



the national governing body for group exercise

INSTRUCTOR SURVEY

NAVIGATING FROM LOCKDOWNS REPORT

MAY 2022

A group of diverse people are participating in a group exercise class in a bright, modern studio. They are all performing a similar pose, with one arm raised high. The studio has a light-colored wooden floor, white walls, and several pendant lights hanging from the ceiling. The participants are wearing casual athletic wear. The overall atmosphere is energetic and positive.

EMD UK is the National Governing Body for group exercise. Our mission is – ‘to support group exercise instructors to be the best they can be’ and our vision is ‘healthier communities through group exercise’.

This report supports our mission of supporting group exercise instructors to be the best they can be. This is done by better understanding their current teaching situation, how they teach, their needs and support required, and areas affected by COVID-19 including any financial impact.

Methodology

Quantitative research was conducted via an online survey which was live between 8th April 2022 – 5th May 2022 to understand how EMD UK can better support the group exercise workforce as we navigate from lockdowns. The survey was sent to EMD UK's databases predominately made up of group exercise instructors and shared via EMD UK's stakeholders.

Executive Summary

A total of **1,300** responses were received.

47.2% of Instructors stated that **70%** of their participants had now returned to their fitness classes. COVID-19, work and health were the key themes identified by instructors as to why they no longer teach fitness classes.

Over half (**59.4%**) plan to return to teaching or aren't sure. Those who don't plan to return to teaching, the lack of increased pay was a key reason.

Since the pandemic began, just over half of instructors (**50.8%**) are now earning less. This is concerning when looked at in the context of a cost-of-living crisis with inflation rates predicted to continue to rise.

Over half of Instructors (**57.9%**) reported that they haven't had to increase the price of their class. The reasoning/rationale behind this is not known and potentially an area for further investigation. The remaining **42.1%** of instructors have had to increase all or some of their class prices.

95.3% have now returned to teaching face-to-face classes compared to **65%** in May 2021 (EMD UK, Instructors – how are you getting on? 2021).

Last year, **71.5%** planned to continue to deliver classes online (EMD UK, Instructor feedback on music licensing, 2021). These latest results show that **34.8%** of instructors are still teaching online. Whilst the percentage has dropped online demand is still there.

Over half of instructors have removed 'some' COVID-19 restrictions and **34.4%** have removed 'all'. Demonstrating a step back towards 'normal' for group exercise classes.

Instructors shared a range of different support requirements. Marketing, in particular, social media and advertising were heavily featured.

We hope you find this report beneficial. If you have any questions or comments you wish to make, please contact insight@emduk.org

Recommendations

The report has highlighted some main stats and picked up some key areas of support which instructors require.

40.6% of Instructors don't plan on returning to teaching

– Support is needed for the workforce to overcome the potential barriers and challenges highlighted in this report.

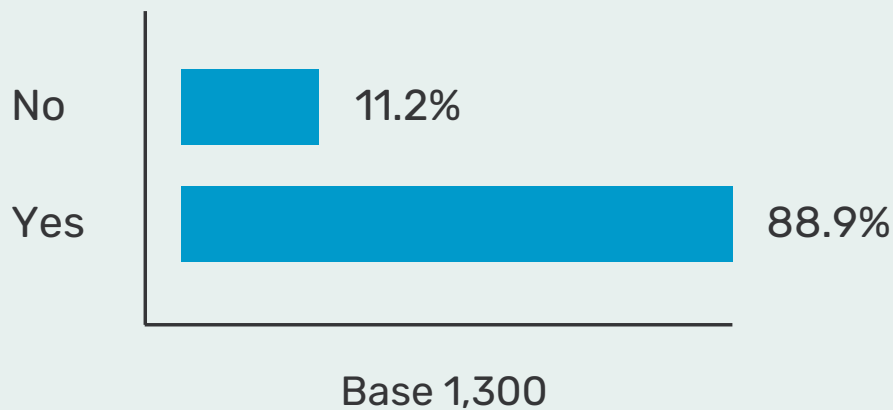
Support is needed for Instructors with their music licensing needs.

Just over 20% of Instructors have seen less than 50% of their participants return with 'Getting clients back', 'Retaining members' and 'Participant barriers' featuring as support requirements – there is a need to better understand participants utilizing EMD UK'S National Survey results.

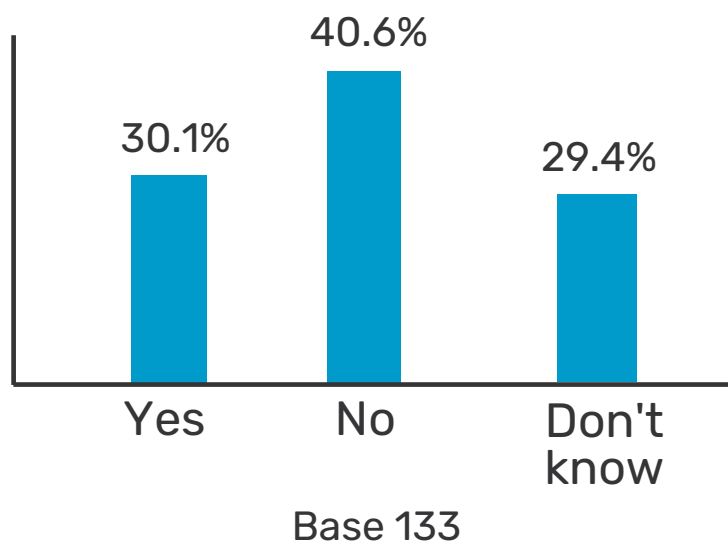
Providing more marketing support to Instructors via social media, advertising (specifically via Facebook advertising) and recruiting new members is paramount.



