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## Covid-19 Member Update

Tuesday 12 May

### Summary

The Government yesterday (11 May) released a 50-page strategy document outlining a roadmap for progressively reopening the economy and loosening the Coronavirus lockdown in England. The Prime Minister later presented the document to the House of Commons, where he faced questions from MPs and the leader of the opposition on its messaging and applicability in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Some parliamentarians raised concerns that the document, accompanied by the Government's new slogan to 'stay alert', generates confusion. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer also pointed to the numerous inconsistencies between the announcements made during the Prime Minister's address to the nation on Sunday (10 May), outgoing Downing Street communications, and the text within the document. Expect to see more scrutiny and questions to arise over the coming days.

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.

### **'Our Plan to Rebuild': An analysis of the Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy**

The Government yesterday published its Covid-19 recovery strategy which aimed to set out a roadmap to returning the country to some semblance of normality. The crucial announcement was the three stages for opening up society:

- 1) From no earlier than Wednesday 13 May: those who cannot work from home can go to work. Unlimited outdoor exercise. Can visit one person from another household outside.
- 2) From no earlier than 1 June: a phased return to schools for early years and year 6; opening non-essential retail; cultural and sporting events behind closed doors; re-opening more public transport; potentially expanding household "bubbles".
- 3) From no earlier than 4 July: open at least some of the remaining businesses and premises that have been required to close, including personal care (such as hairdressers and beauty salons) hospitality (such as food service providers, pubs



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and accommodation), public places (such as places of worship) and leisure facilities (like cinemas).

Underpinning these three strategies are the new alert levels, ranging from 1 to 5 with 1 being no presence of the virus, and 5 being material risk of the NHS being overwhelmed. The UK today is, according to the document, hovering between 3 and 4, meaning we can begin to see restrictions lift very slightly.

The Government has said it will adjust whatever it needs to in order to keep the reproductive rate of the virus, the R, at a manageable level, meaning restrictions can be tightened as well as loosened.

The full document can be read [here](#).

### **ukactive responds to the UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy**

ukactive CEO Huw Edwards yesterday responded to the Government's published Covid-19 recovery strategy. In his statement he said: "The Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy in its current form regrettably does not provide the clarity we are seeking – omitting both a clear window for reopening our facilities and the guarantee of continued financial support essential for the viability of the sector.

"In order to secure both clarity and answers to the questions posed, we will scale up our constructive engagement with the Government and, over the coming days, discuss in detail the framework we have developed for the reopening of gyms, leisure centres and the wider fitness industry during social distancing."

The full statement can be read [here](#).

### **Boris Johnson's address to Parliament**

Following the publication of the Government's advice at 2pm, Boris Johnson stood in front of MPs to offer what was largely a repeat of his Sunday night speech, followed by answering questions. First was Labour Leader Sir Keir Starmer's response to the statement, which asked Johnson a series of specific questions. In his response Johnson did little to answer these substantively, preferring instead to talk about the hard work done up to this point and the unique spirit of the British people.



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Johnson did though confirm there would be publication of the guidance for socially distancing in workplaces in the evening of Monday 11 May. Once published, this was given the sign of approval from the Trades Union Congress, a big relief for the Government after a tricky few days. He also announced the Health and Safety Executive would be given additional powers for inspection.

Johnson also confirmed the Chancellor would be setting out changes to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in the Commons today (Tuesday 12 May).

### **Downing Street press conference**

Following his appearance in the House of Commons, Johnson fronted yesterday's daily press conference from Downing Street, alongside CMO Professor Chris Whitty and CSA Patrick Vallance. With the emphasis on questions from the public, the key points included:

- In response to a critical question from the public accusing his address of being “vague”, Johnson encouraged the public to use their “common sense” when deciding what they should and shouldn't do under the new guidelines. He also said meeting multiple friends in the park was “probably pushing it too far”.
- Johnson also said employers should be understanding of employees with childcare issues, and that those who felt they could not go into work should speak to their employer before returning to work.
- Sir Patrick Vallance said he very much hoped we would develop a vaccine, although it could not be guaranteed. He did though say it was unlikely there would be no treatment developed to combat the disease.

### **Expected announcements**

Expect multiple announcements from the Government today pertaining to wage support, guidance for businesses on staying safe in the workplace, and public transport.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak will appear before the House of Commons today to unveil his plans to wind down the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme that allowed millions of workers to be furloughed. He will explain how the Government intends to change its wage support for employees heading back to work in the coming weeks, and outline what new support will be made available to those who cannot go back to work yet.



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Elsewhere in parliament, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps will be speaking to MPs to present the Government's guidance on public transport use, where he will face concerns that the networks may get overcrowded in the near future.

And finally, Business Secretary Alok Sharma will appear before your screens tonight to outline the measures within the Government's newly published [guidelines](#) on staying safe in the workplace during Coronavirus.

### **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](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](#).