

# leisureopportunities

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## Pure Gym and The Gym Group announce merger

Budget fitness club operators Pure Gym and The Gym Group have announced plans to merge, pending regulatory approval.

The deal marks the union of two of the leading brands in the highly competitive budget club sector, who in recent years have been jostling for market share.

Financial terms of the agreement have not been disclosed.

"This agreed deal unites two innovative players in the fast-changing gyms sector, where the low-priced model is improving consumer choice and contributing to better exercise levels across the country,"

says Peter Roberts, chief executive of Pure Gym.

The Gym Group chief executive John Treharne believes the merger will put the company on a firm footing to further challenge traditional gym models.



John Treharne, chief executive of The Gym Group, will lead the new group as chief executive

"This enlarged business, combining great facilities and excellent trainers, will provide a compelling alternative to gym providers," said Treharne.

As part of the merger agreement, Pure Gym's Roberts will become executive chair of the new

group, while John Treharne will be chief executive.

The new company will be run by CCMP Capital Advisors and Phoenix Equity Partners and Bridges Ventures, who own Pure Gym and The Gym Group respectively.

The two companies will continue to operate independently until regulatory approval and completion terms are finalised.

Pure Gym launched in 2009 and operates 61, 24-hour gyms across the UK, with one site in Northern Ireland.

The Gym Group was founded in 2007 and operates 42 gyms throughout Britain.

Both run a low-cost business model, typically offering contract-free membership based around cardio and strength training equipment and group classes. *Continued on back cover*

### Rugby fans want hotel and match ticket packages

A recent survey by Advanced Ticketing has revealed that more than half of rugby supporters would be interested in package hotel deals included with the cost of a ticket.

Mark Dewell, MD of Advanced Ticketing said that the incorporation of hotel costs into a ticket was a very viable option, with previous similar models including shirts in the price of a ticket.

Dewell also said he believed a club website to be key for the purpose of selling tickets and other add-ons, with great benefits to clubs.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=x8h8v>

### West Ham FC signs deal to sell stadium

West Ham United Football Club (WHU) has agreed to sell its Upton Park stadium to developer The Galliard Group when the club completes its move to the Olympic Stadium in 2016.

According to WHU, Galliard won the bidding due to its links to the local community and its commitment to "honour the history of the Hammers" at the Boleyn Ground as part of its proposed development.

Galliard's scheme includes a mixed-used project with leisure, retail and new homes and there are plans to establish a central garden park named after the late WHU legend Bobby Moore.

Galliard has appointed sculptor Frances Siegelman to create a statue of Bobby Moore



West Ham United will move from Upton Park in 2016

and other artwork celebrating the heritage of the football club.

The development, which will have a construction programme of some 30 months, has an anticipated completion date of late 2018.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=p7H4x>

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## SPORT

# Olympic sports get funding increase

High performance sports agency UK Sport has revealed details of its Annual Investment Review, with 11 Olympic sports and seven Paralympic sports seeing an increase in the amount of funding they receive.

In total, 19 Olympic and 17 Paralympic sports will receive £350m of funding annually in the run up to Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020.

Taekwondo, triathlon, hockey, judo and sailing all secured sizeable increases in their elite funding.

Rowing (£32.6m), cycling (£30.6m) and athletics (£26.8m) – the three most heavily funded sports – have had their funding kept at the same level.

Four Olympic sports – basketball, synchronised swimming, water polo and weightlifting – have seen their funding withdrawn entirely.

Three Paralympic sports suffered the same fate, with funding cut from five-a-side football, goalball and wheelchair fencing.

Two Olympic sports, swimming and badminton, saw small increases in their funding.

The sports which have missed out on funding have until March to lodge an appeal.



Triathlon is among the sports to have its funding increased

British Swimming's chief executive David Sparkes said he was "shocked" at the decision to cut funding on water-based sports.

Sparkes said: "We are deeply disappointed and shocked at the decision to remove funding from the sports of women's water polo and synchronised swimming. The decision flies in the face of the massive legacy impact afforded by the investment previously and we may well consider a more formal appeal over these devastating decisions."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k2A5v>

## Bristol City opts for £40m stadium revamp

Bristol City has vetoed plans to move to a new stadium in favour of a £40m revamp of its current home at Ashton Gate.

Bristol Sport, which owns the football club, wants to replace two of the existing stands to increase ground capacity from 21,500 to 27,000.

As part of the redevelopment of Ashton Gate, the club intend to install the new seating in two stands, with the areas initially being used only for rugby as they have not been cleared by the football league.

The plan was made as an alternative to building a new stadium at nearby Ashton Vale, after plans faltered in recent years.

Capita Symonds has been appointed to the redevelopment that would comprise of the new stands and a pitch widening, and expects work to be complete in time for the 2016/17 season.

The scheme was approved by Bristol City Council in November 2013.

Bristol City's chair Steve Lansdown said:



The club wants to replace two stands to increase ground capacity to 27,000

"We'll sign the section 106 agreement any day now and then we have six weeks to wait for the judicial review period.

"We wanted to give some certainty to supporters, so if we get through to March with no judicial review, then we will be going ahead with the redevelopment plans, starting in May."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=P5Z8E>



## Beckham announces MLS franchise

David Beckham confirmed the launch of his own Miami-based Major League Soccer (MLS) franchise at a press conference on 5 February – the first in the Florida city since 2001.

The 38-year-old's move into football ownership is expected to cost him £15m – around 25 per cent of the price other new clubs have to pay.

Speaking at the press conference MLS commissioner Don Garber said: "David chose Miami because he believes in this city. People here love this sport. We together have no doubt it will be a very successful MLS team."

The franchise is not expected to take part in the MLS until 2017 with major issues – such as the stadium – still to be ironed out, though Beckham confirmed the stadium build would be completely privately funded.

