

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased from 10.5 million to 13.5 million (1990-2000) (ONS 2001).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of older people in the UK. The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for older people, which sets out a vision for the future of older people's health and care. The strategy is based on the following principles:

- Older people should be able to live independently and actively in their own homes.
- Older people should be able to access the services and support they need to live well.
- Older people should be able to participate in decisions about their care and services.
- Older people should be able to live in a safe and secure environment.

The strategy also sets out a number of key objectives, including:

- To improve the health and well-being of older people.
- To ensure that older people have access to the services and support they need to live well.
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- To ensure that older people live in a safe and secure environment.

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