

Thousands of military personnel supporting Covid-19 response

- 60 defence medics will be deployed to support hospitals in need across Northern Ireland
- Armed Forces personnel are now providing support in all of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
- Over 1,500 personnel conducting 23 tasks across the UK

With the deployment of defence medics to hospitals in Northern Ireland, the Armed Forces are now providing support within all four nations of the United Kingdom as part of Operation Rescript.

60 defence medics will support NHS hospitals across Northern Ireland and personnel are expected to be on task for around four weeks, helping deliver front-line services in intensive care units, emergency departments and respiratory wards.

Military support in hospitals has stepped up amid ongoing staff shortages due to Covid-19.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Our Armed Forces are supporting all four corners of the UK as we work to overcome this pandemic and ensure communities and the NHS are able to rebuild.

I'm proud of our personnel from across all services for their talent, hard work and perseverance throughout the pandemic.

Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis said:

The UK Government is providing assistance to Northern Ireland at a crucial time, when healthcare capacity is urgently required to continue treating patients during the Covid pandemic.

The support of military colleagues to help with this vital work demonstrates the Government's continuing commitment to meet the needs of the whole of the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland.

Support is being provided through the Military Assistance to the Civil Authorities (MACA) process. There are 23 open Operation Rescript tasks with 1,985 personnel assigned to provide support. Since March 2020, Defence has responded to over 440 MACA requests across the UK.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

I am immensely grateful to the thousands of military personnel providing crucial support to the NHS and its hardworking staff.

Armed forces members are being deployed in a range of roles across the UK – from ambulance drivers and front-line support in hospitals, to assisting the vaccine rollout.

In England, 285 personnel continue to support the vaccine rollout.

Ambulance services are also being supported across England, with 170 personnel supporting the North West Ambulance Service, 112 providing support to the Yorkshire Ambulance Service and 69 to the East Midlands Ambulance Service.

In Wales, 313 Armed Forces members are continuing to support the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust, increasing the resilience of emergency responders during the winter period.

66 personnel are currently supporting the vaccine rollout in Wales, a task that runs until mid-February.

In Scotland, 96 personnel are on task in support of the Scottish Ambulance Service until the end of March. Additionally, there are nearly 100 currently supporting NHS hospitals in Scotland with support to the vaccine rollout there as well; both tasks will draw down during February.

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.