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Covid-19 Member Update

Tuesday 21 April

Summary

MPs are back to work today after a month of recess. The first order of business will be to pass a motion allowing virtual debates to take place, as the House of Commons reinvents itself for the duration of the coronavirus lockdown. Members will be able to appear via videolink, with strict restrictions on the numbers available in the chamber.

MPs will return as UK deaths from Covid-19 rose by 449, a substantial number but down significantly on the last couple of weeks. There is renewed optimism the UK might be past the peak of the virus, if not out of the woods.

Below, please find a summary of yesterday's announcements, and the actions undertaken by the team at ukactive to support the physical activity sector throughout the pandemic.

Government announcements

The Government press conference was delivered by Chancellor Rishi Sunak, alongside Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser Angela Maclean and Public Health England Medical Director Yvonne Doyle. Key points included:

- The Chancellor announced over 140,000 firms had already applied for funding through the Government's Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, with over a million people having been furloughed. Sunak announced the checks for funding should take place immediately, with funds distributed within six days, in time for April payroll.
- More funding was also announced at the conference, with The Chancellor having worked with Business Secretary Alok Sharma to develop a package for high growth and innovative firms. A total of £1.25 billion will be distributed in loans and grants to these firms
- There will be two pots of this money: a Future Fund of £500 million in convertible loans to be distributed to high growth companies, matching private investment up to £5 million; and funding in the form of grants and loans worth £750 million, to be distributed by



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Innovate UK to innovative firms. Both schemes are expected to be up and running by May.

- There was continued pressure on the scientists over lack of PPE for frontline staff. Yvonne Doyle was forced to deflect questions on why PHE had downgraded guidelines for PPE, and whether this was merely in response to a shortage. Expect more questions on this during tonight's Downing Street press conference, given this morning's reports that millions of PPE items are currently being shipped out of the UK and sold to hospitals across Europe.
- There were also questions on whether the delay in the UK's lockdown, most notably the staging of large gatherings such as Cheltenham and the Liverpool vs Atletico Madrid tie, were contributors to additional cases. Angela Maclean described it as an "interesting hypothesis".

Job Retention Scheme portal opens

The Government's much anticipated Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme has finally opened for applications, with 140,000 firms applying as of 16:00 on Monday. The Chancellor announced they had already had applications for over a million employees to have their wages covered by the scheme.

Once background and anti-fraud checks are completed, Treasury expects funding to make its way to firms within six days, in time to meet April payroll.

The online portal can be found [here](#).

Nike and ukactive launch 'Move Crew'

ukactive Kids have worked with Nike to launch 'Move Crew', a new initiative designed to help children reach their recommended 60 minutes of activity during the lockdown.

The Move Crew initiative uses the expertise of primary school staff, elite athletes, coaches to support teachers, parents and carers by setting daily 'activity missions' which can be completed either at home with family members or at school with teachers and classmates.



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Every Monday, a Nike athlete will announce a new weekly theme, with a new Move Mission released every morning at 8am.

Week one's theme is "Power of the Team" and features 200m World Champion Dina Asher-Smith, Grantham Primary School PE Lead Hanna Sapeta, 12-year-old sprinter Savannah McKenzie Morgan, and Nike trainer Joelle D'Fontaine.

Working with partners across the sport, activity and education sectors, ukactive and Nike will make content accessible to children across the UK, with the target age for the programme those aged between 7-12.

More information can be found [here](#) - and the videos will be uploaded [here](#).

Expected Announcements

There are no expected announcements on changes to Government policy today, with the press conference likely to focus on the Office for National Statistics' weekly release of Covid-19 data, expected to show a significant rise in deaths outside of hospital. There will also be questions around continued lack of PPE, and the chances of the Government meeting its 100,000 tests a day target by the end of April.

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

ukactive is also on hand to answer questions arising from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

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](#).