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# First care home to receive vaccine in Scotland hit with new Covid outbreak

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The first care home to give residents the [Covid-19](#) vaccine has been hit by an outbreak of the virus.

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Groups representing families said they knew of other homes where residents had been treated but later developed symptoms.

Abercorn Care Home in **Hamilton** received the Pfizer vaccine on December 14.

That vaccine, the first in the UK to be given a safety licence, is most effective after two doses, the pharma firm says.

Annie Innes, 90, who moved into the home last year, was first to get the jab. Her family said she was not among the new cases.

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Another 51 residents were then inoculated before it was rolled out at hubs across the country.

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But **NHS** Lanarkshire now says it is working with care home providers Sanctuary Care to manage an outbreak at the facility.

The number of cases have not been confirmed but it is understood to include residents and staff.

A row broke out last week after the Scottish Government announced it was extending the recommended length of time between injections.

Instead of getting a second dose within 21 days, patients will now get it after 12 weeks to spread out supplies.

Doctor groups, including BMA Scotland, have voiced concerns over the move.

The first injection gives nine out of 10 people a level of protection against Covid-19. A follow-up jab was found to increase immunity to 94 per cent.

However, tests revealed that the Pfizer drug's efficacy only kicked in up to three weeks after the initial treatment.

The outbreak will raise further questions about the decision to delay a second dose.

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Professor Hugh Pennington, emeritus professor of bacteriology at the University of Aberdeen, said: "I have never thought that a vaccine will act as a silver bullet to halt this pandemic in its tracks. While we hope it will protect us from serious illness and

death, we will still see cases where vaccinated people get sick.

“That is even more the case with new strains that are more transmittable.

“However, the more people who are vaccinated, the less chance you have of coming into contact with it.

“This will be an interesting case test to assess the efficacy on the vaccine in a care home setting.

“In clinical trials, a few people who were vaccinated subsequently caught coronavirus but the data suggests it was not as severe.

“It’s still early days in understanding how the vaccine is going to work in practice.

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 **The Covid vaccine** (Image: Getty Images)

“We also don’t know whether changing getting the second shot 12 weeks later instead of three will affect things.”

NHS Lanarkshire refused to comment on whether vaccinated residents had fallen ill, on a day where Scotland recorded 1865 new cases, with 8.7 per cent of 26,352 Covid-19 tests returning a positive result.

The Scottish Government said there were 93 new deaths and 109 people in intensive care.

Cathy Russell, founder of Care Home Relatives Scotland, voiced concerns about the levels of vaccination among care home staff.

She said: “We have had members of our group whose parents have had the vaccine and then two weeks later have tested positive for coronavirus.

“While residents in care homes are being vaccinated, staff aren’t.

“They are getting on with their lives, going about their business outside the home and then may be unwittingly bringing it back in.”

Dr Donald Macaskill, chief executive of Scottish Care, which represents care homes in Scotland, said the outbreak is a warning that people should not drop their guard.



He said: "A person getting the vaccine may have caught the virus days before but didn't know.

"Once you have the vaccine, people won't be protected straight away.

"You are looking at around 22 days – and even that won't apply to everyone.

"What we know is that the new strains of Covid-19 are highly transmissible.

"The Government is asking people to behave as though they have coronavirus. I would go as far as to say even people who have had the vaccine should continue to behave like they could give their loved ones Covid-19 until we get this under control."

Scottish Labour health spokeswoman Monica Lennon said it showed that the vaccine won't tackle the pandemic on its own.

She said: "The rollout of the vaccine to Abercorn residents before Christmas was a welcome boost. However, there can be no room for complacency.

"It's vital that Test and Protect is working well and properly resourced.

"The Scottish Government was slow to act during the first wave on PPE, testing and contact tracing.

"Getting the vaccine fully rolled out in care homes must be a national priority."

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 **Prof Hugh Pennington says the vaccine should not be seen as a silver bullet**

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Ashley Goodfellow, NHS Lanarkshire consultant in public health, said: “NHS Lanarkshire’s Health Protection Team is currently managing an outbreak in Abercorn care home in Hamilton.

“We are working closely with the care home manager and have provided outbreak management and infection prevention and control advice and support to the home.

“NHS Lanarkshire’s Health Protection Team is in regular contact with all care homes which have an outbreak until they are resolved and formally declared over.

“We recognise this has been a difficult time for care home residents, their families and friends, and members of staff.”

A Sanctuary Care spokesperson said: “While we would not comment on the medical condition of any of our residents or staff, we remain in regular contact with the Scottish Government’s Health and Social Care Directorate.

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“We continue to closely follow the detailed public health guidance being given to care homes across the United Kingdom and our homes are part of the ongoing vaccination programme.”

A Scottish Government spokesperson said: “We are aware of the situation at Abercorn Care Home, which is currently being managed by NHS Lanarkshire’s Health Protection Team.

“As with other outbreaks, we expect the care home provider to keep residents and their families actively informed of the situation and the protection and prevention work under way.”

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