

leisure opportunities

November 2020 Issue 788

Your careers & recruitment partner

Gyms open, but group ex fight looms

Gyms, health clubs and leisure centres will be able to open their doors when the current lockdown measures in England come to an end on 2 December.

More importantly, fitness and physical activity facilities will be able to remain open under all three tiers of the government's new COVID-19 alert system, which will be introduced when lockdown ends.

Announcing the government's "COVID-19 Winter Plan" in parliament on 23 November, Prime Minister Boris Johnson confirmed physical activity facilities will not be included in any of the baseline measures in the tiered system.

There was bad news for those depending on group exercise, however, as this will be banned in tier 3 areas, adding huge uncertainty for operators – especially boutiques.

The guidance on the tiers states that group exercise will be allowed in tiers 1 and 2, but in tier 3, "classes (including fitness and dance) should not go ahead, unless between people



SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/ALEKSANDAR MIJATOVIC

■ The sector faces a fight to keep group ex going

of the same household or bubble" – a decision which has operators scratching their heads in bemusement

Liz Terry, editor of *Leisure Opportunities*, said: "The industry will fight this irrational decision – group exercise is a vital part of people's fitness regimes and significantly improves both fitness levels and exercise adherence."

[More: http://lei.sr/S6u9M_0](http://lei.sr/S6u9M_0)



Group exercise is a vital part of people's fitness regimes

Liz Terry

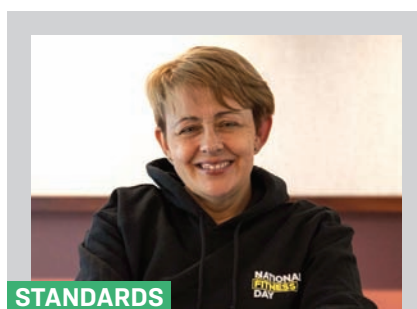


FITNESS

Gym Group building pipeline for 2021

Demand for memberships "strong" despite pandemic

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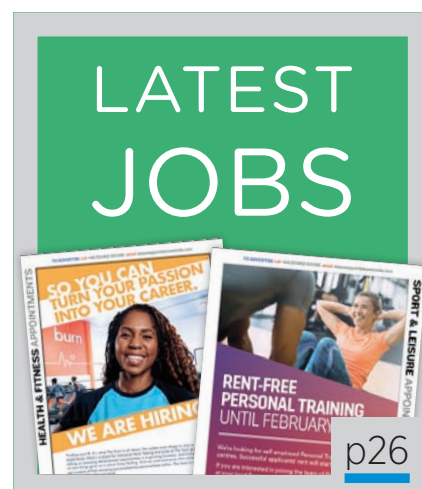


STANDARDS

ukactive reveals details of new Active Standard

Industry body looks to roll out initiative in Spring 2021

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Greg Whyte: Closing gyms means two-thirds of cancer prehab and rehab services have been out of action

The UK's physical activity sector is currently lobbying to have gyms and leisure centres classed as essential services, in order for them to be able to operate during COVID-19 lockdowns.

There is, however, plenty of evidence to suggest that the sector is already an essential service.

This is the view of Greg Whyte, chair of ukactive's, Scientific Advisory Board and Professor of Applied Sport and Exercise Science at Liverpool John Moores University.

According to Whyte, a perfect example of the sector's essential nature is the fact that two-thirds of the country's cancer



■ Whyte has campaigned for the industry to be classed "essential"

"If we are to avoid a future healthcare catastrophe, we must recognise the fitness sector as an essential service"

prehabilitation and rehabilitation support services are delivered at industry facilities.

"According to Anthony Crozier and the PAEx team at Liverpool John Moore's University, 66

per cent of our nation's cancer prehabilitation and rehabilitation support services are delivered at leisure centres, with 69 per cent of this provision funded through local authorities and the third sector," Whyte commented.

"In addition, 73 per cent of functional assessments and 80 per cent of the exercise programmes which support these interventions are delivered by Level 4 instructors from the sector.

"If we want to avoid a future healthcare catastrophe, we must recognise the fitness sector as an essential service," he concluded.

[More: http://lei.sr/f2g2b_0](http://lei.sr/f2g2b_0)

Dr Paul Bedford announces Retention Convention 2020, to be held on 3 December, will go virtual



■ Bedford has compiled an all-female cast for the 2020 convention

Global retention expert, Dr Paul Bedford, will host his sixth annual Retention Convention virtually, bringing together global speakers to form a documentary-style event around turning customers into communities.

With 700+ individuals from 235 companies, from 30 countries, the event will be hosted on 3 December 2020 and will feature international speakers.

Bedford commented: "Now more than ever, we need to

"Now more than ever we need to focus on retaining customers and building communities"

focus on retaining customers and building communities."

The 2020 line up is an all-female cast and includes Australian studio owner, Amanda Bracks, who will open the convention with a session focused on how to build a tight community of members using fun retention activities, attendance driven competitions, a postcard programme and

referral programmes, including examples used during lockdown.

Bedford has also selected Gillian Reeves to speak – the person responsible for Virgin Active's 122 Group Exercise programmes and increasing participation from 25 to 40 per cent during her seven years as national group exercise manager.

[More: http://lei.sr/z5h1l](http://lei.sr/z5h1l)



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■ Dame Sally Davies is the UK's former Chief Medical Officer

"There is a direct correlation between obesity and a high mortality for COVID-19"

Sally Davies: blame obesity for high COVID death rate

Thousands of COVID-related deaths could be prevented if successive governments had tackled the country's obesity crisis in time, according to Dame Sally Davies.

The former chief medical officer said there was a "direct correlation between obesity and a high mortality for COVID".

