

## IRPM welcomes Scottish regulation

A new era has begun in Scotland with the passing of MSP Patricia Ferguson's Property Factors Bill by the Scottish parliament. The Bill was introduced on 1 June 2010 and finally passed Stage 3 on 3 March 2011 with the main objective of raising standards in the sector. It requires property managers to be formally registered and stipulates that it looks to help resolve disputes between homeowners and property managers.

The full wording of the draft bill (as passed) can be accessed via our website [www.irpm.org.uk](http://www.irpm.org.uk)

The bill seeks to improve the experiences of over 400,000 homeowners who use property management services in Scotland and will also allow them access to legislation that requires all property managers to perform to specific standards. The bill mentions a 'level playing field' where all providers have to meet the standards set out in the statutory code of conduct and it seeks to stop the actions of rogue traders who tarnish the reputation of good property managers.

Before the bill was started consumer research was carried out to demonstrate the problems consumers experience within our sector. The main issues that the bill looks to address, which we believe will occur here in England & Wales too, were:- lack of information, difficulty arranging repairs, dissatisfaction and poor complaints handling.

Patricia Ferguson, MSP for Glasgow Labour, who promoted the Bill has said "The Bill recognises the plight of people who have suffered at the hands of unscrupulous factors – people identified during the consultation

on the Bill, people recognised by the Office of Fair Trading in their report into property management across Scotland and the people who have come to our surgeries. In short, people have come to this Parliament for help because it can be found nowhere else. This legislation will help to root out the rascals in the industry and give it the opportunity to show that most factors do work to high standards."

Charities like 'Age Concern Scotland' are delighted with the passing of the new bill after submitting written evidence to Parliament highlighting that they felt legislation was necessary in this area because property managers play a vital role in the lives of their customers - and older people in particular.

We believe the property management industry as a whole welcomes the regulation and IRPM hopes to work closely with all organisations in Scotland that are in support of the bill – PMAS, RICS Scotland, Asset Skills and the Sector Skills Council. We hope that as the new regulation begins to take effect, property managers will see the benefit in becoming professionally qualified and our membership levels will increase in Scotland as our profile continues to grow.

The Scottish Government have also been looking at introducing a voluntary accreditation scheme for property managers / factors. The IRPM fully support accreditation and responded to the consultation pointing out that it was lacking in regards to requiring qualifications, membership of professional bodies, and on-going personal development. It is not currently known how accreditation will

interact with regulation but both proposals are currently progressing. Full details of the Governments consultation paper, summary of responses and the response of the IRPM are available via our website [www.irpm.org.uk](http://www.irpm.org.uk)

Of course it is a different story in England & Wales and since Housing Minister Grant Shapps announced that this Government would not be progressing with regulation of the residential sector, many property managers, agents and leaseholders have been left disappointed. The sector relies on self-regulation by trade bodies like ARMA. They have been calling for regulation for over 10 years and would relish a similar bill being actioned in England. David Hewett, chief executive of ARMA says, "Leaseholders have the right to take some issues, such as the reasonableness of service charges, to a Leasehold Valuation Tribunal (LVT) but this does not cover every situation leaseholders might find themselves in. Regulation would have provided an independent redress process for these and other matters that do not fall under the LVTs' jurisdiction. It is for this reason that ARMA made it mandatory for its members to belong to a recognised ombudsman scheme. "

A copy of the Property Factors (Scotland) Bill as passed can be downloaded from the Scottish Parliament website at: [www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/51-PropertyFactors/b51bs3-asspassed.pdf](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/51-PropertyFactors/b51bs3-asspassed.pdf).



