

Welcome to the Retirement Plus Property Plan

What you may need to know
about your Retirement Plus
Property Plan



retirement⁺plus
Unlock Home Equity Fairly

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Equity Release Council



Retirement Plus is a long-standing member of the Equity Release Council, formerly known as SHIP (Safe Home Income Plans).

The Equity Release Council is the industry body for the equity release sector and is dedicated entirely to the protection of equity release plan holders. They also ensure that their members adhere to the strict standards set out in their code of conduct:

- ▶ To provide fair, simple and complete presentation of the plans
- ▶ To ensure legal work is carried out by a solicitor of your choice, who will look after your interests
- ▶ Your solicitor will be required to sign a certificate to confirm that the plan has been explained to you in full
- ▶ To ensure that you will never owe more than the value of your home and that no debt will ever be left to your estate after your death

Website

www.retirement-plus.co.uk

Customer Service

Open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

 0845 850 8510

Welcome to the Retirement Plus Property Plan

From now on we will be actively involved in managing your Property Plan. If you want to cancel, or move, or sell, or have any problems with property maintenance or legal issues relating to your property, we are your partners in the ownership of your property and we will try to help deal with any issues you may have.

In our Customer Brochure we explained how the Property Plan works. Now, we'd like to give you some useful information about when you should contact us, who you need to speak to and what the Property Plan means to you.

Please remember that our team are here to help and give you any information you may need – please call 0845 850 8510. Please keep this information safe, so that you can refer to it when you need to. If you need another copy of our Customer Brochure or any other literature you have received, let us know and we will be happy to send you a replacement.

Sit back, relax and enjoy the benefits of your Retirement Plus Property Plan



This brochure is meant to be a helpful guide to the Property Plan. The Property Plan Agreement we sent to you contains the full terms of the Property Plan. If there are any differences between the terms in the Property Plan Agreement and this guide, the terms in the Property Plan Agreement will overrule this brochure.

What are my responsibilities?

We want you to continue to enjoy your home. We just ask that you:

- ▶ Keep your home in good condition
- ▶ Ensure your home is correctly insured and send us the annual insurance statement
- ▶ Pay all household property expenses, such as council tax, water rates, gas and electricity. If your home is leasehold you will also need to pay any ground rent, service charges and other maintenance costs
- ▶ Don't make structural changes to your home, leave your home for longer than a month, run a business from home or let anyone else live there without reaching agreement with us first
- ▶ Let us know if your circumstances change or have any problems in respect of the property

Don't forget that we both have interests in your property and we will look to help where we can. For instance, if you are having difficulty meeting repair expenses or intend to make a buildings insurance claim, or have changed the executors in your will, please telephone us.

What contact can I expect from Retirement Plus?

We will telephone you within a few days of completing your Property Plan to introduce ourselves and answer any queries you may have. In addition:

- ▶ You will receive an annual statement detailing the Retirement Plus share
- ▶ You will receive a request to provide up to date confirmation of your buildings insurance each year
- ▶ We will also ask that you confirm every year that your contact information such as your solicitor, next of kin and other personal details have not changed or to let us know when there are changes
- ▶ Once a year, we may also request an appointment to inspect your property. We will make every effort to arrange a time that is convenient for you

At Retirement Plus we pride ourselves on the service we provide to our customers. We welcome any feedback you may have and we may contact you from time to time to check that we are meeting your expectations.



How do I keep a track of my share?

Every month our percentage share in your property will increase at the fixed rate which was set when you took out the Property Plan.

This rate is detailed in your Offer. When you applied for your Retirement Plus Property Plan, your financial adviser provided you with a Key Facts Illustration. This showed what the Retirement Plus share in your home would be at twelve-month intervals. The final version of this information was contained in your Offer.

Once a year, we will provide you with a statement showing how the rate was applied to the Retirement Plus share over the preceding twelve months. It will also show your current share of your home as a percentage. The value of your share in monetary terms is that percentage of the market value.

However, should you be thinking about selling your property or cancelling the Property Plan, there are costs for which you will be responsible – please check the relevant sections in this booklet.