Are you currently teaching fitness?



Do you plan on returning to teaching fitness classes?



Why instructors are no longer teaching fitness classes.

WORK	HEALTH	OTHER	PARTICIPATION
Retired	Haven't felt able – loss of fitness	Personal reasons	Recovering from COVID-19
Decided to stop working in fitness	Surgery	Didn't feel it was stable enough	Reduced level of client interest
Full time job	Injury	Lack of confidence	
Changed careers	Stopped as burned out		

LOCATION	COVID-19	FAMILY	LOOKING TO RETURN
Don't live in UK anymore	Have covid	Maternity leave	Starting again
Relocated to another area	Not enough people coming back		

Other reasons why instructors are no longer teaching fitness classes:

TRAINING	FACILITIES	MARKETING	FINANCIAL
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Base 146 (See appendix 1.0 for all responses)

Do you plan on returning to teaching fitness classes? If no, please explain why & if there is any support EMD UK/the sector/government could provide to help you back into teaching.

'When I first taught 20 years ago I got paid £20 a class. HOW are instructors STILL being paid £20 per class 20 years later?!?'

'The investment is not covered by the return.'

'If the rate of pay goes up along with the cost of living.'

“ Fitness related expenses such as PPL license and program fees go up but the rates gyms pay for classes do not. In reality every year I get paid less and less for teaching classes. When I started teaching 10 years ago I used to get paid £30 per class and 10 years later I get paid £18-20 per class. ”

Retired

Health

Personal Reasons

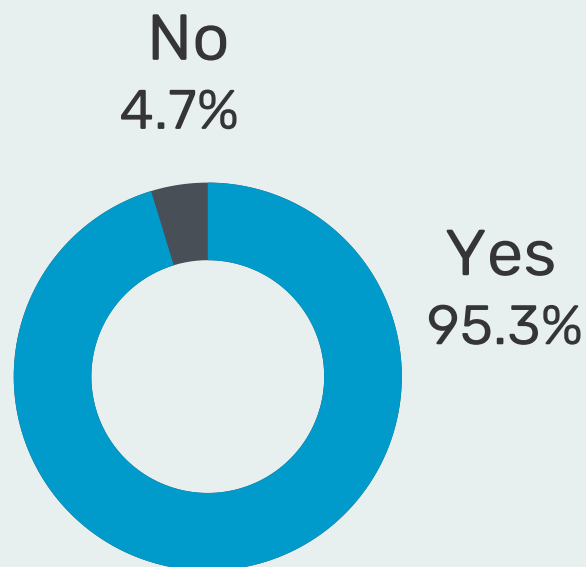
Age

Moved

Not financially viable

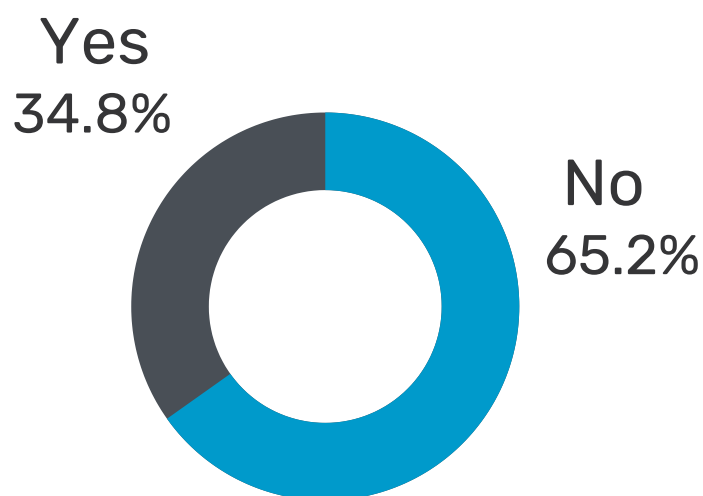
(See appendix 2.0 for all responses)

Have you returned to teaching face-to-face fitness classes?



