

# SWIMTAG Case Studies



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# Introduction

SWIMTAG has now been installed in over 200 pools in the UK and beyond and we have seen many of those pools thrive with users swimming further, faster and more often after the introduction of our technology.

SWIMTAG not only captures the imagination of swimmers and improves the level of service for those who prefer to exercise by swimming lengths. It also provides centres with the opportunity to gain a significant return on investment by attracting and retaining swimming members.

The case studies in this document are as diverse as the pools who use our technology and each offers a different insight into the positive reasons for installing SWIMTAG into your pool.

Some are very focused on return on investment figures, others give great insight into the reaction you are likely to achieve after installing SWIMTAG and others show the great PR that can stem from running SWIMTAG challenges. We would like to thank Places Leisure, Sport Blackpool and Westwoods Health Club for their help in compiling the following information.

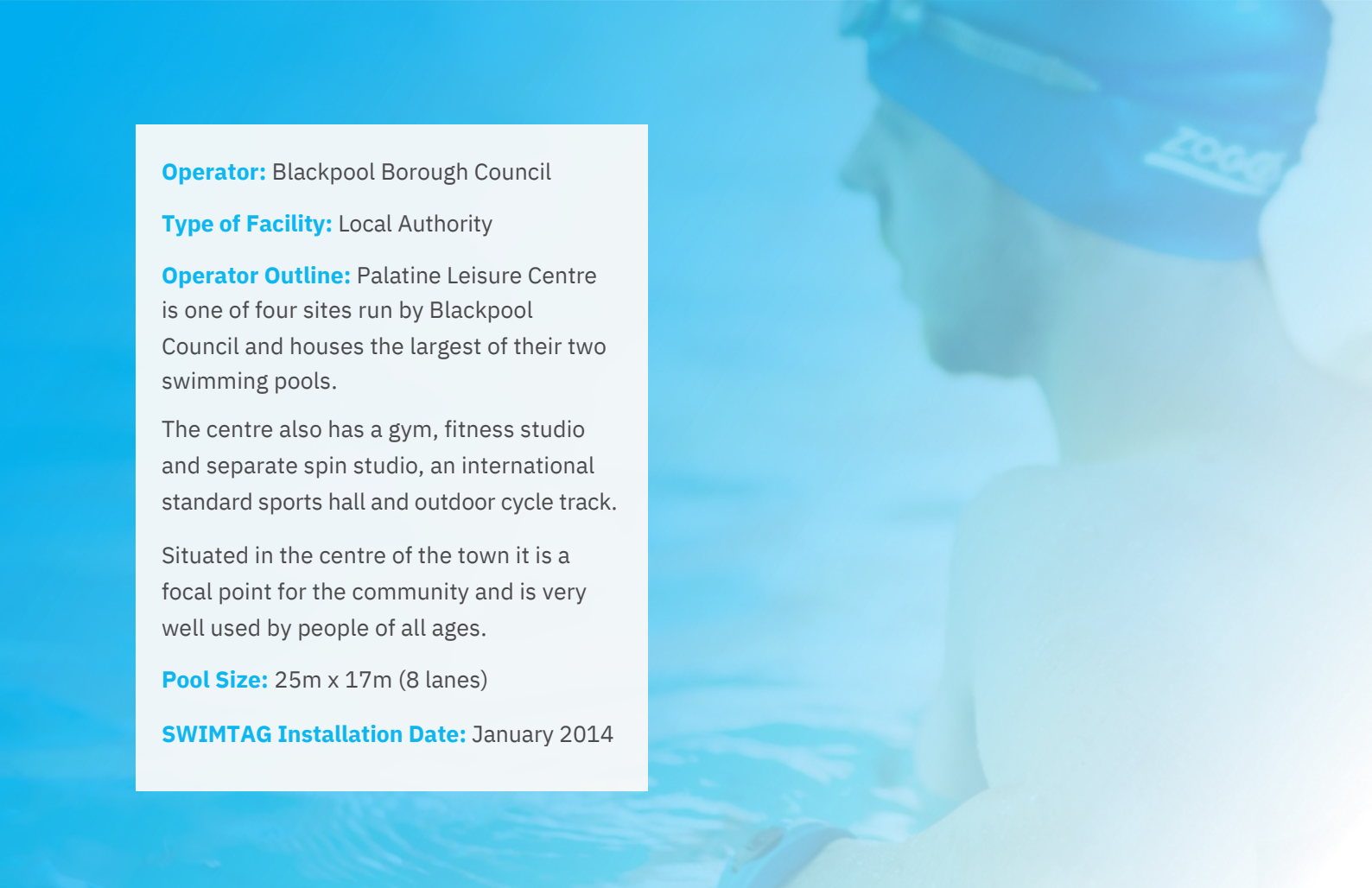
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CASE STUDY ONE

# Palatine Leisure Centre Blackpool Borough Council







**Operator:** Blackpool Borough Council

**Type of Facility:** Local Authority

**Operator Outline:** Palatine Leisure Centre is one of four sites run by Blackpool Council and houses the largest of their two swimming pools.

