



Important questions to ask village sales managers

Make an informed decision with this
comprehensive checklist of questions



Village sales managers are one of the most helpful resources available to you when you're researching retirement villages.

Sales managers are usually full-time, onsite employees. They tend to be village educators and advocates (not pushy salespeople). It's important to them that you make the right choice and that you're happy with your decision.

Sales managers have a wealth of knowledge about:

- How the village operates
- Who currently lives there
- The types of activities and facilities on offer
- The types of services and care offered
- Whether the village would be a good fit for you

Meeting with a sales manager is an opportunity to find out as much as you can about the village so you can get all the information you need to make an informed choice.

To get you started, here are some important questions to ask village sales managers when you meet them.



The village at a glance

QUESTIONS TO ASK TO GET A SNAPSHOT OF THE VILLAGE

- What types of homes are available? E.g. villas, apartments, serviced apartments?
- How many residents live in the village, and what is the maximum occupancy? Is there a waiting list?
- Is the village complete or are there new homes in the pipeline?
If the village does have development plans, ask for details. For example, will the new homes affect your view?
- Who owns and operates the village?
- Is there an onsite village manager? If not, how often does the village manager visit?
- Is there an activities coordinator? If yes, what are some common activities?
- Are pets allowed?
- What security is in place? For example, home alarms, locked gates, cameras, guard patrols?
- Are there emergency alarm buttons? If yes, who attends the calls and is there a cost?
- What are the facilities and services offered? Which services are included in the weekly fee, and which services incur an additional cost?
- What healthcare services are available? For example, access to health practitioners such as doctors, nurses, physiotherapists? Are there regular clinics or onsite staff?
- Is it possible to move homes within the village? For example, from an independent living villa or apartment to a serviced apartment?
- Make sure you understand the costs associated with a move.
- Does the village have a care home? If yes, what levels of care are available?
- Make sure you understand the different cost structure of living in a care home.
- Is there a residents' committee, and what is its role?
- How does the village deal with complaints?
- What are the village rules?

In-depth village information

QUESTIONS TO ASK TO GET A COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE VILLAGE

Fees and paperwork

It's important to get a clear understanding of the financial implications of moving into a village.

Buying into a village

- What are the entry costs? For example, will I need to pay a deposit?
It's also a good idea to ask for a price indication for each type of home.
- What legal titles are homes sold under? For example, a licence to occupy (the most common title) or another title such as unit title?
- What is the maximum deferred management fee? And over how many years does it accumulate, and how is it calculated?
- What happens if I change my mind after signing an agreement? For example, does the village offer an extended 'money back guarantee' over and above the 15 working day cooling off period guaranteed under the Retirement Villages Act 2003?

Living in the village

- How much is the periodic fee (usually weekly), and what does it cover?
- Can the periodic fee be increased, and if yes, how often?
- Will the periodic fee change if the number of people living in the home changes?
- Are there any other fees to be aware of?
- What living expenses are not covered by the village? E.g. utility bills, personal contents and car insurance?
- Is the periodic fee still charged if I go on holiday or I'm in hospital?

Transferring to a different home within the village

- Does it cost to transfer between homes? For example, from a villa to a serviced apartment? And how will the deferred management fee be treated in this situation?
- Does the original home need to be re-licensed before I can move?

NB: *Transferring from an independent or assisted living home into a care home follows a separate process and fee structure. We recommend you discuss the process and costs directly with the sales manager.*

Leaving the village

- Apart from the deferred management fee, are there any additional leaving costs to be aware of? For example, marketing, legal or admin fees?
- Who receives the capital gain when a home is re-licensed? And who is liable for any capital loss?
- Will the home need to be refurbished before it goes on the market? If yes, who is responsible, and how long does it generally take?

It's important to ascertain whether this process will delay the home going to market.

- Will the periodic fee continue to be charged until the home is re-licensed?
- How long will it take for all final leaving payments to be made (from village operator to resident) once the home has been re-licensed?
- Is it possible to apply for an early repayment of the capital sum or a portion of it?

Healthcare

Find out what healthcare services are available to you within the village or nearby.

- What healthcare professionals are employed (or contracted) by the village? For example, registered nurses, physiotherapists, doctors or podiatrists? How often do they visit, and what is the process of making an appointment?
- What other healthcare services are nearby, e.g. a local medical centre and pharmacy?
- Is there an onsite care home? If yes, can residents receive respite care in the event of short-term illness or injury?
- Are any healthcare services included in the weekly fee?
This is usually only the case if you live in a serviced apartment. However, you may have the option to receive certain healthcare services in your independent living home on a 'pay-per-service' basis.
- Who decides if a resident needs a higher level of care, and what's the process for this?

Lifestyle

Find out about the village's facilities, services, and culture.

- What facilities are available? For example, a communal lounge, library, swimming pool, cafe, gym, bowling green?
- How are these facilities managed?
- What are the opening hours of these facilities?
- Are there any restrictions on who can use the facilities, e.g. visiting family members or friends?
- Are there any new facilities underway or in the pipeline?
- What social activities does the village offer? And who organises them?
- Are there additional services available, for example, hairdressing services, laundry and housekeeping?

Types of homes

Get an understanding of the different kinds of homes available.

- What types of homes are available, e.g. townhouses, villas, apartments, serviced apartments?
- What layouts and configurations are available, e.g. studio, 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom?
- What are the key differences between each home type?
- Can residents make any renovations to the property?
- What is the village's policy on wall fixtures? For example, wall-mounted televisions, bookshelves, artwork, etc.
- Are homes accessible by wheelchair or walker?

Village operations

Learn how the village is managed.

- Who is in charge of village maintenance?
- Are the village grounds and facilities well-maintained?
- Are residents responsible for maintaining everything within their home? Or, are there some exceptions, e.g. installed appliances?
- How long does it typically take to carry out urgent maintenance – for example, a faulty oven – and what is the process for this?
- Can residents participate in the AGM?
- How are complaints handled? What is the average response time?

Notes

Further Reading

Thank you for reading our guide **Important questions to ask village sales managers**. We hope you've found the checklists in this booklet useful.

For more information about planning for retirement, and about retirement villages in New Zealand, please visit www.villageguide.co.nz