: Example of completed Body Maps

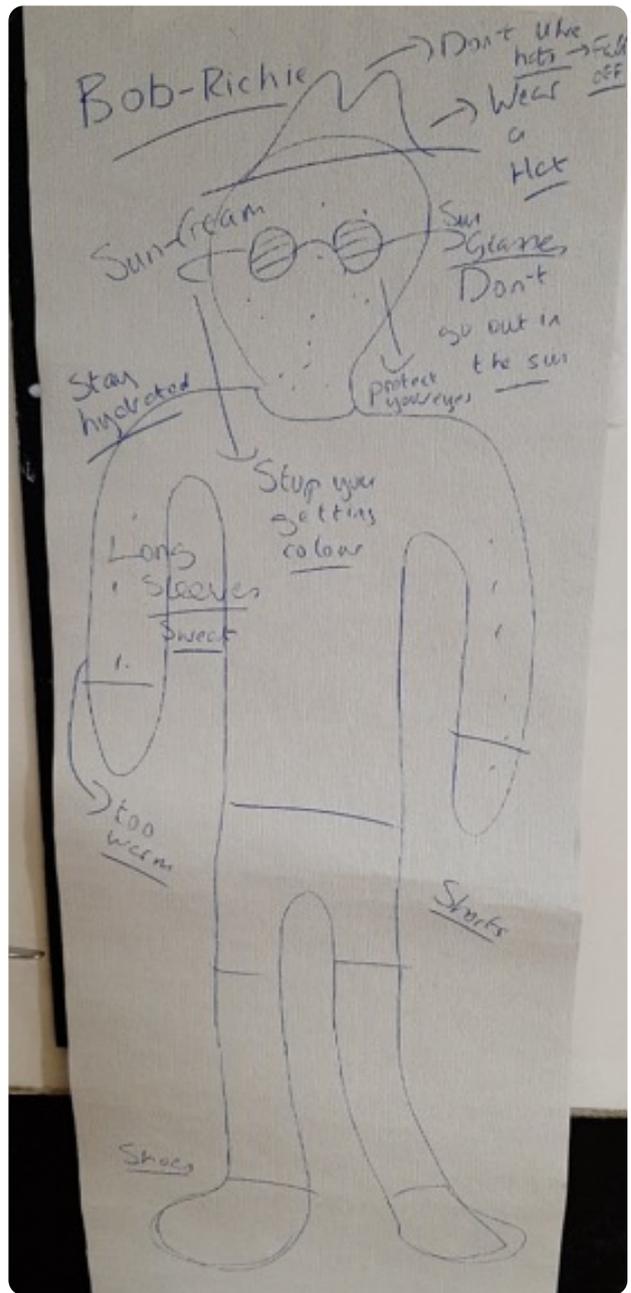
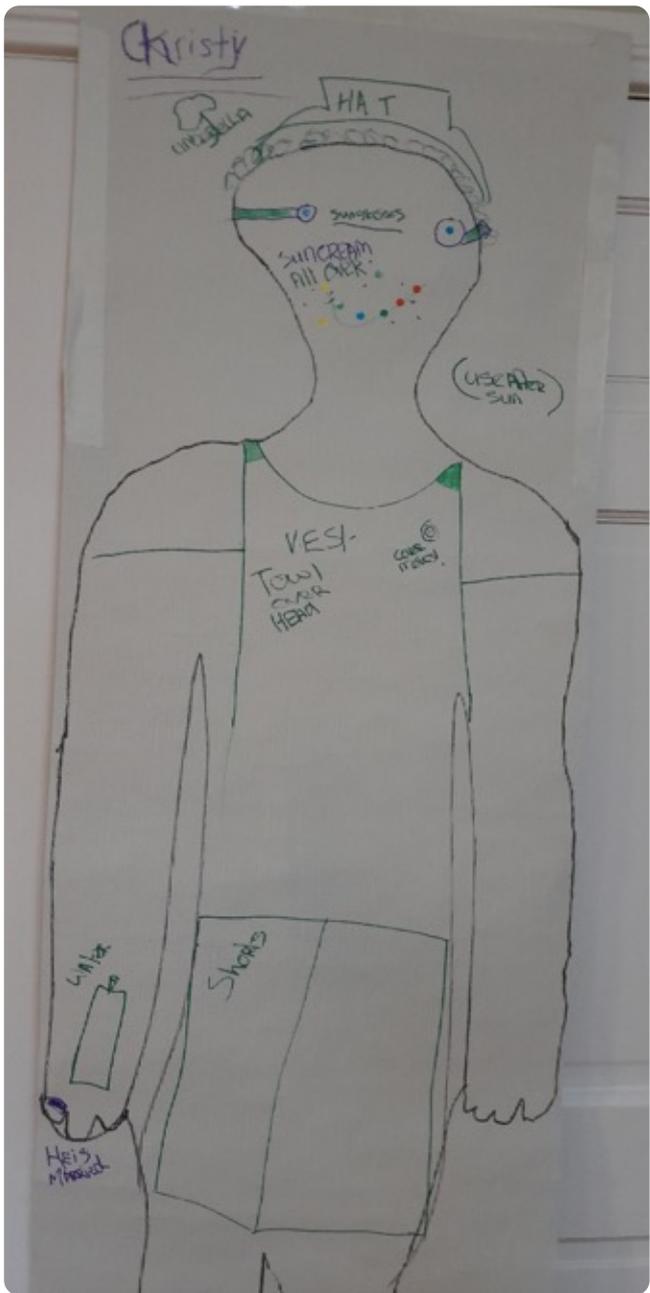


