

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased by 1.5 million, from 2.5 million in 1980 to 4 million in 1998. The public sector has become an important employer of people with mental health problems.

There is a growing awareness of the need to improve the mental health of people in the public sector. The Department of Health (1999) has published a strategy for mental health care, which includes a commitment to improve the mental health of people in the public sector. The strategy states that 'the mental health of people in the public sector is a priority for the Department of Health' and that 'the Department will work to ensure that people in the public sector have access to the same high quality mental health services as the general population'.

The Department of Health has also published a number of guidelines for the management of mental health problems in the public sector. These guidelines are designed to help public sector employers to create a supportive environment for people with mental health problems and to ensure that they receive the same high quality mental health services as the general population.

The guidelines state that public sector employers should: 'ensure that people with mental health problems are able to continue in their jobs; provide a supportive environment for people with mental health problems; and ensure that people with mental health problems have access to the same high quality mental health services as the general population'.

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