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### CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

## Day centre cuts force elderly into full care

By Caroline Green

FAMILIES are being forced to put loved ones in full-time care because of cuts to day centres, experts have said.

Data obtained by The Sunday Telegraph from more than 40 councils shows cuts of up to 55 per cent to public funding for day centres in the past five years. The figures also reveal a decline of people attending the centres.

Ruthe Isden, head of health and care at Age UK, said a lack of care services contributed to families' decisions to put relations into full-time care homes.

"At Age UK we see examples on our advice line in which people have been assessed as eligible for packages of care in the community, and they are waiting for these packages because the council at that time just can't provide it," she said.

"While they are waiting that person enters or remains in a care home and sometimes they don't come back because by the time that care can be put in place, it's too late."

James Clarke, chief executive officer of Action for Family Carers, said: "If services like day centres are not there or carers are not connected to them, many older carers tend not to reach out for help until when they hit a crisis point or when their own health breaks down. So, day care is supporting carers before a crisis happens and is therefore a preventive service."

The figures collected reveal an average funding cut of 30 per cent for day centres over the past five years.

The Department of Health and Social Care said: “We have provided local authorities access to up to £9.4 billion in dedicated social care funding over three years. Our Green Paper due in the autumn will set out our plans to reform the social care system to make it sustainable for the future.”