

Children and Young People in Gym and Group Exercise Facilities

Guidance for operators when considering children and young people in gym and group exercise facilities



More people
More active
More often

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About ukactive

ukactive is the UK's trade body for the physical activity sector, bringing together around 4,000 member organisations and partners in our shared ambition to get More People, More Active, More Often.

From gyms, swimming pools, leisure centres, fitness studios, sports bodies and other activity providers to major health bodies, consumer brands, tech firms and equipment manufacturers, our community collaborates across the private, public and third sectors. ukactive facilitates high-impact partnerships, conceives and drives breakthrough campaigns, conducts critical research and lobbies the Government to recognise the power of the physical activity sector to address today's biggest issues – including reducing the burden on the NHS and social care, supporting workforce health to grow the economy, reducing crime, revitalising our high streets, and tackling loneliness.

We are committed to

- Improving the health of the nation
- Supporting organisations that promote physical activity
- Helping to reduce the pressure on our NHS – where physical activity can play an instrumental role

Our responsibilities are

- To protect, inform and advise our members
- To represent and champion our members
- To help our members grow

Our mission and values

Our long-standing and uncompromising vision is to get More People, More Active, More Often. We are committed to improving the health of the nation through promoting active and healthy lifestyles.

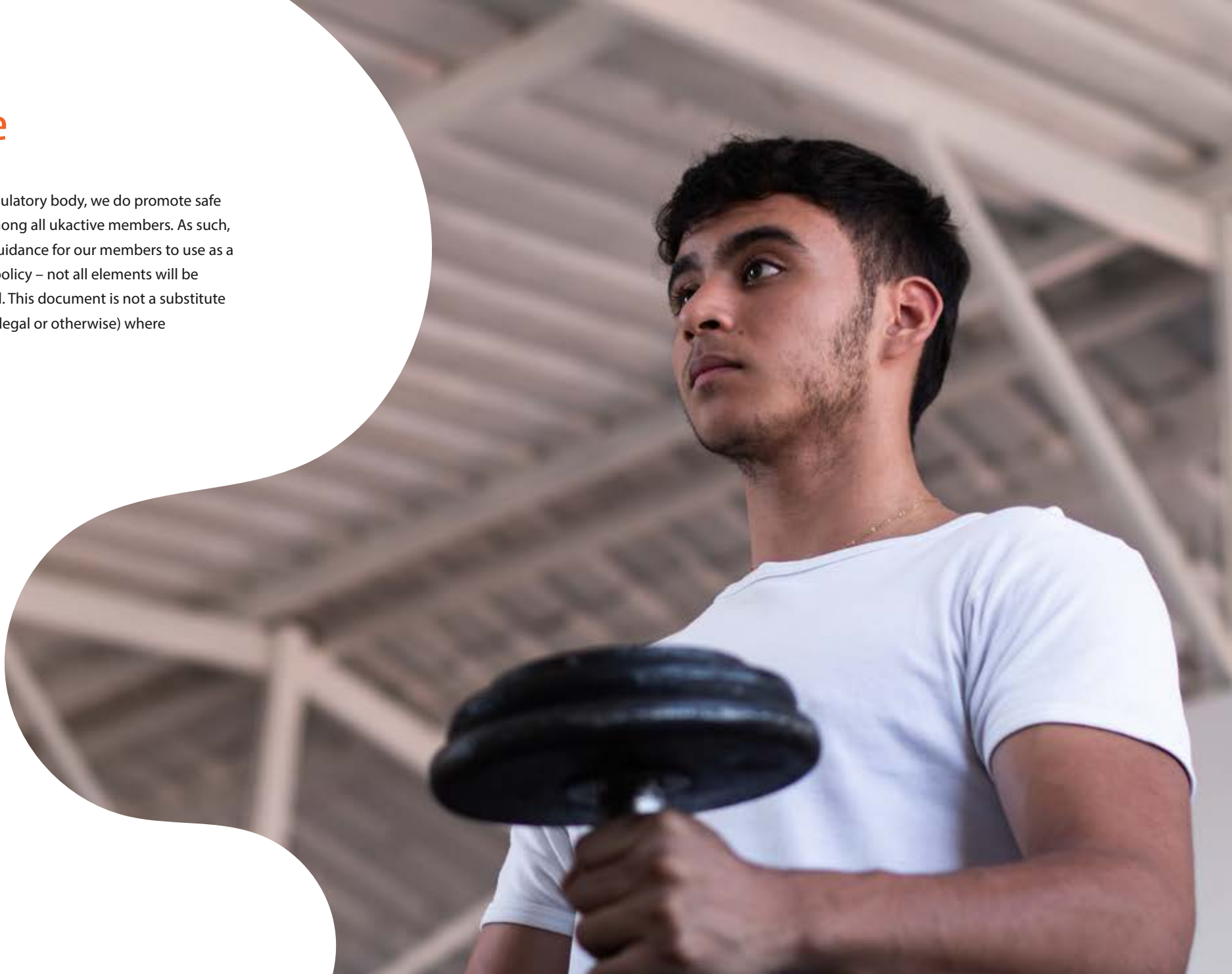
We provide a supportive, professional and innovative platform for our partners to succeed in achieving their goals and create conditions and opportunities that help our sector grow.



