



 rollits
...more than a law firm

Social Housing

Sector specialism

Social Housing

Sector overview

The need for social housing has never been greater. Buying a house remains out of reach for many people, mortgage approvals remain low, fewer affordable houses are being built, repossessions are on the increase as people fall into negative equity or are made redundant and there is a lack of council housing stock; these are all factors leading to an unprecedented demand for council and housing association homes.

The government's 2010 comprehensive spending review announcement to cut the social housing budget by 60 per cent, with the shortfall made up by doubling the rents of new tenants, caused serious concerns amongst housing associations, house builders, those on waiting lists and councils themselves, who are struggling to meet demand.

That said, considerable activity is still taking place, with kickstart schemes taking effect, the establishment of intermediate rent models, ground breaking 'save-as-you-rent' deposit-matching schemes for tenants and more flexible agreements between planning authorities and developers. Importantly for housing associations, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) has simplified consent procedures for the disposal of properties.

Some of London's leading housing associations have also joined forces to form the Housing Associations' Legal Alliance (HALA), which aims to drive down external costs and improve efficiency in the provision of legal services.

Several housing associations in the Yorkshire region have built up reserves, placing them in a strong position in this period of radical change.

Our sector experience

Rollits is one of the few Registered Social Landlords specialists in the Yorkshire region and we provide a full service to the sector nationally, dealing with all aspects of social housing property work.

Our head of the social housing team has two decades of experience in the sector. Working closely with Registered Social Landlords, we recognise that innovation is key to the sector remaining active.

We act predominantly for housing associations and for developers on planning matters and Section 106 agreements. We work closely with local authorities and the Homes & Communities Agency, which is beneficial to our clients. We advise on all matters relating to social housing, including advising charitable bodies, undertaking anything from the management of substantial property portfolios, to day-to-day management of day care and nursery facilities.

We also fully understand their sector-specific products: social rent, shared ownership, shared equity and restricted price covenant schemes/discount for sale.

We have extensive experience across all areas of the sector, including acquisitions involving complex, non-standard documentation, involving framework agreements between parties, overage provisions, the creation of bespoke documentation and 'extra care' schemes. As developers 'develop out' sites and face time limits on sales, we ensure that housing associations are able to take best advantage of the opportunities that arise.



Why use Rollits?

Our status as a credible specialist social housing firm is verified in Chambers and Legal 500. Our approach is very much about forging partnerships. By really understanding our Registered Social Landlords clients' business and ethos, we are able to deliver advice that is client specific and pragmatic.

Our multi-disciplinary approach also ensures that we can bring in other in-house expertise when necessary, dealing with charity status challenges, contracts, employment contracts, data protection work and Freedom of Information requests – where client information needs to be handled carefully.

Our Social Housing team has earned a reputation for combining knowledge and experience with innovation and expertise.

Our services

Land Acquisitions and Disposals

Planning Applications and Appeals

Development

Landlord and Tenant (residential and commercial)

Shared Ownership Leasing

Voluntary Purchase Grants and Discount Schemes

Housing Association Structures and Administration

Employment

Right to Buy

Banking and Finance

Portfolio Financing

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