Lifestyle checklist

The information in this checklist is based on the Retirement Villages Act 2003.

Things to do

Write a list of the most important things you want from retirement village living.

Talk to residents about how they find living in the village.

Get a copy of the village's occupation right agreement and any other relevant documents.

Involve your family or friends in your decision.

Questions to ask

Retirement village _____

Date _____

Management

Make sure you understand how the village operates.

Is the village commercial or not-for-profit?

What is the village's philosophy regarding the care and support of older people?

Is the village a member of the Retirement Villages Association or HealthCare Providers New Zealand? If so, what benefits does this provide?

Who manages the village and how are they appointed? Is there a management agreement and when is it renewed?

Is there an onsite manager and what rules must they follow?

Is there a staff member onsite or on call?

What experience do management and staff have in meeting the needs of older people, and what are their qualifications?

Is there a statutory supervisor and what is their role?

Entry criteria

What are the criteria for living at the village, and do you meet them?

Is there a waiting list?

Location

In addition to the usual location issues when buying a house, there are other issues to consider when moving into a retirement village. The location will determine how much independence and contact with the wider community you'll have.

Is the village separate from or integrated into the local community?

Is the village close to friends and family?

Is it close to medical services including hospitals?

What public and village transport is available, and how much does it cost?

Will the location allow you to keep up your existing interests, such as church and clubs?

Is the village situated on the flat?

Villages or units not yet constructed or completed

If you're buying off the plans:

Are the units and facilities designed for older people?

Will they be finished to the expected quality?

Can you build to your own design and choose your décor, furnishings and appliances?

What is the proposed completion date for your unit? What right do you have to cancel or to compensation if there is a delay in completion of the unit or other facilities?

If you're buying into a village where other units or facilities are still being built:

What measures are taken to reduce disruption to residents during construction?

Who pays for the rates, insurance and maintenance of units that are unsold?

How long will it take for advertised services or facilities to start operating? What rights do you have if these services or facilities do not eventuate?

How will future development plans affect your unit or the facilities?

Residential and care options

Are there different housing options available, such as independent self-care villas and serviced apartments or studios?

Are there rest home and hospital facilities?

Who decides whether you need a higher level of care either within or outside the village? How is this decision made?

Do residents have priority for these facilities and can you return to a more independent unit if you recover?

Is temporary help available during a short-term illness or accident, such as a fall or ongoing care after a stroke?

Healthcare

Will the healthcare offered meet your existing and future needs?

Can you negotiate the level of healthcare and its cost?

Are you allowed to have your own doctor?

Are services such as a doctor, dentist or physiotherapist available within the village or nearby?

Is there a qualified nurse onsite? When are they there?

Where is the nearest hospital?

Does the unit have a medical call button?

Maintenance

Are the units, grounds and facilities in good order and how are they maintained?

Who arranges for repairs and maintenance such as leaks or changing light bulbs?

What are the timeframes for urgent maintenance?

Is there a long-term maintenance plan for big items such as re-roofing, painting or road works?

Who is responsible for updating installed appliances?

Security

Are there burglar alarms, smoke alarms and sprinklers?

Is there sensor lighting?

Are there 24-hour call buttons? Who answers these calls and how quickly? What does it cost?

Can windows and doors be securely locked?

Are gates locked at night?

Is the village patrolled at night?

Facilities and amenities

Facilities may include shops, lounges, dining rooms and bars, libraries, hobby rooms, workshops and computer rooms, meeting rooms, gardens, swimming pools, spas, saunas, gyms and bowling greens.

What facilities are provided and are you likely to use them?

Are there restrictions on using the facilities, such as the number of people or whether visitors or outside groups can use them?

Are new facilities planned and when will they be completed?

Services

Services may include a registered nurse available 24 hours or a doctor on call, housework, laundry, gardening and lawns, and rubbish collection, meals, personal care such as help with dressing and bathing, mail collection, watering indoor plants and feeding pets when on holiday, and transport such as a village van for shopping and outings.

What services does the retirement village provide?

What services are contracted in by the village?

Are you eligible for some of these services through government assistance?

Social activities

Social activities may include shopping trips, garden visits, walks and picnics or trips to the movies or theatre as well as clubs such as chess or bridge and keep-fit classes. In some villages, the residents organise these activities.

What activities does the retirement village offer?

Who organises them?

Design

Check the location of telephones, power points and switches, medical call buttons and lighting.

Is there adequate lighting, heating and ventilation in the unit and communal areas?

Are taps and handles easy to use?

Is there easy access to the shower and grab grips and non-slip surfaces in the toilet and bathroom?

Are cupboards and shelves within easy reach, and benches and ovens at a suitable height?

Is the unit likely to meet your future needs as well as your current needs?

Can you make any modifications to suit your needs?

What facilities are personally allocated to you, such as car parking and storage?

Access

Is there wheelchair and walking-aid access in the village and within the units?

Are there handrails where needed?

Can you use a scooter in the village? Where are they stored?

Rules

What are the village rules?

Can they change and how does that happen?

Do residents have a say in the rules?

Resident involvement

Are there meetings between residents and management, and how often?

Is there a residents' committee and what is its role?

How is the AGM organised and how can residents get involved?

Is there a village noticeboard or newsletter, and how often is it updated or published?

Talk to residents about how they find living at the village. Ask them about having input into how the village operates and the attitude of management to their involvement.

Complaints

How does the village deal with complaints?

How are complaints lodged?

Who manages the complaints process and what is the response time?

Can you or the village management involve someone independent if your complaint cannot be resolved?

Leaving the village or transferring within the village

In what circumstances can you be made to leave or to transfer to a higher level of care?

Who makes this decision and what say do you have?