

May 2026 | Edition 2

BRIGHT INSIGHTS

THE LATEST SPECIALIST LENDING NEWS & CLIENT TRENDS

**UNCERTAINTY IS
THE CONSTANT.
PARTNERSHIP IS
THE ADVANTAGE**

2026 insight.

with William Lloyd-Hayward,
COO, Brightstar Group

**Articles
covering:**

Residential Mortgages
Buy-to-let Mortgages
Second Charge Mortgages
Bridging & Development
Commercial Finance
& Insurance!

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Uncertainty is the constant. Partnership is the advantage.

If there's one thing the market has taught us over the past decade, it's this: waiting for stability is a losing strategy.

Cast your mind back and it becomes obvious. Since 2015, the industry has navigated six Prime Ministers (David Cameron; Theresa May; Boris Johnson; Liz Truss; Rishi Sunak and now Keir Starmer) and 10 secretaries of state for housing (Greg Clark; Sajid Javid; James Brokenshire; Robert Jenrick; Michael Gove; Greg Clark; Simon Clarke; Michael Gove (again); Angela Rayner and now Steve Reed).

We've had political shocks; referendums; leadership changes; global pandemics; economic resets and ongoing geopolitical tension. Each year has arrived with its own set of challenges and each time, there's been a sense that "once this passes, things will settle down".

But they don't. And perhaps that's the point. Uncertainty isn't the exception anymore but the environment we operate in.

That doesn't mean the concerns aren't real. Rate volatility, energy prices and shifting lender appetite all have a direct impact on brokers and their clients. But stepping back the pattern is clear. There will always be something. The names and causes may change but the underlying reality doesn't.

So rather than waiting for calm the more productive approach is to adapt to constant change.

And that starts with focus. In a market that moves this quickly, doubling down on what you do best has never been more important. Brokers who understand their strengths and stick to them are far better placed to navigate uncertainty than those trying to cover every base themselves.

Which brings us to partnership. Because no broker can be everything to every client – certainly not in today's market. The breadth of products, regulation and specialist areas has expanded too far for that to be realistic. But that doesn't mean opportunities should be missed.

In fact, the opposite is true. Every complex case, every unfamiliar scenario, every "no" that could easily be given is a potential opportunity if you have the right support around you.

Whether it's second charge; bridging; commercial; insurance and protection or even services outside of lending there are solutions available. The key is having trusted partners who can help deliver them.

That's how brokers protect and grow their businesses. It's not just about solving the immediate case, it's about building a network that allows you to say "yes" more often. To keep hold of client relationships even when the solution sits outside your core expertise. To create additional income streams without increasing your own operational burden.

In short, to become indispensable. Because from a client's perspective the expectation hasn't changed. They don't see product silos or regulatory boundaries. What they see is one adviser, one relationship and one outcome. The brokers who thrive are the ones who can meet that expectation, whether directly or through the strength of their partnerships.

And in a market defined by uncertainty that consistency matters. There will be more disruption. There will be more surprises. That's a given. But there will also be opportunity for those prepared to embrace it.

So the message is simple: don't wait for things to settle. Build the right relationships, stay close to the people you trust and keep moving forward.

Because in this market standing still isn't an option and the brokers who succeed will be the ones who find a way to say "yes", no matter what comes next.

William Lloyd-Hayward,
COO, Brightstar Group



The market for commercial-to-residential is quietly bubbling

There's a lot of noise in the market right now. Rates moving, products being pulled, brokers scrambling to place cases before lenders change direction again. But step outside of mainstream residential and a different picture starts to emerge – one that's far more stable, and in many cases, far more opportunistic.

From where I sit, the most interesting activity right now is happening in commercial-to-residential conversions.

This isn't a new concept but it is being approached differently. More developers – including those who might previously have focused on ground-up schemes – are now looking at smaller, smarter projects. Offices, retail units and mixed-use buildings are being repositioned into residential stock, often under permitted development, which removes the need for full planning permission. That alone can significantly reduce both cost and time.

And in this market, those two factors matter more than ever.

Commercial assets are typically cheaper to acquire than residential stock and with the current balance of power leaning towards buyers, there is real scope to negotiate well. That creates an entry point where developers can buy below market value, convert, and drive uplift without needing to expand the footprint. In many cases, it's about repositioning – turning something underutilised into something desirable.

Battersea and Nine Elms still remain effectively one continuous regeneration zone, and alongside other key hotspots such as Ealing, Croydon, Hounslow, and Stratford, they commercial-to-residential repositioning in London. With the right type of units, particularly well-designed Art Deco-inspired flats that incorporate high ceilings, large windows, and strong architectural character, developers can create a distinct edge in an otherwise crowded market. In terms of what performs best post-refurbishment, one- and two-bedroom apartments, compact open-plan layouts, and units with standout features such as period detailing, balconies,

or co-working space tend to sell and let exceptionally well, especially when finished to a high standard and targeted at young professionals and renters seeking design-led living.

From a funding perspective, these deals are also well suited to the current lending environment. In contrast to the residential market, where brokers are dealing with product withdrawals and constant repricing, commercial and development finance is far more bespoke. There are no rigid product matrices and every deal is underwritten on its own merits.

That changes the dynamic completely.

As brokers, our most important role aside from customer care, is building and presenting a case to a lender. That means packaging is everything. The quality of the proposal, the strength of the exit, the experience of the borrower – all of it feeds into how a lender views the opportunity.

