How Gymbox charged me over £500 for nothing

Here is my story that might save you a few hundred pounds. Please share this or tag your friends who are members or might want to be members at Gymbox.

I was a member at Gymbox since I moved to London 2,5 years ago. They charged me £86 per month (access to their Holborn branch, with towels) over the years. As their rates are not advertised, they can not be seen neither on their website, nor in their gyms, it took me 2,5 years to accidentally find out that other members now pay much less. For what I was charged £86, others paid £63. That is without any special discount. A £23 difference per month adds up to quite a bit over the years.

There are different types packages on offer giving you access to their Holborn branch, depending on how long you sign up for. 63 GBP if you sign up for 18 months (remember, I spent 2,5 years with them). What I found particularly audacious is that even if you opted for the most expensive package, currently their highest price at Gymbox Holborn is £83. So while currently, the most expensive monthly package on offer is £83, for me - after being a member for 2,5 years - Gymbox happily kept charging more.

In total, I estimate that Gymbox charged me somewhere around £500-700, depending in how you count.

How did this happen? Two key things:

- 1. Prices at Gymbox dropped over the years and it is as I was told "not in Gymbox's policy to contact members" to let them know that new rates are available that are better than what members are currently paying.
- 2. I made the mistake of thinking that Gymbox would let me know if there were better rates available for me. I initially signed up for a 3 months membership as I wasn't sure where in London I will live. Gymbox used this initial rate for the rest of the 2,5 years I was a member with them. When I passed the 18 months mark, they didn't send me a email, didn't give me a call to remind me that I am a total idiot paying a higher rate. They kept quiet and carried on charging me £86.

When I complained, Gymbox showed what their business is really like.

When in Feb 2016 I realized what was happening, I complained to Gymbox and asked them to consider some form of compensation. I thought they could easily offer a loyal long-term member a few free months and a their best rate after that without having to sign a new contract.

First I was assured that HQ will look at my complaint and I should wait. And then nothing happened. Despite my repeated attempts over the phone and in email to get a response, I was ignored for a month. Finally Gymbox customer service responded and told me that they can not offer anything, but I can sign up for a new contract just like anyone who walks into the gym

today. We went back and forth for a while as I honestly couldn't believe that it can be right for a business built on the loyalty of members to treat long-term customers like this. I was wrong. In the process I also realized that Gymbox can not compensate me. They must be doing this with too many members. If they compensate me, they'd need to compensate all the others too that are unknowingly paying more than what they could.

As Gymbox did not offer any remedy and I did not want to be a member at a gym that treats members like they treated me, on the 7th of April 2016, I closed my email to them by asking them to end my membership. And here comes another outrageous episode. I was told, that according to their cancellation policies, they can terminate my membership by the end of May. If I had explicitly told them that I am quitting by the 1st of April, I could have ended my membership by the end of April. So because I asked them a week late, they charged me another month for another £86. I argued that they should consider that they ignored me for a full month and delayed this process with not responding to my complaints. So after overcharging me for years, after ignoring me for a month, they could really show a tiny bit of flexibility and allow me to be 7 days late with my request to cancel my membership. They didn't.

What can you do?

Please share this story with your friends and help me prove that in the age of social media companies can't get away with this without being exposed. They can't keep members in the dark about how much their best rates are, so they can make some extra profit.

If you are already a member at Gymbox, make sure you regularly check their rates. You'll need to call and ask.

If you are not a Gymbox, I suggest to get in shape somewhere else. If the above is not enough to deter you, here is another reason: With my £86 membership, I struggled to get a place in their classes. For a Monday evening class, booking opens at 7:00am on a Sunday. And the popular ones are fully booked by 7:05am. So for £86 a month, you have an alarm going off at 7am on weekends, weekdays, so you can book a class. I'd say that's not a good deal even for the lucky members that got a better rate than myself.

