

Pools on the Park Group Exercise Studio

Feedback from the public engagement exercise

1. Introduction

In November 2023 Richmond Council approved plans for a new group exercise studio at Pools on the Park, to enable greater community activity and improve access to services as part of the work to promote healthier, more active lifestyles for all residents.

The proposed new facilities at Pools on the Park will support the delivery of schemes as part of the Council's new Leisure, Sports and Physical Activity Strategy - such as Exercise on Referral and Active Living - that aim to improve the health of those living in Richmond upon Thames.

To shape the development of the new group exercise studio, the Council invited residents and other interested stakeholders to share their views on what facilities and activities they would like to see. This report sets out the findings from the engagement exercise.

2. Executive Summary

There were 406 responses to the online questionnaire and an additional 11 responses by email.

The majority of respondents live close to Pools on the Park, with 87% of respondents providing a TW postcode. 60% of respondents are current members of Feel Good Fitness.

The headline feedback is as follows:

- Respondents requested a wide range of activities at the new studio - pilates and yoga being the most requested.
- Almost a quarter of respondents would like classes for the over 60's and there were also requests for activities for the less mobile, such as seated exercise. Non-members were slightly more likely to request these activities, suggesting their inclusion might increase accessibility. Respondents would also like to see more activities for parents, children and babies.
- Asked about the changing facilities, a fifth of respondents specifically mentioned that improvements to the showers are needed and a similar proportion requested improvements to the lockers. A wide range of specific requests were also made, for example women only and members only facilities and separate changing for wet and dry activities.
- In terms of accessibility the most common request was direct access to the new studio without having to walk through the swimming pool changing area. There were also comments on improving access for those in wheelchairs or less mobile visitors, including better wheelchair access, automatic doors, step-free access, wider corridors and handrails. Suggestions around length and timings of classes were also made to enable a wider range of visitors to make use of the studio.
- A number of respondents also used the questionnaire to share their anger or disappointment about the loss of the previous health suite at the Pools on the Park, which closed in March 2020.

3. Methodology

Data was gathered using an online survey hosted on the Richmond Council website. The materials and questionnaire are included as an appendix to this report.

To promote awareness and ensure that everyone had the chance to participate, the Council publicised the engagement exercise in the following ways:

- Council news story shared on news page of the Council website
- CGI display boards at Pools on the Park
- Print materials sent to:
 - Civic Centre
 - The 12 borough libraries
 - 5 other leisure centres
 - Children's Centres
 - Youth Centres
 - Community Centres
 - Patch Twickenham
- Email marketing:
 - Richmond Card newsletter to 29,659 recipients
 - Community Newsletter to 40,848 recipients
 - Staff News to 4,383 recipients
- Organic social media:
 - X
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Nextdoor
 - LinkedIn
 - Richmond Moves Facebook Group
- Paid social media (Facebook/Instagram)
- Push notifications sent through LBRUT Sports app

The survey was open to all and respondents were asked for their full postcode and the capacity in which they were responding, to help the Council understand any impact on people in the local area.

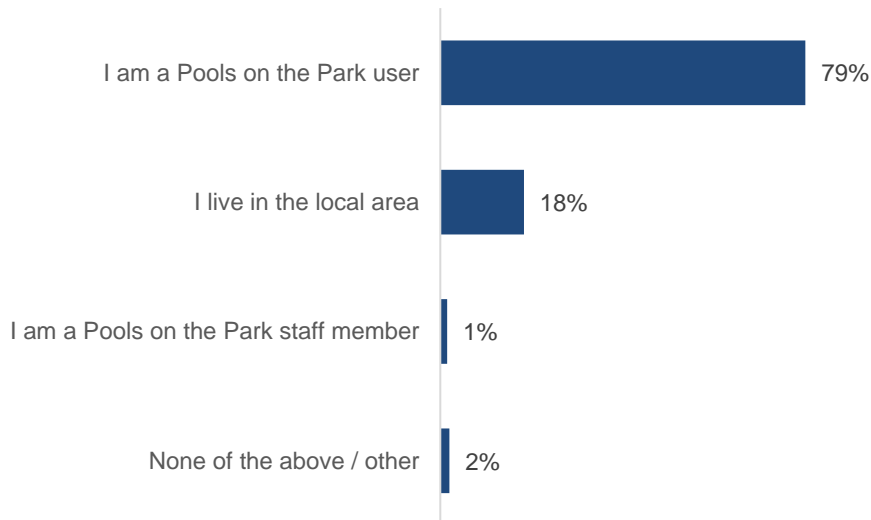
The responses were analysed and reported by the Council's Consultation Team on an anonymous basis under the guidelines of the Data Protection Act. The Consultation Team are qualified researchers and certified members of the Market Research Society, bound by the MRS Code of Conduct when conducting research. The team are also members of The Consultation Institute, a consultation best practice institute, which promotes high-quality public and stakeholder consultation.

