

## Swim England CEOs ‘dismay and frustration’ as Government fails to announce pools reopening date

Swim England published [the following](#) on 23 Jun 2020:

Swim England chief executive Jane Nickerson has expressed her ‘dismay and frustration’ at the Government’s failure to help millions of people return to swimming pools.

It was originally believed that pools across the country would be allowed to reopen from 4 July as stated in the latest phase of easing the lockdown restrictions.

However, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has only given the green light for pubs, restaurants, hair salons, cinemas and museums to open for business once again.

Swim England has now launched an #OpenOurPools campaign calling for the decision to be reconsidered immediately.

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The ‘appalling decision’ has been condemned by Jane, who says the Government are letting down the millions of people who enjoy and benefit from swimming every year.

She has also warned that the continued closure of facilities will lead to more pressure being piled on the NHS in the immediate future as so many people depend on the water to help manage chronic conditions.

Jane said: “By ignoring the swimming sector in the latest easing of lockdown, the Government has let down millions who rely on being in the water – from those who use pools for mental or physical health reasons, to our recreational swimmers and competitive club athletes.

“Thousands of workers in the sector and facilities across the country are also still in a state of limbo and this is simply unacceptable.

“Many will fail to understand how pubs, restaurants, cinemas, museums and hair salons have been given the

go ahead to open on the 4 July but not chlorine-filled swimming pools.

### **Benefitting the health of the nation**

**“I share their frustrations and demand that the Government hastily reconsiders this decision to ignore what is a lifeline to so many.”**

**“It appears that it is okay to sit on the couch watching professional sport, go out for a high calorie meal and then go to the pub but you can’t go for a swim, which provides a sanitised environment.”**

**Swim England revealed last year that aquatic activity helps to save the health and social care system more than £357 million a year.**

The [Value of Swimming report](#) highlighted the vital role pools play in tackling some of our biggest health conditions.

Parents have also expressed a desire to ensure that their children can [return to swimming lessons](#) and learn a vital life skill.

Jane added: “I am dismayed that an activity which plays a major role in benefitting the health of the nation has been overlooked at a time when it is probably needed more so than ever before.

“Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government has rightly championed the importance of physical activity for people’s physical and mental wellbeing.

“Therefore it is particularly frustrating to see swimming pools and leisure centres neglected in this way.

### **Missing out on vital life skill**

**“Our detailed [Returning to the Pool guidance](#) has shown that pools can operate a controlled Covid-19 safe way.**

“However, we have been stressing to the Government that facilities need at least two weeks to be able to prepare for reopening so it’s deeply frustrating these pleas haven’t been listened to.

“Being in the water can be incredibly fun for people of all ages but it’s so important that youngsters have learned the necessary skills to ensure they are safe in and around water and know what to do in an emergency.

“While pools remain shut, this simply doesn’t happen and we can’t afford the next generation to miss out on this vital life skill.

“The longer facilities remain closed, the increased chance many of them won’t be able to afford to reopen.

“We have already called for the Government to provide [urgent financial support to the sector](#) otherwise we risk losing hundreds of pools which will deprive millions of people of the ability to enjoy all the benefits of being active in the water.

“It’s time the Government did the right thing for the leisure industry and the health of the nation by reopening pools and we’re keen to work closely with them to ensure this happens sooner rather than later.

“If pools cannot open from the 4 July, the Government is jeopardising the physical and mental wellbeing of millions of people, preventing a generation of children from learning to swim and enabling them to have fun

in, on and around water – as well as halting the future of potential Olympic champions.”

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