

EXTRACT FROM MMHS's BROCHURE 'CHOOSING YOUR HOME FOR RETIREMENT'

1. Purchase of a Property

- 1.1 If you have been advised by the Society that a purchase will be made you can start to look for suitable properties in your chosen area at any time. Please note that the actual buying process by the Society will not start until February.
- 1.2 Local newspapers, adverts, estate agents, the internet and recommendations from family and friends are all good sources.
- 1.3 When making enquiries, you should mention that the Society, a charity, will be the buyer of the property and that you will be the tenant(s).
- 1.4 After your meeting, and only on or after **28th February 2016**, if you are certain that you have found a suitable property please let us know and ask the estate agent to e-mail or fax details to the Society. It is essential that you **do not make an offer or mention a purchase price to the agents or seller or start any negotiations.**
- 1.5 If the property is being built, request that the developer e-mails or faxes to us details, or you can send us details, but again, you should not enter negotiations or pay any monies even if you find yourself being strongly encouraged to do so.

2. Factors to Consider

- 2.1 The property will be your home and you are encouraged to consider a number of factors.
- 2.2 If you have any doubts about what you should be looking for, please contact the Society.
- 2.3 Recommendations:

2.3.1 Location

The property should be located within easy/reasonable travelling distance of amenities, good access to public transport and your support network, family, friends and church. You are advised to make a point of driving/walking around your chosen area at different times and different dates to get a feel for the area to see if you like it.

2.3.2 Property

- (a) The Society must ensure that properties within its ownership achieve a specified standard. It is essential to ensure that any new purchases measure up to this. In order to achieve this the following criteria are normally applied:
 - i) The property is no older than 10 years.
 - ii) If the property is more than 10 years old a Decent Homes survey will be carried out prior to purchase. If 3 or more substantial items (e.g. kitchen, bathroom, windows, boiler, central heating system, roof, driveway, re-wire) require replacement within 5 years the purchase will not proceed.
- (b) Preferred properties are those which have gas central heating, satisfactory double-glazing, garages/driveways/off-street parking or allocated space/bays, straight stairways, at least one additional ground level WC, manageable gardens and satisfactory energy efficient features.
- (c) An energy performance certificate (EPC) provides information which the seller has to pay for and provide in order to sell the property. This essentially will detail how economic the property is to keep warm. We will see this information once the purchase process is underway, but you are asked to look out for thermostatic heating valves on radiators, check for UPVC double-glazed windows and ask whether there is loft insulation and cavity wall insulation.
- (d) You should bear in mind that because Manses are often bigger, not everything housed in a Manse can be accommodated in a smaller property - down-sizing is inevitable.
- (e) Bungalows are desirable as are flats, houses and dormer bungalows, but you should check that the stairs and or steps to the living area or otherwise will be manageable in years to come.

2.3.3 Looking at the Property

- (a) You are not expected to 'survey' the property when you go to have a look, but care should be taken with even the most minor of things. Checking doors, cupboards, windows, imagining floor and wall space usage, how and where your furniture will fit in all rooms, is very important. Please also refer to our section on features to avoid (para 8 below).
- (b) You should look at the carpets and the fixtures that might be coming with the property. You should also note anything that would cause you to comment, like a damp patch, dated electrics (light switches power points), old radiators, boilers, and so forth. Where possible, you should try to view the property more than once at different times of the day

and week and take a family member or friend or some other third party with you in order to get another viewpoint.

- (c) You will be responsible for the repair or replacement of the fixtures and fittings. These items are those which come included in the purchase price and we will let you have a list of items, if provided to us as part of the stages of the purchase. In particular any gas fires included in the purchase will be your responsibility including repairs, maintenance and replacement of the actual gas fire itself, but the Society will pay for an annual safety inspection.

3. Features to Avoid

Whilst we understand that not all properties will quite meet the preferred features, generally speaking and in terms of the property itself, please try to avoid those:

- 3.1 On steep hills or in hilly areas.
- 3.2 Without manageable transport links.
- 3.3 With potentially unmanageable stairs or steps either to access the rooms of the property or the front door of the property.
- 3.4 With large, unmanageable gardens.
- 3.5 With large trees in the property boundaries close to the property itself.
- 3.6 In locations that you might in future find problematic such as low-lying areas, flood plains, districts subject to unpleasant smells (such as near farms or landfills and those with other hazards such as electricity pylons).
- 3.7 With flat roofs. Pitched roofs are preferred but you are asked to be cautious if the roof looks in any way 'tired' or shows signs of poor maintenance.
- 3.8 With poor brickwork. If the brickwork is plain (i.e. not cladded, pebble-dashed, etc.) you may be able to see the pointing. If the pointing appears broken, loose or has gaps in it, this would suggest that the brickwork is compromised.
- 3.9 With poor double-glazing or non-UPVC frames. Condensation in the double-glazed window itself would indicate that the unit has failed and may need replacement partly or even fully.

4. The Buying Process – (where applicable)

- 4.1 The Society conducts all the negotiations, liaises with the agent/seller and instructs surveyors, heating and electrical test engineers (as need be), solicitors and any other relevant parties.

- 4.2 During the initial purchase phase, there is little to report to you and you can safely assume that matters are proceeding in normal course. It is likely that the Society will be purchasing a number of properties during this period and it is therefore not practical to keep each of you informed at each stage of the transaction. However, if there is any serious difficulty, you will be informed as soon as possible.
- 4.3 We will contact you after we have received the property survey which the Society will commission. This will provide us with information on the age and condition of the property and will enable us to make a decision on whether to proceed or not. Please be aware that if we receive a poor survey result, we may withdraw from the purchase (see also 7.3.2 (ii)).
- 4.4 Subject to this, the Society will make every reasonable effort to proceed with the purchase of the property you have chosen, once our solicitors deal with the legalities and report to us on this. You will then hear from us again, letting you know about legalities relevant to you and your occupation.
- 4.5 After this, the Society prepares to exchange contracts. This is the legal formality which binds parties, the Society as buyer and the seller.
- 4.6 On exchange, we also agree a completion date. The completion date is the date we must hand over the money to the seller's solicitors and they in turn must make sure the keys to your new home are available for collection on completion, usually around 2.30 pm from the estate agents, by you or a person nominated by you. This gives us – as owners – and you – as tenant(s) access to the property and it is essential that these be collected within 3 days of completion. (but see para 12.4 concerning rent).
- 4.7 On and after exchange (and **never** before), you can start to make your removal arrangements. The reason for this is that exchange of contracts can be delayed by factors outside our control and so dates **cannot** be guaranteed to fit in with removals, carpet fitters, deliveries, utility connections, family holidays and such like at least until contracts have been exchanged.
- 4.8 Immediately following completion the Society will arrange for the electrical inspection and the gas safety inspection. This allows us to identify essential, required works and we would ask that you to liaise closely with the Society during this time.
- 4.9 After completion, the Society will deal with post completion matters such as tenancies/equities, rent (including pension consent), handbooks and general authorities (including data protection authorisation).
- 4.10 At all appropriate times, the Society will liaise with you but please telephone should you have any pressing concerns.
- 4.11 The Society aims to complete on purchases 1 to 3 months before retirement with every effort being made to ensure that the property is ready for occupation by the end of July. The purchasing of a property can be quite

complex and we must ensure that any risk to the Society is minimised. For this reason, enquiries are detailed and take time, but please remember that we are ensuring that our investment (and yours, if you are making an equity contribution) is protected as much as possible.