

Coronavirus – additional troops drafted in to assist in vaccine response

An additional 100 Armed Forces personnel have been made available to accelerate the vaccine rollout in Scotland amid the wave of Omicron infections.

This brings the total number of personnel supporting the vaccination programme to 221.

121 personnel have been supporting the vaccine programme across Scotland since early October and they are expected to be engaged in the programme for the next two months

Alongside supporting the vaccine programme, 114 Armed Forces personnel are driving ambulances to support the Scottish Ambulance service. This support has been extended until the end of March, with 96 personnel providing the life saving service.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said: “Our Armed Forces continue to tirelessly support the Covid-19 vaccination programme in Scotland to give people and communities vital protection against this virus.

“This uplift in support will help to get more vaccines into arms faster, working shoulder to shoulder with the dedicated health services.

“The 221 personnel supporting the vaccine programme includes

health care professionals and general duties personnel who will be working in support of NHS Scotland staff and volunteers, administering vaccines and providing planning expertise.

“Personnel on task come from units across the three services – Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force. Some of those deploying have been active on other tasks in Scotland since the pandemic began including community testing.”

Brigadier Ben Wrench, Commander Joint Military Command Scotland said: “Whether it be responding to the impacts of storms or national health crises, the members of our Armed Forces are always prepared to deploy at short notice to support the nation and our communities.

“I commend the dedication of all those serving and supporting this effort, many of whom will find themselves away from their families and loved ones this Christmas and Hogmanay.”