

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 (Department of Health 1999).

There is a growing emphasis on the need to improve the quality of care in the public sector. The Department of Health (1999) has set out a number of key objectives for the public sector, including the need to improve the quality of care, to reduce waiting times, to improve the efficiency of the system, and to improve the experience of patients. The Department of Health (1999) has also set out a number of key principles for the public sector, including the need to be patient-centred, to be transparent, to be accountable, and to be efficient.

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