# MPs launch inquiry into influencers promoting dangerous tanning products and suncream misinformation



Social media influencers promoting dangerous tanning products and spreading misleading anti-suncream messages are now facing critical scrutiny from MPs, sparking a parliamentary inquiry aimed at tackling the wave of misinformation about sun protection. This inquiry specifically targets the influencers on platforms like TikTok and Instagram who engage in irresponsible promotions without adequately warning their followers about the potential health risks associated with their products.

The anti-suncream movement has gained alarming traction online, with viral claims falsely equating sun protection to “rubbing cancer into your skin.” Some influencers have even shared recipes for DIY suncream, a reckless move that experts warn could leave individuals severely exposed to harmful UV rays. This inquiry represents a necessary counteraction to the detrimental trends that have emerged, as MPs assert that enhanced regulatory authority is imperative for the Advertising Standards Authority to dismantle dangerous narratives perpetuated by these influencers.

Carolyn Harris, a Labour MP and chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Beauty and Wellbeing, has articulated the urgent need for public education about the very real dangers of ultraviolet (UV) exposure. Her call to action highlights that without proper education, the nation could well face a health crisis linked directly to irresponsible tanning practices. Meanwhile, the British Beauty Council has underscored the rampant misinformation plaguing social media, pushing for stringent regulations and accountability from influencers. The council plans to present recommendations to the government and industry stakeholders in the near future—a move that aligns with the growing concern over public health being compromised.

This inquiry is far from isolated; it mirrors ongoing discussions in Parliament regarding influencer culture, where reports from the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee have revealed that over 75% of influencers fail to disclose their promotional relationships clearly. This alarming lack of transparency poses significant risks, particularly in light of the psychological impact these promotions have on consumers. Unscrutinized promotion of risky products could endanger the health of impressionable young audiences.

As concerns rise over influencer exploitation and its consequences, previous calls for robust regulations and updated advertising standards grow louder. Discussions dating back to May 2022 urged protective measures not only for child influencers but also for the wider public vulnerable to harmful ideals perpetuated by influencers. The idealised portrayals of body image can have detrimental effects on mental health and self-esteem, especially among youths.

The intersection of influencer culture and health risks has garnered heightened attention following investigative reports into banned tanning products, signalling the urgent necessity for stricter oversight within the influencer marketing industry. Investigations, such as a significant report by BBC News, have revealed shocking shortfalls in consumer protections within this rapidly evolving yet dangerously under-regulated sector.

With MPs and health advocates now demanding accountability in influencer marketing practices, this inquiry is primed to instigate crucial scrutiny of an industry that wields considerable influence over public health opinions. Potential regulatory changes could empower authorities to tackle misleading messaging while promoting safer and more responsible practices in the influencer community, redirecting the focus back to genuine health and wellbeing.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14722893/MPs-online-personalities-anti-suncream-misinformation-TikTok.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/1126/influencer-culture/> - The UK Parliament's Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee conducted an inquiry into influencer culture, examining the power of social media influencers, the operation of influencer culture, and the lack of regulation in promoting products or services. The inquiry found that over 75% of influencers 'buried their disclosures within their posts' and assessed the impact of influencers on media and popular culture, highlighting both positive roles and potential harms. The committee's findings and recommendations are detailed in their report.
3. <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/378/digital-culture-media-and-sport-committee/news/170678/influencer-culture-mps-call-for-action-on-advertising-and-employment-rules-to-protect-children-and-online-performers> - In May 2022, the UK Parliament's Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee called for action on advertising and employment rules to protect children and online performers. The committee highlighted the rapid expansion of influencer culture and identified regulatory gaps, particularly concerning advertising disclosure and protection for child influencers. They recommended strengthening employment law and advertising regulations to address these issues and ensure proper protections for all involved in the influencer industry.
4. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2022-06-30/debates/B57343AB-3DA8-4872-953D-AB844C6CAD3B/MentalHealthAdvertisingAndBodyImage> - In June 2022, during a debate in the House of Lords, Lord Kamall discussed the impact of influencer promotions on body image and mental health. He highlighted concerns about influencers promoting certain products and altering their images to present idealized versions of themselves, leading to feelings of inadequacy among young people. The discussion emphasized the need to address these issues as part of the online advertising program to protect individuals' well-being.
5. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-04-30/debates/434AFD6E-7484-47DA-8C1F-4A945896642B/SocialMediaAndHealth> - In April 2019, during a debate in the House of Commons, Alison Thewliss raised concerns about the harm caused by celebrity endorsements on social media, particularly regarding body image and eating disorders. She cited examples of celebrities promoting diet pills and questioned the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport about the government's approach to regulating such content. The discussion highlighted the significant impact of social media promotions on young people's health and well-being.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0bvzg84> - A BBC News program titled 'Dangerous Tanning Products' investigated the promotion of banned tanning products by social media influencers to millions of followers. The program highlighted the risks associated with these products and the lack of regulation in the influencer marketing industry, raising concerns about consumer safety and the need for stricter oversight.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-61347936> - In June 2022, BBC News reported on MPs calling for more protection for social media influencers and their followers. The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Committee highlighted the rapid growth of online culture and identified regulatory gaps, particularly concerning child influencers and advertising compliance. The report emphasized the need for updated regulations to protect both influencers and their audiences in the evolving digital landscape.