4. Response

In total, the Council received 406 online responses to this survey. A demographic profile of respondents can be found in Section 6 of this report. The Council also received 11 additional responses via email; details of these can be found in Section 7.

5. Results

Question 1: What is the main capacity in which you are responding to this consultation?



There were 406 responses to this question.

The largest group of respondents (79%) said that they were mainly responding as a Pools on the Park user. A further 18% said they were responding as a local resident. 1% of responses were from staff members at Pools on the Park and 2% were responding in an 'other' capacity.

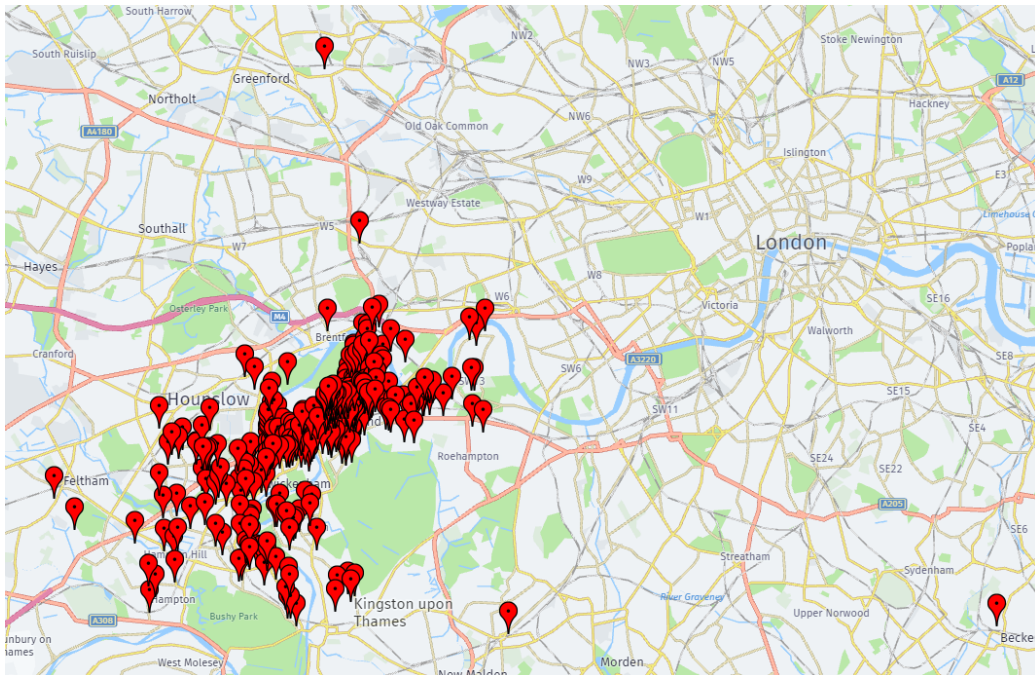
In what capacity are you responding to this consultation?		
Response	Number of respondents to this question	Percentage of respondents to this question
I am a Pools on the Park user	319	79%
I live in the local area	73	18%
I am a Pools on the Park staff member	6	1%
I'm responding on behalf of a local group or organisation	0	0%
None of the above / other	8	2%

Those who selected 'None of the above / other' were also provided with a free-text box to specify and four people responded to this part of the question.

