

Browne Jacobson's social housing team grows with three appointments including new co-head

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Browne Jacobson has made three key appointments to its expanding team of [social housing experts](#).

[Richard Macphail](#) joins the UK and Ireland law firm as Partner and Co-Head of Social Housing alongside Gabor Taller.

[Francesca Smith](#) and [Holly Chadwick](#) are Senior Associate additions, taking the number of lawyers with expertise in social housing real estate to 14 people.

Richard, an experienced property lawyer who was previously Head of Social Housing at Hugh James, predominantly acts for housing associations and developers in England and Wales, as well as for local authorities in relation to their portfolio management work.

He is based in Browne Jacobson's Cardiff office – which also continues its rapid growth trajectory just over a year after opening – and his addition further bolsters its real estate offering.

Recognised in the Chambers and Legal 500 directories as a notable practitioner, Richard has been the lead adviser on some of the largest and most innovative development projects to have taken place in Wales in recent years.

He specialises in site acquisitions, including package deals, golden brick agreements, section 106 schemes, development agreements, options and promotion agreements.

Richard said: "Ever since Browne Jacobson opened an office in Cardiff in July last year, I've been able to see first-hand how it has shaken up the Welsh legal market with a dynamic offering underpinned by a clear social mobility value.

"It's therefore a hugely exciting time to be joining a sizeable and growing UK and Ireland firm that is positioning itself at the forefront of society's biggest issues, and has the strength and depth to advise clients on complex issues.

"Given that the delivery of sufficient affordable housing is also at the top of the new government's agenda, Browne Jacobson's cross-sector expertise also makes us uniquely positioned to play a key role in this over the coming years."

Browne Jacobson's social housing team is part of the wider built environment department, which comprises more than 50 people.

Its client roster includes some of the most actively developing registered providers in England, which provide homes to than one million people collectively. These include Platform Housing, Sanctuary, emh group, Midland Heart, Nottingham Community Housing Association, Longhurst, Housing21 and Great Places.

Gabor added: "These senior appointments represent a significant strengthening of our social housing team. They are all recognised experts with proven track records in delivering for housing associations and developers in England and Wales – they are a great fit.

"We now act for more than a quarter of all strategic partner registered providers in England, which will play a hugely important role in the government's manifesto pledge to 'deliver the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation', while our presence in the Welsh sector continues to grow at pace.

"With Richard taking a leadership role, and supported by Francesca and Holly's additions, we are well-equipped to support this sector during a hugely important period."

Richard is another key appointment to Browne Jacobson's Cardiff office, which opened at 36 Park Place in July 2023. It has since grown from a team of seven, comprising two partners, to 30 people, including six partners and a legal director.

Other new partner additions include Gavin Hoccom, who was recently promoted to lead the construction team in Wales, as well as Tom Saunderson and Christian Farrow, who bring corporate expertise covering a broad spectrum of M&A and investment work.

Tim Edds, Head of Cardiff, added: "Richard and Francesca are fantastic additions to our Cardiff team, further broadening our offering in the Welsh market. Our rapid growth shows no sign of abating, with further key hires anticipated in the coming months."

Key contact



Henrietta Scott

Head of Marketing

PRTeam@brownejacobson.com

+44 (0)330 045 2299