

the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased by 50% (Mental Health Foundation 2000). The prevalence of mental health problems in the UK is estimated to be 10% (Mental Health Foundation 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of people with mental health problems. The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for mental health care, which aims to improve the lives of people with mental health problems. The strategy is based on the following principles: (1) people with mental health problems should be treated as individuals; (2) people with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to participate in decisions about their care; (3) people with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in the community; and (4) people with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to work and study.

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