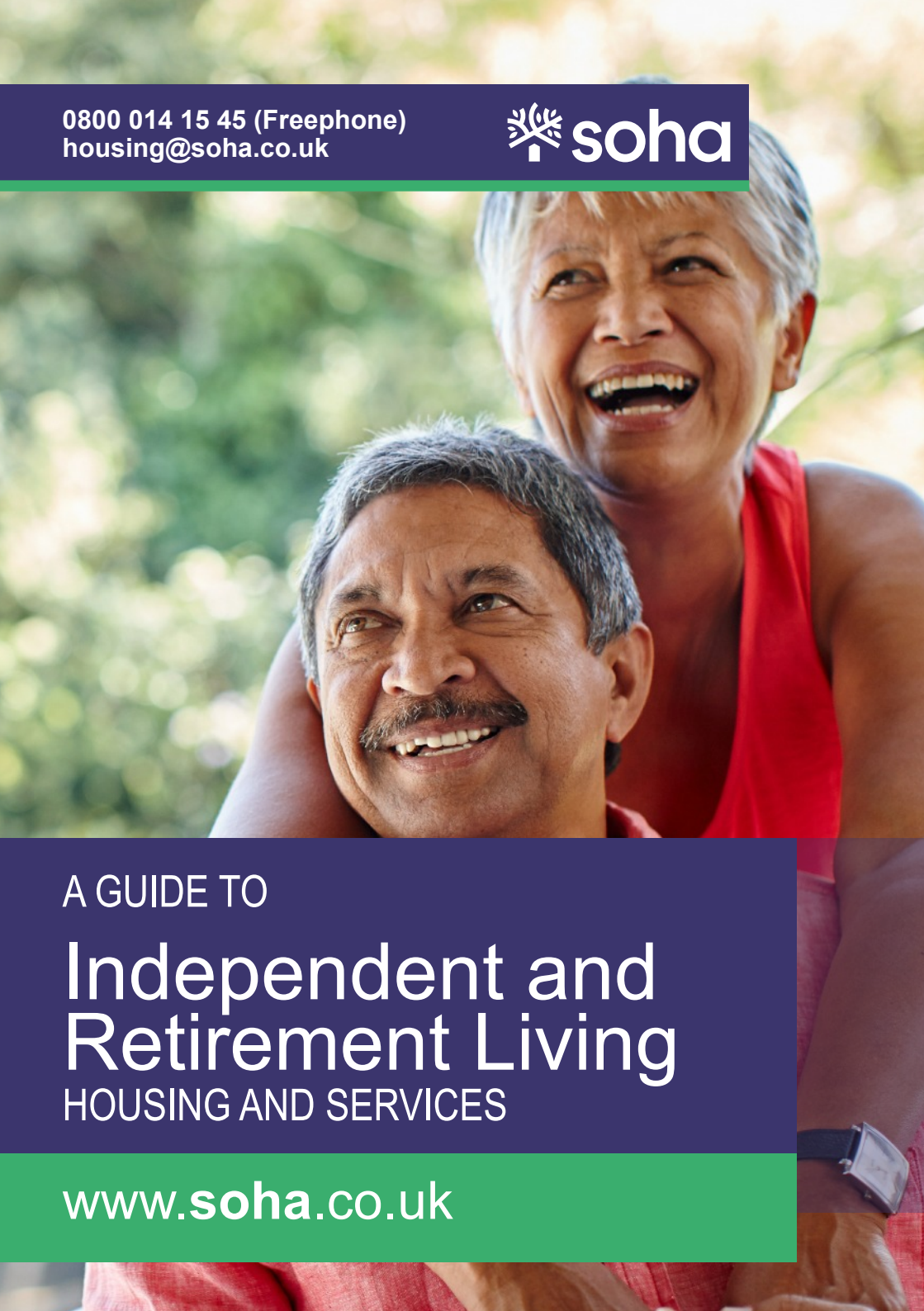


A photograph of an older couple smiling and looking off-camera. The woman is in the background, wearing a red sleeveless top, and the man is in the foreground, also wearing a red shirt. They are both smiling warmly. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting foliage.

0800 014 15 45 (Freephone)
housing@soha.co.uk



A GUIDE TO

Independent and Retirement Living

HOUSING AND SERVICES

www.soha.co.uk

Introduction to Independent and Retirement Living

Soha Housing offers a range of affordable accommodation for people of retirement age. With homes across South Oxfordshire and surrounding areas, there is plenty of choice to rent or buy in both town and village locations.

Our homes are self-contained and comfortable offering you the privacy of your own home coupled with an active social life when it suits you. We aim to accommodate couples as well as single people and some of our homes, often with a communal lounge and garden, are perfect for wider family visits.

Independent Living schemes

Our schemes provide quality accommodation to people who want to live with others of a similar age. Often in a building with a communal entrance, lounge and garden these homes are located in towns and villages and are ideal for getting to know your neighbours a little and remaining independent. Our teams regularly visit these sites.

