

EMD UK Instructor Impact Survey January 2021

Overview

In mid-January 2021 EMD UK carried out a survey of fitness instructors to find out 'How are you getting on'. The aim of the survey was to:

- Establish/reaffirm what guidance and support is required at the moment.
- Gain evidence of the impact of COVID:19 on instructors' income, employment and their abilities to gain help through government support schemes.
- Establish barriers/challenges and motivations to teaching online.
- Find out how they are currently feeling.

The actions that EMD UK planned to take from collecting this information were two-fold:

1. Offer the support and guidance that is asked for.
2. Use the evidence collected to support the case for group exercise instructors to Sport England, the DCMS and other influential bodies.

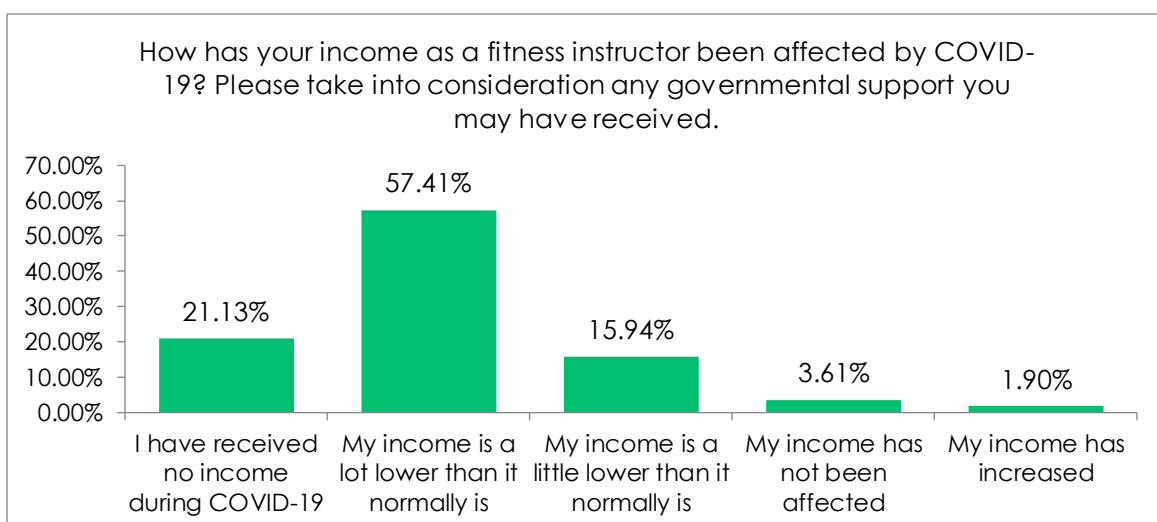
The Results

Respondents: We had 1587 responses over the period of 13/01/2021 to 26/01/2021. Responses were gained through a mixture of comms to EMD UK databases, social media posts and sharing through partner networks.

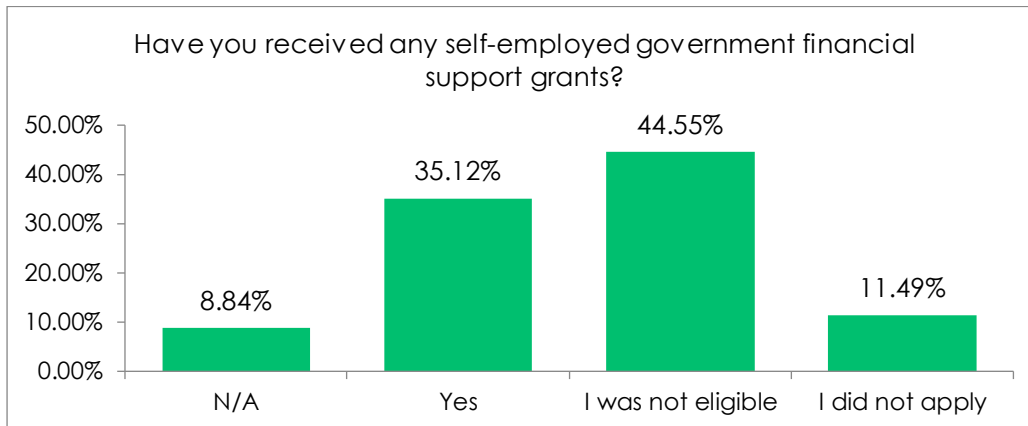
1. We asked 'Would guidance in any of these areas be of assistance to you? All areas had a positive response. Support with marketing and promoting classes came out top.

