

Quarter of Scottish coronavirus deaths from care homes

A quarter of the deaths related to Covid-19 recorded in Scotland have been care home residents.

The charity Age Scotland is now demanding better medical care for care home residents after the National Records of Scotland revealed today's figures. Almost 70% of Covid-19 deaths are people aged 75 and over.

Brian Sloan, Age Scotland chief executive, said: "It is devastating to learn that 237 care home residents in Scotland have died as a result of coronavirus. The fear we have had over the past few weeks about the impact this is having on some of the people most at risk has now sadly become a reality.

"No age group is immune but these grim figures highlight once again the devastating effect that this virus has on the lives of older people.

"Each and every death is a tragic loss to those who knew and loved them. Care homes must be supported with everything they need to prevent and stop the spread of this virus among residents and staff.

"It is more important now than ever that older people know that their lives matter. We must have assurances that care home residents have fair and equal access to medical treatment. Decisions about treatment should be made on a case-

by-case basis, through open discussions with doctors, patients, their families and other healthcare professionals and not by broad assumptions. There is never an excuse to use a person's age as a factor when deciding on medical care or admission to hospital. To do so would be blatant discrimination.

"We know care home staff across Scotland are working tirelessly in very difficult circumstances to provide the highest standards of care for their residents. It is imperative that social care and care home staff are not seen as second tier. They are very much frontline workers delivering critical services that keep people alive. They must be given robust protection equipment to keep themselves and their residents safe from infection. They should never be expected to work in an unsafe environment.

"We also urgently need more widespread testing to be made available for everyone who needs it, whether they work in a hospital, care home or community setting.

"Unfortunately we expect more older residents of care homes in Scotland will die in the coming days, weeks and months as a result of coronavirus. Care homes are close knit communities where staff and residents love and care for one another, never more so than now when family members cannot visit their loved ones. Older residents and their carers deserve our full support as they navigate this difficult path ahead."

The National Records of Scotland publishes the figures each Wednesday. Today they announced: "Between 6th April to 12th April, 608 deaths relating to Covid-19 have been registered, up from 282 deaths in the previous week, 30th March to 5th April.

"To place these statistics in context, the total number of deaths registered in Scotland from 6th April to 12th April was 1,969. The average number of deaths registered in

the same week over the last five years was 1,100. Registered deaths involving Covid-19 from 6th April to 12th April accounted for 31% of all deaths registered in that week.”