Retirement Living housing

Retirement Living housing (also referred to as Extra Care) is ideal for older people who have some care support needs. The sites where these homes are based have wheelchair accessible accommodation and an on-site support service.

These are not residential care homes. They host many activities and promote healthy living. Many have a restaurant, hairdresser, and an IT room. Each Retirement Living housing scheme has a permanent manager based on the premises.

Flats and Bungalows

Our traditional one or two bedroom flats are available for anyone seeking complete independence. Modern flats for older people also have energy-efficient heating, good space sizes and are easy to manage. Our bungalows can usually be found in more rural areas and often have a garden or parking.

Choosing Your Home

You can view details of our Soha homes at **www.homechoice.org.uk**. To apply for housing with Soha you need to register with your local Council. This will include completing a form online; a family member or your local authority can help you with this. Soha can also help you with your application so please call Customer Services on **01235 515 900** or **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone).

Who can apply?

Anyone over the age of 55 can apply for housing with us. We will also consider younger residents living with disabilities if the property would be more suitable for them than an adapted home. Residents needing ongoing support will firstly need to be assessed by the local authority for care needs.

Shared ownership

Our shared ownership apartments are offered on a part-rent, part-buy basis to make them more affordable. Full details of our shared ownership homes are published on our website **www.sohahomeownership.co.uk**.

Classification of housing

Our Independent Living homes are grouped into two classifications:

IL1 - Flats/apartments within a sheltered scheme.

IL2 - Bungalows/other properties attached to, or within immediate vicinity of, a sheltered scheme.

Some of our homes which are suitable for older people and often located in less populated areas are not classified. Service charges vary according to classification so please ask us for more details.

Further information

Our staff can help advise you on which type of accommodation would suit you best. Call us on **01235 515 900** or **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone).

You can also find more information at **www.soha.co.uk**.

Our address is:

Soha Housing Royal Scot House, 99 Station Road, Didcot, OX11 7NN

Independent Living Schemes

We have over 20 Independent Living schemes offering you security and the companionship of living with other people attracted by independent or retirement living. The schemes, each with a communal entrance, have between twelve and thirty flats and a visiting Housing Officer who holds regular meetings for residents.

We have replaced some of our older Independent Living housing schemes with modern flats designed and built specifically for older people. Each flat, with its own front door, includes good living space and a cost-effective heating system. Some flats have access to communal gardens maintained by Soha. Parking is available at most schemes.

Our Independent Living Service at-a-glance

- We support you to live independently.
- Help to access support services such as Occupational Therapists and social workers, or our own Tenancy Support Service.
- Social and wellbeing events that you can join.
- Annual review of your independent living once you reach 70 years old.

When you move in

The Housing Officer is there to help you view a property, settle in and show you how to pay rent, report repairs and generally keep in touch with us. Soha doesn't provide care but we can help you get in touch with organisations who visit people at home. We have a programme of health and wellbeing activities, including chair-based exercises.

Retirement Living Housing

As you get older you might want to stay in your own home for as long as you can but need help with mobility or day-to-day tasks.

Retirement Living housing (sometimes referred to as Extra Care) is purpose-built, wheelchair accessible and offers your own front door.

Properties are accessed with key fobs and have CCTV installed. A care and support provider team is on site 24 hours a day. A care assessment is needed for this service on an ongoing basis.

Retirement Living housing has a great community spirit with activities including cooking and gardening. Available to individuals and couples, you can keep your independence while living in a safe, secure and supportive environment.

Some flats can be purchased on a shared ownership basis (part-buy, part-rent), the remaining flats are rented.

These homes are ideal if you're over 55 and need a little more support. It is not residential care – the emphasis is on independence and helping you to remain in your own home for as long as possible.

For couples only one resident needs to have a care need. If your husband / wife / partner does not need care you can still live together.

Why Retirement Living?

- Helps maintain an independent lifestyle but reduces anxieties and worries.
- 24-hour care on site.
- Independence, but with the option to socialise with other residents.
- Close to shops and other services.
- Events and activities to help keep your mind and body healthy.

Property features

- Spacious one or two bedroom apartments
- Fitted kitchens
- Level access wet rooms
- Lift access to all floors
- Landscaped communal gardens
- Comfortable communal lounge
- Hairdressing salon on site
- Laundry facilities
- 24 hour emergency alarm system

Locations

Goring-on-Thames
Kingston Bagpuize
Thame
Wallingford

Support Services

Soha's Housing Officers

Housing Officers (HOs) hold scheme meetings for tenants at all our schemes. They check the building, grounds maintenance and the cleaning of communal areas and can help tenants organise social events. Scheme meetings are a great opportunity to meet and chat with other residents.