Table 4: Summary of in-person consultation activity 1: Body Map exercise on protection of skin from sun

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4
How to protect skin?	Hat Sunglasses Sunscreen (when in water) T-shirt/Shorts Towel	Sun cream Hat Sunglasses T-shirts (short sleeve) Sit in shade	Stay off the sunbeds Umbrella Glasses Sun cream Hat Stay inside middle of day Clothes (long sleeves) Keep body cool	Sunscreen/cream Don't go out in the sun Wear a hat Stay hydrated Might wear shorts to stay cool Sunglasses Shoes Long sleeve top
Why protect?	Need to protect self-e.g., plaster over the mole My scalp burns if not covered. Older people need to protect self-more.			
Why not use protection?	Want a colour/tan Show off bikini Maybe use baby oil to get colour Might be drunk on holidays and forget Some oils mightn't be good	Good skin	Too lazy Don't realise how dangerous the sun is. Don't like the feel of sun cream on skin Want to get a colour (wears baby oil to get a good colour)	Wouldn't wear a hat because it would mess up his hair Not wear long sleeves as it would block out the colour you would get from the sun

Why do people protect their skin from the sun?

In the discussions the young people were slow to identify reasons for protecting their skin from the sun. One participant reported wearing sunscreen as their skin burned easily in the sun. One described covering skin moles when in the sun, and another described wearing a hat to prevent their scalp from burning. In one group, the young people felt older people needed to protect their skin from the sun.

'I wear sun cream as I don't get a colour'
'I wear sunglasses – to look cool and for the women'

Why would people not protect their skin from the sun?

Across the four sessions the young people listed several reasons for not protecting their skin from the sun. Most described wanting to get a tan.

'I've good skin I go brown easily'
'I use sunbeds as I get a tan '
'I go tan – pure black'
'To get a good colour – Wear baby oil to get a colour'.
'They prefer having dark skin, it's important to them'

When asked why it is important to have a colour, the boys in the groups mentioned wanting to look good for the girls 'for the bures'.

'The girls like me brown'.
'He (body map) wants to be brown for the ladies'.

The girls mentioned feeling and looking good, and how they look related to their self-esteem.