What if Retirement Plus has paid for things on my behalf?

Although you are responsible for the direct payment of things such as buildings insurance premiums, maintenance costs and service charges, there may have been an occasion when we have had to pay them on your behalf.

If we do so, we will write to you, giving you the opportunity to repay us immediately. If you do not, we may charge you interest on this amount whilst it remains unpaid.

If there are any such amounts outstanding, these will be shown on your annual statement, together with any interest that has been charged. You can repay this balance at any time in order to save paying further interest.



Who arranges the buildings insurance on my home?

It's very important that your home is correctly insured at all times. You are responsible for arranging the cover, paying the premiums and informing us if any insurance claim is required.

We are here to help should you need guidance.

Each year, when you renew your insurance, you need to send us a copy of the schedule sent to you by your insurance company or broker. We will check that the cover is in order, that the insurance value is sufficient and that the insurance is in our joint names.

If you fail to make insurance premium payments, we will do this on your behalf, but we will charge an administration fee for doing so – please see our current tariff of charges. We will also charge interest on the premiums until you have repaid us. So it's in your interest to pay these yourself.

What if I need to make a claim on my buildings insurance?

Should there need to be a claim on the buildings insurance for whatever reason, you must let us know. The insurance money must be used to restore your property to good condition.

If your claim is against your contents insurance, you have no need to notify us and whether you replace your lost or damaged contents is up to you.



What if I want to start a business from my home?

The Property Plan does not allow for any commercial use of your home without our consent.

However, we don't want to spoil your plans, say you want to do dressmaking, take commissions for your art work, do book keeping or take in bed and breakfast guests. As long as we can assure ourselves that your business activities will not have a detrimental effect on the value of the property and that you have the appropriate insurance or consents, then we will look to agree to this.

There will be a cost to cover our administration – which is detailed in our current tariff of charges under Changes to Circumstances.

If you are thinking of making alterations to accommodate your business then we will need to ensure that the property can easily convert back to a family home.

We will obtain a valuation at your cost. It may well be that your improvements actually enhance the value of the property and we may adjust the Retirement Plus share to give you the benefit of any increase in value – see the section on Home Improvements and Repairs.



What if I want to cancel the Property Plan?

If at any time you want to cancel the Property Plan, you can. We will arrange for a valuation of your property, this will be paid for by you – please see our current tariff of charges. Our share of the property will be calculated using this valuation figure. This will be the amount you need to pay us in order to cancel the Property Plan.

As the Retirement Plus share increases every month, the amount you will have to pay us to cancel the Property Plan will change each month. We will give you a cancellation statement that will show you the three different amounts you would need to pay us if you cancelled the Property Plan in the next three months.

This statement will be valid for three months.

If you do not cancel within the next three months, but still intend to do so, we will need to arrange a new valuation. You will have thirty days from receiving the statement to tell us if you want to go ahead with the cancellation.

Please remember that if you cancel within five years of taking out the Property Plan and property prices have fallen, the Retirement Plus share will be based on the original valuation amount when you took out your Property Plan. You will also be responsible for any legal costs and Land Registry fees and any other costs or taxes that may arise.

What happens to my home when I die?

As the terms of the Property Plan intend for you to live in your home for the rest of your life, you have probably wondered what happens to your home when you die.

We will talk to your family or executors and arrange for the sale of your home. You may be worried about what will happen to all your belongings. We understand that this will be a difficult time for your family and will endeavour to agree a sympathetic timeframe for your belongings to be removed.

Once your home is sold, we will deduct the Retirement Plus share and any sale and legal costs from the sale proceeds. Any remaining balance will be paid to your estate. If there isn't sufficient money to pay the costs, Retirement Plus will cover them.

If the Property Plan is in joint names and one of you dies, the other has the right to continue to live at home. Please inform us, as we will have to make administrative changes to your Property Plan, but you will not have to pay any administration charges for this.

What if I need to release further money?

We may be able to agree to an increase in the Retirement Plus share in your home.