For the sake of full transparency, I pasted all my email exchanges to a public document here:

https://goo.gl/czMyC9

(see below)

------ Forwarded message ------

From: Richard Schuster <**@gmail.com>

Date: 17 May 2016 at 11:50

Subject: Re: Your Gymbox Membership

To: Membership Accounts <membershipaccounts@gymbox.co.uk>

Hi Harriet,

i wanted to follow up to let you know that to show good will on my side to settle our dispute i now paid the 86 GBP you asked me to. Having said that I still maintain that Gymbox owes me about 400 GBP that I have been overcharged by in the last 2,5 years and now the 86 GBP that you requested me to pay despite the fact that Gymbox caused a month delay in my complaint process.

Best.

Richard

----- Forwarded message ------

From: **Gymbox** <support@gymbox.zendesk.com>

Date: 21 April 2016 at 09:37

Subject: [Gymbox] : Ticket 10833 solved To: Richard Schuster <**@gmail.com>

##- Please type your reply above this line -##

Your Gymbox query (Ticket number: 10833) has now been solved.

If you have any further comments, please reply directly to this email to re-open the

ticket.

Sarah Clarke (Gymbox)

_Apr 21, 09:37

Hi Richard,

Thank you for your feedback regarding our classes and booking system. We do take all member feedback on board therefore I will pass this onto the studio team.

In regards to our booking system, we do hope you can understand that we have tried a few different ways and our current booking system has proven the best way for us at Gymbox. We do understand that at some of our Gymbox locations classes do get booked up quite quickly in the mornings, however we do often have members end up cancelling these bookings throughout the day, or around 2 hours prior to the class starting so I can only advise you keep an eye out throughout the day if you don't manage to book first thing in the morning.

Again, I do apologise that you feel this way and that Gymbox haven't provided a fair service, however as previously explained, unfortunately there is nothing further in which I can help with.

Kind regards,

Sarah

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Richard Schuster <**@gmail.com>

Date: 19 April 2016 at 17:04

Subject: Re: [Gymbox]: Ticket 10833 solved

To: Gymbox <support+id10833@gymbox.zendesk.com>

Hi Sarah.

Thank you for your response, very kind. Please note that due to the fact that following our initial email exchange I haven't heard back from Gymbox for a month - despite my repeated attempts to have my concerns addressed - I consider that time to count against my termination period.

Also, I thought I share one more thing.

I find it appalling that - while charging 86 GBP a month - your classes fill up just a few minutes after 7am, within 5-10 minutes after booking opens. When I joined, I explained to your sales person that I'm choosing Gymbox specifically for the evening classes you have. He assured me that it's not difficult to get into any of them.

The reality is that I need to set my alarm for 7am Sunday morning to book a class for Monday, as the classes get fully booked by 7.05-7.10am. It's a running joke among members that if you oversleep 10-20 minutes, you have no chance to book. So I pay 86 GBP per month and need to wake up 7am on Sundays to be able to get a place in your classes.

I read your Terms and Conditions and wasn't surprised to find out that it has no mention of what you as a gym need to provide for members, so I guess not providing a decent service would also not give me sufficient ground to terminate my membership with you.

All the Best, Richard
Forwarded message From: Gymbox <support@gymbox.zendesk.com> Date: 19 April 2016 at 15:19 Subject: [Gymbox] : Ticket 10833 solved To: Richard Schuster <**@gmail.com></support@gymbox.zendesk.com>
##- Please type your reply above this line -## Your Gymbox query (Ticket number: 10833) has now been solved. If you have any further comments, please reply directly to this email to re-open the ticket.
Sarah Clarke (Gymbox) Apr 19, 15:19
Hi Richard,
Thank you for your follow up response, however unfortunately as previously explained, we are unable to help any further on this occasion.
Kind regards,

Sarah

----- Forwarded message ------

From: Richard Schuster <**@gmail.com>

Date: 18 April 2016 at 16:33

Subject: Re: [Gymbox]: Ticket 10283 solved

To: Gymbox <support+id10283@gymbox.zendesk.com>

Hi Sara.

the fact is that my initial complaint was ignored for a month. I emailed and called multiple times and nothing happened for a month, despite that I was assured that your HQ will follow up. What I'm now asking for is you to allow me a 7 day delay in requesting to cancel my membership, as a way to compensate for a month of delay on your end. It's true that I responded with some delay, but that by no means justifies that you ignored my complaints for a month.

