

GETTING PLACES WORKING

Housing association developer

Houses are in desperately short supply and prices are sky-high. Without housing associations, many would never be able to get on the ladder. Housing association developers play a key role in making sure affordable homes are available. A developer combines the skills of a project manager, property developer and housebuilder. You might be finding and acquiring new sites, managing building projects or handing over a completed project to residents. You'd have to prepare bids for funding, work with council planning staff or private developers building schemes that include affordable housing. Ultimately, it's your job to get homes built that people want, on time and to budget.



Ronny Popat at work
Development officer, Sovereign Housing Association



Degree needed

There isn't a specific degree you'll need for this job. Employers may ask for a 'relevant business qualification' which could be in anything from construction or surveying to town planning.

Many employers will ask for evidence of the Chartered Institute of Housing's (CIH) professional qualification. The institute is the professional body for housing staff and offers a wide range of training and education, both for newcomers to housing and experienced managers. If you have a degree in a subject such as town planning, social policy or urban studies, it may be possible to go straight on to study for the institute's professional diploma. For others, a one-year graduate conversion course is normal. This is available in colleges or by distance learning.

Good courses

Courses approved by the CIH include:

- Foundation degree in Housing (New College, Durham)
- BA honours degree in Housing Professional Studies (Sheffield Hallam University)
- Conversion certificate in Housing Studies (London South Bank University)
- Postgraduate diploma/MA in Housing and Community Renewal (University of the West of England, Bristol)

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Facts and figures

Starting salary

You could start on around £25,000.

Working hours

Generally 35 to 37 hours a week.

Days' holiday per year

A minimum of 25 days is normal.

Skills and experience

You need to be an excellent planner with strong numeracy and analytical skills.

Would suit

If you're confident, a good organiser, not afraid of pressure and want to make a difference this could be a good role for you.

Likely employer types

- Larger housing associations
- Arm's length management organisations set up by local authorities
- Opportunities are also available with private developers

How many jobs available?

According to the Housing Corporation, there are over 1,500 housing associations in England, currently managing around 2m homes. However, only a relatively small number of larger housing associations are actively involved in development. The corporation is in the process of opening up its development programme to a wider range of partners, including commercial housebuilders.

Number of people employed in this field

More than 150,000 people are employed in housing and housing management within the UK.



Meet the expert
Ronny Popat,
Sovereign Housing
Association

Visit AskWhatIf.co.uk to watch video diaries and get opinions from other real people doing real jobs.



"I'd urge anyone looking for an honest and rewarding career to go into affordable housing. Development is varied, challenging and I have the satisfaction of building the homes people want."

Did you know?

One new home is built every three minutes for people in need with funding from the Housing Corporation. The corporation's national affordable housing programme for 2006-08 is worth £3.9bn and will create 84,000 new affordable homes in England.

More information

- Details of the Housing Corporation's national affordable housing programme are at www.housingcorp.gov.uk
- The National Housing Federation represents housing associations in England www.housing.org.uk
- For information about careers in housing and professional development, visit the Chartered Institute of Housing's website www.cih.org