The centre also has a gym, fitness studio and separate spin studio, an international standard sports hall and outdoor cycle track.

Situated in the centre of the town it is a focal point for the community and is very well used by people of all ages.

**Pool Size:** 25m x 17m (8 lanes)

**SWIMTAG Installation Date:** January 2014

## 83% of participants said SWIMTAG motivated them to swim at Palatine Leisure Centre more frequently.

Palatine installed SWIMTAG in 2014 and Swimming Development Officer Jane Garrick championed its use. She was responsible for creating the “Swim to the Isle of Man” Challenge which received coverage in the local press as well as on BBC Radio Lancashire (sound clip available on request).

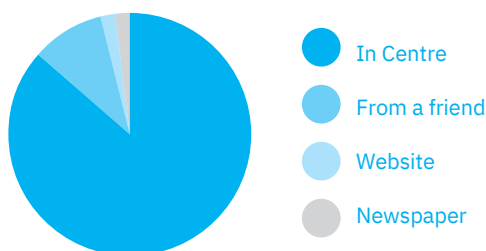
In the centre’s first year using SWIMTAG, over 550 users created a SWIMTAG account and the number of swims often exceeded 1000 SWIMTAG swims per month.

The survey on the following pages was carried out a year after SWIMTAG’s introduction and feedback was sought from users as to how they felt about the council investing in SWIMTAG permanently. As a result of the feedback contained within this study, the decision was made to continue with SWIMTAG and a new system was installed in early February 2015.

In 2016, the centre took part in our “Swim Rio” Challenge which led to one of their youngest members, 6 year old Archie, being featured in the local paper.

# SWIMTAG Survey Results

How did you find out about SWIMTAG?



**99%**

Of participants said SWIMTAG has enhanced their swim.

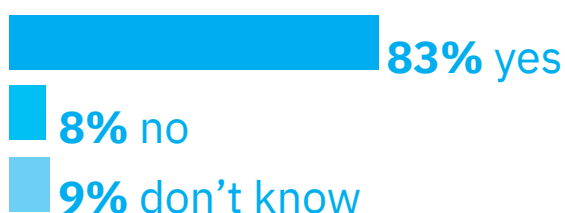
**83%**

Of participants said SWIMTAG motivated them to swim at Palatine Leisure Centre more frequently.

How do you think SWIMTAG has been beneficial to you?

**Kept me motivated 78%**  
**Improved my technique 24%**  
**Swim for longer 66%**  
**Swim further 64%**  
**Swim faster 32%**  
**Burn calories 31%**  
**Other 11%**

Do you feel that your swimming has improved since you started using SWIMTAG?



Since using SWIMTAG have you noticed any of the following health benefits?

**Weight loss 47%**  
**Toning 47%**  
**Less out of breath 42%**  
**Overall feeling 61%**  
**Feeling less tired 34%**  
**Feeling happier 51%**  
**Feeling energised 51%**

**60%**

Of people have taken part in a SWIMTAG challenge.

Challenges taken part in:



**52%**  
Isle of Man Centre



**21%**  
Heart UK Amazon



**66%**  
Individual Challenge

**100%**

Felt that the SWIMTAG challenges added to their swimming experience

**60%**

Said their swim has become more sociable since using SWIMTAG.

**96%**

Said they would recommend SWIMTAG to friends and family.

**58%**

Said they or someone they know started swimming at Palatine Centre because of SWIMTAG.

## Selected Comments

The final question in the survey was “Please let us know if you have additional comments about SWIMTAG”. Some of the answers have been reproduced below.

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“SWIMTAG has been very beneficial to me. Monitoring my performance and incentivising me to improve times. Details on swimming pinpoints the weakness of the stroke. SWIMTAG also helps with distance details. In all SWIMTAG has been successful at Palatine Leisure centre and in Blackpool Aquatics”.

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“It’s a great tool and actually the main reason why I became a member. If SWIMTAG wasn’t at Palatine I would probably leave and use a private club.”