Question 2: What is your postcode?

There were 397 responses to this question. The postcodes provided were used to create a map illustrating where people were responding from. The majority of responses were from people within the Richmond, Twickenham and Kew areas although there were respondents from all across the borough. 87% of respondents providing a postcode, had TW postcodes.

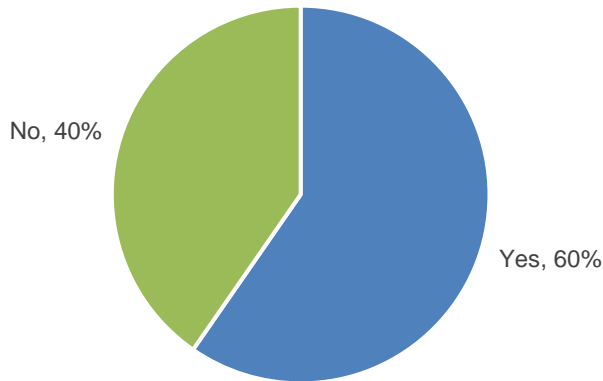
The map below shows the distribution of responses from all those respondents who provided a postcode (397 responses representing 98% of all respondents).



The map below illustrates the distribution of respondents within the Richmond, Kew and Twickenham areas:

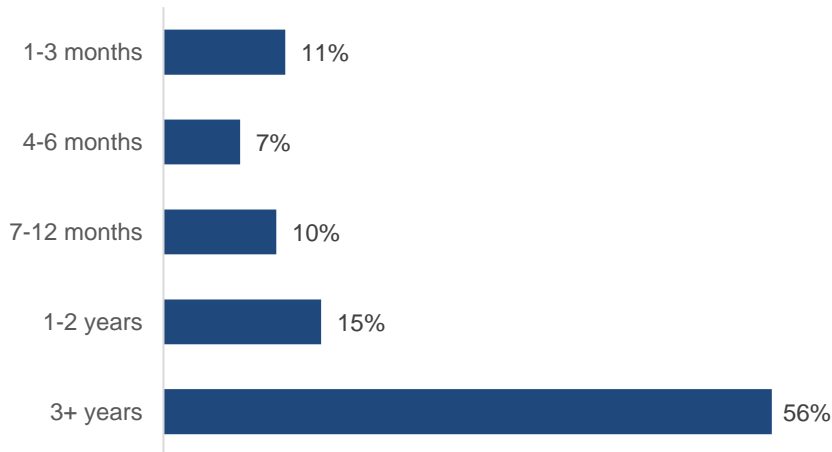


Question 3: Are you a member of Feel Good Fitness?



Six in ten respondents stated that they are current members of Feel Good Fitness.

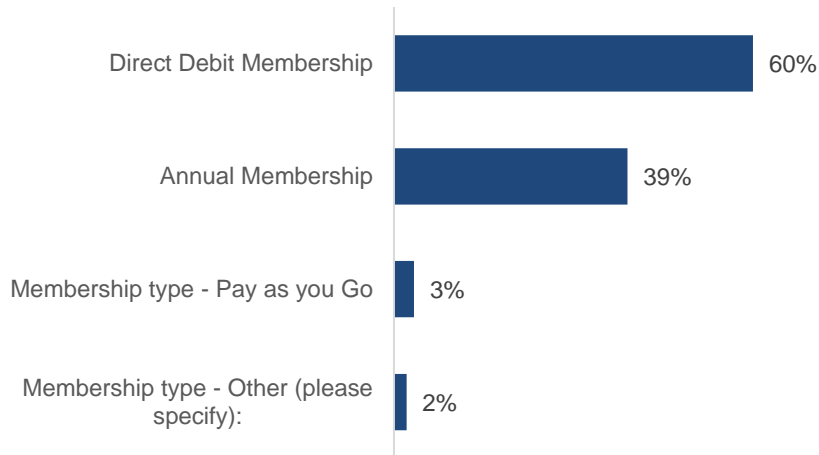
Question 4: How long have you been a member of Feel Good Fitness?



