

Retirees return to their roots

"As with all housing decisions, one of the biggest questions when it comes to choosing a retirement home is location. Is it best to stay in an area you've lived in for years, where you may have built up a support network? Or to move to be near family? Or to pick a new area that meets other needs or aspirations, somewhere you've always wanted to live?"

John Lavin of Cognatum says, "The concept of retirement as the third age, associated with free time and opportunity rather than a passive, sedentary lifestyle has changed the perception of retirement and retirement housing.

"The dominant pattern of residents living on our estates is that the majority of retirees don't move far from their latest home. But our most recent survey shows that in the region of 10% of our residents have moved to within 20 miles of where they grew up, discovering a desire to return to their hometowns having left the area in their teens or early twenties.

"One of the reasons many retirees don't move far from their existing home is that it's a safe option; it can be difficult to make new friends without the bonding aspects of life such as work and children. But establishing a new life in an area that's familiar from the past, however distant, is very much easier than it is in a completely new area, emotionally as much as anything, the sense of familiarity can be very comforting.

"Generally we would advise against the heart ruling the head, and moving to the setting of happy holidays. But retirement is the opportunity to enjoy yourself, to make the most of free time and do all those things you promised yourself you would one day. Like all moves in later life though, do sense check the idea before rushing into a move and make sure you are happy with the reality as well as the sentiment.

"While the long-term view is a consideration for any property purchase, it's arguably even more vital in retirement when the upheaval of a move potentially becomes more challenging, and when finances are generally less flexible than during working life."

"When young, it can seem that the area in which one grew up is too small and too familiar. The urge, especially for those who have moved to cities for work or university, is to escape to new and exciting pastures. But with age comes different priorities, along with a sense of nostalgia, and a move to one's childhood home can start to look very attractive. There may well be friendships that can be revived, family living nearby, and even acquaintances also making the move back into the area, often as a result of inheriting property.

"Does the move make financial sense in terms of property values? The area you knew several decades ago will inevitably have changed. Try and look at it through fresh eyes so you're not overlooking potential negatives.

"Retirement brings with it the advantages of more time, and greater flexibility. You want to bring the best parts of your life with you, so if travel is an important aspect of your retirement, is the area well served by public transport, with good rail links, and uncomplicated access to airports? Are there local societies and clubs that meet your leisure needs so you can continue to pursue your interests and meet new friends?"

"From a more day to day point of view, the ability to walk to facilities such as shops, pubs, church and local friends shouldn't be underestimated.

"If your thinking is robust, a move to an area in which you've grown up can be a wonderful thing in later life. We have found that our residents who have made the move find as much delight as they anticipated, and more, in the familiar surroundings, revisiting old haunts, and discovering more connections than they anticipated.

**www.cognatum.co.uk
01491 821170**

Cognatum, an independent not for profit company, has 60 retirement estates across central and southern England. All are in prime locations within vibrant market towns or villages, within walking distance of shops and restaurants. Each estate benefits from thoughtful architecture, landscaped grounds, and a dedicated estate manager.

*For press information, contact
Amanda MacCaw
07977 238175
amanda@wildmaccaw.co.uk*