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GO WEST SUSSEX FOR THE BEST QUALITY OF LIFE IN RETIREMENT

- **West Sussex overtakes Dorset as the most attractive county for pensioners**
- **East Sussex, Devon and Norfolk make the top five pensioner friendly counties**
- **Pensioners in Surrey have the highest income, those in Essex enjoy the best weather and retirees in Gwynedd enjoy the best access to healthcare**

West Sussex is the county where pensioners have the highest quality of life, according to analysis of the latest publicly available data for England and Wales. The analysis¹, carried out by Prudential as an update to its Quality of Retirement Index, also ranks Dorset and East Sussex in its top three most attractive retirement counties for pensioners.

Prudential's rankings are based on eight sets of recently published data which it has identified as indicators of a happy and comfortable retirement for each of the 55 counties in England and Wales:

- **Resident pensioners as a proportion of county's population** – an indicator that the county has previously been an attractive location for pensioners
- **Disability-free life expectancy** – an indicator of pensioners' ongoing health and well-being
- **Access to healthcare** – an indicator of the quality of healthcare likely to be available should a pensioner fall ill
- **Crime levels** – an indicator of how safe someone is likely to feel in retirement
- **The number of pensioners moving to the county** – an indicator of how attractive the area is to other retired people
- **Pension income** – an indicator of the health of pensioners' finances
- **Weather** – an indicator of the attractiveness of the county's climate
- **Healthy lifestyle data** – an indicator of how proactive the population is in pursuing a healthy lifestyle

Prudential's new expanded methodology for 2017 builds on the findings of the previous Quality of Retirement Index, published in last year, in which Dorset topped the rankings using a slightly smaller set of indicators based on the most up to date data available at the time².

Stan Russell, a retirement income expert at Prudential, said: “There are now 10.6 million people aged 65 or over in England and Wales, a million more than five years ago, and accounting for nearly one in five of the total population. So deciding on the right place to retire to is a challenge faced by a huge number of people each year.

“Our analysis shows that every part of the country has something different to offer pensioners, but the counties with the most attractive attributes tend to be along the southern and eastern coasts of England. Counties like West Sussex and Dorset may be attractive because of their low crime rates or the quality of their health care. However finding the right spot to live in such popular locations can be tricky.

“It is understandable that many people want to choose somewhere attractive to live in retirement. To get the most choice when the time comes to give up work, people will benefit from saving as much as they can into a pension as early as they can in their working lives. And before taking any decisions on how to turn their pension savings into an income, many will also benefit from a conversation with a professional financial adviser.”

Prudential Quality of Retirement Rankings – top five counties for 2017

First place – West Sussex

With Fishbourne Roman Palace and Arundel Castle within its boundaries, West Sussex has a history of attracting people to come and live there – it remains attractive in 2017 as proven by the fact that it has the second highest net inflow of pensioners in England and Wales. This could be down to its strong rankings for good weather and disability-free life expectancy. Indeed, West Sussex achieved top-four rankings in half of the eight research categories.

Second place – Dorset

Home to much of the Jurassic Coast and enjoying a tourism boom as the location of TV drama Broadchurch, Dorset remains a popular destination for pensioners, ranking in the top ten for five out of the eight criteria. With the third highest population density of pensioners in the UK and the second-best weather, any over 65s relocating here should feel at home very quickly.

Third place – East Sussex

As renowned for vibrant and hip Brighton as it is for the more sedate retirement hotspot of Eastbourne, East Sussex is a county of contrasts. This is also reflected in its scores this year, with top-five rankings for net inflow of pensioners and good weather, tempered by lower pensioner population density and its crime ratings.

Fourth place – Devon

With a wide choice of lifestyles, from city dwelling in Plymouth and Exeter to rural Dartmoor and two different coastlines, Devon has the highest net inward migration of pensioners in England and Wales. This could be down to factors such as its low crime rate, and generally good weather.

Fifth place – Norfolk

As well as boasting nearly 100 miles of coastline, having the largest village green in England and the highest concentration of medieval churches in the world, Norfolk is also one of the most pensioner-friendly counties in England and Wales. Strong scores for low levels of crime, good weather, pensioner population density and net migration give Norfolk a spot in the top five.

