

News story: Gyms merger has chance to avoid in-depth investigation

David Lloyd must resolve concerns in Brighton and Brentwood to avoid further investigation of its purchase of 16 Virgin Active gyms.

Following an [initial investigation into the merger](#), the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has found that the 2 Virgin Active gyms in these areas compete closely with the nearby David Lloyd gyms, and would face limited competition from other operators after the merger.

The CMA is concerned that this loss of competition could result in higher prices or worse deals being offered to gym users in these areas.

It is therefore going to refer the merger for an in-depth phase 2 investigation by an independent group of CMA panel members unless David Lloyd is able to offer proposals that resolve the competition concerns by 26 May 2017.

In the other areas affected, the CMA has found no competition concerns from the merger.

News story: Just Eat/Hungryhouse merger referred for in-depth investigation

Just Eat's acquisition of Hungryhouse has been referred for an in-depth merger investigation.

Earlier this month, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) said that it would [refer the deal for an in-depth investigation](#) because of concerns that the merger could lead to worse terms for restaurants using either company. However, Just Eat was first given the chance to offer ways of addressing these concerns.

Just Eat has not offered these and so the merger will now be referred for an in-depth, known as phase 2, investigation by an independent group of CMA panel members. The deadline for the final decision is 2 November 2017.

Both companies provide online takeaway ordering services. These give restaurants the opportunity to reach a wide pool of people, as well as offer

customers the convenience of choosing from a large range of takeaway providers in one place.

Following its initial investigation into the merger, the CMA has found that the companies are close competitors because of the similarity of their service and their broad geographical coverage.

Further information about the investigation will be published on the [case page](#).

Speech: Future Education – A Father's Perspective

Education is an increasingly complicated business, and you are all experts, which left me wondering how I should approach this speech to you today;

Should I come to you as Paul Rennie, DHM Malaysia, and regional head of the British Government's ASEAN Education campaign, spouting numbers and stats about futures and impacts;

Or should I draw from my experience as a governor of a leading international school in Kuala Lumpur, and explain how the market is shifting around us, and the challenges that governors face to read the tea leaves;

But in the end I decided it would probably be far more useful to talk to you about none of that, and instead talk to you straightforwardly as the father of a six-year old daughter. Because, as someone who hopes to be a customer of your services for the next decade and a bit, I can tell you that I am utterly terrified about the future;

Now this is not some dystopian monologue about global warming, deforestation, or the extinction of species – though all of them are things my daughter has already lobbied me on. Instead it is a recognition of the competing demands that education is going to place on my daughter, and on me, and ultimately on you;

I will start with my first favourite statistic – that 90% of the jobs that my daughter is likely to apply for by 2032 don't exist yet. Think back to the six-year olds of 2003. How many of their parents planned for them to be social media strategists, app designers, iphone engineers – how many of them thought they would get a nice stable job at Nokia;

And those trends of globalisation are not limited to jobs that don't exist yet;

I look down the road, and see that globalisation is going to be pushing work

up, as well as down. Mega companies will become even more mega, but at the same time harder to get into. While the market for the self-employed entrepreneur, these job makers not job takers, is going to explode;

Work will become more cross cultural and more international, which means a boy like me, who grew up, went to school, and went to university within five miles of the hospital he was born in, getting a job with an international company, let alone the Foreign Ministry will seem like an absurdity. (Joke though I know Scotland remains on the brink of being a foreign country to the UK);

The ability to scale at speed will continue. It took Ford Motor Company a little over a century to sell 350 million cars; Apple sold 1 billion iPhones in nine years. That, frankly, isn't a world I grew up in;

What I would call 'Combinativity', the ability to merge different ideas and product together, is likely to become more important than pure creativity, and that will require a broad understanding of the world – but if you don't specialise, how will you ever get ahead?

Yet what I don't believe will change is people. In fact those people skills are likely to become more important as automation becomes more prevalent. But would we give up on learning French because we perfected the Babel Fish (as only Hitchikers Guide to the Galaxy fans would understand);

So where does all of that leave my daughter – where does that leave schools? Because one of the biggest challenges in the sector is risk aversion, which is something that I absolutely share as a parent – and you probably need to help me not to;

My father, for example, went on a journey that involved going to school five days a week; sitting a series of individual exams; going to university and then applying to a company for a job;

I went on a journey that involved going to school; sitting individual exams with a bit of individual course work; going to university (to sit more individual exams) and then applying to a company;

My daughter is going to school right now, and at the end of the pathway I still see A-Levels, or IBs, and then University. Because grades matter, and that is what I demand, and what schools live and die by, but is that enough?