Support visits

Anyone needing care and support will be referred to a local service designed to help older people remain at home with some additional help. They can also refer you to Social Services for a care package. This service might be free for tenants on a lower income or for a small fee for those with a higher income.

Tenancy Support Service

Soha's Tenancy Support Service helps tenants who find it difficult to maintain their tenancy. It is provided and funded by Soha to help residents with support needs to keep their home. Our Tenancy Support Officers will help you remain independent. They can check your benefit entitlement, refer you to support agencies such as AgeUK or Social Services and put you in touch with local help.

Aids and Adaptations

There are many types of equipment available to assist if you have difficulty getting in and out of your property, using the stairs, answering the door or carrying out everyday tasks such as cooking, washing or dressing. You might be eligible for financial assistance from the local authority. If major adaptations are needed we might be able to offer you alternative accommodation to suit you better.

Disability equipment and small adaptations are generally provided free of charge if you've been assessed as needing them and eligible. Adaptations and equipment include grab rails, ramps, and kettle tippers. Larger adaptations may be funded through a Disabled Facilities Grant.

OKEachDay

OKEachDay is a service that supports independent living. It can be activated through an easy-to-operate digital device. You simply press a button each day to let us know that you're alright. If you don't press the OKEachDay button, Soha is contacted so we can check how you are.

Resident Engagement

Events and activities

Residents in some schemes organise their own events and activities including day trips, theatre visits, gardening clubs and BBQs. They also have an annual Christmas party.

We work alongside many other community-based organisations such as AgeUK to help people get all the help and support they need and remain active members of their community.

Resident Involvement and Membership

We put resident involvement at the heart of everything we do and work hand in hand with residents in designing, delivering and developing homes and services. Involving you is all about meeting new people, learning new things and working with us to improve our services and your communities. It doesn't mean lots of meetings, paperwork or people talking at you. Whether you've got a few minutes to spare every few months or you can give more of your time, there are lots of ways you can get involved. Just let us know.

You can also join as a Soha member which means you can become more fully involved in decisions affecting the future of Soha Housing.

Seniors' Group

Many of our residents like to offer their views on how Soha plans and runs its housing and services. With our sociable Seniors' Group, residents can share their views and help redesign services. Residents are also involved in the Tenant Auditors group, the Scrutiny Group and even joining our Board.

Further information

Find out more about what's going on by contacting our Resident Engagement and Communities Team on **0800 014 15 435 (Freephone)** or email **residentengagement@soha.co.uk**.

Advice, support and information services

Nov 2022

Advice and Support

AgeUK	www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire T: 0345 450 1276
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AgeUK Oxfordshire provides essential services for older people throughout the county. It has a range of services offering help and support including Will planning and Power of Attorney advice.

Citizens' Advice	www.adviceguide.org.uk T: 03444 111 444
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Advice includes pension credits, benefit entitlements or Power of Attorney. If they cannot answer your query, they will signpost you to other organisations that can help.

Cruse Bereavement Centre	www.cruse.org.uk T: 0808 808 1677
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Free care and bereavement counselling when someone close to you dies.

The Silver Line	www.thesilverline.org.uk T: 0800 4 70 80 90
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A free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24/7.

Health and Wellbeing

Adult Health and Social Care	www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/social-and-health-care
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Information and advice on care assessment and assistance for older people and carers.

Macmillan	www.macmillan.org.uk T: 0808 808 00 00
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If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with cancer, Macmillan Cancer Support can provide practical, medical and financial support.

Message in a Bottle	www.365alive.co.uk/cms/content/have-you-got-message-bottle For a free green bottle please call 01865 323 765
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A simple idea for people living on their own. Use a bottle and a piece of paper to write your basic personal and medical details then leave your bottle in the fridge to be found in an emergency.

MIND	www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk T: 01865 247 788
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MIND aims to make sure anyone with a mental health issue has somewhere to turn for advice and support. It can help you make choices about treatment, understand your rights or access support.

National Dementia Helpline	www.alzheimers.org.uk T: 0300 222 11 22
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Information, advice and signposting to support you or those you care for.

Legal

Power of Attorney	www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice or call the Office of the Public Guardian on 0300 456 0300.
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A Power of Attorney is a legal document that allows someone to make decisions for you, or act on your behalf, if you're no longer able or no longer wish to make your own decisions.

Social

U3A	www.u3a.org.uk T: 020 8466 6139
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A local charity organisation for retired and semi-retired people to come together and learn together. Members share their skills and life experiences. Activities include walking, languages and crafts.

Utilities and Insurance

Energy Saving Trust	www.est.org.uk T:020 7222 0101
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Advice on how to reduce bills, make your home more energy-efficient and information on grants and schemes to help with heating costs.

Insurance and energy comparison and switching	www.gocompare.com www.moneysupermarket.com www.uswitch.com
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Online website services to compare prices on a range of products and services. They can help you save money on gas and electricity, heating, phones, insurance and personal finance products.