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Biggest ever study of Retirement Communities shows huge health, wellbeing and security benefits for residents

- **In-depth research by ProMatura International and ARCO shows older people are healthier and more active in specialist housing-with-care**

The largest and most in-depth poll ever conducted of UK Retirement Community residents and prospective residents has found that people who live in Retirement Communities have healthier, more active, more social, more secure and happier lives than those who have not yet moved to a Retirement Community.

The research, carried out in partnership between ProMatura International and ARCO (the Associated Retirement Community Operators) included a total of 2,799 residents from 81 Retirement Communities run by 15 operators. 1,111 older people who were considering a move into Retirement Communities also took part in the research.

The report found that residents in Retirement Communities:

- stay *healthier* for *longer*
- are *more* active
- are *less* lonely
- have a *greater* sense of a safety net
- feel *more* secure
- enjoy life *more*
- enjoy *more* privacy

compared to those who had not yet moved (but were considering making a move).

The report, which is now available for sale, also found that:

- 90% of residents thought they had moved into a Retirement Community at *just the right time* in their lives. 6% would rather they'd moved in sooner.
- 71% of residents saw moving in to a Retirement Community as a *chance to make new friends*.
- Retirement Community residents feel more *in control* of their lives.
- By a huge margin, residents of Retirement Communities believe that their lives are better now than they were a year ago.

Retirement Communities combine high quality housing options for older people with tailored support services. They allow residents to rent or own a property and to maintain their privacy and independence, with the reassurance of 24-hour on-site staff, communal facilities, and optional care and support as needed.

Retirement Communities may also be referred to as retirement villages, extra care housing, housing-with-care, assisted living, close care apartments, or independent living settings.

ProMatura International is the world's leading data and customer insight provider for the seniors' housing industry.

ARCO is the trade association representing the Retirement Community sector in the UK.



Michael Voges, Executive Director of ARCO said:

“It is amazing to have such high quality data on our sector. This reinforces what our members have been reporting and seeing on the ground for years – that living in a Retirement Community is good for your health, wellbeing and sense of security.

“It is easy to see why Retirement Communities are set to account for three quarters of all specialist housing for older people within five years. They represent a fantastic offering for increasing numbers of older people and are based on a responsible, sustainable business model which is attracting record levels of investment.

“We were delighted to have the opportunity to work with such a well-respected and rigorous research agency as ProMatura – there is a clear need for more good quality data like this as our sector grows.”

Margaret Wylde, Chief Executive and founder of ProMatura said:

“The evidence here is very strong and hard to argue with – Retirement Communities are an excellent option for older people in the UK, benefiting their health, keeping them active and providing security.

“This is the first time that these questions have been asked on this scale and the data provides vital insight for investors, operators and suppliers in this sector.

“We are working through the full implications and are already exploring several options for follow-up research to support the fastest growing sector in housing for older people in the UK.”

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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.