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Covid-19 Member Update

Monday 11 May

Summary

The Prime Minister yesterday (10 May) announced the Government's highly anticipated gradual steps towards loosening the Coronavirus lockdown in England. Though we can expect to see little change in the measures this week, Boris Johnson is expected to provide more information to Parliament today, with a detailed report outlining the Government's plan coming out at 2pm today. During his address to the nation on Sunday night, the Prime Minister emphasised the need for caution to prevent a second peak in COVID-19 cases, and promised continued re-evaluation of the measures in place.

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

The Prime Minister's address to the nation

Yesterday's address to the nation unveiled the first gradual steps the Government will be taking to loosen the lockdown in England. Major announcements included:

- **Those who cannot work from home should return to work:** The Prime Minister urged people who cannot work from home (ie construction sector, some retail) to return to work from Monday 11 May onward (however, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said on Monday's broadcast round this would be from Wednesday). He emphasised that this should only be encouraged if social distancing can be practiced in the workplace and public transportation can be avoided.
- **Unlimited exercise and some sports will be permitted:** As of Wednesday 13 May, people will be allowed to go out for exercise more than once a day. In addition, some sports, including swimming in lakes and rivers, tennis and golf will also be allowed, but only within household groups.
- **Schools in England to reopen for some primary students early June:** The Prime Minister confirmed that the plan to start reopening schools in England will begin after the half term at the start of June. More information on how this will work is expected to be announced shortly.



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- **Restaurants and cafés will remain closed until at least July:** While some retail shops could start to reopen with schools, the hospitality industry is expected to open in July at the earliest, but only if there can be safe social distancing.

ukactive Chair, Baroness Grey-Thompson, appears on BBC 5 Live Breakfast

ukactive Chair Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson appeared on [BBC Radio 5 Live](#) on Saturday morning to urge the Government to prioritise the schedule for reopening gyms and leisure centres, given its role in the nation's health and wellbeing, and the uncertainty and perilous financial position of the sector.

ukactive also wrote to the Prime Minister last week to urge him to consider the case for reopening the fitness and leisure sector as a priority.

Watch [here](#).

ukactive urges government to reopen gyms and leisure centres to support national resilience

The Coronavirus lockdown has highlighted just how significant physical activity can be for our nation's health and wellbeing. Physical activity benefits people of all ages and abilities, and supports the prevention of over 20 chronic conditions which currently increase the dangers of Coronavirus.

In a letter from ukactive Chair Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson to Boris Johnson, we urged the Prime Minister to consider carefully the impact of any extended closure of gyms and leisure centres. Our sector's workforce and facilities have a huge role to play in the national recovery from COVID-19 - but only if our facilities can reopen to the public.

The story was reported in The Telegraph [here](#).

David Lloyd says gyms should reopen before shopping centres

Glenn Earlam, Chief Executive of David Lloyd Leisure, has argued the Government should allow gyms to reopen before shopping centres, following the lead of countries such as Switzerland, which is set to allow fitness facilities to open today (Monday 11 May). Mr Earlam explained that gyms and leisure centres could safely reopen with social distancing measures in place. Read more [here](#).

ukactive's framework to re-open the physical activity sector



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Both [The Telegraph](#) and [Evening Standard](#) have written stories referencing ukactive's framework to reopen the physical activity sector this weekend. ukactive will continue to communicate the sector's ability and readiness to reopen safely, and work with the Government to ensure that our facilities are able to reopen as soon as possible.

Downing Street press conferences

With Boris Johnson having announced he would be making his big speech on Sunday night, the Downing Street press conferences over the weekend veered away from discussions of ending lockdown measures and focussed on small efforts from the Government. Delivering the press conferences were Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab (Thursday), Environment Secretary George Eustice (Friday), and Transport Secretary Grant Shapps (Saturday). Key announcements included:

- Mr Raab confirmed any changes made by Mr Johnson would be minor and incremental, and guided by the data at all times. Perhaps the most interesting moment of the press conference was ONS Chief Statistician Sir Ian Diamond offering a "personal view", that "maintaining social distancing will be essential in the coming weeks".
- Mr Eustice continued the messaging around cautious change, repeating the line the UK was "not out of the woods yet". He also said the Government was working to have a UK-wide approach.
- On Saturday Mr Shapps announced public transport systems would be operating at just 10% of capacity once people start going back to work, as social distancing will have to continue to be maintained. He also confirmed £2 billion of an already announced £5 billion will go towards walking and cycling ahead of the publication of a national cycling plan in June.

Expected announcements

The Prime Minister will sit before parliament this afternoon, shortly after publishing the full details of his plan to start easing lockdown restrictions in England. This document is expected to clear up at least some of the confusion from Mr Johnson's address last night.

The Prime Minister will also take part in a separate session later this afternoon to answer selected questions submitted by members of the public.



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Tomorrow Chancellor Rishi Sunak is expected to give an update to the furlough scheme, including extending it to the end of July. There has also been talk of reducing the level of subsidy from 80% to 60%, and of the introduction of a partial furlough scheme.

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.

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](#).