With one of the highest rates of obesity in the world – and the second-highest in Europe – the UK has seen one of the highest death rates from COVID-19.

According to official figures, people classed as obese (those with a BMI greater than 30) are 48 per cent more likely to die of COVID-19.

In an interview with *The Times*, Dame Sally urged the NHS to start acting as a preventative body rather than just looking after those who are ill.

Exercise – alongside a healthy diet – is proven to be the best solution in combatting obesity and keeping fit.

The government's decision to close fitness facilities during lockdown has been met with a furious backlash from members of the public, with a 600,00-strong petition prompting a full Parliamentary debate.

The closing of fitness facilities has also resulted in calls to class physical activity an "essential service".

[More: http://lei.sr/n8Z6W_0](http://lei.sr/n8Z6W_0)

leisure opps

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TWITTER.COM/NICKWHITCOMBE1

Rebel gym owner, **Nick Whitcombe**, appears on Panorama and speaks to *HCM*

Nick Whitcombe, the independent gym owner who became a fitness industry campaigner by refusing to shut his Liverpool gym as part of tier 3 restrictions, appeared on the BBC Panorama on 9 November.

Whitcombe, who talks to *Leisure Opportunities*' sister title *HCM* in an interview for the upcoming issue (issue 10/2020), made headlines in October after keeping his Body Tech Fitness gym open, despite orders to close it.

"Everyone's onboard on the campaign to get gyms classed as an Essential Service"

Whitcombe's campaign to keep gyms open quickly gathered momentum and a petition reached 600,000 signatures in less than a week. A gofundme page set up to enable his gym to pay fines and legal costs raised £55,000 in six days and he now receives up to 15,000 social media messages a day from well-wishers supporting his cause.

Speaking in his interview with *HCM*, Whitcombe said: "Everyone's onboard on the campaign to get gyms classed as an Essential Service.

"We're working with local members of parliament, ukactive, sports and nutrition companies and the big players such as Grenade, Pure Gym and Gymshark."

[More: http://lei.sr/n9F6U_0](http://lei.sr/n9F6U_0)

■ Whitcombe's campaign to keep gyms open has resulted in him appearing on a number of news outlets

Women can and should empower themselves in the spa and wellness industry, says **Marisa Peer**

Best-selling author and therapist, Marisa Peer, sees women as some of the best leaders in business and wants to remind them to give themselves permission to believe in their own ability.

Speaking as a GWS keynote, she explained that women have huge potential in business and have a natural capacity to be great leaders – a powerful message for the spa and wellness industry which is predominately made up of women.

Peer shared that during her 30-year career as a therapist, around 80 per cent of professional female clients experienced imposter syndrome, compared to less than 40 per cent of men.



■ Marisa Peer delivered a keynote at the 2020 GWS event

"Women feel less capable than men and they fear failure far more than them"

"I hear the same things over and again, with women saying they feel unconfident and don't have enough

self-esteem," she said, "women feel less capable than men and they fear failure far more than them."

Peer urged women to believe in themselves in order to tap their inner potential, saying that they should avoid thinking or acting like men – something that many female clients thought was necessary to be successful.

She offered some suggestions on how to be a great female leader:

- Give specific praise to your employees
- Show people that you know your own strengths, don't shy away from them
- Tell yourself you're more than capable of doing things that men can do
- Empower yourself, know that you're a success and not an imposter.

[More: http://lei.sr/N8p6s_0](http://lei.sr/N8p6s_0)

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ISSN 0952/8210 (Print). ISSN 2397-2394 (Online).



TWITTER.COM/TERRYMONKTON

■ The Experience UK chair said the move would strengthen the organisation

Terry Monkton reveals merger of Experience UK and ALES UK

Experience UK has completed a merger with ALES UK – the industry body for manufacturers and suppliers working within the visitor attractions and amusements industries.

As a result, Experience UK – which was launched more than 12 years ago to represent companies that design, create and deliver visitor destinations – will become a fully-fledged trade body, with ALES UK being subsumed into the combined organisation.

Terry Monkton, chair of the Experience UK board, said: “The merger between Experience

UK and ALES UK makes a lot of sense, with a unified trade association representing the UK’s finest creative industries.

“Experience UK will be in a stronger position to ensure adequate trade show support for its members, while continuing to support them in their efforts to secure export sales.”

In its role as a trade body, Experience UK will conduct research into two key international markets – the Gulf and Central/Eastern Europe – which will look into the potential opportunities the regions hold for experience companies.

More: http://lei.sr/s9n8d_0

“The merger between Experience UK and ALES UK makes a lot of sense, with a unified trade association representing the UK’s finest creative industries”

PLANNING FOR GROWTH

Gym Group building pipeline for 2021

The Gym Group will look to further grow its 183-strong portfolio across England, Scotland and Wales during 2021, as the demand for gym memberships has remained strong, despite the disruption caused by COVID-19.

In a trading update, the budget operator said it continues to see an opportunity to access attractive potential new sites and is building a pipeline for new openings in 2021.

It has already had leases exchanged on four sites, with “several more under negotiation”.

The company revealed that when it reopened its estate on 25 July 2020, it had 658,000 members.

574,000 of these were ongoing paying members – and the figure excludes members who had opted to freeze their membership without charge and students whose fixed term contracts had been extended to October/November 2020 due to the initial lockdown.

“In the three months since reopening we’ve seen good levels of membership demand reinforcing the beneficial role that fitness makes to physical and mental well-being,” said Richard Darwin, The Gym Group CEO.

“COVID-secure measures are working very well across the sector.”

