



Ministry of Defence

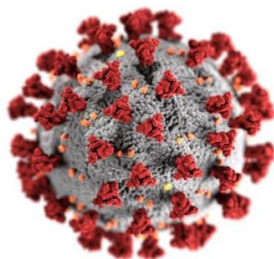
Coronavirus Cases in Defence: Number of COVID-19 tests in Defence & positive cases in the UK armed forces

As at 2 September 2022

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Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause disease in people and animals. COVID-19 refers to the “coronavirus disease 2019” and is a disease that can affect the lungs and airways. The World Health Organization classified COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. This fortnightly official statistic provides information on the number of Defence personnel who have had a COVID-19 PCR test administered through the UK national testing programme; and for the UK armed forces, the number of positive cases of COVID-19.

Key Points



- As at 2 September 2022:
 - 32,225 armed forces personnel had a positive test for COVID-19 recorded in their medical record.

From 14 June 2022 the Ministry of Defence ceased the routine reporting of PCR tests for COVID-19. Please refer to previous publications and the associated data tables for this bulletin to access the historical numbers and time series.

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Background quality report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/number-of-covid-19-tests-in-defence-and-positive-cases-in-the-uk-armed-forces-2021>.

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Introduction

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause disease in people and animals. They can cause the common cold or more severe diseases, such as COVID-19. COVID-19 refers to the “coronavirus disease 2019” and is a disease that can affect the lungs and airways. The World Health Organization classified COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. A pandemic is where a disease is prevalent over a whole country or the world.

Defence, in line with the rest of the country, continues to follow guidance as provided by the UK government and devolved administrations.

[Living safely with respiratory infections, including COVID-19 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-safely-with-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19)

In line with this plan, from 1 April 2022 the legal requirement in England to self-isolate for positive cases has been removed. Universal testing for the general public has now ceased as part of the Government’s strategy to live with and manage the virus. Defence may retain some minimal testing capabilities and continues to balance COVID related risks and Defence outputs across all establishments.

In April 2020 the House of Commons Defence Committee (HCDC) requested that the MOD provide fortnightly updates on the numbers of Defence personnel tested for COVID-19, and positive cases in the UK armed forces.

Findings

Positive test results in the UK armed forces

Following a test for COVID-19, the results are provided to the individual's primary health care provider. For UK armed forces personnel, results are sent to Defence Primary Health Care (DPHC) and records show that, as at 2 September 2022, a minimum of **32,225** UK armed personnel had tested positive for COVID-19 (**Table 1**).

Table 1: UK armed forces personnel¹ with a positive COVID-19 test result, by service and location², numbers

As at 2 September 2022

Service/ Location	ALL
All services	32,225
Navy	9,013
Army	14,377
RAF	8,835
All locations	32,225
UK	27,775
Overseas	4,450

Source: DMICP and NOTICAS.

¹ Personnel include all UK armed forces regular and reserve, trained and untrained personnel.

² Location is where the positive test result for the individual was first entered. This is not necessarily where personnel are currently located or where they were first exposed to COVID-19.

Methodology

This section provides a brief summary of the methodology and data sources; more detailed information is available in the Background Quality Report for this bulletin.

Positive COVID-19 Test Data

It is the responsibility of UK armed forces personnel to inform their military GP of the outcome of their COVID-19 test. The information on positive test results are then documented in their military healthcare record by Defence Primary Health Care (DPHC).

UK armed forces personnel with a confirmed test result of COVID-19 were identified using;

- Electronic medical records (Defence Medical Information Capability Programme, DMICP) with a COVID-19-related Read code. Please note that DMICP is a live data source and subject to change. Date of data extract 5 September 2022.
- Notification of Casualty (NOTICAS) data where a positive test for COVID-19 was recorded. A casualty notification is raised when a member of the UK armed forces is admitted to hospital for more than 72 hours and/or where there is serious risk to life.

Location of where personnel were diagnosed with COVID-19 was identified as the first location at which a positive test result was entered for that individual. This is not necessarily where personnel are currently located or where they were first exposed to COVID-19.

The voluntary reserves not undertaking MOD tasks receive their primary medical care from the NHS. Any information on COVID-19 entered in an NHS record is not held by MOD thus has not been included in the figures presented.