The truth is that it's down to you to decide whether you'd like to show some flexibility on this and let me cancel the membership at the end of April. I imagine it takes a few clicks in your system. Is it really how much Gymbox values a customer that spent 2,5 years as a Gymbox member and paid over 2,000 pounds in fees that in a case like this and you don't feel the need to make a gesture of good will?

Best.

Richard

----- Forwarded message ------

From: **Gymbox** <support@gymbox.zendesk.com>

Date: 13 April 2016 at 14:53

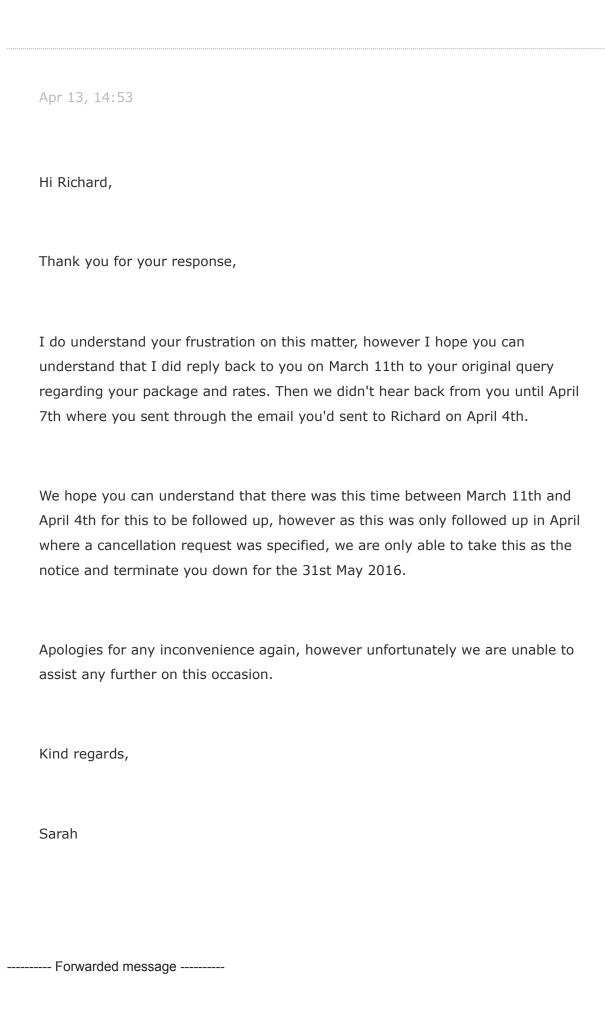
Subject: [Gymbox] : Ticket 10283 solved To: Richard Schuster <**@gmail.com>

##- Please type your reply above this line -##

Your Gymbox query (Ticket number: 10283) has now been solved.

If you have any further comments, please reply directly to this email to re-open the ticket.

Sarah Clarke (Gymbox)



From: Richard Schuster <**@gmail.com>

Date: 13 April 2016 at 14:33

Subject: Re: [Gymbox] : Ticket 10283 solved

To: Gymbox <support+id10283@gymbox.zendesk.com>

Hi Sarah,

my point is that my initial complaint was not addressed for a month. If you had responded to my complaint in a timely manner, we would have got to the end of our discussion a month earlier and I would have been able to cancel my membership a month earlier. I honestly don't understand why you're not showing the smallest level of flexibility on this.