More people
More active
More often

Guidance

While ukactive is not a regulatory body, we do promote safe and inclusive practices among all ukactive members. As such, we have developed this guidance for our members to use as a basis to create their own policy – not all elements will be suitable, or possible, for all. This document is not a substitute for taking specific advice (legal or otherwise) where appropriate.



Introduction



There is no situation, there is no age, and no condition where exercise is not a good thing.

Professor Chris Witty, Chief Medical Officer,
April 2020

ukactive members play a key role in providing the solutions, programmes, accessibility and workforce to increase activity levels for children and young people across the UK and across all communities. The decision as to whether to encourage or allow children and young people into your facility is one for you to make as the operator, however, should you wish to encourage physical activity for children and young people at your facility, this guidance is designed to help you to do so safely.

The issues relating to safeguarding, safety and ethics surrounding the participation of children and young people in gym and group exercise activities at any facility are complex. To provide clarity over what is, and what is not required or recommended, ukactive has created this guidance document.

This guidance is applicable for children and young people from eight years of age upwards and is designed to provide recommendations when working with children and young people in fitness and leisure facilities – specifically the gym area and group exercise sessions.

Since the pandemic there has been a large increase in gym and fitness activity driven by an increase in participation by younger children (aged five to 11-years-old). Additionally, older children (aged 11 to 16-years-old) are following a steady upward trend in participating in gym and fitness activities over the longer term.

In 2024, 908,000 more children and young people took part in gym and fitness activities compared to five years ago – an increase of 11.8% (1)

While this increase in participation is encouraging, the number of overweight and obese children and young people in the UK is a concern. Obesity levels among 10 to 11-year-olds in England was 25.5% in 2020–21, 23.4% in 2021–22 and 22.7% in 2022–23, compared with 21% in 2019–20. When obesity and overweight figures were combined, 36.6% of children were an unhealthy weight (2).

While ukactive encourages physical activity for all ages in a wide range of environments, this guidance applies specifically to activity provision for those children and young people aged eight to 11-years-old and 12 to 17-years-old – these being the age bands for older primary school children and for secondary school children respectively.

The guidance in this document applies to a child or young person participating in activities either in an exercise class or in the fitness room at any gym, fitness class, leisure centre or health facility. The guidance is not applicable to participation in any sport because each sport will have its own specific National Governing Body (NGB) which is recognised as the single, national authority for a specific sport in the UK.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the primary document that outlines the fundamental human rights of children (those under the age of 18 years). In addition to this, England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland each have their own safeguarding legislation, policies, procedures and guidance setting out the duties and responsibilities of organisations and/or facilities to keep children safe from harm or abuse (3).

Government advice – Physical Activity Guidelines

The UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that;

[Read Guidelines](#)

- All children and young people should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day. Vigorous intensity activities, including those that strengthen muscle and bone, should be incorporated at least three days a week.
- This can include all forms of activity such as physical education, active travel, afterschool activities, play and sports.
- Children and young people should engage in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity across the week to develop movement skills, muscular fitness and bone strength.
- Children and young people should aim to minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary, and when physically possible should break up long periods of not moving with at least light physical activity (4).

The UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines for Disabled Children and Disabled Young People recommend that:

[Read Guidelines](#)

- Disabled children and young people undertake 120–180 minutes of aerobic physical activity per week at a moderate-to-vigorous intensity.
- This can be achieved in different ways (e.g. 20 minutes per day or 40 minutes, three times per week). For example, walking or cycling.
- For good health benefits, disabled children and young people should do 20 minutes of physical activity a day.
- Disabled children and young people should do challenging but manageable strength and balance activities three times a week.

