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COVID-19 Member Update

1 April 2020

Summary

Tuesday (31/03/2020) saw the first Cabinet meeting to be held remotely as the UK had its deadliest figures from Covid-19 so far, with 380 deaths in the 24 hours previous.

The Government also revealed the ambition of 25,000 tests per day may not be achieved until the end of April, with a tentative suggestion that the peak could be the week commencing 12 April.

Today also sees the planned rise in the National Minimum Wage (NMW) come into effect, with rises between 4.6% and 6.4% depending on the age group. The NMW for adults over 25 will now be £8.72 per hour.

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

Sport England announces package for sport and physical activity

As part of its response to the coronavirus outbreak, Sport England has [announced](#) it is making £195 million available for the sport and physical activity sector. Using a combination of National Lottery and government funding, the package includes the following measures:

- A £20 million Community Emergency Fund, which will be opened immediately for clubs and community organisations to bid into. Grants between £300 and £10,000 are available.
- A £5 million pot for existing partners to bid into if they are facing specific financial difficulties.
- An additional £55 million to support our sector during an ongoing period of restrictions, to fund new and innovative ways to keep people active and, when the period of restrictions is over, to help organisations get back to business and adjust to a different environment.



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- A £115 million rollover of current funding into 2021/22 to give long-term certainty to more than 100 well-established partners who play a vital role in the delivery of sport and physical activity in England.

Sport England has also agreed to consider requests to release six months of the coming year's funding (50% of awards) to its partners, meaning additional funding will be available sooner.

Sport England Chief Executive, Tim Hollingsworth said: "Sporting events are being cancelled, gyms and leisure centres are closed, clubs and community groups are not operating, and children and young people are all at home.

"This is impacting the sector financially in a significant way, although it is heartening to see huge amounts of innovation and agility, with many operators getting classes online in a matter of days to enable home workouts, for example.

"As the body responsible for the growth of sport and physical activity at a grassroots level, we have an important role to play both in ensuring that we support those with short-term cash flow concerns and immediate loss of income, as well as those facing medium- and long-term survival challenges and financial difficulties.

"We want the sector not just to come through this crisis but to be in a position to thrive again in the future and this package will ease the pressure on a huge number of the organisations who are central to that."

The package is significant for the sport and physical activity sector, providing additional funding at a time when the short- and medium-term future of a significant proportion of the sector looks bleak.

Government Press Conference

Michael Gove held yesterday's daily government update, accompanied by Dr Jenny Harries, Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England, and Professor Stephen Powis, Medical Director for NHS England. The press conference primarily focused on the operational elements of the Government's response to the coronavirus outbreak. Key highlights included:

- Michael Gove announced that Monday 30 March marked the highest single increase in the number of coronavirus-related deaths in the UK since the onset of the outbreak. He reiterated that it was therefore vitally important for people to abide by the Government's social distancing measures.



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- The Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care are working with organisations across the globe to secure the necessary materials and chemicals to increase testing capacity in the UK. The Government also confirmed new ventilators are currently in production and will be delivered to the NHS as early as next week.
- Michael Gove stated the Government is working with food producers and other suppliers to support 1.5 million vulnerable people with food and medicine deliveries. Mr Gove announced that the Government is seeking to expand this support by cooperating with volunteers and workers across other sectors to ease pressures on a greater number of vulnerable families.
- Professor Stephen Powis highlighted that while the number of new infections seems to be stabilising, people must not be complacent and continue to abide by social distancing measures. Only then can we expect to see sustainable improvement over the next two-to-three weeks.

Expected announcements

Government announcements are expected to continue to focus primarily on the operational elements of the Government's response to the coronavirus outbreak. The Government is under mounting pressure to rapidly increase coronavirus testing capacity. With news that Germany's testing regime is headed towards 500,000 coronavirus tests a week, the Government's pledge to hit 25,000 tests in the next few weeks pales in comparison.

Government is also likely to announce continued plans to increase the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) to NHS staff, as well as nursing homes and care workers.

While there are no imminent policy announcements, the Government is still working on potential support for businesses not covered by the current package.

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 the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, on issues such as rental payments, and discussions with the Department for Education on continued support for children's activity providers. ukactive is also speaking to HMRC for further clarification on the specifics of Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.



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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:
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](#).