

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased from 10.5 million to 13.5 million (19.5% of the population).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of older people, and the Government has set out a strategy for the 21st century in the White Paper on *Ageing Better: A Strategy for the 21st Century* (Department of Health, 1999). This strategy is based on the following principles:

- Older people should be able to live independently, safely and comfortably in their own homes.
- Older people should be able to live in their own communities, and be able to take part in the life of their communities.
- Older people should be able to live in good health, and be able to take part in the life of their communities.

The White Paper also sets out a number of key objectives for the 21st century, including:

- To ensure that older people are able to live independently, safely and comfortably in their own homes.
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The White Paper also sets out a number of key actions to be taken to achieve these objectives, including:

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