



Sector commits to housing 250,000 people in UK Retirement Communities by 2030

The Retirement Community sector united at the ARCO Annual Conference in backing a positive vision for the future of retirement living, based on delivering high quality housing and care for older people and helping the UK to catch-up with countries around the world where the sector is far more developed.

The two-day conference on 4 and 5 July, which convened 350 leaders and experts from across the world, saw a strong display of unity in the sector with the launch of ARCO's Vision 2030.

The UK is currently lagging behind comparable countries such as New Zealand, Australia and the USA – where between 5% and 6% of older people live in Retirement Communities. In the UK the figure is 0.5%, resulting in significant extra strain on the NHS and the social care system.

With the sector already showing signs of rapid growth and huge potential, members of ARCO (Associated Retirement Community Operators) have committed under Vision 2030 to provide 250,000 people with the opportunity to live in retirement communities by 2030.

In order to achieve this, the sector has committed to ten pledges including calling on the Government to implement sector-specific legislation to protect consumers as the number of people living retirement communities continues to grow. The sector has also called on the Government to ensure clarity in the planning system for developments providing housing, care and support for older people.

This is alongside commitments from ARCO members to work with partners across industry and civil society to invest in innovative social care technology, retirement community workforces and develop a clear proposition for consumers.

Michael Voges, Executive Director at ARCO (Associated Retirement Community Operators), said:

“As a sector we have great ambitions to help tens of thousands of older people enjoy their retirements. We know that living in retirement communities is a great option for many people. By relentlessly focussing on value and service for our customers we can help to bring the UK up to the level of provision we see in many other countries around the world.

Recent years have already seen major growth in our sector. Our Vision 2030 is a crucial next step – exciting times lie ahead!”

Nick Sanderson, CEO at Audley Group and Chair of ARCO (Associated Retirement Community Operators) said:

“The UK's aging population, the need for more person-centred models of care and the success of the retirement community model around the world all go to show just how much potential our sector has to provide housing and care to many more people now and in the future.”



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 30 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.
- 2. About retirement communities:** Retirement communities typically consist of individual one or two bedroom flats or small houses, located in a development of 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 village 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.