



Gym access is top priority for Gen Z when choosing where to live

The Gym Group's 2026 Gen Z Fitness Pulse Report reveals new insights:

- 31% of Gen Z rank gym and fitness facilities as the most important lifestyle amenity when choosing where to live, ahead of recreational shopping facilities and green spaces
- 42% place fitness spend as their top discretionary spending priority, up from 26% last year
- 72% say gym access is an important factor in choosing their next home, and 62% have already chosen, or would consider choosing, a home because it is close to a gym
- 32% would pay a premium to live near a gym, an average of £40 extra per month, which equates to £480 per year

London, August 31st, 2026: Asked to rank local amenities that matter most when deciding where to live, more Gen Z put gyms and fitness facilities first (31%) than recreational shopping facilities (25%), green spaces and parks (21%), restaurants, bars and cafés (14%), and entertainment (6%) and cultural venues (3%).

The Gym Group's annual Gen Z Fitness Pulse Report, based on a survey of 2,000 respondents aged 16-29, found that nearly three-quarters (72%) of Gen Z say access to a gym is an important consideration when choosing where to live, and almost two-thirds (62%) say they have already chosen or would consider choosing a home because it is close to a gym. Living near a gym even comes at a premium, as almost a third (32%) say they would pay higher rent for gym access at an average of £40 extra per month, around £480 per year.

The report highlights a generation putting fitness at the centre of their lifestyle choices. More than four in ten (42%) now rank health and fitness memberships or apps as their biggest discretionary spending priority, up from 26% a year ago. A significant 55%

surveyed place health and fitness among their top two discretionary priorities, up from 44% in 2025.

The findings also show that gyms are becoming an integral part of local communities, almost two-thirds (62%) of Gen Z agree that a gym is more than a place to exercise, it is somewhere to socialise and feel part of a community, while 57% say it's a place where they can make meaningful connections with people.

Commenting on the findings Will Orr, CEO of The Gym Group says: "The findings in this year's Gen Z Fitness Pulse Report paint a clear picture that going to the gym is becoming more than a way to stay active, it is increasingly influencing how young adults organise their everyday lives. From where they choose to live, to how they spend their money, support their mental wellbeing and build friendships, gyms and fitness have become firmly embedded in the routines and priorities of this generation.

"Understanding Gen Z fitness habits is not only important for us as a business, but for the future of the nation's health and wellbeing. We are committed to bringing our low cost gym model to all who need it, making fitness accessible nationwide."

ENDS

Notes to Editor:

The Gym Group Gen Z Fitness Pulse Report 2026 key findings:

- **Gyms influence housing decisions:** 72% say access to a gym is important when choosing where to live, rising to 82% in London. A third (32%) would pay more in rent to live closer to one, an average of £40 per month extra.
- **Fitness tops spending priorities:** More than four in ten (42%) rank health and fitness as their number one discretionary spending priority, ahead of all other categories, and 55% place it first or second priority, up from 44% in 2025.
- **Gyms are places to connect with others:** 62% agree that as well as a place to exercise, the gym is also a place to socialise, and 72% believe going to the gym helps tackle loneliness.
- **Exercising is routine:** Almost six in ten (58%) Gen Z adults exercise at least twice a week; with more than half of Gen Z (54%) attending the gym at least once a week.
- **Mental wellbeing is an important exercise motivator:** 39% say regular exercise improves their mental wellbeing; this closely follows 40% choosing to exercise for their fitness levels and physical health.

- **Value for money matters:** Over 40% say value for money is the most important factor when choosing a gym, as the availability of affordable and accessible gyms helps young adults to build healthy fitness habits.

About The Gym Group:

The Gym Group was a pioneer of the low cost gym model and offers 24/7 opening and flexible, no contract memberships. We operate 260+ high quality sites across the UK with around 1 million members nationwide. Our gyms have c.70 million visits per annum and score highly on member satisfaction. The Gym Group is the world's first gym operator to have its science-based net-zero emission reduction targets validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi).

Methodology:

The findings of The Gym Group's Gen Z Fitness Pulse Report are based on a nationwide survey exploring Gen Z fitness trends and the role fitness and gyms play in Gen Z's lives. The survey, conducted in partnership with OnePoll, is the third wave of research following surveys carried out in 2024 and 2025, allowing us to compare evolving attitudes and behaviours and provide year-on-year insights.

A total of 2,000 Gen Z respondents aged 16 to 29 took part in the survey, which was distributed online across the UK between the 9th and 14th of July 2026. To capture a comprehensive view of the topic, the questionnaire included a variety of formats such as single-select and multiple-choice questions, ranking exercises, matrix selects, and free-text responses.

Data from the survey was analysed using descriptive statistical methods via the OnePoll platform, which provided summary charts and graphs. Key trends and insights were then identified and interpreted by the report authors to highlight the most relevant findings.