

Enjoying life to the full

Retirement Villages can help families have peace of mind, reports Sarah Town

HELPING elderly parents remain in the family home can be just as stressful for grown-up children as it is for the person trying to maintain their independence. But few people want to see their parents in a care home unless care needs necessitate. That's why more families are looking at retirement villages which provide a choice of accommodation, fantastic facilities and reassurance of on-site support and care.

"Deciding what's best for mum and dad is an issue facing an increasing number of families as the population ages and one we hear frequently," says Paddy Brice, managing director of Richmond Villages who have an award winning retirement village at Painswick and a new community just opening in Witney.

"Keeping people in their own home is often only achievable with great support from a network of family, friends, neighbours and public services, and the stress on everyone can be considerable."

It was the need for support such as having meals, laundry and cleaning provided that persuaded Liz Smith to look for a retirement village for her father.

"My father had been widowed for a number of years and had lived independently in the family home. But as he got older he was struggling with day-to-day life," she says. "I looked at several places but the thing that impressed us all about Richmond Villages, including my dad, were the facilities and the fact it was very much a social community as well. It was important for my dad that he owned his own property and this was something Richmond Villages were able to offer."

Liz's father bought a Village Suite which has a large bedroom with walk-in wet room. It also has a separate living room with a kitchenette that has a microwave and washing-up facilities.

"The assisted living package means all his meals are provided, his washing, laundry and cleaning are done and in fact everything is done for him," says Liz. "For myself and my family it's given us peace of mind."

Liz describes living at Richmond Villages as, "like living in a five-star hotel" and says her dad really enjoys using the swimming pool. "There are various exercise classes, as well as lots of clubs and societies he can belong to should he choose."



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For further information on Richmond Villages visit www.richmond-villages.com or call 01993 768656.

When considering a retirement apartment it's important to think of your current and future requirements. It's obviously important that there is a great social community with lots going on which most retirement villages provide. But don't forget about asking what support and help is available should you need it in the future. Is there staff on-site 24-hours a day and will this include qualified carers? What happens if I need more specialised care? Is there a care home on-site providing nursing and dementia care or will I need to move? Ask yourself what facilities are important to you. To one person it may be the use of luxury facilities such as a Spa and pool, for the next it could be the reassurance of knowing the retirement village has a transport service.

"Meeting up with friends is a great social occasion for most people and the social aspects are enhanced by our activities and events team who arrange everything from bridge clubs to cultural festivals," says Paddy Brice. "We also have our own vehicles and drivers so shopping and other trips mean not having to rely on taxis or family and friends if you don't drive anymore."

So, if you're in the situation where you're thinking of moving to a retirement property or are concerned about your elderly relatives why not take a look at a retirement village; you'll be pleasantly surprised! ♦