"We will fund the stadium ourselves," said Beckham. "It's something where we have worked very hard to get to this stage. We've had some great work from the mayor and the commissioners. We want to create the people's football club."

"We can't build a stadium in two weeks, this is



David Beckham is to launch an MLS franchise in Miami, Florida

going to take time. Once we have the right investors and we have the site we want, you'll know more. We will be in downtown Miami. I think it's important we are in this part of the city because I see what The Miami Heat basketball team has done and football fans love to commute, love to walk to games. It's a community. Once we have the site we'll be quick, very quick hopefully."

The MLS currently consists of 19 teams, but the league announced in 2013 that two further sides would join in 2015 – Orlando City SC and New York City, which is part-owned by Manchester

## Scottish sport leadership scheme to reach 50,000

The latest round of the Lead 2014 sports leadership initiative has been launched in Scotland, with the scheme expected to reach the 50,000 participants landmark in time for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

The programme – a partnership between sportscotland, Youth Sport Trust and Glasgow 2014 – is designed to develop the leadership skills of young people.

Secondary pupils are mentored at a one-day conference by university student volunteers (student tutors) in how to plan, organise and manage Commonwealth Games themed sports festivals for their local primary and secondary schools. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=g7a8t>

## FA calls for more artificial pitches to be installed

There should be a strong drive towards installing more artificial football pitches across England, a spokesperson for the Football Association (FA) has said.

Speaking on BBC Radio 5 Live's *Victoria Derbyshire*, Peter Ackerby, the FA's senior national game development manager, said many pitches run by local councils were in an "abhorrent" state and that the future of the game at grassroots level was under threat unless there is a move from grass to artificial pitches.

According to Sport England statistics, grassroots participation levels within football have been falling over the past decade. The latest Active People Survey, published in January 2014, showed that football suffered the steepest fall (90,000) of all sports in the number of people playing the sport regularly.

"There has to be a stronger push for artificial pitches," Ackerley said. "Together with the Football Foundation and Premier League we have so far done around 600 and many more are needed." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=m8B2K>

## £750m funding confirmed for school sport

Prime Minister David Cameron has confirmed that funding for Primary Physical Education and the government's Sport Premium scheme will be continued throughout the course of the next parliament – securing funding until 2020.

The announcement means that the government is committing a total of £750m to school sport – continuing its pledge to invest £150m a year in PE up to 2016.

Baroness Sue Campbell, Chair of the Youth Sport Trust, said the government had made an "incredible commitment" and the funding

would provide a unique opportunity to "transform PE" in primary schools across the country.

She added: "For some time now we have called for a long-term strategy for sport that will allow schools the security to plan for sustainable improvements in the quality of PE teaching in primary schools."

"If we are to develop enthusiasm and passion for sport among young people then we must offer them a high quality PE and sport experience from an early age."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=f8M4t>

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## HEALTH & FITNESS

# Two-thirds of adults overweight

Nearly two-thirds of adults in England are overweight or obese, according to data from the government's public health agency which sheds new light on the country's growing obesity crisis.

Data from Public Health England (PHE) – the body responsible for advising local authorities on how to improve the nation's health – shows 64 per cent of adults in England have a body mass index (BMI) of 25 or over, which is the threshold for being classed as overweight.

The new figures also highlight the considerable variation in the numbers of overweight or obese people in different parts of England.

There are 19 district local authorities where more than 70 per cent of adults fall into this category, with a sizeable proportion situated in the north.

Copeland (Cumbria) is the fattest part of the country, with 75.9 per cent of adults overweight or obese, trailed closely by Doncaster (South Yorkshire) with 74.4 per cent.



Problems associated with being obese cost the health service over £5 bn

In contrast, London is home to the country's three thinnest boroughs – Kensington & Chelsea (45.9 per cent), Tower Hamlets (47.2 per cent) and Richmond upon Thames (47.6 per cent).

People who are overweight have an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease and certain cancers, with the NHS under severe strain from the increase in weight-related illness. At present, health problems associated with being overweight or obese cost the health service more than £5bn each year. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=F2f2U>

## Liverpool leisure centres face council axe

Two Liverpool leisure centres are threatened with closure as Liverpool City Council (LCC) weighs up how to make £156m of savings over three years.

Under council proposals, which include the loss of 300 jobs, £4m will be saved from the city's leisure facilities budget over the next three years.

LCC operates 13 Lifestyles Fitness Centres in the city and the £4m figure is expected to be squeezed from existing centres.

A large proportion will be derived from the proposed phased closure of Everton Park and Park Road centres – where Olympic bronze medallist Beth Tweddle trained – starting with their swimming facilities.

A council spokesperson told *Leisure Opportunities* the two centres have been earmarked for closure as they have relatively low levels of usage and high running costs.

"These centres are both near to other leisure facilities, so the impact on local residents will be less significant," they said. "Park Road is also



Everton Park's swimming facilities are under threat of closure by the council

an old Victorian building and requires significant investment to remain open. However, this is not a done deal and we're actively seeking partners to come in and work jointly with the council to keep these centres open."

LCC has developed a three-year reduction strategy, following central government funding cuts of £173m over the last three years, hitting the city with a 56 per cent funding cut in real terms since 2011. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=e3c8Y>



# G LL expands property portfolio

One of the UK's largest operators of public leisure centres, GLL, has expanded its portfolio of sports facilities with the acquisition of Sporthouse in Dagenham, London.

Sporthouse was opened by five times Olympic rowing champion Sir Steve Redgrave ahead of the London Olympic Games in April 2012.

It has the country's biggest multi-use sports hall at 5,000sq m, a large health club and two outdoor basketball courts. It also has the capacity to hold 6,000 spectators.

The centre was an official Games training venue during London 2012 and hosted both Olympic and Paralympic athletes in the run up to the Games.

