



Social Housing Finance

Market leader

The housing finance team at Trowers & Hamlin is the largest and most experienced in the UK and we have been a leading firm in this field since housing associations began to borrow extensively in 1988. We are recognised by all major legal directories as a leading firm in the field, acting for both Registered Providers and lenders.

Depth and breadth of expertise

The group assists Registered Providers (of all sizes and types) in making the most of their funding opportunities. Our experience covers the full range of funding transactions from straightforward loans and capital market issues through to complex securitisation of rents. We have a reputation for being an essential part of the team in any innovative transaction, having been at the forefront of all major developments in the housing finance market, but our depth of experience means that we can also add real value to all mainstream financings.

We also act for a number of the lenders who are active in this market including Dexia, Abbey and Lloyds TSB. The firm acted in the establishment of The Housing Finance Corporation and has acted for it on all of its lending and fundraising transactions ever since.

We know how important it is that the long term relationship between an Registered Provider borrower and its funders starts off on a firm footing. We therefore always seek to ensure that negotiations are conducted constructively.

In-depth knowledge of the sector

We seek a detailed understanding of our clients' business and aims for the future and enjoy working in partnership with them to ensure that they are able to deliver the best service to their customers. The fact that we act regularly for both borrowers and lenders means that we understand the needs and concerns of both as well as having a thorough knowledge of current loan terms. This enables us to contribute positively to the negotiation process and to suggest practical solutions when issues arise.

Commitment to social housing

The firm's wider commitment to the social housing sector means that we are able to call on advice from experts in a wide variety of fields including property, governance, construction, environmental law, housing projects, PFI and stock transfers. We can therefore look at financing needs in the context of the Registered Provider's business as a whole so as to provide relevant and focused advice.



Source: istockphoto

Extensive experience

Our experience is extensive and covers the following areas:

- bilateral and syndicated loans for established Registered Providers, and transfers of local authority housing;
- capital markets issues;
- group lending arrangements – establishing innovative loan and bond financing structures encompassing diverse groups with charitable, non-charitable, traditional and stock transfer members;
- a wide range of security structures including, cross collateralised and ring-fenced security structures and the use of security trustees;
- finance for PFI and public/private sector joint ventures – where particular attention must be paid to transfer of risk;
- intra-group loans – advising on documentation, security and covenants;

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Trowers & Hamlin LLP
Sceptre Court
40 Tower Hill
London
EC3N 4DX

t +44 (0)20 7423 8000
f +44 (0)20 7423 8001

www.trowers.com

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- treasury management – negotiation of ISDA documentation, advice on powers and regulatory controls and on the comparative advantages/disadvantages of fixed rate mechanisms within bonds, loans and separate hedging transactions.

Property Security team

Putting properties into charge is a vital part of securing finance and the complexities and detailed work involved can have a major influence on the timescales and costs. We have a specialist Property Security team to provide a comprehensive and practical service. The team knows the importance of early identification of potential problems and offers clear and pragmatic advice and an efficient service to ensure that deadlines are met.

In particular, we offer:

- advice and assistance on how to charge properties as quickly as possible including satisfying conditions precedent, dealing with lender's queries and obtaining consents;
- clarification on exactly what information is needed to complete certificates of title. In order to provide a streamlined and efficient approach, we will work with clients to ensure that as much information as possible is provided and is available by electronic means;
- where needed, advice on planning, construction and environmental issues affecting the properties.

Banking and Finance Track record

Examples of recent highlights of our work:

- Acting for London & Quadrant on its £300 million bond issue.
- Acting for Sovereign Housing Group on its £150 million bond issue.
- Acting for Waterloo Housing Association and New Linx Housing Trust, subsidiaries of Waterloo Housing Group, in a joint facility of £100 million provided by Barclays, including advising on security trust arrangements, and stand alone ISDA arrangements.
- Acting for The Housing Finance Corporation Limited in respect of a £350 million loan facility from The European Investment Bank for on-lending to 35 Registered Provider borrowers.

- Acting for The Housing Finance Corporation Limited in respect of a £72.25 million bond issue for on-lending to four Registered Provider borrowers.
- Advising Triathlon Homes, the joint venture vehicle established by East Thames Group, Southern Housing Group and First Base Limited to acquire parts of the Olympic Athletes Village which will be converted for use as social housing after the 2012 games.
- Advising and assisting in obtaining lender consents to restructure The Riverside Group, involving a statutory amalgamation of 8 separate industrial and provident societies.
- Acting for Dexia on the restatement and consolidation of existing facilities and an additional tranche of new money for Richmond Housing Partnership.
- Advising the Homes and Communities Agency on the structure and terms of the Kickstart Housing Delivery Programme (a core element of the Government's Building Britain's Future initiative).
- Advising Abbey on a new loan facility and security arrangements for Habinteg Housing Association.

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For more information please contact:

Adrian Carter, Partner
t +44 (0)20 7423 8301 f +44 (0)20 7423 8001
e acarter@trowers.com

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