



Independent Surveyors & Valuers Association
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INDEPENDENT SURVEYORS & VALUERS ASSOCIATION (formerly INDEPENDENT SURVEYORS ASSOCIATION)

INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS

Why was ISA formed?

Richard Adams, and over sixty Chartered Surveyors from small or independent practices concerned about the domination of the valuation and survey market by financial institutions and large corporate surveying practices, launched Independent Surveyors Association (ISA) in October 1992. The Association changed its name to Independent Surveyors and Valuers Association in May 2011.

The Association has grown as an umbrella organisation and now represents more than 500 Member firms and in excess of 1,000 independent Chartered Surveyors. It provides representation of and support for individual practices and, more importantly, a voice that has an impact both within the profession and in wider circles beyond. The extent of disciplines in which Members are engaged are widespread, encompassing commercial, industrial, rural, residential and general practice. Many Members are particular specialists in their own field. There is considerable 'cross fertilisation' and networking which proves to be advantageous to our Members.

Independent Surveyors and Valuers Association is run by forward-thinking Chartered Surveyors who, like you, care about the future of their profession and, of course, their livelihood. The Council consists of annually elected Members.

What does ISVA do?

As individuals, we are a lone voice and can do little to influence matters that are of concern. As a body, we are able to promote the services of small independent firms and ensure that views of our Members are known. The ISVA, representing sole practitioners and small practices, maintains contact and continuing dialogue with the RICS, Government Departments, mortgage lenders and others.

We encourage networking via a Members' Directory and Website (www.isva.org.uk). The Council meets regularly and Members are kept informed of proceedings and developments.

We aim to offset the cost of subscription further by providing Members with positive benefit of membership by negotiating 'privilege discounts' on a range of services which might not be available to a single individual alone.

CPD Conferences are held annually providing an opportunity for Members to meet and also to air their views. The lectures are carefully selected to cover topics of professional interest and current concern. We welcome attendance by non-members of ISVA to ensure diversity of views.

We also regularly circulate topical issues to all Members via e-mail.

The achievements of ISA/ISVA

ISA formed '*Independent Surveyors Training Limited*' to develop and promote good quality CPD for Members and to organise Conferences, training days and technical seminars at subsidised cost.

The Association, in consultation with RICS and to comply with RICS bylaws, has developed a dedicated Complaints Procedure for use by Members if required, and will arrange initial appointment of a Mediator without charge whenever this is required under a Members' Complaints Procedure.

ISA/ISVA Council has, with some success, made strong representation to RICS on a number of issues. The Council has also established sound relationships and dialogue with RICS, Government Departments and Consumer Groups, as well as Trade Organisations, to ensure that the voice of Members is heard.

Finally, and most important of all, the Association has co-ordinated a network of progressive professional surveyors throughout the UK, who are dedicated to the ethos of 'putting the client first', and committed to the principles set out in the ISVA Charter (copy enclosed). As individuals running our own businesses locally, all our Members are totally independent and proud to remain so. On the other hand, as an organised group we can offer a wide skill base to the general public. Through networking and referral of clients to other Members who hold similar principles, we are able to offer a service second to none, wider afield than our own individual areas of practice and can make available a diverse range of specialist skills whenever the need arises.

What of the future?

New areas of concern constantly arise. ISA contributed to the Brooke Review and modernisation of RICS with two ISA Members co-opted to the Review Committee. ISA prepared a detailed response to the Carsberg Consultation on professional conduct and remains in continuing dialogue on how disciplinary procedures should be conducted.

Although we interact positively with RICS and promote the view of the small independent practice, as a body, we continue to remain apprehensive of RICS' policy towards smaller firms, particularly the sole practitioner, and the Institution's commitment towards global expansion. We have adopted a 'watchdog' approach whenever changes are proposed which we consider could disadvantage Members.

We doubt that Members as individuals receive value for subscriptions paid to RICS. We continue to make representation for improved services and communication. At the same time, ISVA endeavours to provide servicing and support for Members to make good what is perceived as a shortfall on the part of RICS in this area.

Obtaining PI insurance cover at economic cost continues to present a major headache for many small practices. ISVA maintains contact with RICS, the Insurance industry generally and has forged a new relationship via ISVA's honorary brokers, Fraser Miller, in developing a dedicated PI scheme for ISVA Members to enable best (FSA-compliant) advice to be given and PI support to be obtained at competitive rates. ISVA is currently exploring options relating to 'run-off' cover on retirement.

ISVA Council monitors closely changes in Government legislation to assess the impact on its Members and to enable pro-active advice to be offered.

We have also developed an interactive Website www.isva.org.uk where the public can search for individual surveyors in their area and where Members can browse for information.

The profession is constantly changing. New challenges arise and with them new problems that need to be addressed. We hope that you will decide to become part of a vigorous, active and informed group of surveyors who care not only about the future of their profession, but also about providing a first class service for their clients.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Julia Grasske

Records & Administration Officer

for **Independent Surveyors & Valuers Association**
and **Independent Surveyors Training**