Standards

To work with children and young people within your facility, it is recommended that you are assessed for 'The Active Standard' (TAS), a certification provided by ukactive which outlines the minimum requirements for the operating standards within the sector, with specific reference to the following:

- Policies / Insurance
- Risk Assessment
- Internal & Third-Party Inspections and Surveys
- Emergency Response
- Professional Standards & Competence
- Protecting Staff & Consumers
- Protecting Children & Young People and Vulnerable Adults
- Swimming Pools & Spas
- Music Licensing

It is a requirement that all ukactive members have, or are working towards, The Active Standard (TAS) which is aligned to Quest and FITcert accreditation schemes. This standard has been designed for all operators – whether from the private, public or independent part of the sector – and comes free of charge as part of ukactive membership. If you are not a member of ukactive and want to find out more, please visit: <https://www.ukactive.com/the-active-standard/>



Environments/Setting/Supervision

It is recommended that the following age ranges are used as a guide for group exercise and gym usage.

Age Range	Group Exercise	Gym Usage
8–10 years	While it is the operator's choice, our guidance proposes that group exercise / activities can be delivered to children and young people from eight years of age (excluding those group exercise programmes with elements of free weights e.g. Body Pump class, GRIT, or equivalent, etc.). <i>Note: all children and young people should be provided with clear and age-appropriate instructions outlining safety and guidance, including code of conduct / etiquette within the class environment, prior to the class or activity. Where programming is designed for adults, activities should be adapted to ensure children and young people can sustain the movement and intensity of the activity.</i> <i>Note: please refer to your programme supplier / creator to check age group recommendations and available adaptations</i>	It is recommended that children and young people under the age of 11 do not use the gym **.
11–13 years		It is recommended that children aged 11 to 13 years of age should always be supervised by an instructor (this could be in the form of a qualified instructor on duty for a specific children and young people open gym session or a qualified member of staff on duty on the gym floor). The supervisor should be available to answer questions and to monitor usage and ensuring safe practice. The supervision could also be in the form of a parent or guardian who is with the child throughout any use of the gym, ensuring induction and signed consents are completed.

Age Range	Group Exercise	Gym Usage
14–15 years	Group exercise activities begin to include elements of free weights normally in the form of circuits, with clear time restrictions and focus on technique.	Young people aged 14 to 15 years of age can often have greater freedom in the gym subject to the required induction being completed, avoiding lone participation, and with the ability for the young person to request advice, supervision and support if / when required.
16–17 years	Adult Group Exercise access with adaptations where required.	From age 16 to 17 years of age, access can be increased to the facility and activities which often mirror the adult/independent access membership, which typically commences at 16 years of age.
<i>** Note that ages may vary, for example, sports performance squads (e.g. elite juniors in line with sport development pathways), family activities, parental supervision (e.g. Family Group Exercise sessions such as Blaze Rebels) or rehabilitation work for children and young people. This must be with a professional and under supervision.</i>		

Did you know?

Due to children and young people's growth spurts (typically taking place from 10 to 14-years-old for boys, and eight to 13-years-old for girls) it is recommended to avoid excessive training on specific body parts – and where possible, keep it varied. Avoiding excessive training or one form of exercise all the time on the back, knees and ankles.

Insurance

Providers/Operators must have Public Liability Insurance, and it is recommended that facilities/operators must inform their Public Liability Insurer that children and young people will be on site and taking part in activities. Any instructor must hold adequate Civil Liability Insurance.



Education and Training



Guidance on education and training provided by CIMSPA.

This guidance has been provided by the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) to help the workforce and ukactive members understand best practice when working with children and young people in gyms, group exercise and fitness classes.

We have outlined the recognition that CIMSPA will provide for the workforce who want to work with children and young people in gyms and fitness classes and the qualifications and training that will enable them to be professionally recognised and deemed competent to work with children and young people in a gym or in fitness classes.

Professional Recognition

CIMSPA provides professional recognition for the sport and physical activity workforce. By being professionally recognised, the public, customers and ukactive members can be assured that the person working in the gym or providing a fitness class is qualified, competent and safe. They have demonstrated they meet the professional standards defined by the fitness industry for its workforce.

(4) ukactive members who employ members of the workforce who are not professionally recognised by CIMSPA must check the member of the workforce is appropriately qualified. For a list of endorsed and credible qualifications and CPD programmes see here: [Careers Hub – Supporting you in finding a great career in the sport and physical activity sector.](#)

Did you know?

