

Armed Forces re-deploy to support Welsh Ambulance Service this autumn

The support from the UK Government is being provided through a Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) request. The task will help to ease pressures resulting from the pandemic and ensure the ambulance trust can continue to provide their essential service, including attending life-threatening calls quickly.

Defence personnel will augment the ambulance service with non-emergency drivers who will not operate under blue light conditions. They will attend lower priority calls to help to free up WAST resources for emergency calls where there is an immediate risk to life, such as cardiac arrests.

Personnel are deploying to regions across Wales and are from across the three services.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

“I am proud of the tireless work of all our service personnel during this pandemic. They continue to provide important support, working alongside our dedicated emergency services across the UK.

“The deployment of 110 personnel to support the ambulance service will ensure WAST can continue to deliver their life-saving services.”

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

“Once again the UK’s armed forces are playing a key role in the fight against Covid-19 by supporting the critical work of the Welsh Ambulance Service. I am hugely grateful for their commitment and expertise.

“I would like to extend my gratitude to all those who have worked incredibly hard to ensure our public services deliver for the people of Wales throughout the pandemic.”

Chief Executive of the Welsh Ambulance Service Jason Killens said:

“We’re proud and grateful to be working alongside the military once again, who did a superb job of assisting us on two occasions previously last year.

“The pandemic has presented a challenge like no other, but the last couple of months in particular have meant significant and sustained pressures on our ambulance service, including high levels of demand and an increase in Covid-19 related activity.

“Winter is our busiest time, and having military colleagues on board once more will bolster our capacity and put us in the best possible position to

provide a safe service to the people of Wales.”

In addition to drivers, Defence will provide 3 personnel to support planning at NHS Wales. This is the third deployment of the Armed Forces to support WAST since the pandemic began in March 2020. 68 personnel deployed in April 2020 and 120 personnel augmented dedicated Welsh Ambulance Service staff in December 2020, including Defence medics.

Defence also supported the vaccine rollout in Wales earlier this year and previously deployed during the pandemic to provide specialist planning advice, deliver PPE and support the community testing programme in Merthyr Tydfil.