



# RETIREMENT LIVING, CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE MODERN AGE

## Introduction

**Keith Shields, Managing Director, Retirement Property Services, FirstPort**

This briefing paper brings together three different, but interlinked, perspectives on retirement living. It's been known for some time that the retiree cohort is changing. We're living longer and more actively. By 2024 the number of people aged 65 and over living in England will reach 20%<sup>1</sup>.

Drawing on our 40 years of experience, insight and data as the UK's largest retirement property manager, we're evolving our Third Age proposition to better serve the changing needs of our 75,000 retirement customers. Whilst buildings need to be adapted or built fit for the future, at FirstPort we've long recognised that our people will be the main agents for change.

1. ONS (2016)

Working with carefully selected partners, our customers will also be able to access a range of additional services designed to make their lives easier and sustain their independence, including:

- Wellbeing monitoring
- Community navigation
- Domiciliary support
- Utilities management
- IT / digital support
- Moving in services

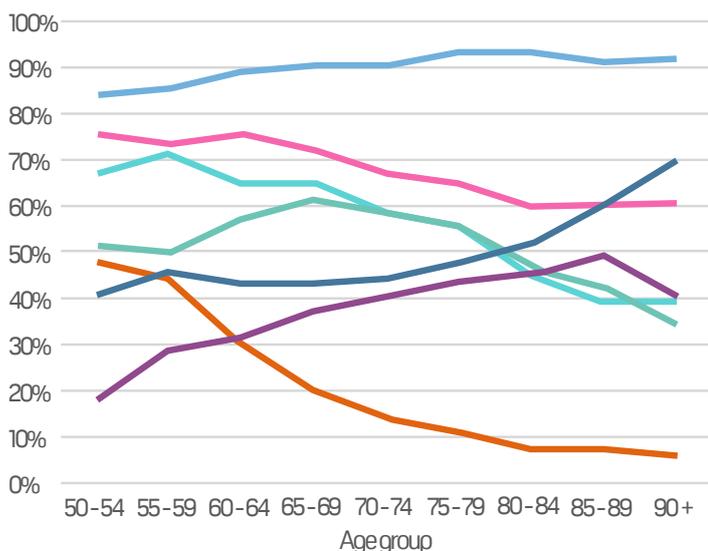
This briefing paper accompanies the *Retirement reimagined* briefing for residential, commercial and retirement living specialists, hosted by FirstPort and The International Longevity Centre UK and held at the Future of Ageing Conference at the Copthorne Tara Hotel, London, on Thursday 29 November, 2018.

# What are the retirement expectations of older people today?

By Dr Brian Beach, Senior Research Fellow, International Longevity Centre

Retirement is changing – with numerous opportunities for an active later life. We all know who older people are and what they like – or do we?

Let's review some facts; when asked, here's what people said 'they did yesterday'...



- Watch television
- Work or volunteer
- Walk or exercise
- Do other health-related activities
- Travel or commute
- Spend time with family or friends
- Spend time at home alone

Source: ILC report - Understanding Retirement Journeys (2015)

Today we spend more years in retirement. In 1990 men in the UK spent on average 16 years in retirement. In 2012 this had stretched to 21 years. For women it was 23 years in 1990 and 26 years by 2012.

Reductions in pensioner poverty since 1994 have also shown positive signs of improving. According to Joseph Rowntree Foundation figures in 2016/17, fewer than 1 in 6 pensioners were 'poor' compared to 1 in 4 in other ages.

However, research conducted by the ILC reveals also how little retirees as a cohort spend in the company of others.

## WELLBEING IS LINKED TO SOCIAL CONNECTIONS – AND HOUSING HAS A ROLE TO ENHANCE THIS

There is growing recognition of the importance of social connections in later life. Chronic loneliness affects an estimated 1.2m older people, with significant impacts on health and wellbeing. But loneliness is subjective - different than isolation - so about more than just creating connections. The quality of connections is crucial.

A 2018 report from ILC, *Stronger Foundations*, recommended that the retirement communities sector should promote product diversification, but with limited complexity. In other words, options for different people but with a clear sense of the benefits and experience - like stronger social connections.

