

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased by 1.5 million (1990–2000) and is projected to increase by a further 1.5 million by 2020 (Office for National Statistics 2001). The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 2.5 million by 2020 in the USA (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to develop strategies to meet the needs of the ageing population. The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a 'Global Strategy on Ageing and Health' (WHO 1999) which aims to 'enable older people to live longer, healthier, and more active lives'. The WHO strategy is based on the following principles: (1) older people should be able to live longer, healthier, and more active lives; (2) older people should be able to live in their own homes; (3) older people should be able to participate in social and community life; (4) older people should be able to live in a safe and secure environment; (5) older people should be able to live in a supportive environment.

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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 1995. The public sector has become a major employer in the UK, and its growth has been a key factor in the overall growth of the economy.

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