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“I feel it is a brilliant incentive for “would be” competitive swimmers and I have encouraged several youngsters to try it”.

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“It has been very beneficial and staff have been very informative, have found joy in swimming again, the Isle of Man challenge was really good, I even raised over 400 pounds for charity, so it’s been a great couple of months and I look forward to the next one, many thanks”.

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“Brilliant! Does what Strava does on the bike and the run”.

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“It has motivated me after 15 years of no exercise, to swimming over 2 1/2 km a week, losing weight , feeling better than I have for years”.

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“I think it should be part of every pool, I’m in a triathlon club, it would be great for sessions both in and out of the club to look at technique, speed, stroke length etc. I miss it when I swim in my local pool”.

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“It’s a brilliant yet simple and effective idea. We love it and recommend it to anyone. It’s so encouraging and keeps you going”.

## Staff Feedback

Jane Garrick is Palatine Leisure Centre's Swimming Officer and it has been her responsibility to promote SWIMTAG in the Centre. When asked about the impact of SWIMTAG she said:

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"I'm delighted that we've managed to secure SWIMTAG at Palatine on a permanent basis. The response from members has been fantastic; it was their feedback that convinced the management team to purchase a SWIMTAG system, when the kit borrowed from the ASA was due to be taken out.

Like all councils, we run on a tight budget so any spending on new equipment needs to be justified. SWIMTAG gives you great usage stats on the operator panel so we were able to show the management team how frequently it was being used. And with so many of our users saying that it was one of the things that kept them loyal and stopped them going to a rival club, we felt that it made business sense to make SWIMTAG a permanent feature.

The Isle of Man challenge was a great success (despite it being a very difficult challenge) and we were really happy with the publicity we managed to generate from that in local press as well as on social media. As a result, people came in to

the club to find out about SWIMTAG and some joined after trying it out.

Bob our swimming coach – who does a lot of adult coaching has really taken it to his heart and runs coaching sessions, using the training plans within SWIMTAG, to get swimmers into the habit of structuring their sessions.

And now that SWIMTAG is here to stay we will be looking to do even more with it. We've seen the potential that SWIMTAG has to help with GP referral so our next plan is to get more people from that scheme into the water and swimming with a wristband, so that we can use SWIMTAG's features to illustrate how much they have improved. I would recommend SWIMTAG to any pool with a good number of users because it allows you to give all levels of swimmer a much better experience, it helps to aid retention and gets more people doing more swimming, more often".

Jane's contact details are available on request from the SWIMTAG Team.



In early 2019 we asked for an update on SWIMTAG at Palatine Leisure Centre and Jane gave us the following information:

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“SWIMTAG continues to be very popular at Palatine Leisure Centre. We’ve been very close to logging 1000 swims per month on a number of occasions so our next target is to try and get over 1000 swims in a calendar month.

The new pool battle feature that’s been created is great and our users have had a lot of fun taking on other pools across the country in a number of races. I’m pleased to say we’re still undefeated! We’ll also be repeating the Isle of Man Challenge that we did back in 2015 as we have lots more new users that won’t have had a chance to do it the first time around.