In terms of the individual indicators, pensioners looking to live with people of a similar age could do a lot worse than relocate to the Isle of Wight, where nearly 38,000 people, or more than one in four of the population there, is aged 65 or over. Older people in Herefordshire can look forward to their retirement in the knowledge that they have the highest disability-free life expectancy, while pensioners in Wales have reasons to be cheerful, with Gwynedd enjoying the highest number of healthcare workers per capita and Dyfed and Powys having the lowest crime rates in England and Wales.

According to official figures, Devon is the most attractive county for pensioners moving house, with the highest net influx of over 65s last year. Surrey remains the county with the highest mean pension income, with an average income of £21,400, nearly a third higher than the average in England and Wales.

While the south coast dominated the overall rankings this year, it was the East coast that came out on top when it comes to the weather, with Essex scoring highest. The final category, covering a range of health and lifestyle factors including diet, smoking, obesity, physical activity and alcohol-related hospital admissions, found Rutland to be the county with the healthiest lifestyle habits.

-Ends-

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The Prudential Quality of Retirement Index top 10 counties

| Overall Ranking | County | Individual indicator ranking (out of 55) | | | | | | | | Overall score |
|-----------------|-----------------|--|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------|---------------------------|----------------|---------|---------------------|---------------|
| | | Proportion of pensioners | Disability-free retirement | Access to health care | Crime rate | Attracting new pensioners | Pension income | Weather | Health & Life style | |
| 1 | West Sussex | 16 | 4 | 15 | 21 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8.75 |
| 2 | Dorset | 3 | 8 | 26 | 12 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 17 | 9.75 |
| 3 | East Sussex | 21 | 18 | 6 | 21 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 14 | 12.00 |
| 4 | Devon | 12 | 17 | 21 | 4 | 1 | 16 | 9 | 23 | 12.88 |
| 5 | Norfolk | 6 | 27 | 19 | 11 | 4 | 26 | 12 | 19 | 15.50 |
| 6= | Oxfordshire | 46 | 10 | 17 | 13 | 34 | 6 | 15 | 4 | 18.13 |
| 6= | Worcestershire | 19 | 3 | 24 | 24 | 15 | 16 | 29 | 15 | 18.13 |
| 8 | Isle of Wight | 1 | 16 | 25 | 44 | 20 | 21 | 6 | 16 | 18.63 |
| 9= | Suffolk | 14 | 10 | 51 | 19 | 8 | 21 | 19 | 12 | 19.25 |
| 9= | North Yorkshire | 20 | 28 | 22 | 3 | 12 | 9 | 32 | 28 | 19.25 |

Notes to editors

¹ Research methodology:

Each of the 55 counties in England and Wales is ranked according to the eight criteria below. The average ranking for each county is then calculated. According to Prudential's index, the lower the average ranking score the greater the quality of life for the county's retired population.

Criteria:

- Resident pensioners as a proportion of county's population** – the proportion of the county's population aged 65 or over. Source ONS: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimate/datasets/populationestimatesanalysisistool>
- Disability-free life expectancy** – the length of time (in years) an adult is expected to live disability-free after the age of 65. Source ONS: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/disabilityfreelifeexpectancybyupperlocalauthorityengland201214andcomparisonwith200608>
- Access to healthcare** – number of Hospital and Community Health Service employees at NHS trusts per 1,000 people. Source NHS and StatsWales: <http://www.digital.nhs.uk/catalogue/PUB30022>
<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/NHS-Staff/NHS-Staff-Summary/nhsstaff-by-staffgroup-year>
- Crime levels** – number of crimes recorded per 1,000 people, March 2017. Source ONS: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/policeforceareadatable>
- The number of pensioners moving to the county**– net changes in migration of those aged 65 or over in the county, June 2016. Source ONS: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/migrationwiththeuk/datasets/internalmigrationlaandregionmovesandbysexandsingleyearofagetotals>
- Pension income** – average pension income 2014-15. Source ONS: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/income-and-tax-by-county-and-region-2010-to-2011>
- Weather** – the annual number of hours of sunshine, days of rainfall and days of frost. Source Met Office: <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/climate/>
- Lifestyle factors** – An overview of lifestyles and wider characteristics linked to Healthy Life Expectancy in England, 2013-15. Source: ONS: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/investigatinglifestylefactorstounderstandthedifferencesinhealthylifeexpectancyinengland>

² Prudential press release – “Best place to retire? Dorset is top of the pops!” – 31st August 2016:

<https://www.pru.co.uk/press-centre/quality-of-life-index/>