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Covid-19 Member Update

Monday 4 May

Summary

Another news-heavy weekend as the world prepares to ease lockdown restrictions in the coming weeks. The UK public can expect to hear more about the Government's plans for a post-lockdown future on Sunday 10 May. The Prime Minister is expected to unveil a "roadmap" to lead Britain out of the coronavirus lockdown, and outline a "new normal" for the country. Based on this weekend's news reports, opening schools, creating better conditions for active travel and tracking people's movements to avoid a second wave of infection are at the top of the Government's priority list.

Right on cue, the Government's "test, track and trace" scheme will be launching today. Health Secretary Matt Hancock will be speaking at tonight's Downing Street press conference to outline the parameters of the scheme, and provide an estimate for when we can expect the scheme to be fully rolled out across the country.

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

ukactive policy calls published

ukactive has today published its policy calls needed to support the physical activity sector in reopening. The plans focus on five areas: workforce, support to rebuild, local authority leisure providers, rent, and children and young people.

ukactive is calling for additional support from the Government in these areas to ensure the sector can reopen sustainably as restrictions are lifted but social distancing remains in place. ukactive is continuing to speak with the Government regularly to discuss plans for reopening the sector, and will continue to ensure members are best placed to make the physical activity sector one of the first to get Britain moving again.

Full details of the policy calls can be found [here](#).

Business leaders call for an extension of the job retention scheme



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Business leaders are urging the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, to offer a 'second wave' of financial support to avoid mass unemployment and bankruptcies. The Government's £40 billion job retention scheme will be running until the end of June, but business groups and the Labour Party are already warning Mr Sunak that the scheme needs to be extended to avoid widespread redundancies come early summer.

The Guardian has the story [here](#).

Downing Street Press Conference Announcements

The weekend began with Health Secretary Matt Hancock announcing on Friday the Government had met the target of 100,000 tests a day by Thursday. This was despite the figure including 40,000 tests mailed out rather than conducted, and following days have seen a reduction in the number of tests. Saturday's and Sunday's press conferences were fronted by Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove. Other key announcements included:

- Hancock lavished praise on those who had helped the Government reach its target of 100,000 a day, saying over 122,000 tests had been conducted. There was, however, some controversy, as Professor John Newton conceded this figure contained over 40,000 tests that had been sent out and not completed. This sent accusations that the Government had manipulated the figures to hit the target.
- Hancock also announced fertility services will restart in the NHS, given the time critical nature of much fertility treatment. He also confirmed the plan to have 18,000 contract tracers in place by the middle of May.
- Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick announced on Saturday an additional £76 million of funding to go to domestic violence charities, following the significant upsurge in incidents during this lockdown period. He also said victims of domestic abuse would be prioritised for local housing.
- On Sunday, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove announced testing had dipped to just over 75,000, showing the Government's 100,000 tests a day target lasted only two days. Gove admitted the Government will have made mistakes in its response to the virus.



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- Also on Sunday, Professor Stephen Powis confirmed the R number, the number of people each carrier of the virus infects, was around 0.7.

Ireland releases plans for reopening

The Irish Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has set out plans to gradually reopen the economy. The country will extend its current lockdown conditions until 18 May, at which point it will begin a phased removal of restrictions. The five stages will take place over three months, beginning with the opening of some retail shops on 18 May.

This will be followed on 8 June by allowing visits to other households (providing social distancing is observed), and on 29 June by the resumption of sporting events behind closed doors and the reopening of restaurants.

20 July will allow people to travel more than 20km, as well as small social gatherings such as weddings and baptisms permitted. On 10 August, schools and universities will be allowed to gradually reopen.

Full details can be found [here](#).

Funding boost to support high street regeneration

On Friday 1 May, the Government announced a £6.1 million funding boost to support high streets and town centres during the coronavirus pandemic. The funding package will see hundreds of local business partnerships across England share £6.1 million to spend on projects that will help their local economies through the uncertainty of lockdown. The money will be paid to local authorities and dispersed to Business Improvement Districts.

Find out more [here](#).

Top up to local business grant funds

On Saturday 2 May, the Government announced that a discretionary fund has been set up to accommodate certain small businesses previously outside the scope of the business grant funds scheme. The funding package is an additional 5% uplift to the £12.33 billion funding previously announced for the Small Business Grants Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund. The fund will be aimed at small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs.



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Expected announcements

Health Secretary Matt Hancock is expected to appear on our screens tonight to launch his testing and tracing programme. The scheme is designed to track all new outbreaks, prevent a second wave of infection, and therefore support the Government in its effort to ease lockdown restriction measures. In the meantime, Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham and NHSX boss Matthew Gould will join this afternoon's joint committee on human rights in parliament to discuss the privacy issues surrounding the new test-and-trace-app.

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

ukactive is also on hand to answer questions arising from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

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](#).