



NBS Case Study:

Basingstoke Aquadome Serco Leisure

The National Benchmarking Service (NBS) is a partnership approach to providing critical data on the performance of leisure facilities. The partnership brings together the expertise of Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC) at

Sheffield Hallam University and Leisure-net to work on behalf of Sport England and provides the industry with a collection and analysis of participation, financial and customer satisfaction data.

Serco Leisure's Basingstoke Aquadome achieved two awards from the 2018 NBS report, firstly for the overall highest scoring leisure facility and secondly for its success in the area of Access and Utilisation.

The Basingstoke Aquadome Leisure Centre is a semi-destination wet site, which has one of the largest flume attractions in the UK, as well as a 25-metre competition pool, a 20-metre teaching pool and a lagoon pool with baby beach. The leisure centre has 950,000 visits per year and 4,000 gym/fitness members. It employs 140 full and part time members of staff.

Jimmy Miller, Contract Manager for BDCLT says:

“The NBS awards are a fantastic achievement for the site and for our staff. The NBS is a very useful tool for us to learn where we are getting things right and where we need to improve. To come out top overall demonstrates what a great bunch of people we have working across Basingstoke Aquadome, both customer facing and the crucial behind the scenes team who ensure our site runs like clockwork, providing customers with quality and value for money leisure facilities. I'm particularly proud of the Access Award as this recognises our efforts in attracting users from a wide range of backgrounds, including those from the most at-need groups.”

The Basingstoke Aquadome is constantly assessing its programme offer, ensuring its class content and scheduling make the facility accessible to all. At a time of fierce competition it is crucial to be sensitive of target markets and have appropriate price points and offers.



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A key part of BDCLT's success is its ability to listen to its customers and implement changes quickly. The Leisure operator receives 70 customer surveys per month, has numerous mystery shoppers and holds customer forums twice a year. Miller says:

"We continuously seek feedback both from our customers and staff. The management team are open to change and will implement new schemes if they feel it will benefit the site. For example, our gyms and pools are now open earlier as requested by our customers, and when we refurbished in 2018 the design was largely shaped from input from our customers too. Financially, our management will spend money to make money, but will only commit to investment if customer feedback and focus groups have identified a need."

"We have created a unique culture of respect and empowerment, and we pride ourselves on being engaged with our customers and staff, which is led from our senior management and duty managers. Our staff and customers feel energised and valued."

BDCLT also pays its staff above the minimum wage, and has a vigorous training and induction programme. Miller says:

"Paying our staff more than our competitors means our staff want to come to work, they want to keep their jobs, and they want to do their best to progress their leisure careers. Training is crucial in keeping a motivated workforce, and Serco Leisure provides comprehensive training that always supports our Mission Statement mantra; to encourage customers to return to the facility because they want to, not because they feel they have to."

The NBS report did highlight areas where we could do better, and since the NBS publication, changes have come about. Miller concludes:

"There is always room for improvement, we must always strive to be better. The NBS identified a lack of participation of women and we have since targeted more of our marketing recourse to encourage greater participation from this demographic. In addition we have removed time limitations to specific memberships, allowing customers to use the gym at any time during the day, rather than limiting them to peak or off peak – the goal being to spread out the gym usage throughout the day and to avoid rush times where possible."

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