Best,

Richard

----- Forwarded message ------

From: **Gymbox** <support@gymbox.zendesk.com>

Date: 13 April 2016 at 11:15

Subject: [Gymbox] : Ticket 10283 solved To: Richard Schuster <**@gmail.com>

##- Please type your reply above this line -##

Your Gymbox query (Ticket number: 10283) has now been solved.

If you have any further comments, please reply directly to this email to re-open the ticket.

Sarah Clarke (Gymbox)

_Apr 13, 11:15

Hi Richard,

Unfortunately we would not be able to honour an earlier termination for you as the original ticket you raised didn't specify anything about the termination of your membership.

The earliest you requested to terminate your membership was within April and therefore the earliest we are able to process this termination for you is for the 31st May 2016.

Apologies for any inconvenience, however we do have to adhere to our cancellation policy.

Kind regards,

Sarah

----- Forwarded message ------

From: Richard Schuster < **@gmail.com>

Date: 11 April 2016 at 15:52

Subject: Re: [Gymbox]: Ticket 10283 solved

To: Gymbox <support+id10283@gymbox.zendesk.com>

Hi Sarah,

is there a chance you could make an exception and cancel my membership at the end of April considering the below:

When I first emailed Gymbox about my concerns, I was told on the 10th of Feb that my complaint had been forwarded to head office and I should wait to hear back. I have not heard back from you, so I emailed again on the 29th of Feb. As I have not heard back again, I submitted my complaint through your website on the 9th of March. That's a full month delay in the process of this complaint.

I pasted my original email exchanges with Steph (holborn@gymbox.co.uk) below for your reference.

Also, I've been paying 86 GBP for a membership others pay 23 GBP less and would really appreciate some flexibility on your side.

Best, Richard ----- Forwarded message ------

From: **Gymbox** <support@gymbox.zendesk.com>

Date: 11 April 2016 at 11:21

Subject: [Gymbox] : Ticket 10283 solved To: Richard Schuster <**@gmail.com>

##- Please type your reply above this line -##

Your Gymbox query (Ticket number: 10283) has now been solved.

If you have any further comments, please reply directly to this email to re-open the

ticket.

Sarah Clarke (Gymbox)

Apr 11, 11:21

Hi Richard,

Thank you for your response, however unfortunately the earliest we are able to terminate your membership for is the 31st May 2016.

This is due to our cancellation policy in that we do require one full calendar months notice effective from the 1st of the following month, and therefore as you have requested to terminate on the 7th April, the full calendar months notice isn't effective until 1st May, meaning the earliest we can terminate your membership down for is the 31st May 2016.

Kind regards,

Sarah

----- Forwarded message ------

From: Richard Schuster <**@gmail.com>

Date: 8 April 2016 at 17:26

Subject: Re: [Gymbox] : Ticket 10283 solved

To: Gymbox <support+id10283@gymbox.zendesk.com>

Hey Sarah,

thanks. Could you please terminate my membership as soon as possible, but latest by the of the end

of April? Richard

----- Forwarded message ------

From: **Gymbox** <support@gymbox.zendesk.com>

Date: 8 April 2016 at 17:20

Subject: [Gymbox] : Ticket 10283 solved To: Richard Schuster <**@gmail.com>

##- Please type your reply above this line -##

Your Gymbox query (Ticket number: 10283) has now been solved.

If you have any further comments, please reply directly to this email to re-open the

ticket.

Sarah Clarke (Gymbox)

Apr 8, 17:20

Hi Richard,

Thank you for your follow up response,

I have spoken with Richard who has asked me to respond back to yourself, and

unfortunately, whilst we have taken on board all of your comments and

feedback, unfortunately I can only repeat what has already been explained to

you in my previous email.

As I understand that this was not the outcome you were hoping for, please do

let me know if you would like me to place a termination on your membership.

We would be able to process this for the 31st May 2016 if you would like to do

SO.

