

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: The Government's Strategy for Older People* (Department of Health, 1999). This strategy is based on the following principles:

- (i) older people should be able to live independently and actively in their own homes;
- (ii) older people should be able to live in their own communities and be able to participate in the life of their communities;
- (iii) older people should be able to live in good health and be able to enjoy a good quality of life.

The White Paper also sets out a number of key objectives for the Government:

- (i) to improve the health and well-being of older people;
- (ii) to improve the independence and quality of life of older people;
- (iii) to improve the opportunities for older people to participate in the life of their communities;
- (iv) to improve the opportunities for older people to live in their own homes.

The White Paper also sets out a number of key actions for the Government:

- (i) to improve the health and well-being of older people;
- (ii) to improve the independence and quality of life of older people;
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