The privately-owned centre, however, ran into financial difficulties and was placed in administration in 2013 - despite a deal with sports promoter Matchroom Sport which was set to televise boxing, darts and world championship snooker from the venue in Mayesbrook Park.

Following the acquisition, GLL will rename the centre as Barking Sporthouse and Gym



The Sporthouse was an official Games training venue for London 2012

and invest an initial £100,000 in upgrading the facility.

Sporthouse will join Charlton Lido and Lifestyle Club in South London and a chain of low-cost Better Gyms in GLL's wholly-owned property portfolio.

GLL managing director, Mark Sesnan said, "With our experience running two key former Olympic venues in legacy mode, we are determined to offer local people the chance to experience world class sporting facilities on their doorstep." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=p4Z7D>

# Fitness Date Club launches UK website

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, an international dating website is vying for the hearts of UK fitness enthusiasts with a brand new launch.

Fitness Date Club, which aims to link up health-minded singletons predominantly from the UK, USA, Germany, South Africa and Sweden, has launched a new site exclusively for British-based users.

The site encourages members to use gyms, fitness centres or sports clubs as a platform for dating activities, with the idea that people can stay fit, enjoy their hobbies and meet new people all at the same time.

Aside from its dating focus, the site also promotes healthy living through a recently added blog featuring articles on nutrition, yoga, running, bodybuilding, cycling and training tips.

According to founder Martin Dagger, a former musician from Sweden, the UK's commitment to wellbeing is strong enough to merit



The site encourages members to use gyms as a platform for dating

a stand-alone offering for the country's lonely (albeit extremely healthy) hearts.

"One reason we want to start in the UK is that I think there is a good market for sporty people who are interested in fitness and dating," says Dagger.

"If you are focused on living an active, healthy life, what better way is there than to have a significant other who feels the same way." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=x7B5X>



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## Hamleys opens London Underground attraction

Renowned London toy store Hamleys has launched its own interactive attraction based on the London Underground on the lower floor of its Regent Street store.

The attraction opened earlier this week, featuring an interactive tube station area and a 1970s train driver's cab, thanks to a partnership between the store and the London Transport Museum.

As well as the two main features, the attraction includes transport related games, a Nerf tunnel target board and in-store entertainment.

"We are delighted to be the only place in London where families can enjoy the experience of being in the driver's cab of an underground train, making a trip to Hamleys all the more exciting," said Ralph Cunningham, retail and brand director of Hamleys. "We look forward to continuing our strong relationship with the London Transport Museum." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=p4n7f>



The installation features live streaming technology

## Hengistbury visitor centre opens interactive installation

Hengistbury Head Visitor Centre has opened a new interactive AV installation to enable visitors to further explore the wildlife and history of the ancient headland in Bournemouth.

Constructed by specialists DJW, the installation features technology to stream live footage and audio of wildlife across the nature reserve, filmed in real time on hidden cameras at study stations and a weather station.

The £1.35m visitor centre, which has a grass roof and walls insulated with straw, seeks to educate on the internationally important archaeology, geology and ecology of the headland and its surrounding area.

As well as the new installation, the site features displays, study zones, videos, wildlife webcams, podcasts, trails, talks and walks, to help raise awareness and understanding of the habitat that is now declared as an ancient monument. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=x8U7T>

## HLF invests £5m into natural heritage

Natural heritage in the UK is set to receive a £5m boost for two projects after the Heritage Lottery Fund announced a new £16m round of funding.

The UK-wide 'Saving our Magnificent Meadows' campaign and 'The Great Heath Living Landscape' campaign in south-west England will bring together a variety of partners and bodies to protect some of the UK's most vulnerable habitats and species.

The 'Magnificent Meadows' campaign, which received £2.1m in funding, will help Plantlife International deliver a three-year conservation programme to safeguard nine meadow and grassland sites across the UK.

The 'Great Heath Living Landscape' campaign has received £2.7m in funding and encompasses the Poole, Bournemouth, Christchurch and East Dorset areas of England. The local environment will be secured and enhanced as a Natural England 'Focus Area'.

Other projects to receive funding are Salford's Bridgewater Canal (£3.6m), Dorset's



The Magnificent Meadows campaign will safeguard nine sites across the UK

Kimmeridge Fossil Museum (£2.7m), Surrey's Limnerslease 'Saving the Studios' (£2.4m) and South Tynedale Railways Preservation Society Heritage and Environmental Sustainability project (£4.3m).

Three projects have also been granted initial support funding including the Capability Brown Birthday and Festival (£905,200), Lister Steps Carnegie Community Hub (£4.1m) and CITiZAN: The Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network (£1.4m). Details: <http://lei.sr?a=t5P6Q>

## Funding deadline set for Robin Hood attraction

Developers of a new 'Discover Robin Hood' attraction in Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire have been given until the end of March to show they have the necessary funds in place.

Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) named Discovery Attractions as the preferred bidder for the £13m project in October 2012, but the original proposed opening date of 2015 for the first of two phases has been put back to 2016 following a number of contractual delays.

The council has expressed concern about progress on the attraction and a spokesperson for NCC's cultural services department said: "We have agreed with Discovery Attractions a deadline of 31 March 2014 to confirm their funding package to us."

Once complete, the new centre will replace the existing Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre near Edwinstowe and offer – among other



The Robin Hood attraction was previously estimated to cost around £13m

attractions – a live action main show created by Discovery Attractions in conjunction with US-based BRC Imagination Arts, an ecological exhibition called Discover Sherwood Forest, a theatre, a medieval village, Castle Dungeons and Knight's School, the Robin Hood Exploratorium and an adventure playground. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=B7K6G>

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## The floods – learning from Foot and Mouth disease



**KURT JANSON**  
is policy director of  
Tourism Alliance

**T**he analysis from the Met Service and the Environment Agency is grim. They believe that flooding in the UK is going to get significantly worse before it gets any better and that, after the wettest January since 1766, the ground is now so saturated that even if the rain were to stop tomorrow, the flood waters will not fully recede for up to four months in some parts of the country.