Base 1,186

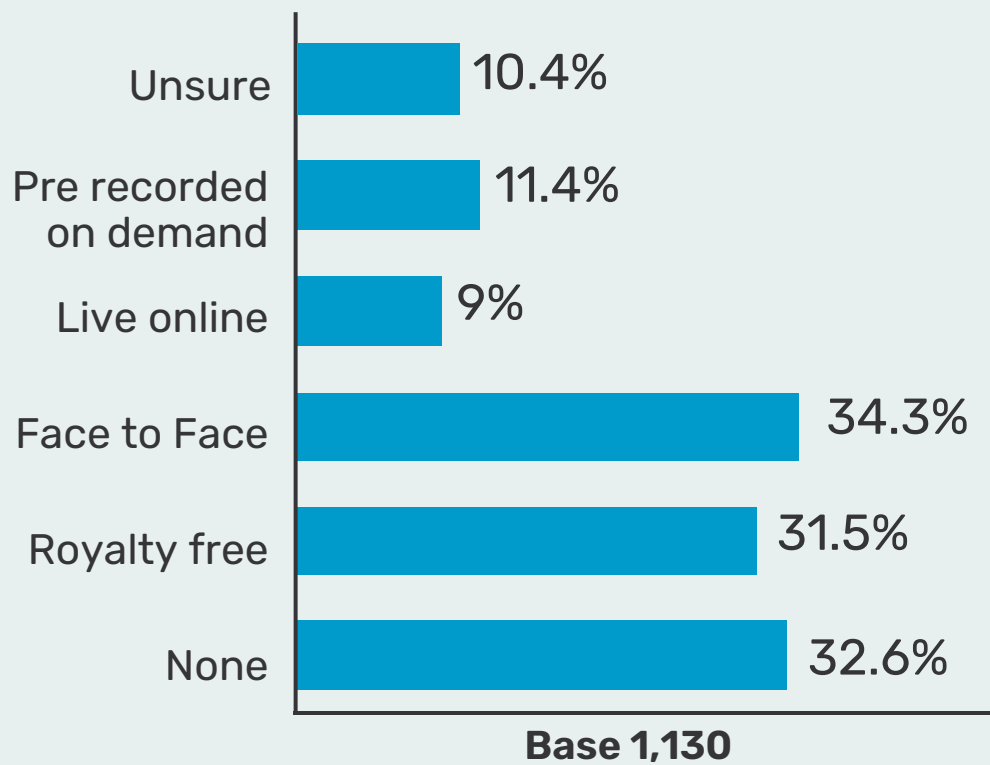
Are you currently teaching online fitness classes?