# Building a better world together

By John O'Brien, Construction Innovation, Associate Director, BRE Group

BRE is the UK centre of excellence for the built environment. We are wholly owned by a charity, the BRE Trust, which has a remit to create a better world through better buildings. We support and advise Government and local authorities to implement appropriate housing and health strategies. To do this we have created much of the data, knowledge and science that underpins the Building Regulations, and created tools and guidance to enable better built outcomes.

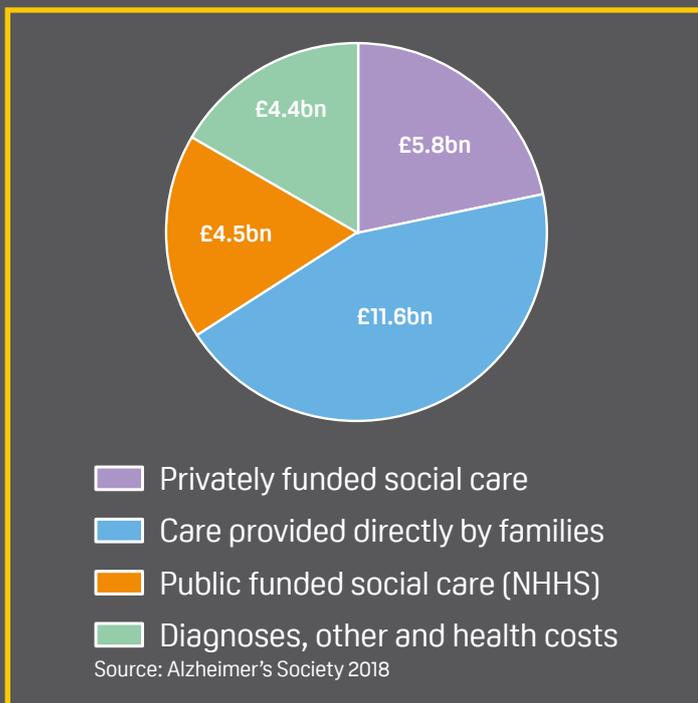
We have the largest housing data set in the UK and use this to advise housing interests on a range of solutions from, environmental impact, cost effectiveness, emissions, quality and health impacts.

We are in the process of building a concept 'Dementia home' to showcase how elderly people can live longer, independently in their own home with a range of disabilities, including cognitive impairments.

## WHY DEMENTIA?

- The number of people over 60 is due to increase by 25m over the next 25 years
- 850,000 people already live with dementia in the UK today
- Projected to rise to 2 million by 2051
- 1 in 14 people in the UK live with dementia
- Although dementia is associated with ageing an estimated 40,000 people have early onset dementia
- The Department of Health estimated only 59% of people living with dementia have a full diagnosis.

## THE COST OF DEMENTIA TO THE UK ECONOMY



## CREATING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY HOME

Our journey started when we were approached by Liverpool John Moores University to see whether we would be interested in building their dementia concept home. They were part of an EU funded Dementia Innovate research programme working in conjunction with the Dementia Action Alliance, The SERF Group (representing the interests of service users and carers), Halsall Lloyd partnership an architectural practice specialising in homes for the elderly and those with dementia and Mercy Healthcare a leading NHS Mental Health Trust.

The concept model integrates a range of good practices which optimises spatial layouts, wayfinding and adaptations, embraces features of existing Lifetime Homes and includes assistive technologies.

This used sandpit sessions involving people with dementia as a part living laboratory. This is unique research as it used people with dementia and their carers to review all design aspects of the home.

The outcome was a design for dementia concept home which better enabled all people to stay independent in their home for longer with a range of long-term conditions and disabilities, including cognitive impairments.

A home for long life to fit with life styles that enables people to live well with dementia, a home that can be aspired to be lived in by anyone. People do not want to live in identifiable dementia or old peoples' homes.

