

Council drafts in military help

Military personnel will be providing specialist help to ensure that some of the most vulnerable people in the city are able to get from their homes to much needed medical and other emergency locations after the Council submitted a request to the Scottish Government and Ministry of Defence.

Talks are still ongoing, but under the plans, soldiers will be helping local residents from the hardest hit areas of the city, as well as those who need access to transport for medical or emergency reasons. They will also help to clear special locations such as doctors surgeries, care homes and hospitals.

Council staff will continue to concentrate on general snow clearance in residential areas as well as the continual clearing of Category 1, 2 and 3 roads.

Edinburgh has experienced the worst snowfall since 1963 and the council say that gritters are continuing to work 24 hours a day to keep the city moving.

Councillor Robert Aldridge, Environmental Leader, said:- "Edinburgh is the first authority in Scotland to seek help from the military to ensure our most vulnerable residents get the support they need to ensure access to hospital and other emergency services. In these special cases, identified by the Council, soldiers will be working hard to make sure these people get the treatment they need. Our own staff will continue to carry out snow clearance and gritting to keep the city moving.

The Council believes it has already brought in more contractors than any other local authority in Scotland to help deal with the exceptional snowfalls, which are the worst the

city has seen in nearly 50 years. Up to 30 inches of snow have fallen in parts of the capital. Despite constant gritting, ploughing and other snow clearing work, by hundreds of staff, fresh heavy snowfall on Monday has set back the Council's 24/7 efforts in the previous week.