

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased from 10.5 million to 12.5 million (1990-1999) (Office for National Statistics 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of older people in the community. The Department of Health (1999) has published a strategy for older people, which sets out a vision for the future of older people's health and social care. The strategy is based on the following principles:

- Older people should be able to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.
- 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 support.
- Older people should be able to live in a safe and secure environment.

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

- To reduce the number of older people who are in care homes.
- To improve the quality of care and support for older people.
- To ensure that older people have access to the services and support they need to live well.
- To ensure that older people are able to participate in decisions about their care and support.

The strategy is a key document for the development of older people's services in the UK. It provides a framework for the development of policies and practices that will ensure that older people are able to live well in the community.

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