



## News Release

<b>Date:</b>	23 June 2019
<b>Subject:</b>	Seven guidelines for student accommodation check-outs during coronavirus – The DPS

**Bristol**, - The Deposit Protection Service (DPS) has issued seven ways to help students and landlords in England and Wales arrange accommodation check-outs during the coronavirus pandemic, in line with the Government’s easing of lockdown restrictions on house moves.

Changes in regulation on 13 May mean physical visits to properties in England and the creation of rental check-out reports — which set out the condition of a property at the end of a tenancy — are now possible as long as letting agents, inventory clerks and contractors follow Government guidelines.

Matt Trevett, Managing Director at The DPS, said: “We understand that the ongoing lockdown restrictions could create anxiety for students and their landlords at the end of tenancies.

“These guidelines, which reflect the latest rules on working in other people’s homes, should help ensure a more efficient and safer handover of the property in line with most recent Government policy.”

The DPS said that it was ready to support landlords and student tenants looking to arrange deposit returns on houses, flats or University accommodation at the end of the academic year.

The organisation also said students, property owners and letting agents should read the Government’s [guidance for landlords and tenants](#) during the pandemic to make sure the move happens within the rules.

Below are The DPS’ seven guidelines:

### **1: Take date-stamped pictures for the check-out report**

Taking time-stamped photographs or videos of the property’s condition on moving out helps landlords to verify the check-out report, could avoid a dispute and encourages the efficient return of deposit money. Landlords in Wales, where restrictions on house

moves from occupied properties continue, should consider asking their student tenants to collect this evidence.

If the check-out didn't take place as a result of the lockdown, keeping a clear record of what happened (and when) enables The DPS to assess each case on its merits and arrive at a fair outcome.

## **2: Keep contact details up-to-date and stay in touch about the check-out report**

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

## **3: Read the small print about cleaning**

Around 63% of landlords who enter The DPS' Dispute Resolution Service cite cleaning amongst their reasons for a claim. During the pandemic the landlord may have to organise a full professional clean after the tenant leaves the property to minimise potential spread of the virus but, unless one took place before start of the tenancy or the tenancy agreement stipulates one is required, the tenant generally does not have to cover the cost.

## **4: Students and landlords cannot use deposit money to pay rent**

Students should tell their landlords if they experience financial issues so that both sides can discuss options, e.g. rent deferments. Students experiencing problems paying their rent cannot ask for their deposit money to make up the shortfall or cover the final month's rent before moving out. Landlords that have reduced a tenant's rent cannot make a claim from the deposit to make up the payment. Landlords offering payment holidays should spell out in writing, e.g. via email to the tenant that they must pay the deferred rent once the crisis is over.

## **5: Use photographs to estimate repair costs**

Contractors should not access a property to carry out non-urgent repairs if the tenant is self-isolating (or the property is occupied and in Wales). In these cases, the tenant can send a photograph electronically to the landlord who can pass it on to a contractor to obtain an estimate for repair work after the self isolation/lockdown period ends.

## **6: Problems compiling dispute evidence during lockdown**

Let the DPS know immediately of problems compiling dispute evidence so it can help to find a solution, for example, The DPS may be able to allow an extension for evidence submissions.

## **7: Checking gas or electrical safety certificates**

The Government says that landlords should make every effort to keep gas and electrical safety checks up-to-date but that if the tenant shows coronavirus symptoms, is self-isolating, shielding or does not agree for the landlord or a contractor to access the property, the inspection should not take place.

The DPS has also created a series of detailed FAQs on how to organise check-ins and check-outs during coronavirus, available via its [website](#).

### **For any media enquiries**

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### **Notes**

1. For high resolution images of spokespeople, visit <http://cpu.vg/spokespeople>.

### **About The DPS**

The Deposit Protection Service's custodial tenancy deposit protection scheme is accredited by the Government. It is provided free of charge, and funded entirely by the interest earned from deposits held in the scheme. The DPS was approved by the UK government to run an insured TDP scheme in September 2012 in addition to the approval it has already been granted by the UK government in respect of the custodial scheme. The DPS is run by [Computershare Investor Services PLC](#). Online self-service allows landlords to register and make deposit payments, transfers and repayments 24 hours a day. Help and advice is available through a dedicated call centre during office hours. An impartial Dispute Resolution Service, helps to resolve any disputes quickly and without the need for court action.

For more information, visit [www.depositprotection.com](http://www.depositprotection.com).

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