

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, and the number of people aged 75 and over has increased from 4.5 million to 6.5 million (Office for National Statistics 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the health care needs of the elderly population. The Department of Health (2000) has set out a strategy for the NHS to meet the needs of the elderly population. The strategy is based on the following principles:

- To ensure that the elderly population has access to the same quality of care as other groups in the population.
- To ensure that the elderly population has access to the same range of services as other groups in the population.
- To ensure that the elderly population has access to the same range of care settings as other groups in the population.

The strategy also sets out a number of key objectives for the NHS to meet the needs of the elderly population. These objectives are:

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