

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 sets out a vision of a society in which older people are able to live well, and to contribute to society. The White Paper sets out a number of key objectives, including:

• To ensure that older people are able to live well, and to contribute to society.

• To ensure that older people are able to live independently, and to participate in the community.

• To ensure that older people are able to live in their own homes, and to receive the care and support they need.

The White Paper also sets out a number of key actions, including:

• To improve the health and well-being of older people.

• To improve the care and support of older people.

• To improve the housing of older people.

• To improve the social and economic participation of older people.

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