Admin – risk assessments/PARQ's etc.	38.32%
Marketing/promotion of online classes	47.04%
The technology involved in delivering online/virtual classes e.g., Zoom	41.95%
How to adapt classes to be effective online	41.82%
Partnership opportunities e.g., connecting with local businesses	41.12%

2. We asked 'How has your income as a fitness instructor been affected by COVID-19? Please take into consideration any governmental support you may have received'. A staggering 78.5% of instructors reported that they have had no income, or their income has been a lot lower than normal.



3. We asked 'Have you received any self-employed government financial support grants? Nearly 45% of instructors surveyed were not eligible for any government financial support. We know from previous findings this is due to recently becoming self-employed (not having a 18/19 tax return), mixed employment (instructing not making up at least 50% of their income) and being sole traders/directors of their companies.



4. We asked 'Has your employment status changed during COVID:19? Although the majority (circa. 50%) of instructors have not seen a change in their employment, nearly 12% have been made redundant/unemployed or had their contractual hours reduced. The 'other' category shows that although nearly 50% of instructors have not had a change in their employment status the large majority continue to be self employed but are making little or no income. This is particularly a challenge for individuals who are full time self employed and have not been able to access any support grants. In many cases these individuals have had to try and find work in other industries.

N/A	9.42%
No	49.83%
I have been made redundant/unemployed	5.95%
I have been furloughed for a length of time	11.29%
My contractual hours have been reduced	5.81%
Other (please specify)	17.70%

A few 'others':

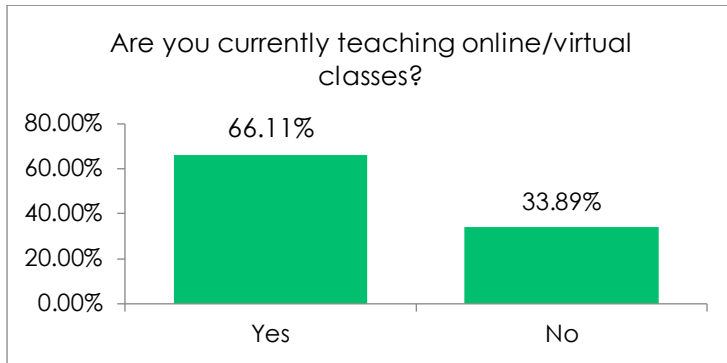
"I went full self-employed end of oct so no money."

"One gym has closed permanently!! The other even out of lockdown has cut classes by 75%"

"My fitness hub is my second job she I cannot claim anything, at the moment I have lost an income of £5000."

"I started a job in a different industry All my classes were stopped and council refused to furlough me as I am self employed."

5. We asked, 'Are you currently teaching online/virtual classes?' It is positive that 66% of instructors are currently teaching online. Although we mustn't forget that our previous insight told us that class numbers and income are both reduced.



6. We asked, 'What is preventing you from teaching online?'. There still seems to be a cohort of instructors (circa. 10%) that don't have the technical expertise. The 'Other' category was quite high in this instance. The main themes that came through were space, older participants not knowing how to/wanting to go online and franchises not allowing instructors to run online classes.

I don't want to teach online	8.08%
I don't have the technical expertise	10.46%
My internet is not good enough	4.96%
My participants don't want to join in online	15.49%
I am home schooling	5.91%
I have had to find another job	2.58%
The set-up costs are too high	5.50%
Other (please specify)	11.07%

A few 'others':

"I teach Pilates reformer and my clients do not have the equipment".

"Both myself and some of my class members are not 'tecky' enough to see this through."

"I have a tiny house and don't have room."

"I am a franchisee for a larger company who put their own classes online."

"Not enough room/no equipment/age of class attendees - don't want online".

"I am teaching on line but most people have decided it's not for them"

"Don't have money to get a laptop that is reliable, plus a mic, mixer etc etc... Also lack of space or privacy"

7. We asked, 'Is there any support (other than financial) that we could give you right now that would make it easier for you in your fitness instructor role?'

The most common responses were as follows:

- Support with marketing and promotion of online classes
- Guidance on getting set up and teaching online (the tech and the adaptation)
- Support for participants on how to join online classes
- Being able to collaborate with/support other instructors

A few example replies:

"I'd love to see a big promo on supporting your local fitness instructor! One that we could maybe tweak around our own classes/situations! And help with what to do on Instagram! I don't understand it at all! 😊"

“More training on how to deliver professional on line class networking / support groups with other instructors. its a bit lonely!”

“Training on delivering online classes”

“Advice on tech needed for professional Zoom and advice on setting up own web page for technophobes. Basically converting from face to face to online.”

“Practical tips on how to deliver online e.g. reduce music lag, additional lighting and camera tips”

“Probably "idiot" or simple steps to do online coaching...”

8. In one word how are you currently feeling about your role as a fitness instructor?

