



6.04.2020

KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab led tonight's government announcements, answering journalists' questions on the Prime Minister's health following his admission to hospital yesterday, the government's lockdown exit strategy and lingering problems with financial support for businesses.

Mr Raab appeared alongside Chief Medical Officer Chris Whitty, who has returned from self-isolation following COVID-19 symptoms, and Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser Prof Dame Angela McLean.

The main announcements this evening were:

- The Prime Minister was admitted to hospital for tests on the advice of his doctor as a precautionary step given his persistent COVID-19 symptoms.
- The Prime Minister is in good spirits and continues to lead government.
- Discussions on the country's exit strategy from lockdown will come after the peak of the virus has passed. To begin these discussions now risks sending mixed messages and could undo the good work we have all done.
- The government's strategy is to at all times ensure there are more intensive care unit beds available than are needed for COVID-19 patients.
- The government is very confident it can develop effective antibody tests. These will be most useful in a later stage of the epidemic, given antibodies may only be detectable after some 21-28 days.
- The Chancellor will set out further details on the wage subsidy scheme and business loans as soon as practicable.
- Responding to a concern that only 1,000 business loans have been agreed by banks through the government scheme, Mr Raab said the government

wanted to encourage banks to lend and to provide the liquidity small and medium-sized businesses need, and that he wants that message conveyed to the banks and acted upon as quickly as possible.

Over the weekend, Michael Gove, also responded to questions over the support measures in place for workers during the pandemic, notably universal credit.

Acknowledging the universal credit scheme was designed to encourage people into work, yet many are unable to work at present owing to the lockdown, Mr Gove stated that universal credit remains the means for giving support to those people who need it most, but that the government keeps the whole welfare system under review to make sure it is supporting people in this difficult time.

Mr Gove also stated the treasury was keeping all its schemes under review, to ensure support was available to businesses, workers and the self-employed.

Elsewhere in COVID-19 news....

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

BUSINESS

1. What are the rules relating to the provision of holiday or temporary accommodation?

The Scottish Chief Medical Officer resigned yesterday after it emerged that she visited her second home on two occasions since the implementation of the government's lockdown. Today, there has been more scrutiny on temporary accommodation and the businesses that provide them.

Airbnb has come under criticism with some of its hosts advertising properties as "Covid-19 retreats". The [government's guidance](#) issued on 24 March 2020 called for accommodation providers to "close for commercial use as quickly as is safely possible". Such businesses were only allowed to keep their sites open for a limited number of reasons, including if remaining open to support key workers or vulnerable groups.

Regulation 6 of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 set out the limited circumstances in which someone is allowed to leave the place they are living. This of course means that people are not allowed to visit their second homes or travel to stay in different accommodation unless it is for the purposes of moving house "where reasonably necessary".

Actively encouraging people to flout the rules and to stay in Airbnb accommodation so that they can have a more comfortable quarantine period is irresponsible and the government has criticised it strongly. It has also added that businesses could be fined for offering such accommodation.

Businesses should therefore be very mindful of the limited reasons that people can leave their home and to not do anything to encourage them to breach the Regulations.

DISCLAIMER

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

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