Please confirm and I will be able to process for you,

Kind Regards,

Sarah

----- Forwarded message ------

From: Richard Schuster < **@gmail.com>

Date: 7 April 2016 at 11:44

Subject: Re: [Gymbox] : Ticket 8553 solved

To: Gymbox <support+id8553@gymbox.zendesk.com>

Hi Sarah, thank you for your response.

I still believe that this cannot be the right thing to do as a business. It certainly wouldn't make you look good in the eyes of other gymgoers. I sent a note to Richard Hilton directly and tried to explain why I think your policies in this regard are wrong. I'd appreciate if you could take a look - I pasted it below.

If you still say that all I can do is count my losses and sign up for a new membership, I'll rather chose to end my membership with Gymbox and go elsewhere.

Looking forward to hearing back from you.

Best, Richard

----- Forwarded message ------

From: Richard Schuster <schusterricsi@gmail.com>

Date: 4 April 2016 at 16:45

Subject: How Gymbox overcharged me 100s of pounds - feedback from a long-time member

To: richardh@gymbox.co.uk

Dear Richard,

I wanted to send you a note directly as I believe that there is something wrong with your business practices, which you might not be aware of. I'm Richard Schuster, a long-time member at Gymbox Holborn in the evening and a PR manager at a global tech company during the day. If I was a PR manager at Gymbox and was responsible for your company's reputation, I'd certainly want to be alerted of what I think is flaw in your your policies.

To make a long story short, I've been a member at Gymbox for about 2.5 years and have been paying 86 GBP per month. I recently found out that I pay significantly more than other members do for the same. If I walked into your gym today and signed up for an 18 months membership, I'd be charged 63 GBP per month for the same package (single gym access, towels included). I'm currently being charged 23 GBP more each month - that's after being a member for over 30 months.

I raised this issue and asked that Gymbox makes this right in some form. My complaint has been rejected. I had originally signed up for a 3 months membership for 86 GBP and I've been told now that "it's not in Gymbox's policy to contact members after this minimum term to see if they wish to upgrade to a longer length contract". (You can see my email exhange with Sarah Clarke below.)

I am emailing you directly, as I still think that this just can't be right. This cannot be the right thing to do as a business. It certainly wouldn't make you look good in the eyes of other gymgoers.

When your prices dropped, Gymbox kept charging me 86GBP. When I've been with Gymbox for longer than what you require for a better rate, Gymbox kept charging me 86 GBP. I haven't received an email or a phone call. I haven't seen any banners in the gym or on your website about the new headline rates, which would have reminded me to check what I'm paying. Recently when I noticed

that I've been paying more than what I could have payed (somewhere between 360 - 600 GBP more over the years), I thought that this just might be an error on your side and Gymbox will compensate me by offering to waive the membership fee for a few months or granting credit for personal training etc. Now I've been told that you can't do anything to make this right, all I can do is sign up for a new membership or keep paying 86 GBP per month, which is more than the most expensive single-gym membership you offer today for new members.

When I joined, I recommended your gyms to my friends. More than one of them signed up. I also think that your classes and trainers are the best in town. But I for one, would not want to be a member of a gym that let's their long term members pay more than what they should.

I still hope that what happened to me is just a result of an error. This is why I wanted to write to you directly. If i'm wrong and what happened to me reflects your business policies, I'd rather go to another gym and that's what I'll recommend for others too.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours Faithfully, Richard Schuster

On 11 March 2016 at 13:15, Gymbox <support@gymbox.zendesk.com> wrote:

##- Please type your reply above this line -##

Your Gymbox query (Ticket number: 8553) has now been solved.

If you have any further comments, please reply directly to this email to re-open the ticket.

Sarah Clarke (Gymbox)

Mar 11, 13:15

Hey Richard,

Thank you for your email,

I have taken a look through all of your comments below and taken a look into your membership.