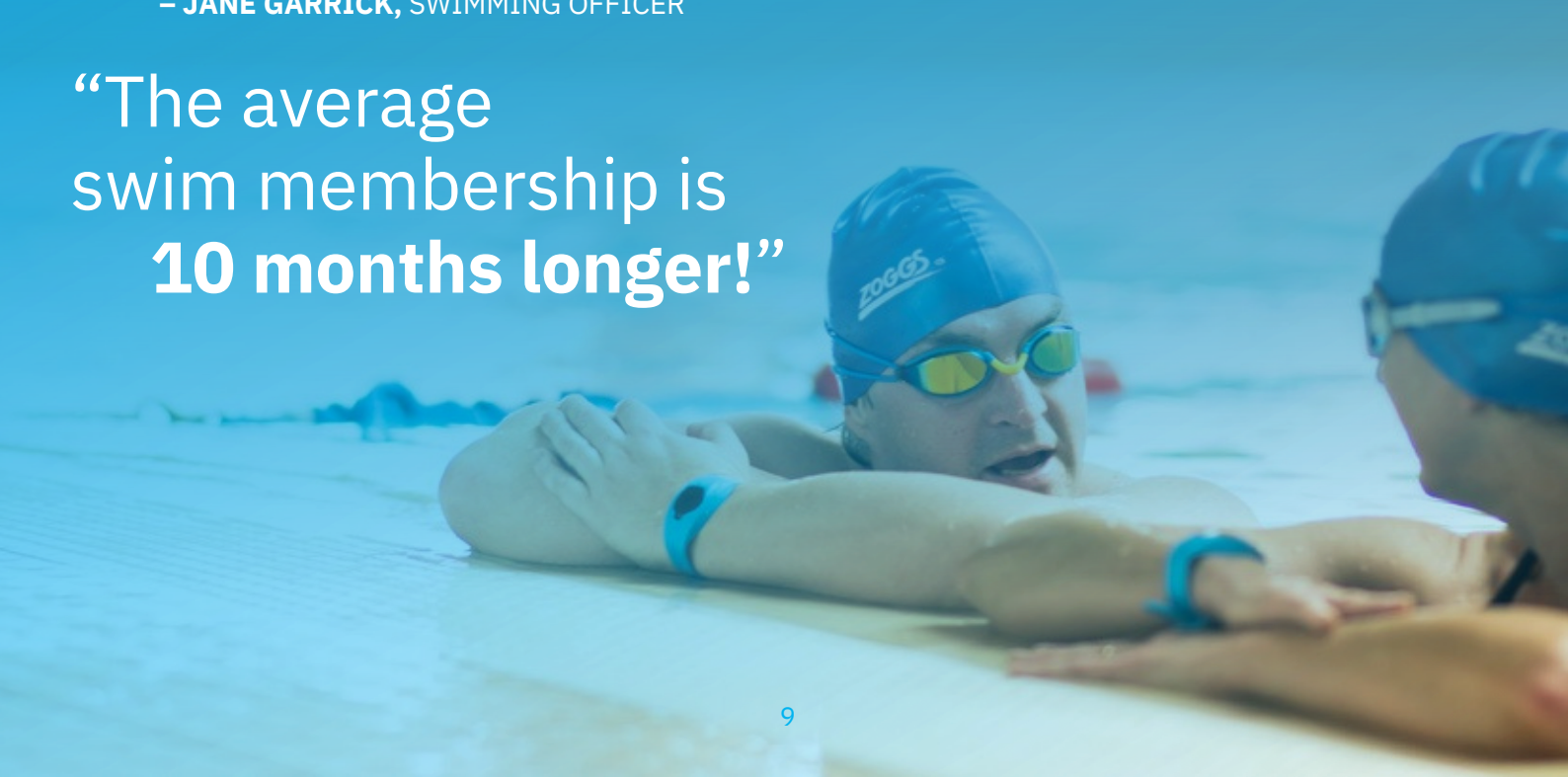
We’ve been taking a deeper dive into the numbers and comparing our site to a nearby pool which doesn’t have SWIMTAG at the moment. The most remarkable stat that we have discovered is that **the average length of a “Simply Swim” membership at Palatine is 10 months longer** than at Moor Park Leisure Centre.

Both facilities have a fairly similar offering. Palatine’s pool is slightly larger, but everything else is basically the same. The only key difference is SWIMTAG and the users who get slightly addicted to the challenges and trying to beat their own personal bests. We know that it’s SWIMTAG that’s the key factor because our users tell us every time we ask for feedback”.

SWIMTAG has since been added to Moor Park.

– JANE GARRICK, SWIMMING OFFICER

“The average  
swim membership is  
**10 months longer!**”



# Archie Takes on Rio Olympic Pool Challenge

When little Archie Shaw was diagnosed with Perthes Disease his youth sport days seemed numbered.

The hip problem, which means running or jumping could lead to serious injury, left the six-year-old soccer fan sidelined – only able to train in goal with his pals at Spirit of Youth FC.

But the South Shore youngster was determined to keep active and has just completed a 15km Rio challenge at Palatine pool – spending more than 16 hours in the water over the course of 31 days. The Olympic-themed challenge, set by tracking technology firm SWIMTAG, involved swimming the distance across Rio bay, in the somewhat safer surroundings of a local pool. Coaches at Palatine initially insisted Archie, a pupil at Our Lady of the Assumption Primary School, was too young to take on the gruelling test. But he proved everyone wrong. Mum Jane, 37, explained: “Archie has done an amazing job. “When he was diagnosed we thought he might struggle to carry on with his sport. “But he’s thrown himself into this. “At first they didn’t want him to try, they said he was too young. “We had a job convincing them. “But Archie has been absolutely fantastic. “He’s been doing 20 lengths a day and finished the challenge within a month. “I’m so proud of him for doing it.”