MOD civilian personnel receive their primary medical care from the NHS. Their results are sent to the individual and their NHS GP, therefore Defence does not hold information on the number of positive tests for civilian personnel.

Limitations of the positive test data for UK armed forces:

- The reporting process relies on the individual reporting the positive test result to their military medical centre.
- Positive tests results were sourced from the military medical record, DMICP, using Read codes from the data warehouse where the Read code indicated a positive test for COVID-19 or coronavirus. Information entered using free text has not been included as the information is not held in the central data warehouse; therefore, the figures provided are a minimum.
- NOTICAS data relies on the chain of command/line manager and the medical officer completing the form documenting that a positive test has been received, thus the figures provided are a minimum.
- The data presented is the total number of cases, it is not possible from the data held to report how many personnel are affected by COVID-19 at a point in time.

DMICP and NOTICAS are live data sources and subject to change due to late reporting. Thus, the total number of new positive cases cannot simply be derived by subtracting the number of positive cases from the total presented in the previous fortnightly bulletin.

Revisions

There are no regular planned revisions of this bulletin. Amendments to previously published figures may be identified during the compilation of this bulletin. This will be addressed in one of two ways:

- Where the number of figures updated is small, figures will be updated and an explanation for the revision will be given in this section of the bulletin.
- Where the number of figures updated is substantial, the revisions to the table, together with the reason for the revisions, will be identified in the commentary at the beginning of the relevant chapter / section, and in the commentary above affected tables.

Glossary

Army - The British Army consists of the General Staff and the deployable Field Army and the Regional Forces that support them, as well as joint elements that work with the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. Its primary task is to help defend the interests of the UK.

Coronavirus - Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause disease in people and animals. They can cause the common cold or more severe diseases, such as COVID-19.

COVID-19 - COVID-19 refers to the “coronavirus disease 2019” and is a disease that can affect the lungs and airways. It is caused by a type of coronavirus.

COVID Support Force (CSF) – UK armed forces personnel stood at readiness to assist public services with their response to COVID-19.

Defence Medical Information Capability Programme (DMICP) - The DMICP programme commenced during 2007 and comprises an integrated primary Health Record (iHR) for clinical use and a pseudo-anonymised central data warehouse.

Full time reserve service - are personnel who fill service posts for a set period on a full-time basis while being a member of one of the reserve services, either as an ex-regular or as a volunteer.

Lateral Flow Device/Test (LFD) - used to test for COVID-19, similar to a pregnancy test, used for mass testing by schools/employers to test individuals who cannot work at home and maybe asymptomatic. This test gives results within two hours.

Lockdown - Lockdown is the shutting down of all non-essential activities to slow the spread of COVID-19. In the UK, this has seen strict limits imposed on daily life. The first UK lockdown was applied on 27 March 2020. This has formed the basis for each nations’ stay at home guidance.

Mobilised reservists - are volunteer or regular reserves who have been called into permanent service with the regular forces on military operations under the powers outlined in the Reserve Forces Act 1996.

Navy - Royal Navy, the sea-going defence forces of the UK, and Royal Marines, sea-going soldiers. Excludes the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Service (RFA).

NOTICAS - Notification of casualty is the name for the formalised system of reporting casualties within the UK armed forces.

Pandemic - A pandemic is where a disease is prevalent over a whole country or the world. The World Health Organization classified COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020.

PCR COVID-19 test - The PCR COVID-19 test is the polymerase chain reaction test and is used when individuals have COVID symptoms, for confirmation of a positive test, if an individual has received an unclear result or if a member of the National Tactical Response Group. Tests are sent to a laboratory and can take up to 3 days for results to be available.

Top level budgets - The MOD comprises seven top-level budgets. The head of each TLB is personally accountable for the performance and outputs of their organisation.

Royal Air Force (RAF) - the aerial defence force of the UK.

UK Armed Forces - full time UK armed forces personnel, including nursing services and Gurkhas, naval activated reservists, mobilised reservists, Military Provost Guarding Service (MPGS), Non-Regular Permanent Service (NRPS) and reservist personnel. Unless otherwise stated, includes all trained and untrained personnel.

UK StratCom – UK Strategic Command, provides strategic and operational integration across the five war-fighting domains

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