

London fitness firm bosses warn they are 'fighting for survival' due to Plan B and call on PM for support

London fitness bosses have penned an open letter to the [Prime Minister](#) warning that their [industry](#) is "now on a knife edge fighting for survival" after seeing class attendance slashed by [Plan B](#) and [Omicron fears](#).

In the letter, bosses of boutique chains including Barry's, Psycle and Kobox called for [support](#) to be put place in time for the sector's usually key January and February trading months. They said that otherwise many of the capital's health and fitness [businesses](#) may "go [bust](#) through no fault of their own".

Measures demanded include grants, a moratorium on evictions, reduction in VAT and the reintroduction of a flexi-furlough scheme.

Sandy Macaskill, co-founder of Barry's UK, told the Standard he has had to close three studios early since the Prime Minister and Chief Medical Officer's last address over the variant.

He argued fitness firms need equivalent support to the hospitality sector, which currently has VAT reduced to 12.5%.

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“It is truly staggering that the government does not seem to understand how affected our industry has been.” Macaskill said.

Robert Rowland, co-founder of United Fitness Brands, behind Boom Cycle, KOB0X and Barrecore, said: “Q1 is up to 30% of annual cash receipts for fitness businesses in the UK.

“There is a lockdown in all but name. Bookings have plummeted up to 60% at studios in commercial locations from where they were before the work from home order was introduced.

“Advising people to work from home rather than the office empties out entire sections of London where businesses still have to pay rent and staff or let staff go if no business is possible.”

Plan B implemented a “work from home if you can” order from December 13. London pub bosses have closed sites early for Christmas as footfall in office-centred locations plummeted as a result, and have also called for support.