

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 needs of older people, and the need to ensure that the health care system is able to meet the needs of older people. The Department of Health (2000) has published a strategy for older people, which sets out the government's commitment to improve the health and quality of life of older people. The strategy is based on the following principles:

- Older people should be able to live independently and actively in their own homes for as long as possible.
- Older people should be able to access the services and support they need to live well.
- Older people should be able to participate in decisions about their care and services.

The strategy also sets out a number of key objectives, including: to reduce the number of older people who are dependent on others; to improve the health and quality of life of older people; and to ensure that older people are able to access the services and support they need.

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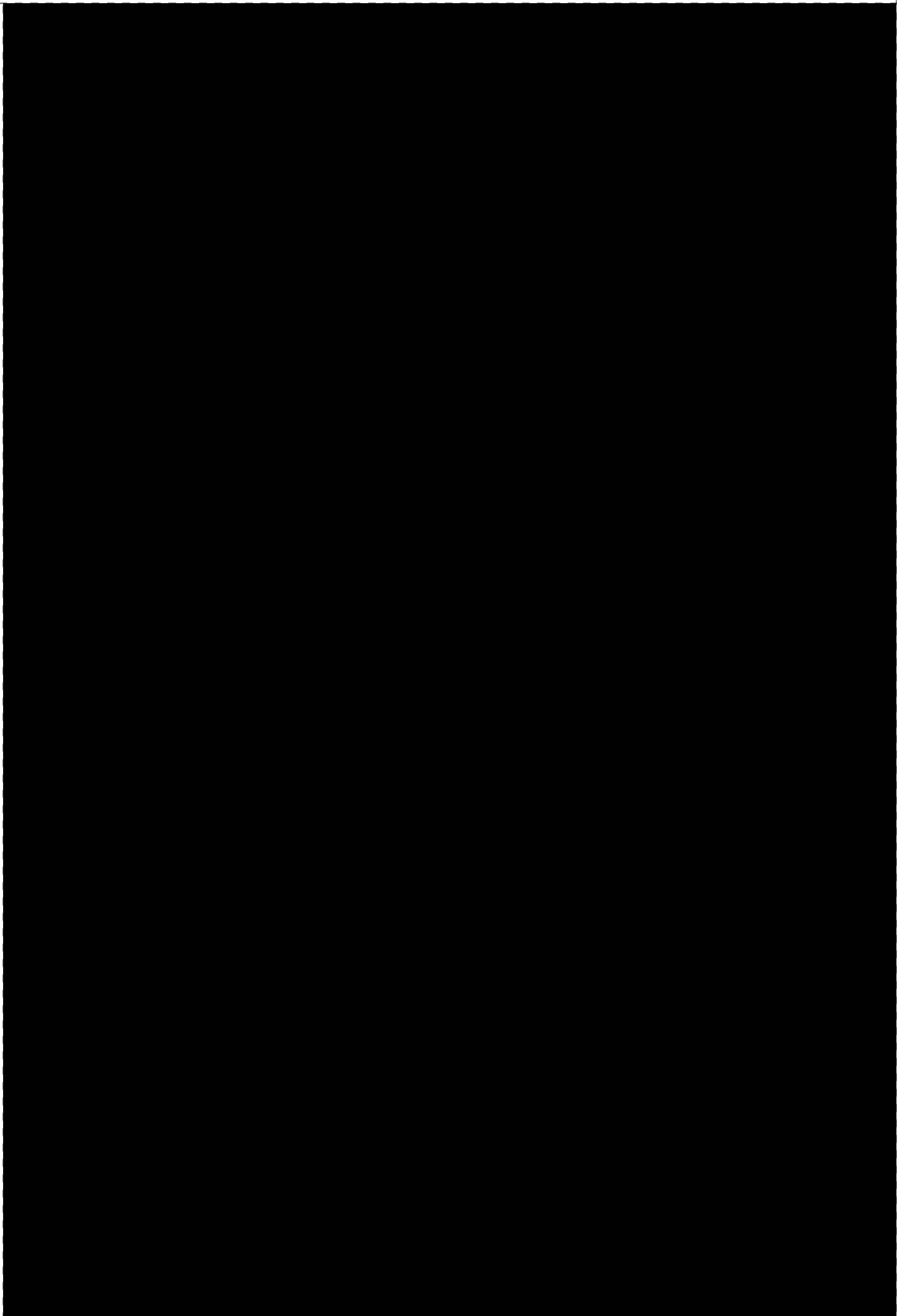
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