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Covid-19 Member Update

Thursday 30 April

Summary

Today marks the Prime Minister's return to the public stage, as Boris Johnson prepares to lead tonight's Downing Street press conference just 18 days after being discharged from hospital. According to news outlets this morning, the Prime Minister will not outline an action plan on easing lockdown, but instead offer a broad assessment of the UK's current stance in relation to the five milestones needed to come out of lockdown. His announcement follows yesterday's meeting with the Government's scientific advisers to discuss post-lockdown preparations. Expect a full blueprint on easing restrictions to be announced on 7 May.

Yesterday also saw the UK include deaths in care homes in its daily total, which showed 26,097 people have now died of Covid-19. This puts the UK as the country with the worst death toll in Europe at the same stage, as well as one of the highest death rates per million of the population in the world.

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.

LGA publishes guidance for councils to support leisure providers through Coronavirus

The Local Government Association yesterday published guidance for councils on supporting leisure providers through the current crisis. **The guidance was drafted in partnership with ukactive and Community Leisure UK**, and outlines the importance of leisure providers, the key features of leisure operators, the challenges currently facing leisure providers, the risks associated with leisure operator failure, and how councils can support their leisure partners. It also includes examples of how councils are providing practical support to providers and ensure facilities are in a position to reopen when social distancing measures are relaxed.

The guidance can be accessed [here](#).

Grant fund to protect businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors



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The Government yesterday published the Ministerial direction letters authorising a grant fund to help protect businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors from the impact of Covid-19.

Find out more [here](#).

Downing Street press conference

Yesterday's daily press conference was chaired by First Secretary of State Dominic Raab, accompanied by Professor Yvonne Doyle and Professor Jonathan Van Tam. Key highlights included:

- Dominic Raab emphasised that the Government would not consider easing restriction measures until the criteria in the five tests originally set out on 16 April had been met. He highlighted that it was important not to act too soon, and drew attention to Germany, which has seen a new increase in the number of cases since easing restrictions last weekend.
- Mr Raab announced that the Government would be providing the international vaccine alliance Gavi with £330 million of funding every year for the next five years.
- Professor Yvonne Doyle stated that the increase in vehicle use was worrying, as it may indicate a decrease in the public's abidance to social distancing measures. Despite this, the UK is still seeing a continuing fall of Covid-19 patients in hospital. New Covid-19 cases are also stabilising.
- Professor Jonathan Van Tam highlighted that ongoing social distancing measures were being kept under constant review to see whether any relaxations could be made, but that the public would have to live with the threat of the virus "for quite some time".

Gavin Williamson sits before the Education Committee

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson appeared before the Education Committee yesterday to face questions from MPs on the impact of the coronavirus shutdown on schools and particularly disadvantaged pupils. Mr Williamson noted this was an area of deep concern within the department, stressing that all pupils were missing out as a result of school closures, with disadvantaged pupils especially hard hit.

To combat this, Mr Williamson pointed to the Government's £100 million investment in technology for disadvantaged students. He also said the Department was working very closely with the BBC on increasing the amount of educational programming available for children of all ages.



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On the big question of reopening, Mr Williamson said no date had yet been set – although he did say there were no plans to open over the summer holidays at this stage. SAGE, he said, had been commissioned to look in detail at which year groups would benefit from returning to school first, allowing schools to best comply with social distancing. He also confirmed there would be a phased approach to schools opening.

Prime Minister's Questions

Labour Leader Keir Starmer's second PMQs was once again opposite First Secretary of State Dominic Raab, with the PM attending the birth of his child. Starmer led on the crisis in care homes, saying, ahead of the publication, figures including the death toll in care homes would mean Britain has "one of the highest death tolls in Europe".

In response, Raab said it wasn't worthwhile to compare countries – despite the fact Downing Street does this every day – and said much work was being done to ease the crisis in care homes.

Starmer then discussed testing, as the Government seems set to miss its 100,000 target by Thursday – although acknowledging the arbitrary deadline was not overly important. His main question was why this was not in place earlier.

Raab pointed to the effort the Government had made and how close it was, and called for more support from the Opposition frontbench.

Expected announcements

Boris Johnson is expected to give tonight's press conference, at which he will not announce any measures designed to ease the lockdown. It is likely to be a more personal press conference, with Johnson reflecting on his time in intensive care and the birth of his son. There are likely to be questions on the 100,000 tests a day deadline (which Justice Secretary Robert Buckland this morning admitted the Government is likely to miss), as well as the latest figures showing the UK's position as one of the worst hit countries in Europe.

Tomorrow will see Matt Hancock appear for the big question of whether the testing target has been hit.

ukactive engagement with Government



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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](#).