











the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased by 1.5 million (1990–1999) and is projected to increase by a further 1.5 million by 2010 (Office for National Statistics 2000). The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 2.5 million by 2020 (Office for National Statistics 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to develop strategies to meet the needs of the ageing population. The Department of Health (1999) has published a strategy for ageing, which sets out the government's commitment to improve the lives of older people. The strategy is based on three main principles: (1) to ensure that older people are able to live independently and actively; (2) to ensure that older people are able to access the services and support they need; and (3) to ensure that older people are able to participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

The strategy is based on the following assumptions: (1) that older people are a diverse group with different needs and interests; (2) that older people are able to live independently and actively; (3) that older people are able to access the services and support they need; and (4) that older people are able to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. The strategy is based on the following principles: (1) to ensure that older people are able to live independently and actively; (2) to ensure that older people are able to access the services and support they need; and (3) to ensure that older people are able to participate in the decisions that affect their lives.

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