This is going to have a significant impact on the country as a whole and could even impact upon the UK's economic recovery. It wouldn't be surprising if GDP, which has been continually revised upwards over the last three months, starts to be revised back down again as what started as a localised problem evolves into a national crisis.

In doing so, the flooding is repeating the pattern of the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak in 2001. And this similarity is important for the UK tourism industry as the FMD outbreak caused significant damage to both inbound and domestic tourism businesses. The inbound tourism industry suffered because overseas news channels covered the story for months and showed graphics of the disease slowly spreading throughout the country – giving potential visitors the impression that the whole country was in a state of quarantine.

If you are currently overseas and watching news reports on the flooding, the picture is eerily familiar – graphics show the flooding spreading over the whole of the UK.

The domestic tourism industry also suffered due to the government not understanding the importance of tourism to rural economies and telling people to stay away from rural areas. As a result, many rural businesses went bankrupt.

Overall, the misconceptions surrounding the FMD outbreak were estimated to have damaged the UK tourism industry by approximately £17bn. The task for the tourism industry is to ensure that history does not repeat itself with the floods. The tourism industry, which has played a key role in the UK's economic recovery, needs to be at the heart of the government's plans to support and rebuild businesses affected by this crisis.

## TOURISM

# UK enjoys record year for tourism

Britain welcomed 32.9 million overseas visitors in 2013, more than any other year, according to provisional estimates released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Across the calendar year, visitors spent a record £21bn on their trips, an increase of 13 per cent on 2012, which also saw record figures, buoyed by the staging of the Olympic Games.

The UK received 2.4 million overseas visits in December 2013, a 2 per cent increase year-on-year, but enough to ensure the annual figure represents a 6 per cent increase on 2012.

"Not only have we managed to surpass the £20bn barrier for the very first time, but we've broken records for holidaymakers and visitors from key growth markets such as China and South Korea," said Sandie Dawe, chief executive of VisitBritain. "Our international



2013 was a record year for British tourism, outstripping the success of 2012

tourists are starting to see and do more across the country, which tells us that our GREAT campaign is not only working, but influencing travel too. Holiday figures are up across the whole of Britain with robust growth for Scotland, Wales, the rest of England and London." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Z2g3u>

## Boating tourism brings in £626m to West Country

Boating tourism was responsible for bringing £626m into the West Country's economy last year, according to an extensive report by the British Marine Federation.

The report shows that the industry supports thousands of jobs for locals, with

income ranging from billionaires' super-yachts mooring in local ports, to families hiring narrow-boats on the region's canal ways.

It is thought that the south west now accounts for a sixth of the national total of money generated by boating tourism. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=a9q3k>

## Spafinder to launch wellness tourism programme

Spafinder Wellness 365 is to organise a three-day programme focusing on the growing wellness tourism sector at this year's World Travel Market (WTM) 2014 exhibition.

The wellness industry company – which covers media, marketing and gifting offerings – has devised a schedule combining workshops with experience and insights from some of the sector's leading executives and experts.

The programme will run from 4-6 November 2014 at London's ExCeL centre, as part of WTM, an event which attracts more than 50,000 senior travel industry professionals, government ministers and international press.

Reflecting on the success of the wellness tourism sector, which is currently enjoying 9 per cent annual growth, John Bevan, CEO Europe for Spafinder, says: "The sector offers a



Spafinder CEO Europe, John Bevan, is "excited to increase exposure"

wide range of opportunities for the travel and tourism industry, while World Travel Market – with executives in attendance agreeing more than £2bn in business deals – is the perfect platform to help grow the sector further." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=c8t6p>



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## Aromatherapy Associates sold to B&B Investment

Spa product house Aromatherapy Associates (AA) has been sold to B&B Investment Partners, a new fund – established in November 2013 – with plans to invest in health, wellness, beauty and personal care brands.

B&B is a partnership between Alliance Boots, owner of UK high street chemist Boots, and the principals of B&B Investment Partners, Chris Britton and Jean-Philippe Barade.

AA was founded in 1985 by entrepreneurs Geraldine Howard and Sue Beechey. The company is a world leading supplier of aromatherapy-based products to the professional spa sector, with contracts including Mandarin Oriental, Four Seasons, Fairmont and Orient Express Hotels.

The acquisition by B&B – for an undisclosed sum – is one of the first to be completed by the new investment business. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=R5w9Z>



Ecover is thought to be behind the spa

## Dormy House spa opens as final part of £10m investment

Dormy House in the Cotswolds, UK has seen the opening of a new House Spa as the final part of the boutique hotel's £10m (US\$16.3m, €12m) refurbishment.

The hotel and spa are part of Farncombe hospitality – a group of companies originally owned by Jorgen Philip-Sorensen, the entrepreneur behind the green cleaning product brand Ecover.

The spa refurbishment is the product of a collaboration between Sparcstudio, Howard Spa Consulting and Temple Spa.

Sparcstudio is behind the spa's design and interiors, with the spa being developed in consultation with Howard Spa Consulting.

The facility features six treatment rooms, as well as a 16m infinity pool, hydro pool and a personal training studio, which will be available to guests, day spa visitors and a limited 200 members.