Unfortunately, whilst we understand your frustration on this matter, we wouldn't be able to honour any form of compensation on this occasion. You did originally sign up to a 3 month rolling membership, which we can see has continued to roll on from after your minimum term was completed, however this is not in Gymbox's policy to contact members after this minimum term to see if they wish to upgrade to a longer length contract.

Additionally, you do pay a little extra than the current headline rates as you have a towel bolt-on on your membership, which is something in which you have the flexibility to remove should you wish to, whereas those members who are on the same package but for a little less, at £84.00 per month, do not have this option to remove the towels.

We do have a couple of options for you, that you can always upgrade to a new contract, or we could remove the towel bolt on, and include towels inclusive instead. Please see a bit of a breakdown of the options for you.

- 1. Remove towel bolt on of £10.00, and change to current headline 3 month DD rate inclusive of towels at £84.00 per month.
- 2. Upgrade your membership to a longer length contract, so either 6 month, 12 month or 18 months, which would all include towels inclusive, however would require you to commit to a minimum of that package length duration. The rates for these length memberships are as per below,

6 month - £77.00
12 month - £70.00
18 month - £63.00
Unfortunately, these are the only options in which I can offer you, and whilst we understand this isn't the outcome you were hoping for, we do have to adhere to our terms and conditions on this occasion.
Please let me know if you wish to go ahead with any of the above,
Kind Regards,
Sarah

Member Information
Home Club: Holborn
Name: Richard Schuster
Email:
Phone:
Membership Number: H0129423
Request Information
Type Of Change: Other
Change Start Date: Immediately

Comments: Hi there, I am writing to complain about the rate I'm charged for my membership and seek a way to be compensated. I have been in touch with Steph at Gymbox Holborn since the 9th of Feb 2016 who now directed me to this form. I learnt from other members that people pay significantly less than I for the same

membership. I understand from Steph that without any special discount, you offer memberships for 63 GBP per month. I pay 86 GBP per month, 23 GBP more. As I signed with Gymbox in Nov 2013, to date spent over 2 years and 5 months with you, that adds up to quite a bit. Depending on how I calculate, it's somewhere between 365 GBP and 598 GBP in total. I do acknowledge that I originally signed up for a 3 months membership with an 86 GBP monthly rate. I also know that I'm being charged according to my contract. You could say that I paid this much more because I was stupid and didn't realize that I should change my contract, as I had already spent more time with you than any of your membership packages require as a commitment. I was indeed naive thinking that Gymbox wouldn't charge me significantly more than others. At the same time this is also a question about business conduct and how you treat your customers. Is it fair to charge 86 GBP for someone who has been a member for 2,5 years, when you're selling memberships for 63 GBP? Is that how Gymbox wants to be seen? I still hope that my issue is only a result of some kind of administrative oversight. For me the key is that if Gymbox had reminded me 3 months into my membership, that I can change my membership fee by committing for longer term, I would have paid 598GBP less in total through the years. If you had reduced my rates only *after* I completed the time commitment for your 12 and 18 months memberships respectively, I would have paid 365 GBP less in total. (So that's if you've charged me the fee you charge for those who commit to a year, after I completed a full year.) Steph, in your Holborn branch offered that I can start a new contract now, if I commit to 12 or 18 months. I will not accept that offer as I feel that it is not fair in light of the above. I am writing to be able to speak to someone in your HQ who can address my issue. Ultimately, I'd like to find a way to feel that I did not pay hundreds of pounds to Gymbox for nothing, only because I trusted Gymbox not to charge me more than what they charge others. Looking forward to hearing back form you. Richard Schuster ---, or: --.

Terms: Agreed

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Richard Schuster <****@**.com>

Date: 9 March 2016 at 16:58

Subject: Fwd: inquiry re: membership fee in Holborn [Richard Schuster]

To: Elliott Roy-Highley <e.roy.highley@gmail.com>, Richard Schuster <schusterricsi@gmail.com>

I called Gymbox to follow up, but didn't get anywhere. So now I submitted this. Furious.

Hi there.