It also means that, despite wider economic uncertainty, deals can still progress at pace. When everything aligns, funding can move quickly – in some cases, within weeks – because the decision-making process is more relationship-led than system-led.

What's also worth noting is that this part of the market hasn't reacted in the same way to recent volatility. While some lenders have adjusted pricing, many have held firm. There's a level of consistency here that brokers simply aren't seeing in the mainstream space.

At the same time, investor behaviour is evolving. There's been a clear shift away from traditional buy-to-let as the default strategy. That doesn't mean it's gone – far from it – but more investors are exploring alternatives. Commercial property, mixed-use assets, and higher-yielding strategies like conversions are all gaining traction.

And when you look at the numbers, it's easy to see why. In some cases, the overall cost of borrowing on larger, mixed-use or commercial-led portfolios isn't significantly higher than standard buy-to-let – but the yield potential is materially better.

Residential going away

For brokers, the opportunity is clear. This isn't about abandoning residential – it's about broadening the conversation. The clients are already thinking differently. The question is whether brokers are ready to guide them through it.

Because right now, some of the best opportunities in the market aren't where everyone is looking.

For intermediaries only



Billie Cox
Associate, Sirius Finance

Contact

The Renters' Rights Impact for landlords what it could mean for buy to let brokers

Heena Thaker,
*Group Head of Legal – Mortgages,
Rely, OSB Group*

In October 2025, the Renters' Rights Act received Royal Assent and introduced changes to strengthen tenant protection and raise standards across the private rented sector. These changes by their nature, have a direct impact on landlords and could influence their growth strategies and borrowing behaviour.

Here's an overview of the new legislation and how the changes could influence how brokers advise as well as highlight key considerations with their landlord clients.

How the Renters' Rights Act could affect landlords

Good news: despite the proposed changes to legislation, 62% of the landlords asked in the latest Landlord Leaders survey from Rely, shared their optimism at operating as a landlord in future, which is up significantly from 47% in 2025.

Mortgage brokers will play a key role in helping landlords navigate the new legislation, as well as understand which lending criteria can help their future journey in the private rented sector to go smoothly.

Below are a few key highlights that brokers may want to include in conversations with their landlord clients.

The Act will be introduced in three phases:

Phase 1: From 1st May 2026

- Section 21 'no-fault' evictions have been abolished
- Introduce Assured Periodic Tenancies in the PRS
- Possession Grounds reform to create more balance between Landlords and Tenants
- Limit rent increases to once a year
- Ban on rental bidding and rent in advance
- No discrimination against tenants with children or those on benefits
- Landlords must consider rentals to tenants with pets
- Strengthen local council enforcement - Local authorities will have more power when it comes to investigating breaches and larger penalties will be implemented to strengthen the importance of the reforms.

Phase 1: Broker Considerations

Landlord clients are likely to be increasingly interested in lender appetite, risk tolerance and exit strategies. It's worth brokers getting as clued up as possible on criteria by speaking to their BDMs to ensure they're able to paint an accurate picture for their clients. The new possession rules attempt to balance tenant protection with the landlords' needs. Brokers may find that this ruling affects short-term investment strategies and sales intended for quick turn arounds. It's important for brokers to speak to all of their landlord clients, regardless of portfolio size, to ensure they're aware of these important changes.

The changes may result in changes to rental income growth, which could impact affordability calculations and change the number of options that brokers can access when refinancing. It's important that brokers speak to their landlord clients at the earliest opportunity in order to help understand the potential impact on rental income as rental increases will be more restricted under the new regime.

Landlords and agents will no longer be allowed to accept offers above the advertised rent or request more than one month's rent in advance. This will have a direct impact on the rental yield calculations for affordability assessments, so it's important that this is considered before submitting an agreement in principle. This is a model that many landlords are already using so brokers may find that this impacts the smaller accidental landlords who may be new to the sector and therefore need more support in navigating the changes.

These reforms also mean landlords will no longer be able to discriminate against certain tenant demographics. It may fall to brokers to remind landlords and reassure lenders on the importance of aspects like insurance, arrears management, or income stability.

Phase 2: From late 2026

Phase 2 is due to be implemented in 2 key stages:

- Roll out of the PRS Database – Stage 1
- Establish the PRS Landlord Ombudsman – Stage 2

The PRS Database registration will be mandatory for all PRS landlords, and they will be required to pay an annual fee and provide key information. Stage 2 will enable a form of public access and sharing of this database.

The Ombudsman will provide a resolution service for private rented sector tenants but also support landlords with tools, guidance and training on handling complaints from tenants.

Act: s and for



The Ombudsman scheme will be mandatory for PRS landlords and landlords will be required to fund the service through a charging model to be determined.

Phase 2: Broker Considerations

It may be useful for brokers to remind their landlord clients about the importance of Phase 2 and its impact on maintaining their registration for the database and the Ombudsman.

It will be important for brokers to stay ahead of the Phase 2 changes to ensure they can advise their landlord clients well in advance of any deadlines and by keeping in touch with specialist buy to let lenders such as Rely brokers can keep themselves ahead of the curve.

Phase 3: A new Decent Homes Standard in the PRS (timings yet to be confirmed)

- The Decent Homes Standard will introduce a minimum standard of housing quality and provide local councils with powers to take enforcement action if PRS properties fail to meet it.
- Extend Awaab's Law to the PRS, setting clear legally enforceable timeframes within which PRS landlords must make homes safe where they contain serious hazards.

