

COMMUNITY LIFE



A recent report has found 'overwhelming evidence' living in community benefits people in later life to maintain health, independence and reduce the level of support needed as they age

Research carried out by the King's Fund and the University of York looked at the value of retirement communities on the wellbeing of the people who live in them, and on the health and social care system in the UK. The findings showed comprehensive and conclusive evidence the retirement community model plays a vital role in supporting people in later life to live well for longer.

Retirement communities, often referred to as assisted living or retirement villages, combine self-contained quality accommodation with tailored support services. This includes onsite dining and leisure facilities to encourage social interaction and natural friendships to form.

The research found the provision of care, meals and support on-site played a significant role in maintaining the wellbeing of residents - a lowering of the levels of depression, feelings of isolation and anxiety, and helped to reduce the likelihood of falls and hospital admissions.

Loneliness, as a result of social isolation, is now one of the most serious public health concerns facing older people. Social distancing measures have made it more difficult.

Retirement communities have tackled loneliness and isolation by creating opportunities for residents to participate in activities and events

that interest them or develop and explore new skills in the company of liked-minded people even during the pandemic.

Birchgrove's Woodbank Apartment is a retirement community in Hook Heath, Woking. It provides modern and spacious one and two bed self-contained apartments for people in later life who want to continue living independently in their own home, but with assistance and support available should they need it.

Agnes recently moved into Woodbank Apartments after finding her home, which she loved, was getting too much for her. She told us: "I'm very independent and very much do my own thing. I wanted something different, a place where I could stay in control and keep my independence.

"I might need a bit of help to fix something, but I find I'm able to manage myself pretty well. I do all my own cooking and shopping and I like the fact I'm a free agent and can do as I want.

"Woodbank Apartments is very close to my daughter and son-in-law. I've kept my car and once things have eased I can pop in and see her and drop in to my church. There's a lot going for living here."

If you would like to find out more about Woodbank Apartments, please get in touch with the team at Birchgrove on **020 3929 5599** or visit **www.birchgrove.life**