Over half of respondents who said they are current members of Feel Good Fitness said they have been members for three or more years.

How long have you been a member of Feel Good Fitness?		
Response	Number of respondents to this question	Percentage of respondents to this question
1-3 months	27	11%
4-6 months	17	7%
7-12 months	25	10%
1-2 years	35	15%
3+ years	135	56%

Question 5: What type of membership do you currently have?



60% of members have a Direct Debit membership and 39% have annual membership.

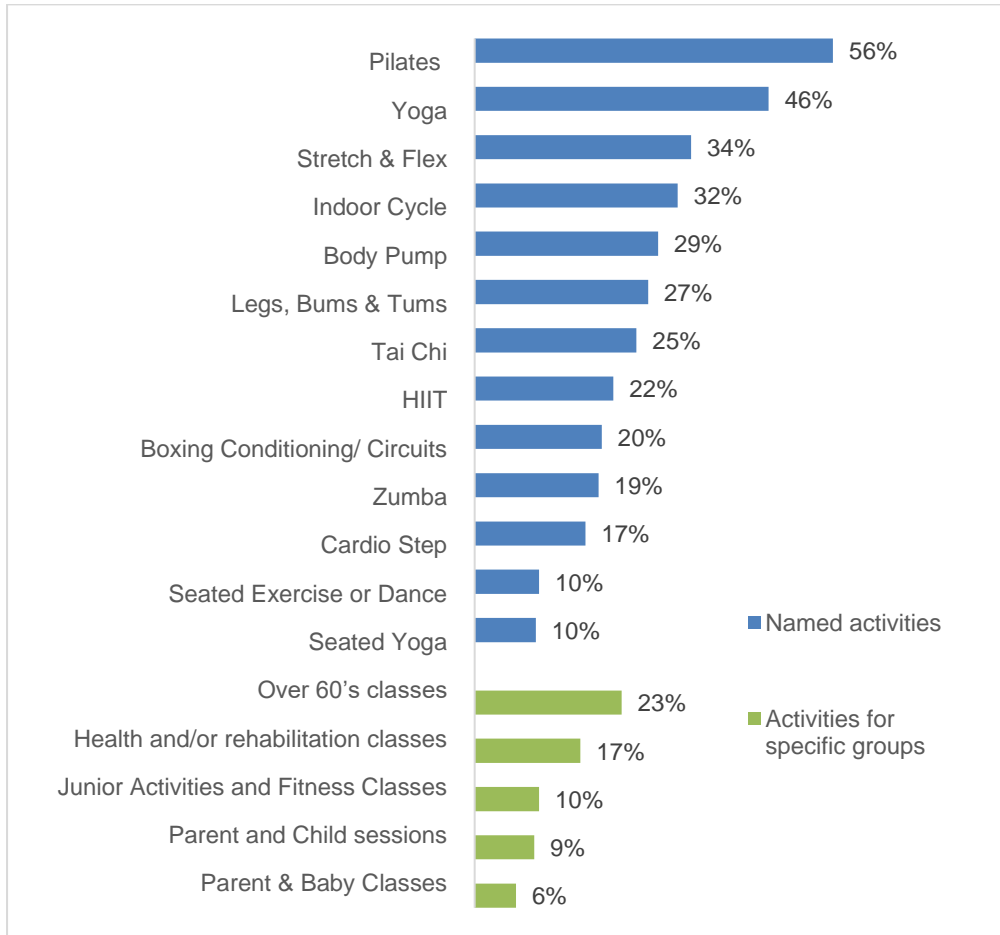
2% of members said they have another type of membership, including:

- 2 months offer
- Corporate Gold
- Senior Swim membership
- Swim membership

Which type of membership do you currently have?		
Response	Number of respondents to this question	Percentage of respondents to this question
Direct Debit Membership	143	60%
Annual Membership	93	39%
Pay as you Go	8	3%
Other	5	2%

NB Respondents were able to select more than one option, so percentages add up to more than 100

Question 6: Which of the following activities would you like to see at the new group exercise studio?