[More: http://lei.sr/x8p6c_0](http://lei.sr/x8p6c_0)



■ The number of members is currently up by 2.4 per cent



“
We’ve seen good levels of membership demand

Richard Darwin

FINANCIAL IMPACT

PureGym ‘burning £4m a week’ during lockdown



“
We’re asking our landlords to share some of the pain with us

Humphrey Cobbold

PureGym is burning £4m of cash a week through its UK business, due to the UK government’s decision to shut gyms in England as part of “Lockout 2” measures.

Speaking on Sky News, PureGym CEO Humphrey Cobbold said he expects the figure to come down slightly, as easing measures are implemented.

“We’re burning about £4m a week at the moment,” Cobbold said.

“This will come down to about £2.5m to £3m a week with the mitigation activity and contributions from the government, such as



■ PureGym is Europe’s second largest operator

the furlough scheme and a rates holiday – which, I have to say, we are very grateful for,” he continued.

“We’re also looking at what we are doing with our landlords. We’re going to ask them to share some of the pain with us, which is part of the work which is underway currently.”

[More: http://lei.sr/r5A2d_0](http://lei.sr/r5A2d_0)

STANDARDS

ukactive reveals details of new Active Standard



This will ensure the industry's reputation will be protected

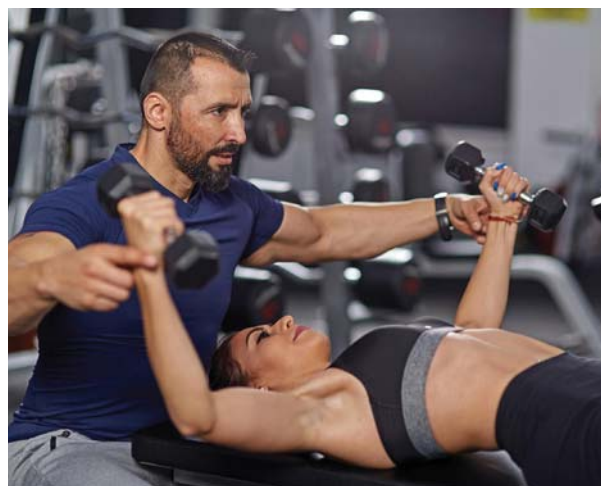
Tanni Grey-Thompson

Physical activity body, ukactive, has revealed plans to create a new sector standard for active leisure, to act as a product and service quality trademark.

Speaking at the ukactive Summit today (4 November 2020), chair, Tanni Grey-Thompson, said: "This standard will cover the full scale of our sector – from operators, suppliers and children's activity providers and will be developed with key partners, stakeholders, members and customers.

"The 'Active Standard' will provide reassurance for customers that they are receiving the best possible service from

SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/SLATAN



■ The standard will cover all aspects of delivery

ukactive members and help members access new partnerships across the wider health agenda. It will ensure member and the industry's reputation are protected moving forward."

ukactive will begin developing and consulting on the standard, with the aim of rolling it out from Spring 2021.

[More: http://lei.sr?a=n3s5c](http://lei.sr?a=n3s5c)

COVID-19

Nuffield introduces rehab scheme for COVID sufferers

Nuffield Health is launching a specialist, 12-week rehabilitation programme in Manchester to support Covid-19 patients in their recovery.

The programme blends together physical therapy – including exercise – and mental health support and will be run in partnership with Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, before being developed into a national programme.

Over the 12-week programme, patients will work with a rehabilitation specialist for personalised advice and on a recovery



SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/PHOTOGRAPHEE.U

■ Exercise will be at the heart of the rehab programme



Some Covid patients need specialist support for their rehabilitation

Davina Deniszczyc

plan, consisting of a six-week, virtual programme of at home exercises, before moving to a Nuffield Health fitness and wellbeing centre.

"We know that some patients who have contracted Covid-19 are going to need specialist support for their rehabilitation," said Dr Davina Deniszczyc, charity and medical director at Nuffield Health.

[More: http://lei.sr/z6Y2N_0](http://lei.sr/z6Y2N_0)

NFD 2020 breaks records with 19.1m getting active

Millions of people throughout the UK took part in physical activity during this year's National Fitness Day (NFD) – a show of strength from the UK's health and fitness industry.

Results, recorded using ComRes polling, showed that a total of 19.1 million people were inspired to be physically active on the day (23 September), smashing the campaign's 10 million target and making it the most successful NFD to date.

Coordinated by industry body, ukactive, NFD is the sector's showpiece event.

[More: http://lei.sr/p9t4f_0](http://lei.sr/p9t4f_0)

ACTIVE LIVES

COVID's impact on participation revealed

Gains made getting people more physically active over the last few years were all but 'cancelled out' during the first seven weeks of lockdown, according to Sport England.

In its latest *Active Lives* survey, the sports body said activity levels in England were on course to reach record highs before the pandemic hit.

The study – conducted by Ipsos MORI – covers the 12 months from mid-May 2019 to mid-May 2020 and includes the first seven weeks of lockdown restrictions.

Figures show that more than 3 million people were less active between mid-March and mid-May,

compared to the same period a year before. Overall, the data shows that between mid-May 2019 and mid-May 2020, just 62.8 per cent of adults (28.6m) were classed as active.

More than a quarter of adults (25.5 per cent – 11.6m) were deemed inactive.

"Though the early months of lockdown brought unprecedented disruption to our lives and had a huge impact on our overall engagement in sport and physical activity, it is also positive to see how many people turned to new activities like fitness at home," said Sport England CEO Tim Hollingsworth.