Among the other reasons for not using skin protection included looking good in a bikini, forgetfulness or laziness, and not liking the feel of sunscreen. One group mentioned lack of knowledge on the consequences of not protecting their skin from the sun.

4.2 In-person consultation activity 2: Open Space discussion (Sunbeds)

Summary findings – Open Space sunbeds (In-person consultation)

Reasons for using sunbeds

- To tan/colour
- To be attractive to other sex
- For positive self-image/self-confidence/self-esteem, to feel happy/ good for mental health
- Preparation for sun tanning/sun holiday.

Reasons for not using sunbeds

- Skin damage (moles/burning/heat rash/skin peels/ dries out skin),
- Ageing effects
- Health risks (skin cancer)
- Cost
- Not allowed

In the second activity the facilitator placed two images on the wall. One had an image of sunbed and the second had a sunbed with an X through it. In this activity the facilitator focused on two questions

- 1. What are the reasons that young people use sunbeds? (sunbed image)**
- 2. What are the reasons that young people wouldn't use sunbeds? (sunbed image with X)**

The young people were invited to call out their response or write it on the whiteboard. In most of the groups one person volunteered to write the group's responses, with some adding additional points at the end of the discussion (see Figure 6 for example of whiteboard). The facilitator read through each answer and explored these points in further detail. Table 5 provides a summary of the responses to the two questions.

Table 5: Summary of in-person activity 2: Open Space discussion on sunbeds

	Session 1 Females 17-18 years	Session 2 Males 12-14 years	Session 3 Males 15-17 years	Session 4 Females 16-18 years
Why do people use sunbeds?	<p>Makes you brown</p> <p>To get used to sun</p> <p>It's good for your mental health</p> <p>Builds your self esteem</p> <p>Makes an outfit – confidence</p> <p>Good to get out of the house</p> <p>Everything looks better when tan.</p> <p>Makes the “undatable datable”</p> <p>No need to use fake tan</p>	<p>To get a colour</p> <p>For the ‘bures’ {Girls}</p> <p>Confident in front of the girls</p> <p>To look well</p> <p>Makes you feel ‘good looking’</p> <p>Impressive – and happy.</p>	<p>To look good</p> <p>Women</p> <p>Confidence</p> <p>Nice warm and comfortable</p>	<p>To get a colour so you wouldn't be snow white</p> <p>Makes you feel warm</p> <p>Less insecure</p> <p>Gets rid of spots (acne)</p> <p>Feel good about yourself</p>
Why not use sunbeds?	<p>You need to take a day off (from sunbed) to protect skin – you get pigmentation if you over use it (some use it 25 minutes every day)</p> <p>Makes your skin peel.</p> <p>Skin cancer</p> <p>Wrinkles</p>	<p>You can get cancer</p> <p>If you have moles, you should cover them up</p> <p>You can get a bad burning</p> <p>You should never over use a sunbed</p> <p>Use alternatives e.g., sunshine</p>	<p>Because you can get sick (don't want to get sick)</p> <p>Don't like them – uncomfortable</p> <p>Expensive €10 for 10 minutes.</p> <p>Afraid to get sick e.g., damage to my private parts</p>	<p>It's dangerous</p> <p>Makes skin age</p> <p>Not allowed to</p> <p>Don't want to age</p> <p>If there was a family history of skin cancer, they wouldn't use it</p> <p>It will dry out your hair</p> <p>Dry out the oils in your skin</p> <p>Get burned</p> <p>Heat rash</p> <p>Hurts your eyes</p>

Why do people use sunbeds?

The reasons young people gave for using sunbeds echoed their responses for not using sunscreen including getting a tan and to look good,

'Makes you brown'
'No need to use fake tan'
'To get a colour so you wouldn't be snow white'

One group depicted having a tan as part of their outfit, and several of the young people (males and females) described the importance of having a tan to attract the other sex.

