

DEBT FIRMS TRY TO BOOST STANDARDS

Group launches code of conduct

A NEW organisation aims to represent the growing number of debt-management companies that charge to help people hit by the recession to manage their finances.

Debt Management Association of Ireland chiefs said the body would raise standards in the unregulated sector at a time when Irish consumers owe more than €180 billion — and are among the most indebted people in Europe.

Chairman Eugene McDarby, who is also managing director of Moneyvillage, said the association would protect the interests of the public and creditors.



PLAN: Chairman Eugene McDarby

Audit

He said that members would face “a rigorous

audit to ensure full compliance with DMAI code of conduct”.

Mr McDarby said personal debt in Ireland was now causing tremendous fear.

And people who never experienced debt problems before were suffering and were afraid to deal with debt head-on.

“The main fear factors are a fear of not paying bills; pressure to pay bills when you don’t have the money; the uncertainty about the future; the loss of confidence; lack of concentration and feelings of unworthiness; poor decision making and grief for a former lifestyle,” he said.

“In extreme cases personal debt can create suicidal feelings.”

DMAI members will liaise with credit firms to agree a repayment rate that people can afford — handling all the administration, correspondence and phone calls involved.