

Elderly at risk as social care faces collapse, says Age UK

By Gabriella Swerling, social Affairs Editor

A RECORD number of over-65s are not getting the care they need, Age UK has warned, as increasing numbers are “at far greater risk”.

In its report, Health and Care of Older People in England 2019, the charity said that social care is at the point of “total collapse”.

It also revealed that demand for care has reached a record high. According to the latest available figures, in 2018 a record 1.4 million people aged 65 and over had unmet needs and were struggling to carry out basic daily living activities such as eating, bathing, getting dressed, using the lavatory and getting in and out of bed.

In 2017, the figure was 1.2 million, which rose from 1.04 million in 2015 and 900,000 in 2014.

Caroline Abrahams, the charity director at Age UK, said: “If an older person needs social care but can’t get it, this is a sure-fire recipe for them to become weaker and less well. “They are at far greater risk of not eating enough and of falling and hurting themselves because of trying to do more than they really should.”

The charity is calling on the Government to substantially invest in the social care system to avert the risk of “total collapse” in the worst-hit areas.

It said health and social care services were operating in a “perfect storm of limited financial resources, significant workforce challenges, and increasingly complex population needs”.

It is calling for Sajid Javid, the Chancellor, to allocate a significant sum to local authorities in the spending review next week as an “essential first step”.

A Department of Health and Social Care spokesman: “We have given local authorities access to nearly £4 billion more dedicated funding for adult social care this year. “The Prime Minister is committed to fixing the social care system and we will outline proposals in due course.”