'Makes the "undatable datable"'
'Everything looks better when tan'
'Confident in front of the 'bures' {girls}'

Across the groups the young people talked about how people feel after using sunbeds, with two groups referencing the importance to self-esteem and self-confidence.

'It's good for your mental health'
'Builds your self-esteem'
'Makes you feel 'good looking''
'Impressive – and happy'

A couple of the young people mentioned using the sunbed to prepare for sun bathing and sun holidays.

'To get used to the sun'

Participants in one of the groups described the benefits of using sunbeds to help clear acne.

Why do people not use sunbeds?

The effect of using (or overusing) sunbeds was discussed in a couple of the groups. This included pigmentation, drying the skin, and wrinkles.

'You need to take a day off (from sunbed) to protect skin – you get pigmentation if you over use it (some use it 25 minutes every day)'

'You can get a bad burning'

'It will dry out your hair'

'Dry out the oils in your skin'

Two of the groups mentioned the health risks of sunbeds including skin cancer.

'Because you can get sick (don't want to get sick)'

'Afraid to get sick e.g., damage to my private parts'

'If there was a family history of skin cancer, they wouldn't use it'

Young people in two of the groups mentioned the danger of sunbeds on skin moles, and the need to cover these when using the sunbed.

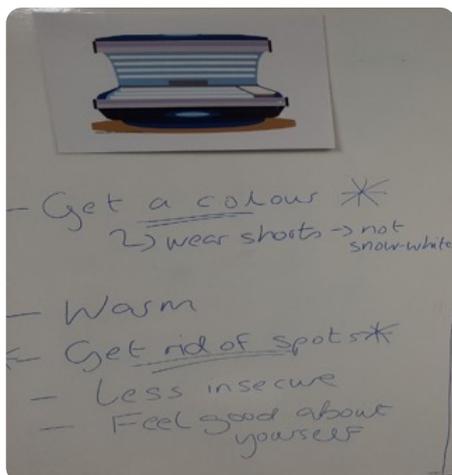
One group mentioned the cost of sunbeds.

'Expensive €10 for 10 minutes'

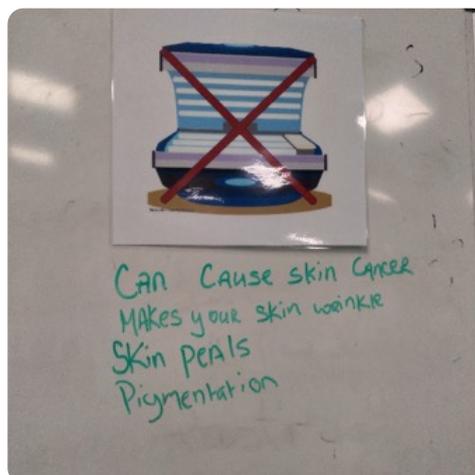
Other reasons for not using sunbeds included the opportunity to use alternatives (e.g., sunshine), not being allowed to use sunbeds, and the fact they are uncomfortable.

Figure 6: Examples of Whiteboard Activity on Sunbeds

Why people use sunbeds



Why people do not use sunbeds



4.3 In-person consultation activity 3: Moving debate on sources of health information

Summary findings – Sources of health information (in-person)

Who is the best person to get health information from?

- Parents (mostly younger age group)
- Health professionals

What is the best way to get information to young people?

- Word of mouth
- Facebook (mixed views, not trusted) Internet
- Social media (but reliable source)
- Radio (for older age groups)
- Personal stories, social media (with real life stories).

The final activity in the session explored the young people's views on sources of information about health. This activity explored two questions.

1. **Who is the best person to get health information from?**
2. **What's the best way to get health information out to young people?**

To commence the discussion, the facilitator read out three statements and asked the young people indicate their agreement / disagreement with each statement by moving to one side of the room if they agreed or to another side if they disagreed (see Table 6 for summary of level of agreement). The statements were:

Parents are the best people to get health information from

Facebook is the best way to get health information to young people

Radio adverts are a really good way to get health information to young people

The young people were invited to expand on the reasons for their decision. For example, if a young person disagreed with a statement they are asked to expand on this and then asked about any alternative sources of information.