Well it's not enough for me as a parent, which is why I begin to make extortionate demands of you. I want, obviously, straight As, but I also want you to have a drama studio that could host a west-end musical; sports facilities that could hold the 2020 Olympics; and a design and technology centre that could put a probe on the moon.

It is a virtual arms race at international schools, to the point where even Universities are struggling to keep their tech current with what the kids are used to. And it's all because I want you to keep doing the traditional stuff, but also help her to find her niche;

And that is a challenge for me as a parent, in letting go and trusting schools. One headmaster told me that 90% of everything we know about the human brain we have learned in the last ten years. That's staggering, but it also post-dates everything about my school experience that I rely on to help my daughter;

Most of you will be familiar with the phonics system of learning to read. I wasn't. I learned to read via a series of little slips of paper with words written on them, kept in an old tobacco tin (spelling smelled like Virginia Gold Leaf until I was ten). It was a huge leap of faith to go with phonics – but it is incredible;

And then there are topics now that I don't even understand, like coding. I always knew the day would come when I lost track of what my daughter was studying, I have never been much of a scientist so if it came to GCSE Chemistry she was on her own. But to have you six year old daughter teaching you how to use coding programme Light Bot on the iPad, well, I thought I would have more time. (In fact, I got cocky after that and tried to do some of the Year 5 coding activities on the EducationCity website – I got 27%);

She needs those skills, she needs these new ways of learning, but how do schools help to take me as a parent on that journey?

If someone had said to my parents when I was at school they were going to put me up for an exam in game design, they would have wondered what I was going to do with a degree in PacMan, and yet today the games industry is worth more than Hollywood;

There is also the challenge of the cultural shift, which I get glimmers of being here in an international environment, but those in the UK probably don't see as clearly.

There is little doubt in my mind that the century belongs to Asia, if nothing else they have demographics on their side. There are 140m people under the age of 14 in ASEAN alone, and another 100m yet to be born by 2030. They will be going for those global jobs at the mega corporations too;

Even at six, frankly even in pre-school, it was a startling revelation to see what people have termed 'tiger parenting' in action. I'd heard of it, but when you see it in practise, it is both terrifying, but also incredible to see what some children can achieve with that level of investment;

And while it is absolutely not what I want for my child, I realise that as long as the main determinant of University entrance are still the grades, then that is what my daughter is up against. I find that I have become a bit more like that myself, though probably better described as dwarf leopard than Tiger – but is that right? Should schools be taking a view?

Because when you look to places like Malaysia, you can see the churn in the education sector in all its glory. You have long established schools, and new entrants. For profit, not for profit, and even a few in between. And that innovation in the market means schools have to keep up;

Like in the UK, where around 150,000 children will sit GCSE French, compared to about 4,000 doing Mandarin or Cantonese. Is that imbalance because schools there have carefully thought about the future needs of a British work force when set against growing export markets; or is because we have lots of French teachers, and it's what their parents learned?

But while it may be easier for new entrant schools to ditch 'traditions' there is also the danger of getting caught by fad-ism. Just as someone once described a leader with no followers as simply a person taking a walk, so if you are pioneers in every new field it might turn out to be no field at all – just ask all the people who have big collections of laser discs;

And obviously as a parent I want you to do both. I want a massive French department, as well as a fully staffed Chinese department, and what about Spanish while we're at it. Because I want you to give her all the skills to be at the cutting edge when she graduates, but I don't want you to bet her future on it in case she gets it wrong;

It is impossible, and I know every time as a Governor when teaching colleagues come with the next big idea, that schools will have to do all of the above without putting a single penny on tuition fees;

But I also have more fundamental worries as a parent about my daughter's education, particularly in the international sphere;

Multiculturalism is amazing, but does becoming a global citizen risk becoming a citizen of nowhere? I didn't leave Edinburgh until I was twenty one. My daughter is half British, half Dutch, was born in India, and now lives in Malaysia. I have a very clear idea of where I am from, does she, will she, or is that an absurd thing to wonder about? One thing is for sure, I can't draw on personal experience to help, so do I rely on the teachers who will be steering her in four year chunks as I move around the world – is that your role?

And I worry about the digital and online world, because I know I will always lag in my understanding of it, like my parents did, as teachers probably do. As a tech thinker once told me, if you describe a technology as disruptive, it shows you are already too old to understand it – people who disrupt aren't disrupting, they are just living. And because nothing ever dies online, can she have fun at school, and yet still start as an adult with a clean slate, as I did?

Which merges into the digital world blurring the lines between home and school, particularly in the future. As her personal life and school life merge into a single iPad, will she ever be able to switch off? And in that space, does it mean she can now take her bullying home with her, and nobody will ever know? Maybe by the time she is fourteen there will be teachers around her who have personal experience of being trolled by cyber bullies and can help, but I suspect few of your teachers could claim that – but does it matter? Is that what your Year 12s and 13s are there for, to bridge the gap?