[More: http://lei.sr/u9Q9Y_0](http://lei.sr/u9Q9Y_0)



SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/TATIANA SOARES

■ Digital, at-home fitness grew in popularity during lockdown



The first lockdown had a huge impact on engagement in physical activity

Tim Hollingsworth

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Boris pledges support for £70m football project



This is a very exciting project and I look forward to the opening

Boris Johnson

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has pledged his support for plans to build a £70m world class football facility in Northwich, Cheshire.

Driven by Cheshire Football Association, the proposals – called Vision 2020 – include a new 3,000-capacity stadium, two outdoor 3G pitches, one indoor 3G pitch, a medical facility, an outdoor activity centre, a hotel and spa.

To be located in Winsford, the "football village" – designed by architects Space & Place – will become a leading centre for women and girls football.



SPACE & PLACE

■ The centre is designed by architects Space & Place

Speaking in Parliament, answering a question on the centre, PM Johnson said: "This is a very exciting project and I welcome Cheshire FA's commitment to providing a new world class facility for women's and girl's football and I look forward to the opening."

[More: http://lei.sr/P3x3c_0](http://lei.sr/P3x3c_0)

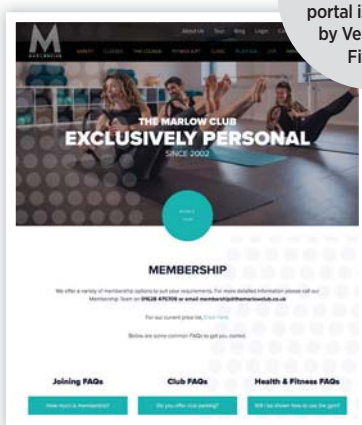


Fitness is evolving the future of blended memberships

- ▶ **Venueserve Fitness** keeps your fitness brand and your members working out together, no matter where they choose to train. 24 hours a day.
- ▶ **Venueserve Fitness** brings you a fully brandable white label fitness platform for live streaming and pre-recorded workouts.
- ▶ **Venueserve Fitness** has been built to protect your revenue, make your membership more flexible and to help retain existing members and attract new ones.

Memberships are evolving. People may not train at the gym or in your class; some may never physically come to your club, but they still want to be part of your community.

Venueserve offers flexible ways for members to participate and have a positive experience of your club, from afar. Your fitness brand will travel with your members. Working from home – no problem. Too busy to get to the gym – no problem. Working away on a business trip – no problem. Training whilst on holiday – no problem.



The Marlow Club's branded online membership portal is provided by Venueserve Fitness

Why is Venueserve Fitness a good fit for your customer?

- ▶ Authentic live streamed classes with the instructors they know and love
- ▶ Access to a huge bank of pre-recorded virtual classes
- ▶ Branded content that looks and feels like your club
- ▶ Maintain relationships and customer engagement at a safe distance
- ▶ A secure platform to give your customers and instructors digital peace of mind
- ▶ A live streamed alternative when classes are full

Why is Venueserve Fitness good for your business?

The rise of streaming is an opportunity, not a threat to your revenue. Venueserve Fitness allows you to capture these new incomes from a new type of customer, adding value to your overall offer.

- ▶ Simple, affordable and adaptable - simply plug and play
- ▶ Protect your existing income by offering current members a blended membership, including online and in-person training
- ▶ Convert leavers to a digital-only membership to protect revenue
- ▶ Tempt new members with a 'try before you' buy digital taster
- ▶ Generate valuable customer insights



We designed this qualification to provide learners with an understanding of how End-point Assessments are developed and delivered

Jenny Patrickson,
Active IQ managing director



Active IQ spearheads emerging demand for EPA assessors

Active IQ - one of the UK's leading awarding organisations for the active leisure, learning and wellbeing sector - is leading the way in meeting the growing demand for End-point assessors with a brand-new qualification

The Active IQ Level 3 Award in Understanding the Development and Delivery of End-point Assessment is a comprehensive qualification that covers the principles of apprenticeship standards and develops the necessary skills to deliver End-point Assessments.

As one of the first End-point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) within the physical activity sector to be approved on the Register of End-point Assessment Organisations,

Active IQ has unmatched expertise and experience in this sector. It offers 14 End-point Assessments (EPAs) for the new apprenticeship standards within the leisure, facilities management, transport, business and administration and education sectors.

Meeting high demand

This new qualification meets the increasing demands for skilled assessors in this emerging area. Its comprehensive content includes background information about the development of apprenticeship standards in England, the principles and requirements of End-point Assessment and a clear overview of the different types of End-point Assessment methods.

Learners will gain an understanding of how End-point Assessments are developed and delivered, as well as the knowledge and skills to be able to plan an End-point Assessment through the syllabus that covers:

- Planning End-point Assessments
- The role of apprentices, employers and training providers in the process
- Making End-point Assessment decisions
- Ensuring End-point Assessments are quality assured
- Managing information relating to End-point Assessments
- The legal and good practice requirements in relation to End-point Assessment

Meeting high standards

"We've seen significant growth in this market since End-point Assessment was introduced," says Jenny Patrickson, Active IQ managing director. "The number of apprenticeship standards grew from 330 to 739 between September 2018 and now, while the number of EPAOs has grown from 165 to 311 over the same period," she explains.

