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COVID-19 Member Update

30 March 2020

Summary

Britain has now completed a week in lockdown, with a major impact on all areas of public and private life. While there were no announcements of the scale of Thursday's package for the self-employed, there was still additional information from the Government as the crisis continues to make its mark.

The below outlines developments and updates from across the weekend for the sector, as well as the work ukactive is doing on behalf of members.

Huw Edwards outlines sector response to coronavirus outbreak on BBC Radio 4

ukactive CEO Huw Edwards appeared on BBC Radio 4's Today programme on Saturday 28 March 2020, to outline the physical activity sector's response to the coronavirus outbreak. He called on the Government to unlock the necessary funding and support required for businesses within the physical activity sector to survive and re-emerge from this crisis ready to continue their work at the heart of our communities. Key moments included:

- “The reality is that we are seeing our members having zero income so ukactive have been working very closely with Government. Government announcements have been very positive but it is now a question of how that money filters through to give the physical activity the financial support it needs.”
- “We need Government to enforce these announcements with landlords, local authorities and the banks to free up funding and ease current pressures facing the sector.”
- “Our members are working innovatively and tirelessly to continue to support the entire nation to maintain essential daily activity, factoring in the needs of specific groups such as children and young people, working adults and older adults.”

To listen to the full interview, click [here](#).



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Government briefings

Following the announcement on Friday that both Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock had both tested positive for coronavirus and were working from home, there were updates from other members of the Cabinet.

On Friday, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office Michael Gove delivered the briefing, alongside Deputy CMO Dr Jenny Harries and NHS England Chief Executive Simon Stevens. The briefing focused primarily on the steps being taken to increase the UK's testing regime, and plans to build two further temporary hospitals in Birmingham and Manchester, in the same style as the NHS Nightingale Hospital at London's Excel Centre.

Saturday's briefing was of the most significance for business, with Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Alok Sharma spoke alongside NHS England Medical Director Professor Stephen Powis. The key points of the update were:

- UK companies undergoing rescue or restructure processes will be able to continue trading during the current crisis. This will give companies experiencing difficulties valuable breathing space to find a long-term solution after the crisis.
- It will particularly allow companies to continue buying supplies, such as energy, raw materials and broadband, while attempting a rescue. Furthermore, the Government will temporarily suspend wrongful trading provisions from 1 March 2020 for three months for company directors, to allow them to keep businesses going without the threat of personal liability.

On Sunday, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Robert Jenrick, making his second Sunday appearance, said the country was now on an emergency footing. However, the big story was the admission from Deputy CMO Dr Jenny Harries that it would be two to three months before we could say categorically the lockdown had worked, and these measures may need to continue for six more months. With such an extended period of economic turmoil a real possibility, there will continue to be pressure on the Government to support people and businesses.

Expected Announcements

With the Government having announced its measures for the self-employed on Thursday, there are few glaring omissions in the economic package to help firms and employees through the crisis. While there will continue to be pressure to help those not currently covered by the various



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schemes, and the Chancellor has said the Treasury is looking at some support in these areas, there is not expected to be a major announcement within the next week.

Instead, the focus of the Government briefings will likely shift towards operational questions, such as the testing regime and delivery of protective equipment to NHS staff. There may also be further guidance regarding essential work, as there continues to be criticism of some employers for remaining open. Over the weekend, 128 MPs signed a letter to the Government calling for clarity on the continued operation of “non-essential workplaces”, such as construction sites.

Join the Movement

After Sport England launched a new campaign to inspire people to stay active during the coronavirus outbreak, ukactive is keen to hear of any initiatives from members designed to keep people active during the outbreak so that we can help to shine a light on the work of the sector.

If your business is finding innovative ways to get people moving from their homes, please share your examples with the team for further dissemination. You can get in touch at:

publicaffairs@ukactive.org.uk.

ukactive engagement with Government

ukactive is in constant dialogue with multiple government departments on additional support available for our members. This includes continued engagement with DCMS and MHCLG on issues such as rental payments, and discussions with DfE on continued support for children’s activity providers.

All insights gained from this engagement will be fed back to members through the daily briefing. Please contact a member of the ukactive team if you have any specific questions on the above:

publicaffairs@ukactive.org.uk

You can find all the latest information on what Covid-19 means for the sector as well as guidance and support for your organisation in our newly created Covid-19 [hub](#).