I am writing to complain about the rate I'm charged for my membership and seek a way to be compensated. I have been in touch with Steph at Gymbox Holborn since the 9th of Feb 2016 who now directed me to this form.

I learnt from other members that people pay significantly less than I for the same membership. I understand from Steph that without any special discount, you offer memberships for 63 GBP per month.

I pay 86 GBP per month, 23 GBP more. As I signed with Gymbox in Nov 2013, to date spent over 2 years and 5 months with you, that adds up to quite a bit. Depending on how I calculate, it's somewhere between 365 GBP and 598 GBP in total.

I do acknowledge that I originally signed up for a 3 months membership with an 86 GBP monthly rate. I also know that I'm being charged according to my contract. You could say that I paid this much more because I was stupid and didn't realize that I should change my contract, as I had already spent more time with you than any of your membership packages require as a commitment. I was indeed naive thinking that Gymbox wouldn't charge me significantly more than others.

At the same time this is also a question about business conduct and how you treat your customers. Is it fair to charge 86 GBP for someone who has been a member for 2,5 years, when you're selling memberships for 63 GBP? Is that how Gymbox wants to be seen?

I still hope that my issue is only a result of some kind of administrative oversight.

For me the key is that if Gymbox had reminded me 3 months into my membership, that I can change my membership fee by committing for longer term, I would have paid 598GBP less in total through the years. If you had reduced my rates only *after* I completed the time commitment for your 12 and 18 months memberships respectively, I would have paid 365 GBP less in total. (So that's if you've charged me the fee you charge for those who commit to a year, after I completed a full year.)

Steph, in your Holborn branch offered that I can start a new contract now, if I commit to 12 or 18 months. I will not accept that offer as I feel that it is not fair in light of the above.

I am writing to be able to speak to someone in your HQ who can address my issue. Ultimately, I'd like to find a way to feel that I did not pay hundreds of pounds to Gymbox for nothing, only because I trusted Gymbox not to charge me more than what they charge others.

Looking forward to hearing back form you.

Richard Schuster

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Richard Schuster <-->**Date: 29 February 2016 at 17:02

Subject: Re: inquiry re: membership fee in Holborn [Richard Schuster]

To: Holborn holborn@gymbox.co.uk

Hi Steph,

would you be able to connect me with someone your head office who can address my concerns?

Since I first emailed you 3 weeks ago, I learnt from other members that people pay significantly less than I for the same membership. Some pay as little 59 GBP per month and I have been unable to find a logical reason for the difference. As I signed with Gymbox in Nov 2013, I have to date spent over 2 years and 5 months with you, that adds up to guite a bit.

I hope that my issue is due to some kind of administrative oversight and does not reflect Gymbox's business approach. I hope we can find a resolution soon.

Looking forward to hearing back from you.

Best,

Richard Schuster

On 10 February 2016 at 11:17, Richard Schuster <--> wrote:

Thank you, appreciate it. Richard

On Wed, Feb 10, 2016 at 9:33 AM, Holborn holborn@gymbox.co.uk wrote: Hey Richard,

Thank you for your email. I have forwarded your details onto head office and will let you know when they respond.

I have also removed your booking ban so you will be able to again book classes. Speak to you soon,

Steph

From: Richard Schuster [mailto:--]
Sent: 09 February 2016 20:53

To: Holborn < holborn@gymbox.co.uk>

Subject: inquiry re: membership fee in Holborn [Richard Schuster]

Hi Steph,

I'm writing to follow up on our chat earlier this evening. Could you please look into the question regarding my membership fee?

I've had a membership with Gymbox Holborn for over 2 years now. I've been paying 86 GBP per month, for a single-gym pass, including towels. I was disappointed to find out that the same membership (single-gym access to your Holborn branch, with towels) only costs 70 GBP when one commits to a year. As I mentioned, I've been with you with over 2.

Could you please look into what you could do?

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Richard Schuster