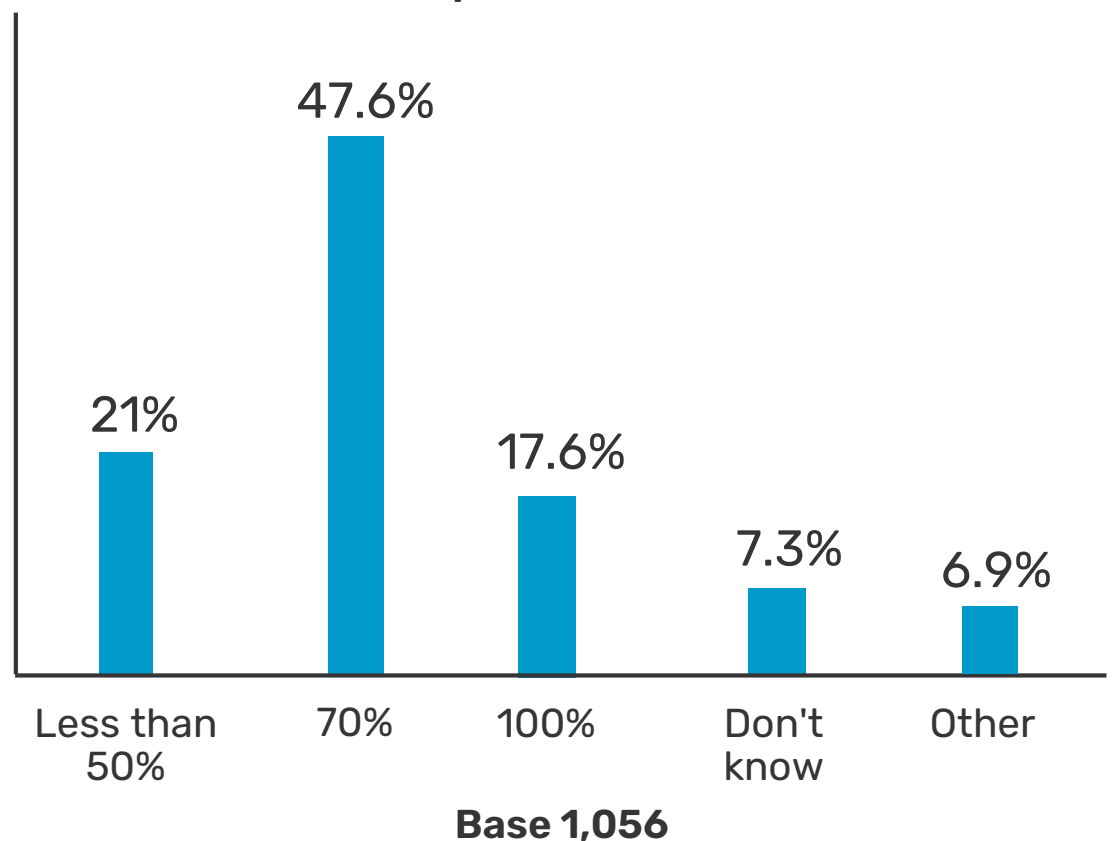
Base 1,186



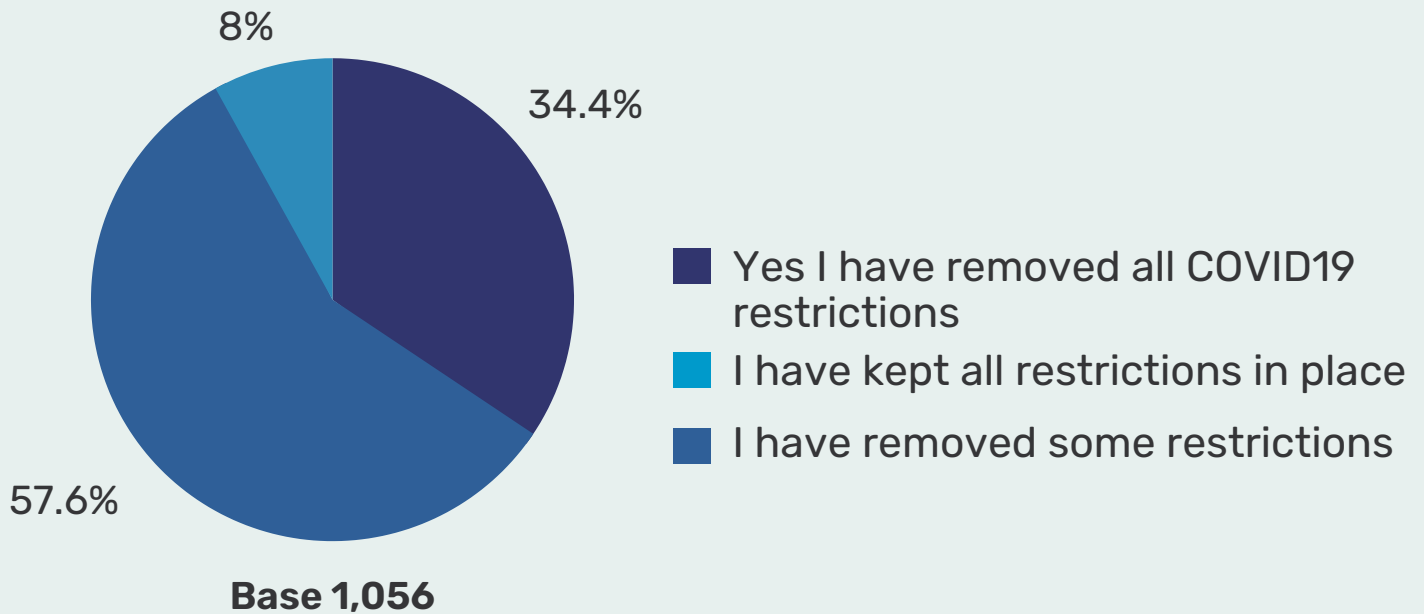
What are your current music licensing needs?



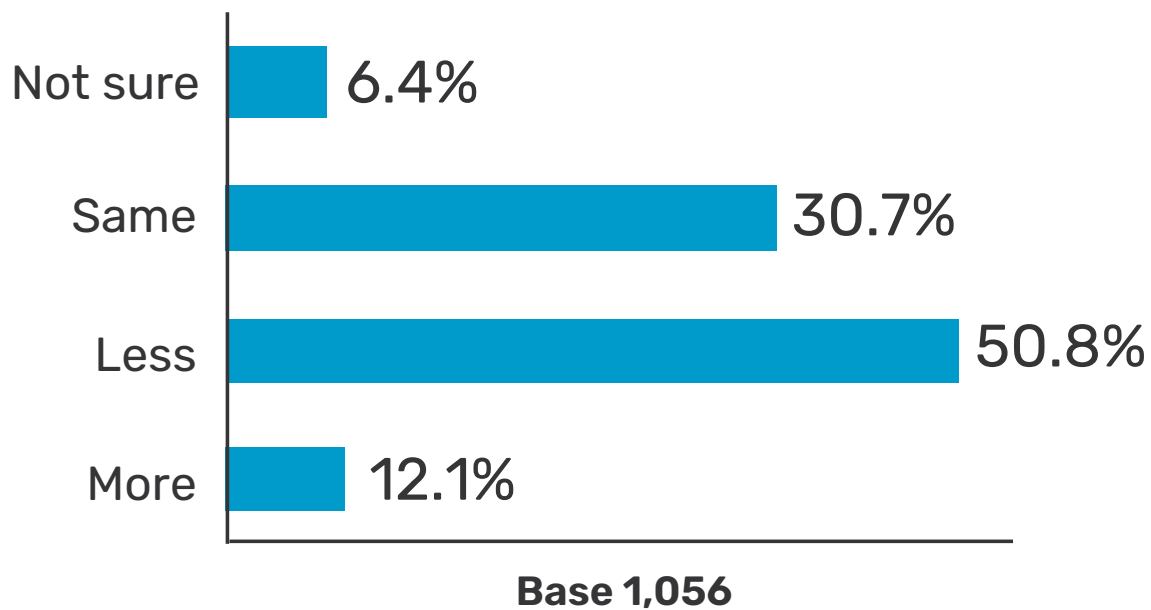
What percent of participants have returned to your fitness classes?