"Running in tandem with these developments is an increasing demand



SHUTTERSTOCK/MAKSIM SHMELOV

■ Skills in this area are much sought after

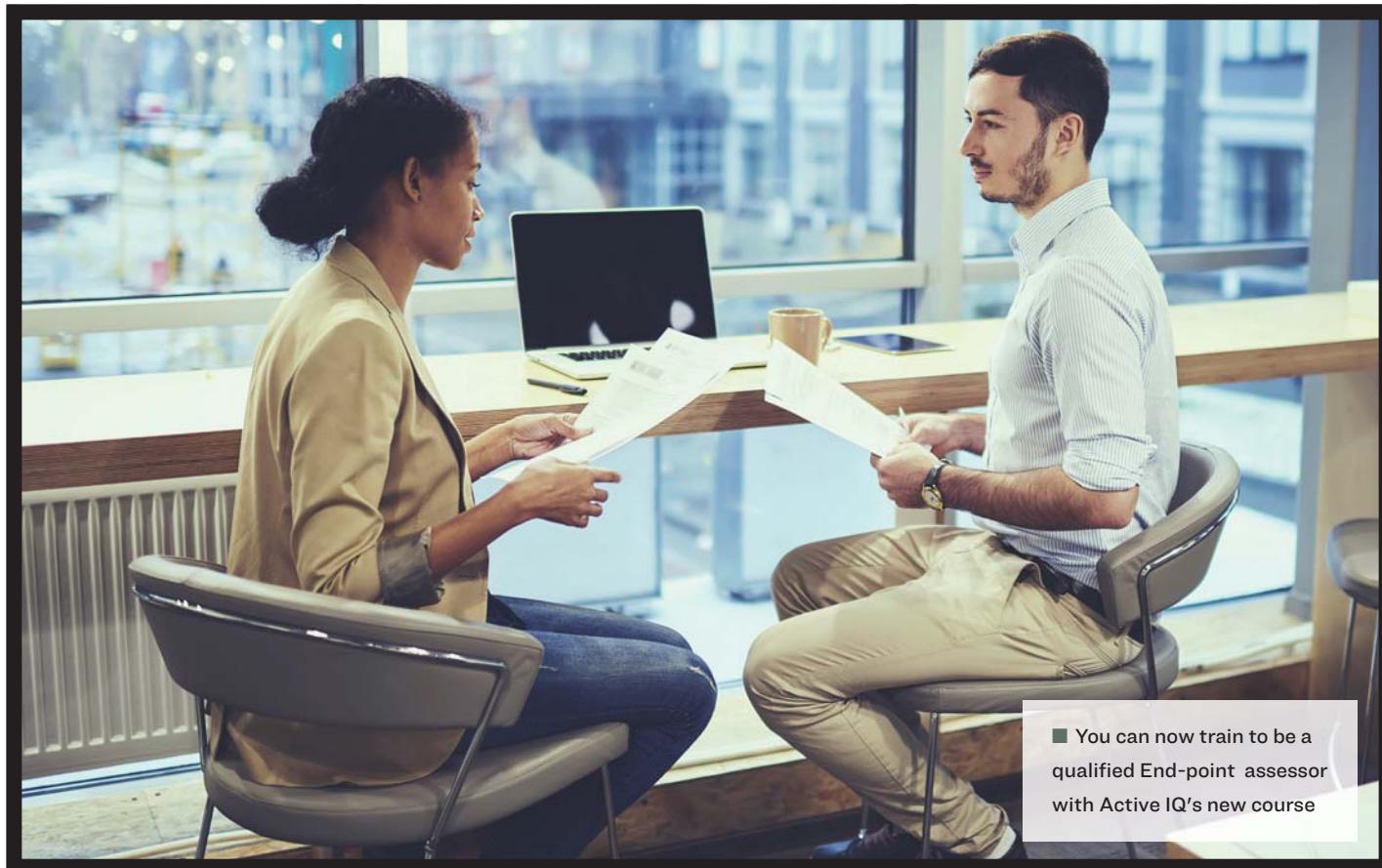


PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/GAUDILAB



We've seen significant growth in this market since End-point Assessment was introduced



for qualified End-point assessors,” says Patrickson. “Their role at the end of the apprenticeship process is crucial to ensuring the learner has achieved the requisite standard, while their independent eye is important to see that the apprentice before them meets the standards required.”

The Active IQ Level 3 Award in Understanding the Development and Delivery of End-point Assessment is open to all learners over the age of 19. Suitable candidates are likely to be already qualified as vocational or work-based learning assessors and wishing to widen their knowledge and skill set to include End-point Assessment. In addition, individuals who seek to understand the process better – such as employers, those involved in on-programme delivery or for personal and professional development – will also find the qualification beneficial. They can easily undertake the studying, as no previous experience is required.

Comprehensive content

The qualification comprises 10 Guided Learning Hours (GLH) and 30 hours' Total Qualification Time. Active IQ offers eLearning resources and a manual to support the qualification, complemented by digital delivery through its Professional Career Development Programme. This makes the study options very flexible, easy to fit around existing work commitments and accessible to those who may be learning from their home environment.

The qualification includes one mandatory unit: 'Understanding the development and delivery of End-point Assessment' and is assessed by eAssessment and an innovative case study/assignment which gives learners hands-on experience of planning for End-point Assessments, assessing apprentice evidence and making grading decisions.

“We designed this qualification to provide learners with an understanding

of how End-point Assessments are developed and delivered, as well as the knowledge and skills to be able to plan an End-point Assessment,” says Patrickson. “Recognising assessments involve a number of interested parties, we ensure learners cover how to involve apprentices, employers and training providers in assessments, how to make assessment decisions and how End-point Assessments are quality assured.

“In this way they will have a complete understanding of the context as well as the content of the qualification making them well-equipped to make the most of this rapidly growing and changing market,” she says. ●

Active iQ

www.activeiq.co.uk
01480 467950

FRANCHISES

Snap takes back UK franchising rights

Snap Fitness has ended its agreement with its master franchisee for the UK and Ireland markets, by 'reacquiring' the territory.

Snap had signed a master development agreement with fitness startup TwentyTwoYards in 2014, with the aim of opening 200 locations in four years.

