

Redmill – relatives told numbers were the same as Saturday

A relative of one of the residents at HC One's home in East Whitburn has contacted us about the complete lack of communication from the owners of the home which led them to find out the true figures in the press today.

The relative was told in a phone call this morning that the numbers of people affected remained the same as they had been told on Saturday – firstly that 9 residents and 7 members of staff had tested positive for coronavirus. Since then they were told that one person had died, a further 10 residents had tested positive and another 2 members of staff also had coronavirus.

So according to HC One's helpline this morning the number remained at 19 residents and 9 members of staff.

Our reader was reassured that their mother was okay. After that, HC One refused to divulge any updates on the numbers of those affected among the 62 residents, but then this afternoon, NHS Lothian issued the news that 53 people are affected and further rounds of testing are being carried out. Eventually HC One were persuaded to confirm the actual number.

The reader, who prefers to remain anonymous, explained: "I

have not seen my mother since March, although my brother who lives locally has visited. When visits could only take place outside the gazebo which was put up for shelter was erected in a windy and dreary car park. It could have been better placed. My mother was shivering with cold when my brother met with her. That is one thing but this complete lack of communication persisted until my sister in law managed to talk to an Area Manager who is now in the home who eventually confirmed the numbers quoted in the press are accurate. Although the carers are good, the communication has not always been the best.

“You can imagine the shock and upset when I read reports from yourself. Why was this information denied to families?”

A spokesperson for the home said to The Edinburgh Reporter this evening that it was difficult for them as they are not in charge of either the NHS testing which comes back in batches and not all at once. They said they were also not in control of the timing of the news released by NHS Lothian. He said: “We are in regular contact with the next of kin of our residents, which includes providing proactive telephone and written updates at the weekend, and again today, which detailed the latest test results at the time those calls were made. Testing is administered by the NHS and Public Health Teams, with samples taken over a number of days and results returned to us sporadically. We are still awaiting some test results being returned meaning the picture continues to develop. We are endeavouring to relay the latest information to everyone as quickly as we can and adapt the information we provide as it changes throughout the day.

“Families can contact the home directly at any time for information on their loved one and they will receive proactive updates on any changes in the health of their loved one. Families can also reach us via our central Relatives Support Line. We are also increasing the number of tablet computers at the home so that we can facilitate more video calls for families, as we know how important it is that everyone remains

connected and informed. We have received a great many positive comments from families and we are very grateful for their ongoing support.”

The response to this outbreak is being led by NHS Lothian, but West Lothian Council through the West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership also has a role. A West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership spokesperson said: “This is a private care facility, but we are providing HC One with assistance through our Care Home Support Team. Our thoughts are with the families and staff affected by this outbreak at this time.”

Lothian MSP, Miles Briggs, said earlier: “My thoughts are with the families and loved ones who have died from this cruel virus at these care homes.

“Since the start of the covid-19 outbreak care homes have been by far where the highest proportion of deaths have been, with residents at higher risk to Covid-19 and living under the same roof.

“SNP Ministers have failed to introduce effective infection prevention measures comprehensively across all care homes, which has left residents at greater risk.”

The spokesperson for HC One continued: “Our thoughts and sympathies are with all families who have lost a loved one from coronavirus and we are doing our utmost to support them during this difficult time.

“Following routine testing, we can confirm Redmill care home is experiencing a coronavirus outbreak. We are taking all necessary precautions to minimise the risk of transmission to other colleagues and residents. This includes continuing to implement our robust infection control measures across the home and closing the home to non-essential visitors.

“Our senior team are supporting local colleagues and

coordinating our response to the outbreak, and we are collectively working closely with NHS Lothian and Public Health as we navigate this next period.

“We are in regular contact with the next of kin of our residents, and we are grateful for their ongoing support and understanding. We are also proud of our colleagues and how they have shown huge dedication and commitment to our Residents.”



It was HC One who owned Home Farm in Portree, Skye which was eventually bought over by NHS Highland for a sum in the region of £900,000 after 10 residents there died.