

## Briefing Paper – Scrutiny Committee

### Leisure Services

**Retention** within the Leisure service can mean many things in a variety of ways. For the service to survive and thrive retention systems that have been developed will require a continual measure and development to maintain effectiveness, and new systems to aid retention will require development and ongoing support in the future.

Broadly, the areas of retention with regards to Zest Memberships requires the following:

**Face to face communications** – Whilst we have undertaken development in this area, this is an ongoing investment in our teams and systems to ensure that we start to retain our Zest Members even before they commit to us, through our customer service at front of house, and within the wider teams. For example probing to find the goals of the prospective member to find a product that will best suit their requirements, and removing as many barriers to exercise as possible, such as; access times, how to book sessions and courts, what to wear, location of the changing rooms, who the instructors will be, and what is expected of the Zest Member, are all of significant importance to retaining our Zest Members.

It is evidenced, and common sense, that the more contact points a member has with the team the more likely they are to feel valued, part of the community and able to approach a member of the team for support. We are developing processes for our Fitness Instructors to commit Zest Members to a journey with us, which will increase the interactions at the time of exercising, and ultimately be able to predict who those at risk of leaving will be. Fundamentally the more we; look at, smile to, speak with and gain feedback from our Zest Members and users, the more likely they are to feel valued, and stay with us longer. There are limited opportunities for being able to ‘**measure**’ these interactions with a Zest Member, at this current time, and this is an area we are continuously developing.

**Automated communications to Zest Members** – From Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September we are launching our *Communicate* system, which will ensure that the following campaigns take place, to support our other retention methods:

1. All new Health and Fitness members will receive a welcome email within the first 7 days signing up as a Zest Member, giving them more information about the service and the benefits of being a Zest Member
2. After 1 month that member will receive a congratulatory email, reminding them to keep in contact with their fitness instructor, and offering an opportunity to ‘recommend a friend’
3. For members that have only visited 0-1 times in the previous week, a personal text will be sent to their mobile with a friendly message asking them ‘When are you going to use your Zest Membership this week?’

4. On a monthly basis an email will be sent to any Zest Members who cancelled or did not re-join after their renewal date had passed, from a period of 90-120 day previous.

These campaigns will take 30 minutes every Monday, and we will be able to report on their effectiveness.

**Manual tracking of advanced Zest Members usage** – We are able to report on the renewal date of Zest Members, and their activity levels. It is common sense that if a Zest Member has paid in advance for their membership and are not visiting, it is not due to the affordability of the service, and if they are **not** making use of their membership they are unlikely to renew. It is our intention that we directly communicate with Low Usage Zest Members in person (face to face, phone, or email) to offer them an opportunity to chat through their change in circumstances, and what we can do to help.

This is a relatively new process and is labour intensive, we do not currently have dedicated team member/s to undertake this process, and it is not effective for a team member to undertake these communications whilst completing other tasks, such as lifeguarding, or being required at front of house. Success is also reliant on the Zest Member's contact details being correct, the Zest Member answering their phone, the Zest Member wishing to discuss their low usage with us (this can at times be embarrassing for them), or occasions where the Zest Member has 'opted out' of the communications. More can be progressed in this area with dedicated officer time, however it is not currently built into the salary budgets, or staffing structure.

**Communication with cancelled Zest Members** – it is often too late to retain a Zest Member when they have decided to cancel their membership, and often it is difficult to obtain true information from them about the reason for cancellation, this is an area target for improvement going forward. We have systems in place for the collection of and progression of zest Membership Direct Debit rejections, this again is a manual process that requires officer time. It is important that we maintain professionalism with cancelled members as they may well return to us again in the future.

We have more opportunities going forward, such as member focus groups, improved survey and comment systems, targeting of staff interaction, internal training and standards, industry specific training, that will all aid retention of all of our members and users. This will be a priority area for development with the strategic team going forward.

For information - Please see the following tables as a guide to the formation of adult Zest Members:

**Zest Members - By Group**

| Group              | Total       |
|--------------------|-------------|
| 60+                | 652         |
| Corporate          | 492         |
| Lifestyle          | 201         |
| Lifestyle Plus     | 2242        |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>3587</b> |

**Zest Member by Payment**

| Payment Method     | Total       |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Cash               | 1214        |
| BACS               | 2357        |
| Invoice            | 16          |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>3587</b> |

**Zest Members by Gender**

| Gender             | Total       |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Female             | 1997        |
| Male               | 1573        |
| *Unknown           | 17          |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>3587</b> |

**Zest Members by Age Group**

| Age Group          | Total       |
|--------------------|-------------|
| *00-15             | 7           |
| 16-24              | 551         |
| 25-34              | 605         |
| 35-44              | 572         |
| 45-54              | 657         |
| 55-59              | 233         |
| 60+                | 858         |
| Unknown            | 104         |
| <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>3587</b> |

\*All information categorised as Unknown is under review for rectification

Lee Chester, Manager