

## Case Study Pyramids Centre

# PYRAMIDS

### Client:

Portsmouth City Council

### Website:

[bhlive.org.uk](http://bhlive.org.uk)

### Base:

Southsea, Hampshire

### Industry:

Health, wellbeing and cultural events

### Project:

Invest in and expand public facilities and services

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### Results:

More people taking part in regular physical activity

Diverse programme of public events

Improved cultural programme

Thriving music programme

Improved reach and appeal in the local community

New facilities and greater employment and training opportunities

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## Leading operator brings investment focus to breathe new life into Pyramids Centre



**Pyramids Centre in Portsmouth has been revitalised as a thriving events, health and wellbeing centre for the region. In just two years, leisure membership has grown from 500 to 3,000, with new swim and health programmes launched to encourage more local people to get active.**

### The challenge

Pyramids Centre has changed hands many times since it was built in 1988 and by 2013, although popular, standards had fallen behind similar facilities along the South Coast.

A fresh approach and a safe pair of hands were needed to stimulate visitor numbers, attract bigger audiences at events, generate new revenue streams, reduce the dependence on subsidies and prepare for the future as a commercial, self-sustaining business.

In Autumn 2013, the contract to manage the centre was awarded to BH Live, a leading social enterprise with a nationally recognised track record of operating leisure centres and event venues to a high standard across the South of England.

### The approach

*“Our strategic objectives complemented the council’s plan to develop the leisure and event offer for local residents and visitors, to encourage more people to take part in physical activity, especially those from hard to reach groups, and to enrich and expand the entertainment and business event programme,”* explains Mike Lyons, Director of Leisure, BH Live.

Following an in-depth analysis of the business and discussions with partners and stakeholders, new programmes were developed to appeal to a broad range of

interests, backgrounds and lifestyles, and include high quality on-site retail and event catering.

A swim programme was created to encourage non-swimmers into the water and provide sessions to suit swimmers of all ages and ability.

Gym and class programmes were expanded to include more activities, from pilates and pump to circuit training and high intensity training.

A robust campaign followed to promote the new services offered by membership packages and a pay-as-you-go option.

After just four months, membership almost doubled from 500 to 900 people. Progress was, however, abruptly halted in early 2014, when a tidal surge in The Solent coincided with a storm and high winds, flooding the plant room and closing the centre for eight months while repairs were carried out.

### The results



The centre re-opened in September 2014 with new plant and equipment, a new fitness studio for weekly classes and new catering outlets.

Thanks to the improved facilities and services, more members have joined and pay-as-you-go visits have increased.

Pyramids now has more than 3,000 members. Every month, more than 2,000 people go to fitness classes and over 6,000 gym visits have been recorded. 15,000 people are now swimming each month, with 300 taking part in a weekly learn-to-swim school.

The event programme has widened to include everything from exhibitions and weddings to comedy and sporting events, with programming, marketing and promoter management supported by the BH Live event programming team.

More than 25 jobs have been created and the team has undergone training in customer services, health and fitness, recreation and event management.

Already booming in other regions with over 2,000 participants, a GP referral scheme has been launched to encourage people take up physical activity to improve health outcomes.

Concessionary pricing has been introduced for people on low income and the team is working with disability forums and

community groups, including Portsmouth Voice, to make the facilities and services even more accessible and attractive to everyone.

*"Pyramids is thriving once again with more than 3,000 members. The leisure pools, gym and fitness classes are popular and the centre*

*has a great atmosphere," says Mike Lyons.*

*"The event programme is also doing extremely well, with high profile events such as the 2014 Shaping the Future of Portsmouth Conference through to gigs from James Bay, George Ezra, Jungle, Enter Shikari, Public Service Broadcasting and The Vaccines.*

*"We have launched membership offers and promotions to encourage more people to lead a more active lifestyle and added more weekly fitness classes.*

*"We've introduced new luxury spa treatments to attract more customers and our health and wellbeing programmes now include schemes to help people with diabetes, obesity, heart and other conditions to use exercise to alleviate their symptoms."*

Customer satisfaction at Pyramids is up, with engagement driven by a dedicated customer service team and communication in social media.

*"Working with BH Live has increased the health, leisure and cultural offer in Portsmouth, which means more local people have the opportunity to improve their health and wellbeing," says Cllr Linda Symes, Portsmouth City Council's cabinet member for culture, leisure and sport.*

*"I'm pleased that visits to the centre have been on the increase and new activities introduced, including a GP exercise referral scheme. We want to make Portsmouth a great place to live, work and visit, and partners in the health and leisure industry like BH Live are crucial to making this a reality."*

### About BH Live

BH Live is the South Coast's leading operator of leisure and event venues – a social enterprise that designs and builds engaging experiences to inspire people and enrich lives.

[bhlive.org.uk](http://bhlive.org.uk)