## THE BRE INNOVATION PARK



## WHY MAKE THESE CHANGES: THE EXPERIENCE OF DEMENTIA

The characteristics of people with cognitive impairments vary from individual to individual, of course. However identifiable behaviours can include a combination of one or several from the list below, appearing occasionally or all the time.

- Lonely
- Unsure
- Anxious
- Lost
- Unclear
- Bewildered
- Aggressive
- Perplexed
- Confused
- Disoriented
- Agitated

Given this list it's easy to see how a traditionally constructed home might not be suitable for their needs.

### TYPICAL EXISTING HOUSE



- Stairs and stepped access
- No bathroom ground floor
- Poor lighting and ventilation
- Windows hard to open

As can be seen from a typically built home the way it was originally designed does not lend itself readily to the future requirements of a person with dementia. Considerations for future design approaches can be summarised with three criteria.

**IS IT ACCESSIBLE?** Does it meet mandatory requirements for accessibility?

**IS IT ADAPTABLE?** Can it be readily adjustable when the need arises?

**IS IT INCLUSIVE?** Will it serve every user in the safest possible and most convenient way by providing for an independent and equal way of living?

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS: TEMPERATURE AND VENTILATION

- Provide a healthy and comfortable environment.
- Design and implement optimal natural ventilation strategies.
- Implement automated control system for natural ventilation and heating.
- Satisfy thermal comfort and indoor air quality while minimising energy demand.

### PHYSICAL STIMULATION

- Physical exercise can prevent dementia
- Physical exercise can also help to manage dementia
- Cooking own meals important to retain independence
- Hobbies such as gardening, walking, music, clubs.

### NEXT STEPS

A key element of the dementia home will be to provide a demonstrator which will provide a platform for sharing knowledge on what works and what doesn't, to provide information that enables both the supply chain and the client to understand what's involved with creating homes which are dementia friendly so that the basic concepts can be replicated in real projects.

- Provide authoritative information on adaptation
- Undertake future research
- Develop partnerships
- Influence the wider housing and health agenda through policy, standards and industry engagement.
- Information point for stakeholders
- Adaptation capacity embedded in new-build
- Support ageing plans and adaptation planning.

We feel this information will be of use to a range of elderly stakeholders looking to provide appropriate adaptations to existing homes.

# Third Age from FirstPort: Retirement reimaged

Samantha Gibson, Director, Retirement Property Services, FirstPort

The supply of suitable housing for older people has been lacking for a number of years. However there are signs that this is starting to change with forecasts indicating that the number of private retirement units will increase by 30% in the next five years<sup>2</sup>.

We see four main drivers shaping the future of independent retirement living.

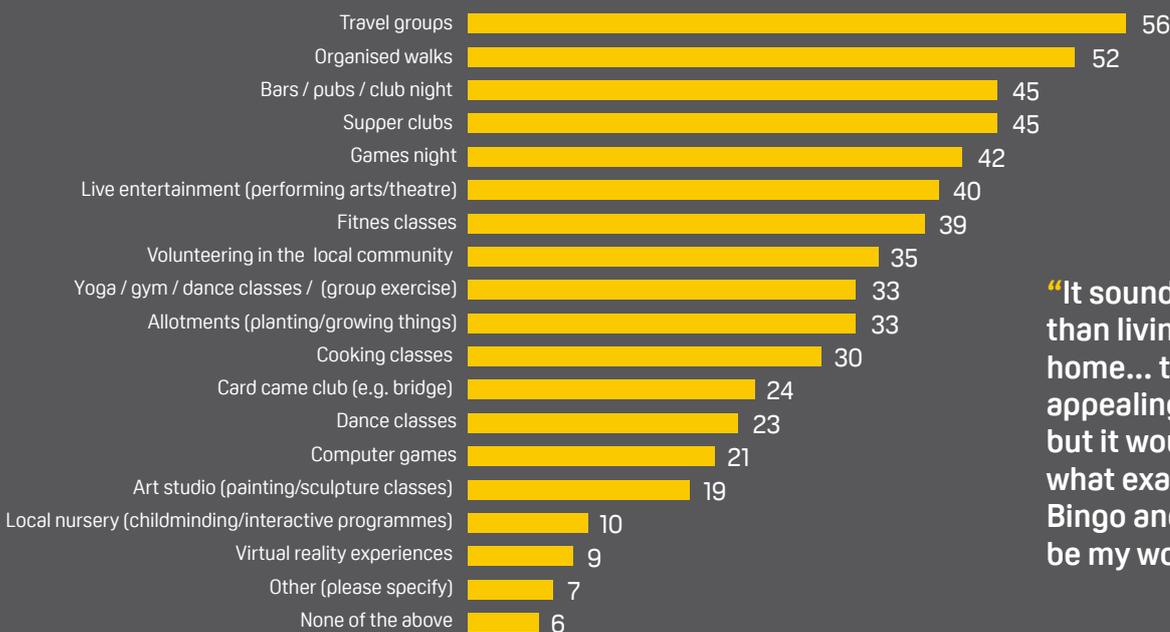
Through research carried out by Boomer and Beyond we know what activities customers want to participate in. Most people would consider moving to a retirement living community. Only a small proportion (14%) rules it out. The groups most likely to 'definitely consider' this option were aged 55 – 59 and people living alone.