Archie, of Sandgate, South Shore, swam with grandma Eileen Shaw and finished his challenge on Wednesday last week – collecting a special certificate from coaches at Palatine Leisure Centre. Perthes Disease is a childhood disorder which affects the head of the femur. In Perthes disease the blood supply to the growth plate of the bone at the end of the femur becomes inadequate. As a result the bone softens and breaks down.



Archie receives his certificate from swimming coach Bob Hudson.

Archie will get better over time but for now the Pool, where there isn’t so much pressure put on his joints, will have to take priority over the football pitch. “We thought Archie would have to give up football completely,” said Jane. “But right now he’s able to play in goal which is good because he still gets to see his friends and his team mates. “He will eventually recover and hopefully the swimming will help with that.” Archie was one of 30 people who took up the Rio challenge at Palatine. Swimmers across the country have been posting their results online.

Source: <http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/archie-takes-on-rio-olympic-pool-challenge-1-8057325>



## CASE STUDY TWO

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# Places Leisure





**Operator:** Places Leisure

**Type of facility:** Leisure

**Operator outline:** Places Leisure is a leading leisure and wellness social enterprise, delivering fitness, sport, health and wellbeing in partnership with Local Authorities across England. In line with a mission to create ‘active places and healthy people’ the organisation works in collaboration with its Local Authority partners to deliver social and financial objectives which improves lives across all segments of the community.

**Pool Size:** 25m+ SWIMTAG

**SWIMTAG Installation Date:** 73 sites between 2013–2022

## Places Leisure (PfPL) is one of the largest Leisure Management Contractors in England, running over 100 leisure facilities on behalf of 34 Local Authority partners.

Recognising the organisations commitment to initiating change and driving communities to be more physically active, the social enterprise has won a host of awards including multiple wins of ukactive’s prestigious ‘Operator of The Year’ Award.

SWIMTAG was originally installed in three PfPL operated pools, Alfreton Leisure Centre, Alton Leisure Centre and Victory Swim and Fitness Centre to support the Swim4Health trial, in partnership with Swim England (formerly the ASA) and Sport England. The trial ran for twelve months and evidenced success in driving community swim participation. As a result, Swim4Health was rolled out across all PfPL

managed pools with SWIMTAG established as a vital component of the programme’s success and future expansion.

Today, SWIMTAG has become an integral part of the PfPL pool offering. No longer restricted to swimmers on health intervention programmes, SWIMTAG is now available at all PfPL managed pools to all swimmers, free of charge.

Swimmers have responded very positively to the introduction of SWIMTAG and every month, PfPL logs 6,000-7,000 SWIMTAG sessions. In addition, more than 5,000 swimmers each month take part in SWIMTAG’s, pre-programmed online competitions.



Since SWIMTAG was made available across the estate, swim memberships are up 18 per cent and casual pool usage has increased by 2 per cent. Over the next few months, PfPL will enhance their users' experience further with the roll out of our new 2nd generation SWIMTAG lane displays, enabling swimmers to access even more live feature during their swim.

## Bucking the Trend

National Data from Sport England depicts a decline in swim participation, with 776,000 less people swimming weekly now, than ten years ago. Despite this, PfPL continues to evidence an increase in the number of people swimming across the estate, with swim memberships up 18 per cent in recent years.

This trend is attributed to several factors:

**Embracing new technologies:** As well as enhancing the user experience through the provision of gym style activity and performance feedback, SWIMTAG has enabled PfPL to gather a mass of intelligence on the pool activity of our users. This not only enables the creation of individual activity records, hugely important in the delivery of pathway programmes like Swim4Health, but also enables PfPL to analyse collective data, helping to develop products and programmes which address specific community needs.

**Developing products** which target specific segments of the community and provide participation pathways (e.g. Swim4Health, Swimazing, #ThisGirlCan), breaking down barriers and homing in on individual motivations and drivers to encourage engagement. 43 per cent of Swim4Health participants go on to purchase swim memberships and, to date, more than 15,000 sessions have

been purchased through the pay-as-you-go, #ThisGirlCan initiative. Participants engaging through these products are unlikely to have become physically active left to their own devices.

**Flexible programming and access to pool timetables:** To ensure PfPL continues to provide programmes that reflect community needs and makes them accessible when target groups are able to access them, there is a constant market evaluation process being conducted through the interrogation of data collated via SWIMTAG, demographic profiling and user surveys. Up to date pool timetables are also available, online, to help the community keep informed of any changes.

