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Retirement Housing Residents in Scotland to Benefit from New Code of Practice

Monday 26 October 2009 will herald the introduction of a new Code of Practice specifically for the management of private retirement and sheltered housing in Scotland.

Initiated by the Association of Retirement Housing Managers (ARHM), in consultation with the Scottish Government, the new Code will be formally launched by Alex Neil MSP, Minister for Housing and Communities, at an event to be hosted by leading Scotland property manager Peverel Retirement and staged at the Dynamic Earth venue in Edinburgh.

The ARHM Code aims to promote best practice in the provision of management services in retirement housing, setting out clearly what must be provided by law and what else needs to be provided as good practice, irrespective of whether these services are provided by private companies or housing associations. As such it will be a useful resource for both property managers and owners alike and a helpful source of information for prospective purchasers of retirement housing when deciding on the right housing options for them.

The ARHM Code for Scotland draws its content and format from the Code for Private and Leasehold Retirement Property in England and Wales introduced in 2006, yet reflects the different legal status and position of residents North of the Border.

Since the publication of the previous Code of Practice in 2000, the Title Conditions (Scotland) Act 2003 has been passed, making it easier for owners to change managers if they are not satisfied with the services they receive. The ARHM Code provides guidance on the process to be followed to try and ensure a smooth transition.

Joining Alex Neil MSP at the launch of the new Code will be Keith Edgar, Chairman of the ARHM and David Manion, Chief Executive of Age Concern and Help the Aged Scotland.

Housing and Communities Minister Alex Neil said:

“We want to help older people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.

“That’s why we are committed to providing a range of high quality housing options and support for older people which meets their different circumstances.

“We know private retirement housing is one option that many older people wish to take.

“This new code will help promote best practice for private retirement housing across Scotland and importantly, provide clarity for older home owners on the standards they should expect.”

Reflecting on how retirement housing has grown in popularity in Scotland in recent years - providing an opportunity for people to maintain their own homes in later life, while benefiting from the provision of management services which take care of some of the more onerous tasks of home ownership is - ARHM Chairman, Keith Edgar, stressed “the importance for both managers and owners to be fully aware of the standard of services

that should be achieved, irrespective of whether the services are provided by private companies or housing associations”.

David Manion, Chief Executive of Age Concern and Help the Aged Scotland, said: “The charity was closely involved in the drafting and development of this new code and, as such, we are confident that a measurable improvement in practices will result from its implementation.”

Further information about the introduction of the Private Retirement Housing Code of Practice for Scotland is available from the ARHM at: www.arhm.org

Copies of the Code of Practice for Scotland are available at a cost of £5 from the ARHM, Southbank House, Black Prince Road, London SE1 7SJ.

Alternatively, owners may obtain individual copies from the Scottish Government: Housing Access and Support Division, Area 1-H, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH 6QQ.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

Please note the event begins at 10am Monday 26 October 2009

The Association of Retirement Housing Managers (ARHM), represents 57 organisations which, between them, manage just under 100,000 retirement properties.

The Association is committed to high standards and ethics in the management of private retirement and sheltered housing.

The main objectives of the ARHM are to:

- Promote high standards of practice and ethics in the management of retirement housing and in the provision of services to residents.
- Set standards for membership of the Association and promote quality and professionalism through training and education of members.
- Monitor standards of members including implementing a compliance testing regime so that further improvements in standards can be made.
- Consider and comment on matters affecting the Association and retirement housing and to promote the views of the Association in the business, social, educational and political communities.
- Investigate and determine complaints against members
- Provide the principal forum for the discussion and progression of issues facing retirement housing
- Promote the benefits of retirement housing
- Provide and disseminate information on retirement housing and to act as a source of professionally based knowledge
- Foster the exchange of ideas and information between members and organisations

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