If you are considering this, you must seek advice from your financial adviser and solicitor. They will look at all the options available to you and advise you accordingly. We will let your financial adviser know how much money is available to you, based on your estimation of the current value of your home.

If you do decide to proceed, we will arrange for a valuation of the property – you will be responsible for the cost of this.

If you are planning on spending the money on home improvements you need to tell us so that we can get the valuer to take this into account when arriving at a valuation figure.

The Retirement Plus share will be based on the improved value of your home, so that you will receive the full benefit of any increase in the property value as a result of the improvements – please see the section in this booklet on home improvements and repairs for more information.

There will be other costs – please see our current tariff of charges. Your financial adviser will also provide you with a Key Facts Illustration so that you can consider these before you decide to go ahead.



What if I want to improve my home?

If you are considering making any improvements or alterations to your home you may need to contact us.

For some larger improvements, say an extension, loft conversion or alterations to a listed property, you may need planning permission or special consents. Before you make an application you need to let us know. As we also have an interest in your home, we will need to provide you with written consent. You will also need to keep us informed on how your application progresses.

If your proposed works cost more than £10,000, we will adjust our share in the property so that you get the benefit of any increase in value of your home as a result of the improvements you have made. We will arrange for a valuation before you carry out the works and a valuation afterwards.

You will be responsible for the costs of the valuation inspections – please see our current tariff of charges.

Please remember that the value of your property may not increase as a result of the changes you make.

When we receive the first valuation, we will discuss the valuer's report and give an indication of how the improvements will affect the value of your home. We will also let you know how your share of the property is likely to be affected and send you the information in writing so that you can seek advice on whether or not the improvements are worthwhile.

We will only know how much the property has actually increased in value once the work has been done and the valuer has assessed the final results.

You may be planning something smaller, say an updated bathroom suite or a fitted bedroom. If the cost of your work is less than £10,000, excluding VAT, there is no need for you to get in touch with us.

As you will probably have this Property Plan for a long time, we may at some time in the future increase the £10,000 limit. Before starting any work please check with us.

What if any repairs need to be done?

Repairs may need to be carried out on your home from time to time.

If your gutters need repairing or your windows need repainting this will be your responsibility. However we would like you to contact us and inform us of any repairs that need doing if you are struggling to pay for them. We may be able to help. If we do pay for any repairs then interest will be added to the costs and we will be reimbursed out of the proceeds of sale of the property, at the end of the Property Plan. You can repay this balance at any time if you want to save paying any more interest charges.

Once any repairs have been completed we will arrange for a suitable date to visit your home, to make sure the repairs have been carried out satisfactorily.



What if I wish to let out my property?



The Property Plan was agreed on the basis that you would remain living in your home.

However we appreciate that circumstances may change, say going to stay with relatives for a while or going on a cruise around the world. So you may feel it's best to let your property out during the time you're away.

You must speak to us and obtain our consent before taking any action. Your tenants will need to enter into an Assured Shorthold Tenancy Agreement. We will need to satisfy ourselves that the wording of this agreement is satisfactory and that the property will be managed in your absence.

It is usual to appoint an estate agent to prepare the Tenancy Agreement, manage the property and maybe collect the rent. You will also need to inform us to check that adequate insurance arrangements are made.

We will charge a fee for the administration – please see our current tariff of charges.

We will look to accommodate your plans where we can, however we would normally only agree to this for a short period. Please remember that it remains your responsibility to ensure that the property is well maintained and you will have to make good any damage or wear and tear caused by your tenants.

Can I leave my property empty?

If you are planning on leaving your property empty for more than a month, you need to contact us.

You may want to spend time with a relative in Australia, or spend the cold winter months somewhere with a milder climate, or maybe you need to nurse a sick relative or friend.

We must ensure that you have made adequate arrangements for the property to be kept secure, insured and well maintained. We will also need your contact information, should we need to get in touch with you.

What if I need to move into long-term care?

If you move into long-term care, we do not insist that your home is sold, provided that your care home fees are paid and we agree that you have made adequate arrangements for the property to be kept secure, insured and well maintained. You need to contact us so that we can agree any arrangements.