Interval training should form the main focus when designing cardiovascular sessions for children and young people. This type of training provides variety, which boosts enthusiasm, motivation and confidence. Varying the content of the session is extremely important. This will improve engagement, performance and reduce behavioural issues.



Activity	Professional Recognition	Advised additional requirements	Further Details
General gym use by children Small (5 or less) group sessions in a gym setting	Gym Instructor Practitioner or Personal Trainer Practitioner	CPD in working with Children endorsed against the Working with Children Professional Standard. CPD in safeguarding and protecting Children in line with the Safeguarding and protecting Children Professional Standard (endorsed by the NSPCC / CPSU)	<u>Gym Instructor Practitioner</u> <u>Personal Trainer Practitioner</u>
Fitness classes in a studio or similar setting	Group Exercise Instructor Practitioner	Qualification or CPD in the group fitness activity being delivered e.g. • Strength and body conditioning (e.g. BODYPUMP™, body conditioning, core stability) • Cardiovascular (e.g. Spinning®, indoor cycling, step aerobics, BODYATTACK™) • Holistic (e.g. yoga, Pilates, BODYBALANCE™, tai chi) • Dance fitness (e.g. Zumba®, BODYJAM™, street dance, dance aerobics) • Water workouts (e.g. Aqua Zumba®, aqua aerobics) • Dance (e.g. ballroom, Latin, country and western, folk) CPD in working with Children endorsed against the Working with Children Professional Standard.	<u>Group Exercise Instructor Practitioner</u>

Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Children are defined as those under the age of 18 years. As a facility, all staff members have a legal and ethical duty of care towards the children who attend to ensure they are safe and protected from harm (5).

You should:

- Have an effective safeguarding and child protection policy in place.
- Have clear communication with parents about the facility's policies on unaccompanied children, supervision and reporting procedures.
- If photographs or videos are taken, parental permission must be obtained and any restrictions on photography must be respected.
- All staff and volunteers working with children should receive appropriate safeguarding training, including how to recognise signs of abuse and neglect.
- Have clear and accessible reporting procedures in place for staff, parents and children to report any concerns about safety or well-being.
- Have a written code of conduct or behaviour outlining boundaries for staff and volunteers when interacting with children.
- Be aware of, and have training on, the specific safeguarding issues (including those relating to online platforms) that can put children and young people at risk of harm.
- Appoint a designated safeguarding lead (DSL), who has undertaken safeguarding and child protection training (including relating to online platforms) who is responsible for overseeing safeguarding procedures and reporting concerns.
- Report any allegations of harm to a child to your local authority safeguarding services as reasonably practicable. Please note that each Local Authority has specific safeguarding support – such as LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer – to whom you can report concerns), MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs), or SPA (single point of access). Organisations and individuals working with children and young people must be aware of the relevant safeguarding support and escalation process.
- Be aware of the legal duty to refer persons subject to concerns to the Disclosure and Barring Service and ensure you make referrals when appropriate – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-barring-referrals-to-the-dbs>
- Encourage open communication and dialogue about safety concerns, creating a culture where children feel comfortable reporting issues.
- Regularly review safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure they are up to date, effective and relevant.



Other key areas to be aware of include:

- **Staff suitability** – ensure team members have relevant pre-employment checks including DBS checks (where applicable), right to work, references, self-declaration and verification of ID. Operators must ensure all relevant employees are checked at the appropriate level through a disclosure system. Find out which team members require a DBS here: [Find out which DBS check is right for your employee – GOV.UK](#)
- **Health and safety** – good practice includes ensuring that suitable checks are made regarding the safety of the areas used by children and young people (taking steps to reduce risks by collecting emergency contact details and recording any known medical or health conditions where appropriate), ensuring access to first aiders.
- **Governance** – it is good practice to have the following policies to support the safety of children, such as a complaints policy, a whistleblowing policy and a clear line of accountability for safeguarding which runs throughout your organisation, including at the most senior level.
- **Equipment** – should be age-appropriate and regularly checked for safety, with instructions from the manufacturer followed.

Did you know?

An easy acronym for team members to remember when relating to safeguarding, disclosures, suspicions or allegations are the three Rs: **Respond,**
Record,
Report.



