



PROFILE & FACTFILE

What is freedomleisure?

Formed in 2002, freedomleisure is the largest provider of community leisure in the area. Employing more than 830 full and part-time staff, this not-for-profit trust currently manages the operation of 19 leisure sites across Kent and Sussex. These include K2 Crawley, one of the country's flagship leisure centres, and the latest additions to its portfolio from July 2009 include the three Olympos leisure centres in Burgess Hill, East Grinstead and Haywards Heath. In partnership with GLL, it has also taken over the management of Clair Hall in Haywards Heath and Martlets Hall in Burgess Hill.

Facilities differ across the various centres but include gyms, swimming pools, exercise studios and health suites, sports halls, a Multi-Use Games Area, Astro Turf pitches, freedom café's, crèches, soft play facilities and 10-pin bowling, as detailed in the accompanying table.

All freedomleisure gyms are equipped with the most up-to-date equipment including cross and summit trainers, treadmills, cycles and rowers as well as the free weight zones and resistance machines.

The freedomleisure exercise studios offer a range of classes, including instruction in body pump, combat and balance; street dance, boxercise and pole dancing, as well as traditional favourites such as legs, bums and tums and pure step.

Freedomleisure health suites offer customers the relaxation they deserve after their workout. The heat-based therapies of a sauna or a steam room revitalise and relax tired muscles.

But what is freedomleisure all about?

Freedomleisure's core product is the provision of community leisure. Operating on a not for profit basis enables the business to enhance leisure facilities through continual reinvestment of surplus and freedomleisure hopes to act as a catalyst for the reinvigoration of the wider community.

Freedomleisure believes in the benefit of a healthy lifestyle and regular participation in exercise. It encourages everyone to undertake at least five weekly exercise sessions of 30 minutes' duration, promoting good health throughout the local population. Freedomleisure also takes part in national campaigns such as 'Commit to Get Fit' and Swimathon.

Freedomleisure places great emphasis on forging and developing strong links with local communities, to which it hopes to make a major contribution both economically and socially. Freedomleisure offers competitive corporate membership rates to many Kent and Sussex-based

companies, supports local sports clubs and societies, and aims to be considered the employer of choice in the area.

Freedom*leisure*'s vision encompasses the entire neighbourhood, serving people of every age, ability, and attitude. This inclusive vision means that although freedom*leisure* targets the whole market with its offering, it nevertheless recognises the demands of the numerous niche segments within that market. Thus freedom*leisure* develops its facilities and schemes to cater for the needs of specialist groups such as senior citizens, teenagers, GP referrals, pre- and postnatal mothers, ethnic groups and many more.

Freedom*leisure*'s status as a charitable trust, together with its inclusive vision, translates into fantastic value for the customer. The continuous 'reinvestment of surplus' policy creates facilities of the highest quality at affordable prices. Furthermore, freedom*leisure* membership is not subject to a minimum contract, allowing for greater flexibility for the customer.

What services can freedom*leisure* offer?

Freedom*leisure* has created the concept of the Freedom Journey, tailored to help members reach their goals. The team at every freedom*leisure* centre are friendly, interactive and approachable, and are there to help members and guests to the best of their ability. Gym instructors spend as much time as needed with members, including 6 individual sessions with new members as a part of the Freedom Journey.

The inclusive vision means that special exercise programmes are crafted to meet the specific needs of various groups. A broad range of classes are held in the fitness studios, offering many different exercise regimes to cater for the diverse demands of freedom*leisure* customers..

The organisation successfully introduced a Workplace Health initiative in the Wealden area in 2008, aimed at the corporate community and has teamed up with Focused Individual Training (F.I.T) to provide a new personal training and nutritional advice service in Bexhill, Crowborough, Hastings, Uckfield and Rye.

Freedom*leisure* offers swimming lessons for both children and adults, and organises holiday activity clubs for children. There are excellent crèche facilities at many freedom*leisure* sites offering quality childcare while parents exercise.

It also offers a bespoke Training and Consultancy service focusing primarily on the provision of training in first aid, lifesaving, manual handling and safety management. These programmes are available for both the public and commercial sector.

Freedom*leisure* working in partnership

Freedom*leisure* works closely with local authorities including Wealden District Council, Hastings Borough Council, Rother District Council, Crawley Borough Council, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Kent County Council. It also prides itself on an excellent, practical working relationship with Primary Care Trusts, local primary and secondary schools, the Sussex County Sports Partnership and a range of community-based initiatives, such as the Sure Start scheme in Bexhill and the CSN (Community Sport Network).

What is the Freedom Café?

Freedom Cafés are modern coffee bars that extend freedom/leisure's unique, bold, and contemporary style beyond the fitness rooms. They represent a new way forward for leisure centre catering, offering high quality service in a relaxing and aesthetically pleasing environment. Further to the light meals on offer, the chosen drinks supplier, Costa Coffee, guarantees products of a quality to match the surrounding leisure facilities.

What is it like to work for freedom/leisure?

Part of freedom/leisure's commitment to contribute to local communities is a desire to be 'the employer of choice' in the area. Freedom/leisure staff are well looked after through excellent Training and Development Programmes, effective Performance Management Systems, and a competitive Reward/Recognition and Remuneration package. Many centres are accredited with 'Highly Commended' Quest awards.

Where is freedom/leisure heading in the future?

The policy of continual reinvestment of surplus makes for a bright future of constant improvement. freedom/leisure has an ambitious expansion programme and aims to win further leisure management contracts in the South East and to deliver innovation and diversity in the leisure service that it offers. Work to achieve this goal is already underway, with plenty of development in the pipeline for the more immediate future.

Investment in facilities and equipment across the centres has totalled more than £5million since April 2002. Over the past three years alone, there has been a substantial programme of refurbishment at many freedom/leisure sites including:

- Falaise Fitness Centre was re-launched in 2006 with new equipment and a Freedom Café (£250k).
- Summerfield Leisure Centre received a brand new Freedom Café as a part of redevelopment of the reception and entrance area. The £125,000 scheme made the centre more accessible and welcoming to the public.
- The exciting £1million transformation of the sports hall at Hailsham was completed March 2006. It provided a dedicated junior gym, 10-pin bowling, large soft play centres, a newly-fitted crèche and party zone, ensuring Freedom/leisure Hailsham's status as one of the county's primary 'family leisure destinations'. It also demonstrates Freedom/leisure's commitment to promoting an increased participation in diverse forms of exercise, in particular targeting younger generations.
- Refurbishment work has also been undertaken at Bexhill Leisure Centre, Crowborough, Hassocks, and Rye.

Freedom/leisure is moving forwards, hand-in-hand with local communities it serves, towards a healthy, active future of expansion and improvement. www.freedom-leisure.co.uk

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