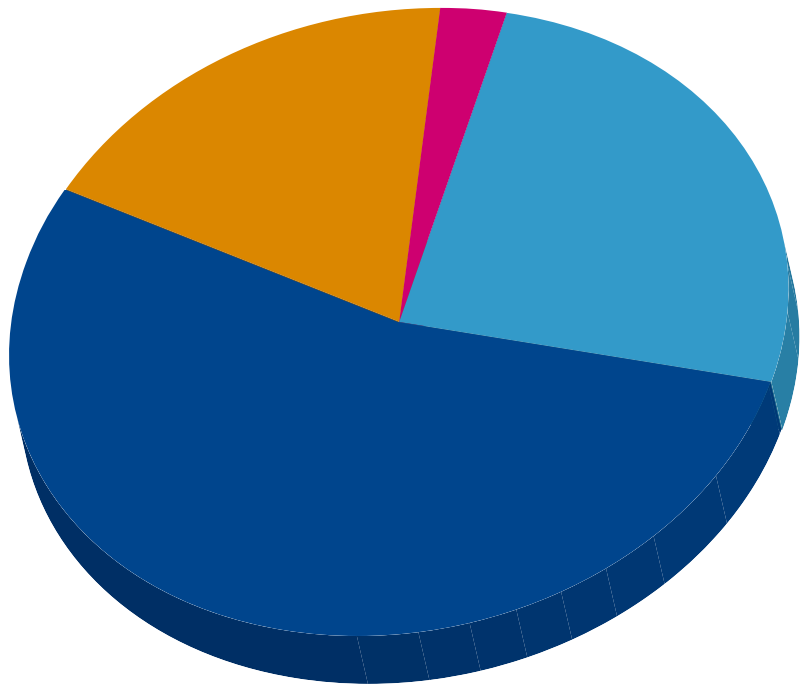
MSP Patricia Ferguson

# Member Statistics

We are extremely proud that IRPM is now approaching the 2,000 member mark as we continue to set standards in the industry. We will be commending our 2,000th member with a special certificate and distributing press releases to all relevant publications to ensure your institute continues to grow and become more widely recognised

- Fellow – 54
- Associate – 1,068
- Affiliate – 364
- Member – 468 - this will increase after Part II on 20/4/11

Total = 1,955.



## IRPM Exams

We are very pleased with the continual growth we are seeing in the irpm exams. The Part I Exam is now held three times a year and always sells out in advance. In February we had to have two sittings in London to accommodate our members. We hope that as we step up the advertising and PR in 2011 and irpm moves further into the forefront of the sector, the number

of people joining as Affiliates and then upgrading to Associate level will continue to grow. For those that are already AIRPM qualified remember to sign with pride and encourage your colleagues to join up and study for their Part I Exam.

The same can be said for our Part II Exam as interest in 2011 has been unprecedented. Despite the logistical difficulties we have managed to accommodate all candidates who wished to sit. We will be undertaking

a total review of the Part II process and sitting arrangements prior to next years exam. If any changes are made we will keep you all informed in good time to prepare for next years exam. If you're due to sit your Part II on 20th April – good luck. For those Associates thinking about upgrading, you can start studying anytime so don't delay and visit the Part II Section of our website for more information.

[www.irpm.org.uk/public/page/exam-part2](http://www.irpm.org.uk/public/page/exam-part2)

## Remember to use your IRPM designation - Sign With Pride

It takes a lot of skill and hard work to be a property management professional and your IRPM designation (AIRPM, MIRPM, FIRPM) reinforces that professionalism and your commitment to raising standards in the sector.

The Governors therefore ask you to take pride in your qualifications and what they mean.

Please join us in raising public awareness



**Sign with pride**

# IRPM/Brethertons Part II Exam Preparatory Weekend - 12 & 13 March 2011



2011 has seen an unprecedented increase in demand for the IRPM Part II Exam which is not only good for your institute but also for raising standards in the sector on a wider scale. This meant the Brethertons Weekend, back by popular demand, was a complete sell-out with almost 100 delegates attending. Whilst not everyone attending is a member - some take it as an opportunity of a legal refresher course - those that were and had not yet booked an exam place did so speedily on Monday morning before it was a sell out.



Menzies Welcombe Hotel & Spa was the ideal setting for a weekend of learning and relaxation combined. The course ran from 10am to 4.30pm on the Saturday and Day 2 was slightly shorter running from 10am – 1pm so there was time before and after to enjoy the surroundings, sample the excellent food and have some treatments in the spa. The winning formula of the weekend provides Associates of the IRPM with an excellent way to prepare for their Part II Exam alongside their peers.

Shaun Jardine, a Partner and Head of the Litigation Department at Brethertons, was the Chair for weekend and welcomed and thanked everyone in his introduction. Yashmin Minstry, a solicitor at Brethertons who specialises in enfranchisement and residential landlord and tenant law, opened Day 1 ensuring everyone was comfortable with the lease and all its components. Jeff Platt, IRPM CEO, gave his thoughts on exam technique, and reviewed past papers giving delegates a chance to see what an examiner felt was the ideal answer.

Justin Bates, a barrister at Arden Chambers who is fully conversant with all aspects of property litigation, returned for a second year to discuss Section 20, service charge & new legislation. His engaging style allowed for a mixture of lecturing and open forum where attendees felt confident asking questions. There were many ‘bar’ questions with people clearly wanting to pick Justin’s legal brain. Perhaps next year should he return the rules of ‘admission to the bar’ could be altered slightly to ‘must buy Justin a beer’!

