

the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased in the UK (Mental Health Act 1983).

There is a growing awareness of the need to improve the lives of people with mental health problems. The Department of Health (1999) has set out a strategy for mental health care, which includes a commitment to improve the lives of people with mental health problems. This strategy is based on the following principles:

• People with mental health problems should be treated as individuals, with their own needs and wishes.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to participate in decisions about their care and treatment.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in the community.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to work and to contribute to society.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live a full and active life.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in a safe and secure environment.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in a supportive and caring environment.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in a community that is accepting and inclusive.

• People with mental health problems should be given the opportunity to live in a community that is safe and secure.

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