

Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools - UK - July 2011

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“There is a major opportunity for trusts and contractors to diversify into budget gyms, which is a fast-growing sector within the private health and fitness industry. They could do this both on their own accord (eg by opening their own private facilities independent of councils) or by opening smaller ‘infill’ sites for councils which would help to relieve demand pressures on larger leisure centre sites.”

– Michael Oliver, Senior Leisure Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- How can leisure centres and swimming pools respond to the threat posed by budget gyms?
- What specific consumer types can leisure centres and swimming pools target for growth?
- What can leisure centres and swimming pools do differently to attract more users?
- Are there opportunities for trusts and management contractors to diversify?

Definition

This report covers local authority-owned leisure centres and swimming pools, including facilities run on a ‘dual use’ basis, eg facilities housed within schools etc that are available for use by the public at certain times of the day or week. Despite often being in direct competition with public leisure centre facilities, private health and fitness clubs are excluded from the coverage of this report, as are all other private facilities that are not open to the general public, such as those reserved for employees, or association or trade union members.

Where reference is made to data on public sports centres sourced from The Leisure Database Company, the use of the term ‘Public Sports Centre’ relates to both availability and core facilities. In terms of availability it has been refined to exclude those venues not available to the general public on a ‘pay-and-play’ basis or for club use only (usually applicable to educational-based sites). The Leisure Database Company definition also refers specifically to a venue with one or more of the following core facilities: health and fitness, swimming pool (indoor or outdoor), or sports hall.

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