Pre-screening and Induction

Children and young people participation must be subject to:

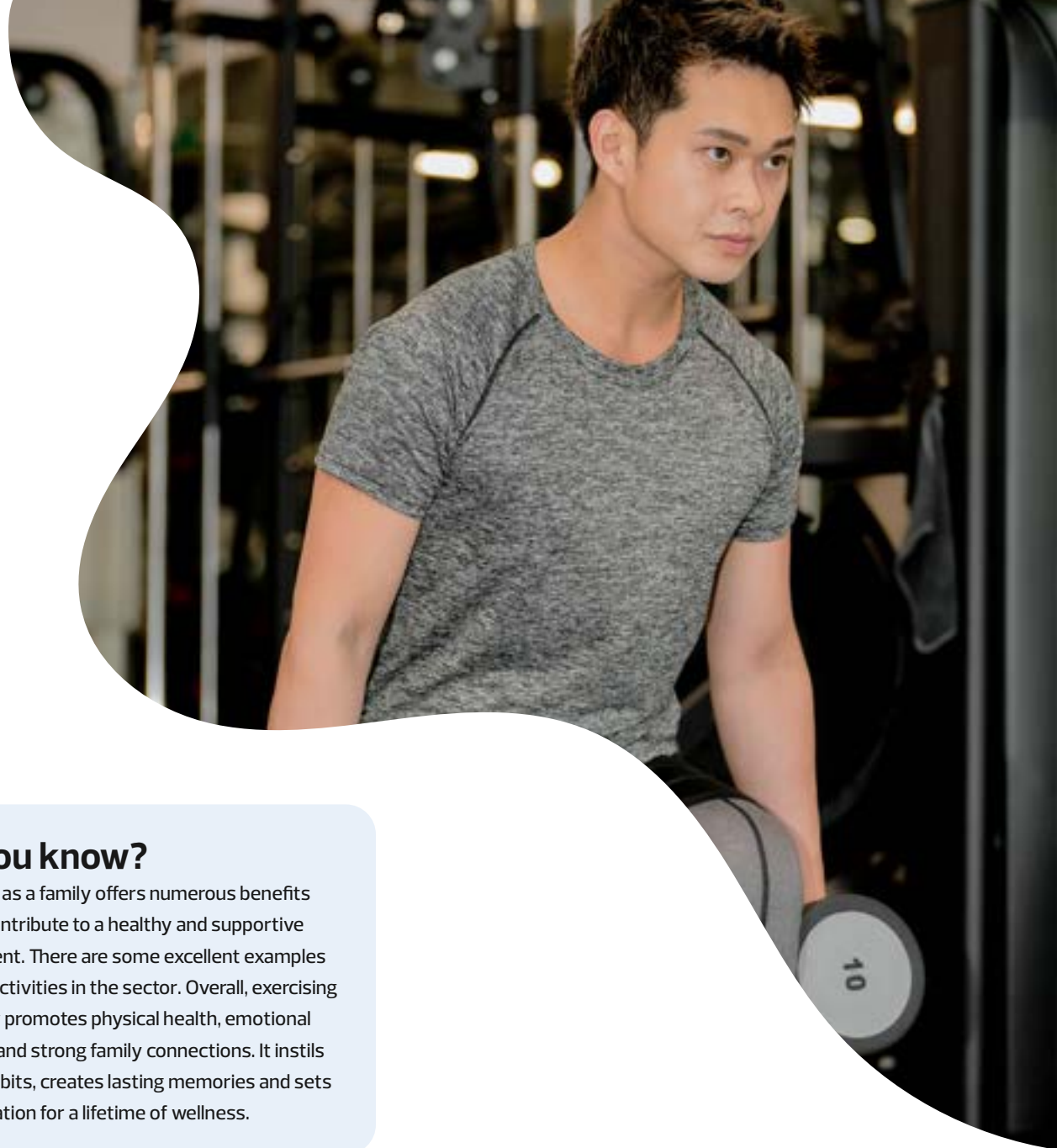
- a) All recommendations being adhered to in relation to safety, risk management and safeguarding;
- b) Completion of a Health Commitment Statement

Before exercise commences it is recommended that all children and young people accept a Health Commitment Statement, with parent or guardian consent to the activity (typically in the form of a signature but may also take a digital format). It is recommended that emergency contact details are collated where possible.

All children and young people (between 11 and 15 years of age) must have an induction outlining safety and guidance. In addition, it is recommended to explain the importance of technique, resistance training guidelines, interval training, warm up, cool down, hydration, what equipment they can or cannot use, and the gym terms and conditions (this could include code of conduct, gym etiquette, attire, respect, concerns, etc). It is highly recommended that the initial induction takes place in person / face to face (please see FAQs for information on virtual inductions).

