

The Week in Review

Monday 1 June



“We can now take careful but deliberate steps to reopen our economy”

On Friday, the Chancellor took to the Downing Street podium and confirmed that the Job Retention Scheme will conclude at the end of October. Rishi Sunak set out further details of how employers will have to start sharing the cost from August.

In an uplifting message, Sunak said: *“Over the coming weeks, we can now take careful but deliberate steps to reopen our economy. Across the country, office lights will be turned on and windows thrown open. Work clothes and school uniforms will be pulled out of the wardrobe. Shops and factories will start to hum with activity. As we enter this new phase, things will change.”*

He also announced that the self-employment income scheme will be extended, with applications opening in August for a second and final grant.

Further lockdown easing measures announced

The Thursday daily briefing was led by the Prime Minister, who announced a further easing of lockdown measures, with a step to allow groups of up to six people to meet outside from Monday 1 June (in England). In Wales, any number of people from two different households will be able to meet each other outside from Monday, but beauty spots will remain closed. It comes as First Minister Nicola Sturgeon confirmed people

from two different households, up to a maximum of eight people, were now able to meet outside in Scotland from Friday. In Northern Ireland, groups of up to six people who do not live together can meet outdoors (from 19 May).

In England, outdoor markets and car showrooms will also be able to reopen from 1 June, provided they meet COVID-19 secure guidelines and all other non-essential retail can open from 15 June.

Test and trace up and running

The NHS Test and Trace service went live on Thursday, in England, with 25,000 contact tracing staff and the capacity to trace the 10,000 contacts per day. Announcing the new service, Matt Hancock commented: *“As we move to the next stage of our fight against coronavirus, we will be able to replace national lockdowns with individual isolation and, if necessary, local action where there are outbreaks. This new system will help us keep this virus under control while carefully and safely lifting the lockdown nationally.”* Scotland have launched their new Test and Protect system. Northern Ireland already has its own version of the programme and Wales’ scheme is due to start in early June.

Economic data skewed

Last week, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said the virus is skewing economic data and making it hard to collect, which is in turn making it difficult to understand the full scale of the impact

on the world economy.

They stated: *“Without reliable data, policymakers cannot assess how badly the pandemic is hurting people and the economy, nor can they properly monitor the recovery”*, adding that *“innovative data collection methods”* are needed to tackle the discrepancies in data and assess the extent of the crisis.

On Friday, there were concerns about the possibility of a rise in tensions between the US and China over recent actions in Hong Kong, but the White House press conference was less confrontational than feared. Many global indices closed the month in positive territory.

“British sporting recovery” – on the starting blocks

On Saturday, Culture and Sport Secretary Oliver Dowden informed us that competitive sport will be allowed behind closed doors in England from 1 June, paving the way for the first live action in nearly three months, saying: *“Football, tennis, horse racing, Formula One, cricket, golf, rugby, snooker and others are all set to return to our screens shortly.”* He added: *“We still have a way to go, but for a sporting-loving nation, today really is a significant milestone”*.

Onwards and upwards

We are here to guide you through these uncertain times. Financial advice is key, so please get in touch with any concerns or queries you may have.

The value of investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the full amount you invested. The past is not a guide to future performance and past performance may not necessarily be repeated.