

### BACKGROUND

ARMA was formed in 1991 and is a trade body to vet, monitor and promote its members which are principally businesses engaged in the management of residential long leasehold blocks of flats. Its members manage some three quarters of all blocks of flats under professional management.

As a trade body, ARMA is not in the position to offer individuals a portable professional qualification as it would have no control over individuals so qualified once they left the employ of an ARMA member.

However, ARMA recognises the need for not only its members, which are businesses, to deliver quality but also individuals engaged in residential property management whether they work for an ARMA member or not. Thus in January 2002 the Institute of Residential Property Management (IRPM) was launched with ARMA as its Founder Sponsor.

### NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR BLOCK MANAGEMENT

As far back as 1997 it was seen that there was a need to produce a definitive detailed statement of the necessary skills and knowledge needed by individuals engaged in block management.

With Government funding and under the aegis of what is now Asset Skills a project was created to produce this definitive statement in the form of a National Occupational Standard (NOS) which after extensive input by ARMA, its members and others was approved by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) – the QCA being the Government appointed body that oversees all national educational standards. These standards were reviewed and updated during 2007.

This NOS is now the guide and benchmark for all future training and qualifications and copies can be obtained from Asset Skills.

### TRAINING VERSUS QUALIFICATIONS

ARMA has a continuing role to provide training in various forms for its members' employees and to a more limited extent individuals not working for members. This training takes the form of guidance notes on specific topics, email briefings, members' only training sessions and public events such as briefings, workshops and an annual conference.

However, ARMA has been instrumental in providing other forms of training for the sector as a whole, namely an Open

Learning Course, training courses, webinars and an extensive Bibliography & Information Sources guidance note.

### OPEN LEARNING COURSE

Again under the aegis of the Asset Skills a joint venture was formed in 2000 between ARMA, the Association of Retirement Housing Managers (ARHM), the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), the Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA), the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA) and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) to produce an Open Learning Course (OLC) for new entrants into the sector or for those already in the property sector wishing to transfer into residential block management.

The OLC was based upon the basic skills and knowledge needs as set out in the NOS and aims to help a student within six months to become an effective member of a block management team. The OLC is in the form of a CD so that the text can be studied on a laptop or computer in an office and as of July 2009 has been available online. The text of the OLC was updated and rewritten in 2007.

The OLC is available to anyone wishing to purchase it. An information leaflet and an order form are available from the Asset Skills or via ARMA's website.

### TRAINING COURSES

Organised by ARMA these courses provide more advanced and intensive training than the OLC.

Courses include an introduction to property management, a two-day more intensive course covering essential aspects of the property manager's role, accounting courses from time to time (updated when legislation changes) and various Section 20 workshops, legislation updates etc. These courses are open to employees of ARMA members and any other interested parties. The courses can also be offered as in-house courses, subject to conditions.

Full details can be obtained from the 'Training and Qualifications' page on [www.arma.org.uk](http://www.arma.org.uk).

### BIBLIOGRAPHY & INFORMATION SOURCES

This 18 page guidance note is believed to be the most comprehensive document available on publications and information sources relating to the management of residential long leasehold property.

It is available to ARMA members and individuals who belong to the IRPM free of charge or can be obtained by sending a cheque for £17.25 (£15 +VAT at 15%) to ARMA, 178 Battersea Park Road, London SW11 4ND.

## WEBINARS

In conjunction with Brethertons Solicitors, ARMA presents webinars on a range of topics. These can be viewed in your own office at lunchtimes and allow for you to ask questions on the topics. Further information can be obtained from [www.arma.org.uk](http://www.arma.org.uk).

## RECOGNISING SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

Training is all very well but it needs its rewards which may be better pay or promotions. It also needs recognition, that is why ARMA formed the IRPM as Founder Sponsor. Since its formation two further sponsors have become involved, the Association of Retirement Housing Managers (ARHM) and the Property Managers Association Scotland (PMAS). The IRPM is dedicated to encouraging the highest personal professional standards and to that end has developed a range of nationally recognised, portable professional qualifications for those involved in residential property management. It is a professional institute for individuals not businesses and exists to provide the recognition of individuals' capabilities rather than offering training which is being left to each trade body in their relevant sector to provide.

The grades of membership are Affiliates (Student), Associate (AIRPM), Member (MIRPM) and Fellow (FIRPM). Eligibility for any particular grade is based upon a given number of years experience and either sitting an IRPM examination or holding an alternate IRPM recognised qualification.

Full details can be obtained from the IRPM – [www.irpm.org.uk](http://www.irpm.org.uk).

## THE 'FIT'

ARMA's various activities and involvements are all linked into one aim – providing the highest standards of service and technical competence.

Thus, for example, the OLC should provide sufficient learning for an Affiliate of the IRPM to sit the IRPM Part I Examination and move up to Associate and ARMA's training courses should do the same for the Part II Examination to move Associates up to Member grade.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Business probity, training and professional qualifications are the requirements now and in the future for residential

management so you should be contacting the appropriate organisations today:-

Association of Residential Management Agents  
178 Battersea Park Road, London SW11 4ND  
Tel: 020 7978 2607 Fax: 020 7498 6153  
Email: [info@arma.org.uk](mailto:info@arma.org.uk)  
Website: [www.arma.org.uk](http://www.arma.org.uk)

Institute of Residential Property Management (IRPM)  
178 Battersea Park Road  
London SW11 4ND  
Tel: 020 7622 5092  
Fax: 020 7498 6153  
Email: [info@irpm.org.uk](mailto:info@irpm.org.uk)  
Website: [www.irpm.org.uk](http://www.irpm.org.uk)

Asset Skills  
2 The Courtyard  
48 New North Road  
Exeter  
EX4 4EP  
Tel: 01392 423399 Fax: 01392 423373  
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