

# Military personnel help to accelerate UK vaccine programme

Working together with local health boards and the NHS, personnel are part of Operation Rescript, the Armed Forces Covid-19 response. They are providing ongoing assistance to administer vaccines, provide logistics and planning support, as well as carrying out surge testing in response to variants of concern.

## **Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, said:**

The Armed Forces continue to show their incredible versatility and flexibility, deploying wherever and whenever they are needed in support of this national vaccination effort.

I am delighted to see that across all corners of the UK, military personnel are working side by side with their NHS counterparts to help get the British public vaccinated as quickly as possible.

## **Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock said:**

We have vaccinated over three quarters of UK adults with a first dose and half of adults with a second dose. That is a huge effort across the healthcare system and beyond – and I am incredibly grateful for the amazing role our armed forces have played in this.

We know how effective the vaccine is, thousands

of lives have been saved and thousands of hospitalisations prevented. These are not just numbers, these are our family, friends and loved ones who have all been protected. Each vaccine brings us one step closer to putting this pandemic behind us. So when you get the call, get the jab.

## **North-West England**

Armed Forces personnel have deployed to Bolton and Blackburn to help the NHS, DHSC and local councils respond to the variants of concern identified in the area. 144 medics from across the Army are working on the vaccine programme in Bolton in addition to 75 personnel who are providing support to mass testing. They are working alongside RE: SILIENT and St Johns Ambulance service.

In nearby Blackburn, 55 personnel from 19 Regiment Royal Artillery are also supporting the testing programme, providing additional capacity to help break chains of transmission.

## **Scotland**

63 members of the Armed Forces will deploy to Lanarkshire and Lothian from Monday 7 June for up to five weeks. 42 service personnel will provide support to NHS Lothian. This will be made up of 36 vaccinators, 4 registered health professionals and 2 command and control managers. They will be split into 4 vaccine support teams who can deploy across Lothian as required.

21 service personnel will also work alongside NHS Lanarkshire and will consist of 18 vaccinators, 2 registered health professionals and one command and control manager. They will form two vaccine support teams and will deploy across Lanarkshire as required.

## **Northern Ireland**

In Northern Ireland, a Vaccine Task Group made up of 100 Combat Medical Technicians and 22 logisticians supported the mass vaccination programme for 8 weeks.

Alongside their Health and Social Care Northern Ireland counterparts, medics administered almost 121,000 vaccines which saw 7% of the population being vaccinated against the virus by the military. Regular and reservist personnel from 32 units across all three services supported the programme at the SSE Arena in Belfast until the end of May.

**Commander Standing Joint Command, General Tyrone Urch said:**

I am incredibly proud of our servicemen and women who have deployed in support of the Department for Health and Social Care, NHS and Health Boards across the United Kingdom to help deliver the vaccination programme efficiently and at pace.

We are delighted to be able to support and complement the incredible work done by health professionals and volunteers across the country and we will continue to deliver anything requested of us.

As part of the UK Government's response to variants of concern, 400 trained vaccinators from across the Armed Forces are available to be deployed when and wherever required. 4,300 service personnel also remain at high readiness and can be called upon to support with Covid-19 tasks across the UK.

This comes in addition to support the Armed Forces have provided around the world, including delivering vaccines to Ascension Island, Falklands, Gibraltar and Tristan da Cunha, and delivering other essential COVID supplies to India and Nepal.