

Britain facing 350,000 shortfall of care workers

By Christopher Hope, Chief Political Correspondent

PENSIONERS face rising care costs after a 350,000 shortfall of workers to look after them was identified by a leading think tank.

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) warned of the shortage of 350,000 social care workers by 2028 – unless care providers pay them better.

The shortfall, which assumes that current migration levels will not change despite Brexit, will particularly hit pensioners who are reliant on care staff as they get older and could have to pay more if salaries increase.

Ministers are expected to set out the future of social care in a Green Paper next month.

The IPPR analysis shows that more than 500,000 workers in social care, nearly half the workforce, are paid below the real living wage – £10.55 an hour in London and £9 an hour elsewhere. Paying all staff the living wage would cost £450 million. The report's authors found: "Low pay and poor working conditions have resulted in the sector struggling to recruit and retain the workers it needs to meet rapidly rising demand.

"There will be a shortage of 350,000 workers in social care by 2028, rising to nearly 400,000 if freedom of movement ends after Brexit."

Dave Prentis, the general secretary of the Unison union, added: "The crisis in care can no longer be ignored."