

The Active Standard: Narrative and FAQ

Narrative

Pre-pandemic, the fitness and leisure sector was one of the fastest-growing sectors in the UK, with operators bucking the trend of high street decline and continuing to demonstrate strong economic growth. Consumer awareness and demand for fitness and wellbeing services have increased, and links to health services have also grown and strengthened.

Growth comes with new challenges, and ukactive, together with sector partners including Sport England and CIMSPA, have been supporting operators and suppliers across the sector to reach higher standards of service across a range of areas.

The professionalisation of the workforce and businesses within the sector has accelerated at pace, supported by greater quality control and assurance, increased provision and uptake of certification and accreditation, and overall standards of service across both the public and private sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused huge disruption to business; however, it also accelerated several vital areas of work: the improvement of safety standards consistently across operators of all sizes; the sharing of data by both public and private operators; and a refocus on areas such as workforce training and inclusion policies.

The sector is showing early signs of a strong recovery from the pandemic and ukactive will support its members across the sector to capitalise on the opportunity to continue delivering consistent standards.

Going forward, consistent, unified standards across the sector will help to build on the newfound confidence the sector has earned under close scrutiny from the Government, its agencies, sector partners and, most crucially, the customer. By continuing to demonstrate consistent standards for safety, inclusion and other key societal areas, the sector will increase the uptake of its services, and move into the development phase of ukactive's strategy for growth. It will also help the sector to recover sooner from the pandemic.

The creation of new standard for the sector, the "Active Standard", was announced by Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson at the ukactive Summit in October 2020, when she set out our vision, in partnership with Sport England, for a new sector standard which offers the all-encompassing, flexible approach needed to consistently maintain the standards necessary to support the continued professionalism of the sector.

The Active Standard offers ukactive members the chance to become more resilient to reputational risks, while growing their reputation and opportunities with new partners across the wider public health agenda.

Over the last 12 months, The Active Standard has been developed in consultation with a broad range of ukactive members, representing all parts of the sector, along with stakeholders and partners. We are currently going through a pilot testing with 40 different organisations across the breadth of our membership and sector to make sure that it delivers value to the businesses we serve, and we hope

to have these completed by the end of the year, so that it is fully embedded within your ukactive membership in early 2022.

Pilots

To make sure that The Active Standard is fit for purpose and gives clear benefits to our members, we will be trialling 4 pilot processes (with 10 locations in each pilot – 40 overall), each combining of different membership types to cover the full breadth of the membership, each pilot will consist of documentation being sent in to an assessor via an on-line portal:

The purpose of these pilots is to make sure that The Active Standard is fit for purpose and there are clear benefits for members. It will also give us feedback on the Internal process and ease of administration, value for money, external process and ease of administration for ukactive members and the quality of partners.

FAQs

(Problem Statement) Why does the sector need the Active Standard when there are other standards already?

Covid-19 has had a huge impact on the nation. It is now essential for the physical activity sector to amplify its voice, its work with government and its agencies, and increase the understanding and uptake of its services. The sector needs to place itself as a central part of the solution to the nations' recovery, delivering the highest quality of safety standards and setting the precedent for others.

Currently within the sector, there are a raft of existing standards that can be confusing and unfocused. The Active Standard is the all-encompassing, flexible approach needed to consistently maintain the standards necessary to support the continued professionalism of the sector.

As the industry's trade body, ukactive has cemented its place as the primary representative of the physical activity sector throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, building and presenting the evidence base for the sector as a safe and essential service for the nation's health and wellbeing – the engine room for physical activity levels. As a ukactive service, the Active Standard will be recognised by the Government, its agencies, other businesses and sectors as *the* mark of best practice across the sector.

Does this signal the end of other industry standards?

No, ukactive will be working with a range of partners to make sure that all standards are aligned and that there is no duplication for users when working to achieve the various industry standards required.

What are the main benefits of the Active Standard?

1. Ensure a consistent quality assurance of its services and products for the public and regulators.
2. Provide reassurance to customers.
3. Support the management of reputational risks that occur from incidents.
4. Help members access new partnerships across the wider health agenda.

What areas does The Active Standard cover exactly?

ukactive is working with representative stakeholders across the sector to develop a consistent standard for all member facilities, relevant to both current health and safety requirements and the societal issues members are required to address. It covers the breadth of the ukactive membership, including suppliers and children's activity providers.

The Active Standard consists of 13 key modules. Each ukactive member will adhere to core compulsory modules as well as a selection of additional elective modules that apply to their organisation. The modules will link to our risk register and will be aligned with NGB's and other partners within the sector.

Modules:

- 1 Health & safety
- 2 Staff training
- 3 Safeguarding & Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- 4 Customer satisfaction & feedback
- 5 Fitness, memberships & inductions
- 6 Equality, diversity & inclusion
- 7 Environmental management
- 8 Quality management
- 9 Health & wellbeing
- 10 General data protection regulations (GDPR)
- 11 Marketing
- 12 Food & beverage
- 13 Risk register

How will The Active Standard be developed and delivered?

The Active Standard has been created and will be administered by ukactive. This is part of our work with Sport England to [develop a set of standards and a new framework](#) for improvement that all parts of the sector can adopt. ukactive is currently going through a **pilot testing phase** of The Active Standard.

The new industry standard and improvement framework will be offered to existing and new ukactive members from early-2022.