Phase 3: Broker Considerations

Brokers could see an increase in capital-raising remortgages or further advance requests to fund the improvements needed to meet these new Phase 3 standards.

The extension of Awaab's Law to the PRS will mean that serious hazards like damp and mould will need to be investigated and fixed on much stricter timelines. This may result in increases to maintenance costs that landlords hadn't anticipated.

Similarly to the Decent Homes Standard, brokers may also see an increase in buy to let investors who rely on refinancing to fund these projects. Rely's latest Landlord Leaders study shared that just over 50% of professional landlords are using their savings to fund energy improvements.

Buy to let mortgage brokers may find that lenders start to introduce stricter due diligence, and that the involvement of accidental landlords in the PRS becomes less and less.

Understanding the regulations and compliance that comes with buy to let lending will become part of the advice investors will rely on brokers for and that's where specialist lenders can really step up to the plate.

For intermediaries only

Why bridging out

Spend five minutes talking to most brokers at the moment and you'll hear the same thing: uncertainty, volatility and a lot of frustration around pricing and product stability.

But step into the bridging market and the picture looks very different. Despite everything going on in the wider economy bridging has remained remarkably steady. In fact, in some cases, it's gone the other way entirely.

While parts of the mortgage market have seen rates edge upwards or products pulled, certain bridging lenders have actually reduced pricing to stay competitive and win market share.

That's not something you'd expect in a "tumultuous" market but it highlights a key difference in how bridging operates.

Unlike mainstream residential lending, which is heavily influenced by swap rates and longer-term funding pressures, bridging finance is typically shorter term and funded in different ways. Some lenders are linked to SONIA, others rely on deposits or alternative funding lines which gives them more flexibility in how they price risk.

Benjamin Peace,
*Bridging and Development Finance
Specialist, Brightstar Financial*

Contact

bridging is quietly outperforming the wider market

The result? Less volatility, more consistency, and a product that continues to do what it's always done: provide fast, reliable access to capital.

That consistency is starting to stand out. At a time when brokers are dealing with last-minute changes elsewhere, bridging is becoming a more dependable option for clients who need certainty and speed. And that's feeding directly into demand, particularly in areas like refurbishment.

Seasonality always plays a role here but it's amplified in the current market. As we move into the warmer months, activity naturally picks up. Clients who have been sitting on plans over winter suddenly want to move - whether that's extending their home, purchasing an investment property, or pushing ahead with a light development project.

Bridging is often the enabler for that. Refurbishment finance, in particular, is seeing strong momentum. It's a space where lenders are actively competing with products designed to stretch loan-to-value and support more ambitious projects.

For brokers, it's an area where deals can be structured quickly and delivered with a level of certainty that's becoming harder to find elsewhere.

And it's not just at the smaller end of the market. There's a growing focus on larger, more complex transactions,

particularly in the £1m to £5m range, where there's a clear sweet spot for both borrowers and lenders. At the top end, capacity is there too, with some lenders able to support significantly larger facilities for the right clients.

That reflects a broader shift. As confidence returns higher net worth investors are starting to re-engage. Activity in prime markets, including London, is showing signs of life again, and with that comes demand for short-term, flexible funding solutions.

Bridging is well placed to support that movement. Of course, no market is completely insulated from external pressures. Recent geopolitical events have created some short-term noise but so far the impact on bridging has been limited. If anything, it's reinforced the value of a product that isn't tied as closely to the same funding mechanisms as traditional mortgages.

Looking ahead, the outlook remains positive. If stability continues to return, even gradually, bridging is likely to maintain its position as one of the most adaptable and resilient parts of the lending market.

For brokers, that presents a clear opportunity. Because in a market where certainty is hard to come by, bridging is quietly delivering exactly that and in doing so, it's becoming an increasingly important part of the conversation.



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Why second charge becoming the most solution brokers are using

There's a growing disconnect in the market right now. On one side, you've got clients needing to raise capital, often for very real, very time-sensitive reasons. On the other, you've got mainstream lending becoming increasingly restrictive, with further advances declined and remortgaging not always making financial sense.

That gap is exactly where second charge lending is stepping in and in many cases, it's doing it more effectively than brokers might expect.

One area where this is becoming particularly relevant is school fees. For a lot of families, it's no longer a case of paying one lump sum and moving on. It's a long-term commitment, often running over several years and that creates a very specific kind of funding challenge. Clients don't necessarily want – or need – to take a large amount of capital upfront. What they need is flexibility.

That's where the newer generation of second charge products is starting to change the conversation. We're now seeing flexible drawdown facilities that allow clients to agree a larger loan amount but only draw funds as and when they need them. That could mean quarterly payments aligned to school terms, annual withdrawals or even ad hoc access depending on circumstances.

The key point is this: interest is only paid on what's actually drawn. So while the headline rate might appear higher than a traditional mortgage product, the real cost is often far more manageable because clients aren't paying for money they're not using.

And it's not just about school fees. This kind of structure works just as well for staged renovations, large home improvements or even as a longer-term financial safety net.

Georgia Walton,
*Second Charge Mortgage Specialist,
Brightstar Financial*

[Contact](#)



It is not flexible aren't fully

Clients can access funds, repay them, and redraw again without needing to refinance or reapply. In effect, it creates a revolving line of credit secured against property – something that simply doesn't exist in the same way within the first charge market.

