

Deposits- Frequently Asked Questions

This document contains information regarding deposits. Please take the time to read everything before emailing or calling as it may well answer your query. Keeping call and email volumes low allow us to return your deposit faster.

What is a check out?

A check out inspection is where a member of staff will attend your property after you move out. They will check the condition of the house such as broken items, damage and the cleanliness (See attached cleaning checklist). They will also check for maintenance issues or items for the landlord to address. Back in the office, the check out will be compared to your opening inventory when you moved in for discrepancies. Discrepancies in excess of fair wear and tear may then be claimed from your deposit.

Most of our tenancies end the 28th or the 30th June which means this period is extremely busy. If you have moved out before then, please let us know and we can conduct your check out sooner. The sooner your check out is done the sooner you can have your deposit back.

We cannot do a check out if there are any belongings left in the house. You will not be given the opportunity to go back and remove items/clean/repair damage during or after your check out.

Do I have to be there for the check out?

No. As mentioned the summer period is very busy and inspectors will have to do many check outs each day. In the property the inspector will only record the condition and maintenance issues, they will not compare this with your opening inventory whilst there. They will not be able to take on board any comments you make such as the condition when you moved in or maintenance that has occurred. Your presence may also make the check out longer which has a knock on effect for other check outs and deposit releases.

When your check out report is sent to you, you will be able to comment on each part of it if the clerk has missed something.

If you do still want to attend we can give you a morning or afternoon slot only, we cannot give you an exact time of attendance. Slots are limited so you are more likely to be able to get one if you leave your property early (Before the 28th June).

I want to talk to you on the phone about my deposit

Every year we have thousands of tenants move out and into properties in the space of a few days. Many of our staff are out of the office during this time conducting check out reports. Calling the office may mean you don't get to speak to the right person, and in a busy period messages can get lost or not answered in the time frame you would like. Furthermore for deposit disputes, evidence

cannot be given over the phone and conversations can turn abusive which is not fair on our staff. For this reason, please email your queries to us and we will be working hard to respond to you as soon as possible.

We will only answer queries from the tenant themselves, or their guarantor. Please nominate one tenant from each household to email us regarding deposits, as multiple emails from multiple tenants only complicate matters and delays response times. Please ensure every email clearly has the property address in the subject line.

Where is my deposit?

Landlords and letting agents in Wales must protect your deposit in a government held scheme. If you are in one of our managed properties, it will be protected with the Deposit Protection Service (DPS). If your landlord manages your property directly it may be with another scheme such as the Tenancy Deposit Scheme or MyDeposits, please contact your landlord directly about your deposit in this case.

How do I get my deposit back?

In order to receive your deposit back, your tenancy needs to have ended and the house needs to be vacant. A check out inspection will be conducted where the condition of the property is compared to how it was at the beginning of the tenancy as per your opening inventory and any proof of works undertaken.

If the property is in a clean and tidy condition with nothing in excess of fair wear and tear, your deposit can be released quickly through the DPS.

If the property is not in the same condition it was let to you in, works may need to be done such as cleaning or repairs. The landlord then may wish to make a claim for the cost of these works from your deposit which will delay the return of it to you.

How will the money be returned to me?

The money will never come directly from Lettings Angels, it will always come from the DPS itself.

YOU HAVE TO REQUEST YOUR DEPOSIT RETURN ON THE DPS WEBSITE.

The reason for this is if we put the claim through (rather than responding to your claim) you can't see what deductions are being made so don't know what the landlord is claiming for. We will not release any deposits unless you request the release through the DPS.

The person to request the deposit becomes the nominated tenant. That means they are then in charge of distributing funds. Funds can either be sent to one bank account or the nominated tenant can input several sets of bank details. Funds are then sent from the DPS in 3-5 working days. We cannot change who is the nominated tenant, and we cannot influence how many sets of bank details are entered or the proportion of funds to go to each person.

I can't log into the DPS, what do I do?

Please contact the DPS directly about all log in enquiries as we cannot change these, visit <https://www.depositprotection.com/> or 0330 303 0030

My flatmate didn't pay their rent/caused damage but I didn't. Can I get my deposit back?

If you have a Joint and Severally Liable Assured Shorthold Tenancy, you are all equally liable for rent and damages on the property. You will have one of these tenancies unless you have rented only 1 room. If you came to us as a group and rented the house as a group, you are equally liable. It will be up to you as a group to decide how the deposit is split between you.

What happens if the landlord wants to make a claim?

