

# 10 check-out tips to help student tenants, landlords and letting agents avoid disagreements

This document is brought to you in partnership with The Deposit Protection Service (The DPS)

Below are ten guidelines to help student tenants, landlords and letting agents during the check-out process.

## 1: Carry out a full check-out inspection

Landlords should thoroughly assess the condition and age of carpets, walls, furniture and garden, using the inventory created at the start of the tenancy, and note any damage or changes to their condition. Landlords should also ensure that the check out report is accurate and as clear and concise as possible.

## 2: Tenants have the right to attend check-outs

Landlords must give tenants the opportunity to attend a check-out and provide them with the chance to discuss or disagree with any findings. Letting agents can use a professional service for their check-out process.

## 3: Stay in touch about the check-out report

Student tenants and landlords or their agents should swap up-to-date mobile numbers so they can call, text or email each other throughout the check-out process. They should also keep copies of all communications, especially if there is a delay or dispute, because an adjudicator will want to see any steps the landlord took to reach an agreement.

## 4: Remind the tenant to sign the check-out documents

Landlords or their agents should politely remind tenants to remember to sign the check-out documentation. If a tenant doesn't sign the report, for example after seven days, it is unlikely that the tenant disagrees with its findings.

## 5: Take date-stamped images

Date-stamped photographs enable landlords to show any damage that has gone beyond what is reasonable wear and tear for the length of the tenancy and can dramatically lessen the chances of a dispute after check-out. Landlords or letting agents without date stamping software on their devices should still send images electronically to adjudicators, who can check for date information inside the file.

## 6: Understand the latest rules on cleaning

A landlord can only ask the tenant to return the property to the same standard of cleanliness it was in when the tenancy started. As a result of the Tenant Fees Act 2019, landlords cannot require a tenant to pay for the service of a third party to carry out cleaning.

## 7: Students cannot use deposit money to pay outstanding rent

Student tenants cannot ask for their deposit money to make up any rent shortfall or cover the final month's payment before moving out.

## 8: Maintain neutral language during a dispute or claim

Landlords and letting agents should avoid using emotive language to describe a property's condition during a claim or dispute. For example, words such as 'disgusting' or 'squalid' in any documentation or attached to any imagery could potentially increase tension during a dispute if a tenant views the evidence.

## 9: Remind yourself of the property's true condition before making a claim

Landlords or letting agents who have rented out properties for years to successive tenants may not fully recall their original condition or décor. Tenants who do not meet their tenancy agreement obligations should likewise expect reasonable deductions.

## 10: Take pictures of final energy readings

Student tenants living outside University accommodation should ensure they take final gas and electricity meter readings, preferably using their mobile or other electronic device, and pass those onto the energy supplier. They should also send a copy to the landlord or letting agent.

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