Alternatively, if you wish to sell your home, we will arrange this with you. The selling costs, including estate agents fees, valuation, legal costs and our administration charges will be your responsibility and we will deduct these from the sale proceeds, before we send you your share.

If your share of the sale proceeds is insufficient to meet these costs, then we will pay any outstanding fees.

Should you decide not to sell your home, the Retirement Plus share in your home will continue to increase.

This may not be a sensible long term solution and you should seek advice from your financial adviser and solicitor as to what is the best option for you.

What if I want to move or sell my home?

If you want to sell your home, you will need to contact us. We will work with you to have the property valued and seek advice on the price at which the property should be marketed.

Together, we will obtain the best possible price for the property in the circumstances at that time. The fees, cost and expenses involved in the sale will be paid out of the share of the proceeds of sale due to you, including the valuation fees and our administration costs. Please check the current tariff of charges or contact us to find out how much our costs will be. If your share of the sale proceeds is insufficient to meet these costs, then we will pay any outstanding fees.

If you want to move house and keep the benefits of the Property Plan, your current property will be valued to work out the value of our current share.

We will also need to carry out a valuation on the property you wish to buy and check that it's acceptable to us. If the new property is worth less than your current home, then you may need to pay us a sum to keep our percentage share in the property at the same level as it was in your current home.

Similarly, if the property you wish to buy is worth more than your current home, our percentage share in the new property will be lower.

There may be other early cancellation penalties and you should check your Property Plan Agreement or contact us in this regard.



What if I want someone else to come and live with me?

You may have someone live with you, but you must obtain our consent. The Property Plan was agreed on the basis that you may live in the property for the rest of your life. It does not allow for anyone else to have the same rights.

If you had someone living with you when you took out the Property Plan they would have been asked to sign a document agreeing to move out of the property in the event of your death.

Similarly if you want someone to move into the property once you have taken out the Property Plan, we will need them to sign a document agreeing to vacate the property when you die.

You should contact us and we will send out the appropriate documentation.

If you are planning on having a lodger, friend or young relative move in with you, it may be perfectly acceptable for them to find alternative accommodation in the event of your death.

If, for example, you are planning to marry or have your brother or sister move in, then you may want to have the comfort of knowing that they, too, can live in the property for the rest of their life, irrespective of whether they outlive you.

In these cases, we may agree to amend the Property Plan to include them as a party to the Property Plan Agreement, thus giving them the same rights of occupation as you. We may ask that some of the Amount Released to be repaid and your home would be transferred into the joint names.

We would ask you to seek independent advice from your financial adviser and solicitor to explore what is the best option for you.

Why might I consider creating an enduring/lasting Power of Attorney?

A person who is granted an enduring/lasting Power of Attorney by you can manage your affairs if you are no longer capable of making a decision for yourself. You can appoint anyone you wish to act as your Power of Attorney – your solicitor, trusted friend or a relative.

This is an important decision and you may wish to seek legal advice.

The advantage of giving a Power of Attorney over your home is that should you need to go into long-term care, the Power of Attorney will enable decisions over your home to be taken quickly. In the case of sale, this will allow for a faster process resulting in the Retirement Plus share of your home not continuing to increase even though your home is standing empty.

Why is it important to keep you up to date with my contact details?

When you took out the Property Plan, your solicitor provided us with the name and address of your next of kin and where applicable, those of your executor or Power of Attorney.

When we send you an annual statement, this information will be shown so that you can check it. If any details have changed, please let us know.

Also, say your next of kin moves house or you change your executor or you appoint a Power of Attorney – please call with the details.

This will ensure that we always have the most up to date information to keep things running smoothly.



Why do you need to inspect my home?

We will need to inspect your home periodically to make sure that everything is in order and that there are no major problems with the property that you may not be aware of. Similarly, if you have any concerns or are worried about the property structure, call us and we may arrange for a professional to visit and give their opinion.

Will you let me know that someone is coming?