Did you know?

Exercising as a family offers numerous benefits and can contribute to a healthy and supportive environment. There are some excellent examples of family activities in the sector. Overall, exercising as a family promotes physical health, emotional wellbeing and strong family connections. It instils healthy habits, creates lasting memories and sets the foundation for a lifetime of wellness.



Changing Rooms

Dependent on the facility and its layout, children above the age of eight years can use changing facilities unaccompanied and should be in the relevant sex changing area.

Consideration should be given to allocating specific children and young people areas, or specific cubicles or private changing areas where possible to provide safety and security for children, young people and families.

Further reading:

Sport England Accessible and Inclusive Facilities Guide:
<https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/accessible-inclusive>

The Child Protection in Sport Unit:
<https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/best-practice/safe-use-of-changing-facilities/>



Equipment

Children and young people should use equipment appropriate for their age or size. Operators should check the manufacturer's instructions to ensure that all equipment in their facilities complies with current British and European Standards, is age/size appropriate and has been risk assessed.

- For strength training, the teaching of good technique and practice is advised when allowing the use of light-load free-weights. With appropriate guidance, children and young people will see a positive development of posture, stability and core strength.
- Free weights should be used with caution when training children and young people and should only be used by those under the age of 16-years-old if they have been inducted by a qualified instructor in how to use weights safely.
- Progression in resistance, repetitions and sets should only be programmed when adolescents are both physically and mentally ready.

- Strength training should start with light weights (or resistance) and one or two sets of eight to 12 repetitions rather than lifting a heavy load once or twice. Avoid maximal lifts (lifting the heaviest weight possible).
- The amount of weight will depend on a child's age, size, form, experience and strength level. This is also true within the studio environment. For example, if adjustments on an indoor bicycle are unable to meet the requirements of a child or young person it may not be suitable for them to attend the class.

Did you know?

The Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) Scale could be used to gauge an adolescent's performance. It is simple and easy to understand. Particular attention should be paid to how they are feeling and how much physical stress they are under.



Case Study – Oldham Active

Raising participation

Oldham Active has seen a 'boom' in young people using its gym facilities through upskilling and educating its team and its adult members, setting a clear process of onboarding, induction and support for the young people to use the gym with adults, as well as using simple messaging such as 'Pins not Plates' for the resistance equipment.

Oldham Active provided its team of fitness instructors with the skills and qualification to work with young people partnering with a local college. This led to the development of specific programmes for young people, including: its unique class, BLAST, using TechnoGym's specialist curved treadmills; Skill Mills; SKI ergs (which replicate Nordic ski function movements); rowers; free-weights and other pieces of functional training kit. Oldham Active also worked in partnership to introduce young persons' Body Balance (inspired by yoga/tai chi/Pilates), Combat and Born to Move for 11 to 15-year-olds.

A parent or guardian must help the young person set up their membership, including completing an application form, health questionnaire and establishing the direct debit. Once the young person has had a complimentary full induction, including creating a bespoke fitness programme, they can use the gym and facilities whilst supervised by a member of staff.



Case Study – Nuffield Health

Setting young people up for success (and safely)

Nuffield Health, the UK's largest healthcare charity, exists to build a healthier nation through its hospitals, fitness and wellbeing clubs. It operates 114 clubs.

Nuffield is committed to increasing children and young people's activity levels by providing access to its clubs to these age groups through clear processes and progression, including an induction template called 'How you induct children and young people' for gym floor staff to follow. This covers gym etiquette, health and safety on the gym floor, how to safely use equipment and a balanced training session plan written for the child or young person to follow (incorporating warm up, cardio, functional, strength and cool down including stretching).

Children who are aged 13 and over are also required to complete a code of conduct form, outlining acceptable behaviour standards.

Use of a coloured band system helps to identify the children and young people in the gym area as well as identifying what induction the young person has received and the types of areas and equipment the young person can use.

Nuffield reports that an increasing number of children and young people are using the gym and group exercise through the increased offer, and as a result of ensuring team members are informed about the children and young people offer at the point of recruitment. In-house training has raised team member's awareness of the need to engage and motivate children and young people to use these facilities.

