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Covid-19 Member Update

Tuesday 28 April

Summary

Prime Minister Boris Johnson returned to 10 Downing Street yesterday, after three weeks recovering from the illness which saw him admitted to intensive care. He delivered a speech from the steps of Downing Street, comparing the virus to “an unexpected mugger” who we were now beginning to wrestle to the ground. However, he struck a note of caution, that the fight was far from over and there would continue to be restrictions in this “moment of maximum risk”.

Coronavirus deaths rose by their lowest amount in four weeks, but Professor Chris Whitty pointed out this also followed a pattern of lower recording of deaths over the weekend.

Below, please find a summary of yesterday’s major announcements and events, as well as the steps ukactive is taking to support the physical activity sector.

Chancellor announces new microloans package

Chancellor Rishi Sunak yesterday announced a new loans package for small businesses. The “bounce back” loans will allow small businesses to borrow loans of up to 25% of turnover, between £2,000 and a maximum of £5,000. As with the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), loans will be interest free for the first 12 months, but the Government will be guaranteeing these loans up to 100%.

The loan scheme will be launched on Monday, with minimal credit checks and quick access to the cash. It is intended to allow small businesses to access funding quickly, without the rigorous process which has held up the CBILS.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Sunak also ruled out the possibility of increasing the Government guarantee on the original scheme to 100%.

Full details of the scheme can be found [here](#).



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DCMS questions and Ofsted evidence to Education Committee

With Parliament now back in full swing, there were a number of relevant developments yesterday. Digital, Culture, Media and Sport questions took place in the House of Commons, with Secretary of State Oliver Dowden and Minister for Sport Nigel Huddleston answering questions from MPs. Much of the focus was on professional sport, notably football, rugby league and horse racing. Dowden particularly stressed the importance of getting Premier League football running again to ensure money would trickle down through the leagues. He also pointed to the £195 million Sport England fund for sport and physical activity as evidence of the Government's commitment to the sector.

Speaking before the Education Committee, HM Chief Inspector of Ofsted Amanda Spielman and COO Matthew Coffey discussed the impact of coronavirus on schools. While stressing it was not Ofsted's position to comment on when or whether schools should reopen, Spielman said the longer they were closed the worse it would be for the attainment gap. She said there was particular concern over looked after, vulnerable or SEN children during this time.

Downing Street press conference

Yesterday's press conference was led by Secretary of State for Health Matt Hancock, CMO Chris Whitty, and NHS England Medical Director Stephen Powis. In a new feature, there was a question submitted by a member of the public. Key announcements included:

- Hancock announced a £60,000 payment for the families of those NHS and social care staff who had died with coronavirus. The life assurance fund was a tribute to the 82 NHS and 16 social care workers who had lost their lives so far.
- Also announced was the return of cancelled non-Covid care, as the NHS returns to some semblance of normal having not been overwhelmed by the virus.
- 37,000 tests were conducted yesterday, as Hancock confirmed the Government was still on track to complete 100,000 tests a day by Thursday.
- Professor Chris Whitty refused to be drawn on what death toll would be deemed a success – after the original estimate of 20,000 was passed at the weekend – and also declined to speculate as to the acceptable level of transmission, or the 'R' number.

Expected announcements

The Government's senior scientific advisers will meet today to discuss ways of easing current lockdown restrictions as the UK prepares to move to the next stage of the crisis. The Prime



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Minister is expected to outline his Government's action plan around easing lockdown restrictions to the public later this week.

Matt Hancock is likely to lead tonight's Downing Street briefing, where he will continue to outline the UK's medical response to the crisis. He is not expected to make any significant announcements.

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 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](#).