For thermal experiences, an extensive suite houses a salt infusion steam room, Finnish sauna, drench showers, an ice chute and a lavender sauna. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=S2V5w>

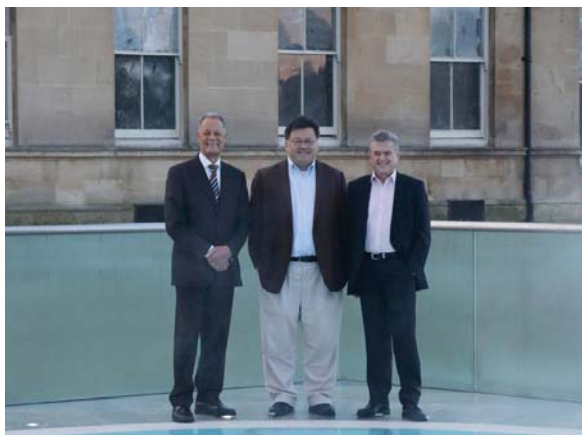
## YTL takes charge of Thermae Spa

YTL Hotels, owner of the soon-to-open Gainsborough Bath Spa Hotel and Bath-based utility company Wessex Water, has strengthened its grip on the ancient spa town's wellness facilities by acquiring the operating contract of Thermae Bath Spa.

YTL Hotels has obtained the contract from former operators Thermae Development Company for an undisclosed fee.

The deal ensures that jobs at Thermae Bath Spa, which employs more than 170 people, will be safeguarded, while the name will also remain.

Thermae Bath Spa will be operated by Bath Hotel and Spa (BHS), a YTL Hotels subsidiary set up to manage both the spa and the Gainsborough Bath Spa Hotel, although the two will remain separate businesses. The actual



(From left to right) Henk Verschuur, Dato Mark Yeoh and Colin Skellett

Thermae Bath Spa buildings and the supply of natural thermal water are owned by Bath & North East Somerset Council.

"This represents a further major investment by YTL and demonstrates their long-term commitment to Bath," said BHSL chair Colin Skellett. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=f9V7q>

## Spa design revealed for Center Parcs Woburn

Center Parcs has unveiled plans for its new 22 treatment room spa at Woburn Forest, opening in Q2 of 2014.

The facility is made up of six smaller spas all inspired by nature and combining different approaches from many of Europe's leading establishments. The six spas are themed around; Fire and Ice, Mineral and Gemstone, Blossom, Herbal, Sensory and Salt.

The Aqua Sana spa was designed and developed by Schletterer Wellness & Spa Design and Sparc Studio.

As well as 25 experience rooms there are also 22 treatment rooms across the six different areas with products from Elemis, Decléor and Bliss as well as Serail Suite for couples' mud treatments.



The concept was developed by Schletterer Wellness & Spa and Sparc Studio

Also included is a boutique, gym, Vitale Café Bar serving Mediterranean refreshments and light cuisine an outdoor infinity pool looking out across Woburn forest. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=R4A6g>

## £26m makeover of Belfry resort nearing completion

World-renowned golfing resort The Belfry in Birmingham is about to reach the end of a £26m refurbishment, designed to place a strong emphasis on luxury wellness and gastronomy.

The spa, which is the subject of plans for a further upgrade, comprises 10 treatment

rooms stocked with Clarins and ESPA products and offers a number of treatments.

In addition the on-site gym has been fully refurbished, featuring the latest Life Fitness equipment and three new restaurants have been created. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=K5y3S>



# Hotel transactions to hit US\$50bn

A new report by real estate company Jones Lang LaSalle, *Hotel Investment Outlook 2014 – A new era*, predicts that global hotel transaction volumes will rise by 5-10 per cent to about US\$50bn (£30.7bn, €36.9bn) in 2014, with the year characterised by continuing investor confidence and a market flush with capital.

The Americas are expected to drive the increase with a 15 per cent jump in transactions to US\$27bn (£16.5bn, €19.9bn), led by private equity buyers and with Middle Eastern and Asian investors targeting the US.

The outlook for EMEA remains positive, with hotel investment volumes forecast to reach US\$16bn (£10bn, €11.8bn) and Africa emerging as a growth market for hotel investment.

Asia Pacific is likely to see some softening after its second highest year on record – up 160 pct in 2013 to US\$9.5bn (£6bn, €7bn) – since there will be fewer landmark deals, although



A year characterised by investor confidence and a market flush with capital

it is anticipated that there will be an increase in small asset sales for 2014. Australia, Japan and Thailand are seen as likely to attract the most investor attention.

The report also observes that as the economy strengthens and leisure travel picks up, resort transactions in addition to gateway markets could show momentum, with Mexico – in particular Cancun, Los Cabos and Mexico City – indicating signs of strong performance. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=J3B3h>

## The post-recession return to growth



**PETER DUCKER**  
is chief executive officer of the Institute of Hospitality

Following one of the worst recessions in history, the UK is now passing from recovery to bona-fide growth. Instead of the 1.5 per cent it gave us a few months ago, the IMF now expects the UK to grow 2.4 per cent this year, higher than any other European country.

Of course, such positive news is hugely welcome, but it is not without challenges for our industry. In an even more fiercely competitive labour market, how will economic growth affect our ability to recruit and retain capable and talented employees?

Undoubtedly, hospitality, leisure and tourism (HLT) was one of the success stories of the recession. While the public sector, manufacturing and engineering shrank, our industry created 153,000 new jobs between 2010 and 2012 – a quarter of all new jobs, according to the British Hospitality Association.

Yet despite such facts, many parents, teachers and careers advisors continue to regard hospitality, leisure and tourism as careers of last resort. Trying to attract school leavers to our industry is leaving it too late. That is why a number of schemes are aiming to educate and influence primary school children about the variety of opportunities that we offer.

Of course we need receptionists, chefs and waiters but we also need professionally-qualified employees in IT, online distribution, revenue management, web-analytics, interior design, property and acquisitions, branding, sales and marketing.

Coming out of recession does not mean that we are returning to a pre-2008 world. The environment has changed significantly, and in many respects, conditions are ripe for us to promote HLT as a more attractive career choice than ever before.