Nuffield also offers a 'Move Together' programme specifically for 11 to 16-year-old girls, promoting activity in the community. This initiative is targeted at those living with lower resources or from underserved areas, recognising that it is important to remove as many barriers to participation as possible. Children aged 13-years-old and over are able to provide consent to participate where there is no option to obtain consent from a parent or carer. When self-registering, participants that are 13 years old or over are asked to confirm that they will inform a parent or carer that they are taking part in a Move Together session, as well as to provide contact details to be used in the event of an emergency.



Case Study – BORN TO MOVE™

Group exercise

BORN TO MOVE™ is a programme from Les Mills, designed to nurture a life-long love of physical activity, BORN TO MOVE™ helps children experience the joy and vitality of moving to music. Combining fitness with fun, to help operators and local authorities encourage physical activity among children and adolescents. The programme is a series of digital and live class workouts, to enhance their physical education curriculum, assemblies, and after-school activities. Each session feeds young people's natural appetite for action, movement and play – and lets them enjoy the energy, confidence, good health and increased ability that goes with it. Optimised for core developmental stages, BORN TO MOVE features programming for children aged 2–5 and for those aged 6–16.

Expanding Access to Physical Activity in North Northamptonshire: In partnership with Freedom Leisure—a not-for-profit charitable trust—this programme was launched across local schools in North Northamptonshire to support increased physical activity among children and young people. Alongside in-school delivery, pupils at participating schools using the BORN TO MOVE™ Active platform were offered an affordable membership option at their local Freedom Leisure centre. Since the introduction of this initiative, Freedom Leisure has reported a notable rise in facility usage among 8 to 17-year-olds.



****Note:** [Free access to BORN TO MOVE™](#) programming is now available via the newly launched Les Mills Content Portal and Analytics Dashboard, expanding reach and impact beyond the original case study.

Case Study – Lifestyle Fitness

Fitness in education settings

Lifestyle Fitness operate over 18 fitness clubs (out of a total 24) within schools, colleges and universities and are sites well used by both the education partner and the local community. The clubs host dedicated after-school sessions for pupils aged 11–16 to help these groups to be introduced to fitness and build the confidence to exercise for life. Their successful initiative operates across 24 education sites and sees up to 40% of students join. The dedicated qualified team regularly attend assemblies and lessons to provide education on nutrition and exercise, and the aim is to ensure that every student has the opportunity to learn about the importance of physical and mental wellbeing.



Case Study – Everyone Active

Welcoming CYP – At scale

Everyone Active is the longest-established leisure operator in the UK and runs more than 230 facilities across the country. There has been a marked increase of over 50% in juniors joining and using the gym at these centres since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Everyone Active offers junior fitness and gym memberships for those aged 11–15. This gives them use of state-of-the-art gym and group exercise facilities following an induction with a qualified instructor with a CPD in training young people.

Those aged 11–13 can book into specific gym sessions or attend with their parents, while those aged 14–15 can book into sessions where they work out on their own or with friends. Clear guidance is given on what equipment can be used by children via the induction and the gym rules displayed at each site.

In addition, a programme of chaperoned junior virtual group exercise classes give youngsters access to a range of activities such as BODYCOMBAT, RPM and Core.



Frequently Asked Questions

Can children and young people have a virtual induction?

It is widely recognised that utilising digital platforms and social media will help engage children and young people and is more accessible, therefore a hybrid induction and registration can be beneficial. For example, initial questions, data capture, guardian information undertaken online followed by a face-to-face induction can have excellent results.

Can children and young people use free weights?

As outlined in the Equipment section above, free weights should be used with caution when training children and should only be used by those under the age of 16-years-old if they have been inducted by a qualified instructor in how to use weights safely. It is worth noting that the use of weights can be appropriate where it relates to sports performance squads or rehabilitation work under professional supervision.

Can children and young people join Group Exercise sessions?

While it is the operator's choice, the guidance proposes that group exercise/activities can be delivered to children and young people from 8 years of age (excluding those group exercise programmes with elements of free weights e.g. Body Pump, GRIT, etc.). ***Note: all children and young people should be provided with clear, age-appropriate instructions outlining safety and guidance, including etiquette within the class environment, prior to the class/activity.*

What is the required supervision level for the gym floor?

It is recommended that a thorough risk assessment of the areas of the gym floor used by children and young people is undertaken, to ensure presence of a qualified team member and to enforce safety protocols to ensure age-appropriate usage. A number of operators adopt one or more of the following strategies:

- a) limiting the time during which children and young people can have access,
- b) having specific open sessions for 11 to 13-year-olds,
- c) requiring parental supervision (subject to induction),
- d) restricting access to specific areas of the gym to reduce risk and manage numbers within the space.

