

Reservist at heart of the North's mass vaccination effort



Gerard is pictured at York's newly operating mass Covid-19 vaccination on the city's Tadcaster Road. Copyright YH RFCA 2021.

Pictured above at York's newly operating vaccination centre, Reservist, Major Gerard Hardy (Royal Logistics Corps) has been mobilised in support of the national Covid-19 effort.

Major Hardy is currently lead military liaison officer for the vaccine taskforce in the region. His team is delivering vital military support to underpin the roll-out of mass Covid-19 vaccinations by the NHS across the Yorkshire and the North East.

I head a team that includes 19 full-time regular British Army medics and our role is logistics planning and supporting the mobilisation of new sites as vaccination centres.

I'm the only Reservist on the team and one of my tasks is to deploy medics to plug any shortfalls the NHS may have in manpower. So, for example, we have a team doing Covid vaccinations in the North East and have been helping to prepare a site in York for the start of mass vaccinations.

In his civilian life, Gerard is a dad of two and the schools liaison manager for the RFCA for Yorkshire and the Humber.

The country is facing a historic health challenge and so it's been good that my role in the reserves has given me the opportunity to get involved and make a positive contribution.

Aspiring pilot Mya among youngsters joining the cadets during lockdown

The 12-year-old from Kirkburton, Huddersfield, is one of dozens young people from across Yorkshire who have become cadets during lockdown.

Air cadets is fun – even virtually

Mya who is a pupil at Kirkburton Middle School is enjoying all that her local unit, 868 (Mirfield) Squadron, has to offer, albeit virtually.

We meet online once or twice a week and get to do things I would never get the chance of anywhere else.

We've had a tour of the Houses of Parliament, talks about in-flight safety and we've even learned about space which was really exciting.

It will be a while before I get to meet anyone face-to-face but I know when I do I will be nervous but happy too.

Being a cadet is a step on her way

Mya's Mum Kirsti said:

She's dreamed of being a pilot since she was very small and being an Air Cadet is one step nearer for her.

She's so keen on flying that we bought her a flying experience where she went up on a flight for her 10th and 11th birthdays.

When she was ten, she even wrote to Richard Branson asking for tips on becoming a woman pilot.

Joining the cadets

Mya's Squadron Commander, Flight Lieutenant Peter Doubell, said:

It's great that young people are continuing to join the cadets during this lockdown period and it's a tribute to the work of our adult volunteers and instructor cadets who put so much effort into providing engaging activities for our cadets to do online.

Obviously, it will be fantastic for everyone when things finally get back to normal. But in the meantime we're very much making the most of the opportunities online technologies offer our young people.

£23 million Seafood Disruption Support Scheme now open

Seafood exporting businesses across the UK that have been affected by the challenges of adjusting to new requirements for exporting to the EU [can apply from today](#) for financial support from the UK Government.

The UK-wide Seafood Disruption Support Scheme will provide up to £23 million of financial assistance to businesses that suffered a financial loss because of delays related to the export of fresh or live fish and shellfish to the EU during January 2021. The fund will be paid retrospectively to cover losses incurred between 1-31 January 2021.

Alongside the Seafood Disruption Support Scheme, the UK Government has been offering targeted support to help exporters with new processes. This includes the Seafood Exports Working Group, meeting twice a week to troubleshoot issues raised by the industry; and a newly established [Scottish Seafood Exports Task Force](#).

Meeting for the first time this week, the taskforce will draw together government officials and industry representatives from the catching, processing and aquaculture sectors to specifically driving forward the seafood sector in Scotland.

The fishing and seafood sector is also set to benefit from significant government investment with a £100m fund to help modernise fishing fleets, the fish processing industry, and rejuvenate a historic and proud industry in the UK, on top of the £32m that will replace EU funding this year.

The Seafood Disruption Support Scheme, [first announced](#) on 19 January, has been made available in recognition of the unique circumstances currently affecting the seafood exporting sector at a time when the industry is facing lower market prices and demand due to the pandemic.

