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Covid-19 Member Update

Tuesday 7 April

Summary

With the Prime Minister having been admitted to intensive care, First Secretary of State Dominic Raab will take over as de facto PM during his treatment. While it will be a concerning time for many who work closely with the PM, with the response guided by scientific advisers and Matt Hancock leading the health service's efforts things should be able to proceed as normal.

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

Yesterday's press conference was led by Dominic Raab, who since Johnson's admittance to hospital on Sunday evening declared he had overtaken some of his duties. A clue to Johnson's true condition was revealed when Raab admitted he hadn't spoken to the PM "personally since Saturday" – unusual given he was standing in for Johnson at the Covid-19 Cabinet meeting. Raab was joined by Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser Dame Angela Maclean and Chief Medical Officer Professor Chris Whitty, who has recovered following a period of self-isolation. The key points from the press conference include:

- Raab began by noting the figures for the previous 24 hours, with an additional 439 dying of the disease in hospital. While this is down on the earlier figures, Raab urged caution not to think this meant we were over the peak.
- Raab stressed the continuing work being done by NHS workers, as well as Government efforts to support them, and then in his position as Foreign Secretary updated on the continued efforts to repatriate Britons stuck abroad.
- Following a brief update, the press conference moved on to questions. The majority of these focussed on the UK's 'exit strategy' – how it would move out of lockdown and to some semblance of normality. The decision to suggest Easter Sunday (12 April) as the peak may have backfired, as it was clear from the answers that it was "too early" to think about – suggesting there is no detailed plan for exiting. Everything will depend on what happens to the numbers of cases.



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- Professor Whitty said social distancing was having an effect on stabilising admissions, but it was too early to really see the effects, with most of the cases still likely to have been caught before the measures were implemented.
- There was a further blow to the UK's exit strategy by the revelation the antibody test being tested by the Government did not work reliably. With the repetition that "no test is better than a bad test", the Government is back to square one on this score.
- In response to a question on business support, Raab said the Chancellor had made his announcements and would deliver further detail as soon as practical.

Latest guidance on Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Yesterday, HMRC released updated guidance on the Government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for both [employers](#) and [employees](#). The guidance provides greater detail on the process for placing employees on furlough, who is eligible to be placed on furlough (including clarity on the mechanisms for those who started after 28 February), and activities employees can undertake while on furlough.

ukactive will be updating its FAQs in accordance with the latest guidance, which can be found [here](#).

Support for exporters and investors

The Department for International Trade has announced it will provide additional support to exporters and investors during this period, with guidance having been sent out to 160,000 businesses and investors across the country. UK businesses will now be eligible to secure export insurance cover to major international markets.

More information can be found on the Business Support [website](#).

Upcoming Government updates

Today's briefing will have a heavy focus on the condition of the Prime Minister, with questions likely to focus on what contingencies are in place. There will be further concern as to how decisions will be made on the end of a lockdown while Johnson recovers.



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As per Raab's statement yesterday, we should expect an announcement later in the week from Chancellor Rishi Sunak, further clarifying his support package, especially as the systems come online.

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. 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.

ukactive will also be writing to MPs later this week to stress the critical importance of the physical activity sector and outline the support we still require from the Government.

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

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](#).