

Extra 100 Armed Forces personnel to support Scotland's vaccine rollout

An additional 100 Armed Forces personnel have been made available from today (14 December) to accelerate the vaccine rollout in Scotland amid a wave of Omicron infections, bringing the total number of personnel supporting this effort to 221. Further support from the UK Government including Defence is on standby should it be requested or required.

121 personnel have been supporting the vaccine programme across Scotland since early October, and the boosted cohort of personnel are expected to be on task until the end of February 2022.

Alongside supporting the accelerated vaccine programme, 114 Armed Forces personnel are driving ambulances in support of the Scottish Ambulance service. As of today, this support will be extended until the end of March, with 96 personnel remaining on task to provide this life saving service.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Our Armed Forces continue to tirelessly support the Covid-19 vaccination programme in Scotland to give people and communities vital protection against this virus.

This uplift in support will help to get more vaccines into arms faster, working shoulder to shoulder with the dedicated health services.

The 221 personnel supporting the vaccine programme includes health care professionals and general duties personnel who will be working in support of NHS Scotland staff and volunteers, administering vaccines and providing planning expertise.

Personnel on task come from units across the three services – Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force. Some of those deploying have been active on other tasks in Scotland since the pandemic began including community testing.

Secretary of State for Scotland Alister Jack said:

Once again our fantastic British Armed Forces are stepping up in times of need to help tackle Covid-19 in Scotland and across the UK and I pay tribute to them.

The deployment of a further 100 personnel will make a significant contribution to getting people vaccinated in Scotland. As the festive season approaches, when we want to spend time with loved ones, it's more important than ever to be protected. I urge

everyone to book their jobs as soon as they are eligible.

There are now 398 personnel available to support on Operation Rescript tasks in Scotland, the operational name given to Defence's work to support the pandemic response across the UK. This includes around 60 personnel supporting NHS Lanarkshire hospitals.

Support is being provided through the Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) process. Since March 2020, Defence have responded to over 430 MACA requests across the UK.

Brigadier Ben Wrench, Commander Joint Military Command Scotland said:

Whether it be responding to the impacts of storms or national health crises, the members of our Armed Forces are always prepared to deploy at short notice to support the nation and our communities.

I commend the dedication of all those serving and supporting this effort, many of whom will find themselves away from their families and loved ones this Christmas and Hogmanay.

The Armed Forces stand ready to step up and support civil authorities, devolved nations and communities as required in the coming months where the requests meet the MACA principles.

Recently, Defence deployed 134 personnel at short notice to support Aberdeenshire Council conduct welfare checks on vulnerable people and isolated communities impacted by Storm Arwen.