



## Soaps

# Sunbed boss left girl to burn



Burns ... Kirsty suffered horror injuries after using unmanned tanning salon

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**THE 'cavalier' boss of a tanning salon where a schoolgirl suffered 70 per cent burns during an unmanned session was today warned he faces jail.**

Kirsty McRae, 14, was left red raw after 19 minutes on a coin-operated sunbed — the first time she had used one — a court heard.

She put £1 in for five minutes and then added another £3 for a further 15 minutes when she felt she wasn't getting tanned enough.





Facing jail ... Hadley  
Wales News Service

Four hours later she was rushed to hospital with first-degree burns to three quarters of her body, put on a drip and given oxygen while doctors rehydrated her and administered painkillers.

James Hadley, 25, the owner of the 'Lextan' salon in Barry, South Wales, admitted five health and safety offences.

They were failing to staff premises throughout opening hours, failing to ensure goggles were available for customers' use and failing to ensure sunbeds were capped at a maximum 15 minutes exposure.

He also admitted employing a young person without carrying out a risk assessment and making a false statement to council investigators.

Prosecutor Lee Reynolds said council health and safety inspectors had previously raised concerns with Hadley about the salon in October 2008 and January 2009.

Just days before Kirsty was burned in February a "disgruntled parent" had contacted him about teenagers who were visiting his salon straight after getting off the school bus.

District Judge John Charles adjourned the case for the preparation of pre-sentence reports and told Hadley he had taken "cavalier" approach to health and safety legislation.

He said: "The combined seriousness of the offences warrants rather more than a financial penalty.

"Suffice it to say the public have to be protected, particularly young persons."



Facing jail ... Hadley  
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He added: "These offences - the combined seriousness of them - warrant at least a community penalty or the possibility of a sentence of imprisonment."

Mr Reynolds said: "Lextan was an unmanned salon and would open at 7.30am by a timed lock and would close at 9.30pm.

"For the majority of that 14 hours the salon was not manned at all.

"Customers were allowed access to the tanning equipment, including the sunbeds without being able to access advice or information from a member of staff.

"Customers would be completely unsupervised."

Hadley told council investigators there was a risk of under-16s using his equipment — but said it was their own risk if they ignored warning signs.

Barry JPs heard health and safety officers tried to buy a £2 pair of goggles from a vending machine in the salon but it had sold out.

Hadley was given a scholarship from the Welsh Assembly government to study economics and management at Cardiff University.

The court heard after graduating he opened a chain of salons attracting up to 1,000 customers a week.

Defending, Mark Owen said: "Mr Hadley has an entrepreneurial spirit - his concept and business model was extremely well received.

"He is a young businessman who has done his very best in seeking to meet the various requirements of the council.

"He's not someone who takes his health and safety responsibilities lightly.

"Many customers of unmanned tanning salons use them precisely because they are unmanned.

"Customers were using the salons out of their own free will. There is no obligation on the public to walk in and use them."

The court heard the Health and Safety Executive has issued fresh guidelines following the injuries suffered by Kirsty.

Hadley, of Resolven, Neath, who owns six other salons, was released on bail until next month.

Kirsty's mother welcomed the threat of the jail sentence — if it prevents other children going through the same horror.

Jill McRae, 49, said: "I don't want to see any child again going through what my daughter has been through.

"It shows just how seriously the courts are taking health and safety issues these days surrounding tanning salons.

"Justice must be done and if the courts decide that means jail in this case then I would welcome it.

"We don't want vengeance or to make it personal - just to protect children.

"Kirsty's superficial scarring has healed now but we just don't know what the long term damage will be to her skin.

"It may take many years and that is a difficult thing for a 15-year-old to deal with. But we have had marvellous support from Cancer Research UK who have been wonderful.

"Kirsty now realises she should never have gone in that place and hopefully her experience will show others not to do the same."