

## Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools - UK - Jan 2013

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*“Opening selected facilities 24 hours a day is something which would allow leisure centres to confront the growing threat from budget gyms head on.”*

– Michael Oliver, Senior Leisure and Media Analyst

### In this report we answer the key questions:

- How can centres compete with the rise of the budget gym?
- How can centres reach out to new potential users?
- How can centres encourage more people to visit?

Despite tough economic conditions, the leisure centres and swimming pools market has continued to grow. In fact, these tough conditions have worked in the industry's favour, because its competitive price positioning and range of flexible payment options has made it particularly relevant in today's cash-strapped, austere environment.

The past few years have been marked by the continued growth of the trusts sector, mainly taking share from in-house council operations. With local authority budgets under pressure, councils can no longer afford to ignore the potential savings that can be made by contracting out their operations to a trust or management contractor, while an added attraction is these groups' willingness to invest in improving the facilities they operate.

However, this is not an industry without worries: it faces spiralling energy costs and a new tax which has added to its overhead burden, forcing a renewed focus on energy consumption and efficiency, while an added threat is the rapid growth of the budget health clubs sector, which is chipping away at the competitive price positioning of some operators' gym membership packages.

This report assesses the current status of the market together with an examination of consumer behaviour and attitudes, as well as interest in potential innovations. Mintel last reported on the industry in *Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools – UK, July 2011*.

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