It was great to see so many property managers networking and making new friends over dinner. One student advised

that he had set up on his own, working from home, which can be a lonely existence, and he found it immensely reassuring to share similar problems with others in the sector.



The IRPM would like to thank all Brethertons staff for their help in particular Alison McCormack who organised the weekend. Also thank you to our speakers Justin Bates, Yashmin Minstry and Jeff Platt. Don’t forget your attendance at the weekend counts as 4 hours towards your CPD so log on now and upload.

And finally to everyone sitting on 20th April.....Good luck!



## Attention Affiliates!

We are pleased to announce a new service to assist Affiliates in England and Wales working towards our Part I examination.

The Part I examination is based on the Residential Block and Estate Management Open Learning Course (OLC). This is no longer available to purchase as a hard copy document but is instead available as an internet based subscription service at: [www.leaseholdlearning.co.uk](http://www.leaseholdlearning.co.uk)

It is intended to establish a cohort of students studying the OLC prior to each Part I exam. The students can benefit by sharing experiences and comments via an online forum.

Jeff Platt and other tutors will be available via this forum to answer queries and to assist with learning over a period of about 8 weeks running up to the exam. It is anticipated that the cohort will concentrate on two or three sections of the OLC each week until the whole course has been

covered over this period. There will be a final session covering revision and examination techniques.

Any Affiliates who are planning to sit the next Part I exam on 28th June 11, are invited to join in this interactive, on-line cohort. To participate you must be a current subscriber to the OLC on-line. Please contact the office to register your interest in joining this cohort.

## IRPM Qualifications Scholarship Announced

For some time, the Institute has been looking at ways of ensuring that there are no barriers to Members progressing through the various levels of membership via the qualifications.

Quite clearly, we live in difficult economic times and the current austerity measures impact upon both individuals and the organisations that employ them. The view of the Institute's Governors is that we should take an initiative to assist Members where financial considerations may be hindering their ability to progress their career.

Therefore, your Institute is pleased to announce the IRPM's Qualifications Scholarship.

### Who Will Be Eligible?

Up to 6 Associates per year who were:

- Amongst the highest scoring candidates in each of the Part 1 Examinations and
- Who work for a small firm (under 2000 units in management)
- which is also a member firm of one of the Institute's founding sponsors i.e. ARMA, ARHM, or PMAS.

### What Will The Scholarship Comprise?

The Members receiving the scholarship will receive:

- Free entry to the Part 2 Examination
- Free attendance at the Brethertons revision weekend (England & Wales)
- Free attendance at one other

examination preparation workshop or designated course.

The value of all this will be approximately £750 per candidate.

### What Are We Hoping To Achieve?

- We want to provide an incentive for Members to do well in their Part 1 examination and to ensure that they then head straight for the Part 2 qualification.
- By targeting this award to employees of smaller firms, there is less likelihood that the employer will pay the fees of the Member. This scholarship will then assist any Member whose personal financial circumstances may otherwise prevent them from continuing with their studies.

- Apart from having been the Institute's founding sponsors, we recognise that companies that are members of the 3 trade bodies subscribe to their respective codes of conduct and should therefore offer a working environment within which an IRPM Member might thrive.

This scholarship is now in operation. Members who have recently taken their Part 1 examinations who might be eligible to apply will be contacted by the Secretariat during the course of the next few weeks and details of awards will be reported in the RPM.

Good luck!

Event	Date
Part II Exam England & Wales	20 April 2011
Part I & Part II Exams Scotland	20 April 2011
Property Professional Show	10 & 11 May 2011
Part I Preparatory Workshop- London	9 June 2011
Part I Exam England and Wales	28 June 2011
ARHM Conference	28 & 29 June 2011
PMAS Conference	21 September 2011
IRPM Seminar & AGM	29 September 2011
ARMA Conference	5 October 2011

# CPD – It's easier than you think!

The residential property management industry continues to move forwards and it will do so for the time being without government regulation that many believe is much needed. Legislative changes over recent years means the need to keep the professionals within our industry up to date has never been so great. Allied to the more technical aspects of your own role, all of us need to keep our 'soft' skills fresh helping to consistently deal with our customers a professional manner and improve our contribution to the success of the organisations we work for.

The IRPM recognises this need for life long learning – more commonly known as Continued Professional Development (CPD) – and from 1 January 2011,

compliance with the IRPM's CPD requirements was made compulsory underlining the IRPM's professional standing and commitment to developing its members.

