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Covid-19 Member Update

Tuesday 5 May

Summary

With 288 deaths in all settings recorded in the 24 hours before 9am yesterday, the lowest since late March, there continues to be real confidence the UK is indeed past the peak of the disease. Although these figures are always lower immediately after the weekend, it is positive ahead of Sunday's expected announcement of a slight easing of lockdown restrictions.

Yesterday also saw figures announced for the takeup of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, with 6.3 million people revealed to have been furloughed. This is at a cost to the Government of £8 billion, and prompted Chancellor Rishi Sunak to say this was not a "sustainable situation".

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 outlines key policies needed to support the physical activity sector

On Monday 4 May, ukactive published the key policies needed to support the physical activity sector in reopening, as [reported by HCM magazine](#). The plans focus on five areas: workforce, support to rebuild, local authority leisure providers, rent, and children and young people.

These policy areas will be used in discussions with the Government as the necessary support to allow the physical activity and leisure sector to reopen as quickly as possible. They reflect the concern that even after being allowed to reopen, social distancing measures still in place will dramatically reduce income from normal levels. They also raise concerns over the sector being hit with significant bills upon reopening despite months without income.

The full set of policy asks can be found [here](#), and anybody with any questions should contact publicaffairs@ukactive.org.uk



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ukactive CEO speaks to BBC Radio 5 Live

As highlighted yesterday, ukactive CEO Huw Edwards spoke to BBC Radio 5 Live Breakfast on Monday about the policies in more detail, and outlined plans to reopen the fitness and leisure sector.

The interview reflected the work being done with the Government, particularly over this weekend, to develop a roadmap for the sector to reopen once lockdown measures begin to be restricted. The other focus was on the need for continued support from the Government in order to support businesses to stay afloat over the coming months.

The full interview can be heard [here](#).

Launch of new ‘bounce back’ loans for small businesses

HM Treasury yesterday announced the launch of new ‘bounce back’ loans. The scheme will enable small businesses to apply for quick and easy access to loans between £2,000 and £50,000. The loans will be 100% government backed for lenders, and businesses can apply online through a short and simple form.

The Bounce Back Loan scheme is the latest programme in a package of support measures launched by Rishi Sunak in the last two months. To find out more about this scheme, please visit the HM Treasury portal [here](#).

Downing Street press conference announcements

Yesterday’s press conference was chaired by Health Secretary Matt Hancock, supported by National Testing Coordinator Professor John Newton and Deputy Chief Medical Officer Jonathan Van-Tam. Key announcements included:

- As part of the next phase of the Government’s “test, track, and trace” policy, Hancock announced there will be a pilot on the Isle of Wight. This has involved ramping up testing capacity there, and will see the rollout of the NHS Tracing app by the end of the week.
- The strategy will rely on 18,000 people working as contract tracers manually finding those who have been in contact with infected people, while the app will alert people if they have been near somebody who’s been infected.



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- On the five tests the Government has unveiled, Van-Tam said there was progress being made on a number of them, but there would need to be a further sustained fall in deaths before measures could be eased.
- Hancock also confirmed antibody tests were out in the field for survey purposes, and work was ongoing to determine the extent to which people had immunity from the disease after contracting it.

Expected announcements

The Select Committee for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport held an evidence session this morning to hear about the impact of Covid-19 on DCMS Sectors. Sport England CEO Tim Hollingsworth outlined the impact of the coronavirus on the physical activity and sports sector. Hollingsworth highlighted the benefits of sport and physical activity for the physical and mental wellbeing of our communities, and stressed that coronavirus has had a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged communities, who are struggling to gain access to opportunities for physical activity. Read more [here](#).

Elsewhere in parliament, Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance and Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England Jenny Harries appeared before the Health and Social Care Select Committee, where they faced questions on a number of issues including the scale of current infections across the UK, plans for easing lockdown restrictions, and whether the Government's initial 'herd immunity' strategy was the right way to go.

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](#).