Respondents were asked which activities they would like to see in the new group exercise studio.

Pilates was the most mentioned activity, mentioned by over half of respondents (56%) answering this question. This was followed by yoga, which was requested by 46%.

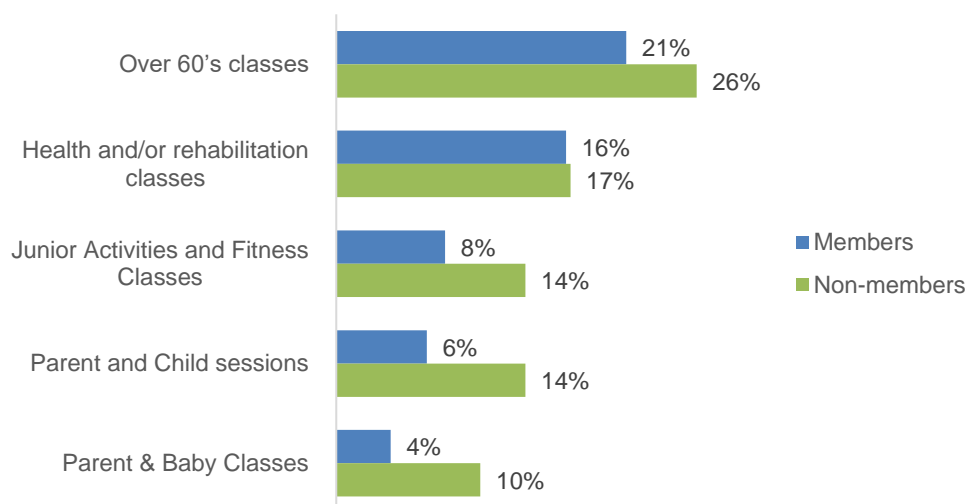
Respondents were also able to select specific groups that they would like the studio to cater for – the most popular of these was classes for the over 60s, followed by health / rehabilitation classes and sessions for parents, children and babies.

Which of the following activities would you like to see at the new group exercise studio?

Response	Number of respondents to this question	Percentage of all respondents to this question
Pilates	217	56%
Yoga	178	46%
Stretch & Flex	131	34%
Indoor Cycle	123	32%
Body Pump	111	29%
Legs, Bums & Tums	105	27%
Tai Chi	98	25%
Over 60's classes	89	23%
HIIT	84	22%
Boxing Conditioning/ Circuits	77	20%
Zumba	75	19%
Cardio Step	67	17%
Health and/ or rehabilitation classes	64	17%
Seated Exercise or Dance	39	10%
Seated Yoga	37	10%
Junior Activities and Fitness Classes	39	10%
Parent and Child sessions	36	9%
Parent & Baby Classes	25	6%

NB Respondents were able to select more than one option, so percentages add up to more than 100

As can be seen from the chart below, non-members were more likely than members to request all of the following activities for specific groups:



A total of 155 respondents (38%) provided other suggestions for activities. The most common responses are listed in the table below:

Are there any other activities would you like to see?		
Response	Number of respondents to this question	Percentage of all respondents to question 6
More of existing classes/ more at specific times	16	4%
Dance	16	4%
Barre	9	2%
Reformer Pilates	8	2%
Other/ specific form of yoga	8	2%
Sound bath/ gong bath	7	2%
Classes specifically for over 60's/ older users	7	2%

A number of respondents also used the open text field to share their anger or disappointment about the closure of the previous health suite at Pools on the Park.

Question 7: The group exercise studio will allow a wider and more inclusive range of activities, including:

- Activities for older residents
- Activities for residents with a disability
- Activities for parents/carers and babies
- Activities for children and young people

Please tell us if you have any suggestions about activities for these and other groups at the new studio?