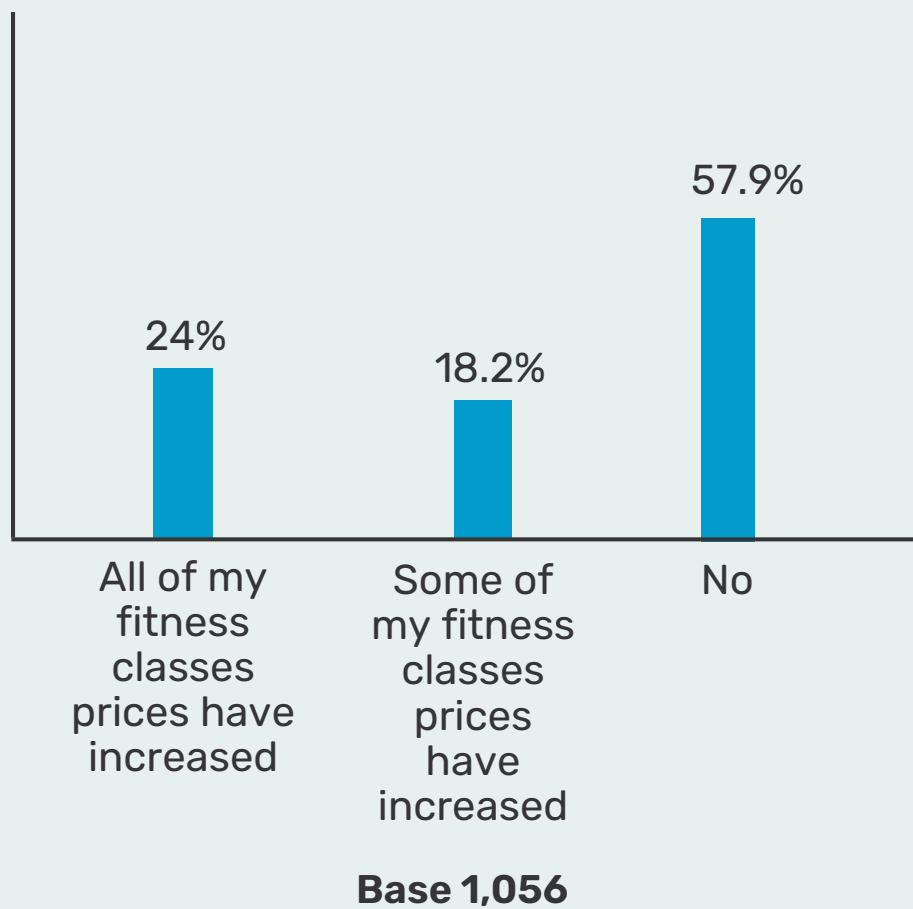
Have you removed all COVID-19 restrictions from your fitness classes?



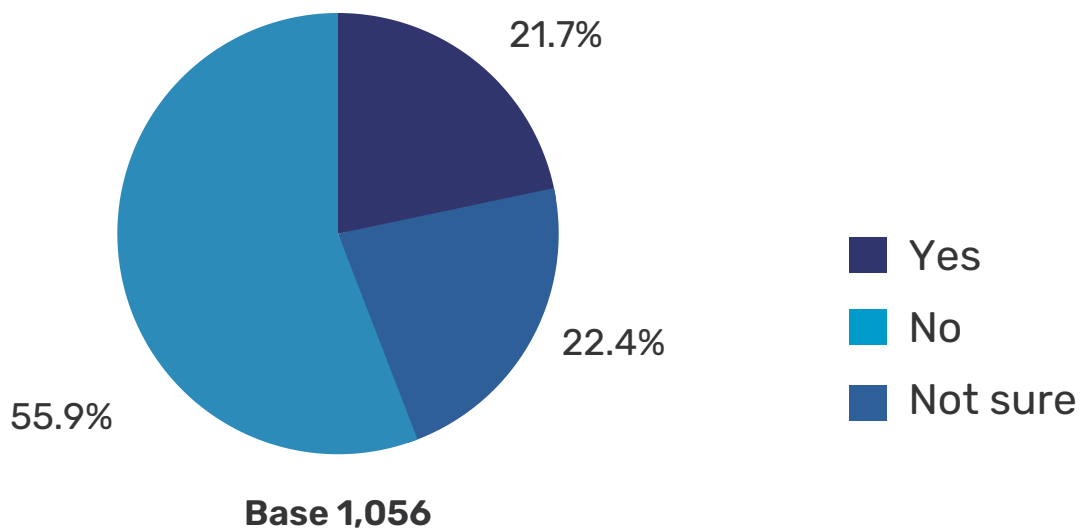
Teachers earnings



Class prices and COVID-19

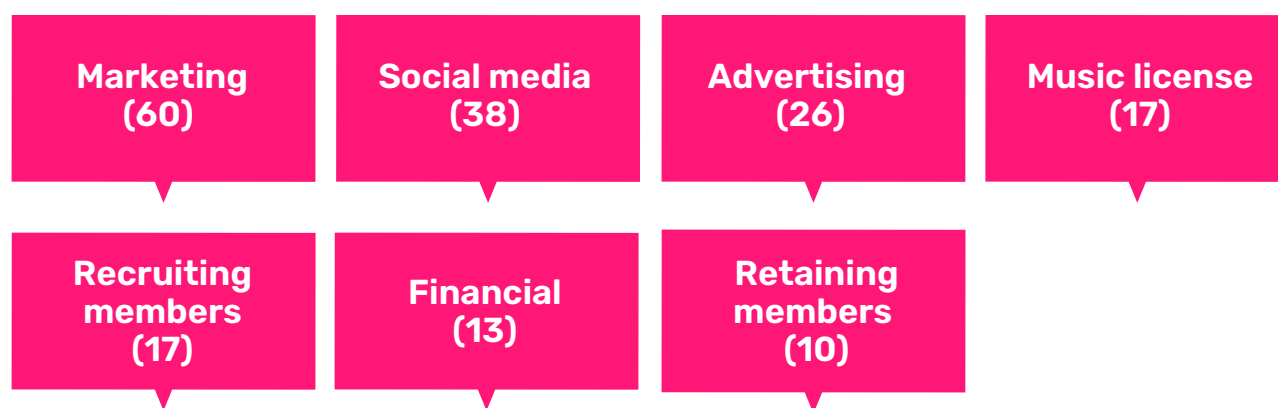


Would financial business support be useful to you?



