



Region ranked top for 'wealthy-retired'

PARTS of the Westcountry have been named among the top retirement locations for the "wealthy-retired".

Modbury, in South Devon, and Tavistock in West Devon have been ranked in the top eight destinations in the country for the wealthy-retired – those in high income brackets with the best occupational pensions.

Data analysts Experian revealed the locations following research into what people expect from their retirement.

It revealed that the retired want to have access to bustling towns, where there are active communities and opportunities for business ventures. They also looked for good food, fashionable shops and art galleries and lovely old houses with substantial pieces of land.

Flete House, less than two miles from Modbury perfectly fits the bill. A 16th century Grade I listed mansion, divided into 30 luxury apartments and set in 12 acres of stunning private, landscaped gardens, it has been developed solely for the over-55s.

Cybil Irene Lines, 84, fell in love

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with the building and the area on her first visit. She said: "I have never had five minutes here with the feeling that I am lonely or that I have nothing to do. We have a mini-bus that goes to Ivy-bridge and Modbury twice a week. I eat in the restaurant every day, where

the food is excellent and the choice is amazing. We have coffee together in the drawing room after lunch and there is even a birthday with champagne drinks being organised for someone."

The facilities at Flete House include a gym, library, restaurant, tennis courts and also a 24-hour security officer, who can be alerted by an alarm in each of the apartments.

Peter Reece-Smith, 80, also lives at Flete House. He is a former professional hockey player and once represented Great Britain at the Olympics. He recently moved to the area from Worcestershire. "The great thing about this place is you can do as much or as little as you please. I'm a keen golfer and there are courses nearby."

Professor Richard Webber, Experian's geodemographics expert believes the wealthy-retired need to live within shooting distance of a bigger town so they can continue playing an active role. He said: "The chance to take an active part in community life is extremely important. These people have had high-powered jobs and they need to feel valued.

"Smallish country towns still have thriving communities with lots of things going on. Coastal towns with their fluctuating populations don't have such strong communities."

Professor Webber believes that thriving country towns will continue to remain the attraction of the

wealthy-retired. He said: "Prices in the places I have identified are so high that there will be no place for cheap housing. And as most of the towns lie within land with planning restrictions, notably national parks, there'll be no chance of expansion on their outskirts."

Meanwhile a call has been made for an increase in "appropriate" housing

to help improve the health and well-being of the Westcountry's resident elderly population.

The National Housing Federation, the South West Regional Public Health Group, and the Care Services Improvement Partnership, are urging more quality and suitable housing for all older people.

They believe that, as older people spend up to 90 per cent of their time in their homes, the quality of their accommodation can significantly impact upon their health and well-being.

Westcountry MPs have welcomed the calls both for helping local people and for freeing up much needed affordable housing, which may be inappropriate for elderly people but a perfect solution for young families struggling to get on the housing ladder.

The three groups last week launched a publication called "From Healthier Homes to Healthier Lives" which highlights the role housing can play for older people's lives.