

Downsizing checklists

Whether you're downsizing to a retirement village, sheltered housing or to a smaller home, thinking about the new surroundings is crucial. Use our checklists to help make your decision – and your move – easier.

Getting around

- Is there good public transport in the new area, and is it easily accessible? For example, is there a main-route bus stop within easy walking distance of the new home?
- Can your friends and family easily get to the area?
- Are there good shops, a library, cafes and other amenities you need nearby?
- How far away is the nearest doctor's surgery?
- What are the parking facilities like?
- Is there off-street parking or unrestricted parking on the street for visitors?
- If you find it difficult to drive, also take a look at our article on what are the alternatives to driving?

Enjoying the area

- Are there other people of a similar age on the street or in the immediate neighbourhood?
- Does the area generally seem quiet and peaceful?
- Are there activities and classes for older people in the local area that match your particular interests?

- Are there any plans for major changes or developments, such as building works, in the area?
- Does the local council have a good reputation in general for delivering services, such as rubbish collection, in the area? And for services specific to older people?
- What are the local GP surgeries and hospitals like? Read their inspection reports on the UK regulator websites: in England: the Care Quality Commission (CQC); in Northern Ireland: the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA); in Scotland: the Care Inspectorate; in Wales: the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).
- Do any charities or social businesses provide services to older people in the area?

Feeling safe

- Does the area feel safe? What are the local crime statistics?
- Is the building well secured?
- Are there suitable locks on all the external doors and windows?
- Is there a burglar alarm? Is the property fitted with a smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector?

Potential challenges of downsizing

- A smaller home means having less space. While this can be an advantage, it's useful to think ahead about how much space you might need for hobbies and accommodating family or visitors.
- Similarly, if you're moving from an older property with large rooms and a garden, you might find a new flat very cramped. Make sure you're happy with the new building, and can see yourself living there for a number of years.
- Sometimes it can be harder for older people to settle into a new area and to make new friends.
- If you've lived in your home for a long period of time, it's likely that you've developed an attachment to it and your happy memories could make it harder to move on.

Extra notes/comments