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## Covid-19 Member Update

Monday 6 April

### Summary

As the UK enters its third week in official lockdown, this weekend highlighted the challenge that the Government officials will face over the coming weeks to keep people in their homes. As the weather improves, a small minority of people are defying social distancing rules to spend time outside and enjoy the sunshine. But encouraging updates from Italy and France are testament to the effectiveness of social distancing measures. Both countries reported fewer deaths over the weekend, offering a glimmer of hope that the worst is behind them.

Sunday also marked the Queen's fifth special televised broadcast, other than Christmas messages, of her long reign. The Queen's speech attempted to lift the spirit of the nation, highlighting that "we should take comfort that, while we may have more still to endure, better days will return: we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again".

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has also been admitted to hospital as he continues to suffer with the virus, 10 days after first revealing he had tested positive. Dominic Raab will take over some of his duties, such as chairing the Covid-19 Cabinet task force, while he recovers.

Below is a summary of this weekend's events, as well as the steps ukactive is taking to support more than 4,000 members across the physical activity sector.

### Downing Street press conference:

This weekend's press conferences focused on the UK's medical preparedness for Covid-19. Highlights included:

- Speaking alongside Deputy Chief Medical Officer Professor Jonathan Van Tam on Friday, Health Secretary Matt Hancock outlined hospital capacity numbers across the UK, reassured health and social care workers that essential personal protective equipment was due for delivery shortly, and highlighted that clinical research trials for effective Covid-19 treatments were already underway.
- Mr Hancock stated that he was cooperating with his counterparts across the G7 nations to pool together the latest research on Covid-19.



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- Progressive declines in mobility across the UK indicate that British people are following social distancing rules. Professor Van Tam stated that the medical community expects these changes to turn the curve on the number of new infections over the coming weeks. However, it is too early to determine when the peak of the outbreak will take place.
- Speaking alongside Dr Jenny Harries on Sunday, Mr Hancock backtracked on his suggestion that the Government would ban people from exercising altogether if the current social distancing rules were not adhered to. He did, however, urge people to follow the rules and stay home.

### **Financial support packages**

Having announced changes to the financial support available to business late on Thursday, it was a little surprising not to see the Chancellor offer further clarification. There has been no further detail from HM Treasury on the changes, with the Government hoping it has been clear to lenders about what the changes to the scheme will mean for them.

HM Treasury officials now appear to be looking closely at an 'exit strategy' from the lockdown, with the admission if the current regulations were to go on beyond June, the Government may be unable to prevent otherwise profitable businesses from collapsing.

In better news, the Welsh Government and Sport Wales have followed in the footsteps of Sport England by announcing an emergency funding package worth £400,000. The £200,000 made available by the Welsh Government will be allocated to non-for-profit sports clubs, and will be matched by funding from the arms length body. There will also be an £8.1 million fund which will be used to support sports clubs and well-established partner networks. Sport Wales is continuing to liaise with the sector on the requirements for this.

More on this can be found [here](#).

### **Labour leadership outcome**

Keir Starmer was elected Leader of the Labour Party on Saturday, 4 April. He was elected during the first round of voting with 56.7% of the votes. Speaking to BBC's Andrew Marr on Sunday, Starmer highlighted his intention to scrutinise the Government's response to the coronavirus outbreak and continue asking difficult questions to ensure that people and businesses are getting what they deserve during this time. With his appointment now confirmed, Starmer can get on with the crucial task of appointing his Shadow Cabinet.



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Some of these have already been announced, with former Shadow Treasury Minister Anneliese Dodds appointed Shadow Chancellor and former leadership rival Lisa Nandy becoming Shadow Foreign Secretary. Long-time Starmer ally Nick Thomas-Symonds becomes Shadow Home Secretary, while highly rated Jon Ashworth continues in the Health and Social Care brief he has held since 2016, and in which he has been praised for sensibly holding the Government to account. Further announcements are expected today.

You can access the full list of newly appointed shadow Ministers [here](#).

Tasked with rebuilding the Labour Party as a genuine electoral force after the disastrous 2019 election, Starmer will know this is a difficult time. He will have to tread a fine line between holding the Government to account and ensuring some semblance of support during this crisis, and will know with the next election four years away this is a marathon not a sprint.

ukactive will engage with the new opposition team to ensure that our members' priorities are championed and represented across Parliament.

### **Innovate UK Funding**

The Government announced a £20 million funding pot for ambitious technologies to build UK resilience following the coronavirus outbreak. Grants of up to £50,000 will be available to technology and research-focused businesses to develop new ways of working and help build resilience in industries such as delivery services, food manufacturing, retail and transport, as well as support people at home in circumstances like those during the coronavirus outbreak.

Innovations could include:

- New services for families to connect with and remotely monitor their elderly or vulnerable relatives;
- Creating education tools which seamlessly integrate the classroom with the kitchen table, allowing teachers to remotely set dynamic tasks, support vulnerable children and make certain no child is left behind.

All projects will begin by June 2020 and will last up to six months, with products and services expected to be available to the public towards the end of this year. To find out more, read [this](#) press release.

### **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 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. ukactive is also speaking to HMRC for further clarification on the specifics of Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. 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](#).