The scheme, administered by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) on behalf of Defra, is a UK-wide fund offering financial assistance based on a proportion of losses that can be verified up to a maximum of £100,000 per business.

Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis said:

Seafood exporting businesses across the UK can apply from today for support from this £23 million scheme, reflecting the unique challenges faced by the sector.

We will continue to work closely with the fisheries and seafood industry through our Seafood Exports Working Group to troubleshoot any issues that cause delays to the export of these highly perishable goods.

UK Government Minister for Scotland David Duguid said:

While recognising that huge efforts went into preparing for the required changes as we exited the EU, there are many who have incurred losses through no fault of their own. The UK Government is, therefore, stepping up with the Seafood Disruption Support Scheme.

I have been engaging with the industry for many months and continue to work with all sections of the seafood sector in Scotland as we move to maximise future opportunities and adapt to new rules.

Secretary of State for Wales, Simon Hart said:

The Seafood Disruption Support Scheme highlights the UK Government's commitment to Welsh exporters who are currently facing a uniquely challenging period.

We want to back our fantastic Welsh businesses and I encourage all who are eligible to apply for this support.

Qualifying businesses for the Seafood Disruption Support Scheme must be registered at Companies House or have evidence that they are a sole trader, partnership or other legal entity, and must meet the following conditions: having fewer than 250 employees, an annual turnover of under £36 million, and less than £18m on their balance sheet.

Applicants must be able to evidence the expected value of the consignment. Shipments affected by export rules that prevent the movement of goods to the EU will be outside the scope of the scheme. The call for applications closes on 28 February 2021 and, if successful, payments are expected to be issued during March. Further eligibility conditions apply and are outlined in the [full scheme guidance published on the MMO website](#).

The Marine Management Organisation also offers a ['one stop shop' for export guidance](#); Defra and HMRC will also be offering targeted, proactive and hands-

on support to fisheries exporters to help them successfully meet the new requirements. This includes new training package and focused workshop sessions.

ENDS

Government to introduce tougher measures and enforcement rules for quarantined passengers

- Heavy financial penalties and potential jail time for non-compliance
- All passengers travelling to England to take mandated COVID-19 tests on day 2 and day 8 of quarantine
- Those who have been to a 'red list' country required to purchase 'quarantine package' covering hotel and testing
- 16 hotels contracted so far for an initial 4,600 rooms

Tough new enforcement measures – from fixed penalty notices to imprisonment – have been introduced, as [the Health and Social Care Secretary set out details of the government's new quarantine measures](#).

Under the changes announced, from 15 February all arrivals at English ports will be required to undertake 2 mandatory COVID-19 tests – on day 2 and day 8 of their 10-day quarantine.

The new measures build on those already in place, which include refusing entry to non-UK residents from 'red list' countries. All passengers, no matter which country they have travelled from, are already required to provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken no more than 3 days before departure and must self-isolate on arrival. A passenger locator form must also be completed with fines for those who fail to comply.

From Monday, anyone arriving who has been in a country on the [UK's travel ban list](#) in the previous 10 days will be required to purchase a quarantine package. Bookings will be made through a dedicated online portal and will include:

- assigned government transportation
- food and drinks
- accommodation in a government-approved facility
- security
- welfare
- testing

The charge for a single adult will be £1,750.

To ensure compliance, fines will be issued and will range from £5,000 rising to £10,000 for arrivals who fail to quarantine in a designated hotel. A £1,000 penalty will also be given to any international arrival who fails to take a mandatory test, followed by a £2,000 penalty to any international arrival who fails to take the second mandatory test. This will be accompanied by an automatic extension of the quarantine period to 14 days.

Passenger locator forms will now not only detail their travel journey but also their quarantine and testing package. Anyone attempting to conceal that they have travelled in a 'red list' country on their form could face a £10,000 fine or prosecution and up to 10 years in prison.

The Health and Social Care Secretary said:

Our fight against this virus has many fronts and, just as we're attacking this virus through our vaccination programme, which is protecting more people every day, we're strengthening our defences through these vital measures so we can protect the progress that we've worked so hard to accomplish.