**Benchmarking** against other PfPL sites in the estate. Technologies are being used to monitor and evaluate success. Detailed demographic profiling is also being used to make assumptions as to what will work in areas sharing similar population profiles. Data produced by SWIMTAG, detailing popular usage times and average session times help to ensure programming addresses the preferences of individual communities.

**Industry collaboration:** Keeping abreast of the latest technologies and insights through a close working relationship with organisations such as ukactive, Swim England, Sport England, CIMSPA, CLOA).

**Product development to encourage physical activity:** PfPL offers many products which target specific community groups from Swimazing to #ThisGirlCan and Swim4Health, from AquaJog to Swimfit. All of these tap into specific motivations and create a pathway which encourage a move to regular physical activity.

# The introduction of SWIMTAG

We asked Susan Rossetto, Group Health and Wellbeing Manager at PfPL how SWIMTAG has been integrated into the swimming offering at PfPL sites:

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## **Swim4Health and SWIMTAG:**

“SWIMTAG provides a key measurement and retention tool after the Swim4Health six week journey finishes. It helps us convert people who have taken up the temporary offer to convert to a swim membership or a full membership. It also helps us secure funding as commissioners can be supplied with accurate data to evaluate and prove engagement. We use it to get inactive people into a programme of regular and sustained activity, so it’s a highly effective public health tool”.

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## **Featured Challenges:**

“Featured Challenges are very well received by our teams on the ground. The challenges are fun and enable our site staff to promote SWIMTAG to people who haven’t yet tried it”.

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## **Support offered by 222 Sports:**

“Support provided by 222 Sports is world class. The company have worked with us to develop the effective package we now have. 222 Sports are not merely suppliers, we consider them our partners in driving swimming participation and aquatic innovation”.

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## **SWIMTAG as a Management Tool:**

“SWIMTAG is offered to our members at no additional cost as we see it as adding value and quality to the service provided, enabling our swimmers to access the very best technology and enjoy their swimming more. The SWIMTAG Operator Panel enables us to be accurately informed of busiest times, busiest days which means we can develop our pool programme to meet customer needs. The Operator panel also means we know exactly how our swimmers are engaging with us and we can even use it to work on a very personal level with them helping them set goals so they can achieve personal bests and fitness and health aspirations”.

“SWIMTAG helps us to drive swim membership sales and achieve an excellent conversion rate from our Swim4Health programme. It encourages our existing members to stay with us for longer, another huge factor that gives us a great return on our investment”.

– **SUSAN ROSSETTO**, GROUP HEALTH AND WELLBEING MANAGER

## Swim4Health – A Case Study

Swim4Health is a six week, aquatic journey, designed to encourage inactive people to participate in regular physical activity.

All Swim4Health participants are signposted to Swim4Health from a GP or other Allied Health Professional who identifies the physical, social and mental benefits the individual would experience from participation in regular physical activity.

The six-week pass costs £25. Many GPs and health professionals cover this cost through various funding initiatives designed to encourage those with high blood pressure, type two diabetes, obesity and other medical conditions into some form of regular exercise. The Swim4Health journey looks like this:

- A one-to-one consultation with an aquatics advisor at the start of the journey to set some goals and introduce SWIMTAG.
- Unlimited access to the pool for lane swimming.

- Free access to SWIMTAG.
- Unlimited access to aqua classes such as aqua fit, aqua Zumba and aqua jogging.
- Ongoing support and monitoring by an aquatics advisor via email. Telephone and SWIMTAG Connect.
- One-to-one consultation at the end of the journey to discuss completed activity recorded via SWIMTAG and to encourage the participant to commit to ongoing swimming activity via the purchase of a swim membership.

Swim4Health attracts a conversion rate to swim membership of 43 per cent. It is unlikely these individuals would have engaged with the leisure centre without being signposted to this programme.

# Rotherham Leisure Centre – Return on Investment Analysis

Places for People have kindly agreed to share live data from one site (Rotherham Leisure Centre) to illustrate the return on investment SWIMTAG can generate when you use it as part of a programme to get more people swimming. These figures only relate to the people who were part of the Swim4Health programme and don't take into account the benefits to other pool users who also had their user experience improved by using SWIMTAG.

The data showed that over a 12 month period:

- The total ROI during the period was at least £15k.
- 307 people signed up to the Swim4Health journey, generating income of £7,675.
- 43% of those users were converted into members (133 people).
- The minimum membership cost at the site is £19.50 for a swim only membership.