For the right client, that flexibility is incredibly powerful. What's interesting is that demand is already reflecting this shift. Activity in the second charge market is as strong as it's been in years, driven in part by the limitations brokers are facing elsewhere.

Cases that don't fit first charge criteria, whether due to affordability, timing or lender appetite, are increasingly finding a home here.

And yet, awareness still hasn't caught up. It's surprising how often clients – and even some brokers! – still see second charge as a niche or last-resort option.

In reality, it's a fully viable, often more suitable solution in a wide range of scenarios. The challenge isn't capability it's understanding when and how to use it.

That's where the opportunity lies. Because this isn't about replacing remortgages or further advances. It's about adding another, highly flexible tool to the toolkit, one that can solve problems that other products simply can't.

For brokers, the question is straightforward: are you giving clients every option available to them?

Because in a market where flexibility is becoming more valuable by the day, second charge lending isn't just relevant, it's increasingly essential.

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Dan Narwal
Intermediary Corporate
Account Director

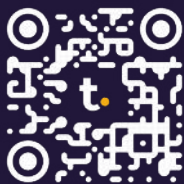
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Development finance is finding its feet again and the opportunities are back

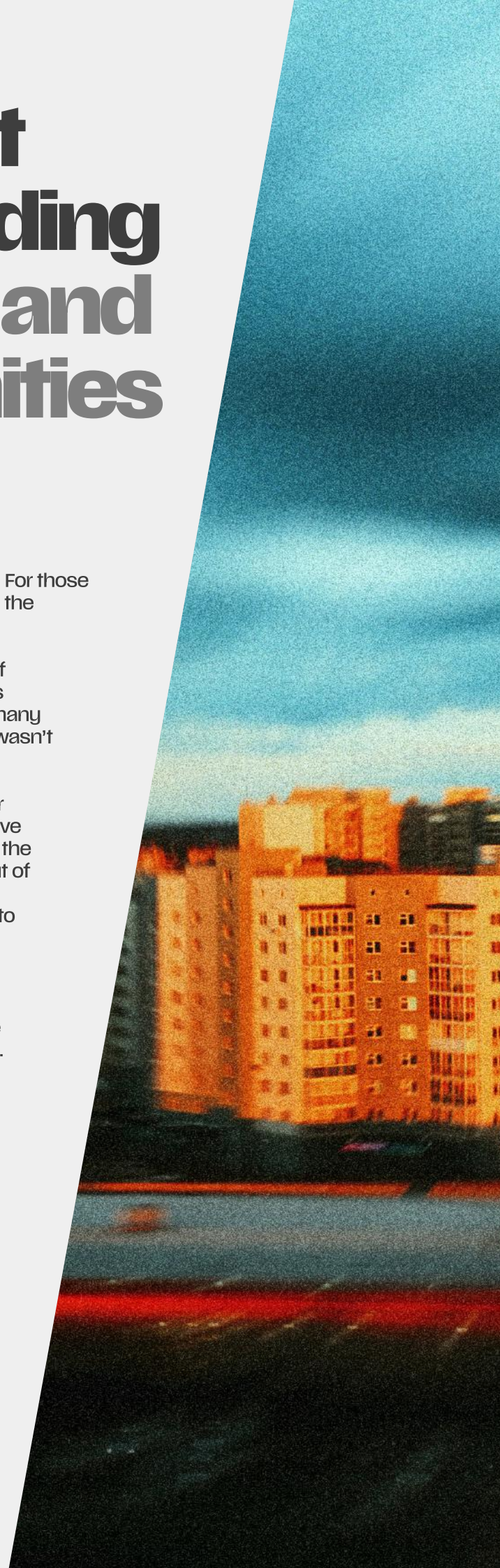
It's fair to say the last couple of years haven't been easy. For those of us working in development finance, it's probably been the toughest period in recent memory.

Rising interest rates, spiralling material costs and a loss of confidence all combined to slow the market down. Deals became harder to structure, margins tightened and for many developers, the appetite to take on new projects simply wasn't there.

But markets move in cycles and right now there are clear signs that things are turning. Since the start of the year, I've seen more development finance enquiries than I have in the previous two years combined. That shift hasn't come out of nowhere. A combination of stabilising rates, improving lender appetite and slightly easing build costs is starting to bring schemes back into play.

The deals themselves are different, though. Developers are being more cautious, and lenders are being more disciplined. Margins are tighter than they were during the peak years and there's a greater focus on fundamentals. Build costs, exit values and borrower experience all need to stack up properly. But importantly, deals are getting done again. And not just small ones. We're seeing strong activity in larger, more structured projects, schemes in the £5m–£10m range that would have been shelved 18 months ago are now being revisited by lenders that we work with and pushed forward. And what's more, there are also more options for smaller developments with newer lenders that have now entered the market.

These aren't speculative plays; they're well-thought-out developments backed by experienced operators who have weathered the recent volatility and are now ready to move again.



Geography is also playing a part. The focus has shifted away from central London, where high-end development has become increasingly difficult to make viable. Pricing at the top end has softened and stock is taking longer to move. As a result, developers are looking further afield – to regional locations where land values are more realistic and demand remains steady.

That's where we're seeing real momentum. Schemes in areas outside the traditional London hotspots are proving more resilient with stronger demand dynamics and more workable numbers. For many developers, it's a case of adapting to where the opportunity now sits, rather than where it used to be.

