

For UK National and Trade (Agriculture, Construction and Healthcare) Media Only

## New UK report reveals urgent need to protect outdoor workers from the most common, yet preventable, cancer<sup>1</sup>

- \* Non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC) is the most common cancer in the UK and can considerably impact a person's physical and mental wellbeing<sup>1</sup>
- \* Outdoor workers are twice as likely to develop NMSC and more than half (58%) want more help from employers to protect themselves<sup>2,3</sup>
- \* New report outlines five areas of action needed to improve sun safety and NMSC symptom recognition for outdoor workers, and reduce the growing burden on the NHS<sup>3</sup>

**READING, UK – 9 July 2020** – The State of the Nation: Non-Melanoma Skin Cancer report, released today by Sanofi and with a foreword from Sir Edward Leigh MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Skin, revealed that public awareness about non-melanoma skin cancer (NMSC) is worryingly low and urgent action is needed to improve sun protection for outdoor workers. NMSC is the most common cancer in the UK, with more than 152,000 new cases diagnosed every year; the equivalent of 416 every day.<sup>1,4</sup> This is more than breast, prostate and lung cancers combined.<sup>5</sup>

Outdoor workers, such as construction workers and farmers, are more than twice as likely to develop NMSC as those that work indoors, because of increased exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UV) from the sun.<sup>2,6</sup> With approximately 130,000 construction workers in the UK alone, the number of people at increased risk of NMSC is significant, despite it being largely preventable.<sup>7</sup> There is a legal responsibility for employers in England to protect the long-term health of their employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act.<sup>8</sup> Yet a survey of over 3,600 people in the UK, conducted to inform the report, showed that two thirds (64%) of employees who work outside for more than one hour per day, do not get help from their employers to protect against skin cancer.<sup>3</sup> More than half (58%) of outdoor workers said they wanted help from their employer to protect themselves against NMSC.<sup>3</sup>

*“NMSC is a highly visible type of cancer that can cause lasting disfigurement in places such as the head, face, neck and hands. This can result in substantial distress and affect a person's self-esteem and confidence,” said Diane Cannon, Melanoma UK. “This report not only highlights the importance of increasing awareness of NMSC and its risk factors among outdoor workers, but for employers to improve the measures they have in place to protect their employees from this serious, yet preventable disease.”*

Additional results from the survey showed that 4 in 10 (40%) of UK adults were not at all confident about identifying the signs of NMSC, and when presented with the four most common symptoms (a scab or sore that won't heal, a scaly or crusty patch of skin, a flesh coloured bump that grows, or a volcano like growth), less than a quarter (23%) were able to correctly identify them.<sup>3</sup>

*“The publication of this report has highlighted the major gap that still remains in protecting outdoor workers from NMSC – they are at much higher risk for skin cancer and the ones who we should be protecting the most,” said Sir Edward Leigh MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Skin. “We hope that this will encourage the government to improve the education and guidance provided to employers about skin cancer prevention and detection, and the psychological support needed for people who live beyond skin cancer.”*

In addition, the report also highlights low numbers of senior dermatologists (doctors specialised in skin conditions), under-reporting of NMSC and inconsistent quality of care as key areas of need.<sup>3</sup> In order to address these challenges and manage the growing numbers of NMSC cases, which are estimated to reach almost 400,000 by 2025,<sup>9,10,11</sup> the report outlines five areas to be prioritised by the government and policymakers. These include: 1) improving awareness of skin cancer and sun safety; 2) increasing patient access to disease information and support; 3) improving data on NMSC; 4) preparing for the growing impact of NMSC on the health system, and; 5) increasing patient access to a broader range of healthcare specialists.<sup>3</sup> With an ageing population and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to be felt, taking action now will be vital to help reduce the increasing burden on the NHS.

### **About NMSC**

NMSC refers to a group of cancers that develop in the upper layers of the skin.<sup>1</sup> Although there are several types of NMSC, the most common types are basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma.<sup>12</sup> The single biggest risk factor is exposure to the sun.<sup>13</sup> Over 80% of tumours occur on the head, face and neck – the areas most regularly exposed to the sun – and it most commonly affects those with fair or light skin, which easily burns.<sup>13</sup>

NMSC can be successfully treated with surgery, but in a small number of cases the cancer can spread and be fatal.<sup>14</sup> However, even when treatment is successful the disfiguring nature of tumours associated with surgery means NMSC can have a significant lasting psychological impact, particularly as a patient's risk of developing further tumours and having more surgery remains high.<sup>15,16</sup>

### **About the State of the Nation Report**

Sanofi published the State of the Nation: Non-Melanoma Skin Cancer report to improve understanding of NMSC and the quality of care offered to patients across the UK. It includes contributions from Sir Edward Leigh MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Skin (APPGS), key opinion leaders in dermatology and patient advocates, as well as results from a survey of over 3,600 members of the UK public.

The survey was conducted by Sanofi and Brains and Cheek in March 2020 to investigate public knowledge and understanding of NMSC in the UK. 3,638 adults aged 18 years and above were interviewed online about NMSC.

## About Sanofi

Sanofi is dedicated to supporting people through their health challenges. We are a global biopharmaceutical company focused on human health. We prevent illness with vaccines, provide innovative treatments to fight pain and ease suffering. We stand by the few who suffer from rare diseases and the millions with long-term chronic conditions.

With more than 100,000 people in 100 countries, Sanofi is transforming scientific innovation into healthcare solutions around the globe.

Sanofi, Empowering Life.

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