EMD UK want to provide you with additional support through training, webinars and resources. Please state below any areas that would help you with teaching and running a successful business

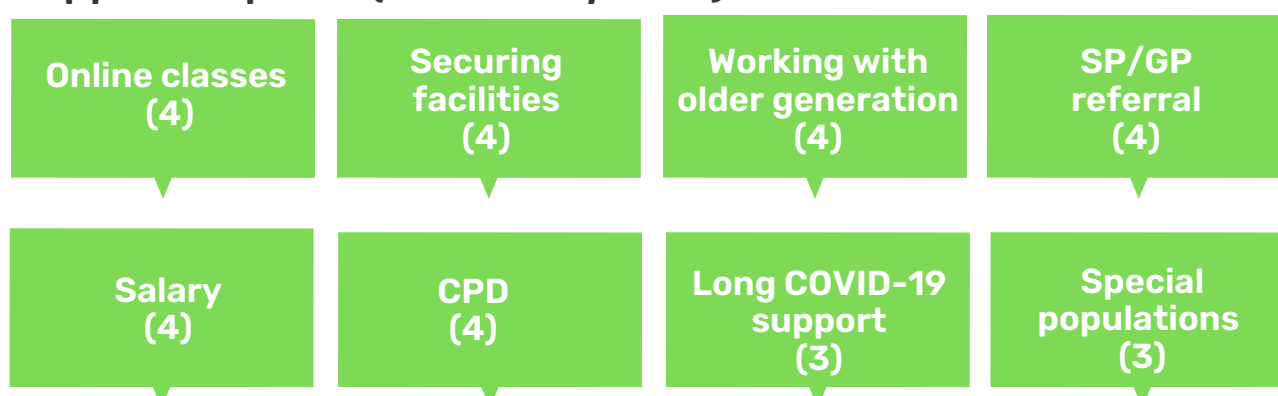
Support required (*Most popular response*)

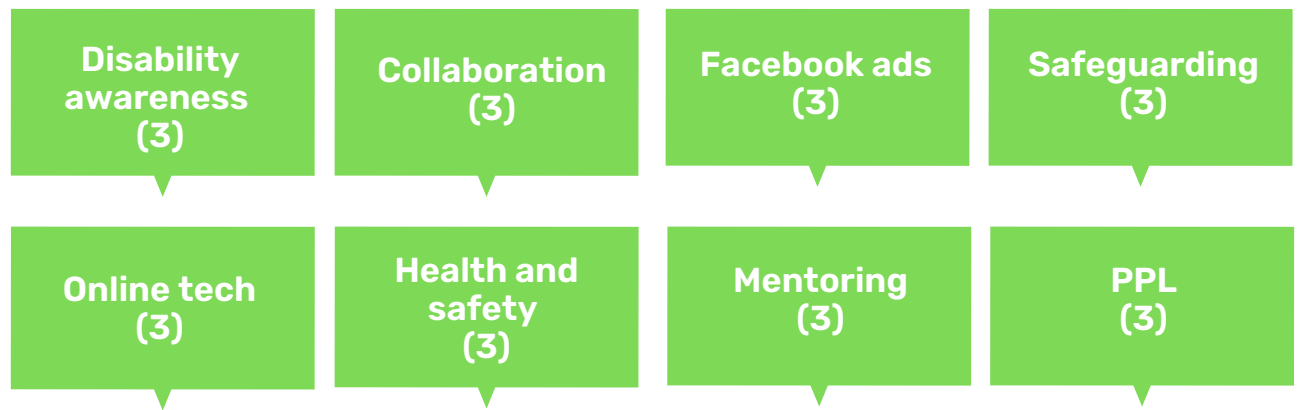


Support required (*Moderate response*)



Support required (*Lower response*)





Base 387 (See appendix 3.0 for all responses)

Summary

This report should be used by EMD UK's network of stakeholders and partners to better support the group exercise workforce providing up to date insights on what support instructors require now we are out of COVID-19 restrictions.

To achieve this, the sector needs to collaborate and work collectively to ensure insights are turned into actions and the voice of group exercise instructors is being heard.

