

Ambitious couple develop flagship Puddle Ducks site

Liz and Phil Gabriel own and manage Puddle Ducks baby and child swimming school franchises in Nottinghamshire and North Leicestershire. In 2017 they also bought and relaunched The Key Health Club in Nottingham, as a flagship home for Puddle Ducks in the area.



An ambitious, professional couple, neither Phil nor Liz had experience of teaching swimming when they signed on the dotted line with Puddle Ducks back in 2010 but they knew a great brand when they saw it. In the years since setting up, they have been instrumental in helping the brand grow into the top-rated national franchise that it is today and they, in turn, have received the support to grow their business beyond all recognition.

“Nottinghamshire was our first territory,” said Liz, “I launched with 15 customers and now routinely teach 1,000 babies and children every week. It was quite a culture shock in the early days because I had come from a long career as a buyer for a national pharmacy chain. Everything about my working day was different, so I didn’t mind starting small but I always knew that I wanted to grow the business and that I would, with the fantastic support of the head office team. That’s why I chose Puddle Ducks in the first place, though it was a much smaller company at the time my professional experience had taught me to spot a good brand when I saw one. I knew we could all go far together.”

“These days I’m no longer teaching; Puddle Ducks teacher training is second to none, so there is no shortage of excellent teachers eager to get in the pool. Following the first few years of ‘all hands on deck’ I went back to being able to really use my unique business skills to develop the company.”

Phil left a career in technical sales to join the business in 2014, when the couple took the decision to expand into a second territory. Three years later they were able to buy and redevelop The Key Health Club.

Already the health club’s biggest client, running 63 classes a week in the pool, the Puddle Ducks owners and now health club owners, have created a fantastic hub for family and fitness activities in their community. Puddle Ducks baby and children’s swimming classes run daily at the club, as well as at other locations across Nottingham, Mansfield, Loughborough and Leicester.

<https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/business/health-club-reopens-after-refurbishment-743510>