



# The ins & outs of inventories: *A guide for landlords, letting agents and tenants*

**This guide has been created to help avoid deposit disputes occurring at the end of the tenancy and to help ensure that rented property is left in the same condition in which it was originally let.**

## Who this guide for:

- Landlords
- Letting Agents
- Tenants

## For tenants it will:

- Help to maximise the chance of having their deposit returned in full by providing an idea of the important things to consider when leaving a property/ moving out.
- Ensure they aren't faced with a deposit deduction for something that they could have otherwise avoided.
- Provide tips and advice from industry experts.

## Specifically, for landlords/ letting agents it will:

- Provide an idea of what kind of detail is needed to describe the property's items and their condition.
- Ensure they're better placed to have their property returned in a good condition at the end of the tenancy.
- Help to avoid and assist a deposit dispute by providing an idea of the key things to take into account when compiling an inventory at the start of the tenancy.
- Provide tips and advice from industry experts.



## Why a deposit is taken

Nowadays very few landlords or letting agents let a property without taking a deposit as it provides a guarantee that they can be compensated for financial loss should the tenant breach the terms of the tenancy agreement or damage the property.

The deposit money belongs to the tenant and they will want to make sure that they receive it back in full at the end of the tenancy. However, if the property is not returned in the same condition it was in at the start of the tenancy the landlord or letting agent may need to make a deduction to the deposit. Of course, the landlord or agent will need to allow for fair wear and tear and should only make reasonable and proportionate deductions.

# The importance of the inventory

It is best practice for a comprehensive inventory to be carried out at the start of the tenancy. It should detail the current state of the property at check-in, providing a clear comparison for how the property should be returned at the end of the tenancy. It should also define the terms used to report the condition or cleanliness of items in the property. It must be clear enough for a third party to understand without them being present.



*Disputes do of course still occur and when this happens, communication is the most effective way to resolve the issues.*

[www.mydeposits.co.uk/tenants/guides](http://www.mydeposits.co.uk/tenants/guides)

## Returning the deposit



**60%** returned by landlord/ agent in full



**39%** returned with deductions agreed by tenant



**1%** require formal dispute resolution

### Top tip for tenants:

“ It’s up to you to check the detail of the inventory as soon as possible and notify the landlord or agent of anything that needs to be amended. Make sure you sign the document to verify its content. ”

(UK Association of Letting Agents)

### Top tip for tenants:

“ When moving in ask for an inventory and schedule of condition. You can take photos at the start of your tenancy but ensure they are date-stamped and signed by both parties. Make sure to capture each room of the property, as well as any specific damages or wear. ”

(Townends)

### Top tip for landlords/agents:

“ The check-out process is the perfect opportunity to discuss and agree any deductions. Conducting a mid-term and a pre-check out inspection will also help resolve any issues and avoid a dispute. ”

(National Landlords Association)

# Inventories

## key areas to consider



### Checklist area #1: Furniture

***If you're letting or renting a furnished property, consider the following...***

- Is any of the property's furniture already damaged, stained or chipped?
- Check the structural integrity of the beds. Are there any broken supports or damage to the frame? Consider the underside of a mattress and not just the top.
- What about bedside tables, chests of draws and wardrobes? Do all the drawers work and are they damage free and clean?
- Inspect the chairs, tables and desks for signs of damage, stains or scratches.
- Check any sofas for tearing, chipping or damage.



### Checklist area #3: Flooring

***Pay attention to the ground you walk on...***

- Check for any stains on carpets. Are there any rucked areas or rips to the flooring or carpets?
- Check for holes and stains in lino or laminate floors and look for chips or signs of stained grout on tiled floors.

### Top tip for tenants:

“ If you are renting a furnished property it is important to be aware that you will have a responsibility to maintain the state of any furniture items, as well as other aspects of the property. ”  
(National Landlords Association)



### Checklist area #2: Doors & Walls

***They keep you safe from the elements but what condition are they really in?***

- Are doors properly fitted, and do they open, close and lock where necessary?
- Are there any painted areas/wallpaper that are dirty, stained, ripped or marked?
- Do skirting boards and door frames have any marks, stains or damage?
- Don't forget the shelves, property surfaces and even the ceilings. Any marks, stains, water marks or damage?
- Are there any signs of mould or damp?

### Top tip for landlords/agents:

“ Does your tenancy agreement make clear what the tenant's cleaning obligations are? Does this give them any guidance or define different levels of cleaning or what is required of before they depart? ”  
(UK Association of Letting Agents)



## Checklist area #4: Windows

***They're not just for letting in light...***

- Do all windows open, close, lock and are they damage free?
- Is there any damage or staining to curtains, rails or blinds?
- Is there any sign of condensation, damp or mould within the window frames and seals? Especially in the bathroom?



## Checklist area #5: Kitchen

***It's not just the oven that you need to think about...***

- Are all cupboards presentable, clean and empty? Do they all open and close properly?
- Are the kitchen worktops presentable and clean with no burn, scratched or chip marks?
- Are there any tiles with chips or stains and is any of the sealant or grouting dirty or mouldy?
- Do all the white goods work as they should and are they clean and clear of any mould or damage?
- Is the oven and hob clean and in full working order?
- Check the washing machine, soap tray, door and seals for cleanliness.

### Top tip for tenants:

“ Check with the landlord whether any appliances should be left off when leaving the property. ”  
(LSL Property Services)

### Top tip for tenants:

“ Check the state of the oven & grill tray – does it need to be professionally cleaned? ”  
(Nicholas Percival Lettings)



## Checklist area #6: Bathroom

***Don't just leave the toilet seat down...***

- Is the sink or bathtub stained or damaged and do the taps work and drain as they should?
- Are there any areas with mould?
- Are any tiles stained or chipped?
- Check the shower, including the doors, showerhead and curtains. Does it all work as it should? Is it all fitted properly or is there any soap scum or mould?
- Are the cupboards or cabinets tidy and presentable?
- Check the toilet is free from stains and damage and that it is in good working order and flushes properly.
- Don't forget the mirrors - are they clean and free of chips and scratches?



## Checklist area #7: Outdoors

**Who is responsible for the garden and its upkeep...if there is one...?**

- Are the property's drives/ gardens and paths presentable and damage free?
- Are there any side gates? Are they locked and secure?
- What about the fences or garden walls? Are they damaged or broken?
- Inspect any garages and sheds for damage, are they presentable and clutter free?

### Top tip for landlords/agents:

“ Does your tenant know the location of all meters; gas, electric and (where applicable) water? Inform them to take accurate readings to make sure they pay for their consumption. ”  
(Townends Lettings)

### About this Guide:

This inventory guide has been brought to you by the mydeposits Group, a government-licensed operator of custodial and insurance-based Tenancy Deposit Protection (TDP) schemes in the UK, that has safely protected over £2bn worth of tenants' deposit money.

If you would like to learn more, please visit [www.mydeposits.co.uk](http://www.mydeposits.co.uk)

### Top tip for tenants:

“ On leaving the property, remove any rubbish and unwanted items left behind - as your landlord/ agent may charge you for removal costs. ” (UK Association of Letting Agents)

### Top tip for landlords/agents

“ Make sure any photographs are digitally dated or embedded into the printed inventory in order to complement the written document ”  
(Nicholas Percival Lettings)



## Checklist area #8: Utilities

**Are the essentials all in proper working order?**

- Do all the lights work and are bulbs in place and light fittings secure?
- Are the plug sockets fully functioning?
- Is the boiler working, has it been checked by a professional and are the property's radiators functioning?

**Reminder for tenants:** Make sure your inventory accurately reflects the condition and level of cleanliness of your property. If you're not sure about your inventory or you're not happy with its content then speak to your landlord or letting agent immediately.

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