Appendix 1.0

1.0 Why Instructors are no longer teaching fitness classes – all responses

COVID-19	Marketing	Participation	Facilities	Location	Work	Looking to return	Health	Training	Financial	Family	Other
Key worker & not prepared	Best way to advertise	Not enough people attending to cover costs	Unable to secure venue	Moved & would have considered once move moved, however, think too much time has passed	Hoping to once start new job giving back more time	In progress setting up	Haven't felt able – loss of fitness (5)	EMD UK didn't provide any follow up care after practical exam	Not possible to earn enough	Had a baby	Personal reasons (4)
Teach care homes – not open for classes		Not enough people coming back (3)	One gym closed & one reduced classes on timetable	Don't live in UK anymore (2)	Retired (22)	Starting again (2)	Stopped as burned out (2)	Failed practical & not managed to get back to do	Back & fourth between lockdowns making no money	Mat leave (2)	Too old
COVID now unfit		Struggling to get numbers – some want online	Lack of availability previously used times	Relocated to another area (3)	Decided to stop working in fitness (3)	Just passed training & planning to set up	Surgery (3)		Rate of pay for classes	Commitments	Didn't feel it was stable enough (2)
Have covid (6)		Reduced level client interest (2)	Haven't wanted to resume classes	In two locations due to caring responsibilities	Work stress	Looking to teach for first time	Unable to teach – problems feet & balance				Finding overwhelming & losing confidence
Long covid		Older clients not returned & younger clients changed jobs/increased hrs & no longer available	Lost venue	Unable to run via 'Zoom' as live rurally	Redundant		Hip issue				Fear of teaching to lots of people
Difficult to rebuild		Group vulnerable & not ready to return	Owner turned studio into offices	Lack of space to teach online	Just cover		Illness				Became tired of it all

Appendix 1.0

1.0 Why Instructors are no longer teaching fitness classes – all responses (continued)

COVID-19	Marketing	Participation	Facilities	Location	Work	Looking to return	Health	Training	Financial	Family	Other
Find it hard to return		Not turning up			F/T job (2)		Fall				Lack of confidence (2)
Recovering from COVID-19 (2)					Changed careers (4)		Advised not to by medical professional				Not viable to continue
Never went back					Too busy other work		Diagnosed MDS & anaemia				Haven't been ready to return
Doing only PT					New job		Heart attack				No longer viable with LMUK licenses dropped from major chains
							Anxiety				
							Injury (4)				

Appendix 2.0

2.0 Do you plan on returning to teaching fitness classes? If no, please explain why & if there is any support EMD UK/the sector/government could provide to help you back into teaching

