

Retirement Village CHECKLIST 2019



Take time to select your retirement village. Visit several so that you can appreciate the different options you have. Each has its own character and within each village there are often a range of units to consider including units of different sizes, layout, aspect and price.

Unlike any other property transaction the ‘purchase’ of your new home in a retirement village is likely to be very different from how you’ve purchased or owned property before. An Occupation Right Agreement (ORA) explains the terms and conditions of such an arrangement. Make sure you understand what your capital sum is ‘buying’ and about your on-going costs.

Download and print the checklist below to help you make the best decision. There are many things to consider here. The list however is not exhaustive. Happy house hunting!

Name of Village.....

Name of village guide/contact person.....

Contact details.....

Date(s) visited.....

Tick the boxes when you are satisfied you have addressed the issue.

Initial investigations

- Is the village a registered Retirement Village? (You can check this on www.retirementvillages.govt.nz). Some village type units do not have to be registered, so speak with the village management team if you need clarification about this.
- Does the village belong to the Retirement Villages Association (a providers organisation for villages)? Check this on www.retirementvillages.org.nz.
- When is the accreditation renewal date?
- What is the village ownership structure? Is it a company (how many shareholders), a trust or another entity? How might the ownership of a village impact on you? Have the owners built other villages? Who is the ‘front-person’ for the ownership body? What experience have they had?
- Who manages the village? Are they and their staff experienced and suitably qualified?
- Entry age into the village can vary. Ask about this.
- Is the village completely finished? Are there plans for expansion? If so, where is it expanding to and how long until completion? How disruptive would construction be? What is the maintenance schedule?

Location

- Is the unit close to services that are important to you e.g. library, your doctor, RSA, gym, shops etc.?
List the services that are close by this village that are important to you:

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- Is it easy to access services if you decide to no longer run your own car?
- Is there a bus stop nearby? Enter the distance here
- Would the taxi fare to places you would need or want to go to, be affordable?
- Is it easy for friends and family/whānau to visit you?

Amenities

- Are there on-site amenities and services that are important to you e.g. community rooms, bowling green, dining room, library, cafe, spa, etc?
- Can your visitors use the amenities?
- Do the common grounds look to be well maintained and inviting?
- Are new amenities planned? What happens if they don't go ahead?

The unit

- Is the unit the right size and layout for you? What items of furniture do you want to keep for your new home? Will these fit?
- Can you accommodate guests? For how long? Is there a spare room, or a suite offered by the village for their comfort? Or a nearby motel?
- Is there plenty of storage (internally and externally)?
- Do you need a garage or carport? How accessible is it?
- Do you, or will you, use a mobility scooter? If so, where can this be kept?
- If there are call bells in the unit, are they in a useful place? Who monitors them? Are you charged for ringing the bell?
- What are the emergency evacuation procedures? If alarms are set off what do you do and where do you go? Can you get there?
- Can you modify the unit in any way?
- Is there a garden? Can you grow what you want to? Who will maintain it?
- Is the unit and village set up to cater for those with a disability or for those who need support? (Think about future-proofing.)
- Who is responsible for maintaining the outside of your home?

Activities

- Can you go on an outing to learn more about the village lifestyle and meet your new neighbours before you move into the village?
- Are there planned activities organized? Who organizes them?
- Are you satisfied with the activities run by the village?
- Are there costs associated with these activities?

Support

- Is there a care facility onsite? Can residents receive high-level care in their home, or would they need to move to the care facility? What happens if a resident needs to move to the care facility and there are no vacancies?
- Who decides if you are 'independent'? What are the implications?
- Do you know how you can access support services? Who will provide them? What are the costs?
- Can you receive support from an 'outside' provider of support services?
- Is it a friendly, neighbourly village?
- Are security measures up to the standard you require?

Practicalities of village living

- Have you considered how communal living may impact on your privacy?
- How easy would it be to downsize within the village?
- What are the rules? Do you have a copy? How are they made/changed?
- How does the village keep residents informed about village matters? Are there notice boards, newsletters, meetings, etc.? How is the AGM managed?
- How are residents' concerns or complaints addressed? What is the process and time frame? Can an independent person be involved?
- Is there a residents' committee?
- Are you happy with the policy regarding pets?

Legal

- Not all lawyers are experienced in retirement villages and their costs vary. Have you got quotes from independent lawyers who know this sector?
- Have you read and understood the ORA and other documents you've been given?
- Is everything you've discussed with the village manager/salesperson, etc. in the ORA? If not, ask your lawyer to write in any verbal assurances or promises.
- What is the legal title of the unit?
- Does the village require a Statutory Supervisor? What does that person do?

Financial

- Do you need to visit a financial advisor experienced in retirement villages to ensure you fully understand the financial implications?
- What is the initial cost of the unit you are interested in?
- How much are the regular outgoing fees? What are they for? How often are they increased and by what rate? (Some villages set the rate when you sign.)
- What does the village insurance cover? Do you need any extra insurance?
- What other on-going costs do you need to factor into your budget? (e.g. power, telephone, satellite TV, personal insurance, etc.)
- If fees or personal costs increase in the future, will you be able to pay them?
- Do you pay fees when you are in hospital or on holiday?
- What are the costs of moving within the village, e.g. to a smaller unit or rest home? Moving into the rest home will probably incur daily premium fees.
- Who pays for any increased village costs, e.g. village compliance costs?
- What happens to the fees if the number of people living in the unit changes?
- A Deferred Management Fee (DMF) is a cost that is deducted from the sale of your home. Do you know what it can include and what the implications are?
- What would happen if you run out of money?

Leaving the village

- On exiting the village who gets any capital gain? What about a capital loss?
- Can you or your estate have a say in the sales process? Who determines the current market value? Who pays for marketing and administration?
- When will you or your estate receive any payment? What if there are delays?
- Is refurbishment automatic after every resident leaves? What is the process around this? Does the village get quotes for this work? How much could this cost you or your estate? What about your improvements? Are these alterations seen as improvements by the village operator?
- When you're no longer resident, who pays for the ongoing maintenance on an unsold unit? For how long? What about weekly fees? For how long?
- What is your contingency plan if you decide to leave the village (after the 'cooling off' period)? Can you afford it?

It's useful to create a comprehensive rating scale as it helps keep you focused. This is a very basic one.

Location	/10
Overall village offerings and appearance	/10
Unit	/10
Price - initial investment & ongoing costs	/10
Other important criteria	/10
TOTAL	/50