160 respondents answered this question. The most common responses are listed in the table below:

Response	Number of respondents to this question	Percentage of respondents to this question
Classes for older people	16	10%
Dance classes (inc line dancing)	12	8%
Increase availability of existing classes at specific times	11	7%
Increase capacity/ availability of existing classes	9	6%
Classes for children	8	5%
More inclusive activities	8	5%
Activities for those with medical conditions	7	4%
Gentle classes/ classes without loud music	6	4%
Classes for new mums/ classes where babies can attend (but not participate)	6	4%
Balance and core strength classes	5	3%
Different/ specific types of yoga	4	3%
Body conditioning/ strength and conditioning classes	4	3%
More classes for beginners	5	3%
Barre	3	2%
Meditation	3	2%
Smaller class sizes	3	2%
Pre-school/ toddler activities	3	2%
Classes for men	3	2%

Classes for older people were the most mentioned specific group of people, mentioned by 10% of those who answered this question. Dance classes were also a popular suggestion. A number of respondents would like to see more availability of classes at different times of day or the capacity of classes increased.

A number of respondents also used the open text field to share their anger or disappointment about the closure of the previous health suite at Pools on the Park, or to make comments about the pillars included in the design images.

Question 8: Please tell us if you have any suggestions about improvements to the changing facilities?

257 respondents answered this question. The most common responses are listed in the table below:

Please tell us if you have any comments or suggestions about improvements to the changing facilities		
Response	Number of respondents to this question	Percentage of respondents to this question
General request for improvement	58	23%
General negative about current facilities	44	17%
Improve/ repair lockers/ improve access to lockers/ more lockers	43	17%
Better cleaning	38	15%
Improve/ repair showers	30	12%
Women/ female only/ single sex changing area	25	10%
Improve/ fix/ replace spinners	24	9%
Retain members only changing area	20	8%
Separate changing for studio (dry) vs pool (wet)	17	7%
Individual showers	16	6%
(more) Individual changing rooms/ cubicles	13	5%
Single sex showers	12	5%
More hair- dryers	12	5%
Less smelly/ address odour from drains	12	5%
Better/ some heating	11	4%
More space	9	4%
Smart lockers (no coins/ tokens)/ own padlock	8	3%
Free towels/ Complimentary shower gel/ shampoo	8	3%
More family changing rooms	7	3%
Better wheelchair access/ better access for those with mobility issues	7	3%
Better access to pool/ outdoor pool from members changing	7	3%
Wider walk-through/ close locker doors/ improve walk-through	6	2%
No outdoor shoes in changing area	6	2%
Direct access to studio (no need to walk through changing)	6	2%
Other improvement suggestion	6	2%
Improve locker keys/ wristbands	5	2%
Better ventilation	5	2%
More showers	4	2%
Separate changing area for schools/ more space for schools	4	2%
More baby-change tables	4	2%

NB Respondents were able to select more than one option, so percentages add up to more than 100

The most common comments about the changing rooms were general mentions of the need for improvements and negative comments about the current facilities. The lockers, the standard of cleaning and the showers were the most mentioned issues. 10% also made comments about women only / single sex changing areas.

A number of respondents also used the open text field to share their anger or disappointment about the closure of the previous health suite at Pools on the Park, or to make comments about the pillars included in the design images.

Question 8: Please tell us if you have any comments about how the studio can be made more accessible to yourself and/ or others?

There were 107 responses to this question. The most common responses are listed in the table below:

Please tell us about how the studio can be made more accessible to yourself and/ or others?		
Response	Number of respondents to this question	Percentage of respondents to this question
Direct access to studio/ not have to walk through changing area	13	12%
Pillars in the design would have a negative effect on accessibility	9	8%
More classes generally	7	7%
Better wheelchair access	7	7%
Automatic doors	6	6%
Already seems accessible	6	6%
All on same level/ level surfaces/ step-free	6	6%
Wider corridors/ hand-rails	5	5%
More classes outside working hours/ at other times	5	5%
Service by more bus routes	5	5%
Better signage/ instructions/ directions	4	4%
Lower prices	4	4%

For 12% of respondents to this question, direct access to the studio was the most important accessibility issue. 8% made a comment about the pillars and the effect they may have on accessibility. There were comments on improving access for those in wheelchairs or less mobile visitors such as better wheelchair access (7%), automatic doors (6%), step-free access/ all on the same level (6%), wider corridors and/or handrails (5%) or better signage (4%).