The IRPM Code of Professional Conduct requires every member to strive to maintain and improve his or her professional knowledge. The aims of CPD and benefits to you are to:

- improve your performance
- increase your understanding of your job and ensure greater job satisfaction
- progress your career prospects
- develop your CV
- allow you to command better salary and benefits

- give substance and credibility to your professional standing
- improve how you interact with your customers.

Compulsory CPD means undertaking and recording at least 15 hours CPD per year (1 January to 31 December). 15 hours is not a great deal and the vast majority of you will surpass the minimum requirement with relative ease.

If you have any queries about your CPD that are not answered on the website, please do not hesitate to contact the Secretariat on 020 7622 5092 or [info@irpm.org.uk](mailto:info@irpm.org.uk). The new IRPM website - that was launched in January 2011 includes further details to help you with your CPD.

## You're doing relevant CPD without realising it....

All CPD activities should form an integral part of your own personal development plan. Yes, it should be planned rather than a random collection of activities undertaken as and when convenient. In planning appropriate CPD, emphasis should be on the purpose and aim of activities together with the outcomes in terms of the skills development and additional knowledge that you will gain.

The activities you undertake as part of your professional development may be diverse, but must be relevant. They should relate to the theory and practice of the professional services you offer your clients and customers. This is important as the IRPM membership consists of property managers, accountants, training and development managers, and various types of support staff – a wide variety of property management professionals.

Many activities count as relevant CPD provided you can show what you have learned from it (e.g. improving your technical knowledge, honing your leadership ability, developing your customer service skills). Your CPD should reflect a cross section of the activities and should demonstrate what you have learned, how you have developed, and what you are able to bring to your role that you were perhaps unable to 12 months ago.

## How do I log my CPD?

Through the *Members Only* section of the IRPM website, it's **easy** to log your CPD online.

Once you have logged into the IRPM

website, go to:

[www.irpm.org.uk/members\\_area/cpd/](http://www.irpm.org.uk/members_area/cpd/)

You will be able to add your activities as per the following headings:

- Activity Title

- Activity Date
  - Total Hours
  - What did you learn?
  - How will it benefit you in future?
- Please be sure to save any changes you make.

## ....and what happens if I don't?

*What are the consequences if:*

- *I don't submit a minimum of 15 hours of CPD time – on time, or*
- *some or all of my CPD is inappropriate, or*
- *I don't submit my CPD 'evidence' when requested to do so?*

**Answer:** Failure to file your CPD record card when requested will be met with a reprimand, reminding you that your

membership is conditional upon the CPD requirements being met in full. Similarly, if your CPD is inappropriate, you will be given time to rectify this and re-submit your CPD record card. You will be reminded what is suitable CPD and what is not suitable CPD.

If you fail to present your CPD record card (containing at least 15 hours of suitable CPD) after a written warning or

similarly fail to submit evidence of CPD after requested to do so, your membership may be suspended for six months or until 15 hours of suitable CPD has been submitted (whichever is the greater).

A random sample of members' CPD records will be scrutinised. Please co-operate with us to provide the 'evidence' requested.

# Here is a table of 'Acceptable CPD' and some Examples

Acceptable CPD	Examples
Courses / Seminars / Workshops: External	Technical courses relating to aspects of property management, accounting, training and development. And also courses for developing interpersonal skills.  Brethertons Solicitors' Webinars is relevant CPD.
Courses / Seminars / Workshops: Internal	Attending an in-house training seminar; IT training
Conferences and AGMs	IRPM / ARMA
Study towards formal qualifications	Study towards attaining your IRPM Part 1 or 2 qualifications; Surveying degree; higher level NVQ; accountancy exams; project management studies...
Project work	Running an in-house training event
Activities outside of work	Voluntary or charity work work (e.g. where management/financial skills could be improved); school governor; time spent as a Director of an RMC or residents committee.
Structured reading	Reading of textbooks, legislation or journals relating to the industry, RPM, ARMA Quarter Day, Flat Living magazine etc

## Your 15 hours CPD should be made up as follows:

- **At least 10 hours technical learning** – activities directly relevant to your role in property management – e.g.s credit control, building maintenance, property law, service charge accounting, health & safety training).
- **No more than 5 hours of 'soft-skills' learning** – activities that help you develop your ancillary skills – e.g.s coaching, motivating, leading others, team-building, presentation skills training, improving how you deal with difficult customers, improving your computer skills.

