



TV

Celebs back teen sunbed ban



Backing ... Hollyoaks star Gemma supports ban

By STAFF REPORTER

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CELEBRITIES today backed Government calls for under 18s to be banned from using sunbeds in tanning salons.

Hollyoaks actress Gemma Merna, who plays Carmel Valentine in the Channel 4 soap opera, and Girls Aloud singer Nicola Roberts both admitted to using sunbeds as teenagers.

Gemma, 25, said: "I started to use sunbeds once or twice a week with my friends when I was 15 but never realised the risks that I was putting my skin through just to get the perfect tan."





Pale ... singer Nicola Roberts

"When I was younger I just wanted to look tanned and to fit in with everyone and didn't give any thought to the risks I was taking.

"I now realise the damage that sunbeds can do and support any move to ban them to under 18s."

Singer Nicola, 24, who is making a documentary about the dangers of the tanning industry, said she has learned to love her pale skin after years of using fake tan to match her bronzed bandmates.

Both stars will speak at today's launch of a Private Member's Bill, which has already been endorsed by Health Secretary Andy Burnham, being introduced in Parliament by Cardiff North MP Julie Morgan.

Risk

Ms Morgan said: "It's a Bill that's urgently needed. If you get backing from the Secretary of State there's that much more chance we'll get it through. It's absolutely great."

Mr Burnham added: "The scientific evidence is clear - sunbeds increase your risk of getting skin cancer.

"It is far too easy for young people to use sunbeds and I am determined to take action to protect them.

"I fully support this Bill which will force tanning salons to ban access for people under 18 years old."

A Cancer Research UK report, commissioned by the Government, found six per cent of children aged 11 to 17 had used a sunbed, with the figure rising to 11 per cent in the North of England.

A fifth of children in Liverpool and 18 per cent of those in Sunderland said they had used a sunbed, according to the report published in November last year.

Sarah Woolnough, head of policy at Cancer Research UK, said: "We know that coin-operated sunbeds and unstaffed salons - which offer cheap deals - make using sunbeds extremely appealing to young people.

"We are concerned that unless action is taken to ensure salons are staffed young sunbed users will continue to put themselves at risk of skin cancer."

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