Absolutely. We would never turn up at your property unannounced. We will give you plenty of notice that we want to make an appointment – at least 7 days but usually longer – by letter and telephone. Any appointment will always be arranged with you beforehand at a time that is convenient.

You can also rest assured that the person we send to visit you will always carry an identification card to give you peace of mind. You can also telephone us to check before you let them in – they will not be offended.

Will you let me know what the inspection showed?

We will always give you feedback after we visit to reassure you that everything is in order. If the inspection reveals that there are repairs necessary, we will ask that they be undertaken by you within an agreed timescale, to ensure that the property does not deteriorate. We will then arrange a further visit to check that the repairs have been satisfactorily completed.

What if I cannot afford the repairs you want me to do?

Although keeping the property in good order is your responsibility, please let us know if you cannot afford the repairs, we may be able to help – please see the section in this booklet on home improvements and repairs.



You held back money from the amount you released

When you took out the Property Plan we may have asked you to have repairs carried out on your home and retained some of the Amount Released until this work is done.

The amount we kept back and the timescale we set for the repairs to be carried out will be detailed in your Offer.

If you are unsure after reading the Offer, please call us and we can give you the necessary information.

If you cannot finish the work within the agreed timescale, please contact us so that we can agree a suitable solution with you.

If you have completed the repairs, you will need to contact us to arrange for the payment of the retained money.

Usually, Retirement Plus will need to instruct a valuer to confirm the works have been carried out satisfactorily or in some cases we may need to see invoices and guarantees.

You will be responsible for the valuation fee – please refer to our current tariff of charges – and we will deduct this from the money due to you.

Once we are happy that everything is in order we will arrange to send you the money.

What happens if I need legal advice on matters relating to my home?

You should contact us on any matter relating to the property.

For instance, say you have a dispute with your neighbours over trees, or you receive a legal notice from your Local Authority, or you have land boundary issues with your neighbours, or someone is applying for planning permission and you think it will affect your property.

We may be able to arrange for free legal advice.



Protecting your home

If you suffer loss or damage to your property your insurance policy can help put things right, but it won't compensate you for the inconvenience, worry and upset. By following some of our suggestions you can help protect yourself and your home.

Fire

- ▶ From time to time get your electrical wiring, electrical and heating appliances checked
- ▶ Switch off power points when they are not in use
- ▶ Kitchens are a major source of fire – keep an extinguisher and fire blanket handy for emergencies
- ▶ Fit a smoke alarm and get someone to check regularly that it's working

Theft

- ▶ Fit good quality locks to all doors and windows and keep them locked – especially when you go out
- ▶ Fit a chain and spy hole so that you can check the identity of callers. Never let anyone into your home without identity
- ▶ When you go away, cancel all deliveries and ask a neighbour to keep an eye on your home
- ▶ Leave a light on if you go out for the evening

Flood

- ▶ Lag your attic, water pipes and tanks
- ▶ If your pipes freeze, turn off the water at the mains and thaw them out slowly using hot water bottles
- ▶ If you are going away for some time in the winter, make sure your pipes are drained to prevent bursts
- ▶ If you think a flood is likely, take as many possessions as possible upstairs



If things go wrong

We are fully committed to providing a quality service to all our customers at all times. However, we know that sometimes things can go wrong and you may be dissatisfied with the service we provide. If this happens, we want you to tell us so we can try to put it right.

Retirement Plus Limited administers the Property Plan for Milton Homes Properties Limited.

The Compliance Officer
Retirement Plus Limited
Newcombe House
45 Notting Hill Gate
London W11 3LQ

Telephone: 0845 850 8510
Email: complaints@retirement-plus.co.uk

If an agreement cannot be reached, the complaint will be referred to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

Financial Ombudsman Service
South Quay Plaza
183 Marsh Wall Street
London E14 9SR

Telephone: 0845 080 1800

Financial Services Compensation Scheme

The Retirement Plus Property Plan is covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. You will be entitled to compensation from this scheme if we cannot meet our obligations to you. For further information please contact:

**Financial Services Compensation
Scheme**
7th Floor, Lloyds Chambers
Portsoken Street
London E1 8BN



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