

# WILD TRAINING

MONTHLY ARTICLE FROM JAMES GRIFFITHS

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS - EDUCATION - PERSONAL TRAINING



THIS MONTH'S FEATURES

**The Unjust  
Leadership**

**Suppression of gyms  
when the nation  
needed them the  
most**

**Illness and the rich**

## UNFIT TO LEAD AN UNFIT COUNTRY

### HOW THE UK LEADERSHIP FAILED THE NATION

The leadership of this country, the government and the leaders of the fitness industry are failing the UK. The palpable message is about the importance of health, fitness and being active, and yet at every opportunity our leaders have failed to generate real change in the country's health.

At a policy level people are being incentivised to lead unhealthy lifestyles. With the Omicron hospitality and leisure grants being offered to what seems like every kind of business, except gyms, it's clear again that actually the fitness industry, most suited to help our country become

healthier, fitter and stronger, is being disregarded and actively restrained. Put me in a room with anyone involved with these decisions and I'll get to the bottom of why it's happening.

Why did restaurants like McDonalds get to pay 5% VAT in lockdown but gyms had to pay the standard pre lockdown VAT rate all the way through?

Why are casinos, nightclubs, cinemas, pubs, amusement parks, restaurants, soft play and cafes like Costa getting grants of up to £6000 per site, but gyms are getting nothing?

Why were gyms kept shut longer than non essential shops, pubs, restaurants and hairdressers? Based on test and trace data gyms made up 2.8% of common locations reported where people that had contracted the virus had visited. Compare that to supermarkets at 11.2%, secondary schools at 6.8% and pubs at 7.4%.

We've all suffered over the lockdowns and businesses have really had a hard time. My argument is not with other businesses in any way. My argument is with everyone involved in the decision and policy making process that has led me to this point, ready to fight.

**The government. The prime minister. Local councils. What were you all thinking? Eat out to help out. Genius. Crack on everyone. Go to restaurants with a higher transmission rate than gyms and get up to £10 off your meal.**

This cost the government £840 million, which was £340 million more than the treasury forecasted. Solid work there! Again, my argument isn't with the scheme designed to help restaurants get customers back in their doors after lockdown ended. My argument is why wasn't there a 'Get Fit to help out scheme'.

**Gyms don't get the same tax breaks as other businesses. Gyms didn't get to open until weeks after other businesses with higher transmission rates got to open.**

Now gyms aren't even getting grants awarded to lots of other hospitality and leisure businesses because of how the Omicron variant scared people into not going about their normal lives.

**'WE KNOW OBESITY AND POOR HEALTH MASSIVELY INCREASED THE SEVERITY OF THE CORONAVIRUS SO WHY WAS THERE NOT MORE DONE TO INCENTIVISE THE PUBLIC TO CHANGE THEIR LIFESTYLES AND GET HEALTHY.'**

Give me £840 million and I'd be able to help more people in the UK improve their health and maintain it than our leaders ever will. We need to change public opinion about why they exercise and how they value activity. To do that we need to create financial incentives to start getting fit, and stay fit.

Then there are the local councils.

*"You're not eligible for this grant but we might launch a discretionary scheme soon so keep an eye out for that and if you might qualify."*

Seriously businesses are closing up shop. Gyms are ready to support their communities get on track with managing their health, and the council's are deciding if they want to use any of these discretionary funds to help struggling gyms stay open.

**'IF WE DON'T ACT NOW THERE WILL BE NOTHING LEFT BUT ILLNESS AND A FEW RICH PEOPLE.'**

How about the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. What is it? Basically a replacement for Public Health England. That didn't work so wrap it up with a new title and carry on as normal!

*"We focus on improving the nation's health so that everyone can expect to live more of life in good health, and on leveling up health disparities to break the link between background and prospects for a healthy life."*

Where's the focus? What has been achieved by the government and these different offices? Improving the nation's health, you say. Levelling up health disparities you say. What have you actually done?

**The Black Report came out in 1980. An expert committee reported into health inequality chaired by Sir Douglas Black.**

**'THIS REPORT BASICALLY SAID THAT THE DEATH RATE FOR MEN IN LOWER SOCIAL CLASSES WAS DOUBLE THAT OF MEN IN HIGHER SOCIAL CLASSES, AND THE GAP WAS GROWING, NOT REDUCING AS EXPECTED.'**

The report showed the causes of these inequalities were so "deep rooted" that only a "major and wide-ranging programme" of public expenditure could alter the pattern. The health secretary at the time dismissed the committees advice. The suggested cost of £2 billion, which would be closer to £8.6 billion today, was seen as unrealistic at the time or in the future.

Just remember kids, the elected are focused on improving the nation's health so everyone can expect to live more of life in good health. None of this makes sense. None of the dots join up and no one is doing anything to change the facts. Well 40 years or so on and we have the pandemic and we still have more than double the mortality rate in

deprived areas. Nothing is changing. If anything, our country's ability to support the health of the people that live in it is getting worse.

A pandemic hasn't changed attitudes towards health. Global warming isn't changing minds around how we live fast enough. Capitalism can do one. An economy based on growth just doesn't work.

I'm ready to go to war with anyone that thinks it's right to have a few rich people and a lot of unhealthy people. It's not the right way to live now, or in the future.

You can't just keep growing. There are limited resources and dividing them up the way we currently are isn't working for the majority of people on the planet. Why are we allowing the minority to dictate the rules?

People in our country are living unhealthy lives. That sucks for them and it's bad for the country.

**'HEALTH INEQUALITY IS REAL AND IT'S KILLING LOTS OF PEOPLE. IT CAN BE STOPPED AND WE NEED TO STOP IT NOW.'**

I'm not smart enough to understand what goes on in these rooms where everyone nods and agrees that they are creating the right policies for the country to become a better place for all our futures. All I know is if I was in the room, no one would leave until I was sure their policies would help the most people lead healthy lives where they get to add value to their communities.

If someone tells me the country can't fund health reforms I'll fight until we find the money to fund it. These people that are more worried about GDP and how much money they have in their back pocket need to get out of the way of the health of our nation now.

I'm done with accepting it.