At the same time, there's a broader shift happening across the investor landscape. The buy-to-let market is no longer the default strategy it once was. Increased regulation, rising costs and ongoing legislative changes are prompting many investors to rethink their approach.

Some are moving into mixed-use assets, others into commercial or development-led opportunities – all areas where returns can still justify the risk. And that shift is feeding directly into development finance.

More investors are willing to explore new strategies and more lenders are open to supporting them, provided the deal is structured correctly. That's where experience really comes into play. In complex cases, it's not just about finding a lender; it's about building a case that a lender can get comfortable with.

Because in this part of the market, complexity isn't a barrier, it's often where the opportunity sits.

Looking ahead, there are still uncertainties to navigate. External factors will always influence sentiment and the market won't move in a straight line. But the underlying direction feels more positive than it has for some time.

For brokers and developers alike, that creates a window. The easy deals may be gone for now but the good deals are coming back. And for those willing to adapt, structure properly and look beyond the obvious, development finance is once again offering real opportunity.

Robert Heywood,
Senior Associate,
Sirius Finance

Contact

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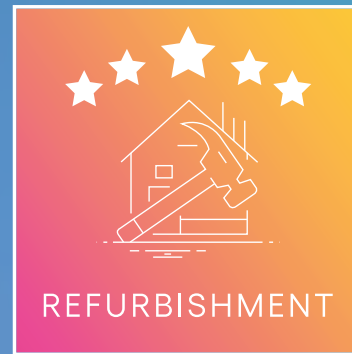


Our Bridging finance product with up to 75% LTV

Our Bridge product is perfect for Borrowers requiring fast finance. Ideal for the purchase and refinance of residential BTL and HMO properties as well as commercial investments.

Key Features

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- **No minimum** term
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- **All types of borrowers** considered
- Cosmetic **works permitted**
- Interest can be **serviced** or **deducted**
- **Heavy adverse** credit considered where exit is sale
- **Second charge** loans considered
- **Dual Representation** available on kerbside residential properties



Our Refurb loan with up to 90% LTV

With full flexibility around the servicing of interest and no mid-term valuations, our Refurb product is ideal for the purchase and light refurbishment or conversion of residential BTL and HMO properties.

Key Features

- Up to **90% LTV** day one
- **No minimum term** and **up to 12 months**
- Interest can be **serviced** or **deducted**
- Available on **residential kerbside houses** and **flats**
- **All types of borrowers** considered
- **Heavy adverse** credit considered where exit is sale
- **Dual Representation** available on kerbside residential properties

LTV	Up to 65%	65% - 75%	75% - 90%
Maximum loan size	£3,000,000	£1,000,000	£500,000

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Our Development finance product with up to 65% GDV

Our Development product offers up to 70% LTV and 100% of works as well as no mid-term valuation, ensuring its suitability for a wide range of property projects. Ideal for development schemes of up to £1,000,000 that result in up to 4 houses or 6 flats.

Key Features

- Rates from **0.8%** - Up to **70% LTV day one, 65% LTGDV**
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For all development enquiries contact **Samantha Herd**

0161 710 3109 | Samantha.Herd@mintpf.co.uk

For all bridging enquiries contact **Adam Robson**

0161 710 2763 | Adam.Robson@mintpf.co.uk

There's a part of the market that's been quietly growing in the background and for many brokers, it's still largely untapped. Expat lending. While much of the conversation has focused on domestic affordability, regulation and rate movements, demand from UK nationals living overseas has remained consistently strong. In fact, it's one of the few areas where activity hasn't come in waves but been steady, month after month.

And there's a simple reason for that. Leaving the UK doesn't mean cutting ties with it. For many expats, property is how they maintain that connection. Some keep hold of their existing home, either as a residential property for family use or by converting it into a consumer buy-to-let. Others take a more strategic approach, building or expanding a UK portfolio as a long-term investment.

In both cases, the motivation is similar: security, income, and optionality. There's a strong belief that the UK property market remains a reliable long-term investment, particularly when it comes to rental demand. For expats earning abroad, often in stronger currencies or tax-efficient environments, UK property offers a way to generate a second income stream while keeping a foothold in a familiar market.

For some, it's also a future plan. Even when there's no immediate intention to return, owning property in the UK creates flexibility. Plans change, circumstances shift, and having an asset in place means that option is always there, whether that's moving back in, refinancing, or continuing to let.

What's particularly interesting is how accessible this market has become.

Historically, expat lending came with fairly rigid requirements. Borrowers often needed to be employed by large multinational firms and affordability assessments could be restrictive. That's changed. Lenders have become far more flexible, focusing instead on the ability to evidence income, whether employed or self-employed, and applying more pragmatic approaches to currency.

Rather than applying blanket reductions to foreign income, many now use stress-tested exchange rates based on historic performance. In practical terms, that means affordability is less of a barrier than many brokers assume.

The bigger challenge is often knowledge and permissions. A significant number of brokers either don't have the regulatory permissions to advise on expat cases or are unsure how to approach them, particularly when clients are based overseas. That's where opportunities can be missed.

Because these cases don't need to be turned away. Whether through referral or specialist support, expat clients can be serviced from virtually anywhere in the world, with lenders showing appetite across a wide range of jurisdictions. From the UAE and Australia to Europe and beyond, the global reach of this market is far broader than many expect.

