

# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE INVENTORY PROCESS FOR LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

## **Why Have an Inventory?**

Only instruct independent professional inventory providers who are trained to be impartial, both at the time of making the original inventory and at check in and check out. Their evidence will be relied upon in the event of a dispute over the deposit at the end of the tenancy. **The Deposit Protection Service and Courts of Law will look for an unbiased opinion with relevant documentation.** With an independent professional you can be confident that the documentation will have been drawn up correctly and fairly.

## **What is an Inventory?**

A professionally executed **Inventory and Schedule of Condition** is not just a list of items placed in or on the premises; an accurate inventory is a detailed document that will include a schedule of condition of the property itself as well as the fixtures, fittings and contents and is compiled to protect both the landlord and the tenant at the end of the tenancy from any unwarranted disputes. If there is an insufficient, outdated or, even worse, no Inventory, then there will be no evidence of the condition of the property at the start of the tenancy. This means that there is no documented proof of damage or misuse. If there is a clear indication of the condition of the property at the start of the tenancy then this can be used as a measure against the condition of the property at the end, with allowance for fair wear and tear. Without the Inventory there are elements of doubt about the property which can lead to protracted disputes which may involve an independent party for adjudication or ultimately, a Court of Law.

## **Who pays for the Inventory?**

Usually, the Inventory and Check In is paid for by the Landlord. The Inventory carries 'one off' charge and is updated for any subsequent tenancy producing a fresh document with new photographs. In most cases the inventory is usually the responsibility of the landlord, but if the inventory provided is not sufficient, the tenant has an equal right to instruct an independent clerk to produce an inventory.

The document is owned by the landlord and can be used by other agencies for future tenancies or if the property is managed by the Landlord.

## **What is a Check In?**

This takes place at the very start of a tenancy. An independent inventory clerk will be instructed to meet the tenant on the day the tenancy commences, in order to walk through the property pointing out any defects that have been noted and recorded on the inventory. The clerk will also hand over keys for the property, record utility readings and advise of legal obligations for both landlord and tenant and their responsibilities for the duration of tenancy.

A Schedule of Condition will be signed by both clerk and tenant in agreement of the condition, cleaning, readings, etc. at the start of the tenancy. The tenant can also add their own comments at this stage to the document. A copy of the completed inventory and schedule will be forwarded to all parties, who then have a further 10 days to sign off the document to confirm all items within the property are in full working order.

## **What is a Check out?**

This will take place on the final day of the tenancy. The inventory clerk will meet the tenant at the property with the inventory to compare the condition of the property from the start to the end of the tenancy. Any dilapidations are noted and photographed and returned to all parties within 48 hours for any deductions to be made from the deposit.

This is when using an independent service becomes important as all comments are impartial and, therefore, can be contested through the correct channels.