Other operators choose to have a more open-access approach with clear supervision ratios or instructors on the gym floor for children and young people (e.g. 1:15-30) dependent on the layout of the space. It is important to ensure all children and young people have had an induction and are adhering to the etiquette and safety requirements.

What are the recommendations in respect of varied or mixed age groups engaging in group exercise?

Group exercise classes for children and young people can have a mix of ages. It is important to consider the impact this may have on adult participants and children and young people, with the instructor providing clear guidance and with adaptations to exercise being made as outlined within 'Education and Training' section.



Are there any specific marketing restrictions to consider when promoting to children and young people?

The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) has advice when it comes to marketing to children, including the need for responsible marketing that does not promote something that is, or is widely believed to be, bad for a minor's physical or mental health. Marketing must not sexualise or be perceived to sexualise minors. In addition, the Advertising Practise Codes (the CAP Codes) which are written by the Committee of Advertising Practice and enforced by the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) forbid advertising which makes children feel unpopular or belittled for not buying a product or service, or which undermines parental authority. It is recommended that you follow the ASA's advice which can be found here:

<https://www.asa.org.uk/advice-online/children-general.html>

How can we cater for children and young people with specific SEND (or ALN in Wales) requirements and ensure inclusion?

All children including children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – or in Wales, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) benefit both physically and emotionally from participating in group exercise classes and gym activities, the key is adapting activities to suit each child's abilities and needs. For more information visit:

<https://www.activityalliance.org.uk/get-active/at-home/adapting-activities> and the Activity Alliance Learning Hub <https://learn.activityalliance.org.uk/>

Where children and young people with SEND or ALN are taking part in activities, instructors may be required to adapt exercise programming (e.g. discussing with the child/young person, family members or SEN/ALN co-ordinator). Where appropriate, team members could request a copy of the child's or young person's education, health and care plan (EHCP) or Individual Development Plan (IDP), which outlines what support a child or young person needs. These plans are prepared by schools or education authorities and may be drawn up in partnership with professionals working across education, health and social care specialist services.

Where children require additional support, how can we ensure we are providing inclusive access and support?

Where possible, operators should attempt to make 'reasonable adjustments' to remain inclusive and accessible for all children and young people. This could include adapting activity areas, improving access, increasing support and providing training for team members. Where operators are not able to make reasonable adjustments or require support, they could seek specialist assistance (with appropriate consent), including from a Local Authority, SEN / ALN co-ordinator, Welfare Officer or external bodies such as Activity Alliance, the national charity for disabled people in sport and physical activity which provides resources such as Adapting activities and the Activity Alliance learning hub.

What guidance is available for 0–7 years of age?

While we encourage and promote all children to be active, it is recommended that children 0–7 years should not use the gym equipment. Children from Early Years can be active in a group exercise environment in a wide range of activities and programmes from play-based to sports, ensuring safety guidelines, supervision and required staff ratios are adhered to all times which vary dependent on activity type and length of activity. It is recommended that these activities and programmes are specific to children as opposed to participating in adult-designed classes.

Further information and references

UK Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) Physical Activity Guidelines

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-children-and-young-people-5-to-18-years>

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines for Disabled Children and Disabled Young People

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-disabled-children-and-disabled-young-people>

What type of role is it? – Find out which DBS check is right for your employee – GOV.UK

<https://www.sportengland.org/guidance-and-support/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/accessible-inclusive>

The NSPCC Child Protection in Sport unit (CPSU)
[Keeping Children safe in sport and physical activity](#)

- 1) Active Lives CYP Survey 2022– 23 23 [available here](#)
- 2) Projected health and economic effects of the increase in childhood obesity during the Covid-19 pandemic in England: the potential cost of inaction. Ivan Ochoa-Moreno et al.
- 3) NSPCC & UNICEF definitions – <https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>
- 4) [Physical activity guidelines for children and young people – NHS](#)
- 5) The Children Act 1989 (England and Wales), The Children (Scotland) Act 1995, The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. Safeguarding is a term which is broader than 'child protection' and relates to the action that must be taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and to protect them from harm.

With Thanks To

Sport England

For its commitment to the systems partnership with ukactive, supporting the sector's growth and working to reduce inequalities in physical activity.



Partners and Contributors

For their insights, recommendations, collaboration and leadership:

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