Alongside this, the traditional buy-to-let market continues to hold its ground.

Why expat buy-to-let is one of the biggest opportunities brokers are missing

Despite ongoing regulatory changes, including the Renters' Rights reforms, demand from experienced landlords hasn't dropped off in any meaningful way. If anything, the types of clients entering or expanding in the market are becoming more considered, often operating through SPVs and taking a longer-term, portfolio-driven view.

For expats, that structure is even more common, particularly where properties are professionally managed in their absence.

Expatriate buy-to-let isn't a niche but a consistent, global opportunity. And in a market where diversification is becoming increasingly important, it offers a way to access clients, income streams, and solutions that sit outside the constraints of the mainstream space.

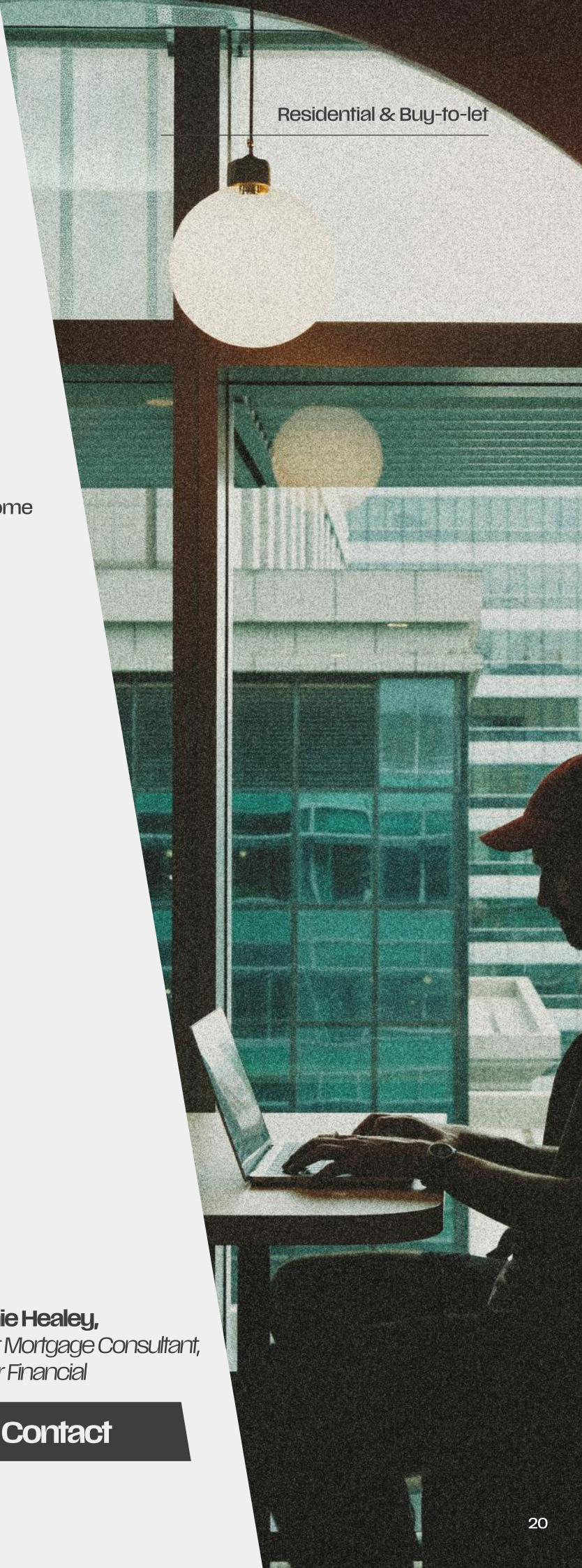
The demand is already there. The question is whether brokers are set up to capture it.

For intermediaries only



Stephanie Healey,
*Specialist Mortgage Consultant,
Brightstar Financial*

Contact



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Property Development Finance

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Funding to secure land, cover early costs and progress planning – even where permission isn't yet in place.

- Maximum loan size** - £3 million (£2 million land-only)
- LTV** - Up to 65% LTV (up to 50% land-only)
- Term** - Available up to 18 months
- Other criteria** - Can be accepted without planning permission



Development Finance

Flexible funding through the build phase, structured around real construction timelines

- Maximum loan size** - £4 million
- LTV** - Up to 90% LTC and 70% of GDV
- Other criteria** - Land purchase and construction costs acceptable



Exit Bridging

Short-term finance at or near completion, giving developers time to sell or refinance without pressure

- Maximum loan size** - £5 million
- LTV** - Up to 75% LTV
- Term** - Available up to 18 months
- Other criteria** - Flexible loan amount for internal applications considered on a case-by-case basis

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Maximum loan size	£3 million	£3 million	£3 million	£3 million
LTV	Up to 75% LTV	Up to 80% LTV (up to 75% for first-time-landlords)	Up to 75% LTV	Up to 70% LTV
Other criteria	Regulated and Consumer BTL accepted	Available to Day 1 Expats No Personal Guarantees required up to 55% LTV ICR: 125%	Student lets accepted Up to 6 bedrooms ICR 140%, 125% for like-for-like remortgages	Student lets accepted No max no. bedrooms ICR 140%, 125% for like-for-like remortgage
Ltd Co and personal ownership available No minimum income requirements for experienced landlords *First Time Buyers/ Landlords accepted across our full range				

*excludes Large HMO BTL

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HMOs

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Commercial shops

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Development sites

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Industrial Units

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- Noting Lenders Interest
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- Flood Risk
- Non-invalidation & Non-Vitiation Clause
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- Professional Indemnity Cover
- Unoccupied properties

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Why u missing re

When brokers think about refurbishment projects the focus is usually on funding. How much can the client borrow? What's the exit? Does the deal stack?