- The minimum term of membership was 12 week, so over the year, Rotherham Leisure Centre were guaranteed a minimum of £7,410 in membership income from those who joined, giving a minimum ROI of £15,085 when added to the income generated from the £25 passes.
- If all the people who joined stayed for an average of 12 months, then the total income generated from memberships alone would be £31,122 or £38,797 when added to the cash generated from the £25 passes.

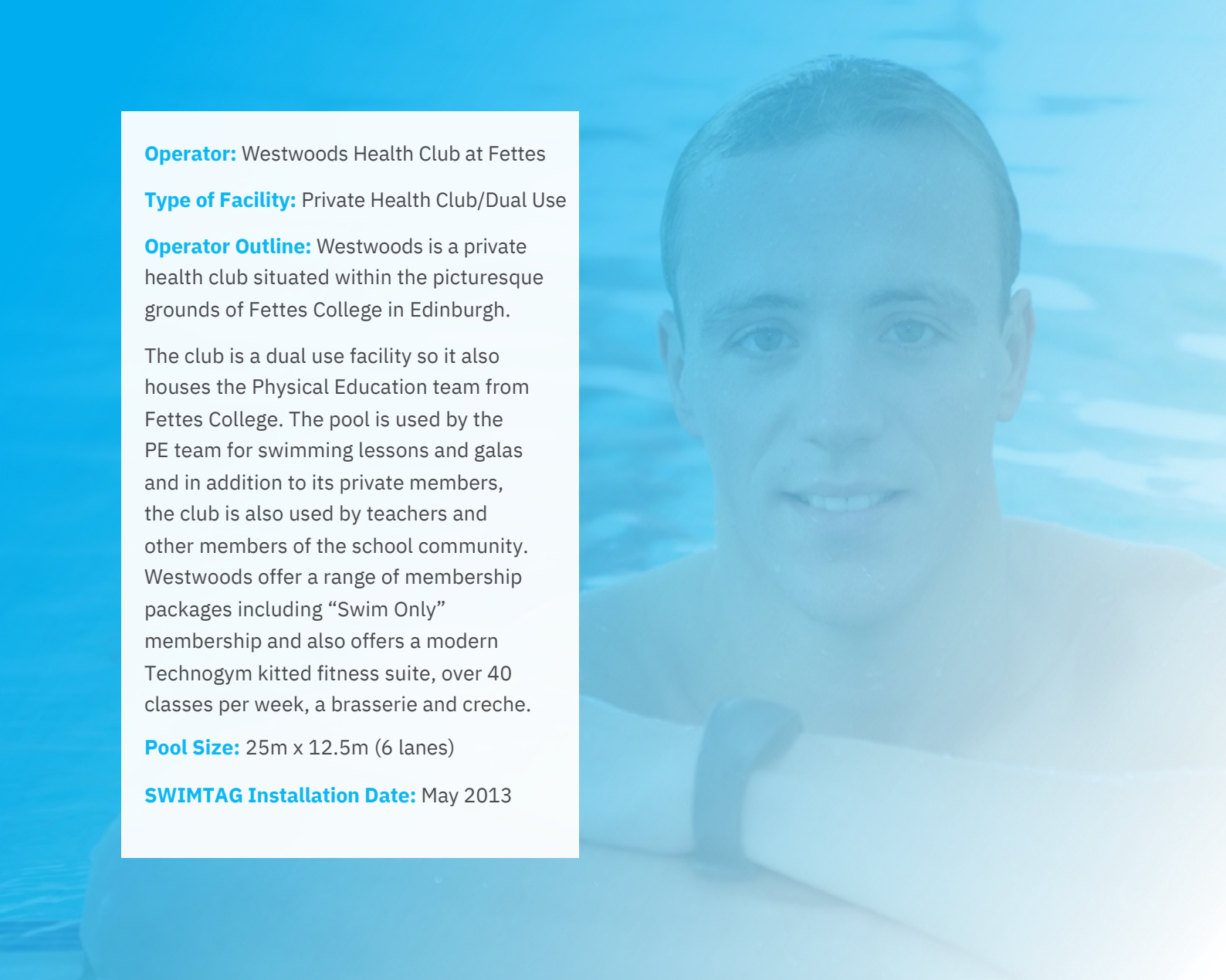




## CASE STUDY THREE

# Westwoods Health Club at Fettes





**Operator:** Westwoods Health Club at Fettes

**Type of Facility:** Private Health Club/Dual Use

**Operator Outline:** Westwoods is a private health club situated within the picturesque grounds of Fettes College in Edinburgh.

