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COVID-19 Member Update

26 March 2020

Summary

The UK's lockdown continued for a second day on Wednesday, with [polling](#) for ITV's 'Peston' programme last night showing the majority of people are following the Government's advice. Wednesday also saw Jeremy Corbyn's last PMQs as MPs questioned the Prime Minister on a number of areas, chief among which was measures for the self-employed. An announcement on that is expected today, of which more details can be found below.

Below is a summary of the day's events, as well as the steps ukactive is taking to represent more than 4,000 members across the physical activity sector.

Downing Street press conference

Prime Minister Boris Johnson hosted yesterday's press conference, flanked by Chief Medical Officer Dr Chris Whitty and Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance. Highlights included:

- Repetition that the public must stay at home, in order to protect the NHS and save lives.
- 405,000 people signed up to help the vulnerable and isolated through the Government's Good Samaritan scheme in the 24 hours since its launch.
- A significant national testing programme is being rolled out. This includes two kinds of tests: the 'antigen' test which can determine whether an individual currently has the disease; and the 'antibody' test which determines whether an individual has previously had the disease.
- Dr Chris Whitty confirmed the priority list for testing of the first variety, including the sick and vulnerable, NHS workers, and the elderly. He also stressed that while UK testing was high and improving, there was a global shortage of tests which was preventing the scaling-up the Government wanted to see.
- Sir Patrick Vallance dismissed reports that tests would soon be available from online retailers, stressing it was important the Government remained in control of the testing regime.



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- Johnson confirmed Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak would give his much-anticipated update on measures to protect the self-employed this evening (Thursday 26 March).

During PMQs there were a number of questions around Universal Credit, given the significant pressure put on the system in recent days. Johnson confirmed the threshold had been raised by £1,000, but gave no detail on extra support to ease pressure on the system.

Letter to the Chancellor

With the continued uncertainty over what support will be available for self-employed workers unable to receive income as a result of the crisis, ukactive, along with Community Leisure UK and Les Mills International, supported a [letter](#) from CIMSPA to the Chancellor.

The letter thanks the Chancellor and his Treasury team for the measures already announced to help employees, but noted as many as 65% of the sport and physical activity workforce is self-employed, with 95% experiencing financial losses of at least £7,800. Therefore, the letter calls for further parity with employed staff through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme by considering the following measure:

For the government to support self-employed or freelance workers in the physical activity sector by contributing 80% of average monthly earnings, based on the past three months, or up to £2,500 per month (whichever figure is the lower).

ukactive and its partners remained committed to working with the Treasury to ensure the steps taken are deliverable and provide security for the physical activity workforce in these difficult times for the sector.

Chancellor announcement

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak MP will appear at the daily press conference from Downing Street to announce a package of measures to support the self-employed. At both PMQs and yesterday's press conference, Boris Johnson confirmed this delay had been because the situation for the self-employed who were not subject to PAYE was more difficult, and so had taken longer to put together.

There is much speculation in the press regarding what level of income the support will be set at, how this will be calculated, and the timeline for availability of support. As outlined above,



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ukactive has called for parity with the measures announced for employees at the end of last week.

The press conference is due to start from 17:00 GMT this evening, and a full breakdown of the package will be included in Friday's Member Update.

Coronavirus Bill

The Coronavirus Bill yesterday passed the House of Lords without further amendment and will receive Royal Assent today, passing it into law. A full breakdown of the contents of the Bill can be found in Wednesday's briefing, and full details can be found [here](#).

Join the Movement

Sport England has today launched a new campaign to inspire people to stay active during the coronavirus outbreak. Titled 'Join the Movement', the [campaign](#) will encourage activity in and around the home, with a view to motivate people to share their at-home workout ideas and experiences online using the hashtag **#StayInWorkOut**.

The campaign will have its own [online hub](#) to give access to a range of home workout options – including existing free exercise content and advice from organisations such as the NHS, and workouts from popular fitness brands and influencers, many of whom are offering free content and extended trials to help people get easy access to home exercise.

ukactive is working with Sport England to ensure this campaign can provide our members with support while they engage their members and customers outside their gyms, centres and facilities. This will include assets linked to the campaign for them to benefit from as a significant digital media plan is being rolled out by Sport England. There will also be the opportunity for ukactive members to host 'Live Workouts' on the hub, as part of a virtual timetable that is being developed over the coming days.

Chief Executive of Sport England Tim Hollingsworth will be hosting a live [webinar](#) on Friday 27th March at 11am.

Please contact a member of the ukactive team if you have any questions about the campaign or how you can get involved: publicaffairs@ukactive.org.uk.



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ukactive engagement with Government

ukactive is in constant dialogue with multiple government departments on additional support available for our members. Yesterday this included a letter to the Chancellor on the issue of support for the self-employed, and a discussion with HR professionals from across the sector on the details of the scheme for furloughed workers. Questions from this have been taken to Government,

ukactive continues to work with DCMS and MHCLG to get further clarity on rent payments.

All insights gained from this engagement will be fed back to members through the daily Member Update. Please contact the ukactive team if you have any specific questions:

publicaffairs@ukactive.org.uk