People worried about COVID-19

Returned to f/t work to cover finances

Costs increased & participation dropped

Difficult finding new venue

Struggling with COVID-19 situation

Council charge for use of parks

Free L2 CPD courses – specifically self esteem

Feels too difficult

Not taught for years

Depends on own fitness

Too much time involved

Lack of motivation

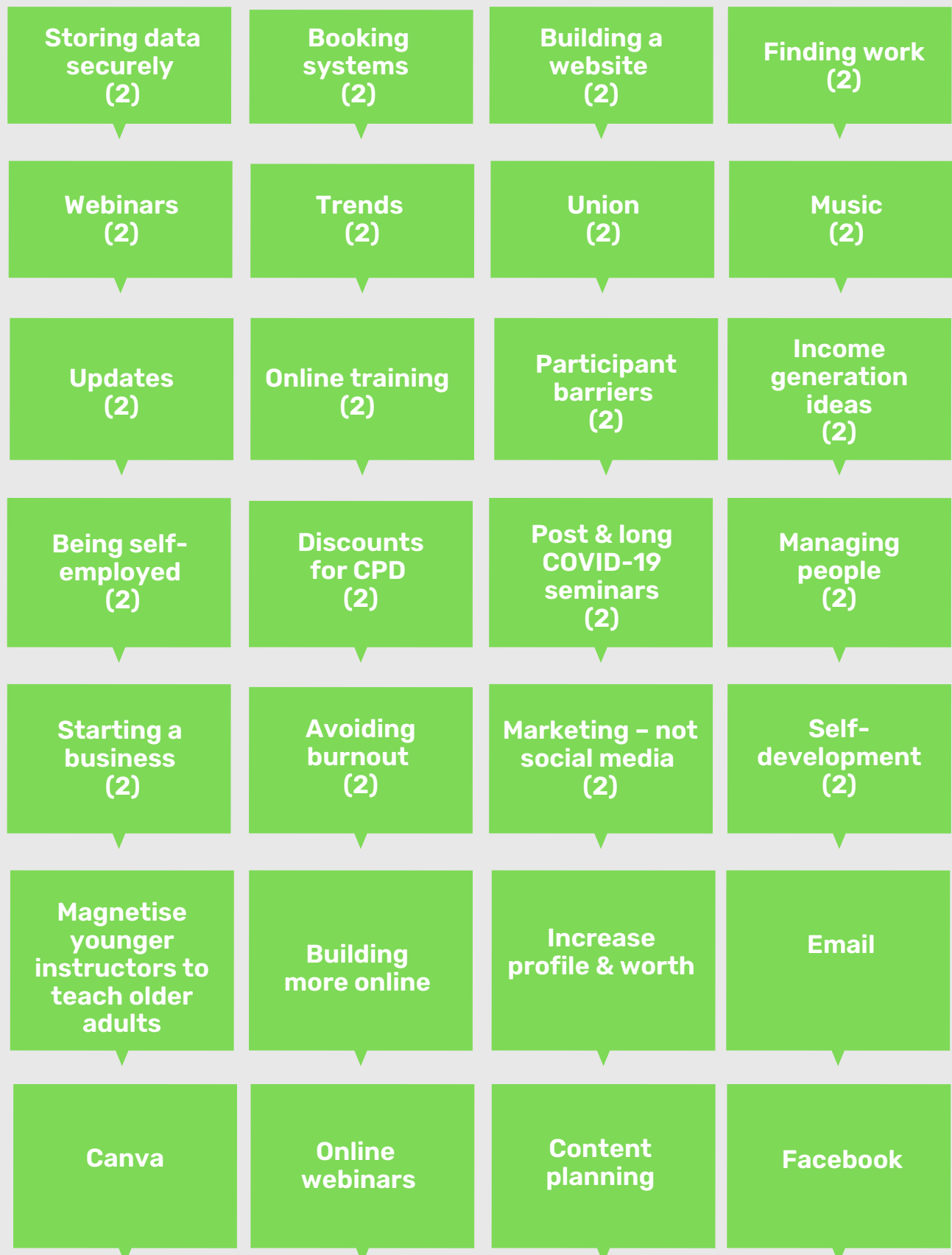
I only provide cover

Injury

Long term health condition

Appendix 3.0

3.0 Support required



Appendix 3.0

3.0 Support required



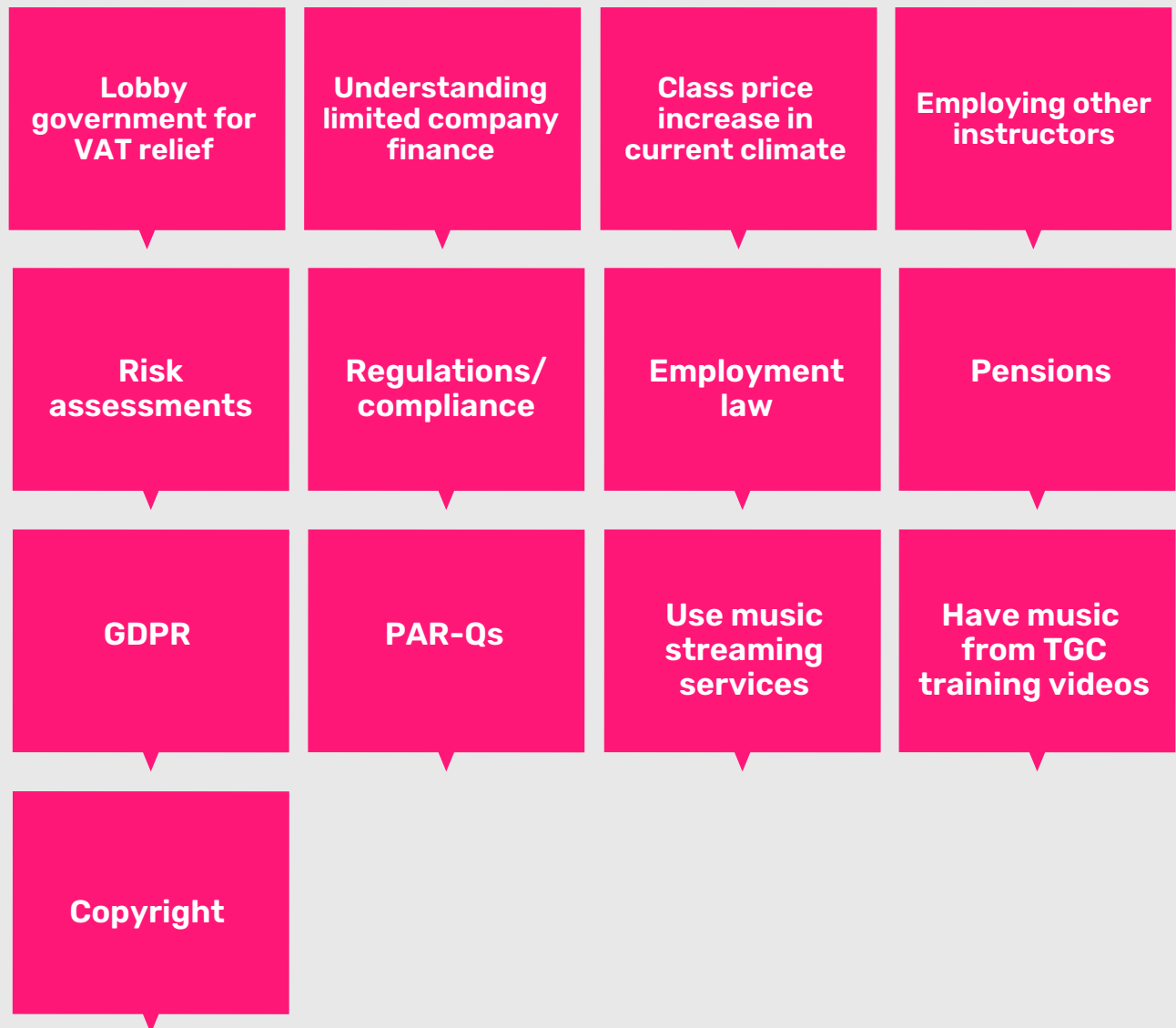
Appendix 3.0

Support required (continued)

Membership package ideas	Free/low cost pilates course	Transition from teaching online back to face-to-face	Childcare offering as part of class
Exercises for older people	Participants post op	Training provider	Free classes
Queuing moves	Online equipment	Outside class	Insurance providers
Class structure	Pilates demo	Insurance	Free classes
Rehabilitation	Overcoming imposter syndrome	ROI resources as UK based	Managing stress
Motivation	Mental Health	Self-care	

Appendix 3.0

Support required (continued)



Appendix 3.0

Support required (continued)