That was followed by the signing of a development plan with MSG Life in 2016, which included plans to open 30 new clubs. However, progress has been slower than expected and according to the Snap UK website, there are currently only 74 gyms across the UK and Ireland.

TwentyTwoYards was set up in 2014 by Australian

businessmen and fitness enthusiasts, Matt Quinn and Scott Jones.

Snap told *Leisure Opportunities* it will "continue to invest internally within the quickly growing UK market", with the investments including infrastructure development, club growth, franchise support and "innovative product and technology offerings".

As part of the move, Jon Cottam, previously MD Europe of Snap's parent company, Lift Brands, has been named as CEO for the EMEA market.

Launched in 2003, Snap Fitness reached 100 clubs in Europe this year.

[More: http://lei.sr/S9Z3s_0](http://lei.sr/S9Z3s_0)



■ Launched in 2003m Snap has 100 clubs across Europe



We will continue to invest internally within the quickly growing UK market, with the investments including club growth

Snap Fitness

FITNESS TECH

Venueserve platform offers white-label content streaming



We give operators the tools to offer a branded virtual membership, whether as a free service for existing members or as a separate, subscription-based online membership

Lee Booth

A new, white-label online fitness platform has launched, enabling health club operators, instructors and PTs to offer live streaming, as well as pre-recorded training sessions and group exercise classes, all branded as their own.

The platform - Venueserve Fitness – is already being used by more than 45 health clubs across the UK, including London's Roehampton Club, The Marlow Club and The Health Club Collection.

The platform was developed by Lee Booth, founder and CEO of Venueserve, a company which started out in the



■ Gyms and PTs can live-stream their classes

ticketing and sports membership sector and which is now taking its first steps into the fitness industry.

Booth says: "Venueserve allows operators to offer a branded virtual membership, whether that's a free service for existing members or a subscription-based online membership."

[More: http://lei.sr/f6c4M_0](http://lei.sr/f6c4M_0)

NEW
QUALIFICATION

ACTIVE IQ LEVEL 3 AWARD IN UNDERSTANDING THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF END-POINT ASSESSMENT

This qualification is designed to provide learners with an understanding of how End-point Assessments are developed and delivered and the knowledge and skills to be able to plan an End-point Assessment.

Learners will also cover how to involve apprentices, employers and training providers in End-point Assessments, how to make End-point Assessment decisions and how End-point Assessments are quality assured.

Active iQ

Entry Requirements

This qualification is open to all (learners must be 19 years old or over).

Qualification Structure

The learner must complete the one mandatory unit:

- Unit 1: Understanding the development and delivery of End-point Assessment

Assessment

This qualification is assessed by:

- Practical demonstration/ assignment
- eAssessment

Learning Resources

- Manual
- eLearning

We are currently offering
End-point Assessments for the
following apprenticeship standards:

Personal Trainer	Leisure Duty Manager	Teaching Assistant
Community Activator Coach	Business Administrator	Assessor/Coach
Facilities Management Supervisor	Team Leader/Supervisor	Learning Mentor
Customer Service Practitioner	Leisure Team Member	Early Years Educator
Passenger Transport Service Operations Onboard and Station Team Member		Community Sport and Health Officer

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VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

We The Curious ready to open its biggest exhibition



We're ready to open despite the odds being stacked against us

Donna Speed

We The Curious science and arts centre in Bristol, UK, will open the doors to its largest ever exhibition – as soon as the current “Lockdown 2” measures are lifted.

Inspired by questions from the people of Bristol, the new What If exhibition consists of 68 new exhibits and 25 art pieces clustered around seven questions on different themes.

During the creative process, 10,000 questions were collected from the people of Bristol and the final result has been shaped by many different voices, from members, volunteers,

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■ The exhibition is based on 10,000 questions

community groups and school children as well as artists and researchers.

Designed by exhibition specialist Kossmanndejong and engineered by Bruns, project What If has been supported by a £3m grant awarded by the Inspiring Science Fund.

“This would be a challenge at the best of times, let alone during lockdown,” said Donna Speed, CEO. “It’s incredible that we’re ready to open despite the odds being stacked against us.”

[More: http://lei.sr/T6m3v_0](http://lei.sr/T6m3v_0)

CHILDREN

£400m winter funding includes activities scheme

The government has been forced to make a U-turn and to spend more than £400m to support vulnerable children and their families in England.

Following a high-profile campaign led by footballer Marcus Rashford, the government announced plans for a winter grant scheme, to be run by local authorities.

Plans include supporting vulnerable families with food and bills, as well as an expansion of a holiday activities programme.

The latter’s inclusion in the funding programme



■ The funding will cover a holiday activities programme



Young people suffer a loss in fitness levels of up to 74% over holidays

Jack Shakespeare

was welcomed by physical activity body, ukactive.

“We praise the decision to expand the existing Holiday Activities and Food scheme,” said Jack Shakespeare, ukactive’s director of children, young people, families and research.

“Our research shows children and young people suffer a loss in fitness levels of up to 74 per cent over during the holidays.”

[More: http://lei.sr/F2g3s_0](http://lei.sr/F2g3s_0)

Parliamentary committee debate about gyms expected

A UK Parliamentary committee will hold a debate on COVID-19 restrictions on gyms and sport on Monday 23 November.

Taking place at 4:30pm GMT, the debate can be viewed online live on the day, through Parliament TV.

The move is the result of a successful Parliamentary petition which now has 604,000 signatures and counting.

There are currently 12 Parliamentary petitions running, set up by members of the public, calling for gyms to remain open, with this the one with the most votes.

