

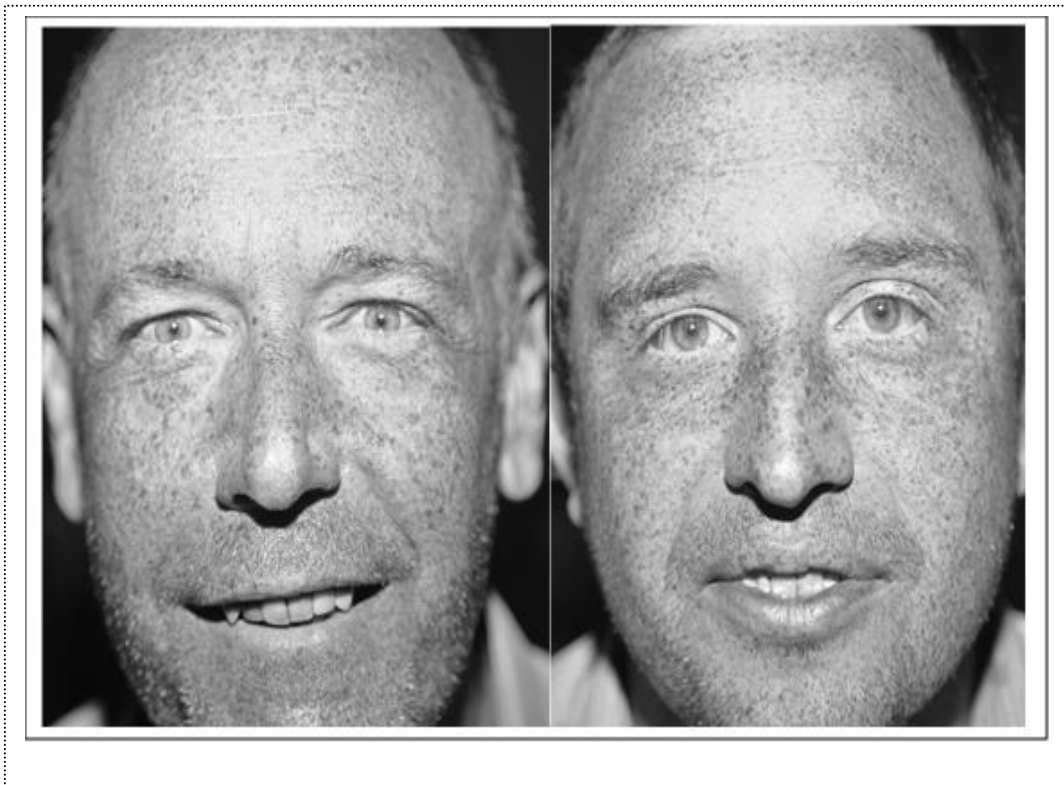


Seeing skin damage changed our behaviour in the sun

Employer: Venator Greatham site

Area: Hartlepool

Theme: Skin Cancer Awareness



Venator is a global manufacturer and marketer of chemical products that comprise a broad range of pigments and additives that bring colour and vibrancy to buildings, protect and extend product life, and reduce energy consumption. Venator's Greatham site is based just outside of Hartlepool and employs 240 associates with approximately 100 core contractors. We gained our Better Health at Work Bronze Award in 2018 and currently working towards the Silver award.

Each year we run a promotion on sun safety which comprises each employee receiving information on skin cancer, how to stay safe in the sun and sun cream. This year we wanted to reinvigorate this promotion and gave some thought on how we could do something different. Our EHS Manager had a great idea of hiring a UV camera so individuals could have their faces and heads photographed under ultra-violet light which will show any sun damage which is invisible to the naked eye. Our aim was to instigate positive behaviour change regarding sun safety, and we felt this would be assisted by personalising the promotion and giving individuals feedback on how effective they have been in protecting their skin from sun exposure.



We promoted the event across the site throughout May and booked the camera from Advanced Camera Services for two days in June. The camera itself was portable so rather than have it in one location we decided to take it out to various locations across the site to make it more accessible for employees and to maximise participation.

Initial reactions to the photographs were generally, one of surprise. Once the photographs were transferred to a PC and increased in size this turned to shock. Skin pigmentation is emphasised with UV photography. When compared with normal lighting, lighter skin appears very pale and darker skin even darker. An uneven, spotted pigmentation is a sign of UV damage and occurs in areas that are subject to regular UV rays – for instance on the face or the hands. As you can see from the images, some had some surprising results.

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To get feedback on the exercise we asked participants the following questions. Feedback from individuals who took part was positive overall and it was pleasing that some had already changed the way they protected themselves from the sun:

1. Did you change your health behaviour afterwards e.g. how you reduced your sun exposure/applied sun cream etc?

‘Yes, applied and re-applied sun cream taking extra notice to not miss any areas – didn’t get burnt, as I usually miss a bit somewhere and it is very painful’

‘Yes, I focussed more on the small areas identified by the UV camera’

2. Did you promote sun safety with friends and family afterwards?

‘Yes – showed them my photos’

‘Although my picture wasn’t a true representation of the sun damage due to moisturiser, foundation UV factor, it did make me think about using sun cream, more so my husband who spends a lot of time outside at home and doesn’t have any hair! I gave him the sun cream and made sure I kept nagging him to put it on. He has been to the doctors recently as I think the damage had already been done but it has made sure that it does not get any worse. He does wear a hat more as well’

3. How can we make improvements if we decide to run this event again?

‘An improvement would be to make sure the ladies (or gentlemen!) don’t have anything on their skin so that the camera gives a true reflection of any damage’