If after your check out report is carried out and the property is not up to standard then works will need to be carried out. Some periods of year are exceptionally busy (July-September) and contractors are booked months in advance to visit properties. Once any works are carried out the contractor invoices us, so we know how much to claim for. Contractors don't always invoice us right away, and during busy periods some may take 2 months or so to send us the invoices although we do try to chase them up for them. Once the invoices are received the claim can be put through on the DPS website, where you can either fully accept, partially accept, or reject it.

Also included in the claim may be works carried out throughout the tenancy that are tenant charges, rent arrears or late rent charges. Please make sure you settle these before the end of your tenancy.

I don't agree with what the landlord is claiming for, what do I do?

If you don't agree with the claim please email us with your reasoning and any evidence you have. Please also respond to your check out report on each individual item that you are disputing. We may have missed something or can speak to the landlord and amend the claim to come to a mutual decision. The claim can then be amended on the DPS website.

I can't agree with you/the landlord won't change his decision. What do I do?

If after emailing your reasons you still don't agree then you can use the **Alternative Dispute Resolution** Procedure with the DPS. In this, both parties submit evidence (such as check outs, photos, emails) as to why they think the funds should be awarded to them. An independent third party adjudicator then reviews the evidence and comes to a decision on how the funds are to be awarded. This process if started in busy periods can take anything from 6 weeks to 6 months.

How long will it take to get my deposit back?

If after your check out inspection there is nothing to be claimed your deposit can be returned with a few days/weeks.

If after your check out inspection there are items to be claimed it can take days-months. This is especially true if there are large amounts of work to do, specialist work, contractors are booked up, you wish to wait for the invoices to be received so you know exactly what the cost is, and if the landlord takes a long time to respond to us.

If you want your deposit to be processed sooner, we can estimate the cost of common works (See table below) and use the estimate for the claim. We will do this where we can to speed up release times but will make you aware this is what we are doing. If you wish to wait for the exact figures that is fine but please be aware it will take significantly longer. Estimates only apply to common works not specialist ones.

What is a single claim?

In some circumstances tenants do not respond to the DPS, so the landlord may wish to speed the Alternative Dispute Process along with the use of a single claim. A statutory declaration is the paperwork needed to do this. It costs money to send a statutory declaration off as a solicitor must sign the paperwork.

What is fair wear and tear?

Please see this link which describes fair wear and tear:

<https://www.depositprotection.com/learning-centre/disputes/adjudication/>

What is betterment?

Landlords can only claim for replacements of something that is like for like. They can't for example, replace your damaged £200 wardrobe with a £500 one and claim £500 from you. They can only claim like for like. Similarly, if a mattress is stained and needs replacing but is 4 years old, the landlord cannot claim for an entirely new mattress. They must consider the life of the object, and proportion the amount to be deducted according to its lifespan.

Why is there no invoice for part of the claim?

If for example, you created a large iron mark on the carpet and the carpet in the room had to be replaced at a cost of £100, you may expect an invoice to show the carpet had been replaced and that it cost £100. However in this instance, the landlord knows next year he wants to renovate the house so it is not worthwhile for him to replace the carpet right now. A claim for compensation would be made to reimburse the landlord. Just because the work may not have been done, does not mean a claim for compensation cannot be made. Damage to the property has still occurred, it is just at the landlords discretion if he wants to go ahead with the repairs right away or not. This will also apply for replaced items, for example if you broke 4 freezer drawers the landlord may decide to just

replace the whole freezer instead. The landlord cannot provide an invoice to show he has replaced the drawers as he hasn't, but you will be charged as if he has done so.

Average charges for common deposit claims

Works	Approximate cost
Cleaning per hour	£18
Cleaning, average 2 bed	£100
Cleaning, average 3 bed	£125
Oven cleaning	£40-£70
Rubbish removal	£42 minimum call out charge. Price varies depending on quantity and location
Handyman visit for minor repairs	£25-£60 call out charge per visit, plus materials.
Lightbulbs	£5 if a cleaner/handyman is already there, call out charge of £25-£60 if a visit is made specially
Painting 1 wall/ceiling	£50-£120 depending on colour and condition
Painting 1 standard bedroom	£200-£250 depending on colour and condition
Chest of drawers/wardrobe repair	From £60 plus materials
Bed frame repair	From £60 plus materials
Replacement mattresses	£50-£150 single £90-£200 double
Replacement bed frames	£100-£200 single £150-£300 double
Replacement desk chairs	£30-£100
Replacement desks	£80-£160
Replacement freezer drawers	This depends a lot on your freezer model, but from £20 each plus a handyman call out charge to fit.