We also know what local facilities are most important to future retirees when considering a move to a retirement community.

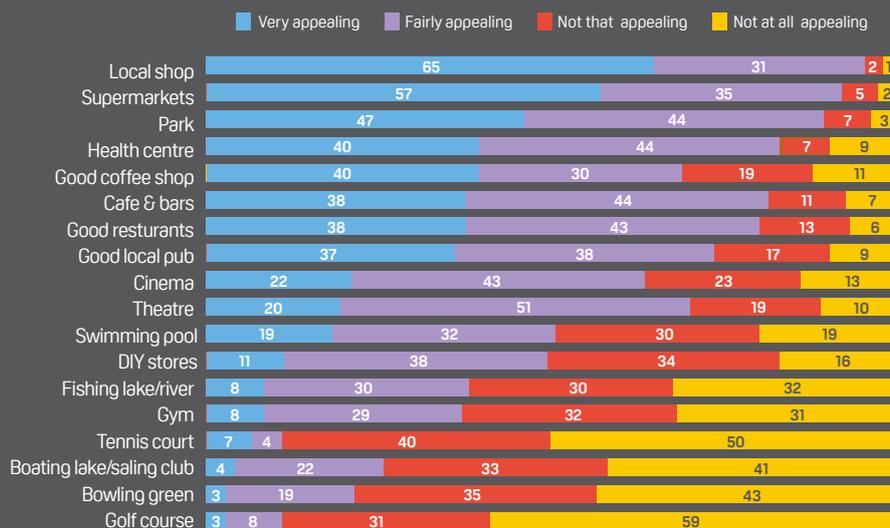
## THIRD AGE – A CHANGING WORLD

- **DEMAND** - 65+ POPULATION SET TO INCREASE TO 20% BY 2024
- **EQUITY** - UK HOUSE PRICES INCREASED BY OVER 300% IN LAST 20 YEARS
- **SUPPLY** - RETIREMENT UNITS SET TO INCREASE 30% BY 2022
- **SECTOR CHANGE** - SECTOR IMPACT: ANALOGUE VS. DIGITAL

2. Knight Frank – Retirement living comes of age (2018)



“It sounds much better than living in an old people’s home... the social aspect is appealing to some extent - but it would be dependent on what exactly was available. Bingo and card games would be my worst nightmare!”



# Third Age: FirstPort's approach to providing later living residential property services

As the data shows us, categorised by customer need we need to provide a person centred suite of services. Customers will be offered choices, designed to enhance their lifestyles and sustain their independence for longer.

As the table below shows, and from the learnings to be taken from the ILC's work and BRE's ongoing research, as dependency increases so must the services offered flex to take these needs into consideration.

## FIRSTPORT'S GRADUATED SERVICES OFFERING

Putting the customer first allows us to focus primarily on their changing needs and to respond accordingly. They will have an engaging and continuously evolving community, with our people offering proactive lifestyle services which make a real difference.

