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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ARCO issues challenge to new Ministers

- **Ministers mustn't let the opportunity presented by Retirement Communities go to waste**

ARCO, the body representing providers of housing with care for older people, has welcomed Christopher Pincher as Housing Minister and Helen Whately as Care Minister and called on them not to miss out on the golden opportunity which the sector offers both departments if action is taken now.

Operators of Housing with Care, known as Retirement Communities, are set over the next decade to £40bn, creating a £70bn sector and saving the health and social care systems £5.6bn. They aim to provide for at least 250,000 people, freeing up housing for 562,500 people.

They represent both the fastest growing providers of social care in the UK and the overwhelming majority of all specialist housing for older people which is planned in the years ahead. To ensure that this happens and to accelerate growth the sector is calling for sector specific regulation.

Michael Voges, Executive Director of ARCO said:

“We are delighted to welcome Christopher Pincher and Helen Whately to their roles and wish them every success.

“One of the biggest opportunities open to both Ministers is to work with our sector and consumer champions to ensure that as Retirement Communities develop we can play the biggest possible role in housing and social care.

“If our Ministers are up to the challenge they can unleash a revolution in provision which will benefit hundreds of thousands of people.

“Our sector stands ready to work with them to achieve this. Let's not let this opportunity go to waste.”

ENDS

For Further Information Please Contact

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Notes to editors

1. **About ARCO:** ARCO (the Associated Retirement Community Operators) is the trade association for operators of housing-with-care developments for older people. ARCO was founded in 2012, and is now comprised of 27 private and not-for-profit operators of Retirement Communities. ARCO represents approximately 50% of the Retirement



Community sector. ARCO sets high standards, and all ARCO members must adhere to the externally assessed ARCO Consumer Code. ARCO does not represent the traditional retirement housing model where there are limited services and no care is available or care homes.

2. About Retirement Communities: Retirement Communities typically consist of individual one or two bedroom flats or houses, located in a development with similar properties. Residents have access to a range of services and facilities, which will include optional on-site care, 24-hour staffing, and dining and leisure facilities, and may also include bars, gyms and craft rooms. Retirement Communities are also sometimes referred to as housing-with-care schemes, retirement villages, extra care housing, assisted living, or close care apartments. They sit in between traditional retirement houses (which have less extensive staffing and leisure facilities), and care homes, and can be in urban or suburban locations.

3. About Vision 2030: Vision 2030 is ARCO's vision for 250,000 people to be living in retirement communities by 2030. The vision sets out ten areas of work for the sector in order to achieve this. These are:

- Development of a clear customer proposition
- Effective self-regulation
- Enhanced health and wellbeing
- Intelligent use of technology
- Flexible models of tenure
- Sustainable funding streams
- Sector-specific legislation
- Comprehensive and robust data
- Clarity in the planning system
- A highly trained workforce

For more information on Vision 2030, please contact Gareth Lyon, Head of Policy and Communications, at garethlyon@arcouk.org.

4. Benefits of Retirement Communities:

- *Meeting the needs of an ageing population:* Older people need and want choice in their housing for later life. However, at present housing options for older people are limited. Retirement Communities are an important element of housing choice for older people. Developing the capacity of the Retirement Community sector is vital to ensuring that the UK's housing market is fit to meet the needs of an ageing population.
- *Promoting independence, security and wellbeing:* Older people living in Retirement Communities are likely to experience lower levels of loneliness and social isolation. [A 2014 study](#) by the International Longevity Centre found that 82% of respondents in Retirement Communities said they hardly or never felt isolated, and only 1% often felt isolated.
- *Reducing costs and encouraging more efficient use of resources:* Residents in Retirement Communities are able to receive specialist care in their homes if needed, enabling them to return home from hospital earlier. They are also less likely to enter hospital. For example, one way in which Retirement Communities improve health is by preventing falls. Retirement Community properties are designed and built with adaptations to support independence and research shows that those living in these specialist homes are between 1.5 and 2.8 times less likely to have a fall than those living in homes without adaptations. This helps to reduce pressure on NHS services.



[A recent study](#) found that NHS costs were reduced by 38% for those moving into Retirement Community housing and NHS costs for 'frail' residents had reduced by 51.5% after 12 months.

- *Responding to the housing shortage:* Older people moving to a Retirement Community will typically 'downsize', freeing up much needed and under-occupied family sized homes. If all those interested in moving into a retirement property were able to do so, [research](#) suggests that approximately 3.29 million properties would be released, including nearly 2 million three-bedroom homes.