

News story: Military support for snow relief

The military has been using vehicles and personnel to transport essential NHS staff to hospitals and vulnerable people in the community. The military has also been supporting local police forces to assist people stranded on motorways.

The Defence Secretary has met with soldiers from 1 Royal Irish, who have been carrying out vital work transporting health workers in the Shropshire area, which has been hit by heavy snow.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Our Armed Forces are doing an incredible job up and down the country, helping the emergency services, local authorities, and the NHS supporting those in need.

From Scotland to Cornwall, more than 100 personnel from across the forces are making a real difference in getting nurses and doctors to vulnerable and elderly patients, and helping rescue those left stranded in freezing conditions.

I pay tribute to their professionalism, dedication and sense of duty. They are proving once again that Britain can always depend on our troops to protect us no matter the time, no matter the place, and no matter the problem.

I witnessed for myself the vital role they are playing in helping the British people during the treacherous weather which has caused so much difficulty for so many people.

I am extremely grateful for all that our personnel are doing and will continue to do over the weekend – and I want to thank them for answering calls for help across the country.

Military assistance to date:

- 20 RAF personnel and 10 4x4 RAF vehicles are transporting health staff to hospitals and communities in Lincolnshire
- 20 Army soldiers and 10 4x4 vehicles are transporting NHS Scotland staff needed to deliver critical care services to and from Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and the Western General Hospital.
- 20 Army soldiers and 10 4x4s are transporting health staff to hospitals and support health workers in visiting vulnerable people in the community in Shropshire.
- 20 Royal Marines and 10 4x4 vehicles are transporting health staff to hospitals and communities in Devon and Cornwall

- The military is assisting Greater Manchester Police to enable them to access and assist motorists on the M62

Military assistance will continue as necessary during the current adverse weather conditions, and will be regularly reviewed in line with the requirement.

There are three UK standby battalions held at high readiness to respond to UK contingencies and emergencies, including support to local authorities. We have the right people with the right training to respond to a range of contingencies.