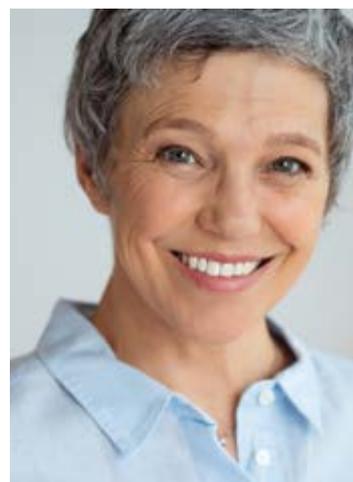
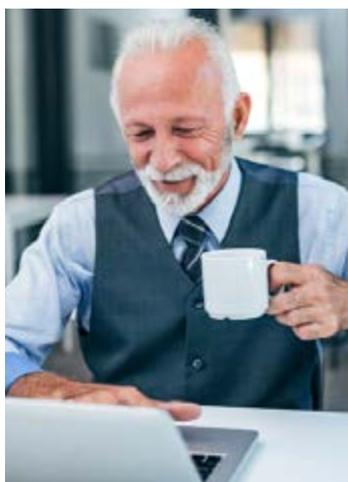


"My family and friends are very important in my life & I want them to visit & enjoy my home."

"I lead a varied & active lifestyle so I love to try new things in my local area such as yoga & art classes."

"My working life continues so I need good WiFi and flexible communal spaces so that my business continues to thrive."

"As my lifestyle is more relaxed these days, I want to live somewhere safe, sociable & friendly with a real sense of community."



# Meet the speakers



**KEITH SHIELDS -  
MANAGING DIRECTOR,  
FIRSTPORT  
RETIREMENT PROPERTY  
SERVICES**

Joining FirstPort in February 2015, Keith has a wealth of experience as a senior manager in roles across the services industry - from catering to facilities management. Keith's most recent role, prior to joining FirstPort, was as Head of Facilities & Asset Management for Lendlease Europe and looked after its UK business.



**DR BRIAN BEACH -  
SENIOR RESEARCH  
FELLOW,  
INTERNATIONAL  
LONGEVITY CENTRE**

Brian joined the ILC-UK in June 2013. In this role, he has conducted research on a range of topics related to population ageing, such as loneliness, serious illness, and housing, with his main expertise relating to the issues around employment in later life. He has worked on this subject and the changing nature of retirement for over 12 years.



**JOHN O'BRIEN -  
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR,  
CONSTRUCTION  
INNOVATION, BRE  
GROUP**

John has benefited from working as both a contractor and a client in the building industry, and now in research and testing. He is a Chartered Builder and Chartered Environmentalist with 19 years' experience in Construction and Social Housing before joining the BRE in 2008.



**SAMANTHA GIBSON -  
DIRECTOR, FIRSTPORT  
RETIREMENT PROPERTY  
SERVICES**

Samantha joined FirstPort in 2014 and spent three successful years as Regional Manager before being appointed Director of the Retirement Property Services division. She started her career in local government before moving into residential property management. She is a member of the Chartered Institute of Housing, a board member for her local Citizens Advice Bureau and for the Association of Retirement Housing Managers (ARHM).

## Like to learn more?

FirstPort is the UK's largest residential property manager, caring for 185,000 homes across more than 3,900 developments in the residential, retirement and luxury markets. We're also the UK's largest property manager for independent retirement living.

With a 40-year track record, we offer home builders and institutional investors a uniquely scalable combination of residential property planning and asset management backed by our national reach. If you would like to discuss the findings from this paper in more detail, please come and talk to us.

### PREVIOUS BRIEFING PAPERS IN THIS SERIES FROM FIRSTPORT CAN BE DOWNLOADED HERE

[Harnessing Technology in Residential Property Management](#)

[Uncertainty and opportunity in the UK residential property market](#)

[Customer service excellence: Trust versus transaction](#)

[Delivering Build to Rent - Are you ready?](#)

[Delivering Build to Rent - Top ten questions answered](#)

[Perspectives on health and wellbeing from commercial and residential property](#)



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