

Advice, training
and advocacy

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“Over the years I have worked with Mark on a number of projects. He has an in-depth understanding of the housing benefit scheme as it applies to supported housing. His work is methodical and precise and he has a knack of getting results. In this particularly complex area, I consider Mark to be one of the leading experts. I would recommend him to any organisation working in the supported housing sector.”

Martin Ward, author of Shelter's Guide to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

Who we are



Our main area of expertise is the housing benefit scheme as it applies to supported housing. Mark Rodgers established MR Associates in 2000 and now works alongside some of the best practitioners, barristers and advocates specialising in the housing benefit field. MR Associates have successfully represented hundreds of claimants at tribunal hearings. We love our work and strive to deliver the very best service we can to our clients.

Over the past ten years, MR Associates have brought in finance for supported accommodation providers in excess of £35 million.

“From our earliest days, we have always approached our work in a rigorous and methodical manner. Some say we are obsessed by detail, and they’re right. In our line of work, this is a much-needed quality! It’s this attention to detail which has allowed us to meet our clients’ needs and get the right results.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rodgers', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Mark Rodgers (Director)

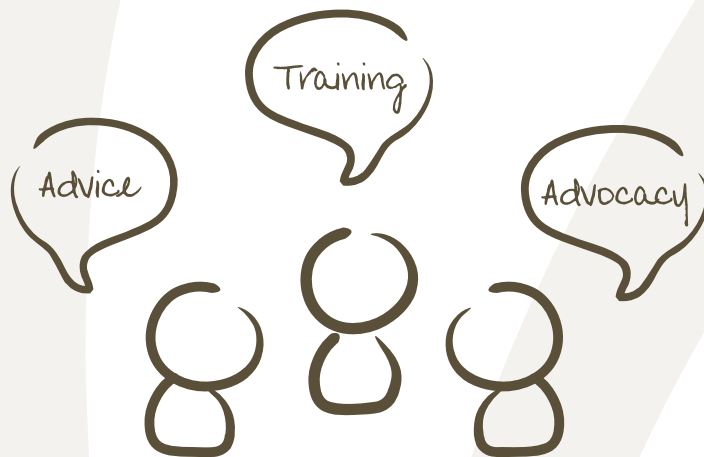
www.mrassociates.org

What we do

We work with supported housing providers in the UK who need advice, training and other help with the housing benefit scheme.

MR Associates have licensed access with the Bar Council of England and Wales and are recognised by the Scottish Faculty of Advocates as a Direct Access Body. This means that we can instruct a barrister or advocate directly on your behalf.

We find that most issues can be discussed over the phone or by exchanging documents. You may also want us to spend time with you at your premises. We always look for the most efficient way of working with you.



"For 16 months, our organisation struggled with an extremely difficult tribunal appeals process and our accommodation, providing 300 places for the homeless, was threatened with closure. We were wandering in the wilderness trying to get expert legal advice in the complex area of housing benefit – and then we found Mark! Mark has not only given us a road map showing how to rebuild and sustain the funding of the charity, but his enthusiasm and positive approach have restored our belief in our future. At a time when the charity felt let down by experts, Mark was our critical friend, challenging our assumptions and gently leading us through the maze of DWP guidance. His patient explanations of all aspects of housing legislation can only be described as master classes! He is an absolute joy to spend time with, and here at BFH we cannot contemplate a future without MR Associates. Mark has our highest endorsement."

Tricia Davis, Managing Director of Bristol Foundation Housing

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“At Hope Metro we provide supported housing for ex-offenders. Meeting Mark was, for our organisation, like a breath of fresh air. He understands the need of the client and tailors his services to meet that need. Mark ranks at the very top in our estimation. The money spent engaging him to work on our behalf was one of our best investments: because of his professional approach, our local council now hold us in the highest regard.”

Brian Jackson, Chairperson of Hope Metro

Advice

Our work focuses on the more complex areas of supported housing. We can help you tackle a range of issues by providing clear guidance and expert opinion. We can advise on all aspects of the housing benefit scheme including:

- exempt accommodation
- calculating and setting rents
- rent increases
- rent restrictions
- contrivances and non-commercial arrangements.



Training

Our training is created to meet your requirements and is provided on your premises. We design and deliver structured days and longer courses for trustees, directors, senior management and front-line staff. We focus on the areas of housing benefit we know best.

Popular courses include:

- understanding exempt accommodation
- dealing with rent restrictions
- avoiding contrivance and non-commerciality problems
- appealing decisions.



“Mark is an acknowledged expert in the niche field of housing benefits for clients with learning disabilities. He has a great in-depth knowledge of his subject and an enviable track record of success in representing vulnerable clients in housing benefit tribunal cases. Recently, he has been invaluable to myself and the other trustees of an almshouse charity in assisting with the introduction of weekly maintenance charges and addressing the benefit issues arising therefrom.”

Russell Atkinson, Chairperson of Osbaldeston Trust

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"We asked Mark to help us deal with a complex housing benefit issue that was causing us great concern. The housing benefit department had decided to restrict our rent payments, which threatened closure of the service. Mark not only managed to have our rent restored, but subsequently secured a substantial increase in housing benefit payments. We have continued to work with Mark since then, and his expert knowledge of housing benefit has been invaluable. We cannot recommend him highly enough."

Alison Cattell, Director of Manor Women's Project

Advocacy

We provide case management and representation for housing benefit appeals. We can accompany you to meetings with the local authority and negotiate on your behalf.

We can:

- request a statement of reasons for an adverse housing benefit decision
- initiate appeals
- gather evidence and arrange witness statements
- prepare written submissions and manage tribunal directions
- provide representation at tribunal hearings.



Who we help

MR Associates work with charities and other non-profit-making organisations that provide supported housing. Our clients share our values, which are based on honesty, integrity and fairness. We do not take on commercial work where profit is the sole motive. Our overall purpose is to help social and charitable causes.

Here's what some of our clients say:

Mark is a housing benefit expert who has great attention to detail and is a specialist in this subject. I employed him to fight what seemed like an impossible case. He worked through the problem systematically and professionally to a successful conclusion. He treated the elderly relatives involved in a sensitive manner, gaining their trust and understanding throughout the process. It was refreshing and reassuring to work with someone so able and personable. I would not hesitate to recommend Mark.

Sandra Lanni, who employed Mark to represent her elderly parents at a tribunal hearing

Mark's commitment to organisations providing supported housing to substance misusers is second to none. His knowledge of the housing benefit scheme, which most of us find so difficult, means he is able to simplify matters and advise us with absolute clarity. We would have lost our housing benefit if Mark had not stepped in and prepared an appeal against the council, which he won.

Maxie Richards, Chairperson of the Maxie Richards Foundation

When it comes to supported housing issues, MR Associates are without question the UK's leading consultants.

Javier Lesta Candal, Director of Teen Challenge London

Mark is the go-to guy for housing benefit issues in relation to supported housing in the UK; he has an outstanding track record in this area with dozens of supported housing providers.

Frank Curran, Director of SP Solutions

Mark has been invaluable to the society with his in-depth knowledge and expertise. He is committed and conscientious in his approach and ensures the best possible results for his clients.

David Nettleship, Business Manager of Jericho Benedictine Society

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