Press Release

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Ground Breaking Research into the Future of Retirement Housing Begins

A visionary research project that aims to explore what the homes of older people could look like in the future has been launched this month by Churchill Retirement Living and the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at Newcastle University.

The research, which will take place over the next three years, seeks to influence the design response to specialist retirement housing. It will audit the national need for older people's housing, documenting the ageing population's aspirations and reviewing current practices.

Andrew Burgess, Planning Director for Churchill Retirement Living, explains why this research is needed: "We know the UK population is ageing. The number of households aged 65+ will account for over half of new households in the future. However, there is a chronic under supply of suitable accommodation for older people.

"Up to 3.5 million older people are interested in buying or renting a retirement property (*Demos, Top of the Ladder, 2013*), but the next generation of older people have enjoyed unprecedented improvements in living standards and have alternative expectations.

"We need to establish what these expectations are so we can drive a step-change in housing choice for older people – and this is why this research is critical."

Architect Sam Clark has been appointed by Newcastle University to undertake the research on behalf of Churchill Retirement Living. He adds: "At the core of this research, we want to establish what older people consider when making choices about their housing and how housing providers can take this information to develop more appealing options.

"In the last decade, there has been a considerable expansion in the range of choices available and, while there is a growing demand and requirement for specialist housing, it remains true that many older people do not move until they reach crisis point.

"It is important therefore to gain insight into not just what retirement housing of the future might look like, but also how good design can encourage people to plan earlier in order to make more proactive decisions about their housing options."

The scope of the study will relate to England, focusing on towns and cities to reflect the continued migration of older people from rural to urban and suburban areas. Research methodologies will include statistical analysis, participant observations, interviews, focus groups, workshops and testing and evaluating design typologies.

Spencer McCarthy, Chairman and Group Managing Director, commented: "This PhD is fully funded by Churchill Retirement Living and demonstrates our commitment to developing the range and type of retirement living housing we will provide in the future. I am delighted that we are working in partnership with Sam Clark and Newcastle University on this exciting project.

"We are at present the second largest developer in the sector and maintain our position as the fastest growing privately owned company in the retirement market, and I am pleased to say the best. This research will help ensure as part of our overall investment and growth plans that we remain the best and grow to be the biggest. As Winston Churchill said, *"To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often."*

For further information, please visit www.churchillretirement.co.uk/research-and-policy

For more information on Churchill Retirement Living, please call 0800 458 1856 or visit www.churchillretirement.co.uk

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