The compliance and enforcement regime is end-to-end, and all passengers should expect to be checked at various points throughout their journey, such as:

- by carriers at the time of departure
- by airport staff throughout their journey
- by Border Force officers on arrival
- spot checks by police, where appropriate, for those quarantining at home

Government has been working closely with the aviation industry and the country's major airports including Heathrow, Gatwick and Birmingham to designate arrival ports. These airports account for the vast majority of international arrivals into England and will allow for close monitoring. Anyone arriving at a non-designated port who has visited a 'red list' country will receive a fixed penalty notice and still be required to quarantine in a managed quarantine facility. Government has so far contracted 16 hotels with 4,600 rooms and more will be secured as needed.

There will be a security presence throughout, with personnel directing travellers on arrival, in transit and on arrival at the managed quarantine facilities. Security will also be present to ensure passengers remain at their facility and, where necessary, police will be called upon to provide additional support.

Any passengers travelling back to England from countries not on the travel ban list will be required to quarantine at home for the same period (10 days) and abide by the same stringent testing regime. In both cases, tests must be booked from a list of government-approved test providers. Test to Release will continue to be in operation – however, arrivals will still be required to purchase the 2-testing package.

Guidelines for travellers will be published on GOV.UK and the booking portal will go live on Thursday.

Summary of how the current rules for passengers are enforced:

- firstly, passengers must show proof of a negative test in the 3 days before departure
- they must also complete a passenger locator form in the 2 days before arriving in the UK
- carriers must check both of these for every passenger before they board the plane
- passengers are then checked again by frontline airport staff and Border Force upon arrival – passengers arriving without a completed form and negative test face a £500 fine and the airline faces a £2,000 fine
- if they have been in a red-listed country in the past 10 days, they will be denied entry to the UK unless they have a residency right
- all passengers must then self-isolate at the place they are staying for 10 days after they arrive – we have enhanced these spot checks to make sure people are self-isolating and they may be referred for police action including a fine of up to £10,000
- we have also increased checks for those self-isolating and by police at ports and airports

Norfolk potato company makes amends for polluting river

The discharge of sludge into a stream during factory cleaning has led to a Norfolk potato producer handing £14,000 to charity.

Albert Bartlett and Sons (Airdrie) Ltd allowed sludge resulting from routine weekend cleaning of its Worstead-based factory, to enter the channel and flow into the Smallburgh Stream in September 2019. Lack of monitoring meant the sludge was not detected and was pumped away, making its way through a network of tanks, to discharge into the river.

As a result, the company paid £14,000 to the Norfolk Rivers Trust, in what is known as an enforcement undertaking. The company also had to pay costs, including those of the Environment Agency.

The money will go to support the charity's work in the creation of aquatic habitats, conservation and restoration, education, and providing advice on land management and farming.

The Environment Agency accepted the offer from Albert Bartlett and Sons Ltd in recognition of a number of factors. These included the fact that the pollution was limited and had no lasting impact on the stream, that the

discharge was the result of negligence rather than dangerous or foolhardy behaviour, and that the company had since spent a lot of money on infrastructure and systems improvement to prevent a recurrence.

Environment Agency Environment Officer Stephen Grice, who was involved in the investigation, said:

It is important that all companies take action to avoid polluting the environment through careful consideration of their processes and procedures, and the monitoring of their operations.

In this case, Albert Bartlett and Sons fully cooperated with the investigation and gave frank and helpful information to the investigators.

Enforcement undertakings allow companies and individuals to make amends for breaching environmental regulations, including through a financial contribution to an environmental project.

To agree this type of civil sanction, the Environment Agency must be satisfied the offender will make changes to its operations, to prevent future breaches of permitting legislation.

The Environment Agency continues to prosecute organisations and individuals where evidence shows high levels of culpability and serious environmental harm.

Notes for editors

Albert Bartlett and Sons Ltd was sanctioned under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010 (as amended).