

IPOA E-ZINE

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1. IPOA Launch new Conference & Workshop Centre at special event

On Wednesday 14th December, at the IPOA offices on the Navan Road, the new IPOA Conference & Workshop Centre was officially launched. Mr Brian Linehan T.D., Minister Department of Health and Children and T.D. for the constituency of Dublin West officiated at the ceremony, and cut the red ribbon marking the opening of the Centre which will serve as a space which will host training sessions and workshops for IPOA members into the future.

The Opening also marked the launch of the new IPOA Advocacy Service, the Property Classifications Scheme and the Yearbook & Diary. The event was attended by several IPOA members and special guests.

2. The new IPOA Property Grade (PG) Scheme previewed

The PG (Property Grade) Scheme is borne out of a desire for the IPOA to provide a categorisation and classification scheme for its members' rental accommodation. It represents a voluntary self-assessment scheme for members which will lead to a formalised and recognised form of customer assurance, strengthening the standing of the IPOA members and their properties.

A pilot scheme will commence in May 2006. It is a structure which will be based on minimum standards as set out in legislation which all property owners are obliged to abide by. The IPOA are simply formalising the necessity to apply certain standards to private rental accommodation and providing a stamp of approval which will become widely recognised and associated with quality assurance.

The scheme is based on the physical standards prevailing in the premises, the quality of the furnishings and the level of customer comfort. Whether or not a premises has a particular facility is an objective fact, it is not a matter of opinion. The combination of facilities required to qualify for a particular classification is fixed, and must be understood by the proprietor, in relation to his/her self-assessment.

Initially the scheme will comprise a basic standard entitled PG1 - PG being Property Grade. The standard represents minimum standards as set out by legislation. We propose that this is extended during 2006 to implement 2 further standards; PG2 Superior and PG3 Premier. A concise explanation of the requirements for the classification will be presented to all members in 2006. It is then up to the individual property owner to apply to the IPOA for classification which will be based on a self-assessment guaranteed in writing by the owner. On examination of the self assessment a grade will be applied and a certificate and supporting printed material provided for display on premises. Each unit must be classified separately according to a detailed list of facilities. If the facilities provided are not of acceptable quality, the premises will not be classified at all. Quality will determine whether the premises is suitable for classification. Unacceptable quality will result in a refusal to classify.

An experienced assessor will carry out monitoring from time to time.

The Property Grade Scheme will provide a level of assurance and quality for the Property Owner and will help to protect against the slandering which is prevalent against property owners.

We hope that our members will comply and look forward to bringing the organisation a step closer towards protecting its members and proving that we provide a quality, compliant service which should in turn be rewarded by financial gains.

Further details will be available from the IPOA in May, after which applications will be accepted.

3. Introducing the new IPOA Advocacy Scheme

The Residential Tenancies Act 2004 has taken disputes out of the remit of the courts and these are now dealt with by the Private Residential Tenancies Board's Dispute Resolution System. This has changed the way disputes are being dealt with and very specific obligations have now been placed on property owners and tenants. Procedures have to be carried out in a prescribed manner.

Since the inception of the Mediation/Adjudication service provided by the Private Residential Tenancies Board, members have been requesting assistance.

From January 2006 we will be in a position to provide trained advocates to attend the Dispute Resolution Service of the PRTB with the members. These advocates are familiar

with the Residential Tenancies Act 2004 and have also been trained in mediation methods and the adjudication system.

Our advocates will be available to assist members from the early stages and will be able to advise them of the correct procedures and steps required for them to bring their cases to a successful conclusion. In a case where it has been appealed to a Tribunal, the IPOA will have the ability to provide an appropriate professionally qualified person.

A separate department has been set up within the IPOA, to give our members support when cases are being brought before the Private Residential Tenancies Board. Their secondary brief is to monitor the interpretation of the Legislation and to compile a list of the amendments required for the effective implementation of that Legislation.

We will also be monitoring the determination orders and assessing the fairness and even-handedness of the judgements.

The Advocacy Service will assess disputes initially and attempt to resolve the problems by direct negotiation. If this is unsuccessful or not practical a trained advocate will be assigned. They will devise the strategy for the case, ensure that the procedures required by the Legislation have been carried out correctly, brief the property owner and ensure that everything is in order prior to the mediation or adjudication case as required. The advocate will attend the hearing with the property owner and assist on the day as necessary.

4. IPOA 2006 Diary & Yearbook

The 2006 IPOA Yearbook & Diary was officially launched last Wednesday, 14th December. The diary is the 1st of its kind from the Organisation and will be provided to all members free of charge on renewal of their subscriptions. It is a page per day diary which will help you all keep your affairs in order and enable you to clearly mark all IPOA events - so no excuses for not turning up.

The diary is completely self funded through advertising revenue. We would like to formally thank all of the advertisers and hope that their participation will reward them in terms of exposure. So thanks to Bank of Scotland Ireland, Eaglestar, S.A. Faughnan Brokers Ltd, Galco Steel, Wyse Estate Agents, S.A. Faughnan Auctioneers Ltd., John B. O'Connor and Stephen Durcan.

Happy Christmas to you all !