Growth is set to continue, more and more HLT firms are being recognised as employers of choice and studying at an English university has now become extremely costly, meaning that many young people are looking at alternative routes. HLT's low barriers to entry mean that there are roles for everyone, with or without qualifications and for those with ambition and talent, the career paths are very clear.

## £40m Shard hotel finally gets opening date

The long-awaited £40m hotel within London's tallest building has been announced as opening on 6 May.

The five-star 202-bedroom Shangri-La Hotel will be London's first elevated luxury hotel, occupying levels 34 to 52 of the 1,016ft (310m) Shard in central London.

Room features will include custom-made beds, iPod docking stations, complimentary high-speed internet access, coffee machines, heated floors and a butler service in all suites.

Facilities at the hotel include three river-facing event rooms, an infinity pool and a 24-hour gym.

Dining options include a gourmet deli and cake shop on the ground floor, a destination restaurant Shard 35, light dining and tea at Lounge, and a destination bar GONG.

It will not be until September 2014 that all the rooms will be available at the hotel, which



The Shard was completed in 2012 and is western Europe's tallest building

will be only the third Shangri-La in Europe – after Paris and Istanbul.

The Shard was designed by architect Renzo Piano and at 310m (1,016ft) holds the title for tallest building in western Europe. The building opened to the public in February 2013. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=u3j5d>

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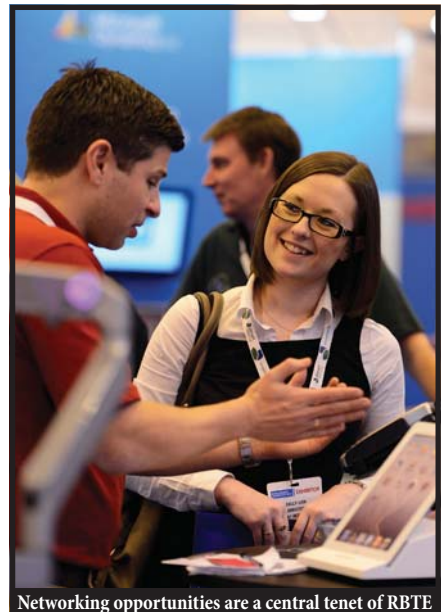
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Visitors to RBTE can take advantage of over 100 free education sessions, including conferences, seminars, workshops and roundtables. A particular highlight in the programme is a session from David Page of Pizza Express fame, who will be presenting 'An Exclusive Preview into the Consumer Insight Revolution' alongside Georgina Nelson from truRating. Virgin Media will be talking about 'Mobile PoS - the Future of In-store Retail' and Mark Smith, finance and operations director of British ladies sportswear brand Sweaty Betty, will share the brand's 'omnichannel strategy' and its UK and US growth aspirations.

In addition to the extensive conference programme, (with one theatre dedicated to payments) there are a wide range of other features at RBTE. The eCommerce Bootcamp will provide hands on advice for

attendees and is designed to inspire delegates, who will go back to the office ready to invigorate their colleagues.

The issue of customer loyalty will also come under the spotlight, thanks to a loyalty roundtable discussion.

Furthermore, visitors will be treated to briefings on all the latest ideas and blue sky thinking in the Innovation Theatre, where a number of challenges faced by organisations will be addressed and tackled in some very exciting ways.

RBTE will also see the winner of the Revive & Thrive Challenge announced – a new competition to bring people and businesses together to revive their town or cities to make them more engaged.

The winner of the competition will work with a team of experts, giving them access to over £190,000 worth of support to bring their idea to fruition.

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The promenade was designed by Reich and Hall

## Bids invited for Scotland's £30m elite sport centre

Bids are now being invited from contractors for the £25m National Performance Centre for Sport (NPCS) at The Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, Scotland.

It is hoped a contractor will be named by the summer, with construction due to start later this year. The centre is expected to be fully operational by 2016.

The centre will offer an indoor full-sized 3G football pitch with seating for 500, a full-sized Hampden grass pitch with seating for 500, a synthetic 3G pitch, two goalkeeper training areas, two rugby pitches, five football pitches and three outdoor tennis courts.

Indoor facilities include a nine-court sports hall, a 100-station fitness suite, hydrotherapy, strength and conditioning and treatment areas, office accommodation for governing bodies and the incorporation of existing facilities at the university's Centre for Sport and Exercise. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=C6a4Z>*

## Cinema to be centrepiece of Watford shopping centre

Shopping centre owner Intu has been granted detailed planning consent to redevelop Charter Place in Watford, Hertfordshire in a scheme which will include a 450-seat, nine-screen multiplex cinema and leisure complex, along with a new restaurant hub.

The £100m, 1.4m sq ft (130,000sq m) project will see the substantial refurbishment of the existing Intu store and its integration with the adjoining Charter Place shopping centre, which was bought by Intu Properties in April 2013.

A new public square is also to be created, with the aim of hosting events such as street theatre and music shows.

The development will create around 1,125 new jobs across the hospitality, leisure and retail sectors, along with up to 630 temporary posts during the construction phase.

Work is expected to start in 2015, with the new centre scheduled to open in 2017. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=z5b8h>*

## Bristol Rovers FC stadium plans in jeopardy

Bristol Rovers FC's hopes of landing a new 21,000-seat stadium are heavily reliant on whether or not a supermarket chain can win a legal challenge against them going ahead with a new store.

The club needs funding from selling its existing ground to Sainsbury's to help pay for the new £40m stadium on the northern edge of the city.

A Bristol Rovers fans' petition in support of a Sainsbury's supermarket at the Memorial Stadium in Horfield has now topped the 12,000 mark, while a legal challenge against the supermarket from the pressure group TRASHorfield will be heard in Bristol on 13 March.

Bristol Rovers Football Club (BRFC) has already been given planning permission by South Gloucestershire Council to proceed with its new stadium development on land next to the University of the West of England's Frenchay campus.



