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Covid-19 Member Update

Thursday 9 April

Summary

The UK had its deadliest day to date, with 938 hospital fatalities when figures were announced yesterday. This was a sobering reminder that for all the talk of an 'exit strategy' and ending the lockdown, this crisis still has a long way to go.

Yesterday's press conference also saw a more sombre tone from Chancellor Rishi Sunak, who while announcing his support package for charities said he would "not be able to save every job, every business, every charity". As we head into an Easter weekend indoors, the scale of the impact of this crisis on people's lives and the economy is crystal clear.

An inevitable extension to the lockdown is to be announced next week.

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

ukactive CEO in Times Business Briefing

ukactive CEO Huw Edwards was interviewed for the Times Business Briefing on Facebook, discussing the real prospect of immediate gym closures and job losses. This follows the national media coverage of ukactive which suggested unless the Government works urgently to ensure access to its loan scheme and speeds up the process for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, physical activity infrastructure in the UK may not survive.

ukactive continues to put pressure on the Government to ensure these issues, among others, are dealt with urgently. Yesterday (08/04/2020) a letter was sent to all MPs calling on them to raise the issue with the Government.

The full video can be viewed [here](#).

Downing Street press conference

Yesterday's daily press conference was delivered by Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak, who delivered the details of a support package for charities. He was joined by NHS England



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Medical Director Professor Stephen Powis, and Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser Dame Angela Maclean. The package was as follows:

- Mr Sunak stressed the importance of the charity sector in our civil society, stressing at times like these the sector was more important than ever and was very obviously struggling with increased demand and slashed revenues.
- The total package is £750m, with £360m available directly from Government departments. £370m will be made available through the National Lottery Community Fund for smaller charities.
- The Government has also pledged to match public donations from the BBC's Big Night In fundraiser later this month – pledging a minimum of £20 million.
- The direct funding will be targeted at charities delivering a vital frontline service, and supporting vulnerable people through the crisis. These include hospices, St John's Ambulance, victims and children's charities, and Citizens Advice.
- The second pot will be made available for small and local charities, supporting charities in communities involved with, for example, food distribution and providing financial advice.

The charity sector reaction to the announcement has been lukewarm at best, with many welcoming the move but suggesting it is a drop in the ocean. The problem is particularly acute for those charities outside the criteria announced by the Chancellor as providing essential services now, but who still face massive revenue issues.

Full details of the Chancellor's package can be found [here](#).

Dame Angela Maclean said there was some good news despite the headline fatality figure, with cases not accelerating out of control and intensive care admissions up just 4%.

Expected announcements

COBRA is expected to meet today to discuss the extension of the lockdown, with the three week review as announced on 23 March coming up. As outlined above there is not expected to be an announcement on this until next week, although there is no question the lockdown will continue at least until the after the 'peak'.

Following the Chancellor's announcement yesterday there are no immediate plans for additional support packages, although there may be announcements around the business loan scheme as companies continue to struggle to access funding.



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The Government's main priority will continue to be on testing, on provision of PPE for frontline workers, and on ensuring the lockdown measures are adhered to over the Easter Weekend.

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.

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](#).