[More: http://lei.sr/8b9q3_S](http://lei.sr/8b9q3_S)

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MENTAL HEALTH

Physical fitness helps fight depression

A major seven-year study of more than 150,000 people has found that those with higher levels of aerobic fitness and muscular strength are significantly less likely to experience depression and anxiety.

The study, *Individual and combined associations between cardiorespiratory fitness and grip strength with common mental disorders: a prospective cohort study in the UK Biobank*, was led by Aaron Kandola of University College London and involved 152,978 participants, aged between 40 and 69, who were part of the UK Biobank Study.

The research, published this week [w/c 8 November 2020] in the BMC Medicine

journal, found that people with low combined fitness levels (low cardiorespiratory fitness and low grip strength) were twice as likely to suffer from depression than those with higher combined fitness levels.

Those with lower levels of fitness were also 1.6 times more likely to suffer from anxiety disorders.

“To the best of our knowledge, this is the first prospective study to examine associations between individual and combined cardiorespiratory fitness and grip strength with the incidence of common mental disorders in the general population,” Kandola said.

[More: http://lei.sr/X3f8C_0](http://lei.sr/X3f8C_0)



SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/KZENON

■ Fit people were less likely to suffer from depression and anxiety



TWITTER.COM/KANDOLAAARON



This is the first prospective study of its kind

Aaron Kandola

EXERCISE AND CANCER

Exercise stalls cancer growth by changing T cells



KNUT AND ALICE WALLENBERG FOUNDATION



The positive effects of exercise can provide new insights

Randall Johnson

Cancer sufferers who exercise regularly have, generally, a better prognosis than inactive patients – but science hasn’t quite managed to agree why this is.

Now, researchers at Karolinska Institutet in Sweden have found a likely explanation of why exercise helps slow down cancer growth.

Randall Johnson, professor at Sweden’s Karolinska Institutet, says new evidence points to physical activity changing the metabolism of the immune system’s cytotoxic T cells – and thereby improving their ability to attack cancer cells.



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■ Exercise changes the T Cells’ metabolism

“The biology behind the positive effects of exercise can provide new insights into how the body maintains health as well as help us design and improve treatments against cancer,” Johnson said.

[More: http://lei.sr/x7R4A_0](http://lei.sr/x7R4A_0)

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Trends ahead

Global Wellness Summit panel predicts hottest upcoming wellness trends for 2021



■ Nature-based programming and interactions will continue to be a trend in 2021

SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/ITALI MATOKHA

The 2020 GWS this month hosted a discussion panel about future wellness trends, where industry experts offered their take on what's in the pipeline for the industry in 2021. Moderated by Beth

McGroarty, GWS VP of research and forecasting, the panel featured Sandra Ballentine, *W* magazine editor; Cecelia Girr, senior cultural strategist at Backslash, Elaine Glusac, The *New York Times* travel columnist and Claire McCormack, "trendspotter" at Indie Beauty Media Group. *Leisure Opportunities* has rounded up the top four trends from the session.

IMMUNITY

Ballentine kicked off by predicting that COVID-19 will make immunity building and enhancement major wellness trends in 2021. This programme style has already ramped up speed in 2020 with a host of operators rolling out or planning immunity support and booster packages, including RAKxa, Clinique La Prairie, The Bürgenstock Resort and Lefay Resorts.

Ballentine also believes this will lead to an increased focus on gut health and microbiome because of its relation to our immunity and brain function.

"There's going to be an increased focus on supporting immunity," she said

There's going to be an increased focus on supporting immunity



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■ Panellists believed spas have an opportunity to leverage the up and coming trend of self-care and wellness in the home

Spa professionals have a real opportunity to enhance the at-home experience, with virtual classes and digital content

NATURE

The panel unanimously agreed that nature will continue to be a trend in 2021, following a global retreat to the wilderness as people all around the world looked for an outlet while social interaction has been restricted.

For spas, this trend could materialise as more creative outdoor wellness programming such as wild swimming, forest bathing or meditation in nature, as well as outdoor treatments and use of spa gardens.

TACKLING THE TABOO

Girr believes that 2021 will see a “massive and seismic cultural taboo toppling”, meaning wellness will expand its boundaries to things such as death, sex, money and socialising.

“We’re moving from wellness focusing on looking and feeling good, to this next wave where we’re lifting the lid on

some of the pain points and pressures in society,” she said. “Wellness will fundamentally change the way we approach the riskier topics we don’t tackle, because they’re so sacred.

WELLNESS AT HOME

Ballentine highlighted that although self-care and beauty are already taking off in 2020, they will reach new heights in 2021 and that spas have an opportunity to leverage this.

“I think all kinds of wellness coaching will become increasingly important – spa professionals and personal trainers have a real opportunity to enhance the at-home experience for customers, with things such as virtual classes and digital content, to maintain engagement.”

McCormack said at-home wellness, in particular, has been gaining traction in 2020 – and that lots of spa companies are noticing this. ●



■ The trends session was moderated by GWS VP of research and forecasting, Beth McGroarty



We applaud governments that prioritise health, empower people to keep themselves fit and healthy

Liz Terry, Editor, *Leisure Opportunities*



Healthy countries keep gyms open

An analysis of obesity data reveals that countries with lower obesity rates are the ones keeping gyms open



SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/MICHAEL D EDWARDS

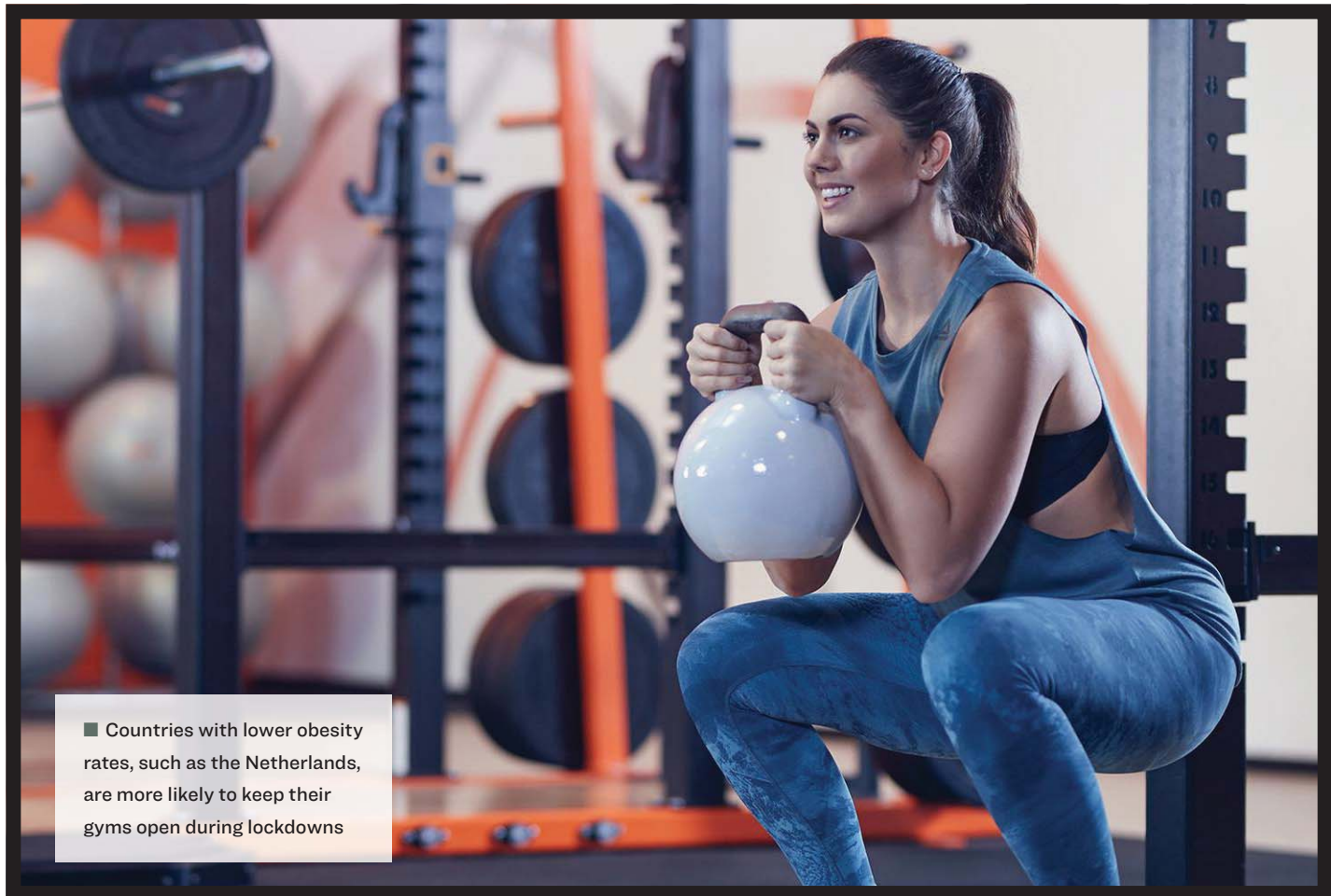
■ Countries with obesity rates of above 22 per cent were more likely to shut their gyms

Investigations by *Leisure Opportunities* have revealed a correlation between countries with lower obesity rates and those where governments have kept gyms open during lockdowns.

Leisure Opportunities found that European countries with an obesity rate of around 22 per cent or above are more likely to be closing gyms, while countries with lower obesity rates – under 22 per cent – are more likely to keep them open.

The countries with the highest rates of obesity in Europe, including the UK (with an obesity rate of 26.40 per cent), Czech Republic (26 per cent) and Ireland (25.30 per cent) have closed their gyms as part of the latest round of lockdowns.

Meanwhile, countries whose obesity rates are among the Continent's lowest – such as Switzerland (19.50), Denmark (19.70 per cent), Austria (20.10 per



BASIC-FIT

■ Countries with lower obesity rates, such as the Netherlands, are more likely to keep their gyms open during lockdowns

“ We utterly condemn those who feel justified in removing this most fundamental human right ”

cent) and The Netherlands (20.40 per cent) – have kept their gyms open.

On Tuesday 3 November, for example, the government of the Netherlands updated its COVID-19 guidance and called a stop on international travel and closed theatres, visitor attractions, cinemas and libraries.

However, when it came to keeping the population fit, the government said gyms would “remain open, because exercise is too important to the physical and mental health of people”.

In the UK, the physical activity sector is lobbying to convince the government to categorise gyms and leisure centres as “essential services”, which would mean they could remain open during COVID-19 lockdowns.

The UK entered a month-long “Lockdown 2” on 5 November, which will force gyms to shut until 2 December.



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■ Gyms have adopted social distancing measures and other controls to keep exercisers safe

Leisure Opportunities editor, Liz Terry, said: “This correlation between gyms being open and obesity levels shows different government attitudes towards their citizens.

“We applaud governments that prioritise health, empower people to keep themselves fit and healthy and enable them to take responsibility for their own wellbeing and self-care.

“We utterly condemn those who feel justified in removing this most fundamental human right from their populations – the right to take personal responsibility for your own wellbeing.

“The UK government must realise that every day that goes by with gyms and sports facilities closed, hundreds of thousands of people are being forced to be more sedentary, to get less fit and to become significantly more susceptible to COVID-19.” ●

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