The club is a dual use facility so it also houses the Physical Education team from Fettes College. The pool is used by the PE team for swimming lessons and galas and in addition to its private members, the club is also used by teachers and other members of the school community. Westwoods offer a range of membership packages including “Swim Only” membership and also offers a modern Technogym kitted fitness suite, over 40 classes per week, a brasserie and creche.

**Pool Size:** 25m x 12.5m (6 lanes)

**SWIMTAG Installation Date:** May 2013

## Westwoods were the 10th pool in the UK and the first in Scotland to install SWIMTAG.

Usage amongst members is high. Since SWIMTAG was launched over 1000 members have created SWIMTAG accounts and Westwoods have made particularly good use of the “Challenge” feature to increase participation.

They also set targets and gave prizes to receptionists for encouraging SWIMTAG use in the early stages of the launch and invited 2010 Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist Robbie Renwick to the club to try SWIMTAG out, run a coaching session and participate in a Q&A.

### Maggies Challenge

In November 2013, Westwoods teamed up with SWIMTAG to create a customised challenge.

Local Cancer Caring Centre Maggie’s were asking people to run or cycle between their centres to raise cash for their charity. With SWIMTAG newly installed, Westwoods decided to be the first to swim between two centres, so the “Maggie’s to Maggie’s Swimming Challenge” was born with the help of the team at SWIMTAG HQ.





Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist Robbie Renwick visiting Westwoods.

Participants were challenged to swim between Maggie's Edinburgh and Maggie's Fife, situated in Kirkcaldy around 18km away (or 734 lengths of the pool). The club chose November as the best time to run the challenge and gave participants the month to complete it.

The total number of swims using SWIMTAG increased dramatically with 533 swims in October and 363 swims in December, you would have expected the total number of swims in November to be just over 400. The actual number was 785, meaning that the total number of swims in November almost doubled as a result of the challenge and almost matched the usage in January.

The club raised over £6000, which Westwoods added to other cash they had raised throughout the year to present a cheque to Maggie's for over £8000 at their annual Christmas Party. The challenge and cheque presentation photo were both covered in local press & radio and details were widely shared on social media by the participants and the charity. The Maggie's Challenge was repeated in 2016, raising a further £7500.

## Return on Investment

SWIMTAG was one of a number of measures introduced to Westwoods to encourage participation, help member retention and improve membership sales.

## Swim Only Membership

Between May 2013 and August 2014 the Club increased its Swimming Only membership by 5.5%.

## Overall Membership

Between May 2013 and August 2014 the Club increased its overall membership by 5%. (0.9% of this increase is relative to Swimming Only memberships).

# Was SWIMTAG worth the investment?

General Manager Wendy Wallace told us:

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“With a sustained increase in their overall membership following the installation of SWIMTAG, the initial purchase and setup costs of the equipment was paid back within 9 months. The club believe this to be an excellent return on investment and see SWIMTAG as a key USP for maintaining the facility as a forward-thinking, future-proof health club.

“In an increasingly competitive environment we need to distinguish ourselves from the competition. We already offer all fitness appointments included within the cost of membership, so members are very well looked after in the fitness suite, with all their programmes stored on a Technogym key using their Wellness System. Class participants are given a great group exercise experience by our instructors and with SWIMTAG we are now able to complete the circle and offer the same high end service to our members who wish to swim as their main form of exercise”.

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**On Membership Sales:** “As well as creating a buzz around the club and attracting swimmers who had heard about SWIMTAG and wanted to try it out, it also created the wow factor for

those who didn’t know we had it until they came in for a tour. The club invested in an iPad for the sales team to demonstrate SWIMTAG and that new part of the tour certainly had a positive impact in turning prospects into members”.

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**On Member Retention:** “Members love it when you add in a new service included within the cost and I am sure that the addition of SWIMTAG was one of the major factors in our improved retention levels, which were already much better than the industry average”.

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**Individual Stories:** “We have had many success stories from members, who have lost weight and improved their swimming as a result of SWIMTAG. The technology has the ability to turn casual swimmers into goal-focused swimmers which is why they start to see results so quickly.

The most inspiring story to me was a member called Duncan who used to take an occasional dip in the pool, but when SWIMTAG was introduced he took to it like a duck to water. It really brought out his competitive streak. Some swimmers just want to compete against themselves and still see improvements, but Duncan took it one step further and vowed to be the first to finish the “Maggies to Maggies Challenge” and succeeded, beating two very fit and active members of staff in the process. Duncan is 78 years old and an inspiration to us all.”



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