But there's another side to these projects that doesn't always get the same attention and that's risk.

Particularly when you move beyond light refurbishments into heavier, more complex works, insurance can quickly become one of the most important – and misunderstood – parts of the process.

I was reminded of that recently while working on a case involving a Grade B listed building in Edinburgh. The client was converting a former doctor's surgery into residential use, with significant structural changes planned over a nine-month period. As you'd expect, the property was going to be unoccupied throughout, which immediately makes things more complicated from an insurance perspective.

On the surface, insuring the building itself isn't the issue. The challenge is everything that sits around it.

Jacqui Edwards,
*Senior Insurance Executive,
Solstar Insurance*

Contact

Underwriting is the piece in complex renovation projects

Most standard policies will cover the structure but they often exclude damage caused by the works themselves. That creates a potential gap – particularly if something goes wrong and responsibility isn't clear. If a contractor causes damage but doesn't claim on their own insurance, and the building policy excludes it, the client could find themselves exposed.

That's where specialist renovation underwriting becomes critical.

A purpose-built policy is designed to remove those grey areas. It provides comprehensive protection, ensuring there are no gaps in cover and giving clients confidence that the project is fully protected from start to finish.

Crucially, it also gives them full control. They're not reliant on a contractor's insurance arrangements, which may or may not respond in the way they expect.

This is especially important on larger or more complex projects, where multiple parties are involved and the risk of disputes is higher.

Specialist insurers also bring a much deeper understanding of the risks involved in renovation work. That translates into more flexible underwriting but also more effective claims handling. If something does go wrong the process is typically faster and more straightforward, without the delays that can arise when different insurers argue over liability.

And the scope of cover is wider. It's not just about the main contractor's work, it can include materials purchased directly by the client, additional project costs and other elements that might otherwise fall outside a standard policy. That level of protection becomes even more valuable if circumstances change mid-project.

Because they often do. If a contractor walks off site or becomes insolvent a specialist policy provides continuity of cover. The project can continue without interruption and the client isn't left scrambling to put new arrangements in place at short notice.

There's also a preventative element. Many specialist providers offer risk management support, helping clients identify potential issues before they become problems. That might involve guidance on site security, project planning, or best practice during the build – all of which can reduce the likelihood of a claim in the first place.

For brokers, the message is simple. As refurbishment projects become more ambitious, the need for proper underwriting becomes more important. It's not just about ticking a box, it's about making sure the client is genuinely protected.

Because when something goes wrong on a development, it's rarely small. And having the right cover in place can be the difference between a project staying on track or coming to a very expensive halt.

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I needed funds for my client...

I needed funds for my client within 10 days and Krystal and Neil worked wonders for me and got it all sorted. Could not thank them enough

Duncan G, 11 February

Showing our latest reviews



Another outstanding...

Another outstanding professional experience working with Brightstar! Big thanks to Neil Taverner and Maisy Stephens for brilliant communication,...

Paul Y, 10 February



Very professional service...

Fast, efficient and professional. Richard was extremely knowledgeable and quickly understood my requirements...

Giles G, 10 February

The power of partnership turning complexity into opportunity

There's no getting away from it but the market feels uncertain. Rates are moving, criteria is shifting and what worked six months ago doesn't always land today. For brokers, that creates a simple but pressing challenge: how do you continue to deliver for your clients when the goalposts keep moving?

For me, the answer comes down to one thing: partnership. Because in a market like this, trying to do everything alone is where opportunities start to slip through the cracks.

We're seeing it every day. Brokers who are brilliant at mainstream lending are coming up against cases that don't quite fit, whether that's a complex income scenario, an expat client, a

second charge, a bridging requirement, or a commercial angle. Historically, those cases might have been turned away. Today, that's becoming a far more costly decision.

The reality is, diversification is no longer a "nice to have" – it's becoming essential.

That doesn't mean every broker needs to become a specialist overnight. But it does mean having the right support around you to step into those spaces when your client needs it.

Bridging, commercial, development, second charges, complex BTL and specialist residential – these are all areas where demand exists, but confidence or permissions can sometimes hold brokers back.

That's where partnership comes into its own. At its best, it's about helping brokers service their clients under one roof, without forcing them to step outside their comfort zone. It's about

adding value, not adding pressure. And crucially, it's about doing that in a way that protects the broker-client relationship.

Trust is a big part of this. There's still a perception in parts of the market that referring a client means losing control of that client. That's why one of the most important things we emphasise is simple: your client remains your client. Always. A no cross-sell approach isn't just a feature it's fundamental to how strong partnerships are built.

But partnership isn't just about referrals. For some brokers, it's about having the option to package, to stay in control of the client relationship while leaning on specialist expertise

Lee Payne,
Group National Account Manager,
Brightstar Group

Contact

For intermediaries only



Partnership: Diving into

to place the deal. It's a flexible approach that means brokers can choose how they engage, depending on the case in front of them.

