

Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP
Secretary of State
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

30 June 2020

Dear Mr Dowden

RE: REOPENING OF SWIMMING POOLS

Since the disappointing announcement from the Prime Minister on 23 June that swimming pools in England must remain closed, despite the further easing of lockdown restrictions, Swim England launched the #OpenOurPools campaign calling for an urgent review of this decision.

In less than a week the below petition has now been signed by over 47,000 people the length and breadth of the country who are desperate to get back in the water, demonstrating the strength of feeling on this issue.

“Swimming is an activity enjoyed by millions of people in England each year. Swimming has been proven to be hugely beneficial for both physical and mental wellbeing, yet swimming pools remain shut in England. This is despite guidance from Swim England and swimming pool operators demonstrating how pools can reopen safely.

Swimming pools are hubs of physical activity in communities up and down the country, particularly for many people who may struggle to be active on land due to a range of health conditions.

We, the undersigned, call on the Prime Minister to urgently review the decision not to allow swimming pools to reopen and to announce a date when pools may open again without delay.”

Swim England’s detailed Returning to the Pool guidance has shown that pools can be well-managed spaces that are safe environments for users.

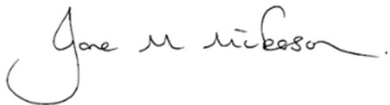
However, swimming pool operators need adequate time to be able to bring their pools back up to operational standards and are unable to plan effectively in the absence of a reopening date and accompanying guidance from the government.

Furthermore, without urgent additional financial support, hundreds of swimming pools up and down the country will not be able to reopen, even when the government declares it safe to do so. This would exacerbate health inequalities and deprive millions of people of the opportunity to enjoy the many benefits that being active in the water provides. It is therefore vital that this support is made available for swimming pools.

I would be most grateful for a response to this petition which I may share with the individuals who have signed the petition and the wider swimming community.

I also repeat Swim England's offer to contribute to the taskforce the Prime Minister announced.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane M Nickerson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

Jane M Nickerson
Chief Executive, Swim England