

## **Who To Call If Things Go Wrong**

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Moving can be stressful and moving to retirement property is no different. Most companies in this sector will have schemes to help you with the move and take some of the worry out of the process and for most people everything will go well and the life that follows will be rewarding and comfortable. Many, many times people have said to me 'I wish I had made the move years earlier, I'm so much more comfortable now.'

If you are starting to think about a move where do you turn to for advice and how can you be sure that help will be on hand if there are problems? Of course, you will get information from company brochures, websites and, when you visit properties to see what is available, the sales team but what about independent advice?

The Elderly Accommodation Counsel is a national charity that offers independent advice and they have two services. The First Stop Service gives free telephone advice (call 0800 377 7070) to older people, their families and carers about housing and care options for later life. They also have a website for this service [www.firststopadvice.org.uk](http://www.firststopadvice.org.uk). In addition, they provide a second website with a vast range of free information and guidance for elderly people, their relatives and carers, and professionals who work with them at [www.housingcare.org.uk](http://www.housingcare.org.uk) and that website also lists accommodation and properties throughout the country.

Another important charity that offer advice is Age UK and you can access their website at [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk). They also have local branches and you can contact the Gloucestershire branch at 01452 422660.

If you have made the decision to buy a retirement property then your solicitor should explain everything to you and has the responsibility of reading the legal documents and explaining them to you. If need be, take a friend or relative with you when you discuss things with your solicitor to ensure you have all the information you need.

On those rare occasions when things go wrong there are several places you can turn. Once again you may need to talk to your solicitor. There is a lot of legislation protecting the rights of consumers and leaseholders. The Leasehold Advisory Service ([www.lease-advice.org](http://www.lease-advice.org)) can also help with advice about leases and dealing with problems that arise from them.

Various trade bodies exist that can help ensure companies in this sector adhere to appropriate good practice. The Association of Retirement Home Managers (ARHM) oversees a government approved code of practice and the Associated Retirement Community Operators (ARCO) also has a code of practice for their members. If you have moved into property that offers care and the care service is not up to standard the Care Quality Commission is a Government Agency responsible for inspecting and regulating care services.

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