

In order to review the latest revised national guidance, a COVID-19 JOPG was held on the 7 Jan '21. The General Staff reviewed the issues raised and provided the necessary Decisions and Guidance. The **medical force protection** of all personnel remains the priority of the General Staff. We will continue to monitor any further changes in measures or restriction levels to limit the spread of COVID-19, in line with Government guidance. Where necessary, JOPG meetings will be conducted followed by General Staff Decision Briefs.

- 1) The following **Decisions** were provided by the General Staff:
 - a) Defence Forces personnel **currently** deployed overseas **should** avail of the opportunity to receive a booster vaccination **if offered and if the vaccine meets the approved DMB conditions.**
 - b) In the current COVID-19 environment, there will be **no change to the restriction on RDF overnight training.** This situation will be reviewed NLT 15 FEB 22.

- 2) The following **Updates and Guidance** were provided by the General Staff:
 - a. The Standing Working Group (SWG) on Vaccinations in the Defence Forces are requested to review the current Defence Forces guidance with respect to a number of areas such as; the requirement for vaccination for induction and for deployment on COVID-19 facing activities, the requirement for booster vaccinations for continued deployment overseas and the use of Antigen Testing for certain Defence Forces activities (e.g. specified courses). Thereafter, the SWG will make recommendations to the General Staff for consideration.
 - b. **CMU** will examine the implementation of a **system for capturing and recording information on serving personnel's vaccination/booster status, in line with GDPR,** and bring forward a proposal for approval by General Staff.
 - c. For the foreseeable future, **the conduct of meetings and conferences will, where possible take place virtually,** in order to minimise participants interacting with persons outside of their pods.
 - d. J 3&5 supported by CMU will continue to **plan and coordinate the delivery of booster vaccinations for members of 119 Inf Bn UNIFIL** deployed in theatre.
 - e. **OPERATION FORTITUDE** continues with 116,959 personnel deployed on operations to date. As of 07 JAN'22 the national positivity rate is 50.4%, this is a sharp increase on positivity rate of 13.7%, reported at the last COVID JOPG. The total number of **positive COVID-19 cases within the Defence Forces** on 07 JAN '22 is **325**, which is an increase of **266** since the last COVID-19 JOPG on 16 DEC '21.
 - f. 1 Bde ICCW with D Engr will investigate the potential use and benefit of **HEPA filters for Defence Forces facilities.**