IMAGE: BRISTOL ROVERS FOOTBALL CLUB

Bristol Rovers has already gained planning permission from the council

The Arturus Architects-designed project will centre on a 21,700-seat stadium. Gleeds, Pegasus Planning Consultants and TPA have also been involved with the plans.

Facilities will include a 1,280sq m (13,778sq ft) gym, a 784sq m (8,439sq ft) supporters club bar, a jogging track and a banqueting and hospitality suite, as well as teaching space. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=p3B9w>*

## Watersport centre plans for Swansea

Swansea Bay could soon boast a tidal lagoon featuring an international watersport centre and oyster hatchery as part of radical redevelopment plans.

London 2012 Olympic Park designer LDA Design has released its masterplan for Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon, featuring the world's first man-made, energy-generating lagoon, which would provide clean, renewable power for more than 120,000 homes and could be connected to the national grid by 2018.

Inspired by traditional fishing warehouses and boat houses, the design of the 4000sq m (43,056sq ft) building for the watersport and hatchery centre has been developed by architects FaulknerBrowns as a key component of the lagoon.

The centre would provide a hub for both recreational and competitive sporting facilities, alongside sustainably focused research and the development of various marine industries.

It will include operational and maintenance facilities, boat storage and wet changing areas,

a gateway facility, bio-reactor greenhouse facility and a hatchery.

Mike Hall of FaulknerBrowns said: "The project is a great opportunity to harness the infrastructure of green energy production for the social benefits of recreational watersports activities."

Because of the size of its energy-generating potential, the overall £756m Swansea tidal lagoon proposal – which would see a six-mile-long seawall run from Swansea docks – will ultimately need government backing if it is to meet aims of completion by 2017. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=C2p5K>*



The watersport centre is part of a £756m plan to build a tidal lagoon



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Castlereagh Borough Council wishes to invite expressions of interest from operators who wish to be considered for the fitting out and operation of a municipal gymnasium and fitness centre within a future new leisure facility located on the outskirts of Belfast.

### About the Facility

The facility will be part of an exciting project to rebuild Dundonald International Ice Bowl, which has been one of the leading attractions in Northern Ireland over the last 27 years. The proposed plans will extend the range of existing services to create a unique facility with leisure, entertainment and wellbeing services under one roof.

To submit an Expression of Interest, please email [DIIBTender@castlereagh.gov.uk](mailto:DIIBTender@castlereagh.gov.uk) by **12 noon on Friday 28th February 2014**. Please mark the subject line of your email "DIIB Municipal Gymnasium and Fitness Centre." The information supplied should include a contact name, organisation name, full postal address, email and telephone contact details.

Mr S Reid,  
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### Students develop Chatsworth House guide

Students from the University of Derby Buxton have created an insider guide to Chatsworth House designed for students studying business and tourism qualifications.

The university, which offers 'real-world learning' teamed up with Chatsworth to give three students the opportunity to create an education package aimed at B-Tech and A-Level students studying business and tourism courses, which is now being actively used by Chatsworth going forward.

"What we try and do is to take education and use and apply that into the context of the situation," said Dr Sarah Rawlinson, assistant director at the University of Derby Buxton. "These excursions are embedded into the student's degrees and who better to advise on what young people want to know, need to know and would respond well to than our own students."

Denise Marsh – who lead the student team – said: "I have always had an interest in heritage



Students developed a tourism and business-focused insider guide

sites and working on this really gave me an insight into this type of tourism.

"It was a unique opportunity and one I am sure will help me in securing future employment within the industry, as well as a fantastic chance to get behind the scenes of such a renowned heritage site, meet some of the staff and find out exactly why Chatsworth remains so successful as a visitor attraction." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=k6d9X>

### Museum apprentice scheme kicks off

A museum-based apprenticeship scheme across several high-profile attractions in the north of England has been launched to entice the next generation of talent to the creative and cultural heritage sector.

Funded by Arts Council England and run by the new Cumbria Museum Consortium (CMC), the initiative gives young people the chance to gain valuable skills work experience over a one-year placement.

Ten new apprenticeship roles have been created by the CMC, which co-ordinates projects and activities at Tullie House in Carlisle, Lakeland Arts in Bowness and Kendal and the Wordsworth Trust which is in Grasmere.

The apprentices, all aged 18 to 23, cover a wide range of duties to equip themselves with broad



Apprentices gain valuable experience in the cultural heritage sector

experiences to enhance their career prospects in the notoriously tough museums sector.

Youngsters attend extra workshops organised by CMC apprenticeship manager Helen Ivory, who hopes the apprenticeship programme will become a model that other museums in Cumbria and the north can follow. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=z6F5H>

### Fitness Industry Education launches London academy

Training provider Fitness Industry Education (FIE) has launched a new £1.2m fitness instructor training academy in central London, following a £350,000 investment from Academy Leasing.

The site will be used for the training and development of fitness industry professionals.

"The establishment of a purpose-built training facility represents the next step in our expansion strategy and we expect it to accelerate the company's already strong growth," said Michael Betts, managing director of FIE.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=w5N7c>

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#### Lifeguard

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#### General Manager

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Company: Kirklees Active Leisure  
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Company: GLL  
Location: Marshall Street Leisure Centre

#### Health and Fitness Supervisor

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#### Assistant Manager -

#### Health and Fitness

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Location: Finchley, London, UK

#### Swimming Manager

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#### Fitness Instructor

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Location: Didcot Wave, UK

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Location: Nottingham, UK

#### Duty Manager

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Location: Exeter, Devon, UK

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Location: Stratford, East London, UK

#### Centre Assistant

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#### Duty Manager (Tennis)

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#### Duty Manager (Events)

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Company: Everyone Active  
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Company: The Gym Group  
Location: Various locations, UK

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Company: GLL  
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Company: Everyone Active  
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Company: NRG GYM LTD  
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#### Club Manager