Table 6: Summary of in-person activity 3: Moving space on sources of health information

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Parents are the best people to get information from	8	1	6
Facebook is the best way to get health information to young people	7	1	10
Radio adverts	4	1	10

Parents as sources of information

The young people’s views were mixed in their response to this statement. The younger age group were more likely to agree that parents were a good source of health information. For many, parents were viewed to be the first port of call when the young person is ill.

‘But if you’re sick, you’ll talk to parents then the doctor’

But one young person wasn’t convinced parents know best when it comes to health.

‘Parents just say have a flat seven up. I’d go to a doctor. If you need someone for your mental health you’d go to a psychologist’

However, in one of the groups two young people said they wouldn’t go to a doctor.

Social media as a source of information

The young people were not convinced about the usefulness of Facebook as a reliable source of information.

‘Sometimes Facebook has false information’

‘I don’t think it’s the best way, but it can be good’
‘I’d go to Google to get information’
‘You are more likely to catch an Ad on Facebook’

Snapchat was mentioned as a possibility as ‘people can talk to each other and share videos.’ Some, but not all, liked Google.

‘Don’t trust social media like Instagram, Facebook, Google’
‘Would trust TikTok’
‘Trust the Health Service if they put an Ad on social media’

When questioned about Instagram as a source of information, the young people said they only look at information shared by friends. Social influencers were mentioned as they can make the message more real, and with more 'likes' their messages can be taken on board.

'Real stories: It's serious stories that capture people's attention'

One group suggested making an App that might be shared on social media. They suggested that the source of information on the App needs to be certified (e.g., by a Government body). One of the young people felt that it was important for any approach to be co-designed with young people.

'Ask young people and they will give you ideas'

Radio adverts

Radio ads were considered more effective for older people and less so for younger age groups:

'Young people don't really listen to the radio'

Most of the young people described only listening to the radio when with their parents, and that they rarely watch the TV.

Other sources of information

More generally, young people felt word of mouth is one of the best ways to get information about health. One young person noted that most people are not as interested in health as they should be.

Suggestions on possible ways to grab people's attention was to post 'real life' and personal stories or to have real stories on the radio. The stories on the radio were considered to be a good way of having debates on different topics, with people calling in to express their views on the topics.

*'Young people hear their messages because they are in their parents' cars.
But the older young people who drive may not get the message.'*

In one of the groups the discussion included sunbeds to treat acne, the young people suggested having skin care experts come into schools and youth services. In this context they said they would trust someone who suffered with acne all their life.

Section 5: Session evaluation

At the end of the sessions, the participants were asked for their feedback on the consultation (see Appendix 2a and 2b for summaries of star rating for each item).

Overall, the feedback was extremely positive with most young people stating they felt comfortable and safe giving their opinions, understood what was being discussed, and were offered the chance to give their opinions. Most participants understood why their views were being sought, and how their opinions would be used. Most felt confident that what they said at the consultation would be taken seriously, and they would be told what happens to their views. Feedback on the online consultation was particularly positive with all young people indicating they had enjoyed the sessions, finding the discussions interesting and educational. The feedback from the in-person sessions was also positive, with most young people indicating that they felt they had been offered sufficient opportunity to voice their opinion and most knew why the consultation was taking place and how this information would be used but some were less sure about the audience for the consultation and the potential influence of the findings. A couple of young people weren't 100% sure why the consultation was been undertaken and how the findings will used. However, one young person was late arriving to the session and may have missed this information. From their responses to the open questions, it was obvious that the young people enjoyed the session, and felt they were offered sufficient opportunity to express their opinions.