And, obviously, I worry about the cost of all of this, in a world of

shrinking budgets and resources, will I be able to keep her in the schools that are offering her all these opportunities, or will you end up pricing me out of the market, as you keep up with my demands?

There is a lot ahead of you, the margins of success become ever smaller at A-Grade; there is more competition than ever; the reputational risks are only growing; and to meet all the demands I've listed you're going to need a body of staff that is both multi-talented and specialised – who is going to train them for you, and what will they cost? Sadly, we will not all be investors in Snap to pay for it all.

But in spite of these worries, the final thought I would leave you with is my huge pride, and belief, in the British education model I see in international schools today (and I would say that even if my government weren't paying me to). I think it does have tradition as well as modernity; I think it puts a lot of trust in its teachers, rather than wrote structures; and I think it gives children a wide exposure, but still creates a sense of belonging.

I wish you every success in the conference, and look forward to fruitful discussions. You have great challenges, and even greater responsibilities, and parents like me will need your help more than ever in the future.

Speech: “On too many occasions this year, Bosnia’s leaders have returned to the divisions of the past instead of delivering for the future.”

Statement by Stephen Hickey, Counsellor at the UK Mission to the United Nations, on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thank you Mr President.

Let me join others in welcoming back Dr Inzko to the Council and by thanking him for his report and briefing. You have the United Kingdom's continued support in your role as High Representative and we're grateful for all the work that you do for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people.

Looking back over the reporting period, it's clear that 2017 was full of promise for Bosnia and Herzegovina; the EU accession path lay ahead, finally unblocked after years of inertia, and the reform agenda had begun to deliver the jobs and growth that so many cried out for when they took to the streets in 2014.

And yet, as the High Representative's report makes clear, narrow interests, whether personal or political, have instead set back progress this year and dampened the prospects and potential of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On too many occasions this year, Bosnia's leaders have returned to the divisions of the past instead of delivering for the future. These setbacks have only served to distract attention away from much needed progress on the reform agenda; reforms that would promote greater security, stability and prosperity across the country.

We saw this clearly in the celebrations in the Republika Srpska on 9th January. The referendum on the National Day was in clear defiance of the Bosnian Constitutional Court's authority and in direct challenge to the Dayton Peace Agreement. The participation of Serb members of the Bosnian armed forces raised tensions even further, and underscored the urgent need to implement the Defence Review.

In addition, the continued efforts of Bosnian Croat politicians to advocate for electoral reform this year have also distracted attention from the reform agenda and much needed socio-economic reforms. We've seen economic legislation blocked and delayed because leaders have chosen to act in the interests of one of the constituent peoples, and not in the interests of all of Bosnia and Herzegovina's people.

And finally, we've seen the Bosniak member of the Presidency undermine trust in the ruling coalition by unilaterally and unsuccessfully launching a revision of the legal case accusing Serbia of complicity in wartime genocide. This sort of backward looking divisive politicking has no place in 2017.

Mr President,

There is still time for Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders to deliver this year. Through the reform agenda, they have a clear map charting the way ahead. It's a path that will lead to growth and stability, but one that needs renewed commitment and engagement. It's a path that remains central to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU membership; an aspiration shared by so many across the country.

And yet it's still a path not yet taken, and that has not been without cost. Over \$75 million of IMF funding was delayed last week by the failure to adopt the law on excise duties. Over \$1 billion of further IMF funding is now at risk.

As my Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson made clear during his visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina last month, it is long past time for Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders to work together in order to deliver the reforms that will enable the country to compete and thrive in the modern global economy.

We've seen in the past months that they can find common ground. The successful re-run of elections in Stolac show that the authorities can deliver for the people. But it's also clear that until national interests trump narrow interests, stability in Bosnia will not be entrenched, and our

concerns about the political and security situation will remain.

Because continued divisive rhetoric and repeated political crises only put pressure on the country and distract from much needed reforms. So we share the High Representative's assessment that the EUFOR mission, with an executive mandate, remains vital. We will therefore support the retention of this crucial asset when its mandate is up for renewal in November.

Thank you.

Speech: The Ambassador's speech at the Queen's Birthday Party in Argentina

Good evening to you all. It is a pleasure to welcome so many representatives of the political, social, economic and cultural life of Argentina to the Residence. Your presence is a true reflection of the extensive links that the British Embassy has developed in Argentina.

