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Bungalows unsuitable for over-65s claims research

30 per cent of older people find bungalows wanting according to Churchill Retirement Living

Bungalows are an inappropriate and unsuitable type of housing for older people according to research by Churchill Retirement Living, the retirement housing specialist. The survey of 1,775 people shows that 30 per cent of over-65s move to a retirement community after trying a bungalow and finding it wanting.

Churchill Retirement Living has published the data in response to Government plans to encourage more bungalows to be built specifically for people over 65 years old. It highlights how bungalows fail to meet the housing needs of older people in four key areas:

1. **Bungalows eat up greenbelt land** – bungalows are an inefficient use of land; they need space and unfortunately space in the UK comes with a premium attached. Land which has been previously developed (brownfield sites) however is usually unsuitable for this type of development and bungalows are typically only viable on greenfield sites or, at worst, the greenbelt.
2. **Bungalows cost more to build and are economically unviable** – bungalows are a low density type of development and as a result are more costly in both land and construction costs.
3. **Bungalows abandon older people in isolated and inaccessible locations** – the shortage of land in the UK mean bungalows are virtually impossible to develop near town centres and shops, healthcare facilities and other amenities. As a result, bungalows are typically pushed to edge-of-town or out-of-town sites where there is less pressure for land.
4. **Bungalows can be difficult for older people to maintain** – keeping the property and gardens in good shape can be difficult for people in their 70s and 80s.

Spencer McCarthy, Chairman and Managing Director, Churchill Retirement Living, commented:

“Building more bungalows is not the solution to the shortage of housing for older people and I urge the Government to abandon this crazy proposal before it is too late. Bungalows waste land and eat up the greenbelt. Worst of all, because it is virtually impossible to build bungalows near town centres, bungalows often mean old people are abandoned in remote and inaccessible locations – far from friends, families and loved ones.”

“Older people need housing which is reasonably priced, close to shops, with excellent security and good facilities. We need to be building community environments with the right infrastructure for older people to live near family, friends and likeminded people. Bungalows achieve the exact opposite.”

Research carried out by Churchill Retirement Living indicates that the UK is under-prepared to meet the housing needs of the baby boomer generation – over the last two years the number of new homes being built for older people has barely reached 1,000, with only 100,000 private properties in the UK defined as ‘retirement’.

The population of the country is steadily rising and there are more 65 year olds in the UK than at any point in history – the 2011 census shows that the overall number of people turning 65 in 2012 increased by 30 per cent in a single year.

The demand for retirement communities (privately-owned housing in a community setting) is a recent phenomenon and, according to Churchill Retirement Living, can play a significant role in helping to alleviate the problems of loneliness and isolation amongst older people. Retirement developments allow people to live in a community, while also enabling them to maintain their independence. Research carried out by Churchill Retirement Living demonstrates that retirement developments can also allow older people to delay their entry into residential care homes.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

About Churchill Retirement Living

Churchill Retirement Living has specialised in the provision of purpose built apartments designed for older people, since 1998. Its self-contained apartments are located throughout England and are specifically designed to meet the needs of independent retired people and are provided for sale within a single block. The apartments are sold with a lease containing an age restriction which ensures that only people of 60 years or over, or those over this age with a partner of at least 55, can live in them. The accommodation is managed by Millstream Management Services Ltd, a specialist in the management of retirement developments, and a company wholly owned by Churchill Retirement Living.

Churchill Retirement Living won ‘Housebuilder of the Year’ in 2012, the ‘Best Medium Housebuilder of the Year’ award in 2012 and ‘The Most Outstanding Retirement Housing Operator in the UK’ in 2012 for the fourth consecutive year.

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