Other comments related to access generally; more classes (7%), more classes at specific times (5%), serviced by more bus routes (5%) or lower prices (4%).

A number of respondents also used the open text field to share their anger or disappointment about the closure of the previous health suite at Pools on the Park.

6. Demographic Profile

The table below shows the composition of the consultation sample.

Demographic	Sample base	Proportion (%)
Gender		
Female	305	76%
Male	89	22%
Prefer not to say	7	2%
Prefer to self-describe	1	0%
<i>Base: 402 respondents</i>		
What was your age last birthday?		
19 and under	2	0%
20 – 24	3	1%
25 – 34	30	7%
35 – 44	62	15%
45 – 54	75	19%
55 – 64	123	31%
65 – 74	72	18%
75+	21	5%
Prefer not to say	14	3%
<i>Base: 402 respondents</i>		
Do you consider yourself to have a disability?		
Yes	36	9%
No	343	86%
Prefer not to say	22	5%
<i>Base: 401 respondents</i>		
How would you describe your ethnic group?		
White	313	79%
Asian or Asian British	21	5%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	17	4%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	2	1%
Other ethnic group, please specify:	4	1%
Prefer not to say	38	10%
<i>Base: 395 respondents</i>		

Respondents who said they consider themselves to have a disability were asked to provide further details:

If you consider yourself to have a disability, please provide details:

If you consider yourself to have a disability, please provide details:		
Response	Number of respondents answering this question	Percentage of respondents to this question
Long standing illness/ health condition	16	26%
Physical impairment	11	18%
Mental health condition	9	15%
Sensory impairment	6	10%
Learning disability/ difficulty	4	6%
Other	7	11%
Prefer not to say	20	32%

7. Other responses received

In addition to the online responses, the Council received 11 emails in response to the engagement exercise.

The emails raised the following queries, comments and concerns:

- Queries and concerns about the closure of the health suite
- Queries and comments about the showers
- Comments and concerns about women only changing rooms
- Comments and concerns about members only changing rooms
- Comments about the pillars featured in the design images
- Comments about the outdoor pool
- Request for table tennis provision
- Request for shorter exercise sessions

Appendix 1 – Material and questionnaire

Overview

Richmond Council has approved plans for a new group exercise studio at Pools on the Park to enable greater community activity and improve access to services as part of the work to promote healthier, more active lifestyles for all residents.

Group exercise sessions at Pools on the Park are often fully booked. The proposed new facilities will also see improvements to the changing facilities and will increase the popular leisure centre's capacity to deliver a wider and more inclusive range of activity.

Over the last 18 months, the Council has been gathering information for the development of its new Leisure, Sports and Physical Activity Strategy, including obtaining insight from residents to understand the barriers they face in accessing leisure opportunities and facilities they could benefit from. The proposed new facilities at Pools on the Park will support the delivery of schemes that will be proposed as part of the Strategy, such as Exercise on Referral and Active Living that aim to improve the health of those living in Richmond Upon Thames.

This work forms part of the Richmond Moves campaign which aims to provide convenient resources that enable residents to become more active, more often. Share your ideas for what you would like to see in the new group exercise studio.

What might the new group exercise studio look like?

Shortcode: factbank

Factbank Title: [Click here to see the initial design images for the studio and changing rooms](#)

Factbank Content:







Why are we asking for feedback and how will we use it?

We want residents to share their views on what the new group exercise studio could look like and what it could be used for. Your ideas will help us decide what equipment should be provided and what activities should be run in the new studio.

