



2.04.2020

KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Having recovered from coronavirus, Health Secretary Matt Hancock came out of self-isolation today and led tonight's government announcement.

Mr Hancock was joined by Professor Stephen Powis, the National Medical Director of NHS England, and Professor John Newton, the Director of Health Improvement at Public Health England. The focus of the government's announcements and journalists' questions was testing.

The main announcements this evening were:

- Mr Hancock outlined his 'five pillar' testing strategy:
 - The first pillar is swab testing in Public Health England labs and NHS hospitals to find out if a person currently has the virus. Mr Hancock committed to 25,000 swab tests being available by the end of April at the latest.
 - The second pillar is the creation of new testing capacity with commercial partners, including universities, research companies and commercial organisations such as Amazon and Boots.
 - The third is blood testing, to determine whether people have had the virus and are now immune. When a reliable test is available, it is expected it could be scaled up quickly to very large numbers.
 - The fourth is an ultra high accuracy antibody test to carry out surveillance studies of who has had the virus. Data from this will inform the government's strategy for moving forward.
 - The fifth pillar is the creation of large-scale diagnostics capacity with pharmaceutical giants such as AstraZeneca and GSK.

- Mr Hancock has set a goal of making 100,000 tests available per day across all five of his pillars by the end of April.
- Mr Hancock stated that everyone needs to play their part in this crisis, noting some of his colleagues in the NHS had made the ultimate sacrifice.
 - Responding to a journalist's question, he said premier league football players should consider their pay. Some staff in these clubs have had their wages reduced while they are furloughed.
- Mr Hancock stated that 'Immunity Certificates' are something that the government is looking at to enable people to get back to normal life in time, but that the science of the disease is too immature for these now.

Elsewhere in Covid-19 news....

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

BUSINESS/CYBER

- 1. The Financial Action Task Force yesterday published a [statement](#) addressing Covid-19-related financial crime.**

The Financial Action Task Force ("FATF") has sent a clear message that criminals are attempting to exploit the present situation through "scams, including advertising and trafficking in counterfeit medicines, offering fraudulent investment opportunities and engaging in phishing schemes". The FATF further addresses issues around cybercrime "with criminals attempting to profit from the pandemic by exploiting people in urgent need of care and the goodwill of the public".

This should serve as a stark warning to businesses, as well as consumers, who may be looking at alternative cheap suppliers to replenish their stock or are trying to help wherever they can. As financial struggles sink in for many businesses, cutting costs will become a necessity. Businesses though should ensure that they thoroughly check the background and history of suppliers offering cheaper rates and also of any potential investors. The first port of call should be checking the company's details on Companies House and contacting those they allege to have done business with.

Many businesses have been donating goods and money to assist the NHS and other charitable causes helping to fight the pandemic. Prior to making any donation, businesses should confirm that their donations are going to legitimate charitable organisations or public bodies.

Finally, as businesses are no doubt receiving dozens of Covid-19-related emails per day, they should be extremely cautious of potential viruses and malware lurking within them.

Although the FATF has not raised issues that were not already present before the pandemic, their increasing prevalence is noteworthy. The age-old adage of “if it seems too good to be true, then it probably is” should still be at the forefront of all business owners’ minds.

DISCLAIMER

The above is not intended to be legal advice. Specialist advice should be sought for individual cases where necessary.

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