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## Covid-19 Member Update

Thursday 23 April

### Summary

There is positive news around testing this morning as National Testing Coordinator Professor John Newton confirmed Health Secretary Matt Hancock's target to reach 100,000 tests a day by the end of the month will be achieved. The Government is also due to recruit an army of 15,000 contact tracers to contain the coronavirus outbreak. All signs point to a progressive transition in the UK's medical response to the crisis, moving towards South Korea's 'test, trace, isolate' model. While these announcements may seem technical and unimportant to the general population, they will no doubt have positive effects on the UK's preparedness to progressively reopen the economy (and to do so sooner rather than later).

Questions still remain around personal protective equipment, access to financial support, and the Government's lockdown exit strategy. These featured among the key concerns raised by MPs during yesterday's Prime Minister's Questions. ukactive will continue to monitor key announcements and work with the Government to support the physical activity sector throughout the pandemic.

Below, please find a summary of yesterday's major announcements and events.

### ukactive sets out four-stage strategy to support reopening of physical activity sector

ukactive has today [revealed plans](#) for a strategy to support the reopening of the physical activity sector safely, once the Government eases Covid-19 lockdown restrictions in the UK.

The strategy has four key stages:

- 1. Research on business modelling:** using new research, currently being undertaken by ukactive and DataHub, to provide business modelling which ensures that decisions by operators are informed by the latest intelligence and provide financial viability to reopen safely.
- 2. Framework for operators:** providing a clear framework for fitness and leisure operators to guide their operational plans for reopening. The framework is currently under review by



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public health experts and ukactive's councils and forums, which represent operators of all types and sizes across the physical activity sector.

- 3. Public information campaign:** launching a public information campaign which includes the dissemination of guidelines to operators and provides them with assets to engage and reassure their customers, while inspiring the public to step back into gyms and leisure centres.
- 4. Policy support:** continued policy support of ukactive in its conversations with the Government, ensuring that policy decisions deliver what is needed to support the sector through additional or extended financial measures, and regulatory and taxation changes, once the sector is allowed to reopen.

#### **ukactive CEO speaks on EuropeActive Webinar**

ukactive CEO Huw Edwards spoke to fitness leaders from across Europe this morning, during EuropeActive's webinar on strategic planning for the future, in the context of coronavirus. He outlined the UK position on a coordinated approach for the future, and heard insight from other European leaders in the sector. Huw's presentation included strategic plans linked to: the latest research on modelling around returning to business and the effect of delays to opening clubs; frameworks and best practice required for clubs to re-open safely; how to work with politicians and policy-makers to ensure fitness is right at the top of their thinking; and how to build effective communications and campaigns to promote physical activity and grow consumer confidence.

Find out more [here](#).

#### **Active Lives Survey**

Sport England has published its Active Lives survey for the period covering November 2018 to November 2019, which showed an overall rise in physical activity prior to the coronavirus outbreak. It showed 28.6 million adults were active, a rise of just over 400,000 people on the previous year. Inactivity – those not doing 30 minutes of moderate activity a week – was also down.

The rise was particularly down to an increase in activity levels among women, over-55s and those with long-term health conditions, reflecting progress made in key areas for Sport England and campaigns such as This Girl Can and We Are Undefeatable.



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Gyms and physical activity facilities remain the third most popular form of exercise, with 12.9 million people taking part.

The full survey results can be found [here](#).

Sport England is also running a weekly tracker for how Covid-19 is affecting activity levels, which can be found [here](#).

### **Downing Street Press Conference**

Yesterday's daily press conference was hosted by acting Prime Minister Dominic Raab, accompanied by Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty and Chief Defence Staff General Sir Nicholas Carter. Key announcements included:

- Mr Raab insisted that the greatest risk for the UK would be to ease up on the current lockdown restrictions, given the possibility of causing another spike in the number of coronavirus cases and risking prolonged economic difficulties.
- Mr Raab provided an update on the repatriation of UK nationals, announcing that over 1 million people had been able to return home on commercial flights, while over 13,000 were repatriated on 63 chartered flights. More flights to India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sierra Leone are scheduled for later this week.
- Chief of Defence Staff General Sir Nicholas Carter made his first appearance at the Downing Street press conference, providing an update on the role of the Armed Forces during the crisis. Over the past month, the Army was brought in to support the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government with logistical challenges, and to support the NHS and the Department for Health and Social Care in the construction of new facilities.
- Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty reiterated Mr Raab's plea to continue abiding by the Government's social distancing measures to avoid a second peak.
- In perhaps the most significant moment of the press conference, Mr Whitty acknowledged there may need to be an element of social distancing lasting until the end of the calendar year, until a vaccine can be developed and distributed.



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## **Government launches plan to tackle loneliness during coronavirus lockdown**

The Government yesterday launched a major effort to tackle loneliness and social isolation during the coronavirus outbreak. Overseen by Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden, the plan will aim to ensure that, for people of all ages and backgrounds, staying at home does not need to lead to loneliness.

The #Let'sTalkLoneliness public campaign has been rolled out to get people talking openly about loneliness, which includes new public guidance offering useful tips and advice on what to do to look after yourself and others safely.

The campaign is part of a wider cross-Government plan to tackle loneliness during the crisis. Mr Dowden also announced that:

- Loneliness organisations will be allocated a guaranteed £5 million funding pot to continue and adapt their crucial work at this time
- Loneliness charities will be supported to work with NHS Volunteer Responders in their communities
- Loneliness charities will benefit from being a priority category of the £750 million package of support for charities announced by the Chancellor on 8 April.

To find out more about the campaign, please visit the Government's website [here](#).

### **Expected announcements**

Matt Hancock will lead tonight's press conference from Downing Street, where the focus will again be on the UK's testing as the end of the month approaches, and continued pressure for PPE provision for NHS staff. There will be questions on this, and any further measures for care homes.

Expect further guidance on the wearing of face coverings following SAGE's decision they are recommended in crowded areas. However, this is not likely to be this evening as the Government is eager to get the message right and avoid stockpiling which would affect NHS supply.



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## **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)

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](#).