



More people  
More active  
More often

We are **ukactive** >

## Covid-19 Member Update

Friday 17 April

### Summary

The UK's lockdown will continue until at least 7 May after acting Prime Minister Dominic Raab confirmed a three week extension. It followed meetings with SAGE and COBRA in the morning where the Government went through the latest scientific evidence and concluded the UK, while perhaps beyond the peak of infection, is in no position to relax the lockdown.

Mr Raab emphasised that an early relaxation of social distancing measures would do more damage to the economy and overall public health in the future. Though the extension is only due to last another three weeks, Mr Raab and his advisers remained tentative and suggested it was still too early to determine an exact timeframe for relaxation. Expect clearer answers on plans for the future in the coming weeks.

Please find a summary of yesterday's events, as well as the actions ukactive is taking to support the physical activity sector at this difficult time.

### Government press conference

Yesterday's press conference was hosted by acting Prime Minister Dominic Raab, Chief Medical Officer for England Professor Chris Whitty, and Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance. Key highlights included:

- Mr Raab confirmed that government would extend the lockdown until 7 May at the earliest. The decision was made after news that some areas are still seeing significant increases in new cases.
- The acting Prime Minister announced four key milestones needed to be achieved before government could consider lifting the lockdown. These include: protecting NHS ability to cope with critical care capacity, sustained and consistent fall in daily death rates in coronavirus, reliable data showing the rate of infection is decreasing, and confident testing capacity and PPE delivery.
- There was positive news from a scientific perspective, with both Vallance and Whitty confirming there was a very high likelihood the R value (the number of people each person with the disease infects) was now less than one. While this is the level at which



More people  
More active  
More often

We are **ukactive** 

many countries are relaxing lockdown laws, both scientists said there was a need to drive this down further in the UK. This is likely because while the  $R = <1$  in the general population, there are some settings - such as care homes - where this is not the case. Vallance also said as well as  $R$ , the absolute number of infections in the community needed to come down.

- Raab also discussed the danger of a “second peak” if restrictions were relaxed too early, with a much bigger impact on the economy if that were the case. With speculation that without a vaccine there can be no return to normal life, the timing and nature of lockdown restrictions will be hotly contested.
- The Government maintained it would not give a timeframe for the easing of restrictions so as not to dilute the message about staying at home. However, Raab did repeat the timeframe first used by the Prime Minister in mid-March of ‘12 weeks’.

### **Chancellor expands loan scheme for large businesses**

HM Treasury yesterday [announced](#) that bigger firms will now be able to benefit from the Government’s Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. Previously, support was only available to companies with a turnover of up to £500 million, but this cap has now been lifted by the Treasury. New provisions of the scheme now include:

- All viable businesses with turnover of more than £45m will be able to apply for government-backed support
- Firms with turnover of more than £250 million can borrow up to £50 million from lenders (double the amount previously available)
- New measures designed to complement existing support including the Covid Corporate Financing Facility and the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme

### **US President announces three-phased plan to reopen US economy**

Mr Trump yesterday unveiled new federal guidelines to reopen the US economy, putting the onus on state governors to make decisions about their states’ economies.

Under the first phase of the plan, restaurants, movie theatres and large sporting venues could reopen under certain conditions, while schools, day care centres and bars would not. Gyms would also be permitted to reopen if they adhere to strict physical distancing and sanitation protocols.



More people  
More active  
More often

We are **ukactive** >

The guidelines do not suggest any reopening dates, and cannot be implemented until states meet a 'gating' criterion which includes a downward trajectory of documented cases within a 14-day period as well as hospital preparedness. Read more on this [here](#).

### **Mass participation sporting events raising funds for charities**

Organisers of some of the UK's largest mass participation sports events - including the London Marathon - have joined forces in an attempt to recoup some of the billions of pounds charities face losing due to coronavirus.

The campaign, also known as the 2.6 challenge, will launch on Sunday 26 April. The public will be asked to draw up an activity based around the numbers 2.6 or 26 and fundraise or donate to save the UK's Charities via [twopointsixchallenge.co.uk](http://twopointsixchallenge.co.uk). The challenge is open to anyone of any age - the only requirement is that the activity must follow the Government guidelines on exercise and social distancing.

More on this [here](#).

### **Calls for more clarity around schools reopening**

The Guardian published a piece earlier this week outlining calls for greater clarity on government plans to reopen schools. The head of England's most successful academy trust is pushing government to set a date for the reopening of schools, as parents across England anticipate national offer day for primary schools. Commenting on national offer day, Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, which represents the majority of primary school leaders said: "it is vital that no child going through the primary admissions process this year should be disadvantaged."

The Government has said it will only reopen schools when the scientific evidence says it is safe to do so. A number of ministers are reported to be pushing for reopening schools sooner rather than later, but the details remain unclear.

More on this [here](#).

### **Alok Sharma's message to retail and construction sectors**

Business Secretary Alok Sharma this week gave an indication of the kind of sectors that could be in the vanguard of an economic reawakening, when he offered more permissive guidance on social distancing rules. He thanked construction, manufacturing, logistics, essential retail, waste



More people  
More active  
More often

We are ukactive >

management and outdoor industries for following the Government's advice on social distancing and providing essential services to the population in these challenging times. More on this [here](#).

### **Expected announcements**

Health Secretary Matt Hancock will go head to head with Health Select Committee Chair Jeremy Hunt in a virtual hearing on the Government's response to the coronavirus this morning. Mr Hunt invited fellow committee chairs (Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Science and Technology, and Communities) to press Hancock on a range of issues. We can expect to hear from the Health Secretary on topics including: coronavirus and the care home setting, testing capacity, and the Government's plan to get the economy running again in the future.

### **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. Discussions with Treasury over its latest announcements continue.

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](mailto: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 ukactive [Covid-19 hub](#).