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#### Fitness / Box Fit Instructor

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#### Membership Sales Consultant

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Location: Exeter, Devon, UK



**Membership Consultant**

Company: Everyone Active  
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Company: GLL  
Location: Various London Boroughs, UK

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Location: Various locations, UK

**Personal Trainer - Self Employed**

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**Lifeguard/ Recreation Attendant**

Company: Everyone Active  
Location: Tenbury Wells, UK

**Sales Supervisor**

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**Lifeguard**

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Location: Farnborough, UK

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Company: Zoological Society of London  
Location: Dunstable, UK

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Company: Zoological Society of London  
Location: London, UK

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Location: Exeter, UK

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Location: London, UK

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Company: Lakes Aquarium  
Location: Windermere, UK

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Location: Dorset, UK

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## Terry calls for UK 'wellness cities'

*Leisure Opportunities* and *Leisure Management* editor Liz Terry has described government proposals for building two garden cities in the south of England as a "once in a lifetime opportunity" for the leisure and wellness industries.

Her editorial in *Leisure Management* Q1 called for a move away from traditional garden city models – used for Letchworth and Welwyn, in Hertfordshire – towards a wellness city concept, built on the latest sustainable design principles, with green technology and leisure facilities fully integrated into other infrastructure such as education, transport, medical, commercial and retail.

With a growing body of evidence for the health and economic benefits of an environment centred around wellness, Terry believes a successful development would pave the way for further initiatives.

"It's recognised that in order for people to be healthy and lead long, happy and productive



Liz Terry thinks a wellness city could be a once in a lifetime opportunity

lives, wellness needs to be built into day to day life," said Terry.

"A purpose-built wellness city, with places to walk, exercise and spend time outdoors, as well as with access to great facilities, would enhance quality of life, lead to better health and serve as a model for others to follow."

The government has yet to confirm any locations for the proposed cities, but has pledged to publish a report into the viability of building large new settlements. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=E3x7p>

## Gym Group's Treharne excited by merger

*Continued from front cover*

The Gym Group chief executive John Treharne believes the pending merger with former rival in the budget club sector Pure Gym has come at the perfect time for both companies to continue their expansion.

The potential tie-up – subject to approval by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) – came as no surprise to many in the industry, given the clear similarities between the two firms.

The new entity (as yet unnamed) would comprise of more than 100 gyms across the UK. Treharne, who expects to maintain existing growth rates once all the pieces are in place, will be chief executive, while Pure Gym's Peter Roberts will be executive chairman.

"We want to continue expansion across the UK and will be looking to open in excess of 30 gyms per annum, pending regulatory approval. Research shows the UK market still has a lot of scope for growth – certainly compared with the US and Germany – so we hope to capitalise on that," said Treharne. "For now we have to wait for the OFT decision – which



John Treharne sees the merger as a catalyst for expansion

we expect by early April – so until that goes through it will be a case of business as usual for both companies, continuing to trade and expand as before.

"After the OFT decision, we'll consult on joint branding for the new company. We're very similar companies in terms of pricing, equipment, 24/7 opening hours and philosophy, so I don't envision there being many integration issues." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=d6A7y>

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- CIMSPA +44 (0)845 603 8734  
[www.cimspa.co.uk](http://www.cimspa.co.uk)
- CPRE +44 (0)20 7981 2800  
[www.cpre.org.uk](http://www.cpre.org.uk)
- English Heritage +44 (0)870 333 1181  
[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)
- FSPA +44 (0)2476 414999  
[www.sportsandplay.com](http://www.sportsandplay.com)
- Fields in Trust +44 (0)20 7833 5360  
[www.fieldsintrust.org](http://www.fieldsintrust.org)
- HHA +44 (0)20 7259 5688  
[www.hha.org.uk](http://www.hha.org.uk)
- IAAPA +1 703 836 4800  
[www.iaapa.org](http://www.iaapa.org)
- IEAP +44 (0)1403 265 988  
[www.ieap.co.uk](http://www.ieap.co.uk)
- Institute of Hospitality +44 (0)20 8661 4900  
[www.instituteofhospitality.org.uk](http://www.instituteofhospitality.org.uk)
- LPF +44 (0)1462 471932  
[www.leisurepropertyforum.org](http://www.leisurepropertyforum.org)
- Natural England +44 (0)845 600 3078  
[www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)
- People 1st +44 (0)870 060 2550  
[www.people1st.co.uk](http://www.people1st.co.uk)
- REPs +44 (0)20 8686 6464  
[www.exerciseregister.org](http://www.exerciseregister.org)
- SAPCA +44 (0)24 7641 6316  
[www.sapca.org.uk](http://www.sapca.org.uk)
- Sports Aid +44 (0)20 7273 1975  
[www.sportsaid.org.uk](http://www.sportsaid.org.uk)
- Sport and Recreation Alliance  
+44 (0)20 7976 3900  
[www.sportandrecreation.org.uk](http://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk)
- Sport England +44 (0)8458 508 508  
[www.sportengland.org](http://www.sportengland.org)
- Springboard +44 (0)20 7529 8610  
[www.springboarduk.org.uk](http://www.springboarduk.org.uk)
- SkillsActive +44 (0)20 7632 2000  
[www.skillsactive.com](http://www.skillsactive.com)
- Tourism Management Institute  
+44 (0)1926 641506  
[www.tmi.org.uk](http://www.tmi.org.uk)
- Tourism Society +44 (0)20 8661 4636  
[www.tourismsociety.org](http://www.tourismsociety.org)
- ukactive +44 (0)20 7420 8560  
[www.ukactive.org.uk](http://www.ukactive.org.uk)
- VisitBritain +44 (0)20 7578 1000  
[www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com)
- World Leisure +1 250 497 6578  
[www.worldleisure.org](http://www.worldleisure.org)