Have your say

Please give us your views by clicking on the 'Online survey' link below. If you require any materials on paper or in another format please contact us on 020 8891 1411 or email consultation@richmond.gov.uk

What happens next?

Your suggestions will help shape the design of the new group exercise studio and the programme of activity, with works beginning later this year.

Privacy

All the information you provide will be treated in strict confidence and will only be used for the purposes of this consultation. The Council will do all we can to respect your privacy and to protect the personal information we acquire through responses to our consultations. You can read the Council's Privacy Notice here:

[Richmond Council Privacy Notice](#)

Your response

What is the main capacity in which you are responding to this consultation?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- I am a Pools on the Park user
- I am a Pools on the Park staff member
- I live in the local area
- I'm responding on behalf of a local group or organisation
- None of the above / other

What is your postcode?

Your response continued

In what other capacity are you responding to this consultation?

Local group or organisation

Which group or organisation are you responding on behalf of?

Your membership

Are you a member of Feel Good Fitness?

Please select only one item

- Yes
 No

Your membership (continued)

How long have you been a member of Feel Good Fitness?

Please select only one item

- 1-3 months
 4-6 months
 7-12 months
 1-2 years
 3+ years

Which type of membership do you currently have?

Please select all that apply

Please select all that apply

- Direct Debit Membership
 Annual Membership
 Pay as you Go
 Other (please specify):

Group activities

Which of the following activities would you like to see at the new group exercise studio?

Please select all that apply

- Body Pump
- Indoor Cycle
- Cardio Step
- Boxing Conditioning/Circuits
- Zumba
- Seated Exercise or Dance
- HIIT
- Legs, Burns & Turns
- Tai Chi
- Yoga
- Seated Yoga
- Pilates
- Stretch & Flex
- Parent and Child sessions
- Junior Activities and Fitness Classes
- Health and/or rehabilitation classes
- Over 60's classes
- Parent & Baby Classes

Are there any other activities would you like to see?

Inclusive exercise activities

The group exercise studio will allow a wider and more inclusive range of activities, including:

Activities for older residents

Activities for residents with a disability

Activities for parents/carers and babies

Activities for children and young people

Please tell us if you have any suggestions about activities for these and other groups at the new studio:

Changing facilities

Please tell us if you have any comments or suggestions about improvements to the changing facilities:

Accessibility

Please tell us if you have any comments about how the studio can be made more accessible to yourself and/or others?

About you

The following optional questions will help the Council to improve its services and be fair to everyone who lives in the borough. The information you provide will be used for statistical and research purposes only and will be stored securely. If there are any questions you do not wish to answer, please move on to the next question.

Why do we ask the 'About you' questions?

The Council asks Equality Monitoring questions at the end of all of our public consultations. It might not seem obvious why they're relevant to each individual consultation, but we need to be sure that we're being fair, and considering the impacts of any possible changes on any groups with protected characteristics. The Council is required to do this under Equalities legislation.

The questions help us to:

identify residents' needs and whether the services we provide are right for them

be better positioned to know whether we are providing fair and equal access to all groups of people who need our services

identify how we can improve services to make them more accessible and inclusive

understand who is or is not responding to our consultations

The questions are optional – if respondents don't feel comfortable providing this information they are under no obligation to do so. All monitoring data is classed as personal data and is treated as confidential, in line with Data Protection requirements.

There is a helpful guide by Stonewall on this issue called 'What's it got to do with you?' which you can read by clicking [here](#).

Are you:

Please select only one item

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe:

What was your age last birthday?

Please select only one item

- 19 and under
- 20-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+
- Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

If you consider yourself to have a disability, please provide details:

Please select all that apply

Please select all that apply

- Physical impairment
- Sensory impairment
- Learning disability/difficulty
- Mental health condition
- Long standing illness/health condition
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify below)

How would you describe your ethnic group?

Please select only one item

- White
- Mixed/multiple ethnic groups
- Asian or Asian British
- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British
- Prefer not to say
- Other ethnic group, please specify: