

Welcome Note

Welcome to the fifth edition of the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LLAS) Newsletter.

This edition contains more detail on the current proposals, following considerable activity within the Steering Group.

Please feel free to be constructively critical of these proposals by contacting the Project Officer by e-mail, telephone or letter - your comments could still influence the direction of the scheme, as nothing is set in stone.....yet!



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But that will soon change as we approach July, the proposed launch month, and it will be more

difficult to have the same level of influence after that date.

Results of Landlord Survey

We have to date received 101 responses to the "Landlords Have Your Say?" questionnaire. These have been analysed and will be influencing both the content of the training/development



information and the type of incentives we will try to incorporate within the scheme.

For training topics, favourites were 'Recovering rent arrears' (63%),

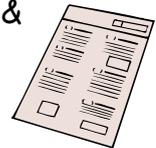


'Dealing with tenant anti-social behaviour'

(60%) and 'Tax law' (60%).



For incentives, in front was 'Ability to receive Council grants' (63%), followed by 'Regular factual updates & newsletters' (60%) and 'Quality information/development seminars' (53%) - all of which are likely to be incorporated, although grant availability will almost certainly vary between boroughs.



The majority of respondents preferred the training to be delivered during normal working hours (62%), although 43% would be happy with evening courses. A smaller majority



(47%) preferred a full day session, with 38% thinking half-day sessions would be better. It is likely that all

these options will eventually be made available, together with other important equality considerations such as non-English courses, etc.



Landlords' Reference Group

Most of the landlords receiving this Newsletter electronically should already have received an invitation to participate in the Reference Group via e-mail, with regular opportunities to meet face to face if desired and convenient.



Whilst we do not wish to exclude anyone from having their say, there is no doubt that e-mail enables this to be done much faster and easier. But if you are not able to use this method and want to take part, please contact the Project Officer and every effort will be made to include you by more conventional means.

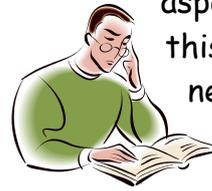
Training Format

We are hoping to provide the developmental training in as logical a way as possible, but at the same time to be able to partially accommodate the increasing number of landlords who have already undertaken the RLA one-day 'Creating and Managing a Tenancy' course.



It is therefore proposed that the training will be in 2 modules, each split into 2 sections. Module 1 will have 'Pre-Tenancy' and 'During Tenancy' sections, whilst Module 2 will have 'Start of Tenancy' and 'Ending the Tenancy'. Module 2 is effectively a trimmed down version of the RLA course, so those landlords who have recently been on that course may be exempt from sitting through Module 2.

A rather controversial element of the training debate revolves around the evaluation issue. Most landlords would undoubtedly prefer not to have to undergo some form of 'test' on their understanding of the more important



aspects of the training, but this will almost certainly be necessary to give the accreditation the required standing in the eyes of the people who would be most likely to value the scheme. Without that, one of the main incentives of the scheme, ie an added attraction to prospective tenants, would be largely lost.

Details of the best method of such an evaluation are still being debated - options include a 'multiple choice' type of paper at the close of each module (or the day), online testing from home or work at a later date and a telephone auto-test system. Views would be very much welcomed on this issue.

Training Organisations

Work is being done towards placing adverts in appropriate publications for 'expressions of interest' from suitable trainers and/or training organisations to deliver the approved syllabus, as it has been strongly advised by our 'non-LA' partners that to succeed, the training must not be local authority (LA) based but demonstrably independent.

Code of Conduct

Also closely associated with the perceived standing of the scheme is the adoption of a suitable Code of



Conduct for accredited landlords. Without being too onerous, this will require accredited landlords to 'sign up' to the code to ensure a certain tenancy management standard is maintained.

Whilst it is not envisaged that the code will need to be invoked on a frequent basis, if at all, it is seen as a necessary fall-back position to deal with anyone who wilfully and persistently fails to comply with the basic standards expected of a letting business.

A necessary part of such a code would be a means by which an aggrieved landlord may appeal against a decision by the scheme's management committee, through an internal scrutiny



panel and ultimately to an independent Appeals Panel (eg ANUK - Accreditation Network UK).

Website

A new website is currently being designed which will link directly with the London Landlords Day website, which is also undergoing a significant upgrade.

It is hoped that the preferred route to gain information on the LLAS will be through this website. This will include access to training course information, online application/booking forms, etc. To assist in this process, discounts will be offered to those landlords who apply and book/pay online.



As this website develops, it should provide opportunities for LLAS accredited landlords to provide links to their own websites, providing marketing benefits as well as confirmation of accreditation to prospective tenants.

Feedback

The Steering Group would be very pleased to receive feedback on the important issues covered in this newsletter, as it is essential that we take on board the positive and negative feelings at this critical stage in the scheme's development. Without a willingness and enthusiasm for landlords to take part, the scheme will clearly not flourish.

Please use the contact details below to make your views known.

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