It is recognised that 'soft skills' learning for a property manager (e.g. how to make effective presentations to large groups) may be classed as **technical** skills for a training and development manager.

Of your **technical learning** CPD, **at least 7 of the 10 hours** should be training courses, seminars, conferences, workshops and similar. The remaining 3 hours may be devoted to personal study, revision, reading journals/periodicals or similar.

Likewise with **'soft skills'** learning CPD,

**at least 3 of the 5 hours** should be training courses, seminars, conferences, workshops and similar. And the remaining 2 hours devoted to personal study, revision, reading journals/periodicals or similar.

### Some examples

Technical:

e.g. Workshop on effective arrears collection

Soft skills:

e.g. Seminar on dealing with difficult customers

Personal study/revision:

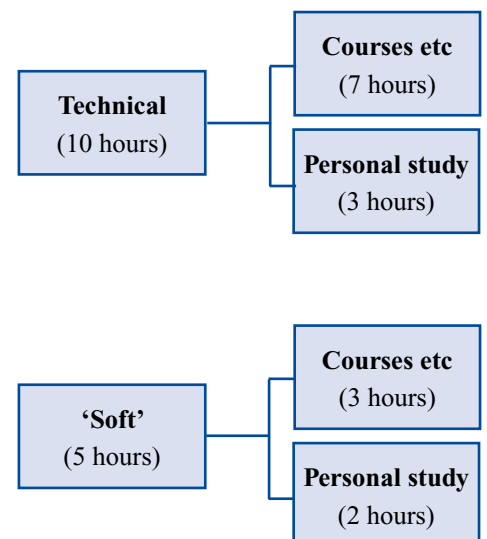
e.g. Revision for accountancy exams.

Courses/Seminars:

e.g. Attendance at Annual ARMA Conference.

It is worth pointing out that your priorities will change from year to year and so will the amount of time you will devote to certain (relevant) activities. If one year you wish to focus on your studies towards a particular qualification, for example, this may be disproportionate to the amount of time you have to spend attending workshops and seminars. And in the next year, you may have no studies and prefer to focus more on externally provided courses.

The new IRPM website will include a profile of a property manager who has been logging her CPD throughout the year.



# SKY Offers Support and Subsidies for Communal Tv Systems

We are very pleased to announce that SKY have kindly agreed to return in 2011 as proud sponsors of irpm AGM & Seminar. Here is a word from them on how they could benefit you.



With the UK's digital switchover well underway, and a variety of new TV technology now available to consumers, many property managers are facing the prospect of introducing digital communal TV systems in their blocks of flats.

According to Pascal Wharton, Director of Sky Communal TV Solutions, property managers are frequently unsure of the best course of action due to the perceived cost and lack of a single point of contact to manage the process:

"Many property managers across the UK are keen to ensure their flats are prepared for digital switchover and able to access the latest technology, but they are concerned that the work required will be costly and stressful.

"Sky TV is keen to make them aware that for a limited time only, they can benefit from substantial subsidies to help make the cost of a new system more manageable, and will be supported by an account manager for the duration of the work."

Sky offers a choice of solutions, including its Shared Dish system, which comes at a very competitive price and includes a dedicated project manager and expert installers. In many cases, depending on the complexity of the installation and cabling work and the number of Sky subscribers in each block, **Sky is able to offer substantial subsidies starting at 50%. This offer is available for a limited time only.**

An alternative is Sky's Integrated Reception System (IRS), which is a "platform-neutral" solution, offering huge flexibility and choice, and comes with a variety of maintenance and leasing options.

Pascal Wharton adds:  
"Whatever the size or situation of the block, Sky has a suitable communal system to provide property managers and residents with a stress-free and affordable solution. Now is a good time to take advantage of the subsidies and financial options that are available before this offer comes to an end."

To find out more and for a free estimate, go to [www.sky.com/managers](http://www.sky.com/managers) or call **08442 410 331**.

- Sky's Shared Dish subsidies start at 50%. This subsidy is based on a standard externally cabled system design and is inclusive of earth bonding. Sky will contribute towards the cost of materials. There could be other factors that could impact the cost of installation in your particular block, such as internal cabling costs.
- Maintenance and warranty for Shared Dish are provided via third party installers. This is provided during the terms of the contract and will cover repair and maintenance of Shared Dish and Equipment, as well as cabling and/or installation faults.
- The IRS maintenance and warranty will expire on the one year anniversary of the transfer of the title in the equipment to you. If the system is leased, 5, 10 or 15 year options are available depending on the terms of the lease.