Several of you have heard me say that no other country in the whole of Latin America can claim to have had through the years a more intense all-round relationship with the UK than Argentina. We can speak of railways, football, immigration, the British Hospital, music, trade, academic exchanges, tourism and great number of other areas in which Argentine and British people have much to share. We are two proud, independent countries with two warm, important peoples.

A good example of this relationship is this building where we are celebrating The Queen's birthday tonight, the Madero-Unzué Palace. It is a unique piece of architecture intertwining styles and stories of Argentine and British citizens. This year marks the 100th anniversary of its construction by British architects Bassett-Smith and Colclutt, and we are pleased to have here with us today the descendants of the family that lived in this Residence before it was purchased by the UK Government in 1947. Members of the Royal Family, including Prince Charles and Diana, and top artists like the Rolling Stones or Coldplay have all been here, and the place was even declared a heritage listed building by the Argentine Government.

Some people have told me that the Embassy has been a little quiet over the past few years, but what I can tell you for certain is that we are going to get out there and engage with Argentina. There is much work to do. We are coming back. Britain is back.

This rich bilateral relationship has gained great momentum in the past year, as reflected in the joint statement that both Governments signed last September, the ministerial-level visits, the visits to the UK by multi-party groups of deputies and senators, and the creation of parliamentary friendship

groups. I am very grateful for the presence of deputies and senators here tonight. As I said before, this Embassy is constantly looking to open new channels and build new bridges with this country's Government and society. This is a combined effort between our Embassy and my colleague and friend Carlos Sersale, Argentine Ambassador in London.

We are pleased to see that these efforts have not remained mere wishes and that we are able to show concrete results, including joint scientific research agreements, anti-corruption co-operation projects and UK Export Finance's decision to grant a package of up to £1,000 to finance trade with Argentina, to mention only a few. At the same time, we see more and more opportunities to build bridges between our peoples, for instance through an increased number of Chevening scholars, exchange opportunities in sports like rugby and football – we are going to have the England rugby team here at the Embassy in June – or the launch of new low-cost flights between Buenos Aires and London, because, in my view, the important thing in relations between countries is not just the relationship between the two Governments but also people-to-people links.

At a time when uncertainty reigns in many parts of the world, it is important that each country should play its part, open up to the world and not shut themselves off, aiming for fair, inclusive development. We are very pleased that Argentina is playing a leading role in the international community and getting ready in the coming months to host a WLO conference, the WTO ministerial meeting and hold the presidency of the G-20 and other international forums.

We are going to work shoulder to shoulder with our colleagues in Argentina, looking for opportunities to build a fairer, more inclusive world.

Although we are focused on the future, we will not ignore the past. 2017 marks 35 years of a very painful event for our peoples. It is important to take into account and show proper respect for all those affected by the conflict, not only veterans and their families but also, in particular, the people for whom the Islands are their home.

We wish to pay proper tribute to the fallen, in a true spirit of reconciliation. It is worth highlighting the progress made in the process of identification of Argentine soldiers buried in Darwin Cemetery, with the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross, under an agreement signed by our Governments.

I am particularly grateful for the presence at this event of authorities from the Commission of Families of the Fallen and representatives of South Atlantic conflict veterans' organisations.

In the same spirit of reconciliation we will, in a few minutes, hear the Royal Marines Band play the Argentine and British national anthems. The Band members have come specially from the UK to take part in this event, an initiative for which I thank Captain Andy Hancock, who is about to finish his tour of duty as the Embassy's Defence Attaché.

I would also like to give very special thanks to all the sponsors who have made this celebration possible. You will see our sponsors here tonight, their support is very important to us. And I would also like to thank all members of the Residence and Embassy team who have worked very hard over the past few months to make sure that you enjoy the event tonight.

This is a very important day to us. It is the day when we celebrate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's birthday. It represents our National Day and it is also an opportunity to pay tribute to an exemplary Head of State.

Lately, several people have spoken to me about the story of Queen Elizabeth's reign and I have concluded that everyone has watched The Crown. The TV series is not bad, but let me tell you that I had the opportunity to meet the Queen on three occasions and my admiration for her has grown over the years. The monarchy has had the ability to change in order to identify itself with the society it represents. Through her example, the Queen has shown an interest and a sense of devotion and service that very few can match. She has now reigned for over 65 years and continues to work for her country, day after day.

So I am now going to invite you to make a toast to the Heads of State and the peoples of our two countries. I personally have chosen to toast the Argentine President with a glass of Malbec and the Queen with a genuine single malt Scotch. I trust you will understand that this is one of the sacrifices that diplomats sometimes have to make.

Thank you for your patience. I was not going to speak, but my colleagues said that I was going to have a captive audience, and so you have been. Thank you all for coming. Enjoy the party!