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Build-to-Rent: Why competence and compliance protect profit

The Build-to-Rent (BTR) sector - including purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) and co-living - is the fastest-growing residential market in the UK. Institutional investment continues to pour into high-quality schemes across major cities. Residents expect not only lifestyle amenities but safe, well-managed homes.

At the same time, the Building Safety Act (BSA) has raised the bar. Operators must now demonstrate competence, compliance and safety, not simply claim it. For BTR owners and operators, compliance is no longer a regulatory tick box. It is about protecting reputation, reducing risk, and safeguarding long-term asset value.

The new standard: Competence and the Golden Thread

The BSA requires accountable persons to submit Safety Case Reports, secure Building Assessment Certificates (BACs), and maintain the “golden thread” of information. This golden thread ensures that all safety-critical data is captured, auditable, and accessible in real time.

For BTR leaders, this represents an opportunity to differentiate. By embedding competence and compliance into their operating models, they can build trust with regulators, reassure residents, and give investors confidence that assets are being managed responsibly.

The cost of not getting it right first time

In BTR, net operating income depends on predictability and efficiency. Non-compliance leads to wasted consultancy fees, repeated assessments, legal exposure, resident disputes and even void periods. The cost of repeating assessments, or worse, defending yourself in court, can dwarf the investment needed to get it right first time.

The impact is clear: fewer surprises, less wasted spend, and stronger operating profit. Done right, compliance is not a cost centre, it's a profit protector.

To achieve this, operators need:

- Court-ready assessments that withstand regulator scrutiny.
- Comprehensive Safety Case Reports that go beyond the superficial.
- Resident engagement strategies that work in practice, not just on paper.

Competence beyond fire safety

For BTR operators, true compliance means thinking beyond fire. Structural integrity, water safety, health and safety, and resident engagement are all under the same regulatory spotlight, but require different expertise and processes. One weak link can undermine the entire compliance chain.

As Dame Judith Hackitt, author of *Building a Safer Future*, urged in her keynote at Ark's recent flagship event *Competence in the Built Environment*:

"I urge you all to make an honest assessment of the competence of your organisation and start filling the gaps — and do the same for your supply chain."

Technology: The enabler of the Golden Thread

For many BTR operators, technology is now central to getting it right first time.

Organisations partnering with Ark Workplace Risk and using the QUOODA® risk, compliance and safety management platform are achieving substantial operational and cost efficiencies. QUOODA® reduces reliance on spreadsheets, provides real-time dashboards and portfolio oversight, and creates an unbroken golden thread from strategy to evidence.

For investors, this delivers visibility. For residents, it offers reassurance. For operators, it provides a single version of the truth.

Raising standards across the sector

Ark Workplace Risk is proud to be the Risk & Compliance Partner to the sector's main body, the Association for Rental Living (ARL).

As Brendan Geraghty, CEO of the ARL, explains:

"The ARL is committed to driving professionalism and best practice across the Build-to-Rent sector. Ark's expertise in risk, compliance and safety, combined with their proactive approach to competence, makes them an invaluable gold partner to our members. Their work directly supports our mission to deliver safe, trusted, and high-quality rental communities."

Looking ahead

As the BTR sector matures, competence and compliance will define which operators succeed. By embedding the golden thread and getting it right first time, leaders can protect residents, reassure investors, and secure long-term asset value.

Ark is proud to be working alongside the ARL and leading BTR operators to set a new benchmark for safe, trusted, and resilient rental communities.

Need Support with Building Safety or Compliance?

Our services comprise multi-disciplinary expertise; covering health & safety, fire safety and structural safety, along with our award-winning risk, compliance and safety platform, QUOODA®.

2025 Accolades:

- ACE Award for Outstanding Customer Service: WINNER
- News on the Block Property Management Awards- Professional Services Provider of the Year: WINNER
- News on the Block Property Management Awards - PropTech Innovation of the Year (QUOODA®): WINNER

Talk to our team today to discover how we could become your long term risk, compliance and safety partner, dedicated to your ongoing success:
team@arkworkplacerisk.com or visit our website by clicking [HERE](#) to learn more.