

# 1,000 personnel to represent the Armed Forces at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022

- Long-planned deployment will see hundreds of military personnel support smooth running of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.
- Six serving Armed Forces personnel competing or coaching at the Games.
- 300 personnel supporting with ceremonial duties.

Around 1,000 Armed Forces personnel will be a part of this year's Commonwealth Games in Birmingham –by supporting security, competing for medals, officiating competitions, participating in the opening ceremony and supporting the delivery of a safe and secure event.

Hundreds of Armed Forces personnel will be deployed to Birmingham to support the West Midlands Police Security Operation, the biggest the region has seen.

An opening ceremony on Thursday 28 July will mark the start of the Commonwealth Games, featuring many of the Armed Forces personnel who are in Birmingham for ceremonial duties, civil engagement or competing as athletes.

The Band of HM Royal Marines will provide a fanfare of trumpeters during the ceremony. More than 130 Armed Forces flag raisers will be deployed across the venues to lead the over 280 medal presentations taking place throughout the Games.

## **Minister for the Armed Forces James Heapey said:**

On behalf of the Defence community, I'd like to wish the Armed Forces competitors representing both their nation and their service at the Commonwealth Games the very best of luck.

Alongside our elite athletes in Birmingham will be hundreds of their Armed Forces colleagues, deployed to help ensure the Games run as smoothly and securely as possible.

## **Commander of the military deployment, Brigadier Matt Pierson said:**

I am delighted to be leading the Armed Forces' contribution to the Commonwealth Games. We will play a small but important role in this fantastic sporting event, supporting West Midlands Police and Birmingham 2022.

Our personnel will be raising flags during medal ceremonies, supporting security efforts, and competing for medals. Sport,

health and fitness are core elements of the Armed Forces community – this event shows who we are and what we do. I wish every success to those competing.

The British Army and Royal Air Force will be represented by athletes competing at this year's Games, with Armed Forces personnel taking part in boxing, judo and athletics.

Supported by the Armed Forces' elite athletes programmes, competing service personnel have been given time off their normal duties to focus on their training. Among them is Air Specialist (Class 1) Luke Pollard, a paratriathlete guide for world number one ranked paratriathlete David Ellis.

**Air Specialist (Class 1) Luke Pollard, competing as a paratriathlete guide, said:**

I'm proud to represent not only Team England but also the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the Armed Forces. I do feel a sense of pride at representing my service. I'd love to be able to showcase what the RAF has to offer and how much they value sport.

As part of the Government's long-term planning for the delivery of the Games, a Venue Assistance Force (VAF) made up of Armed Forces personnel has deployed to Birmingham to support local authorities.

Like the military flag raisers, the VAF will be working across the Games' venues, on hand to support the security programme led by West Midlands Police. The VAF is made up of both regular and reservists representing a large number of regiments from across the UK.

Defence is providing a range of standard support to enable the safe delivery of the Games including expert advisers and bomb disposal teams.

**Assistant Chief Constable Matt Ward, Gold Commander for Birmingham 2022 commented:**

WMP have been working on the security plans for Birmingham 2022 since the City won the bid back in 2017 and our partners have been part of that planning every step of the way. If you are visiting the Games, it's likely you'll see a number of different uniforms but we are all working together to deliver a safe and secure Birmingham 2022 for athletes, the Games family, spectators and the public.

This joint approach to security has always been an important part of the overall security plan. We know there's often a real interest in the military being involved with security of events but it's standard practice for them to be part of the planning and delivery

of events of this scale.

It's a great opportunity for our officers to get to work with military colleagues and officers and staff from so many different police forces and organisations and there's a fantastic team spirit, not just inside the stadiums and venues but out on the streets with everyone working together towards the same goal, a safe and truly memorable Birmingham 2022.