

Knowledge at your

Jo Williams reveals how property professionals can stay ahead of the game at the Landlord & Letting Show and Property Investment Expo



With ever changing legislation and the regular introduction of new regulations for the industry, it is a full time job for landlords, letting agents and associated property professionals to equip themselves with all the knowledge and information required to help them succeed.

Training courses serve their purpose, but are often costly and private rented sector professionals can end up with a big dent in their wallet, not to mention the impact that ongoing training can have on their busy schedules.

The Landlord & Letting Show and Property Investment Expo offer the perfect alternative for busy property professionals. Open for two days to give more scope for attendance, the

shows offer access to information on a host of pertinent issues, with advice available from a wide range of industry experts.

Oliver Romain, editor of Landlord & Buy-to-Let magazine and managing director of Accession Exhibitions & Publishing who organise the shows, commented: "Advice is really hard to come by in the sector, but it is imperative that everyone involved in property keeps themselves informed, especially the 'accidental' landlords who are new to it all. We regularly publish stories on landlords and agents that have been fined or worse, so our free shows really are a worthwhile use of time.

"We liaise with industry experts to ensure our programme of free to attend seminars focuses on the latest

sector developments and covers topics that landlords have expressed a desire to learn more about.

"What's more, show attendance now qualifies for continuing professional development (CPD) points, so coming along really is a win win situation all round." Some of the many informative topics to be covered on Thursday 19th and Friday 20th May at ExCeL, London, are outlined below.

One pertinent topic that may create some controversy is the recent Article 4 Directions. From October this year, small HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation) will be subject to planning permission in more than two dozen - mostly university - towns. Landlords with existing shared houses will be able to continue to rent to

finger tips...



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his session, Peter will be explaining what impact LHA changes will have and how to minimise risks.

Fellow SLA director and national leasehold expert Shula Rich will also be sharing her expertise, answering individual queries or leasehold problems, including right to manage, lease extensions, service charge disputes, students and HMOs, helping attendees to make sure that flats keep their value.

One area that is always flagged as a cause for concern in surveys carried out amongst landlords and agents is the age old issue of finance. Property Accountant Stephen Fay ACA says: “Many property investors have moved on from simply owning one or two properties, and now effectively run a fully-fledged business. This means they require better financial management skills. Using plain English – guaranteed – at the end of my session I intend to be stood in front of a room full of attendees who understand how to run their property business like a professional Financial Controller does.”

Stephen’s session will cover cashflow, forecasting (which is, in his eyes, the most important skill to master), working capital, key performance indicators, tax planning for 2011 and the topic he deems ‘boring but essential’, record keeping.

On the topic of finance, funding has been a cause for concern amongst many for some time. Mortgages have been in short supply and the presence of mortgage experts at private rented sector shows has been on a low ebb for some time. The end of 2010 saw a shift with more mortgage providers returning to exhibit. One such reappearance was from Mortgages for Business.

groups, but will not be able to invest in similar properties without getting permission in the affected areas.

A panel of industry experts, led by Chris Town of leading trade body, the Residential Landlords Association, will be sharing their views and taking questions from the floor in the hope of answering the question: are these directions Good News for Landlords / Bad News for the Community?

Another association in attendance at the show is the Southern Landlords Association (SLA). Director Peter Littlewood comments: “On April 1st this year, most Local Housing Allowance rates were reduced - some quite substantially. Unless you plan accordingly, tenants may well very rapidly get into arrears, and may struggle to meet their obligations.” In



Dave Princep



David Whittaker



Paul Shampina

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Managing director, David Whittaker explains: “The buy to let market is showing strong signs of recovery. Lenders are returning to the market, loan to values are back up to 85 per cent and there are more products for HMOs and limited companies.” David will be sharing his expertise in an informative seminar session looking at the reality of this recovery and the buy to let funding options for both professional and part-time landlords.

Legislation is perhaps the single most complicated area for the industry to make sense of. With the introduction of new regulations and changes to existing laws, staying up to date can be difficult, even for the most seasoned of property professionals.

Tessa Shepperson, a solicitor and specialist in residential landlord and tenant law who has run her online legal information service, Landlord Law, for almost a decade, has supported the Landlord & Letting Shows for several years. “It’s imperative for landlords to stay one step ahead. I regularly attend the shows with two constantly evolving topics and a packed seminar theatre is always a welcome sight: it clarifies landlords’ awareness of the importance of understanding legislative issues.”

Tessa will be offering her ever popular ‘Essential legal points for landlords’, giving a quick whip around the legal rights of landlords and tenants, including assured shorthold tenancies, HMOs, landlords’ statutory repair obligations, gas regulations and more.

She will also be taking an in-depth look at dealing with rent arrears: “In the current economic climate, many tenants are getting into financial difficulties, or even losing their jobs, which will inevitably lead to rent arrears with their landlord. This talk gives guidance on what you should do from Day 1, and will take you through the various options available to you, including bringing proceedings for possession of the property.”

Two other show regulars and visitor favourites – Marie Parris of George Ellis Property Services and Tom Entwistle of LandlordZONE – will also be in attendance.

Whether you own one property or thirty, Marie has the knowledge to inspire, educate and empower landlords to learn how to self let and manage a portfolio, even whilst working full time. Marie says: “It really is possible to be your own ‘letting and managing agent’, helping you to avoid traditional costs associated with agents, saving you money in the process. This presentation is guaranteed to leave the stressed landlord re-focused and able to implement some proven tips.”

Tom has been an investor and manager of residential and commercial property for over 30 years. “In hard times like these, landlords and agents face some difficult challenges sustaining occupancy levels and maintaining cash-flow. We also live in a complex mobile society where the potential for fraud, identity theft and bad debts is a higher risk than ever.

“Judgement, common sense and ‘gut feel’ still remain very much part of the equation when it comes to selecting tenants, but this needs to be supplemented by a systematic management approach.” Tom will share his expertise and systematic approach to credit and identity checks and maintaining rental income.

One thing all landlords and agents are desperate to avoid is bad tenants. Show and TV regular Paul Shamplina of Landlord Action will be at the show to discuss DIY tenant referencing, what key pieces of information need to be gathered, credit control, rent recovery and, perhaps most importantly, what to do when it goes wrong.

Many more subjects will be covered at the show, including a focus on energy efficiency, the benefits of video inventories, the role of the letting agent beyond collecting rent and solving the inventory challenge. With so many pertinent issues and hot topics under scrutiny, there really is no better place for landlords, agents, and associated property professionals to acquire all the knowledge and expertise they need to help them excel in their field.

Rather appropriately, ExCeL in London is the new venue for the spring 2011 Landlord & Letting Show



Neil Nichols Edmund Cude



Tessa Shepperson



Marie Parris

and Property Investment Expo. Oliver Romain commented: “ExCeL is an ideal venue and offers some great opportunities for expansion as we move into the future. It is also easily accessible for our existing visitors, but hopefully the new location will attract new property professionals who may not have wanted to cross the City to Olympia.”

ExCeL is accessed from the Custom House stop on the DLR (District Light Railway). Travel from Euston Station in the centre of London takes approximately 50 minutes. There is also parking for those wishing to travel to the venue by car. The show is open to the public on Thursday 19th May from 10.00am to 5.30pm and Friday 20th May from 10.00am to 5.00pm.

Entrance tickets (worth £20) are free to all those who book in advance online at www.lettingexpo.co.uk ■