Appendix 1

Members of project group

DCEDIY	Linda O Sullivan
DCEDIY	Stephanie Graham
Hub na nÓg	Kate Jones
Hub na nÓg	Mary Brereton
National Participation Office	Renagh Hayden
National Participation Office	Mark O'Dwyer
National Participation Office	Alexis Carey
NCCP	Áine Lyng
NCCP	Maria McEnery
Report Writer	Deirdre Fullerton
Report Writer	Sheena McGrellis
Youth Work Ireland	Karyn Farrell
Youth Work Ireland	Suzanne Byrne

Appendix 2

Appendix 2a: Participants' evaluation of Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence (Online consultation) (completed by 19 young people)

	Detail	1	2	3	4	5
Space	I felt comfortable giving my opinions				3	16
Voice	I got the chance to give my opinions				1	18
Audience	I know who wants to hear our opinions			1	3	15
Influence	I think what we said today will be taken seriously			1	3	15

Open Comments	
The best thing about today was:	<p>The small numbers in breakout rooms and being asked to have cameras</p> <p>Coordinators were amiable and welcoming they encouraged us to voice our opinions. It was lively discussion.</p> <p>That it was taken seriously</p> <p>Hearing everyone else's opinions</p> <p>Giving my perspective and opinions</p> <p>Learning about skin damage</p> <p>Getting to voice our own opinions and being listened to</p> <p>All young people not lectured got to give raw honest opinions</p> <p>The breakout rooms</p> <p>The atmosphere of the consultation was very warm and it didn't feel difficult to bring forward my opinions</p> <p>How involved everyone was, there wasn't many awkward silences Getting to hear everyone's ideas and being able to share my own ideas as well</p> <p>It was fun to see the videos and then talk about our opinions and hear each other's views and experiences. Everything we were doing was easy to follow and participate in.</p> <p>I was able to give my opinions comfortably and I did learn a lot :)</p> <p>Everyone was helpful and easy to talk to</p> <p>Getting to meet new people and be a part of a bigger project - it was by far the most comfortable meeting I've been a part of everyone bounced off each other and the time flew in!</p> <p>Discussions</p>
One thing you'd change from today's event	<p>An easier Ice breaker. Maybe one where the information is given to you, and you don't have to come up with it yourself</p> <p>If maybe if it was in person, but I know that it's not possible or safe</p> <p>Shortened meeting</p> <p>I would change the way one or two of the questions were phrased. I think once or twice I wasn't sure what I was answering about until there was further clarification.</p> <p>Nothing (x14)</p>

Appendix 2(b) Participant’s Evaluation of Space, Voice, Audience, and Influence (In-person session) completed by 15 young people

	Detail	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Space	I felt comfortable giving my opinions		1	1	2	10	14
	I felt safe giving my opinions		1	1	2	10	14
Voice	I got the chance to give my opinions			1	2	11	14
	I understood what was being discussed		1		8	5	14
	I could give my opinions whatever way I wanted			2	2	9	13
	I had enough time to talk		1	2	1	10	14
Audience	I know who wants to hear our opinions		1	2	2	9	14
	I know why they want the opinions of young people		1	2	3	7	13
	They were honest about what they would try to do with our Opinions		1	2		11	14
Influence	I know where our opinions are going next	1	1	5	2	5	14
	I know how we will be told about what happens to our opinions			3	5	6	14
	I think what we said today will be taken seriously			2	3	9	14

Open Comments	
What were the best things about today?	<p>I learned more and talked and gave more opinion</p> <p>I think we all got to voice our opinions and we got loads of different perspectives</p> <p>I learned more and it made me understand more about learning about skin cancer</p> <p>Learned more about sunbeds</p> <p>We got a chance to talk and listen</p> <p>It was fun</p> <p>Food</p> <p>I wasn't told stop talking</p> <p>The fact that I was heard, and I wasn't told stop talking I could talk whenever I felt the need to</p> <p>I could talk freely, and nobody told me to stop</p>
One thing you'd change from today's event	<p>Time</p> <p>Nothing (x8) I would change nothing it was fun</p>

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