

Podcast – Edinburgh Leisure – back exercising together

Edinburgh Leisure's Chief Executive, June Peebles, welcomed the First Minister's announcement earlier in the week.

This means that the Edinburgh-based leisure operator can finally welcome customers again for indoor fitness classes, gym classes, adult coaching and adult outdoor contact sports from Monday 17 May 2021.

June Peebles spoke to The Edinburgh Reporter as a guest on our podcast here, explaining what customers can expect when they go to the gym or leisure centre now.

Ms Peebles said: "It's been a long time coming but it's another much welcomed step towards normality. I am so excited that we can finally restart our indoor fitness classes, gym classes, adult coaching and adult outdoor contact sports. It also means our dedicated fitness instructors can, at last, get back to doing what they love; helping people to move and have fun in a group setting.

“While we were permitted to reopen our pools and gyms for individual exercise on 26 April 2021, indoor group fitness classes were still not allowed. For customers who prefer the variety and sociability of a group fitness class, this enforced lock-down has been tough. Like many businesses we have had to move with the times and adapted by offering online streamed classes and some outdoor classes at Drumbrae and Portobello, but it’s not quite the same. Also, Scotland’s weather isn’t always the most conducive for outdoor classes.”



Leith Victoria Pool PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

As in September 2020 when Edinburgh Leisure reopened their venues after the first lockdown, the Edinburgh Leisure experience is different from before, but customers will still receive the warm, Edinburgh Leisure welcome.

The main changes that customers will notice are:

- All activities must be booked via the Edinburgh Leisure app or website.
 - Members can book classes three days in advance, while for non-members, it is two days.
- Edinburgh Leisure continues to operate in a cashless environment, accepting contactless payments.
- Safety guidance will be on display throughout the venues.
- Enhanced cleaning will take place and there are additional sanitisation stations available in the venues for use before and after each visit.
- All activities are timetabled with staggered session start times to reduce congestion.
- Customers must wear face coverings in communal areas, but not for their activities.
- Class sizes are reduced.

Gyms and leisure centres were among the businesses to close their doors in a bid to control the coronavirus pandemic.

After the initial lockdown in March 2020, Edinburgh Leisure started to reopen their venues on 14 September and could offer group indoor fitness and gym classes, gym and swim sessions. However, the group classes were forced to close again after only three weeks and five days on Friday, 9 October, due to a spike in Covid-19 cases across Scotland. And when Edinburgh Leisure's venues reopened again after almost a four months' closure on 26 April 2021, only individual activities such as swim and gym sessions were permitted.

Nonetheless, since November 2020 and during the closure, Edinburgh Leisure's Active Communities programme has continued to work with around 450 customers per week through a blend of online classes and one to one session and 'wellbeing' phone calls to keep more 'vulnerable' customers active and well at home, safely.

June said: "Edinburgh Leisure is committed to 'building back better' to a sustainable Edinburgh Leisure and to continue making a positive impact to the citizens of Edinburgh's health and wellbeing – as we have done for the last 23 years. Now that the roll-out of the vaccine programme is well underway and with the enhanced safety and cleansing measures we have in place, I hope that our customers will feel confident to return if they haven't already done so.

"Never before has health and wellbeing been so important. And Edinburgh Leisure remains committed to supporting the people of Edinburgh to be active and enjoy good health."



Photograph by Phil Wilkinson 07740444373 www.philwilkinson.net
Edinburgh Leisure – Drumbrae Leisure Centre.