

# Second team of UK medics sent to support hospitals in blast-hit Beirut

Press release

The team will help tackle the coronavirus outbreak in Lebanon, which has been made significantly more challenging by the explosion.



UK Emergency Medical Team members at Heathrow airport ahead of their flight to Beirut. Picture: UK Med

A second team of UK-aid funded medics have flown to Lebanon today (Friday 21 August) to help tackle coronavirus in hospitals affected by the explosion.

The team of five, who left from London Heathrow Airport, are part of the UK's Emergency Medical Team (UK EMT) and specialise in intensive care, infection control, and water and sanitation. They will join three colleagues deployed earlier this month, with five more medics expected to join in the coming weeks.

An assessment from the first team of medics from the UK EMT, showed there was an urgent need for help to tackle the coronavirus outbreak in Lebanon, which has been made significantly more challenging by the explosion. The team will share their expertise with the World Health Organisation (WHO), which is coordinating health needs in the city.

International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

Beirut is still facing an uphill battle to get back on its feet, having to deal with the complex double challenge of the aftermath of the explosion at the same time as tackling a worrying increase in coronavirus cases.

I want to thank this team of British heroes, whose expertise will help co-ordinate the response to this tragic disaster.

Lebanon has seen a stark rise in reported coronavirus cases, with the total numbers of cases doubling since the blast.

The full team of 13 experts will meet needs on the ground by joining up with the WHO to coordinate the international response to the health crisis and embedding in two public hospitals to help tackle coronavirus cases.

## **Notes to editors**

- The UK EMT team includes three from an earlier team deployed on 7 August (who will remain in Beirut), today's further five experts, and a team leader who will arrive in Beirut early next week. Four more will travel to Beirut in the coming weeks.
- The UK has committed up to £25 million in response to the Beirut explosion. This includes a package of £20 million to the UN World Food Programme to help provide food for the most vulnerable in Lebanon, £3 million to the British Red Cross and a shipment of medical supplies.
- The UK has provided £743m in support to the Lebanon since the 2011 outbreak of the Syria crisis, supporting some of the most vulnerable people.
- The UK EMT team members have been recruited and prepared by charities UK-Med and Humanity & Inclusion.
- Lebanese Ministry of Health figures show that the total number of cases has increased by 116% from 5,062 (3 Aug) to 10,952 (20 Aug).

Published 21 August 2020