INSTRUCTOR SURVEY
NAVIGATING FROM LOCKDOWNS REPORT
MAY 2022
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 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?

- No: 11.2%
- Yes: 88.9%

Base 1,300

Do you plan on returning to teaching fitness classes?

- Yes: 40.6%
- No: 30.1%
- Don't know: 29.4%

Base 133
Why instructors are no longer teaching fitness classes.

**WORK**
- Retired
- Decided to stop working in fitness
- Full time job
- Changed careers

**HEALTH**
- Haven't felt able – loss of fitness
- Surgery
- Injury
- Stopped as burned out

**OTHER**
- Personal reasons
- Didn't feel it was stable enough
- Lack of confidence

**PARTICIPATION**
- Recovering from COVID-19
- Reduced level of client interest

**LOCATION**
- Don't live in UK anymore
- Relocated to another area

**COVID-19**
- Have covid
- Not enough people coming back

**FAMILY**
- Maternity leave

**LOOKING TO RETURN**
- Starting again

Other reasons why instructors are no longer teaching fitness classes:

**TRAINING**

**FACILITIES**

**MARKETING**

**FINANCIAL**

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?

- Yes: 95.3%
- No: 4.7%

Base 1,186

Are you currently teaching online fitness classes?

- Yes: 34.8%
- No: 65.2%

Base 1,186
What are your current music licensing needs?

- Unsure: 10.4%
- Pre recorded on demand: 11.4%
- Live online: 9%
- Face to Face: 34.3%
- Royalty free: 31.5%
- None: 32.6%

Total responses: 1,130

What percent of participants have returned to your fitness classes?

- Less than 50%: 21%
- 70%: 47.6%
- 100%: 17.6%
- Don't know: 7.3%
- Other: 6.9%

Total responses: 1,056
Have you removed all COVID-19 restrictions from your fitness classes?

- Yes I have removed all COVID19 restrictions: 34.4%
- I have kept all restrictions in place: 8%
- I have removed some restrictions: 57.6%

Base 1,056

Teachers earnings

- Not sure: 6.4%
- Same: 30.7%
- Less: 50.8%
- More: 12.1%

Base 1,056
Class prices and COVID-19

- All of my fitness classes prices have increased: 24%
- Some of my fitness classes prices have increased: 18.2%
- No: 57.9%

Base 1,056

Would financial business support be useful to you?

- Yes: 55.9%
- No: 22.4%
- Not sure: 21.7%

Base 1,056
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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Area</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music license</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruiting members</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retaining members</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Support required (Moderate response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Area</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online music license</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business planning</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax returns</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First aid</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting clients back</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choreography/exercises</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaching more clients</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process record/bookkeeping</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running a business</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Support required (Lower response)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Area</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online classes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing facilities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with older generation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP/GP referral</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long COVID-19 support</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special populations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

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### Appendix 1.0

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COVID-19</th>
<th>Marketing</th>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Work</th>
<th>Looking to return</th>
<th>Health</th>
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<th>Family</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key worker &amp; not prepared</td>
<td>Best way to advertise</td>
<td>Not enough people attending to cover costs</td>
<td>Unable to secure venue</td>
<td>Moved &amp; would have considered once move moved, however, think too much time has passed</td>
<td>Hoping to once start new job giving back more time</td>
<td>In progress setting up</td>
<td>Haven’t felt able - loss of fitness (5)</td>
<td>EMD UK didn’t provide any follow up care after practical exam</td>
<td>Not possible to earn enough</td>
<td>Had a baby</td>
<td>Personal reasons (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach care homes – not open for classes</td>
<td>Not enough people coming back (3)</td>
<td>One gym closed &amp; one reduced classes on timetable</td>
<td>Don’t live in UK anymore (2)</td>
<td>Retired (22)</td>
<td>Starting again (2)</td>
<td>Stopped as burned out (4)</td>
<td>Failed practical &amp; not managed to get back to do</td>
<td>Back &amp; fourth between lockdowns making no money</td>
<td>Mat leave (2)</td>
<td>Too old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID now unfit</td>
<td>Struggling to get numbers - some want online</td>
<td>Lack of availability previously used times</td>
<td>Relocated to another area (3)</td>
<td>Decided to stop working in fitness (3)</td>
<td>Just passed training &amp; planning to set up</td>
<td>Surgery (3)</td>
<td>Rate of pay for classes</td>
<td>Commitments</td>
<td>Didn’t feel it was stable enough (2)</td>
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<td>Have covid (6)</td>
<td>Reduced level client interest (2)</td>
<td>Haven’t wanted to resume classes</td>
<td>In two locations due to caring responsibilities</td>
<td>Work stress</td>
<td>Looking to teach for first time</td>
<td>Unable to teach - problems feet &amp; balance</td>
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<td>Finding overwhelming &amp; losing confidence</td>
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<td>Long covid</td>
<td>Older clients not returned &amp; younger clients changed jobs/increase d hrs &amp; no longer available</td>
<td>Lost venue</td>
<td>Unable to run via Zoom as live rurally</td>
<td>Redundant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficult to rebuild</td>
<td>Group vulnerable &amp; not ready to return</td>
<td>Owner turned studio into offices</td>
<td>Lack of space to teach online</td>
<td>Just cover</td>
<td>Illness</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fear of teaching to lots of people</td>
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*Appendix 1.0*

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storing data securely (2)</th>
<th>Booking systems (2)</th>
<th>Building a website (2)</th>
<th>Finding work (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Webinars (2)</td>
<td>Trends (2)</td>
<td>Union (2)</td>
<td>Music (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updates (2)</td>
<td>Online training (2)</td>
<td>Participant barriers (2)</td>
<td>Income generation ideas (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being self-employed (2)</td>
<td>Discounts for CPD (2)</td>
<td>Post &amp; long COVID-19 seminars (2)</td>
<td>Managing people (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting a business (2)</td>
<td>Avoiding burnout (2)</td>
<td>Marketing – not social media (2)</td>
<td>Self-development (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnetise younger instructors to teach older adults</td>
<td>Building more online</td>
<td>Increase profile &amp; worth</td>
<td>Email</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canva</td>
<td>Online webinars</td>
<td>Content planning</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3.0

3.0 Support required

- Promotion of private, online classes
- Benefits online classes
- Keeping a strong, online presence
- Accessing corporate wellbeing
- Recorded webinars
- Instagram promo videos
- Mailchimp
- Website design
- Promotional tools
- Shareable articles
- Optimising website
- Marketing templates
- Online marketing
- Uploading onto YouTube
## Appendix 3.0
Support required (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lobby government for VAT relief</th>
<th>Understanding limited company finance</th>
<th>Class price increase in current climate</th>
<th>Employing other instructors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk assessments</td>
<td>Regulations/compliance</td>
<td>Employment law</td>
<td>Pensions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDPR</td>
<td>PAR-Qs</td>
<td>Use music streaming services</td>
<td>Have music from TGC training videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3.0
Support required (continued)

System to pay for everything in one place (music license, PPL etc)
Monetising recorded classes
Teach Les Mills without a license
Payment systems

HMRC approved software
Linking online & face-to-face
App for pilates class
Booking apps

Online security
Website planning
Admin time
Website help

Licenses