And that flexibility matters. Because not every opportunity is obvious at first glance. Some of the most valuable cases are the ones that don't quite fit the mould, the ones that might feel like a dead end until someone takes a different view.

That's why one of the simplest pieces of advice I give is this: don't assume a case can't be done. Before you turn a client away, pick up the phone. Send the email. Give it a chance. Even if it feels like a last resort, it's still an opportunity and in this market, those opportunities matter.

Behind the scenes, a lot of this comes down to relationships. Strong lender connections, access to semi-exclusive products, and the ability to navigate criteria that isn't always visible on a sourcing system. It's also about investing in people because ultimately, it's people who turn complex scenarios into workable solutions. The recent appointment of a new Business Development Manager at Brightstar has furthered strengthened our National Accounts Team, enhancing coverage and reinforcing our commitment to relationship support.

And we're seeing the impact of that. Despite the wider challenges in the market, activity across specialist lending remains strong. In fact, for many brokers, it's becoming an increasingly important part of their overall proposition, not as a replacement for mainstream lending, but as a powerful extension of it.

Because when complexity increases, so does the opportunity but only if you know where to look. And more often than not, you don't have to look alone.



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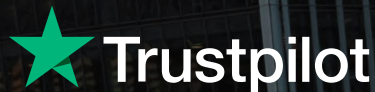
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Offer was issued in January, by far the fastest mortgage offer ever received. Highly recommend.

Dr Izzy, 26th January



A very smooth journey...

A very smooth journey with very supportive staff. Albey was very prompt in answering my questions...

CR, 22th January



Bridging Finance...

This is the first time I've taken out bridging finance, and I have to say... the experience was perfect...

Neil Ave, 16th January

Showing our latest reviews



**UTB Speed Boost: More
AVMs and enhanced criteria
mean quicker case processing!**

Simpler, faster, and more efficient.

We've recently launched a series of significant enhancements across our Residential Mortgage and Second Charge Loan product ranges, and our refined valuation approach means Bridging cases are moving faster than ever with fewer delays.

Mortgage Criteria Enhancements

1. Consent to Follow Introduced for Second Charge Loans

Customers can now complete faster without waiting for first charge consent upfront.

2. Written explanations for historic adverse no longer needed for Super Prime, Prime Plus or Prime applicants

This reduces back-and-forth and improves speed.

3. Additional BTL Properties – Clearer Assessment

We are now only verifying 50% of the BTL portfolio in a personal name.

4. New Build – Re-inspection requirements removed

Where a valuation report includes a valuation figure, we will rely on the New Build Warranty certificate, removing the cost and delay associated with re-inspections.

5. Annual Bonus Income has been revised

Annual Bonus over £10k: assessed at 75%
Annual Bonus under £10k: assessed at 50%
Two years' evidence is required (averaged).

6. Updated Accountant's Certificate

Streamlined 2-page document, now captures only the figures needed for our affordability calculator.

7. Applicants in Probation

We can now consider applications where probation is under six months if: First payslip is provided;
12 months' continuous employment in a similar field is evidenced; Salary uplift is below 15%

8. Deeds of Consent / Occupiers Waivers

Waivers are now required only when: A spouse resides at the property but is not party to the mortgage; and the loan exceeds £100,000 (Scottish cases exempt.)

9. Post Benefit Affordability

An explanation is required only where the benefit is due to end within five years of drawdown.

10. Wider range of benefits

11 new benefits are now accepted as part of affordability assessments for Residential and Second charge cases.

11. More Flexible Lending Into Retirement Policy

We've revised our approach to better support customers whose mortgage term extends beyond retirement age.

12. Updated ILA Requirements

To streamline the process: ILA is required only where the applicant is aged 75+ at the start of the mortgage term. Where an applicant is aged between 70–74, the broker must confirm if the client has chosen not to proceed with ILA.

13. Enhanced AVM Policy for Second Charge Loans

We have aligned our confidence levels.

Hometrack* £150k max gross loan:

Up to 85% LTV, minimum confidence score of 5.

Up to 60% LTV, minimum confidence score of 4.

Up to 40% LTV, minimum confidence score of 3.

For a £250k max gross loan, we will go up to 75% LTV, minimum confidence score of 5.

Please note the maximum property value is £1m.

On properties over £1m we will accept up to 75% LTV, a max gross loan of £150k and a minimum confidence score of 6.

Bridging AVM Enhancements

At UTB we've refined our valuation approach — and the impact is clear. Cases are moving faster, smoother and with fewer delays.

AVMs now power 52% of UTB Bridging applications.

1. Rapid turnarounds

No site visits or lengthy reports

2. Early momentum

Quicker movements from DIP to offer

3. Less Friction

Fewer delays and smoother progression

4. Predictable timelines

Ideal for time-sensitive bridging



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Rising costs of independent education.

With the introduction of VAT on school fees, many parents are concerned about the affordability of keeping their children in independent education. School fees are already increasing year on year, and VAT has added a further 20% to the total cost.

Protect against future fee increases.

One way to safeguard against rising fees and VAT is to lock in today's prices. Many schools allow parents to pay fees in advance for several years. Doing so now can help you avoid future inflation and tax-related increases.

Use property equity to cover fees.

Parents may be able to use equity in their home through a second charge mortgage or a remortgage to fund school fees. In many cases, the interest rates on these loans are lower than the annual increase in school fees, making it a potentially cost-effective strategy.

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